

Research Summary

Fiscal Impacts of Document Waivers for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

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BACKGROUND

Over 771,400 people experienced homelessness according to HUD's 2024 point-in-time count—a record high and an 18% increase from 2023. HUD's report also illustrates disproportionate rates for people of color, American Indian populations and individuals who identify with the LGBTQ communities. [Research from School House Connection](#) suggests the reported number of people experiencing homelessness, particularly youth, is an undercount due to varying definitions of homelessness, difficulties with contacting unhoused people and other [methodological challenges](#) with the mandated [point-in-time count](#).

Connecting individuals with housing, employment and healthcare resources is critical for preventing and mitigating homelessness. According to the [U.S. Government Accountability Office](#), accessing these and other supports can be challenging for individuals experiencing homelessness due to lack of identification or other vital documents. Securing this documentation can be costly and require an individual to visit a government office in person. The [American Bar Association's Commission on Homelessness and Poverty Commission on Youth at Risk](#) cites a lack of permanent residence or address as significant obstacle to obtaining documents such as a birth certificate or social security card, particularly for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Policymakers are expanding access to these vital documents by waiving fees and allowing youth to receive a copy of their records without consent from a parent or guardian. By waiving these fees, state budgets may face fiscal impacts. The following legislation includes fiscal analyses associated with document fee waivers for individuals experiencing homelessness.

ENACTED LEGISLATION

Alabama ([HB 385, 2022](#)) exempts homeless children and youth from certain fees associated with a driver's license and requires a designated staff member to verify if a student qualifies for an exemption. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) estimates the law would decrease receipts to four funds, 1) state general fund, 2) highway safety fund, 3) probate judges; and 4) state veterans' legacy trust fund. Receipt losses were estimated to be \$20,048 for FY2022, \$60,143 for FY2023, and \$49,500 for each fiscal year thereafter.

California ([AB 1733, 2014](#)) allows a homeless person, or a homeless child or youth, to be eligible to receive a copy of a birth record without a fee from a county, if the person, child, or youth 1) meets the federal

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homeless person or homeless child or youth; and 2) can verify homeless status. The [corresponding fiscal analysis](#) suggests the following costs: 1) one-time costs of about \$300,000 for the development of regulations and information technology changes to allow DMV to issue no-cost identification cards; 2) ongoing cost of about \$115,000 per year for DMV to issue no-cost identification cards; 3) ongoing costs to local registrars and county recorders of about \$140,000 per year; and 4) ongoing revenue loss to DPH of about \$30,000 due to reduced birth certificate fees.

Florida ([HB 1577, 2022](#)) requires the state's Department of Children and Families to waive all fees for a certified copy of a birth certificate issued for an unaccompanied homeless youth and for a young adult who is, or was at the time they reached 18, in the custody of the department. The legislation also promotes collaboration among the State University System, the Florida College System, and the Department of Education to address the need for a comprehensive support structure to assist children and young adults who have been in foster care. The [corresponding analysis](#) stated 1) the bill has no fiscal impact on state government or local governments; and 2) the bill has an indeterminate, significant, negative revenue impact on state colleges and universities relating to the bill's provisions expanding the tuition and fee exemption to additional individuals.

Idaho ([SB 1268, 2022](#)) amended existing law to allow for the issuance of no fee identification cards to persons who are homeless. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) estimates one-time software development costs of \$24,000 and ongoing costs of \$27,200 per year based on 10,000 issuances per year. According to the note, there would be no impact to the general fund only the Department of Transportation dedicated funds.

Indiana ([SB 464, 2019](#)) allows youth experiencing homelessness to access their birth certificate, a photo identification, and a driver's license without charge or the consent of a parent, guardian, or custodian. The youth must meet certain guidelines and possess a fee and consent waiver affidavit. The [corresponding fiscal impact statement](#) suggests the population affected by the law is expected to be small and will have an indeterminate fiscal impact. The fiscal impact statement outlines a variety of documentation fees and estimates the total cost would be \$143.50 per homeless youth.

Kansas ([HB 2274, 2025](#)) eliminated fees for homeless veterans to obtain birth certificates for purposes of nondriver identification card applications and prohibits such cards from expiring. The [corresponding supplementary note](#) states that this law would not result in a fiscal effect as the Office of Vital Statistics already has a process in place to waive fees for veterans. The Kansas Department of Revenue reports that as of January 2024, there is an estimate of 199 homeless veterans in Kansas. There is no estimate for the number of homeless veterans who would obtain an ID card pursuant to the bill. This law would not have a fiscal effect on agency operations. Any fiscal effect associated with enactment of SB 106 was not reflected in the FY 2026 Governor's Budget Report.

Kentucky ([HB 100, 2024](#)) requires that no fee be paid for furnishing a certificate of birth to a homeless individual or a homeless youth under 25 years old, provided that they have been verified as homeless. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) suggests no fiscal impact to the Department for Public Health.

Michigan ([HB 4853, 2019](#)) provides for a waiver of the vital record fee for individuals experiencing homelessness. The [corresponding fiscal analysis](#) suggests the law is estimated to cost \$226,000 from the General Fund/General Purpose annually. \$136,000 GF/GP of the cost would be allocated to the DHHS Vital Records Office to compensate for the exempted individuals' records. The remaining \$90,000 GF/GP would be dedicated for reimbursing local homeless service provider organizations who obtained records from local records agencies on behalf of their homeless clients.

Nevada ([AB 220, 2025](#)) authorized the issuance of identification cards by the Department of Health and Human Services to persons experiencing homelessness. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) estimates the system development and hardware costs to be \$1,935,275 over the biennium.

New Mexico ([HB 389, 2023](#)) eliminating the ID card fee for individuals experiencing homeless. The [corresponding fiscal impact report](#) outlines potential costs of the bill, including \$13,000 for FY 2024 and indeterminate or minimal impact for FY2025. The report estimates an additional cost of \$26,700 for the Taxation and Revenue Department to implement changes from the new law.

Oklahoma ([HB 3231, 2024](#)) enacted the Improving Employment and Education Outcomes for Homeless Youth Act, which authorizes certain individuals to verify whether certain children and youth are homeless. The legislation also provides exempts fees for identification documents for youth experiencing homelessness and does not require a signature from a parent or guardian. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) suggests a one-time implementation cost of \$32,384 and an ongoing cost of \$10,650.

Oregon ([HB 3026, 2021](#)) directs the state's Department of Transportation to waive fees for issuing, renewing or replacing identification card if person who is issued card is experiencing homelessness. The corresponding analyses suggest the law has [minimal expenditure impact](#) on state or local government and [minimal revenue impact](#).

South Dakota ([HB 1098, 2024](#)) provides free birth certificates to persons experiencing homelessness. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) suggests, in the first year, the cost to the state could be \$14,406 to cover the administrative cost which could be paid out of the general fund, and the children's trust fund could also lose \$2,216 in revenue for a total of \$16,623. In subsequent years, the cost to the state could be \$3,564 to cover the administrative cost, and the children's trust fund could lose \$548 in revenue for a total of \$4,113 per year.

South Dakota ([HB 1131, 2024](#)) waives certain fees for nondriver identification cards for individuals who are homeless. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) suggests, in the first year, the state could expend up to \$31,024 to cover the administrative cost of providing cards. In subsequent years, the state could expend up to \$7,672 each year to cover the administrative cost.

Texas ([HB 123, 2019](#)) provides, without fee or parental consent, certified copies of birth records and personal identification certificates for foster children, homeless children or youth, and unaccompanied youth. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) suggests no significant fiscal implication to the state and that any state costs

associated with implementing the provisions of the bill could be absorbed within current resources.

Utah ([SB 223, 2024](#)) requires that documentation fees for birth certificates, IDs, transcripts and other documents be waived for an individual who is 1) under 26 years old; and 2) is a foster child, former foster child, or individual experiencing homelessness. The [corresponding fiscal note](#) suggests the legislation could reduce birth certificate copy dedicated credit collections by \$11,700, one-time in FY 2024 and \$70,400 ongoing in FY 2025. The legislation could also reduce driver's license fee revenues by \$3,800, one-time in FY 2024 and \$23,000 ongoing in FY 2025. The legislation could also reduce fee revenues collected by the institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education for transcript copies, however, the system-wide impact is estimated to be negligible. Additionally, the report suggests the legislation could increase General Fund expenditures at the Department of Health and Human Services \$4,800, one-time in FY 2024 and \$28,600 ongoing in FY 2025 to support programs previously funded utilizing dedicated credits that would be lost due to the fee waivers. Also, the legislation could cost the Department of Public Safety Restricted Account \$8,800, one-time, in FY 2024 for programming changes to the licensing system. Furthermore, the legislation could decrease the local health department share of birth certificate fee revenues by \$41,800, ongoing in FY 2025, but could also lessen the fee burden for foster children, former foster children or individuals experiencing homelessness for certain government services by \$135,200 in aggregate in FY 2025.

Virginia ([HB 1617, 2025](#)) prohibits fees from being assessed against homeless youth for a furnished copy of a vital record. The [corresponding fiscal impact statement](#) suggests the legislation could reduce vital record issuance fee revenue by approximately \$49,248.

Virginia ([HB 450, 2026](#)) requires the State Registrar to report annually regarding revenues collected from vital records fees collected and the annual expenditures of the Office of Vital Records.

ADDITIONAL NCSL RESOURCES

- [Housing and Homelessness Legislation Database](#)
- [Housing and Homelessness Toolkit](#)
- [Preventing Youth and Young Adult Homelessness: Resources for State Legislatures](#)
- [Youth Homelessness Overview](#)