

# Kitsap County has \$53 million in COVID-19 relief funds. Here's how they will get spent

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Kitsap Sun

Aug. 18, 2022 | Updated Aug. 19, 2022, 2:05 p.m. PT

Kitsap County has committed roughly 90% of the COVID-19 relief funding it received as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021.

To date, Kitsap County has directed the spending of \$47.6 million out of \$52.7 million it received from the federal government. The money will go to a variety of projects that relate to public health, homelessness, childcare, small business assistance, hospitality and tourism, and infrastructure like broadband expansion.

The spending is focused on assisting communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, those who are homeless or at risk of it, those who are low-income, and small businesses, said Eric Baker, Kitsap County deputy county administrator.

**Homelessness in Kitsap:** [South Kitsap's project for tiny home village gains traction again](#)

An August report that details spending shows the amount of money invested in each category: \$23.3 million for public health; \$10 million for "lost revenue recovery"; \$9.9 million to address "negative economic impacts"; \$8.9 million for infrastructure; and \$650,000 for administration.

"Our money is largely being focused on going out into the public or addressing internal issues in the county that are affecting the public," Baker said.

Some projects that help homelessness include \$3.4 million for the renovation of the former Olympic Fitness Club [into a homeless shelter of over 75 beds on Mile Hill Drive](#) and \$272,000 for the Housing Solutions Center to create additional homelessness intervention

teams. Another \$250,000 will go to the Dispute Resolution Center of Kitsap County to help renters address potential eviction issues without involving the court system.

Some of the most expensive projects on the list: \$7.2 million to improve the ventilation system for the Kitsap County Jail and \$6.6 million for Kitsap Public Utilities District's broadband node expansion project. In that project, up to 30 broadband nodes will be built in underserved areas to give people greater access to in-home reliable high-speed internet.

KPUD also secured a \$470,512 budget for its free Wi-Fi expansion project, in which 24 Wi-Fi hotspots will be constructed at Kitsap Transit park and ride lots and other public facilities, according to county documents.

As for tourism and hospitality businesses, \$60,000 has been dedicated to Visit Kitsap Peninsula for a project to collaborate with the Port of Seattle and Visit Seattle and Olympic Peninsula to bring journalists and writers to the county to promote tourism, county documents said.

Kitsap Public Health District is slated to get \$748,000 for its [nurse family partnership](#), which is an expansion of in-home health assistance to expectant mothers and new families to improve birth outcomes, child development, kindergarten readiness and parenting practices.

YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap County's childcare programs are slated to get \$519,000 for subsidies for daytime and before- or after-school childcare for low-income families; \$243,000 will go to the organization's youth and senior programs.

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The county is working with stakeholders to hammer out some contract-based projects and is making a good process of spending the money, Baker said.

"We do have a number of contracts that have gone out. And then we have a number of projects that are internal, that are not necessarily contract-based, but we're making good progress toward spending the money," Baker said.

The spending deadline for the ARPA fund is the end of 2024. The county is using the money in a way that ensures recovery needs beyond those identified in 2021 can be covered, according to Baker.

"If we issued all our money last year, a lot of the stuff we know we need today, we wouldn't have money for it," Baker said. "The board is kind of moving methodically with this money, making sure that we're getting as much out there as we can, yet also ensuring that we have a certain amount to handle emergent issues that we didn't think of previously."

The county plans to commit the rest of the \$5 million in 2023, Baker said.

*This story has been changed since it was first published to correct the agency that runs the nurse family partnership.*

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