

LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment

Stakeholder Engagement Process and Findings

October 2021

LA County CVA Stakeholder Engagement Summary

Climate Resolve supported the County in conducting stakeholder engagement for Los Angeles County's Climate Vulnerability Assessment. Methods, analysis, and results are presented here.

INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

Building from the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, the LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) further advanced County goals to engage local government, utility and business entities, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and neighborhood groups in sustainability initiatives. The stakeholder engagement process occurred between August 2020 through July 2021—a tough year for many stakeholders given climate disasters, racial justice uprisings, and a pandemic-induced widening of racial inequities. The project team and stakeholders were challenged to find creative ways to engage hundreds of stakeholders virtually. We utilized platforms such as Zoom, Mentimeter, Google Jamboards, and Miro to reach over 400 stakeholders.

Some of the engagement goals included:

- Learn from community members about the climate-related risks, challenges, and/or impacts they experience, what strategies they have developed to cope, and any opportunities to minimize harm from future climate threats
- Help residents understand the full array of climate impacts they may face in the places where they live, work, or go to school, especially for vulnerable populations
- Make engagement activities accessible and comfortable to the target audience, which could include providing stipends and language translation as well as selecting tech-friendly outreach platforms
- Acknowledge community members as leaders and experts in their communities
- Inform stakeholders of project objectives and provide transparency on the LA County CVA stakeholder engagement process
- Ensure community feedback influences the direction of the project and promotes community ownership of the LA County CVA
- Assist in relationship building between LA County departments and key stakeholders, and connect stakeholders with similar climate efforts and projects in the county and state
- Ensure that the LA County CVA data and tools empower stakeholders to address systemic harms and relevant climate threats as well as uplift the assets of communities
- Empower stakeholders to be able to develop next steps in preparing for climate change, and be thoughtful about roles they can play in implementation of the LA County CVA

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The project team conducted several activities to engage a broad audience of stakeholders as well as interact more deeply with prominent sector partners, leaders of diverse geographic regions, and representatives of vulnerable populations. The activities are outlined below.

Advisory Committee (September 2020 - June 2021)

The project team invited **15 partners** from local government, utility and business entities, nonprofit organizations to collaborate on the development of the CVA and participate in four meetings spread out over 10 months. Each

Advisory Committee member was identified as an expert in their sector/region, and all members had varying knowledge of climate change science and impacts. The members are listed below:

1. Active San Gabriel Valley
2. Association of Rural Town Councils
3. BizFed Institute
4. Communities Actively Living Independent & Free
5. The Greenlining Institute
6. Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California
7. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
8. Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
9. Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
10. Mayor's Office of Resilience, City of Los Angeles
11. Prevention Institute
12. Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples
13. Southern California Edison
14. UCLA Sustainability
15. USC Sea Grant

The Advisory Committee meeting topics focused on the CVA's data needs, equity framing, stakeholder engagement process, desktop review, physical and social vulnerability key findings, cascading impacts, and usability of the report. The project team tailored meeting content and discussion questions to maximize efficacy, acknowledge lived experiences, and utilize Advisory Committee members' feedback to influence the CVA process and content. Stipends of \$1250 were provided for Advisory Committee members who came from nonprofit organizations.

Kickoff Workshop (October 16, 2020)

120 attendees participated in the event, which featured welcoming presentations from the CSO team about the purpose and scope of the CVA, as well as existing climate data and research in the Los Angeles region. To emphasize real world applications, the presentation included climate vulnerability stories from Nancy Zúniga at Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California and Fiahna Cabana from the City of Long Beach. An extensive amount of feedback was collected on the impacts of climate hazards via eight breakout groups, Mentimeter, and Google Jamboards.

