



## FOCUS ON PEOPLE WITH LOW INCOMES

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The CARES Act is a critical step in addressing the needs of people with low incomes. However, the bill has a number of important shortcomings:

- While this is the largest stimulus package in modern history, it will not provide enough support over the course of the economic downturn that will result from the necessary measures to stop the spread of the virus.
- While the CARES Act provides critical resources to hospitals and states to help cover COVID-19-related costs, it does not expand health coverage or cover COVID-19 treatment for the uninsured.
- The CARES Act also fails to increase SNAP benefits, which were one of the most effective stimulus policies of the Great Recession.

As we work toward additional relief for Americans, we can make changes for the benefit of all including people with low incomes and people of color.

### Increase health care coverage

- Provide incentives for states to adopt or immediately implement the Affordable Care Act's expansion of Medicaid to low-income adults. This could include temporarily covering 100 percent of the cost of expansion, up from the current 90 percent.
- Help people who lose their jobs transition to marketplace coverage. This could include promoting enrollment and increasing premium tax credits.
- Enable Medicaid to cover costs of COVID-19 treatment for people who remain uninsured despite the above policies, including people now ineligible for Medicaid due to their immigration status. Without such changes, people with low incomes may be afraid to seek COVID-19 treatment, or even testing, because they fear they can't afford it.



- Increase the federal share of Medicaid costs until the economy improves. This would help avert state cuts not only in education and other key services, but also in health coverage and services, exactly when need is greatest.

### Increase investments in SNAP

- Raise SNAP benefits by at least 15 percent for the duration of the downturn. This temporary increase, of just approximately \$100 per month for struggling families, would help families put food on the table and effectively boost the economy.
- Give states flexibility to expand SNAP benefits beyond the immediate public health emergency. Many CARES Act provisions assume that the



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- economic fallout will outlast the public health emergency; assistance for families facing food insecurity also needs to last throughout the course of the downturn.
- Suspend the three-month time limit on SNAP benefits for unemployed adults not raising children as long as the economy is weak — not just during the public health emergency.
- Halt implementation of new Trump Administration regulations that would cut SNAP benefits and take SNAP benefits away from 4 million people.

## Add a fund to support very low-income families

- Create an emergency fund modeled after the

successful TANF Emergency Fund in place during the Great Recession. Such a fund could quickly provide both families with children and others with cash assistance to meet their basic needs and other forms of crisis assistance.

Together we can make a change to benefit all in Washington and especially those with low incomes and people of color.

## Questions

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