

Wyoming ARP-HCY State Plan

- Plan narratives
- Stakeholder engagement summary



Part One: ARP-HCY I

How the State Education Agency (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 Local Education Agency (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 subgrant in the past in order to ensure that these LEAs are well-prepared to utilize the funds provided in ARP Homeless II:

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) will reserve 20% of ARP-HCY funds to provide state-level activities to LEAs across Wyoming. The WDE has not been able to use ARP-HCY funds in the summer of 2021, as our state has not formally accepted the funding at this time. However, once funds are accepted, we will move forward with this plan:

State-level activities will include the following items as identified through stakeholder engagement with LEAs:

- Training to all LEAs and any staff within the LEAs to build capacity for identifying students experiencing homelessness, and students in housing transition. This will aid all LEAs, which is inclusive of LEAs that have not received an EHCY grant award in prior years.
- Training and technical assistance provided to all LEAs on allowable uses of funds under McKinney-Vento, ESSER, ARP-HCY, and other federal programs that allow for services specific to students experiencing homelessness.
- Guidance on planning for and providing wrap-around services to students experiencing homelessness. Opportunities to engage with providers of wrap-around services will also be offered.
- Creating a directory of resources by city/town, county, and school district to assist LEAs with identifying local partners/support for students and families experiencing homelessness. The WDE will work with communities and other state agencies that have already gathered significant amounts of this information and placed it on the Wyoming 211 network. The WDE will compile the information in a way that makes it useful for LEAs and students. In this directory, there may be an opportunity to provide some kind of



identification of providers and community partners that would assist with or support summer programming for 2022.

- For all LEAs, and to provide basic support to LEAs that have rarely or never received EHCY grants in the past or LEAs that have not had an identified student in the recent past, the WDE will provide support in reviewing and strengthening LEAs policies, plans, and procedures for supporting students experiencing homelessness.

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:

The WDE will retain 20% of ARP-HCY funds to provide state-level activities to LEAs across Wyoming. The WDE has not been able to use ARP-HCY funds in the summer of 2021, as our state has not formally accepted the funding at this time. However, once funds are accepted, we will move forward with this plan:

The WDE will collaborate with LEA's, and community partners to:

- Determine the needs for summer programs, or additional support needed for existing summer programs, that serve homeless students for the summer of 2022. Needs would be identified through surveys, and stakeholder meetings, with the expectation that LEAs will have conducted a needs assessment to provide input for the SEA level to consider.
- Assist LEA's in creating or enhancing existing summer programs for the summer of 2022 by conducting meetings where all LEAs participate to share their own approaches and use of resources for idea sharing and troubleshooting.
- Where possible, provide SEA contracted services to assist LEAs based on identified statewide needs.
- Helping LEAs identify community partners that they may choose to contract with to provide summer programs, helping them make sure their procurement processes align with federal requirements, and that their desired use of community partners will be allowable and provide results for students experiencing homelessness.



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 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 Homeless I can urgently reach them.

The WDE will be awarding 80% of funds to LEAs through a competitive grant application to allow all 48 LEAs the opportunity to apply for these funds. Applications will be scored based on a scoring rubric, which does include a metric to determine the LEAs that are currently most in need of funding to support homeless students. Current year data is reported by the LEA in the grant application and the WDE will also review previous years data to assist in determining LEAs that may have had an influx of students experiencing homelessness due to the pandemic. Based on these data elements, LEAs will fall into one of three tiers to ensure that funding is prioritized for those LEAs with the greatest need. Once our state has formally accepted funding, we will be able to open this grant application for our LEAs, and we have already conducted virtual meetings to discuss the application process and questions contained in the grant application to prepare our LEAs for quick submission, and efficient SEA review and awarding processes. In the virtual meetings, it was discussed how the funds may be used, and that they are supplemental to EHCY grants for those that currently receive that funding.



Part Two: ARP-HCY II

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

The WDE will retain 20% of ARP-HCY funds to provide state-level activities to LEAs across Wyoming. State-level activities will include the following items as identified through stakeholder engagement with LEAs:

- Training to all LEAs and any staff within the LEAs to hone skills in identifying students experiencing homelessness, and students in housing transition.
- Training and technical assistance to all LEAs on allowable uses of funds under McKinney-Vento, ESSER, ARP-HCY, and other federal programs that allow for services specific to students experiencing homelessness.
- Guidance on planning for and providing wrap-around services to students experiencing homelessness.
- Creating a directory of resources by city/town, county, and school district to assist LEAs with identifying local partners/support for students experiencing homelessness. The WDE will work with communities and other state agencies that have already gathered significant amounts of this information and placed it on the Wyoming 211 network. The WDE will compile the information in a way that is useful for LEAs and students.
- For all LEAs, and to provide basic support to LEAs that have rarely or never received EHCY grants or have not had an identified student in the recent past, the WDE will provide support in reviewing and strengthening LEAs policies, plans, and procedures for supporting students experiencing homelessness.



