



Cleveland County RECOVERY PLAN 2022



STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS CLEVELAND COUNTY RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary _____	3
Use of Funds _____	6
Promoting Equitable Outcomes _____	9
Community Engagement _____	10
Labor Practices _____	13
Use of Evidence _____	13
Performance Report _____	13
Project Inventory _____	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ROADMAP TO RECOVERY

Cleveland County was founded in 1890 and is located in central Oklahoma. A land area of more than 500 square miles and a steadily growing population of close to 300,000 people (2020 census makes it the third most populous county in Oklahoma). The county seat is Norman, home of the University of Oklahoma, the National Weather Center and numerous government facilities. While the majority of the county's population is located in Norman or Moore, there are also small towns and rural areas for whom the county provides services. A portion of Oklahoma City stretches across the northern part of the county.

Due to its history in response to emergencies, Cleveland County is well positioned to develop a practical and effective Recovery Plan for the Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Funds. Cleveland County is taking a strategic, needs-based approach to this once in a lifetime opportunity, recognizing these funds can make a lasting impact on the community.

Cleveland County's first priority was to identify the effects of, or exacerbated by, the pandemic and to educate the public on the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Focusing on the negative public health and economic impacts, a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted to determine the needs facing Cleveland County. The assessment focused on immediate needs and longer-term recovery strategies for the county. As the pandemic is ongoing, this Recovery Plan will focus on process, over-arching goals, and objectives identified, ensuring that the funds are truly tied to the needs of the community. It is important to the County Commissioners that the process to develop funding priorities is transparent and that the Recovery Plan be a working, community-driven document.

From the initial community feedback, the county outlined three main goals which serve as the guide for the use of funds throughout the term of the Recovery Plan. The county will continue meeting with residents, community organizations, and businesses and update this plan accordingly.

Goals:

Goal One:

To ensure that Cleveland County supports the welfare of its residents with compassion and collaboration across sectors with services provided to those in need and accessible to vulnerable populations.

Goal Two:

To ensure that Cleveland County has an economy which is strong, resilient, and provides diverse opportunities for its residents.

Goal Three:

To ensure that the public infrastructure of Cleveland County is safe, secure, resilient and strategically focused on long-term benefits for all.

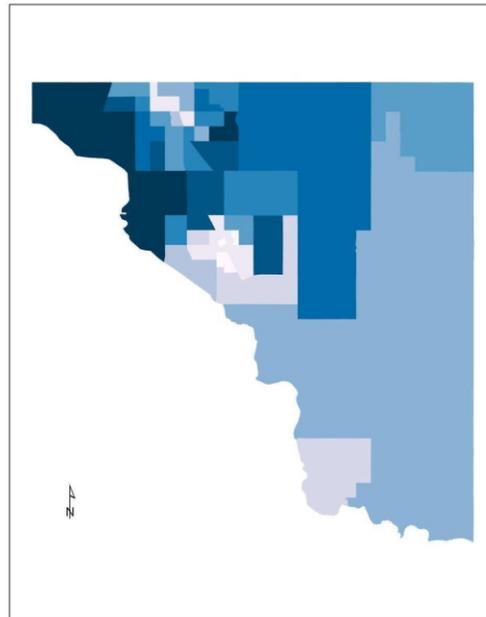
These goals are the foundation for developing the overarching strategy used to determine funding priorities and projects.

The first phase of the initial Recovery Plan was to conduct a needs assessment of the impacts the pandemic has had in Cleveland County. The process to determine needs included input from many diverse communities and stakeholders across Cleveland County, as outlined in the Recovery Plan - Initial Report. All of the information gathered will be used to determine a prioritized list of projects centered around the overriding three goals of the Recovery Plan and subsequent objectives. The projects will be prioritized based upon need and impact. A project inventory will be developed with measurable outcomes and outputs and key performance indicators to evaluate progress toward the three goals and objectives. This Recovery Plan will be updated annually, while the project inventory and measurements will be updated more frequently.

