

Genesee County



Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Funds**

2021 Report

Genesee County
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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Genesee County will receive \$78,704,932 in direct recovery assistance under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act.

The Genesee County Board of Commissioners approved five major areas of focus:

- 1) **Health Department Initiatives** – aiding our response now and in the future to COVID-19 issues, including vaccinations, and other related emergency health issues
- 2) **Administration of Justice Initiatives** - address court case and jail backlog that is the result of COVID-19 related shutdowns
- 3) **General Tax Relief** – for those residents that have been experienced negative financial impacts due to COVID-19
- 4) **Capital Project Initiatives** - water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure projects
- 5) **Lost Revenue Replacement**

Uses of Funds

- a. **Public Health** – Under this category, the County plans to fund the following:
 - Capital investments in public facilities to meet pandemic operations
 - Improvements to the data or technology infrastructure for Health and Public Health Programs
 - Public safety services to help move the backlog of court cases
 - Other costs related to mitigating and preventing the spread of COVID-19
- b. **Negative Economic Impacts** - The County approved Tax Assistance Navigator Positions to aid individuals in identifying programs to assist in prevention of homelessness.
- c. **Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities** -Amounts have not been allocated to this category by the County as of July 31, 2021.
- d. **Premium Pay** - The payment of premium pay has not been an allocated use of the funds by the County as of July 31, 2021.
- e. **Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure** – The County has approved funding for a \$2,000,000 water tower project. The County continues engagement with other local units of government in an effort to partner and maximize all relief dollars across our communities. .
- f. **Revenue Replacement** - At the onset of COVID-19, County offices were temporarily closed. Once the decision was made to re-open to the public, there was limited activity and primarily appointment based. The courts were under guidance from the State Court Administrative Office to limit activity. These factors, along with others, resulted in a reduction of for the County during that timeframe. The lost revenue calculated as of December 31st of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 will be used to aid the County in providing government services.

Genesee County has been awarded a wide array of grants to assist with the pandemic recovery as follows:

Grant Name	Description	Amount Awarded
Water-Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security Part I	To create a residential emergency relief program to provide direct payment assistance for all water and wastewater utilities designed to help households retain water service as an essential public health method of mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Eligible households may also receive assistance with plumbing and well repairs.	\$881,504
Coronavirus Relief Fund Emergency Services - 2020 Part I	To enable eligible Community Action Agencies to coordinate funding with other community partners, MDHHS local offices, and other CFR funding to assist low-income households with food distribution, eviction prevention, transportation, water assistance, utility assistance, housing, etc.	\$140,550
Coronavirus Relief Fund Water and Plumbing - 2020 - Part I	The focus of this program is to ensure every home has access to hot and cold water and at least one functioning toilet, shower/bath, kitchen faucet, and laundry tub.	\$315,000
Quarantine Box Coronavirus Aid, Relief - 2020 Part I	To provide quarantine boxes with food/household items to people that are in quarantine that have tested positive for COVID-19, are waiting for test results, or are immune compromised. By providing the supplies they need to their home, the chance of exposure to themselves and others is mitigated.	\$15,000
Coronavirus Relief Fund Digital Divide - 2021 Part I	The focus of this program is to grant funds to eligible Community Action Agencies to provide technology devices and an annual subscription to local internet connections for low-income individuals and families that are 200% of federal poverty	\$241,028

