



# BUILD BACK BOLDLY

## Senate Democrats Budget Priorities *for* 2021-22 and Beyond



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# Introduction

## Background

The Build Back Boldly budget embraces the once-a-generation opportunity for California to make bold transformative progress as the economy rebounds from the COVID-19 crisis:

- A decade of responsible budgeting enabled California to endure the recession without massive, widespread program cuts or middle class tax increases – which means that unlike in past recoveries, the budget does not need to first restore billions and billions in program cuts before making new investments.
- Tens of billions of available one-time and ongoing General Fund revenues and federal American Rescue Plan funds provide historic levels of resources to take bold action to address existing crisis and make bold transformative progress.
- A proactive federal government that largely shares California’s values appears poised to make bold changes for infrastructure, safety net programs, and health care – all of which will spur the national and state economies to soar and therefore pave the way for more bold transformative progress in California.

The Build Back Boldly budget embraces the “California Way” attitude that has led the nation in progressive change and “busted” the myths that progressive policies are bad for the economy. From a tax system that relies most on those that can most afford to pay, to expanding the Obamacare subsidies to the middle class, to fighting climate change, to implementing criminal justice reforms, to expanding paid family leave, to phasing in the \$15 minimum wage – California has been the progressive leader. The Build Back Boldly budget calls for more transformative progress.

The goal of the Build Back Boldly budget is to take a strong first step in building a post-pandemic economy that extends prosperity for Californians:

- **A more equitable economy** that supports and improves pathways out of poverty, expands access to wealth to reduce debt and wealth gaps, and dramatically reduces homelessness to end that crisis.
- **A stronger middle class** that improves affordability of housing, healthcare and education, expands access to education from Early Care to Higher Education, protects the environment and improves community environmental quality, and enables small businesses to grow and thrive.
- **A better economy for all** that recognizes the economy does not need to be a “zero-sum game,” with a more equitable economy and stronger middle class improves economic vitality for everyone, including the wealthiest Californians.

The general approach of the Build Back Boldly budget for available American Rescue Plan funds, is as follows:

- Limit ongoing negative impacts of COVID Crisis:
  - Assist economically impacted Californians: rent, mortgage, utilities, student debt.
  - Address mental health challenges for our students, workforce, and families.
- Provide additional direct stimulus relief to struggling Californians and small businesses/nonprofits.

- Fill gaps in other federal stimulus programs to assist local governments, schools, universities, and other programs.
- Fund critical and eligible infrastructure projects, including broadband expansion, clean energy, and the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water program.
- Augment General Fund investments for eligible purposes throughout the budget.

## **Build Back Boldly Proposals**

The Build Back Boldly budget proposes eight transformative proposals and key subcommittee packages:

### **Transformative Build Back Boldly proposals:**

- Debt Free College.
- Path to Universal 0-3 Early Care and Education.
- Homelessness, Housing Affordability & Homeownership.
- Wildfire Prevention and Resilience.
- Drought Protection.
- Health Care Access and Affordability.
- Small Business and Non-Profits Bounce-Back.
- State Systems Improvements.

### **Key subcommittee Build Back Boldly packages:**

- Subcommittee #1:
  - K-12 Education Package
  - Higher Education Package
  - Public Libraries Package
- Subcommittee #2:
  - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Package
  - Pollution Reduction Package
- Subcommittee #3:
  - Strengthening the Safety Net Package
  - Aging Package
  - Public Health Package
- Subcommittee #4:
  - Equitable Recovery Package
- Subcommittee #5:
  - Workforce Package
  - Access to Justice Package
  - Justice Reform Package
  - Fairness and Equity for Court Users Package

## **Responsible Budgeting**

The Build Back Boldly budget continues the responsible budgeting practices Legislative Democrats have championed over the past decade that turned the state's finances around. The Build Back Boldly budget includes:

- Replenishing the Rainy Day Fund and Safety Net Reserve to ensure those reserves can protect against future downturns, just as they did during the COVID-19 recession.
- Maximizing paydown of Proposition 98 deferrals to accelerate cash for school and community college districts and to provide room for future deferrals should they be needed to maintain programs during future downturns.
- Repaying special fund loans and unfunded liabilities to further strengthen the state's fiscal condition.
- Ending the practice of building in phony "program suspensions" for future years. Multi-year forecasts that reflect savings from program suspensions do not provide an accurate forecast, since the Legislature is not going to allow cuts to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), health access, aging programs, and other critical programs to be implemented before other common sense budget solutions.

