



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CONSUMER & BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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March 15, 2023

To: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

Director
Rafael Carbajal

From: Rafael Carbajal
Director
Consumer and Business Affairs

Chief of Staff
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Fesia A. Davenport
Chief Executive Officer

REPORT BACK ON ENSURING AN EQUITABLE POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY IMMIGRANTS (ITEM NO. 4, AGENDA OF JUNE 14, 2022)

On June 14, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted the motion, "Ensuring an Equitable Post-Pandemic Recovery for Los Angeles County (County) Immigrants," which mandated the following directives:

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 directors 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 (ARP) Act 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;
 - d. Identifying barriers that immigrant-serving groups face in accessing County programs (ARP-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. Making 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.

On December 15, 2022, OIA and ARDI asked the Board for, and received, a 90-day extension to submit the report back by March 14, 2023. This report summarizes the work ARDI and OIA have completed to implement the above-noted directives. OIA and ARDI plan to submit a subsequent status report to the Board by June 30, 2023, that will document the completion of outstanding directives and next steps, as needed.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused devastating health and socioeconomic impacts on nearly all communities within the County of Los Angeles. Harmful impacts have been particularly profound among traditionally marginalized groups, including immigrants. For instance, a high percentage of County immigrants have faced significant financial hardship due to high job losses in essential front-line job sectors where they are disproportionately represented. Furthermore, barriers to accessing basic safety-net services such as unemployment insurance, high levels of exposure to illness and injury, and housing instability have caused great financial, mental, and physical harm to many immigrants and their families who are vital to nearly all aspects of County life.

In 2021, President Biden announced the ARP Act to provide local communities with much-needed resources to address the significant harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This federal investment provides state and local governments with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to prioritize investments in historically marginalized communities and build a foundation for an equitable economic recovery. As the County deploys its ARP resources, the ARDI Initiative has adopted a framework to ensure that the County's recovery funds equitably reach communities that have been most impacted and traditionally under-resourced. This includes ensuring that immigrant-serving organizations receive the support they need to serve immigrant clients with culturally, linguistically, and immigration appropriate support services.

To ensure an equitable post-pandemic recovery for County immigrants, OIA and ARDI have implemented several strategies in consultation with the Immigrants Are LA (IRLA) Coalition and other community stakeholders. These strategies have primarily focused on increasing access to ARP resources and other County benefits by:

- Tailoring ARP data collection and program reporting tools to meet immigrant community needs;
- Addressing common service barriers impacting immigrants, including language accessibility;
- Increasing outreach and education to immigrant communities; and
- Strengthening the capacity of providers to provide linguistically, culturally, and immigration appropriate services to clients.

Improve ARP Data Collection and Program Reporting Tools to Increase Equitable Access to Funded Resources

ARDI met with the IRLA Coalition to gather feedback on strategies to better inform immigrant populations on the benefits of the ARP Act through the County’s ARP Public Portal and Dashboard, the ARP Project Viewer, and the COVID-19 Equity Explorer Mapping tool. IRLA responded to ARDI with written recommendations to improve each of these tools by indicating on the ARP Dashboard which projects:

- Require prior appointments;
- Require in-person appearances at appointments;
- Are closely located near public transit for in-person service sites; and
- Require Wi-Fi to participate in the program or services.

ARDI implemented these recommendations and is working with departments to report on these access requirements. The ARP Dashboard reports information in real-time using corresponding icons. See Figure 1 below.

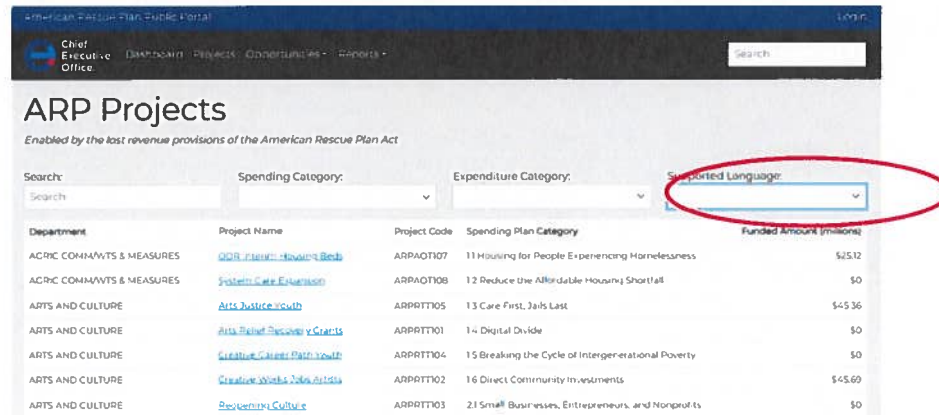
Figure 1: ARP Dashboard Program Icons



Similarly, IRLA requested the addition of eligibility requirements and the location of in the ARP Project Viewer. Similarly, ARDI is working with ARP-funded departments to update their projects with the requested information and is collaborating with the Internal Services Department’s Geographic Information Systems team to build an automated process to update the Equity Explorer and Program Viewer sites with this information.

