



# The Latino/a Scorecard Report: A Policy Roadmap for Transforming Los Angeles







## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Los Angeles County we know today has drastically changed since our ancestors ruled the region thousands of years ago. To honor those that came before us and show gratitude as a sign of respect and willingness to heal, we must fully understand and acknowledge where we stand and who stood here before us. Today, we acknowledge that this land was originally called Tovaangar and was the home of the Tongva people, the original stewards of this territory. This land we call home was stolen from the indigenous natives, and we are here to acknowledge their cultural power and strength that has been passed down over generations and will continue to empower our future descendants. We also acknowledge the Mexican inhabitants and legacy of California and Los Angeles County and that their homes and territories were stolen by the United States and White settlers through war, systematic racism, and legal maneuvers to dispossess them of their territories. As we grow as a County and community we will continue to pay tribute to the history and legacy of this land, particularly the fight for economic prosperity and addressing past injustices.

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## SCORECARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Rosie Arroyo  
Audrey Dow  
Fernando J. Guerra, Ph.D.  
Refugio Lopez  
Michael Anthony Mendez, Ph.D.  
Feliza I. Ortiz-Licon, Ed.D.  
Robert M. Sainz  
Michele Siqueiros  
Helen Iris Torres  
Fernando Torres-Gil, Ph.D.

## UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

### USC Price

Sol Price School of Public Policy  
*Sol Price Center for Social Innovation*

USC Price Center for Social Innovation and their team:  
Caroline Bhalla, Victoria Ciudad-Real, Molly Creighton, Karla Fernandez, Peter Griffin, and Gary Painter, Ph.D.

The mission of the USC Price Center for Social Innovation is to develop ideas and illuminate strategies to improve the quality of life for people in low-income urban communities. Together with the school's academic rigor and practice-based expertise, the USC Price Center for Social Innovation works to advance new models of equity and opportunity for low-income children and families, as well as advance the field of social innovation through scholarship and rigorous academic inquiry.



**Loyola Marymount  
University**

**StudyLA**

Thomas and Dorothy Leavey  
Center for the Study of Los Angeles

Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles (StudyLA) at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) and their team: Alejandra Alarcon, Jorge Cortes, Max Dunsker, Brianne Gilbert, and Fernando J. Guerra, Ph.D.

Founded in 1996, the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles (StudyLA) is the premier public opinion research organization studying the dynamic region of Los Angeles. It is recognized as one of the leading undergraduate research centers in the nation, and it is an acknowledged LA authority in public opinion surveys, exit polls, and leadership and community studies. StudyLA advocates for a better, more equitable Los Angeles through research, student mentorship, and engagement with residents and leaders.

**UCLA**

**David Geffen School of Medicine**

Michael A. Rodriguez, M.D., MPH of the David Geffen School of Medicine and the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA and his team: Andrea Fernanda Cortez Chirino and Anahi Cruz

To improve health and healthcare, the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA will create world leaders in health and science, discover the basis for health and cures for disease, optimize health through community partnerships, and heal humankind one patient at a time.

The UCLA Fielding School of Public Health aims to build health and equity, and to drive positive change for all people. We act on this mission through initiatives in three core areas: education, discovery, and service. In each of these realms, we affirm our commitment to developing leaders and evidence-based solutions, and to working in partnership with communities to promote health and well-being in ways that are innovative, respectful, and inclusive.



## REFLECTIONS

**George Gascon**, District Attorney, Los Angeles County  
**Fernando Guerra**, Ph.D., Director, Center for the Study of  
Los Angeles, LMU

**Robert Suro**, Professor of Journalism and Public Policy, USC  
Annenberg School for Communications and Journalism

**Michael A. Rodriguez**, M.D., MPH, Professor and Vice-Chair,  
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

**Veronica Terriquez**, Ph.D., Director, Chicano Studies Research  
Center, UCLA

**Gary Painter**, Ph.D., Director, USC Price Center for Social  
Innovation

---

## ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

AltaMed  
American Red Cross  
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Speak Up  
St. John's Well Child and Family Center  
The Campaign for College Opportunity  
The Children's Partnership  
The Education Trust West  
United Ways of California  
Webster Avenue Strategic Partners

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## COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND LEADERS

Steven Almazan • Rosaura Andrade • Ed Avila  
Jennifer Cano • Maria Casillas • Tommy Chang, Ed.D.  
Mónica Garcia (LAUSD School Board Member)  
Jane Garnica • Maria Lino • Katy Meza  
Jesus Navarro • Luz Puebla • Darline Robles, Ph.D.

## ABC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert M. Sainz, Chair  
Rosie Arroyo, Vice-Chair  
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Feliza I. Ortiz-Licon, Ed.D., Secretary  
Refugio Lopez, Treasurer  
Mercedes Cruz  
Michael Anthony Mendez, Ph.D.  
Helen Iris Torres

### Authors:

Together with university partners, Susana Bonis, Ph.D.,  
co-authored this report with contributions from Vanessa  
Aramayo

### Reviewers and editors:

Susana Bonis, Ph.D., Morgan Robson, and Grant Skakun

### For her leadership and vision:

Carla Lopez-Valdes, Associate Director, ABC

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Andrea Fernanda Cortez Chirino, Anahi Cruz, Liliana Alonso  
Maya, Frank Renteria, Morgan Robson, Natalia Uscanga,  
Carla Lopez-Valdes, Dominique Itzel Whipple, and Joanna  
Vazquez Zelaya

### Graphic designer:

Anna Artemis Mkhikian

# Welcome

Los Angeles County has the largest Latino/a population of any county in the United States, making up nearly five million of its ten million residents. Los Angeles County is also home to 32% of California's Latino/a population. Among Los Angeles County's 88 incorporated cities, Latino/as are the largest ethnic/racial group in 48 cities. In addition, 62.5% of elementary and high school students are Latino/a. The economic and social prosperity of the Los Angeles region is undoubtedly dependent on the prosperity of the Latino/a community.

A few years after being established as a nonprofit, Alliance for a Better Community (ABC) joined with the United Way of Greater Los Angeles to release the *2003 Latino Scorecard: Grading the American Dream*. This initial report took an important step to shine a light on the contributions of Latino/as and the challenges our community faces. The report examined data, perceptions, and implications surrounding the Latino/a community and put knowledge to work to surface one critical and fundamental idea: **to take action**.

Today, we find a never more urgent need to take action due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the great disparities it has exposed for Latino/as. We need to ensure the Los Angeles Latino/a population does not continue to go unrecognized by policy and decision makers and the media in its vitality, importance, and needs.

***The Latino/a Scorecard Report: A Policy Roadmap for Transforming Los Angeles*** builds on the previous scorecard and offers an action agenda to ensure we are moving towards this goal. The recommendations developed by ABC will serve as a guide for advocacy and campaigns to address the opportunity gaps and barriers. The report will also be a tool for research, policy, communications, accountability, and collective advocacy for resources, to shape public policy, and to help realize a more stable future for our region. Grounded in data and driven by the community, this report embodies what ABC was founded on: leveraging collective resources and working in coalition, *in alliance*, with others to advocate for the economic prosperity of Latino/as and the Los Angeles region.

As a community, we have much to celebrate with progress made over the last 20 years. As a movement, we have greater insight, stronger collaborations, increased research and mobilization capacity, more sources for funding, and the sheer experience of knowing how to build a movement. Together, we have much to work towards, and we call on government at all levels, philanthropic organizations, and the business sector to support these efforts for greater inclusivity and equity for Latino/as.

Let us one day look back at this pivotal moment and recall the decisions we made and the actions we took to help one another and ensure that this devastating period was one that also brought about unprecedented lasting, positive change rich with opportunities and one in which *everyone* could flourish.

Thank you for joining in this call to deliver the equitable Los Angeles we all deserve.

