

New Hampshire State Plan
American Rescue Plan Act
Education for Homeless Children and Youth



New Hampshire

Department of Education

Published September 7, 2021
as Submitted to the U.S. Department of
Education

Grantee and Contact Information

ARP-HCY PR Award Number: S425W210030 - 21A

SEA Contact: Christina Dotson, State McKinney-Vento Coordinator

Telephone: (603)271-3840

Email address: Christina.L.Dotson@doe.nh.gov

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <p>By signing this document, I assure that: To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.</p> | |
| <p>Chief State School Officer or Authorized Representative (Printed Name) Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education</p> | |
| <p>Signature of Authorized SEA Representative</p> | <p>Date: September 7, 2021</p> |

Introduction

The *American Rescue Plan Act* Education for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP Homeless) funding presents a unique opportunity for the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) to further support its students experiencing homelessness. New Hampshire school districts reported 3,519 students or two percent of 176,170 total students as experiencing homelessness in the 2019-2020 school year. The decrease in this population from 4,033 total students experiencing homelessness in the 2018-2019 school year may be driven by the barriers to identification in remote learning environments. Thus, improving outreach to and identification of students experiencing homelessness, especially in disrupted educational environments, is a top priority for NHDOE's administration of the ARP Homeless Fund.

Currently, four school districts participate in McKinney-Vento. Supported by ARP Homeless funding, NHDOE is providing expanded training and new networking opportunities to the nearly 200 homeless liaisons around the State. The NHDOE's support will include technical assistance on McKinney-Vento requirements, especially to LEAs that have not previously participated in McKinney-Vento, including the responsibilities of the school of origin and supporting unaccompanied youth, as well as needs based on field feedback, including transportation and community-specific resources.

Additionally, NHDOE will focus its ARP Homeless Fund on removing barriers that may otherwise prevent students experiencing homelessness from accessing educational opportunities, including transportation especially in rural communities, supplies, clothing, and hygiene, and by providing wraparound services, including academic tutoring and mental health supports. Finally, NHDOE will prioritize its State ARP Homeless funds on academic supports ensuring students experiencing homelessness accrue and recover credit, especially in high school.

Application Questions

I. ARP Homeless I

Question 1:

How the SEA has used or will use up to 25 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless I for State-level activities to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building, and engagement at the State and LEA levels, including support to LEAs to increase access to summer programming in 2021. This must include how the SEA has supported LEAs to plan for and provide wrap-around services, in collaboration with State and local agencies for immediate needs this spring 2021, and how it will support LEAs for school year 2021-2022. This should include the extent to which the SEA has or plans to build capacity in LEAs that have not received an EHCY sub-grant in the past in order to ensure that these LEAs are well-prepared to utilize the funds provided in ARP Homeless II;

SEA Response:

The NHDOE will use the 25 percent set-aside ARP Homeless I State funds totaling \$143,498 to Support additional State staff to administer the program and provide additional training, technical assistance, and engagement to build LEA capacity throughout the performance period ending September 30, 2024. This technical assistance will include introductory training on the uses and best practices for the ARP Homeless Funding, especially for LEAs that have awarded a competitive grant under ARP Homeless I that have not recently accessed funding strictly targeted to students experiencing homelessness.

Technical assistance also will be available throughout the performance period of the ARP Homeless grant to assist LEAs in continuing to utilize their funding to best meet the needs of the students experiencing homelessness within their communities. This training will focus on:

1. Outreach and identification;
2. Reengagement, including through providing nontraditional transportation supports especially in rural communities; and
3. Credit recovery and attainment.

It will also include open office hours informed by the questions and needs of LEAs as they develop their plans and focused on removing barriers that may prevent students experiencing homelessness from accessing their education. This work will also be supported by the 25 percent set-aside ARP Homeless II State funds totaling \$430,561.

