

# City of Jamestown American Rescue Plan Funding

Prepared by:

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**COMMUNITY**  
FOUNDATION



# Summary of Feedback

The City of Jamestown has been allocated more than \$28 million in American Rescue Plan Act Funding. This has been described as a game-changing opportunity that brings tremendous resources to a community with significant needs. Under the Mayor's leadership, a preliminary plan was drafted to deploy the funding using five broad classifications indicated in the ARP legislation and Interim Final Guidance.

The City of Jamestown and the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation worked collaboratively to host four general community listening sessions and roundtable discussions with business and nonprofit leaders to present and solicit feedback on the preliminary plan.

These sessions were attended by *118 residents* and a total of *8 responses* were received through email and telephone, bringing significant community voice to this government process.

## Classifications receiving the most support include:

1. Housing Stability and Neighborhood Revitalization
2. Economic and Workforce Development
3. Resident Health and Wellbeing (Mental and Physical Health)
4. Recreation and Youth Activities

## Cross cutting themes:

1. **Equity** should be a primary focus when considering how proposed programs and projects, including impact on populations that have historically been underserved or marginalized (people of color, residents living in poverty, people with disabilities and older adults).
2. **Prioritize community need** by funding programs and projects that will directly impact local residents, balancing the "nice-to-have" with quality of life needs for residents.
3. **Sustainability** should be considered before utilizing funding from ARP for new programs or projects requiring ongoing maintenance.

## Needs that surpass the ARP funding scope alone:

1. Reducing the poverty rate
2. Addressing transportation needs
3. Meeting the needs of an aging community
4. Being more inclusive and equitable when deploying resources



# Recommendations

The Chautauqua Region Community Foundation seeks opportunities to improve the quality of life for all residents of our region. This process captured the voice of the community and is the basis for these recommendations.

- 1) The obligations of both the pace of expenditure and documentation expected are nearly unprecedented in City history. It is unlikely that these obligations can be met without investing in capacity and oversight. This can be internal or contracted. Keep in mind that documentation relates to reporting to the federal government AND being transparent with City residents about how the dollars are deployed.
- 2) The pace of the expenditures is likely to challenge the community's capacity to deliver. This will exacerbate existing shortages with both materials and skilled labor force. The City should consider how these dollars could encourage new small businesses in under-resourced sectors and increase the number of MWBE vendors.
- 3) Utilize community-based organizations to expand the scope of what is possible through the City of Jamestown alone. Directly overseeing the spending of \$28 million and moving all of the projects through existing City processes may slow down the expenditure and risk the second payment of the funding.
- 4) Conduct an open and transparent process to identify the best community-based organizations to run programs that expand the City's reach. Consider how an Ad-Hoc Committee comprised of elected officials AND community members could be created to keep community voice present. Explore if the City Charter includes an existing Commission that can do this. Learn from other organizations that routinely administer funding to gain efficiency and expertise.
- 5) Prioritize projects that present opportunities to leverage ARP funding with other funding sources, including philanthropic dollars. Along the same lines, leverage the experience of community-based organizations by building on existing programs with ARP funding.
- 6) Most importantly, apply an equity lens to all aspects of this funding. If specific projects are funded, consider how all City residents benefit. Document demographics like race, ethnicity, income and age when identifying the target audience. If specific programs are funded, engage individuals with lived experience in the funding decision and in monitoring the progress. Measure success and report on those metrics as part of the effort to be transparent to the community.



