

Using American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) Funds to Meet Students’ Needs

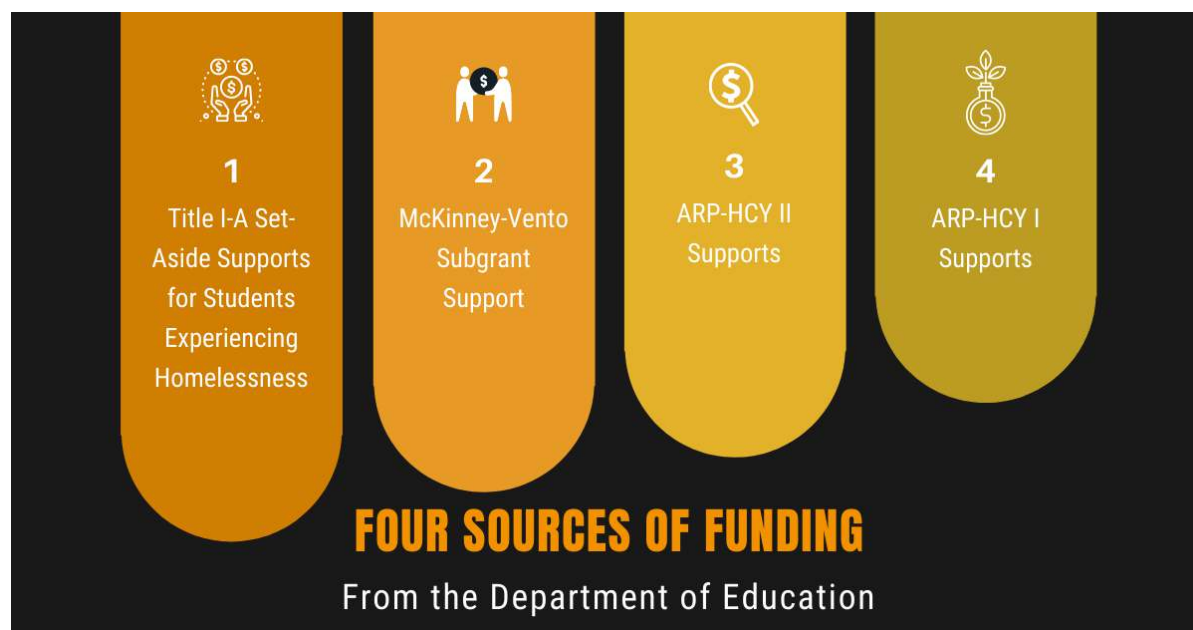
This document is designed to be used in tandem with the McKinney-Vento Act, Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program Needs Assessment. It shares ideas to meet needs identified through the needs assessment. It is important to note that many of the activities suggested in this document actually are *required* McKinney-Vento services. We noted some of these and encourage you to review McKinney-Vento Act [summaries](#) and the [law](#) itself for more information.

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Currently Available Funding to Support the Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness

As you consider the best strategies to meet needs, keep in mind that students experiencing homelessness should be fully included in all Educational Services programs, as well as being uniquely served through the Title I, Part A homeless set-aside. While McKinney-Vento and ARP-HCY funds offer an opportunity to provide innovative, supplemental services, they do not replace Title I, Part A supports. The four sources of funding the U.S. Department of Education currently provides *specifically* for students experiencing homelessness can be visualized as layers of support, with some funding sources supplementing others.¹



In addition to accessing as many different kinds of funding as possible, schools and districts also may pool their funds to support students experiencing homelessness regionally.

¹ ARP-HCY I: one-time funds that were awarded to local educational agencies (LEAs) in 2021 based on a competitive subgrant process. Allowable uses and additional information are available [here](#).

ARP-HCY II: one-time funds that will be awarded to LEAs by formula early in 2022. Allowable uses and additional information are available [here](#).

McKinney-Vento Subgrants: awarded every three years based on a competitive subgrant process. Allowable uses are listed [here](#).


Title I, Part A Set-Aside: All LEAs that receive Title I Part A funds must [reserve](#) funds to support homeless students. Allowable uses can be found in Section M [here](#).

