



STATE OF ALABAMA  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



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 State Superintendent of Education

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**Alabama Receives More Than \$13 Million to  
 Help Homeless Children Negatively Impacted by COVID-19**

**MONTGOMERY, AL** – As a provision of the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* (ARP), the United States Federal Government is providing all states with more than \$800 million in assistance to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and participate in school activities.

Of that total amount, Alabama has received more than \$13 million (\$13,232,539) to help identify homeless students and provide wraparound services, including summer learning and enrichment programs throughout the summer months.

Education officials will use the funds to address urgent needs of homeless students including academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs as quickly as possible.

The funds also help local schools and school systems increase capacity by hiring staff, dedicating resources, and planning partnerships with community-based organizations, among other strategies. Dr. Eric Mackey, State Superintendent of Education, said we need to immediately meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness and be mindful of the most marginalized students – those who can potentially fall through the societal cracks if we are not intentional about their wellbeing.

“There are students who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in transient situations. These students technically qualify as homeless,” Mackey said. “It could be a student moving from a relative’s house to a homeless shelter... any number of possible scenarios by which a student’s ability to learn is disrupted by unavoidable circumstances.”

Kristen Dial, State Homeless Education coordinator for Children and Youth, said the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Homeless funds will be dedicated to support the identification, enrollment, and school participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness in Alabama.

“Alabama has received a total of \$13,232,539 in ARP Homeless I and II funds. The ARP Homeless I Funds will be available by June 1, 2021, to LEAs who received the Fiscal Year 2021 McKinney-Vento Act’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth Grant. The ARP Homeless II funds will be available late summer or early fall for all LEAs using their 2018-2019 homeless data.,” Dial said.

“The ALSDE will work closely with LEAs to strategically use these funds to locate, engage, maintain connection, and support children and youth experiencing homelessness.”

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The allowable activities may include any expenses necessary to facilitate the identification, enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youth, such as:

- Providing wraparound services (which could be provided in collaboration with and/or through contracts with community-based organizations, and could include academic supports, trauma-informed care, social-emotional support, and mental health services).
- Purchasing needed supplies (e.g., PPE, eyeglasses, school supplies, personal care items).
- Providing transportation to enable children and youth to attend classes and participate fully in school activities.
- Purchasing cell phones or other technological devices for unaccompanied youth to enable the youth to attend and fully participate in school activities.
- Providing access to reliable, high-speed internet for students through the purchase of internet-connected devices/equipment, mobile hotspots, wireless service plans, or installation of Community Wi-Fi Hotspots (e.g., at homeless shelters), especially in underserved communities.
- Paying for short-term, temporary housing (e.g., a few days in a motel) when such emergency housing is the only reasonable option for COVID-safe temporary housing and when necessary, to enable the homeless child or youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities (including summer school); and
- Providing store cards/prepaid debit cards to purchase materials necessary for students to participate in school activities.

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