



# Los Angeles County Racial Equity Strategic Plan

## Abridged Version

February 8, 2023



County of Los Angeles  
**Anti-Racism,  
Diversity,  
& Inclusion**

CREATING AN LA COUNTY  
WHERE WE ALL THRIVE



# Abridged Version



**Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative**

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## ABRIDGED VERSION

On July 21, 2020, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously adopted a motion to establish an Anti-Racist County Policy Agenda recognizing, affirming, and declaring that “racism is a matter of public health in the County of Los Angeles (County) and that racism against Black people has reached crisis proportions that result in large disparities in family stability, health and mental wellness, education, employment, economic development, public safety, criminal justice, and housing.” The Board issued several related directives, including the development of a strategic plan and underlying policy platform, and the establishment of an organizational unit—since created and called the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative—within the Chief Executive Office (CEO) dedicated to implementing the plan.

This strategic plan articulates how LA County became inequitable, the historical factors that helped produce racial disparities, and presents a vision for a new reality in the County. To help achieve this vision, this plan articulates a set of ten-year strategic goals, dozens of strategic initiatives, and an overview of activities that will move the County toward implementation.



This strategic plan articulates how LA County became inequitable, the historical factors that helped produce racial disparities, and presents a vision for a new reality in the County.

Redlining and yellowlining refer to federal practices that identified neighborhoods on maps in red and yellow as undesirable or risky investments. This led to a lack of home loans and historic investment, which contributed to racial segregation and disparate median family wealth by race and ethnicity.

## RACIAL INEQUITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY IS TRACEABLE TO SPATIAL INEQUITY

There are large racial gaps in key life outcomes that include suspension rates, juvenile felony arrests, high school graduation, felony convictions, University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) eligibility, college enrollment, family incomes at or above 250% Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and homeownership rates. Many of the gaps in these outcomes are traceable to inequities in the spatial distribution of opportunity in the County. A scientific consensus has determined that where a person grows up exerts enormous causal influence over the outcome of their life. In Los Angeles County, with its geography of concentrated affluence and concentrated disadvantage, race is closely aligned with living in one or the other of these two worlds. Black, Latino, and American Indian residents are much more likely to live in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage, even when they are from families with high incomes. According to Bayer, Charles & Park (2021), the average Black household in Los Angeles County must earn \$150,000 a year to live in a neighborhood with the same average median income as the average White household earning approximately \$20,000 a year.<sup>1</sup>

## INTENTIONAL POLICY DECISIONS LED TO LA COUNTY'S SPATIAL INEQUITIES & RACIAL DISPARITIES

Throughout most of the 20th century, government at federal, state, and local levels, as well as private actors—as varied as the California Real Estate Board, the Los Angeles Realty Board, neighborhood homeowner's associations, White county voters, and the Ku Klux Klan—established and maintained the county's enduring spatial inequity.<sup>2</sup> Using policies and tactics that included racially restrictive covenants, redlining and yellowlining, collective violence, urban renewal, the location of highway construction, the siting of public housing, and the siting of toxin-emitting industrial uses, the foundations for an enduring geography of haves and have nots was laid in the county.

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S VISION FOR RACIAL EQUITY

Given government's role in upholding historic policies that contribute to enduring racial inequities, the County of Los Angeles has a responsibility and aspires to become a region where every resident can thrive regardless of the color of their skin. This will require collaboration with County of Los Angeles government departments; County commissions, advisory bodies, and public agencies; the County's 88 incorporated cities, 80 school districts, and 120 unincorporated areas; state and federal agencies, and any other jurisdictions; and community-based organizations (CBOs), philanthropy, and academic institutions. Using the Life Course Framework, the County will be able to support positive life trajectories and prevent negative life outcomes from the time a child is in the womb to the point of becoming an older adult.

To that end, the County's vision statement is as follows:

**"Los Angeles County is a place where all residents are healthy, experience justice, and thrive."**

This vision will be achieved by analyzing root causes, applying data, ensuring data-driven decision-making processes, aligning budgets to equity priorities, engaging communities with lived experience, and developing a policy agenda to close racial disparities and help achieve positive life outcomes for residents within its communities.

### The Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative

In support of the Board's directives and the County's vision, the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative's mission is:

**"To end structural racism and its consequences in Los Angeles County. To boldly articulate an anti-racist agenda that will guide, govern, and increase the County's ongoing commitment to fighting systemic and institutional racism in all its forms and dimensions by directing, building capacity for,**

**and sustaining the development of equitable policy, workforce culture, data analysis, and resource distribution."**

ARDI provides central coordination and guidance to ensure the incorporation and integration of equity in Countywide and departmental racial equity efforts. ARDI partners with County departments to provide racial equity training, technical assistance, and other capacity building efforts. In addition, ARDI contributes to all Countywide efforts by creating racial equity tools, providing policy analysis with an equity lens, coordinating data-related equity efforts, and infusing equity into program development and resourcing efforts. ARDI will work to advance its mission through a justice-oriented approach that considers the ways in which procedural, distributional, and structural equity can be achieved.

