



American Rescue Plan Fiscal  
Relief Funds for Local Leaders

---

MISSISSIPPI

# WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

---

In March 2021, President Biden introduced the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP or ARPA), designed to stimulate the economy further as Americans recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with several other recovery initiatives, the Act includes \$350 billion in direct funding for state and local governments through the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program.

The SLFRF program allows for spending to “address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic” and includes guidance from the U.S. Treasury to consider spending that focuses on equitable outcomes and includes community input.

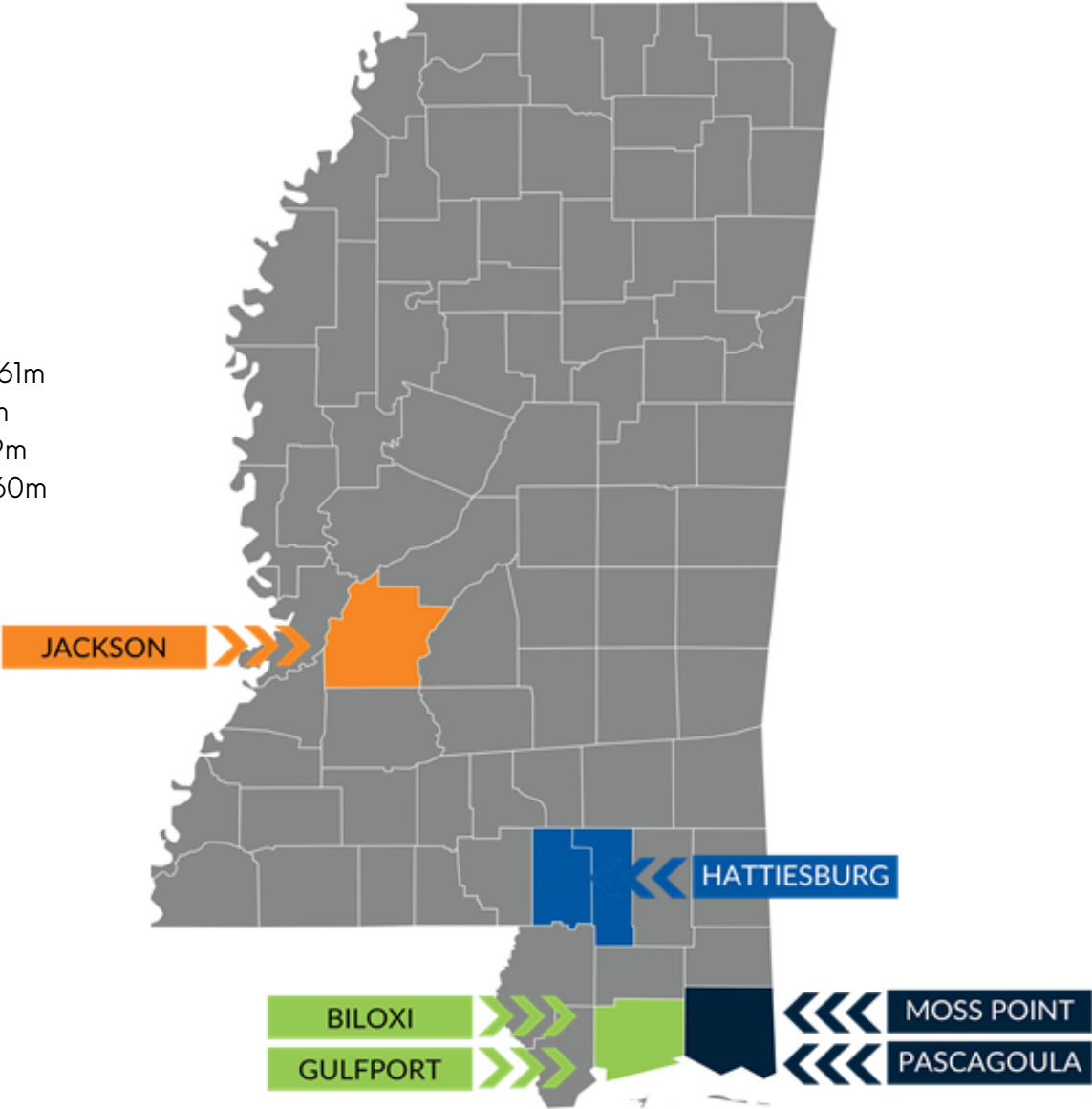
## Key aspects of the state and local recovery funds include:

- **Cities and counties of all sizes are receiving funds.** SLFRF are provided to every city and county in Mississippi, no matter how big or small. Click on these links to find out how much money will come to your community: [City Funding](#) & [County Funding](#).
- **There is a longer spending timeline than previous pandemic assistance.** Most state and local governments will receive two allotments of money: May 2021 and June 2022. Officials have until the end of the calendar year 2024 to make spending plans and until the end of the calendar year 2026 to spend the funds.
- **There is greater flexibility in funding categories.** Leaders can use SLFRF for a tremendous range of recovery programs and projects. Examples of expenditure categories in the Treasury’s guidance include public health, mental health, food programs, direct cash transfers, rent aid, eviction prevention, cash assistance to the unemployed, job training assistance, aid to nonprofit organizations, education aid to high poverty districts, child care, affordable housing, violence interventions, early learning, community health navigators, and more. Other eligible uses include water and sewer infrastructure, broadband expansion to underserved areas, or revenue replacement to offset pandemic impacts on local budgets.

Treasury’s [Final Rule](#), released in January 2022, provides even greater flexibility. The Final Rule expands who can receive premium pay and which households and communities are considered impacted by the pandemic. It clarifies that capital projects, such as affordable housing and child care centers are allowed. The Final Rule provides additional expansions and clarifications that open new doors for local leaders to meet the needs in their communities with confidence.

# METRO CITIES (MILLIONS)

- Biloxi - \$11.53m
- Gulfport - \$18.01m
- Hattiesburg - \$13.61m
- Jackson - \$46.66m
- Moss Point - \$2.79m
- Pascagoula - \$4.60m



# COUNTIES (MILLIONS)

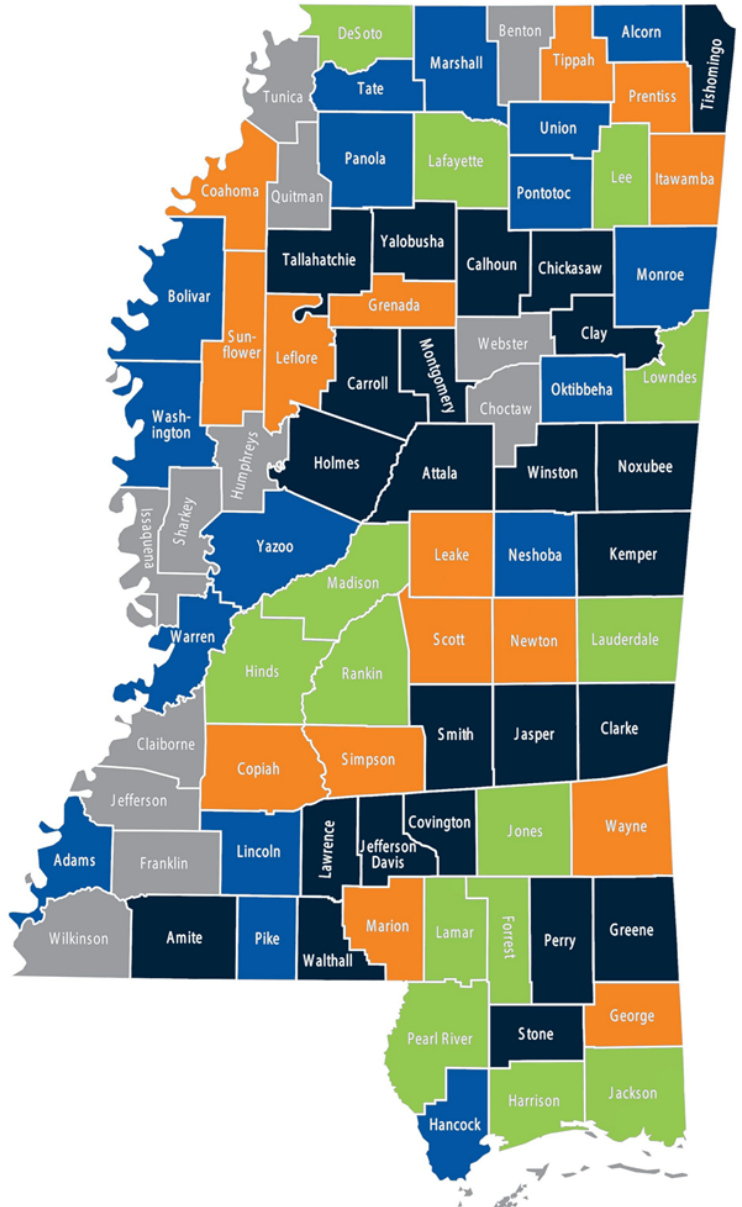
Oktibbeha County - \$9.62m  
 Hancock County - 9.24m  
 Warren County - \$8.80m  
 Washington County - \$8.52m  
 Pike County - \$7.62m  
 Alcorn County - \$7.17m  
 Marshall County - \$6.85m  
 Monroe County - \$6.84m  
 Panola County - \$6.63m  
 Lincoln County - \$6.62m  
 Pontotoc County - \$6.24m  
 Adams County - \$5.95m  
 Bolivar County - \$5.94m  
 Yazoo County - \$5.59m  
 Neshoba County - \$5.65m  
 Union County - \$5.59m  
 Tate County - \$5.49m

