



March 10, 2021

**ACTION ITEM**

**SUBJECT: CONTINUED DISTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

**Strategic Plan Priority Area:** Child Health

**Goal:** All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5.

**RECOMMENDATION**

First 5 California (F5CA) staff recommends the Commission approve up to \$2 million to supply local communities with necessary supplies to continue addressing the COVID-19 pandemic through the Summer of 2021.

**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE**

Over the last year, First 5 California has been invested in working with our county commissions to help address the pandemic by providing emergency supplies to local communities statewide. However, COVID-19 is continuing to have a devastating effect on the world, touching the lives of every person in some way, shape, or form. California was, and continues to be, on the forefront of addressing this ravaging pandemic. Despite Governor Newsom's admirable and ambitious efforts, Californians still struggle with economic, emotional, and physical impacts of the virus.

In particular, children and families are experiencing a generational health crisis that requires extreme caution to help mitigate the growth of variants and the spread of the coronavirus. Likewise, childcare programs and providers have been especially hard hit by closures, dwindling childcare services, and increased costs to provide said services. While the vaccine rollout continues to gain momentum, child care providers were not initially a priority group for inoculations. Child care programs continue to struggle with keeping their doors open until vaccines are more readily available and herd immunity is established.

To that end, F5CA believes this is a unique opportunity to continue to address a generational health crisis by supporting local communities around the state who continue to grapple with this pandemic and do not have available state and/or federal resources to draw from. F5CA is seeking approval to fund the purchase and shipment of

emergency supplies pursuant to a formula that assures all 58 counties receive an equitable distribution of goods. This effort would supplement other supply acquisition efforts around the state and would be coordinated to maximize the various funding sources to support the purchase of emergency supplies and not duplicate efforts. F5CA's goal is to prioritize child care providers serving first line responders and people working in essential services. After those child care providers have been served, counties could provide supplies to the broader high-need, at-risk community.

Supplybank.org not only has been effective in procuring and distributing supplies at a highly reduced administrative cost, but also has been a vital partner in working and supporting local First 5 county commissions in order to maximize the quantity of necessary supplies to serve more families and providers. Supplybank.org will continue to provide a quick turnaround time so that the need is met as soon as possible and will work with county commissions and their local partners to determine the best distribution process.

While the previous investment has been a monumental achievement to get crucial supplies to children, families, and providers in a timely fashion, there was a consistent message from local partners that a continued investment of emergency supplies is needed even given the positive developments over the last couple of months related to declining coronavirus cases.

Before the previous contract expired, a survey was disseminated to county commissions to gauge interest in another supply program and conduct a needs assessment to prioritize what supplies were desired moving forward. Overwhelmingly, 93% of respondents believe there is continuous need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and/or emergency supplies in their community due to the pandemic or other related economic hardships. Additionally, 82% of respondents reported their organization has exhausted local and county financial resources for these items. Not surprisingly, disinfectants, PPE, and baby wipes and diapers rose to the top of items needed to support their local communities at this time.

If the Commission approves this investment, F5CA staff would proceed with executing a new contract with Supplybank.org, which meets the Governor's requirement that all new contracts address COVID-19 mitigation and recovery.

## **SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

The Commission previously approved \$5 million to address the initial onset of the COVID-19 outbreak beginning in April 2020 through February 2021. Through this previous investment, millions of units of supplies, including disinfectants, PPE, diapers, baby wipes, toilet paper, and children's books, were distributed to every county throughout the state.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

This commitment would be funded entirely through the Unallocated account in the amount up to \$2 million between fiscal years 2020–21 and 2021–22.

However, a positive development is underway for a potential external funding source for this investment. F5CA has been working with the Governor's Office of Emergency

Services (CalOES) in applying for federal disaster relief funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). With the new Biden Administration, changes have been made (via a Presidential Memorandum from the White House on January 21, 2021<sup>1</sup>) to eligibility criteria that had been previously deemed ineligible with the prior Administration. It's anticipated that activities and expenditures related to F5CA's previous contract with Supplybank.org will be reimbursed at or near 100% of its initial investment of \$5 million. This FEMA reimbursement could potentially cover the entirety of the current request outlined above as well.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/21/extend-federal-support-to-governors-use-of-national-guard-to-respond-to-covid-19-and-to-increase-reimbursement-and-other-assistance-provided-to-states/>