

STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

Equity and Outcomes Resource Guide

How governments are incorporating equity, community engagement, evidence, and performance management into their use of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds



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Introduction

The State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act, delivers \$350 billion to state, territorial, local, and Tribal governments across the country to support their response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Given the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic experienced by historically underserved communities, including low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) implemented the SLFRF program to encourage recipients to address health and economic disparities and ensure that the recovery from the pandemic is truly an equitable economic recovery. The Biden-Harris Administration's American Rescue Plan Equity Report, [Advancing Equity through the American Rescue Plan](#), describes Treasury's approach to advancing an equitable recovery through the implementation of the SLFRF program, including the following:

- **Structuring the program's eligible uses to encourage recipients to address underlying disparities** by including a broad menu of automatically eligible uses of funds that are designed to improve health and economic equity. The final rule also listed an expanded set of automatically eligible uses of funds when provided in disproportionately impacted communities, including funds for community health workers, housing vouchers, and high-poverty school districts. This approach made it easier for recipients to address the underlying disparities that contributed to more severe impacts of the pandemic in underserved communities.
- **Expanding eligible populations to empower recipients to serve families and communities hardest hit by the pandemic** by presuming that all low-income households and communities were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and therefore automatically eligible for the broadest range of services.
- **Designing reporting guidance to support equity** including by encouraging recipients to engage their communities in the design of their SLFRF programs. Through the Recovery Plan Performance Reports, recipients are also encouraged to transparently articulate how their SLFRF programs promote equitable outcomes.
- **Providing ongoing government-to-government support to Tribal governments** by prioritizing Tribal consultations to ensure that the final rule and reporting approach were tailored to the unique needs of Tribal governments.

As a result of this approach, the program has [delivered much needed resources](#) to communities across the country in its first year, helping revitalize the economy and ensuring that funds reach the most historically underserved communities.

As Treasury's efforts to implement the SLFRF program to advance equity demonstrate, effective program implementation is critical to addressing underlying disparities. In order to assist recipient governments to effectively use their funds to advance an equitable recovery, Treasury has produced this resource guide. This guide highlights examples of how recipients are applying equity principles, engaging their communities, incorporating evidence-based interventions, and monitoring outcomes using performance management strategies. Along with transparency and accountability, these practices are at the core of an equitable economic recovery as highlighted in Treasury's [Compliance and Reporting Guidance](#).

For the purposes of SLFRF, the definitions of equity and underserved communities are outlined in [Executive Order 13985, on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#).¹

1. As described in [Executive Order 13985 On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), issued on January 20, 2021, the term "equity" means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. The term "underserved communities" refers to populations

Executive Summary

In this guide, Treasury is highlighting examples of approaches and tools in the areas of equity, community engagement, evidence-based investments, and performance management to provide recipients a set of resources to support the development and implementation of their Fiscal Recovery Funds program. The examples below highlight strategies that recipients could implement throughout the lifecycle of their SLFRF-funded programs, from policy and project selection through implementation. These strategies include:

- **Goal Setting:** Setting goals for their jurisdiction’s equity work, both in their SLFRF-funded programs and throughout government operations through executive and/or legislative action and strategic planning
- **Equity Frameworks:** Using frameworks or rubrics to consider equity throughout the project development or selection process and assessing proposed projects on equity in project design and proposed outcomes
- **Identifying High Need Populations:** Mapping social vulnerability indexes and other data against proposed project locations to ensure services are targeted to the communities with the greatest need
- **Engaging Underserved Communities:** Offering different types of community engagement opportunities to ensure that voices from underserved communities can participate in the process
- **Convening Leaders:** Convening taskforces made up of a diverse group of community members to analyze data gathered through engagement processes and recommend focus areas and projects
- **Using Evidence:** Incorporating consideration of evidence-based practices into the budget process
- **Tracking Outcomes:** Collecting performance data for each project to track progress toward advancing equitable outcomes

These examples are largely derived from the Recovery Plan Performance Reports (Recovery Plans) that states, territories, and the largest local governments (with populations of more than 250,000) are required to submit to Treasury.² However, the practices shared in this guide can be employed by any government across the country in the implementation of their State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds projects. For additional information about these examples, Treasury has included a link to the jurisdiction’s publicly-available Recovery Plan on Treasury’s website or to the Tribal government’s website.³

Equity

Treasury encourages state and local governments to intentionally use Fiscal Recovery Funds to support an equitable recovery and address health and economic disparities, exacerbated by the pandemic, in underserved communities.⁴ As noted above, this section includes examples, tools, and resources that recipients may be interested in referencing and utilizing to incorporate equity into their program design and implementation processes.

sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

2. Treasury’s Compliance and Reporting Guidance outlines requirements for recipients that submit Recovery Plans in sections titled promoting equitable outcomes, community engagement, use of evidence, and performance report.
3. Note: Examples are based on information submitted and certified to the Department of the Treasury by recipient governments in the Recovery Plan Performance reports collected in August 2021 covering activity through July 31, 2021. Recovery Plan Performance reports include information from the largest recipients of SLFRF funds: states, territories, and cities and counties with populations over 250,000. Releasing this information does not indicate that Treasury has made a determination about project eligibility. Furthermore, Treasury has not confirmed the accuracy of submitted information, including financial data.
4. Definitions of equity and underserved communities are included in [Executive Order 13985 On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), issued on January 20, 2021.

