

RFP # 22-014

American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth Technical Assistance Center

Questions and Answers

1. Is an organization allowed to apply for this grant if its activities are exclusive to New York City?

The American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth Technical Assistance Center (ARP-HCY TAC) will support all of New York State. The bidder may apply if their experience has only been with New York City, however, the RFP will be evaluated based on the strength of the proposal to support all of New York State.

2. If a bidder does not have an established NYC office and does not plan to create one, can they meet that RFP requirement by subcontracting with an organization who *does* have an established office in NYC?

No. The intent of the requirement was such that the bidder would have a constant presence in New York City, which has the largest population of students in temporary housing in New York State, and which will receive the greatest allocation of ARP-HCY funding. The prime bidder must have at least a satellite office currently established within one of the five boroughs. A subcontractor for the bidder does not need to meet this requirement.

3. What is the difference between the support that current MV grantees [referred to throughout this document as EHCY grantees] are getting from NYS-TEACHS and the support NYSED hopes the ARP-HCY TAC will provide to them?

The support provided by the ARP-HCY TAC will be intended to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in finding students in temporary housing that were unaccounted for during the pandemic, using strategies and methods that go beyond the traditional identification processes, and that are responsive to the changing structure of LEAs during and throughout the pandemic. In addition, the ARP-HCY funding is a huge increase in resources, and the ARP-HCY TAC will provide guidance on how best to leverage the funding to meet the unique pandemic-related needs of students in temporary housing.

The ARP-HCY TAC will provide special support to LEAs that get ARP-HCY II but have not gotten EHCY (Education for Homeless Children and Youth) funds in the recent past. The United States Department of Education (USDE)'s ARP-HCY guidance emphasizes how ARP-HCY funds can be used in "building capacity in LEAs that have not received an EHCY program subgrant in the past." USDE expects states to "use funds to provide technical assistance and training to LEAs that do not have an EHCY subgrant, to ensure that these LEAs are well-prepared to utilize ARP Homeless II funds."

In practice, this could look like:

- ***Providing technical assistance and targeted professional development to LEAs that haven't had funds and have not had strong programs historically. This assistance could be related***

to Identification, immediate enrollment, best interests, transportation, dispute resolution, etc.

- *Helping with systems navigation specifically to connect families and youth to all the other ARP services and state services that are available. LEAs that have not received EHCY grants may need some very basic assistance in developing community collaborations specific to homelessness.*
- *Helping districts strategize about how to weave ARP-HCY, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER), and Title I funds together effectively to best support homeless children and youth.*
- *Helping districts effectively use funds for wraparound services and all the other allowable costs.*
- *Sustainability— helping districts plan to spend funds strategically while thinking about longer-term needs.*

4. What is the difference between the professional development support NYS-TEACHS provides to all LEAs and the support NYSED envisions that the ARP-HCY TAC will provide?

The ARP-HCY TAC will provide professional development to LEAs around new strategies to support finding students in temporary housing that go beyond traditional methods. Additionally, the ARP-HCY TAC will provide targeted professional development on how LEAs can best use the infusion of ARP-HCY funds to support the creation of programs for students in temporary housing that meet the needs of a changing school structure due to the pandemic, and that meet the new needs of students in temporary housing that have resulted from the pandemic. This could include professional development on how LEAs can support trauma response, and address lost academic skills and instructional time for students in temporary housing.

The technical assistance/professional development provided to experienced grantees could be more advanced, since presumably LEAs that have historically received EHCY subgrants are competent in the basic implementation of the law. This technical assistance could also include more targeted help with building out consortia or particular partnerships; scaling and adapting practices and services to meet pandemic-related needs or digging in deeper on equity.

5. The 1st bullet under component #1 states, “Prepare monitoring forms and monitoring review protocols to ensure the successful oversight of ARP-HCY grant programs.” Does this refer to McKinney-Vento Grantees getting additional funding under ARP-HCY I or all of the LEAs getting funding under ARP-HCY (I & II)? If this is referring to the former (*i.e. preparing ARP-HCY monitoring forms current MV grantees*), how does NYSED envision this monitoring process and technical assistance to be different from the support NYSED is currently getting for the MV Grantees from NYS-TEACHS?

The ARP-HCY TAC will prepare monitoring forms and protocols that align with the reporting and monitoring guidelines that will be issued by the USDE for ARP-HCY I and II funds. The monitoring process for ARP-HCY I and II will be defined by: the data that USDE requests; data that is required under the Uniform Guidance for federal grants (UGG) from the United States Office of Management and Budget; and the level of scrutiny that USDE brings to the use of

these funds. The allocations under ARP-HCY I and II are significantly greater than those provided through the traditional EHCY grants, and the period of availability is through September 30, 2024. The differentiation of technical assistance is described in the answer to question #4.

