Town of Gilbert, Arizona
Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

2025 Report

Town of Gilbert
2025 Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Gilbert, Arizona, is a suburban community within the greater Phoenix Metropolitan Region. The community population is 281,600, with data utilized from FY2023 as new population totals are not yet available. Throughout the pandemic, the community has continued to display overall resilience. However, long-term impacts that can be directly correlated to the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic are being felt. Inflationary pressure and the related costs of goods and services resulting largely from the COVID-19 pandemic are impacting our community members and nonprofits. These stressors can be observed via crime trends in key categories and needs for social services within the community. Fortunately, these impacts had been planned for via the intended uses of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) from the Treasury. Specifically, Gilbert has applied the SLFRF funds to two categories: support of nonprofit entities serving Gilbert residents and to provide robust service delivery to victims of crimes, particularly those in underserved demographic populations, via a Victim Advocacy Center. In Fiscal Year 2023, over 16,500 residents benefitted from nonprofit services provided by the funding of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Over the past year Gilbert has been progressing well with design and construction of the Advocacy Center. In December, a contract was approved by the Town Council and awarded to the construction vendor. The Town broke ground on the construction of the project in January and included many community members in the groundbreaking event. Currently, the building structure has been erected with exterior framing ongoing. Sitework activities are also progressing with sewer and water with electrical utilities to follow. During the coming fiscal year, it is anticipated that substantial completion of the facility will be reached and that the Advocacy Center will be open and providing services by the end of calendar 2026.

Contained within this report is a discussion regarding Gilbert's intended use of SLFRF funding and updates on current SLFRF projects.

Uses of Funds

Gilbert's usage of SLFRF funding align with two specific areas, a Victim Advocacy Center under the Public Health category and support for nonprofit entities as part of the Public Health, Negative Economic Impacts and Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities categories.

Gilbert Advocacy Center

The Gilbert Advocacy Center aligns with the area of Public Health because it will offer services to address one of the identified public health impacts from the Final Rule—COVID's effect on violence, particularly domestic violence, sexual assault, crimes against children, and human trafficking. The Town of Gilbert identifies these survivors as a population disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. While COVID-19 had negative impacts on most members of the local community—like mental and physical stress, financial loss, or isolation—the negative impacts of the pandemic were meaningfully more severe for those vulnerable to abuse and violence. Loss of childcare, homeschooling requirements during lockdowns, and stay-at-home orders created additional household stress. Layoffs and business closures resulted in job loss and unanticipated financial burdens. Certain coping strategies, like alcohol use, may have increased the risk of abuse. During the pandemic, some adult and adolescent victims were forced to live with their abusers with no direct contact with support systems or mandatory

reporters, like teachers or physicians. Further, stay-at-home orders made accessing victims' services especially difficult. It is established knowledge that the pandemic exacerbated the impact and incidence of physical and sexual abuse while making accessing services more difficult.

Prior to the pandemic, Gilbert was already experiencing an increase in interpersonal violence that continued through the height of COVID.

Between 2015 and 2019, Gilbert experienced an average domestic violence occurrence of 5,318 incidents per year (involving both adults and juveniles), with a marked increase in events during 2018 and 2019. During the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, The Town saw a significant increase in events, greater than the previous all-time highs of 2018 and 2019. These statistics indicate that Gilbert, like most communities, suffered unseen impacts on its residents due to the strain of the pandemic.

The Town's analysis of sex crime related offenses also brought increased focus to the needs surrounding survivors of sexually related crimes. A comparison of the period between 2015-2019 and 2020-2023 reflected a 35% increase in sexual offenses committed against both adults and children. This area of need illustrates the benefit that the Advocacy Center will bring to members of our community who are dealing with some of the most horrific types of victimization.

Additionally, analysis of violent crime classifications encompassing criminal homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault has determined that there was a 31% increase in the average rate of these types of crimes when assessed between the pre-period of the pandemic (2015-2019), and the during/post period of the pandemic (2020-2023). The Gilbert Advocacy Center will support victims of all types of violent interpersonal crime. These figures represent the ongoing need within our community.

Over the past year, Gilbert Police and the Town Council have continued to be engaged in increased efforts to address teen violence in the community. These efforts supplement the already significant work that Gilbert PD engages in to address violent crime in the community. The pandemic exacerbated the impacts of stress and societal issues on teens. Gilbert was not exempt from these impacts, and in the fall of 2023, several significant violent crimes in the East Valley region involving teen offenders came to light. These high-profile crimes have triggered ongoing and necessary conversations within the local government, schools, and community at large. The Gilbert Town Council created a Teen Violence Subcommittee, which developed three categories for exploration by the reconvening Community Engagement Task Force (CETF). One of these categories, Resources, identifies explicitly the services of the future Gilbert Advocacy Center to be considered for exploration by the CETF as an area of opportunity in addressing teen violence. The final report by the CETF with their findings and recommendations was presented to the Council in December 2024.

Additional efforts within the Town have also been implemented. These efforts include the addition of a Youth Community Engagement Officer at the Police Department, who has worked to build relationships across the community, specifically with teens. The work of the Youth Community Engagement Officer intersects with the advocacy efforts that will be supported by the future Gilbert Advocacy Center. This position proactively addresses societal concerns through interaction and engagement with our youth and serves as an intermediary between the community and other divisions of the police department and departments within the Town of Gilbert. As the Advocacy Center is completed, the Youth Community Engagement Officer will also utilize the physical and service resources of the facility to enhance the work being done

with youth in our community. During the past year, the Youth Community Engagement Officer conducted significant research into best practices and programs that promote positive community outcomes. These efforts will continue to be a focus for the Town and a vital aspect of how services for youth will be coordinated at the Advocacy Center to facilitate a robust approach to combatting violence in the community.

