

Improving Early Learning Services for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness in Philadelphia

Recommendations for Early Childhood and Housing Support
Services Partnerships

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PHMC Early Childhood Education Group

Collection of programs that cultivate, expand, and demonstrate high quality early childhood services

- QRIS Administrator
- Federal Head Start Grantee
- Fund For Quality
- PHLpreK Intermediary
- ERS & CLASS Assessment
- Early Intervention Service Coordination
- ECE Workforce Transformation Initiative
- Parent Child Home Program

Internal partnerships on these initiatives:

- Early Childhood Action Collective (ECAC)
<http://ecactioncollective.org/>
- Employer Sponsored Childcare
- ECE Workforce Transformation Initiative
- Building Early Links for Learning (BELL)

PHMC's Scope of Activities with BELL

- Landscape analysis of successful approaches; funding, service delivery model & program components
- Identify replicable components and design a model to implement in Philadelphia
- Identify and request waivers needed from the Administration for Children and Families for custom local Head Start models for families experiencing homelessness, if necessary
- Implement Philadelphia pilot



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LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

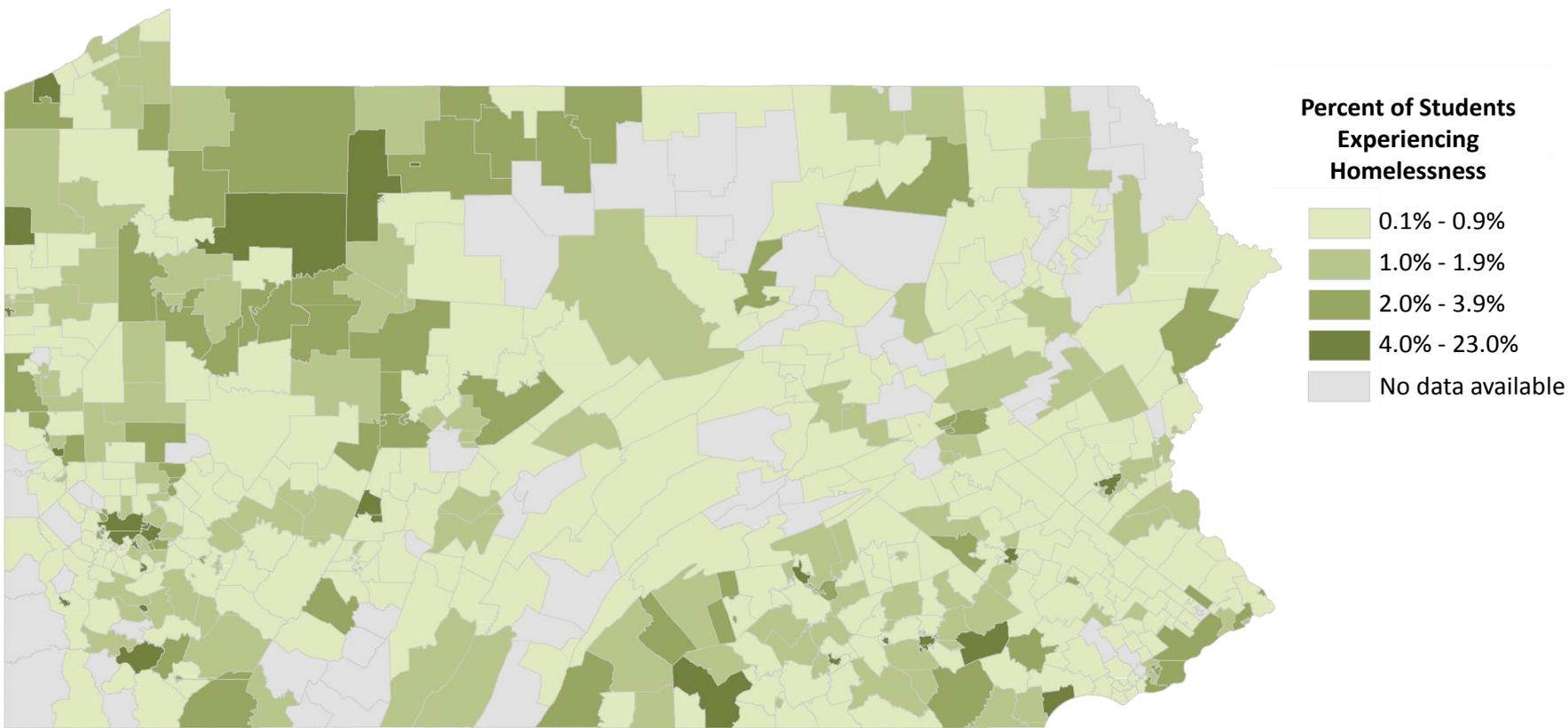
Landscape Analysis

PHMC performed a national, state and local landscape analysis to identify applicable:

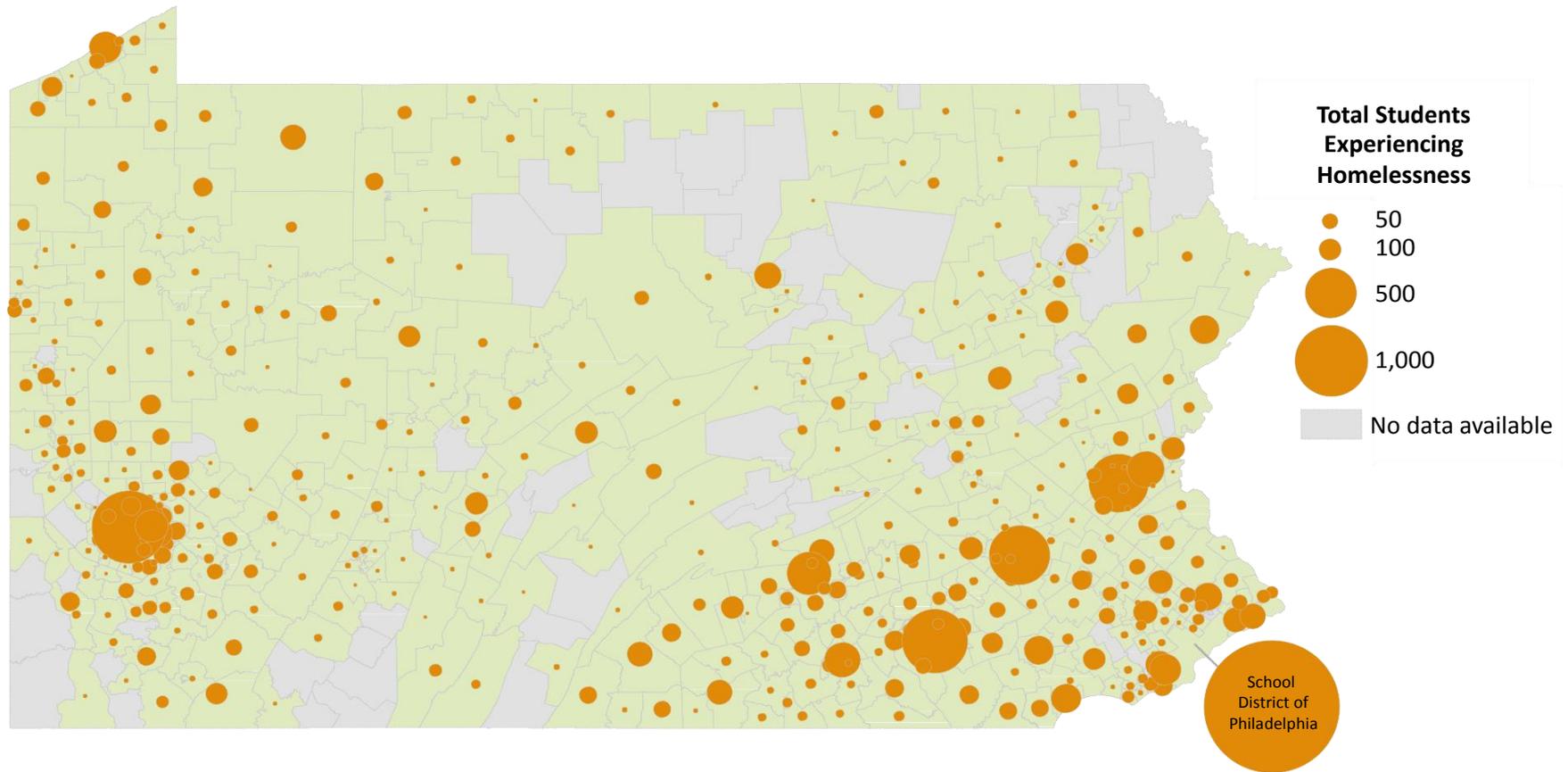
- Policy and Funding Landscape
- Intervention Models
- Practice Recommendations

