



Charleston County Government Charleston County, SC **Recovery Plan**

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2023 Report

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Charleston County Government
2023 Recovery Plan

Table of Contents

GENERAL OVERVIEW	2
Executive Summary	2
Uses of Funds.....	2
Promoting Equitable Outcomes	5
Community Engagement.....	6
Labor Practices.....	6
Use of Evidence	6
Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category	7
Project Inventory	8
Performance Report	9

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) provided \$80 million to Charleston County for Coronavirus pandemic relief and economic recovery. The Department of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization (HNR) has been given the responsibility to plan, award, and distribute these funds to achieve the maximum level of community impact in a fair and equitable manner. The County Council has established a set of overall priorities for the distribution of these funds, and HNR will engage with the community to determine the best way to achieve each priority.

Charleston County Government has identified four priorities in using the American Rescue Plan funding.

1. Making Charleston County Whole
 - Deferred Maintenance/Purchases
 - Premium Pay for Critical Staff
 - Completion of Backlog of Public Works Projects
2. Accessibility & Connectivity
 - Broadband/Digital Equity
 - Cybersecurity
 - Equal Access to County Services in Rural Areas
 - Public Safety Expansion
 - Bike & Pedestrian Pathways
3. Economic Stability for All
 - Housing Security
 - Small Business Stabilization
 - Building Grassroots Capacity to Serve the Community
 - Behavioral Health Support
4. Resilience and Infrastructure
 - Addressing Flooding & Drainage Issues
 - Functioning Sewer, Septic, & Water Access

Uses of Funds

Charleston County Council engaged with the College of Charleston Riley Center for Livable Communities in a strategic planning effort to determine its priorities for allocating and spending ARPA funds. Council then appropriated \$3 Million of ARPA funds to establish the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization (formerly known as the Department of Community Revitalization and Housing Affordability) to plan, allocate, expend, and oversee these funds on behalf of the County, and another \$650,000 in program administration costs to execute ARPA-related programs. Since October 22nd, 2021, the department has been engaged in a comprehensive planning effort to award and distribute these funds to achieve the maximum level of community impact in a fair and equitable manner. HNR has undertaken a county-wide effort to engage with the community to determine the best way to achieve each priority.

1. Making Charleston County Whole

The Revenue Replacement provisions of ARPA funding allow municipal governments to use a portion of ARPA funds to supplement municipal general funds in consideration for revenue lost during the pandemic shutdown. These funds can generally be used for anything for which general revenue funds can be used.

a. Deferred Maintenance/Purchases

County Council has allocated \$6,665,000 of Revenue Replacement funds to complete deferred maintenance projects and purchase needed equipment. Approved items include improvements to the Lonnie Hamilton Public Service Building, the County

Detention Center, and the County judicial building (COB). This also includes purchases of fleet vehicles and equipment, and a utilization study to maximize efficiencies in fleet usage and purchases. The County used available county funds to maintain and sustain critical life safety infrastructure – albeit without re-capitalization replacement of vehicles and equipment for first responder agencies.

b. Premium Pay for Critical Staff

County Council has allocated \$3,500,000 from Revenue Replacement funds towards a one-time Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for county staff for FY 2022 and \$4,000,000 towards a one-time COLA for FY 2023.

c. Completion of Backlog of Public Works Projects

County Council has allocated \$1,850,000 of Revenue Replacement funds to public works projects (not including drainage and water/sewer projects). This includes funding for lost bridge replacement and improvements to the Steamboat Landing boat access in Edisto.

Other Critical Projects

Other projects determined to be a priority by the council include \$5,749,805 of revenue Replacement funds for various county projects including a new county tax software system, improved fire suppression for records facilities, and general COVID response.

2. Accessibility and Connectivity

Charleston County covers an extensive and complex geographical area which presents many challenges to Charleston County residents' access to critical public services and amenities. Connecting residents to these services and amenities, both physically and digitally, is an important undertaking to ensure that all county residents have access to the quality-of-life Charleston County provides.

a. Broadband/Digital Equity

While Council may vote to expend some ARPA funds for general planning for broadband and digital equity, available funding at the state and local level to expand digital service and connectivity has made it unnecessary to allocate any substantial ARPA funding in this area.

b. Cybersecurity

HNR has worked with the County's Information Technology (IT) department to identify critical security enhancements that will not only facilitate the expansion of digital access services to county residents, but also provide important safety upgrades to county employees carrying out their daily functions. In doing so, County Council has allocated \$900,000 for Privileged Access Management and Network Access Control.

