



FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE STUDY SESSION

RE: American Rescue Act Funding

County of Champaign, Urbana, Illinois

Tuesday, May 25, 2021 – *6:00 P.M. *PLEASE NOTE TIME

Shields-Carter Meeting Room/Zoom

Brookens Administrative Center

1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, Illinois

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All meetings are at Brookens Administrative Center – 1776 E Washington Street in Urbana – unless otherwise noted. To enter Brookens after 4:30 p.m., enter at the north (rear) entrance located off Lierman Avenue. Champaign County will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities. Please contact Administrative Services, 217-384-3776, as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled meeting.

I am writing to encourage the Champaign County Board to support funding for improving rural broadband internet access and to consider allocating part of the funds the county will receive from the ARPA allocated by Congress.

This past year both myself and my wife worked from home. My daughter, a UI student, and my son a high school senior also attended classes remotely at home. While we have access to the internet, at times it is unreliable and slow. My position often requires the use of large amounts of data, which would be greatly enhanced by more reliable and faster internet.

As many organizations return to work, we will have flexible working arrangements that will allow for partial telecommuting going forward. Enhanced broadband access will make Champaign County more competitive in the job market in attracting employees, especially in the technical and scientific areas.

Our rural communities and schools would also benefit and make them more competitive for investment and families locating there.

Thank you for consideration.

Greg Knott
1377 County Road 2275 E
St. Joseph, IL 61873

Rural broadband has become a necessary utility, just like water and electricity. With children learning from home, operating a business and our family farm, we continue to struggle with weak and unreliable signals that don't always work.

It is difficult to imagine businesses coming to rural communities without this problem being resolved. Likewise, it's not as appealing to individuals to consider moving to the rural towns when they learn of the broadband issues they would face.

Internet is no longer a luxury, it's a necessity. Everything revolves around the internet – it's how we operate our farm. I am using the internet to purchase parts for machinery repair, order supplies, pay bills, track grain markets, make grain sales, and more.

During the pandemic, I became the caregiver for my grandchildren whose parents are essential workers. It was a challenge to connect to their remote learning sites while in my care, as well as at their own residence in a rural small town.

I know personally of elderly friends who relied on the internet to keep them connected to family and friends especially throughout the past 14 months.

The pandemic really highlighted the gaps in broadband availability. If farm families and rural communities are going to keep up with the rest of the world, it's critical to continue modernizing technology in areas where broadband access is less than adequate.

I urge you to make rural broadband access a priority for the ARPA funds.

Thank you for your time.

Marilyn Whalen

5/14/21

To: Decisionmakers Regarding Rural Broadband
From: Maynard Birkey (CCFB Board Member)

My interest in this subject is prompted initially by two factors: my current internet service is slow (11.33), and I find it increasingly necessary to use the internet if I am to stay relevant within today's culture. My concern in these matters stayed at a more personal level until recently when I listened to the observations of Beth Ford (CEO of Land of Lakes Cooperative) where she pointed out that if we want to keep our young families in the rural communities, one of the issues we need to resolve is access to competitive internet service. This took my thoughts beyond the personal to my concern for our rural communities. It is my conviction that it is in the best interest of our nation to maintain vibrant and innovative families that live in rural settings with a healthy respect for the contribution agriculture makes to providing food and fiber for all of us. As I reflect on the obstacles before us to bring high speed internet to the rural areas, I have a sense it parallels the challenge that was confronted many generations ago to bring electrical service to less populated areas. While at first it seems that rural service benefits only those who live there, I think a case may well be made that at the end of the day all citizens benefit by the efforts of those living on the land.

FROM: Sharon Irish, 608 West Iowa St, Urbana

Prairienet, an early freenet that built innovative community networks, community technology centers, software, and supported library services, started in Urbana-Champaign in 1993 and was phased out in 2008. Prairienet's mission is still relevant and urgent:

- Strengthen community organizations by helping to retrieve networked information, generating new knowledge;
- Empower individuals by providing access to networked information and by teaching the skills necessary to access and use this information so that they can achieve their goals;
- Facilitate information and resource sharing in support of community-driven efforts;
- Promote equity of access to computer resources for everyone in the community.

These points were also fundamental to the proposals that created Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband (UC2B). While the fiber-optic network was funded and built starting in 2010, the "above-ground" portions that would have supported public computing and sustainable adoption were not funded in either of the two applications submitted and thus progress slowed.

Rescue Plan Act funds could provide vital resources to community technology support and services across the area to ensure that un- and under-resourced neighborhoods and families finally get essential hardware, connectivity, and training. These funds could offer a robust structure that would coordinate ongoing low-cost, high-speed internet offerings by for-profit companies; remote learning by educational institutions; regular, high-quality trainings by libraries and non-profit groups, including faith-based organizations; and a supply of refurbished, affordable computers, through groups like PCs for People. We need community-based accessible technology hubs that build on past experiences and lessons learned.

My home is in desperate need for faster and more reliable internet due to the following reason:

1. Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic I have had to work from home. My internet drops out 5-12 times per day. I pay for up to 12Mbps upload speed but get 2Mbps on a good day. This is not suitable for having Zoom meetings and remote working as the internet plays a key part in my job duties.
2. My kids are home schooled and 75% of the schoolwork is online. The kids get behind on their work when the internet is not functioning properly.
3. My wife and daughter are taking college classes that requires them to be online for all assignments and quizzes. Again, the unreliable internet makes completing assignments difficult.
4. My father-in-law lives with us, and he runs a business out of the home. This also requires reliable internet for proper transactions of contract documents and invoicing.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated in getting faster internet.

Thank you,
Noah Marx

I am emailing to encourage the support and prioritization of rural broadband projects from the use of the ARPA funds from the Champaign County Board. Proper internet access is a key component in my everyday life. I work remotely and often have internet access issues that hinder my productivity as an employee. Champaign County has so many wonderful attractions that would benefit from the investment in rural broadband access.

Thank you,
Chandler Bruns

As a mother of three grade school children and a work from home mom at that, having a strong internet connection proved to be one of our most valuable resources in 2020 and so far in 2021. We were able to get the kids plugged in easily to remote learning, and my job was uninterrupted at this time as well.

Unfortunately, this was not the case for all families here in Champaign County. For some, this year proved to be a very frustrating and isolating one as 4500 homes in our county have NO internet service and many others have poor quality and slow connections (my brother and his family included). In the year 2021, this should not be an issue. Investing in broadband infrastructure is a NECESSITY for all members of the county and is a critical piece of infrastructure.

