

American Rescue Plan Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY)
State Plan for the District of Columbia

In the District of Columbia's application for funding to the United States Department of Education (USED) under the American Rescue Plan Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) assured we would submit a plan for ARP-HCY within 60 days of the application's publication. The below responses constitute DC's plan for ARP-HCY.

- 1. How the SEA has used or will use up to 25 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless I for State-level activities to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building, and engagement at the State and LEA levels, including support to LEAs to increase access to summer programming in 2021. This must include how the SEA has supported LEAs to plan for and provide wrap-around services, in collaboration with State and local agencies for immediate needs this spring 2021, and how it will support LEAs for school year 2021-2022. This should include the extent to which the SEA has or plans to build capacity in LEAs that have not received an EHCY subgrant in the past in order to ensure that these LEAs are well-prepared to utilize the funds provided in ARP Homeless II.**

OSSE is using the ARP-Homeless I 25% reservation to transport students experiencing homelessness to a summer program sponsored by the DC Department of Human Services. These summer enrichment programs were open to all students in the District of Columbia, but slots were reserved at each site for students residing in four family emergency shelters. This funding helped remove transportation barriers for targeted students and ensured that students experiencing homelessness were able to access the program.

In addition, OSSE utilized existing fiscal year 2021 McKinney-Vento funds for State education agency activities to provide trainings to local education agency (LEA) homeless liaisons who serve all LEAs, including those LEAs that have not received EHCY subgrants. Trainings in September 2021 focused on the impact of COVID-19 on students and families experiencing homelessness, mindfulness practices, trauma-informed care, racial equity and how to utilize various tools and resources (such as ARP-Homeless funding) to address the educational, social and emotional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this particular population. OSSE will also offer a homeless liaison training in December 2021 focused on outreach and communication strategies to address the educational, social and emotional needs of students experiencing homelessness. OSSE's Homeless Education Program has also provided individualized technical assistance to LEA- and school-based staff requesting guidance or assistance with identifying essential educational supports and resources in the spring and summer of 2021 for students and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

OSSE is utilizing existing channels and developing new tools to ensure all LEAs – including those that have not received an EHCY subgrant in the past – are well-prepared and positioned to use their ARP-Homeless II funds. In addition to communication and training through the homeless liaison sessions described above, OSSE is ensuring awareness about the ARP Homeless II funding opportunity and timelines through an established biweekly grants newsletter and weekly LEA Look Forward newsletter. OSSE is also building capacity through an ARP-Homeless Funding Strategy Guide that encourages LEAs

with specific examples of how ARP-Homeless II funds can be used to reengage students, connect students to resources, and recover student learning. Any remaining ARP-Homeless I 25% funds will be used alongside ARP-Homeless II 25% funds to maximize the impact of these funds. State reserve funds will be used to provide competitive grants to community-based, faith-based and/or nonprofit organizations to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness and support them in accessing wraparound services to meet their needs. In addition, subgrantees will be responsible for delivering training, technical assistance, and capacity building to strengthen service provision and coordination for children, youth, and families within their organizations and in LEAs. ARP-HCY state reserve funds will also be used to partially fund a Special Populations and Programs Recovery Manager who will use the ARP-HCY portion of their time designing, administering, and managing the ARP-HCY competitive grant program described above.

- 2. How the SEA has used or will use their funds for State-level activities to provide support to LEAs to increase access to summer programming and plan for and provide wraparound services for summer 2021, in collaboration with State and local agencies and other community-based organizations.**

See response to question 1.

- 3. How the SEA has used or will use at least 75 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless I for distribution to LEAs in accordance with all requirements of EHCY. This must include the extent to which the SEA has or will use funds to supplement existing EHCY subgrants to allow for more rapid fund distribution to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness, and the extent to which the SEA analyzed and reviewed where there are significant concentrations of students and families experiencing homelessness across the State (including in LEAs that are not existing EHCY subgrantees), and how it has or will ensure that supports from ARP Homeless I can urgently reach them.**

ARP-Homeless I 75% funds have been awarded to existing EHCY subgrantees. We conducted a survey of EHCY subgrantees to understand projected needs for supplemental funding to support summer 2021 and school year 2021-22. This included an analysis of the specific barriers that affected students experiencing homelessness in school year 2020-21 and the number of students identified as experiencing homelessness during the last in-person school year, 2019-20. Subgrantees have indicated plans to use funds to:

- Re-engage students – Activities include providing transportation to students and in some cases their parents to and from school and school-related events and activities, including return to school events; paying costs associated with athletic participation or graduation; and hiring community liaisons and other staff that can assist in identifying and enrolling students experiencing homelessness in advance of the upcoming school year.
- Connect students and families to resources – Activities include providing store cards for school supplies, clothing and school uniforms, shoes, and toiletries; providing shelf-stable meals for families; providing emergency housing; and providing health screenings, dental exams, and eye exams and eyeglasses.
- Recover learning – Activities include using funds toward summer learning and enrichment or extended day and year programs; training for staff on students' social-emotional needs in the

wake of the pandemic; and re-entry and back to school programming for parents.

