



COVID-19 International Responses: Resources for Comparison with U.S. Policies

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This Insight presents selected resources and CRS products that may be useful for Congress as it compares U.S. responses to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic with other countries' responses.

COVID-19 emerged in China in late 2019 and has since spread around the globe, infecting millions and leading to [hundreds of thousands of deaths](#). Since it emerged, the pandemic epicenter has shifted from China to several countries in Europe and then across the western hemisphere, including Brazil and the United States. In addition to the high counts of illness and death, COVID-19 has prompted a [global economic recession](#) with varying impacts on countries worldwide, according to the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The U.S. economy, as measured by gross domestic product, [contracted at an annual rate of 32.9%](#) in the second quarter of 2020. In the United States, unemployment also became widespread, with close to 18 million jobless (11.1% of workers) and more than [30 million Americans](#) receiving unemployment benefits as of July 30, 2020.

Congress has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic fallout with three broad emergency supplemental legislative assistance packages:

- P.L. 116-123, Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020, March 6, 2020;
- P.L. 116-127, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, March 18, 2020; and
- P.L. 116-136, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, March 27, 2020.

On April 24, 2020, Congress also enacted P.L. 116-139, the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, which created the [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#). The PPP was designed to provide for loans, guaranteed by the Small Business Association, to small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and veterans' organizations.

Two additional laws concerning the PPP were later enacted. In June 2020, P.L. 116-142 extended the PPP loan forgiveness period. P.L. 116-147, enacted in July 2020, extended the authority for commitments for the PPP, extended the PPP's covered loan period, and authorized \$659 billion for PPP loan commitments and \$30 billion for [7\(a\) loan commitments](#).

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Congress also enacted two additional laws relating to COVID-19. In April 2020, P.L. 116-140, the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 authorized the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to continue paying work-study allowances during emergency periods. The Emergency Aid for Returning Americans Affected by Coronavirus Act, P.L. 116-148, enacted on July 13, 2020, increased the maximum amount of funding available in FY2020 for, and revised certain requirements pertaining to, temporary assistance for U.S. citizens and their dependents returning from abroad.

The House passed a fourth broad legislative package to address the pandemic on May 15, 2020: the Heroes Act (H.R. 6800). The Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship has held hearings on the legislation.

Numerous educational institutions and international organizations have compiled and tracked information on the international response to COVID-19. CRS has provided some of these compilations below in alphabetical order by organization, along with brief notes on the type of information provided.

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s [COVID-19 Policy Tracker](#) “summarizes the key economic responses governments are taking to limit the human and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.”
- The OECD's [Key Country Policy Responses website](#) provides policy papers on 97 countries' responses to COVID-19. An [interactive map](#) allows users to receive detailed descriptions of each country's COVID-19 response. Users interested in comparing international responses between two countries may also download the underlying data that support the map. The following spreadsheets are available:¹
 - [Fiscal and Monetary Policy Responses by Country](#),
 - [Employment and Social Responses by Country](#),
 - [Tax Policy Responses by Country](#),
 - [Health Policy Responses by Country](#). and
 - [Science and Innovation Policy Responses by Country](#).
- The World Health Organization's (WHO)'s [Health System Report Monitor](#) allows users in a single PDF to compare various countries' (primarily European countries) responses (primarily health system responses, but also governance and expenditure responses). Users may select up to 10 countries and up to 4 topics at a time.
- The [Cambridge Core Blog](#) contains comparative information on a wide variety of country responses and some state or province measures, including social safety net efforts and direct payments to individuals.
- The European Commission's [proposed country-specific recommendations](#) provide economic and disease control monitoring for European Union (EU) member states and the United Kingdom.
- The University of Oxford's [Coronavirus Government Response Tracker](#) collects data on COVID-19 policy responses for more than 180 countries, as well regional aggregations and a separate analysis of all 50 U.S. states. The tracker scores the number and “stringency” of 17 indicators of government responses (e.g., income support to citizens and containment policies, such as school closures) and aggregates them into a Stringency Index.
- The Yale Program on Financial Stability's [COVID-19 Fiscal Response Tracker](#) follows interventions by central banks, fiscal authorities, and organizations aimed at restoring

¹ All links except the “Science and Innovation” link open the spreadsheets directly.

- financial stability in 79 countries and international organizations (such as the World Bank Group and the Nordic Investment Bank). The “Fiscal Stimulus” category includes, but does not disaggregate, direct payments to individuals, increases in defense spending, and the construction of new homes.

CRS Reports

For more information on global responses to COVID-19, U.S. foreign assistance for low-income countries, and global economic effects of the pandemic, among other things, see the following CRS reports:

- CRS In Focus IF11421, *COVID-19: Global Implications and Responses*, coordinated by Sara M. Tharakan;
- CRS In Focus IF11575, *COVID-19 and Global Food Security: Issues for Congress*, by Alyssa R. Casey and Emily M. Morgenstern;
- CRS Report R46319, *Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Q&A on Global Implications and Responses*, coordinated by Tiaji Salaam-Blyther;
- CRS Report R46270, *Global Economic Effects of COVID-19*, coordinated by James K. Jackson;
- CRS Report R46430, *Global Democracy and Human Rights Impacts of COVID-19: In Brief*, coordinated by Michael A. Weber;
- CRS In Focus IF11496, *COVID-19 and Foreign Assistance: Issues for Congress*, by Nick M. Brown, Marian L. Lawson, and Emily M. Morgenstern; and
- CRS Insight IN11477, *Fiscal and Monetary Policy Initiatives by Major Economies to Address COVID-19*, by James K. Jackson.

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