

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES CARES ACT FUNDING SURVEY

COGNITIVE TESTING SUMMARY REPORT *MAY 26, 2021*

This summary report includes:

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Project Description

In 2020, the National Endowment for the Arts (Arts Endowment) distributed funding to State Arts Agencies (SAAs) through the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is developing the *CARES Act Funding Survey* to understand the impact of that funding. As part of survey development, NASAA contracted with ProgramWorks (PW) for cognitive testing of survey items with a representative sample of interviewees. The findings will be used for the Paperwork Reduction Act clearance needed for the survey.

Methodology

PURPOSE OF COGNITIVE TESTING

The purpose of cognitive testing of data collection instruments is to reduce measurement error associated with respondents, by evaluating the quality of questions and the extent to which the questions solicit the desired information. The goal for cognitive testing of the *CARES Act Funding Survey* is to ensure future respondents interpret the items as NASAA intends and the survey ultimately yields data that is easy to manage and straightforward to interpret.

COGNITIVE TESTING SAMPLE: CHARACTERISTICS AND RECRUITMENT

Throughout this report, "participant" refers to the eight SAA representatives who participated in interviews. "Grantee" refers to the entities who received funding from the SAAs. One representative from a regional arts agency (RAO) was also contacted to provide feedback on the survey instrument.

NASAA developed a pool of participants for cognitive testing, with the sample representing a range of SAA characteristics including:

- SAA geographical location;
- SAA budget size;
- Staff position with SAA (e.g., Executive Director, Deputy Director, grants officers);
- Methodology for collecting data; and
- How CARES Act funds were administered.

NASAA and ProgramWorks collaborated to recruit and schedule eight participants for cognitive testing. Each participant was assigned to one of two ProgramWorks interviewers. In addition to the SAA representatives, a RAO representative was invited to provide feedback on the instrument.

COGNITIVE TESTING PROTOCOL

Cognitive testing participants completed the 12-item *CARES Act Funding Survey* online. Simultaneously, they completed the Interviewee Recording Form (see Appendix), responding to five prompts for each numbered survey item:

- 1. Is the data/information available?
- 2. Can you answer the question with the available data/information?
- 3. Comprehension: Is the question fully understandable?
- 4. My confidence in accurately answering this is: (rating scale)
- 5. I have additional comments.

After completing the survey and the Interviewee Recording Form, each participant submitted the completed recording form to the ProgramWorks interviewer (PW). PW also obtained the survey data entered by the participants.

Prior to each interview, PW reviewed the participant's Interviewee Recording Form and survey data and identified items for targeted follow-up questioning. This included items where:

- The data/information was not unavailable or could not be answered with the available data;
- The participant reported a problem with comprehension;
- The participant did not have full confidence in accurately answering the item;
- The participant indicated they had comments; and/or
- The participant's survey data did not meet expectations for content.

During the interview, PW and the participant reviewed each item. First, the participant read the item silently. If the item was not flagged for follow-up questioning, PW asked the participant if they had any comments or questions about the item. If the item was flagged for questioning, PW followed up with prompts such as:

- What information do you need to answer that question?
- How did you arrive at that answer?
- Why is the confidence rating for this item 1/2/3?
- Can you rephrase the question (or response choice) in your own words?
- Please describe your thinking.
- What makes that item confusing/ambiguous/difficult to answer?
- How could that guestion be improved?
- Do you have any additional comments?

After reviewing all items, the participant was asked to comment on their experience with the survey format, including the ease of accessing and completing the survey and whether any other issues arose. PW made notes of the participants' responses throughout the interview.

Analyses and Results

PARTICIPANT ACCESS AND USE OF THE ONLINE SURVEY

Participants found the survey platform easy to use and no technical issues arose when accessing or completing the survey. There was a recommendation to alert future participants to the information that will be requested in advance through an option to preview the survey online or by circulating the items in advance. They also recommended being able to stop and restart the survey and to return to previous questions.

