



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

Note that the federal government typically assists businesses through [loans rather than grants](#)—though there are exceptions. Sometimes local and state governments may offer business grants (see section below on “State, Local, and Philanthropic Resources”).

Small Business Administration

The Small Business Administration’s (SBA’s) webpage [Coronavirus Relief Options](#) provides information on assistance programs made available by the [CARES Act](#).

- SBA [Economic Injury Disaster Loans \(EIDL\)](#) are low-interest loans and are still available to eligible small businesses.
- The [Emergency EIDL Grant program](#) provided EIDL advance payments of up to \$10,000, which did not need to be repaid, and which are no longer available.
- The [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#), perhaps the most prominent program, is no longer accepting applications.

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN11301

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

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*.

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 Pandemic 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.

Department of the Treasury

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 pandemic 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](#)).

Economic Development Administration

The Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration administers a [revolving loan fund \(RLF\)](#) program. Eligible businesses may receive a loan from one of the approximately [400 organizations administering EDA-funded RLFs](#). According to the EDA, eligible businesses can apply for loans from an RLF for working capital or fixed assets for [operating expenses, business growth, job retention, or similar efforts](#). See CRS Insight IN11418, *COVID-19: EDA Revolving Loan Funds for 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 provides 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*.

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*.

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 do. 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.

GovLoans.gov

GovLoans.gov is a collaborative effort across federal agencies that provides information on loan programs. See the “loan finder” tool, and the coronavirus resources page.

USA.gov

USA.gov lists a 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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