

April 26, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-44**

This All County Letter (ACL) provides information to counties interested in opting into the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program) in Fiscal Years (FY) 2021-22 and 2022-23.



KIM JOHNSON  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • [www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov)



GAVIN NEWSOM  
GOVERNOR

April 26, 2021

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-44

TO: ALL COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS  
ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES NEW SYSTEM  
ALL JUDICIAL COUNCIL STAFF  
ALL FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS  
ALL TILE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES  
ALL COUNTY CHILD CARE COORDINATORS  
ALL FOSTER CARE MANAGERS  
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICE PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY CHILD CARE BRIDGE PROGRAM FOR FOSTER CHILDREN (BRIDGE PROGRAM) OPTING IN FOR FISCAL YEARS (FY) 2021-22 AND 2022-23

REFERENCE: SENATE BILL [\(SB\) 89](#), (CHAPTER 24, STATUTES OF 2017); WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE [\(WIC\) SECTIONS 309](#); [WIC 361.45](#); [WIC 11461.6](#) AND [WIC 16519.5](#); HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE [\(H&SC\) SECTION 1517](#); EDUCATION CODE [\(EDC\) SECTIONS 8208](#); [EDC 8212](#); AND [EDC 8250\(d\)\(2\)](#); TITLE 45 OF THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS [\(CFR\) SECTION 1356.60](#); MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES [\(MPP\) SECTION 47-260.3](#); TITLE 5 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS [\(CCR\) SECTIONS 18075.1](#) AND [CCR 18075.2](#); ALL COUNTY LETTERS [\(ACL\) NO. 19-18](#); [ACL NO. 18-80](#); [ACL NO. 18-80E](#) AND [ACL NO. 18-73](#), COUNTY FISCAL LETTERS [\(CFL\) NO. 19/20-52](#); [CFL NO. 18/19-04](#); [CFL NO. 18/19-04E](#); [CFL NO. 17/18-45](#); [CFL NO. 17/18-45E](#); AND [CFL NO. 16/17-75](#); ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER [\(ACWDL\) DATED AUGUST 23, 2019](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide guidance to counties opting to participate in the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program) funding in Fiscal Years (FY) 2021-22 and 2022-23. The opt-in period is biennial but is subject to appropriation in the annual Budget Act and funding is allocated annually. The amount of funds a county is allocated each fiscal year may vary depending on the total allocation amount and the number of counties participating.

### **Background**

The Bridge Program was enacted through Senate Bill (SB) 89 (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2017) and implemented in January 2018, to reduce child care barriers for children and parenting youth in the foster care system, their caregiver families, and nonminor dependent parents. The goals of the Bridge Program are to increase the number of successful home-based family care settings for children in foster care, increase placement stability, increase the capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of children in foster care, and maximize funding to support the child care needs of eligible families.

### **California's Child Care Infrastructure**

Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Programs provide valuable information about the availability of child care at the local level throughout the state. The programs assist potential child care providers in the licensing process, offer direct services, including training, and coordinate community resources for the benefit of parents and local child care providers. These services are available in all 58 California counties.

Alternative Payment Programs (APPs), funded with state and federal funds, work in partnership with R&R Programs to provide families with financial assistance for an array of child care options, such as license-exempt care, family child care home care, and center-based child care. APPs help families pay for child care services and are designed to support parental choice and accommodate the individual needs of families.

**The Bridge Program consists of the following three components: voucher, child care navigator, and trauma-informed care training and coaching.**

### **Emergency Child Care Voucher or Payment**

Through the Bridge Program, eligible caregiver families, parenting youth, and nonminor dependent parents may receive a child care voucher to pay for child care costs for a child in their care from birth through age 12, and for children and youth with exceptional needs up to age 21.

The voucher is a time-limited payment that may be issued for up to six-months with the goal of successfully transitioning the child into long-term child care paid through another source (subsidized or unsubsidized). If the caregiver is unable to secure long-term child care

during the initial six-month period, eligibility may be extended at the discretion of the county for an additional six-months but may not exceed 12 months total. When a long-term child care placement is secured or the 12-month limit is reached, the Bridge Program voucher ends. Counties are authorized to disburse child care payments either directly to the family or to the child care provider. All vouchers and payments must be paid in accordance with the [Regional Market Rate \(RMR\) ceilings](#) for subsidized child care payment rates. Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 18074 to 18076.3 provide the requirements for the use of the RMR ceilings.