In hope and optimism,



**Vanessa Aramayo**  
Executive Director  
Alliance for a Better  
Community



**Robert Sainz**  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Alliance for a Better  
Community

## ABC'S MISSION:

**Advancing social, economic, and racial equity and justice for the Latino community and the Los Angeles region through power building and policy advocacy**

# Foreword

## U.S. Senator Alex Padilla

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the many institutional and social disadvantages that Latino/as in Los Angeles continue to face. Gaps in access to health care, economic prosperity, education, and many other factors were further exacerbated by the pandemic. COVID-19 has left millions of Angelenos worried about the future of their families and communities. The issue now falls in the hands of elected officials, community leaders, and advocates to develop and coordinate strategies for an equitable and viable recovery for the Latino/a community and all of the Los Angeles region.

In conjunction with university partners, issue experts, and community members, Alliance for a Better Community (ABC) is reintroducing the “Latino/a Scorecard Report,” a project that previously debuted in 2003. I was serving on the Los Angeles City Council at the time of this debut, and we knew back then the critical importance of coming together, leveraging resources, and lending greater coordination to our efforts to make significant changes that would result in greater access to opportunities for Latino/as and all Angelenos.

Over the last 20 years, a robust, responsive, and effective movement has been built, and, as a result, we have had victories where many Latino/as have seen life-changing improvements: greater access to quality and affordable health care, increased high school graduation rates, increased enrollment to higher education institutions, increased voter registration, increased homeownership, and more. However, while some Latino/as have had greater access, there have been far many more that continue to be denied access to opportunities and upward mobility. COVID-19 further threatens to reverse the progress some Latino/as have made over the years.

We cannot allow this to happen.

This report comes at a crucial moment in time. It is the product of an extensive collaboration among numerous community-based organizations, experts, and key university research partners including the University of Southern California, Loyola Marymount University, and the University of California, Los Angeles. The report shares findings grounded in data and in common values to grow access from “some” to “all.” Furthermore, it provides a vision for what is possible and invites us to join as partners for the effective collaboration needed to achieve more victories together.

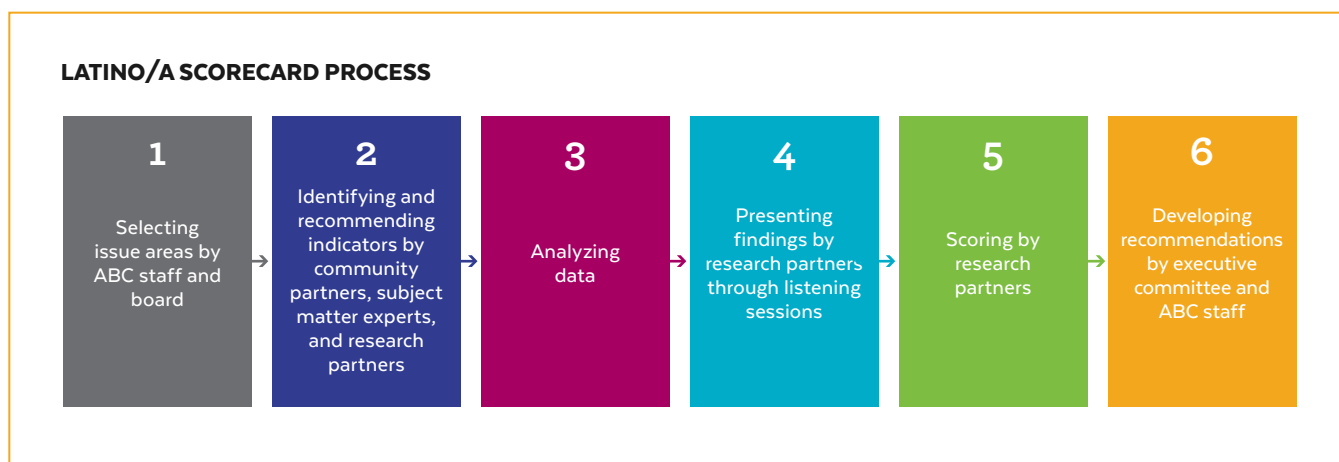
While there are many similarities between the needs we saw 20 years ago and those we see today, one thing is starkly different: we have done this before. We know what it takes to make effective changes. We have the experience from the lessons we learned over the years, greater representation, tools, and the infrastructure built by numerous community organizations and our communities. We have outstanding partnerships among our various sectors in academia, philanthropy, labor, business, and the faith-based community. We know the strength of our movement is in the strength of our relationships, and we have been building these for decades.

As California’s first Latino U.S. Senator, and a native Angeleno, this vision for Latino/as is very personal to me, and I committed to working with ABC and the Los Angeles community to bring greater equity and opportunities to Latino/as in the region.



# Overview of the Report Development Process

*The Latino/a Scorecard Report: A Policy Roadmap for Transforming Los Angeles* is the result of a collaborative process that included many individuals deeply committed to improving the quality of life of Latino/as in Los Angeles County. The figure below outlines the approach that was taken in developing the Scorecard, which is followed by a short description of each step. ABC's Board of Directors formed an Executive Committee comprised of current and former board members who worked closely with staff and partners throughout this project.



## SELECTING ISSUE AREAS

ABC staff and Board of Directors identified issue areas by drawing upon the 2003 Latino/a Scorecard and ABC's power ecosystem, and using the social determinants of health framework. The six issue areas selected include education, health, public safety, economic prosperity (including housing), civic engagement, and environmental quality and neighborhood wellbeing. The first five issue areas are covered in this document. Data for environmental quality and neighborhood wellbeing are presented in a digital data story developed by the USC Price Center for Social Innovation; recommendations are included in the section on health.

## IDENTIFYING INDICATORS

The indicators in the Latino/a Scorecard Report serve as "temperature gauges," providing insight into strengths, opportunities, and challenges. The intention was to select a limited number of indicators that could prompt discussion around action and accountability. To inform the selection of indicators, meetings were held and interviews were conducted

with university and community-based partners. The 2003 Latino/a Scorecard was also reviewed. The proposed set of indicators was presented and approved by the Executive Committee, which appears at the end of this section.

## ANALYZING DATA

University partners from the USC Price Center for Social Innovation, the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA identified data sources that could provide information on the indicators. These included databases of state and national data, as well as institutional reports by government agencies or other organizations. They collected and analyzed this data. When appropriate, they disaggregated the data by race and ethnicity at the County level.

## CONVENING LISTENING SESSIONS

A listening session was held in each issue area of the Latino/a Scorecard Report. The purpose was for university partners

to present data, hear how trends resonated with individuals' experiences, and discuss how the data could be helpful for future advocacy efforts. The listening sessions were led by ABC and attended by community residents, representatives from community-based organizations, and members of the Executive Committee. It was important to ABC to convene multiple stakeholders who could offer their reactions to the data from different perspectives.

## SCORING

University partners assigned a grade for each indicator and a cumulative grade for each substantive area. For civic engagement, letter grades were assigned for voter turnout relative to other County residents and for representation relative to the proportion of the Latino/a adult population of the County. For education, health, public safety, and economic prosperity, letter grades were assigned relative to non-Latino/a White groups (with two exceptions). More detail on grading is available in Appendix 6.

## DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations were developed by ABC staff and approved by its Board of Directors. They were informed by research and discussion with partners. The recommendations represent policy and budget priorities that ABC believes could significantly impact the wellbeing of Latino/as in Los Angeles County. They also represent areas within ABC's advocacy capacity and within that of its power ecosystem.

