

Public Safety Funds Available to Support COVID-19 Challenges

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the need for public safety technology solutions that assist with data sharing, remote working conditions, and social distancing requirements. In response to the ongoing pandemic, the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan ACT (ARPA) of 2021 includes \$350 billion to offset decreased revenue for state, local, territorial, and tribal governments.

Public safety agencies may be entitled to funding to support local governments' investment in technology. Local governments that have invested in technology during the pandemic have used software to:

- Enable remote work
- Engage community members
- Maintain operations
- Build operational efficiencies

COVID-19 acted as a catalyst for local governments and public safety agencies to recognize the importance of remote capabilities and digital workflows. Whether it is enabling a hybrid work model, eliminating paper workflows, or creating remote community and employee digital access, software has proven valuable to public safety agencies nationwide.

ARPA's Support for Public Safety

The ARPA follows the 2020 CARES Act, which ties support directly to areas of local government impacted by the pandemic. However, unlike the CARES Act, ARPA funds are not restricted solely to COVID-19 response. Non-competitive direct formula grants are available to public safety agencies without a grant application; additional competitive grants are also available to support fire and emergency services. Because ARPA is a one-time aid disbursement, public safety agencies should advocate for their needs by working with their local government to access direct funds to support the efforts of first responders during COVID-19.

ARPA Highlights

- \$65.1 billion for counties with populations greater than 200,000
- \$200 million for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants (SAFER)
- \$45.6 billion for metropolitan cities with populations greater than 50,000
- \$100 million for Emergency Management Performance Grant
- \$19.5 billion for cities and counties with populations less than 50,000
- \$772.5 million for Tribal assistance
- \$100 million for Assistance to Firefighter Grants

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How Public Safety Agencies Can Be Their Own Best Advocates

ARPA funds may be used to cover areas that have been financially impacted by the pandemic, including delivery of services, staffing, technology upgrades, etc. To gain access to ARPA aid, public safety agencies should approach local leadership armed with information.

Be strategic in your request for ARPA funds – outline what you need, why you need it, and what will happen if the agency doesn't receive funding. Demonstrate financial losses due to COVID-19 and come equipped with data which details the long-term costs of lost revenue and strained resources. Also, consider coordinating fund requests between departments to present the aid as a regional investment. To improve the likelihood of receiving ARPA aid, rank financial requests based on need to ensure agencies receive priority even if only partial funding is available.

A Commitment to Helping Agencies When It's Needed Most

Tyler Technologies offers numerous tools to help agencies respond safely and better prepared for any emergency or incident, including those related to COVID-19 exposure.

Agencies with these tools experience the following:

- **Improved response times with fully integrated computer aided dispatch (CAD) solutions**
 - » Telecommunicators have immediate access to the essential functionality required of dispatch (narrative, address, and routing details), along with mission-critical information, including warrants, orders of protection, and alerts.

- » COVID-19 alerts allow telecommunicators to provide first responders with data on addresses where individuals tested positive for COVID-19. With this functionality, dispatchers can create a specific questionnaire about COVID-19 infection, including symptoms, exposure, or known quarantine situations. This data is automatically mapped within the agency's CAD system and allows agencies and communities to track COVID-19 cases.

- » Law enforcement, fire, and EMS first responders gain real-time access to incident information, improving decision-making abilities regarding response, resources, and route-planning.

- **Mobile apps provide unparalleled situational awareness for telecommunicators, first responders for both law and fire, and command staff**

- » With mobile apps that work on smartphones, smartwatches, and tablets — first responders stay connected in the field with dispatchers, other public safety personnel, and command staff from any location. These apps go beyond mobile data terminals and provide users with real-time CAD data in transit and on the scene.

- » First responders can use these apps to access CAD data, request back up, communicate with other first responders, and provide dispatchers with real-time updates from the field.

- » With COVID-19, this provides first responders with an immediate way to connect with dispatch and others in the field regarding possible sites of infection.

- » The fire inspections application equips Fire Marshals with mobile tools that promote remote work capabilities to complete inspections faster, with greater accuracy, and with fewer opportunities for COVID-19 exposure.

- **Reduce touch points during traffic stops with electronic citation processes**

- » With eCitation solutions, officers can scan drivers' licenses and insurance information in the field. The data processes automatically to relevant law enforcement records management and court solutions without requiring officers to print material or go into the station.
- » These capabilities reduce touchpoints between individuals and allow agencies to comply with state regulations on social distancing measures regarding COVID-19.
- » Agencies can also use the data collected during traffic stops to enact change for their communities by improving drivers' safety and reducing traffic accidents.

- **Real-time data insight and access from any location, any time**

- » With powerful analytic tools, decision-makers and staff can access data anywhere — even off shift — allowing for a clear view into what's happening in the community, the impact of COVID-19, and what public safety personnel are doing to make communities safer.

- **Secure data sharing capabilities between integrated public safety and court systems**

- » Tyler is the only public sector software vendor with truly integrated systems between public safety agencies and courts. With these capabilities, securely and digitally shared data eliminates the need for paper processes, limits visits to police stations or courthouses, and reduces staff interaction.
- » Data flows seamlessly between CAD and mobile operations, including field reporting, citations, arrests, police and fire records, pre-booking activities, corrections, and the courts.
- » It allows agencies and courts to adhere to social distancing practices while improving processes and efficiency.

The American Rescue Plan Act is a historical bill that has the potential to impact government infrastructure for years to come. Empower your agency to enact positive organizational change by becoming an ARPA advocate for your community.

Tyler provides free grant assistance to agencies looking to update their core public safety software solutions. For guidance on how to advocate for ARPA funding, or other available grants, get started at tylertech.com/ps-grants.