The trends and preliminary efforts by the Town to mitigate violence and support the community reinforce the Town's commitment to the Advocacy Center and the services that will be supported by the facility. Victims of interpersonal violent crimes are at a higher risk for mental health struggles and the legal process can take years, requiring long-term support. The Center will provide short and long-term support in one location, creating reliable access to victim resources.

In late 2019, just a few months before the pandemic, Gilbert sponsored a Community Needs Assessment conducted by the Williams Institute for Ethics and Management (TWI). For its research, TWI actively engaged with the Gilbert human services community (both recipients and providers of services); residents and community advocates; faith communities; leaders/staff members of Town of Gilbert human services and public safety departments; volunteers; and members of nonprofit boards, commissions and coalitions to conduct a human service needs assessment for the community. The assessment concluded with a community rank order of where additional resources are needed most critically. One of the top groups identified as most in need were survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. While TWI began with pre-determined groups in need as focus areas for its research, TWI identified this new group as critically in need through the research process. TWI's final report states, "This serious stand-alone group is in need of immediate attention in Gilbert." To address the needs of this group, the Community Needs Assessment recommended the following:

Recommendation #1: Develop a transitional, seamless model for immediate connection with services and resources, in addition to linkage to follow-up at periodic intervals appropriate to individual and family needs. The assessment recommended for Gilbert:

- Establish the Gilbert Advocacy Center currently under study (modeled after the Chandler and Mesa centers) – where police, social workers/counselors, human services providers, prosecuting attorneys, and on-site physicians work together to reduce the trauma of domestic violence, child and adult sexual assault and abuse, and human trafficking. The center would provide on-scene crisis intervention from trained victim services personnel to avoid re-traumatizing victims by allowing them to tell their stories one time.

Recommendation #2: Establish a visible community program to reduce domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse, and human trafficking in Gilbert. The assessment recommended Gilbert:

- Develop an awareness campaign to inform the Gilbert community and students of the issues/warning signs and resources available to all those impacted by violence – children and adults, witnesses, and survivors.
- Increase visible treatment options for individuals in need of treatment, counseling, and follow-up services (immediate priority to life/death/health endangerment situations).
- Explore opportunities for partnerships (perhaps with local medical facilities, police stations, or fire stations) to provide access to "safe spots" for adults or teens experiencing violence in the home, sexual threats within the community, or exploitation by human traffickers.

The full Community Needs Assessment from TWI is located on Gilbert's website under the Human Services Needs Assessment heading.[1]

In recent years, the Gilbert Police Department has invested in additional resources to serve local survivors, including hiring Victims' Advocates, and executing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Arizona Department of Child Services' Office of Child Welfare and Investigations (OCWI). Gilbert now has two OCWI Investigators working side by side with detectives. The OCWI Investigators assist in conducting investigations of the Child Abuse Hotline reports classified as criminal conduct and provide integrated services to children and families in the pursuit of child safety. Gilbert PD dedicated effort in FY2022 to support this endeavor by expanding their staffing and partnerships to serve the community better. Gilbert PD hired a Victim Advocate to assist victims in navigating the criminal justice system and provide resources to help them with future needs. During FY2023, Gilbert Police added a second Victim Advocate to assist with increasing workload, the community's future growth, and in preparation for expanded roles following the completion of the Advocacy Center. During the past year, Gilbert PD Victim Advocates assisted 534 victims of crime, an increase of 62% from the previous year. The Advocates supported both individuals and families affected by crime. It is worth noting that some of these individuals have been listed as victims' multiple times, highlighting the ongoing need for support.

In the last fiscal year, the Victim Advocates staffing was consistent with the two full time staff advocates and two interns, despite a significant increase in the demand for victim-centered services. The team provides such services as accompanying victims to court, offering support in navigating the criminal justice system, providing education, and connecting people to valuable community resources.

The Internship program has been vital to the future modeling of the programmatic needs of the Advocacy Center. It has been noted that both regionally and specifically in Gilbert, there has been difficulty recruiting and hiring for Advocate positions due to a lack of qualified applicants. During the past year, two interns worked with the Gilbert team. These interns both worked 20+ hours a week, assisting with the endeavors of victim advocacy, integrating into the function of the police department investigations team, and becoming a vital part of service delivery to victims in our community. Upon completion of their internship, one intern has decided to further contribute by volunteering their time in this discipline. It is Gilbert's belief that while the immediate benefits of service enhancement to our community are apparent, the long-term benefits of developing a robust applicant pool committed to exemplary advocacy practices in our community will enhance the services provided through the Gilbert Advocacy Center.

Gilbert has and continues to bolster its resources for local survivors. However, policy changes and additional funding for existing programs cannot replicate the advantages of one facility that offers a multidisciplinary approach to caring for survivors and provides services in an environment that prioritizes their needs.

Currently, survivors travel miles to access various services, often requiring them to repeatedly relive their trauma. After examining specific crime trend data available and understanding the challenges survivors face in the current local system, Gilbert PD identified a Victim Advocacy Center, that will also serve as a visible community program to reduce violence and that works with local partners to connect survivors to "safe spots", as a high priority for the Town of Gilbert.

[1] The full Community Needs Assessment from TWI is located on Gilbert's website under the Human Services Needs Assessment heading, linked here: https://www.gilbertaz.gov/residents/community-resources

This recommendation from Gilbert police, in conjunction with the findings from the Community Needs Assessment and the data showing COVID-19's impact on already rising levels of violence in our community, led us to select the construction of a Victim Advocacy Center as the best use for a portion of Gilbert's SLFRF funding.

