



Kent County, Michigan Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
2021 Report**

Executive Summary

Kent County government is committed to providing resources and services that promote a high quality of life for the entire community through responsible budgeting and thoughtful planning. This County mission was at the forefront of planning and distribution of CARES Act - Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars during the work to contain COVID-19 and protect the community. That same commitment to thoughtful planning and responsible use of resources will guide Kent County through the recovery from COVID-19 using the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) dollars.

The U.S. Department of Treasury allocated \$127.6 million to Kent County from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF). Half of the allocation was received. None of the funds were expended through the reporting period ending July 31, 2021. This report provides an overview of planned categories of expenditures. The planning underway will continue as Kent County leader refine goals, collect community input, examine best practices, and develop a specific spending plan that aligns with the Treasury's SLFRF guidelines.

The following strategies will guide the county's planning to enhance quality of life and recover from the pandemic a more resilient community:

- Maximize all funding resources, including other COVID recovery funds, state funds, and grants, to build a strategic response to the pandemic and use funds wisely,
- Leverage community relationships and lessons learned from the allocation of Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars,
- Lean on other counties, state and national associations for best practices and effective strategies,
- Maintain flexibility to reallocate funding as information, community input, needs and federal guidance evolve.

Uses of Funds

Based on initial collaboration with elected officials, county departments and stakeholders, Kent County identified five priority categories for use of SLFRF dollars. The pandemic enhanced our understanding of existing needs and brought to light new needs across the county. A clearer understanding of community needs and other lessons learned since March 2020 contributed to selecting the categories outlined below.

Decisions about specific uses of funds will evolve and adjust as more information about other potential revenue sources becomes available. That includes opportunities to use State of Michigan funds after the State Legislature begins to consider its allocation of SLFRF dollars in the fall of 2021. Kent County is beginning to engage with our state representatives to understand the most strategic uses of state dollars and how various funding streams can best support our COVID recovery.

Kent County is also monitoring future opportunities to use Federal Infrastructure dollars to support the COVID recovery and address a variety of infrastructure improvements that enhance health, safety, and sustainability. The County's SLFRF spending plan may adjust as more information becomes available about the Infrastructure dollars.

Priority SLFRF Spending Categories:

1. Protect Public Health

Protecting public health is the first step to longer term and equitable recovery for the community. The challenge to protect Kent County residents' health is ongoing. Kent County Health Department data that identifies the portions of the County most lacking vaccination continues to drive targeted efforts to make vaccination convenient and to address vaccination hesitancy. Addressing mental health needs has also been a high priority in Kent County. The need for mental health services, including for those in mental health crisis, was exacerbated by the pandemic and will continue to receive targeted attention in Kent County.

2. Stabilize and Recover the Economy

The necessity to close businesses for an extended period and the resultant impact on resident employment instability had enormous impacts on the economy. Kent County's tourism, agritourism/agribusiness, health care and countless other industries were each impacted in unique ways. The longer-term effect of new work patterns and practices on commercial real estate is yet to be fully understood. The opportunities to strategically invest in economic stabilization and recovery is wide ranging and will be carefully examined to identify programming that supports long term recovery and equitable outcomes.

3. Support Vulnerable Residents by Serving Disproportionately Impacted Communities

A full COVID recovery requires specific attention to those most hard-hit by the pandemic. Our most vulnerable residents continue to struggle to secure stable food, transportation, child care, job training and health care. Residents struggling to pay for housing or living in an unhealthy home environment are at a disadvantage, particularly in the current housing market that challenges renters and buyers at multiple income levels. The needs of our vulnerable residents are far-reaching and will be a focus of the ongoing planning to provide long term recovery and equitable outcomes.

4. Invest in Infrastructure

Plans for spending SLFRF dollars will give specific attention to expanding broadband services to fill current gaps in service. The pandemic showed us that access to quality internet service is a requirement for education, work and health care. Leaving some in our community without access to that service is no longer acceptable.

Safe drinking water, operational septic systems, effective drains and secure dams supports health and protects the environment for future generations. Kent County's water and drain systems are operated through a complex web of municipal agreements and authorities. We recognize the needs and will plan for long-term and prioritized investments. Specific projects will be identified through collaboration across County departments, local partners, the county drain commissioner and experts in the health and environmental benefits of water infrastructure projects. (In Michigan, a drain may be a natural or artificial creek or ditch, or a pipe for carrying storm water).

