ARPA STEERING COMMITTEE IPIRIEILIIMIIINIAIRY IEINIGAGIEIMIEINIT IRIEIPORT

REBUILD BY DESIGN

ARPA STEERING COMMITTEE

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THANK YOU

This effort was made possible by the generous support of the Community Foundation Boulder County and the Knight Foundation.

Thank you TDA Consulting for providing the coding of all survey data.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



The Boulder County Arts Alliance acts as a catalyst to incubate, stimulate and sustain a thriving arts community in Boulder County. BCAA commits to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive and equitable Boulder County for all.



Community Foundation Boulder County is a community catalyst that inspires ideas and ignites action to improve the quality of life in Boulder County. We make informed decisions to respond to immediate needs and anticipate future challenges. Join us to make a difference. We accomplish more together than we do alone.



Front Range Community College is a public community college with multiple campuses in Colorado. It has campuses in Westminster, Longmont, and Fort Collins, as well as centers in Brighton and Loveland.



The **Health and Human Services Alliance** improves the quality of life in Boulder County by enhancing the competency and collaboration of human service agencies, and to educate and influence the public and policy makers on matters that impact the availability and delivery of human services.



The Northwest Chamber Alliance's (NWCA) mission is to apply the collaborative impact of our region's chambers of commerce, including the thousands of businesses and employees they represent, to advance policy goals that enhance economic vitality across the northwest region.



The **Peak to Peak Housing and Human Services Alliance** brings human services organizations together that serve Western Boulder County and Eastern Gilpin County as well as limited sections of Larimer County and Jefferson Counties (aka The Peak to Peak Region, and including the towns of Ward, Nederland, Gold Hill, Jamestown, Rollinsville, Allenspark as well as large unincorporated areas at elevation).

| REBUILD | BY | DESIGN

Rebuild by Design convenes a mix of sectors - including government, business, non-profit, and community organizations - to gain a better understanding of how overlapping environmental and human-made vulnerabilities leave cities and regions at risk. Rebuild's core belief is that through collaboration our communities can grow stronger and better prepared to stand up to whatever challenges tomorrow brings.

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BACKGROUND

5-6

THE PROCESS

6-11

DEMOGRAPHICS OF ENGAGEMENT

12-15

FINDINGS

16-20

INSIGHTFUL IDEAS FROM THE COMMUNITY

21-22

RECOMMENDATIONS

23-25

APPENDIX

26-30

"As both a person with a disability and a leader of an organization serving individuals with disabilities, I had the opportunity to represent the needs of that part of our community. While developing materials, I advised on language and process that would be more inclusive of people of all abilities. The Steering Committee meetings were made more accessible to me by using technology. Going forward, I have confidence the process will build upon successes to date and continue to be considerate and inclusive of all voices in the community."

- Rebecca Novinger, Human Services Alliance

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has touched all members of the Boulder County community, in some cases very tragically. And though the pandemic's effects have been widespread, the health and economic impacts have not fallen equally among different communities. The pandemic further exposed historical inequities in Boulder County – disparities in health and economic outcomes by race, ethnicity, age, gender, geography, physical ability, sexual orientation, and other factors. The County responded to this by setting up resources for impacted community members¹; however, the extent of lockdown and the toll on public health has left lasting impacts on its communities and economy, and new programs would be needed to address the large disparities that are left in the wake of the pandemic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is still devastating our communities, we are also thinking about how we recover and build ourselves back in ways that are more inclusive and equitable. The goal of this effort is to ensure that the greatest impacted community members are prioritized in the recovery. This means their needs and ideas are transformed into new county programs – or increased support for existing programs – to create long-term impacts that help Boulder County avoid the disproportionate burdens we experienced during this pandemic.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law. As part of ARPA, the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) was established to deliver relief funds to state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to bolster their response to the COVID-19 emergency and its impacts, which will be discussed in this report. Boulder County was allocated \$63.3 million, with half of the funding received in 2021 and the remainder anticipated to be disbursed mid-2022. The first \$5.6 million has been allocated by the County to address immediate needs and to sustain COVID-19 services.

These funds present an opportunity to address the immediate needs of all residents, employees, business owners, and students in Boulder County, particularly those most impacted by COVID, while also addressing the economic fallout and underlying systemic inequities. To ensure Boulder County's recovery from COVID is equitable and durable, the Boulder County Board of Commissioners embarked on a public process to hear the ideas of all community members. These ideas will inform how the County uses its share of federal funding to best address the needs of individuals most affected by COVID-19.

ENSURING AN EQUITABLE RECOVERY

The Board of County Commissioners began working with the Community Foundation for Boulder County in an effort to ensure that the voices of the most impacted would be heard through a transparent process to provide direction on the ways that the ARPA funding could best support the people who need it the most. Through a grant from the Knight Foundation, the Community Foundation for Boulder County supported Rebuild by Design to design and execute a replicable model to co-determine how the ARPA funds will be used by community members who suffered in disparate ways due to racial, social and gender inequalities, and set a precedent for future

planning efforts. Rebuild by Design is a global leader in helping communities find solutions to large-scale, complex problems whose core belief is that through collaboration our communities can grow stronger and better prepared to stand up to whatever challenges tomorrow brings.

To ensure that this process was inclusive, the Board of County Commissioners invited organizations who reflected the diversity of the communities affected by COVID, with strong grassroots reach, to co-design an engagement process that would connect to the hardest hit communities. The group became the Boulder County ARPA Community Steering Committee in late August, 2021, and included representatives from the Northwest Chambers Alliance, Front Range Community College, Human Services Alliance, Boulder County Arts Alliance, and Peak to Peak Housing and Human Services Alliance. Together, they represent over 200 organizations in Boulder County. The Committee worked together for six weeks with the charge from the Boulder County Board of Commissioners to understand how Boulder County can mitigate the effects of COVID on the entire community and how it can build assets, strength, and resilience to address the disparities that resulted in disproportionate impacts and provide measurable equitable outcomes.

These results will inform a second phase which will be an in-depth analysis, based on the survey's findings, of the policies, programs, and projects that could create long-term impact in addressing the inequities that the panemic revealed.