TIME TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

Participants reported the survey took 29.4 minutes, on average, to complete, with a range of 5 to 90 minutes. Those who reported longer times said they needed to consult with colleagues and/or extract data. Those who reported shorter times acknowledged that it would take longer to complete the survey when they had all of their data to report. All participants reported that additional time will be needed to extract information from spreadsheets, applications, and/or final reports. Time estimates for extracting and compiling this data ranged from 2 to 35 hours. As noted in the Results section, some participants were not certain they could provide the requested data, completely and accurately, based on their existing data.

ANALYSES

As noted above, the Interviewee Reporting Forms guided the interviews for cognitive testing. Data from the eight Interviewee Reporting Forms are aggregated in Table 1. As this table shows, there was considerable diversity in response to the prompts with no discernable pattern across items.

PW reviewed participants' interview answers for each item to identify both common and unique responses regarding the construction of the survey, overall, and of the individual survey items.

Table 1.

Aggregated Participant Responses from the Interviewee Recording Form

INTERVIEWEE RECORDING FORM AGGREGATED PARTICIPANT RESPONSES (N = 8*)												
Item #	Is this data/information available?		Can you answer the question with the available data/info?		Comprehension: Is the question fully understandable?		My confidence in accurately answering this question is:			I have additional comments.		
	Yes	No	Not applicable	Yes	No	Yes	There's a problem	1 Low	2	3	4 High	Check ✓ if true
1	8			8		8					8	
2	8			8		7	1		1	3	4	4
3	3	4	1	3	5	7	1	1			7	6
4	1	4	3	2	6	7	1	2	1	1	4	5
5	3	5		3	5	7	1	1	2	1	4	5
6	3	5		3	5	5	1	2	1		4	4
7	6	2		4	4	5	2	2	2	1	4	5
8	7	1		7	1	8				2	6	3
9	8			8		7	1		1	2	5	3
10	4	2	2	4	3	4	4		3	1	4	7
11	5	2		6	1	7			1	4	3	2
12	2		2	6	2	8			1		7	2

^{*}where an item total within a column does not equal 8, one or more participants did not provide a response

RESULTS

Aggregated analyses of the Interviewee Recording Forms, survey data, and interviews identified 1) six factors that adversely affected participants' responses across multiple items and 2) challenges related to the interpretation of individual items.

The six factors that adversely affected participants' responses across multiple items pertained to a disconnect between the data requested in the survey and the data that has been collected by SAAs. Those factors are summarized here, rather than at the item level, because they impact multiple items. Given the approach to the distribution of funding to the SAAs, this information does suggest a few item changes, but may be more relevant for interpretation of the survey data.

- 1. The Arts Endowment did not specify data collection requirements for the CARES Act funding. All participants reported that they could have provided the requested data, had they been informed of the requests at the outset. This would have enabled them to include the data points in the grantee applications or final reports. As an aside: Participants believed there were minimal data collection requirements because the Arts Endowment made every effort to distribute the funding quickly, and there was great appreciation for that.
- 2. Participants were unsure how to address CARES Act funding received by SAAs and grantees from other sources. Participants questioned whether they should include CARES Act funding received from other sources. Further, they believed it would be difficult to distinguish CARES Act funding from different sources in grantee data.

- **3.** Isolating CARES Act funding in grantee data is difficult. Participants indicated it may be difficult to isolate the utilization and impact of CARES Act funding, depending on the approach to recording funding and expenditures in the final reports.
- 4. The data are not yet available, as the deadlines for grantee final reports are in May or June. SAA grantees typically submit annual final reports in May or June, at which time the data will become available. This limits reporting on the creation and retention of staff positions, as well as expenditures on facilities/infrastructure, at this time.
- 5. Current SAA data requirements for CARES Act funding recipients do not align with data requested in the survey. While all SAAs collect data from CARES Act funding recipients, it may not align with the data requested in the survey. One participant said, "The 'total dollar amount that your grantee invested in facilities/infrastructure [item 7],' we did not ask the question that way. I don't know if we will get that specific information in the final reports." Some SAAs collect categorical data (check boxes) for funding in sub-categories of infrastructure and operations, such as rent or utilities, but do not track dollar amounts. They can determine how the funds are used but are unable to provide an estimate of the amount of CARES Act funding used for facilities/infrastructure. This resulted in entering a 0 for item 7.

