

State Talking Points on County Funding Needs

- Counties' role in the pandemic is to act as an extension of state government. The California safety net system is almost entirely delivered by counties and is under immense strain as we take all measures to support those impacted by COVID-19.
- As direct service providers administering many state and federal programs, California's Counties are facing increasing budgetary pressures from lost revenues (sales tax, property tax, fees, etc.) and increasing demand for services.
- Counties cannot continue to meet unprecedented demands in public health, emergency response, and support for our communities without additional immediate state 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's counties are requesting \$1.1 billion in residual CARES Act allocation so that all counties receive aid from the Coronavirus Relief Fund given that every county is responding to this crisis. The County-State partnership is critical to mitigating COVID-19 impacts and maintaining and enhancing capacity in these essential programs. Inaction and insufficient funding will force Counties to cut critical public health and safety net programs when our communities need these services the most.
- Counties understand the tremendous strain the COVID-19 pandemic has put on small businesses and consumers. While we support the concept of the Sales Tax Layaway program, we request a state backfill to recoup some much-needed revenue now. Additionally, counties request authority to waive property tax delinquencies caused by COVID-19 to ease the burden on homeowners.
- 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.

Additional Talking Points by Topic

County Services

- 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.
- 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.
- State 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 public safety programs and services, 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 state funds.

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.