

FUNDING RACIAL JUSTICE

*Centering Racial Equity and Empowering
Communities in Local Budgets*

PRESENTER:

Monday, February 10, 2025

Myanna A. Khalfani-King, JD, Manager, Equity in Community Investments

Equity in Community Investments Team

**CATALYST
CALIFORNIA**
Advancing Racial Justice

Local Budget Basics



What are local budgets:



Budgets **are forward looking financial plans**, they're a projection of what will happen and where investments will be going.



Historically **budgets have NOT used an equity lens that is inclusive** of community and community priorities in the development process



Budgets are supposed to reflect the priorities and values of the community and repair historic disinvestment, but **this is often not the case.**

Local Budget Basics



Goal: develop a budget process that



Center racial equity in the budget process



Empower community driven decision-making power



Divest from systems of punishment, and invests in underserved and over-criminalized communities

CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY IN BUDGET ADVOCACY

CHALLENGES

HISTORICAL DECISIONS THAT WIDEN RACIAL INEQUITIES

DISINVESTMENTS



RACIST LAND USE

OVERINVESTMENTS



RACIAL JUSTICE UPRISINGS



BRIDGING THE GAP

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

EQUITY-BASED STRATEGY TO DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES



OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY CARE

- * VIOLENCE & TRAUMA PREVENTION
- * MENTAL HEALTH
- + RE-ENTRY SUPPORT



HEALTHY & EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES

- * BUILT ENVIRONMENT
- * AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- * GOOD PAYING JOBS
- * UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME
- * CLEAN AIR, WATER, SOIL
- * COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES



Steps to building a budget advocacy campaign



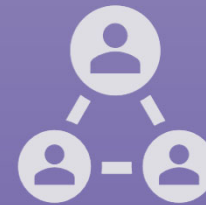
Understand community priorities, vision for success, and budget timeline



Conduct a budget analysis (preferably with a historical lens to highlight inequities)



Work with community to develop budget demands



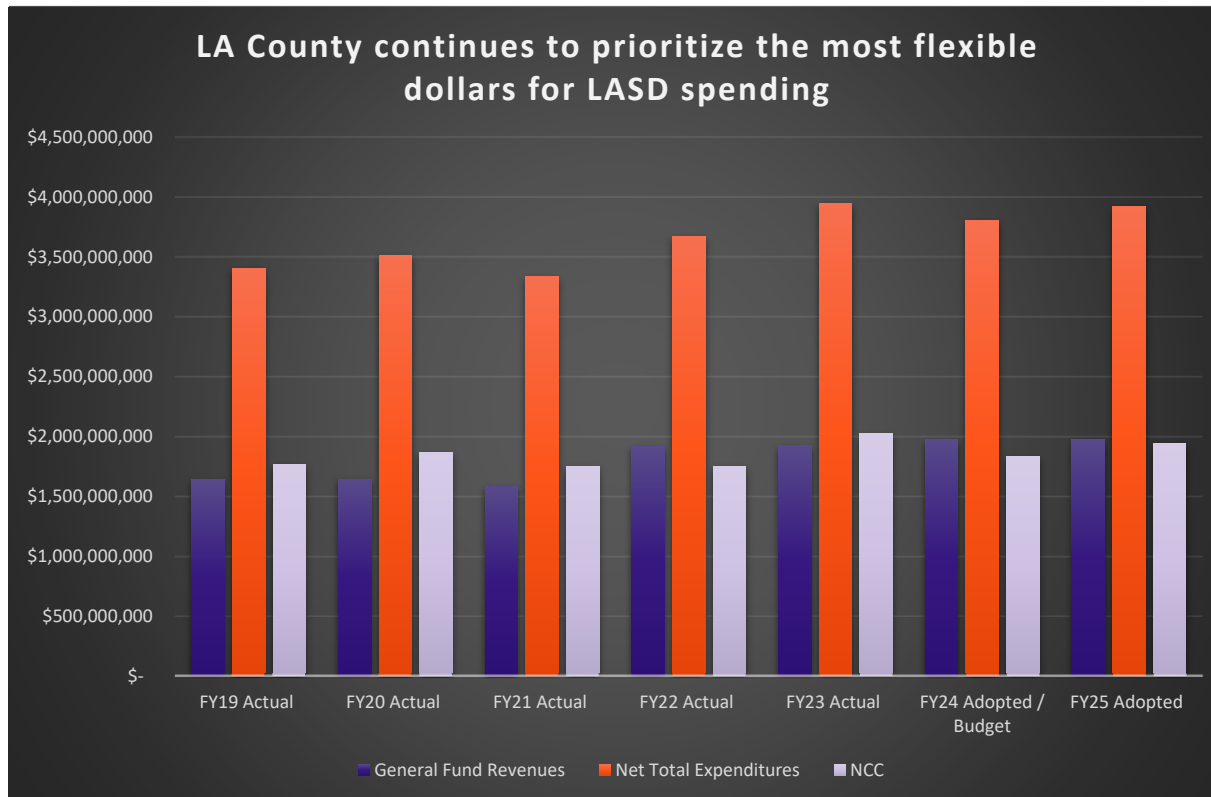
Identify advocacy targets and engage with key decision makers



