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Making Sure Policymakers Know Their Investments Make a Difference

There's big SLFRF news in Kansas City, Missouri. The Jackson County Legislature recently approved a resolution committing to spending \$70.4 million in remaining dollars from the County's \$137 million allocation under the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) enacted as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

The timing is important; if these funds are not obligated via written contracts and grants by the end of this year, the count will have to send it back to the federal government. (Indeed, the [Resolution](#) approved by the county legislature expressly states: "WHEREAS, ARPA funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026".)

Some of the noteworthy community investments of these funds include –

- Facility improvements for community nonprofits to enhance service delivery and operational efficiency (\$5 million)
- Childcare facility improvements to fund expansion of existing facilities to increase capacity and affordability for families (\$3 million)
- Food insecurity program to fund initiatives to help food banks, meal delivery programs, and community gardens increase access to nutritious food (\$1

million)

No doubt, advocates from across the county and from all subsectors of the nonprofit community engaged early and often to help ensure the elected officials knew the importance of investing some of their SLFRF allocation in the work and recovery of charitable organizations. Once the Resolution was approved and made public, wise advocates continued advocating by urging nonprofits to express their appreciation.

The actions of one group - ArtsKC - is exemplary. On the day after the vote of the vote on the Resolution, ArtsKC put out a Call to Action delivering the news and providing next steps.

“We ask our supporters like you to join us in thanking the Legislature for their action,” their message read. To make things easy, they provided a contact sheet to find the email addresses for the individual legislators and [“template language](#) to send a note of gratitude for this critical step.”

The template language is a Master Class in succinct advocacy. First, it expresses gratitude for the Resolution. Next it suggests that writers of thank-you emails reference the economic impact of the arts in the community. It then turns to the ask: “I respectfully request that a substantial portion of this ARPA money be invested in this sector which is such an important economic driver.”

The template message concludes: “Many organizations are still digging out from the pandemic, and an investment of this magnitude could greatly help stabilize the sector and prepare for the once-in-a-lifetime event coming in 2026 - the World Cup.” Never hurts to reference local pride as an inducement.

While the process for seeking SLFRF dollars has seemed complex to some who are used to responding to Requests for Proposals or filing out online applications, the payoff for some basic advocacy efforts can be huge. In this case, in barely 100 words, the nonprofits can cover the gamut from thanks to impact to ask.