



County of San Bernardino

2019 State Legislative Platform



The largest of the over 3,000 counties in the U.S. by geographic area and the 12th largest by population, San Bernardino enjoys a robust and diverse economy

In order for the County to continue to provide quality services, assistance from the State and continued partnership with the delegation is imperative. In this platform, you will find San Bernardino County's state legislative priorities for 2019.

Based on principles of fiscal stability, preservation of local control, efficient service delivery and operations, and the promotion of inter-agency cooperation, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors provides specific direction and overall policy guidance by adopting a legislative platform annually.

The Platform is arranged by Legislative Priorities, County Sponsored Proposals, Legislative Positions, and Policy Statements. The Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the legislative agenda for the current year. The County Sponsored Proposals section provides a summary of specific statutory changes or budget requests the County is seeking in the current legislative session. Finally, the Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation.

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The Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the legislative agenda for the current year, which includes improving the local economy, increasing access to housing, reducing and preventing homelessness, regulatory reform and project streamlining and expediting.

IMPROVE THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The average business operating cost per job in California is 19 % higher than the national average. This can be attributed to energy and labor costs as well regulatory requirements. Despite these challenges, San Bernardino County is home to one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the nation. Its economy is built upon a diverse base of industries ranging from international trade to manufacturing and professional services. In order to ensure our local economy reaches its full potential, policy changes are needed at the State level.

The County will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to support legislation or budget actions that will: 1) provide tax relief programs for business recruitment and retention; 2) provide environmental regulatory and permitting reforms that improve California's business climate and competitiveness; 3) attract private capital to stimulate the local economy; and 4) increase career technical training and programs that prepare our workforce to be competitive in the 21st Century.

INCREASE ACCESS TO HOUSING

Since the 1980s, California has not produced the estimated 180,000 new housing units per year to keep pace with the State's growing population. A significant number of San Bernardino County's renters spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing, leaving little to spend on other essential items such as transportation, healthcare and food.

Housing costs play a critical role in the economic stability of families as well as their physical and psychological well-being. The shortfall of affordable and workforce homes increases the burden on families in the County and can undermine family health, stability and children's educational attainment, putting future opportunities at risk and perpetuating a cycle of poverty. In addition to the impact on the family structure, businesses are impacted by the cost of housing. Many employers who leave California or focus future growth outside the State cite affordable housing options for their employees as a major reason for leaving.

The County will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation or budget actions that include: 1) an equitable amount of funding for housing in the County; 2) programs that increase access to housing; and 3) regulatory reforms that reduce the cost and delivery time of affordable housing and workforce housing.

REDUCE AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a persistent national problem that impacts cities and communities throughout San Bernardino County. According to the 2018 Point-In-Time Count Homeless Survey, the number of homeless was 2,118. A comparison of the last two counts revealed that 252 more persons were counted in 2018, which represents an increase of 13.5%. Despite our investments in positive programs such as permanent supportive housing, homeless outreach, and aggressive use of the "housing first" and "rapid re-housing" protocols, the homeless population in San Bernardino County continues to grow. Additional assistance at both the federal and state level is needed.

The County will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation or budget actions that will: 1) support initiatives to reduce and prevent homelessness; 2) ensure the County receives an equitable share of funding aimed at addressing homelessness and affordable housing; 3) expand the availability of permanent and supportive housing that provides coordinated services; and 4) allow counties to maximize and leverage Federal, State and local funds and programs to provide services for at-risk and homeless individuals.

REGULATORY REFORM, PROJECT STREAMLINING & EXPEDITING

Adopted in 1970, the basic purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was to: inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potential significant environmental effects of proposed activities; identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced; require changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when feasible; and disclose to the public the reasons why a project was approved if significant environmental effects are involved.

Unintended consequences of CEQA not contemplated four decades ago have had adverse impacts on economic development and infrastructure projects. As the State seeks methods of creating economic stimulus and improving infrastructure through a streamlined regulatory process, focus is likely to be on the environmental review process and revisions that will allow for additional expediency in project delivery while maintaining existing environmental protections.

