Cleveland County
RECOVERY PLAN
2021

STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS
CLEVELAND COUNTY INITIAL REPORT
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ROADMAP TO RECOVERY

Cleveland County was founded in 1890 and is located in central Oklahoma. A land area of more than 500 square miles and a steadily growing population of close to 300,000 people (2020 census); making it the third most populous county in Oklahoma. The county seat is Norman, home of the University of Oklahoma, the National Weather Center and numerous government facilities. While the majority of the county's population is located in Norman or Moore, there are also small towns and rural areas for whom the county provides services. A portion of Oklahoma City is even located in the northern part of the county.

Oklahoma has experienced a significant number of emergencies through the years, and Cleveland County is no exception. Natural disasters such as floods, ice storms, wildfires, drought and tornados occur regularly. Oklahoma City was the location of the largest act of domestic terrorism when the Murrah building was bombed on April 19, 1995. The first responders, businesses and citizens are experienced in responding when an emergency occurs and recovering efficiently.

Through these numerous disasters, Cleveland County has developed a culture of collaboration and compassion. The businesses are resilient and innovative. A network of trained first responders is available. A community of engaged and informed citizens endures. And a system of concerned and effective nonprofits sustains. The pandemic is the latest chapter in Cleveland County's ability to respond and recover from whatever challenge the county may face with resilience, compassion and hope for the future.

Due to its history in response to emergencies, Cleveland County is well positioned to develop a practical and effective Recovery Plan for the Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Funds. As such, Cleveland County is taking a strategic, needs-based approach to this once in a lifetime opportunity recognizing that these funds can make a lasting impact on the community.

Cleveland County's first priority is to identify the impacts caused, or exacerbated by, the pandemic and to educate the public on the **Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**. Focusing on the negative public health and economic impacts, a comprehensive needs assessment is being conducted to determine the needs facing Cleveland County. The assessment is focused on both immediate needs, and longer-term recovery strategies for the county. As the pandemic is ongoing, this Initial Recovery Plan will focus on process versus projects, ensuring that the funds are truly tied to the needs of the community. It is important to the County Commissioners that the process to develop

funding priorities is transparent and that the Recovery Plan be a working, community-driven document.

From the initial community feedback, (*community engagement process outlined in more detail below*) the county has outlined three main goals which will serve as the guide for the use of funds, throughout the term of the Recovery Plan. The county will continue meeting with residents, community organizations, and businesses and update this plan accordingly.

Goal One:
To ensure that Cleveland County supports the welfare of its residents with compassion and collaboration across sectors with services provided to those in need and accessible to vulnerable populations.

Goal Two:
To ensure that Cleveland County has an economy which is strong, resilient, and provides diverse opportunities for its residents.

Goal Three:
To ensure that the public infrastructure of Cleveland County is safe, secure, resilient and strategically focused on long-term benefits for all.

