



TRACKING THE FUNDS:

Specific Fiscal Year 2022 Provisions for National Archives and Records Administration

Accessible Version

GAO-22-105883 · September 2022
Report to Congressional Committees

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 appropriated \$36.8 million to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for 13 projects at the request of Members of Congress. The act includes specific provisions that designate an amount of funds for a particular recipient, such as a nonprofit organization or a local government, to use for a specific project. These provisions are called “Congressionally Directed Spending” in the U.S. Senate and “Community Project Funding” in the House of Representatives. Members of Congress had to meet certain requirements under Senate and House rules in order to have their requests included as provisions in the act. Such requirements included that Members post requests online and certify that they had no financial interest in the projects. The House also required Members to demonstrate community support for requests.

This report examines how NARA intends to identify the provisions, distribute the funds made available through these provisions, and ensure the funds are spent for the purposes Congress intended. For more information on this report and others in this series, including background and methodology, visit <https://www.gao.gov/tracking-funds>.

What are the intended uses of these funds?

The \$36.8 million in funding is intended to support efforts to preserve historical records and improve presidential libraries.

National Archives and Records Administration: Fiscal Year 2022 Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending Provisions

Subunit	Budget account	Number of fiscal year 2022 provisions	Percentage of budget account designated for fiscal year 2022 provisions ^a	Examples of projects
Business Support Services	Repairs and Restoration	2	44%	Facility improvements to presidential libraries
National Historical Publications and Records Commission	National Historical Publications and Records Commission Grants Program	11	43%	Digitizing records and supporting historical societies' efforts

Source: GAO analysis of Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 and accompanying joint explanatory statement; and information provided by the National Archives and Records Administration. | GAO-22-105883

^aBased on total amount appropriated for each of the budget accounts for fiscal year 2022.

Who are the designated recipients?

The 13 recipients of NARA’s fiscal year 2022 provisions include historical societies, libraries, museums, and universities located in 11 states. Two subunits within the agency—Business Support Services and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission—are responsible for distributing funds from these provisions.

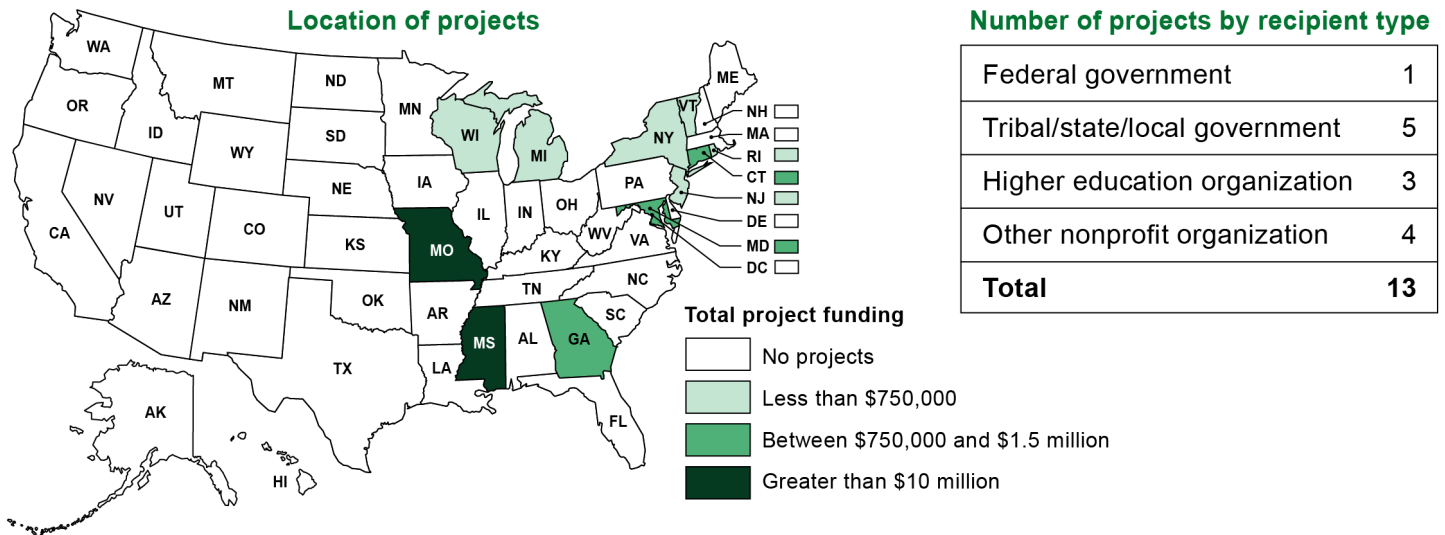
Key Observations

- **Business Support Services** is responsible for two fiscal year 2022 provisions totaling \$31.5 million. These funds are being distributed to the Harry S. Truman (Truman) and Ulysses S. Grant (Grant) Presidential Libraries for repairs and

restorations. The Truman library will receive \$11.5 million and the Grant library will receive \$20 million.

- **The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)** is responsible for 11 fiscal year 2022 provisions totaling \$5.3 million. These funds are being distributed to historical societies, libraries, universities, and tribal, state, and local governments for projects such as records digitization, preservation, and publication. Recipients of these funds will receive an average of \$500,000.

National Archives and Records Administration: Distribution of Fiscal Year 2022 Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending Provisions



Sources: GAO analysis of Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 and accompanying joint explanatory statement; and information provided by the National Archives and Records Administration; Map Resources (map). | GAO-22-105883

Who within the agency will be responsible for identifying and monitoring these funds?

Multiple offices within NARA are responsible for identifying the provisions and distributing and monitoring the funds provided through them. NARA officials stated that the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Budget, and Congressional Affairs staff identify provisions by reviewing the reporting language of NARA's Fiscal Year 2022 appropriation. Business Support Services and NHPRC then distribute the funds provided through these provisions. Once the funds are distributed, Business Support Services and NHPRC will monitor them by reviewing reports and invoices submitted by fund recipients. Additionally, NARA officials stated that the Presidential Libraries program has staff on-site at the Truman library to observe progress daily, and the Business Support Services program will conduct quarterly site visits to observe progress at the Grant library.

How does the agency intend to ensure recipients are ready to receive and are able to use these funds?

To ensure recipients are eligible to receive and are able to use the funds, NARA intends to follow its established process for administering NHPRC grants. Specifically, Business Support Services and NHPRC will require designated recipients to follow the standard grant application process to verify eligibility before making the funds available. This process includes the following:

- Processing the grant using the Electronic Grants Management System (eGMS).
- Requiring recipients to register on the System for Award Management (SAM)—through which entities must register to receive federal funds. When registering, recipients must demonstrate they meet all associated eligibility criteria by providing information such as their physical address, tax identification number, and entity size.
- Ensuring recipients have trackable project objectives.

How does the agency intend to ensure these funds are spent properly?

To ensure these funds are spent properly and to prevent, fraud, waste, and abuse, NARA intends to use the same internal control processes for designated recipients that NHPRC uses for competitive grant recipients. Specifically, designated recipients will be required to submit the following documents:

- Design documentation detailing information such as the project's purpose, duration, and budget
- Project plans detailing milestones and progress
- Semi-annual financial reports
- Financial capabilities reports

NARA staff will review the submitted documentation to ensure designated recipients are meeting deadlines before NARA releases additional funds. For funds disbursed for repairs and restorations, Business Support Services will conduct reviews monthly. Additionally, recipients of funds for repairs and restoration will be required to submit weekly progress summaries, and Business Support Services staff will conduct quarterly site visits at the Grant library. For funds disbursed by NHPRC, NHPRC will conduct documentation reviews every 6 months.

NARA's Office of Inspector General will also follow its standard procedure to have its Financial Statement team review all funds distributed by NARA. Additionally, NARA's financial management shared services provider—the Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, Administrative Resource Center—will confirm on a weekly basis that vendors are not on Treasury's Do Not Pay working system and will check for delinquencies through SAM.

