

In an effort to help point to clear documentation this request meets the eligibility requirements for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds established under the American Rescue Plan Act, attached are pages 189 – 190 of the Department of the Treasury Final Rule and page 12 of the Interim Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions as of January 2022. An excerpt of the relevant language is also noted below. It is our belief this guidance directly supports the Court's request.

### **Department of the Treasury Final Rule**

#### **Administrative Needs Caused or Exacerbated by the Pandemic**

As described in guidance and the interim final rule, SLRFR funds may be used to address administrative needs of recipient governments that were caused or exacerbated by the pandemic. Guidance following the interim final rule included several examples of this, for example, uses of funds to address backlogs resulting from pandemic-related shutdowns (e.g., backlogs in court systems).<sup>249</sup> This also includes using funds for increased repair or maintenance needs to respond to significantly greater use of public facilities during the pandemic (e.g., increased use of parks resulting in damage or increased need for maintenance). Some commenters expressed support for the ability to use funds for these purposes. Treasury is maintaining these enumerated eligible uses in the final rule and clarifying that capital expenditures such as technology infrastructure to adapt government operations to the pandemic (e.g., video-conferencing software, improvements to case management systems or data sharing resources), reduce government backlogs, or meet increased maintenance needs are eligible.

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<sup>249</sup> See FAQ 2.19. Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Frequently Asked Questions, as of July 19, 2021; <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRPFAQ.pdf>. In the case of courts specifically, this includes "implementing COVID-19 safety measures to facilitate court operations, hiring additional court staff or attorneys to increase speed of case resolution, and other expenses to expedite case resolution are eligible uses."

### **Interim Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions**

2.19. Would expenses to address a COVID-related backlog in court cases be an eligible use of funds as a response to the public health emergency? [6/23]

The Interim Final Rule recognizes that "decrease[s to] a state or local government's ability to effectively administer services," such as cuts to public sector staffing levels, can constitute a negative economic impact of the pandemic. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, many courts were unable to operate safely during the pandemic and, as a result, now face significant backlogs. Court backlogs resulting from inability of courts to safely operate during the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the government's ability to administer services. Therefore, steps to reduce these backlogs, such as implementing COVID-19 safety measures to facilitate court operations, hiring additional court staff or attorneys to increase speed of case resolution, and other expenses to expedite case resolution are eligible uses.

*This document has been submitted to the Office of the Federal Register (OFR) for publication and is currently pending placement on public display at the OFR and publication in the Federal Register. The document may vary slightly from the published document if minor editorial changes have been made during the OFR review process. Upon publication in the Federal Register, the regulation can be found at [www.federalregister.gov](http://www.federalregister.gov), [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and at [www.treasury.gov](http://www.treasury.gov). The document published in the Federal Register is the official document.*

## **DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY**

**[31 CFR Part 35**

**RIN 1505-AC77]**

**Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**

**AGENCY:** Department of the Treasury

**ACTION:** Final Rule

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary of the Treasury (Treasury) is adopting as final the interim final rule published on May 17, 2021, with amendments. This rule implements the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan Act.

**DATES:** *Effective date:* The provisions in this final rule are effective April 1, 2022.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

systems, to increase public access and improve public delivery of government programs and services (including in the judicial, legislative, or executive branches).

- Community outreach and engagement resources to support the gathering and sharing of information in ways that improve equity and effective implementation of SLFRF-funded programs and programs that respond to the public health emergency and its negative economic impacts, or which households, small businesses, or impacted industries are accessing during the pandemic that are funded by other sources. These methods include but are not limited to community meetings, online surveys, focus groups, human-centered design activities, behavioral science techniques, and other community engagement tools.
- Capacity building resources to support using data and evidence in designing, executing, and evaluating programs, including hiring public sector staff, contractors, academics, consultants, and others with expertise in evaluation, data, technology, and community engagement as well as technical assistance support for public sector staff, staff of subrecipients, and community partners to support effective implementation of SLFRF-funded programs and programs that respond to the public health emergency and its negative economic impacts, or which households, small businesses, or impacted industries are accessing during the pandemic that are funded by other sources.

#### *Administrative Needs Caused or Exacerbated by the Pandemic*

As described in guidance and the interim final rule, SLFRF funds may be used to address administrative needs of recipient governments that were caused or exacerbated by the pandemic. Guidance following the interim final rule included several examples of this, for example, uses of funds to address backlogs resulting from pandemic-related shutdowns (e.g., backlogs in court

systems).<sup>249</sup> This also includes using funds for increased repair or maintenance needs to respond to significantly greater use of public facilities during the pandemic (e.g., increased use of parks resulting in damage or increased need for maintenance). Some commenters expressed support for the ability to use funds for these purposes. Treasury is maintaining these enumerated eligible uses in the final rule and clarifying that capital expenditures such as technology infrastructure to adapt government operations to the pandemic (e.g., video-conferencing software, improvements to case management systems or data sharing resources), reduce government backlogs, or meet increased maintenance needs are eligible.

