



March 20, 2020

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Chair  
Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship  
United States Senate  
428A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ben Cardin  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship  
United States Senate  
428A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Rubio and Ranking Member Cardin:

We the undersigned send this letter in appreciation of your proposals to get capital in the hands of small businesses immediately. Federal government contractors face challenges that differ from the commercial sector, therefore, we support the following Committee proposals:

- Exclude SBA's socioeconomic programs, including the 8(a), women-owned, HUBZone and service-disabled veteran-owned programs toward the Office of Management and Budget's annual category management goals.
- Total sole-source award contract values to \$8 million for services and \$10 million for manufacturing per year over the life of a contract.
- Temporarily remove the requirement for contracting officers to conduct market research so that contracting officers may grant sole-source award contracts for small business programs, including the women-owned, HUBZone and service-disabled veteran-owned small business programs.
- Require federal agencies promptly pay small business prime contractors and contractors with small business subcontractors within 15 days, notwithstanding any other provision of law or regulation, for the duration of the President invoking the Defense Production Act in response to COVID-19.
- Inclusion of sick pay for employees that must be quarantined or care for a family member with coronavirus, as expenses for which the loan can be forgiven. This will permit companies to receive funds for sick pay for employees that are already impacted by coronavirus versus waiting for a reimbursement from the federal government.
- The extension of the new loan relief period from March 1 – December 31, 2020, recognizing the length of the federal contract cycle. This will assist small business federal contractors to respond to RFPs.

In addition, we urge you to:

- Consider a provision for small government contractors under the new sick leave and/or FMLA expansion for employees that are out due to qualified reasons to be treated as billable as if they are still working under these contracts. This will enable employees to remain on the payroll and not negatively impact the company's cash flow and ability to satisfy operational obligations.

- Enable inclusion of expenses to modify work environments for employee distancing and implement employee transition to work at home as expenses for which the loan can be forgiven.
- For functions under federal contracts in which telework is not an option, consider expanding operational hours so that child care may be easier to accommodate and it would reduce the number of individuals in offices at the same time.

Finally, we ask that Congress focus on the efforts of getting businesses and their employees back to work as the crisis abates. With respect to federal government contracts, small businesses will need additional protections to ensure that federal agencies allow adequate time to ramp up employees and additional work requirements as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Thank you for your willingness to take bold steps to assist small businesses, especially federal contractors, during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP)