



# COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY

**The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that support counties in continuing to combat the pandemic, as well as help the most vulnerable residents, small businesses, and the larger region recover from the mid and long-term economic impacts.**

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 needs additional funding to help residents achieve economic recovery during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, including funding for counties to be used towards extended rent relief, as well as workforce development and the rapid reskilling programs that connect the unemployed with jobs. There is also a need for funding to provide legal assistance to small business owners. There is a growing need for these services in particular to help negotiate payments for past due rent/lease costs, renegotiate leases during and post pandemic, and other more acute legal issues. Finally, counties need support to treat and house homeless individuals, at-risk youth, and aging adults, many of whom are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

**The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that provide additional resources for:**

- Public health services, including testing, contact tracing, surveillance, personal protective equipment, and vaccine preparedness and distribution, among others;
- Public safety measures, including implementation of social distancing guidelines in public facilities;
- Servicing vulnerable populations including homeless individuals, at-risk youth, and aging adults;
- Mental health and substance use disorder services;
- Assistance for small businesses to continue operating and keep their workers employed;
- Social and human services including increased caseloads;
- Workforce development programs that connect the unemployed with jobs; and
- Reopening schools safely and bridging the digital divide.

# COMBATTING & RECOVERING FROM COVID-19

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Federal funding has enabled the County to respond to the ever-evolving COVID-19 public health emergency on several fronts, including helping to fund:

- Public health, health services and related costs for diagnostic testing, contact tracing, personal protective equipment, inspections, vaccines, surveillance efforts, and technical assistance for school districts to reopen safely.
- Housing for vulnerable people, including to support Project Roomkey and related housing efforts such as for medical sheltering, recuperative care, and to house vulnerable and at-risk clients released from jail.
- Financial and other aid for County residents including to support: the Rent Relief Program, food distribution events, the Great Plates Deliver program, various food insecurity programs, and additional vouchers to serve low-income children.
- Support for small businesses effected by COVID-19, including micro- entrepreneurs, nonprofits such as childcare providers, and for outdoor dining variance permit fee waivers.
- Support for staff performing COVID-19 related functions and services, including to cover the cost of deploying more than 3,600 emergency response and disaster service workers.

As a result of the dire economic impacts of COVID-19, the Board of Supervisors and County Department Heads are continuing to assess ways to further reduce operating costs, while continuing to provide critical services.

**Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic requires additional Federal investments to balance public health requirements while addressing the broader safety net service needs of the most vulnerable populations, particularly those of color, which data reveals have been disproportionately impacted.**



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# HEALTH PROGRAMS

**The County urges Congress and the Administration to support proposals that protect and expand the health care safety net and improve the outcomes of vulnerable residents.**

At a time when health care systems are heavily impacted responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicaid must be preserved and expanded to protect the health care safety net. This includes through new Section 1115 and 1915(b) waivers that meet the needs of the County's system of care, and through an increase to the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP).

The COVID-19 pandemic confirmed that a robust public health infrastructure is essential to preventing and responding to health emergencies, disasters, and emerging public health threats. Additionally, local public health systems are critical to addressing root causes of physical and behavioral health conditions, inequities in health outcomes, environmental justice, and community health. Finally, the growing need of individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders continue to outpace resources for services at all levels of care, and investments and policies are needed to ensure individuals have expanded and equitable access to care in the most appropriate settings.

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

- 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.
- Support the ongoing need of local health systems to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including funding for the Hospital Preparedness Program; hazard pay for health care workers and first responders; and targeted distributions of Provider Relief Funds to those with the greatest burden, and clarification of permissible health care expenditures including that these funds may be extended at least through December 31, 2021.
- Strengthen local public health infrastructure and initiatives that help reduce impacts of public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic through emergency preparedness and response, surveillance and epidemiology, targeted testing, vaccination, outreach and education, and support services for disproportionately impacted communities.
- Preserve and increase funding for local public health efforts, infectious disease prevention and control, health promotion efforts, environmental health, and health equity for traditionally underserved and vulnerable communities.
- Repeal or ease the Medicaid Institutions of Mental Disease (IMD) Exclusion, which has inadvertently resulted in a serious shortage of mental health care beds in the region.

# COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO HEALTH CARE

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

- The County's Department of Health Services cares for approximately 750,000 patients annually and is the second largest municipal health system in the nation, with four hospitals and 26 health centers.
- The County's Department of Public Health operates 75 programs and 14 public health centers with the support of over 45,000 public health professionals. The Department oversees disease prevention and control, environmental health, and community and family health programs countywide.
- The County's Department of Mental Health is the largest county-operated mental health department in the country, treating more than 250,000 County residents annually through 85 directly operated sites, approximately 300 co-located sites, and contracts with over 1,000 organizations and individual practitioners.
- To address the COVID-19 pandemic, the County's rapid response includes:
  - The County Department of Public Health implemented a Contact Tracing program which has identified nearly 3,000 contact tracers to date and continues to expand local capacity to vaccinate at over 400 vaccine distribution sites.
  - Thirty County-operated testing sites were opened and partnerships were forged to add approximately 150 sites, focusing on the highest-risk communities.
  - The Community Health Worker Outreach Initiative which mobilizes community health workers, also called Promotoras, in communities with higher burdens of disease to conduct healing-informed grassroots community outreach.
  - The Department of Mental Health expanded its Help Line by creating two new lines—the Emotional Support line for callers experiencing increased challenges and stressors due to COVID-19, and the Veteran and Military Family Member line that connects veterans and military family members to resources including professional and peer support.
  - The Departments of Public Health and Health Services, along with the County's Homeless Initiative collaborated to offer housing for people experiencing homelessness, allowing for quarantining and isolation among other efforts.

**From the start of the pandemic, County departments collaborated to offer housing for people experiencing homelessness, which combined with the robust testing in shelters and contact tracing tailored to this population may have contributed to lower than expected cases and deaths.**



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A photograph of a person sleeping in a shelter, wearing a red beanie and a purple cup, with a blue blanket. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# HOMELESS SERVICES

**The County supports a comprehensive Federal response to the homelessness crisis including extensions and expansions of Federal eviction and foreclosure moratoria, coupled with additional Federal housing and homeless funding.**

According to the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count conducted in January 2020, over 66,000 people in Los Angeles County are homeless on any given night; and thousands of others are at risk of falling into homelessness. The Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative, in partnership with cities, and hundreds of advocates and service providers, has made significant progress to address homelessness. Since the passage of Measure H in March 2017, the County has established a robust service system that has doubled the number of individuals moving from homelessness into permanent housing each year.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020, Los Angeles County and its partners successfully launched Project Roomkey, in which the County entered into lease agreements with 31 motels and hotels that have served as interim housing for over 7,000 people experiencing homelessness, who are vulnerable to hospitalization if they contract COVID-19.

In the Fall of 2020, the County in partnership with the State through Project Homekey, purchased 10 hotels and motels across the County with a combined 847 rooms, which are now open and providing interim housing to COVID-vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. All ten properties will be converted to permanent housing over the next two years.

As the homelessness crisis continues to grow due to sky-rocketing rents, severe lack of affordable housing, and the economic crisis, which is disproportionately impacting low-income families and individuals, the County is doing more to reverse the cycle of homelessness.

**The County encourages Congress and the Administration to support additional Federal homeless funding, including significant increases in:**

- Provision of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) upfront funding for non-congregate shelters to extend and expand Project Roomkey or a substantial decrease in the FEMA reimbursement timeframe for 100% reimbursable expenses under President Joseph R. Biden's January 21, 2021 Executive Action;
- Rental subsidies to help persons experiencing homelessness secure housing and emergency rental assistance for low-income renters at risk of eviction;
- Homeless Assistance Grants;
- Emergency Housing Acquisition funds to assist local jurisdictions to purchase motels and other underutilized properties to convert into housing;
- Re-entry vouchers and services;
- Subsidized employment targeting homeless individuals and families;
- Mental health and other supportive services critical to help people experiencing homelessness secure housing and stay housed; and
- Combining rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH).

# COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Measure H, approved by local voters in Los Angeles County on March 7, 2017, established a 10-year countywide ¼ cent sales tax to raise dedicated revenue to prevent and combat homelessness.

This local revenue has led to a significant expansion of outreach, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing for disabled adults across all parts of the County.