Challenges

There is a mixture of communities located within Cleveland County. The county is a combination of rural areas and suburban neighborhoods; high wealth zip codes, and swaths of Qualified Census Tracts; large government employers and small mom-and-pop businesses. This diversity in population and communities makes it a wonderful and interesting place to live and difficult to use a “one size fits all” approach to recovery funding.

Cleveland County Income



The median household income for Cleveland County is \$64,016, with the Northwest area of the county, including Moore, having the highest income levels, with the lowest concentrated around the university. Two of the highest income zip codes in Oklahoma are located within Cleveland County, however, the county seat of Norman contains a number of Qualified Census Tracts.

A large amount of the county's racial diversity comes from the

Native American population living in rural unincorporated areas. According to census data, Cleveland County demographics are: 78.3% white, 5.5% black or African American, 5.3% Native American, 4.7% Asian, and 9.2% Hispanic or Latino.

Opportunities

There is a sense of community and small town feel in Cleveland County, even while being the third largest county in Oklahoma. It was quickly evident that Cleveland County organizations have an innovative spirit and have cultivated a strong, collaborative network, especially among its nonprofit organizations. Understanding the network of connectors and collaborators is a significant asset of the county. The county is large enough to have a variety of resources, yet small enough to know each other and work together. The population has been through a fair share of disasters and always come together, displaying what is known as the "Oklahoma Standard" across the world. Whether it is a tornado, ice storm, or a home town game of 90,000 fans, Cleveland County is used to working together to achieve a common goal of supporting the wellbeing of its citizens.

Thus, the strategy of the Recovery Plan formed throughout this process will build upon and maximize this natural collaboration and existing coordination rather than duplicating or supplanting existing services. It is the county's intent that this plan be a working document providing for flexibility as residents learn more about the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and provide input. The Recovery Plan will continue to evolve as the pandemic evolves in Cleveland County, allowing enough flexibility to respond to immediate needs while targeting longer term recovery strategies consistent with the three overriding goals. Updates to the Plan will be made as funding priorities are developed and be updated on the county website.

Uses of Funds

Cleveland County has taken a strategic approach of collecting data and feedback from the community before determining the use of funds. The county is focusing on key outcome goals that will help support a strong and equitable recovery from the pandemic and determining priorities with that lens.

In **Public Health**, the pandemic demonstrated the lack of adequate space and ventilation to provide for social distancing in needed public services such as vaccinations, testing, voting, farmers market, and others. The Cleveland County Detention Center had challenges with isolating and quarantining inmates. The lack of testing, personal protection equipment, and screening procedures made it difficult to keep staff and inmates safe. The County Health Department lacked adequate space for social distancing and ability to perform public health functions. The lack of warehouse space to store public health supplies, including vaccines and testing equipment, continues to be a major issue. Additionally, the lack of sheltering for outside public health needs, including testing and vaccination, were problematic due to Oklahoma weather elements.

A common theme across sectors and feedback from the general public was the effect on mental health from the stress of the pandemic. The numbers of people needing assistance are increasing, and are predicted to continue increasing. Many individuals who had previously managed issues such as substance abuse and PTSD were not attending virtual services and relapsing. Drug courts, wellness checks, support groups and other services were not available or accessible in a meaningful way. This lack of structure and in-person resources exacerbated mental health problems. The county also received feedback from every sector mentioning stress and burnout among the workforce. Mental health professionals are increasingly concerned about children and juveniles, and the lack of providers to serve the needs of the community.

When gathering feedback from businesses, cities, and municipalities on the **economic impacts** of the pandemic, workforce shortage concerns were a common theme. Many businesses have raised wages in the hopes of gaining more employees, however they still have difficulty filling jobs. This has led to businesses changing their hours of operation or closing certain aspects of their business, while others have closed entirely. Due to unemployment resulting from the pandemic, workers may need retraining to transition into new positions. The need for flexible policies on work hours and childcare was illustrated across sectors. As many services moved online and the workforce began to work virtually, outdated technology became a problem. Supply chain issues were challenging across the county, including the initial demand for personal protective equipment. Businesses expressed needs surrounding technical assistance in navigating federal programs and the applicable financial documents.

