



County of Los Angeles

**Poverty
Alleviation
Initiative**

PATHWAYS TO THRIVE

**Stepping Up Together:
Co-Creating Paths to a Brighter Future**

Year Two Update

**Los Angeles County
Poverty Alleviation Initiative
Chief Executive Office**

<http://ceo.lacounty.gov/pai>

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Executive Summary

Key PAI Accomplishments This Year

The Poverty Alleviation Initiative (PAI) continues its work with many partners across projects aligned with PAI's strategic framework. The accomplishments featured below were achieved in collaboration with the following partners: Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS); Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA); Department of Public Social Services (DPSS); Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO); Department of Public Health (DPH); Strength Based Community Change (SBCC); Los Angeles City; Community Investment for Families Department (CIFD); Koreatown Youth + Community Center (KYCC); End Poverty in California (EPIC); and Economic Security Project California.

- ✧ Second Expansion of Breathe - LA County's Guaranteed Income Program to provide over 2,000 foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 with \$500 per month for 18 months.
- ✧ Secured an additional \$5.2 million for the DPSS-administered General Relief housing voucher subsidy program, doubling the service capacity for the 2024-2025 Program Year by an additional 1,167 vouchers.
- ✧ Increased the number of low-income tax filings within our network by 4,927 returns in the second year of coordinated tax outreach.
 - Increased the total amount of refunds received within our network by \$6,645,271 when compared to refunds received by April 2023; and
 - Applying the standard local multiplier (1.2 to 1.5) to this amount produces an estimated local economic impact of \$7,974,325 to \$9,967,906 spent in our under-resourced communities.
- ✧ Won the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Bronze Eagle Award in 2023 and a National Association of Counties Achievement Award in 2024 for increasing the number of low-income tax filings through coordinated tax outreach.

Key Partner-Led Accomplishments This Year

- ✧ DCBA provided 1,000 survivors of intimate partner/domestic violence with \$2.5 million in cash assistance;
- ✧ DCBA helped 2,760 residents collect over \$3.9 million in back wages and fines¹;
- ✧ Los Angeles City and CIFD assisted 2,195 unique households with financial assistance exceeding \$3.3 million and prevented them from experiencing homelessness¹;
- ✧ DPH's Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE) released \$1,347,750 million in stipends for 1,000 early educators and child care providers; and
- ✧ DEO awarded more than 4,800 grants to microbusinesses, small businesses, and nonprofits, totaling over \$50 million.

¹ Project data is cumulative and includes data from both the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 program years.

Introduction

In July 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted the Poverty Alleviation Initiative's (PAI's) strategic framework for alleviating poverty, "*Stepping Up Together: Co-Creating Paths to a Brighter Future*." Numerous listening sessions were held involving 1,024 participants, including 643 residents and individuals with lived expertise, to ensure the resulting plan would reflect a collective vision for how the County and its partners should work together to alleviate poverty.

Four key strategies emerged from this process:

- ❖ **Invest In our Communities**
- ❖ **Strengthen Pathways to Opportunities**
- ❖ **Expand Access to Basic Supports**
- ❖ **Improve Our Service Delivery System**

In September 2022, the PAI prioritized actions across these strategies to begin its work. The following five priorities were chosen because of their level of relevance, readiness, impact, and commitment by partners to achieve them. They were strongly supported by residents and community-based organizations who participated in the listening sessions that drove the framework development.

Five priority actions to start:

- ❖ **Supporting grassroots community-led projects**
- ❖ **Maximizing guaranteed income resources available**
- ❖ **Increasing tax credit filings**
- ❖ **Developing a person-centered service delivery model**
- ❖ **Reforming General Relief (GR)**

If we are successful in implementing these strategies, we will expect to see a decrease in the number of Los Angeles County residents in poverty over time, as well as positive shifts in other outcome areas.

We believe that poverty as a systemic issue does not have to be thought of as overwhelming and intractable. It is time that we challenge assumptions that allow us to accept widespread poverty as a 'given,' and truly disrupt its cycle.

