

Empowering Families Experiencing Hardships



Head Start Regional TTA Network



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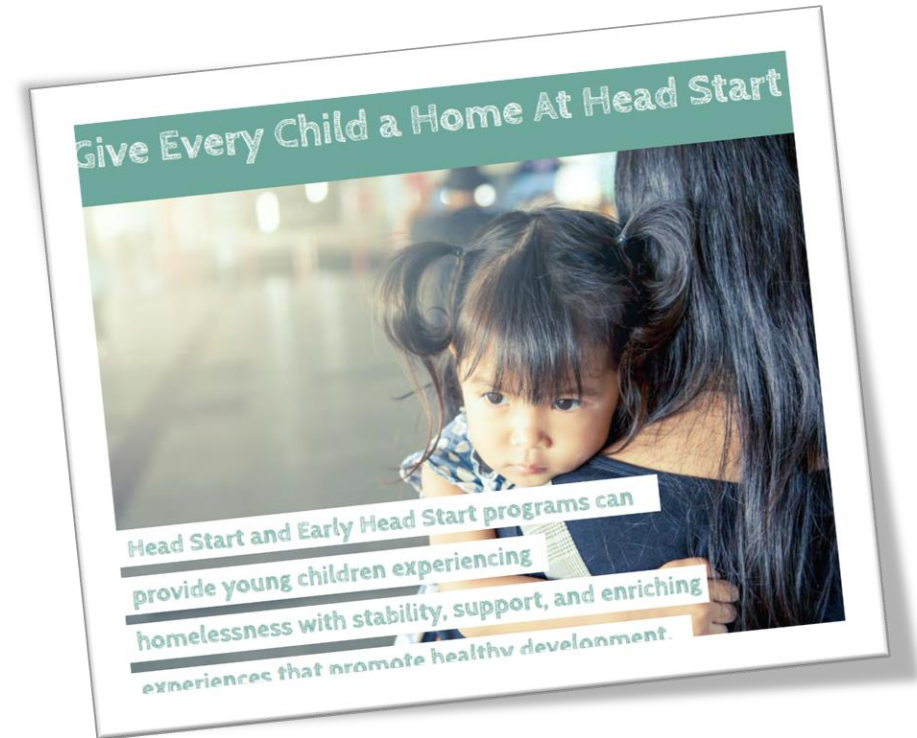
OBJECTIVES

- Participants will gain the skills to recognize families facing challenges, connect with community outreach, and employ effective strategies when interacting with these families.
- To define hardship and explore strategies to support and empower families experiencing hardship.



PURPOSE

"In the journey of comprehending adversity, our goal is to identify challenges and explore strategies that uplift and empower families in their moments of hardship."



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WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?



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- **Poverty and material hardship** – the inability to afford basic needs like food, housing, and medical care – place children at risk of physical health problems, mental health and behavioral problems, and worse learning outcomes. This brief presents new data showing the percentage of children in the United States (US) who experience poverty and material hardships.

