



LOS ANGELES COUNTY



2021

LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

# ABOUT LOS ANGELES COUNTY



LOS ANGELES COUNTY HAS THE LARGEST POPULATION OF ANY COUNTY IN THE NATION - WITH **OVER 10 MILLION RESIDENTS, WHO ACCOUNT FOR 27 PERCENT OF CALIFORNIA'S POPULATION.**



MORE THAN 1 MILLION RESIDENTS LIVE IN **APPROXIMATELY 141 UNINCORPORATED AREAS**, WHOSE MUNICIPAL SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY THE COUNTY.



THE OTHER 9.3 MILLION RESIDENTS LIVE IN **88 CITIES** WITHIN THE COUNTY, LOCATED ACROSS 4,084-SQUARE-MILES.



A DIVERSE COUNTY, WITH **MORE THAN 140 CULTURES** AND AS MANY AS 224 LANGUAGES.



HOME TO THE LARGEST PORT COMPLEX IN THE NATION, A THRIVING AEROSPACE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR, THE ENTERTAINMENT CAPITOL OF THE U.S., AND IS **THE NATION'S LARGEST MANUFACTURING CENTER.**



LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S

# FEDERAL PRIORITIES

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors oversee a comprehensive government structure that provides vital public resources, including health and human services, public safety, fire protection, and essential infrastructure services to 88 cities and approximately 141 unincorporated communities.

The County is proactively engaged in enhancing the physical, social, and economic well-being of its residents through fundamental safety-net services, as well as proactive local programs, including those geared at combating homelessness, reforming the adult and youth justice systems, and protecting the environment, among others. The County has also adopted an anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion policy platform that informs these services. Federal investments in the County's critical services and programs assist to maximize efficiencies and cost savings in programs that help the most vulnerable populations. Investing in the County's residents and physical infrastructure results in greater economic gains throughout the region and across the nation.

In order to continue improving the lives of its residents and the economic vitality of the region, the County of Los Angeles needs on-going legislative policy and funding support from the Administration, Congress, and agency partners. Key priorities for the County of Los Angeles at the Federal level include:

- **COVID-19 Response and Recovery**
- **Health Programs**
- **Homeless Assistance**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Child Welfare**
- **Human Services Programs**
- **Justice Reform**
- **Infrastructure and Broadband Investments**
- **Support for Immigrant Residents**



# COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

It is critical that counties, which provide public health, public safety, and safety net services at the local level, are provided with adequate and sufficient recovery resources to assist in responding to COVID-19. Recent Federal relief funding aided the County to respond to the pandemic and support some of the most at-need residents. However, given the ongoing and long-term effects of the COVID-19, continued Federal support is crucial to the sustainable and successful mitigation of the direct and indirect health, mental health, social, and economic impacts of the pandemic. The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that will assist counties to provide resources to residents in need, including but not limited to support for:

- Public health services, including ongoing testing, contact tracing, surveillance, personal protective equipment, and vaccine preparedness and distribution;
- Public safety measures, including implementation of social distancing guidelines in public facilities;
- Extending services for vulnerable populations including homeless individuals, at-risk youth, and aging adults;
- Mental health and substance abuse use disorder services to address the long-term impacts of the pandemic;
- Assisting small businesses to recover;
- Expanding social and human services to address caseload increases during the pandemic; and
- Workforce development programs, including apprenticeships and credentialing, that connect the unemployed with jobs.

The pandemic inflicted substantial revenue losses on the County, straining long-term COVID-19 response efforts. Relief funding from the Federal COVID-19 legislative packages will help the County to sustain the community response to COVID-19. With this funding, the County will prioritize existing COVID-related programs with developed infrastructure and demonstrated utilization, focusing on high-impact, high-needs core programs including direct health care response and safety net programs like food distribution. In addition, the County plans to address revenue losses to ensure a stable workforce to sustain County safety net programs in the future, as well as planning for a long, sustainable recovery to address lagging impacts from the pandemic.

