

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Why should ARPA funds be invested in understanding neighborhood data and markets?

The American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) \$350 billion [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund](#) distributes federal relief to every US state, local, territorial, and Tribal government, which must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by the end of 2026. This once-in-a-lifetime infusion of flexible funding is focused on catalyzing broader community recovery and rebuilding and addressing the immediate and long-term negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on low-income communities and people of color.

NEED: Communities cannot develop effective, efficient, and equitable strategies to address neighborhood destabilization exacerbated by the pandemic's economic impacts without an understanding of the nature and scale of problem properties and neighborhood markets.

OPPORTUNITY: Activities to **improve local data systems, management practices, and analysis capacity are ideal candidates to address this need with ARPA funding** given the following:

- 1 Through data collection, mapping, and analysis, communities can **identify what inequities exist in their community and who has been disproportionately burdened** by the economic harm caused, or exacerbated, by the crisis and can make the case for specific relief for those people and places.
- 2 Local government departments and their partners can harness their abundance of siloed data through a robust data sharing platform to **drive direct financial relief and health improvement services**, to those households and neighborhoods most impacted.
- 3 With complete and timely data on properties' ownership characteristics, physical condition, sales, and tax status communities can **deploy market-responsive, equitable strategies to create healthier living environments** and neighborhoods, a stated ARPA goal.
- 4 Planning and data analysis in order to improve programs, targeted consumer outreach, improvements to data or technology infrastructure, and impact evaluations are **explicitly eligible ARPA uses**.
- 5 Good data systems will enable local communities to efficiently **assess and report on the impact of their ARPA spending** to their community and Treasury.

ARPA ON THE GROUND

- [Syracuse, NY](#) proposed to use ARPA funds for a housing market study that would analyze vacant structures and housing market conditions and trends and to invest in advanced technology for housing inspectors to detect lead hazards.
- [Detroit, MI](#) will be using \$4 million in ARPA funding to create a web-based portal that uses City data and property information to navigate residents to tax foreclosure prevention, home repair, eviction prevention, and other assistance. And the City will be creating a centralized intake and client management system for housing services.

POTENTIAL IDEAS FOR ARPA USE

- Conduct a citywide property conditions survey to identify where residents or businesses may need repair assistance or where the municipality needs to focus on proactive property improvement.
- Update, standardize, and aggregate parcel data siloed in various government departments and purchase software to connect and map the data.
- Conduct a neighborhood market analysis to identify market conditions, pairing neighborhood stabilization strategies to each market.
- Create an early warning system for vacant properties that tracks early indicators of vacancy so properties can be swiftly secured or reused.
- Upgrade technology infrastructure like computers, servers, and internet service and support employee training to enable the use of more modern, efficient software.
- Invest in program evaluation services supporting public-facing reporting and enabling real-time adjustment of programs to better meet equity goals.



[Learn More](#) about the American Rescue Plan Act at communityprogress.org/resources/arpa/

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Why should ARPA funds be invested in strategic, equitable code enforcement?

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NEED: Deteriorating property conditions have left many homeowners and tenants exposed to health and safety risks. Continued economic impacts due to the pandemic have left residential and commercial property owners unable to invest in property repairs and municipalities without adequate capacity to enforce property maintenance codes.

OPPORTUNITY: Activities to support the **strategic, equitable enforcement of housing and building codes are ideal candidates to address this need with ARPA funding** given the following:

- 1** Code enforcement **raises the overall quality of a community's commercial and residential building stock**, an imperative for healthy living environments and strong neighborhoods, a stated ARPA goal.
- 2** Providing assistance to affected and low-income homeowners, landlords, and tenants for home repair, weatherization, or other programs to mitigate health and safety risks are **explicitly eligible ARPA uses**.
- 3** Code enforcement, paired with property repair grants, can **reduce the presence of lead, mold, and other health hazards** that cause or exacerbate health concerns, a goal specifically stated in ARPA guidance.
- 4** Equitable code enforcement prioritizes ensuring vulnerable tenants or homeowners have **access to safe, healthy homes and mitigates the risk of displacement**.
- 5** Support for local governments to **hire and train qualified staff** to respond to increased health and safety risks in communities most impacted by the pandemic aligns with ARPA's guidance.

