

March 3, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER (ACWDL)

This letter provides county Child Welfare Departments (CWDs) information about opting in for Emergency Child Care Bridge Program funding in fiscal year 2020-21 if the county had not already done so when ACL 19-18 was released.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

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

March 3, 2020

ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JENNIFER HERNANDEZ, Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY CHILD CARE BRIDGE PROGRAM FOR FOSTER
CHILDREN OPTING IN FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

REFERENCE: [ALL COUNTY LETTER 19-18](#), [COUNTY FISCAL LETTER 18/19-04](#); [\(CFL\) 18/19-04E](#); [\(CFL\) 19/20-52](#); [ACWDL DATED 08/23/19](#)

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide an opportunity for those counties who are not currently participating in the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program) to opt in for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021. The goals of the Bridge Program are to increase the number of foster children successfully placed in home-based family care settings, increase placement stability, increase the capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care, and maximize funding to support the child care needs of eligible 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

Eligible caregivers may receive a child care voucher to pay for child care costs for foster children in their care ages birth through age 12, and for children and youth with exceptional needs up to age 21. A voucher is a time-limited payment that may be issued for up to six-months or until the child is successfully transitioned into long-term child care paid through another source (subsidized or unsubsidized). If the family 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 the family secures a long-term child care placement, the Bridge Program voucher shall be terminated.

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](#). The California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Division 1, Chapter 19, Subchapter 2.5, 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:

- Resource families and families that have a child placed with them for an emergency or compelling reason;
- Licensed foster family homes or certified family homes;
- Approved homes of relatives or Non-Related Extended Family Members; and
- Parenting foster youth and nonminor dependent parents.

Counties may establish additional criteria based on local priorities and available funding for Bridge Program eligible populations. Child care providers qualified for other child care subsidies 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 Resource and Referral (R&R) program, works with the eligible family, child's social worker or probation officer, and when appropriate the child and family team to assess child care opportunities and provide consumer education to the family based on the child's age and needs.

Navigator services shall be made available to any child in foster care, any child previously in foster care who has returned to his or her home of origin, and any child of parents involved in the child welfare system, including any child who meets the eligibility criteria for the Bridge Program. Eligibility for navigator services shall not be contingent on a child's receipt of a Bridge Program voucher.

The child care navigator will:

- Assist with accessing child care at the time of placement as well as identifying child care options appropriate to the child's age and needs;
- Connect the family to information and resources about school readiness and child care to empower families and improve their ability to access resources and make informed decisions about the child care needs of the child;

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

Trauma-informed care training and coaching

Child care providers will receive access to trauma-informed care training and coaching to assist in applying the training curriculum. Training and coaching are intended to help child care providers learn strategies for working with children who have experienced trauma. The R&R program in receipt of funding is responsible for providing trauma-informed care training and coaching to child care providers working with children in the foster care system, and children of parenting foster youth. The California Child Care [Resource and Referral Network](#) (Network) developed and coordinates the training content to be used by all participating local R&R programs. Eligibility for trauma-informed care training 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 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 for 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;
- Determine eligibility and establish local priorities and program parameters for the county's implementation of the Bridge Program, consistent with the goals of the Program;
- Distribute the voucher payment directly to the eligible family or child care provider. Counties may elect to contract with a local Alternate Payment Program 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; and

- Collect and submit monthly data and outcomes to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) using the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children Report ([CCB18](#)).

Instructions for county participation

Counties newly participating in the Bridge Program for FY 2020-21, must complete and submit a plan included as Attachment B. Counties that have opted in for FY 2019-20 and 2020-21 do not need to submit a plan unless changes have occurred. Changes taking place throughout the year must be submitted to CDSS as an amended plan. The completed plan must be submitted electronically to CDSS Child Care and Intergenerational Services Bureau by **May 1, 2020**. Please e-mail completed plans to: ChildCareBridge@dss.ca.gov.

Attachment A displays the planning allocation for FY 2020-21. The final allocation for FY 2020-21 will be released through a subsequent County Fiscal Letter (CFL). The child care navigator and training allocations were calculated by determining each county's percentage of eligible caseload to the statewide total eligible caseload. The voucher allocation was calculated utilizing the eligible caseload multiplied by the RMR for the appropriate category to develop each county's percentage of the total statewide allocation. All funding is subject to appropriation in the annual Budget Act. The funds appropriated will be allocated annually.

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 every foster child otherwise eligible and in need of child care in the county. Therefore, counties shall consider the intent of the legislation, budgetary constraints and opportunities, and the best approach to serve the system needs of foster parents, children, and families. Counties shall 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 children would be 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 to ensure funding or choose to utilize/leverage local and federal funds to cover any additional costs 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 eligible 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, CDSS will distribute any unallocated Bridge Program funds among participating counties. Final allocations for July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, will be included in forthcoming CFLs. Final allocations are contingent on the 2020-21 State budget. Please be advised that allocations are likely to change in future years as the caseload and number of counties that choose to participate may fluctuate. Bridge Program fiscal questions can be directed to CDSS Fiscal Systems at fiscal.systems@dss.ca.gov.

Procurement

Due to the circumstances of this project, 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 trauma-informed care 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 Data Systems and Survey Design Section (DSSDS) website at <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Research-and-Data/Report-Form-and-Instructions>. All Bridge Program opt-in counties are required to submit the report via email to DSSDS at admccb18@dss.ca.gov. If you have any questions regarding the completion of the CCB 18, please contact DSSDS at admccb18@dss.ca.gov.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, please contact the Child Care and Intergenerational Services Bureau at ChildCareBridge@dss.ca.gov or at (916) 654-0611.

