ARP-HCY Webinars
Since Sept. 2023 covering topics:

- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Summer Activities
- Hotel/Motel Stays
- Addressing Transportation Needs Through Vehicle Purchases
- Tips and Tools for Using ARP-HCY Funds
- Supporting the School Readiness of Young Children Experiencing Homelessness
- Community Agency Partnerships
- Partnering with School Business Officers
- School as Shelter
- Car Repairs

4,800 Registrants
"The language I use is 'The law said that I have to.' I say it very sternly. I said our number one job as liaisons is to enroll kids in school, make sure that we have transportation, free lunch, AND then I said and our fourth is make sure that we provide additional resources within our community. So this is allowing us to provide that and those additional resources. That's what the law says. That's what it tells us to do. So then what you're able to do is that your District already has some type of service agreement. Do not recreate the wheel. Just find out what that service agreement is, and if nobody wants to help you, you have board docs that will be made public on service agreements. Then you go and you modify it specifically to you. Telling your story, that background information, is phenomenal. That's where you're putting down, 'We have over ____ McKinney-Vento students that have been identified in the last year.' Then, you're saying, 'Okay we're doing this and we're providing the services that we're supposed to but we want to go over and beyond. We want to add tools to our toolkit. And this is how we're able to do that within the language of our service agreement.'
Melissa A. Douglas (McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison, Office of Students In Transition, Kansas City Public Schools, MO)

"I'm talking to the families because I'm right there, just trying to make sure that we're fully engaged. So that they know that the school district is not just saying, 'Oh, we just referred you and now we're hands off.' The conversations that I've been having with the parents are, 'Oh my gosh, my kids are excited about school because they've been going consistently.' That's the win. That's what we want. We want kids to stay enrolled in school, stay at their school of origin, and be there consistently....We were able to really address the need so that we can get the kids to school. It's just been a burden lifted for the for some of the moms."
Malora Horn (McKinney-Vento Program Coordinator, Roanoke City Public Schools, VA)

"When we're able to do something like this, we're not just helping our students get to school. We also are really helping our parents have a way to to a job. One parent that I helped was in tears of joy, thankfulness, because she’s said, 'This is not only helping me get my child to school so he can be in school every day, it's also helping me be able to continue to keep my employment so I can continue to save money, so I can hopefully get a place of our own.' It's a trickle down effect. We helped this one mom that had become homeless because of domestic violence. Not having a car is another way of just completely feeling isolated and scared. This one woman that we helped with tires, she shared with me afterwards, 'This has been so much more than just helping me transport my kids.' She said, 'This has given me an opportunity to feel like I'm getting some control back in my life because this is something that was always kind of hanging over my head. You don't even have a way to to leave if you need to dependent on someone else.' When we help someone with something like this we're helping them for a specific reason, but there are all the other different things that are positives that come out of that."
Paola Machuca (FIT Outreach Social Worker, Rochester City School District, NY)

"When I was looking in our system of accountability, every contact we had with the youth was recorded on our own internal system of touching base with the family whether it be a home visit or what not. There's the average minimum of 12 visits, 12 actual contacts with our youth, that's how much it takes to get them to a point where they feel comfortable to begin to address the barriers that are preventing them from going to school and then once we get through that and we are able to do to do the actual face-to-face re-engagement, then it's an appointment with the school, an official appointment, where people could also potentially support the youth are present so that way there is an actual plan in place. When you have a plan, there's a level of accountability that's different. Now we have a plan and that plan has been documented and then that documentation it contracts for services. It says to our youth, "I matter. I exist." We've received that feedback from our youth. It's been such a blessing to have two people that solely do this work."
"We were super excited for these American Rescue Plan funds until we found out there were so many restrictions. The only thing I could think of was summer camp. What are you going to do with your child in the summer? A lot of students do not get opportunities to participate in enriching summer camp experiences, especially if they're experiencing homelessness. Summer camp became the big thing on our to-do list. There's lots of camps here. Many of them are academic. So, our local Prince George's Community College has enrichment as well as academic camps. Prince George's Parks and Rec has several recreation centers throughout the district. And then we have Junior Achievement Finance Park. That's for high schoolers that want to participate in an entrepreneurship summit. We developed a website. Put all those camps out there. We offered it as a $350 scholarship to an enriching camp experience. The parents then had to look at the respective guidebooks, registered through those programs. The camps invoiced us and we paid the invoices for the camp. The total amount allocated for that was $27,000. We have about $2,900 left for this school year. Hoping to increase that to at least $6,000 so that we can send our kids to camp again."
"One thing that I’ve been really happy that we’ve been able to do with our ARP money is the short-term hotel stay program. I thought that we would be doing a handful of families a week, maybe 10 to 15 a month. We get probably 10 referrals a day. I reached out to a community organization in San Diego County letting me sort of jump on their program. They had an existing contract with all the Motel 6s and Studio 6s in San Diego County, and their contract allowed for fast turnaround. When we get a referral, I send it over to our community partner, they log into the computer and make the reservation themselves and we can have people checking into the hotel the next day. Some of my McKinney-Vento liaisons were asking me, ‘How did you get this done because we have a lot of our own ARP funds.’; They run into sort of the same problems with like a PO process and how to get it done. So I created an MOU that LEAs in my county could sign on to that would just allow me to still run all the referrals through my program and then I invoice them for their stays if they want to use their own ARP funds. We only allow hotel stays in the neighborhood where the students are going to school. And the idea is to make it easier to sustain school attendance while families are going through these transitions. These families, many of them were invisible to me. I can guarantee you they were invisible to a lot of the homeless response system in San Diego County. So, by taking a hotel stay from us, that’s being paid for by a third party makes them eligible for more services within the homeless response system, and we’ve had families that have literally cried because they’re so happy that they’re going to get a case manager that’s going to help them through this process. So that part’s been really satisfying."

