



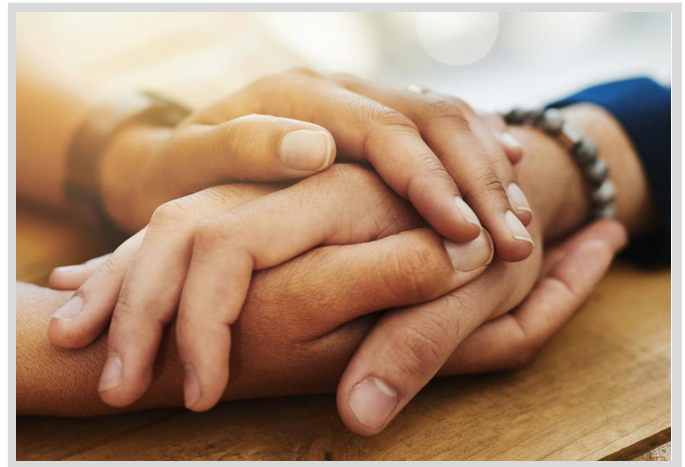
# Federal Advocacy **BRIEF**

APRIL 2021 • ISSUE NO. 1

## The Promise of the American Rescue Plan

### Funding Opportunities to Reduce Violence, Meet the Needs of Underserved Communities, and Promote a Vision for Shared Safety

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) presents an unprecedented opportunity to invest in public-health programming and infrastructure that can transform our country's response to violence and diminish its costly and harmful overreliance on the criminal justice system. To realize this opportunity, advocates, providers, community leaders, policy makers, and elected officials throughout the country will need to work together to ensure that the implementation of the ARP fulfills its promise. This report provides a framework for this effort.



## **Key Resources** in this Document

### → **Outline of Funding Opportunities**

The first section gives an overview of the ARP, explaining its differences from past stimulus acts and typical federal grant programs. In summary, significant amounts of resources are available for community-based service providers who are currently under-resourced to deliver key public safety and healing services, and government leaders have wide discretion over how these resources will be administered.

### → **Key Advocacy Targets to Access Funding and the Need for Advocacy**

The second section discusses the critical needs that ARP advocacy must address.

### → **Key Tools to Use in Advocacy—Strategies, Case Study, and Resources**

Finally, the third section concludes with an outline of strategies and resources for federal, state, and local advocacy efforts. ASJ also provides an Appendix with useful outreach tools to access these funds.

# Outline of Funding Opportunities

## *What is the American Rescue Plan and how is it different from past stimulus and typical federal grant programs?*

Signed into law on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocates \$1.9 trillion to provide a broad range of assistance and programming to help people recover from the harms caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, Congress has passed multiple stimulus bills, beginning with the \$831 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) in March of 2020; and the \$900 billion of relief that was part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act that was passed in December of 2020.

Stimulus bills typically provide both discretionary financial support to states and also augment existing federal funding streams that continually support a wide range of state and local government activities, from economic development to criminal justice and public safety.



**The emphasis of the ARP is substantial increased investments into sorely needed public health improvements.**

The ARP is similar to these past stimulus acts, but takes a different approach to public safety. These past stimulus acts collectively allocated approximately \$6 billion to support the operations of the criminal justice system, largely through the augmentation of federal formula-based Department of Justice grant programs that have, for decades, been a main source of funding for law and criminal justice operations.<sup>1</sup> Augmenting funding for these programs essentially locks in a law enforcement-based approach to public safety and doubles down on what has been the dominant federal response to community violence since the passage of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.<sup>2</sup> Remarkably, the ARP does not contain any of the typical federal funding augmentations for these criminal justice grant programs. Indeed, nothing in the ARP is earmarked for expanded

federal investments in police, prosecutors, jails, or prisons. That is a first. Instead, the emphasis of the ARP is substantial increased investments into sorely needed public health improvements. That's a major opportunity—using a public health framework to address the harms caused and compounded by the pandemic can improve the entire nation's approach to public safety, as well as allow states to significantly

<sup>1</sup> ARRA allocated almost \$4 billion and CARES approximately \$1 billion to the Department of Justice (DOJ). While the COVID-19 relief part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act did not contain additional investments in the criminal justice system, the omnibus appropriation provisions included a more than \$1 billion increase to DOJ, including \$107 million for law enforcement assistance grants, above the federal fiscal year 2020 enacted level.

<sup>2</sup> In recent years, scholars have published trenchant research on the relationship between federal community grant-making and the history of tough-on-crime politics and policy. In particular, see Jonathan Simon, *Governing Through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

expand public health approaches to stop cycles of crime and violence. By giving significant discretion to government agencies to use federal funds to improve public health, the ARP can provide strong support for state and local responses to safety outside of the criminal justice system.

