

## Making the Case for Federal COVID-19 Recovery Funds for Children from Birth to Age 5

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a huge strain on families with young children due to family health concerns, ongoing stress, and job loss and underemployment. As part of the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund in the American Rescue Plan (ARP), \$45.6 billion will be provided in direct aid to metropolitan cities. Cities in Alameda County are expected to receive the following estimate amounts.<sup>1</sup>

Jurisdiction	Millions
Dublin	12.20
Emeryville	2.27
Newark	9.25
Alameda	28.95
Berkeley	68.26
Fremont	42.17
Hayward	38.23
Oakland	192.08
Pleasanton	8.53
San Leandro	19.15
<b>TOTAL to Cities and Towns in Alameda County</b>	<b>421.10</b>
County Allocation to Alameda County	324.14
<b>TOTAL Expected for Cities, Towns, and Alameda County</b>	<b>745.24</b>



This is a critical time to engage local representatives to document need, present consensus ideas, and be a bridge between community and government. Child care, school readiness, and family supports—including basic needs—are critical areas that need immediate funding to mitigate the ongoing crisis. In Alameda County:

- There are about 113,700 children under age 6 and approximately 1 in 10 children under age 5 lives below the Federal Poverty Level.
- Families are in economic distress and struggling to meet basic needs, particularly families of color.
- ✎ Since the start of the pandemic, the Alameda County Community Food Bank has seen a doubling of residents experiencing food insecurity, with a reported 1.2 million pounds of food distributed monthly.<sup>2</sup> National surveys, have estimated 1 in 4 children are experiencing hunger.
- ✎ Black households take home roughly 1/3 the income of White households after rent.<sup>3</sup>

Outlined below are recommendations where these local one-time funds can be used to help support families with children age 0-5 that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 emergency. For more about First 5's policy priorities, please see our [2021 Policy Agenda](#).



**Direct Supports for Child Care Providers:** The Alameda County child care field has [lost an estimated \\$18 million per month](#) due to closures and under enrollment, and it is operating at 60% capacity.<sup>4 5</sup> Safe and stable child care is critical to keeping kids learning, parents earning, and our economy thriving. Additional economic support is needed to support this essential field, which underpins our economic recovery ahead.

<sup>1</sup> House Committee on Oversight and Reform, *American Rescue Plan*: <https://oversight.house.gov/budget-reconciliation>

<sup>2</sup> The Mercury News, *Opinion: Bay Area food bank numbers tell a sobering story* <https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/12/23/opinion-hunger-in-a-tale-of-two-cities/>

<sup>3</sup> Advancement Project Race Counts data. <https://www.racecounts.org/county/alameda/>

<sup>4</sup> Department of Social Services, *Facility Closures and New Licenses Between March 2020 and January 2021, and Net Loss or Gain of Facilities by County as of January 31, 2021*: <https://app.box.com/s/hsqbgqptmjer2u0cdp5nrc5ic4tqat4>

<sup>5</sup> First 5 Alameda County, *Alameda County Child Care Data*: <http://www.first5alameda.org/files/AC%20Child%20Care%20Data%20Feb%202021.pdf>



**Family Basic Needs:** Families in Alameda County need support meeting basic needs, particularly families of color.

**CHILD HUNGER.** Fund food outreach and distribution, including through child care providers.

***ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO REDUCE HOUSEHOLD DEBT OR EXPENSES, INCLUDING:***

**DIAPERS.** Fund diaper distribution programs. Diapers are an essential need for families with young children, yet [1 in 3 struggled to afford](#) them prior to the pandemic. Diapers cost \$80-\$100 dollars per month for one child. Families cannot leave their children with child care providers and cannot go to work without clean diapers.

**UTILITIES.** Support utility and debt relief related to utilities. Advance policies that protect families from negative changes to their credit score due to inability to pay for utilities during the pandemic.

**DIRECT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.** Provide fast and direct economic assistance for families, particularly those that have been most impacted by the pandemic and those left out of federal aid.



**Family & Community Leadership**

**BASE BUILDING & PARENT LEADERSHIP.** Allocate funding toward supporting parent- and caregiver-led organizations that proactively center and prioritize families and caregivers with an equity lens to build solutions our community needs to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NEIGHBORHOOD APPROACH.** Fund place-based approaches to family navigation, addressing basic needs, and fostering neighborhood conditions that will help all families thrive.



**Family Health & Wellbeing**

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.** Support children and families with accessible culturally appropriate services in their community. Mental health is a pressing need in communities that have been severely impacted by COVID.

**PRENATAL AND 0-3 PROGRAMMING.** Fund services such as doulas, peer-to-peer parent groups, navigation support to resources focused on African American and Asian Pacific Islander communities given maternal and child health disparities.

**PROMOTORES DE SALUD.** Allocate funding for [promotores de salud](#) who are trusted leaders in the community and have been essential in mitigating the impact of the pandemic by providing critical resources to families that experience additional barriers.



**This list of needs is not exhaustive, and your community may have additional recommendations for investments to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.**

The Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund included in the ARP provides our cities and county the opportunity to bolster the social safety net for young children and families, build infrastructure, and support parental leadership across our communities. For more information, support, or with questions please contact Diana Garcia, First 5 Alameda County, Policy and Data Analyst [Diana.Garcia@first5alameda.org](mailto:Diana.Garcia@first5alameda.org).