



# Advocacy in Times of Crisis

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2020

2:00 - 3:00 PM, ET





# ADVOCACY INSTITUTE

*Equipping social entrepreneurs to become better, bolder advocates.*

# Special Update: SBA Loans + Paycheck Protection Program

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- On April 24, the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act was signed into law – “CARES Act Part II.”
- Provides \$484 billion in funding for small-businesses, hospitals and for COVID-19 testing.
- Specifically, provides \$310 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, originally created under the CARES Act, that provides loans to small businesses and nonprofits which may be forgiven if businesses maintain their payroll.

# COVID-19 Relief Package State of Play

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- The **first COVID-19 relief package** included \$8.3 billion in emergency funding for vaccine development, research and equipment stockpiles, and supporting State and local health budgets.
- The **second** package provided \$1 billion in nutritional aid and expanded access to COVID-19 testing and expanded sick leave benefits.
- The **third** package provided \$2 trillion in emergency funding for States, businesses and individuals, and included education funding.
- Currently Congress is working on a **fourth** package and there could be more.

# Non-COVID-19 State of Play - Appropriations

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- The FY2021 appropriations process is underway
- Appropriators are holding meetings, considering requests and listening to stakeholder priorities
- Timing of committee markups is unknown, possibly delayed due to COVID-19, but staff *are* working on FY21 appropriations

# Non-COVID-19 State of Play - Authorization

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- While COVID-19 is dominating staff time and bandwidth, staff are **still interested** in gathering ideas for bills and legislation even if it is setting the stage now for something they will tackle next year.

# Is it Appropriate to Advocate at this Time?

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- **YES** - Advocating now on the issues we work on is **NOT** seen as opportunistic.
- At this time, more than ever, **our voices are *critical***.
- The pandemic has shed a light on long-existing issues with which **we have deep on-the-ground experience**.
- **Policymakers want to hear from you** and learn how you are helping communities at this time and what supports the field truly and immediately needs.
- Advocating at this time keeps up drumbeat of engagement which helps to **build relationships** and establish you organization and our coalition as a go-to-resource for offices.



# Remember: You are the Experts!

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- **Members and their staffers want to hear from you.**
- **Localize your story** - Members and their staff want info from their States & districts.
- **Personalize your story** - share the story of those you serve and know.
  - Better yet, include community members or practitioners who can directly and succinctly share their stories of impact .

# Technology Tips for Going Virtual

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- Be device flexible, but know ahead which device / platform for each call (may differ depending on the office and the specific staffer.)
- Find a quiet place for the call.
- Test out all technology.
- If more than one person from your team is joining, make a plan to ensure meetings run efficiently with introductions, content and follow up - coordination is even more crucial when you are joining remotely and separately.

# Tips for Successful Hill Meetings

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- Know that time is limited- usually 30 minutes- maybe less with COVID-19.
- Remember, effective advocacy does not always take the form of a bill or funding - sometimes warding off bad policy threats is a win.
- Remember, staff are the lifeline to Members of Congress, and building relationships is at the heart of advocacy.
- Be prepared to answer how COVID-19 is affecting the communities we serve.

# Questions to Anticipate?

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## Context - COVID-19

### Try to have answers to these questions:

- What is the situation in the member's state / district?
- How is COVID-19 affecting children and families in the communities you serve? (Consider economic and mental health impacts as well)
- Are in-person services being provided? If not, are there virtual services being provided? Are there barriers to doing so?
- What additional funding or flexibilities are needed to better serve children and families during this time?
- Are there barriers to accessing much needed public benefits at this time?
- What are your short-term and long-term needs?

# Coalition Member Insights on Advocacy During COVID-19

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**Pam Cantor,  
Founder & Senior Science  
Advisor,  
Turnaround for Children**

# Questions?

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# Resources, Engagement, and Outreach

- Access support through America Forward's partnership with **We The Action**
  - Free legal assistance to help navigate the COVID-19 crisis (from SBA loans to grants/contracts compliance to employment issues, and more)
- Get informed by America Forward's weekly federal updates on legislative activity and support in light of COVID-19
- America Forward recent blogs:
  - [Latest on COVID-19 related legislation](#)
  - [AF Weekly Tip Sheet](#)
- Amplify your organization's impact and COVID-19 response - share your stories via the survey we sent to the Coalition, so America Forward can lift up your impact to policymakers (fill out survey COB Monday, 5/4)
- Join the America Forward Coalition Facebook Group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AmericaForwardCoalition>
- Teacher Appreciation week, May 4-8: Join E4E's **#SendTeachersLove** social media campaign





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