Additionally, language access in Spanish was integrated into advertising the workshop and by providing virtual interpretation during the event. This was identified as a need by the project team as well as other stakeholders. The project team noted that CVA will be broadly disseminated to representatives of Spanish-speaking communities once the report was complete, and it was important to have the translation available. The workshop was recorded in English/Spanish and has auto-generated captions on YouTube links. The recordings are linked on the project webpage: <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ourcounty-cso-actions/>

Cities Summit (October 21, 2020)

50 local government staff representatives engaged in conversations on the needs of cities' capacity to address the increasing threats from climate change, especially to ensure that the most vulnerable in their communities are prepared. Questions discussed included:

- Do you have a poor/good/detailed/very detailed idea of the climate impacts in your city?
- How would you use a climate vulnerability assessment in your work, or do you already?
- What types of community partners would benefit from learning about climate risks in your city?

Remarks on state-level climate actions were also made from Kate Gordon, director of Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

Stakeholder Interviews *(October 2020 - April 2021)*

The project team conducted over 25 interviews with staff from County departments, public agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations to inform data sets being used in the CVA as well as to gather information on overlapping research efforts going on across the region and state. Through interviews with County departments the team also sought to understand criticality, adaptive capacity, and potential impacts for relevant physical infrastructure. The conversations also helped to prioritize and vet indicators and indicator sets for physical and social vulnerability and impacts on vulnerable populations. An additional round of outreach focused on cascading impacts, posing the question to stakeholders about the dependencies and outputs of water, power communications, transportation, emergency services, public health and health services.

Listening Sessions *(February 2021 - March 2021)*

The County co-hosted six listening sessions with community leaders and organizations in order to learn about climate-related experiences, adaptation strategies, and impacts among populations that are excluded, underrepresented, and/or have barriers to engaging in, governmental decision-making:

1. People experiencing homelessness (co-host: Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority)
2. People without reliable transportation (co-host: Tamika L. Butler Consulting)
3. People with disabilities and access challenges (co-host: Communities Actively Living Independent & Free)
4. Outdoor workers (co-host: Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California)
5. Tribal and Indigenous communities (co-host: Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples)
6. Rural communities (co-hosts: Association of Rural Town Councils and Move the World)

Co-hosts from, or representing, the listening session populations helped shape the format of each session, aided in identifying and inviting participants, and co-moderated the sessions. The co-hosts also shared guidance on interacting with each of the populations like how to prioritize questions to ask and value diverse feedback from participants. Each co-host received \$1000 for their time.

To set the stage for each listening session and help establish a trusting and safe space, the project team began each session with roundtable introductions and community agreements. CSO conducted a 15-minute presentation outlining what the CVA is, why it is important, and a broad picture of how climate change is affecting Los Angeles County. A majority of the session focused on four overarching questions for the population:

1. How are your communities impacted?
2. How are your communities preparing and coping?
3. What happens to your communities when infrastructure fails?
4. What gives you hope for the future?

The listening sessions served as a valuable form of qualitative research for the Social Vulnerability Assessment, complementing the quantitative approach of the Social Sensitivity Index. For summaries of each listening session, see the Listening Sessions Summaries section in this Appendix.

Local Tribal Discussions/Conversations (March 2021)

15 members of local Tribes of Los Angeles County participated in discussions co-hosted by the CSO and Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission. Participants were asked questions similar to the listening sessions, and these additional conversations helped uplift the unique Tribal and Indigenous climate vulnerability narratives significant to the region. The need for ancestral knowledge and land stewardship were central themes.

Workshop: Countywide Climate Vulnerability Findings (July 1, 2021)

190 participants attended the closing project workshop, which showcased the assessment's findings on how climate change will impact infrastructure and different populations. The workshop featured an introduction from Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara, as well as guest speakers, Nurit Katz from UCLA and Sona Mohnot from The Greenlining Institute, who highlighted ways organizations could use the CVA to spark climate resiliency efforts. Attendees gave significant feedback on how the County should use the CVA once published, and described how they would use the information in their own efforts.

Similar to the kickoff workshop, the team integrated additional language access in Spanish into advertising the workshop and by providing virtual interpretation during the event. The workshop was recorded in English/Spanish and has auto-generated captions on YouTube links. The recordings are linked on the project webpage: <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ourcounty-cso-actions/>.