Tishomingo County - \$3.76m  
 Clay County - \$3.75m  
 Covington County - \$3.61m  
 Stone County - \$3.56m  
 Attala County - \$3.52m  
 Winston County - \$3.48m  
 Chickasaw County - \$3.32m  
 Holmes County - \$3.30m  
 Jasper County - \$3.18m  
 Smith County - \$3.09m  
 Clarke County - \$3.01m  
 Calhoun County - \$2.79m  
 Walthall County - \$2.77m  
 Tallahatchie County - \$2.68  
 Greene County - \$2.63m  
 Lawrence County - \$2.44m  
 Amite County - \$2.38m  
 Yalobusha County - \$2.35m  
 Perry County - \$2.32m  
 Jefferson Davis County - \$2.16m  
 Noxubee County - \$2.02m  
 Carroll County - \$1.93m  
 Montgomery County - \$1.90m  
 Kemper County - \$1.89m

Hinds - \$44.96m  
 Harrison - \$40.36m  
 DeSoto County - \$35.87m  
 Rankin County - \$30.11m  
 Jackson County - \$27.85m  
 Madison County - \$20.6m  
 Lee County - \$16.57m  
 Forrest County - \$14.53m  
 Lauderdale County - \$14.38m  
 Jones County - \$13.21m  
 Lamar County - \$12.28m  
 Lowndes County - \$11.36m  
 Pearl River County - \$10.77m  
 Lafayette County - \$10.48m

Leflore County - \$5.47m  
 Scott County - \$5.45m  
 Covich County - \$5.44m  
 Simpson County - \$5.17m  
 Prentiss County - \$4.87m  
 Sunflower County - \$4.87m  
 Marion County - 4.77m  
 George County - \$4.75m  
 Itawamba County - \$4.54m  
 Leake County - \$4.42m  
 Coahoma County - \$4.29m  
 Tippah County - \$4.27m  
 Newton County - \$4.08m  
 Grenada County - \$4.03m  
 Wayne County - \$3.91

Webster County - \$1.88m  
 Tunica County - \$1.87m  
 Claiborne County - \$1.74m  
 Wilkinson County - \$1.67m  
 Benton County - \$1.60m  
 Choctaw County - \$1.59m  
 Humphreys County - \$1.56m  
 Franklin County - \$1.50m  
 Jefferson County - \$1.36m  
 Quitman County - \$1.32m  
 Sharkey County - \$0.84m  
 Issaquena County - \$0.26m

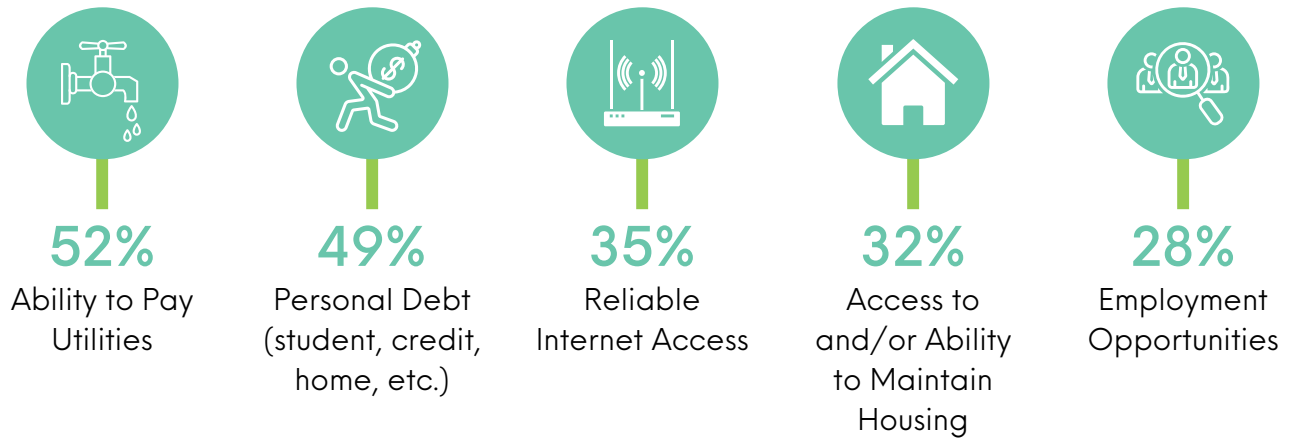


# WHAT ARE MISSISSIPPIANS SAYING?

Community input is critical when setting ARP spending priorities. Between November 2021 and January 2022, 626 Mississippians receiving SNAP benefits answered survey questions about their community challenges in the pandemic and their priorities for local ARP funds:

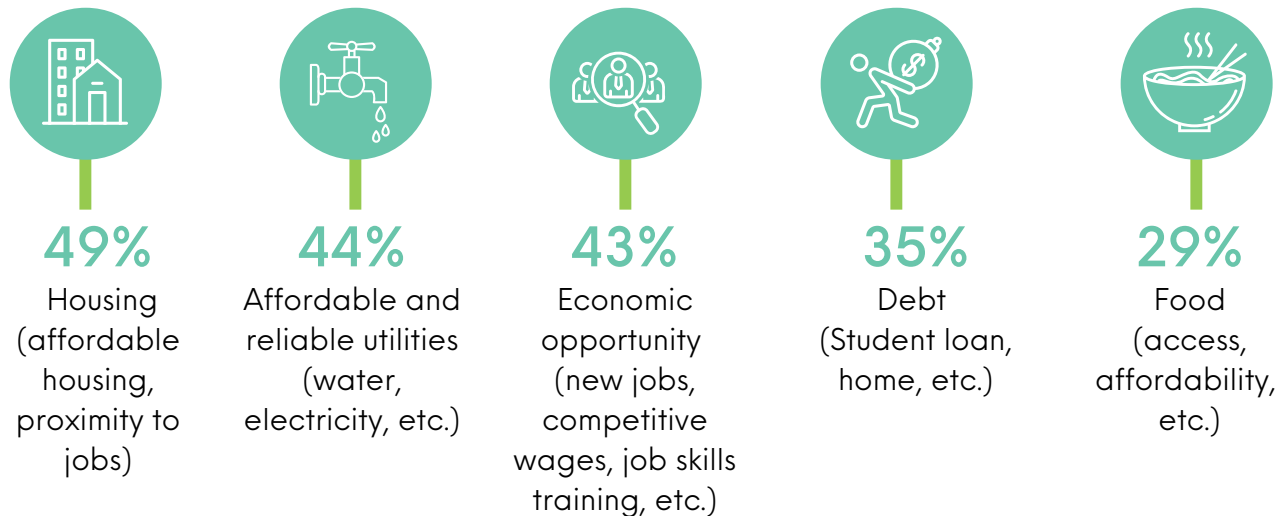
## "During COVID-19, which of these challenges have you experienced, personally?"

(Responses total more than 100% because respondents were instructed to check all that apply.)



## "What are the 3 greatest challenges for your community right now?"

(Responses total more than 100% because respondents were instructed to select three options.)



# WHAT ARE MISSISSIPPIANS SAYING?

"If your community received \$3 million to recover from COVID-19, what would be the most important way you would want that money invested?"



26%

Affordable  
Housing



14%

Affordable  
Utilities



8%

Job Creation



7%

Food  
Accessibility



5%

Job Skill  
Training

"Have you had any community or elected official reach out to you about how funding from the American Rescue Plan (federal recovery funding for COVID-19) should be invested?"

91%

NO

"No one has reached out to me."

\*567 of 626 respondents\*

ENGAGE

MENT



## SURVEY RESPONSES:

When asked, "What do you think your community would look like if it built back better from COVID-19?", respondents said:

I would hope it would be a place with better internet, and therefore smarter people who are in school and getting an education thanks to that more reliable, faster internet

It would open up more opportunities for better businesses and education.

Better jobs and community support. Families could actually provide for their children in a better environment with better schools.

Better housing  
better opportunities  
better school

It will look like a place where children can go back to being themselves and get a good education at the same time.

## SURVEY RESPONSES:

When asked, "Why would you want money to be invested in those areas? [your community]?", respondents said:

“

"It would help people afford a place to stay. We need to reform the way we teach our students. It's time for a change. These children need a more hands on approach. We need to better prepare our children for adulthood and the school system is not doing it. By high-school a child should have an idea about what path they want to be on."

”

“

"Families need support for jobs. Their children need to be well educated and fed."

”

“

"We need reliable internet in the rural areas for our children to succeed in school. The food situation needs to be addressed because there are a lot of people without food and there's no reason they should suffer. I think mental health is very important especially during the pandemic"

”

“

"The mental health is the most important. Here it's like people with those problems or drug addiction do not matter. No help no support. Really need more community support and out reach for the youth and more GED classes and skills Training."

