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# K-12 student homelessness in US hits record high - report

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Reuters / Jessica Rinaldi

2 points

A record high 1.16 million students in the United States were homeless last year, according to new data from the US Department of Education.

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During the 2011-12 school year, 1,168,354 enrolled preschool or K-12 students were homeless, a 10 percent increase from the previous school term.

A total of 55.5 million students were enrolled in preschool or K-12 that year, meaning about 2 percent of all students were without a home.

*"The number of homeless children in public schools has increased 72 percent since the beginning of the recession,"* according to First Focus, a

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children's advocacy group.

The totals leave out children too young or not enrolled in school, whether they dropped out or were expelled.

The data show 43 states saw school annual increases in the amount of homeless students, as 10 states reported increases of 20 percent or more. California, New York, Texas, and Florida are the states with the most homeless students.

*"These numbers are devastating, but sadly, entirely predictable," said Ruth White, Executive Director, National Center for Housing and Child Welfare. "This report simply provides more evidence that the federal government has abandoned its commitment to fill yawning gaps in affordable housing options for low income families. The consequences reach far beyond housing, beyond education, and into the job market. This alarming trend could be easily reversed by prudent investments in federal housing policy that help families make ends meet."*

In the September 2013 report *"Seeking Shelter,"* the Center for American Progress reported lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth make up a disproportionate share of homeless youth in the US.

*"[T]heir experiences of homelessness continue to be characterized by violence, discrimination, poor health, and unmet needs,"* the LGBT report found. *"Family rejection, harassment in schools, and the shortcomings of juvenile justice and child welfare continue to drive these elevated rates of homelessness."*

The Education Department [data](#) release comes weeks after new Census data showed 16.1 million children, or 21.8 percent, live in poverty in the United States.

Last week, a new Opportunity Nation study [showed](#) almost 15 percent of those aged 16 to 24 in the US have neither a job nor are in school.

First Focus pointed out that the Education Department statistics also show federal programs for which Congress has seriously discussed reducing funding have been shown to lift children out of poverty. For instance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps, reduced childhood poverty in 2012 by 1.67 million kids.

The US House has proposed nearly \$40 billion in cuts to SNAP, while the Senate has voted for much less in cuts - \$4 billion - but cuts nonetheless. Currently, 45 percent of SNAP recipients - 1 in 7 in the US receive benefits - are children.

Regardless of whether Congress cuts food stamp funding, automatic



reductions in SNAP's budget are scheduled for Nov. 1, as increased funding was installed as part of the 2009 economic stimulus.

The stimulus, or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, added \$45.2 billion to the SNAP budget, increasing benefits from \$588 a month to \$668 for an average household of four.

Once those reductions come into effect, a family of four will see a five percent cut to benefits, AP reported.

That cut comes out to average less than \$1.40 per person per meal in fiscal year 2014, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Meanwhile, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid says there are 58,000 homeless students currently enrolled in college nationwide. Though since colleges are not required to track student homelessness, the FAFSA form students fill out for aid is the best record available.

Piling onto the homelessness problem is the record number of deportations that have taken place under the Obama administration--two million since he took office in 2009--disconnecting youth from parents, which can then lead to homelessness. About 660,000 Americans born to undocumented parents have lost a parent to deportation since 1998, Al Jazeera reported. Around 4.5 million American citizens have undocumented parents in the US.



2 points

## Comments (6)

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**Grant Turner** 25.10.2013 15:00

+1

**Susinko** 25.10.2013 00:38

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We REALLY need to get rid of that law that lets a child become a US citizen if they are born here, even if their parents are illegal. Then all the illegals can be deported as families.

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I agree. I wasn't surprised one bit when I saw which states have the highest rate of student and child homelessness!



**sandra** 25.10.2013 13:25

+1



File charges against the politicians that are spending our tax dollars for occupations of fake wars. We need the money in the US and not to kill others by drones strikes or strikes from our warships to Syria. Put these politicians in prison for ruining our country. They should be held accountable for their actions.



**MonsantoGoingDown** 25.10.2013 04:12

+1

America is coming apart at the seams... increasing poverty, spiraling debt, decreasing purchasing power of the dollar, increasing police violence and increasing violence in the streets, now known as flash mobs. The whole country is going crazy all at once.

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