



# Coronavirus Update

March 16, 2020

Information and resources on federal responses for state, local, and regional government.

## Useful Links

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[Centers for Medicare and Medicaid](#)  
[U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)  
[U.S. Department of State](#)  
[U.S. Department of Labor](#)  
[National League of Cities](#)  
[International City/County Management Association](#)  
[National Association of Counties](#)  
[United Nations](#)  
[World Health Organization](#)  
[Bloomberg Philanthropies to Assist American Mayors](#)

## Federal Response

**Capitol Hill.** House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and President Trump agreed on a multi-billion dollar stimulus package aimed at assisting individuals and state and local governments directly impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. The [new agreement](#), the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R.6201)*, would provide for free coronavirus testing, even for the uninsured; paid emergency leave with two weeks of paid sick leave and up to three months of paid family and medical leave **for certain employers, including all local governments**; strengthened nutrition security initiatives; and increased federal funds for Medicaid to support local, state, tribal and territorial governments and health systems. The House approved of the plan late last week but the House will need to approve the bill again to make needed technical corrections and address concerns expressed by small business interests. Those changes are expected to be approved by the House as soon as today, The Senate is expected to consider the bill sometime this week. The House Appropriations Committee summary of the legislation is [here](#).

The Census Bureau has [announced](#) updates to the planned 2020 Census in order to ensure that college students, who may have moved away from their college-area due to the coronavirus outbreak, are counted in the area's census; ensure that all residents are counted; and delay the start of the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Program to April 13 (originally March 30). Several House members from New York have written a [letter](#) to the Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross seeking an extension to the 2020 Census due to the developing coronavirus outbreak. TFG is closely monitoring 2020 Census development and its implications for state and local governments.

**Administration.** On March 13, President Trump declared a [National Emergency](#). Declaring an emergency triggers the Stafford Act, the federal law that gives FEMA responsibility for coordinating disaster

relief efforts and providing emergency funding to state and local governments. The order also allows the Department of Health and Human Services to waive certain regulations and laws to more quickly deliver testing and care for coronavirus patients.

Each state or territory that has requested assistance through the announced national emergency is assigned a specific **emergency declaration**. **Each state emergency declaration be found [here](#)**. TFG will provide more information on FEMA emergency declarations as it becomes available.

Over the weekend, the Federal Reserve made an emergency interest rate cut to zero, an action aimed to make borrowing as affordable as possible for individuals and businesses as the coronavirus drastically affects the U.S. economy. The benchmark interest rate will be in a range of 0 to 0.25 percent. This cut has and will likely continue to lower loan rates for federal loan programs such as TIFIA and WIFIA. DOT's [TIFIA website](#) updates the TIFIA interest rates daily.

The Federal Transit Administration has [announced](#) that expanded eligibility of federal assistance is available under FTA's Emergency Relief Program to help transit agencies respond to the coronavirus in states where the Governor has declared an emergency.

## Resources and Funding

The Health Resources and Services Agency, under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has issued [guidance](#) on how grantees can amend project budgets in response to the impacts of the coronavirus.

The Congressional Research Service released a report titled, "[Stafford Act Assistance for Public Health Incidents](#)," which provides a brief overview of presidential declarations under the Stafford Act and provides examples of declarations that have been previously issued to address public health hazards.

The CDC has published [interim guidance for COVID-19](#) and recommends that for the next 8 weeks, organizers cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the U.S.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) hosted an [Infectious Disease Preparedness for Homeless Assistance Providers and Their Partners](#) webinar on March 13 with representatives from the CDC, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Healthcare for the Homeless Council. The webinar provided information and identified resources to support local response efforts.

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## Federal Agency Intergovernmental Contacts

Primary points of contact at federal agencies can be found below:

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