

# County of Mercer

## **Recovery Plan**

### **State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**

### **2022 Report**

Note: The Recovery Plan Performance Report will provide the public and Treasury information on the projects that recipients are undertaking with program funding and how they are planning to ensure program outcomes are achieved in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner. While this template includes the minimum requirements for the Recovery Plan, each recipient is encouraged to add information to the plan that they feel is appropriate to provide information to their constituents on efforts they are taking to respond to the pandemic and promote an equitable economic recovery.

Each jurisdiction may determine the general form and content of the Recovery Plan, as long as it meets the reporting requirements, and recipients are encouraged to tailor this template to best meet their needs. Use of infographics, tables, charts, pictures, case studies, and other explanatory elements are encouraged.

## 2022 Recovery Plan

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## GENERAL OVERVIEW

### **Executive Summary**

County of Mercer (“County”) is publishing this Recovery Plan and Performance Report consistent with requirements outlined by the United States Department of the Treasury (“US Treasury”) in connection with the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (“SLFRF”) under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (“ARPA”).

The guidance and reporting requirements for the SLFRF program were released on June 22, 2022. These guidelines established the need for various reporting requirements, including an Interim Report, quarterly Project and Expenditure Reports, and annual Recovery Plan Performance Reports. The Recovery Plan Performance Report will provide the public and Treasury information on the projects the county is undertaking with program funds and how the county is planning to ensure program outcomes are achieved in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner, while complying with key performance and mandatory indicators identified by Treasury. This report, as required by Treasury that covers the period from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Subsequent annual reports will describe the county’s efforts to direct these funds and comply with federal guidelines.

The U.S. Department of Treasury has processed a payment in the amount of \$71,368,970.00 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. These funds have been presented to the Board of Commissioners, the Governing Body for the county. The Board of Commissioners (the Board) is in the process of developing a strategy to determine priorities and funding strategies to utilize the SLFRF dollars over the course of the next several years. SLFR Funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and must be spent by December 31, 2026.

The hereby follows the Objectives of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and will use funds to support urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease spread of the virus and bring the Pandemic under control, strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs, support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses, and address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the inequal impact of the Pandemic. The Board is developing a plan to address the needs of the community, as impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. These strategies will follow the overarching guidelines of the American Rescue Plan and requirements of SLFR Funds. These categories for funding include:

- a) Public Health
- b) Negative Economic Impacts
- c) Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities

During July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, the Board and Economic & Community Development staff met with 12 cities in County of Mercer to collect public input, input from local jurisdictions within the county, and collecting data to see where the needs are most prominent. The priorities within the county will be based on these findings as well as thorough evaluation of any available data on the inequitable that impact the County of Mercer Recovery Plan Performance Report in various regions in the county. The county's efforts will mirror those established by the American Rescue Plan Act to help aid the county in economic recovery and bolster public health.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had far-reaching health and economic impacts in the county. These impacts have yet to be enumerated to their full extent. Since the beginning of the Pandemic, County of Mercer has reported 92,395 confirmed COVID-9 cases, as of July 29, 2022.

The economic impacts of the Pandemic are currently being identified as part of this Recovery Plan prioritization process. This report outlines the use of funds from the date of fund distribution in July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. It also describes the on-going efforts as the county develops a plan to prioritize spending and address community needs, particularly in prioritizing equitable recovery in the county.

## **Uses of Funds**

The following section describes the use of funds during the initial Reporting period, from the first distribution of funds in July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. The use of funds will be described within each of the funding categories, as established by federal reporting guidelines in the SLFRF Compliance and Reporting Guidance. Future efforts will be described in subsequent plans. This section will also be used to describe other county efforts to help mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

### **Public Health**

No expenditures were incurred through the initial Reporting period. Future projects will be included in subsequent reports, based on data collected through input from the public, local jurisdictions and other information sources.

### **Negative Economic Impacts**

No expenditures were incurred through the initial Reporting period. Future projects will be included in subsequent reports, based on data collected through input from the public, local jurisdictions and other information sources.