Overall, dozens of homeless strategies have been implemented including many different services and interventions to address the unique circumstances people experiencing homelessness face.

Between July 2017 and the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21, efforts implemented by Los Angeles County have resulted in:

- 23,692 individuals and family members being permanently housed, including 1,519 during the first quarter of FY 2020-21.
- 48,712 individuals and family members entered interim housing funded in whole or in part by Measure H, including 1,998 individuals during the first quarter of FY 2020-21.
- 47,424 individuals were connected by Countywide Outreach Teams to services, including 7,499 during the first quarter of FY 2020-21.

**Preventing and combatting homelessness requires a sustained, focused collaboration between the Federal Government, states, counties, cities, and continuums of care. Without an ongoing meaningful Federal financial commitment, the homeless crisis will likely continue to grow across California and the nation.**



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# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**The County urges Congress and the Administration to support proposals that finance and incentivize the creation and preservation of affordable housing, help prevent housing instability or homelessness, and support innovative solutions to increase housing stock faster.**

## **Housing Uncertainty**

Skyrocketing rents, unjust evictions, and a lack of affordable housing have resulted in 547,030 severely rent-burdened households in Los Angeles County. Additionally, rental developments at risk of being converted to market-rate within the next five years have put the County at risk of losing over 8,873 existing affordable homes, unless action is taken to preserve them. These figures are expected to increase as the nation continues to grapple with the financial and housing insecurity that have resulted from the coronavirus pandemic. A recent California Housing Partnership COVID-19 Housing Fragility Survey found that 41 percent of all renters in California have “no confidence” or “slight confidence” that they can pay their rent next month or have a deferred payment. Further, a UCLA/USC COVID-19 Survey found that Los Angeles renters are more likely than homeowners to have lost work/income during the pandemic.

## **Increasing Affordable Housing Stock**

The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) finances the development and rehabilitation of a variety of housing options, provides capital funding, Section 8 Project-Based Vouchers, and project-based Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Vouchers for the creation and operation of permanent multi-family rental housing units and single-family housing from local revenue sources.

The County has reserved \$736.0 million dollars to invest in affordable housing development over the last five years; \$490.0 million of which has been allocated to affordable housing development for the construction of approximately 6,355 affordable units, and has been used to leverage \$2.68 billion in public and private funds. The LACDA has helped 21,515 low-income households retain housing through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program and 1,737 veterans through VASH Vouchers. The LACDA also operates the County's first-time homeownership and home improvement grants programs.

## **The County requests that Congress and the Administration advance proposals that provide:**

- Increased Federal funding to provide housing subsidies to eligible low-income families residing in the unincorporated areas of the County through its HCV Program and Public Housing Program;
- Waivers of statutory and regulatory restrictions of housing and voucher programs to protect vulnerable individuals and families from becoming homeless;
- Full funding for the maintenance, operation, and preservation of the County's public housing resources including the Capital Fund and Operating Fund;
- Increased funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to allow the County and the participating cities it works with to provide affordable housing, rental assistance, and economic opportunities for the County's residents with limited means;
- Emergency rental, mortgage and legal assistance for people who owe back-rent, unpaid mortgage costs, and other unpaid housing-related taxes and charges due to COVID-19 related financial impacts and are at risk of eviction, housing instability, or homelessness;
- Increased funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program to maintain and expand existing efforts to provide safe and affordable housing opportunities; and
- Greater administrative fees for the HCV program, to high performing, fully-leased Public Housing Agencies that are prioritizing housing homeless and special needs populations.



# STATUTORY REFORM TO PROTECT VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES FROM BECOMING HOMELESS

**Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs): Increasing the 30 percent Cap** – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocated 25,699 vouchers to the County for tenant-based rental assistance which allows the voucher-holder to find a suitable housing unit in the private rental market and retain the voucher when moving to a different unit. Currently, the County commits PBVs exclusively to projects that lease units to a specific special needs population, such as veterans, the homeless, seniors, persons with disabilities, and Transition-Age Youth.

The County anticipates committing PBVs to several major housing developments over the next three years, including developments in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, California's Project Homekey, and supportive housing for patients discharged from hospitals or other care facilities. With its extensive PBV utilization, the County projects to reach the 30 percent cap on or before December 31, 2023.