There are similar issues for the survey items that address staff positions (items 3 through 6). One person commented, "We asked about the numbers of people laid off, the total loss of revenue, cancelled programs. We asked for losses, not retention." While they will have data on staffing levels before and after the CARES Act funding, they did not ask whether the retention or addition of staff is a result of that funding. Other participants asked grantees whether the funding supported jobs, but they did not track the number of jobs, differentiate between created and retained positions, or differentiate between full-time and part-time positions.

Some SAAs also reported challenges related to the type of entity that received CARES Act funding. For example, one SAA distributed funds to organizations to support infrastructure and employees but considered it an "infrastructure" grant and did not collect data staffing. They also provided grants to individual artists for "loss of gross income" based on tax returns. This data for individual artists is available, so they reported "Yes" on item 8 and could provide the data for item 9 about the artists supported. However, they did not report this as retained positions in items 5 and 6 because the funding did not go to organizations. Reflecting on this, the participant said, "We gave grants to artists and organizations. This survey seems to be only looking at organizations. Those who make grants to both can't parse this out. I actually collected more information from the artists than the organizations, but there is no useful way to provide that information in this survey."

6. Data may exist but are not easily accessed. For example, three SAAs reported that data for creation and retention of staff positions (items 4 and 6), the amount of funding grantees invested in facilities or infrastructure (item 7), and specific benefits (item 11) will be embedded in narrative sections of grantees' final reports. Extracting the data would require considerable staff time and may ultimately not be reliable. Two participants believed they could, at best, create estimates based on narrative and numerical data. One participant's response reflected those of several others:

"The survey was easy. However, I could get frustrated because we weren't given guidance as to what data to collect. We could track jobs and facilities on the front end, and it would

have been helpful for them. We could go back and tweak the data to support the impact...We have it, but we don't have an easy way to get it. Anecdotally, we know that this had an impact on retaining jobs and paying bills. It's just hard to pull that in a clean, easy way because we did not know we were reporting on it."

It is important to note that some SAAs used their standard process and data collection systems for existing grants programs to administer the CARES Act funding. They reported that these systems are more likely to include the variables represented in the survey (e.g., separate data points for contractors and staff positions), which will enhance their ability to provide valid and reliable data.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the cognitive testing by item number. Items with asterisks have corresponding recommendations for revisions in the Recommendations section (see Table 3). The information in Table 2 provides the rationale for the recommendations in Table 3.

Table 2.

Survey Item – Results of Cognitive Testing

	n – Results of Cognitive Testing
ITEM #	FEEDBACK
Intro	Understandable and straightforward.
1	Item is understandable and straightforward.
2*	Participants had questions/comments about formulating an answer.
	 The item allows multiple responses but does not indicate "select all that apply" or
	"select only one." That information should be included.
	 If only one response is allowed, provide criteria for determining the top selection;
	for example, base the selection on the total amount of funding, total number of
	grants, or other parameter.
3*	Item is understandable and straightforward.
	Data may not be readily available or valid.
4*	Item is understandable and straightforward.
	 Data may not be readily available in requested categories.
	Data may be available but not fit the categories
	 One participant was uncertain about the meaning of "match" for the fourth entry
	field and suggested simplifying to "numbers for the above categories"
	To improve interpretation of the last option (the estimate), participants
	recommended adding a field to explain how the estimate was calculated.
5*	Item is understandable and straightforward.
	Data may not be readily available or valid.
6*	Item is understandable and straightforward.
	 Data may not be readily available in requested categories.
	Data may be available but not fit the categories
	 One participant was uncertain about the meaning of "match" for the fourth entry
	field and suggested simplifying to "numbers for the above categories"
	To improve interpretation of the last option (the estimate), participants
	recommended adding a field to explain how the estimate was calculated.

