



EXPLAINER

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Paving the Road to Recovery

Last updated June 24, 2020

Investing in our nation's infrastructure needs is more urgent than ever. American infrastructure was crumbling long before the COVID-19 pandemic. Now the economy is in ruins as well. [More than 44 million Americans](#) have filed for unemployment as many businesses across the country shuttered for good. Unemployment has spiked to its highest rate since the Great Depression — and is likely to [remain high for years](#). In its most recent projections, the Congressional Budget Office said it doesn't expect the economy to [fully recover until 2030](#).

Now is the time for a bold public investment in rebuilding our infrastructure and our economy. This will put people back to work when it is safe to return, spur consumer spending, and result in much-needed improvements to our roads, bridges, transit systems, schools, child care providers, drinking water, energy grid, broadband, hospitals, and Postal Service. A robust infrastructure package is exactly the downpayment we need on a strong recovery.

America's Infrastructure Crisis

We faced an infrastructure crisis long before anyone had heard of COVID-19.

- **Surface transportation:** In 2017, the American Society of Civil Engineers graded American infrastructure at a D+ and estimated that the U.S. faces a [\\$1.1 trillion deficit](#) in surface transportation investment.
- **Schools:** [Over half of public schools](#) needed to be repaired or improved.
- **Drinking water:** The Environmental Protection Agency estimated that the U.S. [needs to spend \\$473 billion](#) on our drinking water infrastructure to prevent more crises like the lead poisoning in Flint, Michigan.
- **Affordable housing:** In 2018, [nearly half of all renters](#) were rent-burdened, meaning that their rent was more than a third of their income. The affordable housing crisis is only getting worse, as home prices were [rising faster than wages](#) in 80 percent of U.S. housing markets before the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the need for action even more urgent.

- **Health care:** Hospitals [only have the capacity](#) to handle a 20 percent infection rate over a year, even assuming that half of beds are for COVID-19 alone. Without more funding, another surge in infections could overwhelm the health care system.
- **Schools:** Schools and child care facilities need additional funding to ensure their facilities can reopen safely.
- **Broadband:** [12 million children](#) lack internet access at home. Without broadband, remote learning is leaving poor and rural students behind.
- **Housing:** Families facing loss of income are struggling with rent more than ever. One in three apartment tenants [didn't pay April rent](#).

Moving Forward Act

On June 22, House committee leaders released [H.R. 2](#), the Moving Forward Act. The 5-year, \$1.5 trillion infrastructure proposal focuses on creating jobs, addressing the climate crisis, and reducing inequality in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The chart below lists investments by category.¹

Category	Authorization level
Transportation	\$500 billion
Schools	\$130 billion
Child care	\$10 billion
Affordable housing	\$100 billion
Drinking water	\$25 billion
Clean energy	\$70 billion
Broadband	\$100 billion
Health care	\$30 billion
Postal Service	\$25 billion

The Moving Forward Act also provides incentives for renewable energy and community investment. And it includes Buy America and labor protections to ensure that public investment in infrastructure creates good jobs for U.S. workers.

The Moving Forward Act significantly expands on the [Moving Forward Framework](#) released by House Democratic leaders on January 29, 2020. The initial Moving Forward Framework was a narrower, \$760 billion proposal.² The Moving Forward Act not only scaled up the total amount of investment but also added critical areas such as schools, child care, affordable housing, health care, and the Postal Service.

With infrastructure crumbling, millions of Americans out of work, and the current surface transportation bill expiring on September 30, 2020, Congress needs to pass bold, comprehensive infrastructure legislation without delay.

¹ The chart covers about \$1 trillion in infrastructure investments. It excludes funding and tax provisions not assigned a dollar amount in the initial [committee summary](#) of the bill.

² School infrastructure was incorporated into the Moving Forward Framework after its initial release, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi signaled future incorporation of affordable housing and other investments.