



## SAFER Grant Provides Funds for Six Paramedics/Firefighters

### Federal Funding Enabled Fire Department to Increase Staffing in 2019

BY DAN REISIG

Thanks in part to federal funding, the Edina Fire Department was able to add more Paramedics/Firefighters in the past few years to keep up with the community's growing calls for service.

The money came through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant, an initiative led by the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency. A total of \$911,821 was granted to the City for a three-year period. The expenses of adding six new Paramedics/Firefighters were covered at a 75 percent level in years one and two and 35 percent in the final year of 2022. The City's contribution over the same amount of time totaled approximately \$567,000.

"These six new hires, made possible by the SAFER Grant, allow us to close the gap toward optimal staffing levels, given the volume of calls for service that we receive," said Fire Chief Andrew Slama. "Beyond just meeting demand, we wanted to ensure that our response times and levels are appropriate for the needs of the community."



Paramedic/Firefighters Ryan Schmitz and Alex Heroff are two of the six new members of the Edina Fire Department thanks to the SAFER Grant in 2019. (File Photo)

The six new staff members hired from the grant are Allie Adie, Luke Anderson, Bernie DeHoog, Alex Heroff, Chris Liston and Ryan Schmitz. More than 18 percent of the department's total shift staff came from this grant, adding two Paramedics/Firefighters to each 24-hour shift.

Among that group is the Department's first full-time female Paramedic/Firefighter, a total which has since grown to three in subsequent recruitments.

"We've been able to increase our minimum staffing levels to nine people available to respond to emergencies, instead of the previous seven," said Capt. Dave Schmitzer. "It's the biggest staffing impact we've ever had in my 27 years here, and it has been so helpful."

The purpose of the grant is to provide financial assistance directly to fire departments to hire new firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing for adequate personnel to respond safely to perform at incident scenes, provide protection from fire and fire-related hazards and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments.

Edina is one of 17 Minnesota cities to receive funding from the grant, spanning a period from 2015 to the most recent grant awards in September 2021. Upon the conclusion of the grant funding in early 2023, the six Paramedics/Firefighters' salaries will be fully incorporated into the department's annual budget.

"This was an unusually large class of new hires to bring in at one time," Slama added. "By using these funds from the grant, we have been able to position our department to continue suitable response to increased demands for service in the city."

For more information on the SAFER Grant program, visit [bit.ly/femasafef](http://bit.ly/femasafef). 

The City of Edina reports financial year-end results in its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). This report summarizes significant data from select funds in the Dec. 31, 2021 ACFR and is consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. For a complete review of the City's financial position for 2021, consult the ACFR, available at [EdinaMN.gov/Finance](http://EdinaMN.gov/Finance).

## City of Edina Directory

### City Council

#### Mayor

Jim Hovland – 612-874-8550

#### Council Members

Ron Anderson – 952-833-9549  
Carolyn Jackson – 952-833-9547  
James Pierce – 952-833-9548  
Kevin Staunton – 612-743-7571

### Executive Leadership Team

#### City Manager

Scott Neal – 952-826-0401

#### Assistant City Manager

Lisa Schaefer – 952-826-0416

#### Communications Director

Jennifer Bennerotte – 952-833-9520

#### Community Development Director

Cary Teague – 952-826-0460

#### Engineering Director

Chad Millner – 952-826-0318

#### Finance Director

Alisha McAndrews – 952-826-0419

#### Fire Chief

Andrew Slama – 952-826-0332

#### Human Resources Director

Kelly Curtin – 952-826-0402

#### I.T. Director

Ryan Browning – 952-826-0434

#### Parks & Recreation Director

Perry Vetter – 952-826-0430

#### Police Chief

Todd Milburn – 952-826-1610

#### Public Works Director

Brian Olson – 952-826-0311

# Facilities Division Works Behind the Scenes to Manage City Buildings

**Better Data and Increased Investment Will Extend Building Life, Improve Efficiency**



Facilities Supervisor Jon Darsow will oversee a project to repair Braemar Arena’s parking lot and improve lighting for safety. The project will be done in phases over two years so the Arena is still easily accessible. (Photo by Dan Reisig)

BY DEBBIE TOWNSEND

In Facilities Manager Derik Otten’s ideal world, the Facilities team would be like ghosts, never seen yet keeping the City’s buildings and their equipment humming along flawlessly.