”

“

"It gives families of this community hope. Hope that even the ones still living in poverty can have access to affordable health care, education and essentials."

”



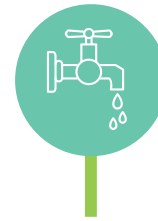
# THE NEEDS COMMUNITIES HIGHLIGHTED IN THEIR SURVEY RESPONSES ARE BACKED BY DATA:



**Affordable Housing:** According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, 43% of low-income renters and 65% of very low-income renters are cost-burdened. There is also a shortage of over 40,000 affordable rental options for extremely low-income renters in the state.



**Job Creation:** Based on the latest data (February 2022) from the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, the state of Mississippi ranked third in the nation for percentage of adults in households who expect someone in their household to have a loss in employment income in the next four weeks. (Jun. 23 - Jul. 5)



**Affordable Utilities:** According to the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, Mississippi has the second-highest percentage of adults in the nation that were unable to pay an energy bill in full in the last 12 months.



**Job Skill Training:** Based on the latest data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mississippi has the lowest average weekly earnings in the nation.



**Food Accessibility:** According to data from the USDA, Mississippi has the highest food insecurity rate in the nation.

# HOW CAN LOCAL LEADERS USE ARP FUNDS FOR THESE PRIORITIES?

---

Leaders can use these funds for a tremendous range of projects. Here are some examples from around the country of city leaders dedicating ARP funds to the wanted priorities found in the Mississippi survey.



## HOUSING AND UTILITIES

The [U.S. Treasury](#) highlighted the comprehensive approach to housing and homelessness by local leaders in Austin, Texas:

"The City will utilize \$95.3M of ARPA - SLFRF funding as part of a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness... Primary service types within the broader project include Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach, Diversion/Rapid Exit, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Targeted Prevention, Landlord Outreach & Incentives, Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder Services, Employment/Workforce Services, Service Provider Capacity Building, Planning, Management, and Administration, [and] Housing Development – Capital Subsidy."

### Other housing initiatives include:

- **Utility Program:** Clarkston, GA will use ARP funds to pay up to \$1,000 or 3 months of utilities for qualifying residents.
- **Rental, down-payment, and mortgage assistance programs:** Tucker, GA allocated \$1.2 million to NETwork Cooperative Ministry for a rental and mortgage assistance program.
- **Court eviction diversion programs:** Pueblo, CO allocated funds to Legal Services to run their Eviction Prevention and Diversion Project.
- **Construction of new affordable units and rehabilitation of existing units:** Mobile, AL has proposed spending about half of its ARPA funds on housing (rehab of 100 owner-occupied homes and construction of new rental units).
- **Land banks:** Rome, GA provided \$1 million to its land bank.
- **Land stewardship:** Baton Rouge, LA will use ARP funds to clean up vacant lots.



## EDUCATION, JOB TRAINING, JOB ASSISTANCE

The U.S. Treasury highlighted Columbus, OH for funding its Youth Programming Initiative, which “addresses educational setbacks due to COVID-19, provides social and recreational opportunities, and offers job training and professional development for Columbus youth.”

Treasury also highlighted the Cherokee Nation for dedicating \$100 million to job training and small business support, including GED assistance, skills and career readiness training, and short-term placements.

### Other education and job training initiatives include:

- Leaders in Mobile, AL have proposed spending \$500,000 on summer camp and after-school learning.
- To tackle learning loss due to the pandemic, Arkansas developed the [Arkansas Tutoring Corps](#), a system designed to recruit, train, and support individuals wanting to become qualified tutors who will provide intervention to meet the academic needs of at-risk learners.

## FOOD SECURITY

Atlanta, GA has dedicated \$2 million of funds to food programs, which “will include a mix of direct support to residents through programs such as the continuation of the Grocery Delivery Program and expansion of the Fresh MARTA Market program. In addition, funding will support establishing networks of organizations that can deliver food initiatives and one-time investments to develop the city's infrastructure and capacity to support the overall food system and to build the needed networks.”

Bulloch County and Statesboro, GA have proposed combining a portion of their ARPA funds to build a permanent home for the local food bank.

Additional efforts highlighted in Treasury's [first report](#) include vaccination initiatives and other public health spending, community violence prevention projects, small business assistance, rehiring of public employees, broadband, child care, and mental health.



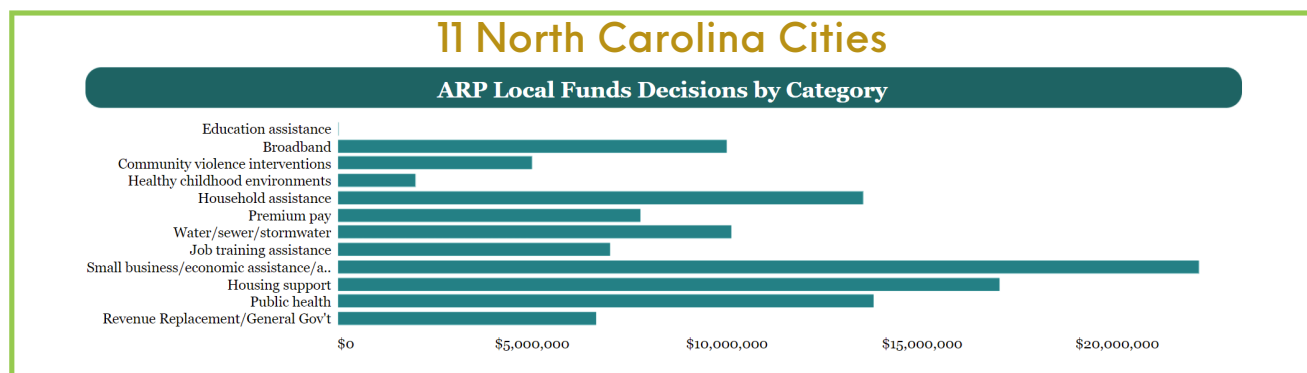
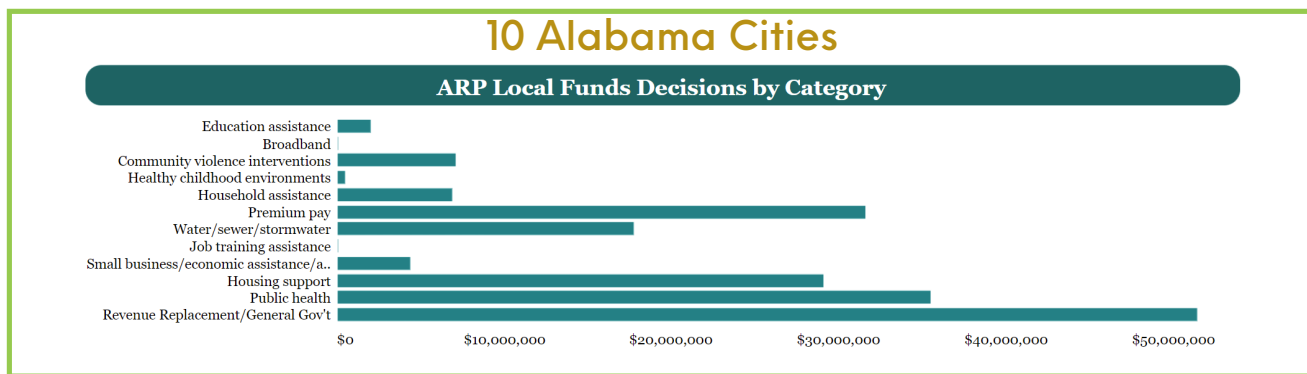
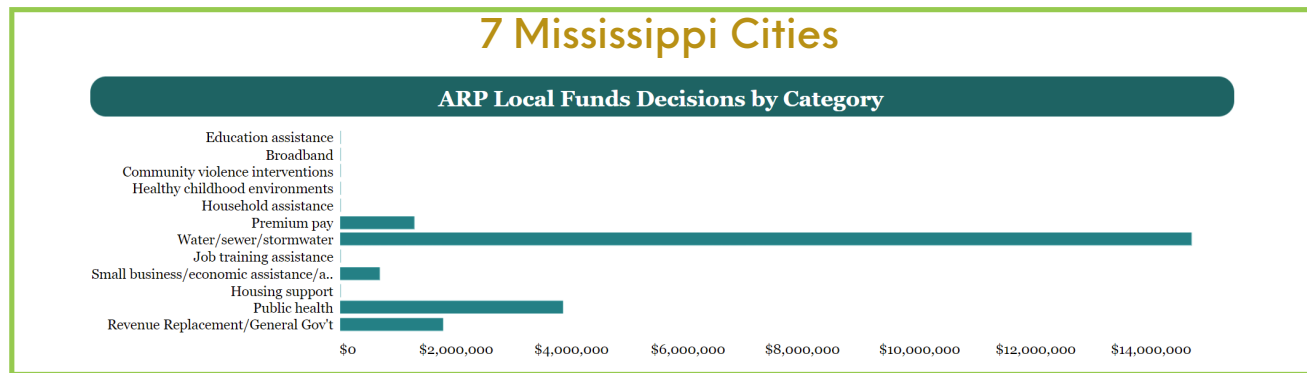
ARP State and Local Fiscal Relief Funds provide an opportunity for city and county leaders to meet the needs of their community in a wide variety of projects. ARP also includes funds that go directly to school districts. City, county, and school leaders can work together to make sure these funds go even further in strengthening schools and communities.

