

New Castle County, Delaware  
**Recovery Plan**

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery  
Funds**

2021 Report

**New Castle County, Delaware**  
**2021 Recovery Plan**

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## 1. Executive Summary

In New Castle County, Delaware, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the community in many ways—from temporary and permanent job losses, to impacts on parents and students who navigated remote learning, to increasing risks to vulnerable populations like those experiencing homelessness. The pandemic also revealed and exacerbated long-standing inequities in our community, from health inequities, to access to safe outdoor spaces, to educational outcomes.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) provide us a unique opportunity to reimagine New Castle County. We have solicited ideas directly from residents via an online webform and through five ARPA Task Force Committees, a public process that has yielded 23 committee meetings to date. We have carefully considered various ways to improve the quality of life for residents across our County—both in terms of immediate recovery and longer-term investments. We have also considered ways to address historical inequities.

Our proposal for use of the SLFRF award is reflected in this report. In consultation with New Castle County Council, we will refine these plans and anticipate beginning implementation in fall 2021. We are also working with the municipalities in the County to identify areas for collaboration—and to mitigate conflict or overlap in our approaches, since many of the solutions we will propose will cross jurisdictional boundaries. We are also in consultation with the State of Delaware to coordinate investment opportunities and limit redundancy of efforts.

Finally, we are also identifying other sources of potential support, from HUD, EDA, FEMA, and other agencies whose funding can also support our goals.

## 2. Uses of Funds

New Castle County is considering a range of proposals, including those described below, organized by the Expenditure Categories (EC) defined by the Treasury. The proposed uses of funds described below are all subject to New Castle County Council authorization.

### a. Public Health (EC 1)

We propose continuing to support vaccination education efforts, recognizing that having a greater percentage of vaccinated individuals in the County mitigates health and economic impacts.

We propose expanding access to Behavioral Health resources, including expanding the New Castle County Police Behavioral Health Unit.<sup>1</sup>

### b. Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)

We propose investing in workforce development programs in the fields of computer programming, construction trades, and childcare—fields where talent is in high demand and underemployed or unemployed individuals can build skills and careers. We also propose investing in re-entry and anti-recidivism workforce development programs, as well as ensuring

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<sup>1</sup> See Police Combine Two Units and Create Behavioral Health Unit (Oct. 22, 2019). Available at <https://nccpdnews.com/2019/10/22/police-combine-two-units-and-create-behavioral-health-unit/>.

that workforce development programs can provide case management to address other needs that participants may have.

We propose investing in eviction prevention strategies and are considering options like increased case management for tenants accessing rent support. New Castle County's Housing Advisory Board is providing recommendations for this area and for increasing the supply of affordable housing.

We propose revitalizing neighborhoods, with a combination of efforts, including commercial corridor investments in underserved communities and potentially providing targeted support to small businesses and non-profits located in specific underserved areas of the County.

c. Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC 3)

We propose investing in solutions to make our communities safer. New Castle County and its largest municipality, Wilmington, have experienced increased gun violence during the pandemic—and historically have experienced more violence relative to other similarly sized jurisdictions. We are considering potential programs in a range of areas, including interrupting patterns of violence, addressing problems at the neighborhood level, and providing more support to parents of young children.

We propose investing in ways to increase the supply of affordable housing in the County, and in other ways to decrease housing insecurity.

We also propose addressing environmental injustices in our County through projects to increase equitable access to open space and addressing health inequities by continuing to invest in the new National Health Corps Delaware program we established this year with CARES Act funding. Other opportunities to address environmental and health inequities are also being evaluated.

d. Premium Pay (EC 4)

We propose providing Premium Pay to New Castle County Employees who were required to report to work in person during the pandemic.

e. Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure (EC 5)

We propose investing in wastewater and stormwater projects, to address ageing infrastructure and enhance stormwater management capabilities in the County. Specific projects are being identified and prioritized currently.

We also propose investing in broadband infrastructure, to address existing gaps in service in specific locations in our County with inconsistent connectivity. We will partner with the State of Delaware in this broadband expansion work.

f. Revenue Replacement (EC 6)

No amount of revenue replacement funds has been allocated to government services at this time. Once a determination, which is subject to New Castle County Council authorization, is made, the amount of allocation and to which government services will be provided to the Treasury.

### Planned Uses of Other Federal Funds

We anticipate using additional HUD funding under the American Rescue Plan to support affordable housing in the County, a persistent need that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. In addition, we intend to pursue EDA grant opportunities for projects to enhance tourism and outdoor recreation.