The process included an analysis of available data, a review of literature, and targeted interviews

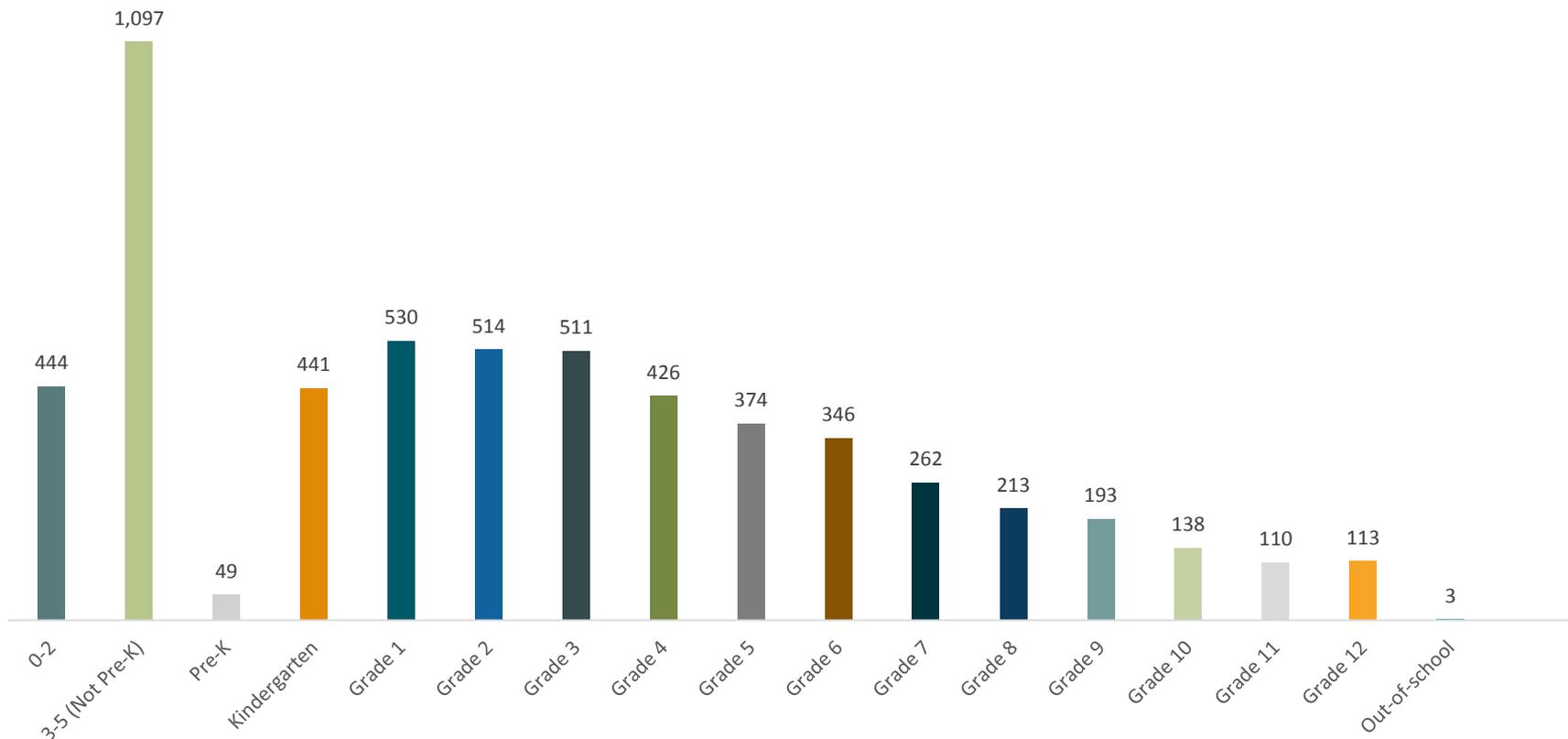
Percent of Students Experiencing Homelessness in Pennsylvania, by Local Educational Authority (SY14-15)