## THE COUNTYWIDE GUIDING EQUITY PRINCIPLES

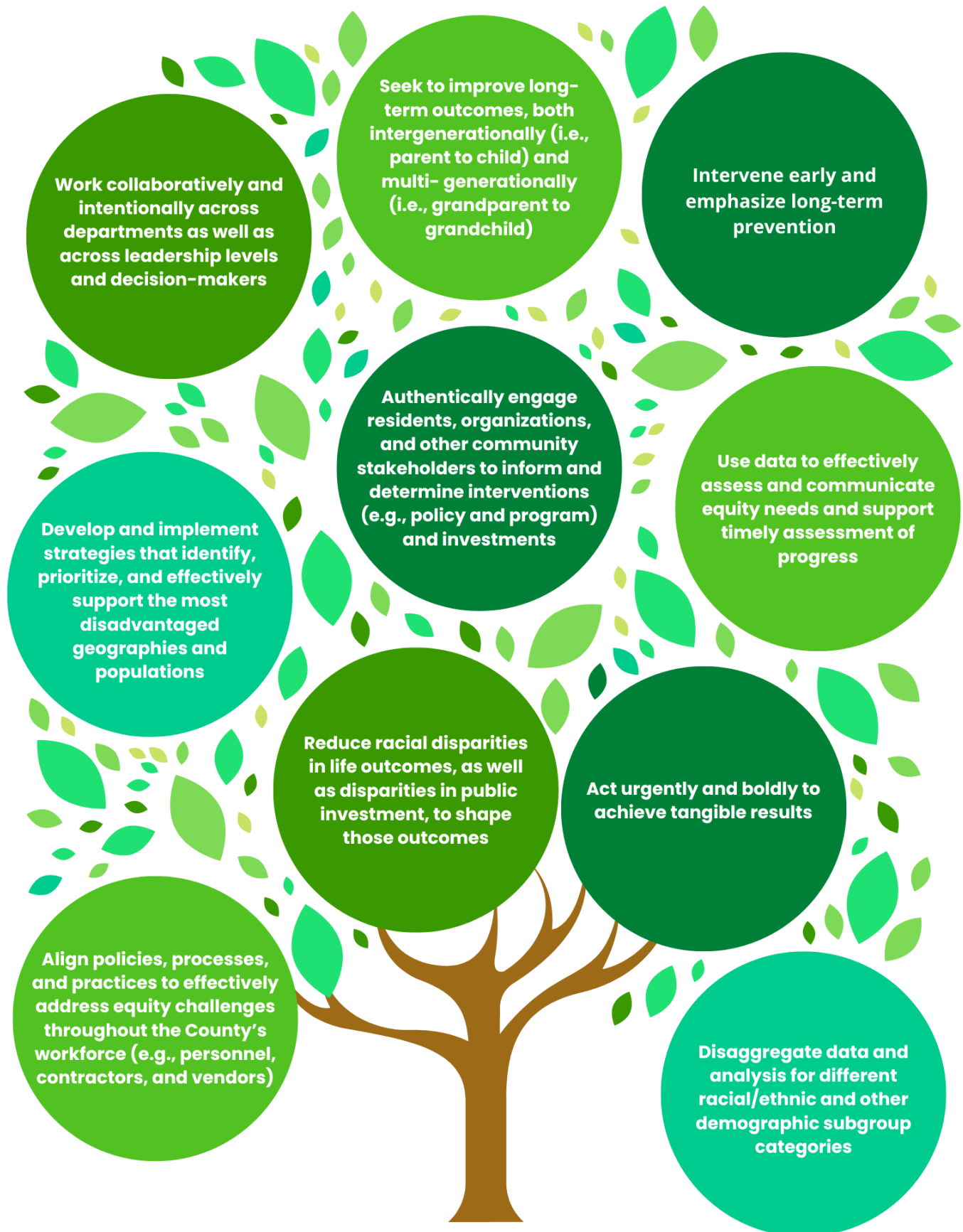
Equity principles are generally values-based and incorporate and express ethical premises. They articulate how to do things right (effectively) and the right thing to do (express the values basis for action). They are also generally able to be evaluated, which means it is possible to document and judge whether the principle is being followed, and what results from following the principle. ARDI assembled feedback from internal stakeholder focus groups and discussions with County workgroup planning participants who helped define the County's "Guiding Equity Principles," which guided the strategic plan's development and will continue to inform ongoing efforts to promote equity and anti-racism in the County. Guiding principles serve as "guardrails" or "pointers" for how the County should develop strategies and prioritize new initiatives with a timeline and metrics.

These Board-approved principles will help County departments weigh considerations and ensure that program, policy, and funding decisions align with the Board's anti-racism policy agenda.



## COUNTYWIDE GUIDING EQUITY PRINCIPLES

These principles were Board-approved to ensure that program, policy, and funding decisions align with the Board's anti-racism policy agenda.



## THE ARDI STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Informed by “A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Populations,” the planning process was oriented toward taking “the long view” and seeking to influence changes in population outcomes over the next several years. Focusing on specific “life course outcomes,” the six-step planning process:

1. Identified key long-term population outcomes to influence, called “Strategic Goals,” as well as “Equity Principles” to guide the strategic planning effort;
2. Identified how to measure those outcomes;
3. Examined trends in those outcomes over time and set goal targets for changing those outcomes;
4. Identified major contributing factors that put people “on-track” or “off-track” to achieving the desired outcomes in the long-run;
5. Mapped the limits of County authority and the potential for collaborative partnerships; and
6. Identified strategic initiatives—ranging from programs to policies—to influence those contributing factors over the next decade.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Countywide Racial Equity Strategic Plan (RESP) was developed through a series of internal and external workshops with participants from 29 County departments, as well as a series of input sessions to gather feedback from CBOs, residents, civic leaders, and the County workforce. Stakeholder and community member involvement were prioritized and integrated throughout the entire planning process to inform the final plan’s development. Channels for input from external stakeholders included:

- » The ARDI Community Input Advisory Board (CIAB), a diverse

cross-sector group of community leaders, who provided consultation and input on the recommendations developed during each strategic planning phase;

- » A series of key stakeholder interviews and community listening sessions to prioritize, vet, and recommend strategic and enabling initiatives;
- » Partnerships with CBOs to host conversations with their networks as community ambassadors to gather feedback on the draft plan and its strategies;
- » Targeted outreach to civic leaders in education, housing, government, and other domains; and
- » A 30-day public comment period inviting written comment on the draft plan once it was released for public review through [ARDI's website](#).

