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Leveraging local American Rescue Plan dollars to support immigrants in North Carolina

Immigrants are essential workers, neighbors, and members of our communities, yet many have been left out of relief to date. Leveraging local American Rescue Plan dollars can help.

Immigrants serve critical roles in our communities and economy, as farmworkers putting food on our tables, as doctors providing critical care when we need it, and as technology experts working to ensure information systems can keep up with our fast-paced economies. Yet as our communities continue to respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and navigate new challenges, [many immigrants continue to be excluded from the economy and from the programs meant to provide relief](#).

Many safety net programs designed to provide access to crucial services and supports to low-income people — including Medicaid, the food stamp program, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and unemployment insurance — specifically exclude certain categories of immigrants. During the pandemic, immigrants who lack a Social Security Number, including certain types of lawfully present immigrants, were also excluded from new relief options such as the federal Economic Impact Payments or “stimulus checks.”

Community leaders must do their part to strengthen the well-being of immigrants in their communities to support their local economy.

As part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act enacted by Congress in March 2021, all local governments are receiving allocations of funds to respond to the pandemic, maintain vital services, and recover equitably. These once-in-a-generation funds can go far to advance equity by prioritizing communities that have been left out of relief to date, including many immigrant communities, and there is no federal requirement that ARP fund recipients ask for the immigration status for those receiving services.

American Rescue Plan fund guidelines

Funds must be allocated by Dec. 31, 2024, and spent by Dec. 31, 2026, and can be used to do the following:

- Replace lost public sector revenue
- Support the COVID-19 public health and economic response
- Provide premium pay for eligible workers performing essential work
- Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure

Leveraging local ARP funds to support immigrant families

There are many ways local governments can support immigrant families by leveraging their local ARP funds.

- Support immigrant-led and immigrant-serving nonprofits providing culturally appropriate services to the immigrant, including through Community Health Workers, language navigators, and interpretation and translation services.
- Provide funding for local government agencies to ensure that adequate language access services are provided for all those who need or prefer them, including in social services offices, public health departments, and more.
- Provide cash supports to residents, including those who file taxes using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), to ensure families have the funds they need to pay for essentials such as gas for their car, diapers for their children, utility bills, and otherwise make ends meet.

Find out more

For more information about ARP or for case examples of communities that are advancing immigrant inclusive policies, contact uzy Khachaturyan at suzy@ncbudget.org.



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