
JEFFERSON COUNTY RECOVERY PLAN

2022
REPORT



AMERICAN RESCUE RECOVERY PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary	2
Use of Funds	4
Promoting Equitable Outcomes	8
Community Engagement	10
Labor Practices	12
Use of Evidence	13
Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category	14
Performance Report	15

PROJECT INVENTORY

Project Inventory	16
References	22



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the first confirmed case of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in January of 2020, the public health emergency has caused major economic damage, placed significant strain on the national healthcare system, and resulted in countless losses of life around the world. The COVID-19 public health emergency triggered joint executive measures from various federal, state, local, and tribal government entities to call for actions such as shutdowns, social distancing, and a fast-tracked development of a vaccine to combat the disease. As of June 2022, the United States has suffered more than one million COVID-related deaths since the start of the public health emergency (1).

To combat the continued impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency, Congress introduced House Resolution (H.R.) 1319, now referred to as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 (2). The legislation sought to address the damages done by the public health emergency. Here, broad appropriation applications were set to ensure states, counties, tribal governments, and other eligible entities received ample financial support to address the negative impacts caused and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One significant component of H.R. 1319 was creating the State and Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) program, which would include over \$350 billion in direct and flexible financial assistance to state, local, and tribal governments over several years. On March 11, 2021, H.R. 1319 was signed into law by President Joseph Biden, officially starting the federal disbursement process under the U.S. Treasury's discretion (3).

Under the guidance of the U.S. Treasury, the agency issued the Final Rule on January 6, 2022, and solidified the Final Rule with updates from public comments, to take effect on April 1, 2022. The Final Rule was established as an informational reference to better assist recipients [counties] with determining allowable uses of funds. Recipients were encouraged to utilize funding for costs associated with the response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and the negative impacts that resulted from the pandemic. Coupled with the Treasury's frequently asked question document, Treasury was better able to understand national trends indicating potential revisions to federal guidance.



Jefferson County must complete an annual "Recovery Plan" to highlight its efforts to combat the COVID-19 public health emergency as a federal requirement. The 2022 Jefferson County Recovery Plan complies with all federal compliance requirements and the U.S. Treasury's guidance on ARPA. The following pages contain the information required by Treasury to ensure accountability, transparency, responsible spending, and proper communication with the public.

Jefferson County was awarded a total allocation of \$127,920,085.00 to be dispersed in two tranches, one in May 2021 and the other a year later. Funds must be obligated or approved for expenditure no later than December 31, 2024 and spent no later than December 31, 2026, a total of 5 years for recipients to spend their entire award. This authority and final approval for project allocation fall under the five-member Jefferson County Commission.

On December 2 and December 16, 2021, the Jefferson County Commission approved project priorities for ARPA funds. The budget was designed to fund programs in two phases. Programs revolving around public safety, aid to tourism, water infrastructure, and more were approved as County priorities not to exceed \$127,920,085.00. The County Manager is tasked with developing programs and projects consistent with the priorities and allocations set by the Commission. Funds are obligated after the Commission votes to approve agreements presented to them by the County Manager in furtherance of this.

Since the last Recovery Plan, projects have included food assistance programs that address food insecurity and offer at-risk communities much-needed resources. A comprehensive assessment of Jefferson County's emergency medical services (EMS) systems is another project the County has pursued to mitigate the pandemic's impacts on healthcare services, especially emergency response. Additionally, Jefferson County allocated funds for The World Games and other attractions to aid impacted tourism entities in the area. More information about the projects that have begun since the previous Recovery Plan can be found in the Project Inventory section.

For supplemental information or questions regarding the 2022 Jefferson County Recovery Plan, please contact County Manager Cal Markert at markertc@jccal.org.

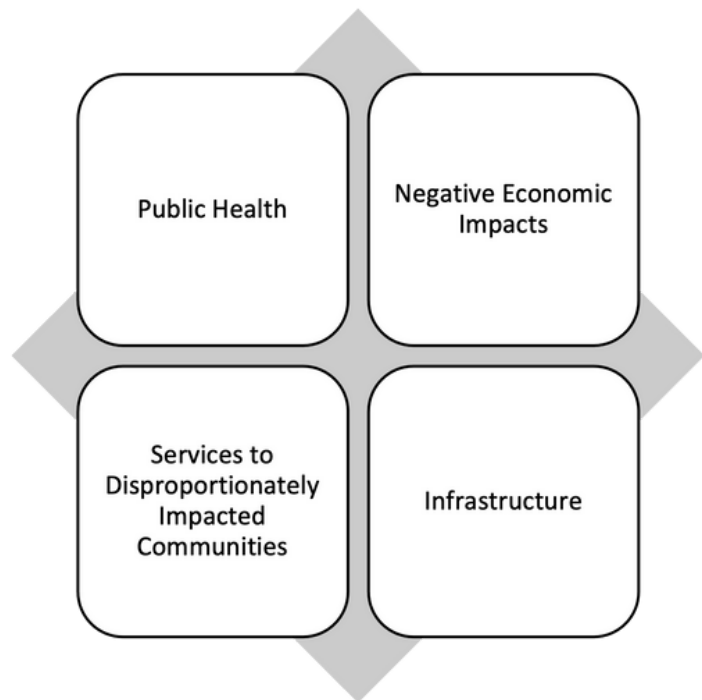


USE OF FUNDS

Expenditures, broken down by categories, must be recorded and documented using the generally accepted accounting principles and the provisions in Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance. This guidance reflects the Final Rule and serves as supplement information to sets the foundation for reporting best practices for all SLFRF recipients. The Final Rule identified many ways the ARPA can financially support state, local, and tribal governments working to reduce and respond to the adverse health and economic impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Treasury recognizes that funds provided are critical for state, local, and tribal governments to respond to the public health emergency and allow for broad use of financial assistance. Treasury identified several major expenditure categories (E.C.s) that recipients must use to categorize projects.

Eligible uses

Projects will address the public health emergency, negative economic repercussions from the pandemic, services to disproportionately-afflicted people, and infrastructure needs, according to the U.S. Treasury's eligible use of funds. Jefferson County is encouraged to prioritize interventions and funds for projects aimed at underserved communities.



Ineligible Uses

Congress specified two types of ineligible uses of funds:

- 1) Funds may not be used for deposits into any pension fund; or
- 2) To offset a reduction directly or indirectly in net tax revenue resulting from a change in law, regulation, or administrative interpretation.



Jefferson County has obligated and expended funds to address public health (E.C. 1) and negative economic impacts (E.C.2). The County awarded select organizations (non-profits) for reducing food insecurities within a number of at-risk communities in the County. The following project list reflects obligated funds based on applicable expenditure categories. It does not reflect projects still under consideration by the Jefferson County Commission.

Public Health (E.C. 1)

ARPA-001 EMS Comprehensive Assessment

- \$127,400 for a comprehensive and detailed plan of action to improve the current Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system in Jefferson County.

Negative Economic Impacts (E.C. 2)

ARPA-050 Coronavirus Food Insecurity Grant Program

- \$1,460,485.00 is obligated to mitigate food insecurity among populations disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is administered by the County utilizing various local non-profit organizations for the distribution of food.

ARPA-003 The World Games 2022 (TWG 2021 Birmingham Foundation)

- \$2,500,000.00 is obligated to support expense shortfalls created by the one-year postponement of the Games due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ARPA-009 Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex - Capital Improvements

- \$6,000,000.00 is obligated for repairs and enhancements to facilities for reopening and long-term COVID-19 pandemic industry recovery.

ARPA-006 Greater Birmingham Visitors and Convention Bureau

- \$4,000,000.00 is obligated in support of long-term COVID-19 pandemic industry recovery.

