

# **Washtenaw County Recovery Plan**

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds  
2021 Report



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## **Executive Summary**

In July 2021, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution committing to approve every use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars by resolution. The goal is to ensure transparency in decision-making and that every use of ARPA funds will undergo an equity analysis. This resolution limits the amount of information we are able to provide in this report. We cannot list potential uses identified by the Board of Commissioners, county staff, or community partners until approved by resolution.

To date, the Board has only approved one resolution indicating an intended use for ARPA funds. That resolution only instructs the creation of a plan to respond to existing health disparities, as well as the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, and is subject to further Board approval.

Instead, this Recovery Plan will outline the community engagement process currently being implemented. To date, approximately 1,200 Washtenaw County residents and workers have responded to a community input survey. Additionally, over 200 residents have recently attended town halls to engage with their Commissioners. Both of these efforts are to ensure resident voices and perspectives are heard before funding is allocated.

This Recovery Plan will also go into more depth about the one intended use approved at this point, as well as uses of other federal recovery funds to ensure a comprehensive response is pursued. The Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) has received over \$33 million in direct or passthrough federal funding to aid in COVID-19 response. Likewise, the Washtenaw County Health Department has received federal funds for direct COVID-19 response, such as test kits, targeted vaccine distribution, and more. These uses from both OCED and the Health Department will be detailed later in this report.

## Use of Funds

In July 2021, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a [resolution](#)<sup>1</sup> (#21-123, July 2021) committing to approve every use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars by resolution. The goal is to ensure transparency in decision-making and that every use of ARPA funds will undergo an equity analysis by our [County's Racial Equity Office](#).<sup>2</sup> Because of this, we are limited in the amount of information we are able to provide in this report. Potential uses identified through ongoing conversations between Commissioners, County Staff, and community partners can only be listed as intended uses if approved via resolution.

To this point, only one resolution has been approved by the Board of Commission. The [resolution](#)<sup>3</sup> (#21-115, July 2021) instructed the County's Administrator to work with our Health Officer to collaboratively develop a list of potential ARPA-eligible programming and services to respond to existing health disparities, as well as the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The final completed plan inclusive of programming, budget, data metrics and timelines will be brought to the Board of Commissioners for final approval.

While there have not been other specific intended uses identified by resolution, there have been several conversations at public Board of Commissioner meetings about how to use these funds. A common theme in these conversations include combatting systemic racism, addressing community trauma, and providing a holistic response to the health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19.

To ensure this holistic response to recovery efforts, the County is considering federal relief programs already being implemented.

The Commissioners recently approved a [resolution](#)<sup>4</sup> (#21-140, August 2021) ratifying the many COVID-19 federal response grants received by the OCED. These include \$9.8 million in direct federal awards, and \$23.5 million in State of Michigan Passthrough Federal Awards. These funds and programs include, but are not limited to:

- Operating an Emergency Rental Assistance program;
- Bridging the digital divide by providing devices and internet plans to 139 lower-income households to ensure students were able to take part in virtual learning;
- Implementing a water assistance program to assist 626 households with past-due water and sewer bills; and,
- Providing quarantine kits filled with necessities and personal hygiene products to 115 households.

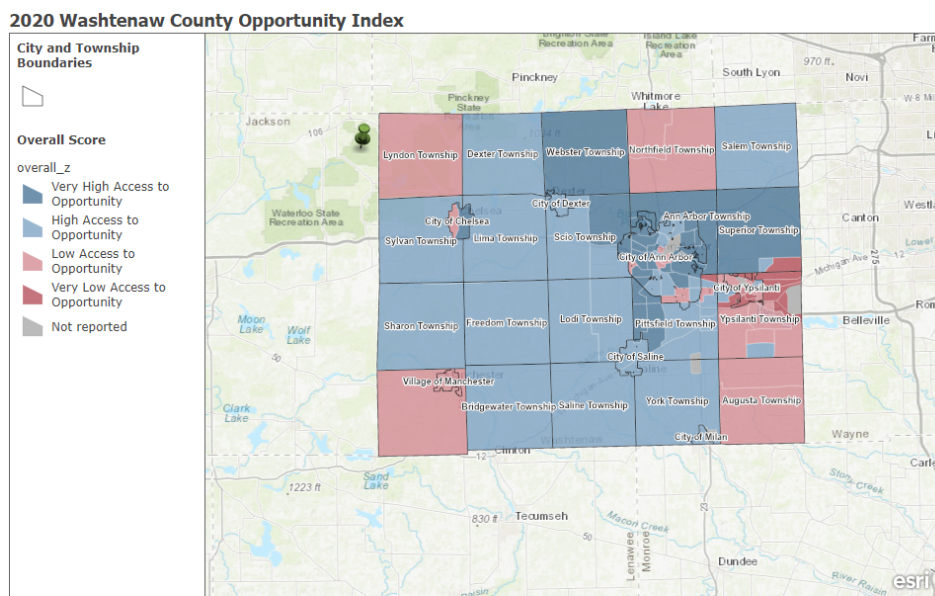
Intended uses for other funds received by OCED, including the HOME-ARP funds are still being developed and will be provided in future recovery plan reports.