Progress Made This Year

Progress continues to be made across all five of the priorities identified in the PAI strategic framework, *Stepping Up Together*, and all 19 of the additional priorities led by other partners. This reflects the addition of a new priority project, improving benefits access and equity in CalWORKs. The new project, led in partnership with DPSS and the Benefits Access and Equity collaborative, aims to apply guaranteed income learnings to the CalWORKs program. The addition of a new priority is the product of the strong commitment and determination from our partners to end poverty in Los Angeles County.

PAI Strategic Framework Priorities

1) Supporting Grassroots Community-Led Projects

PAI, in partnership with DCFS, released grants to 20 neighborhoods across Los Angeles County. The grant was used toward projects that uplift resident identified priorities and addresses either a root cause or effect of poverty.

- ✧ 20 resident-led projects launched on July 1, 2023, and received a grant of \$135,000 to implement their ideas for addressing root causes and effects of poverty within their communities.
- ✧ Projects include:
 - Issuing \$2,500 scholarships to local high school students that can be used towards tuition or cost of living;
 - Securing a mobile space to safely host community meetings and events. The space has hosted a community book club, community meetings, and even resident celebratory events and quinceañeras;
 - Culturally based nutrition and cooking courses for youth accompanied with family grants for food in neighborhoods where healthy food is not accessible; and
 - Community beautification efforts that provide residents and their homes with a community crew to manicure and improve their outdoor spaces.
- ✧ The initiative is being evaluated by the University of California, Los Angeles with plans to release findings in late Summer 2024.

2) Maximizing Guaranteed Income Resources Available

Guaranteed income is an effective strategy towards alleviating poverty while also improving health and well-being outcomes. Guaranteed income programs provide cash grants without the paternalistic requirements traditionally accompanied with government-funded benefit programs, like work requirements. Research and evidence are now demonstrating that a guaranteed income program provides households with financial stability, improved employment and economic mobility outcomes, increased engagement in post-secondary education, reduced stress, reduced medical and doctor visits, and increased sense of hope and well-being.

While the County, City, and many partners behind the twelve guaranteed income projects that have launched throughout the County build additional evidence to further demonstrate the positive impact and efficacy of guaranteed income, we are all also contributing to national and statewide narrative change work. Narrative change uplifts the resounding evidence that

people who receive guaranteed income spend their money on basic needs and investments that provide pathways towards intergenerational wealth. In support of narrative change, the County and the City are hosting a Guaranteed Income Summit for policymakers, funders, and government agencies this summer.

In addition to narrative change, the County is also interested in supporting national and state legislative pursuits that offer permanency and sustainability for guaranteed income programs.

❖ **Legislative Advocacy**

The County is supporting legislation that offers more opportunities to provide cash assistance without the traditional requirements typically associated with cash-based benefits programs, such as guaranteed income. Currently, the County is supporting and advocating for the following federal and state bills:

- ❖ H.R. 7024 (Smith) – this bill contains provisions to increase and modify the Child Tax Credit and enhance the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, offering more cash for families at time of tax filing. Historically, the Child Tax Credit has lifted more than 500,000 children out of poverty.
- ❖ H.R. 7038 (Garcia) – this bill would allow states to provide guaranteed income to older youth who have exited foster care. The bill proposes to offer eligible youth \$1,000 per month for up to one-year.
- ❖ A.B. 2263 (Friedman) – establishes a Guaranteed Income (GI) Coordinating Council with eleven members tasked with examining the feasibility, benefits, and challenges of scaling up permanent guaranteed income programs in California. PAI participated in the statewide workgroup that informed the final provisions included in this bill.

❖ **Breathe - Los Angeles County's Guaranteed Income Program**

The County's original program Breathe – Los Angeles County's Guaranteed Income Program launched in March 2021, and is providing 1,000 randomly selected residents with \$1,000 per month for three years. In June of 2023, the program expanded to include 200 former Los Angeles County DCFS foster youth between the ages of 21 and 23 with \$1,000 per month for two years. The program evaluation is being led by the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Guaranteed Income Research (CGIR), with a subcontract to the University of California, Los Angeles. The program is being run in partnership with Strength Based Community Change; DCFS; DCBA; DPSS; the CEO's Center for Strategic Partnerships; the Chief Information Office; Anti-Racism, Diversity, & Inclusion Initiative; Internal Services Department; Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk; and County Counsel. Philanthropic partners include the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation; First 5 LA; The California Endowment; The California Wellness Foundation; The James Irvine Foundation; The Kresge Foundation; and the Weingart Foundation.

