CHILDREN CANNOT WAIT

Part 4

Summary of Region 1 Data from the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program 2019-2020 State Evaluation Report
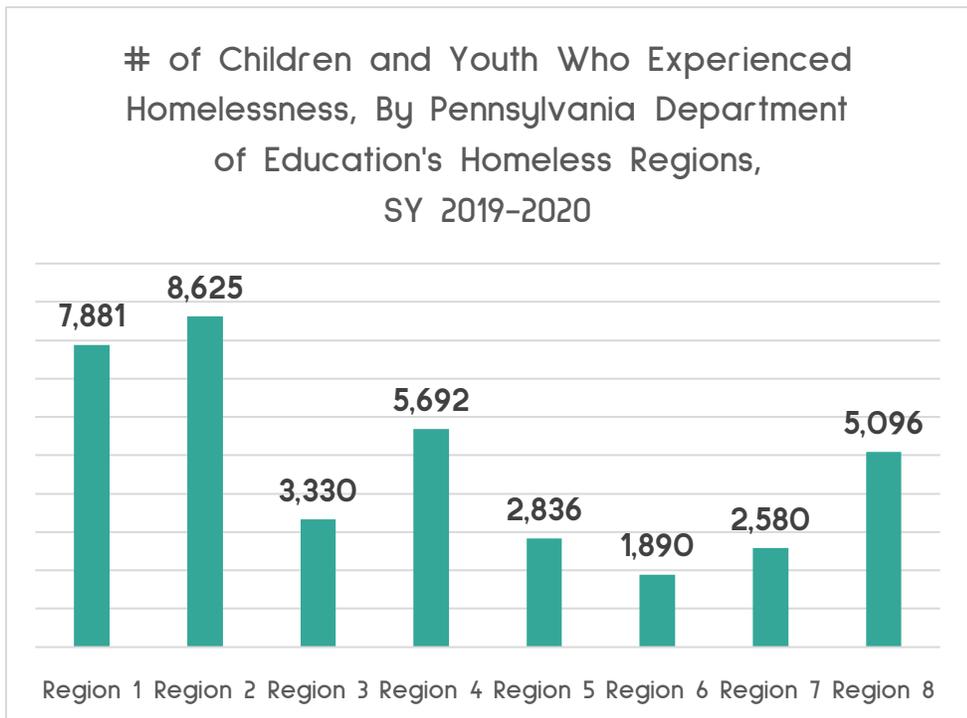
Prepared by the
Policy Department of
People's Emergency Center

PEC

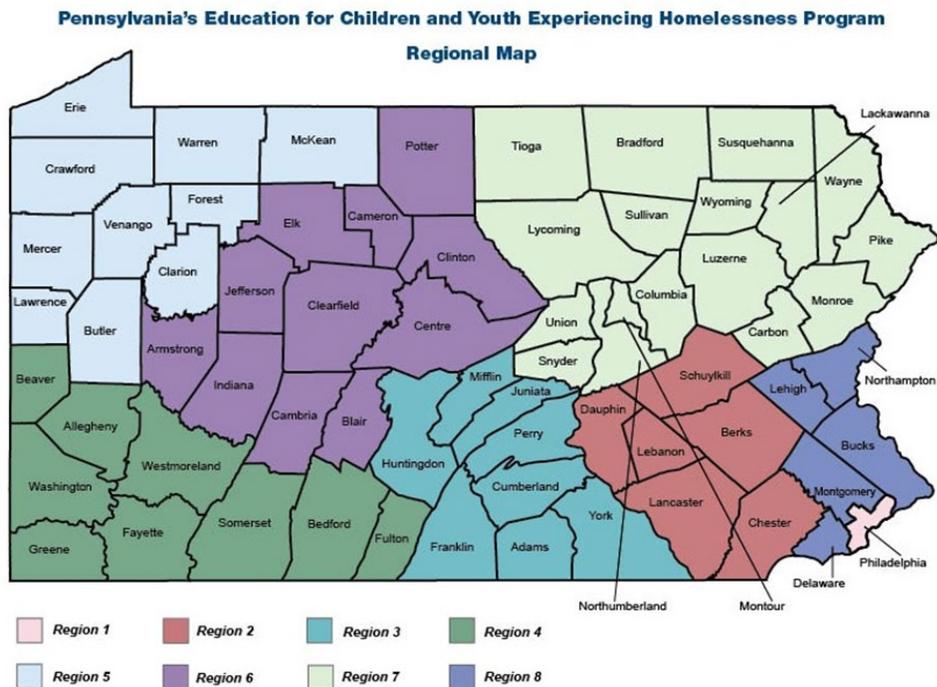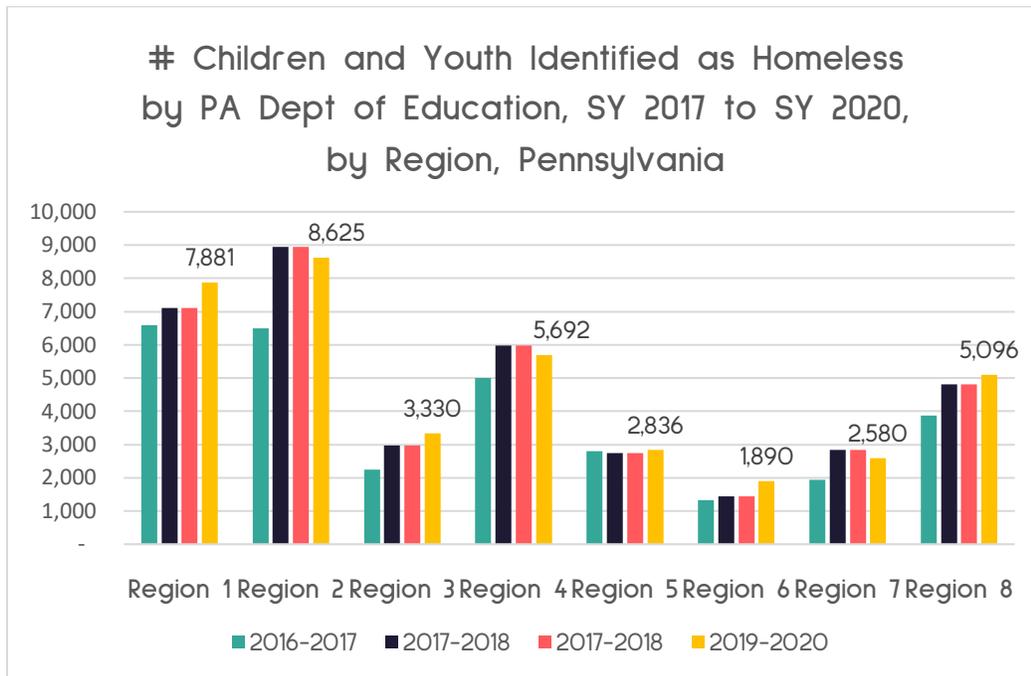# 37,930 Children and Youth Experienced Homelessness in Pennsylvania in School Year 2020

The number of children and youth who experienced homelessness in School Year (SY) 2019-2020 was 37,930, according to a report by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). This is a **decrease of 1,291 children, or 3%, compared to the previous year**.

People's Emergency Center summarized The Pennsylvania Department of Education's *Education (PDE) for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) 2019-20 State Evaluation Report* can be read at [ECYEH 2019-2020 State Evaluation Report](#). to inform policy makers about children and youth experiencing homelessness, from the homeless housing system and living doubled up with other families. The *Evaluation Report* has a wealth of information, but PEC does not focus on the entire report. Also, please note that the PDE report does not show data from previous years, but that PEC compares SY 20 results to previous years to show trends.

# of Children and Youth Who Experienced Homelessness, By Pennsylvania Department of Education's Homeless Regions, SY 2019-2020

Region	Number
Region 1	7,881
Region 2	8,625
Region 3	3,330
Region 4	5,692
Region 5	2,836
Region 6	1,890
Region 7	2,580
Region 8	5,096

The evaluators caution readers, "Care should be taken to avoid making comparisons across regions, as each region has differing numbers of LEAs, numbers of collaborating entities, reporting practices, ECYEH Program staff, and total child and youth counts. Additionally, regions have differing areas of focus based on regional need within the population experiencing homelessness. That said, differences among the regions can guide program improvement and technical assistance at the state level." (p. 6 of the state's report).

This chart shows the comparison from School Year (SY) 2017 to SY 2020. The map below it shows the area for each region.

