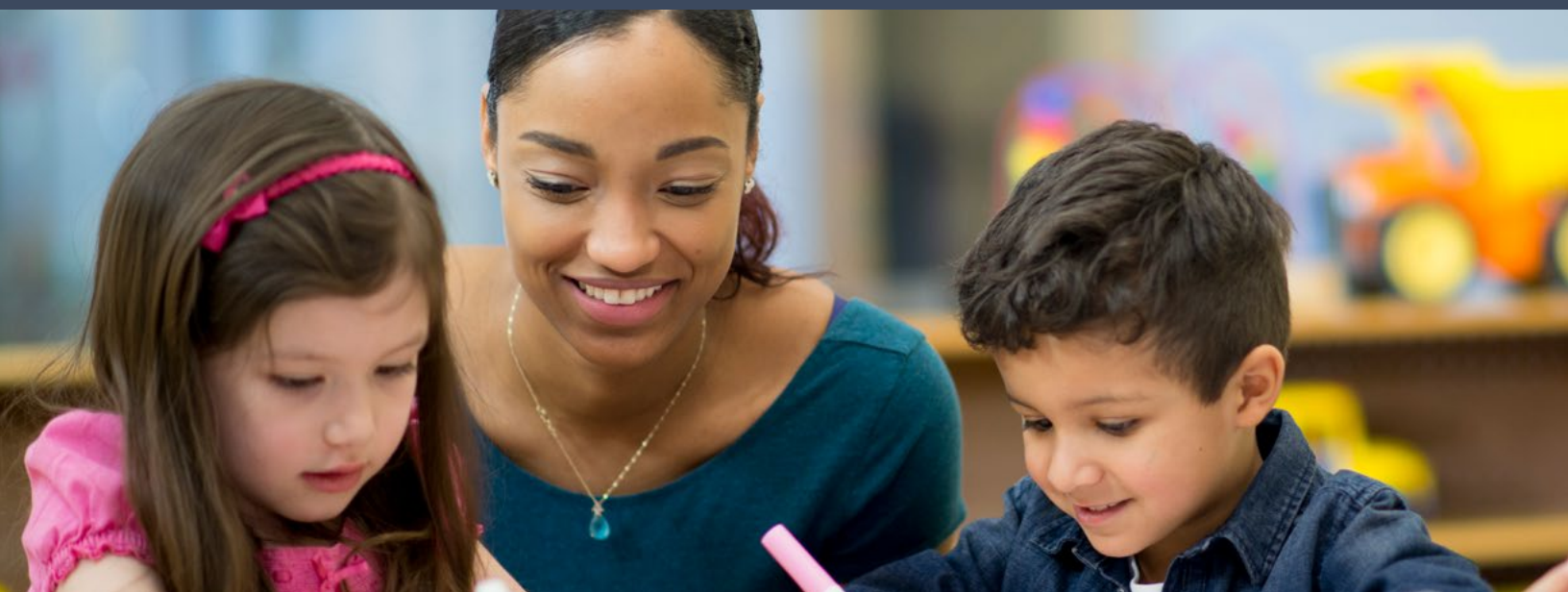


2024

School Rescue Funds Implementation

PROGRAM REPORT

Leading State and Local Efforts to Ensure American Rescue Plan Act Investments
Are Used to Create Safe, Just, and Equitable Learning Environments for Every Student



NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

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LETTER FROM NEA PRESIDENT PRINGLE

Dear NEA Members and Supporters,

The NEA School Rescue Funds Coordinators Network—created following the 2021 passage of President Biden’s historic American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)—is leading state and local efforts to ensure relief funds are utilized to promote, protect, and strengthen public education. Through their efforts, our Network is transforming the education landscape so that every student can attend a school that is strong, safe, equitable, and just.

As the single-largest investment in public education in U.S. history, the American Rescue Plan Act continues to provide the resources necessary to meet the long-ignored inequities that were exposed and exacerbated by the global pandemic. NEA members and activists wrote hundreds of thousands of messages to their senators and representatives advocating for Congress to pass this legislation. As a direct result of NEA member advocacy, ARPA included a \$7.2 billion fund dedicated to equipping students with technology and resources to access learning opportunities at home and at school through the Federal Communications Commission’s E-Rate program.

