

County of Burlington Recovery Plan



State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2023 Report

**COUNTY OF BURLINGTON
2023 Recovery Plan**

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The County of Burlington in New Jersey was awarded approximately \$86.5 million under the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF). Although the threat of the pandemic is over, the County of Burlington, along with our residents and businesses are still in the recovering stage economically.

Like most counties across the nation, the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for our government operations, local businesses and our residents. As our economy and communities struggled, Burlington County created new programs that offered assistance to both businesses and residents through the use of state and federal funding.

Burlington County is utilizing the funding in several focus areas: public health, business grants & loans, residents assistance, public safety, revenue loss, connectivity and infrastructure improvements.

Uses of Funds

The County is utilizing funding under the following expenditure categories: Public Health (EC1), Negative Economic Impacts (EC2), Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC3), Infrastructure (EC5), and Revenue Replacement (EC6).

Public Health (EC 1)



Throughout the pandemic, Burlington County has made safeguarding public health its top priority and has expended operating funds for testing, vaccination, contact tracing, outreach campaigns and personal protective equipment (PPE) for first responders, long-term care facilities personnel and frontline public employees. Many of the eligible public health expenses are covered through other funding streams, however, once those funds are no longer available, the county anticipates supplementing the cost with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) funds.

Uses of Funds (cont'd)

Mental Health Services (EC 1.12) – Suicide Prevention



Mental Health is an important topic that the Burlington County Commissioners are addressing. The Commissioners will create teen suicide prevention programming that will address teen mental health concerns within our most vulnerable communities. The Commissioner plan to authorize the Department of Human Services to advertise for proposals for this project.

Public Safety Training

Training our public safety professionals in another top priority for Burlington County. When first responders are properly trained and equipped, our residents are better protected. The County is undertaking various vital upgrades to public safety training systems and existing equipment.

Community Violence Interventions (EC 1.11) – Firearms Automated Training Simulator



The Firearms Automated Training Simulator, also known as FATS, was installed in the Burlington County Public Safety Building more than a decade ago and provides police officers with real-life scenarios they may encounter on patrol or investigations to test their split-second reactions and decisions. Virtual training simulators have been proven to improve speed, accuracy, judgment in the use of force, and overall ability while reducing training time, logistics, and cost for law enforcement officers. The County's FATS system trains county, local, state, and federal officers and is vital to public safety.

Other Public Health Services (EC 1.14) – Fire Training Academy Updates



The Burlington County Fire Training Academy at the Emergency Services Training Center trains thousands of area firefighters and other emergency personnel each year. This training is critical to public safety and to the wellbeing of first responders. The Fire Academy uses life-like fire training houses and vehicle to simulate real fire conditions. Burlington County will use funds to update this equipment to ensure that first responders are properly trained and that the residents of Burlington County remain safe.

Uses of Funds (cont'd)

Office of Emergency Management

Burlington County takes the lead in our county for emergency response and supports local emergency management offices. Our county is the largest county in New Jersey, covering 827 square miles. That is a vast area to support if a disaster or emergency situation occurs. Having the proper vehicles and equipment to respond to those critical, time-sensitive situations is vital to keeping our residents safe.

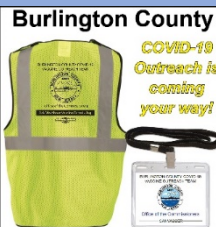
Other Public Health Services (EC 1.14) – Emergency Operations Command Vehicle

Public Safety Command Vehicle



The Burlington County Office of Emergency Management will be replacing our existing mobile emergency operation vehicle that has reached the end of its useful life. The mobile command vehicle is used to support planned community educational activities and is available to respond to emergency events throughout the County. Having a fully functional emergency command vehicle allows County personnel to respond rapidly to various situations where coordinated relief and recovery operations are needed.

