

County of Chester
Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Funds**

2022 Report

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The County of Chester is in the process of evaluating proposals for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) funding for adherence to Treasury's requirements and potential benefit to the community. The County assembled an Evaluation Committee, composed of members of the community and County personnel, to review applications and make recommendations for the best use of funds.

The inclusion of this Evaluation Committee has posed both a challenge and an opportunity for the County. The Committee's review has added multiple steps in the review process, which in turn has added significant time to the process. This has created an additional challenge to getting the funding allocated and distributed. However, the Evaluation Committee has also created an opportunity for influence from constituents. The creation of this Committee has opened a line of communication for the community's priorities and concerns to be heard and allowed the recommendation of applications they believe will best serve the community. Not only does this benefit the individuals involved and the public, who have been given a voice in the process, but it also benefits the County decisionmakers as it provides them with a better understanding of community priorities.

Uses of Funds

The use of ARPA funds may potentially relate to the following areas:

- a. Public Health (EC 1)
- b. Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)
- c. Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity (EC 3)
- d. Premium Pay (EC 4)
- e. Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure (EC 5)
- f. Revenue Replacement (EC 6)

It is important to Chester County to allocate and distribute its nearly \$102 million in funds in a way that best serves the community and adheres to the spirit of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) and Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) are unique and innovative approaches being used by local governments to match available resources with community priorities. They also serve to provide valuable decision-making information to elected officials, engage citizens in the budgeting process, and escape the traditional routine of basing "new" budgets on revisions to the "old" budget. These approaches help ensure that the community can identify and preserve those programs and services that are most highly valued. Processes like PBB and BFO are used to determine the intended and actual uses of funding to best serve the communities within County of Chester.

To engage the community, the County of Chester opened a grant application period for local organizations to request SLFRF funds for eligible projects. Applicants were not limited in the number of applications they could submit, nor the amount of funding they could request. Applicants also were not limited by the organization's geographic location, provided the funding would be used to support and/or serve Chester County residents. Hence, some applications were submitted from organizations outside of Chester County.

The County is currently reviewing potential projects submitted by County departments, municipalities, small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other entities during the open application period. 309 applications were received, totaling over \$300 million in requests.

Susquehanna Accounting and Consulting Services, Inc. will assist the County with compliance. A summary of all proposals received— regardless of whether they are funded or not – will be posted on the County’s ARPA webpage once funding has been awarded.

Promoting equitable outcomes

In Executive Order 13985, President Biden defined “equity” as, “the consistent and systemic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.” With this definition in mind, the County of Chester recognizes that any action taken that does not address inequity will perpetuate it.

The County intends to address inequity as follows:

- a. **Goals:** Since the County of Chester has not yet distributed funds, specific goals or targets to address inequity have not yet been identified. However, the County recognizes two distinct areas – the City of Coatesville and Southern Chester County – as communities where action to address inequity must be taken.
- b. **Awareness:** The County announced and promoted the open application period through press releases and postings on the County’s website and social media accounts. Representatives of the County also attended meetings within the community to promote and discuss the application process. When finalized, awarding will be announced with press releases to ensure that the community is aware of the services available as a result of SLFRF funds. The County will also encourage all recipients to actively promote the services they provide as a result of SLFRF funds.
- c. **Access and Distribution:** The County ensured equal access to the application period through the program manager, who was available via email, phone, and video conferencing to address individual questions and assist applicants with their proposals. With respect to services provided by recipients, the County has included a nondiscrimination clause into the grant funding agreement all recipients will be required to sign.
- d. **Outcomes:** The most prominent way the County intends to close gaps in service is through supporting, rebuilding, and stabilizing human service programs provided by independent organizations and the County. Human service programs historically provide support to those individuals, families, and households that need the most assistance. By supporting Chester County’s human services industry, SLFRF funds will be supporting those historically disinvested in communities.

The above initial efforts to promote equity resulted in receiving over three times the amount of funding requests as the County’s SLFRF funding. In addition, almost \$34 million in requests came from West Nottingham Township, East Nottingham Township, Elk Township, New London

Township, Franklin Township, London Britain Township, and Oxford Borough – which make up Southern Chester County – and the City of Coatesville.

Community Engagement

To ensure community engagement, the County of Chester assembled an Evaluation Committee, made up of members of the community and County personnel, to review proposed projects for suitability and make recommendations for the best use of funds. The Committee was split into six teams, in accordance with Treasury's six expenditure categories. Each team evaluated applications pertaining to their respective category. The County engaged the public volunteers in this way to ensure that funds are directed towards the communities most impacted by the pandemic.