STORIES

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, the project team aimed to uplift stories or direct experiences from people who coped with past heat waves, flooding, drought, and wildfire hazards. These narratives make the CVA information much more relatable and both ground truth and bring to light some of the data in the CVA analysis. The stories also made the project team aware of gaps not captured in data. Therefore, the project team solicited written short stories from Advisory Committee members and listening session participants in March and April 2021. A handful of submissions were turned in along with photos to be considered for the report. The stories detail experiences with climate hazards and the subsequent cascading impacts on evacuation, energy, health, communication, and more.

LESSONS LEARNED REGARDING ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGIES

In wrapping up the project, the project team would like to share additional tips learned for other local government agencies to consider in climate planning processes.

- Climate vulnerability is a heavy topic, and it is best to pair discussion of solutions and action with broader explanation of the risks. Moreover, when discussing “social vulnerability” it is important to recognize the root causes of vulnerabilities (e.g. systemic racism’s effect on public health in BIPOC communities), and ensure blame is not being placed on those experiencing vulnerability.
- Compensate community members for their knowledge and time whenever possible. For this project, we were able to compensate nonprofit organizations on the Advisory Committee, listening session co-hosts, and listening session participants. The compensation helped in fostering deeper relationships and incentivizing certain hard-to-reach populations to participate.

- Sometimes it is productive to have a tailored conversation for different geographic region and sector-specific community groups rather than combine (e.g. rural communities in Topanga/Malibu vs. Antelope Valley) so that conversations can be more fluid between stakeholders.
- Having a co-host for outreach activities that participants are familiar is a great way to build trust and encourage feedback.
- It can be helpful to preview engagement methods and approaches with various partners to critique before components are completely fleshed out. This gives an opportunity for co-ownership in the engagement being conducted.
- Virtual interactive polls and other live engagement tools are helpful in gathering large amounts of responses when time is limited. Follow-up surveys have a much lower response rate.

LISTENING SESSION SUMMARIES

Findings from the LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment result from a qualitative process centered around a set of listening sessions with groups of people who are often excluded from policymaking. The sessions provided an opportunity for the County to hear from groups who are susceptible to negative outcomes from climate hazards, including several whose susceptibility is not well-represented in our quantitative data, to understand their experiences with climate hazards and barriers to resilience or recovery. The County engaged representatives from the following groups for the listening sessions: people experiencing homelessness, climate exposed workers and jobs, people with disabilities and access challenges, people without reliable transportation, rural communities, and Native and Tribal communities.

Summary of People Experiencing Homelessness Listening Session

People experiencing homelessness often live in temporary shelters, outdoor encampments, or other non-permanent homes that provide minimal physical protection from climate hazards. Nine representatives from the following organizations participated in a listening session focused on how people experiencing homelessness are affected by climate change:

- LA Community Health Project
- Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN)
- Los Angeles County Department of Health Services
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)
- Northeast Valley Health Corporation
- People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)
- Safe Place for Youth
- St. Joseph's Center
- Union Station Homeless Services

At least one participant has directly experienced homelessness and was able to speak from lived experience in addition to their work. These organizations provide programs and resources such as food, healthcare, housing, and workforce development across LA County, as well as advocate for strong policies and funding to support people experiencing homelessness.

Participants reported that people experiencing homelessness – especially those who sleep outdoors – have increased exposure to climate hazards. Climate hazards of concern include extreme heat, flood events, wildfire, increased air pollution, and vector-borne diseases, such as West Nile Virus. Extreme heat is the hazard of most concern across this population group. People experiencing homelessness lack cooling resources and easy

access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities (such as bathrooms and showers), which can lead to dehydration and heat exhaustion. For these reasons, parks and shaded areas in LA County are critical for survival during extreme heat events.

Extreme precipitation and flooding are also a concern, because they can make it difficult to upkeep a tent encampment or stay dry and warm in outdoor shelters. These conditions can damage belongings and cause mold.

People experiencing homelessness also have higher rates of and/or susceptibility to various illnesses, including mental health conditions, due a combination of factors including exposure to sun, pests, air pollution, and a general lack of access to healthcare. Higher rates of pre-existing illness put people experiencing homelessness at higher risk to the impacts of climate change.

