

The background of the slide is a blue-tinted photograph of the Brookings Institution building, a large, multi-story classical structure with many windows and a prominent portico. The text is overlaid on this image.

BROOKINGS

**Laboratories of Higher Education
Innovation:**

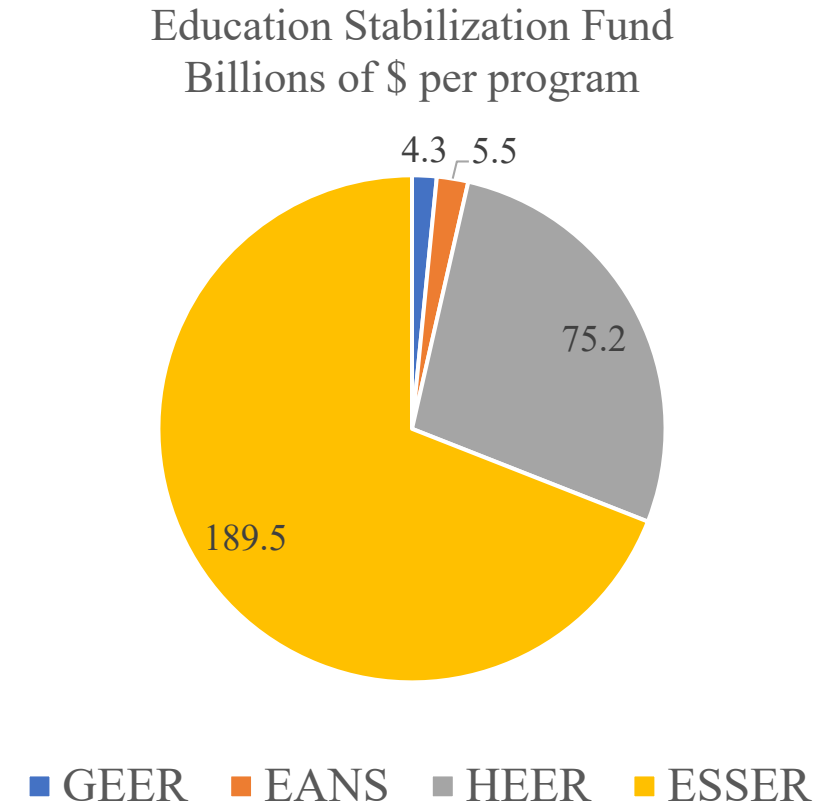
**GEER Case Study & How Higher Education
Decisions Vary by State**

