

Washington County, MN Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2023 Report



Washington County, MN
2023 Recovery Plan

Table of Contents

General Overview3
 Executive Summary.....3
 Uses of Funds3
 Promoting Equitable Outcomes4
 Community Engagement6
 Labor Practices6
 Use of Evidence7
 Performance Report7

Project Inventory8

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Washington County, Minnesota, while a county that is fortunate to have natural, financial, and human resources, had residents who were greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as did every other jurisdiction in the country. Its leadership and residents are grateful to have additional resources to rebuild the organization and assist residents as the pandemic abates. A number of projects will address needs and deficiencies and inequities that were exacerbated in the county by the pandemic. The hungry became more evident, the unhoused became more prevalent, the un- and under-employed suffered more acutely from their financial plight. A number of programs will address and, it is hoped, alleviate these deficiencies going forward. This report includes a listing of projects and initiatives that the county will undertake in its recovery. Projects will bolster county spending to replace aging and overused physical resources that make county business possible and were overlooked or underfunded due to revenue loss during the pandemic response. Other projects will enhance county workspaces and public spaces to make them safer for workers and members of the public to use while recovering from this pandemic and going forward.

Uses of Funds

All Washington County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds have been allocated. These funds are allocated to address continued response to ongoing pandemic needs, focusing on the recovery to those most impacted by the public health emergency, addressing long-standing gaps in the economy that prevent equitable economic recovery, and shoring up government services to ensure ongoing capacity and assurance for the future to continue to serve the needs of the community.

Almost 74% of the county's allocation has been dedicated to the public health needs of county residents and staff. Ensuring availability to testing best positioned the county to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Equipment, service, and building modifications are addressed in the recovery plan that will assist in the response to COVID-19. The broader health impacts of the pandemic and the public health emergency are also addressed with adaptations to public buildings and services, as well as necessary equipment to mitigate COVID-19 transmission.

ARPA provides the county the opportunity to bolster its Crisis Response Team to address the increasing mental health needs within the county, as well as assist with other payroll costs related to the county's ongoing response. The county has ongoing needs to provide virtual environments, tools, and resources to continue to operate the county and serve its residents by strengthening efforts to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

The county's allocation takes a strategic approach to support a strong and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing economic gaps experienced by residents, businesses, and non-profits by focusing on food security, internet access, job training, small business technical assistance, and housing. The county's emphasis on services to

disproportionately impacted communities focuses targeted support to those hardest hits by the pandemic and addresses housing stability throughout the jurisdiction with housing outreach and an emergency/transitional housing program for adults and youth. Community Health Workers will address the health disparities exacerbated by the pandemic.

The county is using a portion of the allocation to improve the county's infrastructure to better position itself for the ongoing public health emergency. Investments in the county's information technology, capital equipment needs, and staff augmentation – for example, in the attorney's division to address the case backlog as a result of the pandemic – will allow the county to continue its recovery and preparation for a future COVID-19 response.

The affordable housing project will use ARPA and other funding to construct 52 new affordable housing units in Washington County. These new affordable housing units will provide a range of affordability, with 36 units affordable to households with incomes at 30% area median income (AMI) and the remaining units affordable to households with incomes at 60% AMI. ARPA funds will be used as one-time development funds to create additional affordable housing infrastructure to serve the needs of low-income families long term.

The need for additional, deeply affordable housing in Washington County is also well documented in Maxfield's 2022 update to the Comprehensive Needs Survey of Washington County, Minnesota. According to the report, household turnover, mobility, and population growth will create demand for 5,406 additional rental units in the county over the next eight years. Of new demand, affordable units are projected to be 25% of the total need, or 1,361 units. The need for subsidized affordable units is expected to be 19% of the total rental need by 2030, or 1,023 units. Currently, there are minimal vacancies in the affordable and subsidized market, and many have closed their waiting lists. New affordable properties are often fully leased prior to completion and even new market rate properties are experiencing pre-lease rates of 25% to 30% at opening, demonstrating significant demand for new rental units.

Washington County received Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds through ARPA. These funds allowed the ERA team to focus on what's most in need: rental, rental arrear, and utility arrear assistance for residents. The majority of those served were within the 0-30% of AMI income level. The funding received through the ERA program will be fully expensed in 2023. Washington County is no longer accepting applications for the funding.

Promoting equitable outcomes

Equity considerations are central to Washington County's work. Although the county consistently ranks as one of the healthiest counties in Minnesota, some residents are still affected by poor health. The health outcomes of populations within the county can be starkly different depending on a variety of factors, including race, education, income, and geographic locations. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these disparities that already existed. During the county's COVID-19 response efforts, staff regularly considered equity in decision making and response activities. Much of the county's equity work involves community partnerships, collaborations, and outreach. The county regularly integrates equity in its approach, structure, and delivery to advance its intended outcome of ensuring all residents have equal access to services. This outcome recognizes both the critical

relationship between county services and the health and well-being of residents.

