



# in our own backyard

THE HIDDEN PROBLEM OF  
CHILD FARMWORKERS IN AMERICA  
<http://www.ourownbackyard.org>

## Part III: What Can Be Done?

### **Migrant Education Grants**

Federal grants encourage states to develop programs to help children of migrant workers in achieving educational goals. Two of those programs are described as examples.

*Source: Office of Migrant Education in the Department of Education,  
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/mep/index.html>*



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Funds support high quality education programs for migratory children and help ensure that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner by disparities among states in curriculum, graduation requirements, or state academic content and student academic achievement standards. Funds also ensure that migratory children not only are provided with appropriate education services (including supportive services) that address their special needs but also that such children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet. Federal funds are allocated by formula to SEAs, based on each state's per pupil expenditure for education and counts of eligible migratory children, age 3 through 21, residing within the state.

## TYPES OF PROJECTS

States use program funds to identify eligible children and provide education and support services. These services include: academic instruction; remedial and compensatory instruction; bilingual and multicultural instruction; vocational instruction; career education services; special guidance; counseling and testing services; health services; and preschool services.

## PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of the Migrant Education Program is to ensure that all migrant students reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or complete a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.

## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The Office of Migrant Education has several leadership initiatives in place to increase the capacity of State educational agencies, local school districts, schools, and other community organizations to continuously improve the educational outcomes attained by migrant children. These initiatives currently focus on:

- [Binational Migrant Program](#)
- [Comprehensive Needs Assessment](#)
- [Identification and Recruitment](#)
- [Student Records Exchange](#)
- [Secondary Students](#)

## Examples of Migrant Education Grant Programs

### **1) Center for Migrant Education grant aims to assist migrant students**

*Source: Texas State University*

<http://www.ua.txstate.edu/mrp/relations/newsreleases/2006/10/18n2.html>

SAN MARCOS —The Texas State University-San Marcos Center for Migrant Education received \$2.2 million from the U.S. Department of Education’s College Assistance Migrant Program, which will fund a project aimed at assisting migrant students in their pursuit of a college education at Texas State.

The program offers financial and academic assistance to 50 migrant students from high schools in cities throughout central Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, where the highest concentration of migrant workers resides. Eligible students will receive funding to cover tuition, room and board, and a stipend for other expenses during their freshman year at Texas State.

“In Texas, 60 percent of Hispanics in college drop out after their first year,” said Frank Contreras, director of the Center for Migrant Education. “The objective is to get all 50 students to continue their education into their second year.”

The center will monitor the recipients throughout their remaining years at Texas State, and help them obtain financial aid and receive academic support. This program also contributes to the university’s effort to increase the Hispanic student population and become a Hispanic serving institution, said Contreras.

The program is also looking into finding first-year freshmen migrant students enrolled at Texas State during the fall 2006 semester, who might qualify for financial assistance for the Spring 2007 semester under this program. Students who wish to apply must be migrant students and have a minimum 2.0 grade point average.

In addition to providing financial and academic assistance, the program will also provide funds to bring the recipients’ parents to Texas State during orientation.

### **2) Virginia Receives Grant to Improve Migrant Education**

*Source: U.S. Department of Education*

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/NewHome/pressreleases/2004/july26.pdf>

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige today announced that the Commonwealth of Virginia has been awarded a \$241,314 federal education grant for an interstate partnership to help migrant students improve their math skills. On behalf of Secretary Paige, Deputy Secretary of Education Gene Hickok today presented a grant check to Virginia Superintendent of Schools Jo Lynne DeMary during an event at the state Capitol in Richmond.

“Strong math skills can open doors of opportunities for students, and the goal of the No Child Left Behind Act is to ensure that all children—including migrant children—receive a high-quality education,” Secretary Paige said. “But migrant children face many challenges. When you combine the migratory lifestyle with language and cultural barriers, as well as poverty,

these students have many hurdles to overcome. And with the right supportive services, migrant children can achieve at the same level as their peers.”

Virginia is one of eight states to receive the Migrant Education Program Consortium Incentive Grant, a two-year competitive grant for state education agencies that participate in Project MATEMATICA (Math Achievement Toward Excellence for Migrant Students and Professional Development for Teachers in Math Instruction Consortium Arrangement). The combined grant is worth more than \$1.3 million.

Project MATEMATICA addresses the special math needs of migrant children, whose education is continuously interrupted as their families move from state to state to work in the agricultural and fishing industries. The project provides professional development for teachers to strengthen their skills and services to help parents increase their involvement in their child’s education.

The vast majority of migrant students who participate in the Migrant Education program are Hispanic (89 percent); one-third have limited English proficiency. The number of limited English participants has risen over the last three years, growing from 22 percent in 1998-1999 to 31 percent in 2000-2001. California, Texas and Florida account for more than half—52 percent—of the migrant student population.

The No Child Left Behind Act is the bipartisan landmark education reform law designed to change the culture of America’s schools by closing the achievement gap among groups of students, offering more flexibility to states, giving parents more options and teaching students based on what works. Under the law’s strong accountability provisions, states must describe how they will close the achievement gap and make sure all students achieve academically.