

**American Rescue Plan Act
Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**

Recovery Plan Performance Report
Leon County, Florida



2025 Annual Report
Reporting Period:
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into law, providing \$1.9 trillion in economic relief and recovery assistance to individuals, households, businesses, public health and healthcare agencies, governmental entities, and others in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Building upon previous legislation enacted by Congress in 2020 and 2021 to provide economic relief and recovery assistance related to the pandemic, the ARPA provided additional direct economic support for individuals and families, hard-hit industries and vulnerable populations, and state and local governments. This included rent, mortgage, and utility assistance for low-income households; food and nutrition assistance; additional resources to address the COVID-19 public health emergency such as funding for testing and vaccines; grants for childcare assistance, additional federal unemployment assistance, a third round of direct stimulus payments; additional targeted assistance for small businesses impacted by the pandemic; and more. In addition, the ARPA established a \$360 billion Coronavirus State and Local Recovery Fund (the “CSLFR Fund”) to help state and local governments offset increased expenditures, recover lost revenues, and mitigate the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the CSLFR Fund, Congress has provided state, local, and tribal governments with significant resources to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and its economic impacts through four specific categories of eligible uses. As provided in the ARPA, these funds may be used:

- To respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19, or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
- To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers;
- For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency; and
- To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

Of note, the ARPA was also the first COVID-19 relief legislation authorized by Congress that intended and allowed for governmental entities to recover significant revenue losses resulting from the economic effects of the pandemic. In January 2022, the U.S. Department of the Treasury published a final administrative rule for the implementation of CSLFR Funds, effective April 1, 2022, and has also issued several fact sheets and “frequently asked questions” documents. This guidance “provided state, local, and Tribal governments substantial flexibility to determine how best to use payments from the [program] to meet the needs of their communities.” Based upon the funding formula provided in the ARPA for CSLFR Funds, Leon County’s allocation totals \$57,024,862, to be distributed in two equal tranches in FY 2021 and FY 2022. The U.S. Treasury disbursed the first tranche of this funding to the County in late May 2021; the second tranche was disbursed to the County on June 21, 2022.

At the May 25, 2021 Budget Workshop, the Leon County Board of County Commissioners approved an expenditure plan for the County’s allocation of CSLFR Funds under the ARPA (the “Recovery Plan”). Leon County’s Recovery Plan is designed to address community recovery needs in the areas of public health, human services, and small business support; provide one-time funds to support major wastewater infrastructure improvements; and mitigate significant revenue impacts incurred by the County as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the plan allocates funding to:

- Support and expand local vaccination efforts, particularly to high-risk and underserved populations;
- Support the local business community, including funds to extend a micro-loan program for minority-owned and women-owned small businesses which the County initiated in 2020 using federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds;
- Provide services to address the unique impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community's low-income population including food and nutrition assistance, homelessness diversion and prevention services, housing services, legal services for households facing eviction or foreclosure, and more;
- Complete three major wastewater projects, which will further support local economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for local workers;
- Mitigate a significant reduction in Leon County and Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency revenues over the next two fiscal years which occurred as a result of the pandemic, enabling the County to maintain a balanced budget while avoiding tax or fee increases, capital project reductions, or workforce reductions; and more.

Leon County's Recovery Plan complements, and in many cases extends, the assistance provided in calendar year 2020 through its "Leon CARES" expenditure plan. In 2020, Leon County received a separate allocation of \$51.2 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds through the federal CARES Act; through a variety of partnerships and direct assistance programs, the County quickly distributed this funding to address critical public health needs, housing and utility assistance, small business assistance, food insecurity, childcare assistance, support for mental health and homelessness services, and more. The quick and successful implementation of the Leon CARES plan positioned the County to receive an additional \$11 million allocation from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, which allowed the County to provide assistance to thousands more individuals, families, and local businesses in the community. In total, Leon County successfully leveraged \$62.2 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to support a broad range of community needs through the Leon CARES plan.

To inform the development of its CSLFR Fund Recovery Plan, Leon County coordinated extensively with local human service providers, public health entities, the local business community, and the City of Tallahassee to identify community recovery needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This input from community partners has been incorporated throughout the Recovery Plan. The plan also leverages partnerships with many of these community stakeholders to ensure the quick and efficient distribution of funds and to promote equitable outcomes throughout the community. In addition, Leon County continues to partner with the City of Tallahassee to jointly fund several of the programs and initiatives included in the Recovery Plan on a countywide basis. This allows both entities to leverage a significant portion of their Coronavirus Local Fiscal Relief Fund allocations to address food insecurity, small business needs, and homelessness support as part of a highly coordinated, communitywide plan.

Immediately upon approval of the Recovery Plan by the Board of County Commissioners at the May 25, 2021 Budget Workshop, Leon County began implementing the plan to quickly distribute this assistance throughout the community. From May 21, 2021 (the date of initial funding award) through June 30, 2025, the full \$57 million has been obligated and the County is working to expend these funds toward the specific outcome measures identified in the Recovery Plan.

This Leon County Recovery Plan Performance Report provides a detailed overview of Leon County's Recovery Plan and provides a summary of the County's progress to date toward its implementation. This report, which is submitted to the U.S. Department of the Treasury and is available to the general public

for review, includes information on the specific initiatives that Leon County is undertaking with its allocation of CSLFR Funds, a summary of expenditures made under the plan through the current reporting period (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025), and a detailed discussion of the strategies that Leon County has employed to engage citizens and community partners, promote equitable outcomes, and facilitate the community's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

SECTION I: RECOVERY PLAN

This section of Leon County's 2025 Recovery Plan Performance Report describes the County's intended and actual uses of Coronavirus Local Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). This section discusses how the County's approach supports a strong and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn, as well as strategies employed to maximize programmatic impact and effective, efficient, and equitable outcomes. Where appropriate, this section also includes information on the County's use of other federal recovery funds including other programs under the American Rescue Plan Act, such as Emergency Rental Assistance, to provide broader context on the County's overall approach to pandemic recovery efforts.