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:

The WDE will be awarding 80% of funds to LEAs. Some LEAs did not meet the \$5,000 minimum award requirement (11 out of 48 LEAs could not get to that amount). The WDE will work with these 11 LEAs to encourage consortium and collaboration, of which there is interest based on our ARP - HCY stakeholder feedback.

Allocations were determined based on the funding model in the ARP-Homeless II guidance. Half of the ARP-Homeless II funds were calculated equitably to LEA's by utilizing the proportional share of an LEA's allocation under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) for the most recent fiscal year. The other half of the Homeless II funds were allocated equitably based on the higher number of homeless students identified in each LEA for the 2018-19 and the 2019-20 school year, and allocating funds based on the year that had the higher count. Nineteen (19) LEAs had higher counts in the 2018-19 school year, twenty-four (24) LEAs had higher counts in the 2019-20 school year, and five (5) LEA's had the same homeless count for both years.



Part Three: ARP Homeless I & II

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:

The ARP ESSER approach to students experiencing homelessness is focused on communication from the WDE to LEAs. WDE will provide technical assistance to all LEAs regarding the ARP HCY funds and the requirement for those funds to supplement the ARP ESSER funds through zoom trainings, email communication and documentation. In addition, The ARP-HCY I and II grant applications include an assurance that ARP-HCY funds supplement 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. WDE will also review LEA's ARP ESSER grant applications and ARP ESSER Implementation plans and compare those to LEAs ARP-HCY grant applications to ensure that LEA's are not supplementing support and services provided under ARP ESSER.

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:

Through stakeholder feedback, historically smaller EHCY funding, and an increasing need in our state due to declining industries and pandemic impact on businesses, the WDE intends to seek out community-based organizations and experts to provide statewide training to all LEA's Homeless Liaisons and other identified LEA staff. The training would be focused on identifying children experiencing homelessness based on the unique demographics or populations in individual LEA's



communities, understanding how services can support those students once identified, what those services are, how to access them, and more. This may involve a Request for Proposal or Request for Information process, and a subsequent contract process, all of which have state procurement required timelines associated with them.

To meet more unique needs in our LEAs once students are identified, the WDE will encourage use of LEA grants funds for local contracting with community-based organizations. Wyoming is a large state geographically, with many rural communities. Because of our state's size, some community-based organizations are only set-up to serve their counties or immediate surrounding areas, meaning they are not able to provide services statewide. Because of this, the WDE will work with LEAs to encourage use of the ARP-HCY funds to contract with their closest community-based organizations to assist them as they serve students experiencing homelessness.

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

The WDE will be using state-level activities funds to encourage LEAs in identifying community partners that serve historically underserved populations experiencing homelessness to collaborate with. The WDE will work with LEAs and other agencies in Wyoming to create a directory of organizations that serve underserved homeless populations and their families. By creating this directory, it will allow LEAs the ability to not only know what organizations are in their local community, but in the ones that are in neighboring communities to allow them a larger pool of partners to collaborate with. The WDE will also provide technical assistance and support to LEAs and their partners by offering to facilitate conversations, and provide guidance on ensuring services and supports meet the requirements under the ARP-HCY plan.

The WDE holds monthly virtual meetings with LEA Homeless Liaisons and will continue to use these meetings to provide assistance, support, troubleshooting, and encouragement to LEA's during these meetings, with a large focus on the ARP-HCY funding since it will be reaching a larger volume of LEAs than ECHY funding has historically.

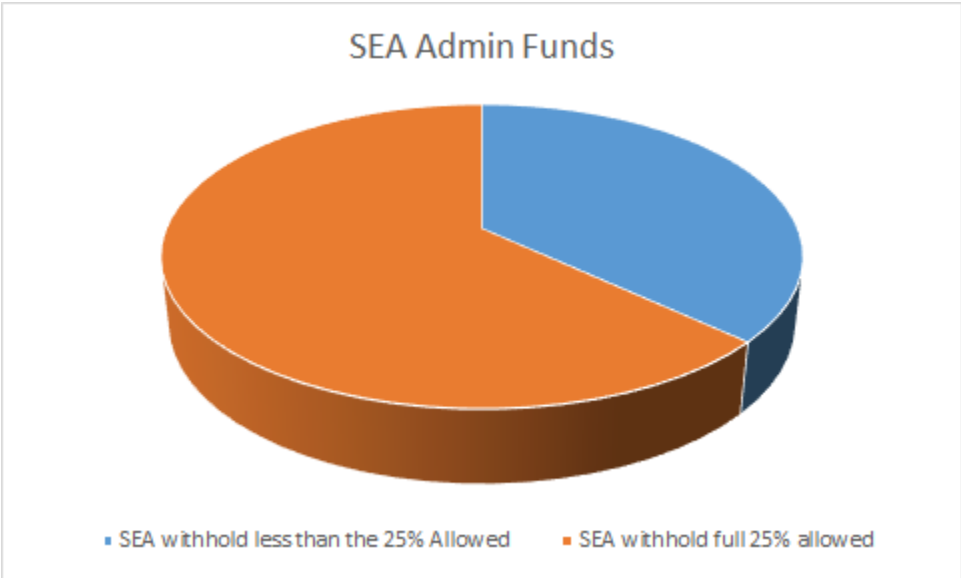


Part Four: Stakeholder Engagement

Summary

The WDE created and distributed to LEAs a brief survey to gather feedback in order to properly plan for ARP-HCY use of funds, and to highlight potential state and community partnerships to assist with delivery of services. The survey was distributed on August 11, 2021, and feedback was received through August 22, 2021. The WDE received 19 responses out of 48 LEAs in Wyoming.

