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# Los Angeles County Disability Services Strategic Plan



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**Aging & Disabilities  
Department**

Prepared by  
Public Consulting Group

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# Letter from the Director

Dear Los Angeles County Resident,

The Los Angeles County Aging & Disabilities Department (AD) developed this Disability Services Strategic Plan to help create a more inclusive and accessible Los Angeles County for people with disabilities. It outlines our goals and action steps to better support the disability community and guide efforts to build a system that is easier to access and navigate.

We know that while this plan was developed with the best intentions, the world is always changing, and what makes sense today may not make sense in the future. We also recognize that resources, including financial and workforce capacity, are limited both within AD and across Los Angeles County, which may impact implementation. For this reason, AD will treat this plan as a living document and will revisit and update it as needed so we can continue to make progress, improve where possible, and address barriers as they arise.

I want to thank every County resident who contributed to the development of this plan by participating in a survey or focus group, as well as the Los Angeles County departments that supported this work in many ways. I also want to thank the Commissioners from the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities and the Los Angeles County Commission for Older Adults for their partnership throughout its development.

If you have any questions about this plan, please contact Victoria Jump at [vjump@ad.lacounty.gov](mailto:vjump@ad.lacounty.gov) or 213-856-1219.

Sincerely,

Maral Karaccusian, MSW  
Director, Los Angeles County Aging & Disabilities Department

# Executive Summary

Los Angeles County is home to a large and growing population of people with disabilities of all ages. Their needs, and the services that support them, continue to change over time. To better serve the community, the Los Angeles County Aging & Disabilities Department (AD) engaged Public Consulting Group (PCG) to create this Disability Services strategic plan for the Department with the goal of improving supports and services for people with disabilities of all ages across the County. The development of the strategic plan was informed by an assessment of the current status and needs of the disability services ecosystem across the County. PCG conducted a countywide needs assessment and, in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities and AD, engaged stakeholders, gathered existing data, and examined best practices to identify the key factors, influences, and realities that impact the system of services as well as the existing needs, gaps, and opportunities addressed in the strategic plan.

Building on the findings and recommendations of the Needs Assessment, AD brought stakeholders together to co-create the vision for AD for the next five years. During a day-long, facilitated session, participants outlined the vision, values, action areas, goals, and objectives that form the Los Angeles County Aging & Disabilities Department Disability Services Strategic Plan.

This Strategic Plan establishes the Aging & Disabilities Department as the Countywide convener, coordinator, and standard-setter for disability services, navigation, and accessibility. Implementation of the Plan does not replace statutory authority or programmatic responsibilities of other County departments, but is intended to strengthen coordination, alignment, and continuity across existing systems.

## Action Areas and Goals

### Action Area 1

#### Strengthen Capacity and Infrastructure

**Goal 1.1:** Establish AD as the County-wide Hub for disability services across the County

**Goal 1.2:** Right-size the capacity of the network to support system improvements

### Action Area 2

#### Increase Accessibility and Inclusion

**Goal 2.1:** Improve accessibility of the existing County infrastructure

**Goal 2.2:** Improve the County standard for accessibility beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

**Goal 2.3:** Improve accessibility in communities and neighborhoods

### Action Area 3

#### Expand Advocacy and Education

**Goal 3.1:** Establish AD as the active and visible leader in advocating for all individuals with disabilities in Los Angeles County

**Goal 3.2:** Serve as a model for County Departments through AD's internal staff education, training, and workforce

**Goal 3.3:** Establish AD as the leading resource for information, guidance, and education on best practices and regulations for serving and including people with disabilities

### Action Area 4

#### Enhance Services and Supports

**Goal 4.1:** Increase the availability and accessibility of disability related services and supports across Los Angeles County

**Goal 4.2:** Increase information about and awareness of services for individuals with disabilities

## Implementation and Priorities

To support AD's implementation of this Strategic Plan, an implementation plan was also developed based on discussions from the Visioning Session and the findings of the Needs Assessment. This plan outlines the key activities, strategies, performance metrics, and timelines that describe how AD will achieve the goals and objectives detailed in the Strategic Plan. Implementation efforts will prioritize coordination at key transition points across all ages in life, from early childhood to school age and youth to adulthood. The implementation plan includes a five-year staggered timeline for various plan activities, enabling AD to focus on specific aspects in a structured manner. Again, it is important to note that implementation specifics are dependent on available funding and resources.

During the Visioning Session, participants were asked to identify their top priorities and highlight which of the goals and objectives discussed may have early success. These priorities and opportunities for early success informed the implementation plan timeline. There was strong agreement that improving AD's internal policies and practices represented both the highest priority and the strongest opportunity for early success. Participants felt strongly that AD should lead by example across all identified action areas, reflecting its core values of accessibility, inclusion, and collaboration.

# Strategic Plan Methodology

The development of this plan included a total of four phases, with Phase 1 providing the information necessary to identify action areas. A simple explanation of the methods used is shown below.