In accordance with reporting guidance published by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the remainder of this document includes references to the following specific expenditure categories (abbreviated throughout this report as "EC 1," "EC 2," etc.) allowed under the ARPA:

- Public Health (EC 1)
- Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)
- Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity (EC 3)
- Premium Pay (EC 4)
- Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure (EC 5)
- Revenue Replacement (EC 6)
- Administrative and Other (EC 7)

A summary of Leon County's efforts to promote each of these expenditure categories is provided below. More detailed information regarding each specific project within the County's Recovery Plan including project descriptions, funding amounts, timelines, project partners, etc. is provided in Section II, "Project Inventory."

Of note, the U.S. Department of the Treasury has issued compliance and reporting guidance related to this Recovery Plan and Performance Report, which asks CSLFR Fund recipients (such as Leon County) to report whether these funds are being used for "evidence-based interventions." As defined in the reporting guidance, evidence-based interventions involve conducting research studies to determine the potential outcomes of proposed recovery programs. Generally, Leon County's approach to developing its Recovery Plan was to (i) engage a broad variety of community partner organizations to assess ongoing recovery needs; (ii) share information with these stakeholder groups regarding the assistance made available through the CARES Act, the ARPA, and other federal COVID-19 relief legislation; (iii) identify remaining unmet community recovery needs that could be addressed through the County's allocation of CSLFR Funds; and (iv) develop and implement a Recovery Plan as quickly as possible to address the immediate need for assistance to those hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic in our community. As such, and because conducting experimental research studies would delay the distribution of assistance, Leon County's Recovery Plan does not utilize evidence-based interventions as defined in the Treasury reporting guidance.

Public Health (EC 1):

The Recovery Plan allocated approximately \$1 million in funding to expand and strengthen the County's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Specifically, this category dedicated funding for the Leon County Health Department to support communitywide vaccination distribution, acquisition of

personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 infection prevention and control, and minor facility enhancements. This category also dedicated funding to support facility enhancements at two local Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), which provided primary health care services to underserved populations, to meet CDC guidelines for reducing the spread of COVID-19 and mitigating the risk of infection. Additionally, this category supported an extensive public information and outreach campaign to reduce vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccination rates, particularly among underserved communities.

Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2):

This expenditure category within the Recovery Plan dedicates funding to support several programs and initiatives directly supporting the local business community. This includes direct assistance to minority- and women-owned businesses through an extension of the SmartSteps Revolving Micro-Lending Program, which the County established in 2020 using its CARES Act funding allocation in partnership with Florida A&M University Credit Union; support for the three local Chambers of Commerce in Leon County to expand programming and resources for local businesses; and funding for local entrepreneur support entities to assist startup companies in the post-pandemic economy.

This expenditure category dedicates funding to provide targeted assistance, in partnership with a variety of local human service partner agencies, for Leon County residents most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and who are lagging the overall economic recovery. In developing its Recovery Plan, Leon County extensively engaged local nonprofit and human services partners to share information regarding the assistance made available through the ARPA and earlier COVID-19 relief legislation as well as to identify any remaining gaps in human service needs throughout the community. Based upon the feedback collected from local partner organizations, this expenditure category provides funding, leveraging a proportionate contribution from the City of Tallahassee's CSLFR Fund allocation, to address food insecurity, expand access to legal services to prevent evictions and foreclosures, and to support a grant program for local nonprofit organizations that provide human services and programs for Leon County citizens impacted by COVID-19.

Finally, this expenditure category allocates funding to significantly enhance homelessness support and affordable housing inventory in Leon County. As with other expenditure categories in the Recovery Plan, the County extensively engaged its community partners in the area of homelessness services to develop specific strategies to meet the needs of this population. Based on the feedback collected from these partners, the Recovery Plan provides funding to the Big Bend Continuum of Care (BBCoC) to expand initiatives and programs in order to alleviate the increased demand for homelessness support services resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic including community outreach, permanent supportive housing, homelessness diversion services, and recruitment of established organizations to expand homeless prevention services locally. The BBCoC is the agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as the regional planning and oversight organization for Leon, Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Wakulla counties. This assistance complements the extensive resources for homelessness assistance provided separately in the ARPA. In addition, this category provides additional funding to four emergency homeless shelters in Leon County to address unanticipated expenses related to COVID-19 and that are not covered by FEMA reimbursement or other federal and state funding sources, as well as funding to support the Orange Avenue Apartments project, which involves the major redevelopment of a public housing complex to enhance the inventory of affordable housing in the community.

Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity (EC 3):

Leon County's Recovery Plan does not allocate funding in this category.

Premium Pay (EC 4):

Leon County's Recovery Plan does not allocate funding in this category.

Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure (EC 5):

This category within the Recovery Plan allocates funding to support the completion of three major wastewater infrastructure projects in Leon County. As discussed earlier in this report, the ARPA provides that the County's CSLFR Fund allocation can be used to make necessary investments specifically in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. In Leon County, the City of Tallahassee and Talquin Electric Cooperative operate drinking water utilities; the County does not own or maintain any drinking water infrastructure. Also, the County's role in wastewater infrastructure is limited, as the City and Talquin also operate sanitary sewer utility infrastructure. All water and wastewater utility services throughout Leon County are provided by the City of Tallahassee, Talquin Electric Cooperative, or another provider via exclusive franchise. However, as part of its commitment to protect the community's natural resources, Leon County has aggressively and successfully pursued state grant funds over the past several years for wastewater infrastructure improvements leading to the removal of hundreds of septic tanks within the Wakulla Springs Primary Springs Protection Zone.

In the area of broadband infrastructure, there are eight residential broadband internet service providers operating in Leon County. Counties and cities in Florida are limited by state law in their ability to expand broadband access to their citizens; however, while Leon County does not own or maintain any broadband infrastructure, the County has led several initiatives to support internet access both before and during the pandemic including providing free internet access through Leon County Libraries, extensively engaging citizens to share information about low-cost internet options, promoting discounted services that are made available through the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, and more.

Given the factors discussed above, Leon County's use of CSLFR funds to support infrastructure initiatives is limited to sewer infrastructure. In partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the County has established a multi-year Water Quality and Springs Protection Infrastructure Improvement Plan to enhance the region's water quality through a series of septic-to-sewer conversion projects. In recent years, the County has leveraged the commitment of over \$63 million in state and local funds with plans to upgrade or eliminate a total of 1,610 septic tanks in the Wakulla Springs Primary Springs Protection Zone. The County has been awarded state funding through FDEP's Springs Restoration Grant Program to begin the implementation of the Northeast Lake Munson Sewer System, Belair/Annawood Sewer System, and Woodville Sewer Projects. The total state and local funding committed for these projects across the multi-year project plan is as follows (these totals reflect the County's cost share; FDEP provides an equal matching amount toward each project):

- Northeast Lake Munson Sewer System: \$15.6 million
- Belair/Annawood Sewer System: \$4.29 million
- Woodville Sewer (4 Phases): \$43.45 million

Due to current construction pricing trends which have substantially increased in recent years, the budget estimates detailed in the initial grant applications for each of these projects are projected to be insufficient

to complete construction. Given the temporary, one-time nature of the CSLFR funding provided under the ARPA, this funding represents a unique opportunity to fulfill the County's commitments to these projects despite the recent increase in construction costs. This strategy will enable the County to complete these projects and provide high-quality wastewater infrastructure for the community.

Revenue Replacement (EC 6):

According to the U.S. Treasury's Final Rule for the implementation of CSLFR Funds, it is critical that local governments utilize this funding to mitigate drastic budget reductions and thereby avoid constraining the economic recovery:

During the period following the 2007-2009 recession, State and local government budget pressures led to fiscal austerity that was a significant drag on the overall economic recovery.

...[the American Rescue Plan Act] allows recipients experiencing budget shortfalls to use payments from the SLFRF funds to avoid cuts to government services and, thus, enables state, local, and Tribal governments to continue to provide valuable services and ensures that fiscal austerity measures do not hamper the broader economic recovery.

Although Leon County distributed \$62 million of assistance in 2020 funded by the CARES Act, as discussed earlier in this report, that legislation did not allow for funding to be used to offset the significant revenue losses related to the COVID-19 pandemic experienced by state and local governments. Conversely, one of the principal objectives of the ARPA is to provide resources to ensure that local governments can continue delivering critical services to their communities by replacing local revenue losses with federal funding. Without the ability to mitigate COVID-19-related revenue losses, many local governments including Leon County would be forced to consider implementing austerity measures to balance their budgets such as operating reductions, hiring freezes, capital project deferrals/eliminations, additional use of fund balances, and possible tax or fee increases. As such, this expenditure category dedicates funding to mitigate revenue reductions incurred by Leon County, which will enable the County to address immediate budgetary needs as well as to ensure its continued long-term financial stability.

Additional Expenditure Categories in Leon County's Recovery Plan:

The Recovery Plan provided funding to support the implementation of Leon County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program ("ERA Program"), including contracted services for an extraordinary volume of application reviews as well as application assistance and technical support. Leon County aggressively implemented its ERA program, which consists of separate funding allocations made under the December 2020 *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act* (the "ERA 1" program) and the ARPA (the "ERA 2" program). As of the publication of this report, Leon County has approved rent and utility assistance for more than 3,500 Leon County households, totaling more than \$15 million in awards. Based on ERA program reports published by the U.S. Treasury, Leon County has ranked #1 among all Florida local governments and in the top 10 nationally in the proportion of its ERA funding allocation that has been distributed.

While federal program guidelines allow up to 10% of the County's allocation of ERA 1 funding and 15% of its ERA 2 funding to be used for administrative purposes, this maximum administrative allowance did not provide the funding needed to complete reviews of the large volume of applications received for the program while providing the enhanced level of support necessary to ensure that our most vulnerable residents receive the application assistance and technical support they need. Accordingly, this

expenditure category within the Recovery Plan provided funding to ensure that adequate resources were available to administer the County's ERA Program expeditiously.

The U.S. Treasury's Final Rule for the use of CSLFR Funds also allows for certain administrative expenses to assist recipients in fighting the pandemic and supporting families and businesses struggling with its impacts, maintaining vital services amid revenue shortfalls, and building a strong, resilient, and equitable recovery. As such, this expenditure category includes funding to ensure Leon County Government's continuity of operations through the acquisition and deployment of laptops, configured with secure virtual desktop capability, to support remote work as needed throughout the public health emergency. Finally, this category establishes a reserve fund that may be allocated to any of the other Recovery Plan expenditure categories discussed above based on future needs, or for any potential changes in federal guidance that may allow for new uses without impacting existing categories. The ARPA provides that CSLFR funds may be used to cover costs obligated by the County through December 31, 2024, and obligated funds will remain available to complete projects through December 31, 2026.

Recovery Plan – Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

Leon County, Florida

Summary of Planned Expenditures

Expenditure Category	Funding Allocation
Public Health Response (EC 1)	
Leon County Health Department	\$0
Neighborhood Medical Center	\$500,000
Bond Community Health Center	\$300,000
Vaccine Hesitancy Engagement and Promotion	\$155,741
Mental Health Services	\$110,400
Category Subtotal:	\$1,066,140
Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)	
SmartSteps Program	\$1,100,000
Local Chambers of Commerce	\$165,444
Entrepreneurship Support	\$165,499
Food Insecurity	\$767,280
Legal Services	\$446,717
Nonprofit Grant Program	\$1,362,399
Homelessness and Housing Support	\$4,296,144
Support for Orange Avenue Apartments Project	\$1,002,853
Category Subtotal:	\$9,306,336
Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure (EC 5)	
Northeast Lake Munson Sewer Project	\$6,500,000
Belair/Annawood Sewer Project	\$944,000
Woodville Sewer Project	\$9,927,473
Category Subtotal:	\$17,371,473
Revenue Replacement (EC 6)	
Leon County Revenues	\$23,817,461
Blueprint Revenues (County Share)	\$2,494,488
Category Subtotal:	\$26,311,949
Administrative and Other (EC 7)	
ERA Program Support	\$333,436
County Continuity of Operations Support	\$2,144,711
Reserves/Replenishment Account	\$490,817
Category Subtotal:	\$2,968,954
Total Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Allocation:	\$57,024,862

SECTION II: PROJECT INVENTORY

This section provides an overview of each of the projects undertaken by the County. Each project description includes the name of the project, a brief description of the project, the funding amount, the expenditure category that the project falls under, as well as the intended outcomes of the project.

Public Health (EC 1)

Project #1: Leon County Health Department – Vaccine Distribution and Response

Funding Amount: \$0

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.1, COVID-19 Vaccination

Total Expenditures to Date: \$0

Project Overview: This funding category contemplated funding for the Leon County Health Department (LCHD) to ensure broad vaccine distribution across the community, including expanding vaccine distribution access for high-risk and underserved populations. The LCHD partnered, planned, and implemented vaccination activities with critical organizations across the community, including churches, businesses, and non-traditional providers that serve underserved populations. In addition, the LCHD led community engagement strategies to expand messaging to promote COVID-19 vaccinations, increase vaccine confidence, and provide details on how and where citizens can receive a vaccine.

This project was discontinued upon Florida's statewide COVID-19 emergency declaration's expiration on June 26, 2021, and the funding was reallocated to the Homelessness and Housing Support project.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of vaccine outreach events conducted	N/A	N/A
Number of Leon County citizens vaccinated	N/A	N/A

Project #2: Neighborhood Medical Center

Funding Amount: \$500,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.14, Other Public Health Services

Total Expenditures to Date: \$500,000

Project Overview: This category dedicated funding to support Neighborhood Medical Center (NMC), a local Federally Qualified Health Center, in renovating a former bank building into a medical facility to provide general healthcare services for low-income residents. In 2019, NMC purchased the 8,310 square-foot facility located at 2613 South Monroe Street in Tallahassee. The reconfigured building opened in August 2023 and includes a waiting area, exam rooms, dental operatories, offices, records rooms, a lab, and patient services. Along with COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, NMC also offers other healthcare services for underserved populations at the reconfigured site. The total project cost is approximately \$1.3 million and NMC is committing \$800,000 from federal grants, bank loans, local donations, and capital reserves. As requested by NMC, the County has expended \$500,000 under this funding category to support the remaining construction and equipment costs not covered by other funding sources.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of patient visits at Neighborhood Medical Center	0	22,449
Number and type of services provided to Leon County citizens (e.g., primary healthcare, mental/behavioral healthcare, dental)	0	22,449 OB/GYN, dental care, case management, and in-house pharmacy services.

Project #3: Bond Community Health Center

Funding Amount: \$300,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.14, Other Public Health Services

Total Expenditures to Date: \$300,000

Project Overview: This category dedicated funding to Bond Community Health Center (Bond), a local Federally Qualified Health Center, to support renovations at its current facilities to meet the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) guidelines for reducing the spread of COVID-19 and mitigating the risk of infection. In addition, this funding enabled Bond to make physical improvements to its mobile units which are utilized for COVID-19 testing and vaccination events throughout the community.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of patient visits at Bond Community Health Center	0	6,397
Number and type of services provided to Leon County citizens (e.g., primary healthcare, mental/behavioral healthcare, dental)	0	6,397 primary care, oral health, behavioral health, pharmacy services, podiatry, chiropractic, HIV/AIDSs care, mobile health services and transportation services

Project #4: Vaccine Hesitancy Engagement and Promotion

Funding Amount: \$155,741

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.7, Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)

Total Expenditures to Date: \$155,741

Project Overview: This funding category supported targeted outreach efforts, particularly to underserved communities, to promote vaccine information, reduce vaccine hesitancy, and increase vaccinations. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began and throughout the vaccine rollout, Leon County Government has been the lead coordinator of emergency communications alongside the Florida Department of Health for the Leon County community. Working with a variety of community partners, Leon County established a COVID-19 Vaccination Community Education and Engagement Task Force to better mobilize churches, community-based organizations, federally qualified health centers, and other stakeholders across the county to work collaboratively toward the goals of reducing vaccine hesitancy in minority communities and ensuring access to vaccination information.

As part of the County's vaccination efforts, two hesitancy surveys were conducted in December 2020 and April 2021 to assess and measure changes related to vaccine hesitancy, concerns, and barriers in the community. The County's vaccine hesitancy engagement and promotion efforts resulted in greater community trust and confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine as demonstrated by the April 2021 hesitancy survey with nearly 80% of respondents indicating that they would be open to receiving a vaccine.

The County allocated \$155,741 to fund vaccine public information and outreach efforts until December 30, 2021. The City of Tallahassee also allocated \$268,800 toward this initiative from its Coronavirus State and Local Recovery (SLFRF) Fund allocation, for a total project cost of \$424,541. These efforts included continued partnership with the Leon County Coronavirus Vaccination Community Education and Engagement Task Force, promoting vaccination efforts, rollout, and other public health information, targeted outreach to communities of color through the Task Force, and more.

This project was discontinued upon Florida's statewide COVID-19 emergency declaration's expiration on June 26, 2021.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of households reached in direct door-to-door outreach	0	27,000
Number of COVID-19 town hall meetings	0	10
Number of people vaccinated in underserved areas	0	5,000
Number of attendees engaged at health expos and other vaccination information events	0	8,100

Project #5: Mental Health Services

Funding Amount: \$110,400

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.12, Mental Health Services

Total Expenditures to Date: \$110,400

Project Overview: Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health services have remained a critical need in our community. Local human service partners have experienced an increased demand for these services in recent years to assist clients who have been impacted by COVID-19 in various ways including job loss, reduced income, and increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation. According to 2-1-1 Big Bend, suicide calls have increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to previous years. Through the Leon Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) expenditure plan in 2020, the County allocated over \$185,000 to support 2-1-1 Big Bend in enhancing access to mental health resources in the community. To address the increase in call volume of individuals that are experiencing mental health crisis, this funding supported the hiring of two additional positions by 2-1-1 Big Bend to triage mental health calls to appropriate free or low-cost mental health services in Leon County.

