REPORT OF
THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN

TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 52

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1998

January 8, 1998

TO: The Honorable George F. Allen, Governor of Virginia

and

Members of the Virginia General Assembly

The 1997 General Assembly, through House Joint Resolution 524, requested that the Virginia Commission on Youth "be directed to study the educational needs of homeless children."

Enclosed for your review and consideration is the report which has been prepared in response to this request. The Commission received assistance from all affected agencies and gratefully acknowledges their input into this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas M. Jackson, Jr.
Chairman

From the Virginia House of Delegates

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Eric I. Cantor
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From the Senate of Virginia

Mark L. Earley, Vice Chair
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Gubernatorial Appointments
from the Commonwealth at Large

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I. Authority for Study

§ 9-292 of the *Code of Virginia* establishes the Commission on Youth and directs it to "...study and provide recommendations addressing the needs of and services to the Commonwealth's youth and their families." § 9-294 provides the Commission the power to "...undertake studies and gather information and data in order to accomplish its purposes...and to formulate and present its recommendations to the Governor and members of the General Assembly."

The 1997 General Assembly enacted House Joint Resolution 524 requesting the Commission on Youth to conduct a study examining the educational needs of homeless children in the Commonwealth. The study resolution further directed the Commission to identify the barriers to service for this population and to develop recommendations to respond to those barriers. In fulfilling its legislative mandate, the Commission undertook the study.

II. Members Appointed to Serve

The authorizing legislation required the Commission on Youth to study the educational needs of homeless children. The Commission divided into three subcommittees for the purposes of conducting the studies assigned to them by the 1997 General Assembly Session. HJR 524 was assigned to the Services Subcommittee, which received the briefings from Commission staff in the summer and fall of 1997. The recommendations of the Subcommittee were forwarded to the full Commission at its December 11th legislative meeting and approved at that time. The members of the Services Subcommittee are:

Del. Jerrauld C. Jones (Norfolk), Subcommittee Chair
Sen. Mark L. Earley (Chesapeake), Subcommittee Vice Chair
Sen. Yvonne B. Miller (Norfolk)
Del. Eric I. Cantor (Henrico)
Del. R. Creigh Deeds (Bath)
Del. Phillip Hamilton (Newport News)
Ms. Norma M. Clark (Virginia Beach)
Ms. Michelle Harris (Norfolk)

III. Executive Summary

The HJR 524 workgroup met five times over the course of the study. Workgroup members reviewed national evaluations of the McKinney Act and literature on the study topic. They also developed, disseminated, and analyzed surveys and interviews with providers of homeless and educational services. As a result of these activities, the workgroup discovered that day care and after-school care needs for homeless children are not consistently met across the state. The absence of alternative care results in further

isolation of the child and the parents' inability to sustain employment. School districts are attempting to meet the educational needs of the homeless through their at-risk initiatives, but are usually not familiar with how to identify homeless students or with what constitutes best practice in responding to their needs. Lastly, the workgroup found fragmentation between the human service agencies and local schools and within the schools' at-risk programming. This fragmentation hinders providers' ability to identify and assess the service needs of homeless students, as well as to access the appropriate services in the school or community.

The Services Subcommittee of the Commission on Youth received three briefings on the workgroup activities and findings. On the basis of these findings, the Commission on Youth makes the following eight recommendations in three areas: day care, educational services, and community-wide responses.

The first three recommendations address the goals of providing alternative caregiving arrangements to homeless children, exposing them to early childhood education so they reach kindergarten ready to learn, and freeing their parents up from child care responsibilities so they are able to find and maintain employment.

Recommendation 1
Increase accessibility of pre-school and after-school care programs for homeless children.

Recommendation 2
Request the Commission on Early Childhood and Child Day Care Programs to work with private care providers to create incentives to provide pre- and after-school services to homeless children.

Recommendation 3
Develop a day care respite initiative with the faith community through the Department of Social Services' Division of Volunteerism.

The next set of recommendations addresses the need to increase local schools' awareness of and responsiveness to homeless students. Emphasis is placed on including homeless students in current at-risk educational initiatives.

Recommendation 4
Increase awareness of the presence and needs of homeless students through the inclusion of homelessness as a risk factor in existing Department of Education at-risk initiatives.

Recommendation 5
Disseminate to all local school division training materials on the identification of homeless students and how to assess and address their needs.

Recommendation 6
Provide state funding support for the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Education Project.

The last two recommendations speak to the need to improve coordination and collaboration between the educational and human service providers.

Recommendation 7
Provide in-depth training, at the request of local school divisions, on best practices for the identification of and intervention with homeless students.

Recommendation 8
Request the Department of Social Services to make explicit mention of the homeless' eligibility for services under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in their staff training on Welfare Reform.

IV. Study Goals and Objectives

On the basis of the requirements of HJR 524, the following study goals were developed by staff and the study workgroup and approved by the Commission on Youth:

A. Conduct an assessment of barriers to school enrollment for homeless students;

B. Analyze the current scope of activity on the part of local school divisions to identify and educate homeless students;

C. Determine the availability of day care and after-school care availability for homeless children; and

D. Review strategies for school personnel to identify and provide services to homeless students.

In order to meet the study goals, the following objectives were established:
1. Review the literature to identify the barriers to the enrollment and achievement of educational success of homeless students in Virginia;
2. Review data on students in Virginia served by the 1996 and 1997 grant recipients of the Stewart B. McKinney Act Homeless Education Project;
3. Identify and review national evaluations of the Homeless Education provisions of the McKinney Act;
4. Identify local program models serving homeless students and analyze salient components for replication;
5. Solicit comments from school divisions regarding their perceptions of barriers to the enrollment and education of homeless students in Virginia;
6. Survey homeless shelter providers on day care accessibility;
7. Interview homeless shelter residents on their day care needs; and
8. Analyze survey results of questionnaire developed by the Department of Housing and Community Development for recipients of Child Care for the Homeless Program funds.

In order to respond to the study mandate, a workgroup of professional and lay persons was established. Represented in the workgroup were the following organizations:

- Virginia Departments of Education, Housing and Community Development, and Social Services;
- Arlington, Loudoun, and Portsmouth school divisions' Pupil Personnel or Student Services;
- Charlottesville and Roanoke homeless shelter service providers;
- Coordinators of the McKinney Act Homeless Education Project at the College of William and Mary;
- Albemarle County local service at-risk grants coordinator; and the
- Council of Mid-Atlantic Presbyterian Church.

A complete listing of the workgroup membership is provided in Appendix B.

The workgroup met five times between April and December 1997. The activities of the workgroup were:

1. Developing a research methodology to collect quantitative data for the study, including developing and approving sampling techniques, survey and interview instruments;
2. Conducting telephone interviews with selected school divisions;
3. Researching current educational initiatives for at-risk students;
4. Analyzing and summarizing the barriers to educational achievement for homeless students;
5. Reviewing the data findings from the shelter surveys, telephone interviews and secondary analysis from the Child Care for the Homeless Program;
6. Developing briefing packets for the Commission on Youth Services Subcommittee;
7. Reviewing the findings from the McKinney Act Homeless Education Project's statewide survey; and
8. Developing recommendations to address the educational needs of homeless students.

A. QUANTITATIVE

The HJR 524 study resolution delineated three areas of concern: (i) assessment of barriers to school enrollment, (ii) determination of day care needs and accessibility; and (iii) training needs of school personnel. In response to the study mandate, a three-prong approach for data collection was developed: first, a survey was sent to shelter and transitional living program providers serving minor children to assess their day care and after-school needs and the providers' perceptions of the barriers to accessing care; second, a telephone survey was conducted with local school divisions on their practices in identification and service provision to homeless students; and, last, a secondary data analysis was conducted using service needs reported by shelters receiving Child Care for the Homeless Program funds.

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1. Shelter Survey

A survey was developed which asked shelter and transitional living program providers for information in five areas: 1) estimated number of minor children served in the last year; 2) their clients' ages; 3) their clients' experiences securing day care and/or after-school care; 4) providers' assessment of the barriers to receiving care; and 5) the impact lack of day care and after-school services has had on their clients. Care was taken to insure that the survey would not require specific data from the respondents. The information requested called for few subjective judgments, and responses could be based on information which shelters and transitional living programs had readily available. A copy of the survey instrument is provided as Appendix C.

To identify those programs which should receive the survey, Commission staff developed a roster of shelters (both domestic violence and homeless), transitional living programs and safehouses serving minor children. The source of this list was the 1997 Report on the Study of the Needs of Homeless Children, House Document 37. Additional contacts were made with the field to note changes in source providers which were incorporated into the dissemination list. It was decided not to survey the 30 programs receiving Child Care for the Homeless Program (CCHP) funds from the Department of Housing and Community Development for the purchase of child care and after-school care for their clients. This decision was based on the assumption that programs receiving designated funding for child care would have experiences and perceptions about the accessibility of services which differed from other programs. Ultimately, Commission staff disseminated the survey to 67 programs providing either shelter or transitional living services to minor children.

The Commission received responses from 43 of the 67 programs receiving surveys, for a response rate of 64%. Of these 43 respondents, 14 were domestic violence shelters, 22 represented homeless shelters, 2 were safehomes, and 5 were transitional living programs. A thorough analysis of the survey findings is provided in Section VII of this report.

2. School Division Interviews

The second quantitative method examined how schools identify and serve homeless students. Commission staff developed a stratified sample of school divisions based on fall 1996 school enrollment. Workgroup members helped design a brief telephone survey instrument for use with school division staff responsible for services for at-risk students. Care was taken that the instrument requested information which was easily accessible to respondents and which would allow the Commission to capture the uniqueness of each school division's service delivery system.

Because every locality experiences homelessness, the workgroup sought to develop a sampling strategy which would capture the activities of school divisions of every size in Virginia. The Department of Education provided a list of school divisions by student enrollment. These were then stratified into divisions of 1,000 based on fall 1996 school enrollment.

Removed from the list of school divisions considered for the population sample were the 17 school divisions receiving McKinney Act funds designated to facilitate the enrollment and academic success of homeless children. (This list is shown as Chart 2.) Profiles of current McKinney Act grant recipients are provided in Appendix F.

Commission staff ultimately selected 16 school divisions representing 18% of the total school population. The listing of school divisions in the sample, their student enrollment, and percent of the strata represented is listed in Chart 1.

Chart 1

**School Division Sample
for Telephone Interviews**

Division	Division Size	% of Strata
Highland	< 1,000	10
Rappahannock & Sussex	1,000 - 2,000	09
Martinsville, Buckingham & Northampton	2,000 - 3,000	26
Scott	3,000 - 4,000	10
Wythe	4,000 - 5,000	10
Mecklenburg	5,000 - 6,000	14
Williamsburg	6,000 - 8,500	11
Bedford & Frederick	8,500 - 11,000	22
Spotsylvania	11,000 - 18,000	20
Newport News	31,448	na
Prince William	48,333	na
Chesterfield	49,781	na

A copy of the survey instrument, along with a letter inviting recipients to contribute to the survey effort, was sent to participating school divisions in June 1997. Four workgoup members and Commission staff were each responsible for three telephone interviews, all of which were conducted in August and September. A copy of the telephone survey instrument is reprinted in Appendix D. The result of those contacts with the schools is provided in Section VII.

Chart 2

McKinney Act
1997 Virginia Grant Recipients

School Division	Division Population
Radford (City)	1,539
Floyd County	1,931
Giles County	2,565
King George County	2,829
Pulaski County	5,160
Culpeper	5,247
Petersburg	6,181
Montgomery	9,118
Lynchburg	9,506
Roanoke	13,260
Arlington	17,546
Portsmouth	17,845
Hampton	23,980
Richmond	27,083
Norfolk	36,389
Virginia Beach	76,677
Fairfax County	143,260

3. Child Care for the Homeless Program Survey Analysis

The last quantitative data activity was the Commission on Youth staff review of surveys completed by the 30 recipients of CCHP funds. These surveys, which were the product of a spring 1997 mailing by the Department of Housing and Community Development, asked grantees about their experiences with the administration of the funds and the impact of funding on clients. Section VII provides an overview of this analysis.

