



**Interim Application Instructions for American Rescue Plan Act Funding
As of September 17, 2021**

Overview

Mayor Brandon M. Scott is pleased to extend an opportunity for City agencies, quasi-agencies, and external organizations to apply for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. ARPA established the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund which has provided \$641 million in one-time funding to the City of Baltimore to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and its negative economic impacts.

These application instructions will provide insight into how the City of Baltimore plans to use the funds, the funding process, and other important information for requesting funds.

Baltimore City's ARPA Strategy

Funding from ARPA will allow the City to continue its robust response to fighting the COVID-19 public health emergency. It will also be a bridge to local economic recovery and a catalyst for transformational and equitable change. Mayor Scott strives to use this funding to change outcomes and increase the quality of life for City residents.

The process for using this one-time ARPA funding and making these critical investments is project based. Through projects approved for funding, the City will invest in its processes, equity, infrastructure, public health, and more to combat the COVID-19 public health emergency and move Baltimore forward.

In July 2021 Mayor Scott established the Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs (Recovery Office), responsible for administering all aspects of ARPA funds and regularly reporting to the federal government, as well as the public. The Recovery Office strives to ensure that ARPA funds are utilized to make strategic investments in Baltimore's future and equitably deliver resources and services to City residents.

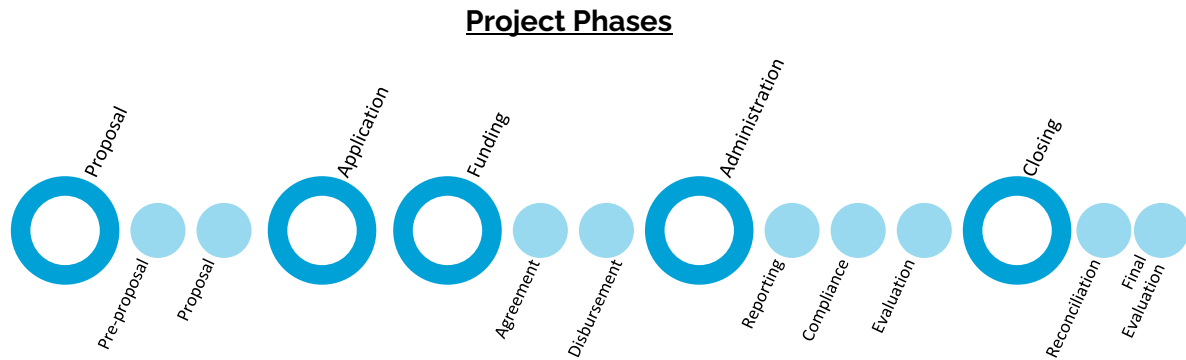
It is the City's expectation that organizations put forth eligible projects that advance Mayor Scott's Priority Outcomes. Below is a definition of each:

Priority Outcomes

	Prioritizing Our Youth		Addressing the effect of the pandemic on youth development and welfare.
	Building Public Safety		Enhancing and scaling violence prevention and response monitoring and communications efforts.
	Equitable Neighborhood Development		Delivering resources to communities to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and reduce vulnerabilities.
	Clean and Healthy Communities		Direct response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic, safe reopening of facilities, and implementing preventative public health measures.
	Responsible Stewardship of City Resources		Investments in City operations and assets affected by the pandemic to improve future outcomes.

Project Lifecycle

The City of Baltimore uses a project-based approach for ARPA funding. There are five phases to projects: Proposal, Application, Funding, Administration, and Closing. Each phase has concurrent or consecutive requirements that must be met to move on to the next phase. This section will provide a brief overview of the requirements for each phase.



Proposal

The proposal phase contains two consecutive steps: pre-proposal, proposal. A user guide for the application portal is attached as Appendix A.

Pre-proposal

Eligibility

There is an eligibility threshold for projects to meet to be considered. Projects that will be considered eligible for funding must identify the following information:

1. Identify a negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and
2. Identify how the project accurately documents and responds to the scale of the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Projects have a minimum funding request of \$250,000. The funding can be used over the course of multiple years but must be obligated by December 31, 2024. Ineligible projects will be declined.

