

City of Bridgeport, CT

ARPA Goals and Performance Report For use of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Recipient reporting Period Ending:
December 31, 2021

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

I. Program Summary

The City of Bridgeport (the “City”) fully recognizes the significant adverse impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had within our City and community and the nation over the past two years. The City is truly thankful for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) provided, as approved by the President and U.S. Congress in spring 2021, to address this historic and unique challenge.

After the U.S. Treasury released its Interim Final Rule in May 2021, the City began to participate in a variety of webinars hosted by the U.S. Treasury, the State of CT, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the Government Finance Officers Association. City officials have developed a thorough and deep knowledge of the eligible uses for these ARPA SLFRF funds as well as all the federal and state compliance and reporting requirements. The City has been awarded approximately \$110,000,000 under the ARPA SLFRF program, of which \$41.3 million was directly awarded to the City from the US Treasury and \$14 million was awarded as County pass through funds from the State of Connecticut. The City received these first tranches totaling \$54,563,155 in June 2021.

Efforts to obtain wide community input and meetings to determine City priorities were held and made from June 2021 through November 2021. Discussions and workshops were held with the community as well as community leaders. The City Council held many public meetings to determine and authorize uses for SLFRF funds to respond to the COVID 19 pandemic and the negative economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This process was pivotal to the process of allocating funds. The City’s top priorities include: supporting public health, broadband infrastructure, sewer and water pollution control, education assistance, public safety needs, business assistance, and use of revenue losses for the time allowed to date through December 2021. The City Administration created a process and set up a thorough review and accounting and purchasing system to implement ARPA for the City, and reporting and compliance requirements as well for all the applicants who wish to seek funding awards through programmatic requests for proposals. We plan to execute strategies to maximize community and programmatic impact that ensures effective, efficient and equitable outcomes over the next three years. The city is committed to an open and transparent process with the community to address the negative impacts of COVID-19 in all sectors of the community and our residents and businesses.

II. Uses of Funds

The City has determined and allocated approximately forty percent (30%) of the \$110 million for the first forward fiscal year, FY2022, for which we have already received the first 50% of ARPA SLFRF awarded recipient funds to meet the needs of the community. The City is using legal and financial advisors and staff to ensure the City is in full compliance with all the requirements promulgated by the U.S Treasury and the State of Connecticut. To date, the City is funding allocations in the following categories: Public Health; Negative Economic Impacts from the pandemic; Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities, Public Infrastructure, and Revenue replacement. Specifically, some of our program categories include: Small Business Assistance, Emotional and Mental Health programs, Affordable Housing and Homeless and Housing relocation programs, Public Safety needs to respond to and reduce crime; Revenue loss uses; Investments in Water pollution control and Sewer and Broadband Infrastructure; as well as direct public health programs to continue to deal with the pandemic.

III. Community Engagement

The City has held open public forums and seminars to both explain the ARPA program funding uses and to solicit community feedback through both public comment and an online survey available to all citizens. The response was very strong and positive and helped City leaders to determine priorities for the community. Further, the Council Budget & Appropriations Committee and the City Council held a series of meetings during the summer of 2021 before adopting the first round of funding allocations. Additional community feedback sessions are planned over the next year and reports are being furnished both on the City website as well as to elected officials and the community. The City understands that it is vital that community feedback remain a central part of this process.

Community Input Objective

The objective of the community input period was to gather critical data from residents, businesses, and organizations serving Bridgeport on their priorities for spending the \$110M allocated to the City of Bridgeport from the American Rescue Plan Act. Community input was collected through the online survey as well as a public hearing on June 15th.

Methodology

The survey was designed to be an easy response format that could be completed in less than ten minutes. Participants were asked for their name, email, organization- if applicable, identify from the ten funding areas which are priorities, and finally a free response section.