	level working on a self-sufficiency custom plan.	
Emergency Rental Assistance	To assist with rent and utility payments.	\$12,085,085
CDBG-CV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent/Mortgage/Utility Assistance Small Business Assistance Senior Housing Basic Needs Administration Jail Improvements 	\$216,844 \$461,125 \$461,124 \$216,844 \$461,123 \$488,562
ESG-CV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Shelter Operations Emergency Shelter Improvements Rapid Rehousing/Homelessness Prevention COVID Shelter Space Administration 	\$375,000 \$225,000 \$620,396 \$100,000 \$146,709
COVID – 19 CFR Local Health Department Contact Tracing	To provide staffing, communications, IT, office supplies, computers, phones, access to people finding software or EMR, and indirect specifically for COVID-19 related work.	\$879,038
COVID-19 Coronavirus Relief Local Government Grants	To cover expenditures that were necessary due to the public health emergency with respect to Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)	\$3,759,531
COVID-19 Public Safety Payroll Reimbursement	To cover public safety payroll expenditures that were necessary due to the public health emergency.	\$1,063,704
COVID-19 First Responder Hazard Pay Premiums	Pay for qualifying first responder hazard pay premiums provided to first responders who have performed hazardous duty or work involving physical hardship related to COVID-19.	\$251,000

Promoting equitable outcomes

- Public safety services were chosen to assist in expediting backlogged court cases. The focus has been on those cases where individuals have been incarcerated for over a year while awaiting trial. The goal is to provide timely justice for the individual and the community.
- The Tax Assistance Navigator program was selected to focus assistance to those individuals that were financially impacted as the result of the pandemic. The loss of income reduced their ability to pay property taxes and caused increased risk of foreclosure of property. The goal is to educate and assist in finding available programs that will provide financial support and education to establish financial stability going forward.
- The Water Tower Infrastructure project allocation was approved to aid in much-needed emergency service, peak demand service, and fire protection for Genesee County residents. Funding for this project will help avoid rate increases that could be detrimental to the low-income residents.

Community Engagement

On May 25, 2021, the County held a brainstorming session at the Capitol Theater in Flint and invited the local units throughout the County to attend. This session facilitated discussion between local units about their individual needs as well as how all units could work together to maximize our investments. In July of 2021, the County reached out to these communities once again to request potential projects, estimated costs, project partners, and the potential benefits to the community of each project. Genesee County Water and Waste also proposed a potential infrastructure project that would benefit all residents of the County. The Commissioners will continue to seek input from the local units moving forward as funding decisions are made.

Labor Practices

The Water Tower infrastructure project will provide up to 50 skilled trade jobs for 18-24 months which will produce strong employment opportunities for workers. This project will require Davis Bacon Wages. The combination of these factors will promote an effective and efficient delivery of a high-quality infrastructure project.

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.7	Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency	\$22,795	\$22,795
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement		
6.1	Provision of Government Services	TBD*	TBD*

***This amount is yet to be determined based on the Final Rule to be issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury.**

Approved Project Status and Performance Indicators

Project 001: Water Tower Infrastructure Project

Funding amount: \$2,000,000

Spent to date: \$-

Project Expenditure Category: 5.14 Drinking Water: Storage

Project overview

- This project is a partnership with the Genesee County Drain Commissioner's Office, Division of Water & Waste Services (GCDC-WWS), and will fund \$2,000,000 of the \$5,347,142 project. This construction will be a one million gallon elevated storage tank to provide emergency service, peak demand service, and fire protection for the Genesee County residents. The project is estimated to be completed within 18-24 months. The funds were not expended as of July 31, 2021.
- *This project would not contribute directly to addressing climate change.*

Output Measures

- 34 communities having access to Water Tower

Outcome Measures

- Access to emergency service, peak demand service, or fire protection through use of the Water Tower for all communities in Genesee County
- Elimination of the need for a water rate increase, which can negatively impact the most vulnerable in our community, the poor and elderly on fixed incomes

Project 002: Capital Investment that responds to the COVID-19 public health emergency

Funding amount: \$22,795

Spent to date: \$22,795

Project Expenditure Category: 1.7 Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency

Project overview

- Due to COVID protocol implemented by the courts per guidance of the SCAO rules, the County was required to relocate jury selection to a location that would allow social distancing. This relocation required the purchase of a metal detector and scanner at the administration building to screen individuals entering the building for jury selection.

