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June 14, 2022

**Ensuring an Equitable Post-Pandemic Recovery for Los Angeles County  
Immigrants**

Unprecedented public investment in COVID-19 pandemic recovery and public infrastructure holds great promise to building an inclusive, equitable, and resilient Los Angeles County (County). The County’s Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative has led the nation in developing a framework for equitable investment of the County’s recovery funding in our hard-to-reach communities. As the County deploys its resources under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), we must ensure that we are continuing to direct resources to the communities that have been most impacted and traditionally under-resourced, including the County’s immigrant population. The County must undertake this work in collaboration with immigrant-serving organizations and coalitions like the Immigrants are Los Angeles coalition.

Immigrants and their families make significant cultural, economic, and social contributions to the County. They are deeply woven into our social fabric, local institutions, and communities. Immigrants account for 35% of the County’s population, make up 44% of the workforce, and contribute 40% of the County’s gross domestic product, around

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\$306.1 billion. Most of the County's immigrants, nearly 70%, have lived in the United States for more than a decade.

A 2021 study by the New American Economy showed that 60% of immigrant Angelenos are employed in essential, front-line work.<sup>1</sup> Yet, immigrants experience high levels of economic insecurity and have been disproportionately impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Over 40% of immigrants in the County live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, including 62.1% of undocumented immigrants.<sup>3</sup> Over the last two years, immigrants have experienced high rates of job loss,<sup>4</sup> high levels of exposure to illness and injury, housing insecurity, and food insecurity.<sup>5</sup>

While social services and cash assistance programs provide a critical safety net to County residents during times of job loss and economic crisis, access to vital safety net programs such as Unemployment Insurance and stimulus payments is restricted for millions of immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, who are categorically excluded from these programs. Federal relief packages such as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act included relief payments which were not available to undocumented immigrants or to U.S. citizen children whose parents did not have valid Social Security Numbers (this includes 22% of children in Los Angeles County).<sup>6</sup>

As part of the County's commitment to advancing equity and wellbeing for our immigrant residents and their families, on September 12, 2017, the County Board of

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<sup>1</sup> New American Economy, "New Americans in Los Angeles County," [https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/12/G4G\\_LosAngelesCounty.pdf](https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/12/G4G_LosAngelesCounty.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Tara Watson, Hilary Hoynes and Chloe East, "Coronavirus' Disproportionate Economic Impacts on Immigrants," Jun. 17, 2020, The Econofact Network, <https://econofact.org/coronavirus-disproportionate-economic-impacts-on-immigrants>.

<sup>3</sup> USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2019 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation.

<sup>4</sup> Community and Labor Center at the University of California Merced, "Persisting Joblessness among Non-Citizens during COVID-19, Jun. 2020, [https://clc.ucmerced.edu/sites/clc.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/persisting\\_joblessness.pdf](https://clc.ucmerced.edu/sites/clc.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/persisting_joblessness.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants Report, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> USC Dornsife, State of Immigrants in LA County, 2021, [https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/1411/docs/SOILA\\_2021\\_full\\_report\\_v6\\_FIN\\_AL.pdf](https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/1411/docs/SOILA_2021_full_report_v6_FIN_AL.pdf).

Supervisors (Board) unanimously declared immigration a County Priority, adding it to the list of five other County priorities that require multi-departmental collaboration. Since then, the Board has strived to honor its bold commitment towards immigrants by creating an immigration legal representation program for low-income immigrants facing deportation, launching an Office of Immigrant Affairs, and passing over 60 motions to protect immigrants. The County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to ensure that all immigrants who reside in the County are part of an equitable recovery, regardless of their immigration status.

The County must continue serving immigrants who, due to their immigration status, have been excluded from federal or state relief programs, and ensure that the County continues to root out these exclusions. This includes assessing and redressing any direct and indirect barriers, such as language and cultural barriers, legal and policy restrictions, technological hurdles, or other socio-economic obstacles that immigrants face in accessing ARPA-funded County programs, as well as state and locally funded public programs. Moreover, as called for in the Board's July 27, 2021 motion on [\*Improving How We Meet the Needs of our Black Immigrant Communities\*](#), the County must strengthen its outreach to and engagement with the Black immigrant community to meet the needs of this intersectional population as well.

As we engage in ensuring the equitable distribution of ARPA funds, we must identify opportunities to support immigrant communities most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in order to substantially improve the lives of immigrants who continue to experience disproportionate health, social, and economic impacts.

The County allocated hundreds of millions of dollars in supportive programs in its Phase One ARPA Spending Plan, many of which were specifically designed to reach the immigrant community or persons living in communities with high rates of immigrant populations. The County will soon be allocating an additional \$975 million in Phase Two. Evaluating how well our allocations are working for immigrants and the barriers immigrants still face in accessing ARPA-enabled programs will guide changes to existing

and future ARPA program designs to be more inclusive of all County residents, regardless of their immigration status.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Direct the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) and its Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA), to collaborate with the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative and other relevant departments, including the Departments of Public Social Services, Health Services, Public Health, Mental Health and Economic Opportunity, to consult with community stakeholders representative of the County's diverse immigrant community, commencing in July 2022, to discuss ways in which County departments can coordinate and collaborate to better serve immigrant populations.
2. Direct the Director of OIA and ARDI to report back to the Board in writing within 180 days with final recommendations on data gathering, standard metrics, reporting, policy, and program changes that enable the County to better serve immigrant communities, including the following:
  - a. Integrating an immigration lens into the County's ARDI strategy and ensuring related programs are inclusive of immigrants of all immigration statuses;
  - b. Improving data collection on the equitable distribution of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and services to underserved, geographically isolated, and excluded immigrant-serving groups, and, in consultation with immigrant-serving community based organizations, exploring methods to more effectively gather information on how funds and services are reaching and impacting immigrant groups;
  - c. Improving, as needed, the County's COVID-19 Vulnerability and Recovery Index Dashboard and Equity Explorer Mapping Tool to incorporate data measuring outcomes for the immigrant community; and

- d. Identifying barriers that immigrant-serving groups face in accessing County programs (ARPA-funded and otherwise) and recommending solutions to improve access. Recommended solutions should include, but not be limited to, a review of County-funded programs with eligibility exclusions based on immigration status, social security requirements and other documentation.
  - e. Program design changes and service delivery changes across County departments, to serve the immigrant community, regardless of immigration status, in a more culturally competent and linguistically appropriate manner.
3. Direct the Director of OIA to partner with County Departments and community organizations that serve the immigrant population to expand the County's outreach and service delivery to immigrants of all statuses through credible community messengers and hyper local and ethnic media to increase trust in the County's social services safety net, and report back to the Board in writing within 180 days on recommended next steps.

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