5. Enhance Essential Government Services and Plan for the Future

As Kent County grows and recovers from the pandemic, attention must be turned to enhancing essential county services and planning for the county's future. Key areas that could be addressed under this category, and are consistent with the priorities in the Kent County Strategic Plan, include:

- communication with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to enhance community engagement, understand the community's needs, and provide information consistently, accurately and conveniently through a range of tools;
- providing services in facilities that provide the space required to meet customer needs, are in locations that are accessible to customers, and provide flexibility to accommodate population growth and changes in services as needs evolve;
- collection, analysis and reporting of data that contributes to decision making, transparency and the delivery of services; and
- efficiently and effectively manage the SLFRF.

Beginning in September, a strategy to further define the county's goals and plan the spending within each category will be developed. A community engagement strategy aligned with the Compliance and Reporting Guidelines of the Department of Treasury, will be a component of the planning and decision making. The planning will take into account current investments in the COVID recovery, such as:

- distribution of COVID Emergency Rental Assistance funds to support renters and landlords across Kent County
- Investment of CDBG funds in community development projects, and
- Affordable housing projects completed with federal HOME funds

Subsequent quarterly and annual Project & Expenditure Reports and Recovery Plans to the Treasury will reflect the detailed plans and implementation of Kent County's COVID recovery strategy and spending.

Promoting equitable outcomes

Programs will be designed with an equity lens to mirror the Treasury's guidelines. Future reporting on programs and spending will address goals, awareness, access and distribution, and outcomes. Reports on SLFRF spending will also describe constraints or challenges that impacted project success in terms of increasing equity and the geographic and demographic

distribution of funding, including whether it is targeted toward traditionally marginalized communities. A Kent County is positioned to enhance the utilization of public health and economic, and population data systems for the purpose of aligning critical data under the Treasury guidelines as necessary to operationalize county-wide decision-making. The goal is to leverage county level data sets with external sources to increase the vulnerable populations with access to and receiving quality county services.

The development of a plan for SLFRF dollars coincides with the establishment of a Chief Inclusion Officer in the Kent County Administrator's Office. The position reflects the County's focus on equitable service delivery and outcomes. The Chief of Inclusion will be a member of the SLFRF planning/implementation team, bringing community relationships and expertise in equity and health outcomes to the team. Community partners engaged in equity and inclusion who have been engaged through the pandemic and the distribution of CARES dollars will continue to be a valuable resource to Kent County.

Kent County recognizes that the level of economic impact due to COVID disproportionately affected some parts of our community more than others. We will collaborate with community groups and use our data to help identify disparities that exist and work towards long-range solutions, and to ensure that residents and business are equally made aware of resources provided by the county.

Community Engagement

Extensive community engagement in the distribution of CARES Act - Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars set the stage for community engagement with SLFRF decision making. With the priority spending categories in place, a comprehensive community engagement plan will be developed.

Existing partner organizations and advisory groups that know intimately Kent County community needs will be consulted, such as the Human Services Committee, Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council, Community Health Advisory Committee, Community Mental Health Advisory Board, Department of Human Services Board, and Veterans Services Advisory Committee.

Kent County's business and economic partners, such as the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, The Right Place, and Experience Grand Rapids, will be engaged. To support the Treasury's guidance on capturing feedback from diverse constituents, Kent County's Race, Equity, and Inclusion Partners – more than 40 organizations collaborating since March 2020 to protect the community against COVID – are an ongoing resource.

Labor Practices

Kent County is prepared to engage in infrastructure projects that ensure contracts include language aligned with fair labor practices and prevailing wage requirement as reflected in our historical work with Housing and Urban Development grants and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services grants.

