

## Community Feedback from ARPA Town Halls

Below are the responses from community members to the questions that were presented at each town hall / roundtable, broken down by category. Some of the comments may not fall into an ARPA-related category, but staff felt it important to capture every comment for the City Council to review. There were approximately 313 participants total.

### 1. Public Health

- a. ARPA funds should go to health care, child care, affordable housing, equity and police. Police should do less policing and the City should expend more resources on mental health instead.
- b. Some of the ARPA funds should be used for youth programs in schools, tutoring programs (due to youth impacted negatively by COVID-19 being out of school).
- c. Social workers should be hired to work with EPD
- d. City Council has cut the budget for social services for youth over the years. EPD now intervenes in youth matters where counseling and therapy are necessary. Community members want specific youth services / counseling / therapy rather than using EPD resources for this.
- e. Largest priority for ARPA funding should be in areas of public health concerns.
- f. Mental health programs should be at the forefront of ARPA funding.
- g. COVID impacted disproportionately low income and people of color, and ARPA should be used to alleviate the negative impact.
- h.
- i. City Council should be examining how ARPA can be used to help senior citizens.
- j. Increase public health and social service programming to deter violence in the city
- k.
- l. Since the community does not know and understand fully the impact of mental health concerns for the school children and youth, City Council should set aside funding for programming that will address these concerns.
- m. Funding should be set aside for healthcare needs of community members who do not have access to services.
- n.
- o. Mental health professionals should be hired with ARPA funds to work with police officers
- p. Funding should support an increase in the number of public health professionals working at the City.
- q. Council should allocate funding to support individuals experiencing homelessness, especially women and children and those negatively impacted by COVID
- r. Free and income based mental health services should be offered for families and children
- s. Mental health services generally should be free or income based.

- t. Coverage for substance abuse issues and invest more in social workers
- u. Whatever funding is left-over from ARPA and not already allocated should be allocated to public health matters.
- v. Funding should be used to assist individuals with medical bills.
- w. Substance abuse issues with young people require support programs and funding.

## **2. Economic Impacts**

- a. Paid internships should be funded for people with disabilities that will teach job readiness, and encourage paid internships for adults with disabilities
- b. Arts community has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Musicians were completely out of work during the last year. The Council should examine strategies to revive and support arts organizations in Evanston
- c. Support for arts organizations, musicians, artists who have not been able to work during COVID
- d. Substantial part of ARPA should be given to Family Focus. Family Focus is looking to expand and repair the building at Foster School. They have \$1m set aside from the State of Illinois. Evanston can help foster plans and create a hub for non-profits that are accessible to 5th ward residents.
- e. Family Focus is a hub in the 5th ward and important structure, several not-for-profits and organizations but it needs some serious repairs
- f. Thank you for bringing the city government to the people. It is important to build back better and invest in the future, especially in arts (businesses benefit from arts). I would like to see a tourism site created by Evanston that focuses on arts and culture, a calendar that lists every single event and venue on items going on in Evanston. The City should try to promote tourism and people coming from out of town
- g. Investments need to generate economic growth and the community needs to hold ourselves accountable and be transparent about how we think it will encourage growth when we start spending the funds
- h. Use funding in the areas of the city disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. were not economically impacted by COVID-19. - The City should help the residents who were the most economically impacted - people who lost jobs - people who could not afford child care (if we could do this through Family Focus that would be great and we should put money towards FAMily Focus)
- i. Stop funding grants to restaurants. Their failure rate is too great in general, and to use ARPA funding would be wasteful.t.
- j. Restaurants should pay more than minimum wage (and weren't paying workers well before the pandemic) and we should not use money for restaurants.
- k. "New normal", need to work on workforce development - new ways of working - making sure to support workforce development of this new normal
- l. Economic development should be the City's top priority.t
- m. Council should make sure 8th and 5th ward will benefit from funding and other areas heavily impacted by COVID