## Objective:

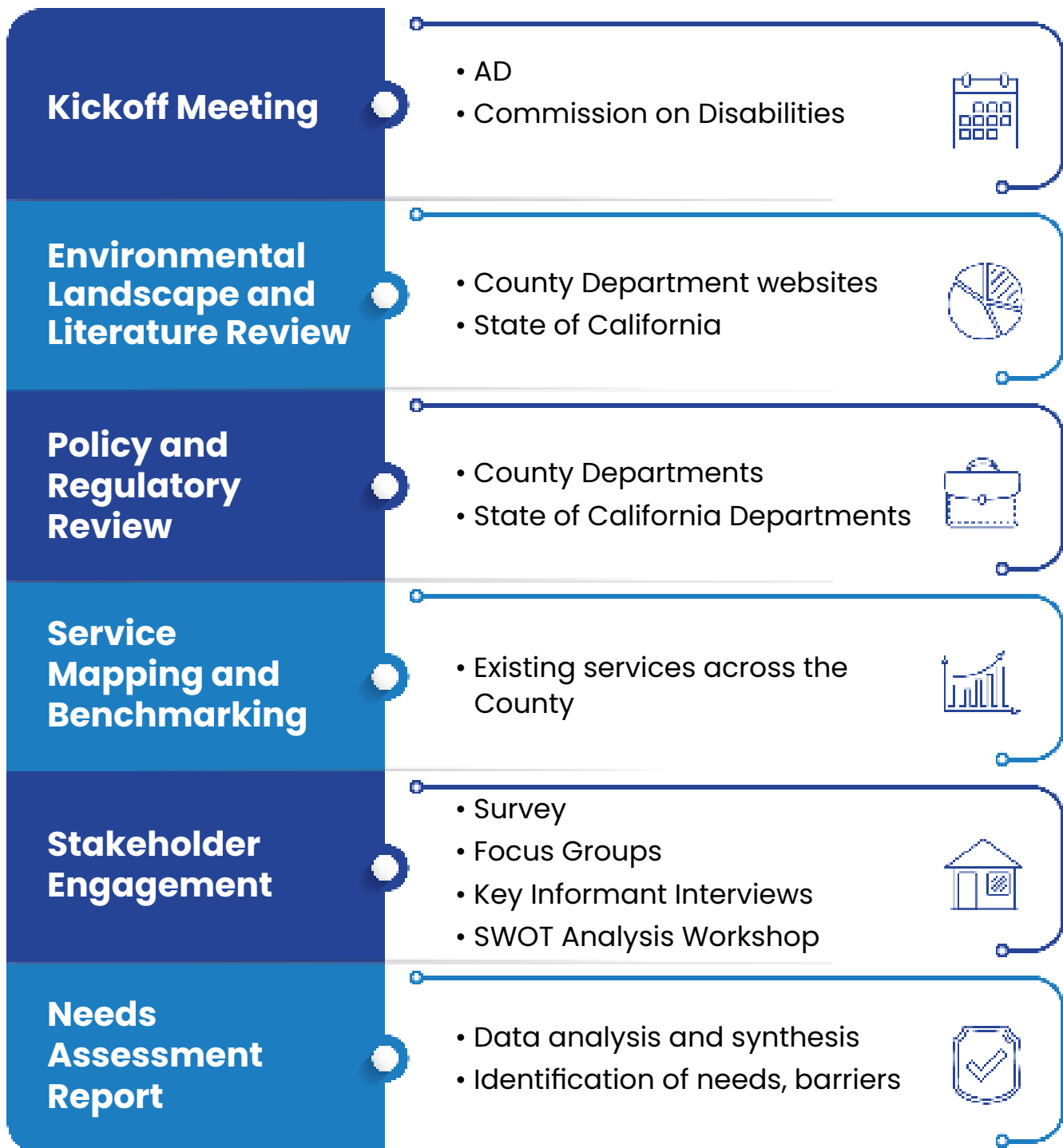
Create a roadmap for how the Aging & Disabilities Department can improve disability services in Los Angeles County over the next five years.

## Strategies:

- Collaborate with the Commission on Disabilities
- Engage stakeholders to understand their lived experiences
- Understand the current state of services
- Identify gaps and areas for improvement
- Develop clear action steps to improve services



To fully develop this plan, significant engagement with the residents of Los Angeles County occurred. Information about the various methods used to engage residents is provided in the graphic below.



# Where Are We Now

To make sure the Strategic Plan was well informed by the current status and needs of people with disabilities across the County, AD engaged Public Consulting Group (PCG) to conduct a disability services needs assessment for the County. In collaboration with the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities, AD and PCG reviewed existing information and gathered new input from many stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities who live and work in Los Angeles County, their families and caregivers, advocates for those with disabilities, people, organizations, and agencies that provide services and support to individuals with disabilities, and the federal, state, County, and local agencies that serve individuals with disabilities. Best practices were reviewed and all data were analyzed to understand the factors, influences, and realities that impact the system of services and to identify existing needs, gaps, and opportunities to be addressed in the Strategic Plan.

## *What We Learned*

The information collected helped us understand the assets, gaps, barriers, and needs of the disability services system across the County.

**Assets:** Existing assets in the system include the local community services network, the Commission on Disabilities, the Commission for Older Adults, and the strong interest across County departments and partners to work together and stay connected.

**Gaps:** Across the needs assessment, four areas stood out as the largest gaps in the ecosystem. These include a lack of system-wide leadership and coordination, an inconsistent definition of disability and the people served by AD, limited connection of services across age ranges, and a number of key services that do not have enough capacity to meet the needs of the County. These gaps were consistently identified across stakeholder discussions and data analysis.

**Barriers:** Identified barriers include lack of coordination across the Countywide network of services, the challenge of navigating multiple programs, providers, and departments to connect to services, and not enough funding for supports, services, and resources. Barriers also included a variety of factors that made existing services inaccessible to individuals with disabilities, such as lack of communication support, or physical inaccessibility.

