

County of Allegheny, PA



State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds – Recovery Plan Performance Report

November 23, 2021

County of Allegheny, PA
2021 Recovery Plan

Table of Contents

General Overview	3
Executive Summary	3
Uses of Funds.....	3
Promoting Equitable Outcomes.....	4
Community Engagement.....	5
Labor Practices	5
Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category	6
 Project Inventory, Performance Report and Use of Evidence.....	 6
1. Human Services Safety Improvements to Congregate Settings	6
2. Human Services Crisis Prevention	7
3. Social Distancing Modifications to County Facilities	8
4. Public Safety Radio Upgrades	9
5. County-wide Radio Replacements	9
6. Children’s Fund	9
7. Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Services Aid	10
8. Grants for Industrial Site Development	10
9. Operating Deficit	11
 Required Performance Indicators and Programmatic Data	 11

Executive Summary

Allegheny County Council approved projects totaling \$99,750,000 of the awarded \$380,998,452 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as of September 28, 2021. The Recovery Plan Performance Report that follows provides information on these specific approved projects. These projects, however, are part of Allegheny County's three-pronged approach as it relates to the overall American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding.

Stabilize: The pandemic has caused large operating deficits in 2020 and 2021. The ARP funding will allow the county to stabilize the operating budget and provide services that otherwise would have been cut due to large budget deficits.

Strategize: ARP funding allows for great flexibility in spending which gives the county the ability to invest in infrastructure and launch programs that otherwise would have been hindered or cut entirely. We plan to make investments that will immediately touch the community while ensuring we take an inclusive approach. This will ensure that communities with economic disparity are not left behind. Also, we plan to use the funds to provide future prosperity to the region while expanding on current and future project goals.

Organize: The county has many departments that provide various services to the community. We have a comprehensive budget process that allows us to engage the County Executive, County Manager, County Council and Department Directors. By including all levels of management in the discussions, we are ensuring that we develop a proposal that addresses the needs of our county.

Uses of Funds

Public Health:

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated behavioral health needs and elevated the importance of crisis response services. Here in Allegheny County, the Western Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation Center reports that after a steep decline in unique consumers in April 2020, there was a steep incline from May to July that has stayed high. Prior to April 2020, unique consumers hovered around an average of 200 a month. Since July 2020, it increased by 50% to 300 a month in July 2020 and then again in April 2021. There is little doubt that more people need support to cope with their isolation, fear of illness, loss of employment and loved ones, and significant disruption to their daily routines. For people with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, the effects of COVID-19 are likely magnified and the increase in crisis services utilization likely reflects only a portion of the need. While some people are recovering their mental health as routines resume, experts suggest that many others will face new or worsening mental health issues that persist or appear down the road. Our Department of Human Services (DHS) provides behavioral health crisis response through a multitude of services and is investing in both new services and significant capacity expansion to address the growing needs resulting from the pandemic. Funding of \$9 million is allocated to mental health services through crisis prevention and response including expansion of mobile teams, peer respite and diversion care.

DHS will also oversee the use of \$5.5 million for improvements in congregate settings to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other health conditions. Sites include homeless shelters, senior centers, domiciliary care sites, inpatient treatment facilities, and recovery houses and DHS plans to target these investments to sites located in and/or serving disproportionately impacted communities.

\$18.25 million of Recovery funds are being invested in emergency communications systems and equipment that serves all county residents. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that all entities need to be better prepared for future pandemics and emergencies. Responders have had to adapt to new protocols implemented to better protect first responders and the public against COVID-19 and future contagious disease. Additionally, reliable communications are needed to directly respond to those with health complications from COVID-19 as well as other potential disasters that impact health such as fire, chemical spills, gas leaks, civil unrest, etc.

\$10 million of Recovery funds are being invested in capacity building support to high-quality childcare centers and out of school time opportunities, including during the non-traditional hours of evenings and weekends.

Negative Economic Impacts:

Allegheny County has already begun distributing up to \$25,000 per entity to support the daily operations of volunteer fire and emergency medical services that were financially impacted by the pandemic due to their inability to fundraise during and after the pandemic while also incurring increased costs due to expanded protocols brought on by the pandemic. Current approved funding for this project is \$5 million.