The County will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and stakeholders to: 1) modernize and reform CEQA to integrate updated environmental and planning laws; 2) focus CEQA litigation on compliance with environmental and planning laws; 3) re-evaluate the statutory and categorical CEQA exemptions to streamline projects; 4) promote job creation; and/or 5) support legislation that promotes innovative procurement of projects, such as design-build and public-private-partnerships where appropriate for efficient project delivery.

The County Sponsored Proposal section includes specific statutory changes or budget requests that the County is seeking in the current legislative session. Sponsoring bills or budget proposals provide a proactive opportunity to advance the County’s legislative goals and agenda. This is accomplished by working with the legislative delegation, statewide associations and regional stakeholders.

ISSUE	SUMMARY	ACTION
Additional Resources for the Child Welfare System	The California child welfare system is engaged in a wide array of significant efforts to improve outcomes for children and families. However, statewide resources directed toward implementing and supporting these efforts has been limited to small investments in classroom-based training. Furthermore, little practical support has been provided to social work staff to reinforce the expected best practices and new mandates in the child welfare program. The current child welfare training system offers limited implementation support to the social work staff to translate curriculum into practice fidelity.	The County of San Bernardino will sponsor legislation or budget actions that will increase funding to enhance the child welfare training system to protect endangered children, preserve and strengthen their families, and develop alternative family settings that are in the best interest of the child.
Expansion of Career Pathway Programs	GenerationGo! is an innovative and collaborative work-based learning program to help train the future workforce of San Bernardino County. The program gives youth the option to identify their career pathway, apply their skills in industry settings while gaining real-world work experience and cross the bridge into gainful employment. The career readiness program enables businesses, schools, community colleges, and universities alike to benefit from the success of the students. To boost economic prosperity in the County, additional investments are needed at the State level.	The County of San Bernardino will sponsor legislation or budget actions that expand funding for GenerationGo.
Improve Mental Health Outcomes	Untreated mental illness is one of the leading causes of disability and greatly affects the residents of San Bernardino County. To provide effective services and treatment for those who suffer from mental illness or who are at risk of mental illness, in 2004 California voters approved Proposition 63 - the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Through the implementation of the MHSA, San Bernardino County serves over 100,000 residents per fiscal year through a continuum of prevention,	The County of San Bernardino will sponsor legislation that will 1) standardize best practices to empower stakeholders to address local challenges and concerns; 2) preserve MHSA funding and programming; and/or 3) improve access to necessary mental health services.

ISSUE

SUMMARY

ACTION

early intervention, treatment, and recovery services. As a result of participating in intensive outpatient Full Service Partnership programs, adults experienced a 70% reduction in homelessness; there was an 87% reduction in child group home placements; a 61% decrease in psychiatric hospitalizations; and an 87% decrease in adult arrests. The costs of these preventative mental health programs are small, compared to the benefits to the recipients.

Increase Recreational Opportunities and Access to Prado Park

The County of San Bernardino operates the 2,280 acre Prado Regional Park in Chino on a leasehold obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), all of which lies within the Corps' Santa Ana River Main Stem/ Prado Dam project area. The County is in the process of developing a master plan to improve Prado Regional Park with amenities and activities that focus on improving the outdoor and recreational experiences of park patrons. The County was the recipient of Proposition 70 park grant funds approved by California voters in 1988. Subsequent State legislation authorized the County to sell agricultural preservation land acquired with the original grant funds and use the sale proceeds to acquire replacement property. Pursuant to California law, the County may acquire park and/or open space land in fee or perpetual easements with the Proposition 70 land sale proceeds.

The County would like to replace the leasehold at Prado with easements funded by Proposition 70, which will then allow the County to increase recreational amenities and fund improvements that are consistent with the Corps' mission of developing multi-use flood control projects. Furthermore, the surrounding infrastructure is inadequate and needs to be updated in order for the park to continue to be a recreational destination for residents and visitors.