Please consider using ARPA funds on getting reliable access to all members of Champaign County. Thank you for your time and consideration~
Megan Hansens

Linda Turnbull 1213 west Beardsley Urbana ILLINOIS 61801 217 550- 6189

A political independent contractor

A lot of people do not have internet in the county. During this pandemic or another situation, it would be helpful.

I would like to contact you regarding the ARPA dollars that the county has received. I farm in Philo township and have 4 companies that I run from our rural property. During COVID it has been very evident with our internet working slower and slower how crippling our current internet is for me and my family to run our businesses. On behalf of rural Champaign county family's please take seriously the infrastructure our county needs for rural broadband.

Thank you,
Benjamin Rice
768 County Rd 1800 E
Philo, IL 61864

It would be very helpful if we could get better and faster broadband service in Champaign County. We live on a farm in northern Champaign County and our service is extremely slow and there are times we can't get service at all. We have to drive six miles into the town of Fisher and go to a business to get service. This proves to be very inconvenient for us. Please continue to work at getting better broadband service into our county. Thank you for your efforts.

Ken and Alice Hieser

To the County Board,

I am requesting that part of the \$40.7 million that has been allocated to Champaign County through the American Rescue Plan Act be used to improve rural broadband services. With the Covid-19 pandemic it has become very apparent that rural Champaign County is in desperate need of better broadband service. Living in rural Champaign County and having to work from home has been challenging when internet speeds are not even fast enough to load website pages and service is lost during parts of the day. It is nearly impossible to even try to use telehealth programs. Neighbors with kids in school were not able to get schoolwork done because the internet speeds were not fast enough. According to the FCC approximately 4500 homes in Champaign County have no internet service and even more have poor quality and slow connections. I am asking that the Champaign County Board makes rural broadband funding a top priority for the ARPA funds.

Thank you
Paul Hunsinger

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thoughts on the need for improved broadband access in rural Champaign County. During the past year, my household has struggled at times needing to have four computers accessing the internet. With two kids working on school and two adults trying to work, we needed better internet access. I also struggle with internet access at our farm which is crucial for keeping equipment updated and capturing data which allows us to farm more efficiently. As we continue to increase the amount of life that happens online it will be important to increase broadband access in rural Champaign County.

Thanks,
Mike Briggs

I am writing you to address the lack of rural broadband in Champaign County.

I have 2 school aged children who have had to rely on internet service for their education this past year and they have suffered academically due to this. Our available service is poor, at best, and cost \$77 per month.

The federal rules are very clear that rural broadband projects qualify for ARPA funds. This is an investment that will last generations.

Please be sure that Champaign County uses these funds responsibly. There is a desperate NEED for reliable broadband service in Champaign County that is not available.

Thank you.
Doug Downs
1436 CR 2150 E
St Joseph IL
61873.

Three reasons to prioritize Broadband Infrastructure funding:

To address widening economic inequities. Poor internet access is already a significant handicap in economic participation and is becoming crucial. The internet gives access not only to job markets, but to training and education to compete in those markets. Poor internet access is common in precisely those communities in greatest need of avenues to economic participation — low-income rural and urban areas.

To address educational inequities. Broadband access is an essential utility for school-aged children — for access to libraries, electronic references, free online tutoring resources such as Khan’s Academy. Currently broadband is most available to those students who need it least; this magnifies already untenable achievement gaps. The effects of differential broadband access are only magnified in pandemics — and public health experts agree that new pandemics are inevitable in a globally interconnected world.

For the county as a whole. When large segments of the county population are shut out of economic and educational participation, the impacts on the county as a whole are profound. Individuals without bootstraps cannot pull themselves up, straining already-strapped social welfare, medical, and justice systems. By contrast, when we enable people to help themselves, they can contribute more to the county in goods, services, and talent; in starting new businesses; in spending and in economic activity; and in tax revenue. Broadband infrastructure gives people bootstraps.

Elsinore Kuo

Lack of Broadband and connectivity are issues we have in rural Champaign County.

As a resident of Stanton township, I know the options are limited and the coverage is sketchy for the few options we do have. During the past year I have realized how important internet is with my daughter doing remote learning for school. I have also been introduced to zoom meetings as a way to connect with others during the pandemic. I know the government has set aside money for Champaign County that can be put into our broadband infrastructure. I have also learned that nearly 5000 residents of rural champaign County are lacking broadband connection. I encourage you to use these funds to get our County residents connected and make champaign County a step ahead with rural broadband.

Thanks for your continued support.

Derek Harms

Hello, my name is Brandon Hastings. My family and I live in Sidney, South East of Champaign. We farm and run a farm construction business. I believe that expanding and upgrading the rural broadband network in Champaign County would be an asset. It is important to keep on the front edge of technology to thrive as a community.

I want to be very clear in my opinion of the importance of broadband for educational purposes. In no way should this money be purposed to keep children out of the classroom. Remote learning should be kept to a minimum. I do believe there is a huge importance for a reliable internet as an aid for anyone who is in school to be able to achieve online education. This can be very challenging in rural areas with low or no connectivity.

The other important uses for a more advanced internet grid would be for police and fire responders and health care.

An expanded broadband would maintain and enhance the efficiency of first responders to keep our community safe.

Sincerely

Brandon Hastings

I would greatly appreciate your attention to rural broadband access in regards to the ARPA Funds. While the pandemic has had us all facing some major challenges, one that we face greatly in Champaign County is rural internet access. Most options in the rural part of the county are very unreliable and very expensive. Throughout the pandemic we faced struggles keeping our kids connected to online schooling without signal losses or having to use our phone hotspots (still not great service). While I only worked from home for a month of the pandemic, connecting remotely to my work server required a decent internet speed, to which ours did not work well enough. This was part of the reason that I chose to go back into the office as early as possible. Most times our internet is not worth the budget burden with how poorly it works, but with kids in school we feel forced to have it since it is our best option. Our family would greatly appreciate Champaign County to make rural broadband access a priority with the ARPA funds.

Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Tharp

I am a Champaign County farmer, and in today's farming, dependable, high speed internet service is drastically needed. We send and receive large amounts of data to and from our vendors. (Plus, my wife works from home for an engineering firm and high-speed internet is a must.) Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Craig Anderson
Board Member Champaign County Farm Bureau

The need for rural broadband is a real dire need. We live in the country and have such a hard time bounding off tower to tower. We had to switch companies twice in the past year and still have issues! When my kids were home during COVID and while working from home to be with my kids, it was VERY difficult to get anything done on our current Wi-Fi. Investment in broadband infrastructure would allow Champaign County to be at the forefront of innovation and connectivity.

