

# **Frederick County, Maryland**

## **Recovery Plan**

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**

**2021 Report**

## Frederick County Government

### 2021 Recovery Plan

## Contents

<b>GENERAL OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Executive Summary.....	2
Uses of Funds .....	2
Promoting equitable outcomes .....	4
Community Engagement .....	4
Labor Practices.....	7
Use of Evidence.....	7
Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category.....	7
<b>Project Inventory</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Performance Report</b> .....	<b>7</b>

# General Overview

## Executive Summary

Frederick County, Maryland (“County”) appreciates the opportunities presented to use American Rescue Plan Act funding to aid in the recovery of the County, its residents, and businesses from the COVID-19 public health pandemic. The County entered into a signed grant agreement in mid-May and subsequently received \$25,206,981 of first round funding. The County was awarded \$50,413,962 in total funding, of which \$38,961,981 was calculated as available for revenue replacement from December 31, 2020.

The County has begun planning how best to deploy these funds to ensure an equitable and full recovery for all sectors and citizens. An internal workgroup was established, which reached out to gather input from residents and groups within the community, such as businesses, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, and community leaders, in addition to County government staff. A countywide survey was conducted in July and August to help set the County’s funding priorities and to receive additional feedback. The County will hold round table sessions this fall to engage public, private and nonprofit stakeholders. The intent of these discussions is to refine and focus the areas of our plan as the landscape of needs inevitably shifts during our collective response to the pandemic.

To date, discussions have been held about the feasibility of projects for improving health programs, reducing health disparities, home repair programs, business assistance, nonprofit grant programs, tourism industry support, senior citizen assistance, homelessness support, and childcare studies, among many others. The results of the community survey and round table sessions will continue to inform project development, design and selection. The County is additionally working to ensure that any approved project is eligible for grant funding.

As of the timing of this first Recovery Plan Performance Report, the County is still within the planning phase of and has not yet obligated any funds. The time to adequately plan the use of these funds was necessitated, not only by the County’s desire to engage with the community to identify significant community needs, but also due to the substantial items identified within the Compliance and Reporting Guidance. The County, in its planning processes, is seeking to integrate this funding with other federal and state funding allocations, such as the Emergency Rental Assistance program, to ensure all applicable funds are utilized effectively and there is no duplication of efforts among our state and local government partners.

## Uses of Funds

The County is located in the north central part of Maryland, with an estimated population of 265,942. There are twelve incorporated municipalities within the County. The County seat and largest city is the City of Frederick, which has an estimated population of 72,481. The City of Frederick is located approximately 45 miles northwest of Washington D.C. and 45 miles west of Baltimore, Maryland.

The County has developed a preliminary plan for the first round of funding, but has not entered into any agreements or begun spending on any projects. A proposed breakdown of the use of ARP funds

follows. These allocations are designed to be flexible, allowing the County to adjust to continual modifications of federal guidance regarding eligible uses of ARP funding, and to adjust to the evolving needs of our community in addressing the impacts of the pandemic. The programs or services mentioned below are being analyzed for feasibility for implementation. Projects will continue to be reviewed for eligibility upon receipt of a Final Rule.

- Public Health Response: \$12.4 Million (First Half: \$6.2 Million)

Activities in this category will support the County's on-going COVID-19 public health response and prevention efforts. COVID-19 has also exacerbated long standing health disparities in our community. ARP funding may be used to address these and other emerging health issues. A health disparity study, related data collection, and a health services experiences survey targeted to specific minority populations are being considered. A broader community health needs assessment process may be initiated. The results of these activities would establish new and enhance current public health data systems. A feasibility study for a universal newborn nurse home visiting program with capacity to serve all births to Frederick County residents each year is under consideration. Other efforts to address public health impacts include vaccination clinics, testing, contact tracing, prevention in congregate settings, personal protective equipment, medical expenses, temporary medical facilities, telemedicine for COVID-19 treatment, communication programs, disinfection of public spaces, quarantining, and treatment of long-term symptom or effects of COVID-19. Expanding access to mental health treatment and to address substance misuse are also under consideration.