**Needs:** The most pressing needs identified within the disability services system include the establishment of a lead entity focused on coordination of the Countywide network, better integration of services across the lifespan, and the need for additional capacity for services to support people with disabilities. Additional priorities included reducing barriers to existing supports and services, as well as assessing and increasing the capacity and infrastructure of the network in order to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in Los Angeles County.

## Needs Assessment Recommendations

The Strategic Plan offers AD an opportunity to address the needs, gaps, and barriers identified through the needs assessment process. The following initial recommendations were identified as a result of the findings of the needs assessment.

**Forming a Disability Services Hub:** AD has the opportunity to position itself as the central Hub for the disability services network by acting as the convener and coordinator of partners and resources. In this role, AD can enhance collaboration, improve service alignment, and strengthen the overall network supporting individuals with disabilities. This can be done through several strategies under the umbrella of coordination, collaboration, and connection.

- **Communication** – AD can champion collaborative discussions and foster and strengthen connections across the network and with external stakeholders and the disability community.
- **Defining the Target Population** – Establishing a consistent departmental definition of “disability” as it relates to AD’s service population will be critical to establishing AD as the Hub for disability services.
- **Advocacy** – A key role of AD as the Hub for disability services is to act as the advocate for people with disabilities across all levels of the network.
- **Education and Training** – As the Hub, AD should provide education and training to all parts of the services network about best practices, available services, and attitudes toward individuals with disabilities.

**Increased Coordination Across Lifespan:** As the Hub for disability services, AD can work with all key County departments and programs to strengthen coordination and alignment of services and supports across all ages. By supporting connections between programs AD can improve connectivity across programs, coordination of services, enhance information sharing and provide more consistent guidance and assistance to support services available across all points of the lifespan.

**Increased Availability of Key Services:** As the Hub, AD should work to increase availability of services through three primary strategies: coordination of existing services, advocating for additional support and funding, and increased accessibility of the existing services within the network.

**Increased Capacity and Infrastructure:** To successfully implement the recommendations and strategies identified in this needs assessment, the capacity and infrastructure of AD and the network will need to be assessed and increased. This includes determining ways to build system connectivity, right-sizing staff across agencies to support the strategies, and bolstering external workforce development to build the network of providers of services.

# Where Do We Want to Go

Using what was learned in the Needs Assessment, AD brought together key stakeholders including the Commission on Disabilities, County departments, and community organizations to co-create the vision for AD for the next five years. During a day-long, facilitated session, participants discussed their vision for disability services in Los Angeles County and the values of the network that guided the vision. With that framework, the group determined action areas and set goals to reach the vision. Objectives were outlined to create a roadmap for how AD will make continued progress toward each of the goals and the overall vision. The vision, values, action areas, goals, and objectives form the Los Angeles County Aging & Disabilities Department Disability Services Strategic Plan.

## Strategic Plan

### VISION

**Our vision is to help people with all disabilities of all ages**

- Live with dignity and independence

**Vision for disability services:**

Los Angeles County shines as the national model of inclusion. A place where people with disabilities live fully and freely. Life is seamless and equitable; opportunities, connections, and experiences are inclusive. A community where belonging isn't just an idea, it's a reality.

### MISSION

**Our mission is to improve lives and champion inclusion and accessibility for people of all ages with all disabilities, and their communities.**

# COMMITMENT

## **Our commitment is to**

Help people with all disabilities of all ages to live fully and freely and age in place, with dignity and independence.

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Promote the safety and well-being of people with disabilities of all ages in their communities.

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Create vibrant community centers that support, empower, and connect residents.

# VALUES

## **EQUITY**

We commit to advancing equity to serve all people of all ages with disabilities in Los Angeles County. We lead explicitly, but not exclusively, through advocacy, transparency, and accountability.

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## **INCLUSION**

We exemplify and foster inclusion in all aspects by championing and modeling accessibility, visibility, diversity, and collaboration

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## **EMPATHY**

We integrate empathy into all we do, ensuring compassion, understanding, and responsiveness are shown in daily actions and interactions.

## How to Read

The Action Areas outline the structure of the strategic plan. They are fundamentally connected to each other: Action Area One is the foundation for achieving Action Areas Two, Three, and Four. Each Action Area both informs and builds on the others. AD must lead by example and internally establish a strong and inclusion-centered infrastructure in order to effectively support the disability services ecosystem through collaboration and system improvements. In turn, their infrastructure must be developed directly in service to the needs of local disability services and their transformation.

### Action Areas

Strengthen Capacity and Infrastructure

Increase Accessibility and Inclusion

Expand Advocacy and Education

Enhance Services and Supports



### Goals:

The highest level of things that AD wants to accomplish, internally and externally. The goals chart the work to carry out the mission in the coming five years.

### Objectives:

The specific activities that determine how AD will accomplish its goals

### Timeline:

An estimated amount of time needed to complete the goal.

### Key Partners:

The departments, agencies, organizations, and other entities outside of the Department that will need to be engaged to effectively achieve the goal.



### Key Performance Indicators:

Specific measures to monitor the progress AD is making towards achieving its goals.

**Please note that the achievement of specific Goals and Objectives in this strategic plan may be impacted by resource constraints facing both AD and Los Angeles County.** PCG and AD recognize this practical reality, however, the plan is intended to be both comprehensive and adaptable to enable AD to fulfill the overall aims of the Action Areas over time and maintain its commitment to its broader Mission and Vision. Timelines are included to reflect the ongoing reality of both the work to be done and the changing resources with which to do the work. AD strives to make a positive impact with this plan where possible and as timely as possible, while marshalling resources for ongoing and long-term improvements. AD will proactively engage with partners to build on existing efforts and maximize resources.

