



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
220 NORTH MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 8645
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48107-8645
(734) 222-6850
FAX (734) 222-6715

TO: Sue Shink, Chair
Board of Commissioners Committee

FROM: Gregory Dill
County Administrator

DATE: February 16, 2021

SUBJECT: Obligate up to \$11,299,007 ARPA Funds

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners obligate up to \$11,299,007 in ARPA funds, including \$1,929,572 from previously recovered lost revenues, for the following:

- Building a strong equity driven health department to support the public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and address health disparities and the social determinants of health to promote health equity by making investments in people, neighborhoods, homes, and places.
- Develop and launch the Mobile Services Support Initiative to bring services to high-need communities where they are, instead of asking the public to come to County facilities.
- Create a Community Priority fund to invest in under resourced communities by supporting community agencies, particularly grassroots agencies in the 48197 and 48198 across one of the following ARPA-eligible categories: Community Violence Interventions, Addressing Education Disparities, Expanding Early Childhood Education, Providing Direct Assistance to Households, Addressing Housing and Homelessness.
- Support the hiring of an Evaluator to work with county staff and contracted agencies funded through ARPA to conduct process and outcome evaluations of the various initiatives funded through ARPA by supporting the collection, use, and reporting of credible evidence to program/initiative staff, Washtenaw County Administration, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, and the US Treasury.

BACKGROUND

The American Rescue Plan Act was signed by President Joe Biden in March 2021 as part of the federal relief effort during the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Rescue Plan Act established the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Program, which will deliver approximately \$350 billion for the eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. There are many potential eligible uses of these funds, including supporting public health efforts, address negative economic impacts of the public health emergency, replace the reduction in revenue faced by governments due to the pandemic, invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, and more. Within these overall categories, recipients have broad flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet the needs of their communities.

Washtenaw County government is set to receive \$71,402,185 from the American Rescue Plan over a 12-month period. The first half of the funding, \$35,701,109, was received in May 2021. It is anticipated that the second half will be received in May 2022.

In July 2021, per Resolution #21-115, the Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution committing that all American Rescue Plan dollars shall be obligated by resolution to ensure transparency, as well as ensure a financial- and equity-based review of all proposals.

In September, the Board of Commissioners unanimously passed the first package of ARPA related investments to:

- Equitably addressing childcare access needs in Washtenaw County through the provision of navigation services and financial assistance
- Develop and launch a Childhood Saving Account Program to promote healthy childhood environments, address educational disparities through investing in lower-income public schools, and begin to impact social determinants of health
- Fully fund the Broadband Task Force's Request for Proposals to expand broadband infrastructure into those areas of the county that presently have no broadband access
- Provide assistance to households to support internet access, digital literacy, and affordability concerns to ensure that everyone who has access to broadband infrastructure is able to adequately connect and use it.
- Increase access to Weatherization services in Washtenaw County to promote healthy home environments, reduce energy bills to help households, and have a positive impact on the sustainability and resiliency of homes in Washtenaw County.
- Account for lost revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the package passage, the Board of Commissioners and Washtenaw County held a series of listening sessions in the 48197 and 48198 zip codes to better understand the needs of residents, who overwhelmingly supported targeted investment in youth, seniors, violence intervention, and agencies addressing those individuals and priority areas.

DISCUSSION

To ensure an adequate and appropriate initial response using the American Rescue Plan funding received by Washtenaw County, the Board of Commissioners will be voting on a resolution that covers a series of obligations that attempt to address several issues of concern concurrently, rather than prioritize certain issues over others. With this package, the Board of Commissioners hopes to target resources to under-resourced communities throughout the

county, but primarily in 48197 and 48198. To accomplish this, Washtenaw County shall leverage evidence-informed interventions, the knowledge of community experts, and data tools like the opportunity index, census-tract maps, and more.

Between the previously mentioned listening sessions, and the community public engagement process, the public has overwhelmingly indicated support for each of these initiatives.

1. BUILDING A STRONG EQUITY DRIVEN HEALTH DEPARTMENT

One of the primary purposes of the American Rescue Plan Act is to support public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and address health disparities and the social determinants of health. In response, this proposal provides funding for the Washtenaw County Health Department to make short and long-term investments to promote health equity by making investments in people, neighborhoods, homes, and places.

