

COUNTY OF BURLINGTON
Recovery Plan



State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
2022 Report

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The County of Burlington was awarded approximately \$86.5 million under the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) and plans to focus on areas such as public health, business assistance, housing assistance, revenue loss and infrastructure. Connectivity and assuring access to high-quality internet and other communication tools will also be a goal.

Burlington County created rental and mortgage assistance programs to help residents with back payments and has provided relief from hefty utility expenses. The County saw that the residents also were battling food insecurity since the beginning of the pandemic, so the Commissioners have partnered with a local food pantry to provide a range of free fruits and vegetables, meats, prepared meals and shelf stable boxes of food each month. Thousands of residents were able to feed their families.

Burlington County is also launching a new program, LIFT-UP (Lunches and Information for Tenants and Underserved Populations), which provides meals and housing information to underserved populations. Burlington County is targeting areas that need additional resources.

Local businesses had the opportunity to apply for interest free loans of up to \$50,000 from our Health Emergency Loan Program (HELP). More than a dozen businesses were able to stay open with our assistance.

Like most counties across the nation, the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for our government operations, local businesses and our residents. As our economy and communities struggled, Burlington County created new programs that offered assistance to both businesses and residents through the use of state and federal funding.

Uses of Funds

The County intends to utilize funding under the following expenditure categories: Public Health (EC1), Negative Economic Impacts (EC2), and Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC3), Infrastructure (EC5), and Revenue Replacement (EC6).

The following is a rundown of the major projects in each category:

Public Health

Throughout the pandemic, Burlington County has made safeguarding public health its top priority and has expended operating funds for testing, vaccination, contact tracing, outreach campaigns and personal protective equipment (PPE) for first responders, long-term care facilities personnel and frontline public employees. Many of the eligible public health expenses are covered through other funding streams, however, once those funds are no longer available, the county anticipates supplementing the cost with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFR) funds.

Infrastructure and Disproportionately Impacted Communities

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of infrastructure, particularly access to high-quality internet that can enable work, education and health care access. Individuals and communities that lack affordable access are at a severe disadvantage. To help close the digital divide, the County is exploring fiber optic upgrades and replacements in disproportionately disadvantaged communities and others lacking high-quality internet access.

Updating those communities' telecommunications infrastructure support increased demand for online education and help families access government services and access health care. The upgrades are also expected to expand opportunities for employment, enhance public safety and help bolster economic activity.

In addition, because sewerage infrastructure is vital for residents' health and wellbeing, the County is also exploring improvements at the Burlington County Resource Recovery Complex (landfill) and the extension of a sewerage line to Rainbow Meadow Park in Delran. The latter improvement would help enhance the Burlington County park for visitors, and also assist Farmers Against Hunger, a nonprofit group that uses a portion of the park for its hunger-relief operations.

Uses of Funds (continued)

Revenue Replacement

To date, the County has allocated approximately \$40 million to replace public sector revenue loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding revenue losses is critical to health and wellbeing of Burlington County's residents because it ensures that vital government services throughout the county continue. The County's allocation covers each of the four years of the program.

The calculation used to determine revenue loss is based on the formula in the Interim Final Rule, as of December 31, 2020. General revenues subject to the loss calculation include amounts collected by subordinate agencies, as defined by the Census Bureau's Individual State Descriptions 2017 Census of Governments report.

In accordance with the Compliance and Reporting Guide: State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds issued by the United States Department of Treasury, the County has utilized the eligible costs identified as Revenue Replacement Funds to cover various government services. Of the \$16 million in revenue losses, \$7.4 million was anticipated as revenue within the 2022 Operating Budget and approximately \$700,000 was used to reimburse the Motor Vehicle Fines Fund. Toll revenue losses of \$8.7 million were disbursed to the Burlington County Bridge Commission to fund the Burlington-Bristol Bristol Bridge Tower Span Deck Replacement Project.

Promoting equitable outcomes

The County's infrastructure and public health programs are designed to promote equitable outcomes and address disparities.

The County investments in testing, vaccinations, food-security assistance and outreach ensure that all populations have access to critical services and support. The County also is exploring broadband improvements specifically to ensure all residents can access affordable high-speed internet to try to bridge any digital divides within local communities.

Community Engagement

Burlington County has a strong connection with our communities, civic leaders, faith-based leaders and local town governments. The County Commissioners attend as many community meetings and events as possible and are always opening dialogues about services and programs that effect the community. The County has been soliciting ideas and comments from the community and welcomes additional input from our stakeholders. More community engagement will be planned.

Labor Practices

As infrastructure projects are identified, the County will review applicable labor standards to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects that also support the economic recovery. Prevailing wage requirements will be utilized for any work done on behalf of the County.

Use of Evidence

Most of the programs and projects Burlington County intends to complete are in the initial planning or concept phase. Once the projects are underway and/or completed, it will allow for assessment and evaluations. The County intends to use relevant sources to assess the level of evidence for any interventions and will identify evidence-based models that could be applied with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) funds.

The County has not yet determined an overall approach for using evidence-based interventions and/or program evaluation metrics to track the County's progress in reaching their project goals.

Performance Report

Burlington County's plans to measure how State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund funds impact overall county goals of improving community health, connectivity and access to critical services. Statistical measurements related to vaccination rates, COVID-19 hospitalizations and high-speed internet connectivity are being considered.

PROJECT INVENTORY

Project 6.1: Government Services

Funding amount: \$40 million

Project Expenditure Category: EC6 Revenue Replacement 6.1, Provision of Government Services

Project Overview

- The County calculated general revenue loss for 2020 as compared to the base year of 2019 at \$18 million, which includes revenue losses of subordinate agencies, as defined by the Census Bureau's Individual State Descriptions 2017 Census of Governments.
- The County intends to utilize revenue replacement in each of the four years of the Recovery Program and has projected future years' revenue losses based on 2020 deficits. If the actual revenue loss is less than the County's cumulative projection of \$40 million, the funding will be reallocated to other projects.