

Deploying the American Rescue Plan in Franklin County

2020

The Franklin County Commissioners have 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 commissioners 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 the needs of the community greatly outweighed resources available while the pandemic surged on.

The Promise of the American Rescue Plan

Then came the American Rescue Plan, and with it came an unprecedented federal investment in the areas of greatest need. The COVID-19 vaccines and other mitigation efforts aimed to ease the public health crisis and allowed most of our economy to reopen, but 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 have still 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.

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, 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.

Building Resilience

The American Rescue Plan recognized that basic infrastructure like clean water, functioning sewers and high-speed broadband are 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.

Come back to arp.franklincountyohio.gov to stay up to date on Franklin County's efforts and learn about how Franklin County is putting American Rescue Plan dollars to work for our community.