Output Measures

- Metal Detector and scanner on site

Outcome Measures

- Safe social distancing during jury selection to allow the courts to continue to function

Project 003: Improvement of the Design and Execution of Health and Public Health Programs

Funding amount: \$211,212

Spent to date: \$-

Project Expenditure Category: 1.8 Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)

Project overview

- This project allows for the mobility optimization of our health department through improvements to the technology infrastructure. It also involves implementation of a new electronic health records system. These costs include professional services, hardware, and software related to the project.

Output Measures

- Minimization of future costs
- Optimization of mobile capabilities
- Electronic access to health records

Outcome Measures

- Upgraded technology allows for continuity of communication between health staff in the office and the staff working remotely at sites responding to COVID-19 needs including vaccination clinics, etc.
- Easier access to health records when assisting individuals with their health assessments

Project 004: Expediting Court Backlog

Funding amount: \$1,338,449.16

Spent to date: \$-

Project Expenditure Category: 1.9 Payroll Costs for Public Health, Safety, and Other Public Sector Staff Responding to COVID-19

Project overview

The court operations were crippled during the COVID-19 pandemic causing case backlogs to spiral out of control. This has impacted justice for both individual victims and our

community. There was difficulty in locating victims and witnesses and engaging them to participate in various court events up to and including trial. In an effort to expedite the court backlog, this project will have four investigators that will be focused on case coordination with the Prosecutor's Office after warrants have been authorized. An upgrade of a senior level assistant prosecuting attorney to a managing assistant prosecuting attorney to provide the ability to authorize plea deals, coordinate difficult cases, assist with discovery issues, and ensure that Genesee County Prosecutor's Office policies and procedures are being followed in situations where supervisor approval is required in any part of the cases process will also be a key role.

Output Measures

- Number of cases worked

Outcome Measures

- Ability to expedite the backlog of court cases through the justice system

Project 005: Tax Assistance Navigator Positions

Funding amount: \$760,000

Spent to date: \$-

Project Expenditure Category: 2.5 Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention

Project overview

Due to the impact of COVID, the payment of property taxes and utility costs have been difficult for many citizens. There are available programs to assist individuals with delinquent taxes. An example is the Department of Social Services program which requires the total delinquent tax amount to be less than \$2,000. Another example is the hardship program, offered by the Genesee County Treasurer's office, which extends the foreclosure deadline and suggests monthly payments for constituents. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) did offer a program, Step Forward, geared to assist taxpayers who were behind in mortgages, taxes, and tax liens; however, this program expired in 2020. A section of the law gives the County Treasurer an option to reduce the interest rates to qualified participants, but it requires a stricter repayment plan. A recent change in legislation allows a County Treasurer to offer a new program, Pay As You Stay (PAYS), in which they can reduce the interest or taxes due, however, the primary requirement for this program is the taxpayers must be receiving a poverty exemption from the local government.

In response to COVID emergencies, the State of Michigan will be starting a new program to provide up to \$20,000 to qualified taxpayers to pay mortgages, delinquent and current taxes, or utilities. Funds have been provided to assist renters and landlords to pay rent, taxes, and utilities.

The Tax Assistance Navigator positions will help taxpayers to get qualified for these programs and aid in getting them the assistance that they need. For example, for our PAYS program, taxpayers must receive a poverty exemption from the local government to be eligible. Many taxpayers are not aware that this exemption exists. The Tax Assistance

Navigator would help navigate individuals through that process and aid them in getting funds to pay delinquent taxes.

These Tax Assistance Navigators will work with local units and notify taxpayers of programs that exist as well as potentially help develop new programs to fill the gaps left by existing programs. They will also develop programs to help taxpayers maintain future financial independence. Some examples of potential programs might include offering a financial literacy or budgeting class or working with a financial institution to create a tax payment savings program.

Output Measures

- *Number of people or households receiving eviction prevention services*

Outcome Measures

- Decrease in the number of individuals experiencing foreclosure
- Prevention of homelessness
- Tools provided to aid individuals to maintain future financial independence