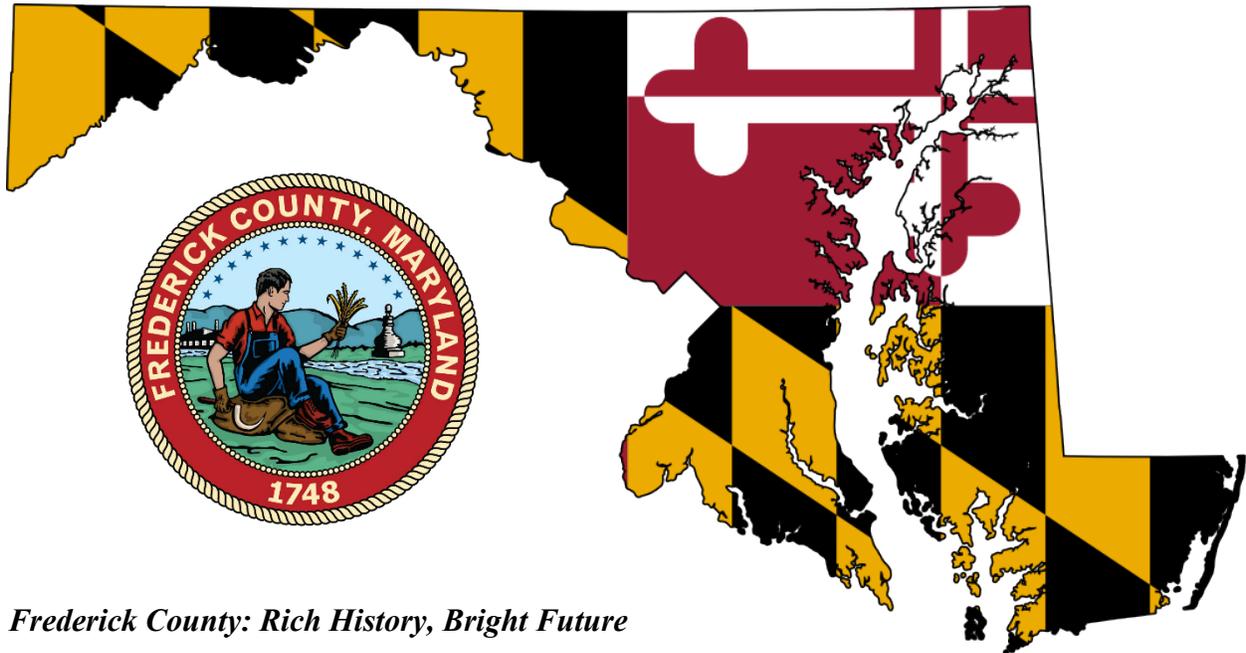# Frederick County, Maryland

Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future

Application Instructions

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

American Rescue Plan Act

Overview

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into law. This law established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSLFRF). These funds provide a substantial infusion of resources ($350 billion) in emergency support to State, local, and Tribal governments in responding to the on-going impact of COVID-19. In May 2021, Frederick County, Maryland was allocated $50.4 million in one-time CSLFRF funding to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and its negative economic impacts. These funds represent a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the County and community to not only address the continued efforts surrounding the on-going pandemic, but also provide generational investments that lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery with meaningful and lasting change.

Frederick County's ARPA Strategy

Funding from ARPA will allow the County to continue its robust response to fighting the COVID-19 public health emergency. It will also be a bridge to local economic recovery and a catalyst for transformational and equitable change. County Executive Gardner strives to use this funding to change outcomes and increase the quality of life for all County residents.

The process for using this one-time ARPA funding and making these critical investments is project based. Through projects approved for funding, the County will invest in a variety of initiatives that help combat the COVID-19 public health emergency and its negative economic impacts, while also advancing equity, and moving Frederick County forward.