B. QUALITATIVE

In addition to the data collection activities outlined above, Commission staff and workgroup members were involved in the analysis of various statewide and local models targeted at homeless and other at-risk students. The group reviewed the program profiles for school divisions receiving McKinney Act Homeless Education Project funds over the past three years and identified commonalties of their program design and placement within local school divisions' administrative structures. A review of statewide education initiatives serving at-risk youth was conducted to assess the applicability of these initiatives to the needs of the homeless student population. Federal and state regulations affecting day care for low-income persons were cross-referenced to identify eligibility requirements for funding. Lastly, national reports summarizing the impact of McKinney Act funding were read to ascertain how Virginia's experience compared to other states'.

VI. Background

A. DEFINING THE POPULATION AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

> When looking at the issue of homelessness from the perspective of education, there seems to be little that can be done to significantly impact the problem because the immediate solution will come only through the provision of adequate affordable housing. Yet, if we fail to do what we can about educating homeless children, then, as a nation, we may forfeit our opportunity to make a dramatic difference in the lives of hundreds, thousands, or hundreds of thousands of children and youth.
>
> "Making the Grade: Successes and Challenges in Educating Homeless Children and Youth" 1996 Position Document of the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Homeless children may be runaways or part of a homeless family. They may be served in short-term homeless, domestic violence or runaway shelters, doubled up in accommodations, or needing to seek temporary shelter in campgrounds or public buildings. They are part of every urban, suburban, or rural landscape in Virginia.

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, children are the fastest growing sub-group of the homeless. While the percentage of minors within the homeless population varies from state to state, most studies cite the proportion of children to the general homeless population to be between 15 and 25%. According to the U.S. Department of Education's 1995 estimate, nationally there are approximately 750,000 homeless school-age children.[1] There is, however, no one data source which precisely captures the number of homeless children nationally or in the state. The data which does exist counts only those receiving services in shelters or who have been arrested for running away. There are no counts of children who do not avail themselves of services or who are turned away for lack of shelter space. Many of the chronically homeless may be duplicated in service counts, as undoubtedly there are homeless children who have been served within the same year by both homeless and domestic violence shelters. However, statistics verify that almost as many people are turned away for lack of space as are served in homeless shelters. Based on the data analysis conducted by the Commission on Youth in 1996, an estimated 17,000 Virginia children are homeless each year.[2]

Few schools routinely assess the prevalence of homelessness among their students. Many homeless children, once enrolled in school, find they are behind academically. Frequent moves, poor concentration, and emotional problems create difficulties for the homeless student. Embarrassment about lacking a permanent residence, self-consciousness about clothing and living conditions, and depression all negatively impact the child's ability to learn. Lack of remedial opportunities and tutorial support create academic obstacles to homeless children. While schools often provide stability and structure for homeless children, absenteeism and frequent moves limit the child's opportunity to benefit from this stability.

The impact of homelessness on children is evidenced by their psychological development, medical needs, and academic achievement. The high rate of developmental and emotional problems of homeless infants, pre-school, and school-age children is documented in the literature. Young children are particularly susceptible to the uncertainty and chaos of homelessness. They often react to these conditions by developing delays in acquiring skills and age-appropriate behaviors.[3] In a study of Massachusetts homeless children under age five, 47% manifested at least one developmental delay and 36% evidenced language delays.[4] Like housed children living in poverty, homeless children manifested problems in attention span, sleep patterns, social interaction, and aggressiveness.[5]

In very young infants, developmental delays are seen in the lag in fine and gross motor development. As these infants age, the developmental lags are most often confined to one area, such as language. In response to the frustration and insecurity caused by homelessness, school-age children may regress in their development and mastery of new skills. Some children, feeling angry about losing their home and most of their previous emotional attachments, may become aggressive and defiant. Others perform poorly at school and become depressed.

Children who are homeless as a result of domestic violence have additional psychological stresses. Children of battered women are physically abused and neglected at a rate as much as 15 times higher than the national average.[6] Domestic violence has severe psychological effects on children, even when the children themselves are not being physically abused.[7]

The psychological impact of homelessness, coupled with the economic stress of not having a permanent fixed address, may greatly impact a child's ability to master their cognitive developmental steps and experience academic success. The educational needs of homeless children do not differ from other students, i.e., they need to be physically and emotional unencumbered by problems which affect their ability to take in information or interact in a socially acceptable matter. When they are enrolled in school, homeless children are often behind academically. They lack both school supplies and a place to do homework. Because of the handicaps they present to the educational system, i.e., developmental delays, emotional stresses, lack of permanency, and often medical as well as psychological needs, these children present unique challenges to educators.

Low-income and homeless children participate in pre-school programs at a significantly lower rate than middle or upper income children. National surveys of homeless families report that 80% of the school-age children did not have any form of schooling prior to kindergarten.[8] Although Head Start was designed to insure that low-income children attend pre-school, it serves less than 20% of all eligible children. Young children may be carried around while the parent seeks a job, receives health care, applies for aid, or searches for a new residence. Child care is rarely available in shelter settings. Sometimes shelter residents provide child care for each other on a short-term basis but with inconsistent quality. Most pre-school day care programs operate on a per-child per-

slot basis. With homeless pre-schoolers in a transient living pattern, day care programs--even if they are able to subsidize attendance--are reluctant to reserve slots for an unpredictable population. Lack of child care can easily force homeless parents to give up their jobs or job training.

A 1995 compliance report to the U.S. Congress under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act indicated that at least 18% of all school age homeless children were not attending school. Nationally, fewer than half the homeless children are reading at grade level and 43% have repeated at least one grade.[9] In comparison to New York City's non-homeless children of similar ages, homeless children are two times as likely to score lower on standardized tests, three times more likely to be placed in special education, four times as likely to drop out of school; and nine times as likely to repeat a grade.[10] Two-thirds of homeless parents did not graduate from high school.

For most runaway youth living on the street, attending school has long ceased being a part of their daily routine. The National Network for Runaway and Homeless Youth puts the dropout rate for runaway and homeless youth at over 75%.[11] Their statistics show that the last grade completed by chronic runaways is ninth grade. Street outreach programs offer preparation for the General Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.), but lack of predictable attendance makes achievement of an equivalency degree often beyond the reach of this population.

B. BARRIERS TO MEETING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Once homeless, families are often forced to leave their community to find shelter. Relocation occurs frequently in rural areas, where families lack temporary housing options. A change in the locality of residence necessitates a change in school district. Requirements for public school enrollment vary by state; however, most states require proof of residency, age, and immunizations. Some state statutes do not recognize temporary accommodations such as shelters as permanent residence for the purpose of school enrollment. Once enrolled, lack of transportation, school supplies, and a physical environment conducive to homework are formidable obstacles to the homeless child's education. The longer a child is homeless, the less meaningful the concept of homework becomes. Factors associated with homelessness--such as preoccupation with meeting basic shelter and food needs and frequent changes of address--are often impediments to educational achievement.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty has conducted national surveys annually since 1990 to measure the impact of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth component of the McKinney Act. In 1995, in a Center survey of 116 service providers, accounting for 4,500 children:

- 50% reported local school districts' residency and guardianship requirements posed a barrier to student enrollment;
- 40% reported inability to meet immunization requirements and lack of transportation remained barriers to enrollment; and

- 30% cited obtaining birth certificates and the transfer of school records to be significant barriers.[12]

The barriers to receiving an education which homeless children face fall into three primary categories:

There are <u>practical barriers</u> which families encounter in keeping their children in the original school or enrolling them in a new school. These include the required records for enrollment, transportation, money for school supplies, and after-school care. In addition, homeless parents need support to help them effectively negotiate with the local school system for the children's academic success.

There are <u>psychological and motivational barriers</u> parents and youth experience around issues of school attendance. Low self-esteem and negative experiences with their own schooling hinder homeless parents from aggressively seeking educational services for their children. Homeless students often experience developmental delays which impact their cognitive abilities. Shame, a sense of confusion, and unmet medical needs impede a homeless student's ability to learn while in the classroom.

The last set of barriers are <u>operational problems</u> local school systems experience in the identification, enrollment, and funding for educational and support services for homeless children. As school systems devote their energies to meeting educational standards, providing the ancillary services required for homeless children to be successful becomes increasingly problematic.

1. Practical Barriers

Lack of transportation is perceived as one of the greatest barriers to enrollment, attendance, and success in school for homeless children,[13] and yet it was not addressed in the original McKinney Act of 1987. Acknowledgment of the problem and requirements to address transportation needs were, however, included in the 1990 amendments to the Act. Section 722(e)(5) of the McKinney Act requires that homeless children be provided transportation services comparable to those provided other students. By federal law, a student's temporary residence in a shelter or campground does not alter the local school district's responsibility to provide transportation. Despite the federal mandate, transportation requirements remain largely a local issue.

Because state-level resources to assist local districts with transportation are limited, states have not been forceful in mandating compliance with this section of the federal law. At the local level, the McKinney Act encourages school attendance in the "school of origin" or the school district of temporary residence, but the realities of obtaining transportation to and from school are challenging at best. Student transportation can present both substantial safety and logistical problems.[14] Safety issues become a factor when students, needing to re-route their path to school from a temporary residence, must cross major highways or walk through areas of gang activity, drug traffic, and other criminal activities. Transportation for homeless students requires additional resources, as shelters are often located in non-residential areas not served by school bus routes. Some school systems

provide bus tokens for public transportation, but obtaining them often takes weeks, causing delays or gaps in school attendance.[15] Parents often lack a car or money for gasoline. Some shelters have vans, but the requirement of certified drivers and liability insurance make this an expensive and difficult process for shelters to manage.

The records required for enrollment typically include academic records from the previous school, a birth certificate, Social Security number, and immunization records. Rarely do parents have this documentation with them once they become homeless. Teenagers who are living on their own almost never have such records in their backpacks. In the past, the availability of these records constituted a major barrier to school enrollment for homeless children. More recently, states "report a high level of success in identifying and eliminating those barriers once posed by policies on residency and school records."[16] Some states have developed new policies and others have created exemptions for homeless students. Paperwork requirements can be effectively minimized when there is a staff person employed by the school system or the shelter who is designated to facilitate the enrollment process.

Section 22.1-3.1 of the *Code of Virginia* requires a copy of a pupil's birth certificate and immunization record for school enrollment. There is currently no exemption to these requirements for homeless students. By law, schools require a certified copy of the pupil's birth record or an 'affidavit which presents information sufficient to estimate with reasonable certainty the age of such child.' Immunizations serve to fight disease, and 42 states including Virginia require all students to be immunized to enroll in school.[17] As with school records, immunization records are a low priority for families without shelter, food, and other basic needs. The requirement for immunization records prior to school enrollment often means that homeless children must either delay school attendance while immunization records are retrieved or be re-immunized. Virginia has just begun a pilot in the Tidewater area for an automated child immunization tracking system. It is hoped that, with statewide implementation of the pilot (anticipated to occur in the next two years), localities will be saved the expense of subsidizing a second set of immunizations and children will be spared the risk of medical complications from unnecessary shots.

The barriers mentioned above are made more complex when parents do not know how to negotiate with the local school systems on behalf of their children and have no informed advocate to assist them. Typically, child-serving agencies are not familiar with homeless shelters and the unique problems of this population. Often homeless parents avoid contact with government agencies, particularly Child Protective Services, fearing their children will be taken from them. Domestic violence shelters, in particular, often perceive themselves to be outside the mainstream service delivery system. Fear about a child's abduction by the abusing spouse and for the safety of shelter residents have prompted domestic violence programs to develop their own in-house educational programs. These programs have lessened the incentive for domestic violence shelters to address education issues through community service providers.

Runaway shelters often feel that their residents are in a crisis situation which must be resolved prior to addressing the issue of school attendance. Runaways do not remain in the shelter very long, and school may be seen as a low-priority component of the brief treatment plan. Many homeless adolescents have already dropped out of school. For those who are not dropouts, missed days of high school create serious problems for re-entry into school or promotion. Adolescents may be the most difficult of all homeless students to enroll and the most seriously injured by out being out of school.