These goals are the foundation for developing the overarching strategy used to determine funding priorities and projects.
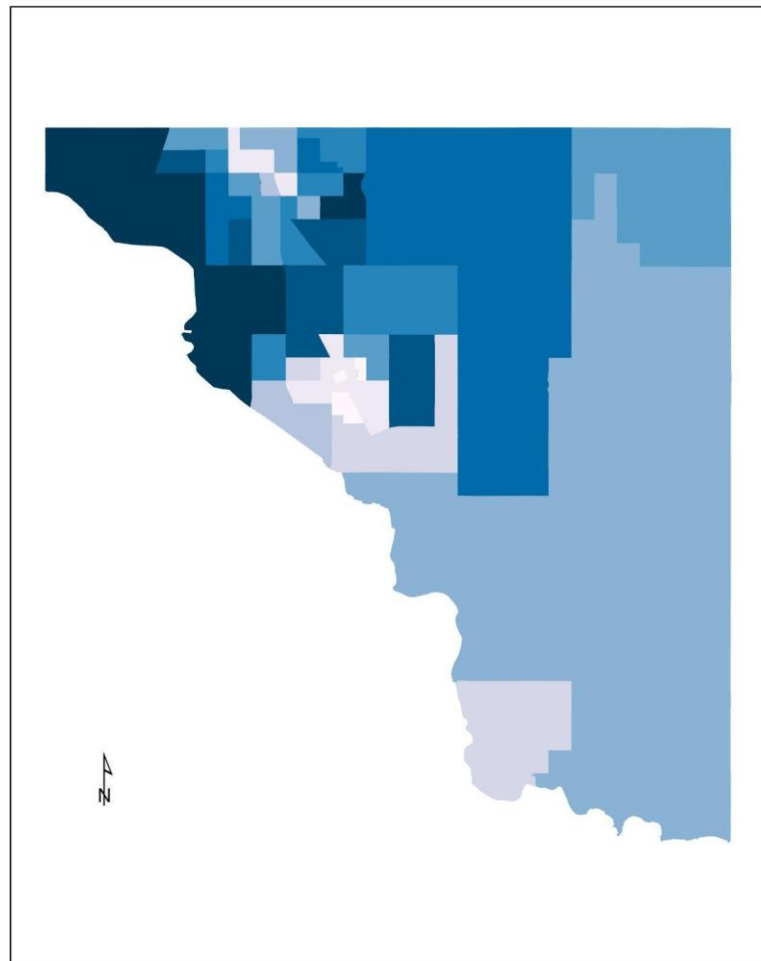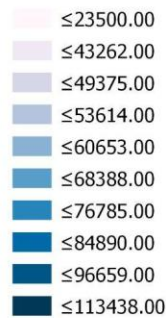
The first phase of the Recovery Plan was to conduct a needs assessment of the impacts the pandemic has had in Cleveland County. The process to determine needs has included input from many diverse communities and stakeholders across Cleveland County, as outlined in this Recovery Plan – Initial Report. All of the information gathered will be utilized to determine a prioritized list of projects centered around the overriding three goals of the Recovery Plan. The projects will be prioritized based upon need and impact. A project inventory will be developed with measurable outcomes and outputs and key performance indicators to evaluate progress toward the three goals. This Recovery Plan will be updated annually, while the project inventory and measurements will be updated more frequently.

Challenges
There is a great mixture of communities located within Cleveland County. The county is a combination of rural areas and suburban neighborhoods; high wealth zip codes, and swaths of Qualified Census

Tracts; large government employers and small mom-and-pop businesses.   This diversity in population and communities makes it a wonderful and interesting place to live; but difficult to use a "one size fits all" approach in recovery funding.

Cleveland County Income

	≤23500.00
	≤43262.00
	≤49375.00
	≤53614.00
	≤60653.00
	≤68388.00
	≤76785.00
	≤84890.00
	≤96659.00
	≤113438.00

The median household income for Cleveland County is $64,016, with the Northwest area of the county, including Moore, has the highest income levels with the lowest centered around the university. Two of the highest income zip codes in Oklahoma are located within Cleveland County, however, the county seat of Norman, contains a number of Qualified Census Tracts.

A large amount of the county's racial diversity comes from the Native American population living in rural unincorporated areas. According to census data, Cleveland County demographics are: 78.3% white, 5.5% black or African American, 5.3% Native American, 4.7% Asian, and 9.2% Hispanic or Latino.

Opportunities

There is a sense of community and small town feel in Cleveland County, even while being the third largest county in Oklahoma. It was quickly evident that Cleveland County organizations have an innovative spirit and have cultivated a strong, collaborative network, especially among its nonprofit

organizations. Understanding the network of connectors and collaborators is a significant asset of the county. The county is large enough to have a variety of resources, yet small enough to know and work together. The population has been through a fair share of disasters and always come together displaying what is known as the "Oklahoma Standard" across the world. Whether it is a tornado, ice storm, or a home town game of 90,000 fans, Cleveland County is used to working together to achieve a common goal of supporting the wellbeing of its citizens.