7*	Item is understandable but participants had questions/comments about formulating an
	answer.
	 Does the item refer exclusively to CARES Act funding received directly from the Arts Endowment, or does it include Arts Endowment CARES Act funding from other sources?
	What does "invested" mean? For example, is paying rent an investment?
	Is there a way to report the number of organizations using funds for infrastructure if
	the dollar amount was not collected?
8*	Item is understandable but participants had questions/comments about formulating an
	answer.
	All eight participants reported collecting qualitative and/or quantitative data.
	What does "impact" mean? How should the question be answered if additional data were collected for the Arts Endowment CARES Act funding, but it was not specifically impact data?
9*	specifically impact data?
9**	Item is understandable but participants had questions/comments about formulating an answer.
	The question was deemed "too broad," and the type of data requested is unclear.
	Participants suggested adding examples and specificity.
	Data may be qualitative/narrative only.
10*	Item is understandable but participants had questions/comments about formulating an
	answer.
	Participants requested guidance about the type and format of data that should be
	submitted to ensure it is useful. For example, SAAs may have extensive narrative
	data or a large spreadsheet that, in raw form, would require considerable scrutiny
	by NASAA. Alternatively, some SAAs do not have resources to curate or extract
	those data.
	Participants requested guidance about reporting data from grantee applications
4.4.4	versus final reports.
11*	Item is understandable but participants had questions/comments about formulating an
	answer. These related to the line items:
	 "Maintained facilities" – Does this mean "was able to retain facility use" or "physical maintenance"
	"Added to other relief efforts" – There was uncertainty about the scope/intention
	of this item. If considered broadly, most will answer "agree."
	"Helped support artists" – Participants were confused about this item, noting that
	1) funds could not directly go to individual artists and 2) if the item includes both
	direct and indirect support, all SAAs will answer "agree" based on inference.
	 Items referring to types of "programs" – Participants wondered about the
	relevance, as funding was intended for operating support and not programs. If the
	item includes both direct and indirect support, all SAAs will answer "agree" based
	on inference. Two SAAs recommended deletion for that reason.
12	Item is understandable and straightforward.

Recommendations

Recommendations for changes to the survey items are provided in Table 3. These changes are intended to increase the accuracy, consistency, and validity of the data, ultimately making it more interpretable. For some items, the recommendations include specific changes. Other items will require NASAA to consider the intention behind the item and the choice of language. For those items, considerations are offered.

Table 3. Recommendations for Survey Item Revisions

ITEM #	ORIGINAL WORDING	RECOMMENDED REVISION	REASON FOR CHANGE
2	The item does not indicate "select only one" or "select all that apply." It currently allows selection of multiple responses.	Add "select all that apply" OR add "select only one," adjust the settings to allow only one response, and provide criteria for determining the top selection. For example, base the selection on the total amount of funding, total number of grants, or other parameter.	Make the expectation for the response fully clear to increase accuracy of responses and consistency across respondents.
3, 5	The item responses include "yes," "no," and "I don't know."	Add a response option: "Data were collected but lack validity."	This option allows respondents to indicate the data has been collected but lacks validity. This will assist with interpretation of the data in items 4 and 6.
4, 6	"If you don't have the numbers that match the above categories"	"If you don't have the numbers for the above categories"	Simplify wording to remove uncertainty about "match."
4, 6	"please include an estimate of full-time equivalent positions."	"please include an estimate of full-time equivalent positions and explain how the estimate was calculated."	This information increases interpretability.
7	What was the total dollar amount that your grantees invested in facilities/infrastructure, using Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?	Either in the survey introduction (recommended, as it applies to multiple items) or in the item, specify whether the item/survey refers exclusively to CARES Act funding received directly from the Arts Endowment, or also includes CARES Act funding from other sources.	Make the expectation for the response fully clear to increase accuracy of responses and consistency across respondents.