Leading with Data for Equity (\$220,390)

Ongoing support for Conduent community health indicator data and the Health for All website. Enhanced Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for Washtenaw County. Additional data analytics capacity for the Health Department. Creation of community health dashboards and reports to track improvements in prioritized health indicators. Support Health in All Policies throughout the County through cross-sector collaboration and advocacy.

Healthy People: Mobile Clinic (\$149,873)

All Washtenaw County residents will be able to access public health services through the RV Mobile Clinic that will traverse the County, bringing services like sexual health services, immunizations, lead testing, and WIC to all nine county districts. Improve access to healthcare through insurance enrollment and access to dental and mental health services.

Healthy Homes (\$340,347)

Address environmental health/home hazards (e.g., lead, failing septic systems, bedbugs, preventing falls), and provide individualized supports that create healthy homes for children and older adults. Collaborate with healthcare providers to ensure that all eligible families are offered services through Children's Special Healthcare Services and Maternal Infant Health Program. Strengthen housing complaint response to address substandard housing and establish a Barrier Busters fund for home environmental and safety enhancements/repairs.

Healthy Neighborhoods (\$383,981)

Establish a network of community health workers (CHWs) to focus on root causes of chronic disease and improve access to healthcare services, including for older adults. Public health staff and a network of CHWs will work with individuals and the communities to build resiliency, support community-based initiatives, and work to improve community-level health outcomes.

Healthy Places (\$92,132)

All county residents will live in healthy neighborhoods that have structural supports, recreational and pedestrian access, and access to basic needs such as grocery stores, access to healthy foods, safe neighborhoods, and transportation. This will reestablish the Health Department's community-based grant program to neighborhoods to promote public health through structural changes to the built environment and allow us to collaborate with local governments on structural changes such as better pedestrian access.

Emergency Preparedness, Climate Change, & Environmental Justice (\$182,711)

Expand community engagement skills of emergency responders and increase the preparedness knowledge of public health workers. Identify potential areas of vulnerability in community resilience, identifying and mentoring community resilience leaders. Evaluate the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) framework for implementation in Washtenaw County. Collaborate with other County efforts related to climate action planning.

ADA Compliance and Signage at Health Department Facilities (\$1,200,000)

Health Department facilities are not ADA compliant and are sometimes hard to find. Given the nature of the in-person services available at the health department, it is crucial to ensure health department buildings and offices are as easy to find and accessible as possible.

2. LAUNCHING THE MOBILE SERVICES SUPPORT INITIATIVE

The Mobile Services Support Initiative (MSSI) would be a new Washtenaw County Program designed to bring services to high-need communities where they are, instead of asking the public to come to County facilities. Estimated costs for three years of programming, from 2022 through the end of ARPA programmatic funding eligibility, is \$729,572. These funds would support two MSSI vehicles for three years; their retrofitting, operation, and maintenance, and a grant status position responsible for coordinating and publicizing the location and services to be offered and made available to the public.

The premise of this program is that there are many individuals who are unable to access services due to difficulty in traveling to where those services are currently provided, and by bringing the services to residents in need, the County and its partners will better meet community needs and will improve the welfare of the County. MSSI supports this premise by providing the physical meeting space and associated resources, allowing for services to be delivered anywhere were the MSSI vehicles could be parked. For example, a vehicle could be used as a mobile food pantry, offering a pick-up location for food provided by Food Gatherers or another community partner in a place far away from the nearest pantry, or it could be used to provide documentation and registration services on-site following a natural disaster or emergency. The goal of the vehicle is to provide a flexible space to provide whatever services are most needed at the place where they are needed.

This program would be a County operated program designed to serve the residents of Washtenaw County, but it assumes that the busses could be used not only by county departments and offices, but by any entity providing services to the public. This program would need to be housed in a yet to be identified department within the County, with that department providing direction as to the services, locations, and goals to be achieved through the MSSl vehicles.

