

UTILIZING THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT TO DRIVE SOLUTIONS ACROSS THE NATION

POWERING LIFE CHANGING COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Three years ago, with the nation still reeling from the catastrophic economic and health impacts of the COVID pandemic, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act into law. In doing so, he brought immediate relief to Americans across the country, helping more than 8 million people stay in their homes, bringing down the cost of healthcare, leading to the lowest child poverty rates in American history, and helping more than 200,000 childcare centers remain open. Beyond that, America has created nearly 14 million new jobs since the law was enacted, and the nation's unemployment rate dropped from 6.1 percent to under 4 percent. In fact, unemployment has remained below 4 percent for 24 consecutive months, a feat not accomplished since 1967.

In addition, the American Rescue Plan Act included the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, investing in state and local governments with flexibility for them to address the immediate public health issues, as well as the biggest challenges facing their communities, so many of which were underscored and exacerbated during COVID. That \$350 billion fund is helping to demonstrate why ARPA is a model for how to respond to a major economic crisis.

Through these investments, communities across the nation continue to experience ARPA's impacts. States and localities are building affordable housing for their most vulnerable residents, creating pathways to good-paying jobs in high demand fields, supporting local small business growth, and connecting more people to high speed internet. In our latest ARPA report, we outline 10 case studies showing progress that communities around the country have made over the past year. These serve as models for effective use of American Rescue Plan Act funds to develop sustainable and direct solutions to the problems facing millions of Americans today.





BOSTON, MA

MAYOR MICHELLE WU

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu has prioritized investing in sustainable career pathways to train and develop the next generation of workers who will tackle the most pressing issues in their communities. In January 2022, Mayor Wu launched [PowerCorps](#), a program aimed at training underemployed Bostonians for green industry careers. This ‘earn and learn’ program pays members to participate in hands-on training and provides them with career readiness support and connections to employers. Everyone in the program's first cohort earned a job or has enrolled in additional training.

Building on that work, Wu [pledged](#) to add 1,000 new biotech and life sciences workers by 2025 to meet workforce demands and uphold the region's prominence in the industry. Funded in part through the federal American Rescue Plan Act, the Boston Sciences Workforce Initiative will offer grants for training programs that connect companies with city residents seeking "good-paying" life sciences jobs and career paths.

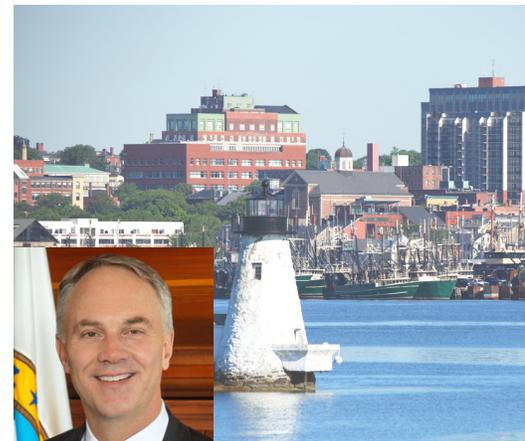
In February, 2024, Wu [announced](#) the recipients of the funding, prioritizing training programs that: secure internships and hiring commitments from life sciences companies; focus on specific in-demand industry positions; and support residents without four-year degrees, particularly workers of color, women, and immigrants, who are currently underrepresented in the field. Additionally, the grants will establish an intermediary organization to provide additional support to workers, training providers, and employers, with the aim of making inclusive employment pathways a permanent fixture in the regional industry. The funding will also address common challenges that workers often face when entering the industry, such as childcare and transportation costs.

“Boston is the home for big ideas that can change the world,” said Wu. “As Mayor, my goal is to help ensure that Boston remains the best place in the world to start and grow a life sciences company—to create life-saving innovations and great jobs for our residents. Through our Life Sciences Workforce Initiative, we’re partnering with industry, training providers, and higher education to connect employers with the talented workforce that lives in our neighborhoods.”

NEW BEDFORD, MA

MAYOR JON MITCHELL

In late 2023, New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell, alongside city and state officials, celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony for the new [NorthStar Early Learning Academy](#), scheduled to open in 2025, to provide more affordable and accessible early education services to over 130 children.



“NorthStar’s new early childhood education center will offer lasting impacts on children and parents alike,” said Mitchell. “Not only will better access to childcare keep more parents in the workplace, but expanded early education programming will help more children be better prepared to start kindergarten.”

Originally conceived as a need in 2017, but unable to move forward without additional financial assistance, Mitchell infused the [NorthStar project with \\$2.5 in ARPA funds](#) to accelerate the projects and leverage additional funding from a mix of private and public entities. When completed, the new facility will also have a commercial kitchen to promote healthy food habits, and will be used as a community gathering place for meetings and other events on evenings and weekends.

Mitchell has made a concerted effort to invest in families and ensure they are able to participate in the local economy. In addition to other investments of [ARPA funds to grow small businesses](#), this investment in early childhood education will help parents participate in the workforce and will benefit the long-term economic well-being, and social health of the community.



KANSAS CITY, MO

MAYOR QUINTON LUCAS

Mayor Quinton Lucas, allocated more than \$15 million from the American Rescue Plan to address the dual issues of homelessness and affordable housing. An additional \$12.5 million has been set aside to establish the City’s [Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#) for affordable housing development, paying special attention to the needs of vulnerable populations. According to the mayor’s office, the ARPA funding represents half of the city’s \$25 million investment in the Housing Trust Fund, which will help the city serve hundreds of residents.

In 2023, Kansas City Council greenlit the second round of the Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board’s recommendations, allocating funds to [12 applicants dedicated to bolstering affordable housing options](#). The selected programs, once implemented, will realize 542 affordable housing units, serving specific demographics and needs in the community. Among these recipients are housing for veterans (55 homes), support for women in recovery from substance use (37 homes), and assistance for individuals grappling with homelessness and mental health challenges (47 homes). Additionally, plans include the establishment of a new navigation center and cottage community (38 homes) tailored to meet the unique housing needs of LGBTQ+ individuals. Furthermore, the initiative aims to safeguard the residences of 232 low-income households by preserving and rehabilitating an existing affordable housing community.

As a consequence of the infusion of ARPA funds, the Housing Trust Fund has awarded two rounds of funding to 26 projects, supporting nearly 1,000 units, including rehabilitation to provide units specifically for seniors and people with disabilities.

"Since becoming mayor, I have been proud to commit \$75 million to Kansas City's Housing Trust Fund, which already has created hundreds of affordable housing units—ensuring stable and dignified housing available to Kansas Citians in all zip codes," said Lucas.

LINCOLN, NE

MAYOR LEIRION GAYLOR BAIRD

The American Rescue Plan Act empowers local leaders to use the funds on initiatives they believe will have the greatest impact in their communities. This encompasses long-term projects that were previously sidelined due to resource limitations and competing interests. In coordination with state officials, Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird has had the opportunity to use ARPA funds to make tremendous progress on the ["Water 2.0: Securing Lincoln's Second Source"](#) project, underscoring the need to begin planning now to ensure that the Lincoln Water System has the capacity to meet the demand of a growing city.



In 2023, Baird officially endorsed her Water Source Advisory Council's [formal recommendation](#) to pursue a wellfield and treatment facility on the Missouri River with a direct transport line to Lincoln. This solution was identified after an extensive review of 14 possible solutions.

With [\\$20 million allocated from ARPA by the state legislature](#), Lincoln is positioned to take the next steps to upgrading its existing infrastructure, enhancing capacity, and laying the groundwork for the transition to a new water system. At the same time, the city will finalize the planning and design to begin construction on the new project.

"This effort will be the largest and singularly most important public works project for Lincoln's growth, health, and vitality into the future," Baird said. "Identifying and securing a second source of water will strengthen our economic and environmental resilience for decades to come."



MANCHESTER, NH

FORMER MAYOR JOYCE CRAIG

In June 2022, Mayor Joyce Craig announced a call for affordable housing proposals to apply for \$3.4 million in investments of federal recovery funds, including from ARPA. This effort built on the \$2.7 million of federal HOME funds already used to develop or renovate 152 affordable housing units in the city, and in October 2023, prior to the end of her term, Craig [approved \\$3.8 million of ARPA and HOME funds for affordable and supportive housing initiatives](#) that will create 188 affordable units, re-open a women's shelter, and continue an effective housing voucher program.

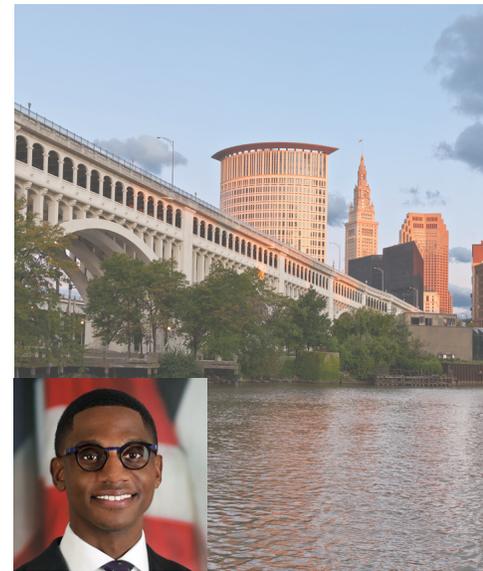
Projects were selected based on their potential to provide the various types of housing and services that residents need. In addition to new construction, the funding extends an ARPA-funded program to incentivize landlords to rent to tenants with Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, and a partnership with a local non-profit to re-open a women's shelter for an additional 2-3 years.

"Housing is the number one issue facing our community, and we are once again taking action to ensure our residents have a safe and affordable place to live," said Craig. "The City of Manchester is prioritizing the development of affordable housing for Manchester families and increasing shelter options for our most vulnerable community members. This latest investment will provide affordable housing and shelter for hundreds of residents."

CLEVELAND, OH

MAYOR JUSTIN BIBB

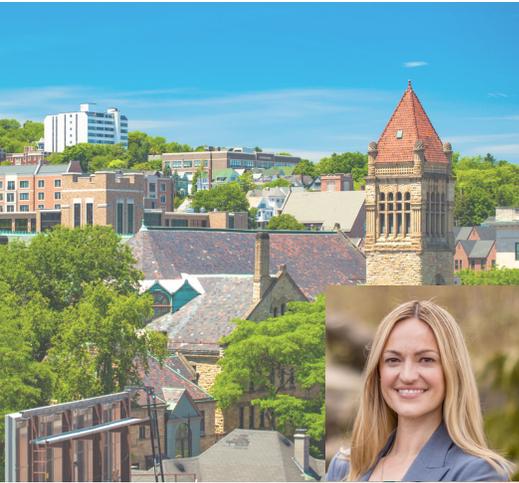
Upon taking office, Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb developed a [Rescue & Transformation Plan](#) outlining his priorities and plans to maximize the use of federal funds, including from ARPA, the Infrastructure Innovation and Jobs Act (IIJA), and other legislation. A central piece of the plan is the Center for Economic Recovery, a strategic policy team focused on guiding ideas for ARPA-funded projects that address the city's most urgent challenges and long-term improvements to the everyday lives of Clevelanders. One of the ten priorities listed in the plan is Violence Prevention & Public Safety, with the goal of investing in proactive intervention and prevention to address the root causes of violence and crime.



Bibb used ARPA for seed funding to enact a pioneering initiative, the [Neighborhood Safety Fund](#), aimed at combating violence in the city. The fund seeks to provide perpetual support for community-driven programs addressing the root causes of violence, spanning from education to mentorship.

"We can't solve it alone here at City Hall," said Bibb. "I believe this first-of-its-kind fund in the nation will really show, not just Cleveland, but the country how to come together as a collective of real support, real alignment, real data-driven collaboration of how to make the right investments in our neighborhoods."

