



# **County of Union, New Jersey Recovery Plan**

## **Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2022 Report**

Period Covered: March 3, 2021 – June 30, 2022

**COUNTY OF UNION  
NEW JERSEY**

**2022 RECOVERY PLAN**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”) establishing the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (“SLFRF”) program. The SLFRF program provides funds to State, territorial, local and Tribal governments to respond to the economic and public health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities, residents, and businesses. The County of Union (“County”) received a total allocation from the SLFRF in the amount of \$130,591,801.00.

The health and welfare of the citizens of the County of Union is paramount and spending of the County’s SLFRF funds has focused on the County’s public health. Specifically, the County has used SLFRF funds for testing and vaccine programs for COVID-19 with the goal of increasing the number of vaccinated residents and decreasing the number of COVID-19 cases.

To assist its residents and to address the negative economic impact of the pandemic, the County has implemented various programs to address food distribution and job training assistance. These programs were designed to help those households and communities hurt the most by the pandemic, including low-income, unemployed, seniors, and disabled individuals. To date, the County has served more than 40,000 households through the food distribution program.

SLFRF funds have also been used to offset direct salary costs incurred to mitigate the pandemic. These salaries include the salaries of public safety and healthcare workers as well as salaries of those employees who were diverted from their normal duties to address public health issues of the pandemic.

Moving forward, the County continues to assess its pandemic-related needs. To this end, the County is prioritizing funds for all necessary staff, equipment, and supplies required to reinforce public health defense and outreach. The County also intends to develop new programs and supplement its existing relief programs to meet the immediate needs of its communities. This includes targeting assistance to specific populations, households, businesses, and nonprofits. The County is considering opportunities to invest in healthy outdoor environments and outdoor tourism. The County has and will continue to hold strategic meetings with the County Commissioners, County administration, and other community leaders to determine where assistance is most greatly needed.

The County is publishing this Recovery Plan and Performance Report consistent with requirements outlined by the United States Department of the Treasury in connection with the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (“SLFRF”) under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

## **USES OF FUNDS**

### **A. Public Health**

With a population density of 5,598 people per square mile, the County is one of the most densely populated counties in the United States. To date, the primary focus of the County's SLFRF program is to respond to the public health emergency resulting from COVID-19. As such, the County continues to expend funds for COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and contact tracing initiatives, including healthcare professionals, supplies, equipment, scheduling programs, facilities costs, mobile vaccine clinics, information technology and other administrative expenses. As of June 30, 2022, the County has expended and/or obligated \$11,944,052 for public health purposes.

The County further continues to use funding to prevent the spread of the virus through the use of PPE and other mitigation techniques for prevention in congregate settings. In addition, to testing and vaccinations, the County has purchased over 300,000 doorhangers to inform County residents of available COVID-19 services. These doorhangers were multilingual. The County has also ordered two (2) multi-purpose vans to directly reach the community to provide both food assistance and information regarding programs (i.e. social services, COVID-19 services). Monies were also provided to sponsor special events held at the Union County Performing Arts Center, which were targeted to children with special needs.

The County is considering opportunities to ensure first responders' ability to safely respond to emergencies and disasters along with advance support of the County 911 service and other emergency services for impacted residents such as shelters, food, supplies and other basic needs.

## **B. Negative Economic Impacts**

The County has and continues to expend funds for household assistance, particularly food distribution. As of June 30, 2022, the County has expended and/or obligated \$10,041,673 for programs related to the negative economic impact of COVID-19. Of this amount, \$7,115,146 went to support direct food assistance to households. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the County focused its efforts to provide funding to address food insecurity and scarcity throughout the County by hosting food distribution events. These food distributions events, which include both drive-thru and walk-up stations, are conducted, at minimum, two times per month. These events are located to best serve the most underserved communities in the County, particularly, providing food and assistance to unemployed households, women and children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and veterans. Additionally, the County utilized SLFRF to address the food insecurity and scarcity issues through its Meals Project. The Meals Project provided meals to senior citizens and shelters, providing assistance to those who have been disproportionately impacted by the public health emergency.

The County has provided the necessary funding to improve community parks and plazas. Specifically, improvements were funded for the Gerald B. Green Plaza (Plainfield, NJ) and Madison Avenue Park (Rahway, NJ). The County continues to explore opportunities of a similar nature throughout the numerous parks and open space facilities.

Funds have been provided to enhance services at Galloping Hill and Ashbrook Golf courses. These golf courses provide recreation services to all County residents.

The County has expended funds for job training assistance to those who lost their job and employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the County has held job fairs for its residents that were negatively impacted by the pandemic, particularly left unemployed.

The County is exploring opportunities to provide trade apprenticeship programs to assist its citizens in returning to work. The County is considering ways in which to increase tourism back into the County in order to assist entertainment and residents in job creation as a result of COVID-19.