People experiencing homelessness find and make use of creative resources to adapt and stay alive – for example, accessing water from open fire hydrants. When various public and charitable services became less accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic, many community groups stepped up to fill the gaps. Organizations like Safe Place for Youth made personal cell phones available so that people experiencing homelessness could access to remote and online services. Cross-sector collaboration and initiatives like [Project Roomkey](#), a state program as part of the COVID-19 response that provided access to non-congregate shelter options, have been crucial in helping people experiencing homelessness.

Participants reported that there are many opportunities to better serve people experiencing homelessness through policy change, resources, and shelter. Opportunities for improvement include:

- **Resource availability + public policy:** It is important that public policy support people experiencing homelessness, including ensuring proper access to resources such as water, food, and sanitation.
- **Shelter + housing:** More affordable permanent housing options are desperately needed across all of LA County. Beyond this, safe, drop-in centers can be expanded and improved to provide shade, cooling, and protection from bad weather as well as access to services.
- **Data needs:** More and better data collection is critical for understanding the shifting scale of people experiencing homelessness in LA County. Data can be used to better understand how many of these people are suffering from climate hazards such as extreme heat.

Summary of People without Reliable Transportation Listening Session

People without reliable transportation include those without access to a private vehicle whether directly owned or shared, those without access to transit, and those without access to bike lanes or safe active transportation options. Seven representatives from the following organizations participated in a listening session focused on how people without reliable transportation are affected by climate change:

- Active SGV
- Day One
- Los Angeles Walks
- Move LA
- Race. Ancestors. Health. Outdoors. Knowledge. (RAHOK)
- T.R.U.S.T. South LA
- Walk 'n Rollers

These organizations advocate for equitable transportation through placemaking, community ownership of land, safe routes to school, neighborhood ecosystems, and active transportation routes.

Participants reported that lack of reliable access to transportation can inhibit a person's ability to evacuate during a climate emergency, safely travel during extreme heat days, and access critical amenities and resources. Over 8% of households in LA County do not have access a private vehicle.ⁱ High fares, infrequent service, and distant stops are all factors that can further limit a person's access to reliable public transportation. Institutionalized racism present in the planning and design of transit systems perpetuate transit inequities for communities of color.ⁱⁱ Children, especially those with working caretakers, are frequently dependent on public transportation to get around. Those reliant on public transportation are especially impacted by the quality of the public realm. Sparse tree canopy coverage, limited bus shelters, and poor shade infrastructure make long wait times difficult. People with allergies or cardiovascular conditions risk respiratory consequences due to increased time outside or exposure to air pollution. The risk of severe health effects from this exposure increases during periods of extreme heat.

During a climate emergency, low-income and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities disproportionately bear the consequences of these inequities.ⁱⁱⁱ A disruption in normal routes due to diverted traffic can mean missing a day of work. The subsequent loss of wages can have dire consequences for households in precarious financial situations. For households with children, factoring in additional childcare considerations creates even longer commutes. Freeways and other high-polluting sources are often located in transit-dependent communities. Navigating long distances and unsafe routes around this transportation infrastructure adds another layer of difficulty.

In waiting for transit, communities utilize everything from collapsible chairs, umbrellas, and lighter clothing to adapt to the changing climate. Moreover, during extreme events, localized neighborhood organizers, especially young people and elders are instrumental in building door-to-door relationships across neighbors and distributing resources to those in need of support. Federal programs, like the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), educate volunteers in basic disaster preparedness skills to expand the reach of emergency response.