This funding category dedicated additional funding to 2-1-1 Big Bend to retain these Mental Health Triage Specialists through FY 2024. The City of Tallahassee also dedicated \$89,600 toward this initiative from its CSLFR Fund allocation, for a total project cost of \$200,000. The 2-1-1 Big Bend Mental Health Triage Specialists assist and refer callers experiencing mental health crises immediately to free or low-cost local mental health resources, including scheduling counseling appointments, dispatching a Mobile Response Team, or connecting telehealth services for mental health.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of mental health calls to 2-1-1 Big Bend referred to area service providers	0	1,884

Additional Expenditure Categories in Leon County's Recovery Plan (EC 7) – Part 1

Project #6: County Continuity of Operations Support

Project Expenditure Category: EC 7.1, Administrative Expenses

Funding Amount: \$2,144,711

Total Expenditures to Date: \$2,144,711

Project Overview: In 2020, many Leon County Government departments and divisions transitioned to a remote working environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which required quick deployment of laptop computers to support County personnel working from home. Leon County's Office of Information and Technology (OIT) worked to address this need for laptops throughout the organization by using departments' pooled laptops and using other laptops assigned to the County's libraries. As a lesson learned during this process, OIT found that the County's virtual network environment did not have adequate capacity for the widespread remote connection needs of the organization, particularly from unknown devices when County personnel worked from home using personal devices, such as their own desktop computers or tablets. As a result, this increased the vulnerability of the network due to the number of unknown, potentially infected devices connecting directly to the County's network. Given this, OIT identified a need to transition all remote connections to a secured virtual desktop solution, which required the use of devices set up and regularly maintained by OIT to facilitate improved security within the network.

While County work areas have returned to normal in-office operations, County employees may still need to quarantine if exposed to a person with a confirmed COVID-19 infection, but may continue to work from home if not exhibiting symptoms. There is a continued need to ensure that the County can deliver critical services to the public if employees must work remotely. The availability of CSLFR funding presented an opportunity for the County to bolster its remote working capabilities by acquiring and proactively deploying additional laptops, configured with secure virtual desktop capability, for use throughout the public health emergency. Accordingly, this funding category allocated funding to support the acquisition of approximately 1,264 laptops, which included 763 laptops deployed across County work areas and an additional 501 laptops deployed across the County's Constitutional and Judicial Offices. In addition, these new laptops and existing laptops owned by the County were enhanced with a new secured virtual desktop solution to provide additional cybersecurity across these devices.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of laptops deployed to County work areas	0	763
Number of laptops deployed to Constitutional and Judicial Offices	59	560

Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2) – Part 1

Project #7: SmartSteps Program

Funding Amount: \$1,100,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.33, Enhanced Support to Microbusinesses

Total Expenditures to Date: \$1,100,000

Project Overview: In 2020, Leon County partnered with Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) Federal Credit Union (FAMU FCU) to establish the SmartSteps Program, a micro-loan program for Black-, minority-, and women-owned businesses. This program was supported by \$1 million in funding from Leon County's Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation under the CARES Act, supplemented with a \$250,000 match from FAMU FCU. The SmartSteps Program launched in February 2021 to enhance and diversify the existing capital pool in the market for minority businesses. Since then, approximately \$1.1 million in loans have been administered through the program.

Under this funding category, the County dedicated an additional \$1.1 million to extend the SmartSteps Program. The City of Tallahassee (City) has also allocated \$500,000 from its CSLFR funds to further expand the program as part of its Neighborhood First Initiative (NFI). As part of its NFI, the City engages community members in the Greater Bond, Griffin Heights, Frenchtown, and Providence neighborhoods to collaboratively plan community improvements in these areas such as housing improvement programs, economic development, and placemaking. In response to the neighborhood's requests for access to micro-loans, the City's funding share has been leveraged to expand the program and support the needs of growing local MWSBE businesses specifically within these areas.

The SmartSteps Program has received widespread recognition, winning an Achievement Award for Community and Economic Development from the National Association of Counties, as well as a Gold Excellence Award for Economic Equity and Inclusion from the International Economic Development Council.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of minority- and woman-owned businesses supported through the SmartSteps program	0	46
Dollar value of awards made to minority- and woman-owned local businesses	\$0	\$1,100,000

Project #8: Local Chambers of Commerce

Funding Amount: \$165,444

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.30, Technical Assistance, Counseling, or Business Planning

Total Expenditures to Date: \$165,444

Project Overview: Three local chambers of commerce operate within Leon County in support of local businesses (Big Bend Minority Chamber, Capital City Chamber, and Greater Tallahassee Chamber). Each of the local chambers was fundamental in providing technical assistance to local businesses applying for the Leon CARES Small Business Assistance Program in 2020. The County also contracted with the local chambers using Leon CARES funding to provide training to help local small businesses implement new technologies and business practices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, assess needs, and coordinate resources.

This expenditure category allocates \$165,444 in additional funding to the three local chambers to provide continued assistance to local businesses by further expanding their programming aimed to help businesses mitigate challenges and capitalize on new opportunities for job creation and growth. The City of Tallahassee is also allocating \$134,000 toward this initiative from its CSLFR Fund allocation, for a total project cost of nearly \$300,000. Specifically, the local chambers will provide targeted, essential support to local businesses which will include:

- Business Outreach and Education: Local programming centered on bridging the talent, education, and workforce gap, job creation and economic development, and establishing sustainable business climates.
- Talent Pipeline Enhancement: Continued implementation of “Talent Hub,” a platform established by the Greater Tallahassee Chamber in 2020 to assist the local workforce with exploring careers, building skills, and finding jobs. The Talent Hub platform seeks to support efforts in bridging the local talent gap by centralizing education and employment resources to explore careers, build skills, and find employment opportunities. Going forward, the Talent Hub will feature resources focused on enhancing partnerships, connecting with more career seekers and employers, and expanding career exploration programs.
- Targeted Assistance to Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses: New training opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses on a variety of topics including networking, marketing, cash flow management, technology improvement, contract negotiations, and capacity building.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of businesses attending training and support programs	0	18,665

Project #9: Entrepreneurship Support

Funding Amount: \$165,499

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.32, Business Incubators and Start-Up or Expansion Assistance

Total Expenditures to Date: \$165,499

Project Overview: Small businesses nationwide have experienced the significant economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and have been disproportionately affected due to revenue losses from forced closures and unanticipated expenses related to keeping employees and customers safe. While these impacts have particularly affected minority- and woman-owned small businesses and those within certain industry sectors, entrepreneurs and startup companies have also faced significant challenges due to COVID-19. A 2020 National Bureau of Economic Research survey found that the financial health of nearly half of startup companies had been negatively or very negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Locally, entrepreneur support entities such as North Florida Innovation Labs and Domi Station have experienced dramatic challenges related to their capacity and ability to host and instruct entrepreneurs. The risk of COVID-19 resulted in increased costs associated with digitizing trainings, acquiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and implementing other safety measures at their facilities. Meanwhile, the need and demand for entrepreneur training and incubator resources have only increased over the past year as individuals previously employed in sectors disrupted by COVID-19 have begun to explore new employment ventures and existing businesses and enterprises have sought to better adapt to the changing economic landscape over the past year.