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY funds to Increase Liaison Capacity

Quick steps with small investments

- Ask the liaison which duties take up significant time and could be shared with existing or new, ARP-funded staff, and reallocate those duties.
 - Example: A liaison in West Virginia realized she was spending more than half of her McKinney-Vento time arranging transportation. She is using ARP-HCY funds to hire a part-time transportation coordinator, which will allow her to focus her time on identification, academic achievement, and connecting young children experiencing homelessness to early childhood education.
- Increase staff/staff hours dedicated to McKinney-Vento liaison duties.

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires every local educational agency to designate a liaison "able to carry out [ten] duties described" in the law. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)

- Designate a liaison at each school building (ideally a counselor, social worker, or administrator) and provide each building liaison with a small pot of money to support McKinney-Vento students at that school. Defray costs for substitute staff

if needed, so building liaisons can attend McKinney-Vento training.

Longer-term activities with greater funding

- Hire an expert to evaluate the McKinney-Vento program and liaison capacity, and design a plan to increase the liaison's capacity and develop the program.

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Improve Identification

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools and districts to “remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youths.” 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(l).

Quick steps with small investments

- Defray costs for McKinney-Vento professional development for teachers, registrars, social workers, counselors, early childhood education staff, administrators, and all school/district staff.

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires liaisons to ensure that “school personnel providing services under this subtitle receive professional development and other support.” 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(ix).

- Conduct school database address queries to recognize addresses of motels, shelters, and doubled-up situations. Increase the liaison’s or a social worker’s capacity to allow them to reach out to families and students identified to confirm eligibility.²

It's The Law!




Providing information in multiple languages is required. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that “public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated... in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.” 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(vi).

- Translate all existing outreach materials, including posters, brochures, school enrollment forms, videos, and website/social media posts, into multiple languages.

² Exercise sensitivity and care when confirming eligibility, to avoid stigma or trauma to families or students. In addition, discussing homeless with third parties, like landlords, would violate the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#).

- Increase liaison or other staff time to collaborate with eviction courts, law enforcement, and legal services to identify families who recently lost their housing.
 - Example: A liaison in Maricopa County, AZ collaborated with lead constables in her area to send a brief McKinney-Vento summary electronically to all constables (who process evictions) and a flyer to give to parents, providing information about school of origin and other McKinney-Vento rights and the liaison's contact information.
- Increase liaison or other staff time to collaborate with community agencies and

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires liaisons to ensure that "homeless children and youths are identified... through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies." 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(i).

provide specialized McKinney-Vento training to organizations that work with pregnant/parenting youth, families and youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and other families and young people, or invite those organizations to larger trainings that include school staff.

Longer-term activities with greater funding

- Hire an expert to conduct an assessment of current identification activities and design a plan to enhance the approach to identification, with a particular focus on students of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ students, and pregnant/parenting students.
 - Example: A school district in California hired SchoolHouse Connection to assess identification activities, focusing on students of color, and develop a plan to enhance identification strategies district-wide.
- Contract with community health and housing agencies for them to train staff in McKinney-Vento eligibility and screen families quickly for potential eligibility.


- Hire McKinney-Vento students and parents to “story-board” a series of short videos that explain the McKinney-Vento program in a student- and parent-friendly manner. Pay them for their work. Work with your high school media program or contract with a media agency to produce the videos, and post them on school and districts websites and social media. Ensure racial and ethnic diversity among participants and be sure videos are culturally sensitive and deliberately designed to reach families and youth of color.
- Contract with a firm to design and launch a public outreach campaign that includes targeted advertisements in places families and youth frequent such as grocery stores, public transportation, and community services, as well as TV, radio, and social media advertisements. Ensure the campaign uses multiple languages and centers diversity and inclusion to reach families and youth of color appropriately.
- Create or purchase online training modules for school staff and community agencies.

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Reengage and Conduct Outreach Students Experiencing Homelessness

Quick steps with small investments

- Hire youth and parents experiencing homelessness to help reach and refer other students and families.
- Increase liaison or other staff time to partner with early education home visiting

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires liaisons to ensure that "homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive... services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs..., early intervention services ..., and other preschool programs administered by the local educational agency." 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(iii).

programs, Head Start recruitment efforts, child-find agencies, and other existing early childhood outreach efforts to be sure their staff are trained on McKinney-Vento eligibility and able to screen families quickly and refer them to the liaison.

