

Ottawa County, Michigan

Recovery Plan



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State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

2021 Report

Ottawa County
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Table of Contents

General Overview.....	2
Executive Summary.....	2
Uses of Funds	2
Promoting Equitable Outcomes	3
Community Engagement	4
Labor Practices	5
Use of Evidence	5
Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category	6
Project Inventory.....	8
Example Project	8
Additional Projects.....	8

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

On June 8, 2021, the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners appointed nineteen community members to help guide the distribution of the County's \$56.6M State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) allocation. These individuals, who comprise the County's COVID-19 American Rescue Plan Act Advisory Committee, represent a diverse cross-section of individuals from a range of industry-sectors, including but not limited to, local government, charitable foundations, economic development, non-profit, and human-services agencies. During this early stage of the County's funding distribution process, 5 categories of high-level priorities have been identified. These include: County COVID-19 Operations; County Capital Infrastructure; Community Capital Infrastructure; Social/Human Services Need; and Business.

The anticipated distribution of the County's SLFRF dollars through this categorized lens-of-impact is directly correlated to our County's need for pandemic and economic recovery. The expected outcomes from initiatives funded by these dollars range from, but are not limited to, reducing the negative economic impact to households and businesses, responding to the broader public health impacts of COVID-19 for the community as a whole, acquiring necessary technologies and equipment to help prevent/limit transmission of the virus, constructing necessary infrastructure to eliminate gaps in broadband access, and replacing lost revenue to ensure continued delivery of effective county services.

Because the County just commenced with its efforts to identify funding needs via the formation of a dedicated oversight Committee, no disbursements have been made to-date; thus, no progress updates are available for this August 31 report on expected outcomes or noteworthy challenges/opportunities.

Uses of Funds

Ottawa County's approach to help support a strong and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn will be thorough, inclusive, and strategic in order to maximize the impact of these funds and ensure long-term value to the County, local governments, residents, and businesses that benefit from the distribution of funds.

At this time, apart from the creation of the formalized Committee to help oversee the distribution of the SLFRF dollars, no specific project-funded strategies have yet been developed and/or employed to maximize impact. However, as described in the Executive Summary, the Committee's focus is to distribute funds to areas of need which will generate quantifiable, positive outcomes. Based on the 5 categories of high-level funding priorities, the funds are expected to support not only individuals (e.g., rent/utility assistance, affordable housing), but also populations (e.g. broadband access) as well as communities and the county as a whole (e.g. revenue replacement, covering pandemic expenses, implementing touchless technologies, improving ventilation systems, etc.).

As it relates to our efforts to promote the specific categories listed in this guidance (i.e. Items 2a-2f), the Committee's established categories of high-level funding priorities acknowledges each of these areas. Accordingly, eligible initiatives which can be considered for funding include Public Health (EC 1), Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2), Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC 3), Premium Pay (EC 4), Water, Sewer, Broadband Infrastructure (EC 5), and Revenue Replacement (EC 6).

It is also the County's intent to leverage its SLFRF dollars, where applicable, with other ARPA funding opportunities which include, but are not limited to, Emergency Rental Assistance, Housing Assistance, Broadband Deployment, and others.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Ottawa County's efforts to-date to promote equity in our approach to utilize SLFRF commenced with the formation of the COVID-19 American Rescue Plan Act Advisory Committee. As described previously, the Committee is comprised of individuals representing and advocating for the County's diverse populations, which includes those who are particularly underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected. As a means to ensure the County's approach to fund distribution is equitable, the Committee is currently developing a "project funding application form." This evolving application form includes the submittal of pertinent data for each initiative seeking funding, including but not limited to, number of individuals that will be served by the initiative, whether the initiative will directly impact historically underserved, marginalized, and/or adversely affected groups, as well as requiring a description of how the initiative will promote equitable outcomes. Moreover, it is the intent of the Committee that once an initiative is funded, an agreement with the County will be executed that describes the metrics to be collected and reported for the initiative, as well as the need to create an *evaluation plan* that defines appropriate elements of the initiative, including operational/administrative functions such as awareness/outreach efforts for the initiative, equitable access and distribution of available services across groups, as well as targeted equity outcomes.

