

Item #7  
8/18/20

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**From:** Leslie Martinez <lmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2020 2:46 PM  
**To:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 6.1

Lanare Community United Comments Below:

1. It is increasingly necessary to get testing at the Lanare Community center. We are begging as a group. It is urgent and we want to see who needs to be quarantined and how we as a community can manage to help out residents.
2. We strongly support a housing retention program that includes utilities. People need help to stay home and safe.
3. Lanare Community Center needs to be invested in by the county, We need an A/C to ensure that during this heatwave, folks can stay cool and remain socially distanced.
4. The county must provide help for the financial cost of contracting COVID-19. Folks need to feel comfortable that they will be able to pay for the medical services they need.

Many folks are too scared to get testing or do not know where to go get tested. There are families who do not feel safe disclosing that they are infected. You all need reach our communities and tell them there is help.

**Leslie Martinez (she/her/hers)**

Policy Advocate

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HEM #7  
8/18/20

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**From:** Leslie Martinez <lmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2020 2:13 PM  
**To:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 6.1

Comment from Sonia Gomez, Cantua Creek

My husband and I both found out on Monday that we have tested positive for COVID-19 after being quarantined for 5 days. We are both farmworkers and are unable to get groceries, pay rent, and take care of our 5 children. We are scared and do not know where to go from here. We ask that you all find it in your hearts to provide families like ours that have given so much effort to ensure food gets to your tables. We need help with rent, utilities, food, and support so we can stay home safely. We hope you can help us.

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**Leslie Martinez (she/her/hers)**

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**From:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** Public comment

**From:** Grisanti Avendaño <[grisanti@yocalifornia.org](mailto:grisanti@yocalifornia.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2020 10:55 PM  
**To:** BOSComments <[BOSComments@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:BOSComments@fresnocountyca.gov)>  
**Subject:** Public comment

Hello Board of Supervisors,

My name is Grisanti Avendaño and I have lived in beloved Fresno for the last 25 years. My address is 261 S. Callisch ave Fresno, CA 93721. I am disappointed once again by this body on the response to vulnerable families in Fresno County. Our families are frontline workers that need protection as we navigate this pandemic and as they once again have to pick between safety and survival.

Our families need housing protection, our families need safety and essential services such as food, transportation, clean water, covid testing and resources to make rent and utilities. Many of them have lost their jobs and wages as they have contracted Covid and don't have the luxury of paid time off yet feed the nation from our fields and factories.

I am asking you to allocate 5 million for housing protection now and show your commitment and support to the people that ensure we are all fed and taken care of at different capacities.

Thank you for your time.

-Grisanti

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**From:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** BOS: CARE FOR the PEOPLE OF FRESNO

**From:** Faye Balunsat <[fbalun@yahoo.com](mailto:fbalun@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2020 12:07 AM  
**To:** BOSComments <[BOSComments@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:BOSComments@fresnocountyca.gov)>  
**Subject:** BOS: CARE FOR the PEOPLE OF FRESNO

Fresno County Board of Supervisors

The citizens of Fresno need \$5 million in rental assistance relief & resources directed toward testing, direct income, translation services & accessibility for BOS meetings!

Our families are essential workers on the frontlines showing up to the fields, packing houses, grocery stores and hospitals.

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**From:** Leslie Martinez <lmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2020 8:43 AM  
**To:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 6.1 BOS 8/18  
**Attachments:** COVID19-8\_18-BOS.pdf

**CAUTION!!! - EXTERNAL EMAIL - THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK**

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Chairman Buddy Mendes,  
Vice Chairman Steve Brandau,  
Supervisor Brian Pacheco,  
Supervisor Sal Quintero,  
Supervisor Nathan Magsig

August 18, 2020

**Re: Agenda Item 6.1. COVID-19 Response**

Dear Chairman Mendes and Fresno County Supervisors,

Over the past several months, we have continuously attempted to work with Fresno County to address the various concerns related to COVID-19 and highlight community priorities for the use of CARES dollars and other relief funding.

**We Continue to Urge Fresno County to Support Effective and Equitable Access to Public Meetings and Information**

We are pleased that this board has added an update from Fresno County Public Health officials on COVID-19 response to the Board's agenda, but we once again respectfully reiterate our previous request to disclose all the information that has been discussed during the unlawful closed sessions. Much like that has been iterated by Dr. Vohra, COVID-19 has not disappeared, and now more than ever we must provide as much information as possible for residents in this county.

Additionally, we once again urge Fresno County to adopt policy that will allow members of the community to participate telephonically and will facilitate participation of both English and non-English speaking residents through translation support. Doing so will uphold the basic principles of a functioning democracy, protect vulnerable, at-risk and immunocompromised individuals from contracting COVID-19, allow you to respond appropriately to community concerns and ultimately, communicate leadership during unprecedented times.

Fresno County's actions and inactions that discourage remote participation, will lead to increased infections and will perpetuate or even exacerbate COVID-19's disproportionate impact

on people of color along with continued inaction to address the severe impacts of COVID-19 on Latinx communities. Additionally, given the disproportionate effects of the disease on immunocompromised and older residents, the Board's policies are tantamount to an exclusion of people from participating in Board meetings on the basis of age and medical condition.

