

Counties and the American Rescue Plan Act Recovery Fund:

# EQUITY



## THE RECOVERY FUND AND EQUITY

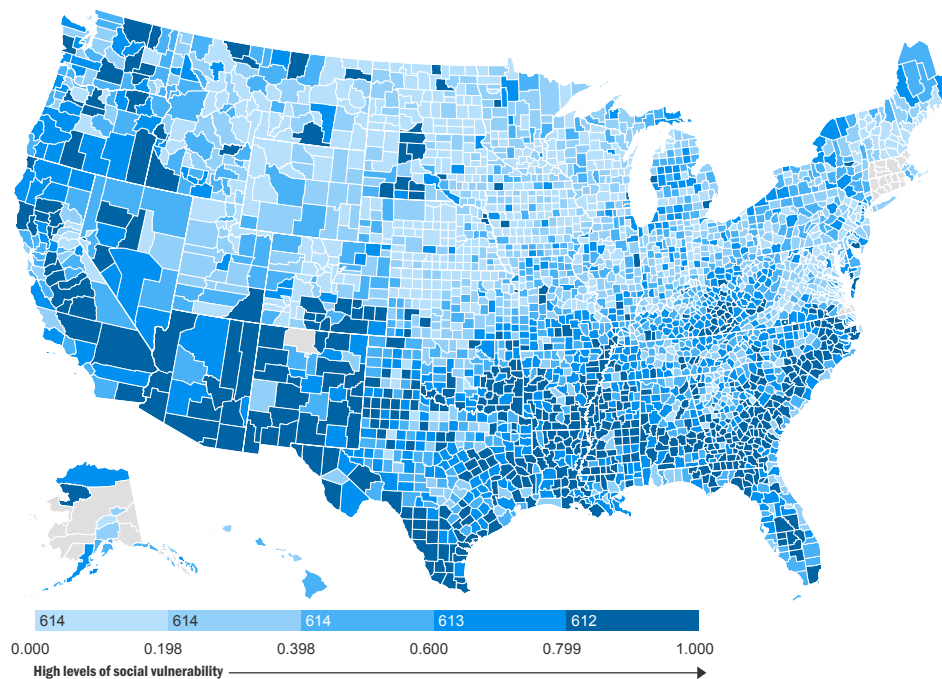
The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Recovery Fund), part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which NACo helped to develop and strongly advocated to pass, allocates \$65.1 billion. **These funds provide direct, flexible aid for every county, parish and borough in America.** Counties are on the front lines in delivering this aid to residents and are a driving force connecting communities and strengthening the economy.

As directed by the ARPA and the U.S. Department of Treasury, counties can invest Recovery Funds into a broad range of programs, services and projects under five categories to: support the public health response; address negative economic impacts caused by COVID-19; replace lost revenue; provide premium pay to essential workers; and invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.

Since the enactment of the ARPA, America's counties have been working hard to develop Recovery Fund implementation plans that will help spur an equitable economic recovery across the nation. As sound financial stewards, **counties are investing these critical Recovery Funds to ensure the health and well-being of our nation's residents and the economic vitality of our local communities.** Many counties are in the preliminary stages of development and implementation of Recovery Fund Plans. This report highlights county investments such as assistance for diverse business owners, health equity initiatives and flexible assistance to low-income households.

## SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX ACROSS THE NATION

The social vulnerability index measures a number of factors such as poverty, lack of transportation and poor housing conditions that may weaken a community's capacity to respond to a disaster or external stress. Across the nation, there are varied levels of social vulnerability that exacerbate inequities and can make residents more susceptible to COVID-19's negative economic and social impacts.



Map: 2018, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

## COUNTIES PLAN TO INVEST RECOVERY FUNDS TO:



**EXPAND VACCINE EQUITY CLINICS AND OUTREACH**



**PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN LOW-INCOME AREAS**



**HIRE NEW EQUITY PERSONNEL TO OVERSEE INVESTMENTS**



**SUPPLY LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WITH FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**