Thus, the strategy of the Recovery Plan formed throughout this process will build upon and maximize the natural collaboration and existing coordination, not duplicate or supplant existing services. It is the county's intent that this plan be a working document providing for flexibility as residents learn more about the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and provide input. **The Recovery Plan will continue to evolve as the pandemic evolves in Cleveland County, with enough flexibility to respond to immediate needs while targeting longer term recovery strategies consistent with the three overriding goals. Updates to the Plan will be made as funding priorities are developed and be updated on the county website.**

Uses of Funds

Cleveland County is taking a strategic approach of collecting data and feedback from the community before determining the use of funds. The county will focus on key outcome goals that will help support a strong and equitable recovery from the pandemic and determine priorities with that lens. However, the county is also mindful of the evolving nature of the pandemic and is evaluating whether the fall of 2021 might necessitate deploying funds to address immediate needs of the county. The Recovery Plan provides for the flexibility of addressing both longer term recovery planning and short term response needs within the framework of the three overriding goals.

The process to develop goals and priorities is to focus on four key questions:
- What negative impact is the county and organizations within the county seeing from the pandemic?
- What needs have been exacerbated by the pandemic?
- How should the community address those needs?
- What ideas would promote an equitable economic recovery and public health response?

While the county will continue engaging with its residents and stakeholders, there have already been some prominent themes emerging throughout the community engagement process (outlined in greater detail below).

In **Public Health**, the pandemic demonstrated the lack of adequate space and ventilation to provide for social distancing in needed public services such as vaccinations, testing, voting, farmers market, and others. The county Detention Center had challenges with isolating and quarantining inmates. The lack of testing, personal protection equipment, and screening procedures made it difficult to keep staff and inmates safe. The County Health Department lacked adequate space for social distancing and ability to perform public health functions. The lack of warehouse space to store public health supplies, including vaccines and testing equipment, continues to be a major issue. Additionally, the lack of sheltering for outside public health needs, including testing and vaccination, were problematic due to Oklahoma weather elements. The only full service hospital in Cleveland County, Norman Regional Health System, has been operating near capacity at times during the pandemic and needs more and efficient space, ventilation, and outdoor infrastructure. The dire situation of a shortage of health care workers continues to be felt across the county. Overall, the lack of space for mass vaccination and testing was a major issue. A highlighted innovation during the pandemic was IMMY Labs located in Cleveland County. Studying logistics found at the local Chick-Fil-A franchise, IMMY was able to innovate and pivot quickly to provide essential and timely testing services at the height of the

pandemic. They further pivoted to deploy mass vaccinations, but they struggled finding space to implement indoors and outdoors.

A common theme across sectors and feedback from the general public was the effect on **mental health** from the stress of the pandemic. The numbers of people needing assistance are increasing, and are predicted to continue increasing. Many individuals who had previously managed issues such as substance abuse and PTSD were not attending virtual services and relapsing. Drug courts, wellness checks, support groups and other services were not available or accessible in a meaningful way. This lack of structure and in person resources exacerbated mental health problems. The county also received feedback from every sector mentioning stress and burnout among the workforce. Mental health professionals are increasingly concerned about children and juveniles, and the lack of providers to serve the needs of the community.

When gathering feedback from businesses, cities, and municipalities on the **economic impacts** of the pandemic, workforce shortage concerns were a common theme. Many businesses have raised wages in the hopes of gaining more employees, however they still have difficulty filling jobs. This has led to businesses changing their hours of operation or closing certain aspects of their business, while others have closed entirely. Due to unemployment resulting from the pandemic, workers may need retraining to transition into new positions. The need for flexible policies on work hours and childcare was illustrated across sectors. As many services moved to online and the workforce began to work virtually, outdated technology became a problem. Another issue across the county was supply chain issues and initially gaining needed personal protective equipment. Businesses expressed needs surrounding technical assistance navigating federal programs and the applicable financial documents.

Cleveland County's nonprofit community is a robust network working together to provide services to those **disproportionately impacted** populations in the county. Nonprofits expressed the need for more resource centers where multiple nonprofits can collaborate on services and case management. The county's nonprofits fill many service needs including mental health, food insecurity, substance abuse, and homelessness. The need for more case managers and providers was prevalent. More than 7% of the population are veterans with unique needs. One of the largest school districts, Norman Public Schools has more than 50% of its student population which qualifies for free and reduced lunch program. For the '21-'22 school year the school district decided to provide free breakfast and lunch to all 14,000+ of its students. The county is also utilizing Emergency Rental Assistance funds for its residents struggling to pay for rent and utilities. According to the census US Census Bureau, 36% of Cleveland County residents are renters with the median gross rent of $926. Through quarter two of 2021, $1,933,666.67 has been awarded assisting residents facing eviction, through the Emergency Rent Assistance Program. Every eviction docket in the Cleveland County courthouse is staffed by

legal aid attorneys and Community Cares Partners staff to ensure any resident in need of rental and utility assistance is helped.