3. CREATING A COMMUNITY PRIORITY FUND

Description

The pandemic exposed and compounded existing disparities in our community. The Washtenaw County Rescue Plan is an opportunity to invest in communities that have been under-resourced and underserved for generations. By leveraging qualified census tract maps, the Opportunity Index, COVID-19 case data, and the testimony of residents, we can identify the areas that are most in need of investment. These areas are highly concentrated within the 48197 and 48198 zip codes. In response, Washtenaw County is proposing the creation of a Community Priority Fund to direct investments across a number of ARPA-eligible categories to fund community agencies, particularly grassroots agencies who have continued to serve households during the pandemic. The goal is for this fund to have low barriers so that service providers, regardless of size or experience, are able to submit funding requests and be eligible for consideration. The following section will describe the types of eligible programs, requirements around the targeting of these investments, details on reporting and evaluation requirements, and a community and internal review process to ensure timely and community-informed decision making for these dollars.

Eligible Activities

Programs & Initiatives (\$7,200,000)

Proposed projects must fall into one of the following ARPA-Eligible Categories:

1. Community Violence Interventions: Evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic.
2. Addressing Educational Disparities: Evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, after-school, and other extended learning and enrichment programs.
3. Expanding Early Childhood Education: Programs or services help develop new or expanded high-quality childcare to provide safe, supportive, and educational care for children
4. Direct Assistance to Households Program: Programs that provide assistance to households or populations facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including, but not limited to food assistance, cash assistance, job training, and other basic needs.
5. Addressing Housing and Homelessness: Programs or services that address housing insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness, such as supportive housing, residential counseling, housing navigation, legal services, eviction prevention, and other housing needs.

Evaluation (\$800,000)

The roles and responsibilities of the Evaluator will be to work directly with County staff and contracted agencies funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Evaluator will assist staff and agencies in conducting process and outcome evaluation of the various initiatives funded through ARPA. The primary goal of the Evaluator is to support the collection, use, and reporting of credible evidence to the program/initiative staff, Washtenaw County Administration, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, and the US Treasury. This will allow program/initiative staff to improve their work by applying lessons learned through the evaluation and will inform future investment by Washtenaw County by demonstrating the impact of funds used on individuals and the community. The Evaluation component funded here is broader than just the community priority fund. They will work across all County ARPA-funded investments to ensure the County can assess and report on the overarching impact of the Washtenaw County Rescue Plan. The costs will go to an investment in a data management system, as well as a position to manage these activities.

Funding Categories:

Community Violence Interventions (\$2M): Evidence-based, community violence intervention and violence and response programs to prevent violence and mitigate the impact of increased violence experienced during the pandemic.

Addressing Educational Disparities (\$1M): Evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, after-school, and other extended learning and enrichment programs.

Expanding Early Childhood Education (\$1.8M): Programs or services help develop new or expanded high-quality childcare to provide safe, supportive, and educational care for children

Direct Assistance to Households Program (\$1M): Programs that provide assistance to households or populations facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including, but not limited to food assistance, cash assistance, job training, and other basic needs.

Addressing Housing and Homelessness (\$1.4M): Programs or services that address housing insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness, such as supportive housing, residential counseling, housing navigation, legal services, eviction prevention, and other housing needs.

Process:

- 1. Application** - Organizations will be able to apply to one or multiple funding buckets via an easy to complete online webform that will ask agencies basic questions about proposed program/initiatives. There will be the ability to reach out to county staff to offer technical assistance in completing the webform to limit barriers to funding for smaller, grassroots organizations. This webform will launch and submissions will be reviewed on a biweekly basis.
- 2. Staff Vetting** – Washtenaw County staff will conduct a high-level review of all proposals to determine if the proposed program/initiative is eligible for fund usage. This review will not assess the merits of the applications, simply whether they are eligible. After reviewed, proposals will be prepared by staff for presentation to the advisory body.