ARPA-036 BJCC USFL Preparedness

- \$500,000 has been obligated to support the USFL inaugural season, which will be conducted in Birmingham, Alabama.



Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity (E.C. 3)

- **No Projects yet identified.**

Premium Pay (E.C. 4)

- **No Projects yet identified.**

Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure (E.C. 5)

- **Projects allocated by the Jefferson County Commission.**
- **No Projects yet obligated as of June 30, 2022.**

Revenue Replacement (E.C. 6)

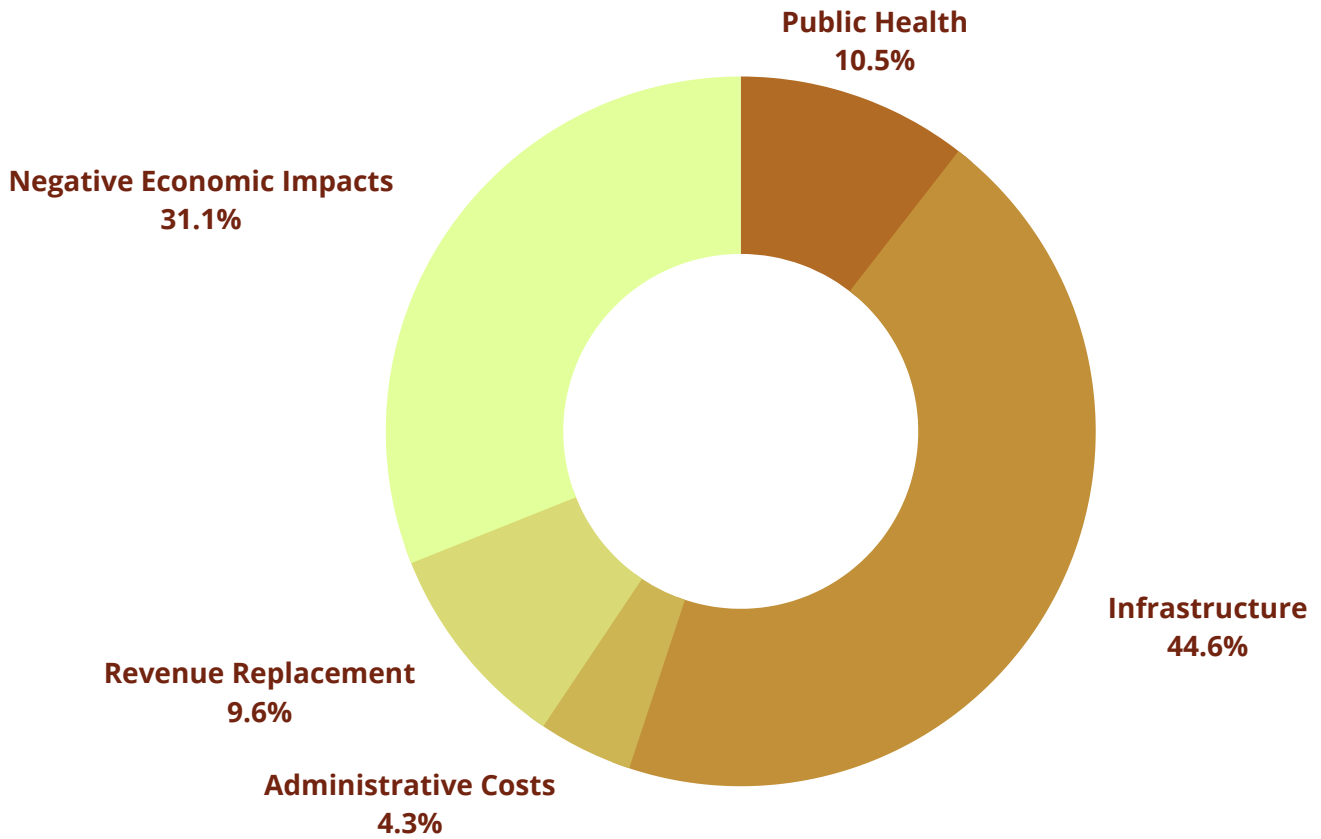
- **Projects allocated by the Jefferson County Commission.**
 - **No Projects yet obligated as of June 30, 2022.**
-