I would like to ask the County Board to make rural broadband access a priority for the ARPA funds.

Tanna D. Suits

Here's my ARPA Champaign County Plan idea: I urge the County Board to make decisions on how to allocate the \$40M+ in federal money based on these criteria: (1) focus on root causes of issues that were either caused by or aggravated by the pandemic, and (2) allocate the money to a minimum number of initiatives to achieve the greatest possible effect for the money invested. My preference would be to divide the money among no more than 2 or 3 initiatives.

My priority is to invest in critical infrastructure that supports better lives for people throughout the county.

County-wide high-quality broadband. Inequities experienced by K-12 students and adults through unequal ability to access and use the Internet became obvious during the pandemic. The county's goal should be that every home, school, and business is served by high-quality broadband. High-quality broadband and Internet access is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity

Thank you.
Ann Prisland
1713 Nancy Beth Drive
Champaign, IL 61822

DIGITAL DIVIDE

We are very fortunate to live in a community with access to broadband, but there still exists a digital divide in how the poorer community members utilize computers and the internet. Both the K-12 institutions and Parkland college provided laptops to students to use during the pandemic, but there was nearly no education on how to set up, organize, or maintain a wireless network or how to maintain or trouble-shoot common computer problems. I found it especially sad that Champaign students were not using laptops, but Chromebooks that are actually modified tablets. There is a whole generation of students who will be behind in computer skills because of the lack of access to computers.

Champaign County needs a community effort to increase computer skills for all individuals that includes basic knowledge, maintenance, and trouble-shooting a home computer network and all connected computers.

Rochelle Harden

As a resident of Garden Hills for over 20 years, we have been promised drainage, streetlights, and sidewalks again and again to have the date pushed out further and further into the hazy future. Twenty years is long enough to wait for the safety features new communities are given without thought. The park and streets flood after rains. There is shooting and drag racing every weekend. No safe way to enjoy the evenings with a walk through the neighborhood. Please. Twenty years is long enough to wait for the standard safety features almost all neighborhoods in Champaign already have. Also, hire more, many more, black teachers for the Unit Four School District.

Many thanks for undertaking the monumental task of sorting through the needs of Champaign County.

Creel Unbelove'd
1729 Anita Drive
Champaign, IL 61821
217.293.3970

Honorable Members of the Champaign County Board,

The following is a request for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for **Mapping of the Mahomet Sole-Source Aquifer**.

Mapping of the Mahomet Sole-Source Aquifer

The Mahomet Aquifer is the sole source of potable water for East Central Illinois including most of Champaign County however, there is insufficient information about the sustainability of the water resource. The Mahomet Aquifer Protection Task Force listed the acquisition of Helicopter Transient Electromagnetic (HTEM) technology to provide the high-resolution mapping required for long-term protection of this vital water resource.

Acquisition of this advanced technological airborne geophysical imagery will provide:

- Thickness and extent of subsurface geologic materials including lateral changes of the layers.
- Physical connections between the Glasford and Mahomet Aquifers.
- Variation in water quality caused by local geology.
- Improved outline and morphology of the bedrock valley including branches and tributaries not yet, or insufficiently known.
- Improved numerical models of subsurface groundwater that will promote sustainable withdrawals for public water supply and agricultural wells to ensure an abundant supply and preserve water quality.

An aerial acquisition of 90 square miles (56,700 square acres) about 13% of Champaign County underlain by the Mahomet Aquifer including borings, surface geophysics and 3D geologic mapping will cost \$300,000 and take about one to two years for completion. This work can be performed by the Illinois State Geological Survey, Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Use of American Rescue Plan funds for an initial acquisition of the HTEM for a portion of the Mahomet Aquifer can provide a basis for designing a thorough investigation of the buried valley aquifers to insure future water supply.

Respectfully submitted.
Christopher Stohr, PhD
Diane Marlin, Mayor, City of Urbana
and others

FirstFollowers totally concurs with the U.S. Treasury's fact sheet for the American Rescue Plan which states, "**COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted low-income families and communities of color and has exacerbated systemic health and economic inequities.**" The county's service ecosystem has proven woefully underprepared to address these disproportionate impacts. Points of note are the absence of affordable and culturally relevant mental health services; insufficient organized street violence interventions; and a shortage of workforce development opportunities intentionally targeting those caught in the cycle of violence.

Champaign County is currently experiencing an uptick in violence, particularly gun violence. Champaign, Urbana, and the Village of Rantoul are on pace to set records in shootings. **Sections 2204, 2707 and 9901 of the ARP Act** give local governments the autonomy to allocate funds to address violence in all its forms. It is critical that the county use ARP funds to address these issues.

FirstFollowers has been deeply involved in violence prevention work through our reentry program. Our experiences have revealed gaps in critical services. Most crucial is the lack of a comprehensively coordinated plan and organization structure to address conditions that foster and perpetuate violence. The county must utilize ARP funds to support such a plan so that harms can be addressed, healing can take place, and hope can be restored. Such a plan must include dismantling structures of racism while providing roles for impacted communities. FirstFollowers believes this is the only path to fully addressing the certain impacts of COVID-19 in our county.

Marlon Mitchell

James Kilgore

Founder, Dir. of Programs and Services Dir. of Advocacy and Outreach

FirstFollowers Reentry Program

<http://www.firstfollowersreentry.com/>

I write in connection with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the necessity to address specific needs in the County.

Relating to Sections 2204, 2707 and 9901

I would urge the County Board to focus on needs related to reducing community violence (of all forms) and the harm being done to the residents of low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. In particular, there is a pressing need for interventions, programs and services to counter the rising amount of gun violence which is becoming endemic in our society.

Sincerely,

Penelope A. Soskin

2702 N. Salisbury Court

Champaign

IL 61821

217398-5738

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted low-income families and communities of color and has exacerbated systemic health and economic inequities as a result. Community violence is a direct result of social-economic neglect, loss of hope, and a lack of self-empowerment. Consistent trauma establishes short-term thinking. Daily life becomes an effort for survival on behalf of those living in economically depressed areas. The gun quickly becomes a false symbol of power and is used to demonstrate strength as well as recognition.

