



Los Angeles County supports the advancement of a comprehensive Federal response to the homelessness crisis that includes robust investments in Federal housing and homeless programs, and expands stable and affordable housing opportunities for households at risk or experiencing homelessness.

# HOMELESS SERVICES

Combating homelessness requires sustained partnerships between the Federal government, states, counties, cities, and local Continuums of Care. Local jurisdictions need help reaching the right balance between interim and permanent housing options, so individuals and families do not languish in temporary shelter settings. Without significant Federal investments in affordable housing and homeless services, the homeless crisis will continue to grow across California and nationwide. The January 2020 Homeless Point-in-Time count found 66,436 people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County, an increase of 13 percent from 2019. Today, as communities await the results of the 2022 Point in Time Count – the first since the onset of the pandemic – that growth stands to be exacerbated by the economic effects of COVID-19, which has disproportionately impacted low-income families and individuals, in particular Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

The accelerating gap between housing expenses and income growth is the primary driver of the homeless and housing crisis. Over the past 20 years, rents for the 1.8 million renter households in the County increased by 54 percent while household incomes only increased 16 percent. Nearly half a million renter households in Los Angeles County are severely rent burdened, paying more than 50 percent of household income on rent.

The homeless crisis has grown despite dramatic increases in the number of individuals the County has housed. Since 2017, the Countywide homeless services system has doubled the number of individuals moving from homelessness into permanent housing each year. Interim Housing (shelters) can only work effectively when there are enough permanent housing options attached to shelter beds. In Los Angeles County, the shortage of permanent housing options for each shelter bed results in longer spells of unsheltered homelessness and prolonged stays in shelter settings.

Although the recent large infusion of one-time State and Federal emergency funding has bolstered Countywide efforts, funding remains insufficient to address the scale of need in high-cost regions like the County. Until more on-going funding is available more individuals and families will continue to fall into homelessness faster than they can be rehoused.

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

- Rental subsidies and supportive services to match new housing units local jurisdictions are building or making available using Federal, State and local capital funding;
- McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Grants;
- Emergency housing acquisition funds to assist local jurisdictions in purchasing underutilized properties to convert into housing;
- Rental subsidies and supportive services for justice-involved individuals;
- Subsidized employment and training targeting homeless individuals and families;
- Mental health and other supportive services critical to helping people experiencing homelessness secure housing and stay housed; and
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program.

# HOMELESS INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County, in partnership with cities, advocates, and service providers has made significant progress to address homelessness.

Through Project HomeKey Round 1, the County, in partnership with the State of California, purchased 10 motels and hotels with a combined 847 rooms and has provided interim or permanent supportive housing to almost 1,500 people since the sites became operational.

Additionally, since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020, the County and City of Los Angeles, in coordination with Federal, State and local partners, have provided more than 11,000 people experiencing homelessness with interim housing at 38 motels and hotels through Project Roomkey.

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

Between 2017 and the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022, efforts implemented by Los Angeles County have resulted in:

- 74,862 people placed in permanent housing and 99,350 in interim housing, funded in whole or part with Measure H funds.
- 19,528 people were prevented from becoming homeless and 32,902 increased their income through employment and benefit services, via services funded in whole or part with Measure H funds.

**Preventing and combating homelessness requires sustained partnerships between the Federal government, states, counties, cities, and continuums of care. Without an ongoing and comprehensive Federal financial commitment, the homeless crisis will continue to grow across California and the nation.**



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Los Angeles County supports proposals that finance and incentivize the creation and preservation of affordable housing, help prevent housing instability and homelessness, and advance innovative solutions to increase the region's stock of affordable housing.

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The County places a high priority on increasing the availability of affordable housing for renters, homeowners, and persons with special needs (such as persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and those living with HIV/AIDS, among others). The Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), which 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 LACDA also operates the County's first-time homeownership and home improvement grant programs.

The LACDA has helped nearly 25,000 low-income households retain housing through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, 1,475 of which are reserved for veterans through VASH Vouchers. In addition, the County has expanded its portfolio of available vouchers to include 1,974 new Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) dedicated to serving homeless families, many of which enter the program with a much lower annual income, or none at all, and require increased case management, social service guidance, and housing navigation services, which are not covered under traditional HCV administrative fees. These new vouchers enhance the LACDA's commitment to prioritize housing for the County's most vulnerable populations, which are often disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Through its ability to leverage Federal, State, and local funds, the County prides itself in implementing innovative solutions and forming partnerships with private and public agencies to increase the availability of affordable housing or preserve existing affordable housing for residents of limited means. Over the last five years, the County has reserved \$813 million to invest in affordable housing development which has funded or will fund the construction of approximately 9,138 affordable units and has been used to leverage \$4.01 billion in public and private funds.

**The County urges Congress and the Administration to increase funding for vital Federal programs and administrative flexibility to effectively administer housing assistance programs to residents with limited means, including:**

- Increased Federal funding to provide housing subsidies to eligible low-income families residing in the unincorporated areas of the County through its Section 8 HCV Program and Public Housing Agency (PHA);
- Increased funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG);
- Emergency rental, mortgage and legal assistance for people who owe unpaid rent or mortgage costs, and other unpaid housing-related taxes and charges due to COVID-19 or other financial impacts and are at risk of eviction, housing instability, or homelessness;
- Increased funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) to maintain and expand existing efforts to provide safe and affordable housing opportunities; and
- Greater administrative fees for the Section 8 HCV program, to high performing, fully-leased PHAs that are prioritizing housing homeless and special needs populations.