I am so proud of how—working through our Network—NEA members have navigated the intricacies of this critical program so that vital funds can reach the classrooms and communities where they are needed most, and more of our students can attend a school with the tools and resources that are required to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment. This historic piece of legislation has created new and impactful opportunities for students and members, including additional counselors, therapists, and nurses in our schools; a growing number of summer and afterschool programs to accelerate students’ recovery from the pandemic; improved school facilities, including indoor air quality; and increases in educator pay that ensure adequate staffing.

This important work is grounded by our shared mission to unite not just our members but also our entire nation to reclaim public education and higher education as a common good, as the foundation of our democracy, and then transform it into something it was never designed to be—a racially and socially just and equitable system that prepares every student, every one, to succeed in this diverse and interdependent world.

United, we will continue to build a better education system—one that uplifts every student, values every educator, and empowers every community. United, we will write the next chapter in the story of American education—one of hope, opportunity, and transformation.

Onward!



Rebecca S. Pringle
President
National Education Association

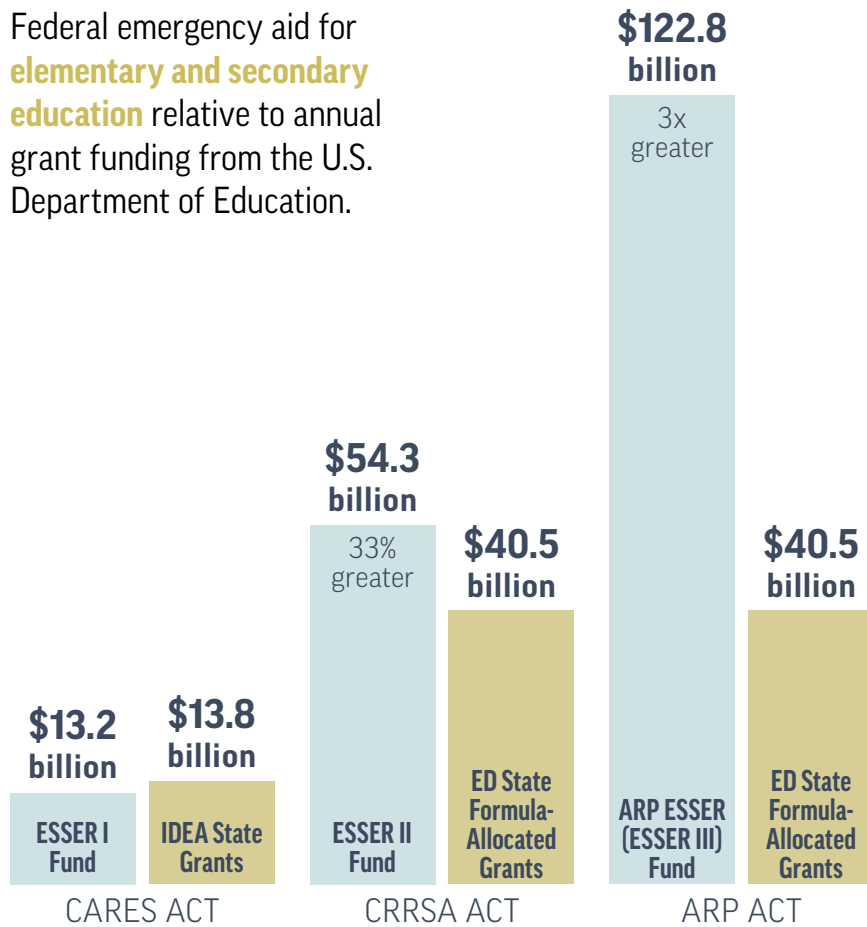


SCHOOL RESCUE FUNDS IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM

The passage of the historic American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dedicated more than \$170 billion in funding to K-12 schools and higher education institutions, providing the National Education Association (NEA) with an unprecedented opportunity to reshape the future of public education for students, educators, and communities across the country. To ensure NEA members have a say in how ARPA funds are used, the NEA created the School Rescue Funds (SRF) Implementation Grant Program, providing state affiliates with dedicated staff, expertise, resources, and networking opportunities to create safe, just, and equitable learning environments for every student across race, place, background, and ability.

Through this program, the NEA is providing state affiliates up to \$100,000 per year for up to three years or until December 31, 2024. State affiliates must use these funds to hire or backfill a coordinator dedicated to the implementation of ARPA funds in their states. Collectively, the state coordinators form the SRF Coordinators Network. The work of the state coordinators has evolved over the course of the implementation campaign—from demanding that school districts meaningfully consult with NEA members on the use of funds, as required, to identifying alternative funding sources to sustain NEA member priorities once the federal dollars expire.

