



COVID-19 Package 4: Brief Update

All of the work that The Arc network has done since March to show #WeAreEssential showed up in the Heroes Act that was introduced in the House of Representatives this week and will be moving to the Senate. The latest COVID-19 response package includes many crucial issues for people with I/DD and their families and will be negotiated in the Senate. We've definitely made progress, but we have MUCH more to do to make these provisions law!

Accomplishments/What is IN the Bill:

Medicaid:

- Provides a global FMAP bump of 6.2% through June 30 (this aligns with package 2). Effective July 1, it provides a 14% FMAP increase.
- Includes an HCBS-specific FMAP increase in lieu of a separate grant program. An additional 10% FMAP from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 is available to be used to support Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) including workforce support, personal protection equipment for DSPs and other HCBS provisions.
- Prevents the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) from finalizing the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation (MFAR) until the end of the COVID19 public health emergency. This regulation would have the effect of deeply cutting funding available for state Medicaid programs by limiting state funding sources used to meet the state match requirement.

Stimulus/Taxes/Paid Leave:

- Expands the economic stimulus payments to adult dependents and issues another round of payments, including everyone this time.
- Disregards Unemployment Insurance (UI) payments from income and asset tests for means tested programs, including SNAP and SSI, which prevents the lowest income children with disabilities on SSI from having their benefits reduced due to parental UI benefits and people with disabilities on SSI from losing SSI because of UI.
- Expands the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) which will help the lowest income adults and children with disabilities.
- The paid leave provisions are expanded to the same leave purposes as paid sick days, with expanded definition of caregiving to include a broad definition of family members caring for an adult with a disability (including siblings and grandparents).

- Tax credits for paid leave extended to 2021 and increased, but are not allowed for large employers (500+, based on ACA mandate) from receiving credits which will include some chapters while extending the paid leave mandate to them.
- Increases SNAP benefits, prohibits the harmful rules we advocated against this year, requires USDA to better track Online Ordering waivers and creates a temporary hot food exemption for existing SNAP retailers (so people can buy hot food at grocery stores).

Workforce:

- Provides \$850 million in child and adults with disabilities care (called Family Care) funding for essential personnel, including DSPs.
- Includes the DSP workforce in the essential workforce for funding for hazard pay and overtime.

Housing and Transportation:

- \$100 billion of emergency rental assistance for up to two years
- A broad, uniform 12-month eviction moratorium
- \$11.5 billion for the Emergency Solutions Grants program to protect people experiencing homelessness
- It also includes significant funding for including \$200 million for Sec. 811 Supportive Housing for People with Disabilities, \$4 billion for tenant-based vouchers (including \$1 billion for new vouchers), and \$750 million for Project-Based Rental Assistance.
- Provides \$15.75 billion in emergency operating support for public transportation
- Codifies the regulatory requirement that state Medicaid programs cover non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT).

Non-Profits:

- Expansion of the Paycheck Protection Program to apply to larger employers (above 500 employees) and to extend through the end of the year.
- Increases the value of the employee retention tax credit from 50% of \$10,000 to a maximum of 80% of \$15,000 per quarter. (raising maximum value from \$5,000 per employee to \$36,000).
- Requires the Federal reserve to include non-profits (including larger non-profits) in the main street lending programs and to create specific repayment terms for non-profits
- Reverse a U.S. Labor Department rule that tells states to bill immediately for 100% of the costs of UI benefits paid to employees. Rule requires nonprofits to wait for their 50% reimbursement allowed under previous stimulus legislation.
- Provide a 50% refundable payroll credit for qualified fixed costs including rent, etc.
- Provides an additional \$10 billion for Economic Injury Disaster Loan program grants.

Health care:

- Provides for a two-month open enrollment period to allow individuals who are uninsured, for whatever reason, to enroll in coverage. Currently, Americans can only enroll in an Affordable Care Act (ACA) plan during open enrollment period, or because of a qualifying life event if they were previously insured.
- Eliminates cost sharing for Medicaid beneficiaries, Medicare Parts A and B, and group and individual health plans for COVID-19 treatment and vaccines during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Rights:

- Provides standards for absentee ballots cast by mail, and ensures that absentee ballots and related voting materials are accessible to voters with disabilities.
- Requires CDC to establish field studies to better understand health inequities that are not currently tracked by the Secretary of HHS and provides funding to modernize data collection methods to include collection on disability disparities among other issues.

Education and Technology

- Provides \$100 billion to support the educational needs of States, school districts, and institutions of higher education and requires states to include assurances when accepting funds that all students with disabilities are afforded their full rights under the IDEA.
- \$1.5 B for broadband access to close the homework gap and \$4 billion for emergency home connectivity needs, and a small increase for Assistive Technology Act program.

What is NOT in the Bill:

- No dedicated funding for special education.
- No additional funds for the Paycheck Protection Program.
- Still needed re: housing: ensuring people with disabilities in congregate settings, who are currently subject high COVID-19 infection and mortality rates, are eligible for any emergency rental assistance, housing, and homelessness resources allocated to address the crisis.