



THE ARP TOOLKIT SPENDING TRACKER BREAKOUT REPORT: GEORGIA

February 2022 | As a part of its ARP Toolkit, the Southern Economic Advance Project publishes its initial report for the newly released ARP Local Funds Spending Tracker.



BACKGROUND

As part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP), the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) delivers \$130 billion in direct support to every community in the US. The scale of the SLFRF program is unprecedented, and local governments have broad discretion in how to use these funds, along with an extended timeline for spending (through 12/31/26).

Since mid-2021, the Southern Economic Advancement Project (SEAP) has encouraged local leaders to choose strategic recovery investments that address the highest priority needs and help residents and neighborhoods most affected by the pandemic. Our ARP Toolkit provides resources and information to local governments and advocates so they can make the most of their SLFRF funds. The goal is to help residents and local governments work together to build SLFRF spending plans that incorporate community input and achieve a more sustainable, equitable recovery.

NOTABLE TOOLS, DATA & RESOURCES

New SEAP Dashboard Shows Real-Time Info on Cities' SLFRF Spending

As of year-end 2021, local leaders setting priorities for local recovery funds is still heavily in progress. Many communities have not allocated most of their local recovery funds. In these places, local government leaders and residents are collecting input on needs and priorities and identifying investments that will have the most substantial impact. SEAP's new [SLFRF Spending Dashboard](#) offers a first look at the status of city-level SLFRF spending in more than 100 cities across several states.

The SLFRF Spending Dashboard also provides data on spending choices for cities where leaders have already made SLFRF decisions. The dashboard identifies and groups planned SLFRF spending into 12 categories (public health, affordable housing, business support, general government, etc.). Our interactive tool allows users to view this information at the city level and statewide.

Most communities (NEUs with a population of less than 250,000) are not required to report on their SLFRF spending until April 2022. Even then, their reports will only reflect actual expenses to date, not go-forward plans. Use this new Spending Dashboard to find real-time SLFRF plans, assess the status of local decision-making, and see trends in the type of recovery spending underway.



INITIAL RESULTS BY STATE

GEORGIA

Our Phase 1 data covers 26 cities in Georgia, which is approximately half of the roughly 50 cities in the state with a population greater than 20,000. These 26 communities are receiving \$576 million in total SLFRF allocations. Our Georgia dataset does not include combined city/county governments since these jurisdictions have different spending responsibilities than traditional cities. Below are some key findings across the Georgia dataset:

Results on Status of SLFRF Decision Making in GA Cities

- **Most spending decisions haven't happened yet.**
 - Nearly half of all cities (46%) have made no spending decisions yet.
 - Across all 26 Georgia cities, spending plans are approved for roughly half (53%) of funds.
 - These results indicate a significant opportunity for community engagement to help set local spending priorities and advocate for strategic and equitable SLFRF investments.
- **Spending decisions to date are not limited to the first half of funds.**
 - Of the 14 cities with some SLFRF decisions, nine cities have plans limited to some or all of the first half of funds.
 - Five Georgia cities have plans for most or all of their total allocation.
 - Compared with other states, this indicates that GA communities are somewhat further along in their spending plans than is observed more generally.
- **Larger cities are further along in their spending decisions.**
 - Our initial dataset includes one Georgia city (Atlanta) with a population greater than 250,000. As seen elsewhere, this larger city has more developed SLFRF spending plans than is seen generally.
 - In Atlanta, plans are in place for 100% of the total allocation of \$171 million.
 - Notably, Atlanta's spending plan includes \$131 million for Revenue Replacement/General Government.
 - When Atlanta is excluded, the results indicate that the 25 smaller cities are further behind in their spending plans. Roughly one-third of the total \$406 million in SLFRF for these smaller communities has spending plans.

INITIAL RESULTS BY STATE

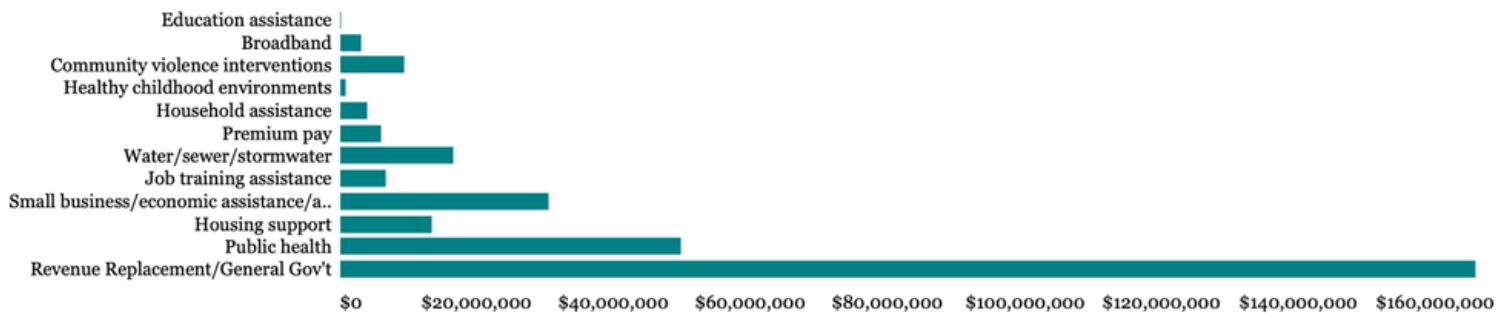
GEORGIA

Georgia Results on Type of SLFRF Spending Planned To Date

Across the Georgia dataset, spending plans to date show a high priority on Revenue Replacement/General Gov't. This category alone represents 54% of planned spending to date, however, this result is largely due to the influence of Atlanta's \$131 million allocation to this category. Other top spending categories are Public Health, Small Business/Economic Assistance, and Water/Sewer Infrastructure.