Build power and make your voices heard throughout the budget process!



LASD MULTI-YEAR TRENDS



Multi-year graph showing LASD budget

The County has continued to **prioritize investments into LASD at steady rates**

NCC covers almost half of their spending

This **spending doesn't align** with the County's vision of "care first, jails last"

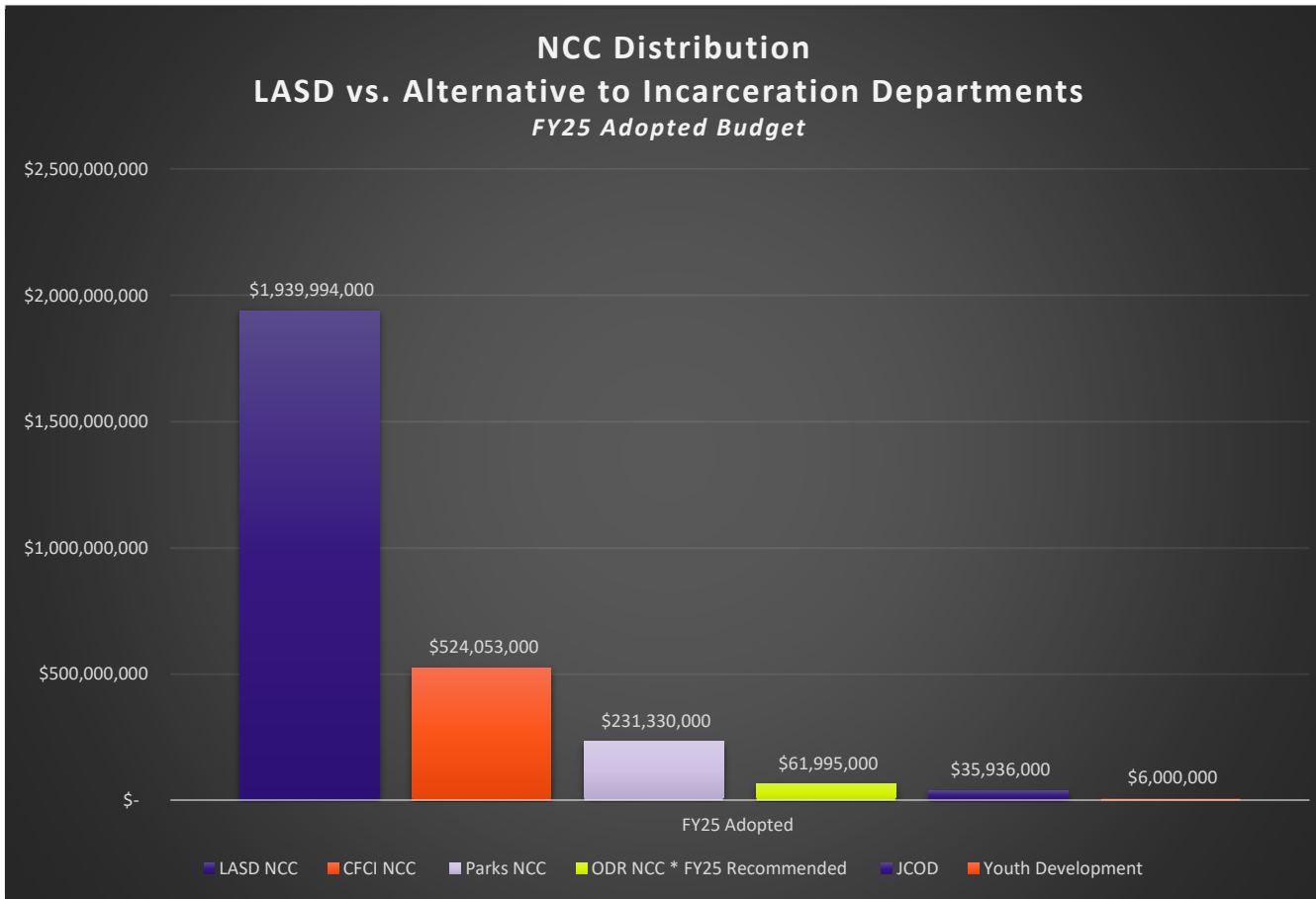
Even in the pandemic years (FY20-FY22) the County continued to invest in LASD

