



American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth Funds Consortium Checklist

The American Rescue Plan Act provided \$800 million in funding specifically dedicated to support the identification, enrollment, and school participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including through wrap-around services. These funds are known as American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth Funds (ARP-HCY).

Local educational agencies (LEAs) who receive less than \$5,000 for their ARP-HCY II allocation may form a consortium with other LEAs. State Coordinators, LEAs, and regional agencies all have a role to play in strategically forming consortia and ensuring that funds are targeted to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. While the idea of forming a consortium may seem like a daunting task, the following considerations and ideas will support your work to form, lead, and implement a consortium grant.

Consortium Requirements:

- Consortium total funding under the ARP-HCY Part II formula has to be at least \$5,000.
- Consortium applicant must be an LEA.
- Consortia do not have to be geographically contiguous.

Considerations in forming a consortium:

- With which LEAs do you typically collaborate, or already have strong partnerships?
- With which LEAs do you typically share students and transportation costs?
- Are there regional service agencies or regional education centers that could facilitate a consortium?
 - In some states, regional service agencies or regional education centers are treated as LEAs and could apply directly for an ARP-HCY grant on behalf of a consortium. In other states, those centers are not LEAs and so could not apply for a grant, but could support LEAs in forming a consortium and applying.

- Regional service agencies or centers may already facilitate other consortia, such as Title III, and be well-positioned to support an ARP-HCY consortium.
- Are there LEAs with similar demographics who can elevate and meet the needs of historically underserved populations?
- Which LEAs access the same community-based organizations and resources?
- Which LEA has the capacity, technology, or staff to be the consortium lead?

Considerations in determining how to use funds within the consortium:

- Meet as a group to assess the needs of students and each LEA's McKinney-Vento program.
- Target funds to meet the most urgent needs that cut across LEAs.
- Be sure funds supplement and do not supplant other funding sources, including ESSER and Title I, Part A.
- Connect each use of funds directly to a measurable, student-based outcome, such as improvements in identification, attendance, achievement, discipline referrals, participation in early childhood programs, graduation, participation in school activities, etc., to be sure expenditures are supporting students in specific, measurable ways.

Ideas for using ARP-HCY funds as a consortium:

- Hire a systems navigator to support students and families in accessing community resources.
- Create a [FAFSA mentor position](#).
- Partner with community-based organizations to provide critical services, such as:
 - Transportation;
 - Mental health services; and
 - Tutoring.
- Consider [partnering with Black-led organizations](#) to address the needs of students of color experiencing homelessness.
- Hire a transportation coordinator, purchase shared vehicles, or develop hubs.

- Learn more about how [Pennsylvania's Region 5 is doing this](#).
- Launch regional awareness campaigns (PSAs, posters, wallet cards, social media posts, etc.) to inform parents and youth about McKinney-Vento services and how to access them.
- Implement regional public service campaigns/awareness building.
- Consider ways to partner with Runaway and Homeless Youth programs.
- Conduct staff development/regional networking meetings.
- Engage in joint outreach to [re-engage students](#).
- Partner with a college or university to provide academic tutoring and other support.

Best practices/strategies for LEAs in leading and implementing a consortium grant:

- Notify your McKinney-Vento State Coordinator that you would like to form a consortium and identify which LEA will serve as the fiscal agent.
- Connect with the homeless liaison in each participating LEA.
- Gather data/conduct a needs assessment of all LEAs participating in the consortium to learn what needs exist and what resources may already be available.
- Consortium leads are encouraged to reach out to community-based organizations to assess needs and resources already available.
- Co-create a plan of shared goals and how the funds will be spent across all LEAs in the consortium based on the results of the needs assessment. The consortium lead should not make one-sided fiscal decisions on how the funds will be used.
- Discuss ahead of time any direct or indirect costs on which the consortium lead will spend funds.
- Co-create MOUs across all participating LEAs and collect signatures so that all are in agreement on how funds will be used. Consider completing this step before turning funds over to the consortium lead.
 - Be clear on the deliverables to be included in the MOUs and contracts.
- Establish roles and responsibilities of member LEAs.

- Establish [SMARTIE goals](#) with clear, measurable, student-based outcomes to evaluate how the consortium is meeting needs/serving students and families experiencing homelessness.

Resources

- Wisconsin ARP-HCY website: <https://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/arp-hcy>
- Wisconsin Responsibilities and Resources for Consortia, including a sample MOU: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/homeless/pdf/ARP-HCY_Consortium_Responsibilities_and_Resources.pdf
- Wisconsin Survey Cover Letter: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/homeless/pdf/ARP-HCY_Part_II_Initial_Funding_Selection_Survey_Text.pdf
- California ARP webpage: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/arphcyassurances.asp>
- California ARP-HCY resource guide: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/arphcyresourceguide.asp>
- [Minnesota Department of Education Consortium Requirements \(p. 2\)](#)