

Protecting the Most Vulnerable

Priorities for the Fourth Congressional COVID Package

April 20, 2020

The Coronavirus pandemic is exposing deep systemic inequality in the US and is quickly making the disparities worse, as millions of marginalized people are struggling to pay the bills, stay healthy, and survive. The swift and devastating spread of the virus in the US is dealing a staggering blow to our public health systems and our economy and revealing the precariousness of millions of working families who have been struggling for decades. As millions lose their jobs and front-line workers risk their own health and wellbeing, Oxfam is calling on Congress to urgently increase critical funding and address policy gaps to ensure millions of people are able to get through this crisis.

Domestically, our next round of requests to Congress focus on policy fixes and additional emergency appropriations to help impacted families and protect all workers on the front lines - particularly women; low-wage workers and disproportionately impacted marginalized communities. With respect to corporate accountability and tax justice, our requests focus on measures to require transparency and accountability of federal aid; to deter profit shifting to tax havens and job outsourcing; tax justice measures to fund our recovery; and measures to ensure that tests, treatments and vaccines become a public good that all can access. We are also urging Congress to dramatically ramp up efforts to protect voter rights.

Globally, the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic could push half a billion more people into poverty unless urgent action is taken. Oxfam's new report "Dignity Not Destitution," estimates that between six and eight percent of the global population could be forced into poverty as governments shut down entire economies to manage the spread of the virus. This could set back the fight against poverty by a decade, and as much as 30 years in some regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. This could mean that more than half of the global population could be living in poverty in the aftermath of this pandemic.

Together with other international development, humanitarian and global health organizations, Oxfam is urging Congress to provide at least \$12 billion in emergency supplemental resources for the International Affairs Budget to support the global response. These additional resources are essential to US global leadership in combating the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide and to protecting the health, security and economic interests of all Americans.



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HELP IMPACTED FAMILIES & LOW WAGE WORKERS

- Expand CARES Act paid sick time and paid family and medical leave to cover all workers.
- Increase the CARES Act \$1,200 individual tax rebate to at least three months to provide stability for those in unpaid work and unable to access other protections during this crisis.
- Expand school lunch distribution programs to all children in need.
- Extend and expand the CARE Act's federal eviction moratorium.
- Expand Payroll Protection to All Employers to Stem the Loss of Jobs.
- Require Companies to Compensate All Essential Employees with Pandemic Premium Pay.
- Require an Emergency Standard and Effective Enforcement from OSHA during the Crisis, including Requirements for PPE, Training, and worker Engagement on health and safety.
- Designate all essential workers at the frontlines of this crisis as first responders, and make clear the designation carries with it temporary priority access to testing and coronavirus related treatment, priority access to child care and PPE when it becomes available.
- Require the CDC and States to report on COVID-19 testing, cases, and outcomes, disaggregated by gender, race, and socioeconomic status. This will help increase awareness about the disproportionate impacts of Coronavirus on African American, Latino, women, and others, and help incentivize more inclusive policy in the pandemic response and recovery.
- A variety of measures to protect Undocumented Workers, Migrants, Refugees, and Immigrant communities including DACA and TPS holders.

PUT WOMEN AT CENTER OF RELIEF EFFORTS

- Ensure Gender Based Violence Shelters and Reproductive Health Centers are treated as Essential Services, and Expand Resources to Protect Women;
- \$100 million for implementation of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.
- \$100 million in emergency funding for the Sexual Assault Services Program (OVW) to assist rape crisis centers in transitioning to virtual services and meeting the emergency needs of survivors; and \$225 million in emergency Violence Against Women's Act funding to be distributed to the states and territories for victim services.
- Passage of Safe From the Start Act to prevent and respond to gender-based violence from the onset of humanitarian emergencies.

DEMONSTRATE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

- An additional \$4 billion for USAID and State Department Global Health and Pandemic Response programs to defeat the Coronavirus and invest in health security systems to stop the next pandemic before it reaches our shores.
- An additional \$5 billion for Emergency Economic Relief and Humanitarian Assistance to address the far-reaching humanitarian and economic consequences of this pandemic in a world already grappling with the gravity of more than 70 million people fleeing war, persecution and conflict. These funds are for humanitarian assistance, water and sanitation, food security and economic and social support programs managed by the USAID and the State department.
- An additional \$3 billion for ongoing State Department and USAID frontline operations by U.S. government diplomats, development experts and multilateral and international partners who are the frontline operational response protecting the lives of Americans abroad.

NO BLANK CHECKS FOR CORPORATIONS

- Ensure full transparency of the amounts given and recipients of the \$500 billion Treasury Exchange Stabilization Fund. This information should be available publicly in real-time.
- A variety of measures to deter Coronavirus profit shifting to tax havens, outsourcing of jobs, and tax justice provisions to ensure the wealthiest pay their fair share of our economic recovery.
- No Coronavirus emergency assistance or bailouts of the oil and gas sectors.
- Ensure that COVID tests, treatments and vaccines - once discovered and approved for use - immediately become a global public good, available to all who need it, anywhere.
- Push back on all Trump Administration rollbacks of public health and safety regulations.

PROTECT DEMOCRACY & ELECTIONS

- An additional \$1.6 billion to support states' timely implementation of vote-by-mail, secure voter registration, and safeguard in-person voting (beyond the \$400m already appropriated).
- Aggressive new voter protection measures for voters who have historically faced barriers to full and fair participation including voters of color, voters with disabilities, and students.