



Updated *Heroes Act*

Health, Nutrition, and Community Support Provisions

Maintaining Access to Affordable Health Coverage

The updated *Heroes Act* will help millions of workers and their families who lose their jobs and their job-based health benefits purchase affordable Marketplace coverage, preserving their access to health insurance when they need it the most. The bill:

- Establishes a Special Enrollment Period to allow workers who receive unemployment compensation to enroll in a Marketplace plan with minimal administrative burden.
- Enhances tax credits for unemployed workers to purchase coverage, providing the typical worker access to a silver-level plan with a premium of about \$43 a month or less for self-only coverage.
- Improves financial protections to ensure workers are not subject to high reconciliation payments.
- Provides additional information to laid-off workers and strengthens funding for outreach and enrollment.

The updated *Heroes Act* requires that health plans cover the fully cost of COVID-19 treatment and vaccines. The bill:

- Removes cost barriers to care by prohibiting insurers from charging for COVID-19 treatment or vaccines.
 - This requirement applies broadly, including to private employment-based group health plans.

The updated *Heroes Act* improves information provided to consumers by their health plans. The bill:

- Requires health plans to notify consumers of the availability of advance refill of prescriptions during emergencies and improves the notifications provided to workers eligible for COBRA or enhanced tax credits through the ACA.

Strengthening Food Assistance Programs for Students and Families

The updated *Heroes Act* bolsters food assistance at a critical moment for vulnerable students and families. The bill:

- Provides emergency relief to help school meal and child and adult care food programs, which are in dire need of financial assistance, to continue serving children and families.
 - Provides as much funding as necessary to carry out these payments.
- Provides schools increased flexibility to provide children in low-income communities with fresh fruit and vegetable snacks through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).
- Nearly triples the value of the (WIC) Cash Value Voucher (CVV) for women and children over a four-month period.
 - Provides \$400 million for WIC to fund the increased CVV benefit.
- Requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a task force on food delivery models in the WIC program

so that participants have access to curbside pickup and other safe food purchasing methods during the pandemic.

- Raises the age of eligibility from 18 to 25 years for participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) at emergency homeless shelters during the pandemic.
- Ensures that commodity allocations and other calculations in the child nutrition programs are held harmless during the months severely impacted by COVID-19.
- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture to make publicly available all child nutrition waiver applications, approvals, and denials pursuant to the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* in a timely manner.
- Protects college student eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during the COVID-19 public health emergency by clarifying that work study eligibility – rather than enrollment – is sufficient to confer eligibility for SNAP. Requires the Secretary of Education to inform students and federal financial aid applicants of SNAP eligibility requirements for college students during the pandemic.
 - This will ensure that college students do not lose SNAP eligibility due to work study or job loss during the pandemic.

Supporting Communities and Families

The bill makes a major investment in the nation’s public health response – providing \$75 billion to support robust coronavirus testing, contact tracing and isolation measures, with a focus on the communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

- \$500 Million is dedicated to supporting the recruitment, placement, and training of individuals in COVID-19 contact tracing and related positions, with a focus on recruiting from impacted local communities and building a culturally competent workforce. This section also provides for transitional assistance and support post-employment.

The updated *Heroes Act* provides critical health and economic support to communities and families. The bill:

- Strengthens federal child abuse prevention and treatment programs and invests \$325 million in such programs to ensure vulnerable children and families receive support.
 - The bill includes a reauthorization of the *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act* (CAPTA) and provides \$325 million in supplemental funding for CAPTA programs to ensure states and local providers are equipped to support vulnerable children and families during this difficult period.
- Provides \$350 million for the Corporation for National and Community Service, as well as legislative flexibilities, including for federal matching requirements.
- Supports domestic violence organizations by waiving matching requirements on all federal *Family Violence Prevention and Services Act* (FVPSA) funds for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Provides \$100 million in additional funding for FVPSA programs.
- Ensures that all funding provided to the *Community Services Block Grant Act* (CSBG) programs can be allocated fairly and in a timely manner and raises the federal poverty line for CSBG programs to 200% through Fiscal Year 2022 so that more individuals and families recently impacted by COVID-19 can be eligible for benefits.
- Expands energy assistance for low-income families through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and reduces barriers to LIHEAP participation during the COVID-19 emergency.
 - Provides \$4.5 billion in additional funding for LIHEAP.
- Provides emergency aid to help low-income families facing high costs for drinking water and wastewater services to pay their bills and avert shut offs and late fees.
 - Provides \$1.5 billion in additional funding for this initiative.
- Provides flexibility to providers serving youth experiencing homelessness to support their response to the

pandemic, including waiving maximum stay limits so that youth are not forced to secure new housing during the pandemic and waiving matching requirements on *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act* (RHYA) funds for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities

The updated *Heroes Act* provides key resources to older adults and individuals with disabilities. The bill:

- Provides \$925 million in funding for programs authorized under the *Older Americans Act* (OAA) and waives state matching requirements for OAA funds. Specifically:
 - \$200 Million is provided for supportive services;
 - \$500 million is provided for OAA nutrition programs, including \$20 million for Native American nutrition programs;
 - \$150 Million is provided for the National Family Caregiver Support Program;
 - \$44 Million is provided for evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention;
 - \$6 Million for targeted outreach to at-risk populations; and
 - \$20 Million is provided for elder rights protection activities, including the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and \$5 million is provided for senior legal services.
- Extends key flexibilities in OAA nutrition programs, including making it easier for seniors who are home-bound due to COVID-19 to receive home-delivered meals instead of coming to a congregate location.
- Provides \$50 million for activities authorized under the *Developmental Disabilities Act*.
- Provides \$25 million for *Assistive Technology Act* programs.