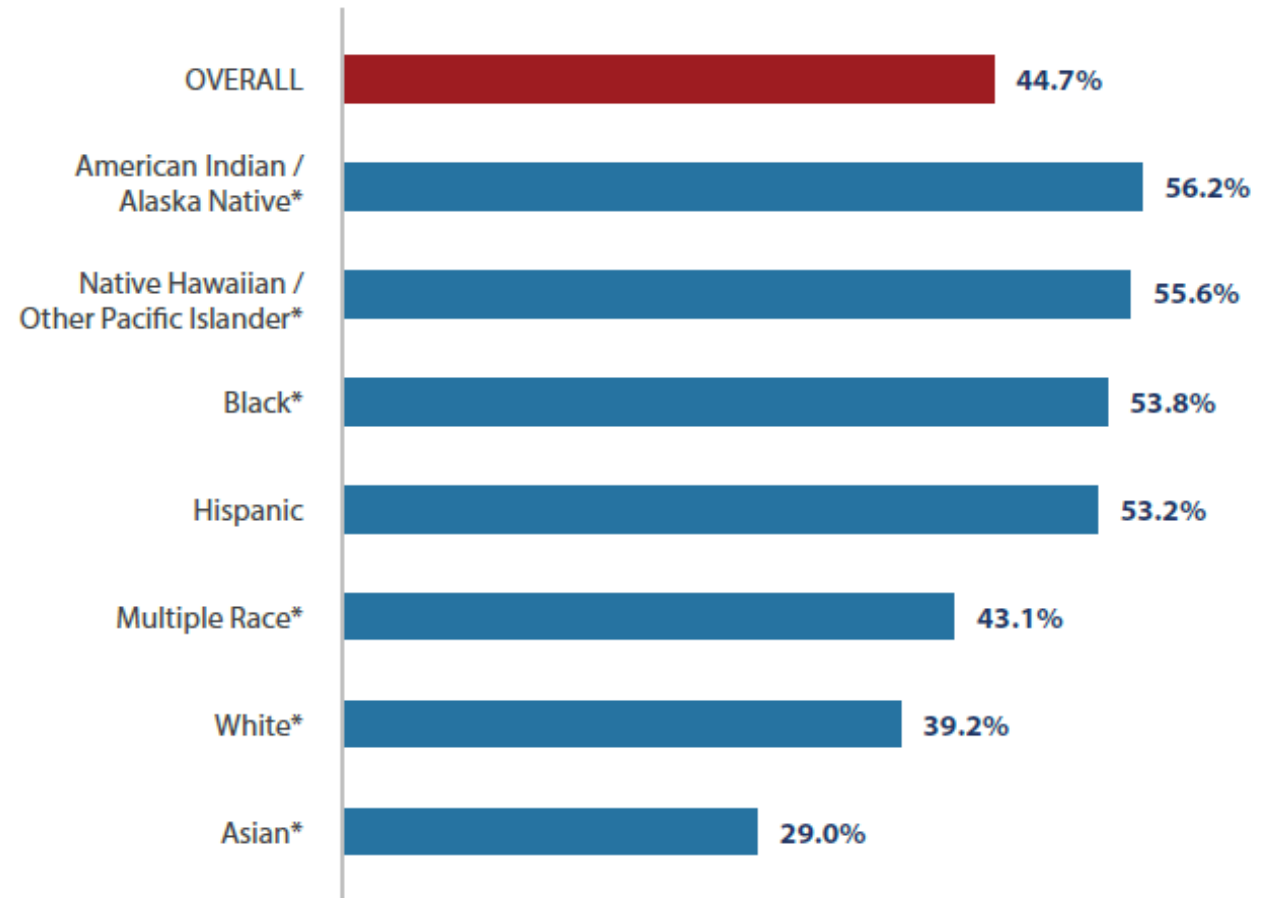


Family Income and Lifetime Material Hardship among Children

- ✓ In 2022, nearly 1 in 5 (18.5%) U.S. children ages 0-17 lived in families with income below the poverty level, and another 1 in 5 (19.7%) children lived in families with income 100-199% of the poverty level (data not shown). 1All references to household income and poverty levels refer to past year (2021) income. This is because respondents to the 2022 NSCH reported about income in the prior calendar year. In 2021, the poverty level for a family of four with two children was \$27,479.

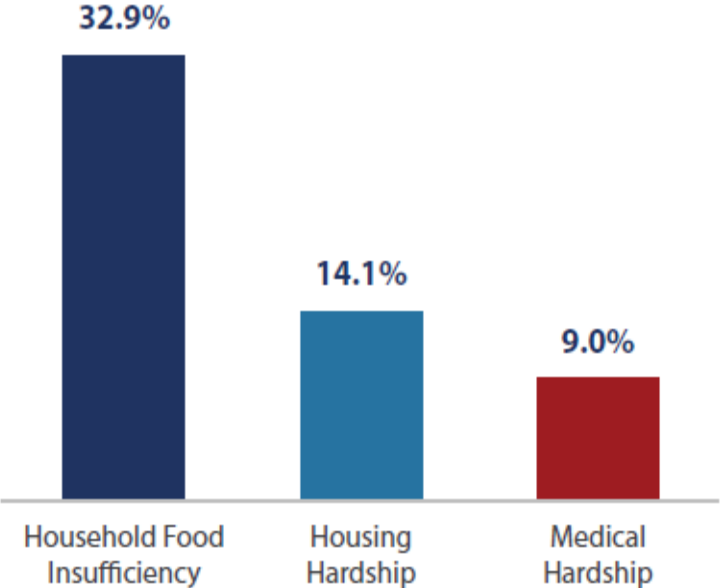
Proportion of children who have experienced material hardship in their lifetime, by race and ethnicity, 2022