In their Recovery Plans, many recipients discussed in detail the equity issues in their jurisdictions and their work to invest Fiscal Recovery Funds with equity in mind. For example, [Washington, DC](#) noted in their approach to equity the appointment of a Chief Equity Officer to lead efforts and monitor progress. [Louisville Metro Government](#) outlined by project the populations served, how those populations would become aware of and access services, and the intended outcomes. [Los Angeles County](#) provided a comprehensive overview of their equity approach including equity principles, targeted populations based on a COVID-19 Vulnerability and Recovery Index, and an equity toolkit to support project design.

Equity Goals

Some recipients highlighted the overall equity goals of their jurisdiction, including references to existing equity-related executive orders, legislative/council resolutions adopting equity goals, commissions and task forces dedicated to equity, and equity-related strategic plans or action plans. For example:

[Lexington-Fayette Urban County, KY](#) discussed how the equity work already undertaken by the Mayor's Commission for Racial Justice & Equality, a body of diverse community members, would be further advanced by its SLFRF program (pg. 7). *"LFUCG [Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government] is committed to promoting equitable outcomes in all government services, not only those provided through the use of ARPA dollars. In June 2020, LFUCG Mayor Linda Gorton created the Mayor's Commission for Racial Justice & Equality. This group was tasked with a determined and defined purpose: To assemble diverse community members to listen, discuss, and create empowering solutions that dismantle systemic racism in Fayette County. This commission, through the work of five subcommittees, issued a report in October 2020 that outlined recommendations in five broad categories: Education and Economic Opportunity; Housing and Gentrification; Health Disparities; Law Enforcement, Justice, and Accountability; and Racial Equity. A six-month progress report was issued in April 2021 outlining action taken by LFUCG towards meeting the recommendations of the report. The report notes that the Mayor and Council approved over \$2 million in the FY2022 Operating Budget dedicated towards the goals and recommended outcomes of the report. While current funding and that allocated in the previous budget provided a head start towards meeting the goals and recommendations of the report, the award of ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provides an opportunity to address these recommendations in a manner that is potentially transformative for the community."*

[New York City, NY](#) highlighted their city-wide initiative Recovery for All (pgs. 6-8). *"More specifically, New York City's Recovery for All aims to confront the inequity and systemic racism that have pervaded the City, with a goal of making New York City one of the fairest cities in the country. Primary goals include: Continue the City's momentum in fighting COVID-19; Drive economic development; Promote equity. Recovery for All leverages COVID-19 relief opportunities and aligns City agency programs, community-based organization projects and non-profit efforts to maximize the impact of funding and reach residents who most need support... To track progress, New York City will consider and measure equity throughout the stages of program funding by tracking demographic and social vulnerability indexed information according to services funded in particular ZIP codes. Key outcomes for New York City's Recovery Plan include increasing vaccination rates for underserved populations, increasing jobs in underemployed neighborhoods, and increasingly food and housing security."*

[City of Austin, TX](#) described how the equity approach within the SLFRF program is driven by their strategic plan, called Strategic Direction 2023 or SD23. The City of Austin also included a discussion of equity for each project in its project inventory (pgs. 8-11). *"The City plans to use... ARPA - SLFRF funding in a manner which helps promote the Quality of Life values outlined in SD23. Funding will be used to provide relief services and*

assistance to Austin residents, creatives, non-profits, and businesses that were most affected by this public health emergency and to provide long term resiliency to help support the health of Austin residents and the Austin economy. Equity is central to the City’s development of the projects outlined in this report and most projects will focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized and adversely impacted populations, including low-income residents, communities of color, LGBTQIA+ persons, and those living with disabilities.”

[Minneapolis, MN](#) described using an existing equity action plan to consider proposals for projects funded by SLFRF funds (pg. 5). “The City of Minneapolis already integrates an analysis of equity impact into its annual budget process and legislative actions. In addition, the City’s elected leadership has adopted a Strategic Racial Equity Action Plan (SREAP), that calls out specific operational and policy goals to advance racial equity. These existing policies provided the foundation for generating, reviewing, and amending proposals and ultimately appropriating the first round of American Rescue Plan Funds by City Council in July. Each proposal submitted for consideration in phase one of SLFRF decision-making included an equity impact statement. Implementing departments at the City were asked: “What does data tell us about how solving this problem will impact constituents or staff from BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and people of color] communities?” Responses to this question were utilized in the Mayor’s recommendation process, as well as by Council when they amended and then adopted final proposals. Answers to this question along with other proposal details were also made available to the public before and after the two public hearings that were held on phase one SLFRF appropriations.”

[King County, WA](#) highlighted its strategic plan among the tools it is using to consider equity in program design (pgs. 6-9). “King County’s Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan is a blueprint for change, mutually created by King County employees and community partners. From the outset, the planning process was designed to hear from people across sectors, geography, and populations before developing a draft. More than 600 County employees and 100 local organizations—including community organizations, education, philanthropy, labor, business, and local governments—shared their insights and expertise on where we have made progress, persistent challenges that exist, and solutions toward achieving equity.”

[Erie County, NY](#) described using Fiscal Recovery Funds to create a health equity office.⁵ “Erie County will establish staffing and budget lines for a new Office of Health Equity within the Erie County Department of Health. This office is directly in line with the stated goals of the ARP State and Local Recovery Fund’s mission to address disparities in public health outcomes with a staff of 9 individuals including Epidemiologists. The Office of Health Equity will produce an annual report that improves and expands on the current 3-year Community Health Assessment process required by NYS. The Office will direct future county and grant spending, as well as provide detailed analysis and support to not-for-profit entities to better invest philanthropic dollars into health equity issues. A core focus will be addressing the social determinants of health.”