In addition to ARPA funds to combat the negative impacts of the pandemic, Jefferson County currently manages two emergency rental assistance projects through strategic partnerships with the Urban League and Bridge Ministries. ERA projects aim to provide rental assistance to disproportionately impacted households in Jefferson County. The County is not involved in the following: The Homeowner Assistance Fund, Capital Projects Fund, or the State Small Business Credit Initiative. However, under the Coronavirus Relief Fund, Jefferson County did establish a \$2,500,000 renters and utilities project that concluded in 2020.

The tables below signify the approved uses of funds for Jefferson County. Projects in this Recovery Plan reflect those obligated and/or expended funds. Approved funds may not directly align with the actual use of funds, as obligation does not occur until contracts are executed. Please note that as of the end of the 2022 Jefferson County Plan period, the Jefferson County Commission is evaluating the allocations for each of the expenditure categories to determine if the allocations approved in 2021 align with the needs of the County currently and for the foreseeable future.



APPROVED ALLOCATIONS TO DATE



Public Health	\$11,000,000
Negative Economic Impacts	\$32,500,000
Infrastructure	\$46,650,000
Administrative Costs	\$4,500,000
Revenue Replacement	\$10,000,000
Total Allocation from U.S. Treasury	\$127,920,085



PROMOTING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES

Goals

Jefferson County's efforts for recovery include targeting Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) within their boundaries. These areas have historically, disproportionately impacted communities which the County views as an opportunity to serve through its pandemic recovery efforts. It is the goal of the County to ensure equitable outcomes for the use of American Rescue Plan Act dollars so that all residents are offered improved government services and access to emerging projects.

The County is aware of the existing demographic breakdown within its boundaries and understands that success in pandemic recovery includes supporting at-risk communities. Jefferson County also recognizes that communities, both historically disadvantaged and directly impacted from the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency, may not be aware of the services offered by the County. With that in mind, the County is committed to expanding awareness through new strategies.

Awareness

Jefferson County seeks to raise awareness and improve public perception of government transparency and services. Methods used by the County for purposes of community outreach and public awareness currently include live streaming meetings; micro-targeted social media campaigns through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Nextdoor, and Instagram; the County's podcast, and website; and local radio, print, and T.V. advertising campaigns, which disperse information to a wide array of demographic categories. Based on the survey conducted at the start of the year, residents indicated their satisfaction with the County's ability to share resources by informing its citizens of existing projects.



Access and Distribution

Jefferson County sees potential opportunities to raise awareness and streamline external communication for residents and businesses alike seeking federal assistance for impacts experienced, and that continue to be experienced, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The County will develop processes and criteria that will promote transparency in award solicitation and applicant eligibility.

Outcomes

Since the last Recovery Plan, Jefferson County and its subrecipients have been supporting disproportionately impacted communities and industries through programs aimed at mitigating issues such as food insecurity and service disruptions. For example, the selected organizations for the Coronavirus Food Insecurity Grant Program have become local community leaders and have assisted with providing food and meals within some of the most vulnerable communities in the County. As a commitment to residents, Jefferson County will continue to assist selected organizations with any challenges they face during periods of performance and reporting.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Jefferson County conducts public meetings in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act. The County also solicits public feedback where practical. The Commission is committed to transparency and discloses Member contact information on the County-sponsored website, including an office phone and email address. Furthermore, the County frequently updates its calendar of upcoming events, promotes public meetings, and ensures that agenda packets are posted on the County website. Citizens can watch the meeting live via social media channels or the live stream on the County website at <http://www.jccal.org/Default.asp?ID=2121&pg=Live+Stream>. An archive of these meetings also pairs with the agenda for ease of viewing.