Other Public Health Services (EC 1.14) - Community Outreach Program



Community outreach is also an important aspect in assisting our residents. Many people are in need of services and help, but do not know where to go to get it. Burlington County launched a Community Outreach team that traveled into disadvantaged and underserved communities within the county. Team members knocked on doors to educate and assist residents with accessing services and programs. The outreach team also made phone calls and sent text messages.



Burlington County also launched a new program, LIFT-UP (Lunches and Information for Tenants and Underserved Populations), which provides meals and housing information to underserved populations. Representative from various County departments provide information about services and help connect residents with the help they need. Many people will not seek out assistance or do not know how to apply for programs. By going out into the community in underserved areas, residents can learn about services and programs in their environment.

Uses of Funds (cont'd)

Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)

The County's residents' health, safety and wellbeing are top priorities for the county. The County of Burlington wants to ensure our residents have access to programs and services they need.

Household Assistance: Food Programs (EC 2.1) – Programs for Food Distribution and Addressing Food Insecurities

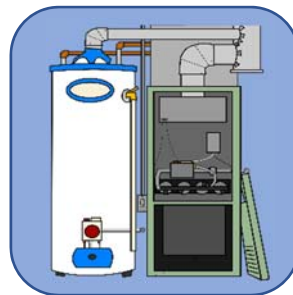


Food insecurity has been an issue for many years, but the pandemic brought the topic to the forefront, demonstrating that thousands of residents need assistance with providing basic nutrition for their families. The Commissioners partnered with a local food pantry to distribute free fruits and vegetables, meats, prepared meals and shelf stable boxes of food each month. Thousands of residents are able to feed their families because of this important initiative. Many free food distribution programs in the region have ceased to operate, but Burlington County has continued to provide this much-needed help. Residents are still struggling to recover

from the pandemic and this free food assistance helps them not have to choose between feeding their families and paying other bills.

Burlington County is also creating a grant program for area food pantries, food banks and soup kitchens. Local non-profit organizations that offer relief for residents experiencing Food Insecurity can apply for funding of up to \$10,000. The County will go out for RFP for a company to run and manage the program. The funding can be used for operational costs, food and other supplies and also capital expenses that will improve and enhance their organization.

Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance (EC 2.18) - Emergency Home Repair Programs



Burlington County is expanding the Heater Repairs Program and the Emergency Home Repairs Program so that low-income senior citizens in disproportionately impacted communities have assistance with extensive home repairs. The Heater Replacement Program provides financial assistance to low-income Burlington County homeowners in participating townships to pay for the purchase and installation of a replacement heating system. The Emergency Home Repair Program provides limited grants to eligible homeowners to make emergency repairs to their homes. Eligible emergency home repair services consist of corrections to

conditions that pose an immediate threat to occupants' health, safety and/or welfare.

Uses of Funds (cont'd)

Long Term Housing Security: Affordable Housing (EC 2.15) – Grant Funding for Affordable Housing Projects



The Commissioners created a grant program for affordable housing to be created or built in Burlington County. Grants will be given to qualifying proposals who will create affordable houses in the county. Rental fees and housing prices have skyrocketed causing many residents to no longer be able to afford their homes. More low rent and low-cost housing options are vitally important to the residents of Burlington County.

Not-For-Profit Assistance (EC 2.34) – Art History Program



The Burlington County Commissioners recognize that not-for-profits also struggled during the pandemic and have been slower with their recovery. Art groups and organizations were hit particularly hard so the Commissioners established an Arts Grant program where local art entities can submit a proposal for funding projects that will benefit the community and enrich the lives of the residents. These arts grants can be used for programming or operational continuation.

Other Programs to Support Communities and Address Negative Economic Impacts:

Emergency Rental Assistance



Keeping our residents safe and in their homes is a primary goal for Burlington County. Many were out of work for extended periods of time, laid off or their place of employment went out of business. This created a hardship for thousands of residents, and many fell behind on rent and mortgage payments. Using Emergency Rental Assistance provided by federal recovery funds, the County partnered with the State of NJ to create rental and mortgage assistance programs to prevent homelessness and help residents with back payments. We also provided relief from hefty utility expenses that many were unable to pay.

