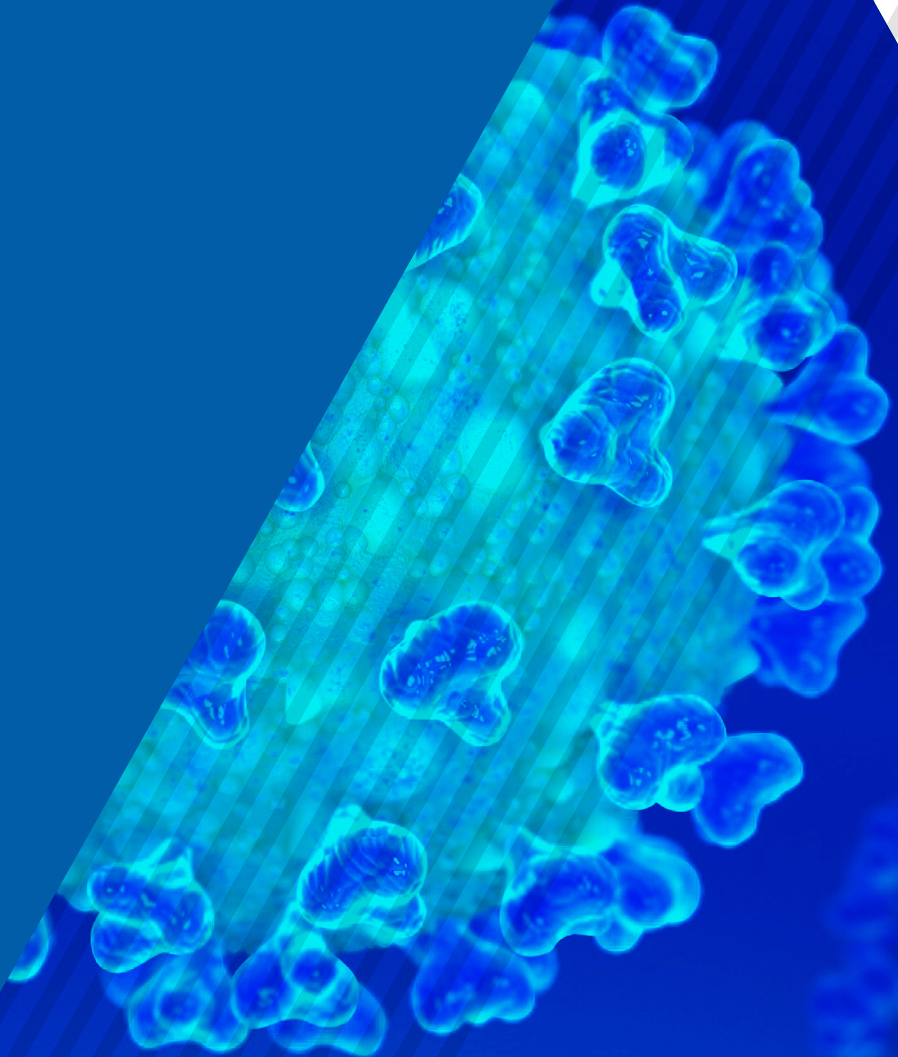




The Council
of State
Governments

CSG COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS



A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO



Dear State Officials:

The coronavirus pandemic became the first time in American history that all 50 states had presidential disaster declarations issued at the same time. That was just one of the unprecedented circumstances state government experienced in 2020. The pandemic, which brought on unimaginable suffering, tested state officials and the

capacity of state government to respond. But state governments proved themselves resilient, and state leaders worked tirelessly and creatively to address the needs of their citizens.

Many state employees worked in essential positions, placing themselves at greater risk to serve the greater good. CSG commends these heroes and is grateful for their example of selfless service at a time when their efforts were needed the most.

COVID-19 was the cause of death for hundreds of thousands of Americans, including several of our friends in state government office. We mourn their loss and honor their service as we continue to battle this disease and as we acknowledge the tremendous hardships and suffering brought about by this global pandemic.

While the full impact of the performance of state governments during the pandemic is yet to be known, there are some clear lessons learned so far. First, trust in government is enhanced by truth and transparency. Second, bipartisan cooperation at the federal and state levels provided rescue and recovery funding to help states provide essential services. Third, the best way to revive the economy is to first defeat the virus. And finally, rescue and recovery efforts are improved with robust interbranch and bipartisan collaboration and cooperation focused on the common good.