Children and Youth Identified as Homeless by PA Dept of Education, SY 2017 to SY 2020, by Region, Pennsylvania

Legend: 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2017-2018 | 2019-2020

Region 1: 7,881
Region 2: 8,625
Region 3: 3,330
Region 4: 5,692
Region 5: 2,836
Region 6: 1,890
Region 7: 2,580
Region 8: 5,096

Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program Regional Map

Region 1 | Region 2 | Region 3 | Region 4
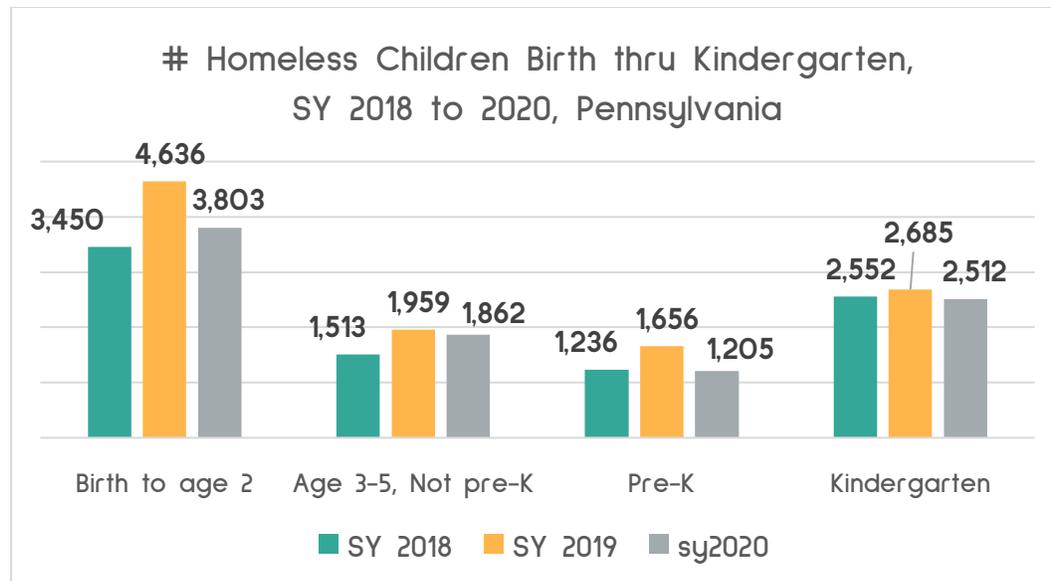Region 5 | Region 6 | Region 7 | Region 8

Highlights

- Although **there was a** reduction in the total number of children identified as homeless in SY 2020, five of the eight regions identified more children and youth than the previous year.
- Most students stay in their 'school of origin' and do not attend multiple schools throughout the year.
- 5,933 (16%) of the 37,930 children and youth were identified as being an **unaccompanied** youth,
- 9,122 (24%) of all homeless children and youth were identified as having a **disability**.
- 68 percent of students were living **doubled-up**, and 21 percent were in a **shelter**
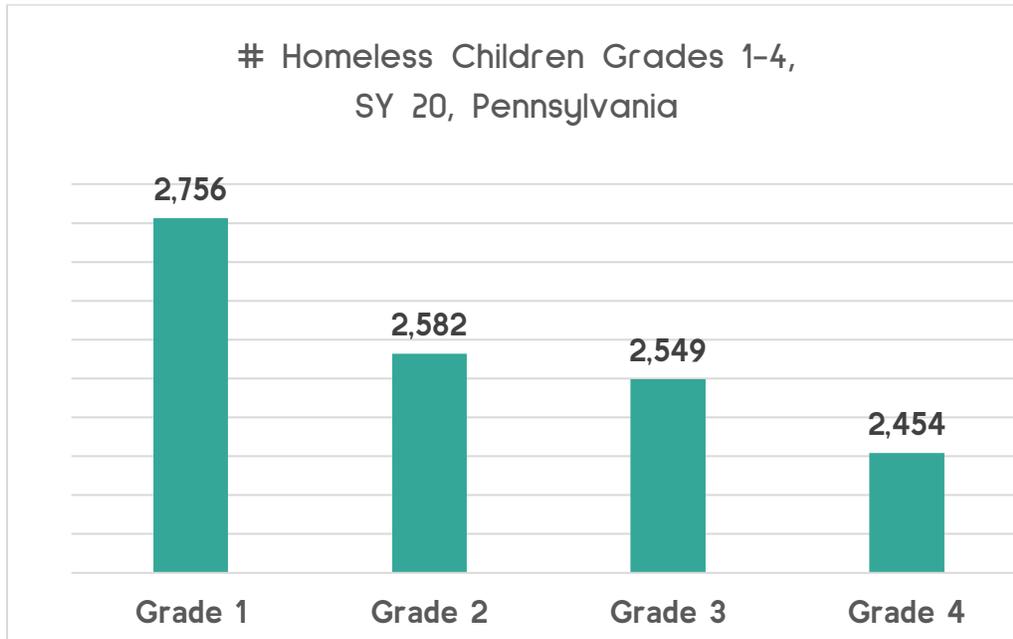- Most homeless students do not experience high rates of **absenteeism**.