## **Additional Thoughts**

The Build Back Boldly budget is just the first step of crafting the Budget Act of 2021 and in setting the long-term budget agenda.

- The proposals will be fine-tuned and updated as more is learned about the state's fiscal condition with the updated May forecasts.
- The proposals should work in concert and complement many of the proposals expected to be put forth by the Senate's budget partners: the Assembly and the Governor.
- The proposals go beyond just the sprint to the June 15 budget deadline.

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*The Build Back Boldly budget outlined in this document embraces the once-a-generation opportunity to make bold transformative progress for the people of California.*



- The funding level for MCS 2.0 will be set annually in the budget, to reflect “responsible budgeting” principles (similar to CalEITC). The goal will be to fully fund the MCS 2.0 each year and enable students to avoid student loans entirely, but even in years when partially funding, dependence on loans will be dramatically reduced.

### **Part 3: Assist Californians with current student debt:**

- Call on President Biden and the federal government to do the following:
  - Cancel up to \$50,000 of current student debt. This will eliminate student debt for 3 million Californians, and dramatically reduce the debt for nearly 1 million more.
  - Eliminate interest on all remaining federal student loans to keep debts more manageable and balances from accumulating.
- Expand the current state tax deduction of student loan payments:
  - Enable principal and interest to be deducted (currently only interest can be deducted).
  - Increase the annual deduction cap above current \$2,500.
  - Increase the eligible income level above current \$65,000/\$135,000 (individual/joint filers).

## **Path to “0-3” Universal Access to Early Care and Education**

The Build Back Boldly budget takes a major first step and lays the groundwork for universal access to early care and education for children ages 0 to 3:

- Make a significant investment for up to an additional 200,000 childcare slots for working families as next step toward universal access for ages 0 to 3.
- Establish childcare worker apprenticeship/training program.
- Reduce cost to working families by reducing/eliminating family fees.
- Increase rates to achieve livable wage for childcare workers.
- Stabilize and retain providers as the state emerges from the pandemic:
  - Support providers that have remained open during the pandemic by continuing hold harmless policies.
  - Provide one-time funds to help providers who have closed re-open or those who are open to expand.
  - Retain essential worker families in the child care system.

## **Homelessness, Housing Affordability & Homeownership**

The Build Back Boldly budget addresses housing related challenges facing California today, from ending the homelessness crisis, to improving housing affordability, to knocking down barriers to homeownership to enable families to build wealth.

### **Part 1: \$20 billion, Five-Year Commitment to End the Crisis and Reduce Homelessness:**

- Fund acquisition/rehab of multi-family, motels, board & care, more to convert to permanent housing for homeless very low income Californians.



- Fund local efforts to reduce homelessness, with strong accountability measures:
  - Provide multi-year support for local governments to provide transition services for those experiencing homelessness to exit to permanent housing.
  - Provide “first and last month” rental assistance to remove a key barrier for those experiencing homelessness to move back into permanent housing.
  - Provide multi-year flexible funding for homelessness programs that serve populations that are served by programs for such as Adult Protective Services, SSI/SSP, CalWORKs, Child Welfare Services, and Foster Care to direct funds to specific, local needs.

## **Part 2: Housing Affordability:**

- Provide funding for the Senate’s “Building Opportunities for All” Housing Package, which empowers homeowners, provides more land-use tools and flexibility to meet the needs of local governments and community partners, and streamlines procedural hurdles.
- Fund innovative approaches to expanding and preserving affordable housing, such as:
  - Establishing financing tool for Accessory Dwelling Unit construction to produce more affordable units, provide wealth building opportunities for low and moderate income homeowners, and benefit historically disadvantaged communities.
  - Providing incentives to convert vacant or underused commercial and retail space into affordable housing.
  - Assisting local governments, nonprofits, or other qualified buyers acquire foreclosed homes to be used for housing.
- Provide emergency grants to low-income homeowners to avoid foreclosure.
- Bring tax fairness and relief for renters by reforming and expanding the Renters Tax Credit.
- Incentivize Earthquake Retrofit with federal 75 percent match funds.