Not being properly educated on the 5 core concepts of financial literacy contributes to consistent inescapable poverty. A lack of proper understanding of the tools used by the middle class to escape poverty is not being properly conveyed. Tools like buying a home to generate equity or building credit to make positive financial gains. Or simply knowing the difference between assets or liabilities. Soon turning to false narratives of wealth-building becomes the practice followed by negative anti-social behaviors. Lashing out soon becomes a way of expression.

Ending community violence entails understanding the critical components which contribute to violence, such as educating all components of long-term economic development such as entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and effective long-term goal setting. Knowing how to manifest favorable opportunities which have a long-term beneficial effect. Escaping poverty involves building wealth which empowers individuals to see a better future. A critical awareness of how harm, healing, and hope is needed to correctly address violence resulting in long-term positive change.

Regards,
James E Corbin II
First Followers - Peer Mentor | Econ Coordinator
MA SSA, Nonprofit Mgmt |
Social -Entrepreneur | Activist | Certified Life Coach |

Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) gives us a great opportunity to address needs of segments of our community that were affected the most by COVID. It is well documented that COVID disproportionately affected communities of color due to their lack of good health care and their economic disadvantage produced by centuries of discriminatory policies.

One way that the strain the pandemic as added to the burden of communities of color is by the increase in violence. We lack the resources to effectively prevent violence to get at the root causes of violence: the lack of self-esteem, the absence of stable housing, and a dearth of good employment opportunities. We need a strategy to reach those most at risk, we need programs to address their needs, and we need support for those impacted by the violence.

Violence is only a symptom of a more insidious problem. Violence is a tactic for those with limited options to improve their life. We need programs to address the root causes of violence if we are to effectively solve the problem.

Randall Nelson
1102 West Green Street

Dear Champaign County Board Members,

I'm writing in regard to the needs of Champaign County residents and violence prevention. Particularly gun violence prevention of all kinds.

As a member of this community and volunteer Survivor Fellow for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, I have seen the devastation in the aftermath of violence. I hear their stories, feel their pain and see their tears as they try to piece back their lives often because there are other children to take care of and life must go on. But trust and believe if there is not infrastructure and programs to end the cycle then it will continue. I believe we are too rich of a county and nation to ignore the cries of its people and not address the obvious. We are better than that.

COVID only crippled us more and made matters worse. We could do a lot of work in the next four years in order to turn the tides of poverty, racial discrimination, and violence prevention. Let's be on the productive side of history and really address this critical need.

In Peace and Solitary,

Janice Walker

Good evening. I am writing this letter today to remind the county to not to forget to allocate some of the ARPA funds to address community violence that was intensified during Covid-19. I live in Rantoul and I would like to see our largely growing poor minority community included in these efforts. Gun violence is the effect of so many other systematic causes that MUST be addressed with the same fidelity as the gun violence itself. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kevin Williams

Hello, my name is Linda Turnbull and I live in Urbana Illinois. I suggest we use the money for gun violence and putting up cameras around the city to help control the violence.

The funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) provide an opportunity for us to address problems of long-standing that have been worsened by COVID. People of color and those of lower income have been most impacted by the pandemic.

Gun violence - There have been significant efforts to remediate this in recent years by providing opportunity for known perpetrators to "change course" by taking advantage of services offered. I was encouraged by this effort but know that it has not achieved the success it has hoped for. Gun "turn in" events are good but have been small scale. We need additional means of addressing the root causes, expanding crisis intervention, supporting families during crisis and to prevent crises, addressing community trauma, and aiding re-entry.

Marcia Nelson

To the County Board Regarding ARPA funds:

Violence prevention and support for survivors have been identified as key priorities in the ARPA because many communities historically impacted by economic insecurities and structural inequities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID and escalating rates of gun violence. Unfortunately, Champaign County has followed those trends. The neighborhoods most significantly impacted by higher rates of COVID are the ones currently being ravaged by gun violence.

According to CDC data, in 2014 Champaign County reported one of the highest rates of residents in the State having four or more reported Adverse Childhood Experiences (childhood trauma). The variables that lead to this data are thought to be our high rates of poverty, structural inequities, disparities in and experiences with our systems of child welfare, mental health, human services, and criminal justice systems. We do not expect the data to change the next time a survey is conducted. Researchers have found a correlation between experiencing violent trauma and becoming involved with future violence. We also know that when survivors of trauma do not receive the care and support, they need to heal and be resilient, they are at risk for greater involvement in our mental health, physical health, substance use, and other service systems. Addressing social determinants of health is the only proven way to reduce the burgeoning costs to our service system related to unresolved and untreated trauma. Effective and evidence-based violence prevention strategies not only address community violence but also make communities healthier (physically and mentally), safer, and violence.

Karen Simms
1905 N. Cunningham Ave, 303B
Urbana, IL 61802
(217)377-5575

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

Champaign County needs a long-term, coordinated effort to address community violence through prevention, intervention, and support for victims. This effort cannot be led by “law and order” initiatives that incentivizes police and the criminal justice system to harm the communities of color that have already been negatively impacted by inequitable policies. The focus must be on investing in the people of the community, especially people of color, by providing opportunities that allow individuals to select healthy, non-violent choices for themselves and their families.

Rochelle Harden

Hello, County Board!

I feel strongly that the Board consider donating a portion of the ARP funds to local nonprofit organizations that directly serve mothers community that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Per the Treasury's Interim Final Rule, funds may be used for "Serving the hardest-hit communities and families. While the pandemic has affected communities across the country, it has disproportionately impacted low-income families and communities of color and has exacerbated systemic health and economic inequities." Historically, mothers, and especially mothers of color, have not been treated equitably within health care systems or supported adequately. Champaign county has an opportunity to invest in non-profits who directly support mothers and families in our local area as the pandemic rages on.

Thank you for your consideration!

Jessica Wolff
The Nest Postpartum Support

I believe the Champaign County Board should consider donating a portion of the ARP funds to local nonprofit organizations that directly serve women within our community that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Per the Treasury's Interim Final Rule, funds may be used for "Serving the hardest-hit communities and families. While the pandemic has affected communities across the country, it has disproportionately impacted low-income families and communities of color and has exacerbated systemic health and economic inequities." In February of this year, Vice President Kamala Harris referred to the 2.5 million women who have left the work force since the beginning of the pandemic a "national emergency". Women leaving the workforce during the pandemic is not one of personal choice. It is a cumulation of the lack of social support that was already there and only exacerbated by the pandemic. Historically, women, and especially women of color, have not been paid equally, treated equitably within health care systems, and supported adequately causing women to disproportionately shoulder childcare and unpaid labor. Champaign county now has an opportunity to invest in local non-profits who are working hard to directly support women and families in our community and therefore lift up our most vulnerable populations. There are excellent nonprofits that have identified the needs in our community and are providing solutions for those hardest hit and could have even greater impact with increased funding like this.