We ask that this Board make public all meetings with the Governor-deployed Strike Team, and allow CBOs and constituents to fully participate in these conversations to ensure that actions being discussed are guided by the on-the-ground expertise of community members. More specifically, the County must provide public notice in advance of Strike Team Meetings in compliance with the Brown Act, provide remote participation options that allow constituents the opportunity to call in to these meetings and provide verbal and written public comments, and provide interpretation so that non-English speaking constituents are able to participate. This is especially crucial considering that communities where languages other than English are spoken are among the hardest hit by COVID-19. Each decision that is being made in these meetings will directly affect the safety of BIPOC communities. In order for these efforts to be successful we must hear from community leaders directly without making assumptions about what is needed in Fresno County communities most impacted by COVID-19. The voices of those directly dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 must be afforded the opportunity to inform the policies and investments of the Strike Team.

### **COVID-19 Disproportionately Impacts Latino Residents**

COVID-19 continues to impact Latino's at a much greater rate than white residents in Fresno. Fresno County's Data and Surveillance Dashboard demonstrates disproportionate impact to the Latino community. According to available data, Latinos in Fresno County account for 51.2% of all COVID-19 cases, while white residents account for only 10.8% of cases. (Race and ethnicity data is unavailable for 29.7% of cases).<sup>[1]</sup> Similarly, based on the same data, Latinos are more than twice as likely as white people in Fresno to be diagnosed with COVID-19. Many health experts cite disproportionate representation in the essential workforce, limited access to healthcare, close living quarters including farmworkers living in farm labor camps, as some of the main causes.

We remain particularly concerned about rural, Latino communities and agricultural workers and their access to critical health services and protections. For example, in Cantua Creek, a majority Latinx community, there was no timely notice of free testing and very few residents were able to benefit from the service. In various communities, residents are often confused on how to register for testing and many unaware of where they can get free testing.



Finally, testing is rarely located directly in unincorporated communities, many having to travel up to an hour to a rural city to get testing.

### **Community Priorities**

A steady increase in cases and hospitalizations, the vulnerability of older and immunocompromised residents, disproportionate impacts on people of color, and now a dangerous heat wave all reinforce the urgent need for the County to take action to establish protective measures to protect the health of its population through its public health program, through its investments to protect impacted residents, and by meaningfully engaging with community on COVID-19 policy and investment decisions in a safe manner.

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability has been in direct communication with various residents in unincorporated communities and has expressed their priorities since March of 2020. Community Residents are, once again, calling on Fresno County to respond appropriately to COVID-19 and act in the interest of the health and well-being residents by ensuring:

1. Remote Telephonic Participation for public meetings to ensure safe dialogue with their elected officials to ensure all COVID-19 efforts are being worked with in tandem with community leaders.
2. Regular and accessible testing in unincorporated communities, that do not require online registration, email accounts, or a car to access testing.
3. Measures to protect essential workers and volunteers. Employers and the County must continue to regularly provide PPE, adequate spacing, air circulation, staggered breaks, notification of available time off, and notification of exposure.
4. Investment in broadband infrastructure for unincorporated communities
5. Provide financial support for cost of COVID-19 treatment to vulnerable communities
6. Invest in cooling centers in unincorporated communities, such as Lanare, Cantua Creek, Three Rocks, that have infrastructure to encourage social distancing.

We urge the county to show leadership and guidance towards addressing the disproportionate impacts on Black and Brown communities in Fresno County. We challenge this county to work with CBOs and community leaders who work and or live in disadvantaged unincorporated



communities to provide resources to help ensure everyone in Fresno County is taken care of and supported during these times.

As always, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability is here to assist and support Fresno County in any way possible in achieving these community priorities.

Respectfully,

Leslie Martinez  
Policy Advocate

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[1] <https://cofgisonline.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=1f82e8eb24c0403c90e774202c5dafa>

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**From:** Kassandra Hishida <kassandrahishida@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2020 8:30 AM  
**To:** BOSComments  
**Subject:** Fund Fresno: Calling for \$5M in rental assistance relief, testing, translation services and more!

**CAUTION!!! - EXTERNAL EMAIL - THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK**

Good morning,

My name is Kassandra Hishida. I am a resident of Fresno and I'm reaching out to urge our Board of Supervisors to invest \$5 million in the health and safety of our community.

**We must uphold the rights of our Fresno County communities who lack basic resources and are already being evicted or threatened with eviction.** Housing is a human right. Access to safe and affordable drinking water is a human right. We need \$5 million NOW to supporting the following:

- rental assistance relief
- resources directed toward testing
- direct income
- translation services
- accessibility for BOS meetings

**\$250K is not enough!** I have been working with the grassroots, volunteer-led Central Valley Mutual Aid Network since March 2020. We have been fundraising to provide relief funds and cash assistance to San Joaquin Valley communities who have faced barriers to accessing state and local COVID-19 resources. We currently have a waitlist of hundreds of community members waiting for funds, many from Fresno County. \$250K would not even be enough to support the families currently on our waitlist, let alone the broader Fresno County communities who all deserve and need support from the County. The folks reaching out to our network have been sharing stories of how COVID-19 is impacting them. From loss of income due to COVID-19 to lack of access to healthcare to being evicted, it's clear that the pandemic has been hitting our most vulnerable communities the hardest. It's time for the Board of Supervisors to step up and show up for us by channeling resources to our communities most impacted by the pandemic!

**BOS meetings are not accessible!** I also urge the board to invest in translation services and additional measures to increase the accessibility of Fresno County BOS meetings. I help care for a high-risk, immunocompromised family member and so I have to choose between coming to a board meeting or caring for my family. This is not ok! And of course it is critical that there is translation for accessibility to our diverse communities.

Thank you,  
Kassandra Hishida