Equity Frameworks

Other recipients also discussed the equity-related frameworks and tools that they are using to evaluate project proposals and implement approved projects. See Appendix 1 for copies of the frameworks and tools, where available, that recipients are using to assess equity. For example:

[Harris County, TX](#) described using an [equity framework](#) for its SLFRF program that includes tools like an equity reflections question set and an equity assessment tool (pgs. 6-12). “All Harris County program proposals are

5. The details in this example are based on information submitted and certified to the Department of the Treasury by recipient government in the Project and Expenditure Report collected in January 2022 covering activity through December 31, 2021.

first assessed and scored against an equity framework, included below [see Appendix 1]. This ensures that racial and economic equity are a part of the conversation when deciding upon how funds will be spent in the first place, and includes a statement of broad equity goals, as well as strategies to reach these goals in each step of an ARPA project's lifecycle (from capacity building in departments, to project development, selection, monitoring and evaluation, and finally evaluation and accountability). Each project includes equity reflections... and equity scoring."

[Boulder County, CO](#) describes a number of approaches to promoting equitable outcomes including utilizing a Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool (pgs. 18-32). *"The Racial Equity Team's goal of develop, implement, iterate, and evaluate racial equity practices in the areas of teaching and learning, key partnership, and advocacy has created a community of practice within the County that normalizes, organizes and operationalizes racial equity work in Boulder County, in particular using the Government Alliance for Racial Equity Framework. In what was initially a piloted program within the County's pandemic response, racial equity efforts expanded into other departments and offices within the County. The use of the Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool has moved from a onetime use to incorporating the principles and planning tools within many FTS teams, and in the County's longer-term pandemic response and recovery efforts"*

[City of Durham, NC](#) described how it uses a set of equity goals and an equity assessment tool to guide funding decisions (pgs. 3-4) *"The City of Durham has worked closely with its Office of Equity and Inclusion to ensure that the city's outreach and allocation process promotes equitable outcomes. Together, we have identified shared goals, built public awareness, investigated existing disparities, and started to outline desired outcomes... We have also committed to using an equity impact assessment to support systemic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision, minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed funding decisions, and serve as a vital tool for preventing institutional racism while identifying new options to remedy longstanding inequities."*

[Cleveland, OH](#) described how it used existing equity-related methodologies to evaluate projects (pgs. 6-9). *"To help facilitate this strategy development, the City is following existing program evaluation methodologies it has used in other contexts that address critical considerations, including: Upfront community engagement that includes communities of color and low income populations; Identifying existing community and neighborhood priorities and aligning programs to them as appropriate; Developing qualitative and quantitative data collection and evaluation tools that can be, when possible, disaggregated to illuminate disparity; Identifying who will benefit from the City's actions and, when appropriate, who will be burdened and, as appropriate, address any disparities; Ensuring that economic benefits, including workforce development opportunities, are available to communities of color and low income population; and Using program communications that are easily understood and accessible to anyone who could benefit from participation in the program."*

[San Antonio, TX](#) described using [Budget Equity Tool](#) to integrate considerations of racial and economic equity into the budget process (pgs. 3-10). *"Since Fiscal Year 2018, the City of San Antonio's budget development process intentionally embedded equity as a strategy using a Budget Equity Tool which represented a shift from an equality-based approach to a more strategic equity approach. Over the past five years, the City of San Antonio has integrated explicit considerations of racial and economic equity into the City's budget development process as a key strategy in its comprehensive and citywide approach towards advancing equity. From the inception, racial and economic equity have been key components in the City's approach to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, and the proposed use of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) aligns well with the approach that the City has taken in recent years to drive meaningful equity results through budget allocations."*

[San Jose, CA](#) described how it incorporated equity into its Framework for considering Weighted Shortest Job First (WSJF) process (pgs. 19-21). *“To help ensure a racial equity-based and data-driven resource allocation of the City’s constrained funds for its Community and Economic Recovery from COVID-19, the City added a racial equity lens to a Weighted Shortest Job First (WSJF) process, shown in Figure 4, which was used to prioritize the City Roadmap Initiatives and projects noted in the Uses of Funds section above.”*

Equity Data

In addition, some recipients provided maps and demographic information to share how the pandemic had impacted the public health and economic circumstances of their residents and how projects funded with SLFRF were targeted toward these communities that were most impacted. For example:

[Collier County, FL](#) mapped QCTs, median household income, and social vulnerability index and then indicated where projects funded with SLFRF would be geographically located based on these indicators (pgs. 17-26). *“A key aspect of project development has been a focus on Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and disproportionately disadvantaged residents. American Community Survey Data finds that of Collier County’s population of 384,902, roughly 89.3% are white, 7.3% are black, 1.6% are Asian, and 28.6% are Hispanic. 73.3% of housing is owner-occupied, 85.2% of the population has access to broadband, the Median household income is \$76,415, and 9.4% of persons are in poverty. While the poverty rate is comparatively low countywide, areas of more concentrated poverty exist in East Naples, Immokalee, and in the Southwest part of the County. Lower income communities in Collier also display higher social vulnerability scores, as defined by the Center for Disease Control’s Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). Variables such as poverty, lack of transportation access, and more crowded housing can figure into a higher SVI score, indicating that these communities may face more challenges during recovery. QCTs, distributions of household income, as well as CDC’s social vulnerability, along with geography-specific projects, are shown in the following maps.”*

