

Franklin County, Ohio Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2023 Report

Franklin County, Ohio
2023 Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Franklin County has been hard at work since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that no tool or resource at our disposal is left untapped that could help our residents. Whether it was sharing trusted sources of information, deploying local, state, and federal resources, outfitting the Greater Columbus Convention Center as an overflow hospital facility, or forging strong partnerships with community leaders, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and healthcare providers, the County has worked tirelessly to meet unprecedented health and economic challenges brought on by the pandemic.

In 2020, we successfully maintained mandated, essential county services including public health, public safety, and health and human services programs. We also allocated significant funding to support small businesses, public health partners, and nonprofit human service providers struggling with uncertain financial circumstances amid rising demand for their services. When Franklin County residents faced hardship with making rent payments, buying food, getting access to health information and resources, or navigating the uncertainty of the pandemic, we tapped every resource at our disposal to connect our residents with the help they needed. But as the pandemic surged on, the needs of the community greatly outweighed resources available.

While the COVID-19 vaccines and other mitigation efforts aimed to ease the public health crisis and allowed most of our economy to reopen, we know that many of our Franklin County residents and businesses are still suffering from the effects of the pandemic. Many who lost their jobs or had hours reduced in 2020 still have not returned to their previous salary levels, and not everyone who lost their job has been able to find work again. Many businesses that saw their customer bases dry up are still not back to previous sales, and even for families and businesses that are beginning to recover, it may take years to rebuild family and business balance sheets. Children too are suffering, and many of them have fallen behind in school. The pandemic has impacted all of us, but our most vulnerable neighbors have been hurt the most, and the road to full recovery may be long.

Then came the American Rescue Plan, and with it came an unprecedented federal investment in the areas of greatest need. With the support of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Franklin County will be able to put these dollars to work for our community to meet these challenges. This support includes the most significant investment ever in the local early childhood learning system; grant funding for small business that will be prioritized for those that are located in underserved communities and are minority-, woman-, or veteran-owned; investments in developing the county workforce to meet a growing demand for technology jobs while placing equity at the forefront; and support for local nonprofit agencies that serve low-income Franklin County residents.

Uses of Funds

We have heard directly from residents and community partners that many of our neighbors are struggling with the threat of eviction, income loss, job uncertainty, mental health challenges, and the ongoing spread of COVID-19. Federal assistance continues to be vital to our collective response and recovery, and the American Rescue Plan delivers significant funding to address these areas of need. With support from the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established in the American Rescue Plan, along with other federal programs such as Emergency Rental Assistance, we aim to build new, and strengthen existing partnerships, to respond to the community's needs for:

- Public health resources;
- Housing, rent and utility assistance;
- Mental health services;
- Small business and non-profit assistance;
- Workforce and economic development services; and
- Services for seniors and children.

The American Rescue Plan recognized that basic infrastructure like clean water, functioning sewers, and high-speed broadband, is foundational to any community's economic health, especially coming out of the economic crisis related to the pandemic. While we continue to address the short-term and urgent needs of our community, we will also invest in long-term strategies to emerge from this pandemic stronger and more resilient.

Franklin County has always been a great place to raise a family or grow a business. Our community continues to grow and, in some ways, is already moving past the challenges of the pandemic. We know as county leaders, however, that our community will not be successful until every one of our residents is able to share in its success. That is our challenge as we work to rebuild and recover. Our goal is to help the community to return better than it ever was before, and our promise is to continue to serve every resident every day.

Promoting equitable outcomes

While Central Ohio is generally experiencing growth and prosperity, there are many people experiencing poverty, which has spread throughout the region. In the fall of 2018, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners began an initiative to analyze the causes of poverty that are unique to Central Ohio, the resources that are available in our community, and to create a plan to more effectively bring those resources to bear on the problem with a community-wide, systematic approach. They assembled a steering committee of subject matter experts and community members from all walks of life, hosted conversations with hundreds of Franklin County residents who are living in poverty, and studied nationwide best practices.

The steering committee produced the Rise Together Blueprint for Reducing Poverty in Franklin County, including a list of more than 120 goals, action steps, and recommendations with the goals of improving economic mobility, family stability, and equitable access to opportunity across Central Ohio. In taking a frank assessment of poverty in Franklin County, the steering committee identified and prioritized the need to be candid and direct about the historic and current role race and racial inequities play in perpetual poverty. This led to the understanding that, if real change is to take place, there must be an effort to disrupt the institutional racism and unconscious biases

that continue to permeate the community. It is recognized that facing the challenge of racial inequities in the county will require a sustained effort to engage and change. It identified steps and action items in the blueprint to address these issues in individual organizations.

As part of that effort, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners recognizes the benefit of a fair and competitive business environment in Franklin County. It also recognizes that greater numbers of minority, female, and disadvantaged businesses constitute a significant portion of Small and Emerging Business Enterprises (SEBE) in Franklin County. To ensure opportunities are afforded to Small and Emerging Business Enterprises, the board established a Small and Emerging Business Outreach Program.

This program is a commitment to the small and emerging business to encourage competition, as well as provide an even playing field for all businesses. This program is designed to provide assistance to small and emerging business enterprises, encouraging their participation in Franklin County contracts and procurements.

Franklin County will continue these efforts to promote equity as it looks to the distribution of the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, with particular emphasis on services to disproportionately impacted communities to align with the County's Rise Together Blueprint for Reducing Poverty. This includes support of the new Tech Women of Color workforce training initiative to help train and place low-income women of color on the path to self-sufficiency through good paying jobs; expanding access to our highly successful Building Futures pre-apprenticeship training program; providing additional funding to local non-profits serving individuals in Qualified Census Tracts through the Community Funding Initiative; and addressing health disparities and advancing adoption of the Health and Equity in All Policies policy in recognition of racism as a public health crisis.

Community Engagement

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners held a public hearing on July 15, 2021 to hear from residents on how the County should allocate funding from the American Rescue Plan. The hearing was held in-person, but individuals could also join virtually to view and provide testimony. In addition, residents who were not able to attend the hearings could submit their ideas via email to ARP@FranklinCountyOhio.gov.

The County also participated with the United Way of Central Ohio in developing a community survey to provide insight on households that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to identify their needs. Participants were recruited by United Way of Central Ohio and partner organizations as well as through media outreach. In addition to English, the survey was offered in Arabic, French, Kinyarwanda, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, and Swahili.

The County will continue to work with its local non-profit community partners in order to allocate funding to enhance the capacity of these organizations to serve individuals with significant barriers to services, including people of color, people with low incomes, limited English proficiency populations, and other traditionally underserved groups. This includes expansion of the County's partnership with COSI Columbus to translate its Learning Lunchbox kits to other languages including Spanish and Somali.

Labor Practices

With regard to the Stormwater projects, the Franklin County Engineer's Office will ensure the implementation of diverse, safe, high-quality labor in the completion of capital improvement projects funded by the American Rescue Plan. To necessitate the highest quality skilled labor, every contractor and subcontractor shall deliver to the Franklin County Engineer's prevailing wage coordinator a certified copy of its payroll. All prime contracts must submit prior to the execution of a contract a copy of a valid Certificate of Compliance for Equal Employment Opportunity purposes as issued by the State Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator. Every contractor must submit, prior to the execution of a contract, their OSHA Violation History Upload. To foster nondiscrimination and remove barriers to the participation of disadvantaged businesses, each project will be bid with an Equitable Business Enterprise (EBE) goal to be achieved during the progress of the work.

Use of Evidence

Franklin County will identify as appropriate how evidence-based interventions are incorporated into each project. Even if a formal project evaluation is not undertaken, the County uses performance measures and seeks to identify the causal connections between resources and outcomes as part of its budget process and in making awards to its nonprofit Community Partners.

Each year as part of the budget process, agencies in Franklin County review and revise their strategic business plan. A strategic business plan is a comprehensive and systematic management tool designed to help organizations assess the current environment, anticipate and respond appropriately to changes in the environment, and achieve consensus on strategies and objectives for achieving that organization's mission.

Included in the strategic business plan is a logic model for each program. The logic model is developed to describe how program inputs and activities produce outputs that are expected to lead to social or economic outcomes over the short, medium, and long term. A well-designed logic model assists agencies in identifying how their services relate to one of the County's Core Principles and the appropriate performance measures to report.

In addition, Franklin County requires non-profit Community Partners to identify program outcome goals and objectives (i.e. outcomes, activities, and outputs) to be able to measure the success of programs being funding. Franklin County will continue this practice in providing COVID-19 Recovery Grants utilizing the funding from the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.

Performance Report

Franklin County also has a long history of performance budgeting. In 2000, the County implemented a Managing for Results (MFR) initiative and took the first step in reaching a larger goal to run County government more like a business by focusing on customer service, accountability, and results. County agencies and offices developed strategic business plans and reported performance data on the operations of their programs.

In 2011, the County implemented the Budgeting for Policy Results and Outcomes (BPRO) initiative to replace the MFR initiative. The County revised its core strategic principles and goals and refined its strategies to attain those goals. The strategic business plan and performance measurement systems were also revised for County agencies, offices, and courts to use. These important steps were designed to better align and link program outcomes to county goals.

Since 2014, all County agencies, offices, and courts have participated in the County's BPRO initiative. The County continues to utilize and improve upon this framework of outcome-based budgeting and policy goal-centered management. During the 2021 budget process, the County developed the Performance Spotlight. This allowed each agency, office, and court to focus on one performance measure and provide context around that measure to demonstrate its value and better illustrate the policy results and outcomes the County is working towards.

In addition to utilizing performance budgeting, Franklin County requires reporting from its non-profit Community Partners. As part of their grant agreements, Community Partners provide mid-year and final financial and performance reports that must be submitted to the County. Franklin County will continue this practice in providing COVID-19 Recovery Grants utilizing the funding from the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.

PROJECT INVENTORY

PUBLIC HEALTH

Project Expenditure Category: 1.1 COVID-19 Vaccination

Funding amount: \$5,093,073.17

Project overview

- This project provides an incentive to County employees to decrease the number of unvaccinated employees or motivate employees to receive a COVID-19 vaccination sooner than they otherwise would have.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of employees vaccinated

Project Expenditure Category: 1.4 Prevention in Congregate Settings

Funding amount: \$3,200,000

Project overview

- This project provides support for the creation of a pandemic floor at the new Wexner Medical Center Inpatient Hospital Tower. Funding will be used for a dedicated exhaust system that will increase the number of beds operating as full airborne infection isolation rooms.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of beds operating as full airborne infection isolation rooms

Project Expenditure Category: 1.5 Personal Health Equipment

Funding amount: \$26,045

Project overview

- This grant provides support to the Human Services Chamber of Central Ohio to distribute 120,000 medical grade disposable masks to Franklin County children throughout its non-profit members.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of masks distributed

Project Expenditure Category: 1.6 Medical Expenses

Funding amount: \$3,000,000

Project overview

- This project is for the reimbursement of employee benefits fund for medical expenses related to treating COVID-19.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of individuals covered by the County's employee benefits fund

Project Expenditure Category: 1.7 Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses

Funding amount: \$90,000

Project overview

- This grant provides support to Franklin County Public Health for their efforts for mask enforcement and communication to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of families served

Project Expenditure Category: 1.11 Community Violence Interventions

Funding amount: \$1,200,000

Project overview

- This grant provides support to CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence to complete construction and purchase furnishings associated with the shelter expansion.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of masks distributed

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

Funding amount: \$1,125,000

Project overview

- This grant provides support to Franklin County Public Health for the A Kid Again program, which supports recreational therapeutic relief for Franklin County residents hit hard by healthcare costs and COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of families served

NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Project Expenditure Category: 2.1 Household Assistance: Food Programs

Funding amount: \$9,500,000

Project overview

- These grants provide support to the Mid-Ohio Food Collective to build a 19,000 square-foot addition to an existing warehouse which will house a new 14,000 square foot freezer that provides more than 1,000 additional pallet positions, roughly doubling current storage and picking locations, as well as provide funding for the purchase of food and grants to food pantries to support the local food system infrastructure.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of people served with access to healthy food

Project Expenditure Category: 2.2 Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid

Funding amount: \$1,500,000

Project overview

- This project provides support of the Prevention, Retention, Contingency Plus Rental Assistance Program (PRC) to prevent evictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic by providing rental support for low-income families.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of households provided assistance

Project Expenditure Category: 2.4 Household Assistance: Internet Access Programs

Funding amount: \$80,585

Project overview

- This grant provides socially and economically disadvantaged seniors living in qualified census tracts with devices, hot spots, and opportunities to learn and experience the digital world. Digital access will allow these seniors to reduce social isolation, engage in telehealth opportunities, as well as connect to employment and other commercial activities such as e-grocery shopping and transportation and attending virtual naturalization and citizenship classes.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of seniors receiving services
- Percent of seniors reporting increased confidence with using technology and feeling socially connected

Project Expenditure Category: 2.10 Assistance to Unemployed or Underemployed Workers
Funding amount: \$22,825,862.91

Project overview

- These grants provide support for a number of training, internship, and summer youth programs. These include the Tech Women of Color workforce training initiative, Building & Driving Futures pre-apprenticeship programs, Women Back to Work Initiative, Jobs & More (JAM) and Pathways 2 Progress summer youth employment programs, and the Ready 2 Earn summer youth work readiness training program.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of workers enrolled in job training programs
- Number of workers completing job training programs
- Number of people participating in summer youth employment programs

Project Expenditure Category: 2.11 Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care
Funding amount: \$22,516,418

Project overview

- This project includes \$22 million to provide a historic new investment in families and local child care providers called Franklin County RISE. The funding is intended to help families who are facing the “benefits cliff” in which they make too much to qualify for Publicly Funded Child Care but too little to actually afford child care, as well as the early learning centers and teachers on which they rely.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of children served by childcare and early learning services

Project Expenditure Category: 2.15 Long-term Housing Security: Affordable Housing
Funding amount: \$15,500,000

Project overview

- This project supports Healthy Neighborhoods Healthy Families initiative at Nationwide Children’s Hospital to retain and expand affordable housing in the Linden neighborhood. The initiative impacts targets five impact areas: affordable housing, education, health and wellness, community enrichment and economic development.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of homes repaired to ensure lower-income residents can stay in their homes
- Number of new affordable housing units developed

Project Expenditure Category: 2.18 Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance
Funding amount: \$72,600

Project overview

- This project supports a comprehensive marketing strategy to assist Franklin County residents with eviction protection and rental assistance to reduce the number at risk of homelessness due to the adverse financial consequences caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of residents contacted

Project Expenditure Category: 2.21 Medical Facilities for Disproportionately Impacted Communities
Funding amount: \$3,680,000

Project overview

- This project supports the expansion of facilities located in a qualified census tract to support the provision of health care as well as support families with seriously ill children. A grant to Alvis will assist with the expansion of its current facility to serve additional residents, and includes a carved-out space for a new health center to be operated by PrimaryOne Health, a federally qualified health center (FQHC). A grant with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Ohio will allow for the expansion of its current facility to provide housing to families with seriously ill children.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of individuals receiving health care services
- Number of families assisted

Project Expenditure Category: 2.29 Loans or Grants to Mitigate Financial Hardship
Funding amount: \$6,323,500

Project overview

- This project includes support of the Response and Recovery program to provide administrative, financial and performance management of funding allocated to furnish a range of Covid-19 recovery assistance to eligible small business, as well as support of the Equity Alliance to aid minority business owners who are historically underserved and under-connected by linking existing community assets and develop gap-filled initiatives to strengthen the regional small business ecosystem burdened by COVID-19.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of small businesses supported

Project Expenditure Category: 2.34 Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations
Funding amount: \$6,276,305.02

Project overview

- These grants provide economic support to non-profit organizations to cover lost revenue or increased expenditures due to the pandemic, including the Community Funding Initiative. As part of the Community Funding Initiative, nonprofit organizations would receive a grant covering 50% of lost revenue or increased expenditures up to a maximum amount of \$50,000 if a majority of clients were served in a qualified census tract (QCT); and 25% up to a maximum amount of \$25,000 if outside a QCT.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of nonprofit organizations supported

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35 Aid to Tourism, Travel, and Hospitality
Funding amount: \$4,564,000

Project overview

- These grants provided support for various initiatives in support of the region's travel and tourism industry. This includes funding to Franklin County Stadium, Inc. to support its operations for the avoidance of furloughs and filling vacancies, supporting of a Diversity Apprentice Program designed to provide hands-on experience to ethnically diverse apprentices interested in pursuing a career in the tourism and hospitality, and allowing for enhanced safety and health improvements at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and Nationwide Arena.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of jobs created or retained
- Percent of individuals in the Diversity Apprentice Program securing a full-time entry level supervisor position

Project Expenditure Category: 2.37 Economic Impact Assistance: Other
Funding amount: \$6,589,331.45

Project overview

- These grants include support various programs addressing the social determinants of health such as Franklin County Public Health’s Community Health Improvement Plan, Equity in All Policies policy to address health disparities, and collaboration with Restoring Our Own Through Transformation (ROOTT) for prenatal support and doula services.
- These grants also support other education related initiatives such as the COSI Columbus Learning Lunchboxes program to provide STEM-related learning kits to serve youth and families alongside critical human service providers throughout Franklin County and the OSU Cooperative Extension for the Urban ROOTS Exploration Experience.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of individuals served

PREMIUM PAY

Project Expenditure Category: 4.1 Public Sector Employees
Funding amount: \$5,934,062.68

Project overview

- This project provides a premium pay incentive to County employees who face heightened risks for COVID-19 exposure while providing essential services to the public.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of employees receiving a premium pay incentive

WATER, SEWER, AND BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Project Expenditure Category: 5.6 Clean Water: Stormwater
Funding amount: \$2,000,000

Project overview

- These projects will support the County Drainage Engineer’s efforts to improve drainage in areas in Franklin County. The focus is on upgrading the County’s 100-year-old stormwater drainage system, built primarily for agricultural purposes, to meet the needs of a rapidly developing urban and suburban county.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of linear feet of ditches maintained and repaired

REVENUE LOSS

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Funding amount: TBD

Project overview

- The intent is to use this funding to support public safety and public health expenditures, grants for community partnerships and economic development, support of the County's human services agencies, poverty mitigation, and various capital projects at the County's facilities. However, a final determination on the types of Governmental Services has not been made at this time. Based on the calculation in the final rule, the amount that the County can allocate to revenue loss per year is:
 - \$60,145,000 in 2020;
 - \$58,431,000 in 2021; and
 - \$96,376,000 in 2022.