In March 2020, when the pandemic's impact was first being felt, CSG quickly pivoted, and, although in-person meetings were no longer possible, we strategically connected with state officials, the White House, Congress and the media. On March 17, 2020, CSG launched its online COVID-19 Resources for State Leaders. The website tracks and provides daily updates to state executive orders, state vaccinations plans, case numbers of COVID-19, state-by-state regulations, schedule of legislative sessions and special sessions, resources for legislatures, state courts and elections. Last year, the site saw 4,000-5,000 unique visitors each day and had over 10,000 unique visitors daily in the early weeks of the pandemic. For more information, please visit: web.csq.org/COVID19.

Throughout 2020, we researched and released insightful reports to help state officials make informed decisions. We convened thousands of legislators, legislative staff and executive

branch officials, providing them with forums to learn from each other. We leveraged our regions and the CSG Justice Center to provide focused expertise, and we emerged as a go-to resource on the hundreds of executive orders issued by states in response to COVID-19.

Under the leadership of our national and regional officers, CSG, our four regions and the CSG Justice Center stepped up to provide the states with the programs, services and knowledge needed to help them navigate complex public policy challenges and uncertain times. Regional annual meetings and the CSG National Conference were reimaged and presented virtually, reaching a broad audience of state officials with dozens of presentations on priority issues.

In 2021, we will focus on the next phases of battling the virus and on jump-starting economic recovery. CSG will advocate for additional flexible state funding from federal sources. We will work to optimize the distribution and administration of vaccines in every state and partner closely with federal agencies as schools reopen.

Additionally, considering the projected late release of census data, CSG is prepared to help states during the constitutionally mandated redistricting and reapportionment this year.

CSG was founded in 1933, the worst year of the Great Depression. We have flourished as an organization of the states in both good and bad times because state officials value a nonpartisan, data-driven, consensus-based approach to public policy analysis. We believe now, as we did in 1933, that for our democracy to survive, state government must solve problems. We know that solving problems becomes easier when each state can learn from the experience of every state. CSG resiliency is born of the many dedicated public servants that help lead CSG and determine our priorities. We are grateful for their continued trust and their active participation.

I am proud of all of the ways CSG responded to requests for help from state officials in 2020. But for CSG, like the states, there is still much hard work to do. While we are hopeful some since of "normal" will be restored in 2021, we remain dedicated to helping state officials defeat the virus, restore the economy and use the lessons learned from this pandemic to build a better future for all of us.

If we can ever be of assistance, please reach out. We work for you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Adkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'D'.

DAVID ADKINS
CSG Executive Director/CEO



ABOUT US

The Council of State Governments (CSG) is the nation's largest nonpartisan organization serving all three branches of state elected and appointed officials. The mission of CSG is to champion excellence in state government and the organization executes this mission through four major platforms:

CSG National Office

The CSG national office, located in Lexington, Kentucky, houses many national projects, publications and special initiatives that foster collaboration and community between elected and appointed officials from across the country and the six U.S. territories. The CSG national office also houses the CSG Center of Innovation, the CSG National Center for Interstate Compacts, Capitol Ideas magazine and the CSG Henry Toll Fellowship.

CSG Regional Offices

CSG East, CSG Midwest, CSG South and CSG West

The regional offices of CSG allow state officials to connect on shared issues that are geographically based (e.g.: federal lands, water rights, agriculture, border relations, etc.). CSG regional offices also host conferences, in-state visits and leadership development programs that allow officials to regionally network. Within these offices, CSG also houses the Eastern Regional Conference (ERC), Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC) and the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC).

CSG Justice Center

The CSG Justice Centers bring together state and local officials, along with subject experts, to discuss challenges and best practices in policy areas directly related to issues of public safety and justice.

CSG Affiliate Organizations

CSG is home to 10 affiliate organizations that also serve as partners for many of its projects:

- American Probation and Parole Association
- Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies
- Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission
- National Association of State Facilities Administrators
- National Association of State Personnel Executives
- National Association of State Technology Directors
- National Emergency Management Association
- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
- State International Development Organizations
- Women In Government

Through these four platforms, CSG is able to offer unparalleled national, regional and policy-specific opportunities for officials to network, collaborate, problem-solve and forge life-long partnerships that advance the common good for all states.