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORTS

in Los Angeles County

The LACDA was awarded \$1.2 million in renewal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to continue the operation of its Family Self-Sufficiency Program. The FSS Program supports the Federal government's goal of increasing economic opportunity for HUD-assisted families. The LACDA's FSS Program links Housing Choice Voucher participants and Public Housing residents with a case manager who helps clients develop a plan to increase income with tools such as training, education, and financial literacy.

Additional LACDA programs include:

#### **COVID-19 Rent Relief Program**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, \$117.3 million in funding was allocated to provide emergency rental assistance grants to income-eligible County households economically impacted through job loss, furlough, or reduction in hours or pay. Grants were given to 14,189 households, 91 percent of which were in targeted zip codes.

#### **Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program**

The EHV Program, approved through the American Rescue Plan Act, provides rental assistance to those most in need, including individuals and families who are: experiencing homelessness; at risk of experiencing homelessness; fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence or human trafficking; or were recently homeless; and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent homelessness or having high risk of housing instability. The LACDA was awarded 1,964 EHV's and began leasing on July 1, 2021.

#### **Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program**

The PBV Program has proven to be a powerful tool in combating homelessness in the County since these affordable units are developed for a specific special needs population which are often met with barriers when locating housing in the private market. In June 2021, the LACDA committed its latest infusion of 1,733 PBV's to affordable housing projects that are in development or under construction, nearly doubling the Program. Ninety-eight percent of future PBV units will be set aside for the homeless, seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities.

**The County is committed to keeping its most vulnerable residents housed and looks forward to working with the State and Federal government to explore additional resources to ensure residents are assisted.**



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Los Angeles County supports proposals that invest in strengthening and supporting families; promote the safety, health, and well-being of all children; and enable vulnerable youth to successfully transition to self-sufficiency and adulthood.

# CHILD WELFARE & EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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 the safety and well-being of approximately 32,000 foster youth in Los Angeles County.

The County continues to advocate for proposals that support the provision of comprehensive, evidence-based child welfare practices uniquely tailored to meet complex needs of children and families. Action from Congress and the Administration is needed to provide sufficient resources and flexibility to support vital foster care services without interruption and help mitigate the ongoing strain of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child welfare system. Resources and flexibility are also critical to ensure that the County can respond to the increased risk of abuse and neglect as well as reinforcing the provision of providing upfront critical prevention services to keep children out of the child welfare system.

Major DCFS programs include:

## Extended Foster Care

Serves more than 2,325 non-minor dependents ages 18-20 years-old, which is over 90 percent of the eligible population.

## Kinship Care

Countywide, more than half of the children who enter foster care are placed with relatives - this outcome is unmatched by any other large child welfare system in the nation. Of note, approximately 2 percent of foster children are placed in congregate care.

## LGBTQ+

The Board of Supervisors approved a \$3.6 million budget allocation to provide direct services and support to LGBTQ+ foster youth.

## Amazon Connect

The DCFS Child Protection Hotline (CPH) system upgrade allows continued operations in the event of a major disaster. DCFS is the first child welfare agency in the nation to implement this cloud-based technology.

The County urges Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that:

- Support counties and states in successfully implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act, including exempting Qualified Residential Treatment Programs from the Institute for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion;
- Comprehensive services tailored to meet the unique and complex needs of children, transition-age, and former foster youth and families;
- Reform that invests in critical services to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, youth, and families involved or at risk of getting involved in the child welfare system; and
- Increase investments for services and funding for case management, mental health, educational attainment, career development, and stable housing that promote self-sufficiency among transition-age foster youth, non-minor dependents, and former foster youth.

# CHILD WELFARE INITIATIVES

in Los Angeles County

Major DCFS initiatives include:

## **Eliminating Disparity and Disproportionality**

Implemented Implicit Bias training and programming to safely decrease the number of Black and African American children entering out-of-home care by 10 percent.

## **Risk Stratification Pilot**

In partnership with the University of Southern California's School of Social Work, the pilot identifies complex cases that can benefit from targeted resources and support, including the interventions to remedy identified bias in reporting, improved referral screenings, and increased family strengthening supports within the community.

## **National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS)**

Utilizes information sharing and the application of safety science and data to reduce fatalities and other critical incidents. The goal is to stimulate innovation and identify strategies that focus on preventative interventions and upstream supportive services by evaluating child maltreatment as a public health issue.

## **Upfront Family Finding Program Expansion**

By increasing the potential for child placement with relative caregivers there was a significant increase in kinship placement rate.

## **Child Care Vouchers**

Allocated \$20 million of the County's Federal CARES Act funds for childcare vouchers which provided 6,017 early care and education services through partnership with the Child Care Alliance of LA.

## **LA County Early Childhood Education (ECE) COVID-19 Response Team**

Helped keep early care and education programs open by supporting webinars, distributing supplies, and vaccination of early educators.

## **Workforce Pathways LA**

Distributed financial incentives to 1,219 early educators to improve their qualifications by completing trainings, college courses, permits or degrees.

**Los Angeles County remains committed to maintaining critical child welfare services that best support child safety, well-being, permanency, and a youth's successful transition to independence.**



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Los Angeles County supports ongoing funding for the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure and affordable networks to bridge the digital divide, provide connectivity, and ensure digital inclusion, particularly in underserved communities.