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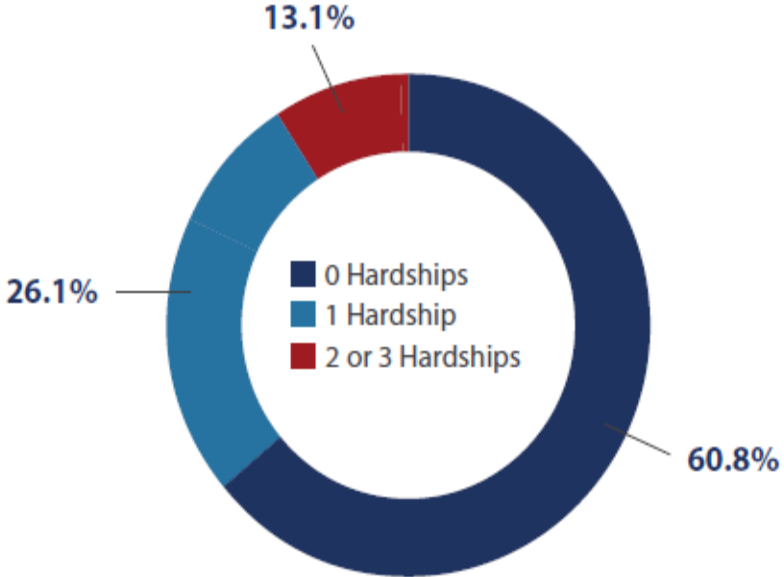


RECENT FOOD, HOUSING, AND MEDICAL-RELATED HARDSHIPS

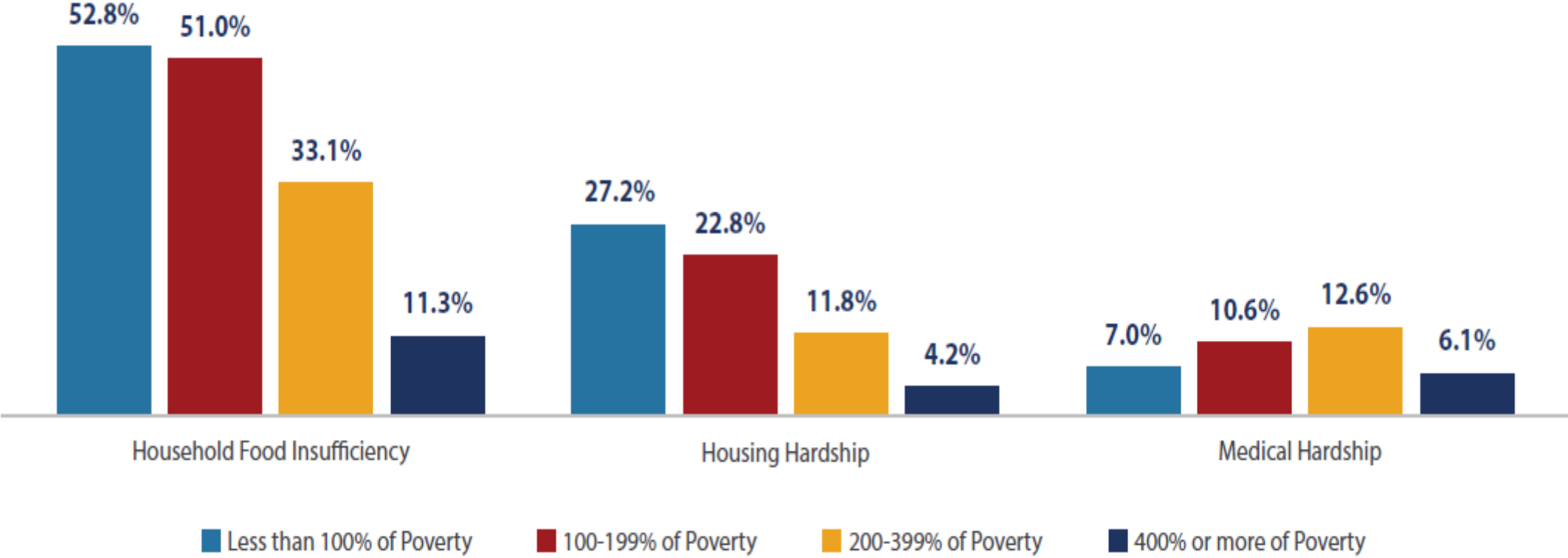
Proportion of children who experienced household food insufficiency, housing hardship, and medical hardship in the past 12 months, 2022



Proportion of children experiencing 0, 1, or 2-3 material hardships in the past 12 months, 2022



HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSUFFICIENCY, HOUSING HARDSHIP, AND