- n. Supporting communities of color, local businesses who have not returned, loss of business near the theater and need for a new theater
- o. How can we encourage merchants to come back, enticements; continue to engage the community on the front end with ideas and implementation as well as the final decision - who makes the decision - what role does the community get to play?
- p. Front line workers, how can we better support them?
- q. Downtown Evanston, what will replace the businesses that have left and what can serve as an anchor for the City pertinent for all residents? A plan is needed.
- r. Learned more about local businesses during the pandemic and wanting to see local businesses come back possibly through small grants - connection between community and businesses
- s. Workforce development, what can we do to train the youths for jobs and repairs in our city? ARPA funding should be used in training components when it comes to the trades. This will allow opportunity for youth outreach to get them trained in the trades.
- t. How can we promote economic development, what can the City invest in?
- u. Generate more economic revenue and activity it will help with the City finances
- v. Economic development for small businesses, sustaining not for profits, helping not for profits
- w. Need to make sure funding is spent on areas that will be turned over and multiply dollars in the city
- x. Job security is a problem in the community. Use ARPA funds to sustain businesses to create job security.
- y. Investments in projects that bring sustaining growth; job training
- z. Track individual's progression through economic development services
- aa. Tracking the return on investment in programs
- bb. Investment in businesses related to sustainability
- cc. Many businesses are closed and need support. Other facilities (ex Canal Shores Golf Course) stayed open whole time and took more wear and tear
- dd. Something for people in need of job training or assistance returning to work
- ee. Collaboration with Oakton to provide job training in Evanston for youth, homeless, other folks in need; collaborate with other social services
- ff. Oakton community college location in Evanston should receive funding
- gg. Northlight would be a great asset for City, but using it for capital construction on the building would not be appropriate in the infrastructure categories
- hh. The City did not appear to truly be economically impacted from COVID-19.
- ii. Financial assistance for families who are struggling financially.
- jj. Help Local businesses through grants or programming.

### **3. Premium Pay**

- a. Request for jobs training, premium pay
- b. Downtown and essential workers should receive ARPA funding and support (i.e. premium pay).
- c. Fund for essential workers brought up - broader than just City essential workers

- d. Childcare, essential workers, especially low income **essential** workers

#### **4. Revenue**

- a. Use the money first to cover the City's deficit, and support existing programs before undertaking new projects
- b. Use some of the money to offset the budget for funds lost due to free beach tokens for 3 days
- c. Cure deficit before spending more money
- d. Revenue--align ourselves with forward, progressive thinking organizations and look at our revenue streams
- e. Putting money into City revenue holes should not be a priority
- f. Don't use money to pay for any debt

#### **5. Water**

- a. Water--important that we have our water system insured that in can increase capacity and make every effort to extend our services around northern Illinois
- b. Lead water pipes has been an issue in the past - one time opportunity to upgrade these
- c. Lead pipe lines, importance of providing employment opportunities and enhancing safety

#### **6. Sewer**

- a. Sewers--should be repaired

#### **7. Broadband**

- a. Digital divide, make sure to solve the problem of broadband - how can we fix the digital divide in Evanston?
- b. Robert Crown should provide free digital access and services for businesses and community
- c. Broadband--5G relegated to big 3 communication companies--City of Evanston should look into if 5G should be a utility for the entire city (a digital divide would no longer be an issue in Evanston). We have a digital superhighway running through the City. Other businesses are implementing 5G throughout the country and improving business.
- d. Cell phone towers along the lake should be constructed. Accessibility for those along the lake cannot get service
- e. Broadband and hot spots needed throughout the City.
- f. Desire to provide more broadband--may not be the best way to reach seniors
- g. Broadband to make it into a public utility, closing the digital divide
- h. Assessment of areas of the City that are unreliable with broadband, make sure youth and seniors have access to broadband; Youth need access for education, seniors need to stay connected and keep from getting isolated
- i. Highest priority is wireless broadband citywide - digital divide really showed during COVID
- j. Permanent broadband not temporary broadband
- k. Lots of people did not know how to navigate technology when kids were at school, and ARPA funds should be used to provide programming that assists parents in children's education at home.

- l. Internet and equipment used for the internet should be funded through ARPA funds.