Through the Leon CARES Small Business Assistance Program in 2020, the County distributed \$18.1 million in financial assistance to support the restart, re-launch, and re-opening of over 930 small businesses in the community, with over \$7.8 million awarded to local businesses that are minority-owned and woman-owned. Like small businesses, entrepreneurs and startup companies are critical to the economic vitality of any community, providing contributions in additional employment opportunities for residents and industry diversification within the local business community. As such, this expenditure category allocates \$165,499 to address local entrepreneurs' and startup companies' demonstrated need for assistance while also further promoting resilience among the local business community as a whole. The City of Tallahassee is also allocating \$134,000 toward this initiative from its CSLFR Fund allocation, for a total project cost of nearly \$300,000. This funding will be distributed to the local entrepreneur support entities, North Florida Innovation Labs and Domi Station, for enhanced training, employment connection opportunities, and resources to support talent retention, revenue growth, and innovation among the local entrepreneurial community.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of local entrepreneurs attending training/education programs	0	896

Project #10: Food Insecurity

Funding Amount: \$767,280

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.1, Household Assistance: Food Programs

Total Expenditures to Date: \$736,280

Project Overview: Due to the ongoing negative financial impacts experienced by households in the community as a result of COVID-19, food insecurity continues to be a concern in Leon County. Second Harvest of the Big Bend (Second Harvest) is a non-profit food bank that accepts and distributes donations of food through a network of 135 local food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, senior community centers, and children's feeding programs. In 2020, Leon County provided more than \$4 million to Second Harvest through the Leon Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) plan to address local food insecurity, which facilitated the distribution of over 3.4 million meals across the community. Leon CARES funding supported Second Harvest in purchasing food supplies, hiring program staff, and purchasing refrigerator trucks and other equipment to distribute meals to the community's most vulnerable populations.

The County's Coronavirus State and Local Recovery Fund (SLFRF) allocates \$767,280 in additional funding to the Second Harvest. The City of Tallahassee's SLFRF plan also allocates \$622,720 toward this initiative, for a total of \$1.39 million dedicated for the purchase of meals. Second Harvest continues to lead various programs, efforts, and initiatives to distribute these meals to Leon County families impacted by COVID-19, including low-income children participating in virtual school and summer camps. Additionally, this funding category has supported Second Harvest in purchasing four temperature-controlled grocery lockers to be deployed and operated throughout the community to increase access to meals with flexible schedules for food pickup at nearby locations.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of households receiving food assistance	0	1,887,225*

** Totals reflect number of meals served*

Project #11: Legal Services

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.2, Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid

Funding Amount: \$446,717

Total Expenditures to Date: \$446,717

Project Overview: The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant increase in households facing the risk of eviction or foreclosure due to an inability to pay their rent or mortgage. This expenditure category dedicates funding to Legal Services of North Florida (LSNF) to expand legal assistance resources for low-income households facing eviction or foreclosure in an effort to reduce their vulnerability to homelessness. The City of Tallahassee is also allocating \$362,880 toward this initiative from its Coronavirus State and Local Recovery Fund (CSLRF) Fund allocation, for a total project cost of nearly \$810,000.

With this assistance, LSNF has hired a full-time attorney, paralegal, community outreach-partner relations specialist, and law clerk to expand its capacity to address the current and continuing need for eviction defense in our community. Eviction defense services involve providing support to individuals in accessing rental assistance, foreclosure defense, stimulus checks, and unemployment compensation, among other resources. In addition, LSNF has hired case managers and intake specialists to assist pro bono lawyers with the continued and growing need for eviction and foreclosure defense.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of households receiving eviction prevention services (including legal representation)	0	2,898

Project #12: Nonprofit Grant Program

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.34, Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations (Impacted or Disproportionately Impacted)

Funding Amount: \$1,362,399

Total Expenditures to Date: \$1,362,399

Project Overview: Leon County collaborated with the City of Tallahassee, United Partners for Human Services (UPHS), the Council on Culture and Arts (COCA), the Institute for Nonprofit Innovation and Excellence (INIE), and the United Way of the Big Bend (UWBB) to address the significant demand for services that nonprofits and human service organizations experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2021, UPHS, COCA, and INIE conducted a survey of local nonprofit organizations which found that 72% of these organizations experienced an increase in demand for their services since the onset of COVID-19. The organizations represented sectors such as education, healthcare, legal services, and workforce development.

This funding category supported the implementation of a Nonprofit Services Grant Program to provide funding to local nonprofit organizations to continue to meet the immediate demand that they experienced for essential human service needs such as after school/summer enrichment programs, computer technology, and crisis management. The City of Tallahassee also allocated \$1,496,320 of its CSLFR funds toward this program, for a total project cost of nearly \$3 million. As recommended by UPHS, COCA, and INIE, this program provided up to \$20,000 in one-time assistance to support local nonprofit agencies that were providing or would provide human services/programming to Leon County residents impacted by COVID-19. The funding level was consistent with the Leon CARES Human Services Grant established in 2020, which awarded funding to 121 local nonprofit organizations. Under this grant program, applicants were required to be a 501©(3) organization registered with the State of Florida to be eligible. Priority for funding consideration was given to organizations that did not receive previous assistance through the Local Economic Assistance for Nonprofits (LEAN) Program—which was also established in 2020 to provide emergency financial relief to nonprofits—the Leon CARES Human Services Grant Program, or the Leon CARES Nonprofit Assistance Grant Program. The County and City contracted with UPHS, INIE, COCA, and UWBB to provide technical support to agencies that sought this grant program, such as hosting webinars on program guidelines and eligibility requirements, and assisting local nonprofits with submitting applications and the required documentation.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of local nonprofits assisted with grant funding	0	84
Dollar value of grant funds distributed to local nonprofits	\$0	\$1,367,130
Number of nonprofits receiving technical/application assistance	0	1,051*