### **C. Public Health - Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity**

The County utilized SLFRF to support payroll and covered benefits to compensate for time that was dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 public emergency. As of June 30, 2022, the County has expended and/or obligated \$6,809,539 related to the public sector's capacity to respond to the public health needs and negative economic impacts of the pandemic. This included payroll for public health employees involved in providing medical and other health services to patients. This program included personnel expenses related to the County establishing COVID-19 testing sites, vaccination sites, and contact tracing. This program also included payroll and covered benefits for public safety and similar employees who spent time mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The County has also provided funding for the administration of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). The ERAP has received over 1,500 submissions for rental assistance. The County has also upgraded its document management system for the Division of Social Services and Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital. High-tech scanners were implemented to record all vital information and statistics electronically.

### **D. Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure**

The County is considering ways to increase broadband access to its citizens, especially the County's underserved and unserved citizens, which is expected to have an economic impact for generations to come.

The County is reviewing and determining infrastructure deficiencies within the County's neighborhoods with the intent on focusing strategically on the infrastructure needs in the County's urban areas.

The County is considering infrastructure deficiencies with regard to public roads, streets and sidewalks, to better serve the County's citizens and communities, including those underserved and unserved citizens.

### **E. Revenue Replacement**

The County has a calculated “revenue replacement” of \$82.6 million in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis regarding revenue replacement is based on the formula in the Final Rule effective as of April 1, 2022. The growth adjustment used was 5.2% percent over 3 years prior to the pandemic. Major losses were felt across the board. Particularly hard-hit were revenues from the County Hospital Board of Pay Patients and Parks & Recreation. Using this analysis as the total amount available regarding Revenue Replacement Funds, the County has begun reviewing opportunities for use of American Recovery Act 2021 funds.

In accordance with the Compliance and Reporting Guide: State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds issued by the United States Department of Treasury, the County has utilized the eligible costs identified as Revenue Replacement Funds to cover certain government services as reflected in the County of Union 2021 Budget. Replacement revenue was only utilized to offset costs incurred from March 3, 2021 through July 31, 2021. The governmental services were allocated in the following areas by the Revenue Replacement Fund for the reporting period.

- Public Safety – Salaries & Wages
- Public Safety – Operating Expenses

In accordance with Treasury’s guidance, the County will **NOT** use SLFRF funds for expenses associated with obligations under instruments evidencing financial indebtedness for borrowed money, including interest or principal on any outstanding debt instrument, including, i.e., short-term revenue or tax anticipation notes, or fees or issuance costs associated with the issuance of new debt; or for the satisfaction of any obligation arising under or pursuant to a settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, or judicially confirmed debt restructuring in a judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceeding, except if the judgment or settlement required the provision of government services; or to replenish financial reserves (e.g., rainy day or other reserve funds)

#### **F. Use or Proposed Use of Other Federal Recovery Funds**

The County was awarded the following federal recovery funds:

Emergency Rental Assistance Program in the amount of \$24,802,620.18 to assist households in the county that are unable to pay rent or utilities.

Area Plan Contract Coronavirus Consolidated Appropriations Act (CCA) funds in the amount of \$279,064 to provide home delivered meals program services throughout Union County.

Area Plan Contract Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act funds in the amount of \$115,263 to augment the Older Americans Act programs during the Coronavirus pandemic for Adult Protective Services.

Area Plan Contract-ADRC/NWD COVID 19 Access Supplemental Funding in the amount of \$35,227 to assist vaccine access to older adults and people with disabilities.

Area Plan Contract Vac 5 COVID-19 Vaccine Funding in the amount of \$80,975 to connect older adults and their caregivers to support activities related to vaccine access including disseminating and directing individuals to credible information about COVID-19, identifying individuals who

may need help getting a COVID-19 vaccine and assisting the individuals with scheduling, arranging, reminding, transporting and other support.

Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccination Supplemental Funding Program in the amount of \$450,000 to increase vaccine throughout the county, vaccinate under-served communities, partner with organizations, and leverage local partnerships to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence in racial and ethnic minority and increase accessibility for people with disabilities.

## **PROMOTING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES**

With a population of 23.8% African American and 33.6% Hispanic, the County serves a diverse population and aims to prioritize both economic and racial equity. To best assist those communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, the County seeks and will continue to allocate funds to projects and programs that address system public health issues, provide economic stabilization to households, and build strong communities through investments in housing and neighborhoods.

The County recognizes the inequity of vaccine administration among racial and economic communities. Pursuant to the Centers for Disease Control, some African American and Hispanic or Latino individuals and families are less likely to be vaccinated against COVID-19 than individuals in other racial and ethnic minorities.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, African American and Hispanic or Latino individuals are more likely to become seriously ill and die from COVID-19.<sup>2</sup> Based upon this data, the County has dedicated a significant amount of funding and time to its vaccination and testing clinics, focusing on communities in the QCT, other low-income communities, as well as the County's African American and Hispanic populations, in order to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and minimize the impact of the COVID-19 virus on those populations most susceptible.