Attachments:

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

Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program)
July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021

I. PROGRAM CONTACTS

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

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.)

 Agency Representative's Name (print)

Date: _____

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.)

 Agency Representative's Name (print)

Date: _____

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: _____

**FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 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	\$729,305	\$140,324	\$60,395	\$200,719	\$930,024
ALPINE	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,000	\$33,500	\$43,500
AMADOR	\$23,807	\$32,500	\$2,949	\$35,449	\$59,256
BUTTE	\$286,863	\$58,666	\$34,402	\$93,068	\$379,931
CALAVERAS	\$38,669	\$34,095	\$4,915	\$39,010	\$77,679
COLUSA	\$27,143	\$33,094	\$3,713	\$36,807	\$63,950
CONTRA COSTA	\$613,654	\$74,045	\$52,859	\$126,904	\$740,558
DEL NORTE	\$35,183	\$33,458	\$4,151	\$37,609	\$72,792
EL DORADO	\$158,709	\$44,652	\$17,583	\$62,235	\$220,944
FRESNO	\$971,869	\$131,286	\$121,554	\$252,840	\$1,224,709
GLENN	\$34,044	\$33,913	\$4,696	\$38,609	\$72,653
HUMBOLDT	\$248,545	\$55,844	\$31,016	\$86,860	\$335,405
IMPERIAL	\$221,545	\$52,842	\$27,412	\$80,254	\$301,799
INYO	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,092	\$33,592	\$43,592
KERN	\$697,526	\$104,076	\$88,899	\$192,975	\$890,501
KINGS	\$152,848	\$45,652	\$18,784	\$64,436	\$217,284
LAKE	\$84,147	\$39,009	\$10,812	\$49,821	\$133,968
LASSEN	\$22,092	\$32,548	\$3,058	\$35,606	\$57,698
LOS ANGELES	\$12,444,519	\$1,345,135	\$1,326,278	\$2,671,413	\$15,115,932
MADERA	\$149,307	\$45,652	\$18,784	\$64,436	\$213,743
MARIN	\$39,199	\$32,500	\$2,731	\$35,231	\$74,430
MARIPOSA	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,000	\$33,500	\$43,500
MENDOCINO	\$103,242	\$40,192	\$12,232	\$52,424	\$155,666
MERCED	\$215,458	\$53,296	\$27,959	\$81,255	\$296,713
MODOC	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,420	\$33,920	\$43,920
MONO	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,000	\$33,500	\$43,500
MONTEREY	\$204,735	\$49,747	\$23,699	\$73,446	\$278,181
NAPA	\$71,408	\$36,188	\$7,427	\$43,615	\$115,023
NEVADA	\$38,120	\$33,458	\$4,151	\$37,609	\$75,729
ORANGE	\$1,435,518	\$144,117	\$136,953	\$281,070	\$1,716,588
PLACER	\$87,913	\$38,009	\$9,611	\$47,620	\$135,533
PLUMAS	\$23,419	\$32,548	\$3,058	\$35,606	\$59,025
RIVERSIDE	\$1,500,665	\$179,426	\$179,327	\$358,753	\$1,859,418
SACRAMENTO	\$1,001,076	\$125,825	\$115,001	\$240,826	\$1,241,902
SAN BENITO	\$20,285	\$32,500	\$2,184	\$34,684	\$54,969
SAN BERNARDINO	\$3,602,303	\$388,095	\$429,751	\$817,846	\$4,420,149
SAN DIEGO	\$1,386,458	\$147,485	\$140,993	\$288,478	\$1,674,936
SAN FRANCISCO	\$551,938	\$87,574	\$33,091	\$120,665	\$672,603
SAN JOAQUIN	\$640,621	\$95,521	\$78,633	\$174,154	\$814,775
SAN LUIS OBISPO	\$200,308	\$48,109	\$21,733	\$69,842	\$270,150
SAN MATEO	\$107,011	\$37,280	\$8,737	\$46,017	\$153,028
SANTA BARBARA	\$202,173	\$46,563	\$19,876	\$66,439	\$268,612
SANTA CLARA	\$724,110	\$79,597	\$59,520	\$139,117	\$863,227
SANTA CRUZ	\$117,464	\$39,646	\$11,576	\$51,222	\$168,686
SHASTA	\$224,415	\$53,843	\$28,614	\$82,457	\$306,872
SIERRA	\$10,000	\$32,500	\$1,000	\$33,500	\$43,500
SISKIYOU	\$49,078	\$35,460	\$6,553	\$42,013	\$91,091
SOLANO	\$190,754	\$48,201	\$21,843	\$70,044	\$260,798
SONOMA	\$256,249	\$82,023	\$26,429	\$108,452	\$364,701
STANISLAUS	\$340,908	\$66,037	\$43,248	\$109,285	\$450,193
SUTTER	\$78,932	\$38,190	\$9,829	\$48,019	\$126,951
TEHAMA	\$70,881	\$38,190	\$9,829	\$48,019	\$118,900
TRINITY	\$13,593	\$32,500	\$1,856	\$34,356	\$47,949
TULARE	\$579,465	\$93,065	\$75,684	\$168,749	\$748,214
TUOLUMNE	\$51,042	\$35,187	\$6,225	\$41,412	\$92,454
VENTURA	\$440,971	\$67,402	\$44,887	\$112,289	\$553,260
YOLO	\$321,034	\$57,302	\$32,763	\$90,065	\$411,099
YUBA	\$96,812	\$40,467	\$12,558	\$53,025	\$149,837
TOTAL	\$31,987,333	\$4,987,334	\$3,487,333	\$8,474,667	\$40,462,000

* 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.