Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Where can we access the official grant application and accompanying guidelines?**

   The FY 2027 Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and FY 2027 Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program Attachments can be found on ISBE's Education for Homeless Children webpage.

2. **Is there a direct application link or specific online portal through which applications must be submitted?**

   Page 9 of the NOFO states, "Submit complete proposals via email to homeless@isbe.net no later than 4 p.m. on November 23, 2026."

3. **Are there any required registrations or preliminary steps that must be completed before applying?**

   Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) of the NOFO for information about eligibility and GATA Grantee Portal registration and prequalification requirements, and Section D (Application and Submission Information) for additional information on SAM.gov registration.

4. **What are the specific eligibility requirements for organizations seeking funding under this program?**

   Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) and Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for full eligibility requirements.

5. **Are nonprofit organizations, such as EDUServe for All, eligible to apply directly, or is funding restricted to school districts, Local Education Agencies, or other designated entities?**

   Page 4 of the NOFO indicates eligible applicants are "Public school districts, public university laboratory schools as defined in Section 18-8.15 of the School Code, charter schools, and Regional Offices of Education. An eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a State-funded homeless education program." Nonprofit organizations are not eligible to apply.

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6. **Are there any minimum organizational qualifications, required partnerships, or additional criteria that applicants must satisfy?**

   Refer to Section D (Application and Submission Information), Section E (Application Review Information), and Section F (Award Administration Information) for complete information about the application submission requirements, review criteria, and required reporting and deliverables for the grant.

7. **What percentage awarded can be used for salary and/or employee benefits?**

   A set percentage is not specified in the NOFO. Refer to Section 5 of the review criteria regarding the budget on Page 12. Budgeted expenditures must be aligned to the allowable activities specified in Section B (Funding Information) and reflect the needs assessment and program description in the applicant's program narrative (Attachment 2).

8. **We wanted to clarify whether children experiencing homelessness who attend nonpublic schools, including private Jewish schools, would be eligible to receive services funded through this grant, as the notice does not seem to clearly address this. If so, would these services need to be coordinated through a public school district, or is there a way for community organizations to partner in providing assistance?**

   Nonpublic schools are not eligible to apply directly for this program under 105 ILCS 45/1-50. Refer to Page 4 of the NOFO, which indicates eligible applicants are "Public school districts, public university laboratory schools as defined in Section 18-8.15 of the School Code, charter schools, and Regional Offices of Education. An eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a State-funded homeless education program."

   Nonpublic schools can coordinate services and collaborate with eligible applicants as part of a proposal. Refer to Page 8 of the NOFO under Section 3 (Coordination of Services) #5, which states, "Demonstrate that effective coordination with private, nonprofit entities, social services agencies, and others serving homeless children and youth and their families will occur, as necessary, so that the applicant is able to provide services that are appropriate and comprehensive."

9. **Can individual school districts apply for this grant, or is this the grant that our regional office applies for, and we go through them for funding?**

Eligible applicants can apply individually or jointly with other eligible applicants if a lead applicant is identified. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) and Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for full eligibility requirements.

10. **Is this the application that requires sign-off by the Continuum of Care administrator, or is that a different NOFO?**

    No. Refer to Section 3 of the Evaluation Rubric (Coordination of Services) in the NOFO and optional Attachment 5 (Collaboration Documentation) for further guidance on coordination of services between Local Education Agencies and local social services agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.

11. **The grant states that it can be used for "Transportation assistance, including school bus transportation." Does this mean directly as an offset against the district's obligation to pay 100% (or split 50/50 if transportation is from outside of the district)? Most other activities listed are "above and beyond" ideas but do not seem to directly address or offset what is already mandated.**

    Services provided by school districts through the use of grant funds may not replace the regular academic program and must be designed to expand upon or improve services provided for homeless students as part of the school's regular academic program. This NOFO is issued pursuant to the authorities identified in Section A (Program Description). In the event of any conflict, inconsistency, or discrepancy between this NOFO and the applicable statutory, regulatory, or other governing authority, the governing authority shall control. Additionally, refer to Page 3 of the NOFO under Section B (Funding Information) for guidance on allowable activities and transportation assistance. 6.E. states, "The provision of assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students under § 11432(g)(4)(A), not otherwise provided through federal, state, or local funding, where necessary to enable students to attend the school selected under § 11432(g)(3)."

