

Data on Needs of Families in Alameda County

With COVID-19 threatening the health and safety of Alameda County's inhabitants, community organizations are struggling to keep pace with the needs of families navigating historic levels of job loss, child care and school closures, health care challenges, housing insecurity, and more.

- Currently, it has been confirmed that **230 out of approximately 3,000 licensed child care providers** are open to provide child care for essential workers.
- **24 agencies surveyed by First 5 serving nearly 16,000 families reported critical need among families** for food, baby formula, and other goods, including diapers, wipes, and cleaning supplies.
- Many schools in already struggling neighborhoods, especially those with students from undocumented families such as at [Esperanza Elementary in Oakland](#), are reporting **high rates of unemployment and lack of access to basic necessities** among their families, some as high as 80%.
- Of the over 100 Spanish Speaking families surveyed in the City of Newark recently, **54.4% reported being stressed and concerned and 54% reported they are worried about paying their bills.**
- Parent Voices Oakland surveyed over 300 families over the past couple of weeks and **48% were concerned about access to food and 51% were concerned about paying rent or their mortgage.**
- The [2019 Alameda County Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#) showed that **44% of children in Alameda County are fully ready for kindergarten.** From our study, we know that family financial stability is the greatest predictor of kindergarten readiness.
- **4 in 10 of Alameda County households with children earned below the California Needs Calculator** in 2018 and 37,000 families have an income under \$25,000 during the years 2013-2017.
- **56% of children in Alameda County have a foreign-born parent** and **45% of households speak a language other than English.**
- **More data on families in our [2018-19 Annual Report](#).**

First 5 Alameda County COVID-19 Related Policy Priorities

Economic

Immediate

- **Strengthen and maintain housing stabilization, food, and basic needs** supports, including the provision of essential supplies, like diapers, baby wipes, formula, and hand sanitizer. Rectify supply chain issues between cities, counties and distribution sites. And support the streamlining of purchase approvals and fast track reimbursements.
- Support the continuance of **protections for immigrant families** in Gov. Newsom's Executive [Order N-50-20](#).

First 5 Association State Advocacy Day 2020: COVID-19 Policy Priorities, Local Need, and Response

- Continue **foreclosure forbearance and eviction moratoriums** for families and childcare providers.
- An estimated **2.1 million noncustodial parents in the child support program across the country may never receive the full direct payment of their \$1,200 stimulus check**, instead going to federal tax offsets to pay child support arrears. While many of these collections will be forwarded to custodial families, a large portion will offset state debt. We urge you to use your authority and direct the specific state debt funding to noncustodial parents who are currently excluded from payments to support themselves and their children.

Long Term

- Help immigrants shut out of federal recovery efforts by creating a state-provided **recovery rebate for ITIN filers as well as a wage replacement fund for immigrants** who don't qualify for unemployment insurance.
- This crisis has made us more acutely aware of the services that keep families strong, and it has also exposed already existing deep inequities, and made them worse. In the last recession, the safety net, child care and family support issues took substantial hits in funding, decimating systems that keep communities afloat. We must continue **to invest in the safety net, child care, family strengthening, and healthy development** to pull the economy out of the coming recession.
- Encourage an official **debrief of county emergency response**, and city/county emergency coordination.

Child Care

Immediate

- California is earmarked to receive \$339 million in Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds under the federal CARES Act. Gov. Newsom recently announced that \$50 million will be released to support child care for essential workers and Alameda County received over \$1 million. We urge the state to **distribute the rest of the CCDBG funds to support our essential workforce and not use these funds to backfill.**

Ongoing/Longer Term

- COVID 19 will **impact the school readiness of younger children** and a recession will have lasting impact on family and community well-being. Families who were suffering economic hardship before the crisis are disproportionately impacted; a renewed commitment to investing in under resourced communities, and equity in policies is essential.
- Allow for **better flexibility and responsiveness** of the social services system to community needs.

Ongoing Strategic Partnership

- Partnership with local financial institutions to **support child care providers** in accessing small business supports.
- Continue to **support First 5** and its role in bolstering the early childhood system of care.