## ALLIANCE FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY CHOICE OF TERMINOLOGY

*The U.S. Census defines "Latino/a" as any person of "Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin." Latino may be of any race, such as White, Black, or Asian, and may speak any language, such as Spanish, Portuguese, Mixteco, or English.*

*ABC does not use the term "Hispanic," which typically relates to Spanish-speaking countries.*

*The term "Chicano" refers only to individuals of Mexican origin or descent and was a symbol of pride during the Chicano Movement of the 1960s.*

*Recently, the term "Latinx" has emerged as an alternative to "Latino/a" replacing the Spanish gendered suffix of "o" and "a" with "x." Proponents argue the emerging term supports gender neutrality while opponents argue "Latinx" imposes American values onto the Spanish language. ABC uses "Latino/a" in our Scorecard with two exceptions: 1) reflections provided by guest authors, and 2) when referring to the LGBTQ+ community because many in the community identify with "Latinx." The term continues to be under debate.*

## INDICATORS

### EDUCATION

- Early Childhood Education
- Third Grade Reading Achievement
- Reclassification of English Learners by Grade 5
- Algebra 1 by Grade 9
- A-G Completion
- High School Graduation
- Enrollment by Higher Education Segment
- Undergraduate Retention, Graduation, and Outcomes

### HEALTH

- Life Expectancy
- Suicidal Ideation
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Teen Pregnancy
- Cervical Cancer
- Influenza Vaccination
- Uninsured Rates
- Access to Regular Source of Health Care
- Enrollment in Health Professional Program

### PUBLIC SAFETY

- Latino/as as Victims of Crime (Hate Crimes)
- Police-Initiated Contact
- Latino/as Within the Criminal Justice System
- Trust in Law Enforcement
- Presence of Latino/as in Law Enforcement
- Presence of Latino/as in the Judicial System

### ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- Income
- Unemployment
- Latino/a Home Ownership
- Latino/a Home Values
- Opportunity Youth
- Rent Burden

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Voter Participation
- Representation in Public Office

### ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD WELLBEING

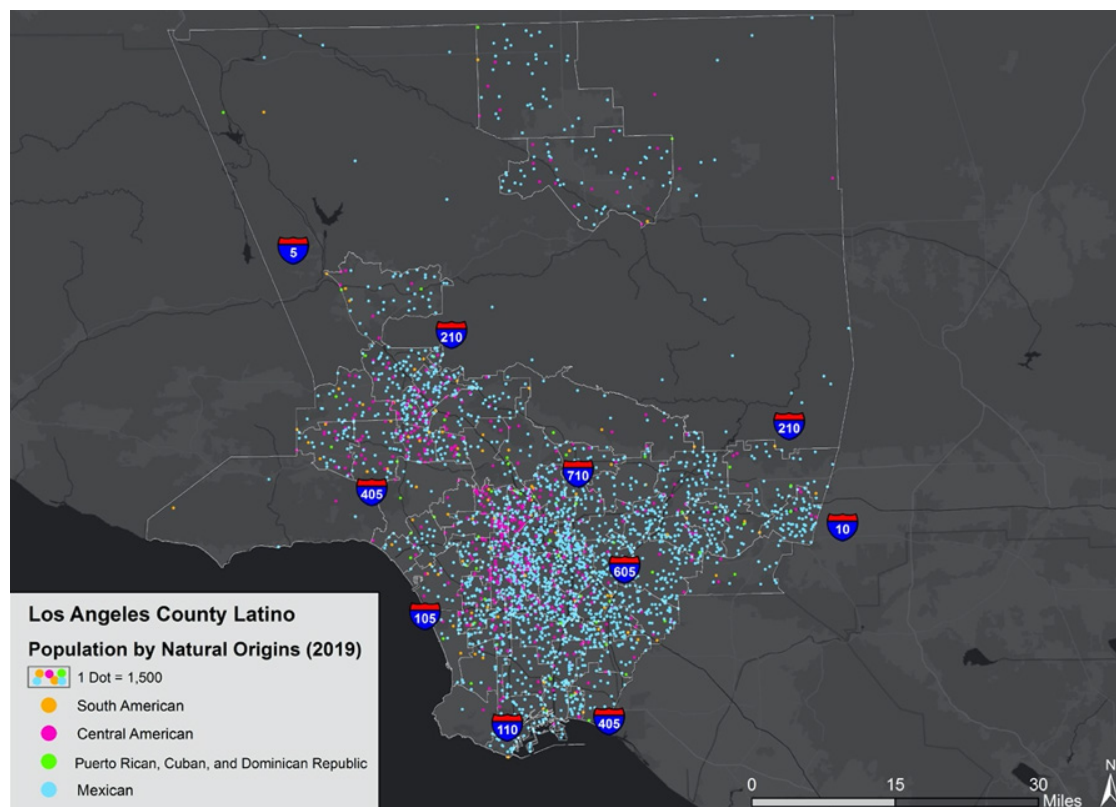
- Access to Healthy Food
- Access to Clean Water
- Access to Clean Air
- Access to Parks and Green Space

# Demographic Profile

Latino/as comprise 49% of the population in Los Angeles County, making it one of the largest shares in the United States. Within the Latino/a population there is diversity across race, country of origin, geography, age, and immigration status that should be considered when developing and promoting policies for the benefit of this community. This section provides an introduction to some characteristics of the Latino/a community in Los Angeles County. All of the maps used in this section are by Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), a geographic category used by the Census Bureau that is roughly the size of a large neighborhood.<sup>1</sup>

## MAP 1: LATINO/A POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The largest subcategory of Latino/as in Los Angeles County are of Mexican descent. It is estimated that roughly 3.7 million Latino/as in Los Angeles County are of Mexican origin, while 811,000 are of Central American origin, 130,000 are of South American origin, and nearly 92,000 are of Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Dominican origin. Map 1 shows how they are distributed geographically.

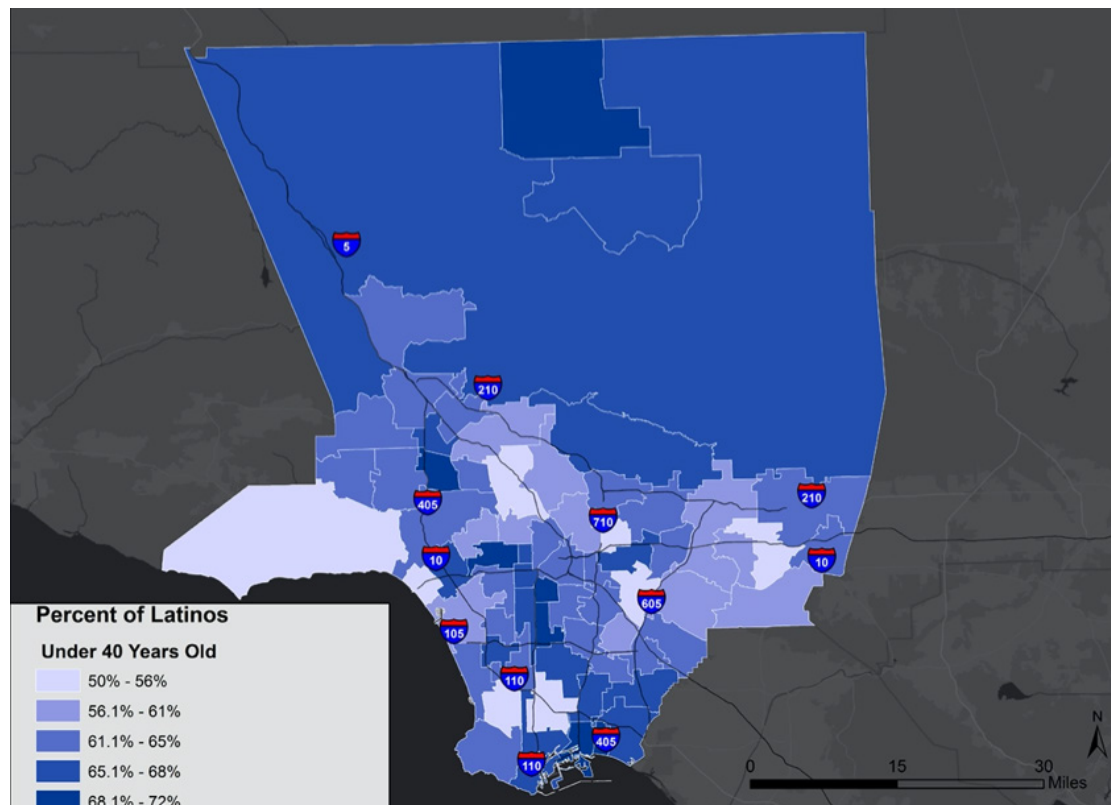


1. "Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) are non-overlapping, statistical geographic areas that partition each state or equivalent entity into geographic areas containing no fewer than 100,000 people each." <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/pumas.html>