- ❖ Expanding the program for a second time in the Fall of 2024 to include over 2,000 DCFS foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 with \$500 per month for eighteen months through stipends made available for youth in care and participating in enrichment activities.

❖ **Abundant Birth – Los Angeles**

Abundant Birth is amongst the first cohort of projects funded by the California Department of Social Services' Guaranteed Income Pilot Program. Abundant Birth is the first pregnancy guaranteed income program in the United States, serving expectant mothers and birthing people facing long-standing disparities in birth outcomes. Selected individuals will receive \$807 per month for 18 months alongside access to an Abundant Birth coach who will serve as a navigator to various health, economic, and supportive services. The partnership for

this project includes the Department of Public Health (DPH); the African American Infant and Maternal Mortality Initiative; Department of Health Services; the Department of Mental Health (DMH); philanthropic funders; and First 5 LA.

- ✧ Launched in January of 2024, the program has enrolled 119 mothers and/or birthing people, with 70 opting to work with an Abundant Birth coach.

3) Increasing Tax Credit Filings

Each year, Los Angeles County residents forego close to an estimated \$600 million in federal tax credits, either by not filing their tax returns or by not claiming these credits. Partnered for the second year with DCBA; DPSS; Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO); Aging and Disabilities Department; Los Angeles City; Koreatown Youth + Community Center (KYCC); PHFE Women, Infants, and Children, a Program of Heluna Health; Economic Security Project; and the CEO's Women and Girls Initiative to align messaging and media campaigns geared toward low-income residents, expand outreach to those who may not typically file taxes, create 'warm hand-offs' and stronger connections to free tax supports, and increase the capacity of free tax-preparation sites. The goal of this initiative is to increase direct income to those who are eligible.

The *Free Tax Prep LA* campaign launched by Los Angeles City, the County's DCBA, and KYCC was leveraged and expanded by this project to now include the *Claim Your Cash Los Angeles* campaign, which included an easy to navigate webpage and customer service call center.

❖ Coordinated Countywide Efforts

There was a significant increase in both overall tax filings and cash refunds for Los Angeles County residents, when comparing 2023 and 2024 IRS tax data.

- ✧ The number of low-income tax filers increased by 4,927, resulting in an increase of \$6,645,271 million in additional refunds.
- ✧ Applying the standard local multiplier (1.2 to 1.5) to this amount produces an estimated local economic impact of \$7,974,325 to \$9,967,906 spent in our under-resourced communities.
- ✧ The amount of low-income tax filers receiving the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) increased by 1,445, resulting in an additional \$2.3 million claimed by filers this year when compared to last year.
- ✧ The amount of low-income tax filers receiving the Child Tax Credit (CTC) increased by 1,372, resulting in an additional \$2.2 million claimed by filers this year when compared to last year.

Given the impact of these dollars spent locally, this project has already improved economic conditions for more than 53,000 Los Angeles County residents that filed taxes within our network and their communities.

4) Improving Benefits Access and Equity in CalWORKs

The PAI, Center for Strategic Partnerships (CSP), DPSS, End Poverty in California (EPIC), and the Benefits Access and Equity (BAE) Collaborative are partnering to develop a pilot project that applies learnings from guaranteed income to the CalWORKs program, known locally as Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN).

- ✧ Launched a one-year planning phase that will develop a pilot project within the CalWORKs program for recipients who enter employment with the goal of mitigating a benefits cliff and continuing services without the stress of meeting traditional program requirements, applying learnings from guaranteed income.

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- ✧ The project received philanthropic funding for the one-year planning phase with project implementation planned for the 2025-26 Program Year.

5) Reforming General Relief (GR)

DPSS's GR program is a 100 percent County-funded program that provides cash assistance and supportive services to single adults and couples without dependents who need financial support. The PAI and DPSS are partnering to develop policy and practice reforms, including those addressing housing needs and sustainable jobs, that help participants gain greater financial stability.