Uses of Funds (cont'd)

Small Business Loans



The County Commissioners are dedicated to assisting local businesses. Small businesses had the opportunity to apply for interest free loans of up to \$50,000 from our Health Emergency Loan Program (HELP) using other federal recovery funds passed thru the Economic Development Authority (EDA). More than a dozen businesses were able to stay open with our assistance. The County is also launching a grants program for veteran - owned businesses. These businesses can apply for grants to help them recover from the effects of the pandemic. Many had to close their doors, lost revenue or had to make significant changes to their businesses in order to meet public health concerns. These grants will assist in their recovery.

Premium Pay (EC 4)

Public Sector Employees (EC 4.1) – Premium Pay



The County Commissioners recognized county employees for going above and beyond during the pandemic, risking their health and wellbeing. Premium pay and retention incentives were included in the 2022 and 2023 budgets to compensate employees who qualified.

Infrastructure (EC 5)

Water and Sewer: Other (EC 5.18) - Sewage Line Infrastructure Improvements



Sewerage infrastructure is vital for residents' health and wellbeing. Burlington County is planning sewer improvements at the Burlington County Resource Recovery Complex. Water treatment facilities at the complex will be created to recycle and renew wastewater that is generated

The County Commissioners and Farmers Against Hunger of New Jersey entered into an agreement that allows the organization to farm a section of Rainbow Meadows Park to help provide free fruits and vegetables to those in need. The park, which was a former farm, lacks sewer service. The Commissioners are going to use funds to run the sewer line and connect the park to township utilities. This service will allow Farmers Against Hunger to expand their services for the good of our residents.

Uses of Funds (cont'd)

Broadband: Other Projects (EC 5.21) – BurlCo Connects

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of infrastructure, particularly access to high-quality internet that can enable work, education and health care access. Individuals and communities that lack affordable access are at a severe disadvantage.



To help close the digital divide, the County is installing fiber optic upgrades and replacements in disproportionately disadvantaged communities and others lacking high-quality internet access. The need for reliable high-speed internet service became vital to continuing education, doing business, receiving government services, and even healthcare virtual visits. The Commissioners created the Burlington County Connects initiative that provides free wi-fi in all county buildings and also county parks facilities. Fiber optic cabling will provide the public access to high-speed reliable internet service in areas that are lacking the service. The

upgrades are also expected to expand opportunities for employment, enhance public safety and help bolster economic activity.

Revenue Replacement (EC 6.1) – Provision of Government Services



To date, the County has allocated approximately \$40 million to replace public sector revenue loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding to replace revenue losses is critical to health and wellbeing of Burlington County's residents because it ensures that vital government services throughout the county continue. The County's allocation covers each of the four years of the program.

The calculation used to determine revenue loss is based on the formula in the Final Rule, as of December 31, 2020. General revenues subject to the loss calculation include amounts collected by subordinate agencies, as defined by the Census Bureau's Individual State Descriptions 2017 Census of Governments report.

In accordance with the Compliance and Reporting Guide: State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds issued by the United States Department of the Treasury, the County has utilized the eligible costs identified as Revenue Replacement Funds to cover various government services. Of the \$16 million in revenue losses, \$7.4 million was anticipated as revenue within the 2022 Operating Budget and approximately \$700,000 was used to reimburse the Motor Vehicle Fines Fund. Toll revenue losses of \$8.7 million were disbursed to the Burlington County Bridge Commission to fund the Burlington-Bristol Bristol Bridge Tower Span Deck Replacement Project.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes



The County's infrastructure and public health programs are designed to promote equitable outcomes and address disparities. The County invested in testing, vaccinations, food-security assistance and outreach to ensure that all populations have access to critical services and support. The County also is exploring broadband improvements specifically to ensure all residents can access affordable high-speed internet to try to bridge any digital divides within local communities.