## Use of Funds (Continued)

Likewise, the Washtenaw County Health Department has received approximately \$3 million of federal relief funds for pandemic response. These include funds for infection prevention, contract tracing, testing, and immunization efforts.

## Promoting equitable outcomes

Passing the resolution committing to approve every use of American Rescue Plan Act dollars by resolution ensures an equity analysis for each intended use. This equity analysis by the Racial Equity Office is mandated for all resolutions by the [County's Equity Policy](#).<sup>2</sup> The Board also passed a [resolution](#)<sup>5</sup> (#21-059 | April 2021) early in 2021 that adopted the [Washtenaw County Opportunity Index](#)<sup>6</sup> (see below) as part of the racial equity review. This will ensure a review of how funds will be used in geographic areas with existing disparities in access to opportunity. These were also areas disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic



The 2020 Washtenaw County Opportunity Index maps access to opportunity across our county, identifying disparities in access to safe and affordable housing, quality education, employment, adequate healthcare, and stable neighborhoods.

Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS

## Community Engagement

The community engagement process for the usage of American Rescue Plan and other related funds has included a [community survey](#)<sup>7</sup> and a series of community town halls hosted by each Commissioner. To date over 1,200 Washtenaw County residents have responded to the community survey with representation from every City and township in the County. They have responded to a series of potential investments with how likely they are to support each initiative and give feedback on the general categories of use. There is also a space to collect information on new ideas for use the community members might have to ensure all possible projects are considered.

## Community Engagement (Continued)

A [preliminary report](#)<sup>8</sup> was provided to the Board of Commissioners at their August 5th Working Session meeting to inform ongoing planning discussion, and a final report will be provided to the Board in September 2021. As of the end of August, every Washtenaw County Commissioner has hosted at least one in person or virtual townhall for residents of their district to ask questions, give feedback, and suggest additional potential initiatives. Some Commissioners hosted in person events, while others hosted virtual Zoom events. In total, over 200 residents have attended or watched the different town halls.

## Labor Practices

As of this first report, no resolutions have been passed by the Board of Commissioners obligating American Rescue Plan Act funds to infrastructure projects. However, the County does have strong purchasing/procurement policies and practices in place to ensure we are leveraging strong labor standards to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects while also supporting the economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for workers.

Some of the most relevant policies and practices include our [Responsible Contractor Policy](#),<sup>9</sup> [Living Wage Ordinance](#),<sup>10</sup> [Local Vender Preference Purchasing Policy](#),<sup>11</sup> and usage of prevailing wage as a best practice.

The County's Responsible Contractor Policy was recently amended to strengthen protections for whistleblowers, enhance policy enforcement and allow those who report policy violations with the county. Modeled after the Federal government's False Claims Act, this [resolution](#)<sup>12</sup> (#21-141, August 2021) specifically referenced the American Rescue Plan Act Funds as rationale to ensure that these funds are used responsibly to achieve high quality products and promote positive working conditions for people in our community.

Our Living Wage Ordinance and use of prevailing wages further ensures any firms contracted to implement ARPA-funded projects will pay their employees, many of whom would be local workers based on our LVP policy, are paid adequately for their work.

## Expenditure by Category

As of July 31, 2021 no State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds have been obligated or expended in any category. The first round of fund obligation will go in front of the Board of Commissioners in September 2021 for approval. Once approved next steps of procurement, contract issuance and payments will take place.

## **Use of Evidence**

Not applicable. Will be included in the 2022 Recovery Plan.

## **Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category**

Not applicable. Will be included in the 2022 Recovery Plan.

## **Project Inventory**

Not applicable. Will be included in the 2022 Recovery Plan.

## **Performance Report**

Not applicable. Will be included in the 2022 Recovery Plan.

## **Document Links:**

- 1 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/21780/21-123-Administrator-and-Health-Department-plan-for-programming-and-service-to-respond-to-health-disparities-and-economic-impacts-of-covid>
- 2 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/2658/Equity-in-Washtenaw>
- 3 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/21772/21-115-American-Rescue-Plan>
- 4 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/21797/21-140-Approval-of-Pandemic-Response-Funding>
- 5 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/20227/21-059-Integration-of-the-2020-Opportunity-Index>
- 6 - <https://www.opportunitywashtenaw.org>
- 7 - <http://www.washtenaw.me/rescue-plan>
- 8 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/22104/Washtenaw-Rescue-Plan-Engagement-Prelim-Results>
- 9 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/3210/Responsible-Contractor-Policy>
- 10 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/6779/Living-Wage-Poster>
- 11 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/683/Local-Vendor-Preference>
- 12 - <https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/21798/21-141-Responsible-Contractor-Policy>