When examining the county's **infrastructure** needs, insufficient water quality in certain rural areas was identified. The broadband utilization rates were encouraging, though challenges such as affordability and speed in rural areas of the county remain. Many public infrastructure needs relayed were issues regarding inadequate space in the public health sector, especially in terms of prevention and safety in congregate facilities. Additionally, the latest census figures show continuing and steady growth in the county population, which will inevitably strain the public infrastructure of the county moving forward.
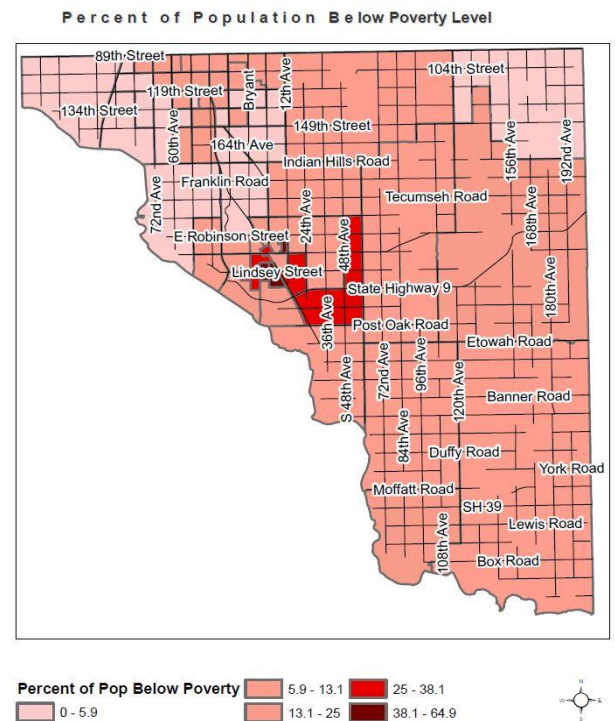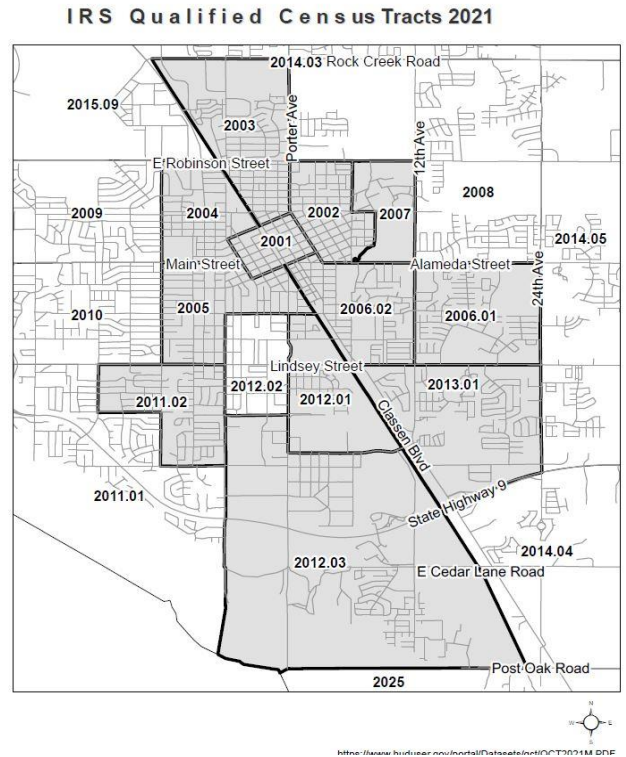
These themes serve as the guide by which the county's goals and key outcomes are developed. While a specific project inventory has yet to be developed, it will align with the three goals of the Recovery Plan, and will seek to address the recurring themes emerging from the stakeholder engagement.