The County also recognizes that reaching those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including minority populations and low-income households, can be difficult. To facilitate outreach to serve these populations and communities, the County is purchasing two vans to facilitate on-the-go enrollment and resources regarding the County's Department of Human Services programming. These programs include General Assistance/TANF, rent and utility programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), employment assistance, Medicaid, health care service, and other key support services for residents in need.

Also keeping in mind the devastating impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on the County's low-income population, the County established a food distribution program to respond to the food insecurity and scarcity problem caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this program, the County has held more than fifty (50) events to distribute emergency boxes of produce, dairy, and

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<sup>1</sup> Covid-19 Vaccine Equity for Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/vaccine-equity.html> (March 29, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Covid-19 Vaccine Equity for Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/vaccine-equity.html> (March 29, 2022).

shelf stable food with sufficient quantities to sustain a family for several days. The County holds both walk-up and drive-thru events in various locations to best target low-income communities and families, including those in the Qualified Census Tract (QCT). Additionally, the County has implemented a program to provide prepared meals to its senior citizens and residents in shelters. The County has teamed with local restaurants to prepare and package meals for pick-up at various shelters and senior centers throughout the County. To date, the County has held more than twenty (20) events providing such meals to the low-income and senior residents.

As the County continues to obligate the remaining SLFRF funds, it will continue to consider the demographic and geographic reach of the funding, including funding to prioritize both economic and ethnic equity. The County is considering the following program:

- Providing services to address homelessness such as supportive housing, and to improve access to stable, affordable housing among unhoused individuals;
- Providing affordable housing development to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units; and
- Providing housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance to facilitate household moves to neighborhoods with high levels of economic opportunity and mobility for low-income residents, to help residents increase their economic opportunity and reduce concentrated areas of low economic opportunity;
- Creating new, expanded, or enhanced early learning services, including pre-kindergarten, Head Start, or partnerships between pre-kindergarten programs and local education authorities, or administration of those services;
- Aiding high-poverty school districts to advance equitable funding across districts and geographies;
- Creating new or expanded high-quality childcare to provide safe and supportive care for children;
- Creating home visiting programs to provide structured visits from health, parent educators, and social service professionals to pregnant women or families with young children to offer education and assistance navigating resources for economic support, health needs, or child development; and;
- Providing enhanced services for child welfare-involved families and foster youth to provide support and training on child development, positive parenting, coping skills, or recovery for mental health and substance use challenges.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The County seeks and welcomes input from its residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations. The County's website provides information for all residents regarding attendance at public meetings, finance information, information relating to COVID-19, and the numerous programs established by the County in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the County's website and attendance at the Union County Board of Commissioners' meetings, all residents, businesses, and local organizations have the opportunity to comment and provide feedback to the County on the various programs as well as bring recommendations for future use of funds.





Images of advertisements for the County’s Food Distribution and Vaccination programs.

The County also issued a survey made available to all residents of the County for input as to the use of SLFRF. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the County’s residents’ strongest needs as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was made available on the County website and via paper copies. It was available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. The County has reviewed and considered the responses to the survey in developing a plan of action to best address the community’s needs.

**LABOR PRACTICES**

To date, the County’s focus for the use of SLFRF has been towards providing much-need services to the County residents. However, the County has planned capital projects to improve the parks and outdoor space throughout the County in order to respond to the public health emergency and negative impact of COVID-19. As the County moves forward with these capital projects, the County will ensure compliance with all applicable laws, including, but not limited to the Davis-Bacon Act, the New Jersey Prevailing Wage Act, the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, and other applicable laws to ensure that the contract award is only made to a contractor authorized to perform such work in accordance with the New Jersey Public Works Contractor Registration Act.

**USE OF EVIDENCE**

With each funding request, the County reviews the proposed project or program and evaluates the purpose and the potential impact on the community at-large. Based upon the project or program, the County will consider either strong evidence, meaning the evidence base can support causal conclusion for the specific program with the highest level of confidence, or moderate evidence, meaning the reasonably developed evidence base can support causal conclusion.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The County is managing project and program performance through tracking and oversight. Key performance indicators for each SLFRF program and project are included in the Project Inventory.

## **PROJECT INVENTORY**

Project: 1.1 Vaccination

Funding Amount: \$4,557,179.05

Project Expenditure Category: 1.1 Covid-19 Vaccination

### Project Overview

- Funding to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 through Union County’s vaccination campaign. This program includes the expenses related to the COVID-19 vaccination program and sites, including staffing, acquisition of equipment or supplies, facilities costs, mobile vaccine clinics, information technology and other administrative expenses.
- The County’s website for its vaccination campaign is located at the following: <https://ucnj.org/covid19/>.
- To this effect, the program currently provides vaccinations at the following sites and times:
  - Warinanco Sports Center (Tuesdays - 8:30-12:30pm & 3 - 7PM; Thursdays - 3-7 PM)
  - Plainfield High School (Saturday 9AM- 12 PM)
  - Mobile operations vary weekly throughout the County, occurring at least once a week.

### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this program is to serve all residents of the County in order to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The goal is to increase vaccination rates and continue to slow the spread of the virus through the continuation of the campaign for the general public, booster doses, and our children. Although, specifically, the program has targeted the most vulnerable populations, including minorities and low-income individuals.
- An additional goal of this project is to stay current as new guidance and potential new or updated vaccinations are introduced, such as the Pfizer and Moderna Infant formulations, which were recently introduced. As a result of these introductions, the County is experiencing an uptick in vaccinations.

### Performance Report

- The program is ongoing and is being evaluated based on vaccination rates throughout the County. Performance is tracked by analyzing and comparing weekly reports of vaccine administration with the Union County COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Report sent by the New Jersey Department of Health. All outreach activities target areas within the County with low vaccination/booster rates.
- This program utilizes the New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard and the New Jersey Immunization Information System to track vaccination rates throughout the County.
- Currently, in Union County, 864 residents per 1,000 have received at least one vaccine dose. Comparatively, 746 residents per 1,000 population are fully vaccinated.
- Through this program, the following populations have been vaccinated:
  - Age Group
    - 0-4 563 (0.4%)
    - 5-17 6,767 (4.9%)

- 18-29 17,587 (12.7%)
    - 30-49 41,074 (29.6%)
    - 50-64 38,776 (27.9%)
    - 65-79 26,852 (19.3%)
    - 80+ 7,343 (5.3%)
  - Race/Ethnicity
    - American Indian or Alaskan Natives 208 (0.01%)
    - Asian 7,657 (6%)
    - Black/African American 16,248 (12%)
    - Hispanic/Latino 37,866 (27%)
    - Unknown/Prefer not to specify 24,503 (18%)
    - White 52,480 (38%)
  - Gender
    - Male: 65,213 (47%)
    - Female: 73,257 (53%)
- The County also utilizes zip code data to focus mobiles in communities with low vaccination/booster rates. The County is continuously reaching out to provide vaccinations at convenient locations including but not limited to health fairs, food distributions, municipal buildings, schools, faith-based organizations, family success centers, senior housing establishments, concerts and local events. The mobile unit also vaccinates the County's homebound residents.

Project: 1.2 Testing

Funding Amount: \$4,448,743.54

Project Expenditure Category: 1.2 Covid-19 Testing

#### Project Overview

- Funding to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 through the testing of residents. This program includes the costs of providing COVID-19 testing, monitoring of case trends and genomic sequencing for variants. Union County currently offers COVID-19 testing for all Union County residents, which is available at multiple locations throughout the County. The County has set-up multiple testing locations, including mobile operations, to providing COVID-19 testing to the County's residents.
- The County's website for its testing campaign is located at the following: <https://ucnj.org/covid19/>.

#### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to serve all residents of the County in order to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The goal is to increase awareness and continue to slow the spread of the virus through the continuation of the campaign for the general public. The testing program also seeks to test Union County's population including those residents that are hardest to reach.
- An additional goal of this program is to administer timely PCR testing and results to slow down the spread of COVID-19 and ensure timely public health action.

### Performance Report

- Performance is measured by the timeliness of results ensuring timely public health action to slow the spread of COVID-19. Efficiency of sample collection and availability of appointments are also other performance measures that the County utilizes to assess the success of the testing program.
- Based upon the testing program, the County has reached the following population (by age):
  - 0 to 4           1,767     (1%)
  - 5 to 17        15,547    (8%)
  - 18 to 29       52,700    (26%)
  - 30 to 49       63,785    (31%)
  - 50 to 64       48,700    (24%)
  - 65 to 79       17,670    (9%)
  - 80 +           3,077     (2%)

Project: 1.7 Communication

Funding Amount: \$534,061

Project Expenditure Category: 1.7 Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses

### Project Overview

- Funding to aid the County in effectively communicating with the community regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency. The County strives to keep the public informed regarding their efforts in mitigating and preventing the spread of COVID-19. The communication includes distributing door hangers, a direct link to COVID 19 programs offered by the County, notices within Union County that include information about the Union County vaccination program, testing and social distancing practices.
- The County’s website for its testing campaign is located at the following: <https://ucnj.org/covid19/>.
- The program is striving to inform Union County’s population including those residents that are hardest to reach about the Coronavirus. The County has launched a campaign to reach its most vulnerable populations to spread awareness, assist the community in locating testing centers and vaccination sites, as well as to clarify misinformation about testing and the vaccine.

### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to serve all residents of the County in order to educate the general population and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The goal is to increase awareness and continue to slow the spread of the virus through the continuation of the campaign for the general public.

### Performance Report

- To date, the program has attempted to reach all households in the County to provide them with critical information about the COVID-19 virus, testing, and vaccinations.