Participating counties shall determine eligibility for the Bridge Program using the criteria for eligible populations outlined below:

- Approved resource families;
- Families that have a child placed with them for an emergency or compelling reason and are in the process of resource family approval;
- Formerly licensed foster family homes or certified family homes; approved homes of relatives or Non-Related Extended Family Members in the process of resource family approval as of December 31, 2020;
- Parenting foster youth and nonminor dependent parents; and
- Tribally approved homes.

Counties may establish additional criteria based on local priorities and available funding for eligible populations. This limited set of eligibility criteria is intended to allow counties the greatest flexibility in meeting their unique needs. Providers caring for children receiving subsidies through other programs are not prohibited from receiving Bridge Program funds. Participating families have a choice in selecting child care providers.

### **Child Care Navigator**

The child care navigator, employed by a local R&R agency, works with the eligible family, the child's social worker or probation officer, and when appropriate the child and family team to assess child care opportunities and provide consumer education based on the family need and the child's age and needs. Navigator services shall be made available to eligible Bridge Program caregiver families, parenting youth or nonminor dependents, any family with a child previously in foster care, or any family involved with the child welfare system. Eligibility for navigator services is not contingent upon receipt of a Bridge Program voucher.

The child care navigator will:

- Assist with identifying and accessing child care options appropriate to the family's need and the child's age and needs;
- Connect to information and resources about school readiness and child care to empower and improve access to resources supporting informed decisions focused on the needs of the child;

- Assist in identifying potential opportunities for an ongoing child care subsidy if otherwise eligible;
- Assist in completing appropriate child care program applications, paperwork, and enrollment requirements; and
- Develop an overall, long-term child care plan with efforts to minimize transitions or disruptions for the child where possible.

### **Trauma-Informed Care Training and Coaching**

The [California Child Care Resource and Referral Network \(Network\)](#) developed and coordinates the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) training curriculum to be used by the participating local R&R agency. These programs are responsible for delivering TIC training and coaching to Bridge Program child care providers in their communities to provide information about the effects of trauma and to help build capacity for working with children who have experienced trauma. TIC training participation is not contingent on a provider caring for a child in the Bridge Program.

Counties participating in the Bridge Program shall:

- Ensure collaboration between the county child welfare services program and CalWORKs child care program administrators, as needed, to share information, identify priorities, and plan for the implementation and ongoing operation of the Bridge Program;
- Develop interagency communication and enter into a formal agreement with a local R&R program to provide child care navigator services to families receiving a Bridge Program voucher and other eligible children referred. If the R&R program does not enter into a formal agreement with the county child welfare agency, the R&R program must explain, in writing, why it is not practical nor feasible to do so;
- Determine eligibility and establish local priorities and program parameters for the county's implementation of the Bridge Program, consistent with Bridge Program goals;
- Distribute the voucher payment directly to the eligible family or child care provider. Counties may elect to contract with a local APP to administer the child care voucher payment;
- Ensure voucher payment is in an amount commensurate with the RMR ceiling payment rates;
- Take steps to maximize funding from local, state, and federal sources. This includes submitting proper claiming paperwork to support the state's ability to draw down additional federal share of cost (Title IV-E) as match for the voucher and claiming for federal IV-E training funds; and
- Collect and submit monthly data and outcomes to the CDSS using the [Bridge Program report \(CCB18\)](#).

### **Instructions for County Participation**

Participating counties will opt in biennially. This period will include FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. The county must complete and submit a plan included as Attachment B. Any changes taking place throughout the two-year period must be submitted to CDSS as an amended plan. All funding is subject to appropriation in the annual Budget Act and will be allocated annually.

To receive funding, plans must be submitted electronically by June 1, 2021. Please e-mail completed plans to: [ChildCareBridge@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ChildCareBridge@dss.ca.gov).

