



ARPA Funds in Craighead County & Jonesboro

As of July 26, 2023

This post does not represent or speak on behalf of Craighead County, the city of Jonesboro, or any of its employees or officials. This post contains information regarding the activity of the \$21,430,698 Craighead County received in ARPA funds from the federal government. Any verified corrections are welcomed.

ARPA stands for American Rescue Plan Act. For the Craighead County Quorum Court and Jonesboro City Council, it is a very important federal act that recently brought an unprecedented amount of non-matching (the county and city don't have to contribute to receive any of it) funds to both Craighead County & Jonesboro.

This information is all public record and was provided to me, as I requested, by our local County Judge's, County Treasurer's, and County Clerk's Offices. All of these offices' staff were very responsive, courteous, & professional. Thank you!

The American Rescue Plan Act is a federal law, passed in 2021, that delivered \$350 billion to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to respond to COVID-19 pandemic and stimulate the economy from job and revenue loss. I would argue it's been quite successful as the US employment is 3.6% and Arkansas's unemployment rate is 2.6% while a vast majority of the new administration's laws are even in effect until August 1, 2023. (June 2023, BLS)

Thanks to all 48 US Senate democrats and 2 independents (Sanders-VT & King-ME), the US Senate passed the American Rescue Plan Act on March 6, 2021.* Every US Senate republican, aside from Sullivan-AK who was non-voting, voted against ARPA. In similar fashion, every republican member, aside from one non-voting member, of the US House voted no on the act. 220 democrats (with J. Golden of Maine being the sole no) secured the act's passage on March 10, 2021.**

I don't share the vote tally to rub anyone's nose in the fact these funds were made available solely due to democrats but to allow the record to correctly reflect how these funds made their way from D.C. to Craighead County, Jonesboro, and cities/counties throughout the country. Especially now that more and more counties and cities are starting to plan projects or have already began monumental projects with ARPA funds.

Craighead County received two equal payments from the US Treasury for its ARPA funds. The first payment of \$10,715,349 was deposited on May 20, 2021 and the second payment of \$10,715,349 was deposited on June 10, 2022 - for a total of \$21,430,698. This total does not include interest. To

date, \$380,727.98 has been earned on the interest from the 2 deposits. ARPA did allow a transfer of \$10,000,000 which was transferred to the General Fund on August 23, 2022 via Appropriation Ordinance 2022-24 (link below). Once in the General Fund, the \$10,000,000 can be spent on anything normally allowed in the General Fund. It can also be used with existing/separate ARPA funds on allowable expenses, however a significant portion of these transferred funds will be used to pay down the cost of the new courthouse expansion. The General Fund ended 2022 with \$11,084,537.45. In 2021, the ARPA fund expenditures totaled \$2,946.59. The 2022 expenditures/transfers totaled \$10,018,463.75. To date in 2023, the ARPA fund expenditures have totaled \$886.25. Since 2021, Craighead County has paid AG Witt, LLC. \$18,795 for grant management services to advise the county on compliance as any non-compliant expenditures must be paid back to the federal government. As of the most recent financial summary, the county still has \$11,792,075.98 in its ARPA fund with the \$10,000,000 still being reflected in the county general from the previous transfers via Appropriation Ordinance 2022-24. That Ordinance can be viewed here on the county's website: <https://craigheadcountyar.gov/government/about#ord>

The city of Jonesboro's most recent ARPA Ledger/Summary can be found by visiting: <https://www.jonesboro.org/526/Financials>, clicking on "May 2023 Financials (PDF)" and scrolling to page 24. Once you're on page 24, you can see all of the city's revenue and expenditure activity for its ARPA funds. Per this most recent summary, the city of Jonesboro still has \$12,471,229. Coupled with Craighead County, that is \$24,263,304.98. When you add the aforementioned \$10,000,000 transfer, that's \$34,263,304.98, but as I mentioned, the \$10,000,000 with Craighead is being used to aid in the courthouse expansion.

The US Treasury Department issued a Quick Reference Guide for permitted uses of ARPA funds. It can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/17zaK7e9LZSYqqHQwvEDrfb2VUlcqW0Jo>

Page 2 shows some examples, and yes those examples are still rather vague but they provide some context for items that are still very needed in Jonesboro and throughout Craighead County. Please review pg. 2 and feel free to comment with anything you think ARPA funds should be used for in Craighead County.

Lastly, Craighead County and the city of Jonesboro can leverage their ARPA funds together for what YOU think is most needed and important for growth, progress & addressing on-going community challenges. There are examples all over the country, and even Arkansas, where Quorum Courts and city councils use their ARPA funds together. One recent and very local example is in the city of Paragould. If you've heard about or visited their new Farmer's Market/Pavilion <https://www.kait8.com/2023/05/13/paragould-farmers-market-opens-new-location/>, that building was built with the Greene County Quorum Court and Paragould City Council each committing \$750,000 of ARPA funds. Their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Resolutions (how they legally authorized the project) can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ul-eEotEAeuh7tFT-d6IIXKU08_6A68E?usp=sharing

All of the ARPA funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026.

That's all I have to share for now. I will occasionally make ARPA Updates and will defer the city of Jonesboro's activity to their own officials but will share what they have posted on their website. Please comment with anything you'd like to share or ideas you have on how ARPA funds in Craighead County should be spent. At the end of the day, your ideas are what elected officials need to hear the most and should strive to balance with all the complex ARPA compliance guidelines.

Take care and God bless! - Garrett

*https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_votes/vote1171/vote_117_1_00110.htm#position

**<https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/202172>

***<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/121NACx8uXSREgYj0fwUe1EykXS7iVbmv?usp=sharing>