



COVID-19

April 2024

To: County Judge Hidalgo  
Commissioners Ellis, Garcia, Ramsey, and Briones

From: Romeo Solis, Director, ARPA Portfolio Management Office  
Emily Myers, Manager, ARPA Portfolio Management Office

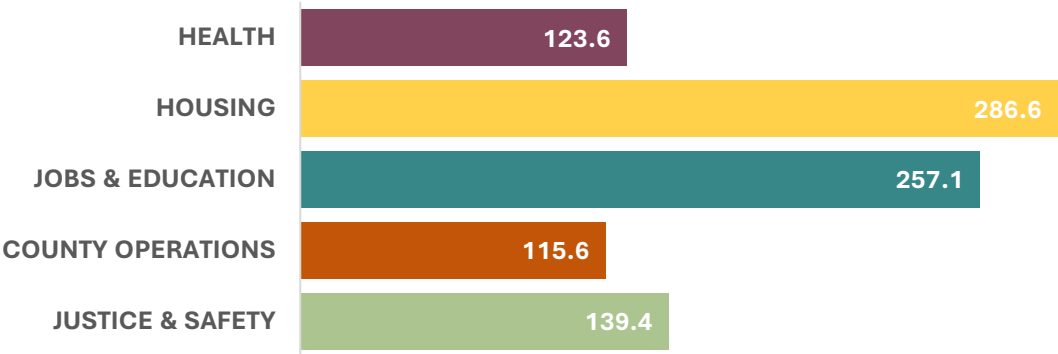
Re: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Monthly Report

Since our last report, Commissioners Court has approved \$48.4 million of investments and agreements across the ARPA Portfolio. These include the following:

Health	<b>Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement:</b> Approved contract renewals with various vendors to continue mowing and abatement services. <b>Food &amp; Nutrition:</b> Approved an amendment with Urban Harvest to decrease awarded funds by \$0.3 million.
HOUSING	<b>Affordable Housing:</b> An investment of \$39.8 million approved to fund six Multi-Family Development projects.
JOBS & EDUCATION	<b>Early Childhood (ECI):</b> \$3.8 million approved for the interlocal agreement and implementation of the Responsive Intervention Supports & Engagement (RISE) Program. <b>Financial Stability:</b> \$0.4 million approved for additional funds to the Immigration and Naturalization Services Fund to support additional services by vendors.
Justice & Safety	<b>Institute of Forensic Sciences (IFS):</b> Approval of a contract agreement with Forensic Radiology Group LLC.

A total of **\$922.4** million has been allocated to date toward pandemic recovery programs in the ARPA and FLEX portfolios.

ARPA INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO (\$M)



GOVERNANCE, COMPLIANCE, AND PLANNING

The ARPA Portfolio Management Office continues to engage working groups, the ARPA Steering Committee, and County departments in the standup, management, monitoring, and closeout of projects across 19 focus areas:

HEALTH	HOUSING	JOBS & EDUCATION	COUNTY OPERATIONS
Behavioral Health	Affordable Housing	Early Childhood	Elections
COVID-19	Homelessness	Family Financial Stability	Justice & Safety
Coordinated Care	Infrastructure	Small Business Support	Violence Prevention
Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	Re-entry / Re-integration Housing	Workforce Development	
Environmental Health: Lead			
Food & Nutrition			
Harris Health			
Healthcare Access & Coverage			

## NEW INVESTMENTS & AGREEMENTS

### HEALTH

#### **Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement: Vendor Renewal**

The Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement program is focused on the abatement of unsafe structures of properties in Harris County neighborhoods that pose a health and safety risk to area residents, including children. Commissioners Court approved a renewal option with Landscape Consultants of Texas, DL Glover Clearing, LLC, and Houston Spraying & Supply, Inc. for abatement services in various locations for Public Health Services at a cost of \$510,033.

### Food & Nutrition

The Food & Nutrition program aims to address food insecurity and strengthen our food and nutrition infrastructure. Commissioners Court approved an amendment to an agreement with Urban Harvest, Inc. to decrease funds by \$358,198.

### HOUSING

#### **Affordable Housing: Multi-Family Development**

The Multi-Family Development program provides funds for acquisition, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and new construction of affordable multi-family housing projects in Harris County. Commissioners Court approved to conditionally award up to \$3.1 million for the Lost Oaks project, \$4.2 million for the Mason Place Apartments project, \$9.9 million for the Meridian on Cullen project, \$9.0 million for the New Hope Housing Avenue C project, \$7.4 million for the Upland project, and \$6.1 million for the Tidwell Apartments project.

Additionally, Commissioners Court approved an interlocal agreement between Harris County Housing and Community Development and the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation (HCHFC), to conditionally award up to \$54.7 million to the HCHFC in existing project allocations as approved.

Lastly, Commissioners Court approved to conditionally award up to \$7.3 million for the Yellow Cab project.