12. **Can a Regional Office of Education and a school district in that same region both apply for this grant?**

    An eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a State-funded homeless education program. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) and

Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for full eligibility requirements.

13. **I see that ROEs are listed as an eligible applicant, but most of the information required is district-specific. Do you anticipate ROEs requesting funding as a joint consortium for multiple districts, or independently? If so, (or even for a joint consortium for multiple districts) would the combined total number of McKinney-Vento students be identified as the total homeless student population?**

    Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) are listed as eligible applicants under Section C (Eligibility Information). If the ROE does not directly serve homeless students, it would only be eligible to apply if it created a consortium. The grant will provide a tiered funding structure based on the number of students identified as homeless for a school district as designated in the most recent Illinois Report Card published by ISBE as of the application deadline. The funding tier for a consortium of two or more eligible applicants will be calculated based on the sum of all homeless students across all eligible applicants included in the proposal. Refer to Section B (Funding Information) for the specific funding tiers and Section C (Eligibility Information) and Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for full eligibility requirements.

14. **If a joint commission applies, how would you like multiple districts to identify items for the priority points?**

    ISBE will calculate priority points during the evaluation process. Refer to Section C beginning on Page 4 of the NOFO. This section covers available priority points. Additionally, Section 6 of the Evaluation Rubric on Page 12 of the NOFO outlines how priority points are calculated.

15. **If an ROE applies for the NOFO, can our districts apply as well, independently from us? I read the entire application and cannot find a definitive answer.**

    An eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a State-funded homeless education program. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) and Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for full eligibility requirements.

16. **The NOFO reads, "an eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a State-funded homeless education program." I am reading this to mean that if awarded the grant, a district in our area cannot tap into the funding that ROE is provided through this grant, if we were to apply and receive it. I.e., There is nothing that would preclude a district from applying, if our office did as well. Am I correct in this assumption?**

    If an ROE does not directly serve homeless students, it would only be eligible to apply if it created a consortium. In this instance, an ROE must include a list of "participating districts" in Attachment 1A as part of the application. All joint applications must include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the administrative agent and each joint applicant listed in Attachment 1A, signed by each district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal, indicating agreement to participate in the joint application. If a district applies within a joint application as a "participating district" (Attachment 1A), they are then not eligible to apply as an individual grantee or under another joint application. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) and Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for full eligibility requirements.

17. **I understand that the maximum award amount is based on homeless student enrollment reported on the most recent Illinois Report Card. However, our district's homeless enrollment figure is suppressed on the public Report Card. Could you please clarify how we can obtain the official count that will be used to determine our funding tier?**

    Student counts fewer than 10 on the Illinois Report Card are suppressed for privacy reasons. Districts with fewer than 10 identified McKinney-Vento students would have data suppressed on the Illinois Report Card and receive the lowest tier of funding. Districts may log in to the My Illinois Report Card (MyIRC) portal to review their data if it is suppressed on the public-facing Illinois Report Card webpage. Please note, the funding tier is "based on the number of students identified as homeless for a school district as designated in the most recent Illinois Report Card published by ISBE as of the application deadline." Refer to Section B (Funding Information) for more information.

18. **We participate in cost-sharing transportation arrangements for McKinney-Vento students who attend both our district and neighboring districts. Could you confirm whether the funding-tier count is based strictly on homeless students enrolled in our district, regardless of which district is financially responsible for transportation?**

    The tiered funding is determined by the applying district and joint districts if applicable. Please see guidance on Page 3 of the NOFO regarding homeless student enrollment figures and funding tier structures.

