

Counties and the  
Fiscal Recovery Fund:



# RURAL COMMUNITIES



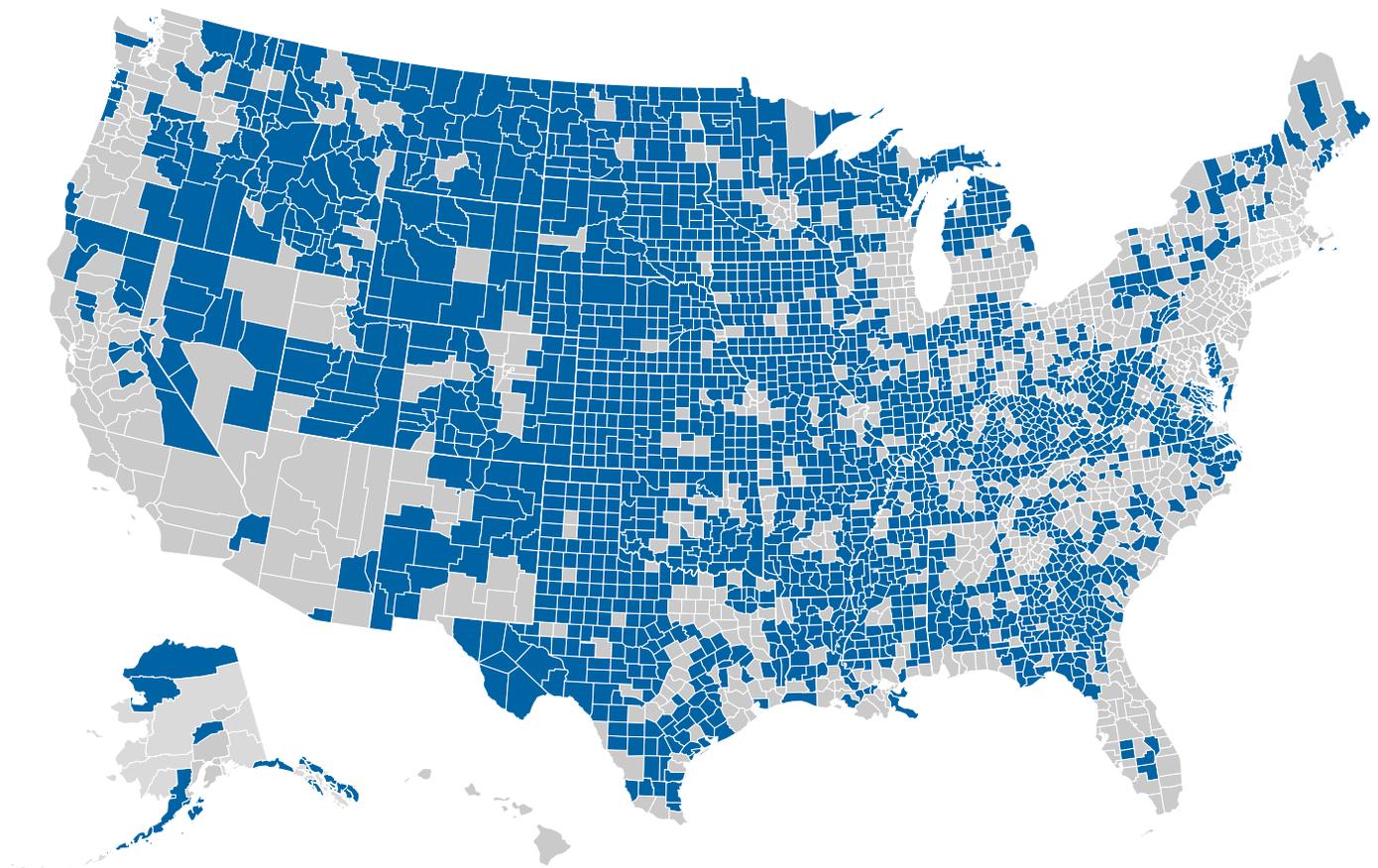
## THE FRF AND RURAL COMMUNITIES:

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Recovery Fund), part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which NACo helped to develop and strongly advocated to pass, allocates \$65.1 billion to directly to every county across the nation. NACo was especially proud to help deliver over \$7.5 billion in funding to rural counties with populations of less than 50,000. These funds provide direct, flexible aid for every county, parish and borough in America. Counties are on the front lines in delivering this aid to residents and are a driving force connecting communities and strengthening the economy.

