

White House Briefing Notes Wednesday, April 1, 2020

COVID-19 Update and Overview - Dr. Anthony Fauci (Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases)

- On Tuesday, March 31, the White House Coronavirus Task Force issued revised guidelines – [30 Days to Slow the Spread \(Español\)](#)– for an additional 30 days. Even if you are young and otherwise healthy, you are at risk, and your activities can increase the risk of contracting the Coronavirus for others. Everyone can do their part. The recommendations are simple to follow but will have a resounding impact on public health.
- States, Tribes, and localities must continue to do their part to implement the guidelines and proper mitigation efforts.
- Over the next two weeks, we need to be prepared for things to get worse before they get better. There are early indications that mitigation efforts are making a difference, so now is the right time to double-down and not let up to keep bending the curve down.
- Models are based on assumptions. We can “anticipate” but “do not need to accept” the forecasting of these models. Everyone needs to do their part and intensively adhere to the guidelines.
- We must continue to take proper precautions even after the number of new cases begins to stabilize and the curve begins to move in the right direction.
- “We are an extraordinary nation...[and response] will require the American people to pull together.”

Economic Update and Overview - Larry Kudlow (Assistant to the President for Economic Policy & Director, National Economic Council)

- The first priority of the President and Administration is the health and safety of the American people. The economy returning back to normal depends on how quickly the country can flatten the curve.
- Key components of fiscal relief are unemployment insurance, unpaid leave support, and small business payroll retention.
- The CARES Act provides American families, healthcare workers, and small businesses with the economic support they need to get through this challenging time (*See [White House Fact Sheet](#); See Op-Ed from Ivanka Trump – [Emergency Relief Bill Will Help America’s Small Businesses](#)*). The \$2.2 trillion economic relief package includes:
 - \$1,200 tax free payments (treated as refundable tax credits) to Americans;
 - \$150 billion in direct aid to State, Tribal, and local governments;
 - \$340 billion in additional emergency supplemental funding to combat the coronavirus outbreak.
 - \$500 billion for loans and guarantees that authorize the U.S. Treasury to support eligible businesses and States and local governments to cover losses incurred as a result of COVID-19;
 - \$100 billion for hospitals and health care facilities to reimburse expenses or lost revenues not otherwise reimbursed that are directly attributable to COVID-19;
 - \$3.5 billion to allow States to expand childcare benefits for healthcare workers, first responders, and others on the frontlines of this crisis.
- “When we get to the other side, the economy will resume its upward course.”

CARES Act Implementation - State, Local, and Tribal Government Assistance

- The U.S. Department of the Treasury has setup a [website](#) with up-to-date guidance on CARES Act implementation.
- States, territories, eligible units of local government, and Tribal governments will receive funds from the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Treasury expects that the \$150 billion provided to the Fund will be distributed no later than April 24.
- Distributions will generally be based on population, with a floor of \$1.25 billion for the 50 states. Population data will be drawn from the latest vintage of the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program.
- Treasury is developing a website portal for units of local government to apply for direct funding equal to 45% of its pro rata share of the state's allocation. Guidance will be provided regarding what jurisdictions are eligible.
- Funds distributed are an advance against eligible COVID-19 expenditures above budgeted amounts. Guidance on eligible expenditures is expected to be provided in the coming weeks; Treasury understands that recipients of funds need this guidance before disbursements are made.
- Treasury sees no prohibition on states providing funds to sub-grantees, but the use of funds by sub-grantees must meet statutory use provisions
- Treasury is partnering with the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior in conducting Tribal Consultations. The first Consultation will be held on Thursday, April 2.
- Treasury welcomes the partnership with state and local leaders in the implementation of this fund.

Individual, Small Business and Unemployment Assistance Update

- The Internal Revenue Service has setup a [website](#) with up-to-date guidance to help taxpayers, businesses and others affected by the coronavirus.
- Distribution of economic impact payments to individuals will begin in the next three weeks and will be distributed automatically, with no action required for most people. Social security recipients, who are not typically required to file a tax return, [will automatically](#) receive economic impact payments. For guidance, see [Economic Impact Payments: What You Need To Know](#)).
- The Small Business Administration is offering low interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses and private, non-profit organizations all U.S. States and territories. Learn more [here](#).
- The CARES Act's *Paycheck Protection Program* authorizes up to \$349 billion for small businesses to be applied towards job retention and certain other expenses. Small businesses and eligible non-profit organizations, Veterans organizations, and Tribal businesses described in the Small Business Act, as well as individuals who are self-employed or are independent contractors, are eligible if they also meet program size standards.
 - For a top-line overview of the program: [Click Here](#)
 - If you are a lender: [Click Here](#)
 - If you are a borrower: [Click Here](#)
 - For the application for borrowers: [Click Here](#)
- March 28, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) published more guidance to provide information to employees and employers about how each will be able to take advantage of the protections and relief offered by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) when it goes into effect on April 1, 2020. More information [here](#).

- The Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act (FFCRA), signed by President Trump on March 18, 2020 authorizes the U.S. Department of Labor to disburse \$1 billion in grant funding to states for the administration of unemployment insurance programs. The funding is available to states in two allocations. 23 states have applied for the first round of funding, and DOL is working with the Department of Treasury to certify the funds.
 - Each state administers a separate unemployment insurance program, but all states follow the same guidelines established by federal law. For more information regarding rules in your state, contact with your state's [unemployment insurance program](#).
 - The FFCRA also authorized emergency paid sick leave and an expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act. On April 1, 2020, DOL issued a [temporary rule](#) codifying in regulation previously issued [guidance](#) regarding the implementation of the new leave benefits.
- The CARES Act, in part, creates the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program which provides unemployment compensation benefits for employees traditionally not eligible for these programs (self-employed, independent contractors, and those with limited work history). DOL anticipates additional guidance on the implementation of the CARES Act in the near future.
- On March 18, DOL announced availability of up to \$100 Million in National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) in response to COVID-19. The DWGs are intended to provide eligible participants with both disaster-relief employment and employment training services. These participants can include dislocated workers, workers who were laid-off as a result of the disaster, self-employed individuals who are unemployed or underemployed as a result of the disaster, and long-term unemployed individuals. Learn more [here](#).

Critical Infrastructure Workforce Guidance Update

- Functioning critical infrastructure is imperative during the response to the [COVID-19](#) emergency for both public health and safety as well as community well-being. Certain critical infrastructure industries have a special responsibility in these times to continue operations. On Saturday, March 28, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) – released [updated guidance on the essential critical infrastructure workforce](#) (see [Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response](#)). The list and guidance were initially published on March 16th in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.
- [The guidance and accompanying list](#) are intended to support State, Local, and industry partners in identifying the [critical infrastructure sectors](#) and the essential workers needed to maintain the services and functions Americans depend on daily and need to be able to operate resiliently during the COVID-19 pandemic response. Notable additions to the guidance/list from the March 16 release include:
 - Clarification that mining and related critical mineral activity is essential;
 - Clarification that construction activity necessary for infrastructure resilience is essential;
 - Clarification on essential retail activity, particularly as it relates to distribution centers necessary for ecommerce and customer service activity for telecommunications vendors;
 - Clearer recognition of the cross-sector importance of hygiene products and sanitation services;

- Enhanced detail on enabling functions for critical infrastructure, to include the commodity, services, and logistics supply chains; and
- The addition of firearm and ammunition manufacturing and distribution as essential
- State, local, tribal, and territorial governments are responsible for implementing and executing response activities, including decisions about access and reentry, in their communities, while the Federal Government is in a supporting role. Officials should use their own judgment in issuing implementation directives and guidance.