

City of Fort Worth, Texas
Fort Worth Convention & Visitors
Bureau, Visit Fort Worth
Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
2025 Report

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2025 Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Visit Fort Worth will put ARPA funds to work rebuilding our visitor economy, which supports jobs and local businesses.

Tourism has been named a priority industry by federal ARPA guidelines because the industry was among the hardest hit by the pandemic. In 2020, the Vendor responded to the pandemic by laying off 20% of its staff, reducing spending, and shuttering visitor centers.

Over the next three years, ARPA funds will replace about half of the \$10.44 million Visit Fort Worth lost during the tourism downturn. Specifically, \$6 million over three years, or 57% of that total loss of projected revenue.

Uses of Funds - overview of intended use under (EC2).

Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Visit Fort Worth has a three-point plan for the effective use of ARPA funds:

- Support recovery of conventions by attracting meetings and helping customers connect with local businesses and services.
 - \$3 million over three years
 - Project concepts
 - National marketing campaign to promote Convention Center expansion, including targeted promotions and events, corporate outreach, video, and trade show exhibits
 - Site visits and familiarization trips for new convention customers, especially those who do not fit into the current facility
 - Pre-promotion of conventions to support attendance, such as marketing campaigns around conventions before they come to Fort Worth
- Leverage our momentum with sports tourism by securing and hosting events that attract fans and media coverage.
 - \$1.75 million over three years
 - Project concepts
 - Site visits and familiarization trips for sports events rights holders, including the 2022 hosting of the Sports ETA conference
 - DFW-wide advertising to drive ticket sales for sports events, demonstrating local support
 - Start-up salary for sports events coordinator position, which will be funded by the operating budget long-term as hotel tax collections recover to pre-COVID levels
- Promote leisure tourism, especially highlighting our incredible attractions and experiences around the arts, western heritage, and nightlife.
 - \$1.25 million over three years
 - Project concepts
 - Splashy national advertising to promote new attractions such as Stockyards, Downtown, Cultural District, Dickies Arena, and landmark museum exhibits such as Kimbell Art Museum's 2022 "Language of Beauty in African Art"
 - Promotional roadshow in key Texas markets
 - Sponsorship for difference-making festivals and events that raise Fort Worth's profile (e.g., Opal's Walk, Fortress Fest)

Promoting equitable outcomes

Stimulate the economic activity for all tourism-related businesses in the city, for example: hotels, restaurants, museums, etc., which will provide employment opportunities for citizens across the city.

Community Engagement - overview of how community involvement is included.

- Broad-based Marketing will include most areas of the city, highlighting what each part has to offer to attract tourism and economic impact to those areas.
- Sponsorships for community activities to include: Opal's Walk, Fortress Fest, and others that highlight the diverse culture of Fort Worth, its history, and residents, will be funded to contribute to the quality of life for residents and to attract visitors.

Use of Evidence - overview of how the project is being evaluated

- Marketing activities will be evaluated by evaluating reach, views, and/or engagement
- Sales activities will be evaluated by lead generation, definite room night bookings and/or number of events booked.

See Section C(7) on page 27 of the Reporting Guidance for additional information.

Performance Report

Describe how performance management is incorporated into their SLFRF program, including how they are tracking their overarching jurisdictional goals for these funds as well as measuring results for individual projects. The recipient has flexibility in terms of how this information is presented in the Recovery Plan, and may report key performance indicators for each project, or may group projects with substantially similar goals and the same outcome measures. In some cases, the recipient may choose to include some indicators for each individual project as well as cross-cutting indicators. Recipients may include links to performance management dashboards, performance management policies, and other public-facing tools that are used to track and communicate the performance of Fiscal Recovery Funds. In addition to outlining in this section their high-level approach to performance management, recipients must also include key performance indicators for each SLFRF project in the Project Inventory section (more details below).

See Section C(7) on pages 38 and 39 of the Reporting Guidance for additional information.

Project Inventory

In this section, jurisdictions should provide a description of each project undertaken. See Section C(8) on page 27 of the Reporting Guidance for additional information.

Project [Identification Number]: Texas Rangers Advertising – VFW 021

Funding amount: \$275,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- This project is focused on increasing awareness of Fort Worth as a travel, meetings, sports, music, and film destination across a broad range of advertising mediums such as broadcast, OTT, digital, and social. The commercial and its various cutdowns will be the primary video content for the Visit Fort Worth advertising campaign for the next three years.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to increase awareness of Fort Worth as a travel destination through a narrative that captures the essence of Fort Worth as the Modern West. The commercial will be utilized in traditional TV buys, OTT, digital, and social media campaigns. The creative will be tracked and measured through a series of data reporting tools associated with the media buys. Traffic to FortWorth.com and measurement of awareness in key target markets such as Dallas, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, Oklahoma City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Waco, and West Texas will be measured over the three-year campaign.

Additional Projects

Project [Identification Number]: Data Analyst - VFW 018

Funding amount: \$235,064

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- This project is funding an employee whose primary function is partnering with our group convention sales team to identify and book groups and conventions for Fort Worth. Their responsibilities include maintaining our CRM system, reviewing new leads and opportunities, and helping to identify the “optimal” group customers for both the convention center and the partner hotels.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to analyze data, which will lead to the booking of groups and conventions that help maximize the revenues for both the convention center and the hotels.

Project [Identification Number]: Sports Marketing Manager - VFW 020

Funding amount: \$362,114

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- This project is funding an employee whose primary function is to market and promote Sports events and activities in Fort Worth in an effort to increase tourism for the City of Fort Worth.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to increase awareness of sports-related events both inside and outside of Fort Worth to increase economic impact by improving Sports Tourism in Fort Worth and improving the quality of life for residents.

Project [Identification Number]: Copy Writer - VFW 019

Funding amount: \$92,419

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- This project is funding an employee whose primary function is to support marketing campaigns that attract group business (conventions and sports) as well as build long-term awareness of the City as a destination. Responsibilities of this position include writing and editing critical information pieces such as visitor maps, information sheets, websites, itineraries, advertisements, and more.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to provide customers, especially group customers, with the information they need to book Fort Worth and attract attendees to their events. Much information must be updated since the pandemic, and in a way that appeals to today's travelers. Our customers require more and different information today, in a timely manner. In addition, Visit Fort Worth produces advertisements internally without an ongoing creative agency. Measurements will include awareness of Fort Worth (through sentiment surveys) in key markets such as Austin, Houston, and Oklahoma City, group bookings, and customer survey responses.

Project [Identification Number]: Sports Event Incentives – VFW 022

Funding amount: \$500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- The goal of this project is to use additional incentive funds to book large sports events in the city that will utilize the Fort Worth Convention Center, Dickies Arena, or other Fort Worth facilities and locations. These events will bring athletes, attendees, and media that will drive economic impact through hotel room night stays, dining, and retail in conjunction with the sporting events. Potential events include: CrossFit Games, USA Gymnastics Championships, MLB Draft, Professional Bull Riding World Championships, and the Bassmaster Classic fishing tournament.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to increase awareness and economic impact for the City of Fort Worth. Ticket Sales, attendance, media value, including TV broadcasts, and other financial metrics will be tracked as part of the Texas Event Trust Fund reimbursement process for eligible events.

Project [Identification Number]: Sports Marketing – VFW 023

Funding amount: \$442,269

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- The goal of this project is to drive ticket sales to the high-profile sporting event clients of the Fort Worth Sports Commission, including those listed below. The campaign will also encourage hotel room night stays, dining, and retail in conjunction with the sporting events. Driving ticket sales to these events will help encourage repeat business from clients, thus creating a positive economic impact for Fort Worth and for the host venues such as Dickies Arena.
 - NCAA Gymnastics
 - Xfinity US Gymnastics Championships
 - PBR World Finals (TBD)
 - MLB All-Star Week
 - CrossFit Games
 - E-Sports events

Use of Evidence

- The following metrics will be used to monitor, evaluate, and report on campaign success for each event:
 - YOY Ticket Sales
 - Traffic to Event Landing Page
 - Hotel Room Nights Associated with Each Event
 - Newsletter Opt-Ins
 - Traffic to Local Businesses
 - Increase in Social Media Impressions/Followers

Project [Identification Number]: Fort Worth Video Production – VFW 024

Funding amount: \$158,050

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- The Fort Worth Science and History Museum recently installed a replacement for their Omni Dome theater with a state-of-the-art 8k cinematic system. This project involved creating an intro video that will be played prior to each performance, showcasing Fort Worth and its many locations and attractions to explore and visit.

Project [Identification Number]: World Cup Preparations – VFW 025

Funding amount: \$185,084

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35-Aid to Tourism Travel or Hospitality

Project overview

- The FIFA World Cup is coming to the DFW Metroplex in the summer of 2026. We will utilize these funds to either hire staff, purchase advertising, or produce materials that will enhance Fort Worth's ability to execute its World Cup strategy, which will increase visitation of both overnight and daytime visitors. With a successful outcome, we anticipate increased visitation for the long term by showcasing the city and all it has to offer.

See Section C(10) on page 27 of the Reporting Guidance for additional information.

¹ For more information on evidence-based tutoring programs, refer to the U.S. Department of Education's 2021 ED COVID-19 Handbook (Volume 2), which summarizes research on evidence-based tutoring programs (see the bottom of page 20).