



# WASHTENAW COUNTY RESCUE PLAN

The Commissioners and Washtenaw County staff have developed a list of potential programs, projects, and initiatives for their proposed Washtenaw County Rescue Plan. This plan will leverage multiple funding sources, most notably the American Rescue Plan Act, to ensure a more complete response to the impacts COVID-19 has had on our community. These potential programs, projects, and initiatives have been categorized into 7 priority categories. This document note how expensive a project could be, how quickly these projects could be acted on, and whether they qualify for American Rescue Plan funding.

The proposals do not show specific costs at this time because many of the programs and projects are scalable and can be adjusted based on public engagement and commissioner consideration. Some projects indicate a range of costs to reflect this.

## Connecting Washtenaw County



### Broadband Infrastructure

Many household in Washtenaw County do not currently have access to high speed internet. By working with local jurisdictions and internet providers, we would be able to connect every household to broadband.

\$\$\$\$ | Qualifies for ARP | Ready to Go

### Broadband Relief Fund

While some households have access to Broadband infrastructure, they still struggle to afford the plans necessary for their family to go to school, work remotely, search for jobs, and connect with families and friends. This fund would help households not need to make the decision between paying for rent and paying for internet if they are struggling to make ends meet.

\$\$ | Qualifies for ARP | Ready to Go

### Expanding Public Wifi

Another possible way to expand internet access is through expanding public wifi. This would provide internet access, centered in public spaces (e.g., parks, downtown streets) free of charge. These networks could be privately or publicly owned.

\$\$\$\$ | Does Not Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

**\$ - Less than \$100,000**  
**\$\$ - \$100,000 to \$1,000,000**  
**\$\$\$ - \$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000**  
**\$\$\$\$ - More than \$5,000,000**

# Encouraging Generational Success



## Addressing Childcare Access

This item could vary based on recommendations from the community. It could include short term investments to address needs right now, as well as longer term investments to make a lasting impact on access to quality childcare in Washtenaw County

\$\$ - \$\$\$\$ | Qualifies for ARP | More planning needed

## Expanding Early Childhood Education

Local investments can ensure local, community based providers are able to take advantage of expanded funding at the state and federal level. These funds would help provide technical assistance to community organizations to help them obtain classroom space, attract quality teachers, and more.

\$\$\$ | Qualifies for ARP | Ready to Go

## Investing in High-Impact Tutoring

By working with community stakeholders, an investment in this area would expand current efforts to offer high quality tutoring and support for students in Washtenaw County.

\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

## Universal Childhood Savings Accounts

By giving every student who goes to school in Washtenaw County a savings account, we are creating a pathway to higher education. Whether it's community college, a job training program, or a 4-year college, this program will help orient students towards success and provide the initial investment to help them attain their goals.

\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$ | ARP Eligibility To Be Determined | Ready to Go

## Launching a Financial Empowerment Center

Financial empowerment centers offer free, one-on-one financial counseling to residents. In addition to helping households make ends meet, this program would include special funding to provide direct cash assistance to program participants to help them reduce debt, build savings, and invest in their future.

\$\$ | ARP Eligibility To Be Determined | Ready to Go

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**\$\$\$\$ - More than \$5,000,000**

# Addressing Housing Affordability and Homelessness



## Rental Assistance Program

While this \$20 million program is already being implemented by Washtenaw County's Office of Community and Economic Development to provide households rental, utility, and internet assistance, the level of need is great and could be expanded using American Rescue Plan funds if needed.

\$\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Already being implemented

## Increasing BIPOC Home Ownership Rates

Leveraging these dollars to address systemic inequity is critical. Renters, who are disproportionately people of color due to racist programs, policies, and practices were hit particularly hard by the pandemic. Residential counseling, down payment assistance, and other recommendations made by a community collaborative focused on this issues would be an important first step towards addressing this disparity.

\$\$-\$\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Ready to Go

## Securing Permanent Affordable Housing Units

Washtenaw County is already receiving non-flexible funds to secure and preserve affordable housing units that can be used as part of our homelessness response system. American Rescue Plan funds could be used to expand this work to increase the affordable housing stock across the county.

\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

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# Creating a More Sustainable Community



## Climate Action Planning

To make substantial, coordinated efforts to combat climate change, the County needs to invest in a comprehensive plan to help identify and prioritize potential projects.

\$\$ | Does not Qualify for ARP | Already being implemented

## Expanding Solar Infrastructure Across the County

While climate action planning will determine a lot of the climate mitigation work that the county will pursue in the coming years, there are certain priorities that can begin moving forward now. One such is looking at different ways to invest in innovate solar infrastructure solutions.

