



# American Rescue Plan Act

## Guidance & Application Package

**Applications Due**  
**May 23, 2022**  
**(No later than 5:00 p.m.)**

Submit Applications to:  
Cascade County Commission Office  
325 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave North, Room 111  
Great Falls MT 59401

## American Rescue Plan Act Application Package

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# I. Application Instructions

## A. Background

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program, a part of the American Rescue Plan, delivers \$350 billion to state, local, and Tribal governments across the country to support their response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The SLFRF program provides governments across the country with the resources needed to:

- Fight the pandemic and support families and businesses struggling with its public health and economic impacts
- Maintain vital public services, even amid declines in revenue resulting from the crisis
- Build a strong, resilient, and equitable recovery by making investments that support long-term growth and opportunity

## B. Available Funds

Cascade County will receive a total of \$ 15,804,392 in direct ARPA aid from the US treasury as well as a portion allocated from Montana HB 632 specifically for Water and Sewer projects within Cascade County. The water and sewer funds from HB 632 total \$ 1,787,464.00.

## C. Federal Guidance / Eligible Use of Funds

1. Treasury has released the [Final Rule](#) for the program, which took effect on April 1, 2022. Recipients and stakeholders are also encouraged to consult the [Overview of the Final Rule](#), which provides a summary of Final Rule provisions for informational purposes, and to visit the Final Rule section below for more details.
2. In general, the funds may be used as follows:
  - a. Replace lost public sector revenue, using this funding to provide government services up to the amount of revenue lost due to the pandemic
  - b. Respond to the far-reaching public health and negative economic impacts of the pandemic, by supporting the health of communities, and helping households, small businesses, impacted industries, nonprofits, and the public sector recover from economic impacts
  - c. Provide premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support to those who have and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical sectors
  - d. Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, to support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand affordable access to broadband internet

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provide substantial flexibility for each jurisdiction to meet local needs within these four separate eligible use categories.

**Eligibility consideration: Expenses must be incurred between March 3, 2021 & September 30, 2024.**  
**All project related funds must be expended & projects completed by September 30, 2026.**

## **D. List of ineligible ARPA activities**

1. No recipient may use funds to make a deposit to a pension fund
2. Funds may not be used to pay off debt
3. Funds may not be used to pay legal settlements
4. ARPA funds are considered federal grant dollars. As such, these funds may not be used by the recipient as "match" dollars in concert with separate grant programs prohibiting the use of federal dollars as match funding unless an explicit allowance exists with the ARPA legislation.
5. Projects that are not able to be completed within the federal timelines
6. Funds may not be used for any activity that conflicts with the purpose of the ARPA statute (e.g. use of funds that conflict with COVID-19 mitigation practices in line with CDC guidance and recommendations)

## **E. Intended use of funds by Cascade County**

Cascade County intends that these funds will be used in a variety of ways that will assist the citizens of our county and our economy in recovering from the effects of Covid-19. The guiding principles and priorities of the Commission in this effort will be:

1. Deployment of these funds such that they assist in the mitigation of Covid-19 damages without creating multiyear funding obligations for the county
2. Provide one time capital to "jump start" long term sustainable projects that will improve the community
3. Improve the capacity and compliance of area water and sewer districts
4. Provide enhanced public access to county records and business processes via online access.
5. Assist with workforce and supportive housing services in Cascade County
6. Enhance the capabilities of Montana Expo Park Facilities
7. Support for tourism and other Covid impacted industries
8. Assist in the creation of sustainable job training programs in Cascade County
9. Assist existing local providers with the expansion of High-Speed Internet capability into unserved and underserved areas
10. Provide as necessary budgetary assistance to County Departments directly impacted by Covid such as the CCSO, CCHD and Juvenile Detention Center
11. Support as appropriate, one-time enhancements to a variety of Nonprofit organizations serving our community
12. Provide support for economic development and retention activities
13. Other projects that fall within the scope of the Federal ARPA guidance

## **F. Upcoming Key Dates**

<b>May 23, 2022:</b>	<b>Cascade County Application Deadline</b>
<b>May 31, 2022 &amp; June 3, 2022:</b>	<b>Public meetings will be held with all applicants</b>
<b>July 12, 2022:</b>	<b>Grants are expected to be awarded</b>

## II. Application Guidelines / Processes

### A. Requirements and reminders

1. There is no minimum grant request amount
2. Please type the application or utilize the online fill-in pdf form
3. Please number all pages so we can be certain that we have all the required materials
4. Applicants must have a SAM account. (This number is used by the federal government.)  
To obtain an account visit their website: <https://sam.gov/content/home>)
5. If your organization is a 501c(3), please provide verification of your status
6. The timeline of your project, including the date of anticipated completion, is a critical portion of determining eligibility so please include it with your application
7. Please make certain that the application is signed by an agent authorized to commit your organization to this effort
8. **If you have already filed a grant application with the state or a federal agency, you may include that in your submission rather than duplicating the same information on the county form**
9. This is a reimbursable grant. Applicants must be able to bear the cost of the expenditures and then be reimbursed for the approved costs
10. Cascade County reserves the right to ask for additional information throughout the process

### B. Review process

1. After your application is submitted, a team made up of the County Commissioners, the County Budget Officer and our Deputy Civil attorney will review all applications to make sure that they are complete and then they will score the application
2. All applicants whose application is deemed compete will be invited to formally present their request to the County Commission on May 31, 2022 or June 3, 2022
3. Awarding of the grants is expected to occur at the July 12, 2022 Commission meeting

### C. Scoring Criteria

1. **Project Description including:** **25 points max**
  - i. Overall goal of project
  - ii. What services will be provided by the successful completion of this project
  - iii. Target population to be served
  - iv. Where the project will be located
  - v. Project timeline for startup phase
2. **Length and Value of Community Benefit of Project** **25 points max**
3. **Project Compatibility with ARPA Eligibility Requirements:** **50 points max**
  - i. Describe how this project is compatible with ARPA funding (no grant will be awarded unless this can be demonstrated)
  - ii. Describe why this project requires ARPA funding

- iii. Estimate the number of clients to be served annually by this project.
- iv. Describe the process through which you determined the need for this project.
- v. Describe any match leverage that the ARPA funds will secure.

4. **Project Management:** **25 points max**
- i. Identify the individuals and organizations that will be responsible for the management and administration of this grant and the required Federal reporting
  - ii. Give examples of past or current federal grants that your organization has managed successfully
  - iii. Explain the organization's financial capacity to pay for the cost of this project and be later reimbursed
5. **Project Readiness to Proceed:** **25 points max**
- i. Detail how soon the organization has the capacity to proceed after the grant is awarded
  - ii. If project is designed to be done in phases, explain the various phases and levels of service to the community at each phase
6. **Project Timeline** **25 points max**
- i. Provide a detailed timeline demonstrating the project completion within the ARPA funding deadline
7. **Project Budget:** **25 points max**
- i. Provide a detailed budget showing all sources of funding and whether they are committed or merely applied for
  - ii. Provide a specific description of how the ARPA funds will be used within the project budget
8. **Project Partners:** **25 points max**
- i. Provide a list of other organizations that are supplying financial or operational support for the project
  - ii. Provide letters confirming the support of the other listed partnering agencies
9. **Grant Match:** **25 points max**
- i. Detail how the allocation of these funds will bring additional grant resources into the county. (Will this be used as a match to another grant?)
10. **Sustainability Plan:** **25 points max**
- i. Detail how the project will continue in operation going forward showing how no additional funds will be required from county in the future

## **D. Reservation of Rights**

Cascade County reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to award all, a portion, or none of the available ARPA funding, and may reject any and all proposals based on the quality and/or merits of the proposals, or when it is determined to be in the public interest to do so. Furthermore, the County may extend deadlines and timeframes, as needed.

Cascade County reserves the right to substantiate an applicant's qualifications, financial information, capability to perform, or past performance in its consideration of the applicant's grant request.

Cascade County reserves the right to waive any informalities in proposals, to accept any proposal or portion thereof, and to reject any and all proposals should it be in the best interest of the County to do so.

## **E. Post Award and Sub-recipient Criteria**

All awards are subject to pre-contract negotiations with the recipient. A recipient must comply with all applicable state and federal statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders, and a recipient shall provide for compliance with ARPA, this subpart, and any interpretive guidance by other parties in any agreements it enters into with other parties relating to the use of these funds.

Cascade County is committed to monitoring the performance of grant recipients to ensure that funds are used appropriately and in a manner commensurate with the American Rescue Plan Act. Copies of the monitoring reports will be kept in the Budget/Grants Office.

Recipients that do not comply with the Post-Award and Sub-Recipient Criteria listed below will have their award revoked.

1. ARPA sub-recipients shall not incur any costs or obligate any funding until a contract between the County and the recipient is executed, unless specifically allowed by the contract
2. The ARPA Sub-recipient applicants shall complete their program and expend all awarded funds by September 30, 2026
3. All recipients must provide proof of the following insurances:
  - i. Commercial General Liability (Including Products/Completed Operations) with \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$2,000,000 general aggregate limits and Cascade County listed as an Additional Insured
  - ii. Automobile Liability with \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limit per accident
  - iii. Worker's Compensation Insurance
  - iv. Unemployment Insurance
4. ARPA sub-recipients will be required to maintain accurate records documenting the prevention of, preparation for, or response to the Coronavirus AND records documenting targeted populations and/or areas being served by the program or project. ARPA recipients will provide quarterly reports to the County demonstrating that the above eligibility requirements are being satisfied. The ARPA recipient must collect, and track data elements associated with the program/project requesting funding. Additional reporting, including audited findings, may be required if requested by the United States Treasury.

5. Recipients will be asked to provide a final summary reporting all accomplishments and outcomes to be provided to United States Department of the Treasury and the public. This includes a description of the impact or outcomes of the program or project. Quarterly updates may be requested and must be provided. If requested, funded recipients must comply.
6. Sub-recipients are required to:
  - i. Collect and track data elements associated with the program/project requesting funding. These elements may include: how the person/household/business was directly impacted by the coronavirus; number of persons/ households/businesses served; family size; race/ethnicity; income documentation; and residency documentation. Additional elements such as underwriting for business programs, income, and health outcomes will be required, collected, and tracked depending upon the nature of the program
  - ii. Submit performance reports to the County on a quarterly basis. The reports will be reviewed for accuracy, performance measures, and compliance
  - iii. Follow Uniform Guidance for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200) which includes: Allowable activities; Cost principles; Cash management; Equipment and real property; Procurement, suspension and debarment; Matching, level of effort or earmarking; Program income; and other Award terms and conditions such as records retention, Single Audit Act, Civil Rights Compliance, etc.
  - iv. Comply with applicable state prevailing wage laws (18-2-401 to 432 MCA)
7. These ARPA funds are issued as a reimbursable grant and the applicants will need to be aware that the county will only issue reimbursements once per quarter. Invoices or requests for payments must be accompanied by documentation substantiating the costs.