

Town of South Kingstown – Proposed American Rescue Plan Funding Program



To The Honorable Town Council
From Theresa L. Murphy, Interim Town Manager
Subject Proposed American Rescue Plan Funding Program
Date July 22, 2021

American Rescue Plan – Proposed Spending Plan Overview

The following plan presents the recommendations for spending \$8,950,000 the Town of South Kingstown expects to receive under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The proposed projects align with the guidelines that have been set at the federal level and would best advance the objectives of the Act – to respond to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This proposed plan reflects input from town staff, outside agencies, and the community at large. It focuses on revitalization of South Kingstown’s local and tourism-dependent industries and recognizes the critical importance of helping local businesses and residents return to pre-pandemic levels of income and economic activity. The Interim Final Rule that outlines how the federal grants funds can be spent provides that municipalities can undertake programs and activities that:

1. Respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts including assistance to: Households, Small businesses, Non-profits, or Impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.
2. Respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers.
3. Provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the COVID-19.
4. Make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

This document provides narrative descriptions and recommended budgets for the projects and initiatives proposed for funding through the ARP. This plan focuses on three specific goals:

1. Economic Recovery – Downtown Village - Public/Private Sector Investment Programs
2. Response to Negative Economic Impacts Associated with Households and Non-Profits Impacted by Covid-19
3. Response to negative economic impacts associated with the delivery of Government Services

ARP Summary - Proposed Distribution of Funds

The total proposed ARP Program funding for South Kingstown is \$8,950,000 from two sources:

- \$3M in Non-Entitlement Aid to Municipalities
- \$5.95M in County-based Aid to Municipalities

These funds must be obligated between March 3, 2021 and December 31, 2024, and projects must be completed on or before December 31, 2026.

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A summary of the proposed distribution by category is shown below:

American Rescue Plan Proposed Distribution	
Downtown/Village economic revitalization	
Public Sector Investment	\$4,360,000
Public/Private Sector	2,282,500
Sub-total	\$6,642,500
Response to negative economic impacts	
Housing	400,000
Social Service/non-profit (Grants)	500,000
Sub-total	\$900,000
Municipal Investment	
Focus on services that suffered detrimental effects	\$1,407,500
TOTAL ARP FUNDS	\$8,950,000

ARP Spending Program Detail

Projects and initiatives proposed for ARP funding are detailed on the following pages of this document. It is important to note that the proposed budget for disbursement of these funds represents a framework that takes into account the areas identified as in need of recovery and revitalization as a result of the negative impact caused by the pandemic.

I. Economic Recovery – Downtown Village - Public/Private Sector Investment Programs

DOWNTOWN/VILLAGE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

In order to facilitate the rapid revitalization of the venues and neighborhoods that have historically attracted tourists, Rescue Plan funds are proposed to be used to make strategic community (village) investments to the extent permitted by Treasury Department guidance, as well as enter into public private partnerships (matching grant program), designed to restore economic activity and promote economic growth throughout the Town. Programs would be centered around tourism, hospitality, household services, and small business support/activation, which shall include, but not be limited to, funding for efforts and initiatives to improve the business climate on key commercial corridors within South Kingstown's Villages, with a focus on Wakefield, Peace Dale, West Kingston, Kingston, Matunuck, and Lower Tower Hill. Funding is also proposed to provide direct support for small businesses through loans and grants, and marketing and promotion of the Town to assist with the economic recovery.

Public Sector Investment/programs	
Street Lighting (LED/New night sky compliant, light poles with options for banners/flower baskets)	\$500,000
Landscaping (Street Tree replacement and expansion, flower baskets/boxes)	300,000
Streetscape improvements (general place making)	50,000
Hard goods (benches, trash/recycling receptacles)	100,000
Sidewalk/Crosswalks improvements and expansion	875,000

