

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Why should ARPA funds be invested in strategic, equitable code 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: 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.



Learn More about the American Rescue Plan Act at communityprogress.org/resources/arpa/