

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

PLAN OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) included State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to address the COVID-19 related economic fallout and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Eligible uses for ARPA funds based on the U.S. Treasury final rule include the following categories:

- Public Health
- Negative Economic Impacts
- Premium Pay for Essential Workers
- Water, Sewer & Broadband Infrastructure
- Replacing Lost Public Sector Revenue
 - *General Government Services*

Total Award: \$17,886,237.00

- First Tranche received May 2021.
- Second Tranche received June 2022.

Deadline for Obligation:

December 31, 2024

Deadline for Expenditure:

December 31, 2026

OBJECTIVES

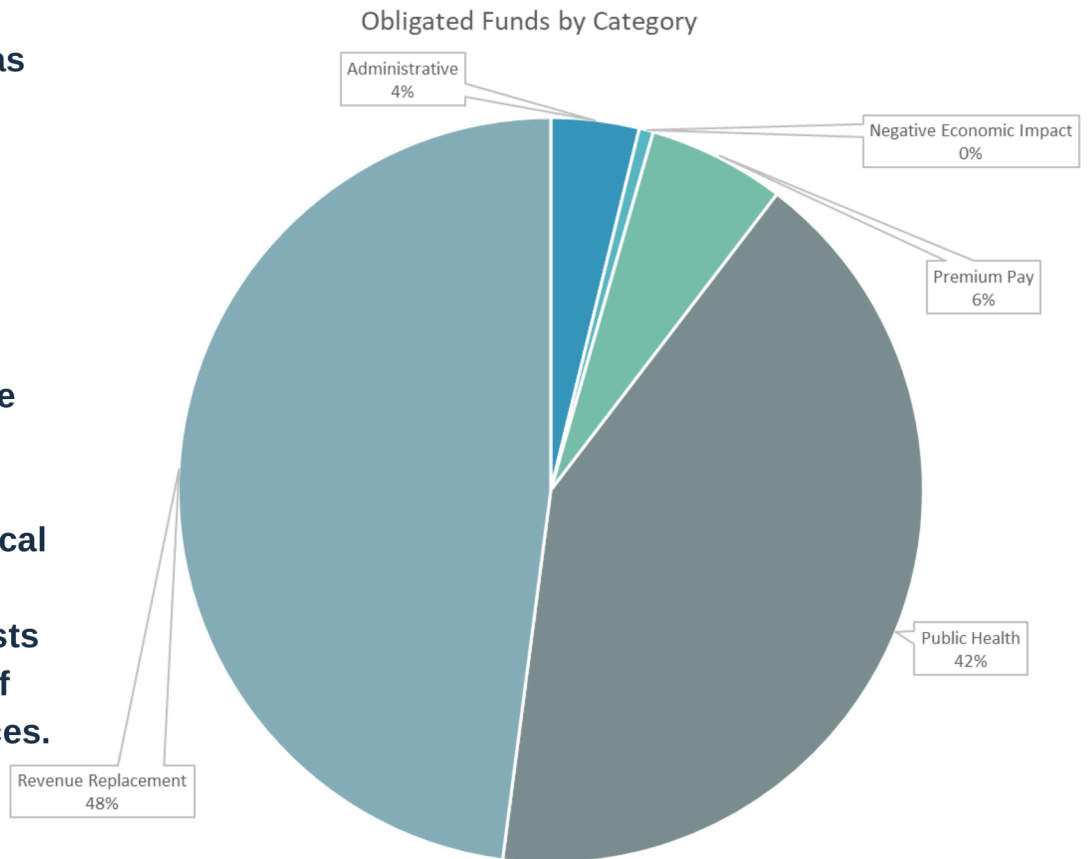


The goal of the **ARPA Committee** was to review the final treasury guidance and help Commissioners' Court set policies and procedures for prioritizing spending. The appointed committee members were County Judge Ben Zeller, Commissioner PCT 1 Danny Garcia, Michelle Samford, County Auditor, Robin Knipling, Grant Administrator. John Johnston, County Engineer, and Rick McBrayer, Emergency Management Coordinator.

