



# Summary of Coronavirus Response and Relief Provisions

## Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (H.R. 133)

On Dec. 27, 2020 President Trump signed the [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 \(H.R. 133\)](#) funding the federal government through Sept. 30, 2021, providing emergency coronavirus relief and authorizing other matters. (Summaries: [appropriations](#), [coronavirus relief](#), [additional provisions](#).)

## Support for Cities

The omnibus legislation failed to provide any additional direct relief to state or local governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The National League of Cities (NLC) continues to advocate for direct aid to America's communities. Despite the failure on the part of Congress to provide much-needed relief to struggling cities, towns and villages, H.R. 133 does contain some potential bright spots for businesses and residents in need. Read more in our blog, "[A Closer Look at the New COVID Deal: What Local Priorities Made the Cut?](#)".

## CARES Act and the Coronavirus Relief Fund

Extends the date by which state and local governments can make expenditures with CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) distributions from Dec. 30, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2021.

## Transportation

- Provides \$10 billion in suballocated funding to support both State Departments of Transportation and local transportation agencies. Funds are available to replace amounts lost as a result of the coronavirus for preventive maintenance, routine maintenance, operations, and personnel costs and may also support tolling agencies and ferry systems.
- Supports transit with an additional \$14 billion for operating assistance. In combination with amounts provided in the prior CARES Act, this funding will ensure both urban and rural transit agencies receive amounts based on their operating expenses. The bill also provides \$50 million and spending flexibility for paratransit providers.

- \$2 billion in grants for the operations and personnel cost of airports, including economic relief for retailers at the airport (i.e., concessionaires), and for assistance to communities with small airports.
- \$1 billion to support Amtrak’s ability to operate Northeast Corridor, State-supported, and long-distance passenger rail service, including \$284.7 million to assist States and commuter rail providers in making required payments to Amtrak, and prevents further reductions in long-distance rail service.

## Connectivity

- Creates an emergency broadband benefit for eligible households experiencing economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This temporary, one-time program will provide assistance to qualifying low-income individuals and families to get connected or remain connected to internet access.
- Allocates \$1.9 billion for the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Programs, which provides funding for carriers to “rip and replace” harmful companies like Huawei and ZTE from networks.
- Establishes the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth at the National Telecommunications Information Administration, including a \$300 million broadband deployment program at NTIA to support broadband infrastructure deployment to unserved areas.
- Establishes an Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives at the NTIA and appropriates \$285 million to support historically black colleges and universities, Minority Serving Institutions and qualifying partnerships with minority-owned businesses to receive internet access.
- Requires NTIA, FCC, and USDA to coordination on broadband efforts and ensure that federal broadband funding is not duplicated.
- Provides an additional \$250 million to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to carry out the temporary telehealth pilot program authorized under the CARES Act and requires that the Commission equitably distributes the funding to the extent feasible.
- Provides \$65 million for the FCC to improve broadband mapping.
- Includes the Don’t Break Up the T-Band Act, which halts auction of the T-Band public safety spectrum and preserves it for public safety use, as well as prohibiting diversion of 9-1-1 fees for uses unrelated to 9-1-1.
- Shifts management of the .gov domain from the Government Services Administration to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and directs the agency to support and encourage migration of state, local, and tribal websites to the .gov domain.

## Nutrition and Financial Assistance

- Increases the monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit level by 15% on the June 2020 Thrifty Food Plan through June 30, 2021.
- Excludes Pandemic Unemployment Compensation from being counted toward household income for SNAP.
- Extends SNAP eligibility to college students who are eligible for a federal or state work study program or has an expected family contribution of zero.
- Provides \$614 million to Puerto Rico and American Samoa for nutrition assistance, of which \$14 million shall be available to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

- Invests \$400 million in the Emergency Food Assistance Program through September 30, 2021.
- Provides \$13 million to the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.
- Provides \$175 million in emergency funding for Older Americans Act nutrition programs.
- Clarifies that states may issue Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) for children under the age of 6 who live in households receiving SNAP and residing in an area in which schools or child care facilities are closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance without the need to verify child care enrollment at the individual household level.
- Provides emergency relief to help school meal and child and adult care food programs, which are in dire need of financial assistance, to continue serving children and families. Provides as much funding as necessary to carry out these payments.

## Health and Human Services

- Provides \$4.25 billion to provide increased mental health and substance abuse services and support, including:
  - \$1.65 billion for the Substance Abuse and Prevention Treatment Block Grant;
  - \$1.65 billion for the Mental Health Services Block Grant;
  - \$600 million for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics;
  - \$50 million for suicide prevention programs;
  - \$50 million for Project AWARE to support school-based mental health for children;
  - \$240 million for emergency grants to States; and
  - \$10 million for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
- Provides \$25.4 billion for a Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund to support testing and contact tracing to effectively monitor and suppress COVID-19, as well as to reimburse for health care related expenses or lost revenue attributable to the coronavirus.
- Provides \$8.75 billion to support federal, state, local, territorial and tribal public health agencies to distribute, administer, monitor, and track coronavirus vaccination to ensure broad-based distribution, access, and vaccine coverage, including:
  - \$4.5 billion for State, local, Territorial, and Tribal Public Health Departments; and
  - \$300 million for a targeted effort to distribute and administer vaccines to high-risk and underserved populations, including racial and ethnic minority populations and rural communities.
- Extends the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) through the end of FY21.
- Extends the Health Profession Opportunity Grant Program (HPOG) through the end of FY21.

## Education and Early Childhood

- Provides \$82 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund of flexible funding to support the educational needs of States, school districts, and institutions of higher education and the students they serve in response to coronavirus.
- Provides \$54.3 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, which is formula funding to States and school districts to help schools respond to the coronavirus, including new allowable uses for school facility repairs and improvements and addressing learning loss among students.
- Provides \$10.25 billion to support early childhood programs and child care providers through \$10 billion for Child Care and Development Block Grants to provide immediate assistance to child care providers and \$250 million for Head Start.
- Provides for the simplification of the federal financial aid application process (FAFSA) and expands student eligibility.

## Labor

- The Family First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA) **excluded** government employers from receiving tax credits for providing sick and paid family leave. This **was not** fixed in the bill Congress passed at the end of the year. NLC will be working with members of Congress to try to remedy this issue in the 117<sup>th</sup> session of Congress.
- Provides a refundable tax credit of \$600 per eligible taxpayer (\$1,500 if filing jointly), in addition to \$600 per qualifying child.
- Provides \$400 million to support foster youth, including training vouchers for youth aging out of the system.

## Water

- \$638 million for grants for a Low-Income Household Drinking Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program. Grants will go to states and Indian tribes to assist low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, that pay a high proportion of household income for drinking water and wastewater services. Funds will be provided to owners or operators of public water systems or treatment works to reduce arrearages of and rates charged to such households for such services.\*
- Agency: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children and Families Services Programs
- The Secretary shall appropriate funds to a state or Indian Tribe based on the following:
  - the percentage of households in the state, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribe, with income equal to or less than 150 percent of the Federal poverty line, and
  - the percentage of such households in the state, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribe, that spend more than 30 percent of monthly income on housing.
- Up to 3 percent of the amount appropriated shall be reserved for Indian Tribes and tribal organizations.

## Small Business

- Provides more than \$284 billion for first and second forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans (PPP).
- Expands PPP loan eligibility to nonprofits and local newspapers.
- Provides \$15 billion in dedicated funding for live venues, independent movie theaters, and cultural institutions.
- Provides \$20 billion for targeted Economic Injury Disaster Loans Grants designed for main street small businesses.
- Provides \$9 billion for Community Development Financial Institutions and Minority Depository Institutions to support lending in low-income and underserved communities.

## Housing and Community Development

- Provides \$25 billion in household aid under the new Emergency Rental Assistance program to help distressed residents make rent and utility payments. Cities over 200,000 residents may access the program directly. Municipalities with less than 200,000 residents need to negotiate with their state or large counties to access ERA funds.
- Extends the CDC eviction moratorium by one month, to January 31, 2021.
- Enact Low-Income Housing Tax Credit enhancements to aid developers finance the construction of affordable housing.

## Law Enforcement, Public Safety & Criminal Justice

There is no additional funding to support law enforcement and criminal justice programs.

## Personal Protective Equipment

Requires the Secretary of the Treasury to issue guidance or regulations providing that personal protective equipment and other supplies used for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 are treated as eligible expenses for purposes of the educator expense deduction. Such regulations or guidance shall be retroactive to March 12, 2020.

## Disaster Assistance

Provides up to \$2 billion in assistance through states for families with funeral expenses due to COVID through December 31, 2020. It requires FEMA to provide this assistance, which the Trump Administration has previously declined to do, and waives an otherwise required 25% state match.

## Employment Assistance

- Extends through March 14, 2021 the provision in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act which provided temporary full federal financing of Extended Benefits (EB) for high-unemployment states.
- Extends through March 14, 2021 a provision in the CARES Act which amended the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to provide federal support to cover 50% of the costs of unemployment benefits for employees of state and local governments and non-profit organizations.
- Extends Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) to March 14, 2021 and allows individuals receiving benefits as of March 14, 2021 to continue through April 5, 2021, as long as the individual has not reached the maximum number of weeks. Increases the number of weeks of benefits an individual may claim from 39 to 50.

