

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS



THE PROBLEM

When our City became the epicenter of COVID-19, our most vulnerable community members bore the brunt of the crisis, experiencing devastating levels of tragedy, hardship, and trauma. Our families, neighbors, and fellow Angelinos continue to pay the price for this pandemic, and have been fractured by its profound reach on all facets of life.

During times of tragedy and loss, L.A.'s communities have faced disaster with courage, determination and a real investment in making the City whole again. Now, as we move towards a recovery and re-imagining of everyday life in the wake of this pandemic, we have a substantial opportunity to help Angelinos get back on their feet, and to take steps towards building a Los Angeles that is livable for everyone. Whether you are a frontline health care worker, grocery worker, educator, non-profit or small business owner—we have all been impacted.

While we all have suffered under the pandemic, communities of color, especially South LA, East Los Angeles, and East San Fernando Valley, have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 as the virus worsened pre-existing inequitable material conditions such as food insecurity, wealth inequality and the digital divide, among others. According to research conducted by Advancement Project CA, African Americans and Latinos, who are the primary demographic of South LA, East San Fernando Valley and East LA, have among the highest COVID-19 death rates; and South LA and East LA ZIP codes rank among the highest in the state for risks of infection, deaths, and a longer economic recovery.

Further, according to a Rolling Stone article: "Ten of the richest neighborhoods in Los Angeles County combined, representing about 323,000 people, have about 700 fewer confirmed coronavirus cases than just the city of Compton (95,000 people) alone ...", underscoring the vast differences in how this virus is being experienced across communities.

[In Los Angeles, Pandemic Life Depends on Where You Live](#)

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

Not only have there been vast differences, but also deep inequities regarding access to the vaccine. The Los Angeles Times recently reported, “In some neighborhoods on the wealthy Westside such as Beverly Hills, 25% of residents have already received the first dose of the two-shot vaccine. In contrast, South L.A. and neighboring cities such as Compton and Watts, where incomes are lower and a majority of residents are Latino, only 5% of residents have been vaccinated.”

[New map shows deep inequities in L.A.'s COVID-19 vaccine rollout](#)

OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORT

Over the past year, Brotherhood Crusade, Community Coalition, InnerCity Struggle, and SEIU 2015 have been directly engaged in relief efforts to help our communities through this crisis. Our members live in the hardest hit communities and work in the hardest workforce.

Community Coalition

Since March 16, CoCo has been delivering water, sanitizing supplies, paper towels and toilet paper to its members. The organization has also talked to more than 1,000 South LA residents and distributed essential supplies—including 23,000 pieces of PPE. CoCo has also connected more than 2,000 South LA senior residents to hot meal programs and provided more than \$525,000 in direct relief (including rent/mortgage assistance, utilities and food).

Last summer, CoCo created a virtual summer academic program to service over 100 families and prepare Black and Brown students attending the highest need schools in the LAUSD for distance learning. The program offered an intentional and strategic **academic intervention** to make up for the loss of learning and to prepare them for the upcoming school year, and provided **social & emotional support** to students and parents to address their mental health and overall wellness needs. It also helped to ensure that all families had **technology hardware and internet connection**, and that they were proficient in using the technology in preparation for the upcoming school year. As we approach the one-year anniversary of Covid’s unprecedented impact, CoCo continues to provide tech tutorials and mental health workshops to parents and learning pod opportunities to students to combat learning loss.

InnerCity Struggle (ICS)

InnerCity Struggle (ICS) has supported over 480 Eastside low-income, majority Latinx and immigrant families through the pandemic period. ICS has provided \$370,000 in cash assistance to support Eastside families with rent, utilities and other basic necessities. The organization has also distributed 78,000 surgical masks and hundreds of bottles in hand sanitizer to low-income Eastside residents and organizations. ICS has supported over 200 Eastside high school students with individualized academic and social emotional support during this challenging period.

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

Brotherhood Crusade

The Brotherhood Crusade has provided direct service to 20,000 low-income families, as well as provided over \$900,000 in monetary support to help South Los Angeles families with rent, utilities, food insecurities, PPE and other essential items. In addition, the organization has provided students with 2,500 tablets and hot spots, food baskets, new clothing, and shoes.

