
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 673 (Jackson) - Unaccompanied homeless pupils: Unaccompanied Youth Support Grant Program

Version: June 18, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: ED. 4 - 2, HUMAN S. 5 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill establishes the Unaccompanied Youth Support Grant Program to provide supports necessary to improve school attendance, pupil engagement, pupil graduation rates, and pupil wellbeing for unaccompanied youth who are 16 and 17 years of age.

Fiscal Impact: The proposed program would be contingent upon an appropriation and could lead to Proposition 98 General Fund cost pressures of \$45 million each year to. This estimate is based on the budget request that was submitted to the budget subcommittees on education from the Californian Department of Education (CDE).

Background: The McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:

1. Children who are sharing the housing of others due to economic hardship, are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations, are living in emergency or transitional shelters, or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Children who have a primary nighttime residence not designed or ordinarily used for sleeping;
3. Children who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
4. Migratory children who are living in the circumstances described above.

Existing law requires the CDE and the Department of Social Services (CDSS) to identify representatives who have experience in homeless youth issues to develop policies and practices to support homeless children and youth and to ensure that child abuse and neglect reporting requirements do not create barriers to the school enrollment and attendance of homeless children or youth.

Existing law requires an LEA to ensure that each school within the LEA identifies all homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled at the school by administering a housing questionnaire.

Existing law requires the CDE to provide training materials to LEA liaisons to assist them with providing professional development and other support to school personnel providing services pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act.

Existing law requires a school district, charter school, or county office of education (COE) to create a website containing the list of LEA liaisons for pupils in foster care and pupils who are homeless with contact information, and information on homelessness, including educational rights and resources in that school district, charter school, or COE.

Proposed Law: This bill requires the CDE to administer formula grants as part of a pilot program, to be known as the Unaccompanied Youth Support Grant Program, to LEAs for the purposes of providing supports necessary to improve school attendance, pupil engagement, pupil graduation rates, and pupil wellbeing for unaccompanied youth who are 16 or 17 years of age, including connecting youth with resources to find stable housing. The bill requires that the grants be awarded to LEAs and be available for expenditure for five years from the date of receipt.

This bill specifies the eligible uses of the grant, including supporting connections and establishing referrals to existing community-based organizations, licensed youth shelter programs, county welfare departments, and local continuums of care to enable pupils to access housing navigation services, social services, child welfare services, and family stabilization services administered by those entities; providing basic needs, including items such as clothing, food, and stipends for transportation; and providing educational support services and tutoring provided directly by the LEA or through a partner nonprofit or service provider.

This bill requires an LEA to have identified at least one unaccompanied youth enrolled during the prior fiscal year as reported in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) in order to be eligible to apply for grant funds.

This bill requires an LEA applying to receive a grant to submit an application to the CDE in the form and manner prescribed by the CDE. It requires an application for grant funding to include all of the following information: a description of the LEA and existing partnerships between the LEA and other agencies or organizations to support unaccompanied youth, as applicable; a description of how grant funds will be used to identify eligible pupils, the types of supports to be provided based on eligible uses of grant funds, and the performance measures that the LEA will use to measure progress towards program goals; and the number of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youth, as those terms are defined under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, enrolled within the LEA during the prior fiscal year, as reported in CALPADS.

This bill authorizes the CDE to establish additional application requirements or criteria necessary to ensure effective program administration, accountability, and equitable geographic distribution of grant awards consistent with the purpose of the program and the eligible grant uses.

This bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), commencing with the 2028-29 fiscal year, and subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act for these purposes, to allocate funding to LEAs or a consortium of LEAs that have submitted an

application and been determined eligible to receive an Unaccompanied Youth Support Grant.

This bill requires the SPI to reserve 30% of the total funds appropriated for the program in any fiscal year to be distributed to all participating LEAs or consortiums of LEAs as a base grant. It also requires the SPI, after reserving and allocating the base grant amounts, to allocate the remaining 70% of the total funds based on a weighted formula using the following metrics:

1. 70% of the allocation shall be based on the proportionate number of unaccompanied homeless youth identified within the LEA or consortium of LEAs in the prior fiscal year.
2. 20% of the allocation shall be based on indicators of concentrated need within the territory served by a LEA or consortium of LEAs, as determined by the SPI based on all of the following metrics: the rate of chronic absenteeism among homeless pupils and the percentage of identified homeless children and youths, as defined under the McKinney-Vento Act, enrolled within the LEA or consortium of LEAs that exceeds the statewide average of homeless pupil enrollment.
3. 10% of the allocation shall be based on the structural scale and geographic barriers of the applicant, including the number of districts within the county and the documented capacity of the LEA to coordinate regional housing and supportive services.

This bill requires the SPI, on or before October 31 of each fiscal year, to submit a report detailing the final funding allocations made to the Department of Finance, the State Board of Education, and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature for oversight and review.

This bill requires an LEA that has been awarded Unaccompanied Youth Support Grant funds to submit an annual report to the CDE, in the form and manner prescribed by the CDE, describing the expenditure of the funds, the number and characteristics of unaccompanied youth served by the grant, the services provided, and measurable outcomes related to housing stability, school attendance, and educational attainment.

This bill requires the CDE, upon completion of the five-year grant cycle, to submit a report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, as specified, evaluating program outcomes and recommending whether the program should be expanded or made permanent.

This bill authorizes the CDE to implement the Unaccompanied Youth Support Grant Program through management bulletins or similar letters of instruction.

Related Legislation: AB 373 (Gipson, Chapter 327, Statutes of 2023) requires an LEA operating an intersession program to grant priority access to homeless and foster children and youth.

AB 408 (Quirk-Silva, Chapter 904, Statutes of 2022) requires LEAs to establish homeless education program policies consistent with federal law, requires homeless

education liaisons to offer training to specified school staff, and requires the CDE to develop a risk-based monitoring plan for homeless education requirements.

AB 2375 (Luz Rivas, Chapter 912, Statutes of 2022) requires LEAs and charter schools to identify all homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth enrolled at the school by administering a housing questionnaire based on specified best practices.

Staff Comments: This bill establishes a new program to allow LEAs to provide necessary support to improve school attendance, pupil engagement, pupil graduation rates, and pupil wellbeing for unaccompanied youth who are 16 or 17 years of age, including connecting youth with resources to find stable housing. The bill allows funds to be used to support connections with appropriate existing county services, continuums of care, and community-based organizations which are better equipped to facilitate access to housing navigation services, social services, child welfare services, and family stabilization services. It also authorizes the funds to be used to address other critical factors that impact a student's long-term stability, such as food, clothing, and transportation, educational support services and tutoring, and employment readiness and skills development, including skills related to independent living.

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