Charts Representing the Number of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Grade
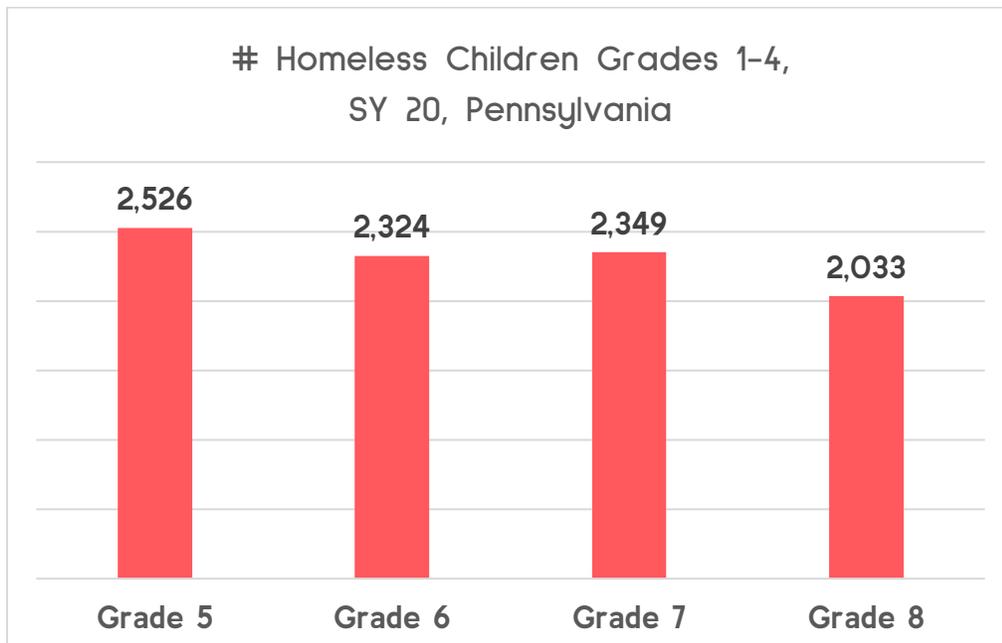
Birth to Kindergarten: 9,382 children.
- This number is less than the 10,936 reported in the previous year, but higher than reported in SY 2018.

- PEC created the chart below to show the trend in hopes of assisting planners involved in strategies to increase access to high quality early learning programs for the families of young children.

Homeless Children Birth thru Kindergarten, SY 2018 to 2020, Pennsylvania

	Birth to age 2	Age 3-5, Not pre-K	Pre-K	Kindergarten
SY 2018	3,450	1,513	1,236	2,552
SY 2019	4,636	1,959	1,656	2,685
sy2020	3,803	1,862	1,205	2,512

Grades 1-4: 10,341 school children.

**# Homeless Children Grades 1-4,
SY 20, Pennsylvania**

Grade	Count
Grade 1	2,756
Grade 2	2,582
Grade 3	2,549
Grade 4	2,454

Grades 5 to 8: 9,232 middle school students.

**# Homeless Children Grades 1-4,
SY 20, Pennsylvania**

Grade	Count
Grade 5	2,526
Grade 6	2,324
Grade 7	2,349
Grade 8	2,033

Grades 9 to 12: 8,975 high school students.

