

Talking Points on County Funding Needs

- California's counties are facing unprecedented demands on public health and critical safety net services at the same time as our ability to fund them is rapidly depleting.
- Counties cannot continue to meet unprecedented demands in public health, emergency response, and support for our communities without additional immediate federal funds. Reserves are being depleted to protect our residents but budget decisions must be made now and will impact the very services most in need.
- California Counties are the frontline for the COVID-19 pandemic response and need bipartisan funding support to protect critical services in our communities and fuel economic recovery.
- California's counties will be absolutely critical in kick-starting the economy. California won't be able to recover if county public health departments can't access testing and coordinate trained workers to track and isolate cases as restrictions are lifted. The same goes for the much needed social services and health workers protecting the at-risk elderly, youth, and disabled populations, while also providing shelter and services to those experiencing homelessness.
- Federal funding is needed now to ensure County public health departments can adequately monitor COVID-19 as California reopens. We need funding for the frontline workers, for sheriffs who protect public safety and health, social workers securing the hotel rooms for those experiencing homelessness, and behavioral health staff to respond to and help all Californians in need.
- County eligibility workers are working around the clock to address the millions of Californians suddenly in need of food assistance, medical care, and financial resources. County social workers are conducting outreach and wellness checks on older adults and continuing to respond to reports of child abuse and elder abuse to protect our most vulnerable individuals. This work cannot continue without additional immediate federal funds.

Major Arguments & Rebuttals

Claim: CARES Act provided funding for counties and solved local issues

Response: California's counties need Federal aid and their needs are immediate. CARES did not come close to bridging the funding gap facing California's Counties. Less than a third of California's 58 counties (16, 27 %) received funding in the CARES Act via the Coronavirus Relief Fund, and that funding is highly restrictive. Every California County is on the front line of responding to the COVID-19 crisis and needs immediate, flexible, and direct relief for both expenses and lost revenues.

Claim: State and locals mismanaged finances, have huge reserves

Response: Even counties with AAA Bond Ratings are experiencing immediate financial strain. The longer-term financial consequences of the COVID-19 crisis will play out over the next 6-18 months while counties are spending what reserves they may have to combat COVID-19 and protect the public's health right now. This is unsustainable. Counties are facing unprecedented demands on public health and critical safety net services at the same time as our ability to fund them is rapidly depleting

Claim: Federal aid for Counties will take away any incentives for Counties/States to re-open our economies

Response: There is no greater concern for the health and safety of our California's communities. Aid for county governments is good for our local economies since county governments spend money locally with our workforce, vendors and small businesses. County governments need this federal aid in order to continue providing the essential public health and safety net services that protect our elderly and children, help small businesses and unemployed workers, and will play a big role in kick-starting the economy with infrastructure projects, among others.

Additional Talking Points by Topic

County Services

- County governments provide essential public health and safety net services that protect the elderly and children, help small businesses and unemployed workers, and will help kick-start the economy with infrastructure projects and others.
- California counties provide numerous programs and services that are essential for the COVID-19 response and recovery, from the public health departments and the frontline workers leading the COVID-19 response and recovery, to the social service and health workers protecting the at-risk elderly, youth and disabled populations, while also providing shelter and services to those experiencing homelessness.
- Counties already fund the probation departments that are providing supervision of, and services to, those released early from prison. Now these same departments are charged with new supervision requirements for an increasing pretrial release population related to the new COVID-19 \$0 bail rule.

Local Economies

- Aid for county governments is good for local economies. California Counties are often the largest employer in many regions, and are economic engines because they use funds to support the community and ink contracts locally, empowering the local workforce, vendors and small businesses.

County Funding

- Just like small business needs are immediate and should be addressed, the same is true for local county governments facing substantial reductions in services and workforce without additional funds.

- Counties are on the COVID-19 front lines. The time is NOW to help salvage counties and prevent even longer food lines.
- You don't cut off the water supply in the middle of fighting a wildfire. It is imperative that our Federal leaders open the firehose and preserve the essential public health and safety net services California's Counties provide and that are more needed than ever.