

State passes new grant opportunities and funds existing programs using state and federal stimulus funds



By the CML Advocacy Team

The 2021 Legislative Session concluded with unprecedented grant and loan opportunities. Whether it is housing, transportation, economic development, or water infrastructure, almost all the programs can positively impact and provide much needed funding to municipalities. This article lists all the applicable grant programs and the lobbyist to contact for more information.

HB21-1253: Renewable and Clean Energy Project Grants

HB21-1253 transfers \$5 million from the General Fund to the Local Government Severance Tax Fund for the purpose of funding grants to local governments for renewable and clean energy infrastructure implementation projects. Grants will be distributed through the Department of Local Affairs by **Aug. 15, 2021**, or as soon as possible thereafter. For more information, contact Heather Stauffer (hstauffer@cml.org).

HB21-1260: General Fund Transfer Implement State Water Plan

HB21-1260 authorizes a \$20 million transfer from the General Fund to the Colorado Water Conservation Board to help implement the state water plan. Some of the funding can be used for grants which municipalities are eligible to apply for. The act lowers the matching fund requirements of these CWCB grants from 50% to 25% and further specifies that the CWCB may award grants in 2021 and 2022 with further reduced matching fund requirements. For more information, contact Heather Stauffer (hstauffer@cml.org).

HB21-1263: Meeting and Events Incentive Program

HB21-1263 creates the Colorado Meeting and Events Incentive Program within the Colorado Tourism Office to provide support for events like meetings, conferences, or festivals. The program may provide rebates of up to 10% of the hard costs of an event and up to 25% of cost related to complying with public health requirements due to COVID-19 restrictions. To be eligible for funding, an event must occur between **July 1, 2021, and Dec. 31, 2022**, and must generate at least 25 paid overnight stays in a hotel or other vacation rental. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

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HB21-1271: Department of Local Affairs Innovative Housing Strategies

HB21-1271 creates three different grant programs in the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The first program is called Local Government Affordable Housing Development Incentives Grant Program. The program allows a local government to apply for a grant if they adopt at least four policies to incentivize development. The second grant program is the Local Government Planning Grant Program. Money under the planning grant program will be available to a local government to enable them to retain a consultant to identify housing needs. Finally, the act creates the Affordable Housing Guided Toolkit and the Local Officials Guide Program. The purpose of the housing toolkit program is to provide local governments the tools to begin the process to identify their housing needs. For more information, contact Meghan Dollar (mdollar@cml.org).

HB21-1285: Funding to Support Creative Arts Industries

HB21-1285 provides funding to support the creative arts industries and arts-related economic development. \$5 million is allocated to the Colorado Office of Film, Television, and Media Operational Account Cash Fund for use in awarding performance-based incentives for film production in the state, as well as for the loan guarantee program to finance production activities. \$5 million is allocated to the Creative Industries Cash Fund to fund the arts relief program and to fund grants to cultural facilities that focus on programming for historically marginalized and under-resourced communities. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

HB21-1288: Colorado Startup Loan Program

HB21-1288 creates the Colorado Startup Loan Program in the Office of Economic Development to provide loans and grants to businesses seeking capital to start, restart, or restructure businesses. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

HB21-1289: Funding for Broadband Deployment

HB21-1289 funds grant programs to support broadband infrastructure using federal relief funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). Four grant programs are funded through the act—Digital Inclusion, Broadband Stimulus, Interconnectivity, and Connecting Colorado Students. Local governments can apply for grant funding through the programs. A total of \$75 million is appropriated from the Economic Recovery and Relief Cash Fund created in SB21-291 to fund the grant programs. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

HB21-1290: Additional Funding for Just Transition

HB21-1290 provides funding for the Office of Just Transition and the Coal Transition Worker Assistance Programs. The Office of Just Transition is appropriated \$8 million to implement the final just transition plan and to provide supplemental funding for existing state programs that the office identifies as the most effective vehicles for targeted investment in coal transition communities. The act also appropriates \$7 million to the Coal Transition Worker Assistance Program for assistance programs that directly assist coal transition workers and to support families of coal transition workers. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

HB21-1318: Create Outdoor Equity Grant Program

HB21-1318 creates the Outdoor Equity Board and the Outdoor Equity Grant Program in the Division of Parks and Wildlife in the Department of Natural Resources to increase access and opportunity for underserved youth and their families to experience Colorado's outdoor resources. The grant is available to applicants that engage underserved youth, offer outdoor-based educational opportunities, and reduce barriers to the outdoors, which includes governmental entities. For more information, contact Heather Stauffer (hstauffer@cml.org).