BUDGET SYNOPSIS

Victoria County was allocated a total award of \$17,886,237.00.

A revenue replacement standard allowance was set by the US Treasury at \$10M. This allowed for local governments to recoup eligible costs for the provision of government services.



CATEGORIES	AMOUNT OBLIGATED
PUBLIC HEALTH <i>(COVID-19 Mitigation & Prevention, Public Health Expenses, Medical Expenses, etc.)</i>	\$7,455,098.03
NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS <i>(Aid to Impacted Industries)</i>	\$110,387.90
REVENUE REPLACEMENT <i>(Provision of Government Services)</i>	\$8,573,402.02
PREMIUM PAY <i>(Public Sector Employees)</i>	\$1,064,002.55
ADMINISTRATIVE <i>(Administrative Expenses)</i>	\$683,346.50
TOTAL	\$17,886,237.00

The next few pages provide an overview of all approved projects in all categories..

PUBLIC HEALTH

PROJECT OVERVIEWS

County-Wide Radio Replacement

From the onset of providing Public Health and Safety measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Victoria County established the need for communications equipment to more reliably, effectively and efficiently provide public health and safety measures within Victoria County and the surrounding region. First responders and Victoria County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) officers and staff participated in numerous public safety measures within the community to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Victoria County determined that first responders and VCSO were depending solely on outdated radio communications equipment that was no longer serviceable by the manufacturer or third party vendors to provide critical communication for public health and safety in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The solution to this critical need was determined to include the purchase of new portable radios for first responders and VCSO law enforcement officers and other applicable staff. Victoria County purchased portable radios to provide more reliable, effective and efficient communications within the county in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and related tasks associated to slowing the spread of the disease.

Regional Antibody Infusion Center

State of Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced on September 21, 2021 that the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), in partnership with local officials, would launch a new COVID-19 Therapeutic Infusion Center in Victoria, Texas. The infusion center began serving patients the following day and provided monoclonal antibodies to treat outpatient cases of COVID-19. The treatment was available at no cost to patients who have doctor referrals or were deemed medically qualified by center staff. Local partners include Victoria County, the Victoria Office of Emergency Management, the Victoria Independent School District, and the Golden Crescent Regional Advisory Council.

During the plan of establishing and activating the Infusion Center, TDEM collaborated with Victoria County to identify an available space to provide the critical public health service. Identification of the site included the location being reasonably accessible to all county and regional residents. The Mitchell School site was identified as the effective location to place the temporary center. As part of Victoria County's collaboration in promoting public safety in response to COVID-19 treatment needs, the County Commissioners Court agreed to fund costs for the property lease.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Department Information Sign

Victoria County explored the most effective and efficient methods in which to communicate critical public health notices, information, activities, and events to all members of the public. The digital Health Department information sign was purchased to reach a broad range of general public members, as it is located in front of the public health department where a broad range of community members seek health services, as well as on the main thoroughfare through the community that sees one of the largest traffic counties within the city.

The digital sign was purchased to provide more visible and effective communication of public health notices and events, especially during critical events including the COVID-19 pandemic, in an effort to protect life health and safety.

Citizens Medical Center, Subrecipient

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for emergency, life-saving resources and facilities across the country. The influx of patients placed a strain on emergency medical facilities and response personnel that provided vital resources to respond to the pandemic. Citizens Medical Center provides these essential life-sustaining and saving services for the County of Victoria and also felt the negative impacts of the pandemic. The pandemic emphasized that the current status of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Citizens Medical Center is in need of expansion and updating to provide necessary critical care services.

Citizens Medical Center is planning to build a 14-bed Intensive Care Unit (ICU) expansion, which will include renovation/expansion of existing areas of the hospital on the second floor of the north tower. It will also include renovation/expansion of the first floor of the north tower, extending the wing's width and length with new construction to provide the appropriate footprint needed for this expansion. The project will encompass the architectural and engineering design of the ICU expansion, as well as, the necessary major moveable equipment.

NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Victoria Regional Airport Capital Marketing & Advertising

The change in the behavior of passengers following the COVID-19 crisis, travel restrictions and the ensuing economic crisis have resulted in a dramatic drop in demand for airline services. Many airlines and airports, including the Victoria Regional Airport (VCT), have struggled to fill seats as they work to recover from the pandemic and recession that has followed. VCT is included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), which identifies existing and proposed airports that are considered significant to the national airspace system. The objective of the Air Service Marketing Program for the VRA is to stimulate and increase the local and regional use of the airport to ensure the success of the air service provided to the community.

To provide aid to an impacted industry, Victory County elected to award the Victoria Regional Airport with funds to cover services related to advertising, marketing, social media, brand development, creative development, media buying, and market research, air service development marketing, press releases as specifically related to an airport within a mass transportation system, focused on the continual development of an established distinctive brand that will resonate visitors, residents, stakeholders, and the community to promote flying local out of VCT.

REVENUE REPLACEMENT

Per Treasury's Final Rule: Sections 602(c)(1)(C) and 603(c)(1)(C) of the Social Security Act provide that SLFRF funds may be used "for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue of such . . . government due to the COVID-19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year of the . . . government prior to the emergency." To avoid cuts to government services due to budget shortfalls caused by the pandemic, the Final rule allows this eligible use to provide valuable services and assist in its economic recovery.

Revenue Replacement funds have been allocated to the purchase of replacement software for critical public safety general records management tools, including dispatch, calls for service, and communication between dispatch and vehicles, etc. to serve law enforcement and emergency response for the protection of life, health, and safety. Additionally, funds have been utilized for the ongoing operational costs of sheriff's office salaries and health insurance benefits. Other such needed governmental efforts, such as a County employees compensation study and airport maintenance building demolition have also been allocated funding.

The County has also allocated revenue replacement funds to two additional subrecipient projects.

Port of Victoria, Subrecipient

The Port of Victoria was allocated funds for the site development and preparation of the multi-modal Texas Logistic Center at the Port of Victoria. This project transforms 2,200 acres at the Port of Victoria into a premier logistics hub for our community and region, ensuring multiple options for moving products critical to business success in our region.

Billy T. Cattan Recovery Outreach (BTCRO), Subrecipient

BTCRO was allocated funds for the design, pre-construction, site development, and preparation costs to construct a 35,700 square foot detox and residential facility located on TX- 185 in Victoria County that will provide a comprehensive substance abuse treatment program for Victoria and the Crossroads area.

PREMIUM PAY

Victoria County elected to award premium pay to eligible workers as a one-time, lump sum payment. Eligible worker means “those workers needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as each Governor of a State or Territory, or each Tribal government, may designate as critical to protect the health and well-being of the residents of their State, territory, or Tribal government.” The industries recognized as essential critical infrastructure sectors include healthcare, public health and safety, childcare, education, sanitation, transportation, and food production and services. The chief executive of each recipient has the discretion to add additional “non-public” sectors to this list, so long as additional sectors are deemed critical to protect the health and well-being of residents. All public employees of recipient governments are already included in the definition of “eligible worker.”

Victoria County eligible employees included active county employees who were deemed essential by their supervisors and physically reported to work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Victoria County elected to award a premium pay amount of 5% of the budgeted annual salary to all eligible employees that were employed for at least one calendar year through December 2022.



CLOSING SUMMARY

Victoria County's commitment to utilizing its State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to address the COVID-19 pandemic, promote public health and safety initiatives, and aid economic development will have a lasting impact on the community.

By ensuring that these funds are allocated in a strategic and equitable manner, Victoria County has taken a proactive approach to recovery for a brighter future for not only its residents but also the surrounding regions. With these initiatives in place, we can work towards a more resilient and prosperous future.

-VICTORIA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