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Fencing (i.e., main street, river walk)	200,000
Historic Plaques	5,000
Creation of pocket parks, green space opportunities (i.e., removal of building and seeding of green space at High Street and Schaeffer Street - UFD)	100,000
Multi-purpose Trail markers and feature structures at major cross roads (i.e., introduction of mile makers on the Trails)	200,000
Traffic calming	1,000,000
Wayfinding/signage (contact sensitive design for village scale)	175,000
New Bus Shelters	500,000
Creation of design standards /specifications for Commercial/business Development (new or existing)	75,000
Old Mountain field rehabilitation (Concessions/small business restart)	280,000
Sub-total	\$4,360,000
Private Sector Investment/programs (Matching Grants)	
Façade improvements: Matching Grants – (develop standards and matching percentage)	\$1,500,000
New Improved Business/Wayfinding/signage (contact sensitive design for village scale)	200,000
Lighting (LED/New night sky compliant, light poles with options flower baskets)	300,000
Fencing	200,000
Historic Plaques	5,000
Landscaping (replacement and expansion, flower baskets/boxes) private/public green space creation	15,000
Architectural Services: Consultation with Registered Architect (AIA) on proposed design/standards for improvements	62,500
Sub-total	\$2,282,500
Category: Sub-total	\$6,642,500

II. Response to Negative Economic Impacts Associated with Households and Non-Profits Impacted by Covid-19

HOUSING

The COVID-19 pandemic hit low-income families hard and contributed significantly to housing insecurity in South Kingstown because housing prices are well above state and national averages. To address the harm caused to low and moderate-income households in South Kingstown, \$300,000 of Rescue Plan funding is proposed to be dedicated to a program focused on housing affordability, which shall include, but not be limited to, funding for non-profit entities working to create affordable housing opportunities and expand the quality housing opportunities in South Kingstown's villages with a particular focus on promoting homeownership.

- Matching grants for creation of new affordable units meeting the RI State guidelines for affordability (Goal to create 15 new/rehabbed units in a walkable setting – Matching grants up to \$20,000 per unit.

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Funding in the amount of \$100,000 is also proposed to support local non-profit agencies for the provision of home repairs for elderly and low to moderate income families, who, as a result of the pandemic and prolonged isolation, experienced deterioration of housing infrastructure.

SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The biggest challenges facing low and moderate income families as they return to post-pandemic work involve addressing the day-to-day challenges of childcare, transportation and managing household finances. The ARP Interim Final Rule acknowledges economic disparities that existed prior to the Covid-19 public health emergency and the amplified impact of the pandemic among low-income and minority groups. The Interim Final Rule identifies services and programs that will be presumed to be responding to the negative economic impacts of the Covid-19 public health emergency. Funding allocation in the amount of \$500,000 is proposed to support local organizations with established childcare, domestic-assistance programs (such as utility and rental assistance programs), food security, mental health services and other non-profit community-based supports.

In June 2021, the Town Council solicited input from local non-profit and outside agencies for preliminary funding requests in order to understand the level of interest, as well as gauge the potential benefits to the community. Organizations were asked to demonstrate how their proposed programs would address the negative impacts of COVID-19 in the community. At their June 28th work session, the Town Council heard from many of the agencies that submitted proposals. These proposals allowed the Council to gain an understanding of the types of programs that could support the local Covid-19 recovery efforts, particularly for the population most negatively impacted by the pandemic. It is the Town's intent to establish a formal competitive grant application process, once the Town Council has set a budget allocation plan for the ARP funds, including a specific amount designated for non-profits and outside agency support.

A total of 20 organizations responded to the Town's solicitation for ARP funding consideration, requesting a total of \$3,995,900 – see Appendix B for list of agencies and funding requests. Based on review of the responses, five were determined to be ineligible, as submitted, for one or both of the following reasons:

- Request was for funding related to a municipal program/property
- Proposed projects were for new infrastructure and were not directly related to impacts associated with COVID-19

Of note, six of the submissions serve a regional constituency and it is recommended that consideration be given to supporting partial funding of initiatives. This recommendation is based on the premise that those organizations could seek additional funds from other municipalities or solicit alternative funding sources that may be available to them as non-profit and/or social service agencies.

Upon finalization of a formal application process, the program will be advertised and open to non-profits and outside organizations that serve the residents and businesses of South Kingstown. The award process will require the authorization of the Town Council for all Rescue Plan fund grant awards.

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Housing	
Create housing opportunities and expand the quality of housing opportunities in South Kingstown's villages - focused on affordability: Including, but not be limited to, funding for non-profit entities working to create affordable energy efficient (i.e., Net Zero) with a particular focus on promoting homeownership. Matching grants for creation of new affordable housing units meeting the RI State guidelines for affordability (Goal to create 15 new/rehabbed units in a walkable setting – Matching grants up to \$20,000 per unit (50/50 match);	\$300,000
Elderly home repair grants (low/moderate income) and non-profit assistance	\$100,000
Sub-total	\$400,000
Social Service/Non-profit Grants	
Non-Profits Child care (low/moderate households) - Non-Profit Social Service Type Grants (competitive) serving low and moderate households.	\$500,000
Category Sub-total	\$900,000

III. Response to negative economic impacts associated with the delivery of Government Services and non-profits impacted by COVID-19

Municipal Investment	
Natural Resource Officer (need compounded by COVID-19)	\$180,000
Grant & Contract Manager (2-year position)	300,000
Office 365 - software upgrades	45,000
Audio/visual meeting town council chambers	100,000
Youth employment program	65,000
Enhance Discovery/summer camp/after school mental health program	40,000
Para/medicine	270,500
Public Safety and Mental Health Staffing (EMA/Police)	407,000
Sub-total	\$1,407,500

NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICER/HARBORMASTER

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, South Kingstown saw an increase in recreational activities that allowed people to socially distance themselves. The Town experienced a significant increase in boating activity in local waters – Potter Pond, Pt. Judith Pond and Narrow River. The harbormaster role, especially throughout the Summer 2020, became more critical in ensuring public safety on town waters; and local boating activity in South Kingstown waters has increased because of Covid-19 and limited recreational options. Other recreational resources impacted and highlighted by the pandemic, with increase in activity where people could socially distance, were the town's public access rights of way to the shore, nature trails, bike paths, the disc golf course, and park picnic areas. As these passive recreational resources have been (re)discovered by residents and visitors alike, they are equally as important as playgrounds, athletic fields, and active recreational venues. The combination of higher level harbormaster activity and the need for dedicated attention to the Town's natural resources supports the need for a full time Natural Resource

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Officer/Harbormaster position. \$180,000 in ARPA funds is allocated to support this full time position for the first two years after which the position will be incorporated into the general fund operating budget.

GRANT & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

It is anticipated that a dedicated ARP grant/contract manager will be necessary to manage programs affiliated with the COVID-19 utilization plan. This role will be critical in development, rollout and monitoring of the proposed grant programs associated with a specific category of assistance being sought. For example, the façade Improvements matching grant for businesses; non-profit grant program for social services, child care, and mental health program; or affordable housing development and improvement grants. This position will also work directly with the Finance and Planning Departments, as well as other departments that have proposed funding to implement recovery programs and projects, to ensure that all federal regulatory and reporting requirements are met throughout the implementation of the ARP funding program. This position is proposed to be funded for a two year period.

LOCATION RESILIENCE – TECHNOLOGY

During the pandemic, a large percentage of town administrative staff was forced to work remotely and the need to share files and work collaboratively in a virtual setting increased. The Town would have greatly benefitted from having Office 365 (O365) in order to allow for multiple contributors on projects, with shared documents and files. Office 365 would include additional cloud storage and Teams virtual meetings technology, which would replace Zoom as a more secure internal meeting platform. The cost to implement this is \$50,000.

DIGITAL DEMOCRACY RESILIENCE – VIRTUAL MEETINGS TECHNOLOGY

The Town's ability to offer remote programs and meeting access has been severely limited due to strained resources surrounding the delivery of services to the community. Upgrading the town's software and audio/visual capabilities will relieve pressure on the community as it relates to in person meetings.

During the pandemic, remote meetings via Zoom were the norm. These meetings included Town Council and town boards and commissions, staff meetings and departmental meetings. As municipal services return to in-person, we recognize the need for a "hybrid" meeting model to accommodate in-person and remote participation. This will require an upgrade to audio visual equipment in the Council Chambers and depending on cost, may include equipping conference rooms in other Town facilities, with audio equipment. The estimated cost for upgraded equipment and new purchases for the Council Chambers is \$100,000.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Throughout 2020 and in the first quarter of 2021, Covid-19 had a significant negative impact on employment opportunities for youth who would have otherwise had a first time job experience with a local business or through seasonal employment through the Town or State of Rhode Island. Because of the limited recreational and tourist activities, combined with constraints for group gatherings, seasonal job opportunities for teens were severely limited. A \$65,000 investment will support a one-year seasonal youth employment program that would afford training and mentorship of local teens in work areas such as Parks, Recreation, Senior Services and Municipal administrative support. This program will help local youth who have aged out of summer camp eligibility to learn job skills, interact in a team environment and be productive contributors to their community. This program is intended to be a building block from which

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participants will gain work experience and learn skillsets that will be transferrable as they move on to other employment opportunities. Program eligibility will prioritize residents from low to moderate income households.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Because of Covid-19 it is expected that there will be a higher level of need among school aged children related to mental health and behavioral challenges as a result of prolonged isolation and reduced social interaction. For this reason, \$40,000 is proposed to fund a part time, temporary, mental health/behavioral health specialist for staffing the Recreation Department youth Day Camp program and "School's Out" Vacation camps to address needs of all campers especially those with behavioral challenges. Involvement of qualified professionals within the framework of recreational programming will support and enhance existing services in place within the school system; and will help to ensure a continuum of mental health care both in and out of school.

COMMUNITY PARA-MEDICINE AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

COVID-19 affected the mental health of our community members in multiple ways. As an example, the persistently mentally ill were unable to receive the ongoing outpatient and/or community care that provides stability to remain within the community due to many providers and various agencies transitioning to telehealth services only. In addition, the significant isolation made the generally stable and more of the "worried well" type individuals, who may have required medication or only on an as-needed basis, increasingly symptomatic to the point where they now require consistent treatment, certification or hospitalization when they have either no history of mental health or very little. To reverse the spike in mental health care needs due to the effects of Covid-19, the South Kingstown Community Paramedic Program would work to implement integrated behavioral health care to the citizens of South Kingstown with the following goals:

- Bridge the divide between the mental health needs of the community and appropriate care
- Implement change in patient outcomes and reduce health care costs
- Address chronic disease management which can coincide with mental health
- Reduce non-emergent 911 calls
- Reduce non-emergent emergency room visits

ARP SKEMS – COMMUNITY PARA-MEDICINE PROGRAM	
CPP Vehicle -1 SUV Explorer	\$35,000
CPP Paramedic Personnel -2	150,000
Cardiac Monitor 12 Lead EKG -1	35,500
Sub Total	\$220,500
SK EMA Administrative Staff	50,000
TOTAL	\$270,000

South Kingstown Emergency Management Agency (EMA) was charged with the implementation and operation of COVID-19 vaccine clinics for South Kingstown along with other regional partners in Washington County. Duties included establishing and managing MEDPOD's since December 2020 through present and into the future. In addition to managing MEDPOD operations, significant administrative work



has been required to facilitate reimbursement from state and federal agencies such as Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The aforementioned duties are currently carried out by the Chief of EMS and an administrative Captain with South Kingstown Police Department (SKPD). Because of Covid-19, the workload for these two critical positions increased significantly. During events such as a public health emergency (COVID-19), natural disasters or man-made disasters, significant administrative work is required prior, during and post event. Having administrative staff allows the department to dedicate a staff member to handle the appropriate documentation required for planning events, continued review of response plans, coordination of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers, maintenance of records/inventory of equipment dedicated for disaster response and required documentation for reimbursement. A total of \$50,000 is proposed for this function for a two year period.

MENTAL HEALTH IN POLICING

Because of COVID-19 many citizens suffered from mental health related problems. Many who had pre-existing mental health issues saw their symptoms exacerbated during the pandemic and others that had no previous mental health problems found themselves experiencing symptoms. Clearly, mental health issues among members of the community have grown due to the pandemic and as a result, the police department has seen an increase in mental health related calls for service. The South Kingstown Police Department recognizes this problem and is committed to being guardians of the community. These specified police roles of community officers will be non-enforcement positions that focus on the overall social service needs of the community and also focus on community engagement which will ultimately bring the police department closer to the citizens it serves.