## **8. Housing**

- a. Use funds for small landlords who have not received rent in two years
- b. Help for affordable housing landowners, not luxury units
- c. Interfaith Action--forced to scale back on emergency shelter--people living in parking garages. Need for a permanent 24/7 year round shelter is made abundantly clear. Need for public restrooms in downtown Evanston. Likes the COVID-19 plan speaking to this.
- d. ADU--out of reach for many Evanston residents, but use funds for ADUs to help create generational wealth
- e. Assistance for renters and landlords; big risk at ending of the eviction moratorium
- f. affordable housing
- g. Housing: fix site acquisition and rehab, tenant based rental management and development of permanent housing for people who need assistance
- h. Affordable housing should be funded through ARPA
- i. Affordable housing, projects are only sustained for 15 years, community land trust might be a better option
- j. Housing affordability makes it difficult to stay in Evanston, displacement of people of color
- k. Housing: big need in affordable housing and making it sustainable, what can we do in purchasing properties or that the land and buildings remain affordable?
- l. Affordable housing for lower class and for middle class
- m. Affordable housing is needed and should be provided with ARPA funding.
- n. Do not like CDBG by area, want it to be by need
- o. Rent control ordinance should be created
- p. Providing resource information for low income housing, in spanish

## **9. General Infrastructure**

- a. Water parks, pools for the youth in parks should be created
- b. Sidewalks, infrastructure in bad shape. Will this be addressed? Money allocated to infrastructure of sidewalks
- c. Use funding to repair and create sidewalks (where there aren't any). Areas where sidewalks are kept up and areas where they are not, Intergenerational wealth and well kept buildings have kept up sidewalks, those that are not intergenerational wealth and not well kept buildings are not maintained or kept up. How do these funds impact long term the places where the sidewalks are in disrepair? not in shape
- d. Use for sidewalks / roads / bike lanes
- e. Reduce rideshare fees and see where this can be curtailed.
- f. Infrastructure--scooter / vespa racks in neighborhood paid lots. It would reduce congestion.
- g. Upgrade train platforms, viaducts
- h. Parks and field upgrades to encourage healthy living and healthy engagement

- i. Infrastructure, not for profit wants to build school building in 2nd ward because they are all bussed to schools in different areas, they would have the opportunity for more after school time - would be a long term investment
- j. Infrastructure: what needs to be addressed in terms of what could be done now? It will be more expensive in the future to put off infrastructure needs.
- k. Consider the complete impacts of COVID - places not used and places overused in infrastructure project decisions
- l. Fifth ward school brought up
- m. Public water park
- n. Robert crown, make it free? Do a better job of advertising
- o. More street lighting, very dangerous not enough lighting,
- p. Adult education, english as a second language practical (concentrate on colloquial dialogue)
- q. Community center for latinos where they can get information and assistance
- r. Technology classes, computer classes, basic and simple
- s. Hub for latino businesses (incubator?)
- t. Programs for senior citizens, they were the most affected and they do not have programs available for them, boredom/ isolation?

#### **10. Childcare**

- a. Most programs are not self-sustaining on their own, for example child care. Funds should be used to help sustain.
- b. Funds should be used for childcare and training.
- c. Invest and consider daycare options for parents.
- d. Childcare, as well as child health care needs funding: Early childhood education providers are underpaid and 0-5 is the most impactful time during a person's lives but we are not paying enough attention to that time period of it
- e. Increase availability of childcare and preschool; probably not sustained through this, but again something to get it started
- f. Respond to needs of people who lost loved ones, jobs, childcare, responding to those who have been hurt the hardest
- g. Offering summer camps for children, bilingual summer camps for children
- h. Supporting young people especially those that suffered academically, tutoring/ after school programs

#### **11. Other**

- a. Use funds to help elderly people repair their homes (basements, windows)
- b. Do not spend \$43 million just around Robert Crown
- c. ARPA funds should be used to reduce property taxes
- d. Northwestern should make commitment to help sustain new programs that we might need
- e. Homeowners are paying the taxes of Northwestern; businesses paying for the repairs of areas but not doing it (for example hospital alleys)
- f. Stall and offset the tax rate
- g. Reconsider the non-profit building of Northwestern. The sorority / frat housing "council of" or "society of" buildings are shells during the school year and often

empty during the summer. Those are property lots that could otherwise generate property tax revenue