While ARDI’s stakeholder engagement activities focused on the strategic planning process and the final plan’s development, ARDI will continue to engage, seek consultation from, and partner with, internal and external stakeholders as the County embarks on implementing the plan and other equity-related initiatives.



**Nearly 30% of Los Angeles County’s population lives in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage.**





ON AUGUST 28, 1963, KING, MARTIN LUTHER, JR., DELIVERED THE  
"I HAVE A DREAM" ADDRESS AT THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON  
FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM.

(EXCERPT)

I have a dream  
that one day this nation will "fall up and live" for the true meaning of its creed:  
"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream  
that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves  
and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down  
together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream  
that one day even the State of Mississippi, a state sweltering  
with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be  
transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream  
that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be  
judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.  
I have a dream today.

I have a dream  
that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor  
having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification",  
one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to  
join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.  
I have a dream today.

I have a dream  
that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain  
shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain,  
and the crooked places will be made straight,  
and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together.



# Racial Equity Strategic Goals and Initiatives





## LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S RACIAL EQUITY STRATEGIC GOALS 10-YEAR

Through a process of research, analysis, and deliberation, the County will pursue five identified strategic goals over the next decade. "Strategic Goals" are defined as changes in population level outcomes that will be achieved through multiple strategic initiatives.

## INITIATIVES TO STRATEGIC GOALS ACHIEVE

Recognizing the limits of the County's formal authority and the need for collaborative partnerships with other governments and private institutions, 99 strategic initiatives were identified to advance the County's five Racial Equity Strategic Goals. They are listed in groups below under their related strategic goal in the following pages.



### STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 1:

**Increase the Attainment of Postsecondary Credentials with Significant Labor Market Value**



### STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 2:

**Reduce Adult First-Time Felony Convictions**



### STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 3:

**Increase Stable Full-Time Employment Among Individual Adults with Incomes at or Above 250% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**



### STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 4:

**Increase the Percentage of Families with Incomes Above 250% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a Family of Four**



### STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 5:

**Reduce Infant Mortality**



## **STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 1:**

### **Increase the Attainment of Postsecondary Credentials with Significant Labor Market Value**

#### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?**

This strategic goal entails increasing the attainment of bachelor's degrees from four-year nonprofit or public universities, as well as the attainment of associate degrees or vocational certificates from nonprofit or public colleges in high-earning subject fields that include Health Sciences, Business, Computers/IT, and Engineering/Drafting.

#### **WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT?**

It is well established that a postsecondary education is an essential pathway to higher incomes, especially among low-income youth. The existing evidence shows that while attaining a bachelor's degree is the most common and often the most direct pathway for increasing income over one's lifetime, attaining associate degrees or vocational certificates in key subjects can be just as financially rewarding, and in some cases, more rewarding than bachelor's degrees.

#### **WHAT ARE THE TRENDS FOR POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY?**

In Los Angeles County, the completion of bachelor's degrees increased from 2010-2019 for Asians (+10%), Whites (+18%), Blacks (+22%), and Latinos (+40%). The data for American Indians, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and other disaggregated Asian communities (e.g., Cambodians) are not collected and/or statistically reliable due to small sample sizes. Trend line data for completion of any associate degree from 2010-2019 showed that rates of associate degree completion remained the same for Blacks and Whites. It increased for Latinos (+20%) and decreased for Asians (-13%). Again, the data for American Indians and Pacific Islanders are not statistically reliable due to small sample sizes.

#### **WHAT IS THE TARGET FOR THIS STRATEGIC GOAL IN 10 YEARS?**

A goal target will be established during the implementation planning phase.

#### **WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING POPULATION OUTCOMES THAT MAY INFLUENCE THIS STRATEGIC GOAL?**

Through extensive research, several important population outcomes that contribute to postsecondary completion were identified. They include college-readiness, high school grade point averages, juvenile delinquency or arrests, middle school grades, participation in arts education, school absences, school suspensions, externalizing behavior, and grade retention.



Informed by “A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Populations,” the planning process was oriented toward taking “the long view” and seek change in population level outcomes over the next several years.









## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL NO. 1:

### Increase the Attainment of Postsecondary Credentials with Significant Labor Market Value

The twenty-one strategic initiatives identified were aimed at increasing the attainment of income-improving postsecondary credentials or influencing identified contributing outcomes like school suspensions, school absences, or middle school grades. They include:

#### INCREASE HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

- » Create an Accelerated Study in Associate's Program (ASAP) at local community colleges to boost associate degree completion. ASAP is an evidence-based model shown to substantially increase associate degree completion among students of color;
- » Provide stipends for attending community colleges or 4-year universities, offer programming to create interest in pursuing a postsecondary credential, provide online resources for professional development, and provide free online career certificates for adults to promote college enrollment and credential completion;
- » Consider providing funding alternatives or other supports to bypass federal exclusionary provisions for accessing financial aid for higher education and training; and
- » Expand cross-training opportunities and support the pursuit of higher education for advancement for employees within County departments.