Projects must remedy the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts directly or indirectly. Direct projects respond to effects that can be solely attributed to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Examples of direct projects include mobilizing a large-scale vaccination effort or building improvements for social distancing. The COVID-19 public health emergency is the only cause for direct projects. Indirect projects can also address the effects of the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. Indirect projects are linked to the COVID-19 pandemic via direct effects or have more than one cause, of which the COVID-19 pandemic is one. For example, an organization proposing a tutoring program would be an indirect project—a direct effect of the pandemic was the transition to virtual school, of which many students suffered learning loss in the transition.



Note: An eligible project idea is not a commitment to fund.

Proposal

This is the second step in the application phase. A proposal is a concise overview of the project. It identifies the project managers, provides a description of the project, identifies potential performance measures, and offers a high-level overview of the budget and potential cost impacts. The information provided in the proposal will be reviewed for eligibility by the Recovery Office.

Incomplete proposals and proposals that do not meet eligibility criteria will not be accepted.

Completing the Proposal

The proposal form has multiple points where character count is limited to ensure brevity. Applicants will have the opportunity to expand upon their proposals in application phase pending eligibility review and evaluation.

Title. Project titles should be a brief description of what is being proposed. Do not include your organization's name in the project title. Titles may be edited at the discretion of the Recovery Office.

Priority Outcome. Applicants must select one of the five Priority Outcomes (referenced on page 1) to categorize their project. If an applicant believes that their project could be categorized as two or more of the outcomes, chose the one in which a majority of the funds will be spent.

Risk. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the capacity, skill, and internal control to administer funds appropriately and in compliance with all laws, regulations, agreements, and guidance—the uncertainty in performing this task is considered risk. Applicants are not expected to eliminate risk. However, applicants are encouraged to describe at least 3 risks and a plan for mitigation to receive the maximum number of points.

Evaluation. Proposals should include thoughtful consideration of measurement and evaluation that have valid, accessible, well-sourced data. Performance measures are a quantifiable expression of the amount, cost, or result of activities that indicate how much, how well, and at what level products or services are provided during a given time period. Most importantly, proposed performance measures should link to outcomes, measures of benefit received associated with a program or service.

Financial Information. Proposed budgets should be well planned but are not expected to be exhaustive or granular at this phase. Proposals should describe all necessary resources to complete a project. Furthermore, organizations should give additional thought as to

whether the project they are proposing will have an impact on future operating budgets, revenue and expenditures.

The full list of proposal questions can be found in Appendix B for review in advance. Proposals will only be accepted via the online portal. The link to the online application portal is located at <https://arp.baltimorecity.gov/>.

Eligible proposals will be scored by a 7-person Proposal Review Team. There is a team for internal applicants and a team for external applicants.

In addition to City agency reviewers, the Internal Proposal Review Team will include one member from the Private Sector/Industry and the External Proposal Review Team will contain one Community Representative, both appointed by the Mayor.

Proposals will be scored against 100-point criteria. The criteria are contained in Appendix C. Below are the evaluation decisions:

- Proposals receiving a score of 50 points or less by any member of the panel or an average of score of 50 points may be declined.
- Proposals receiving an average score greater than 50 and up to 67 points may be asked to resubmit with revisions up to 2 times.
- Proposals receiving an average score of 67 points and above will move on to the next step in the process.



Note: A proposal deemed eligible and successfully evaluated is not a commitment to fund.

Applicants will be notified via email through each step of the review process.

Endorsements

Proposals that are scored 67 points or higher are eligible to be endorsed by elected officials. An endorsement is a letter of support for your application and is a testimonial in favor of the project proposal that demonstrates its capability to further the goals of City leadership.

Endorsements can come from the Comptroller, City Council President, or a City Council member. Project proposals are not required to have an endorsement to proceed to the next step. If an endorsement is sought, only one is necessary for the application to receive the benefit. Multiple endorsements are not necessary.

