

**§ 115C-250.5. Homeless and foster student transportation grant.**

(a) There is established the Transportation Reserve Fund for Homeless and Foster Students to provide for a grant program to cover extraordinary school transportation costs for homeless and foster students. For the purposes of this section, "homeless" is defined in accordance with the definition in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

(b) The Department of Public Instruction shall provide an application process for local school administrative units and charter schools to apply for funds to cover extraordinary transportation costs for qualifying students. The Department shall establish eligibility guidelines and shall award funds consistent with the following requirements:

- (1) In determining extraordinary transportation costs, the Department shall consider total prior-year transportation expenditures for homeless and foster children, including expenditures from local funds and all other funding sources, as a proportion of total expenditures.
- (2) Priority shall be given to applicants in proportion to the extent that their applications and prior-year expenditures demonstrate use of available federal funds to cover the cost of transporting homeless and foster children.
- (3) Awards shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of extraordinary transportation costs as determined pursuant to this subsection.
- (4) Awards shall not be issued on a pro rata basis to each eligible applicant.

(c) The Department of Public Instruction shall submit a report by March 15 of each year to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the use of funds appropriated to the Transportation Reserve Fund for Homeless and Foster Children pursuant to this act using data collected from the prior school year. The report shall include at least the following:

- (1) A list of local school administrative units receiving funds from this section.
- (2) The amount of funds applied for by each local school administrative unit.
- (3) The amount of funds received by each local school administrative unit.
- (4) How the funds were spent by each local school administrative unit, including the number of students transported and the locations between which the students were transported.
- (5) Any other information the Department of Public Instruction deems relevant. (2023-134, s. 7.30(a); 2024-1, s. 2.4.)