Alongside direct cash assistance and other forms of recovery and relief, the ARP allocates resources to federal agencies and state and local government leaders that they can use to support safety solutions for communities in crisis. This is what Alliance for Safety and Justice calls Shared Safety. It is a framework that brings community and government leaders together to determine how to best promote safety through centering public-health, well-being, and crime survivors; breaking the cycle of harm; and making our systems work. Proven safety solutions include community violence intervention and interruption programming, assertive outreach, employment programming designed to reach individuals returning home from incarceration, substance abuse treatment, community-based victim support, reentry support, and trauma-informed mental health services like the Trauma Recovery Center.<sup>3</sup>



## What is Shared Safety?

Our nation has an opportunity to build consensus around the public safety solutions needed to achieve safety for all. Moving from safety for some to safety for all through smart investments and new partnerships is what Shared Safety is about. Shared Safety envisions a world where everyone can attain safety, and everyone takes responsibility for it.

Shared Safety begins with joint responsibility—across different government entities and in partnerships with

communities—for deepening our understanding of who is vulnerable, for investing in effective prevention, health and recovery and for breaking the cycle of harm.

Shared Safety means looking beyond arrests and incarceration—and beyond the justice system—to cultivate safety at the family and neighborhood level. The more we can focus our metrics, investments, partnerships and attention on what works to improve safety and stop the cycle of crime, the better for our budgets, communities and families.

### The five principles that drive the Shared Safety approach are:

- **Public Health:** Only responding to crime after the fact is akin to an emergency-room-only response to illness. The public health field has much to teach about how to address epidemics: prevention, detection and treatment. Threats to personal and community safety worsen when knowable root causes are left unaddressed.

<sup>3</sup>There have been excellent recent reports on how federal funds can support safety solutions. For a grant program-specific report, see Californians for Safety and Justice, “Victims of Crime Act and the Need for Advocacy: A Toolkit for Advocates and Victims Services Providers to Ensure Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Funds Reach Underserved Crime Survivors.” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3fpWZqX>. For a state-based analysis, see Futures Without Violence, “A Road Map for Ending Domestic Violence in California: A Life Course Approach to Prevention” (2021). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3u2BG2N>. For a national analysis, see Brittany Nieto and Mike McLively, “America at a Crossroads: Reimagining Federal Funding to Community Violence” (Giffords Law Center, 2020) Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3fldTHq>.

- **Well-Being:** The strongest communities are the safest communities. Well-being means community conditions promote mental and physical health and resilience. Measuring safety with crime data alone misses the opportunity to measure well-being, the most important metric. By defining, measuring and tracking well-being, we can invest in prevention scaled to community needs and foster safety.
- **Survivors at the Center:** For too long, justice policy and investment decisions have not been informed by the experiences of most crime victims. Those that bear the disproportionate burden of harm need a voice. Placing survivors at the center means recognizing who victims are; amplifying investments in protection, trauma recovery and restorative justice; and partnering with survivors to stop the cycle of harm.
- **Breaking the Cycle of Harm:** A growing number of experts agree: Incarceration as a one size-fits-all response to crime is ineffective and unsafe. Breaking the cycle of harm requires a problem-solving approach. Alternatives and graduated responses can hold people accountable, address the drivers of crime to reduce recidivism, and prepare people for stable reentry to the community.
- **Making the System Work:** The historic over-reliance on the criminal justice responses has created a system that cannot solve most of the root causes of crime. Shared Safety relies on collaboration across communities, bringing together health experts, crime survivors and other community leaders together with representatives from law enforcement and the courts. And, making the system work starts with trust. Communities that share a connection and mutual trust with local government have what it takes to attain safety for all.

Today, public safety financial and policy priorities cannot achieve Shared Safety. It is possible to transform those priorities. We already know what works and how to get there—it's about building consensus on the solutions and scaling them up to meet community need.



## Outline of Funding Opportunities Under the American Rescue Plan

The chart below provides an overview of some of the key programs in the ARP that can support these safety solutions. It outlines the ARP's specific funding sources, the amounts allocated, the government entity that is tasked with administering the fund, and the discretion that the ARP gives administrators to shape the fund's programming. As of the publication of this report, the Biden administration has not yet released any of the ARP's major funding opportunities. To stay up to date on federal grant opportunities, including the ARP, visit [www.grant.gov](http://www.grant.gov). This website gives key information and assistance on all federal grants.

