Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF)

2021 Recovery Plan Performance Report

Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

2021 Recovery Plan

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners have methodically allocated millions of dollars in federal, state, and local assistance to small businesses, municipal governments, fire departments, and nonprofits within the county to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and assist those who were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 allocates a total of $105.3 million in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to Westmoreland County. In May 2021, Westmoreland County received the first half of these funds in the amount of $52.6 million with the second half anticipated to be received approximately one year after the first installment. Until the U.S. Treasury's Final Rule has been released, the Board of Commissioners are taking spending recommendations that comply with the Treasury's Interim Final Rule under consideration, but recognize that this preliminary plan will be reevaluated and redistributed once the Final Rule is issued. Therefore, the information contained in this preliminary Recovery Plan Performance Report is under consideration but does not represent a commitment.

Unaware of the impending pandemic, the current Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners commissioned two studies in February 2020: one for human services and a second for broadband services. These studies were in the field as the pandemic lockdowns began, and the reports were enlightening with respect to the needs in Westmoreland County. At this time, we have received the results of these reports, and we are preparing for some public hearings regarding the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

	April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022	April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023
	Year-1	Year-2
Study Broadband	Completed in 2020	X X X X
Study Human Services	Completed in 2020	X X X X
Present Broadband Report	X X X X	X X X X
Present Human Services Report	X X X X	X X X X
Submit grant to fund a Human Services Director	X X X X	X X X X
Public Hearings on SLFRF	X X X X	X X X X
Development of Recovery Plan	X X X X	

Through July 31, 2021, Westmoreland County has expensed and/or encumbered around $1.2 million of the SLFR funds. These uses include personal protective equipment, vaccine clinic signage, webEx licenses, cyber security software, and premium pay for primary election workers. More information on projects can be found beginning on page 11 of this report under the Project Inventory section. Larger projects and spending plans are suspended until the Treasury Final Rule is released. Therefore, key outcome goals are primitive as decisions and project development are still under consideration.

Other Recovery Funds

As previously stated, since the beginning of the pandemic, Westmoreland County has administered multiple forms of COVID-specific federal, state, and local assistance in response to the pandemic. From small business grants to emergency rent and utility relief to direct municipal allocations, Westmoreland County continues to administer myriad forms of COVID-related financial assistance that—coupled with traditional grant programs administered by Westmoreland County--forms the total context in which to view SLFRF investments.

In July 2020, Westmoreland County was awarded $31.5 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding through the County Relief Block Grant (CRBG). Of the $31.5 million, around $7 million went towards assisting non-profit organizations within the County, $6.4 million was awarded to small businesses in the County, municipalities were awarded around $1 million, and fire departments were awarded over $600,000. Additionally, $16 million went towards County response, planning and outreach.

In addition, Westmoreland County received $10.3 million in Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) ERA1 funds from the US Treasury, $12.5 million from the PA Department of Human Services, and an additional $3.2 million in ERA2 funds, also from the U.S. Treasury. This program was created to assist renters and landlords with a financial hardship due to COVID-19 to help avoid eviction. The program is being administered by The Union Mission, an emergency shelter located in Westmoreland County. To date, Westmoreland County has awarded $2.7 million and the program remains open for eligible applicants.

In March 2021, the County was awarded $3.9 million in COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP) funds assistance to Westmoreland County hospitality businesses in need. 145 businesses received funds ranging from award amounts of $10,000 up to $37,429.

The American Rescue Plan also allocated nearly $35 million to Westmoreland County's 65 municipalities and over $66 million to 17 school districts in Westmoreland County though the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund.

Westmoreland County's plan is contingent upon the Treasury Final Rule. Upon release, the Board of Commissioners will set forth a more concrete SLFRF spending plan.

Promoting equitable outcomes

Westmoreland County Commissioners recognize the unique identities, backgrounds, and cultures of the residents in the County, and there's a desire to embrace diversity and create equity. Through public engagement, efforts will be made to listen to all residents equally and equitably, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Everyone's voice will be heard with respect.

The County will explore this area once the Treasury Final Rule is released.

Uses of Funds

The following is a list of eligible uses under deliberation by the Board of Commissioners, while awaiting the Final Rule.

