The American Rescue Plan (ARP) includes an unprecedented level of federal support for U.S. communities, and significant local recovery funds are arriving in cities and counties across the country. Most regions are receiving funds equal to roughly $300 per resident. Do your residents and leaders know this opportunity is here? Is your community participating in the dialogue about how best to invest these funds?

Our Southern Economic Advancement Project (SEAP) ARP Assistance team collects and shares vital information in our ARP Toolkit. We’re working to ensure local leaders are informed about ARP and have access to great examples of how to use these dollars to produce a more sustainable and equitable recovery.

New Orleans Council Adopts SEAP’s ARP Resolution, Confirming Equitable Spending Goals

On October 7, 2021, to achieve an equitable recovery from the pandemic, the New Orleans City Council unanimously passed the ARP Model Resolution, drafted by the SEAP. The resolution commits the city to utilize its share of ARP funds to promote a community-sustaining recovery across all neighborhoods and sectors. The declaration includes but is not limited to prioritizing the improvement of public health, education, and housing. Nellie Catzen, the Executive Director of Committee for a Better New Orleans, introduced the resolution with support from Councilmembers Kristin Gisleson Palmer and Jay Banks.

Visit www.southstrong.org to access the full ARP Toolkit.
As more communities start building plans for how they’ll use their federal recovery funds, SEAP is tracking real-time examples of best practices. Our online ARP news tracker shows examples of community outreach and engagement related to SLFRF plans. The tracker also showcases communities with plans for SLFRF spending with an equity focus. We’ve grouped these initiatives by category if you’re interested in particular topics (affordable housing, household or business assistance, etc.). Use the tracker to select from more than 200 examples we’ve found, or read our summary report to review a smaller set of highlights. The U.S. Treasury included our report in its early data update concerning how governments are committing recovery funds.

We’ll be adding more examples throughout the Fall, so you can continue to learn about different strategies and approaches. If you’d like us to include information from your community, please email Morgan Smith at: southstrong@rooseveltinstitute.org.

Large Cities Begin to Share Spending Plans

Below is a great example from North Carolina’s first round of "Recovery Plan" reporting. To learn more about why these reports are important, see the Treasury’s latest report.

Per an August 31 reporting deadline, the largest cities in the U.S. have submitted their first SLFRF "Recovery Plan" reports to the Treasury. These reports provide the initial view on how bigger communities plan to invest SLFR funds and how they’ll meet the Treasury’s instructions to incorporate community engagement and to consider equity aspects of their spending. Cities must publish these reports on their public-facing websites.

Durham, North Carolina provides an excellent best practice example of the SLFRF approach, including robust community outreach and a commitment to equity considerations. Durham’s first Recovery Plan report highlights Durham’s significant work to engage residents in choosing top spending priorities. Durham’s outreach process includes community surveys, virtual events, and community-driven applications for SLFRF spending proposals.

More SLFRF Data to Come

Our next project will involve collecting detail on the status of SLFRF decisions in Southeast cities, large and small. Soon, SEAP will share where SLFRF spending decisions are just beginning, in progress, or nearly complete. This resource can help local leaders map out the opportunity for engagement and understand how their regions are moving forward in recovery spending plans.

Alongside that progress info, we’ll show how cities are directing SLFRF dollars by sorting their plans into key spending categories (affordable housing, household assistance, business support, infrastructure, premium pay, etc.). This data will help advocates and decision-makers recognize emerging trends and also collect ideas for strategic recovery investments. Look for this new SEAP resource to launch next month.

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“Recovery Plan” Reports from Larger Jurisdictions

Atlanta, GA
Jacksonville, FL
Miami, FL
Tampa Bay, FL
Orlando, FL
St. Petersburg, FL
Charlotte, NC
Raleigh, NC
Greensboro, NC
Durham, NC
Nashville, TN
Louisville, KY
New Orleans, LA
Virginia Beach, VA