The WDE also conducted two virtual meetings on August 19, 2021 to allow LEAs to ask questions about the funding, the survey, and to allow an additional avenue for more feedback. There were a total of 23 participants between the two meetings. The meeting conversations helped steer both the WDE and LEAs towards approaches that we hadn't clearly identified in the survey responses.



Districts were asked about the percent of funds the WDE can withhold to determine if they would prefer the WDE to withhold the full 25% to help support all the school districts, or if they



would like the WDE to withhold less to allow the districts additional funding to assist with establishing community partnerships. We provided preliminary allocations based on the formula established within ARP-HCY II with the WDE withholding the full 25% to give an idea of funding at that level. The consensus of this question in the survey was close to divided, and on the zoom meetings equally leaned towards the SEA retaining close to the 25%. The WDE assessed this feedback to get to the determination of awarding out 80% of funds instead of 75% of funds as a way to have enough funding to serve all LEAs from the state level and put a little more funding out to the LEAs themselves.

Also discussed were community partnerships. Smaller communities don't have as many local resources, but aren't always aware of resources in nearby communities that they may be able to partner with. This is where the conversation about creating a directory to help the LEAs would be a good use of SEA level funds. This directory would list all the local resources known in each community that serve or provide services to assist homeless students and their families. Wyoming does also have a website with information that was highlighted during the virtual meetings. That website is a good starting place for gathering information to create an LEA user-friendly directory. The website highlighted is: <https://wy211.communityos.org>.

Training was another item that all LEAs agreed would be a valuable use of SEA level funds. There was direct mention of both training about McKinney-Vento, and training on how to partner with community organizations and create contracts to receive direct services.

Stakeholder responses regarding state level activities and creating partnerships:

-Accurately Identifying youth and families in transition (specific examples and discussions about what does and doesn't qualify families)

-Continue to provide support and direction of successful / positive activities and partnerships that the State is seeing and would like to continue to see.

-If at the state level more good could be done (aka supporting non-profits in creating a network of shelters; creating trackable data systems school districts could share) then the support for more state money is higher. Other things that could be helpful statewide - supporting non-profits in expanding infrastructure in our community - internet; low income housing; youth shelters.

-College and Career Readiness and college/career visits

-I would like more specific training and help with parent/care-giver partnerships



-Training/PD for district school wide staff

-Continue to train District Liaisons

-Additional training and assistance with community partnerships

-I do not have specific suggestions as I do not have a lot of familiarity in this capacity. Our homeless population is almost zero, and when we do have a situation present itself in the past, we have been able to provide supports and resources as needed.

-Programs that help identify and remediate learning gaps for kids.

-Trauma informed staff members.

-Communications of community/state partnerships available, training on how to best use resources in a community with very little homeless population

-Maybe a database to track MKV students who transition a lot. We do not have a lot of partners here due to rural nature and 7 Fremont County districts in our area. We share borders with 4 districts.

-Providing sample forms that meet legal requirements, creating state level partnerships with groups that serve many communities

-Provide clear direction about how the funds can be spent.

Stakeholder responses regarding how the WDE can help support LEA's with contracting with organizations and partners:

-I know more could be done for summer programming.

-I am unsure. I'm still learning about this role and don't know what is needed. I apologize.

-Continue to provide direction and support. Thanks

-WDE personnel are quite helpful and make themselves available.

-Unsure...district personnel are already partnering with these organizations in our school district.

-I am not sure at this time. White Buffalo recovery and prevention.

-It would be helpful to have a list of contacts and specific people to talk to at each community organization



-For isolated rural very small districts, additional support staff and resources would be VERY beneficial.

-Further training for staff working with homeless youth. I believe small communities and rural communities struggle with available support and wraparound services.

-First, I would be interested in seeing a list of such organizations and partners in our community that would be recommended.

-Contracted counseling services for students and families, free healthcare drive up clinics at the schools, shelter security resources, food and household goods pantries, and after school programming to increase supervision for students who may be left home alone more due to the financial burdens created by Covid-19.

-Know information with who we can specifically partner with, and what are the allowable uses of the funds.

-My district has a community with very little opportunity to contract with other organizations and partners in this specific area. Any connections the WDE has would be beneficial. Thank you.

-We partner with the early childhood organizations on the reservation.

End of Stakeholder Summary