



Osceola County Board of County Commissioners Recovery Plan



State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2024 Report

Osceola County Board of County Commissioners

2024 Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Public Law No. 117-2 was signed into law. Section 9901 of ARPA created Section 603 of the Social Security Act, which created the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Recovery Fund). The Recovery Fund provides \$130 billion for local governments, including counties, cities, and smaller local governments. Osceola County received a total of \$72,985,227 in funding.

The Recovery Funds, in coordination with other federal and state programs and allocations, allow Osceola County to mitigate the COVID pandemic, address the negative economic impacts, and make the necessary investments to our community, county, and infrastructure so that we can recover in an equitable way from this pandemic and be well positioned for the 21st century.

Osceola County’s economy was hit especially hard. Located south of Orange County, Osceola County is home to the workers of Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World. Our tourism and hospitality-based economy was shut down in March 2020, and unlike our neighbouring counties that received direct aid from the federal government through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Public Law No. 116-136, Osceola County was forced into triage with only two smaller direct CARES Act allocations from the federal government, specifically from the Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus (CDBG-CV), and FEMA Disaster Recovery Assistance funds. Faced with some of the longest food bank lines in the country, the third highest unemployment rate in the United States, and the highest unemployment rate in the state of Florida, the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners (the Board) quickly allocated the CDBG-CV, County General Fund dollars, and FEMA Disaster Recovery Assistance funds into three main categories of assistance: (1) food assistance, (2) business assistance, and (3) housing assistance.

In July 2020, Osceola County was awarded a suballocation of Coronavirus Relief Funds from the State of Florida’s CARES Act allocation. With those funds, the Board expanded assistance efforts to help support the costs of public safety, ensure the protection of residents, maintain local government operations, and the local response to the emergency health crisis. With the leveraged funds, the Board was able to adopt strategies for individuals, families, businesses, education, non-profits, mental health, workforce training, and continued support for the recovery of tourism through our local destination marketing organization. Additionally, from these funds the County provided a bonus for employees that were on the frontline supporting the County’s operations from the onset of the pandemic, but not qualified for the State’s pandemic first responders bonus criteria. Osceola County has provided the following necessary assistance to stabilize our economy and community:

- **\$65,565,652** from the State of Florida’s Coronavirus Relief Fund went to support the costs of public safety, ensure the protection of residents, maintain local government operations, and allowed the allocation of funds that would have supported the County’s public safety payroll to be used for the County’s local response to the public health emergency. The County’s strategies are mentioned above, and more detail provided in the table below:

CARES REPLACEMENT FUNDS			
RECIPIENT	STRATEGY	RECIPIENT	STRATEGY
Individual Recipients	Rental/Mortgage Foreclosure/ Eviction Asst/Utilities	Osceola Trach College/ Adult Learning Center of Osceola	Training for better paying jobs
Help Now - Not for Profit	Rental/Mortgage	Valencia Community College	Training program for sustained employment
Cameron Preserve Phase II	Development of Affordable Housing	Experience Kissimmee	Recovery Marketing/Local-Focused
Hope Center	Housing Homeless	Health Department	2 Mobile Medical units
Homeless Services Network	Housing Homeless	Federally Qualified Health Centers	1 Mobile Medical Unit
Dillingham Apartment	Chronically Homeless	Park Place Behavioral Health Care	Mental Health Assistance
Individual Recipients	Elderly Disabled Assistance Program	School District of Osceola County	Support for Distance Learning
Food Pantries/Bank (multiple)	Food Insecurity Assistance	United Cerebral Palsy School	Support for Distance Learning
School District of Osceola County	Food Insecurity Assistance-FIT support	LS&S/ Career Online High School	Scholarships for online educational learning
Individual Recipients	Business Assistance/Utilities	County Support Cost & Supplies	Support for delivery of strategies
Early Learning Coalition	Child Care Assistance	Salvation Army	Affordable Housing Support