Susie Terry (Coordinator, Homeless Education Services, San Diego County Office of Education)
Jen Saunders (Homeless Liaison, Milton Town School District, Vermont)

It's really less about the dollars that we are spending on emergency housing. It's more about it no longer being an allowable use. We have access to a state grant that I've applied for and gotten money for. But again, it's not something that's included. There are other things within that list of allowable uses from the ARP money that are also going away. And, and to me, that's the biggest area where I think SchoolHouse Connection and, and other national agencies can help is by advocating for an expansion of that list of allowable uses. The conversations are really largely between students and their counselors, or it's a family being really honest about what's happening. I've had unaccompanied youth who left an unsafe situation and were looking to find a better place to stay. And we did put that student up for eight nights. I interpreted the “reasonable” time frame as needed. That was reasonable for that student. I think for a state like ours and many other states, I imagine partnering with existing infrastructure would ease the burden significantly and make that sort of service that we could provide something that is actually tenable, which I think right now it isn't for a lot of school districts. They just don't take on emergency housing.

Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Through Hotel/Motel Stays
Andrea Winstead (McKinney-Vento Liaison, Lawton Public Schools)

"I said, look, we have the school bus, we have a city bus option. The smaller kids, although they could get on the city bus just with their student ID for free. It's still not really an option, for the families. And then the school bus, you know, we have a bus driver shortage and some bus drivers do two routes. Until we get that bus routed outside the school zone, a few days go by. If we had a vehicle, we could bridge that time until there is a bus. The kids would just keep going on to their school of origin as if nothing really is, you know, is happening. To get it approved, it was not as complicated as you would think. I talked to my supervisor about it, who is the Federal Programs Director. She thought that was a really good idea too. We checked with our state department. She said, yeah, that's an allowable fund. I should just write up what we would be using it for, all the different things. I said it would be transportation to school until there is a school bus. Then also we use it for taking a parent with the child to the health department, to get kids to the doctor, to bring people to the food bank and bring the food back, or just haul donations and other supplies. So then, we talked to the Financial Officer at the school district. He thought that was a really good idea too. In August 2022, we got the vehicle. And then with the ARP-2 funds, we got another vehicle. We share driving it, my Outreach Specialist and me. We do our own dispatching, if you want to say it this way. Parents call us, text us, because sometimes they're so transient, we pick them up at a motel, we pick them up somewhere else again. It really works out great. We just talk in the morning together. Hey, who's on your route this morning? Maintenance, insurance, everything falls on the Transportation Department of the school district. But we keep a log in the vehicles for the mileage. This is how we count what is being billed to the grant. It actually has strengthened our, our relationship with the Transportation Department. And the same in the schools. It's really kind of a win-win to all work together in that, in that way. The kids are actually getting to school."

Addressing Transportation Needs Through Vehicle Purchases with ARP-HCY Funds
Dani Graham (Homeless Program Coordinator, Eau Claire Area School District)

"We were trying to drive and realized we weren't getting the rest of our job done. So, we went and talked to HR and our district has never hired drivers. I had a position that was just a driver. We talked to them and also explained, we already had the Business Office behind us, explained where the funding would come from, and what would be involved, what that driver would be expected to do. And they said, 'Yep. That's an allowable thing. Our district is okay creating that position.' So we put that out. It's a position of about 25 hours a week, shared between drivers. Are these driver positions sustainable after the ARP funds are gone? I would say if your district is spending money on taxicabs, yes. Since the van's already paid for, that taxicab money is shifted over to drivers and paying for them. The van has a life of probably 7 to 10 years. I think during that time, it's going to be established how lucrative this is for the district, both time and money. I imagine by that point, when that van does need to be replaced, it will kind of be a staple in our district to the point that it would be hard to say, 'No, we're not going to run those routes anymore.' We've only had a van going for a month that is a true route morning and afternoon, and we are already purchasing a second van because it has worked so successfully and we still have full taxicab routes that we could shift over, and we still have ARP money. So that's how well this has gone. And how simple it's gone."