Federal emergency aid for **elementary and secondary education** relative to annual grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education.



GOALS OF THE GRANT PROGRAM



Provide Our Solutions.

Share the power and effectiveness of educator solutions to address COVID-19 opportunity gaps and bridge toward lasting education equity.



Raise Our Voices.

Ensure educator voice is an essential component of securing the ARPA resources that schools and students need and receive.



Assert Our Power.

Seize this opportunity to show existing and potential members proof of their power to make change and the power of belonging to America's largest labor union.



Reinforce the Power of Our Vote.

Seize on opportunities created by the American Rescue Plan Act to bolster champions for public education.

“Imagine the headlines if the money didn’t go to schools. How many teachers would have been eliminated? What would the class sizes be? How many students would not have [returned to classrooms] because they didn’t have adequate staffing? When I think about colleges, how many colleges would have closed down if it weren’t for the American Rescue Plan dollars? I would welcome the opportunity to share more examples of how in every state students benefited from the American Rescue Plan. Then I would offer: Imagine if we didn’t have a president that pushed for that, what districts would be facing. Ask any school superintendent across the country if they needed that additional support—these are people who are highly qualified and trained to lead districts—and they’re going to tell you the benefits that their students face.”

—U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, in an [interview with Education Week](#), October 19, 2023

SCHOOL RESCUE FUNDS COORDINATORS NETWORK

The School Rescue Funds Coordinators Network has grown into a nationwide community of dedicated advocates for safe, healthy, inclusive, and future-focused public education. Since the program began in 2021, states have continued to join the program and bring on coordinators, expanding the reach of the Network across our affiliates.

Across the Network, state coordinators possess unique skill sets and expertise in a range of areas, including research, data analysis, communications, policy analysis, advocacy, and organizing. Coordinators share their skills, successes, and challenges with their network peers to learn from one another and enhance the effectiveness of all.

In addition, NEA provides training and development to build skills in all areas, which has been central to the Network's success. Through these training opportunities, coordinators and members are gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively advocate for modern, safe, supportive, and future-focused public schools that serve the needs of every student. As a result, coordinators are able to navigate the complexities of education policy, advocate for effective funding, and communicate success stories to a wide range of stakeholders.

Coordinators have utilized their expertise to collect and communicate local-level ARPA spending plans, assisting local and member leaders to advocate and bargain for equitable uses of funds. Through their efforts, coordinators have leveraged victories in educator compensation, workplace safety, and addressing staff shortages at bargaining tables and negotiations across the country.

Through the SRF Coordinators Network, NEA has worked directly with senior members of the Biden Administration to raise NEA and state affiliate priorities, challenges, and successes and actively advocate for student and educator needs. SRF coordinators have shared their concerns and ideas, ensuring that the voices of educators, students, and communities are heard at the highest levels of government. By sharing success stories with influential entities—such as the White House, U.S. Department of Education, and the media—the Network has raised awareness of the positive changes underway and the significance of sufficiently funding these initiatives.

As the use of ARPA funds approaches the September 2024 deadline, coordinators are championing the successes of this historic investment in public education. They are working to ensure that programs created using school rescue funds are sustained to prevent any negative impacts on students and educators by the funds' expiration.

“NEA created a network of experts in our affiliates across the states to make sure that money was spent on what educators and students truly needed in their communities. We put clothes on the backs of our students in Georgia and food in the bellies of our students in Idaho. We expanded early learning for our little ones in New Mexico and New York. And our public employees in Montana and across the country used the American Rescue Plan to keep our cities and our states running as smoothly as possible. It has helped us get lead out of school pipes and provided \$10 billion worth of upgrades to school ventilation systems across the country. And, we have secured educator raises in states across the country. All of this, and more, has been made possible by the American Rescue Plan.”