- Example: Rhode Island's Department of Education staff work in partnership with the Rhode Island Head Start Association to create [tools](#) to help schools and districts connect with [local Head Start providers](#) for families experiencing homelessness who have preschool children.
- Contract with local agencies that assist families and youth for them to have staff trained in McKinney-Vento eligibility and able to screen families for potential eligibility and assist in connecting them to school quickly.
- Budget now for additional social work and administrative staff during the summer, to help with outreach and enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year.

Longer-term activities with greater funding


- Hire an Outreach Case Manager.
 - Example: The Maslow Project in Medford, Oregon created a [Student Outreach Coordinator](#) to work with youth, school personnel, motels, housing agencies, and community partners to locate disengaged students and distribute information and supplies.
- Provide stipends for local Bachelor's or Master's degree in social work students as interns to support with outreach and reengagement.
- Contract with a local agency to create a Mobile Outreach Unit to drive to areas with motels, high-density apartments or other housing to distribute books, snacks, hygiene supplies and other items, and to reconnect students to school.
 - Example: Hawaii's McKinney-Vento program used a summer outreach unit to reach children and families and share information about school and the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Build an online app to connect students and families to school and local resources in real time.
 - Example: Pittsburgh's Homeless Children Education Fund partnered with local service agencies to create "[BigBurgh.com](#)," an online app that directs youth and adults experiencing homelessness to free, low-barrier services.

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Improve Attendance of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Quick steps with small investments

- Provide prepaid cell phones for youth and parents to allow for quick and easy communication as soon as attendance issues arise.
 - o Example: Kansas City Public Schools purchased phones with one- and two-year contracts for McKinney-Vento high school seniors.

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools and districts to "remove barriers to the... enrollment and retention" of students experiencing homelessness. Enrollment includes "attending classes and participating fully in school activities." 42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(I); 11434a(1).

- Enlist counselors, teachers, administrators, and other staff with relationships with individual students to find out why students are missing school, and address the root causes, such as:

<p>Student is self-conscious about clothing or hygiene</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide store cards/prepaid debit cards for students/parents to purchase clothing, uniforms, hygiene supplies, etc. • Purchase a washer and dryer for students and parents to use at schools after hours. These can be used by sports and clubs, as well. • Provide laundry tokens and detergent, since these are necessary to enable the student to attend and participate fully in school activities.
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Student lacks transportation to school, or transportation is unreliable or unreasonably time-consuming

It's the Law!

The McKinney-Vento Act requires transportation to the school of origin, as well as transportation to school and extra-curricular activities “to the extent that lack of access to transportation is a barrier to school or extracurricular activities.” McKinney-Vento and ARP-HCY funds can be used to cover excess costs for transportation. 42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(J)(iii); 11432(g)(1)(I); 11433(d)(5); U.S. Department of Education (2018), Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, J-11.


- Provide hiring incentives to attract drivers for McKinney-Vento students and address driver shortages.
- Pay for a student’s/parent’s car repairs to allow them to drive to school if the cost of the repair is reasonable and necessary based on the student’s needs and other available alternatives.
- Pay for access to local bikeshare programs for students.
- Engage local taxi companies to provide on-demand transportation with background-checked drivers.
 - Example: Minneapolis Public Schools set up on-demand taxi service after student/parent surveys indicated transportation was the greatest need.
- Provide gas cards and mileage reimbursement for parents and/or youth.
- Develop a regional, virtual message board for transportation directors/coordinators to post needs that other districts could view to see if they are able to assist.
- [Hop, Skip, Drive](#) is a child-friendly Uber alternative available in some communities.
- Create a local or regional transportation one-stop “hub” where rides could be coordinated.
- Hire a transportation specialist/router to build and coordinate transportation options for McKinney-Vento students.
- Contract with other local transportation systems, such as those used for senior citizens or medical appointments, to provide transportation during their off-hours with background-checked drivers.
- Purchase a vehicle(s) for McKinney-Vento transportation, as long as the purchase, including related expenses such as fuel and insurance, is less than the cost of alternative means of transportation.