RESPONDING TO A CHANGING SITUATION

When the first phase of the outreach process began, Boulder County, like much of the country, was experiencing increasing COVID-19 cases due to the high transmissibility of the delta variant and facing a second mask mandate. Despite the initial discussions of in-person events, focus groups, and welcoming residents to county offices and spaces to participate in this process, the prospect of another shut down, stay at home orders, or more COVID restrictions loomed on the horizon, leaving widespread uncertainty about the feasibility of such in-person events. Therefore, at the start of the planning process, the Steering Committee decided to place a strong emphasis on a survey that could be distributed manually or virtually. Likewise, the Steering Committee identified opportunities to engage different audiences both virtually and in-person, health and safety permitting.

Knowing that it was impossible to address all needs solely through ARPA funding, the first phase of the engagement process was set to align with the County's November budget hearings. This timeline provided less than three months to plan, execute, and analyze the outreach process and results. This report identifies and analyzes insights from Phase I (July - October) of this two-stage process. Phase II will begin in December 2021.



- "People were surprised by this in-person engagement and the county opening their door to listen to the community in this new approach."
- Aisa Garita, Boulder County Community Engagement Specialist

THIE PROCESS

PHASE I

IDENTIFY KEY PARTNERS

 Identification and selection of a steering group of 5 "partner" organizations who have deep reach throughout the Boulder County Community to co-design and lead this process

CO-DESIGN PROCESS

- Create principles of engagement, see p. 8
- Identify target populations most impacted by COVID, see p. 8
- · Identify and design engagement events
- Invite nonprofits to host community conversations

CREATE OUTREACH MATERIALS

- Design and test survey
- · Create shared outreach materials
- Translate materials to Spanish and Nepalese

ENGAGE RESIDENTS & BUSINESSES

- Distribute outreach materials and encourage organizations to get involved in the process
- Publicly announce the process at the Boulder County Town Hall Meeting
- Attend events, talk to businesses, poster neighborhoods, create booths at street celebrations, etc.

• Check survey demographics to ensure we are meeting our targeted

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

audiencesRefocus outreach plan for targets

ANALYZE RESULTS

Analyze survey data, community conversation feedback, and other inputs.

"Community engagement shouldn't be boring, it should be fun."

- Berenice Garcia Tellez, Northwest Chamber Alliance

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

At the start of the engagement planning process, the ARPA Community Steering Committee identified a list of agreed upon principles for conducting outreach to Boulder County communities. This list captures many, but not all, of the key tenets of effective and equitable engagement which the Steering Committee has committed to upholding throughout the engagement process to ensure transparancy and inclusivity.

- Share the high-level goals of the engagement effort from the start
- Collaborate with organizations that the community trusts
- · Create a multi-lingual engagement plan
- · Provide relevant content
- · Know the audience
- Be thoughtful with speech and language choice
- · Educate oneself
- Invite people to participate to the extent they are comfortable
- Communicate regularly to collaborators and constituents
- · Make representation in the planning and

- decision-making a priority
- Establish clear goals
- Establish trust by following through with promises
- Be clear on who you are meeting with, how often, and the outcomes of those meetings
- Strive for accessibility via method of engagement, platforms used, language, etc.
- · Make sure all voices are heard
- · Have boots in the streets
- Go to places where businesses or communities we want to include are
- Listen

TARGET COMMUNITIES

The ARPA funds present an opportunity to help those most impacted by COVID in Boulder County. The ARPA Community Steering Committee recognizes that COVID magnified the underlying vulnerabilities of many within the county and exposed systemic inequalities which caused some populations to fare worse than others throughout the pandemic. The Steering Committee, with input from statewide and county-level health and economic impacts data, identified populations most impacted by COVID to specifically target in the outreach effort.

- Boulder County Employees/Students living outside of county due to cost of housing
- Businesses with supply chain challenges or who have had to close
- · Detained or incarcerated people
- East Boulder County residents
- · Essential industries
- Families with young children
- Front line workers
- Gig workers
- Outbreak hotspot locations (e.g. Mine Shaft restaurant)
- Hospitality industry
- · Latinx businesses
- Long-term care, assisted living and supportive living homes
- People with cognitive/TBI/Intellectual or developmental disabilities

- Nepalese community
- New Americans/immigrants/refugees
- Organizations with labor shortages
- People with chronic health conditions or are immunocompromised
- · People with physical disabilities
- Priority public health populations
- · Seniors in social isolation
- Students/faculty/staff/others with no internet
- · Teachers
- · Tribes and tribal organizations
- · People who are unhoused
- Unincorporated areas
- Vaccine equity locations
- · Victims of domestic violence
- Working parents

PROCESS FOR ENGAGEMENT

In September 2021, the Boulder County ARPA Community Steering Committee embarked on a six week outreach campaign to understand how Boulder County can mitigate the effects of COVID on the entire community and how it can build assets, strength, and resilience to address the disparities that resulted in disproportionate impacts, ultimately providing measurable equitable outcomes.

Since there was a high likelihood that there would be another lockdown due to the delta variant, the outreach committee determined that a community-wide survey, supplemented by attending existing events, and creating a half dozen new events targeted at the impacted communities would be the best way to reach the largest amount of community members who live, work, go to school, and own businesses in Boulder County.





"We have a lot of motivated people, these people don't often get asked their opinion."

- Katrina Harms, Peak to Peak HHS

COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

The Boulder County ARPA Community Steering Committee collaborated to create outreach materials that could be used in a variety of formats and events throughout the county. The committee ensured that the language and design would be accessible to community members who speak English, Spanish, and Nepalese. Materials include a survey in the three languages, as well as posters, flyers, postcards, and a banner to be used for public outreach. The Steering Committee and County Engagement Team reached out to over 331 organizations, local governments, and businesses to invite them to participate in the process. The engagement materials were shared through over 41 outreach activities, multiple newsletters and email distributions directed to thousands of residents, and on the ground engagement.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