The Advocacy Center will provide needed services for the entire community. We expect that it will have an even more significant positive impact on underserved community members who may not have the resources or capabilities to obtain victim services or who have an ongoing need for counseling services after their initial involvement in an incident. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a disproportionate impact throughout underserved local populations, who have more limited access to resources, limited financial stability, and worse social determinants of health. The Advocacy Center will ensure equitable services to all community members during some of the most challenging points in their lives.

Support for Nonprofits

Support of nonprofits serving the Gilbert community was also identified as a priority in the allocation of federal COVID-19 relief funds, in alignment with federal categories A (Public Health), B (Negative Economic Impacts), and C (Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities). As a portion of the CARES Act funds was also dedicated to nonprofit initiatives, the Town reserved SLFRF funds for distribution to nonprofits until Fiscal Year 2023 (July 2022). This methodology helped to ensure ongoing support to nonprofits during the protracted years of impact that COVID-19 has had on the nonprofit community. During the 2021 Performance Report, Gilbert noted its intention of dividing a 5% total allocation of SLFRF between FY23 and FY24. However, re-examining the needs for nonprofits triggered a change in methodology regarding funding division over two years. In early 2022, Gilbert's Community Resources Division solicited applications for support from the nonprofit community utilizing criteria established in the Final Rule. Gilbert identified priority support areas such as Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Families in Crisis, Survivors of Domestic Violence, and Homelessness and Housing Insecurity for Individuals and Families in this award. After reviewing applications, it was determined that a total allocation of 5% of the SLFRF funds in FY2023 was appropriate. As such, the Gilbert Town Council approved the allocation of these funds at the June 14, 2022, Council Meeting. Allocation occurred after July 1, 2022, via quarterly invoicing, and performance metrics were measured throughout the year.

The request from nonprofits to Gilbert for support funds increased between FY2020 and FY2022 by over 59%. Significantly, the requests between FY2022 and those received for FY2023 jumped from $1.8M to $2.5M, an increase of an additional 39%. The allocation of AZCARES and additional funding from CDBG-CV3 helped to support the requests in previous years. However, nonprofits have indicated a significant concern about sustainability due to the impacts of COVID-19. Specifically, they have lost considerable ground in fundraising due to pandemic limitations. Correspondingly, donor contributions have not recovered to pre-pandemic numbers. These noted impacts, attributed to the strain on nonprofits by the pandemic and current economic considerations, have created significant concerns about sustainability. Compounding this challenge is an uptick in service needs identified throughout the community due to the pandemic. While all designated SLFRF allocations of nonprofit funding were distributed by the Town in FY23, Gilbert remains committed to aiding our nonprofits, who, in turn, provide vital services to our community members.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Gilbert is steadfast in its commitment to promoting equitable outcomes in the distribution of federal relief funds. While recognizing that overall, Gilbert is a community with relative economic stability, its population is diverse, and the needs of our residents are great. U.S. 2020 Census data for Gilbert reflects trends in diversity growth in recent years. Gilbert recognizes the need to provide programming that promotes equitable outcomes for all its residents. Gilbert's census data reflected a growing senior population, increasing by approximately 2% of the population in the past five years. Additionally, Gilbert has almost 13,000 residents living below the poverty rate (5.3%), of which 23% are children. 9.3% of Gilbert's residents are foreign-born, and approximately 1/3 of its 267,918 residents are people of Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Black, American Indian, or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander descent. Approximately 8.2% of residents of Gilbert identify as having some form of recognized disability, whether physical or mental.

Family Advocacy Center

The SLFRF-funded Advocacy Center will be the first of its kind in the community. Currently, after an incident, victims visit multiple locations for interviews, exams, and assistance. Often forcing survivors to retell their stories and relive their trauma. Logistically, this can create significant challenges for those holding multiple jobs, individuals with children, or for those who do not have access to personal transportation. Gilbert is designing the Advocacy Center to ensure services are accessible to community members from all backgrounds. In that effort, the Center is being constructed in a central location that is accessible by public transport.

Upon opening the facility, Gilbert will commence services specific to criminal investigatory needs and victim advocacy services. These services will include forensic interviews, criminal investigation of violent crimes, and connecting survivors with victims' advocates to aid victims in the aftermath of an incident. The facility will be equipped with such amenities as private, family-style waiting areas as well as private individual waiting rooms, space for the pets of victims who may be fleeing an unstable domestic situation with their animals, rooms for forensic interviews, single-party consent calls, and digital appearances before court judges to obtain emergency orders of protection.

Further, although the Advocacy Center will only be a service provision center (meaning housing will not be provided), the Center's Victim advocates will connect victims to services provided by community partners, including local nonprofits and other service providers, who are experienced in working with underserved and minority populations and are sensitive to those communities' needs.

Although domestic violence and sexual violence victimization can occur at any income level, research shows higher rates of these types of violence are associated with lower socioeconomic status of victims.[2,3] Circumstances of those living in poverty were exacerbated by the pandemic, and COVID-19 pulled many more individuals and families into poverty. The Victim Advocacy Center aims to provide assistance and improve outcomes for these victims regardless of income level. However, research demonstrates that victims seeking assistance will likely be those of

[2] Breiding, M. J., Basile, K. C., Klevens, J., & Smith, S. G. (2017). Economic Insecurity and Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Victimization. *American journal of preventive medicine, 53*(4), 457–464. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2017.03.021
[3] Lubker, Disa K. V. (2004) Socioeconomic Status and Domestic Violence. *International Journal of Global Health and Health Disparities, 3(1),* 85-91. https://scholarworks.uni.edu/ijghhd/vol3/iss1/10

lower socioeconomic status meaning the Center will inherently be addressing the effects of economic inequality in the community.

