

County of Kern

Recovery Plan Performance Report

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

As of July 31, 2022 Report

County of Kern
2022 Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The Kern County Board of Supervisors approved on June 8, 2021, a spending plan for the American Rescue Plan. The initial plan intended to respond to the public health emergency and related negative impacts by supporting programs that increase access to healthcare, behavioral health, substance use services, provide training for individuals in industries severely affected by the public health emergency, provide education through our countywide libraries, and make investments to restore our tourism industry. It also includes investments in neighborhoods through necessary improvements in parks, sewer, and internet infrastructure. The plan also addressed economic stability by compensating essential workers that continued to provide services despite the heightened risk created by the COVID-19 public health emergency. The public health emergency has not only affected the economic stability of individuals in our community, but our County experienced significant budget shortfalls which affect the ability to provide services and improve the health of our community.

Taken together, these proposed investments represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the County to make improvements in our community and to set the foundation for our residents to share in a healthier and more equitable access to government services.

After the Final Rule was approved, the County refined its plan to ensure that the plan comply the uses outlined in the rule: (a) to respond to the public health emergency with respect to Coronavirus Disease or its negative economic impacts, (b) to respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers, (c) revenue replacement for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue of the county due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, or (d) to make necessary investments in water, sewer, stormwater or broadband infrastructure. We also made changes to ensure that the investments have a direct impact on hard-hit disadvantaged communities.

The plan provides the framework to respond to the pandemic and its economic impacts through the accountable, transparent, and careful use of the \$174,853,685 allocated to Kern County:

A. To respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus disease or its negative economic impacts:

Description	Amount
Support for homelessness, behavioral health, and substance use	\$15,000,000
Access to health care services through the Public Hospital	\$10,000,000
Improve educational opportunities through the Countywide Library System	\$2,450,000
Improve job training opportunities	\$720,000

B. To improve neighborhoods and build environment through investments in sewer and stormwater:

Description	Amount
Flood mitigation	\$10,000,000
Sewer improvements	\$15,000,000

C. To respond to workers performing essential work during the public health emergency by providing premium pay for eligible workers:

Description	Amount
Economic stability – Premium pay for eligible workers	\$22,429,954

D. For the provision of governmental services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the public health emergency:

Description	Amount
Estimated revenue loss to be used for governmental services	\$99,253,731

Uses of Funds

Support for homelessness, behavioral health, and substance use (\$15,000,000)

COVID-19 has had a clear and direct impact increasing homeless and substance abuse issues and exasperating mental health conditions. The unsheltered population has been disproportionately impacted by the public health emergency. Many of these individuals have been unable or unwilling to seek traditional help through our homeless shelters or behavioral health services. This funding will allow for a proactive approach to engaging with those in need.

1. \$2,500,000 Allocation for implementing four co-response teams pairing mental health workers and conservators with public safety to directly engage with the homeless community throughout the County. Under this program, Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services initiated the ROEM Team (Relational Outreach and Engagement Model) to provide street outreach to high need behavioral health and substance abusing individuals who are treatment and engagement resistant. The funding will be used to assign outreach workers to work 40 hours per week and to utilize two mobile units that will allow for services in the field including enhanced medication services, and telehealth. The mobile units afford more privacy and an air-conditioned area to meet the unsheltered individuals.

While the ROEM Program is not evidence-based, it utilizes the Motivational Interviewing, which is an evidence-based practice to engage individuals. The program will also utilize the Housing First Model as well as the Harm Reduction substance use model, both are evidence-based techniques to address the needs of these population. Relating to the utilization of the above practices, our data doesn't track the specific interventions given, but tracks the outcomes such as reduction in crisis utilization, improvement in symptomology, successful placement, and successful engagement into treatment.

This program has three goals:

Goal / Outcome: Successfully engage 50% of referred homeless individuals residing at shelters and navigation centers into behavioral health services.

Output Measures / Objective: Engage and refer individuals living in the shelters and navigation centers into behavioral health services by ensuring consistent staffing, coordination and collaboration with shelter staff and maintaining a consistent and engaged presence in the facilities.

Results: Since January 2022, the engagement rate has ranged from a low of 47% to a high of 94%.

Goal / Outcome: Successfully engage 50% of referred homeless living on the street into behavioral health services within 6 months of initial contact.