- h. Collaboration between the city and the educational system to reverse the bleed of families that cannot afford to live here, help and focus on families with intersectional vulnerabilities
- i. Who has hurt the most, where has the most negative impact fallen - do we have data on this, data the city doesn't have that chamber or others might have? Need to respond in equitable way
- j. Climate issues, CARP implementation
- k. Reframing police and fire under public safety - going to them to see what they need to do their work effectively and fairly
- l. Concern about use of first responders, trained as police but smaller issues could be handled by someone other than first responders
- m. Better use of city finances and city infrastructure, would like more money on public health, help people thrive in general
- n. Sustainability, and its impact in housing and for seniors
- o. Ideas that we need to make sure these items are sustainable
- p. residents and nonprofit support,
- q. Outside consults for how to spend the funds
- r. food security
- s. Overall capacity building
- t. Seniors and families living paycheck to paycheck
- u. Violence prevention around schools/ ways to eliminate violence especially gun violence
- v. Funds for the public library
- w. Latino librarians have been doing incredible outreach
- x. Consider not fining people who cannot afford the fines, different revenue streams
- y. No new programs, but to support current NFP who already support the community
- z. They want to know how to take advantage of programs
- aa. Cleaning the bikeways
- bb. More funds for schools, especially those with special needs families
- cc. More programs or invest in current programs
- dd. Stickers for permit parking should be offset
- ee. Strengthen the relationship with the police offers, lots of latinos do not trust police
- ff. Support the latino nonprofits
- gg. Public overview of the budget in spanish with more specific categories and indicate where the funds are going
- hh. Universal basic income \$400, not giving money to large corporations
- ii. Do not bring large corporations but support local businesses give them more contracts
- jj. Crime near schools

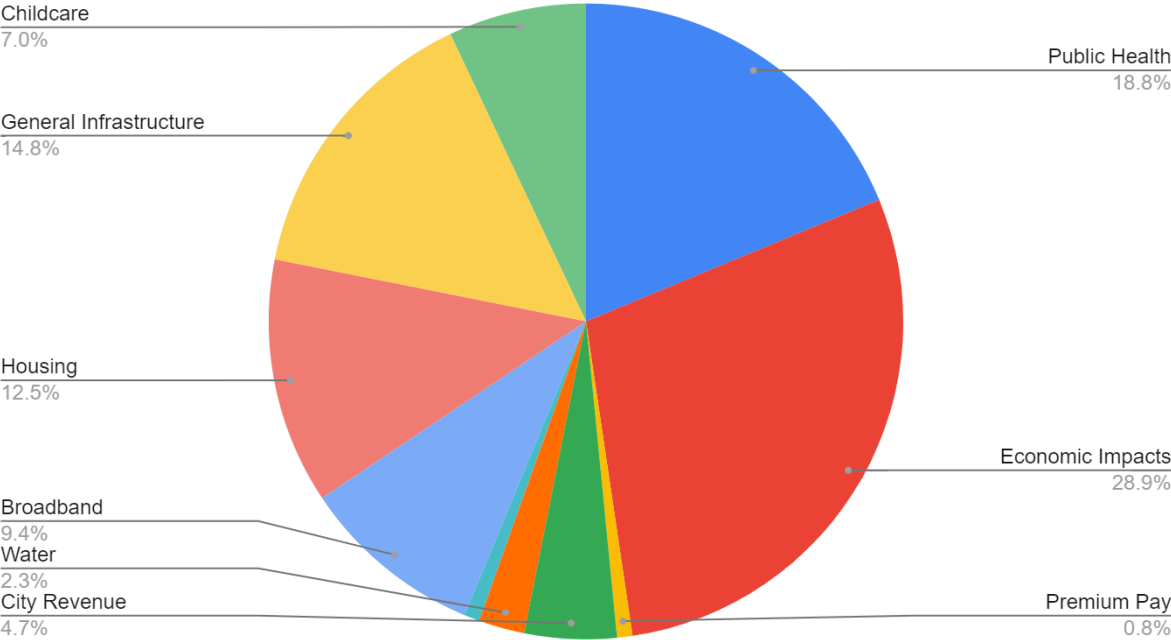
## **12. Involvement --How Would You Like to Be Engaged in this Process?**

