



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

LEADERSHIP RESPONSE
TO INJUSTICE



LEADERSHIP DECLARATION

We, the Department Heads of the County of Los Angeles, recognize and affirm that all people are created equal and are entitled to all rights afforded by the Constitution of the United States. We acknowledge that as government leaders serving the most populous and diverse county in the nation, we have an opportunity to change the narrative on the role of government and its relationship to the communities it serves.

Collectively, the work of our departments have far-reaching impacts on all aspects of our residents' lives, particularly in the areas of employment, land use, education, voting, housing, health, arts and museums, infrastructure, justice, veteran services, environmental protections, community and social services, and ensuring a fair and equitable marketplace. Many of the inequities that the work of our departments address are the result of systemic racism and discrimination. We stand against racism in any form and pledge to use our offices to advance racial and social equity, diversity, and fairness.

We will continue to work with renewed purpose to build on progress made in partnership with our Board, employees, customers and the communities we serve to improve quality of life and foster vibrant and powerful communities for all of Los Angeles County.

A message to employees from Sachi A. Hamai, CEO
June 1, 2020

I had intended to use this week's letter to celebrate the latest milestones of reopening in L.A. County—the return of in-person dining in restaurants, the opportunity to finally get a haircut—as we work together to continue the incredibly important COVID-19 health precautions that will keep us moving ahead safely in the weeks and months to come.

But instead, I'd like to pause to reflect on the tragedy of George Floyd's death and the ensuing civil unrest that has endangered communities across our County and the nation.

As a County family, we are all feeling the widespread sadness and frustration of this moment.

We share the grief and outrage, and also embrace the importance of seeking productive solutions together.

That is why it is so disheartening to witness the widespread violence, including looting and arson, that has erupted in communities across the County over the past several days. In response, Board of Supervisors Chair Kathryn Barger has declared a state of emergency that will make it easier for us to coordinate assistance across jurisdictional lines, quickly obtain vital supplies, and receive future reimbursement from the state and federal governments.

I recognize the challenges that this new emergency presents, especially for our first responders. As public servants, our County workforce is already handling so much: safeguarding the health of our 10 million residents, assisting the tens of thousands who have been infected with the virus that has killed more than 2,300 of our residents, and helping the many thousands more who have been devastated by COVID-19's economic toll.

Once again, our communities are counting on us to demonstrate the strength and resilience that will bring us through this crisis. I am grateful for your hard work and continued dedication to our County and the residents we serve.





**Public remarks issued by Dr. Barbara Ferrer
June 1, 2020**

I want to say a few words about events since the Memorial Day murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis. The events in Minneapolis and response to those events are overwhelming and I think it's important to comment on the connection between these two concerns, the death of a Black man at the hands of police, and the experience of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County.

First, I want to express my personal heartbreak and anger, and that of my colleagues at the department of public health, over this most recent death of a Black American at the hands of police officers. There are no words for the horror that the picture we've all seen from Minneapolis brings up. I want to extend my deepest sympathy to the Floyd family and to Mr. Floyd's friends and his community. I also want to extend my condolences to the families and friends of Breonna Taylor and Tony McDade, and the many other families that have borne witness to violence against their loved ones.

And I want to thank everyone who came together peacefully to stand against racism and violence.

I also would like to take a minute to try to connect this brutal event to what we see in Los Angeles County in dealing with COVID-19. We know that Black Americans fare worse than other groups on virtually every measure of health status. And it has become all too common to blame this on individual behaviors when in fact the science is clear: the root cause of health inequities is racism and discrimination and how it limits access to the very opportunities and resources each of us need for optimal health and well-being. Science also tells us that that lifetime stress associated with experiences of daily acts of discrimination and oppression play a major role. It starts at birth, with higher rates of Black infant mortality and shockingly higher rates of maternal mortality among Black women, and extends through adulthood, when we see Black residents of LA County experiencing earlier onset of heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes and early deaths. When I report each week that we have seen elevated numbers of black deaths in this county due to COVID-19, I am reporting on the consequences of these long-standing inequities.

And it is not just the direct victim of violence – the man or woman who is beaten or shot or asphyxiated – who pays the price for police brutality. It is an entire community that lives with the fear that the next time it could be them, or their son or daughter, neighbor or friend. It is the consequence of that fear that we are seeing when we report instance after instance of inequality in health outcomes. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar put it eloquently in an op-ed in the LA Times when he said the black community has to ask itself if “being black means sheltering at home for the rest of their lives because the racism virus infecting the country is more deadly than COVID-19.”

The op-ed piece called for a rush to justice as the answer to events like this. As the department responsible for public health in LA County, and in acknowledgement that addressing law enforcement violence and racism are core to public health, this rush to justice has to be part of our prescription as well.

**Statement of Debra Duardo, LA County Superintendent of Schools
June 1, 2020**

Over the weekend, we watched peaceful protests call for justice and equality after the killing of George Floyd. We saw thousands of people engage in nonviolent peaceful protests. We also witnessed media images of violence in our communities and across America. As the Superintendent of Schools for Los Angeles County, my thoughts embraced our young people.

Today, our children will seek to understand these events. They will turn to us with wide eyes and questions. As adults, we must teach them to peacefully stand up against injustice, racism and inequity. Violence is never the answer.

As young people turn to adults for answers, it is important that we listen and respond with honesty and empathy. The images they have absorbed on the news and social media may result in an array of emotions, including anger, fear and anxiety. We must address those feelings. Helping students recognize and acknowledge their emotions can be a powerful tool in turning these events into a learning experience.

Ultimately, we must look out for each other, continue to create safe spaces for our youth and teach and protect our vulnerable, impressionable young people. My hope is that we shift our focus as a community and come together as one LA County in support of a brighter tomorrow for our children. This week, I will reach out to education leaders and philanthropic supporters to develop ideas to help us move forward.

Today, I call on our educational community to rise and support equity for our children and our county. Last week's death of Mr. Floyd in Minneapolis Police custody must be a turning point in our approach to race and equity. Persistent inequalities in our nation and neighborhoods have also been exposed by the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people of color – particularly African Americans.

“ Enough is enough. We cannot continue as we have been. We must use this moment as a turning point to bring about real change. Our children’s future depends on the actions we take today.



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**
Serving Students • Supporting Communities
Leading Educators

Joint Message from the Offices of the Los Angeles County Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender

The Los Angeles County Public Defender's and Alternate Public Defender's offices kneel in solidarity with George Floyd and Black Lives Matter. We call for social justice and the end to senseless and needless killings of African-Americans.