ARP Funds	Amount	Administrative Entity, Its Discretion Over the Funds, and Why These Purposes are Important
<b>State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Sec. 9901)</b>	<b>\$349.7 billion</b>	The Secretary of the Treasury shall distribute fiscal recovery funds to state, city, and county executives, among other eligible purposes, "to respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease." A funding formula in the ARP will determine the amounts of these grants to state and local governments. These funds are to cover costs incurred by December 31, 2024. <i>The increase in violence in communities hit hard by COVID-19 can be used to justify requests for funding essential services like community-based violence prevention, reentry, trauma recovery, and economic development.</i>
<b>Grants to Support Underserved Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Sec 2204(c))</b>	<b>\$49.5 million</b>	The Secretary of HHS shall: (A) support culturally specific community-based organizations to provide culturally specific activities for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, to address emergent needs resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency and other public health concerns; and (B) support culturally specific community-based organizations that provide culturally specific activities to promote strategic partnership development and collaboration in responding to the impact of COVID-19 and other public health concerns on survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. <i>The clear intent of this language is that these funds should be used to support community-based programs to help survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence whose needs have historically been unmet by more established programs.</i>
<b>Funding for COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Mitigation</b>	<b>\$47.8 million</b>	The Secretary of HHS shall, among other things, use these funds to support "strategies and activities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19." <i>As jails and prisons are two of the countries' worst hot spots of infection, some of these funds should be used to support efforts to deflect, divert, release, and keep people from returning to carceral facilities.</i>
<b>Funding for Community-Based Funding for Local Behavioral Health Needs (Sec. 2707)</b>	<b>\$50 million</b>	The Secretary of HHS "shall award grants to State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, Tribal organizations, nonprofit community-based entities, and primary care and behavioral health organizations to address increased community behavioral health needs worsened by the COVID-19 public health emergency." <i>These funds can be used to support violence prevention and trauma recovery services, particularly in communities that have experienced increases in violence during the pandemic.</i>
<b>State Option to Provide Qualifying Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services (Sec. 1947)</b>	<b>\$15 million in planning grants</b>	States to change their Medicaid plans or apply for waiver to use Medicaid to provide behavioral health and other supportive services to people experiencing a mental health and/or substance crisis outside of a jail, prison, or hospital. Services become available on March 12, 2022, one year after the ARP was enacted. <i>These funds can be used to build out the capacity for community-based organizations to use Medicaid as a funding stream.</i>

# Key Advocacy Targets to Access Funding and the Need for Advocacy

**The ARP’s public health framework could not come at a more timely, yet perilous, moment.** While the pandemic has had a destabilizing impact throughout our country, it has had a particularly devastating effect on low-income, immigrant, Latinx, and Black communities. Lockdowns, job loss, and social disconnection have exacerbated community-level concentrated disadvantages that pre-existed the pandemic, including high rates of unemployment, justice involvement, segregation, and a lack of supportive services. As the Center for Diseases Control and Prevention have found, these conditions have not only put “racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19,” but they have also contributed to severe spikes in violence, particularly homicides.<sup>4</sup> Examining crimes rates in 34 representative American cities, researchers from the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice found that “homicide rates increased 30% in 2020, a large and troubling increase that has no modern precedent.”<sup>5</sup>



**This surge in violence demands immediate action.** At the same time, the pandemic has revealed that our country’s overreliance on the criminal justice system is unequipped to promote the safety needed by communities in crisis. Just as research indicates that our overuse of incarceration is not an effective means of reducing crime, so has epidemiological data analysis shown that jails and prisons have become one of our country’s worst COVID-19 hotspots.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the social unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd exemplifies what research has confirmed and what people in our country’s most harmed communities already knew: The historical overreliance on the criminal justice system in low-income, immigrant, Latinx, and Black communities has compounded the conditions that produce violence and fractured the essential trust that people need to have in their government for it to be effective.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Health Equity Considerations and Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups” Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3u3L5ap>.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Rosenfeld, Thomas Abt, Ernesto Lopez, “Pandemic, Social Unrest, and Crime in U.S. Cities: 2020 Year-End Update (National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice, 2021) at 17. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2PelbAQ>.

<sup>6</sup> For a review of research findings on the diminishing public safety returns of over incarceration, see Jeremy Travis, Bruce Western, & Steve Redburn (eds.), *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2014) at 7. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3m0NOGN>. For a recent analysis of jails and prisons as COVID-19 hotspots, see Lisa B. Puglisi, Giovanni S.P. Malloy, Tyler D. Harvey, Margaret L. Brandeau, and Emily A. Wang, “Estimation of COVID-19 basic reproduction ratio in a large urban jail in the United States” *Annals of Epidemiology* 53 (2020): 103-05. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3t8bLl>.

<sup>7</sup> See Robert J. Sampson, “Crime in Cities: The Effects of Formal and Informal Social Control,” *Crime and Justice* 8 (1986): 271-311.; David S. Kirk and Mauri Matsuda, “Legal Cynicism, Collective Efficacy, and the Ecology of Arrests,” *Criminology* 49 (2011): 443-472; and Tom R. Tyler and Yuen J. Huo, *Trust in the Law: Encouraging Public Cooperation with the Police and the Courts* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).

