



Kent County, MI

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
2025 Report**

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2025 Recovery Plan Performance Report

Kent County utilized the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (LFRF) to implement various community projects to promote long-term recovery and growth. This report highlights key internal and community projects, their objectives, expected outcomes, and funding sources. To date, all funds have been allocated to internal County initiatives and external community projects.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Kent County government is committed to promoting a high quality of life for the entire community through responsible budgeting and planning. This mission was at the forefront of planning and distribution of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (LFRF) dollars. The U.S. Department of Treasury allocated \$127.6 million to Kent County from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (LFRF). This report provides an update of allocated and planned expenditures, as well as progress at the time of submission.

Through extensive community engagement, Kent County identified five areas of focus for investment of LFRF funds: Community Health, Quality of Life, Infrastructure, Economic Innovations and Workforce Development, and Improving Government Operations. The public engagement process was targeted to ensure all communities impacted by the pandemic had a voice and were able to contribute to Kent County's strategy.

All of Kent County's funds have been obligated in accordance with LFRF guidance and in alignment with the values and priorities of communities within the County. This report will be posted publicly on Kent County's APRA website <https://www.kentcountymi.gov/696/American-Rescue-Plan-Act-ARPA> and provided to the Kent County Board of Commissioners.

Uses of Funds

Based on collaboration with elected officials, County departments, stakeholders, and a consulting firm, Kent County identified five priority categories for use of LFRF dollars. A clearer understanding of community needs and other lessons learned through an extensive community engagement process contributed to selecting the categories.

Additionally, Kent County continues to consider how other federal and state funds could be leveraged with LFRF funds to impact the priority areas of focus. Previously, Kent County received two funding awards through the Congressionally Directed Spending process for two projects that have been allocated Kent County LFRF dollars: The Grand River Greenway and the Behavioral Health Crisis Center.

Kent County's LFRF funds allocated through *Revenue Replacement* (EC 6) include a detailed overview of the five priority LFRF spending categories below:

1. **Community Health** – Kent County is investing in new and existing mental and physical health programs for the community such as mental health crisis support, supporting homeless youth through mental health services, removing lead hazards from homes, reducing negative impacts of sickle cell disease among African Americans, providing food for those who lack financial resources, and assisting residents who have been victims of domestic violence.

Protecting public health is the first step toward a longer-term, equitable recovery and the challenge to safeguard the physical health of Kent County residents remains ongoing. Addressing mental health needs has also been a high priority in Kent County as the need for mental health services was exacerbated by the pandemic and will continue to receive attention in Kent County.

2. **Quality of Life** - Long-term quality of life improvements for our community such as parks, riverfront enhancements, and family and visitor entertainment attractions are high priorities of our residents. As a direct result of COVID-19, the County's revenue, and that of community partners, was dramatically reduced while community desire for outdoor recreation and safe entertainment options increased. Further, the necessary focus of existing County resources was redirected to coping with and mitigating the impact of COVID-19. There are extensive opportunities for new investments that have long-term impacts on the County's ability to grow by attracting new business developments, tourism, and residents. The needs and opportunities are especially pronounced in disproportionately impacted communities who had even less resources to privately mitigate losses from the pandemic. Investments in this category include the acquisition and development of new parks and outdoor spaces, construction of a new trail along the Grand River connecting, improvements to the regional zoo, and improvement of the regional youth fairgrounds.
3. **Infrastructure** - Investments in the infrastructure of Kent County and its future such as broadband internet, stormwater flooding mitigation (drains), and county-wide mobility. Plans for spending LFRF dollars include expanding broadband services to fill current gaps in service. The pandemic demonstrated that access to quality internet service is a requirement for education, work, and health care. Leaving some in our community without or limited access to that service remains an ongoing challenge. Further, safe drinking water, operational septic systems, and effective drains support health and protects the environment for future generations. Kent County's water and drain systems are operated through a complex web of municipal agreements and authorities. Specific projects identified through collaboration across County departments, local partners, the county drain commissioner and experts in the health and environmental benefits of water infrastructure projects received funds. Finally, infrastructure investments include road enhancements in Kent County's rural townships to improve mobility for those who lack access to public transportation and support business recovery and growth in our rural areas.

- 4. Economic Innovation and Workforce Development** – Funds were invested in the future of Kent County’s economy to provide a thriving, innovative and sustainable business climate, and skilled workforce to address the long-term industry demands, such as workforce training and food licensing fee waivers. The necessity to close businesses for an extended period and the resultant impact on resident employment instability had enormous impacts on the economy. Kent County’s tourism, agritourism/agribusiness, health care and countless other industries were each impacted in unique ways. Finally, access to affordable housing was negatively impacted by COVID-19. New housing construction halted abruptly in 2020. A recent assessment found that Kent County will need to add almost 34,000 housing units by 2029 to meet the current demand. This problem is exacerbated by the increasing costs of construction and a need for a construction workforce.

