

# THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

## 2021 PROBLEM STATEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Analyzing Equity in Federal COVID-19 Spending

**THE CHALLENGE** – Develop innovative tools that combine datasets to help inform community leaders on equitable distribution of federal funding. Teams are encouraged to analyze how federal COVID-19 spending has been shared with communities most vulnerable to impacts of the pandemic.

**EXECUTIVE CHAMPION** – Justin Marsico, Chief Data Officer, Bureau of the Fiscal Service, US Treasury Department

**THE PROBLEM** – Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government has [made \\$4.5 trillion available](#) for relief efforts. How has this money been spent? A greater understanding of how government spending reaches different communities is a step forward for data transparency and a call-to-action to improve equity. Access to federal financial data alongside demographic data can help community leaders make higher impact funding decisions. In line with the [recent Executive Order](#) on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, this problem statement seeks to put equity at the center of the government spending agenda.

**THE OPPORTUNITY** – The correlation between federal spending data and demographic data is critical to understanding how federal funds are distributed to various communities and demographic groups, but this correlation has not been fully explored or made accessible to community level stakeholders. This creates blind spots for government leaders as they make decisions on funding allocation and addressing inequities in their communities. With an overwhelming amount of federal data collected, there are many ways that digital tools could combine data sets to help paint a picture of equity in federal spending, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To help address this need, digital products could:

- Combine federal financial data and demographic data to enable government leaders' decision-making on the equitable allocation of federal funds
- Create models around the flow of federal funding to different geographic regions
- Identify and visualize overlapping COVID spending across programs and agencies
- Help local communities learn about federal funding available to help with COVID relief

Note on equity: A [recent Executive Order](#) defines “equity” as the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who

live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. We seek to work with tech teams to better refine how to define and construct measures of equity using data.

**VISION FOR SPRINT OUTCOMES** – By bringing together Census, Treasury, and other open data sources, digital tools help stakeholders better understand whether the federal government is equitably distributing federal funds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**TARGET END USERS** – Local officials/decision makers; policy and advocacy organizations; research communities; data journalists.

## RELATED DATA SETS

- ↳ [American Community Survey](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [USA Spending.gov](#)
- ↳ [COVID-19 Small Business Pulse Survey](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [COVID-19 Household Pulse Survey](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [TIGER Shapefiles](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [COVID-19 Data Hub – Data Equity](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [Consolidated Federal Funds Reports](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- ↳ [Girl Scouts State of Girls](#)
- ↳ [Fiscal Data](#), U.S. Department of Treasury
- ↳ [CDFI Fund Data](#), U.S. Department of Treasury
- ↳ [SNAP Utilization + Expenditures](#), U.S. Department of Agriculture
- ↳ [Unemployment data](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- ↳ Education Data ([Public School Spending Per Pupil](#), U.S. Census Bureau, [Annual Survey of School System Finances Tables](#), U.S. Census Bureau)
- ↳ Health Care Data ([Medical Expenditure Panel Survey](#), Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality; [Medicaid Enrollment Data](#), Medicaid.gov)
- ↳ State/Local Economic Data
  - (e.g., on considerations like state or local climate incentives, regulations, etc)
    - [Proposed & Enacted State Budget Links](#), National Association of State Budget Officers
    - [The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration](#), Universal Basic Income Project
- ↳ [USPS ZIP Code Crosswalk Files](#), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

## LEAD POINT OF CONTACTS

- ↳ Steve Keller, Senior Data Scientist
- ↳ Grace Lim, Data Lab Product Owner
- ↳ Eileen Carey, Communications and Stakeholder Specialist
- ↳ Ben Turse, Data Scientist