Project: 1.14 Community Outreach Program

Funding Amount: \$310,304.88

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

#### Project Overview

- Funding to facilitate outreach aimed at targeting unserved and underserved communities where services are not accessible. Communities throughout the County were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. This program includes the purchase of two vans that would facilitate outreach efforts by the County to its citizens by providing on-the-go enrollment and resources regarding the County's Department of Human Services programming. These programs include General Assistance/TANF, rent and utility programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), employment assistance, Medicaid, health care service, and other key support services for residents in need.
- The program is striving to inform Union County's population including those residents that are hardest to reach about the Coronavirus. The County has launched a campaign to reach its most vulnerable populations to spread awareness, assist the community in locating testing centers and vaccination sites, as well as to clarify misinformation about testing and the vaccine.
- Once the County receives the vans, they will be sent throughout Union County municipalities providing resources for on-the-go enrollment for entitlement and community programs. Programs include, but not limited to, General Assistance/TANF, rent and utility programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), employment assistance, Medicaid, health care services, and other key support services for residents in need. The mobile vans are in support of meeting people where they are to link residents to community resources. Vans would hold a stock of shelf stable food and other non-food items that would be helpful on the go. Vans will be positioned in communities that are economically disadvantaged, unserved and/or underserved. Outreach will begin in the communities of opportunity as identified in the Union County Community Needs Assessment (Elizabeth, Hillside, Linden, Plainfield, Rahway, Roselle and Union). These areas where the needs of some populations are intensified, and where priorities should be placed for addressing unmet needs and eliminating barriers to services and supports.
- The vans would provide service and be active during normal business hours and after hours/weekends as identified where services are needed.

#### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to serve all residents of the County in order to educate the general population and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The goal is to increase awareness and continue to slow the spread of the virus through the continuation of the campaign for the general public.

#### Performance Report

- This program has not yet started.

Project: 1.14 Medical Examiner

Funding Amount: \$211,040.00

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

Project Overview

- Funding for costs associated with paying additional per diem medical examiners and the increased costs of livery transportation and storage caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency. Since the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the medical examiner's duties have expanded to aid in the County's medical response to the crisis. This along with the increased death rate caused by COVID-19 has forced the County to retain the services of per diem medical examiners to keep up with the increased workload. The increased death rate due to COVID-19 has also put a strain on the County's ability to transport and store bodies.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this program was to provide additional funding to the County's medical examiner to cover the costs associated with the expanded responsibilities and aid to the County as a result of the pandemic.

Performance Report

- Union County medical examiner's time in the office increased substantially due to COVID-19. As such, there was an increased need for per diem medical examiners, who worked, on average, 25 days per month and performed approximately 220 autopsies. On some days, performing three to four autopsies. These per diem medical examiners were onsite from June 2021 through the end of December 2021.

Project: 1.14 Prevention/Social Distancing

Funding Amount: \$139,169.77

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

Project Overview

- Funding to allow for more effective social distancing practices throughout County buildings. These efforts help prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This project includes the hosting of online training courses for County employees that would previously have been held in-person, additional furniture to allow for more efficient social distancing within County offices and other measures that help prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the Union County office space. This project also includes the cleaning supplies and sanitizing service that help keep the County offices and public spaces safe.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this program was to implement social distancing practices throughout the County-owned buildings.

Performance Report

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, training courses for County employees occurred in-person. This program allowed the County to continue providing training courses for its

employees remotely while encouraging and maintain social distancing. Over the past year, 2,157 County employees completed the training course remotely so as to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 virus among the County's employees.

Project: 1.14 Radio Dispatch Consoles & Quality Assurance

Funding Amount: \$1,732,646.20

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

#### Project Overview

- Funding to purchase eleven operational radio dispatch consoles and an automated quality assurance system for monitoring 911 medical calls for pandemic protocol compliance. The additional dispatch consoles will enable the County to double its current emergency dispatch capabilities. In order to meet a higher level of emergencies related to the pandemic and other emergencies throughout the County, an expansion in equipment related to handling such emergencies is warranted and necessary. Similarly, the automatic quality assurance system will review all 911 medical calls throughout the County and ensure that emergency medical teams are compliant with pandemic protocols.

#### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring compliance with COVID-19 protocols on a larger scale.

#### Performance Report

- This project has not yet started.

Project: 1.14 Radio Tower Repair

Funding Amount: \$54,639.00

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

#### Project Overview

- Funding to repair the County's main radio communications tower, which is used by forty-seven of the sixty-two public safety agencies in Union County. The repair to the existing structure is essential for the County to meet operational needs in response to the COVID-19 health emergency as response to the emergency requires open channels of communication between first responders and other public safety officials.
- The radio tower, which connects the County dispatch with units in the field, developed a crack in one of its support pylons. This crack required permanent repairs to ensure the tower was able to withstand severe weather. Otherwise, if the radio tower was to fall, the County's ability to respond to emergencies, including COVID-19-related emergencies, would cripple.

#### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project was to reconstruct the radio tower to ensure that communications between first responders and their central coordination continues unhindered.



### Performance Report

- The radio system is used Countywide and benefits all 575,345 residents of Union County. Upon completion of the work, the County is secure in knowing that the radio tower will continue to operate, particularly in severe weather conditions.

