



Local Government Solutions Guide for COVID-19 and Beyond: *Alternative Public Service Solutions*

May 2021



FEMA

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Executive Summary

This resource guide is part of a set of documents developed by FEMA in response to the disaster recovery challenges state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments have faced due to COVID-19. Although developed in response to COVID-19, many of the solutions can be applied beyond the context of disaster. FEMA held discussions with representatives from FEMA Regions, national associations, and other federal agency partners to identify challenges for SLTT governments. From these engagements three key topic areas were identified – adaptive design, grants management capacity, and alternative public service solutions.

Each topic has a “Stand-alone” Solutions Guide with a Case Studies Supplement that provides examples from different representative community types. **These guides and case studies are intended to provide guidance and resources rather than recommendations and best practices.** The guides do not provide specific guidance for complying with requirements for any federal assistance programs.

The **Alternative Public Service Solutions Local Government Solutions Guide** proposes methods local governments can use to provide ongoing services or partner with others to meet residents’ needs despite budget constraints. The guide is divided into five subsections: **Crisis Budgeting, Public-Private Partnerships, Local Government Organizations, Shared-Services and Technical Assistance (Universities and Foundations)**. While there is variation in the steps for each of the solutions, all these innovations require:

- Community Engagement
 - Engage with residents first to discuss community needs to ensure solutions have community backing and address residents and local government concerns.
- Communication
 - Ensure that all parties are aware of the scope of the agreement and provide a clear path to incorporate feedback on the project.
- Partnerships
 - Identify and build strong partnerships, beyond the local government unit, to include private partners, non-profit organizations, neighboring towns and cities as well as local universities or foundations.
 - Find strong partners that have a connection to the community and an understanding of its challenges and makeup.
 - Seek to establish mutually beneficial partnerships. For example: inviting universities to conduct technical assessments can provide hands-on experience to students or local non-profits can receive a stable source of income from a partnership to provide pandemic relief funds.

Most importantly each community must decide what solutions best fits their needs. Some public-private partnerships may be beyond the scope of smaller communities, while shared-service

agreements may be challenging for large and more complex cities. In addition, some communities may pursue multiple strategies using a university led feasibility study (technical assistance) to start a public-private partnership.

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1. Introduction

As local governments face continued fiscal stress, alternative models for delivering public services can provide economic relief while promoting innovation and growing stronger networks among municipalities. Alternative Public Service Solutions are different models for rethinking public service funding and delivery, which include the shared service model, public-private partnerships for infrastructure, development and monetization of public assets, academic partnerships, and local government support of philanthropic community service organizations. These options can address varied needs from recovery and planning to stewardship of parks and waters to delivery of public safety services.

1.1. Purpose

This Local Government Solutions Guide on **Alternative Public Services Solutions** is one of three documents focused on providing guidance and resources that local governments can use to plan for recovery from COVID-19 pandemic impacts. This guide is not intended to provide technical assistance or recommendations but rather it acts as a summary of the innovations other communities have employed to meet public service needs in the face of budget constraints. The guide frames core challenges and provides general solutions, resources and considerations for local government officials who wish to pursue them.

1.2. Local Government Solutions Guide Development

In developing these guides, feedback from national associations, FEMA regional contacts, and federal partners that work with local governments was used to identify local governments' largest obstacles to recovery from COVID-19. This approach was taken to draw on the local knowledge of these partners and expediently assess key general challenges, given the broad diversity of local government, in both type and size, across the nation. This process included a review of several surveys and data sources partners have compiled directly from local governments.¹ From these discussions we identified three major themes of concern with a gap in general guidance that could benefit from a solution guide for the coronavirus: Adaptive Design, Grants Management Capacity, and Alternate Public Service Solutions. Another gap identified was the diversity of local government types and the desire for a peer-to-peer engagement among communities of similar population or governance.

In response, we developed abbreviated guides for each of the three topic areas with case study supplements, included at the end of each document and where possible focused on COVID-19 examples. **Throughout the documents the term "local government" is used broadly to include a**

¹ i.e. [The United States Conference of Mayors Fiscal Pain Tracker](#); [National Association of Cities Comprehensive Analysis of COVID-19's Impact on County Finances and Implications for the Economy](#); [International City/County Management Association COVID-19 Impacts on Local Governments](#)

diverse array of “local” government structures including: towns, cities, rural and non-rural counties, and tribal communities. The case study supplements are organized in alignment with the relevant topic area and local government type.

2. Alternative Public Service Solutions

COVID-19 has led to reduced revenues for many local governments as they face the increasing costs of response and recovery programs for both health and economic impacts. Further, the impact of COVID-19 has not been distributed equally, as those with fewer resources, reduced access to healthcare, lower job security and in particularly hard-hit industries are carrying a larger burden. Thus, recovery requires that local governments consider their resources and capacities when determining what will help beyond immediate concerns and identify an equitable plan for the long-term health of the community.

Government officials also need to consider the downstream effects on those who rely on services and ensure their voices are sought out and included in the decision-making process. Local government decisions are opportunities to take stock of existing public service programs, to increase equity in their communities, and to promote greater regional connectivity.

Community Engagement and Equity

An important element in the identification of an internal or external challenge or gap and its potential solution is seeking out and incorporating community feedback in an inclusive and continuous manner in order to ensure priorities and projects meet needs of vulnerable or underserved populations as well as align with an equitable distribution of resources. Make sure to plan for effective, culturally aligned communication and messaging to outreach to traditionally underserved populations. While local governments may already have established techniques for community engagement, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adaptation of expanded methods of community participation – particularly the use of virtual engagement methods. Make sure to address communications accessibility requirements for those with functional or access needs. For more information on this topic and an expanded list of the resources below see the **Adaptive Design Guide** in this series on Local Government Solutions.