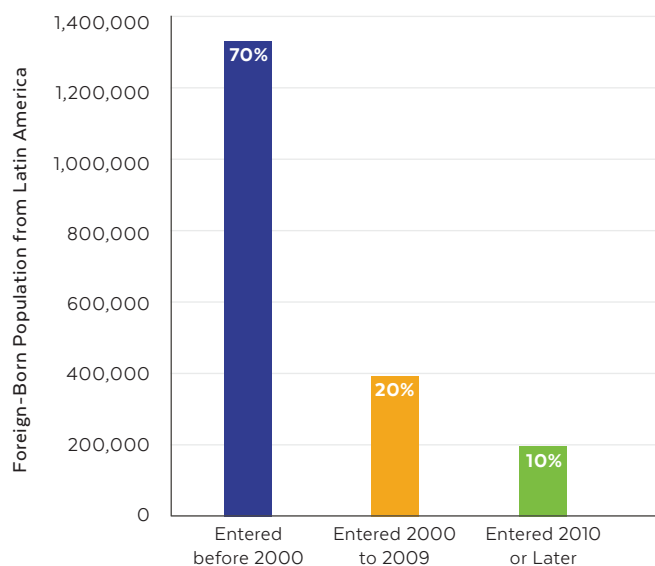
## MAP 2: PERCENTAGE OF LATINO/A POPULATION UNDER 40

Sixty-two percent (62%) of Latino/as living in Los Angeles County are under the age of 40, of which 1.2 million fall between the ages of 20 and 40. The largest numbers of Latino/as under the age of 40 are found within the City of Los Angeles. In the areas east of the 110 Interstate in the City of Los Angeles, 60% of Latino/as are under the age of 40.



## FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION FROM LATIN AMERICA ORIGIN PERIOD OF UNITED STATES ENTRY | LOS ANGELES COUNTY

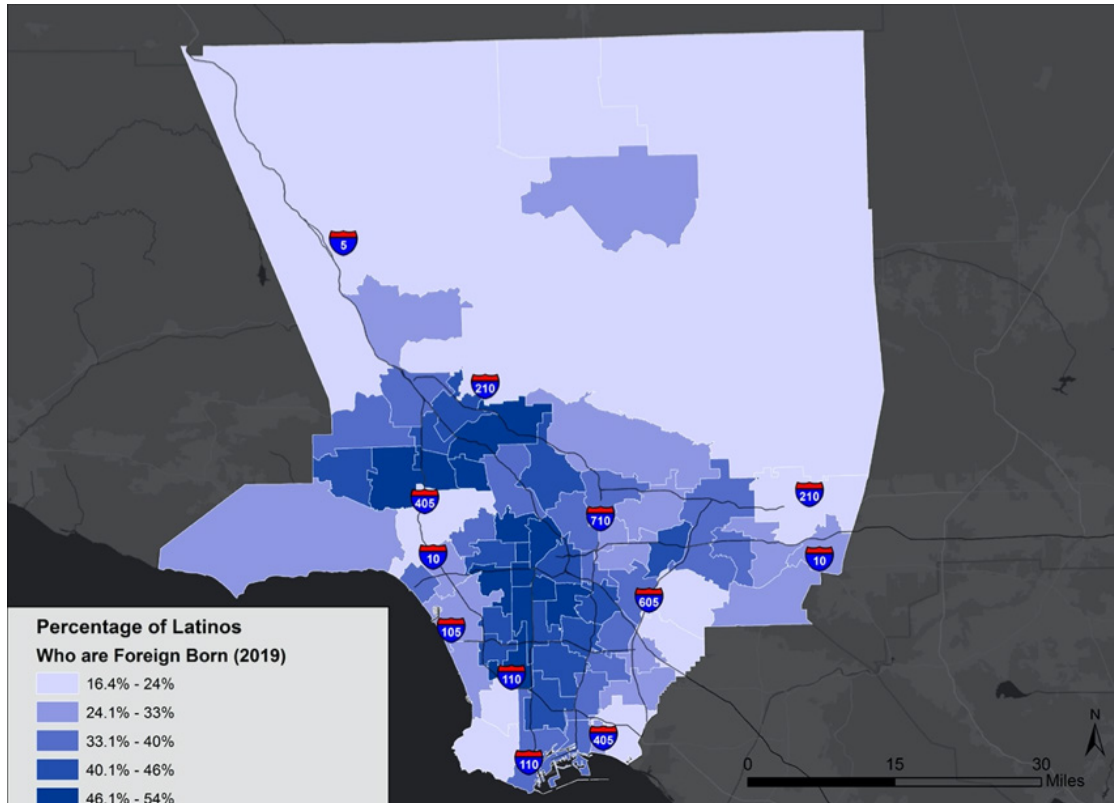
Source: 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



More than one in three Latino/as in Los Angeles County are immigrants (38%), while nearly two out of three (62%) were born in the United States. When accounting for the period of arrival, 70% of foreign-born Latino/as in the County entered the U.S. before 2000. Conversely, one in five Latino/a immigrants entered between 2000 and 2009, and only 10% entered in 2010 or later. This suggests that the majority of Latino/a immigrants have been Angelenos for more than two decades with established roots in the community.

### MAP 3: PERCENTAGE OF LATINO/AS WHO ARE FOREIGN BORN BY SUBREGION

The areas with the highest proportion of foreign-born Latino/as are geographically similar to the maps that show where young Latino/as live within Los Angeles County. Areas near the northern San Fernando Valley and the areas near the 110 corridors in the City of Los Angeles have the largest concentration of Latino/as who are immigrants.



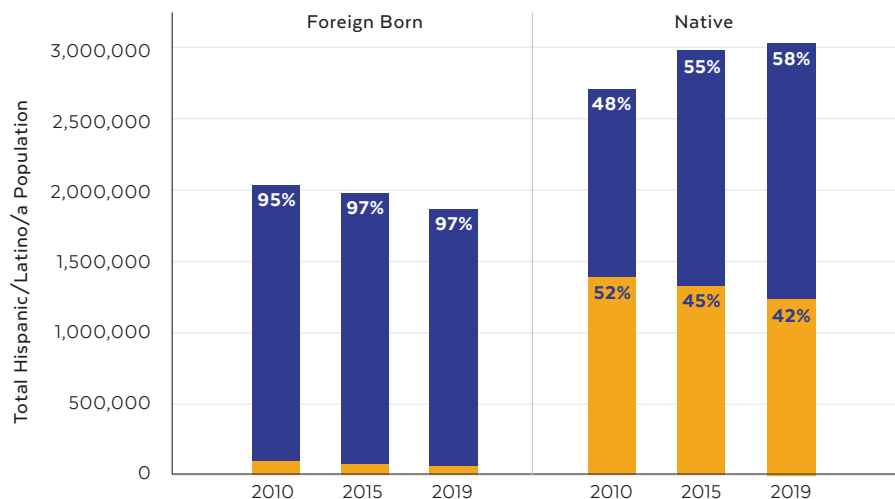
Over the span of nearly a decade, more Latino/a immigrants have become U.S. citizens. In 2010, the majority (65%) of the adult Latino/a immigrant population were not naturalized U.S. citizens. However, this decreased over time with an estimated 42% of adult Latino/a immigrants being naturalized citizens in 2019. This is a similar trend observed in Latino/a immigrant children (ages under 18). In 2010, approximately 91% were not U.S. citizens, and in 2019, 84% were not.