3. Advisory Body:

- a. *Composition* – This body will include four county staff and four commissioner appointees. Staff representation will be determined by the Administrator. Commissioners representing 48197 and 48198 will identify one community member to represent them. Members of the advisory body may not be an employee, board member, spokesperson or client of an agency that seeks funding support through this fund.
- b. *Scope of Work* – This advisory body will meet virtually at least once a month. After the webform has been created, they will review submissions that have gone through the staff vetting process. They will receive a packet of proposals ahead of each meeting, organized by funding bucket, and will score each proposal on a scale of 1 (Do Not Support Funding) to 10 (Strongly Support Funding). Criteria for scoring will be provided in advance of inaugural meeting, but will prioritize high impact projects in qualified census tracts within 48197 and 48198. Meetings will offer an opportunity for the Advisory Body to have a conversation about each proposal. Members will be allowed to re-score each proposal after the meeting. County staff on the Body will take the average scores for each proposal and provide the list of scored projects to the County Administrator for review.

4. Administrator Review and Preparation of Recommendation

- a. The County Administrator will receive recommendations from the Advisory Body.
- b. Highly scored proposals that receives a favorable review by the administrator's office will be prepared for board approval as a package. Mid scored proposals will return to the Advisory Board to be reconsidered along with any new applications in line with the next . Low scored proposals will not be funded.
- c. In the event that less than the majority of funds are not dedicated to specific proposals at the conclusion of the acceptance period, a second acceptance period of 30 days may be opened to solicit proposals additional.

5. Board Vote to Accept the Recommendation

- a. The Board of Commissioners will receive a recommendation from the County Administrator to approve a package.

6. Operationalization

- a. If approved by the Board, the County will work with the approved organizations to draft contracts and scopes of work.
- b. The evaluator will schedule an initial meeting with each funded program to develop and finalize an evaluation plan and/or reporting framework and will offer ongoing technical assistance as the program is implemented.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

Necessary modifications to position control, either by way of the creation of regular or temporary positions, may be needed to serve as an intermediary between the service providers, the residents of the County and the Board of Commissioners to ensure the funds are invested and tracked in alignment with treasury guidance, and that work is completed to agreed upon standards. Position(s) created to support ARPA initiatives will be earmarked as such and shall be eliminated upon expenditure of all ARPA funds.

As part of building a strong equity driven health department, launching the MSSSI, establishing the Community Priority Fund, and beginning evaluation and reporting work there are several positions that could be created and hired do this work. As indicated in the resolution, the Board is recognizing these potential modifications that will be established as grant status funded through the time that ARPA dollars can be expended. The Administrator will work with county program staff and HR to identify these modifications, including the creation of regular or temporary positions.

PCN	Position Title	Employee Group	Grade	Create	Eliminate
3022.0001	Data and Evaluation Manager (grant status)	Non-Union	30	1.0	

IMPACT ON BUDGET

Washtenaw County received \$35,701,092 in Federal funds in May which represents 50% of the total award. It is currently anticipated that the second half of the award will be received in May 2022. As the funds are obligated through Board of Commissioners action will be made available through the establishment of individual budgets within the ARPA fund by expenditure category as identified by the ARPA Compliance and Reporting instructions.

Washtenaw County Rescue Plan Initiative	American Rescue Plan Fund	ARP (Lost Revenues)	Total Obligation
Building a Strong, Equity Driven Health Department	\$1,369,435	\$1,200,000	\$2,569,435
Launching a Mobile Services Support Initiative		\$729,572	\$729,572
Creating a Community Priority Fund	\$8,000,000		\$8,000,000
	\$9,369,435	\$1,929,572	\$11,299,007

IMPACT ON INFRASTRUCTURE

The programs and projects proposed in this resolution will have significant impacts on the infrastructure, however these impacts have been accounted for in this proposal.

The \$1,200,000 included to renovate and update Health Department facilities will be a sizable capital improvement project which will be led by the Facilities Management department, and which will update the spaces used by the Health Department to be more accessible and effective.

The Mobile Services Support Initiative will also expand the infrastructure. The two vehicles to be used as the basis for mobile service delivery will be added to the County’s fleet, and as such will

require maintenance support and funding to safely operate. The normal fleet practice at the County is to include the eventual replacement of all county vehicles, however this proposal does not include funding for bus replacement. The busses donated to the County from AAATA for this program are in excellent repair and should operate for several years under the use proposed for the MSSSI, however when these busses reach end of life there will need to be consideration given to their replacement and funding identified from outside of the fleet fund.