Without law enforcement accountability, we get a police officer's knee on George Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes while other officers look on and do nothing. These horrific images are forever seared in our minds along with a shameful list of other African Americans who have met a similar fate. We demand police accountability and the end to systemic racism, overt and implicit, that results in the killing of unarmed Black people.

We hold out hope that these injustices and the resulting uprising lead to fundamental change in our justice system throughout the country including here in Los Angeles County. We demand sweeping police reform including implicit bias training, implementation of duty to intervene policies and separate agencies besides the local district attorney to prosecute officers who break the law. We join the peaceful protestors expressing their First Amendment rights for racial, economic and social justice.

For Angelenos, cellphone footage of Mr. Floyd's killing and the civil unrest that has followed are painful reminders that little has been done to undo the dehumanization of African Americans that started with this country's founding and continues to permeate our justice system to this day.



As public defenders we fight the anti-racism battle each day, zealously upholding the Sixth Amendment, in and outside courtrooms. Like public defenders across the nation, we see the indifference and inequitable treatment of our clients, who are disproportionately people of color. We fight for their human rights and are the voice for the voiceless. We demand that their lives and their voices matter.

This pandemic has underscored the urgency to end institutional racism in our health systems, jobs and jails. We continue to fight mass incarceration and put an end to the daily influx of arrests that do not make our communities safer. We must stop making unwise and unlawful arrests, like the arrest of Mr. Floyd.

Throughout the nation, we must finally end the systemic use of violent police interaction. And when police officers abuse and kill those they are tasked with protecting and serving, there must be accountability with swift and aggressive prosecutions. We are all part of the same humanity and the same community. Only until we unify to become an anti-racist society can we ensure that history does not continue to repeat itself.

We believe as Martin Luther King, Jr. said that "The moral arc of the universe bends toward justice." With renewed energy, we must double down to change that trajectory now, toward the justice that Dr. King envisioned.

Ricardo Garcia
Public Defender

Erika Anzoategui
Alternate Public Defender

**A communication to employees from Emilio Salas,
Acting Executive Director on June 10, 2020**

I know that the last two weeks have been incredibly difficult for all of us. Although tension abounds throughout our County, the nation, and across the globe, in the wake of the senseless death of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement...this brings to light how far we have yet to go in the struggle to obtain equality and justice for everyone. While the world around has been dramatically changed by a pandemic, this current wave of protests reminds us of what has still yet to change.

Despite the level of discomfort and uncertainty that these protests bring, it reminds us of the sentiments expressed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who told us that some prefer the absence of tension to the presence of justice. It is understandable that some may long for a restoration of order and a return to "normalcy." However, it's my opinion that this is exactly what we don't need to happen right now.

For some, normalcy means being followed by security while shopping in a department store. It means jogging through the wrong neighborhood and not making it home alive. It means being detained and slowly suffocated in broad daylight. Even amid a pandemic, normalcy means living in a community of color that has five times the rate of exposure to a virus as compared to wealthier communities within the same County.

In our line of work, we see firsthand how racism and even unconscious bias has led to an overrepresentation of black people experiencing homelessness and the shameful overrepresentation of black and brown people in our County jails. We don't have to look far to see that this struggle is real and yet there is still a segment of our population that thinks everything is ok.

I don't want to pontificate about such a sensitive topic as I know that many of you have very strong feelings about what is going on and some of you have experienced systemic racism directly. But like every family, there are times that we, as a work family, need to have difficult conversations in order to move forward.

In the days and weeks ahead, we will undoubtedly see and hear more about all the work that is left to be done to bring true equality and equal justice to everyone. Although we cannot have large group gatherings, I encourage all of you to have conversations amongst yourselves and think about ways that we, as an organization and as individuals, can make a difference in this fight. I know that the law enforcement community can learn much from our very own Community Policing Team.

All of us come from a different point of view and have lived a different experience. I, for one, grew up in the City of Compton where I witnessed more violence than I care to remember. We have staff members that grew up in war torn countries where mere survival was the only objective. And we have staff that grew up in suburbia, in a nuclear family, but with just as much passion as anyone else in their desire to give back and provide others the opportunity to experience the good that this country has to offer.

Whatever the case may be, we all have something to learn from each other. But we cannot and should not hope to see the tension subside just because it makes us uncomfortable. Let's seize this moment and be the change that we want to see in this world. We do this every day, but now it's time to bring it up several notches. The LACDA is nothing without the people that breathe life into it. Give us your breath of experience, give us your perspective, share your thoughts, and let us be an integral part of the solution.



**Statement from Dr. Lori Bettison-Varga, President and Director
June 2, 2020**

The Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County stands with Black communities and commits to be museums where everyone is seen, heard, represented and respected. Protest gives voice to deep anger at injustice, and it has the power to inspire change.

Today, we know the names George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many more - and in knowing their stories we might understand the outrage, the fear, the sadness and the exhaustion Black people carry with them every day. Systemic racism is deeply ingrained in our country's history and daily interactions. And it is further amplified by the moment, in Los Angeles and all across the country, where inequity is deepened and revealed by the pandemic as communities of color are impacted the most.

Founded in 1913, as museums of, for and with Los Angeles, it is our obligation to meet this historic moment, advancing empathy, learning and dialogue. We are committed to build upon our strong foundation to listen, working closely with our community partners, reflecting their perspective with new programming and approaches which embrace principles of social justice, and promote equity and inclusion. We re-dedicate ourselves, and reinforce our mission of inspiring wonder, discovery and responsibility for our natural and cultural worlds, and make the commitment to be a true partner in building a better community where there is no tolerance for injustice or racism.

**Communication from Erika Anzoategui
Alternate Public Defender**

Seeing yet another unarmed Black man killed mercilessly at the hands of law enforcement has caused a deep sadness and reopened old wounds for many. Working as public defenders, we know and understand the current demonstration of pain and frustration due to systemic racism during the ongoing protests has been a long time coming. I know we stand with all who fight against injustice and oppression. Let's hope this moment in time will generate true change and spark the fire for the soul searching needed for people to education themselves on implicit and explicit biases in order to eradicate them.

I want to thank you all for your tireless fight against injustice. Sometimes you may feel it's all for naught, but the images you saw this weekend should solidify the fact that you are needed more than ever! You are the voice to the vulnerable and the oppressed who are routinely cast aside. You call our systemic racism, demand that people listen and face their biases, and fight to right the wrongs created by an unfair criminal justice system.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. George Floyd represents so many people. His death highlights the ongoing issues of systemic racism and injustice that plague our communities. His senseless death shall not be in vain and will help our country realize "enough is enough." It's time to change.

As an office, I am asking that we come together to denounce racism and hate by listening to the communities who have been deeply wounded by not only this recent tragic death but generations of hate.





