



Embargoed Until March 10, 2009, 12:01 am EDT

Media Contact: Christina Jordan, 617-969-7146, christina.jordan@familyhomelessness.org

One in 50 U.S. Children Is Homeless

New Report Ranks 50 States and Urges Action To End Child Homelessness

Newton, MA – A new report released today by the National Center on Family Homelessness finds more than 1.5 million children are homeless annually in the United States—one in every 50 American children. *America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness* offers the first comprehensive state-by-state data on the status of homeless children and ranks the 50 states from top to bottom. The report urges federal and state action to end child homelessness and recommends how this can be done.

America's Youngest Outcasts documents the extent of child homelessness, describes the plight of these children, profiles and ranks the states, and proposes solutions. The report presents several national data sets in one place for the first time, offering the clearest snapshot of child homelessness to date. The complete report and a 16-page summary document can be downloaded at www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.

“Children without homes are on the frontline of the nation’s economic crisis. These numbers will grow as home foreclosures continue to rise,” said Ellen L. Bassuk, M.D., president of the National Center on Family Homelessness and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. “Our report underlines the need for every state—as well as the Obama Administration and Congress—to provide equal opportunities for all American children to grow and thrive in the safety and security of their own homes.”

According to the report, children experiencing homelessness have twice the rate of moderate to severe health conditions compared to middle class children, and twice the emotional problems. They struggle in school, with an average 16% lower proficiency in math and reading, and an estimated graduation rate below 25%.

Release of the report launches the **Campaign to End Child Homelessness**, an initiative by the National Center on Family Homelessness to bring together advocates, communities, families, policymakers, and others at local, state, and national levels to galvanize public and political will to prevent and end child homelessness.

“This report shows the staggering reality that one in fifty children in America is homeless,” said U.S. Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr. (Pennsylvania), chair of the Advisory Board to the Campaign to End Child Homelessness. “I urge my fellow citizens to read this report and let the magnitude of this problem sink in. We must come together to help prevent even one child from wondering where he or she will lay their head at night.”

MORE.....

Data from all 50 states were collected and analyzed along four major domains: extent of child homelessness; child well-being; risk for child homelessness; and state policy and planning efforts. A composite of the four domains was used to rank the states. Children experiencing homelessness were found in all 50 states. Individual state profiles and the complete state rankings are available at www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.

Top 10 States

1. Connecticut
2. New Hampshire
3. Hawaii
4. Rhode Island
5. North Dakota
6. Minnesota
7. Wisconsin
8. Massachusetts
9. Maine
10. Vermont

Bottom 10 States

50. Texas
49. Georgia
48. Arkansas
47. New Mexico
46. Louisiana
45. Nevada
44. North Carolina
43. Florida
42. Kentucky
41. Mississippi

“Homeless children are scared, hungry, sick, isolated, and falling behind in school. Without decisive action, millions of children will carry the burden of homelessness for their entire lives,” said Dr. Bassuk. “The consequences to our society will play out for decades. As we bail out the rest of our nation, it is also time to come to their aid.”

The report offers state and federal policy recommendations such as increasing housing stock; improving supports for uninterrupted schooling; family-oriented services to treat the extreme trauma of homelessness; addressing family employment and income needs; and including homeless children in all federal and state plans to end homelessness. Complete policy recommendations can be downloaded at www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.

About the National Center on Family Homelessness

The National Center on Family Homelessness, founded in 1988, is the nation’s foremost authority on family homelessness, and the only national organization dedicated solely to helping homeless families. Through state-of-the-art research, program design, and public education, the National Center is committed to ending family homelessness in America. For more information on the National Center, please visit www.familyhomelessness.org.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the Marie C. & Joseph C. Wilson Foundation, the principal funder who has worked in partnership with the National Center on Family Homelessness to develop *America’s Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness*.