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August 26, 2021

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Fesia A. Davenport
        Chief Executive Officer

REPORT ON RECOVERING BETTER THAN BEFORE: ENSURING EQUITABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ITEM NO. 24, AGENDA OF JULY 13, 2021)

On July 13, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to report back within 30 days on the creation of an implementation plan to accurately capture data for non-geographically concentrated communities, including, but not limited to, American Indian, Pacific Islander, and immigrant communities, for the purpose of ensuring the equitable investment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in populations disproportionally impacted by COVID-19. This report provides a status update on the implementation plan to capture data for non-geographically concentrated communities to ensure ARPA investments are directed appropriately to serve members of these communities who are highly impacted by COVID-19 but may not adequately be served through a place-based funding approach.

Background

In response to the Board's directive, the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative (ARDI) developed equity principles and a formula to direct County of Los Angeles (County) investments toward communities highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and located in areas experiencing concentrated poverty and disadvantage. Current efforts are now underway to ensure that non-geographically concentrated communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are identified and prioritized within departmental ARPA allocations and programs. These include, but are not limited

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

to, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, and immigrant communities.

ARDI consulted with several internal and external subject matter experts (SMEs) to identify strategies to collect data, use indicators, and adopt practices to include non-geographically concentrated communities for departments to consider in their program design. Key informants included Advancement Project California; the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander COVID-19 Data Policy Lab at the University of California, Los Angeles; Center for Health Policy Research; Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission; and the Office of Immigrant Affairs. Further meetings are planned with the Urban Indian Health Institute and the University of Southern California Dornsife Equity Research Institute.

Data Strategies

Based upon these initial consultations, ARDI will explore and integrate additional validated indicators to identify disproportionately affected and hard-to-count populations to include in departmental ARPA program analyses. This will enable departments to use the Equity Explorer (mapping tool), which includes the Vulnerability and Recovery Index (Index), to identify additional communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While many of the non-geographically concentrated communities share common factors already included in the Index, additional data suggested will help better identify these communities.

The SMEs also suggested adopting recommended practices to improve County standards for collecting data and reporting hard-to-count communities to address capacity concerns. Adopting these practices may help track population prevalence and service utilization data to establish ARPA-related allocation and accountability measures and will strengthen data practices for non-geographically concentrated communities overall.

Finally, ARDI intends to adopt alternative methods for data mapping and more targeted outreach and engagement strategies to reach these communities, such as:

- Conducting Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) analysis (outlined in Attachment I). PPGIS analysis is a technique for community-based participatory mapping used to capture data in collaboration with community leaders and other stakeholders;
- Using provider and community experiences as qualitative data points to supplement quantitative indicators (i.e., mixed-method strategies) to inform programming investments. Insights could be gained from the County COVID-19 Community Equity Fund providers that predominantly serve the identified communities;

- Leveraging community-based organizations and internal County programs that predominantly serve hard-to-count populations to identify and reach them in the communities in which they live. Partnering with trusted messengers is particularly crucial for immigrant communities who may experience heightened fears of government institutions or violating public charge rules; and
- Building in robust and targeted outreach and engagement services in funded programs and aligning these efforts in departmental community engagement plans.

Implementation Plan

ARDI has drafted a proposed implementation plan with a timeline, action items, and designated department and community leads to explore and implement, to the greatest extent possible, the recommended strategies to ensure ARPA funding supports non-geographically concentrated communities highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This implementation plan will allow for the incorporation of emerging recommendations as feedback collection and consultations continue. The plan is included in Attachment II.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me or D'Artagnan Scorza, Ph.D., Executive Director of Racial Equity, at (213) 974-1761 or dscorza@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:TJM
DS:HJN:es

Attachments

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
        County Counsel
        Internal Services

Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) Analysis

Public Participation Geographic Information Systems[1] (PPGIS) analysis is a technique for community-based participatory mapping in several contexts relevant to capturing data from local communities and stakeholders. The technique may be conducted using either paper-based or digital approaches, but in either case the initial preparation for a PPGIS session is done using traditional Geographic Information System (GIS) tools and methods.

