



Michael B. Cooper  
*Parish President*

# **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021**

## State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

### 2021 Recovery Plan Performance Report

#### **Reporting Period**

March 3rd, 2021 - July 31st, 2021

August 31st, 2021

# ST. TAMMANY PARISH GOVERNMENT

## 2021 Recovery Plan Performance Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## I. Introduction and Summary

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into law. The legislation included \$350 billion in relief for state, local, and tribal governments, many of which were hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the U. S. Department of Treasury, St. Tammany Parish Government was allocated a total of \$50,583,338 in stimulus funding from ARPA. The U.S. Department of Treasury identified 4 eligible uses for state and local governments' ARPA funding:

1. To respond to the public health emergency
2. To respond to workers performing essential work during the Covid-19 public health emergency
3. For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the Covid-19 public health emergency
4. To make necessary investments in water, sewerage, and broadband infrastructure

## II. Purpose and Guidance

St. Tammany Parish President Cooper and Parish Council engaged the assistance of St. Tammany Parish Corporation, the independent economic development organization in St. Tammany Parish, to help facilitate and develop the strategic investment framework for the American Rescue Plan Act Funds. St. Tammany Parish Corporation provided support and organized community stakeholder engagement. Program policy, best practices, and authorized uses of the funds were reviewed by Parish Administration and Council to determine best use of the ARPA funds in St. Tammany Parish.

The goal is to ensure the projects are intentional, strategic, transformational, and forward-thinking. While there is significant flexibility on the funds' specific programs and

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

projects with in the identified eligible categories, priority will be given to initiatives or projects that satisfy multiple uses.

Current ARPA provisions allow local governments to develop their plans to provide the biggest impact to their individual community, but require substantial reporting to institute transparency and compliance. St. Tammany Parish staff have been identified to lead the compliance efforts, and their engagement in the working group has been valuable. Continued understanding of best practices for the use of funds, required protocols, and reporting expectations will be essential as the U.S. Department of Treasury issues new information on eligible uses and reporting requirements.

### III. Methodology

In order to understand the needs and wants from the St. Tammany Parish citizens and stakeholders, engagement sessions were held. The sessions allowed an open forum for St. Tammany Parish to discuss the necessity and urgency of initiatives requested. A better understanding of the requests will allow St. Tammany Parish Administration to align the use of ARPA funds with existing Parish priorities.

Resources compiled from national, state, regional, and local entities provided helpful guidance and resources to create beneficial dialogue with stakeholders. Discussion included completing existing projects, leveraging funds for enhanced positive impacts, and funding high-dollar, high-impact initiatives that may otherwise be challenging to fulfill.

Community engagement was conducted through an assembled working group of St. Tammany Parish Government Administration, Council, and St. Tammany Corporation team members. The working group met with stakeholder focus groups that represent the multifaceted community of St. Tammany Parish. An online survey was also distributed to gather input directly from citizens.



**Working Group** | A working group was established by Parish Administration including Parish Council members as appointed by Chairman Mike Lorino and members of the Parish government staff. The working group was comprised of the following individuals:

- Parish President
- Parish Council Chairman and 3 members of the 14-member Council
- Parish Council Staff - Council Administrator and Special Assistant to Council
- St. Tammany Parish Government CAO and CFO
- Assistant District Attorney from 22nd Judicial District Attorney's Civil Division
- St. Tammany Corporation team members

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Key staff including the CAO, CFO, Director of Grants, Assistant Director of Finance, Financial Analyst, Council Administrator, and ADA were assigned to review guidance received from the U. S. Department of Treasury. Topics discussed included opportunities for public engagement through St. Tammany Corporation, existing Parish priorities, and guiding principles of the selection and implementation of projects utilizing ARPA funding.



**Community Engagement** | Community participation comprised a significant portion of the initiative's work. Engagement and feedback were facilitated through in-person focus group sessions and an online community survey.



**Focus Group Sessions** | In-person Stakeholder Focus Groups were held at the Parish Council Chambers:

- Business Organizations
- Non-Profit and Community-Based Organizations in collaboration with the Northshore Community Foundation
- Business and Industry
- Residents and Community Members

The focus group sessions encouraged participants to consider the following questions in a facilitated discussion:

- What does success look like for these funds?
- In five years, how will/should the landscape of St. Tammany be changed or impacted by the investment of the American Rescue Plan dollars?
- What is the core function of these funds?
- How do you all see the funding priorities being organized?
- What are things that need to be considered that we have not yet considered in terms of overall resiliency and preparedness?
- Complete the thought “St. Tammany Parish’s ARPA funds will be successful if they are/do...”

Participants then participated in an exercise sharing their insights and priorities within the eligible areas of funding. 61 individuals participated in the in-person focus group sessions.

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**Online Survey** | Providing an opportunity for widespread engagement from across the Parish in a tangible, direct manner was a priority for the working group.

An eight-question online survey followed a similar structure to the focus group sessions. The platform gave respondents an opportunity to share their thoughts and perspectives on the impacts of the pandemic in the community and identify their desired priority uses of St. Tammany Parish's ARPA funds. The community survey received over 700 responses from citizens.

# USE OF FUNDS



## Uses of Funds



The U.S. Department of Treasury compliance guidelines indicate that funds are to be allocated by December 31, 2024, and spent by December 31, 2026. The timeline provides for applicable projects to be identified, implemented, completed, and begin yielding results to the community in a timely and tangible fashion.

Parish staff have completed the calculation of revenue loss for fiscal year 2020. As discussed in question 3.3 in the SLFRF FAQs, the calculation included revenue based on the 2006 Census Bureau's Government Finance and Employment Classification manual. Utilizing the formula in FAQ 3.5, the Parish included the growth adjustment of 4.1% and completed the calculation employing the GFOA's Revenue Loss Calculator. The reduction in revenue from fiscal year 2019 to 2020 was \$3,684,319. Accordingly, the Parish may opt to spend the revenue loss funds on government services to include maintenance of infrastructure or pay-go spending for building new 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.

As of the date of this report St. Tammany Parish Government and the working group are still assessing the information gathered from the community to ensure that the selected projects represent the diverse needs of St. Tammany Parish citizens. The goal is to invest the ARPA funds into sustainable and maximum-impact, high-value projects and programs of scale that build capacity and benefit the highest number of citizens in St. Tammany Parish as possible. These one-time funds will be leveraged to be transformational in the Parish and improve the lives of the Parish's families and workers.



# PROGRESS REPORT



## Progress Report



Selected projects will be budgeted by the St. Tammany Parish Council at a public meeting. The budget approval process requires a duration of 60 days to allow for public notice and opportunity for Citizens to give input on the proposed projects. The budgets for the projects will be allocated once the ordinance is adopted.

After projects are allocated funds, the descriptions and progress will be included in the required reporting for ARPA. Future reports will show the funds allocated by project along with the expected impact the project will provide to the Parish.

This report was created by St. Tammany Parish Government with information provided by St. Tammany Corporation. The report provides transparency and public accountability for the ARPA award funds. An electronic copy of this report can be found at [www.stpgov.org/ARPA](http://www.stpgov.org/ARPA)



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