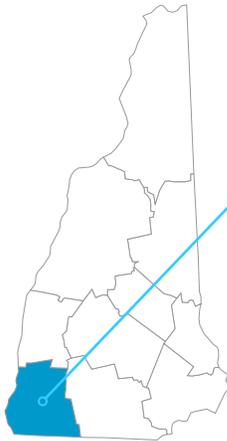
As directed by the ARPA and U.S. Department of Treasury, counties can invest Recovery Funds into a broad range of programs, services and projects under five categories to: support the public health response; address negative economic impacts caused by COVID-19; replace lost revenue; provide premium pay to essential workers; and invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.

This report highlights how counties have begun investing Recovery Funds to support rural communities and residents across the country.

## COUNTIES WITH POPULATIONS BELOW 50,000



There are over **2,000** counties with populations below 50,000 people



## **CHESHIRE COUNTY, N.H.**

The Cheshire County Commissioners approved a spending plan of over \$7.2 million in ARPA funds. The allocations include \$1 million in additional support to the Maplewood Home Reconstruction Project, \$1 million for emergency grants to county businesses and nonprofits, \$2.3 million for energy upgrades across all three county campuses and \$1 million for qualifying municipal improvement projects and unplanned COVID-19 costs distributed to Cheshire County's towns.



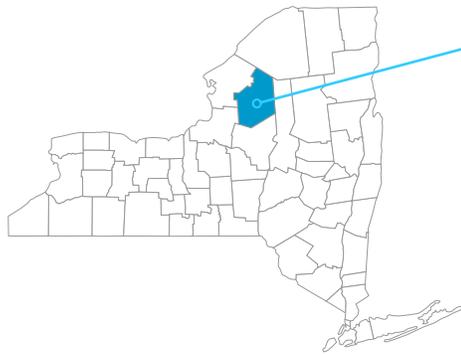
## **JEFFERSON COUNTY, MONT.**

Jefferson County has allocated \$100,000 for childcare support to support licensed childcare providers with sustainment of existing facilities and supporting new programs throughout the county, \$100,000 for the Jefferson County Health Department and \$50,000 for assisted living support to support long-term care facilities. The county is also investing in community businesses through a \$200,000 allocation for a small business county revolving loan fund to help support business development and expansion programs, \$100,000 for business improvement grants, \$100,000 for nonprofit organization support and \$300,000 for entrepreneurship and incubation development. Other allocations include funding for historic buildings, land development, broadband, tourism and utility infrastructure.



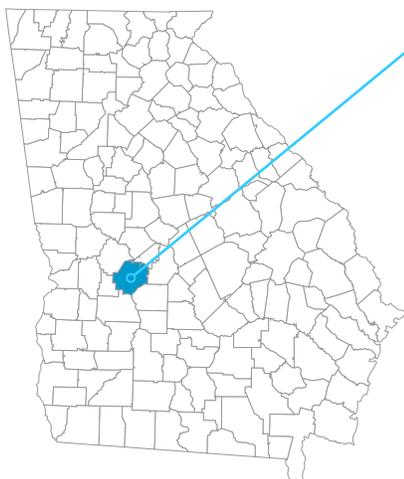
## **KANDIYOHI COUNTY, MINN.**

The County Board of Commissioners plans to spend up to 75% of the county ARPA allocation to support several broadband expansion projects. An initial \$1.3 million allocation is funding a project that will expand high-speed broadband to a few townships serving over 755 households within the community.



## **LEWIS COUNTY, N.Y.**

County legislators approved the investment of \$1.5 million in ARPA funds for a broadband expansion initiative. Other areas of investment currently under consideration include \$1.5 million for improving recreation “community connectors” along the county trail system, \$1 million for a Community Investment Program that creates a fund for vacant and underutilized properties to be developed and \$400,000 for streetscape improvements within the community.



## **MACON-BIBB COUNTY, GA.**

Macon-Bibb County has approved distributions totaling \$18 million in ARPA funds. These funds will support several initiatives, including \$5 million for blight elimination (e.g. demolitions, building new homes, etc.), \$1.5 million for affordable housing projects and \$4 million toward the Brookdale Warming Center to support populations experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, the county has approved \$2.5 million to address food insecurity in the community (including funds to address food deserts and funding for the Food Bank), \$3 million for Visit Macon to boost tourism, and \$2 million for community interventions to prevent violent crime.



## **MIAMI COUNTY, IND.**

County commissioners have pledged \$1.4 million to help fund a major expansion of high-speed internet to rural parts of the county, including to underserved students in low-income areas. The money will go to Miami-Cass REMC, which last year purchased the local internet provider Broadway Broadband and now plans to install 800 miles of fiber internet over the next six years.