Investments in this category includes food service licensing fee waivers, a reimbursement for Kent County Convention and Arena Authority Revenue Loss, investment in small business services for those rebounding from the pandemic, expansion of a regional construction institute dedicated to developing a well-educated commercial construction workforce, investments in an affordable housing revolving loan fund, technical/financial assistance to local governments to innovate their zoning and land use policies to provide for more affordable housing, a community hub in one of the region’s most underinvested areas, workforce development programs for communities of color, and revolving loan funds for entrepreneurs of color.

- 5. Improving Government Operations** - Investing in Kent County government operations, such as facility improvement and new technology, to address the growing needs of the community and to improve customer service. As Kent County grows and recovers from the pandemic, attention must be turned to enhancing essential County services and planning for the County’s future. Key areas that could be addressed under this category and are consistent with the priorities in the Kent County Strategic Plan, include communication improvements, facilities expansions, and data and reporting investments. This broadly overlaps with expenditure category three (Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity) and includes the County’s allocation to develop the Fuller Campus Clinic Modification, construction of a new Medical Examiner facility, and instituting a County-wide school radio network to improve response time during crises.

Beginning in September 2021, a strategy to further define the County’s goals and plan the spending within each category was developed. A community engagement strategy aligned with the Compliance and Reporting Guidelines of the Department of Treasury, was implemented, and is detailed on the County’s website. The subsequent quarterly and annual Project & Expenditure Reports and Recovery Plans to Treasury reflect the detailed plans and

implementation of Kent County's COVID recovery strategy and spending. They are uploaded to <https://www.kentcountymi.gov/696/American-Rescue-Plan-Act-ARPA>

PROMOTING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES

- **Equity Focus:** The document emphasizes the importance of equity, defined as fair and impartial treatment of all individuals, especially underserved communities.
- **COVID-19 Impact:** Investments were made in communities of color to reverse the negative impacts of the pandemic. Projects include removing lead hazards, addressing sickle cell disease, creating a community hub, revolving loan funds, workforce development, and mental health care for homeless youth.
- **Evaluation and Reporting:** Kent County is working with organizations to measure outputs and outcomes, focusing on goals, awareness, access, distribution, and challenges in increasing equity.

Kent County took several steps to ensure inclusivity in their community engagement process.

Translation and Accessibility

- **Multilingual Materials:** All engagement materials were translated into multiple languages, including English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Mandarin, to reach non-English speaking communities.
- **Simple and Clear Communication:** The ARPA website and other materials were designed for simplicity, clarity, and accessibility to ensure that all community members could easily understand and engage with the content.

Targeted Outreach

- **Identifying Marginalized Groups:** The County specifically identified groups that traditionally lack access to County officials and processes and developed strategies to better reach these groups.
- **Direct Meetings:** Scheduled meetings with community leaders representing traditionally marginalized communities to ensure their voices were heard.
- **Community Forums and Meetings:** Held numerous community forums and meetings, strategically scheduled and arranged to offer convenient and welcoming in-person engagement opportunities.

Diverse Communication Channels

- **Advertisements in Specialty Newspapers:** Advertised the survey and engagement opportunities in newspapers serving marginalized communities, including non-English language papers.
- **Digital Advertising:** Conducted paid digital advertising in Spanish-language media to reach Spanish-speaking residents.
- **Email Bulletins and Social Media:** Sent large-scale email bulletins and sponsored social media posts to inform the community about engagement opportunities.

Inclusive Survey and Proposal Processes

- **Survey Distribution:** Distributed surveys both online and in printed form, ensuring accessibility for those without internet access.
- **Proposal Portal:** Developed a proposal portal that was open to any individual or organization, designed to not exclude any groups or individuals.

Continuous Feedback and Adaptation

- **Interim Reports and Additional Outreach:** Analyzed initial feedback and responsiveness trends, leading to additional outreach measures for less responsive communities.
- **Community Engagement Dashboard:** Created a dashboard to track and report data on community survey responses, proposal submissions, and project awards, ensuring transparency and continuous improvement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Three-Phase Plan:** The engagement plan included strategy development, community engagement rollout, and analysis/recommendations.
 - Developed strategy and materials, focusing on internet presence, surveys, and in-person engagements, with materials translated into multiple languages.
 - Launched a website and video, conducted surveys, and held community forums and meetings.
 - Analyzed feedback, made recommendations, and presented a final report to the Board of Commissioners.