—Kim Anderson,
NEA Executive Director

BY THE NUMBERS

38

State Affiliate Grant Applications Approved

33

SRF Coordinators in Place

2.5 K+

Local Plans Collected
and Analyzed

681 K+

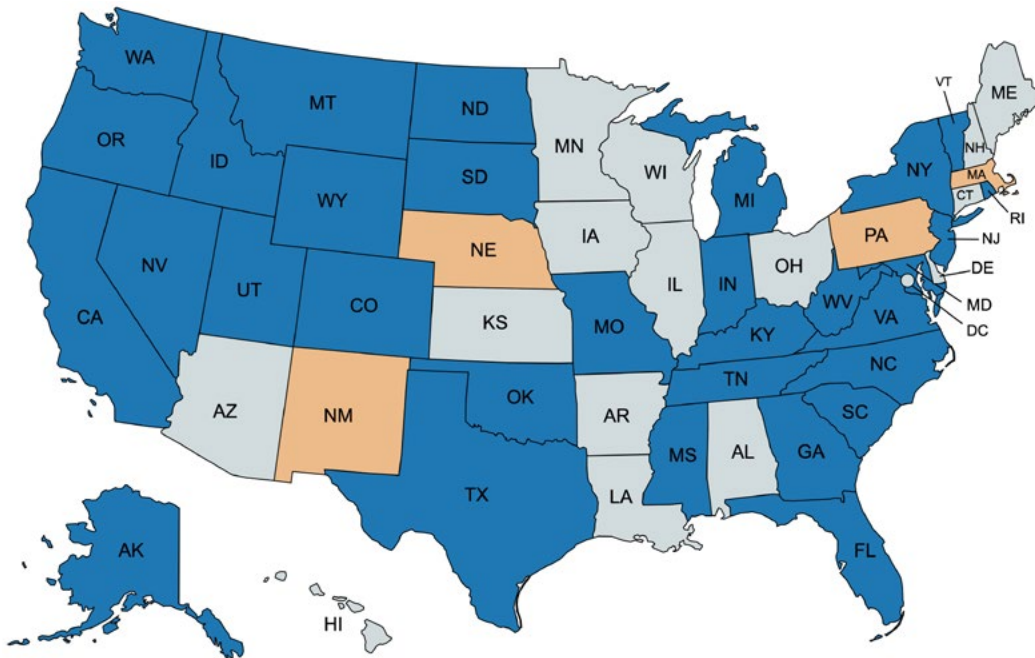
Member Contacts Made

2.7 K+

Members Recruited

**\$2.75
BILLION+**

ARPA Funds Allocated to NEA Priorities
Through the SRF Coordinators Network



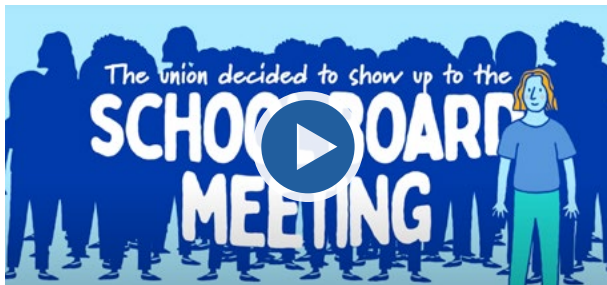
Approved Program Completed Not Participating

SCHOOL RESCUE FUNDS DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

In 2022, the NEA released a series of videos highlighting real stories that features the voices of NEA members who have advocated within their local associations for ARPA funds to be allocated where they are needed most—toward educator retention bonuses, reduced class sizes, additional social-emotional learning staff in schools, and more.

The series was part of a national advertising campaign that included more than \$1 million in digital advertising to bolster ARPA's champions and hold accountable those unwilling to address historic inequities. The videos display the importance of educator voices in funding and policy decisions and the power of the union, highlighting key stories that emphasize the impact of school rescue funds on districts throughout the country.

CHECK OUT THEIR STORIES:



"The union had tremendous success bargaining with the district to reduce class sizes at all K-6th grade levels . . . The biggest lesson coming out of this experience is that we are the union collectively and we can make a difference."

—Camille, California

"I had never been in a union. This is the first time that I ever had a job that had an association. It means a great deal to me, being the voice of our [bus] drivers."

—Scott, Maine



I knew this was something I wanted to

BE A PART OF



"In our district, we were able to support our students by hiring additional intervention teachers and to support our educators by hiring instructional coaches to help support them in the classroom."

—Lakeisha, Texas

"The union chose to stand up, and we were able to provide each faculty member with a recurring increase of \$2,431. Funding from ARPA set up all types of opportunities for all HBCUs."

