



GEORGIA AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN IN ACTION

April 2022 | As a part of its ARP Toolkit, the Southern Economic Advancement Project publishes its quarterly report for its ARP Local Funds Spending Tracker, highlighting State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds spending decisions currently underway by local leaders.

www.theseap.org | www.southstrong.org

BACKGROUND

As part of the American Rescue Plan ([ARP](#)), the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) is delivering \$130 billion in direct support across every community in the U.S. The scope and scale of the SLFRF program are unprecedented, and local governments have broad discretion in how to spend these funds, as well as an extended spending timeline (through 12/31/2026).

For the past year, the Southern Economic Advancement Project ([SEAP](#)) has been working to encourage local leaders to choose strategic recovery investments that address the highest priority needs and help residents and neighborhoods most affected by the pandemic. SEAP's [ARP Toolkit](#) provides resources and information to assist local governments and advocates in making the most of their SLFRF funds. SEAP ARP Assistance team's 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

ARP Local Funds Tracker Shows Real-Time Info on Cities' SLFRF Spending

The data through March 31, 2022, illustrates that the work to set priorities for local recovery funds is still very much in progress. In many communities, the majority of most local recovery funds have yet to be allocated. In these places, local government leaders and residents are working to collect input on needs and priorities and to identify investments that will have the most impact. SEAP's new [ARP Local Funds Spending Tracker](#) offers a first look at the status of over 120 cities' SLFRF spending across several Southern states.

The tracker also provides data on specific SLFRF spending choices for those cities that have made some decisions. Any planned SLFRF spending is grouped into 13 categories like spending on public health, affordable housing, business support, or general government. Our interactive tool allows viewers to access this information at either the city or state level.

Most communities (Non-entitlement Units of Local Government (NEUs) with a population of less than 250,000) are not required to report on their SLFRF spending until April 2022. These reports will only reflect actual expenses to date, not forward-looking plans. The tracker identifies real-time SLFRF plans, assesses the status of local decision-making, and visualizes trends in the type of recovery spending underway.

Notes:

Q4-2021 is defined by October - December of 2021.

Q1-2022 is defined by January - March of 2022.



SECOND-QUARTER RESULTS: GEORGIA

Our data currently covers 26 cities in Georgia. These cities have a population of more than 20,000 and collectively will receive \$576 million in SLFRF funds. Our Georgia dataset does not include combined city/county governments, since these jurisdictions have different spending responsibilities than traditional cities. Included in this report are key findings across the state.

Results on Status of SLFRF Decision Making in GA Cities:

Spending decisions in GA are accelerating.

- Most cities (69%) have now made some type of spending decision.
- In the 26 Georgia cities, spending plans are approved for more than half (56%) of funds. However, much of this is attributed to Atlanta (see graph: GA SLFRF Spending Decisions in Large Cities).
- When Atlanta is excluded, the remaining 26 cities have 63% of their recovery funds (\$255 million) unprogrammed. These results indicate that there is still a significant opportunity for community engagement to help set local spending priorities and advocate for equitable SLFRF investments.

Spending decisions in GA are not limited to the first half of funds.

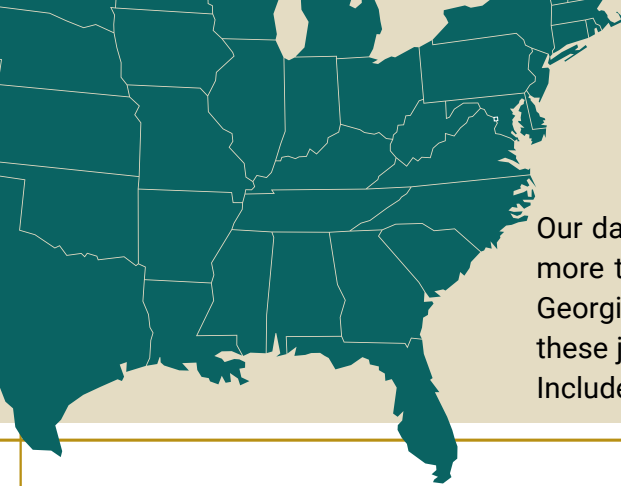
- Of the 18 cities with some SLFRF decisions, 11 cities have plans for the first half of funds.
- Seven Georgia cities have plans for most or all of their total allocation.
- Compared with other states, this indicates that GA communities are further along in their spending plans than is observed more generally.