The process for participatory mapping involves bringing maps, including relevant contextual information, into a community and then asking stakeholders to annotate the maps with information that is relevant to the research question. One important benefit of PPGIS is that since it is a visual method, it is a useful way to engage diverse individuals without some of the barriers presented by language, educational level, or prior knowledge.

In most PPGIS applications, there will be one of three objectives:

1) To capture new, primary data about a community and geography of interest.

   Collecting new information with PPGIS is most useful when there is not an existing source for the required data. This is often the case when the community is not well understood and/or captured by typical data collection programs conducted by government agencies or other organizations, or when these data are not available at the required level of detail that only local community members would be aware of.

2) To prioritize several options based on community input.

   When there are already many potential options, PPGIS may be used to gather public input about the desirability or ranking of various alternatives. This is an approach traditionally used in community planning when different project options and locations are being considered. Stakeholders can provide input on their preferences, alternatives, and other valuable feedback that can help to identify the best choice, or in some cases, when an unconsidered location or option may be worth further exploration.

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[1] Steinberg, S.L., and S.J. Steinberg (2015). *GIS Research Methods: Incorporating Spatial Perspectives*. Esri Press. Redlands, California.

3) To validate information (typically *official information*) that the researcher already has about the community.

> Sometimes official data does not completely or appropriately capture information, or captures it at a level of detail inadequate for making decisions in another context. For example, Census data, captured only once per decade, may not reflect reality on the ground as it ages and communities change. PPGIS can be a valuable and effective way to present these official data to a community to learn where they are correct or where changes may have occurred that are not reflected in these existing sources. This can be a valuable tool to validate the accuracy of existing information or obtain up-to-date information from a community.

An effective PPGIS process requires careful planning in relation to both the means of gaining access and trust from the community of interest. Community engagement must occur in partnership with a trusted community-based organization or leader. Additional community participants should be fully aware of how the data they share will be used, and these data should be shared back with the community for their own use and understanding. Without considering these and other issues of trust, participatory mapping will not succeed.

Additionally, it is important to consider the right methods and technology to use. While some communities may be comfortable with highly technical, computer-based approaches, more often it is helpful to use manual methods that are more familiar and non-intimidating. Additionally, manual methods can be carried out in almost any venue or context as they do not require power, projectors, or connectivity to carry out.

Manual methods can be as simple as printing out large format maps with the relevant information and then asking community members to annotate them with markers, potentially of specific colors to represent specific topics or information needed. Manual methods also provide the benefit of interactivity between and among community participants, which creates a higher level of interest and engagement, producing better results than digital approaches. Additionally, multiple individuals can annotate maps simultaneously. Both of these are more difficult to accomplish using digital approaches; however, implementation strategies will depend on the need to adhere to any COVID-19 safety protocols to protect participants' health and well-being.

Participants in a PPGIS activity annotating maps of their community. Colors indicating different topics or information are used as instructed on the page shown on the lower left of the photo. (Steinberg and Steinberg, 2015: p193).

Following the participatory mapping session, the data can be readily digitized for inclusion in GIS mapping software and used to update existing data sources, or be used in a variety of analysis and visualization contexts.

Alternatively, if the location, context, and comfort level of the target community is appropriate, similar methods may be conducted directly in software by projecting the maps on screen and then capturing annotations and notes using a mouse and keyboard. While this eliminates the need to do post-event digitization, it typically requires additional hardware and software, along with staff who have the appropriate knowledge and training to carry out these software operations in a rapid, accurate, and effective manner so that the technology does not interfere with the process and objectives of the session.

The County of Los Angeles' eGIS team has the capabilities to support the technical components for conducting PPGIS, including the preparation and development of digital and/or large format printed maps. Additionally, the Internal Services Department team has extensive experience in the planning and facilitation of PPGIS sessions in both manual and digital formats. Several universities and consultants also have similar capabilities and could be retained to provide the needed technical support for such an effort.

As noted previously, it is essential to engage with trusted community organizations and leaders to appropriately plan for sessions, questions to be addressed, data to be presented and collected and in what manner, considering issues of language, education, and comfort of the stakeholders with whom the participatory mapping is planned.

**Implementation Plan to Ensure Non-Geographically
Concentrated Communities Are Identified and Prioritized**

Overview

There is a need to ensure that non-geographically concentrated communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are identified and prioritized within departmental American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocations and programs. These communities include, but are not limited to, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, and immigrant communities. To address this need, the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative (ARDI) has drafted an implementation plan with a timeline, action items, and designated department and community leads to explore and implement recommended strategies to ensure ARPA funding supports all communities highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This implementation plan will also allow for the incorporation of emerging recommendations as feedback collection and consultations continue and new practices are identified.

Need

Non-geographically concentrated communities have been highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These populations are frequently overlooked based on current data collection and reporting methods that underrepresent their COVID-19-related risk, severity, and recovery needs, Data that does exist demonstrates that Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaska Native, and immigrant populations have disproportionate rates of COVID-19 exposure, cases, and deaths. For example:

- *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Communities*
  As of August 5, 2021, the Los Angeles County (County) Department of Public Health reported that NHPI communities have experienced 1.8 times the COVID-19 case and death rates when compared to the County average, and they have the second lowest household median income earnings when compared to other racial and ethnic groups living in the County.[1]

- *American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Communities*
  Accurate data showing the impact of COVID-19 on AIAN communities are limited given the current data collection and reporting practices that underestimate their

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[1] County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. (n.d.). LA County COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard. Retrieved from http://dashboard.publichealth.lacounty.gov/covid19_surveillance_dashboard/.

population,[2] but disproportionate risk for COVID-19 infection and poor outcomes among AIAN communities are well documented. Nationally, COVID-19 case rates among AIAN individuals were three and a half times the rates among non-Hispanic white individuals.[3] Locally, AIAN communities also experience disproportionate rates of household poverty, being uninsured, and underlying medical conditions, which place them at greater risk for severe illness and related death.[4]

- *Immigrant Communities*
Immigrant population data is difficult to collect due to several factors ranging from language and literacy barriers to participating in verbal and written census surveys, to the transient nature of some immigrant communities. In many places, immigration status is not even collected or tracked for fear of reducing service use by people in need and the possible repercussions of collecting and storing that information. In the County, COVID-19 case and death rates are not disaggregated by immigration status; however, immigrants are disproportionately at risk for COVID-19 infection and poor outcomes. They are more likely than U.S.-born and naturalized citizens to experience poverty and be uninsured, and they disproportionately work in high-risk, essential occupations that increase their exposure to COVID-19. These include jobs in the health care, agriculture, and construction sectors.[5]

To mitigate data collection and reporting issues, ARDI consulted with several subject matter experts (SMEs) to identify strategies to collect data, use indicators, and adopt practices to be inclusive of non-geographically concentrated communities. These SMEs identified factors such as uninhabitable living conditions, tobacco use prevalence, obesity rates, Sickle Cell diagnosis rates, disability status, and suicide rates. These SMEs also recommended defining existing indicators in ways that ensure greater inclusion of these communities. For example, they proposed reducing the age threshold from 75+ to 55+ years of age for indicators that measure disadvantage among older adults (e.g., the percent of the older adult population who live in poverty). This is due to the higher prevalence of premature mortality in the target communities caused by high rates of chronic diseases and other factors that reduce life expectancy. Similarly, SMEs

[2] Urban Indian Health Institute. (updated August 2020). Best Practices for American Indian and Alaska Native Data Collection. Retrieved from https://www.uihi.org/download/best-practices-for-american-indian-and-alaska-native-data-collection/?wpdmdl=16644&refresh=6116249a232211628841114.
[3] Hatcher SM, Agnew-Brune C, Anderson M, et al. COVID-19 Among American Indian and Alaska Native Persons — 23 States, January 31–July 3, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1166–1169. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6934e1
[4] Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services. (2020). LA County Native American Organizations Launch PSA to combat COVID-19 and save Lives. Retrieved from https://wdacs.lacounty.gov/la-county-native-american-organizations-launch-psa-to-combat-covid-19-and-save-lives/.
[5] USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute. (June 2021). State of Immigrants in LA County. Retrieved from https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/1411/docs/SOILA_2021_full_report_v6_FINAL.pdf.

suggested ensuring more inclusivity when considering preferred language as an indicator. Rather than prioritizing the top twenty threshold languages, consider the top five to ten languages in different global regions to better account for the linguistic diversity present in the County.