Use of Evidence

Kent County's overall approach for using evidence and evaluation will be developed in conjunction with the next phase of decision making on allocation of SLFRF dollars and the associated community engagement. The approach will be described in the next report to the Treasury. Upon development of a Project Inventory, evidence information for each project will be reported with a focus on public health, negative economic impacts, and services to disproportionately impacted communities

Evidenced based intervention strategies are critical to the decision-making process for allocating the U.S. Department of Treasury funds. Kent County is positioned to align, implement, and assess evidence-based strategies to strengthen equitable outcomes. Through processes and community engagement activities Kent County will provide accurate, relevant, and real time data for common metrics across multiple years. Evidenced-based intervention strategies will allow Kent County to scale up existing strategies and programs at a departmental level to a county-wide level.

Kent County is prepared to evaluate evidenced-based intervention strategies to ensure necessary data are collected for the purpose of identifying the necessary data points that need collected. Evidence-based intervention strategies will require Kent County to plan for the collection, dissemination, and use of quality evidence through multiple methodology informed by a diversity of viewpoints.

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Kent County has not obligated or expended funds as of the end of the reporting period.

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.1	COVID-19 Vaccination		
1.2	COVID-19 Testing		
1.3	COVID-19 Contact Tracing		
1.4	Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)		
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment		

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1.6	Medical Expenses (including Alternative Care Facilities)		
1.7	Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency		
1.8	Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)		
1.9	Payroll Costs for Public Health, Safety, and Other Public Sector Staff Responding to COVID-19		
1.10	Mental Health Services		
1.11	Substance Use Services		
1.12	Other Public Health Services		
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.1	Household Assistance: Food Programs		
2.2	Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid		
2.3	Household Assistance: Cash Transfers		
2.4	Household Assistance: Internet Access Programs		
2.5	Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention		
2.6	Unemployment Benefits or Cash Assistance to Unemployed Workers		
2.7	Job Training Assistance (e.g., Sectoral job-training, Subsidized Employment, Employment Supports or Incentives)		
2.8	Contributions to UI Trust Funds*		
2.9	Small Business Economic Assistance (General)		
2.10	Aid to nonprofit organizations		
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries		
2.13	Other Economic Support		
2.14	Rehiring Public Sector Staff		
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities		
3.1	Education Assistance: Early Learning		
3.2	Education Assistance: Aid to High-Poverty Districts		
3.3	Education Assistance: Academic Services		
3.4	Education Assistance: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Services		
3.5	Education Assistance: Other		

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
3.6	Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care		
3.7	Healthy Childhood Environments: Home Visiting		
3.8	Healthy Childhood Environments: Services to Foster Youth or Families Involved in Child Welfare System		
3.9.	Healthy Childhood Environments: Other		
3.10	Housing Support: Affordable Housing		
3.11	Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons		
3.12	Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance		
3.13	Social Determinants of Health: Other		
3.14	Social Determinants of Health: Community Health Workers or Benefits Navigators		
3.15	Social Determinants of Health: Lead Remediation		
3.16	Social Determinants of Health: Community Violence Interventions		
4	Expenditure Category: Premium Pay		
4.1	Public Sector Employees		
4.2	Private Sector: Grants to other employers		
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		
5.1	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater treatment		
5.2	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater collection and conveyance		
5.3	Clean Water: Decentralized wastewater		
5.4	Clean Water: Combined sewer overflows		
5.5	Clean Water: Other sewer infrastructure		
5.6	Clean Water: Stormwater		
5.7	Clean Water: Energy conservation		
5.8	Clean Water: Water conservation		
5.9	Clean Water: Nonpoint source		
5.10	Drinking water: Treatment		
5.11	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution		
5.12	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution: lead remediation		
5.13	Drinking water: Source		
5.14	Drinking water: Storage		
5.15	Drinking water: Other water infrastructure		
5.16	Broadband: "Last Mile" projects		
5.17	Broadband: Other projects		
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement		

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
6.1	Provision of Government Services		
7	Administrative and Other		
7.1	Administrative Expenses		
7.2	Evaluation and data analysis		
7.3	Transfers to Other Units of Government		
7.4	Transfers to Nonentitlement Units (States and Territories only)		

Project Inventory

Kent County has not implemented any projects as of the end of the reporting period.

Performance Report

Key performance indicators for SLFRF funded projects will be included in future reports as specific projects are identified, planned and implemented. No data is currently available for the Treasury’s required performance indicators.