



Berks County American Rescue Plan (ARP) FAQs for Grant Application

1) When is the application deadline?

Applications were accepted until **March 31, 2022**. Any applications received after this date and time will NOT be considered.

2) Is there a limit to how much funding can be requested?

The maximum amount that an applicant could apply for is the **lesser of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) or 25% of total project cost**. The County reserves the right to award a lesser amount based on the demonstrated need and availability of resources.

3) Can you further clarify the awarding amount?

The award amount is **25% of the total cost with a \$1 million maximum**. So, if 25% of the total cost is more than \$1 million, the awarding amount would max out at \$1 million. At least 75% of the total cost of the project will be the responsibility of the applicant to fund.

4) How do I know if I am eligible to receive funding?

The ARP application guidelines were posted at www.countyofberks.com/ARP and listed the eligible applicant criteria.

5) How do I know if my project qualifies for funding?

The review criteria for each project was included in the ARP application guidelines. See FAQ #8 for more information.

6) How do I access the grant application?

The grant application was available at www.countyofberks.com/ARP until March 31.

7) How will I know my application has been received?

A confirmation email was sent to applicants within 24 to 48 hours after submission. If this did not occur, contact **Karra Mayo, Grants Coordinator, at 610.478.6136 ext. 6129**.



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8) What are the review criteria for the application?

Fully completed applications are evaluated based on the following:

- Does the request create a legacy and/or long-term benefit to Berks County?
- What is the Project's Readiness?
 - Are there plans and competitive quotes, proposals, or bids for the project?
 - Are any other funding sources identified?
 - Is there a match requirement for any of the funding sources?
 - Can the project be completed by December 1, 2023?
- Does the project support the communities most “disproportionately impacted” and/or “impacted” by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Does the project have letter(s) of support from any community partners or organizations?

Note: For Water & Sewer applicants, additional criteria questions were asked. For example: *Is your project in compliance with the Berks County Planning Commission’s Comprehensive Plan Update 2030?*

9) Where can I find the Form of Agreement for grants approved by the Berks County Commissioners?

A sample of the [Form of Agreement](#) is located at www.countyofberks.com/ARP under the “[Grant Program](#)” section.



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10) Do projects utilizing these funds need to be completed at prevailing wages or Davis-Bacon wage rates and need to be competitively bid?

Davis-Bacon wage rates do NOT apply to County of Berks' grant funds.

NOTE: *These rates may apply for other funding sources and the Grantee should consult with their attorney for addition clarification.*

The Grantee should note that the following may be applicable if Grantee was awarded funds for a project determined to be a public work:

1. Award of a grant constitutes expenditure of public funds.
2. Projects defined as "public works" are subject to the statutes and acts identified below.
3. "Public work" is defined as construction, reconstruction, demolition, alteration and/or repair work other than maintenance work, done under a contract and paid for in whole or in part out of the funds of a public body where the estimated total cost of the project is in excess of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00), but excluding work done under a rehabilitation or manpower training program.
4. Public work at or in excess of the then applicable statutory bid threshold may be subject to bid in accordance with Pennsylvania Statutes Title 16 P.S. Counties § 1802 and Separations Act, 71 P.S. §1618. The 2022 bid threshold can be found in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#).
5. Grant awards for upgrade/construction projects constituting Public Works and having an estimated cost of \$25,000 or greater may be subject to the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act (43 P. S. §§ 165-1 - 165-17). Further details on the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act and how to request determinations can be found on the [Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor & Industry](#) website.

NOTE: *This information is provided for general informational purposes and is not intended to constitute legal advice. The statutes and regulations noted above are subject to amendment or modification at any time and the County has no obligation to update the information provided if such amendments or modifications are adopted. The information contained herein may not constitute the most up-to-date legal or other information. Grantees should contact their attorney to obtain advice with respect to any particular legal matter relating to the impact of receiving and using grant funds awarded.*



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11) If awarded a grant, how long do we have to spend the funds?

Funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and expended by December 31, 2026, but highest priority and consideration will be given to projects that will have the funds expended or project completed by **December 1, 2023**.

12) What do you mean by "Project Cost" in the application?

Project Cost means the **total amount** of the cost of the project for which you are requesting a grant.

13) What should be included in the brief summary of the Proposed Project?

The brief summary should include a short overview paragraph about the key objectives of the project.

14) Please explain Question 4 of the application: "Does your organization have professionally prepared plan documents for the project"?

This question is referring to a project proposal that has been prepared by your organization or an outside organization which outlines the entire scope of work for your project. If you have a prepared project proposal, it is required to be included in your submission and can be attached to your application.

15) Please explain Question 5 of the application: "Does your organization have competitive quotes, proposals, and/or bids for the project"?

This question refers to having multiple "options" for the cost of your project to show that the costs you have provided and are requesting for the project reflect the lowest possible price/cost. This information is usually included in the project's scope of work or professionally prepared plan.



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16) What is a “proposal/scope of work”?

The narrative description of a project's work requirement. It defines project-specific activities, deliverables and timelines for a vendor providing services to the client. This is a required document for the application.

17) Are there any formatting or content requirements for the proposal/scope of work?

There are no formal formatting or requirements for the proposal/scope of work. However, you will want to ensure this document has all the relevant information pertaining to your project and outlines in detail your plan of action and budget. There is no required file format, but please make sure the information within the document is legible and that the document is easy to print.

18) Does the grant allow using the funds to add staff salaries?

No. Berks County's grant funds are for projects only. Operational and programmatic expenses are not eligible uses of the funds available through this grant program.

19) What is the preferred way to submit my application? What should I do if my answers to the questions are not fully visible?

The grant application was formatted as a fillable PDF and designed to be completed and signed digitally. The best method is to download the PDF and complete it on a desktop computer or laptop. The completed application can then be submitted as an email attachment.

If you choose to print the PDF to fill it out or sign by hand, please ensure that all answers appear complete and legible. Some answer fields include a scrolling feature for long responses that may not be fully visible if printed. If you experience this, you may include an additional document that lists the entire question and answer. Please do not attempt to reformat the application.



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20) Can I still apply for a grant even if my project is not guaranteed to be completed by December 1, 2023?

Yes, you could still apply for a grant even if your project's completion date is after December 1, 2023. That is a weighted scoring question to rank project priority; however, if a project ranks high on other criteria scoring questions, this question may not harshly affect your project's overall scoring.

21) What is the schedule for the review of grant applications?

Review and determination will occur on April and May and grants will begin to be awarded in mid-June.

22) Must an executed agreement be submitted with my application?

No. Form of Agreements are only executed **AFTER** selection and awarding, but prior to the disbursement of funds. The only thing required to be executed in your submission is the application certification page.

23) What are eligible uses of these funds?

Capital project costs and expenses are qualifying uses. Operational and/or programmatic expenses do not qualify as uses for these funds.

24) Can we apply for funds for a company vehicle?

Purchasing a company vehicle is **NOT** a qualifying request for this grant program. Qualified uses of these funds include capital improvements such as:

- Building
- Expansions
- Repairs and replacements



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25) If an organization has multiple capital projects, can you submit more than one request?

You may, as long as they have separate scopes of work, proposals, and budgets.

26) Can we apply for a grant to then create mini-grants?

The program was not structured for the Grantee to act as a Grantor. Utilizing the current scoring matrix/review criteria, this type of project may or may not score high enough to be considered a priority for funding.

27) Must an applicant wait for a grant notification from Berks before spending any money on a project?

No, that is not a requirement for these specific funds. These grants are meant to serve as gap funding to bring a project to completion. The grant can be for up to 25% of a project's total cost. The other 75% is the responsibility of the applicant to fund.

Please note that projects that can be completed by December 2023 may be considered a higher priority for funding.