Uses Under Consideration (Subject to Change upon release of the Treasury Final Rule)

Revenue Replacement – EC 6

Revenue replacement, expenditure category 6, is being considered by the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners to recover lost revenues due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The calculation provided by the Treasury Interim Final Rule will be used to determine the estimated amount of reduction in revenue.
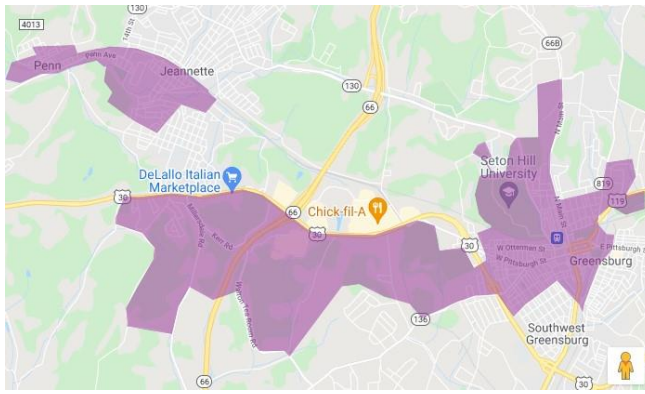
Intended Outcomes

The loss of revenue impeded the County's ability to provide all governmental services previously delivered pre-pandemic. Cost cutting measures were taken, including furloughing nearly 500 employees, many of which served in human services departments.

Recovering lost revenue will allow the County to serve the over 250,000 residents at pre-pandemic levels.

Goals

The pandemic resulted in several county residents in large need of human services programs, many of which are not fully funded through state funding. Restoring revenue reduction will ensure residents of Westmoreland County are receiving critical services to assist in recovery, particularly in the Qualified Census Tract (QCT) pictured below.

Services where there has been an increase in need include, but are not limited to, the following list:

- Area Agency on Aging
- Westmorland Manor (County-owned nursing home)
- Children's Bureau
- Community Development
- Mental Health and Developmental Services
- Human Services
- Housing Assistance

Infrastructure: Broadband – EC 5:

Westmoreland County Commissioners are considering spending a portion of the SLFRF funds towards regional broadband. A 2018 Comprehensive Plan listed broadband to be a key core objective in Westmoreland County. In this modern age, the internet is an increasingly integral part of nearly every aspect life[1], particularly with the rise in remote work, learning, and healthcare. Per the Commonwealth: "High speed internet access is essential to growing our economy, expanding educational opportunities for our children, increasing access to modern healthcare, and improving the safety of our communities. [The goal is to] close the digital divide ensuring every citizen and business has the access it needs to connect to the ever-expanding digital world in which we live and work."

Intended Outcomes

The County recognizes the importance that internet access plays in everyday life and the investment in the infrastructure needed to expand or enhance broadband connectivity in underserved areas. Aggressively expanding and enhancing the County's technology infrastructure will work to close the digital divide.[1]

In 2020, prior to the pandemic effecting Westmoreland County, a regional broadband study was conducted to determine where internet access expansion is necessary, particularly in many rural areas of the County creating a digital divide. The pandemic has made affordable, dependable internet access mission critical to daily life to allow County residents to safely attend school, work, appointments and activities, connect with friends

and family, or access information from critical resources from the safety of their own home.

Goals

The strategy to expand broadband services throughout the county, with the largest focus being in rural areas of the county, would be to partner with municipalities, school districts, and other counties to expand broadband infrastructure. As with many other disparities, the pandemic emphasized an already uneven playing field and the goal is to bring those underserved communities up to the same level as those areas with strong connectivity.

Other Expenditures Categories Being Considered

(Subject to Change upon release of the Treasury Final Rule)

The Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners will also take the following expenditure categories under consideration, subject to the release of the Treasury Final Rule:

Public Health – EC1: An undetermined portion of the SLFRF funds will be allocated towards public health and COVID-19 pandemic response, including COVID-19 testing, personal protective equipment, and other COVID-19 public health expenses. Public health outcome goals include increasing the number of vaccinated residents of Westmoreland County and mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

A human services study was conducted revealed that the County needs to design, develop, and deploy an online survey of human service providers in Westmoreland County to gauge perceptions of ecosystem strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, including a special section on the impacts of COVID-19.

Negative Economic Impacts – EC 2: Westmoreland County is home to many high-performing provider agencies working tirelessly to meet the needs of the county's most vulnerable citizens. To meet the increasing demand for human services, the County Commissioners will consider increasing provider capacity to ensure they are fully equipped to meet the evolving complex needs of a growing number of vulnerable people. Those citizens, small businesses, and non-profits of the county who have

experienced negative economic impact are in need of assistance in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of a shrinking budget is further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on service providers. An average of 87 percent of nonprofits experienced negative financial impact in contrast while 36 percent reported an increase in demand for services (The Pittsburgh Foundation; United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania). [2]

1 Westmoreland County 2018 Comprehensive Plan: Reimagining Our Westmoreland

2. 2021 Human Services Study: Improving Human Services in Westmoreland County, The Hill Group

Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities - EC 3: Another area that the Westmoreland County Commissioners will take into consideration is services to disproportionately impacted communities. Housing and shelter services for individuals who are, or are at risk of becoming, homeless seem to be acutely low, possibly with fewer emergency beds and transitional housing options than any other county of our size and scope (The Pittsburgh Foundation). Officials from United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's 2-1-1 service noted that up to two-thirds of the 1,300 calls received by staff in January 2021 were related to housing or rental assistance. This conflict in increasing demand and inadequate levels of service as indicated by a provider survey, which was conducted in 2020, presents significant issues to the County's ability in being able to meet resident needs.[2] Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) are currently being used to address this growing concern. The largest focus for consideration will be within the Qualified Census Tract (QCT) as mentioned and shown above.

