

**THE AMERICAN  
RESCUE PLAN  
ACT AND IT  
MODERNIZATION:  
FOUR THINGS  
STATE AND LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS  
NEED TO KNOW**



When the COVID-19 crisis hit, it very quickly highlighted the drawbacks of legacy systems, demonstrating the need for modernization in state and local government IT. With funding available under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, these agencies now have the chance to upgrade their technologies to put themselves in a better, more resilient position going forward.

---

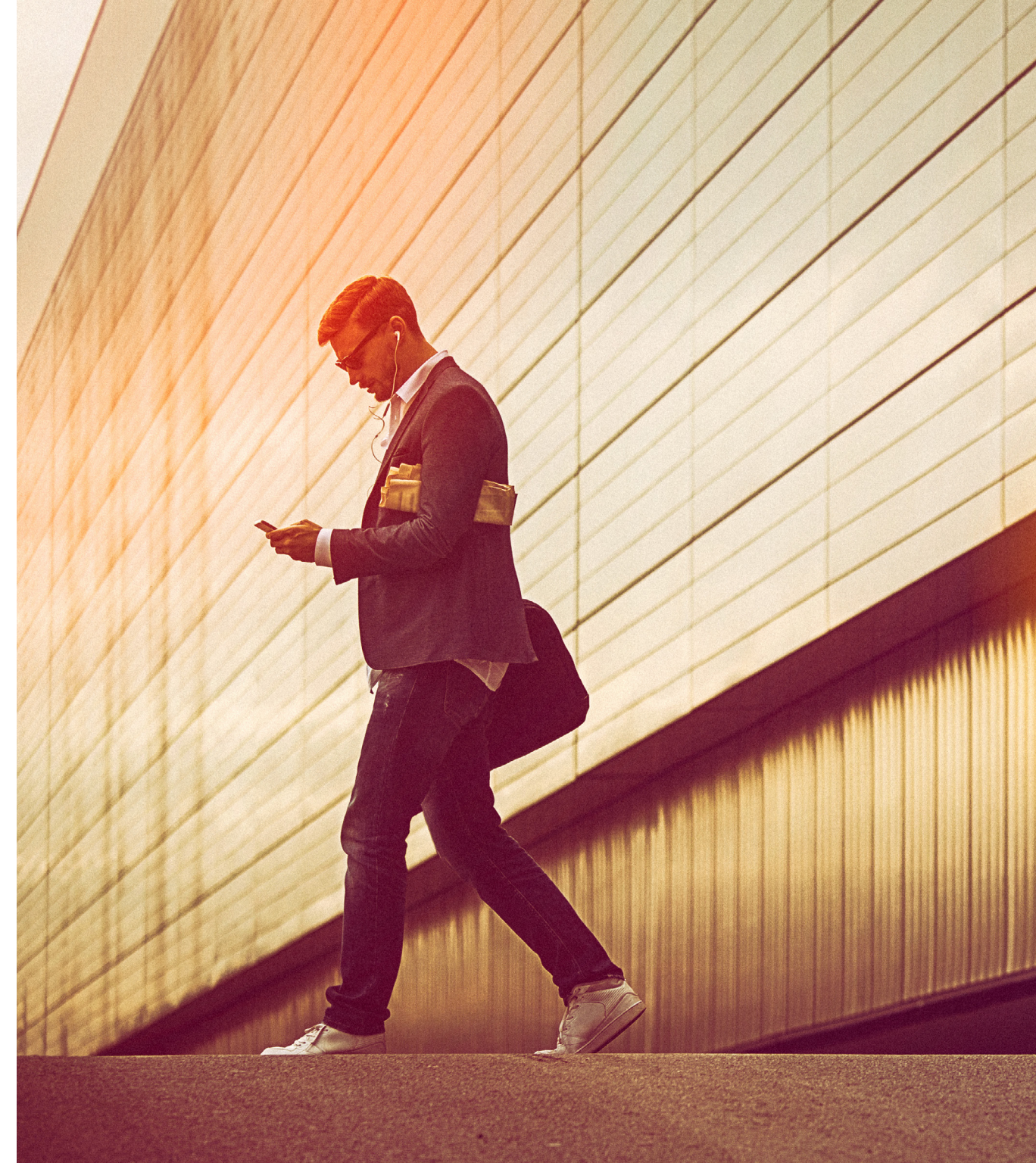
## Challenges and opportunities



With the rush to remote work, agencies saw the limitations of current systems that may be decades old, especially around travel, expense, and invoice (TE&I) reporting. These systems – some purchased and some homegrown via Excel spreadsheets – can be expensive, inflexible, siloed, and time- and labor-intensive to manage. Especially as people began working from home, these legacy systems distracted government employees from the main mission: to serve citizens.

