



SchoolHouse
Connection

Children Can't Wait! The 2021 BELL Summit

Wednesday, September 29th, 2021

About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- Website:
<http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org>
- Newsletter:
<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up/>
- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships



Funds to Support Children & Families Experiencing Homelessness

COVID Relief Navigation Tool

1. Access to School and Learning: ESSER, ARP HCY (wrap around supports)
2. Early childhood: child care, Head Start, Home Visiting
3. Higher Ed: Emergency Financial Aid Grants
4. Housing Assistance: HOME Investment Partnership Program, Emergency Housing Choice Vouchers, Emergency Rental Assistance
5. Technology and Connectivity: E-Rate, Emergency Broadband Benefit
6. Food: National School Lunch Program, Pandemic-EBT, SNAP
7. Health/Mental Health: ESSER, Federal Insurance Market Place
8. Income Support: Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Stimulus Payments



**SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
WITH AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS**

JUNE 2021

<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/supporting-young-children-with-arp-funds/>

General Strategies for Using ARP Funds Across Federal Programs (1)


- Consult with stakeholders
 - Parents and youth with lived experience
 - K-12 Educators
 - Head Start and PreK programs
 - Child care professionals
 - Homeless assistance and housing providers
- Increase capacity and support employees
 - Offer training (and cross-training) specifically about McKinney-Vento rights, early childhood development, identification of families, trauma-informed practice, etc.
 - Raise wages and salaries to ensure that [employees who might be experiencing homelessness](#) have more support
 - Hire a homelessness outreach specialists/systems navigator/early childhood specialists who can help identify families and help them access other services they might need

General Strategies for Using ARP Funds Across Federal Programs (2)

- Remove barriers to attendance, participation, and services
 - Pay for transportation (buy vans, hire additional drivers, pay parents, etc.) to ensure children and parents can access programming
 - Offer additional service sites to make access easier for families experiencing homelessness
 - Provide onsite medical staff to ensure that children are able to receive necessary screenings, vaccinations, etc in order to remove barriers to participation
- Reach more children and families
 - Clarify enrollment information and questions about housing, including paying to have materials translated into multiple languages
 - Hire parents and youth with lived experience to design and conduct outreach
 - Develop materials to share in hotel/motel lobbies, physician offices, housing authorities, laundromats, and other places where families are likely to visit
 - Partner with eviction courts and legal aid to help reach families facing eviction
 - Create a Public Service Announcement to reach a wider audience in your community
 - We have an [app for that!](#)

Head Start Referral App

- Currently in pilot stage
- Goal of increasing enrollment of children experiencing homelessness in Early Head Start/Head Start programs
- Designed as a tool for LEA McKinney-Vento liaisons to use
- Information is shared with local Head Start program, who then does the outreach for enrollment



There are approximately 1.4 million children under the age of six who experience homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act requires LEAs to designate a homeless education liaison, whose role is to “ensure that...homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs)....” The law also requires liaisons to “ensure that... homeless families and homeless children and youths receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services...” 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A). Based on this statutory mandate, liaisons should refer families with eligible children to Head Start as a means to ensure they receive those services.

Having a LEA designate a child as homeless opens up an array of services to them that require no further documentation. This goal of this app in to both facilitate and streamline this referral process.



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General Strategies for Using ARP Funds Across Federal Programs (3)

- Consider the long-term and strategic impact
 - Invest in needs assessments that can inform strategic uses of funds
 - Quantitative and qualitative data to make the case to policymakers and philanthropists that these funding levels should be sustained.
 - Find partners who may be better able to privately sustain staff or programming when ARP runs out
 - Create new collaborations with organizations serving marginalized communities
 - Advocate for prioritization of families with young children for emergency rental relief, HUD HOME ARP, and other programs that tend to overlook this population, and use more limited resources for services and staffing
 - If bureaucracy is a barrier, cut out the middle man by developing direct partnerships, unmediated by the Continuum of Care or other intervening entity, or providing assistance directly

Considerations for Using Funds Strategically

Consider: What are the needs of young children experiencing homelessness and parents? Solicit stakeholder feedback to understand.

Use the most restrictive funding sources first, followed by more flexible funds. For example, in the education world:

- 1) Title I;
- 2) MV subgrant funds;
- 3) ARP HCY

Think big, think future! We won't reduce adult or youth homelessness unless we meet the needs of young children and families.

What's on the Horizon: Federal Policy Update

- Debt Ceiling
- FY2022 Federal Funding
- Build Back Better Act
 - Universal PreK and Child Care
 - Children who meet ED definition of homelessness are categorically eligible
 - A portion of funds must be used to improve child care access for homeless and children in foster care
 - States must provide age-appropriate transportation for homeless and children in foster care
 - Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit Extensions
 - Free Community College
 - Housing Assistance
 - Housing Choice Vouchers and Project Based Assistance, Public Housing, HOME, Housing Investment Fund

Federal Policy Updates: <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/policy-advocacy/policy-updates/>



STATE PROVISIONS TO HELP CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ACCESS CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL

- Federal protections are important and powerful.
- But because early childhood education is implemented differently from state to state, state laws are **equally** important.
- This SHC document summarizes state laws, regulations and policies that help children experiencing homelessness access child care and preschool.

<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/state-laws-on-early-childhood-education/>

Early Childhood Homelessness Resources

1. [SchoolHouse Connection's Early Childhood Resources Page](#)
2. [Head Start Early Learning and Knowledge Center's Modules on Homelessness](#)
3. [Head Start Decision-Making Tool to Determine a Family's Homeless Situation](#)
4. [Supporting Young Children & Families Experiencing Homelessness with American Rescue Plan Act Funds](#)



SHC Tool for [finding your LEA's Homeless Education Liaison](#)

Youth Leadership and Scholarship - Application Open – Deadline October 15, 2021



<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/youth-leadership/scholarship-program/>