



HEROES Act: The Next Chapter of Federal COVID-19 Response

On May 15, the U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solution (HEROES) Act, a \$3 trillion-plus, comprehensive coronavirus response package. The measure encompasses a broad array of provisions, including funding for COVID related public health and research activities and relief for essential workers, small businesses and nonprofit organizations. The measure passed the House on a roughly [party-line vote](#) of 208-199—with all but 14 (mostly vulnerable) Democrats voting in favor of the bill and all but one Republican voting against it. Republicans generally objected to the broad scope and price tag of the measure, which now faces a dubious future in the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate.

Among the important provisions that would deliver resources and relief that are of interest to population scientists and to PAA as an organization are:

- \$2.1 billion for the **Centers for Disease Control**, including:
 - \$2 billion for state, territorial and tribal public health agencies
 - \$130 million for public health data surveillance and analytics infrastructure modernization
- \$4.745 billion for **NIH** to expand COVID-19 related research (intramural and extramural) and to support the shutdown and startup costs of research labs
- \$410 million for the **Census Bureau** for expenses due to the delays in the 2020 Census
- \$125 million for the **National Science Foundation** for research to “prevent, prepare for and respond to coronavirus”
- Authorizes an NIH led longitudinal study on the short- and long-term impact of COVID-19 on recovered patients
- Enacts the Administration’s request to allow a 4-month delay in the publication of apportionment and state redistricting data by the **Census Bureau**
- Extends the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) provisions by 6 months, and
 - Extends eligibility to all nonprofits
 - Includes a 25% carve-out of the PPP funds for nonprofits, with at least half of that amount set aside for small nonprofits

PAA and other associations have been advocating for targeted relief for associations that experienced significant loss of revenue related to cancellations of major events. While the HEROES Act did not include such specific relief, the PPP-related provisions described above would potentially afford some relief to PAA and similarly affected organizations.

The onus is now on the Senate to act on the next phase of COVID-19 relief. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has expressed strong skepticism not only for the HEROES Act but also as to whether additional relief is needed at this time. However, pressure is likely to increase as time elapses—and unemployment numbers continue to rise. The PAA Office of Government Affairs will issue action alerts to encourage members to weigh in as the bill moves through the legislative process.