

American Rescue Plan - Executive Branch Agency Ideas List

Ideas to utilize upcoming American Rescue Plan dollars

Through the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319), state and local aid will be distributed to States, local governments, and tribal governments in the same manner as Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) from the CARES Act.

Unlike the provisions of the CARES Act, it appears these funds will be more flexible in terms of how they can be expended. While guidance will inevitably be released following the passage of the budget resolution, the expected CRF dollars coming to the State must adhere to the following criteria:

To respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;

To respond to workers performing essential work during the public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers of the State government that are performing such essential work, or by providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work;

For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the public health emergency relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency; or

To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

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Idea to Utilize ARP Funds:

Restoration of Employee Health Benefits

Allowable Use Category:

To respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts

Type of Funding Needed:

» **Both** (Selected)

One time funding

Ongoing funding

Policy Category:

Addressing Budget Shortfalls

Explanation of Idea:

State employees and retirees suffered major cuts to health benefits as a result of mandated budget cuts. The PEBP Board has expressed a desire to restore all benefits to pre-pandemic levels, with focusing on lowering deductibles and out of pocket maximums as a priority. The PEBP Board has granted the PEBP Executive Officer to act on their behalf to work with stakeholders to determine an appropriate plan design for FY23 should ARPA funds be granted for this purpose.

Working under the assumption that FY24/25 budgets will remain flat, PEBP will require additional on-going funding to maintain these benefit levels moving forward.

Estimated Cost (if known):

\$1M-\$34M/year depending on degree of restoration

Additional Comments:

Affected benefits as a result of budget cuts: Increased deductibles, Out of Pocket Maximums, and copays. Decrease in HSA contributions. Elimination of Long Term Disability Benefit. Reduction in life insurance benefit.

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Idea to Utilize ARP Funds:

Coverage of PEBP COVID-19 related claims

Allowable Use Category:

To respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts

Type of Funding Needed:

» **One time funding** (Selected)

Ongoing funding

Both

Policy Category:

Addressing Budget Shortfalls

Explanation of Idea:

In 2020, PEBP received \$5.6M in CARES Act dollars for the reimbursement of COVID related claims through the end of 2020. PEBP has incurred an additional ~\$5M in COVID claims (testing, treatment, vaccinations costs) to date. The health plan has absorbed all COVID related costs at 100% with no cost sharing to PEBP members. PEBP is requesting reimbursement for all COVID-19 related claims using federal dollars.

Estimated Cost (if known):

~\$5M to date. This number is expected to increase significantly should surges in COVID continue.

Additional Comments:

NOT ANSWERED