Cleveland County's nonprofit community is a robust network working together to provide services to disproportionately impacted populations in the county. Nonprofits expressed the need for more resource centers where multiple nonprofits can collaborate on services and case management. The county's nonprofits fill many service needs including mental health, food insecurity, substance abuse, and homelessness. The need for more case managers and providers was prevalent. More than 7% of the population are veterans with unique needs. One of the largest school districts, Norman Public Schools has more than 50% of its student population which qualifies for free and reduced lunch program. For the '21-'22 school year the school district decided to provide free breakfast and lunch to all 14,000+ of its students. The county is also utilizing Emergency Rental Assistance funds for residents struggling to pay rent and utilities. According to the census US Census Bureau, 36% of Cleveland County residents are renters with the median gross rent of \$926. Through quarter two of 2022, \$5,731,465.20 has been awarded to assist residents facing eviction through the Emergency Rent Assistance Program. Every eviction docket in the Cleveland County Courthouse is staffed by nine legal aid attorneys and Community Cares Partners staff to ensure all residents in need of rental and utility assistance are helped.

When examining the county's **infrastructure** needs, insufficient water quality in certain rural areas was identified. The broadband utilization rates were encouraging, though challenges such as affordability and speed in rural areas of the county remain. Public infrastructure needs included inadequate space in the public health sector, especially in terms of prevention and safety in congregate facilities. Additionally, the latest census figures show continuing and steady growth in the county population, which will inevitably strain the public infrastructure of the county moving forward.

Cleveland County has relied on public input to identify the county's needs and determine the use of funds. The feedback from the community resulted in three overarching goals for the county:

These overarching goals were provided for in the initial Cleveland County Recovery Plan submitted to US Treasury in August 2021. Utilizing the stakeholder input, those goals were further divided to objectives to be achieved by each of the goals and potential projects to achieve the objectives. The Board of County Commissioners voted on adopting the following objectives for the use of funds:

Goal One: To ensure that Cleveland County supports the welfare of its residents with compassion and collaboration across sectors with services provided to those in need and accessible to vulnerable populations.

Objective: Residents' behavioral health needs are met through comprehensive collaboration, workforce development, and facility and infrastructure needs.

Objective: The public health needs of 300,000 citizens are met and the Cleveland County Health Department is prepared to respond to a public health emergency and other public health needs.

Objective: Support the county's collaborators and connectors who provide services to most vulnerable

Objective: Ensuring the Couch Center is safe for Cleveland County juveniles and that the facility can address and respond to occupants' needs.

Objective: The Cleveland County Detention Center has adequate infrastructure to provide for the health and safety of detainees and staff during a public health emergency

Objective: The citizens of Cleveland County are provided needed government services by the Cleveland County government offices.

Goal 2: To ensure that Cleveland County has an economy which is strong, resilient, and provides diverse opportunities for its residents.

Objective: Develop a strong, resilient, and diverse workforce for critical occupations and diverse industries to respond to immediate needs and strong economic recovery.

Goal 3: To ensure that the public infrastructure of Cleveland County is safe, secure, resilient, and strategically focused on long-term benefits for all.

Objective: Address aging water infrastructure to provide access to safe drinking water.