The County administered a citizen survey starting in December 2021 through ETC Institute, an organization focusing on providing local governments with data gathering services, so that the County could better understand public awareness of programs and services and allow an opportunity for the public to provide their opinions. Since ETC Institute's founding, they have had two million completed projects since 2010 and have completed surveys in 49 states. A random sample of County residents was sent a six-page survey that explained the reasoning behind the survey and encouraged those selected to respond to the request via mail or online. ETC Institute forwarded an additional email reminder as a follow-up to the initial survey to enhance the survey's response rate. The survey conducted for Jefferson County included a section on COVID-19, and how residents felt regarding the County's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and priorities for the use of funds.

Over 1,300 residents responded to the survey with 95 percent confidence. Questions were graded on a one through five scale using the terms such as "very satisfied/important" to "very dissatisfied/not important." Using these metrics, the County successfully identified how residents felt about several issues affecting the County, including the pandemic. Based on the sum of the residents' top five choices, the responses to achieving an equitable recovery that should receive the highest priorities were (in priority order) access to healthcare, education, behavioral healthcare and substance abuse, healthy childhood environments, and safe and reliable drinking water.



Information provided in the survey responses will assist the County in purposefully creating allocation plans. Surveys also indicated areas for improvement regarding communication and outreach. As a result, the County is committed to expanding awareness through new strategies.



LABOR PRACTICES

Regarding labor practices, Jefferson County is subject to a statutorily imposed merit system overseen by the Personnel Board of Jefferson County – an advisory entity that functions independently from the County Commission. The Personnel Board advises job openings, accepts applicants, performs initial applicant screening and selection procedures, and creates a register that is provided to the County. The Jefferson County Human Resources Department then applies secondary selection procedures and finalizes job offers to candidates.

Positions classified, or in the civil services, are filled through a competitive selection process while considering equal opportunity employment. Government entities coordinate with the Jefferson County Personnel Board to solicit or update upcoming hiring needs. Jobs are filled by appointment from eligible lists of people who have successfully passed an examination or met the minimum vocational or education requirements. Each examination is based on the experience, training, and knowledge needed for each potential position with the County. Besides monetary compensations, Jefferson County employees receive multiple benefits following their probationary period. This includes retirement savings, medical, and dental benefits for participating members.

Jefferson County provides highly competitive benefits and wages based on prevailing market rates to its employees. The County does not have current labor agreements with unions and associated groups. The County will continue to practice fair labor laws such as prevailing wages and premium pay when deemed essential to regional readiness. Once the County approves infrastructure projects, Jefferson County will provide all required information.



USE OF EVIDENCE

Jefferson County's original project approvals sought to provide immediate relief to its residents and industries. Based on this immediate need to serve the public, project evaluation has yet to occur and further determine additional interventions deeply.

Public Health

Programs under Public Health are currently in the planning phase, so the County is seeking evidence for its preliminary design. Jefferson County identified a shortage of paramedics due to more competitive rates of reimbursement that exist in neighboring states. The County currently does not have a centrally coordinated emergency medical services (EMS) system, negatively impacting community health while also placing strain on existing services. An assessment was necessary to determine exact data and numbers regarding EMS needs so that the County can address those needs. The County contracted with a third-party provider to analyze the state of the EMS system in Jefferson County.

Negative Economic Impacts

The Jefferson County Commission identified an opportunity to aid impacted tourism entities within the area. Projects including the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center, Greater Birmingham Visitors and Convention Bureau, and The World Games 2022 were conceptualized to promote economic recovery from the shutdowns, postponements, and restrictions due to COVID-19.

Additionally, Jefferson County identified an opportunity to assist communities most at-risk from food insecurity, including people experiencing homelessness and low-income families, by coordinating with non-profit organizations. Pursuant to the Final Rule, non-profits were approved to be classified as subrecipients that appeared to benefit the County and its residents. Selected organizations were required to serve at least one QCT within the County. These organizations coordinate with the County to ensure adequate resources are appropriately distributed to households most impacted by the pandemic.



EXPENDITURE TABLE

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.14	Other Public Health Services	\$ 101,920.00	\$ 101,920.00
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.1	Household Assistance: Food Programs	\$ 36,390.73	\$ 36,390.73
2.35	Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality	\$ 5,364,459.12	\$ 5,364,459.12
7	Administrative		
7.1	Administrative Expenses	\$ 1,044,412.50	\$ 1,044,412.50



PERFORMANCE REPORT

Since the COVID-19 public health emergency started, Jefferson County's overarching goal was to recover as quickly as possible. As seen across the nation, the consequences of the stay-at-home orders on small businesses and families, especially at-risk populations, were devastating as economic activity slowed drastically. All ARPA projects began during the 2022 Recovery Plan period of performance. As information is available, Jefferson County will develop a report on each project's key performance indicators (KPIs) consistent with federal requirements. The following KPIs were available for the 2022 Jefferson County Recovery Plan. More information on projects using SLFRF funding can be found in the Project Inventory section.

Coronavirus Food Insecurity Grant Program

- Project Expenditure Category: 2.1: Household Assistance: Food Programs
- Number of households served since the previous Recovery Plan: 26,188
- Amount expended: \$ 36,390.73



PROJECT INVENTORY

ARPA-001: EMS Comprehensive Assessment

Funding amount: \$127,400

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

Project Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a strain on the healthcare systems nationally. This project was initiated to provide a comprehensive and detailed plan of action to improve the current emergency medical services (EMS) system in Jefferson County. The County wanted a comprehensive and detailed plan of action to improve EMS and public safety response and communications capabilities in the County, mainly rural, unincorporated areas lacking consistent service. To begin the process of improving and enhancing the EMS system in Jefferson County, the County engaged Fitch and Associates to perform a comprehensive on-site review of the County's existing EMS systems and to provide guidance on industry best practices to address those challenges in Jefferson County strategically and effectively.

Use of Evidence

Jefferson County identified a shortage of paramedics due to more competitive rates of reimbursement that exist in neighboring states. The County currently does not have a centrally coordinated emergency medical services (EMS) system, negatively impacting community health while also placing strain on existing services. An assessment is necessary to determine exact data and numbers regarding EMS needs so that the County can address those needs.

Performance Report

At this time, there are no key performance indicators to report. A final report and phased plan will be provided to Jefferson County upon completion.



ARPA-050: Coronavirus Food Insecurity Grant Program

Funding amount: \$ 1,460,485

Project Expenditure Category: 2.1: Household Assistance: Food Programs

Project Overview

To address food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency, ARPA-050 moved to award organizations with funding that directly impacts low-moderate income households within at-risk communities. Selected recipients implemented multi-pronged approaches that developed fresh produce, food box, or meal initiatives, and delivery and distribution programs to tackle food insecurities in Jefferson County. Organizations awarded include:

- Jones Valley Urban Farm
- Community Food Bank of Central Alabama
- Christian Service Mission
- Downtown Jimmie Hale Mission
- Kikstart Inc
- Cooperative Downtown Ministries
- Mission Alabama

Use of Evidence

Each organization serves low to moderate-income populations and communities that saw an increase in food insecurity during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Awards are distributed on a reimbursement basis. A full program evaluation has not been completed, as this program is currently in progress.

Performance Report

Since the beginning of the program, selected organizations have served over 26,188 households in Jefferson County.



ARPA-003: The World Games 2022 (TWG 2021 Birmingham Foundation)

Funding amount: \$ 2,500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35 Aid to Tourism Travel and Hospitality

Project Overview

The World Games were initially scheduled for July of 2021. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, The World Games were postponed one year – to now take place in July of 2022. The cancellation and rescheduling of the Games severely strained the TWG Birmingham Foundation's financial and logistical ability to continue hosting the event. This project sought to assist with re-launching the Games regarding marketing, promotions, and facility upgrades.