Phase One: Strategy and Development

- **Strategy Creation:** A County team developed the overall strategy for community engagement.
- **Materials Development:** Created necessary materials for engagement, focusing on internet presence, surveys, and in-person engagements.

- **Equity Focus:** Ensured that equity and engagement with disproportionately impacted groups were considered at every level.
- **Translation:** All materials were translated into multiple languages (English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Vietnamese, and Mandarin).
- **Online Presence:** Developed an ARPA website with simplicity, clarity, and accessibility in mind, including descriptions of major initiatives and ways for community members to engage.

Phase Two: Engagement

- **Website and Video Launch:** Launched the ARPA website and an introductory video explaining the funding parameters and priority groups.
- **Survey Distribution:** Developed and distributed a short online survey, with printed copies available upon request. The survey asked residents to prioritize funding categories and share ideas.
- **Advertising and Outreach:** Advertised the survey in newspapers, including those serving marginalized communities, and conducted paid digital advertising. Held over 30 community group meetings focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- **Community Forums:** Scheduled and arranged community forums for in-person engagement, with presentations, group dialogue, and Q&A sessions. Also offered live online participation for those who couldn't attend in person.
- **Proposal Portal:** Developed a portal for submitting full requests for funds, open to any individual or organization.

Phase Three: Analysis and Recommendations

- **Interim Reports:** Provided initial analysis of community responses from engagement meetings, surveys, and proposals.
- **Responsiveness Trends:** Examined trends with a focus on disproportionately impacted communities, leading to additional outreach measures.
- **Final Report:** Presented a final report to the Board of Commissioners, highlighting proposals and ideas aligned with community preferences and targeted needs.
- **Investment Strategy:** Proposed an investment strategy, which was voted on by the Board of Commissioners. The Administrator's office then worked with departments and organizations to finalize project scopes, timelines, evaluation plans, and agreements.

Decision-Making and Implementation

- **Board of Commissioners Vote:** The Board of Commissioners voted on the final investment strategy on December 1, 2022.
- **Project Finalization:** The Administrator's office then worked with internal departments and external organizations to finalize project scopes, timelines, evaluation plans, and agreements.

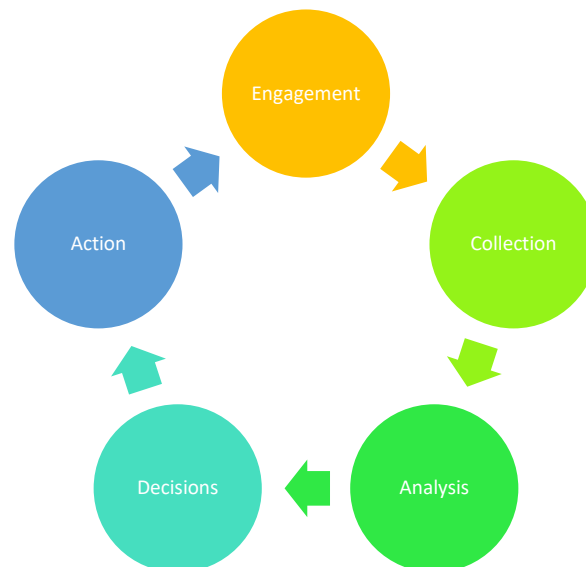
LABOR PRACTICES

- **Infrastructure Projects:** All infrastructure projects received investment under the Revenue Replacement expenditure category. As such, Kent County is following its internal purchasing and contracting policies, which provides open and competitive bidding to interested contractors. No labor standards outside of following state and federal law are being required. However, there are projects that received investment that are including their own labor standards.

USE OF EVIDENCE

- **Evaluation Plans:** Kent County developed for each project outcomes and identified potential barriers for long-term impact. The County aims to improve system-level responses to needs exacerbated by the pandemic. Kent County will utilize existing data tools (such as survey software, analytic software , and data visualization software) to expand and strengthen the capability of collecting, analyzing, and accessing community and service delivery data and provide critical information specific to the investment of American Rescue Plan funds.

PERFORMANCE REPORT



- **Software** Kent County Administration executed a contract agreement with mySidewalk (<https://www.mysidewalk.com>) which is a software solution that enables users to have direct

access to over 4 billion data values and easy-to-use visualizations through Seek Beta library. The data library and guides include analytics focused on housing challenges, population changes, and disparate health outcomes through methodology. This includes normalizing data to view both counts and percentage, what percentage of people are experiencing this condition, and how many people may need assistance or be affected. It will allow users to use descriptive statistics and summarize data and help identify relevant averages, ranges, modes, and to enable outliers and reveal areas that are substantially different. It also allows users to explore maps to discern patterns in data. Additionally, The mySidewalk Solution includes data guides specific to social determinants of health, mobility, vaccine hesitancy index, affordable housing, affordable housing preservation, housing supply and demand, housing challenges, workforce and labor market conditions, public engagement with community, digital inclusion, indicators of livability, racial equity.