Implementation Plan

ARDI developed a set of proposed action items to implement strategies to ensure ARPA funding supports non-geographically concentrated communities highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic based on consultation data and community experts. The table includes designated department and community leads and timeframes.

Specific action items that will be led by ARDI are included, while additional approaches will depend on departments to incorporate these strategies into their program design. These include:

- Using provider and community experiences as qualitative data points to supplement quantitative indicators (i.e., mixed-method research designs) to inform programming investments;
- Partnering with community-based organizations and internal County programs that provide services to hard-to-count populations; and
- Building in more robust and targeted outreach and engagement services in ARPA departmental program designs.

ARDI will partner with departments conducting these activities to ensure that equity is infused in their programming and funding proposals.

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD(S)	TIMELINE
Data Strategies		
Consult with SMEs (e.g., Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission [LANAIC], Office of Immigrant Affairs [OIA]) to identify relevant data sources and best practices needed to ensure non-geographically concentrated communities (hard-to-count populations) are appropriately considered and included in funding allocation decisions.	ARDI	Ongoing
Review data collection and reporting protocols from existing sources used in the COVID-19 Vulnerability and Recovery Index indicators used in the proposed formula; identify and implement strategies to consider *hard-to-count population* indicators as part of the Index, formula, or additional data overlays to determine equitable funding allocations.	ARDI Community-based organizations	By August 31, 2021
Select and apply validated indicators that prioritize hard-to-count populations.	ARDI Other SMEs and data experts	By August 31, 2021
Include both process and performance measures within ARDI equity budgeting tools that consider hard-to-count populations to ensure inclusion of hard-to-count populations.	ARDI Community-based organizations Internal Services Department (ISD)	By August 31, 2021
Provide technical support to departments, as needed, to identify, incorporate, and apply indicators to strategies to support equitable investment in, and resource allocations for, hard-to-count populations.	ARDI Consultant	By August 31, 2021 and ongoing
Develop and disseminate an initial draft of the stakeholder engagement toolkit to support the program design and development of targeted outreach and engagement needed to ensure hard-to-count populations have access to funded services; expand toolkit resources on an ongoing basis.	ARDI	By September 10, 2021 and ongoing

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD(S)	TIMELINE
Data Strategies		
Explore the feasibility of and develop a plan for implementing recommendations to improve County standards for data collection and reporting for hard-to-count populations.	ARDI Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) LANAIC Other SMEs and data experts	By October 31, 2021
Explore feasibility of conducting a Public Participation Geographic Information Systems analysis and engage in a community-based participatory mapping project.	ARDI ISD LANAIC OIA	By November 30, 2021
Develop a plan to conduct mapping project.	ARDI LANAIC OIA	By December 31, 2021
Initiate pilot to implement recommended data collection and reporting practices for hard-to-count populations.	ARDI OCIO Department(s) TBD	By January 31, 2022
Conduct community-based participatory mapping sessions.	ARDI ISD Community-based organizations	By February 28, 2022
Evaluate the efficacy of indicators and strategies chosen to be inclusive of hard-to-count populations; iterate if the expected outcomes are not achieved.	ARDI	By March 31, 2022 and ongoing
Integrate information collected from the participatory mapping session into the Equity Explorer.	ARDI ISD	April 30, 2022
Develop policies and procedures to standardize the collection and reporting of inclusive and disaggregated population data for hard-to-count populations across the County.	ARDI OCIO LANAIC Other SMEs and data experts	By June 30, 2022