To move toward that goal, the City has evaluated and scored every building and its components, increased funding for capital improvements, consolidated services to save money and is shifting toward reinvestment in City buildings.

“We’re trying to plan better and eliminate the emergency repairs and do more proactively instead of reactively,” said Otten, who was hired in 2020 to spearhead the efforts.

The City’s buildings – from City Hall to places like Braemar Arena – were constructed during different decades and take up about 800,000 square feet in total. In 2017, the City invested in software to track physical assets and score them based on factors such as age and condition. This provides an industry-benchmark Facility Condition Index measurement that shows how the City’s buildings are performing compared to peers and long-term outlook of repairs/maintenance versus replacement. Otten said this greatly helps the City decide which investments have the best long-term payoff.

Incorporating this information, the City’s leaders increased the Capital Improvement Plan levy from \$300,000 in 2019 to \$2 million in 2021-2022 without additional tax burden due to debt service falling off.

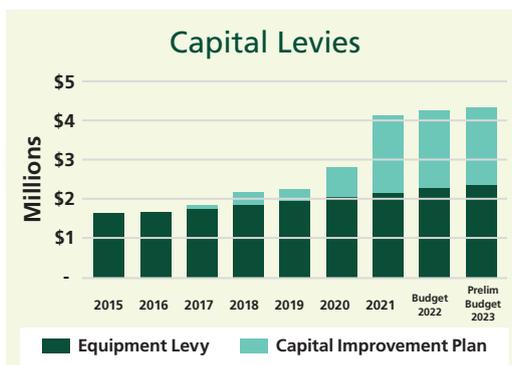
Projects can be very visible, such as an upcoming one to improve safety at the Braemar Arena parking lot via pavement repairs and better lighting, or almost hidden, like updating air conditioning and refrigeration to keep the concessions stand at the Edina Aquatic Center open during very hot weather.

To improve project oversight and centralize coordination of tasks like cleaning, inspection and maintenance for better efficiency, the Facilities Division was reorganized and moved to the Engineering Department, along with Sustainability. Jon Darsow, who previously managed complex facilities at the Minnesota Zoo, was brought on as Facilities Supervisor while Rachel Finberg, who had overseen the grounds of Centennial Lakes Park, came on as Project Manager.

All Facilities’ work is done with an eye on sustainability and the City’s climate goals. For example, a Facilities-led study on City Hall identified ways to reduce energy needs an estimated 40 percent and how replacing the rooftop solar array will increase energy capacity, productivity and efficiency.

“The Facilities team has taken Edina’s climate goals to heart,” said Sustainability Manager Grace Hancock. “The team understands the stacked benefits that come with an efficient building, from cost savings to greenhouse gas reductions, and works to find creative solutions for common facility challenges that meet sustainability goals and facility function needs.”

For more information about the Facilities Division, contact Otten at [DOtten@EdinaMN.gov](mailto:DOtten@EdinaMN.gov).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Children’s Concert,**  
Centennial Lakes Park  
11 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