A message from Ricardo D. García LA County Public Defender

Public defenders across this country are witness to a history of racial injustice. They rail against a system built to silence, dehumanize and incarcerate Brown and Black people. As public defenders, we listen to our clients, respect their life experience, and tell their story. We are often the only people to recognize the lies in a police report, to challenge an illegal search and planted evidence or to document and shed light on a police officer's assault on a client.

Public defenders believe in the presumption of innocence which too often is nothing more than a vague legal construct to prosecutors, judges and juries. Public defenders are a beacon for evolutionary and revolutionary changes in the justice system. Our calling is to hold the system accountable.

As the Los Angeles County Public Defender, it is my responsibility to deliver on the promise of our Constitution; that regardless of the charge, poverty, race or ethnicity, the accused will receive equal justice and be treated with fairness under the law. It is my duty to help my team hold the system accountable.

George Floyd's horrific murder has laid bare a truth what for African Americans, has always been painfully obvious — the promise of equal justice and humane treatment by law enforcement and the courts is too often a lie. Too often Black men, women and children are presumed to be 'dangerous' or presumed 'suspicious' and they are 'presumed guilty' based on nothing more than the color of their skin. This is fundamentally wrong.

We must hold the justice system accountable for ensuring equal and fair treatment for all people regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

Justice and accountability must start with law enforcement. Certainly, many law enforcement officers are dedicated and conscientious professionals. However, the truth is when officers witness acts of criminal misconduct committed by their colleagues, too many remain silent. Their silence makes them complicit in the perpetuation of such misconduct. Rank-and-file officers must condemn in the strongest terms the acts we saw committed by the four officers in Minneapolis.

Beating a handcuffed suspect is a crime. Filing false police reports is a crime. Stopping a Black man because he is driving a luxury car in an affluent neighborhood is a violation of the 4th Amendment and is illegal. Stopping Black men on the street to 'stop and frisk' them without reasonable suspicion is illegal. Such acts can never be condoned. Police officers themselves must change the culture in their ranks to end such misconduct. They must hold each other accountable.

For the last two weeks, Los Angeles residents and people across our nation, indeed across the world, have registered their justified collective anger and frustration with the consistent and pervasive mistreatment of African Americans in society and in the justice system. The massive number of people across our communities choosing to peacefully protest these injustices was sparked by the torture and murder of George Floyd. These protests reflect our collective scream demanding reform and accountability.

Without accountability, we will continue to see horrific crimes like George Floyd's murder by police where a human being is suffocated with cruel indifference, for nearly nine minutes, while other officers looked on and did nothing. George Floyd's murder along with a list too long and too shameful of others who have met a similar fate, is forever seared in our psyches. I will never forget the image of a police officer's knee on George Floyd's neck and his final words; "I can't breathe." We must demand accountability, we must demand justice and the end to systemic racism, overt and implicit, that results in the killing of unarmed Black men.

Message to all Parks employees
From Norma Garcia, Acting Director

In the last couple of months we have faced some of the most challenging times together with the impact of COVID, quarantine and the economy.

The emotional stress associated with the pandemic, social isolation, caring for our loved ones while serving as essential workers and supporting our communities has been significant.

And all of this has been compounded by the death of George Floyd, which has evoked emotions ranging from sadness to frustration to anger to grief.

We have also witnessed throughout the nation, as in many of our County parks, a movement underway to end the senseless deaths of African Americans and to end institutionalized racism.

As park professionals, we are no strangers for standing up for equity. In 2016, we published the Countywide Parks Needs Assessment which illustrated park disparities in communities of color in Los Angeles County. We then supported a park equity movement and the public passed Measure A, which was the first equity ballot measure in LA County dedicating resources to high and very high need park communities.

Last year we made a stronger commitment to inclusion and equity in our mission statement and values.

And in the completion of our Department business operation plan this year, we implemented an “equity formula” to add additional park staff hours to parks located in high and very high need communities.

While the impacts of COVID on the economy has had a direct impact on our Department budget, our collective equity work must continue – we must strive together to ensure that our Department and our public parks are spaces of healing, empowerment, equality, equity and justice – including the most vulnerable – where many of us come from or work in or are passionate about.



A message from Kristin Sakota, Director
June 3, 2020

For weeks our personal and professional lives have been filled with news and updates, tracking the responses to and impacts of COVID-19. After days of civil unrest protesting the death of George Floyd and voicing the call for racial justice, I did not want to send another update. Instead, I write to express and acknowledge the sorrow, outrage, and determination that so many of us are feeling.

I come from a long line of African-American public servants and essential workers—military veterans, medial workers, a railroad mail carrier, a surgical nurse, an art teacher—a lineage that survived Jim Crow and the Great Migration in search of a better life. This week, I have been waking to a gaping pit in my stomach, grown wide with the loss of 100,000 lives to this pandemic, a disproportionate number of them from black and brown communities, and the trauma of 400 years, spanning time, across nations, across continents, and oceans of pain. I write to call their names and honor their memory.

As the nation grapples with recent events, I write to uplift the work of our department, the artists and cultural organizations we support, and the diverse communities of Los Angeles County that we serve. I write to speak to the transformational power of arts, culture, and creative expression—to bridge across difference, advance narrative and social change, support equitable and resilient communities, inspire local identity and belonging, reflect our shared humanity, and help us reimagine a better future. In a moment where there can be no going back to "normal" the arts have an important role to play.

As our inaugural year as a department comes to a close and we build on more than 70 years as the Arts Commission, the focus on the importance of our work sharpens. We envision a region where arts, culture, and creativity are integral to civic life and are committed to ensuring all our diverse people and communities have access to the many benefits of the arts. Our work is framed by the guiding principles of the LA County Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative.

Yet we know the full cultural equity and inclusion we envision cannot be achieved without racial equity.

We stand with our Black community and stand against racial injustice. Black art matters, black dance matters, black thought matters, black love matters, black money matters, black grief matters, black joy matters, black lives matter.

I continue to be inspired by all of you, and so many artists, advocates, teachers, organizations, first responders, and freedom fighters. There is more work to do. It's going to take all of us collectively to make lasting change. The very fabric of our culture and our democracy is at stake.

A Message from Celia Zavala, Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors

During the past week, we have seen our streets filled with millions of people calling out passionately for social justice in response to the senseless killing of George Floyd -these images have no doubt touched all of us to the core.

We've seen communities share a collective voice. There has been an outpouring of support, a display of courage and frustration, as well as shared pain. We recognize that these past few months have been hard and uncertain as this comes on the heels of a global pandemic.