The ARP has the potential to fund the safety solutions that communities in crisis need to reduce pandemic-related spikes in violence, but realizing this promise will require immediate and sustained advocacy at the federal, state, and local level. While the ARP does not contain mandated spending on tough-on-crime programming that is typically found in federal funding, it does rely on the discretion of federal, state, and local government agencies and leaders to develop and support alternative programming and infrastructure based in public health. Over the past 50 years, as our country has built up the largest prison system the world has ever seen, ineffective strategies have been conflated with safety. As a result, government leaders and elected officials have become so accustomed to spending taxpayer money on the criminal justice system that it happens as if it were automatic. Unless there is advocacy dedicated to promoting an alternative vision for what communities in crisis need to be safe, many elected officials and government leaders will use ARP funding to strengthen ineffective strategies.

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An essential part of this advocacy must address two aspects of federal grant-making that often frustrate effective community investment. First, as the historian Elizabeth Hinton has shown, **federal community grant-making is rooted in a history that pathologized poor communities of color**. Beginning in the 1960s, as the infrastructure for federal community grant programming was being developed, researchers and policy makers believed that people who lived in communities in crisis were unable to determine for themselves what they needed to promote their own safety and well-being. While the ostensible purpose of these early federal grant programs was to eradicate poverty in Black communities, these officials assumed that interventions could only be effective if they were designed and administered by white-led organizations and institutions. The immediate

effect of this racist assumption promoted ineffective interventions. More fundamentally, it created a policy infrastructure that undermined authentic community leadership, eroded the social and political power that inheres from people coming together to help and look out for each other (what researchers call “collective efficacy”), and encouraged federal policymakers to define communities not by their strengths, but by their perceived weaknesses and deficits.<sup>8</sup>

This history continues to haunt federal grant-making, particularly in the bureaucratic requirements that administrators impose on applicants and grantees. Many organizations which are staffed and led by the residents of the communities they serve are small and solely dedicated to providing services. While these features give organizations the proximity and credibility required to work effectively with impacted people, they are typically associated with a lack of administrative capacity that administrators often require from applicants and grantees. **Like all federal grant-making, it is critical that the ARP promote accountable funding practices. Real accountability, however, must begin and end with the people and the communities who have been the most harmed, but too often the least helped by government-funded programs.** This is

<sup>8</sup> See Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*.

not simply the right thing for administrators to do. Research also suggests that, when funders support community-led initiatives, they can strengthen the collective efficacy communities need to prevent crime on their own.<sup>9</sup>

Alongside the onerous administrative requirements imposed on organizations, the second need that ARP advocacy must tackle is the tendency for federal funds to support the status quo. At the state and local level, federal grant programs often seem to fund the same approaches, programs, and organizations. It is easy to assume that this grant-making must be an intentional strategy; that federal investment in the existing state of affairs is how authorities protect themselves and their base of power. While there is some truth in that assessment, what also frequently prevents government leaders from using federal pass-through funds to support new and innovative programs is that they lack the time or resources to fully understand the permissible expenses of the federal grant programs that they administer. As a result, administrators come to rely on the status quo, not necessarily because they have a positive investment in it, but because they know that, if they continue to support past practices, they will comply with federal and state grant program requirements. This points to important but often neglected opportunities for advocates: through modest intervention, advocates can help policymakers develop a more complete understanding of what grant requirements make possible, work with the staff and leadership of grant-making agencies to take full advantage of existing law and policy to access funds, and identify and remove the actual barriers that stand in the way of accessing government funding.




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<sup>9</sup> The work of sociologist Patrick Sharkey suggests that investments in community-led initiatives in themselves may reduce crime, as he found that expansion of “community organizations that took place in the 1990s likely played a substantial role in explaining the decline in violence” that occurred during this period. See Sharkey, *Uneasy Peace: The Great Crime Decline, the Renewal of City Life, and the Next War on Violence* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2018) at 53.



# Key Tools to Use in Advocacy: Strategies, Case Study, and Resources

## Strategies

As the country begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot let the legacy of racism and the dynamic of ignorance and fear that often attends federal funding stand in the way of realizing the promise of the American Rescue Plan. The key to overcoming these obstacles is to ground advocacy efforts in the ARP's statutory purposes and then design and execute campaigns directed at educating, partnering, and influencing the government officials and entities that are tasked with administering them.

**It might be helpful to think about this work in terms of an advocacy strategy that has three separate, but interrelated, tracks:**

### Track 1 | Federal Advocacy

From now and at least until the Biden administration releases the ARP funding opportunities, advocacy should press federal agencies tasked with administering the funds to provide both *maximum guidance* and *maximum flexibility* to potential grantees. To provide maximum guidance, federal administering agencies should explicitly prioritize organizations that are based in and staffed by residents of the communities they serve and that have an established history of providing effective safety solutions. To provide maximum flexibility, federal administering agencies should do all that is practically possible to remove bureaucratic barriers that too often exclude critical assistance providers from accessing federal resources. This advocacy is particularly important as agencies' staff are drafting applications, guidance for state and local fiscal relief, behavioral health, and victim services funding opportunities. By providing this clear guidance, the Biden administration will help communities address spikes in violent crime that have followed from the pandemic. It will thus enable a more equitable recovery, helping to provide jobs to people who are closest to the violence and make essential investments in local public safety infrastructures outside the criminal justice system.