Application

The application phase is focused on providing additional information for project implementation.

Application

A successful proposal will proceed to the application phase. It is in this phase that applicants will create detailed implementation plans based on their proposal. Applicants will be assigned an Application Advisor to provide technical assistance through this process. The process includes developing:

- a detailed budget
- performance measures
- a performance management plan
- community engagement plan (City agencies only)
- a language access plan
- a project risk analysis
- an equity impact analysis
- an overall project timeline

The Recovery Office will work with applicants to ensure that applications are completed in a timely manner. There is no defined time to complete an application. Timing of the process will vary with how fast the applicant can complete the required components of the application and respond to requests for information.

For City and quasi-governmental agencies, the Recovery Office will assign community engagement standards during the application stage. Examples include:

- Public notice providing project information and the agency decision-making process
- Public meeting and comment period no less than a specific number of days
- Letters of support from community organizations and resident testimonials
- Community charrettes, workshops, open houses, or townhalls for extensive feedback and participatory decision-making

For external applicants, the City may require detailed employment and tax data, insurance information, governmental licenses, and organizing documents to conduct due diligence and risk assessments to ensure satisfaction of federal guidelines and regulations.




Note: A completed application is not a commitment to fund.

A completed application will be reviewed by the Chief Recovery Officer. Each application is evaluated on its own merits through the process. In determining if projects should receive final approval for funding, the Recovery Office will consider the following: urgency of the project, timeline for the project's completion, other available sources of funding (internal and external), if the project is a new or existing program, overall complexity of the project, project risk, if the project competes with existing priorities, and the possibility of existing similar projects or programs.

Applications may be placed on active waiting lists to ensure funds are awarded in accordance with this policy and to facilitate prudent financial management and equitable distribution of funds. All completed proposals will be accepted and evaluated, and funds will be available until the final application deadline.

The Mayor, City Administrator, or their designees will provide the final review and approval for applications. Executive approval creates a commitment to fund and moves the application to the funding phase. Applicants will be notified via email on the status of their application.

	Note: Executive approval is a commitment to fund.
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Funding

Once a request for funding has received executive approval, it is eligible to be funded. The funding phase has two consecutive requirements: agreement and disbursement.

Agreement

Each project must have an agreement. For internal applicants, this will typically take the form of an Inter-agency agreement with the Recovery Office. For external applicants, this will be in the form of a grant agreement. The agreement will describe the terms and conditions of funding, including, but not limited to purpose, term, eligible uses, scope, reporting requirements, amendments, termination, audit, and any other requirements.

Disbursement

The agreement will contain the terms of the disbursement of funds. However, actual disbursement of funds will be subject to existing City policies. For internal awardees, account numbers for the project will be assigned by the Recovery Office. In addition, the project manager and respective fiscal officer will work in close coordination with the Recovery Office and Bureau of Procurement to conduct all purchasing and execution of related contracts. External awardees will be provided instructions on how to receive disbursements in accordance with City procedure in their grant agreements.

Administration

The administration phase contains four concurrent steps: reporting, compliance, evaluation, and technical assistance.

Reporting, compliance, and evaluation requirements will be defined in the funding agreement. The administration phase includes the implementation of those requirements. The awardee is responsible for the implementation of the project as defined by the application and funding agreement. Technical assistance and project management support will be available throughout the process through the Recovery Office.

The City of Baltimore holds compliance with federal guidelines with the utmost importance. Failure to execute a project as planned or comply with the funding agreement may result in

corrective action, disqualification from submitting future applications, recovery of funds, termination of the agreement, and/or other civil or criminal proceedings as necessary.

Project Closing

Projects will be closed once the terms of the agreements have been fulfilled or the term of the agreement has concluded. All funds will have been reconciled, all outstanding issues have been resolved, and unused funding returned. Final reports must be filed and the awardee is required to retain those reports for future audits.

Responsibilities

The instructions contained in this document have highlighted multiple responsibilities for applicants and the Recovery Office. In addition, there are several additional policies and expectations of the City that may impact the decision or ability to apply for project funding.