**Concert in the Park,**  
Centennial Lakes Park  
7 p.m. Sundays, Mondays  
and Wednesdays

**Da Beauty League, Braemar Arena**  
5-8:30 p.m. Wednesdays

**Farmers Market,**  
Centennial Lakes Park  
3-7 p.m. Thursdays

**Performance on the Plaza (P.O.P.),**  
Nolan Mains Plaza  
4-7 p.m. Fridays

**Sunday, July 3, 8 p.m.**  
First John Philip Sousa Memorial  
Band concert followed by fireworks,  
Rosland Park

**Monday, July 4, 10 a.m.**  
Independence Day Parade,  
begins behind Edina City Hall

**Monday, July 4, Independence Day**  
City offices closed

**Thursday, July 7, 10 a.m.**  
Story Strolls, Centennial Lakes Park

**Sunday, July 10,**  
Eid al-Adha Observed

**Thursday, July 14, 4:30 p.m.**  
Art in the Park, Countryside Park

**Saturday, July 16, 9 a.m.**  
Walk With the Mayor,  
Fred Richards Park

**Tuesday, July 19, 5-8 p.m.**  
Utility Bill Clinic, Edina Library

**Tuesday, July 19, 7 p.m.**  
City Council meeting, Edina City Hall

**Thursday, July 21, 7:30 a.m.**  
Housing & Redevelopment  
Authority meeting, Edina City Hall

**Thursday, July 21, 4:30 p.m.**  
Bike Rodeo, Pamela Park

For a complete listing of meetings  
and events, visit [EdinaMN.gov](http://EdinaMN.gov).

Watch City Council, Housing &  
Redevelopment Authority and Planning  
Commission meetings live:

- Edina TV (Comcast Channels 813 or 16)
- Facebook.com/EdinaMN
- “Watch a Meeting” web page at [EdinaMN.gov/LiveMeetings](http://EdinaMN.gov/LiveMeetings)

# Affordable Housing Continued to ‘Open Doors’ to Edina in 2021

## Program Advancements Helped More Than 30 Families Maintain or Purchase a Home

BY BRITTANY BADER

Progress made in 2021 with three affordable housing programs helped open the door for more than 30 families to maintain or purchase a home in the city.

Highlights from the year include the addition of a first-generation homebuyer benefit within the Come Home 2 Edina second mortgage program, a brand-new Housing Rehabilitation Program and the issuance of a \$2 million line of credit to the West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust’s Homes Within Reach program.

“Advancements like we had in 2021 help move forward the City’s affordable housing mission of ‘Open Doors Edina’ by creating more opportunities for people of all income ranges to call Edina home,” said Affordable Housing Development Manager Stephanie Hawkinson. “To have a really healthy community, you need to be able to serve and maintain a diverse population.”

### First-Generation Homebuyer Program and ‘Come Home 2 Edina’ Second Mortgages

Come Home 2 Edina has been available through the Edina Housing Foundation since 1985, although Hawkinson notes the program has undergone some changes and expansions since then. Lenders apply on behalf of income-eligible borrowers who are acquiring homes valued up to \$425,000, and if approved, applicants can receive up to \$60,000 to put toward the cost of their home in the form of a second mortgage. The principal on these loans is deferred until the first mortgage is due or the house is sold. In November 2021, an expansion to the program was made that provides first-generation homebuyers an additional opportunity.

“In 2021, the big news was that we created the First-Generation Homebuyer Program, which allows an additional \$15,000 in mortgage assistance for people who did not grow up in a home that their parents or guardian owned,” said Hawkinson. “The goal is to allow people to break into homeownership and have the opportunity to create generational wealth.”

This \$15,000 loan is forgiven \$1,000 each year of homeownership.

As of June 1, 2022, three applicants had taken advantage of the first-generation homebuyer program: one in 2021 and two in 2022. All three applicants used the assistance to purchase single-family properties. In total, there were nine applicants for the Come Home 2 Edina program in 2021, and Hawkinson expects to exceed that number in 2022.

### Housing Rehabilitation Program

Launched in April 2021 in partnership with the Center for Energy & Environment, the newly created Housing Rehabilitation Program has seen four times the success than anticipated at the onset. Hawkinson said the program was born out of wanting to preserve aging homes in Edina and the desire to make resources available to owners for maintenance and energy improvements. Approved applicants can receive a deferred loan of up to \$30,000 to complete home renovations. If one day the homeowner sells their home to the Edina Housing & Redevelopment Authority or one of the City’s housing partners to maintain as affordable housing, the loan is forgiven.

Utilizing money from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which is fed by developer fees, the program started with an initial \$250,000 in funding. Due to growing interest from residents, Hawkinson requested an additional \$750,000, which the Housing & Redevelopment Authority approved.

“The success and popularity of the program have totally exceeded expectations — particularly the speed at which funds were drawn down,” said Hawkinson.

In total, 20 Housing Rehabilitation Program applications were approved in 2021. By June 1, 2022, an additional 13 applications had been approved and nearly all of the \$1 million in funding had been spoken for.