Here are three actions you can take to advocate for ARP funds at the federal level.

1. **Review and sign the National Coalition for Shared Safety's letter to President Biden** that asks his administration provide both maximum guidance and maximum flexibility to potential grantees. Visit <https://bit.ly/3dfQftg>.
2. **Inform your U.S. Senators and your U.S. Representative(s) about your work to access ARP funding and ask for any assistance they can provide.** See language on [page 17](#) that you can use for this purpose.
3. **Create an account on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)**, monitor new grant opportunities, and explore the site to learn about the federal grant system.

## Sign the **Letter to President Biden**



On March 23, the National Shared Safety Coalition released a public letter to President Biden, asking that his administration provide both maximum guidance and maximum flexibility to potential grantees.

To read and sign on to the letter, visit <https://bit.ly/3dfQftg>.

## Track 2 | State and Local Advocacy

From now and until at least state and local governments begin to disburse the ARP's funds, advocacy should ensure that government leaders and administrators in their state also hear that these funds should be administered with maximum guidance and maximum flexibility. If the federal advocacy described above is successful, advocates should use the guidance from the Biden administration to argue for an expansive interpretation of ARP-funded programs. At the same time, advocacy should work to understand how the laws and rules of their state and cities will co-determine the administration of ARP funded programs, looking for areas that allow flexibility, as well as areas that need to be reformed. Alongside this effort, advocacy should promote relevant funding opportunities to community-based organizations that might be reluctant to apply based on past negative experience with federal grants, as well as the understandable perception that federal resources are not meant for them. To help with this, advocacy should consider asking state and local executives to reserve a dedicated amount of their jurisdictions' fiscal relief funds to support community-led safety initiatives and build their organizational capacity through the end of 2024, when the funds expire. And, finally, if feasible, advocacy should form broad-based coalitions and partner with state and local elected and government leaders to leverage the different parts of the APR's funding streams, working together to use the ARP not simply as a one-time infusion for community-based programs, but rather as a means to create sustainable sources of support.

Here are four actions you can take to advocate for ARP funds at the state and local level.

1. **Send the fiscal relief letter** on [page 16](#) to your governor, mayor, and county executive.
2. **Identify and enlist state and local legislators and other elected officials who can help champion your work to access state and local APR funds.** Educate them on your work to access ARP resources and ask for assistance, including outreach to state and local executives. See language on [page 17](#) that you can use for this purpose.
3. **Identify, research, and request to meet with the leadership of your state and local administrative agencies to inform them of your work and to ask for their assistance.** Federal grants that support community programs are typically passed through state and local administrative agencies. The names and even the kinds of agencies that administer federal funds can differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. As noted above, these agencies are frequently under resourced. The most effective advocacy will aim to help these agencies do the work with which they have been tasked.

## Track 3 | Implementation

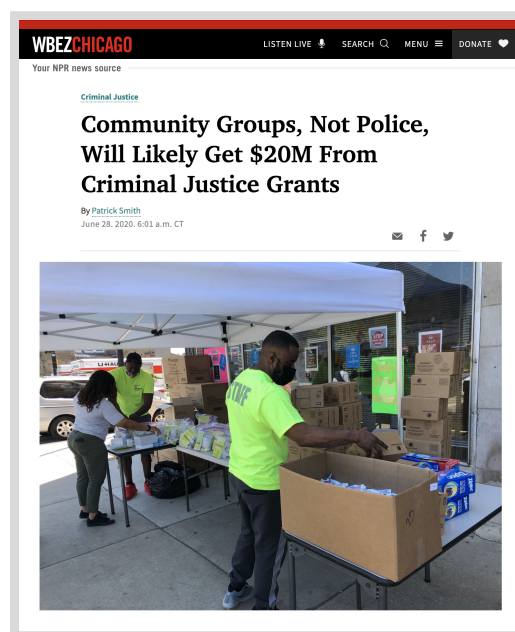
As the ARP funds begin to be disbursed throughout the country, attention needs to be paid to their implementation. This is where advocacy tends to stop and good intentions break down. Advocates should expect that the ARP will present both unforeseen difficulties and opportunities. The results of monitoring implementation should be communicated back to the federal, state, and local officials, informing advocacy work to improve the administration of the ARP programs and federal grants in general. As the need for implementation unfolds, look for future publications and resources from the Alliance for Safety and Justice.