Like many legislatures, businesses and organizations across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has required CSG to develop new and innovative ways to deliver programs and information to state leaders so that they can continue serving constituents during one of the most challenging times in American history.

The following report contains an overview of the products and services offered to the states from March - December 2020 by the CSG national office, the CSG regional offices, the CSG Justice Center and CSG affiliates.

VIRTUAL CONVENINGS

Shortly after the pandemic hit the states in March 2020, CSG national and regional governing authorities met to make determinations on in-person conferences and programs. It was concluded that in order to ensure the health and safety of all CSG members, attendees and staff, all in-person meetings and conferences needed to be canceled.

However, because CSG knew the states needed timely information, analysis and support more than ever, virtual programming was quickly introduced across national and regional platforms. The CSG national and regional governing boards

met virtually over the coming months and educational programming and working groups continued their work despite state leaders' and partners' inability to travel. CSG West and the CSG national office held full virtual conferences replacing planned in-person convenings.

With quick action and innovative content transition, over 6,000 state officials and staff participated in 2020 virtual programs provided by the CSG national office, the CSG Justice Center and the four CSG regional offices.

Over 6,000 state officials and staff joined CSG at online events including:

2,074	attendees at CSG national office virtual programs
924	attendees at CSG Justice Center virtual programs
1,515	attendees at CSG East (includes CSG Eastern Regional Conference/ERC) virtual programs
759	attendees at CSG Midwest (includes CSG Midwestern Legislative Conference/MLC) virtual programs
411	attendees at CSG South (includes CSG Southern Legislative Conference/SLC) virtual programs
692	attendees at CSG West virtual programs

The four CSG regions hosted virtual programs, including:



Specialized State Leader Multi-Day Convenings in Response to COVID-19

CSG MEDICAID LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

CSG virtually convened its annual Medicaid Leadership Academy Sept. 23-25, 2020. The program, normally held in Washington, D.C., was held over the course of three days and focused on the impacts that COVID-19 has had on state Medicaid programs. The policy academy brought together 39 legislative health committee chairs and vice chairs and other jurisdictional leaders.

CSG FORECAST FOR LEGISLATIVE LEADERS

The CSG 2021 Forecast for Legislative Leaders series featured eight roundtable discussions with leading experts brought together to equip state legislative leaders with insights and data-driven information to lead in a time of unparalleled crisis. The roundtables provided chamber leaders the ability to connect with intellectual authorities on a variety of topics including fiscal issues, elections and legislative trends. As states continue to lead amidst COVID-19, legislative leaders are beginning to ponder long-term fiscal impacts and how to rebuild post-pandemic.

CSG EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

The Council on Communities of Color (CCC) is a self-identified member committee that provides a forum for state decision-makers to examine the unique challenges facing communities of color. In 2020, led by New York state Sen. Kevin Parker and Maryland state Del. Joseline Peña-Melnyk, this group took on critical topics related to COVID-19 which had disproportionately impacted communities of color. Members gathered virtually to share best practices and identify solutions to identified issues during sessions that included:

- Black Business: What's the Survival Plan?
- By the Numbers: The Use of Data in Mitigating Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice System
- COVID Communications: How to Talk with Your Communities During a Pandemic

The CSG national office replaced its annual in-person national conference with its first-ever virtual national conference. **The CSG National Conference Reimagined** spanned Oct. 16-Dec. 18, 2020 and included:

50 VIRTUAL
SESSIONS

OVER 90
virtual programming
hours

1,020 STATE OFFICIAL PARTICIPANTS
representing 50 states and three U.S. territories

CSG West held its 73rd Annual Meeting virtually in 2020, canceling its planned in-person program. Held July 29-30, this virtual event featured:

33 leadership development and public
policy virtual sessions

TWO KEYNOTE
SPEAKERS

THREE VIRTUAL
RECEPTIONS

527 REGISTRANTS INCLUDING
267 participating state officials

THE CSG CENTER OF INNOVATION

Established in 2018, the CSG Center of Innovation is a national resource on technical assistance and public policy analysis spanning a multitude of priority areas including workforce development, diversity and inclusion, voting, state budgets, occupational licensing and health care. The expertise of over 30 CSG Center of Innovation staff was a go-to resource as COVID-19 impacted all states and U.S. Territories in 2020.