# Specific Feedback by Category

## Economic Development and Lost Revenue

- Long-term and strategic vision for the use and potential impact of funds.
- Promote economic development opportunities across the City, not just downtown.
- Improvements to areas of the City heavily trafficked by local residents every day, such as North Main, E 2<sup>nd</sup>, Fairmount, Falconer, Washington, Foote and Buffalo St.)
- Economic development plan for Washington St, Fluvanna Ave. and North Main St. (equivalent Peach St., Erie PA or Route 60, Fredonia/Dunkirk).
- Replacement of 3<sup>rd</sup> St. trees should be matched by planting trees along Washington St.
- Sample project of the 3<sup>rd</sup> St. trees is more of a “nice to have,” of the approx. 29 properties the \$500K project breaks down to \$17,241 each.
- Neighborhood revitalization, improvement projects, parks and recreation need greater equity in the selection of locations across the entire City; prioritize neglected areas.
- Consider multiple smaller projects at several locations instead of just one larger project.
- Indoor, year-round athletic facility for youth and college level sports.
- Community or recreation centers for youth, seniors and other residents.
- Promotion of specific projects, such as YMCA of Jamestown new facility, Northwest Arena’s TheZone, or new ones such as short golf course/youth learning course.
- Expansion of the Public Market to be year-round, indoors, community food co-op.
- Rebuilding more of the curbs and sidewalks, and install new ones where none exist.
- Need for greater City representation on the CCIDA.
- Business development, more “shovel ready” sites for developers.
- Turn vacant factory locations into green space or public use areas.
- Bring back the Youth Bureau Director position to coordinate activities and programs.
- More recreation opportunities for families across different parks in the City, rather than just one and the development of different offerings in parks such as natural play spaces.
- Workforce programs to help businesses support employees.
- Target bringing 4-year degree programs to the community that can help workforce recruitment and fill current gaps by attracting and developing more skilled workers.
- Training program (exit ramp) for applicants that are not accepted into JCC Nursing program; to offer other healthcare training here locally (LPN, CAN, lab tech).
- Business incubators for MWBE start-ups.
- Civic Engagement Incubator, recruit BIPOC residents in government and nonprofits.
- Preparedness for future pandemics, through mitigation strategies and capacities.
- Develop alternative, sustainable energy, that could also serve as a revenue source
- Sample projects, fire stations, city infrastructure and other are good investments.



## **Housing**

- \$1.4 million is not enough to address housing issues in the City.
- Programs should target improving housing stock and tax base.
- Strategy to buy back housing stock, purchase of rental properties on tax auction.
- Programs for home improvement should require simpler paper work; not based on income eligibility; prioritize support for older adults and people with disabilities.
- Increase investment in the gateway corridors into the City.
- Creation of pre-fab housing that can be locally manufactured.
- Efforts to mediate issues with notoriously delinquent landlords.
- Establish a registration program for landlords and renters.
- Position at the City to help bridge the gap/ communication with landlords and renters.
- Receivership program is positive; concerns about landlord/tenant issues.
- Creation of tax tiers to favor local ownership of properties.
- Option to collect property taxes monthly, versus an annual basis.
- Demolition of abandoned and condemned structures.
- Incentives for first time home buyers, program for down payments and closing costs.
- Programs to support low income homeowners and prevention of eviction.
- Concerns on increase of housing insecurity when the moratorium on evictions is lifted.
- Gap of an emergency shelter serving women and families.
- Ability to leverage ARP funds to bring in additional/more dollars for projects.

## **Mental Health**

- Not enough funding is allocated to address mental health and substance use; priority to addressing issues of poverty, addiction, improving quality of life for residents.
- Multi-disciplinary approach to address the root causes of mental health crises.
- Trauma informed care community and building trauma informed infrastructures.
- Whole health focus, not just mental health aspect.
- Embed mental health providers in existing structures in the community, and provide training to community members.
- Need for more high-quality community-based providers, services and greater capacity given to substance use treatment options.
- Address the long-term sustainability of programs.
- Mental Health Rapid Response is a great idea, but concern over whether or not other components are in place to make this an effective program.
- Lack of local and regional rehab programs; affordability of programs.
- Concerns on coordination and duplication of services being offered.



- Address cultural and economic bias in law enforcement that may hinder individuals from being able to get the right help.
- Provide greater support for mental health workers.
- Consider other social determinants of health and the impact on children.

### **Water, Sewer and Broadband**

- Sample projects are needed and long overdue.
- Investment in water, such as clean water, recycling water.
- Understanding the difference and costs between waste v. storm water.
- Broadband is a needed and an essential service; ensure availability is offered across entire City to not create a “digital redline” in certain areas.
- In addition to accessing internet service, there is a need for devices in homes without them.

### **Transparency & Tracking**

- Not a required category, concerns on level of funding for this category.
- Much needed to ensure accurate reporting, so not to compromise future funding.
- Consider options to utilize partners to be able to share in the cost, instead of creating new positions.  
Events coordinator position is redundant, already offered by many existing attractor entities, Chamber and CCVB.
- Suggestion on tracking big picture, data, time line and regular updates on the City website and to local media.

### **Other**

- Focus on reducing the city’s high poverty rate.
- Proposed projects should be linked to job creation.
- Prioritize projects that cannot be funded through other sources, CFA and CDBG.
- Address transportation, to better serve a diverse population, need for a more robust system; greater access, availability and funds to support the use by local residents.
- Support for local entities like the James Prendergast Library serving diverse populations, such as a station for a social worker.
- Programs to support Senior citizens; registry of reliable vendors, home improvement incentives or rebates, community center/activities.
- Need for shared, accurate data and data driven strategies across organizations.
- A mechanism to follow up with the public on the feedback received as part of these sessions, and ongoing transparency and feedback on the use of the funds over the next five-year period.