    "This grant will provide a tiered funding structure based on the number of students identified as homeless for a school district as designated in the most recent Illinois Report Card published by ISBE as of the application deadline. The funding tier for a consortium of two or more eligible applicants will be calculated based on the sum of all homeless students across all eligible applicants included in the proposal. No awardee will receive less than $10,000.

    Maximum award for fewer than 10 identified homeless students: $10,000
    Maximum award for 10 to 35 identified homeless students: $15,000
    Maximum award for 36 to 100 identified homeless students: $25,000
    Maximum award for 101 to 500 identified homeless students: $50,000
    Maximum award for 501 to 10,000 identified homeless students: $100,000
    Maximum award for 10,001 or more identified homeless students: $500,000"

19. **Can you clarify that if some school districts join/collaborate with the ROE's McKinney-Vento state grant application then any other school districts that don't join can't have funding given to them? If so, does it make sense for an ROE to collaborate with school districts or let them apply on their own and we apply on our own? If they apply, how would I know that so I would exclude them from our school district McKinney-Vento count when our ROE applies, and do I have to exclude them?**

    Districts can choose to apply individually or in a joint application. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) and Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for eligibility requirements. An eligible applicant may only participate in one proposal for a State-funded homeless education program. If a district is included within an ROE's joint application as a "participating district" (Attachment 1A), with a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), they will not be eligible to apply separately if the ROE is already creating a consortium. All joint applications must include an MOU between the administrative agent and each joint applicant

listed in Attachment 1A, signed by each district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal, indicating agreement to participate in the joint application. Joint applications that do not include a signed MOU with all participating districts listed in Attachment 1 at the time of submission will not be scored. Joint applicants in a consortium may not submit multiple proposals in response to this NOFO.

20. **After submitting the application via email to homeless@isbe.net, will there be a notification to indicate it was successfully received?**

    Yes, an ISBE staff member will confirm receipt of applications received in the homeless@isbe.net inbox. Receipts can take up to two business days to be sent.

    All applications received will be reviewed for eligibility with all NOFO/RFP, statutory, and regulatory requirements. Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be reviewed, and the grant program manager will notify these applicants via email. Refer to ISBE's Merit-Based Review Policy for more information.

21. **Our district would like to apply for the EHCY grant but we do not see it listed on IWAS for our district. How do we access the grant?**

    This grant application will not be in IWAS until final awards are determined. The FY 2027 Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and FY 2027 Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program Attachments can be found on ISBE's Education for Homeless Children webpage. Page 9 of the NOFO states, "Submit complete proposals via email to homeless@isbe.net no later than 4 p.m. on November 23, 2026."

22. **The NOFO lists that a recorded webinar and FAQ are available on www.isbe.net/homeless but I am not able to find those.**

    The webinar and FAQ are located within the blue drop-down bar titled "FY27 State EHCY Grant NOFO." There, you will find the NOFO document, attachments, technical assistance webinar, and the slides used in the PowerPoint presentation.

23. I am looking to start and complete the application for this grant. I see the PDF that is available to complete this grant. I also see that there should be a section in IWAS for this application; however, I do not see it. Are you able to let me know where my application should go or where I can go to work on my application other than the PDF so when it is ready to be submitted, I can?

This grant application will not be in IWAS until final awards are determined. The initial application will be completed using the PDF document. The FY 2027 Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and FY 2027 Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program Attachments can be found on ISBE's Education for Homeless Children webpage. Page 9 of the NOFO states, "Submit complete proposals via email to homeless@isbe.net no later than 4 p.m. on November 23, 2026."

24. A partner shared that a new grant was released by ISBE, but I am not sure if this is the one we already have.

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program parallels and supplements, but operates independently of, the federal grant program allocating funds for assistance under Subtitle B of Title VII of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.). FY 2009 is the only other year in which the Illinois state budget has included state funding for this program. The FY 2027 EHCY State Grant Program NOFO process will be competitive, and awards will be for one year starting July 1, 2026, with two one-year continuation renewals contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress of the grantee in the previous grant period.

25. The effective dates of the grant: Is it for one school year from the award date? Is it from the date of award through June 30, 2027? Is it backdated to be effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027?

