

City of Bridgeport ARP Funding FAQs

What is the ARPA?

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was passed by Congress in February 2021, providing for billions of dollars of relief to states, counties, and localities in response to the impact of Covid-19 on their local communities. Bridgeport has received approximately \$40 million so far, with another \$70 million arriving next May.

Who is eligible?

Bridgeport residents and Bridgeport-based non-profits that exclusively serve Bridgeport residents may apply for the non-profit related RFPs. Bridgeport-based businesses can apply for the two application programs.

How can I apply?

Go to <https://bridgeportct.gov/arp>. All 13 applications have links to fillable PDF forms.

What is the deadline?

Two paper copies of the applications must be delivered by 2:00 p.m. (EST), Tuesday, August 31, 2021 to the Purchasing Dept, 999 Broad St, Bridgeport, CT 06604. This is a hard deadline.

Can I apply for more than one RFP?

Yes. If your organization plans to provide more than one distinct program or initiative, then you are welcome to file applications for more than one RFP.

Is this a loan or a grant?

These are grants; repayment is not expected. Federal guidance suggests that funds may be 'recouped' if not applied in accordance with the ARPA.

Why is there a cap on grants?

In order to provide funding to as many eligible applicants as possible, the City has capped the grant amount that may be awarded to an organization for each grant year.

Is the grant for just this year?

The Storefront Improvement, Small Business Expansion, and Faith-Based Initiative grants are one-time grant opportunities. For the other RFPs, selection committees will allocate funding for this grant year. Based on the availability of funds and compliance with the conditions of this grant award, organizations will likely be funded for an additional two years.

Is there a deadline for when funds must be spent?

Deadlines for when grant funding must be spent will be laid out in the contract with the City once a non-profit or business has been awarded money.

Will the city publish who received grants?

Yes. As part of the federal quarterly reports required from the city, recipients will be identified.

Who decides who gets the grants and how much?

Each RFP will have its own selection committee. The committees will include between three to eight individuals, including at least one representative from a) the City Administration; b) City Council; and c) the community at large. The selection committees will make funding decisions based on the criteria set forth in each RFP.

When might the first checks be provided?

The City anticipates making funding decisions by late September and issuing initial disbursements in early October.

Besides these RFPs, are ARP funds being applied elsewhere?

Yes. The City is making an investment of ARP funds in a number of areas that were identified as priorities during the community input process. For example, the City is making an investment in Summer Youth programs and hiring, in broadband infrastructure, in the design of the WPCA's West End Plant, and social services. The City is also exploring other opportunities, such as NRZ funding, business start up funding, premium pay, and other areas that will benefit our city.

Do business owners have to own their storefronts, or can they be lessors?

Business owners can own or be lessors to submit the Store Front Improvement. If the Business owner is a lessor, they will need to provide a signed agreement from the landlord to be eligible for the grant.

Do non-profits need to start their programs by September 2021, or can they propose a different timeline?

Organizations can propose any timeline that makes sense given the proposed program. Some programs may choose to start right away in September 2021. Others may not have the capacity start without the City cutting the first check. Some programs are not year-long programs. There are no hard rules about what the timeline needs to be, except that you should only propose a budget for a year's worth of spending.

Can faith-based organizations apply for non-faith-based RFPs?

Yes, faith-based organizations will be considered for funding by the RFP committees just like any other non-profit under each of these ARP opportunities, as long as the programming is not religious in nature and the program meets the criteria established by the RFP.

Can previous payments be reimbursed with ARP funds?

No. The funds are intended for future uses.

Can business owners propose visual arts upgrades (such as murals) as part of the storefront improvement program?

Yes. As long as the artistic work is part of a storefront improvement, it will be considered for funding by the committee.

Are non-profits allowed to partner with other organizations to carry out its proposals or to help with fiscal capacity?

Yes, non-profits are highly encouraged to partner with other organizations in proposing programming under any of the American Rescue Plan opportunities. Partnerships may make the proposal stronger, especially for newer non-profit organizations. Those organizations that do not have a lot of fiscal capacity are highly encouraged to find a fiscal partner to ensure proper accounting and expenditure of these funds. Again, these types of partnerships are likely to strengthen your application and give more confidence that your program will meet the City's requirements for funding.

Under the Nutrition Insecurity grant, will the purchase of refrigerators, freezers, and other kitchenware essential to carrying out the programming provided by the non-profit be considered for funding?

Yes, the committee may consider such expenditures for funding and may determine that such expenditures are important to the mission of the program—namely, feeding those who are food insecure.

Can a non-profit employ subcontractors in pursuit of meeting its program goals?

Yes, non-profits may use a subcontractor to carry out programming; however, the use of such subcontractors must be outlined in the application, so it is clear how the program is being carried out and who is involved. The costs of the subcontractor must also be outlined in the program budget with details as the hours and compensation for which the subcontractor is being paid.

Where can I go for more information on the American Rescue Pan Act?

The National League of Cities provides useful links and information regarding the ARPA. Go to <https://www.nlc.org/covid-19-pandemic-response/>. The Treasury Interim Final Rule and Treasury FAQs are particularly useful to provide guidance on eligible uses of these funds.

What about locally? Where can I get more information?

Please email arpagrants@bridgeportct.gov or consult www.bidsync.com for more information.