—Roscoe, Florida



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

By leveraging the flexibility of ARPA funds, NEA members and local affiliates have achieved wins that address both the urgent needs of students and educators now and support changes that will positively impact schools in the years ahead. There are several issue areas in which the Network has identified as emerging more frequently among education associations, members, and communities and in district-level allocation decisions, including:

- **STUDENT SUCCESS:** States and school districts were required to set aside a portion of their ARPA funds to address academic recovery, which included summer learning and comprehensive afterschool programs. In addition, states and school districts made funding decisions in collaboration with NEA affiliates to invest in tutoring programs, mental health supports, social and emotional learning, smaller class sizes, and preschool expansion.

In July, an [Education Week Research Center survey](#) of teachers, school leaders, and district administrators found that **“70 percent said they are confident their students will end the 2023–2024 school year on grade level. Of that 70 percent, 25 percent said they were either “extremely” or “very” confident.”**

- **SCHOOL SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS:** COVID-19 prompted new attention and dedication to ensuring the safety of students and staff. ARPA funds are being used around the country to upgrade facilities to improve health and safety infrastructure in schools, including ventilation systems and mold remediation.

According to an [Education Week article published on October 5, 2023](#), a key conclusion from a recently published study of the far-reaching effects of school district investments in school facilities is that student test scores can be expected to rise significantly after the district invests to upgrade HVAC systems and roofs, especially in historically under-resourced districts and those marginalized districts serving students of color.

The paper concludes that students benefit most when degraded facilities get better.

- **STAFF SHORTAGES:** ARPA funds have been used to support recruitment and retention programs to address staff shortages among educators, which are impacting school districts nationwide. According to a [U.S. Department of Education May 15, 2023, press release](#), as of July 2022, with the help of these funds, **the number of school social workers is up 48 percent, the number of school nurses is up 42 percent, and the number of school counselors and school psychologists are each up 10 percent**—in comparison to the pre-pandemic period.

- **WAGES AND BONUSES:** Our members have won retention bonuses and salary schedule increases for educators, including classroom teachers, education support professionals, and specialized instructional support personnel.

Reluctance by school districts to use non-recurring funds for recurring expenses is the primary challenge that local education associations face. Many local education associations have challenged the reticence and won at the bargaining table by mobilizing educators, parents, and students on their behalf.



LOCAL AND STATE WINS

As the SRF Coordinators Network has expanded, state and local affiliates have been achieving success across the country. Here are highlights of these success stories.

Dillingham, Alaska, a community of approximately 2,200 residents, used ARPA funds for student travel to Anchorage to visit college campuses and attend college classes. The district additionally used ARPA funds to provide new opportunities for students to engage in the learning process through museum visits, cultural exploration, and libraries.

Colorado educators won a **\$3 per hour raise** for all hourly employees for the 2022-2023 school year and a subsequent \$1 per hour raise for the 2023-2024 school year to address the educator shortages being experienced across the country and ensure students have the high-quality attention and dedication they need.

The **Boise, Idaho**, school district, which employs the highest concentration of experienced and qualified educators in the state, utilized ARPA funds to protect their most vulnerable students. The district has a large population of refugee students and broad income inequality; educators in the district organized to mitigate the impacts of remote learning on these populations, including using ARPA funds to launch a robust lunch delivery program and ensure vulnerable students received nutrition assistance.

Anchor Bay, Michigan, public schools have used federal funds to add academic coaches, literacy tutors, and a dedicated literacy coach for each of their seven elementary schools. These specialists work together to provide scaled support before, during, and after school to previously underserved students.

Flint, Michigan, educators won a **\$22,500 retention bonus** to address historic pay inequity. The retention bonus is paid to every educator following each of the subsequent three semesters. Flint dedicated 3 percent of ARPA funds to staff retention and recruitment to ensure students receive high-quality educational experiences from dedicated educators.



Nevada utilized **\$28 million** of ARPA funds to provide an additional year of universal free meals to students in 2022-2023; previously, the state had utilized \$78 million, a portion of which came from ARPA funding, to provide universal free meals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The state additionally allocated **\$7.5 million** to assist school districts in hiring **100 new mental health support professionals** in school-based positions to support students' social and emotional learning needs.



Michigan Education Association (MEA) member Karen Storey spent over a decade creating a therapy dog program for her district in Brighton, Michigan. The work of the Pack of Dogs program has drawn local and national coverage.

