

End of 2022 Legislative Session
American Rescue Plan Act Funds

Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers writing to you after the close of the 66th Budget Session. This special report outlines a few key American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provisions. As you know, the Legislature has utilized the federal COVID-19 relief funds and the ARPA dollars as a one-time opportunity to resolve long-standing issues Wyoming has been unable to address due to declining energy revenues.

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, Wyoming has received over eight billion dollars in various forms, from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to bolster Wyoming businesses, to money for hospitals, mental health, and schools. Much of that \$8 billion also went directly into communities to help with the immediate relief from the pandemic through different programs.

This Legislative Session, we looked at how to strategically and smartly use the approximately \$1.068 billion in one-time ARPA dollars to meet current needs and to invest in Wyoming's future. The Legislature was able to use \$585 million for one-time revenue replacement needs in the 2022 Budget Bill and the remaining balance, \$484 million, for one-time direct funding. Through Senate File 66, the Legislature appropriated \$386 million of that one-time direct funding. Approximately \$72 million remains to be appropriated by the Legislature at a future date.

The following provisions were signed into law last week:

Workforce Development and Education

- The Legislature appropriated \$10 million to the Governor's office for the distribution of funding to the Business Council, Department of Workforce Services, the University of Wyoming, and community colleges for workforce development priorities. These include initiatives supporting apprenticeship, health care workforce programs, early childhood workforce programs, laid-off workers, programs for the underemployed, reentry programs, a program to recruit Wyoming natives back to the state, and for economic development training.

- The Legislature appropriated more than \$2.7 million to the University of Wyoming to support health practitioner education, including the Family Medicine Residency program, and to account for inflation for tuition and fees in its program.
- The Legislature appropriated nearly \$6.5 million to the Community College Commission for the Wyoming Investment in Nursing program in community colleges throughout the state.
- The Legislature appropriated \$18 million to the Department of Health for retention of medical providers and Emergency Medical Services ambulatory staff. While portions of this provision were vetoed by the Governor, the underlying appropriation remained intact.

Infrastructure

- The Legislature appropriated \$25 million to the Wyoming Business Council for a grant program that increases broadband connectivity to improve access and meet the need for reliable high-speed internet. The provision specifies that grant recipients will have to offer and provide continuous services to broadband customers for at least seven years. This will increase broadband service in rural, underserved cities, towns, and counties that lack competition for these critical services. This allocation will also serve as matching funds, which are required for federal matches for broadband connectivity projects within the federal infrastructure bill. While portions of this provision were vetoed by the Governor, the underlying appropriation remained intact.
- The Legislature appropriated \$43.8 million to the Department of Transportation for state or local government expenditures related to the WyoLink statewide public safety interoperable radio communications system, hardware and network, and to aid commercial air providers in mitigating issues related to payroll and benefits, support, operations, facilities, and equipment.
- The Legislature appropriated \$5 million to the Department of Health for grants to health and human services providers to improve existing infrastructure and to provide financial relief to providers who are at imminent risk of closure. Grants will be distributed to providers as determined by the department.

- The Legislature appropriated \$85 million to the Office of State Lands and Investments for health and human services infrastructure and capital construction investments, including \$7 million for community mental health center regional crisis stabilization facilities and women's substance use disorder facilities and \$15 million for rural health clinics.
- The Legislature appropriated \$50 million to the Office of State Lands and Investments for eligible water and wastewater projects.

Local Government Support Projects

- The Legislature appropriated \$50 million to the Office of State Lands and Investments for competitive grant funding to cities, counties, and tribal governments for COVID-19 public health emergency initiatives and to mitigate its negative economic impacts. The successful applications will be decided by the State Loan and Investment Board.

Healthcare

- The Legislature appropriated \$1.2 million for the Department of Corrections substance use disorder treatment program.
- The Legislature appropriated \$5 million to the Department of Health's Health and Human Services Innovation Fund Grants program for innovation in rural health care, long term health, and community behavioral health, health information technology, and digital medical innovation.
- The Legislature appropriated \$10 million to the Department of Health in matching funds to establish a pilot project for five trauma regions across the state which would improve access and reduce costs for emergency medical services.
- The Legislature appropriated \$3.3 million to the Department of Health for EMS certification and for suicide prevention, which includes widening access to resources such as the 24/7 Wyoming suicide prevention hotline, training for mental health providers, and special mental health support for Wyoming's first responders.

- The Legislature appropriated \$2.7 million to the Department of Health’s Aging Division for the Wyoming Home Services Program.

Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

- The Legislature appropriated \$10 million to the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources for products, projects, and grants in response to the COVID-19 emergency.
- The Legislature appropriated \$2 million to the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources and the Office of Outdoor Recreation for qualifying one-time ARPA expenditures.

Other Items of interest

- The Legislature appropriated \$50 million to the Governor's Office for purposes of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Legislature appropriated \$1.75 million to the Department of Health for 2-1-1 capacity building.
- The Legislature appropriated \$250,000 million to the Department of Family Services for food insecurity.
- The Legislature appropriated \$3.1 million to the Supreme Court for needs of the Judicial Branch.

Items of Interest that Received a Governor’s Veto

- The Governor vetoed a \$45 million appropriation the Legislature made to various state departments and entities to establish a competitive grant program for cities, counties, special districts, and tribal governments for eligible water projects to be decided by the Wyoming Water Development Commission.

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