



## **How Should Arizona Spend Federal Pandemic Funds?**

### **Southern AZ Report**

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#### **Most Important Areas to Address Disparities in Health and Well-Being**

Increasing broadband internet would be a good investment and would reduce disparities across the board. Those without internet access tend to reside in rural and economically disadvantaged communities, and may lack access to education, jobs, and other services. Broadband would allow access to telehealth services and facilitate the provision of home and community-based services.

Food insecurity is an area where disparities could be reduced. There is an educational component to food insecurity as well as the economic and transportation components.

Health care, including mental health care, is desperately needed by many and would be a worthwhile investment. Mental health and resilience training could be provided to those who serve, health care providers, first responders, the national guard, and teachers.

Shelter is critical to well-being, and many people are facing eviction. The funding is available to address the problems of landlords and tenants impacted by the pandemic but there is too much red tape. We need to take action to free up the available funds.

Utility services and other basic infrastructure should be established in areas that do not currently have it, such as many areas in the Four Corners area.

#### **Priorities for Utilizing One-Time Funding**

Arizona's public schools are woefully underfunded and some of the monies should be used to improve the condition of the schools. We need to increase funding for K-12 schools. However, we should make sure that funds are NOT used to reward or incentivize businesses, governments, school districts, or others who do NOT support mask mandates and required vaccinations.

Arizona needs affordable housing. This is particularly true for elders. Every seven minutes someone turns 65 and we as a nation are simply not prepared to feed and shelter so many people on fixed incomes. Until we get COVID-19 under control the other issues will be ongoing and worsen as more and more people are impacted.

Priorities should be:

- Additional funding support for Arizona Department of Housing's Homeowner's Assistance Fund.
- Vaccinations, then Education and Housing.
- Housing, essential worker pay, and funding for sustained public health campaigns

- Educate people about nutrition, exercise, and other aspects of good health, and assure that they have the time to apply this information to keep themselves healthy.
- Figure out how best to bring the message and information to various communities and engage people where they are, in their own preferred terms and methods.
- We need to fund green infrastructure and provide funding for workforce development and for entrepreneurs.
- Voter rights protection. Also, should hold the state and counties accountable for spending these funds based on where the data shows the greatest need.
- Decent affordable housing is important for all communities, especially rural and urban areas. Creating more affordable units would ensure that one-time funding will make a permanent impact on our communities.
- Over 47,000 children have lost a parent to COVID-19. Many of those parents did not have a plan or advance directive, guardianship etc. Some funding should be used to help these children and families adjust to their losses.
- Information and referral and community coordination agencies such as Tempe Community Action Agency and Health Current which refer people to resources are a vitally important part of the solution and should be adequately funded.