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Anti-Poverty Pledge Across Los Angeles County

Poverty is a policy choice. Current systems are structured to reinforce racism, disparities, privilege, and oppression, perpetuating cycles of poverty. Los Angeles County (County) serves as the region’s “safety net,” and since 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) has made poverty alleviation a Countywide priority and adopted a strategic framework to guide long-term, systems-level reform.

However, the consequences of H.R. 1 are expected to be drastic and will exacerbate poverty across the County, pushing families into hunger and hardship through the loss of critical food and health programs. H.R. 1 represents the largest cuts to federal food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to Medicaid in the programs’ history. Beginning in June 2026, SNAP (known as CalFresh in California) work requirements for “Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents” will affect more than 250,000 recipients. There is strong evidence that SNAP helps keep families out of poverty. A 2025 study found that SNAP reduced poverty by 4.6 percentage points nationwide in 2021. Similarly, studies show that in California Medicaid reduces poverty for children by about 9% and for adults by 13-19%. Given the impacts of H.R. 1, the County must act swiftly to prevent even deeper levels of poverty.

While the County cannot backfill federal cuts or circumvent federal regulations, anti-poverty programs remain the region’s safety net. Since 2022, the Poverty Alleviation Initiative (PAI) has prioritized expanding access to basic support and assistance for County residents. In 2022, PAI identified five priority areas to reduce and disrupt poverty: (1) supporting grassroots, community-led projects; (2) maximizing guaranteed income resources; (3) increasing tax credit filings through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC); (4) improving

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benefits access and equity in CalWORKs; and (5) reforming General Relief.

Over the past four years, these efforts have produced measurable results. PAI awarded \$135,000 in grants to 20 neighborhoods across the County to address the root causes of poverty through programs ranging from community safety to food assistance; launched one of the largest guaranteed income pilots in the country, providing \$1,000 per month for three years to 1,200 residents, and later expanding in 2024 to include 2,200 foster youth; and set new records in reclaimed tax credits through the Claim Your Cash Los Angeles program, which served nearly 65,000 people in 2025 alone.

In 2025, PAI launched the *State of Poverty Dashboard* (the Dashboard), developed in partnership with the Hilton Foundation, UCLA Luskin School, the Internal Services Department, and the Chief Information Officer. The Dashboard marks a major shift in how the County understands and responds to poverty. For the first time, the County can visualize where poverty is concentrated at the neighborhood level - not only at the federal poverty line, but also at 200% and 266% of the poverty level, where many families live just one job loss, rent increase, or illness away from crisis.

The Dashboard also allows the County to track compounding forms of hardship, including access to CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and other benefits. It provides the Board, County departments, and community partners with real-time information on which neighborhoods are most vulnerable to H.R. 1's cuts and where residents are at risk of losing food assistance and medical coverage. Future versions of the Dashboard will include a County-specific poverty measure based on local economic conditions and administrative data, enabling more precise targeting. Given limited resources, the County must work with its 88 cities to target anti-poverty interventions and track progress across both cities and unincorporated areas.

By setting poverty reduction targets Countywide and by district, and inviting cities to disrupt poverty, the County can better coordinate resources at a time when working families face increased economic pressure. Cities that participate will be incorporated into the Dashboard, where the County will track poverty metrics, convene working groups to share best practices, and

provide technical assistance to increase enrollment in programs proven to reduce poverty. While the County administers federal benefits regionally, cities play a critical role as constituents' first line of government contact and a trusted partner in a coordinated regional response.

PAI is well-positioned to expand programs that help lift individuals and families out of poverty, including increasing access to free tax preparation services to claim tax credits, expanding enrollment in CalWORKs, food assistance, and healthcare benefits, and strengthening regional collaboration to address poverty amid harmful federal policy changes.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Executive Director of the Chief Executive Office's (CEO) Poverty Alleviation Initiative (PAI), in coordination with the Directors of the Departments of Public Social Services (DPSS), Consumer and Business Affairs, and the Acting Chief Executive Officer, to develop a public-facing anti-poverty pledge that local jurisdictions within the County can sign on to as part of a concerted effort to promote Claim Your Cash Los Angeles (CYCLA), CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and CalFresh benefits programs, and report back to the Board in 30 days through the Economic Development and Policy Committee with an implementation strategy that targets local jurisdictions, a plan for participating in the pledge, and proposed pledge language. The pledge language should include:
 - a. Decreasing local child poverty by increasing CalWORKs enrollment by 10,000 families Countywide.
 - b. Increasing cash back by increasing filings of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by 10% Countywide over two years through co-locating CYCLA outreach at DPSS centers in targeted areas where CalFresh and Medi-Cal recipients are most impacted and conducting outreach that includes linkages to Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and secure free tax preparation tools.
 - c. PAI will track local jurisdictions' CalFresh and Medi-Cal benefits access and disaggregate the data by Supervisorial districts and city level.
 - d. Local jurisdictions that participate in the anti-poverty pledge will:

- i. Promote CYCLA, CalWORKs enrollment, and food access on their local websites and social media and integrate these efforts into their outreach activities.
 - ii. Encourage their local departments to have staff volunteer at VITA centers and local food banks.
 - iii. Receive in-kind technical assistance and specialized data analysis from CEO PAI to inform outreach.
2. Direct the Director of the Center for Strategic Partnerships to engage and educate philanthropy about the low rates of CalWORKs uptakes, CTC and EITC filings, and drop-offs of Medi-Cal and CalFresh in certain communities, how this effort supports the CEO PAI goals, and the investments needed for outreach and education, data collection and management, and technical assistance for cities participating in the pledge.
3. Direct the Executive Director of CEO PAI, in coordination with the Chief Information Officer and the Director of DPSS, to track metrics on cash claimed through CYCLA, and integrate CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and CalFresh enrollment data into the State of Poverty Dashboard, disaggregated by Supervisorial District and city level, to enable pledge cities to track benefit participation rates and poverty trends in their jurisdictions, and to report quarterly to the Economic Development Policy Committee on progress.

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