



COVID-19 FEDERAL ACTION SUMMARY

This document will be updated frequently. Please check back to see new developments in the federal government's response to COVID-19 and how it impacts rail suppliers.

COVID-19 RELIEF LEGISLATION

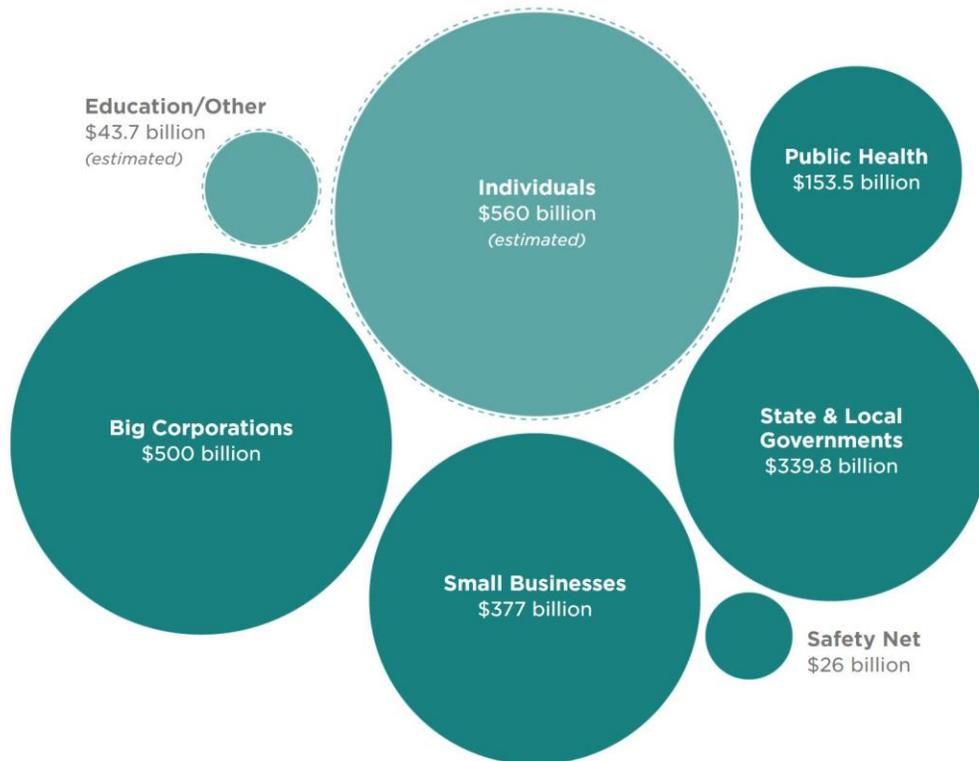
- i. Phase One: [H.R. 6074 - Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#)
 - Signed into law on 3/6. The bill provided \$8.3 billion in emergency funding to federal agencies to handle COVID-19 and focus on vaccine research and development.
- ii. Phase Two: [H.R.6201 - Families First COVID-19 Response Act](#)
 - Status: signed into law by President Trump on Wednesday, 3/18.
 - Summary:
 - (a) The bill, totaling \$104 billion, provides free COVID-19 testing, expands food assistance and unemployment benefits, and requires employers to provide additional protections for health care workers.
 - (b) Provides \$1 billion in additional unemployment insurance funding for states.
 - (c) Paid sick leave for businesses with fewer than 500 employees
- iii. Phase Three: [S.3548 - CARES Act](#)
 - Status: The Senate passed the bill with a unanimous 96-0 vote on 3/26, and the House is did so by voice vote on 3/27. Signed into law by President Trump on 3/27.
 - Summary:
 - (a) \$500 billion in direct payments to qualified individuals and families, amounting to two \$1,200 checks for most individuals and up to \$3,000 for a family of four.
 - (b) Further unemployment benefits increases, including additional funds and extension of benefits from 26 to 39 weeks.
 - (i) This bill does treat the Railroad Retirement Board and Railroad Unemployment Insurance the same way it does unemployment programs funded through Social Security. In the second phase, this wasn't included initially but was added in the technical corrections portion after the bill passed the House.