Refer to Section B (Funding Information) of the NOFO for full guidance. The initial grant period is anticipated to begin upon full execution of the grant agreement and end on June 30, 2027. ISBE may expressly approve an earlier effective date, no earlier than July 1, 2026, subject to the requirements governing pre-execution costs stated in this NOFO. Costs incurred before execution are at the grantee's own risk.

26. In the webinar, the competitive sequence of the grant indicates a score of 60 or less will not be eligible for an award. I did not see a scoring rubric. Is there an available rubric to be sure the grant submission meets the criteria?

Refer to Section E (Application Review Information) of the NOFO. The Evaluation Rubric is available on Pages 10-12.

27. Would the purchase of twin-size bed frames, mattresses, pillows, sheets, blankets, and comforters for eligible McKinney-Vento students be an allowable expenditure under this state grant?

Sheets, blankets, and comforters are allowable under McKinney-Vento. Bed frames and mattresses are not allowable. McKinney-Vento only allows the purchase of "bedding and portable gear" when addressing the needs of students. Please refer to the Education for Homeless Children Act and the full list of McKinney-Vento authorized activities.

28. I work very closely with [continuum of care provider]. I reached out to their team to seek partnership and support related to this grant. Their grants team is under the impression that we can identify them as a subgrantee and we as the lead applicant could authorize funds to them as a subgrantee to expend for rental assistance.
Can you please confirm that this is allowable and if so, what would we provide in the application to identify them as a recipient of a portion of the funds to expend on our families' behalf for rental assistance, utilities, etc.?

No, community partners are not eligible applicants. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) of the NOFO. A community partner can only be a collaborative partner. Refer to Section 3 (Coordination of Services) on Page 7 of the NOFO for further details on collaboration with community partners. Also refer to Section 3 of the Evaluation Rubric on Page 11 of the NOFO. If collaboration with a community partner is specified in the Program Narrative (Attachment 2), then the State Budget Summary (Attachment 4) and the Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 4A) should include subcontract information. The application would also require a completed Collaboration document (Attachment 5).

29. I am writing for the FY27 Education of Homeless Children and Youth Grant for [ROE]. We have 8 school districts that are going to be included in our grant. I wanted to know if this would be considered a joint application or not.

Yes, this would be considered a joint application. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) on Page 3 of the NOFO for guidance on joint applications. Guidance outlining eligibility can be found on Page 5 of the NOFO. An application will be deemed ineligible and will NOT be read if:

- A joint application is submitted without a list of participating districts (Attachment 1A) and an MOU signed by an authorized representative for each joint applicant (Attachment 6: MOU for Joint Grant Application).
- The application is submitted with any of the following information missing:
    - Attachment 1: Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance
    - Attachment 2: Program Narrative
    - Attachment 3: Need, Activity, Outcome, and Measurable Objective
    - Attachment 4: State Budget Summary
    - Attachment 4A: Budget Summary Breakdown

30. (a) We are writing as an ROE for our districts, not as a joint application. (b) We need an accurate amount of the combined districts' FY27 Title I, Part A homeless reservation set-aside amount and year-to-date expended amount set aside across the districts. What is the date we use and where do we access this information? ISBE's Title I page, and Homeless pages have the FY25 Homeless Reservation set-aside amounts.

(a) If an ROE does not directly serve homeless students, it would only be eligible to apply if it created a consortium. In this instance, an ROE must include a list of "participating districts" in Attachment 1A as part of the application. All joint applications must include a Memorandum of Understanding between the administrative agent and each joint applicant listed in Attachment 1A, signed by each district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal, indicating agreement to participate in the joint application. If a district applies within a joint application as a "participating district" (Attachment 1A), they are then not eligible to apply as an individual grantee or under another joint application. Refer to Section C (Eligibility Information) and Section D (Application and Submission Information) of the NOFO for full eligibility requirements.

(b) Information on the current set aside and year-to-date expended set aside can only be found through each individual district's Title I grant team or homeless liaison.