Community Engagement



Burlington County has a strong connection with our communities, civic leaders, faith-based leaders and local town governments. The County Commissioners attend as many community meetings and events as possible and are always opening dialogues about services and programs that effect the community. The County has been soliciting ideas and comments from the community and welcomes additional input from our stakeholders. More community engagement will be planned.

Labor Practices



As infrastructure projects are identified, the County will review applicable labor standards to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects that also support economic recovery. Prevailing wage requirements will be utilized for any work done on behalf of the County.

Use of Evidence



Most of the programs and projects Burlington County intends to complete are in the planning or initial purchasing phase. Once the projects are completed or near to completion, they will allow for assessment and evaluations. The County intends to use relevant sources to assess the level of evidence for any interventions and will identify evidence-based models that could be applied with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) funds. The County has not yet determined an overall approach for using evidence-based interventions and/or program evaluation metrics to track the County’s progress in reaching their project goals.

Performance Report

Burlington County’s plans to measure how State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund funds impact overall county goals of improving community health, connectivity and access to critical services. Statistical measurements related to vaccination rates, COVID-19 hospitalizations and high-speed internet connectivity are being considered.

PROJECT INVENTORY

Project 1.12: Teen Suicide Prevention & Other Mental Health Services

Funding amount: \$100,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.12 Public Health – Mental Health Services

Project Overview

- The Commissioners created teen suicide prevention programming that will address teen mental health concerns within our most vulnerable communities.
- The Commissioner authorized the Department of Human Services to advertise for proposals for this project.

Project 1.11: Firearms Automated Training Simulator

Funding amount: \$125,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.11 Public Health - Community Violence Interventions

Project Overview

- Purchasing the hardware and software for law enforcement training to prevent community violence
- Provides police officers with real-life scenarios they may encounter on patrol or investigations to test their split-second reactions and decisions.
- Virtual training simulators have been proven to improve speed, accuracy, judgment in the use of force, and overall ability while reducing training time, logistics, and cost for law enforcement officers.
- The County's FATS system trains county, local, state, and federal officers and is vital to public safety.

Project 1.14a: Fire Training Academy Updates

Funding amount: \$350,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.14 Public Health – Other Public Health Services

Project Overview

- Purchasing the hardware and software for first responder training to prevent community violence
- Critical to public safety and to the wellbeing of first responders.
- Uses life-like fire training houses and vehicle to simulate real fire conditions.
- Burlington County will use funds to update this equipment to ensure that first responders are properly trained and that the residents of Burlington County remain safe

Project 1.14b: Emergency Operations Command Vehicle

Funding amount: \$1,600,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.14 Public Health – Other Public Health Services

Project Overview

- Purchasing the vehicle and outfit with equipment for responding to disasters and emergencies to prevent community violence
- Critical to public safety and to the wellbeing of residents.
- respond to those critical, time-sensitive situations is vital to keeping our residents safe.
- An emergency command vehicle can be taken to any situation where coordinated relief and recovery operations can be organized from the vehicle.

Project 1.14c: Community Outreach

Funding amount: \$1,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 1.14 Public Health – Other Public Health Services

Project Overview

- Burlington County launched a Community Outreach team that traveled into disadvantaged and underserved communities within the county.
- Team members knocked on doors to educate and assist residents with accessing services and programs.
- The outreach team also made phone calls and sent text messages.

Project 2.1a: Emergency Food Distribution

Funding amount: \$200,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.1 Household Assistance: Food Programs

Project Overview

- The Commissioners partnered with a local food pantry to distribute free fruits and vegetables, meats, prepared meals and shelf stable boxes of food each month.
- Thousands of residents are able to feed their families because of this important initiative. Residents are still struggling to recover from the pandemic and this free food assistance helps them not have to choose between feeding their families and paying other bills.