- Negative Economic Impact: \$3 Million (First Half: \$1.5 Million)

Activities will address economic harm resulting from, or exacerbated by, the pandemic. Examples include household assistance, such as food programs, rent, mortgage and utility aid, and eviction prevention; assistance to unemployed workers such as mobile career services, job training or job seeking assistance; small business economic assistance may include grants for disadvantaged businesses; supplemental funding for our Community Partnership grant program; analysis of child care targeted to expanding access, providing training for child care providers, and enhancing equity; aid to impacted industries, such as tourism, travel, and hospitality; and other economic support to improve economic relief programs.

- Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities: \$5 Million (First Half: \$2.5 Million)

Programs, services or other assistance will help to address the disproportionate public health and economic impacts of the hardest-hit communities. Examples include but will not be limited to housing support programs or services that address housing insecurity, family and individual shelters, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness; retrofitting homes of seniors so that they may age in place; and facility upgrades to the County owned Bell Court for severely limited income seniors; and supports for local shelters. Upon completion of the studies mentioned in this plan, other additional services may be developed to meet the needs identified in the studies.

- Revenue Replacement/  
Continuity of Government Services \$30 Million (First Half: \$15 Million)

The County has calculated revenue replacement as of December 31, 2020 at \$38,961,981. This amount represents a significant portion of the County's overall award of \$50,413,962. The County is

in the process of identifying and prioritizing projects to be funded with these amounts as well as projects that would be eligible under other categories of grant funding.

The Interim Final Rule gives recipients broad latitude to use funds for the provision of government services to the extent of reduction in revenue. We are planning to address lost revenue in our County owned Citizens Care and Rehabilitation Center and Montevue Assisted Living facility. Cybersecurity enhancements are being considered as well as positioning the county to take advantage of federal grants to provide rural broadband and improve service in underserved areas of the county. There may be other government services to be included in this category.

After the Community Engagement public process is completed, program details further flushed out, and U.S. Treasury regulations finalized, the administration will provide a more detailed plan to the County Council and the public.

### **Promoting equitable outcomes**

The County is working to promote equitable outcomes in all phases of the grant implementation, including: planning and project selection, communication and community engagement, and individual project design. The County's Office of Equity & Inclusion and its associated leadership team have provided their guidance and goals to aid in promoting equitable outcomes through the projects being considered and the distribution of these funds.

During the initial planning phase, staff reviewed health assessment information already available within the Health Department to identify areas with significant gaps in community outcomes. This information led to the development of several requests to gather additional information on health disparities. Specifically, the County is considering projects for pregnant women of color and a strategic community health improvement plan.

The County also reviewed data on COVID-19's effect on underrepresented businesses and on the results of an economic impact survey on minority business owners. Based on this review, the County is looking to develop specific projects to respond to COVID-19's impact on minority businesses.

As the County moves towards obligating funds, individual project initiators will need to incorporate these reporting requirements into their individual projects and provide quarterly reporting on steps taken to ensure services are accessible for all and outcomes meet targeted goals.

The County is still planning the overall use of funds and developing projects that close the gap between minority and majority outcomes. More defined targets and strategies will be identified in future reports.

### **Community Engagement**

Frederick County sought input from a broad range of constituents and in a variety of manners. Our spending plan was shaped by feedback from residents, businesses, community-based organizations and municipal officials. We communicated with both internal and external audiences to ensure the plan reflected the needs and priorities of our community.

### Input gathered to date

An internal workgroup was established, which reached out to gather input from residents and groups within the community, such as businesses, nonprofits, healthcare providers, and community influencers, in addition to County government staff. A countywide survey was conducted in July and August to help set the County's funding priorities and to receive additional feedback. The survey was translatable into 100+ languages to facilitate outreach to non-English speaking communities. In addition to direct communications, the workgroup gathered data from existing business surveys, human needs assessments and plans developed by community organizations. This includes our triennial community health assessment, behavioral health statistics, and data specific to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the people who live and work in Frederick County.

**AUDIENCES:** To inform our plan, we sought out individuals, businesses, community coalitions, and leadership teams that focus on the needs of disadvantaged groups that experienced a disproportionate impact from the pandemic. Specifically, we worked with those who represent and serve minority communities; seniors; children and families, particularly those with low incomes; individuals with behavioral health needs; people who face housing instability; those with potentially unmet health needs; and small business owners, among others. In addition, the countywide survey was made available to anyone with a connection to Frederick County. Information was collected on each respondent's role in the community, as well as any organizational affiliation.

