



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

# **ARPA Needs Assessment and Community Engagement Process**

*September 13, 2021*

# ARPA Funds Overview

- On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319), also known as ARPA, into law.
- \$1.9 trillion package is intended to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, including the public health and economic impacts.
- The American Rescue Plan Act allocates hundreds of billions of dollars for public health and vaccines, assistance for vulnerable populations, education and housing stabilization, economic recovery assistance and direct assistance for families and individuals.



# ARPA Funds Overview

- Counties will receive direct federal aid  
*(Acton will receive a portion from Middlesex County)*
- Cities with populations below 50,000 receive funds based on each jurisdiction's percentage of the state's population, not exceeding 75 percent of its most recent budget as of January 27, 2020
- Funds are available until December 31, 2024



# Acton ARPA Funds

- Municipal Allocation: \$2,476,667
- County Reallocation: \$4,596,066
- Total Funding: \$7,072,733

ARPA Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Allocations by Municipality

| Municipality | Population | County    | Functional County? | CD1 | CD2 | US Treasury Classification | DPH Hardest Hit Community | Municipal Allocation | Municipal Per Capita Amount | County Reallocation | County Reallocation Per Capita | Total Amount |
|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|-----|-----|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Abington     | 16,668     | Plymouth  | Y                  | 8th |     | Nonentitlement Unit        | N                         | 1,744,615            | 105                         | 0                   | 0                              | 1,744,615    |
| Acton        | 23,662     | Middlesex | N                  | 3rd |     | Nonentitlement Unit        | N                         | 2,476,667            | 105                         | 4,596,066           | 194                            | 7,072,733    |
| Acushnet     | 10,625     | Bristol   | Y                  | 9th |     | Nonentitlement Unit        | N                         | 1,112,103            | 105                         | 0                   | 0                              | 1,112,103    |
| Adams        | 8,010      | Berkshire | N                  | 1st |     | Nonentitlement Unit        | N                         | 838,395              | 105                         | 1,555,849           | 194                            | 2,394,244    |
| Agawam       | 28,613     | Hampden   | N                  | 1st |     | Nonentitlement Unit        | N                         | 2,994,881            | 105                         | 5,557,740           | 194                            | 8,552,621    |
| Alford       | 488        | Berkshire | N                  | 1st |     | Nonentitlement Unit        | N                         | 51,078               | 105                         | 94,788              | 194                            | 145,867      |
| Amesbury     | 17,532     | Essex     | N                  | 6th |     | Nonentitlement Unit        | N                         | 1,835,049            | 105                         | 3,405,385           | 194                            | 5,240,435    |



# ARPA Funding Categories



## Support Public Health Response

Fund COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff



## Replace Public Sector Revenue Loss

Use funds to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic



## Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Make necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water and invest in wastewater and stormwater infrastructure



## Address Negative Economic Impacts

Respond to economic harms to workers, families, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector



## Premium Pay for Essential Workers

Offer additional support to those who have and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors



## Broadband Infrastructure

Make necessary investments to provide unserved or underserved locations with new or expanded broadband access





# ARPA Funding Categories

## Support Public Health Response

- **Services to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19**, including vaccination, medical expenses, testing, contact tracing, quarantine costs, capacity enhancements, and many related activities
- **Behavioral healthcare services**, including mental health or substance misuse treatment, crisis intervention, and related services
- **Payroll and covered benefits** for public health, healthcare, human services, and public safety staff to the extent that they work on the COVID-19 response

## Replace Public Sector Revenue Loss

- **Ensure continuity of vital government services** by filling budget shortfalls
- **Revenue loss is calculated** relative to the expected trend, beginning with the last full fiscal year pre-pandemic and adjusted annually for growth
- **Recipients may re-calculate revenue loss** at multiple points during the program, supporting those entities that experience revenue loss with a lag

## Address Negative Economic Impacts

- **Deliver assistance to workers and families**, including support for unemployed workers, aid to households, and survivor's benefits for families of COVID-19 victims
- **Support small businesses** with loans, grants, in-kind assistance, and counseling programs
- **Speed the recovery of impacted industries**, including the tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors
- **Rebuild public sector capacity** by rehiring staff, replenishing state unemployment insurance funds, and implementing economic relief programs

## Premium Pay for Essential Workers

- **Provide premium pay to essential workers**, both directly and through grants to third-party employers
- **Prioritize low- and moderate-income workers**, who face the greatest mismatch between employment-related health risks and compensation
- **Key sectors include** healthcare, grocery and food services, education, childcare, sanitation, and transit
- **Must be fully additive** to a worker's wages



# ARPA Funding Categories



## Water & Sewer Infrastructure

- **Includes improvements to infrastructure**, such as building or upgrading facilities and transmission, distribution, and storage systems
- **Eligible uses aligned to Environmental Protection Agency project categories** for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund



## Equity-Focused Services

- **Additional flexibility for the hardest-hit communities and families** to address health disparities, invest in housing, address educational disparities, and promote healthy childhood environments
- **Broadly applicable** to Qualified Census Tracts, other disproportionately impacted areas, and when provided by Tribal governments



## Broadband Infrastructure

- **Focus on households and businesses** without access to broadband and those with connections that do not provide minimally acceptable speeds
- **Fund projects that deliver reliable service** with minimum 100 Mbps download / 100 Mbps upload speeds unless impracticable
- **Complement broadband investments** made through the Capital Projects Fund



## Ineligible Uses

- **Changes that reduce net tax revenue** must not be offset with American Rescue Plan funds
- **Extraordinary payments into a pension fund** are a prohibited use of this funding
- **Other restrictions apply** to eligible uses



# Needs Assessment



## Town of Acton Select Board Goals

*Established August 2, 2021*

### SHORT-TERM GOALS

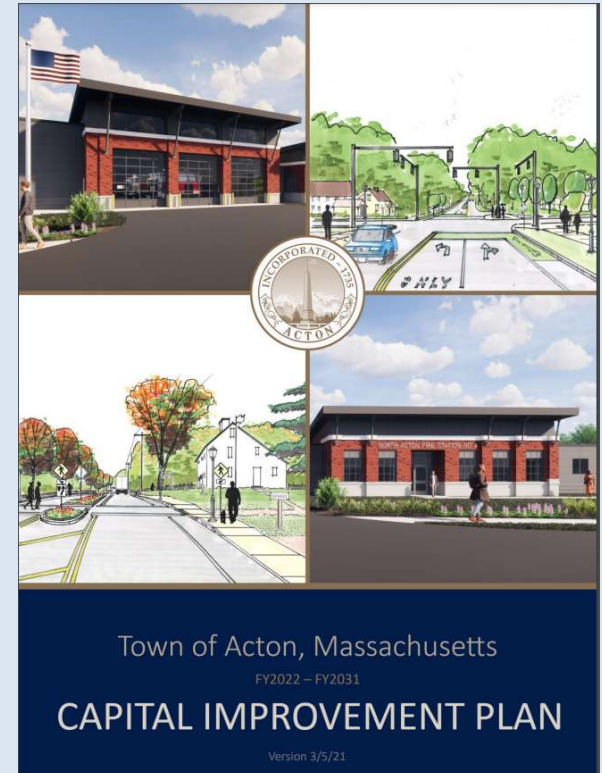
1. Decide on a concept and transform the Asa Parlin House property into an indoor/outdoor amenity for cultural programs and events
2. Consider establishing an affordable housing rehab trust by April 2022 Annual Town Meeting
3. Establish a Youth Advisory Committee
4. Evaluate the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission recommendations and implement policy and staff changes
5. Find a way to extend the rent relief program
6. Form a Department of Public Works Building Study Committee, inclusive of the Department of Public Works building, Transfer Station and Recycling Center Complex
7. Determine the process for allocating the American Rescue Plan Act funds and incorporating community engagement in the process
8. Form a Social Services Committee that can explore a team of therapists and social workers in an effort to increase mental health resources available to the community
9. Complete Phase One for Gardner Field Playground
10. Work with the Acton Dog Park Committee and the Acton Housing Authority on design and construction of a dog park and a cohesive design for the whole site
11. Implement changes for town elections and town meeting, adjusting dates, consider when people are sworn in after elections, and other town meeting/elections issues