### Homes Within Reach

2021 saw significant advancement of the City’s partnership with Homes Within Reach. Through this program, homes are acquired and rehabilitated, and the land is placed into a community land trust for 99 years. This makes homes affordable by allowing homebuyers to lease the



**Progress in 2021 helped advance the City’s affordable housing mission of ‘Open Doors Edina.’ Signs like this one are placed throughout the city to indicate sites of future affordable housing.**  
(Photo by Katherine Hulbert)

property’s land instead of purchasing it. Hawkinson said this results in a 50 percent reduction in cost on average to the first buyer and future buyers.

In the past, the money provided to Homes Within Reach by the City came solely from Community Development Block Grant Funds, an amount typically totaling \$100,000 or less per year. Hawkinson said that while this funding is important, progress by this method alone was slow, only allowing for acquisition of one home every two to three years.

Through a desire to accelerate the program’s work, a \$1.3 million line of credit was issued from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in June 2020 and augmented with an additional \$2 million in August 2021.

“Typically, it would have taken 10 years to acquire five homes. With the line of credit, we were able to do that in one year, so it’s a very big deal,” said Hawkinson. “We’ve lost about 1,000 homes to teardowns in 10 years. This program helps preserve modest-sized homes in Edina and keeps them affordable for 99 years,” said Hawkinson.

The City is paid back the sale proceeds of the home by Homes Within Reach upon closing, said Hawkinson. The value of the land is converted into a grant.

*To learn more about Affordable Housing in the City of Edina, visit [OpenDoorsEdina.org](https://OpenDoorsEdina.org) or contact Hawkinson, 952-833-9578 or [shawkinson@EdinaMN.gov](mailto:shawkinson@EdinaMN.gov).*



# American Rescue Plan Act Money Reaching Businesses, Residents

## How To Spend Second Half of Funding Soon to be Decided

BY DEBBIE TOWNSEND

The first half of \$4.9 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money that Edina is receiving is already flowing into the community, providing everything from rent and food assistance to mental health services to business support.

The Edina City Council designated about 70 percent of that first half money go directly to helping those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible.

“We are helping families who truly need it,” said City Manager Scott Neal. “Every program is working as it should. People are getting the assistance we intended to get them.”

This summer, the City Council will consider recommendations on how to spend the second half of the ARPA funding. Here are some frequently asked questions about ARPA, answered by Neal and other City staff members.

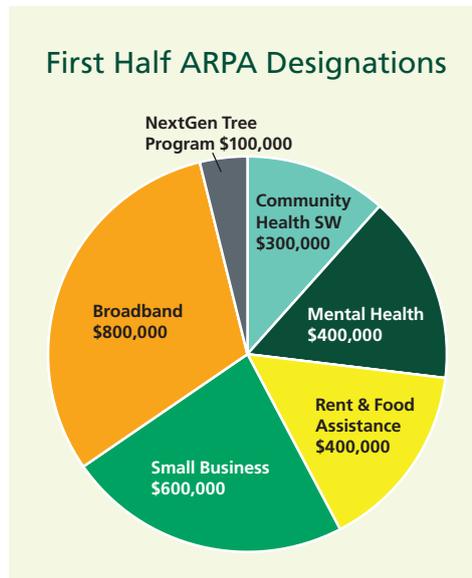
### Has all the ARPA money allocated for 2021 been spent?

Not yet. Some money, like \$100,000 each to the Edina Chamber of Commerce and the 50th & France Business Association, went out immediately so those organizations could help the business community.

But most of the funding programs, such as mental health support for Edina school families, are reimbursement-based. While this may take longer to distribute, it increases accountability to ensure funds are spent appropriately.

Here is the breakdown of what was designated: \$600,000 for small business

support; \$500,000 for community broadband expansion; \$400,000 for mental health assistance expansion; \$300,000 each for rental assistance, broadband for City utility facilities and Community Health software; \$100,000 each for food assistance and the NextGen Trees initiative.



### How has the \$600,000 helped our business community so far?

The Edina Theatre, with its iconic art-deco Edina sign, is being remodeled and reopening later this year. The 50th & France Business & Professional Association has hosted events and expanded marketing to keep that district prosperous. The Edina Chamber of Commerce is launching an innovation hub to assist new and existing businesses.