Although our current Recovery Plan does not include funding for rental assistance, Allegheny County implemented a robust rental and utility assistance program with funding from both the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERA 1). The county provided \$14.7 million to approximately 3,600 households in CARES funds in 2020 and an additional \$44.6 million to approximately 7,400 households in ERA 1 funds in 2021 to eligible applicants. The county has also received over \$44 million in ERA 2 funds under the American Rescue Plan and will continue to spend down funds until they are exhausted.

DHS – statistics related to our Emergency Rental Assistance program can be found at:

[Allegheny County COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program: Dashboard – Allegheny County Analytics: Reports, Visualizations and Datasets](#)

The pandemic also had significant economic impact on the hospitality industry. Through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Allegheny County received and distributed over \$13.7 million for the COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP) which provided funding to eligible hospitality industry businesses impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Eligible businesses were those with a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) designation within Accommodation subsector or Food Services and Drinking Places subsector, had fewer than 300 full-time equivalent employees, and a maximum tangible net worth of not more than \$15,000,000. Funding was used to alleviate revenue losses and pay eligible operating expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The minimum grant for an eligible business was \$5,000 and did not exceed \$50,000.

Revenue Replacement:

Funding will be used to replace lost public sector revenue to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic. Our county's revenue losses included:

- Various taxes: alcoholic beverage tax, hotel occupancy tax, car rental tax, sales and use tax, gaming tax.
- Charges for Services: fines and fees related to county operations such as real estate transfer fees, court filing fees, permit fees, etc.

Funds are being used to provide government services that otherwise would have been cut in the annual budget process. Our funds would be used to maintain pre-pandemic service levels and serve the community without interruption. The approved budget for revenue loss is \$37 million.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Allegheny County has a strong commitment to promoting equity within its organization and the entire county. This funding provides the county with the opportunity to effectively respond to issues highlighted during the pandemic. The county has aligned resources with the needs of a variety of groups to promote a strong and equitable recovery plan.

The county's goal is to allocate funding to projects which promote an equitable recovery to residents and businesses that have been impacted disproportionately by the pandemic. One of the projects where equity is a

focus is our Children's Fund. The mission of the Allegheny County Department of Children Initiatives is to promote equitable access to high-quality early care and education and Out of School Time (OST) services for all children and youth in the county.

Additionally, our Department of Human Services is providing equitable outcomes through the Human Services Safety Improvements to Congregate Settings project. DHS plans to target these investments to congregate and group care settings located in and/or serving disproportionately impacted communities. Sites include homeless shelters, senior centers, domiciliary care sites, inpatient treatment facilities, recovery houses, and more.

Services to disproportionately impacted communities are being addressed through the HOME Investment Partnerships Program. Allegheny County was awarded \$10.8 million in ARP funds through the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME-IP) Program. HOME-IP funding gives jurisdictions significant new resources to address their homeless assistance needs by creating affordable housing or non-congregate shelter units and providing tenant-based rental assistance or supportive services. Our Department of Economic Development intends to invest these funds for deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed at existing facilities. These are buildings with hundreds of dorm-style single-room occupancy units that house very low-income people who are highly vulnerable to homelessness.

By working through the Department of Equity and Inclusion, the county reviews all contracts to ensure compliance with Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (MWDBE) standards. Promoting equity has and will continue to be a top priority for the county. The department's goals include, but are not limited to, business development of MWDBE firms, providing equal and fair access to business opportunities, providing exceptional MWDBE certification processing and to quantifying the MWDBE participation in procurement opportunities.

Community Engagement

The county is governed by the Home Rule Charter which mandates we maintain 13 districts and 2 at-large council members. These council members represent the citizens of Allegheny County. In order to accept and expend a grant, we must obtain council approval and executive approval before funding is spent. Through this process, we engage and consult with council members to ensure their districts and constituents are being heard and addressed.

The Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Department of Economic Development regularly engage the community and evaluate where the greatest needs are throughout the county.

Labor Practices

The county adheres to the Administrative Code when it comes to contracts, purchasing, labor agreements, and prevailing wage requirements.

[Allegheny County, PA Competitive Procurement and Contracting \(ecode360.com\)](https://www.ecode360.com/allegheny-county-pa-competitive-procurement-and-contracting)

In addition to those policies and procedures outlined in the Administrative Code, the county requires successful bidders for all projects to comply with additional specifications that further ensure fair and equitable labor practices.

These specifications include:

M/W/DBE Participation Requirements – These requirements help ensure that all contractors are working towards the county's goal of 13% MBE and 2% WBE participation on all projects.

