



Butler County, Ohio

Recovery Plan – 2022 Report



State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds 2022 Performance Report

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

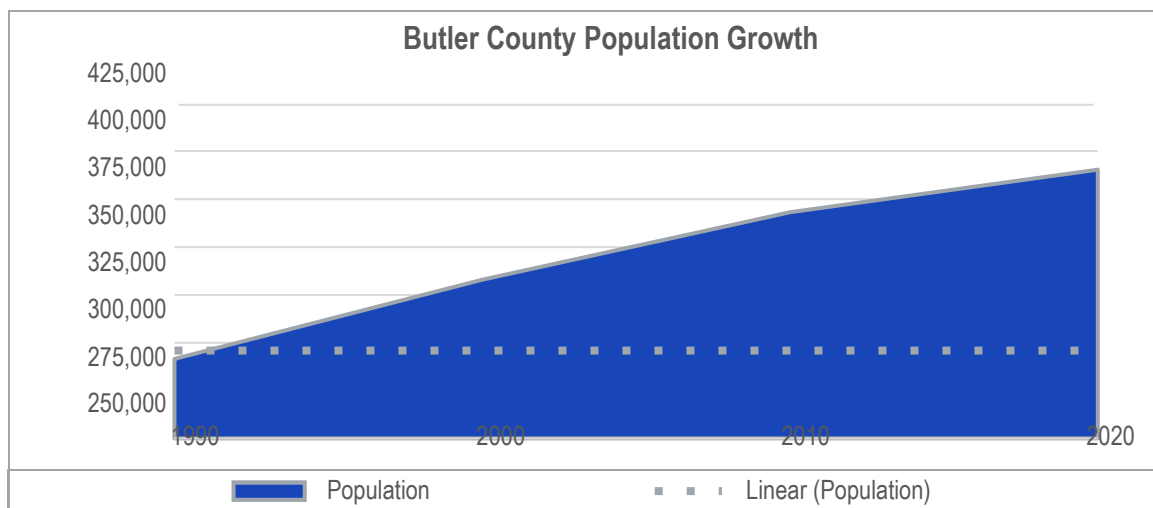
Executive Summary

Butler County is located in the southwestern part of the State of Ohio, strategically positioned equa-distant between two metropolitan areas: the City of Cincinnati to the south approximately 25 miles and the City of Dayton, approximately 25 miles to the north. The County is the seventh largest in the State of Ohio and is comprised of 24 unique political subdivisions with independent governing authorities yet dependent on a variety of County services and with some local governments dependent on County authority.

Numerous natural resources and infrastructure enhancements initiated and propelled the great commercial and industrial growth in the 1800's which Butler County continues to enjoy today. The Great Miami River and the opening of the railroads in the early 1850s birthed the commerce center Butler County enjoys today, and the advent of the construction of Interstate 75, traversing through the County, expanded the great commercial and industrial growth which continues to develop in the County today.

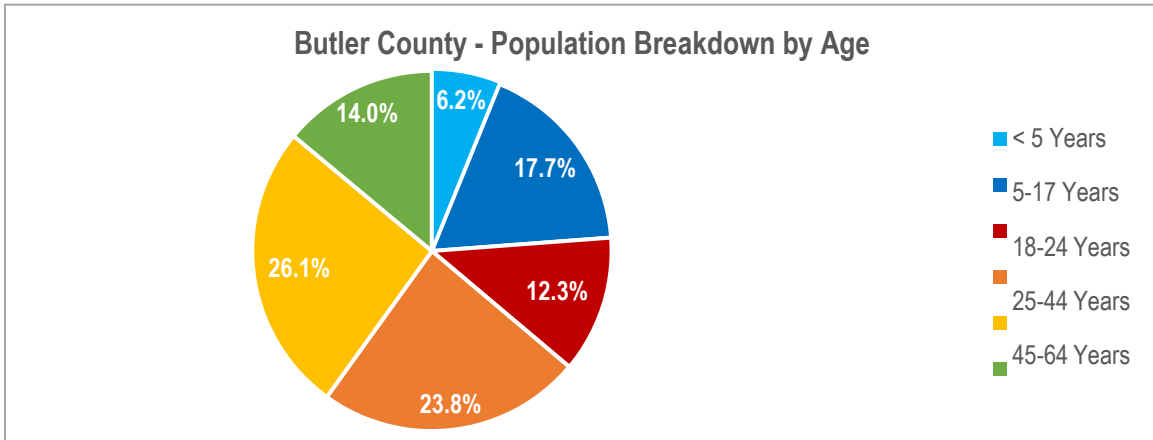
In addition to the rich history and tradition in contributing to innovation of industrial development, Butler County has a record of consistent population growth and increasing demographics which support an evolving community. The County's estimated 2020 population was 390,357, slightly over a 6.0% increase over the last decade, surpassing the State of Ohio's growth rate of 2.3%.