Homeless Youth in Grades 9-12, SY 20, Pennsylvania

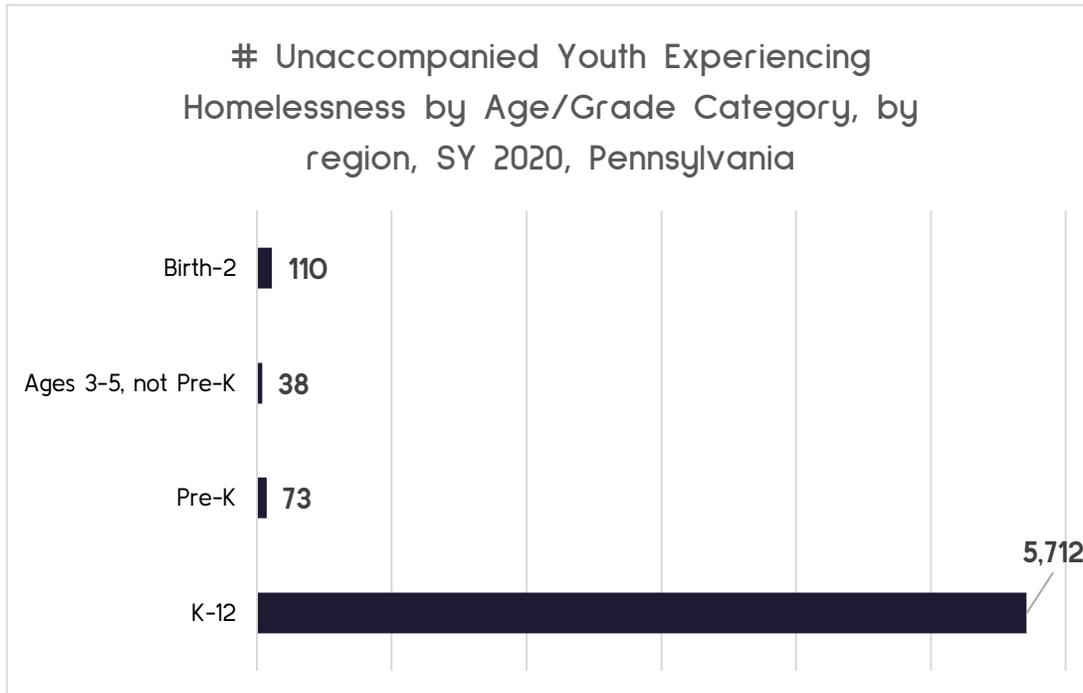| Grade	Number
Grade 9	2,503
Grade 10	2,061
Grade 11	1,926
Grade 12	2,485
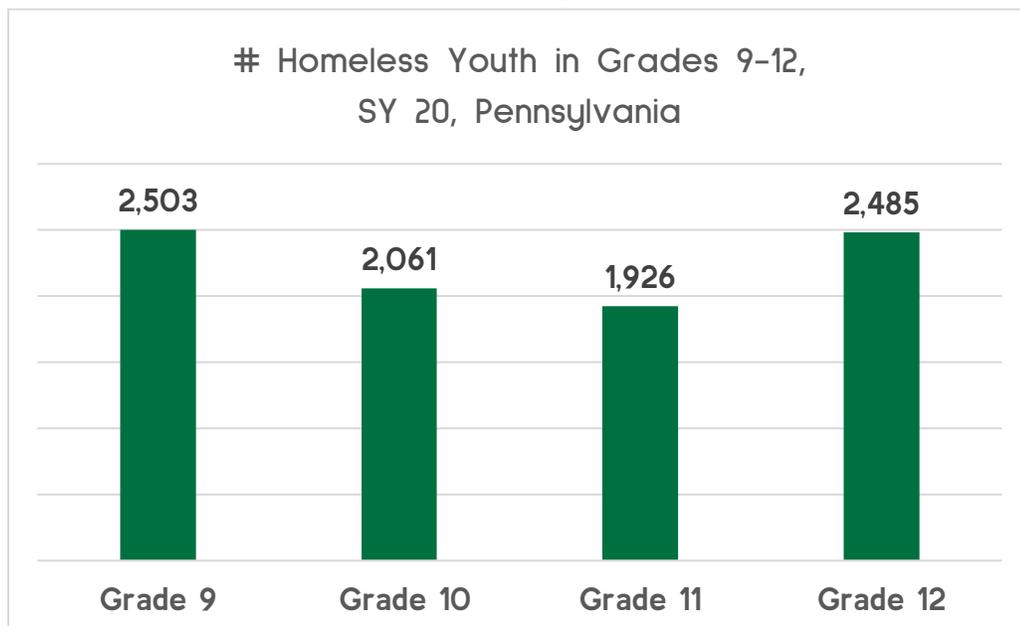
Unaccompanied Youth: 5,933 Children & Youth.