Prior to the pandemic, CSG Center of Innovation researchers were providing information, analyses, and implementation tools and techniques on issues that have proven critical as states respond to the pandemic.

• Workforce Development

The unimpeded movement of professionals, particularly in health-related fields, is essential to ensuring efficient and effective access to care and services. CSG assists states in creating solutions created by variation in state occupational licensing policies. CSG's National Center for Interstate Compacts (NCIC) is an information clearinghouse; provider of training and technical assistance; and facilitator of state review, revision, and creation of new interstate compacts. The National Center for Interstate Compacts, a leading voice on occupational licensing in the states, released two papers to provide state officials guidance on, "Assessing COVID-19 Occupational Licensing Policy Actions and Occupational Licensing State COVID-10 Responses." These reports examined actions by the states offered policy options for state to consider post-pandemic. Resources can be found at licensing.csg.org.

• Diversity and Inclusion

Understanding the specific needs of workers with disabilities is critical to sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce as private businesses and public agencies adapt to remote work. CSG studies policies and practices that improve the quality and quantity of employment and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The lessons of accessible and equitable workplaces is universal.

• Voting

The pandemic accelerated efforts to ensure secure and accessible remote voting processes. The CSG Overseas Voting Initiative has long assisted military personnel and other Americans living overseas who face unique challenges in exercising their right to vote. The initiative provides state and local election officials with objective analysis and best practice guidance to strengthen the protection, transmission, and verification of absentee ballots. Ahead of the November 2020 election, the OVI Working Group also produced a series of papers on ballot duplication. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, as part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, cited the work on its Rumor Control site in Fall 2020.

The CSG Center of Innovation continually updates its warehouse of analyses for state officials.

Delivery of Customized Research for State Leaders

CSG has augmented its existing strengths by conducting efficient and effective research in response to a multitude of state official and staff requests for information, analysis and advice. In 2020, much of the research focused on or was attentive to the impact of the pandemic across policy areas. Recent topics:

ADMINISTRATION

- Ballot processing timing
- Electronic voting in state legislative chambers
- Police qualified immunity
- Remote participation in legislatures
- School library funding
- State public servant compensation rates

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Childcare facility regulation
- Corporate childcare tax credits
- Economic development agency composition
- Landlord tenant relief
- Public transportation and COVID-19
- Remote learning
- State regulations on childcare adult to child ratios and group sizes
- Tax incentive programs for businesses

FINANCE

- Short-term debt options

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Equal education amendments and legislation
- Health insurance
- Long-term care facilities during COVID-19
- Photo EBT regulations
- Urban blight legislation
- Vaccine scheduling protocol

If you have a research request or technical assistance need, please contact Elizabeth Whitehouse, CSG Chief Public Policy Officer.

Assessing States Fiscal Risk and Resilience

The CSG Center of Innovation, with research and analysis support from accounting firm KPMG LLP, examined near-term budget impacts, the economic risk of ongoing pandemic effects and shutdowns, the resiliency of states to respond and strategies for fiscal recovery. In July 2020, CSG released its findings in the report, "COVID-19: Fiscal Impact to States and Strategies for Recovery." Any state can request an updated analysis based on current metrics.

The analysis assessed the pandemic's impact on each state's fiscal well-being with a series of metrics:

RISKS

- Expected near-term general fund revenue decline
- Medicaid expense increases through the end of the fiscal year ended in 2021
- Weeks of unemployment benefits funding remaining as of the start of the current recession
- Industry sector-based risk factor
- Pension investment return risk

RESILIENCE

- Rainy-day fund balance as a percent of pre-COVID-19 FY2020 estimated revenue
- Debt service coverage ratio
- Pension funding coverage
- Unemployment trust solvency value
- Average state Medicaid expenses per enrollee
- Change in inflation-adjusted primary and secondary education (K-12) spending levels per student relative to the previous recession

2021 CSG Priorities to Aid State Recovery

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic created an abrupt disruption to state revenues that resulted in immediate implications for state leaders charged with oversight of fiscal, health, education and public safety systems. As the pandemic arrived stateside, two CSG National Task Forces were already underway in a two-year effort to examine the future of work and state health care systems. Task force members and partners were able to double down on their examination of these issues, such as capacity, preparedness and resiliency, and also pivot