Promoting equitable outcomes

While no specific projects have been approved at this time, the county is researching and establishing outcome measures focused on those residents 'hardest to reach' and ensuring the resources needed are available and accessible. Cleveland County is developing an inventory of existing nonprofit providers within the county and identifying potential gaps and areas for collaboration and coordination.

Nonprofits have been asked about lessons learned from the pandemic and continuing needs. The nonprofit community is a key stakeholder in promoting an equitable recovery, as they are on the front lines serving residents in need.

Some Qualified Census Tracts are located within Cleveland County, therefore the county will be focused on ensuring that there is awareness and accessibility surrounding any new programs and services. More research is needed on the needs, even within the QCT, due to the high population of university students within the area, as their needs may be more immediate than long term. Even the areas outside of the QCT, there are areas of lower income in the rural parts of the county which will also need to be considered.

IRS Qualified Census Tracts 2021

To ensure balance and fairness, outcome targets will be developed through the phases of the evidence building process (outlined below). Cleveland County has a sophisticated network of charitable organizations serving residents with wraparound services and through the needs assessment and phases of evidence building, the county should have sufficient data points to formulate a learning agenda incorporating appropriate metrics.

Percent of Population Below Poverty Level

Percent of Pop Below Poverty   [ ] 0 - 5.9   [ ] 5.9 - 13.1   [ ] 13.1 - 25   [ ] 25 - 38.1   [ ] 38.1 - 64.9

Community Engagement

Cleveland County has held a series of stakeholder engagement meetings to identify needs and assess the impact to the community from the pandemic. The county met with community members on the front lines of public health, behavioral health, nonprofit services, and businesses. The purpose of these meetings was to educate the community on the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds eligible uses, identify negative impacts from the pandemic, collect needs exacerbated from the pandemic, and solicit ideas on how to address those needs to promote an equitable economic recovery and public health response. Stakeholder engagement and public meetings will continue throughout this process as the county evaluates community needs.

The county also made a community feedback submission form available online. This form is open to the public and was promoted through the local newspaper, social media, and the county website, as well as stakeholder meetings. The purpose of the form is to identify ways in which individuals and families across the county were affected by the pandemic. This feedback form asks in what ways the respondent was affected, did they seek assistance, and what priorities should the county focus on to recover. This form remains open and available to the public.

Some insights realized through the public feedback form :
- Residents are mentally exhausted and stressed attributable to a variety of factors
- Concern for small businesses and workforce needs
- Many are underemployed or unemployed
- The varying opinions on how government should respond to the pandemic is illustrative of the community's diversity

Stories from Cleveland County residents:

"Our community is stressed. Our infrastructure, services, and social supports are pushed to the limit. We need to invest long-term in clean, reliable water; broadband internet; and a sustainable, robust social safety net including mental health"

"Mental health and substance use disorders are at an all time high. People are stressed and resources are strained. Workers in nonprofits and helping professions are exhausted with the next massive covid wave coming"

"Friends and family have lost jobs, living situations, savings, access to medical. Everyone seems to be suffering from being mentally exhausted"

" Increased difficulty for businesses due to lack of available workforce. Deepening community divides due to disparate impacts on vulnerable communities paired with increased political rhetoric."

"Whether acknowledged or not, very few if any of us have not had our mental health impacted by the pandemic. The disconnection, fear, losses, uncertainty... had created a greater need to mental health services and support. At the same time, our mental health system is struggling to retain quality trained staff to provide mental health services. There is a shortage of mental health providers at all levels in our community"

Surveys directed at businesses and the issues they are facing were also sent out through many outlets including the local chambers of commerce, mayors and city managers, and other community groups. These surveys ask specific questions relating to workforce shortages and needs resulting from the pandemic. They target what resources would be helpful for businesses to recover.
There has been continued engagement with the county's mayors, city officials, and county officials to ensure feedback is gathered from all levels of government as well. Many communities expressed concern over their small businesses and mental health needs of their communities.

Targeted stakeholder surveys were also sent out to organizations spanning sectors and industries. These surveys requested input on community needs, harms exacerbated by the pandemic, and possible solutions for those needs. This survey allows respondents to propose project ideas on how the funds should be spent, specify the project budget, and identify the reporting code the project would fall under. There is a link to the reporting guidance and expenditure categories so stakeholders could evaluate for themselves if their proposal was an eligible use of funds. These project ideas will be compiled and considered in context of the overriding goals of the Recovery Plan and priority areas.