# DIGITAL DIVIDE

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of access to high-speed broadband internet and related resources as an essential means to access health services, education, economic resources, and job opportunities. Access to an internet connection has become a fundamental need, similar to other utilities. The areas where more than 20 percent of households lack broadband service are largely the same areas where the household income is less than \$50,000 a year, and where people of color are more likely to be the largest population of residents.

In November 2021, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to accelerate digital equity by investing in viable options to provide reliable, high-speed broadband service to households in underserved communities. These options include:

- **Agreements with Internet Service Providers and Telecommunication Companies**  
The County will utilize Federal and/or State grants to fund the cost of residential access to existing broadband networks for up to 300,000 households.
- **Community Wireless Network**  
A five-year proof of concept model utilizing public-private partnerships to deploy Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) and/or millimeter wave technologies in delivering reliable wireless high-speed internet service to approximately 12,500 households. This option includes a workforce program to employ individuals from the impacted communities to serve as “Digital Navigators” to assist residents with broadband education, equipment set up, and troubleshooting.
- **County-Administered Municipal Broadband Service**  
The projected long-term benefits include more resilient internet for residential households and County facilities; catalyst for widespread deployment of fifth generation (5G) technology for wireless networks; and lower County operating costs at scale compared to alternative internet delivery methods.

Specific to implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the County strongly recommends that both unserved and underserved populations are prioritized. More than 365,000 Los Angeles County households continue to remain unconnected; however, very few are likely to be considered “unserved” using the Federal Communication Commission’s (“FCC”) former definition.

The County urges Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that:

- Provide funding for the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure and reliable, affordable networks to bridge the digital divide, provide connectivity and services; increase access to high-speed internet to benefit as many households as possible; and ensure digital inclusion, particularly in underserved communities.
- 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;
- Utilize innovative, short-term and long-term strategies to provide free or low-cost high-speed internet and related devices to disadvantaged communities; and
- Expand and modernize Wi-Fi at County facilities to help close the digital divide for residents in disadvantaged and broadband poor communities.

# BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

in Los Angeles County

- The County's vision is to ensure digital equity across all communities and on behalf of its residents, Los Angeles County has a vested interest to ensure equitable broadband deployment and access for all of its residents.
- Affordability is the biggest barrier for many of the County's residents. While the County welcomes the \$14.2 billion from the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program that will provide assistance to eligible households in securing broadband connectivity, it is unlikely to tip the balance for many low-income households or provide a solution for those areas lacking necessary infrastructure.
- The Department of Commerce has appropriated over \$40 billion in the BIL to help close the digital divide. With implementing regulations now being developed, it is critical that these regulations prioritize underserved populations, contain digital inclusion and workforce development components, and develop future-proof solutions. These regulations should focus on affordability, and support government and other initiatives to install internet and Wi-Fi infrastructure at schools, libraries, local government facilities and homeless shelters in order to provide greater broadband access to underserved communities. Regulations should also explicitly allow for funding for multi-unit building retrofits to support in-building wiring for minimum gigabit+ symmetrical speeds in all units.
- Reform U.S. Housing and Urban Development Agency rules to allow broadband subscription to be eligible for the Utility Allowance.
- The County embarked on a multi-platform, multi-language campaign that increased adoption of the sunset Emergency Broadband Benefit in Los Angeles County by 43 percent. The Federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) can act as an accelerator for equity in communities and the County's campaign goal is to increase participation up to at least 75 percent.
- The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and FCC should require low-cost plans being offered by incumbent internet service providers (ISPs) to be fully covered by the ACP benefit.
- The FCC should consider revising the E-Rate program guidelines to permit community off-campus access to the school/library broadband network.

**Access to affordable and reliable internet service is a basic human right and having the ability to participate in the digital economy is not a privilege, it is essential for the welfare of society. The toll that communities are paying (e.g., loss of intellectual capital, decrease in life expectancy for people of color) is far greater than the cost to pay to ensure equal access.**



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Los Angeles County supports proposals that preserve or increase Federal funding for human services entitlement programs, such as SNAP and TANF, critical in assisting low-income individuals and families and proven to reduce deep poverty and hunger those disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# HUMAN SERVICES

The County's human services programs help to relieve financial hardship and food insecurity for the most vulnerable residents, while promoting family health and self-sufficiency. The County receives non-Medicaid Federal revenue from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs. Maintaining and increasing SNAP and TANF assistance is critical to combating food insecurity, especially among children, and providing families with all the supportive services and cash assistance they need to transition to self-sufficiency.

The health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have made it more difficult for many low-income households, many which are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and people of color, to afford food and other basic needs. Recent Federal pandemic relief legislation (e.g. Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021) provided extended and expanded benefits, as well as waivers and other administrative program flexibilities. However, most of these provisions are temporary. Given that the public health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are ongoing, it is important that the Federal government continue to extend monthly benefit increases. These benefit increases include: eligibility to college students, certification periods for households; utilization of periodic report procedures instead of the more extensive recertification process; waiver interviews; and extension of other administrative flexibilities.

With the passing of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Congress approved a temporary expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) that included increases and full reimbursement, meaning even households earning low or no income received the payment in its entirety. Expanding the CTC would yield a significant impact on low-income families in the County and allow for stability towards economic mobility.