c. Equal Access to County Services in Rural Areas

HNR is in the early stages of identifying different ways county services can be made more available to residents in rural areas of the county.

d. Public Safety Expansion

County Council has allocated \$1,300,000 of Revenue Replacement funds to facilities and equipment at the County Coroner's office. These improvements include important investigative enhancements that will allow the county to save substantial time and money by eliminating the need to secure investigative service in Columbia, SC. The county has also invested in a number of public safety expansion projects using county general funds.

e. Bike & Pedestrian Pathways

Charleston County's complex geography makes cycling and pedestrian activity very challenging outside of the county's urban centers. This issue became particularly problematic during the COVID pandemic when outdoor activity was critical to the physical

and mental health of residents. While Council may vote to expend some ARPA funds in this area, funding for this will be addressed through infrastructure funds and the Greenbelt Program making it unnecessary to allocate any substantial ARPA funding in this area.

3. Economic Stability for All

During the pandemic, the Charleston area was significantly impacted in the hospitality and tourism industry resulting in significant job loss in this sector. At the same time, the availability of remote working opportunities resulted in a significant increase of high-income individuals relocating to Charleston County. This inward migration, along with a decade of underbuilding in the housing sector has created a housing crisis affecting a large number of low and middle-income county residents. Limited transit-oriented development further complicates the existing conditions. It is proposed that addressing housing stability, increasing transportation options and connected behavioral health services to citizens in need are all important elements of this revitalization plan.

a. Housing Security

The fact that South Carolina contains 12 of the top 20 counties for eviction rates in the United States, and the city of North Charleston has the highest eviction rate in the country demonstrates the severity of the housing crisis in Charleston County. In response to this crisis, Charleston County Council has tasked the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization with creating a comprehensive housing plan for the county and allocated \$20 million in ARPA funding towards its implementation. The Housing Our Future plan will detail goals, objectives, and strategies for alleviating the housing crisis and ensuring that more county residents have safe, decent, and affordable housing. Another \$3,000,000 has been allocated for a critical home repair program for elderly and disabled homeowners. County Council has also expended \$2,484,884 for the purchase of 18 houses to be used for affordable housing, and \$1,150,000 to the Neighbor's Together women and children's shelter. HNR will release its proposed plan for the \$20 million allocation in September 2022.

b. Small Business Stabilization

HNR received approval on March 31, 2022, to appropriate \$2 million of ARPA funds as part of the Department's early action items and on August 23, 2022, another \$2 million for the Microbusiness Pandemic Relief Program. This program was created to assist neighborhood-scale ("Mom and Pop") businesses affected by the COVID pandemic. This is a one-time relief grant intended to help mitigate past and present perils of COVID-19 on workers and businesses. The aim is to support neighborhood-scale businesses by providing access to capital and facilitating capacity building through the injection of federal funds. Qualified businesses received up to \$25,000. The effectiveness of this early action program was limited because many neighborhood-scale businesses lack the proper organization and paperwork capacity to receive federal funds. HNR has engaged with the South Carolina Association for Community and Economic Development and the County's Small BusinessEnterprise Program to construct new programs and mechanisms to support the county's small business community.

c. Building Grassroots Capacity to Serve the Community

HNR received approval on March 31, 2022, to allocate \$1,500,000 for the Nonprofit Pandemic Relief Program as part of the Department's early actions items. The goal of this pandemic relief program is to support community-based nonprofit organizations by providing capital, through the injection of federal funds, to reimburse for pandemic-related services provided to Charleston County residents. Qualified Nonprofits can receive up to \$50,000. The initial round of non-profit grant applications was due May 13, 2022. A total of nineteen (19) applications were received by the deadline. The program was re-opened in June and HNR engaged in an intensified community outreach process to solicit more applications. The effectiveness of this early action program was limited because many Non-Profits lack the proper organization and paperwork to receive federal funds. Future

program rounds will include provisions to assist these businesses in establishing the proper organization and paperwork. HNR has engaged with the South Carolina Association for Community and Economic Development, the Trident United Way, the South Carolina Community Loan Fund, and the Coastal Community Foundation to construct a capacity building network that benefit all Charleston County charitable organizations. With the help of these organizations, capacity was increased and a total of 37 community based non-profit organizations were supported.

d. Behavioral Health Support

Charleston County hospitals are experiencing higher levels of admissions from homeless individuals with opioid addiction. The lack of transitional housing with wrap around services means individuals are either spending more time in hospitals than is preferred which further jeopardizes the public health of those needing emergency care or they are being discharged without any stable housing or plan to achieve it. Investments in the County's Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) has been identified as a priority for the investment of ARPA funds.