**total interactions with nonprofits*

Project #13: Homelessness and Housing Support

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.16, Long-term Housing Security: Services for Unhoused Persons

Funding Amount: \$4,296,144

Total Expenditures to Date: \$3,486,202.82

Project Overview: Leon County has four emergency shelters designated to assist the homeless population: the Kearney Center for single individuals experiencing homelessness; Hope Community, operated by Big Bend Homeless Coalition for families; Capital City Youth Services (CCYS) operates a youth shelter; and Refuge House operates a shelter for domestic violence victims. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, homeless sheltering generally consisted of “congregate” facilities where homeless individuals were housed at a single location, often with several individuals living in the same room. COVID-19, however, required homeless service providers to fundamentally adjust this model – public health guidelines related to physical distancing required providers to shift to “non-congregate” sheltering arrangements which involved placing homeless individuals in hotels, motels, or other facilities that allowed for greater physical distancing to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. This approach to sheltering, which required significantly more square footage and often the use of privately-owned lodging facilities, was necessarily much more expensive than the traditional congregate sheltering model.

Compounding this challenge was the significant increase in demand for homeless sheltering due to the economic effects of the pandemic. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all four emergency homeless shelters experienced a significant increase in clients at their congregate or non-congregate facilities. To meet CDC guidelines for social distancing, each provider had to reduce the number of clients in their congregate shelters and develop waiting lists for shelter services due to the increased demand. As a result, there was a larger number of unsheltered homeless individuals utilizing vehicles and homeless encampments.

The availability of CSLFR funding presented an opportunity to significantly enhance the community’s homelessness support infrastructure through several targeted strategies. The Recovery Plan allocated \$4.2 million to the partner organizations listed above to expand a variety of initiatives and programs, alleviating the increased demand for homelessness support services including community outreach, permanent supportive housing, homelessness diversion services, and recruitment of established organizations to expand homeless prevention services locally. This category also provided funding support to the four emergency shelters to address unanticipated expenses related to COVID-19 and that were not covered by FEMA reimbursement or other federal and state funding sources. The City of Tallahassee also allocated \$2,809,856 toward this initiative from its CSLFR Fund allocation, for a total project cost of approximately \$7 million.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of individuals receiving 24/7 emergency homelessness services including shelter, showers, and food for clients	2,018	6,790
Number of local homelessness service nonprofits assisted with training and technical support	3	8
Number of households receiving eviction prevention services (including legal representation)	131*	3,029

* The data reported for this performance metric is also captured under Project #10: Legal Services.

Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure (EC 5)

Project #14: Septic-to-Sewer Projects (3)

Project Expenditure Category: EC 5.2, Clean Water: Centralized wastewater collection and conveyance

Funding Amount: \$17,371,473

Total Expenditures to Date: \$17,371,473

Project Overview: This expenditure category provided funding support to complete three critical septic-to-sewer conversion projects in the following neighborhoods/areas:

- Northeast Lake Munson
- Belair/Annawood
- Woodville

Leon County invested millions of dollars in recent years within the Wakulla Springs Primary Springs Protection Zone to help improve water quality by transitioning hundreds of septic tanks to central sewer; in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the County established a nine-year Water Quality and Springs Protection Infrastructure Improvement Plan to enhance the region's water quality through a series of septic-to-sewer conversion projects.

Due to recent construction pricing trends, which substantially increased over the previous reporting period, the budget estimates detailed in the initial grant applications for each of these projects were insufficient to complete construction. Given the temporary, one-time nature of the CSLFR funding provided under the ARPA, this funding represented a unique opportunity to fulfill the County's commitments to these projects despite the recent increase in construction costs. Not only did this strategy enable the County to complete these projects and provide high-quality wastewater infrastructure for the community, but it also supported local economic recovery by facilitating strong employment opportunities for local workers.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of septic tanks removed/replaced	125	408
<u>Outcome Measures:</u>		
Pounds of nutrient discharge reduced	1,869	7,171

Revenue Replacement (EC 6)

Project #15: Leon County Revenues

Project Expenditure Category: EC 6.1, Provision of Government Services

Funding Amount: \$26,311,949

Total Expenditures to Date: \$26,311,949

Project Overview: Similar to other local governments nationwide, Leon County experienced significant revenue losses resulting from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As discussed in Section I of this report, the U.S. Department of the Treasury emphasized in its Interim Final Rule for CSLFR funds that it is critical that local governments utilize this funding to mitigate drastic budget reductions and thereby avoid constraining the broader economic recovery. The Treasury provided a specific methodology to calculate reduction in revenue; based on this methodology, Leon County's total projected revenue loss was \$26.3 million. This included all County revenues (state shared sales taxes, gas taxes, tourist taxes, property taxes, etc.) as well as Leon County's contribution of local option sales tax revenues to the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency ("Blueprint"). Blueprint is a joint agency created by Leon County and the City of Tallahassee which plans and executes infrastructure projects funded by a one-cent local option sales tax. Blueprint's Board of Directors is comprised of the Leon County and City of Tallahassee Commissions sitting as one body and provides direction to the agency, which operates under the guidance of both the Leon County Administrator and the Tallahassee City Manager.

As summarized in the table below, Leon County Government incurred approximately \$11.3 million in revenue losses during FY 2020 based on Treasury's CSLFR guidance, which was recovered in the County's FY 2022 budget. This funding was used to not only address the County's immediate budgetary needs, but also to ensure the continued long-term financial stability of the County by:

- Investing \$2.8 million to fund general county services such as library services, human services, veteran services, constitutional services, EMS, fire services, stormwater, and solid waste; assist in reducing the use of fund balance; and lift a hiring freeze which the County implemented in 2020 to address the immediate fiscal impacts of the pandemic;
- Investing \$3.6 million to ensure funding is available for the County's capital maintenance program;
- Investing \$2.2 million to address the significant impact to Division of Tourism revenues (i.e., transient lodging taxes) through enhanced marketing/promotion to support rebuilding the local tourism economy; to renovate an historic County-owned Amtrak station and convert it into a new Leon County Welcome Center; to address significant industry-wide construction inflation cost increases; and to support on-going development of the County's Apalachee Regional Park as a world-class recreational amenity; and
- Utilizing \$2.7 million to address transportation and flood relief projects that were delayed or not funded due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