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

- Increase Federal funding for SNAP and the minimum and maximum monthly SNAP benefits;
- Maintain administrative flexibilities and extend waivers for SNAP;
- Oppose Federal mandates requiring states to increase SNAP work requirements;
- Support the reauthorization of TANF beyond temporary extensions and refocus the program to help more families in deep and persistent poverty meet their basic needs, while helping to connect parents with viable work, training and education opportunities.
- Support efforts to increase the TANF block grant funding by eliminating the AFDC eligibility lookback that is preventing TANF funding from keeping pace with the cost of living.
- Support efforts to continue the Advance Child Tax Credit, which helps needy families afford basic needs, including food, housing, and childcare; and
- Support waiving of public funded Guaranteed Income for SNAP eligibility purposes, helping reduce food insecurity, income inequality, and deep poverty.

# SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

in Los Angeles County

The County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is the second-largest social services agency in the nation. DPSS administers more than 2.5 million cases and provides services to more than 40 percent of Los Angeles County 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.

In addition to programs and services administered by DPSS, during the pandemic, the County:

- Dispatched 175 drive-through food distribution events, delivering 14.5 million pounds of food to nearly 250,000 households;
- Partnered with local community-based organizations to develop and implement a food voucher program that provided nearly \$22 million in grocery gift cards to 29,740 low-income families that did not qualify for CalFresh (SNAP in California) or other benefits, and who were most severely impacted by food insecurity during the pandemic;
- Worked with the California Community Foundation to provide \$18 million in grant funds to 46 community-based organizations to support local food support programs such as home-delivered meals for people with disabilities and underlying health conditions, community pantries, and meals for people experiencing homelessness;
- Launched the Great Plates Delivered program, which provided 6.7 million home-delivered meals to nearly 9,000 older adults for more than one year;
- Implemented the General Relief "No Negative Action" policy to ensure participants would not lose their cash aid benefits during the pandemic because they could not go to DPSS office in person or had hardships in submitting required documents timely due to the pandemic;
- Converted the congregate meal program to a home delivery program called the Elderly Nutrition Program Plus (ENP+) to ensure older adults continued receiving critically needed meals while safely self-isolating at home; and
- Launched Los Angeles County's Guaranteed Income program - one of the most significant programs of its kind in the nation. The program awards 1,000 randomly selected qualifying residents a guaranteed \$1,000 a month for three years; and aims to help disrupt the cycle of poverty, combat economic inequity and address income instability among County residents.

**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.**



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Los Angeles County supports Federal proposals that protect people and the environment, while focusing on environmental justice; rapidly addressing the climate crisis; addressing inequities in the distribution of pollution burdens and climate change impacts; and providing counties with direct funding for environmental mitigation.

# ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental justice is a basic human right. Environmental hazards compounded by the impacts of climate change continue to place an unequal burden on low-income communities and communities of color. Over the last several years, incidents threatening entire communities, have required the County to convene regulatory agencies to target environmental mitigation efforts and ensure that residents are safe and responsible parties are held accountable for swift corrective action.

The County supports investments that transform the region's energy, water, food, and transportation systems; protect and increase native biodiversity; help overcome past inequities that have resulted in disproportionate pollution burdens and health outcomes for communities of color; help local businesses, organizations, and residents, particularly in disadvantaged communities, adapt to climate change; and advance racial and gender equity.

The County urges the Department of the Interior to prioritize \$8.3 billion in western water infrastructure funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the State of California projects that will promote preparedness and resiliency to climate-driven droughts. As climate change-induced droughts continue to threaten regional water supply, the County must commit long-term investments in water conservation and continue to demonstrate its leadership in prioritizing water conservation at its own facilities and throughout the region.

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

- Support the County in ameliorating the dangers of climate change, including extreme heat, drought, wildfires, flooding, sea level rise and coastal erosion, by funding preventative programs that include protections for its most vulnerable residents;
- Support federal resources for alternative energy infrastructure throughout the County, with an emphasis on underserved communities;
- Rapidly decrease greenhouse gas emissions;
- Ensure a just transition for fossil fuel workers while prioritizing the intersecting goals of job creation, protection of natural resources, improved public health, social equity, technology innovation, and regional policy collaboration;
- Provide Federal investments to improve the region's water quality, reliability, and safety, as well as adequate resources for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enable critical studies, construction, safe disposal of contaminated sediment, and operation and maintenance of projects under its jurisdiction.

# SUSTAINABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

in Los Angeles County



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To advance environmental sustainability, the County has:

- Changed its fleet policy to require the purchase of zero-emission vehicles whenever available and operationally feasible. Converting transportation to zero-emission sources (and powering those vehicles with 100 percent renewable energy) is among the most significant actions the County can take to reduce its greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions.
- Approved the cessation of all oil drilling in unincorporated County areas within five years and established a Just Transition Taskforce to support and strategically plan for the transition of both the workforce and energy market from the fossil fuel industry to cleaner industries.
- Issued a groundbreaking study to analyze and map community-level climate vulnerability, and pinpoint where climate resilience resources should be focused.
- Co-led the Transportation Electrification Partnership, an unprecedented public-private partnership with a special focus on zero emission goods movement.
- Committed to delivering 100 percent renewable energy for unincorporated areas by 2022.
- Spearheaded the creation of a stakeholder coalition for multi-benefit climate resilient infrastructure.
- Continued to vocalize the importance of expedited closure of the Aliso Canyon natural gas storage facility.