May 19, 2025

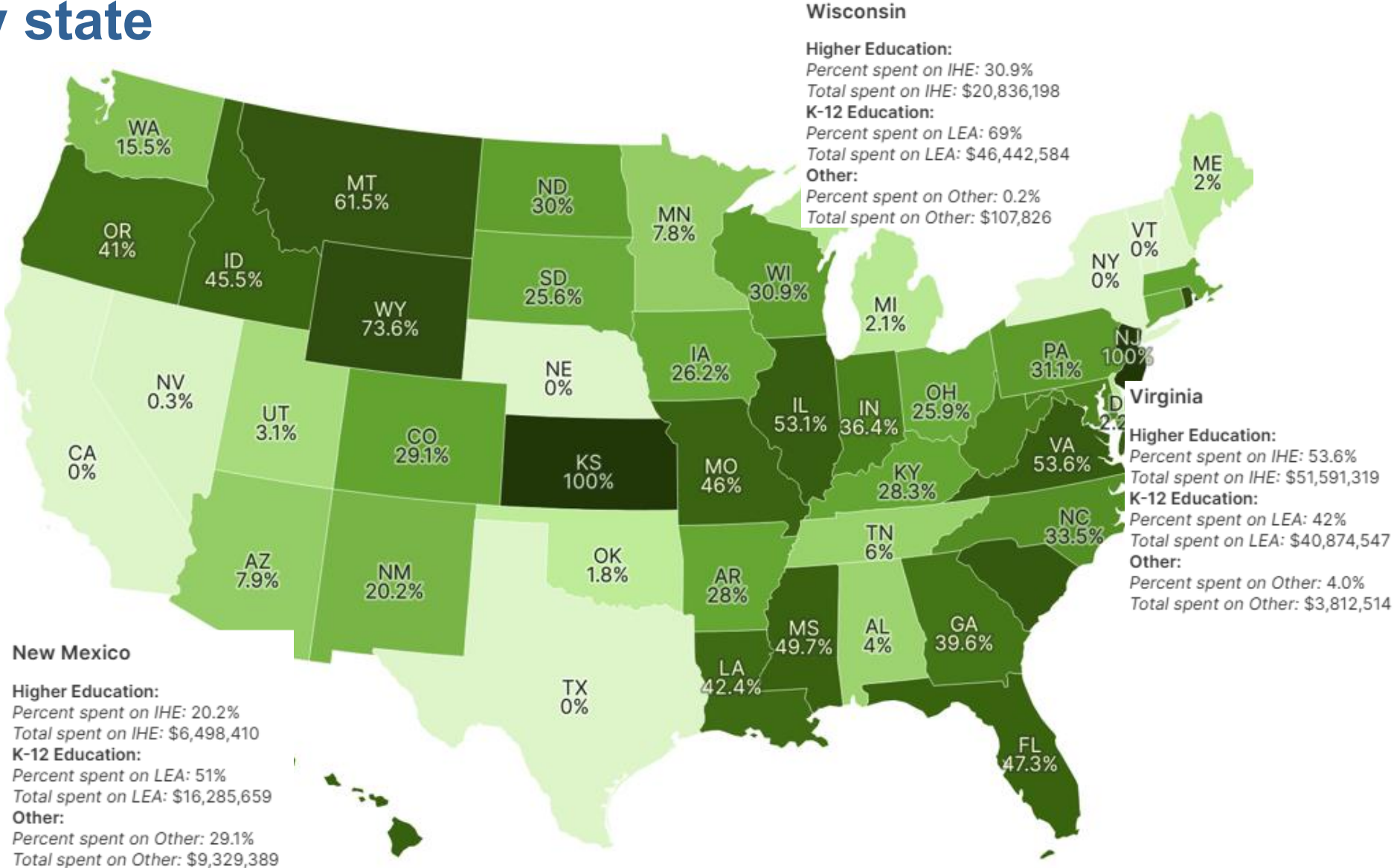
Case study in state decision-making

Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund

- \$4.3 billion awarded directly to governors for emergency education relief (two waves)
- Smallest of the Education Stabilization Fund programs but gave significant discretion to governors
- How did governors allocate funds?



