

Public Hearing – 7pm, September 20, 2021; 2nd Floor Conference Room, Town Hall

The Sheffield Select Board will be holding the first of several public hearing to gather public input on how \$935,279 received under the American Rescue Plan Act should be spent. ***Response to public health emergency or its negative economic consequences is an eligible category.***

Here are some ideas put forward by the Federal Treasury for this category:

1. Response to the COVID -19 public health emergency or its negative economic consequences

- COVID-19 mitigation and containment, behavioral health care to address situations exacerbated by the pandemic, and public health and safety employee costs.
- Negative economic consequences include rebuilding public sector capacity and replenishing unemployment insurance trust funds to pre-pandemic levels.
- Build internal capacity to successfully implement economic relief programs, with investments in data analysis, targeted outreach, and technology infrastructure.
- Eligible expenses for addressing court case backlogs, assisting certain business startups, eviction prevention and housing stability services, including utility assistance, counseling, outreach, and legal aid services.
- Funding jobs programs.
- Improvements to community outdoor spaces may be an allowable expense.
- In communities where the pandemic has led to an increase in violence, recipients may use funds to address that harm.

2. Responding to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency / Negative Economic Impacts

- Services needed to contain COVID-19 include vaccination programs; medical care; testing; contact tracing; support for isolation or quarantine; supports for vulnerable populations to access medical or public health services; public health surveillance (e.g., monitoring case trends, genomic sequencing for variants); enforcement of public health orders; public communication efforts; purchases of personal protective equipment; support for prevention, mitigation, or other services in congregate living facilities and other key settings like schools; ventilation improvements in congregate settings, health care settings, or other key locations; enhancement of public health data systems; and other public health responses.
- Capital investments in public facilities to meet pandemic operational needs, such as physical plant improvements to public buildings to implement COVID-19 mitigation tactics.
- Assistance to households includes: food assistance; rent, mortgage, or utility assistance; counseling and legal aid to prevent eviction or homelessness; cash assistance; emergency assistance for burials, home repairs, weatherization, or other needs; internet access or digital literacy assistance; or job training to address negative economic or public health impacts experienced due to a worker's occupation or level of training.

- Assistance to small business and non-profits includes: loans or grants to mitigate financial hardship such as declines in revenues or impacts of periods of business closure, costs to retain employees, mortgage, rent, or utilities costs, and other operating costs.

However, the above ideas may or may not meet Sheffield's needs. The Select Board wants to hear your suggestions.

To encourage as much input as possible, the Select Board will also accept your input via email: Jhughes@sheffieldma.gov or by mail: Town Administrator, 21 Depot Square, Sheffield, 01257.