Approaches to make county services more equitable include:

- removal of barriers that slow response time, such as limiting personal information needed for services, such as food support or vaccine appointments;
- working with diverse community representatives to understand communication gaps with historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected groups;
- seeking trusted messengers to equalize access to information;
- translating materials and having interpreter services available;
- eliminating transportation barriers by offering rides to residents who need transportation services to vaccine clinics, COVID-19 testing facilities, or food distribution events;
- offering no-contact delivery options for food support;
- embedding social workers in libraries to simplify the process for residents to access support and services by offering assistance in accessible locations;
- extending access to libraries making the materials, spaces, and resources more accessible and convenient for patrons.

In spring 2021, feedback from diverse community representatives was gathered to understand communication gaps with communities of color and underrepresented groups, specifically around vaccine information. Various campaigns were developed with reaching diverse communities in mind. As vaccine clinic operations expanded to the public, staff considered equity in messaging and promotion, translated materials in clinics, made interpreter telephone services available, and made the clinic space as welcoming as possible to all individuals.

The county will use ARPA to fund a special project position to lead the effort to shift the county's focus and resources to provide services more equitably to residents to address disparate outcomes for populations most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. This position is focused on projects that create a more equitable service delivery system for the people served by applying a race-equity lens and using diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks and tools. The work consists of developing, piloting, and implementing race equity tools and processes for the Community Services Department to be used with policies, programs, projects, and budgets to uncover inequities. In addition to this work the position will also focus on the following projects:

- equitable access to interpreters for both staff and people served;
- mitigate disparate impacts on BIPOC and low-income communities by providing communication and steps for the medical assistance renewal process using targeted communication and outreach;
- establish an equitable process for department contracts;
- develop a policy to compensate individuals for providing testimony of lived experiences and methods to compensate participants.

Explicitly informed by community partnerships, collaborations, and outreach since March 2021, the Food Security Unit continues to integrate equity as a core value in its approach, structure, and delivery to advance its intended outcome of ensuring access to high-quality food to all county residents in need. This ambitious outcome recognizes both the critical relationship that links high-quality food, its supportive role in strengthening immunity, and its

availability as a critical determinant in COVID-19 severity and recovery in the lives of individuals and the food insecurity that has disproportionately affected the county's historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected residents before and throughout the pandemic. The Food Security Unit will embed equity through its ARPA funded projects by:

- continuing to remove administrative structures that would slow or limit a speedy or sustained response;
- asking only for size of household and age ranges of its members to ensure food quantity is proportionate;
- removing the barrier of transportation by offering no-contact deliveries or other remedies for connecting residents with food solutions; and
- explicitly seeking trusted messengers to equalize access to information and to communicate options and opportunities to residents.

Community Engagement

Using a variety of inputs, Washington County has actively solicited the feedback of individuals and households with whom the county partners, shaping its services in response. Through phone calls, emails, and face-to-face communication, resident input has led directly to the development of specific programs, including the prepared meal delivery and the Harvest Express, two programs that will continue with ARPA funds. In addition, the county sought feedback from diverse community representatives in Spring 2021 to understand communication gaps with communities of color and underrepresented groups, specifically around vaccine information.

Ongoing community engagement around COVID-19 response and beyond seeks to work through trusted partner organizations and residents of affected communities. At the same time, the county continues to build staff capacity and understanding around health equity and how to advance the work.

The Community Engagement project will include a variety of ways to engage with the community, especially those communities that were most disparately impacted by COVID-19. The primary focus will be using the Community Health Worker model that can engage with communities to build trust and gather feedback on needs and how the county needs to be changed to provide better access. The focus will be in communities that have historically faced significant barriers to services, such as people of color, people with low incomes, limited English proficient populations, and other traditionally underserved groups. The primary strategies will include, but not be limited to: oral feedback through community and one-on-one meetings, issue-specific listening sessions, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups. In addition, there will be additional strategies based on feedback from the communities, such as surveys (written and digital), flyers to share information, and attending and/or hosting community events.

Labor Practices

The county's plan for infrastructure projects include the expansion of accessibility to broadband transmission of data over a high-speed internet connection, building of an

affordable housing unit, updates to county buildings, and the purchase and renovation of a transitional/emergency housing shelter.

These county initiatives will support the economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for workers through either project labor agreements, community benefits agreements, prevailing wage requirements, and/or local hiring.