2. Psychological And Motivational Barriers

The head-of-household in a typical homeless family is a young, single woman without a high school diploma or substantial work experience. There is a 50% chance that she is pregnant, has most likely experienced substance abuse, is probably the victim of domestic violence and perhaps has lived in foster care as a child.[18]

The Institute for Children and Poverty found in 1995 that 71% of the homeless heads-of-household in New York City had a substance abuse history, 49% had a domestic violence history, 10% had a mental illness history, and 75% had never worked. Most homeless parents themselves have not had satisfactory school experiences. The National Coalition for the Homeless reports that two-thirds of homeless parents did not graduate from high school. Most have had no significant work experience and therefore have a limited understanding of the impact education can have on job attainment and success.

Parents who may not value education have little incentive to insure that their children's schooling is minimally disrupted during periods of homelessness. Schools may trigger feelings of low self-esteem in parents who grew up seeing school as a place of failure. These 'phobias' about school make parents reluctant to get involved with a school system to the extent necessary to overcome enrollment barriers. Further, most parents under stress feel ill-equipped to help their children with schoolwork, especially when the children have missed school and need to make up work outside school hours. There are no quiet places suitable for study and none of the required resources for homework in doubled-up living situations, campsites or shelters.

3. Operational Problems Experienced By Schools

Schools face problems in providing adequate educational and support services for homeless children. Some of these problems are created by the special needs of the homeless population. Others are reinforced, first, by laws and policies and, second, by the larger environment in which schools operate. Choices about use of limited resources must be made in light of community expectations, as well as the needs of particular groups of students.

Identification of homeless children is essential to planning services that meet their needs. Several significant problems in the identification process emerge. The use of a uniform, consistently used definition across agencies and jurisdictions is critical; yet it is not uncommon for agencies to use different labels when designing services for children. The

lack of identification of homeless students can lead to improper assessment of certain behaviors in school. Homeless students may be excluded from services based on definitional labels or their homelessness may go undetected as a result of the service category in which they are placed.

Students who have missed school may have fears of re-entry which contribute to their poor performance. They may have regressed on already-learned skills and that regression may have a powerful negative effect on learning. Inconsistent academic achievement may be interpreted by educators as lack of ability, rather than a lack of opportunity to learn. The students' frustration may be exhibited by acting out or by clinging or withdrawn behavior in the classroom.

School enrollment may be hampered by school officials seeking to enforce general policies regarding enrollment and residency, but not cognizant of federal laws related to homeless students. This lack of awareness may prove frustrating to parents seeking an education for their children. Further, parents may deny being homeless in an effort to maintain dignity. Parents' shame in acknowledging that their family is without a home prevents them from acknowledging their circumstances and availing themselves of services.

Homeless children by definition are in the midst of major life challenges. In most cases they need a higher level of support from school personnel. In many cases, they require the pro-active initiatives of local school officials to assure regular attendance and effective communication with parents and other service providers who are involved with the family. As local school personnel become overburdened with new procedures and responsibilities, they are less able to devote significant amounts of money, additional attention and energy to the needs of the homeless student.

According to a national evaluation of the effectiveness of the McKinney Act, school personnel, including teachers, secretaries, principals, and counselors, "usually have had little training for working with the problems of homeless children."[19] Homeless students present a complex set of problems often shared by other at-risk populations: poverty, academic and developmental delays, depression, aggressiveness, etc.[20] Educators may have a one-dimensional understanding of homelessness and may be unprepared for the challenges these students present. However, sensitivity on the part of the school community can provide one of the most stabilizing influences on a homeless child's life. Shaffer and Caton found in a 1984 study conducted by the New York Psychiatric Institute that 69% of the adolescents using youth shelters in New York City wished to finish high school and 41% hoped to graduate from college.[21] This motivation, against great odds to attend and finish school, represents a tremendous opportunity to help adolescents in at-risk situations that schools have not recognized or acted upon.

Virginia's public schools, like those across the nation, find themselves charged with addressing a wide variety of social issues which were once the purview of parents, the community, or community organizations. Currently the emphasis in public education is on

American students being prepared to compete with their peers in other nations. Nationwide there is a marked emphasis on strengthening academic rigor and an expectation of higher academic achievement by all children. As the struggle to obtain necessary funding and access to resources for academic programs intensifies, schools must choose between initiatives which directly impact instruction and support services that focus on "life issues" outside the school.

C. THE FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATING HOMELESS CHILDREN

In the late 1980s, de-institutionalization of the mentally ill, demolition of boarding homes, and the on-going recession prompted the 100th Congress to take a more comprehensive approach. The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was enacted in the spring of 1987. While still short-term in focus, the McKinney Act--with emphasis on emergency relief--authorized a wide range of emergency and transitional housing, primary health and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and educational and job training. With allocations of $355 million in FY 87 and $358 million in FY 88, the legislation included demonstration education projects and the first national-level attempt to quantify the number of homeless in America. While there are many components to the McKinney Act, this report addresses only the educational component of the legislation and companion budget authorizations.

1. Education

Congress initially saw homelessness as a temporary problem directly attributable to the recession. Members of Congress assumed that homelessness could be curtailed with the provision of temporary financial relief. In 1983, Congress appropriated $100 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. Through the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), appropriations were distributed annually by local community boards representing charitable organizations. The 98th Congress made it easier for the homeless to qualify for Social Security, Food Stamps, Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) and Medicaid by increasing outreach efforts and removing permanent address as an eligibility requirement.

At the time the McKinney Act was enacted, there were early indications that the demographics of the homeless were changing in that women and children represented a increasingly larger portion of the population. Congress included provisions which required states to ensure that homeless children have the same right as other children to a free and appropriate public education. In support of this policy, Congress adopted additional provisions requiring states to review and undertake steps to revise residency requirements for school attendance to ensure that homeless children did not experience delays with school enrollment. Funds were appropriated to enable states to establish or designate an Office of the Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The state coordinator was given authority to gather state specific data on homeless children and develop a state plan for their education.

In 1990, provided with the new information from data collected by the states, Congress revisited the McKinney Act. The McKinney Act (P.L. 101-645) was amended to

reinforce the policy that enrollment alone was not sufficient and that states had to promote homeless students' academic success in public school. The McKinney amendments required states to look beyond residency issues to other factors that were keeping homeless children and youth out of school. The 1990 amendment required states to review and revise all policies, practices, laws, and regulations that might be barriers to the enrollment, attendance, or academic success of homeless children. States were made responsible for assuming a leadership role in ensuring that local education agencies review and revise policies and procedures that might similarly impede the access and success of homeless children and youth.

With Congressional recognition of the need to promote the academic success of homeless students came authorization for the provision of direct educational services. Prior to passage of the 1990 amendments, states were prohibited from using McKinney funds to provide direct educational services. Today, schools that apply for and receive McKinney funds may use them to provide before- and after-school programs, tutoring programs, referrals for medical and mental health services, pre-school programs, parent education, counseling, social work services, transportation services, and other services that may not otherwise have been provided by the public school program. In furtherance of this policy, Congress increased appropriations significantly from 1987 levels.

Despite the many amendments to the Act (most significantly, the inclusion in 1990 of pre-school populations), the education goals of the Act have remained fairly constant:

The purpose of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program is to ensure that all homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, provided to other children and youth.

U.S. Department of Education, 1990

Congress amended the McKinney Act again in 1994 as part of its re-authorization of the Improving America's Schools Act (P.L.103-382). In this re-authorization, Congress increased the legal protections of homeless children and youth to ensure that they had greater access to the appropriate educational services provided under federal, state, and local law. States were now authorized to extend the program services to pre-school children served on sectarian property (where constitutionally permissible to do so). Categorical spending limits were eliminated to provide participating local school districts greater flexibility in developing programs to meet the educational, social, and health needs of homeless children. Congress also added provisions requiring states to ensure that school districts abide by a parent or guardian's request to enroll a homeless child in a particular school to the extent that such a request is feasible.

State McKinney Act Coordinators are responsible for identifying their states' homeless children and youth, assessing their special needs, and facilitating coordination among state and local human service and education agencies. In Virginia, the Department of Education has contracted out the coordination and oversight of the state's compliance with the McKinney Act to the College of William and Mary.

In developing plans for the state's improvement of their educational efforts with homeless children, the federal law offers the following definitions:

- *Child or youth:* means those persons including pre-school-age children who, were they children of residents of the State, would be entitled to a free, appropriate education.
- *Free, appropriate education:* means the educational programs and services that are provided to the children of a resident of a state and that are consistent with state school attendance laws.
- *Homeless individual:* an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- *Children and youth in transitional or emergency shelters:* States should consider these children and youth to be homeless until an agency places them in a foster home or in a home for neglected children or youth.
- *Children and youth living in trailer parks and camping grounds:* States should consider them homeless if they lack adequate living conditions. If they live there on a long-term basis, the state should not consider them homeless.
- *Doubled-up children and youth:* If children and youth are sharing housing because of a loss of housing, they should be considered homeless.
- *Foster children and youth:* They are *not* considered homeless unless children are in foster care due to a lack of shelter space.
- *Incarcerated children and youth:* States should *not* consider them as homeless unless the state places them in an institution because no other place for them to live exists.
- *Migratory children and youth:* States should *only* consider them homeless if they are residing in places not fit for habitation.
- *Runaways:* States should consider children or youth who have run away from home as homeless regardless of whether or not their parents have provided or are willing to provide a home for them.
- *School-age unwed mothers:* If they live in homes for unwed mothers and lack other available living quarters, states *should* consider them homeless.
- *Sick or abandoned children and youth:* States *should* consider them homeless if they remain in hospitals due to abandonment by their families because they have no other place to live.
- *Throwaways:* Those whose parents/guardians do not permit to live at home are considered homeless if they live on the streets, in shelters, or in transitional or inadequate accommodations.

Obviously, the federal definition of homelessness is far more expansive than Virginia's, where foster care, institutionalized, and hospitalized children are not considered homeless.

Since the inception of the McKinney Act, there have been many amendments to the legislation in response to the concerns of advocates and the evaluative research conducted on the funded programs. The impact of subsequent amendments has been adapted from the National Association of State Coordinators' 1996 Position Document to Congress for presentation in Chart 3, which follows.

Chart 3

Effects of the McKinney Act
1990-1996

Issue	Amendments to McKinney Act	Results as of 1995
Failure to meet school districts' residency requirements	Requires states to review and revise law and policies to eliminate residency requirements as an obstacle to school enrollment. (1987)	▪ Majority of states have enacted legislative reform to remove residency requirement for homeless students ▪ Shelter providers view residency requirement as minor barrier to school enrollment
Inability to produce prior school records, immunization records and birth certificates	Schools must maintain any records ordinarily kept required by the General Education Act. (1990)	▪ Majority of homeless students are able to enroll without the previous school records ▪ Shelter providers rank transfer of school records as a significant enrollment barrier
Schools enrollment denied or delayed for homeless students who do not reside with a parent or a legal guardian in the district	States are required to address problems related to guardianship issues. (1990)	▪ Most states report guardianship requirements remain a hindrance to school enrollment. ▪ Concern over liability is primary impediment to overcoming guardianship issues.
Lack of transportation	States are required to address transportation problems. (1990)	▪ Majority of the states report transportation remains one of the three top barriers.
Immunization requirements prohibit non-immunized students from enrollment	In their review of laws and policies, consideration given to immunization requirements. (1990)	▪ 42 states require immunization as condition of enrollment; issue remains a major barrier.
Mobility of population prevents student evaluations for specialized programs.	Requires homeless students to be provided services comparable to other students served by the school. (1990)	▪ Significant number of homeless students have limited access to Title I. ▪ Service providers consider lack of evaluation for homeless students a problem.
Attendance rate among homeless approximately 69% in 1989	No specific amendment	▪ Attendance rate for homeless students in 1995 was 86%.

Source: Commission on Youth Analysis of NASCEHCY 1996 Position Document to Congress "Making the Grade: Successes and Challenges in Educating Homeless Children and Youth", 1997

In 1989, a group of state education officials formed the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NASCEHCY) to focus on the educational needs of homeless children. Members of this organization are state officials responsible for implementing the portions of the McKinney Act related to the education of homeless children and youth.