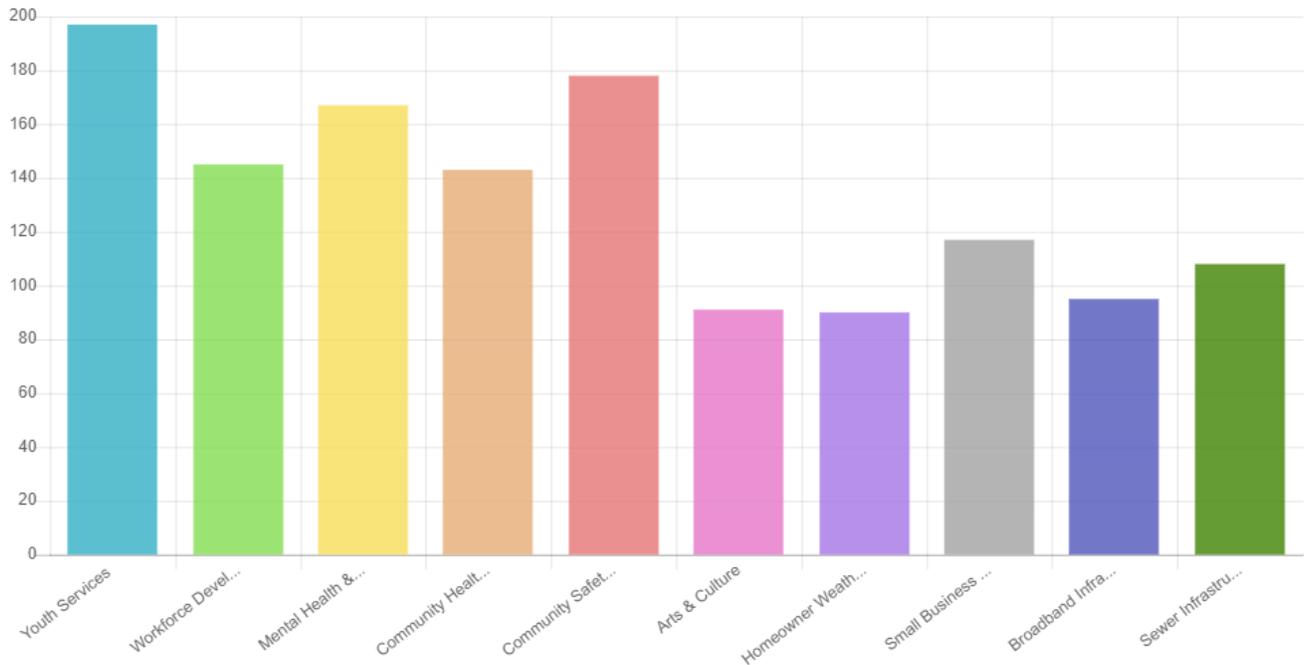
Intended audience: Bridgeport residents, businesses, community organizations, nonprofits, etc. Over 300 groups and community members fully responded and completed surveys.

Public Hearing Summary:

A public hearing was held by the City Council on Tuesday June 15th at 6pm via Zoom. During the public hearing, many community citizens, individuals, business owners, potential subrecipient non-profit applicants, and stakeholders participated. The themes from the public hearing included:

- Youth services: mentoring, summer/afterschool programs, college tours, activities to keep the youth and young adults busy and engaged.
- Homelessness outreach & wrap around services
- Access to affordable housing, dealing with the pending eviction crisis.
- Mental health and wellness programs throughout the city for all ages.
- Community safety: some wanted more cameras, security, and policing while others argued for less policing or new ways for civilian response teams.
- Infrastructure investments for broadband and WPCA.
- Premium pay for essential workers.
- Address long-term inequities with sustainable solutions.

Survey Results



The common themes from the free response section include, but are not limited to:

- Funding for programs that serve the most vulnerable- housing, food security, mental health, etc.
- Addressing the increase in mental health, addiction and domestic violence needs exacerbated by the pandemic.