In the post-pandemic era, government funding in support of IT modernization opens a window of opportunity. State and local agencies can leverage federal funding to drive much-needed technology upgrades. When applied to travel, expense, and invoice reporting, this modernization promises to improve resilience, enhance flexibility, and support compliance needs going forward.

The following four tips will help you plan how to best approach this funding opportunity.



# 01

## TIP 1: Know what's available

The 2020 CARES Act and the 2021 ARP Act provide funds that can be used to improve critical infrastructure. Over the long term, ARP Act funds are a form of working capital that can support investments in the cloud and other needed technology upgrades. But it will be up to business leaders to make the case for technology investments.

They will need to establish priorities, and perhaps also establish partnerships, between program owners, IT, and finance to pave the way for successful use of these funds. Technology leaders can step up and define strong business cases that demonstrate how these funds can help unite digital government, remote or hybrid workforces, and innovation to bring better business processes – and service – to constituents.



The deadline to use CARES Act funding has been extended through December 31, 2021, while funding from the ARP Act can drive modernization efforts through December 31, 2024.

## TIP 2: Establish project priorities

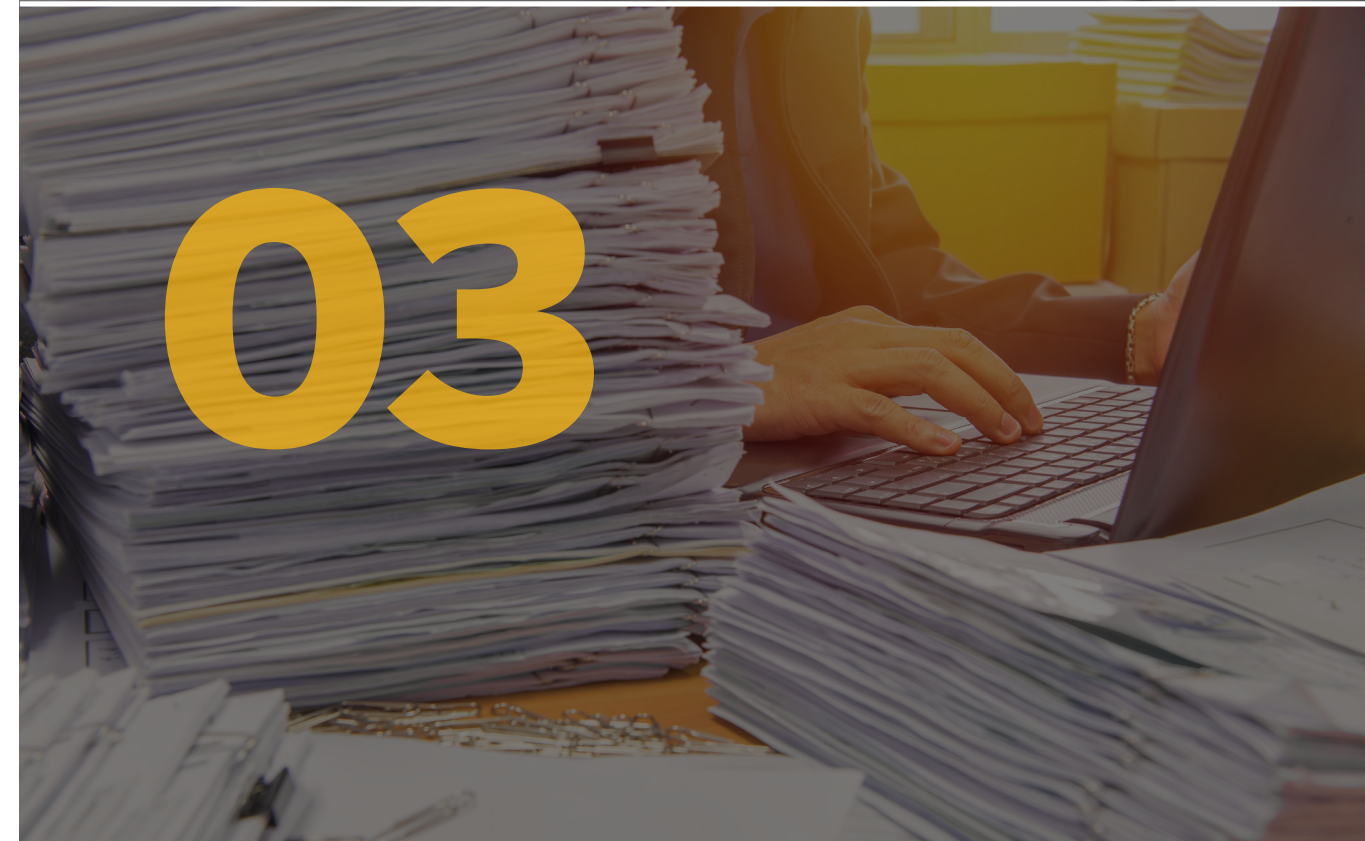
Faced with competing priorities, agencies must be strategic in how they utilize ARP Act funds. Look for ways these funds can help you implement systems that make it easier and more efficient for government employees to serve citizens, enable internal and external collaboration, and promote greater accountability.

For example, TE&I processes have suffered from a lack of automation. Yet, this area is ripe for improvement: Finance teams have already established an entry point for automation by creating expense categories that meet regulatory needs. With this foundation, TE&I is primed for cloud adoption and technology that makes it easier to accurately manage and track spending, increase transparency and accountability in support of tightened budgets, and help improve regulatory compliance.

## TIP 3: Fix what's broken first

When looking to make the most of ARP Act funds, turn your attention first to those processes most urgently in need of repair. As the pandemic showed, manual, paper-based processes should be first in line. There is often no holistic view of expenses and spend from above, coherent workflows are lacking, and employees are mired in time-consuming tasks.

With TE&I, a strategic investment in technology can help make dramatic changes important to both agencies and constituents. Automated processes can replace data entry, email approval chains, manual audits, and other slow-moving processes – freeing your staff to focus on services that more directly affect constituents. At the same time, gathering all TE&I data in one system with easy-to-use dashboards and reporting can provide a much-needed view into spending across your organization.



# 04



## TIP 4: Leverage powerful technologies

When considering the types of technologies ARP funds might support, it makes sense to pursue IT strategies that deliver the greatest operational improvements – and position agencies for greater future resilience.

Cloud-based systems offer the scalability, flexibility, and reliability needed for continuous delivery of services, regardless of changing circumstances or where employees are working. Automated spend management offers a low threshold of entry for those looking to upgrade and enhance their cloud utilization. As most agencies have TE&I categories with granular approvals already in place, there's a readiness for improvement that's rarely seen in government systems.

---

### The path to easier processes and more transparency

By improving travel, expense, and invoice management processes, state and local governments can promote transparency and drive greater compliance. Improved reporting can help stabilize budgets – a key objective for agencies as they find their footing among the economic challenges of the post-pandemic era.



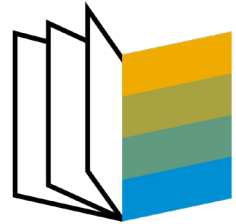
When considering solutions, look for capabilities that bring control and visibility across spending to manage costs and reduce complexity more effectively. Consistent, intelligent controls and automated workflows help ensure the right policies are applied to every line item on every expense report and invoice. This also eases the workload on employees, AP, and finance teams, while also delivering full visibility and greater manageability.

---

### Forging ahead



ARP Act funds present state and local government entities with a unique opportunity to pursue much-needed IT modernization. By investing today in travel, expense, and invoice management technology, your agency can lay the foundation for a more resilient future, even in the face of rapidly changing circumstances.



**Learn more** about on how SAP Concur solutions can help you leverage ARP Act funds for your organization today.

## About SAP Concur

SAP® Concur® is the world's leading brand for integrated travel, expense, and invoice management solutions, driven by a relentless pursuit to simplify and automate these everyday processes. The highly-rated SAP Concur mobile app guides employees through business trips, charges are directly populated into expense reports, and invoice approvals are automated. By integrating near real-time data and using AI to analyze transactions, businesses can see what they're spending and avoid possible blind spots in the budget. SAP Concur solutions help eliminate yesterday's tedious tasks, make today's work easier, and support businesses to run at their best. Learn more at [concur.com](https://concur.com) or the [SAP Concur blog](#).

