



Evaluating CARES & ARPA

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Overview

- OLS-ORE plan to evaluate G2S CARES/ARPA grants
 - Examine *only* Grants-to-States
 - Est \$208 million in awards
- Desire to investigate use and efficiency of funds, identify lessons learned, and understand gaps in post-recovery activities



Draft scope for CARES/ARPA evaluation

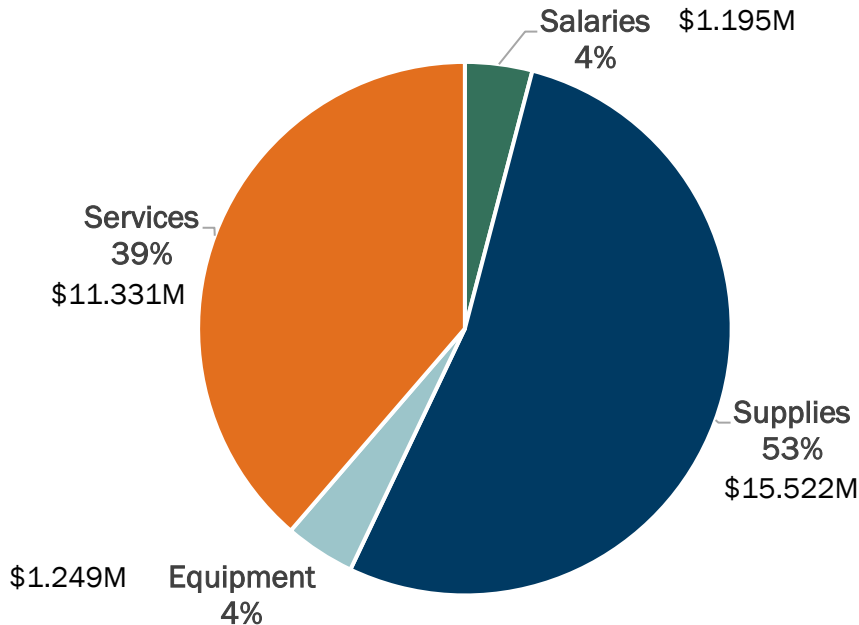
- **Goal:** review the administrative processes and distribution/use of CARES/ARPA by SLAAs
- **Methods:** potential focus groups, interviews, and/or a survey of SLAA staff, library workers, and selected state-level officials
- **Deliverables:** evaluation report of findings and communications assets
 - PPTs, infographics, and one-page summaries of key learnings
- **Timeline:** 2023-2024 (~July 2024 end date)



