

**ARP (American Rescue Plan) Homeless Funds (ARP-HCY)
- Rhode Island State Plan**

The following is the Rhode Island State Plan for the American Rescue Plan (ARP-HCY) Homeless Education Funds. This plan is submitted by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). Primary contacts for this plan are:

Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner, angelica.infantegreen@ride.ri.gov

Dr. Kelvin Roldán, Deputy Commissioner for System Transformation, kelvin.rolدان@ride.ri.gov

Jennifer Carney, Director, Office of Support and Strategic Planning Jennifer.Carney@ride.ri.gov

Eileen Botelho, Education Specialist, McKinney-Vento Homeless Coordinator,

eileen.botelho@ride.ri.gov

Mailing Address:

Rhode Island Department of Education

255 Westminster St.

Providence, RI 02903

Phone: 401-222-4600

In order to complete this plan, RIDE utilized the questions outlined in the ARP-HCY Homeless II application, which stated that SEAs (State Education Agencies) must respond to 8 prompts (3 related to ARP-HCY Homeless I, 2 related to ARP-HCY Homeless II, and 3 related to both ARP-HCY Homeless I & II)...

For ARP-HCY Homeless I:

1. How the SEA (State Educational Agency) has used or will use up to 25 percent of funds awarded under ARP-HCY 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 (Local Education Agencies) 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 (Education of Homeless Children and Youth) (Education of Homeless Children and Youth) (Education of Homeless Children and Youth) (Education of Homeless Children and Youth) (Education of Homeless Children and Youth) subgrant in the past to ensure that these LEAs are well-prepared to utilize the funds provided in ARP-HCY Homeless II;

In order to maximize the immediate benefit of the ARP-HCY I funds to impact and support our homeless students, The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) opted not to use the permitted 25% of funds awarded under ARP-HCY Homeless I for State-level activities to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building, and engagement at the State and local

education agency (LEA) levels. Instead, RIDE selected to distribute all available funds in the form of grants to the ten LEAs that had participated in the most recent RFP (2019) for McKinney Vento EHCY subgrants. This decision was intended to support the ten LEAs in the identification, enrollment, and school participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including through wrap-around services.

Technical assistance was provided to the ten participating LEAs as a first step in planning for the allocation of the ARP-HCY Homeless I funding. An overview of the guidance on ARP-HCY funds, as well as a summary of the timing, allocation, and allowable uses of these funds were provided to the ten participating LEAs. This state level support, training and technical assistance was provided to the LEAs by current RIDE staff and community partners with existing resources.

Based on the importance of distributing ARP-HCY I funds as expediently as possible to meet the needs of our homeless students during the summer and early fall, RIDE decided to target the LEAs with existing EHCY subgrants for the ARP-HCY Homeless I funds; these LEAs have the most significant needs, have identified higher numbers of homeless students in 2019, and already have successful programs in place to meet the needs of this population.

RIDE requested that each of these LEAs develop a plan to utilize the ARP-HCY Homeless I fund in ways that are the most impactful for students experiencing homelessness, that are aligned with the [LEAP Task Force Recommendations](#) and that supplement other ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding, with a focus on 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, so that the funds connect students to educationally related support and wraparound services.

In order to provide further guidance and technical assistance to the ten LEAs in writing their ARP-HCY1 proposals that would ensure that they meet the immediate needs in the spring and summer of 2021, and to support LEAs for school year 2021-2022, RIDE held a second training session, in collaboration with several community agencies who are members of the Rhode Island Continuum of Care (CoC), to provide information about various resources and supports available to homeless students, and to foster partnerships between the LEAs and these community-based agencies.

RIDE plans to build capacity in LEAs that have not received an EHCY subgrant in the past by utilizing a portion of the allowable 25% from ARP-HCY Homeless II funds (which is available to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building, and engagement at the State and LEA levels) to conduct capacity building trainings to ensure that LEAs that have not received an EHCY subgrant in the past are well-prepared to utilize the funds provided to them (based on formula) from ARP-HCY Homeless II in addressing the needs of students experiencing homelessness. These LEAs will need to assess the needs in their districts in order to develop a plan to expend ARP-HCY Homeless II funds in ways that support students experiencing

homelessness as well as to train various LEA staff on identification, enrollment and ensuring full participation.

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.

RIDE has not used any ARP-HCY Homeless I 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. However, RIDE has worked in collaboration with State and local agencies and other community-based organizations to provide technical assistance (as described in question 1) to the ten LEAs that were invited to submit proposals for the first round of funding.

3. How the SEA has used or will use at least 75 percent of funds awarded under ARP-HCY 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 subgrants 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 subgrantees), and how it has or will ensure that supports from ARP-HCY Homeless I can urgently reach them.

RIDE has not used funds awarded under ARP-HCY Homeless I but has ensured that distribution to LEAs is in accordance with all requirements of EHCY. A decision was made to invite proposals only from LEAs to supplement their existing EHCY subgrants and to LEAs that had submitted proposals in our most recent RFP (Request for Proposal) for McKinney Vento Funding (2019) to ensure more rapid fund distribution to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness, and to ensure that supports from ARP-HCY Homeless I can promptly reach those students most in need of supports during the summer and upcoming school year.