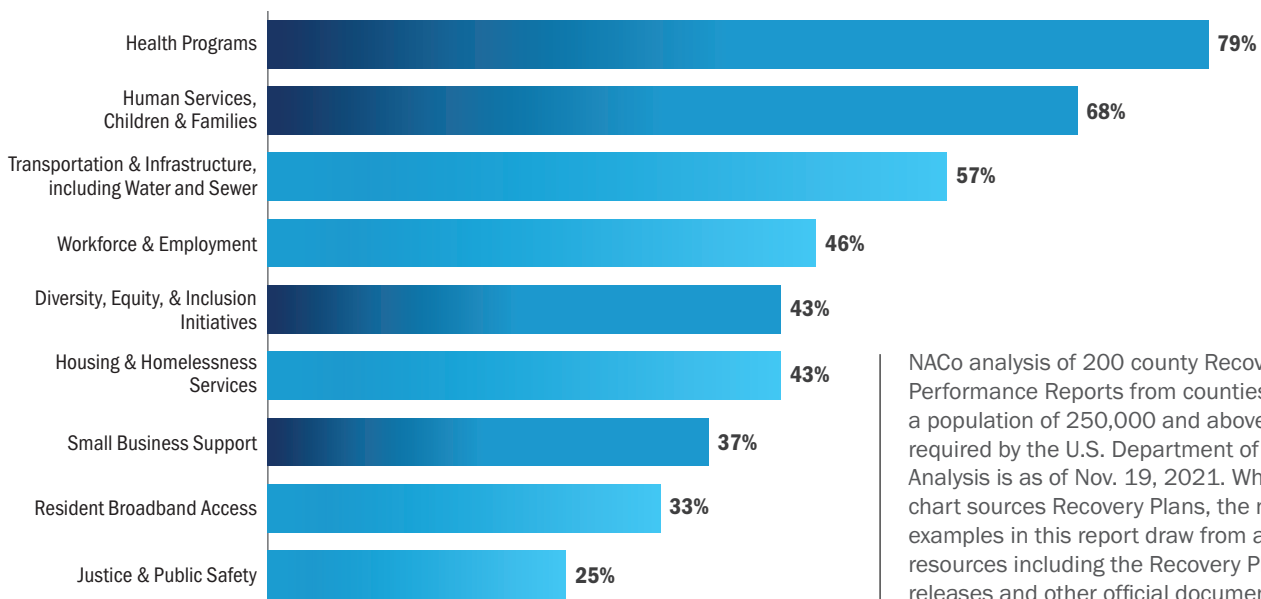
**SUPPORT DIVERSE BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVES**



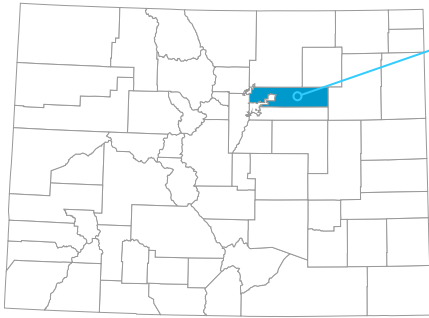
**ASSIST UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS WITH WRAPAROUND SERVICES**

## COUNTIES ARE INTEGRATING DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION INTO KEY GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**How will counties invest the funds?** NACo analysis of 200 county ARPA Recovery Fund plans reveals county-designed investments in the community across key areas of need. These local priorities are found within county plans at the rate displayed in the chart, **e.g. forty-three percent of county plans include investments in diversity, equity & inclusion initiatives.** The darker bars are the investment categories adjacent to equity that support the continuation and expansion of services in counties. The examples in this report further illustrate the allocations to support equitable programs and services on the local level.

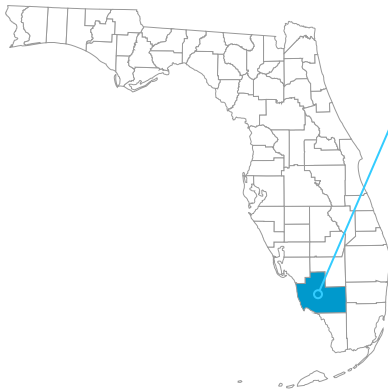


NACo analysis of 200 county Recovery Plan Performance Reports from counties with a population of 250,000 and above, as required by the U.S. Department of Treasury. Analysis is as of Nov. 19, 2021. While the bar chart sources Recovery Plans, the narrative examples in this report draw from a variety of resources including the Recovery Plans, press releases and other official documents.



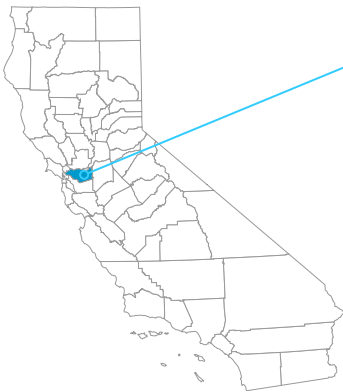
## **ADAMS COUNTY, COLO.**

Adams County has set aside \$1 million for vaccine equity clinics and incentives, in addition to \$92,000 for a new Social Justice/Race Equity Coordinator to help fulfill ARPA's directive and **assist in the development of programs that eliminate racial and ethnic disparities**. The coordinator will also lead the development of the county's Racial Equity Action Plan.



## **COLLIER COUNTY, FLA.**

Collier County will provide **200 Wi-Fi hotspots in low-income neighborhoods** and expand educational sessions at county libraries with a \$4 million investment in high poverty districts that struggled to maintain operations during the pandemic. Another \$901,000 will be allocated to add library materials in diverse languages, and \$2.2 million is set aside to address the social determinants of health through nutrition classes, financial education and mentorship for underserved communities.



