

**American Rescue Plan State Fiscal Recovery Fund Recommendation  
Cover Sheet**

Please submit this document with any recommendations for funding from Rhode Island's allocation of federal fiscal recovery funds available through the American Rescue Plan Act. This information will be made available to the public along with any detailed documents submitted that describe the proposal. It is encouraged that such documents identify clear goals and objectives and quantifiable metrics.

**This is not a formal request for funds, and submission of recommendations does not guarantee a response, public hearing, or appropriation from the General Assembly.**

Name of Lead Agency: G P Y M C A , Greater Providence YMCA

Additional agencies making recommendation (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

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Brief Project Description (attachments should contain details) upgrade physical infrastructure, provide program support for childcare, academic, and mental health needs, to more than 5,000 children across the state for several years.

Total request: \$ 9,000,000

One-time or Recurring Expense? One-Time

ARPA Eligibility Category (check all that apply) – See link for further information

<https://www.rilegislature.gov/commissions/arpa/commdocs/Treasury%20-%20Quick-Reference-Guide.pdf>

- Respond to the public health emergency and its economic impacts X
- Premium pay to eligible workers \_\_\_\_\_
- Government services/state revenue replacement \_\_\_\_\_
- Water/sewer/broadband infrastructure \_\_\_\_\_



*Proposal for American Rescue Plan State Fiscal Recovery Fund Recommendation*

As the largest childcare provider in the State of Rhode Island the Greater Providence YMCA, GPYMCA, is tasked with taking care of the physical, emotional, and mental health needs of the children we care for. We are at the forefront of the childcare issue and we believe the issue of childcare across the state will only increase due to the effects of the pandemic. Starting 2022 we have been increasing our childcare capacity to assist parents across the state, but also had some financial challenges due to COVID.

The GPYMCA would like to submit two proposals that we feel would complement each other. First, we are proposing an upgrade of our physical infrastructure such as the roofs, fields, gymnasium floors, pools and other physical features at all seven of our locations. We have a large physical footprint around the state and this could be utilized effectively for a large number of kids. The pools provide access to our popular life-saving swimming classes for children, and a low impact exercise option for our older members. We are also looking to increase the safety features at Camp Fuller, our overnight sleep away camp located on 55 acres in South Kingstown, by making it safer against fires by clearing out underbrush and debris. This would also help protect the wooded areas in the Kent County branch.

These upgrades were part of our long-range strategic vision prior to COVID, but due to the pandemic it had to be put on the back burner, due to other, more problems, and the dwindling lack of funds. It was a matter of priorities, and was simply unaffordable for us at the time.

The second proposal is to expand, and underwrite, some of our programs for children who cannot afford childcare. Our responsibility is grand, and it is in the urban core and would affect a large number of under-served children. We are also in 11 schools in the greater Providence area, in after school programs (Out-of-School Time).

With ARPA funding the GPYMCA would be looking at a once in a generation transformation of investment and services that would positively impact children across the state. With our long-term plan for physical upgrades, and for programmatic expansion to include childcare needs, academic needs, and mental health needs, we believe it is needed especially considering the mental health needs of our children during COVID.

We are very concerned about the mental health and well-being of the children we care for and look to expand our programs to include more cognitive learning, and expanded activities. We recently hired three new mental health advocates and they are making an impact with our members. Studies across the country show that all societal groups, regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic background were adversely affected by the pandemic. Studies also show that exercise is an extremely helpful tool in combatting many of the mental health effects from the pandemic by increasing dopamine and serotonin levels, improving socialization opportunities, and having structured activities all to improve the mental health of the people we serve.

Our main focus is to provide more programs such as gymnastics, swimming, and academic help, to more kids, in more viable, and safer environments. We also are looking to include programs with a focus on improving the mental health and well-being of the children we serve.

Prior to COVID we were on track to make these improvements ourselves. It was our strategic goal to implement these changes slowly and methodically. Once COVID hit almost all of our funding went to staying open.

Today, we are looking to grow and expand again because our services are needed across the state. We have \$40 million in physical assets, are located in seven locations across Rhode Island, and serve thousands of individuals. Selling any of our assets is not an option. Membership is still only about half of what it was before the pandemic, and so are our donations. The ATRPA funds would allow us to focus funds to these seven locations.

1. The Kent County Branch has 115 acres, and two buildings
2. The South County Branch has 20 acres, and a building
3. The Newman Branch has 10 acres, and a building
4. The Barrington Branch has five acres, and a building.
5. The East Side Branch has two acres, has a building, and is working with the City Providence.
6. The Cranston Branch has 10 acres and two buildings
7. Camp Fuller on Salt Pond, has 52 acres, and over 75 buildings
8. Providence Youth Services goes into 11 different schools

In early 2020 we were just starting the planning phase for the opening of our very popular summer sleep away camp (Camp Fuller) located in Wakefield, Rhode Island.

Three months later, all GPYMCA sites were closed due to COVID. Our employment levels went from 800 down to a low of just over 200, and Camp Fuller was forced to completely shut down any kind of sleepovers for two summers, and our Out of School (OST) programs were all closed. It was a devastating event for the organization.

Today, many of our programs are opening up to full capacity, including Camp Fuller, which serves approximately 500 campers over the summer. It provides a safe place for kids from all over the state to interact, get to know each other, and participate in a wide variety of activities including swimming lessons, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, wind-surfing, water skiing, archery, team sports, rope courses, biking, yoga, gardening and nature, dance, music, chess, and photography. We are finding the money to do this because the need is so great, but we are still in need of funding.

The GPYMCA has the infrastructure, experience, skilled staffing, and alliances to provide great services to thousands of children and members. With ARPA funds the GPYMCA is looking at a once in a generation transformation that can help change the course of the state. We are very excited about that. With our long-term plan for physical upgrades, and our new programmatic expansion for childcare needs, academic needs, and mental health needs, we believe that we are looking to make such an impact. The need is there, and with the help of ARPA funds we can begin to synergize our resources with ARPA funding, so that together we can help improve the lives of thousands of children, and give them the boost they need for years to come.