With Pack of Dogs serving as the model, districts in Michigan have expanded the program using ARPA funds. They have also utilized ARPA funds to expand the program, implementing it in Colorado, Oklahoma, and Virginia.

New York City devoted a total of **\$1.98 billion** of ARPA funds toward early childhood education, including the full expansion of the city’s 3-K initiative. The 3-K program focused on children who had not yet attended public school at the beginning of the pandemic. By proactively expanding the program, New York City is able to provide an introduction to public education for thousands of students.

The **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**, school district announced a **\$125 million** project funded by ARPA to rehabilitate learning environments across eight buildings. Goals include improving heating and cooling systems—including the installation of new boilers, hot water piping, unit vents, and various other heating equipment—and replacing central chiller systems in two buildings previously affected by extreme heat.

Vermont created the ARP School Indoor Air Quality Grant Program, which allocated **\$15 million** to local educational agencies through grants to improve school ventilation.

Montpelier, Vermont, utilized ARPA funds to provide free tele-mental health services to all students and educators in the district. To date, more than 400 students and educators have been provided access to mental health care that supports their growth and allows them to thrive.

“Our coordinator worked with bargaining teams, which was crucial to achieving sizable salary increases at the bargaining table. For example, in our Rivendell local, our local leader used the ESSER data that our coordinator provided to help support staff achieve salary increases of 10 percent in Year 1 and an additional 10 percent in Year 2, and that data also allowed teachers to obtain 7 percent, 8 percent, and 6 percent salary increases. The data moved the school board bargaining team. In other words, the school board was saying it lacked the funds to give sizable salary increases but the raw ESSER data showed the school did have more than enough funds with which to come to an agreement on salary.

Our coordinator played the key role in educating Vermont-NEA members about a very complex and huge federal funding program. He met with more than 35 different locals last year, educating members about ESSER I, II, and III, and he highlighted how their ESSER I, II, and III funds were being allocated and spent. While focusing on ESSER I, he explained to members how these funds could be used; what role they, as educators, could have in being involved in the conversation; and what discrepancies existed between what was in the ESSER III public plan versus what information was entered for ESSER III in the Vermont Agency of Education Grant Management System. Our coordinator explained this complex system in a way that was helpful and actionable, thereby freeing up members to focus their attention on their students instead of having to dig through the details of ESSER funding.”

—Jeff Fannon, Executive Director, Vermont-NEA



Virginia utilized **\$250 million** in ARPA funds to upgrade air quality systems in public schools, matched with \$250 million in other locally distributed relief funding. The funding will allow for the completion of almost all of the 463 planned HVAC projects across the Commonwealth.

In Virginia, **Staunton City Public Schools** used ARPA funding to reimburse education employees for child care costs for children up to age 12. Similarly, the **Harrisonburg City Council** moved forward with a child care support program, using **\$600,000** in ARPA funds. These critical funds provided safety and security for the families of education professionals as they returned to in-person learning environments.

Roane County, West Virginia, used ARPA funds to reduce class sizes to fewer than 20 students per class in all elementary schools grades K–4. The county saw improved test scores and reduced discipline issues in those classes despite COVID-19 setbacks.

Fayette County, West Virginia, used ARPA funds to provide a classroom aide for grades 1–3. This program became part of a statewide initiative to provide aides over the next three years to all grade 1–3 classrooms with more than 10 students.

Green River, Wyoming, hired additional school wellness counselors in the district using ARPA funds. The district also offers access to a program called School Pulse, which allows students to reach therapeutic services by QR code 24 hours a day.

In **Washington**, the state utilized ARPA funds and tapped the Washington Education Association (WEA) to create a “for educators, by educators” union-run teacher residency program. This historic first-of-its-kind program deserves national attention for two reasons. First, the ARPA ESSER funds were invested as intended—to make long-term transformational changes in public schools in Washington State. Second, the WEA recognized from the outset the need to identify and secure funding to sustain the program beyond the ESSER funds’ expiration. The program will transition to an apprenticeship model in the 2025–2026 school year, with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.

The WEA created this program to prepare educators to serve Washington’s diverse learners and communities while also dismantling institutional systems that cause harm to students and educators. In particular, the program will help address educator shortages in special education. In its first year, the program has 16 residents participating across three sites: Federal Way, Mukilteo, and Walla Walla. The WEA intends to double the number of residents participating in the 2024–2025 academic year.

This teacher residency program offers a model for other states, demonstrating how to hold high standards for residents while also reducing barriers to entry into the teaching profession.

