

## As Congress considers COVID-19 legislation, Children's Action Alliance urges them to consider the following:



### RELIEF TO STATES AND FAMILIES

*The next round of economic relief should target families and the state, local, and tribal governments that serve them, especially public education.*

- **Expand stimulus payments to households who filed 2018 and 2019 taxes under an ITIN.** “Recovery Rebates” are a special tax credit for working Americans. Immigrant taxpayers play a pivotal role in our economy and deserve the same considerations as those who were born in this country.
- **Loosen the restrictions on state budget relief funds in the CARES Act** to allow more flexibility for states to address budget shortfalls caused by a decline in state tax revenue. While providing flexibility, ensure funds are used as intended through the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements for public education and health funding.
- **Increase the maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit by 15% and increase the minimum benefit from \$16 to \$30** to support the nutritional needs of children and families.



### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Public schools need additional financial resources to operate safely and they must have adequate resources to respond equitably to the needs of all families.*

- **Provide additional fiscal relief to states so that they do not have to make deep cuts to public education.** The Arizona Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) has released preliminary estimates that Arizona will have a combined shortfall of \$1.5 billion in the next three fiscal years. More fiscal relief will be needed for Arizona to prevent devastating cuts to public education.

### CHILD CARE

*We must address the crisis in our child care systems by providing immediate and robust financial support.*



- **Increase fiscal support dedicated to childcare to a total of \$50 billion to offer immediate relief to providers, educators, and families during this crisis.** This funding must include enough flexibility to address the needs of communities and families for the duration of this crisis while still maintaining strong health and safety requirements that are especially important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Monies should be used to eliminate copayments and tuition for families during the crisis, to fund essential duty pay for childcare workers who work during the crisis, and to provide continued payments to providers.
- **Provide support and technical assistance to childcare providers** to navigate the small business loan application processes.



## HEALTH CARE

*We must bolster our public health systems and ensure all families, regardless of income or immigration status, can access the care they need when they need it.*

- **Increase the federal match rate for Medicaid by a full 12% (an additional 5.8%) and extend the increase beyond the public health emergency** to absorb growing demand for services during the subsequent economy recovery period. Increasing the FMAP by a full 12% would bring much needed additional funding to bolster Arizona's health care system and support increased caseloads in Arizona's Medicaid Program (AHCCCS).
- **Continue the Medicaid maintenance of effort (MOE) provisions outlined in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and extend these provisions to state CHIP programs**, so that Arizonans participating in AHCCCS and KidsCare can maintain access to lifesaving health care.
- **Block implementation of Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Reform (MFAR)**. If the current proposed MFAR rule is implemented, Arizona's Medicaid agency (AHCCCS) could face a budget deficit of \$2 billion. Congress should override the proposed rule in the next stimulus package, preventing further financial damage to our struggling health care system.



## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

*Keep children in kinship care safe and out of an overburdened foster care system and older youth connected to services until they can successfully transition to independence.*

- **Increase the federal match rate for the Foster Care, Prevention, and Permanency Program** (Title IV-E) by a full 12% (an additional \$3.85 billion) and extend the increase beyond the public health emergency to absorb growth in demand for services during the subsequent economic recovery period.
- Provide \$2 billion to enable child welfare agencies to **provide families, kinship caregivers, and young people with a broad range of support services**, including assistance for transportation, housing, and utility payments.
- Provide \$30 million for **kinship navigator** programs to ensure kinship caregivers have access to information and resources, including food, safety supplies, technology, and COVID-19 testing.
- Provide \$500 million for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program **to ensure young people have access to supports, such as housing, food, and cash assistance**, and allow more of these funds to cover housing costs for foster youth. Funds could also be used for education and training vouchers, which help young people cover the cost of education.
- **Establish a moratorium on "aging out" of foster care** to ensure no young person is cut off from critical housing and support services during the public health emergency. This will bring federal dollars to Arizona to support this highly vulnerable population.

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