			SEPTEMBER	2021		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			Arts Alliance Newsletter		HSA/SVC Meeting	
			Community Foundation Newsletter			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
			Planning Commission Newsletter	BOCC Town Hall		Art Walk in Longmont
		Latino Chamber of Commerce Email	Meeting w/ Local Officials			
		Longmont Development Authority – meeting	Meeting w/ Department Heads			
			Longmont Downtown Dev. Authority Business Owner Meeting			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	Mobility and Access Coalition	23ZIP Event	Boulder Farmers Market	On the ground outreach		Fiesta and Food Trucks
	Board of Health Meeting					Lafayette Firsthand Market
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Peak to Peak Meeting	23ZIP Event	VECC Meeting	NWCA Focus Group		Raw Tools Community Event
		Direct outreach to nonprofits		POSAC		Energy Resilient & Pandemic Resilient Grass Roots Solutions
				Outreach to small businesses in Longmont		
26	27	28	29	30	ос	TOBER
Nederland Farmers Market		Imagine! Event	BCAA Meeting	Women who Light the Community Event	1	2 Kick2Build
		23 ZIP Event		Community Updates CPWD		
		CSN Leadership Virtual Meeting		El Comite Longmont Presentation		
			OCTOBER :	2021		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Electric Vehicle Event	Louisville Town Meeting	Tabling at Front Range CC		Outreach to small businesses in Lafayette	Tabling at OUR Center	Dia de Los Muertos
		Casa Esperanza			Outreach in Downtown Boulder	
		Meeting with FRCC Student Chamber				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		Outreach to businesses in North Boulder	Tabling infront of the Courthouse	Lunch with the Dean at FRCC	Pearl Street Engagement	Latinx Community Event Chautauqua
		Town Hall w/ OUT	Engaging businesses on Pearl Street	Boulder Outreach		
				Boulder Chambers Economic Summit		

WHAT WORKED WELL IN THE PROCESS

- Meeting weekly with all project partners kept us on track and thinking about the work
- Talking directly to community members and being present at events
- Reassuring people that their opinion will matter





- Working with cultural brokers to spread the word
- Bilingual engagement staff to ensure we can reach the spanish-language communities
- The creation of a template of materials that could be quickly recycled or shared for whatever partners needed; easy access on cloud-based document sharing site

- Building off of existing meetings and events for built-in audiences
- Partner organizations could create their own events and invite county staff
- Being present at weekend events to meet community members where they are at, in their towns and cities, when it is most convenient to them



"Once the conversations were started, the engagement around the survey happened quickly with conversations with student groups, tabling on campus, and working with campus leadership to engage staff and faculty. The FRCC community is honored to be a part of a process that relies so heavily on feedback from the community first."

- Rebecca Chavez, Front Range Community College

DEMOGRAPHICS OF ENGAGEMIENT

In just under seven weeks (September 1 - October 15, 2021), the ARPA Steering Committee engaged communities from every corner of the county through presentations, social media, hosting community conversation events, contacting their networks, flyering on the street, running information tables, and more.

Participants of the survey were invited to fill in demographic information, including zip code, age, race + ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, employment status, and disability status. Eighty-one percent of participants provided this information, which can be broken down as follows on the following three pages.

11539

SURVEYS COMPLETED

4[1]

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

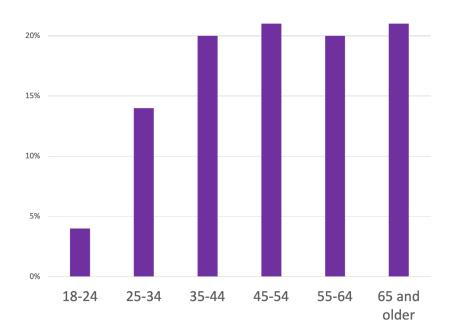
331

ORGANIZATIONS
INVITED TO
PARTICIPATE

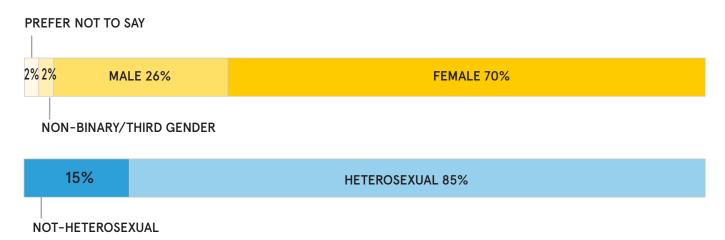
AGE

The results of the survey tell us that future outreach processes should make a more concerted effort to engage younger community members. While many parents wrote on behalf of their children, we also recommend that future efforts include public games or activities to engage the county's non-adult population.

BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPATION BY AGE



GENDER + SEXUALITY



Far more women filled out the survey than any other gender. While women generally are more willing to participate in surveys (Smith, 2008), it gives reason to explore future methods of engagement that are more successful at engaging men and non-binary individuals.

of participants idicated they are frontline workers

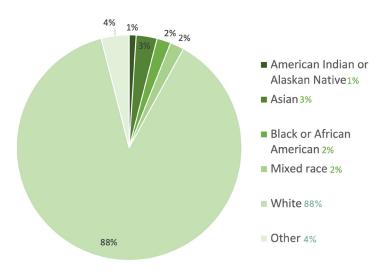
of participants identified having a disability or accessibility needs

RACE + ETHNICITY

The demographic breakdown of participants is fairly representative of the County's racial profile (according to US Census 2019 estimates). COVID-19 health and economic impacts data indicated that the Latino community of Boulder County was severely impacted by the pandemic. Having bilingual Community Engagement Specialists who were able to build trust within the Latinx community was key to successfully targeting this population and overcoming language barriers or distrust in government.

of participants identify as being of Latino, Latina, Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish heritage.

BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPATION BY RACE



Smith, William G, PhD. "Does Gender Influence Online Survey Participation?", Jan Jose State University, 2008. US Census Bureau, "Boulder County, Colorado: Population estimates, July 1, 2019," 2019.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

At the start of the engagement process, the Steering Committee recognized that in order to overcome the digital divide in the West Boulder County Mountain Region and other broadband "dead zones," the survey would need to be widely distributed in paper format and would require in-person on the ground outreach.

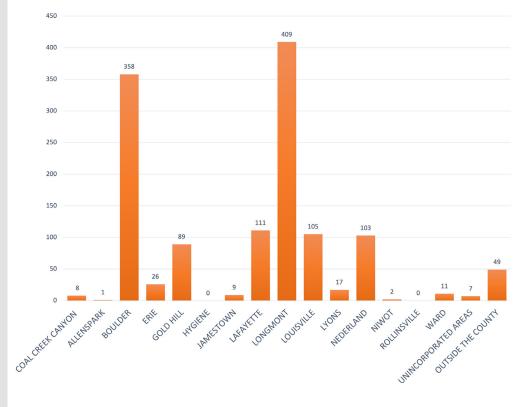


Input from community leaders acknowledged that there is widespread skepticism that the government is truly listening, particularly in the Western Mountain Region and among Latinx communities, causing hesitancy to fill out government surveys. In order to overcome this hurdle and build trust, the Engagement Team, Partners, and County Commissioners met with communities directly, going to the people instead of asking people to come to them whenever possible.

