



Douglas County, Colorado
Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Funds**

2022 Report

Douglas County, Colorado
2022 Recovery Plan

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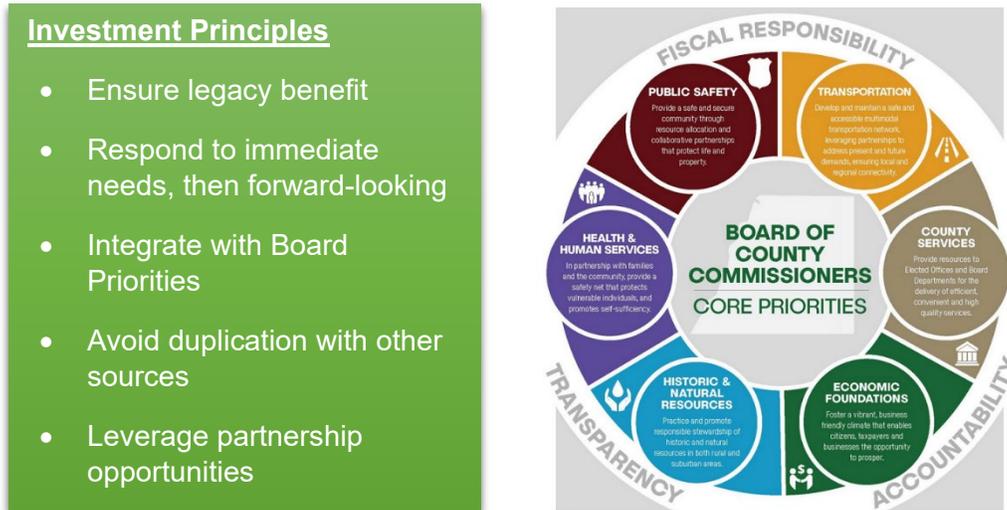
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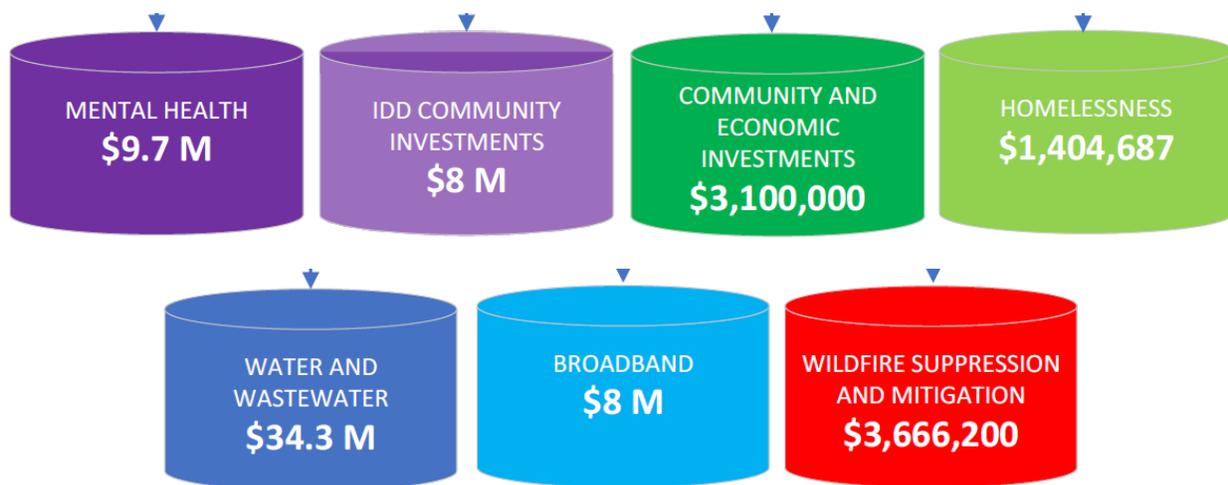
GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Douglas County’s Board of County Commissioners developed a spending plan for its Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (LFRF) allocation through a deliberative, transparent decision-making process. The process is directed by five investment principles and the Board’s six Core Priorities:



These principles guided formation of a spending plan developed over the course of several months. Investments in these areas are anticipated to provide legacy benefit for County residents, consistent with the County’s primary investment principle.



This draft plan is subject to refinement as the County continues to pursue additional opportunities for offsetting or augmenting these investment areas with other grant funds from state or Federal programs. Going forward, the County will implement spending in these target areas with community partners, consistent with its objective to leverage partnership opportunities.

Uses of Funds

Douglas County developed a spending plan based on the County's Board Priorities, investment principles, and the input received through the community engagement process described below. As noted in the executive summary, this spending plan is preliminary, and subject to change based on additional grant opportunities, emerging needs, and refinement through project implementation with community partners. For County fiscal years 2020 and 2021, Douglas County has identified \$18,060,529 of its allocation eligible for revenue replacement and use for government services. These funds are included in the uses described below.

Water and Wastewater - \$34.3M

Local Fiscal Recovery Funds may be used for investments in water and wastewater infrastructure. Douglas County anticipates allocating approximately \$34.3M to this priority in partnership with local water and wastewater districts. These expenditures would be reported within Expenditure Categories 5.1 to 5.18 – Water and Sewer Infrastructure. A portion of expenditures in this category may also be reported within Expenditure Category 6.1 – Provision of Government Services.