RESOURCE: [Practices for Engagement in the Time of COVID](#) (2020)

RESOURCE: [The New Normal: Communities adjust to Conducting Business Remotely While Maintaining Citizen Input](#) (2020)

RESOURCE: [10 Ways to Manage Crisis Communications During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (2020)

RESOURCE: [Bright Spots in Community Engagement: Case Studies of U.S. Communities Creating Greater Civic Participation from the Bottom Up](#) (2013)

RESOURCE: [Participation Tools for Better Community Planning](#) (2013)

RESOURCE: [Guidance for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)

RESOURCE: [Guidance for Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

2.1. Chapter Organization

This chapter provides a brief overview of crisis budgeting and is then organized by the partner types local governments can work with to support the delivery and development of public services, including private companies, universities, or even other local governments. This guide includes options communities have considered to reduce the costs of providing a variety of social services to residents. It also discusses ways governments can utilize partnerships to defray project costs that may otherwise be borne solely by the local government.

2.2. Crisis Budgeting

Whether a community chooses to pursue an Alternative Public Service Solution will depend in part on budget considerations. There are many different methods a community can use to construct its budget, including traditional/incremental, participatory, performance/priority-based, multi-year, and zero-based budgeting (see Appendix A: Resources for Different Budgeting Approaches). When a crisis impacts a community, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or a disaster, it may require resources originally budgeted for one purpose to be redirected to address more pressing needs. In order to do this, a community will need to 1.) assess the situation and identify the immediate needs of the crisis, 2.) implement short-term recovery solutions that stabilize the situation but do not limit long-term recovery, and 3.) implement long-term recovery solutions that factor in financial resilience and adaptability –all while continuing to provide steady-state community services.

Many traditional tools for addressing budgeting shortfalls, such as increasing service and utility fees on already impacted residents, may not be appropriate during the current COVID-19 pandemic and local government decision-makers will need to take this into account (along with considerations such as the size, timing and duration of the deficits) when weighing long-term risks against enacting short-term cost cutting or revenue enhancements. The [Government Finance Officers Association \(GFOA\)](#), along with other associations and organizations, provide numerous resources on how to approach all stages of crisis budgeting (see resource list below). In addition to addressing steady-state needs, the types of Alternative Public Service Solutions described in the following sections of this document can provide a means of addressing some of the budget shortfalls which may have been identified through the crisis budgeting process.

2.2.1. CRISIS BUDGETING GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES:

RESOURCE: [Fiscal First Aid Resource Center](#)

- Produced by GFOA
- Includes links to numerous resources for all stages of fiscal first aid, including a detailed 12-step process: [Recognition](#), [Mobilize](#), [Generic Treatments](#), [Initial Diagnosis](#), [Near-Term Treatments](#), [Detailed Diagnosis](#), [Recovery Plan](#), [Long-Term Treatments](#), [Long-Term Financial Planning](#), [Recovery Leadership](#), [Manage the Recovery Process](#), and [The Outcome of Recovery](#)

RESOURCE: [Local Response Initiative For City Leaders Session 8: Towards Financial Resilience: Budgeting During COVID-19 Key Takeaways](#)

- Produced by the Bloomberg-Harvard City Leadership Initiative
- Part of 11-session series, [COVID-19 Local Response Initiative: Insights and Guidance on Crisis Leadership](#), focusing on different aspects of crisis leadership
- Provides key take-aways on 3 phases: Respond, Stabilize, Transform
- Provides links to additional resources

RESOURCE: [The State of Participatory Budgeting During COVID-19](#) (April 2020)

- Produced by the Participatory Budgeting Project
- Lists key takeaways on how to adapt the participatory budgeting process in the face of COVID-19: Design with the digital divide at the forefront, diversify our social media and email lists, don't forget accessibility, and set hypotheses, evaluate and iterate.

2.3. Private Sector Expertise (Public-Private Partnerships)

Public-private partnerships, also referred to as PPP or P3s, are generally thought of as finance mechanisms for large scale national infrastructure projects, however, in recent years local governments have found new ways of leveraging private expertise for all sizes of communities. These include technology partnerships to improve local transportation and others to promote broadband access for residents. It is important to recognize that P3s are a tool for innovation and can provide access to private sector finance but may not result in large cost-savings for the local government. There may be risks introduced that reduce amount of control a local government has over a service. Instead, P3s can increase expertise and access to capital as well as keep projects moving forward. The resources below highlight traditional P3s for infrastructure and P3s focused on public social services.

Successful P3s identify an issue in the community and create community buy-in for the project. Furthermore, building processes into the P3 partnership to ensure that the project is well managed and transparent is critical to the overall success. It is also important to look at the state's legislation regarding P3s, as regulations can vary from state to state. For example, some states may have restrictions on the type of work P3s can be used for. In others, the use of P3s may be limited to state governments, with local governments restricted from using this type of partnership. Finally, certain areas such as urban centers or areas with high density are more likely to attract private investment but techniques like bundling multiple projects can increase interest in local government projects led by smaller community types.

Local governments have used P3s in responding to the COVID-19 crisis both as a funding mechanism to support the local business community, as well as, for workforce development and job placement initiatives (see case studies below). In some cases, these partnerships have benefited from flexibility in the relationships, which have allowed for the type of support offered to shift with the community's needs.

General pros and cons for P3s include:

- Pros: Upfront cost reduction, financing for larger projects, strengthen partnerships/economic development, increased efficiency
- Cons: Require expertise with contracts, bidding etc., revenue shift rather than cost-savings, long-term commitment often confirms unequal access to resources and long-term reduction of revenues as well as oversight problems, may introduce risk over local control of services

2.3.1. MAJOR PROJECTS AND INVESTMENTS GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

RESOURCE: [Public Private Partnerships to Revamp U.S. Infrastructure \(2016\)](#)

- Produced by the Hamilton Project/Brookings Institute
- This guide examines the benefits and drawbacks of P3s for larger infrastructure projects and highlights the best use of P3s.
- Includes 4 considerations for local governments using P3s:
 - Choose a Public-Private Partnership that fits community need
 - Use the right P3 Contract
 - Be transparent about P3 costs in local budgets
 - Implement best practices for governing P3s - separate the group awarding the contract and from the group administering the P3 agreement

RESOURCE: [Public Private Partnerships \(P3s\): What Local Government Managers Need to Know](#)

- Produced by International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Includes different P3 types, pros and cons of P3s
- Includes case studies of local-level P3s
- Provides additional resources for reference about P3s

RESOURCE: [What Successful Private Public Partnerships Do \(2019\)](#)

- Produced by Harvard Business Review
- Highlights three themes of successful projects:
 - Building personal commitments among partners for a shared goal
 - Figuring out and sharing motives behind disagreements
 - Admitting to and correcting setbacks quickly

RESOURCE: [Municipal Public-Private Partnership Framework \(No Date\)](#)

- Produced by The World Bank

- 20-module series includes the full lifetime of a municipal P3 from assessing a municipalities readiness to managing contracts and communicating to the public about a public private partnership agreement.
- Includes over 100 case studies of P3s highlighting both successes and failures for local governments to learn from.

2.4. Local Organization Partnership

Government and community organization partnerships are critical to the delivery of public services. For many of these mostly non-profit organizations, government contracts account for [over a quarter of their annual budget](#) and are critical to their survival. Many governments contract with local community organizations and non-profits to provide an array of social services including job training, homeless shelters, and foodbanks, all of which are critical to supporting residents during times of economic hardship. While these kinds of partnerships are not novel, new partners and innovative methods of contract stewardship can allow local governments to get the most out of these relationships. Ensuring that there is a strong relationship and open communication between organizations and local governments is critical but also time consuming. Clearly defining the scope of the relationship and what each partner can offer is also integral to success for local organizations and local governments. Finally, to promote equity it is important that local governments survey the entire landscape of community organizations to ensure representation of all groups. The importance of this consideration is well illustrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as many traditionally harder to reach groups, such as the elderly, are experiencing larger health impacts from the disease.

General pros and cons for local organization partnerships include:

- Pros: Increase community connectivity, avoid duplication of building distribution networks, organizations can bring subject specific expertise, fast deployment
- Cons: Smaller organizations may lack ability to completely take over public services, sufficient funds, leadership, special expertise (accounting), and experienced personnel due to turnover

2.4.1. LOCAL ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIPS GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES:

RESOURCE: [Human Service Non-profits and Government Collaboration](#)

- Produced by the Urban Institute
- Highlights strong existing contract relationship between NGOs and government.
- Includes recommendations to strengthen relationships and provide enhanced community organization delivery of services.

RESOURCE: [Turbocharging Government Human Resources: 5 Ways to Improve Local Government Contracting with Community-Based Organizations](#)

- Produced by Results for America

- Includes recommendations to local governments from a survey of community organizations on how to improve contracting with community-based organizations:
 - Collaborate
 - Provide Funding Flexibility
 - Write Clear Requests for Proposals
 - Prioritize and Fund Outcomes – Not Outputs
 - Check-in Regularly to Create a Feedback Loop

RESOURCE: [Community Foundations: Snapshots Philanthropic-Public Partnerships \(2011\)](#)

- Produced by The Council on Foundations
- Case studies of local government and community organization partnerships across the country.
- Provides geography of community served and area of service provided.
- Includes contact information about organizations to encourage peer-to-peer engagement.

2.5. Horizontal Integrations (Shared-Service Agreements)

Some communities providing public services can also improve efficiency and find cost-savings through shared-service agreements or consolidation of services with neighboring cities, towns, or counties. In this type of agreement, multiple neighboring communities partner with each other or with their county to provide public services such as emergency, social, and public safety services, or other government functions. This type of arrangement may be of value as communities everywhere address similar challenges from the coronavirus. It is key that the relationships and avenues of communications between all members of the agreement are open and supported. There should be clear agreements around funding allocations by members, including ability to amend the agreements. Some states, such as New York, New Jersey, and Illinois among others, also offer support for shared services for local governments. As with other types of alternative public service solutions, communication and transparency among partners and with the community is key to successful agreements. Furthermore, as these agreements have long-lasting impacts, regularly setting intervals when parties can come together and evaluate how the agreement is serving all members can avoid conflict and enhance outcomes for all involved.

General pros and cons for horizontal integrations include:

- Pros: Cost savings, improved regional coordination, increased transparency on public spending
- Cons: Greater coordination required for decision-making, need to maintain strong relationships, contract negotiation, not a quick deploy strategy

2.5.1. HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION OF SERVICES GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

RESOURCE: [A County Manager's Guide for Shared Services in Local Government](#)

- Produced by IBM Center for The Business of Government

- Full assessment of what shared services are and why they are considered.
- Lists preconditions needed to have a successful shared-service agreement.
- Explains how to maintain shared services.

RESOURCE: [Shared Service Agreements Require Governments to Work Together](#)

- Produced by National Association of Counties (NACo)
- Includes six steps to achieve a successful shared service agreement with background and examples:
 - Develop List of Stakeholders and Community Needs
 - Conduct a Feasibility Study
 - Coming to Agreement
 - Implementation
 - Ongoing Monitoring
 - Long-term Review/Agreement Reassessment

RESOURCE: [Evaluating Service Delivery Alternatives \(No Date\)](#)

- Produced by GFOA
- Includes process to assess value of public service and usage.
- Holistic assessment of positive and negative effects of changing service delivery including end-user access.