"Peak to Peak had good success doing outreach and connecting with community members at the Nederland Farmer's Markets. We did have some instances of skepticism from folks doubting that their voices would be heard. The Sunday that Commissioner Loachamin and **Commissioner Levy** came to the market made a huge impact. We were able to introduce community members to the Commissioners. It was empowering for our folks to share and to ask auestions."

- Chris Current, Peak to Peak HHS

BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPATION BY GEOGRAPHY



from West Boulder County
Mountain Region

Note: Geographic data was collected as zipcodes and subsequently aggregated into town and regional bounderies. The geographic dstribution above is therefore an estimate.

Advice for the Boulder County Commissioners as they prioritize greater outreach in future government processes:

- In order to build trust in local government, Commissioners should commit to attending events throughout the county. Our communities want to see that you understand our needs.
- Commissioners must be part of County engagements to demonstrate that the County will truly listen. In a few events, community members were surprised to meet a commissioner and also shared their experience of not knowing who commissioners are. When it happened, it gave a secure affirmation that community voices are being heard and for accountability for the future long-term engagement of communities and the county.
- Ensure that you offer multiple ways to engage. There is still a digital divide. From residents in the mountain communities, to seniors, to people with physical or cognitive disabilities, there are a lot of members of our community who do not have access to the internet, or need assistance with digital formats. A phone and/or paper option must be available to ensure participation by all intended audiences.
- Expand the Steering Committee to ensure more representation from different populations, particularly through cultural brokers, to ensure appropriate language, traditions, and customs are incorporated into the work. This applies similarly to both residents and businesses, as businesses often are confused regarding opportunities to share their perspective and/or find there is a challenge to have their voices heard in public discourse.
- Build in feedback loops throughout the process so you can judge if you are hitting your targeted audiences better.
- Different audiences need different engagement materials and methods of outreach.

 Create unique engagement materials. For instance, a business oriented survey would have helped in knowing business' specific needs, and businesses would feel heard.
- Invest in multiple local, full time, engagement specialists who can learn from different cultures, life experiences, and identities, and who can work nights and weekends to engage with people where they are. Partnering with existing business support associations would be an effective and efficient outreach tool for the county's diverse companies and workforce.
- Increase representation from marginalized communities to ensure all public-facing language and survey questions are appropriate.
- Know that outreach is hard work and you have to keep working at it to get the engagement you set out to achieve.
- Consider applying this model of co-designing engagement processes to other funding opportunities or projects.

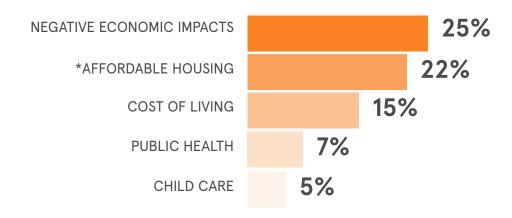


Residents, students, employees, and business owners of Boulder County were asked to fill out five-questions (plus demographic information questions). The questions were formatted as openended questions to ensure the Steering Committee received a comprehensive range of ideas and so that participants would not be limited to predetermined choices. The responses were then coded according to the ARPA Expenditure Categories by the TDA Consulting Team.

Question: What is the biggest challenge you and your family face living, working, or owning a business in Boulder County? (Please use your own definition of family – loved ones, friends, immediate family, etc.)

Responses from the survey indicate that Negative Economic Impacts, Affordable Housing, Cost of Living, Public Health, and Childcare are the leading challenges facing the Boulder County community. Negative economic impacts, affordable housing, and cost of living are the top three concerns across age, gender, race, ethnicity, geography, employment status, and disability status. In some instances, affordable housing is rated higher within a demographic, however, it is typically only by a marginal 1-2 point difference.

TOP 5 CHALLENGES



"Affordable Housing" is listed as a discrete expenditure category in the ARPA Guidelines. However, by combining all housing-related categories, we can see that "Housing" more broadly rises to the top challenge (27%) for the Boulder County survey respondents (see Appendix C for details).

"We have been struggling for years before the pandemic. That's where the skepticism comes from."

- Katrina Harms, Peak to Peak HHS

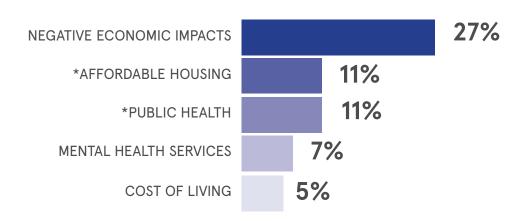
^{*} See appendix for further details about this category

Question: What has been the biggest challenge for you, your family, or your business since the start of the pandemic?

While Affordable Housing and Economic Impacts are the top issues facing the public, the pandemic responses indicate an increasing challenge in the following areas: Public Health, especially Mental Health Services, as well as Childcare and the general Cost of Living. This is consistent in responses across race, ethnicity, and gender.

The top challenges throughout the pandemic do, however, vary across age groups. While affordable housing and the cost of living are the top concerns for the 18-34 age range, public health, with a particular emphasis on mental health, is the top concern for ages 35 and up. The 35-44 age group indicates a near equal concern for childcare as it does for public health. While we do not have responses from children in the community, many parents expressed a deep concern for the mental health of their kids and the county's youth at large.

TOP 5 CHALLENGES SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC



The category of Negative Economic Impacts is broad and requires further analysis. The economic impacts of the pandemic were widespread, affecting businesses, employees, organizations, academic institutions, and students. However, many of the economic struggles throughout the county are not new; rather, they have been amplified by the pandemic. Businesses and nonprofits are still struggling with the economic fallout of extended closures, reduced revenue, and labor shortages. Many struggle to compete with the wages offered by larger corporations and government salaries. Equally, many fully employed workers find that their wages do not cover their basic costs of living, and end up relying on nonprofit services and food pantries.

