



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First 5 Alameda County Announces \$3 Million in Community Resilience Grants Amid COVID-19 Crisis

Grants will fund distribution of emergency food and supplies to families with young children.

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April, 16, 2020, Alameda, CA — Today, the First 5 Alameda County (First 5) Commission approved grants totaling \$3,000,000 for the support of families' basic needs in the county. The Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB), SupplyBank.Org, and the county's three child care resource and referral agencies—BANANAS, Community Child Care Council of Alameda County (4Cs), and Hively—will receive a combined \$1,000,000 in emergency funds this year. An additional \$2,000,000 will be available in the next fiscal year for current and potential new partners.

With the county sheltering in place due to COVID-19, community organizations are struggling to keep pace with families in need who are navigating job losses, child care closures, health care challenges, housing insecurity, and more. In a community survey, 23 agencies serving nearly 16,000 families reported that food and other goods, such as diapers, wipes, and cleaning and personal hygiene supplies, were among the most requested items.

Access to basic needs is particularly important for young children. "Communities, parents, and caregivers all have a role to play in children's health and development, especially in the earliest years of life," said Kristin Spanos, First 5's Chief Executive Officer. "The COVID-19 crisis is laying bare all the inequities and vulnerabilities of our systems and communities. To best support children, we must ensure that the adults around them are supported and that their family's financial stability, including access to concrete needs like food, is addressed."

First 5 ramped up existing operations to distribute diapers and wipes in early April and has also begun procuring and distributing personal protective equipment for direct service providers, including child care workers. This new investment will enable community organizations and providers to increase families' access to food and supplies. It will also facilitate greater coordination between ACCFB, SupplyBank.Org, and other partners to ensure that a variety of goods is available where and when children, families, and providers need them.

SupplyBank.Org's Executive Director Benito Delgado-Olson stressed the importance for low-income children and families. "They should not have to face the added anxiety of unmet basic needs such as diapers, food, and other essentials," he said. "SupplyBank.Org is proud to be part of this large coalition of service providers, led by First 5, to ensure that the basic needs of all families are met."



Through this investment, First 5 plans to draw down additional dollars through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's COVID-19 response funds, capitalize on other available funding, collaborate with philanthropic efforts to support Alameda County's early childhood system, and support coordination of the county's emergency response for child care providers and families. The grants also complement funding available from First 5 California and the State of California to support the supply needs of child care providers serving essential workers.

"First 5 is uniquely positioned to provide quick response in support of the concrete needs of children, families, and caregivers," said Renee Herzfeld, chair of the First 5 Alameda County Commission and Executive Director of 4Cs. "I appreciate their leadership and collaboration with ACCFB, SupplyBank.Org, and Resource & Referral organizations, which have decades of service to the community."

"Resource & Referral agencies have always had a unique relationship with families and child care providers, ensuring our youngest learners thrive," said Kym Johnson, Executive Director of BANANAS. "We can respond to their needs quickly and in a coordinated way, and these funds will be a lifeline for families and child care providers who are struggling."

Suzan Bateson, ACCFB's Executive Director, noted that, "Many of the communities that have been hit hardest were in crisis even before COVID-19. As an emergency response organization, we know it will take months—and in this case—years for our community to get back on its feet. Support from First 5 comes at a critical time and will be instrumental in ensuring families in our community are nourished for as long as they need us."

"Through the establishment of a COVID-19 Emergency Fund we have been able to provide essentials like groceries and diapers for hundreds of families each week," said Kelly O'Lague Dulka, Executive Director of Hively. "Funding from First 5 will allow us to broaden our reach and provide hope to families in our community who are having trouble making ends meet."

In addition to the \$3,000,000 in Community Resilience Grants, First 5 is also easing requirements across its other existing contracts to allow for greater flexibility in the community-led COVID-19 response. It also plans to repurpose funds from disrupted activities to be used for additional local support. All together, these changes represent more than \$1,000,000 in additional funds for the current fiscal year toward the county's COVID-19 emergency response and relief efforts.

To learn more about the services, resources, and supplies being offered through First 5's grantees, please visit their websites:

- [Alameda County Community Food Bank](#)
- [BANANAS](#)
- [Community Child Care Council \(4Cs\) of Alameda County](#)
- [Hively](#)
- [SupplyBank.org](#)



About First 5 Alameda County

First 5 Alameda County builds the local childhood systems and supports needed to ensure our county's youngest children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school and life.

Our Mission

In partnership with the community, we support a county-wide continuous prevention and early intervention system that promotes optimal health and development, narrows disparities, and improves the lives of children from birth to age five and their families.

Our Vision

Every child in Alameda County will have optimal health, development, and well-being to reach his or her greatest potential.

Learn more at www.first5alameda.org.

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