[FY24 Adopted Budget LA County](#)

[FY20 Final Budget LA County](#)

[LA County FY25 Rec Budget](#)

COMPARATIVE DEPARTMENTAL SPENDING



- The County allocates significantly more of our MOST flexible dollars on LASD than the departments that offer alternatives to incarceration services
- We need to see more investment into a community system of care (alternatives to incarceration)

[FY24 Adopted Budget LA County](#) [LA County FY25 Rec Budget](#)

Recommendations



Advocate for implementation of an **inclusive community driven** budget development process



Shift over-investments in punitive systems of harm and invest in a community of care infrastructure



Use **equity-based strategies** to advocate for equitable distribution of resources



Create and fully implement dedicated funding streams and mechanisms for structural reform

THANK YOU!

 CatalystCalifornia

 CatalystCali

 CatalystCalifornia

CATALYST
CALIFORNIA
Advancing Racial Justice

www.catalystcalifornia.org

Catalyst California

Who are we: A racial justice data, research, and policy organization that strives for a world where **systems are designed for justice** and **support equitable access to resources** and opportunities for **all Californians** to thrive

Our mission: to advocate for racial justice by building power and transforming public systems by

- partnering with communities of color,
- conduct innovative research,
- develop policies for actionable change, and
- **shift money and power back into our communities.**

Catalyst California

Educational Equity



Creating a racially just birth to 12th grade system

Equity in Community Investments



Strengthening community power to transform neighborhoods

Political Voice



Making state and local governments more responsive, participatory, and representative

Reimagine Justice & Safety



Advancing justice & safety

ECI Long Term Outcomes

1. Powerful, knowledgeable, and engaged communities
2. Inclusive and transparent government
3. Equity-based policy and funding decisions

Agenda



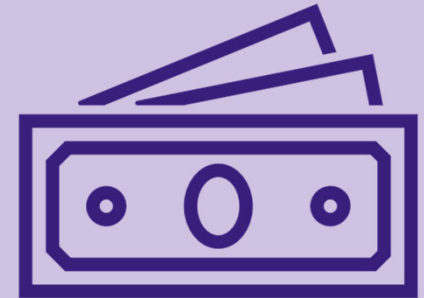
Local Budget

- What are they?
- Why are they important?
- What do they tell us?



Budget Advocacy

- Why it is important?
- How to center racial equity ?
- The importance of centering community voice in a budget process?



Spending

- Specifically our flexible dollars
- How LASD allocations have been distributed across multiple years
- How LASD gets allocations compared to other departments that serve alternatives to incarceration

What does the budget include?



Offers a **budget narrative** often located in the first ten pages of the budget document.



The budget narrative offers key changes from the **previous year** and a discussion of the **fiscal outlook**.

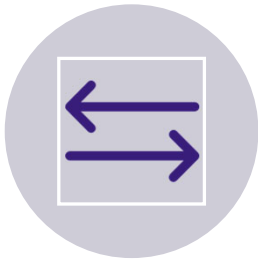
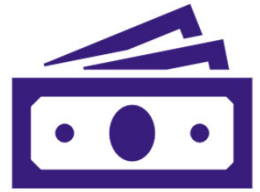


Includes total projected revenue and expenditure for the fiscal year.



Discussion of **elected official priorities**.