## **Part 3: Create new “California Dream For All” First Time Homebuyer Program:**

The wealth gap – particularly among racial minorities – is a growing problem throughout the country and here in California. Generation after generation, those with wealth get wealthier, and those without fall further behind. As has been the case so often throughout the nation’s history, this has been made worse by racist barriers constructed to hold communities back – and the impacts of those barriers are still evident today.

The first step to reaching the California dream of thriving in the middle class and building family wealth starts with homeownership. But taking that first step is even more challenging as the cost of California homes grows higher and higher.

The California Dream For All first time homebuyer program aims to address historical and economic barriers to homeownership with a new way for Californians to buy a first home and get a foothold in the middle class and to begin to build family wealth.

The California Dream For All program allows Californians to purchase a first home with a “silent partner,” therefore dramatically reducing the cost for the homebuyer. Here is how it can work:

### ***Basics:***

- The California Dream For All program cuts the cost of first-time homebuyers by as much as 40 percent, saving families more than \$12,000 each year.
- A state sponsored corporation would establish a new revolving fund, called the California Dream Fund (Fund), which would be infused with a one-time deposit of available state or federal funds.

- Eligible first-time homebuyers “partner” in purchasing eligible homes, with the Fund. The Fund serves as a “silent partner” and owns a minority share of up to 45 percent of the house.
  - For example, this enables a \$400,000 home to be essentially purchased for a more affordable price of \$220,000, the Fund purchasing the other \$180,000 share.
- Eligibility for the homebuyer will be based on income levels, eligibility of homes will be based on the home price. Sliding scales can be established to avoid any “cliff effects” on eligibility. The eligibility requirements for incomes and home prices will differ by region to reflect the reality that incomes and home prices differ dramatically throughout California.
- Specific outreach efforts to target benefits of the California Dream For All program will be made to underrepresented homeownership communities, those that have still not returned to homeownership after losing homes in the Great Recession, and those with high student debts.

**Investors:**

- Shares of the Fund would be sold to investors, and the revenues generated by the sale of shares are then used to partner with additional homebuyers.
- As the value of the homes partially owned by the Fund increases, the value of the Fund also increases.
- Investors are free to sell their shares at any time.
- The Fund, and therefore the investors, would not receive any rent payments, so the investment is tied only to the value of the homes. Therefore, to encourage investment:
  - The Fund would not be responsible for any costs of the property, such as: maintenance, property taxes, insurance, etc.
  - Capital gains would be tax free under California law, and the goal would be for the federal government to also make them tax free (treat similarly to municipal bonds).

*(It may be the case that the “silent partner” concept can be implanted entirely through private companies and investors, and without a state sponsored. In which case the state role will be limited to establishing eligibility requirements and providing tax incentives.)*

**Homebuyers:**

- The homebuyer is responsible for 100 percent of home maintenance, property taxes, insurance requirements, and any other similar costs.
- The homebuyer can “buy-out” the Fund’s share of the home at any time, at the current fair market price.
- The homebuyer must, in general, use the home as their primary residence.
- As with any first home, homebuyers can use the equity growth from their share of the property to “move-up” in their next home, or stay in that home as long as they would like, and even pass on their home and their ownership share to heirs.

**Summary:**

- The California Dream For All program can dramatically slash the cost of first time homes for eligible home buyers.
- And unlike most major programs that come with major tax payer costs, this program will come with minimal state costs and instead rely on putting investors’ money (from around the world) to work building wealth for deserving Californians.



- So, Win-Win-Win: Win #1 – homebuyers that can now afford a home and can thrive in the middle class and begin to build wealth; Win #2 – investors that get to protect and build their wealth by investing in California real estate; and Win #3 – California taxpayers and state budget that will face only minimal new costs.