Large cities are further along in their spending decisions.

- Our initial dataset includes one Georgia city (Atlanta) with a population of more than 250,000. Similar to other states, the large city has more developed SLFRF spending plans than smaller cities.
- In Atlanta, plans are in place for 100% of the total allocation of \$171 million. Notably, Atlanta's spending plan includes an allocation of \$123 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 two-thirds (63%) of the total \$406 million in SLFRF for these smaller communities are allocated in spending plans.

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 56% of planned spending. Other top spending categories are Small Business/Economic Assistance, Water/Sewer Infrastructure, and Capital Expenses.

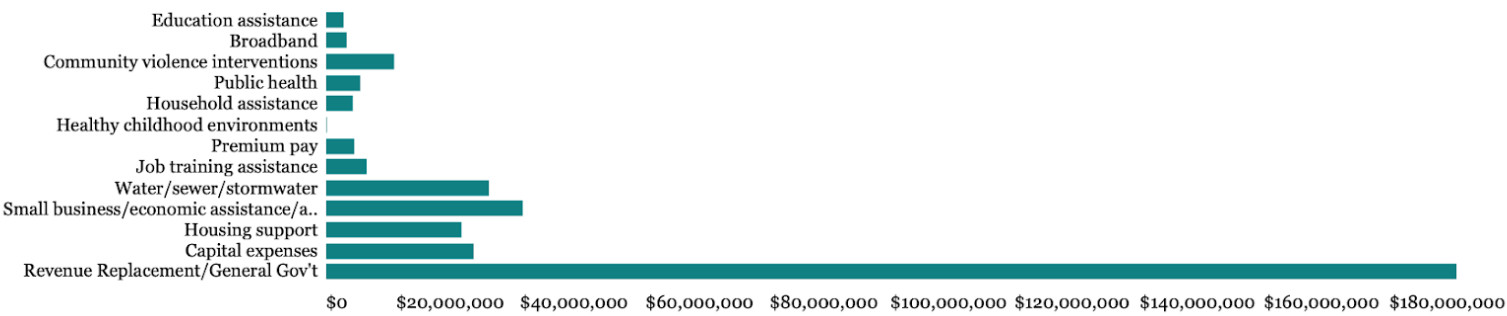


SECOND-QUARTER RESULTS: GEORGIA

Our data currently covers 26 cities in Georgia. These cities have a population of more than 20,000 and collectively will receive \$576 million in SLFRF funds. Our Georgia dataset does not include combined city/county governments, since these jurisdictions have different spending responsibilities than traditional cities. Included in this report are key findings across the state.

GA SLFRF Spending Decisions to Date By Category (26 Cities Represented)