# SOUTHERN CITIES FOCUSING ON WIDE VARIETY OF PROJECTS

Looking at 12 Mississippi cities with populations over 20,000 shows:

- Most spending decisions haven't happened yet; about half have made no spending decisions at all.
- Spending plans to date emphasize water/sewer infrastructure. Other early spending decisions include a smaller emphasis on public health, revenue replacement/general government, and premium pay.

A comparison across states shows that Alabama and North Carolina cities are spending ARP dollars on a wider variety of projects than Mississippi leaders so far.



# TEMPLATES & TOOLS

---

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ARP legislation and federal guidelines set clear expectations that local governments will include community input as part of developing ARP spending plans. U.S. Treasury guidance specifically encourages local governments to seek participation from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups.

### THE FOUR-STEP PLAN: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

#### **Establish your community engagement goals**

Define what the public's role is in this process. Local leaders will likely seek "involvement" or "collaboration" with local community members to identify ARP spending priorities. For any project or issue, the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation can help stakeholders select the level of participation that defines the public's role in a public participation process. The spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans worldwide.

#### **Identify existing and potential partners**

For some local governments, engagement is already part of their standard practice. For others, ARP decisions present a pivotal opportunity to take up a more proactive, inclusive dialogue about community needs and goals. To be successful, this engagement should include partner individuals and organizations who can contribute a "trusted voice" to accelerate and expand the community dialogue.

#### **Identify tools and process**

Online tools such as surveys can help local governments connect to key audiences. Many cities may partner with existing vendors to provide accessible, easy-to-use platforms for surveys and feedback. These tools can solicit new ideas and assess support for ARP spending on existing programs and new proposals. Other tools and processes include community meetings, virtual meetings, task forces, and more. Be sure to identify how to reach specific populations, including those most impacted by the pandemic. For example, some cities include surveys in water bills to reach the most residents. Other cities are doing telephone-townhalls to specific zip codes with the most at-risk households.

#### **Develop and launch engagement plan and outreach activities**

Once a public participation plan is developed, cities should publicize their process by providing a roadmap for engagement efforts, including a timeline for key milestones. Many online tools can also offer a dashboard or other public-facing resource to easily share process updates, resident feedback, survey results, and additional information. This can help expand community engagement into an ongoing dialogue between local government and residents.

Find more resources [here](#).

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Good Community Engagement Practices

The U.S. Treasury highlighted Cleveland, OH for its community engagement activities. To gain input about how their city should spend recovery funds, the city of Cleveland launched a community engagement campaign. They utilized three contact methods to reach as many residents of their city as possible; an online survey, printed surveys at city recreational centers, and mailed surveys. The city received feedback from residents from all 17 of the city's wards.

Click [here](#) to view Cleveland's SLRF Recovery Plan Performance Report.



## EQUITY

---

The US Treasury calls for prioritizing racial and economic equity as a goal of ARP funds. To help local leaders focus on equity, Treasury posed these questions in their "[Driving Equity with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#)" webinar:

“Think about the highest impact service you provide. How do you know if those services are reaching the intended beneficiaries and those most in need? Who else could you talk to or engage to learn more than you know now?”

Some local leaders are using an equity framework or scorecard to judge projects. (See [Harris County, TX](#), and [Durham, NC](#) for examples.) Others are focusing on a place-based strategy by targeting funds to particular neighborhoods. [Washtenaw County, MI](#) set aside \$8 million in ARP funds to go to organizations serving specific zip codes that are most in need of support:

“Much of the distribution of that money would be guided by an advisory board of elected leaders, officials and six residents from those areas, and aided by an evaluator who would help organizations through the process and aid in documenting their impact, to report back to the federal government and county. The cash infusions would be available to groups working to right educational disparities, reduce community violence and provide direct assistance to households hurt by the pandemic, among other areas.”

As municipalities and state leaders develop ARP funds proposals, there are significant opportunities for project/spending collaboration beyond infrastructure to maximize economic recovery from the pandemic. For example, Indiana is encouraging intergovernmental collaboration by allocating a portion of its ARP funds to support the [Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative \(READI\)](#). READI is a grant program in which self-identified regions put together plans for growth on a 4:1 match basis.



# MODEL LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

---

Committing the [City/Town/County/Parish] to the strategic, equitable, transparent, and responsible use of American Rescue Plan funds.