To determine the extent of progress made by states since Congress enacted the McKinney Act, NASCEHCY conducted studies in 1995 and 1996. The results of the studies were mixed. On the positive side, there was evidence that states and their localities have removed many barriers that had earlier prevented homeless children from attending school. For example, in 1995 the average attendance rate for identified homeless children was 66% higher than in 1987. On the negative side, the studies showed that other barriers continue to inhibit many homeless children's receiving the kind of education enjoyed by their peers. For example, barriers connected to guardianship, immunization, and transportation remain as obstacles for homeless youth.

2. Day Care

In the early 1980's, federal government followed the trend in reducing funding support for day care programs for low-income families. By the end of the 1980's, the only significant source of federal funds for day care services was targeted at AFDC (Aid for Dependent Children) welfare recipients.[22] Adult AFDC recipients receiving approved education or training or involved in work activities were eligible for day care assistance.

The federal government's role in the funding of day care services has gradually increased over the last decade. In the 1990's the federal government began providing day care subsidy to low-income families which were not welfare recipients. Prior to 1997 there were two forms of federal financial support for day care services. ADFC and low-income family day care funding required a 50% match from the states. The second form of funding--provided through the Child Care and Development Block Grants--did not require a match from either state or local government. Allocations were capped for each state based on a federal formula. From 1992 through 1996, the federal allocation for day care services for both AFDC recipients and other low-income families has increased significantly--from $17.3 to $38.4 million. During this period Virginia was allocated a total of $76.5 million in federal funds.[23]

With the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, the federal government enacted significant policy and funding changes in day care. Most of the federal funding was placed in into the Child Care and Development Block Grant which capped the amount of funds available for each state to use. Funding for the Block Grant was placed in two broad categories: mandatory and matching funds. Mandatory funds do not require a state or local match. However, to access the federal matching funds, the state must obligate all their mandatory funds by the close of the fiscal year and expend a level of state funding equal to their federal FY 94 state share. Once the state meets these expenditure requirements, it is eligible to receive additional federal dollars based on a 50% match rate. With respect to the state and federal government role in funding day care services for homeless children, designated funding for the population has come in the form of a "carve out" of the Child Care and Development Block Grant funds. For the past four years, these funds have been made available to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development for awards to homeless and domestic violence shelters. For FY 97, $300,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funds has been set aside specifically for child care subsidies to assist families who

are in transitional housing or homeless or domestic violence shelters. This initiative provides stipends to residents for the purchase of child care services in the community.

D. VIRGINIA'S RESPONSE TO EDUCATING HOMELESS CHILDREN.

This report will examine three components of the Commonwealth's response to educating homeless students: participation in the McKinney Act; state-sponsored at-risk initiatives in the education; and day care initiatives. While not an exhaustive overview, these three areas are the most relevant to the educational needs of homeless children.

1. Virginia Homeless Education Project

The Virginia Homeless Education Project is a federal grant authorized by the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Administered by the College of William and Mary through a contractual arrangement with the state Department of Education, Project HOPE has been established within William and Mary's College of Education. The project goals are to facilitate the enrollment and academic success of homeless students. Local school divisions are awarded funds through a competitive grant process. The project funds school and community activities through the year, including remedial summer school. On average, 14 to 16 school divisions receive funds annually. An overview of the funding history is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Virginia Homeless Education Project
Funding History 1990-1997

Year	No. Localities	Total $$$
1990	·	84,373
1991	·	135,054
1992	7	485,728
1993	6	422,197
1994	15	386,954
1995	16	418,374
1996	17	331,441

Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of Data provided by the College of William and Mary Project HOPE Office, 1997

In addition to working with the individual school divisions, the project provides statewide training and technical assistance to local educational authorities on the identification and delivery of educational services to the homeless student population. Appendix F shows a profile of the current educational activities of McKinney Act grantees.

2. Virginia's Educational Initiatives for At-Risk Students

In many ways the issues faced by homeless students are the same as those confronted by other at-risk youth populations. Communities beset by poverty, violence, and instability tend to be those where students have a harder time experiencing academic success. Family demographics of the at-risk student population, which are characterized by a single head of household, low educational achievement by the mother, and economic stresses, are shared by families of homeless students. The agreed-upon indicators for academic failure, i.e., poverty, low attachment to community institutions, family dysfunction and economic stress, are also experienced by the homeless students. Over the last five years, Virginia has made a substantial commitment to funding services for at-risk students. In establishing and funding these programs, the General Assembly has used the participation in free lunch programs and scores on standardized test scores to identify the prevalence of at-risk students in the school district. In the distribution of funds either by competitive grant awards or through a distribution formula, the Department of Education provides additional guidance for the eligibility criteria of selected at-risk programs.

An overview of the larger state-supported at-risk initiatives is provided in Chart 4. This chart does not include programs which are primarily federally funded, such as Title I or Migrant Education Grants. The federal government has historically been the primary funding source for educational services for the general and at-risk student populations. The exclusion of federal funding programs from the chart was based on an acknowledgment that, compared to the flexibility afforded by state-sponsored initiatives, states have relatively little or no ability to amend eligibility of federal programs.

Every school division in Virginia participates in at least one program for at-risk students. As would be expected, in those communities where there is a higher concentration of poverty, there is increased funding for remedial and at-risk initiatives. As will be discussed in the following section, most school divisions are creative in their use of these funds and, within the eligibility criteria established for each specific program, try to reach all of those students identified at the division level as being at-risk.

3. Virginia's Day Care Initiatives

The state submitted its Child Care and Development Block Grant plan to the federal government in July of 1997. This plan outlines the state's objectives for the allocation of funds for day care support for families who receive public assistance, who are transitioning off welfare, or who are considered low-income families. Concern has been expressed that Virginia's plan does not adequately meet the needs of low-income families and places too much emphasis on those who are transitioning off welfare to the detriment of support for low-income families.

Chart 4

Summary of State-Sponsored Education Programs for At-Risk Students

Program Name	Program Goals	Targeted Population	Criteria of Need	FY 98 Funding
Pre-School At-Risk Four Year Olds	Reduce disparities among young children upon formal school entry and factors leading to early academic failure	At-risk 4 year olds unserved by other programs	Locally determined	$15,071,933
K-3 Reduced Classroom Size	Provide enhanced instructional attention to elementary school students	Primary grade schools	Percentage of free lunch participants	$56,730,696
SOQ Remedial Education	Improve educational achievement for students scoring in bottom quartile of statewide tests	Students scoring in bottom quartile of standardized tests	Academic testing	$32,938,998
English as a Second Language	Instruction for students for whom English is not native language	Foreign-born students	English language proficiency	$2,593,707
Remedial Summer School	Additional instruction for students failing standardized tests	Students below grade level, poor academic performance	Students scoring in bottom national quartile	$11,012,476
At-Risk Add-on	Aid to localities to fund state supported programs for students educationally at-risk	Students determined to be educationally at risk	Free lunch participants	$36,582,022
Dropout Prevention	Reduce number of students dripping out of high and middle schools	Students in grades 6-10 judged by objective criteria to be at risk of dropping out	8th grade students scoring in bottom national quartile	$12,792,545
Homework Assistance	Extended school day for at-risk students in grades 3-5	At-risk students grades 3–5	Schools with 60% of students qualifying for free lunch	$1,007,190
Truancy/Safe Schools	Improved identification of truants through local coordination of services and provision of alcohol and drug education	Elementary and middle schools	Low attendance rates based on four year trend	$1,945,253
Early Intervention Reading Initiative	Early diagnosis and research-based intervention to counteract reading deficient	Primary school students demonstrating deficiencies based on kindergarten and/or first grade diagnostic tests	Percentage of students eligible for free lunch	$6,227,060

* Only statewide initiatives are included; pilot sites, i.e., AVID, Project Discovery, School/Health Clinics, are not included.

Source: Commission on Youth Analysis of HB 30, Department of Education Briefing Papers, October 1997

DSS provides child care assistance to low-income working families or parents who are engaged in their search for employment or in approved training activities. These funds, totaling over $51 million, are available to families through local departments of social services. Homeless families or those individuals in transition may experience difficulty in accessing or maintaining this assistance because eligibility is based on residence. Head Start slots for homeless children are in short supply. For FY 97, $300,000 in Child Care and Development Block Grant funds have been set aside specifically for child care subsidies to assist families who are in transitional housing or domestic violence or homeless shelters. This initiative provides funds for the purchase of day care services in the community.

Historically, Virginia has not drawn down all the federal funds available to the state. The Department of Social Services (DSS) estimates that approximately $8.2 million in federal funds will not be accessed in FY 97 due to the non-availability of state and local matching funds. The amount not drawn down equals 16% of Virginia's FY 97 federal day care allocation.

VII. Findings and Recommendations

A. DAY CARE

The HJR 524 workgroup included day care issues as part of the scope of the study in acknowledgment of the importance of early childhood education to later academic success. Demographics of homeless families revealed that many of the children who are homeless in Virginia are of pre-school age. The need for day care services among homeless parents has been previously documented by the Virginia Interagency Action Council for the Homeless (VIACH). VIACH members recognized that absence of child care created obstacles to finding employment and believed that availability of day care was an important issue for the homeless community. To understand the dimensions of the problem, they conducted a survey in 1992 to determine the percentage of shelter residents who were potentially in need of child care services.

In designing the survey, VIACH convened a group of representatives from various shelters and local DSS offices. In November 1992, VIACH sent the survey to all domestic violence, homeless, and transitional shelters whose names appeared on the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) mailing list. A total of 50 completed surveys, representing a 74% response rate, were received and analyzed.

The survey responses indicated that a great need for child care services for homeless children existed. The analysis revealed that infants and adolescents had fewer care options than pre-schoolers and elementary age children. Analysis of the barriers to obtaining day care showed that lack of funds to purchase day care prevented many parents from placing their children in programs. Second, some domestic violence shelters listed safety concerns as a reason for not using community day care programs. Lack of transportation was the third most frequently cited barrier. Responses also indicated the

need for improved support services, such as psychological, educational, nutrition, and health/dental services, social services, and case management. Finally, almost 90% of the shelters identified increased funding as the key to greatly improving the child care of homeless children.[24]

For the HJR 524 study, two data research techniques were employed to explore the issue of day care. A survey of all shelters serving homeless children, but not receiving federal funds for day care, was developed and disseminated to 60 providers. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix C. A secondary analysis was conducted on the 24 shelter programs which received Child Care for the Homeless Program (CCHP) funding.

Forty three responses to the workgroup's shelter survey were received, for a 67% response rate. The break-down of respondents by type of facility is provided in Chart 5.

Chart 5

Survey Respondents by Facility Type
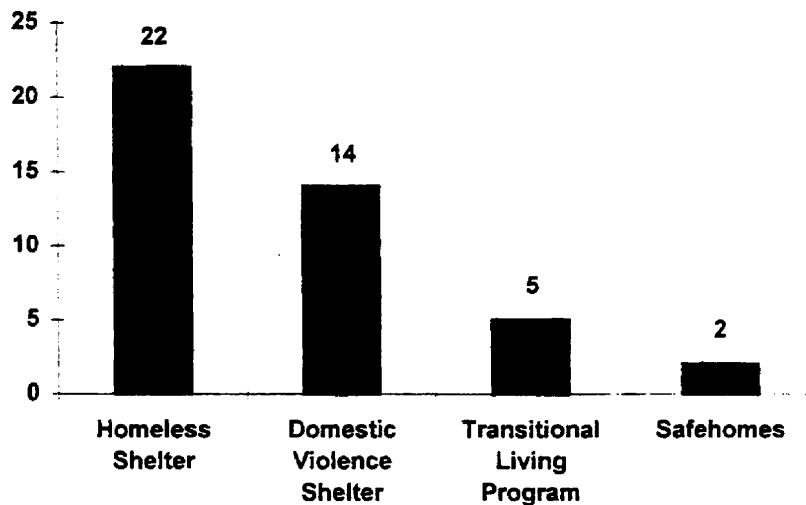
Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of Analysis of Day Care Provider Survey, October 1997

These 43 facilities reported serving a total of 3,878 children under age 18 in the last year. The number of minor children served by facility type is consistent with the findings in 1997 Report on the Study of the Needs of Homeless Children, House Document 37. Given this consistency, one can conclude with reasonable certainty that the findings from the 1997 day care provider survey are applicable to the general homeless shelter provider population. The number of children served by facility type is provided in Chart 6.