[Learn more about WEA’s teacher residency program.](#)



ORGANIZING WINS

Organizing has been critical to the success of the SRF implementation campaign. NEA experts and SRF coordinators have shared trainings and resources with fellow coordinators, showcasing successful advocacy for ARPA funds. These trainings have highlighted best practices, introduced coordinators to work being done by member leaders as part of NEA's Year-Round Organizing program, and led to action that has seen tremendous impacts around the country.

The **NEA-Alaska** created a guidebook for local education associations to use in their advocacy work, which included policy information, specific funding details, and research on best practices for each district in the state.

The **Michigan Education Association** created a school board-level electoral organizing plan that was successful in defeating numerous hostile candidates, secured victories in more than 75 percent of endorsed races, and utilized ARPA funds as an issue to activate members and hold accountable candidates opposing strong and safe public schools in the 2020 election. Following the election, the state's SRF coordinator convened several meetings with incoming school board members to brief them on allowable uses, best practices, and requirements surrounding ARPA funds.

The **South Carolina Education Association** created an organizing campaign to activate members around the usage of ARPA funds that included direct building-based outreach, text message and phone outreach, and digital outreach and organizing. This outreach connected educators and community allies directly with students and their families to advocate for the successful usage of ARPA funds.

The **Vermont-NEA** has held trainings for staff, state affiliate organizers, local associations, and member leaders to provide organizing strategies, resources, and support for districts advocating for ARPA funds.

“The work that we have been able to do through the SRF Coordinators Network has been invaluable. Through this program, we have reached more than 14 targeted locals and worked with them to ensure the funds were utilized to improve the lives of students and members. In addition, the work that we did through the program helped The South Carolina Education Association grow by 1,223 full-time active new members. This growth has helped The SCEA identify 32 new local leaders, where ongoing labor-management meetings are being held around the terms and conditions of employment for our members.”

–Todd Jaeck, Executive Director,
The South Carolina Education Association

In **San Antonio, Texas**, an SRF coordinator worked with the San Antonio Alliance of Teachers and Support Personnel to create a robust campaign that has won major victories in ARPA fund allocation. By creating a network of educators and supporters of public education, the alliance was able to canvass, phone bank, and organize members and parents to share critical information and promote activism.

The alliance hosted public forums on the uses of school rescue funds and ran a public campaign, which resulted in significant retention bonuses for educators district-wide to address staff shortages. Additionally, the alliance secured funding for high-quality personal protective equipment for educators and students and promoted a public organizing action in support of smaller class sizes and public health safety in schools.

The work of the alliance continues to build the power and impact of the union on both ARPA-specific issues and as an organizing body for educators.



TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The SRF Implementation Grant Program places a significant emphasis on training and building the capacity of the Network to more effectively advocate for modern, safe, supportive, and future-focused public education and achieve positive outcomes in participating states.

The Network's training programs are tailored to provide coordinators with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the complexities of education policy, effectively advocate for member priorities, and construct a public narrative that highlights the successful uses of the school rescue funds. Coordinators have received guidance on building strategic partnerships, conducting data-driven research, and engaging with diverse stakeholders, from community leaders to policymakers. These resources empower them to assist state and local affiliates, members, and school districts in making informed decisions.

The Network also offers ongoing support to coordinators, including access to resources, expert guidance from the NEA and partner organizations, and a collaborative community where coordinators can exchange best practices and seek advice from peers. Coordinators meet biweekly for training sessions and presentations from policy and skill experts, and they share threats, opportunities, and best practices.

It is through this combination of training, resources, and ongoing support that NEA empowers coordinators to be effective and passionate advocates for equitable, safe, healthy, and inclusive public schools.

“NEA worked hard to advocate for the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act and we knew we couldn’t rest and hope for the best after it passed. Hope is not a strategy. When you have an investment in public education as historic as this, it’s critical to mobilize and do all you can to ensure equitable implementation. That is what our network is designed to do and that’s what it is doing.”

–Daaiyah Bilal-Threats, Senior Director,
Education Policy and Implementation Center, NEA

IN-PERSON CONVENINGS

The SRF Coordinators Network has hosted three in-person meetings of state coordinators. These biannual networking and training opportunities have been critical to coordinator development.