Project: 1.14 Sensory Friendly Theater

Funding Amount: \$19,937.37

Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services

### Project Overview

- Funding for in-person events hosted through the Sensory Friendly Theater program at Union County Performing Arts Center. The funds were used to support the County's efforts in addressing the challenges faced by those with special needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing a behavioral health service for said individuals.
- This project consists of two events, which occurred in October 2021 and December 2021. These events included the performance of "Bubble Trouble" and the "Nutcracker".
- The website for this program: <https://ucnj.org/sensory-friendly-theatre/>

### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project was to help those individuals with behavioral health issues.

### Performance Report

- These events were attended by more than 900 children and adults.

Project: 2.1 Food Distribution

Funding Amount: \$8,124,249.47

Project Expenditure Category: 2.1 Household Assistance: Food Programs

### Project Overview

- The County hosts two (2) food distribution events per month, including one (1) drive-thru event and one (1) walk-up event. There are also additional pop-up distributions aimed at underserved or unserved communities.
- In 2021, the County hosted forty (40) food distribution events.
- In 2022, the County hosted food distribution events at the following locations:
  - Kean University (Drive-Thru) on January 29, 2022, February 5, 2022; March 19, 2022; April 9, 2022; May 14, 2022, and June 11, 2022.
  - Roselle Borough Hall (Walk-up) on March 5, 2022.
  - City of Elizabeth Board of Education parking lot (Walk-up) on April 30, 2022.
  - Hamilton Stage (Walk-up) on May 21, 2022.
  - Division of Social Services, Gerald Green Plaza (Walk-up) on June 25, 2022.
- As part of these food distributions, recipients will receive an emergency box of produce, dairy, and shelf stable food with sufficient quantities to sustain a family for several days.
- Food distributions continue to assist including, but not limited to unemployed households, women with children, seniors, persons with disabilities and veterans.

- To promote the food distribution events, the County issued press releases, issued event flyers, and promoted the events of the County website and social media sites. Advertisements were posted in local news on TAPinto.net news in several Union County Municipalities listserv. Through the press releases, there were several events advertised on News 12 NJ when picked up by local media. Flyers were also distributed through email outreach to DHS Advisory Boards, subcommittees, superintendents of schools and other community organizations for posting/handed out onsite at partner agency locations. The DHS Director’s Action Line, Division of Social Services, and information & referral teams referred residents to attend the food drives

### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project was to address the food insecurity and scarcity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing food and meals to the most underserved individuals in the County.
- This program seeks to target the most underserved individuals. As such, food distribution is targeted in Qualified Census Tract areas as well as low-income geographic areas of the City of Elizabeth, City of Plainfield, Township of Hillside, City of Rahway, Borough of Roselle, and Township of Union. Since the inception of the program, food distribution events have occurred at the following locations:
  - Union County Vocational Technical School
  - Warinanco Park
  - Plainfield High School
  - Immaculate Conception Church
  - Kean University
  - Division of Social Services, Gerald Green Plaza
  - Our Lady of Fatima Church
  - Township of Union Senior Center
  - Elizabeth Waterfront
  - Conant Park
  - Cranford Community Center
  - Rahway Recreation Center
  - Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church
  - Roselle Borough Hall
  - Cedar Brook Park
  - City of Elizabeth Board of Education Lot
  - Hamilton Stage

- Evidence-based interventions:

### *Food Insecurity and Delayed or Forgone Medical Care During COVID-19 Pandemic<sup>3</sup>*

As of December 2020, 18.8% of U.S. adults reported experiencing food insecurity. This study found “elevated odds of food insecurity . . . among non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and low-income” individuals. The study also concluded that “food insecurity was significantly associated with greater likelihood of foregoing any type of medical care as a result of cost concerns.”

- \$4,921,571.77 of the total project spending is allocated toward evidence-based interventions.

#### Performance Report

- Key performance indicators include the number of households served by the food distribution program. Under this program, as of December 31, 2021, 26,869 households have been served through this program; as of June 30, 2022, 13,461 households have been served through this program.

Project: 2.1 Senior Citizen & Shelter Meals

Funding Amount: \$42,000.00

Project Expenditure Category: 2.1 Household Assistance: Food Programs

#### Project Overview

- Funding to support Union County’s efforts in addressing food insecurity and scarcity by providing meals for shelter and senior citizen residents. This program provided funding to provide meals for shelter and senior citizen residents, those that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. This program also supported the County’s local small businesses that were negatively impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Specifically, meals are prepared at local restaurants and packaged for grab-and-go pick-up onsite at locations in disadvantaged communities where food scarcity is most prevalent.
- The County’s initial program provided meals through December 31, 2021. The County is considering continuing this program in the Fall 2022 to provide additional meals and more site locations, including sites near the Union County Fresh Start Mobile Shower van and other non-profit locations in disadvantaged communities.
- Meals were delivered to eight (8) senior centers and shelters, including O’Donnell Dempsey Senior Center, Peterstown Community Center, Stephen Sampson Center, Liberty Square Center, Proceed, Inc., Jewish Family Services of Central New Jersey, The Gateway Family YMCA (Elizabeth Branch), and YMCA Union County. These locations include populations in the Qualified Census Tract and low-income areas to best serve the most negatively impacted populations of the County.
- To advertise this program and reach those individuals most in-need of these services, the County issued press releases and promoted the events of the County website and social media sites.