7	What was the total dollar amount that your grantees invested in facilities/infrastructure, using Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?	Consider synonyms such as "used for" or "committed to" to remove the allusion to actual investment.	Clarify or change terminology to increase comprehension as well as accuracy of responses and consistency across respondents.
7	What was the total dollar amount that your grantees invested in facilities/infrastructure, using Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?	Consider also collecting data on the <i>number of organizations</i> that received money for infrastructure.	Some SAAs may not have data on dollar amounts. The number of organizations provides an alternate statistic.
8	"did your agency collect any data on the <i>impact</i> of Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?"	Determine whether the item focuses specifically on impact, or whether it includes any/all data related to the Arts Endowment CARES Act funding and adjust wording.	Clarify or change terminology to increase comprehension and to increase accuracy of responses and consistency across respondents. Provide examples of the type of data requested.
9	"If yes,"	Provide <i>examples</i> .	Clarify to increase comprehension as well as accuracy of responses and consistency across respondents.
10	"please attach any grantee-level data that you collected specifically for the grants that included Arts Endowment CARES Act dollars."	Provide guidance on the type and format of data that will be useful to NASAA, with examples. If guidance is provided, consider deleting "any."	Make the expectation for the response fully clear to minimize burden on SAAs and increase the likelihood that the data NASAA receives will be usable. Note that some requests may require considerable time for SAAs to format/curate the data.
11	"Maintained facilities"	Edit to clarify. For example, "Maintained facilities (physical maintenance)" or "Maintained facilities (physical maintenance and/or retained access to facilities)"	Clarify or change terminology to increase comprehension as well as accuracy of responses and consistency across respondents.
11	"Added to other relief efforts"	Edit or add <i>examples</i> to clarify.	Clarify or change terminology to increase comprehension as well as accuracy of responses and consistency across respondents.

11	"Helped support artists"	Edit to clarify "support." For example, "Provided direct support to artists," "Helped support artist indirectly," or "Helped support artists throughX"	Clarify or change terminology to reduce inference and increase comprehension as well as accuracy of responses and consistency across
11	"continued delivery	No recommended edits.	respondents. Noted here to flag for
	ofarts education		interpretation or deletion, as
	programscommunity arts		the responses are likely
	programsnew content"		based on inference.

Appendix

INTERVIEWEE RECORDING FORM

Interviewee name Enter

INSTRUCTIONS: For each item, please indicate the following.

Is the data/information available?	Can you answer the question with the available data/info?	Comprehension: Is the question fully understandable?	My confidence in accurately answering this is:	I have additional comments.
Do you (or will you) have the data or information requested?	Does the available data/info enable you to answer the question?	Consider the wording and all terms. Check "there's a problem" if you have any questions or recommendations for the question or response choices.	Rate how confident you are in answering the question accurately.	Check the box if you have any additional questions, concerns, comments, etc. No need to detail them here, but we recommend making notes to remind yourself.

Time to	comp	lete	Enter									
survey												
Item#	Is this data/information available?		Can you answer the question with the available data/info?		Comprehension: Is the question fully understandable?		My confidence in accurately answering this question is:			I have additional comments.		
	Yes	No	Not applicable	Yes	No	Yes	There's a problem	1 Low	2	3	4 High	Check ✓ if true
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9					_					_		
10												
11												
12					_					_		
Ala Ala	Now that you are done, what are your recations or thoughts eventil?											

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

CARES Act Funding Impact Survey v0

(untitled)

1 3

In spring 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which packaged numerous relief efforts for the American public. The CARES Act included \$75 million in funds distributed through the National Endowment for the Arts. By law, 40% of those dollars were allocated to state arts agencies and regional arts organizations. Your agency received these Arts Endowment CARES Act funding as a supplement to your FY19 Partnership Agreement dollars. No new reporting requirements were associated with the provision of those funds; however, we know that many states attempted to track the impact of the CARES Act funds. In order to better understand the impact of these specific Arts Endowment CARES Act dollars on a national level National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) and the National Endowment for the Arts are administering this short survey. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, based on information you have received from your grantees. This survey will take about 5 minutes to complete and you will be able to save and return to it later if needed. We ask that you answer all questions to the best of your ability and to the fullest extent possible. All results will be anonymized and reported in the aggregate.

