



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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FESIA A. DAVENPORT
Chief Executive Officer

February 28, 2022

To: Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
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First District

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Second District

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Third District

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Fourth District

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REPORT BACK ON ESTABLISHING A LOS ANGELES COUNTY POVERTY ALLEVIATION POLICY AGENDA AND CREATING A COUNTYWIDE GUARANTEED INCOME PROGRAM (ITEM NO. 20, AGENDA OF MAY 18, 2021)

On May 18, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion directing the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to establish a ninth Board-Directed Priority, the Poverty Alleviation Initiative (PAI), and report back in 90 days on developing a strategic plan, drafting a set of policy recommendations for closing the racial and gender wealth gaps, coordinating with the City of Los Angeles and other Los Angeles County (County) jurisdictions interested in poverty alleviation efforts, and recommending relevant legislative policies that reduce racial disparities and support Guaranteed Income (GI) programs that do not negatively affect other State and federal benefits. The motion also directed the CEO to, within 60 days, establish a GI pilot program that includes identifying appropriate funding and administrative support for the pilot to serve 1,000 residents for three years; work with a consultant to identify a target population, engage the community, and develop a mechanism for disbursing funding; hire a consultant to evaluate the pilot; and, within 180 days, develop a recommendation for the long-term Countywide administration of this type of program. Progress reports were submitted to the Board on August 18, 2021, and November 9, 2021; this is a follow-up progress report addressing the directives.

Progress

The PAI is developing a strategic plan for alleviating poverty across the County. A series of listening sessions are being conducted throughout the County to engage residents in the development of the plan. To date, over 900 participants from diverse backgrounds and geographies have been included. Of those, 623 were residents, many of whom disclosed having experienced, or currently experiencing, ongoing issues of economic security. This includes current and former recipients of public benefits; people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity; people experiencing food insecurity; domestic violence survivors; former foster youth; seniors; undocumented County residents; and formerly justice involved. Listening sessions were also conducted with representatives from over 70 community-based organizations, over 50 other stakeholder entities, and 22 County departments. Common themes emerging across these groups are being identified and categorized; they mainly fall within the areas of advocacy, operational issues, access to opportunities, and community supports. Once a draft plan is developed, it will be vetted with the listening session participants before being finalized. The PAI is targeting completion of the strategic plan by late spring 2022.

The PAI is also leading the implementation of the Countywide GI project. Contracts with the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Guaranteed Income Research (CGIR) as the lead research team, and Strength Based Community Change (SBCC) as the program administrator, were each executed on November 23, 2021. University of Pennsylvania's human subject's Institutional Review Board granted the project exemption status on January 10, 2022, permitting the research portion of the project clearance to move forward. This clearance was also needed to complete the County's waiver request to the State from including guaranteed income payments in the income calculation for California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids benefits. We anticipate receiving the State's decision on this waiver request within the next month.

An analysis was completed on potential impacts of receiving guaranteed income payments to a variety of different public benefits participants may be receiving. As a result, on February 8, 2022, the Board instructed County Counsel to prepare draft ordinance language for the Board's consideration within 30 days that would temporarily suspend certain General Relief eligibility requirements for individuals while they are participating in a County or city guaranteed income program. These analyses and others have also led to the Countywide GI program team being consulted for program design advice from the Cities of Long Beach and Pomona; the City of Chicago, IL; and the State of Delaware, as they each prepare to launch their own GI programs.

The Internal Services Department (ISD) is finalizing a screening tool that will be posted on the website for applicants to complete and instantly confirm whether or not they meet the program eligibility requirements. Only applicants who qualify will be given a link to complete the full application, saving people the time of filling out a lengthy program application for which they do not qualify. For applicants who do not qualify, they will be provided a website link to a list of other resources that may be helpful to them. ISD is also finalizing an interactive map, using data from the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion's Equity Explorer, that will highlight the 1,298 eligible census tracts the participants need to live in to qualify for the program (just over 50 percent of the total number of census tracts in the County). These census tracts include those that fall at or below the County's Area Median Income and have been identified as experiencing a moderate to very high negative impact from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department of Consumer and Business Affairs has agreed to manage the distribution of funds to program participants. They are concluding a competitive solicitation process for selecting a debit card vendor, and they anticipate moving forward with contract negotiations within the next two weeks. The next steps in preparing for the application portal launch is translating the application and research survey into multiple languages and testing the system's functionality. We are partnering with the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to secure translation resources and will be working with the CGIR research team to complete the necessary testing. Our target launch date for the application portal is the end of March 2022.

The Center for Strategic Partnerships (CSP) has helped philanthropy partner in this effort by supporting communications, community engagement, and research. Five foundations, including the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation, Weingart Foundation, and First 5 LA, have together contributed \$2,375,000, and a number of other foundations are considering proposals for additional investment. Some of this support has helped SBCC secure commitments from 31 community-based organizations to conduct extensive outreach and engagement efforts, provide significant assistance to applicants requesting it, and train them to help potential participants understand any impacts to public benefits they may have.

Lastly, the County is preparing to submit an application to the State's GI program, once the application is released. The CEO has been convening the Departments of Public Health, Health Services, Mental Health, Children and Family Services, Probation, Child Support Services, Public Social Services, and the CSP to develop a collaborative program design that meets the State's guidelines. We will continue to meet until we complete a design concept that will help the County be competitive in receiving one of the State's matching GI program grants.

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The PAI will provide the Board with an updated progress report on these ongoing efforts by June 30, 2022.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me or Carrie Miller, PAI Executive Director, at (213) 262-7823 or cmiller@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:JO
CDM:kdm

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 Child Support Services
 Children and Family Services
 Consumer and Business Affairs
 Health Services
 Internal Services
 Mental Health
 Probation
 Public Health
 Public Social Services
 Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
 Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services
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