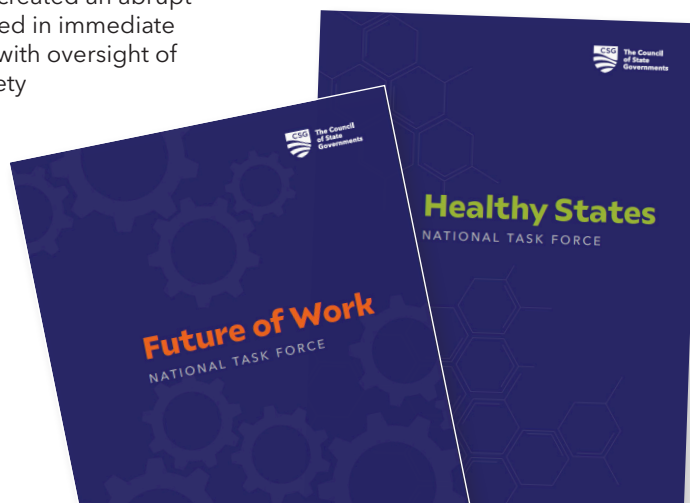
as instant innovations in American work life and health care became new norms across the states. In December, these two national task forces released their key findings in two national reports.

To assist states with recovery and rebuilding, CSG will expand upon this work and establish a new Healthy States National Task Force in 2021. This national task force will address major public policy issues arising from the pandemic in 2021-22. CSG will bring together 60 state officials plus private sector partners to identify challenges faced during this unprecedented crisis. The Healthy States National Task Force has established four sub-committees to help develop public policy resources and solutions for state leaders in order to answer the question: "What makes a healthy state?"

- Fiscal Health
- Human Health
- Economic and Workforce Health
- Civic Health

Examining States Mental Health Policy Needs and Developing Tools to Address

In 2021, the CSG Center of Innovation will develop a Mental Health State Resource Guide. The Guide will provide research and tools to assist state policymakers in improving state mental health policy through the adoption of best practices and effective solutions. This project also will examine the impact of the pandemic on mental health outcomes across the U.S. The four topics of research and analysis are social isolation, improving maternal mental health, improving the social determinants of health, and ensuring mental health insurance parity.





CSG AFFILIATES IN ACTION

CSG Affiliates are national organizations comprised of state officials that share ideas and combine efforts to accomplish mutual goals. In 2020, our mutual goal was to empower and embolden the state officials served by each CSG affiliate in their fight against the novel coronavirus. Ten CSG Affiliates contribute specialized expertise, information, resources and issues to the overall mission of CSG, and their expertise brought to bear herculean efforts on behalf of the state this year. Through a year of multiple national crises, CSG Affiliates transitioned state operations and personnel to virtual and remote offices, assisted the western states as they fought wildfires for months and served as a coordinating point as states deployed emergency response, oversaw the release of inmates from state corrections facilities due to the threat of the virus and secured personal protective equipment.

CSG Affiliate Provides Mutual Assistance PPE to States

The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) is a CSG Affiliate that houses the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). This compact is the cornerstone of the nation's mutual aid system. EMAC assists during governor-declared states of emergency by allowing states to send personnel, equipment and commodities to assist with response and recovery efforts in other states. States can also transfer services – such as shipping blood from a disaster-impacted lab to a lab in another state – and conduct virtual missions, including GIS mapping. EMAC establishes a firm legal foundation for sharing

resources between states: once the conditions for providing assistance to a requesting state have been set, the terms constitute a legally binding agreement. The compact solves the problems of liability and responsibilities of cost and allows for credentials, licenses and certifications to be honored across state lines. Since ratification in 1996, all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands have become EMAC members.

NEMA and EMAC have been critical partners to the states through many efforts to combat COVID-19. EMAC facilitates rapid, collective responses to disasters by working around the bureaucratic wrangling that is typically involved in any agreement between governments. It allows for workers' credentials to be recognized across state lines and frees responding states from legal or financial burdens associated with providing resources and services to the affected states.