## Action Area 1: Strengthen Capacity and Infrastructure

Strengthen the internal AD and external network infrastructure and capacity to build, strengthen, and sustain connections and collaborations across the network and create the infrastructure necessary for system improvements.

## Action Area 2: Increase Accessibility and Inclusion

Increase accessibility of County infrastructure, communities and neighborhoods, communications standards, and services and programs. AD will lead by example by setting the standard of accessibility within internal services and programs, with the goal of improving accessibility and inclusion across all parts of the disability services ecosystem. AD will also lead the conversation around Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) updates and will advocate for improved minimum accessibility requirements.

## Action Area 3: Expand Advocacy and Education

Establish AD as the visible leader for advocacy and education for support of individuals with all disabilities of all ages across Los Angeles County. Serve as an advocate for people with disabilities across all levels of the network. Provide education and training to all parts of the services network about best practices, available services, and attitudes toward individuals with disabilities.

## Action Area 4: Enhance Services and Supports

Increase the awareness and accessibility of, access to, and capacity of the disability services and supports network, including, but not limited to, housing, transportation, technology, and emergency services.

**Action  
Areas**

# Goals and Objectives

## Action Area 1: Strengthen Capacity and Infrastructure



### GOAL 1.1: Establish AD as the County-wide Hub for disability services across the County

As the County department uniquely positioned to serve people across the lifespan and across disability types, AD is best situated to anchor coordination, navigation continuity, and cross-system alignment. The disability services hub, anchored in the Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) model, will serve as the convener and coordinator of county-wide partners and resources focused on supporting people with disabilities.

The Hub will connect and build on existing efforts and utilize the No Wrong Door framework to facilitate communication and information sharing, create synergies across programs and departments, improve service alignment and navigation, and strengthen the overall disability services network. As the county-wide Hub, AD will coordinate with existing access points (i.e., Regional Centers and County departments) by establishing shared standards, clearly defined escalation pathways, and continuity of navigation, rather than duplicating intake or referral functions.

#### Objective 1.1.1:

Build connections across the network through expansion of No Wrong Door (NWD) and Aging and Disability Resource Connections (ADRC) models into the disability services network to enhance supported navigation of programs and services (in both digital and analog formats) for individuals as they transition across age groups.

#### Objective 1.1.2:

Work with partners and existing efforts to convene a disability services task force, with coordination through the ADRC, that regularly brings together all key stakeholders for the disability services network to collaborate and coordinate actions, services, and supports across the network. This includes stakeholders that represent all disabilities across all ages.

**TIMELINE:** Year One

#### KEY PARTNERS:

Board of Supervisors, all other County Departments, Commission on Disabilities, Commission for Older Adults, Aging and Disability Resource Connection.

### Objective 1.1.3:

Integrate the AD Hub with all County Departments to provide coordination and facilitate collaboration for services and supports for people with disabilities.

### Objective 1.1.4:

Establish consistent lines of communication between AD and all internal and external stakeholders to provide input, guidance, and institutional knowledge for efforts across the County (e.g. emergency planning, County infrastructure, and going beyond ADA compliance, policy development). Consistent lines of communication will include defined roles, handoffs, and escalation pathways across departments to support timely resolution of cross system barriers.

### Objective 1.1.5:

Use data to inform and assess AD's approach to ensuring supports, advancing equity, and fostering connection and collaboration. This includes adding evidence-based assessments (e.g. Hunger Vital Sign, PRAPARE, Housing Stability Vital Sign, etc.) to intake processes to support outcomes measurement and researching and implementing technology solutions for data organization and management.

#### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:



##### AD AS HUB

- Change in outreach/integration across the network (e.g. number and participation for Task Force meetings, AD representation at external initiatives).
- Change in individuals reporting supported navigation through the services network.
- Improved continuity of navigation across life transitions

##### COLLABORATION

- Change in connectivity for disability services (e.g. number of AD staff familiar with and using the NWD and ADRC models, number of departments and agencies connected to AD).
- Change in connectivity for AD (e.g. number of departments, agencies, organizations, and programs AD works collaboratively with)
- Change in reported ease of navigation of services across the County.



## GOAL 1.2: Right-size the capacity of the network to support system improvements

### Objective 1.2.1:

Explore and identify additional funding sources and opportunities to support the work of the Hub and inter-connected network.

### Objective 1.2.2:

Identify strategies to fully utilize existing key stakeholders/partners in the network, including the Commission on Disabilities, the Independent Living Centers (ILCs), the State ILC Council, and AD Community and Senior Centers.

### Objective 1.2.3:

Develop policies in human resources and hiring practices to successfully engage people with disabilities in the County recruitment and hiring process, including incorporating existing efforts for neurodivergent staff.

### Objective 1.2.4:

Identify strategies and best policy practices for supporting and increasing the external disability services workforce (including but not limited to direct service providers).

### Objective 1.2.5:

Appropriately staff AD to implement the strategic plan and maintain existing and new functions.

**TIMELINE:** Year One Through Three

#### KEY PARTNERS:

Board of Supervisors, all other County Departments, Commission on Disabilities, Commission for Older Adults, Aging and Disability Resource Connection, Independent Living Centers, Los Angeles County Community and Senior Centers.

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:



#### INTERNAL CAPACITY

- Change in staff capacity for the Hub (e.g. number, diversity of staff – appropriate staffing, staff with lived experience, permanent director).
- Change in available resources for AD and Hub initiatives (e.g. number of external grants or funding partnerships).

