

RESOLUTION

ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Planning and Development
Committee
INITIATED BY



2/1/2022
DATE DRAFTED

Authorizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding for Workforce Development Projects and Amending the 2022 Budget

WHEREAS, investing resources to facilitate the development, enhancement, exposure, preparation and overall readiness of the area’s workforce development pipeline requires strategic collaboration; and

WHEREAS, the availability and utilization of a skilled workforce is an important, as well as critical, factor that significantly impacts the economic health of the county and region; and

WHEREAS, the workforce shortages facing Wisconsin were predicated nearly 40 years ago, and these supply-and-demand challenges are even more acute today, particularly when factoring retirement rates; pandemic-related variables that are influencing the ability of workers to return back to work, ranging from childcare to eldercare issues; and a wide array of skill set mis-matches which are increasingly widening due to the pace of workplace innovation and technology investments; and

WHEREAS, Rock County has a strong history of collaborative and strategic public / private economic and workforce development; and this has been the primary engagement platform used to reposition and revitalize Rock County’s economic landscape following the Great Recession; and

WHEREAS, this platform continues to facilitate strategic and value-added partnerships that transcend traditional organizational boundaries; thereby, bringing together more groups and leveraging scarce in-kind and fiscal resources; and

WHEREAS, workforce and pipeline development programming are continually commanding larger shares of these resources; and ongoing misalignments between local needs versus and state/federal mandated focus areas and prescriptive requirements creates significant operational and programmatic issues; and

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) affords local governments with the flexibility to allocate ARPA resources toward addressing lost revenue and other impacted operational areas; and

WHEREAS, by using a portion of its ARPA allocation for countywide workforce and talent pipeline development projects, Rock County is sending a strong collaborative message to its private / public sector partners.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Rock County Board of Supervisors assembled this 10th day of February, 2022, does hereby commit to allocate up to \$500,000 of ARPA funds for workforce and talent pipeline development activities, initiatives and programming.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution provides the County’s Planning, Economic and Community Development Department with the approval to determine how said funds will be directed, pending the engagement of area employers, Blackhawk Technical College, local school districts, the Southwest Workforce Development Board and/or other related organizations. Additionally, deployment of these funds will be contingent upon their alignment with the following principles and/or tactics: career readiness, preparation and work-based experiences; youth and/or adult leadership development; employee recruitment / retention strategies and tools; industry and/or occupational-specific, short-term employee training; and applicable TBD matching grant funding opportunities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any unspent funds, when said workforce and talent pipeline development projects associated with this Resolution are complete, those funds will be available for other ARPA programs determined by the County Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2022 budget be amended as follows:

<u>Account Description</u> <u>Account Number</u>	<u>Budget at</u> <u>02/01/2022</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>Incr (Decr)</u>	<u>Amended</u> <u>Budget</u>
<u>Source of Funds</u> 19-1980-0000-42100 ARPA Funding	\$15,118,128	\$500,000	\$15,618,128

<u>Use of Funds</u>			
19-1980-2701-64604	\$0	\$500,000	\$500,000
Program Expense			

FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution authorizes the use of \$500,000 in ARPA funds under the Job Training provision.

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to §§ 59.01 & 59.51, Wis. Stats. As an amendment to the adopted 2022 County Budget, this Resolution requires a 2/3 vote of the entire membership of the County Board pursuant to § 65.90(5)(a), Wis. Stats.

Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

As was discussed during the adoption of the 2022 Rock County Budget, workforce and talent pipeline development programming are a high priority for the County in 2022 as an employer and service provider. Both the public and private sectors are facing challenges in these areas, which are increasingly important components necessary for a healthy economy. Depending on the specifics of the programs developed, they may be eligible under the Job Training provisions of ARPA, and would definitely be eligible under the lost revenue provision, which can be used for the County's general government operations.

Josh Smith
County Administrator

Committee Action

Planning & Development Committee

The Planning & Development Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Authorizing ARPA Funding for Workforce Development Projects and Amending the 2022 Budget

This Resolution would allocate up to \$500,000 from Rock County's total American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for countywide workforce and talent pipeline development activities, initiatives and programming. Specifically, these ARPA funds will be used to support the following projects: high school student internships and high school instructor externships; career readiness, preparation and related work-based experiences; youth and/or adult leadership development; employee recruitment and retention strategies and tools; and industry and/or occupational-specific, short-term employee training; and applicable TBD matching grant funding opportunities.

Rock County has a strong history of collaborative and strategic public/private economic and workforce development – and it has an existing framework or operational model that can serve as the primary implementation platform for the above referenced programming. That framework, known as Rock County 5.0, was instrumental in facilitating Rock County's economic repositioning, revitalization and resurgence following the Great Recession. During that period, those impactful economic and workforce programs were overwhelming directly financed by private sector and philanthropic contributions. Unfortunately, the immediate impacts of COVID-19 and its public health mandates have effectively halted the continuation, financing, implementation, scalability and/or sustainability of many RC 5.0 programs.

In consideration of the ever-evolving state of living with the pandemic, not to mention the need to fuel Rock County's economic engine, now is the optimal time for the County of Rock to step forward with supporting the following proposed workforce and talent pipeline development investments:

- High School Student Internships & High School Instructor Externships
\$236,500
- Industry and/or Occupational Training for Youth & Adults
\$155,000
- Career Readiness, Preparation & Work-Based Experiences
\$70,000
- Employee Recruitment & Retention
\$38,500

Given the fluid nature of these proposed investments, which will be influenced by TBD variables such as participation and cost-sharing commitments, this Resolution affords the County's Planning, Community and Economic Development Department with the authority to direct these funds, accordingly. While existing partnerships with the likes of Blackhawk Technical College, the Southwest Wisconsin Development Board and other organizations will help drive the Department's funding decisions, this Resolution also encourages the Department to consider creative, forward-thinking and value-added investments that will develop, position and strengthen the county's workforce and talent pipelines.