Currently, Gilbert is actioning a campaign to raise awareness in the community about the Advocacy Center project and the services the facility will offer. To communicate the Advocacy Center and its mission to as many individuals as possible, Gilbert has conducted outreach in a variety of ways, inclusive of both English and Spanish messaging, including:

- Hosting in-person events
- Outreach to residents, homeowners' associations, and local non-profits
- Creating an Advocacy Center webpage on Gilbert's website
- Social media messaging
- Offering a subscription mailing list for project updates

The intent is to make all members of the community, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or religious background, aware of the Advocacy Center and the resources it can provide to anyone in need.

Support for Nonprofits

Gilbert's Community Needs Assessment and an Inclusivity Study, completed in 2022, further highlight the pressing needs for the services provided by our nonprofits within the community. Highlighted within these studies were the significant needs for services in underserved areas of the community. In determining the allocation of 5% of the overall SLFRF funds towards the support of nonprofits, applicants were asked to explain economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic that threatened their ability to provide services to the community. Furthermore, the nonprofits detailed how the funding award would subsequently enhance service provision to the community. Of the applications received, ten recipients were identified. Services identified in the applications will benefit the community in areas such as assistance to domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking victims, assistance for those enduring homelessness or housing insecurity, assistance for families in crisis, aging-in-place services for the elderly, and food bank services.

Projects identified for utilization of SLFRF funds aligned with recommendations and findings from the Community Needs Assessment, the Inclusivity Study, and feedback from community members. We believe these projects will provide services that promote equitable outcomes in the community. Utilizing the funds towards these projects ensured that marginalized or underserved residents can access needed resources and services.

Community Engagement

Gilbert has already made significant efforts in ensuring community engagement via the Community Needs Assessment and the Inclusivity Needs Assessment that it performed. Both studies were conducted by an independent research firm and derived their findings from community outreach. The outreach occurred through written surveys, social media engagement to solicit involvement, connections through local nonprofit providers, outreach to targeted civic engagement and activism groups, and focus group interviews. The design of these studies was built on the foundation of civic involvement and input to provide equitable and holistic perspectives about the challenges impacting the residents of Gilbert. As such, Gilbert's

identified priorities for the distribution of federal funds align with this community engagement and research.

Community Engagement Task Force

Additionally, Gilbert formed a Community Engagement Task Force (CETF) during FY2022. This Task Force, comprised of nine diverse community members, was tasked with working with the Town Council to evaluate the needs of our community and to provide recommendations that will improve services within Gilbert. CETF provided vital community input in conjunction with the Community Needs Assessment.

In 2023, CETF focused on three areas of identified concern: Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Human and Sex Trafficking, and Domestic Violence. CETF presented their Mental Health and Suicide Prevention recommendations to the Town Council, which included the following:

Topic	CETF Recommendations
Mental Health and Suicide Prevention	Specific Recommendation: *Awareness / Education campaign of mental health resources available in the Town of Gilbert. Improve distribution/awareness of information on available mental health services and resources. Add or retain services of Navigation, Family Advocacy Center, and Mental Health Professionals (therapists and mental health providers).*
	Actionable recommendation: *Mental Health/Suicide Prevention Services – Develop Family Advocacy Center.*

In August 2023, CETF presented its recommendations to the Council on Human and Sex Trafficking. These recommendations included the following:

Topic	CETF Recommendations
Human and Sex Trafficking	Resources: *Highlight, improve, recommend, and make accessible resources that help with choices, healing, and self-sufficiency.*
	Family Advocacy Center • *Trauma Informed Care* • *Victim Advocate positions* • *Support services for drug addiction* • *Establish relationships with group homes to help provide them with direct access and resources of supportive services that may be available from the Advocacy Center* • *Provide a "safe" spot to start for minors and adults who experience violence or sexual threat or exploitation*

In October 2023, CETF presented its recommendations to the Council on Domestic Violence. These recommendations included the following:

Topic	CETF Recommendations
Domestic Violence	Resources: *Highlight, improve, recommend, and make accessible resources that help with choices, healing, and self-sufficiency*.
	• *Resources* • *Education* • *Awareness*

In the spring of 2024, the CETF was extended for an additional six months beyond the original scope of its intended duration. The Gilbert Town Council determined that the CETF should examine the topic of youth violence in Gilbert to make recommendations that would have a positive impact on the community. In this endeavor, the composition of the CETF was modified by the Town Council to include eleven members, of whom five were teens. The recommendations submitted by the CETF following extensive research and education encompassed three categories: Education, Resources, and Awareness, and included the following:

Topic	CETF Recommendations
Teen Violence	*Education including in person classes that include topics such as school violence, bullying, recognizing warning signs, and strategies for safely managing escalating situations and include partners from advocacy groups.*
	Cross-community efforts include exploring an East Valley coalition aimed at fostering community-wide engagement in preventing teen violence, which includes participants from advocacy groups.

CETF has voiced a continued community need for the Advocacy Center and the services that this facility will enable the Town to offer to the community, ensuring quality assistance is provided to survivors of violence.