#### EXTERNAL CAPACITY

- Number and types of policies and procedures across the County that are supportive of people with disabilities (e.g. inclusive hiring policies, policies for increased utilization of Commission, ILCs, Community and Senior Centers).
- Changes in county partnerships or initiatives that support the disability services workforce (e.g. number of partnerships formed focused on the disability services workforce, number and type of initiatives to support workforce development).

## Action Area 2: Increase Accessibility and Inclusion



### GOAL 2.1: Improve accessibility of the existing County infrastructure

#### Objective 2.1.1:

Advocate for improved accessibility of buildings used for County services beyond the minimum Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

#### Objective 2.1.2:

Advocate for accessible parking that meets, at minimum, ADA requirements for buildings which will be used for County services and activities.

#### Objective 2.1.3:

Collaborate with other County departments for planning when new County buildings are being constructed to advocate for accessibility beyond minimum ADA requirements.

**TIMELINE:** Years Two and Three

#### KEY PARTNERS:

Board of Supervisors, all other County Departments (with a focus on Los Angeles County Public Works, Los Angeles County Planning, Internal Services Department), Los Angeles County Development Authority, Commission on Disabilities, Commission for Older Adults

#### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Number of advocacy actions for building accessibility.
- Number of partnerships with other County departments.
- Number of advocacy actions for accessible parking spaces added.



### GOAL 2.2: Improve the County standard for accessibility beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

#### Objective 2.2.1:

Review current ADA policy and identify priority areas for improvement/change (focusing on areas where the minimum standard is not truly accessible).

### Objective 2.2.2:

Advocate for updates to County policy to augment existing ADA policy to improve accessibility in the community.

### Objective 2.2.3:

Advocate for proactive communication access across the County (e.g. developing best-practice standards of inclusive communication, partner with County departments for identification and adoption of best practices, advocate for updated County policies to mandate all major county public events such as town halls, Board meetings, emergency briefings, provide American Sign Language (ASL) and Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) services by default, advocate to formally recognize American Sign Language (ASL) as a primary language for the purpose of County service delivery, requiring the same level of access as other non-English languages).

### Objective 2.2.4:

Collaborate with other County departments to inform and support the development of a County-wide minimum accessibility policy with an emphasis on universal design and communication standards (e.g. recognize that information access is a vital service by improving access for interpretation services). Model these practices within AD and serve as a resource to support other County departments as accessibility questions and challenges arise.

### Objective 2.2.5:

Engage stakeholders at the state and federal level to advocate for ADA updates.

**TIMELINE:** End of Year One Through Year Four

**KEY PARTNERS:**

Board of Supervisors, Internal Services Department, all other County Departments, Commission on Disabilities, Commission for Older Adults, State of California Department of Developmental Services, State of California Department of Rehabilitation

#### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Number of ADA policies identified as priority areas.
- Number of new policies drafted.
- Number and types of stakeholders engaged.
- Number and type of County-wide policy development milestones achieved (e.g. policy drafts, communications best practices identified and/or implemented, number of major county public events that meet statutory and proposed standards, recommendations made, number of departments collaborated with).
- Change in the number of Deaf or Hard of Hearing residents participating in public Town Halls.





## GOAL 2.3: Improve accessibility in communities and neighborhoods

### Objective 2.3.1:

Collaborate with stakeholders, including the Department of Transportation and related transportation providers and agencies, to improve accessibility and safety at bus stops.

### Objective 2.3.2:

Coordinate with Los Angeles County Public Works to develop and distribute public information campaigns to educate the general public about the importance of keeping sidewalks and other paths of transit clear from mobility hazards.

### Objective 2.3.3:

Coordinate with stakeholders (to include other County and City departments) to advocate for, and where possible support enforcement of, accessibility policy in the community (e.g. keeping sidewalks clear of hazards, ensuring public areas remain accessible, making updates and repairs as needed).

**TIMELINE:** Years Three and Four

**KEY PARTNERS:**

Board of Supervisors, all other County Departments (with a focus on Los Angeles County Public Works, Los Angeles County Planning), METRO, Los Angeles County Development Authority, Commission on Disabilities, Commission for Older Adults

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

- Number of transportation partners engaged to review bus stops for accessibility updates.
- Number of public information campaigns developed.
- Number of people reached with campaigns.
- Number of stakeholders engaged regarding accessibility improvements.



## Action Area 3: Expand Advocacy and Education



### GOAL 3.1: Establish AD as the active and visible leader in advocating for all individuals with disabilities in Los Angeles County

#### Objective 3.1.1:

Leverage the strength and visibility of the Commission on Disabilities to support AD's advocacy efforts through closer collaboration and coordination.

#### Objective 3.1.2:

Expand the partnership with Independent Living Centers (ILCs) to include advocacy efforts, given that part of ILCs' required services include "individual and systems advocacy" with the State ILC Council to support alignment of initiatives.

#### Objective 3.1.3:

Expand and enhance relationships with Los Angeles County's provider and advocacy organizations to support and amplify AD's advocacy goals.

#### Objective 3.1.4:

Work with state and federal partners to advocate for the needs and support of people with disabilities across the County, including additional funding and resources, inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all planning and strategic efforts, and sufficient network capacity to support people with disabilities in Los Angeles County.

#### Objective 3.1.5:

Serve as advocates for the Commission on Disabilities to ensure they are able to fulfill their work with the community.

