

Post-COVID Spending Principles for Greater Gains in Hoosier State

Joint Statement by Community Recovery Coalition of Statewide Associations Outlines Strategies for Investing Recovery Funds, Leveraging Resources for Long-Term Gains

The infusion of funding provided through the Congressional American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the Indiana General Assembly's 2022/2023 biennial budget represents an extraordinary, once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape the future of Indiana's communities and residents' lives in transformational ways. We, the undersigned, urge elected officials, policymakers, and civic leaders to consider a strategic and deliberate approach in determining how to best invest and leverage those funds to achieve long-term gains, as outlined below.

Schools, municipal and county agencies, nonprofits, community groups, and other local organizations have faced unprecedented challenges over the past fifteen months, and understandably, most are looking to this funding to address continuing needs, fill identified gaps, and replace lost revenue. With that, there is significant public and institutional demand to allocate these relief and recovery dollars rapidly, in ways that produce immediate, observable results.

For these funds to have the greatest impact on the Hoosier state, it is imperative that elected and civic leaders pause and step back, consider their overall values and vision, gather information and perspectives from a broad base of constituencies, and determine the best course of action to meet local, regional, and state needs. We appreciate the urgency of the challenges faced and the desire to show swift action, but we cannot afford to invest in things that do not achieve sustained vibrancy and prosperity for our communities and people.

Our organizations believe firmly that investments must address community conditions—jobs and wages, housing and transportation, education and childcare, public health and clinical services, and social and cultural opportunities—in ways that more equitably impact the overall health, well-being, and quality of life of our residents.

A thoughtful, measured approach to spending should reflect these strategies:

- Develop and implement a transparent and inclusive process that solicits diverse input and engagement among individuals and organizations.
- Engage the full ecosystem of community partners to expand the range of ideas and contributors to solutions.
- Prioritize spending that will yield long-term improvements.



- Identify strategic opportunities that have emerged over the past year.
- Apply funds in a way that, to adopt Governor Holcomb’s phrase, takes Indiana communities and its residents to the ‘next level.’
- Embrace the Hoosier tradition of fiscal stewardship to guide the process for determining how, when, where and in what to invest.
- Use a balance of data, existing plans, and new input to inform decisions and drive the process.
- Establish a formal process by which community members and groups can access available funds.
- Document, track, and share the process for decision-making and the specifics of how money is spent within the community.

We have a tremendous opportunity to pair the challenges and lessons of the pandemic with these recovery resources to shape a stronger, more resilient future.

Be visionary. Be collaborative. Be transformative.

Signed by:

- Accelerate Indiana Municipalities (AIM)
- Association of Indiana Counties
- Indiana Association of Regional Councils (IARC)
- Indiana Chamber Executives Association (ICEA)
- Indiana Economic Development Association (IEDA)
- Indiana Library Federation (ILF)
- Indiana Philanthropy Alliance (IPA)
- Indiana Public Health Association (IPHA)
- Indiana Tourism Association (ITA)
- Indiana United Ways
- Indiana Workforce Development Board Alliance
- Prosperity Indiana
- Purdue Extension