Total Students Experiencing Homelessness in Pennsylvania, by Local Educational Authority (SY14-15)



Homeless Children and Youth in Philadelphia, by Age/Grade (SY14-15)



Pennsylvania Department of Education. Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program: 2014-15 State Evaluation Report. 2016

Federal, State, and Local Policies and Agencies

Policy	State/Local Entity
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), McKinney-Vento, Title I	PA Dept of Ed (PDE), School District of Philadelphia (SDP)
Early Head Start and Head Start, PreK Counts, HSSAP	SDP, PHMC, OCDEL, and other grantees
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Elwyn, Service Coordinators, SDP, Early Learning Providers
Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), CCW Subsidy, QRIS	OCDEL, CCIS, Regional Keys
City Government Agencies	HHS, OHS, MOE, DOH, PHA, CBH

Other Key Partners

There are many opportunities for targeted models and intra-agency collaboration:

- Federal Interagency Council on Homelessness sets a model for interdisciplinary planning and action
- Philanthropic Entities
- Family Advocates



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NOTABLE PRACTICES

Coordination of Activities & Leveraging of Funds

- Anchorage, AK- Title 1 with HS to create robust centralized referral process
- Connecticut- HSSCO and HUD for facilities and program assessments and improvements; Office of Early Childhood, Community Action Agency and ES/TH Providers support transition into ECE programs
- Columbus, OH-Title I funds to support a two-generation model with ECE advocate and a parent consultant at local shelters
- New York City- Department of Homeless Services and the Education Department target outreach for universal PreK enrollment

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT – ELC)

Example—Massachusetts:

- Data sharing between state agencies
- TA to homeless-serving organizations to build early childhood competencies (e.g., child development, developmental screening practices)
- Linking homeless-serving organizations with early care and education organizations that can serve homeless students to promote bi-directional referrals

Example—Oregon:

- Establish regional hubs that coordinate cross-systems resources and services for families with at-risk children (including homeless) to help families access health, housing, education, and workforce training systems, etc.

Co-location of Services

Early care and education services are provided within or adjacent to a supportive housing facility. Proximity eliminates the largest barrier to enrollment and attendance (transportation), and facilitates cross-systems collaboration between staffs to support children's and families' needs holistically

Example- UMOM, Phoenix, AZ

- UMOM provides families facing homelessness with safe shelter, housing and support services so they can reach their greatest potential.
- High quality childcare is provided onsite and facilitated during housing transition.

Cross-systems Collaborations

Both supportive housing providers and early care and education providers stand to gain from coordinating activities and referring between organizations; both systems can increase referrals and improve their clients' outcomes

Example—Thames Valley Council for Community Action, CT:

- Early care and education advocate works with supportive housing providers to identify appropriately aged children and enroll them in high quality programs (often Head Start)
- Advocate also assists partners with building developmentally appropriate and responsive practices and physical environments
- The advocate builds long-term relationships with staff at partner housing providers that strengthen inter-organizational referral practices

Unified Referral Portal

A one-stop referral system can promote successful referrals between multiple systems (e.g., health, housing, education)