Community Engagement

Pending the Treasury Final Rule, the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners will take feedback received from their constituents under consideration. Along with the survey on the County's website, which allows stakeholders to prioritize allowable expenditure categories, Commissioners will hold public hearings for additional feedback before developing a spending plan. The online SLFRF survey can be found at https://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/ARPAsurvey

Labor Practices

Workforce practices on any infrastructure (EC 5) projects being pursued will follow the prevailing Pennsylvania Wage Requirements, as determined by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Labor and Industry. At this time, the County does not have projects in this category but will determine workforce practices on infrastructure projects being pursued (EC 5) using 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.

Additional labor standards will be implemented at the discretion of the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners.

Use of Evidence

Until the Treasury Final Rule is released, evidenced-based interventions and/or if projects are being evaluated through rigorous program evaluations that are designed to build evidence are unidentified.

Pursuant to guidance in the Treasury Final Rule, Westmoreland County will utilize evidence-based interventions and program evaluations, where appropriate and required.

Performance Report

Due to the interim status of the Treasury Final Rule, Westmoreland County has not finalized SLFRF spending decisions and, therefore, does not currently have specific SLFRF projects for which to report key performance indicators.

Westmoreland County will report both key performance indicators and progress-to-date on chosen indicators on its 2022 Recovery Plan Performance Report. This will include both self-selected and mandatory performance indicators required by Treasury and specific to Expenditure Category.

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

	Category	Cumulative expenditures to date ($)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.1	COVID-19 Vaccination	$231.00	
1.2	COVID-19 Testing	$26,355.14	
1.3	COVID-19 Contact Tracing		
1.4	Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)	$341,921.44	
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment	$8,779.72	
1.6	Medical Expenses (including Alternative Care Facilities)		
1.7	Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency	$365,039.58	
1.8	Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)		
1.9	Payroll Costs for Public Health, Safety, and Other Public Sector Staff Responding to COVID-19		
1.10	Mental Health Services		
1.11	Substance Use Services		
1.12	Other Public Health Services		
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.1	Household Assistance: Food Programs		
2.2	Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid		
2.3	Household Assistance: Cash Transfers		
2.4	Household Assistance: Internet Access Programs		
2.5	Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention		

	Category	Cumulative expenditures to date ($)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
2.6	Unemployment Benefits or Cash Assistance to Unemployed Workers		
2.7	Job Training Assistance (e.g., Sectoral job-training, Subsidized Employment, Employment Supports or Incentives)		
2.8	Contributions to UI Trust Funds*		
2.9	Small Business Economic Assistance (General)		
2.10	Aid to nonprofit organizations		
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries		
2.13	Other Economic Support		
2.14	Rehiring Public Sector Staff		
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities		
3.1	Education Assistance: Early Learning		
3.2	Education Assistance: Aid to High-Poverty Districts		
3.3	Education Assistance: Academic Services		
3.4	Education Assistance: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Services		
3.5	Education Assistance: Other		
3.6	Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care		
3.7	Healthy Childhood Environments: Home Visiting		
3.8	Healthy Childhood Environments: Services to Foster Youth or Families Involved in Child Welfare System		
3.9.	Healthy Childhood Environments: Other		
3.10	Housing Support: Affordable Housing		
3.11	Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons		
3.12	Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance		
3.13	Social Determinants of Health: Other		
3.14	Social Determinants of Health: Community Health Workers or Benefits Navigators		
3.15	Social Determinants of Health: Lead Remediation		
3.16	Social Determinants of Health: Community Violence Interventions		
4	Expenditure Category: Premium Pay		
4.1	Public Sector Employees	$257,780.32	
4.2	Private Sector: Grants to other employers		
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		
5.1	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater treatment		

	Category	Cumulative expenditures to date ($)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
5.2	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater collection and conveyance		
5.3	Clean Water: Decentralized wastewater		
5.4	Clean Water: Combined sewer overflows		
5.5	Clean Water: Other sewer infrastructure		
5.6	Clean Water: Stormwater		
5.7	Clean Water: Energy conservation		
5.8	Clean Water: Water conservation		
5.9	Clean Water: Nonpoint source		
5.10	Drinking water: Treatment		
5.11	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution		
5.12	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution: lead remediation		
5.13	Drinking water: Source		
5.14	Drinking water: Storage		
5.15	Drinking water: Other water infrastructure		
5.16	Broadband: "Last Mile" projects		
5.17	Broadband: Other projects	$277,647.93	
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement		
6.1	Provision of Government Services		
7	Administrative and Other		
7.1	Administrative Expenses	$4,022.18	
7.2	Evaluation and data analysis		
7.3	Transfers to Other Units of Government		
7.4	Transfers to Nonentitlement Units (States and Territories only)		

Required Performance Indicators and Programmatic Data

At this time, Westmoreland County does not have any expenditures in categories that require this data, therefore, no data is required to be submitted.