### LONG-TERM GOALS

1. Expand the Department of Public Works tree crew
2. Improve the Town website
3. Increase sidewalk construction
4. Enhance funding for Open Space
5. Review all bylaws with sustainability and equity goals in mind
6. Continue exploring ways to make Acton more business-friendly

Stakeholder  
Engagement

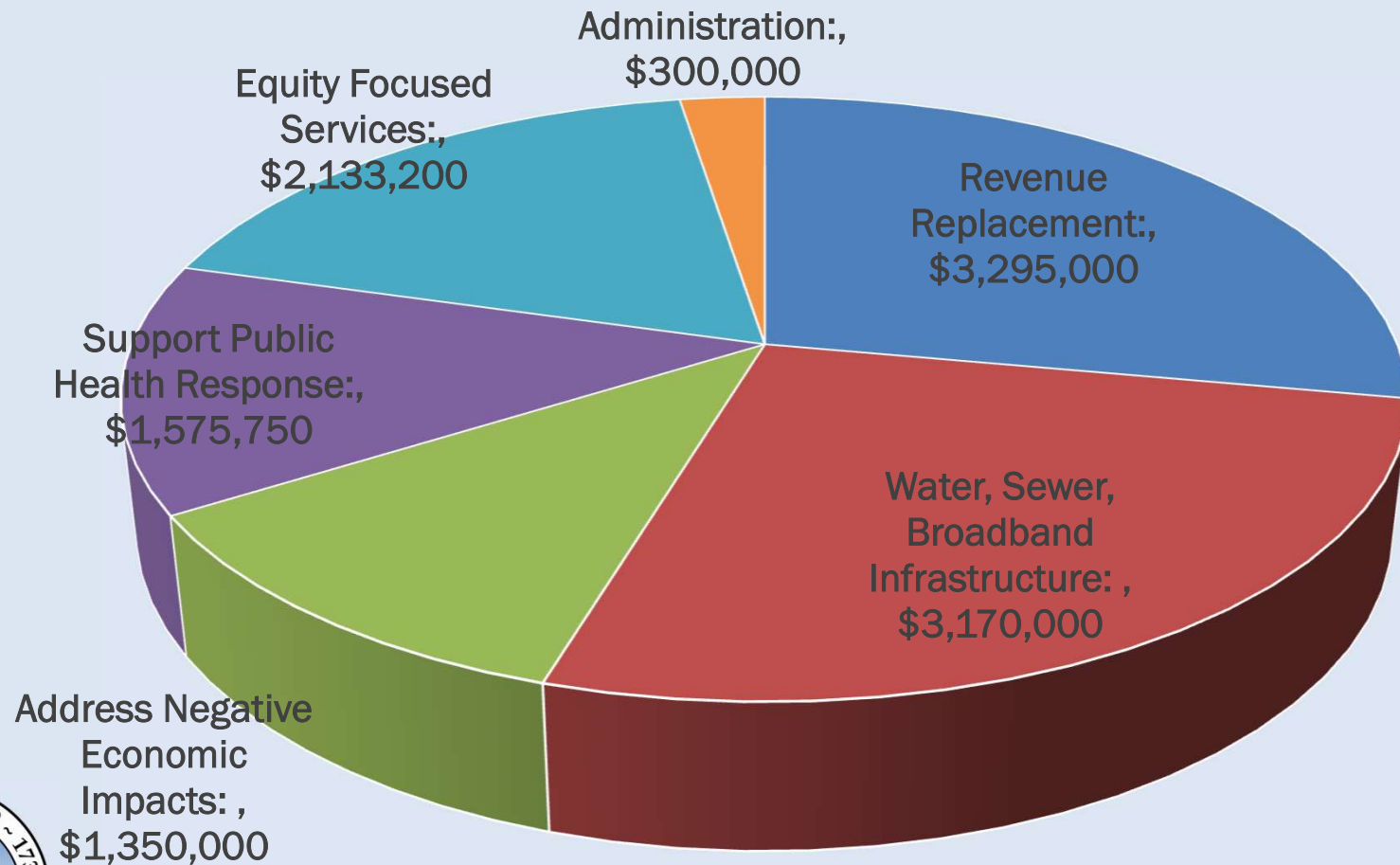
Internal  
Working  
Group



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# ARPA Investment Priorities Identified in Needs Assessment by Category



