

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocated about \$3.4 billion in fiscal recovery dollars directly to local counties, cities, and towns across the Commonwealth. These funds present a significant opportunity for local communities to address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people of color, people with disabilities, immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ populations, and other historically marginalized groups. To maximize the impact of these funds, local communities must allocate their fiscal recovery fund allocation towards creating affordable, accessible, climate resilient, and energy efficient housing for the lowest-income and marginalized families and individuals.

ARPA FUNDING ELIGIBLE USES FOR HOUSING

Assistance to Households

ARPA funds can be used to provide assistance to households to respond to the negative impacts of the pandemic. This includes:

- Rent, mortgage, utility, and relocation assistance; and
- Counseling and legal aid to prevent evictions and homelessness, such as legal services related to eviction proceedings and maintaining housing stability, court-based eviction prevention or diversion programs, and other legal services that help maintain or obtain housing.

Housing Stability Services

ARPA funds can be used for housing stability services that enable eligible households to maintain or obtain housing. This includes:

- Housing counseling, fair housing counseling, case management, outreach to households at risk of eviction or promotion of housing support programs, housing-related services for survivors of domestic abuse or human trafficking, and specialized housing support services for individuals with disabilities or seniors.

COVID-19 Response, Mitigation, and Prevention Activities

ARPA funds can be used for COVID-19 response, mitigation, and prevention activities. This includes:

- Support for isolation or quarantine; enhancement to health care capacity, including through alternative care facilities; support for services in congregate living facilities (e.g., nursing homes, incarceration settings, homeless shelters, group living facilities); and ventilation improvements in congregate settings.

Services and Programs to Respond to the Negative Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency*

ARPA funds can be used to build stronger communities through investments in housing and neighborhoods. This includes:

- Services to address homelessness such as supportive housing and to improve access to stable, affordable housing among unhoused individuals;
- Affordable housing development to increase supply of affordable, high-quality homes; and
- Housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance to help household moves to neighborhoods with high levels of economic opportunity and mobility for residents with low incomes and to help residents increase their economic opportunity and reduce concentrated areas of low economic opportunity.

**Investments in this category are applicable to Qualified Census Tracts and to other populations, households, or geographic areas that are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. ARPA fund recipients must be able to support their determination of "disproportionately impacted."*

LOCAL ARPA HOUSING PRIORITIES

CHAPA recommends that local counties, cities, and towns consider allocating a significant portion of their direct ARPA fiscal recovery funds towards the following housing investments:

- **Affordable Rental Housing Production and Preservation** to provide increased housing options that are climate resilient, energy efficient, and accessible to disproportionately impacted populations, including BIPOC communities, persons with disabilities, seniors with low incomes, LGBTQ+ populations, and others.
- **Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Projects** to meet the Commonwealth's climate resiliency and energy efficiency goals, provide more accessible homes for persons with disabilities, and improve housing quality and the health of residents by removing hazards like lead paint and mold
- **Expanded Homeownership Investments** to build new affordable homeownership opportunities for households with low and moderate incomes and to expand resources for first-time homebuyers, including down payment assistance, particularly in communities of color.
- **Public Housing** investments for capital repairs, improvements, and redevelopment for the long-term preservation of local affordable housing.
- **Acquisition Funds** for residents or communities to acquire unsubsidized property being sold or foreclosed upon, providing new opportunities for long-term affordable homes and preventing displacement of residents from their homes and neighborhoods.
- **Supportive Housing** investments that end homelessness, including for rent assistance, operating costs for supportive services, and the acquisition of hotels, motels, or nursing homes to convert into permanent, deeply affordable homes.
- **Counseling and Legal Aid Services** to prevent evictions for tenants and small owner-occupants at risk of losing their homes.
- **Tenant Outreach and Assistance** provided by local community-based organizations, nonprofits, and groups to help families and individuals learn about and apply for all available housing assistance, including emergency assistance and legal aid.