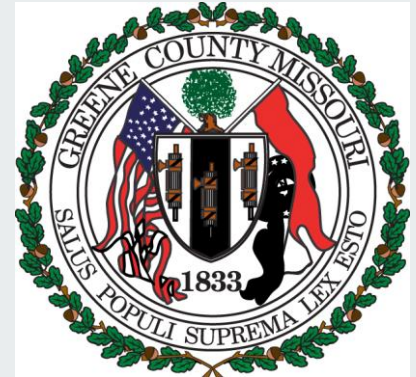


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# Greene County ARPA Needs Assessment Report

Presentation Prepared by the ARPA Team  
For the Greene County Commission  
November 19, 2021





## Executive Summary

- On March 11, 2021, Congress passed the **\$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**
- **Greene County is the direct recipient of \$56,928,520** through ARPA's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund
  - **\$28,464,260** of Greene County's allocation arrived on May 19
  - The remainder will arrive in 2022
- The Needs Assessment document is **developed to provide a basis for priority funding areas** and a **current assessment of community needs** for the Greene County Commission to consider
- The ARPA Team reviewed and **utilized a number of different documents and sources** to provide the most recent information on the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Greene County and its residents



## Census Data

- The county population increased by more than **23,700** people, with the net gain made up entirely by people of color
- Several municipal populations have experienced growth since 2010
  - Republic went from 14,751 to 18,750, a **21% increase**
  - Willard went from 5,288 to 6,344, a **17% increase**
- Springfield gained **9,678** new residents, a **6.1% increase**, for a city population of **169,176**
- The new census information reflects **rapid growth in the smaller municipalities in particular** and a **healthy increase in the county population**



## Census Data

- Statistics from 2021 show that Springfield home values have increased by **14.8% in the last year** and **52.5% over the last 5 years**
- Similarly, **rent in Springfield has shown an increase of 15-30% year-over-year**, depending on the source
- **The county poverty population of 14.4%** compares to a poverty population in the city of **Springfield of 22.9%**
- **Poverty has largely been decreasing** in the area, with the **exception of Asian communities**
- Greene County's **unemployment rate is 2.1%** as of September 2021
  - This indicates local difficulties in hiring new employees

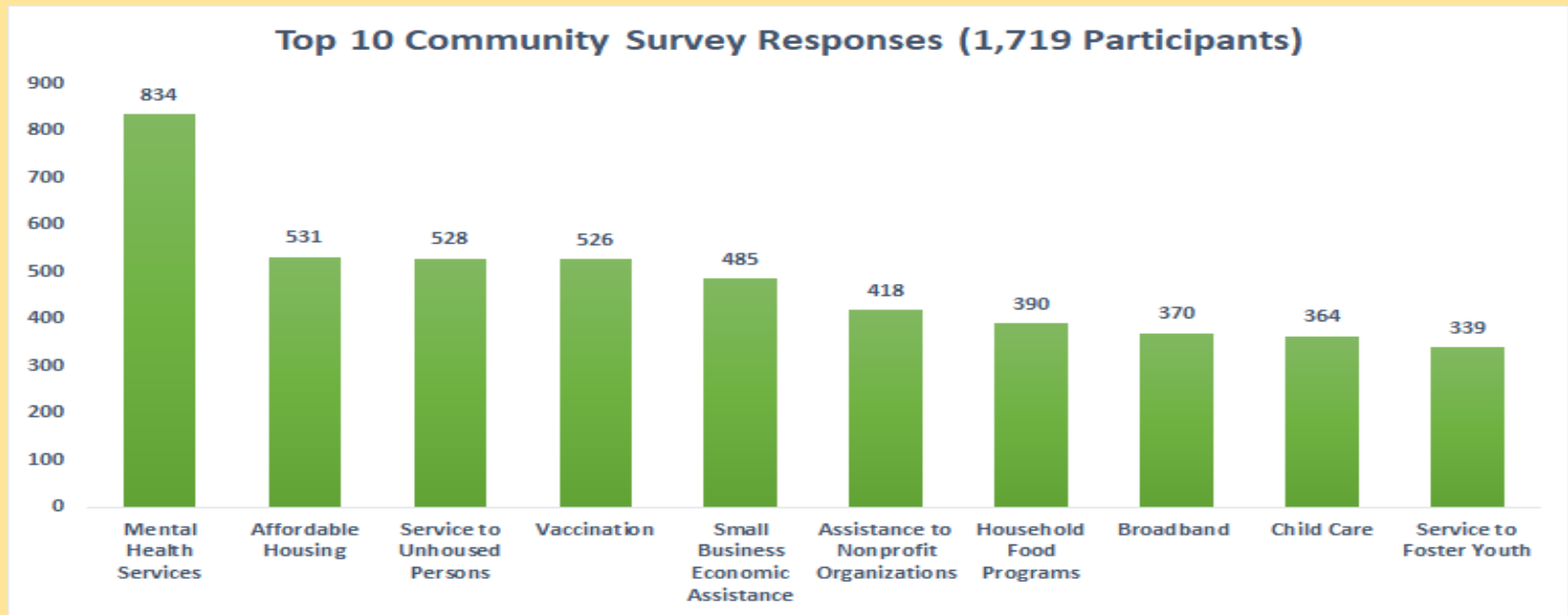


# Greene County Community Survey

- Greene County conducted a community survey for Greene County residents from September 10th - 23rd, 2021
  - The purpose of the survey was to gauge what issues community members perceived as being high priority for the county to address using American Rescue Plan Act funding
- **A total of 1,719 respondents** across Greene County completed the survey
- The distribution of survey participants **reflects the population distribution across the county** and **indicates strong response rates**