**Federal funding helped the County respond to the ever-evolving COVID-19 public health emergency through various programs such as:**

- Diagnostic testing, contact tracing and PPE;
- Medical sheltering to house at-risk clients;
- Food insecurity programs;
- Support to small businesses and nonprofits; and
- Support for staff performing COVID-19 related functions.





# HEALTH PROGRAMS

The County urges Congress and the Administration to support proposals that protect and expand the health care system for low-income and uninsured residents and improve the outcomes of our most vulnerable residents.

With the need to address the short and long-term health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential that Medicaid services and funding be preserved and expanded, including through new Section 1115 and 1915(b) waivers, and an increase to the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP). New investments and regulatory changes are also needed to support the ever-growing need for mental health and substance use disorder services. In addition, reinforcing the local public health infrastructure will be critical to preventing and responding to health emergencies, as well as addressing inequity, environmental justice, community health, and other issues that lead to physical and behavioral health conditions.

The County encourages Congress and the Administration to support proposals that:

- Address the ongoing need of local health care delivery systems to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Protect and expand Medicaid funding, eligibility, and covered services, including through the State's Section 1115 and 1915(b) waivers and proposals that increase FMAP payments to state Medicaid and foster care programs;
- Repeal or ease the Medicaid Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) Exclusion, which has inadvertently resulted in a severe shortage of mental health care beds in the Los Angeles County region;
- Preserve and increase funding for local public health infrastructure to provide critical services such as emergency preparedness and response, disease prevention and control, environmental health, particularly among disproportionately underserved and vulnerable communities.



**Together, the County's Department of Health Services**, the second largest municipal health system in the nation, and the **Department of Mental Health**, the largest county-operated mental health department in the country, **treat more than 1 million County residents annually**. Throughout the County, **the Department of Public Health operates 75 programs** and 14 public health centers with the support of over 45,000 public health professionals.



# HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Additional affordable housing is needed to address the skyrocketing rents, unjust evictions, and severe lack of current affordable housing units which has resulted in 547,030 severely rent burdened households in Los Angeles County. To increase affordable housing, the County encourages Congress and the Administration to support proposals that:

- Increase Federal funding to provide housing subsidies to eligible low-income families;
- Waive statutory and regulatory restrictions of housing and voucher programs to protect vulnerable populations from becoming homeless;
- Fully fund the maintenance, operation, and preservation of the County's public housing resources;
- Increase funding for the Community Development Block Grant program;
- Provide emergency rental, mortgage, and legal assistance for people experiencing COVID-19 related financial impacts;
- Increase funding for the HOME Investment Partnership Program; and
- Direct greater administrative fees for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program to high performing, fully-leased Public Housing Authorities that are prioritizing housing homeless and special needs populations.

Also, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis have exacerbated the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles. The County supports a comprehensive Federal response to the homelessness crisis including significant increases in:

- Rental subsidies to help persons experiencing homelessness secure housing;
- Homeless Assistance Grants program;
- Emergency Housing Acquisition funding to assist local jurisdictions to purchase motels and other underutilized properties to convert into housing;
- Re-entry vouchers and services; and
- Rental assistance for homeless veterans combined with case management and clinical services.



Since launching **Project Room Key (PRK)** in April 2020, Los Angeles County and its partners entered into lease agreements with **38 motels and hotels** countywide, which have served as interim housing for **over 7,000 distinct people experiencing homelessness (PEH)**. These motels and hotels have been critical to enabling at-risk PEH to live safely during the pandemic and avoid illness, which has in turn protected the healthcare system to the benefit of all Los Angeles County residents.

A photograph of three children of diverse backgrounds climbing a green rope structure against a clear blue sky. The child on the left is a young boy in a red shirt, the middle child is a girl in a blue shirt, and the child on the right is a boy in a yellow shirt. They are all smiling and looking upwards.

