



Douglas County
Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Funds – Performance Report**
As of July 31, 2024



Douglas County Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The Douglas County, Nebraska, Board of Commissioners has received \$110.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding from the U.S. Department of Treasury in the form of two \$55.4 million installments, the first in May 2021, and the second in June, 2022. The County Board has decided to prioritize qualifying internal County government requests, along with requests related to improving mental health services across the County. In addition, the County Board has allocated \$2.5 million of the ARPA funding to each of the seven Commissioners to aid their districts.

The first installment of \$55.4 million in ARPA funding has all been spent or earmarked by the County Board. The County chose the standard allowance of \$10 million for revenue loss and allocated \$9 million for premium pay for County public health and safety employees. The Douglas County Health Department used \$7.6 million in ARPA funding in dealing directly with efforts to combat the pandemic, including vaccination-related expenses, contact tracing, and employee payroll and benefit expenses. Other County departments were allocated approximately \$10 million in funding for qualifying projects and expenses. A little over \$1 million was awarded to fund mental health-related projects administered by non-profits in Douglas County, while the \$17.5 million allocated to individual Commissioner projects was awarded to a variety of projects, primarily in Qualifying Census Tract areas in North and South Omaha. Many of these projects involve mental health initiatives along with homeless issues, food pantries, refugee care, projects for disadvantaged youth, and other community programs.

The second ARPA installment was received in June 2022, and the County Board allocated **\$1.2 million** to purchase a new HVAC system for a section of the Civic Center and **\$3.8 million** for a premium pay program for employees who work in areas other than public health and safety. The remaining **\$50 million** has been earmarked for mental health priorities. The County Board hosted four public townhalls across the County to seek public input as to how these mental health funds should be spent, which included detailed presentations and discussions regarding the potential options for the use of this ARPA funding for mental health initiatives.



The County Board concluded that this funding should be used to develop and construct new mental health facilities to serve the population of Douglas County. The first two options or alternatives that were considered was whether the needed mental health operation should be a combined facility for both the Adult Community Mental Health Department and the Department of Corrections operations that service inmates who have been diagnosed with serious mental health issues, or, alternatively to develop separate facilities for the Community Mental Health and Correctional Mental Health operations.

The County retained consultants from Carlson West Povondra Architects to develop site selection and evaluation criteria, project cost estimates for the development and operation of the facilities, and a timeline to completion. Progress to date on this project is summarized in the Mental Health Assistance section of this report.

The County's policy regarding ARPA awards is to have all County Board approved awards be reviewed by the County's consultant, Deloitte, to ensure that the individual projects are eligible for funding under the ARPA guidelines issued by the U.S. Treasury Department.

Uses of Funds

With the intention of addressing and assisting public health, negative economic impacts, and services to disproportionately impacted communities by Covid pandemic, the County spending plan for the first installment of ARPA funding totals **\$55.4 million** spread across three Board-approved strategic pillars:

- (1) **\$17.5 million** to provide and assisting disproportionately impacted communities within Douglas County territories,
- (2) **\$8.6 million** to preserve and promote public health and mental health of residents within Douglas County territories; and
- (3) **\$28.9 million** to preserve County's fiscal stability, continuation of services and shore up our safety net programs.

Detailed information regarding each pillar is included below.



Note: A second installment of ARPA funding in the amount of **\$55.4 million** has been allocated with **\$3.8 million** to premium pay initiative and **\$1.2 million** for a new HVAC System in the Civic Center, with the remaining **\$50 million** being earmarked for mental health priorities.

FIRST PILLAR: DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

The COVID-19 outbreak is a public health emergency and on March 11, 2020, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. During the pandemic, about 4 in 102 adults in the U.S. have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder. The pandemic has impacted the well-being of households, particularly mothers, children, young people, older adults, and people with disabilities in having poorer mental health and women adversely impacted by the economic downturns, such as job loss. For us as a community to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to put resources towards ongoing testing, vaccine education, vaccinations, and mental health support.

MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE

The resolution passed by the County Board clearly identifies that mental health initiatives will be a top priority when considering how to allocate the ARPA funding. Funding was allocated to support non-profits providing mental health services and to address mental health concerns in our schools and emergency rooms.

The resolution also states that projects administered by the County departments which provide services and benefits to Douglas County residents, especially those living in disproportionately impacted communities, will be considered first for County Board approval.

Mental Health Initiatives

The first option for mental health assistance evaluated by the consultants was a combined Community and Corrections Mental Health facility. Several issues with this alternative were identified in the evaluation. First, the County does not currently own an available site large enough to accommodate this combined option (at least five acres would be required). Second, the cost estimate for developing this large facility would be at least \$60 million, which is 20% over the amount allocated for this project. Finally, discussions with community leaders identified that a significant negative stigma could be associated with a combined facility, as potential users of the



Community Mental Health facility could be deterred from utilizing the facility due to the fact that a significant portion of it would house a secured detention area with the necessary Corrections staff creating a “jail-like” atmosphere.

The second alternative evaluated in this phase of the study was the development of separate Community and Correctional Mental Health facilities. Two county-owned sites in central Omaha located fairly close to each other were identified as potential locations. Carlson West Povondra evaluated the stand-alone Community Mental Health Center and came up with a preliminary cost estimate of \$25 million to \$28 million for a new 35,000 square foot facility. They did a similar analysis for constructing a new 37,000 square foot addition at the existing Correctional facility, which would be used solely as a secured mental health detention facility for inmates diagnosed with serious mental illness. The preliminary cost estimate of this was \$32 million to \$35 million.

The combined cost of these two separate facilities is above the amount earmarked for this project. In order to determine if this project could be made to come in at or below the \$50 million budget, the County Board has requested that consultants evaluate another alternative which is to renovate some vacant modules at the existing Douglas County Correctional facility to convert them into secured detention facilities for the inmates with severe mental illness. This phase of the project is ongoing at this time and when the findings are complete, the County Board intends on choosing which mental health facility alternative to proceed with given the budgetary constraints.

In terms of prioritizing the greater need for a new mental health facility between Community Mental Health and Corrections Mental Health, the County Board has decided that constructing a mental health treatment unit at the Department of Corrections is the top priority for utilizing the remaining ARPA funding.

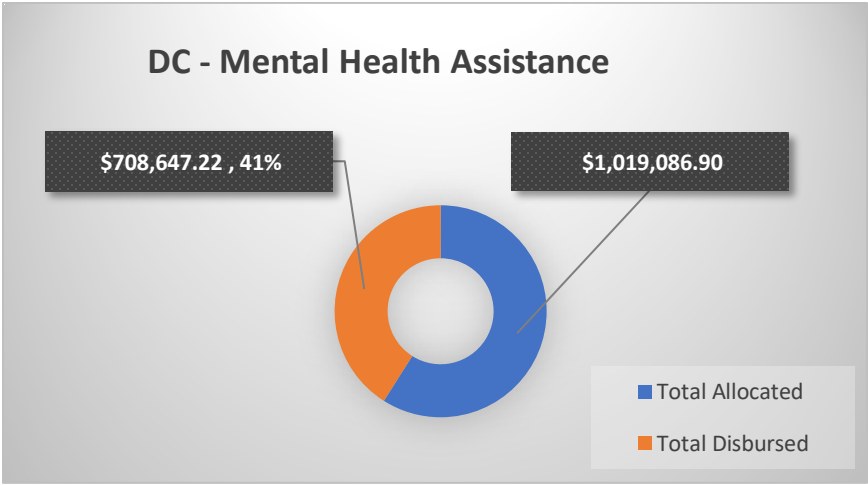


Figure 1 - Douglas County Mental Health Assistance Graphic

Douglas County Health Department Vaccination Program

The health, social, and economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitate the use of several ARPA funding to meet urgent, immediate needs faced by the Douglas County community. Rising COVID cases and the ongoing vaccination campaign require immediate funding to ensure current work can be sustained and new public health campaigns can be launched. The County has allocated **\$1.9 million** to its vaccination program which focus on vaccinating the community, ensuring all individuals, regardless of race or ethnicity have proper avenues to receiving accurate information and access to vaccines.

