

23 March 2020

The Events Industry Council, in collaboration with our 33 members and the business event professionals we represent, greatly appreciate this Government's commitment to provide relief and recovery during the COVID-19 crisis.

As you consider assistance for the hospitality industry, we strongly urge you to take an expansive view of this sector to include events, conferences, exhibitions and associations.

EIC represents more than 110,000 professionals and 19,500 firms and venues involved in the events industry. We have a diverse community, which extends beyond hotels, airlines and restaurants to include countless support services such as, but not limited to, destination marketing organisations, incentive travel companies, independent event and show organisers, intermediaries, exhibition services, decorators, speakers, temporary staffing, and transportation. Our people, businesses, associations, meetings and exhibitions are key drivers to the economy.

Globally, we contribute an estimated \$1.5 trillion USD of annual GDP and 1.07 trillion in direct spend. We support 26 million direct and indirect jobs globally. People depend on that spending – and on those jobs.

Today, millions of individuals working in our sector are being furloughed. The entire events industry has been forced to sharply curtail, even eliminate entirely, their activities. Businesses are faltering. The lights have been darkened and we are uncertain when – or if – they will come back on. Our members are in distress about their ability to make ends meet.

Thousands of large-, medium- and small-sized companies that engage in conceptualizing, organising and executing events that help drive our economy are on the verge of collapse. But this is not just about the immediate pain of closures. The people, companies and associations that we represent are the same ones who will play a key role longer term in our recovery toward financial and social health.

The events industry, through these various association and corporate bodies, is the largest provider of professional development and adult education. This has a direct impact on today's workforce and our future workforce.

For these reasons, our member organisations and companies should be eligible for any and all relief – e.g. deferring tax payments, payroll tax reductions, tax credits to retain employees, loan guarantees, loan forbearance, cancellation of debts through executive action etc. – that is provided for the hospitality industry.

We are a unified voice that champions the value of face-to-face global events, conferences, meetings, tradeshows and exhibitions. We know and understand our role in the global economy as well as the role we play in leaving a lasting legacy of social impact. We are prepared and eager to serve in this role, but we need your help to keep us in a position to be able to do that. The events industry will play a critical role in the road to recovery, and we need immediate support.

On behalf of the Events Industry Council's member organisations,

