



Arkansas House Newsletter

November 15, 2024

Budget Hearings Continue



This week, the Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC) approved several requests to distribute federal funding to benefit Arkansas education, health, and safety initiatives.

One of the most significant approvals was a request for \$72.3 million of American Rescue Plan Act Program Funding (ARPA) from the Arkansas Department of Education. In addition to increasing the number of literacy coaches, tutoring grants to schools and students, merit teacher incentives, and transportation modernization grants, the division will use additional funds to standardize reporting systems across the state, increase measures such as the phone free school initiatives and increase career-ready pathways for students.

The ALC also approved \$2.6 million in ARPA funding for the Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood. This funding is designated to purchase fresh and processed food from local, socially disadvantaged farmers, making locally-produced food more accessible to Arkansas families. This program is designed to support both local agriculture and family nutrition, creating a positive impact for both growers and consumers in our state.

In addition, the council approved \$1.9 million in ARPA funding to support the Victims of Crime Act. This funding will help ensure that victims receive essential support and resources immediately following a crime.

Meanwhile, budget hearings are ongoing at the Capitol. This week, members received updates from the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services. Members expect to review the Governor's balanced budget proposal on November 21.

This week, Governor Sanders unveiled a new state employee pay plan aimed at streamlining career tracks, consolidating job titles, and bringing state employee pay up to labor market rates. The proposed pay plan would raise compensation for over 14,000 state employees, with the goal of aligning their pay with private labor market rates and addressing areas with workforce shortages. This pay plan will be considered during the upcoming Regular Session, beginning January 13, 2025.

Additionally, members of the 95th General Assembly will soon begin filing bills for consideration in the 2025 Regular Session. To stay informed, please visit our website at arkansashouse.org, where you'll find updates on filed bills and more information on legislative action.