



# Los Angeles County

## 2023 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES



Through its ability to leverage federal, State and local funds, the County prides itself on sponsoring new solutions and partnering with private and public agencies to increase the availability of affordable housing and preserve existing affordable housing for residents. The County will continue to support State proposals that: 1) provide funding to construct new affordable housing units while preserving and rehabilitating existing affordable housing units; 2) provide rental and legal assistance for individuals and families at-risk of housing instability or homelessness; 3) provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers; and 4) fund initiatives to ensure housing stability for youth, including those currently and formerly in foster care.

The County has also partnered with the State, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and other regional stakeholders to implement a comprehensive and multipronged plan to reduce homelessness among the most vulnerable in the community. Despite the County's ongoing local investments and one-time Federal and State investments to prevent and address homelessness, the 2022 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count recorded a 4.1 percent increase in homelessness since 2020 primarily due to the slow economic recovery and the high cost of housing in the region. The County remains focused on transitioning those experiencing homelessness into stable housing and implementing effective strategies to reduce the flow of individuals and families into homelessness.

The County will continue to support State proposals that include: 1) on-going funding to reduce and prevent homelessness beyond the additional year of Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention funding included in the State Budget; 2) financial resources to expand the availability of interim, permanent supportive and affordable housing, and reduce state restrictions and barriers to ensure flexibility in local utilization of these types of housing; and 3) allowing counties to maximize federal, State and local funds to provide services to persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, including Medicaid reimbursable services.

### CHILD WELFARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



The County is committed to its collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders to increase resources that improve the outcomes for children, youth, and families involved or at risk of getting involved in the child welfare system. The County has prioritized investments in programs and services that strengthen families; prevent child abuse and neglect; and promote optimal childhood development and learning by investing in high-quality, accessible early care and education programs.

The County will continue to support State proposals that provide: 1) 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; 2) comprehensive trauma informed services and robust continuum of placement resources tailored for vulnerable children and youth with unique and complex needs, including commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) victims; 3) investments in critical services to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, youth, and families and address racial disparities while enhancing child safety, well-being and permanency; 4) evidence-based child abuse and neglect prevention services; 5) high-quality early care and education programs and 6) support for the County's efforts to successfully implement child welfare reform without disruption to vital services.

## ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



The County is strategically and equitably investing in support for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and innovative economic and workforce development programs in high growth and emerging industry sectors that create a pipeline to well-paying jobs.

The County will support State proposals that promote inclusive and sustainable economic development, stimulate quality job growth in the region, and help lift economically disadvantaged residents of poverty and into self-sufficiency. This includes proposals that would: 1) support the expansion and growth of key industry sectors, including technology, health care, trade, manufacturing, construction, leisure and hospitality, childcare, bioscience, clean energy, and creative economies; 2) develop workforce programs – including high road training partnerships and apprenticeships that center around equity, employer partnerships, and job quality – to prepare workers for jobs in high-growth and emerging industries and propel community and regional economic growth; 3) stimulate regional investment and business development and encourage private sector participation in advancing equitable and sustainable growth; 4) support comprehensive employment and training programs that advance diversity, equity and inclusion, and provide wrap-around supportive services; and 5) provide economic relief to industries, small businesses and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to support the County’s economic recovery and foster sustained regional growth.

## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY



The County continues to support policies and investments that improve the energy, water, food, and transportation systems; help overcome past inequities that have resulted in disproportionate pollution burdens and health outcomes for communities of color; help local businesses, organizations, and residents in disadvantaged communities adapt to climate change; and advance racial and gender equity. To address these environmental issues and make this a sustainable region, the County will advocate for proposals that promote clean energy infrastructure, advance environmental justice, and invest in climate resiliency.

The County will support State proposals that: 1) further decrease greenhouse gas emissions; 2) develop infrastructure (e.g., organic waste processing capacity) and community-scale programs (e.g., resilience hubs, extreme heat risk communication strategies), as well as provide funding to address imminent health risks; 3) increase local water supply and improve water quality, as well as support sustainable water infrastructure; 4) enhance the electric grid infrastructure and expand community-based solar and storage projects; 5) support efforts to properly abandon orphaned oil wells and conduct site remediation when no responsible party can be identified; 6) strengthen regional food supply chains and improve urban access to fresh local foods; and 7) promote climate resiliency and provide sufficient funding to encourage and incentivize production methods and technologies that advance clean manufacturing, create greenhouse gas reducing jobs, and eliminate motor vehicle emissions.

## HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND MENTAL HEALTH



The health and well-being of the County’s diverse communities are critically important for preventing physical and behavioral health conditions and for reducing health inequities across the region. Medi-Cal is essential for providing healthcare for the County’s most vulnerable residents, especially through California’s Medicaid 1115 and 1915(b) waivers that aim to transform and improve quality of care, access, and efficiency of healthcare services.

The County supports State proposals that will: 1) effectively respond to current and future public health emergencies, emerging threats, and other disasters; 2) build-up community health, disease prevention and control programs; 3) broaden wellness efforts to address the root causes of physical and behavioral health conditions, including but not limited to monkeypox, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), substance use and overdose epidemics; and 4) improve other behavioral health programs; and 5) help recruit and retain workforce for the County’s health care systems.

The growing need for treatment for individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders continues to outpace resources for critical services at all levels of care, including acute inpatient, outpatient, and residential facilities. The County looks forward to additional will advocate for State funded funding opportunities to broaden behavioral health infrastructure, including expanding community-based facilities like Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs, also known as Board and Cares), which are a vital part of the County’s mental health safety net and homeless prevention networks which for treating the most vulnerable citizens.

The County will support State proposals that will: 1) advance the State’s pursuit of an 1115 waiver to permit Medicaid Institutions of Mental Disease treatment and increased bed capacity for serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance; 2) provide individuals with mental illness with access to critical services in the most appropriate, least restrictive setting; 3) increase flexibility for Mental Health Services Act funding to more comprehensively address the needs of local communities; 4) expand funding for public behavioral health services and placements/housing; and 5) provide dedicated ongoing funding for Public Guardians/Public Conservators services.

## INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS



The County will continue to advocate to advance infrastructure investments and projects that support cities, counties, and the State in improving and maintaining vital public infrastructure in the greater Los Angeles region. The County is committed to making its communities more climate resilient, modernizing its infrastructure systems, helping local businesses to partner with community-based organizations to advance environmental justice and spur economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities, and advancing racial and gender equity in the workforce.

The County will support infrastructure projects that are sustainable, equitable, and resilient to include: 1) transportation mobility and safety; 2) water and stormwater infrastructure; 3) disaster prevention/mitigation efforts; and 4) additional public infrastructure such as waste management, energy, and electric-vehicle infrastructure.

## DIGITAL DIVIDE



Access to high-speed broadband internet and related resources is an essential means to accessing health services, education, economic resources, County services and job opportunities. In Los Angeles County, areas where more than 20 percent of households lack broadband service, are largely the same areas where the average household incomes are less than \$50,000 annually, and where people of color are more likely to be the majority of residents. The County will continue to support State legislation and regulations that provide funding for the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure and reliable, affordable networks to bridge the digital divide by increasing access to high-speed internet for as many households as possible, particularly in underserved communities.

The County will support proposals that would: 1) incentivize private investment in broadband infrastructure in historically underserved and rural communities; 2) create workforce development pipeline programs in the broadband, fiber and related telecommunications infrastructure industries; 3) utilize innovative, short-term and long-term strategies to provide free or low-cost high-speed internet and related devices to disadvantaged communities; and 4) expand and modernize Wi-Fi at County facilities to help close the digital divide for residents in disadvantaged and broadband deficient communities.

## JUSTICE REFORM



The County continues to make investments to advance the “Care First, Jails Last” vision with community investments and the establishment of new initiatives to create a more just and equitable justice system. 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 necessitates a robust multi-disciplinary effort, including a continued and expanded partnership with the State.

The County supports State legislative and funding proposals that advance statewide and local efforts to transform the adult and youth and criminal legal systems, including proposals that would support the County’s goals to: 1) divert adults and youths from incarceration and into rehabilitative, health-focused, and care-first systems; 2) mitigate disparities in the juvenile and criminal legal systems based on racial, economic, or immigration status; 3) strengthen law enforcement transparency, accountability, and policing reforms; 4) implement pretrial reforms and associated best practices to reduce detention while maintaining public safety; 5) reduce the reliance on jails and mass incarceration; 6) promote and streamline access to criminal records clearing services; and 7) support increased funding and eligibility for resources and support, including but not limited to, the areas of housing, mental health, substance use disorders, youth development, and employment and training for youth and adults impacted by the criminal legal system.



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