Addressing Transportation Needs Through Vehicle Purchases with ARP-HCY Funds
Lisa Martinez (Early Learning Navigator, Hawaii State Department of Education)

"We used our ARP-HCY funds to put a part-time Early Learning Navigator in a complex area. One of our higher count complex areas, and she directly supports the birth to five population, with the goal of referring to early childhood services. We also used our funds for a Re-engagement Navigator on our state team, and this partnership has helped us to identify and support our youth who are pregnant or already have a child. We’re also hiring a COFA navigator, and this will help to support the needs of our families who have migrated from the islands of Micronesia. We’re also using our ARP-HCY funds for a current Transportation Navigator statewide to help address the transportation needs across the state. We’ve also used our ARP-HCY funds to partner with our local YMCA to open an early childhood site in a shelter on the island of Oahu. Our goal is to open two more sites on Oahu and one in Maui. April, our Outreach Coordinator, saw that we had an RFP that was already set up with the Department of Education, so she was able to push that contract through for the approval process to get that site in place. The funds have all been allocated based upon needs that we're identifying statewide. So when our state coordinator Toby first developed these positions, she determined where were the biggest needs and where can the funds be utilized."

Supporting the School Readiness of Young Children Experiencing Homelessness with ARP-HCY Funds
Lisa Cruden (Chief Programs Officer, Family Promise of West Michigan)

"We can really support families. Childcare is another big one that we're asked about a lot. Most of our families don't just have one school-aged child. They have a younger one, an older one. One of the areas that we've really tried to focus on, school-aged kids, if you will, right, often coming from our school districts, and we have an Early Childhood Specialist on staff. So if any of our team is working with a family that has a zero to five year old that needs, you know, some additional resources, we can connect to that person as well. Transportation is a big one. Not just getting kids to and from school, but helping families get to and from work. Because if they have an ability to go to and from work, they have an ability to make an income. We can connect them to the banking system to workforce development. We have a Landlord Liaison on staff. So, kind of have that wraparound here at Family Promise to be able to help in this work to ensure that again, meeting that family where they're at on their continuum of crisis."

Leveraging ARP-HCY Funds to Empower Students Experiencing Homelessness through Community Agency Partnerships
“When people are prepared or individuals are prepared, and they come to us [Business Services] with a plan, it makes that conversation a whole lot easier. It's important to really spend the time and talk to them about, you know, it's not just the numbers. Be prepared to explain the problem. They often are just behind a desk most of the time. They're not out in the field seeing the impact that the work is having. I would suggest connecting with those individuals, inviting them along to see the work that you're doing, so it really connects them with the work. So, as they're seeing, you know, some of the fiscal components come through, they're really connected to it and they understand it's not just a number. They're connecting it back to the work and really the individuals and the lives that we're impacting with what we're doing. Our job is really to find ways that we can support our families. If you come with a good plan, and you come with understanding, where are the clear limitations, but where can we operate within the gray, you'll be able to further those conversations a little bit more. Sometimes, we'll have to work in the gray and that's okay.”

Partnering with School Business Officers and Homeless Liaisons on ARP-HCY Funds
Kathi Sheffel (Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia)

"We have somebody focusing on attendance. We have an attendance specialist and as we're looking into this attendance issue for our homeless kids, we're finding things that we didn't know were there. For example, some of the children were not able to come to school because they didn't have clean clothes to wear. So we used our funds to pay for laundry, and we just found out that we can use our funds at a new laundry, and they can bill us directly."

"We're focusing on early childhood too. We've been able to do a lot of educational materials at our shelters and for our families that have families doubled up with them with little ones that need exposure to educational opportunities. We're using a lot of that money for transportation to get parents to be able to participate in those programs that our community already offers."

"We've been using our funds for emergency transportation if parents need to get to school or kids need to get home and they're sick at school and need to go home."

Mini Series: Tips and Tools for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness
Leslie Navarro-Walker, District McKinney Vento and Family Engagement Liaison, Cherry Creek School District, CO

"One really interesting thing is that I was able to hire a specific admission specialist whose sole purpose is to work with our McKinney-Vento families. That way she can take her computer and go to them to help them with their enrollment."

