

CAN PAYMENTS TO INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS BE INCLUDED IN CALCULATING PAYROLL COSTS UNDER THE PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM? UNCERTAINTY EXISTS.

On March 31, 2020, the Small Business Administration (SBA) posted guidance on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). This guidance follows the passage of the CARES Act, and the guidance includes the PPP loan application, which can be found [here](#) on the U.S. Department of the Treasury website, along with information sheets for [borrowers](#) and [lenders](#).

Based on the application and the information sheets, uncertainty exists as to whether borrowers can include payments to independent contractors when calculating payroll costs (as defined in the CARES Act) on their PPP applications. Although the text of the CARES Act appears to contemplate including payments to independent contractors in payroll costs, the additional guidance suggests that payments to independent contractors from a borrower **will not** be included in calculating payroll costs. However, the SBA has not yet provided definitive guidance on this issue. Accordingly, borrowers should consult their advisors, including their bank, when calculating payroll costs and should specify in their PPP loan application how their payroll costs were calculated.

The attorneys at O'Neil, Cannon, Hollman, DeJong and Laing are closely monitoring all guidance released from the SBA. For questions or further information relating to the Paycheck Protection Program, please speak to your regular OCHDL contact, or the author of this article, attorney Jason Scoby.