Output Measures / Objective: ROEM team will continue utilization of ROEM model for engagement for individuals living unsheltered on the street, building rapport and trust to engage clients served into behavioral health services. Street Psychiatrist will support the team to provide medication services, ensuring a variety of interventions and resources are utilized.

Results: Since January 2022, the engagement rate has ranged has been approximately 56%

Goal / Outcome: Engage 25% of individuals served through the ROEM program into housing placement within 6 months of initial contact.

Output Measures / Objective: ROEM will continue to focus interventions to individuals served to support unsheltered individuals moving into housing placements through an array of services and engagement activities. Staff will work with existing housing and placement providers to support expanded capacity for all housing resources and ensure expedited placement access is available when needed. Additional intensive services are provided after initial placement to ensure housing stability.

Results: Approximately 44% of individuals served through the ROEM program have been placed into housing placement.

Conservator Partnership Outcomes:

	Jan 2022- June 2022
Number of Clients seen by Deputy Conservator	77
Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) Consults	11
ROEM Temporary Conservatorship referrals	1
Permanent Conservatorships for ROEM clients	0

2. \$1,350,000 has been allocated to add four additional Mobile Evaluation Team units to increase mental health response to those in crisis including the homeless population. This program will reduce the number of unsheltered individuals, living on the streets, causing nuisance and/or unsafe behaviors for the community.

This program has the following goal:

Goal: Divert crisis calls involving homelessness to this specialized outreach team.

Output Measure / Objective: Respond to 9-1-1 calls involving reports of homelessness, public nuisances as a result of homelessness, and check the welfare calls involving people experiencing homelessness with behavioral health needs.

Results: The Kern Behavioral Health and Bakersfield Police Department (BPD) Co-Response team was launched on February 2, 2022, and it is establishing working collaborative relationships within the community. 104 calls were diverted from BPD street calls, saving valuable officer time. 25% of the calls the team responded to (104 total) were linked to behavioral health services.

Opportunities: To continue and increase success, it is necessary to increase the training and materials (i.e., phone chargers, snacks, toiletries) needed to ensure the Co-response team can fully operate with the ROEM model, increase outreach and public awareness of the co-response team as a community resource available and to enhance and increase inter-agency collaboration with all partners to ensure the team is able to fully coordinate care for individuals served.

3. \$4,000,000 was allocated for funding rapid response teams to respond to unsafe and illegal encampments and mitigate the public health and safety risk to the community. The goal of this program is to engage with individuals living in encampments to reduce the health risk associated with this setting. The Kern County General Services Division and the Kern County Public Works Rapid Response teams are tasked with contacting individuals living on the streets and engaging them with non-profit entities that provide housing, and other health services. They will also post notices and clean up the unmanaged encampments areas, leaving them in a clean and safe condition. Since inception, the Public Works Department has engaged 255 individuals of which 83 accepted assistance. 172 encampments were cleaned. The General Services Division has cleaned up 220 encampments and engaged with 111 individuals that accepted assistance.
4. \$2,000,000 was allocated to create and operate safe camping and parking spaces to provide alternatives for unsafe and illegal encampments for those unwilling or unable to go into a shelter or navigation center. The Safe Camping and Parking Program provides unsheltered homeless individuals a safe place to reside that includes restrooms and 3 meals a day and is located adjacent to the County's Navigation Center. The safe camping site can assist approximately 50 individuals and provides a tent, sleeping bag, shaded covering, and allow pets. The safe parking side can host 10 individuals who live in their vehicles by parking in the County's shelter parking lot. Security staff and surveillance cameras are monitoring both spaces.

This program began in late May 2022. The County has engaged Community Action Partnership of Kern as the operator of this program. They have been tasked with operating the safe camping site and documenting through monthly reports the number of participants that have moved into navigation center and have engaged in wraparound services. Data will be available next reporting period.

5. \$5,150,000 has been allocated to create new temporary housing solutions for individuals not able to function in congregant settings where substance abuse and mental health services can be administered. This program will include the construction of a supportive village that will provide non-congregate shelter to homeless individuals experiencing mental illness. With approximately 50 beds, the operator of this village will work hand in hand with Kern County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services to identify the appropriate clients. The village is meant to house those homeless clients where their mental illness prevents them from being successful in a congregate setting.

Currently, this project is in the design phase with the hope of selecting a contractor in winter of 2022 and construction following soon after. As with other projects, the operator will be responsible for providing monthly reporting that shows housing placements, engagement in case management, reduction of self-exits, etc. In this case, Kern County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services would provide general reports on a participant's

improvement of their mental illness to their case manager. Reports will abide by all HIPAA regulations when sharing client information.