But it's the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) that's brought quick relief to Edina's smaller businesses, so much so that one owner was moved to tears during an orientation session. TAP is providing 20 businesses, from small retail stores to mom-and-pop restaurants, with services from digital marketing experts.

“It can be used for whatever the owner and consultant think is the best way to invest \$10,000 in the business to make an immediate difference,” said Economic Development Manager Bill Neuendorf, noting that the way customers hear about businesses and shop/dine at them has changed. “Several of the business owners were sincerely thankful for a path because they've had so many challenges over the last couple years.”

### Will any of the 2021 designated funding be left over?

All of the money is expected to be spent as designated. The one program running well under what was budgeted is Internet Essentials, which provides broadband internet access to economically disadvantaged families. Not everyone believed to be eligible has signed up yet. You can learn more about requirements at [BetterTogetherEdina.org/arpa-free-internet](http://BetterTogetherEdina.org/arpa-free-internet).

### Were community discussions held about how to spend the second half of the money?

Yes. One community meeting in person and two virtual meetings were held earlier this year for discussion and input on the second round of funding. City staff were asked for their ideas at multiple meetings. People also were invited to submit ideas via [BetterTogetherEdina.org](http://BetterTogetherEdina.org).

Residents contributed 37 ideas during the community meetings and 28 online. Staff generated more than 45 ideas. In many cases, the ideas were duplicative as people felt similarly about key areas like mental health services or basic needs.

### Is there a deadline for spending ARPA money?

Yes. Every penny must be designated by 2024 and spent by 2026.

*Second-half ARPA spending will be on a future City Council agenda. Check the City Council agendas at [EdinaMN.gov](http://EdinaMN.gov) for more information.* 🏡 🏢 👥



The Arbor Day tree planting at Rosland Park kicked off the NextGen Trees effort, funded by ARPA, to plant more trees across Edina. (Photo by Jasmine Robles)



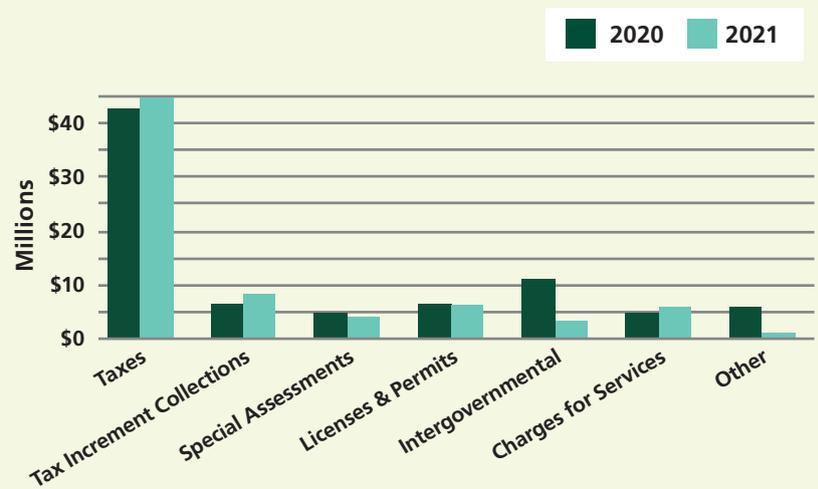
The Edina Theatre at 50th & France will reopen after a remodel and upgrades, paid for in part with ARPA money. (File Photo)

# Governmental Funds

## Governmental Fund Revenues

	2020	2021	Difference
Taxes	\$42,588,944	\$44,903,999	▲ \$2,315,055
Tax Increment Collections	\$6,452,819	\$8,295,756	▲ \$1,842,937
Special Assessments	\$4,629,551	\$4,130,703	▼ \$498,848
Licenses and Permits	\$6,454,749	\$6,077,446	▼ \$377,303
Intergovernmental	\$11,218,739	\$3,321,222	▼ \$7,897,517
Charges for Services	\$4,968,288	\$5,980,258	▲ \$1,011,970
Other	\$5,869,759	\$1,284,971	▼ \$4,584,788
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$82,182,849</b>	<b>\$73,994,355</b>	<b>▼ \$8,188,494</b>