# CHILD WELFARE

The County urges Congress and the Administration to invest in proposals that strengthen and support families; promote the safety, permanence, health, and well-being of all children; and enable vulnerable youth to transition to self-sufficiency and adulthood. These proposals include improved access to services and programs such as:

- High-quality early care and education;
- Comprehensive child abuse and neglect prevention services;
- Enhanced child welfare and permanency services;
- Services and funding for case management, mental health, educational attainment, career development and housing programs, that promote self-sufficiency among transition-age foster youth, nonminor dependents, and former foster youth; and
- Additional investments and resources to address the increased need for services resulting from the ongoing pandemic and provide relief for strained systems.

The County also supports:

- Reforms that include the elimination of the 1996 lookback provision to adequately provide for and offer services to the vulnerable children and families involved in the child welfare system; and
- Additional support for counties to help with the successful implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act.



Federal support and investments will help the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) achieve its critical mission. In 2020, over **62,000 child abuse referrals** were generated in Los Angeles County, involving almost **117,000 children**. As the nation's largest public child welfare and adoption agency, DCFS provides monthly child welfare services to approximately **38,600 children** ages birth to 21 years, of which nearly **19,000** reside out-of-home, with around **51 percent** placed with relatives and non-relative extended family members.



# HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

The health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have made it more difficult for many low-income households to afford food and other basic needs. Recent Federal coronavirus relief legislation has provided temporary extended and expanded benefits, like the 15 percent increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, as well as program flexibilities. With the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will likely continue for many months, it is important that the Federal government continue to provide administrative flexibilities and extend benefit increases for programs such as SNAP.

The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that preserve or increase Federal funding for human services entitlement programs, including proposals that support efforts to:

- Permanently increase Federal funding for SNAP;
- Preserve broad-based categorical eligibility;
- Permanently ensure college students have access to SNAP;
- Permanently maintain administrative flexibilities and extend waivers for SNAP; and
- Reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program beyond September 30, 2021.

The County urges Congress and the Administration to oppose efforts to:

- Block grant SNAP;
- Implement Federal mandates requiring states to increase SNAP work requirements;
- Restrict Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirement waivers for states and counties;



The **County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)** is the largest social service agency in the United States, providing services to one out of every three residents in Los Angeles County. DPSS has a workforce of nearly 14,000 employees with the capacity to serve residents in 19 languages at more than 40 offices throughout Los Angeles County.

# JUSTICE REFORM

The County urges Congress and the Administration to support efforts that advance national justice reform, as well as local efforts, such as Los Angeles County's work to find alternatives to incarceration and to transform the juvenile justice system.

The County's ongoing reform of its justice programs continues to be at a critical stage, and its success will have momentous impacts locally, statewide, and nationally. In March 2020, the Board of Supervisors created the Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Unit, which is spearheading the County's "Care First, Jail Last" efforts. The ATI works closely with County justice, health, and social services departments, including the County's Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) to continue implementing services and reforms by which to create a more effective and human-focused justice system. The ATI is also leading the County's juvenile reform efforts, which will move the local juvenile justice system away from a more punitive system into an equitable, care-first, health, and treatment centered model.

Justice reforms will require a robust, multi-disciplinary and intersectoral effort, including a continued and expanded support from our Federal partners. The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that would support the County's goal to:

- Divert adults and juveniles from incarceration and into rehabilitative, health-focused and care-first systems;
- Mitigate racial and economic disparities in the justice system; and
- Strengthen law enforcement transparency, accountability and policing reforms.



**Over the last five years, the ODR has successfully diverted more than 6,000 individuals away from jail and into community services.** ODR's jail and community-based diversion programs serve to reduce the number of inmates in the Los Angeles County jail who suffer from mental illness and/ or substance use disorders by removing them from jail through various court interventions or through pre-arrest or pre-booking diversion, and providing them with care and housing.

# INFRASTRUCTURE & BROADBAND INVESTMENTS

The County has a vision for modernizing highways, bridges, dams, flood protection, water delivery and conservation systems, solid waste management facilities, airports, and public transit networks while assuring efficient resource management in the context of climate change and population growth. These pending shovel-ready projects would create over 20,000 jobs.

