



# Pandemic Recovery Office

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American Rescue Plan Act  
Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund  
**MULTIPURPOSE COMMUNITY FACILITY PROJECTS**  
**PROGRAM PLAN**

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The State of Rhode Island proposes using \$46.7 million of the State's \$112.3 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) allocation to invest in multipurpose community facility projects that directly and jointly enable work, education, and health monitoring. The State plans to administer a matching grant program under which the state's 39 municipalities can request CPF funds to construct or rehabilitate multipurpose community facilities. This municipal matching grant program is designed to leverage other funds available to cities and towns to help them address critical needs highlighted or exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The multipurpose community centers will be accessible to all Rhode Islanders.

At Governor Daniel J. McKee's direction, the Pandemic Recovery Office (PRO) engaged the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns (the League) in a discussion about possible collaboration and coordinated expenditure of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) including CPF. This engagement helped the State gauge interest for this type of partnership and the extent to which the cities and towns were planning to rehabilitate or construct these multipurpose community facilities. In early December 2021, Governor McKee's staff met virtually with local officials to discuss this partnership opportunity. Several municipalities expressed interest in working with the State to secure funding for such facilities and willingness to spend a share of their own SLFRF allocations to advance projects that would result in multipurpose community facilities to serve their residents.

### Program Objectives:

Governor McKee and Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos launched the Rhode Island 2030 (RI 2030) initiative to set priorities for the state's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. The Governor looked for opportunities where the State could partner with the 39 cities and towns on projects that would align local investments with the following RI 2030 priorities to enable a cohesive pandemic recovery strategy and maximize the one-time federal funding resulting from ARPA:

- Supporting small businesses
  - Investing in our children, families, and early education
  - Strengthening k-12 education
  - Enhancing workforce development and postsecondary education
  - Prioritizing housing
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- Driving economic growth
- Enhancing public health and wellness
- Addressing climate change
- Advancing infrastructure and transportation

Building on the RI 2030 priorities, the Administration has decided that all multipurpose community facilities that receive matching funds must provide targeted programming aimed at achieving the following three goals:

- Improving education and student performance
- Increasing household income through workforce training for better and higher-paying jobs
- Making local communities healthier by helping residents better monitor their physical and mental health

The CPF municipal matching grant program will also:

- Invest in areas that were most impacted by the pandemic
- Support a ground-up approach to local recovery
- Build resilience to the current and any future pandemic
- Invest in assets that help mitigate the learning loss, economic setbacks, and health-care gaps created or worsened by the coronavirus pandemic

### **Target Capital Assets:**

Rhode Island proposes to use the CPF municipal matching grant fund to invest in community assets that are accessible to all community members. Further, these community assets will be designed to offer facilities for programs and services that help address the critical needs of each municipality that were highlighted or exacerbated by the pandemic. This will enable these community anchors to establish, expand, and/or consolidate service programs that directly and jointly enable work, education, and health monitoring in their community into one location.

### **Implementation:**

The Governor's Office, in partnership with the League, engaged in several discussions with municipal leaders to ensure that the intent and criteria of the CPF municipal matching grant fund were shared widely and that all municipalities had the information and materials necessary to participate in the application process. Through municipal forums hosted by the League, PRO invited all interested municipalities to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) form confirming their interest in accessing the CPF municipal matching grant fund. The LOI also asked municipalities to share project information such as: (1) project type, status, and cost, (2) amount of state-funding requested; (3) alignment of project with U.S. Treasury eligibility criteria; and (4) commitment to support the programmatic offerings at these facilities for a minimum of five years after project completion.

PRO will ensure that all approved projects comply with U.S. Treasury requirements and guidelines for Multi-Purpose Community Facility Projects, as well as the Administration's goals, identified above. Awards will be allocated to eligible projects using a funding formula based on the municipalities' population and per capita income. The precise formula will be dependent on the total number and cost of approved projects with the goal of equitably distributing funding for necessary projects throughout the state while also prioritizing projects in low-income areas.

#### **PROGRAM TIMELINE AND MILESTONES**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>MILESTONES</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>JULY</b>	Application for CPF municipal matching grant program – Letter of Intent
	<b>AUGUST</b>	Develop project proposals for all eligible multipurpose community facilities
	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	Submit CPF multipurpose community facility project program plan
	<b>OCTOBER - NOVEMBER</b>	Presumed approval by U.S. Treasury
<b>2023</b>	<b>JANUARY</b>	Notice of grant award to qualifying municipalities
	<b>MARCH</b>	Architecture and Engineering Services (A&E): procurement complete
	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	A&E: 50% complete
<b>2024</b>	<b>MARCH</b>	A&E: 100% complete
	<b>JUNE</b>	Construction and all related services: procurement complete
	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	Construction commenced
<b>2025</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	Construction: 50% complete
<b>2026</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	Construction: 95% complete
	<b>NOVEMBER</b>	Beneficial Use and Occupancy. Projects substantially complete. Programs and services enabling work, education, health monitoring fully operational.
	<b>DECEMBER</b>	Final invoices received and paid through PRO.

#### **PROGRAM WEBSITE**

The State's CPF webpage is under development and will go live following project approval by Treasury.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Work:**

Eligible multipurpose community facility projects will provide programming aimed at increasing local household incomes through training for new and better jobs and will directly enable work across Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns.

Based on preliminary feedback from the municipalities, examples of how eligible multipurpose community facility projects would directly enable work are:

- providing dedicated Workforce Development staff who can facilitate access to job opportunities through partnerships with local organizations and agencies such as: the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Rhode Island Commerce Department, Rhode Island College, Community College of Rhode Island, the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, the Rhode Island Builders Association, and the Veteran's Service agencies;
- hosting job fairs and providing coaching and mentoring support to help aspiring candidates find and secure jobs that align with their skills and qualifications;
- providing trainings and certifications for the local workforce, such as certification opportunities for home health care aides and certified nursing assistants or TIPS certification for members of the town's restaurant community;
- providing compliance training, cybersecurity, safety training, management training, workforce development, and end-user trainings which will allow existing public employees to maintain or improve their employment prospects.

Additionally, across the state, communities have identified the lack of access to computers, broadband internet, Wi-Fi, printers, and space to conduct virtual job interviews as a significant barrier to people of all ages entering the workforce. Eligible projects may also include dedicated space in their multipurpose community facility to provide these resources supplemented by digital literacy training for computer skills, Microsoft Office and e-reader skills, and access to online job resources and employment databases.

Eligible multipurpose community facility projects will align with the RI 2030 objectives and U.S. Treasury requirements and will span a variety of initiatives and programs to directly enable work across municipalities in Rhode Island, each responding to the critical needs identified by that community.

### **Education:**

Eligible multipurpose community facility projects will provide programming aimed at improving education and student performance, including high-quality out of school time and early learning programming.

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) examined the impacts of COVID-19 on student participation and learning. RIDE's Learning, Equity, and Accelerated Pathways (LEAP)

task force report from April 2022 assessed lower performance in comparison to performance in 2019 at all grade levels. While all students have been affected by the pandemic, reading and math performance for students of color, differently abled students, multilingual learners, and students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch have been most impacted by the pandemic. Eligible multipurpose community facility projects will establish initiatives and programs to address educational needs in their respective communities based on their specific needs.

Based on preliminary feedback from the municipalities, examples of how eligible multipurpose community facility projects would address pandemic-related learning loss are:

- Summer Brain Gain Program: Common Core aligned modules for all school students;
- DIY STEM Program aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS);
- Summer Food Service Program as a tool to combat the summer learning loss often experienced in low-income communities, by incorporating fun, educational programmatic content through partnering with local organizations;
- Early Learning Center Program to provide early education and care;
- homework clubs for school age children, GED/adult education classes, and programs to help students access educational resources and content supported by after-school and out-of-school coordinators, tutors, and mentors.

Additionally, eligible projects may also provide free broadband and Wi-Fi internet access along with dedicated computer labs, desks, and private rooms to allow students and community members to participate in online educational activities, such as remote classes and research activities.

### **Health Monitoring:**

The COVID-19 pandemic was a public health emergency that overwhelmed and stalled the healthcare infrastructure of the state. As a result, Rhode Islanders were not able to access regular preventative and wellness care. Eligible multipurpose community facility projects will help make local communities healthier as they emerge from the pandemic, including by offering health clinics and other resources to help residents better monitor their physical and mental health.

Based on preliminary feedback from the municipalities, examples of how eligible multipurpose community facility projects would directly enable health monitoring are:

- provide on-site testing/vaccination services, health screenings, healthy diet and lifestyle seminars, and food distribution (in partnership with Rhode Island Community Food Bank);
- help mitigate the high rates of asthma, obesity, and lead poisoning, with a particular focus on low-income communities and children, through pediatric health screening, treatment resources, and other supports geared towards these conditions;
- provide resources to older adults to address chronic health issues such as high cholesterol, hypertension, depression and anxiety through programming such as blood pressure clinics, nutrition classes, aerobics for seniors, yoga, and general wellness clinics.

Municipalities have indicated an ability to leverage established relationships with local healthcare partners and providers, including URI Pharmacy and the College of Health Sciences, WellOne, and CVS.

Additionally, eligible projects may also provide access to free broadband and Wi-Fi internet access, a computer lab, and private rooms to enable participation in online tele-health visits to directly enable health monitoring across the state.

**Critical Need:**

The communities to be served by the multipurpose community facilities municipal matching grant fund are those most vulnerable to the COVID-19 and future pandemics. Investing in these projects will allow for a robust infrastructure of community facilities located across the state that can bolster each municipality against future pandemics. More than half of the initially proposed projects lie in low-income areas that experienced greater gaps in learning, jobs, and healthcare than the rest of the state. Three communities with the lowest per capita income in the state would each be able to build a new multipurpose community facility. In some of the most populated communities, the facilities would help consolidate and disseminate services that are currently not equitably accessible to all community members.

**Quantitative And Qualitative Data:**

As part of the initial application process, municipalities have gathered and continue to collect data through surveys, workshops, community meetings, Mayors' town halls, etc. In addition to the local information, data collection and established reporting performed by the relevant State agencies helped determine the impact of the pandemic on various essential programs and services.

- Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) examined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and economic growth.
- Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) examined the impact of COVID-19 on student participation and learning in Rhode Island. RIDE's Learning Equity and Accelerated Pathways (LEAP) task force report from April 2022 assessed lower performance in comparison to performance in 2019 at all grade levels.
- Rhode Island's Department of Health (RIDOH) examined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on private practice and health centers whose capacity was drastically reduced making it challenging to provide care for vulnerable patients, including those with behavioral health and substance use disorders and those with dental disease related to their conditions.

The areas where these services would be most impactful were identified using U.S. Census and U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development data as well as data and maps provided by the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning. Other news sources and organizations' studies and reports also contributed to developing a more detailed picture of the pandemic's impact on Rhode Island communities, such as:

- Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook
- Office of Healthy Aging (RIDOH)

- The New York Times' Coronavirus interactive tracker webpage
- Landmark Medical Center's 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment
- Safer Institute's The Health of Urban Rhode Island: Assets and Opportunities

### **Community Engagement and Public Participation**

The McKee-Matos administration launched the RI 2030 initiative to set priorities for the state's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. These priorities were developed through community conversations and data collection aimed at compiling a comprehensive picture of the state's needs and aspirations. This process included virtual community conversations on key topics including discussions with a panel of diverse Rhode Island community stakeholders, keynote speakers with national expertise on the topic, and members of the General Assembly. These conversations helped the administration identify the RI 2030 priorities that in-turn informed the objectives for the Capital Projects Fund municipal matching grant fund.

As part of his budget process, Governor McKee looked for opportunities where the State could partner with the 39 cities and towns on various projects, so the state and the cities and towns could get the most out of the one-time federal funding that resulted from ARPA. In November 2021, the Governor's Office requested that PRO engage the League in a discussion about possible collaboration and coordinated expenditure of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) including CPF. The feedback from the cities and towns showed that there was demand for this partnership opportunity and within a few weeks from the initial discussions, several cities and towns expressed interest in pursuing a partnership with the State on this type of facility.

PRO conducted several meetings and one-on-one discussions with municipalities to help them apply for the CPF matching grant and begin developing multipurpose community facility program plans in alignment with U.S. Treasury requirements.



**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

**Compliance:** The Pandemic Recovery Office (PRO) sits within the Department of Administration at the State of Rhode Island and serves as the central office for policy coordination and compliance for federal COVID-19 stimulus funds, including but not limited to those provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Office has a dedicated Capital Projects Fund Administrator and will engage additional project management resources to provide technical assistance to the municipalities and ensure compliance with award requirements. Once the program is approved by U.S. Treasury, PRO will develop sub-award agreements with each eligible municipality that will serve as an enforcement tool for Treasury requirements and grant regulations. PRO will conduct bi-weekly check-ins, monthly updates, and quarterly site-visits in the first year after the award is made. In subsequent years, PRO will conduct monthly check-ins, bi-monthly updates, and quarterly site visits to ensure that all funded projects are appropriately monitored and in compliance.

**Community Engagement and Participation:** The State has engaged municipal leaders in ongoing dialogue through the League and will continue to engage them throughout the life of the CPF matching grant. The leaders and local administrations of municipalities with eligible projects will be required to demonstrate community outreach and engagement through surveys, workshops, town hall meetings, etc. to ensure that the multipurpose community facilities have been vetted and endorsed by diverse and representative stakeholders of their communities.

**Project Budget:**

<b>Administrative Costs</b>	<b>CY22</b>	<b>CY23</b>	<b>CY24</b>	<b>CY25</b>	<b>CY26</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Grant Administration	\$104,427	\$200,695	\$215,337	\$219,934	\$226,636	\$967,029
Technical Assistance	\$0	\$200,000	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$550,000
Administrative support to sub-recipients	\$0	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$104,427</b>	<b>\$400,695</b>	<b>\$365,337</b>	<b>\$319,934</b>	<b>\$326,636</b>	<b>\$2,017,029</b>

<b>Project Costs</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$11,680,047</b>	<b>\$23,360,095</b>	<b>\$5,840,024</b>	<b>\$5,840,024</b>	<b>\$46,720,189</b>
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