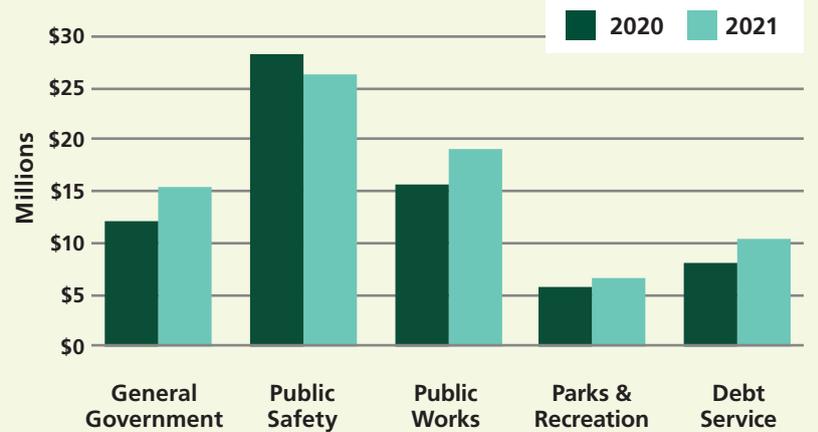
## Governmental Fund Revenues Comparison



## Governmental Fund Expenditures

	2020	2021	Difference
General Government	\$11,872,093	\$15,206,275	▲ \$3,334,182
Public Safety	\$28,084,852	\$26,213,713	▼ \$1,871,139
Public Works	\$15,520,402	\$18,970,221	▲ \$3,449,819
Parks & Recreation	\$5,490,708	\$6,379,999	▲ \$889,291
Debt Service	\$7,872,730	\$10,218,346	▲ \$2,345,616
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$68,840,785</b>	<b>\$76,988,554</b>	<b>▲ \$8,147,769</b>

## Governmental Fund Expenditures Comparison



The graphs above provide the 2020 and 2021 revenues and expenditures for the governmental funds. Revenues are presented by category and expenditures are presented by function. At the end of 2021, revenues and expenditures totaled \$74 million and \$77 million, respectively, for an overall decrease in fund balance of \$3 million before other financing sources (i.e., transfers and bonds issued).

Revenues in 2021 came in 10 percent, or \$8.2 million, lower than 2020. The decrease is driven by \$6.3 million in one-time intergovernmental revenue received in 2020 from the federal CARES Act for COVID-19 response and recovery and municipal state-aid street funding for West 58th Street. Investment income decreased by \$2.2 million in 2021 due to unrealized net losses. The losses are unrealized because the City holds the investments to maturity. Finally, other revenue was higher in 2020 relative to 2021 due to \$1.9 million

in affordable housing fee revenue received from housing development activity.

The decreases were partially offset by a \$4.2 million increase in taxes and tax-increment collections and \$1 million increase in charges for services. Tax revenue (property, franchise fees and lodging taxes) increased 5 percent and tax-increment collections increased 29 percent. The increase in taxes is the result of an increased general fund operating levy that provides funding for governmental services listed in the table above. Tax increment collections increased primarily due to continued development around Southdale Center. Charges for services for park program registrations increased in 2021 as a result of less COVID-19 impact.

2021 expenditures came in 12 percent, or \$8.1 million, higher than 2020. This is attributed to a \$3.3 million increase in General Government

spending, which was driven by Housing & Redevelopment Authority increases in emergency rental assistance, affordable housing purchases and rehabilitation (\$1.7 million), development tax-increment financing loans (\$500,000) and capital spending (\$1.4 million) for Eden Avenue and Grandview area improvements. Public Works increased primarily due to \$2.6 million of capital spending. Parks & Recreation Department spending in 2020 was down due to the impact of COVID-19; 2021 spending increased by \$889,000, which is more consistent with pre-pandemic spending levels. Debt service expenditures increased by \$2.3 million primarily due to refunding of 2012A bond issuance to lower future debt service payments. These spending increases were offset by lower Public Safety spending in 2021 due to \$1.5 million of one-time COVID-19 expenses in 2020.