- **\$6,320,306** from the State of Florida’s State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) awarded to the County to support housing initiatives to aid in the pandemic response, Osceola County was able to support many critical initiatives.
- **\$2,862,023** from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus, which was used to provide assistances to individuals, families, and businesses impacted by COVID-19.
- **\$11,346,060** from the Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance 1 program to assist eligible households with household income at or below 80% of the area median income, stay in their homes.
- **\$11,679,488** from the Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance 2 program to assist eligible households with household income at or below 80% of the area median income, stay in their homes.
- **\$69,996** from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund ("Relief Fund"). The Relief Fund allowed for the purchase of equipment used to disinfect the fire rescues, the solution used in this equipment, the purchase of consumable items such as cleaners, hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment including coveralls, boot covers, gloves masks, thermometers and probe covers.
- **\$48,000** from the Florida E911 Board the funds were used to assist the county with expenses necessary to protect County 911 personnel from COVID-19 e.g. cleaning and disinfecting, installation of protective shields between positions, etc.
- **\$1,535,582.54** has been requested from FEMA’s Disaster Recovery Assistance fund, this allowed the County to provide emergency protective measures. Of the amount requested, \$1,096,820.44 has been paid to the County.

Osceola County’s planned use of the ARPA Recovery Funds will complement the County’s prior response to the pandemic, through the use of revenue replacement. Since March 2020, Osceola County has seen substantial losses in various revenue sources. The County saw revenue loss in gas taxes, sales taxes, toll revenue, and tourist development taxes. Revenue replacement will allow the County to stabilize its finances, allowing for the continuation of county services, and enhance pandemic and economic recovery response efforts.

The Board established the following categorical priorities to help guide how the future recovery efforts should be focused, ensuring equitable investments, and establishing long-term resiliency for the county:

- Education/Training/Infrastructure
- County Infrastructure
- Targeted Recovery Efforts
- Enhanced Recovery of Tourism/Quality of Life
- Enhanced Transit

Key outcome goals of the County’s recovery efforts mirror the county’s strategic planned goals, which include establishing and promoting Osceola County as a great place to live with high quality infrastructure and transportation supported by a diversified economy delivered via an efficient and high performing county government. By replacing lost revenue, we will be providing an efficient and high performing county government. The strategies will then provide educational and workforce development opportunities and investments in infrastructure and transit which support a diversified economy, a more equitable community, and a higher quality of life.

USES OF FUNDS:

Uses of Funds: REVENUE REPLACEMENT

Priority Category: Revenue Replacement (EC-6)

Funding Amount: \$72,985,227

Purpose/Goal: Stabilize the County’s budget with revenue replacement to offset decreases in revenue experienced during the pandemic. Some of the sources of revenue that declined include the gas tax, sales tax, tourist development tax, and toll revenue.

Description: Local governments may use payments from the Recovery Fund for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Section 603(c)(1)(C) of the ARPA provides local governments with broad latitude to use the Fiscal Recovery Funds for the provision of government services. Government services can include, but are not limited to, maintenance, or pay-go funded building of infrastructure, including roads; modernization of cybersecurity, including hardware, software, and protection of critical infrastructure; health services, environmental remediation; school or educational services; and the provision of police, fire, and other public safety services.

Osceola County has generally decided to use Revenue Replacement to support the impacted revenue streams from the economic decline caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be the County’s goal to stabilize the County’s finances and ensure the level of services for County operations are restored. The ability to implement this strategy will allow the County to both provide vital public services and help retain jobs, while allowing additional resources to focus on the continued recovery efforts. While this plan is still evolving, the overall strategy will be for the revenue replacement funds to support human services, transportation, and impacted areas from the decline in revenues, for example the decline in Tourist Development Taxes impacted the County’s sporting facilities and venues. These funds will not be used directly to make a deposit in pension funds, funding debt services, legal settlements, or judgments. Neither will these funds be deposited into rainy day funds or other financial reserves. Nor will not be used as a non-federal match.

Osceola County’s long term recovery efforts fall under these broad categories: (1) education, workforce training, and supporting infrastructure, (2) investing in county infrastructure, (3) targeted recovery efforts within the Commission districts, ensuring equitable investments are made, (4) enhance and promote the recovery of tourism and the quality of life for our residents, and (5) enhance transit.