Public Awareness Campaign

Gilbert has initiated efforts to bring public awareness to the Advocacy Center via multiple engagements and outreach efforts over the past two years. An open house was conducted at Gilbert Town Hall, and the project team also participated in several ‘roadshow’ style events intended to bring information to the community by meeting them where they are. These events included attending a Parks and Recreation-sponsored Movie in the Park night, attending the Mayor’s annual State of the Town address with an informational table for attendees, setting up a booth at the Gilbert Farmers Market, and having a tent with displays at the Gilbert Global Village event. Additionally, the Town conducted outreach to nearby residents and homeowners' associations prior to site preparation groundwork to inform the immediate vicinity of upcoming activity. These physical outreach activities resulted in conversations with over 200 community members. Supporting these efforts, a pamphlet handout was developed in both English and Spanish and made available for distribution at all events. The pamphlet is also available for visitors at the front desk of Gilbert Town Hall.

In August 2024, Gilbert hosted another in-person open house to further enable the community to learn details about the project. This open house is being widely advertised to the community utilizing printed media publications, electronic newsletter distribution, HOA connections, social media, and direct mailers to nonprofit organizations. The groundbreaking ceremony, signifying the start of construction in January, was an event open to the public and also helped provide information and context to community members about the need for the center. In June, the public was invited to come sign one of the support beams being placed within the facility and write messages of hope in a symbolic gesture of support to future victims of crime who will be served at the facility. Additional outreach efforts are being planned throughout the duration of the project to ensure the community is informed about the Gilbert Advocacy Center.

The Town has developed a website landing page for those seeking additional information about the project.[4] This website is updated routinely with additional project information, community engagement events, and FAQs. All published materials, including the pamphlet, permitting signage, and site security fencing graphics, contain a QR code that directs interested community members to this site. Additionally, Gilbert created a subscription mailing list so that residents can opt-in to receive timely updates regarding the project's status.

Finally, the Town has employed its widely popular social media platforms to provide information to the community about the coming Advocacy Center. These efforts and the interactions that they afforded with community members have brought widespread support to the coming Advocacy Center from residents. The social media outreach connected with over 26,000 community members via engagements and viewing interactions during the last year on such platforms as Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, and LinkedIn. Residents' comments on these posts reflect widespread support from the community for this project.

Labor Practices

The Family Advocacy Center is a capital expenditure, and Gilbert is committed to utilizing strong labor standards in alignment with the Final Rule to promote effective and efficient delivery of a high-quality infrastructure project.

Gilbert is complying with the Davis-Bacon Act for the construction of the Advocacy Center to ensure all workers on the project are paid fair wages. The Town has contracted with a PM/CM that provides labor compliance services, including conducting labor standard interviews and utilizing the software LCPtracker to compile and review certified payroll reports from contractors and subcontractors.

In June of 2024, Gilbert competitively procured a Qualified Select Bidders List of construction contractors that could be utilized for any vertical municipal building projects in the Town. As part of the Town's evaluation of construction firms to make the Qualified Select Bidders List, Gilbert requested information related to labor practices, including how each firm maintains a ready access to a sufficient supply of appropriately skilled and unskilled labor to ensure high-quality construction, details on any firm history of labor disputes and disruptions, and each firm's approach to project safety, safety records, and ability to maintain a safe work environment.

[4] Gilbert's webpage dedicated to the Advocacy Center is linked here: https://www.gilbertaz.gov/departments/public-works/engineering-services/capital-improvement-projects/mf2490-advocacy-center

Incorporating these criteria into the selection of vendors was a critical component of the Town's plan to establish effective labor practices for the construction of the Advocacy Center.

Gilbert issued an Invitation for Bid for the Advocacy Center and awarded a vendor contract to construct the facility in December 2024. Since construction began, Gilbert has required a detailed Safety & Health Program (SHP) from the general contractor as required by specification Safety & Health 015950. This specification requires the contractor to hold weekly Safety Meetings with all trades and superintendents during construction. The general contractor is also required to staff a full-time/on-site Safety and Health Officer to ensure compliance with the SHP. Finally, Gilbert requires the PM/CM to provide Health and Safety oversight on behalf of the Town with quarterly peer reviews from a Health, Safety and Environment Manager.

Use of Evidence

Gilbert is committed to evidence-based and data-supported programming. The Advocacy Center project is a capital expenditure in category 1.14—Other Public Health Services. Although SLFRF funding only supports facility construction and not the services it will offer, the Center's intended model of providing increased access to victims' services via a multidisciplinary approach is supported by strong to moderate evidence, according to the Treasury's definition.

According to the National Children's Alliance—an accrediting body for more than 900 Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) in the United States—"(CACs) are child-focused, facility-based programs in which representatives from many disciplines work together to conduct interviews and make team decisions on cases of child abuse." There has been extensive research on the CAC model and its multidisciplinary approach to handling crimes against children. The Gilbert Advocacy Center will not solely focus on children and instead will provide services to survivors of domestic violence, child and adult sexual assault and abuse, and human trafficking. This is more similar to the Family Advocacy Center (FAC) model utilized in established centers like the Mesa Family Advocacy Center and the Chandler Family Advocacy Center. The FAC model utilizes the same multidisciplinary approach central to the CACs. Therefore, studies on the CAC model will apply to the effective design of FACs.

In 2019, the National Children's Alliance published its annual National Report on Outcomes for Children's Advocacy Centers.[5,6] This report includes survey results to measure the success of Children's Advocacy Centers. Seventy-three thousand caregivers and multi-disciplinary team members took the survey. Key takeaways from the survey included:

- 73% of caregivers agree that Children's Advocacy Centers provide them with resources to support their children.
- 98% of team members believe clients benefit from the collaborative approach of multi-disciplinary teams.
- 97% of caregivers would recommend others utilize a Children's Advocacy Center if faced with similar circumstances.