### **3. Promoting Equitable Outcomes**

We are actively considering how our ARPA SLFRF-funded investments will promote greater equity in the County.

We have mapped the Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) in the County.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, because the Qualified Census Tracts do not fully reflect all areas of poverty in the County due to the sizes of QCTs, we also mapped areas where more than 50% of residents earn less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).<sup>3</sup> We conducted this additional mapping to better identify the communities in the County most in need of SLFRF funds.

As we design specific SLFRF-funded projects, we will consider the historical inequities in the County and create projects that are appropriately focused to address those gaps.

### **4. Community Engagement**

On June 1, 2021, we began the public engagement process by soliciting written input from the community on how to reimagine New Castle County with SLFRF funds.<sup>4</sup> Since then, we have received 146 written comments, with input on supporting non-profits, investing in infrastructure, supporting parents with daycare access, and many other topics.

We also chartered a task force comprised of five committees to gain insights from subject matter experts and members of the public on specific topics:

- Early Childhood Learning
- Economic and Community Development
- Workforce Development
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Audit & Compliance (a continuation of a committee started under our CARES Act process)

These five committees held a total of 23 meetings in June, July, and August, 2021, and three of the committees—Early Childhood Learning, Economic and Community Development, and Workforce Development—delivered their recommendations to the County Executive within the past two weeks.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1: Map of Qualified Census Tracts in New Castle County, Delaware. Available at [QualifiedCensusTracts\\_06222021.jpg \(7200x10800\) \(nccde.org\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2: Map of New Castle County ARPA Target Areas. Available at [TargetAreas\\_07212021.jpg \(7200x10800\) \(nccde.org\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> News Flash, New Castle County, DE, *Meyer proposes urgent individualized assistance to address COVID-19 learning loss, forms task force*, June 1, 2021, <https://nccde.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2019>.

In addition to these New Castle County Executive branch actions, New Castle County Council also held two public workshops—on June 23 and July 21, 2021—to discuss funding priorities and programs.

The County’s community engagement process—including the written suggestions from the public and the recommendations of the task force committees—worked not only to solicit ideas for SLFRF-funded projects, but also provided diverse perspectives on the challenges facing the County and in particular its underserved communities.

## **5. Labor Practices**

While New Castle County has not yet defined specific infrastructure projects using SLFRF funds, for any such projects we will use the County’s robust bidding and monitoring practices. In evaluating bids for infrastructure projects, New Castle County encourages the use of Delaware labor. In addition, Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation in consideration of any award.

## **6. Use of Evidence**

As we consider priorities and work to design specific SLFRF projects, we are actively studying the evidence needed to focus project goals and to measure impact. Through discussions with subject matter experts and with our retained auditing firm, we anticipate designing and investing in multiple evidence-based interventions.

