

# American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) Program Overview

## Purpose

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) included a total of \$800 million to support the specific needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness through the ARP Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) Fund. On April 23, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced the first disbursement of these funds under section 2001(b)(1) of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) for the purposes of meeting the immediate needs of students experiencing homelessness, including the identification, enrollment, participation and success of children and youth experiencing homelessness, and the provision of wrap-around services in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document provides a general overview of the ARP-HCY program; additional guidance from USED is forthcoming and the AOE will distribute more information as soon as it becomes available.

## Allocations

State allocations of ARP-HCY funding are based on the proportion of funds that each state received under Title I in fiscal year 2020. The total ARP-HCY allocation for Vermont is \$1,867,977. States may reserve up to 25% of the allocation for State-level activities; at least 75% of funds received by the SEA must be allocated to LEAs.

The USED has awarded 25% (ARP Homeless I) of each State's ARP-HCY allocation now in order to provide immediate funding as a supplement to McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) funds. The USED will award the remaining 75% (ARP Homeless II) after USED completes necessary regulations to change the EHCY program's required competitive subgrant process for the ARP Homeless II funds. At this time, it is anticipated that the ARP Homeless II award will be made available during summer 2021 and funds will be distributed to LEAs via a formula that considers the LEA's allocation under Title I, Part A and the number of identified homeless children and youth in 2018-2019.

- Total ARP Homeless I allocation: \$466,994.
- Total ARP Homeless I allocation to LEAs: \$350,246.
- Period of performance: Date of Grant Award – Sept. 30, 2024. (Please note: AOE is awaiting guidance on whether pre-award costs are available for ARP-HCY funds. Until AOE receives that guidance, LEAs should assume that there are no pre-award costs for this grant).

## ARP Homeless I

USED requires ARP Homeless I funds to be administered by the Office of the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and in a manner consistent with all the requirements of the EHCY program. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, EHCY funds must be distributed via a competitive grant process; therefore, ARP Homeless I funds will also be awarded to LEAs through a competitive grant process in the Grants Management System (GMS).

### ARP Homeless I Application

All LEAs will be eligible to apply for ARP Homeless I funds and applications will be based on existing EHCY subgrant requirements. In alignment with Education Recovery priorities to reengage students, approval priority will be given to applicants whose strategies increase identification of students experiencing homelessness, provide access to summer programming, and/or plan for the provision of wrap-around services for this summer (2021), in collaboration with State and local agencies and other community-based organizations.

#### Key Dates

- ARP Homeless I Application released to LEAs: TBD.
- Deadline to apply for ARP Homeless I: TBD.
- Expected date of grant awards for ARP Homeless I: TBD.
- Deadline to obligate funds under ARP Homeless I: Sept. 30, 2024
- End of Period of Liquidation under ARP Homeless I: Nov. 30, 2024

#### Allowable Uses

ARP Homeless I funds supplement the EHCY program and LEAs may use these funds for any of the [sixteen allowable uses](#) permitted by the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. §11433(d)).

1. The provision of tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services.
2. The provision of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and youths, including needs and eligibility for programs and services (e.g., educational programs for gifted and talented students, children with disabilities, English learners, services provided under Title I, career and technical education, school nutrition programs).
3. Professional development to heighten understanding and sensitivity to the needs of homeless children and youth, the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths.
4. The provision of referral services for medical, dental, mental, and other health services.
5. Excess cost of transportation, not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding.
6. The provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs for preschool-aged homeless children.
7. The provision of services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youth in public school programs and services provided to non-homeless youth.
8. The provision of before- and after-school, mentoring, and summer programs which provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities.

9. The payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children and youth in school.
10. The provision of education/training for parents and guardians of homeless children and youth about the rights of, and resources available to, their children and other activities designed to increase the meaningful involvement of parents/guardians in the education of their children.
11. The development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youth.
12. The provision of specialized instructional support services and referrals for such services.
13. Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youth that may arise from domestic violence and parental mental health or substance abuse problems.
14. The adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for any non-school facilities made available under subsection (a)(2) (services provided with subgrant funds to provide services).
15. The provision of school supplies.
16. Provision of other extraordinary or emergency assistance to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school.

In addition, ARP Homeless I funds may be used for any expenses that are reasonable and necessary to facilitate the identification, enrollment, retention, and educational success of children and youth experiencing homelessness, such as:

- Providing wraparound services (which could be provided in collaboration with and/or through contracts with community-based organizations, and could include academic supports, trauma-informed care, social-emotional support, and mental health services);
- Purchasing needed supplies (e.g., PPE, eyeglasses, school supplies, personal care items);
- Providing transportation to enable children and youth to attend classes and participate fully in school activities;
- Purchasing cell phones or other technological devices for unaccompanied youth to enable the youth to attend and fully participate in school activities;
- Providing access to reliable, high-speed internet for students through the purchase of internet-connected devices/equipment, mobile hotspots, wireless service plans, or installation of Community Wi-Fi Hotspots (e.g., at homeless shelters), especially in underserved communities;
- Paying for short-term, temporary housing (e.g., a few days in a motel) when such emergency housing is the only reasonable option for COVID-19-safe temporary housing and when necessary to enable the homeless child or youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities (including summer school); and
- Providing store cards/prepaid debit cards to purchase materials necessary for students to participate in school activities.
  - Please note, at this time the Vermont Agency of Education does not allow the purchase of prepaid store cards with federal grant funds. The AOE's [Memo: Alternatives to Prepaid Store Cards](#) provides several options LEAs may consider in order to meet programmatic needs, while satisfying federal fiscal regulations and controls.

LEAs are strongly encouraged to use these funds to focus on identifying students this spring in order to connect students experiencing homelessness and their families to summer learning and enrichment programs in summer 2021, and to engage students and their families in preparation for this fall. USED also encourages LEAs to award contracts to community-based organizations that are well-positioned to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in historically underserved populations and connect them to educationally-related support and wrap-around services. When considering funding decisions, LEAs should analyze the needs, including academic, social, emotional and mental health needs, of students experiencing homelessness in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact.

### **Reporting Requirements**

The SEA and LEAs will have to comply with reporting requirements established by USED, including those outlined in the EHCY program, as well as the numbers of students experiencing homelessness identified and supported with ARP Homeless funds and the specific details of supports and services received by students. The AOE will provide additional information regarding reporting requirements as it becomes available from USED.