A cost projection with the recommendation of hiring two additional officers utilizing ARP Funding, is estimated at \$407,000. This projection is for a period of three years and it is anticipated that future costs will be integrated into the police department operating budget.



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING PROGRAM	
I. RESPONSE TO COVID-19 NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH SMALL BUSINESS, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY.	
Public Sector Investment/programs	
Street Lighting (LED/New night sky compliant, light poles with options for banners/flower baskets)	500,000
Landscaping (Street Tree replacement and expansion, flower baskets/boxes)	300,000
Streetscape improvements (general place making)	50,000
Hard goods (benches, trash/recycling receptacles)	100,000
Sidewalk/Crosswalks improvements and expansion	875,000
Fencing (i.e., main street, river walk)	200,000
Historic Plaques	5,000
Creation of pocket parks, green space opportunities (i.e., Removal of building and seeding of green space at High Street and Schaeffer Street - UFD)	100,000
Multi-purpose Trail markers and feature structures at major cross roads (i.e., introduction of mile makers on the Trails)	200,000
Traffic calming	1,000,000
Wayfinding/signage (contact sensitive design for village scale)	175,000
New Bus Shelters	500,000
Creation of design standards and specifications for Commercial/business Development (new or existing)	75,000
Old Mountain field rehabilitation (Concessions/small business restart)	280,000
Sub-total	\$ 4,360,000
Private Sector Investment/programs (Matching Grants)	
Façade improvements: Matching Grants – (develop standards and matching percentage).	1,500,000
Streetscape improvements (general place making)	
New Improved Business/Wayfinding/signage (contact sensitive design for village scale)	200,000
Lighting (LED/New night sky compliant, light poles with options flower baskets)	300,000
Fencing	200,000
Historic Plaques	5,000
Landscaping (replacement/expansion, flower baskets/boxes) private/public green space creation	15,000
Architectural Services: Consultation on proposed design/standards for improvements	62,500
Subtotal	\$ 2,282,500
Category Total	\$ 6,642,500



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

II. RESPONSE TO NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH HOUSEHOLDS AND NON-PROFITS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Create housing opportunities and expand the quality housing opportunities in South Kingstown's villages-focused on affordability: Including, but not be limited to, funding for non-profit entities working to create affordable energy efficient (i.e., Net Zero) with a particular focus on promoting homeownership. Matching grants for creation of new affordable housing units meeting the RI State guidelines for affordability (Goal to create 15 new/rehabbed units in a walkable setting – Matching grants up to \$20,000 per unit (50/50 match)	\$300,000
Elderly home repair grants (low/moderate income) - non-profit assistance	100,000
Non-Profits Child care (low/moderate households) - Non-Profit Social Service Type Grants (competitive) serving low and moderate households.	500,000
Category Total	\$900,000

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

III. RESPONSE TO NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DELIVERY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Municipal Investment	
Natural Resource Officer (need compounded by COVID-19)	\$180,000
Grant & Contract Manager (2-year position)	300,000
Office 365 - software upgrades	45,000
Audio/visual meeting town council chambers	100,000
Youth employment program	65,000
Enhance Discovery/summer camp/after school mental health program	40,000
Para/medicine	270,500
Public Safety and Mental Health Staffing (EMA/Police)	407,000
Category Total	\$1,407,500
TOTAL PROPOSED AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN EXPENDITURES	\$8,950,000



