



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 \(PPP\)](#) (a loan program established by the CARES Act). PPP loans may be forgiven if the borrower maintains its number of full-time equivalent employees and does not reduce their compensation by more than 25% during the eight-week period after the loan's origination date. The [SBA briefly stopped accepting new PPP loan applications on April 15, 2020](#), before [resuming on April 27, 2020](#), following enactment of the [PPP and the Health Care Enhancement Act](#).

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) are low-interest loans available to eligible small businesses; the CARES Act also established the [Emergency EIDL Grant program](#) to provide EIDL advance payments of up to \$10,000, which do not need to be repaid. The [SBA stopped accepting COVID-19-related EIDL and Emergency EIDL grant applications on April 15, 2020](#), because the SBA was approaching its disaster loan assistance credit subsidy limit. On May 4, the SBA began accepting EIDL and EIDL grant applications again but on a [limited basis—only to provide relief to U.S. agricultural businesses](#). See CRS Insight IN11370, *SBA EIDL and Emergency EIDL Grants for COVID-19*, by Bruce R. Lindsay; CRS Report R44412, *SBA Disaster Loan Program: Frequently Asked Questions*, by Bruce R. Lindsay; and

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN11301

CRS Insight IN11357, *COVID-19-Related Loan Assistance for Agricultural Enterprises*, by Robert Jay Dilger, Bruce R. Lindsay, and Sean Lowry.

Businesses may contact local SBA district offices with questions about these COVID-19-related assistance programs.

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

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

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

Note that the federal government most typically assists businesses through [loans rather than grants](#)—though there are exceptions.

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.

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 Philanthropic 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. For example, some private

grantmakers are providing [relief funds to women- and minority-owned businesses](#). The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has compiled [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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