### JOBS & EDUCATION

#### **Early Childhood Initiatives (ECI): Responsive Intervention Supports & Engagement (RISE) Program**

Commissioners Court approved an interlocal agreement with The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD in the amount of \$338 million to administer the Responsive Intervention Supports & Engagement (RISE) Program. The program seeks to directly mitigate access to care barriers through expanded Early Childhood interventions and resources including informational resources, helpline supports, expanded eligibility, peer-to-peer support for families of children with disabilities, and evidence-based intervention for children with autism. RISE is a 24-month program with an April 2026 end date.

#### **Early Childhood Initiatives (ECI): CASE for Kids Summer Program Fund Increase**

Commissioners Court approved a cost-neutral budget amendment to Harris County Department of Education's interlocal agreement to update the program budget, shifting more funds into the CASE for Kids summer programming grants line item, for the implementation and administration of the County Connections Youth Summer Programs Initiative.

#### **Early Childhood Initiatives (ECI): Kids Meals Inc. Agreement Extension**

Commissioners Court approved a six-month contract extension to expand Kids Meals Inc.'s healthy meal delivery program to children and families in Harris County. The organization aims to end generational poverty by providing children with meals until they reach kindergarten thus negating low school engagement, substandard academic development, and poor emotional and physical health. The total contract amount did not increase.

#### **Early Childhood Initiatives (ECI): UpWords Agreement Amendment**

Commissioners Court approved an amendment to Texas Children's Hospital agreement, for the UpWords program, to update the Federal Award Identification table for programs or interventions to be funded by the Early Childhood Impact Fund to improve early childhood health and development outcomes, reduce disparities, and generate evidence to better meet the needs of young children and their families for Harris County, with no increase in the total contract amount.

#### **Disparity Studies: Agreement Amendment**

Commissioners Court approved an amendment to the contract term of the joint interlocal agreement with Alief Independent School District, Aldine Independent School District, and Spring Independent School District to conduct a localized disparity study regarding the utilization of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBES). The no-cost amendment requires the completion of the study within 24 months (by August 2025).

#### **Immigration & Naturalization Services: Agreement Amendment**

Commissioners Court approved an additional \$420,000 for additional services for the Immigration & Naturalization Services Fund. Three vendors (BakerRipley, Galveston-Houston Immigration Representation Project and Justice for All Immigrants) each received an additional \$120,000 through executed contract amendments.

### **JUSTICE & SAFETY**

#### **Court Backlog IFS**

Commissioners Court approved an agreement with Forensic Radiology Group to enhance pathology and autopsy assessments with the Institute of Forensic Sciences (IFS). IFS facilitates decedent transport and pathology through collaboration with board certified forensic radiologists.

## ACTIVE PROJECTS

### HEALTH PORTFOLIO

#### ACCESS Harris

ACCESS Harris is a transformational technology investment, bringing together County safety net departments with the purpose of coordinating care for vulnerable populations through shared data, goals, and strategies. The goal of this initiative is to provide integrated service delivery through a no-wrong-door approach for individuals in need of services across the County systems and community-based programs.

##### Key Updates

- Enrolled 1,040 participants across all five cohorts
- Expanded IBM statement of work to increase agreement by \$6.7 million to enable solutions

#### Behavioral Health (BH)

Harris County seeks to enhance BH educational tracks and develop a pipeline to increase the number of culturally and linguistically competent BH providers. This program also seeks to expand services in socially vulnerable neighborhoods for youth, and supports overdose prevention initiatives and access to treatment.

##### Key Updates

- 11 programs underway to expand access to BH services, including counseling services for youth and families, treatment for substance use, and growing the BH workforce

#### Chronic Disease Prevention (CDP)

The CDP program intends to reduce the prevalence and impact of chronic disease-causing risk behaviors by offering clinical services and community education in Nutrition and Physical Activity, Tobacco/Vaping Prevention and Cessation, Diabetes Prevention, and Hypertension Prevention and Education.

##### Key Updates

- 5,642 participants have received at least one chronic disease prevention program service

#### Clean Streets, Safe Neighborhoods

The Clean Streets, Safe Neighborhoods program aims to reduce violent crime through the installation of sidewalks, streetlights, and green spaces. Project locations are selected through community engagement and a data-driven approach to identifying neighborhoods with the greatest need.

##### Key Updates

- Sunnyside SPARK Park was completed in May 2023 and included investments in ¼ mi concrete path, new playground equipment, fencing, and art installations.
- Investments of \$2 million per neighborhood will improve or install sidewalks, streetlights, and green spaces across 11 neighborhoods: Alief, Barrett, Cloverleaf, Cypress Station, East Aldine, Gulfton, Highlands, North Shore, Sharpstown, South Houston, and Sunnyside
- Commissioners Court approved a \$3 million investment in Civic Art across the 11 neighborhoods

#### Food and Nutrition

Transformative programs aim to address food insecurity and strengthen our food and nutrition infrastructure. These programs will foster partnerships across entities, grow produce availability, and increase presence in food deserts.