# Greene County Community Survey





# Greene County Community Survey

- Participants in the Community Survey were given the opportunity to detail any **additional comments, concerns, or areas of interest** that respondents deemed to be important issues
- A total of **645 comments were received** and categorized
- **Top comments that correspond to priorities listed in the Community Survey include:**
  - Nonprofit Assistance, Broadband, Education Retention, Eviction Protection Laws, Affordable Housing, Mental and Physical Health Services, Drinking Water
- **Top comments in areas that were not included in the survey's listed priorities include:**
  - COVID-19 Information Resources, Crime Prevention and Law Enforcement Training, Additional Green Spaces, Investments in Transit and Transportation Infrastructure



## Forward SGF

- Springfield's Housing and Urban Development Planning staff implemented a citizens outreach effort from 2018 to 2019 which included a **Community Development Needs Survey**
- The Forward SGF report focused on the city's categories of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) spending, which includes **measures on housing and economic development**
- The results of the Forward SGF and Greene County Community Surveys identified several areas in which similar priority areas were highly ranked, including **Service to Unhoused Persons, Affordable Housing, and Assistance to Homeless Youth**
- Since the Forward SGF report was conducted before the COVID-19 Pandemic, **it does not take into account the high priority ranking of Vaccination or Mental Health**





# City of Springfield Community Survey

- The City of Springfield and its American Rescue Plan Act Committee conducted a community survey during the **fall of 2021** to determine ARPA funding priorities
- A total of 1,438 questionnaires were completed and returned by mail or online
- Compared to the Greene County Community Survey, **Crime and Premium Pay are ranked much higher**
- Mental Health Services and Affordable Housing remain **high priority areas**

## The top rankings were:

- Public safety and crime prevention (55%)
- Homeless and housing services (40%)
- Community health and wellness (37%)
- Premium pay for essential workers (36%)
- Stabilizing and revitalizing neighborhoods (29%)
- Quality of Life (29%)
- Economic recovery and growth (24%)
- Public facility preservation and enhancement (22%)



## Community's Diverse Young Professionals

- Dr. Lyle Foster, Dr. Ximena Uribe-Zarain, and the Lenica Consulting Group developed a Community Research Report in 2020 aimed at **capturing the climate of inclusion in Springfield by gathering input from diverse young professionals**
- Recommendations to **make Springfield more attractive to diverse professionals** include diverse representation in leadership, equitable job opportunities, promote events and activities for underrepresented groups, and provide fair and affordable housing options
- A major component of the ARPA legislation is **Equitable Recovery**
  - **Considering the recommendations made by diverse professionals** is a good way to help minority groups that were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19



# Community Focus Report 2021

- Biennially, a Community Focus Report card is conducted to **identify blue ribbons and red flags to highlight areas of conversation** in every targeted area
- **Notable red flags raised in the report include:**
  - **Mental health** and substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, **skilled worker shortages**, lack of safe **affordable housing**, pandemic-related learning challenges, park/trails and infrastructure funding, public safety staffing shortages, **shutdown affecting arts engagement and funding challenges for the arts**
- The **Needs Assessment recognizes the significance of the arts in our community**, not only as an enjoyable and cultural experience, but also as an **economic engine for our city and county**
  - **Support to Nonprofit Organizations** and **Aid to Tourism, Travel, and Hospitality** are certainly categories that can be utilized for arts organization support



# Springfield Inclusiveness Survey

- From January to March in 2020, 2,276 Greene County citizens completed a survey created by the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights and the City of Springfield to **measure views on inclusiveness in the area**
- Participants noted that **Springfield could become a more inclusive community** by hosting educational events, expanding legal protections, and improving transit infrastructure
- **Noted barriers that prevent inclusiveness** include limited disability accommodations, discrimination based on minority status, and general safety concerns
- The **findings of this report differ** from Greene County's Community Survey in that it focused primarily on outcomes of inclusion with an emphasis on solutions that decrease levels of discrimination and harassment
  - **ARPA funding encourages communities to work towards equitable solutions**



## Emergency Rental Assistance

- Greene County is an **active participant in the ARPA funded ERA program** which is providing needed rent and utility assistance
- With federal rental assistance, many citizens within the county have been able to **move forward after falling behind on rent**
  - However, the county recognizes the complexity of addressing affordable housing
- While many Greene County residents have been able to catch up on rent, ERA does not address the fact that **housing payments are still not affordable to many**
- The Greene County Community Survey and Nonprofit Listening Sessions both identify **affordable housing as being a significant issue**
  - Considering the recent increase in housing costs in the Greene County housing sector, this continues to be a **need that has major impacts**