Information Gathered from States

CARES Act project budgets dominated by Supplies, Services

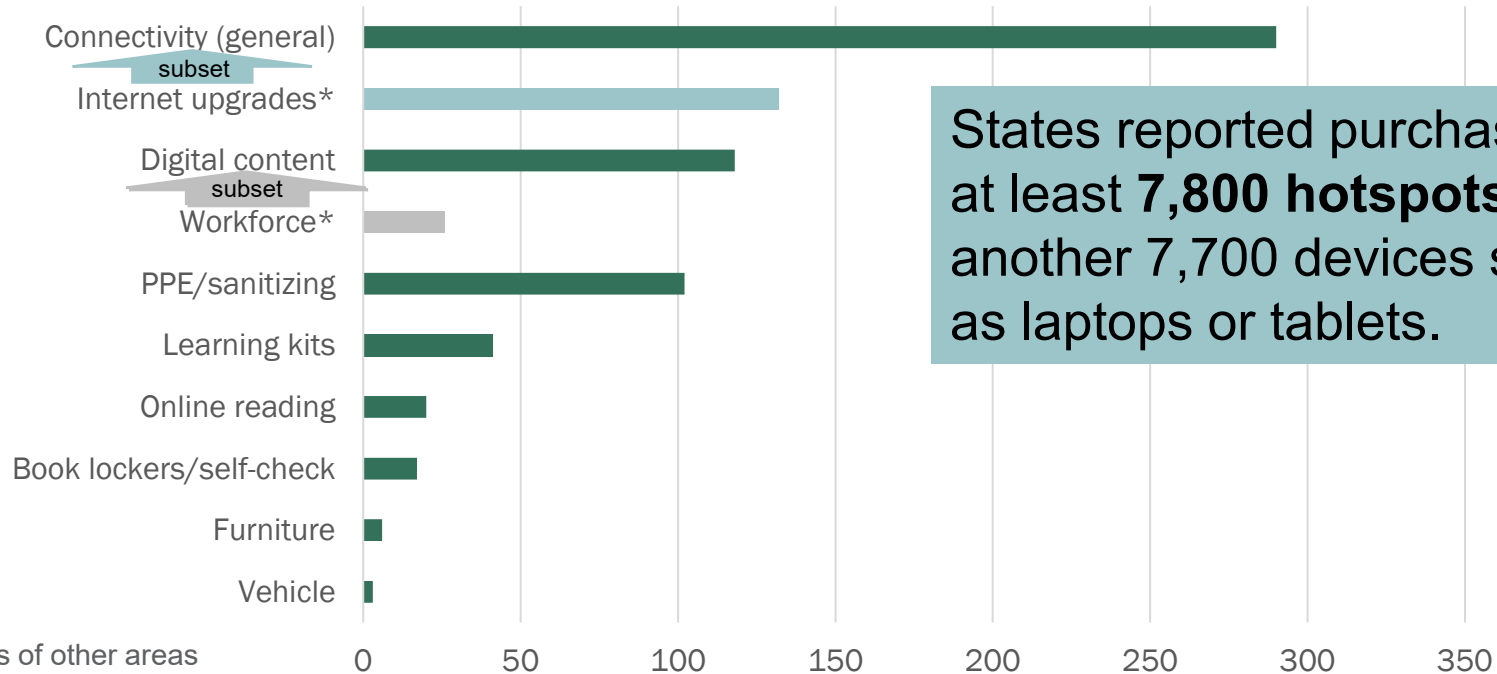
CARES budget categories of over \$1 million



- Examples of Supplies
 - Hotspots/devices
 - PPE/sanitizing
 - Learning kits
- Examples of Services
 - Digital content
 - Internet upgrades/service plans
 - Online reading

CARES funded areas (by projects)