2.6. Expertise and Technical Assistance (Universities/Foundation)

Both public private partnerships and shared services agreements are generally founded on mutual understandings about the proposed project and its goals based on information the local government has gathered about the feasibility of the proposed program. This can be a costly and time-consuming step, but universities and foundations often have the expertise and capacity to assist local governments in conducting feasibility assessments and cost-benefit studies. Furthermore, universities are generally interested in providing students experience in real-world projects. However, for the project to succeed the community must have already identified a problem to work on and local governments need to foster community backing. University partnerships can also provide guidance around grant applications and securing outside funding or bring in subject matter expertise. As the COVID-19 pandemic places additional strain on local government capacity, including staff cuts or hiring freezes, such collaborative projects may be of particular benefit for bolstering local government capacity. If possible, funding sources for projects should be considered or obtained before enlisting universities and foundations for technical assistance. Ultimately, a successful project will require funding beyond technical assistance to reach completion.

General pros and cons for expertise and technical assistance include:

- Pros: Improve outreach, access to subject-matter experts, low to no cost for project support, greater connectivity between major institutions and community, technical assistance
- Cons: Require time and government supervision, timelines of projects need to be shorter and discrete, not all communities have institutions with this expertise, conflicting interests or cost for some types of assistance

2.6.1. EXPERTISE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

RESOURCE: [When a University Partners with Local Governments in Innovative Ways](#)

- Produced by ICMA
- University of North Carolina has developed a robust program to reach out to local governments in economic distress and provide them varying levels of support for economic development and technical assistance.
- They found the four keys to successful partnerships involve:
 - Clear local government goals about what the community needs and hopes to achieve through this partnership
 - Local governments must have continued engagement in the process to provide feedback throughout and commitment from both parties at the top levels
 - Leverage the power of students in meeting capacity needs rather than relying solely on faculty experts as they can also engage with larger portions of the community
 - Financial support or investment in the project available to see it through to completion

RESOURCE: [University perspectives for creating community partnerships](#)

- Produced by American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
- Includes information about how to support public-private partnerships between universities and local governments.
- Highlights partnership between a local university and Lake Charles, LA in development of the Southwest Louisiana Entrepreneurial and Economic Development (SEED) Center.
- Includes how to build community needs into curriculum to provide mutually beneficial projects.

RESOURCE: [Community Foundations: Snapshots Philanthropic-Public Partnerships \(2011\)](#)

- Produced by The Council on Foundations
- Case studies of local government and community organization partnerships across the country.
- Provides geography of community served and area of service provided.
- Includes contact information about organizations to encourage peer-to-peer engagement.

RESOURCE: [Arizona State University \(ASU\) American Indian Policy Institute](#)

- ASU Institute focused on participatory research based on research needs identified to them by tribal governments.
- Research projects are aimed at empowering tribal communities and American Indian students, while supporting tribal self-determination and capacity building.
- Areas of expertise are translating research and policy analysis into applied knowledge, creating partnerships between academia and Indian Country, serving communities via innovative capacity-building initiatives, and driving change through community embeddedness
- Links include [Tribal Financial Managers Certificate Training](#), research and news

3. Case Studies by Topic and Community Type

3.1. Crisis Budgeting

3.1.1. MID-SIZE CITIES



Reprioritizing Spending on Tight Timelines

Washington, DC (Population 684,498): While Washington D.C. uses a traditional/incremental budgeting process, unlike other local governments they must get Congressional approval of their budget. To justify their budget, D.C. prepares an operating and a capital budget which identify the programs that are to be funded in the fiscal year and the revenue that will support these programs. Additionally, the budget document provides a five-year financial plan, which shows the long-term impact of current spending and is a critical tool in ensuring the fiscal health of the District. Both the operating and capital budgets provide stakeholders with information on the operations of D.C.'s over 100 agencies.

Recently, the GFOA developed a financial tool, the Financial Foundations Framework to help local governments facilitate collaboration and support for public policies and programs. Organized into five pillars, the Framework shows a local government how to improve their financial position now and create a strong foundation for a thriving community over the long-term. Due to the District being a leader in asset management and infrastructure renewal planning, the [GFOA](#) used the District as a pilot study to test if the Financial Foundations Framework governments can help local governments make better financial decisions. Research began as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated financial crisis required the District to lower its capital budget by about 13%. Because the District had a database of its assets and a priority ranking of its capital projects, it was able to revise its nearly \$8 billion capital budget in a matter of weeks to reflect the reduced revenues, while maintaining core priorities and delivering high-quality infrastructure for District of Columbia residents. The GFOA study concluded that Washington D.C.'s approach to capital assets has allowed it to better navigate the financial challenges caused by COVID-19.

3.1.2. LARGE CITIES



COVID-19 Impacts Influence San Antonio's FY2021 Budget Priorities



City of San Antonio
Recovery & Resiliency
 Conquering Today's Challenges For A Stronger Tomorrow.

Figure 1: The emblem from the City of San Antonio COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan.

[Source](#)

[San Antonio, TX \(Population 1,327,407\):](#)

Responding to the coronavirus pandemic's past effects, confronting its present effects and anticipating its future effects played a major role in the development of the FY2021 Budget unanimously adopted by the San Antonio, TX City Council in September 2020. Although the FY2021 Budget is \$4.4 million lower than the previous year's, it stays below the statutory cap on property taxes and corresponds with the approaches previously identified in the City's [COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan \(June 2020\)](#): workforce development, housing security, small business support, and digital inclusion. The Recovery and Resiliency Plan identifies these priorities, outlines strategies to address them, and links the strategies to funding mechanisms. The City Finance Department & Office of Management and Budget issues [Financial Reports](#) documenting progress on implementation of the Plan. The FY2021 Budget aligns with this foundation – in order to both maintain traditional city services and provide the expanded services aimed at recovering from the health and economic impacts of the virus, the city is combining its existing budgetary funds with resources from federal grant allocations targeted at COVID-19 relief. This allows for expanding programming in some key areas, such as public health and housing. The Budget does, however, also include \$87 million in cuts over 2 years due pandemic related revenue reductions. The cuts include a hiring freeze, compensation adjustments for existing city employees, suspension of economic development incentives, and reductions to the Police Department overtime budget and Cadet Hiring Bonus program.

3.2. Public-Private Partnerships

3.2.1. SMALL TOWNS AND CITIES



Partnering for Commuter Benefits in South Bend, IN

[South Bend, IA \(Population 101, 860\)](#): In late 2019, South Bend formed a partnership with local employers and transportation providers to develop a new program called the [Commuters Trust](#). This program offers enhanced options for workers in South Bend to reach and keep their jobs. An enrolled employee would receive a free bus pass as well as a discount on rideshare services. The city created this program in response to a survey that showed that reliable transportation was a consistent barrier to finding and keeping a job in the region. South Bend is a low-density town that is heavily reliant on individual vehicles and lack a strong public transportation system.

This project was first piloted the previous year as part of South Bend’s application to the 2018 U.S. Mayor’s Challenge. The initial funding for this program was provided in part from a three-year grant that the city won through this competition. In addition, three South Bend employers, the Beacon Health System, the University of Notre Dame, and the City of South Bend’s Venues Parks & Arts Department, are putting in contributions as the founding partners of this Public-Private Partnership. However, as the program grows, the city hopes to continue to add employers and collect employee contributions to make this program self-sufficient. They also intend to partner with a local group to run this initiative once the grant expires.

3.2.2. TRIBAL COMMUNITIES



Partnership Expands Broadband Access for the Hoh Tribe



Figure 2: A map showing the location of the Hoh Indian Tribe Reservation. [Source](#)

Hoh Tribe: Access to broadband service is [a challenge common to many tribal governments](#), particularly in rural areas, and use of a tribally centric deployment model rather than an individual residential service model has been successful in many tribal communities. In this case, the [Hoh Tribe](#) has partnered with Starlink, a division of the private company SpaceX in order to expand broadband

internet access on the Hoh Indian Reservation, located on the coast of the Pacific Northwest’s Olympic Peninsula. The partnership came about by way of coordination facilitated by the Washington State Department of Commerce. The State had been working with the tribe to bring high-speed internet to reservation residents to help them access COVID-19 related telemedicine and at-home learning services. The Hoh tribal council petitioned to join the Starlink pilot program and, after an interview with the tribal council, installation began. Part of the appeal of the collaboration is that in contrast to more traditional approaches, there was no need to construct new infrastructure. Instead, a satellite dish installed on the reservation transmits a signal to individual household routers, which connect to household devices using Wi-Fi or a hardwire. Although the Hoh Tribe reports increased download speeds, it is also continuing its efforts to become its own backup internet service provider by way of built infrastructure connecting the reservation to the Grays Harbor Public Utility District.

[As another option for tribal governments, information on federal programs to expand tribal broadband can be found on the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs website](#), including a link to the [National Tribal Broadband Strategy](#).

3.2.3. MID-SIZE CITIES



Bham Strong: A Public-Private Partnership in Birmingham, Alabama

[Birmingham, AL \(Population 209,880\)](#): A group of 30 organizations formed a public-private partnership to expand COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts in the City of Birmingham, AL called “Bham Strong.” This partnership has two main objectives: one is creating an emergency loan fund for small businesses to bridge the gap before Small Business Association (SBA) aid would arrive, and the other is the creation of the Birmingham Service Corps that matches the recently unemployed with paid volunteer opportunities related to the pandemic.

Bham Strong collected survey data from local businesses and started an emergency loan fund of \$2.4 million dollars funded by the City of Birmingham, the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, and corporate donors; it is run by the Birmingham Business Resource center. Once Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans funding from the federal government became available through the SBA, the focus shifted to technical assistance and connecting those in need to additional sources of funding. This outreach was managed by recently unemployed residents who were hired as part of the Birmingham Service Corps.

The Birmingham Service Corps has also been employed to conduct phone-screenings for COVID-19 contact tracing, to assist school lunch delivery, and to support non-profits. It has also continued to look proactively at job retraining opportunities. This program was able to be implemented quickly but is likely to have long-term impacts for the city.

3.2.4. NON-RURAL COUNTY GOVERNMENTS



Fairfield County Community College Partners for Job-Retraining Program

[Fairfield County, CT \(Population 943,333\)](#): Fairfield County Community Colleges have begun a new 4-week fast-track program which would retrain hospitality workers who have been displaced by COVID-19 to work in the healthcare field. This is a partnership between college foundations, Bank of America, and Social Ventures Partners. This job retraining program directly addresses unemployment created by the pandemic and can be accomplished in a relatively short term as it is an adaption of healthcare worker training programs already in place at the community colleges participating in this program. Local government’s equity in this lies in their funding and support of retraining programs and help and support of unemployed residents. This model for public-private partnerships job-retraining has also been used at [Housatonic and Norwalk Community Colleges](#) to start similar programs demonstrating the need for these workers and how well-positioned community colleges are to take on this role.