- **Dashboard:** Kent County Administration built a Community Engagement Dashboard for the LFRF. The Kent Community dashboard tracks and reports county wide data on community survey responses, proposal submissions, project awards.

PROJECT INVENTORY

Kent County projects reflect the county's commitment to promoting equitable outcomes and fostering a resilient and thriving community.

Community Health Projects

Isolation Shelter for Un-Housed COVID-positive People (FRF012)

- **Funding Amount:** \$254,704.77
- **Objective:** Provide a safe isolation space for individuals experiencing housing insecurity and COVID-19.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Reduce the spread of COVID-19, alleviate the burden on medical facilities, and support the health and safety of vulnerable populations.
- **2025 Update:** Project is complete

Winter Emergency Shelter to Accommodate Social Distancing (FRF014)

- **Funding Amount:** \$165,000
- **Objective:** Increase shelter capacity to comply with social distancing guidelines during winter months.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Provide safe shelter for people experiencing homelessness, reduce the spread of COVID-19, and ensure compliance with CDC guidelines.
- **2025 Update:** Project is complete

Infrastructure Projects

Knapp Corner Drain Project (FRF002)

- **Funding Amount:** \$2,000,000
- **Objective:** Improve stormwater management and reduce flooding risk.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Enhance water quality, address elevated chloride and sodium concentrations in groundwater, and protect surrounding homes from flooding.
- **2025 Update:** As of April 1, 2025, Engineering is 90% complete and ready for bidding once a proposed settlement is finalized and approved by Ada Township. The Kent County Road Commission is securing right-of-way and grading permits, and an EGLE permit is pending.

Broadband Initiative Consultant Support (FRF015)

- **Funding Amount:** \$375,000
- **Objective:** Assess the status of broadband services and develop recommendations to increase access.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Identify gaps in broadband service, provide data-driven recommendations, and guide future broadband installation projects to ensure equitable access.
- **2025 Update:** Project is complete

Economic Innovation and Workforce Development Projects

Kent County Convention and Arena Authority Revenue Loss (FRF002)

- **Funding Amount:** \$511,933.86
- **Objective:** Reimburse revenue losses due to the use of DeVos Hall as a vaccine clinic.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Support the financial stability of the Convention and Arena Authority, maintain the venue for future events, and contribute to economic recovery.
- **2025 Update:** Project is complete

Improving Government Operations Projects

Fuller Campus Clinic Modification (FRF001)

- **Funding Amount:** \$3,900,000
- **Objective:** Renovate the main health department clinic to better meet service delivery needs.

- **Expected Outcomes:** Increase the size of the waiting room, biologics room, clinic lab, and clinic rooms, and improve overall healthcare services for the community.
- **2025 Update:** As of April 2025, the project has reached the drywall phase and remains on schedule for completion in Fall of 2025.

School Safety Radio Network (FRF020)

- **Funding Amount:** \$2,837,500
- **Objective:** Install an 800 MHz radio system in all K-12 school buildings to improve emergency response.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Enhance communication between schools and the Sheriff's central dispatch, improve emergency response times, and increase the safety and security of students and staff.
- **2025 Update:** The total number of equipped buildings in Kent County is at 326, and Staff within those schools have been trained in operation of the equipment. The foundation of this project will continue to be reinforced through ongoing public-private collaboration, regular software and firmware updates, and the continuous infrastructure assessments to ensure long-term strength and reliability.

Administrative and General Support Projects

ARPA Consultant Support (FRF011)

- **Funding Amount:** \$397,000
- **Objective:** Provide administrative support for the use of ARPA LFRF funding.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Ensure effective community engagement, eligibility considerations, project data collection, and audit preparation.
- **2025 Update:** Project is complete

Administrative, Contract Services, General Support (FRF013)

- **Funding Amount:** \$200,000
- **Objective:** Support the administrative, contractual, and general needs associated with monitoring LFRF spending.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Ensure efficient and effective use of funds, support project implementation, and maintain transparency and accountability.
- **2025 Update:** Project is complete

Provision of Government Services

Provision of Government Services (FRF019)

- **Funding Amount:** \$116,638,239
- **Objective:** Various projects related to the provision of government services.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Ensure efficient and effective use of funds to provide government services.
- **2025 Update:** Completed 50% or more.