Access to health care services through the Public Hospital (\$10,000,000)

Since 1867, the County's public hospital, Kern Medical, has served as an integral part of the community, caring for the most underserved in Kern County. As a safety net and designated public hospital, Kern Medical has the unique opportunity to serve the most vulnerable populations. As an academic institution, their role in the community is critical to the important health issues residents face. In addition to being the only trauma center, Kern Medical operates 11 outpatient clinic sites that provide primary services and most physician specialty services. Nearly all of Kern County is in a medically underserved area and as the safety net and largest healthcare service provider for the County, Kern Medical has a pivotal role in delivering affordable, accessible, quality care to the most vulnerable populations of our community. The patient population (e.g., underserved, undocumented, unsheltered, incarcerated, impoverished, linguistically isolated) is often uninsured or underinsured with a payer mix of over 50% Medicare and Medicaid (Medi-Cal).

Since the beginning of the public health emergency, Kern Medical has been providing several COVID-19 related services to all residents, including housing and medical care for COVID-19 patients that required isolation, drive-thru testing sites, and mobile vaccination clinics for farmworkers and other high-risk populations. Since then, Kern Medical has made large strides in increasing vaccine accessibility to Kern County's most vulnerable populations. Kern Medical's mobile clinic team has been working diligently to improve access to vaccination throughout different areas of Kern County, including some of the most underserved areas such as Wasco, Taft, Lamont, and Arvin.

The proposed allocation seeks to continue with the existing efforts to address the medical needs of the community as a result of COVID-19 including the long-term medical effects of the virus, Valley Fever awareness, mental health awareness and navigation, preventative screening, and mobile vaccination sites for COVID-19 – all free for our community.

Improve educational opportunities through the Countywide Library System (\$2,450,000)

The Kern County Library system includes 24 branches and 2 bookmobile routes across the County. Over the last fiscal year, operations at all locations have been impacted due to capacity and social distancing guidelines, coupled with budgetary and staffing concerns. Due to loss of revenue, only 12 branches remain open for public use.

The proposed plan allocates \$2.45 million in funds to be used within the next three years to backfill for positions lost during the Coronavirus pandemic. This funding will be used to hire employees to run operations at 22 branches across the county. Each branch will have a team of staff providing dedicated service to each individual community. With this additional funding and through the libraries reopening plan, the county will be able to provide full indoor service while continuing to provide curbside service at 22 library branches across the county. Restoring and expanding on these library services will provide community members of all ages access to programs in various forms. This improved service is all for the shared goal to continue providing reading and other educational opportunities to communities across the county. The goal is to hire back 44 individuals.

Improve job training opportunities (\$750,000)

1. \$170,000 has been allocated to make improvements to a restaurant training facility. The restaurant industry was especially hard-hit during the past year of COVID-19. Many restaurants closed and those that remained opened had to adapt quickly to the impacts of the public health emergency. Although many restaurants are beginning to foresee a normalizing of business conditions, the recovery for the restaurant workforce will be longer. Many employees left for other jobs and are not returning to this industry. This project proposes using the existing training program to reintroduce individuals to this restaurant business.

The training will provide career opportunities and require mastery of entry-level skills, including knowledge and professional attitude related to food preparation and service. Students will be given career-oriented hands-on experience in the planning, preparation, and delivery of meals in the on-campus restaurant by serving the community, as well as through community classroom events and internship training.

The pandemic has changed the way food is prepared, as well as the job training of servers and cooks. With the proposed allocation, improvements to the training facility will provide training in the digital world which is instrumental to hiring within the restaurant business. These improvements will provide additional equipment as and online learning library materials.

The socio-economic backgrounds of students are varied. The overwhelming majority of students have barriers to employment including criminal records or prior substance use issues. This program provides students the opportunity to gain confidence and enter the workforce of an industry in need of employees. The goal of the program is to enroll 50 students per session.

This program began in late April with 8 individuals. While capacity is greater, this small group provided the opportunity to begin the program and refine the training for the next group that is expected to begin in early August.

2. \$550,000 was allocated for transitional job programs. The County will work with three non-profits to provide training to the chronically unemployed that have been significant barriers to employment and have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The program will pair short-term training programs with intensive support and a wage. This program began in April 2022 and currently has 20 individuals enrolled in office occupations and safe food handling programs.

