

April 10, 2021

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-43**

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide guidance on the disbursement and spending parameters of the \$9,476,701 California Adult Protective Services (APS) has received from the federal Administration for Community Living. The California Department of Social Services will be distributing the funds to the 58 county APS agencies based on population and caseloads. The funds are designed to enhance and improve Adult Protective Services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by supplementing APS programs.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
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**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
GOVERNOR

April 10, 2021

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-43

**TO:** ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICE MANAGERS

**SUBJECT:** **GUIDANCE REGARDING THE DISBURSEMENT OF  
CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL  
APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2021 FUNDS TO COUNTY ADULT  
PROTECTIVE SERVICES AGENCIES**

**REFERENCE:** [CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL  
APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2021: GRANTS TO ENHANCE  
ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES TO RESPOND TO COVID-19](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide guidance on the disbursement and spending parameters of the Grants to Enhance Adult Protective Services to Respond to COVID-19 funding opportunity to implement Section 2042(b) of Subtitle B of Title XX of the Social Security Act, otherwise known as the Elder Justice Act (EJA) as authorized and funded through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021. California's Adult Protective Services (APS) programs have received \$9,476,701 from the federal Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living. As detailed in County Fiscal Letter (CFL) 20/21-88, each county will receive a calculated amount based on their percentage of the state's APS caseload. The allocation has also been adjusted to ensure each county receive a minimum of \$1,000. The supplemental funds are designed to enhance and improve APS response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A second CFL will detail the process counties are to follow to claim costs to their allotment.

### **Background**

The Administration for Community Living has established the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 as authorized in the Elder Justice Act Section 2042(b) of Title XX of the Social Security Act. In accordance with these statutes, the purpose of this appropriation is to enhance and improve protective services provided by APS in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The total amount of funds available is \$93,880,000, with California's share, based on senior population, being \$9,476,701. The total being distributed to the counties is \$9,221,722, with \$254,979

being allocated for an evaluation study detailing how the funds were used to serve APS clients and programs throughout California. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in partnership with a contracted university researcher, will be reaching out to the counties to participate in the study at a later date.

The particulars of the application process were outlined in Federal Register 2021-02091, referenced above. The CDSS has submitted to the Administration for Community Living (1) the required Letter of Assurance, which promises that California will adhere to the restrictions and parameters guiding the receipt and use of the funds, and (2) an initial spending plan that outlines the categories in which California counties will be asked to utilize the grant money. Once received, the funds will be distributed to the 58 counties.

### **Elements of the Appropriation**

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 provides general guidance on how the money can be used but leaves the specific parameters up to individual states. Federal Register 2021-02091 stipulates that these funds must supplement existing APS funding, programs, and services in response to the COVID-19 virus, not supplant general APS operations. In other words, the monies from this appropriation cannot be used to replace existing funding but rather add to it. Any individual who meets California's statutory or regulatory criteria for client APS services is eligible to benefit from these funds. The funds are to be allocated to county APS programs only and cannot be used to supplant COVID-related costs for any other county programs.

The CDSS will be required to submit semi-annual federal financial reports and annual program reports related to the activities performed. The CDSS will periodically reach out to counties to collect data and other information about how the funds are being spent in order to meet the federal reporting requirements. The initial reports will be due to the Administration for Community Living on October 30, 2021.

It is anticipated that the funds will be available for distribution in early April 2021. Counties must spend their disbursement on activities occurring between April 1, 2021, and September 30, 2022.

### **COVID-19 Categories**

Each county will receive a calculated amount based on their percentage of the state's APS caseload. While maximum flexibility is afforded the counties in determining how they will spend the funds, counties are advised to exercise that discretion within the scope of the following COVID-19 related categories that supplement existing practices and programs:

- Costs for, and associated with, assisting APS clients in securing the least restrictive emergency or alternative housing options possible, along with the expenses that come with the coordination of transitions in the level of care as appropriate.
- Supplementing APS' clients' food resources beyond California's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (i.e. CalFresh) and any other programs clients may be utilizing, including the Great Plates program.
- Supplementing the costs of transporting APS clients to necessary appointments, such as medical and COVID-19 vaccination appointments.
- The continued expense of ensuring that APS clients' health needs, both physical and mental, are being adequately addressed during the pandemic. This could include partnership with public health nurses to expand home visits to clients who are homebound, and potentially providing in-home COVID-19 vaccinations. In addition, funds may be used to increase assistance and support helping clients understand and avoid COVID-19 scams that proliferate on the Internet.
- Addressing technology gaps that have hampered APS social workers and clients during the pandemic, including purchase of tablets or other electronic devices, to facilitate safe communication between clients and support personnel that have been limited because in-person visits were not permissible. This could include devices or Wi-Fi service for APS clients and/or county APS staff. Per the grant's requirements, purchases of equipment with a value of more than \$5,000 require prior written approval from the Administration for Community Living. The CDSS APS staff will review all county requests for purchases requiring prior written approval and then submit them to the federal Administration for Community Living on behalf of counties. To submit a request to purchase technology equipment over \$5,000 with these funds, email the following information to [aps@dss.ca.gov](mailto:aps@dss.ca.gov):
  - Identification of and cost for purchase
  - Purpose and intended use of the purchase
  - Market research done (i.e., obtaining bids, assessment of lease vs. purchase)
  - Efforts to adhere to "Buy American"

Purchase of the equipment should not be made until CDSS APS staff confirms to the county that written approval is received from the Administration for Community Living. Once approval is received, your county may then follow its own procurement policies for the purchases.

- Enhancing and extending APS case management for clients whose lives were either directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19, and whose cases cannot be closed in normal time frames. The COVID-19 impacts may include isolation or loss of support systems, income, food resources, or housing. Counties may pay for extended hours/overtime for staff or hire temporary staff in order to fulfill these case management duties.
- Costs associated with establishing new or improving existing APS processes for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This grant also provides counties the added opportunity to coordinate with their local tribal communities in responding to the needs and issues that have arisen as a result of COVID-19. Native Americans, along with the Native Alaskan population, have suffered disproportionately from the Coronavirus.

The Administration for Community Living has provided the following resource for the most prevalent [questions related to the grant](#):

Please note, even if the pandemic and/or state of emergency ends and pre-pandemic practices resume prior to the grant's end date, the September 30, 2022, closure remains in place. At that time, all activities and practices funded by the grant must be complete.

If you have questions regarding this ACL, or the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021, please contact CDSS APS at [aps@dss.ca.gov](mailto:aps@dss.ca.gov) or 916-651-5111.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By:***

DEBBI THOMSON  
Deputy Director  
Adult Programs Division