

## The COVID Crisis: Urgent Recommendations

### COMMUNICATIONS:

- Current information distribution methods used by the County are criminally inadequate. A thorough review of how information is disseminated to the Spanish-speaking community should be initiated, to expand the audience reached and to evaluate the effectiveness of messages.
- Providing information in Spanish should be prioritized equally with providing information in English. During the pandemic, the Spanish-speaking community is receiving information days behind everyone else.
- The County Department of Public Health should use Nixle to get public health information to the community, not just law enforcement alerts. (is being done in Napa and SF Counties)
- More education and outreach about the alert system is needed for the Spanish-speaking community.
- To account for Indigenous languages, alerts should provide a link to a homepage where video translations of the message can be accessed: Mixteco, Triqui, Chatino, Maya.
- Alerts should also be made in person to the community – volunteers could be trained to provide accurate information.
- The 211 County information line is inadequately maintained and updated in Spanish. The 211 County website is NOT translated thoroughly or completely, with correct links.
- More information should be pro-actively distributed in the community regarding ICE policies and practices during COVID. The County should adopt a formal COVID-related policy prohibiting ICE activity in the County.
- Information about COVID from the County has been totally inadequate. They have not produced or widely distributed any Public Service Announcement or information in Spanish about COVID services or relief.
- Channel 20, the information channel, is only in English.
- **Socoemergency.org translation link (upper right of homepage) does not function at all, and should be removed. Some pages are only partially translated, with links available only in English.**
- **Press conferences are routinely worse and less informative when delivered in Spanish. The Supervisors leave the press conference and their assistants deliver a short summary in Spanish. The interpreters are not professional and do not provide full and informative interpretation.**

- Townhalls from state elected officials representing Sonoma County have not even been available in Spanish.
- The County should disseminate information on all Spanish TV channels, all Spanish and bilingual newspapers and magazines in the County. The County should make a pro-active effort to widely distribute information not just on KBBF but on all Spanish radio stations and programs.
- The County should immediately produce and distribute Public Service Announcements and information promos in Spanish about COVID, Public Health orders, and County recovery resources. Currently, any coverage in Spanish has been initiated by individual broadcasters or the station itself – NOT the County.
- All information distributed by the County press office should be translated into Spanish and routinely circulated to all Spanish radio stations, TV stations, and all Spanish newspapers and magazines.
- The County should make a proactive effort to identify and distribute information through all communications networks used by people speaking indigenous languages in the county.
- Directing people to the County's webpage and Facebook page is insufficient outreach. Public education and information-sharing should also be conducted through community networks such as churches, community and non-profit organizations, and through public agencies like the library and police department. County-produced information about COVID and recovery resources should be available in all public spaces.
- Churches, school networks, and community organizations have not been effectively utilized as communication networks during the COVID crisis.

### **SERVICES:**

- Any aid distributed by the County should be available to all residents, regardless of immigration status.
- Very little information about COVID recovery resources is available in Spanish. No one knows how state aid for undocumented people will be distributed.
- COVID-related food programs, including Food Banks and senior meals programs, should recruit, incorporate, and reimburse neighborhood restaurants and rancheros (food trucks) in providing and distributing culturally appropriate food.
- Provide emergency shelter with centrally located bathroom and cooking facilities and handwashing stations for people without shelter. Extend the ban on displacement of homeless encampments until permanent shelter is secured.
- The County will provide and widely distribute information about where people can access free and low-cost healthcare. The County will ensure that laid-off workers

and their families who lost health insurance can access healthcare. The County will require local employers to provide sufficient paid sick days for employees, waiving the 90-day requirement to receive sick leave.

- The County will prioritize testing, contact tracing, and quarantine of vulnerable populations – people in the jail, nursing home residents, people without shelter, healthcare janitorial staff, healthcare workers.
- County agencies will proactively support the development of COAD as a network of community organizations providing emergency services. COAD will operate on the basis of strong principles of equity and inclusion.

### **LEGISLATION and POLICY:**

- Clear COVID safety guidelines for all categories of workers should be developed, with public education about these guidelines available in all languages spoken in the County. Specific guidelines should be developed for agricultural workers, grocery and retail workers, delivery drivers. Workers should be informed and educated about these guidelines.
- Employers in the County will be required to provide appropriate personal protective equipment for all workers interacting with the public. The County will enforce safety regulations through ordinances and inspections, to ensure safety regulations are being properly implemented.
- The County should immediately adopt a moratorium on all evictions, rent increases, and foreclosures to extend at least 6 months after the end of the COVID outbreak. No rent debt should be accumulated.
- The County should enact a rent stabilization and just cause eviction ordinance.
- The County should enact a just cause termination ordinance to keep workers employed until all recovery aid for employers is exhausted.
- The County will require its federal lobbyists and legislators to advocate for equal access to federal aid for undocumented and immigrant people. It is unconscionable that undocumented people paying taxes are ineligible for stimulus financing that other taxpayers are receiving.
- Policy proposed by IDTF to restrict information collected at all shelters should be adopted and implemented.
- The County should adopt a formal COVID-related policy prohibiting ICE activity in the County during this pandemic and all natural disasters.
- The County will enforce safety regulations through ordinances and inspections, to ensure safety regulations are being properly implemented.
- The County will immediately form a community advisory group to address the 450% disparity in infection rate between the Latino and general community.

- County disaster response plans will be sent to Latino and indigenous community organizations for review, comment, and revision.

**Evacuation Shelters and LACs:**

- At every LAC, a trained interpreter will be present, paid by the County and identified by a vest or T-shirt and name tag that clearly states what languages they speak. NOT IMPLEMENTED DURING KINCADE FIRE
- No one was stationed at the entrance of the LAC welcoming people during the Kincade Fire, or potentially answering questions about ICE access.
- Policy proposed by IDTF to restrict information collected at all shelters should be adopted and implemented immediately.
- Clarify in advance the County relationship with the Red Cross and its shelters. In any contractual relationship, the County should specify that services must be provided in a culturally competent and sensitive manner.
- All agencies and organizations present in the LACs will be strongly encouraged to provide information and services in Spanish.
- No volunteer training in Spanish or recruitment of Spanish-speaking volunteers has taken place. NOT IMPLEMENTED