During these difficult times, we can take great pride in knowing we represent and serve a Board that continues to provide bold leadership and is committed to social justice and the advancement and equality of communities of color.

As an organization, we must reflect on our core values. We use these values to hold ourselves and EO family members accountable every day: integrity, respect, innovation, collaboration, and ownership.

Effective immediately, I would like to announce that we will be updating our Department's values to include Equality. While the spirit of equality is reflected in our existing values and our treatment to our fellow employees and constituents and communities, I believe that directly stating this in our core values better reflects our stance on the fair and equitable treatment of everyone; and, further, it amplifies our intolerance for any behavior or action that would otherwise result in the inequitable treatment of others.

We continue to hold these values high during this time and will continue to use them to provide a platform to elevate the diverse voices and ideas of our staff, which I can proudly say is a reflection of the communities we serve every day.

Our new and existing Department values remind us that we are committed to accepting personal responsibility for behaving honestly and ethically and valuing our differences. They remind us to treat each other with dignity and to use imaginative approaches to overcome barriers. They push us to work together as a team across boundaries to accomplish common goals and commit to taking the initiative to solve problems and transform our challenges into successes.

I am proud to say that the work being done by the EO staff every single day is a testament to how we honor those values. Our Department has been invested in the critical work needed to provide the change our society desperately wants to see. It reflects our commitment to uplift LA County and is in alignment with the mission of the Board we serve.

As we struggle to make sense of this heartbreaking, tragic event, we can take pride in the fact that we are part of the important daily work that needs to happen for true reform. The Board formulated the Executive Office to be the independent counterbalance to other administrative and operational entities within our local government. Here are just a few examples:

- The Civilian Oversight Commission is fighting for our communities by increasing the transparency and accountability of the Sheriff's Department to make sure that it becomes a trustworthy institution that communities of color can begin to build bridges with.
- The Office of Inspector General continues to promote constitutional policing and the fair, ethical, and impartial administration of justice. More than ever, this work is critical.
- Our Civil Service Commission continues to hold all employees accountable to ensure an ethical, fair, and equal workplace.
- Our County Equity Oversight Panel works tirelessly to protect the rights of our employees to be free from discrimination based on a protected status.

There is still so much more work to be done, but we remain optimistic in the steps we have taken to be true agents of change.

I call on each of you to use your individual and collective voices to stand for truth, to speak out in your communities and workplace to help cultivate a culture of diversity and inclusion that recognizes and celebrates the inherent value in each person regardless of race.

This is a daily effort that will pay dividends for future generations. In the coming years, our office is committed to ensuring all of our internal and external decisions are through the lens of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. This is something you can count on.

**Communication from Joseph Nicchitta, Director
March 31, 2020**

The deaths of George Floyd and those before him are horrific. They have exposed deeply painful scars and provoked sadness and outrage across our country and here, acutely, in Los Angeles County.

I write to acknowledge the anger, pain, anxiety, and hopelessness you may be feeling. You are not alone. DCBA is strong in our diversity, and because of our diversity we suffer together and with our community.

The County will be pushing out work-related information soon. Right now, I simply want to thank you again for being such strong advocates for Los Angeles County, and remind you that I appreciate you, your DCBA colleagues appreciate you, and the County appreciates you.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**CONSUMER &
BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

**A message to staff from Christina R. Ghaly, M.D.
Director of Health Services on June 1, 2020**

As we begin another month responding to COVID-19, I want to recognize your ongoing efforts to rise up to meet the challenges of this pandemic. Thank you all for your steadfast commitment to providing extraordinary care to our patients.

I also want to take a moment and acknowledge what we are seeing unfold in the County and across our nation. The footage of the tragic and unjust death of George Floyd a week ago is seared into our minds, along with the untimely deaths of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor just weeks before. Now we watch as protestors here in Los Angeles (LA) and across the country denounce these killings and the factors behind them.

We are living in difficult times – dealing with two pandemics: coronavirus and racism. It is heartbreaking to see so many individuals in our communities experiencing such pain. Pain that is acute for so many reasons – the pain of loss, anxiety, isolation, and unemployment – but also pain that is longstanding, the result of decades of individual and systemic racism. And these pandemics sadly are inter-related. We know that minority communities bear a disproportionate number of COVID cases and related deaths because of the impact of structural racism.

In times like these, we must stand together in solidarity and have eyes not only to the challenges of the communities we serve but the struggles of those we work with as well. I am proud, as I know you are, to be a part of an organization whose foundational identity is grounded in the dignity and worth of every human life. Regardless of the color of a person's skin, where they were born, how much money they have, or how they live their life.

We will continue to work toward an LA County defined by justice and peace for our patients and families that we care for. And reaching out to our communities beyond the physical walls of our clinics and campuses.

DHS's values – being Welcoming, Inclusive, Compassionate, Innovative, Excellent and Accountable – describe what we hold dear and will guide us forward. I hope we can all find new ways every day to live out these values with our patients and one another.

We will get through this. We will come out stronger as an organization and, I hope, as a society. During this very trying period, more than ever, we are in this together.

Thank you for your dedication, for being there for each other, and for saving lives.



Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

**A message to employees from Marcia Mayeda, Director
Animal Care & Control**

I am reaching out to you in acknowledgement of the events of the past week. It is inspiring to see people of all colors, ethnicities, ages, and backgrounds come together to speak as a unified force to demand justice and equality. The tragedy of George Floyd's killing, shortly after the unconscionable murder of Ahmaud Arbery, has elevated a movement that demands a dismantling of structural racism at every level of society. The collective outrage of humanity against racism has become a powerful voice and serves as a meaningful push for all of us to examine our own beliefs, attitudes, and treatment of others.

At DACC, our team members are of various ethnicities, races, religions, sexual orientations, ages, and other foundational identities that make DACC a culturally rich organization. We serve members of many different communities and must treat everyone with whom we interact with dignity, fairness, objectivity, and compassion. Racism or intolerance of any kind is not tolerated in DACC, and any person may report such an incident through the County's confidential CPOE process. We prohibit retaliation of any kind for reporting such incidents.

However, we know that part of the work of anti-racism is to take an honest look at our programs and services as an organization to see where we can do better. One example of doing this was our change in procedures for dominant dog breed adoptions last year. Our examination of inherent bias in DACC operations showed us that change was called for in this area. We examined our internal processes for inherently biased procedures, and determined that requiring extra adoption applications and interviews for dominant breed dogs led to biases against people interested in adopting them. Rather than judging people by their choice of animal, we moved to a conversational adoption model so we could work collaboratively with the adopters. George Floyd's killing shows us that much more needs to be done to achieve real, true unity in our nation and DACC will continue to seek ways to ensure fairness for its staff, volunteers, and constituents.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
**ANIMAL CARE
& CONTROL**

The looting and vandalism that has marred the social protests and demands for justice has blighted the messages being sent by peaceful protesters. We must not let this lawlessness overshadow the demands to end racism. A powerful message on social media has said: Instead of saying, "It's horrible that an innocent black man was killed, but destroying property has to stop." Let's say, "It's horrible that property is being destroyed, but killing innocent black men has to stop."

For all our colleagues hurting right now, please know that you are not alone and that we have resources to support you. It's more important than ever to talk to one another, and to find healing in our common humanity...

Let's stand together to insist on ending institutional racism, bigotry, and discrimination.

“DCFS will take decisive steps to reduce systemic racism and implicit bias resulting in the overrepresentation of children and families of color in the child welfare system through:

- intentional, equity-based policy and program development**
- ongoing staff training, and**
- community engagement.**



**Los Angeles County Department of
Children and Family Services**

**A message to the public from Bobby Cagle, Director
June 4, 2020**

We are living through one of the most difficult times in our nation’s recent history. The roots of the civil unrest taking place run deep; all that was needed was a spark to ignite the smoldering hurt driven by an almost uninterrupted string of injustices throughout the history of our country.

Our communities are crying out for fairness, justice and equity, and it is imperative that we actively listen and understand these concerns, starting by examining our own implicit biases and questioning assumptions we may have held for many years. We must routinely challenge our pre-conceived notions and work with purpose daily to create a culture of safety, equity, and community.

Recent events have highlighted deep disparities and the over-representation of marginalized populations in our child welfare system. The stark reality is that the children and families we serve often live in communities that are disproportionately affected by crime, poverty, violence and trauma brought about by the lack of human compassion and equity.

As a department, we have taken important actions in recent years toward combatting discrimination and injustice, including the implementation of our Office of Equity, which will confront these issues head on by focusing on adaptive change. System disruption often paves the way for transformation, and we are committed to harnessing the energy of this moment to make dramatic, lasting change and continue creating a more just, equitable system for those we serve.

In this moment of introspection, we pledge to embrace our core values and be intentional in our work so that we may be part of the solution. All we need to do is roll up our sleeves and get to the difficult work of changing hearts and minds, as well as systems.

Change begins at home, and at this watershed moment our department will strive to act as forces of peace, stability and justice on behalf of those who need it most.

Message from Antonia Jiménez, Director
June 23, 2020

I want to take a moment to add my voice to the voices of all those in our country who are demanding equality and fair treatment for African Americans. As a person of color, I have experienced firsthand the systemic oppression, marginalization and maltreatment that can occur when individuals pass judgment on others simply because of the color of their skin.

We are witnessing history in the making; despite the threat of a global pandemic and economic uncertainty, people of all backgrounds are marching peacefully in streets across the country in solidarity with African Americans who are experiencing racism.

The good news is that these demonstrations give us hope and a promise for a better tomorrow as we band together and advocate for the change we want to see. This requires all of us to take a personal inventory of our lives and determine how we can bring about positive change in our country. There are many ways to do this, such as making our voices heard at the polls, volunteering for a worthwhile cause, or simply showing more empathy and compassion towards one another.

As your Director and leader of the largest social services agency in our country, I am committed to using my energy to strengthen our programs to effectively lift individuals and families out of poverty and towards economic mobility. My commitment is rooted in the reality, and validated by data, that many of those who rely on DPSS services come from diverse backgrounds and underserved communities. The recent Coronavirus pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement validates further that we in government must do more to provide greater access to health care and social services for minorities and racial equality for African Americans, as well as all Americans.

DPSS, as the heart and soul of LA County, will continue to play a critical role by serving the individuals and families who rely on us for food, health care and shelter. The diversity of the DPSS workforce is representative of the multi-cultural population we serve, and it is also our greatest strength, which allows us to learn from one another and grow together as a community. I want to encourage all employees to continue to respect and value our differences, with an understanding that we are all working together for a common goal and stand together as Americans.

I will close by expressing my sincere appreciation for the work that you do to improve the lives of the individuals and families we serve. As we navigate through the pandemic and social inequality in America, I want you to know that I stand with you and your families to bring about the change we all want to see.



**Communication to employees from Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel on June 9, 2020**

2020 is a year of change. Across the County and throughout the nation individuals are standing up in peaceful protest to denounce racism and demand justice for George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and all those who lost their lives at the hands of law enforcement.

As a DHR community, we denounce racism in any form. Period. As the County leaders in equity and inclusion, as public servants, and as friends, colleagues and family members, we must continue to call for the elimination of discrimination and oppression of all kinds, including in our justice, healthcare, education, housing and employment systems.

It has always been through the efforts of advocates and the movements they built that our nation has progressed. As a result, legislation has been enacted throughout our history to advance equity, including, but not limited to following:

- **1776** – Declaration of Independence
- **1848** – Women’s Suffrage Movement
- **1865** – Passage of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude.
- **1866** – Civil Rights Act declaring all citizens were equally protected under the law, without respect to race, color or previous condition; prohibited racial discrimination in the sale or rental of property.
- **1920** – Women were granted the right to vote
- **1963** – Equal Pay Act prohibiting sex-based wage discrimination.
- **1964** – Civil Rights Act outlawing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin; prohibited unequal application of voter registration requirements, employment, and public accommodations.
- **1968** – Fair Housing Act
- **1990** – Americans with Disabilities Act prohibiting discrimination based on disability.
- **2019** – Equal Pay Act requiring equal pay for the same or similar work.

When I look at this significant list of legislation, I ask myself if we are truly doing all we can to stamp out inequities in our society. I think it is fair to say that we have not yet arrived.

A law that is not enforced is simply a collection of words on parchment. This is one of the reasons I wanted to become an attorney - to fight for the rights of others. This is what drew me to public service - to provide equitable services and opportunities afforded by the government to those who need a safety net. This is why I love the field of HR – to create pipeline programs for individuals with barriers to employment and to develop and provide growth opportunities for DHR and County employees.

As a woman of color and mother of two young black men, I stand with our LA County community and other communities nationwide in the fight to eradicate racism and its many vestiges. I stand with others to lift up those who have been blocked or excluded from the axiom “liberty and justice for all.” What we learn from the above list of legislation is that laws alone don’t make change - civil and fair-minded people do...

We cannot foresee how long this civil unrest will continue, but we can stand together to provide empathy and understanding for those who march. We can be respectful of the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs each of us holds. We can show that same respect in our communications with and actions toward each other, our County colleagues and the members of our communities we are privileged to serve.