[Buffalo, NY](#) also used maps highlighting the neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic (pgs. 11-12). *“Appendix A, Map 1 identifies those neighborhoods which have been the most disproportionately impacted in areas of health equity and economic fallout during the pandemic. It is not a coincidence that the most severely impacted neighborhoods are also communities of color with higher-than-average poverty rates and overlap with other maps indicating other interventions which will be funded by Buffalo’s ARP allocation to reduce poverty, gun-violence, improve public health outcomes, and help residents secure better employment opportunities.”*

[Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa](#)⁶ is located in a Qualified Census Tract in rural North Dakota where the unemployment rate is 55%. The Tribe published its plan for recovery that emphasizes priority-based budgeting built upon research and data. The plan’s goal has four major principles: 1) the Tribe be prepared and responsive to the needs of the community; 2) the emergency response systems are robust, secure, resilient, and flexible; 3) the recovery plan includes diversity in government services; 4) finally, that the plan is affordable, resource-efficient, and long-term operational costs are considered. According to the plan, “*These principles will increase our community’s resilience to many risks, including pandemics and other disasters and help individual households’ resilience to shocks such as lost income and health issues caused from COVID-19.*”

Community Engagement

Treasury encourages recipients to engage their communities as part of ensuring that funds are directed towards the communities most impacted by the pandemic. As such, Treasury requested that recipients describe their approach to engaging their communities in determining how Fiscal Recovery Funds will be invested.

Community Engagement Approaches

Recipients described multi-faceted community engagement approaches that included a combination of online surveys, focus groups, community meetings, issue-specific stakeholder meetings, and public project proposal processes. For example:

[Clark County, NV](#) described a multi-faceted community engagement strategy (pgs. 12-14). “*Clark County began a robust community engagement process to determine the use of Fiscal Recovery Funds. This included several interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, community surveys, and a grant pre-application process. The community engagement process was initiated in alignment with federal guidance... The community engagement strategy included in-person and virtual interviews and public meetings along with opportunities for community members to provide written comments. Specifically, the community engagement strategy included interviews with community leaders, four (4) community workshops, eight (8) in-person and virtual neighborhood meetings, a grant pre-application process, written public input and two (2) surveys.*”

[North Las Vegas, NV](#) described a mix of community engagement approaches, summarizing each approach and the overall issues prioritized (pgs. 16-18). “*Meaningful community input has been a cornerstone of the development of the City’s initial SLFRF recovery framework and will continue to inform and influence our decision-making throughout the life of the Fund. Central to North Las Vegas’ SLFRF investment strategy is the recognition that SLFRF funding is fueled by taxpayer dollars for taxpayer benefit. All decisions, from designing the strategic framework to allocation of funds for specific projects, are made through this lens and with our resident’s interests front and center. To ensure a diverse range of community input was received, a comprehensive outreach plan was developed by the North Las Vegas Communications department. Elements of the plan included: ARPA Community Survey..., ARPA Town Hall Events..., City Council Meetings..., Exploratory Meetings... Feedback from each of these engagement methods revealed the following community priorities for SLFRF investment, in descending order: Education, Economic Development and Job Opportunities, Housing, Public Health, Infrastructure, Social Justice and Equity.*”

6. The details in this example are based on public document released by the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. Tribal governments are not required to submit Recovery Plan Performance Reports.

[Cook County, IL](#) described engaging with a community organization to support community engagement (pg. 10). *“To build its capacity to ensure robust engagement over the course of the planning and implementation of SLFRF, Cook County will engage a local well-established organization that will help provide professionalized engagement activities, partnering with a diverse group of community based organizations and coordinated councils rooted in marginalized communities or communities that have disproportionately suffered the health and economic impacts of COVID19. Community-based organizations and coordinating councils have deep networks in the communities where they operate, and a high degree of trust among members of those communities. Therefore, these community-based organizations and coordinating councils will play a critical role in maximizing community-based engagement and increasing equitable opportunities for marginalized and under-represented communities to participate in Cook County’s planning and decision-making processes. The community engagement approach includes three tiers:*

- 1. Broad Outreach: Broad engagement and outreach across all of Cook County including engagement of Commissioner districts through townhalls in impacted communities as well as the launch of the interactive survey for community-wide input on July 4, 2021*
- 2. Impacted Communities: Hyper local engagement and outreach in the impacted communities that have been historically disinvested in and those hardest hit by COVID-19*
- 3. Place-Based Outreach: Longer term place-based engagement for the transformative initiatives being developed by the County’s Equity Fund Taskforce which is an advisory body established prior to the County’s receipt of SLFRF funds.”*

[Guilford County, NC](#) described how it is using SLFRF funds to engage a partner to lead a wide-ranging community engagement process.⁷ *“[This project will] Conduct a comprehensive public engagement process to solicit and receive resident, non-profit, for-profit, and other stakeholder feedback on the pandemic’s impact on our community and our residents and ideas for the strategic use and investment of American Rescue Plan Act’s (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Deliverables include the creation and implementation of an engagement strategy, production and distribution of marketing and outreach materials and activities, facilitation of community conversations (in-person, virtual), obtaining and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data from surveys and conversations, summarizing feedback and identifying pandemic impacts and prevalent recovery needs, a prioritization of community recovery needs, and cohesive and intentional strategy and investment recommendations. Special attention will include soliciting and receiving feedback from areas most impacted by the pandemic.”*

