Information to Participate

- Today’s PowerPoint can be downloaded from the “handouts” section of your control panel
- To submit questions, click on the “Questions” panel, type your question, and click “send”
- Presentation materials and audio will also be posted at www.jbaforyouth.org
Agenda

- COVID-19 STATUS
- RESPONSE RECOMMENDATIONS
- NEXT STEPS
- DISCUSSION / Q&A
243,453 U.S. cases

California has the fourth most cases (10,773) in the country and placed a shelter-in-place order across the state to slow down the spread.

Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University (JHU). [https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html)
Many Resource Parents are seniors or medically fragile. Many foster children and youth have pre-existing health conditions, making them particularly vulnerable to potential exposure. Solution: need for essential items delivery ($); virtual visitation (unless all parties agree that in person visits are safe). (P)

Resource families are: educating, entertaining, supervising, isolating, and meeting all special needs 24/7 without the support of schools, therapy, SPED services, etc. (5+ meals/snacks a day!) Solution: funding to cover additional expenses. ($)

Resource families are still taking placements and may need to isolate family members or divide the family up if someone becomes infected. Solution: funding to cover additional costs of isolation. ($)

Placement preservation strategies must be implemented. Solution: Virtual family counseling, parent coaching, peer to peer mentoring, and other virtual behavioral health readily available for families; enforcement for CFT’s to create/implement placement preservation. (E)
Erica Hickey-Smith, Voices

- Housing
- Employment
- Education
- Wellness
Rochelle Trochtenberg, Foster Care Ombudsperson

- Youth Rights
- Technology & Education
- Visitation
- Communication & Connection
CWS continues to prioritize Emergency Response for child safety; all other visits are mostly “virtual”

- Concerns: Referrals down, staff shortages, and toll on children/youth/families
- Strengths: Embracing technology and partnerships with CBOs
- Needs: Flexibilities, Funding, and Resources
Currently, over 60,000 children and youth are in California’s foster care system. They uniquely rely on the public child welfare system to ensure their economic, emotional and educational well-being.

The COVID19 pandemic & resulting changes pose a special risk to youth in care, and it is critical that the State act quickly to address these needs.
Recommendation #1:

Provide emergency financial relief to caregivers and youth impacted by COVID-19.

- Increase monthly foster care payments across all programs.
- Establish a $10 M Foster Youth College Relief Fund.
- Inform non-minor dependents who have lost wages or hours about accessing benefits included in the federal stimulus package.
- Increase virtual accessibility of CalFresh.
Recommendation #1:

Provide emergency financial relief to caregivers and youth impacted by COVID-19.

Increase monthly foster care payments across all programs.

Foster care payments:

- +$400 per child or youth for +6 months

Infant Supplement:

- +$400 per child
- Draw down Title IV-E matching funds
Recommendation #1:

Provide emergency financial relief to caregivers and youth impacted by COVID-19.

Establish a $10 M Foster Youth College Relief Fund.

Funds would help college students who have exited the foster care system who are facing emergency needs.

College foster youth support programs, financial aid offices or equity office would administer.
Recommendation #1:

Provide emergency financial relief to caregivers and youth impacted by COVID-19.

Federal Stimulus Packages have been passed to help with COVID-19 crisis. Inform youth & caregivers of the following:

- Tax filing extension & tax credits
- Direct Payments to Individuals ($1,200)
- Paid Sick & Family Leave
- Emergency Food Assistance Programs
- Expanded Unemployment Insurance
- Homelessness Relief
Recommendation #1:

Provide emergency financial relief to caregivers and youth impacted by COVID-19.

- Waive face-to-face interviews for CalFresh.
- Authorize use of CalFresh for online purchasing with the use of EBT.
- Reduce or waive grocery delivery fees for online grocery purchases.
- Provide guidance to nonminor dependents and caregivers about how to access CalFresh.

Increase virtual accessibility of CalFresh.
Currently

Most traumatic events for youth and children in foster care are unplanned disruptions.

COVID-19 poses a serious threat to maintaining family and placement stability through multiple increased pressures.
Recommendation #2: Ensure stability of foster care placements.

Place 180-day moratorium on discharge of non-minor dependents from extended foster care.

Preserve placements through development and implementation of placement preservation strategies that is currently required by law.

StabilityTrauma
Recommendation #2:

Ensure stability of foster care placements.

Place 180-day moratorium on discharge of non-minor dependents from extended foster care.

Do so unless the youth no longer wishes to participate in the program, has a transition plan in place and housing secured.

Suspend school and work requirements as a condition of placement for 180 days.
Recommendation #2: Ensure stability of foster care placements.

Preserve placements through development and implementation of placement preservation strategies that is currently required by law.

Enforce placement preservation strategies before 14 day written notice.

This would include nonminor dependents for the next 180 days.

Issue guidance emphasizing that multiple placement preservation strategies should be used & how to implement during a public health crisis.
Currently

COVID-19 mitigation strategies create new obstacles for foster youth.

Access to services such as education, healthcare, visitation with siblings and parents is critical as youth are more isolated than ever.

Ability to transition procedures and processes to online is key.
Recommendation #3:

Immediately remove obstacles to distance learning, telehealth, visitation, and permanency.

Ensure foster youth have access to a laptop, WiFi, and telephone to meet connectivity needs.

Waive health and safety inspections for SILPs for the next 90 days, not solely those moving due to campus closures.

Authorize virtual completion of documents for nonminor dependents re-entering foster care without a face-to-face contact.