❖ GR Reform

- ✧ Last year, a preliminary analysis of the California State Welfare and Institutions Code and Los Angeles County Code statutory provisions was conducted. The analysis identified barriers that limit meaningful service delivery to GR recipients.
- ✧ This year, listening sessions and interviews were conducted with 135 GR recipients across nine district offices, over 24 community-based organizations and advocates, DPSS staff, and several other County Welfare Departments that administer local GR programs.
- ✧ Data from these efforts were categorized across three themes: eligibility & enrollment; benefits & services; and customer service. These themes will serve to inform the upcoming launch of a working group, which will include both internal and external partners. The working group will begin in the Fall of 2024, with the goal of developing policy and practice recommendations.

Additional DPSS Activities Include:

❖ Homeless Service Model

- ✧ Developing a stronger pathway to housing and other support services for unhoused recipients that is anticipated to launch in 2025; it is estimated that over 63 percent of the approximately 118,000 GR recipients are experiencing homelessness.
- ✧ In the interim, PAI assisted DPSS in securing additional funding for the GR housing voucher program. Through coordinated planning and advocacy, funding increased by over \$5.2 million, providing vouchers an additional 1,167 GR recipients with housing vouchers, more than doubling the current capacity of the program.

Partner-Led Strategic Framework Priorities

Listed below is the progress made on the 19 additional priorities led by our partners.

Progress Made This Year

Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

❖ Developing a Person-Centered Service Delivery System

This project was created to implement customer service enhancements and improvements to DPSS's public-facing services, with the goal of improving recipients' experiences and increasing the number of eligible people seeking out and getting needed support.

To date, the project has:

- ✧ Launched a series of randomized telephonic and in-person customer service surveys to collect data on customer experience. As of November of 2023, the surveys are offered in all DPSS threshold languages to ensure equity in engagement and participation.
- ✧ Established an internal committee to develop strategies for improving overall performance. Strategies include training and staff development, improving customer service focused skills, and modifying operations and flow of service to better meet the needs of DPSS customers.

Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA)

❖ Worker Protections

The Office of Labor Equity (OLE) enforces worker protection ordinances adopted by the County of Los Angeles including the Minimum Wage, Public Health Anti-Retaliation, Prevention of Human Trafficking, Fair Chance, Fair Workweek Ordinances, as well as partner municipalities and State labor laws. Through these enforcement efforts, OLE ensures payment of proper wages, a workplace free of retaliation, and fair scheduling and hiring processes for workers in the County.

To date, the Office of Labor Equity has:

- ✧ Helped 2,760 residents receive over \$3,942,535 collected in back wages and fines;
- ✧ Educated over 3,000 businesses to ensure compliance through one-on-one consultations and workshops throughout the County's five Supervisorial Districts; and
- ✧ Adopted policies and procedures to issue statements of interest to allow workers to receive immigration benefits inclusive of an expedited work permit to ensure immigrant workers have access to meaningful job opportunities.

❖ Wealth-Building and Estate Planning

Launched in December 2023, the Leaving a Legacy Program provides access to free estate planning and legal services to eligible Los Angeles County residents to support the creation and retention of intergenerational wealth. Since its launch, this program has:

- ✧ Conducted 51 outreach events in high-need areas that connected with 1,287 residents to raise awareness about the need and benefits of estate planning; and
- ✧ Provided 119 individuals with legal guidance pertaining to drafting of wills, trusts, advanced healthcare directives, and/or powers of attorney.

❖ GreenLine Home Program

The Greenline Home Program addresses historical impacts of redlining by increasing homeownership and wealth-building for marginalized Los Angeles County residents. The program offers eligible first-time homebuyers with a \$35,000 forgivable loan to assist with the down payment and/or closing costs for the purchase of their first home. Since the program launched in January 2024, the program has:

- ✧ Received 101 applications;
- ✧ Awarded \$175,000 in Greenline funding for first-time home purchases; and
- ✧ Conducted 20 workshops that have reached 716 people to learn about the Greenline Home Program and other available homeowner resources. This includes six first-time homebuyer workshops to better prepare new homeowners for the responsibilities of owning a home.

