

Jefferson County
Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Funds**

2021 Report

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Jefferson County will use American Rescue Plan funds for COVID-19 expenses in a manner that meets community and county needs. The county will also seek out alternate funding sources for proposed projects to ensure ARPA funds provide the county with maximum financial flexibility. Jefferson County is establishing data-driven decision-making processes to assess community needs that make meaningful impacts to our most vulnerable and underserved communities.

Community engagement surveys are being conducted to help us better understand the needs of the community. Prioritization of internal department needs are evaluated through Jefferson County's Vision and Strategic Outcomes, along with the US Treasury guidelines.

The seven Strategic Outcomes considered are:

- Create Safe, Healthy, and Thriving Communities
- Enhance Inclusive Community Engagement
- Ensure Responsible Growth and Development
- Protect Natural Resources and Our Environment
- Strengthen Public Facilities and Infrastructure
- Operate as an Employer of Choice
- Provide Innovative, Equitable, and Effective Services

Key goals include support for community members impacted by COVID-19, such as unemployment and industry skills gaps. The funds will be used to support self-sufficiency of people and organizations while addressing root causes of needs. We will strive for transformative system changes where possible, rather than providing a one-time "band-aid" that temporarily treats the symptoms. For example, rather than providing a financial payment to unemployed or underemployed workers, a goal might be to fund programs that reduce the skills gap so that such an individual can gain a certification that will help them build a sustainable career. At the same time, we recognize there may be some emergent short-term needs that require funding while long-term solutions are developed.

Internal County department needs will be viewed through the following lens.

- Is the proposed use aligned with Jefferson County Strategic Outcomes and eligible under ARPA rules?
- How does the request support COVID recovery efforts within the county or the larger Jefferson County community?
- Which requests have the greatest impact or most improve equity?
- By spending this money right now, will operations be sustainable going forward? Does it create operational savings or help generate additional revenue?
- Does funding fix the problem or will the same problem exist in 2025?

Another essential goal is to protect the health and well-being of all Jefferson County community members and visitors. This is accomplished through coordinating preparedness and response efforts with state and local public health departments to prevent, prepare for, and respond to

COVID-19. Meeting these needs may consist of both addressing immediate emergency response needs and driving transformative efforts to reduce public health inequities.

Uses of Funds

Jefferson County is evaluating the Expenditure Categories in a collaborative approach with the community, business leaders, and internal departments. Our goal is to fully understand the overarching needs and determine if those requests represent an eligible use of the funds. Along with the Expenditure Categories, requests will be evaluated to ensure they meet at least one of Jefferson County's Strategic Outcomes. Through mindful strategic planning and analysis, the funds will be expended to align with these categories to achieve COVID-19 recovery.

- a. *Public Health (EC 1)*
- b. *Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)*
- c. *Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC 3)*
- d. *Premium Pay (EC 4)*
- e. *Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure (EC 5)*
- f. *Revenue Replacement EC 6)*

Jefferson County is evaluating potential expenditures using the following criteria:

- ARPA eligibility rules
- Relation to COVID-19 recovery
- Jefferson County Strategic Outcomes
- True Recovery: One-time vs ongoing expenses – since this funding is one-time, it should be used to truly solve one-time needs rather than only temporarily meeting ongoing needs
- Relative impact
- Impact on Equity

One key short-term need the county has faced has been increasing staffing to deal with immediate workload increases tied directly to the COVID-19 pandemic. These immediate needs have included:

- Continued Public Health response to COVID-19
- Administration of federal relief funds
- Increased legal representation
- Increased processing of emergency assistance payments
- Technology and operational changes to facilitate ongoing hybrid work and service environments

Jefferson County is aware that there are other potential funding sources that may help finance programs and other ARP requests. To that end, we are investigating alternative funding sources to be used in addition to or in conjunction with the American Rescue Plan funds. Some of these alternate sources include Emergency Rental Assistance, Housing Assistance, pending federal infrastructure legislation, and expected State of Colorado programs addressing COVID impacts. Our goal will be to leverage all funding sources in order to maximize the impact of the funds.

The county will consider these alternative funding sources as we move forward with recommending and prioritizing requests, working towards maximizing impact and equity.

Promoting equitable outcomes

Jefferson County is invested both in ensuring any programs enacted using ARPA funding are conducted equitably and in funding programs that specifically address existing inequities.

