YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Advocating for Community Health and Racial Equity in the American Rescue Plan
Led by Public Health Advocates, **California COVID Justice** is a coordinated public health response to the deep-rooted inequities that the pandemic has laid bare.

**Leading issues include:**

- Racism as a Public Health Crisis
- Inadequate Housing and Homelessness
- Lack of Economic Supports
- Lack of Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce
Introduction

This presentation is a tool to help communities advocate for the resources they need to recover from COVID-19. The **American Rescue Plan Act** is sending billions of relief dollars to California’s cities and counties.
It’s important that community members directly impacted by COVID-19 advocate for:

- Community members to be key partners in setting priorities and developing spending plans
- Transparency regarding your city/county spending process and decisions
- Investments in public health programs and infrastructure
- Directing money and resources to those most impacted by COVID-19
What is the American Rescue Plan Act?

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 aims to deliver immediate economic help to American families most impacted by COVID-19 (esp. low income, people of color).

Through ARPA, the state of California will receive $26 billion, and California’s cities and counties will receive $16 billion.

Your voice is needed to make sure this money goes where it is needed most. Community members and community-based organizations can influence how the money is spent.
The $362B in the State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund includes the $16B for California’s cities and counties – the focus of our advocacy tools.
How can local $ be spent?

► $16 billion in federal aid to California’s local governments, including counties and cities, can be spent on:
  ► Responding to the public health emergency of COVID-19 and its economic impacts
  ► Providing government services where there has been a loss in funding
  ► Investing in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure
  ► Assisting essential workers by providing additional pay
How the local funding works

► A local government can spend the funds on its own programs, or it can transfer funds to a nonprofit or other local community organization for approved projects.
Community members, community councils and community-based organizations can and should advocate for how these funds are spent.
Job loss has disproportionately affected people of color throughout the pandemic, specifically those who identify as Black and Hispanic. Of the estimated 161,000 unhoused people in California, 40% are Black Americans.

Racism is a public health crisis!
The California COVID Justice coalition recommends using the $16 billion in local funding towards critical supports such as: economic supports, housing, racial equity and public health infrastructure.
Here are some specific ideas on how you can spend the money in your community...
Direct economic supports to families & small businesses

► Create pilot programs to provide guaranteed income to historically underinvested communities

► Guaranteed income is the idea of providing a set amount of money each month to ease the stresses of poverty that make it harder for people to find work and stay healthy.

► Example: Pilot programs in Stockton, Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles
Direct economic supports to families & small businesses

► **Grant Reparations Programs**
  
  ► Reparations programs are a SMALL way to recognize the historic inequities Black Americans have internalized. Reparations should be in direct forms that underscore racial disparities in health, housing, and entrepreneurship.

  ► Example: [Evanstan, Illinois reparations](#)

► Invest in and support immigrant and small businesses owned and operated by people of color
Economic Supports: Questions to Consider

► What programs can be put in place or expanded to support small businesses owned and operated by immigrants and people of color in your community?

► How can guaranteed income programs help to support families in your community?
Housing and Homelessness

▸ Invest in permanent supportive housing
▸ Create safe organized spaces with wraparound services for unhoused people
▸ Fund adequate, affordable housing, and access to income-based housing
▸ Cancel or defer rent and mortgages
▸ Provide grants for homeownership
Housing Initiatives:

Questions to Consider

► Who doesn’t have housing and who is at risk of being homeless?
► Is there a housing shortage?
► What programs can help prevent homelessness?
► How can your community use ARPA funds to provide shelter for people and families who are homeless?
Racism is a Public Health Crisis

COVID-19 has devastated communities of color. We must invest in their recovery and fund programs to dismantle long-standing health inequities.

Click here for current data on COVID illness and deaths in California by race and ethnicity.
Invest in Racial Equity

► Cities and counties can use ARPA funds to reach the low-income communities of color that were hit hardest by COVID-19 and its economic impacts.

► In California, Prop 209 (prohibiting state institutions from considering race, ethnicity, or sex in public employment, contracting or education) can be incorrectly cited as a barrier to funding resources and programs for communities of color.

► The Black Infant Health Program and Oakland Black Business Fund are examples of programs serving Black Californians.
Racial Equity and Economics

Economic solutions can address racial disparities

► People of color are more likely to be “essential workers” (nurses, agriculture, retail, food industry) and are most at risk for COVID-19

► Funds can provide hazard pay to essential workers. Raising minimum wages to be liveable wages can reduce poverty rates for people of color.
Strengthen Public Health Infrastructure

Public health infrastructure provides the capacity to prepare for and respond to emergency threats and chronic health challenges.

Local public health jobs never recovered from the 2008 recession, leaving health departments under-resourced.
Strengthen Public Health Infrastructure

ARPA funds can help communities reduce historic inequities and address root causes of disproportionate COVID rates by:

- Strengthening community health programs, collaboratives, mobile health units, Promotora programs, street medicine clinics
- Creating or strengthening task forces and community-based communications campaigns for some of the most impacted communities such as undocumented individuals and persons with disabilities
- Providing equitable, widespread vaccine distribution
- Improving outreach, education, and translation services for non-English speakers
Racial Equity & Public Health Infrastructure:

Questions to Consider

► What public health needs in your community have not been addressed during the pandemic?
► What existing programs can be supported with ARPA funding to improve community health?
► What are some other ways to address racial equity?
What should the money NOT be spent on?

**Law Enforcement**

- ARPA should be used to support communities and individuals who have been devastated by the pandemic.
- Most of each city budget already goes to law enforcement.
- The local ARPA funds are intended to address the basic needs of individuals and families.
- We recommend spending these funds to strengthen public health infrastructure, support families economically and address the housing crisis.
ARPA funding goes to cities AND counties

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES
Links to your community’s funding allocations are below.

County of Sacramento: $303M
  City of Sacramento: $112M
  City of Roseville: $17.3M
County of Fresno: $195M
  City of Fresno: $166M
  City of Clovis: $17.3M
County of Los Angeles: $2B
  City of Los Angeles: $1.25B
  City of Carson: $18.3M

Find your county’s allocation

Find your city’s allocation
AMERICAN-RESCUE-PLAN-ACT
A brief timeline

MARCH 2021

ARPA is enacted on March 11, 2021

MAY 2021

Half of funds to be disbursed 60 days after enactment

MAY 2022

Second half of funds disbursed one year after first payment

MAY 2024

All funds must be spent by May 2024

Community members should advocate for $
This is what you can do now…

Speak with the decision-makers in your community

• Contact your county board of supervisors, city council and mayor of your city.
• Speak during public comment periods.
• Identify the programs in your community that should be expanded using these funds.
• Organize community groups to turn out.

Demand a community driven process

• Hold public discussions and conduct polls
• Ensure priorities reflect your community needs
• Ask for reports on where the money is going
• Ensure documents are accessible (non-English, large print, clear language)
California COVID Justice is creating more advocacy tools for you to use

Go to www.phadvocates.org/ARPA to access the following materials and tools:

- A webinar recording on the ARPA
- This slide deck, which you can present to groups in your network
- Additional advocacy tools, including a model resolution, coming in early July
For more information, visit: www.phadvocates.org

This presentation was made possible with sources from:
  • National Conference of State Legislature
  • California Policy and Budget Center
  • California Department of Public Health
  • US Department of Health and Human Services
  • US Department of Treasury
  • PolicyLink
  • Civilytics Consulting

Disclaimer & Copyright
The content included in this presentation is intended for community education purposes and is the property of Public Health Advocates. You may not copy, edit or reproduce this information without the prior written permission from Public Health Advocates.