- According to the evaluation report, "Unaccompanied youth is a federally defined term. Children or youth who meet the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness may also be identified as an "unaccompanied youth," meaning the child is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian."
- Region 2 had the **highest** number of unaccompanied children and youth, even more than Region 1 (Philadelphia) and Region 4 (Allegheny and other counties).
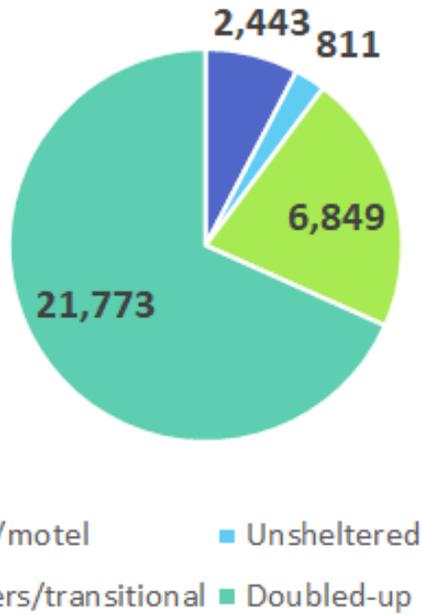
All Unaccompanied Children and Youth, by ECYEH Region, SY 2020, Pennsylvania

Region	Number
Region 8	748
Region 7	474
Region 6	440
Region 5	633
Region 4	810
Region 3	496
Region 2	1,475
Region 1	857
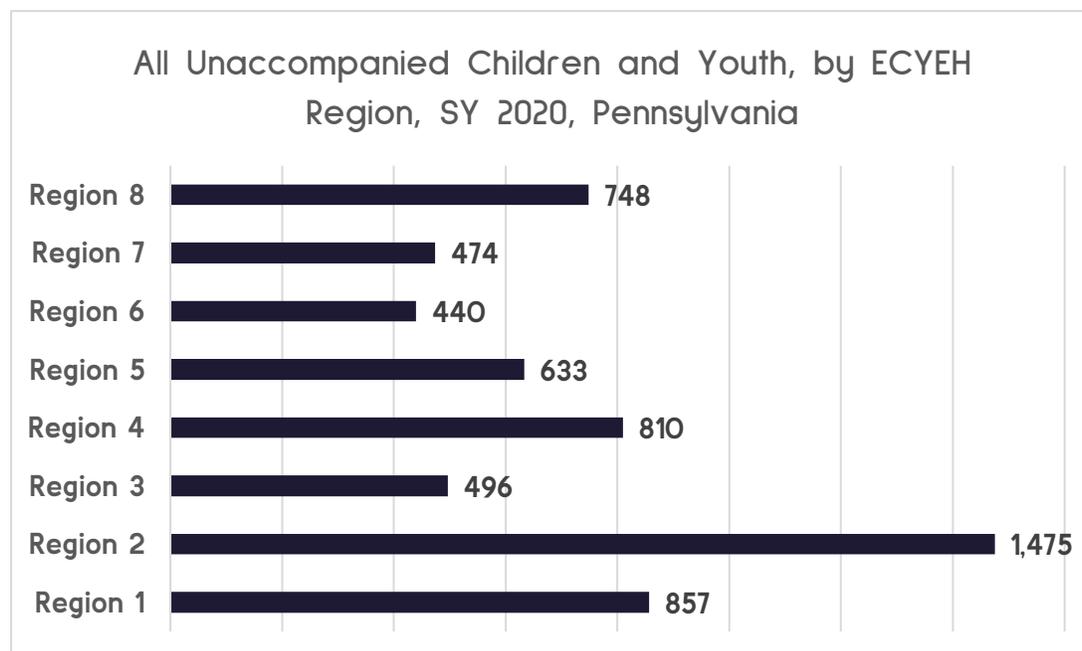
Nighttime Residence