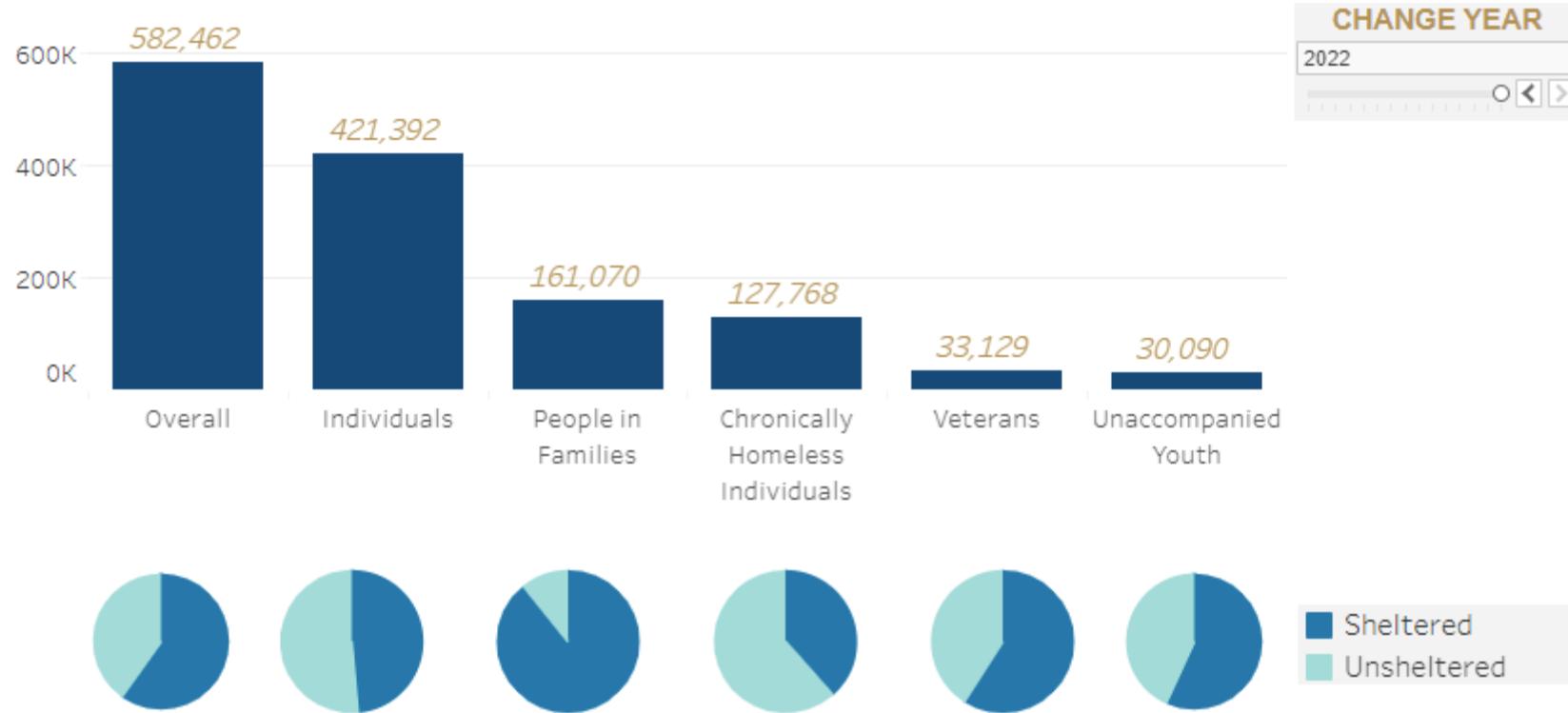


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NUMBERS

Total Number of People Experiencing Homelessness per Year by Type, 2007–2022



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR). Note: The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted data collection in 2021 so data for that year is unavailable.



THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT

The definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act includes children and youth who lack a nighttime residence, that is:

- ✓ A "fixed nighttime residence" is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.
- ✓ A "regular nighttime residence" is used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis.
- ✓ An "adequate nighttime residence" sufficiently meets the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