##### Key Updates

- Common Market: 28,020 Households served to-date
- Houston Food Bank: 14,448 Households served to-date
- Small Places: 374 Households served to-date

### **Harris Health Food Rx**

Harris Health's Food Rx program addresses health-related social needs, like food insecurity, poor nutritional knowledge, and lack of access to culinary education that are prevalent in vulnerable populations and are tied to poor health outcomes.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved a \$0.5 million allocation to Harris Health to support expansion of the Food Rx program

### **Harris Health GI Lab**

The GI Lab at Quentin Mease Health Center will create additional capacity for colonoscopy procedures with the goal to reduce the number of colorectal cancer diagnoses through prevention and to reduce the severity of colorectal cancer diagnoses provided to patients.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved a \$9.0 million allocation to Harris Health to support expansion and funding for the Quentin Mease GI Lab

### **Healthy Minds, Healthy Communities**

The Harris Center aims to empower community members with tools and training to support each other's emotional health, strengthening community behavioral health, emotional wellness, and resiliency.

#### **Key Updates**

- 5,455 participants engaged at 83 outreach and community events
- 5,966 participants trained at 160 HMHC trainings
- 853 participants at 44 events hosted by HMHC
- 27,708 unique digital engagements to date to discuss behavioral health challenges and resources
- In progress of onboarding COVID support group facilitators (Vietnamese, English, Spanish)

### **Lead Abatement & Prevention**

The Lead Abatement & Prevention program aims to protect children from lead poisoning and exposure in schools, childcare facilities, and homes. Blood and facility lead-level testing, along with acceleration of lead abatement of homes and child-occupied facilities in vulnerable communities, aims to improve health outcomes, enhance quality of life, and increase awareness of lead concerns.

#### **Key Updates**

- Completed lead risk assessments and inspections at 168 residential homes and completed lead abatement of 81 homes to date
- 2,849 children and 900 pregnant women tested to date; 122 children and 74 pregnant women were identified as having high lead levels and follow-up support is underway
- 37,383 educational materials have been distributed at 603 outreach events to date
- Commissioners Court recently approved an award to Ryan Diagnostics of Florida, Inc. for the amount of \$123.2k for lead testing kits, accessories, and related items for Public Health Services

### **Maternal & Child Health**

Expansion and resource navigation of social and health benefits for new and expecting families through a systematic approach of care coordination, prenatal care, post-partum care, and infant-early child development. The program will provide the social support needs of black mothers and babies diminished during the pandemic.

#### **Key Updates**

- 157 participants enrolled in the program to date with 111 home visits completed
- The program started performing home visits on May 22, 2023
- Commissioners Court recently approved five positions to provide direct assistance to pregnant mothers and infants at risk for severe health complications by increasing enrollment into available health coverage options, increasing the number of prenatal and well child visits, and increasing the number of home visits for health education and access to care

#### **Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement**

The program focused on the abatement of unsafe structures in Harris County neighborhoods that pose a health and safety risk to area residents including children. It is a public health response to violence in impacted communities that experienced pandemic-driven increases in rates of criminal activity. Orders to abate at 123 locations have been approved by Commissioners Court to date.

#### **Key Updates**

- 371 violations have been abated to date, including securing 5 abandoned pools, demolishing, or securing 49 unsafe residential structures, and 309 removals of refuse, rubbish, or weeds.
- Award approval for nuisance abatement refuse removal services to Pollution Control Inc.
- Commissioners Court approved orders to abate public nuisances at 12 additional locations, increasing the total number of approved locations to 169

### **HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

#### **Affordable Housing**

The Affordable Housing program aims to create multi-family and single-family affordable housing, as well as providing repair and preservation of multi-family and single-family units.

#### **Key Updates**

- To date the Multi-Family Development program has closed on four (4) properties: Kingsland Park (Pct 4), New Hope Housing Ennis (Pct 1), Hartwood at Shadow Springs (Pct 4), and Palladium Houston Ella (Pct 1)
- On February 8, 2024 there was a Multi-Family Development Groundbreaking for the New Hope Housing Ennis project located in Precinct 1. The project has an ARPA allocation of \$9,000,000 and will provide a total of 102 affordable units.
- Construction has begun on the Palladium Houston Ella project (Pct 1).
- To date the Single-Family Acquisition program has acquired twenty-two (22) houses: Seven (7) houses (Pct 1), Twelve (12) houses (Pct. 2), Three (3) houses (Pct 4)
- To date the Single-Family Acquisition program has sold Two (2) inventory houses and have closed on Five (5) homebuyer driven properties.

### **COVID Community Housing Project (CCHP)**

CCHP seeks to permanently house people who are currently experiencing homelessness (e.g., living in shelters, encampments, or on the streets) as well as those who may fall into homelessness because of the economic effects of the pandemic. This program is administered by the Coalition for the Homeless (CFTH), which serves as the leader of the homeless response system for Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery Counties. The American Institute for Research will assess the impact of homelessness services provided as part of CCHP to understand how effective and equitable the program is and identify gaps in services and potential improvements. The evaluator will also help identify, source, and evaluate data to better understand the County's reentry population and manage local data related to those at risk of recidivating to jail or prison.

#### **Key Updates**

- To date the program has provided permanent supportive housing case management to 481 participants, housed 391 participants, provided behavioral health services to 746 participants, provided move-in kits to 1696 participants, provided utility assistance to 659 participants, and provided domestic violence services to 139 participants.