4. Resilience and Infrastructure

Resilience and Sustainability Office was created in 2020 by County Council to identify strategies to make the County more resilient and sustainable while focusing on the prevention and mitigation of climate change which causes increased sea level rise, flooding, and extreme heat in Charleston County. Additionally, as a large portion of the county is rural and an estimated 40% of homes are serviced by well and septic systems, investment in functioning sewer, septic, and water access is a priority for the county.

a. Addressing Flooding & Drainage Issues

As a coastal community, Charleston County faces an exaggerated threat of flooding due to sea level rise and extreme weather events. County Council has allocated \$1,250,000 to address flooding issues at capri Island, Forest Lake Blvd., and the Phillips Community. HNR will engage with other County departments to determine if more projects can be funded with ARPA funds.

b. Functioning Sewer, Septic, & Water Access

Charleston County's Community Development Department operates a well and septic program that services low and moderate-income homeowners in need of repair and replacement of well and septic systems. HNR will be working with Community Development to facilitate additional investments in this program using ARPA funds. The department will also be looking at projects to bring water and sewer to settlement communities in the county. County Council has allocated \$1,500,000 to address Well/Sewer/Septic program expansion and settlement community (Donut Hole) connections. County Council has also allocated \$4,000,000 to address the Snowden water/sewer phase II connections.

Other Federal Pandemic Relief Funds

Charleston County Community Development received CARES act funding from HUD totaling \$3,991,331 from CDBG and ESG. These funds were used to provide, food, rental assistance, shelter, homeless services, legal services, and rapid rehousing. The first round of CDBG funds, \$855,699 and all the ESG funds, \$1,341,755 were awarded to non-profit organizations who provided the services to low-income and homeless citizens in Charleston County. The second round of CDBG funds, \$1,793,877, were used to run an in-house program for rental and utility assistance. Except for funds remaining in ESG for shelter services all these funds have been distributed. Charleston County is receiving two rounds of Emergency Rental Assistance funding from U.S. Treasury. Round 1 included around \$12.4 million and Round 2 will include around \$9.8 million. All these funds have now been distributed.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Many of the priority areas that Charleston County has identified will improve the lives of residents living in disproportionately impacted communities such as broadband/digital equity, equal access to county services in rural areas, housing security, small business stabilization, building grassroots capacity to serve the community, behavioral health support, addressing flooding & drainage issues, and functioning sewer, septic, & water access. Strategies to implement these priorities can include assistance to disproportionately impacted communities.

HNR will be deliberate in its planning to ensure that all programs will be designed to promote equitable outcomes. The department will provide regular updates, using qualitative and quantitative data, on how our approach achieved or promoted equitable outcomes or progressed against equity goals during the ARPA grant period.

Community Engagement

HNR began its planning for the distribution of ARPA funds using community engagement data collected by the Charleston County Community Development Department. The department's efforts incorporated constituent input gathered throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Community Development utilized a Citizen Participation Plan to capture public input on federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding the County receives. In 2020 and 2021, this citizen participation included 7 public meetings, 2 public comment periods, 4 roundtables, 2 workshops, and a survey (761 respondents took the survey).

Survey findings indicated the top priorities for county residents were as follows:

1. Affordable Housing (for rent or homeownership) * - 77%
2. Public Services (training, counseling, fair housing, rental assistance, etc.) - 61%
3. Clean water/sanitary sewer (well/septic, water/sewer) - 59%
4. Economic Development (workforce development, business incubators, technical assistance) - 54%
5. Homeless Services (rapid rehousing, shelter) - 54%

HNR has since engaged in its own community engagement efforts including a Community Engagement Plan which incorporates two community surveys, an aggressive public meeting schedule, and an extensive digital media marketing campaign. The Community Engagement Plan and information on progress will be published to the department website in August 2022 and will be included in future progress reports.

Labor Practices

Department of Treasury guidelines anticipate that workforce practices on any infrastructure projects being pursued with ARPA funds use strong labor standards to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects while also supporting the economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for workers. Charleston County has not yet commenced any infrastructure projects funded by ARPA resources but will engage with the appropriate County departments to ensure that these guidelines are followed to the fullest extent of local, state, and federal laws. Information on these practices will be included in future progress reports.

Use of Evidence

Department of Treasury guidelines anticipate that ARPA funds will be used for evidence-based interventions or that projects will be evaluated through rigorous program evaluations that are designed to build evidence. HNR has not yet engaged in any programming that requires or anticipates this approach, but the department is developing an evidence-building strategy for the County and its use of ARPA funds. This strategy will describe our overall approach for using evidence and evaluation, including how a Learning Agenda will support our overarching evaluation efforts. Detailed evidence information for each project will be included in the Project Inventory section of future progress reports.

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.1	COVID-19 Vaccination*	\$0	\$0
1.2	COVID-19 Testing*	\$0	\$0
1.3	COVID-19 Contact Tracing*	\$0	\$0
1.8	Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)*	\$0	\$0
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.9	Small Business Economic Assistance (General)	\$160,245	\$160,245
2.10	Aid to nonprofit organizations	\$0	\$0
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities		
3.10	Housing Support: Affordable Housing*	\$0	\$0
3.11	Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons*	\$0	\$0
3.12	Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance	\$0	\$0
4	Expenditure Category: Premium Pay		
4.1	Public Sector Employees*	\$0	\$0
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement**		
6.1	Provision of Government Services	\$7,709,689	\$7,709,689
7	Administrative and Other		
7.1	Administrative Expenses	\$178,950	\$178,950
7.2	Evaluation and data analysis*	\$0	\$0

* Funds expended from Revenue Replacement not included in total.

** Includes expenditures from other categories paid for with Revenue Replacement Funds.

Project Inventory

Project D63000001: Department of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

Funding amount: \$3,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 7.1 - Administrative Expenses

Project Overview

Council appropriated \$3 Million of ARPA funds to establish the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization (formerly known as the Department of Community Revitalization and Housing Affordability) to plan, allocate, expend, and oversee these funds on behalf of the County.

This is not an evidence-based program.

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/hnr/index.php>

Project 22-65: Nonprofit Pandemic relief Program

Funding amount: \$1,500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.10 - Aid to Nonprofit Organizations

Project Overview

The Charleston County Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Non-Profit Pandemic Relief Program is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 which includes help for community-based nonprofit organizations affected by the COVID pandemic. This is a one-time relief grant intended to reimburse nonprofit organizations for funds already spent to provide pandemic relief to Charleston County Residents. The goal of this pandemic relief program is to support these community-based nonprofit organizations by providing capital to reimburse for pandemic related services provided to Charleston County residents. Approved applicants will receive a one-time relief grant in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 per eligible nonprofit.

This is not an evidence-based program.

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/hnr/nonprofreliefprog.php>

Project 22-68: Microbusiness Pandemic Relief Program

Funding amount: \$4,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.9 - Small Business Economic Assistance (General)

Project Overview

The Charleston County Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Microbusiness Pandemic Relief Program is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 which includes help for neighborhood scale ("Mom and Pop") businesses affected by the COVID pandemic. This is a one-time relief grant intended to help mitigate past and present perils of COVID-19 on workers and businesses. Qualified businesses can receive up to \$25,000 per business.

This is not an evidence-based program.

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/hnr/mbpreliefprog.php>

Project 22-121: Critical Home Repair Program

Funding amount: \$3,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 3.12 - Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance

Project Overview

Council appropriated \$3 Million of ARPA funds to emergency housing rehabilitation targeted at senior citizens and disabled individuals on a low to moderate income.

This is not an evidence-based program.

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/community-development/critical-home-repairs.php>

Project 22-188: Critical Home Repair Program Administrative Costs

Funding amount: \$300,000

Project Expenditure Category: 7.1 - Administrative Expenses

Project Overview

Administrative expenses for the Critical Home Repair Program.

This is not an evidence-based program.

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/community-development/critical-home-repairs.php>

Project 22-190: Scattered Site Houses Administrative Expenses

Funding amount: \$350,000

Project Expenditure Category: 7.1 - Administrative Expenses

Project Overview

Administrative costs to maintain the 18 scattered site houses purchased by the County with revenue Replacement funds to be used for affordable housing.

This is not an evidence-based program.

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/community-development/index.php>

Project 22-255: Community Data & Mapping

Funding amount: \$850,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2 – Negative Economic Impacts

Project Overview

To harmonize Charleston County administrative data sources related to the type of housing zoning the quality of housing and housing insecurity evictions and foreclosures into a single data frame with publicly available data sources to enable bivariate and multivariate trend analysis.

This program just started, and no data has been collected to date.

(No website yet available)

Project 22-255A: Water and Sewer

Funding amount: \$5,500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 5.5 – Other Sewer Infrastructure

Project Overview

To address the Resilience and Infrastructure priority, approve \$4,500,000 in ARPA program expenditures as matching funds for water and sewer projects with Mount Pleasant Water Works (conditioned upon full funding of the projects) and \$1,000,000 for the Charleston County Community Development Well and Septic program.