❖ **Healthy Food Kickstarter**

DCBA's Healthy Food Kickstarter project aims to increase access to nutritious, local foods in food insecure areas of the County through a combination of grants and technical assistance to local businesses and organizations launching new healthy food initiatives or expanding existing efforts. To date, the project has:

- ❖ Disbursed \$2,050,000 in grants to 34 grantees;
- ❖ Conducted 139 one-on-one technical assistance sessions with grantees, both in-person and virtually; and
- ❖ Held four group workshops/networking sessions that provided grantees with both information on how to effectively launch their Healthy Food Kickstarter project and served as an opportunity to engage with other grantees.

❖ **Mortgage Relief Program**

Launched in June 2023, this \$4,000,000 program provides up to \$30,000 in financial relief to landlords with mortgages to alleviate rental debt accrued during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its launch, the program has:

- ❖ Awarded \$4,000,000 to 181 applicants with grants averaging \$22,099.
 - 72 percent of grantees reside in the County's high and highest needs census tracts as defined by the COVID-19 Vulnerability and Recovery Index.

❖ **Cash Grants to Survivors of Intimate Partner/Domestic Violence**

The Empower-u Fund was designed to provide immediate, minimal barrier financial assistance, with a \$2,500 grant to 1,000 domestic and/or intimate partner violence survivors. The grant can be used to cover relocation expenses, medical bills, and other costs necessary to bolster financial independence amongst survivors. To date, the program has:

- ❖ Disbursed \$2,500,000 to 1,000 survivor grantees in the form of a \$2,500 grant each;
- ❖ Provided ongoing wraparound services to grantees, which includes one-on-one counseling, family counseling, trauma-informed counseling, and housing navigation services;
- ❖ Allocated an additional \$950,000, which is currently being disbursed and providing nearly 500 additional survivors with a \$2,500 grant; and
- ❖ DCBA is now working towards incorporating an additional \$4,000,000 in funding through a third expansion of the program.

❖ **Expansion of Financial Coaching**

DCBA's Financial Coaching Partnership project was launched to increase the capacity of community-based organizations (CBO) to provide financial coaching and debt avoidance services to residents of Los Angeles County most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project established a Financial Coaching Certification Training Academy that certifies staff to become financial coaches. CBOs receive a \$12,000 grant for each employee who obtains a certification, creating a network of financial ambassadors across all participating CBOs. Since its launch, the program has:

- ❖ Certified 21 CBO staff and distributed grants to each of the participating CBOs totaling over \$250,000.

Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (OAECE)

❖ \$1.3 Million in Financial Incentives for Early Educators

Workforce Pathways LA (WPLA) is a comprehensive workforce development model that supports early educators in their professional growth. The stipend program supports early educators in center-based care, family child care settings, and family, friends, and neighbors working to become licensed family child care providers.

- ❖ Processing \$1,347,750 million in financial incentives for 1,000 early educators who improved their qualifications.
 - 21 stipend awards were for obtaining a Family Child Care License;
 - 374 stipend awards were for completing 21 hours of professional development;
 - 485 stipend awards were for completing college courses;
 - 31 stipend awards were for obtaining an initial Child Development Permit;
 - 89 stipend awards were for achieving an associate's, or bachelor's degree; and
 - 252 WPLA participants received at least one session of college and career advisement.

Los Angeles City, Community Investment for Families Department (CIFD)

❖ Solid Ground Homelessness Prevention Program Expansion

The Solid Ground Homelessness Prevention Program was successfully integrated into CIFD's broader anti-poverty initiatives and expanded to 19 Family Source Centers, an increase from the expansion to eight Family Source Centers last year. The program was originally created in 2020 to stop the inflow into the homeless system by providing supportive services, temporary financial assistance, and financial coaching to participants with the goal of stabilizing their living conditions. This new strategic expansion provides comprehensive support to vulnerable populations and addresses the root causes of homelessness. Since July 2023, the program has:

- ❖ Provided financial assistance totaling over \$3.3 million to 569 households, impacting 2,195 individuals; and
- ❖ This support has been instrumental in preventing these households from experiencing homelessness, demonstrating the effectiveness of an integrated approach to combating poverty and homelessness.

