



American Rescue Plan Act

Supplemental Appropriation
Request

September 9, 2021



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TOTAL GRANT TO BELKNAP COUNTY:

\$11,907,389

On June 17th \$5,953,694.50 was received.
The second half is expected in June 2022.

Tonight's request is to appropriate
\$1,391,854. The revenue source is the
ARPA Grant, resulting in NO impact to
county taxes.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Support urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control
- Replace lost revenue for eligible governments to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs
- Support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses
- Address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provide substantial flexibility for each government to meet local needs—including support for households, small businesses, impacted industries, essential workers, and the communities hardest hit by the crisis. These funds can also be used to make necessary investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

USE OF FUNDS

To provide governments with a substantial infusion of resources to meet pandemic response needs and rebuild a stronger, and more equitable economy.

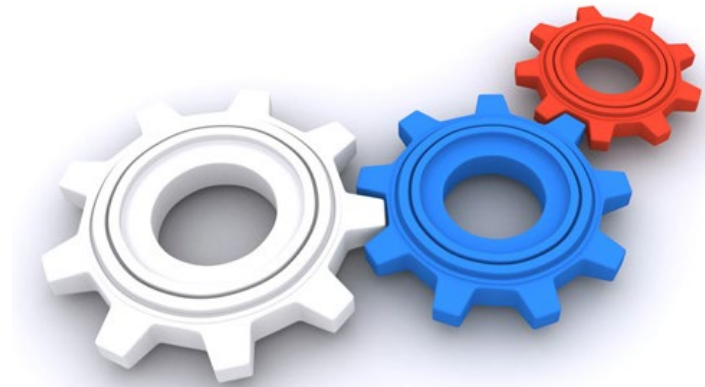
Recipients may use these funds to:

- **Support public health expenditures**
- **Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency**
- **Replace lost public sector revenue**
- **Provide premium pay for essential workers**
- **Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure**

Within these overall categories, recipients have broad flexibility to decide how best to use this funding to meet the needs of their communities.

THE PROCESS:

- The Commissioners considered the highest needs of the county government when considering how to best utilize the funding.
- They solicited input from all operational areas of the County, looking primarily for projects that would otherwise have to be funded by property taxes.
- The Commissioners prioritized projects that would have a lasting impact on the County.
- Each project was submitted on a Capital Project Template for consideration by the Board.
- A public hearing was held to solicit input from the community.



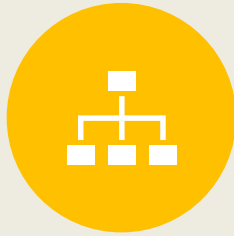
44 Projects Considered:



**Infrastructure &
Facilities**



**Workforce
Development**



**Operations &
Administration**



Community



**Economic
Development**

44 Projects Prioritized:



Urgent Needs



High Priority



Tax Reducing



Opportunities

Urgent Needs:

A supplemental appropriation is being sought tonight, so the Board of Commissioners can begin immediately addressing the most urgent needs of the County.

Six projects are included in this request:

- Compensation Study
- Skylights
- Premium Pay
- Single Audit
- LPN Program
- Communications System

Only the cost that will be incurred in 2021 is being requested at this time. The balance of these projects and projects to be accomplished in 2022 are expected to be addressed during the upcoming budget process.

Compensation Study:

- This is an urgent need due to the morale problems created by compression of our various wage scales. The wage and benefit system was last independently evaluated in 2006 and only partially implemented at that time.
- A classification and compensation audit will point out where positions should be in relation to others and appropriate levels of compensation for each.
- An audit of pay practices, policies, and methodologies will result in a credible pay structure. This is necessary in the highly competitive labor environment that exists today.
- It will also provide a map for maintaining our system well into the future.
- County services cannot be provided without our most important asset; the workforce.
- Another county recently completed a similar project at an approximate cost of \$55,000.

Premium Pay:

This is an urgent need due to the labor shortage and the highly competitive wage environment.

In addition to being one of the four primary purposes of the ARP Act, the Board considers it imperative to increase rates of pay for many county employees and to recognize the dedication of all county employees.

This is a unique opportunity to attempt to attract new employees in an environment where we have been unable to compete in “bidding wars”. If we are able to increase rates for new hires, we will have to increase rates for our existing employees, as well.

This program will allow for a gradual transition from ARPA support to a new classification and compensation plan (see project #8).

- Year 1 will be all ARPA funds,
- Year 2 will be funded with reduced ARPA funds and increased wages,
- 2023 will further reduce reliance on ARPA funds and theoretically see increases in base wages,
- Until 2024 when there will be no ARPA funds used for this purpose.

The request is for \$676,854 to cover the remainder of 2021.

Skylights:

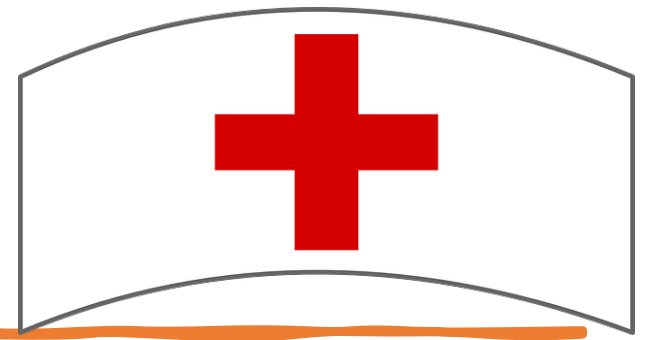
- This is an urgent need because the existing skylights, located in the nursing home, are leaking. The annual Nursing Home Survey Team has identified this situation and is prepared to fine the County if it is not immediately addressed.
- The ARPA grant provides an opportunity to replace the skylights without adding to the county tax burden.
- The estimate for completion is \$100,000.

Federal Audit:

- This was an urgent need because funding was not appropriated during the 2021 budget process. A transfer has since been authorized and the need is no longer *urgent*.
- The required federal audit is an allowable use of the ARPA grant, using these funds would avoid the use of property tax funding.
- The cost is estimated to be \$5000 in 2021 (and then \$5000 in each of the following four years).



LPN PROGRAM:



- This is an urgent need due to the workforce shortage.
- It is imperative that we hire additional nursing staff.
- Providing professional development by paying tuition and other program costs will entice our employees to commit to staying as well as recruiting others to work for The County.
- LPNs fill a valuable role in providing nursing services.
- \$50,000 will cover the tuition and supplies for 4 students.
- Another \$150,000 will be requested for 2022 & 2023.



COMMUNICATION SYSTEM:

- This is an urgent need due to the condition of the existing system.
- It is imperative that we have an operational dispatch and radio communication system.
- A complete upgraded and rebuilt system is planned.
- It is estimated that up to \$500,000 will be required in 2021.
- Total cost estimate is \$1,800,000.



Conclusion:

- We have the opportunity to address many capital projects and community projects that might otherwise be funded with property tax dollars.
- Capital projects to maintain & improve county facilities are top priorities, although we recognize that without adequate & well-trained staff, our services will suffer.
- We will continue to seek other funding opportunities for projects as federal grants continue to be introduced.



Questions