Flood mitigation (\$10,000,000)

The Lamont Stormwater Mitigation Infrastructure Project will divert and mitigate hazardous stormwater delivered from the Caliente and Walker Basin Creeks that has been the source of regular flooding in Lamont, California, and surrounding communities.

The intent is to create the most natural landform and geomorphology possible in the Caliente Creek riparian area to spread and slow flood flows of water, maximizing flood mitigation of a 500-acre portion of land, and protecting the communities from stormwater using landform and vegetation communities. Stormwater mitigation will ensure roads remain open for emergency

services, workplaces, schools, and commercial needs for economic sustainability, as well as reducing potential damages, hazardous contamination, and loss of life or property for these already economically burdened communities.

The communities served include census tracts (CT) 62.01, 62.02, 60.04, 64.01, 64.03, and 64.04. The census tracts are predominantly Hispanic or Latino (of any race), estimated at 89.16% of the population (2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, table DP05). The identified census tracts have an average California Healthy Places index of 10.9, or worse conditions than 89.1% of other census tracts in the State of California for clean environments. The census tracts have a Disadvantaged Community Percentage (DAC) of 74.17, meaning 74.17% of these census tracts are disproportionately burdened by exposure to multiple sources of pollution and heightened social and economic vulnerability. An average of 31.82% of the census tracts' residents lives below the poverty line (2021 FFIEC Geocode Census Report).

This project has received significant public input. A feasibility study was completed, and multiple public meetings were conducted to review the outcome of the study. This project has not started yet.

Sewer improvements (\$15,000,000)

Three projects are proposed (one for new and two for repair) to reduce/remove the disproportionate economic and environmental burden of future sewer backup/failure and resulting property and roadway damages in the unincorporated communities of east Bakersfield, Ford City/Taft Heights, and western Rosedale.

The purposeful planning and careful implementation of these projects has prioritized the economic, social, and racial equity of disadvantaged communities in Kern County to reduce the burden that insufficient or outdated water and sewer infrastructure have on these traditionally marginalized communities. These projects serve residents in areas identified as disadvantaged, low income, and unhealthy. CalEnviroScreen 3.0 report was used to determine that most of the census tracts these projects serve, or benefit are disadvantaged, with high levels of exposure to pollution and increased vulnerability to the adverse effects of pollution. The Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) report was used to determine that most of the census tracts the projects serve are also significantly below the poverty line (5% - 38% below the poverty line). The California Healthy Places Index was used to determine that every community that these projects serve have the top 20% worst clean environment conditions in the entire state. Equity is and will continue to be measured by access to sufficient sewer infrastructure.

The sewer repairs in the communities of Ford City/Taft Heights and east Bakersfield will improve sewer infrastructure by providing much needed repair and maintenance on sewer lines that if left unattended will burden economically disadvantaged homeowners. The western Rosedale project is designed to reduce the disproportionate burden of old or nonexistent sewer infrastructure by providing access to sewer facilities which reduce cost and risk to homeowners for septic failure and associated economic and environmental health concerns.

All projects are in the early stages of design. It is anticipated that construction will begin early calendar year 2023.

Economic stability – Premium pay for eligible workers (\$22,429,954)

The County of Kern continued to operate at all times throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. While some offices temporarily closed or reduced on-site staffing, core functions of County government and services to the public continued. County employees continued to work in some degree during the pandemic (outside of office closures or leaves of absence). Many employees fell ill with COVID-19 or had family members or friends affected by the disease. Some employees assisted with efforts (including local, state, and federal programs) to test or vaccinate the general public locally during the pandemic. Employees continued to make sure the public was being served and protected, while dealing with their own risks, stresses, and difficulties related to working and living through the global pandemic. The County paid premium pay of \$3,000 for 6,933 of our public eligible employees.

Revenue loss to be used for governmental services (\$99,253,731)

The public health emergency has not only affected the economic stability of individuals in our community, but our County experienced significant budget shortfalls which affect the ability to provide services and improve the health of our community. The County calculated its revenue loss for fiscal year 2020 and determined that \$99.2 million would be used as provided by the Treasury guidance for governmental services including but not limited to maintenance of infrastructure including roads, modernization of systems to improve cybersecurity, protection of critical infrastructure, health services, and the provision of police, fire and other public safety services. The following allocation is currently being evaluated and projects will be identified in more detail in the next reporting period.

