



# Small Businesses and COVID-19: Relief and Assistance Resources

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This CRS Insight presents selected websites and CRS products potentially relevant to small businesses that are directly affected by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and seeking economic relief and assistance.

For an analysis of the small business provisions in the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#), enacted on March 27, 2020, see CRS Report R46284, *COVID-19 Relief Assistance to Small Businesses: Issues and Policy Options*, by Robert Jay Dilger, Bruce R. Lindsay, and Sean Lowry. For a list of all CRS products related to COVID-19, see the [CRS COVID-19 Resources](#) page.

## Selected Resources

### Small Business Administration

The Small Business Administration's (SBA's) "Coronavirus (COVID-19)" resource page provides information on new assistance programs, such as the [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#), established by the CARES Act. Businesses may contact local SBA district offices with questions about when new assistance programs will become available.

SBA economic injury disaster loans are low-interest loans available to eligible small businesses. See CRS Report R44412, *SBA Disaster Loan Program: Frequently Asked Questions*, by Bruce R. Lindsay; CRS Insight IN11232, *SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans for COVID-19*, by Bruce R. Lindsay; and CRS Insight IN11357, *COVID-19-Related Loan Assistance for Agricultural Enterprises*, by Robert Jay Dilger, Bruce R. Lindsay, and Sean Lowry.

SBA also continues to offer a number of [nondisaster loans and grants](#) for small businesses and organizations. For more information, contact local SBA affiliates:

- [SBA district offices](#)
- [Small Business Development Centers](#)
- [Other SBA-affiliated resource partners](#)

**Congressional Research Service**

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN11301

For summaries of non-disaster SBA assistance programs, see CRS Report RL33243, *Small Business Administration: A Primer on Programs and Funding*, by Robert Jay Dilger and Sean Lowry.

### **Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Business Programs**

The Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) [Rural Development Business programs](#) provide financial and technical assistance to qualified rural businesses; see CRS Report RL31837, *An Overview of USDA Rural Development Programs*, by Tadlock Cowan. USDA also has announced measures to assist businesses affected by COVID-19 and has recently published a [COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide](#).

### **Department of Housing and Urban Development**

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a flexible program that provides funds to address a wide range of community development needs, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some U.S. localities have announced efforts to support small businesses with existing CDBG funds, and HUD has issued a guide for infectious disease response; see CRS Insight IN11277, *Responding to the COVID-19 Outbreak with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Authorities*, by Michael H. Cecire and Joseph V. Jaroscak, and CRS Insight IN11315, *Community Development Block Grants and the CARES Act*, by Joseph V. Jaroscak. For more information on eligible activities, see HUD's "CDBG Infectious Disease Response" webpage or contact [local or state CDBG administrators](#).

### **Department of Labor**

The U.S. Department of Labor has [resources to help employers and workers prepare for and respond to COVID-19](#), including information on workplace safety; wages, hours, and leave; unemployment insurance; and other topics.

### **Department of the Treasury, Community Development Financial Institution Fund**

The Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund supports organizations that provide loans to businesses, homebuyers, community developers, and investors in distressed areas; see CRS Report R42770, *Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund: Programs and Policy Issues*, by Sean Lowry.

### **Federal Government Contracting Opportunities**

Incumbent and potential contractors may access federal agencies' solicitations on the [beta version of the System for Award Management](#). For example, the [Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority](#) (part of the Department of Health and Human Services) issued a [solicitation for advanced development and licensing](#) of COVID-19 diagnostics, vaccines, or medicines. Although some solicitations might include the term "COVID-19," contracting opportunities related to the coronavirus outbreak may not necessarily include this term or related terms.

Small businesses may find information about the federal procurement process in the SBA's [contracting guide](#). See, also, CRS Report RS22536, *Overview of the Federal Procurement Process and Resources*, by L. Elaine Halchin, and CRS Legal Sidebar LSB10428, *COVID-19 and Federal Procurement Contracts*, by David H. Carpenter.

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## The Federal Reserve System

The [Main Street Business Lending Program](#), a new initiative [announced](#) by the Federal Reserve, will reportedly support [eligible small and medium-sized businesses](#). To receive loans under this program, a business must have no more than 15,000 employees or had no more than \$5 billion in revenue in 2019, among other eligibility requirements.

## Internal Revenue Service

The Internal Revenue Service provides updated information on tax relief for individuals and businesses affected by COVID-19, including news releases and frequently asked questions, on its [Coronavirus Tax Relief](#) page; also, see CRS Report R46279, *The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act—Tax Relief for Individuals and Businesses*, coordinated by Molly F. Sherlock.

## Minority Business Development Agency

The Department of Commerce’s [Minority Business Development Agency](#) (MBDA) is the lead federal agency dedicated to supporting the development and expansion of the minority business community. Through a network of local business development centers, the MBDA carries out this mission by providing a variety of business assistance services to [minority-controlled business enterprises](#) of all sizes. Local [Minority Business Development Centers](#) are available in a number of communities.

## National Institute of Standards and Technology, Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The National Institute of Standards and Technology’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership is a [national network of centers](#) that provide custom services to small and medium-sized manufacturers to improve production processes, upgrade capabilities, and facilitate product innovation. For more information, see CRS Report R44308, *The Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program*, by John F. Sargent Jr.

## State, Local, and Private Resources

State and local economic development or commerce agencies may provide assistance to new and established businesses. Many [city and state governments](#) are offering COVID-19 business relief in the form of loans, grants, or tax-deferral programs.

Although [foundations do not typically award grants to businesses](#), some private [grantmakers](#) or [local community foundations](#) may also be possible resources in light of COVID-19. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is also compiling [a list of programs \(by state\) providing financial assistance to small businesses](#) affected by COVID-19.

## USA.gov

USA.gov lists a growing number of [resources on the federal government response to COVID-19](#). See the “Businesses” section for links to the Department of the Treasury, Export-Import Bank, Farm Credit Administration, and other federal agencies.

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