APPENDIX A

Eligibility Areas for Village Revitalization

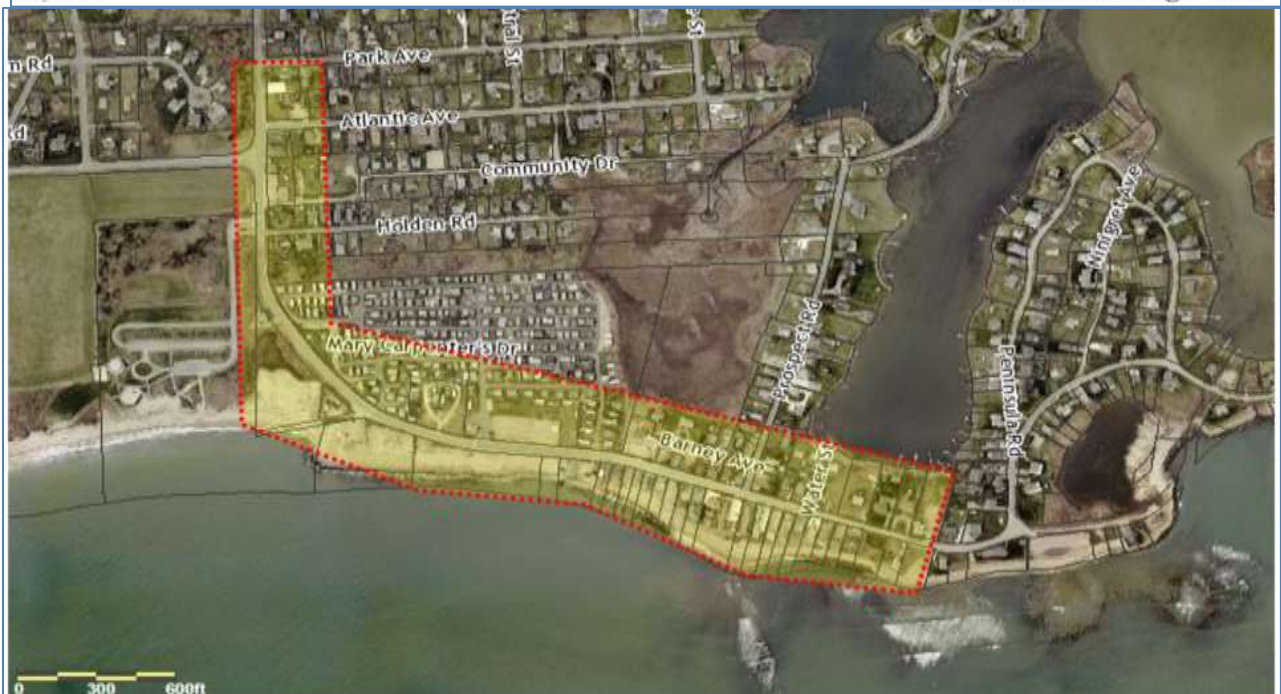


Wakefield and Lower Tower Hill

South Kingstown, RI
Façade, Signage and Landscape
Program Eligibility Area
May 2021



Town of South Kingstown



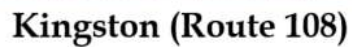
Matunuck

South Kingstown, RI
Façade, Signage and Landscape
Program Eligibility Area
May 2021



Town of South Kingstown

Eligibility Areas for Village Revitalization (continued)



Town of South Kingstown



Town of South Kingstown



APPENDIX B

INITIAL FUNDING PROPOSALS FROM NON-PROFIT/OUTSIDE AGENCIES (JUNE 28 WORK SESSION)

Entity	Geographic Area	Total Funding Proposed
Wakefield Village Association	South Kingstown	500,000
Southern Rhode Island Volunteers	Washington County	8,000
Washington County Coalition for Children, the Jonnycake Center for Hope and Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County	Washington County	200,000
C.A.N.E. Child Development Center	Southern Rhode Island	50,000
The Education Exchange	South Kingstown	75,000
Galilee Mission, Inc.	Washington County	60,000
RI Food Policy Council	State-wide	500,000
Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County	Washington County	64,400
Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County	Washington County	1,125,000
Jonnycake Center for Hope	Southern Rhode Island	250,000
Boys and Girls Clubs of Newport County	South Kingstown	77,000
South County Historic Center	South Kingstown	18,000
Contemporary Theater Company	South Kingstown	200,000
Southern RI Chamber of Commerce	Washington County	50,000
Chris Collins Foundation	South Kingstown	25,000
South Kingstown Housing Authority	South Kingstown	650,000
VFW Post 916	South Kingstown	78,500
Tri-County Community Action Agency	South Kingstown	25,000
South County Health	South Kingstown	10,000
Neighbors Helping Neighbors	Southern Rhode Island	30,000
TOTAL		\$3,995,900

Two citizen suggestions were submitted via the Town's American Rescue Plan webpage:

1. Recommendation to move the South Kingstown Farmers Market to the Riverwalk Park.
2. Recommendation for funding allocation to non-profits for expansion of digital capabilities (hardware/software)