Chart 6

Number of Children Served by Facility Type
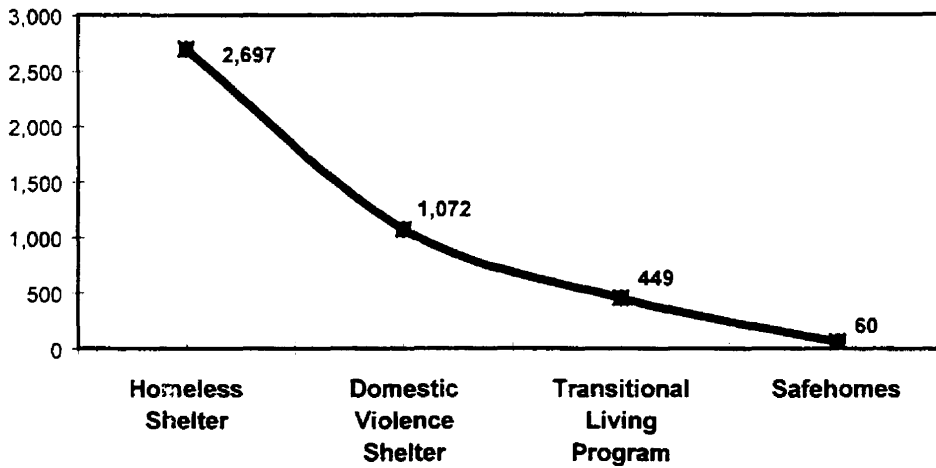
Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of Analysis of Day Care Provider Survey, October 1997

As expected, the majority of the children served were from the two areas of the state having the majority of shelters: Northern Virginia and Tidewater. The concentration of shelters parallels the relative child population and the availability of child-related services in these two regions in proportion to the other regions of the state.

Chart 7

Number of Children Served by Region
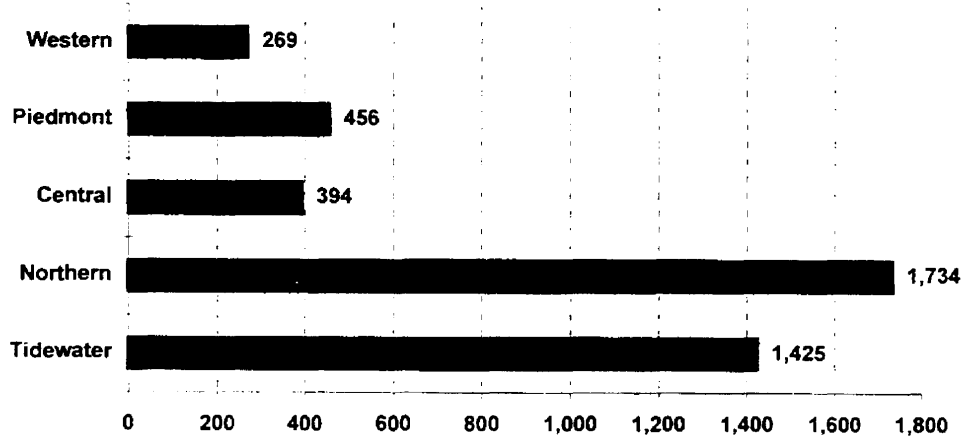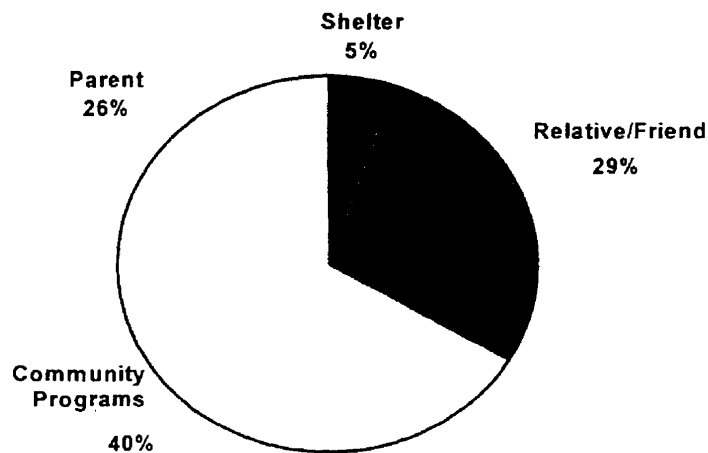

Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of Analysis of Day Care Provider Survey, October 1997

Survey respondents were asked questions about the number and ages of children served, their clients' experiences in accessing care, and the impact the absence of services had on their residents. When asked about the ages of children they had housed in their shelters, respondents were asked to estimate percentage of children five years old and younger and percentage of children age six to twelve. A total of 10% of the respondents reported that one-quarter of their population was comprised of children one month to five years; 31% reported between one-quarter and one-half of their shelters housed fell within this age range; and 6% reported that over half of their residents were these ages. In terms of older children, 15% reported less that one-quarter of the residents were between ages six and twelve years old; 19% reported between one quarter and one-half, and 20% reported that between one-half and three-quarters of the residents were elementary school age children. Of the total respondents, 91% reported that their clients needed day care services and 81% reported the need for after-school care.

A number of trends emerged in responses about the current arrangements shelter residents made for day care services. Taken as an aggregate, day care programs offered in the community accounted for only 41% of the service arrangements made for pre-school children. Parents and the shelters themselves are the providers of day care services for over 30% of the time. The situation shifts slightly when after-school care is addressed, with both community programs and parents together accounting for two-thirds of the care-taking arrangements. Shelters rarely provide after-school programming and reliance on relatives and friends decreases from 29% for day care needs to 26% for after-school care. In both cases, community programs are used less than half the time. The absence of accessible community programs for both pre-school and school-age children was noted throughout the state, but was reported at a higher frequency in Tidewater and Central Virginia. The day care arrangements for shelter and transitional residents are profiled in Chart 8.

Chart 8

Day Care Arrangements Reported by Survey Respondents

Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of Analysis of Day Care Provider Survey, October 1997

Respondents were then asked to identify the barriers to shelter residents' securing day care and after-school care for their children. Their responses are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Barriers to Receiving Services by Region

| Region	% Availability		% Funding		% Transportation	
	Day Care	After-School	Day Care	After-School	Day Care	After-School
Northern	43	50	95	95	57	55
Tidewater	57	29	100	86	100	86
Central	50	50	83	67	100	83
Piedmont	50	50	83	67	80	80
Western	50	50	100	100	75	75

Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of Analysis of Day Care Provider Survey, October 1997

The lack of available services for both age groups was reported by respondents from the Central, Piedmont, and Western regions to be the barrier in half the cases. The lack of day care services was reported to be most acute in Tidewater, with 57% of the respondents citing absence of services as a barrier. Funding was the greatest obstacle for all areas of the state. Funding for day care services appears to be a greater need than after-school services. The third biggest barrier faced was transportation. Again, for pre-school age children, transportation was problem in 100% of the cases in Tidewater and Central Virginia, averaging in the 80% range for after-school programs.

Lastly, respondents were asked to identify the impact of lack of alternative care on their residents. The three greatest effects are indicated on Chart 7. The greatest impact was in the parent's inability to secure employment. The ability of children to attend school was also reported to be affected by the absence of care. The third largest impact was the parent's inability to remain at the shelter. Many shelters close their facilities during the day or refuse to allow children to remain in the shelter without parental supervision. In those areas where no alternative care is available, a parent may be asked to choose between remaining employed and staying at the shelter. In either case, the impact of lack of alternative care arrangements is that the homeless family remains trapped in the cycle of homelessness.

Chart 9

Impact of Lack of Day Care
By Facility Type
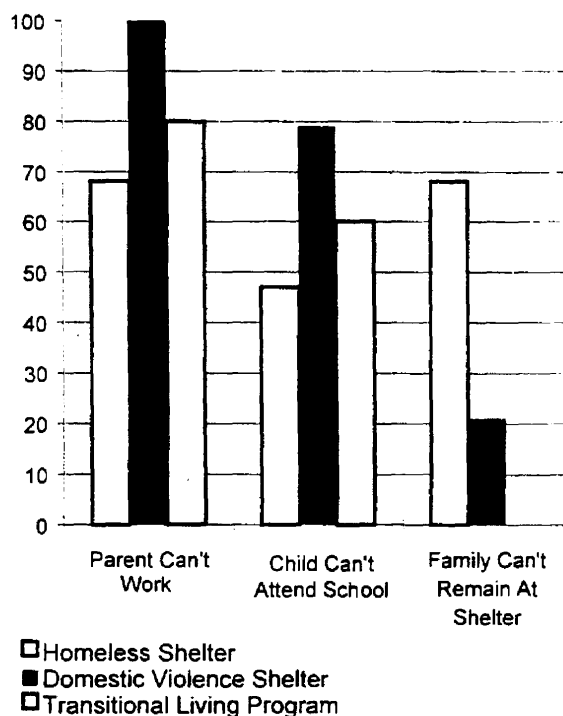
Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of Analysis of Day Care Provider Survey, October 1997

The second research methodology employed was analysis of the surveys sent to shelter providers receiving Child Care for the Homeless Program (CCHP) funds through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Of the 30 grant recipients surveyed by the DHCD in spring 1997, 24 responded. The three primary strengths of the funding cited by respondents were: 1) makes child care available for parents recovering from homelessness; 2) fills a gap for families ineligible for family assistance programs; and 3) the co-payment requirements enhance money management and self-discipline skills for parents. Cited as program limitations were lack of sufficient funds and restrictiveness of the program criteria. The latter specifically addresses the restriction on clients' use of child care grants while job hunting, applying for housing/other services, or court appearances resulting from domestic violence. There was frustration that the funding was inadequate to purchase specialized day care to meet homeless children's treatment needs. Some also voiced concern about the means by which parental co-payment was calculated. From an administrative perspective, 21% (5 of 24) reported experiencing problems with the administration of CCHP. The most often reported problems related to the paperwork required to establish co-payment for clients and the turn-around time for state reimbursement.

There was consensus that the CCHP was needed, with 71% of the respondents reporting that families who have received child care through the CCHP become more self-sufficient and are less likely to experience a recurrence of homelessness. The majority--71%--reported their grant award had decreased from FY 96 to FY 97, and 79% reported their current funding level was inadequate to meet their clients' needs. When asked how much would it take to serve all eligible clients, survey respondents reported needing an additional $243,678 in FY 97 and anticipate needing $465,700 (double the current funding levels) in FY 98.

It is clear that the CCHP responds to a need in the homeless community. However, concern about the adequacy of funding and the eligibility requirements was highlighted by survey responses. The issue of parental eligibility was discussed by the HJR 524 workgroup. The Department of Housing and Community Development operated with the understanding that the Department of Social Services (DSS) required the parent to be working or enrolled in school in order to be eligible for the day care stipend. The DSS representative on the workgroup reported that the parent is eligible if they are looking for work and can document their job search activities. The DSS was able to communicate this expanded eligibility criteria for inclusion in the FY 98 grant funding guidelines disseminated to shelters.

It is clear from these findings that day care and after-school services continue to be an unmet need among homeless families. Funding for day care programs for the homeless enjoys considerable success, although the funding level is inadequate to serve the needs identified. The bulk of state and federal day care dollars is allocated to welfare recipients and low-income day care services are currently under-funded. The workgroup therefore thought it unrealistic to recommend additional day care funding targeted to the homeless population. In deference to the current day care funding priorities, the HJR 524 study recommends instead that private providers and the faith community be approached about increasing their involvement in alternative care arrangements for homeless children. The regulatory process governing day care services for residents of homeless shelters may have created a disincentive for the faith and the private day care communities to provide day care for this unserved population. The first three recommendations are offered with the goal of offering alternative caregiving arrangements to homeless children, freeing their parents to find and maintain employment and giving the children exposure to early childhood education services so they can reach kindergarten ready to learn.