This level of community engagement will continue throughout this process as needs are continuing to be identified and solutions proposed. The county is interested in leveraging resources and collaborating with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the public sector to serve those with barriers to service.

Labor Practices

While there are no specific projects in place at this time, the county will utilize workforce practices that ensure safe workplaces, strong labor market and provide high-quality infrastructure for any infrastructure projects undertaken. Any infrastructure projects in Cleveland County will comply with the employment and workplace laws for the state of Oklahoma and policies for the county.

Use of Evidence

To ensure an evidence-based approach when determining funding priorities, the county has and will continue to pursue a high level of community and stakeholder engagement. The input received through this process will inform the creation of a learning agenda to create the overarching strategy. The county will engage in a three phased approach.

Phase 1: Creation of learning agenda working group
A working group of stakeholders who monitor and measure outcomes on mental health, public health, economic development, disproportionately served populations, and experts within the community will be formed. This group will recommend possible performance-based measures and report to the County Commissioners existing data streams and potential gaps in data.

Phase 2: Gathering input, data, and evidence-based measurements
The first focus of the group will be to determine what metrics are already tracked and reported, to avoid duplication or excessive reporting burdens. The group will uncover any gaps of data in the key focus areas aligning with outcome goals and determine measurements. Any support technology needed will also be evaluated in this phase. This information will be reported to the County Commissioners for review and evaluation.

Other methods of collecting data include:
- Surveys to stakeholders, businesses, and the public
- Data and demographic collection from county resources
- Meetings with stakeholder groups, county officials, local mayors, and the public
- Strategic communications plan requesting feedback throughout the duration of the term
- Local economic development office identification and assessment of economic trends
- Data submitted by nonprofits serving underrepresented populations

Phase 3: Formulation of Learning Agenda including equity measures
Armed with these combined resources, the group will recommend performance-based measures to the Commissioners to assist them in forming the county's learning agenda. The Learning Agenda will be the foundation for the county's evidence-based strategy incorporating the key outcome goals. The process of developing this agenda will also serve as a tool to create metrics for ensuring the county's most vulnerable populations and rural residents are being served.

Each of the projects to be funded through the Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery funds will have targeted outcomes to be achieved and measurable outputs which will be tracked. Where practicable these measures will be reviewed by the learning agenda working group and approved by the Commissioners for incorporation into the Learning Agenda.

The county will utilize programmatic and outcome evaluations to measure short term and long-term impacts.
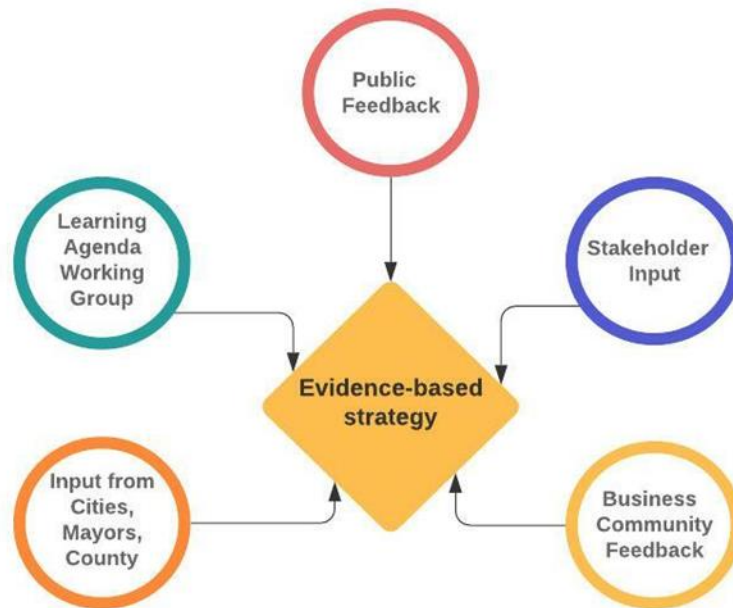
Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date ($)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.1	COVID-19 Vaccination		
1.2	COVID-19 Testing		
1.3	COVID-19 Contact Tracing		
1.4	Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)		
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment		
1.6	Medical Expenses (including Alternative Care Facilities)		
1.7	Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency		
1.8	Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)		
1.9	Payroll Costs for Public Health, Safety, and Other Public Sector Staff Responding to COVID-19		
1.10	Mental Health Services		
1.11	Substance Use Services		
1.12	Other Public Health Services		
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.1	Household Assistance: Food Programs		
2.2	Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid		
2.3	Household Assistance: Cash Transfers		

2.4	Household Assistance: Internet Access Programs		
2.5	Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention		
2.6	Unemployment Benefits or Cash Assistance to Unemployed Workers		
2.7	Job Training Assistance (e.g., Sectoral job-training, Subsidized Employment, Employment Supports or Incentives)		
2.8	Contributions to UI Trust Funds*		
2.9	Small Business Economic Assistance (General)		
2.10	Aid to nonprofit organizations		
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality		
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries		
2.13	Other Economic Support		
2.14	Rehiring Public Sector Staff		
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities		
3.1	Education Assistance: Early Learning		
3.2	Education Assistance: Aid to High-Poverty Districts		
3.3	Education Assistance: Academic Services		
3.4	Education Assistance: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Services		
3.5	Education Assistance: Other		
3.6	Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care		
3.7	Healthy Childhood Environments: Home Visiting		
3.8	Healthy Childhood Environments: Services to Foster Youth or Families Involved in Child Welfare System		
3.9.	Healthy Childhood Environments: Other		
3.10	Housing Support: Affordable Housing		
3.11	Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons		
3.12	Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance		
3.13	Social Determinants of Health: Other		

3.14	Social Determinants of Health: Community Health Workers or Benefits Navigators		
3.15	Social Determinants of Health: Lead Remediation		
3.16	Social Determinants of Health: Community Violence Interventions		
4	Expenditure Category: Premium Pay		
4.1	Public Sector Employees		
4.2	Private Sector: Grants to other employers		
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		
5.1	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater treatment		
5.2	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater collection and conveyance		
5.3	Clean Water: Decentralized wastewater		
5.4	Clean Water: Combined sewer overflows		
5.5	Clean Water: Other sewer infrastructure		
5.6	Clean Water: Stormwater		
5.7	Clean Water: Energy conservation		
5.8	Clean Water: Water conservation		
5.9	Clean Water: Nonpoint source		
5.10	Drinking water: Treatment		
5.11	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution		
5.12	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution: lead remediation		
5.13	Drinking water: Source		
5.14	Drinking water: Storage		
5.15	Drinking water: Other water infrastructure		
5.16	Broadband: "Last Mile" projects		
5.17	Broadband: Other projects		
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement		
6.1	Provision of Government Services		
7	Administrative and Other		
7.1	Administrative Expenses		
7.2	Evaluation and data analysis		
7.3	Transfers to Other Units of Government		
7.4	Transfers to Nonentitlement Units		

	(States and Territories only)		

No funds have been expended as of July 31, 2021 to allow for strategic planning of prioritized needs and appropriate uses of funds.

Project Inventory

The first phase of the Recovery Plan was to conduct a needs assessment of the impacts the pandemic has had in Cleveland County. The process to determine needs has included input from many diverse communities and stakeholders across Cleveland County. All of the information gathered will be utilized to determine a prioritized list of projects centered around the overriding three goals of the Recovery Plan. The projects will be prioritized based upon need and impact. As projects are approved, updates to the Recovery Plan will be made.

Performance Report

As the first phase of the Recovery Plan was to conduct a needs assessment of the impacts the pandemic has had in Cleveland County and to tie the projects to identified needs; the project inventory is not completed at this time. As the projects are identified each will include performance measures including appropriate outcomes to be achieved and inputs to be measured. The Learning Agenda working group will be involved in developing the appropriate key performance indicators for the performance report and available data. It is the hope of Cleveland County, where practicable, to identify existing data streams and reporting mechanisms in use within the county to lower the burden of excessive reporting. All of the key performance indicators being measured will lead to achieving the performance of the prioritized three goals of the Recovery Plan.

Ineligible Activities: Tax Offset Provision

Not applicable to Cleveland County