## Nonprofit Listening Sessions

- From September 30th to November 3rd, **Greene County hosted five nonprofit listening sessions** where nonprofit representative shared the top issues they currently faced
- A total of **56 nonprofit representatives** attended the sessions from **44 organizations**
- **Common issues identified by representatives** include Child Care, Collaborative Projects, Equity and Inclusion in Greene County, Family Assistance, Public Health Improvements, Supply Chain Difficulties, Staff and Volunteer Shortages, and Transportation Infrastructure
- Nonprofits are **encouraged to propose innovative solutions** to existing problems and long-term strategies to target chronic issues



# Greene County Needs Assessment Equity Plan

- The ARPA funding legislation clearly speaks to an **equity focus** for projects that receive ARPA dollars
- It is **highly recommended** that the county adopt an equity thread to assist in addressing some of the pandemic consequences
- Greene County has **definite pockets of underrepresented and underserved communities who can benefit** from the equity focus of the ARPA program



# Recommendations to Address an Equity Lens in the County ARPA Initiative

- Applications specifically include a question about how grant recipients **intend to insure services and programs are available to underserved and underrepresented groups** in their communities
- **Grant recipient demographic report** will be required as part of agency final report
- **Targeted outreach** to underserved communities informing them of application process and the assistance available
- Consideration of an Equity fund with ARPA dollars targeted for **specific programmatic initiatives** in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Consideration of a **targeted business outreach program** to assist underrepresented businesses access ARPA programs





# Needs Assessment Summary & Recommendations

- We are proposing **twelve (12) categories of priority needs** to reflect the input from the public and the existing data sources that we have utilized to inform this report
- We are recommending for the first funding phase to allocate **\$14,000,000** to the ARPA application process
  - **The revenue replacement, which currently stands at \$2.82 million,** would be used at the discretion of the Commission if and when a decision is made to make this allocation
- We would recommend that the commission consider allocating the \$14 million into 3 broad categories of **Community, Collaboration, and County**



# Greene County ARPA Timeline

- **May 19, 2021** - Greene County receives the first allocation of ARPA funds
- **September through November 2021** - Greene County ARPA Team conducts a Needs Assessment Process
  - **September 2021** - Greene County ARPA Team conducts the Community Survey
  - **October & November 2021** - Greene County ARPA Team hosts Nonprofit Listening Sessions
  - **November 2021** - The Needs Assessment Report is presented to the County Commissioners
- **November & December 2021** - Greene County applications for ARPA funds are developed
- **December 2021** - Greene County applications for ARPA funds are announced
- **January & February 2022** - Application process implemented
- **May & June 2022** - ARPA 2nd phase fund allocation (2021 funding)
- **Fall 2022** - ARPA 3rd phase fund allocation (2022 funding, 1st half)
- **Spring 2023** - ARPA 4th phase fund allocation (2022 funding, 2nd half)



# Needs Assessment Summary & Recommendations

As a bit of review, after considering all components of the Needs Assessment report, the top priorities that were previously identified are:

1. Mental Health Services
2. Affordable Housing
3. Services for Unhoused Persons
4. Vaccinations and Vaccine Information
5. Small Business Economic Assistance
6. Diversity and Inclusion Efforts
7. Assistance to Nonprofit Organizations
8. Household Food Programs
9. Broadband
10. Childcare and Services to Foster Youth
11. Water and Sewer
12. Substance Use Services



# Needs Assessment Summary & Recommendations

- While these findings are important, **some changes need to be made** in order to best address the county's immediate needs
- **Vaccination** was omitted from this final list as the health department has allocated funds for Springfield Greene County to set aside for its citizens
- **Diversity and Inclusion** are being addressed through an overall equity plan consistent with US Treasury recommendations
- **The rankings have been updated as follows:**
  1. **Mental Health Services**
  2. **Affordable Housing**
  3. **Services for Unhoused Persons**
  4. **Small Business Economic Assistance**
  5. **Assistance to Nonprofit Organizations**
  6. **Household Food Programs**
  7. **Broadband**
  8. **Childcare and Services to Foster Youth**
  9. **Water and Sewer**
  10. **Substance Use Services**
  11. **Aid to Tourism, Travel, and Hospitality Industry**
  12. **Education Assistance to Early Learning**



# Needs Assessment Summary & Recommendations

- This final list more accurately recognizes how Greene County has already made efforts at mitigating the negative effects of COVID-19, and **ensures a more appropriate and targeted response**
- Greene County recognizes the **unique opportunity ARPA funding presents** to reverse the negative trajectory of the pandemic and **improve conditions** for all citizens
- The end of the global pandemic continues to be the ultimate goal, but as we continue in that direction, **ARPA funding can provide valuable assistance** to many residents, businesses, and organizations who have been negatively impacted