Recommendation 1
Increase accessibility of pre-school and after-school care programs for homeless children.

Recommendation 2
Request the Commission on Early Childhood and Child Day Care Programs to work with private care providers to create incentives to provide pre and after-school services to homeless children.

<u>Recommendation 3</u>
Develop a day care respite initiative with the faith community through the Department of Social Services' Division of Volunteerism.

B. LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS' RESPONSES

The College of William and Mary serves as the administrators for the McKinney Homeless Education Project in their work with local school divisions. As designated State Coordinator, William and Mary is tasked with conducting an annual count of homeless children in the state and assessing current barriers to enrollment and academic success of homeless students. In their last count (published September 30, 1997 for calendar year 1996) they identified over 13,000 homeless school age children and 5,130 pre-school students in 60 school divisions across the state.[25] In conducting their count, they asked shelters to indicate the educational arrangements made for school-age children in shelter care. As Chart 10 indicates, the majority of children were enrolled in public school; a sizable number were not enrolled in school on the day data was collected.

Chart 10

Educational Placements of Children in Shelters
on 10/30/96
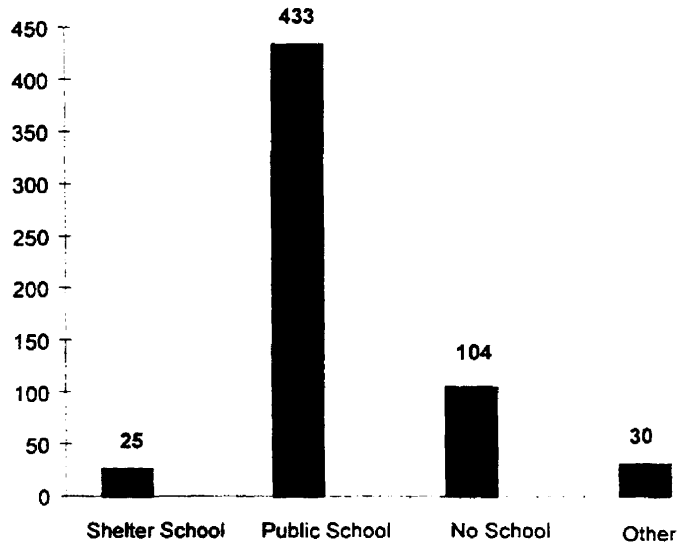
Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of William and Mary Project H.O.P.E. Working Papers, 1997

The State Coordinator's Office also asked local school districts and shelter providers about their perceptions of barriers to school enrollment for homeless children and their prioritization of needs for this population. As Charts 11 and 12 indicate, the priorities assigned by schools and shelters varied dramatically. With respect to the barriers perceived, both groups rank parental influence as the strongest influence. Obviously

30

shelters experience parental resistant to school enrollment more acutely than by schools. The lack of immunization records is the second greatest problem experienced by both the schools and the shelters. With the exception of academic and medical records, schools rate documentation issues higher than the shelters. This difference may be explained by the schools not having exposure to the student until the shelter staff has gathered the appropriate documentation to present upon enrollment.

With respect to students' needs, again, both respondents rank parenting issues as the highest. The next three highest needs cited by shelters are counseling, remedial programs, and pre-school programs. These needs contrast to those cited by school respondents, who record their next three major needs to be remedial programs, free lunches, and school supplies. For schools, counseling and case management were the next important issues, while they ranked the need for case management the lowest. This data is most helpful in illustrating the variance among these two groups of service providers in their perceptions of needs.
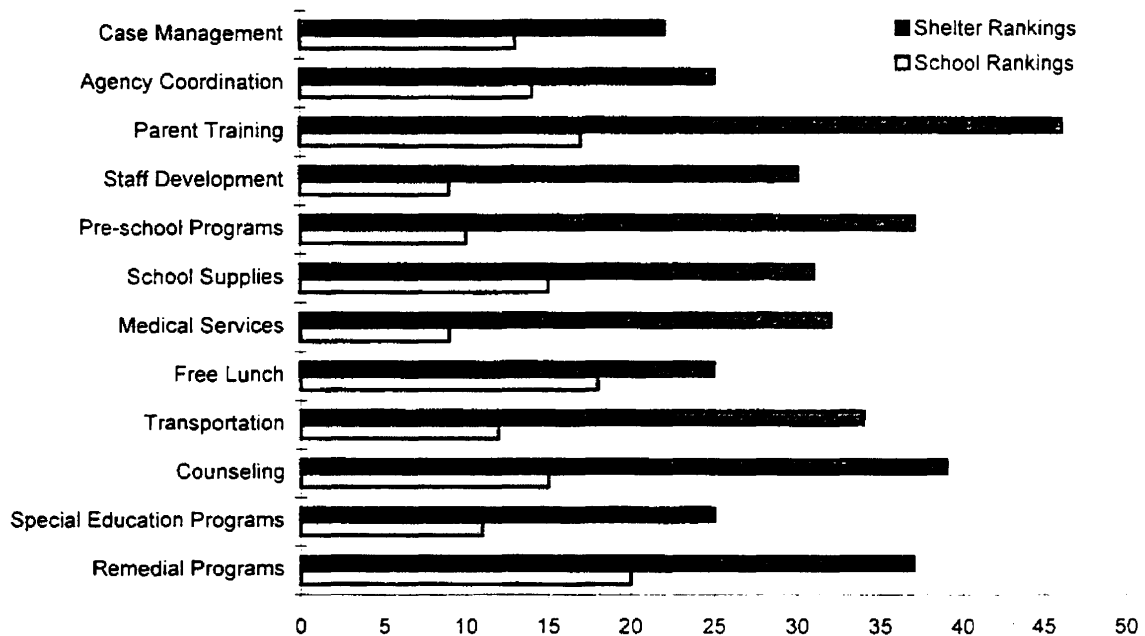
Chart 11

Perceptions of Barriers to School Enrollment
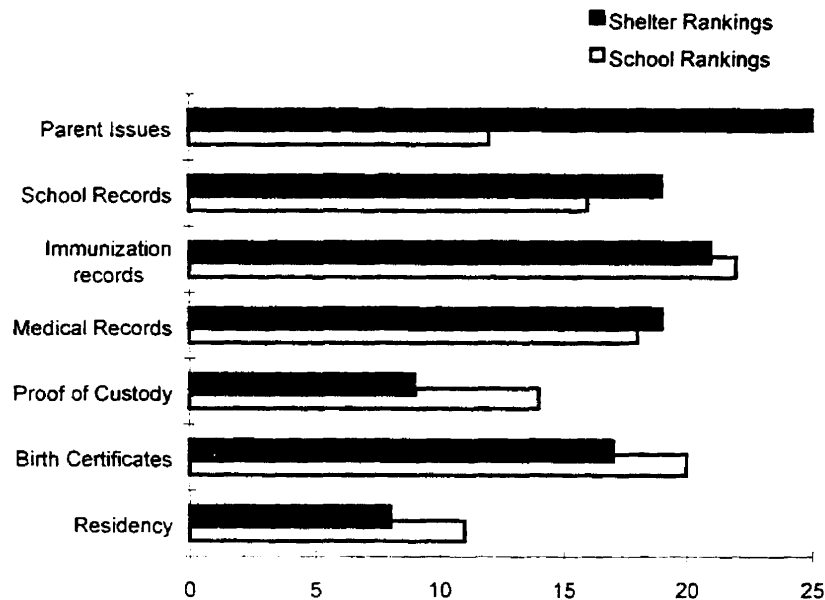
■ Shelter Rankings
□ School Rankings

Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of William and Mary Project H.O.P.E. Working Papers, 1997

31

Chart 12

Perceptions of School-Related Needs of Homeless Children

| | Shelter Rankings | School Rankings |

Source: Commission on Youth Graphic of William and Mary Project H.O.P.E. Working Papers, 1997

To better understand the perceptions of needs and the schools' efforts to respond to homelessness, a stratified sample of school districts were interviewed for the study. The methodology for selection of these districts is explained in the previous section and a copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix D.

Many of the smaller schools did not, at the onset of their interviews, identify the presence of homeless students in their schools. Once they understood that children residing in shelters were considered homeless, however, the percentage of schools identifying homeless students increased to 87%. Eight school systems identified a total annual average of 263 homeless students. All school systems with over 8,500 students identified homeless students. The larger school systems have instituted more formalized enrollment procedures in which the local shelter facilitates the students' enrollment and alerts school officials to the students' living conditions. For the smaller districts, the school's awareness of a student's homelessness and of the family's circumstances occurred through informal word-of-mouth communication. Only Chesterfield and Newport News had a formalized system in which homelessness is routinely identified as part of the enrollment procedure.

With the exception of school divisions receiving McKinney Act grant funds, there are no designated 'homeless student staff.' However, all but the smallest school divisions have staff designated to work with at-risk populations. The staff position most frequently mentioned as responsible for services to at-risk students was in the school's Guidance

Department, although Pupil Personnel and Title I Coordinators were also often mentioned. Offering services is directly related to the presence of designated staff to work with at-risk students. While all school divisions 'make do' and try to access services for the student when they recognize the need, slightly over half (n=7) of the school divisions routinely offer services to at-risk students. The results of the interviews are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation Between Services Offered
and Designated Staff

Services Offered	School Systems With Designated Staff	School Systems Without Designated Staff	Total School Systems Interviewed
YES	6	1	7
NO	4	1	5
Totals	10	2	12

Source: Commission on Youth Analysis of School Division Telephone Interviews, September 1997

Most of the services for homeless students can be categorized as part of the general at-risk initiatives operating within the school. These may include remedial services, counseling, additional testing and/or tutorial services, and gifted and talent programs. When asked how to improve services for the homeless student population, four divisions expressed the need for additional training; two suggested better coordination between the schools and service agencies; and four requested additional staff to work with their at-risk population. Two divisions had no suggestions for the improving services.

Training on homelessness or at-risk topics are offered in only half of the school systems interviewed. Schools with less than 8,500 students offer training less often than the larger school systems, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Correlation between School Size
and Training on At-Risk Issues

School Division Size	School Divisions Offering Training	School Divisions Not Offering Training
under 4,001 students	3	3
4,000 to 8,500 students	1	3
8,501 to 18,000 students	1	1
over 31,000 students	2	1
Totals	7	8

Source: Commission on Youth Analysis of School Division Telephone Interviews, September 1997

While the presence of a staff member designated to work with at-risk students increases the chances that training will be offered, the greatest predictor is the position of the staff member's supervisor. When services are offered under the auspices of Pupil Personnel or Student Services, training occurs, but when the supervision is unrelated to these two fields, training is rarely provided. In the six school divisions which train on the identification of homeless students, training is offered at the beginning of the school year. The other five divisions reported that they cover issues related to homelessness when conducting training on at-risk issues as part of on-going in-service staff development sessions. Only one school division offered training on homeless and at-risk issues to non-instructional staff.

Throughout the interview process, the commitment of school personnel to finding services and resources for students became evident. Most school systems had limited service options but, through informal community networks and collaboration with other agencies, were able to access resources for homeless students. The majority of the school systems admitted that they needed more training on the identification of homelessness among their student body and exposure to best practice models for intervention. Many of the needs identified for the homeless students were similar to those of other at-risk student populations. They were unanimous in their desire not to have a separate program for the homeless student, but asked instead that training be made available to sensitize them to homeless students' needs. Because of the growth over the last five years in education programs for at-risk students, the HJR 524 study is not recommending a separate state initiative for homeless students. However, additional training and exposure to educational techniques for these students is recommended. The College of William and Mary, as State Coordinator for the Department of Education's McKinney Act Homeless Education Project, has expertise in the issue and should be tasked with developing the training materials and responding to local school divisions requests for assistance.

The College of William and Mary staff estimate that the Homeless Education Project serves only 20% of the school divisions having an identified homeless student population. The McKinney Act, due to funding constraints, is not reaching as many school divisions as is needed. The provision of a designated staff position tasked with accessing services and making the community linkages has been found to be a successful approach in those divisions receiving the federal funds. Currently the McKinney Act receives no state funding for its Homeless Education Project, and it is recommended that the state provide a share of the funding to increase the number of school divisions served from 20% to 40%.