Applicants are expected to:

- Self-assess project eligibility before submitting a proposal
- Seek prior approval of all relevant parties before making a submission
- Provide accurate, honest, and timely information
- Comply with all laws, contractual requirements, guidelines, and agreements
- Actively seek an understanding of the project lifecycle
- Make the project a priority
- Complete projects in accordance with the approved scope of work and agreed upon timeline
- Read and continually refer to the application instructions and other future guidance and FAQs from the program administrators
- Be in good standing with the State of Maryland and City of Baltimore

The Recovery Office is expected to:

- Ensure applicants are aware of eligibility requirements
- Notify applicants and awardees of status changes
- Respond to questions from applicants in a timely manner
- Issue and update guidance and Frequently Asked Questions as necessary
- Provide technical assistance to help awardees meet compliance requirements
- Complete agreements and make payments in a timely manner

Contact Information

For additional information, please email arp@baltimorecity.gov.

Appendix A: Application Portal User Guide

The Recovery Office is utilizing an online application portal for all proposed ARPA projects. This guide is meant to provide general support for how to use the portal. For questions specific to the City of Baltimore's process that are not addressed in the guidance below, please contact arp@baltimorecity.gov.

VIDEO 1: Site Access & Account Creation

You will access the system via the logon page, which can be found at <https://arp.baltimorecity.gov/apply-funding>. It's recommended that you bookmark this page in your internet browser for ease of access. If you have already created an account, you may enter your email and password and log in. Otherwise, click on the Create New Account button. If at any time after creating an account, you cannot remember your password, click on the Forgot Your Password button, enter your email address, and you will be sent a link to reset your password.



Logon Page

A screenshot of the logon page for the Foundation's online grant portal. The page includes two input fields for 'Email Address*' and 'Password*', a 'Log On' button, a 'Create New Account' button, and a 'Forgot your Password?' link. A yellow arrow points to the 'Create New Account' button, and another yellow arrow points to the 'Forgot your Password?' link. A grey information box on the right contains instructions for new and existing users, and a 'Not Sure?' section with contact information for the administrator.

Email Address*

Password*

Log On **Create New Account** [Forgot your Password?](#)

Welcome to the Foundation's online grant portal.

New Users: Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.

Existing Users: Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password" link to the left to reset your password.

Not Sure? If you think that you have already registered in the system, do not create a new account. Please contact our Administrator, at example@email.com to receive your username and password.

CREATE NEW ACCOUNT:

- Creating a new account is a multi-step process.
 - with the first section collecting **Organization Information**.
 - the second section collecting **User Information**.
 - and sections three and four collecting **Executive Officer** information.
- After Organization Information has been entered click on the "**Next**" button.
- The next section is the "**User Information**" section, or YOUR information.
 - If your address is the same as your organization's, you may use the "**Copy Address from Organization**" button to automatically pull the address information from the organization address fields into the address fields in this section.
 - It is very important to note that the email address entered in the **Email/Username** field becomes the Applicant's **Username** in the system.

- Once the fields on the **"User Information"** section are completed, click on the **"Next"** button.
 - Please note that should you need to navigate to the previous section in the registration process, use the **"Previous"** button at the bottom of each section in order for the information entered in registration fields to remain intact. If you attempt to navigate to the previous section by using their browser's "back" button you will lose all registration information entered.
- In the next section, indicate if you are the Organization's Executive Officer.
 - If you are the executive officer, select **"Yes."** You will be taken to a section of optional fields that includes only the fields that were not required in the **"User Information"** section.
 - If you are not the executive officer, select **"No,"** and complete the required Executive Officer fields.
- Once the executive officer's information is entered, click on the **"Next"** button to create a password.
- Password requirements are listed at the top of the section, so the applicant can create their password accordingly.
- Once the password is created, the applicant clicks the **"Create Account"** button.

EMAIL CONFIRMATION:

Upon clicking Create Account, you will be taken to the Email Confirmation page to confirm that you are receiving emails from the system. It may take a few minutes for you to receive an email from the system. Follow the onscreen instructions and click the "Continue" button to finish the registration process.

