

One Regional Voice: COVID-19 Stimulus and Relief Response

CONTACT

Laura Wilkison,
Deputy Executive Director, Plan
Implementation & Legislative Affairs
lwilkison@cmap.illinois.gov
or 773-454-3897

Guiding Principles

Provide fiscal relief across all levels of government with increased assistance for those most severely impacted.

- The revenue impacts of the pandemic will be felt by states, counties, and localities; all levels of government should be eligible to receive relief funds. Federally funded transportation projects are matched with both local and state funds, and all entities providing non-federal match need assistance to continue delivering the federal highway program.
- Metropolitan areas will be impacted the most by the current pandemic. Cities and communities that were already disadvantaged and disconnected will feel the impacts more acutely than others. Focused resources in these areas will be necessary to address communities' needs and rebuild the economy.

Broaden eligibility for relief funds.

- The federal role in many programs is focused on capital investment, which is particularly true for transportation. However, funds should have broad eligibility, including for operating budgets and debt service. The unprecedented nature of the pandemic has created uncertainty regarding revenues, and funds originally intended to match federal transportation funds may need to be reprioritized. Flexible federal support is needed.

Continue and increase support for transit.

- The ridership and revenue impacts facing transit agencies are severe. The CARES Act provided vital support for transit agencies; importantly, funds were flexible and 100 percent federal. As medium- and long-term impacts become known, additional support will be necessary to keep these vital services operational and in a state of good repair.

Infrastructure stimulus investments should be both timely and strategic.

- For stimulus funds beyond those needed for immediate relief, there is a potential conflict between making the right investments and making investments quickly enough to have an economic impact. A focus on reconstruction and maintenance of existing infrastructure can provide the needed balance between timeliness and long-term benefit. Stimulus funds should go to projects that provide the greatest benefit using performance-driven criteria that lead to transparent, outcome-based, mode-neutral decisions.
- Align transportation, housing, environment, and economic development programs to leverage the greatest economic recovery benefit.

Stimulus investments should support resilience and mitigate a changing climate.

- Stimulus funds should support communities' ability to prepare for and recover from acute shocks and chronic stresses. This requires making infrastructure, natural systems, and social structures more durable in order to rebound quickly from climate change occurrences, such as stronger storms and more frequent flooding. In addition, funds should focus on programs and activities to mitigate climate change in order to reduce reoccurrences of disruptions and disasters impacting public health and safety.



233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois 60606
312-454-0400
info@cmap.illinois.gov
www.cmap.illinois.gov

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is our region's comprehensive planning organization. The agency and its partners developed and are now implementing ON TO 2050, a new long-range plan to help the seven counties and 284 communities of northeastern Illinois implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.