



## California Mayors Coalition

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### NEWS RELEASE

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## California Mayors Call on State for Equitable COVID-19 Relief for Cities

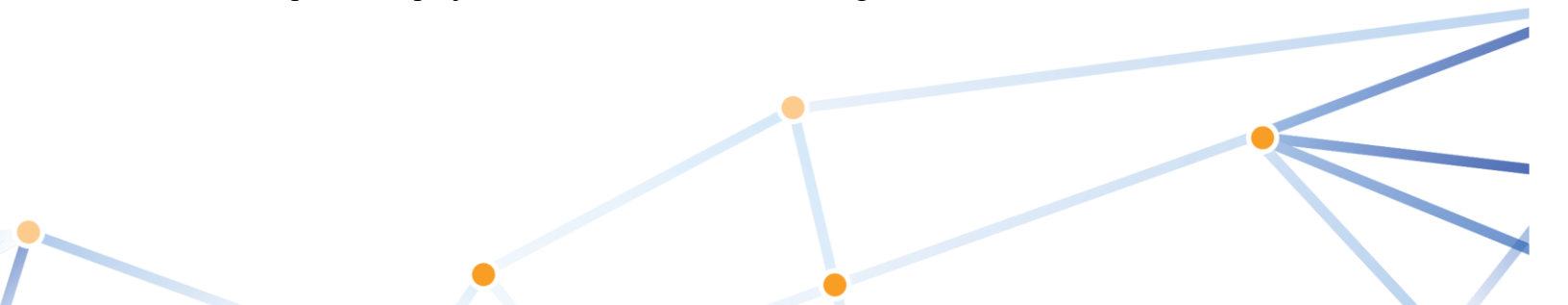
Fullerton, CA - In a seemingly rare bipartisan effort for these times, mayors from across the State of California have banded together to tackle the challenges brought about by COVID-19 and fight for equitable financial relief from the State. The California Mayors Coalition, an informal organization of 60+ mayors, sent [a letter](#) to Governor Gavin Newsom detailing the inequity of support that cities with a population of less than 300,000 have experienced. With a population of 66,847, the City of Laguna Niguel falls into this category.

When the State of California's 2020/2021 budget allocated \$500 million of federal CARES Act funding to cities, \$225 million went to 13 California cities with a population greater than 300,000 that did not receive a direct allocation from the federal CARES Act. Another \$275 million was allocated to cities with populations less than 300,000 residents; however, the 13 larger cities were allocated significantly more funding per resident than the smaller cities.

Six of those 13 cities with populations over 300,000 received funding in the amount of \$174 per resident. The other seven cities with populations over 300,000 received funding in the amount of \$85 per resident. However, the remaining cities with populations less than 300,000, which are where 72% of Californians reside, received funding in the amount of only \$12.28 per resident.

“We find it extremely troubling that the State would place the value of our residents at \$12.28 per person, while valuing residents of other California cities as high as \$174 per person,” said Jennifer Fitzgerald, California Mayors Coalition Founder and Mayor of Fullerton. “Had this federal funding been fairly distributed, smaller cities like my own would have been able to better address homelessness, public health, public safety, resident support, business assistance and other services related to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

And many California Mayors Coalition Members would agree and are feeling the [impacts](#) of this decision by the State. The City of Costa Mesa was forced to lay off 92 part-time employees and delay major infrastructure projects, including citywide street improvements and signal synchronization, and active transportation projects like bike routes and adding new sidewalks. Glendora had to reduce or



eliminate senior care, library and youth programs due to the inability to operate city facilities in a cost-effective manner under existing guidelines. Palm Springs had no choice but to reduce animal shelter services, homelessness services and public safety services, including reducing police department funding by 20% and cutting 10 officer positions. And every single city has witnessed beloved local businesses struggle and, far too often, board up their shops and close their doors forever.

Laguna Niguel Mayor Laurie Davies, a member of the California Mayors Coalition, stated, “I am very disappointed that the State of California has placed the value of our Laguna Niguel residents at an amount that is significantly lower than the value of residents of larger California cities. “Basing the funding distribution amounts simply on population size, while disregarding the fact that the vast majority of the state population is comprised of residents from these smaller cities, is a major oversight.” “I find it to be tremendously troubling that the State’s action has diminished the value of our City’s residents.”

[Stories like this](#), unfortunately, number in the thousands throughout the great State of California. Frontline cities have simply not been provided sufficient resources to provide critical support to businesses and residents, such as rent relief, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), homeless services and other programs. Therefore, the California Mayors Coalition is requesting that the State immediately provide equitable financial relief to cities, especially those with large revenue losses related to COVID-19 that received 12 times less per person than the largest cities in the state.

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