**AGE**

- 18 years and over
- Under 18 years

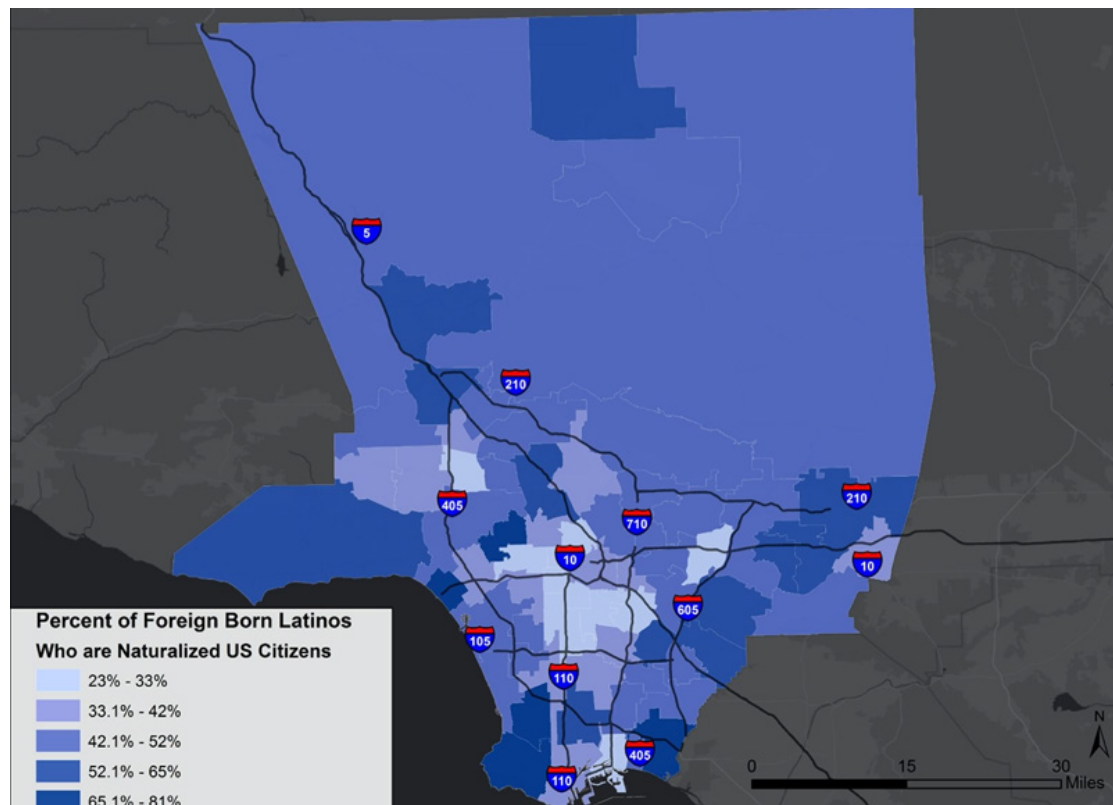
### HISPANIC/LATINO/A NATIVITY STATUS BY AGE GROUP | LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Source: 2010, 2015 & 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



#### MAP 4: PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN-BORN LATINO/AS WHO ARE NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZENS

Areas with a higher percentage of foreign-born Latino/as who have become naturalized U.S. citizens align geographically with areas that are older than 40, which is the inverse of the maps that look at younger Latino/as. This includes areas on the coast and away from the City of Los Angeles.



The Latino/a population in Los Angeles County is not only large in number, but also encompasses differences across countries of origin, immigration status, age, and geographic distribution. While information is not always available to capture the layered identities of Latino/as, these characteristics should cause reflection when examining Latino/a trends and needs at the County level. Given this demographic overview, the following sections will assess the extent to which institutional systems and social structures allowed Latino/as to thrive before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlight resilience and progress, and determine areas for improvement and policy recommendations.





# Focus Areas

## SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE SCORES

- ③ Education
- ④ Health
- ③ Public Safety
- ③ Economic Prosperity
- ③<sup>+</sup> Civic Engagement





# Summary of Recommendations

## EDUCATION

- 1 Invest in high-quality early childhood education in underserved communities so Latino/a children are prepared to thrive in school and life
- 2 Invest in the expansion of quality early grade programming, including dual language programs, that honors and leverages Latino/as students' cultural and linguistic assets
- 3 Ensure that educators are reflective of the communities in which they teach by investing in the educator pipeline, in recruitment, and in educator retention
- 4 Invest in research-based career pathway programs that contextualize academically rigorous, real world, and work-based learning opportunities that prepare Latino/a students for college and career
- 5 Invest in programs and services for Latino/a college students that provide culturally relevant guidance and support needed to graduate from higher education institutions and transition to a career
- 6 Invest in continuing education, credentialing, and skills training for adults, outside of the college system
- 4 Invest in and promote school-based health centers and community-based partnerships and wellness centers as hubs for community health while ensuring that these spaces are welcoming and culturally responsive to the Latino/a community
- 5 Increase community health education programs to support health literacy, improve physical activity and nutrition, strengthen community-clinical links, reduce obesity, control diabetes, and prevent teen pregnancy
- 6 Strengthen various dimensions of cultural competence in the health care field that impact the quality of care, patient safety, and equity; invest in building a pipeline for future generations in the health care and biotech industries
- 7 Establish a more structured and “one stop shop” approach to health care through innovative initiatives like CalAIM, which includes broad-based delivery system, program, and payment reform across the Medi-Cal program

## HEALTH

- 1 Develop healthy environments for Latino/as that promote liveable communities with access to more parks and green spaces, areas for recreation and exercise, healthy food and fresh produce, and clean air and water
- 2 Declare racism as a public health crisis at the state level and declare discrimination due to xenophobia as a public health crisis at the County and State levels
- 3 Expand comprehensive access to high-quality health care, regardless of citizenship or legal status
- 2 Ensure that funds available for community reinvestment are distributed using an equity lens informed by community voice, including immigrants
- 3 Foster institutionalization of relationship-based policing strategies that build public trust, while taking into account generational differences in views around policing
- 4 Support the development of alternatives that limit or shift certain functions that are currently carried out by police to other professionals (e.g., responses to non-violent incidents and to traffic violations)

## PUBLIC SAFETY



- ⑤ Strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the Latinx transgender community, and develop training programs and policies sensitive to gender identity to help reduce the rise in violence against Latinx transgender individuals
- ⑥ Continue substantially reducing the school police budget and reinvesting funds in services and programs that promote positive school climate and support students
- ⑦ Invest in programs that inspire and support Latino/a students to pursue a career in law

## ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- ① Invest in and build a stronger economic safety net for working and low-income Latino/as through outreach and education around the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) and Young Child Tax Credit programs, and through development of a Guaranteed Income program open to mixed-status families during economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- ② Invest equitably in rebuilding a comprehensive child care system, including opportunities for children ages zero to three
- ③ Provide classified employees in public sector positions with a living wage that takes into account the high cost of living in the Los Angeles region
- ④ Partner with educational institutions, community-based organizations, and businesses in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles City and County to provide targeted, creative information and assistance related to workforce training and development opportunities in high-growth industries for specific populations like high school students, youth who are not in school and not working, women, and dislocated workers
- ⑤ Support efforts for student loan debt forgiveness at the federal level
- ⑥ Increase support to Latino/as businesses and entrepreneurs—including small businesses, microbusinesses, and street vendors—by providing access to capital, technical assistance, networking, mentoring, and resources
- ⑦ Increase the access of low- to moderate-income Latino/a families to programs that prepare them for a path to homeownership