#### ~~b. CAPITAL EXPENDITURES~~

~~The interim final rule expressly permitted use of funds for a limited number of capital expenditures that mostly pertained to COVID-19 prevention and mitigation. These included capital investments in public facilities to meet pandemic operational needs, such as physical plant improvements to public hospitals and health clinics; adaptations to public buildings to implement COVID-19 mitigation tactics; ventilation improvements in congregate settings, health care settings, or other key locations; assistance to small businesses and nonprofits and aid to impacted industries to implement COVID-19 prevention or mitigation tactics, such as physical plant changes to enable social distancing. For disproportionately impacted populations and communities, the interim final rule also expressly permitted development of affordable housing to increase the supply of affordable and high-quality living units.~~

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<sup>249</sup> See *FAQ 2.19. Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Frequently Asked Questions*, as of July 19, 2021; <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRPFAQ.pdf>. In the case of courts specifically, this includes “implementing COVID-19 safety measures to facilitate court operations, hiring additional court staff or attorneys to increase speed of case resolution, and other expenses to expedite case resolution are eligible uses.”

**Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**

**Interim Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions**

AS OF JANUARY 2022

**Update (January 2022):** The FAQs in this document pertain to the Interim Final Rule (IFR), which is in effect until April 1, 2022. In addition to this document, recipients are encouraged to consult the *Statement Regarding Compliance with the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Interim Final Rule and Final Rule*, which provides guidance on use of funds until the Final Rule takes effect.

Treasury anticipates issuing FAQs for the Final Rule at a later date. Recipients may find helpful the *Overview of the Final Rule*, which provides a summary of major provision of the Final Rule for informational purposes.

This document contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding the Interim Final Rule of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSFRF / CLFRF, or Fiscal Recovery Funds). Treasury will be updating this document periodically in response to questions received from stakeholders. Recipients and stakeholders should consult the Interim Final Rule for additional information.

- For overall information about the program, including information on requesting funding, please see <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments>
- For general questions about CSFRF / CLFRF, please email [SLFRP@treasury.gov](mailto:SLFRP@treasury.gov)

Questions added 5/27/21: 1.5, 1.6, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 3.9, 4.5, 4.6, 10.3, 10.4 (noted with “[5/27]”)

Questions added 6/8/21: 2.16, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 4.7, 6.7, 8.2, 9.4, 9.5, 10.5 (noted with “[6/8]”)

Questions added 6/17/21: 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11 (noted with “[6/17]”)

Questions added 6/23/21: 1.7, 2.17, 2.18, 2.19, 2.20, 3.1 (appendix), 3.13, 4.8, 6.12 (noted with “[6/23]”)

Question added 6/24/21: 2.21 (noted with “[6/24]”)

Questions added 7/14/21: 1.8, 3.14, 3.15, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12, 6.13, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 10.3 updated (noted with “[7/14]”)

Question added 11/15/21: 12.1; Questions updated 11/15/21: 9.2

Answers to frequently asked questions on distribution of funds to non-entitlement units of local government (NEUs) can be found in this FAQ supplement, which is regularly updated.

recognizes that “decrease[s to] a state or local government’s ability to effectively administer services” can constitute a negative economic impact of the pandemic.

**2.19. Would expenses to address a COVID-related backlog in court cases be an eligible use of funds as a response to the public health emergency? [6/23]**

The Interim Final Rule recognizes that “decrease[s to] a state or local government’s ability to effectively administer services,” such as cuts to public sector staffing levels, can constitute a negative economic impact of the pandemic. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, many courts were unable to operate safely during the pandemic and, as a result, now face significant backlogs. Court backlogs resulting from inability of courts to safely operate during the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the government’s ability to administer services. Therefore, steps to reduce these backlogs, such as implementing COVID-19 safety measures to facilitate court operations, hiring additional court staff or attorneys to increase speed of case resolution, and other expenses to expedite case resolution are eligible uses.

**2.20. Can funds be used to assist small business startups as a response to the negative economic impact of COVID-19? [6/23]**

As discussed in the Interim Final Rule, recipients may provide assistance to small businesses that responds to the negative economic impacts of COVID-19. The Interim Final Rule provides a non-exclusive list of potential assistance mechanisms, as well as considerations for ensuring that such assistance is responsive to the negative economic impacts of COVID-19.

Treasury acknowledges a range of potential circumstances in which assisting small business startups could be responsive to the negative economic impacts of COVID-19, including for small businesses and individuals seeking to start small businesses after the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency. For example:

- A recipient could assist small business startups with additional costs associated with COVID-19 mitigation tactics (e.g., barriers or partitions; enhanced cleaning; or physical plant changes to enable greater use of outdoor space).
- A recipient could identify and respond to a negative economic impact of COVID-19 on new small business startups; for example, if it could be shown that small business startups in a locality were facing greater difficulty accessing credit than prior to the pandemic, faced increased costs to starting the business due to the pandemic, or that the small business had lost expected startup capital due to the pandemic.
- The Interim Final Rule also discusses eligible uses that provide support for individuals who have experienced a negative economic impact from the COVID-19 public health emergency, including uses that provide job training for unemployed individuals. These initiatives also may support small business startups and individuals seeking to start small businesses.