Office of Recovery Newsletter | January 28, 2022

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This week's edition of the Office of Recovery newsletter features an article that details the release of the Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Executive Committee Investment Idea Submission Form. Using this form, Kansans can can submit investment ideas for the allocation of State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) allocated to Kansas through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to be considered by the four SPARK Advisory Panels.

Also included is an article highlighting the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). This program is an FCC benefit program that helps ensure households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare and more.

For the latest information about resources available to Kansans, see the "Updates to Services and Support" section of this newsletter. For the most up-to-date information, please visit the Office of Recovery website at: COVID.ks.gov

SPARK Updates

SPARK Executive Committee Releases Investment Idea Submission Form

The Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Executive Committee is inviting Kansans to share their investment ideas for the allocation of State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) allocated to the Kansas through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of March 2021.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Kansans to make their voice heard as we rebuild our economy and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. The SPARK Executive Committee oversees the development of recommendations for the distribution of ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF), assisted by the four SPARK Advisory Panels: Health & Education, Economic Revitalization, Connectivity,

and Efficiency & Modernization. The SPARK Executive Committee then presents recommendations to the State Finance Council for the distribution of the SFRF allocated to the State of Kansas.

SPARK has launched an online submission form for proposing investment ideas, **which can be accessed** [here](). Currently, SPARK is requesting proposals for program level investments rather than specific project proposals. The four Advisory Panels may consider these submissions as part of the process to determine investment priorities and make recommendations to the SPARK Executive Committee. Advisory Panels will begin meeting in the coming weeks.

In making decisions, SPARK will adhere to the following guiding principles:

1. Prioritize sustainable programs & investments through one-time use of funds vs. substantial expansion of existing services

2. Combine with / leverage local and agency funds to maximize use of discretionary funds

3. Foster long-term systemic impact for Kansans

4. Consider equitable opportunities and outcomes

5. Enable flexibility within investment strategies

6. Ensure results are measurable to enable tracking & transparency

Interested parties are instructed to complete the submission form in its entirety. The submission period will close on February 16, 2022.

Once submitted, investment ideas will be available for review by Advisory Panel members. By submitting an investment idea, interested parties acknowledge that SPARK staff may follow up with them for additional details. Please note that submission does not guarantee assignment to or further consideration by an Advisory Panel and that additional information will not be reviewed unless it is requested.

Interested parties are also encouraged to familiarize themselves on allowable uses of SFRF. An overview of the Treasury Department's Final Rule summarizing eligibility provisions for using SFRF can be found at [this link]() while the entire Final Rule can be found at [this link](). Please note that not all investment ideas will fit within the allowable uses of SFRF.

An FAQ document on the submission form is [available here](). If there are any questions on completing the submission form, please contact [SPARKtaskforce@ks.gov]().

Program Spotlight

New Broadband Program Offers Internet Assistance to Low-Income Families

The Emergency Broadband Benefit, a federal program that helped almost 9 million low-income Americans afford internet service in 2021, ended on December 31. The Kansas Corporation Commission wants Kansans to know that a new $14.2 billion federal program, the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), is available to fill the gap.

The Affordable Connectivity Program can help low-income families and individuals stay connected so they can access healthcare, find jobs, attend classes, stay in touch with family, and call for help in an emergency. Current Emergency Broadband Benefit participants have until March 1 to contact their internet provider and switch over to the new plan with no interruption of service.

The ACP program provides:

- A monthly service discount of up to $30 per month for broadband.

- Up to $75 per month discount for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

- A one-time discount of up to $100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider if the household contributes more than $10 but less than $50 toward the purchase price.

Eligibility is determined based on income or participation in certain assistance programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Federal Public Housing Assistance (FHPA), Medicaid, SSI, Lifeline, free or reduced school lunches or receipt of a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year.

To qualify based on income, participants must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. That is a higher ceiling than the 135% maximum allowed on the Emergency Broadband Program making the program accessible to more families. For example, the maximum income for a family of four on the ACP program is $53,000 per year, compared to a maximum of $35,775 on the Emergency Broadband Program.

More information on the ACP program, including provider listings and applications are available on the KCC's website: [ACP Program](#).

Updates to Services and Support

Office of Recovery Q&A Sessions

Join us on Wednesday, February 9, at 11 a.m. for an opportunity to ask the Office of Recovery questions about applying for funds, guidance from Treasury, upcoming

deadlines, and other topics. These Q&A sessions are also an opportunity for local governments to share what they are doing and learn from one another.

You can join the session by registering here: Register for Q&A Session

Bloomberg COVID-19 Federal Assistance Question Form

Bloomberg Cities Network has created the COVID-19 Federal Assistance e311 to help local governments identify, obtain, and retain federal funding for COVID recovery and response efforts. To use this resource, visit the website and click on the "I want to ask a question" tab. This will give you an option to have an individual conversation with a subject matter expert who can answer your questions. You can also visit the COVID-19 Federal Assistance e311 Knowledge Base which contains all questions and answers that have been already addressed by the Bloomberg subject matter experts to review what questions other local governments have.

Contact the RO

The Office of Recovery is here to offer support and coordination. Questions and inquiries may be submitted via the Contact Us form. Please visit covid.ks.gov for up-to-date information and resources on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic for Kansas residents, businesses, and communities.

Question/Request Form

DeAngela Burns-Wallace, Ed.D.

Secretary, Kansas Department of Administration

On behalf of the Office of Recovery,

Kansas Governor Laura Kelly

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