\$\$-\$\$\$\$ | Does not Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

## Investing in Storm Water & Sewage Infrastructure

Ensuring we have proper drainage infrastructure helps prevent flooding of homes, streets, and public infrastructure. One example of this identified by the Water Resource Commissioner and the Washtenaw County Roads Commission is repairing culverts. By repairing culverts, we can prevent road closures in Western Washtenaw County that can result in long detours.

\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Ready to Go

## Expanding Energy Efficiency Program

The Washtenaw County Home Improvement programs offer free home repair services that increase the comfort of families, while decreasing their energy bills. Expanding this work can help more households, employ more local contractors, and help substantially reduce unnecessary energy usage by replacing old furnaces with high efficiency units, improving home insulation, and potentially adding solar panels to eligible homes.

\$\$-\$\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Ready to Go

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# Supporting A Strong Local Economy



## Small Business Relief Funds

The COVID-19 Pandemic had a huge impact in small business. This small business relief fund is meant to support business through grant programs to small businesses to help them recover from lost revenues over the past year, rehire staff, and more. This would operate similarly to the small business support program administered by OCED, United Way of Washtenaw County, and the Song Foundation last year.

\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Already being implemented

## Support for Farmers and Agriculture Based Businesses

Michigan State University Extension is already doing important work in Washtenaw County to help connect farmers to local markets to sell their produce and more. By expanding this work through additional funding, we can begin to work with groups like the Washtenaw Conservation District to explore new ways to invest in farming and agriculture in our County.

\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

## Supporting Entrepreneurs, Particularly BIPOC Entrepreneurs

While there are many potentially forms this may take, there is interest in creating entrepreneurship assistance fund that will directly invest in business and invest in business technical assistance providers who have an express commitment to equity and anti-racism, and experience working with diverse communities, preferably providers of color.

\$\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

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# Investing in Our Health & Wellbeing



## Mobile Support Services Initiative

This initiative would retrofit buses to be community service hubs that move throughout our county. This would be an expansive partnership with community service agencies to make sure the vehicle is able to connect individuals using it to all of the services they need to be successful.

\$\$-\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

## Medical Mobile Clinic

The Health Department recently got a new medical mobile clinic. By providing additional funding, this would allow us to maximize its use by having it out in the community on a regular basis. In addition to hosting and attending special events, it could also have a recurring schedule in the parts of our county without access to a medical clinic.

\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Ready to Go

## Community Healthcare Workers

By expanding funding to hire additional community health workers, the Health Department can expand their work to address health disparities and the social determinants of health. These workers would help with public health promotion, attend and put on special events, and help connect individuals with important programming and resources.

\$\$\$ - \$\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

## Public Health Data Analysts

Being able to track data, evaluate programs, and conduct community surveys is a critical components of public health response. By hiring data analysts, we can make sure our systems are truly having their intended impacts, while also tracking data to discover and address emerging needs early rather than later.

\$\$ - \$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

## Emerging Needs Microgrants for Non Profits

To be able to address emerging needs related to the lasting impacts of COVID-19 on our community in the coming years, these funds could be used to quickly provide support to specific service providers in need of investment.

\$ - \$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Ready to go

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# Practicing Good Government



## County Master Plan

The goal of a master plan would be to take stock of the current county environment, conduct a needs assessment, develop a shared vision, create a plan to implement activities and achieve project goals.

\$\$ | Does Not Qualify for ARP | Will be implemented soon

## Accounting for Lost Revenues

Washtenaw County and other local governments are facing budget shortfalls due to lost revenue as a result of COVID-19. The American Rescue Plan allows for governments to use funding to replace lost revenue. This will allow Washtenaw County government to continue to provide valuable public services despite decreased revenues.

\$\$\$\$ | Qualify for ARP | Assessed and revisited annually

## Investing in County Government Infrastructure

The American Rescue Plan allows for governments to use funding increase capacity to successfully implement economic relief and health programming, including investing in technology infrastructure. By modernizing systems, we would be able to improve security and stability for employees and the public interacting with our technology.

\$\$\$ | Qualifies for ARP | More planning needed

## Supporting Washtenaw County Employees

Washtenaw County employees have been on the front line of this pandemic, and have provided the social safety net for our community for generations. The Board values county employees and wants to make sure we are creating a workplace that helps us attract and retain the best employees to serve the community. To do so the Board plans to provide initial funding necessary for a paid leave program for Washtenaw County employees and to partially fund recommendations from a compensation study to ensure the civil servants of Washtenaw County Government are paid their fair share.

\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ | Does Not Qualify for ARP | More planning needed

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