GEER allocations varied significantly by state



No clear political trends

Centralized board systems more likely to receive higher ed \$

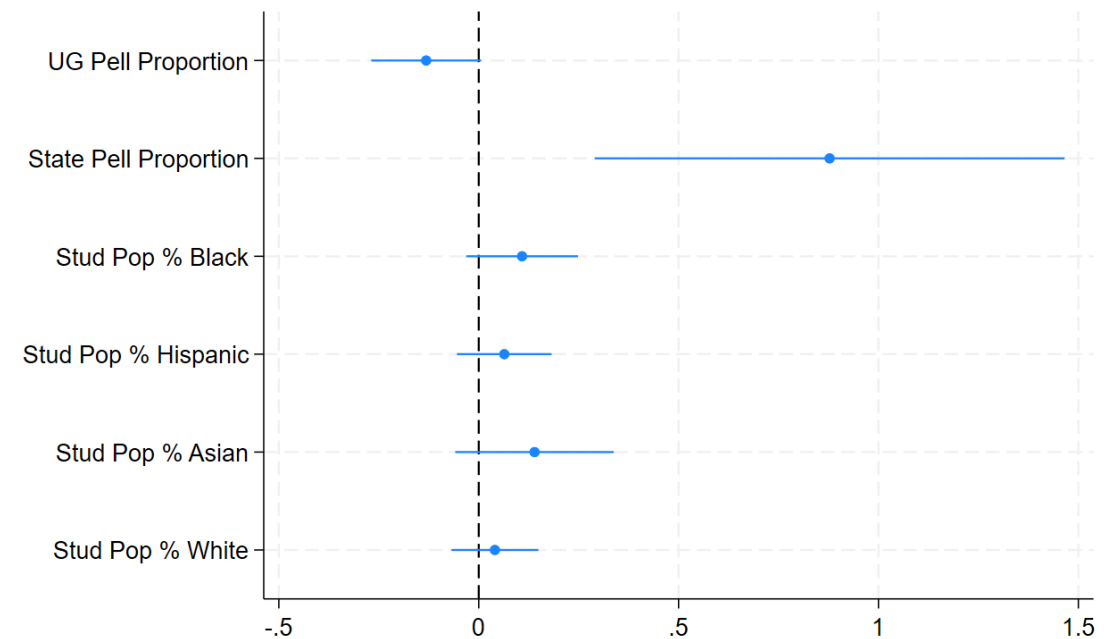
Table 1: States That Gave to Higher Education

States with:	Percent of States that Gave to HE	Share of GEER Given to HE
Republican Governor	84.6 %	49.6 %
Democrat Governor	88.0 %	45.3 %
High investment in HE	86.4 %	53.0 %
Moderate investment in HE	96.0 %	48.9 %
Single, statewide coordinating board	92.9 %	52.3 %
Multiple coordinating boards	78.9 %	45.0 %
All States	86.3 %	47.5 %

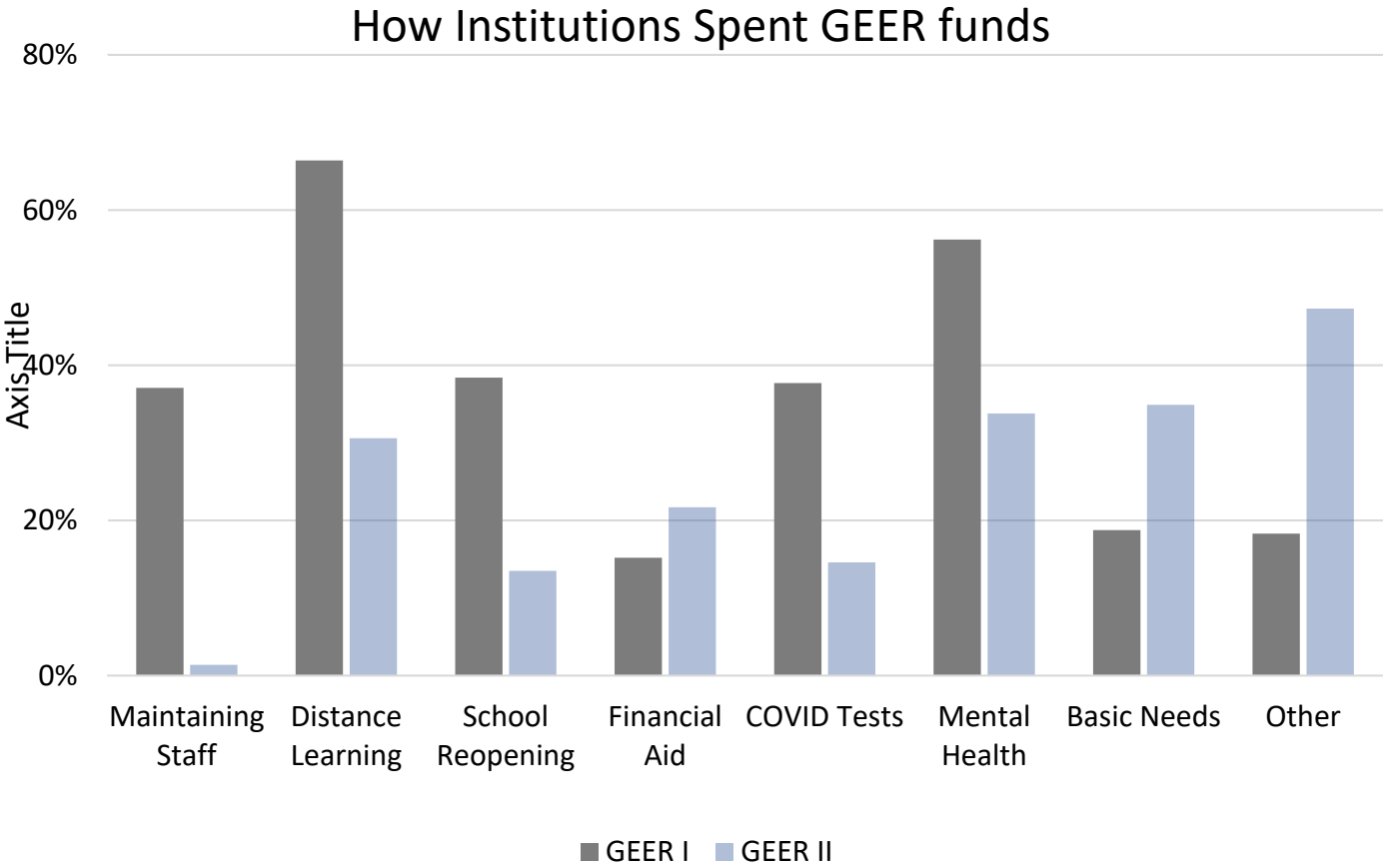
GEER allocation processes varied by state, but strongly relied on existing formulae

