

Washington State Migrant Education Program

Since migrant families began moving from school district to school district and state to state, their children's education has been interrupted by withdrawing the children from one school and enrolling in another. Often, children will be in a district for a limited time span and will return to their home base or move to other areas where parents seek or obtain agriculture or fishing employment. These children represent many ethnic groups and may have limited English language skills. This, combined with irregular school attendance, poverty, often inadequate nutrition, poor housing, and a high incidence of health problems, leads to low overall achievement and frustration, causing many children to drop out of school in their early teens. Congress established the National Migrant Education Program in 1966 in an effort to meet the special needs of these children. This new legislation authorized federal funding for a specific group of children who had limited access to traditional school systems – the children of migratory agricultural workers and fisherman. Washington State's Migrant Education Program was developed in 1967, and was designed to provide services to help educate migrant children. Migrant children may receive supplementary basic skills instruction, supportive health services, and social service referrals, etc. The Washington State Migrant Education Programs works closely with other state migrant programs in an effort to provide migrant students with the best possible education and increase the number of migrant students graduating from high school.

A child is eligible for the Migrant Education Program if:

1. The child is younger than 22 and has not graduated from high school or does not hold a high school equivalency certificate (this means that the child is entitled to a free public education or is of an age below compulsory school attendance).
2. The child is a migrant agricultural worker or a migrant fisher or has a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migrant agricultural worker or migrant fisher.
3. The child has moved within the preceding 36 months in order to obtain (or seek) or to accompany (or join) a parent, spouse, or guardian to obtain (or seek), temporary or seasonal employment in qualifying agricultural or fishing work.
4. Such employment is a principal means of livelihood, and
5. The child:
 - a. Has moved from one school district to another.
 - b. In a state that is comprised of a single school district, has moved from one administrative area to another within such a district.
 - c. Resides in a school district of more than 15,000 square miles and migrates a distance of 20 miles or more to a temporary residence to engage in a fishing activity (this applies only to Alaska).