HB21-1329: American Rescue Plan Act Money Fund Affordable Housing

HB21-1329 creates the Affordable Housing and Home Ownership Cash Fund to provide assistance to households or populations disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency and to support programs or services that address housing insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness. The act transfers \$550 million from the American Rescue Plan Act Cash Fund to the newly created Affordable Housing and Home Ownership Cash Fund and appropriates \$98.5 million to the Division of Housing in the Department of Local Affairs to provide gap financing to assist persons disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency to obtain affordable housing. For more information, contact Meghan Dollar (mdollar@cml.org).

SB21-110: Fund safe revitalization of Main Streets

SB21-110 funds the Revitalizing Main Streets Program in the Colorado Department of Transportation. Within the program there are two grant programs that are available to local governments: Larger Safety Infrastructure Grants and Small Multimodal and Economic Resiliency Project Grants. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

SB21-204: Rural Economic Development Initiative Grant Program Funding

SB21-204 provides an appropriation to the Department of Local Affairs for the Rural Economic Development Initiative Grant Program, which provides grants that create new jobs in rural communities through a new employer or an expansion of an existing employer, or that create diversity and resiliency in a rural community's local economy. The funding may also be used for the Rural Economic Advancement of Colorado Towns program, which assists the state in responding to significant economic impacts in rural communities. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

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SB21-221: Projects under Wildfire Risk Management Grant Program

SB21-221 works in conjunction with a budget appropriation of \$7 million, and removes the \$1 million limit for the grant share of individual projects to allow for larger projects to take place. It also directs the Colorado Forest Service Technical Advisory Panel who reviews grant applications to show preference to hazardous fuel reduction projects from communities who have, or plan to, adopt local measures that reduce wildfire risks which complement funds provided through the program. For more information, contact Heather Stauffer (hstauffer@cml.org).

SB21-229: Rural Jump-Start Zone Grant Program

SB21-229 creates the Rural Jump-Start Zone Grant Program in the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT). Eligible businesses located in a rural jump-start zone may receive tax benefits, including a tax credit equal to 100% of the income taxes imposed on a new business for income generated within a rural jump-start zone, and a full sales and use tax refund for purchases of any tangible personal property acquired by the new business and used exclusively within the rural jump-start zone. Additionally, new employees of eligible businesses may also receive a 100% income tax credit for work performed in a rural jump-start zone. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

SB21-242: Housing Development Grants Hotels Tenancy Support Program

SB21-242 expands the use of the Housing Development Grant Fund in the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The funds may be used for tenancy support services, including those that target individuals experiencing homelessness, and for grants and loans to local governments and non-profits for the rental, acquisition, or renovation of underutilized hotels, motels, and properties to provide noncongregate sheltering or affordable housing. For more information, contact Meghan Dollar (mdollar@cml.org).

SB21-252: Community Revitalization Grant Program

SB21-252 creates the Community Revitalization Grant Program in the Division of Creative Industries (DCI) in the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, and it appropriates \$65 million to fund the grant program. Local governments may receive grants from the program to support creative projects that revitalize or construct mixed-use commercial centers. DCI must collaborate with the Division of Local Government in the Department of Local Affairs to administer the grant program. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).

SB21-258: Wildfire Risk Mitigation

SB21-258 appropriates millions of dollars to various wildfire prevention and response programs at the state. These include funding for mitigation and preparedness on the local level as well as additional funding for state tools used for fire suppression. For more information, contact Heather Stauffer (hstauffer@cml.org).

SB21-291: Economic Recovery and Relief Cash Fund

SB21-291 creates the Economic Recovery and Relief Cash Fund to help small businesses, industries, unemployed workers, and communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, or help with certain infrastructure projects. For more information, contact Meghan MacKillop (mmackillop@cml.org).



SB21-260: signed

Gov. Jared Polis signed the landmark transportation funding bill on June 17. CML staff was in attendance, along with Mayors John Suthers (Colorado Springs), Jackie Millet (Lone Tree), Anita Seitz (Westminster), and Adam Paul (Lakewood). The bill will generate over \$5 billion in new revenue, including over \$900 million of revenue for local governments in the Highway Users Tax Fund. The bill includes funding to create a robust electric vehicle charging infrastructure, boost mass transit, and mitigate air pollution.