	FY 2022 Budget <i>(Projected Revenue Loss in FY 2020)</i>	FY 2023 Budget <i>(Projected Revenue Loss in FY 2021)</i>	FY 2024 Budget <i>(Projected Revenue Loss in FY 2022)</i>	Total
Leon County Government	\$11,280,165	\$9,238,144	\$3,299,152	\$23,817,461
Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (Leon County Share)	\$2,494,488	\$0	\$0	\$2,494,488
Total Revenue Loss Mitigation	\$13,774,653	\$9,238,144	\$3,299,152	\$26,311,949

Also as reflected above, the County's revenue losses for FY 2021 were projected to total approximately \$9.2 million based on Treasury's methodology. The County recovered these losses in its FY 2023 budget. Finally, losses in local option infrastructure sales tax revenues (i.e., Blueprint revenues) in FY 2020 and FY 2021 were projected to total approximately \$2.5 million. Leon County and the City of Tallahassee shared in mitigating these revenue losses. 55.2% of the reduction in Blueprint revenues were addressed through the County's CSLFR allocation and 44.8% through the City's allocation, which was proportionate to the amount of CSLFR funding the County and City each received. The County projected additional revenue loss for FY 2022 for an estimated \$3.2 million and recovered these losses in its FY 2024 and FY 2025 budgets.

Key Performance Indicator: N/A

Additional Expenditure Categories in Leon County’s Recovery Plan (EC 7) – Part 2

Project #16: ERA Program Support

Project Expenditure Category: EC 7.1, Administrative Expenses

Funding Amount: \$333,436

Total Expenditures to Date: \$333,436

Project Overview: This expenditure category allocated \$333,436 to support the implementation of Leon County’s Emergency Rental Assistance (“ERA”) program. As discussed in Section I of this report, Leon County aggressively implemented its ERA program, which consisted of separate funding allocations made under the December 2020 *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act* (the “ERA 1” program) and the ARPA (the “ERA 2” program). As of the publication of this report, Leon County had approved rent and utility assistance for over 3,500 Leon County households, totaling more than \$15 million in awards. Based on program reports published by the U.S. Treasury, Leon County ranked #1 among all Florida local governments—and in the top 10 nationally—in the proportion of its ERA funding allocation distributed.

While federal program guidelines allowed up to 10% of the County’s allocation of ERA 1 funding and 15% of its ERA 2 funding to be used for administrative purposes, this maximum administrative allowance did not provide the funding needed to complete reviews of the large volume of applications received for the program while providing the enhanced level of support necessary to ensure that our most vulnerable residents received the application assistance and technical support they needed. Accordingly, this expenditure category within the Recovery Plan provided funding to ensure that adequate resources were available to complete the administration of the County’s ERA Program. Funding allocated in this category was used to pay for temporary employees as well as increased contractual services for application review and call center support.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of households assisted with rent, utility, and/or internet payments	0	3,578

Project #17: Reserve/Replenishment Account

Project Expenditure Category: EC 7.1, Administrative Expenses

Funding Amount: \$490,817

Total Expenditures to Date: \$490,817

Project Overview: This category established a funding reserve that could be allocated to any of the other categories in the Recovery Plan based on needs or any potential changes in federal guidance that may have allowed for new uses without impacting existing categories. The ARPA provided that funds may be used to cover costs obligated by the grantee through December 31, 2024, and obligated funds will remain available to complete projects through December 31, 2026. Accordingly, this expenditure category authorized the County Administrator to expend funds according to the Recovery Plan as approved by the Board.

Key Performance Indicators: N/A

Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2) – Part 2

Project #18: Support for Orange Avenue Apartments Project

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.15, Long-term Housing Security: Affordable Housing

Funding Amount: \$1,002,853

Total Expenditures to Date: \$1,002,853

Project Overview: Orange Avenue Apartments is a 29-acre public housing complex maintained by the Tallahassee Housing Authority (THA), comprised of 200 housing units that were built between 1971 and 1972. In December 2016, Columbia Residential was selected by the THA to develop a Master Plan for the Orange Avenue corridor as well as a preliminary site plan for the redevelopment of the Orange Avenue Apartments. The Master Plan proposed redeveloping the Orange Avenue Apartments as a mixed-income, multi-family development with 400-410 units structured as two and three-story housing space. All public housing units (200 units) were maintained on the redeveloped site. Most of the new units were dedicated to households with incomes not greater than 60% of the area median income. The grounds also incorporated green spaces, courtyards, and pedestrian pathways to enhance the aesthetics of the property.

Leon County actively supported the THA and the proposed redevelopment of the Orange Avenue Apartments through continued programs and services to ensure housing stability during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting initiatives focused on ending generational poverty, and providing significant financial investment in partnership with the City of Tallahassee and Housing Finance Authority of Leon County that was critical to the project. Since 2016, the County has worked in close coordination with the City of Tallahassee and other partners to take the preliminary steps toward the redevelopment of the Orange Avenue Apartments. These efforts included working with Purpose Built Communities, a nonprofit organization which provides guidance to communities to address concerns of long-standing inter-generational poverty, high crime, poor health, and failing schools; identifying a local nonprofit organization to drive the Purpose Built Communities model by participating in project design with the developer, engaging residents and tenants through project awareness events, and recruiting volunteers to assist tenants relocating to their new homes; and authorizing the Housing Finance Authority of Leon County to issue a \$15 million Multifamily Housing Revenue Bond to provide the primary financing for the first phase of the project.

Due to the recent increase in construction costs, this first phase of the Orange Avenue Apartments redevelopment project faced a funding gap of approximately \$1.2 million. Accordingly, this project in Leon County's Recovery Plan included \$1,002,853 to support the project. The City of Tallahassee also committed to providing an additional \$227,853 to support the project, which filled the anticipated revenue gap. Totalling all funding commitments made to date across all funding sources, Leon County and the City of Tallahassee pledged an equal financial commitment (\$2.27 million each) toward the project.

Key Performance Indicators:

<u>Output/Outcome Measures:</u>	<u>Current Reporting Period:</u>	<u>Total to Date:</u>
Number of affordable housing units preserved or developed	0	260