In the spring of 2021, the NHDOE began making plans for the best way to use the ARP Homeless Funds. The NHDOE began analyzing the data given provided by LEAs on the number of students experiencing homelessness during the End of Year (EOY) counts. The NHDOE also worked to develop the ARP Homeless competitive grant application and open it to all the districts in the state. Finally, the NHDOE ensured that technical assistance was available so that

the LEAs would be ready for future formula funding statutorily focused on students who are experiencing homelessness.¹

The NHDOE also plans to use its ARP Homeless I and II State funds to partner with a non-profit organization that provides resource centers and services for runaway and homeless youth in communities around the State. This organization is uniquely situated to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in the historically underserved populations, as they already serve many of New Hampshire's high-need communities. For example, this community-based organization's resource center in Manchester—New Hampshire's largest and most diverse city—provides any runaway or homeless youth with access to a multitude of wraparound services, including clothing, showers and other hygiene needs, assistance with paperwork necessary for K-12 or postsecondary education enrollment, and housing supports.

Question 2:

How the SEA has used or will use their funds for State-level activities to provide support to LEAs to increase access to summer programming and plan for and provide wraparound services for summer 2021, in collaboration with State and local agencies and other community-based organizations;

SEA Response:

Throughout summer 2021, NHDOE has provided technical assistance to homeless liaisons across the State targeted at addressing the barriers to accessing summer learning opportunities encountered by students experiencing homelessness, including transportation especially in rural communities, supplies, clothing, and hygiene, and providing wraparound services, including academic tutoring and mental health supports.

In summer 2021, NHDOE also created and administered the GEER-funded ReKINDling Curiosity: Every Kid Goes to Camp (<https://rekindlingcuriosityeducation.nh.gov/>) program. The NHDOE partnered with New Hampshire camps and school-age summer programs across the State to offer students access to summer enrichment opportunities and the opportunity to move beyond COVID-19 and be a kid again. Students of all ages, backgrounds and abilities benefit from exposure to short-term summer enrichment programs, including in the areas of challenge, friend-making, positivity, and emotional safety. The NHDOE also ensured students experiencing homelessness and other students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic did not experience barriers to participating in the ReKINDling Curiosity program through providing mental health, transportation, enrichment materials, and nutrition supports.

The NHDOE also worked to develop the ARP Homeless competitive grant application and continued to provide technical assistance on ARP Homeless funds, including through

¹ USED awarded to NHDOE ARP Homeless I funds on 4/23/2021 and ARP Homeless II funds on 7/27/2021. Both ARP Homeless I and ARP Homeless II were approved by New Hampshire's Executive Council on 9/15/17 and New Hampshire General Court's Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee on 9/17/2021, per its standard process to accept and expend funds. As such, NHDOE could not expend ARP Homeless funds in spring of 2021.

webinars with LEAs on use of ARP Homeless II formula funds awarded to them in fall 2021. Finally, NHDOE used this time to obtain input from community-based organizations on the wraparound services most needed by students experiencing homelessness and potential partnerships to meet such needs.²

Question 3:

How the SEA has used or will use at least 75 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless I for distribution to LEAs in accordance with all requirements of EHCY. This must include the extent to which the SEA has or will use funds to supplement existing EHCY sub-grants to allow for more rapid fund distribution to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness, and the extent to which the SEA analyzed and reviewed where there are significant concentrations of students and families experiencing homelessness across the State (including in LEAs that are not existing EHCY sub-grantees), and how it has or will ensure that supports from ARP Homeless I can urgently reach them.

SEA Response:

As identified in New Hampshire's ARP ESSER State Plan, NHDOE's highest priority need for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students experiencing homelessness is outreach and identification. School year 2019-2020 EOY data on the number of students experiencing homelessness showed significant declines and variations compared to the prior two school years. For example, Salem reported 99 students experiencing homelessness in the 2019-2020 school year, a decline from 170 in the 2018-2019 school year. .