Additionally, a 2015 peer reviewed article completed a systematic review of existing research to determine, "the effectiveness of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach of child advocacy centers (CACs) on prosecution rates of alleged sex offenders and satisfaction of non-offending

[5] National Children's Alliance. (2019). *Health, Justice, & Trust: A National Report on Outcomes for Children's Advocacy Centers.* https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/OMS-Report-2019-web.pdf
[6] National Children's Alliance. (2019). *Health, Justice, & Trust: A National Report on Outcomes for Children's Advocacy Centers (Brief).* https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2019-OMS-Brief.pdf

caregivers of children less than 18 years of age, with allegations of child sexual abuse (CSA)."[7] This review of existing research revealed that the use of CACs:

- increases felony prosecution of child sexual abusers,
- improves child forensic interviewing,
- leads to increased referrals for mental health services, and
- increases non-offending caregivers' satisfaction[8]

Advocacy Centers provide improved victim services. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) revealed that victims who received victim services were more than five times (24% compared to 4%) more likely to proceed through all four phases of the criminal justice system. The four phases being: 1) Police are notified; 2) Criminal report completed; 3) Arrest is made, and 4) Adjudication of criminal charges. When victims seek out services, they are more likely to see an arrest made in their case than victims who do not receive direct assistance. Compounding the problem, only 58% of serious violent crimes (rape, sexual abuse, robbery, and aggravated assault) are reported to the police. Of those who do report the crime to the police, only 9% of victims of serious violent crime receive assistance from a victim service agency.[9] Advocacy Centers improve the reporting process and increase victim services, increasing the likelihood of prosecution.

Similarly, and in keeping with Gilbert's use of evidence and data-based practices, the need for support for our nonprofit community partners continues to grow. Nonprofits requested an increase of over 59% in municipal funding support applications from FY2020 to FY2022.

Between FY2022 and FY2023, that figure grew another 39%, totaling over $2.59 million requested by nonprofit community partners. Most of this is directly attributed to the decreased fundraising capacity and economic instability of nonprofit entities during a time of increased service demand. As such, the entirety of the 5% of the SLFRF funding allocation was deemed appropriate for distribution during FY23 to support the critical services that these organizations provide to the community.

Performance Report

The Town of Gilbert's Advocacy Center is a capital expenditure project involving the construction of a new facility that will house a variety of victim services in one central location. SLFRF will not fund any services or programs within the facility. Therefore, performance indicators for this project and associated SLFRF funding will focus on the progress of the design and construction of the facility. The diagram on the following page displays the current project timeline, complete with major milestones and Gilbert's current progress.

[7] Nwogu, N., Agrawal, L., Chambers, S., Buagas, A., Daniele, R. M., & Singleton, J. (2015). The effectiveness of child advocacy centers and the multidisciplinary team approach on prosecution rates of alleged sex offenders and satisfaction of non-offending caregivers with allegations of child sexual abuse: a systematic review protocol. *JBI database of systematic reviews and implementation reports*, *13*(3), 47–60. https://doi.org/10.11124/jbisrir-2015-1842
[8] Ibid.
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GILBERT ADVOCACY CENTER TIMELINE

2022

OCTOBER-DECEMBER
Procurement of Project Management/Construction Management (PM/CM) and Architectural services begins. Gilbert notifies the selected firms of award.

2023

APRIL - DECEMBER
Notice to Proceed is issued to the architect to begin Advocacy Center Design. Gilbert executes a contract with a public relations firm to support a public awareness campaign for the Advocacy Center.

2024

FEBRUARY
Gilbert hosts its first open house for the Advocacy Center.

APRIL-JUNE
Gilbert solicits qualifications for a prequalified list of construction contractors, and the final list of prequalified construction contractors is announced.

JUNE
95% completed design drawings for the Advocacy Center are sent to the Building Department for the initial plan check.

AUGUST
Gilbert solicits bids from prequalified construction contractors .

Gilbert hosts a second open house for the Advocacy Center.

DECEMBER
Contract executed with the construction contractor and all American Rescue Plan Act funds are obligated.

2025

JANUARY
Ground breaking takes place and construction commences.

JUNE
Community outreach with beam signing event.

JANUARY - DECEMBER
Ongoing construction and site work.

2026

SUMMER
Construction complete.

FALL
Advocacy Center opens for services.

The Town executed a contract with a public relations firm in December 2023 and had its first open house for the Center in February 2024. Over the past two years, Gilbert worked with its architect on the design for the Advocacy Center. In June 2024, the Town sent 95% complete design drawings to the Building Department for the initial plan check. In April 2024, Gilbert released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to competitively procure a Qualified Select Bidders List of construction contractors. Gilbert announced which construction firms made the final list in early June 2024. The Town issued an Invitation for Bid for the construction of the Advocacy Center to firms on the project and awarded the construction contract in December 2024. All SLFRF funds were obligated in December 2024.

Nonprofit entities who applied for a portion of SLFRF funds agreed to quarterly reporting of performance in the designated areas for projects. Upon distribution of funds in FY2023, nonprofits provided the following data quarterly:

- Number of residents served (both new and ongoing)
- Number of services provided
- Service definitions
- Race/Ethnicity data
- Poverty level of assisted residences
- Household composition
- Age of residents served
- If the resident is handicapped/disabled
- Measurable outcomes of the contracted service provisions
- Narrative of successes
- Narrative of challenges
- Number of volunteers providing services
- Volunteer hours
- Types of volunteer services provided

The Town subsequently analyzed these metrics to assess SLFRF funding performance and determine whether the funds' intended goals were achieved.