### *Case Study: The Illinois Coalition for Shared Safety*

To access ARP funding—and more generally to improve federal grant making’s capacity to support communities in crisis—will require sustained advocacy and broad based collaborations. One of the more successful recent examples of this kind of advocacy helped Illinois direct CARES Act funds to community-based organizations.

Shortly after the COVID-19 sheltering in place orders were issued, the Alliance for Safety and Justice helped found the Illinois Coalition for Shared Safety (ICSS), a diverse alliance of violence prevention, victim services, and reentry organizations across Illinois. The initial purpose of ICSS was to educate state policymakers on how the early days of pandemic were impacting crime survivors and the organization dedicated to helping them and their communities. After the CARES Act was enacted, ICSS began an advocacy campaign focused on prioritizing \$20 million of CARES Act stimulus funds from the Department of Justice to non-profit organizations that work in communities most impacted by the pandemic. Partnering with Illinois’ Attorney General and leaders from the Legislative Black Caucus, ICSS got the state to allocate all of its BJA CARES funds, which in most states went directly to law enforcement, to support community-based organizations and reentry efforts (read the full article from WBEZ Chicago: <https://bit.ly/3macHYK>).

What made ICSS successful was the fact that it brought together a diverse alliance of organizations, its grounding in a vision of shared safety, and its collaboration with elected leaders. As Illinois is getting ready to receive its ARP funds, the Coalition is preparing again to work with government leaders to ensure that Illinois uses its federal resources to support community-based organizations that have been most impacted by the public health emergency brought on and worsened by the pandemic.



## Resources

As the opportunities to use the ARP's funds will differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, advocacy will need to tailor campaigns based on state local conditions. The below outline provides arguments that you can use to craft advocacy campaigns for five funding opportunities in your jurisdiction.

1. The increase in violence in communities hit hard by COVID-19 justifies requests for funding essential services like community-based violence prevention, reentry, trauma recovery, and economic development. (ARP Sec. 9901)

### Funding Amount

\$219.5 billion to state, territorial, tribal governments, and the District of Columbia and \$130.2 billion to local governments (Sec 9901). Find your state or local jurisdiction's fiscal relief allocation here: <http://bit.ly/318XFZG>.

### Overview

The pandemic's public health crisis has led to severe increases in violent crime, especially homicides, aggravated assaults, gun assaults, and domestic violence in communities across the country, particularly in low-income, immigrant, Latinx, and Black communities that have also experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths.<sup>10</sup>

In its description of how recovery funds may be used, the ARP states that governments may provide assistance to nonprofits that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and/or provide "grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work."

Some state and local governments have declared that nonprofits that provide such services as violence prevention and reentry supporter "essential," directly linking these funds to assist nonprofits that provide essential services like reentry support, trauma recovery, and street violence intervention.<sup>11</sup>

Using these funds to support organizations that are based in and staffed by the residents of the communities that they serve has the additional benefit of making workforce development a part of local public safety infrastructures, providing jobs to people who are closest to violence and an opportunity to be trained in public health approaches to violence reduction. [There is significant public support, including bi-partisan support, for using federal funds to pay for community-based violence prevention](#)<sup>12</sup> and [documented gaps in what these organizations need to deliver these services](#).<sup>13</sup>

### How to Access

To access these funds, identify the amount that your state and/or local government are scheduled to receive and use the following arguments to make a case to your governor, mayor, or county board executive for why your organization and/or organizations in your field should receive them.

<sup>10</sup> See Rosenfeld, Abt, and Lopez, "Pandemic, Social Unrest, and Crime in U.S. Cities: 2020 Year-End Update Retrieved from Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2PelbAQ>

<sup>11</sup> See Council of State Governments, "Survey Shows Reentry Services Halting Across U.S" (2020). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3db1e7e>; Alliance for Safety and Justice, "#STOPHESPREAD: A survey of crisis assistance service providers and people on the frontlines working to stop cycles of crime" (2020). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3ctAxLU>

<sup>12</sup> National Coalition for Shared Safety, "The National Safety Gaps Survey" (2020). Retrieved from <https://wesharesafety.us/#section1>

<sup>13</sup> Alliance for Safety and Justice, "#STOPHESPREAD: A survey of crisis assistance service providers and people on the frontlines working to stop cycles of crime" (2020). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3ctAxLU>



## 2. Funding to meet the needs of underserved domestic violence and sexual assault survivors. (ARP Sec 2204(c))

### Funding Amount

\$49.5 million to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS)

### Funding Purpose

“to support culturally specific community-based organizations to provide culturally specific activities for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, to address emergent needs resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency and other public health concerns.”

The clear intent of this language is that these funds should be used to support community-based programs to help survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence whose needs have historically been unmet by more established programs. Programs like [Trauma Recovery Centers](#) (TRCs) are ideally suited for this purpose. TRCs are an evidence-based model designed to meet underserved crime survivors where they are, providing wrap-around, trauma-informed services through an orientation of cultural humility. [There is significant public support for using federal funds to address the unmet needs of crime survivors](#), and [documented gaps to provide these services because of a lack of resources for them](#).<sup>14</sup>

### How to apply

To apply for these funds, look for future solicitations from HHS at <https://www.grants.gov>.