Use of Evidence

The county follows best practices from a number of sources, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and professional associations for county programmatic planning and delivery within the county. Much of the Recovery Plan outlined relies on expanding or improving existing programs to better address the inequitable impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Equally, some of the projects are directly tied to ARPA's identification of a program or initiative that would reduce the disparate impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and/or address underlying economic inequities that are exacerbating the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Washington County is investing more than 43% of its allocation, or \$22 million, on interventions, such as crisis response; food security; internet accessibility; housing support, including affordable housing and emergency shelter; community health workers; and career pathways to have a direct impact on the goals described for each of these initiatives.

Performance Report

Performance management is tracked with the programmatic data and internal goals of each project. Projects are reviewed routinely to ensure delivery of the scope of each project.

Washington County posts the total obligations and expenses of all projects quarterly on the Washington County website. This report can be found at the following link [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) | Washington County, MN - Official Website](#).

ARPA funds have been used to house 232 individuals experiencing homelessness and more than 5,200 meals have been delivered to households facing food insecurity.

Crisis response mental health services include front-door services, outreach, landlord liaison, and emergency shelter. Front-door services include housing referral information, rental and damage deposit assistance for eviction prevention, access to emergency shelter, and housing stabilization consultations. Outreach includes outreach to individuals living outside, everyday supplies to those living outside, housing search, and short-term tenancy sustaining support. In 2022, the Housing Outreach Services Team (HOST) has managed 3,549 calls through the Front Door Services; 92 individuals were served in emergency shelter, and 197 individuals were contacted through the street outreach.

The broadband grant program has approved \$2 million in 1:1 match grant funding. The approved projects will provide more than 1,500 unserved/underserved households in Washington County with a wireline connection that delivers a reliable broadband service to these residents. This is a response to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic on a household by providing assistance that helps secure internet access and increase the ability to

use computers and the internet. The COVID-19 public health emergency has highlighted the importance of universally available, high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband coverage as millions of Americans rely on the internet for school, healthcare, and work.

The Career Pathways Project program is guided by an advisory group of organizations which represent the populations who have been negatively impacted economically by COVID and education partners who offer a variety of training opportunities that provide flexibility to meet the needs of the people being served. The objectives of the project are to enhance the Career Pathway program in Washington County so that economically disadvantaged students, adults and families may improve their economic status.

Two county employees, a grant manager and grant coordinator, are funded by ARPA to provide central oversight of the program and manage county projects. The oversight includes department outreach, adherence to federal policies and grant requirements, reporting, and subrecipient monitoring. The county is also using a consultant to provide guidance on spending and the broadband grant program.

Project Inventory

Expenditure Category: REVENUE REPLACEMENT ALLOCATION \$50,975,893

Project Identifier: 900002
Project Name: COVID-19 Testing Planning and Implementation
Funding Amount: \$100,000

This project continues the county's testing program and costs and would include all supplies, staff time, and materials. The county's program would prioritize unserved or underserved communities within its jurisdiction by providing varying testing sites, times, and addressing transportation needs and language barriers within the community to ensure accessibility.

Project Identifier: 900003
Project Name: Protective Equipment and Measures
Funding Amount: \$184,000

This project will provide the necessary safety measures for virus transmission mitigation, including, but not limited to, materials and supplies for personal protection, temporary modifications, enhanced cleaning, materials and supplies for ongoing telework, and other supplies as needed for protective measures.

Project Identifier: 900004
Project Name: Campus Heating and Cooling Improvements
Funding Amount: \$8,000,000

This project will replace the heating, cooling, and ventilation systems throughout the Washington County Stillwater campus, including boilers and chillers, along with associated piping, pumps, and motors as necessary. In addition, select air-handling units may have to be replaced to accommodate the new equipment. The new equipment will provide a higher energy efficiency than the current equipment. Enhancements would include increased air flow and outside air intake, replacement of equipment that is unable to accommodate the recommended guidelines during a pandemic due to age and vintage, and provide additional functionality, which would allow for quick reaction to public health-related concerns in a timely manner.

These building modifications would assist the response to COVID-19 and the broader health impacts of COVID-19 and the COVID-19 public health emergency as adaptations to public buildings to implement COVID-19 mitigation tactics.

Project Identifier: 900005
Project Name: Building Modifications to Ensure Safe Service Delivery
Funding Amount: \$6,000,000

The project would reconfigure workstations and office spaces to accommodate changes in workstyles, including telework, due to the pandemic. Replacing existing furniture with more flexible options will maximize the space and reduce the need for future space growth in the county. Reconfiguration of front reception desk areas throughout county will enhance safety between front desk staff and the public and increase security in the buildings. Upgrades and installation of audio and visual equipment throughout the county will allow for enhanced virtual interaction between staff working between sites, between home and office, and between staff and clients.