Participants reported that access to reliable and safe transportation is one of the primary means for adapting to climate hazards. For populations without reliable access, there are many opportunities to expand resources and plan for more equitable transportation infrastructure. Opportunities for improvement include:

- **Funding + resources:** Outreach to neighborhood and volunteer organizers engaged in emergency response work to support their efforts and share existing resources available
- **Bike equity:** Increasing access to bikes through rebates, bike share options for those without credit cards, and pairing bike infrastructure investment with anti-displacement strategies
- **Mobilizing bus capacity:** Leveraging bus fleets during emergencies to aid those without the ability to evacuate on their own
- **Infrastructure improvements:** Increased frequency and quality of bus shelters, additional tree canopy coverage, and greater park equity for low-income communities and communities of color

Summary of Climate Exposed Workers Listening Session

Climate exposed workers include people who work in jobs that are mostly outdoors and/or are exposed to climate hazards. Climate exposed jobs may include day laborers, street vendors, domestic workers, car wash workers, construction workers, gardeners, and warehouse workers, among others. We recruited several groups

representing workers who are under-represented in labor data or whose industries are not typically categorized as outdoor. Eight representatives from the following organizations participated in a listening session focused on how climate exposed workers are affected by climate change:

- Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
- CLEAN Carwash Campaign
- Community Power Collective
- Inclusive Action for the City
- Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA)
- Miguel Contreras Foundation
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network
- Warehouse Workers Resource Center

These organizations provide assistance to climate exposed and outdoor workers and advocate for these groups to ensure safe, fulfilling jobs, policies, and resources.

Participants reported that climate exposed workers are much more likely to have prolonged exposure during extreme heat events and they tend to have physically demanding jobs. For these reasons, they are more likely to experience heat-related illness like rhabdomyolysis, heat exhaustion, fainting, and heat rash. Heat can also be a concern for warehouse workers where sometimes indoor temperatures can be warmer than the outside temperatures. For domestic laborers, there is a lack of Cal/OSHA worker protections since the workplace is a private home, which increases workers' vulnerability to heat, as well as to other climate hazards. Generally, among climate exposed workers, there is a fear of retaliation from reporting heat-related among other incidents.

Poor air quality is an environmental condition that particularly affects street vendors, car wash workers, and other climate exposed workers. Without protective filtration systems, outdoor workers are exposed to poor air quality, particularly during wildfire events. This increases the likelihood of experiencing respiratory illness. For car wash workers, working in underground or garage parking lots with poor ventilation can exacerbate the impacts of poor air quality.

Participants reported that climate exposed and outdoor workers are particularly unprotected from climate events and there are many opportunities to better recognize their needs and improve resources. Opportunities for improvement include:

- **Inclusion:** One action that is particularly important for this group is to acknowledge industries that are often excluded from programs, councils, etc. like domestic workers. More broadly, climate exposed workers can often feel like they are treated as outsiders in the communities in which they work – there are opportunities to address concerns of racism and policing during their regular job activities, and especially during extreme events.
- **Resources:** While there are resources available to these groups, they could be improved through more direct engagement on-the-ground workers and grassroots labor organizations.
- **Communication:** One means for ensuring information access to these communities is to offer alternative methods of communication, especially for mobile devices, such as mass texting platforms like WhatsApp and Hustle for emergency alerts.

Summary of People Living in Rural Communities Listening Session

People living in rural communities represent many communities throughout LA County, mostly living in Northern areas. Eleven representatives from the following organizations participated in a listening session focused on how people living in rural communities are affected by climate change:

- Acton Town Council
- Agua Dulce Town Council
- Antelope Valley Partners for Health
- Lake Los Angeles Town Council
- North Topanga Fire Safe Council
- Pearblossom Rural Town Council
- Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains
- The Canyon Sages
- The Malibu Foundation
- Topanga Community Center
- Topanga Town Council

These organizations represent town councils, community-based organizations, and non-profit organizations that serve and provide resources to residents in rural areas of LA County.

Participants reported that rural areas of LA County face unique challenges as it relates to climate change. These areas tend to have less tree canopy and can be more exposed to high temperatures. This can be of concern for places like schools where access to shade during play time can be important. Additionally, there has been an increase in people relying on RVs for housing in the northern parts of LA County. RVs can present challenges for adapting to extreme temperatures as well as flooding and large amounts of precipitation.

