

Federal Relief Fact Sheet

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This fact sheet is intended to provide information for your organization and members about the benefits for workers and families created by the most recent COVID 19 federal relief package, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

There is more to be done to address the severity of the impact from this pandemic and the federal relief is small relative to the scale of the crisis. Also, Congress excluded many people from having access to the benefits.¹

States will have to take some actions to ensure families can fully access the benefits in the CARES Act. We have included information about actions that states and localities have already taken to protect people living in their boundaries.

ONE-TIME CASH INCOME SUPPORTS

The CARES Act creates one-time direct payments (“recovery rebates”) to low- and middle-income families of \$1,200 for most adults and \$500 for children under age 17 (phase-outs start at \$75,000/\$150,000 for two-parent households) for 2018 and 2019 tax filers. Individuals can still file 2018 and 2019 returns. Unfortunately, millions of low-income households that don’t file taxes will need to file now to receive payments. Many immigrant families, including ITIN filers and mixed status families, are not eligible. More information about the cash income support plan in the CARES Act can be found [here](#).

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EXPANSION

Unemployment Insurance (UI) supports workers who have already lost their jobs and income.

¹ For a thorough summary of what is included in the last two federal relief packages and what remains to be done to protect families and workers, see: <https://cepr.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-03-COVID-19-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

The CARES Act extends and supplements UI benefits for four months through three new federally funded programs: Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

- PUC: \$600 per week available to everyone getting regular UI, expires July 31, 2020 and doesn't count against Medicaid or CHIP eligibility.
- PEUC: provides an additional 13 weeks (up to 39 weeks total) of state UI benefits, available after exhausting regular state UI benefits. All but eight states offer 26 weeks of UI benefits.
- PUA: covers people who have already exhausted state UI benefits or are not typically eligible for UI including self-employed workers, independent contractors, freelancers, part-time workers, anyone affected by quarantine orders including workers at home with children who are out of school or child care, and workers who do not have a long-enough work history to qualify for state UI benefits.
- PUA applicants will need to provide self-certification that they are (1) partially or fully unemployed, OR (2) unable and unavailable to work.
- PUA will have a minimum benefit that is at least equal to one-half the state's average weekly UI benefit (about \$190 per week) and will run through December 31, 2020. PUA eligible workers are also eligible for the \$600/week under the PUC program.
 - States will have some authority over how workers can access the federal PUA benefit.
 - States have the authority to waive one-week waiting periods and flexibility to modify work-search requirements (which all states should do to adapt to current job market realities).

More information about the UI measures in the CARES Act can be found [here](#).

MODEST INCREASE IN CHILDCARE FUNDING

The CARES Act provides \$3.5 billion for the Child Care Development Block Grant and \$750 million for Head Start programs.

States can use funds to continue assistance to providers that have closed or lost enrollment.

- States are encouraged to place restrictions on funds to make sure they are used to pay wages.

- States can use funds to pay for child care for essential workers, whether or not those workers meet income limits.
- States can provide assistance to child care programs that were NOT participating in the state's subsidized child care program before the pandemic.
- Funds can be used to support enhanced cleaning and sanitation needed to keep programs operating safely during this health crisis.
- Some states are covering the cost of family copayments, in addition to subsidy payments.

You can find an estimate of how much your state will get [here](#).

Note that child care providers may also be able to use new unemployment compensation programs or access small business relief to stay afloat. These programs are identified below.

Also, the CARES Act created a Small Business “Paycheck Protection” Forgivable Loan Program that child care providers could use to apply for loans available to small businesses to cover payroll expenses for employees (wages, benefits, state and local tax obligations) and/or their own income as a sole proprietor or self-employed worker in the case of small family child care providers.

More information on child care in the CARES Act can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

MODEST STATE FISCAL RELIEF

States are already projecting revenue shortfalls for the upcoming fiscal year from lost sales and income taxes, and those that depend heavily on tourism will be especially hard hit.

The CARES Act provides states with **billions** in healthcare infrastructure funds and state fiscal relief including:

- \$100 billion for a new program to provide grants to hospitals, public entities, not-for-profit entities, and Medicare and Medicaid enrolled suppliers and institutional providers to cover unreimbursed health care related expenses or lost revenues attributable to the public health emergency resulting from the coronavirus.
- \$27 billion for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund
- \$45 billion for the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund
- \$450 million for food banks (Emergency Food Assistance Program).

- \$1.3 billion for Community Health Centers for COVID testing and treatment and an increase of more than \$2 billion for Community Health Centers for general services in 2020.
- Small business relief for small business owners, including self-employed individuals and independent contractors, through the Paycheck Protection Program.

Governors have flexibility to determine how to spend these funds, and it will take advocacy to push them to get money to our communities and ensure **everyone** is included in relief. You can see how much your state will get [here](#).

MODEST HOUSING RELIEF

The CARES Act provides \$4 billion for homeless relief and includes \$3 billion for rental assistance. The bill includes \$900 million for heating and cooling bills. The CARES Act places limited moratoria on evictions and foreclosures, covering property with any federal funding or backing. More details on the moratoria can be found [here](#).

Many states have also imposed moratoria on evictions, foreclosures, and utility shut-offs and have banned late fees during the emergency, and you should push yours to adopt these steps if it has not already. To check on action taken by your state, or for more on housing protections included in federal relief packages and model moratorium legislation, look [here](#) and [here](#).

MILLIONS OF IMMIGRANTS EXCLUDED FROM BENEFITS

- Cash rebates: To be eligible for \$1200/\$2400 cash rebate, individual filers and those filing jointly must have a valid social security number and may not file with an ITIN. (With exception for spouses filing jointly where at least one spouse was in armed forces last tax year and at least one spouse has a valid SSN). Children claimed as dependents for the \$500 rebate must have valid SSNs.
- Unemployment insurance (UI): UI is a federal program only for work authorized immigrants (DACA and TPS holders with EAD qualify).
- Child care: All children currently eligible for Head Start will continue to have access to any operating Head Start program. Children without a SSN are ineligible for child care subsidies.

CRITICAL RELIEF LEFT OUT OF CARES ACT

- The CARES Act didn't include essential increases to SNAP (food stamp) benefits. There were some increases in an earlier bill passed by Congress, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which would help states provide food assistance but more needs to be done to meet the [need](#).
- The CARES Act did not include an expansion in health coverage or payments for COVID-19-related treatment for the uninsured. States, however, are taking action on this front (see below).
- The CARES Act did not allow states the option to provide Medicaid to all individuals regardless of immigration status including DACA recipients and TPS and green card holders to ensure everyone has access to testing and treatment.
- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which preceded the CARES Act, included limited provisions for paid sick leave and paid leave, however there were critical omissions (e.g. employees of large businesses) that still need to be addressed. More detailed information about paid leave in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, can be found [here](#).

STATES AND LOCALITIES STEPPING IN

Noteworthy actions taken by states and localities - often by executive action taken by their governors and mayors - to provide economic relief:

- Imposing a freeze on evictions, foreclosures, and utility shut-offs so no one loses their home or necessary services during the pandemic (NE, NY, IL, WI).
- States are broadening eligibility for unemployment to part-time workers, self-employed workers, people out of work to care for their children, and others, and suspending rules that ordinarily require workers to wait for benefits, or look for work (WA, IA).
- Expanding paid leave and/or paid sick leave for workers (CO), including public sector workers who didn't have coverage before (MN).
- Providing food assistance to families whose children received free or reduced price breakfast and lunch at school or their child care provider (MO, NV, NY).
- Continuing to pay child care providers even when subsidized children are absent (VT, NM).
- Covering the costs of COVID-19 testing and treatment for people without insurance (MT). NY bars health insurers from charging for COVID-related emergency room services.
- Seattle is using revenue from its soda tax to fund emergency food vouchers for over 6,000 families.

Look [here](#) for a frequently updated source on what states are doing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHAT'S NEXT

We must ensure we don't leave anyone without healthcare and adequate resources in this unprecedented time of uncertainty. Congress must lead to guarantee that the next stimulus package includes relief for everyone. Community Change Action has outlined a full set of demands to [meet the moment](#). They include:

1. Expand cash payments in size, make them ongoing until the economy recovers and ensure immigrants have **full access** to them.
2. **\$100 billion investment in child care** so emergency workers can have access to safe care.
3. Expand Unemployment Insurance to **cover all workers**, including self employed and all immigrants, and ensure states deliver maximum benefits over time.
4. Billions more in **aid to states and localities** whose workers are on the front lines of delivering public services during this crisis.
5. Ensure **everyone** has access to free COVID-19 testing and treatment.
6. Automatically extend protection for DACA recipients and TPS holders to ensure people have stability and the ability to stay safe.
7. Suspend practices and policies that further endanger immigrant communities, such as immigration enforcement and the public charge rule.