#### INCREASE JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- » Fund educational and job training programs and employment opportunities;
- » Develop a strategic plan to identify investments in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs and any needed policy changes;
- » Promote trade schools as a suitable path towards a good career and increase their access, availability, and affordability;
- » Provide greater support for people with developmental and cognitive disabilities and ensure that they are receiving training and job skills;
- » Provide student programs and other supportive services (e.g., tutoring, mentors, childcare) to ensure school success and employment after graduation;
- » Ensure that high-quality broadband internet access is a basic right for all households; and
- » Ensure access to affordable housing for students and teachers.

**INCREASE PATHWAYS TO JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

- » Partner with community colleges to offer apprenticeship tracks leading to technical-vocational credentials for jobs in county government, which have the potential to substantially increase long-term earnings;
- » Partner with businesses to create “training to jobs” pipeline; expand and directly connect training to employment opportunities;
- » Expand paid internships, training, and mentorship/sponsorship opportunities for employment within County departments; and
- » Create a directory of public and private internship opportunities in LA County and promote within educational institutions.

**REDUCE SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS**

- » Support the implementation of the “Self-Affirmation” intervention in middle schools, an evidence-based model that has been shown to produce large reductions in racial gaps in school discipline at scale; and
- » Provide more mental health and counseling services and support in schools.

**DECREASE SCHOOL ABSENCES**

- » Expand the mission of School Attendance Review Boards (SARBs) to work more with students and parents starting in elementary and middle school, especially given how important school absences are to high school graduation and college attendance.

**IMPROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES**

- » Expand specialized early intervention programs, like the Early Start Program; and
- » Provide more school resources and high-quality programs for those showing an achievement gap.

**INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN ARTS EDUCATION**

- » Offer a wide range of programs and events to increase participation in Arts Education to help reduce high school dropout.





## **STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 2:**

### **Reduce Adult First-Time Felony Convictions**

#### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?**

This strategic goal entails decreasing first-time felony convictions.

#### **WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT?**

Being incarcerated in prison or receiving a felony conviction have been shown to cause long-term declines in employment, earnings, and mental and physical health.

#### **WHAT IS THE TREND FOR FIRST-TIME FELONY CONVICTIONS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY?**

In Los Angeles County, first-time felony convictions fell from 2010-2019 for Blacks (-18%), Latinos (-15%), Whites (-23%), and Asians (-20%). The data for American Indians and Pacific Islanders were suppressed for privacy reasons due to small prevalence counts, while disaggregated data for Native Hawaiians and other Asian communities (e.g., Cambodians) are not reliably collected at this time.

#### **WHAT IS THE TARGET FOR THIS STRATEGIC GOAL IN 10 YEARS?**

No goal target has been established for this strategic goal at this time.

#### **WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING POPULATION OUTCOMES THAT MAY INFLUENCE THIS STRATEGIC GOAL?**

Through extensive research, several important population outcomes that contribute to first-time felony convictions were identified. They include: inability to pay bail, high school dropout, high school grade point average, juvenile detention, and onset of a substance use disorder before age 16.



There were more than one hundred incidents of “move-in bombing” and vandalism in Los Angeles from 1950 to 1965 alone, with only one leading to an arrest and prosecution.









## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL NO. 2:

### Reduce Adult First-Time Felony Convictions

The twenty-five strategic initiatives identified were aimed at reducing first-time felony convictions or influencing identified contributing outcomes, like delinquency, criminal offending, and high school graduation. They include:

#### INCREASE FELONY DIVERSION

Diverting adults and juveniles from entering the criminal justice system and receiving a felony conviction will fundamentally shape the long-term outcomes of their lives;

- » Invest in, implement, and encourage pre- and post-filing diversion programs for juveniles and adults on selected crimes;
- » Invest in, implement, and encourage law-enforcement pre-arrest and pre-bookings diversion programs for juveniles and adults on selected crimes;
- » Invest in, implement, and encourage mental health diversion for justice-involved youth and adults;
- » Increase criminal conviction expungements; and
- » Support alternatives to incarceration so that those with mental illness, addiction, or homelessness are not given convictions over treatment, especially former foster care youth.

#### REDUCE CRIMINAL OFFENDING AND DELINQUENCY

- » Increase investment in free open spaces, parks and other spaces for people in communities with the greatest need to participate in sports programs and activities;
- » Invest in, implement, and encourage prevention programming, such as additional low or no cost drug, alcohol, and mental health treatment opportunities, to reduce adult criminal behavior, juvenile delinquency, and police contact for adults and juveniles;
- » Ensure more substance use disorder support, housing support, immediate housing that includes social workers, medical attention and coordinated care, and response teams are readily available for high-risk adolescents and young adults;
- » Increase access to counseling and mental health services;
- » Provide meaningful job opportunities during high school to avoid future contact with police; and
- » Provide basics of everyday personal finance (e.g., teach them how to balance a bank account).

### INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

- » Implement strategies to encourage law enforcement personnel to positively engage with communities, to utilize de-escalation techniques, and to avoid unnecessary contacts and uses of force;
- » Create mental health response teams consisting of trauma-informed workers to respond in partnership with police to mental health emergencies;
- » Create mandatory trainings for law enforcement, judges, and those in positions of authority and power that examines their implicit bias; and
- » Reduce racism in policing and eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline, specifically within the Sheriff's department, through training, hiring, and recruiting practices.

### INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY OF COUNTY AGENCIES

- » Invest in and implement strategies to encourage County departments to engage with communities in order to encourage understanding of and build trust with communities served; and
- » Increase hiring and promotion within County departments to reflect communities disproportionately and negatively impacted by the criminal justice system.

### INCREASE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Given how important high school graduation is to risk of incarceration or a felony conviction in California, with 90% of black males who drop out of high school going to prison compared to just 12% of high school graduates, increasing high school graduation rates is a crucial strategy in reducing rates of felony conviction or incarceration. Strategies to promote increased high school graduation include:

- » Support targeted high school programs that increase graduation rates;
- » Provide targeted supports for those at risk of high school dropout and subsequent felony conviction/incarceration;
- » Promote the free Online High School program to increase high school graduation;
- » Increase internet access for those who don't have it and provide programming to improve digital literacy, such as providing internet/connection incentives and reimbursements;
- » Increase school-based restorative justice programs in middle and high schools to decrease school suspensions and expulsions;
- » Offer trauma informed mediation, anti-bias and anti-bullying training for teachers and school staff, especially playground monitors;
- » Increase mental health services and school/career counselors in middle and high schools; and
- » Provide programs that offer free tutoring to students in low-income communities.





### **STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 3:**

## **Increase Stable Full-Time Employment among Individual Adults with Incomes at or Above 250% FPL**

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?**

This strategic goal involves increasing the percentage of adults engaged in stable (i.e., working for 50-52 weeks out of the year), full-time employment (i.e., equal to or greater than 35 hours per week) with incomes equal to or greater than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for individuals, which in 2022 equaled \$33,975.<sup>3</sup>

### **WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT?**

Stable, full-time employment is a critical factor for experiencing growth in wages and for reaching the middle class. In fact, the lack of stable employment is a major potential factor in explaining racial gaps in income mobility. Having unstable employment patterns in the first decades of adults' working lives is associated with large declines in earnings by mid-life. One study cited in the plan finds that declines in annual earnings are as high as 39% to 53%.

### **WHAT IS THE TREND FOR STABLE FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT AT 250% FPL IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY?**

In Los Angeles County, the percentage of individuals over age 16 that were both stably employed and had earnings at or above 250% of the Federal Poverty Level changed marginally between 2010 and 2019. A small increase occurred for Asians (+3%), Whites (+3%) and a more substantial increase occurred for Latinos (+10%). Blacks saw little change over the decade. American Indians and Pacific Islanders saw a decrease and an increase respectively, but these estimates are not statistically reliable due to small sample sizes. Further disaggregated data for Native Hawaiians and other Asian communities (e.g., Cambodians) are also not reliably collected at this time and therefore, not included here.

### **WHAT IS THE TARGET FOR THIS STRATEGIC GOAL IN 10 YEARS?**

Reduce the racial gap between Whites (the reference group) and Blacks, Latinos, American Indians, and Pacific Islanders by 50% in 10 years.

### **WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING POPULATION OUTCOMES THAT MAY INFLUENCE THIS STRATEGIC GOAL?**

Through extensive research, several important population outcomes that contribute to stable full-time employment were identified. They include work disability, college completion, enrollment in a for-profit college, child support arrears, childcare arrangements, felony convictions, substance use disorders, housing instability, high school graduation rates, young age of childbearing, and juvenile delinquency.



AIAN people did not qualify for public housing assistance and/or experienced housing discrimination in the form of private racial covenants excluding them from many neighborhoods.









### STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL NO. 3:

#### Increase Stable Full-Time Employment Among Individual Adults with Incomes at or Above 250% FPL

The thirty-four strategic initiatives identified were aimed at increasing stable full-time employment at 250% FPL or influencing identified contributing outcomes, like increasing stable full-time employment, reducing housing instability, or increasing the availability of affordable childcare. They include:

- » Expand access to financial literacy and economic development programs to low-income communities and communities of color;
- » Address barriers of accessing employment; provide interview training and support preparation (i.e., have a resume and cover letter, interviewing skills, clothing for interviews, addresses for unhoused applicants, etc.); and
- » Pass a higher minimum, livable wage in Los Angeles.

#### INCREASE STABLE FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

- » Increase County employee recruitment from paid internship programs sponsored by the County or elsewhere;
- » Encourage opportunities for careers in local law enforcement for those from underrepresented communities;
- » Adopt first source hiring agreements targeting residents in concentrated disadvantage neighborhoods and align with employment training initiatives;
- » Create tax incentives for businesses that encourage them to go into underserved cities/places in the county or incentives for employment of local residents in specific communities;

- » Leverage existing and new employment programs as well as partnerships with community colleges to create career pathways to full-time employment;
- » Provide access to language translation services to connect non-English speakers with job opportunities;
- » Fund culturally appropriate programs and organizations that facilitate English language acquisition for various immigrant populations to increase employment eligibility;
- » Provide universally available paid internships for high school students, “work opportunity youth” (i.e., those unconnected to school), and young adults to support pathways to full-time employment.
- » Implement a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) arrears mitigation initiative in partnership with child support enforcement, the courts, and education and employment service providers;
- » Reconsider previously imposed sentences to ensure that those who have demonstrated rehabilitation in the criminal justice system may re-enter the workforce upon release from incarceration;
- » Educate, implement, and encourage greater use of expungement of convictions and certificates of rehabilitation for those previously justice-involved individuals so prior conduct does not inhibit future employment;
- » Expand warrant reduction initiatives to include both low-level misdemeanors and felonies so justice-involved people may more rapidly re-enter the workforce;

- » Invest in, implement, and encourage community re-entry programs and opportunities for those who have been released from custody;

- » Invest in, implement, and encourage diversion opportunities for justice-involved people; and

- » Streamline jail work programs to include certifications.

