

American Rescue Plan 2021

How to Use Engagement Tools to Support Your ARPA Fund Allocation

US Treasury Department Urges State and Local Governments to Engage Their Constitutes on Use of ARPA Funds



US Treasury Urges Civic Engagement in COVID Recovery Plans

Source: Department of the Treasury, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Interim Final Rule

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way Local and State Governments informed, engaged and collaborated with their communities, **rapidly shifting their public participation strategies online**. A process that traditionally brings communities together in-person meant that the once “fringe” engagement strategies were implemented to allow communities to come together online through surveys, video town hall discussions, forums and interactive mapping to continue civic engagement and critical communication at a time when community voices needed to be heard the most.

The announcement of the American Rescue Plan Act 2021 allows us to transition from pandemic response and mitigation to a proactive focus on economic and community recovery. With lockdowns, social distancing and working from home still in place, **it is critical that Governments and Community Planners have supporting digital community engagement tools** available to ensure a bottom-up approach is taken when allocating funds.

What is the American Rescue Plan Act 2021?

The American Rescue Plan (ARP), signed into law on March 11, 2021, provides \$350 billion in federal aid to cities and counties to drive economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.



The U.S Treasury Department will administer the stimulus package in two separate allocations in 2021 and 2022, which cities must use by December 31, 2024. Local, State, and Tribal Governments will receive their first funds (deposited in two tranches) between May-June 2021, with the second balance delivered 12 months later.

The US Treasury Department has urged State, Territorial, Tribal, and Local Governments to **engage their constituents and communities in developing plans to use their American Rescue Plan Funds**, given the scale of funding and its potential to catalyze broader economic recovery and rebuilding.

The American Rescue Plan Act also notes that Governments need to **submit a tangible report to justify the use of their recovery funds**. Online platforms such as Social Pinpoint provide accessible, organized and verified data that highlights your bottom-up civic engagement strategy, outcomes and supporting decision making.

What can ARPA funds be used for?

The American Rescue Plan funds are to be used by State, Territories, and Tribal governments to carry out mandatory critical capital projects that directly enable work, education, and new infrastructure to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to US Treasury Interim Final Rule:
“Within the eligible use categories outlined in the Fiscal Recovery Funds provisions of ARPA, State, local, and Tribal governments have flexibility to determine how best to use payments from the Fiscal Recovery Funds to meet the needs of their communities and populations”.



Reach a wider, diverse audience group

Social Pinpoint allows you can allocate your funds most equitably by hearing the collective voices of diverse audiences, eliminating traditional engagement barriers surrounding language, geography, and accessibility. With a multitude of communication and participation tools built into Social Pinpoint, Governments can reach communities in real-time with post-pandemic recovery information, gather community feedback and facilitate online discussions on how other members of the community would like to see funds allocated.

According to Pew Research, in 2008, only 24% of Americans attended at least one town, local, or school meeting in 12 months. **Social Pinpoint clients have reported 3x the participation and engagement on community projects through digital tools**, compared to traditional engagement methods.

Build through a bottom-up approach

Social Pinpoint is trusted by Governments globally and is used to support bottom-up civic engagement strategies throughout the development of large infrastructure projects in Transit, Water, Sewer, and Broadband. By gaining comprehensive public input and understanding at the start of a project, you avoid time delays and cost increases further down the line. With the American Rescue Plan funds representing the largest positive fiscal jolt to Government budgets in decades, you will want to keep your project on time and within budget to effectively support the community.

How to build your ARPA funding strategy using Social Pinpoint



1. Applying for and reporting on ARPA funds

When applying for and reporting on the use of your American Rescue Plan funds, you will need to **show how your decision-making was driven through a best practice civic engagement strategy**. Using Social Pinpoint, you are able to reach a wide, diverse audience group and report on your engagement strategy in a clear and logical format that highlights themes, topics and concerns.

2. Utilize a suite of Social Pinpoint tools to drive desired outcomes

Social Pinpoint has a suite of digital tools and resources to suit your desired project outcomes including Surveys, Forums, Interactive Mapping, Ideation Tools, Participatory Budgeting, Landing Pages, and Stakeholder Management.

3. Start your project design and bring it to life

Social Pinpoint's Customer Success Team will work with you to build and design your engagement site to suit your objectives. All Social Pinpoint projects are able to be customized in your organizational brand including colors, fonts and logos. As a self-service platform, **our tools are user-friendly and easy to set up in a matter of minutes**. During your onboarding process, we will provide you with various insights to help optimize your engagement platform to get the best possible results.

4. Gather insightful community feedback

Reaching and engaging communities with traditional engagement methods in the COVID-19 pandemic has proven challenging as we adhere to remote working conditions and social distancing. With digital methods, you can safely reach people from anywhere on any device. Social Pinpoint has worked alongside clients globally to provide **best practice methods to increase digital traffic and participation rates** on project sites.



5. Pull intuitive real-time reports

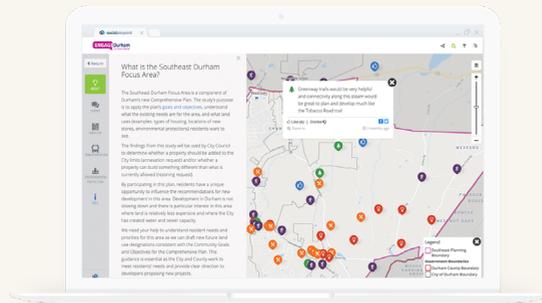
You will need to showcase your civic engagement strategy and how this underpinned informed decision-making. Social Pinpoint's intuitive reporting has **automatic sentiment and key phrase analysis** to identify top themes/topics and 'hot spot' identifiers to help you get in front of issues sooner. Social Pinpoint's reports can be produced in PDF graphs, word clouds, bar and pie charts.