California State

❖ CalKIDS

CalKIDS is a children's savings account (CSA) program that is funded by the State. The program is being administered by the ScholarShare Investment Board and provides each child born in California, foster youth, youth experiencing homelessness, and other eligible low-income public-school students with up to \$1,500 in grant scholarships. Funds can be withdrawn tax-free for educational expenses.

- ❖ Los Angeles City is partnering with the County to launch a campaign across Los Angeles County this fall to encourage eligible people to register.
- ❖ The State is currently in progress to release a marketing toolkit and outreach resources for local partners to help market the program and lead local campaigns. Resources are planned to be released in early 2025.

First 5 LA

❖ Increasing family, friends, and neighbors who provide child care

Implemented the second year of a five-year initiative focused on increasing home-based child care, which is child care offered in a provider's home or in the child's home. Home-based child care is the most common form of nonparental child care for Infants, toddlers, and historically marginalized families. To date, the initiative has:

- ❖ Funded a collaborative Home-Based Child Care Strategy Group composed of system partners and practitioners and created a joint work plan focused on:
 - Developing a holistic support model that meets the multi-faceted needs of home-based care providers;
 - Increasing home-based care providers' access to benefits, specifically health care through Child Care Providers United; and
 - Reducing barriers for home-based care providers to access food programs.
- ❖ Launched an advisory committee of Family, Friend, and Neighbor caregivers.
- ❖ Executed an agreement with Home Grown, a national collaborative of funders committed to improving the quality of and access to home-based child care to pilot Thriving Providers Project, a guaranteed income program for Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers, in Los Angeles County. An RFP was released last month, for an implementation partner to support the administration of the program.

Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)

❖ Worker Equity Fund

The Worker Equity Fund provides \$1,500 in cash assistance to participants in any ARPA-funded DEO high-road workforce training program to help cover the costs of services participants access while trying to secure employment. The types of supportive services they can choose to use the funding for, while searching for a job, include transportation, child and dependent care, housing assistance, legal aid, and technological support.

- ❖ Received 283 referrals since launching in March 2023.
 - 222 high-road training program participants received \$1,500 cash payments to cover supportive services used while seeking employment for a total of \$333,000 distributed to date; and
 - 191 participants completed their training program, and 91 of them secured permanent employment.

❖ Youth@Work Elevate

This program offers paid work experience in a high-growth sector, or with an employer offering high-road jobs. It targets youth between the ages of 17 - 24 and residing in areas most impacted by the pandemic; current or former foster youth; individuals experiencing homelessness; LGBTQ+ youth; and/or justice-impacted youth.

- ❖ Since launching in September 2022, over 1,510 applications have been received, with applications still incoming for the sixth and final cohort set to begin this month.
 - 788 youth have enrolled in the program;
 - 605 youth have received subsidized work experience;
 - 709 youth completed personal enrichment training;

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- 617 attended group mentoring sessions;
 - 342 youth secured unsubsidized employment, 96 in high-growth sectors; and
 - 19 youth entered post-secondary education or advanced training.
- ✧ Won the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Golden Eagle Award in 2023 for the Youth@Work partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

❖ **Economic Opportunity Grant**

This program provides streamlined outreach and access to over \$50 million in grants from the American Rescue Plan Act and the State's Office of Small Business Advocate. Grant sizes range from \$2,500 to \$25,000 to help small businesses, non-profit organizations, and microentrepreneurs recover, stabilize, and grow. Nearly half of grants went to microbusinesses with less than \$50,000 in revenue. It is one of the largest small business grant programs ever administered at the County level in the United States.

- ✧ Launched Phase 1 (State Microbusiness Grant) on January 25, 2023.
 - 27,507 applications were received; and
 - Nearly 2,400 grants were awarded, totaling close to \$6 million.
- ✧ Launched Phase 2 (ARP grant programs) on February 23, 2023.
 - 55,730 applications were received; and
 - Over 2,400 grants were awarded, totaling nearly \$46 million.

❖ **PLACE Program Expansion**

The Preparing Los Angeles for County Employment (PLACE) program, launched in October 2018, prepares job seekers interested in public sector employment for entry-level County jobs that offer a career pathway in high road sectors. PLACE prioritizes individuals facing barriers to employment and offers a six to eight-week customized professional development training program, which includes civil service exam preparation, stipends while participating in training, and supportive services. The program is a partnership with the Department of Human Resources and the Worker Education & Resource Center.