Given such gaps in outreach and identification related to the COVID-19 pandemic and supported by data declines and variations, the NHDOE found that LEAs that have not recently participated in McKinney-Vento would greatly benefit from ARP Homeless I funds supporting outreach and identification. All LEAs were eligible to apply for the ARP Homeless I competitive grant, and the "needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness" in the LEA—informed by numbers of students experiencing homelessness and supporting qualitative information—were evaluated and scored by an independent peer review. Applications were funded in in rank order.

For this reason and to increase the number of students experiencing homelessness served, NHDOE published a request for applications for 75% of ARP Homeless I funds in June 2021 that was open to all LEAs in the State, including the four LEAs currently participating in McKinney-Vento. The request for applications included an overview of ARP Homeless I and potential ways an LEA could leverage funds to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. In addition to outreach and identification, the grant competition also prioritized reengagement including through providing transportation and other wraparound services.

² USED awarded to NHDOE ARP Homeless I funds on 4/23/2021 and ARP Homeless II funds on 7/27/2021. Both ARP Homeless I and ARP Homeless II were approved by New Hampshire's Executive Council on 9/15/21 and New Hampshire General Court's Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee on 9/17/2021, per its standard process to accept and expend funds. As such, NHDOE could not expend ARP Homeless funds in summer 2021.

The NHDOE facilitated an independent peer review of submitted applications in July and August based on a publicly available rubric that evaluated the application's data analysis, needs assessment, plan for utilizing the funding, and budget narrative. The NHDOE is currently in the process of making competitive grant awards to LEAs both not currently and currently participating in McKinney-Vento in rank order based on the peer-review rubric scores.

II. ARP Homeless II

Question 1:

How the SEA will use up to 25 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless II for State-level activities to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building, and engagement at the State and LEA levels, including support to LEAs to plan for and provide wrap-around services, in collaboration with State and local agencies, for school year 2021-2022

SEA Response:

NHDOE plans to use the 25 percent set-aside ARP Homeless II State funds to sustain and expand the state-level activities that were introduced under ARP Homeless I. The 25 percent set-aside ARP Homeless I State funds totaled \$143,498. The 25 percent set-aside ARP Homeless II State funds totals \$430,561, and will support additional State staff to administer the program and provide technical assistance and training to LEAs throughout the performance period ending September 30, 2024 on best practices in utilizing the ARP Homeless II funding available through the formula grant. This technical assistance will include introductory training on the available funding and uses for the ARP Homeless Funding, especially for LEAs that have not recently accessed funding strictly targeted to students experiencing homelessness

Technical assistance also will be available throughout the performance period of the ARP Homeless grant to assist LEAs in continuing to utilize their funding to best meet the needs of the students experiencing homelessness within their communities. This training will focus on:

1. Outreach and identification;
2. Reengagement, including through providing nontraditional transportation supports especially in rural communities; and
3. Credit recovery and attainment.

It will also include open office hours informed by the questions and needs of LEAs as they develop their plans and focused on removing barriers that may prevent students experiencing homelessness from accessing their education.

Additionally, NHDOE plans to use the 25 percent set-aside ARP Homeless II State funds totaling \$430,561 to partner with a non-profit organization that provides resource centers and services for runaway and homeless youth. This community-based organization provides wrap-around services and access to supports addressing mental health, physical health, and safety concerns for youth experiencing homelessness in communities around the State. These wraparound services—including clothing, showers and other hygiene needs, assistance with paperwork necessary for K-12 or postsecondary education enrollment, and housing supports—allow students experiencing homelessness to better access their education and also support LEAs in their outreach and identification efforts.

Question 2:

How the SEA will use at least 75 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless II for distribution to LEAs in accordance with the final requirements. This must include a description

of how the SEA will distribute funds in accordance with the required formula to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness and the extent to which the SEA has encouraged or will encourage the creation of consortia for those LEAs that may not meet the required minimum formula amount.