6. Make informed decisions

With traditional in-person community engagement efforts, the same group of stakeholders participate every time. While their feedback is valuable and important, online community engagement provides the opportunity to connect with and hear from a much larger segment of the community. Using digital tools in your civic engagement strategy, you **engage with multiple communities** and better represent how traditionally underrepresented communities would like to see the COVID-19 recovery funds utilized.



Clients that used digital tools to build hybrid engagement strategies during COVID-19:



City of Durham • North Carolina

In 2020, over **ONE THOUSAND** residents participated in the **ENGAGEDurham** project. Durham City Council worked with residents to better guide new development and direct how government investments in infrastructure and services are spent.

A Social Pinpoint Online Engagement Website hosted rich information for the community. Residents could utilize the Interactive Map to plot their area priorities, help shape the Durham of their Dreams with a Digital Ideas Wall or learn more about the Community Goals and Objectives.



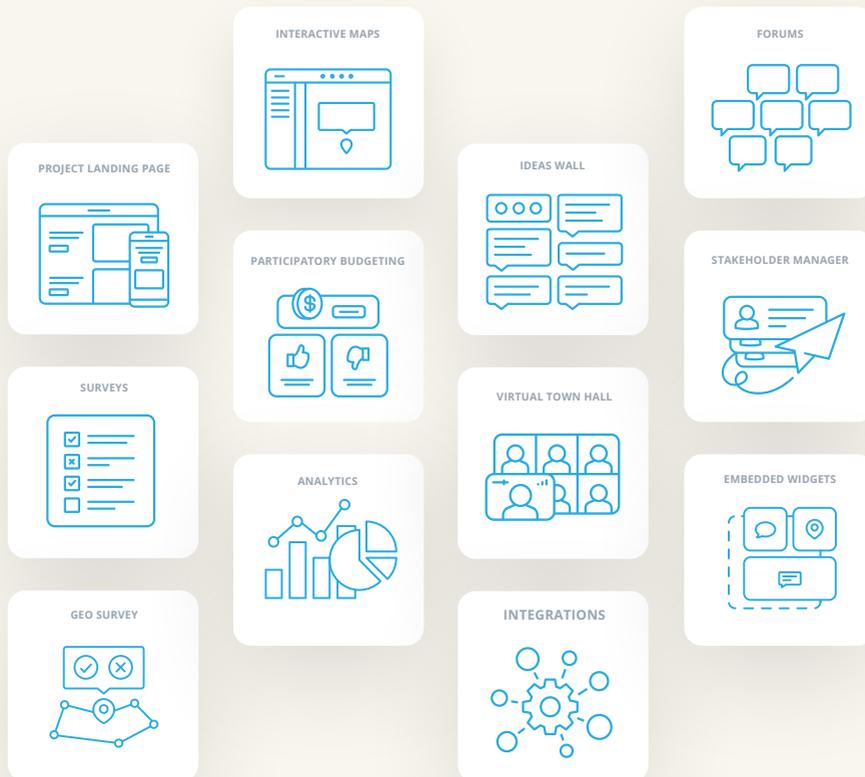
Denton County • Texas

Denton County Transportation Authority is requesting public input for a proposed GoZone on-demand rideshare service that will replace most of the existing fixed route Connect Bus service and on-demand zones.

Residents can view the full proposed GoZone service plan, learn how the service works, participate in online forums, provide open-ended feedback, receive responses from DCTA staff, and more via their Social Pinpoint site. This site hosts a one-stop-shop for all information regarding the proposed GoZone service.

About Social Pinpoint

Trusted by Government globally, Social Pinpoint is an all-in-one digital community engagement platform that enables greater reach, diverse participation, and collaboration to drive informed decision making. Our suite of customizable tools and features allows you to reach your audience anywhere at any time and collect rich community engagement data.



Social Pinpoint's ARPA Funds Package for USA Governments

Social Pinpoint has tiered packages to suit your ARPA project which includes:

- **1-Hour Free Strategy & Consultation Session** with our Product Specialist to determine your project needs and objectives.
- **Full Access to our Community Engagement Platform** with packaged supporting tools based on your needs, including Community Surveys, Participatory Budgeting, Ideas Walls and Interactive Maps where the community can drop ideas, thoughts and suggestions in real-time.
- **Unlimited Reports** with supporting automatic sentiment, key phrase analysis, top theme and hot spot identifiers to support your ARPA reporting which can be produced in PDF graphs, word clouds, bar and pie charts.
- **Free Professional Services** to design, set up and deploy your civic engagement project.
- **Marketing Services** to gain greater visibility, reach and engagement on your ARPA project.

Please get in contact with our US team directly:

info@socialpinpoint.com or 1-800-469-0127 (North America)

How to get started with Social Pinpoint

To support civic engagement in the planning and allocation of American Rescue Plan funds for Local and State Governments, Social Pinpoint is offering a **free strategy session** to guide your understanding, planning and execution of digital civic engagement strategies

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