Jefferson County plans to hire an ARPA Equity Coordinator with the possibility to hire a second coordinator, if the need to do so is demonstrated. This individual will be an equity subject matter expert to consult with and support the Rescue Team for all COVID-19 recovery projects. These roles will be housed in the EDI Program under the Jeffco EDI Program Manager. One position will be initially hired to focus on developing methods for Jefferson County to support decision-making teams working on projects and programs related to ARPA. Once programs are selected for funding, this role will collaborate to institute a recommended framework around monitoring and evaluation while also advising ways to foster enhanced inclusive community engagement.

This position will be instrumental in developing metrics specific to ARPA impacts. To the extent that current equity metrics are available, the coordinator will utilize and build on that work. Data will be used to evaluate equitable outcomes, provide insight, and will be foundational in creating best practices for distribution of ARPA funds. This evaluation will be in alignment with the evidence-based criteria outlined in federal guidelines. This information will be shared with the Rescue Team and county leadership to enable adjustments to ARPA funding priorities and operations to better address equity.

Overall, the collaboration between the equity coordinator and the Rescue Team and other departments will ensure Jefferson County follows Executive Order 13895's guidance in working to advance equity to all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

Community Engagement

Jefferson County is in the process of conducting three community engagement surveys to better understand current needs related to COVID-19, its impacts, and existing inequities. These surveys are specifically targeted at individuals in diverse groups who live or work in Jefferson County, businesses, and non-profit organizations. These surveys are being conducted by a local, female-owned company that will break down the survey responses by demographic categories to differentiate needs as identified by segments of the community. We also have set up a "suggestion box" on the County website to ensure anyone can submit an idea for a way to spend ARPA funds. The survey results will be available to the County in late summer or fall to assist in the identification of spending priorities, using this community input as a guide alongside the expertise of county staff. In addition, focus groups and roundtables are being held with the business community in Jefferson County to better understand the ongoing pressures on local businesses.

Labor Practices

One of Jefferson County's Strategic Outcomes is to continuously focus on enhancing infrastructure resiliency, creating versatile spaces and amenities for residents and visitors to enjoy, and ensuring ease of movement within the County. We recognize that one of the allowable uses of funds is to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. In addition, the State of Colorado is working to improve infrastructure. We are also investigating improved access to broadband, water, stormwater, and sewer infrastructure within our County. We are exploring opportunities to partner with other public entities to maximize use of our resources and avoid duplication of efforts. Once we have determined which infrastructure projects will be supported by Jefferson County ARPA funds, we will be able to give more information on planned workforce practices.

Use of Evidence

As stated earlier and throughout this report, we are still in the process of researching which projects to support. We will evaluate economic data; review county department and community needs; and utilize residential, business, special district, and county surveys. Also, projects will be evaluated upon how they meet Treasury guidelines on the use of funds and Jefferson County's Strategic Outcomes. With this information, we will develop our priority list, begin allocating funds and designing program specifics using evidence-based understanding of interventions most likely to address determined needs. Once we reach the stage of designing programs, we will incorporate the use of metrics to continuously evaluate program success. Jefferson County is also in the process of determining metrics to measure our progress towards our county-wide strategic goals. We plan to align our evaluation of ARPA funded projects with improving these still-to-be-determined metrics.

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
7	Administrative and Other	206,369	206,369
7.1	Administrative Expenses	206,369	206,369

Project Inventory

We have not yet determined which projects we will be undertaking except for the addition of County staff in areas that have been impacted by COVID.

Project: Grant Team to handle execution of ARPA Funds - The "Rescue Team" was created to support our community through the distribution of the ARPA funds by providing

budget recommendations, stewardship, fiscal oversight, and compliance with federal regulations.

Planned Total Funding Amount: \$ 3,783,774

Project Expenditure Category: 7.1 Administrative Expenses

Project: Additional Litigation Attorney - 1.0 temporary litigation attorney to assist with defense of COVID-19 inmate lawsuits filed against the Sheriff's Office and assist with anticipated increase of tax appeals also related to COVID-19

Planned Total Funding Amount: \$315,872

Project Expenditure Category: 7.1 Administrative Expenses

Project: Rescue Contract Attorney - .5 temporary transactional/contract attorney to assist in creating contracts for programs that will be created in response to American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)

Planned Total Funding Amount: \$153,394

Project Expenditure Category: 7.1 Administrative Expenses

Performance Report

As we are still in the needs assessment phase, we have not yet allocated funding to any major projects with the exception of adding staff in areas within county government that have been impacted by COVID. When we have analyzed the data we are collecting, finished prioritizing the projects, made recommendations to our elected board and received approval from them, we will be able to provide information on key performance indicators. However, we do note that the Rescue Team will support annual single audits by the county's independent auditor to ensure the use of ARPA funds has followed both the U.S. Treasury's final rule and the original legislative text.