6. The 2nd bullet under component #1 states, “Conduct monitoring of LEA implementation of ARP-HCY and ARP Homeless II funds. This includes the generation of monitoring reports and follow up technical assistance with LEAs to ensure compliance with all federal statutory requirements.” What does “conduct monitoring” include in this context? Does NYSED expect that the ARP-HCY TAC will do site visits?

The bidder for the ARP-HCY TAC will need to provide a plan for monitoring that may include but is not limited to surveys, interviews, or site visits (virtual or in-person) to LEAs. Given that hundreds of LEAs are potentially eligible for ARP-HCY II grants, it is incumbent upon the bidder to provide a comprehensive monitoring strategy that ensures that LEAs comply with all federal statutory requirements.

7. The 4th bullet under component #1 asks that TAC “track state and community-based agencies that identify and support homeless children and unaccompanied youth.” What are NYSED’s expectations of “track?” Is this simply creating a list of organizations and agencies? What information does NYSED expect the TAC to gather?

The intent of the deliverable is to ensure that the ARP-HCY TAC has the information on available resources from local community-based organizations and from offices within New York State agencies. This information will be provided to LEAs as they are working to identify and support homeless children and unaccompanied youth. The USDE has noted the benefit of having LEAs work in partnership with CBOs in particular, when supporting this population. The bidder is tasked with providing NYSED with a plan to identify, and when appropriate, facilitate these partnerships.

8. The 5th bullet under component #1 references “identifying professional development needs” and “develop a plan in collaboration with NYSED.” Is the expectation that the ARP-HCY TAC plans and executes a PD/TA plan or only designs it for NYSED to implement?

The intent is that the plan be developed in collaboration with NYSED, and that the ARP-HCY TAC will provide the professional development. In some cases, the plan may require that offices within NYSED provide or partner in the delivery of the professional development.

9. Bullet #2 under component #2 asks that the TAC “[d]evelop data collections tools aligned with data elements required by” USDE. What are the data elements required by USDE? What data collection tools is NYSED going to use to collect these data elements (SIRS, another platform, a hybrid, or something else)?

At this time, states have not been provided with the exact data elements that will be required by USDE. Early guidance suggested that the same data that has been requested with EHCY grants will be requested again. However, there are several indications that data will need to be collected on specific under-served groups and that impact data may need to be collected. Please see the following USDE website for more information:

<https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-secondary-school-emergency-relief-homeless-children-youth-arp-hcy/>.

The ARP-HCY TAC will utilize the Student Information Repository System (SIRS) which provides a single source of standardized individual student records for analysis at the local, regional, and State levels to improve student performance and to meet State and federal reporting and accountability requirements.

In addition, NYSED may issue data collection surveys that are informed by ARP-HCY TAC guidance through the SED business portal if USDE requires elements beyond what is tracked in SIRS. In this case, NYSED will provide the data to the ARP-HCY TAC to finalize for sharing with USDE.

10. Bullet #3 under component #2 asks that the TAC track “specific details of supports and services received by students under the ARP-HCY grant.” If ARP-HCY funds are being distributed as additional funds to current MV Grantees, how is NYSED distinguishing between activities funded/implemented by the two funding sources?

Although the ARP- HCY I funds are being distributed to current EHCY grantees, the application and the funds must be reviewed and tracked separately. Activities that are proposed must be identified clearly as those funded by ARP-HCY I funds.

11. Bullet #4 under component #2 states, “Coordinate systems to track missing McKinney-Vento students who might have moved to another district within the state.” Can you please provide more details about what NYSED means by “coordinate systems?” Which “systems” is NYSED referring to here? NYSED has unique student identifiers assigned to student records in SIRS so that it can already track students who have moved within the state and transferred from one NYS district to another. Given that, can you please provide more details about what NYSED means by “track missing McKinney-Vento students”?

The ARP-HCY TAC will utilize SIRS and LEA data systems to get baseline information on students who have moved within the state. However, as a result of the pandemic, there have been many students in temporary housing who are not accounted for – in some cases they have moved to new districts but not attended school, in other instances they have become unengaged with their current district and stopped attending school. LEAs are struggling to “find” these students. The ARP-HCY TAC will identify districts with “missing” students, and facilitate conversations between LEAs in order to get an accurate accounting of students in temporary housing and where they currently reside.