There is an African proverb that says: *The drum beats loudest before it bursts.* I hear the sound of positive change. Can you hear it?

Communication from Department of Mental Health Executive Team on June 3, 2020

We are thinking about the countless individuals who have had their lives cut short by racism and the violence it brings. We mourn the senseless and tragic loss of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others before them. We also acknowledge the experience of Christian Cooper and countless other men and women of color before him that can have lasting psychological impacts. We also affirm the feelings of anger, sadness, confusion, fear and sense of powerlessness that members of our DMH Work Family and communities are experiencing.

We stand in solidarity with those who are protesting against the continued killing of Black people and the systems and attitudes, like implicit biases, which actively and passively enable such atrocities.

The ongoing pain and trauma we continue to witness being experienced by all communities who are oppressed by the systems of our nation, demands that our Department respond with empathy as we serve our LA County residents and connect with our DMH Work Family. We are called to find ways to outreach our DMH colleagues and to heal the diverse communities we serve.

We don't have to live our fellow humans' experience to obtain understanding and be moved to support a better outcome for them.

It is critical to remember that empathy requires listening with an open heart and mind. The conversations are sometimes uncomfortable but necessary to gain a robust understanding of the lived experiences of individuals we serve as well as work with daily. Indeed, growth and learning happen in the spaces outside our comfort zones and require thoughtful exploration of our own values and actions.

Building resiliency within individuals, families and communities impacted by the pain and trauma surfaced and/or reignited by Mr. Floyd's death is a key component of healing.

“ As the Department of Mental Health, we are positioned to provide the needed support, from a place of humility and understanding, so we Rise Up from this dark place of hurt into the warm light of healing.



**Message to employees from Raymond Leyva, Interim Chief
June 10, 2020**

Over the past week, there have been historic protests around the world in response to the very tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the pain and suffering felt in so many communities across our nation, in Los Angeles County, and among you because of your personal experiences.

We have the opportunity to reflect upon these events and on their applicability as a catalyst for positive changes within the communities we serve and within our department. Let us take this time to renew our commitment to engage the community and our clients, listen to their concerns, act to address their needs, and commit to support each other within our Probation family too as we move toward healing.

As we prepare to reopen our operations from the scaling back due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have a unique opportunity to reset our approach to our work with a refreshed perspective and new sense of focus. Let's work together in the coming months to strengthen our commitment to our goals of rebuilding lives and providing for healthier and safer communities. This message is just one step in a better informed journey of service and commitment. We will continue to communicate and provide clear, substantive changes to our methods to enhance our responsivity to the communities we serve.

I have full confidence in the diverse and talented members of our probation family to meet this challenge and I am proud to stand with you in this endeavor.

“ Let's work together in the coming months to strengthen our commitment to our goals of rebuilding lives and providing for healthier and safer communities. ”



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PROBATION
Building safer communities through positive change.



Message from Otto Solorzano, Acting Director
June 2, 2020

Over the past few months, I have seen every one of our teams create innovative programs and solutions to assist our communities and meet the challenges put in our way. I know that I speak for our entire Leadership Team by saying thank you for everything you are doing to assist residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And as this pandemic continues to pose great challenges for us, we are now facing the heavy burden of the tragic death of George Floyd and the ensuing civil unrest underway in our communities. We recognize the importance of protesting injustice and trying to make positive change in our society. Too many of our residents and people around the country are experiencing sadness, frustration, grief, outrage, and fear about the future. And it's our job here at WDACS and the County to do whatever we can to address these concerns and provide the services that so many need right now.

In closing, I want to say again how proud I am of our Department. Once again, our communities are calling for us to assist them with understanding, healing, and solutions. You are the heart of our Department and I appreciate all your work and efforts. Please keep your family and yourself safe in these challenging times.



Message from Skype Patrick, Library Director

June 2, 2020

We are living through a time unlike any we have ever known, and hopefully unlike any we will know again. COVID-19 has deeply impacted our communities, challenging us to adapt to rapidly changing realities, to take on complex work-life balances, and to comfort one another while remaining physically distant in times of tragic loss, rather than succumbing to fear or panic. And now, at a time when we were already so vulnerable, the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis feels like too much to bear.

Amidst this anxiety, cruelty, and tragedy, LA County Library stands with our Black community. No one should be subjected to prejudice, threats, or violence based on race. We hear you. We see you. We are here for you. We know it can be difficult to remain hopeful at a time like this, and some of you are scared, sad, or angry. We share these feelings. But we press on and continue to find ways to build bridges.

LA County Library welcomes curiosity, and we welcome all. We are committed to breaking down barriers to equity, both social and racial. We aspire to help our communities thrive, providing safe spaces (both physical and virtual) where people can ask questions, learn, and grow, no matter their age, background, or the color of their skin. Our staffing, programming, services, and collections aim to create environments of diversity and inclusion, encouraging community conversations—sometimes on tough issues—and illuminating new ideas for many of our customers.

Libraries have always been a beacon in the darkness, trusted institutions vital to the wellbeing of their communities. Since 1912, we have been dedicated to freedom of information. I encourage you to remain engaged in democracy, seek out the truth, practice empathy, and to be a lifelong learner. Read. Vote. Take Classes. Continue to ask questions. The more we learn about ourselves and one another, the more we have the capacity to change the conversation, or to start a new one.

“*LA County Library welcomes curiosity, and we welcome all. We are committed to breaking down barriers to equity, both social and racial.*”

Our diversity in Los Angeles County is our strength. With varied backgrounds come varied ideas, perspectives, and hopes. In this difficult time of civil unrest, we stand with all of our diverse communities against racial injustice, and continue to believe in the transformative power of knowledge.

I thank you, and hope you and your loved ones remain safe.



Message to employees from Michael Govan, CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director on June 2, 2020

“We stand with our community in rejecting racism, in mourning, and in demanding justice for the deaths of countless African Americans who continue to be targeted by systematic violence. We recognize that museums cannot claim neutrality in addressing the horrific issues that have plagued our society for centuries.

“We have a responsibility to listen and to learn in our efforts to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion and address the deep-seated inequities that exist in the art world and in our society as a whole. We are committed to speaking out against racism, violence, and hatred.