Thank you,
Jessica Etheridge

The funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) provide an opportunity for us to address problems of long-standing that have been worsened by COVID. People of color and those of lower income have been most impacted by the pandemic.

Poverty - Our county has a high level of poverty, out of sight to many as some have the luxury of a focus on being the home of the flagship university of the state.

Marcia Nelson

Champaign County Executive & Board:

When determining the utilization of the Recovery Act funding it is important to understand how the funding was formulated. The CDBG formula is what determines the amount of allocation each city/county receives. direct entitlement grants.

CDBG allocations are based on two unique formulas used to estimate the relative need for each qualifying area. Formula A is based on a jurisdiction's share of population, people in poverty, and overcrowded housing units, whereas Formula B uses population growth lag since 1960, people in poverty, and the number of housing units built before 1940 as formula variables. Jurisdictions are classified as either Formula A or Formula B depending on which method results in the largest award.

People in poverty being the key word in the formula and as such a substantial portion of this funding should go towards helping people in poverty. This includes affordable housing, grants to nonprofits that serve the poor, and infrastructure investment in the poverty census tracts of Champaign County.

I have many ideas to outline that take more than 250 words and I look forward to being a participant in the study session May 25th.

Thank you,

Craig Walker

Family Homelessness

I would like to see a housing community specifically to rehouse pregnant women and women with young children who are homeless that provides long term accommodation and on-site childcare. I've known women in town who have bounced around from friends' homes to homeless shelters to hotels and it is incredibly disruptive to children, especially if there is nothing available locally and they have to relocate to another county and change schools. I wish there were a place that would commit to supporting families for the duration of the school year (or more) so mothers know they have a place to stay for longer than a month or two and children know they will be finishing the school year in the same place.

I knew a mom who found one place after another that would accommodate her family for 2-6 weeks, expecting that she could use that time to find a job, childcare, and housing. The reality was that it took a good portion of her free time (even with help) to find the next temporary stay and she had to supervise her children constantly in a room or two because the places she stayed required it and because they were not safe for kids to go anywhere unaccompanied. It would be really nice to have a community that focuses on families, longer term support, and safety (whether that be childcare or spaces like backyards for semi-supervised play).

Brianna Lawrence

(another vote for ideas suggested by Alaina Pincus via facebook)

Consider increasing homeownership among first-time buyers (especially as part of neighborhood development programs designed to keep communities intact and avoid gentrification) as well as developing more low-cost housing across the county. Incorporate free housing for homeless people as part of a program to help them get back on their feet.

Finland has a good program with good success; long term housing for the homeless can be cheaper than allowing people to remain homeless, since "...when people are in emergency situations, emergencies are more frequent: Assaults, injuries, breakdowns. The police, health care and justice systems are more often called upon to step in – and this also costs money." (see short article: <https://bit.ly/3y5ZqpJ>)

signed, citizen of Champaign,

Roseann Kang

Hello my name is Linda Turnbull and I live in Urbana Illinois. I suggest we build tiny houses we are in need of housing. They do not cost a lot to do and we could build many.

PUBLIC COMMENT TO CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD FOR ARPA PROPOSAL:
INVESTING IN EMERGENCY HOUSING
FOR POOR IMMIGRANTS IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

Immigrant Services of Champaign-Urbana (ISCU) proposes that the County Board acquire emergency housing, and possibly training for trailer and home repair for immigrants in Champaign County, with the involvement of leaders in the immigrant community.

The need for housing and economic integration of immigrants have grown in recent years, and the pandemic has made them even more acute. Overcrowded and substandard housing conditions are ongoing barriers to good health and community participation for many recent immigrants.

We propose to provide apartments or trailers to immigrant families for emergency situations, such as the need to quarantine, to deal with catastrophic income loss or domestic crises and to provide housing for newly arriving asylees and refugees. A value-added component could be training in trailer and home repair. These initiatives will become sustainable through a combination of affordable fees, grants, and ongoing fundraising.

ISCU is a vital part of the support network for the immigrant community in Champaign County. During the pandemic, working together with CUPHD, the Champaign and Urbana School Districts and others, ISCU has played a central role in sustaining hundreds of poor immigrant families through weekly food deliveries and over \$140,000 towards rental and utility assistance. ISCU is currently implementing COVID-19 mitigation and promotion of vaccination clinics in the immigrant, minority, and underserved communities in Champaign County through a large grant from the Illinois Public Health Association.

Ben Mueller, Executive Director
Immigrant Services of Champaign-County

Dear County Board members,

I am writing as the Cunningham Township Supervisor and a long-time community organizer who has worked towards social justice and equity in Champaign County since I moved here in 1995.

I would like to weigh in on local priorities and needs that can help you direct the \$25 Million in one-time federal funding as well as your general budget.

1) Champaign County currently has 8 units of emergency family shelter for the entire county. Families wait between 5-150 days to enter and there is always a wait list leaving families in dangerous conditions. Although Township is working to launch a permanent program that will add 4 more units, we need other units of government to step up so that no family goes without shelter for the night.

Champaign County could purchase another unit near its Park Street location that could be managed by RPC. Or the County could add to what Township is acquiring to expand its scope beyond Urbana.

2) As of 2019, 3215 county residents were disabled living off about \$800 per month SSI (this does not count those living off SSDI). Not a single one could afford living independently in the county without being rent burdened. The number of county residents surviving on SSI has increased by 21.2% in the ten years between 2008 and 2018. We need the establishment of more efficiency and one-bedroom apartments in the \$250-400/month price range for very low income and disabled residents.

3) 1350 Champaign County households had evictions filed against them in 2017 or about 5 per workday. Now that we have a robust county wide rental assistance program, the County needs an eviction diversion program where attempts are made to resolve outstanding debt prior to accepting an eviction filing for non-payment from a landlord. Our goal should be almost no evictions for nonpayment.

I have given these items much thought over four years and would be happy to discuss how to operationalize them.

Best,

Danielle Chynoweth (she)
Cunningham Township Supervisor

I am writing to request funding to support mental health resources, especially for adolescents and children, in Champaign County as part of the ARPA investment.

