

Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is administering the Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants Project (“Project”). The project provides one-time disaster relief assistance to undocumented adult immigrants impacted by COVID-19, who are ineligible for most other forms of pandemic assistance, including direct assistance under the CARES Act and unemployment insurance.¹ CDSS-funded nonprofit organizations will distribute \$75 million² in disaster relief assistance to an estimated 150,000 undocumented adult immigrants. Nonprofit organizations will begin providing these disaster assistance services in May.

Direct Assistance: Eligible undocumented adult immigrants may receive one-time COVID-19 disaster relief assistance at a value of \$500. A limit of two undocumented adults per household can receive this assistance (maximum assistance of \$1,000 per household).

Eligibility Criteria: Nonprofit organizations will assess individuals for assistance eligibility based on further guidance from the Department. At a minimum, an eligible individual must provide information that (1) they are an undocumented adult (person over the age of 18); (2) not eligible for federal COVID-19 related assistance, including CARES Act tax stimulus payments or pandemic unemployment benefits; and, (3) has experienced a hardship as a result of COVID-19.

Assistance Delivery: CDSS will select immigrant-serving community-based nonprofit organizations to conduct targeted outreach, application assistance, and delivery of the disaster relief assistance to eligible individuals. The list of the selected nonprofit organizations will be available in May. The identified organizations have existing agreements with CDSS to provide immigration services and have the expertise and experience to assist immigrants with other wrap around supports including direct delivery or referrals to legal, social, health and mental health services.

These nonprofit organizations will prioritize reaching low-income undocumented adults across the numerous ethnic and language immigrant groups in California.

Nonprofit staff will assist applicants in filling out an online form located on a centralized web portal developed by a nonprofit organization with CDSS funding. The selected organizations will deliver the assistance directly to qualified individuals. Based on their organizational capacity, nonprofit staff may use a variety of methods to provide outreach, application assistance, document verification, and assistance delivery. Staff may communicate with applicants telephonically, online (e.g. video conferencing), or in-person with proper physical distancing to ensure the health and safety of staff and applicants.

¹ Undocumented adults without social security numbers are ineligible for the federal CARES Act stimulus payments of up to \$1,200 per adult and \$500 for children under 16. Without work authorization, they are also ineligible for the \$600 federal augmentation to the weekly payments under the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program. (See: [Understanding the Impact of Key Provisions of COVID-19 Relief Bills on Immigrant Communities](#), National Immigration Law Center, April 2020.)

² The total amount allocated for the Disaster Relief for Immigrants Project is \$79.8 million, including a new allocation of \$63.3 of Emergency Response for COVID-19 Response and \$16.5 million of Rapid Response Funds. The Rapid Response Fund was established in 2019 to award grants or contracts to entities that provide critical assistance to immigrants during times of need. Seventy-five million dollars will support direct assistance and an estimated \$4.8 million will support program administration through qualified nonprofit organizations.

Privacy Protections: The information provided to the nonprofit organizations, including the operator of the web portal, will only be used to confirm eligibility. The organizations will not provide any personal information (e.g. name, address, etc.) to any government agency as part of this project. The organizations will provide general demographic information (e.g. age, gender, preferred language, etc.) to the CDSS.

Philanthropic Partnership: The Project is designed as part of a public-private collaboration with Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). GCIR’s **California Immigrant Resilience Fund** will work alongside the state investment to support regions of California with less nonprofit infrastructure and capacity that may require more administrative flexibility.

Regional Funding Distribution: Below is the proposed regional distribution of the direct assistance funding based on regional estimates of the undocumented population of California and a minimum allocation of \$5 million per region:³

Region	Counties	% of State Undocumented Population	Funding by Region	# of individuals served (@\$500/pp)
Northern California	Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sonoma Tehama, Trinity	3%	\$5,000,000	10,000
Central Valley	Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba	13%	\$10,000,000	20,000
Central Coast	Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Ventura	8%	\$5,000,000	10,000
Bay Area	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano	20%	\$15,000,000	30,000
Inland Empire	Inyo, Riverside, San Bernardino	9%	\$7,500,000	15,000
San Diego	Imperial, San Diego	7%	\$5,000,000	10,000
Orange	Orange	9%	\$7,500,000	15,000
Los Angeles	Los Angeles	31%	\$20,000,000	40,000

³ The statewide percentages of the undocumented population in each region are based on the Public Policy Institute’s (PPIC) estimates of the undocumented population by county in California. See: [Just the Facts: Undocumented Immigrants in California](#), PPIC, March 2017.