- More access to affordable housing.
- Expanded social services.
- Community Safety: addressing gun violence, gang violence, rise in crime, etc.
- Community Safety: more security cameras throughout the city for safety and to prevent illegal dumping.
- Addressing the needs of the elderly and disabled.
- Anti-blight programming, city clean ups, and general beautification of Bridgeport.
- Sewer infrastructure and the WPCA plant upgrades.
- Youth Services: safe activities to keep the youth busy and active through sports & recreational activities, anti-violence programming, educational programming, mentoring.
- Youth Services: employment for teens and young adults, college/career prep etc.
- Small business relief.
- Need for fitness/wellness centers.
- Broadband- providing Wi-Fi access to the neighborhoods who lack connectivity.
- Economic development- especially downtown.
- Workforce development training.
- Develop an Office of Tourism within the City of Bridgeport.
- LGBTQ youth center.
- Local art programs and expanded public art.
- Hazard/premium pay for essential workers.
- Expanded programming for Veterans

There were also responses that were not applicable to the allowable costs including: tax relief, street paving, snow plowing, speed bumps in the north end, funding the schools, funding private schools, creating bike paths, repair the bridge to pleasure beach, widening the highway, etc.

IV. Providing equitable outcomes for the community

The City considers equity, diversity, and inclusion to be major concern priorities for the City and the community. As we establish the compliance and evidence-based reporting desired, the City is developing internal processes to guarantee that we achieve the equitable goals and outcomes desired, and that we obtain and collect qualitative and quantitative data to monitor our program goals.

Use of Evidence

The City developed a process to establish program metrics to be followed by the City and by all applicant organizations to be awarded eligible ARPA program subrecipient funds and all applicant individuals and businesses to be awarded ARPA funding direct assistance. The City created thirteen (13) public Citizen program committees to review all applications from both citizen and business applicants and from subrecipient non-profit applicant organizations desiring to be awarded funds from the City. Each Committee has Council members and public leading citizens and Administration members to ensure the process is fair and transparent. The Committees met to consider proposals for over twenty (20) City Council and Mayoral determined ARPA program uses.

V. ARPA Legal, Contracts, Procurement, and Payment Practices:

Each City ARPA program administered has now awarded subrecipient contracts and direct assistance contracts that require all awardees to accumulate evidence and provide either quarterly or annual reports that quantify program goals and demonstrate outcomes. Direct assistance awardees and subrecipients have provided budgets for all uses of funds along with written proposals describing the use of funds and/or program goals.

City Attorney's lawyers developed templates for all program contracts and programs, which include appendixes containing all ARPA required federal compliance and statutory provisions to be followed by all subrecipients and awardees. All subrecipients and awardees must read and sign award Contracts and all Appendixes. The legal process included researching and implementing all requirements of the ARPA SLFRF U.S Treasury Final Interim Rules. In addition, legal reviews were conducted of other federal statutes relating to anti-discrimination, civil rights, procurement, anti-corruption, and freedom of information. All federal and state laws are being upheld to the highest standards and all awardees and subrecipients must sign documents accepting compliance with all such laws and standards. Ethics polices were also put in place to ensure no conflicts of interest during the awarding and implementation of ARPA programs.

All awardees must provide proof of expenditures made to receive full award payments. Awards of \$10,000 or under may apply for full payment upon demonstrating such proof. Awards over \$10,000 are funded and paid in an installment reimbursement process, though first partial payments may be made in advance with documentation to follow. City staff review all contract submissions, budget and proposal submissions, and all invoice requests for payment prior to processing any such payments.

City staff review ARPA compliance regulations and undertake program evaluations for all subrecipients to determine that each funding award to such eligible applicants meets program goals. For direct assistance to businesses and citizens, the City has created a system of documentation to ensure all funds are expended according to ARPA requirements and all awardees must sign affidavits with their contracts that they will adhere to all ARPA fund requirements and compliance rules.

The City has created a quarterly reporting system to meet the SLFRF reporting information required for all awardees, as well as for City managed programs, to monitor and determine that all funds are expended properly, wisely and in a fashion that will meet the goals set for each program.