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- ① Include non-citizen immigrants in the electoral and democratic process by expanding eligibility to vote in K-12 school board elections and codifying their ability to serve on local citizen commissions
- ② Increase outreach funding and support for the new voting systems being implemented by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder, and increase responsibility of governments at all levels to develop or utilize new targeted methodologies, strategies, and technologies to get out the vote (GOTV)
- ③ Invest in funding to Latino/a-serving, community-based organizations and Latino/a-focused efforts to better understand and address civic deserts through increased research, capacity building, and mobilization
- ④ Invest in comprehensive and inclusive civics education in the K-12 system to support students in becoming informed and engaged members of their schools and communities, including their leadership in local voter registration and citizenship drives
- ⑤ Develop and invest in a leadership pipeline for Latino/as to elected or appointed public positions to ensure fair representation and full inclusion of Latino/as across all levels of government

# Education

Written by: Victoria Ciudad-Real, Karla Fernandez, Molly Creighton, Caroline Bhalla, and Gary Painter, Ph.D. of the USC Price Center for Social Innovation

Overall  
Grade:

C



## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges for students in Los Angeles County as they faced several months of distance learning. This is particularly true for Latino/a students who have lower rates of access to computers and the internet, which were basic necessities for remote schooling.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the impacts of COVID-19 have the potential to exacerbate disparities in education and add to the cumulative disadvantage that Latino/a children already face.<sup>2</sup> This section seeks to answer the question: How were Latino/as faring *before the pandemic* in terms of educational access, opportunities, and outcomes? The following indicators provide benchmarks and trackers of future success to analyze how young Latino/as are faring throughout the County's education system in the areas of: early childhood education, third grade reading, reclassification of English Learners by fifth grade, Algebra I by the ninth grade, high school graduation rates, A-G completion, higher education enrollment, and undergraduate student outcomes.

## DATA

This analysis primarily pulls the latest available test and enrollment data from the California Department of Education. Other sources include IPUMS USA American Community Survey (ACS), the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data

System, and the California Community Colleges' Launchboard statewide data system. For each indicator, data was disaggregated by race and ethnicity at the County level. For a more detailed description, please refer to Appendix 2.

1. [https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/COVID\\_04.pdf](https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/COVID_04.pdf)

2. (Schneider, Martinez, and Owens, 2006)

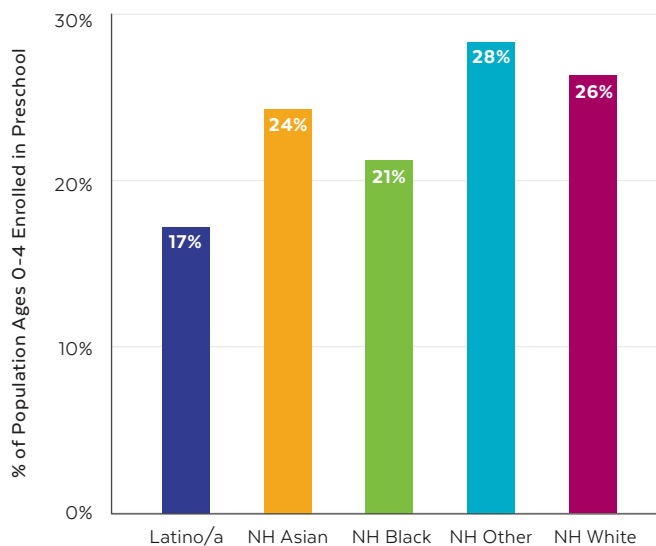
## DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION | GRADE: C

Preschool builds a strong foundation for a child's education. For this indicator, enrollment rates among preschool-aged children were analyzed. In Los Angeles County approximately 17% of Latino/as ages zero to four were enrolled in a preschool program in 2019. Latino/a children are less likely to be enrolled in preschool than White children in Los Angeles County, of which 26% are enrolled in preschool, and other groups. This measure does not account for preschool quality, which could also heighten disparities in access.<sup>3</sup>

#### PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR POPULATION AGES 0-4 ACROSS RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: IPUMS American Community Survey 2019



3. According to a report from First 5 LA, the level of quality for most early child care programs in LA County is unknown due to a lack of comprehensive and publicly-available data in the region. <https://www.first5la.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/First-5-LA-2020-Indicators-Report.pdf>

4. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.715.5162&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

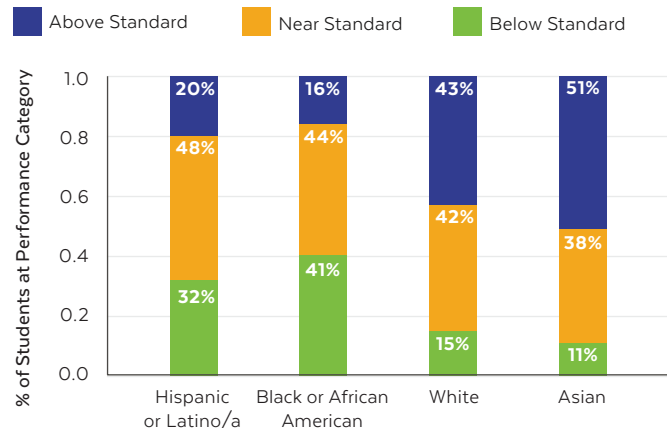
### THIRD GRADE READING ACHIEVEMENT | GRADE: D

Students successfully reading at or above the third grade are more likely to read well in subsequent grades, as well as graduate and attend college.<sup>4</sup> This indicator examines third grade English Language Arts Achievement levels for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) in the 2018-2019 school year. Nearly a third (32%) of Latino/a children in the County scored below standard for reading on California state standardized tests. The indicator demonstrates that the share of Latino/a students who are performing below standards in public schools is almost two times that of White students. This gap is smaller for Latino/a children who are not considered economically disadvantaged, of which 80% read above or near standard.

#### THIRD GRADE READING AREA ACHIEVEMENT IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND PERFORMANCE LEVELS 2018-19

Source: CA Department of Education, CA Assessment of Study Performance and Progress (CAASPP), English and Language Arts Achievement Levels

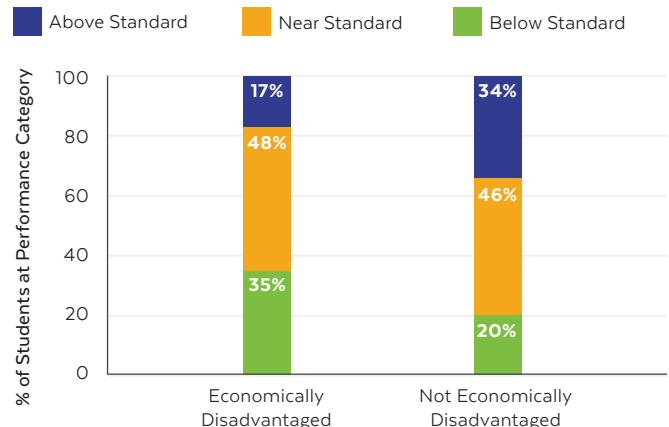
##### Area Performance Level: Reading



#### THIRD GRADE READING AREA ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS FOR LATINOS/HISPANIC STUDENTS BY ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE IN 2019

Source: CA Department of Education, CA Assessment of Study Performance and Progress (CAASPP), English and Language Arts Achievement Levels