Project Stabilization Requirements – These requirements promote efficiency and safety of construction, maintenance, and repair projects by ensuring members performing the work are qualified, skilled, and

competent. This is accomplished by ensuring both the contractors and the unions mutually desire to establish wages, hours, and working conditions through compliance with the Project Stabilization Agreement.

Act 127 Employment Verification – These requirements ensure that all contractors and subcontractors utilize the Federal Government's E-Verify system to ensure that all employees performing work are authorized to work in the United States.

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

CATEGORY		BUDGET	CUMULATIVE EXPENSES TO DATE	AMOUNT SPENT SINCE LAST RECOVERY PLAN
1	Public Health			
1.4	Prevention in Congregate Settings	\$5,500,000		
1.10	Mental Health Services	\$9,000,000		
1.12	Other Public Health Services	\$23,250,000		
2	Negative Economic Impacts			
2.10	Aid to Nonprofit Organizations	\$10,000,000		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries	\$5,000,000	\$4,954,805	
6	Revenue Replacement			
6.1	Provision of Government Services	\$47,000,000		
	TOTAL	\$99,750,000	\$4,954,805	

Although we are reporting no expenses this reporting period, our departments have been actively working on facilitating the approved projects. As needed, we have implemented procedural workflows, obtained equipment quotes, placed orders, drafted and/or executed contracts, and drafted and/or issued RFPs. Equipment delivery is expected to be delayed due to continuing supply chain disruptions and worker shortages throughout the country.

Project Inventory, Performance Report and Use of Evidence

1. Project Name: Human Services Safety Improvements to Congregate Settings

Funding Amount: \$5.5 Million

Project ID: 2501

Expenditure Category: 1.4 Prevention in Congregate Settings

Description: Department of Human Services (DHS) will make investments in human services providers' physical plants to mitigate COVID-19 transmission, improve safety and service quality, and address disparities in public health outcomes. DHS plans to target these investments to congregate and group care settings located in and/or serving disproportionately impacted communities. Sites include homeless shelters, senior centers, domiciliary care sites, inpatient treatment facilities, recovery houses, and more. DHS will distribute dollars through contract allocations to selected providers to make the improvements directly, with DHS' oversight. Potential number of impacted facilities is 82 and the timeframe is one to two years.

Key performance indicators:

- Number of sites completing improvements
- Number of individuals served by sites where improvements are completed
- Number of sites in disadvantaged communities or serving those in disadvantaged communities

Use of Evidence: The CDC recommends a layered approach to reduce exposures to the virus that causes COVID-19. This approach includes using multiple mitigation strategies, including improvements to building ventilation, to reduce the spread of disease and lower the risk of exposure. When indoors, ventilation mitigation strategies can help reduce viral particle concentration. Ventilation system upgrades or improvements can increase the delivery of clean air and dilute potential contaminants.¹

Amount of funds allocated to evidence-based interventions: To be determined

Outcomes: Improved congregate spaces

2. Project Name: Human Services Crisis Prevention

Funding Amount: \$9.0 Million

Project ID: 2502

Expenditure Category: 1.10 Mental Health Services

Description: The pandemic has exacerbated behavioral health needs and elevated the importance of crisis response services. DHS provides behavioral health crisis response through a multitude of services using evidence-based interventions where appropriate. With the support of this funding, DHS will invest in significant capacity expansion and new services including regional call centers, mobile crisis teams, and receiving and stabilization facilities. The timeframe is one to three years. More specifically, this project includes:

- UPMC resolve crisis services – including a 24-hour hotline, walk-in center, short term residential program, and mobile crisis team. These services are aimed at quickly connecting people in the midst of mental health crises with the care they need in order to avoid outcomes such as incarceration and involuntary inpatient hospitalization, which can be traumatic and ineffective.
 - Use of Evidence: There is promising research evidence that mobile crisis services reduce emergency department utilization among some populations experiencing behavioral health crises.² Further, resolve often connects individuals in their care with evidence-based services, including Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)³ for substance use disorder and Cognitive Therapy (CT)⁴ for anxiety, depression, and other emotional problems.
- Pittsburgh Mercy Central Recovery Center – a 12-person program designed as an alternative to jail for people who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Referrals to the program can be made by trained Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) municipal police officers, Allegheny County Justice Related Services, and the Allegheny County Jail. The length of stay is short term – up to five days – during which individuals receive a behavioral health evaluation, a psychiatric assessment, and care management services, which will assess for the need and appropriateness of delivering an evidence-based service.
 - Use of Evidence: In its provision of care management services, Mercy often connects individuals to evidence-based mental health and substance abuse services, including MAT, CT, and counseling that employs motivational interviewing (evidence-based approach to counseling that helps patients follow treatment recommendations).⁵

