

# Richland County's Proposal for American Rescue Plan Funding July 2021

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The County is working to develop a comprehensive plan to allocate funding received through the American Rescue Plan Act. The goal is to use funding in manner that will respond to the most urgent needs of the community, enabling emergence from the public health crisis in a strong, stable position for the its residents.

This coronavirus stimulus package includes funding for a national COVID-19 vaccination program, food assistance, emergency childcare, small businesses, unemployment benefits, rental assistance, and public transit funding to help schools re-open safely.

Most notably, the American Rescue Plan provides \$65 billion in direct aid to counties out of \$350 billion in emergency funding for state, local and territorial governments to support the essential local government workers who have been on the front-line of the pandemic response.

Given the magnitude of the opportunity that this funding represents, we believe it is critical for citizens of the community who have experienced the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis firsthand to have an opportunity to share their priorities with the County.

Richland County  
Appropriation of the  
American Rescue Plan  
\$80,756,312

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

**The American Rescue Plan document in its entirety is over 600 pages long and provides**

**\$1.9 trillion dollars of appropriations affecting every state and many federal agencies. The central focus for counties is the \$350 billion included for state and local assistance. The bill includes**

- \$200 billion for states & territories – allocated based on unemployment levels
- \$130 billion for counties and all other municipalities
  - \$65B for counties – allocated based on population, \$65B for all other municipalities—allocated on a modified CDBG formula
- \$20 billion for Native American tribes

## ELIGIBLE USES

- Response to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality
- Respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers of the county that are performing such essential work, or by providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work.
- Provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue of such state/county/locality
- Investment in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure





## REQUIREMENTS TO RECEIVE THE FUNDING



- Local government (state) must certify that it needs federal assistance, and
- That the local government (state) will use the funds for the designated purposes defined under the bill.
- Fifty (5)0 percent of county funds would be delivered within 60 days of Treasury receipt of certification.
- Treasury may will offer further guidance following a period of feedback through July 16, 2021.
- \$83 billion to support multiple employer pension plans experiencing fiscal shortfalls.

## RICHLAND COUNTY PROPOSED CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUND USE

**Richland County continues to consider allowable opportunities for use of the \$80,576,312 allocated to the county. Option considered would benefit citizens throughout the County to provide immediate and future opportunities to ensure mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic. In considering opportunities, the County seeks to respond with measures that are within the guidance of the provision of funding:**

- To allocate resources for mental health, including suicide, burnout, special needs, substance abuse, etc.
- To provide assistance with homelessness services and support.
- To address community behavioral health needs worsened by COVID-19.

- To evaluate the provision of broadband infrastructure throughout the County.
- To review the possibilities of providing assistance to nonprofits to address community impacts of the pandemic.
- To improve the availability of food and security for the community
- To improve Richland County infrastructure, which includes but are not limited to water, sewer, flood control, drainage, etc.
- To evaluate the replacement of public sector revenue loss and provide funding for those whose jobs were essential in responding to the public health emergency.
- To consider measures to reverse the negative impact of the pandemic on the small business community.
- To access and review the best method to assist equity-focus services in the disproportionately impacted areas of the county.

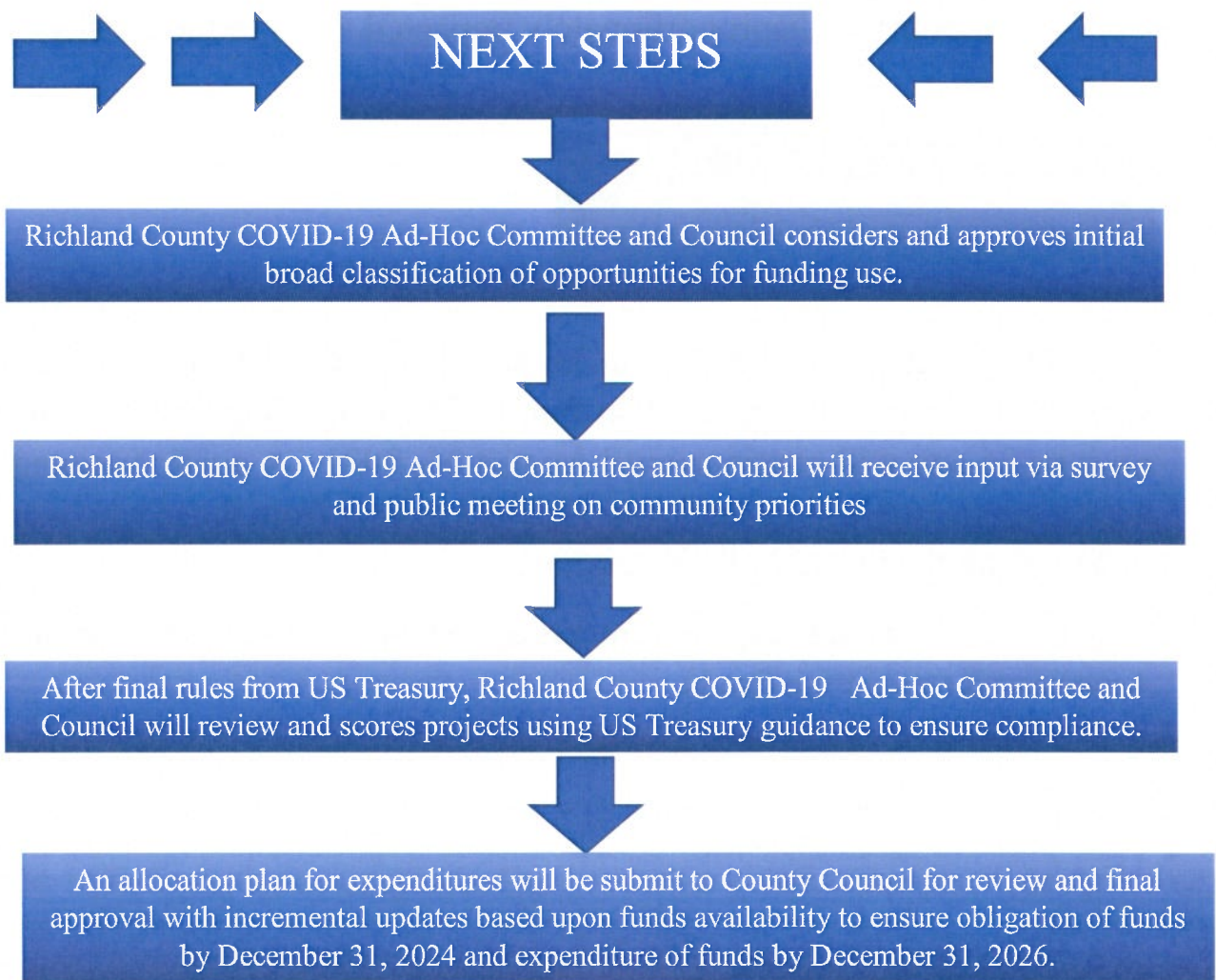
#### PERIOD OF PUBLIC INPUT

Richland County is committed to hearing opinions from its citizens on uses of the American Rescue Plan funds. The public input period began on June 26 and will continue until August 25, 2021. A public meeting to accept comments will be held July 19, 2021 to hear from those who would rather speak than send in their opinions.

Council will consider these comments as they set priorities for use of the American Rescue Plan funds.

## Funds Allocation to Date

In the initial phase, staff recommends funding of \$1,706,439 to lump sum agencies who experienced impacts and service increases due to COVID-19 (list of sub recipients is in Appendix A); \$325,000 for the Richland County Recreation Commission for maintenance of Parklane tennis courts to promote outdoor activities that emerged as safe activities during the pandemic, and approximately \$6,500,000 for stipends for employees directly responding to the public in the pandemic.



# Timeline



**\* Note: these are initial phase dates and are subject to change based on Federal guidance**



## **Summary**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about unexpected consequences to the operation of the Richland County government including:

- Reduced local government revenues, especially sales tax, but also hotel occupancy taxes, mortgage-recording taxes, among other local fees.
- Higher spending necessary to respond to the health emergency.
- The loss of state reimbursement; and

The potential of significant losses for small businesses on our main streets threatened jobs and the tax base of the community and continues to cause concern as our County recovers.

From the onset, Richland County has participated in testing, tracing and quarantining operations and provided PPE to first responders and community members at large. Small business grant programs administered by the county helped the economy begin reopening safely in a modified fashion as our country waited for vaccine approval and availability. Upon availability, the County provided support to enable distribution of vaccines to essential workers and the general population of the Richland County and surrounding area.

All of these efforts were embraced to support Richland County citizens in a time of crisis even as the county's own viability was threatened by:

- Declining local revenues as tourism, business related fees and courts and the associated costs ceased;
- Costs increased for services in response to the health emergency; and
- Business operations for many in the community continue to modify operations with ongoing impacts that may not fully be realized

In response to this unprecedented economic threat, Richland County have been consistent in their call for direct federal aid. The American Rescue Plan is a key component in addressing the challenges that face counties as they work to mitigate the pandemic and its negative impacts on local economies.



## Appendix A

### Lump Sum Distribution Sub Recipients

SUB RECIPIENT	ALLOCATION
Antioch Senior Center	\$40,000
Capital Senior Center/Lourie Center	\$180,000
Clemson University Extension	\$46,663
Columbia Urban League	\$100,000
Communities in Schools	\$70,000
Greater Columbia Community Relations	\$95,250
Palmetto AIDS Life Support	\$70,000
SC HIV AIDS Council	\$71,480
Senior Resources	\$548,046
Transitions Homeless Center	\$200,000
Wiley Kennedy	\$60,000
St John Baptist Church	\$75,000
Mental Illness Recovery Center	\$150,000