Local Budgets



THERE ARE SOME **OPPORTUNITIES** TO ADVOCATE FOR MODIFICATIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR & **TO IMPACT FUTURE BUDGETS.**



OFTEN INTERNAL FACING— DRAFTED BY FINANCE DEPARTMENTS AND FOR COMPLIANCE PURPOSES.



INSTEAD OF EXTERNAL FACING—**NOT COMMUNITY FRIENDLY** AND TYPICALLY DOES **NOT APPLY A FAIRNESS OR RACIAL EQUITY LENS** IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.



ARE OFTEN **INFLUENCED BY UNIONS AND BUSINESSES.**

A decorative orange line starts at the top left, curves down and right, then loops back down and left, ending at the bottom left. It partially encircles the text.

Budget Advocacy:
Centering Racial Equity

What is budget advocacy?



Conducting and using a budget analysis centered on uplifting racial equity that:

Use evidence based data tools to support your position

Identifies and/ or design options for policies that address historical harm and divestment

Develops and delivers a compelling message to decision-makers

Allows for community centered participation, support, and empowerment

Budget Advocacy As A Tool



Budget advocacy is only effective when paired with intentional community power building and political education

Centering Racial Equity in Budget Advocacy Review



There is enough money for the things communities deserve to be well and thrive.

Community safety looks like

- divesting from policing and incarceration
- *investing* in the root causes of violence and crime

Using data tools that highlight where need exists

Budget and Advocacy Timeline

A decorative orange line graphic that starts at the top left, curves down and right, then loops back down and left, ending at the bottom left. It partially overlaps the title text.

TYPICAL BUDGET TIMELINE

DECISION MAKERS

CITY

COUNTY



COUNCIL MEMBERS
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



CITY MANAGER
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER



DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS
DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS



MAYOR



PROPOSED BUDGET PREPARATION (OCT-MAR)

BUDGET GUIDELINES ARE PROVIDED TO DEPARTMENTS

DEPARTMENTS DEVELOP THEIR BUDGET BASED ON THE GUIDELINES

BUDGET (APR-MAY) DEVELOPMENT

CITY MANAGER / COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER DEVELOPS THE BUDGET BASED ON:

- 1 DEPARTMENT REQUESTS
- 2 COUNCIL / BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PRIORITIES
- 3 STATE BUDGET PROPOSALS

PROPOSED BUDGET (MAY-JUN) RELEASED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

COUNCIL / BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MODIFIES BUDGET

* JUNE 30TH

ADOPT BUDGET

COUNCIL / BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVES

IN-YEAR BUDGET CHANGES

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET (MID-YEAR ADJUSTMENT HAPPENS)

3 or 6 (SEP) (DEC) MONTHS INTO FISCAL YEAR

USUALLY:
+ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
+ ONE-TIME INVESTMENTS

Budget Advocacy Process Reflections



Structural change is a slow process that usually requires multiple years of effort and early engagement with departments and the bureaucracy to accomplish



Who actually has power may not line up with who is formally in charge – being able to reach into departments to make change is hard!



Being opportunistic is critical – most funding is on autopilot so jumping on new revenues and policy changes is often a good practice.

LASD Spending

The background is a solid light purple color. A thick orange line starts from the top left, curves down and right, then loops back down and left, ending near the bottom center. The text 'LASD Spending' is positioned in the upper left quadrant, with the word 'LASD' in a larger font than 'Spending'. The text is dark blue and is underlined with a thick yellow bar.

Take Aways



Connecting Budget Advocacy to Campaign Demands Key Takeaways



Budget advocacy is **not a stand-alone tool**. It should always be coupled with intentional community power building



Aim for **structural wins** in the budget process

Slow process that usually requires multiple years of effort

Early engagement with departments



Know the budget process

Especially the opportunities and who holds the power so who you need to influence

Policy Recommendations

Be	Be informed
Build	Build relations with your local officials and communicate with them
Get	Get community involved / Create community demands
Invest in	Invest in community services / Divest in policing

Actionable Next Steps



ATTEND BUDGET TOWNHALLS
OR TRAININGS / CREATE
COMMUNITY DEMANDS



COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR
LOCAL OFFICIALS



USE TOOLKITS AND OTHER
MATERIALS TO HELP INFORM



TUNE INTO BUDGET
MEETINGS TO HELP INFORM
DECISION-MAKING