## REDUCE HOUSING INSTABILITY

Housing instability undermines stable employment and thus is the target of strategies to reduce its prevalence in the county:

- » Facilitate the building of new affordable housing and preserve existing affordable housing;

- » Develop affordable housing across LA County prioritizing outdoor space with health and wellness concepts and proximity to public transportation hubs;

- » Provide incentives to developers to create affordable housing on county's tax default roll, while providing targeted debt relief to homeowners facing tax default;

- » Exercise eminent domain of abandoned property or land for the creation of affordable housing;

- » Adopt streamlined procedures for permitting and entitlements; and

- » Support legislative initiatives that will secure and create affordable housing.

## INCREASE CHILDCARE AVAILABILITY AND SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Given the large economic benefits of broadly available high-quality childcare to parents and children, the following strategies are aimed at increasing availability in Los Angeles County:

- » Create a universal subsidized childcare program for LA County families, that includes free childcare for lower income families;

- » Create a childcare stipend program to help parents stay employed;

- » Provide onsite low-cost/free childcare for County employees;

- » Advocate with the federal government to expand the definition of qualified childcare providers eligible for subsidy programs;

- » Provide subsidies for family care (e.g., care for parents or disable family members);

- » Ensure that every place of County employment has a proper lactation station that is not a bathroom; and

- » Advance and support policies that increase investments in the childcare system for both early childhood education, preschool, and afterschool care (i.e., increasing support and compensation for its workforce, as well as improving access to services for low-income families).

## IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- » Expand diverse transportation options (e.g., E.V. charging, reliable transit) to low-income households, especially those with a higher pollution burden;

- » Decrease transit wait times and travel times by increasing funding to MTA for additional buses; and

- » Increase access to green cars through subsidies or a clunker exchange for low-income individuals.





## **STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 4:**

### **Increase the Percentage of Families with Incomes Above 250% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a Family of Four**

#### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?**

This strategic goal entails increasing the percentage of families with incomes equal to or greater than 250% the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (pegged to a family of 4, which is the average family size in the County). In 2022 this equaled \$69,375. To align with the federal standard and due to the high cost of living in Los Angeles County, the income level to measure poverty is pegged to a family of four even if a family is comprised of 2, 3, 5, or more individuals.

#### **WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT?**

This strategic goal is focused on helping families with children reach the middle class. A vast body of research shows that children raised in families with higher incomes have better outcomes compared to children from lower income families. Compelling causal evidence shows that higher parental incomes reduce low birth weight, infant mortality, behavioral problems, child maltreatment, teenage births, and incarceration and improve math/reading test scores, high school graduation rates, college completion, employment, earnings, and adult health. Thus, this strategic goal is focused on improving intergenerational outcomes, including income mobility for children of color in Los Angeles County.

#### **WHAT IS THE TREND FOR FAMILIES WITH INCOMES AT 250% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY?**

In Los Angeles County, the percentage of families with incomes at or above 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (for a family of 4) changed marginally between 2010 and 2019. Small increases occurred for Blacks (+4%), Whites (+3%), and Asians (+5%). However, a more substantial increase occurred for Latinos

(+10%). American Indians and Pacific Islanders saw an increase and a decrease respectively, but the data are not statistically reliable due to small sample sizes. Further disaggregated data for Native Hawaiians and other Asian communities (e.g., Cambodians) are also not reliably collected at this time and therefore, are not included here.

#### **WHAT IS THE TARGET FOR THIS STRATEGIC GOAL IN 10 YEARS?**

Reduce the racial gap between Whites (the reference group) and Blacks, Latinos, American Indians, and Pacific Islanders by 50% in 10 years.

#### **WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING POPULATION OUTCOMES THAT MAY INFLUENCE THIS STRATEGIC GOAL?**

Through extensive research, several important population level outcomes that contribute to family income above 250% FPL were identified. They include stable full-time employment, employment in high demand industries or sectors, bachelor's degree completion, associate's degree completion, enrollment in high mobility colleges, enrollment in for-profit colleges, postsecondary enrollment, and felony conviction or incarceration.



## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL NO. 4:

### Increase the Percentage of Families with Incomes Above 250% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a Family of Four

Many strategies that will support the economic health of families are addressed in the other strategic goal areas, such as affordable housing, childcare support, education and training opportunities, and access to transportation. The seven strategic initiatives identified were aimed at increasing the percentage of families with incomes above 250% FPL. They include:

- » Create employment pathways into high-demand industries (e.g., technology and healthcare);
- » Create job pipeline programs (e.g., Metro is doing a high school pipeline that train folks and provide guaranteed jobs after graduation);
- » Expand employment training programs, particularly for jobs in the green economy;
- » Expand loans, grants, and incubation programs to small businesses to increase access to entrepreneurship opportunities;
- » Increase capacity to secure County contracts and the certification to apply for those contracts;
- » Support policies and practices that increase wages to reflect equitable pay and living wages; and
- » Promote/expand the guaranteed basic income program.



This strategic goal is focused on improving intergenerational outcomes, including income mobility for children of color in Los Angeles County.





## **STRATEGIC GOAL NO. 5:** **Reduce Infant Mortality**

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?**

Reduce the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births.