The County urges Congress and the Administration to provide increased Federal support efforts that include:

- Rewarding areas that have committed non-Federal financial resources to improving infrastructure;
- Financing programs that allow broad flexibility and local control on project selection and development;
- Investments to improve the region's water quality, reliability, and safety, as well as resources for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enable critical studies, construction, and operation and maintenance of projects under its Federal jurisdiction;
- Investments that advance and improve the region's workforce, and spur economic stability and recovery;
- Proposals that encourage collaboration among local governments and regional agencies to maximize the impact of infrastructure investments;
- Assistance in responding to emergency events such as fires or floods; and
- Reauthorization of a long-term surface transportation bill that addresses the stability and solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also emphasized the importance of developing broadband infrastructure and reliable, affordable networks to bridge the digital divide, provide connectivity and services, and ensure digital inclusion, particularly in underserved communities. The County supports proposals that would help make needed investments to broadband infrastructure, especially in historically underserved and rural communities.



In March 2020, Los Angeles County's Department of Public Works led the effort to establish **InfrastructureLA**, a platform for public and private collaboration on infrastructure strategies in the County. Participants include 151 cities, businesses, and organizations. Key initiatives include COVID-19 related projects, Sustainable Waste and Management, Construction Industry, and Agency/Municipality Construction.



# SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANT RESIDENTS

Los Angeles County is home to over 10 million residents and one of the most diverse counties in the United States. Over one-third of the County's residents are immigrants, including an estimated one million undocumented individuals. The County remains strongly committed to ensuring that all residents, regardless of immigration status, are treated humanely; afforded due process protections; provided access to necessary services without fear of immigration consequences; and given the opportunity to secure permanent immigration status.

The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance comprehensive immigration reforms that provide:

- Pathways to citizenship for vulnerable immigrants, survivors of violent crimes, immigrants who have served in the military, and recipients of special Federal immigration and refugee protection programs.
- Access to basic public services and benefits, including pandemic relief, without impact to immigration status;
- Protection for immigrants and their families from prolonged, inhumane, or otherwise inappropriate detention conditions;
- Reunification and support services for families separated at the border and unaccompanied minors;
- Protections against fraudulent, deceptive, and harmful immigration service providers;
- Relief from harmful executive or administrative actions, including, but not limited to, those that impede due process rights of non-citizens; and
- Federal resources to address the backlog of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) cases in the region.



**The County's Office of Immigrant Affairs** (OIA), in the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), connects immigrants to wrap-around County services available to them and their families, including immigration legal representation and citizenship programs. Of note, OIA and DCBA provide consumer protection services and outreach activities to inform immigrants of their rights.



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' LOCAL PRIORITIES



## **CHILD PROTECTION**

Enhanced well-being and success for systems-involved youth

[dcfs.lacounty.gov](https://dcfs.lacounty.gov)



## **HOMELESSNESS**

Coordination of community-based services and housing resources

[homeless.lacounty.gov](https://homeless.lacounty.gov)



## **INTEGRATED HEALTH**

Streamlined access to integrated health care

[healthagency.lacounty.gov](https://healthagency.lacounty.gov)



## **JUSTICE REFORM**

Alternatives to incarceration and reduced involvement with the justice system for vulnerable adult and youth populations

[ceo.lacounty.gov/justice-reform](https://ceo.lacounty.gov/justice-reform)

[ceo.lacounty.gov/ati](https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ati)



## **SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING OVERSIGHT**

Monitoring for a cleaner and healthier environment

[publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh](https://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh)



## **IMMIGRATION**

Immigrant protection and advancement

[oia.lacounty.gov](https://oia.lacounty.gov)



## **ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

An anti-racist Los Angeles County policy agenda

[ceo.lacounty.gov/antiracism](https://ceo.lacounty.gov/antiracism)

# Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

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