Community Task Forces

Recipients also described community engagement processes led by task forces made up of community stakeholders. For example:

[Boston, MA](#) described a robust community engagement strategy including an Equitable Recovery Taskforce made up of community leaders that will review public input and recommend a plan to the Mayor for a portion of SLFRF funds (pgs. 13-16). *“The feedback that is gathered from community events, survey responses, conversations, and 311 calls will be shared with Boston’s Equitable Recovery Taskforce, a group of over 30 community leaders representing organizations from sectors including, community health, education, non-profit services and private industry... The task force will use public feedback to inform recommendations for a plan that*

7. The details in this example are based on information submitted and certified to the Department of the Treasury by recipient government in the Project and Expenditure Report collected in January 2022 covering activity through December 31, 2021.

will be presented to the Mayor. The Mayor will use the Task Force’s input to put forth a comprehensive plan for the remaining funds. That plan will be followed by a comment period with further community meetings. The final plan will be updated to incorporate feedback from the community that is gathered during the comment period. The goal is to have a final plan by the end of this calendar year.”

[St. Louis, MO](#) highlighted how the Stimulus Advisory Board, made up of community members, engaged the community (pgs. 10-12). *“The SAB was composed of 25 community stakeholders who represented social service agencies, disability advocates, refugee and immigrant advocates, racial equity organizations, and partnering institutions to help guide the initial spending of SLFRF spending. The SAB led a community engagement process between May 5, 2021 and June 2, 2021 with digital questionnaire forms for a total of 2590 respondents with 2051 self-identified residents of the City of St. Louis. The SAB also held a virtual community meeting with the Mayor’s Office. The Mayor’s Office partnered with social service agencies to lead canvassing efforts to knock on doors of households who were underrepresented in the survey data.”*

Engaging Underserved Communities

Recipients also noted that their community engagement approach supported their approach to equity, ensuring they were reaching many different communities.

[City and County of Denver, CO](#) articulated a community engagement campaign called RISE Together Denver aimed at engaging historically underserved communities (pgs. 5-16). *“Deconstructing systemic racism and rebuilding equitable social and economic infrastructure means first employing a different tool: listening. For too long, communities of color were distanced from civic processes or left out of conversations altogether. When developing the recovery plan, Denver committed to keeping historically marginalized communities at the forefront. This commitment led to the sequenced approach to ARPA funding and triggered the community outreach campaign, RISE Together Denver. The campaign took a comprehensive approach to Denver’s recovery and solicited input on the \$308 million ARPA allocation as well as the \$450 million GO bond infrastructure program that will be proposed to Denver voters in fall 2021. The Department of Finance (DOF) aimed to educate residents on and engage them in the economic recovery process, with particular focus placed on reaching historically underserved communities.”*

[Portland, OR](#) discussed city-wide community engagement strategies, connected to its approach to equity (pgs. 10-11). *“The City’s COVID-19 Equity Toolkit identifies community engagements needs as part of the Results-Based Accountability approach. This approach includes identifying ways project teams can authentically engage and inform impacted communities before making programmatic design and decisions. The process also highlights the need to understand historical relationships with impacted communities and identify how to rebuild broken trust. Dating back to March of 2020, the City of Portland has intentionally engaged community organizations, leaders, and members to ensure that our investment decisions reflected community needs as defined by community, not just by policymakers. These 16 months of engagement have included both existing and new committees and focused audiences to ensure that we are leveraging expertise that’s already plugged into City processes as well as bringing new insight and perspective to our work.”*

[The Omaha Tribe of Nebraska](#)⁸ conducted a community needs assessment utilizing a PhD student from the Tribe. The survey was administered both online and in-person with community members driving to rural

8. The details in this example are based on a public document released by the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska. Tribal governments are not required to submit Recovery Plan Performance Reports.

areas within the Tribe’s homelands to better understand how COVID-19 impacted citizens - especially the elderly. The data analysis was presented to the Tribal leadership, staff, and community members. The SLFRF recommended projects and services were then scored, prioritized, and implemented to center the perspective on those Tribal members that are most vulnerable and responding to the assessment results. The Tribal leadership is committed to continuously obtaining feedback from the community as the pandemic evolves.

Evidence-based Interventions and Program Evaluation

Treasury asked recipients to identify, for certain types of projects, whether recipients were investing Fiscal Recovery Funds in evidence-based interventions or whether projects were being evaluated. The use of evidence-based interventions and evaluation are valuable tools that can help a recipient design and reach their equity goals. Treasury encouraged recipients to use relevant evidence clearinghouses, among other sources, to assess the level of evidence for their interventions and identify evidence-based models that could be applied in their jurisdiction; such evidence clearinghouses include the U.S. Department of Education’s [What Works Clearinghouse](#), the U.S. Department of Labor’s [CLEAR](#), and the [Childcare & Early Education Research Connections and the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness](#) clearinghouses from Administration for Children and Families, as well as other clearinghouses relevant to particular projects conducted by the recipient. For example, [Boston, MA](#) included a section discussing evidence-based interventions for every project in their Recovery Plan.