## **Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities**

No expenditures were incurred through the initial Reporting period. Future projects will be included in subsequent reports, based on data collected through input from the public, local jurisdictions and other information sources.

## **Other County Initiatives**

In addition to these efforts, County of Mercer is providing emergency rental assistance through the use of other federal funding resources. The County of Mercer Emergency Rental Assistance Program helps eligible low-income households with their past due rent and utilities. The program covers up to 12 months of past due rent and utilities and may pay up to three months of forward rent at a time, not to exceed a total of 18 months of assistance. Past due rent must be paid before future rent coverage is eligible. Utility costs include electricity, gas, home energy services, and bulk fuels.

Eligible landlords who participate in the Emergency Rental Assistance program can receive reimbursement for 100 percent of an eligible tenant's unpaid rent from April 1, 2020, to present for a total of 12 months.

Eligible tenants can apply for 100 percent of the past due rent from April 1, 2020, to present for a total of 12 months, which will be paid directly to their landlord. Eligible tenants can receive prospective (future) rental assistance equal to 100 percent of their monthly rent for up to three months at a time. Eligible tenants may also receive assistance for unpaid utility bills accumulated from April 1, 2020, to present. Unpaid utility bills will be paid directly to the utility company.

County of Mercer is also providing public health information, information about various federal and state resources for households and businesses, as well as testing and Pandemic tracking. These efforts are being used to combat the spread of COVID-19 throughout the community.

## **Promoting equitable outcomes**

County of Mercer has not obligated any funding options for this initial Recovery Plan Report that addresses equitable outcomes. In future efforts, the county will evaluate which communities are disproportionately impacted or marginalized. This evaluation will include goals that identify if there are any historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected groups that the project will serve, awareness of how equal and practical is the ability for residents or businesses to become aware of the services funded by the SLFRF, access and distribution with and evaluation of differences in levels of access to benefits and services across groups, and intended outcomes. Future efforts to establish equitable outcomes will evaluate intended projects based on racial and ethnic groups, economic equity, and any specifically targeted groups.

In these future projects, the county will use quantitative and/or qualitative measures to ensure that goals are being met. The county will also describe any efforts that target geographical areas in the county, if those efforts are made.

## **Community Engagement**

County of Mercer is planning various public outreach efforts in relation to the American Rescue Plan and SLFR Funds. These efforts will include county-wide outreach to local jurisdictions and non-profit and regional organizations. The county is in the process of developing two surveys to gather additional input from both stakeholders and the general public. The first survey will be targeted to cities and non-profits to help gauge the economic impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The second survey will be targeted to the general public to determine what the greatest needs are in the community, as well as how to best address need throughout the county. The community engagement process in County of Mercer will be on-going throughout the use of these funds. It will include the opportunity for public review of reports, as well as the collection of comments. In addition, the county will continue efforts to work closely with city officials, non-profits, and regional organizations to provide both opportunities to shape the priorities for these funds, as well as the on-going outlet for public comment and scrutiny.

## **Labor Practices**

At the date of this report, the Future reports will include updated data for the Small Business Grant Program complete with a comparative analysis and narrative adding context to help readers interpret the results. Future reports will also include data for other programs initiated by the County. These efforts will be outlined in future reports when these activities are undertaken.

## **Use of Evidence**

At the date of this document, County of Mercer is still in the process of establishing a system to evaluate projects. Projects will be evaluated based on evidence, as outlined by the SLFRF reporting requirements. County of Mercer has not identified any projects in this initial Reporting period that are within the categories that necessitate evidence-based reporting, including any projects in Public Health, Negative Economic Impacts, and Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities. In the event that County of Mercer does elect to fund these types of interventions with SLFR Funds, the use of evidence-based interventions or rigorous program evaluations will be used and described in this section.

## Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

The following table will be used to describe the spending over the course of the SLFRF Funding period. The county has obligated Revenue Replacement these funds as of July 31, 2022 and is still in the planning stages of determining the best use of remaining funds.

