**American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding for Behavioral Health Services**

Signed into law on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocates $1.9 trillion to provide a broad range of assistance and programming to help people recover from the harms caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Stimulus bills typically provide both discretionary financial support to states and also augment existing federal funding streams that support a wide range of ongoing state and local government activities, from economic development to behavioral health. **There are multiple funding streams in the ARP applicable to behavioral health programs and services in the school, community, and health care settings. These funding streams may be accessible to promote MHFA/behavioral health training in schools and the community, as well as to help build a strong foundation for 988-related crisis response.**

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| **ARP Funds** | **Amount** | **Description** |
| State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds ([Sec. 9901](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22american+rescue%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=2#H961DF10AD21C4DD88C956CA51623439E)) | $349.7 billion | The Secretary of the Treasury shall distribute fiscal recovery funds to state, city, and county executives, among other eligible purposes, “to respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease.” A funding formula in the ARP will determine the amounts of these grants to state and local governments. These funds are to cover costs incurred by December 31, 2024. |
| Funding for Community-Based Services for Local Behavioral Health Needs ([Sec. 2707](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22american+rescue%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=2#HB875C9E6D4394BF1AF2170392FA7B576)) | $50 million | The Secretary of HHS “shall award grants to State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, Tribal organizations, nonprofit community-based entities, and primary care and **behavioral health organizations to address increased community behavioral health needs worsened by the COVID-19 public health emergency**.” |
| Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund ([Sec. 2001](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22american+rescue%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=2#HC315DAEC7C254F1085E1EA29A7A76881))  Can be used for **MHFA**/behavioral health training programs | $123 billion | Authorizes the Secretary of Education to award grants to states to address the impacts of COVID-19 on pre-K through 12 education, including: Implementing strategies to meet the social, emotional, **mental health**, and academic needs of students hit hardest by the pandemic, including through **evidence-based interventions** and critical services like community schools. Funds to remain available through September 30, 2023. |
| Youth Suicide Prevention (Sec 2710)  Can be used for **MHFA**/behavioral health training programs | $20 million to remain available until expended | Authorizes SAMHSA and the Department of Education **to award grants to institutions of higher education to enhance services for students with mental health or substance use disorders** that can lead to school failure, such as depression, substance use disorders, and suicide attempts, prevent mental and substance use disorders, reduce stigma, and improve the identification and treatment for students at risk. |
| State Option to Provide Qualifying Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services ([Sec. 1947](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22american+rescue%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=2#H7195AB65779448EE929705D86600F4D8))  **988 planning/implementation** | $15 million in planning grants | States to change their Medicaid plans or apply for waiver to use Medicaid **to provide behavioral health and other supportive services** to people experiencing a mental health and/or substance crisis outside of a jail, prison, or hospital. Services become available on March 12, 2022, one year after the ARP was enacted |

**Advocating for Funds at the State and Local Levels**

At the federal level the National Council is advocating for funds to be distributed quickly, efficiently and with maximum guidance to states to ensure transparency of allocation providing clarity for providers. The National Council aims to ensure all providers are aware of funding opportunities created by the law and will track funding announcements and dissemination of funds through the federal agencies.

Federal grants that support community programs are typically passed through state and local administrative agencies and often don’t require engagement from the legislature to be dispersed. The names and even the kinds of agencies that administer federal funds can differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, state associations should work to understand how existing laws and entities in their state and cities will impact the administration of ARP funded programs. Because state agencies are frequently under-resourced, the most effective advocacy will aim to help these agencies do the work with which they have been tasked by quickly dispersing the funds to meet the intention set by the ARP.

Advocacy efforts should consider asking state and local executives to reserve a dedicated amount of their state/jurisdictions’ fiscal relief funds to support community-based behavioral health services as well as funds to build organizational capacity through the end of 2024, when the funds expire. And, finally, like the Colorado Behavioral Health Council (CBHC) has already done effectively through HB-1119, associations should work closely with state legislators and other government leaders to leverage APR funding streams to create sustainable sources of support for behavioral health programs through legislation and other means.

**Here are four actions Associations can take to advocate for ARP funds at the state and local level.**

1. Send a fiscal relief letter to your governor, mayor, and county executive demonstrating the urgency and need for funds to be put towards behavioral health services.
2. Identify and enlist state and local legislators and other elected officials who can help champion your work to access state and local ARP funds. Educate them on your work to access ARP resources and ask for assistance, including outreach to state and local executives.
3. Identify, research, and request to meet with the leadership of your state and local administrative agencies to inform them of your work and to ask for their assistance.
4. Contact Frankie Berger and the National Council’s State Policy team, we’re happy to help you develop and pursue strategies to secure ARP funds for behavioral health programs in your state.