

**Subject:** Boozman Bulletin: Targeted COVID-19 Relief Coming to Arkansas

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**From:** Senator John Boozman

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## Boozman Bulletin: Targeted COVID-19 Relief Coming to Arkansas

This week, Congress approved additional COVID-19 relief for struggling Americans and hard-hit small businesses, along with additional funding to safely open schools and strengthen efforts to defeat the virus by dramatically increasing efforts to purchase and distribute lifesaving vaccines.

The coronavirus doesn't care if you are a Republican or a Democrat, so relief for Americans impacted by this public health and economic crisis should not have been subjected to political posturing that delayed crucial assistance until the eleventh hour. It is necessary that we are unified in order to deliver relief in a more-timely manner.

I worked with my colleagues to secure \$13 billion in funding to support agriculture producers. Things are certainly tough in farm country right now. Commodity prices have been down, input costs up. Farmers have weathered trade wars and inclement weather. COVID-19 was one more huge complication for our agricultural producers. I am pleased that we were able to direct ample funding to programs that specifically help our farmers and ranchers navigate these challenging times.

This legislation also included a critical provision preventing Medicare payment cuts to physicians that will ensure patients have access to quality and affordable health care. This was based on [legislation I recently introduced](#) that maintains Medicare payments to physicians at current levels.

### **Highlights of the latest round of COVID-19 relief include:**

#### **Support for medical efforts to identify, treat and combat COVID-19:**

- Vaccines: \$20 billion for purchase of vaccines and another \$8B for distribution;
- Testing: \$20 billion to assist states with testing;
- Provider Relief Fund: \$20 billion for the Provider Relief Fund, including the use of unobligated funds, which helps make up for health care-related expenses or lost revenue attributable to COVID-19;
- Telehealth: \$250 million dedicated to telehealth, with an additional \$300 million

specifically for rural broadband buildout.

### **Relief for struggling Americans includes:**

- Direct Checks: A second round of direct checks of \$600 for individuals and qualifying dependents;
- Unemployment Assistance: Temporary extension of all unemployment assistance created by the CARES Act and allows a supplemental \$300 per week for unemployed Americans through March 14, 2021;
- Rental Assistance: \$25 billion for emergency rental assistance, targeted for individuals who lost their source of income, and an extension of the eviction moratorium through January 31, 2021;
- Child Care Assistance: \$10 billion for child care programs that allow parents to return to work;
- Hunger Relief: \$13 billion for emergency food assistance, including increased SNAP assistance, as well as funding for food banks and food pantries.

### **Help for small businesses:**

- Extends and Enhances the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP): Extends the PPP and adds deductibility for PPP expenses;
- Expands Eligibility for PPP: Gives businesses experiencing severe revenue reductions an opportunity to apply for additional loans. Nonprofits, local newspapers and small broadcasters are now eligible for the program. Ensures that churches and faith-based organizations are eligible for the program;
- Funding for Entertainment Venues: Dedicates \$15 billion for live entertainment venues, independent movie theaters and museums;
- Replenishes Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) Program: \$20 billion to assist businesses that were hardest hit by the economic impacts of the coronavirus.

### **Funding to safely reopen schools:**

- K-12 and Higher Education Institutions: Includes \$82 billion in funding for schools and universities to assist with reopening for in-person learning.



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