### **HAY Center**

Commissioners Court approved \$9 million in funding to support the construction and operation of new service and residential buildings to be occupied by eligible youth aging out of foster care. The facilities will include wraparound service provision (training, counseling, etc.)

#### **Key Updates**

- The HAY Center groundbreaking ceremony took place on June 16, 2023
- Construction is currently 68% complete.
- Construction Completion is estimated for July 2024

### **Legal Aid**

Commissioners Court approved a \$4 million allocation to provide eviction defense legal services for low-income residents through targeted awards. Funds will support a network of housing legal service providers and non-profits to meet increased demand.

#### **Key Updates**

- Lone Star Legal Aid and Neighborhood Defender Service are providing legal aid and eviction services to residents and are taking referrals
- Commissioners Court approved agreement amendments for Lone Star Legal Aid and National Defender Service for an additional \$2,000,000 each for additional legal aid and eviction services.
- The program has helped 10,827 participants, provided legal advice to 3,335 participants, and closed 1,068 cases.

### **Re-Entry: Women's Empowerment Center**

The Little Baker facility, now known as the Women's Empowerment Center, has been repurposed to house a maximum capacity of 500 minimum- and medium-security women Harris County Jail inmates. The Re-entry program aims to provide individualized, pre- and post-release programming to inmates and provide capacity support to community partners serving justice-involved populations via an external intermediary organization. Commissioners Court has committed \$4.6 million toward Re-Entry services, primarily funding Public Health case managers under the ACCESS Harris coordinated care program, as well as Harris County Sheriff's Office staff to coordinate with non-profit service providers.

#### **Key Updates:**

- The Women's Empowerment Center celebrated their 1-year anniversary on February 15, 2024



- To date the program has enrolled 275 participants, 166 active participants, and exited 109 participants.
- Commissioners Court approved an MOU with HCSO to support individuals in jail with the goal of better preparing them to reenter the community. ARPA funds will be used to provide desks, exercise equipment, technology, and other solutions to facilitate service provision.
- The Re-Entry program had a soft launch at the Little Baker facility in September 2023.
- The program has connected participants to senior resources, financial assistance, transitional housing, food resources, and more.

### **Water & Wastewater Infrastructure**

The Westfield Estates wastewater infrastructure project will connect over 700 households to the sewer system in an area currently relying primarily on outdated and failing septic systems. The proposed wastewater improvements will significantly improve environmental health and safety within the subdivision and have the potential to increase development within the area.

#### **Key Updates:**

- Commissioners Court approved \$32 million to Harris County Engineering Department for the Westfield Estates Sanitary Sewer System construction project, which will include program management, professional services, property acquisition, construction, construction materials testing, and HCED in-house labor.

### **Community Facilities and Infrastructure Investments**

The program seeks to increase the operational capacity of nonprofit organizations and local government programs by funding community facilities, infrastructure investments and public services. The program intends to reduce the number of residents experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, or food insecurity. They will also expand access to behavioral health supports and healthcare. Lastly, the program will aim to reduce violent crime including domestic violence and sexual abuse.

#### **Key Updates:**

- Commissioners Court approved the Community Facilities & Infrastructure Investments guidelines and allocated \$20 million dollars to the project.
- The RFP for this program closed on March 22, 2024 and applications are currently being evaluated.

## **JOBS & EDUCATION PORTFOLIO**

### **Apprenticeship**

The Apprenticeship Advantage program aims to expand and create opportunities in traditional and high-growth emerging industries within Harris County while offering individual coaching and a pipeline to open employment opportunities. It also seeks to provide wraparound support and financial resources to residents experiencing un- and under-employment for successful completion of programs and transition to work.

#### **Key updates**

- Commissioners Court approved a \$9.1 million award to the Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation (TGCALF-CIO), the largest investment in apprenticeship programming in Texas
- A \$1.8 million award to NPower Inc. was approved to fund the Tech Fundamentals program, which will help 175 Harris County residents enroll in technical training and launch a career in tech by providing in-demand industry certifications

### **County Connections Summer Programming**

Interlocal agreement with the Harris County Department of Education for the County Connections Youth Summer Initiative. Now in its second year, the initiative provides summer programming to children ages 5-18 and addresses pandemic-related gaps in enrichment offerings.

#### **Key updates**

- Commissioners Court approved a \$7.1 million interlocal agreement with the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) for the continuation of the program through 2026, serving 7,000 students annually

### **Childcare Subsidy Enrollment Process Analysis**

Commissioners Court approved an interlocal agreement with the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) to conduct a process analysis of HGAC's childcare subsidy enrollment process. The program subsidizes the cost of childcare for eligible families and is the primary method for low-income families to access childcare across Harris County.

### **Child Care Early REACH (Raising Educational Access for Children in Harris County)**

The Early REACH child care capacity program aims to create up to 1,000 new spots through an innovative model of child care subsidy delivery. The child care sector has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels and faces workforce shortages, while parents still struggle to find quality, affordable care for their children, limiting their ability to work. By contracting directly with child care providers, BakerRipley and the United Way will accelerate capacity expansion while improving families' access to child care subsidies.

#### **Key Updates**

- As of 2/29/2024 Early REACH has expanded 797 classroom spaces which exceeds their goal of 800 by June 2024.

### **Early Childhood Impact Fund (ECIF)**

Three investments in early childhood will benefit Harris County children, families, and caregivers:

1. The Texas Children's Hospital upWORDS community-based training supports infant and toddler brain and language development
2. The Safe Babies program from First3Years works with families and children within the child welfare system to minimize the harm of family separation and prior maltreatment
3. The Alliance's Home-based Childcare support program will provide training to home-based childcare providers, including helping unlicensed programs gain certification and increasing the quality of programming, care, and business operations

#### **Key Updates**

- upWORDS: 2,323 professionals trained, 18,509 books distributed, and 318 children graduated from upWORDS
- Safe Babies: 347 child welfare professionals receiving training and 59 children served
- Home-based Childcare: 51 caregivers entered workforce and 158 childcare slots added
- Commissioners Court approved \$2.06M to create six full-time positions to staff two Local Network Organizations supporting Early Learning Quality Networks.
- Commissioners Court approved awards to Children at Risk, East Harris County Empowerment Council, VN Teamwork Inc, and YMCA of Greater Houston.

### **Harris County Tax Assistance**

ARPA temporarily increased the Child Tax Credit (CTC), providing a credit of up to \$3,600 per child under age 6 and \$3,000 per child ages 6 to 17. To help eligible families claim the CTC, the County approved a program for community outreach, non-filer form preparation assistance, and tax preparation assistance. Mobile tax assistance took the program directly into neighborhoods that needed it most. By the end of April 2021, the credit had been claimed for 4,076 children and 8,950 households filed taxes, with a total expected benefit of both the CTC and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) of \$13M.

#### **Key Updates**

- Baker Ripley helped prepare 13,479 tax returns this season, helping families claim \$24,430,333 in total gross refunds
- CTC was claimed for 9,565 children, helping households claim \$10,119,992
- 1,073 individuals obtained an ITIN

#### **Harris Hub**

##### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved awards to BakerRipley, FORWARD, and Roads Consulting Group LLC to provide small business technical assistance and administration of accelerator grants through the Department of Economic Equity and Opportunity

#### **Immigration & Naturalization Legal Services**

The Immigration & Naturalization Legal Services Fund will provide legal representation to indigent detained immigrants and immigrant families facing removal.

##### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court has approved a Legal Aid Assistant position to support the execution of this program.
- Commissioners Court approved awards to BakerRipley, Galveston-Houston Immigrant Representation Project, Justice for All Immigrants, and the Tahirih Justice Center to provide immigration legal services and naturalization support.

#### **Small Business / Disparity Studies**

Lone Star College System District will conduct a localized disparity study regarding the utilization of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBs). The program will encourage the mitigation of racial and gender disparities where they may exist in public procurement practices, decrease barriers often experienced by MWBs in contract procurement, and increase access to economic opportunities. Commissioners Court allocated \$0.5 million to the LSC study and anticipates additional agreements with local independent school districts.

##### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved a joint agreement with Alief ISD, Spring ISD, and Aldine ISD to conduct a disparity study regarding the utilization of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBs)

#### **Uplift Guaranteed Income Pilot**

The COVID-19 pandemic, along with high inflation rates, exacerbated the financial challenges low-income families face throughout Harris County. The Uplift Guaranteed Income Pilot will provide guaranteed, continuous, unconditional financial assistance to qualified households for an eighteen-month period.

#### **Key Updates**

- Uplift received 51,166 eligible applications out of 82,564 applications in total
- Commissioners Court approved conducting a comprehensive evaluation for the Uplift Harris Guaranteed Income Pilot program
- Commissioners Court approved an award to GiveDirectly Inc. for program administration of Uplift Harris to design and implement the Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot

### **Workforce**

The Hire Up Harris program will implement funding for high-quality job training programs that offer residents technical or sectoral-based training, licenses, degrees, or other industry-recognized qualifications, coupled with career success training, a concrete pipeline to employment, and wraparound services support.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved \$9.1 million in awards to Volunteers of America and Wesley Community Center; both programs are currently taking applications

## **COUNTY OPERATIONS PORTFOLIO**

### **ARPA Administration**

The ARPA Portfolio Management Office (PMO) ensures the 60+ programs in the Harris County ARPA portfolio deliver target outcomes and fully comply with US Treasury regulations.

#### **Key Updates**

- Three new program management positions onboarded with OCA

### **Data Fellows**

The Data Fellows Program will work to empower Harris County government agencies to improve their services to citizens through data-driven decision-making. The program seeks to attract talented data analysts passionate about using data to create positive impact in their communities. Commissioners Court has approved four Data Fellows and one Program Manager to provide hands-on guidance and technical support.

#### **Key Updates**

- One Program Manager and four Data Fellows onboarded

### **FLEX Fund**

The FLEX Fund was created to allow for faster delivery of priority outcomes by reducing the compliance burden of programs and allowing the use of locally procured vendors. It is funded from a budget made available by transferring eligible expenses to the ARPA fund and freeing up the general fund budget.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved a \$40 million increase to the FLEX Fund, increasing it to \$70 million.

### **Voter Education & Outreach**

Voter education and outreach services related to elections in 2022 and 2023 for branding, marketing, and strategic communication services. The purpose of this program is to execute a paid media campaign

focused on educating voters in Harris County about election basics, including how to operate new voting machines, understand the new process for in-person and/or vote-by-mail

#### **Key Updates**

- 14 million impressions delivered through television, radio, digital, print, and outdoor advertisements in multiple languages for the May 2023 election
- 77 million impressions were delivered for the November 2022 election
- Commissioners Court approved an agreement extension of \$2.5 million to the contract with KGBTexas to continue supporting Harris County's voter education and outreach efforts in the 2024 election cycle.

#### **Human Resources and Risk Management (HRRM): Position Standardization and Pay Equity**

The HRRM Position Standardization and Pay Equity initiative aims to identify pay disparities based on race, ethnicity, and gender and develop a countywide market-based pay structure to standardize compensation incentives and allowances. Commissioners Court approved an allocation of \$2.2 million to the program.

#### **Key Updates**

- HRRM launched an RFP for compensation consultant services
- HRRM has submitted milestones for pre and post vendor selection along with proposed KPIs throughout the program
- HRRM has closed the RFP and is in the process of selecting a vendor for Commissioners Court approval

### **JUSTICE & SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

#### **Children's Assessment Center**

Commissioners Court funding of \$1.5 million was approved for child abuse prevention, evidence preservation, and treatment efforts. This investment will help initiate a digital conversion project to convert 34,500 VHS tapes to a digital format, index videos, and expand community prevention training.

#### **Key Updates**

- 1,840 training sessions conducted (927 adults, 40,515 children across all four precincts)
- 1,276 medical exams performed
- VHS conversion is underway with 14,836 tapes converted to-date and a preliminary estimate of 300 non-convertible tapes through the current contractor.
- CAC provides a safe haven to sexually abused children and their families. It employs a multidisciplinary team approach in the prevention, assessment, investigation, referral for prosecution, treatment, and prevention of child sexual abuse. Commissioners Court approved an award to procure digital colposcopes to American Innovative Equipment LLC+ to assess future cases.

#### **Court Backlog**

Efforts to support the reduction of the court backlog by expanding jury services, increasing staff, establishing emergency response dockets, and accelerating evidence processing. The number of cases in the court backlog is defined as misdemeanors aged over 180 days or felony cases aged over 360 days.

#### **Key Updates**

- Since January 2022, The District Courts have cleared a total of 128,809 cases through March 2024
- Since January 2022, The County Courts have cleared 126,329 cases through March 2024
- The number of misdemeanor cases in the backlog is down ~66.2% from January 2022
- The number of felony cases in backlog status has declined by ~58.7% since January 2022
- Commissioners Court approved two positions supporting the County Civil Courts at Law Eviction Appeal docket. This program will fund a Court Coordinator and an Associate Judge with the goal of reducing the days to disposition for eviction appeal cases and reducing the backlog of cases.
- Commissioners Court approved a transfer of \$725.6k from DAO Triage to support DAO Intake Overtime to shorten wait time for filing charges.

### **Court Backlog – County Jail**

Commissioners Court approved a \$25.7 million agreement with Management & Training Corporation (MTC) to temporarily relocate Harris County Jail inmates to a correctional facility outside of Lubbock, Texas.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved an agreement with Management & Training Corporation (MTC) to continue providing services for outsourcing of Harris County Jail inmates to the Giles Dalby Correctional Facility in Post, TX till October 31, 2023, with no increase in pricing
- Commissioners Court approved a \$28 million allocation to County Jail Capacity for FY 2024
- The Jail Capacity program aims to address the overcapacity of Harris County Jails through outsourcing to maintain a secure workspace for employees and a safe environment for inmates, as well as meet state jail regulations. Commissioners Court approved an amendment to the MTC agreement extending the contract through December 2024 with an allocation of \$24.9 million; ARPA funds will be used for FY 24 expenses only.

### **Detention Officer Retention**

Commissioners Court approved up to \$5.7 million in retention incentives to support detention officers with the goal of reducing attrition associated with challenging conditions.

#### **Key Updates**

- 1,266 new hires onboarded since the program was approved in April of 2023 and currently retaining 1,255 out of original cohort of 1,578

### **Domestic Violence Assistance Fund**

Commissioners Court approved a \$4.7 million agreement with the Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HCDVCC) to administer the Harris County Domestic Violence Assistance Fund. The fund will provide flexible assistance and wraparound services to survivors of domestic violence via grants to qualifying community-based organizations (CBOs) and in collaboration with the High-Risk Team.

#### **Key Updates**

- HCDVCC completed the CBO selection process, identifying 20 participating nonprofits
- Since January 2023 3,960 households have been served through the DVAF
- DVAF released their annual report and the report has been shared with ARPA Steering Committee members

### **Gun Buyback Events**

The Gun Buyback program aims to lower gun violence by reducing the number of unwanted firearms in the community. Gun buyback events will allow gun owners to surrender personal firearms in exchange for gift cards.

#### **Key Updates**

- Harris County and the City of Houston have held four-gun buyback events, collecting over 3,500 guns in exchange for gift cards
- Commissioners Court approved an agreement with the City of Houston to host a drive-through gun buyback event on November 18, 2023, at the METRO Westchase Park & Ride. The Harris County Sheriff's Office will administer the Gun Buyback Event. The City will purchase gift cards to be exchanged for qualifying surrendered firearms at the event. Precinct 4 will provide funding to publicize and staff the event.

### **Institute of Forensic Sciences**

Commissioners Court allocated \$2.3 million to The Institute of Forensic Sciences for staff retention efforts, including paying overtime for personnel and funding pathology and decedent transport contractors.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved an award to Carnes Funeral Home to supplement decedent transport services by providing decedent pickup and transport from hospitals, nursing homes, and certain death scenes within Harris County, upon request by HCIFS, to the Medical Examiner's Office.

### **Jail-Based Competency Restoration (JBCR)**

Commissioners Court approved the expansion of the Harris Center and HCSO's JBCR program, which helps restore people in county jails experiencing severe mental healthcare crises. The program expansion from 20 to 50 patients aims to reduce the number of people in Harris County jail who are on the state hospital waitlist by providing behavioral health services to have speedier access to trials.

### **Pre-Trial Data Analytics**

Commissioners Court approved a Developer and business Intelligence position within Pretrial Services to help improve pretrial outcomes. The purpose of this position is to effectively use data collected for each person processed through the Joint Processing Center to produce pretrial metrics, risk profiles, and/or assess outcomes by charge. This will allow the department to measure progress, communicate patterns, and/or contribute to collaborative solutions with other local criminal justice stakeholders.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved an order authorizing the expenditure of funds to Luminosity in the amount of \$382k to execute this program.

### **TeleDeputy**

Commissioners Court approved a \$1.7 million investment to fund the TeleDeputy Unit to allow deputies to work overtime at the Emergency Dispatch Center and respond to calls for service that do not require an on-scene law enforcement response, ultimately allowing patrol deputies to provide a faster response time to higher-priority calls. One of the goals of the program is to decrease response times for Family Violence calls.

#### **Key Updates**

- The TeleDeputy Unit has responded to 20,954 calls for service & completed 7,959 reports

### **Violent Persons Warrants Task Force**

The Harris County Violent Persons Warrants Task Force is a multi-agency task force led by the Harris County Sheriff's Office in collaboration with Harris County Constables that seeks to address the backlog in outstanding warrants and reduce extradition costs through accelerated execution of warrants related to the most violent offenses.

#### **Key Updates**

- The Violent Persons Warrants Task Force has served 3,223 warrants to date

### **Youth Diversion Center**

The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD will start the Youth Diversion Center to serve youth aged 13-17 engaged with law enforcement to provide a supportive environment and reduce exposure to the juvenile detention system. The center will provide mental health services, substance use treatment, family counseling, training, and other support for an estimated 600 youth annually.

#### **Key Updates**

- The Youth Diversion Center opened in early May and started providing services
- To date, the Youth Diversion Center has served 74 youth with an average length of stay of 19.48 days
- The Youth Diversion Center has successfully discharged 69% of youth back to their homes with a parent/guardian.



## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### HEALTH PORTFOLIO

#### Emergency Nursing

Over 602 nurses, respiratory therapists, and other medical staff were temporarily placed with 18 area hospitals in response to the Delta surge, with an additional 361 placed during the Omicron surge, substantially alleviating staffing shortages and providing critical support to patients. Harris County received a \$47 million reimbursement from FEMA for this program.

#### Vaccine Incentives

The countywide vaccine incentive offer ended at the end of September, after incentivizing more than 30,000 incremental vaccinations above baseline forecasts.

### HOUSING PORTFOLIO

#### Employ2Empower (E2E)

Workforce development program providing employment opportunities to Harris County's unsheltered population. The program provides steady income, wraparound services, and workforce development training, while connecting participants to a pathway to permanent housing solutions.

##### Key Updates

- This program is complete. Overall, the program enrolled 190 participants; 38 secured permanent employment, 45 were connected to healthcare, and 44 were connected to recovery services
- Commissioners Court approved to modify the FY 24 budget for the Employ2Empower program and reduce the Harris County Sheriff Office allocation from \$740k to \$582k.

### JOBS & EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

#### Flexible Financial Assistance

The Harris County Recovery Assistance program administered by Catholic Charities has completed the distribution of funds, with \$60 million in assistance provided to 40,000 families.

#### Small Business Relief

LiftFund completed the distribution of \$30 million in Small Business Relief Fund grants, assisting 2,577 small businesses. Final compliance reviews are currently underway.