Recommendation 4
Increase awareness of the presence and needs of homeless students through the inclusion of homelessness as a risk factor in existing Department of Education at-risk initiatives.

Recommendation 5
Disseminate to all local school division training materials on the identification of homeless students and how to assess and address their needs.

Recommendation 6
Provide state funding support for the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Education Project.

C. COMMUNITY-WIDE RESPONSES

To meet the educational needs of homeless students, all components of the community must become involved and draw on their unique strengths. Schools are not the only responsible parties to respond to homeless children's educational needs. The first step is for communities to recognize that they are not immune to the problem of homelessness. Many communities deny the presence of homeless families for fear that acknowledgment of the issue will adversely affect the community's reputation or economic development activities. In acknowledging the presence of homelessness, community leaders must also educate themselves about the impact of homelessness on families in general and children in particular. Because homelessness is caused and exacerbated by a myriad of issues, such as domestic violence, poverty, drug addiction, housing shortages, and employment opportunities, community leaders must take the responsibility to address these issues. Successful community models in other states are characterized by the exertion of leadership to pull community resources together to address the needs identified. The roles for each segment of the community should be clarified and a process established for dividing up the responsibilities for response. Lastly, and of great importance, funds must be allocated to provide the necessary direct services and staff resources to perform case management activities.

Schools need to prepare their teachers and students to accept homeless students with empathy and without attaching a stigma to them. Teachers can be especially sensitive, warm and caring role models for students. A trained teacher can help facilitate appropriate referrals for needed social services without embarrassing the student. Schools might also provide a place for children to be between the time school closes and the shelter opens so parents will know their children are safe. Staff development can help to dispel stereotypes and define the important role schools can serve in the lives of homeless students. "Staff development programs are necessary to sensitize school personnel to the effects of homelessness and to enhance their ability to educate homeless children and youth."[26] School personnel should be well-informed about the legal rights of homeless students, how to make reasonable accommodations for transient families, and the availability of community resources and programs to serve the homeless. "With greater understanding comes acceptance. For many homeless children, the feeling of being accepted in a normal, healthy environment maybe tremendously rewarding, spawning new and powerful interests in school and learning."[27] Not the least of these interests might be that of the parents to further their own education and, thereby, put themselves in a position of being able to support their families through higher paying employment.

Limited parental involvement in the education of homeless students does not automatically mean parental apathy. While educational concerns may become secondary to the daily tasks of survival, most parents have aspirations for their children, and the school/family relationship must be cultivated.[28] A supportive climate can be created that is characterized by consistent communication and provision of training links with community services. Schools cannot be expected to provide the necessary social services to support homeless parents. Educators, however, can be sensitive to the impact of homelessness and provide guidance to parents to facilitate involvement in their children's education. This, in part, means taking the time to communicate with parents in a personal way and demonstrating ways they can assist with their child's school work. In addition, educators can coordinate their efforts with shelters to help identify the viability of community services including housing specialists, provide space for training programs, assist with G.E.D. programs and offer classes on parenting skills. For parents of younger children, the schools can assist the shelters in accessing early intervention programs such as Evenstart or Head Start. Some school systems also offer locally-sponsored programs for pre-schoolers in at-risk situations which could serve homeless children. By reaching out to homeless children and their families, schools can provide a safe, structured environment for children and youth, as well as an important respite for overwhelmed parents.

Linkages with the service network on behalf of the homeless community minimizes duplication of services and makes the most efficient use of funds. Training for human service providers on the needs of homeless helps reinforce appropriate referrals to aid and housing programs. Fragmentation of the human service delivery system often creates obstacles to moving homeless families into permanent housing and employment. It is only after a community has taken a comprehensive approach to responding to the needs of the homeless--including the educational needs of the children--that the cycle of poverty and homelessness can be stopped.

Recommendation 7
Provide in-depth training, at the request of local school divisions, on best practices for the identification of and intervention with homeless students.

Recommendation 8
Request the Department of Social Services to make explicit mention of the homeless' eligibility for services under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in their staff training on Welfare Reform.

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VIII. Acknowledgments

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> Ms. Marisel Morrisey
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> Ms. Patricia Popp, Program Administrator

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> Ms. Charlotte Rose
> Shelter Residents

Help Family Center, Newport News
> Mr. John Johnson
> Ms. Linda Jackson
> Shelter Residents

Salvation Army Family Shelter, Hampton
> Captain Douglas R. Browning
> Shelter Residents

Virginia Department of Education
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> Mr. George H. Irby, Director of Compensatory Programs

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
> Ms. Candice Streett, Associate Director
> Ms. Debra Danieley, Program Administrator

1997 SESSION

971815836

1   HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 524
2   Offered January 17, 1997
3   *Directing the Virginia Commission on Youth to continue the study on homeless children in the*
4   *Commonwealth and to focus its examination specifically on the educational needs of these*
5   *children.*
6   _____
7   Patrons—Jones, J.C., Almand, Cantor, Cunningham, Darner, Deeds, Diamonstein, Hamilton, Jackson
8   and Mims; Senators: Earley, Houck, Miller, Y.B., Waddell and Woods
9   _____
10   Referred to Committee on Rules
11   _____
12   WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 181 (1996) directed the Virginia Commission on Youth
13   and the Virginia Housing Study Commission to study homeless children in the Commonwealth; and
14   WHEREAS, the study identified a variety of negative effects on children, both psychological and
15   physical, as a result of homelessness; and
16   WHEREAS, the United States Department of Education estimates that there are 250,000
17   school-age children in America who are homeless; and
18   WHEREAS, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11381 et seq.)
19   requires that homeless children and youths be provided a free and appropriate education; and
20   WHEREAS, Virginia receives $331,441 in federal funds to facilitate the school enrollment
21   these children; and
22   WHEREAS, this program is only able to serve 15 local school divisions reaching less than 15
23   percent of all school-age homeless children; and
24   WHEREAS, schools can provide safe, stable, and predictable places where homeless children can
25   experience success and may achieve mastery in learning; and
26   WHEREAS, transportation and enrollment requirements may create barriers to a homeless child's
27   enrollment in schools; and
28   WHEREAS, many school personnel are unable to ascertain if a student is homeless; and
29   WHEREAS, homeless children often have developmental delays and learning disabilities that
30   require special attention; now, therefore, be it
31   RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Commission on
32   Youth be directed to continue the study on homeless children in the Commonwealth and to focus its
33   examination specifically on the educational needs of these children. The study shall include, but not
34   be limited to, the following: (i) an assessment of the barriers to homeless children's enrollment in
35   schools; (ii) a determination of the availability of day care services for homeless children and (iii) the
36   development of recommendations regarding training and strategies for school personnel to ensure that
37   homeless children are able to attend and succeed in school.
38   All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.
39   The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to
40   the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the
41   Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

HJR 524
STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
OF HOMELESS CHILDREN
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DAY CARE NEEDS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN
SHELTER SURVEY

In answering these questions, if you do not have specific client information we would like you to estimate, based on an average for the past 12 months. For the purposes of the survey, Day Care refers to pre-school Day Care services for children ages birth to five years of age. After-school care refers to a structured care setting for children ages six to twelve during after school hours. Please circle the most appropriate answer.

1. How many children under 18 have you housed in the last year? _____

2. What percentage of these children were between the ages of 0-5?

     a. 0-25   b. 26-50   c. 51-75   d. 76-100

3. What percentage of these children were between the ages of 6-12?

     a. 0-25   b. 26-50   c. 51-75   d. 76-100

4. Was day care needed for children between the ages of 0-5?

     a. Yes   b. No

5. For the majority of the children between the ages of 0-5, who provided their day care?

a. Your Shelter   b. A Relative/Friend   c. A Day Care Program   d. Parent(s)

6. Was after-school care needed for children ages 6-12?

     a. Yes   b. No

7. For the majority of children between the ages of 6-12, who provided their after school care?

a. Your Shelter   b. A Relative/Friend   c. After-school Care   d. Parent (s)

8. a. Did anyone searching for day/after school care fail to find it because it was unavailable?

Day Care	*After-school*
a. Yes	a. Yes
b. No	b. No

    b. If yes, this barrier affected what percentage of parents?:

Day Care	*After-school*
a. 0-25	a. 0-25
b. 26-50	b. 26-50
c. 51-75	c. 51-75
d. 76-100	d. 76-100

9. a. Does a lack of money prevent parents from purchasing day/after-school care for their children?

Day Care | After-school
a. Yes | a. Yes
b. No | b. No

b. If yes, this barrier affected what percentage of parents?:

Day Care | After-school
a. 0-25 | a. 0-25
b. 26-50 | b. 26-50
c. 51-75 | c. 51-75
d. 76-100 | d. 76-100

10. a. Does a lack of transportation prevent parents from locating day/after school care for their children?

Day Care | After-school
a. Yes | a. Yes
b. No | b. No

b. If yes, this barrier affected what percentage of parents?:

Day Care | After-school
a. 0-25 | a. 0-25
b. 26-50 | b. 26-50
c. 51-75 | c. 51-75
d. 76-100 | d. 76-100

11. a. Do any day care center paperwork requirements prevent some of the parents from enrolling their children?

a. Yes   b. No

b. If yes, this barrier affected what percentage of parents?:

a. 0-25   b. 26-50   c. 51-75   d. 76-100

12. Are there any other barriers that exist? Please explain: _____

For what age group (Please circle):   a. 0-5   b. 6-12

The percentage affected: a. 0-25   b. 26-50   c. 51-75   d. 76-100

13. If you answered **Yes** to any of the previous 5 questions, what has the impact been? (Please check any that apply.)

__Parent unable to go to work   __Parent unable to look for work
__Parent unable to attend school   __Parent unable to enroll in school
__Child isolated from peers   __Parent/child unable to remain in shelter
__Other: _____

Educational Needs of Homeless Children
School Interview Questions
Telephone Survey

1. Are there students in your school division who have been identified as homeless?

   Yes ☎   No ☎

   a) Based upon the last two years, On average, how many homeless students per year do you estimate attended school in your school division?

   _____

   b) How were they identified?

   enrollment was facilitated by shelter ☎   self-report ☎

   word of mouth ☎   information provided at enrollment ☎

   office staff ☎
   other _____

   _____

   _____

2. Does your school division have a **formal** procedure to identify homeless students in your district?   Yes ☎   No ☎

   a) Describe the procedure. _____

   _____

   _____

   b) Does the procedure vary from school to school?   Yes ☎   No ☎

   c) If the procedures vary, what element(s) are different from school to school?

   Identification procedures ☎   Types of referrals offered ☎

   Other_____

3. Are services offered to homeless students as part of your division's at-risk programs?

Yes ☎   No ☎

4. Which of the following services does your school division make available for homeless students?

Elementary	Middle	High

a) Transportation Accommodations
b) Waiving Of Book and/or Activity Fees
c) Counseling Programs
d) Outreach To Shelters
e) General Remedial Programs
f) Other _____

5. Which programs do homeless students routinely access?

Elementary	Middle	High

a) Title I
b) English As A Second Language
c) Gifted
d) Special Education
e) Other _____

6. Are there designated staff to work with at-risk students? (*including homeless students*)   Yes ☎   No ☎

What is their training, staff position(s)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What type of training for instructional and support staff does your division provide which is related to serving homeless students?

Instructional   Support Staff

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

8. What is your position with the local school division's organization?

Head of Pupil Personnel ☎   Head of Guidance

Services ☎
Title_____   Title_____

Head of Student Services ☎   Other _____
Title_____   Title_____

9. What is your responsibility for these programs?

_____

_____

_____

10. In keeping within your current budget, how would you improve your division's services to homeless students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. If you had additional funding what three things would you do to improve services to homeless students?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

September 30, 1996 Fall Membership by Stratified School Divisions
(Minus McKinney Act Grantees)

377 -999
Highland
Lexington
Colonial Beach
Craig
West Point
Norton
Bath
King & Queen
Covington
Bland   **n = 10**

1,046 -1,931
Rappahannock
Charles City
Buena Vista
Cumberland
Galax
Surry
Mathews
Richmond
Middlesex
Falls Church
Radford
Sussex
Essex
Northumberland
Lancaster
Manassas Park
King William
Franklin City
Amelia
Clarke
Madison
Goochland
Floyd   **n = 23**

2,059 - 2986
Westmoreland
Nelson
Fredericksburg
Lunenburg
New Kent
Charlotte
Buckingham (cont.)