RIDE chose to use ARP Homeless I funds (\$679,643) to supplement its existing EHCY subgrantees. The way in which RIDE analyzed and reviewed where there are significant concentrations of students and families experiencing homelessness across the State was to require applicants to report the number of identified children and youth experiencing homelessness in the LEA(s), preschool through high school for the 2018-19 school year, the 2019-20 school year, the SY2019-20 school year and the 2020-21 school year (available to date, if available).

If the number of currently identified children and youth experiencing homelessness in the LEA(s) had changed by more than 10% since the 2018-19 school year, LEAs were asked to explain the difference. In this way we were able to learn where the significant concentrations of

students experiencing homelessness were across our state as well as where the pandemic had most significantly affected students and families experiencing homelessness.

In addition, RIDE analyzed the *RI NCHE data workbook* to determine where there are significant concentrations of students and families experiencing homelessness across the State (including in LEAs that are not existing EHCY sub grantees), to ensure that it has or will supports districts that urgently need them.

For ARP-HCY Homeless II:

1. How the SEA will use up to 25 percent of funds awarded under ARP-HCY 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; and....

RIDE will use up to 25 percent of funds awarded under ARP-HCY Homeless II for State-level activities for all LEAs of which a substantial number have not received McKinney Vento EHCY funds in the past and will require orientation and technical assistance regarding all the requirements and allowable uses of ECHY funds. RIDE will provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building, and engagement at the State and LEA levels. RIDE will collaborate with NCHE (National Center for Homeless Education) and other service providers to design training sessions that support LEAs as they plan for their ARP-HCY Homeless II funding. RIDE will provide guidance and technical assistance to enable all LEAs to identify homeless students, increase enrollment and full participation in their education and will assist LEAs as they develop programs for students experiencing homelessness and include the provision of wrap-around services, in collaboration with State and local agencies, for school year 2021-2022.

2. How the SEA will use at least 75 percent of funds awarded under ARP-HCY 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.

RIDE will use at least 75 percent of funds awarded under ARP-HCY Homeless II for distribution to LEAs in accordance with the final requirements by distributing funds in accordance with the required formula to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness (by formula rather than competition). LEA allocations will be based equally on the proportional share of an LEA's allocation under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)) for the most recent fiscal year, and the LEA's proportional share of the number of homeless children and youth identified by each LEA relative to all LEAs in the State, using the greater of the number of homeless children and youth in either the 2018-19 or 2019-20 school year in each LEA. This will

ensure a balance in the distribution of funds to focus on the needs of the LEAs, considering both the LEA's number of low-income students and the number of homeless children and youth. In addition, allowing the use of either the 2018-19 school year or 2019-20 school year homeless counts takes into consideration the potential for undercounting in the 2019-20 school year due to COVID-19 by allowing LEAs to use the greater of the two numbers.

Because an LEA must have an allocation of at least \$5,000 under the formula to be eligible for an ARP-HCY Homeless II subgrant on its own, RIDE will encourage the creation of consortia for those LEAs that may not meet the required minimum formula amount.

For both ARP-HCY Homeless I and ARP-HCY Homeless II:

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.

RIDE had provided guidance to all the LEAs that submitted proposals for ARP-HCY1 funding that ARP-HCY **must supplement** the supports 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; all applications were reviewed with this as one criterion in the scoring. As RIDE begins to distribute the remaining APR II funds guidance will be provided to all LEAs about the supplemental nature of this funding. RIDE will continue to highlight and require that LEAs comply with the supplemental requirements and that these funds do not replace the use of ARP ESSER funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness.

2. The extent to which the SEA will use its State-level activities funds to award subgrants 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; and

RIDE will use a portion of its State-level activities funds to award subgrants or contracts to organizations that are well-positioned to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in historically underserved populations. Utilizing the state procurement procedures provided by the State of Rhode Island, Department of Administration, RIDE will solicit qualified vendors and service providers that can deliver training and technical assistance to ensure that all LEAs (in particular our 50+ LEAs that have not received McKinney Vento EHCY funds in the past) are trained in the requirements, allowable uses of funds and best practices so that when formula-driven allocations are calculated and awarded to all LEAs, they will be well-positioned to design programs for students experiencing homelessness that will increase the identification, enrollment and full participation in their education - especially for rural 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.

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

RIDE will encourage LEAs to enter contracts with community-based organizations to help identify and support historically underserved populations experiencing homelessness. The LEAs who applied for ARP-HCY I funding were informed during RIDE training meetings and through various correspondence that applications should contain a **focus on 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, these funds can connect them to educationally related support and wraparound services. The same guidance will be provided to all LEAs receiving ARP-HCY II allocations. Additionally, RIDE will continue to offer planning meetings with the Rhode Island Continuum of Care (CoC) and other organizations to improve the community level coordination with LEAs.

LEAs will be reminded that funds may be used for any of the allowable uses of funds permitted by the McKinney-Vento Act. In addition, RIDE provided guidance that ARP-HCY funds may also be used for “any expenses necessary to facilitate the identification, enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youth,” 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).

Conclusion:

RIDE is submitting this State Plan for the approval of the ARP-HCY (American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth) Homeless Funds - and welcomes any comments or recommendations. The Agency remains committed to our students who may experience homelessness and looks forward to working with all partners to improve services and outcomes for our students.