The Brotherhood Crusade joined forces with Community Coalition and InnerCity Struggle to fight the digital divide that students of color were experiencing in the virtual learning environment. The organizations raised \$400,000 to support high-need South and East Los Angeles students with technology to address deep educational inequities in the virtual environment including chromes, laptops and WiFi hotspots. Collectively, the organizations provided over 3,000 chromes and laptops, over 200 WI-FI hotspots, and noise cancelling headphones to youth and families.

SEIU 2015

During the pandemic, SEIU Local 2015 contributed over \$500,000 to organizations throughout California. Through our contributions, we provided essential workers with PPE, supported community food banks that served thousands of families facing food insecurity, and assisted small grassroots organizations with their advocacy efforts. SEIU 2015 has donated hundreds of tablets to our member leaders and contributed \$25,000 to minority-owned small businesses.

THE OPPORTUNITY

In a matter of days, the City of Los Angeles will be awash in cash resulting from the Biden American Rescue Act. The City could receive a direct infusion of \$1.3 billion. [The Controller recently forecast](#) a shortfall for this fiscal year, ending on June 30—just three months from now—of \$550 million. The Controller further estimates that revenues will rebound and City budgets will follow in the months ahead.

While this recession has been extreme, it is likely to be less impactful on City budgets than the Great Recession of 2008-10. This recession has laid bare the jagged reefs of society divided between massive wealth and engulfing poverty. Wealth has bifurcated with the richest Angelinos gaining more, while the poorest and the former middle class struggle to stay housed, fed and employed.

Our city thrives when the least of us see a path to a better life. It fails when more of us face life on the streets and a sense of desperation. That's why we have come together now to demand a new deal for our Los Angeles. We want to build back better, not build back bitter. We cannot pave a road that recovers a system that simply does not work for the least of us. That kind of recovery would be an indictment of all of us.

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

The City’s leadership has a choice. It can use the revenue from Washington to fill budget holes and conduct business as usual, or it can join us in reimagining an inclusive Los Angeles.

OUR CALL: HELP MAKE LOS ANGELES WHOLE FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Over the next two years, Los Angeles will help get Angelinos back on their feet, and create real opportunities to communities who paid the biggest price over the past year, while helping everyone along the way.

We call on the City of Los Angeles to direct a **\$1 billion dollar investment over the next two years** towards poor and working-class families hit hardest by COVID, and develop a formula targeting 80% of those resources towards communities most deeply impacted by COVID. Those funds should be accountable and transparent to the people so that we see results for dollars spent.

We call on the City to use no more than \$500 million to restore city budgets. We agree that City employees need full pay for full work and we must do well by employees; however, we adamantly oppose the LAPD receiving any additional funding. In return, without penalty, we ask families to commit to participating in community service projects with local non-profits in their neighborhoods to reconnect with Los Angeles, and build our city from the community level up. The City must acknowledge all the powerful organizing and advocacy efforts underway to build an inclusive and equitable LA. These recommendations are a reflection of the current work in communities across the City.

We invite you to invest in our future by investing in women, families and communities in the following ways:

WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

1. Family Care for All

Create a fund of no less than \$250 million for child and elder care.

Child Care: The City should leverage funds to provide free child care before and after school until 8pm for families in need. Investing in an economy that puts children and families at the forefront means investing in our future. Many childcare centers have shut down during the pandemic due to low enrollment, fewer tuition dollars to fund staffing, and too many expenses to keep the doors open. Loans and grants have been unavailable to bridge the gap for these mostly women-owned small businesses that provide child care services throughout Los Angeles. Funding for before and after school child care can be housed in Recreation and Parks to support expansion of existing programs.

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

Elder Care: Additionally, the City should dedicate funding to support the in-home care of our elders. The COVID pandemic shined a bright light on the unsafe conditions in skilled nursing facilities. We must work together to ensure our elders and people with disabilities have access to the care and support needed to live safely in their own homes. We are calling for an In-Home Health Care Fund that offers the needed support to families. Such support may include but is not limited to:

- Financial resources toward obtaining additional hours of care for IHSS recipients who need more assistance than the maximum allowed by the county.
- Funding for home modifications for seniors and people with disabilities to ensure safety throughout the home.
- Providing internet access will help close the digital divide among seniors and allow them to utilize digital programs such as telehealth. This enables seniors to receive medical services without leaving their homes.