(cont.)
Grayson
Appomattox
Poquoson
Greene
Bristol
Northampton
Nottoway
Giles
Brunswick
Prince Edward
Patrick
Greensville
Fluvanna
Colonial Heights
Martinsville
Southampton
Staunton
Alleghany
Powhatan
Waynesboro   **n = 27**

3,092 - 3,982
Dickenson
Rockbridge
Winchester
Page
Harrisonburg
Caroline
Orange
Scott
Salem
Louisa **n = 10**

4,107 - 4,969
Carroll
Hopewell
Dinwiddie
Lee
Wythe
Botetort
Russell
Warren
Amherst
Isle of Wight
Buchanan **n = 11**

5,067 -5,881
Mecklenburg
Pulaski
Smyth
Shendoah
Accomack
Prince George
Manassas   **n = 7**

6,418 -6813
Halifax
Gloucester
Franklin   **n= 3**

7,517 -7,867
Williamsburg
Washington
Wise
Tazewell   **n = 4**

8,292 - 8,380
Danville
Campbell   **n = 2**

9,060 -9,953
Fauquier
Henry
Pittsylvania
Frederick   **n = 4**

10,156 -10,969
Alexandria
Bedford
Rockingham
Suffolk
Augusta
York   **n = 5**

11,344 -14,669
Albemarle
Roanaoke City
Hanover   **n = 3**

16,036 -17,378
Spotsylvania
Stafford   **n = 2**

Loudoun - 21,490
Newport News -31,448
Chesapeake -35,593
Henrico -38,120
Prince William-48,333
Chesterfield 49,781

STEWART B. MCKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT
Education for Homeless Children and Youth
Fact Sheet

AUTHORIZATION: Subtitle VII-B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, Public Law 100-77, reauthorized November 29, 1990 (Public Law 101-645) and September 28, 1994 (Public Law 103-382).

PURPOSE: To facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS: An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is :
- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
- An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
- A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

APPROVED ACTIVITIES

Awareness programs	Emergency services	Summer programs
Before- and after-school programs	Health services	Student evaluations
Early childhood programs	Mentoring	Transportation
Coordinating services	Parent education	Tutoring
Domestic violence programs	School supplies	

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: All local school divisions in Virginia that are on file with the Virginia Department of Education - Federal Programs.

CURRENT GRANTEES (1996-97):

Arlington	Hampton	Norfolk	Roanoke
Charlottesville	King George	Petersburg	Virginia Beach
Culpeper	Lynchburg	Portsmouth	
Fairfax	Montgomery	Richmond	

APPLICATION INFORMATION: A letter and proposal packet are mailed to all superintendents in the state of Virginia during April each year for submission by June for grants beginning in July. In addition, current grant coordinators receive a courtesy copy of the letter and proposal packet.

Federal Appropriations:	FY 1995: $28.81 million	FY 1996: $23 million
State Grant:	FY 1995: $418,374	FY 1996: $331,441

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact the Virginia Homeless Education Office.
James Stronge, State Homeless Education Coordinator

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Virginia McKinney Programs
1996-97 School Year

Arlington Public Schools	Charlottesville City Public Schools
Project Extra Step provided educational activities, mental health needs and materials/supplies for 161 school age homeless children and youth. The program has included tutoring services, transportation, and counseling for students to foster maximum growth and success. In addition, staff development on homeless issues and agency coordination between the Arlington Schools, area shelter providers and other county-sponsored programs was implemented to further meet the needs of children and youth identified as homeless.	The Charlottesville Child Advocacy Program has provided school choice whenever possible by working with parents in the enrollment decision-making process. The program has focused on direct services to homeless children and youth through transportation for educational needs, services and supplies comparable to those provided to non-homeless children to promote success and completion of school in addition to increased collaboration between the school district and local social service agencies. Administration of the grant is paid for locally which demonstrates the division's commitment to the academic success of this group.
Culpeper County Schools The Homeless Education Learning Program (H.E.L.P.), established a model program for homeless children and youth which has provided after school and summer tutoring, educational materials, transportation and necessary clothing. McKinney funds have allowed 289 children to receive direct services. Through the Culpeper plan, identification and referral of children for services has been under constant revision so that all children who qualify for services will be identified.	**Fairfax County Schools** The Fairfax County McKinney Homeless Education Program provided educational support for school-age children and youth. A preschool learning-readiness program provided developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for children aged three to five. Summer school was also put into place for school aged children residing in area shelters which has provided them with opportunities to reinforce learned concepts and to strengthen their academic skills.
Hampton City Public Schools REACH (Resources for Education and Advocacy for Children who are Homeless) is a collaborative educational program in cooperation with the Virginia Peninsula Council on Domestic Violence, and the Hampton Ecumenical Lodgings and Provisions (H.E.L.P., Inc.). This project has ensured program coordination, information and resource sharing, and the reduction of duplication of services for better, more extensive direct services to homeless children and youth. In addition to instruction and tutorial services, REACH has provided professional development, coordinated transportation services, educated parents on educational issues, purchased school supplies and provided assistance to enable homeless youths to succeed in school.	**King George County Schools** The McKinney Homeless Education program in King George County has successfully utilized funding to facilitate structure and access to educational resources and services through active case management. McKinney funds have been responsible for providing tutorial services, field trips, transportation needs, materials and essential clothing. Future plans include expanding the tutorial program, improving attendance, and developing flexible programs for after-school that focus on tutoring, homework, assistance, writing skills, remediation and self-esteem.

Lynchburg City Schools	Montgomery County Public Schools
The Lynchburg homeless education program has provided educational assistance to children and youth in three area homeless shelters. In addition to tutoring and homework assistance, McKinney Homeless funds have provided children and youth with necessary and adequate study space and school supplies, and educational software. Future goals of the Lynchburg program will be to strengthen academic skills, increase parental involvement in the schools, raise awareness among educators on the effects of homelessness and domestic violence on students and their families, equalize educational opportunities, and facilitate the social/emotional well being of this "at-risk" population of students.	The Montgomery County Regional Homeless Education Program has been a cooperative effort involving 5 school districts, 5 social service agencies, regional Community Actions, and homeless shelters in 4 neighboring counties and the City of Radford. The program operates out of the Women's Resource Center, where an "in-house school" has been established to provide direct instruction for all school-aged children staying in the shelter. A regional reporting network has been organized to identify and assist homeless children and youth in accessing educational services. The program has facilitated enrollment, transportation, school supplies and appropriate service referrals.
Norfolk City Public Schools	**Petersburg City Public Schools**
The Homeless Education Learning Program (HELP) has been a collaborative effort involving Norfolk Public Schools, the YWCA's Women-in-Crisis Shelter, the Dwelling Place and the Haven Family Center. HELP has provided educational services to children and youth to assist them in maintaining academic skills and to foster the value of education as a way out of the cycle of homelessness. HELP has provided another step on the ladder to stability and self-sufficiency by enhancing and reinforcing educational and pre-vocational opportunities for homeless children and youth in Norfolk.	Project Cares Plus is a collaborative effort between the Crisis Assistance Response Emergency Shelter (CARES) and the Petersburg Public Schools. This program has focused on parental training about the importance of their child's education as well as parental participation in after-school tutoring sessions. The program has provided food/snacks, essential clothing, school supplies and fees for extra-curricular activities, full time staff, programming and activities during the summer months.
Portsmouth City Public Schools	**Richmond Public Schools**
The HARNESS Program (Homeless Assistance Regarding Needed Educational Services Support) has provided necessary transportation to the student's "home school", school supplies, summer school tuition assistance, crisis-oriented counseling as well as information, referral, and coordination with other services offered in the community to homeless children and youth. In collaboration with area shelters, pre-school programs have been developed and implemented for this at-risk population during the school year.	The McKinney Homeless Education Program in Richmond has continued to focus on reducing the educational barriers experienced by homeless children and youth, including, accessing schools, disrupted attendance, frequent school changes, inadequate school supplies, after school homework assistance and remediation needs. The program has provided in-shelter homework assistance, transportation to the student's "home school" to avoid unnecessary school changes, essential clothing and parent education. Summer day care and educational experiences have also been provided in-shelter to encourage educational continuity.

Roanoke City Public Schools	Virginia Beach City Public Schools
The McKinney Project in Roanoke has provided the only educational and academic support program for 326 homeless children and youth in the metropolitan area and has provided services to homeless youth in three neighboring counties and one neighboring city. The focus of this program has been to provide daily and reliable transportation to and from school, facilitate enrollment, remove barriers from pre-school programs, improve student performance and coordinate case management to obtain necessary health and social services for homeless children and youth to ensure regular school attendance and education success.	McKinney Homeless Education funds have been used to develop direct service plans for homeless children and youth on a case by case basis. All students identified as homeless are evaluated to establish a "profile of need", which is utilized by the project coordinator to facilitate services from schools and appropriate agencies. In addition, an emphasis has been placed on parental education, and beginning in October, 1996, 70 percent of families identified as homeless were enrolled in parenting classes as well as academic education classes and/or job training. After-school tutoring services are available 2 times per week for both elementary and middle school-aged children residing in shelters. The program has also provided essential clothing, individual and group counseling, staff development programs and pre-school learning readiness programs.
Williamsburg-James City County	
The goal of Project AIMS has been to facilitate the success of the students in school by providing an after-school and summer tutorial program which has focused on strengthening self-concept, math and language arts skills, social skills, motivation and interest in learning. During the school year, students meet two times each week for two hours after school for assistance. They attend the summer program four days per week for five weeks and participate in activities that have included direct instruction in social and academic skills, academic tasks and enrichment, and group activities. Future activities will include two Family Fun Nights to foster and strengthen the relationship between the school and the students' families.	

Virginia Child Care for the Homeless
Year Program Grantees

Action in Community Through Service of
 Prince William, Inc. (ACTS)
Dumfries

Arlington/Alexandria Coalition for the
 Homeless (AACH)
Arlington

Avalon: A Center for Women and Childre
Williamsburg

Community Lodgings, Inc.
Alexandria

Citizens Against Family Violence
Martinsville

Domestic Violence Emergency
 Services, Inc. (DOVES)
Danville

Emergency Shelter, Inc.
Richmond

Fauquier Family Shelter Services
Warrenton

Hampton Ecumenical Lodging &
 Provisions, Inc. (HELP)

Help and Emergency Response
Portsmouth

Judeo-Christian Outreach Shelter, Inc.
Virginia Beach

Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter
Leesburg

Virginia Beach Community Development
 Corporation
Virginia Beach

Mercy House, Inc.
Harrisonburg

Monticello Area Community Action
 Agency
Charlottesville

Prince William County Department of
 Social Services
Manassas

Rappahannock Refuge, Inc./Hope
 House
Fredericksburg

Rappahannock Council on Domestic
 Violence
Fredericksburg

Response
Woodstock

Salvation Army - Winchester
Winchester

Salvation Army - Charlottesville
Charlottesville

SERVE, Inc.
Manassas

Services to Abused Families
Culpeper

St. Joseph's Villa
Richmond

The Shelter for Abused Women
Winchester

The Haven Family Assistance Center
Norfolk

Total Action Against Poverty, Inc.
Roanoke

Samaritan House
Virginia Beach

Women's Resource Center of New River
  Valley
Radford

Homestretch: Falls Church Community
  Service Council, Inc.
Falls Church

Shelter House, Inc.
Falls Church

Virginia Peninsula Council on Domestic
  Violence
Hampton

Volunteers of America
Leesburg

YWCA/Family Violence Prevention
  Program
Lynchburg

Route One Corridor Housing, Inc.
Alexandria

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