ARPA ON THE GROUND

- [Detroit, MI](#) is using ARPA funds to provide free home repair services, beginning with roof repairs, to qualified homeowners.
- [Syracuse, NY](#) proposed to use \$4.5 million of ARPA funds to invest in advanced technology for housing inspectors to detect lead and to remediate lead hazards.
- [St. Louis, MO](#) is investing \$15 million in a home repair fund for low income owners.

POTENTIAL IDEAS FOR ARPA USE

- Repair grant programs for low- to moderate-income homeowners and landlords to fix code violations.
- Implement a rental registration, inspection, and licensing program – funding could support dedicated enforcement capacity and repair grants.
- Data and technology infrastructure that improves efficiency of code enforcement programs, like parcel surveys, software platforms, and field equipment for inspectors.
- Code enforcement staff capacity and training programs.
- Resident collaboration with code enforcement, such as quarterly meetings, community tool sheds and clean-ups, and neighborhood walk throughs with code enforcement staff.
- Tenant support programs, including programs that help tenants bring claims against negligent landlords to secure critical repairs.



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American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Why should ARPA funds be invested in delinquent property tax relief and enforcement?

The American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) \$350 billion [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund](#) distributes federal relief to every US state, local, territorial, and Tribal government, which must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by the end of 2026. This once-in-a-lifetime infusion of flexible funding is focused on catalyzing broader community recovery and rebuilding and addressing the immediate and long-term negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on low-income communities and people of color.

NEED: Many low-income homeowners and landlords are facing property loss because the economic impacts of the pandemic led them to fall behind on property tax payments. Financially strapped local governments are also struggling to address the health and safety risks posed by vacant properties languishing with delinquent property taxes.

OPPORTUNITY: Dedicating ARPA funding to implement **an equitable, effective, and efficient approach to delinquent property tax relief and enforcement is an ideal investment** given the following:

- 1** Direct assistance to low- and moderate-income households, which are **explicitly eligible ARPA expenses**, could bring households current on property taxes preventing housing loss through property tax foreclosure.
- 2** Vacant, tax-delinquent properties **pose serious health and safety risks to surrounding residents, a stated ARPA concern**, which local government can address by securing and maintaining the properties during the foreclosure process and using the foreclosure process to remove significant barriers to property reuse like and property tax liens and clouded title.
- 3** Through efficient property tax foreclosure processes and with partners like land banks or nonprofits, **vacant, tax-delinquent properties can be a critical pipeline of properties to serve community goals** like quality, affordable housing and greenspace like parks and urban gardens.
- 4** Nonprofit entities, which could partner to help with resident outreach and financial counseling, and land banks, which could help convey foreclosed vacant properties to new, responsible owners, are **eligible to receive ARPA funding** given that it allows local or state governments to transfer funding to nonprofit organizations or other special purpose units of state or local government to carry out eligible activities.

ARPA ON THE GROUND

- [Orange County, NC](#) is using ARPA funding to pilot their Longtime Homeowner Assistance program, which reduces tax bills for lower income residents that have lived in their property for over 10 years.
- [Detroit, MI](#) proposed to use \$3 million to support a program that helps low-income renters and owners avoid tax-foreclosure related displacement.
- [Gwinnett County, GA](#) is using \$1.5 million to waive fees for paying property taxes online.
- [Broome County, NY](#) is using \$2 million to partner with their land bank on the rehabilitation of tax foreclosed properties for affordable housing.

POTENTIAL IDEAS FOR ARPA USE

- Create a property tax abatement, forgiveness, credit, or repayment program for lower income or unemployed homeowners or landlords.
- Help residents secure property tax relief through a multi-faceted outreach program, including tactics like partnership with community organizations, multilingual materials, and door-to-door outreach.
- Fill any temporary revenue gaps created by ending the sale of tax liens, to be replaced with a more equitable system of publicly controlled tax foreclosure.
- Fund the purchase of tax foreclosed properties by land banks or nonprofit partners at tax sales or auctions, preventing those properties from going to harmful absentee speculative purchasers.
- Invest in a data system that connects property tax data to other local data like Register of Deeds, Code Enforcement, and Housing to improve assessment accuracy and support neighborhood stabilization activities.



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American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Why should ARPA funds be invested in land banks?

The American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) \$350 billion [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund](#) distributes federal relief to every US state, local, territorial, and Tribal government, which must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by the end of 2026. This once-in-a-lifetime infusion of flexible funding is focused on catalyzing broader community recovery and rebuilding and addressing the immediate and long-term negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on low-income communities and people of color.

NEED: Before the pandemic, vacant and deteriorating properties were eroding economic and community stability and public health. Continued economic impacts due to the pandemic have only exacerbated this challenge for communities.

OPPORTUNITY: **Land banks are ideal partners to address this need with ARPA funding** given the following:

- 1** Land banks have **special legal tools to efficiently facilitate vacant property acquisition, assemblage, holding, and disposition** in support of community revitalization goals.
- 2** Land banks **address long-term systemic inequities** by focusing their work in communities that have concentrations of vacancy and abandonment, working to shift these properties to support equitable, inclusive, and resilient neighborhoods.
- 3** Land bank interventions on residential and commercial properties, whether rehabilitation, demolition, or stewardship have shown to **increase employment opportunities, return positive economic value to the community, and improve public health and safety**.
- 4** Many land bank activities, such as increasing the supply of affordable and high-quality housing, home repair, and green infrastructure are **presumptively eligible uses**.
- 5** **Land banks are eligible recipients** since ARPA allows local or state governments to transfer funding to nonprofit organizations or other special purpose units of state or local government to carry out eligible activities.
- 6** Land banks have a **track-record** of rapid, effective use of funds to serve community priorities.

ARPA ON THE GROUND

- In Pennsylvania, [Pittsburgh's](#) land bank will be using \$10 million to address vacant properties and [Altoona](#) has proposed to dedicate \$5 million to its land bank with \$2 million for a revolving loan fund.
- [Syracuse, NY](#) is investing \$5 million in the Greater Syracuse Land Bank to stabilize or demolish vacant structures.
- [Rome, GA](#) is planning to allocate \$1 million to its land bank for housing rehabilitation and new construction.
- The [Central IL](#) Land Bank is looking to use ARPA funding to create an owner-occupied rehabilitation program.

POTENTIAL IDEAS FOR ARPA USE

- Development of affordable, quality housing.
- Securing and rehabilitation of vacant residential and commercial property to strengthen neighborhoods and commercial corridors.
- Property improvement, including remediation of lead hazards, home repair, and weatherization.
- Demolition or deconstruction of residential and commercial property that is harming community health, safety, and economic stability.
- Environmental remediation and reuse of vacant land including stormwater mitigation, food production, and energy production.
- Scaling activities by building staffing capacity, pairing with workforce training and apprenticeship opportunities, and investing in data and technology improvements.



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American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Why should ARPA funds be invested in land bank and community land trust partnerships?

The American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) \$350 billion State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund distributes federal relief to every US state, local, territorial, and Tribal government. The funding must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by the end of 2026. This once-in-a-lifetime infusion of flexible funding is focused on catalyzing broader community recovery and rebuilding, and addressing the immediate and long-term negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on low-income communities and people of color.

NEED: Before the pandemic, many families struggled to find quality, affordable housing. Continued un- and under-employment due to the pandemic has only exacerbated this challenge for families.