VIDEO 2: Applying for Funding

Upon completing registration and accessing the system for the first time, you will land on the **Apply Page**. This page will show any relevant deadlines and other applicable information.

- You can preview the application without saving any work by clicking on the "Preview" button.
- To start a proposal, click on the blue **"Apply"** button.
 - Clicking Apply will take you into a form to complete and submit. At the beginning of the process you will submit your proposal via an LOI form.

During a later stage in the process, you will submit the Application form should your proposal be deemed eligible and receive a successful evaluation from the review team. The below examples demonstrates the application stage, which is similar to the form that will be filled out during the initial LOI stage.

Once in the form, note that your contact and organization information automatically populate at the top of the form.

- You may update your contact information and view your email history.
 - If applicants can update organization information the edit icon will appear next to the Organization Information.
 - If not, you must contact the Recovery Office directly to change organization information.
- If you'd like a PDF copy of the application, click the Question List button.
- Once you've completed the form, click the Application Packet button to download a copy of the questions and your responses.

Respond to all fields in the form.

- Note that **any fields with an asterisk are required fields** and must be completed prior to submitting an application.
- As you complete the form, the system will auto-save every 100 characters typed or every time you click out of a field.
- You may collapse question groups once you've finished all of the questions in that group, as an indicator that you have completed that section and reduce scrolling.
- Some fields have character limits.
 - Responses that are longer than the set limit will be saved, **but** an error message will appear informing the applicant that the limit has been exceeded.
 - You will not be allowed to submit the form until the length of the response is in accordance with the character limit.
- File **upload fields** will only accept one file, per field.
 - Upload fields have size limits.
 - If you attempt to upload a file that is larger than the set 3 MiB limit, you will receive an error message informing the applicant that the file is too large and the file **will not** be saved.
 - Upload fields may also have File Type restrictions.

- After selecting Abandon Requests, you must type in Abandon Request and select OK
- The request will then be visible in the Historical Requests tab.

When all of the fields are complete, submit the application.

- If any required fields are not completed, or a response to a text question type is longer than the character limit, the system will not allow the form to be submitted.
 - An error message appears listing the fields that need to be completed or edited.
 - These fields are outlined in red, and are easy to identify as the applicant scrolls through the form.
- When a form is submitted successfully, the applicant will be taken to a confirmation page.
 - When you click "**Continue**" you are taken to your dashboard where you can VIEW your submitted request.
 - Note, that **once an application has been submitted it can no longer be edited.**

VIDEO 3: Your Applicant Dashboard


Your dashboard includes current and historical requests.

The active request tab includes all current requests. These requests still require action, are awaiting a decision and/or requests that have not yet been marked closed by the Recovery Office. Within each request you can see forms, form statuses and submission dates and, if applicable, form deadlines.

▼ Fall Grant For Book Funding

Process: Base Camp Example Process

Application	Draft	07/24/2018	Edit Application
Decision	Undecided		



- You may continue working on saved forms by clicking the edit option next to the form.
- You may view forms that have been submitted but note that submitted forms cannot be edited.
- You can also see the decision status for each request.
 - The default status will be "Undecided" until the site administrator posts a decision.
 - Timing on decision status updates vary.

If your request is approved, you may be assigned Follow Up Reports to be completed and submitted through the system.

- Follow ups are completed and submitted just like any other form.
- If multiple follow up forms are assigned, you must complete them sequentially by due date.
- Follow ups that are past due will be marked as such.

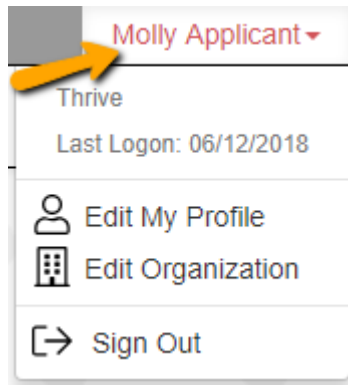
- If the past due message is reflected in orange, you may still submit the form.
- If the past due message is reflected in red, you no longer have the option to submit the form.