On April 9, 2020, NEMA announced that California, via EMAC, planned to send 500 ventilators to support those states facing shortages due to COVID-19. Recipient states include New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Maryland, Delaware, Nevada and the District of Columbia. Additionally, two other states were able to share personal protective equipment (PPE) and a public health incident management teams to other states harder hit by the pandemic. Beyond the sharing of PPE and medical equipment, EMAC's provisions for telehealth practice are allowing states to assist one another in meeting increased demand for medical services. In July, NEMA executed a national survey of the states to assess status of respective stockpiles in the states.

CSG JUSTICE CENTER

The CSG Justice Center is a \$24 million policy division with 100 staff who work daily with and on behalf of the states on criminal justice and public safety public policy. CSG established its Justice Center to help policymakers across government answer key questions about the effectiveness of their criminal and juvenile justice systems and the impact of state investments to reduce crime and improve outcomes. Since then, the CSG Justice Center has worked in every state to further bipartisan, research-driven efforts to increase public safety and strengthen communities. The CSG Justice Center responded to states' needs related to corrections and public safety challenges in the face of COVID-19. These efforts include:

- Working with state correctional leaders to model the impact of COVID-19 in their prison systems and inform decision-makers
- Tracking data across states on COVID-19 testing and positive cases by facility to help correctional leaders understand the variability in rate of spread
- Advising states on protocols and practices related to the release of inmates in order to support this population and ensure public safety. In May, the CSG Justice Center and National Sheriffs Association released the Preparing People for Reentry checklist for correctional facilities to utilize as they quickly moved to release large numbers of inmates
- Providing guidance to states and localities on homelessness amidst the pandemic

As states look to short-term shortfalls and long-term opportunities to rebuild their states stronger, the CSG Justice Center launched Justice Counts in November 2020, a new initiative supported by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance. Justice Counts is designed to help policymakers and criminal justice practitioners make better decisions using data. It is a national, consensus-building initiative bringing together an unprecedented coalition of state and local leaders to enhance policymakers' decisions by making criminal justice data less disjointed, timelier and more actionable. The initiative centers on intense collaboration to provide policymakers with data develop a set of criminal justice metrics that are attainable and impactful for any state or agency.


Justice Counts has established a large network of partners with connections in all 50 states and thousands of counties and cities across the U.S., representing key officials in the areas of policymaking, law enforcement, courts, corrections, behavioral health and more. Justice Counts Partners include: American Jail Association, American Probation and Parole Association, Correctional Leaders Association, CNA, International Association of Chiefs of Police, Justice Management Institute, Measures for Justice, National Associations of Counties Research Foundation, National Association of State Budget Officers, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), NASMHPD Research Institute, National Criminal Justice Association, National Center for State Courts, National Conference of State Legislatures, National District Attorneys Association, National Governors Association, National Legal Aid & Defender Association, RAND Corporation, Recidiviz and University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute.