- **68 percent** of students were living doubled-up

- **21 percent** were in a shelter

- Note: Nighttime status was **not required** for the birth to age 2 population or for children ages three to five and not enrolled in an LEA-operated prekindergarten program.
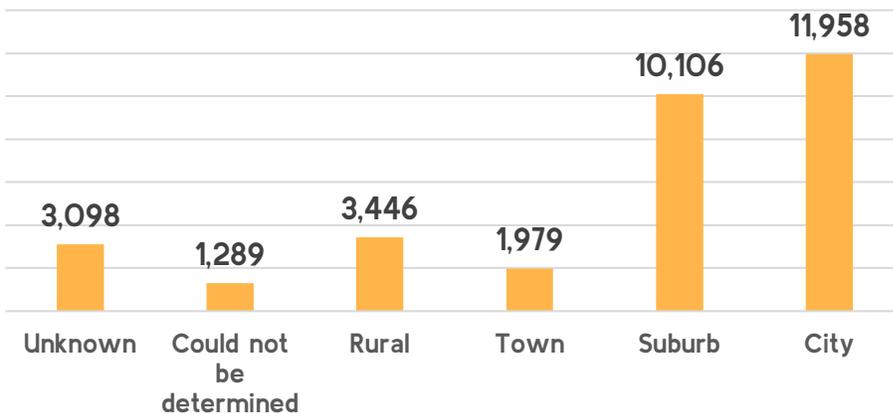
Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Age/Grade Category, by region, SY 2020, Pennsylvania

Age/Grade Category	Count
Birth-2	110
Ages 3-5, not Pre-K	38
Pre-K	73
K-12	5,712

Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by Nighttime Status, SY 2020, Pennsylvania

2,443 811

6,849

21,773

- Hotel/motel
- Unsheltered
- Shelters/transitional
- Doubled-up

Locale

Students experiencing homelessness are located throughout Pennsylvania, with the number of **suburban students** almost equal to those in a **city.**

Enrolled Students Experiencing Homelessness by Locale, SY 2020, Pennsyvlania

3,098	1,289	3,446	1,979	10,106	11,958
Unknown	Could not be determined	Rural	Town	Suburb	City

Disability

9,122 of all homeless children and youth were identified as having a **disability**.

Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness by Disability Category, SY 2020, Pennsylvania

Deaf-Blindness
Traumatic brian injury
Multiple disabilities
Developmental delay
Autistic/autism
Intellectual disability
Emotional disturbance
Specific learning disability

0   500   1,000 1,500 2,000 2,500 3,000 3,500 4,000

■ **Number of Students**

Attendance

Of the 31,060 identified enrolled K–12 students:

- 82 percent (25,395) had school attendance data,
- 16 percent (4,890) did not have attendance data, and
- 2 percent (775) were not enrolled in an LEA for 10 or more days.

Of the 25,395 students with data:

- 57 percent (14,481) attended school 90 percent or more of the days in which they were enrolled,
- 24 percent (6,100) attended 80–89 percent of days enrolled, and
- 9 percent (2,326) attended 70–79 percent of days enrolled.
- 43 percent of students would be considered chronically absent.

Dropout Rates

- The evaluators examined what data was available to them.
- There were 13,357 students identified as experiencing homelessness and enrolled in grades 7–12, of which 3.6 percent dropped out of school, which is slightly lower than the prior year's 4 percent.

- State drop-out data (inclusive of all housing statuses, for grades 7-12) for 2019-20, for comparison, showed a dropout rate of 1.44 percent.
- Grade 12 had the highest percentage of students experiencing homelessness dropping out at 7.5 percent (186 of 2,485 students).
- Grade 11 had the next highest rate of students experiencing homelessness dropping out at 6.6 percent (127 of 1926 students) and
- Grade 10 had a rate of 3.8 percent of students experiencing homelessness dropping out (78 of 2,061 students).

Graduation
- Of the 2,485 grade-12 students experiencing homelessness, the report had graduation status for 2,237 (90 percent) students.
- Of these 2,237 whose status was known:
  - 1,687 graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma (74.4 percent),
  - 186 dropped out (8.3 percent), and
  - 364 (16.3 percent) did not graduate.