##### Reading Performance Level 1

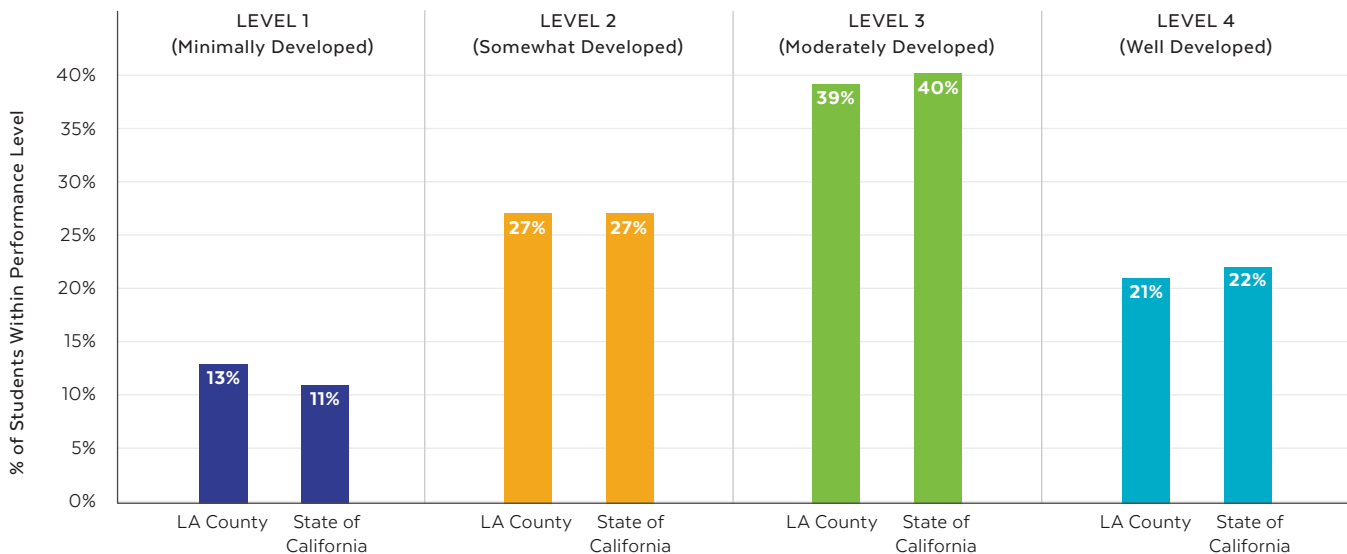


## RECLASSIFICATION OF ENGLISH LEARNERS BY FIFTH GRADE | GRADE: A

In 2018-2019, there were approximately 17,700 Latino/a students who were English Learners (ELs) enrolled in fifth grade across Los Angeles County. In California, four criteria are used to determine whether a student meets the language competency to reclassify from the English Learner category; one criteria involves performance on the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC).<sup>5</sup> Students with an overall performance level of well developed (4) are eligible for reclassification, but the ultimate determination uses other locally determined scores set by each school district. This report analyzed scores for fifth grade EL Latino/a students in the County within the 2018-2019 school year. Based on the findings, only 21% or roughly one in five of Latino/a ELs in the fifth grade tested as well developed and thus were eligible for reclassification. Similarly, out of the roughly 77,500 Latino/a ELs in the state of California, approximately 22% tested as well developed. This suggests that Latino/a ELs in the County were eligible at similar rates as other Latino/a ELs in the fifth grade across the state.

### LATINO/A ELS FIFTH GRADE STUDENT PROFICIENCY ON THE SUMMATIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENTS FOR CALIFORNIA (ELPAC) IN 2018-19

Source: California Department of Education, CA English Language Proficiency for the Summative ELPAC

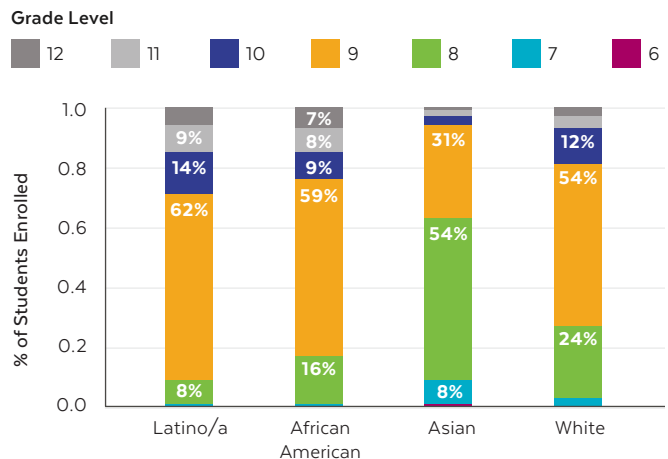


## ALGEBRA 1 BY THE NINTH GRADE | GRADE: C

There are approximately 11,879 Latino/a students in Grades 6-12 that took Algebra I designated courses in the 2018-2019 school year in Los Angeles County. Algebra I is typically taken in the ninth grade and is an A-G eligible course, meaning that students who pass the course with a C or better are able to meet several requirements for admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems.

Source: CA Department of Education, LA County Course Enrollment Data, Sample Sizes: Latino (11,879), African American (n=1,464), Asian (n=1,190), White (n=3,981) | Note: This indicator focused on A-G approved Algebra 1 course enrollment

### PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALGEBRA 1 BY GRADE LEVEL IN LA COUNTY IN 2018-19



5. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rd/index.asp>



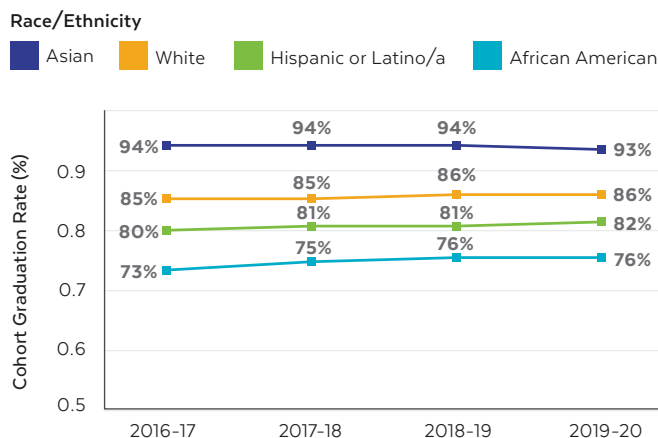
The chart on the previous page compares the grade levels of students taking Algebra I across race and ethnicity. Among the 2018-2019 Algebra 1 class, when compared to Non-Hispanic White students, a larger percentage of Latino/a children were enrolled in the course in Grades 10 and 11, and approximately 13% of Latino/a students enrolled in Algebra 1 were taking it by the ninth grade, the majority of whom were in the ninth grade (62%). Compared to White and Asian students, Latino/as have a lower share of students enrolled in earlier grades (such as the seventh and eighth grades).

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES (FOUR-YEAR COHORT) GRADE: B

High school graduation is an important indicator, particularly because Latino/as historically have had lower rates of educational attainment when compared to other demographic groups. Variations in graduation rates may have important social and economic consequences for Latino/as. In 2019, four out of five Latino/a students graduated high school in Los Angeles County—a trend that has remained stable over the last few years. As shown in the graph below, high school graduation rates for Latino/a students in the County have been around 80% since 2016, but these rates are outperformed by White students by roughly four to five percentage points.

### FOUR-YEAR ADJUSTED COHORT GRADUATION RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Source: California Department of Education (CDE), Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates



## A-G COMPLETION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES GRADE: B

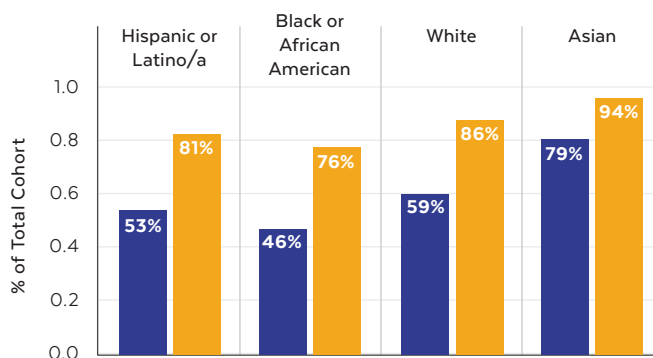
Completing A-G requirements during high school allows graduates to apply for enrollment at the two largest public higher education systems in California: UC and CSU. Not completing these requirements makes students ineligible for admission. More than half of graduating Latino/a students completed A-G requirements in 2018; this is approximately 33,000 Latino/a high school graduates (53% of the four-year cohort). These rates are six percentage points lower than White students. Thus, out of the entire student cohort (approximately 76,500 Latino/a students), only about 43% graduated and met all A-G requirements for college-admission into the UC and CSU systems.