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# Projects Identified in Needs Assessment

## Revenue Replacement *\$3,295,000 in needs identified*

- P1** Replace revenue related to FY21 local receipt shortfall to deliver services in FY22 \$400,000
- P2** Convert the historic Asa Parlin House and surrounding infrastructure into an ADA compliant Community/Cultural center \$1,000,000
- P3** Telephone system upgrade to integrate with new school (ABRSD Request) \$595,000
- P4** Replace revenue related to FY21 Kindergarten/Extended Day revenue shortfalls (ABRSD Request) \$425,000
- P5** NARA accessibility improvements such as replacing the damaged boardwalk at NARA park with an ADA compliant and new ADA compliant walkways \$400,000
- P6** Funding to acquire new open spaces and improve existing open spaces \$250,000
- P7** Town wide Sustainability initiatives such as an electric vehicle pilot program for public safety, constructing solar arrays, and energy efficiency improvements to public facilities to advance efforts towards achieving net zero carbon emissions \$200,000
- P8** Virtual and hybrid meeting technology support \$25,000



# Projects Identified in Needs Assessment

## Water, Sewer, Broadband Infrastructure *\$3,170,000 in needs identified*

- P9** Construct a sewer main extension to the Acton Housing Authority site at 364 Main Street \$2,000,000
- P10** Stormwater improvements at Fort Pond Brook related to the River Street dam \$600,000
- P11** Conduct a sewer feasibility study along the Great Road Corridor to support existing businesses and create new economic development opportunities in this commercial district \$400,000
- P12** Acton Water District water main upgrades in Kelley's Corner (AWD Request) \$100,000
- P13** Extend broadband and utility service along Quarry Road \$70,000



# Projects Identified in Needs Assessment

## Address Negative Economic Impacts *\$1,350,000 in needs identified*

- P14** A new online permitting system to streamline the building, health, conservation and planning permits to improve services and transparency \$450,000
- P15** Streetscape and parking improvements along Massachusetts Avenue and improvements to the Gardner Field in West Acton Center to help small businesses attract and retain customers \$400,000
- P16** Design and construct community recreation facilities including a dog park at 362 Main Street \$200,000
- P17** Forgivable loan programs to make it easier and more cost effective for residents and businesses to implement energy efficiency upgrades and reduce carbon emissions \$100,000
- P18** Implement recommendations from the Local Rapid Recovery Program to support businesses along the Great Road Corridor, including wayfinding signage and shared marketing services \$100,000
- P19** Provide financial incentives for businesses to install EV chargers in locations that would attract customers to frequent local businesses \$40,000
- P20** Update the existing Complete Street Plan to improve infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists \$35,000
- P21** Develop a public art plan and include public art in community spaces to help encourage pedestrian activity in business districts \$25,000





# Projects Identified in Needs Assessment

## Support Public Health Response *\$1,575,750 in needs identified*

- P22** Improve air quality in public facilities by improving HVAC systems \$500,000
- P23** A new full-time licensed social worker position to support Acton residents and help oversee social service programs \$300,000
- P24** Permanent Outdoor Learning Spaces for 6 schools (ABRSD Request) \$255,000
- P25** Public health services and supplies in response to the Covid19 pandemic (vaccine, PPE, testing, contact tracing, etc.) \$200,000
- P26** Covid Mitigation Measures such as Graduation, AP Exams, Tents, Tables, Chairs for April 2021 Return to School (ABRSD Request) \$102,000
- P27** Social Emotional Screener & Curriculum (ABRSD Request) \$63,750
- P28** Expand and improve outreach to increase access to public health information and services \$50,000
- P29** Expand curbside services at the Memorial Library and West Acton Citizen's Library to enhance literacy opportunities \$40,000
- P30** Create an outdoor meeting space next to Town Hall to facilitate outdoor customer service interactions and staff meetings \$40,000
- P31** Study to analyze the Town's COVID-19 response and create a best practices manual for emergency management response \$25,000