These building modifications would assist the response to COVID-19 and the broader health impacts of COVID-19 and the COVID-19 public health emergency as adaptations to public buildings to implement COVID-19 mitigation tactics. Reconfigurations would allow for proper teleworking to accommodate social distancing guidelines in a pandemic while maximizing the availability of staff within buildings to serve the needs of the public.

Project Identifier: 900006
Project Name: Public Health Enhancements to County Environmental Centers
Funding Amount: \$439,800

The county uses its environmental center to support public health preparedness efforts. This project will provide dedicated public health emergency preparedness space and facility modifications at the new center in Forest Lake for supplies and equipment necessary to respond to public health emergencies.

These building modifications would assist the response to COVID-19 as adaptations to public buildings and implement COVID-19 mitigation tactics by providing the opportunity for drive-through test sites and improving flow and egress within the facility.

Project Identifier: 900007
Project Name: Library Express Lockers
Funding Amount: \$150,000

The Library currently operates express lockers in three locations: Hugo, Newport, and Marine on St. Croix. Usage of these lockers in 2022 increased by 40% compared to 2019. During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, 2021, and 2022, these lockers experienced a significant rise in usage, with more than 23,000 items circulated during that three-year period. Despite their usage, the lockers do not integrate with any of the library's software and the hardware is more than 10 years old. This results in frequent challenges for staff who work on the back end of these lockers.

Upgrading the existing Library Express lockers at the Hugo, Newport, and Marine sites would improve the library's capacity to address future public health challenges and assist the library in meeting its strategic objective to expand the reach of the library. Lockers would support equity-focused services by allowing flexibility in access to library services for hard-hit communities. Additional access to library materials would also help address educational disparities and promote healthy childhood environments.

Project Identifier: 900008
Project Name: Safe Working Environment at Big Marine Park Reserve
Funding Amount: \$418,000

Safe Working Environment at Big Marine Park: The staff building at Big Marine Park Reserve does not have running water, staff restrooms, or a handwashing station. This project would add these basic amenities for staff, and include an eye-wash station, employee work areas, locker area, and a basic lunchroom.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, handwashing is one of the core components to slow the spread of COVID-19. By providing a restroom and handwashing station for staff, staff have better opportunities to wash before eating, after using a restroom, and after being in a public place. One chemical toilet, and associated costs, will be discontinued.

This project will assist the response to COVID-19 and the broader health impacts of COVID-19 and its public health emergency by mitigating transmission.

Project Identifier: 900010
Project Name: Public Health Records Assessment and Support
Funding Amount: \$200,000

This project improves the design and execution of certain public health records systems and

health services delivery within the county. This project positions the county to better address and assess health disparities and the increasing mental health and medical acuity of patients within the jurisdiction. Washington County is initiating this project to acquire a comprehensive solution to the county's Jail Medical Unit's Electronic Health Records (EHR). The county will be enhancing the current EHR with system upgrades and custom unit specific care templates. The system will see further improvement and long-term cost savings with the adoption of care specific modules that allows for the discontinuation of current obsolete care modules that require yearly maintenance fees. By improving EHR capabilities, jail medical staff can more efficiently and effectively coordinate care for inmates within the facility and those who are being prepared for release into the community.

Project Identifier: 900011
Project Name: Payroll and Benefit Costs of those Directly Responding to Pandemic
Funding Amount: \$1,196,793

While the costs have dropped significantly in 2021, the county continues to incur salary and benefit costs for those directly responding to the pandemic, including personnel and consulting costs to administer this federal funding.

Project Identifier: 900012
Project Name: Virtual Meeting Service and Support
Funding Amount: \$201,800

The county Board Room requires a high-quality production system to meet the needs of commissioners, the public, and county staff who attend meetings and workshops. There is an internal staff commitment to maintain all the audio and visual equipment in the Board Room weekly to meet the production quality expectations. In addition to the Board Room, there are 197 conference rooms that serve the public and departments that routinely need support for maintenance and programming. This position will also develop conference room standards, develop a training program for staff, and coordinate contracted work that cannot be completed internally. This will support telework and client services.

To ensure effective government services, this position will be expected to provide high-quality customer service to all county departments to minimize any audio and visual disruptions to meetings in conference rooms and the Board Room.

Project Identifier: 900013
Project Name: Crisis Response Mental Health Services Augmentation
Funding Amount: \$250,000

The longer-term impacts of COVID-19 are yet to be determined, and there has been both an influx of new intakes, as well as the suspension of routine case closures and adverse actions. This creates swelling caseloads across most programs and an increased demand on the state and federal government for additional resources. This project would employ the

appropriate number of special project positions to administer assistance programs based on current needs.

Washington County's effort is focused on services to address health disparities and the social determinants of health by providing services to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. Relying on the Best Practice Toolkit from the National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care, the county continues to integrate best practices and evidence-based intervention to address health disparities and social determinants of health.

