



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First 5 Alameda County to Distribute Millions in COVID-19 Relief Grants for Family Child Care Providers

CARES Act funding provided by the Alameda County Social Services Agency will be administered by First 5 Alameda County to support the child care field amid unprecedented crisis

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December 2, 2020, Alameda, CA — Today, First 5 Alameda County (First 5) announced that it will be the administrator of \$4,000,000 in funds provided by the Alameda County Social Services Agency from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Of the total amount, \$3,000,000 will go toward grants to support an estimated 400 in-home family child care (FCC) providers. This funding will help these child care providers keep their doors open to serve families, particularly in underserved communities. The remaining \$1,000,000 will be used to purchase and distribute supplies, such as adult and child face masks, air purifiers, hand sanitizer, and more.

As a more affordable option to center-based care, FCCs are a critical resource for families with low incomes. They are also primarily staffed by women, especially women of color, who have been disproportionately impacted by the health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Child care is the backbone of the economy, crucial to economic reopening efforts. Yet, the industry has been among the hardest hit and least supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Center for American Progress](#) estimates that in California, the average cost to operate an in-home FCC during the COVID-19 pandemic increased by 75%, compared to 54% for center-based care.

“FCC providers have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, opening their homes and risking their health to provide safe, nurturing care for children and support for working parents,” said Renee Herzfeld, Chair of the First 5 Commission and Executive Director of the Community Child Care Council of Alameda County. “This investment provides a critical lifeline for providers who are themselves essential workers and operating under incredible financial pressure.”



Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many FCCs operated on razor thin margins, without adequate savings for financial emergencies. Now, an already precarious field is grappling with months of decreased capacity, reduced income, and higher costs of business. Together, these factors put the entire system at risk of collapse, threatening to leave thousands of parents without a safe, quality child care provider in their community.

“I applaud Alameda County’s leadership and Social Services’ investment in the child care field at this moment of crisis,” said Kristin Spanos, Chief Executive Officer of First 5 Alameda County. “These resources will provide much-needed relief. As a partner with the larger county system, I am proud of First 5’s contribution to help stabilize the local child care field, through nimble use of our procurement and established infrastructure and programming in Alameda County’s child care community.”

Alameda County FCC grants will prioritize child care providers that serve a high percentage of families who access subsidies to pay for child care and those who care for infants and toddlers. Funding can be used to cover expenses including staff salaries, rent, and other operating expenses not covered by tuition. Small FCCs are eligible to receive awards up to \$5,000. Large FCCs can receive up to \$10,000.

While the Child Care Is Essential Act and the Child Care for Economic Recovery Act passed the US House of Representatives in July 2020, both pieces of legislation have since stalled in the Senate. First 5 is calling for state and federal leaders to prioritize child care and provide additional assistance to the industry. “Child care providers should not be left to fend for themselves through the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Spanos. “Without adequate financial relief for the field, we put children, families, and the economic recovery of our community at risk.”

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 their greatest potential.

Learn more at www.first5alameda.org.

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