



## Messaging & Framing Guidance: The American Rescue Plan & Funding Our States' Futures

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Questions? Ideas? Feedback? Email us at [commhelp@cbpp.org](mailto:commhelp@cbpp.org)

*Context:* The American Rescue Plan helps provide our states with the resources needed to care for all of our families. Below are some messages and frames to help ensure our state leaders adopt bold policy solutions that will help all residents and communities. *Note: Be sure to tailor the examples to fit your state's context and add supporting data where possible. You can visit our Federal Scoop website, [www.federalscoop.org](http://www.federalscoop.org), for more implementation resources, including polling on the American Rescue Plan, blogs, and papers from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and information about the major provisions.*

### Topline Messages:

- The American Rescue Plan is a historic investment in us, providing \$1,400 per-person checks to households, help with basics like childcare and healthcare, extended unemployment insurance, and more. It also provides billions of flexible dollars to states, schools, local governments, tribes, and hard-hit businesses.
- That flexible aid will soon flow into our state's coffers, and [State] lawmakers are responsible for getting this money to the people who need it most. Now is the time for them to deliver the relief and support that all our families need.
- It's also time for state lawmakers to fund our future by raising the revenues required to make transformative investments that build on the foundation laid by this one-time federal stimulus.
- State lawmakers must ensure that all of our families, no matter what we look like or where we come from, have what we need. This is especially important for [Staters] of color, who face more barriers to opportunity due to a history of racism and discrimination.
- Our future is determined by what we do together, and this moment requires us to act boldly. Returning to a pre-COVID status quo is not enough, because that status quo left behind too many of our communities and families. Together, we can demand state policies that make [State] a place where all of us can thrive, no exceptions.

### Proactive Messages:

#### Implementing federal relief

## **Lawmakers must ensure our families have the economic support we need**

The American Rescue Plan provides [State] with a historic opportunity to make this a place where all of us can thrive, no matter our color, background, or zip code. To ensure these federal dollars strengthen our communities, lawmakers should:

1. Target aid to those most in need due to the COVID-19 and consequent economic crises.
2. Advance antiracist and equitable policies — both short- and long-term — to dismantle persistent racial, ethnic, gender, and economic inequities and other barriers that non-dominant groups and identities experience.
3. Strengthen state revenue systems to sustain transformative, long-term investments in Black, brown, Indigenous, immigrant, and low-income communities.
4. Build robust outreach operations focused on publicizing available aid and resources and connecting eligible people to them. Maximizing the impact of these crucial emergency investments will require that residents know about them and can navigate the processes needed to access them.

Our state must deliver what our families need to pull through this pandemic and thrive for years to come. It is critical for [State] lawmakers to fund programs that help families make ends meet, businesses reopen, and students return to classrooms. That means [State]'s current budget must include [XYZ].

*Note: For information on the timing of federal relief, refer to the Center's [Implementation Grid on the America Rescue Plan](#).*

## **Building the will to raise revenue to fund our communities**

### **It will take all of us to rebuild**

Federal lawmakers have already enacted historic relief for our families — now it is up to our state lawmakers to fund our futures. Essential workers and local businesses cared for us throughout this crisis — now wealthy households and corporations who profited off the pandemic need to pay their fair share for our communities' well-being.

The American Rescue Plan is a significant step in the right direction, but because its provisions are temporary, state lawmakers have essential roles to play today and in the years ahead. [State] must fund schools that have for too long been deprived, repair often-neglected infrastructure, boost opportunity for those struggling to make ends meet, and make this a place where all of our families can thrive—no matter our race, background, or zip code. Our lawmakers can raise the resources needed to do so over the long term by asking high-income households and highly profitable corporations to invest in our communities and help create the [State] we all deserve.

### **We can't go back to business as usual**

The American Rescue Plan will allow us to address some of our communities' most pressing needs, but it will *not* undo the systemic issues and racist policies that made this crisis so much worse for far too many of our communities. Barriers to economic stability and health existed before COVID-19 for Black, brown, Indigenous, and immigrant communities due to past federal and state policy decisions. We must join together to imagine and ensure better policies so that all of us—Black, white, or brown, native or newcomer, from [CITY/TOWN/COUNTY NAME] or [CITY/TOWN/COUNTY NAME]—can make a good living and have a good life.

**Federal relief is already helping. When will [Staters] see their state lawmakers' impact?**

Just [X months] after its passage, the new federal relief package is already showing [Staters] what it looks like when our government cares for us. Many/Most [Staters] have already received their much-needed stimulus checks, and in the months ahead, more parents will see their children return to affordable child care and better-funded schools; more small business owners will receive the relief needed to reopen; and more people struggling to make ends meet will be able to provide for their families. But because the federal aid provides only a short-term stimulus, [State] and local lawmakers must act to fund our futures and ensure our communities' long-term well-being by [INSERT KEY POLICY PRIORITIES HERE].

## Reactive Messages:

### Opposing flat state budgets

This could look like someone saying, "State revenues are stronger than expected and we may receive more federal aid than we are even able to use. There is no need for us to raise new revenues right now. We need to focus on how we can spend what we already have."

#### ***Our Response:***

The American Rescue Plan is a historic and much-needed response to a global pandemic. In the short term, the federal relief will help many of us recover from months of lost wages and overdue rent. It will help [State] students catch up and then gain new ground in their classrooms. And it will help [State] businesses reopen to their returning and new customers.

But this temporary stimulus will end, and [State] lawmakers cannot rely on federal relief alone to respond to this crisis. They must make their own long-term investments in our communities and infrastructure to ensure we all – Black, white, or brown, native or newcomer, from [CITY/TOWN/COUNTY NAME] or [CITY/TOWN/COUNTY NAME] – recover from this crisis together. What's more, federal aid will help us out of the crisis, but it can't reverse the harm done to our families and communities from decades of [budget cuts to/underinvestment in] critical public services like schools, health care, and higher education.

### Opposing tax cut proposals

This could look like someone saying, "The federal relief prohibits states from cutting taxes, regardless of whether it makes sense for a state to do so to stimulate spending and create new jobs. The federal plan is an intrusion into state policy, and we will not allow Washington, D.C. to dictate whether our residents, businesses, and economy would benefit from tax cuts or where we should spend our stimulus dollars."

***Our Response:*** [Staters] across race, place, and party agree that our state lawmakers should deliver federal relief for our communities to support our schools and small businesses and put our families' lives and livelihoods back on track. However, the federal law does *not* prevent [State] lawmakers from misusing our state dollars to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy; they'd merely have to return the equivalent amount of federal aid. Lawmakers who choose tax cut for a few rich residents over investments in our communities are not prioritizing us. Rather, such policies will require all of us to pay more – especially those of us with the lowest incomes – and take away funding from critical public services like education and public health, which we need now more than ever.