Survey responses highlighted a myriad of concerns related to housing, including:

- Getting priced out of the county due to housing costs
- · Pandemic-related job losses causing households to fall back on rent or mortgage payments
- · Overcrowding in single-family units
- · Property taxes increasing at an exponential rate
- Wages only covering the cost of rent/mortgage, leaving families unable to pay for food, utilities, transportation, education, school, and medical care, forcing more and more families to rely on local nonprofits

The increased concern about mental health services is particularly noticeable in responses from urban areas of East Boulder County; however, the feedback from community conversations,

^{*} See appendix for further details about this category

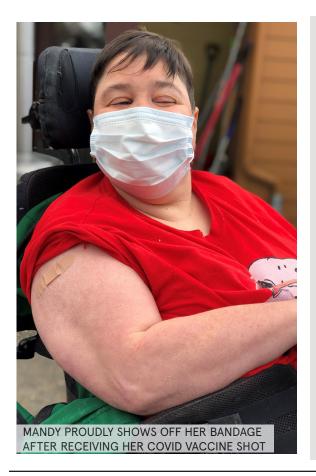
"One of the big issues up here is isolation, both geographic and access to tech."

- Chris Current, Peak to Peak HHS

leaders, and one-on-one conversations with residents of West Boulder suggest that, while speaking about mental health may be taboo in the Mountain Region, it is of equal concern, particularly as residents experienced social isolation throughout the pandemic due to lack of access to internet.

The Steering Committee also learned throughout the process that isolation has been a significant challenge for community members who have physical or intellectual and developmental disabilities due to lack of access to technology or an inability to independently use technology.

The lack of affordable childcare warrants particular attention, as it not only affects the parent age-group who filled out the survey, but it also has significant implications for the youth population. It is clear from community conversations that the shortage of affordable childcare predates the pandemic in Boulder County. For those who can afford childcare, the spots are often limited and the supply cannot meet the demand. This issue has magnified throughout the pandemic, as the labor shortage for childcare workers has increased. Likewise, throughout the pandemic, families with children with disabilities who previously were able to attend group-care settings, have had to rely on a limited number of home aids or family members as caregivers, causing an additional financial burden for the families. More parents have had to stay home with their children due to cost and availability, shrinking the workforce even further.

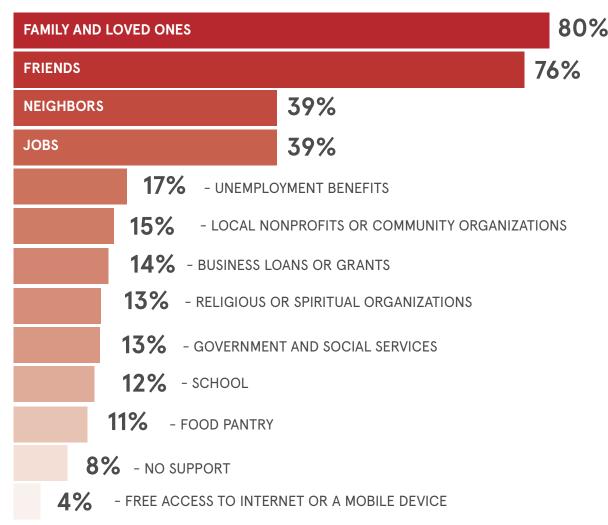


"Several families through my engagement shared with me how little they get paid a month, even though they work multiple jobs and how much rent got higher during Covid. Some only have money to pay for rent, but don't have money to buy groceries and feed their families, have a safety net, or pay for any bills, etc. Mostly these communities are relying on nonprofits for their basic needs. It broke my heart to see the reality of what is happening with communities that are not able to own a house in Boulder County and have to pay such high rents and not be able to invest. I have been a resident and immigrant in this county for over 5 years. I never realized how many people were struggling in this way before COVID-19. Many communities are neglected and not seen by many residents and institutions although the county is growing financially for so many reasons. People can't afford to live in this county anymore."

Aisa Garita, Boulder County Community Engagement Specialist

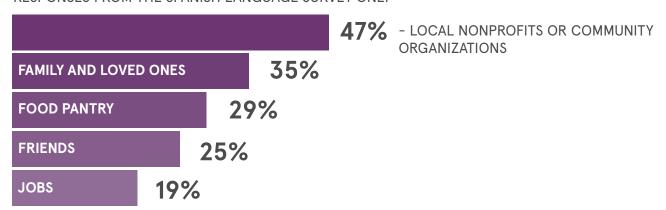
Question: What strengths or support have you, your family, or your business had through the pandemic and its health and economic impacts?

PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS WHO SELECTED THE GIVEN CATEGORY OF SUPPORT FOR ALL SURVEYS



Family and loved ones, friends, neighbors, and jobs are the top categories across every demographic. However, among those who filled out the Spanish survey, local nonprofits and community organizations were the most commonly relied on support throughout the pandemic.

RESPONSES FROM THE SPANISH LANGUAGE SURVEY ONLY



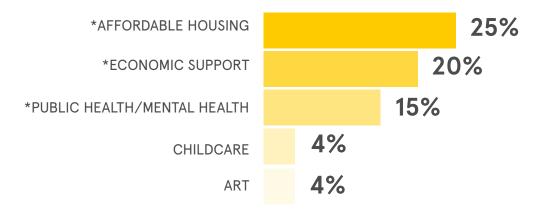
Question: What single action could Boulder County take to most benefit the lives of people who live, work, and own businesses here?

Across the demographic breakdowns by age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, employment status, and disability status, Affordable Housing consistently rises to the top as the number one suggestion for actions Boulder County can take to help its communities. Some community members even indicated that while they were not directly struggling to meet their own housing needs, they recognized it as the most important issue to overcome in their community. Among the responses regarding housing, a higher percentage of Latinx participants wrote in suggestions specifically for rental support than non-Latinx participants.

The needs for affordable housing and economic support are largely consistent across every geography; however, within urban areas we see an increase in suggestions regarding childcare and aid to nonprofits. In more of the Western Boulder County towns, we see an increase in suggestions for small business support.

Responses also indicate that as the age groups get higher, suggestions for support to the arts and transportation also increases.

TOP 5 CATEGORIES



It is important to note that not all survey responses indicated a need for new services, but rather suggested an improved system for navigating the services and programs already available through the county.

Community conversation feedback also indicated that people are concerned the ARPA funds will be used to address immediate needs and then the funding will run out, causing a relapse in the negative economic impacts. Therefore, it is recommended the Commissioners look for opportunities to leverage ARPA dollars for longer-term impacts that will continue to benefit the community well after the pandemic has subsided.

