OASIS · AT A GLANCE

The ARPA cliff: the emergency HCBS money is gone

States planned to spend an estimated $37.1 billion on home and community based services, most of it on the workforce. It was one-time money spent on a permanent problem, and the deadline has arrived.

PILLARS: WHY · WHEN | COMPANION TO BLOG POST B155 | 2-PAGE BRIEF

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STATES GOT EXTENSIONS

The longest runs through September 30, 2026. Then it stops.

How the money moved

ARRIVE, SPEND, EXPIRE

STAGE 1

Emergency money arrived

Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act gave states an enhanced federal match for HCBS. All 50 states and the District of Columbia received it.

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STAGE 2

It went to wages

Workforce recruitment and retention was the largest planned category at $26.3 billion nationally, with another $3.9 billion for training.

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STAGE 3

The deadline arrived

The spending deadline moved from March 31, 2024 to March 31, 2025. CMS granted 24 states extensions, the longest through September 30, 2026.

The spending clock

MACPAC, JANUARY 2026

From emergency match to expiration

Four years of enhanced federal match was long enough to legislate a permanent wage floor. About a third of direct care workforce activities were planned for continuation. The rest was always going to stop.

2021	**Section 9817 enacted** A temporary enhanced federal medical assistance percentage for home and community based services, in the American Rescue Plan Act.
Planning	**Every state took it** All 50 states and the District of Columbia received funding and submitted spending plans.
Spending	**$37.1 billion planned** Workforce recruitment and retention at $26.3 billion, the largest category, plus $3.9 billion for workforce training.
2024	**First deadline** The original spending deadline, later extended.
2025	**Extended deadline** Most states finished here. CMS granted 24 states further extensions.
2026	**The last runway ends** The longest approved extension runs through September 30, 2026. There is nothing after it.

$26.3 billion

Planned for recruitment and retention

The largest single category nationally, plus $3.9 billion for workforce training.

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States with sustainability plans

About two thirds described how they would maintain some initiatives after ARPA.

None

Evaluation requirements in the law

MACPAC found the legislation lacked them, which is why the renewal argument is now harder.

THE BONUS THAT WAS NEVER A RAISE

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Devon’s provider handed out retention bonuses two years running. Fifteen hundred dollars, twice, to the direct support professionals who stayed. Two of them stayed. Then the money ended and the bonuses ended and both of them left within five months of each other.

A BONUS BUYS A YEAR. A WAGE BUYS A CAREER.

THE TAKEAWAY

Anything in your adult child's support that was funded by ARPA and not converted into a permanent rate is at risk this year. Not eventually. This year.

TURN THE PAGE

The questions to ask your provider, what to document, and why the permanence argument beats the amount argument.

Finding out what your family is standing on

ASK, THEN DOCUMENT

ASK

Questions for your provider

- [ ] Was any part of this service funded with ARPA money?
- [ ] Which specific line items, and for how long?
- [ ] What ends when the funding ends?
- [ ] What is the plan to sustain it, in writing?
- [ ] What is the current vacancy rate at this agency?

DOCUMENT

What to record this year

- [ ] Every service reduced since 2025, with dates
- [ ] Every retention bonus or add-on that stopped
- [ ] Staff turnover at your provider, by month
- [ ] Authorized hours against delivered hours
- [ ] Any program that closed or shortened its days

UNDERSTAND

Why one-time money failed

- [ ] A bonus does not change what a job pays
- [ ] Workers compare the next five years, not this one
- [ ] Providers cannot post a permanent job on temporary funds
- [ ] No evaluation was required, so no evidence was built
- [ ] The renewal argument now has nothing to cite

ADVOCATE

What to ask for instead

- [ ] Wage floors written into statute, not appropriations
- [ ] Rate methodologies with inflation adjustment built in
- [ ] Reporting requirements attached to any new money
- [ ] Evaluation language in the bill itself
- [ ] Permanence over amount, every time

BRING ONE PAGE, NOT A BINDER

The what-we-lost sheet

01
The service
What your adult child received in 2023 and 2024.

02
The change
What was reduced or stopped, with the date.

03
The reason
What the provider said, in their own words.

04
The cost
Hours you covered yourself since it stopped.

YOUR MOVE

When a service quietly winds down

1. **Ask the provider**
Which line items were ARPA funded.

2. **Get it in writing**
What ends, and when.

3. **Log the reductions**
Every one, with the date.

4. **Tell the coordinator**
Authorized hours going undelivered.

5. **Make the ask permanent**
Statute, not another temporary bridge.

The emergency money is gone. The emergency is not. Families who can document what they lost are the only people who can prove it existed.

SOURCES

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