**The County is the regional leader in advancing an equitable, sustainable Los Angeles in the face of climate change and also urges Congress and the Administration to support proposals that:**

- Support funding for developing and implementing coastal management plans, including beach stabilization and replenishment projects;
- Mitigate historic and ongoing exposure to environmental risks;
- Enhance the electric grid infrastructure, as well as community-based solar and storage projects;
- Deploy Electric Vehicle infrastructure for all vehicle classes;
- Create more walkable and bikeable communities; and
- Advance measures to eliminate traffic fatalities

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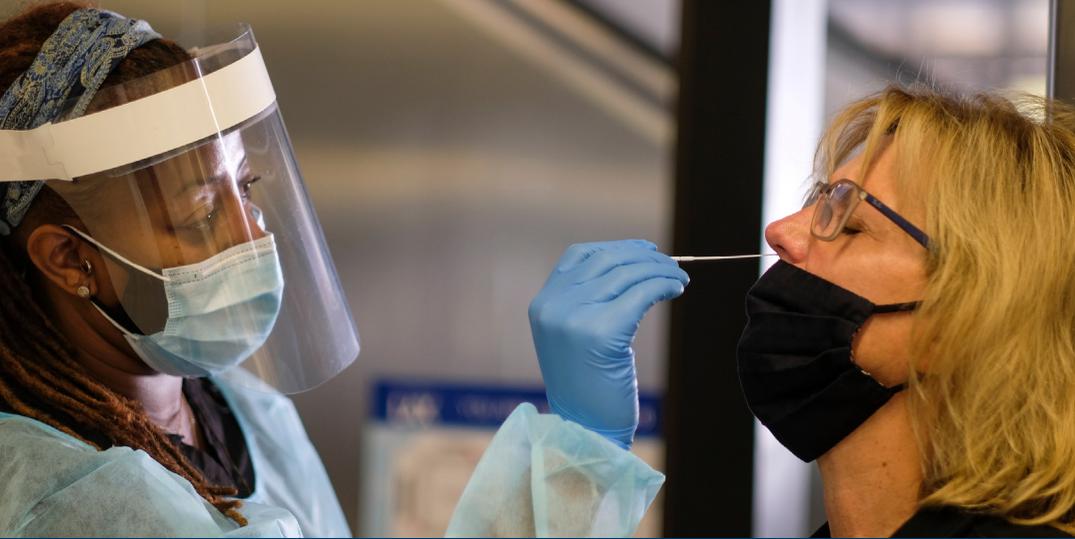
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Los Angeles County supports efforts that expand and enhance the local health care safety net, expand the public health workforce and infrastructure, reduce health inequities, and improve the population's health in the County.

# HEALTH CARE & PUBLIC HEALTH

Los Angeles County's Department of Health Services (DHS) and Department of Public Health (DPH) are on the front lines, delivering critical health care and public health services. These services help to treat and prevent physical and behavioral health conditions, particularly for the County's most disadvantaged communities and communities of color.

As DHS continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic while also preparing to implement a host of innovations pursuant to the recently approved California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Section 1115 waiver, continued Federal support with some enhancements, is imperative to protect and strengthen the health care safety net. The County appreciates the Administration's commitment to providing at least 60 days-notice before ending the Public Health Emergency (PHE) and offering additional time and flexibility for states to reintroduce redeterminations. Additionally, the pandemic response has shown that modernizing aging hospital infrastructure is needed to prepare for future crises, mitigate cybersecurity threats, and serve the unmet needs of vulnerable populations. Therefore, funding for such infrastructure improvements is critical to deliver the overall quality health care services for County residents and in preparation for future health emergencies.

DPH leads efforts to protect and improve the County-wide population health and well-being, efforts which help prevent physical and behavioral health conditions and reduce health inequities. A robust local public health system is essential for preventing and responding to health emergencies, disasters, emerging threats, and addressing the root causes of physical and behavioral health conditions, including social and economic inequities, environmental justice, and community health. The County appreciates the Administration's efforts to plan for any potential future public health emergencies as it continues to respond to COVID-19.

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

- Ensure an orderly phase out of enhanced FMAP after the end of the public health emergency, similar to the provision in the Build Back Better Act (6.2% to 3% to 1.5%, dropping quarterly); recoupment processes that allow providers opportunities to make substantive adjustments to reporting in the event of an adverse determination before recoupment processes are implemented;
- Extend Medicaid benefits to incarcerated populations and advance legislation or grant California's Section 1115 waiver proposal that would lift the Medicaid inmate exclusion for services provided to County Jail inmates similar to the Medicaid Reentry Act of 2021 (H.R. 955/S. 285);
- Increase funding for infectious disease prevention and control, public health emergency preparedness, and health promotion efforts, environmental health, and health equity for traditionally underserved and vulnerable communities, directly funding large local health departments, like the County's; and
- Strengthen the local public health infrastructure, including a well-trained workforce, scientific expertise, laboratory and clinical capacity, and data and information systems, that enhance health equity across the County and that help reduce impacts of public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

# COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SERVICES

in Los Angeles County

- The County's Department of Health Services is the second largest municipal health system in the nation. DHS annually cares for approximately 600,000 patients through its integrated system of 26 health centers and four hospitals.
- The County's Department of Public Health (DPH) operates 39 programs and 14 public health centers with the support of over 5,000 public health professionals. Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health programs countywide.
- DPH administered the distribution of more than 1.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines at Public Health-run vaccination sites and clinics. Via a network of COVID-19 vaccine providers, DPH coordinated the distribution of more than 18 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines with a focus on the county's hardest hit and highest-need communities.
- The County's Community Health Worker Outreach Initiative helped DPH recruit and train more than 1,000 Community Health Workers (CHW). Since May 2021, using a variety of peer outreach models, CHWs have conducted over 479,000 outreach activities and have reached an estimated 3.2 million people.
- Since March 2020, Public Health has issued 117 health officer orders to reduce community exposures and protect essential workers, who have been disproportionately harmed by the pandemic. Public Health compliance teams have conducted 166,894 COVID-19 inspections and over 9,318 outbreak investigations to ensure safety measures were followed.