Mental health resources in Champaign County are severely lacking. We need comprehensive DBT programs to support children and teens in crisis. We need programs which can teach these kids the skills to build healthy coping skills and overcome the adversity, trauma and addictions they are experiencing, now more than ever as a result of the impact of social media and the social isolation of the lockdown. Our kids are in crisis and the closest comprehensive resources to help them learn the necessary skills to heal are in Chicago. Our 2 ER's outsource mental health evaluations to the Pavilion and Rosecrance who are only knowledgeable about acute inpatient hospitals. We need IOP, PHP, comprehensive outpatient and residential options in addition to mental health hospitals.

Please let me know if you'd like any further information.

Sincerely,
Tiffany Armas
Cell 612-597-8416

Hello,

I believe the parents, caregivers, and children in our community need upstream primary prevention supports to strengthen families and reduce child abuse and neglect. Programs and services that are trauma informed, culturally responsive, and strength based that support the protective factors are important needs (including Family Resource Centers, parent/caregiver helplines, etc.) In the community. In particular, investing in the protective factor of concrete supports in times of need by providing tangible resources (e.g., economic support) has a high amount of potential based on research to reduce child abuse and neglect, and contribute to stronger families and communities. Our children have tremendous promise and supporting parents is one of the best ways to help them reach their highest potential.

Additionally, I believe that we need strong investment in the child welfare workforce who are under supported and over worked. They need access to therapeutic support for the secondary traumatic stress they experience and to receive the tangible supports they need to pursue mental and emotional wellbeing. Better meeting their needs will reduce the overwhelmingly high turnover rates in the field and provide more stability for the children and families that count on their support navigating complex and traumatic situations and systems. We cannot expect the families they support to thrive, when they are in a work environment that doesn't foster wellbeing. Child welfare workforce retention has been a longstanding issue that has only been exacerbated by the difficulties COVID-19 has brought.

With joy,
Jessie Heckenmueller

HEALTHCARE

The pandemic revealed the mental health crisis happening across the country. Champaign County needs to go beyond newsletters about self-care and invest in county-wide efforts to support mental health whether it be through nature, exercise, yoga, arts and crafts, support groups, or easy and/or free access to mental health professionals.

Rochelle Harden

My suggestions for Champaign County's use of funds would be for (1) increased funding for mental health services, including related to folks picked up by the police, drug overdoses, and homeless people and (2) First Followers to reduce rates of recidivism, including housing, counseling, job prep, and follow-up for six months to a year.

Best to you,
Joyce Mast
607 S. Westlawn Ave.
Champaign, IL 61821

Dear County Board members,

I am writing as the Cunningham Township Supervisor and a long-time community organizer who has worked towards social justice and equity in Champaign County since I moved here in 1995.

I would like to weigh in on local priorities and needs that can help you direct the \$25 Million in onetime federal funding as well as your general budget.

Champaign County needs to realize the vision of "one door" - an immediate mental health, detox, cool off space that is neither jail nor the hospital for residents experiencing drunkenness, non-violent psychosis, or homelessness. It needs to be staffed by mental health experts and social workers 24/7 with linkages to in-patient and area agencies.

Best,

Danielle Chynoweth (she)
Cunningham Township Supervisor

Here's my ARPA Champaign County Plan idea: I urge the County Board to make decisions on how to allocate the \$40M+ in federal money based on these criteria: (1) focus on root causes of issues that were either caused by or aggravated by the pandemic, and (2) allocate the money to a minimum number of initiatives to achieve the greatest possible effect for the money invested. My preference would be to divide the money among no more than 2 or 3 initiatives.

My priority is to invest in critical infrastructure that supports better lives for people throughout the county.

County-wide childcare services. Lack of affordable, quality childcare throughout the county negatively affected people's ability to gain family-sustaining employment before the pandemic. It's worse now. The county needs to increase the supply of permanent, affordable childcare facilities and services, for both daily and drop-in use. Parents need affordable, quality childcare, thereby positively impacting their ability to find and maintain employment.

Thank you.
Ann Priland
1713 Nancy Beth Drive
Champaign, IL 61822

Champaign County lacks quality, affordable, and reliable childcare which is critical infrastructure. Improving access to high quality childcare in Champaign County would benefit the wellbeing of a community. Women and especially women of color have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 epidemic and have been forced out of the workforce in record numbers due to lack of childcare.

Traci Quigg Thomas

Dear Finance Committee of the Champaign Country Board,

Create schools that are also community centers - open and welcoming to the community including nights and weekends. Imagine a safe, connected, warm place for adults and young people to interact-- schools can be a great space for that purpose. Pickup games, gardening, watching films together, a quiet place for homework, art, learning a foreign language, teaching a cooking class, creating a business plan, having a book club. It would create jobs for new staff that could reflect the diversity of the community, and productive opportunities for all.

Thank you,
Anita Ung

The funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) provide an opportunity for us to address problems of long-standing that have been worsened by COVID. People of color and those of lower income have been most impacted by the pandemic.

Educational achievement - Again, we have a county with the haves and the have-nots when it comes to success in school. Parents without economic means, often working more than one job, and without a history of “success” with the educational establishment due to racism and being the children of those who suffered from all of the above find it difficult to contribute as they would like to their children’s success. Our families need more support.

Marcia Nelson

CHILDCARE

The absence of childcare during the pandemic, radically changed the scope of parenting. And unfortunately, a larger portion of the female population had to bear the burden. Champaign County needs free or nearly free, high-quality childcare, so parents can get back to work.

EDUCATION

The pandemic exposed problems in our K-12 education system and our community college, Parkland College. The success of students was limited prior to COVID-19, but the pandemic exacerbated those problems. Getting students back on track is necessary but putting pressure on students is causing more mental health problems. We are a college town, and we have a focus on academics as a natural out-growth of the presence of the University of Illinois and, of course, the changing economic system that now requires a college education in order to obtain stable employment. However, this anxiety about grades and “getting students back on track” is damaging students’ ability to learn effectively.

Champaign County should partner with the Park Districts and Public Libraries in the county to provide students with high-quality enrichment programs in the form of day camps, sleep over camps at the university, book clubs, arts and crafts classes, etc., so students can learn and appreciate intellectual growth without the pressure to succeed academically.

Rochelle Harden

Safety Town

It would be wonderful if there were a safety town in the area for children to practice riding bikes and following road rules. These are common in Europe and host school groups on weekdays. Police officers will come and give students about an hour of instruction on signaling, what to do at train tracks, overpasses, underpasses, roundabouts, signs and lights, and then children get an hour of practice. Children who don't know how to ride bikes can borrow pedal cars. The course uses real stoplights, signs, speed bumps, and level crossing signals, but is scaled down to child size. The parks are also popular on weekends, where for \$1-2 kids can rent a pedal car, bike, or tricycle and ride around for an hour. I'm on a local bicycle committee where we've talked about Bliss Drive in Orchard Downs for this kind of project. The roads are already closed, and it is within walking distance of three Urbana elementary schools.