# Projects Identified in Needs Assessment

## Equity Focused Services *\$2,133,200 in needs identified*

- P32** Construct and rehabilitate affordable housing units in Acton for individuals and families \$500,000
- P33** Qualifying grants for tuition free ADK based on income level over 3 years (ABRSD Request) \$510,000
- P34** Qualifying grants for tuition free Extended Day Programming based on income level over 3 years (ABRSD Request) \$510,000
- P35** Emergency Rental Assistance program to assist households that are unable to pay rent \$300,000
- P36** Provide free After School Tutoring Program over 2 years (ABRSD Request) \$85,000
- P37** Community Food Program Mar-Jun 2021 (ABRSD Request) \$78,200
- P38** Childcare subsidy program to assist qualified families at or below 80% of the Area Median Income \$75,000
- P39** Workshops and programs related to mental health, equity and empathy \$25,000
- P40** Develop a youth council program to facilitate youth engagement in local government and provide expanded opportunities for participation in decisions being made at the local level \$25,000
- P41** Pilot program to provide a universal access program that ensures equal access to public recreational facilities by providing specialized equipment, programs and techniques \$25,000



# Projects Identified in Needs Assessment

## Premium Pay

No proposals for this category

## Administration *\$300,000 in needs identified*

**P42** Grant Administrator/Procurement Officer to support the management of the ARPA funding and other federal and state grant programs for three years *\$275,000*

**P43** financial consulting and audit services to ensure compliance *\$25,000*



# Proposed ARPA Process

1. Select Board Presentation on September 13, 2021
  - Community engagement process
  - results of the needs assessment from local stakeholders and an outline of a draft investment priorities
  - opening of public comment period
2. Public comments may be submitted in writing via email to [sb@actonma.gov](mailto:sb@actonma.gov) or online using this survey form before October 13, 2021
3. Presentation of ARPA draft investment priorities to the Acton Finance Committee on September 14, 2021



# Proposed ARPA Process

4. Virtual Public Forum hosted by the Select Board on September 20, 2021 at 7:30PM
5. The Select Board will review updated ARPA investment priorities (incorporating initial community feedback) at its meeting on October 4, 2021 for further comment and consideration
6. Select Board consider final ARPA investment priorities to the Board at its meeting on October 18, 2021



# Proposed ARPA Public Meetings

Proposed Public Comment Period Sept. 13 through Oct. 13

**Sept. 13  
2021**

**Select Board  
Presentation  
7:30pm**

**Sept. 14  
2021**

**Finance Committee  
Presentation  
7:30pm**

**Sept. 20  
2021**

**Listening Session  
Public input during  
Select Board Meeting  
7:30pm**

**Oct. 4  
2021**

**Select Board  
Review and discuss  
updated priorities  
7:30pm**

**Oct. 18  
2021**

**Select Board  
Consider final  
recommended  
Investment priorities  
7:30pm**



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# Next Steps

1. Select Board vote to formally accept the ARPA funding
2. Select Board consider endorsing proposed community engagement process to determine how to invest the remaining funds
3. Select Board to consider request to endorse the proposal to allocate \$400,000 for revenue replacement in FY22



# \$400k Revenue Replacement

- DOR requires that we budget revenue based on prior year actual
- FY22 financial plan included level funded local receipts revenue from FY21
- \$400k shortfall in the collection of local receipts for FY21 (did not impact FY21 operations)
- FY22 revenue budget will need to be adjusted by \$400k
- ARPA funds designed to offset these revenue deficits



# Next Steps

1. Select Board vote to formally accept the ARPA funding
2. Select Board to consider request to endorse the proposal to allocate \$400,000 for revenue replacement in FY22
3. Select Board consider endorsing proposed community engagement process to determine how to invest the remaining funds