At each convening, coordinators heard from senior Biden Administration leaders—including Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education Adam Schott, former Assistant Secretary of Education James Lane, and National Coordinator of ARPA for the White House Gene Sperling. These conversations allowed coordinators to share directly with senior education policy leaders about their successes and challenges as well as how the Biden Administration can help ensure school rescue funds promote the interests of students, educators, schools, and the administration. Coordinators also stressed the importance of meaningful consultation with local education associations and educators as required by ARPA.

Coordinators received policy briefings and training in areas including member organizing, digital communications, collective bargaining, data analysis, and sustainability of funding from NEA experts and partner organizations, such as the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Each convening builds on the knowledge and training gained at previous convenings, forming a strong foundation for coordinators as they continue to advocate for effective use and allocation of school rescue funds.

The ability to sustain wins will depend on convincing the public that school rescue funds are necessary and are being used to make a difference for students and schools across the country. The 2024 election is where that debate will play out. To win the public narrative and the public's support for education funding, coordinators received additional training on story development, collection, and advocacy organizing at the most recent convening in October 2023.

“Meaningful consultation is now on my radar, thanks to you.”

—Gene Sperling,
National Coordinator of ARPA,
The White House

PRESENTATIONS AND RESOURCE SHARING

Building on the work of coordinators around the country, NEA staff and the SRF Coordinators Network have presented frequently to NEA members and partner organizations. These opportunities have consistently led to greater involvement from state and local affiliates, increased awareness and support for educator-led solutions, and greater engagement in member organizing efforts.

NEA Year-Round Organizing Conference

Coordinators and NEA staff have presented regularly at the NEA Year-Round Organizing Conference. Bringing together coordinators of diverse areas of expertise, these presentations have assisted state and local education association leaders and member leaders in understanding the use of ARPA funds, policy goals and supports, and effective organizing advocacy strategies.

NEA Leadership Summit

At the 2022 and 2023 NEA Leadership Summits, local and state education association leaders, SRF coordinators, and NEA policy experts provided training on how associations can effectively advocate for and secure equitable uses of ARPA funds.

Association of Research and Bargaining Professionals

Five SRF coordinators shared research and analysis strategies, best practices, top-level successes, and advice with education association research and bargaining staffers from across the United States, amplifying wins and increasing state-level engagement in ARPA funding decisions.



LOOKING FORWARD

As we approach the deadline to use ARPA funds, the SRF Coordinators Network is poised to ensure continued success in the use of ARPA funds, highlighting critical wins, sustaining successful programs, and advocating for sufficient education funding.



STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATIONS

The Network recognizes the importance of continuous advocacy to secure sustainable funding for education. As ARPA funds are non-recurring, the SRF Coordinators Network will concentrate on collaboration with local, state, and national entities to advocate for the long-term financial stability of our educational institutions.



EMBRACING INNOVATIVE AND EVIDENCE-BASED USES OF FUNDS

To maximize the impact of ARPA funds and set the stage for sustainable funding, the Network will continue to highlight innovative and evidence-based uses of funds. Recognizing the diverse needs of states, the Network will prioritize identifying successful models and strategies that can be adapted and implemented effectively.



PREPARING FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2024 DEADLINE AND BEYOND

As the September 2024 deadline for using ARPA funds approaches, the Network will continue to hold districts accountable for investing every dollar effectively in the interest of our students and members. The Network will work to ensure this historic investment won't go to waste by continuing to monitor and evaluate how funds are utilized with a focus on unexpended funds.

Further, the Network will concentrate on sustainable funding mechanisms for programs that may otherwise be discontinued when ARPA funds expire. By highlighting existing federal programs and funding sources and assisting in identifying new sources, states and districts will be better prepared to maintain support for students and educators.



EXPANDING OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Approaching the 2024 election, the Network recognizes the significance of educating the public about the vital role that ARPA funds played in helping public schools recover from the pandemic. Accordingly, plans include expanding outreach efforts, deepening story collection and development, and raising awareness of the impact this historic policy has on students.

Underscoring the importance of this historic funding, on November 8, 2023, *Education Week* published [“Is This the Year Students Finally Catch Up From the Pandemic? Educators Think So.”](#) From their research center, they found, “According to recent results from the National Center for Education Statistics’ federal School Pulse Panel, ‘Large schools and those serving the highest concentrations of low-income students or students of color have increased their after-school offerings, with roughly 3 in 4 now providing academic enrichment or assistance outside the school day.’”