



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

Local Recovery: Five Principles for ARP Implementation

CITY COUNCIL PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND TO HELP GUIDE RICHMOND'S PLAN FOR POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

The American Rescue Plan Act became law on March 11, 2021, and with it Congress approved unprecedented direct aid to 19,000 municipal governments through the new Local Fiscal Recovery Fund administered by the Treasury Department. After a year of advocacy, we are so pleased to see Congress recognize how critical local governments are to addressing this pandemic and the recovery process.

We expect to see guidance come out by the beginning of May, when Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds will be released. These funds are YOURS and City of Richmond funding will come directly from the U.S. Treasury Department.

The National League of City's Federal Advocacy team has offered some principles to keep in mind to help guide the City of Richmond's plan for the use of ARP funds and economic recovery.

1. Assess government operations and community needs to develop a plan for recovery.

- Gather your team and include internal and external stakeholders. Include resident voices.
- Consider Richmond's needs at all levels: individuals, families, organizations and businesses. Build connections across systems and levels. Solicit input from valuable staff and stakeholders to help create a comprehensive needs assessment.
- Make racial equity a part of your plan and ensure that you have set targets to support those who are often excluded.
- The sooner that you develop a recovery plan, the faster you can get people back to work, stabilize your operations, and support those most impacted by COVID-19.
- Consider the benchmarks of success including key metrics that will help you tell the story of how the American Rescue Plan has helped the City of Richmond.

2. Use each revenue source strategically.

- While the Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are the only pot of money going directly to every municipality, they are not the only pot of funding available.
- Identify any linkages between your community needs and specific programs.
- Connect with the General Assembly/state legislators to help align funding priorities and work synergistically. Save Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for gaps and priorities not eligible for other federal and state assistance programs.

3. Prioritize fiscal stability and returning to work.

- The intent of ARP funding is to shore up business and government stability, preserve jobs, and get people back to work. Therefore, the City is advised to plan your spending with this in mind. The latest guidance from U.S. Treasury about allowable uses for American Rescue Plan dollars should be coming in early May. Be thinking about how you will tell the story of your investments meeting these goals.

4. Maintain records and document impact.

- Make a flexible and responsive plan for the city based on the needs and priorities identified.
- Build in feedback loops and process improvement so you can adjust your plan if it isn't meeting your goals, or if your needs change.
- Create long-term information infrastructure for future city leaders, and connect with the state to share stories.
- Plan for tracking and reporting from the start. Use data to tell your story, so you can show the impact of these funds in your community.

5. Your Congressional Delegation is part of your success.

- Keep in touch with Rep. McEachin and Senators Warner and Kaine to let them know what ARP funds are doing in the City of Richmond. Invite them to re-openings, ribbon-cuttings, and other events. Send them pictures of infrastructure projects, introduce them to happy residents, and share media clippings. Let them know how impactful the American Rescue Plan Act is on the ground.

6. Be smart about spending.

- You have until December 21, 2024 to spend down the Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, so you don't need to rush to spend every dollar.
- Take some time to create a well-defined plan with equity at its core;
- Gather input from all your departments and your residents.
- Plan for record keeping and storytelling.