



## **Affordable Housing for Educational Achievement Demonstration (AHEAD) Act**

*Sponsored by U.S. Senator Patty Murray*

For many children, housing uncertainty and instability can negatively impact their education. Homeless children are more likely to drop out of high school, less likely to enroll in college, and more likely to become homeless in adulthood.<sup>1</sup> However, housing policy can also be an opportunity to break down these barriers and provide more opportunity for children from low-income backgrounds and their families.

The AHEAD Act would encourage housing authorities, school districts, and community partners to work together in unprecedented ways to address children's housing and education needs in a coordinated fashion. Under this program, school districts would apply individually or in consortia with other school districts and local housing authorities for a grant from the Department of Education and HUD for projects to:

- **Address and prevent child and family homelessness**
  - School districts could supplement current efforts to help families find and maintain housing by centralizing services within the school building.
  - Housing authorities could hire an education coordinator to help families receiving assistance navigate the housing process with an eye to educational opportunities.
  
- **Increase socioeconomic and racial diversity**
  - Housing authorities could increase their current Section 8 housing rate for families and help them find affordable housing within an area with high-quality schools.
  - School districts could provide additional assistance to children from families receiving Section 8 vouchers to make sure that they transition well into a more rigorous school environment.
  
- **Increase academic achievement for low-income, at risk children**
  - Housing authorities could build data systems to better track and target services to children living in affordable housing.
  - School districts could work with housing authorities to address issues such as chronic absenteeism and access to high-quality early learning.

Partnerships would apply for either a two-year planning grant to begin collaboration efforts and develop a memorandum of understanding or a five-year implementation grant to implement projects that assist families in addressing housing needs and provide education and community-based services for low-income, at-risk children. This demonstration will help both agencies and the general public support and evaluate innovative ideas at the intersection of housing and education policy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Child Trends Databank. (2015). Homeless children and youth. Retrieved from: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=homeless-children-and-youth>