The City also developed a legal procurement process which met all the required local Purchasing Ordinance laws and regulations as well as all federal procurement standards and regulations for public bidding procurements. This process included requiring a publicly advertised request for proposals process for each City ARPA program developed, an award selection process through the Committees described above, an approval of these RFP processes from the city Board of Public Purchases, and selection Committee public meetings, as well as public announcements of awardees and subrecipients.

Exhibit I
ARPA Program Expenditure Categories
through December 2021

SLFRF Eligible Category	ARPA Program Category	Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Program awards Committed to Date
1.1/1.2	COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination		
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment		
1.7	Capital Improvements to Public Facilities responding to COVID-19		
1.9	Payroll costs for Health and Public Safety staff responding to COVID-19		
1.10	Mental Health Services		
1.11	Substance Abuse Services		
2.1	Household Assistance -Food insecurity		
2.5	Household Assistance-Eviction Prevention		
2.7	Job Training Assistance		
2.9	Small Business Assistance		
2.10	Aid to Non Profit Orgs		
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, Hospitality		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries		
2.2	Household Assistance – Rent/Utilities		
3.2	Aid to High Poverty Districts		
	(continued next page)		

	Cont'd Exhibit I – ARPA Eligible Categories		
3.4	Social, Emotional, Mental Health - Education		
3.5	Education Assistance - Other		
3.6	Healthy Childhood- childcare		
3.9	Healthy Childhood Environments		
3.10	Affordable Housing		
3.11	Housing Support – Unhoused Persons		
3.13	Social Determinants of Health - Other		
3.16	Social Determinants Health- Community Violence Interventions		
4.1	Public Sector Employees Premium Pay		
5.1	Clean Water: Centralized Wastewater Treatment		
5.4	Clean Water: Sewer Overflows		
5.6	Clean Water: Stormwater		
5.9	Clean Water: Nonpoint Source		
5.16/5.17	Broadband: Last mile projects and Other Projects		
6.1	Provision of Government Services (use of revenue lost)		
7.1	Administrative Expenses		

Exhibit II

City ARPA Program Listing and Expenditures through December 2021

SLFRF Eligible Category	City Program Name	Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Program Awards Committed to Date
1.1/1.2	COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination		
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment		
1.7	Health Facility Highland Ave East side		
1.9	Payroll costs for Health and Public Safety staff responding to COVID-19		
1.10	Mental Health Service Programs		
1.11	Substance Abuse Service Programs		
2.5	Household Assistance-Eviction Prevention		
2.5	Household Assistance -Weatherization Utilities		
2.7	Job Training Assistance -Workforce development		
2.9	Small Business Assistance – Maintenance and Expansion of Business		
2.9	Small Business Assistance – Storefront Improvements		
2.10	Aid to Non-Profits – Faith Based		
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, Hospitality – Port Authority		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries – Arts		
	(continued next page)		

	Cont'd Exhibit II – ARPA Eligible Categories		
3.4	Education Social, Emotional, Mental Health – Youth and Education Progra		
3.5	Education Assistance - Other		
3.6	Healthy Childcare- Lighthouse after school programs		
3.9	Healthy Childhood Environments – Youth and education Programs		
3.10	Affordable Housing		
3.11	Housing Support - Homelessness		
3.13	Social Determinants of Health - Other		
3.16	Social Determinants Heath- Community Violence: Public Housing security Social Determinants Heath- Domestic Violence Interventions Social Determinants- Community Violence: High Crime neighborhoods		
4.1	Public Sector Employees Premium Pay		
5.1	Clean Water: Centralized Wastewater Treatment – West side Plant	\$4,000,000	
5.4	Clean Water: Sewer Overflows -CSO		
5.6	Clean Water: Rooster River cleanup		
5.9	Clean Water: Nonpoint Source		
5.16/5.17	Broadband: Last mile projects and Other Projects		
6.1	Provision of Government Services (use of revenue lost in FY22 Budget)	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
7.1	Administrative ARPA Expenses	\$200,000	\$55,000