Some recipients also described how evidence-based interventions and program evaluation are incorporated into their program decisions. For example:

The [State of Minnesota](#) highlighted that it provides guidance and resources to agencies to support the use of evidence-based interventions (pg. 9). *“The Results Management team at Minnesota Management and Budget is a national leader in assessing the effectiveness of social programs, and is available to assist agencies in drafting or reviewing RFP language related to evidence-based interventions, evaluation, and developing plans for an evaluation to generate new evidence. Minnesota’s Results First website provides resources to guide agencies’ evidence-building and decision-making practices.”*

[Buffalo, NY](#) is creating a new project office focused on evidence-based interventions and project evaluation (pgs. 14-15). *“As part of its commitment to evaluating the use of the SLFRF funds the City has also created a new office in its Department of Administration and Finance that will take an evidence-based approach to evaluating project partners and impact of resources. To assist City staff with this effort, the MIS Department recently entered into a contract with SAS Institute to create a data analytics center. The data analytics center will help determine how effective the City’s use of ARPA funds (not just SLFRF but other funds the ARPA will make available to Buffalo) is and what outcomes can be reported.”*

[The State of Colorado](#) highlighted how evidence-based practices are currently incorporated into its budget process and will be incorporated into SLFRF investments (pgs. 22-24). *“Colorado’s Office of State Planning and Budget (OSPB) is committed to operationalizing and ensuring the State’s commitment to the use of evidence and to expanding the influence of EBP [evidence-based policy]. This includes incorporating EBP into the Governor’s FY 2021-22 budget. As the office did in FY 2020-21 at the Governor’s direction, OSPB again in FY 2021-22 evaluated each budget request it received to determine alignment with and the position on the Evidence Continuum... To build capacity within the State government, the Governor’s Office conducted training for leaders from across State agencies on how to incorporate data and evidence into agency budget processes. The Governor’s Office has also partnered with Pew and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute*

of Technology to provide training for State agency staff on using evaluations to assess program performance. The Governor's Office will continue to look for opportunities to build capacity within the executive branch to use data and evidence to improve decision-making. As part of each state agency or department's Spending Plan, Directors and their teams are required to identify the evidence level of their proposed project as well as any evaluation strategies that will be implemented to assess the program's effectiveness."

[Baltimore, MD](#), detailed the process for how it will incorporate evidence into the project selection process, including identifying academic partners (pgs. 14-15). "There are five tools we will use to reinforce evidence-based practices through ARPA SLFRF funding. First, the Recovery Office issued a request for information to identify a university partner to provide research and evidence to help design policy and program interventions that are tailored to the City of Baltimore, as well as analyses of available administrative data. We are in the process of selecting academic institution(s) who can provide this assistance as well as measurement and program evaluation support throughout the ARPA funding lifecycle. In addition to supporting the Recovery Office in vetting the evidence base for proposed projects, academic evaluators will allow better measurement of the success of programs and position the City to consider long-term funding commitments to "what works" once ARPA funding expires. Secondly, during the proposal phase, applicants must answer the following question: "Does the project remedy a direct or indirect effect of the public health emergency? Indirect effects are linked to the COVID-19 pandemic via direct effects or have multiple causes." If the effect is indirect, the applicant must provide evidence, such as peer-reviewed journals or a print article, that links the remedy to the public health emergency... While developing full-length implementation plans, including budgets, for organizations that complete applications, Application Advisors and the Recovery Office will proactively ask for the evidence base for specific programs or interventions when necessary and appropriate."

[Washington, DC](#) described how it applied its evidence-based budgeting practice to SLFRF funds and how their investment in a Launch, Evaluation, and Monitoring (LEM) hub will support evaluation (pgs. 28-29). "Each year's budget cycle begins with a review of all proposals for new or expanded programs and services, representing more than \$500M of new programming on average. Through our standardized process, agencies are required to provide the evidence base supporting their budget requests. These are then scored by The Lab in five categories aligned with federal standards: Strong, Moderate, Promising, Demonstrates a Rationale, and No Evidence. These ratings are revised through the budget process as proposals are refined, and the final ratings are presented to the mayor with each proposal. Throughout the process, The Lab identifies potential opportunities to embed rigorous evaluations in investments that are approved (for example, in education technology, 911 responses, and discounted transit) and uses the results of its evaluations to inform future budget decisions. The SLFRF funds were allocated on an expedited timeline, but still followed the basic steps of evidence-based budgeting described above... The LEM supports a team dedicated to the launch, performance management, and rigorous evaluation of select programs and services created with federal stimulus funds... The LEM will enable us to categorize SLFRF projects into three tiers based on the level of evidence generated. Tier III projects will have sufficient performance reporting already in place and will only require light monitoring. Tier II projects will receive enhanced performance management support to both comply with SLFRF Performance Management requirements and to answer descriptive questions from our learning agenda. Tier I projects will be identified for impact evaluations, meaning LEM staff will assist with the launch of the program (enrollment, selection, data collection, etc.) and will also embed an evaluation designed to meet Strong or Moderate criteria."

The [State of Connecticut](#) discussed its approach for determining opportunities for evidence building (pgs. 9-11). "The identification of projects for evidence-building and impact evaluation can be based on a combination of factors: 1) The alignment between the project and the five areas identified by Governor Lamont, to ensure that investments in evidence-building align with the priorities in the SLFRF investments as a whole; 2) The scale or

magnitude of the project, with the anticipation that projects with greater reach are a more likely focus for rigorous program evaluation, including consideration of the capability of the host agency; 3) The existing evidence base for the program, to ensure that the methods required for rigorous program evaluation are appropriate and that any evaluation can generate new knowledge and insights; 4) The potential for robust community engagement, to use those insights to inform the evidence-building strategy with both qualitative and quantitative data (‘mixed methods’), identified as a capacity gap in Connecticut’s State Data Plan.”