**The successful renewal of California's Federal Medicaid waivers is vital to maintaining local safety-net health services and expanding those services to better treat the State's most vulnerable residents.**



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Los Angeles County supports Federal proposals to advance investments that improve and maintain vital public infrastructure and to work collaboratively on long-term planning that will meet the region's economic needs, while protecting its natural resources in a manner that is equitable and environmentally just.

# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

The Los Angeles County region serves as an economic engine for the entire nation - it is the largest manufacturing and international trade center and the hub for aerospace research and development. Covering 4,084 square miles, the County includes over 10 million residents, and is comprised of 88 cities and over 120 unincorporated areas.

The County has a bold vision to modernize its infrastructure, while assuring efficient resource management in the context of climate change and equity. This vision includes approximately \$1.6 billion in shovel-worthy projects for transportation, water, parks, and beaches, with full funding for these projects creating over 8,320 jobs. The County is utilizing 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 residents' quality of life.

In 2018, County voters approved a ballot measure (Measure W) to fund stormwater projects and programs that will help modernize its 100-year-old water system, protect public health and the environment, and maximize a cleaner, locally controlled water system. However, further investment and actions from Federal and State partners are necessary for the County to realize its infrastructure goals. These much needed infrastructure investments are punctuated by the fact that the region will host the 2028 Summer Olympic Games: a catalyst for necessary partnership and funding for sustainable and resilient public infrastructure.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted widespread infrastructure deficiencies and inequities. These include the importance of high-speed broadband internet and related resources as an essential and necessary right in accessing health services, education, economic resources, and job opportunities. Addressing the digital divide by providing reliable, affordable network connectivity and services, particularly in underserved communities, is imperative.

**The County urges Congress and the Administration to fully fund the programs authorized in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and advance proposals that support counties and the State to improve and maintain vital public infrastructure in the greater Los Angeles region, including proposals that:**

- Advance zero-emission vehicle and charging infrastructure deployment in the State;
- Advance infrastructure upgrades, workforce development and job training, economic development, and equity, with a focus on underserved communities most acutely affected by limited resources and air quality issues;
- Allow broad flexibility and local control on project selection and development, while rewarding 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 adequate resources for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enable critical studies, construction, and operation and maintenance of projects under its jurisdiction;
- Encourage Federal collaboration with local governments and regional agencies to maximize the impact of infrastructure investments.

# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

in Los Angeles County

- The County of Los Angeles delivers regional infrastructure projects that promote social equality, supports economic vitality, and improves the quality of life for more than 10 million people in local communities.
- The Board of Supervisors approved several motions to address the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure and affordable networks to communities that are adversely impacted by the digital divide. More than 365,000 Los Angeles County households do not have internet access. This is particularly true in low-income households of color.
- Through the Los Angeles County Flood Control and Waterworks Districts, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (Public Works) is responsible for countywide water resource management, which includes flood risk management, water supply, and watershed health. Over the last 10 years, the County has increased the stormwater recharge capacity at its facilities by approximately 17,680 acre-feet per year; invested more than \$187 million in rehabilitating its dams and improving their operational efficiency; and invested more than \$58 million in enhancing the capacity and operational efficiency of its spreading grounds and seawater barriers.
- The County promotes mobility and multimodal transportation opportunities, managing over 4,200 centerline miles of County and contract city roads, transportation infrastructure, programs, and services. Public Works spends over \$200 million annually on street and road operation maintenance and safety programs.
- Public Works provides trash collection service for approximately 1.1 million unincorporated area residents and nearly 20,000 businesses through comprehensive waste collection franchises and Garbage Disposal District systems. Public Works also manages, operates, and maintains sewer infrastructure within the Consolidated Sewer Maintenance District and the Marina Sewer Maintenance District (Districts). The Districts provide services to a population of over two million people within the County unincorporated area and 37 cities.

**Investing in regional infrastructure 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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Los Angeles County supports proposals that make meaningful reforms to the federal justice system; and promote behavioral health and rehabilitative services for individuals impacted by the criminal legal system.

# JUSTICE REFORM

The County is committed to supporting meaningful reforms to Federal, State, and local justice systems. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has spearheaded significant efforts to reimagine and transform the various facets of the justice system lifecycle. This has been accomplished through enhancements to law enforcement oversight and accountability, reforms to arrest and pretrial detention practices, improvements in the systems of care in and outside of jail settings, and support to the formerly incarcerated to assist with their transition back into society.

