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June 3, 2021

Secretary Janet Yellen
US Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20220

RE: Local Government Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Dear Secretary Yellen,

St. Lucie County is home to nearly 330,000 Floridians, and like many local governments around the nation, we are now addressing the result of impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on each of these citizens. We are appreciative of the hard work the Department has undergone to disburse the much needed economic lifeline provided by the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSFRF / CLFRF, or Fiscal Recovery Funds).

Under the provisions defined in the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, and more specifically the American Rescue Plan (ARP), St. Lucie County is eligible for an estimated \$64 million in relief funding. As we continue our review of how best the county can use these funds to respond to the Public Health Emergency / Negative Economic Impacts of the pandemic, we have several questions that we believe require further guidance from the Department for us to determine eligibility of certain projects and appreciate any assistance your office can provide:

- I. As a result of the pandemic and its ongoing local impacts exacerbated by the public health emergency, the County has suffered a tremendous loss in tourism dollars resulting in economic harm to smaller businesses and local airport authority revenues. We have several airport improvement projects that will allow us to enhance travel to County, revitalize our stunted tourism programs in the county, and once completed, we believe will result in a recovery of those lost revenues during the pandemic. ***Are projects designed to enhance, restore, and revitalize travel to the county via our airport facility – such as taxiway improvements, apron enhancements, and fencing and lighting project, all designed to attract commercial passenger travel to the region in an effort to restore the tourism industry of the county – eligible to receive funds under this program?***

2. As a result of the pandemic and its ongoing local impacts exacerbated by the public health emergency, our local medical examiner's office was unable to access outdated case management software which was inaccessible remotely and unsafe to access within county facilities during the crisis. ***Are projects that allow for software upgrades eligible under ARP guidance?***
3. Similarly, ***will projects designed to digitize records for safe recovery, review, transmittal, public access, and destroying when required without the need for in-person meeting qualify for funding?***
4. In accessing the eligibility of projects for funding, we understand that the county may provide assistance to those considered to be an impacted industry or small business to help address revenue loss/implementing new safety measures. ***Do 501(c)(3) organizations qualify as eligible under these provisions if they can demonstrate to the county's satisfaction that they had revenue loss as a result of the pandemic?***
5. Under ARP Guidance, when is a debt or cost obligated? For example, if the County has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a project to expand broadband access and reliably meet or exceed symmetrical 100 Mbps download speed and upload speeds as prescribed by the program, ***is such a project eligible for funding if the MOU was executed prior to March 3, 2021, even though no work, payments, or expenses have been incurred as of today's date?***
6. It is the County's intent to provide "evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs;" however, the County may not have an available indoor facility with enough capacity to allow the County to maximize the number of children in lower-income areas. ***Are capital costs to construct/expand/improve facilities with the specific purpose of offering the above-described services eligible under ARP guidance?***
7. ***More generally, are capital investments specifically related to services described in ARP guidance, i.e. services that address homelessness, address educational disparities, promoting healthy childhood environments, providing aid to impacted industries, etc. eligible or would the capital investments themselves need to be paid with lost revenue proceeds while the services offered therein could be paid with ARP funding?***
8. Finally, it is our understanding that the County will not be required to secure a pre-clearance from the Department in order to provide funding for projects that are eligible under the guidance from the Department. ***Can you please advise what documentation, records, reports, or other materials the county should retain for potential review by the Department in the future when making decisions to fund certain projects?***

Again, we are grateful for the hard work of the Department and our elected officials to provide this much needed assistance to counties across the country and look forward to working with the Department to address the impacts on St. Lucie County and its residents of the COVID -19 public health emergency. We look forward to receiving any feedback and additional guidance you can provide to our questions.

Sincerely,



Howard N. Tipton