



Yolo COVID-19 Community Needs Series



Insights on the Status of Children & Families in Yolo County

“We’re making sure that families have access to what they need... in order to prevent abuse and neglect.” – Jeneba Lahai, Yolo County Children’s Alliance

The Yolo Community Foundation panel series about current needs in Yolo County launched on Feb. 25 with a discussion about the status of children and families featuring Jeneba Lahai, director of programs at [Yolo County Children’s Alliance](#); Garth Lewis, county superintendent of [Yolo County](#); Heather Sleuter, executive director of Yolo Crisis Nursery; Stacie Frerichs, executive director of Davis Arts Center; and moderator Tessa Smith, Co-Chair of Resilient Yolo.

It was an impactful conversation highlighting the key issues facing children and families in light of the current pandemic, and how the organizations in our community adapted quickly and continue to be stretched in new and difficult ways.

- Yolo Crisis Nursery has been at maximum capacity for much of the pandemic, offering urgently needed care for children of essential workers, families facing COVID and other illnesses, and parents with mental health challenges including postpartum depression.
- When the pandemic began, Yolo County Children’s Alliance reached out to 5,000 clients, many needing language translation, to keep them informed and offer services. YCCA has also distributed more than \$100,000 in rental assistance in Yolo County.
- Davis Arts Center is working with the Davis Joint Unified School District to offer a take-home art kit, helping students process their current situation.
- 93% of Yolo County students are still distance learning. The Yolo County Office of Education is adapting to meet more individualized needs and plans to offer accelerated learning opportunities.

A few specific concerns were raised multiple times, revealing key issues that are impacting children and families in many contexts across our county.

- Income stability will be critical for vulnerable families to bounce back.
- Social-emotional support, trauma-informed training, and mental health services are needed in a variety of settings to equip our teachers, students, and families to recover.
- Affordable and accessible childcare, especially for essential workers, is an urgent need.
- Basic needs are struggling to be met including housing, food, diapers, and formula.
- Technology and connectivity are more necessary than ever before for education and employment, and some families are being left behind due to access and affordability.
- Including the voices of underrepresented populations in decision-making for recovery and community efforts



All panelists mentioned the importance of community collaboration as a crucial piece of recovery. Agencies, institutions, community-based organizations, funders, and organizations must work together in innovative ways to make a deeper impact on these issues. And underrepresented populations must have a seat at the decision-making table to address equity problems. Panelists also identified financial funding and in-kind donations to meet basic needs as top priorities, and a key way for members of the community to make a tangible difference.

“This pandemic exposed some of our weaknesses for family service programs and systems... We want to...wrap around these services for [families] to continue to thrive in our community.”
– Heather Sleuter, Yolo Crisis Nursery

This was the first in a five-week series of discussions, hosted by Yolo Community Foundation, focused on major community needs that have risen in intensity as a result of the pandemic and associated economic crisis. The topics are Children & Families, Food Insecurity, Mental Health, Housing Insecurity, and What’s Next: A look toward recovery. The Yolo COVID-19 Community Needs Series, sponsored by Sutter Health, features panels hosted on Zoom, Thursdays at 11 a.m. Register for events and view recordings at www.yolocf.org.

About the Yolo Community Foundation

The Yolo Community Foundation inspires and supports giving and provides philanthropic leadership in Yolo County. The organization offers donor-advised funds and other philanthropic vehicles, donates to local nonprofits, fosters volunteerism, and supports local giving. YCF currently has more than 60 philanthropic funds valued at over \$7 million and is an affiliate of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. Join us! Visit www.yolocf.org to learn more.