### **WHY IS THIS GOAL IMPORTANT?**

Infant mortality and the size of racial gaps for this outcome are inherently unjust and deserve remedy on moral grounds, alone. Every infant in Los Angeles County should have a fair chance to live.

### **WHAT IS THE TREND FOR INFANT MORTALITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY?**

Over the last twenty years in Los Angeles County, the infant mortality rate has changed substantially for some groups and less so for others. Rates have fallen for Blacks (-29%), Asians (-40%), and Whites (-44%). Latinos, however, experienced no change. The data for American Indians and Pacific Islanders are not available because counts are too small.

### **WHAT IS THE TARGET FOR THIS STRATEGIC GOAL IN 10 YEARS?**

Reduce the racial gap between Whites (the reference group) and Blacks, Latinos, American Indians, and Pacific Islanders by 50% in 10 years

### **WHAT ARE THE CONTRIBUTING POPULATION OUTCOMES THAT MAY INFLUENCE THIS STRATEGIC GOAL?**

Through extensive research, several important population level outcomes that contribute to infant mortality were identified. They include preterm birth, low birthweight, prenatal/perinatal care, the racial concordance between physicians and patients, cesarean section delivery, inter-pregnancy interval, and chronic worry about discrimination.



Every infant in Los Angeles County should have a fair chance to live.



## STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOAL NO. 5: Reduce Infant Mortality

Twelve strategic initiatives were identified aimed at reducing infant mortality. They include:

- » Increase public awareness and provide community outreach and education regarding healthy and joyous births, stress reduction for pregnant and parenting families, and racial and reproductive justice;
- » Remove stigma around adverse birth outcomes and educate on the social forces at play. Frame birth equity as civil rights issue instead of a health education issue;
- » Increase culturally appropriate and respectful pregnancy, labor, and delivery support, including the hiring of, training of, and sustainable payment for doula services and other alternative birthing options that are responsive to community needs;
- » Address bias and racism in the medical field and implement strategies to incentivize positive health outcomes and elevate OBGYN cultural sensitivity, responsiveness, and documentation training;
- » Increase programs, services, and harm reduction strategies for peripartum people who experience or are at risk of housing or financial insecurity, domestic violence, substance use disorders, perinatal mood disorders, and/or high-risk clinical issues. Provide trainings for providers and the public on these services and strategies;
- » Ensure greater access to mental health support to new parents and safety measures to protect the children;
- » Improve services and systems for families by increasing the availability of and referrals between community-responsive prenatal care and peripartum programs that provide respectful, culturally humble, optimal care and fatherhood support;
- » Use collective land use authority to promote environmental justice and create healthy and accessible physical space for families;
- » Improve transportation infrastructure to increase access to care and provide transportation for pregnant parents to appointments, if needed (i.e., give them vouchers for Uber/Lyft);
- » Increase housing accessibility for parenting and peripartum people, including a housing strategy that specifies prioritizing pregnant women for family housing;
- » Advance, support, and expand family and paid leave policies as well as employment protections for pregnant or expectant parents; and
- » Implement alternatives to incarceration, such as diversion, re-entry, resentencing, and counseling for pregnant women.



# Creating an Enabling Environment



## CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Drawing upon the Center for Community Investment's Strengthening the Enabling Environment framework, ARDI acknowledges that both internal and external efforts are needed to create the conditions necessary to achieve the 10-year goals. These efforts may include policies, practices, procedures, processes, platforms, relationships, funding mechanisms, and capacities, among others and must occur alongside the strategic initiatives to advance our progress towards shared goals. Below is a list of some initiatives that will help create the enabling environment needed to reach County's five racial equity strategic goals. They include:

### **Increase Organizational Capacity through Coordination and Collaboration**

- Reduce the service, coordination, and collaboration silos within the County;
- Require County departments to cross-refer customers to other departments' services; and
- Coordinate data sharing across County departments and CBOs or other stakeholders that provide essential services.

### **Ensure Equity in County Contracting and Procurement**

- Reduce barriers to County contracting and accessing funding for CBOs and businesses that are smaller in scale, located in impacted communities, and reflective of the communities they serve;
- Require contractors to engage in local hiring of those with the highest barriers to employment, including but not limited to justice-involved individuals, foster youth, and houseless populations; and
- Prioritize targeted and accessible outreach and engagement strategies to increase awareness of County contracting opportunities.

### **Strengthen and Diversify Governance**

- Diversify County's boards/commissions/workgroups to ensure dedicated slots for community representatives;
- Encourage County vendors to have diverse staff and boards together with diversity, equity, and including leadership training; and
- Diversify attorneys and legal support staff within County Counsel; and
- Partner with community colleges to offer apprenticeship tracks leading to technical-vocational credentials in County government; and
- Examine departmental workforce activities including recruiting, hiring, interviewing selection, onboarding, promotion and retention practices for MAPP employees; and
- Examine the recruitment and appointment of culturally and ethnically diverse managers and leaders within and across County departments.

### **Offer Education and Training Throughout the Region**

- Create a centralized LA County Training and Information Hub on anti-racism, cultural competency, and opportunities to support and/or take advantage of County & CBO partnership resources and opportunities;
- Include high-demand career and trade curriculum at the high school level (e.g., technology and healthcare);
- Fund and institutionalize paid internships at the high school level and/or college enrollment designed to place participants into full-time employment, including in non-profit sectors;



- Provide education about and access to banking for low-income individuals including youth;
- Advance and support policies that increase investments in the childcare and early childhood education system, such as increasing support and compensation for its workforce and improving access for low-income families; and
- Partner with community colleges to provide Accelerated Study in Associate's Programs (ASAPs) to boost Associate degree completion.