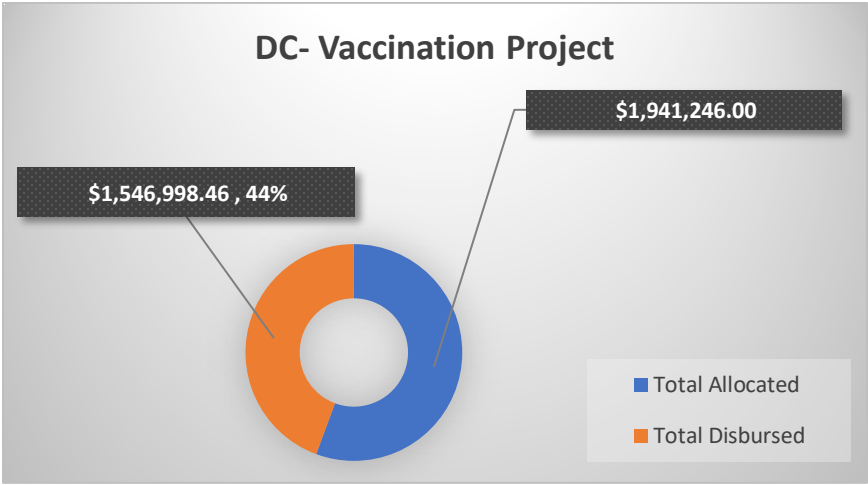


Figure 2 - Douglas County Vaccination Project Graphic

Douglas County Health Department Contact Tracing Program

The County continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the County has expended funds for COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and contact tracing initiatives, including healthcare professionals, supplies, scheduling programs, and prevention campaigning to increase awareness and reach hard to reach communities. The County campaigns aims to use funding to prevent the spread of the virus.

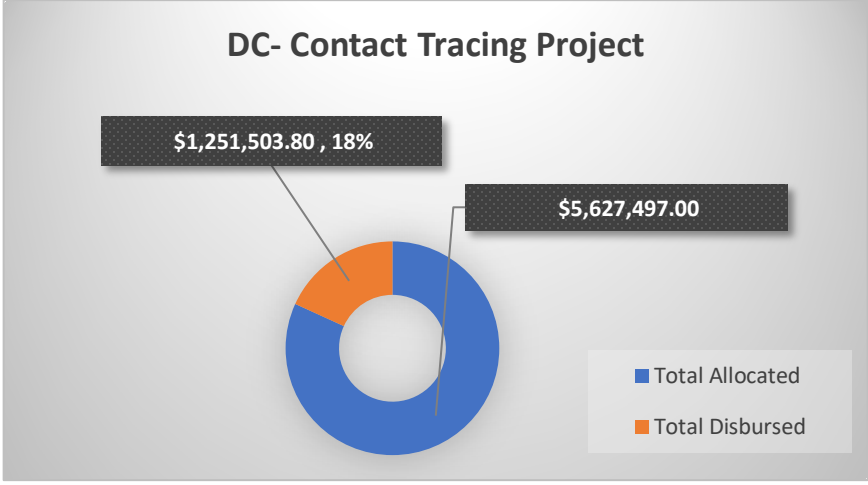


Figure 3 - Douglas County Contact Tracing Program Graphic



SECOND PILLAR: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSISTANCE

County residents in low-income communities and disproportionately impacted communities, have borne the brunt of the pandemic's negative impacts. This second pillar recognizes the need to deploy supportive services through an equity lens to jumpstart recovery for those who have suffered the most and are resourced the least.

This pillar invests millions in fundings to provide financial and other services and programs to benefit primarily nonprofits; create employment opportunities for workers and youth; fund essential childcare, recreational, early education, and home visiting programs for families; further address trauma and violence; and additional food and nutritional resources.

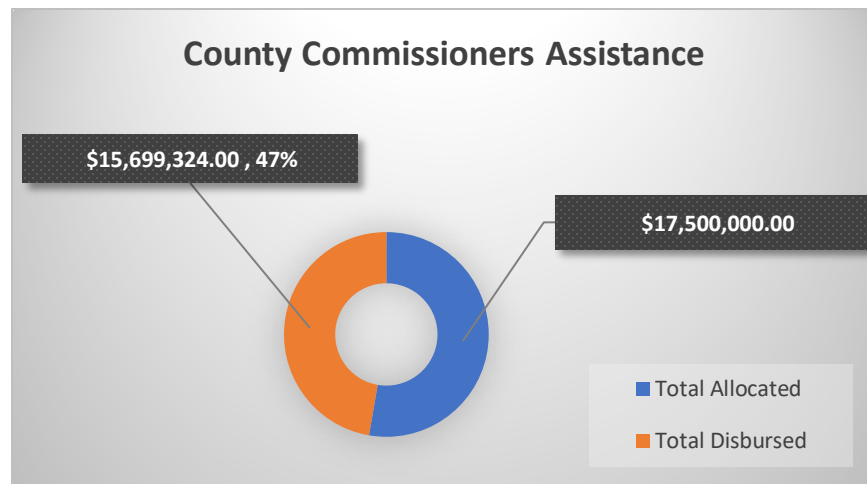


Figure 4 - Douglas County Commissioners Assistance Graphical Matrix

THIRD PILLAR: FISCAL STABILITY AND SOCIAL SAFETY

Throughout the pandemic, the County not only sustained but expanded its safety programs to meet critical public health, economic, and social needs of our community, despite drastic revenue reductions and implementing substantial fundings in departmental curtailments last fiscal year. The third pillar recognizes the need to ensure the County's system of support to residents is on firm financial footing as we emerge from the pandemic.



Douglas County Premium Pay

According to the guidelines set forth by the federal government, one of the uses for ARPA funds is premium pay, one-time bonuses for employees. The Premium Pay Program was rolled out in two (2) Phases.

On resolution signed on December 7, 2021, and effective January 1, 2022 through June 25, 2022, the County elected to provide a premium pay supplement where Public Health and Safety employees received an additional \$5.00 per hour for work performed within his/her classification.

A similar program was instituted from October 2, 2022 through April 1, 2023 for all other Douglas County Full-Time Employees who do not work from home. The program was designed to be compliant with the guidelines issued by the Treasury Department for these types of awards.

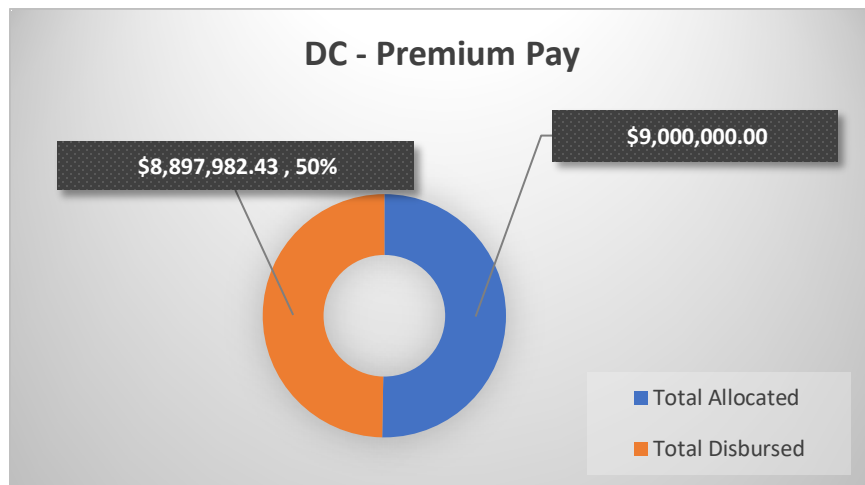


Figure 5 - Douglas County Premium Pay Graphic

Douglas County Revenue Loss

The County can use the Fiscal Recovery Fund for the provision of government services to the extent revenue was reduced due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, with few exceptions. Funds used to replace revenue loss may be used for a wide range of government services, programs, and projects outside of the other eligible uses of the Fiscal Recovery Fund. The