Mental Health Services – \$9.7M over three years

Douglas County plans to expend approximately \$9.7M for the provision of mental health services over three years. These expenditures are to be reported within Expenditure Category 1.12 – Mental Health Services.

To date, Douglas County has expended \$137,499.77 within this expenditure category. That expenditure was a contribution to Metro Crisis Services, doing business as Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners (RMCP). RMCP is the Colorado state-wide provider for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, now operating as 988. Funds provided by Douglas County contributed to operation of the hotline from October 2021 to March of 2022.



Broadband – \$8M

Douglas County anticipates allocating approximately \$8M to support broadband extension to underserved or underserved areas. These expenditures are to be reported within Expenditure Categories 5.19 to 5.21 – Broadband Infrastructure.

A portion of the funding in this category (\$101,971.51) was expended toward a County Broadband Master Plan to inform target investment areas and potential partnership opportunities. The Plan is being developed by H.R. Green on behalf of the County, under a professional contract with a total contract value of \$139,815.

Services for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities - \$8M

Local Fiscal Recovery Funds may be used for a broad range of public purposes when claimed as revenue replacement by a local jurisdiction. Douglas County anticipates allocation of approximately \$8M of revenue replacement funds for services and support to the IDD community. These expenditures would be reported within Expenditure Category 6.1 – Provision of Government Services.

Wildfire Suppression and Mitigation - \$3.6M over two to three years

Local Fiscal Recovery Funds may be used for public sector staffing to increase local government capacity. Douglas County plans to staff two pilot programs focused on wildfire suppression and mitigation. These expenditures are anticipated to be reported within Expenditure Category 3.4 – Public Sector Workforce: Other.

Homelessness - \$1.4M over two years

Local Fiscal Recovery Funds may be used for expenditures to support unhoused persons. Douglas County plans to allocate approximately \$1.4M to this priority. These expenditures are anticipated to be reported within Expenditure Category 2.16 – Long-term Housing Security: Services for Unhoused Persons.

Community and Economic Investments - \$3.1M

Douglas County anticipates allocating approximately \$3.1M to a range of potential investments related to workforce education, non-profit support, business support, affordable housing, and services to seniors or foster youth. These expenditures will be reported within relevant expenditure categories once final allocations have been determined.

Promoting equitable outcomes

The Douglas County Board of County Commissioners govern based on Core Priorities that include its commitment to Health and Human Services. Building on this priority, Douglas County anticipates investments in several project areas that will benefit disproportionately impacted populations, including but not limited to services to foster youth, mental health services, job training, affordable housing, services to unhoused persons, and services to the IDD community. Douglas County anticipates that projects in these areas will address the County's objective to provide a safety net that protects vulnerable individuals and promotes self-sufficiency.

Douglas County also anticipates expenditure of significant resources for water and wastewater improvements that will benefit lower-income communities on the US Highway 85 corridor, where a history of disinvestment resulted in inadequate central services and water quality concerns.

Community Engagement

Priorities within Douglas County's spending plan were developed based in part on a robust community engagement process that began in the second quarter of 2021. The process began with an internal need assessment, followed by consultation with stakeholder groups and task forces. Several of these task forces helped guide investments for the benefit of disproportionately impacted populations, and some were specifically formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to assist the County in responding to identified community needs. These task forces and stakeholder groups include:

- Mental Health Initiative
- Housing Partnership
- Human Needs Task Force
- Pastor Roundtable
- Community of Care service providers
- Homeless Initiative
- IDD service providers
- Wildfire Initiative
- Special Districts
- Economic development organizations

The County began soliciting proposals from partner entities in mid-2021. All proposals received have been considered in public work sessions. In the 4th Quarter of 2021, the County began soliciting water and wastewater projected proposals from local districts and water providers. Approximately \$240M in proposals was received through this process. During the first half of 2022, Douglas County conducted due diligence on several of the larger water proposals, including a seven-part series of fact-finding public workshops on one of the proposals.

Townhall meetings (live and virtual) were held to further solicit input on several of the priority investment areas. These included ARPA-specific Town Halls in December of 2021 and June of 2022. Topical town halls included January 20, 2022 and April 19, 2022 town halls on workforce considerations, a May 3, 2022 town hall on addiction and fentanyl, a May 5, 2022 town hall on mental health, a June 8, 2022 town hall on broadband, and a June 22, 2022 town hall on homelessness.

Labor Practices

As of July 31, 2022, no funds have been allocated to or expended on infrastructure projects. For any future infrastructure projects funded with SLFR Funds, Douglas County will consider the appropriateness of relevant labor practices as encouraged in published SLFRF guidance, and report on the use of such practices as required by applicable Treasury Department Compliance and Reporting Guidance.