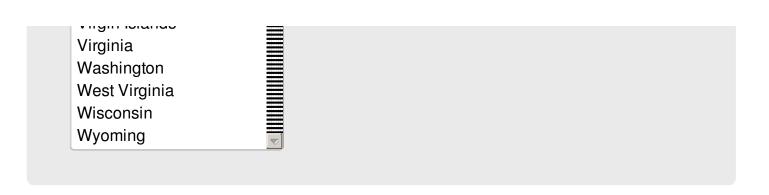
We greatly appreciate both your efforts to answer these questions and your hard work in allocating and reporting these funds in the first place. Please submit your response by DATE and direct any questions to Patricia Mullaney-Loss at patricia.mullaney-loss@nasaa-arts.org.

1 28

1. Please select your state:

Alabama
Alaska
American Samoa
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut

Delaware **District of Columbia** Florida Georgia Guam Hawaii Idaho Illinois Indiana lowa Kansas Kentucky Louisiana Maine Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Mississippi Missouri Montana Nebraska Nevada New Hampshire New Jersey **New Mexico** New York North Carolina North Dakota Northern Mariana Islands Ohio Oklahoma Oregon Palau Pennsylvania Puerto Rico Rhode Island South Carolina South Dakota Tennessee Texas Utah Vermont Virgin Islands



- 2. How did your state administer Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?
 - As stand-alone grants, using only Arts Endowment funds
 - As a supplement to previously allocated General Operating Support (GOS) grant funds
 - ☐ As a supplement to previously allocated grant funds other than GOS
 - As part of an emergency relief funding grant that included a mixture of Arts Endowment CARES Act funds and other funds
 - Other Write In

D 5

- 3. Did your agency track how many staff positions your grantees were able to **create** as a result of Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?
 - Yes
 - O No
 - I am not sure

VALIDATION Must be numeric 10 6
4. If yes, please report the total number of staff positions your grantees created as a result of Arts Endowment CARES Act funding:
Fulltime:
Part time:
Contractors:
If you don't have numbers that match the above categories, please include an estimate of fulltime equivalent positions:
 5. Did your agency track how many staff positions your grantees were able to retain as a result of Arts Endowment CARES Act funding? Yes No
C I am not sure
Tammet date
VALIDATION Must be numeric ID 8
6. If yes, please report the total number of staff positions your grantees retained as a result of Arts Endowment CARES Act funding:
Fulltime:
Part time:
Contractors:
If you don't have numbers that match the above categories, please include an estimate of fulltime equivalent positions:

(untitled)
VALIDATION Must be currency
7. What was the total dollar amount that your grantees invested in facilities/infrastructure, using Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?
8. Apart from information about staff positions created or retained or investments in facilities, did your agency collect any data on the impact of Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?
C Yes
O No
○ I am not sure
119. If yes, what data did you collect related to the impact of Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?

WALIDATION Accepts up to 3 files. **Allowed types:** png, gif, jpg, jpeg, doc, xls, docx, xlsx, pdf, txt, mov, mp3, mp4. Max file size: 10 MB

10. If yes, please attach any grantee-level data that you collected specifically for grants that included Arts Endowment CARES Act dollars.

Browse...

11. Arts Endowment CARES Act funding allocated through my agency allowed for the following benefits in my state:

		Neither Agree nor		Not
	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	applicable
Retained jobs	O	O	0	О
Created jobs	O	C	C	0
Maintained facilities	O	C	O	O
Added to other relief efforts	O	C	O	O
Helped support artists	O	O	O	О
Helped support our state's cultural infrastructure	O	O	O	0
Helped leverage local, state, and/or private support	O	O	O	O
Allowed for the continued delivery of arts education programs	O	O	O	О
Allowed for the continued delivery of community arts programs	O	O	O	О
Allowed for the continued delivery of new content using digital technology	O	O	O	O
Assisted organizations to sustain themselves while shifting to alternative/online content delivery and programing	O	О	О	O
Enter another option	O	O	O	О
Enter another option	O	O	O	0
Enter another option	O	O	O	O

12. Is there anything else you would like to relay about the importance, impact, or challenges related to Arts Endowment CARES Act funding?	

Thank You!



Thank you for taking the CARES Act Funding Impact Survey. If you have any questions, please contact patricia.mullaney-loss@nasaa-arts.org.