American Rescue Act: Summary of Key Provisions for the HCH Community
March 12, 2021

The $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (H.R. 1319) (section-by-section summary) was modeled after President Biden’s American Rescue Plan and signed into law on March 11, 2021. The bill passed in Congress through budget reconciliation, a filibuster-proof process that requires contents of the bill meet certain budgetary standards. Below are key provisions of interest to the HCH Community.

HOUSING/HUD

- $27.5 B for emergency rental assistance, $5 B allocated specifically for housing vouchers
- $5 B for homelessness assistance through the HOME Investment Partnerships program
- $5 B for utility assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Low-Income Household Drinking Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program
- Not included: an extension of the federal eviction moratorium, as it is not permissible through the budget reconciliation process (advocacy on this continues with the Biden administration)

More about homelessness and housing provisions from the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

HEALTH CENTERS/HRSA

- $7.6 B for health centers to respond to COVID-19, including Look-Alikes
- $800 M for the National Health Service Corps

More about health center provisions from the National Association of Community Health Centers.

MEDICAID & THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

- Establishes 100% cost coverage by the federal government for COVID-19 vaccination treatment for people on Medicaid and people who are uninsured
- Provides a financial incentive for states to expand Medicaid to single adults by offering a 5% increase in the federal Medicaid contribution for two years if a state expands coverage
- Increases federal Medicaid support for mobile crisis intervention services to 85% for individuals experiencing a mental-health or substance-use disorder crisis
- Lifts the income eligibility for purchasing private plans on the health care marketplace and allows more generous subsidy coverage for higher income levels

More about Medicaid and Affordable Care Act provisions from the Georgetown University.
PUBLIC HEALTH & VACCINES

- $47.8 B for the national strategy to detect, diagnose, trace, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 to be distributed by the Secretary of the Treasury to local governments and organizations.

- $7.5 B for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for vaccine activities to plan, prepare for, promote, distribute, administer, monitor, and track COVID–19 vaccines.

- $7.7 B for state, local, and territorial health departments to establish a public health workforce.

- $3 B for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Community Mental Health block grant programs.

- $30 M to support community-based overdose prevention programs, syringe services programs, and other harm reduction services.

More about public health and vaccine provisions from the National Law Review.

OTHER RELEVANT PROVISIONS

- Economic Impact Payments ("stimulus checks"): Provides $1,400 for a single taxpayer making under $75,000 a year and an additional $1,400 per dependent, including families with “mixed” U.S. citizenship which were excluded from previous stimulus checks. Anyone with a valid Social Security number is eligible, including resident non-US citizens.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/food stamps): Extends the 15% SNAP benefit increase established in prior legislation through September 30, 2021.

- Unemployment: Extends federal unemployment benefits through September 2021 at $300/week.

- State and Local Government Fiscal Relief: Provides $350 B in flexible funds for state, local, and tribal governments that can be used to mitigate costs related to COVID-19.

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP): Allows charities to be eligible for PPP if they employ less than 500 employees per physical location and provides an additional $7.5 billion in funding, increasing the total program level to $813 B.

- Tax Benefits for Children and Families: Expands eligibility for the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), while raising the CTC benefit up to $3600 and raising the maximum EITC benefit for childless workers from $540 to $1500. These changes are estimated to lift more than 5 million children above the poverty line.

More overviews of the bill from Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Check the Council’s COVID-19 Policy Page for the latest resources on legislation and funding opportunities.