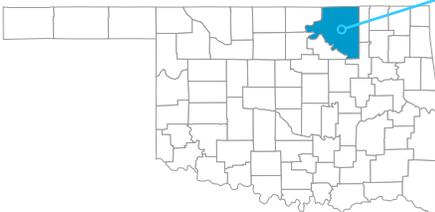
## **MINERAL COUNTY, W.VA.**

Mineral County has approved more than \$450,000 in community investments. These funds will support county government operations, community parks and recreation as well as the county Convention and Visitors Bureau. Each of these areas experienced cutbacks due to pandemic-induced revenue loss; as such, the allocations to these projects are categorized as compensation for revenue loss.



## **OCONTO COUNTY, WISC.**

The Oconto County Board approved a plan for \$4.6 million in ARPA funds. In the plan, \$2 million is allocated towards broadband infrastructure to provide high-speed wireless internet to unserved rural areas. To accomplish this, the number of emergency radio towers will be increased from nine to 11, with four owned by the county and seven to a joint venture with a broadband provider. These funds are in addition to the \$3.6 million Oconto County is already spending to improve the county radio system. Additional investments are earmarked for recreation sites, a community training center and improvements to county buildings.



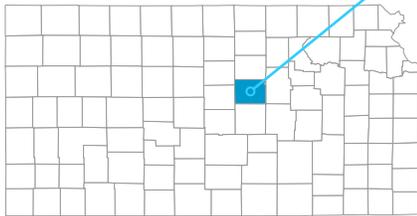
## **OSAGE COUNTY, OKLA.**

The County Clerk and Treasurer have provided the commissioners with a proposal for the first tranche of ARP funds. This proposal includes \$900,000 for road maintenance on county roadways and funds for core government offices, the election board and senior citizens programs among other investments.



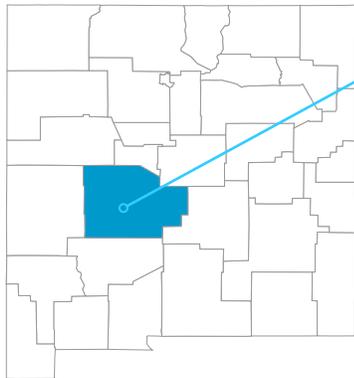
## **RENVILLE COUNTY, MINN.**

The Board of Commissioners approved an initial allocation of \$1.5 million in ARPA funds. This funding covers a wide range of issues from addressing county revenue loss and capital expenditures to mental health services and childcare grants. Also included are allocations to support infrastructure investments to water and broadband within the county.



## **SALINE COUNTY, KS.**

The Saline County Board of Commissioners approved a framework for \$10.6 million in ARPA funds. The first part of the plan allocates \$2 million to business and nonprofit recovery grants, including \$1.6 million for the regional airport. Another \$1 million will go towards housing, \$500,000 for workforce development and water infrastructure grants and \$355,000 to address public safety and criminal justice. The second part of the plan directs additional funds to small businesses, housing, poverty reduction and other long-term investments.



## **SOCORRO COUNTY, N.M.**

County Commissioners in Socorro County have set aside \$750,000 to be used as grant funding for local businesses and farmers, \$50,000 for community vaccine incentives and \$25,000 for a vaccine lottery. The vaccine incentive program will offer residents \$50 gift cards purchased from local businesses and would offer free transportation for those that need to get vaccinated.



## SUMMIT COUNTY, COLO.

The County Board of Commissioners has allocated \$2.8 million to address costs associated with COVID-19 operations throughout the course of the pandemic. An additional \$3 million is allocated for housing support, \$320,000 is set aside as a contingency for future COVID-19 impacts and the balance of the first tranche of funds is allocated towards community economic resiliency.



## TRIGG COUNTY, KY.

The Trigg County Fiscal Court approved a contract with Pennyrite Electric to help improve broadband infrastructure in the outskirts of the county. The funding for this project comes from \$2 million in county ARPA funds.



## WHITMAN COUNTY, WASH.

Of the county's \$9.7 million in ARPA funds, \$4.2 million is approved to fund infrastructure upgrades in county buildings including heating, ventilation, and AC systems. An additional \$1.6 million will address sewer and water improvements in county towns, while \$1 million is proposed to help small businesses and shop locally. Seven-hundred and fifty-thousand dollars are proposed for mental health services, a large portion of which will go to Palouse River Counseling (PRC) to fund new staff. PRC offers behavioral health services and plans to offer group sessions to help people deal with anxiety or depression stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.



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