## 3. Funding for diversion and reduction of over-incarceration to stop the spread of COVID-19 (ARP Sec 2401)

### Funding Amount

\$47.8 million to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS).

### Funding Purpose

“to provide technical assistance, guidance, and support, and award grants or cooperative agreements to State, local, and territorial public health departments for activities to detect, diagnose, trace, and monitor SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 infections and *related strategies and activities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19*” (Emphasis added).

### Overview

Since jails and prisons have been the site of high rates of COVID-19 infections and disproportionate deaths, some of these funds should be used to support programs that help deflect, divert, release, and

<sup>14</sup> National Alliance for Trauma Recovery. “Trauma Recovery Centers: Addressing the Needs of Underserved Crime Survivors.” 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3cx72Zs>

keep people from returning from prison as "related strategies and activities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19." There is strong public support for the policies that have been implemented to reduce the number of people in the justice system because of public health concerns and to continue and expand these policies.<sup>15</sup>

### How to apply

To access these funds to keep people out of jail and prison, identify your state and/or local public health department and use the above arguments to advocate for them to direct funds for these purposes.

## 4. Responding to pandemic-related behavioral health challenges (ARP Sec 2707)

### Funding Amount

\$50 million to the Secretary of HHS.

### Funding Purpose

"to make grants to "State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, Tribal organizations, nonprofit community-based entities, and primary care and behavioral health organizations" in order to address behavioral health needs exacerbated by the pandemic. Eligible programming includes "promoting care coordination among local entities; training the mental and behavioral health workforce, relevant stakeholders, and community members; expanding evidence-based integrated models of care; addressing surge capacity for mental and behavioral health needs; providing mental and behavioral health services to individuals with mental health needs (including co-occurring substance use disorders) as delivered by behavioral and mental health professionals utilizing telehealth services; and supporting, enhancing, or expanding mental and behavioral health preventive and crisis intervention services."

### Overview

As violence and trauma stem from and implicate behavioral health issues, there is a strong argument to use these funds to support violence prevention and trauma recovery services, particularly in communities that have experienced increases in violence during the pandemic. There is a strong, documented need to expand these approaches across states.

### How to apply

To apply for these funds, look for future solicitations from HHS at <https://www.grants.gov>.

## 5. Medicaid support for mobile crisis intervention services (ARP Sec 1947)

<sup>15</sup> National Coalition for Shared Safety. "The National Safety Gaps Survey." 2020. Retrieved from <https://wesharesafety.us/#section1>

### **Funding Amount**

\$15 million in planning grants to apply for new Medicaid-funded services for people in crisis.

### **Funding Purpose**

“to help states amend their Medicaid plans or use section 1115, 1915(b), or 1915(c) waiver requests to create “community-based mobile crisis intervention services” for people who are otherwise covered by the state’s Medicaid plan.”

### **Funding Timeline**

If their proposals are approved, states would be able to use this funding to implement these services as of March 11, 2022, one year after the American Rescue Plan was signed into law.

### **Funding Requirements**

The community-based mobile crisis intervention services must have a number of features, including the following:

- they must be dedicated to people who are experiencing mental health and/or substance abuse crisis;
- the services must be provided year-round 24-hours a day, outside of a hospital, jail, or prison facility, through a multidisciplinary mobile crisis team “whose members are trained in trauma-informed care, de-escalation strategies, and harm reduction” and which includes at least one behavioral health care professional who is capable of conducting an assessment of the individual”;
- the services must be able to be provided in a timely manner, offering people “screening and assessment, stabilization and de-escalation, and coordination with, and referrals to, health, social, and other services and supports as needed, and health services as needed”; and
- the providers of these services must “maintain relationships with relevant community providers.”

### **Overview**

The ability to use Medicaid funds to support these services presents a profound opportunity for states to create the capacity to help people in crisis who often end up cycling through jail, prisons, and hospital emergency rooms.<sup>16</sup>

### **How to apply**

To help your state access these resources, use the above arguments to advocate to your governor and Medicaid agency the reasons that they should apply for planning grant funding to amend or use a waiver to change your state’s Medicaid plan.

<sup>16</sup> Find your state’s Medicaid agency here: <https://bit.ly/31x094h>

## Appendix: Outreach Materials

### *Language to request state and local fiscal recovery funds from governors, mayors, and county board executives*

As noted above, governors, mayors, and county board executives will be tasked with overseeing large infusions of the ARP's state and local fiscal recovery funds. While there will be significant competition for these resources, the ARP supplies several ways that these elected and government leaders can use these funds to support community-led safety initiatives. There is no national formula that can determine the precise amounts that should be requested. The best funding requests will combine what ARP mandates the funds should be used for, an analysis of how the pandemic has negatively impacted the organizations making the request, and an estimate of the funding needed for these organizations to address the specific harms caused by the pandemic. As these funds expire on December 31, 2024, requests could be spread out over the next three years.