Performance Management

Treasury requested the recipients describe the key performance indicators, including output and outcome measures, for each project they are undertaking with Fiscal Recovery Funds. Using performance data to effectively implement and monitor projects, particularly demographic data, can support recipients in understanding their progress toward their equity goals.

Recipients specified key performance indicators for each project. For example, [Boston, MA](#), [Maricopa County, AZ](#), [Madison, WI](#), [Albuquerque, NM](#), [San Diego County, CA](#), [Leon County, FL](#), and [Santa Barbara County, CA](#) included both output and outcome measures for relevant projects. The [State of Washington](#) also included household demographic metrics to track progress toward advancing equitable outcomes.

Some recipients also described their performance management strategy, broadly. For example:

[State of Colorado](#) highlighted how projects funded with Fiscal Recovery Funds will be incorporated in its current state-wide performance management approach (pgs. 20-22). *“As part of each state agency or department’s Spending Plan, Directors and their teams are required to identify and track the performance indicators they will collect for each project, including specific output and outcome measures. Directors are encouraged to align these measures with existing Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) and Lead Measures (discussed further below). As noted above, agencies will be asked to collect both geographic and demographic information on their program activities, so that performance metrics can also be used to identify equity-impacts. Agencies are also encouraged to provide operational metrics, including throughput or process metrics, which show the volume of goods or services delivered within a period of time, and customer experience metrics. These will enable data-driven program management decisions.”*

[Seattle, WA](#) described in detail its performance management and program evaluation approach (pgs. 15, 25-28). *“Although many of the CLFR investment goals strive to achieve population-level outcomes (i.e., advancing economic mobility for all residents), the City of Seattle is committed to disaggregating the data we collect. This will help us better understand who is being served, how well, and with what results... Seattle is implementing a comprehensive and multi-tiered performance management framework to understand if and how we are making progress to advance economic mobility for residents and close race-based gaps. This framework centers continuous improvement and examines individual program-level and system-wide performance over the course of the funding cycle. This will give our program managers across the city the tools and data to recommend program improvements in real-time as well as the key information for policy and decision makers to improve policy and strategize for funding opportunities in the future. The performance management framework is data-driven and responsive to community needs and feedback. It builds accountability and oversight into our investments at all levels. Program staff will quickly know if programs are on track to meet outcomes, and if not, they can intervene and support programs and community-based organizations drive to better outcomes. Policy and decision makers can use this data to guide future investments and advocate for the continuation of evidence-based programs. The public will be able to access performance and spending data to help them better understand how the funds were expended, who benefitted, and increase city-wide accountability.”*

The [City of Baltimore, MD](#) described how performance management is integrated into its project selection and project management processes (pgs. 18-19). *“Performance measurement is a core part of the City’s funding process. Our approach to performance management is informed in part by the Results-Based Accountability™ framework. Because the Recovery Office expects to fund a large and diverse set of organizations, we will provide guidance and a set of resources to align applicants and ultimately subrecipients around a common understanding of performance management. At the proposal stage, applicants must provide at least three performance measures and describe what success looks like. At evaluation, Review Committee members will score based on whether the proposal, “Describes success and includes valid performance measures” (15 percent of the total score). At the application stage, The Recovery Office will support applicants as they identify and refine performance measures that will accurately reflect program activities and results. Finally, quarterly performance reports from subrecipients and support from our measurement and evaluation partners, described in the “Use of Evidence” section, will reinforce evidence-based, data-driven implementation.”*

Appendix 1: Examples of Equity Frameworks and Tools in submitted Recovery Plans

Harris County, TX: Equity Reflections

For each project, the following questions addressing the Equity Strategies may be adapted for use in the initial project proposal, at interim checkpoints, and in a final look-back. Team members responsible for proposing and implementing a project should reflect on the project's impact on equity via overall project results and associated community engagement.

1. How does your project leverage clear outcome measures and disaggregated data from beginning to end to identify inequity and ensure programs are prioritizing disproportionately impacted groups? Who has been disproportionately impacted?
2. How have you analyzed specific factors underlying inequities? What did the analysis reveal?
3. How does your project include voices from disproportionately impacted groups? How have community members been engaged in project development and / or evaluation?
4. How does your project minimize additional burdens and maximize benefits for disproportionately impacted groups?
5. How does your project evaluate performance through defined metrics and provide opportunities for reflection? What do the evaluation and reflection reveal and what changes may be needed?
6. How are you sharing information about the project? Is it reaching people from disproportionately impacted groups?

Harris County, TX: Equity Assessment Tool

	Does the project proposal...	Score
Leverage clear outcome measures & disaggregated data	Include a statement of inequities to be addressed: specific outcomes, disaggregated by race, gender, geography, or other relevant variables (using appropriate proxies for these if not available)?	
	Identify specific groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic?	
	Prioritize disproportionately affected groups as primary audiences?	
Analyze specific factors underlying inequity	Describe how discrimination, policy impacts, institutional barriers, or other social or environmental conditions have contributed to the identified inequities?	
	Consider if other groups, not identifiable in data, may also be affected by the identified inequities based on the factors above?	
	Articulate how the program design takes into account discrimination, policy impacts, institutional barriers, or other social and environmental conditions?	
Include voices of community representatives	Identify potential partners from community institutions, non-profits, and other organizations representing disproportionately affected groups?	
	Incorporate meaningful moments to engage with representatives or individuals from the disproportionately affected groups?	
	Incorporate input from representatives of disproportionately affected groups who have participated in project development, taking into account their lived experiences?	
Target resources and strategies to minimize burden & maximize access	Target resources and strategies to minimize burden on disproportionately impacted groups?	
	Target resources and strategies to maximize access for disproportionately impacted groups?	
Evaluate performance through defined metrics and reflection	Include a plan to measure and evaluate outcomes, specifying metrics to be tracked and how data will be disaggregated by race, gender, geography or other demographic variables?	
	Include a plan to expand access to relevant data if original data sources were insufficient?	
	Include plans to engage in Equity Reflections and adapt the project as needed based on interim results and community impact?	
Publish transparent program results	Discuss channels for disseminating reports and information?	
	Include means of reaching disproportionately impacted groups within the results dissemination plan?	
	Total Proposal Score	