“Our country is divided by ignorance, bigotry, and intolerance, and it is our goal to create safe and productive spaces—both virtual and in-person—for discussion and action. Our staff is hard at work at developing programs and initiatives, including our new series of programs titled “Racism is a Public Health Issue.” We recognize that ours is just one small contribution toward a change in our society that is long overdue. Our deep and ongoing commitment to doing this work is more important than ever and does not end this week, this month, or this year.” — LACMA

I realize these are absolutely unprecedented times. LACMA's staff is working so incredibly hard to keep us going through the COVID-19 pandemic, managing financial impacts and pointing LACMA into the future. Some of us have families to provide support; some have kids at home out of school and must be answering questions now about the problems of the real world as well as homework and home-schooling; some are quarantined alone without the support that comes with work and colleagues in real space; some have had sick loved ones or might have even lost a loved one or a friend.

These times have been so difficult for each of us in different ways, including the news of such horrific acts of racism.

Thank you—each and every one of you—for your hard work amid so much stress and uncertainty about the present and future. And please reach out to me, and to LACMA (through our Employee Assistance Program, EAP), for help if you are in need. We need you to be healthy so that we can continue our mission to inspire people through art.

This moment has challenged us to reflect on all that LACMA is doing right now to bring the change that is necessary to create a better, more equitable society, and end racism and senseless unjust violence. As an art museum that by its very definition is devoted to the diversity of cultures and human creativity, we are uniquely positioned to bring true equity and diversity and inclusion to art, to our lives, and to our democracy. You all know we have a long list of programs and practices that are directed toward the change that's needed. In a letter I wrote to our Board in advance of our meeting tomorrow, I reminded them of some of the things we have done over the years to foster and live the values of diversity, equity and inclusion—through art, exhibitions, public programs, in our staffing and on our board. Our new building embodies these important values. But there is more work ahead, as so many have pointed out, toward the goal that history won't repeat itself. We need to work together to continue to invest ourselves even more deeply in the work that urgently needs to be done to help bring about this more equitable and beautiful world we imagine.

The LACMA logo is displayed in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The letters 'L', 'A', and 'M' are significantly larger than the 'C' and 'A' in the middle. Below the 'L' and 'M' are short horizontal red bars. The logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the white text area, which is overlaid on a background image of the LACMA building.

Message from Fire Chief Daryl L. Osby
June 22, 2020

Over the past several weeks I, along with our nation, have been reflecting upon the state of affairs in our country regarding race relations, institutionalized racism, discrimination, disparate treatment, and other practices that have historically marginalized African Americans and other minority groups. Therefore, I would be remiss in not providing a message to our Department pertaining to this topic and opening the dialogue for us to move forward together.

Without going into detail, my family and I have experienced institutionalized racism firsthand, including incidents involving law enforcement and within the field of firefighting. As a firefighter, I have also seen the severe impact systemic racism has had on African Americans and other minorities when responding to their calls for aid. Nevertheless, despite my experiences I support good public safety and law enforcement as I recognize that they contribute to safe and viable communities.

When I was appointed as the first African American Fire Chief of our amazing Department, I proudly accepted the position and committed myself to serving the most diverse County in the nation. Following my appointment, I initiated our first strategic plan entitled “Engineering our Future,” as I believe we are responsible for the welfare of our Department and communities. The guiding principles of our Strategic Plan are our Department’s Mission, Vision, and Core Values, which I hold true and dear to my heart. I recognize that we are a diverse organization with varying viewpoints and backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is the Department’s expectation that we treat one another with courtesy and respect and embody our Mission, Vision, and Core Values in all our actions.

Moving forward, we will review our training, policies, procedures, and processes to ensure equity, fairness, and a conducive and safe working environment for all members. To ensure all our employees are given a voice, there will be internal stakeholder meetings and dialogue to seek input. Furthermore, we will continue to work towards transparency and accountability to our external stakeholders. We serve a diverse population and the Los Angeles County Fire Department will be part of the solution to address societal inequities.

Throughout my tenure as Fire Chief, I have emphasized the importance of effective communication, creating and facilitating good outcomes, and accountability. Therefore, I have established an e-mail suggestion box where employees can submit their recommendations on how we can more effectively work together and assist our communities for my review: Fire-ideabox@fire.lacounty.gov. I look forward to receiving your ideas.

We will seize this opportunity, stand up to the challenge, and invest in the future of our Department and the communities we serve.

“ The Los Angeles County Fire Department will be an exemplary organization that ensures equity in its recruitment, training, employee development, promotional processes, performance management, and organizational culture. The Department will create an environment wherein internal and external stakeholders will continuously strategize to ensure we implement best practices and provide exceptional public safety that meets the unique needs of our diverse County populace



County of Los Angeles

FIRE
DEPARTMENT



Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk



DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

Message to staff from Dean C. Logan June 1, 2020

I am struggling for words tonight – unfamiliar territory for me. At the same time, I believe silence is inappropriate and hollow at times such as these, so I want to share some thoughts.

The weight of the current situation on our streets, in our cities and across the nation is heavy. And, even as that weight burdens me, I know that it is heavier and brings with it greater pain for many that is beyond my reach.

Embedded in the healing that must take place, is the need for transparent, caring, and effective public services. That is at the heart of why our RR/CC community exists – and our obligation to deliver on that need is more important than ever. The records we are responsible for protecting and maintaining are about identity, belonging and significance. And, in administering elections, we can facilitate and empower change, but there is work we must do to instill trust and confidence that voting delivers on that promise.

The days, weeks and months ahead do not have the same assurance and predictability they once held. There are many questions and challenges, but we must seek out answers, work on solutions and take steps forward.

Among those steps, our Department leadership is committed to celebrating the uniqueness and diversity of our workforce. That starts with ensuring implicit bias training for all employees. While COVID-19 has limited our ability to provide the training in person, we are making the training available and accessible through online services and webinars.

As a work community, it is important for you to be seen and acknowledged. Whatever your experience is right now, I want to ensure our workplace is safe and supportive. If there are ways we can improve or support services you need, I want to hear your ideas and encourage dialog around that.

We are working closely with the larger County family on plans for the re-opening of our facilities to the public, most likely the week of July 6th. In doing that, we have an opportunity to do it in a manner that includes restoration and re-building. I ask each of you to be a part of that in whatever way you can.

Perhaps like many of you, I am unsure of many things, but I do know that this is a time to serve. We need each other and our larger community of Los Angeles County needs to know they can count on us.

Be safe, be strong...be you.



Message from Dean De Gruccio, Acting Director
June 4, 2020

Later this morning, I'll be watching the memorial services for George Floyd in Minneapolis; I am struck, again, by the senseless loss of his life and the systemic problems it once again brought to light. I echo our CEO Sachi Hamai's message and share in the sadness, frustration and for me, anger, of this moment. I support and will continue to support everyone in the CSSD family in any way that I can.

These past few months have been very challenging, in so many ways, for all of us. I will continue to do my best to keep you updated and do things for your safety and well-being. I am so grateful for all of your hard work and continued dedication to the families that we serve and that truly depend on us to do our jobs well.