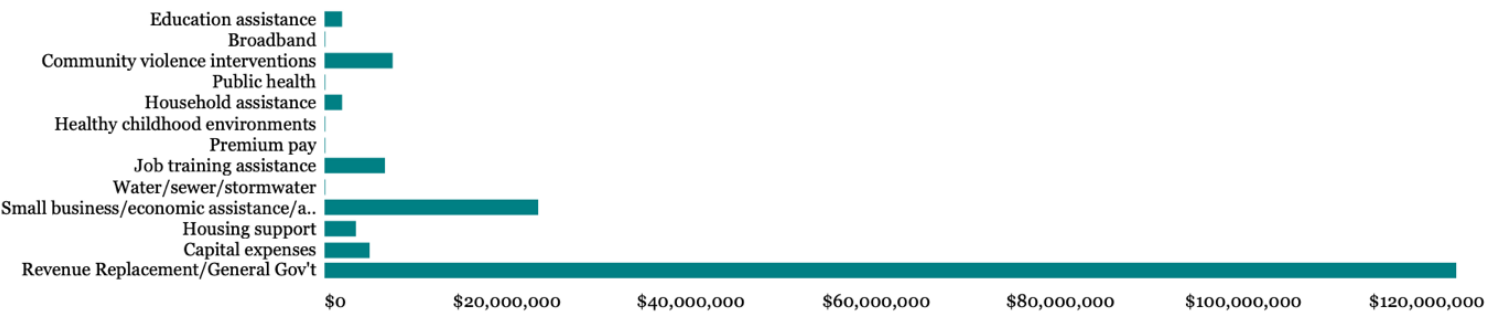
ARP Local Funds Decisions by Category

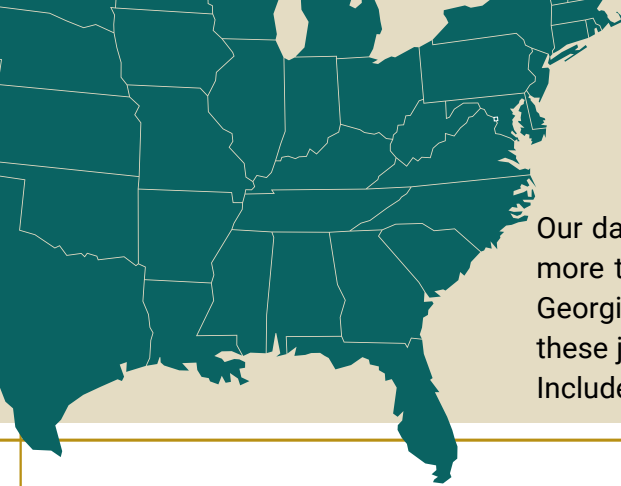


Due to the significantly larger SLFRF allocation for Atlanta, and the fact that Atlanta has made 100% of its spending decisions, it is useful to view the data for other Georgia cities separately from the data for Atlanta. See below for spending differentiated by city population.

GA SLFRF Spending Decisions in Large Cities (Atlanta Only)

ARP Local Funds Decisions by Category



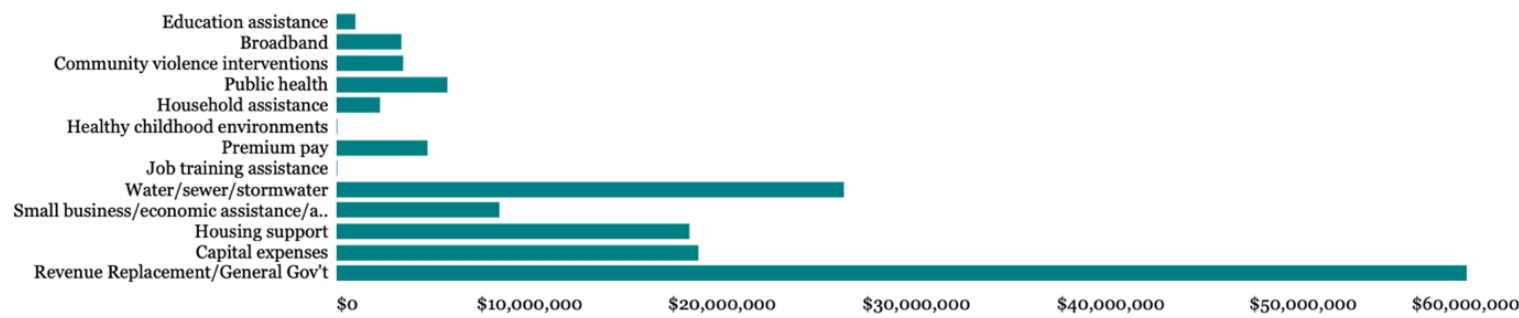


SECOND-QUARTER RESULTS: GEORGIA

Our data currently covers 26 cities in Georgia. These cities have a population of more than 20,000 and collectively will receive \$576 million in SLFRF funds. Our Georgia dataset does not include combined city/county governments, since these jurisdictions have different spending responsibilities than traditional cities. Included in this report are key findings across the state.

GA SLFRF Spending Decisions in Smaller Cities (25 Cities Represented)

ARP Local Funds Decisions by Category



Additional Georgia Findings:

Community outreach on SLFRF spending is not robust.

We found clear examples of SLFRF community engagement in only 8 out of 26 cities. Of the 8 cities that undertook community engagement, 6 used more than one method of outreach.

Evidence of equity-focused spending is increasing in GA.

Evidence of an equity focus within SLFRF spending decisions was indicated by either planned spending within a Qualified Census Tract (QCT) or through clear reference to equity goals in spending decision materials or discussions. These criteria were identified in 7 out of 18 cities with at least some spending decisions.

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