Scoring:

-1 = Not done, or including adverse impacts contrary to the Equity Strategy

0 = Minimally completed

+1 = Thoroughly completed

Proposals are scored by the relevant Working Group.

Proposals with a negative score are rejected or sent back for significant redesign.

Proposals with a neutral score are further reviewed and refined by the Working Group.

Proposals with a positive score may be considered for submission to the Steering Committee.

Boulder County, CO: Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool

Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool questions include:

1. WHO PARTICIPATED IN COMPLETING THIS ANALYSIS (NAMES, DEPARTMENTS) IF YOU ARE IN AN FTS TEAM, NAME THE TEAM? PLEASE SHARE HOW THE PARTICIPANTS RACIALLY IDENTIFY.
2. WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM STATEMENT OR PROBLEM OF PRACTICE?
3. WHAT IS THE DECISION (SOLUTION) UNDER CONSIDERATION? PLEASE DESCRIBE BRIEFLY.
4. WHAT ARE THE INTENDED OUTCOMES OF YOUR PROPOSAL? HOW COULD YOU DEFINE OR ENVISION RACIALLY EQUITABLE OUTCOMES RELATED TO THIS PROPOSAL? HOW COULD THIS PROPOSAL ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY?
5. WHAT DOES THE DATA TELL YOU? DID YOU RACIALIZE DATA IN YOUR ANALYSIS? Y/N? WHY?
6. HAVE COMMUNITY VOICES BEEN HEARD? IF SO, WHO IN THE COMMUNITY WAS ENGAGED? WHAT WAS THEIR INPUT?
7. WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS DECISION?
8. WHO WILL BE BURDENED BY THIS DECISION?
9. ARE THERE STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE ANY UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DECISION?
10. WHAT IS THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN?
11. HOW WILL WE ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY, COMMUNICATE AND EVALUATE RESULTS?

Funding Goals:

1. Target historically disenfranchised communities of color.
 - Does the proposal explicitly state how it will prioritize the needs of historically disenfranchised communities of color?
 - What percentage of funding proposed will reach communities of color?
2. Respond to the needs of frontline workers and COVID-impacted people.
 - What neighborhoods & communities are poised to benefit from this proposal?
 - Is the proposal directly responsive to the needs of workers on the frontline of the pandemic?
 - Does the proposal prioritize COVID-impacted people?
3. Provide a “down payment” toward advancing racial equity.
 - Will this funding work to advance Durham’s long-term racial equity goals?

Equity Impact Assessment Tool

Equity Impact Assessment Tool



1) Proposal - What is being recommended/proposed/considered? What specific results are expected if implemented?

2) Stakeholders: Which stakeholders are currently affected (ex: departments, employee groups, neighborhoods, geographic areas etc).

3) Data: Which qualitative and quantitative data evidences historical inequities and is the rationale for this recommendation/proposal? Neighborhoods & communities that would benefit most are explicitly identified.

4) Causes: What is producing and perpetuating inequities? Are inequities expanding or narrowing? What is the root cause?

5) Positive Impact: What positive impact on equality and inclusion could result? Will this solution reduce disparities/discrimination; if so how?

6) Adverse Impact: What unintended impacts could result? Who would be affected and how? Could adverse impact be prevented or minimized?

7) Alternatives: What could be done instead? Are there any other options?

8) Metrics/Evaluation: How will impact be documented and evaluated? Metrics Clearly defined - including how they will be monitored and reported. Aligned with strategic plan.

Figure 5

Recovery Workstream Prioritization with a Racial Equity Lens	
Community Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How equitable is the initiative? Who is benefitting? Who is burdened? What neighborhoods? • What is the relative value to the community and how does it contribute? How many people are served? • Is this serving marginalized communities? Is it intersectional? Are there higher order positive impacts? • What is the magnitude of impact/change and change to the efficiency or effectiveness of service?
Opportunity Enablement / Risk Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would failure open the community up to risk for human, material, economic, or environmental losses? • Does this serve an at-risk population? What is the risk within certain neighborhoods in the City? • How reimbursable is this? Does this bring in tax revenue? • Does this initiative pave the way for others which need this to come first? • How likely is not completing the initiative to cause litigation against the organization?
Time Criticality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How susceptible is the neighborhood to pandemic impact in the short-term? • How important is it that this initiative gets done quickly? • Is there no other solution? Are other partners better at providing the solution? • Is there another external funding source to move on to? Are they eligible for another solution? • What is the current community impact, especially marginalized communities, if we do not complete?
Job Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long will the initiative take to execute? • How complex and how many unknowns does the initiative have? • How many dependencies are outside of our control? How controversial is the initiative? • How is the relationship with the partner? • How much staff time and effort will this take?