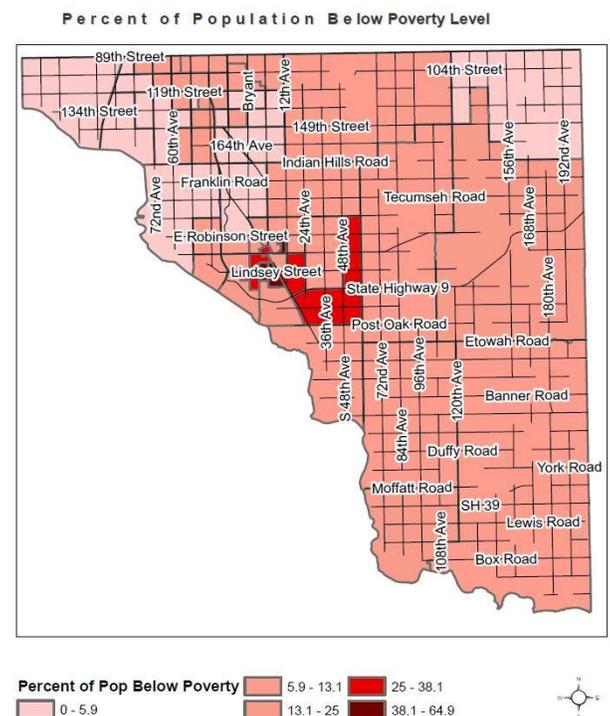
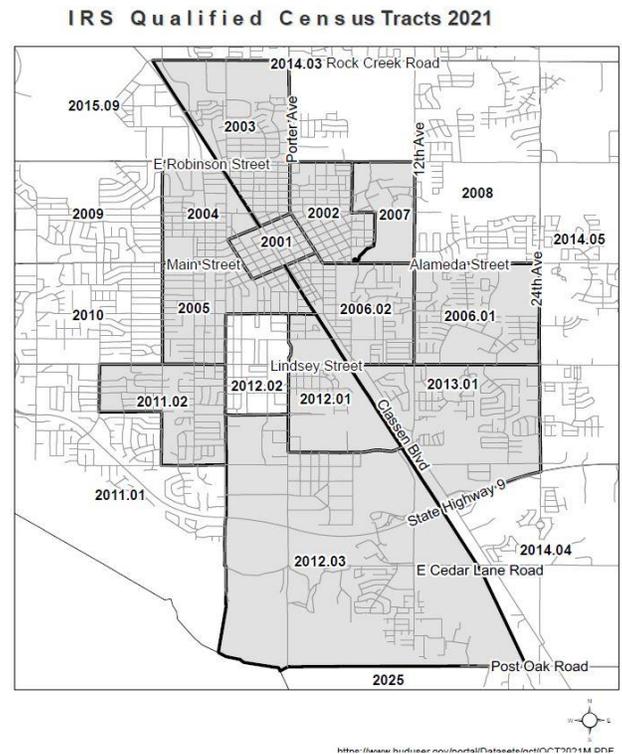
Objective: Provide robust and resilient broadband capabilities in Cleveland County.

Promoting equitable outcomes

While no specific projects have been approved at this time, the county is researching and establishing outcome measures focused on those residents 'hardest to reach' and ensuring the resources needed are available and accessible. Cleveland County is developing an inventory of existing nonprofit providers within the county and identifying potential gaps and areas for collaboration and coordination. Nonprofits have been asked about lessons learned from the pandemic and continuing needs. The nonprofit community is a key stakeholder in promoting an equitable recovery, as they are on the front lines serving residents in need.

Some Qualified Census Tracts are located within Cleveland County; therefore the county will focus on awareness and accessibility for new programs and services. More research is needed on specific needs, even within the QCT, due to the high population of university students in the area, as their needs may be more immediate than long term. Even outside of the QCT, lower income, rural sections of the county will deserve further consideration.

To ensure balance and fairness, outcome targets will be developed through the phases of the evidence-building process (outlined below). Cleveland County has a sophisticated network of charitable organizations serving residents with wraparound services. Using these resources, the county should have sufficient data points to formulate an evidence-based strategy incorporating appropriate metrics.



Community Engagement

Cleveland County has taken a strategic approach to collecting data and feedback from the community before determining the use of funds. The county is focusing on key outcome goals that will support a strong and equitable recovery from the pandemic. These goals provide the lens to determine recovery priorities. The initial Recovery Plan illustrated the variety of ways the Board of County Commissioners has gathered community feedback, including months of community engagement, stakeholder group surveys, and public intake forms.

Cleveland County held a series of stakeholder engagement meetings to identify needs and assess how the pandemic affected the community. The county met with people on the front lines of public health, behavioral health, nonprofit services, and businesses. The purpose of these meetings was to educate the community on the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds eligible uses, identify negative impacts from the pandemic, collect needs exacerbated from the pandemic, and solicit ideas on how to address those needs to promote an equitable economic recovery and public health response.