- ✧ Placed 282 participants into LA County employment since launch; and
- ✧ PLACE has partnered with 13 County departments, including: Child Support Services, Health Services, Parks and Recreation, Beaches and Harbors, Public Defender, Public Health, and Mental Health.

Food Equity Roundtable

❖ **Mapping Food Access and Food Deserts**

The goal of this project is to map all food access locations by neighborhoods to identify areas vulnerable to food insecurity to inform future policy development and resource allocations. Additional funding was allocated to release Food Equity Grants - community grants to alleviate food insecurity and build a more resilient food system across Los Angeles County. The investment:

- ✧ Developed a "Food Base LA" interactive dashboard that provides a comprehensive picture of the Los Angeles County food ecosystem and includes data on food insecurity, diet-related health indicators, food assistance resources, retail food outlets, demographic information, food benefits usage and gaps, and community vulnerability indices; and

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- ✧ Released \$9.8 million in Food Equity Grants to 46 organizations and community partners to fund projects targeting root causes of local food insecurity. Projects range from nutrition promotion, support with accessing public benefits, strengthening our existing food systems, and expanding food distribution efforts.

In Early Stages of Implementation

Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)

❖ Economic Mobility Initiative

The Economic Mobility Initiative (EMI) brings together a coalition of partners to better serve underinvested communities and businesses across LA County. EMI empowers LA County small business owners, entrepreneurs, and non-profits by providing tailored support that helps them thrive and build generational wealth in their communities.

DEO serves as a coordinating “Hub” to three programmatic spokes:

- ✧ Certification and Contracting - Includes a Certification and Contracting Training Bootcamp launching this month; a Social Enterprise Training and Support Academy launching in August 2024; and catered Employee Ownership Services that launched in November 2023 to provide technical assistance and support to businesses interested in transitioning to an employee ownership model.
- ✧ Access to Capital and Commercial Space - Includes the Commercial Acquisition Fund launched in April of 2024, and the Small Business Mobility Fund launching in the fall of 2024.
 - The Commercial Acquisition Fund received 210 applications and is in the process of granting \$10 million across 5-10 qualified applicants to support the acquisition of vacant properties; and
 - The Small Business Mobility Fund will distribute \$3.89 million in loans and grants to more than 250 qualified small businesses, social enterprises, entrepreneurs, street vendors, and microbusinesses.
- ✧ District-Level Entrepreneurship Academies - Launched in May of 2024, offers 500 entrepreneurs and small business owners with cohort-based training and technical assistance to support start-up, growth, and business services.

Los Angeles City, Community Investment for Families Department (CIFD)

❖ LA City Emergency Fund

With the recent Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding cuts, the City is redefining the target population for the LA Emergency Fund to prioritize survivors. This strategic shift ensures that limited resources are directed towards survivors urgently needing support. By focusing on survivors, the City aims to provide crucial assistance for their recovery and stability, addressing the immediate needs stemming from their victimization and assisting in rebuilding their lives. The City remains committed to the original program design, which combines financial assistance with financial coaching to help survivors sustain themselves beyond the initial emergency support.

As a result of these changes, there has been a delay in launching the program as the City secures the necessary approvals and releases a Request for Interest (RFI) from service providers. Currently, the program is planned to launch in January 2025.

Next Steps

As we recognize progress and achievements in the second year of implementing the five PAI priorities and the additional 19 partner-led priorities, we also recognize the spirit of collaboration and resiliency amongst our many partners.

The University of California, Los Angeles will be leading a five-year meta evaluation of all 24 priorities to demonstrate the impact that these initiatives are making on our shared goal of alleviating poverty. The evaluation is nearing the end of a one-year planning period to develop the evaluation model, which will include final program level measures and corresponding indicators to identify progress made towards the outcomes originally detailed in PAI's strategic framework. This evaluation will offer key data to consider when making future recommendations for policy development, legislative advocacy, and allocation of resources. The launch of the five-year evaluation is planned for early 2025.

With excitement, we look forward to accomplishing many more milestones and goals as we step together into the third year of implementation of the PAI strategic framework.