“People’s Bailout”: How to Fund a Just Economic Recovery

Congress so far has allocated $2.5 trillion in emergency stimulus funding. Economic and climate justice advocates are pushing for distribution that will address immediate needs of communities, but also lay the groundwork for a more resilient and just economy. “This pandemic has unveiled the interdependent crises of classism and racism, economic decline, and climate destruction. COVID-19 is magnifying the ills of normalizing profits over people,” says a 350.org statement.

As of May, 50 members of Congress and hundreds of social change organizations had endorsed the #PeoplesBailout’s five principles:

1. **Health of all people is the top priority.**
   - Expanded federal funding for Medicaid
   - Expanded hospital capacity to underserved areas
   - Paid sick leave and paid family medical leave—no exceptions
   - Free and accessible testing, treatment, and protective equipment
   - Full funding for Indian Health Service and urban Indian health centers

2. **Relief is for communities and front-line workers.**
   - Loans maintain payroll and benefits
   - Funds tied to conditions that ensure fair employment opportunities for all
   - Not shareholders or corporate executives

3. **Funding gets directly to those who need it.**
   - Full funding for Indian Health Service
   - Sizable cash payments to every person
   - Larger payments to front-line workers and the poor
   - Increase food aid programs
   - Broaden unemployment insurance
   - Extend housing assistance, halt evictions and foreclosure
   - Expand childcare for working families
   - Relieve student debt
   - Stop water and electricity shutoffs
   - Everyone can vote by mail
   - Automatic voter registration
   - Continuance of government even without in-person sessions
   - Accurate 2020 Census

4. **Investment in a just, regenerative economy:**
   - Expand wind and solar power
   - Clean and affordable public transit
   - Weatherize buildings
   - Build and repair public housing
   - Manufacture clean energy goods
   - Ecological restoration
   - Regenerative agriculture led by family farmers
   - High-road labor standards

5. **Democratic processes are protected.**
   - Loans maintain payroll and benefits
   - Funds tied to conditions that ensure fair employment opportunities for all
   - Not shareholders or corporate executives
   - Full funding for Indian Health Service
   - Expanded hospital capacity to underserved areas
   - Paid sick leave and paid family medical leave—no exceptions
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Counter systemic inequities.

Tackle the climate crisis.

Create family-sustaining jobs.