3.3. Local Organization Partnerships

3.3.1. LARGE CITIES



San Diego Partners with Non-Profit to Refurbish Old Computers



Figure 2: A image of San Diego Bay. [Source](#)

San Diego, CA (Population 1,430,000): The City of San Diego has put forward a proposal to donate its end-of-life computers to a local non-profit, San Diego Futures Foundation, to allow them to refurbish them and send them to in-need residents. As digital access has become a huge concern during the COVID-19 pandemic this partnership allows the city to provide additional resources by leveraging local non-profit capabilities. Prior to this, the city contracted with a recycling company to dispose of these nearly 30,000 computers but the term of that agreement is ending. Further, as the recycling market has slowed down in recent years, city officials are concerned about the costs that may be incurred with a new contract for recycling – especially as this service used to be provided for free. The San Diego Futures Foundation partnership proposal was passed through the City Council Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee and is waiting for a vote from the full city council. If approved, this local organization partnership with the city could provide much needed access to the internet for thousands of city residents while saving the city money.



Safe Parking Partnerships to Provide Overnight Spaces for Homeless

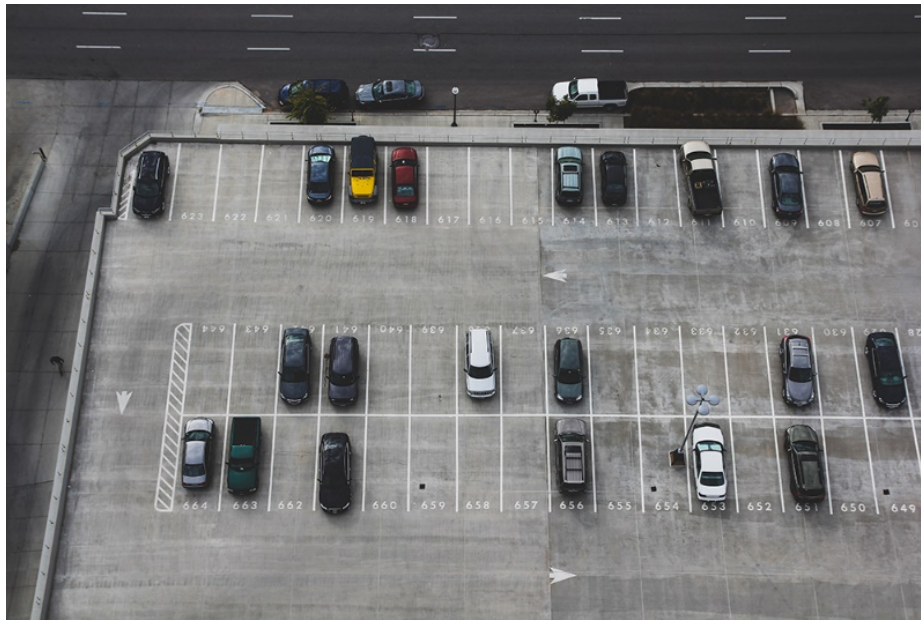


Figure 3: A birds-eye view of a Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)-Administered Safe Parking Site. [Source](#)

[Los Angeles, CA \(Population](#)

[3,990,000\)](#): Los Angeles has a large vehicular homeless population who sleep in their cars overnight. However, as they do not stay in shelters, they can

sometimes be cut off from homeless services. Further, it can be difficult to find safe places to park their vehicles overnight. The City and County of Los Angeles developed a program as part of their larger homeless strategy to allow people to park in safe places with access to security and restrooms and to link them to community resources. There are currently 20 sites where adults and families can park and sleep safely through the night and be connected to social services. This program is funded through the City and County of Los Angeles and state funding for homelessness, but the individual sites are operated through a variety of local non-profits who the city partners with to administer the program. These non-profits act as contacts for these sites and manage the intake and administration of the services provided here. Thus, the city can take care of this vulnerable population and leverage the skills and expertise of these local non-profits in connecting individuals to social services all in one parking lot.

Though this program is very developed in Los Angeles, the city was not the first nor the last to use this model as it has also been adopted in San Diego, CA, Beaverton, OR and Redmond, WA to name a few.

3.3.2. MID-SIZE CITIES



A Local Partnership to Build and Operate Affordable Housing

[Charlotte, NC \(Population: 872,498\)](#): Local non-profit Roof Above is focused on addressing housing affordability for Charlotte residents. Roof Above managed the purchase of a housing complex to provide affordable housing for Charlotte residents earning below the city's median

income. The total cost of the complex was \$50 million dollars. Funds were obtained through private gifts, a low-interest loan from Atrium Health and \$31.6 million in a Fannie Mae Loan through the Housing Trust Fund of the City of Charlotte. The Atrium Health loan was provided in exchange for use of 50 of the 341 apartments reserved for Atrium workers in need of assistance. They were able to further incentivize Atrium's investment by giving Atrium the opportunity to show its commitment to increasing equity in the Charlotte community.

The purchase was completed in September 2020, so this solution is very much still in process. However, Roof Above has already begun to work with a private real estate capital firm committed to affordable housing that will oversee the management of the project. This firm also helped during the acquisition phase. This partnership involved many experts in realty and affordable housing issues and the city's involvement allowed Roof Above to leverage new sources of funding. Importantly, considering how and who will manage the housing began in the acquisition phase, providing a greater chance of success for this project by establishing a clear plan and goals.

3.3.3. NON-RURAL COUNTY GOVERNMENTS



Miami-Dade County Pandemic Assistance Partnership with United Way

[Miami-Dade County, FL \(Population 2,761,581\)](#): When the county of Miami-Dade was allotted their CARES Act funding by the state they partnered with the non-profit United Way to disburse pandemic assistance for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) community members. This partnership has allowed Miami-Dade to have a wider reach and experience in how to reach community members in the most need. Prior to this partnership, [United Way for the Miami-Dade](#) had also raised funds to disburse to the local community. The previous project of distributing the pandemic fund demonstrated that the United Way had a validated method for evaluating applications and distributing funds in a timely manner that the county itself was not as well equipped to do.

The aid was set for short-term assistance for individuals who are in economic distress to support daily living needs. The awards were dispersed in the amount of \$1,000 – 2,000. As part of the accessibility considerations the application for the funding through United Way was available in Spanish, English, and Creole. The program received thousands of applications within the first hours of its launch so organizers paused the application until they could process these initial applications and determine the amount of remaining funds. While this points to the success of the partnership in connecting individuals to aid it also highlights the great need in the community for this funding.

3.4. Horizontal Integration (Shared Services & Consolidation)

3.4.1. SMALL TOWNS AND CITIES



Five New Jersey Towns Create a Combined Municipal Court



Figure 4: The Morris County, NJ courthouse, which was constructed in 1827. [Source](#)

[Morris County, NJ \(Population 494,228\)](#): Created in 2012, this project includes five boroughs and townships that are contiguous with each other located right outside of Newark, NJ. The communities included are Borough of Chatham, Township of Chatham, Borough of Madison, Township of Harding, and Township of Morris. By creating a joint court all residents are subject to one legal jurisdiction; thus, it differs from other types of shared municipal services. This leads to cost savings in supporting and administration fees. In the first year of operation it was considered a resounding success with nearly \$500,000 in total savings for the four municipalities parties (at this point Morris had not yet joined). Though the court is in Madison County, each municipality has equal voting rights to decide on the annual budget. It is important to note that the municipality has been providing shared services for some time, so it does already have a model for inter-local shared service agreements. The current judge was also appointed by the governor to avoid internal fighting over who can appoint judges as this is generally within the jurisdiction of the municipality.

3.4.2. RURAL COMMUNITIES



Rural Communities Combine EMS Support Services

[Walworth County, WI \(Population: 103,718\)](#): Five communities within Walworth County, WI approved a proposal to create a combined EMS to respond to calls in these communities on November 3rd (an additional town had funds set aside and approved the measure without putting it on the ballot). The partnership will cost around \$500,000 a year split among the six communities and will seek to address the lack of volunteer firefighters and to lower ambulance response times in rural communities. The initiative will create a cooperative paramedic team that would be administered by Metro Paramedic Service LLC and will be paid for through an increase in property taxes in those communities. Local government officials consider this a good example of cost-sharing initiatives in communities but recognize asking for an increase in property taxes is challenging in these times. The rationale for the increase in cost to local communities is that doing this as a shared public service costs much less than it would for any individual community. Further, it is argued that the individual communities do not have the volume of calls necessary to justify the expense of full-time staff for ambulance services—although many note that the ambulance service times in the last 10 years has doubled in many rural areas across America. The six communities began work on an [intergovernmental agreement and the public safety departments will also begin work on an operational plan](#). They aim to have this program ready to operate by January 1, 2021.

3.4.3. NON-RURAL COUNTY GOVERNMENTS



Allegheny County, PA Local Governments Consider Combining Police Forces



Figure 5: A view of Allegheny County, PA. [Source](#)

[Allegheny County, PA \(Population 1,216,045\)](#): The county executive of Allegheny County along with other local leaders have met to discuss creating a regional police force to cover Braddock, east Pittsburgh, North Braddock and Rankin communities. The Municipalities are in the process of creating a commission to work on

the plan. It has been put forth as a more cost-effective method of providing police coverage but there is concern about whether the continued employment of current officers will be at stake. The communities are currently voting to approve the plan at the community council level and then they plan to open the discussion for public feedback before a final decision is made.

The four communities recognize that they need to work together to make sure that there is clarity about hiring authority, funding breakdowns, and current employees before this plan can become a reality.

3.5. Technical Assistance and Expertise (Universities/Foundation)



University of North Carolina Partners with Governments to Provide Expertise

Various North Carolina Governments: University of North Carolina (UNC) Chapel Hill worked directly with local governments following the great recession of the late 2000s to help distressed communities by providing expertise on development and revitalization. UNC provided different types of support through different phases of the recession, first setting up the Carolina Economic Recovery Corps (CERC) which was comprised of graduate students who worked with Councils of Government to support localities applying for American Recovery Reinvestment Act funds. Here, CERC interns worked with a wide array of communities who were unable or hesitant to apply for grant funding due to a lack of capacity or understanding of the newly launched grant programs.

The University also created the UNC Community Campus Partnerships (CCP) which worked with distressed communities in North Carolina to provide resources and expertise. CCP created a small university-funded grant program for \$500 to \$20,000 to support community priority research projects. For example, the UNC School of Government created the Development Finance Initiative (DFI) which has since worked on 85 projects supporting North Carolina local governments (<https://dfi.sog.unc.edu/projects/>).

Finally, the university has developed a [UNC DFI Resources for COVID-19](#) page where agents are working with local governments to secure loan capital and creating their own small business emergency loan program. They are also available for hour-long consultations free of charge.

3.5.1. RURAL COMMUNITIES



The University of Vermont Helps a Town Build a Plan



Photo Credit: (clockwise from top left) Karen Gosner Photography; Lauren Saphier, C.A. Armstrong; Lauren Saphier

TOWN PLAN
GREENSBORO, VERMONT

Greensboro Planning Commission
Adopted by Greensboro Select Board June 12, 2019

Figure 6: Cover of the 2019 Greensboro, VT Town Plan. [Source.](#)

Greensboro, VT (Population 706): The Town of Greensboro, VT Planning Commission reached out to the University of Vermont for assistance with their Town Plan. As part of a class project, students created a survey for residents to ask about housing needs, commute times and other aspects of town layout and employment that could inform the local plan. The students were then able to analyze and compile the data and share it with the planning commission. The planning commission used the data to determine where to locate affordable housing units and inform zoning decisions. This initiative did require support and interest from

faculty at the University of Vermont and the instructor for this course but proved a useful experience for the students and a cost-savings and capacity improving measure for the town.