Frederick County expects all eligible projects approved for ARPA funding will not only align with the U.S. Treasury's intended uses of the funds, but also advance County Executive Gardner's ARPA Priority Outcomes. Each priority outcome is a fundamental pillar to Frederick County's overall recovery from the pandemic.

County Executive Gardner's ARPA Priority Outcomes:

Health	Ensure a robust response to protect public health from the impacts of COVID-19.
Health Disparities	Advance equity in health outcomes by identifying and addressing disparities including a focused community based effort to improve maternal health.
Children and Families	Strengthen children and families by providing resources and support to improve family stability, reduce adverse childhood experiences, and ensure success in school.
Economic Recovery	Support economic recovery for businesses and agriculture through innovation grants while ensuring equity through minority business outreach, training, and capital grant programs.
Mental Health	Strengthen and expand behavioral health response to address growing community needs resulting from the pandemic including expanding crisis response efforts and implementing a crisis stabilization center.
Seniors	In partnership with our non-profit human service agencies, ensure resources and support for seniors to live safe, healthy and productive lives.
Transportation	Transportation is an integral piece to all facets of our recovery and affects all other priority outcomes.

To ensure a timely, equitable, transparent and accountable process throughout the ARPA program's lifecycle, Frederick County established a seven-member ARPA Project Review Committee charged with providing a comprehensive review of all funding requests while also confirming project alignment with Federal and local guidance.

Project Lifecycle

Frederick County uses a project-based approach for ARPA funding. There are four main phases to each project: Application, Executive Approval, Administration, and Completion. Each phase has concurrent or consecutive requirements that must be met to move on to the next phase. This section will provide a brief overview of the requirements for each phase.

Project Phases
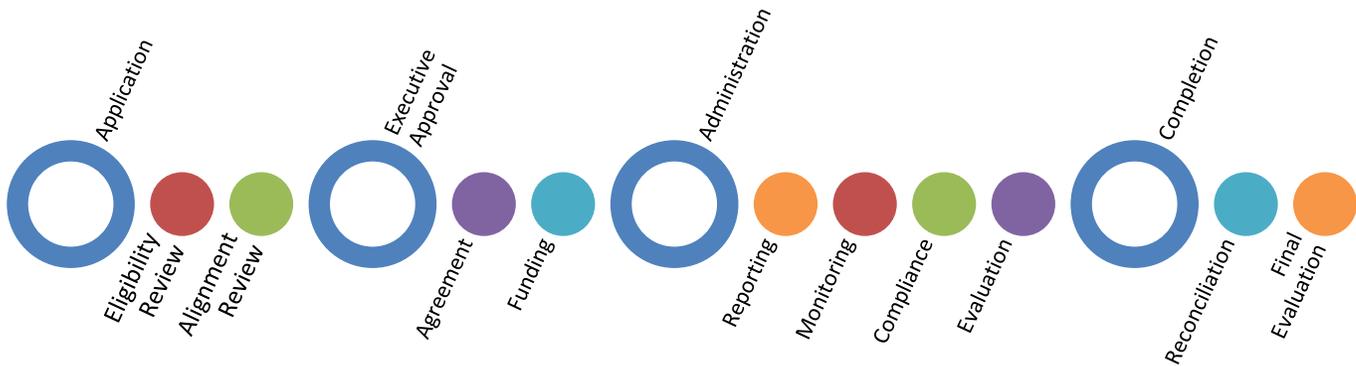
Application Phase

The Application phase consists of two main components. Once a high-level funding request has been submitted providing Frederick County with a brief narrative of the project and organization seeking funding, an initial Eligibility Review will take place to see how the project correlates to the COVID-19 pandemic or its negative economic impacts based on Federal guidelines surrounding the available grant funding. The Project Overview and Funding Request form can be found in Appendix A. If the Eligibility Review proves successful, the application then goes through an Alignment Review to see how the initiative lines up with County Executive Gardner's ARPA Priority Outcomes and best fits the needs of our community and its recovery. This phase of the project lifecycle is expected to take two weeks to complete.

Eligibility Review

There is an eligibility threshold for projects to meet to be considered. Projects that will be considered eligible for funding must first identify the following information:

1) Identify a negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and
2) Identify how the project accurately documents and responds to the scale of the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Projects must remedy the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts directly or indirectly. Direct projects respond to effects that can be solely attributed to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Examples of direct projects include mobilizing a large-scale vaccination effort or building improvements for social distancing. The COVID-19 public health emergency is the only cause for direct projects. Indirect projects can also address the effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. Indirect projects are linked to the COVID-19 pandemic via direct effects or have more than one cause, of which, the COVID-19 pandemic is one. For example, an organization proposing a tutoring program would be an indirect project. A direct effect of the pandemic was the transition to virtual learning/school, of which, many students suffered learning loss in the transition.

> *Note: An eligible project idea is not a commitment by Frederick County to fund that project.*

Alignment Review

All projects must be aligned with at least one of County Executive Gardner's ARPA Priority Outcomes. These include:

➢ *Health*
- Ensure a robust response to protect public health from the impacts of COVID-19.

➢ *Health Disparities*
- Advance equity in health outcomes by identifying and addressing disparities including a focused community based effort to improve maternal health.

➢ *Children and Families*
- Strengthen children and families by providing resources and support to improve family stability, reduce adverse childhood experiences, and ensure success in school.

➢ *Economic Recovery*
- Support economic recovery for businesses and agriculture through innovation grants while ensuring equity through minority business outreach, training, and capital grant programs.

➢ *Mental Health*
- Strengthen and expand behavioral health response to address growing community needs resulting from the pandemic including expanding crisis response efforts and implementing a crisis stabilization center.

➢ *Seniors*
- In partnership with our non-profit human service agencies, ensure resources and support for seniors to live safe, healthy, and productive lives.

➢ *Transportation*
- Transportation is an integral piece to all facets of our recovery and affects all other priority outcomes.

A deeper dive of all funding request applications is done by Frederick County's ARPA Project Review Committee. Each application is evaluated on its own merits throughout the entire process. In determining if a project should be recommended for approval and funding with the County Executive, the ARPA Project Review Committee will consider the following: urgency of the project, timeline for the project's completion, other available funding sources and if funding is needed one-time or on-going, if the project is new, or just an enhancement/expansion of an existing program, how equity will be incorporated and advanced throughout the project's life, overall complexity of the project and the capacity for the requesting organization to implement the project and maintain all reporting requirements, project risks or challenges, and the possibility of existing similar projects or programs. A comprehensive list of project evaluation questions can be found in Appendix B.

The ARPA Project Review Committee will be grading each project application using an evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix's grading criteria can be found in Appendix C. Once each project application has been graded, the ARPA Project Review Committee will provide its recommendations to the County Executive for final review and approval/denial decisioning.

> *Note: A project that aligns with County Executive Gardner's ARPA Priority Outcomes and is successfully evaluated by the ARPA Project Review Committee is not a commitment by Frederick County to fund a project.*

Executive Approval Phase

The County Executive, or her designees will provide the final review and approval/denial of applications based on recommendations from the ARPA Project Review Committee. The County Executive's approval of a project creates a commitment to move the application to the Agreement and Funding phases. Applicants will be notified via e-mail on the status of their application once executive approval or denial has taken place. This phase of the project lifecycle is expected to take two to four weeks to complete.

Agreement

Each project must have a signed agreement between the recipient and Frederick County. For internal applicants, this will take the form of an inter-agency agreement signed by the County Executive authorizing the project initiative. All internal projects will also require a Project Manager Info Sheet to be signed by the division/department staff overseeing the project. For external applicants, this will be in the form of a grant memorandum of understanding agreement. The agreement will describe the terms and conditions of funding, including, but not limited to purpose, term, eligible uses, scope, reporting requirements, amendments, termination, audit, and any other requirements deemed necessary.

Funding

Each agreement will contain the terms of the disbursement of funds. However, actual disbursement of funds may be subject to on-going monitoring and review by County staff based on performance thresholds set forth in the agreement. For internal awardees, specific general ledger information will be provided for each project by Accounting Department staff. In addition, Finance Division staff will work closely with the internal awardee and the Office of Procurement and Contracting to oversee all purchasing and execution of related contracts. External awardees will be provided further instructions in their grant agreement on how to receive disbursements in accordance with County procedures.

> *Note: County Executive approval of an eligible project that has been successfully evaluated by the ARPA Project Review Committee is a commitment by the County to fund that project.*

Administration Phase

The administration phase contains four concurrent steps: reporting, monitoring, compliance, and evaluation.

All reporting, monitoring, compliance, and evaluation requirements will be defined in the grant agreement. The Administration phase includes the implementation of those requirements. The awardee is responsible for the implementation of the project and adherence to all other requirements as defined by the grant agreement. Ongoing assistance, communication and program support will be available throughout the process through the County's Finance Division.

Frederick County considers compliance with Federal guidelines of paramount importance. Failure to execute a project as planned or comply with all of the requirements of the grant agreement may result in corrective action, disqualification from submitting future applications, recovery of funds, termination of the agreement, and/or other civil or criminal proceedings as deemed necessary.

Project Completion Phase

Projects will be considered closed once the terms of the grant agreement have been fulfilled or the term of the agreement has concluded. All funds must be fully reconciled, all outstanding issues must be completely addressed and resolved, and any unspent funding must be returned to Frederick County. Final reports must be filed and the awardee is required to retain those reports for future audits in accordance with Federal guidelines set forth in the grant agreement.

Contact Information

For additional information or if you have any questions, please e-mail ARPA@FrederickCountyMD.gov.
All funding request applications and general correspondence should be sent to the same e-mail address.

Appendix A: Project Overview and Funding Request form

Organization Name (Department Name for internal applicants)	
Unique Entity Identifiers *	
Is the organization a 501(c)(3) non-profit?	
Does the organization employ fewer than 500 employees?	
Primary Contact Person	
E-mail Address	
Phone Number	
Project Name	
Estimated project start date	
Expected project completion date	
Total Project Budget	
Total Funding Requested from Frederick County	
Project Address or Location	
Project Overview/Description	
Briefly describe why this project is needed now and how it relates to the COVID-19 public health emergency and/or its negative economic impacts	

* Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI), replaces the DUNS numbers, are assigned through GSA's System for Award Management (SAM) registration. [SAM.gov | Home](https://sam.gov)

Appendix B: Project Evaluation Questions

Please use the following questions as a guide for completing a project funding request. Include any key benefits expected for the applicant, community and Frederick County.

➢ Is this a new project, or just an enhancement/expansion of an existing program?

➢ Will the project be phased out at the conclusion of the public health emergency?

➢ Which County Executive ARPA Priority Outcome(s) does this project align with?

➢ Will the Project serve the needs of residents in a Qualified Census Tract (QCT)? Projects that take place within a QCT are deemed to support or serve hardest-hit communities and families and more likely to be funded. See Appendix D for Frederick County's outlined QCT as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

➢ How does this project respond to or mitigate the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts?

➢ Does the project remedy a direct or indirect effect of the public health emergency?

➢ If the project is funded, does the organization have the capacity to implement the project and maintain mandatory Federal reporting requirements with existing resources?

➢ Will the organization require additional staff, technology or other physical, social, or organizational resources for this project to succeed? Provide details in your answer.

➢ If required, will your organization be able to provide proof of professional and liability insurance?

➢ What risks or challenges could impact the success of the project?

➢ What does success mean for the project? How will outcomes change due to its implementation?

➢ What are 3-5 performance measures for the project? Each performance measure should include the source of the data used to support it and ability to access and report on that data.