For those low-income communities in rural areas, many experience a high burden from energy costs that can be exacerbated by other costs such as pumping groundwater for drinking water. High energy costs can also cause these communities to turn to informal, cheaper, fuels for heating such as firewood. These more informal fuels can have serious health impacts over time if not properly managed and if exhaust gases are inhaled.

Another concern in these areas is high winds and dust. Dust traveling by wind, also known as fugitive dust, in the Antelope Valley can cause Valley Fever, a fungal infection, that can be hard to treat. Drought can be one cause of increasing levels of dust due to the dry lands. This also raises the risk of fire hazard in these areas as natural and wooded areas dry out and are more susceptible to wildfire, such as the Topanga Oak Woodland. In addition, there are limited transportation options in rural areas resulting in the need to coordinate transportation among residents during extreme events. In some areas of rural LA County, there may only be a few roads that connect a person to safety and if one were to be inaccessible, it may be even more challenging to evacuate and get to safety quickly.

Despite barriers that rural communities face, rural populations in LA County have built strong social networks through town councils, community groups, and neighbor relationships. These networks are valuable sources of knowledge that help these communities prepare and cope with climate hazards.

Participants reported that for populations that live in rural areas of LA County, there are many opportunities to expand the availability of resources. Opportunities for improvement include:

- **Resources:** Many rural areas of LA County are harder to reach and don't often get sufficient access to resources. Of note, rural areas could benefit from resources to help prepare for and communicate climate hazards, increase local business resilience, and reduce cooling and other costs.
- **Cross-sector coordination and improved evacuation:** Generally, these communications could benefit from improved services that offer the right level of care and are prepared for the variety of events and impacts that might transpire. One critical aspect of this is to ensure that these communities are included and engaged in evacuation planning and are connected to safe transportation options during emergencies.

Summary of People with Disabilities and Access Challenges Listening Session

People with disabilities and access challenges include older adults, people with hearing or visual impairments, people with mobility challenges, and people with developmental disabilities who may have difficulty interacting and accessing resources. Eighteen representatives from the following organizations participated in a listening session focused on how people with disabilities and access challenges are affected by climate change:

- 211 LA County
- AARP
- Communities Actively Living Independently & Free (CALIF)
- Disability Community Resource Center
- LA City Department on Disability
- LA County Bicycle Coalition
- LA County Workforce Development Aging & Community Services
- Personal Assistance Services Council
- Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS-IL)

These organizations provide assistance to people with disabilities and access challenges and advocate for these groups and their safety.

Participants reported that intensifying climate change events can have direct impacts on people with disabilities and access challenges. As one example, individuals with skin conditions, certain medications, and brain traumatic issues are very sensitive to extreme heat and cold. In addition, individuals who are disabled or with developmental disabilities have a particularly difficult time regulating their internal temperature, and thus they feel extreme discomfort during periods of extreme temperatures.

More broadly, climactic events can make getting around even more difficult for those with disabilities or access challenges. Extreme precipitation and inland flooding can limit the accessibility of sidewalks and make them more dangerous to navigate. Wildfires are also a concern due to evacuation difficulties. For many people with disabilities and access challenges, getting access to on-demand transportation during an evacuation can be difficult as some cannot drive themselves and relying on emergency response teams can be unsuccessful during extreme events when they are already working at capacity. Due to these difficulties, evacuation transportation could take up to 24 hours and lead to slower evacuations and increased exposure and risk. Wildfires will often also lead to power safety shutoff events where those who rely on power wheelchairs, those with refrigerated medication, and those with battery life supportive devices may be particularly impacted.

There are some existing initiatives to support people with disabilities and access challenges, like organizations providing education information to their networks about emergency preparedness and how to cope with extreme heat. Other organizations have helped with evacuating people with disabilities during wildfire and

flooding events. Lastly, some organizations have facilitated peer support groups to help cope with the mental health impacts that may come from traumatic experiences, such as being left behind during an emergency event.

