

ICYMI: Removal of \$5 Million in Direct Financial Assistance for St. Louis Families Takes Center Stage at City Hall

July 9 2021 9:42 AM



ST. LOUIS - In his proposal for spending an initial investment in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, President Lewis Reed preserved nearly all of Mayor Tishaura O. Jones' \$81 million in recommendations she made to get shots in arms, keep families in their homes and address the root causes of crime to improve public safety. Missing however was a \$5 million in direct financial assistance in the form of \$500 one-time payments to thousands of St. Louis residents and their families.

The issue has dominated coverage of President Reed's effort. From Fox 2 on Wednesday, "[\\$500 checks remain sticking point as St. Louis leaders weigh plans to spend federal relief funds:](#)"

"People need relief to help pay their bills, to help put food on the table," Mayor Tishaura Jones said Wednesday.

"Jones and her administration are critical of a bill that is making its way to the St. Louis Board of Aldermen. The measure, sponsored by Aldermanic President Lewis Reed, covers the vast majority of what Jones is proposing in her \$80 million spending plan from American Rescue Plan Act funds.

"However, it leaves out a \$5 million provision to provide a one-time, \$500 payment to residents who are struggling to make ends meet."

Yesterday, clergy, labor and community leaders came together to demand President Reed and aldermen restore the \$5 million in direct financial assistance for St. Louis families as the Board takes a vote on the measure today. From KMOV, "[St. Louis clergy call aldermen to keep direct cash payments to residents on federal aid spending plan:](#)

"Board President Lewis Reed proposed an adjusted plan to spend millions of dollars coming to the city from the federal government in pandemic aid. It mostly mirrors Mayor Tishaura Jones' plan except it doesn't include a direct \$500 cash payment to city residents.

"The mayor's plan allocated \$5 million in direct cash assistance, which would give 10,000 families a \$500 cash payment to help with rent and food. Faith leaders gathered on Thursday outside City Hall pleading for the cash payment to stay in the plan.

"There's poverty in this city. There's people trying to figure out how to pay their light bills in this city," Reverend Darryl Gray said. "There are people trying to decide whether to buy prescription drugs or put food on their table."

Mayor Jones is glad that the vast majority of her original \$81 million proposal remains intact, and hopes the Board of Aldermen reverses the removal of the \$5 million in direct financial assistance for St. Louis residents and their families as it likely votes today on the full proposal. The full criteria for direct financial assistance is [here](#).