Attachment A displays the planning allocation for counties opting in for FY 2021-22. The funding allocation will be released through a subsequent County Fiscal Letter (CFL). The child care navigator and training allocations are calculated by determining each county's percentage of eligible caseload to the statewide total eligible caseload. The voucher allocations are calculated using the eligible caseload multiplied by the RMR for the appropriate category to develop each county's percentage of the total statewide allocation.

The Bridge Program is an opt-in program with capped funding. Counties are not obligated to provide the resources and level of service beyond what is provided in the state general fund allocation, but are encouraged to leverage other local and federal funding sources to tailor the availability of child care for eligible families to the specific needs of the county.

Bridge Program funds are limited, and may not meet the needs of all who are otherwise eligible and in need of child care in the county. Therefore, counties shall consider the intent of the legislation, goals of the Bridge Program, budgetary constraints and opportunities, the best approach to serve the needs of those eligible, as well as carefully consider target populations defined by age, placement type, and service need. The county may calculate the projected annual cost based upon the caseload in the target population multiplied by the relevant RMR and the projected average length of time served by a Bridge Program subsidy. If this annual cost projection exceeds the state general fund allocation, the county may choose to further prioritize eligible populations, leverage local and federal funds to cover any additional costs, and/or choose to discontinue services for the remainder of the FY.

Counties are required to use Bridge Program funding to complement county child welfare agency efforts to recruit, retain, and support resource families and to supplement, not supplant, any existing funding already used to provide child care to children in home-based foster care placements.

After approval of submitted plans, the CDSS will redistribute the planning allocation of counties that did not opt into the Bridge Program and distribute any unallocated funds to participating counties. Final allocations for July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022 are contingent on the Governor's budget and will be provided in a forthcoming CFL. Please be advised that allocations are subject to change as the number of counties participating may fluctuate.

Bridge Program fiscal questions can be directed to CDSS Fiscal Systems at [fiscal.systems@dss.ca.gov](mailto:fiscal.systems@dss.ca.gov).

### **Procurement**

CDSS has approved for counties to utilize procurement by negotiation to conduct procurements for the Bridge Program. ([Manual of Policies and Procedures 23-650.1.18](#))

### **Data Collection**

Counties are required to submit data and outcomes using the CCB 18. The CCB 18 includes data on Bridge Program eligibility and enrollment, type of voucher placements and child care settings, the length of time receiving voucher, and child care transition information. The data also includes the number of referrals to, and families served by, child care navigators as well as the number of TIC trainings held. To complete the electronic form, download a copy of the accessible CCB 18, which includes links to the instructions and validations, from the CDSS data website at:

[CDSS Research and Data Report Form and Instructions](#)

All Bridge Program opt-in counties are required to submit the report via email to [admccb18@dss.ca.gov](mailto:admccb18@dss.ca.gov). If you have any questions regarding the completion of the CCB 18, please contact [admccb18@dss.ca.gov](mailto:admccb18@dss.ca.gov).

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, please contact the Child Care & Intergenerational Services Bureau at [ChildCareBridge@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ChildCareBridge@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

### ***Original Document Signed By***

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ,  
Deputy Director  
Family Engagement & Empowerment Division

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Attachments:

- A. Emergency Child Care Bridge Program Planning Allocation
- B. FY 2020-21 Directors Certification Plan

**FISCAL YEAR 2021-22 EMERGENCY CHILD CARE BRIDGE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN  
GENERAL FUND (GF) PLANNING ALLOCATION**