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL/GOVERNMENT LEADER],

Representing more than [NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS AND THE KINDS OF SERVICES THEY PROVIDE] that serve [JURISDICTION'S] communities most impacted by crime, violence, and unaddressed trauma, we believe that immediate, targeted, and additional investments are urgently needed to address the severe increases in homicides and victimization associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

As [ELECTED OFFICIAL/GOVERNMENT LEADER] determines how it will spend the approximate [TOTAL AMOUNT] of fiscal recovery funds it will receive from the American Rescue Plan (ARP), we ask that you dedicate [REQUESTED AMOUNT] to support [LIST SAFETY PROGRAMMING] through the end of 2024, when the funds expire.

As the ARP makes clear, these funds are dedicated “to respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19),” which includes “the negative economic impacts” it has had on “nonprofits.” These mandated purposes perfectly align with our requests. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profoundly destabilizing impact on [JURISDICTION], driving severe spikes in violence and crime. [USE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DATA AND/OR DATA FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES ON HOW CRIME AND HARMS HAVE INCREASED DURING THE PANDEMIC.]

In normal times, our organizations are on the frontlines of addressing violence. During the pandemic, our organizations have gone above and beyond their normal work to respond to this aspect of the pandemic’s “public health emergency.” Throughout [JURISDICTION], the staff of our organizations have risked their own health and safety to serve as front-line workers, mediating conflicts, preventing violence, and responding to crisis mental health needs during the pandemic, as well as delivering food, PPE, and other essential services to people who lack access to vital resources.



On behalf of [ORGANIZATIONS], we urge you to make these targeted investments with the [JURISDICTION'S] ARP fiscal relief funds in communities that have suffered from increases in homicides associated with the pandemic. By investing in these proven solutions that provide targeted prevention and recovery to communities in crisis, [JURISDICTION] can reduce violence and promote safety and well-being of all its residents.

Sincerely,

## *Outreach language for U.S. Senators, Representatives, and state and local champions*

As noted above, members of Congress and state and local elected officials can be vital champions to help access ARP resources. Use the language below to inform them about your work, asking for assistance that they can provide. Your request for assistance will depend on the official you are contacting and the funds you are seeking, but should include requests like asking for help meeting with state and local executives and support for your request for fiscal relief.

To find your member of Congress, go to <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map#address=>.

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL],

Representing more than [NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS AND THE KINDS OF SERVICES THEY PROVIDE] that serve [JURISDICTION'S] communities most impacted by crime, violence, and unaddressed trauma, we are contacting your office today to inform you about our work to access resources from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and to ask [BE AS PRECISE AS POSSIBLE IN YOUR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE.]

We believe that the ARP presents a significant opportunity to invest in public-health programming and infrastructure that can help our communities recover from the pandemic by investing in the solutions that we need to reduce violence and promote safety.

As you know, the COVID-19 has had a profoundly destabilizing impact on [JURISDICTION], driving severe spikes in violence and crime. [USE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DATA AND/OR DATA FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES ON HOW CRIME AND HARMS HAVE INCREASED DURING THE PANDEMIC.] In normal times, our organizations are on the frontlines of addressing violence. During the pandemic, our organizations have gone above and beyond their normal work to respond to this aspect of the pandemic's "public health emergency." Throughout [JURISDICTION], the staff of our organizations have risked their own health and safety to serve as front-line workers, mediating conflicts, preventing violence, and responding to crisis mental health needs during the pandemic, as well as delivering food, PPE, and other essential services to people who lack access to vital resources.

Consistent with the ARP's statutory purposes, we have asked [GOVERNOR/MAYOR/COUNTY EXECUTIVE] for [AMOUNT OF FISCAL RELIEF] to support our organization's work "to respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)." We are also preparing to apply for funding opportunities, including [LIST RELEVANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES LISTED ABOVE ON [PAGE 5](#)].

On behalf of [ORGANIZATIONS], we ask for your support in using APR resources to provide the vital assistance needed by our communities that have suffered from increases in victimization associated with the pandemic. By investing in solutions that provide targeted prevention and recovery to communities in crisis, [JURISDICTION] can reduce violence and promote safety and well-being of all its residents.

Sincerely,

## Alliance for Safety and Justice (ASJ)

is a national organization that aims to win new safety priorities in states across the country, and brings together diverse crime survivors to advance policies that help communities most harmed by crime and violence.

*This project was made possible, in part, by grants from*

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**ALLIANCE** FOR  
**SAFETY** AND **JUSTICE**