<p>Student is not motivated to attend school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about the student’s goals and interests, and use ARP-HCY funds to provide related activities at school. For example, hire a community member to teach basic computer game design, drone operation, robotics, dance, and other workshops based on students’ specific interests. • Send small care packages with fun school-supplies and motivational items to students weekly or monthly to keep them engaged. • Offer students the opportunity to build mentorship relationships with school staff with whom they have something in common, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and parenting.
<p>Student’s main connection with school is extra-curricular activities</p> <p><u>It’s the Law!</u> The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools and districts to “remove barriers to the... enrollment and retention” of students experiencing homelessness. Enrollment includes “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.” 42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(I); 11434a(1).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay for needed uniforms and supplies for extra-curricular activities. • Pay/waive fees. • Provide transportation.

Student feels unsafe, unwelcome, or bullied at school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase and implement school climate improvement trainings and activities, focusing particularly on the needs of LGBTQ+ students and students of color.
Student has to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a paid internship at school for the student, including the possibility to earn school credit. • Provide child care at school for parenting students.

Longer-term activities with greater funding

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools and districts to "remove barriers to the... enrollment." 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(I).

- Upgrade online enrollment systems to ensure they are fully and easily accessible to families and students experiencing homelessness.
- Example: [Removing Barriers to Online Enrollment](#) shares specific strategies to ensure barrier-free

enrollment for parent and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

- Hire a part-time attendance specialist specifically for McKinney-Vento students. This person can meet individually with parents and students to determine why students are not attending and address barriers.
- Create a McKinney-Vento student attendance advisory board. Pay students a stipend for their participation. Find out from students what kinds of interventions would promote attendance, and use ARP-HCY funds to implement their suggestions.
- Create a McKinney-Vento parent attendance advisory board. Pay parents a stipend for their participation. Find out from parents what kinds of interventions would promote attendance, and use ARP-HCY funds to implement their suggestions.

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Improve Academic Achievement of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Quick steps with small investments

- Offer teachers extra paid hours to provide individual academic support to their students, do weekly check-ins by text or other platforms outside of class, and provide weekly attendance certificates and other incentives to promote attendance.
- Partner with local colleges to hire qualified college students to provide individual and group tutoring to students.
- Ensure access to existing after-school and summer enrichment programs by prioritizing McKinney-Vento students and providing transportation.
- Expand the capacity of existing after-school and summer enrichment programs to accommodate McKinney-Vento students, and purchase slots in private programs as needed.
- Take McKinney-Vento high school students on visits to local colleges.
 - St. Lucie Public Schools in Florida partnered with a local college to offer the “[McKinney-Vento Opportunity Tour](#)” of college for over 100 students.
- Pay to upgrade the school/district database to make it easier to track partial credits.

Longer-term activities with greater funding

- Hire part-time staff (or contract with a community agency) to provide stable, long-term mentoring and academic support to McKinney-Vento students, similar to the [Check and Connect](#) model.
- Contract with a community agency to provide after-school enrichment activities for McKinney-Vento students. [21st Century Community Learning Center programs](#) could be good partners. Services could be offered at shelters and motels, but also should be offered at schools and non-stigmatizing community centers

where students who are doubled-up, in substandard housing, or in other homeless situations could attend, ideally integrated fully with non-homeless students. Enrichment programs should include a strong academic component, but also could include snacks, computer access, housing support, haircuts, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion assistance, exercise, and outdoor activities.

- Example: The Steve Smith Foundation in Charlotte, North Carolina set-up an after-school learning center for approximately 105 students experiencing homelessness in grades K-5. The Foundation works with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district to ensure all students receive meals, in addition to access to technology and support for learning.
- Provide entertaining and engaging summer enrichment programs that combine academics with physical and mental wellness. Coordinate with higher education for summer course or classes such as life guard certification, kayaking, surfing, rock climbing, etc.
 - Example: SHIP of Frederick County, Maryland provided 75 additional slots in its [New Horizons](#) summer program for high school students experiencing homelessness. Students took academic courses in the morning and life skill workshops in the afternoon.
- Hire a Systems Navigator or Housing Navigator to help connect families to housing, food, and other needs, particularly doubled-up families and youth who struggle to access housing and homeless services, or contract with a community agency to do so.
 - Example: Lincoln County School District, Oregon created the Pandemic Outreach Worker (POW!) position, which assists families and youths with housing, connectivity, food, and other needs.
- Provide short-term, temporary housing (e.g., a few days in a hotel) when necessary to enable the student to attend and participate fully in school activities. Prioritize families and youth who do not qualify for shelters or who do

not qualify for other federal funds due to immigration status, age, gender, or family separation, among other barriers.