SEA Response:

The NHDOE will use the 75 percent of funds awarded for the ARP Homeless to distribute to all LEAs using the formula outlined by the final requirements. This method will include distributing 50% of the allocation using the Title I, Part A formula and 50% of the funds using the count of students experiencing homelessness in the 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 school years, whichever is the higher number provided by each LEA. Once the formula for the allocation of the grants has been completed, the grants will be entered into the Grants Management System (GMS), the system through which all formula grants are managed at NHDOE. Through GMS, LEAs will be able to complete an application and budget for their allocations.

Only schools who receive an allocation of \$5,000 or more per the methodology in federal regulation will qualify for an individual grant. Those LEAs who do not qualify will be able to create consortia to receive funding. To encourage participation, reduce administrative burden, and expand services and resources to students experiencing homelessness, NHDOE will support the creation of a statewide consortium or other consortia of LEAs that may not meet the required minimum formula amount. The NHDOE support will include providing individualized technical assistance to LEAs that may not meet the required minimum formula amount, ensuring application requirements are streamlined and understandable to reduce administrative burden, and facilitating conversations between LEAs.

III. ARP Homeless I and ARP Homeless II

Question 1:

How the SEA will ensure that ARP-HCY supplements the support and services provided with ARP ESSER funds and does not replace the use of ARP ESSER funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness;

SEA Response:

To ensure that the ARP Homeless funds provided to LEAs supplements the supports and services provided with ARP ESSER funds, NHDOE will in its review of the LEA ARP ESSER Use of Funds Plans:

1. Verify that meaningful consultation with stakeholders representing the interests of children experiencing homelessness has taken place;
2. Review how the LEA will identify individual student learning loss, including among students most likely to have experienced the impact of lost instructional time on student learning, such as (a) students who did not consistently participate in remote instruction when offered during school building closures; (b) students who have missed the most in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years; and (c) students most at-risk of dropping out of school; and
3. Review how the LEA will ensure that the interventions it implements will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students, and particularly students experiencing homelessness.

Please see all LEA ARP ESSER Use of Funds Plans submitted by LEAs here:

<https://www.education.nh.gov/educators/grants-and-funding/emergency-funding-schools/new-hampshire-lea-arp-esser-use-funds-plans>.

NHDOE also will review ARP ESSER and ARP Homeless activities submitted to its Grants Management System to, at a minimum, ensure LEAs are leveraging ARP Homeless funds on uses specifically serving students experiencing homelessness and that students experiencing homelessness are able to access and fully participate in ESSER-funded learning loss recovery and other educational programs. Additionally, in NHDOE's 2021-2022 McKinney-Vento grant competition, NHDOE will require applicants to describe how McKinney-Vento funds will complement ARP Homeless activities.

In New Hampshire's ARP ESSER State Plan, NHDOE identified the highest priority academic, social, emotional, and/or mental health needs for the 2021-2022 school year related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students experiencing homelessness as:

1. Outreach and identification;
2. Reengagement, including through providing nontraditional transportation supports especially in rural communities; and
3. Credit recovery and attainment.

Please see New Hampshire's approved ARP ESSER State Plan here:

<https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/arp-esser-nh-state-plan-revised-final-07-28-21.pdf>.

In its administration of other federal COVID-19 education programs, NHDOE also has addressed other unique barriers in accessing educational opportunities that the pandemic has created for students who are experiencing homelessness, including by ensuring GEER-funded programs like ReKINDling Curiosity: Every Kid Goes to Camp (<https://rekindlingcuriosityeducation.nh.gov/>) provided mental health, transportation, enrichment materials, and nutrition supports.

Question 2:

The extent to which the SEA will use its State-level activities funds to award sub-grants or contracts to community-based organizations that are well-positioned to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in historically underserved populations such as rural children and youth, Tribal children and youth, students of color, children and youth with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQ+ youth, and pregnant, parenting, or caregiving students experiencing homelessness, and connect them to educationally-related support and wraparound services;

SEA Response:

Community-based organizations with existing capacity may be well-positioned to administer these emergency funds quickly. Such partnerships also may better align the work of NHDOE, school districts, and community-based organizations in identifying and meeting the needs of students experiencing homelessness.