Brianna Lawrence

FIGHT FOR ILLINOIS

County Board

Champaign County

1776 East Washington St. Urbana, IL 61802

Dear Champaign County and Elected Officials,

Fight for Illinois is organizing a program with the goal to provide online training and certifications to municipal and city elected officials and police officers, across the State of Illinois. This has never been offered in any state before, as a “One-stop-shop” for all online training needs for Elected Officials. We will be the first state to offer this, and we will be able to educate with short, mini e-learning courses geared for a busy politician's lifestyle.

No longer do our elected officials need to take heavy, onsite classes, which rarely are in attendance, or worry about how COVID will affect their learning and attending. They can just click on our site from any laptop, phone, or tablet and complete a mini training course in a specific skill required in under 15 minutes. We know the job and the number of interruptions, so if the course is interrupted, the course will restart where they left off. Each course will then send a follow up job aid to their email for future learning reference needs. All career opportunities should include the ability to educate, learn, and enhance their performance, even Elected Officials. Right now IL has a large gap in learning needs for this group. We are here to solve that need.

We believe that educating Elected Officials will increase knowledge while decreasing public negative views on corruption, which will positively impact the taxes, offer more fair elections, teach proper campaigning, educate on roles, meetings, and expectations for a better government as well as control the spread of insurgency. Educating Law Enforcement will decrease excessive use of force by police and ensuing brutality and discrimination. We have tied these two groups together as many local municipalities (the Mayors) run their Police Departments. This also ensures that all those elected to a position of power understand each other's responsibility to their community.

We believe that equipping Illinois with the training will uniformly unify the State, set understandable and spelled out expectations for Elected Officials, certify Police Officers, and in doing so, alleviate the court system from unneeded lawsuits against Cities, thus elevating much of the tax burden placed on these cities when a multi-million dollar lawsuit is handed down for police brutality.

Hence, we are humbly asking your generous heart to be a contributor to our grant request to open this program in the amount of \$50,000.00. In the body of this proposal is a cost breakdown as of this month. Your grant funding will help us address these costs immediately and ensure that we continue our mission of education, here in Illinois.

Bonnie Kurowski
Fight for Illinois 501C3
3033 Santa Maria Ave.
Clermont, FL 34715
(630)300-8141

Below are a few suggestions/ideas

- subsidy program to help people afford CSA (community supported agriculture) programs
- support and expand community gardens and enrollment
- develop low-cost housing
- help the homeless with free housing
- create a program to subsidize those impacted by outrageous medical bills no matter the income

Sara Munster

Hello, I submitted ideas for the city because there are not a lot of crime in the county. I believe a lot of people are in need for cable and the jail could have somethings we could do because we do not have enough to rebuild. Also, fixing on the bridges would be a good idea!

Linda Turnbull

The structural needs assessed by our organization (Lincoln & Hill INC) concerning the underserved neighborhood(s) on the Northern Edge and throughout Champaign-Urbana, within Champaign County from a workforce readiness or training & development perspective are as follows:

- **Cultural needs** – the baseline to many of the problems going unaddressed in the disadvantaged neighborhoods stem from biased misrepresentation of self, environment, and culture which manifest in disassociated actions & behaviors (criminal).
- **Educational needs** – our county/towns currently are using an 18th Century educational frame, with 19th Century Instructional methods in 20th Century buildings, therefore this process will never produce 21st-century ready residents from disadvantages neighborhoods.
- **Mental Health needs** – based on the low performance metrics in an unproductive/inefficient educational system the labeling of individuals with mental deficiency are resulting in limiting their ability to be productive. That lack of livable wage opportunities, lack of higher education opportunities, and susceptibility to illicit activities culminates in an array of violence.
- **Employment needs** – our disadvantaged neighborhood residents are steered into entering the workforce with knowledge, skill set, and emotional shortcomings
- **Equity needs** – having a divide in resources create gaps directly in services and indirectly in development and sustainability opportunities.
- **Safety needs** – with all the above needs going unaddressed or lightly addresses the safety of the resident living in these disadvantaged neighborhoods rise exponentially.

The foundational needs

- Structured programs to develop individuals beyond having to rely upon (minimal) skill sets
- Structured programs to develop individuals beyond having to rely on non-livable wages

Mark Pelmore, CEO & Founder
Lincoln & Hill Training

The HVAC and air movement systems at large county and city owned buildings used for gatherings of all kinds were not designed for airborne virus control. Knowledge of good air flow and purification design has made great strides due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the existing publically used facilities owned by the county and its various cities should be retrofitted to incorporate the best airborne virus control mechanisms. This means installation of reversible ceiling fans that can lift air upward and well as pushing it downward, high capacity exhaust fans in the upper ceiling to wisk contaminated air out, and HEPA 17 filters on high capacity air intake fans or heat exchange units to bring fresh air into the building.

For example, I exercise regularly at the Phillips Recreation Center, and it acts more as a trap and a circulation area for airborne particles rather than whisking away.

Lets adapt our public buildings so that they can be safely used by the public during the next pandemic. This will lessen transmission of all types of viruses regardless of whether they are of pandemic proportions.

David Dorman
Urbana, Illinois
ddorman@marlboro.edu
Mobile Number: 860-389-1568

From Peggy Patten, Urbana
5-16-21

The County should use the ARPA's allocation to address the following critical & unmet needs stemming from the pandemic:

Mental health services, housing assistance & job preparedness.

We should capitalize on this opportunity to rethink, recreate & strengthen the infrastructure that supports these three categories.

Position mental health professionals in our emergency shelters, juvenile courts & sheriff offices. Provide rental assistance to those at risk of losing their homes.

Provide job coaches/counselors to work with local employers & those who lost their jobs during COVID. Address the specific areas of need identified (e.g. vaccine or PPE acquisition, transportation or childcare assistance, specific training required by employers).

Use this occasion to restructure service delivery so that County offices/departments can respond more effectively now & in the future. Now is the time to reform the way we respond to 911/emergency calls & substance abuse resulting from mental illness, for example.

Incorporate mental health experts more fully in our systems of support so we address the fundamental needs of those who struggle in our community.

Finally, I know many join me in urging the County Board to use this opportunity address the many areas of apparent dysfunction on the Board.

