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| **School Name** | Growing Up Green Charter School | | |
| **Contact Information** | **Name** | **Phone** | **Email** |
| ESSA-Funded Programs Coordinator | Massomeh Spahr | 347-642-4306 x 103 | spahr@gugcs.org |
| McKinney-Vento  Homeless Liaison | [Jennyfere Thomas](mailto:jthomas@gugcs.org) | 347-642-4306 | jthomas@gugcs.org |
| **# of Homeless Students** | 32 | | |

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| **School Name** | Growing Up Green Charter School II | | |
| **Contact Information** | **Name** | **Phone** | **Email** |
| ESSA-Funded Programs Coordinator | Massomeh Spahr | 347-642-4306 x 103 | spahr@gugcs.org |
| McKinney-Vento  Homeless Liaison | [Jennyfere Thomas](mailto:jthomas@gugcs.org) | 347-642-4306 | jthomas@gugcs.org |
| **# of Homeless Students** | 27 | | |

1. Please describe the extraordinary impact of the pandemic on students experiencing homelessness, including academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted students and families all across the United States. As communities closed down to mitigate the spread of the virus, many families experienced employment and income insecurity due to a reduction of work hours and/or loss of full-time jobs. Lack of consistent income impacted a family’s ability to maintain housing payments and, in turn, contributed to insecure housing for families and their school-age children. Growing Up Green Charter Schools enroll more than two dozen students at each campus who are currently experiencing homelessness. As of March 2022, there are 32 homeless students at GUG I and 27 homeless children at GUG II.

As seasoned educators, faculty and staff at Growing Up Green acknowledge the significant academic, social, emotional and mental health needs of students experiencing homelessness. With reference to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, it is important to keep in mind the physiological needs that include food, shelter, clothing, and sleep. These physiological needs greatly impact how students arrive at school, their level of engagement with learning experiences, and their social interactions with peers and teachers.

It is helpful that Growing Up Green currently provides breakfast and lunch for all students. This is especially critical for students who are experiencing homelessness as school becomes a consistent source of food and nutrition. Students can rely on schools to provide access to a healthy breakfast, lunch, snacks, and water throughout the day.

Schools are also places of learning, community, and belonging. In order to navigate the social aspects of school, students need to feel safe and to feel like they belong in their school community. This can sometimes be difficult for students experiencing homelessness if they feel disconnected from their peers or teachers. To create a sense of safety and belonging, schools are places where students learn to socialize with peers, develop friendships, navigate conflicts, and manage emotions. These social emotional demands can be especially challenging for students experiencing homelessness. It can be difficult to manage emotions if one is hungry, if one didn’t sleep well, or if one is tired from taking care of a younger sibling because mom went to work the night before. These are common situations facing students experiencing homelessness.

Lastly, schools are places of learning. Students gather with their peers and engage in academic experiences that often require cognitive load to process new concepts and learn new skills. At times, learning can extend beyond the classroom and the school day. Daily reading logs and homework assignments ask students (and sometimes their families) to engage in learning at home. This can be challenging for students experiencing homelessness as they may not have access to human and/or learning resources at home.

2. Please describe how the LEA intends to use ARP-HCY Part II funds to address the needs identified in #1 above, including, but not limited to activities intended to:

* Increase capacity by hiring staff, dedicating resources, and planning partnerships with community-based organizations, among other strategies;
* Focus on identifying students this spring and to connect students experiencing homelessness and their families to summer learning and enrichment programs this summer (summer 2022), and to engage students and their families in preparation for this fall;
* Identify historically underserved populations such as rural children and youth, Tribal children and youth, students of color, children and youth with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQ+ youth, and pregnant, parenting, or caregiving students experiencing homelessness; and
* Work with community-based organizations for this purpose, as well as to provide wraparound services to these students.

These activities may include any expenses necessary to facilitate the identification, enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youth.

The allocation of ARP-HCY Part II funds will enable both Growing Up Green schools to dedicate human and material resources towards the support of students experiencing homelessness. First and foremost, it is critical for school staff to support basic physiological needs like food, drink, clothing for students experiencing homelessness. At Growing Up Green, all students wear uniforms to school with polo shirts and khaki bottoms. These funds will help provide school uniforms and other clothing like undergarments, socks, and winter coats for students experiencing homelessness.

Secondly, funds will be allocated to provide all the learning materials needed for students experiencing homelessness. Students will receive basic school supplies like notebooks, pencils, and crayons and also essential resources like a laptop for remote learning, wifi access to use, regardless of their current living situation. For students with housing insecurity, it is helpful to be able to provide additional resources to support learning at home like books and other educational toys and materials. In the spring, it is helpful to allocate funds to provide families with access to summer programs to support their child while school is out of session.

Lastly, funding for students experiencing homelessness should be allocated towards school-based staff and resources. This includes additional funding for school deans and counselors to provide on-site support for students and for professional development for teachers to understand how to support students experiencing homelessness in their classrooms. Funding can also support the Operations and Academic teams in keeping track of the number of students experiencing homelessness and monitoring their academic progress in order to better support teachers in differentiating curriculum and instruction to meet their academic needs.