**TIMELINE:** Years One Through Three

**KEY PARTNERS:**  
Commission on Disabilities,  
Commission for Older Adults,  
Independent Living Centers,  
state and federal disability  
services agencies

#### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Change in partnerships (type, frequency of engagement) for advocacy
- Change in advocacy actions (number, type, and outcome)
- Change in visibility for AD and partners across the County (e.g. stakeholders and individuals report AD is well known and report positive public impression of AD as an advocacy leader)





## **GOAL 3.2: Serve as a model for County Departments through AD's internal staff education, training, and workforce.**

### **Objective 3.2.1:**

Establish an internal structure to intentionally and consistently promote the values of AD to help individuals of all ages with all disabilities live with dignity and respect.

### **Objective 3.2.2:**

Develop and implement Department-wide training curriculum for all staff on disability-related issues, resources, and services, including how to use CART and ASL resources.

### **Objective 3.2.3:**

Model an inclusive workforce within the Aging & Disabilities Department by intentionally recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff with lived experience, and by fostering internship and pathway opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Workforce strategies will emphasize retention, professional development, and skill-building to sustain system improvements over time.

**TIMELINE:** Years One and Two

**KEY PARTNERS:**  
County Departments,  
AD Human Resources

#### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

- Creation of internal structure and ongoing updates, training (creating, participants, and frequency of training) on disability related issues.
- Established internal policies for hiring and retention of individuals with lived experience.
- Change in AD staff with education and training in best practices for disability services; AD is reflective and inclusive of those served by the department.





## **GOAL 3.3: Establish AD as the leading resource for information, guidance, and education on best practices and regulations for serving and including people with disabilities**

### **Objective 3.3.1:**

Establish a key contact / liaison at AD to serve as a “go-to” with questions about strategies and best practices for making programs more accessible, including communications standards.

### **Objective 3.3.2:**

Create webinars, print materials, and/or workshops for other County Departments on disability-related issues.

### **Objective 3.3.3:**

Maintain a regular presence at community meetings to share information about AD programs and services and related resources (e.g., the regional committee meetings under the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, veterans’ collaboratives under the Military and Veterans Affairs, etc.).

### **Objective 3.3.4:**

Launch a County-wide public awareness campaign to reduce stigmas and raise awareness about disability resources.

### **Objective 3.3.5:**

Foster connections with the Department of Economic Opportunity and vocational trade schools to improve the availability and accessibility of educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

**TIMELINE:** Years Two Through Five

#### **KEY PARTNERS:**

All other County Departments (particularly Department of Economic Opportunity), Commission on Disabilities, Commission for Older Adults, Disability providers and advocacy organizations, Vocational trade schools.

#### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

- Staff liaisons (established, number and type of contacts and education activities),
- Education materials created and distributed (number and type).
- Community awareness campaign (creation, number and type of views/ interactions/distributions).
- Number of partnerships to support or advocate for educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Change in number of county departments engaged for inclusion of best practices for disability services.
- Inclusion of people with disabilities.



## Action Area 4: Enhance Services and Supports



### GOAL 4.1: Increase the availability and accessibility of services and supports across Los Angeles County

#### Objective 4.1.1:

Expand mapping efforts to fully map all services across the County to develop a comprehensive understanding of the current network of services and supports.

#### Objective 4.1.2:

Identify gaps by service type and/or geography, including if gap is due to lack of service, lack of accessibility, or transitioning across age groups (e.g. early childhood to school age; youth to adults to older adults).

#### Objective 4.1.3:

Pursue targeted efforts to increase accessibility of, and access to, services including housing, transportation, family caregiver supports, mental health, and food access.

#### Objective 4.1.4:

Partner with other departments and organizations to increase the accessibility of existing services and supports.

#### Objective 4.1.5:

Work with relevant State and County agencies to ensure the unique needs of individuals with disabilities are appropriately supported by emergency services (e.g. Updating standards to require that all digital safety announcements include a picture-in-picture ASL interpreter by default, lead by example by ensuring AD internal capacity for support of people with disabilities in the event of an emergency in the AD offices).

#### Objective 4.1.6:

Provide feedback and advocacy on accessibility and inclusion for infrastructure projects related to FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup and Olympics/Paralympics so that they are accessible and inclusive from the start.

**TIMELINE:** Years One Through Three

**KEY PARTNERS:** County departments, service providers, County emergency services, FIFA and Olympics/Paralympics planning committees

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:



- Services (number, type, service location) identified as lacking accessibility and receiving updates to increase accessibility
- Connections built with emergency services and engagement in planning activities (number, type, specified outcomes).
- County residents reporting knowledge of/plans for emergency response.
- Change in service availability and utilization (e.g. services are better known/more accessible and utilized).



## GOAL 4.2: Increase the availability and accessibility of services and supports across Los Angeles County

### Objective 4.2.1:

Cross-train all AD staff on both aging and disability services to increase the delivery of information about and connections to services.

### Objective 4.2.2:

Establish Navigators within AD to support individuals in knowing about resources, accessing services, navigating multiple programs and systems throughout the process. Navigation services will prioritize continuity of support for individuals and families interacting with multiple systems, beyond one-time referrals.

### Objective 4.2.3:

Review information and assistance processes (both by phone and by website) to assure the processes are accessible to all.

### Objective 4.2.4:

Collaborate with other county departments and community organizations to increase knowledge about AD, its programs and role for stakeholder groups and county residents.