The County Board cannot adequately address community needs unless their policies & procedures for governance are sound, transparent & inclusive.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public input.

Dear Finance Committee of the Champaign Country Board,

I would like to suggest several potential uses for the American Rescue Plan Act funds for Champaign County:

1) Set up free saliva testing on site for all public schools throughout the county, open to the public. COVID will be with us permanently now that herd immunity is out of reach. Variants will mutate and sweep through our nation and local community - some will elude the current efficacy of vaccines and affect the long-term cognitive capacity of a portion of our young people. It behooves us to make the public health investment now, with focus on our young people and schools.

2) Fund urban regenerative permaculture demonstration farms with integrated solar, wind, and water collection systems in areas with significant public interaction, especially with students—for example on Park District land. We can leverage Champaign County resources (rich soil, sun, wind, skilled agricultural labor, University expertise) to reinvent agriculture that provides safe, needed jobs for the 21st century. We badly need food systems that expand beyond commodity beans, corn, and wheat to improve human health and fight climate change.

Thank you,
Anita Ung

The ARPA funds are a rare opportunity. To avoid wasting this opportunity in misspent funds, failed projects, and short-lived impacts, the County needs a tried-and-tested approach to meeting community needs. The [Community Development Block Group](#) (CDBG) program offers just such an approach. CDBG:

- Has a strong track record of success in mid-sized cities.
- Takes a “bottom-up” rather than “top-down” approach, inviting local residents, groups, and institutions to identify community needs and propose specific projects.
- Makes the federal dollars go farther by encouraging projects to show matching and in-kind contributions — on average \$4 for every CDBG dollar spent.
- Builds community capacity by encouraging partnerships. When relevant institutions partner on joint proposals, these new partnerships can both help funded projects succeed and spark the development of follow-up and related projects.
- Encourages projects to maximize not only immediate, targeted benefits but also “positive side effects” and “ripple effects” — for example, if funds are proposed to create a community center, “positive side effects” might include local construction jobs, and “ripple effects” might include the expansion of local workforce skills and capacity for future construction projects.
- Provides tried-and-tested program infrastructure — text for Calls for Proposals, criteria for judging proposals, procedures and tips for ensuring that administrative expenses are kept to a minimum, etc.

[This list](#) illustrates the kinds of outcomes CDBG approach makes possible in areas from affordable housing, to neighborhood revitalization, to public health, to infrastructure.

Ming Kuo

I would like to see some of these funds going towards a sustainable and ethical 21st century County animal control program. We desperately need more educational opportunities and low-income vet services to teach and promote responsible pet ownership. We could also create programs for children and teens that would get them interested in animal welfare/medicine. New overall leadership and adequate pay for officers would create more desirably candidates as well.

Amanda C. Dixon

Champaign County has been allocated \$40+ million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to help the county recover from the effects of the pandemic.

Champaign County is very fortunate. We have many advantages that most communities in the state do not have. We have the exceptional leadership of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, a flourishing health care system, and a broadband infrastructure that helped us weather the pandemic better than most communities in the state. However, in order to set the county back on a more prosperous path, there are some needs that must be addressed.

1. free or nearly free, **high-quality childcare** so parents can get back to work;
2. to invest in **county-wide mental health support** efforts whether it be through nature, exercise, yoga, arts and crafts, support groups, or easy and/or free access to mental health professionals;
3. to provide students with **high-quality enrichment programs** in the form of day camps, sleep-over camps at the university, book clubs, arts and crafts classes, etc., so students can learn and appreciate intellectual growth without the pressure to succeed academically;
4. a community effort to **increase computer skills** for all individuals that includes basic knowledge, maintenance, and trouble-shooting a home computer network and all connected computers; and
5. a long-term, coordinated effort to **address community violence** through prevention, intervention, and support for victims.

Allowing parents to return to work, employing more child care workers, employing more mental health care providers, employing people in the arts community, employing more individuals at the Park Districts and Public Libraries as camp counselors, art teachers, computer science teachers, and community violence prevention and outreach counselors will undoubtedly put Champaign County on a path to prosperity where people can support themselves and their families and ultimately increase the government revenue.

Rochelle Harden

Dear Fellow Community Members,

My name is Tanya Parker, Founder of Unity in Action Magazine, A community development initiative that uses the power of media to help our community work together to address critical social and economic issues that especially affect marginalized communities. I am writing to propose that Funds be used to support Unity in Action Magazine program because the organization fills a critical gap in need.

One reason is to provide job opportunities to at-risk teens and young adults as incentives to end gun violence.

Two, to provide critical support for the work of social service agencies by supporting their public awareness, engagement, education, and outreach needs.

Three, is to support small business with supportive services free-to-discounted rate.

UAMag has collaborations with University of Illinois, CUPHD, and Urbana Champaign Independent Media Center and more.

Parker is a native of Garden Hills Champaign community. Graduate from the University of Illinois, Masters in Teaching, 4 years teaching experience and over 15 years of experience with this project.

It is time we try something different. Parker was winner of 2010 Social Entrepreneurship Innovation Award- one of six local awards.

UAMag is a 501.3 C is a local, female, minority-owned business.

For more information visit: UnityinActionMagazine.com. Email us at contact@unityinactionmagazine.com

Thank you for your time,
Tanya Parker
3110 Champaign, IL 61822

I provide the following summary of the CCES request for a transfer of ARPA funds to reduce reliance on single-use plastics that has occurred during the pandemic:

Responding to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts

The COVID-19 restrictions in place for over a year have resulted in the widespread use of single-use plastics containers, utensils, and single-use plastic carryout bags at grocery and retail outlets, fast-food businesses, and restaurants.

Champaign County Environmental Stewards (CCES) would use ARPA funds to develop a local campaign to restore and strengthen awareness and sustainable practices with regard to lessening dependence on single-use plastics such as plastic carryout bags encourage less wastage and coordinate a regional campaign to "Choose to Refuse" single-use carryout bags and plasticware and to return to use of personal bags for shopping.

CCES will develop a reference guide of local retailers who use alternatives to single-use plastics (straws, utensils, containers, bags), based on an inventory and survey of local restaurants, bars, retailers regarding their use of single-use plastics. A key feature of the project will be to strategically promote the "Choose to Refuse" message with a broad marketing campaign to get the word out via advertising digital or traditional billboards and via social media outlets. Phase two will include an education and outreach initiative to assist retailers to find alternative sustainable container, utensils, and packaging materials.

Susan Monte, Executive Director