OPPORTUNITY: **Land bank and community land trust (CLT) partnerships are ideal candidates to address this need with ARPA funding** given the following:

- 1** Land banks address long-term systemic inequities by focusing their work in communities that have concentrations of vacancy and abandonment, working to shift these properties to support **equitable, inclusive neighborhood improvement**.
- 2** Land banks have a **track-record** of rapid, effective use of federal and state funds to serve community priorities.
- 3** Increasing the supply of affordable and high-quality housing is a **presumptively eligible expense** in Qualified Census Tracts and likely eligible outside of these areas based on community needs.
- 4** The CLT model provides a **permanent affordable housing** opportunity, guided by the local community, and provides wealth-building opportunities for generations. With the CLT model, the subsidy provided through ARPA funding would stay with the property providing a lasting benefit for all future homeowners.
- 5** **Land banks and CLTs can be recipients** since ARPA allows local or state governments to transfer funding to nonprofit organizations or other special-purpose units of state or local government to carry out eligible activities.

Sample Project

A community is hoping to construct 50 permanently affordable single-family homes for families at 80% of Area Median Income (\$75,000 for family of 4).

	PER HOUSE	50 HOMES
Acquisition Cost	\$10,000	\$500,000
Development Cost	\$308,000	\$15,400,000
Sales Price	\$210,000	\$10,500,000
Subsidy Needed	\$108,000	\$5,400,000

IF A LAND BANK PARTNERS...

Acquisition cost savings	\$(9,000)	\$(450,000)
Subsidy Needed	\$99,000	\$4,950,000

If the land bank were to provide the property to the CLT at a significantly reduced cost, the project would save \$450,000 in acquisition costs, and the community would gain 50 permanently affordable homes through ARPA funding.



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American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Why should ARPA funds be invested in vacant land stewardship?

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NEED: Vacant, unmaintained, and underutilized lots harm individual and neighborhood health, disproportionately in low-income communities and communities of color, which have resulted in poorer outcomes from the pandemic.

OPPORTUNITY: Dedicating **ARPA funds to repurposing and stewarding vacant lots** to address this need is an ideal investment given the following:

- 1** Vacant land stewardship, from basic maintenance to reuse activities, is a **proven method for improving public health and violence reduction and prevention.**
- 2** Many vacant land uses provide **economic opportunity to individuals and small businesses** – including urban agriculture, art and performance spaces, tree and plant nurseries, and energy production.
- 3** Green infrastructure on vacant lots, such as rain gardens, can **support stormwater system resiliency and watershed health**, a stated ARPA use, facilitating healthier places to live.
- 4** Community-engaged maintenance and greening of vacant lots is an evidence-based community violence intervention, which is a **presumptively eligible expense** in Qualified Census Tracts and likely eligible outside of these areas based on community needs.
- 5** Vacant land stewardship partners like **land banks and nonprofits can be recipients** since ARPA allows local or state governments to transfer funding to nonprofit organizations or other special purpose units of state or local government to carry out eligible activities.

ARPA ON THE GROUND

- [Chicago, IL](#) dedicated significant portions of its ARPA funding to vacant lot reduction strategies, urban agriculture, expansion of tree canopy, green infrastructure projects, and vacant lot environmental assessments.
- [Baton Rouge, LA](#) is planning to use over \$2 million ARPA funding to help address vacant properties including cleaning up vacant lots.
- [Houston, TX](#) will clean up illegal dumping throughout the city with \$1.5 million in ARPA funding.

POTENTIAL IDEAS FOR ARPA USE

- Develop or expand community-engaged vacant lot maintenance programs.
- Utilize vacant lot inventories to improve access to greenspaces by creating new and/or expanding existing parks and other public outdoor spaces and increasing tree canopy.
- Implement green infrastructure projects, such as rain gardens and bioswales to reduce flooding, improve climate resiliency and stormwater infrastructure, and reduce water pollution.
- Prepare vacant lots for reuse by testing for and remediating environmental contamination and clearing title issues.
- Create a workforce development program for vacant lot maintenance.
- Provide fiscal support to residents with existing or new food businesses on vacant lots.



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