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.1	COVID-19 Vaccination		
1.2	COVID-19 Testing		
1.3	COVID-19 Contact Tracing		
1.4	Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)		
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment		
1.6	Medical Expenses (including Alternative Care Facilities)		
1.7	Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency		
1.8	Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)		
1.9	Payroll Costs for Public Health, Safety, and Other Public Sector Staff Responding to COVID-19		
1.10	Mental Health Services		
1.11	Substance Use Services		
1.12	Other Public Health Services		
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.1	Household Assistance: Food Programs		
2.2	Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid		
2.3	Household Assistance: Cash Transfers		
2.4	Household Assistance: Internet Access Programs		
2.5	Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention		
2.6	Unemployment Benefits or Cash Assistance to Unemployed Workers		
2.7	Job Training Assistance (e.g., Sectoral job-training, Subsidized Employment, Employment Supports or Incentives)		
2.8	Contributions to UI Trust Funds*		
2.9	Small Business Economic Assistance (General)		

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
2.10	Aid to nonprofit organizations		
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries		
2.13	Other Economic Support		
2.14	Rehiring Public Sector Staff		
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities		
3.1	Education Assistance: Early Learning		
3.2	Education Assistance: Aid to High-Poverty Districts		
3.3	Education Assistance: Academic Services		
3.4	Education Assistance: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Services		
3.5	Education Assistance: Other		
3.6	Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care		
3.7	Healthy Childhood Environments: Home Visiting		
3.8	Healthy Childhood Environments: Services to Foster Youth or Families Involved in Child Welfare System		
3.9.	Healthy Childhood Environments: Other		
3.10	Housing Support: Affordable Housing		
3.11	Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons		
3.12	Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance		
3.13	Social Determinants of Health: Other		
3.14	Social Determinants of Health: Community Health Workers or Benefits Navigators		
3.15	Social Determinants of Health: Lead Remediation		
3.16	Social Determinants of Health: Community Violence Interventions		
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		
5.5	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement	11,160,480	11,160480.00
5.6	Provision of Government Services		
5.7	Administrative and Other		
5.8	Administrative Expenses		
5.9	Evaluation and data analysis		
5.10	Transfers to Other Units of Government		

## Project Inventory



At the date of this report, County of Mercer has adopted budget of \$22,320,960.00 for Revenue Replacement funding. \$11,160,480.00 have been obligated and \$11,160,480.00 have been expended as of the date of this report.

### Performance Report

As the Board identifies projects through the collection of community data, key performance indicators will be developed for any major SLFRF funded projects and will be reported in future annual reports.

## **Required Performance Indicators and Programmatic Data**

The purpose of the Performance Report is to identify performance indicators and programmatic data for all major SLFRF projects. The County will report key performance indicators for each program/project under this section. US Treasury provides some flexibility to the County to determine how this information should be presented. Going forward, the County may expand on the data presented to specifically include output and outcome measures. Output measures are directly attributable to the immediate results of a project. The County will regularly review its performance indicators to determine if adjustments are needed to its programs to further promote equity and/or to close service gaps. Future reports will include updated data for the Small Business Grant Program complete with a comparative analysis and narrative adding context to help readers interpret the results. Future reports will also include data for other programs initiated by the County. To the extent possible, data will be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, income, and other relevant factors.

## **Summary**

The County of Mercer will use of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds within the American Rescue Plan Act is under-going on-going evaluation to determine the most effective and impactful use of funds for the county. The county's prioritization process is being undertaken, and includes public and community input, collaboration with units of local government, and strategic overview by the Board of Commissioners. County staff is evaluating COVID-19 rates and community impacts, as well as the level of economic impacts on the community. Throughout this process, County of Mercer is also taking into account other resources of funds that can help meet needs that have been created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic. This initial Recovery Plan Performance Report serves as the first report to demonstrate the efforts taken by the county to help ensure a strong and equitable recovery for County of Mercer.