

CARES Funding Opportunities

As with the CARES Act in March of 2020 and the Supplemental Appropriations Act in December of 2020, there will be a lag time of weeks and even months for some of the money to be distributed. There is also a lack of complete details on where the money is going and what, exactly, it can be spent on. If you look closely, though, there are some noteworthy highlights:

Fiscal Relief to Government

- States, localities and tribal governments will receive \$350 billion in fiscal relief. These fiscal relief funds can be used to provide aid to households, small businesses or impacted industries; funding government services that were cut due to declines in revenue due to the pandemic; or making necessary investments in water, sewer or **broadband** infrastructure.
 - States: \$195.3 billion (based on share of unemployment)
 - Local: \$130.2 billion (Counties based on population; Cities based on CDBG criteria)
 - Territories: \$4.5 billion
 - Tribal: \$20 billion

Opportunity: This alleviates pressure from states and localities; companies that offer broadband should focus and target their efforts on this funding stream.

Unemployment Modernization

- States will receive \$2 billion from the Department of Labor (DOL) to support program integrity and timely and equitable access to benefits. The Secretary of DOL will use these funds to develop systemwide improvements related to program integrity, remove access barriers, clear up backlogs.

Opportunity: State Departments of Labor will work to modernize their UI benefits systems with a focus on validating identifies and preventing fraud, waste and abuse.

K-12 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

- \$128,554,800,000 in grants to local education agencies to support the reopening of schools and learning loss associated with the pandemic.

Opportunity: This is a continuation of the funds originally included in the CARES Act. These funds will support the re-opening of K-12 including distance learning, networking and solutions to keep students safe (i.e., occupancy management.)

Higher Education Relief Fund

- \$39,584,570,000 to institutions of higher educations; again, 50% of new allocations must be directed to financial aid to students.

Opportunity: This is a continuation of the funds originally included in the CARES Act. These funds will support the reopening of higher education including distance learning, networking and solutions to keep students safe (i.e., occupancy management.)

E-Rate Connectivity Fund

- \$7.59 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund for schools and libraries to provide eligible connected devices, internet service and equipment to support internet services to teachers and students.

Opportunity: Tremendous opportunity for those that offer E-Rate services to K-12 and libraries.

Vaccine Distribution and Communication

- \$7.5 billion in funding including grants to public health departments from the CDC to support vaccine related activities to prepare, promote, distribute, administer, monitor and track COVID-19 vaccines.

Opportunity: A big gap that emerged quickly was communication gaps related to vaccine eligibility and appointments. These funds will help SLG address these issues.

COVID-19 Testing

- \$46 billion for COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and mitigation including building more testing sites, enhancing IT, data modernization and reporting.

Opportunity: Funding can be used to enhance IT for COVID-19 testing and reporting.

Public Health Workforce

- \$7.66 billion to expand the public health workforce; funds can be used for data management and other technologies.

Opportunity: These funds are largely to augment to public sector workforce but can be used to procure technologies that support this mission.

State-Based Marketplace Modernization

- \$20 million to award grants to state-based marketplaces to modernize any system, program or technology utilized by state-based marketplaces.

Opportunity: \$20 million to modernize the state-based insurance marketplaces.

Federal Transit Administration Grants

- \$30 billion to prepare, prevent and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic expenses include payroll, operating costs and maintaining services.

Airport Relief

- \$8 billion to airports to support operations and to combat the spread of pathogens at airports.