Use of Evidence

To date, Douglas County implemented one project in an expenditure category that requires discussion of whether evidence-based interventions and program evaluations were used. That project was a financial contribution to the operator of the 988 Suicide Prevention Hotline in Colorado. Funds were used for operation of the hotline from October 2021 to March of 2022. At the conclusion of this period, Douglas County required a report of performance metrics associated with call volumes and response times. This report was not an evidence-based program evaluation. The short duration and limited extent of this operational contribution did not warrant a County-specific program evaluation.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a significant contributor of financial and operational resources to 988 service-providers, and is best positioned to complete a longer-term, more comprehensive program evaluation of operational components of the 988 hotline. Within Colorado, the Behavioral Health Administration is tasked with measuring and monitoring 988 operational considerations and may also be better positioned to perform ongoing program evaluations.

Performance Report

At an organizational level, evaluation of the County's LFRF investments will emphasize consistency with the Board's Investment Principles. Primary among these is the County's emphasis on investments that result in long-term legacy benefit. Below is an overview of how these principles are applied to proposals in different categories:

Infrastructure

Investments in water, wastewater, and broadband will be evaluated in part on the extent to which each project demonstrates long-term benefit to present and future residents the County. This may include a project-level evaluation of the number of benefitting households, a demonstration of community need, and when appropriate, whether the project responds to immediate needs like water quality concerns.

Capital Improvements

Where capital improvements are proposed, those proposals will also be evaluated based on compliance with the ARPA Final Rule and the extent to which each project demonstrates long-term benefit to present and future residents of the County. This may include estimates of the number of beneficiaries, housing units created or preserved, or job training enrollments and completions.

Pilot Projects

In some instances, proposals represent pilot projects that support target populations with services, including mental health services, services for the unhoused, or wildfire mitigation and suppression services. These pilot programs will be evaluated by clients served where feasible, acres mitigated (wildfire fuel thinning), or other similar metrics to the extent feasible.

For those County departments that receive pilot program funding, proposals will also be evaluated based on the ability of the pilot project to secure additional funding on an ongoing basis, whether through successful budget requests in future years or grant funding from state or Federal funding opportunities. These objectives are expressed in the investment principles related to avoiding duplication with other funding sources and leveraging partnership opportunities.

Investment Principles

- Ensure legacy benefit
- Respond to immediate needs, then forward-looking
- Integrate with Board Priorities
- Avoid duplication with other sources
- Leverage partnership opportunities

PROJECT INVENTORY

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

Category		Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.12	Mental Health Services	\$137,499.77	\$137,499.77
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		
5.21	Broadband: Other Projects	\$101,971.51	\$101,971.51

988 Operational Contribution, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners

Project: Lifeline Crisis Center Hotline [RMCP]

Funding amount: \$137,499.77

Project Expenditure Category: 1.12 – Mental Health Services

Project Overview: Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners is the certified state-wide provider of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, now operating as 988. Douglas County’s contribution partially funded operations between October 2021 and March 2022, including salaries and benefits for Crisis Specialists who respond to calls and Crisis Leads who manage phone queues.

Use of Evidence: This project was intended to support operations of the 988 hotline in Colorado until such time as additional operational funding was received from SAMHSA. Funds are intended to support operations during the transition from a 1-800 hotline number to the three digit 988 number for the benefit of Douglas County residents and Coloradoans generally. SAMHSA and the Colorado Behavioral Health Administration also provide funding and oversight over the 988 hotline and are better positioned to conduct comprehensive evidence-based program evaluations than Douglas County. \$0 of the total project spending allocated towards evidence-based interventions.

Performance Report: During the covered period from October 2021 to March 2022, 23,909 phone calls were received and 6,255 text conversations occurred. Call volume was a 146% increase from the same period the prior year. Of the clients served, 2,087 did not identify a county of residence. 99 indicated residence in Douglas County or one of its municipalities. Of the 99 calls directly attributable to Douglas County, 67% were return callers, split evenly by gender (51/49 M/F). Three of those calls resulted in urgent referrals to either a walk-in crisis center or a mobile crisis dispatch. In addition to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners also provides staffing for the Colorado Crisis Line, the National Problem Gambling Helpline, and other crisis hotline services. During the funded timeframe, these additional lines served 659 clients who indicated Douglas as their county of residence.

County Broadband Master Plan

Project: Broadband Master Plan [HRGREEN]

Funding amount: \$139,815: total contractual obligation, \$101,971.51 expended to date

Project Expenditure Category: 5.21 – Broadband: Other projects

Project Overview: Development of a Broadband Master Plan for Douglas County. The contact work plan identifies a process including a public engagement phase, evaluation of existing County policies, and inventory and assessment of public and private fiber assets, development of a technology plan and network design, financial analysis, and implementation plan. Collectively, these components are intended to form a broadband strategy for Douglas County that creates the greatest opportunity and value to implement solutions that are capable of meeting current and long-term community needs.

Performance Report: In August 2021, Douglas County commissioned HR Green to complete a broadband study on the status of broadband capacity within the County. By relying upon the results of a citizen broadband survey and the Colorado Broadband Map, a minimum of 13,000 addresses were categorized as un- and/or underserved by the FCC and thereby grant eligible. The findings identified a digital divide in ten targeted service areas where the majority of these residents are located. Through new investments in partnership with municipalities and ten internet service providers, these areas could be served by wired infrastructure by 2026.