

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: September 21, 2021
To: Milwaukee County ARPA Task Force
From: Jeff Roman, OAAA Director and ARPA Task Force Member
Subject: Update on ARPA Community Outreach and Engagement
File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

This report is intended to provide an update on the initial steps to launch a strategic community outreach and engagement process for Milwaukee County residents to inform and be involved in decision making regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding allocations.

POLICY

Milwaukee County Board file 21-555: “A resolution to create a Task Force to review and recommend funding allocations to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for monies received by the County in the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021”

BACKGROUND

On September 2, 2021, the ARPA Task Force approved a robust community outreach and engagement framework to involve Milwaukee County residents in a process to help define and recommend ARPA funding allocations. The framework is grounded in the County’s vision to achieve racial equity and centers the just and fair inclusion of residents of color and other community members most impacted by the COVID in defining what they need to mitigate pandemic impacts. This report serves to outline immediate next steps to ensure County residents are authentically engaged and involved in ARPA decision making. The ARPA outreach and community engagement framework defines community engagement as the iterative, interactive process of informing, listening to, involving, and empowering community members in decision making, with the goals of sharing power and generating public benefit. To that end, the approved framework includes four main phases: Inform, Listen To, Involve, and Empower Milwaukee County residents, outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Community Outreach and Engagement Framework Phases and Timeline

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	OUTLETS/ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE
INFORM	Milwaukee County will inform residents about the County’s vision, services, fiscal challenges, and ARPA funding priorities.	Public Information Campaign; District Townhall Meetings, County ARPA Landing Page, Social Media, Free & Paid Media (TV, Radio, Print/Digital; Information dissemination	September – December 2021

		at County Courthouse, Coggs Center, and Senior Centers, MCTS; Outreach to County Boards and Commissions, Community Resilience Imperative	
LISTEN TO	Milwaukee County will listen to the diverse perspectives and ideas of residents with an emphasis on those most impacted by COVID-19 to help define what, where, and how ARPA dollars are used.	Reverse Community Townhalls targeting African American, Latinx, Hmong/AAPI, First Nations, LGBTQ+, Seniors, Veterans, Persons with Disabilities, and Small Business Owners	October – December 2021
INVOLVE	Milwaukee County will involve residents and impacted community partners directly in ARPA community support and COVID-19 mitigation planning and decision making.	ARPA Task Force Meetings and Community Support Service Area Subject Matter Teams. The County will build upon existing COVID-19 mitigation, strategic communications and outreach, and public health infrastructure development activities underway.	January 2022 through ARPA funding period as needed through Service Area Subject Matter Teams
EMPOWER	Milwaukee County will empower residents and impacted community partner organizations by investing in and building their leadership and organizational capacity to implement ARPA funding decisions and support mitigation efforts, including policy and systems change.	Community Support Implementation and Training Grants; Community Barrier Reduction Infrastructure Development; Community Advocacy Capacity Building	Ongoing through ARPA funding period to support implementation of ARPA funded community support strategies

An ARPA community outreach and engagement planning team has been assembled with County leaders and communication staff who have identified the first two phases (Inform and Listen To) as immediate priorities of focus related to community outreach and engagement. Current activities underway include:

1. **Public Information Campaign Development** – Messaging and content is being development for a countywide public information campaign that will inform residents about the implications of the County’s vision, services, and fiscal challenges related to ARPA decision making. Key messages are being aligned to the specific phases for community outreach and engagement. The public information campaign will launch in October 2021.
2. **Outreach to County Boards and Commissions, Community Outreach Partners** – Outreach is underway to create accessible opportunities for members of the public to inform ARPA community priorities. Aligned to the vision of achieving racial equity, the County is particularly committed to receiving input from residents of color and other communities disproportionately

impacted by COVID-19. The team has identified several community outreach outlets, including the Milwaukee Community Resilience Imperative, County boards and commissions, and community partner organizations to engage in this specific activity. Specific boards and commissions include the Milwaukee County Mental Health Board, Combined Community Services Board, Commission on Aging, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Veteran Services Commission, and the Community Justice Council, who will receive informational briefings on APRA in October and November 2021.

3. **District Townhalls and Reverse Community Townhalls** – ARPA informational packages and guidance are being developed for County Supervisor district meetings and community outreach partners being identified to co-host community townhalls in diverse communities. ARAP community townhalls will be schedule in October through December 2021 to outline criteria for ARAP funding categories and allocations and serve as outlets to receive public input that will inform planning and decision making on ARPA community support and COVID mitigation strategies.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational item.