

Meeting the Needs of Immigrant and Asylum-Seeking Students with ARP-HCY Funds

With an increase in students arriving to the U.S. from other countries, many local education agencies (LEAs) across New York State have questions about how to best serve newly arrived immigrant and asylum-seeking students.

This resource will cover important terminology, context, and best practices for leveraging American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) funds to meet the needs of immigrant and asylum-seeking students who are [eligible for services and educational protections under the McKinney-Vento Act](#).

Important Terminology and Context

In recent months, waves of immigrant and asylum-seeking children, youth, and families have arrived in major cities across the country, including New York City. These newly arrived children, youth, and families have unique stories, experiences, and needs. Starting in October 2023, New York City announced a new policy issuing [60-day shelter limit](#) notices to newly arrived immigrants and asylum seekers. This policy began taking effect in early January 2024, resulting in immigrant and asylum seekers attempting to reapply for shelter and/or move to areas outside of New York City. Therefore, all LEAs across New York State should understand the various terminologies used to describe their experiences to best serve their needs.

Note: Any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence should be designated as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act regardless of their country of origin/immigration status.

Terminology	Definition	Educational Resources & Points of Contact
Immigrant	A person who moves to a country and plans to stay permanently.	NYSED Regional Guides to Community-Based Organizations for Immigrants NYSED Bilingual Education & English as a New Language

Migrant	Someone who moves because the student or family are involved in seasonal agricultural or fishing work.	New York State Regional Migrant Education Tutorial and Support Services (METS) Program Centers New York State Migrant Education Program
Refugee	Generally person outside of their country who is unable or unwilling to return home due to fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, and are not in the U.S. while they are going through the initial immigration process.	NYSED Memo: Enrolling students who are refugees or asylum seekers City University of New York's Initiative on Immigration and Education (CUNY IIE) Refugees and Immigrants in Schools
Asylee	Generally person outside of their country who is unable or unwilling to return home due to fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion who are in the U.S. when going through the initial immigration process.	NYSED Memo: Enrolling students who are refugees or asylum seekers City University of New York's Initiative on Immigration and Education (CUNY IIE) Refugees and Immigrants in Schools
<p><i>Note: The primary difference between refugees and asylum seekers is the location of the person when beginning the immigration process. For this resource, we will address youth and families who are in the US and applying for asylum.</i></p>		
Unaccompanied (alien) Minors	Youth under the age of 18 who come to the U.S. without an accompanying parent or guardian. The term “unaccompanied” in this context refers to their immigration status, not their McKinney-Vento status.	NYSED Memo: Educational Services for Recently Arrived Evacuees, Refugees, Immigrants and/ or Unaccompanied Children
<p><i>Note: Unaccompanied Minors may still be McKinney-Vento eligible. Eligibility must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as placement with a sponsor does not ensure fixed regular and adequate housing.</i></p>		
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth	As defined by the McKinney-Vento Act are children and youth who lack fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and are also not under the care of a parent or legal guardian.	The New York State Technical and Educational Assistance Center for Homeless Students: Unaccompanied Youth

American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) Funds in New York State

As LEAs consider the various funding sources available to support the educational needs of newly arrived students experiencing homelessness, they are encouraged to consider any unspent ARP-HCY funds. As a reminder, ARP-HCY funds must be obligated by September 30, 2024, and fully expended and drawn down by the project period liquidation deadline of October 30, 2024.

While ARP-HCY State Reserve I & II were specifically earmarked for immigrant, migrant, asylee, or refugee students experiencing homelessness **any allocation of ARP-HCY may be used to serve this population.**

Changes made to ARP HCY plans must be made through a [budget amendment](#). Amendments must be sent to: Office of ESSA-Funded Programs - Rm 320 EB RE: ARP-HCY (+ I, II, or State Reserve) New York State Education Department 89 Washington Avenue Albany, NY 12234.

The Office of ESSA Funded Programs will review the amendment, and if approved, will then forward to Grants Finance for processing.

Allowable Uses of ARP-HCY to Meet the Needs Of Immigrant and Asylum-Seeking Students

ARP-HCY funds are [uniquely flexible](#) and may be used to serve the urgent needs of immigrant and asylum-seeking students experiencing homelessness. LEAs must ensure that any expenditures proposed are in line with their own LEA internal controls and policies. Below is a list of examples of allowable uses of ARP-HCY funds that may be particularly helpful to this population.

The New York State Education Department has distributed ARP-HCY funding to eligible LEAs in the following ways:

- **ARP-HCY I** – Approximately \$11 million was disbursed to previous McKinney-Vento subgrant recipients
- **ARP-HCY II** – Approximately \$36 million was disbursed to LEAs via a formula that used the LEA's allocation under Title I, Part A (Title I) and the number of identified homeless children and youth in either school year 2018-19 or 2019-20 (whichever was greater). LEAs with allocations less than \$500 had the option to enter into a consortium to access ARP-HCY funds.
- **ARP-HCY State Reserve I & II** – Approximately \$7.5 million was distributed to LEAs **based on the LEA-submitted count of immigrant, migrant, asylee, or refugee students experiencing homelessness**. Counts were submitted in April 2023 through the ARP-HCY State Reserve, Part I application.

See SchoolHouse Connection's [Allowable and Strategic Uses of American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth \(ARP-HCY\) Funds](#) for more!

Short-Term Temporary Housing

Paying for short-term temporary housing (including a hotel or motel) for three or more days when reasonable and necessary for the student to attend school is an allowable use of ARP-HCY funds. To do this LEAs have:

- **Purchased store cards from their local [Hampton Inn](#)** to distribute to students and families to make their own reservations.
- **Partnered with Motel 6** to develop a [rate agreement](#), and [preferred discount agreement](#), allowing for monthly invoices directly from Motel 6 to their business office and a streamlined referral process.
- **Partnered with [hotels.com](#)** to provide a hotels.com card, using the rate listed on the website, for families to make their own reservations. This removes the liability concern from the district and places it on the parent, with the district paying hotels.com directly.

Basic Needs

Purchasing supplies and services to help students experiencing homeless meet their basic needs and support their full participation in school are allowable uses of ARP-HCY funds. To do this LEAs have:

- **Purchased [charitable](#) store cards with limited purchasing power** from major retailers to allow students and families to purchase food, clothing, and other allowable items.
- **Partnered with local laundromat to create prepaid store cards** with distinct codes, allowing students and families to load them onto their app, covering the expenses to use washers and dryers.
- **Purchased [goodwill store cards](#)** to help students and families purchase household items while temporarily housed and preparing to transition into permanent housing.

Physical and Mental Health Needs:

Partnering with community-based organizations and purchasing services to support the physical and mental health of students experiencing homelessness are allowable uses of ARP-HCY funds. To do this LEAs have:

- **Contracted with an individual bilingual/ bicultural therapist to meet in small groups with immigrant youth experiencing homelessness** to address the trauma of their immigration experience, offer support for self-care, and provide space to manage and work through trauma.
- **Partnered with a local community-based organization to provide an evidence-based mentoring program** to reduce loneliness and isolation, while increasing self-esteem and socialization and strengthening social bonds.
- **Partnered with the local department of health and private health providers** to provide on-site immunization at the LEAs family welcome center.
- **Provided stipends to existing bilingual staff**, such as parent coordinators and paraprofessionals, to conduct outreach to students and families experiencing homelessness.
- **Hire a bilingual benefits navigator** to help families navigate housing in their native language.
- **Pay for translation services** to translate local identification and outreach materials. Note [*NYS-TEACHS offers free brochures and posters*](#) with information on the educational rights of children and youth who are homeless in various languages.