With the allocation of funding in FY2023, the performance of nonprofit funding was assessed using multiple metrics. Reporting from nonprofits who received funding included:

- 10,896 New individual residents served
- 5,922 Ongoing individual residents served
- 251,880 Services provided to individuals

Types of services provided utilizing SLFRF included:

- Safe, stable shelter bed nights, case management and basic needs. Items provided such as toiletries, food, hygiene products, and linens. In addition, clients had access to monthly basic life skills (cooking, cleaning, fitness, parenting) classes, workforce services, food boxes, legal aid, financial wellness workshops, a resource fair, and a variety of social events (craft club, game room, etc.)
- Rental and utility assistance to residents to help prevent eviction & assist with providing funds for utilities to prevent shut off.
- Domestic violence victim bed nights, a counseling session, a victim advocacy session or a support group session.

- Children's dental clinic provided: preventive dental services including dental assessments, professional cleanings, X-rays, sealants, and fluoride varnish treatments
- Meals distributed within the Town through nonprofit partner agencies and other community partners.
- Emergency and Minor Home repair services, keeping low/mod income individuals safe in their homes

PROJECT INVENTORY

Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations

Project Name: Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations
Funding Amount: $1,207,993.00
Project Expenditure Category: 2.34 – Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations (Impacted or Disproportionately Impacted)
Project Expenditure Category Group: 2 – Negative Economic Impacts

Project Overview and Performance Report

On June 14, 2022, the Gilbert Town Council awarded contracts for this project after an extensive application and review process. Funding began in July 2022, and quarterly reporting began thereafter. Nonprofit award recipients for this project were:

- Dignity Health Foundation, Gilbert Children's Dental Clinic, $287,993 – Performs preventative dental services, including dental assessments, professional cleanings, X-rays, sealants, and fluoride varnish treatments, using specially-certified dental hygienists who work with a dentist through teledentistry. Due to COVID-19, families have put off care, and as a result, there are increased numbers of children with advanced dental conditions. These funds enabled the clinic to provide services to the community three days per week in four operatories.
- Child Crisis Arizona, Caring for Homeless Children and Youth, $100,000 – Child Crisis Arizona provides complete care for homeless children and youth, ages birth through 21 years. Youth originating from or in Gilbert benefited from services to improve their current situations and provide opportunities to move forward into thriving lives.
- A New Leaf, Domestic Violence Services, $40,000 – Addressing priorities identified in the Town of Gilbert's 2019 Community Needs Assessment, A New Leaf provides crisis intervention, safety, and support services for Gilbert residents who are survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence.
- Rebuilding Together Valley of the Sun, Safe At Home, $100,000 – Safe At Home has provided free critical/emergency home repairs, home fall prevention modifications, and/or code compliance violation remediation services for approximately 80 economically disadvantaged Gilbert resident households throughout 2022.
- AZCEND, Community Action Program, $300,000 – The Gilbert Community Action Program provides financial assistance to prevent a more significant crisis such as homelessness and utility disconnect for families in crisis. Case management, financial coaching, and referrals to other community resources for low-income Gilbert residents are also part of the Community Action Program service delivery model.
- AZCEND, Gilbert Homeless Services, $100,000 – The AZCEND homeless services program provides emergency shelter, case management, outreach, connection to resources, and supportive services to those experiencing homelessness in Gilbert. The I-HELP program provides shelter 365 days a year, and resource navigation services are available Monday-Friday through street outreach and in-office assessments.

- My Sisters' Place, Survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault/Abuse, and Human Trafficking, $25,000 – Located in the East Valley, My Sister's Place is a 24-hour, 365 days per year emergency domestic violence shelter offering safety and healing for women, men, and their dependent children fleeing domestic violence.
- Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS), Emergency Shelter and Case Management Services for Gilbert Residents Experiencing Homelessness, $100,000 - Central Arizona Shelter Services, Inc. (CASS) 's Emergency Shelter and Case Management Services for Gilbert Residents Experiencing Homelessness Program provides immediate shelter and dedicated case management services in Gilbert 24/7/365 at their Single Adult Shelter and Vista Colina Family Shelter for individuals, children, and families experiencing homelessness in Gilbert, as well as an embedded case manager in a location in Gilbert where collaboration and delivery of resources can occur.
- Midwest Food Bank NFP, Half Million Meals!, $55,000 - Midwest Food Bank (MFB) proposed distributing 500,000 nutritious meals to partner agencies in Gilbert through June 2023. MFB packages a nutritious meal packet called "Tender Mercies," which contains rice, beans, and protein, and pledged to distribute these meals to the 16 nonprofits they currently serve in Gilbert, along with any new churches, schools, shelters, or community partners that apply for assistance.
- Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona, Aging In Place, $100,000 - Habitat's Aging in Place (AIP) Program completes safety and functional home modifications and repairs to enable low-income senior homeowners to remain in their homes through low-cost, low barrier, high-impact home modifications that reduce older adults' risk of falling, improve general safety, increase accessibility, and improve their functional abilities in their homes.

Nonprofit recipients of SLFRF funding provided quarterly performance reporting using the metrics outlined in the Performance Report section. These quarterly reports were analyzed internally by the Town and also used to congregate data for the Annual Performance Report.

Disproportionately Impacted Communities

The 2.34 – Assistance to Impacted Nonprofit Organizations expenditure category requires recipients to report on whether projects are primarily serving disproportionately impacted communities. Gilbert achieved this by distributing funding to support nonprofits providing services to the most vulnerable in the community, including low-income residents, senior citizens, local youth in crisis, and survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Financial strain, job loss, isolation, lack of access to services, and increased risk of violence were some of the effects of COVID-19 that made the impact of the pandemic meaningfully more severe for these groups.