Evaluation Committee members represent Chester County's racial, economic, and geographic diversity. All team members were trained on the criteria as set forth in the Department of Treasury guidance to ensure appropriate use of funds and the promotion of equitable outcomes.

Labor Practices

To the extent that the County has projects in this category, standards will be established to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects while also supporting the economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for workers. Such standards will be established prior to commencement of any such projects.

Use of Evidence

Where applicable, the County is using evidence-based criteria in the design and selection of programs to be funded with SLFRF funds. See details for use of evidence-based criteria in the Project Inventory section below.

Performance Report

In the development of the application for SLFRF funds, the County required applicants to describe anticipated measurable outcomes for the project and how the agency plans to ensure that measurements are valid and reliable. Applicants' responses to this requirement will be strongly considered during evaluation to certify that performance management is an important component of the award-making process.

A major overarching goal for the County is to ensure that the SLFRF funds are used to assist communities throughout Chester County. For this reason, the application was marketed to interested County departments, municipalities, small businesses, and non-profit organizations across the jurisdiction. In response, the County received applications from a variety of geographic locations. A visualization of this geographic diversity can be found on the County's ARPA webpage.¹

¹ <https://www.chesco.org/ARPA>

PROJECT INVENTORY

Inmate Vaccine Incentive

Project “Prison”: Chester County Prison Vaccine Incentive

Funding Amount: \$60,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1; Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

- The Chester County Prison is running a monetary incentive for the inmate population to participate in COVID vaccinations. Incarcerated individuals receive \$100 for each completed vaccine (\$100 for Johnson & Johnson and \$50 per vaccine for Moderna and Pfizer) plus \$50 for each booster.
- The vaccines are being administered by the Prison’s Medical Vendor, PrimeCare and are given to any inmate who requests it. PrimeCare completes a vaccine form and gives that to the Director of Inmate Services for all completed inmate vaccines. The Director of Inmate Services notifies and gives approval to bookkeeping to add money to the inmate’s commissary account.
- The program began on December 17, 2021 and will continue until the allocated funding amount is reached.

Use of Evidence:

- Nationwide, many of the largest single-site outbreaks of COVID-19, since the beginning of the public health crisis, have been in jails and prisons. People who live in correctional settings are at a high risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- COVID-19 vaccinations are an evidence-based intervention proven to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and decrease the risk of serious illness and death.
- The goal of the Chester County Prison Vaccine Incentive Program is to protect this vulnerable population by mitigating the spread of COVID-19 through the administration of vaccines.
- In a report titled “Examples of Evidence-Based Solutions to Increase Vaccine Confidence and Uptake,” the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists monetary incentives for vaccination as a solution to address low vaccination rates in targeted populations.²

Performance Report:

- Through June 30, 2022, 525 vaccines have been administered and \$28,350 has been distributed.

²(n.d.). *Examples of Evidence-Based Solutions to Increase Vaccine Confidence and Uptake*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Juniper Advisory

Project “92021004”: Hospital Advisory

Funding Amount: \$250,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1; Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

- Chester County recently had two hospitals close. These closures have resulted in a loss of crucial healthcare support to the residents of Chester County.
- Juniper Advisory has been contracted to provide consulting services to evaluate potential options for the provision of acute care, emergent, and behavioral health services in Chester County.

Use of Evidence:

- This project has just begun. Therefore, there is no use of evidence to report yet.

Performance Report:

- This project has just begun. Therefore, there has been no performance to report yet.

Cozen O’Conner

Project “92021005”: Hospital Counsel

Funding Amount: \$80,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1; Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

- Chester County recently had two hospitals close. These closures have resulted in a loss of crucial healthcare support to the residents of Chester County.
- Cozen O’Conner has been contracted to provide legal counsel and advice related to entering into a Letter of Intent to consider a financial contribution towards the continued operation of the hospitals.

Use of Evidence:

- This project has just begun. Therefore, there is no use of evidence to report yet.

Performance Report:

- This project has just begun. Therefore, there has been no performance to report yet.

Pocopson Nursing and Rehabilitation Home

Project "Pocopson": Pocopson Nursing and Rehabilitation Home

Funding Amount: \$2,396,789

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1; Revenue Replacement

Project Overview:

- This is a budgeted allocation for the Pocopson Nursing and Rehabilitation Home as a provision of government services for the expected revenue shortfall.
- Pocopson Home opened in 1951 and is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health to provide services for 275 residents. Every resident receives high quality medical and nursing care in a dignified and pleasant environment.

Use of Evidence:

- These funds have not been expended. Therefore, there is no use of evidence to report yet.

Performance Report:

- This funding has been allocated for the Pocopson Nursing and Rehabilitation Home. It is anticipated that the funding will be expended in December 2022.