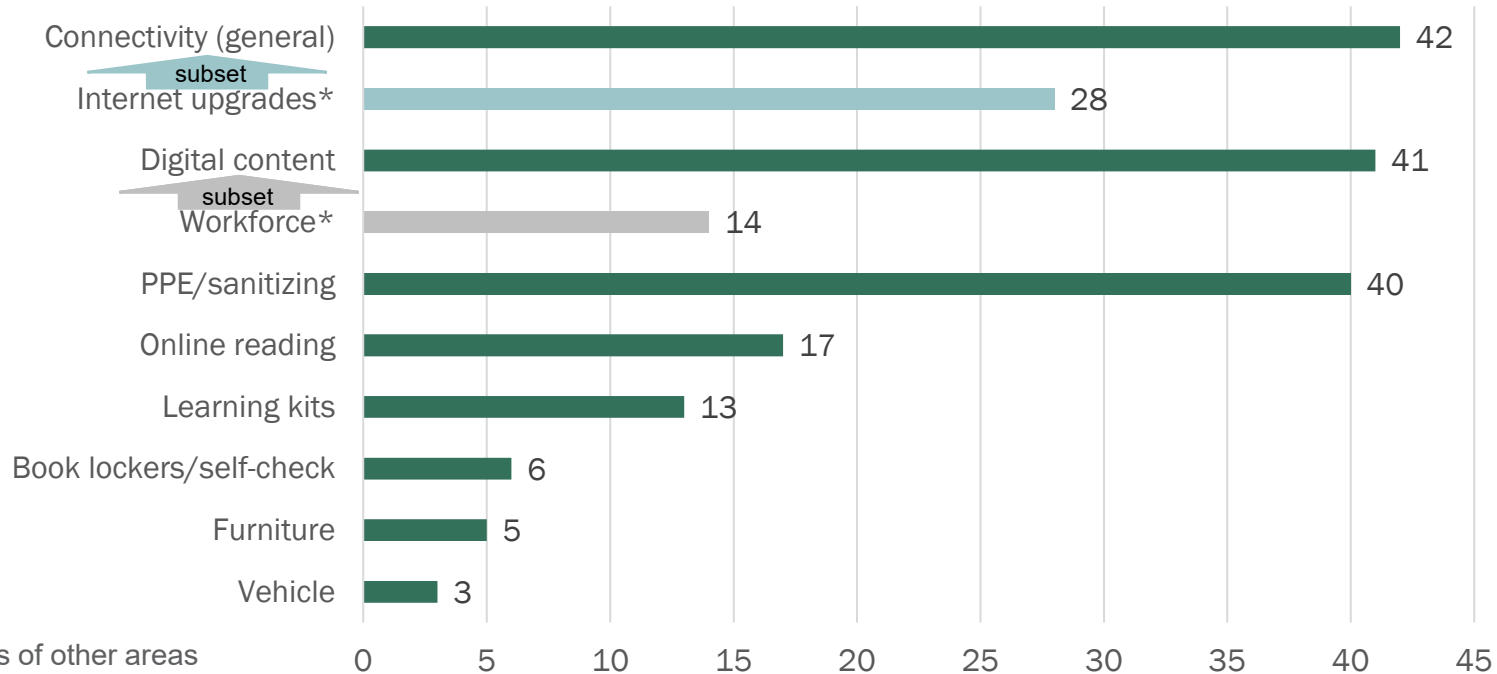
CARES funded area by projects (n=476);
some categories include double-counting



States reported purchasing at least **7,800 hotspots** and another **7,700 devices** such as laptops or tablets.

CARES funded areas (by states)

CARES funded area by number of SLAAs (n=59);
some categories include double-counting



*subsets of other areas



June 2022 Conference Discussion with States

Questions posed to LSTA Coordinators & Chiefs:

- What stories are you interested in? How would you want to use the data to be able demonstrate value/impact? How would you intend to use these stories?
 - For you
 - For others
 - What might not be good optics
- Audience use and engagement – how do you want to be involved?
 - Subject Matter Expert interest if we set up a group
 - Dissemination/communication considerations



December 2022 Discussion with COSLA

Topics with chiefs:

- Shared feedback from June Conference
- States desire further discussion on administering stimulus funds during an emergency
- Strong interest in telling the post-recovery story from the states' eyes
- *IMLS perspective*: leveraging state-federal partnership



Draft research questions: CARES/ARPA

- In what ways did libraries use the funds to **respond to the pandemic** – different modalities (PPE, outdoor furniture)?
- How did the funds **advance technology access** and what are the gaps after the funds are spent?
- What local, state, and federal **lessons learned** from successes and failures can be used to improve existing and future funding from IMLS?



Draft hypotheses: CARES/ARPA

- The smaller rollout of IMLS G2S CARES Act prepared SLAAs and IMLS for the larger roll-out of ARPA
- SLAAs with more staff capacity had an easier time spending down/distributing funds
- SLAAs with existing subaward programs had less of a lift in getting these funds out the door
- Centralized purchasing came with pros and cons; more onerous processes nonetheless yielded efficiencies of cost/scale
- Funds were handled efficiently and used to support communities in need



Table Discussion & Report Out (1)

If you were an evaluator, what would you want to know?

Put yourself in their shoes.....

- What would you ask of States?
- What would you look for in the data?
- What topics/activities would be important to focus on in the research plan?



Table Discussion & Report Out (2)



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Setting the stage for planning the evaluation plan....

- What stimulus-funded programs did you decide to keep permanent?
- What did you STOP doing as a result of the pandemic that you won't return to?