The County's ongoing reform of its justice programs and efforts to realize the Board of Supervisors "Care First, Jails Last" initiative continues to be at a critical stage. The County is taking the next steps to develop a new model for pretrial services and transforming the youth and criminal legal system. Such major reforms to the youth and criminal legal systems necessitate a robust multi-disciplinary effort, including a continued and expanded partnership with the Federal government.

Accordingly, the County supports proposals to:

- Divert adults and youths from incarceration and into rehabilitative, health-focused, and care-first systems;
- Mitigate disparities in the youth and criminal legal systems based on racial, economic, or immigration status;
- Strengthen law enforcement transparency, accountability, and policing reforms;
- Implement pretrial reforms and associated best practices to reduce detention;
- Support increased funding and eligibility for resources and support, including but not limited to, the areas of housing, mental health, substance use disorder, and employment and training for youth and adults impacted by the criminal legal system; and
- Support funding for legal representation for indigent immigrants in removal proceedings.

The County supports the House-passed **George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 (H.R. 1280)**, which would help strengthen national policing reform standards and address police misconduct. Additionally, the County urges Congress and the Administration to advance proposals that:

- Increase funding and eligibility for resources and support, including but not limited to, the areas of housing, mental health, substance use disorder, and employment and training for youth and adults impacted by the criminal legal system;
- Supporting the Medicaid Reentry Act (H.R. 955/S. 285) which would lift the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion;
- Provide funding and flexibility to use Federal health benefits for the incarcerated population, including the mentally ill; and
- Divert vulnerable individuals away from detention and into community-based treatment and rehabilitation.

# TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE REFORM EFFORTS

in Los Angeles County

In 2022, the Board of Supervisors created the Justice, Care and Opportunities Department to support the County's Care First, Jails Last initiative. The newly established Department coordinates policy developments and makes recommendations on funding and budget allocations to holistically implement the County's justice reforms.

As part of reimagining and transforming the Criminal Justice System, the County has also:

- Allocated \$27.4 million in one-time funding to support the implementation of the Youth Development Department and related needs.
- Launched the first cohort of the Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Office Incubation Academy to build capacity, provide technical assistance, and scale frontline service delivery from new and existing community-based organizations, especially those who serve underrepresented and justice-involved populations:
- Initiated additional pretrial reform efforts, which was a significant stakeholder engagement effort involving community advocates, providers, justice partners, the Superior Court, leading subject matter experts, and ATI to expand opportunities and access to pretrial release and reduce the jail population;
- Coordinated the creation and implementation of the Los Angeles Training Center (LATC), a re-entry and job training program for previously incarcerated young adults for careers in public safety, emergency management, and firefighting. The program provides re-entry services, housing, and career-focused training with job placement assistance; and
- Coordinated the implementation of Alternative Crisis Response (ACR), a nationwide effort to provide urgent and appropriate crisis response to individuals experiencing mental health distress. The 9-8-8 number for behavioral health emergency response is expected to be operational in the summer of 2022.

**The County is focused on preventing contact with the criminal legal system whenever possible, prioritizing rehabilitation for those impacted by the justice system, and increasing access to health services and other resources needed for community reintegration.**



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Los Angeles County supports efforts that increase access to critical services for those living with severe and persistent mental illness, as well as those whose mental health has been adversely impacted by a multitude of societal stressors.

# MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

In Los Angeles County, the growing need of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness and substance use disorder continues to outpace available resources for critical services at all levels of care, including inpatient, residential and outpatient programs. Additionally, the local behavioral health system continues to see increasing demands for mental health and substance use disorder services due to the pandemic, economic hardships, and racial inequity. Furthermore, the lack of an effective and widely available mental health crisis system and alternative crisis response system that decreases reliance on law enforcement are critical to providing communities, particularly underserved communities with access to reliable and timely crisis care.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) operates the largest municipal mental health department in the nation, treating more than 250,000 County residents every year. DMH provides services in numerous community venues including schools, parks, libraries and streets in addition to its hundreds of clinics and residential facilities, as well as dozens of inpatient hospitals. Additionally, DMH contracts with hundreds of community-based organizations and a massive countywide network of individual practitioners. The County continues to advocate for ongoing funding to cover the operational costs required to operate opportunities for expanded behavioral health and community care infrastructure for its most vulnerable residents, which are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

The County supports efforts at the State level to advance a Section 1115 waiver proposal to improve services for individuals with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)/ Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) which would, among other things, ease the Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) Exclusion and fund treatment beds when clinically appropriate. Los Angeles County has been working to seek repeal of the IMD exclusion, including through H.R. 2611, Increasing Behavioral Health Treatment Act (Napolitano). The County is also advancing efforts to implement the 988 crisis call centers and Alternatives to Crisis Response which include dispatching mobile crisis teams and access to crisis stabilization facilities.

## The County urges Congress and the Administration to:

- Repeal or ease the Medicaid Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) Exclusion to permit Medicaid funding for treatment and thereby increase the beds available for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions including support for H.R. 2611, or similar legislation;
- Use Section 1115 waiver authority to give states and counties the maximum flexibility needed to care for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions;
- Support legislative efforts such as H.R. 7116 to support 988 implementation and development of alternatives to crisis response;
- Support funding the infrastructure, and modernization of the new hotline through establishing a Behavioral Health Crisis Coordinating Office, authorize Medicaid financing to support call center operations and support crisis response on the ground with Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) Capital Development Grants that include crisis receiving and stabilization programs, and call centers; behavioral health workforce training program expansions; and access to and oversight of mental health and substance use disorder crisis response services; and
- Support funding for programs that grow the mental and behavioral workforce, especially for underserved communities.

# INNOVATIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

in Los Angeles County



The Department of Mental Health:

- Successfully moved an estimated 60 LPS conserved patients from the Department of State Hospital into the community to help the State accommodate Felony Incompetent to Stand Trial (FISTs) and other penal code clients.
- Provides treatment to thousands of system-involved youth (including youth engaged through both child welfare and probation) and trains thousands of community providers and county staff (including staff in DMH, as well as other departments) to promote trauma-informed care, resiliency and enhance foster-care placement stability.
- Successfully implemented a street-based Outpatient Conservatorship Pilot Program through its Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (HOME) teams that focused on relentlessly engaging homeless individuals who were incapable of living safely as a result of having a serious and persistent mental illness but refused to accept care and or housing voluntarily; conservatorship referrals were made to the Office of the Public Guardian.
- Implemented Full-Service Partnership (FSP) 2.0, a redesign of the FSP program with a focus on a multidisciplinary team/population approach with lower staff to client ratios, standardized rates and enhanced services and support to ensure successful transitions to lower levels of care.

**Engaging individuals who are suffering from severe persistent behavioral health conditions and living in the street requires a tremendous amount of relentless outreach and engagement work. For some, the amount of time, energy and funding required to engage, outstrips efforts that are required to deliver treatment.**

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Los Angeles County supports legislation that ensures all individuals, regardless of immigration status are treated humanely, and given a fair opportunity to secure lawful immigration status.

# SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANT RESIDENTS & FAMILIES

Los Angeles County is the most populous and diverse county in the United States. With more than a third of its 10 million residents having been born outside the United States, the County has one of the largest immigrant populations in the nation. Deeply integrated into nearly all aspects of County life, immigrants comprise 44 percent of the workforce, run small businesses that generate 40 percent of self-employed income, and pay billions of dollars in federal taxes every year. Additionally, nearly 60 percent of children born in the County have at least one immigrant parent and 44 percent of households are headed by an immigrant.

To advance the well-being of immigrant residents and their families, the County is taking action to ensure all immigrant residents in the region, from unaccompanied children to refugees, have the support and services they need to remain and thrive in the Los Angeles Region. The County stands ready to support the Federal government in any refugee resettlement effort and supports additional Federal funding for the non-profit agencies directed by the State Department to resettle refugees. These organizations were forced to downsize under the previous administration and are still struggling to resettle the tens of thousands of Afghan refugees who recently fled Afghanistan. Specifically, the Los Angeles County-based non-profits have recommended increasing the amount paid per refugee to fund at least 12 months of aid as the current 90 days is not enough time for a refugee to establish self-sufficiency. In addition, funding for non-profits handling resettlements needs to be increased to support a sustainable workforce, extended case management, and ancillary services. It would be difficult for these organizations to resettle another large volume of refugees unless more funding is identified.

The County will continue to advocate for proposals that ensure all residents, regardless of immigration status are treated humanely; provided due process protections; afforded access to necessary services without fear of immigration consequences and given the opportunity to secure permanent immigration status.

## The County urges Congress and the Administration to support:

- Enactment of the County-supported, House-passed American Dream and Promise Act (H.R. 6) which provides a pathway to citizenship for U.S.- raised immigrant youth known as "Dreamers," Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients, and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) beneficiaries;
- Actions that restore due process rights of non-citizens or facilitate their access to services;
- Access to basic public services and benefits, including pandemic relief, without impact to immigration status;
- Reunification of families separated at the U.S.-Mexico border and support to unaccompanied children and their families;
- Protection for immigrants and their families from prolonged, inhumane, or otherwise inappropriate detention conditions;
- Federal resources to address the backlog of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) cases in the region; and
- Congress consider re-visiting the "public-private partnership" design of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program to ensure that Resettlement Agencies are adequately and fully funded to meet the resettlement needs of current and future refugees.

# SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANTS

in Los Angeles County

The County is committed to ensuring that immigrants from across the globe, from unaccompanied children to refugees, have the support they need to remain and thrive in their new home.

## Unaccompanied Children

There were over 4,249 immigrant children and youth released to families residing in the County in 2021, and projections remain high for Federal Fiscal Year 2022. The County supports proposals that provide services and/or funding for unaccompanied minors (and their families) that seek asylum or other victim-based immigration relief protection.

## Afghan Refugee Task Force

Thousands of Afghan nationals are resettling in the region. The County's Afghan Refugee Task Force was established to assess and meet the unmet needs of Afghan refugees arriving in the community and support the agencies with direct connection with Afghan Refugees. Refugee resettlement agencies in the County are coordinating critical resources such as temporary housing, mental health services, food security, immigration legal representation, and public social services for those who are eligible.

## Ukrainian Refugees

The County is home to over 26,000 individuals of Ukrainian decent. Los Angeles County condemns the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine. It is essential that the United States take a leading role in welcoming Ukrainian Refugees to the United States. The County is encouraged by the recent approval of Temporary Protected Status for Ukrainian nationals, and support humanitarian parole for Ukrainians with U.S. ties to allow them to quickly relocate to the United States.

**The County's Office of Immigrant Affairs in the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs connects immigrants to a full range of County and non-County services available to them and their families, including healthcare, housing protections and resources, public social services, immigration legal representation, and consumer protection services.**



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