This year’s budget action is expected to be the first step of creating this program by directing the State Treasurer and the Administration to develop the program in full detail and present back to the Legislature to be implemented through statute in 2022.

## **Wildfire Prevention and Resilience**

The Build Back Boldly budget builds on the early action Wildfire budget package to provide a sustainable, multi-year commitment to address the wildfire crisis.

- Provide funding consistent with the Senate’s “Blueprint for a Fire Safe California” — e.g., provide short- and long-term funding for wildfire, climate, watershed and forest health; implement modern-day vegetation, forest management, and community hardening plans; and train and deploy a fire resiliency workforce.
- Significantly increase multi-year funding to wildfire prevention and resiliency programs and projects to save on suppression costs and wildfire damage. For every dollar spent on prevention saves \$6-\$7 in wildfire damages.
- Focus multi-year funding on projects with both wildfire and drought resilience benefits.

## **Drought Protection**

The Build Back Boldly budget makes a major \$2 billion commitment to address and mitigate the impacts of drought.

- \$500 million for Community Water Investment Fund to help smaller, lower income communities for immediate drinking water, local water supply, and water efficiency investments.
- \$500 million Water Conservation Fund for homeowners/small businesses/local agencies to replace high water consumption landscapes with water efficient landscapes.
- \$300 million for emergency Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan assistance to agriculture/local and regional agencies.
- \$700 million for other one time and immediate investments in water quality, species protections, stormwater, water recycling water monitoring equipment and other investments to reduce drought impacts.

## **Health Care Access and Affordability**

The Build Back Boldly budget renews commitment to expand access and affordability to health care.

- Reduce deductibles and copays for Covered CA policies by building on prior state and new federal expansions of subsidies for middle income families. This will eliminate the \$4,000 deductible that hundreds of thousands of Californians currently pay.
- Expand access to Medi-Cal to all income eligible Californians, regardless of immigration status:
  - Immediate expansion for those age 65 or older.
  - End “age-out” for those enrolled in Medi-Cal when they turn 26 years old.
  - Establish an expansion plan to close the remaining gap for ages 26-64.

- Reform program asset test for Medi-Cal eligibility.
- Commit to addressing health inequities, including mental health, exacerbated by the pandemic by building on and strengthening the Governor's health equity proposals.

## **Small Business and Non-Profits Bounce-Back**

The Build Back Boldly budget continues support for small businesses and non-profits as they work to bounce back from the pandemic.

- Provide additional stimulus grants to small businesses and non-profits.
- Mitigate impacts of federal Unemployment Insurance repayments for small businesses and nonprofits.
- Support community investment by recapitalizing Community Development Financial Institutions through \$70 million in grants.
- Provide additional support for hardest-hit industries, including:
  - \$45 million for Visit California to support tourism.
  - Grants for independent venues and other businesses that focus on live events.
  - Microgrants for the smallest businesses that are not able to access other sources of funding.
- Expand employee hiring and retention tax credits.

## **State Systems Improvements**

The Build Back Boldly budget works to improve government services and customer access.

- Make systems modernization and program improvements for the Employment Development Department and the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Invest in Broadband Infrastructure to achieve universal internet access. Federal stimulus funds are available for this purpose.
- Explore options for consumers to pay state fee obligations in installments, and for state credits/direct payments to be able to be paid to recipient in installments.
- Expand use of electronic forms and electronic signature for state program forms of all kinds.
- Upgrade aging IT/software systems to improve productivity, customer access at state agencies.



# Key Subcommittee Build Back Boldly Packages

## *Subcommittee #1 on Education*

### **K-12 Education Package**

- Provide record level of one-time and ongoing resources to schools, as the Proposition 98 guarantee grows with the rebounding economy.
- Ensure long-term stability of local schools:
  - Maximize pay-down of deferrals, while balancing need for new one-time investments.
  - Provide additional support for school pension stabilization.
- Provide supports for mental health, learning loss, other pandemic related impacts by leveraging education and health policies.
- Increase school nutrition support to better ensure all students are better able to learn.
- Expand funding for Special Education programs.

### **Higher Education Package**

- Eliminate planned ongoing cuts to UC and CSU.
- Increase funding for expand enrollment at UC and CSU:
  - One time funds for capital costs/property acquisition to enable enrollment expansions.
  - Phase down non-resident students to reasonable level, and replace with California resident students – and backfill lost out-of-state tuition revenues for universities.
- Maximize flexible funding for Community Colleges from their share of the anticipated historic growth in Proposition 98 funds.
- Accelerate repayment of Community College Deferrals to relieve cash pressures for community college districts.

## **Public Library Package**

- \$1 Billion for Public Library Infrastructure and Technology Investments:
  - Fund public library facilities upgrades and modernization projects.
  - Expand broadband deployment and public access to libraries through new fiber optics and technology investments.
  - Procure new technology and devices (IPADs, Tablets) for library users to “check out technology” and for hotspot lending programs.
- Eliminate library debt and provide ongoing sustainable funding for Public Libraries.



# Key Subcommittee Build Back Boldly Packages

## *Subcommittee #2 on Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy*

### Greenhouse Gas Reduction Package

- Craft a Senate Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) spending plan with renewed targeted focus on actually reduces GHG emissions and prepares California for climate change impacts.
- Buyout the GGRF commitment for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water program with federal stimulus funds.
- Encourage CalEPA Secretary to follow through on commitments to reduce dependence on Cap-and-Trade as an emissions reductions tool, stabilize (and possibly increase) revenues and reduce or eliminate allowance oversupply and offset abuses.
- Provide greater support to a broad portfolio of effective GHG reduction programs, such as waste diversion/recycling infrastructure, the Low-Income Weatherization Program, replacement of wood burning stoves, and HFC refrigerants.
- Provide up-front funding to help the state reach its goal of 1.5 million ZEVs on the road by 2025, and set it on a path to make ZEVs 100% of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks by 2035. This includes:
  - At least \$500 million (non-bond, non-GGRF) for ZEV fueling and charging infrastructure.
  - \$175 million (GGRF) per year for three years to support the state’s Clean Vehicle Rebate Program (CVRP).

### Pollution Reduction Package

- Lock in commitment for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Program with \$1.2 billion in federal stimulus funds.
- Focus funding on waste management/recycling programs that are effective in lowering greenhouse gas emissions
  - e.g., support local efforts and waste haulers to eliminate organics from landfills, which helps to reduce methane.
- Provide funding to encourage the use of less toxic pesticides and a more robust integrated pest management (IPM) program, including increasing IPM research and outreach.
  - (e.g. UC Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources activities conducting field trials and working with farmers to implement the use of non-chemical pest control methods.)
- Better align costs of the Department of Toxic Substances Control for lead abatement programs as well as other hazardous waste cleanup programs using the Polluter Pays principle.



# Key Subcommittee Build Back Boldly Packages

## *Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services*

### Strengthening the Safety Net Package

- Increase CalWORKs support to take final steps in meeting longtime Senate priority of “no child in deep poverty.”
- Increase SSI/SSP grants finally restore past program cuts.
- Provide additional support for those hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis, including Rent/Utility relief and another of Golden State Stimulus checks.
- Provide support for Food (and Diaper) Banks to meet increased needs due to continued impacts of COVID crisis.
- Expand access to CA Food Assistance Program (CFAP) and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) to service Californians regardless of immigration status.
- Fully fund placement and other programs that support California's foster youth.
- Fund increased costs of Child Protective Services to ensure safety and improved outcomes, including returning children from out of state and to assist family reunification.
- Extend support and flexibilities for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and the providers that serve them.

### Aging Package

- Permanently restore the 7% reduction to IHSS service hours and ending funding suspensions in other aging programs (for example, Aging and Disability Resource Centers).
- Incentivize counties to reach IHSS labor agreements.
- Reform asset test for Medi-Cal eligibility to expand access to long term care and protect homes and other assets of low income California families.
- Simplify the CalFresh application process for seniors and the disabled.



- Increase funding for senior nutrition programs and expansion of CalAIM meal-related benefits.
- Provide one-time funding for operational subsidies for residential care facilities that would build off the Governor’s proposal to rehab these facilities.
- Double Governor’s proposal for training geriatric health care providers, to diversify and expand the workforce that will assist and treat Californians as they age.