Stakeholder engagement and public meetings will continue throughout this process as the county evaluates barriers to full, long-term recovery and how to overcome those barriers within the subsets of vulnerable populations as well as for the county as a whole.

The county also made a community feedback submission form available online. This form is open to the public and was promoted through the local newspaper, social media, and the county website, as well as during stakeholder meetings. The purpose of the form is to identify ways in which individuals and families across the county were affected by the pandemic. This feedback form asks how the respondent was affected, if they sought assistance, and to identify their preferred priorities for the county's recovery process. This form remains open and available to the public.

Some insights realized through the public feedback form :

- Residents are mentally exhausted and stressed attributable to a variety of factors
- Concern for small businesses and workforce needs
- Many are underemployed or unemployed
- The varying opinions on how government should respond to the pandemic is illustrative of the community's diversity

Stories from Cleveland County residents:

“Our community is stressed. Our infrastructure, services, and social supports are pushed to the limit. We need to invest long-term in clean, reliable water; broadband internet; and a sustainable, robust social safety net including mental health”

“Mental health and substance use disorders are at an all time high. People are stressed and resources are strained. Workers in nonprofits and helping professions are exhausted with the next massive covid wave coming”

“Friends and family have lost jobs, living situations, savings, access to medical. Everyone seems to be suffering from being mentally exhausted”

“Increased difficulty for businesses due to lack of available workforce. Deepening community divides due to disparate impacts on vulnerable communities paired with increased political rhetoric.”

“Whether acknowledged or not, very few if any of us have not had our mental health impacted by the pandemic. The disconnection, fear, losses, uncertainty... had created a greater need to mental health services and support. At the same time, our mental health system is struggling to retain quality trained staff to provide mental health services. There is a shortage of mental health providers at all levels in our community”

The public feedback survey saw over 600 responses and was reflective of the make-up of the county. Behavioral health and public health were the top two priorities identified.

Surveys directed at businesses and the issues they are facing were also sent out through many outlets including the local chambers of commerce, mayors and city managers, and other community groups. These surveys ask specific questions relating to workforce shortages and needs resulting from the pandemic. They target what resources would be helpful for businesses to recover.

There has been continued engagement with the county’s mayors, city officials, and county officials to ensure feedback is gathered from all levels of government as well. Many communities expressed concern over their small businesses and the mental health needs of their communities.

Targeted stakeholder surveys were also sent out to organizations spanning sectors and industries. These surveys requested input on community needs, harms exacerbated by the pandemic, and possible solutions for those needs. This survey allows respondents to propose project ideas on how

the funds should be spent, specify the project budget, and identify the reporting code the project would fall under. There is a link to the reporting guidance and expenditure categories so stakeholders could evaluate for themselves if their proposal was an eligible use of funds. These project ideas will be compiled and considered in context of the overriding goals of the Recovery Plan and priority areas. This level of community engagement will continue throughout this process as needs are continuing to be identified and solutions proposed. The county is interested in leveraging resources and collaborating with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and the public sector to serve those with barriers to service.

While the county will continue engaging with its residents and stakeholders, these were the prominent themes that emerged throughout the community engagement process.

Goals, objectives, and planned allocations directly reflect feedback from the community needs assessment, stakeholder engagement form, and public feedback survey. All planned allocations have been voted on by the Board of County Commissioners in a public meeting.

Labor Practices

While there are no specific projects in place at this time, the county will utilize workforce practices that ensure safe workplaces, strong labor market and provide high-quality infrastructure for any infrastructure projects undertaken. Any infrastructure projects in Cleveland County will comply with the employment and workplace laws of the state of Oklahoma as well as Cleveland County policies.

Use of Evidence

To ensure an evidence-based approach when determining funding priorities, the county has and will continue to pursue a high level of community and stakeholder engagement. The input received through this process will inform the creation of performance measures and metrics to create the overarching strategy. While projects are not currently in the implementation phase, the county will continue initial preparation work gathering current, available data.

Each of the projects funded through the Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery funds will have targeted outcomes and measurable outputs which will be tracked. Where practicable, these measures will be reviewed and approved by the commissioners.