GA SLFRF Spending Decisions to Date By Category (n=26)

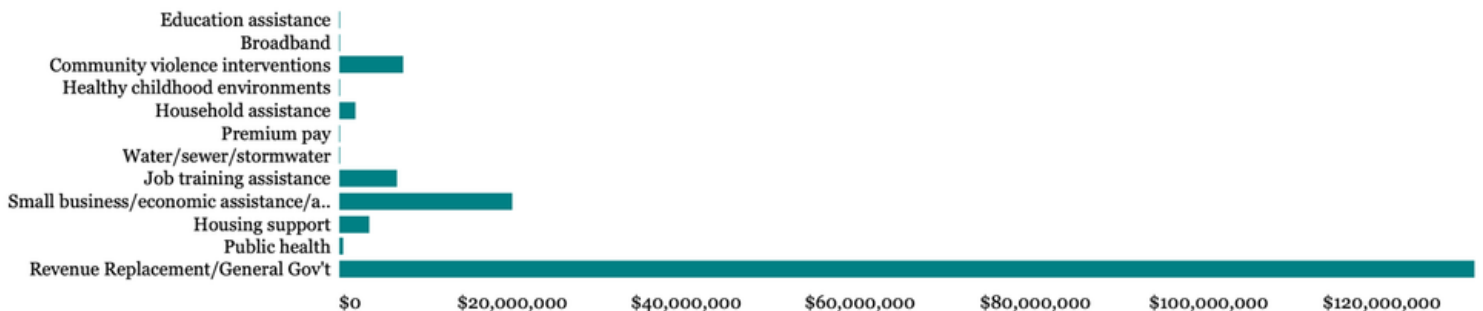
ARP Local Funds Decisions by Category



Due to the significantly larger SLFRF allocation for Atlanta and the fact that city leaders have made 100% of its spending decisions, it is helpful to view the data for other Georgia cities separately from the data for Atlanta. Please see below for spending differentiated by city population.

GA SLFRF Spending Decisions in Large Cities/Atlanta (n=1)

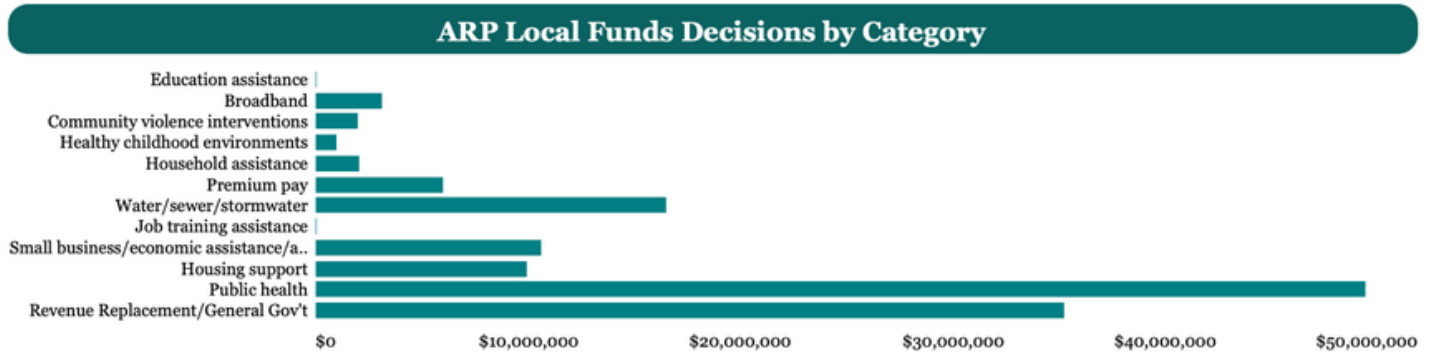
ARP Local Funds Decisions by Category



INITIAL RESULTS BY STATE

GEORGIA

GA SLFRF Spending Decisions in Smaller Cities (n=25)



Other GA Findings:

- **Community outreach on SLFRF spending is not robust.**
 - We found clear examples of SLFRF engagement in only 5 of 26 cities.
- **Identification of Equity Strategy is not common.**
 - An explicit equity strategy for SLFRF spending decisions was identified in only 2 of 26 cities.
 - In some cases, equity goals may be part of a city's implementation plan even if this aspect is not made explicit in the context of the initial spending decision.

For more information or to include data from your community, contact Morgan Smith at SouthStrong@rooseveltinstitute.org.