- 4. How the SEA will use up to 25 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless II for State-level activities to provide training, technical assistance, capacity-building, and engagement at the State and LEA levels, including support to LEAs to plan for and provide wrap-around services, in collaboration with State and local agencies, for school year 2021-2022.**

ARP-Homeless II state set-aside funds will support a competitive grant to be awarded in 2022 to community-based, faith-based and/or nonprofit organizations to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness and support them in accessing wraparound services to meet their needs. In addition, subgrantees will be responsible for delivering training, technical assistance, and capacity building to strengthen service provision and coordination for children, youth, and families within their organizations and in LEAs. ARP HCY state reserve funds will also be used to partially fund a Special Populations and Programs Recovery Manager who will use the ARP HCY portion of their time designing, administering, and managing the ARP HCY competitive grant program described above.

- 5. How the SEA will use at least 75 percent of funds awarded under ARP Homeless II for distribution to LEAs in accordance with the final requirements. This must include a description of how the SEA will distribute funds in accordance with the required formula to address the needs of students experiencing homelessness and the extent to which the SEA has encouraged or will encourage the creation of consortia for those LEAs that may not meet the required minimum formula amount.**

OSSE will distribute ARP-Homeless II funds in accordance with the formula in the final requirements. The application for these funds will focus on strategies for re-engaging students, connecting students to resources, and recovering student learning. As the District of Columbia contains many small LEAs, OSSE will reach out proactively prior to the application process to LEAs that will likely be required to enter a consortium to access ARP-Homeless II funds. As part of this process, OSSE will provide information on smaller LEA's options, including partnering with a larger LEA above the \$5,000 award minimum or reaching out to and partnering with one or more smaller LEAs.

- 6. How the SEA will ensure that ARP-HCY supplements the support and services provided with ARP ESSER funds and does not replace the use of ARP ESSER funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness.**

OSSE has established coordinating routines across the agency for management and oversight of recovery funds. The teams managing ESSER III-ARP and ARP-HCY are both organized within the Division of Systems and Supports, K12, which enables flexible and regular coordination and collaboration among directors and staff.

As ESSER has provided significant funding to schools that will enable them to provide additional support and services to students, including students experiencing homelessness, providing grants to community-based, faith-based and/or nonprofit organizations to identify eligible, underserved students and connect them with additional direct services that will supplement in-school activities. Further, grant recipients will be expected to work with LEAs to ensure a coordinated provision of academic and wraparound services for students experiencing homelessness. In training and communication to LEAs on ARP-HCY,

OSSE is reinforcing how these funds should supplement and not replace the use of ARP ESSER funds to support the needs of students experiencing homelessness.

In addition to outreach to LEAs, OSSE is working to ensure that ARP-HCY funds supplement the support and services provided with ESSER III-ARP through internal review processes. ESSER funds were awarded prior to ARP-HCY, so OSSE established a routine to intentionally review LEAs' ESSER and ARP-HCY plans. For example, OSSE reviews potential changes to ESSER grants to ensure ARP-Homeless funds are not replacing ESSER funds. If an LEA requests an amendment to its ESSER III-ARP plan for uses of funds directly to support homeless children and youth, the ESSER III-ARP program team is prompted to follow up with the LEA and gain additional context prior to considering approval of such a change request to ensure ESSER funds are not being replaced by ARP-HCY. Additionally, as part of review of ARP-Homeless applications, OSSE is reviewing LEA's ARP-ESSER applications to ensure supports are not duplicated.

- 7. The extent to which the SEA will use its State-level activities funds to award subgrants or contracts to community-based organizations that are well-positioned to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in historically underserved populations such as rural children and youth, Tribal children and youth, students of color, children and youth with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQ+ youth, and pregnant, parenting, or caregiving students experiencing homelessness, and connect them to educationally-related support and wraparound services.**

As previously described in question 4, OSSE will manage a competitive grant to community-based, faith-based and/or nonprofit organizations to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness, including those from historically underserved populations, and support them in accessing wraparound services to meet their needs. Requirements and scoring of the new competitive grant will screen for and reward community-based organizations with proven experience and demonstrated outcomes identifying children and youth in historically underserved populations and connecting them with education-related support and wraparound services. Through OSSE's participation in the District's Interagency Council on Homelessness, OSSE has observed there to be a robust sector of community-based, faith-based and/or nonprofit organizations. We are confident a competitive grant competition will support the selection of community partners to deliver services, including housing, outreach, mental health, dental and medical services, and out-of-school time programs, to meet the specific needs of students experiencing homelessness in underserved populations.

In addition, subgrantees will be responsible for delivering training, technical assistance, and capacity building to strengthen service provision and coordination for children, youth, and families within their organizations and in LEAs.

- 8. How the SEA will encourage LEAs to award contracts to community-based organizations to help identify and support historically underserved populations experiencing homelessness.**

OSSE will encourage LEAs to award contracts to community-based organizations by communicating this priority to LEAs through trainings, newsletters and other media, and through the application process. For example, OSSE's ARP-Homeless Funding Strategy Guide encourages LEAs to utilize contracts or subgrants to CBOs that are well-positioned to identify and enrollment historically underserved populations. OSSE is also hosting weekly webinars in November 2021 in honor of Homeless Awareness

month. These weekly webinars highlight various community providers serving children, youth and families experiencing homelessness and expose LEA- and school-based attendees to a variety of community-based organizations that could provide LEAs contractual support to identify and support historically underserved populations experiencing homelessness.