Project 2.1b: Food Insecurity Grants

Funding amount: \$1,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.1 Household Assistance: Food Programs

Project Overview

- Burlington County is also creating a grant program for area food pantries, food banks and soup kitchens.
- Local non-profit organizations that offer relief for residents experiencing Food Insecurity can apply for funding of up to \$10,000.
- The County will go out for RFP for a company to run and manage the program.
- The funding can be used for operational costs, food and other supplies and also capital expenses that will improve and enhance their organization.

Project 2.15: Affordable Housing

Funding amount: \$3,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.15 Long-term Housing Security: Affordable Housing

Project Overview

- The Commissioners also created a grant program for affordable housing to be created or built in Burlington County.
- Grants will be given to qualifying proposals who will create affordable houses in the county.
- More low rent and low-cost housing options are vitally important to the residents of Burlington County.

Project 2.18: Emergency Home Repair Programs

Funding amount: \$250,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.18 Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance

Project Overview

- The Commissioners are expanding existing home repair programs operating under the Human Services Department that provide assistance to lower income groups within the community.

Project 2.29: Small Business Grants for Veteran Owned Businesses

Funding amount: \$500,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.29 Loans or Grants to Mitigate Financial Hardship

Project Overview

- A grants program for veteran -owned businesses.
- These businesses can apply for grants to help them recover from the effects of the pandemic. Many had to close their doors, lost revenue or had to make significant changes to their businesses in order to meet public health concerns.
- These grants will assist in their recovery.

Project 2.34: Grants for Non-profit Arts Organizations

Funding amount: \$250,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.34 Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations (Impacted or Disproportionately Impacted)

Project Overview

- Art groups and organizations were hit particularly hard so the Commissioners established an Arts Grant program where local art entities can submit a proposal for funding projects that will benefit the community and enrich the lives of the residents.
- These arts grants can be used for programing or operational continuation.

Project 2.37: Retention Incentives

Funding amount: \$3,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 2.37 Economic Impact Assistance: Other

Project 4.1: Premium Pay

Funding amount: \$5,025,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 4.1 Public Sector Employees

Project 5.18a: Sewer Line Infrastructure - Resource Recovery Complex

Funding amount: \$7,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 5.18 Water and Sewer: Other

Project Overview

- Sewerage infrastructure is vital for residents' health and wellbeing. Burlington County is planning sewer improvements at the Burlington County Resource Recovery Complex.
- Water treatment at the complex will be created to recycle and renew waste water that is generated.

Project 5.18b: Sewer Line Infrastructure – Rainbow Meadows Park

Funding amount: \$1,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 5.18 Water and Sewer: Other

Project Overview

- Use funds to run the sewer line and connect the park to township utilities.
- This service will allow Farmers Against Hunger to expand their services for the good of our residents.

Project 5.21: Burlington County Connects – Broadband Improvements

Funding amount: \$8,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 5.21 Broadband: Other projects

Project Overview

- To help close the digital divide, the County is exploring fiber optic upgrades and replacements in disproportionately disadvantaged communities and others lacking high-quality internet access.
- The need for reliable high-speed internet service became vital to continuing education, doing business, receiving government services, and even healthcare virtual visits.
- Provides free wi-fi in all county buildings and also county parks facilities.
- Fiber optic cabling will provide the public access to high-speed reliable internet service in areas that are lacking the service.
- The upgrades are also expected to expand opportunities for employment, enhance public safety and help bolster economic activity.

Project 6.1: Revenue Replacement

Funding amount: \$40,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: EC 6.1 Revenue Replacement - Provision of Government Services

Project Overview

- The County calculated general revenue loss for 2020 as compared to the base year of 2019 at \$18 million, which includes revenue losses of subordinate agencies, as defined by the Census Bureau’s Individual State Descriptions 2017 Census of Governments.
- The County intends to utilize revenue replacement in each of the four years of the Recovery Program and has projected future years’ revenue losses based on 2020 deficits. If the actual revenue loss is less than the County’s cumulative projection of \$40 million, funding will be reallocated to other projects.