

HEALTH FORCE, RESILIENCE FORCE, JOBS TO FIGHT COVID-19 ACT

Original cosponsors: Senators Gillibrand, Bennet, Schatz, Markey, Van Hollen, Klobuchar, Blumenthal, Booker, Casey, Duckworth, Reed.

Summary: This public health jobs program is inspired by the Depression-era Works Progress Administration, which similarly tapped thousands of job seekers to help the nation recover from a sharp economic downturn. Health Force members will be recruited from and hired to work in their local communities, ensuring cultural competence and creating local jobs. They will perform vital tasks like vaccine outreach in the near term. In the long-term, they will build our public health capacity, improving quality of care and reducing hospitalization, especially for low-income and underserved communities. Meanwhile, Resilience Force members will provide a surge workforce for FEMA, broadening opportunities for unemployed Americans while supporting President-elect Biden's COVID-19 response plan. Members will assist with supply chain logistics, rebuilding COVID-safe infrastructure for schools and beyond, emergency procurement of medical, personal protective equipment, and testing supplies, widespread vaccination efforts, and more.

Health Force Illustrative Activities: Funded through CDC grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts, federal dollars will flow to State, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to hire, train, and retain local, trusted community members to serve in key public health roles.

Illustrative COVID-19 response and post-emergency response activities include:

- Supporting the administration of COVID-19 tests and vaccinations.
- Conducting contact tracing in a culturally competent, multilingual manner.
- Providing support that addresses social, economic, behavioral and preventive health needs for individuals affected by COVID-19.
- Expanding public health information sharing with community members & organizations.
- Helping communities address social, economic, behavioral, & preventive health needs.
- Sharing community-based information with State, local, and Tribal health departments to inform and improve health programming, especially for hard-to-reach communities.
- Promoting linkages with other health and social programs.

Resilience Force Illustrative Activities: Scalable over 3 years, federal dollars will be used to hire and train up to 62,000 additional FEMA Cadre of On-Call Response/Recovery (CORE) members to engage in COVID-19 and natural disaster relief efforts. An expanded CORE program will provide full-time job opportunities with living-wages and benefits to those suffering from the economic fallout of the pandemic. Illustrative COVID-19 response and post-emergency response activities include:

- Assisting with supply chain logistics and emergency procurement of medical, personal protective equipment, and testing supplies.
- Supporting the whole of government effort to vaccinate as many Americans as safely and quickly as possible.
- Building infrastructure to support safe-COVID facilities for public health, health care, schools, and beyond.
- Deploying to respond to any other emergency declaration – from hurricanes to wildfires.
- Providing ongoing support for our public health infrastructure to build back better and build resilience to protect communities against other future disasters.