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>
Butler County	291,479	332,807	368,130	390,357



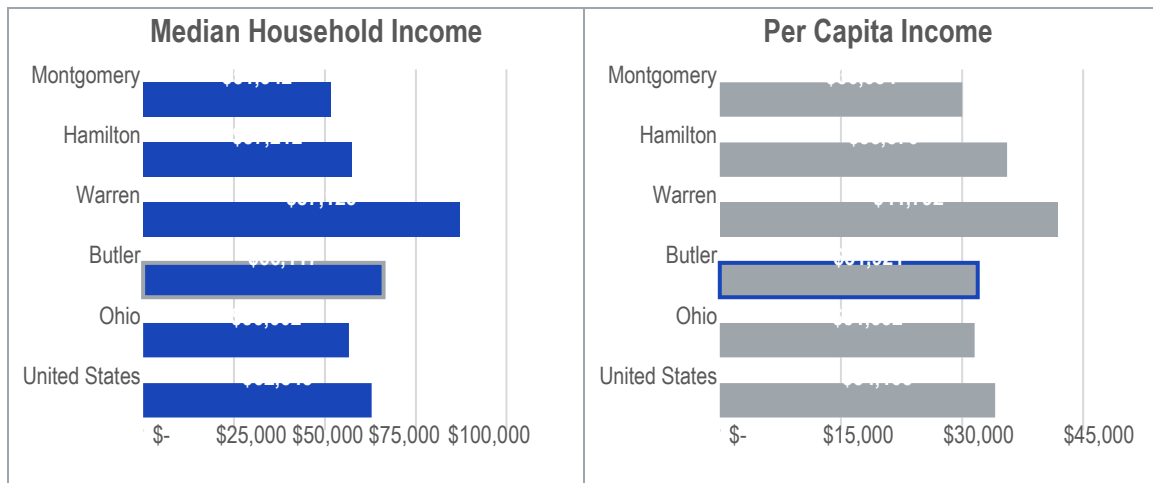
Source: US Census Bureau

Butler County's increasing population has maintained a similar cohort distribution over the last 10 years: slightly less than 25.0% is under the age of 18; nearly 50.0% of Butler County's population resides between 25-54 years old; while approximately 40.0% is older than 45, with 14.0% 65 and older. Identifying programs to serve the varying population cohorts is critical in addressing the needs of those potentially underserved in Butler County.



Source: Ohio Department of Development

Butler County, on a household income and per capita income basis, finds itself mid- range as compared to surrounding counties, while mostly exceeding the State of Ohio and United States in the same categories with one exception, lower per capita income than the United States. Strategically leveraging and applying the SLFRF funds to expand economic opportunities for business growth and development; enhance workforce development and job skill training; and innovatively create sustainable programs which connect business with workforce and which evolve to the ever changing and emerging needs of business will secure Butler County’s economic future. Identifying means to reduce barriers for and creating alternatives to those challenged by and with traditional employment placement and structure are other means for SLFRF funding.



Source: Ohio Department of Development

Butler County is home to a diverse pool of employers. Several Fortune 500, 1,000, and over 450 foreign-owned companies are headquartered in Butler County as well as throughout the Greater Cincinnati region. The major industry clusters for the region, and reflected in Butler County, are advanced energy, advanced manufacturing, biohealth, consumer products and brand development, food

processing and agriculture, and financial and insurance services. SLFRF funding will be applied to promote job training and skill development in these industry sectors as well as the fields of emerging technology and information services.