County’s reduction in revenue is measured relative to the revenue collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency. Using the formula provided by Treasury for the County’s revenue loss calculation, the County has preliminary estimated revenue loss of more than **\$5 million** in FY 2022. While there is no intent to expend the full Fiscal Recovery Fund allocation out of the Revenue Replacement category, the County’s revenue loss demonstrates the significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the County.

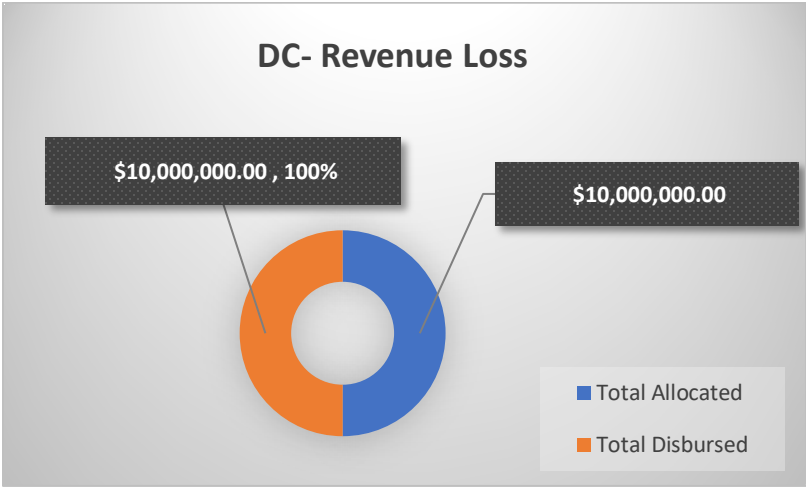


Figure 6 - Douglas County Revenue Loss Graphic

Douglas County Internal Departments

The ARPA Funding within the Internal Departments of Douglas County have been utilized in a broad range of initiatives, upgrades, and enhancements to prevent and mitigate Covid-19 and Mental Health Conditions. As a protective measure, departments that directly serve the public have invested and installed upgraded software allowing the population of Douglas County access to software online to aid Social Distancing. In addition, several disinfection procedures have been implemented in public areas and congregate living facilities such as the Skilled Nursing Home and the Douglas County Incarceration facilities. Ventilation systems have been upgraded and installed across public facilities to meet post-pandemic compliance to prevent further spread of Covid-19. Finally, several initiatives have been implemented as a response to the Mental Health Crisis such as Diversion programs and Mental Health Programs within our Correctional and Youth facilities to lower risk behaviors.

