



ARPA Community Engagement Report: Spending Priorities for \$15 Million of Federal COVID-relief

Aid Coming for Families, Workers, Businesses

February 2, 2022 — Last Wednesday night, January 26, the Governing Body was presented with the ARPA Community Engagement Report that will inform City government decisions about how Santa Fe will spend \$15 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds coming from the Federal Government to provide direct relief to families, workers, and businesses impacted by COVID-19. The funding can be disbursed and spent by December 2024.

To expend these funds in an equitable, just, and community-driven fashion, the City commissioned a community-engagement data-collection effort to better understand the needs of Santa Fe residents. Cerise Consulting, a Santa Fe-based firm specializing in community-based solutions, collected the data and prepared the report under the supervision of Community Health and Safety Director Kyra Ochoa and Community and Economic Development Director Rich Brown. Cerise conducted a survey that 1,040 residents responded to, held a listening session, and incorporated public comments from Governing Body meetings in October and November of last year.

Three areas that respondents felt needed the most funding allocations are Community Health and Safety, Children and Youth Support Services, and Economic Health. Affordable housing and accessible behavioral health services were the respondents' most frequently cited areas of need. The report also includes categories of responses about City Services and Arts, Culture, and Recreation.

Based on the results, the consultants suggested these funding allocation buckets: Community Health & Safety, Community and Economic Development, Public Works and Public Utilities, Basic City Services, and ARPA Grant Management.

Community Health and Safety Director Kyra Ochoa says: “The engagement process balanced the importance of getting meaningful input from city residents about their needs in the wake of the pandemic with the very real need to see these funds get out into the community in a timely manner.”

Community and Economic Development Director Rich Brown says: “The \$15 million awarded to the City of Santa Fe will help our residents recover and strengthen our local economy. This includes programming to help small local businesses grow, job training, community and housing development, and industry-specific ideas to diversify our economy. This multiplier effect of investing in our businesses and community will generate jobs, resiliency, and renewed optimism.”

Over the next month, recommendations for budgeting these funds are scheduled to come before City Council Committees, then the Governing Body for final review.

Find the presentation and report, including results of the survey and community engagement efforts, here: [Cerise Consulting Santa Fe ARPA Public Engagement Report - GB PACKET \(primegov.com\)](#)