

insights

TYPES NOT MAPPED YET April 14, 2022 | TTR not mapped yet | Christopher T. Murray

Earmarks (Community Project Funding)

Update

Congressionally directed spending that benefits a member of Congress's district or state.

Get Right Back to Where We Started From

At this time last year, we [wrote](#) about the return of earmarks to Congress after a decade-long ban. [Earmarks](#) are appropriated funds that are allocated to a specific entity or initiative in a member of Congress's state or district. Though [proponents](#) of earmarks say they ensure Congress retains its authority over spending decisions and gives members an incentive to compromise, opponents characterize them as wasteful spending (e.g., the "[Bridge to Nowhere](#)").

Republicans ultimately banned earmarks entirely in 2011 when they gained control of the House. Last year, Democrats [reinstated](#) earmarks, now rebranded as "Community Project Funding" or "Congressionally Directed Spending." The new process is more transparent and limits funding to public and nonprofit organizations and also excludes organizations to which a member has financial ties.

You Get an Earmark!

President Biden recently signed the \$1.5 trillion FY2022 omnibus appropriations bill, the first to incorporate earmarks in over a decade. The package included almost \$10 billion in earmarks, less than 1% of the bill's total cost, spread out among 5,000 projects. Congressional rules state that Congress cannot spend more than 1% on earmarks, which would have allowed for up to \$15 billion in earmarks in FY2022.

The [funding](#) ranged from as little as \$4,000 for a hydraulic vehicle lift in West Virginia to \$126 million for the University of Alabama. The bill included 3,696 earmarks totaling \$5.2 billion submitted by Democrats, 1,015 earmarks totaling \$3.9 billion submitted by Republicans, and 263 bipartisan earmarks totaling \$615.7 million. Republicans were able to bring home comparatively more money to their states and districts because fewer of them participated, with many GOP members sitting on the sidelines and refusing to submit earmark requests. Out of all projects included, the most common big-ticket items were universities, police departments, and airports.

Take the Money and Run

Because Congress came in significantly under-budget for FY2022 earmarks, House members are now allowed to submit 15 requests per office for FY2023 appropriations bills, up from 10 requests last year. The process is already underway, and members are currently accepting requests. It remains to be seen whether more Republicans will participate this time around, having left billions of dollars on the table last time.

If you have any questions about the appropriations process or submitting a community project funding request, please contact the [Lobbying & Policy team](#) for help!



authorsTest

christopher

Christopher T. Murray