Use of Evidence

The effects of the pandemic on the cancelation of the Games include past losses, new and unexpected costs, and future overruns. Assistance provided was proportional to the impacts experienced from canceling compared to rescheduling the Games. \$2.5 million was provided for re-launch activities, compared to the overall estimated budget (over \$75 million) to host the World Games.

Performance Report

At this time, there are no key performance indicators to report. An impact study is currently being completed, which will require several months to complete.



ARPA-009: Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex - Capital Improvements

Funding amount: \$ 6,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35 Aid to Tourism Travel and Hospitality

Project Overview

This program seeks to assist the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Authority (BJCC) in reopening its venues and increasing the number of events to pre-COVID levels. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BJCC has focused on payroll and has been forced to use financial reserves to maintain minimal maintenance and upkeep levels. Additionally, this program assists in the recoupment of lost revenue due to the pandemic, and with the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Authority, creating opportunities for economic recovery in the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors of Jefferson County. The BJCC project aids a planned expansion or upgrade of tourism, travel, and hospitality facilities delayed due to the pandemic.

Use of Evidence

Tourism in Jefferson County plays a vital role in job creation and economic activity. Initial revenue loss calculations indicate that the BJCC (Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Authority) may have suffered revenue losses in excess of \$ 51 million since the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency. To help tourism thrive in Jefferson County, it was identified that the Civic Center required significant capital improvements to incentivize tourism from contracting with the Authority. In order to be able to secure new agreements, the Civic Center needed to undergo an expansion of its facilities which were delayed due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Performance Report

This project has just started with no key performance indicators to report.



ARPA-006: Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

Funding amount: \$ 4,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35 Aid to Tourism Travel and Hospitality

Project Overview

As part of the long-term recovery of travel, tourism, and hospitality in Jefferson County, the Greater Birmingham Visitors and Convention Bureau is utilizing assistance from Jefferson County's available ARPA funding for meeting and convention sales; sports sales and marketing; group tour sales, student tours, reunions, and international programs; marketing and communications; and research on trackable tourism and hospitality data.

Use of Evidence

The Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau is a hub for Jefferson County tourist attractions and upcoming events. The Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau experienced the closing or curtailment of destinations, venues, and the cancellation of planned events. This assistance will aid the impacted tourism industry in the County to assist in recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Performance Report

This project has just started with no key performance indicators to report.



ARPA-036: BJCC USFL Preparedness

Funding amount: \$500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35 Aid to Tourism Travel and Hospitality

Project Overview

In order to execute on strict deadlines required for hosting the United States Football League, this program seeks to provide general support for the inaugural 2022 season of the United States Football League (USFL). at the related expenditures could include staffing costs, marketing, and necessary capital expenditures.

Use of Evidence

Tourism in Jefferson County plays a vital role in job creation and economic activity. Initial revenue loss calculations indicate that the BJCC (Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Authority) may have suffered revenue losses in excess of \$ 51 million since the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Addressing these shortfalls created by the pandemic can assist in bringing additional revenue to the County.

Performance Report

The County has completed its expenditure for ARPA-036. The USFL was able to start its competitive games and broadcasting according to schedule. Broadcast ratings are within projected expectations for the entire league, with approximately 1,000,000 viewers per televised game. At this time, a USFL calculations sheet is being compiled and will require several months and additional data to complete.



REFERENCES

- 1) WorldMeter. (2022, 07 01). Retrieved from worldometers.info:
<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>

- 2) Yarmuth, J. (2021, 02 24). H.R.1319 - American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.
Retrieved from Congress.gov: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319>

- 3) Biden, J. (2021, 03 11). Remarks by President Biden at Signing of the American Rescue Plan. Retrieved from whitehouse.gov:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/11/remarks-by-president-biden-at-signing-of-the-american-rescue-plan/>

Note: Jefferson County financial and reporting along with programs were used to craft certain areas of this report.