The county will use programmatic and outcome evaluations to measure short term and long-term impacts.

Performance Report

Cleveland County will oversee the implementation of the CSLFRF funds by tracking projects and ensuring they meet the goals and objectives assembled from community feedback. Each project recipient will be guided for compliance with all Federal regulations (Uniform Guidance, Treasury's Final Rule, bidding and procurement processes, audits, etc.) and reporting requirements. Robust internal controls will be established for each sub-recipient based on their risk level. The County will also track project schedules, expenditures, and key performance indicators/outcome measures and set up a dashboard for transparency for all projects in addition to the quarterly and annual progress reporting to US Treasury.

Project Inventory

While no projects are currently underway, the Board of County Commissioners has voted on allocating almost all of the first tranche of funds to the following program and objective areas with the following adopted budgets:

Program: Behavioral Health needs at Couch Juvenile Detention Center

Funding Amount: \$4,000,000

Expenditure Category: Mental Health Services (EC 1.12) and/or Prevention in Congregate Settings (EC 1.4)

Overview: Provide assistance to the Couch Center in addressing the behavioral health needs of residents and providing public health support in a congregate setting.

Program: Behavioral Health support at The Virtue Center

Funding Amount: \$500,000

Expenditure Category: Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations (EC 2.34)

Overview: Comprehensive behavioral health support services throughout the community.

Program: Public Health Support

Funding Amount: \$2,900,000

Expenditure Category: Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (EC 1.7) and Strong and Health Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety (EC 2.22)

Overview: Addressing residents' health needs and providing additional services as well as supporting health initiatives and preparing the county for any future health emergencies.

Aligned project:

Healthy Living Projects at The Well

Adopted Budget: \$900,000

Purpose: Provides programming such as healthy living and wellness services.

Program: Nonprofit Support

Funding Amount: \$2,000,000

Expenditure Category: Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations (EC 2.34)

Overview: Supporting nonprofits across the community.

Aligned projects:

Support for Veterans groups

Adopted Budget: \$500,000

Purpose: Provide assistance to the nonprofits assisting veterans groups in Cleveland County who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The Program will be managed by the Cleveland County Veterans Coordinator.

Support for Food and Shelter

Adopted Budget: \$500,000

Purpose: Aid to the nonprofit Food and Shelter which is the leading service organization addressing homelessness and food insecurity in Cleveland County.

Support for Salvation Army

Adopted Budget: \$500,000

Purpose: Provide assistance to the nonprofit Salvation Army which is an important service organization addressing homelessness and food insecurity in Cleveland County.

Support for Cleveland County nonprofits

Adopted Budget: \$500,000

Purpose: Provide assistance to the nonprofits in Cleveland County who experienced negative economic consequences from the pandemic.

Program: Behavioral and Public Health support at Cleveland County Detention Center

Funding Amount: \$2,700,000

Expenditure Category: Mental Health Services (EC 1.12)

Overview: Provide assistance to the Cleveland County Detention Center in addressing the behavioral health needs and providing public health support in a congregate setting for detainees and staff.

Program: Workforce Development

Funding Amount: \$1,000,000

Expenditure Category: Assistance to Unemployed or Underemployed Workers (EC 2.10) or Technical Assistance, Counseling, or Business Planning (EC 2.30)

Overview: Workforce initiative for unemployed or underemployed ensuring the county recovers economically.

Program: Revenue Replacement Standard Allowance for Government Services

Funding Amount: \$10,000,000

Expenditure Category: Provision of Government Services (6.1)

Overview: Due to the impact of the pandemic, the US Treasury presumes that revenue has been lost due to the public health emergency. This project will be used to fund government services as determined by the BOCC.

Program/Project: Cleveland County Clerk records digitization

Funding Amount: \$2,000,000

Expenditure Category: Public Sector Capacity: Effective Service Delivery (EC 3.4)

Overview: Digitizing the records of the Cleveland County Clerk will provide more effective delivery of services provided by the office. It will also allow the citizens to access records online, eliminating the need for in-person delivery.