Investments in park and public outdoor recreational spaces	\$23,107,700
Pedestrian Safety and Infrastructure Improvements in disadvantage communities	\$25,000,000
First Responders Equipment & Capital improvements	\$10,000,000
System replacement to improve cybersecurity	\$6,500,000
Communitywide litter and graffiti clean up	\$4,395,000
Library system technology improvements	\$225,820
Recovery Plan Administration	\$490,000
Countywide government services	\$29,535,211

Investments in parks and public outdoor recreational areas represent over 23% of the revenue loss allocation. COVID-19 has shown we all need public space more than ever. Public space is an essential part of mental health and public health. During the public health emergency, we faced an immediate need for outdoor space that allowed for safe physical distancing and provided our community with the necessary amenities. The proposed allocation will improve park and open spaces throughout our entire community, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Providing adequate pedestrian safety and infrastructure improvements in disadvantage communities is one of the current problems we are trying to solve with the funding provided by the American Rescue Plan. The mismatch of jobs and residences for low-income families makes it essential that the communities have well maintained and safe infrastructure that assumes that individuals will travel by foot as well as vehicles.

A portion of the funds will be used for administration cost. The Final Rule permits recipients to use funds for administering the SLFRF program, such as costs of consultants to support effective management and oversight, including consultation for ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and other requirements related to ARPA funds. Both direct and indirect costs are permissible expenses that are allocable to the fiscal recovery funds.

Promoting equitable outcomes

The County, similar to many governmental agencies, is in the process of developing the framework and steps that will enable us to ensure equitable outcomes of each project. Our community is considered disadvantaged. In particular, the population living in the unincorporated areas of the County have been negatively impacted by the ability of the County to provide the same level of service that many residents in the incorporated areas of the County receive. Parks and roads are some areas that we clearly see a difference between incorporated and unincorporated areas. As we further develop this area, the following strategies will be utilized to ensure that we are providing the most equitable distribution of funds:

- Engagement of community groups by listening to their concerns. Our projects focus on areas identified to have inadequate conditions. Community groups have been engaged in the dialogue with our departments and members of the Board of Supervisors.
- Operate with urgency and accountability. The proposed projects were selected as urgent to support more equitable distribution of resources in our community.
- Data driven. This is one of the most challenging strategies for governments. While cost benefit analysis is used for most county activities, we will need to use data in a manner that identifies measurable and articulable outcomes to be responsible to those benefitting from these projects.

Community Engagement

The County incorporates multiple methods to engage the community. The proposed projects balance community goals and public master planning activities. The County has a demonstrated history of working with disadvantaged communities and advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and residents. Management of our different operational departments meet regularly with community groups and disadvantaged communities to hear their concerns, resulting in their influence on these selected projects.

In addition, through regular or special public meetings with the Board of Supervisors and Parks and Recreation Commission, public outreach and community discussion have been facilitated regarding parks facilities and projects.

Two formal community surveys were conducted over the past year using an independent polling firm and the County conducted an online community survey to determine the priorities of our community. The information collected in this process has been incorporated into this recovery plan.

Labor Practices

For all infrastructure projects, the County requires contractors and subcontractors to pay workers no less than the applicable prevailing wage. Local and state funded infrastructure projects require compliance with wage determinations set by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), whereas federally funded projects require compliance with wage determinations set by the U.S. Secretary of Labor in accordance with the Davis-Bacon Act.

The County contracts for construction services through the competitive bidding process as outlined in Public Contract Code. These requirements ensure full compliance with competitive bidding statutes as a means of protecting the public from misuse of public funds; provide all qualified bidders with a fair opportunity to enter the bidding process, thereby stimulating competition in a manner conducive to sound fiscal practices; and eliminate favoritism, fraud, and corruption in the awarding of public contracts.

The County requires all contractors to comply with labor non-discrimination. Contractors shall not discriminate in the employment of persons upon public works on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, age, or sexual orientation, except as otherwise provided in Section 12940 of the Government Code.

Use of Evidence

Each project prior to its implementation is evaluated for a cost benefit analysis. Details are included in the narrative of each project above.

Performance Report

Each program below describes the goals as well as the measurable results. While some projects are under the early stages of development, it is anticipated that additional data will be collected to track performance as each of the programs develops and matures.

Project Inventory

See Attached.