



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

The City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force

Purpose, Guiding Principles and Structure

Purpose

The purpose of the City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force shall be to provide guidance and make recommendations to the city government as recovery planning efforts get underway in the wake of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This task force will provide critical insights into balancing long- and short-term equitable and impactful deployments of stimulus relief funds in the City of Providence.

The City of Providence recognizes the need for the City to provide recovery services to residents and businesses in the wake of the COVID-19 global health pandemic. Providence is the capital of Rhode Island and the largest city in the state with an estimated population of 179,883. On March 12, 2020, Mayor Elorza declared a State of Emergency in Providence, RI due to the growing concern about the health and safety of residents, businesses, and visitors to contain the spread of COVID-19.

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act into law, a plan that will help the nation begin to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Rescue Plan will help boost vaccination efforts, improve healthcare infrastructure, transition to in-person learning and educational resources, provide financial relief to communities, and support local businesses that have been hit hardest by COVID-19.

Among the \$1.9 trillion worth of federal COVID-19 relief is \$350 billion for “Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds”, of which the City of Providence is scheduled to receive \$165 million. Providence faces severe budget challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic due to substantial revenue losses, costs incurred due to responding to the public health emergency, and the need for services such as emergency medical facilities and vaccination sites, including support for struggling small businesses, and resources for youth, families and essential workers.

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocation will enable the City of Providence to enhance its public health response, invest in capital and broadband infrastructure, supplement costs to provide assistance to families, essential workers, nonprofits and social services organizations,



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

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provide access to development support for the city's small businesses, and put Providence residents back to work to set the foundation for a strong and equitable economic recovery.

Guiding Principles

The City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force will:

- Be advised by our public health leaders and experts;
- Be informed by and responsive to the needs of people directly impacted in Providence;
- Be informed by and responsive to the needs of the small business community directly impacted in Providence;
- Be informed by racial equity and culturally responsive frameworks to address widening disparities caused or intensified by COVID-19;
- Be action-oriented to ensure direction and advice to place Providence on a path to economic recovery and opportunity;
- Move with a sense of urgency demanded by our residents and stakeholders;
- Advance diverse and inclusive public engagement;
- Bolster efficient and equitable city governance;
- Support the implementation of community-driven recommendations.

Structure

The City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force will issue preliminary recommendations within 60 days of the date appointments are made to the task force followed by long-term recommendations within 120 days. This Task Force will be led by a co-chair structure and be composed of 14 members. The function of the City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force should be advisory only, and all matters under their consideration will be determined in accordance with federal, state and local law. It will not be expected to produce any final report written product, but will provide advice and recommendations as well keep the public informed with respect to recommendations. The Task Force will work closely with the selected vendor who will deliver Project Management services on recommendations for economic recovery initiatives that promote equitable growth and development to the local economy, support the development of business, and enhance the quality of life in all neighborhoods across the City of Providence.

There are two critically important and related aspects of the Task Force's work already identified.



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

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First, the City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force will address the issues namely related to addressing immediate issues of housing insecurity and violence and recommend how these needs can quickly be met within 60 days of appointment. The City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force will also work with the vendor selected to provide Recovery Project Management services and partners to mobilize and meet these needs.

The second aspect of the The City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Task Force work will be to support various long-term strategies, namely regarding infrastructure and small business supports to ensure the following:

- Community needs and racial equity are centered in all strategies;
- Investments made as outlined in the COVID-19 Recovery Plan continue to build equitable momentum for ongoing recovery;
- Investments help the city's small businesses recovery and support future development; and,
- Investments are sustainable beyond the projected scope of work and duration of the American Recovery Act.

Both aspects of the City of Providence COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Task Force will require engagement and support in the creation and implementation of a series of community engagement workshops and meetings in partnership with the City of Providence and in collaboration with residents, community-based organizations, local businesses and religious institutions. The information gathered from these events will be solicited, retained and provided to members of the Task Force to inform initial and long-term ideas. Further aspects of need that fall within the scope of the ARPA funds may also be identified and pursued by the Task Force.

The Task Force will meet weekly over the first 60 days following appointments, engaging throughout with community partners, experts, and local businesses, in order to provide our elected leaders with actionable guidance and advice. After the initial recommendations are generated, the Task Force will meet biweekly for the following 60 days to provide more long-term recommendations. The Task Force meetings will be public and open meetings in accordance with Rhode Island General Law. Members of the community will be invited to listen in, but will not actively participate during these meetings. Participation and engagement for community members will be reserved for community engagement meetings, workshops and events.

The Task Force is supported by dedicated City of Providence staff. Diana Perdomo, Chief of Policy for the City of Providence, will support the Task Force in partnership with the Director of PVD Recovery Programs. Both the Chief of Policy and Director of PVD Recovery Programs will



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

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be delegated by City management to the Task Force and will work closely with the Mayor and chairs to support the administration in executing the development, implementation and sustainability of the City of Providence's COVID Recovery Office and efforts.

Onboarding and Orientation

- American Recovery Act Overview Presentation
- City of Providence COVID Initiatives to Date (March 2020-Current)
- The Status of Housing & Homelessness in Providence, RI (March 2020-Current)
- The Status of Youth Opportunity in Providence, RI (March 2020-Current)
- City of Providence Procurement (March 2020-Current)
- Infrastructure Investments to Date (March 2020-Current)
- Racial Equity and Culturally Responsive Frameworks