"Funding for an art project or even organization operating support isn't helpful if the artists and people working within the arts can't cover their basic expenses, including rent or mortgage."

- Charlotte LaSasso, Boulder County Arts Alliance

^{* =} See appendix for further details about this category

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"When requirements for business are added, more support for affordability in complying and doing so in a timely manner. We understand the need for licensing and related things like fire inspection but get frustrated when it is impossible to get them on time even when we meet deadlines." - respondent zip code: 80304

"A series of community events and ways to connect communities throughout the fall and winter ahead (outdoors of course). AND through this process supporting the Boulder County Businesses (like restaurants, artists, and musicians) who will be most affected if things shut down/go to limited capacity/can't run again. For example, a mountain town's winter festival that brings people out (safely) and offers food and entertainment (provided by Boulder County businesses that need the support). And then a second winter festival in Gunbarrel for the Eastern



communities. Reinstating the small business grants as a part of this process. This would wrap so much of what is needed at these moments into one thing... decreasing anxiety, depression and isolation, and it would offer much needed funds to those events and food focused businesses that are struggling." - respondent zip code: 80301



"Work with other arts organizations to sponsor the lease of a large space that can be divided into smaller spaces that individual artists/artisans can rent, in the \$150 -300/month range. It is difficult right now for any individual to come up with all the funding necessary to pay first/last month rent, deposits for utilities, and build out of space. A community of artist work spaces, combined with classroom/teaching/retail spaces would do much to support the visual arts in this area, and add vibrancy to Boulder's overall image." - respondent zip code: 80301

"Simple and robust navigation system that will allow people to get connected with the services they need. This system should be widely advertised so that everyone in the community is aware of it. It should also have a reporting system that will allow staff to report gaps or areas where services aren't working so that the community can address them." - respondent zip code: 80027

"Work on having an active network of cultural brokers that connect and help people navigate the various systems to complete getting resources that address the immediate need but also then help to address longer term self sufficiency or resilience." - respondent zip code: 80503

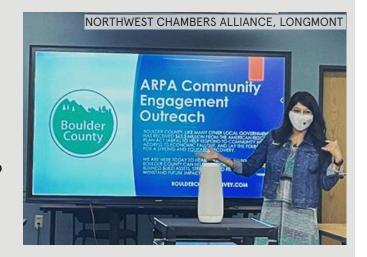
"If it were something I cared deeply about, it would be subsidizing Direct Support Professional (DSP) pay at various agencies to help support the IDD (people with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities) population. This is an underserved and oftentimes ignored part of our society and there is a constant staffing shortage, especially so now. Many of those with disabilities have mental illnesses and their "friends" are oftentimes providers. Throughout the pandemic, many lost their connections within the community. This is continuing now as companies struggle to hire DSPs (Direct Support Professionals) to meet the demand." – respondent zip code: 80503



"Offer supplemental income stipends to support our community... This may include childcare stipends, sick time reimbursement, weekly stipends dependent on the job (ex: social services/healthcare workers receive a supplemental stipend to ensure they can live/work in Boulder County), broadened transportation options for people of all needs (including people with behavioral health needs), use of transportation over county lines within a reasonable mileage range, and additional opportunities for business to increase wages to match the cost of living..." - respondent zip code: 80302

"The need/solution to be defined: (1) Systematic and expanded outreach effort by trusted community members to reach Latinx business owners and startup entrepreneurs to better understand their specific needs, to build relationships and to expand on what is already being done by SBDC, Latino Chamber and other partners; (2) training and hands-on consulting (technical assistance) in Spanish so that the business owners and startup entrepreneurs understand all of the business applications and digital communications options they can use to reach their customers and increase sales for their businesses; (3) grants for electronic devices (improved smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc) to make (2) possible and/or for application licenses so the businesses can use technology to do better business, as learned in (2) -- examples could include accounting programs, social media subscriptions, etc." - respondent zip code: 80303

"Work on zoning laws and local regulations to support more affordable housing while still protecting the valuable resource of green outdoor spaces in the county. For instance, consider allowing specific areas for individuals to purchase small lots for tiny houses that are set on foundations. And/or set up local regulations to prevent predatory practices of large real estate companies...Resources spent on changing policy to support affordable housing can have a huge ripple effect of reducing need for other social programs (like rent assistance, health assistance, food pantries, etc). Stable, affordable housing greatly increases the odds of having stable people." - respondent zip code: 80540



IRIECOIMIMIEINIDATIONS

The Board of County Commissioners initiated the community engagement effort to better understand the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on different communities within Boulder County, and to listen to the community's ideas for building a durable and equitable recovery.

The results are clear. Respondents who live, work, go to school, and own businesses in Boulder County are very concerned with housing and economic impacts, and understand that these issues are all interconnected. Regardless of their location, age, race, or gender, housing and economic issues ranked #1 and #2. This may come as no surprise, since these issues existed pre-pandemic, and were only exacerbated by lockdowns and closures to respond to the public health emergency.

The affordability of housing affects us daily. The high cost of housing is an impediment to spending money on everyday needs, such as groceries, transportation, business expenses, and education, limiting the circulation of money throughout the county's economy, and can put stress on individuals' mental health. Solving for housing and economic issues are interconnected and responding to one can address both.

Attracting a workforce is a challenge for nonprofits and businesses alike. We heard from businesses and nonprofits about how hard it is to attract a workforce, and how thin their operations are. As large corporations increase their lowest-wage jobs, small businesses and nonprofits find it difficult to compete in attracting the same workforce. Many respondents also indicated that due to school closures and the lack of affordable childcare, it is less expensive to have a parent stay home to watch their children. This pulls a number of people out of the workforce, ultimately causing a reduction in the quantity and quality of services. As a result, the needs of those who rely on nonprofit and business services become more dire.

Nonprofit organizations and businesses are on the front lines of the recovery in the communities who need it the most. We started with a list of 70 nonprofit organizations, given to us from the County for engagement, and grew that list to over 300. Nonprofit organizations are on the front lines of the work to address housing, economic issues, business issues, homelessness, arts, and of course, public health. In our Spanish language survey, nonprofits were the #1 place where community members have turned to for support during the pandemic, and the nonprofit community has had significant challenges during the pandemic, including those on the Steering Committee.

