



In partnership, we come together virtually today to share with legislators and staff data and information to make impactful investments to end child poverty, increase access to child care, feeding California's children and lifting up the needs of whole families. During the chaos of the COVID pandemic, many working moms and dads have struggled and continue to struggle with a multitude of poverty stressors that have perpetuated the cycle of poverty and potentially could continue for future generations. During the pandemic until now, these same families have been pushed into chaos and insolvency. With California having an over \$31 billion dollar surplus, we have the opportunity to identify and make meaningful investments to impact the lives of our poorest families and children so that they are positioned to rebound and prosper.

Poverty is best addressed by the following proposals:

- **Safety Net:** Continue to expand on the CAETC the Young Child Tax Credit. Support efforts to expand Pandemic EBT so that families can feed their families, during this economic crisis. Increase cash policies so that families can meet basic needs (i.e., increase SSI payments, UI for ITIN filers, etc....) Get families the money they need so they don't have to choose between keeping the lights on, putting gas in the car, or paying for food. Families are striving to escape extreme poverty; they know how to best spend their money; we can provide the boost for them to do it.
- **Comprehensive Housing Supports:** Increase overall housing availability and reduce evictions so that children and families don't face the trauma and stress of homelessness, exacerbated by the pandemic.
- **Child Care:** Improve access and availability to childcare and address the childcare crisis as exacerbated by the pandemic by adequately meeting the business needs of child care providers. Make sure child care workers can afford to send their own children to preschool or daycare, because child care is a lifeline to keep parents working and families stable.
- **Health Care Expansion:** Strengthen and expand community based and school-based health care clinics to meet families where they are so that they can get the comprehensive health care they need. Within an equity framework provide COVID vaccines in high needs communities and ensure health access for ALL families and children regardless of immigration status.
- **Coordination of Services:** Continue to improve the cost-effectiveness of programs that support families, focusing on community-based, collaborative, research-based solutions. Ensure that services can be easily accessed by families by streamlining systems. Within an equity framework, accessing comprehensive anti-poverty services should be made readily and easily available to families who have been struggling to navigate complex public service systems.

Child Care and Early Learning:

- **Family Fees AB 92 (Reyes):** Creates an equitable sliding scale for family fees that will alleviate the burden on working families struggling to pay for child care and early childhood education services. By increasing the affordability of child care to working families, this bill will benefit the economic recovery of the state by helping parents remain in the workforce and achieve economic stability.
- **Equity in California's Subsidized Child Care System AB 1649 (Quirk-Silva):** Allows that all income eligible families that receive a voucher are guaranteed set amount to that their chosen family child care provider or center will receive. Reimbursement based on enrollment versus attendance.
- **Family Access to Child Care:** Fund community-based programs so that they can hire case managers to help enroll families and get them connected to child care (Budget Request)
- **Hold Harmless for Direct Contracting Programs:** Extend the 2021-22 Contract Earnings set to expire on June 30, 2022 based on guaranteed MRA or expenditures whichever is less for direct contacting programs (Budget Request)
- **Investments in Child Care Workforce and Infrastructure:** Increase funding to reimburse family child care providers and the center workforce rates that more accurately capture the cost of providing care as well as the extraordinary costs associated with the pandemic. Increase funding to build and expand child care access targeted towards identified communities and families with the greatest need. (Budget Request)
- **Emergency Child Care Bridge Expansion (Stone):** Strengthen and expand the capacity of the Bridge program, and navigators, to immediately stabilize traumatized children in the most appropriate foster care placement, and provide them with a path to long-term, high-quality, and trauma-informed early education programs. (Budget Request)

Food insecurity:

- **Food4All SB 464 (Hurtado):** Ensure permanent funding to provide California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) nutrition benefits to all Californians ineligible for CalFresh solely due to their immigration status.
- **School Meals for All/ SB 364 (Skinner):** Build on California's historic success by continuing to invest in school meals, as well as make further investments including to prevent child hunger when schools are closed due to disaster (BOOST EBT). Update, modernize, and increase security and privacy protections for school income data collection, after School Meals for All implementation, in which school meal applications don't collect unnecessary information such as social security numbers.
- **Food with Care: Fair Pay for Providers. Free Meals for All Kids -** Lift the State Meal Reimbursement pay penalty for child care meals; Expand free child care meals to all kids by enabling all child care providers to receive the highest federal reimbursement rate for meals served. (Budget Request)
- **SSI/SSP Grants:** 1) Accelerate part two of SSP grant cut reversal to 2023 and lift all grants above the Federal Poverty Level, moving grants toward the Elder Economic Index as laid out in the Master Plan for Aging; 2) Include SSI recipients in future Golden State Grants; 3) Ensure parity in Supplemental and Transitional Nutrition Benefits (SNB & TNB) with the Thrifty Food Plan in CalFresh to fulfill their hold harmless goal. (Budget Requests)
- **Policies to Improve and Expand Access to CalFRESH:** 1) Expand and protect access for college students, unemployed Californians and community members returning from incarceration (bills to come); and 2) Expand the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot to boost benefits for a greater number of CalFresh households in more diverse regions of the state. (Budget Request)

The pandemic has exacerbated the crisis for many of California's lowest income working moms and dads. Prior to the pandemic, poverty in California was in decline. However, since that time more than a third of Californians are living in or near poverty. Many of our lowest income families which are mainly headed up by single women and women of color have been unable to return to stable employment due to the uncertainty and inability to access child care. The above priorities make a meaningful investment in *human infrastructure*. To continue to weather the uncertainty of the pandemic and to position families to either rise above the threat of poverty or to break through the cycle of poverty, long term investments in families and children must be the priority.

“A budget is more than just a series of numbers on a page; it is an embodiment of our values.”