COUNTY	EMERGENCY CHILD CARE VOUCHER (ASSISTANCE) GF*	CHILD CARE NAVIGATOR (ADMINISTRATION) GF**	TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE TRAINING (ADMINISTRATION) GF**	TOTAL ADMINISTRATION GF	TOTAL ASSISTANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE GF
ALAMEDA	\$667,130	\$135,878	\$55,038	\$190,916	\$858,046
ALPINE	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,000	\$33,500	\$43,500
AMADOR	\$30,027	\$33,120	\$3,743	\$36,863	\$66,890
BUTTE	\$230,148	\$53,519	\$28,214	\$81,733	\$311,881
CALAVERAS	\$30,872	\$33,250	\$3,900	\$37,150	\$68,022
COLUSA	\$20,000	\$32,500	\$2,577	\$35,077	\$55,077
CONTRA COSTA	\$530,519	\$68,855	\$46,612	\$115,467	\$645,986
DEL NORTE	\$60,730	\$36,202	\$7,440	\$43,642	\$104,372
EL DORADO	\$138,861	\$42,516	\$15,015	\$57,531	\$196,392
FRESNO	\$1,148,039	\$150,806	\$144,923	\$295,729	\$1,443,768
GLENN	\$38,052	\$34,334	\$5,199	\$39,533	\$77,585
HUMBOLDT	\$227,207	\$53,387	\$28,057	\$81,444	\$308,651
IMPERIAL	\$228,850	\$54,097	\$28,908	\$83,005	\$311,855
INYO	\$10,045	\$32,500	\$1,165	\$33,665	\$43,710
KERN	\$781,108	\$112,212	\$98,624	\$210,836	\$991,944
KINGS	\$167,972	\$47,223	\$20,661	\$67,884	\$235,856
LAKE	\$59,459	\$36,370	\$7,641	\$44,011	\$103,470
LASSEN	\$30,631	\$33,474	\$4,168	\$37,642	\$68,273
LOS ANGELES	\$12,495,455	\$1,352,060	\$1,334,066	\$2,686,126	\$15,181,581
MADERA	\$135,869	\$44,216	\$17,053	\$61,269	\$197,138
MARIN	\$59,652	\$33,325	\$3,989	\$37,314	\$96,966
MARIPOSA	\$20,000	\$32,500	\$2,241	\$34,741	\$54,741
MENDOCINO	\$111,893	\$41,246	\$13,491	\$54,737	\$166,630
MERCED	\$244,440	\$56,712	\$32,045	\$88,757	\$333,197
MODOC	\$13,769	\$32,500	\$1,905	\$34,405	\$48,174
MONO	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,000	\$33,500	\$43,500
MONTEREY	\$155,127	\$45,056	\$18,062	\$63,118	\$218,245
NAPA	\$77,073	\$36,669	\$8,000	\$44,669	\$121,742
NEVADA	\$39,370	\$33,717	\$4,459	\$38,176	\$77,546
ORANGE	\$1,670,327	\$161,958	\$158,301	\$320,259	\$1,990,586
PLACER	\$93,651	\$38,630	\$10,354	\$48,984	\$142,635
PLUMAS	\$20,000	\$32,500	\$2,421	\$34,921	\$54,921
RIVERSIDE	\$1,550,050	\$184,804	\$185,709	\$370,513	\$1,920,563
SACRAMENTO	\$816,224	\$107,280	\$92,709	\$199,989	\$1,016,213
SAN BENITO	\$20,486	\$32,500	\$2,421	\$34,921	\$55,407
SAN BERNARDINO	\$3,490,324	\$381,788	\$422,018	\$803,806	\$4,294,130
SAN DIEGO	\$1,429,240	\$150,078	\$144,049	\$294,127	\$1,723,367
SAN FRANCISCO	\$572,562	\$88,619	\$34,332	\$122,951	\$695,513
SAN JOAQUIN	\$595,219	\$89,740	\$71,666	\$161,406	\$756,625
SAN LUIS OBISPO	\$159,704	\$44,571	\$17,479	\$62,050	\$221,754
SAN MATEO	\$116,350	\$37,921	\$9,502	\$47,423	\$163,773
SANTA BARBARA	\$273,619	\$52,604	\$27,115	\$79,719	\$353,338
SANTA CLARA	\$748,342	\$79,727	\$59,654	\$139,381	\$887,723
SANTA CRUZ	\$99,705	\$38,032	\$9,636	\$47,668	\$147,373
SHASTA	\$213,785	\$52,734	\$27,272	\$80,006	\$293,791
SIERRA	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,000	\$33,500	\$43,500
SISKIYOU	\$55,845	\$35,921	\$7,104	\$43,025	\$98,870
SOLANO	\$197,939	\$48,961	\$22,746	\$71,707	\$269,646
SONOMA	\$255,348	\$81,613	\$25,928	\$107,541	\$362,889
STANISLAUS	\$312,005	\$62,933	\$39,508	\$102,441	\$414,446
SUTTER	\$64,365	\$36,650	\$7,978	\$44,628	\$108,993
TEHAMA	\$48,055	\$35,586	\$6,701	\$42,287	\$90,342
TRINITY	\$12,632	\$32,500	\$1,860	\$34,360	\$46,992
TULARE	\$553,100	\$90,113	\$72,114	\$162,227	\$715,327
TUOLUMNE	\$61,231	\$36,463	\$7,753	\$44,216	\$105,447
VENTURA	\$353,714	\$59,963	\$35,945	\$95,908	\$449,622
YOLO	\$331,775	\$57,741	\$33,277	\$91,018	\$422,793
YUBA	\$89,438	\$39,660	\$11,585	\$51,245	\$140,683
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,987,333</b>	<b>\$4,987,334</b>	<b>\$3,487,333</b>	<b>\$8,474,667</b>	<b>\$40,462,000</b>

\* Counties with smaller caseload sizes receive a minimum floor of \$10,000. This is based on county foster care caseload and the local Regional Market Rates rates as of January 2018.

\*\* A minimum floor was incorporated to ensure that counties receive an allocation no less than \$17,500 for the child care navigator and \$1,000 for trauma-informed care training components.

A forthcoming County Fiscal Letter will be provided to redistribute funds from any counties not participating in the Bridge Program. The appropriated funds must be used to supplement and not supplant resources already dedicated to activities for this purpose.

## Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program) July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023

### I. PROGRAM CONTACTS

<b>COUNTY:</b>
<b>Primary Contact:</b>
Department/Title:
Email:
Phone:
<b>Secondary Contact:</b>
Department/Title:
Email:
Phone:
<b>Fiscal Contact:</b>
Department/Title:
Email:
Phone:
<b>Data Contact:</b>
Department/Title:
Email:
Phone:

### II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND PROJECTED OUTCOMES

Voucher Distribution	<input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Payment Program	Contact name: Phone: Email:
Child Care Navigator	Child Care Resource & Referral Agency	Contact name: Phone: Email:
Trauma-informed Care Training	Child Care Resource & Referral Agency	Contact name: Phone: Email:

Ages of children served by Bridge Program voucher (county set criteria).	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 13-21 (children with exceptional needs, and severely disabled children up to age 21)
Will the county child welfare agency establish additional eligibility criteria/local priorities for the Bridge Program? Please provide additional eligibility criteria or local priorities (i.e. prioritizing the 0-5 population). If additional space is needed, include as an attachment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please describe <input type="checkbox"/> No

## Attachment B – Directors Certification

Projected issuance of Child Care Vouchers (include ages of children and number of emergency placements and compelling reason placements).	Total Vouchers by age	Emergency Placements	Compelling Reason
	0-2	0-2	0-2
	3-5	3-5	3-5
	6-12	6-12	6-12
	Total	Total	Total

Projected number of Bridge Families to be served by the Child Care Navigator

Projected number of child care providers to be served by the training

Projected number child care providers to receive coaching

Based on the above projections, what amount of funding are you requesting to serve eligible Bridge Program families? Please provide your estimates below:
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FY 2021-22
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### III. SIGNATURES

**The success of the Bridge Program is contingent upon open communication, collaboration, and transparency between the participating agencies. Your signature below signifies agreement to support this partnership.**

#### ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT PROGRAM SIGNATURE

(The APP signature is only required if county is contracting with the APP for the child care voucher payment.)

Date:

Agency Representative's Name (print)

Title:

Signature:

#### RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCY SIGNATURE

(The R&R signature is only required if the R&R has not opted out of the program.)

Date:

Agency Representative's Name (print)

Title:

Signature:

**COUNTY DIRECTOR'S CERTIFICATION**

I certify that the county will administer the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children pursuant to the conditions set forth by the California Department of Social Services. In so doing, the county will, to the maximum extent, leverage federal available pursuant to Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act. I attest that the information completed above and attached is true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director's Name (print)                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_