NEW Pandemic COVID-19 Relief Bill: What’s in it?

On December 21, 2020 Congress passed a new $900 billion pandemic relief package. This bill features many economic relief and annual appropriation opportunities for artists, gig workers, nonprofit, governmental, and commercial arts organizations. Here are a few highlights of what’s included...

### Stimulus Checks
$600 direct payments to individuals making up to $75,000 per year and couples making up to $150,000 per year (based on your 2019 tax return) with $600 additional payments per dependent child.

### Unemployment Benefits
- An extension of two programs created by the CARES Act: Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which pays benefits to self-employed, gig, freelance and part-time workers generally ineligible for state unemployment insurance; and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), which pays extra weeks of benefits to individuals who exhausted their state benefits.
  - These programs are now extended by 11 weeks (till mid-March) allowing individuals to receive a max 50 week of benefits.
  - The benefits will provide an extra $300 per week for all workers receiving unemployment benefits from December 26 to March 14, 2021.

- **Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation**: a federally funded $100 per week additional benefit to those who have at least $5,000 in annual self-employment income but are disqualified from receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance because they are eligible for regular state unemployment benefits.

For more information, keep an eye on the Washington's Employment Security Department (ESD)'s COVID-19 page, which will be updated in the coming weeks. Current claimants should continue to submit weekly claims as usual and look out for more updates ESD.

### Small Business Loans
- A reopening of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The program will allow small businesses to reapply for a second PPP loan and will also expand eligibility to businesses (such as certain nonprofits) who previously could not apply for a PPP loan.
  - This bill specifically designates $12 billion for minority-owned and very small businesses and $15 billion for live venues, independent movie theaters and cultural institutions.

For more information, keep an eye on the Small Business Administration's PPP webpage.

### Rental Assistance
The bill provides money for a first-ever federal rental assistance program; funds to be distributed by state and local governments to help people who have fallen behind on their rent and may be facing eviction.

The new bill also includes funding for schools and child care providers, nutrition assistance, vaccine funding, food/farm aid, and a five-year extension for Section 181, a tax deduction for film, TV, and live theatrical productions. A deeper breakdown of the COVID-19 economic relief section of the bill can be found here.

*Please keep in mind this is a rapidly evolving situation and to keep checking back for updates.*