### Objective 4.2.5:

Conduct disability access perspective exercises for people without disabilities (e.g., Dept. staff or other interested entities) to improve understanding of the challenges

**TIMELINE:** Years One Through Three

**KEY PARTNERS:** County Departments, Commission on Disabilities, Commission for Older Adults, service providers and advocacy organizations, vocational rehabilitation providers.

individuals experience and promote compassion (such as maneuvering using a wheelchair, navigating while blindfolded, etc.). Where possible people with lived experience will be involved in the development and implementation of the exercises.

### **Objective 4.2.6:**

As a Hub for disability services, promote the resource map to individuals and organizations as an information resource of what is currently available.

#### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

- Establishment of Navigators and number of individuals served.
- Trainings on inclusion and accessibility for AD staff (type, number of participants, regular occurrence).
- Change in county residents reporting knowledge of AD and the services and programs available across the county.



# Implementation

This Strategic Plan will guide the Aging & Disabilities Department in next steps toward achieving the shared vision of an inclusive Los Angeles County. The plan details the Department's identity and clarifies how that identity includes services to people with all disabilities of all ages and provides a roadmap for how the Department will leverage resources and work side by side with local disability services partners to pursue goals that will create a more equitable and inclusive Los Angeles County.

Making the strategic plan a reality requires the development of a detailed implementation plan and corresponding evaluation plan. An implementation plan was also developed based on the discussion of the Visioning Session and the findings of the Needs Assessment. The implementation plan outlines the key activities and timelines on "how" the Department will reach goals and objectives. Performance metrics are included in the implementation plan to establish key measures and a cadence for measuring and recalibrating the strategic plan as needed. Throughout implementation, the Department will seek and incorporate regular feedback from staff, partners, and the community, and update and expand expectations based on prior progress. As seen in the strategic planning process, implementation and evaluation will seek to continuously improve the approach to making Los Angeles County more accessible and inclusive.

The implementation plan is developed as a separate file to best outline goals, objectives, activities, performance metrics, and timeline.

# Priorities

During the Visioning Session, participants shared which goals and objectives may be prime for early successes. There was strong agreement that improving the internal policies and practices of the Department was both the top priority and the best opportunity for early success. Participants felt strongly that the Department should lead by example across the identified action areas and the values of accessibility, inclusion, and collaboration. By achieving these early successes within the Department itself, including establishing the Department as the Hub for all things disability services, the Department would not only exemplify best practices for others but would then have the capacity and connectivity necessary to drive the implementation of the longer-term goals and objectives. This prioritization is reflected in the timeline of the implementation plan.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

With the roadmap designed, the Department can continue taking steps toward the vision of Los Angeles County as a national leader for accessibility, inclusion, and equity for all people with disabilities. As implementation progresses, the Department will work closely with partners to complete strategies, achieve goals, and gather and incorporate regular feedback from stakeholders and partners.

Both the Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan are intended to be living documents that guide actions toward the shared vision and are updated as new information, resources, and partnerships become available.

Implementation will be undertaken in partnership with County departments whose missions intersect with disability services.

*The Department looks forward to working collaboratively with its partners to advance a more accessible, inclusive, and equitable Los Angeles County.*

# Acknowledgements

The Los Angeles County Aging & Disabilities Department acknowledges the many individuals who supported the development of this Disability Services Strategic Plan. Their time, perspectives, and recommendations were invaluable. While it is not possible to capture everyone involved (e.g., the approximately 1,100 individuals who responded to the survey and the dedicated AD staff who participated in the SWOT analysis), the Department would like to recognize the following individuals who contributed to the project.

## AD Executive Team

**Maral Karaccusian**, MSW, Director

**Victoria Jump**, Acting Chief Deputy

**Solomon Shibeshi**, PhD, Assistant Director

## Disabilities Services & Supports Staff

**Alexander Gonez**, Program Manager

**Maritza Gomez**, Human Services Administrator II

**Martha Molina-Aviles**, Human Services Administrator II

**Guillermo Medina Jr.**, Human Services Administrator I

## Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities

District	Commissioners
District 1:	Lourdes Caracoza, Hector Ochoa, Margaret 'Peggie' Reyna
District 2:	Michael Agyin, Reena De Asis, John B. Troost
District 3:	Kristine Choulakian, Héctor Manuel Ramírez, Louise Smith
District 4:	Carlos Benavides (Commission President), Deaka Monique McClain, Ramon 'Ray' Pizarro
District 5:	Cathy Gott, Jack Darakjian, Andrea Edoria
Department of Rehabilitation Representative	Erwin Petilla

# Los Angeles County Commission for Older Adults

District	Commissioners
District 1:	John A. Kotick, Helen Romero Shaw, Elvia Torres, Rachel Kirk Valenzuela, Reina Schmitz
District 2:	Carlene Davis, Scott Houston, Zana Wilkins, Wayne Powell, Kari Bell
District 3:	Robert Boller, Barbara Meltzer, Kiera Pollock, Sue Sexton, Claudia Velasco
District 4:	Salvador Diaz, Louis Dominguez, Kimberly Lewis, Cathy McClure, Karen Reside
District 5:	Kyo R. Paul Jhin, Fran Sereseres, Theodore (Ted) Smith, Mary Winners

## Focus group participants

Please note participants were captured to the extent possible, any exclusions are not intentional and due to lack of information

District 1 Focus Group	
People	Organization
Elizabeth Jinzo	D.E.S.I.
Tammy Evrard	Tammy Evrard Consulting
Carlos Benavides	Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (Rancho)
*a number of participants of the Alma Services Programs at Centro Estrella Family Resource & Aquatic Center joined collectively	

District 2 Focus Group	
People	Organization
Lori Anderson	Momentum
Julie Schurman	Disability Belongs
Araceli González	AbilityFirst

Rose Castillo-Chacana	Fank D. Lanterman Regional Center
Shauna Morales	Goodwill Southern CA
Kathleen Kolenda	Easterseals Southern CA
Heather Tigert-Vitela	Goodwill Southern CA
Nelly Nieblas	Disability Belongs
Michael Agyin	Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities
Rhiannon Maycumber	Lanterman Regional Center
Larry Grable	Service Center for Independent Life
Ereida Galda	Westside Family Resource and Empowerment Services and Westside Regional Center
Reena De Asis	RDA Strategies
Sandra Alfaro	

## District 3 Focus Group

People	Organization
Savannah Portillo	Supervisor Horvath's Office
Anshu Agarwal	
Geraldine Bonifacio-White	
Alex Elliott	DMH
Yvette Crayon	
Wendy Cabil	
Héctor Manuel Ramírez	Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities
Kristine Choulakian	Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities
Louise E Smith	Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities
Myra (Mikie) Friedman	

## District 4 Focus Group

People	Organization
Jamie Orozco	
Mary Cadena	
Andrea Palomo	
Carlos Benavides	Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (Rancho)
*a number of participants joined from Los Nietos Community and Senior Center	

## District 5 Focus Group

People	Organization
Julie LaRose	
Cathy Gott	
Jack Darakjian	Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities
Graciela Marquez	
Marlene Rader	

## Commissioners Focus Group

John Kotick	Andrea Edoria
Héctor Manuel Ramírez	Reina Schmitz
Lourdes Caracoza	Rachel Kirk Valenzuela
Karen Reside	Ted Smith
Ray Pizarro	Deaka Monique McClain
Wayne Powell	Helen Romero Shaw
Hector Ochoa	Guillermo Medina
Michael Agyin	Jack Darakjian
Fran Sereseres	

## Provider Network Focus Group

People	Organization
Carlos Benavides	Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (Rancho)
Kelly Takasu	Alzheimer's Los Angeles
Jessica Tran	Chinatown Service Center
Stephanie Fajuri	Center for Health Care Rights
Cynde Soto	CALIF-ILC
Krysteen Styles	Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center
Anat Louis	WISE and Healthy Aging
Barbra McLendon	Alzheimer's Los Angeles
Cesia Garcia Rojas	USC Family Caregiver Support Center/Los Angeles Caregiver Support Center
Bertha Sanchez Hayden	Bet Tzedek Legal Services
Rhoda Alajaji	211 Los Angeles
Marina Escobedo	Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell (SD2)
Maria Aroch	CRS-IL
Gordana Vukotich	Consultant
Yael Wyte	Alzheimer's Association
Marlene Smith	Partners in Care Foundation
Salvador Gonzalez	San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center
SuzAnn Nelsen	Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center
Yvonne Sun	Special Service for Groups, SILVER division
Silvia Viramontes	CA Handyworker Program/Los Angeles Housing Department
Maggie Kavarian	Glendale Senior Services Section

## Key Informant Interviews

Department	Interviewee Name	Title
Mental Health	Rimmi Hundal	Chief Deputy Director
Public Social Services	Nick Ippolito	Assistant Director
Health Services	Sandra Maldonado-Aviles	Chief of Social Work
Library	Steven Park	Assistant Library Administrator, Adult and Digital Services
Arts and Culture	Kristin Sakoda	Director
Los Angeles County Development Authority	Emilio Salas	Executive Director
Beaches and Harbors	Andrew Flores	Division Chief Administrative Services Division
Military and Veterans Affairs	James Zenner	Director
Public Works	Kathy Salama	Administrative Services Manager
Youth Development	David Carroll	Director

## Visioning Session Participants

Attendee	Department/Agency/Organization
Billy Yeung	Aging & Disabilities Department
Dawna Lawrence	Aging & Disabilities Department
Hovannes Meschyan	Aging & Disabilities Department
Susana Ortega	Aging & Disabilities Department
Maral Karaccusian	Aging & Disabilities Department
Martha Molina-Aviles	Aging & Disabilities Department
Solomon Shibeshi	Aging & Disabilities Department
Guillermo Medina	Aging & Disabilities Department
Veronica Sigala	Aging & Disabilities Department
Ivan Pacheco	Aging & Disabilities Department

Vianca Campos-Serna	Aging & Disabilities Department
Jennifer Eubanks	Aging & Disabilities Department
Victoria Jump	Aging & Disabilities Department
Megan Rich	Aging & Disabilities Department
Ray Pizarro	Commission on Disabilities
Carlos Benavides	Commission on Disabilities
Cathy Gott	Commission on Disabilities
Reena De Asis	Commission on Disabilities
Lourdes Caracoza	Commission on Disabilities
Deaka McClain	Commission on Disabilities
Héctor Manuel Ramírez	Commission on Disabilities
Louise Smith	Commission on Disabilities
Hector Ochoa	Commission on Disabilities
Nick Holden	County Board of Supervisors
Savannah Portillo	County Board of Supervisors
LaJuannah Hills	County Board of Supervisors
Judy Mark	Disability Voices United
Jacinto Contreras	Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness (GLAD)
Julia Mockeridge	Los Angeles County Department of Health Services
Rimmi Hundal	Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Dr. Nicole D. Vick	Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Nick Ippolito	Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services
Mary Lee	Special Needs Network
DJ Tomko	State Council on Developmental Disabilities

# STRATEGIC PLAN

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISABILITY SERVICES



**Aging & Disabilities Department Headquarters**

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