Family Advocacy Center

Project Name: Family Advocacy Center
Funding Amount: $22,951,878.00
Project Expenditure Category: 1.14 Other Public Health Services
Project Expenditure Category Group: 1 – Public Health

Project Overview

Gilbert is building an Advocacy Center to provide a "one-stop shop" for survivors of domestic violence, child and adult sexual assault and abuse, and human trafficking. This project is a capital expenditure, and funds will be used to construct a new facility on Town-owned land. Currently, victims visit multiple locations for interviews, exams, and assistance, often forcing

them to retell their stories and relive their trauma. This facility will house an array of professional services, enabling victims to move through the steps of forensic and criminal investigations while accessing victim services in one location. Upon opening the facility, Gilbert will commence services specific to criminal investigatory needs and victim advocacy services. These services will include forensic interviews, criminal investigation of violent crimes, and working with victims' advocates to aid victims in the aftermath of an incident. The facility will be equipped with such amenities as private, family-style waiting areas as well as private individual waiting rooms, space for the pets of victims who may be fleeing an unstable domestic situation with their animals, rooms for forensic interviews, single-party consent calls, and digital appearances before court judges to obtain emergency orders of protection. The Center also contains space for programmed counseling services, nonprofit collaboration areas, and sexual assault forensic exams. At this time, the specific staffing model for counseling services and partnerships with nonprofits and nursing staff has not been contractually defined. As the Gilbert Advocacy Center progresses with design and construction, the Town of Gilbert is simultaneously developing the facility's programming and governance model to accomplish the intended full spectrum of service delivery as soon as possible following the Center's opening.

Local data and community feedback indicated a strong need for the Center prior to COVID, and the pandemic only exacerbated the impact and incidence of interpersonal violence while making accessing services more difficult. For victims of physical or sexual abuse and trafficking, the trauma and negative impacts of abuse can be long-lasting. Survivors of these types of crimes are at a higher risk for anxiety, depression, and substance abuse disorder, and the criminal justice process can take years, meaning long-term access to resources is needed. The Advocacy Center is designed to provide short and long-term support in a centralized location, allowing community members reliable access to resources for years to come. The Center is anticipated to have a significant positive impact on community members who previously may not have had the resources to obtain victim services and who have a long-term need for support. The goals of the Center are to provide a multidisciplinary, trauma-informed approach to the investigation and response to these crimes to reduce stress, to minimize trauma and revictimization by limiting the number of victim interviews and medical exams, and to provide services in a comfortable and central location sensitive to victims' needs. With greater access to victims' services, Gilbert anticipates an increase in the local rate of reporting, and research shows that when victims receive direct assistance, they are more likely to see an arrest made in their case.

Over the past three years, Gilbert has been working to progress construction of the facility and has begun its public awareness campaign to share the mission of the Advocacy Center with the community. All remaining SLFRF funds were obligated in December 2024 with the execution of the construction contract and have been reported quarterly. The Gilbert Advocacy Center construction broke ground in January 2025 and is approximately 36% complete at the time of this reporting. The center is on schedule for construction completion in the summer of 2026. During this time, the Town of Gilbert has been working to fully develop the programmatic structure for the Advocacy Center and has incorporated the departmental funding, including additional staff positions, into its FY26 budget. This funding is supported by the Town's General Fund and not part of the SLFRF funds. Initial hiring for positions necessary to support the Advocacy Center will commence in fall 2025. Gilbert is proceeding on schedule and anticipates opening the doors of the facility for services to the community in fall 2026. All SLFRF funds will be expended prior to December 31, 2026, federal deadlines in accordance with the Final Rule guidance.

Use of Evidence

Since Gilbert is using its SLFRF funding to construct this facility and will not be spending any funding to support the programs or services that the Advocacy Center will provide, the amount of funds dedicated to evidence-based interventions is zero. However, as described in the Use of Evidence section earlier in this report, the multidisciplinary approach to victims' services that the Center will utilize is a proven, successful approach and is supported by strong to moderate evidence. Gilbert is committed to developing a programmatic approach that supports victims in a trauma-informed manner that best supports their needs and reduces trauma as they navigate the criminal justice process.

Performance Report

As mentioned above, Gilbert's Advocacy Center project is a capital expenditure project involving the construction of a new facility. The primary performance indicator for this is the progress of the design and construction of the facility against the project timeline. The project timeline diagram above on page 14 shows Gilbert's current progress on the project, as well as goals for next year. Gilbert has made considerable progress not only in the construction of the facility, but also in community outreach and engagement as detailed on page 8, and in the development of the programmatic structure of the operations for the facility as detailed on page 18. The Town is on track to expend all SLFRF funds by the obligation deadline of December 31, 2026.

Disproportionately Impacted Communities

The 1.14 – Other Public Health Services expenditure category requires recipients to report on whether projects are primarily serving disproportionately impacted communities. As mentioned, Gilbert identifies survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, crimes against children, and human trafficking as a disproportionately impacted community because the impacts of the pandemic were meaningfully more severe for this population. The Advocacy Center is designed specifically for this subset of residents. According to Gilbert Police Department statistics, there was already an increase in these types of crimes prior to the pandemic, and we know that stay-at-home orders and lockdowns only exacerbated circumstances for these survivors. For some this meant being isolated with their abuser and cutoff from support systems. For others the pandemic worsened existing battles with depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder. In both examples, victims faced reduced access to assistance and resources during the pandemic.