Participants reported that people with disabilities and access challenges can face many climate-related challenges and there are many opportunities to enhance and expanded services to better serve these groups. Opportunities for improvement include:

- **Accessibility and management of caregivers:** Caregivers are an important resource for people with disabilities and access challenges. It is important to align caregiving resources with those people who need them the most. It is also important to train caregivers on responses to climactic events and emergencies.
- **Communication:** One means for ensuring information access to these communities is to offer online access and webinars, as well as alternative methods of communication for those who are deaf or nonverbal to ensure they receive communications and emergency assistance through text messages or the like.
- **Cross-sector coordination and improved evacuation:** Generally, these communications could benefit from improved services that offer the right level of care and are prepared for the variety of events and impacts that might transpire. One critical aspect of this is to ensure that these communities are a prioritized group in evacuation plans and are connected to safe transportation options during emergencies.

Summary of Tribal and Native Communities Listening Session

Native communities of LA County include local Tribal communities who are descendants of the first people to inhabit and live on LA County lands, as well as American Indian and Alaska Natives who reside within the County. Local Tribal communities in particular have a unique relationship with the land and history of this County that puts them in a space of general distrust of government but wisdom and knowledge about how to manage the lands and environment. Nine representatives from the following entities participated in a listening session focused on how Native communities are affected by climate change:

- Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival
- Climate Science Alliance
- Chumash Language & Cultural Collective
- CSU Long Beach - American Indian Studies
- Gabrielino Tongva
- Kidiwische Connections
- Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples
- Ventureño Chumash
- Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation

Participants in these sessions included non-profit organizations and grassroots cultural groups, as well as respected elders and members from local Tribes in LA County.

Participants reported that post-colonization, non-Native people have developed social infrastructure that supports control, ownership, and exclusivity of lands that disturbs the Native ideology of a deep reciprocal relationship between humans, land, and ecological systems. Further, colonial practices have exacerbated climate impacts through practices such as planting invasive species and mismanagement of soils. Over the years, the

growth and spread of capitalism and this approach to land management has been frustrating to Native people. Conflicts to intercede has led to a toll on mental and emotional health in these communities.

After generations of mistreatment of Native people and the land on which LA County sits, Native people, in particular local Tribes, still bear the brunt of climate-related impacts. Many compounding factors put these communities at higher risk from the dependence on local water sources which are vulnerable to drought to the reliance on land for sustenance and traditional gathering which is at risk to wildfire, poor air quality, and extreme heat. Among other threats, the lack of adequate infrastructure like energy and transportation infrastructure limits Native communities' ability to adapt. Additionally, these communities often live in more rural areas of LA County that can be especially vulnerable to multiple, compounding hazards.

For Native communities, social resilience and cultural preservation is key to climate adaptation efforts. Prioritizing this, these communities work with elders on intergenerational solutions and uplift the role of Native language, prayer, and song. In response to drought, Native people are nurturing the land, plants, and food through regenerative agriculture and healthy soils. In response to flooding and sea level rise, communities are building canoes and bonding over the experience. Relatedly, social cohesion is a strength in Native communities where emergency planning, evacuation, and caring for elders and neighbors is made possible by strong mutual support networks.

Participants reported that there are many opportunities to begin to repair generations of mistreatment of our Native communities. Opportunities include:

- **Long-term relationship building:** It is important to work towards and develop a strong relationship between government representatives and local Tribes that can also support sustainability initiatives and commitments.
- **Reciprocity:** One foundational element to relationship building with Native communities is to ensure reciprocity, or mutual benefit, between the two groups. This goal will cultivate empowerment of these relationships and provide valuable benefits back to local government.

ⁱ US Census Bureau. (2019). Household size by vehicles available, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12822697.

ⁱⁱ Spieler, C. (2020). Racism has shaped public transit, and it's riddled with inequities. Rice Kinder Institute for Urban Research. Retrieved from <https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/2020/08/24/transportation-racism-has-shaped-public-transit-america-inequalities>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Shonkoff, S. B., Morello-Frosch, R., Pastor, M., & Sadd, J. (2009). Environmental health and equity impacts from climate change and mitigation policies in California: A review of the literature. Publication # CEC500-2009-038-D. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.386.4605&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.