Many organizations we approached shared that they did not have the time to participate – their resources are stretched thin as they were still doing double-time providing pandemic services to their communities; they are experiencing burnout and compassion fatigue;



and in some cases, they are doubtful their feedback will affect change. Supporting the nonprofit community and small businesses will have lasting payoffs in activating a widespread network of those who are deeply connected to those most vulnerable during a crisis.

Social isolation continues to be a challenge. The pandemic has taken its toll on all of us, and as a society, we need to ensure that our communities are able to withstand future setbacks. From the social isolation of the Mountain Region, where some communities still do not have internet access, to the immunocompromised and at-risk senior folks who have had to extend quarantining, to those who have physical or intellectual and developmental disabilities and cannot utilize technology to connect to others without assistance, we see issues of public and mental health, in many forms, prevalent in survey responses.

Social infrastructure can be built through investing in programs and physical spaces that bring our communities together, such as libraries, senior centers, neighborhood associations, intergenerational programing, etc. with particular focuses on the harder to reach populations, including those without access to tech or those with disabilities who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Some responses highlighted events that the County could sponsor to bring residents and businesses together. The more we know one another, the better we – as a community – will be able to withstand future economic, public health, and climate crises. It is often our friends and neighbors who are the first responders in times of need – which could be a matter of life or death for some.

Boulder residents are skeptical that their opinion matters. We heard skepticism in many forms throughout the engagement process. We heard it from community members in the Peak to Peak region who were skeptical of a survey that only had the County's name and logo on top (we changed it to include all the partners). The County's Engagement Specialists heard it on the street over and over from people that their responses would not matter, particularly among immigrants. And, we heard it through sincere vocalizations of disbelief when community members saw County Commissioners personally attend an outreach event.



The creation of the Boulder County ARPA Steering Committee to provide insight into and lead the community engagement process provided one new way of working with community leaders by co-designing an engagement process with non-profit leaders, and demonstrating that the County will listen to the results. The design of this engagement process, including bringing in partner organizations early in this process to co-design the outreach, built trust and transparency in an initial level. Demonstrating that the County is actually listening will be the real test.

County Commissioners and Boulder County staff can work to create additional new ways of informing the public of their work and inviting the community to learn and participate in future processes by building stronger relationships with the nonprofit and business community to solve problems together. Survey responses highlighted a widespread confusion about

the resources that are already available through the County. Working directly with service providers could alleviate some of the confusion.

Within the business community, owners emphasized the difficulty of navigating grant and loan program requirements and the fear of fines from the government for noncompliance. The Steering Committee has been told that a search is under way for a permanent Engagement Specialist; however, that is just one individual. The County must take a deep look into its practices of policymaking and create new ways to champion accessibility, transparency, responsiveness, and inclusivity of all communities.



Communities are still suffering. As we reflect on these results, it's clear that Boulder County is not "back to normal" and it may never be. Businesses need help, residents feel isolated, parents are still struggling, and the workforce is exhausted. While there is no shortage of work to be done, the struggles of the pandemic did not hit all of our communities the same. The goal of this project is to not only recover, but to create a more inclusive and equitable community. Those who suffered disproportionately cannot be ignored. The County must work directly with these communities to design the policies, programs, and projects that will have long-term, trajectory-changing benefits to build assets, strength and resilience for our neighbors who need it the most.

The ARPA funds present an opportunity for the County to create good outcomes rooted in the concerns and creative insights from the communities most in need – outcomes that are sustainable and have lasting impacts. As we move to the second phase of this work, the Steering Committee is excited to continue to work with experts, residents, businesses, and students on the ways in which we can address the issues highlighted from this engagement process. It is our sincere hope that the Commissioners of Boulder County will take this opportunity.

Respectfully,

The Boulder County ARPA Steering Committee November 20, 2021

A. LIST OF OUTREACH EVENTS

Human Services Alliance/SVCC Meeting (HSA) 9/3

Longmont Development Authority Announcement (LDA) 9/7

Longmont Development Authority Business Owner Meeting (LDA) 9/8

BOCC Virtual Town Hall (BOCC) 9/10

Art Walk Longmont (AWL) 9/11

Boulder County Board of Health Meeting (BCBH) 9/13

Mobility and Access Coalition (MAAC) 9/13

23Zip events in Longmont, Louisville, Lafayette 9/14, 9/22, 9/28

Boulder Farmers Market (BFM) 9/15

Longmont Farmers Market (BFM) 9/18

Fiesta and Food Trucks, Latino Chamber Alliance Event (LCH) 9/18

Lafavette First Hand Market (FHM) 9/18

Peak to Peak Town Hall (P2P) 9/20

VECC Meeting 9/22

North West Chamber Alliance Focus Group (NWCA) 9/23

Boulder County (POSAC) Meeting 9/23

Raw Tools Community Event 9/25 (RTC)

Energy Resilient and Pandemic Resilient Grass Roots Solutions Meeting (SEEDS) 9/25

Nederland Farmers Market (NFM) 9/26

Garden to Table Family Event (GTT) 9/26

Imagine! Meeting 9/28

Meeting with Front Range Community College Faculty 9/28 (FRCC)

Student Chamber Network at Front Range Community College, Virtual Meeting with Leadership Team 9/28 (FRCC)

Boulder County Arts Alliance Meeting (BCAA) 9/29

Women Who Light the Community Event (WWLTC) 9/30

Center for People with Disabilities Meeting (CPWD) 9/30

El Comité de Longmont Focus Group 9/30

Kick2build Meeting with parents and kids 10/2

Electrical Vehicle Fair with Sustainable Resilient Longmont (SRL) 10/3

Town Meeting at the Louisville Public Library (LPL) 10/4

Front Range Community College Longmont Campus (FRCC) 10/5

Casa Esperanza 10/5

Student Chamber Front Range Community College Virtual Meeting for All (CSN) 10/5 OUR Center 10/8

Dia de Los Muertos, Longmont 10/9

OUT Boulder Town Hall 10/12

Tabling in front of the Court House (BOC) 10/13

Front Range Community College lunch with Dean Carla Stein (FRCC) 10/14

Boulder Chamber Economic Summit 10/14

Latinx Community Latinx Heritage Month event Colorado Chautauqua 10/16

B. OUTREACH MATERIALS





Are you a Boulder County: RESIDENT. **EMPLOYEE**, **BUSINESS OWNER, or** STUDENT impacted by **COVID-19?** Share your ideas!