- Provide staff time to collaborate with city/county government and agencies that provide housing and homeless services to explore ways to provide housing to McKinney-Vento families.

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Increase Participation of Children Experiencing Homelessness in Early Childhood Education Programs

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires liaisons to ensure that "homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive... services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs..., early intervention services ..., and other preschool programs administered by the local educational agency." 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(iii).

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires transportation to the school of origin, including preschools. 42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(J)(iii); 11432(g)(3)(I)(i). McKinney-Vento and ARP-HCY funds can be used to cover excess costs for transportation. 42 U.S.C. §11433(d)(5);

Quick steps with small investments

- Provide transportation to early childhood programs.
- Increase capacity in preschool, Head Start, child care, and early intervention programs by adding priority slots for children experiencing homelessness and using funds to increase the child care subsidy rate.
- Increase staff time to provide targeted training for educators and paraprofessionals on identifying and supporting families and children experiencing homelessness.

Head Start's Program Performance Standards establish that children experiencing homelessness are categorically eligible for services, and that programs must make specific efforts to locate and recruit such children and may reserve slots for them.

Longer-term activities with greater funding


- Hire early childhood homelessness specialists at McKinney-Vento programs, Head Start programs, and child care programs to assist in the identification and support of young children experiencing homelessness and their families.
- Contract with IDEA child-find staff/agencies for them to have staff trained in McKinney-Vento eligibility and able to screen families for potential eligibility and assist in connecting them to early childhood and McKinney-Vento programs quickly.

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Provide Mental Health Supports to Students Experiencing Homelessness

Quick steps with small investments

- Contract with mental health professionals to meet with students at school.
 - Take extra steps to ensure students of color have access to mental health

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires liaisons to provide "referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services." 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(iv).

supports, as [research](#) has found them less likely to reach out to teachers or counselors for mental health assistance. Also, ensure mental health providers are LGBTQ+ positive and offer online resources sensitive to the challenges of LGBTQ+.

- Train teachers and other staff to screen students for trauma. Simple, well-researched instruments include [UCLA's COVID-19 Screen for Child/Adolescent PTSD](#) and the [Structured Trauma-Related Experiences and Symptoms Screener](#).

Longer-term activities with greater funding

- Partner with community pediatric and behavioral health agencies to open a school-based health clinic.
 - Example: San Antonio ISD in Texas is teaming up with the San Antonio Mobile Mental Wellness Collaborative to provide mental wellness services to students experiencing homelessness, including an evaluation component measuring changes to attendance, discipline, and academics.
- Hire a Wellness Case Manager to connect students and families to available health services.

- Implement trauma-informed training and practices available from the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#), [ACES Aware](#), or similar resources. A recent [review of programs](#) with proven track records, many of which offer free tools and free online training, can help schools get started.
- Adopt [positive school discipline](#) practices school- and district-wide.

Suggestions for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Increase Participation of Students Experiencing Homelessness in Career and Technical Education (CTE), Extra-curricular, and Enrichment Programs

It's The Law!



The McKinney-Vento Act requires transportation to school activities “to the extent that lack of access to transportation is a barrier to school or extracurricular activities.” McKinney-Vento and ARP-HCY funds can be used to cover excess costs for transportation. 42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(J)(iii); 11432(g)(1)(I); 11433(d)(5); U.S. Department of Education (2018), Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, J-11.

Quick steps with small investments

- Prioritize McKinney-Vento students for CTE classes and activities.
- Provide transportation to CTE,

extra-curricular activities, and enrichment programs.

- Implement other activities outlined in the previous sections on improving attendance and academic achievement.

Longer-term activities with greater funding

- Increase the capacity of CTE classes and activities to ensure McKinney Vento students can participate.
- Implement other activities outlined in the previous sections on improving attendance and academic achievement.