Further details about each categorical use can be seen below:

EDUCATION/TRAINING/INFRASTRUCTURE:

\$12.5 million

Workforce development, scholarships for students attending higher education or job training, wrap around services and potential infrastructure to support educational/training opportunities are key to diversifying our economy beyond tourism so that the County may better withstand future economic fluctuations as well as the foundation for our citizens to improve their lives. (Strategic Plan Goal - Diversified Economy)



COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE:

\$44.2 million

Extension of utilities and roads that could spur economic development is another key to improving our County. Where possible extension of utilities could be structured based on reimbursement to the County, such as for industrial development, so that the assistance could be further leveraged. Land acquisition that supports the County's need for economic development and additional affordable housing are possibilities. (Strategic Plan Goal - High Quality Transportation & Infrastructure)



TARGETED RECOVERY EFFORTS:

\$5 million

Specific projects targeted to address the discrete needs of each District as identified by the respective Commissioner to equitably address the diverse needs of our community. This represents approximately \$1 million in each District. County administration will work with each Commissioner to identify the projects. (Projects will meet one of the Commission's Strategic Plan Goals)



ENHANCE/ RECOVERY OF TOURISM/ QUALITY OF LIFE:

\$6.2 million

In addition to \$3 million already committed to our destination marketing organization toward its continued tourism recovery efforts through additional sales and marketing, the remaining \$3 million would assist in funding infrastructure (performing arts center / amphitheatre) to enhance not only our resident's quality of life, but also further support the County's primary economic industry, tourism. (Strategic Plan Goal - Great Place to Live).



ENHANCED TRANSIT:

\$5 million

Expansion of the County's regional transit services (LYNX) and interconnectivity of the Kissimmee SunRail Station to NEOCITY will aid our underserved populations by providing more transportation options to get to work and school. (Strategic Plan Goal - High Quality Transportation & Infrastructure).

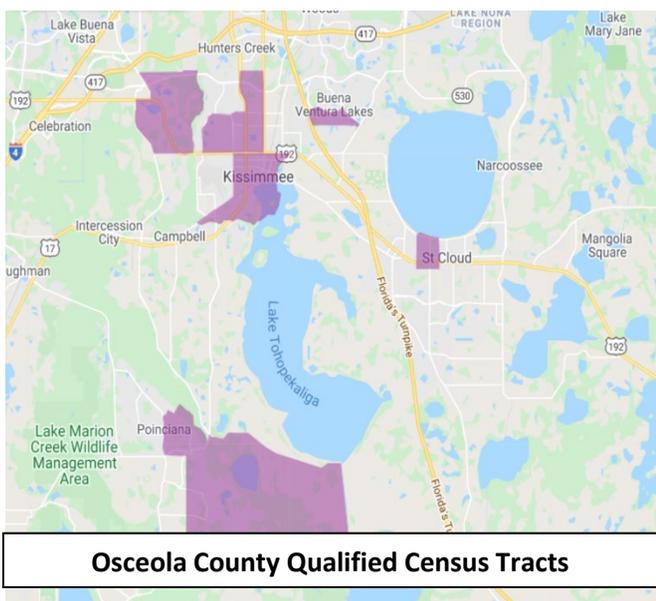


As mentioned above, Osceola County has provided the following necessary assistance to stabilize our economy and community:

- **\$65,565,652** from the State of Florida’s Coronavirus Relief Fund went to support the costs of public safety, ensure the protection of residents, maintain local government operations, and allowed the allocation of funds that would have supported the County’s public safety payroll to be used for the County’s local response to the public health emergency.
- **\$6,320,306** from the State of Florida’s State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) awarded to the County to support housing initiatives to aid in the pandemic response, Osceola County was able to support many critical initiatives.
- **\$2,862,023** from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus, which was used to provide assistances to individuals, families, and businesses impacted by COVID-19.
- **\$11,346,059.80** from the Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance 1 program to assist eligible households with household income at or below 80% of the area median income, stay in their homes.
- **\$11,679,487.70** from the Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance 2 program to assist eligible households with household income at or below 80% of the area median income, stay in their homes.
- **\$69,996.12** from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund ("Relief Fund"). The Relief Fund allowed for the purchase of equipment used to disinfect the fire rescues, the solution used in this equipment, the purchase of consumable items such as cleaners, hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment including coveralls, boot covers, gloves masks, thermometers and probe covers.
- **\$48,000** from the Florida E911 Board the funds were used to assist the county with expenses necessary to protect County 911 personnel from COVID-19 e.g. cleaning and disinfecting, installation of protective shields between positions, etc.
- **\$1,535,582.54** has been requested from FEMA’s Disaster Recovery Assistance fund, this allowed the County to provide emergency protective measures. Of the amount requested, \$1,096,820.44 has been paid to the County.