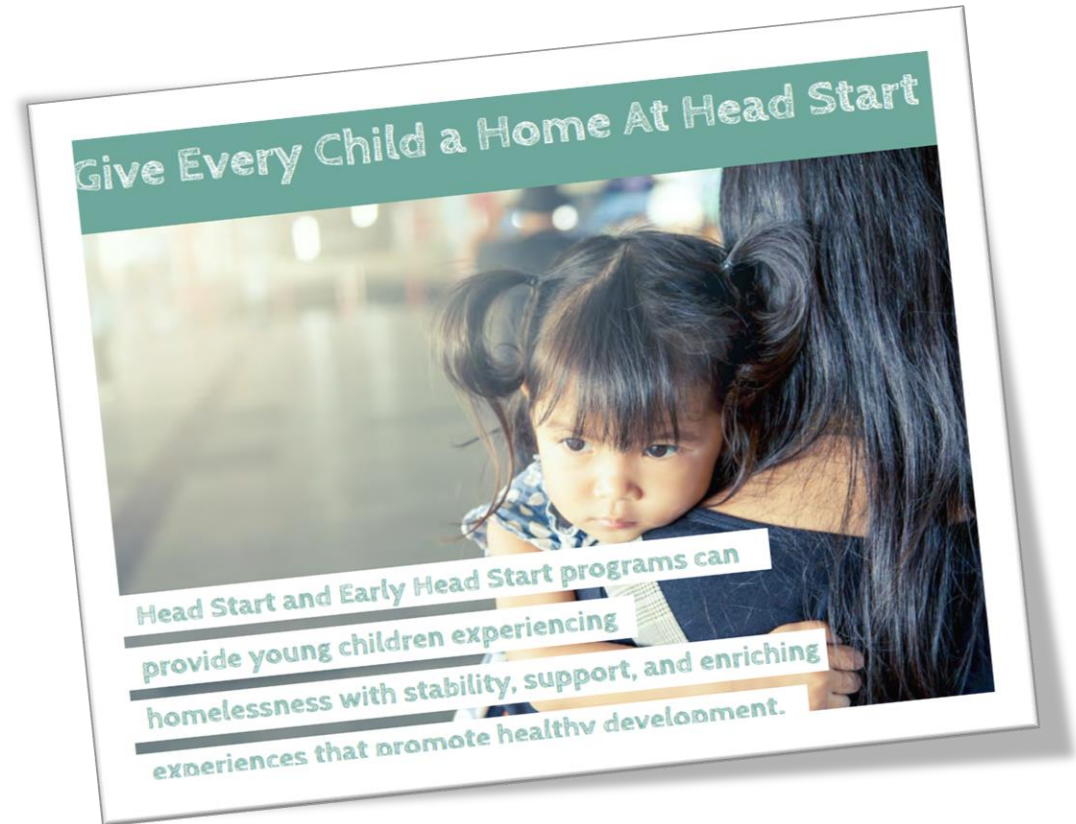


LANGUAGE MATTERS

Experiencing homelessness

Unhoused

Displaced



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STEPS FOR DETERMINING A FAMILY'S SITUATION

1. Prepare for conversations with families.
2. Learn about each family and their living situation.
3. Analyze the family's situation to see if it meets the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless."
4. Use your program's policy and procedures to follow up with parents regarding eligibility for services.



STEP 1: PREPARE FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH FAMILIES

- ✓ Review and understand the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless."
- ✓ Learn more about the effects of homelessness/hardship on children and families.
- ✓ Adopt a strengths-based approach toward all families.
- ✓ Develop and use active listening skills that demonstrate compassion and respect.
- ✓ Reflect on the family's perspective and be sensitive to their feelings.
- ✓ Reflect on personal or professional experiences that may impact your practice.
- ✓ Talk with a peer or supervisor about your questions or concerns.



STEP 2: LEARN ABOUT THE FAMILY AND THEIR LIVING SITUATION

- Talk with the family in a quiet, private space.
- Share your commitment to problem-solving with the family.
- Show respect by conveying that you see the parents as the experts on their family.
- Develop and apply active listening skills that demonstrate compassion and respect.
- Be conversational so that families do not feel interrogated.



STEP 3: ANALYZE THE FAMILY'S SITUATION



STEP 4: FOLLOW UP WITH FAMILIES



*Time for
a break!*



Creating a Welcoming Environment

Stay Connected to Families

Family Partnerships



“Compassionate Connections: Understanding and Supporting Families Facing Challenges”



REFLECTIONS



Head Start Regional TTA Network

<https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>

[Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness for Early Childhood Professionals \(hhs.gov\)](#)

https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/det_elig.pdf

[Connecting with Partners Planning Worksheet \(hhs.gov\)](#)

[Reflection and Planning Tool for Partnering with Families Experiencing Homelessness \(hhs.gov\)](#)

<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/data-research/nsch-data-brief-2022-material-hardship.pdf>