- a. Talented and skilled community--wants a committee of community members to be involved in this ARPA process and allocation.
- b. Transparency to show residents its thoughtful and intentional about long term benefit of investments--holding City of Evanston accountable
- c. Thanks for the town hall. Have a website where we can share ARPA ideas to broaden the rest of our thoughts.
- d. Wants friendlier meeting times / dates and continue virtual meeting
- e. Prioritizing money in ways that care for people
- f. Upset about the post COVID-19 plan, did not include input from the community, was not built with them in mind
- g. More people should have a seat at the table for engagement. By the time City Council meets it is too late. Re-design the way comments work, block clubs. Equity--reach out and make sure all voices are heard.
- h. COVID provided new opportunities for engagement, enjoy this layout (town hall / roundtable format) and being able to converse in this forum
- i. Lift up boards and commissions that are already in existence, create surveys to engage.?
- j. This forum (zoom) doesn't reach people who the money will be spent on - not everyone can join the zoom, canvassing can we reach people through canvassing, not just asking for public input but thinking about how to meaningfully engage them in the process, co-designing process of policy; how to hold the city accountable, how do we give back to people for their time
- k. Surveys might be good option for feedback and then coming to a forum to think about thoughts before meeting
- l. Virtual v in person meeting, pleased that the city is reaching out to the hispanic population, would like to see us reach out to all parts of the community more
- m. What can we do to get the youths' opinions and create programs for them and by them? Create a plan to engage youth.
- n. Neighborhood plans over the years:, "west side planning" that incorporated workforce training, we should re-examine that and identify the best places that we can that were in that plan
- o. Lots of committees, boards, commissions in the City - how can we leverage these and ask them to come up with their own priorities and submit them to City staff letting them submit the proposals based on those conversations?
- p. Engage the citizens, even those who are not old enough to vote, connection, resilience and then engagement
- q. Community town halls, more access and information to keep residents connected to the City
- r. If not engaged in communities we are passionate about, then we may not be represented in the decisions - youth, essential workers, business owners, seniors are all important groups to engage
- s. How can we be informed in the process, what measures will be taken?



- t. Would like the process to be more transparent, compliments to Mayor and new City Council for more community impact
- u. Alders: more, community meetings would be helpful ways to engage all Evanstonians who can't get to meetings?
- v. Community members They don't want to put ARPA funds \$ into City departments and not know how it is spent, they--want to understand the budget and want communication
- w. City to cooperate more with nonprofits who are helping in community, do not feel the city is working in collaboration with them
- x. Nonprofits that are supporting latino community should receive resources or funding
- y. Ensure the city is assessing and communicating the needs of the latin x community, what research are you pulling about needs? based
- z. Equity framework should be the plan on review of funds
- aa. Communicate back to the community so they know they were heard about how the ARPA funds will be distributed based upon town hall comments.
- bb. Want city council members to come to the community and be more accessible, not only translation but also cultural appropriateness
- cc. Recommending replicating Cchicago, city officials to do surveys and talk individually with people
- dd. Make the City website more accessible
- ee. Lot of people have been Evanston residents here for a while and have finally heard for the first time they have a voice, excited that the Citywe hosted town halls and in Spanish. are here
- ff. For the city to go into the community and knock on doors is very important this is a small percentage in the room
- gg. Very happy that we are here and promote it so more people attend

# Percentage of Comments Regarding How to Spend ARPA Funds



\*Note: Not everyone made comments and many comments came from groups with only one representative from that group. This chart is a rough estimate of the number of times a category was discussed compared to the total number of people. This is by no means an accurate account of how all community members feel regarding the categories. More information is required for a statistically significant sample size.\*