**The County requests that Congress introduce and pass legislation that will further increase the percentage cap on project-based rental assistance in order to continue providing affordable housing to special needs populations who would otherwise face barriers in finding suitable housing in the private rental market.**

**Continuum of Care (CoC)** – In 2009, as part of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, HUD imposed statutory restrictions on the administration of CoC funding, which it uses to regulate the Program. The LACDA, in order to acquire the statutory and regulatory flexibility to administer a CoC Program specific to the needs of Los Angeles County, asks Congress to:

**1) Replace the annual one-year grant award and renewal model with an Annual Contributions Contract (ACC).** The County requests that Congress allow HUD to transition the CoC Program from its current annual contract-based funding model to an ACC with the PHA administering the CoC assistance. Currently, Public Housing Authorities (PHA) administering multiple CoC grants face situations where the PHA would have over-leased one grant and under-leased another. The consolidation would allow PHAs to administer their CoC under one funding source, thus preventing instances of overspending or underspending each grant. The LACDA requests that Congress allow HUD to transition the CoC Program from its current annual contract-based funding model to an ACC with the PHA administering the CoC assistance.

**2) Issue CoC grant renewal funding based on the actual unit size leased by a PHA's CoC participants and not the unit size identified in the initial CoC grant application.** The County receives CoC grant renewal funding based on the bedroom size and the number of CoC certificates requested in the initial grant application. As CoC participants experience changes in family compositions requiring increases to the family's bedroom size, the LACDA does not receive additional funding needed to accommodate the higher cost of rent for the increased bedroom sizes. This situation has led to the County utilizing over 100 percent of the funding allocated for a particular grant, while only leasing 70-80 percent of its allocated certificates for the same grant. The County requests Congress allow HUD to revise their current renewal calculation and grant renewal funding to be based on the unit size leased by CoC participants.

**Increased Federal funding and policy assistance would help the County make even greater strides to increase affordable housing, prevent housing instability and homelessness, and develop new housing models that can be used statewide.**



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# CHILD WELFARE & EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**The County urges Congress and the Administration to invest in proposals that strengthen and support families; promote the permanency, safety, health, and well-being of all children; and enable vulnerable youth to transition to self-sufficiency and adulthood.**

The County supports proposals that provide Federal assistance to strengthen families, prevent child abuse and neglect by building on upfront prevention programs, and improving outcomes for vulnerable children, youth, and families through the successful implementation of child welfare reform that includes the Family First Prevention Services Act. To better serve those involved in the child welfare system, the County continues to advocate for proposals that support the provision of comprehensive, evidence-based child welfare services tailored to meet the unique needs of children and families. In addition, the County continues to focus on efforts to expand the population of clients and services eligible for Federal funding through efforts that include the elimination of the 1996 look-back provision and the modification of the Extended Foster Care Program eligibility and redetermination requirements.

Support from Congress and the Administration is needed to help alleviate the strain of the pandemic on the child welfare system. This support will assist the County to provide vital services without disruption, as well as ensure that child welfare agencies have the resources to effectively respond to the increased risk of abuse and neglect in communities resulting from this and any future local, state, and national emergencies.

**The County requests that Congress and the Administration advance proposals that enhance efforts to promote the safety, healthy development, and success of all children and youth, including:**

- Increase investments for Transition-Age Youth and the Extended Foster Care Program;
- Support permanency services and increase placement resources for foster children and youth through efforts such as exempting Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) from the Institutions of Mental Disease (IMD) Exclusion;
- Fund initiatives that strengthen parenting skills and decrease child abuse and neglect;
- Expand Title IV-E eligibility to more at risk, abused, and neglected children; and
- Increase investments and resources to address the increased need for services resulting from the ongoing pandemic and provide relief for strained public systems.

# CHILD WELFARE INITIATIVES

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

As the largest public child welfare and adoption agency in the nation, the County's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is responsible for close to 39,000 foster youth in Los Angeles County.

Major DCFS initiatives and achievements include:

- Implementation and expansion of the innovative Child Abuse Reporting Electronic System (C.A.R.E.S.).
- Provision of early care and education services to over 3,500 foster children through the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program from August of 2018 through September 2020.
- Collaboration with the County's Department of Mental Health to train County staff and providers on trauma-responsive practices.
- Implementation of the Student Information Tracking System to monitor the educational progress of over 10,000 foster students across 21 school districts.
- Creation of the Foster Care Search Engine System, allowing foster home placement requests to be viewed, confirmed, or cancelled from a mobile device.
- Creation of the Office of Equity (OOE) to develop strategies to focus on the needs of over-represented African American, Native American and LGBTQ+ youth.

### Increased assistance from the Congress would help to ensure:

- Successful implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act;
- The Extended Foster Care Program has the capacity to serve all eligible youth 18-21 who need case management and housing services to successfully transition to adulthood;
- Continued progress implementing Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) by investing in services that support relative and other home-based placements in addition to increasing the availability of well-trained resource families via the Resource Family Approval and Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention, and Support programs; and
- All children under five, including foster children, have access to high-quality early care and education programs.



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# HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

**The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that support preserving or increasing Federal funding for human services entitlement programs, which assist low-income individuals and families.**

The cost of living in Los Angeles County is among the highest in the nation and there is a high rate of poverty. The County's human services programs help relieve the most vulnerable members of the communities from financial hardship, while promoting family health and self-sufficiency. The County receives a majority of its non-Medicaid federal revenue from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, and Child Support Enforcement programs, among others. California is one of a few states in which counties administer all of these programs under state oversight.

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 extended and expanded benefits, as well as waivers and other administrative program flexibilities. However, these provisions are temporary. Given that the public health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic will likely continue for many months, it is important that the Federal government continue to extend monthly benefit increases, eligibility to college students, and certification periods for households; use periodic report procedures instead of the more extensive recertification process; waive interviews; and extend other administrative flexibilities.

## **The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that:**

- Support permanent efforts to increase Federal funding for SNAP and increase the minimum and maximum monthly SNAP benefit;
- Oppose efforts to block grant SNAP, and support outreach and enrollment for SNAP;
- Oppose Federal mandates requiring states to increase SNAP work requirements;
- Oppose all efforts to restrict Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirement waivers for states and counties;
- Support efforts to preserve broad-based categorical eligibility;
- Support permanent efforts to ensure college students have access to SNAP;
- Support permanent efforts to maintain administrative flexibilities and extend waivers for SNAP; and
- Support reauthorizing the TANF program beyond September 30, 2021, and increasing the block grant funding, which has not been increased since its enactment in 1996.





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# SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

- The County administers the second largest social services agency in the nation. The County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) provides services to over 3.7 million people, which translates to more than 35 percent of Los Angeles residents.
- DPSS has a workforce of nearly 14,000 employees, with the capacity to serve residents in 19 languages at more than 40 offices throughout the County.
- DPSS provides CalFresh assistance (California's version of SNAP) to over 1.32 million individuals (over 777,000 cases), with a monthly average benefit amount of \$313.36 per case.
- DPSS provides CalWORKs assistance (California's version of TANF) and supportive services to over 249,000 individuals (over 102,000 cases) with a monthly average benefit amount of \$747 per case.
- Maintaining and increasing SNAP and TANF assistance is critical to combatting food insecurity and helping families become self-sufficient.
- Cutting funding for SNAP would have a devastating impact on the CalFresh Employment and Training Program, which provides case management, job training, work experience, and job retention services.

**Preserving and expanding Federal funding for human services will allow low-income individuals to be better prepared to enter the labor force, have less continued dependence on assistance, and be more likely to achieve self-sufficiency, while ultimately boosting the nation's economic well-being.**

A young man with short dark hair is looking down, his face partially obscured by a chain-link fence. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with other people in the distance. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

# JUSTICE REFORM

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

The County's ongoing efforts to reform its justice programs continues to be at a critical stage, and its success will have monumental impacts locally, statewide, and across the country. Reforming the larger adult and juvenile justice systems will require a truly robust multi-disciplinary and intersectoral effort, including a continued and expanded partnership with the Federal government. As such, the County supports proposals that continue to advance national and local efforts to transform the adult and juvenile justice systems, including proposals that would support the County's goals 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.

The County is currently looking to advance legislative proposals that will allow for the expansion of pre-plea and pre-trial diversion programs, increased community-based treatment options for mentally ill justice-involved individuals, allow the County to move its juvenile justice programs out of probation and into a care-first entity, as well as alternatives to incarceration for defendants facing lower level offenses.

**The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that, where consistent with public safety and the best anti-recidivism practices, reduce reliance on incarceration systems and enhance treatment for detained individuals, including proposals that would:**

- Expand pre-plea and pre-trial diversion programs and other alternatives to incarceration, including through new sources of funding;
- Increase community-based treatment options for mentally ill justice-involved individuals;
- Expand Medicaid to more persons, including pre-trial individuals in state and local detention facilities (including by lifting the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion policy);
- Broaden alternatives to incarceration for defendants facing lower level offenses;
- Strengthen national policing reform standards; and
- Allow the County to transform its outdated juvenile justice system into a rehabilitative, health-focused, and care-first system.

# TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE REFORM EFFORTS

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

In March 2020, the Board of Supervisors created the Los Angeles County Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Unit, which is putting in place the vision and strategies by which to create an effective and human-focused justice system as recommended by the County's ATI Work Group's "Care First, Jail Last" report. The ATI will work closely with County justice, health, and social services departments, including the County's Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR).

The ODR uses cutting edge clinical and harm reduction community-based care and support approaches to reduce the incarceration of those with serious mental disorders and/or substance use disorders; improves outcomes for those reentering society after justice-system contact; and diverts young people away from justice system contact.

On November 3, 2020, Los Angeles County voters approved Measure J which dedicates a minimum of ten percent of the County's locally generated unrestricted funding to address the disproportionate impact of racial injustice through community investments, such as youth development, job training, small business development, supportive housing services and alternatives to incarceration. The directors of ATI and the County's Anti- Racism Diversity and Equity Initiative and a 17-member Measure J Reimagine LA Advisory Committee are developing a spending plan recommendation process, and will coordinate with County departments to develop detailed budget requests in line with the identified community engagement priorities and Measure J goals. Measure J realigned funding will help offset some of the funding the County needs to transform its justice system.

**Ongoing support from Federal partners would help advance efforts to safely and humanely divert mentally ill or otherwise vulnerable individuals away from formal detention systems and into more appropriate and equitable community-based programs.**



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# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

**The County urges the Federal government to work collaboratively on a shared vision and long-term planning that will modernize Los Angeles County's infrastructure to meet the region's future environmental and economic needs.**

The Los Angeles County region serves as an economic engine for the entire nation. The County is home to the nation's largest manufacturing and international trade center, as well as the center for aerospace research and development. The region is scheduled to host the 2028 Summer Olympic Games, providing a catalyst for the need to further invest in sustainable and resilient public infrastructure. Maintaining economic growth requires continued and increased investment in the State's infrastructure systems, such as roads and bridges, ports, water and flood control systems, transit, and other public facilities. The County has a vision for modernizing infrastructure while assuring efficient resource management in the context of climate change and population growth, and has approximately \$1.6 billion in shovel-ready projects for transportation, water, parks, and beaches. Full funding for these projects could create over 20,000 jobs, advance and improve the region's workforce, and spur economic stability and recovery.

The County is using existing local and State voter-approved revenue measures to invest in local streets, roads, and bridges, which are vital to the region's economy, public safety, and the residents' quality of life. In 2018, County voters also approved a ballot measure to fund stormwater projects and programs that will modernize the 100-year old water system, protect public health and the environment, and maximize a cleaner, locally controlled water system. However, increased investment and policy actions from our Federal partners would greatly assist the County meet its larger infrastructure goals.

**The County encourages Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that support counties and the State to improve and maintain vital public infrastructure in the greater Los Angeles region, including proposals that:**

- Increase Federal support to improve highways, bridges, dams, flood protection, water delivery and conservation systems, solid waste management facilities, airports, and public transit networks;
- Allow broad flexibility and local control on project selection and development and reward areas that have committed non-Federal financial resources to improving infrastructure;
- Provide Federal 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 jurisdiction;
- Encourage collaboration among local governments and regional agencies to maximize the impact of infrastructure investments;
- Provide Federal assistance in responding to emergency events such as fires or floods; and
- Reauthorize a long-term surface transportation bill that addresses the stability and solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.

# INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

**Broadband.** The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for access to high-speed broadband internet and related resources as an essential means to access health services, education, economic resources, and job opportunities. The County supports Federal funding for the development of 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 also supports proposals that would:

- Incentivize private investment in broadband infrastructure in historically underserved and rural communities;
- Create workforce development pipeline programs in the broadband, fiber and related telecommunications infrastructure industries; and
- Utilize innovative, short-term and long-term strategies to provide free or low-cost high-speed internet and related devices to disadvantaged communities.

**Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA) System.** This system provides flood risk management to millions of residents and property parcels in the County and is jointly operated by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Chronic Federal funding shortfalls have resulted in deferred maintenance valued at over \$200.0 million, hindering USACE's ability to adequately maintain its portions of the LACDA system, and significantly diminished capacity to reduce flood risk in parts of the County. In July 2020, USACE initiated a LACDA Disposition Study to evaluate whether a partial de-authorization of the LACDA system would be in the public interest. On March 1, 2021, USACE Headquarters approved advancing the study to the next phase. De-authorization of the LACDA channels for local control would reduce federal costs and would benefit local communities, including providing improved flood risk management, dedicated local funding, and unified and consistent channel maintenance.

**Investing in regional infrastructure and broadband will help the region and the nation better recover from the economic stressors of the pandemic by creating jobs, and shoring up the physical and digital systems that support southern California's residents and major business centers.**



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# SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANT RESIDENTS

**The County urges Congress and the Administration to support legislation that ensures all individuals, regardless of immigration status are treated humanely, and given a fair opportunity to secure lawful immigration status.**

Los Angeles County is the most populous and diverse county in the United States. Of the County residents born abroad, 80 percent have lived in the County for more than a decade. Foreign-born County residents are parents to nearly 60 percent of all County-born children. These individuals and their families largely contribute to the region's economic, social, and cultural well-being.

Since 2017, over 400 anti-immigrant policies were introduced to reduce legal immigration, restrict humanitarian protections, and otherwise hinder the ability of non-citizens to come to, or remain in, the United States. The anti-immigrant proposals had the chilling effect of discouraging non-citizens and mixed status households from accessing vital services for basic needs such as health care, worker protections, and housing support. The County supports legislation that would provide relief from harmful executive or administrative actions, including those that impede the due process rights of non-citizens or limits their access to services.

The County supports Federal funding and actions to provide access to benefits, services, and emergency relief for immigrants and their families impacted by COVID-19. The County supports coverage of COVID-19 testing and vaccines regardless of immigration status; and an increase in Federal funding to provide language access and public outreach that includes cultural and immigration-related competencies about COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery for immigrant populations. Immigrants in the County, like many in the nation, are worried about the impacts of COVID-19, and a person's immigration status should not be a barrier to access public support services during this unprecedented time.

**The County encourages Congress and the Administration to:**

- Enact legislation that provides immigration reforms that include a pathway to lawful immigration status, such as a path toward citizenship for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries; and
- Enact legislation that provides access to basic public services and benefits, including pandemic relief, without impact to immigration status.



# IMMIGRATION

## IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Of the County's more than 10 million residents, over one-third are immigrants, including an estimated one million undocumented persons.

The County supports legislation which provides a pathway to citizenship for vulnerable residents and recipients of special Federal immigration and refugee programs, including DACA and TPS beneficiaries. In 2017 and 2018, TPS designations for the countries of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, Sudan, and Nepal were terminated. There are an estimated 30,000 TPS holders from El Salvador and an estimated 3,900 TPS holders from Honduras in the Los Angeles region. In addition, there are an estimated 180,000 DACA eligible individuals in Los Angeles County.

In April 2018, then Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a "zero tolerance" immigration policy which targeted individuals crossing the border illegally traveling with children. Upon being taken into custody, parents were separated from their children. Prior to the enactment of the "zero tolerance" policy, families were separated under a pilot program. In total, it is estimated that over 3,700 children were separated from their parents between June 2017 through June 2018. Court filings revealed that hundreds of children remain separated under the "zero tolerance" policy remain unfound. The County is committed to advancing the well-being and protecting the rights of immigrant children and their families, and supports legislation to reunify families and provide services and support.

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



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