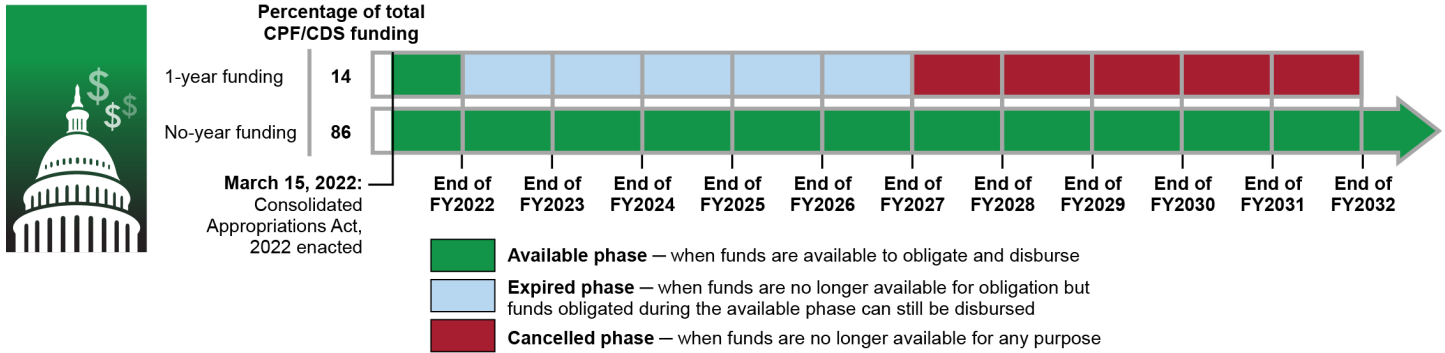
When does the agency expect recipients will have access to these funds, and when might the funds be spent?

NARA does not yet have an estimate for when recipients will have access to funds distributed by Business Support Services for repairs and restoration, but expects NHPRC recipients will have access to funds by the end of September 2022. Moreover, NARA does not have an estimate for when all fiscal year 2022 funds will be fully spent, but officials noted that in the past, similar projects were completed in 2 to 5 years.

NARA has not yet established a time frame for Business Support Services to make the funds available to designated grant recipients. According to NARA officials, Business Support Services does not normally administer grants. Consequently, NARA intends to hold introductory meetings with the Grant and Truman libraries to discuss the fund disbursement process. After these meetings, NARA will be in a better position to know the expected time frame for when the funds will be available to recipients. The funds distributed by Business Support Services are no-year appropriations and, therefore, will remain available to NARA until spent.

NHPRC began notifying designated recipients that they had received a grant in May 2022, and expects to make all funds available no later than September 30, 2022. Amounts appropriated to NHPRC accounts remain available for disbursement until the end of fiscal year 2027 (see figure below). NARA officials responsible for monitoring these funds stated that the actual timing of fund distribution would depend on the designated recipients' ability to develop and submit suitable applications and work plans. For more information on the time availability of these funds, see [GAO-22-105467](#).

National Archives and Records Administration: Appropriations Life Cycle for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending (CPF/CDS) Provisions



Source: GAO analysis of Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 and accompanying joint explanatory statement; 31 U.S.C. § 1552; and information provided by the National Archives and Records Administration. | GAO-22-105883

Note: While the phases depicted in this figure serve as general limitations for the National Archives and Records Administration’s use of funds, agency officials said they anticipate entering into obligations for some projects by September 2022. For more information about the obligation and expenditure of these funds, see [GAO-22-105467](#).

What risks and challenges may the agency face distributing and monitoring these funds?

NARA reported risks and challenges related to using its standard competitive grant process to distribute these funds because that process was not designed for this purpose. For example:

- Designated recipients did not apply for these funds through the competitive grant process and may need additional time to be notified that they were awarded funding, familiarize themselves with NARA’s grant process, and prepare to use the funds.
- Designated recipients were not vetted for eligibility in advance as they would be if applying through the usual competitive grant process. As such, NARA must take additional verification steps to ensure recipients are prepared to meet NARA’s grant requirements and use the provided funding.

Additionally, NARA stated that the intended uses of the funding provided in the 13 provisions made available in fiscal year 2022 were not as specific as funds that NARA distributed in prior years.

Why GAO did this study

The joint explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 includes a provision for us to review agencies’ implementation of Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending. In addition to issuing this and other reports in this series, we will follow and review agencies’ efforts to distribute, monitor, and audit these funds by sampling agencies and recipients and examining whether funds were spent as intended.

Agency comments

We provided NARA with a draft of this report. NARA did not provide comments on this report.

GAO Contact

For more information, contact Marisol Cruz Cain at (202) 512-5017 or CruzCainM@gao.gov.

Staff Acknowledgments: Elena Epps (Assistant Director), Corwin Hayward (Analyst in Charge), Lauri Barnes, and Kami Brown.

This work of the United States may include copyrighted material, details at <https://www.gao.gov/copyright>.

We conducted this performance audit from March 2022 to September 2022 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Source (cover photo): Roman Babakin/stock.adobe.com.

(105883)