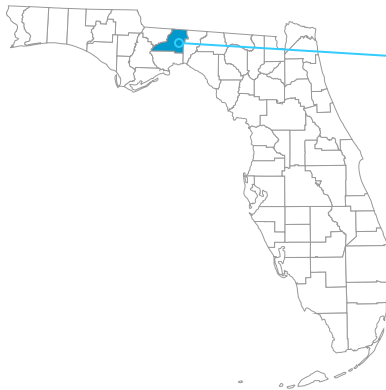
## **CONTRA COSTA, CALIF.**

Contra Costa County **is addressing disparities in public health outcomes intensified by COVID-19** through a \$22.4 million investment of Recovery Funds. The funding will support the expansion of community engagement efforts including the Mobile Equity Vaccination Team and Community Ambassadors; partnerships with consultants that specialize in communications for underserved communities; and expanded data collection to ensure all residents are represented and supported by the county in the recovery efforts.



## HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

Harris County developed a robust equity framework to ensure ARPA investments are allocated in an equitable fashion. The framework focuses on **disaggregating historical data and outcome measures by race, ethnicity and gender** to reduce disparities in health, social and economic outcomes. The county's allocations to date include \$32 million for flexible financial assistance to low-income households that have experienced economic hardship due to the pandemic.



## LEON COUNTY, FLA.

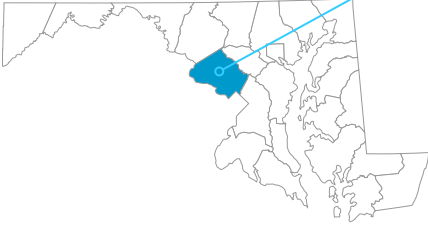
Leon County has extended the SmartSteps Program, a micro-loan initiative for Black, minority-owned and women-owned businesses. The program was allocated \$1.1 million in Recovery Funds and **aims to enhance and diversify the existing capital pool in the county**, as well as address the uneven economic impacts of the pandemic.



## LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIF.

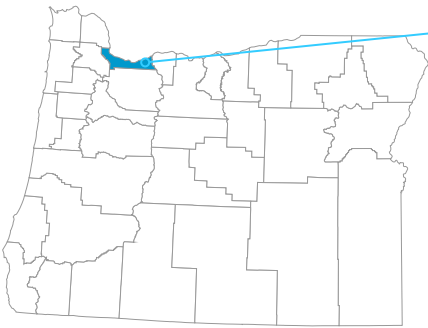
Los Angeles County's Phase One ARPA plan allocates \$567 million for equity-based investments, including \$400 million for housing and homelessness services and \$47 million for the Care First, Jails Last program. The Care First, Jails Last initiative **supports community-based diversion and reentry as an alternative to jails**, and provides wraparound supports for residents who have struggled to secure employment in the wake of the pandemic.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.



Montgomery County is supporting a variety of equity programs including expanding the Working Families Income Supplement to financially assist households with children; allocating \$2.9 million to **implement holistic and culturally competent wraparound services** for Latino communities in the county; \$1.7 million for an African American Health Program; \$1.15 million for an Asian American Health Initiative; and \$3.6 million for health and human service hubs to promote lasting equity beyond the county’s immediate pandemic response.

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY, ORE.



Multnomah County **incorporated equity into every aspect of the official ARPA planning process** to ensure funds were being invested sustainably. Overall, the county allocated \$816,000 for housing stability and eviction prevention; \$5.4 million for wraparound supports for youth and families; \$2.7 million to address community violence through prevention, intervention and healing; \$1.1 million for deepening safety net services; and \$1.9 million for building community connection, assets and resilience.

## OAKLAND COUNTY, MICH.



Oakland County is utilizing Recovery Funds to provide **flexible financial assistance for individuals who face barriers to education** or other credential programs. Additionally, the county set aside \$1.2 million for enhanced services for child welfare-involved families who are facing continued negative economic impacts and strain from the pandemic.

## PIERCE COUNTY, WASH.



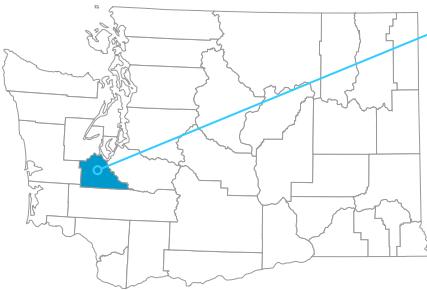
Pierce County is supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) entrepreneurship and technical assistance programs through a \$5 million investment of Recovery Funds. Another \$15 million is set aside for small business assistance, with funds specifically going towards **counselors that will ensure businesses are connected equitably to ARPA funded programs** across the community.

## RAMSEY COUNTY, MINN.



Ramsey County is **assisting young adults who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19** through the “Right Track Plus” initiative which provides workforce development programs and opportunities. The program was allocated \$2.1 million and will provide internships and professional development specifically tailored to a population disproportionately impacted by the economic downturn.

## THURSTON COUNTY, WASH.



Thurston County is targeting minority business owners through a \$3.3 million program specifically designed to **bolster BIPOC businesses affected by the pandemic**. The county will also hire a Minority Business liaison to lead engagement and staff a new Minority Advisory Committee. The staff will manage the Minority Business Grant and conduct outreach with the goal of creating a more inclusive economy, which is essential to ARPA’s mission.



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