### **Change Hearts and Minds**

- Promote the Affirm, Counter, and Transform (ACT) framework in racial equity trainings to train people on how to communicate about race in a way that can move people toward equitable outcomes;
- Provide arts and culture events, experiences, and engagements throughout the County to provide education around different cultures;
- Provide peer advocates in every courthouse who are educated and connected to resources, including increased access to public defenders and/or paralegals for legal guidance;
- Require race, racism, and multicultural trainings for both educators and in K-12 curriculum; and
- Advance, support, and expand family and paid leave policies and employment protections.

### **Create a Regional Collaborative**

- Create and maintain an annual report card on each region and related leadership and programs;
- Increase outreach in different languages, including print and digital materials;
- Require collaboration around infrastructure and transportation between regions/areas in the County; and
- Facilitate the building of new affordable housing and preserve existing affordable housing, including prioritizing outdoor space with health and wellness concepts and proximity to public transportation hubs.

### **Host an Annual Summit**

- Engage County departments in annual summits to deepen and expand internal equity practices with engaging training opportunities and networking opportunities; and
- Engage in conversations with external entities to gather best practices, lessons learned, and issues encountered.

### **Center Community Leadership and Strengthen Partnerships**

- Develop an equitable compensation policy and disbursement process for CBOs and people with lived experience for their participation in commissions, advisory boards, and/or other workgroups or meetings in which feedback is needed for program/policy/budget development and implementation;
- Address the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) low-income communities of color, especially youths of color, across all the Life Course Outcomes; and
- Develop intentional partnership with Tribal governments aimed toward sustained and substantial support, resources, and collaboration.

## Setting an Anti-Racist Policy Agenda

The Board directed the CEO to develop an anti-racist policy agenda in the July 21, 2020 motion that established ARDI. The agenda is meant to guide advocacy for legislation that improves outcomes, reduces racial disparities, and supports local, regional, state, and federal initiatives aimed at dismantling systemic racism. ARDI, in collaboration with Prevention Institute, will meet the Board's directive to establish a racial equity-centered Countywide policy agenda by engaging diverse stakeholders within and outside the County to inform policy agenda priorities and an anti-racist policy framework that can inform future policy efforts;

- Explore reparations for descendants of enslaved Black Americans and indigenous populations based on actions taken by LA County since its inception; and
- Examine the ways the Civil Service system has upheld white supremacy and excluded communities of color.





# Moving Toward Implementation





## MOVING TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

ARDI will coordinate the implementation of the Racial Equity Strategic Plan through an Accountability Framework, in collaboration with department staff and leadership. The Accountability Framework is comprised of a suite of resources to implement changes through policy and practice shifts, measure progress through transparent data and evaluation, and expand County's impact through alignment with existing efforts and strategic partnerships across sectors. ARDI will advance this multi-pronged accountability framework and monitor activities through a governance structure that will track the Plan's progress and revisit its Strategic Goals and associated data every three years. This will allow ARDI to adjust the Plan as needed, recognizing that population needs will likely change and shift over time.

As the largest and most diverse county in America, Los Angeles County is poised to make racial equity a durable reality for its residents. Galvanized by the Board to develop a comprehensive plan for realizing ambitious equity goals over the next decade, this document charts a course that has been reviewed and endorsed by thousands of residents, community organizations, and potential partners. Recognizing that racial inequity in our region is the product of decades of decisions by powerful public and private actors, the 99 strategies outlined in this plan seek to help bend the moral arc of history toward justice by collaborating with today's private and public county, state and federal stakeholders to create a future where every resident can and does thrive. More concretely, this document signifies a commitment and roadmap for change that over the next decade will aim to

significantly reduce disparate outcomes in the areas of physical and mental health, housing and housing stability, meaningful employment opportunities, language access, public safety and justice, and language access by race and ethnicity and other intersecting identities, including, but not limited to, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, and disability.



**LA County must act in the public's interest to ensure that communities can fairly access justice and an effective remedy when they have faced discrimination.**

### Endnotes

1 Bayer, P., Charles, K. K., & Park, J. (2021). Separate and Unequal: Race and the Geography of the American Housing Market.

2 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/0034644619873105>

<https://www.latimes.com/visuals/framework/la-me-fw-archives-ku-klux-klan-images-from-the-1920s-20170825-story.html>

3 Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). 2022 Poverty Guidelines: 48 Contiguous States (all states except Alaska and Hawaii). Online at: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/4b515876c4674466423975826ac57583/Guidelines-2022.pdf>



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the bold vision and support of our Board of Supervisors who continue to carry forward the County's commitment to improving the quality of life for the people and communities in Los Angeles County:

Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Second District and Board Chair  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, First District  
Supervisors Sheila Kuehl, Third District  
Supervisor Janice Hahn, Fourth District  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Fifth District



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**For a full list of acknowledgments, citations, and to access the full Los Angeles County Racial Equity Strategic Plan please visit [ceo.lacounty.gov/racial-equity-strategic-plan/](https://ceo.lacounty.gov/racial-equity-strategic-plan/) or scan the QR code above.**







## Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative

[ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/racial-equity-strategic-plan](https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/racial-equity-strategic-plan) | [race-equity@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:race-equity@ceo.lacounty.gov)

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County of Los Angeles

**Anti-Racism,  
Diversity,  
& Inclusion**

CREATING AN LA COUNTY  
WHERE WE ALL THRIVE