3.5.2. TRIBAL COMMUNITIES



Bay Mills Indian Community Gets Support from Michigan Tech's TTAP Program

[Bay Mills Indian Community/Michigan Technological University](#): Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech), located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula offers a Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP). The Michigan Tech program, which provides Native American tribal communities with transportation infrastructure support, is funded by [the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's \(FHWA\) TTAP program](#). The FHWA TTAP program was created in 1991 in order to help build tribal capacity to manage highway assets through training and technical assistance and serves more than 60 federally recognized tribes. Partnerships in Michigan Tech's program are initiated either by university outreach efforts or requests by a tribal community. University support can take different forms, including guidance on transportation issues, training on specialized hardware and software, help with grant applications, and the official safety audits often required for funding.

An example of a Michigan Tech TTAP partnership is with the [Bay Mills Indian Community](#), who do not have any engineers on their staff and who reached out for assistance with a road safety audit on a problematic portion of the roadway. Over the course of eight months Michigan Tech also assisted with a traffic count, an analysis of different solution options, development of a final plan and specifications, and help identifying funding.

In addition to TTAP the FHWA also administers a [Rural Transportation Assistance Program \(RTAP\)](#).

Appendix A. Resources for Different Budgeting Approaches

GENERAL

RESOURCE: [A Budgeting Guide for Local Government \(2013\)](#)

- Produced by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- An in-depth general budgeting manual with background on various types of budgeting
- Clear steps for every part of the budget process
- Clear explanation of the budget cycle
- An [updated 2020 version](#) is available with paid access

TRADITIONAL/INCREMENTAL

RESOURCE: [City Budgeting Manual for FY 2020](#)

- Produced by Association of Idaho Cities
- Includes the Basics of City Budgeting: Roles and Responsibilities, Budget Classification Structure, Beginning the Budget Preparation Cycle, Developing Budget Requests, Preparing and Adopting the Budget, and Budgeting Best Practices
- Discusses the law and revenue sources governing city budgeting

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

RESOURCE: [Participatory Budgeting \(No Date\)](#)

- Produced by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Provides a list of resources and case studies of cities that have employed Participatory Budgeting
- Details HUD program to support participatory budgeting with HUD grants

PERFORMANCE/PRIORITY-BASED BUDGETING

RESOURCE: [Anatomy of a Priority Driven Budget Process](#) (2011)

- Produced by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)
- Research on several communities to find why they adopted PBB
- Provides information on steps and considerations for all communities considering PBB

MULTI-YEAR BUDGETING

RESOURCE: [Multi-year Budgeting](#) (2014)

- Produced by International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Discussion of the practices of local governments that adopt multi-year budgets with case studies

ZERO-BASED BUDGETING

RESOURCE: [Zero-Based Budgeting – Modern Experiences and Current Perspectives](#) (2011)

- Produced by City of Calgary and GFOA
- Thorough explanation of ZBB and considerations for local governments
- Describes case studies and usage of ZBB

Appendix B. Alternative Public Service Solutions Resources List

The following is a list of all resources mentioned in the Alternative Public Service Solutions guide:

Community Engagement

RESOURCE: [Practices for Engagement in the Time of COVID](#) (2020)

RESOURCE: [The New Normal: Communities adjust to Conducting Business Remotely While Maintaining Citizen Input](#) (2020)

RESOURCE: [10 Ways to Manage Crisis Communications During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (2020)

RESOURCE: [Bright Spots in Community Engagement: Case Studies of U.S. Communities Creating Greater Civic Participation from the Bottom Up](#) (2013)

RESOURCE: [Participation Tools for Better Community Planning](#) (2013)

RESOURCE: [Guidance for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)

RESOURCE: [Guidance for Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

Crisis Budgeting Guidance and Resources:

RESOURCE: [Fiscal First Aid Resource Center](#)

RESOURCE: [Local Response Initiative For City Leaders Session 8: Towards Financial Resilience: Budgeting During COVID-19 Key Takeaways](#)

RESOURCE: [The State of Participatory Budgeting During COVID-19](#) (April 2020)

Major Projects and Investments Guidance and Resources

RESOURCE: [Public Private Partnerships to Revamp U.S. Infrastructure \(2016\)](#)

RESOURCE: [Public Private Partnerships \(P3s\): What Local Government Managers Need to Know](#)

RESOURCE: [What Successful Private Public Partnerships Do \(2019\)](#)

RESOURCE: [Municipal Public-Private Partnership Framework \(No Date\)](#)

Local Organization Partnerships Guidance and Resources:

RESOURCE: [Human Service Non-profits and Government Collaboration](#)

RESOURCE: [Turbocharging Government Human Resources: 5 Ways to Improve Local Government Contracting with Community-Based Organizations](#)

RESOURCE: [Community Foundations: Snapshots Philanthropic-Public Partnerships \(2011\)](#)

Horizontal Integration of Services Guidance and Resources

RESOURCE: [A County Manager's Guide for Shared Services in Local Government](#)

RESOURCE: [Shared Service Agreements Require Governments to Work Together](#)

RESOURCE: [Evaluating Service Delivery Alternatives \(No Date\)](#)

Expertise and Technical Assistance Guidance and Resources

RESOURCE: [When a University Partners with Local Governments in Innovative Ways](#)

RESOURCE: [University perspectives for creating community partnerships](#)

RESOURCE: [Community Foundations: Snapshots Philanthropic-Public Partnerships \(2011\)](#)

RESOURCE: [Arizona State University \(ASU\) American Indian Policy Institute](#)