

What is the Federal Government Doing to Help People Impacted by Coronavirus?



If you are a person impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), are living with cancer, or are immunocompromised, one important way to maintain some sense of control in what might be an anxiety-provoking time is to understand what is being done from a policy perspective to help respond to the pandemic.

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a state of emergency which will allow for faster responses and relief efforts across the United States, as well as provide additional resources for testing and treatment. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will lead a response in states heavily impacted by COVID-19 to help build mobile response centers and assist with public safety.

In Congress, Speaker Pelosi worked with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, to pass the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This bill follows an \$8.3 billion aid package that was passed last week to help fund research and vaccine development. This new multibillion-dollar bill passed the Senate on March 18 and was signed into law by President Trump that evening.

This bill will provide rapid assistance on many fronts including:

- **Free COVID-19 testing:** The bill allows for free testing, emergency room visits, and doctor's fees.
- **Emergency paid sick days:** The bill requires all employers to accrue seven days of paid sick leave and provide an additional 14 days to be available immediately. It ensures sick leave to people impacted by quarantine orders or those who must stay home to care for children. The bill provides funding to reimburse small businesses for these costs.
- **Emergency paid leave:** The bill creates a new paid leave program for workers unable to work because they are caring for a child due to COVID-19 related school closings. Eligible workers would receive benefits for a month (up to three months) and would receive two-thirds of a worker's average monthly earnings.
- **Expanded unemployment insurance:** The bill directs \$2 billion to state unemployment insurance programs and waive certain requirements.
- **Food assistance:** The bill directs \$1 billion in funding through the

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program to provide emergency food assistance.

- **State Medicaid funding** increase tied to COVID-19

As eligibility requirements for these provisions vary, please view the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act Summary](#) for more details.

What Happens Next?

This bill is only one piece of an overall approach to addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19. Additional legislative actions will be taken, and CSC will provide you with ongoing updates and how these changes could impact you. Further, the Trump Administration is also considering an additional stimulus that might allow for emergency checks to be sent to Americans beginning as early as April 6.

The Cancer Support Community will continue to update this information and reach out to you with breaking news. In the meantime, please visit our website, cancersupportcommunity.org/coronavirus, on what people impacted by cancer need to know about COVID-19. Sign up for our [Grassroots Network](#) to ensure that you receive all policy updates on issues that will impact people with cancer.

Editor's Note: This blog has been updated on March 19, 2020

Please note that Coronavirus policy updates are quickly evolving. We are providing this content for informational purposes only and updating it as quickly as possible. If you have questions or concerns, please contact action@cancersupportcommunity.org.

Cancer Support Community uses cookies to personalize your experience. By continuing, you agree to the use of cookies as stated in our [Privacy Policy](#).

Got it!