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 global pandemic caused unprecedented health and economic impacts to communities worldwide and across the United States;

WHEREAS, the pandemic has resulted in a tragic loss of life, created long-term health impacts for many survivors, isolated our seniors, wreaked havoc on the mental health of millions, overburdened health care systems, and exacerbated many of the underlying vulnerabilities in our communities;

WHEREAS, the economic impacts triggered by the pandemic caused millions of jobs to be lost, thousands of small businesses to close, and in many instances resulted in those least able to afford missing work becoming the most exposed to infection;

WHEREAS, these severe and extended economic impacts have led to increased insecurity for local families who struggle to meet household expenses for housing, food, and basic utilities;

WHEREAS, the negative health outcomes from the COVID-19 virus have been found to disproportionately affect communities of color;

WHEREAS, the loss of jobs and income due to the pandemic's economic downturn have been borne to a greater degree by our most vulnerable lower income households;

WHEREAS, the measures taken to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus also caused significant disruption to the nature and form of our community's civic discourse, through limitations on public gatherings and forums;

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act was signed into law on March 11, 2021 in which the federal government has taken the heretofore unprecedented action to appropriate \$130,000,000,000 in direct funding to local governments to aid them in combatting the challenges created by the pandemic;

WHEREAS, the funds provided by the ARP may be used for a variety of purposes related to rebuilding and strengthening our communities so long as the funds are spent by December 31, 2024;

WHEREAS, these ARP funds will provide a significant one-time, supplemental resource for our local government to use for the benefit of our community;

WHEREAS, these ARP funds can support strategic initiatives that encourage recovery while also accelerating progress towards long-range community goals;

WHEREAS, this [City/Town/County/Parish] is committed to using the opportunity created by the ARP funds to uplift, support, and improve the quality of life of all members of this community;



# MODEL LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

---

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED [BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL/COUNTY COMMISSION OF CITY/TOWN/COUNTY/PARISH]:

1. The [city/town/county/parish] declares that in utilizing ARP funds, priority shall be given to the following: supporting economic recovery for all with special emphasis to aiding those on the lower end of the wage scale, improving public health and safety, supporting local businesses and workforce development, increasing access to and improving the quality of public education, improving equity outcomes, and supporting the housing needs in our community.
2. The [city/town/county/parish] will seek community input on the use of ARP funds, and will incorporate community perspectives in decision-making related to ARP resources. Recognizing that true inclusivity often requires making an extra effort to obtain input from those in disadvantaged groups, a variety of methods will be used to engage with the citizenry.
3. The [city/town/county/parish] will commit to a high degree of accountability and transparency in the use of ARP funds, and will provide regular and accessible information to the community regarding the allocation of ARP funds to various uses.
4. The [city/town/county/parish] will commit to measuring outcomes and results from the use of ARP funds, and will provide this information to the community proactively, using accessible platforms and communication tools.

This resolution having obtained the votes necessary for passage is hereby adopted.

This \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

Attest:

On behalf of the [city/town/county/parish] of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

-----  
Official authorized to attest to the passage of said resolution on said date.

# RESOURCES

---

## Data Sources

- ARP Community Needs Survey: Mississippi ([results](#))
- ARP Spending Tracker ([results](#))
- Pandemic to Prosperity: South ([state slides and data tables](#))
- Census Bureau Pulse survey ([info](#)) ([data tables](#))

## About One Voice

One Voice grew out of the work undertaken by the Mississippi State Conference NAACP in response to housing, education, civil rights, and other related policy advocacy needs facing historically disadvantaged communities in the wake of the 2005 hurricanes. That work revealed significant needs within the non-profit sector. One such need was access to current and relevant data required to do effective policy analysis. Another need was one of the connections between trained and networked community leadership and non-partisan, community-based structures through which broad public involvement could be organized and sustained. One Voice, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was formed to address these needs.

Our partners and supporters are committed to building a strong, informed electorate that rejects polarization and seeks to improve the lives of Mississippi residents across the state regardless of color or class. One Voice works toward achieving a progressive civic infrastructure in the American South by supporting local and state policy development through training and collaboration across issue areas and geography. For assistance, contact:

[www.onevoicems.org](http://www.onevoicems.org)

[info@uniteonevoice.org](mailto:info@uniteonevoice.org)

(601) 960-9594

## About NAACP Mississippi

The vision of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights and there is no racial hatred or racial discrimination. The mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.

## About SEAP

The Southern Economic Advancement Project (SEAP) is your partner and resource. SEAP amplifies existing organizations and networks' efforts to broaden economic power and build a more equitable future. Broadening economic power brings attention to how race, class, and gender intersect social and economic policy in the South. SEAP explores policy ideas designed to address these connections directly. SEAP focuses on 12 Southern states and marginalized/vulnerable populations.

To learn more, please visit [SEAP's ARP Toolkit](#).

-END-