Thus, NHDOE plans to use its ARP Homeless State funds to partner with a non-profit organization that provides resource centers and services for runaway and homeless youth in communities around the State. This organization is uniquely situated to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in the historically underserved populations, as they already serve many of New Hampshire's high-need communities. For example, this community-based organization's resource center in Manchester—New Hampshire's largest and most diverse city—provides any runaway or homeless youth with access to a multitude of wraparound services, including clothing, showers and other hygiene needs, assistance with paperwork necessary for K-12 or postsecondary education enrollment, and housing supports.

In its administration of other federal COVID-19 education programs, NHDOE also has addressed other unique barriers in accessing educational opportunities that the pandemic has created for students who are experiencing homelessness, including by ensuring GEER-funded programs like ReKINDling Curiosity: Every Kid Goes to Camp (<https://rekindlingcuriosityeducation.nh.gov/>) provided mental health, transportation, enrichment materials, and nutrition supports.

Finally, in the development of New Hampshire's ARP ESSER State Plan, NHDOE engaged in meaningful consultation with numerous community-based organizations. (More information about New Hampshire's robust consultation may be found on pages 26-31 of the approved ARP ESSER State Plan here: <https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/arp-esser-nh-state->

[plan-revised-final-07-28-21.pdf](#).) Leveraging ARP ESSER State funds, NHDOE has partnered with the United Way to provide afterschool enrichment opportunities and other wraparound services to students in historically underserved populations including English learners and low-income students.

Question 3:

How the SEA will encourage LEAs to award contracts to community-based organizations to help identify and support historically underserved populations experiencing homelessness.

SEA Response:

To encourage LEAs to partner with community-based organizations to help identify and support historically underserved populations experiencing homelessness in their administration of ARP Homeless funds, NHDOE will in its review of the LEA ARP ESSER Use of Funds Plans:

1. Verify that meaningful consultation with community-based organizations has taken place; and
2. Review an LEA's description of such consultation with community-based organizations including partnerships to promote access to before and after-school programming.

Please see all LEA ARP ESSER Use of Funds Plans submitted by LEAs here:

<https://www.education.nh.gov/educators/grants-and-funding/emergency-funding-schools/new-hampshire-lea-arp-esser-use-funds-plans>.

In the application process for the ARP Homeless I competitive grant and ARP Homeless II formula grant, NHDOE also asks LEAs to explain how they have considered partnering with community-based organizations to help identify and support historically underserved populations experiencing homelessness. The NHDOE will also offer technical assistance on awarding contracts to community-based organizations to LEAs as a part of expanded support. Consistent with NHDOE's belief in local control of education, NHDOE will continue to empower LEAs to utilize their ARP Homeless funds to best serve students experiencing homelessness within their community within the statutory and regulatory requirements of ARP Homeless.

Conclusion

Supported by *American Rescue Plan Act* Education for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP Homeless) funding, the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) and New Hampshire's school districts remain committed to ensuring students experiencing homelessness, who were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, can fully access their education. Consistent with this plan for the administration of ARP Homeless, NHDOE is focused on:

1. Improving outreach to and identification of students experiencing homelessness, especially in disrupted educational environment;
2. Addressing the barriers to accessing educational opportunities encountered by students experiencing homelessness, including transportation especially in rural communities, supplies, clothing, and hygiene;
3. Providing wraparound services, including academic tutoring and mental health supports; and
4. Ensuring students experiencing homelessness accrue and recover credit, especially in high school.

ARP Homeless will expand the high-quality technical assistance and training provided to school districts by NHDOE, support schools districts and community-based organizations in serving students experiencing homelessness within their communities, and expand awareness of participation in other federal and programs benefitting students experiencing homelessness. The NHDOE looks forward to working in partnership with New Hampshire's school districts and community-based organizations and the U.S. Department of Education towards our shared goal of best serving students experiencing homelessness.