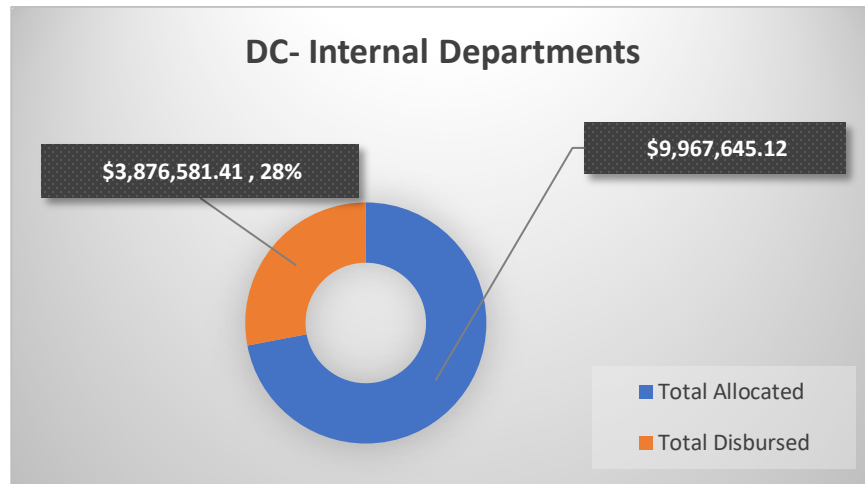


Figure 7 - Douglas County Internal Departments Graphic

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The County is committed to operationalizing equity. This year, with the support of the Board of Commissioners, the County has established the BRIDGE Family Needs Survey. The goal of the BRIDGE Family Needs Survey is to ensure the appropriate programs and services are available throughout our community based on what our youth and families actually needs.

The BRIDGE will create prevention and early intervention system by partnering with families and community resources to envision a future that leverages the strengths of families and coordinates community partners to support and sustain youth and family well-being. The core pillars of BRIDGE are:

- Comprehensive review with families regarding their needs, dreams, and goals.
- Navigational support to connect families to high quality programs and services.
- Walking alongside families as they navigate systems, programs, and services.
- Advocacy for systems, programs, and supports that address service or system gaps.

In addition, a thorough analysis was done of county programs and previous use of CARES Funds including outcomes. The comprehensive data as well as recommendations for improving county services are being taking into consideration by the Board and the County leadership. Such data has provided comprehensive baseline on Equity Goals, Awareness, Access and Distribution, and



Outcomes. The County's acute spending programs are intended to improve equitable outcomes and address the following areas:

- Mental and Behavioral Health
- At-risk Youth
- Housing Insecurity
- Under and Unemployed individuals
- Small Business

Finally, the County has enhanced its communication capabilities to improve communication to the community regarding public health emergency related information and resources that will be available through the County's SLFRF funds.

Community Engagement

The County is committed to engaging the community to develop projects that are pivotal in shaping the strength, sustainability, and equity of The County's recovery from COVID-19 pandemic and future economic growth. Engagement strategies will differ depending on the project and target population.

Community Engagement strategies that have been undertaken to date includes enhancing public communications. The County recognized the need to improve communication with the community and to these matters, the County has enhanced its communication system to centralize and improve overall effectiveness of public communication and community engagement.

Capital Projects

As a result of obtaining a second installment of ARPA funds, the County has evaluated the feasibility of building facilities to provide mental health services within Douglas County population. Such project has received County Board approval. The County has relevant experience in managing the work requirements as required by state and federal grants. For these purposes, projects using federal funds will comply with all applicable federal labor requirements. The county has also instituted its own responsible hiring policy that focuses on elevating the importance of job safety.



Use of Evidence

The County will address use of evidence for the projects listed below.

- Douglas County Mental Health Assistance
- County Commissioners Assistance
- Douglas County Internal Departments
- Restaurant Assistance
- DC Sheriff HVAC Project
- DC Corrections Prison Management System Project
- Youth Center
- DC Correction Security Modifications Project
- Tourism Assistance

Current and future awards have been monitoring disbursed amounts to ensure proper execution of funds per provided guidance, allocation of funds based on an evidence-based approach and proper documentation retention process.

[Project Inventory](#)

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

As of the reporting period ending July 31, 2024, the County have the following ARPA related expenditures against the ARPA appropriations authorized by the Board of Commissioners:



Expenses by Expenditure Category

Project Name	Allocation	Cumulative Expenditures	Project Number	Expenditure Type		Project Description
				Group	Category	
County Commissioners Assistance	\$17,500,000.00	\$15,699,324.00	851-DC Commissioners	1.0	1.12	This project invests millions in fundings to provide financial and other services and programs to benefit primarily nonprofits; create employment opportunities for workers and youth; fund essential childcare, recreational, early education, and home visiting programs for families; further address trauma and violence; and additional food and nutritional resources.
Douglas County Mental Health Assistance	\$51,019,086.90	\$2,124,615.86	851-Mental Health	1.0	1.10	Provide assistance to facilitate mental health services in the community within Douglas County territory upon the success of partnership/funding of local non-profits entities.
Douglas County Health Department Vaccination Program	\$1,941,246.00	\$1,546,998.46	851-Vaccination	1.0	1.1	To provide funding to Douglas County Health Department vaccination initiative for impacted areas within Douglas County territory.
Douglas County Health Department Contact Tracing Program	\$1,155,600.00	\$1,155,600.00	851-Contact Tracing	1.0	1.3	To provide funding to Douglas County Health Department contact tracing initiative for impacted areas within Douglas County territory.
Douglas County Premium Pay	\$9,000,000.00	\$8,897,982.43	851-Premium Pay	4.0	4.10	To provide premium pay to eligible workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency,
Douglas County Revenue Loss	\$10,000,000.00	\$10,000,000.00	851-Premium Pay	6.0	6.1	To covers revenue loss costs associated to providing continuity of public safety and health services on a 24/7 schedule basis.
Douglas County Internal Departments	\$9,967,645.12	\$3,876,581.41	851-Internal Departments	7.0	7.3	<p>Provide assistance to other units from Douglas County government.</p> <p>The Douglas County Health Department among other governments departments is overseeing the only County-run vaccination program in Nebraska, as all the other smaller counties have let the State run their COVID-19 related programs.</p> <p>As anticipated, some of the County's ARPA funding were used to reimburse Douglas County for those COVID-related expenses which were not reimbursed by the State or FEMA agency.</p>



Expenses by Expenditure Category						
Project Name	Allocation	Cumulative Expenditures	Project Number	Expenditure Type		Project Description
				Group	Category	
Restaurant Assistance	\$700,000.00	\$700,000.00	851-Rest. Assistance	2	2.37	This program will distribute up to \$10,000.00 in funding to those local restaurants with less than \$1.25 million in revenues which meet a list of specified criteria.
DC Sheriff HVAC Project	\$3,619,688.00	\$2,391,718.33	851-Public Bldg.	3	3.4	Douglas County Public Buildings Department is renovating an HVAC and a power generator system as part of their initiative for improving air quality and to preserve service continuity for Douglas County population.
DC Corrections Prison Management System Project	\$750,000.00	\$725,710.00	851-Corrections Prison	7	7.2	Implement a software management system for Corrections Prison Dept.
Youth Center	\$600,000.00	\$586,397.48	851- Youth Center	1	1.12	Provide behavioral health services to the Douglas County Youth Center.
DC Correction Security Modifications Project	\$1,100,000.00	\$1,080,467.00	851-Douglas County	7	7.2	To perform corrections to the Douglas County security system.



Expenses by Expenditure Category						
Project Name	Allocation	Cumulative Expenditures	Project Number	Expenditure Type		Project Description
				Group	Category	
Tourism Assistance	\$2,000,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	851-Tourism Support	2	2.35	Provide financial assistance to Douglas County tourism industry negatively impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.
Total	\$109,353,266.02	\$50,785,394.97				

Expenditures Categories Legend

Expenditures Categories Legend		
Project Expenditure Category	Project Expenditure Subcategory	Category/Subcategory Description
1.0	-	Public Health
-	1.1	COVID -19 Contact Vaccination
-	1.3	COVID -19 Contact Tracing
-	1.10	Mental Health Services
-	1.12	Other Public Health Services
2	-	Negative Economic Impact
-	2.35	Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality
-	2.37	Economic Impact Assistance: Other
3	-	Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity
-	3.4	Public Sector Capacity: Effective Service Delivery
4.0	-	Premium Pay
-	4.1	Public Sector Employees
6.0	-	Revenue Replacement
-	6.1	Provision of Government Services
7.0	-	Administrative and Other
-	7.1	Transfers to Other Units of Government
-	7.2	Transfers to Other Units of Government