



ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

Survey Results on the American Rescue Plan

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The American Rescue Plan provides relief to local governments by supporting the public health response and laying the foundation for economic recovery. In addition to addressing revenue losses, the ARP will help cover the costs incurred due to responding to the public health emergency, and provide recovery support through assistance to households, businesses, nonprofits, and essential workers as well as investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

BACKGROUND

The Comptroller's Office surveyed Ulster residents on potential uses of the American Rescue Plan funds. The survey was promoted on social media from March 24 through May 3, 2021, and in electronic newsletters to the Comptroller's Office distribution lists. Readers are cautioned to take into account the relatively small sample size and reach, as only those with internet access could respond.

Two hundred and twelve people responded. Respondents were provided with 14 potential options for the use of funds and asked to grade each on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of importance. Respondents were also asked to provide potential ideas for the use of funds. Ninety-two respondents provided suggestions.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, designed to deliver \$350 billion to state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to bolster their response to the COVID-19 emergency and its economic impacts. Eligible uses for the funds allocated to counties are to:

- Respond to or mitigate the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) or its negative economic impacts;
- Cover costs incurred as a result of such emergency;
- Replace revenue that was lost, delayed, or decreased (as determined based on revenue projections for the metropolitan city, nonentitlement unit of local government, or county as of January 27, 2020) as a result of such emergency; or
- Address the negative economic impacts of such emergency.

Analysis of Comptroller's American Rescue Plan Survey Responses

Develop Affordable Housing
(8.7 out of 10)



Create More Youth Programming
(7.47 out of 10)



Create an Internet Connectivity Fund
(7.33 out of 10)



Expand Cellular Service on Unserved Major Corridors
(6.98 out of 10)



Fund Last Mile Broadband
(6.95 out of 10)



Support Inpatient Opioid Treatment
(6.95 out of 10)



Anti-Gun Violence Programming
(6.48 out of 10)



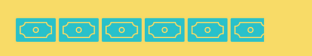
Replenish the Tax Stabilization Fund
(6.37 out of 10)



Expand the Universal Basic Income Program
(6.14 out of 10)



Pay Down Existing County Debt
(5.78 out of 10)



To view the original survey, visit us at <https://tinyurl.com/ComptrollerSurveyPDF>

Other municipalities in Ulster County are slated to receive the following amounts with village allocations contained within the town portions based on population.

- City of Kingston: \$18.66 million
- Denning: \$60,000
- Esopus: \$960,000
- Gardiner: \$610,000
- Hardenburgh: \$30,000
- Hurley: \$660,000
- Town of Kingston: \$100,000
- Lloyd: \$1.15 million
- Marbletown: \$600,000
- Marlborough: \$940,000
- New Paltz: \$1.54 million
- Olive: \$470,000
- Plattekill: \$1.12 million
- Rochester: \$790,000
- Rosendale: \$630,000
- Saugerties: \$2.09 million
- Shandaken: \$320,000
- Shawangunk: \$1.52 million
- Ulster: \$1.38 million
- Wawarsing: \$1.38 million
- Woodstock: \$630,000

COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR STIMULUS FUNDING USAGE

The Comptroller's Office solicited ideas from the community about how funding could be appropriated. Following are some of the highlights of community survey responses.

Affordable Housing

- Affordable housing for diverse economic people and families in all towns.
- Countywide landbank, cancel rent, eviction prevention.

Broadband

- Help the most people with any program so that they raise their economic status - internet for better job/school access, for example.
- Investments towards supporting internet and informational access for all County residents, development of annual County fund allotment for municipal public access groups since Charter/Spectrum isn't willing to assist.

Business Support

- Small business relief, especially restaurants and small theaters.
- Create an advisory agency where small businesses can get free or low cost help with tax prep and bookkeeping advice.

Cash to Residents

- Identify full time Ulster County residents of more than 5 years and provide them a stimulus or gift cards to local businesses of their choice so the money stays local. Can also be used to support charitable organizations.
- Property tax rebates for home owners.

Food Access

- Increase access and affordability of quality fresh foods in areas lacking supermarkets, etc. and support/enhance local small-scale independent farming programs and activities. Decrease the distance and reduce barriers between farm to home table.
- Support direct service feeding programs (groceries/meals) to combat food insecurity.

Infrastructure

- Enhance public transportation, green energy projects, climate mitigation.
- Rebuild infrastructure creating jobs - roads, bridges, wastewater treatment facilities.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- Enhance county mental health and substance abuse services.
- Expand availability of mental health services in more remote areas of the county.

Municipal Support

- Consult with the towns and villages that did not receive comparable per capita funding and give them what they need.
- Help towns create attractive and functional websites with local files digitized and readily available with robust search capabilities in an ADA compliant environment. Help avoid lengthy FOIL process by making most files available online.
- Ensure County workforce is working under contract at adequate pay.

Open Space and Recreation

- Outdoor community space has been very important to people during the pandemic. Expand on trails and parks.
- A permit system for over-visited natural places like Blue Hole and Big Deep that brings in revenue and curtails places being fully closed. Permits should be affordable for county residents and possibly more for tourists.
- Community Land Trust, state of the art skate park, safe places to bike.

Workforce Development

- Development of STEM and healthcare careers, building new jobs with modern skills.
- Provide at least County workers with childcare access subsidies (if not everyone), and make sure pay equity is achieved for women in the County workforce.
- Funding for training and education in the police, fire department, and EMT sectors.

Youth and the Elderly

- More after school education, youth programs, and pre k /daycare programs, a STEM learning center for children.
- Address adolescent drug use and drug prevention programs.
- Expanded elder care programs and reinstate traveling van for OFA that was previously available in each town on rotating week days.