Suspend annual Resource Family Approval updates until shelter-in-place order is lifted unless there are significant changes.
Recommendation #3:

Immediately remove obstacles to distance learning, telehealth, visitation, and permanency.

Authorize the use of online signatures to process and finalize adoptions.

Allow virtual interviews for the Resource Family Approval process rather than in person/in home.

Direct the California Student Aid Commission to distribute Chafee Education and Training Voucher payments to youth attending college electronically.
Recommendation #3:
Immediately remove obstacles to distance learning, telehealth, visitation, and permanency.

Ensure foster youth have access to a laptop, WiFi and telephone to meet connectivity needs such as:

- Remote learning
- Telehealth appointments
- Visitation
- Child and Family Team Meetings

Without requirement to verify dependency status.
Recommendation #3:

Immediately remove obstacles to distance learning, telehealth, visitation, and permanency.

Suspend annual Resource Family Approval updates until shelter-in-place order is lifted unless there are significant changes such as:

- Change in marital status
- Moving to a new location
- Birth of a child
- An adult moving into the home
Currently: NMDs allowed to live in a SILP that has not been approved temporarily, but county must inspect a new SILP within 10 calendar days.

Recommended: Given exposure risk and current shelter-in-place order, waiving this procedure will help ensure stable housing and reduce public health risk.

Recommendation #3: Immediately remove obstacles to distance learning, telehealth, visitation, and permanency.
Recommendation #3:

Immediately remove obstacles to distance learning, telehealth, visitation, and permanency.

- Virtual completion of documents for nonminor dependents re-entering foster care
- Online Signature for processing and finalizing adoptions
- Virtual Interviews for Resource Family Approval process

Update processes and services so that key child welfare procedures can continue in compliance with shelter-in-place order.
Recommendation #3:

Immediately remove obstacles to distance learning, telehealth, visitation, and permanency.

Direct the California Student Aid Commission to distribute Chafee Education and Training Voucher payments to youth attending college electronically.

Provides up to $5,000 to current and former foster youth annually.

Funds can be used for academic or personal expenses.

In this period of instability and evolving crisis, timely financial aid is vital.
Currently

Youth experiencing homelessness make up **10%** of California’s Homeless Point-in Time Count.

**79%** percent are unsheltered, putting them at heightened risk for COVID-19 exposure.
Recommendation #4:

Include the needs of marginalized and disconnected youth in California’s COVID-19 response.

Immediately issue funding for the Transitional Housing Program and Housing Navigation Program.

Require a minimum of 10% of homelessness funding included in the FY 21 state budget be dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless youth.

Allocate $30 million to CA’s 44 Continuums of Care to awardgrunt funding to youth providers through the Homeless Emergency Aid Program.
Recommendation #4:
Include the needs of marginalized and disconnected youth in California’s COVID-19 response.

- Suspend requirement that counties submit a signed resolution from their County Board of Supervisors.
- Authorize the rollover of unutilized THP funds to FY21.
Recommendation #4:

Include the needs of marginalized and disconnected youth in California’s COVID-19 response.

Require a minimum of 10% of homelessness funding included in the FY 21 state budget be dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless youth.

- **$500M Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP)**
  - 2018-19: 5%
  - 2019-20: 8%
  - 2020-21: 10%

- **$650M Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAPP)**
Recommendation #4:

Include the needs of marginalized and disconnected youth in California’s COVID-19 response.

Allocate $30 million to CA’s 44 Continuums of Care to award grant funding to youth providers through the Homeless Emergency Aid Program.

- Outreach, intake, and assessment of needs and linkage to services
- Permanent and permanent supportive housing to provide individuals & families
- Transitional housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills
- Emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative

Emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative
Next Steps:
Sign-On Letter to the Governor

Add your organization’s name to endorse these urgently needed policy solutions.

State Guidance:
Placement Preservation Guidance for County and Tribal Child Welfare Agencies, Probation Departments and Children’s Residential Care Providers in the Event A Child, Nonminor Dependent or Care Provider is Exposed to, Presents Symptoms of, or Tests Positive for, COVID-19
[ADD LINK for ACL 20-33]


Child Welfare and Probation Visitation Contact, Non-Minor Dependents in College Dorms, Resource Family Approval and Disaster Plan Changes Due to Statewide Outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Federal Guidance:

ACF Grants Flexibility in conducting human service activities related to or affected by COVID-19

ACF COVID-19 Child Legal Defense Letter

ACF Low or No Cost Technology Options for Virtual Participation and Contact

The United States Children’s Bureau & Think of Us Town Hall
https://www.thinkof-us.org/town-hall

Foster Club Survey
Resources:
CA.gov: https://covid19.ca.gov/
JBAY: https://www.jbaforyouth.org/covid-19-resources/
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AMR6VLFrlGcFyJkzFcum1O8pwWJZzwjsFdIq0_G7i5M/edit
CYC: https://mailchi.mp/calyouthconn.org/covid_19_response
ACR: https://kids-alliance.org/covid-19/
CLC: http://clccal.org/content/covid-19-resources-children-and-families
CACFS: https://www.cacfs.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources
Questions or Comments?

• To submit live questions, click on the “Questions” panel, type your question, and click “Send”

• Contact information:
  Anna Johnson, Senior Project Manager
  John Burton Advocates for Youth
  Anna@jbay.org

• Presentation materials and audio will also be posted at www.jbaforyouth.org