



Established in 1991, UCC serves as the representative voice for state legislative advocacy for high-population counties in California. Initially composed of seven counties, the association has grown to 14 today. Over 80 percent of the state's population reside in UCC counties. Consequently, urban counties carry out critical programs and services to the state's most vulnerable populations. For more information, including details on our Board of Directors, please visit [our website](#).

UCC Weekly News: January 11, 2021

Members Return; Budget Committees Receive Overview of Governor's Budget Proposal

The newly formulated 2021-22 Legislature reconvened in Sacramento this week for the first time in the new year. Bills continue to be introduced, although committee hearings were sparse.

The major activity centered around both houses' full budget committee hearings where members received an overview of the Governor's proposed 2021-22

budget from Department of Finance (DOF) and Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) representatives. (See DOF's [slides](#) as well as the LAO's [initial overview](#) and budget committee [handout](#).)

Members were not short on questions for the Administration and the LAO. Legislators seemed to have healthy skepticism around the Governor's spending plan – especially the immediate and early action packages he's requested the Legislature deal with, respectively, in January and March. A primary area of consternation was how the Legislature can be asked to take action on a number of big ticket items when questions about additional federal fiscal relief passed in late December are not yet answered.

An early set of budget subcommittee hearings already have been announced, including one set for next Thursday in Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on the state's role in homelessness. Given space and movement limitations occasioned by the pandemic, the houses will be hindered in their ability to replicate the "normal" budget subcommittee hearing process in terms of frequency and, of course, face-to-face access. The Assembly has set subcommittee hearings to run from January through mid-March. With effectively three different budget cycles in play (January package, March package, and June final budget), we will have a steady stream of budget news for you in the days to come.

COVID-19 Vaccination Updates

The state shared with county officials this week that the federal government is changing how they will allocate additional COVID-19 vaccines. States that are slow to vaccinate, like California (at least as far as current data are suggesting), will be getting smaller allotments; states administering high proportions of vaccines will receive a higher proportion of doses. The Administration reported that the state received a smaller allotment of vaccines than expected in the most recent federal shipment.

The Administration continues to press for an acceleration in vaccination administration at the local level. Although the state is reviewing and looking to refine their data, current reports indicate that only 31% of all vaccines shipped to the state have been administered.

DOF Director Keely Bosler views vaccines as part of the pandemic emergency response and is committed to providing additional resources to support county efforts in vaccine administration and coordination. While the Administration proposed \$372 million for vaccines in the budget released last week, they will adjust the number upward based on need. DOF estimates that California will receive the following in additional federal funds from the December relief package:

- \$1.7 billion for testing, with an additional \$575 million directly to Los Angeles County. DOF believes the federal guidance for the testing funds is broad enough to allow it to be used for contact tracing and vaccinations.

- \$350 million for vaccinations.

DOF notes that at least \$1 billion of these federal funds will go to local health jurisdictions. A coalition of county partners – urban and rural counties, county health executives, and county health officers – sent a letter to the Administration and Legislature this week asking for current year funding to address vaccinations, testing, and contact tracing needs and for ongoing investment in public health infrastructure. The letter asks for \$400 million to assist with vaccine expenditures, including costs associated with facilities, security, vaccinators, data entry staff and clinicians; mobile ‘strike teams’ to reach long-term care facility residents, farmworkers and other groups, and outreach to people in underserved areas. The request also is seeking \$280 million for testing; \$440 million for contact tracing and non-congregate housing solutions to protect vulnerable people; \$50 million in ongoing General Fund for public health infrastructure; and \$3.5 million for a state study of public health infrastructure needs.

As frustration about vaccines administration grows, a bipartisan group of legislators sent a [letter](#) to the Governor this week asking for better communication to counties. The letter asks for:

- A reliable forecast for vaccine quantity for the next four weeks,
- Updated forecasts at least weekly,
- Authorization of nursing students, retired medical professionals, and firefighters to administer shots
- Expanded use of the National Guard for vaccine administration,

Capitol Public Radio ran a story on these vaccine-related requests [here](#).

SB 219 Would Codify Tax Collector Authority for Waivers of Property Tax Penalties

Senator Mike McGuire has introduced [SB 219](#), a measure that would codify the county tax collector’s ability to cancel late payment penalties or other charges for those taxpayers who have experienced financial hardship due to a shelter-in-place order. While this authority exists under a previous executive order specific to the COVID-19 emergency, the county treasurer-tax collectors are seeking permanent authority under any shelter-in-place order. SB 219 has not yet been set for hearing. Please reach out if you have questions.

California Supreme Court Rules on Retroactivity of *Dynamex* Decision

This week, the California Supreme Court concluded that its April 2018 *Dynamex* decision, which requires businesses to treat certain workers as employees rather than independent contractors, applies retroactively to cases that were not yet settled when the *Dynamex* ruling came down.

The Court’s unanimous decision could now require many other employers to pay retroactive wage claims from prior to 2018, including gig companies like Uber and

Lyft, as the recently approved Proposition 22 does not include retroactive protections.

State to Host CalAIM Webinar

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is hosting a webinar to provide an overview of the relaunch of the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) initiative on Thursday, January 28, from 2 to 3 p.m. If interested, please register for the webinar here. The webinar will review the individual components of CalAIM, including changes made to the original proposal based on stakeholder feedback.

HCD Releases CDBG-MIT NOFA

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has announced the release of the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for about \$22.4 million from the Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding for the Resilience Planning and Public Services Program. The Program will fund eligible jurisdictions and non-profit entities to create projects to address risks to, or across, community lifelines that support human health and safety and provide mitigation for individual and community-based systems. Application materials are available through the state's eCivis Grants Network system and are due **Friday, February 19**. Register online for a workshop webinar scheduled for Wednesday, January 20, from 1 to 2 p.m.