In addition, we have listened when our community has reached out to inform us of gaps in our various services. With their help, we have explored ways to close those gaps using evidence-based best practices and to develop novel solutions to these complex challenges. Stakeholders have clearly stated that the pandemic revealed many unmet and complicated needs for our vulnerable individuals, communities and businesses.

### Additional Outreach Efforts

We see community engagement as an ongoing process. Frederick County has developed a communications and outreach plan that will guide our future efforts. The plan includes the County Executive and her team holding an open and public one-day event during which various roundtable discussions sessions will engage public, private and nonprofit stakeholders. The intent of these discussions is to refine and focus the areas of our plan as the landscape of needs inevitably shifts during our collective response to the pandemic. Gathering input and insights from our various stakeholder communities is woven into our day-to-day work at Frederick County Government.

### **Communication Plan**

This Communication Plan is designed to support the community engagement requirement for Frederick County, Maryland.

**Objective:** Gather community feedback on proposed projects and initiatives to establish funding priorities.

**Strategy:** Conduct an online survey of stakeholders, to include people who live or work in Frederick County, and those who serve the residents of the County. The survey will open on July 29 and remain open for a minimum of three weeks. The survey, found at [FrederickCountyMD.gov/ARPA Survey](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/ARPA Survey), can be translated into 100+ languages.

**Communications Tactics:**

- A) The County Executive announced the survey during a Public Information Briefing on July 29, 2021.
  - a. Social media posts on the CE account that afternoon will reach 5,413 on Facebook and 3,617 on Twitter.
- B) A news release will be issued that same day. The release is distributed:
  - a. Via email to media outlets in the region (75 recipients);
  - b. Via email to all County employees;
  - c. Via email to all municipal offices and elected leaders in Frederick County;
  - d. Online. The homepage of the County's website will include the headline in the news section and a graphic in the slideshow at the top of the page.
  - e. The online version is automatically shared to the Frederick County, MD accounts on Facebook and Twitter, reaching between 16,000 and 16,600 followers.
- C) A web page will be created to feature the County's ongoing ARPA efforts. This page will include a link to the online survey, as well as to all relevant content, such as news releases, documents outlining the County's investment plan, and an ongoing accounting of expended funds.
- D) A story about the survey will be included in FCG TV's production of *County Perspective* as part of the episode scheduled to air July 30 through August 12.
  - a. The show will be broadcast on FCG TV to all cable subscribers in Frederick County, and to anyone who streams the channel online. Live streaming is accessed by approximately 3,000 people a month.
  - b. In addition, the story will be included in a shorter video containing the show's news items, which is uploaded to YouTube and then shared on the County's social media accounts. The YouTube channel has 961 subscribers and is accessible to an unlimited audience. The main FCG social media accounts have the following number of followers: 16,600 Twitter; 15,988 Facebook; and 1,727 Instagram.
- E) A text message and link will be sent to subscribers of the County's weekly COVID-19 updates. Currently, there are 25,211 unique subscribers to these updates, and an additional 3,875 subscribers to general alerts from the Health Department, for a total reach of over 29,000 people.
  - a. An initial notice will be sent when the survey opens.
  - b. A follow-up notice will be issued two days before the survey closes.
- F) Graphics will be created to promote the survey. They will be shared at least once a week while the survey is open, both through social media accounts and on the website's home page slideshow.

**Strategy:** Conduct direct outreach to community members who serve the business community, as well as those who serve targeted populations. Communicate with both internal and external audiences to ensure the plan reflects the needs and priorities of our community.

**Communications Tactics:**

- A) Frederick County Government staff should continue to hold conversations with key community-based organizations, municipal officials, and residents and businesses.
- B) Request input on any needed initiatives, programs, or services that have been identified by these partners. A list appears in the County's ARPA Community Engagement Plan.
- C) Examine existing human needs assessments and plans developed by community organizations.

D) In the Fall of 2021, hold an open and public one-day event during which various roundtable discussions / listening sessions will engage public, private and nonprofit stakeholders.

### **Labor Practices**

As of the reporting date, the County has not obligated any projects. This reporting section is not applicable at this time.

### **Use of Evidence**

As of the reporting date, the County has not obligated any projects. This reporting section is not applicable at this time.

### **Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category**

At this time, no funds have been expended.

### **Project Inventory**

As of the reporting date, the County has not obligated any projects. This reporting section is not applicable at this time.

### **Performance Report**

As of the reporting date, the County has not obligated any projects. This reporting section is not applicable at this time.