Follow Up Forms

FORM NAME	ASSIGNED TO	AWARD / INSTALLMENT	DUE DATE	STATUS	EDIT/VIEW
Award Agreement	Molly Applicant	Overall Award	05/31/2018	Past Due	Assigned Edit

Denied requests and requests marked closed by the site administrator are included in the Historical Request tab.

If you wish to edit your account information or change your password, click your name in the top right. This will expand a drop-down menu. If you click Edit my profile, you will be able to update your user information or change your password. Click save in the bottom right once completed.



Please note, that you will be automatically logged out of the system after 90 minutes of inactivity (you will receive a warning message at 80 minutes of the pending "time out").

Appendix B: Proposal Questions

Please use the following questions as a guide for completing a project proposals. Include any key benefits expected for the applicant, citizens, and the City of Baltimore.

- How does this project respond to or mitigate the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts?
- Which Mayoral Priority Outcome does the project align?
- Does the project remedy a direct or indirect effect of the public health emergency?
 - Please describe the evidence (print article, peer-reviewed research, internal data, etc.) linking this indirect remedy to the public health emergency.
- If the project is funded, does the organization have the capacity to implement the project with existing resources?
- Would the applicant require additional staff, technology or other physical, social, or organizational resources for this project to succeed? Please describe.
- Describe the project timeline including key dates. Please also include if this project will be phased out at the conclusion of the public health emergency.
- Describe the risks or challenges for the successful implementation of the project.
- How will the project incorporate and advance equity?
- Describe what success means for the project. How will outcomes change due to its implementation? (e.g., "reduce the number of invoices paid late")
- Define 3-5 potential performance measures for the project. Each performance measure should include the source of the data and ability to access and report on that data.
- List all expenses associated with the project (salaries, contracts, materials, equipment, grants, etc.). Provide a brief description of the expense and indicate if it is one-time or recurring. Enter each expense on a new line starting with the dollar value.
- Describe the impact this project will have on the operating budget - revenue and expenditures. If there is no impact, explain why.
- Total Amount Requested

Appendix C: Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Describes project intentions clearly and resulting benefits	No clear intention for use of funds	Intent unclear or uses excessive jargon	Intent clear and presents project benefits	Intent clear, presents benefits, and advances Mayoral agenda
	0 points	5 points	10 points	15 points
Presents business case for the public good	No business case and would result in large-scale revenue loss or recurring costs without a solution	Presents business case for the public good and may result in increased recurring costs	Presents business case and is expected to generate cost savings or revenue	Presents business case and intends to supply both cost savings and revenue
	0 points	5 points	10 points	15 points
Identifies and analyzes project risks	No presentation of risks or adverse results	One risk or adverse result is given	Two or more risks given and at least one mitigating factor	Three or more risks given and a plan for mitigation
	0 points	5 points	10 points	15 points
Describes success and provides valid performance measures	Success not adequately described or goal-based	Success described, performance measures not supported or do not tie to an outcome	Success is goal-based, performance measures are valid	Success is outcome-oriented, performance measures identified, sourced, accessible, and linked to outcome
	0 points	5 points	10 points	15 points
Explains how project impacts equity	No evidence of (or adverse) impact in the project	Equity influences the proposal	Equity is operationalized in the proposal	Equity is a central tenet of the project
	0 points	7 points	12 points	20 points
Outlines financial resources to achieve project goals	No evidence of financial plan or itemized costs	Itemized costs are non-specific; evidence of financial planning	Itemized costs are specific; financial plan is clearly outlined	Itemized costs and financial plan are supported with descriptions
	0 points	5 points	10 points	15 points
Leverages City resources with partnerships	No evidence of partnerships	Partnership identified within the City or an external partner	Partnership and external funding (or enhancement of existing funding) identified	Multiple collaborators and external funding (or enhancement of existing funding) identified
	0 points	1 point	3 points	5 points