➢ Are intended outcomes focused on closing gaps, reaching universal levels of service or disaggregating progress by race, ethnicity, and other equity dimensions where relevant for the project's objective? If so, please explain.

➢ What population(s) will be served? Are there historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected groups the project intends to serve?

➢ How will the project incorporate and advance equity? How will you measure equity at each stage of your program?

➢ How was the project/program developed, adapted and/or implemented with equity in mind?

➢ Explain your efforts to make residents and businesses aware of the services offered?

➢ Are there differences in level of access to benefits and services across groups?

➢ Have you ensured that administrative requirements do not result in disparities in the ability to complete applications or meet eligibility criteria? If so, how is this accomplished?

➢ How do you propose to draw upon diverse perspectives in the community or field that your program will serve?

➢ Will this project require one-time funding or will the funding be needed on-going? If on-going, how will your organization sustain the project once these one-time grant funds are no longer available?

➢ Are there any other funding sources available for this project? If so, have you already applied for funding for this project with another agency? This would be considered a duplication of benefits since funding from multiple sources would be used for the same set of costs.

➢ What is the return on investment for the project? Where will these ARPA funds make the greatest impact? Projects that have a lasting impact on the community are deemed to have a solid ROI.

➢ Is there any planned collaboration or partnership with other community organizations or County government agencies for this project? If so, please describe that collaborative effort across multiple organizations.

Appendix C: Evaluation Matrix (Grading Criteria)

Grading Criteria	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Clearly describes project intentions and resulting community benefits	No clear intention was provided for usage of funds	Intent is unclear or anticipated benefits are unknown	Intent is clear and presents resulting project benefits	Intent is clear, presents resulting benefits, and aligns with CE's ARPA priorities
Project responds to COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts	No direct or indirect connection to COVID-19 pandemic	Indirect connection to COVID-19 pandemic, but project has limited response to the public health emergency	Direct or indirect connection to COVID-19 pandemic, and project provides response to mitigating its impact	Direct connection to COVID-19 pandemic and clearly provides mitigating response that correlates with ARPA priorities
Identifies and analyzes project and organizational risks	No risks identified or organization does not have the capacity to handle project and funding requirements as-is	Limited risks identified or organizational capacity is insufficient and additional resources are needed	Risks are identified and organizational capacity is evident to meet anticipated grant requirements	Risks are identified with plan for mitigation and organizational capacity is not in question
Describes success and provides valid performance measures	Success not adequately described or goal-based	Success described, performance measures not supported or do not tie to an outcome	Success is goal-based, performance measures are valid	Success is outcome-oriented, performance measures identified, sourced, accessible, and linked to outcome
Explains how project incorporates, advances and measures equity	No evidence that equity is addressed with project	Limited evidence that equity is addressed with project	Equity is incorporated into the project and can be measured	Equity is a central tenet of the project and easily measured
Outlines project funding needs	Project requires on-going funding with no identified funding source beyond ARPA grant funds to sustain things	Project requires on-going funding with limited information available on how to sustain initiative	Project uses either one-time funding or demonstrates a funding source for sustaining project beyond ARPA	Project clearly outlines current funding need with the ability to sustain its efforts well beyond ARPA grant funding
Leverages community and/or County government collaboration/partnership(s)	No evidence of any project collaboration or community partnership(s)	Limited evidence of project collaboration or community partnership(s)	Project partner(s) identified with clear expectations/rolls outlined for each party.	Multiple collaborators and external funding (or enhancement of existing funding) identified

Appendix D: Qualified Census Tracts

HUD Qualified Census Tracts
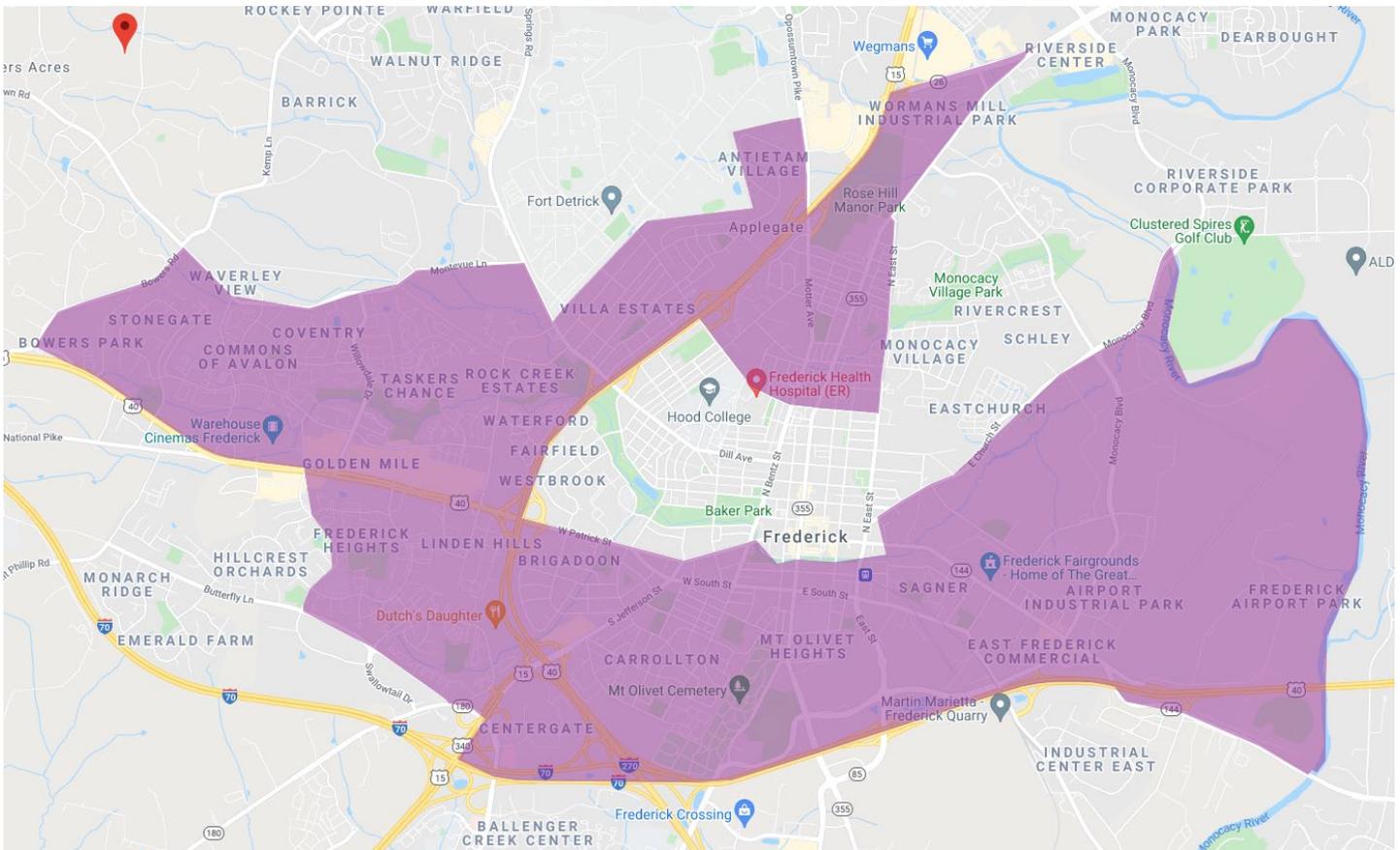
- ➢ Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) are a method used by the U.S. Treasury to define underserved and disproportionately impacted communities.

- ➢ A QCT is defined by the Federal government as a community where at least half of households have lower income than most of the surrounding region.

- ➢ For more details and maps related to QCTs, please visit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's website at https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/qct.html.