PROMOTING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES:

Osceola County is home to a majority-minority population, with 57% of our population Hispanic, 15% African American, and 28% White. Additionally, our median household income is \$58,513 per year with approximately 13% of our population living in poverty. Osceola County is aware of our historically underserved and marginalized populations and has made it a priority to assist them. The County provides all information about county services in both English and Spanish and continuously works towards greater awareness of our human service programs within the community.



In recognition of the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on health and economic outcomes in low-income communities, Osceola County has established priorities that will focus on the hardest hit from the public health crisis. This is critical for the residents of Osceola County, many of which were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic with the complete shutdown of the tourism industry and slow recovery that has followed. The Board has committed funding to connect unemployed and low-wage workers with good jobs and careers by investing in education and training initiatives. Osceola Prosper is one way the County has started to invest in education and training. This new program provided free tuition for all Osceola Class of 2022 Seniors to attend Valencia College or Osceola Technical College (oTECH). The County has contributed \$12.4M for Osceola Prosper. The program’s tremendous success and impact on the community allowed

the Board of Commissioners to approve an additional \$8.3M from general county funds for the Osceola Class of 2023 Seniors.

The revenue replacement funding will also be used to improve the County's infrastructure, including utilities and roads. These projects will have a direct impact on the underserved communities in Osceola County, providing the needed infrastructure and improved connectivity to enhance opportunities.

Establishing the opportunity for the residents to upskill, train, and find new employment and essential services is also key to ensuring the improvements provide the highest level of equity. In addition to road improvements, the county will also invest in expanding bus services, creating connections between SunRail, our local commuter rail system, and NeoCity, the County's new technology district home to high-tech/high-wage job opportunities, and easy access to Valencia Community College.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

The Recovery Plan brought forward by the Board of County Commissioners is a result of strong community engagement. The Board is committed to ensuring their constituents and community-based organizations feedback and suggestions are heard. Through public meetings, public workshops, and one-on-one discussions with residents and community leaders, the Board of County Commissioners have established a balanced plan that brings forward the needs of the community, while ensuring efforts will create equity and long-term resiliency for future generations.

LABOR PRACTICES:

Osceola County is committed to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects which is supported by the County's existing Procurement Code. This document outlines the County's procurement process and ensures all County projects follow the required Federal, State, and local laws.

USE OF EVIDENCE:

The County does not have specific projects that require the use of evidence. However, the County will evaluate all projects to ensure that they have the greatest impacts for the community with a focus on improving the quality of life and opportunities for the underserved communities, creating a more stable economy, and enhancing training and education systems.

PERFORMANCE REPORT:

As part of their planning process, the agencies responsible for the administration of the program area appropriations have begun development of program measures. The measures will range from near-term measures for activities and resulting outputs to longer-term metrics relating to desired outcomes. Mandatory performance indicators will be reported for the programs linked to the designated expenditure categories.

PROJECT INVENTORY:

Project: County Infrastructure

Funding amount: \$44,201,500

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

The County's infrastructure project provides an extension of utilities and roads that could spur economic development and is another key to improving our County. Where possible extension of utilities could be structured based on reimbursement to the County, such as for industrial development, so that the assistance could be further leveraged. Land acquisition that supports the County's need for economic development and additional affordable housing are possibilities. (Strategic Plan Goal - High Quality Transportation & Infrastructure)

Performance Report:

The County entered into an agreement with Hope Partnership Inc to support the financing of 30 affordable housing units for individuals with very low, low, and moderate incomes. Hope Partnership successfully acquired a property in September 2023 and is presently undergoing the rehabilitation phase, aiming for completion by June 2025. As part of the County's Economic Development strategy to invest in infrastructure the County purchased two major properties

Project: Education / Training / Infrastructure

Funding amount: \$12,5000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

This project is dedicated to enhancing workforce development, provide scholarships for students attending higher education, job training, wrap around services and potential infrastructure to support educational/training opportunities. These are key to diversifying our economy beyond tourism so that the County may better withstand future economic fluctuations as well as the foundation for our citizens to improve their lives. (Strategic Plan Goal - Diversified Economy)

Osceola Prosper offers free college or technical education to its citizens. Read more about the program at www.osceolaprospers.com.