## ACTIVE PROJECTS – OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

### HOUSING PORTFOLIO

#### **Rental Assistance via ERA 1 (complete) and ERA 2 (ongoing)**

Harris County's rental assistance program helps vulnerable families remain housed while also supporting landlords with struggling tenants. The Houston-Harris County Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program has been nationally recognized for its effectiveness of fund distribution, accessibility, and outreach.

#### **Key Updates**

- Commissioners Court approved an additional allocation of \$3.2 million of ERA 2 funds to Catholic Charities to assist eligible renter households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- The ERA program is now focused on tenants with an active eviction case
- Harris County has received \$172.1 million of ERA Funds to-date
- \$322 million in assistance has been disbursed to date via over 77,000 awards through the combined Harris County and City of Houston ERA program

## PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

The current portfolio of projects managed via the ARPA governance process follows. A total of **\$922.4 million** has been allocated toward COVID relief from the ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

Fund	Portfolio	Focus Area	Project Group / Display Name	Committed
ARPA 2651	Health	Behavioral Health	Behavioral Health	15.3
			Healthy Minds, Healthy Communities	7.9
		Clean Streets, Safe Neighborhoods	Community Engaged Design	1.5
			Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement	3.0
		Coordinated Care	ACCESS Harris	25.1
		COVID-19	Emergency Nursing	4.6
			Vaccination Incentives	8.0
		Env. Health: Lead	Lead Abatement	19.2
		Food & Nutrition	Food & Nutrition Awards	7.7
		Harris Health	Food Farmacy	0.5
			GI Lab	9.0
		Healthcare Access	Chronic Disease Prevention	6.0
			Health Strategy and Evaluation	2.0
			Maternal and Child Health	7.7
			Reproductive Health Fund	6.0
	Health Total			123.6
	Housing	Affordable Housing	Affordable Housing Admin	3.7
			Eviction Appeal Support	1.1
			Legal Aid & Counseling	8.0
			Multifamily Development	123.0
			Single Family Reconstruction	13.5
			Single Family Rehab	9.2
			Single Family Supply	19.8
		Homelessness	CCHP PSH, RRH, Diversion	35.9
			Employ to Empower	1.2
			HAY Center	9.0
		Infrastructure	Facility & Infrastructure Investment	20.0
			Water and Sewer Infrastructure	37.6
		Reentry / Reintegration	Reentry	4.6
	Housing Total			286.6
	Jobs & Ed	Early Childhood Initiatives	Child Care Workforce Supports	0.4
			County Connections	8.4
			Early Childhood Impact Fund	16.5
			Early Childhood Initiatives Admin	1.9
			Early Learning Quality Networks	16.5
			Early REACH	26.7
			RISE	4.3

		Family Financial Stability	SHINE Facilities	35.4	
			Direct Assistance	65.4	
			Tax Credit Assistance	2.5	
		Small Business	Uplift Guaranteed Income Pilot	19.5	
			Harris Hub Small Business Assistance	6.4	
			Jobs Portfolio Admin	0.6	
		Workforce Development	Small Business Recovery Fund	32.0	
			Apprenticeship Advantage	10.9	
			Hire Up Harris	9.7	
			Jobs & Ed Total		
	County Ops	County Ops	ARPA Administration	23.9	
			Data Fellows	0.6	
			General Fund Support	19.0	
			Position Standardization & Pay Equity	2.2	
		FLEX Fund	FLEX Expenses	70.0	
			County Ops Total		
	Justice & Safety	Justice & Safety	Court Backlog	62.9	
			Detention Officers	5.7	
			Jail Population	53.7	
			Jail-based Competency Restoration	0.6	
			TeleDeputy	1.7	
			Violent Persons Warrants Task Force	6.1	
		Violence Prevention	Youth Diversion	8.6	
			Justice & Safety Total		
		ARPA 2651 Total			

Fund	Portfolio	Focus Area	Project Group / Display Name	Committed
FLEX 1040	Health	Clean Streets, Safe Neighborhoods	Community Engaged Design	25.5
			Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement	0.0
	Health Total			25.5
	Housing	Homelessness	CCHP PSH, RRH, Diversion	0.7
			HAY Center	0.1
	Housing Total			0.7
	Jobs & Ed	Early Childhood Initiatives	Child Care Subsidy Process Improvement	0.2
			Early Childhood Impact Fund	1.2
		Family Financial Stability	Early Learning Quality Networks RAPID-EC Survey	1.0
			Immigration Legal & Naturalization Services	0.7
			1.7	
			1.2	
		Small Business	Uplift Guaranteed Income Pilot Disparity Studies	2.0
			Harris Hub Small Business Assistance	0.6
		Workforce Development	Hire Up Harris	0.4
		Jobs & Ed Total		
	County Ops	County Ops	Voter Outreach and Education	5.0
	County Ops Total			5.0
	Justice & Safety	Justice & Safety	Court Backlog	1.1
			Domestic Violence Assistance Fund	4.7
		Violence Prevention	Gun Buybacks	0.5
			Youth Diversion	0.4
	Justice & Safety Total			6.8
	FLEX 1040 Total			