Ottawa County's emerging process to distribute funds that prioritize economic and racial equity as a goal begins with its comprehensive application process for community partners to request SLFRF funds for specific projects. The intended process will necessitate that applicants identify and describe whether their proposals will address Negative Economic Impacts and/or provide Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities. To further strengthen the County's intentions to prioritize projects that produce meaningful equitable outcomes, and to elevate projects that can clearly articulate strategies to achieve expected targets, the application form itself may also include such criteria as describing the target population to serve, whether the project will directly impact historically underserved, marginalized, and/or adversely affected groups, including defining the project's anticipated outcomes. These application criteria will ultimately be used by the Committee, along with involving the expertise of the County's professional evaluation staff (as described in Section 6 of this report) to assess and screen proposed projects for feasibility and practicality of positively impacting the target communities and populations as intended, along with assessing the ability to quantify those impacts through a scientific evaluative process once funding is distributed.

Ottawa County's efforts to-date to promote equity through its SLFRF process involves the work of the Committee and other county staff to create the robust funding application process and a multi-year, project specific evaluation framework. The County has extensive experience in conducting rigid, scientific assessments of its programming and services to ensure administrative performance, and to quantify intended outcomes as a means to ensure public tax dollars are maximized to positively impact local communities and all populations. Given the County's diverse geographic and demographic make-up, the process developed to distribute funds is intended to proportionately support all populations and communities with the greatest need relative to the experienced impacts of COVID-19.

Community Engagement

It is Ottawa County's aim to maintain contact with County residents and leaders for the duration of the allocation period in order to remain up to date with the needs and wants of the community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impacts. Ottawa County has implemented some of the communication techniques and plans on adding more as the allocation period progresses.

In order to involve the community as much as possible in the decision-making process, Ottawa County has decided to form an American Rescue Plan Act Committee. The role of the ARPA Committee will be to identify needs within their area of expertise and assist with drafting funding options and priorities for the Board Finance & Administration Standing Committee and the Board of Commissioners. The committee is made up of leaders in the community who have an exceptional grasp on the needs of the people they serve. Each of the nineteen members were selected by the County Administrator and Board of Commissioners based on their area of knowledge and the organization they are a part of. Some organizations include those that focus on housing, economic development, nonprofit assistance, and governmental affairs.

With the help of the ARPA Committee, public comment, and community surveys, Ottawa County will prioritize groups that have been historically unserved or underserved. Leaders from groups like the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance, the Lakeshore Nonprofit Alliance, Community Spoke, Ottawa County Housing Commission, etc. will assist in the process of identifying needs within these communities. Ottawa County sent out a community survey in order to ascertain how Ottawa County residents feel the ARPA funds should be used. The survey questions pertain to city services and resident preferences on future investment. The County also plans on assisting ARPA Committee members through the process of reaching out to local units of government with a SurveyMonkey format, the Committee intends to ask if the local units of government requested ARPA funding, how much they requested, and if they have priorities for utilizing the funds.

Through the emerging project application process as previously described, the Committee will work to ensure that funds are distributed to those community organizations that have a pulse on, and are intimately involved in, serving residents with significant barriers to services, including people of color, people with low income, limited English proficiency, and other traditionally underserved groups.

Labor Practices

While the County has not yet identified any specific infrastructure projects at this time, it is the intent of the County to employ strong labor standards to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure and support economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for workers. Ottawa County intends to utilize community benefits agreements for infrastructure projects, and will employ local hiring and prevailing wage requirements, to the extent possible.

Use of Evidence

While the County has not yet identified specific impact-driven projects to receive SLFRF dollars within its 5 categories of high-level priorities at this time, it is the intent of the County to employ evidence-based models and/or rigorous evaluation design to validate expected outcomes. Ottawa County is uniquely positioned to conduct this type of necessary evidence-based, scientific evaluation as it is one of the only counties in Michigan with staff dedicated to conducting such studies.

For nearly 20 years, the County Board of Commissioners has supported and retained experienced evaluation staff in the County's Planning and Performance Improvement Department (PPID). The PPID assists local units of government, nonprofits, and county departments with their evaluation, research, and data needs. This work includes, but is not limited to:

- Strategic planning to provide direction for programs/services.
- Assisting others by sharing our knowledge regarding research methods, survey design, data collection tool design, data/statistics compilation, data analysis, and reporting.
- Evaluating programs/services to highlight what's working well (beneficial outcomes), learn about what's not working well, and identify opportunities for improving programs/services and maximizing the use of financial resources.

Since 2002, the PPID has completed numerous strategic plans and evaluations of criminal justice programs, public health programs, community organizations, as well as Ottawa County departments and initiatives. Samples of many of the strategic plans and evaluations completed by the PPID can be viewed www.miottawa.org/planning/performance_improvement.