Go to bouldercountysurvey.com or scan the QR code to give us your ideas!



Tell your neighbors, friends, and family to send us their ideas too!

ARPAinput@bouldercounty.org















What are your ideas for a **Boulder County pandemic** recovery?

Our entire community has been affected by COVID-19. The federal government is giving Boulder County \$63.3 million to help those with the greatest need recover. Share your ideas about how this money should be spent by going to **bouldercountysurvey.com** or scanning the OR code.

For more information, visit: bit.ly/BoulderCountyARPA

















Nuestra comunidad entera se ha visto afectada por el COVID-19. El gobierno federal le entrega al Condado de Boulder \$63.3 millones para ayudar a aquellos con la mayor necesidad de recuperarse. Comparta sus ideas sobre cómo se debería gastarse este dinero a través de bouldercountysurvey.com o escanee el código QR. For more information, visit: bit.ly/BoulderCountyARPA

¿Cuáles son sus ideas para una

recuperación de la pandemia en

el Condado de Boulder?















Share your ideas!

bouldercountysurvey.com or scan the

#betterBoCo #cambiolocal

Place stamp here

¡Comparta sus ideas!

Vaya a bouldercountysurvey.com

#betterBoCo #cambiolocal

Are you a resident, employee, business owner, or student in Boulder County?

We want to hear from you!

Boulder County will receive \$63.3 million from the federal government through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support those most impacted by COVID-19 in Boulder County.

The Boulder County Commissioners want to hear your ideas as to how to spend our share of federal funding to best address the needs of individuals most affected by COVID-19.

- Go to bouldercountysurvey.com or scan the QR code to give us your ideas!
- Tell you neighbors, friends, and family to send us their ideas too.
- Sign up to host a community conversation in your neighborhood by emailing ARPAinput@bouldercounty.org
- Look out for events in your community!

















C. Q1: BREAKDOWN OF HOUSING-RELATED CATEGORIES

HOUSING- RELATED CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	340
RENT, MORTGAGE, UTILITY AID	47
EVICTION PREVENTION	13
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: FOOD PROGRAMS	14
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: CASH TRANSFERS	3
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: INTERNET ACCESS PROGRAMS	1
SERVICES FOR UNHOUSED PERSONS	1
OTHER HOUSING ASSISTANCE	1
TOTAL	420
PERCENT OF TOTAL RESPONSES	27%

<- The discrete line shown in the graph on p16.

D. Q2: BREAKDOWN OF HOUSING-RELATED CATEGORIES

HOUSING- RELATED CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	172
RENT, MORTGAGE, UTILITY AID	39
EVICTION PREVENTION	0
SERVICES FOR UNHOUSED PERSONS	8
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: FOOD PROGRAMS	15
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: CASH TRANSFERS	0
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: INTERNET ACCESS PROGRAMS	3
OTHER HOUSING ASSISTANCE	1
COMBINED HOUSING TOTAL	238
PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES	15%

<- The discrete line shown in the graph on p17.

E. Q2: BREAKDOWN OF HEALTH-RELATED CATEGORIES

HEALTH- RELATED CATEGORIES	
	RESPONSES
PUBLIC HEALTH	174
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	110
MEDICAL EXPENSES	17
COVID-19 VACCINATION	11
OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES	9
COVID-19 TESTING	4
PAYROLL COSTS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH,	4
SAFETY, & OTHER PUBLIC SECTOR	
STAFF RESPONDING TO COVID-19	
SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES	1
PREVENTION IN CONGREGATE	1
SETTINGS (NURSING HOMES, PRISONS/	
JAILS, DENSE WORK SITES, SCHOOLS, ETC.	
PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENSES (INCLUDING	1
COMMUNICATIONS, ENFORCEMENT,	
ISOLATION/QUARANTINE)	
COMBINED HOUSING TOTAL	332
PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES	21%

- <- The discrete line shown in the graph on p17.
- <- The discrete line shown in the graph on p17.

F. Q4: BREAKDOWN OF HOUSING-RELATED CATEGORIES

HOUSING- RELATED CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	335
RENT, MORTGAGE, UTILITY AID	52
EVICTION PREVENTION	9
SERVICES FOR UNHOUSED PERSONS	42
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: FOOD PROGRAMS	43
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: CASH TRANSFERS	39
HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE: INTERNET ACCESS PROGRAMS	15
OTHER HOUSING ASSISTANCE	7
COMBINED HOUSING TOTAL	542
PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES	25%

All lines are aggregated for the sum of "Affordable Housing" responses shown on p20.

G. Q4: BREAKDOWN OF ECONOMIC IMPACTS CATEGORIES

ECONOMIC SUPPORT CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS	122
AID TO NONPROFITS	46
AID TO TOURISM, TRAVEL, OR HOSPITALITY	2
AID TO OTHER IMPACTED INDUSTRIES	8
REHIRING PUBLIC SECTOR STAFF	2
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OR CASH ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYED WORK	10
JOB TRAINING ASSISTANCE	25
SMALL BUSINESS ECONONOMIC ASSISTANCE	69
PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES	4
PRIVATE SECTORGRANTS TO OTHER EMPLOYEES	1
OTHER ECONOMIC SUPPORT	73
COMBINED ECONOMIC IMPACTS	362
PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES	20%

All lines are aggregated for the sum of "Economic Support" responses shown on p20.

H. Q4: BREAKDOWN OF HEALTH-RELATED CATEGORIES

HEALTH-RELATED CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF
	RESPONSES
PUBLIC HEALTH	77
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	63
MEDICAL EXPENSES	28
COVID-19 VACCINATION	49
OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES	17
COVID-19 TESTING	8
PAYROLL COSTS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, & OTHER PUBLIC SECTOR STAFF RESPONDING TO COVID-19	3
SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES	4
PREVENTION IN CONGREGATE SETTINGS (NURSING HOMES, PRISONS/JAILS, DENSE WORK SITES, SCHOOLS, ETC.	1
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT	2
PUBLIC HEALTH EXPENSES (INCLUDING COMMUNICATIONS, ENFORCEMENT, ISOLATION/QUARANTINE)	3
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS OR BENEFITS NAVIGATORS	9
COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION	2
COMBINED HEALTH TOTAL	266
PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES	15%

All lines are aggregated for the sum of "Public Health/Mental Health" responses shown on p20.