



COVID-19 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Legislative Priorities

While great efforts have been made to provide a temporary response to COVID-19, more action is still needed to stabilize the economy, individuals and families for the long-term. As Congress and the Biden administration finalize priorities for the next COVID aid package, we ask that more funding be provided to ensure people remain housed, fed, and healthy. Please consider the following:

Ensure adequate resources to promote family and worker stability

- Expand and extend Unemployment Insurance through both the pandemic and the economic downturn.
- Extend the 15% SNAP benefit increase to respond to increased demand for food assistance due to COVID-19 and the economic crisis.
- Expand Emergency Medicaid or Disaster-SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) assistance to cover those who are not eligible for regular Medicaid or SNAP but who need assistance that includes critical testing and treatment for COVID-19.
- Support low-income working families by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.
- Provide \$50 billion in critical funding to support child care during COVID-19 crisis to maintain family stability.
- Ensure funding for hazard pay for frontline workers and access to testing and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).
- Ensure access to emergency paid sick and family leave for all workers for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and develop a plan for permanently securing paid time off for illness, recovery and family caregiving for all workers.





Support the health care safety net

- Promote effective vaccine distribution program for all but that prioritizes frontline workers, and vulnerable people, including seniors, persons of color, and low-income and agriculture workers.
- Extend the current practice of allowing telehealth providers to practice across state lines after the public health emergency ends.
- Expand existing Medicaid/Medicare funding for behavioral/mental health programs to provide needed counseling services in response to the pandemic.
- Ensure that any expanded billing/reimbursement authority extended to lower-level practitioners for telehealth services continues after the public health emergency ends.
- Maintain longstanding, bipartisan supported Hyde Amendment policy.

Establish Laws to Punish Predatory Lenders

- Cap the interest rate that can be charged for short-term loans.
- Ensure greater transparency of the conditions of such loans in accessible language for those who might have limited education or English proficiency.

Bolster support for immigrants and refugees

- Provide legal status and a pathway to citizenship for all essential workers, including frontline healthcare and agricultural workers, as well as all Dreamers and those with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and their families.
- Make testing, treatment, and vaccination for COVID-19 available to all and covered by Emergency Medicaid when necessary.
- Provide economic impact payments to those who file taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and ensure that all U.S. - citizen children are eligible, as well as recently arrived refugees, asylees, and those admitted under the Cuban-Haitian Entrant Program (CHEP).
- Place restrictions and ensure adequate public health protections on immigration detention during COVID-19.



Increase funding to prevent homelessness

- Extend national moratorium on evictions and foreclosures.
- Support an additional \$35 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to help renters particularly during the cold and expensive winter months.
- Provide \$26 billion for Emergency Housing Choice Vouchers for approximately 500,000 extremely low-income individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or fleeing domestic violence.
- Provide \$75 billion in funding for emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention.
- Include \$645 million Housing Counseling Assistance Program for housing counseling and mitigation services.

Support for Seniors and Nursing Homes

- Protect vulnerable populations in congregant settings by providing \$20 billion in emergency funding for states to support nursing homes, home and community based-services, intermediate care facilities, home health workers and psychiatric hospitals to prevent and treat the spread of COVID-19.
- Ensure that home and community-based services are available to seniors and people with disabilities and that nursing home and home health care workers are sufficiently equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Allow for states to use a funding mechanism for premium and overtime pay and other essential benefits for workers serving seniors and persons with disabilities.

Support for State, Tribal and Local Governments

- Provide significant funding to state, local, tribal and territorial governments to avoid catastrophic cuts, especially to poor, vulnerable and neglected communities. Create flexible, multi-year Coronavirus Relief Fund to address the decreased revenue of state and local government budgets as they continue to provide vital services and support to those negatively impacted by COVID.
- Create a flexible emergency assistance fund – modeled on the TANF Emergency Fund during the Great Recession – for states to provide basic income assistance and emergency aid to families and individuals facing severe hardship due to recession.

Support for Charities and Nonprofits

- Establish grant and funding programs for charities and nonprofits, such as a nonprofit Paycheck Protection Program, that provides forgivable loans to nonprofits of all sizes without regard to gross receipts.
- Establish a grants program, such as the proposed WORK NOW Act, to help nonprofits retain employees, scale service delivery to meet growing needs, and create new jobs.
- Appropriate funds for emergency grant programs that enable nonprofits to advance their missions of serving communities.
- Expand the cap on the above-the-line charitable deduction, at least through 2022, and preserve the itemized charitable contribution deduction, to ensure that nonprofits can serve their communities effectively.

Support Disaster Relief

- Adding an appropriation to the Department of Agriculture’s “Emergency Grants to Assist Low-Income Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers” (42 U.S.C. 5177a)*. To our knowledge, this program was last used in 2008 for wildfire relief in California.
- Provide an additional \$250 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP).
- Provide additional funding for Community Development Block Grants – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) equal or greater to the CARES Act’s \$5 billion.
- Provide additional funding for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) equal or greater to the CARES Act’s \$1 billion.