Project Inventory

Project 1: Cisco Cyber Security Infrastructure
Funding Amount: $ 277,647.93
Project Expenditure Category: EC5.17 – Broadband: Other projects
Project Overview: Replace various Cisco Infrastructure throughout the county to modernize cybersecurity and protect critical infrastructure.   We have some equipment that has either gone "end-of-support" or will be in the near future, as outlined below.

Once this happens, the vendor (Cisco) no longer provides security updates for the hardware, putting us at a cyber-security risk in continuing to use it.

1. Blades (M5) – These are virtualizable server blades that are used to run any server needed for county operations. i.e. file servers, Exchange (email) servers, applications servers such as New World, Tyler Tech, etc. The models being replaced are B200 M3's.
2. Access Points – Wireless access points used throughout our various buildings for network connectivity. The laptops used from Cares purchases use this infrastructure to connect to our network. Current models being replaced are Cisco Access points, 3600 series.
3. Firewalls – Replacing the Detectives internal firewall. Keeps Detectives data securely separated from the remainder of the county network. Current model firewall in use is Cisco ASA5505.
4. 24 & 48 Port Switching (9300) – Edge switches used to connect remote offices to our network. Current model is Cisco 3750X.
5. Routers – Voice Router will replace the current one at the Juvenile Facility. This allows that location to use our internal phone system. Data Router handles our internet connection from the Westmoreland Intermediate Unit. Both are currently using a Cisco 2951 router.
6. WebEx Desk – replacing the former EX60 and EX90 video units used extensively by the courts system.
7. Room Kit Mini – Replace former MX200 video unit used by the PFA office.
8. 48 Port Switching (9200) – Edge switches used within the primary Courthouse location (CH, Annex, Extension) to connect user endpoints (phones, pc's, printers, etc.). Current models are Cisco 3750X's.
9. Misc Switching – Meraki Switch used at the AP Monessen location to connect phones, pc's, etc. to county network. Cisco 8-port Compact Switch used to connect additional IT equipment to our network (printers, laptop, video unit, evidence presenter).

Project 2: Purchase of Flex Calling AE with AU Meetings
Funding Amount: $ 344,880
Project Expenditure Category: EC1.7 Public Health: Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency
Project Overview: This purchase is for a 5-year licensing agreement that takes our traditional Cisco Unified Connections and bundles everything into a single licensing tier, and increases the collaborative functionality by growing the number of users who have access to these types of tools. includes enhanced collaboration capabilities for all county employees with a computer account, such as voicemail, instant messaging, and WebEx teams (collaborative tool that combines IM and creatable workspaces to better track projects, team efficiencies, etc.). This licensing also includes an Emergency Response feature which ties to 911 and allows a CAD @ 911 to see the exact location of a 911 call coming from any county building using our phone system. Right now, they just see the call coming from 830-3000, our main switchboard line.

Project 3: Motorola Portable Radio System
Funding Amount: $341,921.44
Project Expenditure Category: EC1.4 Public Health: Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)
Project Overview: A Motorola portable radio system, including 110 APX6000 portables, was purchased for the Westmoreland County Prison to allow corrections officers to communicate while socially distancing and/or being located in the isolation unit of the prison where the 24 negative pressure cells are located. These cells limit airflow around infected inmates to just the areas they are housed, but precautions must be taken to support the prevention and mitigation of the spread of COVID-19 in the Prison.

Project 4: Election Workers
Funding Amount: $257,780.32
Project Expenditure Category: EC4.1 Premium Pay: Public Sector Employees
Project Overview: In May 2021, judge of elections and poll workers were required to attend training for the primary election as well as be located at their designated precinct. The SLFRF define essential work as *those in critical infrastructure sectors who regularly perform in-person work, interact with others at work, or physically handle items handled by others.* Since election workers were required to handle ballots handled by others as well as perform in-person work and interact with others, the pay they received is considered to be essential and therefore eligible under the SLFRF Interim Final Rule.

Project 5: Public Health
Funding Amount: $35,365.86
Project Expenditure Category: EC1: Public Health
Project Overview: In the public health expenditure category, the county has purchased PPE, including gloves and masks, has administered COVID-19 testing, and purchased signage for the COVID-19 vaccination clinic held at the county courthouse.