Finally, all three of these proposals will require personnel to implement. Each new position requires space and technology. This proposal includes a single, grant status position creation. However, the MSSSI position also anticipates staffing necessary to coordinate the services although no position creation is requested at this time.

IMPACT ON EQUITY

As defined by the County's equity policy, equity means fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people. According to the Opportunity Index, qualified census tract maps, COVID-19 case data, and the results of community engagement, there are still startling inequities throughout the county. Portions of the 48197 and 48198 zip codes, along with other select areas throughout the county have been systemically under-resourced and require targeted investments to substantially impact generational success and improve our community's health and wellbeing. With this package, the Board of Commissioners hopes to address root-cause disparities. To accomplish this, Washtenaw County will leverage evidence-informed interventions, the knowledge of community experts, and data tools like the Opportunity Index and CDC Social Vulnerability Index. This package of allocations heavily prioritizes evaluation and assessment with the goal of ensuring data-driven decision making around investments.

The first section of the Health Department's proposal to the Board of Commissioners, "*Leading with Data for Equity*", focuses on leveraging data tools like the Opportunity Index and Social Vulnerability Index to prioritize geographic and population focuses for all initiatives and programs funded through this proposal. This use of data, and a proposed, comprehensive, community engagement process to establish community-identified priorities, will go a long way in ensuring equitable deployment of resources. Proposed resources include expanding the existing network of community health workers who are embedded in under-resourced communities and building out the service delivery model of the department's Mobile Health RV. Both Community Health Workers and Mobile Health RV have been well received and demonstrated effectiveness at reaching target populations. Building out these initiatives with the geographic focus mentioned above can be hugely impactful. Further, the Health Department's proposal focuses on Healthy Homes, Healthy Places, and Environmental Justice will invest in neighborhoods with homes that have higher health hazards, poor pedestrian access, and other barriers to health outcomes. The proposal will allow us to focus on addressing the social determinants of health that have had a substantial impact on communities that have been disparately hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Mobile Services Support Initiative* also has the potential to have a substantial impact on equity in our community by addressing barriers to resources that many in our community feel. While the county and its numerous community partners offer a wide range of important services, an individual's ability to access them is hugely dependent on barriers such as transportation, childcare, and more. A mobile services unit to help connect different parts of the community with

these services by bringing them to specific neighborhoods via a mobile community center of sorts.

The *Community Priority Fund* was specifically created to ensure an equitable distribution of APRA resources in our county. Every “Very Low Access to Opportunity” census tract in the community is in the 48197 and 48198 zip codes, and this fund will exclusively fund initiatives and organizations working in this area. The flexibility and low-barrier framework of this fund to support small organizations, particularly grassroots organizations, will allow for a holistic response to addressing the social determinants of health including violence prevention interventions, educational disparities, housing and homelessness, behavioral health, expansion of early childhood education access, and direct support to households.

Finally, by investing in process and outcome evaluation, we will ensure that our strategies are impacting equity in our community in the most effective ways and building the internal evaluation capacity of the partner organizations. The data gathered through the evaluations of all ARPA investments will inform future community investments to ensure they are truly reaching and helping individuals and households. If an initiative proves to be extremely effective, it can be expanded and duplicated. If a program isn't producing the desired results, it can be improved or potentially substituted for something that will. A network of service providers that have the tools for data-driven evaluation and an impact-focused mindset will create a long-lasting, positive, impact on equity in our county.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS

While the obligating of ARPA funds does not impact indirect costs, the operationalizing of the various approved projects will. This award allows the use of the de minimis rate of 10% of the total direct costs for indirect based on each project expenditure category.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES

As intended by the funding award, there will be impacts to internal County departments as they become involved in the operationalizing of the awards, as well as to external organizations and vendors as they provide the actual services. With the array of services being authorized it will require a broad and diverse skill set and knowledge base in order to make effective use of the funds that will result in successful impacts to the community.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES

The requested Board action conforms with all applicable County policies.

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution