



# 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*.

For businesses interested in supporting COVID-19 mobilization efforts, see CRS Insight IN11419, *COVID-19: Selected Federal Resources for Businesses Seeking to Assist with Research and Manufacturing Efforts*.

For a list of 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 under certain conditions. 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](#). A [subsequent bill](#) extended the PPP loan period from June 30, 2020 to August 8, 2020.

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. The SBA began accepting new EIDL and Emergency EIDL grant applications on a limited basis on May 4, 2020, to accommodate agricultural businesses that were

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provided EIDL eligibility by the [Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act](#), and resumed the acceptance of new EIDL and Emergency EIDL grant applications from all borrowers on June 15, 2020. SBA is still accepting loan applications, but is [no longer accepting EIDL grant applications](#) because the program has reached its authorization limit of \$20 billion in grants. See CRS Insight IN11370, *SBA EIDL and Emergency EIDL Grants for COVID-19*; CRS Report R44412, *SBA Disaster Loan Program: Frequently Asked Questions*; and CRS Insight IN11357, *COVID-19-Related Loan Assistance for Agricultural Enterprises*.

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*.

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

## Department of Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers a number of [programs to agricultural producers](#) whose operations have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. See CRS Report R46347, *COVID-19, U.S. Agriculture, and USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP)* and CRS Insight IN11415, *COVID-19 and USDA Farm Loan Flexibilities*.

USDA's [Rural Development Business programs](#) also provide financial and technical assistance to qualified rural businesses; see CRS Report RL31837, *An Overview of USDA Rural Development Programs*. USDA also has announced measures to assist businesses affected by COVID-19 and has 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*, and CRS Insight IN11315, *Community Development Block Grants and the CARES Act*. 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.

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## 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*.

## 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*; and CRS Legal Sidebar LSB10428, *COVID-19 and Federal Procurement Contracts*.

## The Federal Reserve System

The [Main Street Business Lending Program](#), a new initiative [announced](#) by the Federal Reserve in April, supports [eligible small and medium-sized businesses as well as nonprofits](#). 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 (see [FAQs for businesses](#))

## 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*.

## 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*.

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## 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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