



Additional Resources

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ILLINOIS MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM



“Our migrant children ...

they are our only hope ...

Like seedlings, they have been sown in your school.

It is our wish they blossom into harvests of hope.”

-Author unknown



Program Description

The federally-funded Title 1 Migrant Education Program (MEP) provides supplemental educational and supportive services to migratory children across the nation. The program was established in 1966 and has been amended and reauthorized several times, including under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) administers the MEP in Illinois, allocating funds to local school districts with significant populations of migrant farmworker children. ISBE also funds efforts throughout the state to ensure that all eligible children are identified. These efforts can lead to the expansion of services in new population areas.



MEP projects operate in coordination with the regular school program. During the summer, the peak of the migrant agricultural season, comprehensive programs for migrant children offer a full range of academic and supportive services. Areas of focus include reading, mathematics, language development and English as a Second Language (ESL) to improve student achievement.

Program Goals

The MEP is designed to help reduce the impact of educational disruptions and other problems faced by migrant students as a result of their repeated moves. Low wages, seasonal work, poor nutrition, substandard housing and frequent mobility are realities for migrant farmworker families. The MEP's academic and supportive services help migrant children overcome these barriers. As a result, young children are better prepared to enter school, experience academic success, graduate, and pursue postsecondary education or employment.



Who the Program Serves

Trained recruiters interview each family to determine program eligibility. Children and youth through the age of 21 who have not graduated from high school may be eligible for the MEP if they have moved:

- across school district lines
- within the last three years
- with a parent or guardian or on his/her own
- to obtain qualifying temporary or seasonal agricultural or fishing employment.

The work must be directly related to the planting, cultivating, harvesting or processing of crops, the processing of dairy products, meats, fish or shellfish, or caring for livestock. There are no ethnic, national origin or language requirements for determining whether a child qualifies for eligibility.

Services Provided

Each local MEP offers services appropriate to the needs of the migrant children it serves.



Educational services may include:

- Preschool developmentally appropriate programs designed to prepare migrant children for a successful school experience
- Grades K-12 integrated classroom instruction (summer school) and tutorial support (academic year)
- Secondary school services to assist high school students in achieving graduation
- Continuity of instruction between and among school districts and states

Supportive services include:

- Statewide identification and recruitment of eligible children
- Student record exchange and information transfer via the New Generation System (NGS), a multi-state, web-based network that provides instantaneous access to student demographic, educational and health information
- Medical, dental and nutritional services