

WILL: Urges Milwaukee to allocate ARPA funds to education, infrastructure, and public safety

Posted on Friday, Jul 29, 2022

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The News: The City of Milwaukee has a historic opportunity to prioritize the allocation of hundreds of millions of federal COVID-relief funds, and it is worth investigating the city's current and potential plans for the funds. The current leadership in Milwaukee is hoping to use the funds to shore up a teetering pension system, address lead abatement, and upgrade street lighting. A Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty's (WILL) policy brief, [ARPA Spending in Milwaukee](#), urges the city leaders to prioritize the remaining funds to education, infrastructure, and public safety.

The Quote: Noah Diekemper, WILL Senior Research Analyst, said "It is the responsibility of the City of Milwaukee to spend this windfall prudently. It's no secret that Milwaukee struggles to address crime, equip students for learning, and keep roads free of potholes. These are core government services."



POLICY BRIEF

ARPA Spending in Milwaukee

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WISCONSIN INSTITUTE
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What is ARPA?: In 2021, Congress authorized \$1.9 trillion in COVID-relief funds to states and cities across the country. Wisconsin received \$5.7 trillion; and the City of Milwaukee is slated to receive roughly \$394 million, divided equally and disbursed in 2021 (which has already been spent) and 2022 (which is not completely allocated yet). While Milwaukee has already decided how to allocate about 75% of their overall ARPA funding, that leaves roughly \$100 million yet to be allocated; meaning, the City Council and Mayor still have some decisions to make.

[ARPA Spending in Milwaukee](#) by Noah Diekemper, WILL Senior Research Analyst, identifies where the City of Milwaukee could prioritize the funds:

- Education: The City of Milwaukee's proficiency scores decreased during the pandemic. Milwaukee can spend ARPA money to fund summer school programs to make up for proficiency lost during remote learning and to expand broadband in the city to ensure that poorer children have the ability to do their homework.
- Roads: Only 43% of the City's roads are in "good" condition. Milwaukee has the opportunity to work through its backlog of poor-quality roads and make smart purchases for pothole filling while also reconstructing roads that incentivize the alarming issue of reckless driving.
- Crime: The City of Milwaukee has been rated as the 6th worst city in America due to its violent crime and is the worst city for motor vehicle thefts. Milwaukee can help stem the spiking crime problem by funding the court system and offering signing bonuses to increase the ranks of police officers.