Manufacturing and production of goods, rooted in the rich tradition of commerce with the railroad and ports and waterways, are a substantial portion of Butler County’s economic base which is composed largely of biomedical, defense industry, automotive parts and metal fabrication, machine tool and steel manufacturing. Of the top 15 employers in Butler County, 26.7% produce or manufacture goods or materials; 33.3% are health care providers or financial or liability insurers; and 7.8% are of the consumer good or brand management industry. Not represented in the top 15 employers list, is the strong presence in logistics and product distribution, supporting companies like Kroger, Kohls, Amazon, and other ecommerce retailers in supply chain management and real time product fulfillment.

As evident from the expanding population and increasing residential base, commercial development and retail amenities in Butler County have blossomed over the last 12 years consistent with retail sector practices of following population.

Commercial and retail assets are positioned throughout the County, including Fortune 500 and 1,000 corporate headquarters and office campuses and ranging from traditional suburban strip centers to the once popular retail life centers to emerging mixed use centers in the form of Liberty Center. Other iconic destination retailers or amenities like IKEA, Cabela’s, Top Golf, MetroParks system, hosting nationally acclaimed youth sports event, are few which call Butler County home.

Butler County Top 15 Employers			
Employer	Location	Nature of Business	No. of Employees
1 Miami University	Oxford	Education	4,250
2 Cincinnati Financial Corp.	Fairfield	Insurance	3,234
3 GE Aviation	West Chester	Manufacturing	2,500
4 Cleveland Cliffs	West Chester	Manufacturing	2,421
5 Butler County Government	Hamilton	Government	2,044
6 Lakota School District	West Chester/Liberty	Education	1,827
7 Mercy Regional Hospital	Fairfield	Healthcare	1,400
8 Liberty Mutual	Fairfield	Insurance	1,400
9 Koch Foods	Fairfield	Food Service	1,200
10 UC Health West Chester Hospital	West Chester	Healthcare	1,045
11 Kettering Hospital Hamilton	Hamilton	Healthcare	1,028
12 Hamilton City Schools	Hamilton	Education	1,000
13 Tyson Foods	West Chester	Food Service	901
14 Fairfield City Schools	Fairfield	Education	900
15 Cornerstone Brands	West Chester	Consumer Goods	896

Source: Butler County Department of Economic Development

The American Rescue Plan Act’s Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds intend to support Butler County’s response to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19; though, Butler County leadership will strive to use the SLFRF funding to create new and build better existing programs, delivery of services, and

customer point interactions than presently enacted and implemented. The SLFRF funding was designed in an effort to mitigate the impact on communities, neighborhoods, residents, and businesses. The Board of Commissioners pledges to wisely and fiscally soundly apply funding to those projects and programs which demonstrate greatest investment in communities, systems, and most importantly people. These projects will have a significant, long-term, productive impact on Butler County, addressing remnant effects and impacts on the various modes of the micro and macro economy in Butler County and the communities, neighborhoods, and people it affected.

At this phase, Butler County is developing and planning its utilization of SLFRF funding. The County strives to be strategic and recognizes the long-term impact the SLFRF program will have on the communities, residents, and corporate citizens of Butler County. The initial Recovery Plan Performance Report outlines Butler County's intentions and approach for and evaluation of application of the funds.

Uses of Funds

Butler County has received proposals from a number of non-profits, local governments, and other community partners and is evaluating all of the proposals. The County has not expended or obligated any SLFRF funds, as of the date of this report.

Further defining intended uses of SLFRF funds, Butler County will identify programs and projects which will maximize impact for the greatest need and to the most vulnerably underserved; and define effective, efficient, and equitable outcomes while aligning with the Board of Commissioners' policy agenda and aspirational objectives.

Given the broad eligible uses, and the County's needs still evolving through COVID-19, the Board of Commissioners Recovery Plan Performance Report, dated August 31, 2021, continues to demonstrate the County's process to 1) identify, prioritize, and inevitably select projects and programs which satisfy the ARPA and SLFRF requirements and guidelines and support communities, populations, families, and individuals who have felt the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 and 2) engage County stakeholders in the identification, prioritization, and selection of programs and projects to apply and expend the SLFRF funds.

As programs and projects are implemented and funds are obligated and expended, subsequent interim and recovery plan reports will adequately illustrate the reporting requirements and evidence-based metrics and outcomes.

Butler County intends to build its Recovery Plan and to focus its programmatic initiatives on the Expenditure Categories.

- a) *Public Health (EC 1)* – Alleviating the impact of COVID-19 will continue to require focused effort from all forms of leadership, governing Butler County and its communities, business sector, non-profits, and all stakeholders who and which are invested in the success of Butler County and those who inhabit it. Ensuring continued efforts to abate COVID-19 in its present and anticipated variant forms and to navigate continuity of operations for public safety and public health in preparation for other potential communicable epidemics; upgrading capital improvements in County facilities and enhancing public systems which exist to serve, treat, or rehabilitate populations impacted by COVID-19; and collaborating with all stakeholders in business, government, emergency management, non-profits, education, and health care to remediate present

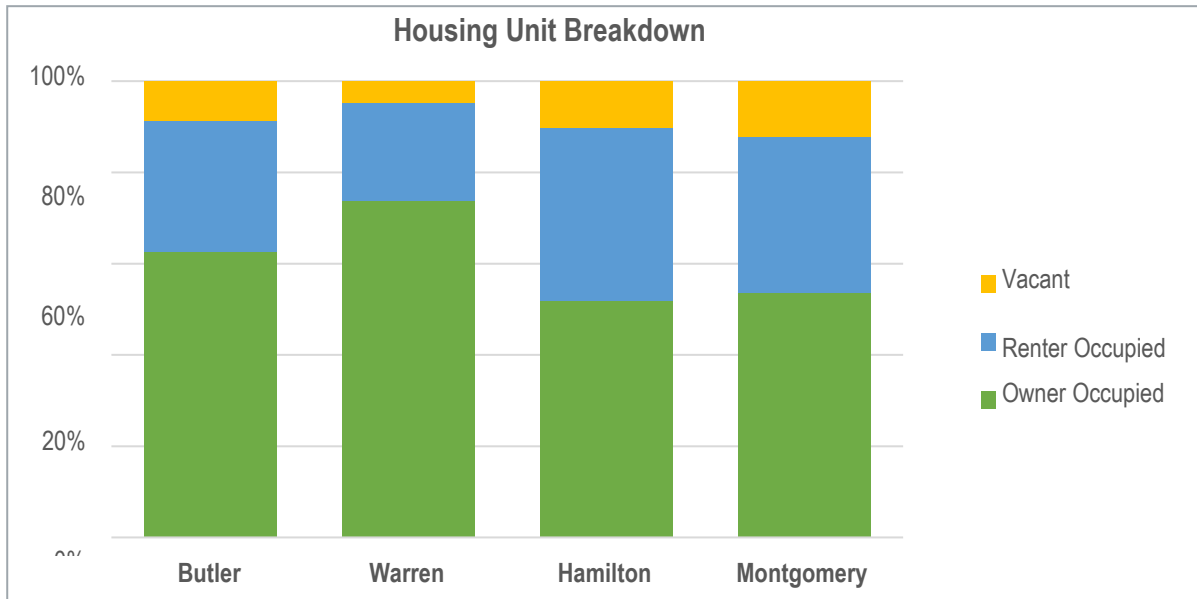
challenges and prevent further spread of COVID-19 and its prospective variants in congregate settings across all sectors – schools, universities, businesses, long-term care facilities, jails, etc. will be the focus as the Board of Commissioners identifies its programmatic and project priorities in this expenditure category.

Other elements of public health are wellness, recreation, and social interaction. Butler County recognizes these elements can enhance the physical health and well-being of Butler County residents and contribute to a healthier and more emotionally and physically well-balanced citizenry. The County will continue to consider these elements when selecting eligible projects.

