



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

145 Dennison Road Essex, CT 06426 | +1 860 581 8554 | www.rivercog.org

October 26, 2021

First Selectwoman Lauren Gister
Town of Chester
203 Middlesex Ave.
Chester, CT 06412

RE: Regional ARPA Project Support

Dear First Selectwoman Gister:

At the July 28, 2021 RiverCOG meeting, the region's chief elected and executive officials voted unanimously to ask towns to temporarily set aside up to 15% of the county portion of their American Rescue Plan Act funds to allow for the development of regional approaches to projects that will assist towns. The concept is that some of the types of projects envisioned in ARPA could be more effectively and efficiently administered on a regional level, and that most towns do not have the staff to take on a large amount of new administrative duties. The request at the moment is to earmark a small portion of the town's county ARPA funds to allow for participation in a regional ARPA project, if the town decides that participation in such a project would be beneficial.

RiverCOG, under the direction of the municipal CEOs, will be developing three regional projects: ARPA bookkeeping and reporting, a regional small business grants program, and a regional social services grants program. I believe the financial administration and reporting support project will be of near universal interest to the towns since the federal requirements for spending and reporting ARPA funds are new to most towns and are not simple. Furthermore, most towns do not have experience administering grant programs and the small business and social service support envisioned by ARPA really demands a professional and apolitical process to solicit requests and make decisions. We envision that support for these three projects would be coordinated by RiverCOG and be administered in partnerships with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce's Middlesex Revitalization Commission and the Community Foundation of Middlesex County.

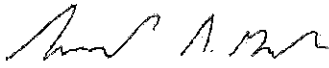
The next step for regional ARPA support would be to convene subcommittees of municipal CEOs to work through the proposed projects and develop budgets and scopes of works to be presented to the municipalities. It will be up to each municipality to choose to participate and authorize the spending of ARPA funds. Any ARPA funds that were earmarked for regional projects remain the town's and will only be spent on items duly authorized by the municipality. I envision that full project proposals will be developed this fall and presented to the municipalities by the end of the year.

RiverCOG

I would be happy to discuss this concept further, or attend a meeting of any town's ARPA Committee. I will also stay in touch providing you project proposals directly, as they are developed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Samuel S. Gold, AICP
Executive Director
Cell 518-505-6088