"We actually hired Katrina to really hone in on our high school age students because that's where we were seeing a lot of our unaccompanied youth. She's been instrumental in really personalizing the interaction she has with those students and creating some really special bonds with the families and the students."

Mini Series: Tips and Tools for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness
Maritza Cabezas, Counselor on Special Assignment (COSA), Hacienda La Puente Unified School District

"We created a program where the mom received a prepaid card for gas every week. She would come every Monday, and I would give her a prepaid card. She would submit the receipts to me indicating that the card was used for gas. In addition, we would also give her food cards because sometimes she wasn't getting enough food for the children."

Martha Calderon, Coordinator

We have a 100% graduation rate within our district for McKinney-Vento students. We do case management with our seniors and juniors, constantly communicating with the counselors. We provide additional hours to those counselors to support our students. We also do field trips for our juniors and seniors to community colleges and universities."

"With ARP funding, we've improved the quality of items we provide. We purchased JanSport backpacks and better quality shoes, like Filas, Pumas, Adidas, and Nikes, through a collaboration with an agency called Shoes That Fit."

Mini Series: Tips and Tools for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness
Jackie Gigliotta - Foster Care Point of Contact, Greece Central School District, NY

"We created an arrangement with a local laundromat. They use an app to have their clients come in and use the machines, the washers, and the dryers. A parent would need to download the app and then we created cards almost like prepaid cards. I give them to the parents and then they take that card and load the numbers on the card into their app the same way they would load a credit card into the app, and it allows them to not only have free laundry services, but I think for those parents, it allows them to feel like everybody else in the laundromat."

"We have prepaid cards with the Goodwill office of Finger Lakes Goodwill. So parents, when we have parents who need things like dishes, silverware, pots and pans, clothing for sure, but also I've had parents buy furniture. I had a parent for $50 bought a loveseat in a really nice and good condition loveseat at Goodwill. So it's allowed parents who are re-establishing a residence after a housing loss to get a little bit of a start on some of the things that they need in their home for their kids."

Mini Series: Tips and Tools for Using ARP-HCY Funds to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness
Anabel Inabex - SFUSD Parent Liaison of Buena Vista Horace Mann

"Case managers check in with the parents to find out what services they need. It could be job referrals, housing resources, or rent subsidies. At the same time, it provides the case managers an opportunity to establish rapport with the parents and assess the child's emotional well-being."

School as Shelter: The Stay Over Program’s Innovative Approach to Sheltering Homeless Students Webinar
Jessica Tremble – Supervisor of Counseling & Student Services K-8, Clifton Public Schools (NJ)

"What we did is we added specific questions to our registration process to help us identify students that could be McKinney-Vento when they first registered for our school district... The main areas that we felt that they needed the best support were the basic needs, so it was laundry kits, hygiene kits, and clothing."

"We hired a mental health clinician last year part-time, so they are available Tuesdays and Thursdays for our students, which has just been a huge asset for our students. Our families don't have to worry about transporting their child after school, they don't have to leave work or anything; the clinicians go to the school building and meet with the students to provide any mental health supports that they can."

"We partnered with a hotel in our district, and that way we kind of set up that partnership so when we did have families in need, it was a quick phone call to set up the hotel stay and have the students and families within the hotel within like an hour or two, which was incredibly helpful."

"If we were not able to set up transportation within a timely manner, and or if we had to outbid for services, then we would provide our families with gas gift cards until we were able to set up transportation, which usually at max takes about a week."

Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness with American Rescue Plan Funds
Quentina Brown, RSW – Homeless Liaison/Foster Care (POC)/Neglected & Delinquent Coordinator, Lafourche Parish School Board, LA

"With the ARP funding, I was able to hire a community outreach person to go into the communities, put out letters, talk to businesses about what McKinney-Vento is and how we identify our families and how we can collaborate on services with other businesses and community resource agencies. So I was able to provide a community outreach specialist."

"I was able to pay for part-time case managers to go into the schools, also pay for LPCs to go into the schools with the mental health to meet one-on-one with our McKinney-Vento students, and they also do group sessions if they can."

"We also do a big parental day we host at the beginning of the school, like in July, where we invite families to come in and get assessed... we also invite community resource agencies to come out and also support us. That way we’re able to collaborate with businesses and also have them on-site for the families."

"We provide needed transportation. Our transportation supervisors normally link up with the neighboring district’s supervisor, and we provide transportation... We also use a reimbursement process, where families have to keep documentation and turn that in at the end of the month, and we reimburse the family."

**Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness with American Rescue Plan Funds**