- b) *Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)* – Identifying the immediate and long term negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in its present and anticipated variant forms will be a primary objective of this expenditure category. The Butler County Board of Commissioners is committed to applying SLFRF funds to mitigate the present and imminent demands of COVID-19 while recognizing the extended and all-encompassing burden has not yet been defined or measured on the economy and proportionally people’s lives; therefore, the Board of Commissioners’ approach to SLFRF funds is two- fold 1) applying funds strategically and fiscally responsibly to services which have no current funding source or limited funding sources which mitigate impact on the most vulnerable and for the greatest present needs; and 2) investing in time to ensure the majority application of funding will mirror needs, demands, and alignment of the Board’s policy agenda and aspirational objectives as economic and population recoveries evolve and are realized. This two-fold approach is intended to be extended, extensive, and adaptable as the economic environment evolves with time, and accordingly, the needs of business and residents are more descriptively revealed.

Working with stakeholders to 1) enhance or re-invent existing systems in the delivery of services and customer point interactions; 2) aid industries specifically outlined in this expenditure category as qualified; 3) provide aid to the backbone of the economy – small businesses and its workforce; and 4) support productive and evidence based and successfully proven non-profit programs which provide assistance for daily life; which require participation in and commitment to life skills development and employment training; and which strive to provide one time or temporary assistance are programmatic objectives to which the Board of Commissioners may apply SLFRF funding.

In the following chart, data from the Ohio Department of Development depicts the breakdown of rental and owner occupied housing in Butler County and surrounding areas.



- c) *Public Health-Negative Economic Impact: Public Sector Capacity (EC 3)* – The ability of the public sector to plan for and respond to future pandemic and other health threats has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Butler County will consider projects that rebuild the public sector workforce in the areas of public health, public safety and human services, rehires public sector staff, and also ensures effective service delivery into the future.

- d) *Premium Pay (EC 4)* – Butler County will analyze the approach, goals, and sectors in any premium pay scenario; will adhere to the requirements if distributed; and will thoroughly evaluate its need among the other expenditure categories before distributing.
- e) *Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure (EC 5)* – Identifying need and investing in basic utilities are paramount in establishing a sustainable county, prepared to weather other communicable diseases potentially spread from improper or poor sanitation systems and processes. Expenditure Category 5 recognizes the need for reinvestment in public utilities, specifically water and sewer infrastructure and the benefit the infrastructure provides from a public health and safety approach.

Butler County is committed to maintaining its water and sewer infrastructure to ensure all populations have access to these vital services. Improvements will be analyzed to ensure goals are met and comprehensive service is achieved.

Butler County Water and Sewer provides drinking water and fire protection for West Chester, Liberty, and Fairfield Townships. Additionally, wholesale water is provided to the City of Monroe and serves some customers in Warren County. In 2020, over 5.1 billion gallons of drinking water was delivered by Butler County.

- o Population Served by Water: 125,000
- o Number of Water Customers: 41,725
- o Miles of Water Main: 660

Butler County Water and Sewer provides sewer service to West Chester, Liberty, Fairfield, Ross, St. Clair, and Hanover Townships; the Cities of Monroe and Trenton; the Village of New Miami; and portions of Warren and Hamilton Counties. In 2020, an average of 20 million gallons of wastewater was treated each day.

- o Population Served by Sewer: 146,000
- o Number of Sewer Customers: 47,082
- o Miles of Sewer Pipe: 797

Expanding to another utility more deliberately as a necessity like public water and sewer is broadband infrastructure. The ability to use SLFRF funding for broadband infrastructure will be impactful to the less dense more rural areas of Butler County.

Currently, multiple areas and zones throughout the County, with population centers and excellent local school districts, lack consistent, high speed, broadband service, compatible with the standards outlined in the SLFRF funding guidelines. Capitalizing on this funding source and opportunity, reliable internet service can be achieved and can enhance the educational and learning experiences of all citizens accessed.

- f) *Revenue Replacement (EC 6)* – Butler County is applying multiple formulae to accurately calculate a Revenue Loss amount. At this time, the Final Rule four-process calculation the Board of Commissioners has calculated to date \$18,139,667.47. This calculation was last performed April 2022 and will likely be calculated annually to determine the amount of lost revenue eligible for the revenue replacement category and to ensure the County does not apply category funds beyond the eligible amount. How much of the eligible dollars the Butler County Board of Commissioners will use in this category is under discussion.

Promoting equitable outcomes

The America Rescue Plan Act's Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds intend to support Butler County's response to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19 while identifying systemic barriers where the vulnerable and underserved populations may languish. Butler County leadership is dedicated to identifying potential inequities and will strive to advance equity in its approach and use of the SLFRF funds to create new and build better existing programs, delivery of services, and customer point interactions presently enacted and implemented.

The SLFRF funding was designed in an effort to mitigate the impact on communities, neighborhoods, residents, and businesses, and the Butler County Board of Commissioners pledges to wisely and fiscally soundly apply funding to those projects and programs which demonstrate greatest equitable investment in communities, systems, and most importantly people. These projects will have a significant, long-term, productive impact on Butler County, addressing remnant effects and impacts on the various modes of the micro and macro economy in Butler County and the communities, neighborhoods, and people COVID-19 affected. At this phase of the funding cycle, Butler County is developing and planning its utilization of SLFRF.

Butler County will consult with stakeholders to assess current program methods

and to identify any systemic inequities or barriers for and creating alternatives to responsibly access funding among traditional structures of and for services. The Board of Commissioners in turn will expect commitment from recipients at the organization level and directly at the individual or family level to be accountable and take measures to improve their own circumstances with the temporary assistance provided.

Equally, the Butler County Board of Commissioners is committed to applying SLFRF funds to mitigate the present and imminent demands while recognizing the extended and the all-encompassing burden of COVID-19 which has not yet been defined or measured on the economy and proportionally people's lives; therefore, the Board of Commissioners will invest time to ensure the majority application of funding will mirror needs, demands and alignment of the Board's policy agenda and aspirational objectives as economic and population recoveries evolve and are realized and potential inequities spotlighted.

The following questions will be asked when determining project viability:

- a) Goals: Are there particular historically underserved, marginalized, or adversely affected groups that you intend to serve?
- b) Awareness: How equal and practical is the ability for residents or businesses to become aware of the services funded by the SLFRF?
- c) Access and Distribution: Are there differences in levels of access to benefits and services across groups? Are there administrative requirements that result in disparities in ability to complete applications or meet eligibility criteria?
- d) Outcomes: Are intended outcomes focused on closing gaps, reaching universal levels of service, and other equity dimensions where relevant for the policy objectives?

Community Engagement

Project proposals were sought through a series of public work sessions conducted in August and September 2021 and more recently through updates from preferred projects and programs as identified and requested by the Butler County Board of Commissioners for funding consideration.

In an effort to maintain transparency and community acceptability, project viability was discussed throughout open meetings and work sessions. At these public work sessions, project stakeholders, as well as community members, have had the ability to provide input, insight, and criticism and voice perspectives on these important project funding decisions.

The Board of Commissioners is committed to a thorough, transparent, project planning and evaluation process in the distribution of the SLFRF funds to ensure proper utilization, strategic application, and most importantly productive and positive impacts to families and people affected the greatest by COVID-19. The Board anticipates awarding funding within 30 days from the date of submission of the Butler County Annual Recovery Report – July 2022.

Labor Practices

Pursuant to lawful requirements, Butler County will follow and integrate labor

standards in its projects. Although there are capital projects being considered for funding, at this time, no major infrastructure projects have been awarded ARPA/SLFRF funding in Butler County nor are underway.

Use of Evidence

Prior to project award, each initiative will be reviewed to identify a recipient's methodology to measure and track evidence-based interventions and outcomes. Butler County is developing an overall approach and reporting portal to construct an evidence-building strategy.

Performance Report

As of the date of this report, Butler County has not funded any projects. Butler County is implementing a portal for all subrecipients and beneficiaries to report both expenditure and performance measures and future annual reports will include information from this portal.

Project Inventory

At this time, Butler County is developing and planning its utilization of SLFRF. The Butler County Board of Commissioners strives to use these funds in a sustainable method that impacts the highest volume of residents and businesses while imprinting the greatest value to those affected by the pandemic and advantaged by the enumerated and revenue replacement projects and programs. Therefore, projects will be vetted at the highest level to ensure funds are spent appropriately and efficiently. To ensure proper stewardship of funds, impact analyses will be performed annually to ensure application of and funded program and project evolution are monitored and funds are distributed productively and effectively to address the ongoing crisis.