ARDI also requested that departments indicate what language(s), other than English, ARP-funded services are provided in and to provide language accessible outreach materials when available. The resulting data enabled the addition of a new feature in the American Rescue Plan Public Portal: ARP Projects dashboard that allows users to search and filter ARP programs by language. See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: ARP Projects Language Filter



The ARP Projects dashboard can be accessed at the following link:
<https://arptracking.ceo.lacounty.gov/Public/Projects>.

Conversations with IRLA about the Equity Explorer Mapping Tool led to feedback recommending the addition of immigrant-specific data layers and indicators in the tool. Revisions to the Equity Explorer to accommodate these requests are currently underway. To date, the Equity Explorer includes map layers featuring data on foreign born populations and limited English-speaking households.

Survey County-funded Programs and Recommend Changes to Improve Immigrant Access

Starting in July 2022, OIA and ARDI began working with immigrant-serving community organizations and impacted County departments on how the County can enhance access to County support services by immigrants and their families. Through these meetings and engagements, OIA and ARDI concluded that there is a need to:

1. Inventory all County programs and services available for our residents;
2. Identify barriers that prevent immigrants and their families from gaining equitable access to available programs and services; and
3. Develop and implement strategies to eliminate barriers that impede equitable access to County programs and services by immigrants and their families.

As a result, OIA and ARDI is in the process of completing a landscape analysis to learn and collect the following information from departments on the programs and services they offer:

- **Eligibility Requirements:** Eligibility requirements for program participants, including immigration status, work authorization requirements, income threshold, and any other eligibility restrictions or criteria for participation.
- **Document Requirements:** Documents applicants must submit to apply for the program (social security number, government-issued identification, company-issued check stub, signed rental lease agreement, etc.).
- **Funding:** Program funding source(s) (e.g., federal, state, net-county-cost) and any eligibility restrictions associated with any funding source(s).
- **Data:** Data collected from all program applicants, such as demographic data and immigration status.
- **Outreach:** Outreach methods used to promote the program/service, including a list of paid or unpaid community-based organizations that the County departments partnered with to conduct outreach.
- **Department-Identified Barriers:** Identified barriers that limit program accessibility to immigrants and their families.
- **Languages:** Language capacity of the responsible program staff and all available languages offered in the program's outreach materials and applications.
- **Other Service Gaps:** Service gaps that impact or potentially prevent immigrants from having equitable access to the program or services.

OIA and ARDI will use the findings to identify barriers that prevent immigrants and their families from gaining equitable access to available programs and services. Based on the analysis, departments will be able to develop and implement strategies to eliminate identified barriers.

Pilot Innovations to Improve Language Access for ARP Programs

In February 2023, CEO provided resources for the integration of OIA's Countywide Language Access Initiative in support of ARP. These funds will be used to pilot two innovative strategies to centralize language support services to increase access to ARP-funded opportunities with the goal of developing sustained infrastructure and to improve language access in the County during the post-pandemic recovery phase and beyond. The two strategies include:

1. Launching a centralized *Language.LACounty.gov* online language services hub; and
2. Securing subcontracted language service providers to support at an in-person ARP grant or contract opportunity application submission event.

The Language.LACounty.gov Service Hub was inspired by the [LEP.gov](#) federal website for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) resources. OIA will create a similar online language access hub as a platform to centralize the provision of resources and training opportunities to address key language access challenges confronted by County departments. The centralized hub would support departments to integrate linguistic and cultural sensitivity into the planning and implementation of ARP projects and increase the promotion and accessibility of ARP projects for individuals who speak languages other than English.

To ensure the website has an immediate impact on increasing language access, OIA plans to prototype a language access request portal. The request portal will enable speakers to request specific application forms, outreach brochures, and other written materials about ARP services, grants, and contracts in their preferred language. This feature will help the County efficiently triage language access requests while gathering much-needed information about evolving language need in the County. Over time, this will include a web-based language access toolkit to support departments in their language access planning along with additional tools and resources. The hub may also house in-language webpages that aggregate the most accessed information, forms, and instructions.