## **7. Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category**

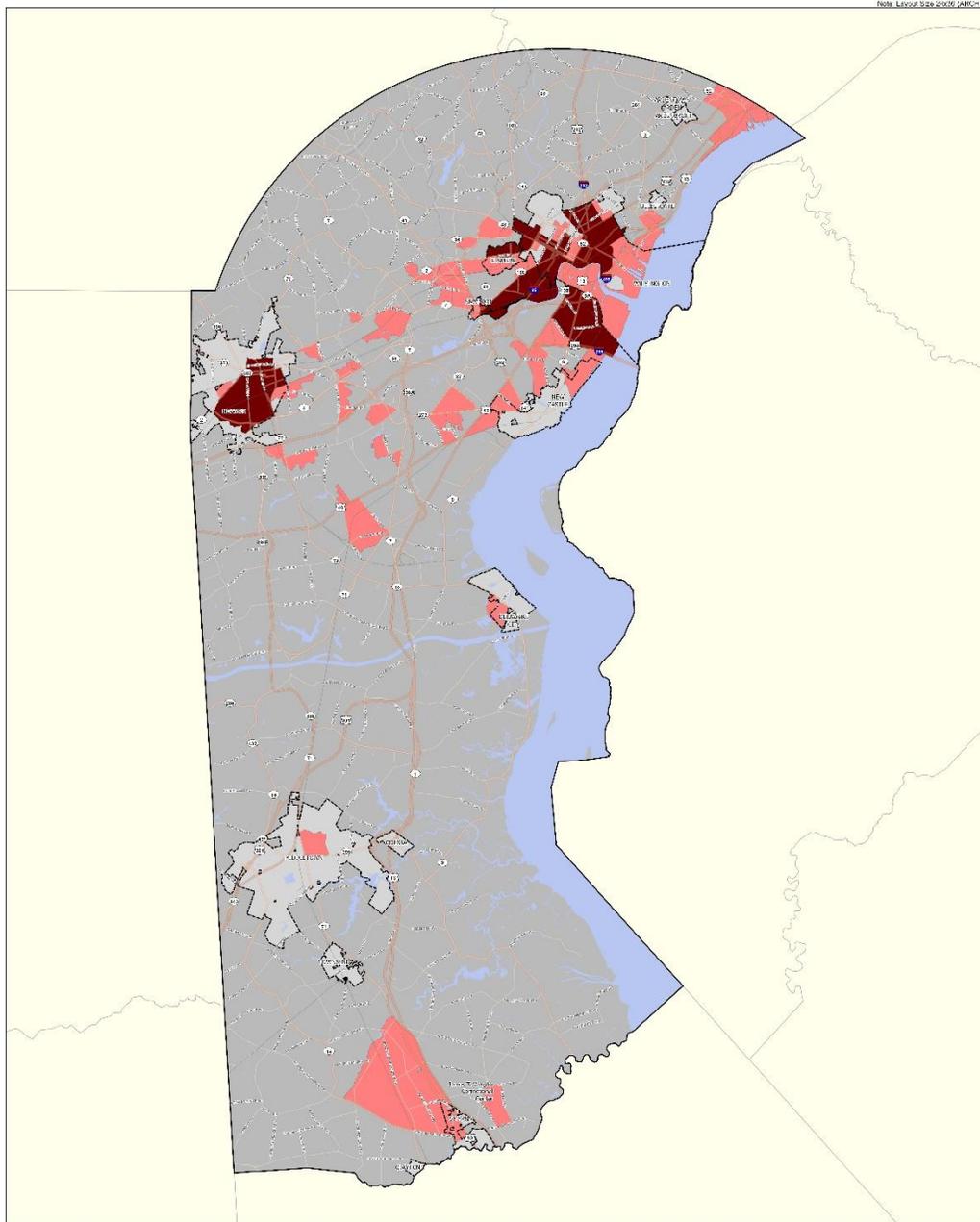
The County’s SLFRF award funds have not yet been accepted or appropriated by New Castle County Council. No obligations have been incurred against the funds, and no expenditures made from the funds.

## **8. Project Inventory**

While we continue to consider priorities for the SLFRF funding, New Castle County has not yet defined specific projects to be undertaken.



## Appendix 2: Map of New Castle County ARPA Target Areas



### Legend

- 2019 Precincts
  - 2019 Census Tracts
  - 2019 Census Tracts
  - Water
  - County
- Roads CLASS**
- Major
  - Minor
  - Unimproved
- Boundary Types**
- Town
  - Village
  - County

\*ARPA is the federal program that provides funding to states and local governments to help them recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ARPA program is authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2). The ARPA program is administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The ARPA program is a key component of the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

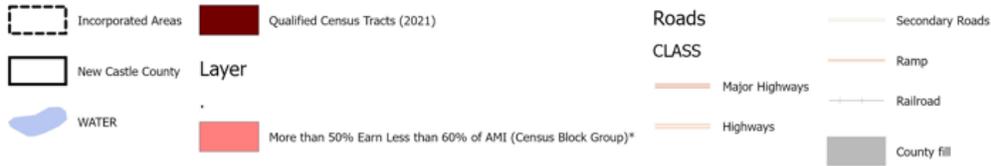
## New Castle County ARPA Target Areas



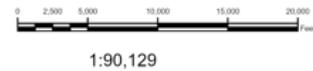
Map prepared by:  
New Castle County Government  
Division of Geographic Information Systems  
Department of Land Use  
Author: Eric Vineska  
Date: 7/14/2021

See enlarged Legend on next page.

**Legend**



# New Castle County ARPA Target Areas



\*\$87,400 is the Median Income (FY 2018), family of four New Castle County (Philadelphia-Camden- Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metropolitan Statistical Area)  
 MHI data based on Census Block Groups from integrated ESRI and ACS data for FY 2018  
 Census Block Groups shown meet a criteria similar to that applied to tract level data for designating QCTs  
 Qualified Census Tracts excerpted from the Department of Housing and Urban Development FY2021 data



Map prepared by:  
 New Castle County Government  
 Division of Geographic Information Systems  
 Department of Land Use.

Author: Pro Munsaka

Date: 7/21/2021