

# What Main Street Needs in the Next Relief Bill

In the past 5 months, Congress and the president have moved aggressively to help America's small business community. Washington policymakers acted quickly and in a bipartisan manner to pass the CARES Act establishing the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), add funding when needed, re-tool aid programs for re-opening, and extend the PPP application date.

As Congress debates the next pandemic relief bill, Main Street still needs help. The U.S. Chamber [outlined several priorities](#) to bolster the chances of survival for millions of small businesses. Policies highlighted by the Chamber, include:

- While the PPP was intended to assist all small business employers, including non-profits, non-profits who are not organized as 501(c)(3) organizations have been excluded from the program. Congress should extend the deadline for applying for PPP funds through the end of the year and make all non-profit employers eligible to apply for a loan.
- Congress should also make the PPP loan forgiveness process easier for the smallest small businesses by automatically forgiving loans under \$150,000 or \$250,000.
- The CARES Act created an Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) that provided an effective \$5,000 refundable tax credit to employers negatively impacted by the economic fallout from the pandemic. Congress should increase the size of the credit, make the credit more flexible by allowing small and midsize employers to claim the credit irrespective of whether the employee is "providing services," and expand the universe of eligible employers by reducing the reduction in gross receipts required to access the credit. Congress can simultaneously make the expanded credit more targeted by reducing the benefit for employers who are experiencing less of a revenue loss.
- In too many cases, small businesses in low-income and rural areas as well as those without traditional banking relationships—including minority-owned businesses—had difficulty accessing the PPP. The bipartisan Recharge and Empower Local Innovation and Entrepreneurs Fund (RELIEF) for Main Street Act would provide \$50 billion to seed and scale local relief programs for small employers. The Chamber urges Congress to pass this initiative.

These targeted and temporary measures should provide financial relief for the small businesses who need it most.

Finally, every entrepreneur who is doing all they can to care for their employees and customers and saving their business deserves protection from coronavirus lawsuits if they follow advice from public health officials. An entrepreneur shouldn't face a lawsuit after surviving the pandemic.

With good policy, small businesses can come out of this crisis stronger and more economically sustainable in order to build a closer community.

—Tom Sullivan, Vice President, Small Business Policy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce