



Summary of Federal Legislation Passed in Response to COVID-19

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This *issue brief* provides a summary of the three pieces of federal legislation that were passed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19, or coronavirus, public health emergency.

H.R. 6074: Emergency Funding

The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020 was signed into law on March 6, 2020. The bill provides emergency funding for the following federal agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was appropriated \$6.5 billion for use by the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. This money is to be used for a variety of purposes, including: grants for states and local health service providers to carry out preparedness and response activities; funding to advance medical countermeasures, vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics; support for the production of medical supplies and medical surge capacity; and worker-based training to prevent and reduce exposure of hospital employees, emergency first responders, and other workers who are at risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The State Department was appropriated \$1.3 billion to be used for a variety of purposes related to international needs associated with the coronavirus pandemic, including maintaining consular operations;

reimbursement of evacuation expenses; support of global health programs overseen by the U.S. Agency for International Development; and other international support.

Finally, the Small Business Administration was appropriated \$20 million for the Disaster Loan Program, which provides low-interest loans to help businesses, renters, and homeowners recover from the economic impact of declared disasters.

The bill expands coverage of telehealth services by Medicare. Read more about these services [here](#).

H.R. 6201: Families First

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act was signed into law on March 18, 2020. The bill expands and increases funding for services designed to assist individuals and families negatively impacted by the COVID-19 emergency.

Food assistance. The bill provides \$1.25 billion in supplemental funding to programs aimed at providing food assistance to individuals in need during the COVID-19 public health emergency, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Administration for Community Living for the elderly, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the National School Lunch Program. This includes funding to ensure low-income students receive meals and snacks while schools are closed due to the pandemic.

COVID-19 testing and services. The bill includes an appropriation of \$1.2 billion for COVID-19 testing and services for a variety of populations, including those individuals who are uninsured. The bill also requires private health insurance companies to cover COVID-19 testing without imposing any cost-sharing.

Paid leave. The bill expands the U.S. Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to allow certain employees to take leave to care for their child while school or childcare is closed due to COVID-19. Leave taken in excess of ten days must be paid. The bill also requires employers to provide up to two weeks of paid sick leave for any employees unable to work due to circumstances related to COVID-19. The law applies to employers with 500 or fewer employees, though those with 50 or fewer employees may qualify for an exemption. Employers are eligible for certain tax credits based on leave wages paid. These provisions are in effect through December 31, 2020.

Unemployment support. The bill provides \$1 billion in grants to assist states that meet certain conditions in responding to the increased demands for unemployment insurance benefits.

Additional resources. Additional information about this bill can be found [here](#).

H.R. 748: Economic Stimulus Package

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The bill made a variety of changes to support different areas of the U.S. economy impacted by the COVID-19 emergency and provide supports to the health care system.

Individual assistance. The bill provides a variety of supports to individuals negatively impacted by the COVID-19 emergency. The bill provides payments of up to \$1,200 per person, plus \$500 per child, which are phased out above certain income levels. The bill also expands federally funded unemployment benefits to allow additional individuals impacted by COVID-19 to receive benefits, provides an additional \$600 per week in benefits, and allows for an additional 13 weeks of benefits. Changes to the taxation on retirement plan withdrawals, payments on federally

backed mortgage loans, and federal student loan deferrals were also made to provide additional assistance.

Business assistance. The bill creates a \$500 billion fund from which the Treasury Department can provide loans, loan guarantees, and other investments to eligible businesses, states, and municipalities that have incurred losses as a result of coronavirus. The bill also makes a variety of tax policy changes to provide assistance to businesses of all sizes that have been negatively impacted.

The bill includes appropriations of more than \$370 billion to the Small Business Administration for various support programs to help small businesses cover ongoing operating expenses, including employee paychecks, and remain operational through the public health emergency. More information about the resources available for small businesses can be found [here](#).

Health care system supports. A significant portion of the bill is dedicated to increasing supports for the health care system. This includes methods to increase the supply of critical medical supplies, \$1.32 billion to be used for grants to health centers that service medically underserved populations, and increasing supports for telehealth and rural health services.

Direct payments to states. The bill creates a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund for states, tribes, and local governments in proportion to population. These funds are intended to cover unanticipated expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 emergency.

Other appropriations. Finally, the bill provides additional funding to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 emergency. Some of the larger appropriations include an additional \$127 billion for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, \$45 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Relief Fund, \$31 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund, and an additional \$24.6 billion for SNAP and child nutrition programs.

Additional resources. Additional information about this bill can be found [here](#).