The County of San Bernardino will sponsor legislation, budget actions or administrative proposals that increase access and would permit the County to use Proposition 70 funds to improve Prado Regional Park.

ISSUE

SUMMARY

ACTION

Investments in
Early Education
Opportunities for
Children

Currently there is a lack of museum and informal educational opportunities for young children in San Bernardino County and the Inland Empire region. Organizations that provide these opportunities, like hands-on science and children's museums, combine specific learning objectives with exploratory play in informal learning environments. Age appropriate activities help young children develop their motor skills, critical thinking skills, historical empathy, and social skills. These early learning experiences lead to kindergarten readiness and higher achievement scores in reading, math and science as they progress through school. In a museum environment, parents benefit from the opportunity to connect with other parents. For vulnerable populations, the interactions with experienced early education staff, and the access to parent education classes and resources can have a measurable impact on families, potentially helping to break the cycle of poverty.

The County of San Bernardino will sponsor legislation or budget actions that provide funding to expand facilities and programming for families with pre-K children in San Bernardino County that benefit the residents of the Inland Empire.

Public Health
Disparities

San Bernardino County, along with the rest of the State, is experiencing a significant increase in communicable diseases. In 2017, California experienced the largest outbreak of hepatitis A since the vaccine was made available in 1996, sickening nearly 600 people. Homeless persons, substance abuse users and other high risk vulnerable person are susceptible to contracting a communicable disease.

In San Bernardino County, due to its sheer geographic area, healthcare providers and community-based organizations operating in rural pockets of the County face overwhelming challenges to reach some of the most vulnerable populations.

The County of San Bernardino will sponsor legislation or budget actions that provide additional investments, resources and services to combat communicable diseases and to fill gaps in underserved, underfunded, and under-resourced communities.

ISSUE	SUMMARY	ACTION
<p>Removing Child Support Inequities</p>	<p>The County of San Bernardino Department of Child Support Services provides a means for children to receive the financial, medical and emotional support they need to help ensure a bright future. The Local Child Support Agency (LCSA) delivers critically needed core child support services to families and children. The San Bernardino LCSA has over 106,000 cases and serves 1 in 5 children in San Bernardino County. The program is funded by a combination of federal and state funding and is one of a few that provides uncapped federal dollars.</p> <p>With the exception of a \$3 million State General Fund augmentation in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-2019, basic administrative funding in California’s child support program has been held flat since FY 2002-2003 despite changes in county caseload and performance. The static allocation methodology has resulted in significant challenges for our county to provide essential child support services to our customers. Adequate State resources for the child support program are necessary to prevent poverty and move families towards self-sufficiency.</p>	<p>The County of San Bernardino will sponsor legislation or budget actions that develop a new child support program allocation methodology which provides sufficient funding to all LCSAs to ensure the provision of equitable, uniform services to families.</p>
<p>Retirement Investment Options</p>	<p>The State passed the Public Employees Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) that amended certain sections of the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (better known as the “37 Act”). There are 20 independent county retirement systems, including San Bernardino County Retirement Associations, which the County is a member. Retirement plans, such hybrid proposals that include a formula less than what PEPRA mandates, are required to be approved by the Legislature.</p>	<p>The County will sponsor legislation that will offer new non-safety employees an alternative retirement plan, which combines elements of a traditional pension plan with a portable defined contribution plan at a reduction in the current retirement contribution rate. This optional alternative hybrid proposal will assist with attracting new employees to the County, while reducing the County’s unfunded liability and ongoing costs.</p>

The Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation and is broken into areas of cultural, educational and recreational services, environmental protection and health, flood control and water resources, governance, finance and operations, health and human services, housing and land use and public safety and first responders.

CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Promote opportunities and access to cultural, educational and recreational services within the County that add to the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Support legislation, proposals and budget actions that: 1) provide residents and tourists with access to County facilities that promote knowledge, education, lifelong learning, recreation/leisure and cultural enrichments; 2) preserve and protect the conservation of the County's natural and historical land resources, including sustainable multi-use on public lands; and 3) provide funding for services that enhance the quality of life for County residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND HEALTH

Promote environmental sustainability that strikes a balance with the local economy.