FEDERAL ADVOCACY

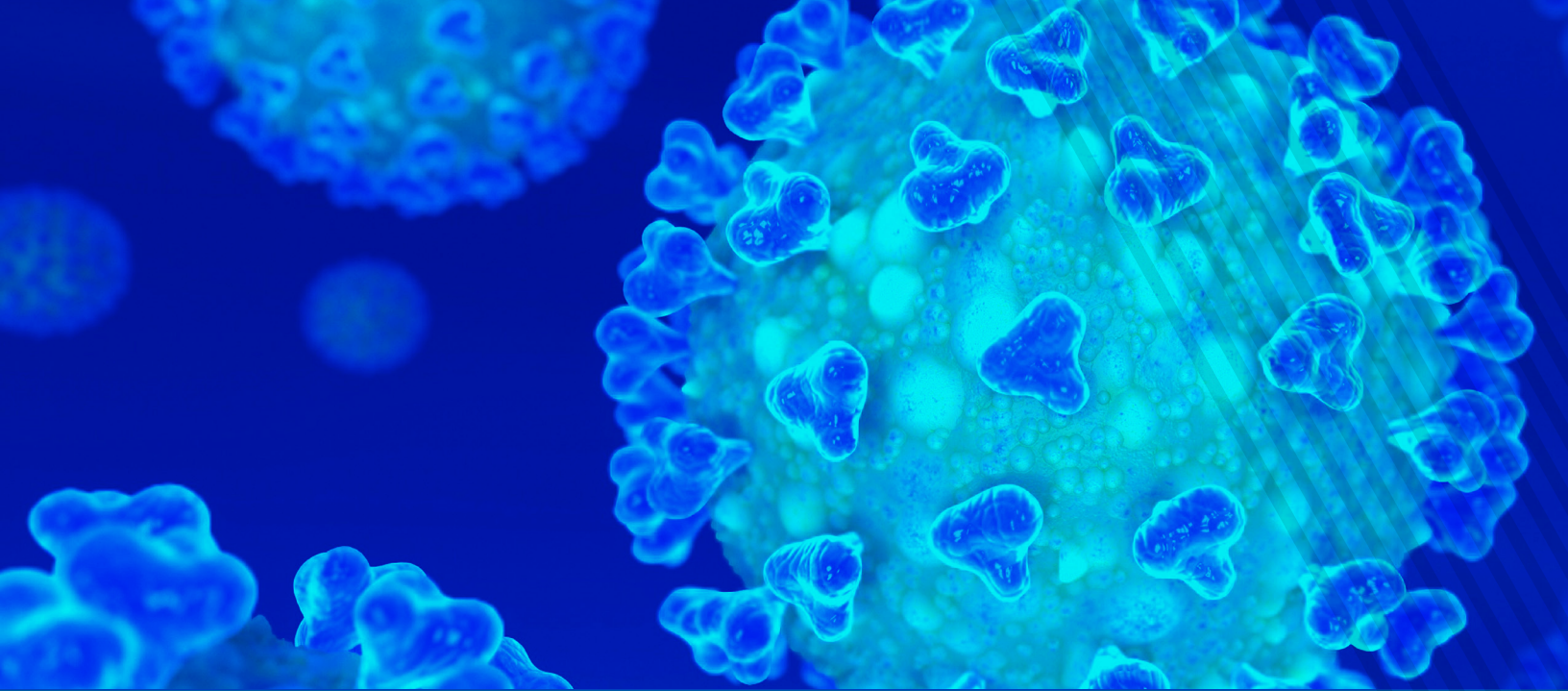
CSG has been a leading voice in our nation's capital for state and local governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. CSG continues to work closely with our partner state and local government organizations, including the National Governors Association (NGA) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), to amplify our voice and to advocate on our member-driven priorities. CSG has sent 14 letters to congressional and administration officials related to the COVID response, including advocating for flexible funding for states, for emergency management funding, for access to broadband and for access to healthcare and critical medical supplies.

In April 2020, CSG Center of Innovation staff surveyed state Finance and Appropriations Committee leaders from 33 states on projected fiscal impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. CSG used data from the survey to advocate for states congressionally and with the federal executive branch on funding and relief efforts. The survey results also helped CSG hone policy and research efforts as we provided rapid-response resources to state elected and appointed officials leading during this difficult time.



“As a nation, we can and must do better, and through negotiation and compromise, our elected representatives can meet the moment and create conditions for a strong recovery.”

– David Adkins, CSG executive director/CEO and fellow Big 7 Organization CEOs in a CNN Opinion piece.



CSG IN THE NEWS

Providing subject matter expertise and insight, CSG appeared in news outlets across the country in 2020, including in:

- The Wall Street Journal
- The New York Times
- CNN
- Newsweek
- MSN
- The Boston Globe
- The Lexington Herald-Leader

CONCLUSION

After the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported in Washington in January 2020, the virus spread rapidly through every state resulting in impacts to every community and industry. States experienced devastation on public health, economy and state finances and were faced with unprecedented struggles in their efforts to combat disease infection rates and address concerns of overall fiscal viability, unemployment, education and more.

The Council of State Governments responded rapidly, instantly shifting and transforming planned programming to virtual platforms and creating resources for states so that our members could have the information they needed to help their commu-

nities at their fingertips. At its national office, the CSG Justice Center and in all four of its regions, CSG created assistance for state leaders as they navigated challenging times in state governance.

As 2021 gets underway, CSG stands ready to continue assistance to the states in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization remains committed to delivering information, assistance and collaborative opportunities to each and every state official in the country. For questions or more information regarding any CSG program or service, please contact membership@csg.org or (800) 800-1910.



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