The second implementation strategy is an ARP application submission event, which will provide tailored support for immigrant and other community applicants to successfully submit applications for a grant opportunity. The in-person event will include subcontracted community interpreters providing simultaneous interpretation services during established office hours to help participants who require language assistance submit their applications. If this approach increases application submissions from limited English speakers, replicating the approach for additional ARP grant and contract opportunities will be considered. The event will also provide key learnings about the efficacy and long-term feasibility of language access “office hours,” centralized language access banks, and coordinated and centralized scheduling of language services as tactics to ensure equitable access to County programs and services.

These two implementation strategies aim to increase language access of ARP programs, as well as will complement and augment the ARP Community Navigators program. While the Community Navigators program is designed to increase access to ARP resources by reducing barriers to utilization more broadly, the partnership with OIA will enable ARDI to expand language access through partnerships with community-based providers to provide in-language and culturally appropriate outreach to organizations, small business owners, and individuals who are eligible, and who may benefit from ARP programs and other County services. OIA will also provide capacity strengthening support to the navigators to increase cultural competency of partners working in community.

Expand Community Outreach and Service Delivery to Immigrant Communities

While the survey results will enable OIA and ARDI to identify community outreach and engagement gaps, as well as develop and implement immediate and long-term strategies to bridge those gaps, there is an immediate need to help communities recover from the devastating impact of the pandemic on immigrants, their families, and their networks. Additionally, many immigrants are still afraid to access government-provided services due to the chilling effect of the previous Administration's new Public Charge Rule. For example, researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles recently found that one out of four low-income immigrants in California reported avoiding public programs out of fear that their participation would negatively impact their own immigration status or that of a family member.

in response, OIA and ARDI have been working with impacted departments and community stakeholders to: 1) increase outreach and strengthen access to support services for immigrant communities; 2) bolster the capacity of partners to appropriately serve immigrants; and 3) reinforce training for the County workforce to serve immigrant clients in a manner that is linguistically, culturally, and immigration appropriate. Attachment I includes a summary of major outreach, education, training, and capacity building activities conducted by departments. OIA and ARDI will submit a subsequent status report by June 30, 2023, to provide an update on current and future activities conducted in the interim.

Should you have any questions concerning ARDI-related activities, please contact D'Artagnan Scorza, Ph.D., Executive Director of Racial Equity, at (213) 974-1761 or dscorza@ceo.lacounty.gov. For questions concerning OIA-related activities, please contact Rigoberto Reyes, OIA's Executive Director, at (213) 247-1365 or rreyes@dcba.lacounty.gov.

RC:JA:RR
DS:EV:ph

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Economic Opportunity
Health Services
Internal Services
Mental Health
Public Health
Public Social Services

ATTACHMENT I

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH, EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY DEPARTMENTS

I. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION	
Task	Activities
<p>1. Conduct community outreach, education, and enrollment in public social services.</p>	<p>Effective May 1, 2022, over 137,000 individuals in Los Angeles County (County) aged 50 and older became eligible to enroll in full-scope Medi-Cal, regardless of their immigration status. This created an opportunity for the County to help immigrants enroll and retain/secure a health care provider. Below are activities conducted by departments to increase enrollment in full-scope Medi-Cal and other public social services among newly eligible immigrants.</p> <p>Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) promoted enrollment in Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWorks, and other public benefits programs they administer through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 bus shelter posters; • 50 surface street billboards; • Five digital bulletins; and • 1,780,411 outbound calls and 1,189,980 text messages encouraging beneficiaries to update their current contact information with DPSS. <p>Department of Health Services (DHS) promoted Medi-Cal enrollment through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review identifying 60,472 individuals enrolled in the My Health LA Program who were eligible to transition to full-scope Medi-Cal; • Outreach activities (e.g., direct phone calls, mailers) that led to 50,986 individuals (84% of total) becoming enrolled in full-scope Medi-Cal by August 1, 2022; • Outreach to the remaining 9,486 former My Health LA clients who are now eligible to enroll in full-scope Medi-Cal. Efforts included: taking direct calls in English and Spanish to reach 3,858 individuals; mailing flyers in nine threshold languages to all 9,486 individuals; and providing regular updates in the My Health LA newsletter distributed to community partners;

- Participation in a project with the California Health Care Foundation on message testing for individuals eligible for the full-scope Medi-Cal expansion; and
- Participation in monthly meetings with the California Department of Health Care Services and advocates to promote enrollment and dispel Public Charge fears.

Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) conducted outreach and education activities, including:

- In consultation with County Counsel, the creation and maintenance of a Public Charge landing page with access to the most up-to-date information on OIA's website: <https://oia.lacounty.gov/publiccharge>;
- Sept 21, 2022, virtual Public Charge training workshops with the Benefits Access for Immigrants Los Angeles (BAILA) Network for Community-Based Organizations (separate English and Spanish workshops);
- Oct 5, 2022, virtual Public Charge trainings for the South Central Los Angeles Regional Center and Community-Based Organization partners in English and the Maternal and Child Health Access community in Spanish;
- Dec 5, 2022, an OIA-BAILA community presentation on public charge at Herald Christian Health Center in El Monte in Mandarin;
- Dec 12, 2022, an OIA-BAILA community presentation on public charge with Chinatown Service Center in Cantonese;
- Media coverage in English, Spanish, and Chinese:
 - <http://cms.wj411.com/preview/upload/information/htmldetail/xq.html?wid=507212>
 - <http://cms.wj411.com/preview/upload/information/htmldetail/xq.html?wid=507212>
 - https://youtu.be/Y1R_DhuNv18
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVrn2C0sCAI>
 - <https://www.unecne.com/archives/185591>
 - <https://www.ushealthlifestyle.com/archives/31006>
 - <https://youtu.be/kbiZQGYC5hA>
 - <https://www.worldjournal.com/wj/story/121360/6837957>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkpGIsCThMs>
 - <https://www.chineseinla.com/hotnews/2417963.html>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ https://www.lapeople.com/news/m/147164.html● On January 28, 2023, a Community Fair with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, Stay Housed LA, Pomona Economic Opportunity Center, Eastside Leads and Pomona Unified School District. Included workshops on public charge, public benefits, and other tenant rights topics to households at risk of losing their housing. Held in English and Spanish;● February 11, 2023, a community fair for small businesses with the Department of Economic Opportunity, Employment Development Department, Torrance, Small Business Development Center, DPSS, and South Bay Workforce Investment Board. Provided education about public benefits access and enrollment, the new public charge rule, immigration legal support, and grant application assistance and appointment follow-ups in English and Spanish;● February 19, 2023, a community outreach and engagement event with the Department of Justice, Care, and Opportunities to provide information and support about public charge, public benefits enrollments, and immigration legal support services to underserved communities in South Los Angeles in English and Spanish; and● February 25, 2023, a community outreach and engagement fair with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs and Stay Housed LA for at-risk-of-homelessness households in Long Beach. Households were counseled on public benefits, public charge, enrollments services access, and immigration legal support services.
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II. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Task	Activities
<p>2. Train impacted County departments and stakeholders on Public Charge and public benefits enrollment for immigrants.</p>	<p>OIA, in consultation with County Counsel, the Public Benefits Enrollment Workgroup, and external stakeholders, developed a Public Charge training presentation that has been used to train departments and stakeholders, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov 17, 2022, Public Charge trainings for Department of Public Health (DPH) contractors and systems navigators in English and Spanish; • Dec 7, 2022, DPH-OIA public charge presentations for CBOs and community members at large in English and Spanish; • Dec 14-15, 2022, a two-part session on <i>Understanding the Immigration System</i> for 300 to 400 participants for Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), subcontractors and other homelessness service providers; • February 14, 2023, two virtual trainings for DPSS employees on the new Public Charge Rule, hosted in coordination with DPSS and County Counsel. Sixty-five DPSS employees, including GAIN Supervisors, Eligibility Workers/ Supervisors, Appeals Hearing Specialists, Fraud Investigators, HSA, Quality Control Monitor, and Social Services Supervisors participated in this training. DPSS plans to make this training mandatory for 11,000 to 14,000 of their employees for completion on their virtual training portal by June 30, 2023; • Feb 2023, a module launched by OIA-DHS within the <i>RepresentLA</i> Program to provide immigration legal representation to immigrants experiencing homelessness or near homelessness so they can establish immigration legal status and have access to support services. • March 2023, a \$5 million ARP-funded initiative implemented by OIA to strengthen the capacity of immigrant-serving organizations to better serve their clients, including accessing public services. Ten immigrant-serving organizations already received capacity building grants of \$150,000 each from ARP Tranche 1 funds. An additional 26 organizations will receive capacity building support from ARP Tranche II funds.