Additional data on family care for the most vulnerable members of our community

- As we move towards ensuring that families are able to work and support their families, and that women in particular are able to move forward from the unique impact on COVID-19 on their ability to work, increasing access to quality child care is an essential. Prior to the pandemic, though there are roughly 650,000 children under 5 in LA County, licensed childcare facilities and family child care homes could only meet the needs of 13% of working parents with very young children.
- Further, safe and high-quality care for low-income children of color remains even more of a challenge to find. For example, prior to the pandemic, data for African American and Latino families in South LA show that 43.1% primary caregivers to children ages 0-5, who are mostly women, report difficulty finding child care, compared to LA County as a whole (31.6%).
- An equitable job recovery, in which the needs and disparate impacts of the virus on women as primary caregivers is considered, requires a bold plan to increase access to childcare, especially for the most vulnerable and impacted families.

2. Racial Justice Equity Fund for Women

It is time we support the mothers and women who have carried the burden of the pandemic; a burden that has largely fallen on the shoulders of women of color. We call on the City to create an equity fund of no less than \$100 million to support women for training, finding employment, and supporting women-owned small businesses and women-led non-profit organizations. As an equity fund, it will place an emphasis on

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

women of color and also target support towards trans women. The fund should also include technical assistance to ensure that organizations led by and serving women of color have access to resources and technical assistance to build their capacity and infrastructure.

This fund must begin operation by July 1, offering a combination of low interest loans and grants, and invest fearlessly to create the next generation of small and medium-sized women-owned businesses as well as non-profit organizations, job training, and employer placement programs. This could be housed in the Economic and Workforce Development Department.

Additional Data on Women and the Impacts of COVID-19:

- More than 2 million women have left the labor force during the COVID lockdown. This pandemic has set women back 25 years (according to a BCC article) leaving women of color disproportionately affected by this pandemic. The fund will encourage women to get back into the workforce and set them up for success.
- Currently, women are earning just 82 cents for every dollar earned by men according to an [analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by the NWLC](#). That translates into \$10,157 less per year in median earnings for full-time working women.
- According to data from the [USC Dornsife Understanding Coronavirus in America Study](#), women have suffered the brunt of the virus as they serve as primary caregivers to children during a crisis in which most children are no longer in school, and have had reduced participation in childcare centers. Further, women have lost jobs at almost twice the rate of men. The disparities have also been psychological, as women with children reported being 9% more likely than those without children to experience psychological distress.

FAMILIES

3. Housing Security: Rent, Mortgage, Utilities Relief

Expand investments to no less than \$250 million to launch a comprehensive local housing stability program to cancel rent debt, suspend rent payments for eligible tenants, strengthen mortgage protections and support vulnerable landlords. The funds should be used to establish a local fund to provide financial relief to certain qualifying landlords to mitigate the economic impact of rent cancellation and ensure housing stability. For more information, read the Healthy L.A. Platform. In addition, the City should also provide resources for:

- Rental assistance (e.g. first and last month rent for first time renters)

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

- Utilities assistance and forgiveness and schedule by need and income
- Eviction defense and assistance

Key Data on Housing Insecurity:

- LA County reported that in 2017, over one third (34.9%) of households spend more than 30% of their household income on housing. In communities like South LA and East LA, it is even higher, with 62.7% and 48.5% respectively.
- The onset of COVID-19 and job loss has intensified the housing burden, and in many cases has led to families unable to pay for housing altogether.

4. Year Round Youth Employment and Leadership Opportunities

Invest no less than \$100 million in comprehensive and holistic employment programs focused on leadership development and life skills for high-need youth in South L.A., East L.A., McArthur Park, and the East San Fernando Valley. As we continue to navigate a pandemic, the threats to public education and the City’s social safety net are severe, and without aggressive investments in youth, the progress of key communities could potentially be set back decades.