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/community-development/index.php>

Performance Report

Department of Treasury guidelines require that the County include key performance indicators for major SLFRF funded projects. The County is required to report key performance indicators for each project, or group projects with substantially similar goals and the same outcome measures. Data must be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, income, and other relevant factors, if possible. Data should be presented in a table and each annual report should include updated data for the performance period as well as prior period data. Programs in the following areas require such performance reporting:

- 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
 - Number of families served by home visiting

Charleston County has not undertaken any programs that require this reporting. If such programs are undertaken, performance data will be included in the project inventory above and aggregated in this section.

Charleston County ARPA Allocations

As of June 30, 2022	Subcategory Totals	% Of Total	Approval Date	Lost Revenue	Early Action Items	Future Programming	Total Per Category
Administration							\$4,405,000
ARPA General Administration	\$3,075,000	5.5%					
Reporting Dashboard			8/25/22	\$75,000			
ARPA Administration (HNR)			1/18/22		\$3,000,000		
ARPA Programs Administration	\$1,330,000						
Early Action Programs			8/23/22		\$350,000		
Future Programs			8/23/22			\$330,000	
Scattered Site Program			6/23/22		\$350,000		
Critical Repairs Program			6/23/22		\$300,000		
Making Charleston County Whole							\$21,765,000
Deferred Maintenance/Purchases	\$6,665,000	8.3%					
Facilities - PSB Envelope			8/25/22	\$1,375,000			
Facilities - Detention Envelope			8/25/22	\$1,600,000			
Facilities - COB			8/25/22	\$950,000			
Council Chambers/Committee Room			4/26/22	\$765,000			
Fleet/Vehicles and Equipment			8/25/21	\$1,675,000			
Fleet Utilization Study			4/26/22	\$300,000			
Premium Pay for Critical Staff	\$7,500,000	9.4%					
One Time COLA - FY-22			8/25/21	\$3,500,000			
One Time COLA - FY-23			4/26/22	\$4,000,000			
Backlog of Public Works Projects	\$1,850,000	2.3%					
Steam Boat Landing			8/25/21	\$1,650,000			
Lost Bridge Replacement			4/26/22	\$200,000			
Other	\$5,750,000	7.2%					
COVID Response			8/25/22	\$500,000			
Charleston County Tax System			3/1/22	\$5,000,000			
Records Fire Suppression			4/26/22	\$250,000			
Accessibility and Connectivity							\$2,200,000
Cybersecurity	\$900,000	1.1%					
Privileged Access Management			8/23/22	\$400,000			
Network Access Control			8/23/22	\$500,000			

As of June 30, 2022	Subcategory Totals	% Of Total	Approval Date	Lost Revenue	Early Action Items	Future Programming	Total Per Category
Public Safety Expansion	\$1,300,000	1.6%					
Coroner's Office - Facilities/Equipment			4/26/22	\$1,300,000			
Economic Stability for All							\$30,134,884
Housing Security	\$26,634,884	33.3%					
CCHA Scattered Site Purchase			12/7/21	\$2,484,884			
Neighbors Together Women/Children's Shelter			12/9/21	\$1,150,000			
Critical Home Repairs			5/10/22		\$3,000,000		
Housing Set-Aside						\$20,000,000	
Small Business Stabilization	\$2,000,000	2.5%					
Microbusiness Pandemic Relief I			3/31/22		\$2,000,000		
Building Grassroots Capacity	\$1,500,000	1.9%					
Nonprofit Pandemic Relief I			3/21/22		\$1,500,000		
Resilience and Infrastructure							\$8,040,179
Flooding and Drainage Issues	\$1,250,000	1.6%					
Capris Island Drainage			4/26/22	\$200,000			
Forest Lake Blvd. Drainage			4/26/22	\$300,000			
Phillips Drainage			8/25/21	\$750,000			
Sewer, Septic, and Water Access	\$6,790,179	8.5%					
Lake Dotterer Flow Project			4/5/22	\$1,290,179			
Snowden Water/Sewer Phase II			8/23/22	\$4,000,000			
MPWW Settlement Community			8/23/22	\$500,000			
Well/Sewer/Septic Program Expan.			8/23/22	\$1,000,000			
Total Funds		83.27%		\$35,715,063	\$10,500,000	\$20,000,000	\$66,545,063
						Funds Remaining:	\$13,365,730
						Total ARPA Funds:	\$79,910,793
						Administrative Costs:	4.66%