

COVID-19 Resources

For State, Local, and Tribal Human Services Leaders

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The COVID-19 crisis requires a Whole Family response from state, local, and tribal leaders. This information builds on [ACF's COVID-19 Resources](#) and is geared towards state leaders. The intent is to provide current mandatory program flexibilities, guidance and resources in ACF programs, as well as information on other federal programs that serve vulnerable children and families.

The CARES Act updates policy and provides supplemental funding for human services and other programs targeting vulnerable children and families. Information on supplemental funding is included below.

ACF Mandatory Program COVID-19 Program Flexibilities, Guidance and Resources

Child Care

The Office of Child Care has a live [COVID-19 Resources Webpage](#) relevant to CCDF stakeholders. Among the resources included are:

- [CCDF Frequently Asked Questions in Response to COVID-19](#): these will be updated as new questions and responses are developed. Topics in the FAQ document cover parent job loss, increasing childcare demand, contingency planning, and more;
- Existing CCDF guidance, published in 2017, covers relevant flexibilities in the CCDF law related to emergency situations. This [Information Memorandum](#) summarizes options for Lead Agencies to change eligibility or priority criteria for child care assistance to permit uninterrupted care, waive family co-payment requirements, or use quality dollars to provide immediate assistance to impacted families, including those that do not participate in CCDF.
- Slides from [webinars](#) with grantees, which were held on March 18-19, to share information on flexibilities and hear about challenges.
- The CDC released [guidance](#) for child care providers that remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CARES Act provides **\$3.5 billion** to the **Child Care and Development Block Grant** in grants to states for immediate assistance to child care providers to prevent them from going out of business and to otherwise support child care for families, including for healthcare workers, first responders, and others playing critical roles during this crisis. It also provides **\$750 million** for grants to all **Head Start programs** to help them respond to coronavirus-related needs of children and families, including making up for lost learning time.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

[Instructions](#) are provided on how the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program can support people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance also outlines flexibilities within TANF that enable states and tribes to ease requirements on TANF applicants or recipients. The PI identifies the following strategies, among others:

- Providing non-recurrent, short-term benefits to families to make up for lost wages and help them meet basic needs;
- Granting good cause exemptions from work requirements for TANF participants who cannot go to work or training activities because, for example, they are ill, caring for a child whose school or day care is closed due to the pandemic, or because the work or training site is closed;
- Increasing cash benefit levels for TANF cash assistance recipients who have reduced income or increased needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Providing case management by phone or other virtual/electronic communication platforms.

The guidance states that while ACF does not have authority to waive the work participation rate that states must meet, it does have authority to grant relief from resulting penalties in face of natural disasters and other calamities. ACF will exercise this authority to the maximum extent possible during this current COVID-19 emergency.

The CARES Act extends TANF through November 30, 2020.

Children's Bureau

The Children's Bureau has a live [COVID-19 Resources page](#) which will be updated frequently.

- On April 1, 2020, a [letter](#) was sent to child welfare leaders informing them that the deadline for the Kinship Navigator Funding applications have been extended to May 1, 2020. It also states that a separate application will not be needed for Family First Prevention Services Act Transition grants.
- On March 27, 2020, a [letter](#) was sent to court leaders clarifying some of the questions around restricting parent/child contact during the COVID-19 crisis, encouraging courts/judges to be mindful of the needs of children in foster care to have ongoing contact with their parents, particularly during a time of crisis.
- On March 18, 2020, a [letter](#) was sent to child welfare administrators informing agencies that they may use videoconferencing to meet the title IV-B monthly caseworker visit requirement under narrow circumstances given the current public health emergency situation.
- On March 12, 2020, a [letter](#) was sent urging child welfare agencies to immediately contact all foster youth and young adults in colleges or other settings who may need assistance finding and securing housing while their college or university is closed.

The CARES Act provides **\$45 million** for grants to states to support the child welfare needs of families during this crisis, and to help keep families together.

Child Support

The Office of Child Support Enforcement is directing parents to obtain guidance directly from state and [tribal contacts](#) on COVID-19.

Whole Family Approach to COVID-19 Response

Food and Nutrition

This [website](#) provides program flexibilities and contingencies for the Food and Nutrition Services' nutrition programs, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), congregate meals, WIC, and school meals.

The CARES Act provides **\$15.51 billion** in additional funding for the **SNAP to cover waiver authorities** granted in H.R. 6201 and anticipated increases in participation as a result of coronavirus. It also provides **\$500 million** for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and certain **WIC statutory waiver authorities** necessary in a public health emergency to encourage social distancing and reduce in-person visits to the WIC clinics.

Parents as Workers

The CARES Act authorizes recovery rebates of \$1,200 for all Americans with adjusted gross income up to \$75,000 (\$112,500 for head of household) and \$2,400 for married couples with adjusted gross income up to \$150,000 who file a joint return. Amounts increase by \$500 for every child. The recovery rebate is not subject to federal income tax. As with any tax refund under current law, **the rebate is not treated as income, or as a resource for a 12-month period, in determining an individual's eligibility or assistance amount under any federally funded public program.**

The Department of Labor [website](#) provides resources to employers and workers on preparing for the COVID-19. There is guidance to states as employers on paid leave requirements [here](#). Information on **which workers are deemed essential** in the pandemic response can be found [here](#) under questions 56 and 57.

The CARES Act authorizes three new **Unemployment Insurance** Programs. The benefit increase brings workers up to 100 percent of wage on average. This increase is intended to encourage people to stay

home as required for public health. It also provides local workforce boards with **additional flexibility** to use funds received under the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act** for administrative costs, including for online resources and allows Governors to utilize reserved workforce funds on rapid response activities for addressing COVID-19.

Both for-profit and non-profit small businesses, including child care businesses, with less than 500 employees will be eligible to apply for **small business loans of up to \$10 million**, of which 8 weeks of monthly payroll, mortgage/rent, and utility payments will be eligible for forgiveness. The Act expands eligibility for entities suffering economic harm due to COVID-19 to access the Small Business Administration's (SBA) **Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)**, while also giving SBA more flexibility to process and disperse small dollar loans. It provides **\$265 million** for grants to SBA resource partners, including **Small Business Development Centers and Women's Business Centers**, to offer counseling, training, and related assistance to small businesses affected by COVID-19. **\$10 million** is provided for the Minority Business Development Agency to provide these services through Minority Business Centers and Minority Chambers of Commerce.

Funding is also available to support "short-time" partial compensation programs where employers reduce hours instead of laying off workers. In addition, the legislation includes changes to the deduction for charitable contributions and a refundable payroll tax credit for wages paid by employers whose gross receipts decline by over 50 percent or whose businesses are fully or partially suspended due to COVID-19.

Education for Children and Parents

Resources for schools and school personnel can be found [here](#). This [fact sheet](#) addresses services specifically for children with disabilities.

The CARES Act designates **\$13.5 billion** in formula funding directly to states, to help schools respond to coronavirus and related school closures, meet the immediate needs of students and teachers, **improve the use of education technology, support distance education, and make up for lost learning time**.

It provides **\$14.25 billion** to states for **higher education emergency relief** for institutions of higher education to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. Funds may be used to defray expenses for institutions of higher education, such as lost revenue, technology costs associated with a transition to distance education, and grants to students for food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.

The Act provides **\$100 million** in targeted funding through Project SERV for elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education **to respond to the immediate needs of coronavirus** and the effect on students.

Health

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has developed a [partner toolkit](#) with materials available on the COVID-19. Medicaid specific resources can be found [here](#). The CARES Act amends a section of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-127) to ensure that states are able to receive the **Medicaid 6.2 percent FMAP increase**.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration [website](#) houses resources for individuals, providers and communities related to behavioral and mental health in the context of COVID-19.

The CARES Act provides **\$425 million for the SAMHSA** to address mental health and substance use disorders as a result of the coronavirus pandemic: **\$250 million** for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics to increase access to mental health care services; **\$50 million** for suicide prevention to provide increased support for those most in need of intervention; and **\$100 million** in SAMHSA Emergency Response grants to provide flexible funding to address mental health, substance use disorders, and provide resources and support to youth and the homeless during the pandemic.

The Health Resources and Services Administration [website](#) includes Frequently Asked Questions related to COVID-19 and health centers.

The CARES Act provides **\$275 million for HRSA** to expand services and capacity for rural hospitals, telehealth, poison control centers, and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program. Language is also included to allow Community Health Centers to use FY2020 funding to maintain or increase staffing and capacity to address the coronavirus.

This [webpage](#) provides information for older adults and persons with disabilities. The CARES Act provides **\$955 million** for aging and disability services programs, including **senior nutrition; home and community-based supportive services; family caregivers; elder justice; and independent living**.

Housing and Homelessness

This [website](#) provides an overview of resources and the impact of infectious diseases on the homeless population.

The CARES Act provides **\$4 billion in Homeless Assistance Grants** that will enable state and local governments to address coronavirus among the homeless population; **\$1.25 billion in Tenant-Based Rental Assistance** to preserve Section 8 voucher rental assistance for seniors, the disabled, and low-income working families, who will experience loss of income from the coronavirus; and **\$685 million in Public Housing Operating Fund**, which may be used for activities to support or maintain the health and safety of assisted individuals and families, and activities to support education and child care for impacted families.

ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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