Performance Report:

Osceola Prosper is currently in its third year and has provided scholarships for roughly 5,000 graduates in the County. Valencia college enrollment has increased nearly 20% between 2021 and 2022. In 2023 2,500 students took advantage of the program up from 2,300 in 2022. As a measurement to success, Osceola County has moved up from 61st out of 67th to 4th in the State for the college going rate for High School graduates. This ranking considers the impact of the first year of Osceola Prosper.

Project: Enhanced Transit

Funding amount: \$5,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6 Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

Expansion of the County's regional transit services (LYNX) and interconnectivity of the Kissimmee SunRail Station to NeoCity, the County's new technology district home to high-tech/high-wage job opportunities, and easy access to Valencia Community College. These enhanced transit projects will aid the County's underserved populations by providing more transportation options to get to work and school. (Strategic Plan Goal - High Quality Transportation & Infrastructure)

Performance Report

The Enhanced Transit projects are still in the development and planning stages, therefore, there are currently no key performance indicators to report.

Project: Enhance/Recovery Tourism/QOL. – ARPA Rep

Funding amount: \$6,283,727

Project Expenditure Category: 6 Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

In addition to \$3 million already committed to the County's destination marketing organization toward its continued tourism recovery efforts through additional sales and marketing, the remaining \$3 million would assist in funding infrastructure (performing arts center / amphitheatre) to enhance not only our resident's quality of life, but also further support the County's primary economic industry, tourism. (Strategic Plan Goal - Great Place to Live)

- The marketing campaign, funded through September 30, 2022, will develop, and implement a marketing campaign for Osceola County small businesses to drive tourism to Osceola County to help citizens get back to work.

Performance Report

The Performing Arts Center / Amphitheatre project is still in the development and planning stages, therefore, there are currently no key performance indicators to report.

Project: Targeted Recovery Efforts

Funding amount: \$5,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6 Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

Targeted Recovery Efforts are specific projects targeted to address the discrete needs of each District as identified by the respective Commissioner to equitably address the diverse needs of our community. This represents approximately \$1 million in each District. (Projects will meet one of the Commission's Strategic Plan Goals)

- Osceola County District 1 - Outreach Services will be funded for a two-year period, assisting the MASA Fund Foundation with financially supporting the Distribution of Information of Housing Services and other programs that are in the best interest of the citizens of Osceola County. Funds will be used to conduct outreach to disadvantaged, non-English speaking, and culturally diverse communities by attending events organized by the Commissioner's Office along with distributing brochures, flyers, letters and translated videos featuring County and community services.
- Osceola County District 1 - Provided assistance to the Pathway to Housing Homeownership Program to bridge the gap to affordable housing with an emphasis on homeownership. This funding will cover a two-year period. Targeted areas are families and individuals from the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) population of Osceola County, Florida. The goal is to move families and individuals from precarious housing, pending homelessness, and housing struggles to purchasing their own homes through intensive case management via The Salvation Army and community collaboration.
- Osceola County District 2 - Provided funding for the purchase and installation of various columns, canopies, and shade-structures covering the playground equipment at the County's Senses Park Facility. The County's Senses Park Facility is an all-inclusive playground that caters to children on the autism spectrum. The shade structures purchased allow the park to benefit the children in different weather conditions.
- Osceola County District 4 - Provided funding to the local YMCA to assist with repairs of the pool area. The Kissimmee YMCA and Team Kareem Memorial Foundation teamed up to provide drowning prevention measures to the local community. Here, they provide water safety education, swimming lessons, CPR, and lifeguard training.

Performance Report:

The County has approved funding for a segment of the project aimed at acquiring and setting up artificial turf at the St. Cloud High School Football field. Additionally, the County is providing financial support to the Osceola County School District for the establishment of the Manufacturing CTE Academy at Liberty High School. This initiative aims to offer industry-certified training options that are driven by employer needs, leading to high-paying, in-demand career opportunities and/or pathways for further education.