

October 24, 2024

The Honorable Neera Tanden
Director
Domestic Policy Council
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20504

The Honorable Shalanda Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Tanden and Director Young:

Public schools are a beacon of immediate relief and stability for children and youth experiencing homelessness, especially when tragedy strikes. As the full scope from Hurricanes Helene, Milton, and related natural disasters becomes clear, we urge the administration to support dedicated funding for the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in any disaster supplemental request of Congress.

Recent natural disasters will further the ongoing crisis of student homelessness, which rose by 14% last year. The public school system is the most logical and practical entity to identify students experiencing homelessness, ensure they are enrolled in school, and support them during an intensely traumatic period. Congress recognized this role by establishing and funding the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, whose personnel are on the frontlines of disaster response.

We respectfully request that the administration include the following in its disaster supplemental requests:

1. Extend ARP-HCY Obligation Deadline: Considering the declaration of disaster, extend the American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) obligation deadline so that unobligated funds can be used to immediately support children and youth experiencing homelessness due to the storm. There is bipartisan, bicameral support for the extension in Congress, as demonstrated by the introduction of legislation (S. 4573 and H.R. 8782) and widely signed letters of support.^{1 2}
2. Supplemental Funding for EHCY: Include sufficient and flexible funding for McKinney-Vento Act's EHCY program in any supplemental funding request. There is precedent for this, as funding for EHCY was included in supplemental funding responding to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (\$5 million), to Gustave/Ike in 2008 (\$15 million), and the 2017 hurricanes (\$25 million).³ Many if not most of the displaced students will meet the definition of homeless. We ask that the obligation date account for the realistic time it will take for communities to recover from these disasters, and for

¹<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/03.04.24-ARP-HCY-Obligation-Extension-Letter.pdf>

²<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/03.07.24-ARP-HCY-Obligation-Extension-Letter-House.pdf>

³ <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ123/PLAW-115publ123.pdf>

allowable uses to be the same as those provided in ARP-HCY, including temporary motel stays.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Afterschool Alliance
All4ED
Association of School Business Officials International
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Chief State School Officers
Education Reform Now
Learning Policy Institute
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Conference of State Legislatures
National School Boards Association
SchoolHouse Connection
The Education Trust