Dead Ends in Pandemic Relief Award Data

It's really hard to know what recipients of pandemic relief awards spent the money on.

Here's the background.

Recipients of federal awards are required to provide a plain language description of how they spent the money they received.

These descriptions get posted to USASpending.gov, letting taxpayers know what their money was used for.

The Pandemic Response Accountability Committee also uses this data to provide detailed data on pandemic relief assistance on its website.

Here's what we found when we looked at how pandemic relief funds were spent.

AWARD DESCRIPTIONS WERE OFTEN FILLED WITH VAGUE, TECHNICAL, OR MEANINGLESS INFORMATION

360
awards listed variations of pandemic-related relief legislation, like "CARES ACT"

2,500
awards were described using only technical jargon, like "CCC5-2021"

12,600
awards used descriptions that repeated the program name, like "Community Development Block Grants/Entitlement Grants"

These awards totaled **$33 billion**

If we don't know how the money is spent, how do we know if it worked? And how can we hold decision makers accountable?

Visit PandemicOversight.gov to view the full report and recommendations.