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When in Doubt, Innovate

The resources made available under American Rescue Plan Act to state, local, and Tribal governments, and ultimately to charitable nonprofits, have been called a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address longstanding challenges and improve conditions in communities. But, by definition, once-in-a-generation means few, if any, have experience implementing the opportunity. Few local governments have practices, procedures, or programs already in place to document and spend the new money that's available. How are communities supposed to come together to make sound investments when there are no experts? By innovating and relying on people who are expert on community needs, of course.

In **Maryland**, those innovators are working at **Maryland Nonprofits** to connect governments to workable solutions that create certainty and impact. The state association of nonprofits recently launched a dedicated webpage titled "[A Model ARPA Grant Program from Maryland Nonprofits](#)." The site explains that the "Model Grant Program" is designed to make it easy for governments to develop and manage a grant program – even if they do not have a lot of experience in this area. The model grant process developed by Maryland Nonprofits is customizable; it allows for direct grantmaking or partnering with an intermediary, like a community foundation or charitable trust, to run the process.

Maryland Nonprofits is going the extra mile by also providing training to government officials and to nonprofits about what is available and how to make the case for mission-focused projects and supports.

- [A model ARPA grant program](#), Nov. 17, offers a ARPA workshop for government agencies and intermediaries to help them create a grantmaking process to distribute Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Relief Fund (CSLFRF) resources in their communities.
- [A "how-to" guide to prepare and submit government grants](#), Dec. 2, provides a guide for charitable organizations to become a more successful government grant applicant.
- [Developing your ARPA strategy](#), Dec. 6, focuses on helping nonprofits create their own ARPA strategy, including key actions they can use to influence local governments and state agencies, get prepared for strategic planning and rapid expansion, and to win ARPA funding.

The idea is that by using the process guide and sample attachments – plus the trainings tailored to government officials and to nonprofits - local jurisdictions can quickly set up a grantmaking process or add a layer to their current grantmaking process what works for charitable organizations and ensures that American Rescue Plan Act funds are quickly, efficiently, and equitably distributed in their communities.