The endowment fund is expected to generate \$13 million in grants over 25 years, with plans to disburse \$1 million annually with two application cycles each year. An advisory committee, including city officials, community representatives, and City Council members, will oversee grant distribution, managed by the Cleveland Foundation.



SCRANTON, PA

MAYOR PAIGE GEBHARDT COGNETTI

In Scranton, Mayor Paige Gebhardt Cognetti has effectively deployed the American Rescue Plan Act to tackle the most pressing issues facing her community. From supporting small businesses and expanding childcare access to investing in community wellness programs, Cognetti has capitalized on the flexible use of ARPA funds to meet the varied and changing needs of her city. Furthermore, after a strong storm in September, 2023 hammered parts of Keyser Valley and North Scranton, Cognetti quickly announced a flood relief fund leveraging ARPA dollars.

The new budget allocation provides up to \$5,000 for eligible households and provides other support to nonprofit organizations and businesses recovering from flood damages. These Disaster Recovery grants can be used for costs related to property repair, appliance repair or replacement, debris removal, insurance deductibles, and moving.

“By reallocating more than \$2.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding, we are providing some financial relief from the September storm and enacting long-term plans to prevent future flooding across the City,” said Gebhardt Cognetti.

Scranton’s original ARPA budget allocated \$17 million in various stormwater management efforts, including funds to form a regional Stormwater Management Authority that would execute cooperative plans across municipalities to prepare for and prevent damages from events like September’s flash flood.

PROVIDENCE, RI

MAYOR BRETT SMILEY

Providence, like many communities across the country, is struggling to keep up with local demands for housing. While Providence has been disproportionately impacted by the state’s housing crisis, Mayor Brett Smiley has responded by investing American Rescue Plan Act dollars into emergency housing solutions and supporting housing development across all price points to meet residents’ needs.



Over the last year, under the leadership of Smiley, Providence has invested \$4.3 million from ARPA to create or extend over 444 emergency shelter beds and is set to invest another \$1.7 million in emergency housing support that is anticipated to benefit over 600 households. This is in addition to the ARPA funding that the city has invested in the Affordable Housing Trust that, all together, will create or preserve over 1,000 units of high-quality affordable housing projects across the city. Providence residents need both immediate support and long-term solutions to address the housing crisis, which is why Smiley has now established the Housing and Human Services Department to better coordinate and streamline the city’s ongoing investments and strategies.



NEWPORT NEWS, VA

MAYOR PHILLIP JONES

In an effort to address the urgent need for affordable childcare options, Newport News Mayor Phillip Jones established ambitious goals to ensure children enter school ready to learn and be successful. As part of the city's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, he prioritized initiatives to increase the availability of high quality early education, particularly for low-income children. To fulfill this strategy, the city is partnering with the [Peake Childhood Center](#) and [Virginia Peninsula Community College \(VPCC\)](#) to develop and operate a fully accredited and licensed early childhood center.

The new spots made available by the center will help alleviate the current crisis in childcare availability, underscored by Peake's current waitlist of more than 400 children, by doubling its capacity to serve 200 children from infant to four years old with tuition determined on a sliding scale based on a family's ability to pay.

The center is part of a mixed-use project that includes housing, commercial space, and an on-site early childhood educator program and classroom space. The cost of the project will be covered almost exclusively by the city's American Rescue Plan Act funds.

Additionally, VPCC will train the next generation of childcare professionals through its [onsite credentialing program](#), allowing VPCC students to train by working directly with children.

The Peake Early Childhood Center will ensure that families who struggle financially have access to a center that addresses early education for their children and supports the broader needs of individual families and the city. In addition to early education's many immediate benefits to parents and long-term impacts on kids, research shows that [a lack of childcare costs businesses \\$4.4 billion annually](#) because parents/guardians must be absent from work to take care of their children.

The new facility is expected to open in the fall of 2024 and, as a result of the initial kickstart by ARPA, has leveraged additional private investments.

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