Be safe and stay well, everyone. And, when I can do something better, please let me know directly! (And I appreciate those of you who are already doing that and sending suggestions!)



THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH PROTESTERS BUILDING TOWARDS A MORE JUST SOCIETY. WE ARE OUTRAGED BY THE CONTINUED SUPPRESSION OF PEOPLE OF COLOR, PARTICULARLY BLACK PEOPLE. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE ROLE PLANNING HAS HISTORICALLY PLAYED IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF BLACK RESIDENTS IN LA COUNTY, MOST NOTABLY THROUGH REDLINING. WE STRIVE TO ADDRESS THESE STRUCTURAL INEQUITIES AND TRULY SERVE ALL UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH LOCAL LEADERS TO PLAN A MORE EQUITABLE LA COUNTY.





Message from Jackie Lacey, District Attorney July 19, 2020

The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery shocked us. These murders have focused our nation's attention on the racism that still exists in our country. As the first African American and the first woman to lead the largest local prosecutor's office in the nation I condemn racism and criminal acts of violence committed by civilians as well law enforcement officers.

My parents moved to California from the segregated South in the 1950s. I will never forget the stories they shared of what life was like back then for Black people. These stories shape who I am as a person and influence how I lead the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. I believe in justice and I want people of color who are victims or defendants to be treated justly.

The people who work in my office are driven by an unwavering commitment to seek justice. Our mission is to protect the community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's office is one of the most diverse offices in the nation. Through our new recruitment unit we are continuing to attract people from underserved communities to become prosecutors. We acknowledge that racism exists. I was one of the first department heads in the County to mandate unconscious bias training.

I acknowledge that the justice system is not perfect. We have led the charge to make substantial changes in how we administer justice. We published A Blue-Print for Change in 2015. We have trained more than 2,000 law enforcement personnel on de-escalation techniques. We advocated for reallocating resources to mental health services. We encouraged the county to create more co-deployed teams to respond to emergency calls. As a result of our efforts we inspired the creation of the Office of Diversion and Re-Entry.

We realize that because we are a constitutional office invested with the responsibility to address crime that we are guardians of justice. We will continue to show courage in addressing violent crime, but we will also show empathy and compassion for all who are affected by our decisions. I have personally met with family members of people who have lost loved ones at the hands of law enforcement and I know their pain is real. To those who have lost loved ones, regardless of the circumstances, I offer my deepest sympathy.

In this time when many are calling for change, we will continue to look for thoughtful and comprehensive ways to improve. We will support law enforcement in their efforts to serve the community. We recognize that the actions of a few should not define the whole profession. We will also search for opportunities to educate the community by being transparent about the process. We are part of this community and we will continue to work with others to find ways to create a safer environment for 10 million plus people who live in Los Angeles County.

Message to staff from Gary Jones, Director
July 27, 2020

The extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn have affected the daily operations of a Department whose mission is to manage and maintain beaches and Marina del Rey has been astonishing, and we should all be proud of how we as a Department have repeatedly risen to the occasion during this trying time. While I may not have the opportunity to tell you that as often as I'd like, I hope you all know how deeply grateful I am for your commitment to *Caring for Our Coast*—especially as many of our resources are stretched thin, and all of us are grappling with the challenges of this coronavirus both at work and in our personal lives.

With the shifting demands we've had to contend with on a daily basis, what we have not yet discussed as a Department is how this pandemic, combined with the killing of George Floyd and the nationwide demonstrations for racial justice that have followed, have affected our diverse staff. There is much to discuss, much to acknowledge, and much to do—and now is the time to begin that part of our journey as a Department.

Many of you have seen on our DBH intranet site the new pledge made by Department Heads recognizing and affirming the fundamental value of what it means to be American—the belief that all people are created equal and entitled to all rights afforded by the United States Constitution. With my colleagues across the County, I recently joined in a renewed commitment to stand against racism in any form and pledged to use my office to advance racial and social equity, diversity and fairness. Our commitment is to work more intentionally to improve the quality of life and foster vibrant and powerful communities for all of Los Angeles County.

This type of reform is only successful to the extent it occurs collectively, and that work begins at home, within our DBH family. We as a Department must strive for a deeper, more supportive understanding of how the pandemic and the racial justice/antiracist movement are affecting our diverse staff, even as we continue to respond to the challenges of the ongoing public health crisis. And while the killing of Mr. Floyd may have struck our collective conscience as the brutal outcome of historical racial injustice wrought by a shameful legacy of slavery, the reforms so in need now extend to individuals of all

ethnicities facing discrimination, to gender, to sexual orientation, even to body types, and often intersect with class, culture and where we come from.

Our work will begin with learning and listening at all levels of our Department. In the coming weeks and months, Executive Staff will be reaching out to begin a dialogue about antiracist measures you recommend DBH should institute to assist in creating a “government of the people, by the people and for the people.”

As most of you know, I was not born in the United States, nor did I grow up studying American history, slavery and the abolitionist movement. But like many of you, I understand that America, my adopted home, is at a turning point when it comes to racial justice and equality for all—and this reform has been too long in coming. Recent events demonstrate that more Americans are now visualizing what it might mean to live in an equal society, just as abolitionist and reformer Theodore Parker observed in 1858 when he said:

“I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice.”

Rather than take a top-down approach, Executive Staff will be reaching out to you for input on how to “bend the arc” in this Department. My commitment to you is that I will remain open to what you choose to share and contribute. By first learning and listening, and then working alongside each other to curve more intentionally toward fairness, equality and justice, I'm confident we will better ourselves both individually and collectively, and so strengthen our Department.



A Message from Public Works Director Mark Pestrella on LA County's Declaration Against Racism

From a public infrastructure perspective, the streets of Los Angeles County paint a clear picture of the state of our local communities.

While some neighborhoods were allowed to flourish during the boom years of LA County's economy, many communities of color were left weighed down by disparities in access to parks, open space, active transportation, community centers, banks, clean water, grocery stores, and adequate healthcare. These longstanding issues not only affect the health and vibrancy of these communities but the long-term aspirations of their residents, as well.

With the recent passing of the great civil rights leader, The Honorary John Lewis, I am reminded that "Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society."

I'm inspired by these words and the opportunity we have, as public servants, to change the narrative on the role of government and its relationship to the communities it serves.

Inclusivity and community are core organizational values at LA County Public Works and at the heart of the work we do.

We are fully committed to the delivery of a 21st Century infrastructure that corrects spatial disparities, ushers in community resilience and leads to long-lasting, equitable change.