The Evaluation Team in the PPID is presently comprised of three experienced staff members with nearly 40 years of combined experience as professional evaluation, along with memberships in both State and National evaluation associations, including leadership as past President of Michigan's Association for Evaluation (MAE).

As members of the national and state associations, PPID staff adhere to the [AEA Guiding Principles](#) and the [Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation's Program Evaluation Standards](#).

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Ottawa County will be reporting on cumulative expenditures in the following categories. To date, no SLFRF have been expended.

Expenditure Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.1	COVID-19 Vaccination		
1.2	COVID-19 Testing		
1.3	COVID-19 Contact Tracing		
1.4	Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)		
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment		
1.6	Medical Expenses (including Alternative Care Facilities)		
1.7	Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency		
1.8	Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)		
1.9	Payroll Costs for Public Health, Safety, and Other Public Sector Staff Responding to COVID-19		
1.10	Mental Health Services		
1.11	Substance Use Services		
1.12	Other Public Health Services		
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.1	Household Assistance: Food Programs		
2.2	Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid		
2.3	Household Assistance: Cash Transfers		
2.4	Household Assistance: Internet Access Programs		
2.5	Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention		
2.6	Unemployment Benefits or Cash Assistance to Unemployed Workers		
2.7	Job Training Assistance (e.g., Sectoral job-training, Subsidized Employment, Employment Supports or Incentives)		
2.8	Contributions to UI Trust Funds*		
2.9	Small Business Economic Assistance (General)		
2.10	Aid to nonprofit organizations		

Expenditure Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries		
2.13	Other Economic Support		
2.14	Rehiring Public Sector Staff		
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities		
3.1	Education Assistance: Early Learning		
3.2	Education Assistance: Aid to High-Poverty Districts		
3.3	Education Assistance: Academic Services		
3.4	Education Assistance: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Services		
3.5	Education Assistance: Other		
3.6	Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care		
3.7	Healthy Childhood Environments: Home Visiting		
3.8	Healthy Childhood Environments: Services to Foster Youth or Families Involved in Child Welfare System		
3.9.	Healthy Childhood Environments: Other		
3.10	Housing Support: Affordable Housing		
3.11	Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons		
3.12	Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance		
3.13	Social Determinants of Health: Other		
3.14	Social Determinants of Health: Community Health Workers or Benefits Navigators		
3.15	Social Determinants of Health: Lead Remediation		
3.16	Social Determinants of Health: Community Violence Interventions		
4	Expenditure Category: Premium Pay		
4.1	Public Sector Employees		
4.2	Private Sector: Grants to other employers		
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		
5.1	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater treatment		
5.2	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater collection and conveyance		
5.3	Clean Water: Decentralized wastewater		
5.4	Clean Water: Combined sewer overflows		
5.5	Clean Water: Other sewer infrastructure		
5.6	Clean Water: Stormwater		
5.7	Clean Water: Energy conservation		

Expenditure Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
5.8	Clean Water: Water conservation		
5.9	Clean Water: Nonpoint source		
5.10	Drinking water: Treatment		
5.11	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution		
5.12	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution: lead remediation		
5.13	Drinking water: Source		
5.14	Drinking water: Storage		
5.15	Drinking water: Other water infrastructure		
5.16	Broadband: "Last Mile" projects		
5.17	Broadband: Other projects		
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement		
6.1	Provision of Government Services		
7	Administrative and Other		
7.1	Administrative Expenses		
7.2	Evaluation and data analysis		
7.3	Transfers to Other Units of Government		
7.4	Transfers to Nonentitlement Units (States and Territories only)		

Project Inventory

Ottawa County will report on individual projects as they are funded.

Performance Report

Ottawa County will report key performance indicators for major SLFRF funded projects. At a minimum, Ottawa County will report on the following metrics for major projects for each Expenditure Category (EC) per the table above:

- a. *Household Assistance (EC 2.2 & 2.5) and Housing Support (EC 3.10-3.12):*
 - *Number of people or households receiving eviction prevention services (including legal representation)*
 - *Number of affordable housing units preserved or developed*
- b. *Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2):*
 - *Number of workers enrolled in sectoral job training programs*
 - *Number of workers completing sectoral job training programs*
 - *Number of people participating in summer youth employment programs*

- c. *Education Assistance (EC 3.1-3.5):*
 - *Number of students participating in evidence-based tutoring programs*
- d. *Healthy Childhood Environments (EC 3.6-3.9):*
 - *Number of children served by childcare and early learning (pre-school/pre-K/ages 3- 5)*
 - *Number of families served by home visiting*