It is unknown how the pandemic and remote instruction affected these data. The evaluators noted that 62 students designated as being in grade 11 either graduated or obtained a high school equivalency diploma.

Trends
Considering the data presented above, the evaluators noted **these** key trends:
1. Children and youth experiencing homelessness are economically disadvantaged.
2. Most students remain in their Local Education Agency (LEA) or school of origin during an episode of homelessness.
3. Despite some consistency for a substantial portion of enrolled students, there are some who experience school mobility and/or barriers to enrollment.
4. Transportation remains one of the most common barriers to education for students experiencing homelessness statewide.
5. Almost half of students experiencing homelessness exhibit chronic absenteeism. The evaluators noted that "Chronic absenteeism most likely directly contributes to lower outcomes on Pennsylvania academic assessments, on-time graduation, and high drop-out rates, especially in grades 10-12. Identifying and addressing chronic absenteeism needs to be a priority for the state office as well as the individual LEAs."
6. The evaluators noted that "There is a complete disconnect between prekindergarten program reporting and the McKinney-Vento Act reporting criteria. Few LEAs operate or fund prekindergarten programs and non-LEA prekindergarten programs are only required to report if they receive direct or indirect services from the ECYEH Program. ECYEH staff, while charged with

reaching out to all prekindergarten programs, many of which are non-LEA, also have a primary priority to support LEAs and their liaisons."

7. Students experiencing homelessness have **high chronic absenteeism and drop-out incidences and a lower graduation rate**.

Evaluators' Recommendations

Some of the evaluators' recommendations are already in place, but advocates, planning agencies and policy makers must be vigilant to ensure that these practices continue.

1. Eliminate barriers to transportation for students experiencing homelessness in every region.

2. Maintain relationships and data sharing agreements with local, regional, or state Continuum of Care contemporaries to ensure that Homeless Management Information Services reporting returns for all 57 counties.

3. Educate and support LEAs in the requirement of reporting their **under-five population**, be it those children who attend their prekindergarten programs, or non-enrolled younger siblings of enrolled school-age students.

4. Build collaborations with **prekindergarten partners** at the state and regional levels and ensure that all LEAs know the prekindergarten programs in their area and have the capacity to make referrals when they enroll students who have under-five siblings not enrolled in prekindergarten programs. **Connections between shelters and prekindergarten programs** may need to be established or strengthened.

5. Collaborate and explore interventions that offer additional instructional support – such as tutoring in shelters by college students, priority for service in LEA or community after-school or summer programs, or inclusion in other state or federally funded programs such as Migrant Education, English as a second language, or 21st Century Community Learning Centers. LEAs should analyze the data on their homeless students much like they analyze other subgroups of students in their schools.

6. Consider restructuring LEA staff duties to compensate for the the increased needs, collaboration, or services resulting from increased reporting of children and youth experiencing homelessness in recent years, increased outreach to non-LEA entities, and the addition of LEA monitoring preparation and follow-up.

7. **Implement the most time-effective delivery methods** for training, technical assistance, and outreach, such as more regional, county, or Intermediate Unit (IU) located trainings, the utilization of technology for 1:1 or small group technical assistance, or participation in only the most critical meetings, boards, and consortiums.

8. **Improve documentation of ECYEH-offered professional development**, technical assistance, and engagement activities conducted by or with other entities that work on or support homeless populations to accurately represent the work that is occurring on behalf of the ECYEH Program.

Acknowledgements

About People's Emergency Center (PEC)

People's Emergency Center uplifts our community by providing housing, social services, and quality of life supports that empower people and encourage more prosperous and safer neighborhoods. PEC is in an affiliation with Youth Service, Inc., with the intent of becoming one integrated agency in 2023.

For families and youth experiencing homelessness, we offer housing, social services, access to early childhood education, and educational programs in career training, parenting, financial literacy, life skills, and technology.

The PEC Community Development Corporation programs respond to community needs and build on neighborhood assets to help bridge the digital divide, expand mixed-income housing opportunities, stimulate economic growth, create wealth, and improve the quality of life for all West Philadelphia residents.

PEC advocates for urgently needed public policy changes on behalf of families and youth experiencing homelessness and the neighborhoods we serve. We have worked successfully with local, state, and federal government agencies to advance legislation and budgets that prioritize these communities.