

Providing Summer Activities with ARP-HCY Funds: Benefits and Considerations

Children and youth experiencing homelessness can experience even greater vulnerability during academic and summer breaks when they do not have access to the ongoing structure and support of school. That is why [federal guidance](#) specifically allows American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) funds to be used for summer programming and activities. Below are some benefits and key considerations for local educational agencies (LEAs) in providing summer services with ARP-HCY funds.

Key Benefits of Summer Activities

Using ARP-HCY funds to remove barriers to existing opportunities in the community (e.g. food banks, summer camps, etc.) can help children and youth experiencing homelessness take full advantage of these offerings and make up for learning loss resulting from their homelessness.

LEAs should identify existing resources, opportunities, and partnerships that can maximize the assistance available to these students during breaks. For example, LEAs can cover registration fees and provide bus passes for students experiencing homelessness to attend [summer camps](#). Other [local organizations](#) providing summer programming may include 4-H, YMCA, Kiwanis/Key Clubs, and faith-based organizations.

Using ARP-HCY to expand staffing capacity during the summer break, directly or through contracts, can keep students and families engaged with school officials and help increase identification and attendance the following school year.

Some LEAs have increased hours, extended contracts from 9 months to 12 months, and altered personnel designations from classified to certified in order to provide concentrated services to students and families experiencing homelessness during the summer months. School districts that increased capacity during the summer months have reported an increase in identification of students experiencing homelessness, as well as higher attendance rates, at the beginning of the academic year.

Using ARP-HCY funds to help stabilize newcomer families during the summer months can improve integration into the school community, as well as school attendance and outcomes.

Many newcomer families settling into the United States experience homelessness, and multiple layers of trauma and disruption. Assisting with short-term emergency housing, enrolling students in school, connecting with housing navigators, meeting nutritional needs, and providing culturally appropriate social and emotional services have the added benefit of integrating the family within the community, while setting them up for regular school attendance and academic success.

Key Considerations for Using ARP-HCY Funds on Summer Activities:

1 ASSESSING NEED + BUDGETING

How many students or families need services on any given day, week, or month during the summer break? What criteria will be used to determine which students/families will be prioritized for services?

2 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Who are the civic, community service, nonprofit, housing, and faith-based organizations in your communities that provide services beneficial to children and youth experiencing homelessness during the summer months? Are there ways to collaborate with partners, like resource fairs or back-to-school events, to ensure their services are reaching the children and youth experiencing homelessness?

3 AWARENESS

How will students/families be made aware of summer activities? What staff capacity is needed to create outreach materials, call families, and undertake other activities to raise awareness? If a community-based partner will be responsible for organizing and implementing the program, how can they help build awareness?

4 STAFFING

Who is the point(s) of contact for students and families experiencing homelessness during academic breaks? How will these students and families communicate with appropriate staff? What or who should be contacted in case of a housing-related crisis during the summer months?

5 COSTS OR FEES

How will upfront costs or registration fees be covered? Is this something the LEA can work out ahead of time, or partner with another organization to remove this barrier?

6 TRANSPORTATION

Who and how will transportation be coordinated to and from summer activities? Will a taxi service be provided while the student/ family are on academic break? Will the student/family be provided with bus passes or gas cards to transport themselves? Are bike shares an option?

7 LEA-LEVEL DECISION MAKERS

Who are the points of contact in the business and transportation office who need to be involved in this initiative? What logistical details need to be discussed before purchasing a vehicle?

Resources

Sample forms and MOUs:

 [SchoolHouse Connection's ARP-HCY Resources](#)

September 2023 guidance on allowable uses of ARP-HCY funds.

 [The U.S. Department of Education's ARP-HCY Updated Guidance Letter](#)

Archived Webinar:

Using ARP-HCY Funds For Summer Activities

 [Watch the Recording](#)

 [Download the Powerpoint](#)