Support legislation, budget actions or programs that enhance environmental quality that balance the interest of the local economy.

Oppose legislation, budget actions and proposals that reduces environmental quality funding to the region or compromises the health of the community.

FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RESOURCES

Protect life, property and public health through responsible management of natural resources.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) promote sound management of natural resources; 2) assist local jurisdictions by removing unnecessary barriers and costs associated with environmental regulations; 3) fund the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of watershed management or flood control projects; and/or 4) maintain or improve upon the supply of adequate potable water.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Improve the delivery of county services, reduce mandates on local government, and promote effective management of county programs by allowing local control.

Support legislation and budget actions that provide: 1) flexibility to administer federal, state or local programs; 2) decision-making authority over the use of state funds, including directing grants or mandatory pass-through allocations; 3) the utilization of technology and innovation to streamline County services; 4) the elimination of unnecessary, redundant or overlapping requirements, or regulations for program eligibility, funding maintenance of efforts, monitoring, permitting or reporting; 5) constitutional protections of all local revenues; and 6) adequate funding for programs the County operates on behalf of the State.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that will adversely impact County operations by: 1) preempting the County's authority; 2) eroding local control; 3) limiting the ability to operate in a reasonable and cost-effective manner; 4) transferring programs from the State to counties unless program control and flexibility are also shifted and adequate funding is guaranteed; 5) exposing the County to unreasonable litigation; 6) increasing County responsibilities or expenses without a viable, adequate and dedicated source of revenue; and/or 7) reducing the County's share of total funding through formula allocations or reductions.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Enhance safety-net services and invest in programs that strengthen the community and improve the lives of residents.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) fully fund the cost of State mandated health and human service programs; 2) create, provide and protect funding formulas for services that ensure an equitable allocation of State funding and reflect complete, accurate and total caseloads and administrative costs; 3) promote local control over health and human service programs; 4) provide greater flexibility to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and in a cost-effective manner; 5) provide for the health, safety and well-being of County residents; 6) diminish poverty and stimulate the local economy; 7) hold counties exempt from fiscal penalties when the State does not provide adequate funding; 8) improve the accessibility and quality of supportive services for vulnerable populations; 9) promote data sharing and coordination between agencies to improve service delivery; 10) align state regulations to improve outcomes; and/or 11) remove categorical funding restrictions allowing for greater local authority to achieve desired outcomes.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that: 1) transfer health and human service programs from the State to the County unless program control and adequate funding is guaranteed; 2) propose funding formulas that adversely impact and impede the ability of the County to deliver health and human service programs; 3) erode local control of the administration of health and human service programs; and/or 4) negatively impact health and human services program sustainability.

LAND USE

Strengthen the County through strategic and planned development.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) promote local authority to adopt or plan for orderly growth and development; 3) increase local control and regulatory authority over land use, zoning, renewable energy, subdivisions and annexations; and/or 4) make the preservation of farmland and land suitable for farming economically feasible for property owners and local government.

Oppose legislation that: 1) erodes local land use authority; 2) uses air quality and/or climate change policy as a vehicle to restrict or remove local land use authority; and/or 3) imposes unfunded land use and general plan mandates.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND FIRST RESPONDERS

Preserve and protect the safety of the public, law enforcement and first responder personnel.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) provide adequate resources to deliver services; 2) provide flexibility and local discretion in the administration of programs; 3) ensure the safety of the public and property of County residents, and law enforcement and first responder personnel; 4) mitigate any potential unintended impacts associated with Proposition 47, 57 and bail reform 5) plan for, respond to, and receive reimbursement for emergency disasters, acts of terrorism and other catastrophic events; and 6) ensure continued funding for adult criminal justice facilities and programs that will meet the needs created by public safety realignment.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that: 1) reduce funding at the State and local level for public safety programs; 2) compromise the safety of the public, local law enforcement or first responder personnel; and/or 3) impede local law enforcement or first responders' ability to deliver services.