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<sup>3</sup> Food Insecurity and Delayed or Forgone Medical Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic, J. Bertoldo, J. Wolfson, S. Sundermeir, J. Edwards, D. Gibson, S. Agarwal, A. Labrique, AMER. J. OF PUB. HEALTH (May 2022).

### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this program was to address the food insecurity and scarcity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic amongst those individuals most negatively impacted by the pandemic.
- Evidence-based interventions:

#### *Food Insecurity and Delayed or Forgone Medical Care During COVID-19 Pandemic<sup>4</sup>*

As of December 2020, 18.8% of U.S. adults reported experiencing food insecurity. This study found “elevated odds of food insecurity . . . among non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and low-income” individuals. The study also concluded that “food insecurity was significantly associated with greater likelihood of foregoing any type of medical care as a result of cost concerns.”

\$21,192.50 of the total project spending is allocated toward evidence-based interventions.

### Performance Report

- This program engaged five (5) local restaurants, those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, to prepare and deliver nutritious meals to low-income, senior citizens, and homeless individuals for twenty-three (23) events.
- As of December 31, 2021 there were 2,524 individuals served meals.

Project: 2.10 Job Fairs

Funding Amount: \$3,738.00

Project Expenditure Category: 2.10 Assistance to Unemployed or Underemployed Workers

### Project Overview

- The County hosted job fairs to assist the unemployed and/or job seekers in obtaining interviews and offer on-the-spot hiring by employers. Job Fairs were held on September 22, 2021 at Warinanco Park and on October 5, 2021 at Jersey Gardens Mall.
- The County targeted job-seekers most impacted by COVID-19 including adults, youths, and dislocated workers, minority and low-income, disadvantaged populations, working in partnership with community and non-profit organizations.
- To advertise this program, the County promoted the job fairs on its website, social media sites, and through its community and non-profit partners.

### Use of Evidence

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<sup>4</sup> Food Insecurity and Delayed or Forgone Medical Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic, J. Bertoldo, J. Wolfson, S. Sundermeir, J. Edwards, D. Gibson, S. Agarwal, A. Labrique, AMER. J. OF PUB. HEALTH (May 2022).

- The goal of this program was to address unemployment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The negative economic impacts of the pandemic particularly effected unemployed workers and their households.
- \$0 of the total project spending is allocated towards evidence-based interventions.

Performance Report

- The County registered 617 jobseekers with 409 attending the job fairs. Notably, thirty (30) employers participated in the job fairs.

Project: 2.22 Green Plaza Repairs

Funding Amount: \$1,500,000.00

Project Expenditure Category: 2.22 Strong Health Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety

Project Overview

- This project will provide funding to repair and replace portions of the concrete plaza, sidewalk, and metal tree grates at the Assemblyman Gerald B. Green Plaza located in the City of Plainfield. These repairs and replacements will help County residents within the community better utilize the facilities. These repairs will allow the County to provide healthy environments and safer outdoor recreation areas to its citizens, including disproportionately impacted communities, particularly minorities and small businesses.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this program is to provide outdoor, healthy and safe environments to the residents of the County.

Performance Report

- This project is in-progress.

Project: 2.22 Madison Avenue Park

Funding Amount: \$493,430.00

Project Expenditure Category: 2.22 Strong Health Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety

Project Overview

- Funding for the purchase and installation of new playground equipment at the Madison Avenue Park in the City of Rahway. Children were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 emergency partially due to the closing of school buildings and the transition to remote learning. The new playground equipment will give children in the community a way to get much-needed exercise while maintaining social distance and obeying any restrictions on indoor gatherings.
- This project commenced in June 2022 and is in-progress.

Use of Evidence

- The goal of this program is to provide outdoor, healthy and safe environments to the residents of the County.

### Performance Report

- This project is completed less than 50%.

Project: 2.35 Golf Course

Funding Amount: \$929,358.54

Project Expenditure Category: 2.35 Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality

### Project Overview

- Funding to cover increased day-to-day maintenance costs at County operated golf courses, Ash Brook and Galloping Hill, including costs associated with increased use of County golf chemical treatment equipment and cart paths. The increased maintenance costs have been necessitated by an increase in play at County golf courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this program is to provide outdoor, healthy and safe environments to the residents of the County.

### Performance Report

- This project is completed less than 50%.

Project: 3.1 Public Sector Payroll

Funding Amount: \$6,057,087.11

Project Expenditure Category: 3.1 Public Sector Workforce: Payroll and Benefits for Public Health, Public Safety, or Human Services Workers

### Project Overview

- This program funded the payroll and covered benefits from a portion of Human Services employees' time that was dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 public emergency, particularly time spent at food distribution events, including drivers and food packers and staffing of temporary career counselors.
- This program also funded payroll and covered benefits from a portion of Public Health employees' time that was dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 public emergency, particularly providing medical and other health services to patients and supervisory personnel. This program includes the personnel expenses related to the County established Medical Reserve Corp, COVID-19 Testing, vaccine sites and contact tracing.
- This program also funded payroll and covered benefits for Public Safety and similar employees to the extent that the employee's time is spent mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Public Safety employees including emergency responders are essential to the County's COVID-19 response.

### Use of Evidence

- The purpose of the program was to restore and bolster the County's public sector capacity to provide much-needed resources directly responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Performance Report

- The County reviews performance of this program by reviewing and assessing time spent on American Rescue Plan events and programs through tracking logs submitted by each County Department.

Project: 3.4 Software & Assistance to ERAP

Funding Amount: \$752,276.50

Project Expenditure Category: 3.4 Public Sector Capacity: Effective Service Delivery

### Project Overview

- This project involves the purchase of software, which shall aid individuals in receiving housing assistance through Union County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program by gathering applicants' required information to apply for the program. In addition, this funding will be used to advertise the software system to those who require housing assistance through television and New Jersey Transit advertisements. This project will also include administrative expenses associated with administering the Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

### Use of Evidence

- The purpose of this project is to address housing instability as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Performance Report

- As a result of this project, the software will allow the County's service provider and community partners to assist virtually to submit, track, and disperse assistance to much-needed recipients.
- In the first three months of this project, the County has had over 1,500 submissions. These submissions include applications specifically from individuals and families under the 30% area medium income and those with the greatest need.

Project: 3.5 Cyber Security Network

Funding Amount: \$24,950.00

Project Expenditure Category: 3.5 Public Sector Capacity: Administrative Needs

### Project Overview

- This project includes the County retaining a cyber security company to ensure the integrity of Union County's computer network. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused increased traffic to online County resources and increased use of the County's networks. The security of that network and the information contained therein is vital to the County's efforts to maintain a safe environment for employees and citizens, and in turn, limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Threats to that network could include loss of sensitive data or an attack designed to slow or disable the County's network.
- Particularly, the County established and encouraged the use of remote resources to allow the County government to continue to function while complying with social distancing and stay-at-home orders. These resources include the ability of County employees to work remotely and County residents to access public information on the County's website.

Providing these additional resources resulted in an expansion of network requirements, increasing access to the County's network and increase in traffic to online County resources.

#### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to assist the County in maintaining a fast and secure network to ensure the government can continue to function while still observing social distancing.

#### Performance Report

- The vendor for this project submits quarterly reports on the network environment to allow the County best assess performance and outcomes.
- Significantly, the County's website was visited approximately 3,601,891 times in 2021 and approximately 1,318,507 in 2022, to date, evidencing the importance of the County's network in providing information to its residents.

Project: 3.5 Scanning & Document Management

Funding Amount: \$1,187,368.79

Project Expenditure Category: 3.5 Public Sector Capacity: Administrative Needs

#### Project Overview

- This project includes the digitization and management of files in Union County's Division of Social Services and Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital. This service will allow for easier and more efficient access to files by employees. The Division of Social Services has seen an increased demand for services due to the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of the major impacts to the economic security of many of Union County's citizens. The scanning and document management service will improve the data infrastructure of the Division of Social Services and Cornerstone Hospital.

#### Use of Evidence

- The goal of this project is to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus by allowing for more effective social distancing in the workplace.

#### Performance Report

- This project is ongoing. As of June 22, 2022, there have been 592,215 files scanned at Cornerstone Hospital and 1,587,693 files scanned at the Division of Social Services.

Project: 7.1 Administrative Services

Funding Amount: \$701,022.02

Project Expenditure Category: 7.1 Administrative Expenses

#### Project Overview

- Funds to support the County's efforts to efficiently administer the SLFRF program. This project includes the payroll expenses of County employees that are involved in the administration and monitoring of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. It also includes the expenses of legal and financial consultation for ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory and reporting requirements.



- This project is ongoing.

#### Use of Evidence

- Not Applicable

#### Performance Report

- The County reviews performance of this program by reviewing and assessing time spent on American Rescue Plan events and programs through tracking logs submitted by each County Department. All professionals are required to submit detailed invoices.

Project: 6.1 Revenue Loss

Funding Amount: \$2,907,700.00

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

#### Project Overview

- The County allocated \$2.8 million based upon its existing budget process for Public Safety salaries and related employee benefits. The County also allocated \$138,000 for Public Safety operating expenses.

#### Use of Evidence

- The purpose of the program was to restore and bolster the County's public sector capacity to provide much-needed resources directly responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Performance Report

- The County allocated funds to offset public safety expenses.