- Pilot and grow different strategies that can contribute to the deep development of Black and Brown youth leaders who can remain engaged and committed to civic life, and who may pursue careers and volunteerism in their local neighborhoods. The life skills programming will enable youth to create a life plan and equip themselves with the skills to take steps toward achieving their goals.
- Youth leadership development programs to teach young people soft and hard skills including the importance of community and civic engagement, arts and culture in outreach and education, public speaking, organizing skills, research, meeting facilitation, data input, assessment, etc.
- Life skills and life management programs can help to prepare youth with the skills to transition to successful adulthood including financial management, healthy sexuality, youth development, health maintenance and access to healthy cooking, exercise, and relationships.
- The City should also adopt the recommendations of the Executive Task Force on Youth Development to establish a Youth Development Department.

5. Guaranteed Basic Income: Dedicate \$100 million to provide two years of guaranteed basic income of at least \$1,500 a month to families in highest need areas. This could be done in collaboration with existing pilots (e.g., Council District 9) and help additional Council members run pilot programs. There should be no requirement around citizenship for eligibility

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

Key Data on Communities of Color and Families Living in Poverty

- “Ten of the richest neighborhoods in Los Angeles County combined, representing about 323,000 people, have about 700 fewer confirmed coronavirus cases than just the city of Compton (95,000 people) alone ...”, underscoring the vast differences in how this virus is being experienced across communities.
- According to research conducted by Advancement Project CA, African Americans and Latinos, who are the primary demographic of South LA and East LA, have among the highest COVID-19 death rates; and South LA and East LA zip codes rank among the highest in the state for risks for infection, deaths, and a longer economic recovery (Race Counts).

COMMUNITY

6. Community Driven Safety Fund:

We call on the city to increase investments of no less than \$200 million to support Community Intervention Workers, the establishment of Healing Centers in communities that have fallen victims to police abuse, and establish a “reimagine public safety innovation fund” to invest in community driven alternatives to policing. This could be housed in GRYD and a community partner.

Key Data on Public Safety:

- Gun violence and homicides have spiked in South LA, with 59 shootings in the first two weeks of January 2021. More than two thirds of incidents in the City have occurred in South LA. It has been reported that 40% of the homicides are African Americans. Already experiencing disparately poorer outcomes when compared to other parts of LA, South LA is suffering the brunt of COVID-19 deaths and economic impacts, while also seeing tragic spikes in homicides that are intensifying the sense of loss and community-level trauma.
- Overpolicing has not made South LA safer, otherwise this would not be the case, as it is the most policed part of the City. Other safety strategies are needed to address the root causes of crime and violence.

Supplemental Investments

1. **Built Environment**--The city should dedicate funding towards communities to expand green space, expand lighting, improve pedestrian safety, and pick up excessive trash.
2. **Mental Health**--There is a neglect around mental health and a dearth of mental health professionals of color. Every person has a right to access medical care. For years, we have treated mental health with incarceration. It is time to reinvest in communities and resources needed to fully support mental health services. As

MAKING LOS ANGELES WHOLE: A RADICAL RECOVERY FOR ALL ANGELINOS

a start, the City must allow funding to be utilized for mental health in all its contracts to help amplify mental health services in our City.

- 3. Free Transportation**--Los Angeles should provide free bus passes to families in need.
- 4. Ending the Digital Divide**--Los Angeles should ensure that hardest hit communities have access to broadband.

CONCLUSION

Los Angeles is a destination and global center because of its people. Yet more and more, this City has not been a friendly place to live for ALL Angelinos. The onset of COVID-19 has worsened this reality, creating a level of crisis and loss not experienced in recent times, and that is unprecedented in our modern context. While we have all been impacted, communities and populations across the City have felt the brunt of the pandemic differently and disparately.

We need a plan that not only helps us recover from the devastating repercussions of the pandemic but a plan to help heal and strengthen our City with vigor and imagination so that Los Angeles is livable for ALL Angelinos. The strategy we propose puts forth bold policy solutions and investments to help address the severe harm and inequity that has affected children and families across our City due to longstanding inequities and the far-reaching and unprecedented consequences of COVID-19.

This is just a start. This budget is a shock to the system that can counter the shock brought about by Covid. We call for a complete reimagining of Los Angeles. By doing so, we can assure everyone in our city that they have a stake in our future.