- **Georgia:** Respective proportion of students who receive the Tuition Equalization Grant
- **Virginia:** Existing state approach to award more funds to public institutions with students with higher unmet financial need; awards to private institutions based on their proportionate share of students.
- **Connecticut:** Same eligibility criteria and formula as the state's Roberta Willis Scholarship program.
- **Kansas:** Proportional to institution's share of the State General Fund operating appropriations

States with higher share of the state's Pell students most likely to receive GEER awards



Governors leveraged GEER block grants for innovation and survival



FUTURES FOR FRONTLINERS

Frontline workers are encouraged to visit www.michigan.gov/Frontliners to explore career opportunities, a list of local community colleges and get started on their application – even if they don't already have a high school diploma.

The program is a \$24M investment funded by Governor's Education Emergency Relief (GEER) Fund – part of the CARES Act, and supports [the state's Sixty by 30 goal](#) announced at the Governor's first state of the state address to increase the number of working-age Michiganders completing an industry certificate, college degree or apprenticeship. A more educated

Lessons learned from GEER for the months ahead?


- State block grants to higher education are rare (RIP LEAP).
- While K-12 debates involve state block grants, higher education funding discussions are either around cuts (SEOG) or reductions (FWS)
- Where can states invest in supporting students and institutions?
 - Key higher education functions include research and data; opportunities for states to collaborate and leverage richer state data to inform the field
 - State role needed to guide residents through changing federal landscape; ex: communicating changes in aid to students

COMMENTARY

What does the US Department of Education do?

Katharine Meyer, Rachel M. Perera, Sarah Reber, and Jon Valant
February 20, 2025


- Congress authorizes funding for a broad range of education initiatives, including grants to school districts, financial aid for students, and research investments, ensuring federal support reaches key areas of the education system.
- The U.S. Department of Education plays a critical role in distributing these congressionally approved funds to students and schools while overseeing their use to maintain accountability and compliance with federal regulations.
- Beyond fund distribution, the Department helps uphold federal education priorities, such as civil rights protections and support for disadvantaged students, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities.



NEWS

Governor declares emergency over problems with federal college financial aid program

By Brad McElhinny
April 30, 2024 - 3:15 pm




Thank you!

Katharine Meyer

Fellow, Brookings Institution

kmeyer@brookings.edu

LinkedIn: 

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