

WORK AND WAGES

Four ways the American Rescue Plan can support working people

Local governments can drive equitable recovery

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Government works best when it works for all people, not just the wealthy few and corporations. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) approaches economic recovery from the ground up by helping people pay the rent, feed their families, fix the car and resume their lives after an unprecedented pandemic and recession.

Besides \$5.4 billion for Ohio's state government, local governments will receive \$5.3 billion in flexible federal Fiscal Recovery Funds to help those most harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic and recession. Those include people who are paid low wages, women, and people of color. Of that \$5.3 billion, Ohio's "metro cities" will receive \$2.18 billion, counties will receive \$2.27 billion and \$844 million will pass through the state to small cities and villages. Appalachian counties will receive \$386 million directly from the federal government, in addition to funds to cities and towns.

Governments can spend the funds to: 1) respond to the pandemic and its negative economic consequences; 2) provide bonus pay to essential workers; 3) restore pandemic-induced public service cuts and avoid additional cuts; and 4) invest in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

To maximize benefits to working people, local governments should:

- Provide bonus or hazard pay to essential workers.
- Mandate businesses receiving ARPA dollars comply with labor laws.
- Fund workplace rights enforcement and create a fund to provide working people with workplace rights education and legal services.
- Mandate Community Benefit Agreements for infrastructure projects that require employers pay good wages and respect workers' right to join a union.

The American Rescue Plan Act is an historic opportunity for local governments to dismantle longstanding racial and economic barriers that the pandemic exposed and worsened. Rescue funds should be used to reduce new illness and deaths from COVID-19 and improve health conditions in the hardest hit communities; ensure families impacted by the recession can pay for basic household needs; and to build a more egalitarian future. Centering working people is key to ensuring that all Ohioans are included in the recovery, and emerge from the crisis stronger than before.