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Looking Back at 2021 in State and Local Government.

States and localities demonstrated their resilience as they navigated a second year marked by the pandemic. There are plenty of pressing issues on the horizon heading into 2022.

It's been another eventful and challenging year for states and localities across the U.S., as Covid-19 and the fallout it is causing for public health systems and the nation's economy continue to dominate government affairs at all levels. There was a glimmer of hope heading into the summer that the pandemic might finally be waning as vaccines became widely available and case counts fell. But that moment gave way to the rise of the delta variant and, now, omicron and another wave of infections. The new variant and skyrocketing case counts amid the winter holiday season mean that America will face more pandemic-driven sickness and disruption as 2022 begins and that state and local governments will continue to be occupied with responding to the crisis.

This year has also been a notable one for federal legislation with major implications for states and localities. First, there was the American Rescue Plan Act, which provided \$350 billion in direct aid to states and local governments—a historic amount of funding. Then, in November, President Biden signed a bipartisan infrastructure law that boosted the amount of federal funding for public works by about \$550 billion. For many state, city and county leaders, getting infrastructure legislation like this passed has been a longstanding priority. In the coming year, how states and localities are beginning to use their ARPA funds and the added infrastructure dollars will be a major storyline to watch.

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ROUTE FIFTY

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