## **Public Health Package**

- Recommit to investments in state and local public health infrastructure to achieve improved population health and maintain vigilance against future infectious disease outbreaks.
- Develop a coordinated strategy to reduce preventable diseases and transmission of infectious diseases.
- Develop an agile public health workforce that can cross-train in multiple public health priorities to address both long-term and emergent needs.
- Maintain diagnostic and epidemiological capacity (testing, genome sequencing, contact tracing, IT infrastructure) built up during the pandemic and reorient to other pressing public health needs when the emergency period ends.
- Invest in public health strategies to address the vast health disparities that were exacerbated by the pandemic, based on enhanced data collection to identify inequities among sub-populations.



# Key Subcommittee Build Back Boldly Packages

## *Subcommittee #4 on State Administration and General Government*

### Equitable Recovery Package

- Expand the CalEITC to increase relief for working families as well as workers without dependents.
- Amplify impact of new federal and state tax credits through:
  - Monthly payments of large state credits.
  - Protecting refundable credits from government debts.
  - Investment in free tax assistance and outreach and education.
- Extend the sunset on the Donated Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Credit to continue this important support for food banks.
- Provide \$10 million for the Financial Empowerment Fund for grants to non-profit groups serving unbanked and underbanked Californians.
- Continue to build upon support for equity operators in the cannabis industry.
- Provide in-language technical assistance for limited English proficient small business owners.
- Fully fund needed maintenance of Office of Migrant Services (OMS) housing centers for the state's agricultural workforce.
- Work to reduce state inflicted debts on low-income residents throughout state government (in addition to Sub 5 action on court debt).



# Key Subcommittee Build Back Boldly Packages

## *Subcommittee #5 on Corrections, Public Safety, Judiciary, Labor, and Transportation*

### Workforce Package

- Address Pandemic induced economic inequity:
  - Job retention/replacement for women who left workplace due to closures , and other essential work industries.
  - State stimulus payment to make up for worker wage losses and to complement the federal stimulus package.
- Expand enforcement programs protecting against wage theft, dangerous health and safety working conditions, and the right to seek representation.
- Expand High Road Training Partnerships to increase job training and apprenticeship opportunities for historically excluded communities. This will provide them with clear pathways to family sustaining jobs and careers.
- Increase “Build Back Better” investments in climate resiliency, transportation related and green infrastructure, and other demand sectors through High Road Partnerships.

### Access to Justice Package

- Protect essential legal service resources in the following ways:
  - \$10 million one-time for pandemic expenses and the temporary increase in dependency counsel caseloads and up to \$30 million ongoing to correct for any shortfall in federal funding.
  - \$50 million ongoing for legal aid services.
  - \$16.5 million to the County Law Libraries to backfill lost revenue due to pandemic.
  - Directs the courts to hire family law and civil court reporters for all cases involving indigent litigants.
  - \$7 million ongoing for a court reporter transcript rate increase.

### Justice Reform Package

- Adopt budget proposals that comply with court ordered plans to increase oversight at CDCR.
- Get Administration’s commitment to long-term prison infrastructure plan to limit unnecessary GF expenditures.

- Cost-free remote communications for the incarcerated during pandemic.
- Provide a one-time allocation of \$75 million for career development, family reunification and healing, local support for individuals to remain out of the criminal justice system, and removal of barriers to employment.
- Approve \$1.1 million General Fund in 2021-22 and 2022-23 for the “Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans, with a Special Consideration for African Americans Who are Descendants of Persons Enslaved in the United States.”
- Sufficiently resource new HHS Office of Youth and Community Restoration to successfully serve all youth in the juvenile justice continuum.

## **Fairness and Equity for Court Users Package**

- Prioritize efficient and equitable access to court services.
- Address court backlogs.
- Protect the privacy and legal rights of all litigants.
- Give seamless and high quality access to court services, both in-person and remotely, with no cost on users.
  - Low income Californians, people with disabilities, those who have difficulty using technology or accessing technology because of location.
  - Those who need language services, court reporters, or free access to legal information.
- Reduce Court inflicted debt on low income residents (fines and fees).