

# COVID-19 relief package: \$20Billion in PPP, \$600 stimulus checks, \$300 bonus for federal unemployment benefits in new deal

Lawmakers struck a nearly \$900 billion COVID-19 stimulus deal Sunday that includes another round of stimulus checks and badly needed jobless benefits for struggling Americans, ending a long standoff in Washington with one of the biggest rescue bills in U.S. history.

After months of impasse, negotiations came down to the wire as 12 million people are set to lose unemployment benefits the day after Christmas. The deal includes restarting a \$300 boost to the federal unemployment insurance benefit, extending eviction moratoriums for renters for an unspecified amount of time and a \$600 direct payment to most Americans.

Even though lawmakers reached a deal, some jobless Americans could see their unemployment benefits lapse since it may take weeks for aid to reach them due to outdated state systems, experts say.

**Americans still face lapse in aid:** Unemployment benefits could be delayed for millions even with COVID-19 relief package

## PPP Program

The package includes an extension of the small business Paycheck Protection Program, which expanded eligibility to local newspapers, broadcasters and nonprofits. It will direct another \$20 billion to small business grants and \$15 billion to live event venues.

The measure increased funding for vaccine distribution and coronavirus testing.

It also provided \$13 billion in increased benefits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

## Another stimulus check?

The measure contains an up to \$600 direct payment to most Americans, and \$600 per child, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a statement. That is less than the \$1,200 checks approved in the spring.

It would also include \$1,200 for couples making up to \$150,000 a year.

The size of the benefit would be reduced for those earning more than \$75,000 in 2019, similar to the last round of stimulus checks, according to The Washington Post.

## When will stimulus checks be sent?

The government will begin to send out direct payments to millions of Americans next week, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Monday.

“People are going to see this money the beginning of next week,” Mnuchin said in a CNBC interview.

## Are unemployment benefits extended?

The bill would extend all pandemic unemployment programs set to expire at the end of December. It’s unclear for how long.

Those benefits would likely be extended for 11 weeks of unemployment, according to The Washington Post. They aren't retroactive.

The deal came down to the wire as two unemployment programs are set to end on Dec. 26: the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, which provides aid to self-employed, temporary workers and gig workers; and the Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, which provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits beyond the typical 26 weeks that states provide to jobless workers.

**'It's a big scary mess':** 12 million Americans to lose jobless aid after Christmas if Congress fails to act

## Are there enhanced unemployment benefits?

The measure would provide a federal unemployment benefit of \$300 a week for up to 11 weeks through mid-March, less than the \$600 provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act passed in March.

The bill also would give an additional federal benefit of \$100 weekly to those who earned at least \$5,000 a year in self-employment income, but are disqualified from receiving a more generous Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefit because they are eligible for state jobless aid, according to The New York Times.

## Is paid sick leave included?

The agreement provides a tax credit to support employers offering paid sick leave, based on the framework of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, enacted in March, according to Pelosi and Schumer's statement.

Families First required many employers to provide workers with two weeks of sick leave related to COVID-19 at full pay, and up to 12 weeks of family and medical leave to care for family members at two-thirds pay.

As many as 87 million workers could lose access to emergency paid leave at the end of the month. If those benefits aren't extended, it would limit workers' ability to stay home to quarantine after COVID-19 exposure, or care for a child whose school or daycare is closed.

It's unclear whether the new measure would still require companies to offer paid sick leave to workers who have COVID-19, or those caring for children following school closures.

## Are eviction moratoriums extended?

Yes. It would offer \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance and provide an extension of eviction moratoriums. It's unclear for how long based on Pelosi and Schumer's statement.

The latest legislation extended the moratorium through Jan. 31, The New York Times said.

The loss in jobless aid and other stimulus relief would have put 30 to 40 million people at risk of eviction as moratoriums were set to expire in January, according to the Aspen Institute, a think tank.