Project Identifier: 900014
Project Name: Food Security Program
Funding Amount: \$202,000

In order to respond to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency, Washington County will continue its Food Security Program in partnership with local food shelves to support the most severely impacted low-income populations. The program will include Emergency Food Pack delivery, transportation of food boxes to people in the community, and infrastructure to support food shelf partners.

The Food Security Program aims to provide 90% of individuals/families who request support assistance in completing steps to transition to other food support programs, as well as ensure that 100% of current and newly arrived shelter guests are connected to available food support programs.

Project Identifier: 900015
Project Name: Career Pathway System Project
Funding Amount: \$400,000

This project is designed to develop a sustainable Career Pathways System for Washington County employers, high school students, and adults. The Career Pathways work is universal to individuals of all ages facing disparities and being impacted by the pandemic.

Career Pathways for high school students is an approach to accelerating the talent pipeline that enables schools and employers to establish partnerships that integrate the skills needed by employers into school curriculum and experiential learning. It provides the opportunity for students to gain more realistic understandings of their career interests and helps employers promote their businesses and career opportunities through engagement with students. This is a priority of the Washington County Workforce Development Board.

The program would develop the structure for the county-wide business and high school consistency of engagement, transition to an "in-kind" effort, and align existing resources to manage and maintain what has been created.

Similar Career Pathway opportunities are also needed for low-income adults. Adding adults to this project would enable a larger outreach and impact through providing support to those needing training or assistance who aren't eligible for regular program funding.

Businesses are struggling now, more than ever, to find qualified candidates, due to both COVID-19 and the baby-boomer generation retiring at a rate that can be higher than new entrants into the workforce. This project will help provide a more stable talent pipeline for industries in demand in Washington County, many of which are listed as those most impacted by COVID-19.

As school districts move toward adopting Career Pathway approaches, there is a growing need to provide assistance in how they connect with businesses and to avoid different engagement approaches that will discourage businesses from participating.

This project responds to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency to both individuals and businesses. Those with barriers to accessing training and employment have seen an increase in this impact due to COVID-19. Individuals from disparately impacted families prior to and during COVID-19 need a better system to guide them through the process of identifying Career Pathways that meet their interests, abilities, and affordability. This project will lay the foundation for high school students and adults across Washington County to create better opportunities for themselves.

Project Identifier: 900016
Project Name: Internet Access to Support Adults and Students
Funding Amount: \$200,000

This is a multi-year funding project for the Library's hotspot program, which has been serviced through Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding since its inception in November 2020.

In 2020, the Library purchased 500 hotspots with a one-year service contract with CARES Act funding. These hotspots were available for check out starting in November 2020. Washington County will continue to track and report, as a performance measure, the rate of use.

Continuation of this program provides assistance to households, small businesses, and non-profits to address the impacts of the pandemic by the most severely impacted populations. Providing hotspots via the county library supports the community with much needed access to internet services for education, jobs, and opportunities.

Project Identifier: 900017
Project Name: Housing Outreach Team Supervision
Funding Amount: \$400,000

The Housing Outreach Services Team (HOST) began in 2014 and has grown immensely in the following six years and especially during the pandemic. The Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness guides the county's strategy and approach regarding homelessness within the jurisdiction. A supervisor will ensure county resources meet the current needs of the community and the anticipated growth.

Funds are being directed to provide services to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency to promote and encourage strong, equitable growth. The need for support for those experiencing homelessness and housing support in

Washington County has continued to grow. With the onset of COVID-19, HOST has experienced an elevated need for homeless outreach, emergency shelter, and housing support services while standing up a COVID-19 shelter.

Project Identifier: 900018
Project Name: County Emergency/Transitional Housing Capital Program
Funding Amount: \$7,000,000

This project would support the purchase of a 50-75 bed hotel to be converted into a 30-bed shelter. The costs include remodeling and first-year service and shelter costs. The Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness guides the county's strategy and approach regarding homelessness within the jurisdiction.

Funds are being directed to provide services to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency to promote and encourage strong, equitable growth. This will be the first permanent shelter in Washington County for single adults and will allow residents to receive necessary services in the community. The project will serve the hardest-hit communities and families, and address health disparities and the social determinants of health, investments in housing, and neighborhoods.

Project Identifier: 900019
Project Name: Economic Support Division Staff
Funding Amount: \$350,000

Additional staff is needed to support the economic support division related to the increase in all program areas that have been caused by the pandemic. During the pandemic, the economic support division has seen increases to economic support programs, such as MAXIS, MNSure, METS, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), housing support and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

These positions address the critical but temporary need to rebuild a stronger and more equitable economy by addressing negative economic impacts and ensuring that public safety net services are available and accessible to communities hardest hit by COVID-19.

Project Number: 900020
Project Name: Equitable Services Program
Funding Amount: \$250,000

This project will pay for one full-time employee to lead the effort to shift the county's focus and resources to more equitably provide services to Washington County residents to address disparate outcomes for populations most vulnerable to the public health crisis. Areas to be addressed include access and resource development. This will be measured by an increase in the numbers of unduplicated residents from the target group who access services and the correlation to the overall population of Washington County.

Washington County's effort is focused on services to address health disparities and the social

determinants of health by evaluating services to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. To promote strong, equitable growth, the county employee will assess the current state, work with stakeholders to define a future state, and create an implementation plan to better address health disparities. The strategy is closely aligned with the county's partnership with the Government Alliance for Racial Equity.

Project Identifier: 900021
Project Name: Community Health Worker-Health Equity Initiative
Funding Amount: \$2,235,000

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the community and have an unusually close understanding of the service needs within the community. This trusted relationship enables CHWs to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. CHWs also build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities, such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy. This ARPA project aims to develop a community engagement program within the Health and Human Services area of Washington County and directly addresses community recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic through a health equity lens. This program will include training and certification for the Community Engagement team, training other county staff who will support this work, supplies, food, and activities for community events, communications, technology support for documentation, and funding to train and support community organizations and/or individuals who will assist the county in further developing relationships with underserved residents in the county through community engagement connections and/or events.

Washington County's work is focused on services to address health disparities and the social determinants of health by providing services to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. To promote strong, equitable growth, eligible services include services that connect residents with health care resources, public assistance programs, and recreational and social services, and build healthier environments. They also fund public benefits navigators to assist community members with navigating and applying for available federal, state, and local public benefits or services.

As identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/toolkits/chw-toolkit.htm>), applied research findings and best practices include Community Health Workers as a valuable tool for addressing and responding to health disparities.

Washington County expects improved service delivery and access evidenced by client/patient satisfaction of county services, percentage of members receiving services in their first language, percentage of community members indicating the Community Health Worker program is suited to community needs, and the percentage of community members indicating the Community Health Worker program is reaching the most in need.

Project Identifier: 900022
Project Name: Broadband Matching Funds
Funding Amount: \$2,000,000

A number of areas in the county are either unserved or underserved with access to high-speed internet. This program will provide matching funds for cities, townships, and broadband providers to assist with financing broadband infrastructure to unserved or underserved areas.

Project Identifier: 900023
Project Name: County Attorney Staff Augmentation
Funding Amount: \$450,000

This project is for two attorney special project positions. These positions will address the backlog of lower-level crimes to ensure effective government services.

Project Identifier: 900024
Project Name: Fleet Replacement
Funding Amount: \$1,000,000

The current Fleet Program Budget for 2022 is \$641,300. The Fleet Program budget should be \$1.52 million per year, based on needs due to end-of-useful life of Public Works equipment. In addition, the existing fleet and equipment replacement backlog is estimated at \$5.4 million. In 2015, the Fleet Program budget was at \$1.4 million, and over the last few years, the amount has been reduced, with the proposed 2022 budget being further reduced to \$641,300. The anticipated performance measure will be reducing the average age of replacement from 17.5 years to 10-12 years.

An adequate fleet is essential for ensuring effective government services.

Project Identifier: 900025
Project Name: Public Safety Radio Replacement
Funding Amount: \$500,000

This project includes the replacement of all Washington County public safety radios installed in squad cars. The present radios were purchased in 2007-2008 and are no longer supported for parts. The new radios offer several enhancements, such as encryption, improved controls, and wireless programming, which will decrease staff time in supporting the radios.

The Wi-Fi programming will allow for social distancing as all updates may be done remotely ensuring more effective government services.

Project Identifier: 900026
Project Name: Election Equipment Replacement
Funding Amount: \$350,000

This project would replace the assistive voting devices (AVD) and poll pads used in each precinct on Election Day and at all absentee voting locations. Currently, Washington County uses machines from 2004 and they are no longer manufactured. New parts are not available with only refurbished parts/machines available when repair or replacement is needed.

This would modernize the system and improve cyber security.

Project Identifier: 900027
Project Name: Voice-Telephone System Replacement
Funding Amount: \$2,017,200

To facilitate telework and virtually deliver county services efficiently and effectively, this project would replace the current county telephone system that is at the end of its useful life.

Project Identifier: 900028
Project Name: St. Croix Bluffs Boat Launch Improvement
Funding Amount: \$700,000

This funding will accelerate the replacement of the boat launch at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park. This will provide accessibility to the river and fishing piers. The boat launch is used for access to the river while responding to emergencies on the St. Croix River.

Project Identifier: 900029
Project Name: Information Technology Infrastructure
Funding Amount: \$3,130,200

This project will provide funding for increased information technology infrastructure and security measures as outlined in the county's capital equipment and technology plan. These improvements will support telework work for county employees and remote access for those doing business with the county, as well as improve client communication, all in response to the pandemic.

Project Identifier: 900030
Project Name: County Emergency/Transitional Housing (Youth)
Funding Amount: \$400,000

Washington County would partner with a neighboring jurisdiction to purchase a building for purposes of providing a youth shelter. The Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness guides the county's strategy and approach regarding homelessness within

the jurisdiction.

Funds are being directed to provide services to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency to promote and encourage strong, equitable growth. Children and youth in need of short-term emergency housing will have access to a facility within 30 minutes of their family home and will benefit from the right level of support and services.

Project Identifier: 900031
Project Name: Stillwater Sewer and Water Utility Matching Funds
Funding Amount: \$750,000

This project will provide for matching funds to the City of Stillwater, as a subrecipient, for sewer and water infrastructure. These funds would supplement a \$2,000,000 investment that the city is making in sewer and water utility lines to support economic development within a hard-to-reach area. This utility line is also anticipated to support a healthcare campus under development.

Project Identifier: 900032
Project Name: County Emergency/Transitional Housing Program
Funding Amount: \$1,650,000

This project would support the housing of people experiencing homelessness until the Washington County ARPA funded emergency/transitional shelter is operational, provide a special project position to assist with the hotel shelter program, fund a housing manager position for the county, and provide prepared meals to shelter residents. The Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness guides the county's strategy and approach regarding homelessness within the jurisdiction. This project would include funding for general operation and administrative support and supplies. This may include communication/marketing, education about the need for emergency housing, cleaning and incidentals for hotel rooms, consultation fees for people with lived experience, and support services for people accessing services in the shelter when no other funds are available.

Funds are being directed to provide services to communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency to promote and encourage strong, equitable growth. The project will serve the hardest-hit communities and families, and address health disparities and the social determinants of health, investments in housing, and neighborhoods.

Project Identifier: 900033
Project Name: Small Business Technical Assistance Program
Funding Amount: \$150,000

This project will allocate up to \$150,000 in ARPA funds to the Washington County Community Development Agency to fund the small business technical assistance program.

Project Identifier: 900034
Project Name: Affordable Housing Project
Funding Amount: \$7,500,000

ARPA funds will fill a gap in financing the construction of the 52 new affordable apartment units. The Washington County Community Development Agency solicited development proposals with the unique opportunity to award 36 of these units with federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rental assistance through the Faircloth to Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. The new units would allow low-income residents to pay 30% of their income toward the rent. The remainder of the rent would be paid through a HUD contract. However, this HUD program has a maximum rent limit that is far below the market (Washington County's 2020 median rent is \$1,363, according to U.S. Census American Community Survey data) and well below other affordability limits (one bedroom rent limits are currently \$1,165 for incomes at or below 50% the multifamily tax subsidy project). The estimated Faircloth to RAD rent limits (1BR = \$520, 2BR = \$645, 3BR = \$906) greatly reduces the development's ability to support amortizing debt service. The ARPA funds will help to fill the financing gap for this development, along with an allocation of tax-exempt private activity bonds and 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The ARPA allocation of \$7.5 million leverages an additional \$7.8 million in other funding to make this new affordable housing development feasible.

Project Identifier: 900035
Project Name: Jail Camera and Security
Funding Amount: \$534,300

The jail is in need of an upgrade to its jail security system, which includes more cameras in the jail for increased coverage. The jail security system needs a software upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 10. Also, more cameras are needed to monitor vulnerable inmates, including those who are suicidal and self-harming. The jail security system and closed caption television system are vital to ensure safe and secure movement and monitoring of staff, inmates, and visitors in the jail. Quick, rapid, and reliable monitoring and response to staff and inmate emergencies is vital in a 24/7 running facility. These funds will keep the closed caption television and security system updated.

Project Identifier: 900036
Project Name: Court Room and Security
Funding Amount: \$100,000

This project will extend security glass to the ceiling and/or fully enclose the inmate holding area of Courtroom 200, which is used for in-custody arraignment. Currently, the glass is up to an approximate height of six feet, which presents the risk of an inmate scaling the enclosure into public spaces, thus escaping custody. Additionally, the higher glass will prevent inmates from spitting over the current glass onto Court staff that sit adjacent to the inmate holding area.

Project Identifier: 900037
Project Name: Access and Continuity Navigator
Funding Amount: \$207,500

This is a pilot program for Community Services that includes embedding two Community Services staff at Washington County libraries. The model is designed to simplify the process for residents to access support and services by offering assistance in accessible locations, such as libraries, and through transferring the complexities of the system to community services staff whenever possible. Staff will answer questions, offer resources, and provide assistance with follow up when needed. This model aligns with county efforts to provide services more equitably to Washington County residents to address disparate outcomes for populations most vulnerable to the public health crisis.

Project Identifier: 900038
Project Name: Law Library Loss Revenue
Funding Amount: \$122,800

The Law Library is funded through fines and forfeitures collected by the Courts. During the pandemic, the Law Library saw a shortfall in collected revenue resulting in negative balances for budget years 2020 and 2021. The collection of fines and forfeitures is projected to be lower than pre-COVID years in 2022. The Law Library will use the ARPA funds to maintain its collection of print and electronic materials.

Project Identifier: 900040
Project Name: Electric Vehicle Charging Study
Funding Amount: \$125,000

Washington County will conduct an assessment to identify and address deficiencies of the Washington County electric vehicle charging infrastructure network, with an emphasis on site locations, to inform the prioritization of future infrastructure investment and deployment. The study will consider county fleet, employee, and general public need.

Project Identifier: 900041
Project Name: Electric Vehicle Charging State Federal Grant Match
Funding Amount: \$135,000

Washington County is submitting an application for a USDOT Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary grant program award to install public facing Level II electric vehicle (EV) chargers at Service Centers and Transit Centers throughout the county. The project requires a 20% local match, and the county would use ARPA dollars to fund this amount. The project local match is anticipated to be \$131,788.80, or 20% of the total \$658,944 project cost.

Project Identifier: 900042
Project Name: Website Analytics, Evaluation & Recommendations
Funding Amount: \$125,000

The purpose of this project is to secure consulting services to conduct a website user needs assessment and usability evaluation on the county's website, co.washington.mn.us. Washington County launched the website, co.washington.mn.us, on its current content management system, CivicEngage Central by CivicPlus in 2012.

The project goal of website evaluation is to assess the performance, user experience and overall quality of the website in order to shift from the staff-centric focus to a user-centric focus, identify areas improvement, and optimize its effectiveness. The county is seeking to hire a qualified firm or individual to engage stakeholders and end users, study the current website, and develop a user-centered recommendation for the future of the website. The county is seeking innovative ideas for how to reinvent the website to meet the needs of residents who seek services, employees who administer services, and businesses who want to thrive in Washington County.

Project Identifier: 900043
Project Name: Library Extended Access Pilot Program
Funding Amount: \$162,000

This project will allow the Washington County Library to provide additional, unstaffed hours at Valley Library in Lakeland. The library is currently open 24 hours per week, but extended access would provide greater flexibility for users to access materials, spaces, and resources outside of staffed hours.

The proposed extended access model achieves the library's goal of making the library more accessible and convenient for patrons. It also responds to the public health impacts of COVID-19 by allowing community members to use the library in ways they feel most comfortable and by reducing congestion of the space for those who are concerned about the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, expanded access to library materials will also help address educational disparities and promote healthy childhood environments.

Project Identifier: 900044
Project Name: Park Grove & Stafford Library Planning
Funding Amount: \$250,000

The Park Grove Library is part of the planned 2027 bond sale project list. In order to deliver the remodel in the requested timeline, design services will need to begin in early 2024. The scope of work that will be included in this phase of design is the following: Community engagement, programming needs determined by Library staff, development of projects options and corresponding costs, and site layout options. This request is to fund the design services since it is outside of the 18-month pre-spend on bond sale revenue.

The Stafford Library is part of the planned 2027 bond sale project list and to deliver the remodel in the requested timeline, design services will need to begin in late 2024. The scope of work that

will be included in this phase of design is the following: Community engagement, programming needs determined by Library staff, development of projects options and corresponding costs, and site layout options. This request is to fund the design services since it is outside of the 18-month pre-spend on bond sale revenue.

Project Identifier: 900045
Project Name: Audio Visual Upgrade
Funding Amount: \$139,500

The Washington County Board Room requires a high-quality production system that effectively meets the needs of commissioners, staff, residents, and guests who attend or view weekly meetings and workshops. The County Board Room hosts several additional events and trainings each year. Primary operations of the audio/video equipment are in the production control room. The system records and broadcasts live content to online digital platforms and cable access partners. This project will increase access to live/recorded content by expanding distribution options, providing limited real-time closed captioning services, integrating critical redundancies, modifying select operations, and adding basic equipment protections.

Project Identifier: 900046
Project Name: Mental Health Services
Funding Amount: \$300,000

County staff play a critical role as the front-line service providers during trying times. This pressure and exposure to trauma can have a lasting impact. Washington County will expand employee mental health services to support county staff and their families who ask for help.