- (c) Provides the Small Business Administration with \$562 million for disaster relief loans (more in the Agencies & Regulation section).
- (d) \$31 billion for the Department of Transportation, \$25 billion for transit and Transit Infrastructure Grants, and just over \$1 billion for Amtrak.
 - (i) Amtrak and public transit's funding levels were in line with what had been requested prior to the bill's writing.

iv. Phase Four

- President Trump has expressed that he supports making the fourth COVID-19 relief bill a \$2 trillion infrastructure bill.
 - (a) Speaker Pelosi, Ways & Means Committee Chairman Neal, and Senate EPW Chairman Barrasso have all agreed with including infrastructure in the fourth bill.
- Latest reports indicate that a bill boosting the Small Business Administration's loan capabilities may happen as early as 4/10, adding \$200 billion to those funds.
- The House has formed a Select Committee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, which will oversee the Trump Administration's implementation of the \$2 trillion CARES Act. Majority Whip Jim Clyburn will lead the committee.



Graphic breaking down allocation of funds in the CARES Act via NPR:
<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/26/821457551/whats-inside-the-senate-s-2-trillion-coronavirus-aid-package>



AGENCIES & REGULATION

v. Department of Transportation

- On 4/3, DOT [announced](#) how the **Federal Transit Administration** will distribute \$25 billion in grant funding which the CARES Act appropriated to public transit agencies. Under the Urbanized Area Formula Program ([49 USC 5307](#)) and the Formula Grants for Rural Area Program ([49 USC 5311](#)) programs, \$22.7 billion will go to large and small urban areas and \$2.2 billion will go to rural areas.
 - (a) Via Progressive Railroading, a breakdown on how those funds will be allocated by region is [here](#).

vi. Federal Railroad Administration

- The FRA has opened an emergency docket through which railroads can apply for regulatory relief related to the emergency. Depending on the regulation, in some cases that relief will extend to contractors working on those railroads.
 - (a) Items on the docket can be viewed [here](#).
- The FRA is seeking comments by April 30th on whether to provide Amtrak with an exemption to Buy America requirements for the following pieces of equipment: one tunnel crane; one track laying machine; and eight two-man rail car movers. More information [here](#).

vii. Transportation Security Administration

- The TSA issued a final rule on security training for surface transportation employees on 3/23, but in light of the national COVID-19 emergency delayed its implementation by 90 days to 6/22. More information on that rule is [here](#).

viii. Treasury Department

- On 4/2, Secretary Mnuchin said that Americans can expect the first round of direct payments to appear in their accounts in two weeks.

ix. Small Business Administration

- Information about the SBA's response to COVID-19 is available [here](#).
- Small businesses impacted by COVID-19 can apply for disaster relief loans through the SBA [here](#).
- The [Paycheck Protection Program](#), part of the CARES Act, began processing applications for loans on Friday 4/3 and the program will run until 6/30.
 - (a) PPP is designed to incentivize businesses with fewer than 500 employees to keep employees on their payroll. The SBA will forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities.
 - (b) A FAQ via the Treasury Department is available [here](#).



x. Department of Homeland Security

- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued guidance for essential critical infrastructure employees on 3/19 during the COVID-19 response, which can be found [here](#).
 - (a) The CISA guidance was updated on 3/28 to include “and” in the sentence: “Workers responsible for operating and dispatching passenger, commuter and freight trains and maintaining rail infrastructure and equipment.”

STATES

xi. Shelter in place or lockdown orders have been implemented in some states.

- These orders vary state to state but generally require residents to stay indoors as much as possible and require non-essential businesses to close.
- A list of which states are affected by these orders is available via the New York Times [here](#).