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SPORTS

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\$96 million fund will help struggling renters, landlords



RENÉE C. BYER rbyer@sacbee.com

Carreen Huizar says she was on a waiting list for Section 8 housing since 2016 as she unpacked boxes on Jan. 20, 2020, in Sacramento. Sacramento officials have a nearly \$100 million fund to help renters.

BY TONY BIZJAK
tbizjak@sacbee.com

As part of a national effort to save low-income renters from eviction, Sacramento city and county officials on Thursday will make nearly \$100 million in free rent assistance grants available to help pay for past-due rent and utility bills during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Sacramento Emergency Rental Assistance program taps federal and state funds to help renters in Sacramento County who are financially under water. Both renters and landlords can apply for funds to cover a portion of rents owed back to April of last year, and rents that will

come due between now and June of this year.

The fund has nearly \$96 million in it, \$31.7 million of it via the city of Sacramento from its federal and state grants, and \$64 million from the County of Sacramento via federal and state grants.

The fund is similar to but much larger than a previous rent subsidy program last fall for Sacramentans who lost jobs or had their paychecks reduced due to economic shutdowns.

The previous program offered \$6.5 million in limited subsidies to some 1,230 low-income Sacramento families and about 780 landlords.

Sarah O'Daniel of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency called it the largest emergency rental aid program ever in Sacramento. She said the new program can be used to help fill rent gaps for 10,000 to 15,000 families in the county.

"We're very glad to have this, to be able to keep a roof over the heads of our families, instead of facing eviction later this year," O'Daniel said.

SEE FUND, 10A

California ag counties to receive more vaccines

BY MICHAEL MCGOUGH AND TONY BIZJAK
mmcgough@sacbee.com

California is making a big push to substantially increase COVID-19 vaccine availability for essential farm and agriculture workers in the Central Valley, a move that has ripple effects across the state as it redistributes limited supply.

Allocation data from the California Department of Public Health shows local health offices are set to receive a combined total of about 70,000 more doses this week than last week.

Topping the list of biggest supply boosts was Tulare County, which more than doubled from about 4,800 doses to more than 10,000. Tulare was followed by Monterey, Imperial, Kings, Merced and Kern counties, all of which increased by more than 75%.

Those are all ag counties: All six ranked among California's top nine counties by gross crop value, according to the latest annual report from the state Department of Food and Agriculture.

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Monday the state plans to open 11 vaccination sites in the Central Valley, where supply allocations would also be boosted by 58%.

This, Newsom said, will help serve "vulnerable and vital Central Valley communities."

To boost Central Valley vaccinations that significantly, doses may be getting shifted away from a few more urban counties in the Sacramento region and Bay Area, sending smaller allocations to some health offices than they'd received in recent weeks.

Sacramento County's direct allocation of COVID-19 vaccine dropped by a higher number of doses than any other local health department in the state this week, fueling some concern for a county that has already faced inoculation setbacks.

Of the 58 county health

SEE VACCINES, 7A



DANIEL KIM dkim@sacbee.com

FAULCONER SPEAKS IN SACRAMENTO

Kevin Faulconer, former mayor of San Diego and running as a Republican candidate for governor if a recall proceeds, speaks at a press conference outside of the California Department of Education in downtown Sacramento on Wednesday. He criticized Gov. Gavin Newsom for delays in reopening schools amid the coronavirus pandemic during his first public event in Sacramento since announcing his candidacy. "Gavin Newsom promised equality but — with private schools open and many public schools closed — he has given us some of the worst inequality in the nation," Faulconer said.

GOP says state has too much money — will it hurt Biden's stimulus plan?

BY DAVID LIGHTMAN
dlightman@mcclatchydc.com

WASHINGTON

California has collected about \$10.5 billion more in tax revenue this fiscal year than expected, giving Washington Republicans fresh ammunition aimed at derailing a huge federal aid package for state and local governments.

But the state's Democrats continue to maintain the COVID-related aid is badly needed.

The Democratic-run House is expected to vote later this week on President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion economic relief plan, which includes \$350 billion for state and local governments. California's state and local governments would get an estimated \$41 billion.

If approved, the Senate would consider the package early next month, and its chances are considered good since the Senate has 50 Republicans and 50 members who caucus with the Democrats — and Vice Presi-

dent Kamala Harris, who until last month was a senator from California, would cast a tie-breaking vote.

Despite California's sunnier budget outlook, its congressional Democrats insist the federal aid is badly needed.

Asked why, Rep. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, answered flatly, "40 million people."

Garamendi, who was the state's lieutenant governor dur-

SEE MONEY, 10A



RICH PEDRONCELLI AP file

Gov. Gavin Newsom outlines his 2021-22 state budget proposal during a Jan. 8 news conference in Sacramento.

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