¹ [Ventilation in Buildings | CDC](#)

² Fendrich, M., Kurz, B., Ives, M., & Becker, J. (2018). *Evaluation of Connecticut's Mobile Crisis Intervention Services: Impact on Behavioral Health Emergency Department Use and Provider Perspectives on Strengths and Challenges*. Farmington, CT: Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, Inc. <https://www.chdi.org/publications/reports/other/evaluation-connecticuts-mobile-crisis-intervention-services/>

³ Medication Assisted Treatment modalities – including Buprenorphine Maintenance Treatment and Methadone Maintenance Therapy – can be found in several clearinghouses for evidence-based services, including CrimeSolutions.gov (<https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/ratedpractices/94>).

⁴ Cognitive Therapy and its related practice, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, can be found in several clearinghouses for evidence-based programs, including the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (<https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/cognitive-therapy/detailed>).

⁵ Levensky ER, Forcehimes A, O'Donohue WT, Beitz K. [Motivational interviewing: an evidence-based approach to counseling helps patients follow treatment recommendations - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#).

- Community Treatment Teams - DHS contracts with Merakey, UPMC, and Mercy to deliver Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), a model of comprehensive community-based psychiatric care for people with severe mental illness. ACT uses a multi-disciplinary team approach to deliver treatment, support, and rehabilitation services.
 - Use of Evidence: ACT is an evidence-based intervention with more than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study with positive findings on more than one intended outcomes; the research demonstrates the model is effective in reducing hospitalizations.⁶ As explained by SAMHSA, “ACT is considered to be one of the most effective evidence-based programs designed to support community living for individuals with the most severe functional impairments associated with [serious mental illness].”⁷

Amount of funds allocated to evidence-based interventions: \$3.9 million

Remaining project funds will be used for new and expanded services to respond to growing need and system gaps that will include:

- Expanding resolve’s mobile crisis team capacity
- Creating new, community response teams that can be dispatched from 911 and/or 988
- Establishing peer respite models (short term, non-clinical, peer-operated, overnight)
- Supporting community-based crisis prevention models and other informal mental health supports
- Adding more crisis walk-in/stabilization beds
- More proactive outreach and diversion support county-wide

Key performance indicators:

- Increased number of mobile crisis teams
- Increased calls to resolve
- Increased number of crisis stabilization beds
- Increase to services throughout the county

Outcomes: Expansion of mental health services to address the growing need throughout the population

3. Project Name: Social Distancing Modifications to County Facilities

Funding Amount: \$5.0 Million

Project ID: 2701

Expenditure Category: 1.12 Other Public Health Services

Description: In order to create a COVID-19 workplace that is safe to the public and internal staff, the county plans to undertake a few projects that will improve health and safety. One project will address office renovations where social distancing was difficult. By conducting a thorough evaluation, the county will be able to identify work and common areas that need to be improved and adjust accordingly.

Key performance indicators:

- Assessment of workplace areas pre and post project

Outcomes: Mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 and other airborne diseases.

⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Assertive Community Treatment: The Evidence*. DHHS Pub. No. SMA-08-4344, Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008. https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/theevidence_1.pdf

⁷ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Assertive Community Treatment Grants*. March 2018. Available: <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-18-013>.

4. Project Name: Public Radio System Upgrades

Funding Amount: \$8.25 Million

Project ID: 3301

Expenditure Category: 1.12 Other Public Health Services

Description: Reliable emergency communications impacts all county residents, and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that all entities need to be better prepared for future pandemics and emergencies. The focus of this project is equipment upgrades and replacements to countywide radio trunk systems. This includes replacing the radio transmitters (repeaters), receivers, voter comparators (compares and selects best signal between receivers), antenna systems, and battery plants. This will have a direct impact on over 100 municipal police, fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) agencies as well as County Police, Sheriff, Emergency Services and Fire Marshall. The time frame is four to six months from delivery of equipment. These upgrades to the backbone of the communications system complements the next project to replace radios across agencies.

Key performance indicators:

- Number of communities served

Outcomes: Providing reliable radio communications to facilitate response to public emergencies.

