Appendix A

Research
Methods

Empirical data collected for this landscape report includes two large focus groups, individual student interviews, and one-on-one interviews with partners in Early childhood, Higher Education, and Nonprofit organizations. Data for K-12 homeless student enrollment was synthesized and analyzed from Data Quest, which is compiled by the California Department of Education.

Summary of Participants
(N=155)

Focus Group participants: 119
[e.g., Nonprofit Organizations, Service Providers, Foundation Organizations, State Agency Partners, McKinney-Vento Liaisons, K-12 school staff, K-12 school educators, K-12 District and County Partners, Higher Education partners]

Student Interviews: 13

Interviews with Nonprofit Organizations: 4

Interviews with Higher Education: 8

Interviews with Early Childhood Partners: 7

Interviews with leaders in the CA Department of Education: 4

Focus Groups

Key stakeholders representing a range of organizations from early childcare to higher education agencies were convened to reflect on the challenges and barriers they face when trying to better support students and families experiencing homelessness.

Student Interviews

The research team conducted thirteen one-on-one interviews with students over the age of 18 from across the state who have experienced homelessness and housing instability. With the support of colleagues in CDE, local K-12 district offices, and community stakeholders, we were able to interview a total of thirteen students. We asked students to share their experiences with homelessness and housing instability while in school, either in K-12 and/or in Higher Education.

Interviews with Educators, Services Providers, and Nonprofit Organizations

A total of 19 individual interviews were conducted with additional educators and services providers. In our focus groups, we had a majority of K-12 educators and school officials. Therefore we conducted individual interviews with additional early childhood, higher education, and nonprofit stakeholders.

Empirical Data Analysis

Data collected from the focus groups and the interviews were analyzed by the research team using Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software. We conducted a two-cycle coding analysis (Saldaña, 2015), using In Vivo and Focused codes to generate the findings of this report. Also, after each focus group, we held review sessions where participants provided feedback on preliminary findings.

About California Department of Education Data

Data collection begins at the school and LEA level. Each LEA has a local liaison for homeless education who is responsible for ensuring the identification of homeless students through coordinated activities with other school personnel and community agencies. The liaison is also responsible for working with the LEA's data staff and the State Coordinator to ensure the LEA provides accurate data that meets the required elements outlined by the Secretary of Education.

California K-12 Homeless Student Enrollment Data

The homeless student data presented in section five was was compiled from DataQuest, the California Department of Education's (CDE) web-based data reporting tool. These data are submitted and certified by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and charter schools as part of the annual End of Year 3 (EOY 3) submission in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). We analyzed K-12 homeless student enrollment data for the 2018-2019 academic year and disaggregated by race and ethnicity. We used the data descriptors used by CDE [e.g., enrollment rates, suspension rates].

Enrollment Rates

This report displays the annual cumulative K-12 public school enrollment by student ethnicity and grade level for the selected report level (state and county) and year. At the time of collection, cumulative enrollment was retrieved from DataQuest's "Chronic Absenteeism Rate" data report under the "Cumulative Enrollment" column disaggregated by program subgroup "Homeless" and filtered by "Yes" for students experiencing homelessness and "No" for non-homeless students (CDE, 2019d). Although no specific cumulative enrollment report exists on DataQuest at the present time, the CDE recently posted cumulative enrollment downloadable files at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesenrcum.asp.

Suspension Rates

Suspension rates were used as the primary indicator for discipline. Suspension calculations include both in-school and out-of-school suspensions in the numerator, and the denominator is determined by cumulative enrollment of all students enrolled at a school during the school year at the selected entity for the selected population using the available filters. The program subgroup was set to "Homeless" and filtered by "Yes" for students experiencing homelessness and "No" for non-homeless students (CDE, 2019c).

Chronic Absenteeism

This report provides a total count of cumulatively enrolled students who were eligible to be considered chronically absent (Chronic Absenteeism Eligible Enrollment) and a count of students who were determined to be chronically absent (Chronic Absenteeism Count). These two counts are used to determine the Chronic Absenteeism Rate (Chronic Absenteeism Count divided by Chronic Absenteeism Eligible Enrollment) at the selected entity for the selected population using the available filters. Students are determined to be chronically absent if they were eligible to be considered chronically absent at the selected level during the academic year, and they were absent for 10% or more of the days they were expected to attend (CDE, 2019d).

Graduation Data / UC/CSU Readiness Rates

Graduation data for this report displays the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) by Race/Ethnicity or Program Subgroup for the selected year at the selected reporting level (state and county) and the number of graduates who met UC/CSU entrance requirements. The four-year ACGR is the number of students who graduate from high school in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. Student UC/CSU readiness is those cohort graduates who a local educational agency determined met all the (a-g) requirements for admission to a University of California or California State University school (CDE, 2019e).