A coordinating agency may be able to fund and maintain such a system, thereby relieving individual providers of this burden and increasing referral efficiency

Example—Anchorage, AK:

- The school district used Title I funding to develop a standardized referral system that is integrated with local HS programs
- Other providers, such as family shelters and federally qualified health centers, could also be incorporated into such a system

Integration of Comprehensive Services

Early care and education providers and homeless serving organizations can serve as hubs that collaborate to provide children to comprehensive supports beyond their traditional domains

Example—Vogel Alcove:

Dual-generation approach to serving young children experiencing homelessness and their families. Provide early care and education, as well as:

- Case management services
- Speech, physical, and occupational therapy
- Parental education around child development
- Employment/career counseling
- Free basic medical and dental services, via partnerships with local universities



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OPPORTUNITIES FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND PHILADELPHIA

PA Child Care Development Fund Plan

Pennsylvania could work to include these practices in the CCDF plan:

- Homeless status automatically confers eligibility for child care subsidy
- Homeless families without countable income are not required to make copayments
- Providers are reimbursed at higher rates for offering care during non-traditional hours
- Housing search activities are allowable for purposes of program eligibility

Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness. *Meeting the Child Care Needs of Homeless Families: How Do States Stack Up?* 2014

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT – ELC)

Use funds to:

- Deliver TA and encourage participation in OCDEL PD for homeless-serving organizations to build early childhood competencies
- Deliver TA to ECE providers on identification, recruitment and service delivery to children experiencing homelessness
- Expand PA-MIS functionality and data sharing to track service to homeless children from ECE providers between state agencies
- Develop PA-MIS as a resource to support bi-directional referrals between Early Learning Services and Housing Services
- Establish a financial incentive to off set additional costs associated with identification, recruitment and delivery of services to children qualifying as homeless

Program-level Prioritization

Intentional identification, recruitment and implementation of a service model designed for families experiencing homelessness is critical

Head Start mandates that a minimum of 10% of enrolled children qualify for IDEA services. A similar threshold could ensure that providers intentionally recruit this population and develop an infrastructure to support the specialized needs of these families

Offer supplemental financial supports for achieving a specific proportion of children experiencing homelessness

Encourage the adoption of policies that ensure children identified as homeless are prioritized for service when there are limited seats available

Philadelphia PreK

Recommendations:

- Perform targeted outreach for recruitment
- Establish a target for enrollment that aligns with City population statistics
- Contract with agency partnerships that propose to prioritize services to families experiencing homelessness
- Include services to a proportion of children identified as homeless as a measure in the provider application rubric
- Adopt policies that ensure these children are prioritized for service when there are limited seats available



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PHILADELPHIA PILOT

Model

The Philadelphia Head Start Partnership worked with the BELL team to identify potential locations for implementation of a locally designed Head Start program option for ES/TH residents

- Begin following home-based model delivered onsite at ES/TH facilities and community locations
- Meeting all requirements of the HS Home Visiting model
- The Home Visitor remains with the family throughout geographic instability with the aim of transition to Center-based HS enrollment
- A family may maintain Home Visiting participation until Kindergarten enrollment

Activities and Status To Date

- Identified 3 potential shelter partners and initiated relationship development between HS and ES administration
- Availability of age eligible children and administration interest vetted prior to site selection
- Target of 24 enrolled children to establish a viable fiscal scale
- Head Start staff participated in onsite information sessions and opportunities for application completion
- Low interest demonstrated from families



Next Steps

- Identify/Develop an intervention model that integrates early learning programming into the emergency housing support model rather than positioning early learning as an add-on to existing EH/TS services
- Identify and utilize a family partnership model specifically designed for families in emergency housing
- Secure funding to deliver services that do not meet the qualifications for application of housing supports or Head Start funding
- Explore how best to apply the new HS Performance Standard allowance of 3% of funded seats (18) to keep seats available for homeless children
- Continue to cultivate relationships between OHS and ECE providers

Thank You

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Questions

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