5. Project Name: County-wide Radio Replacements

Funding Amount: \$10.0 Million

Project ID: 3302

Expenditure Category: 1.12 Other Public Health Services

Description: As an extension of project 3301, this project will provide radio equipment directly to over 300 fire, EMS and police departments throughout Allegheny County. These responders have had to adapt to new protocols implemented to better protect first responders and the public against COVID-19 and future contagious disease. Additionally, reliable communications are needed to directly respond to those with health complications from COVID-19 as well as other potential disasters that impact health – fire, chemical spills, gas leaks, civil unrest, etc. This project also complements project 4601 (see below) to the extent that the pandemic has had direct economic impact on EMS and Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD) that heavily rely on donations. Lost funding impacts their ability to obtain updated equipment and the county can lessen the burden by providing radio equipment. The time frame is two to three months from delivery of equipment.

Key performance indicators:

- Number of agencies receiving radios
- Number of radios distributed
- Positive financial impact to agencies

Outcomes: Providing reliable radio communications to facilitate response to public emergencies.

6. Project Name: Children's Fund

Funding Amount: \$10.0 Million

Project ID: 2401

Expenditure Category: 2.10 Aid to Nonprofit Organizations

Description: The mission of the Allegheny County Department of Children Initiatives is to promote equitable access to high-quality early care and education and out of school time (OST) services for all children and youth in the county. To meet this mission, the county will focus SLFRF funds on capacity building support to high-quality childcare centers and OST opportunities, including during the non-traditional hours of evenings and weekends. Funding will be distributed across Allegheny County with a focus on building capacity in demonstrated childcare deserts and equitable distribution. The project timeframe is two years.

Key performance indicators:

- Number of high-quality childcare spaces added throughout county
- Number of new high-quality childcare facilities added throughout county
- Number of OST spaces added throughout county
- Number of OST non-traditional hours spaces added throughout county

Use of Evidence:

Expanding access to afterschool programs has a host of evidence-based outcomes as outlined in the study below:

http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/What_Does_the_Research_Say_About_Afterschool.pdf

Expanding and improving high-quality Early Learning centers and childcare facilities impact study:

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-Future-of-Working-Families-How-We-Care-for-Our-Children.pdf>

7. Project Name: Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Services Aid

Funding Amount: \$5.0 Million

Project ID: 4601

Expenditure Category: 2.12 Aid to Other Impacted Industries

Description: Grant support to over 200 Volunteer Fire Departments and Emergency Medical Services providers throughout Allegheny County. These organizations continue to feel the financial effect of lost hall rental fees and reduced fundraising due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts over the last two years. Each organization will receive up to \$25,000. This project has already started and anticipated to be completed by 12/31/2021.

Key performance indicators:

- Number of agencies receiving funding

Outcomes: Counteracting the negative economic impact to these agencies

8. Project Name: Grants for Industrial Site Development

Funding Amount: \$10.0 Million

Project ID: 4001

Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Description: The project will support infrastructure and site preparation that would open new industrial sites or reuse of former industrial sites that will ensure the economic resiliency of this region. Demand remains high for industrial development and there is currently not enough industrial real estate product to satisfy demand in Allegheny County. One major impediment is the upfront costs associated with grading and extending utilities and roadways to sites. This project will allow for site developers to apply for grant funds of up to \$1 million to advance industrial sites to shovel ready. Examples of such development include interior roadway networks and trail development; grading and access roadways; and other private; non-profit and publicly owned industrial sites in Allegheny County. Applicants may include projects that promote local economic activity and create and/or retain jobs; improve or create infrastructure; improve or create civic, cultural, or recreational activities or facilities; and/or improve the quality of life in the affected communities. Priority will be given to those applications showing a significant public benefit. The timeframe for this project is one to three years.

Key performance indicators:

- Number of sites completing improvements
- Acres and square footage prepared or rehabbed
- Funds distributed to projects in disadvantaged communities

Outcomes: Job creating business development and community improvement

9. Project Name: Operating Deficit

Funding Amount: \$37.0 Million

Project ID: 4602

Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Description: The pandemic has caused large operating deficits in 2020 and 2021. The ARP funding will allow the county to stabilize the operating budget and provide services that otherwise would have been cut due to lack of funding. Funds will be used to maintain pre-pandemic service levels and serve the community without interruption.

Key performance indicators:

- Revenue comparison by object

Outcomes: Stabilize the budget

Required Performance Indicators and Programmatic Data

We have no approved projects to date under an Expenditure Category with required data. This section is not applicable.