### PERCENT OF GRADUATES COMPLETING ALL COURSES REQUIRED FOR UC/CSU ENTRANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY 2018-19

Source: California Department of Education, Adjusted Cohort Graduate Rate (ACGR) and Outcome Data

**Measure Names**

- % of Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Requirements
- Cohort Graduation Rate

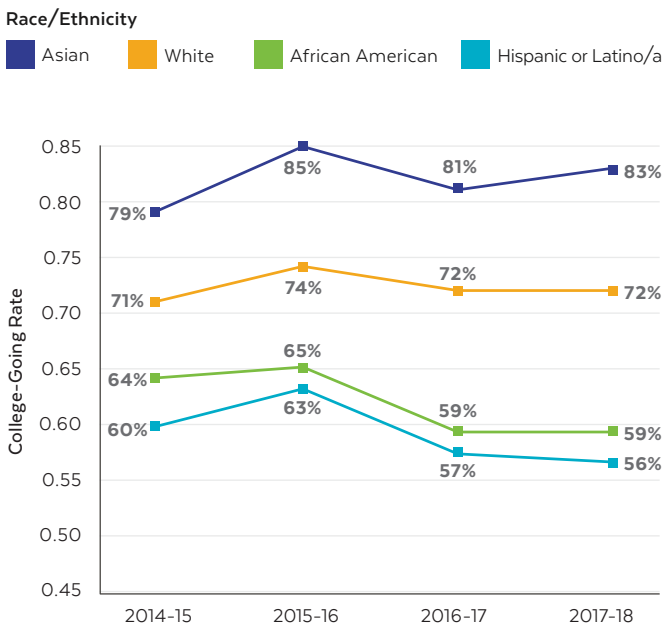


## LATINO/A HIGHER EDUCATION ENROLLMENT | GRADE: D

When examining the latest data from the California Department of Education's college-going rate, in the 2017-18 school year, approximately 56% of Los Angeles County Latino/a high school graduates enrolled in college. This translates to approximately 36,500 students out of about 65,000 Latino/a high school completers. While in 2014-2015 60% of Latino/a high school graduates went to college, by 2017-2018, this dropped down to 56%. Latino/as were outperformed in college-going rates by White (72%), Asian (83%), and African American (58.6%) students, as depicted in the graph below. When broken down by gender, the Latina college-going rate was about 61% while the Latino college-going rate was 51% that year. For Latino/a English Learner high school completers (approximately 6,673 students in 2017-2018), only about 33% (2,190 students) enrolled in college within 12 months of completing high school.

### COLLEGE-GOING RATE FOR GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL COHORTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Source: California Department of Education, DataQuest Census, College-Going Rate



A little over half of graduating Latino/a students in Los Angeles County from the Class of 2018 enrolled in community college within 12 months (56%), about a third (27%) enrolled in California State Universities, 9% enrolled in a UC campus, 4% enrolled in private two- or four-year California colleges, 3% in out-of-state four-year colleges, and less than 1% enrolled in out-of-state two-year colleges (public and private).

## UNDERGRADUATE RETENTION, GRADUATION, AND OUTCOMES | GRADE: B-

### Community College Retention, Awards Earned, and Transfers

Considering the large share of Latino/as attending community college, this report assessed retention rates at the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), which is the largest community college system in the County and nationwide.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, this indicator captures the percentage of Latino/as who were retained from fall to spring, excluding students who transferred or earned a degree. When compared to non-Hispanic White students, Latino/a students are slightly less likely to remain enrolled at the LACCD. In 2018-2019, only 71% of Latino/a students enrolled in a LACCD campus remained enrolled from fall to spring, whereas 76% of White students were retained.

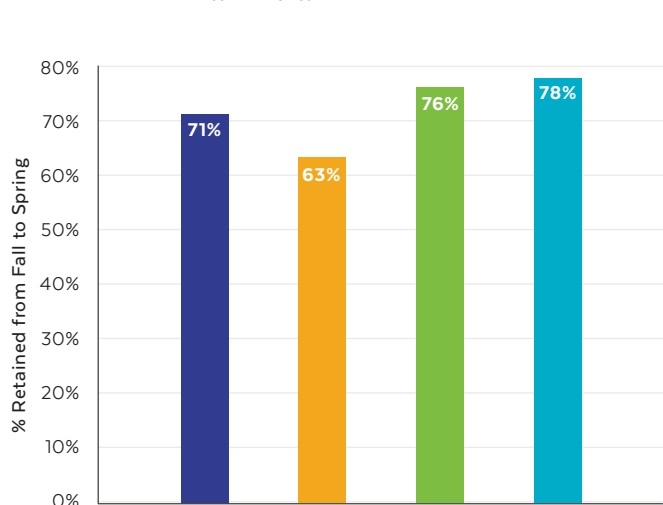
### PROPORTION OF STUDENTS RETAINED FROM FALL TO SPRING IN THE LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT IN 2018-19 (EXCLUDING STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED AN AWARD OR TRANSFERRED TO POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION)

Source: Cal-PASS PLUS

California Community Colleges, Student Success Metrics Dashboard (2020-21 Release)

LACCD includes East Los Angeles College, LA City College, LA Harbor College, LA Mission College, LA Pierce, LA Southwest College, LA Trade Tech, LA Valley College, and West LA College.

### Subgroup



6. <http://www.laccd.edu/About/Pages/Our-Colleges.aspx>

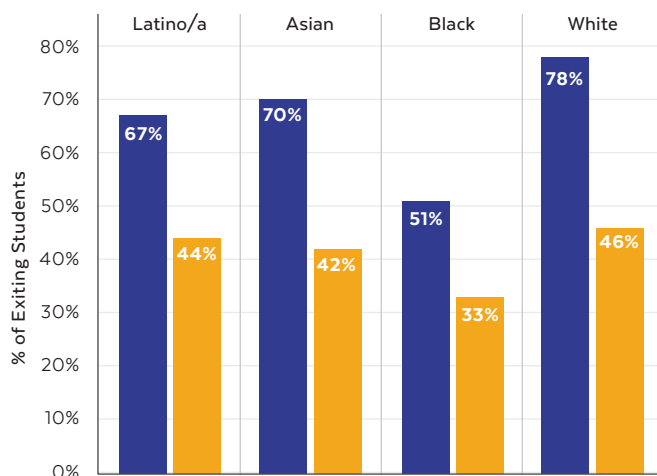
This report also examined outcomes, specifically community college graduation and transfer rates, of those students who exited the Los Angeles Community College District. In the 2018-2019 academic year, approximately 18,000 Latino/a students exited the Los Angeles Community College District having earned at least 12 units. Of the Latino/a students who exited, 67% of Latino/a students transferred to a four-year institution, earned an award, or attained an apprenticeship, compared to 78% of non-Hispanic White students. More specifically, 44% of Latino/a students who exited earned an award or a certificate. When looking at transfer rates across race and ethnicity, 23% of Latino/a students transferred to a four-year institution. By comparison, 46% of exiting non-Hispanic White students earned an award and 32% transferred to a four-year institute during the 2018-2019 academic year.

#### 2018-2019 LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OUTCOMES AND AWARD COMPLETION ACROSS RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: Cal-PASS PLUS California Community College, Student Success Metrics 2018-19 Academic Year

##### Success Outcome

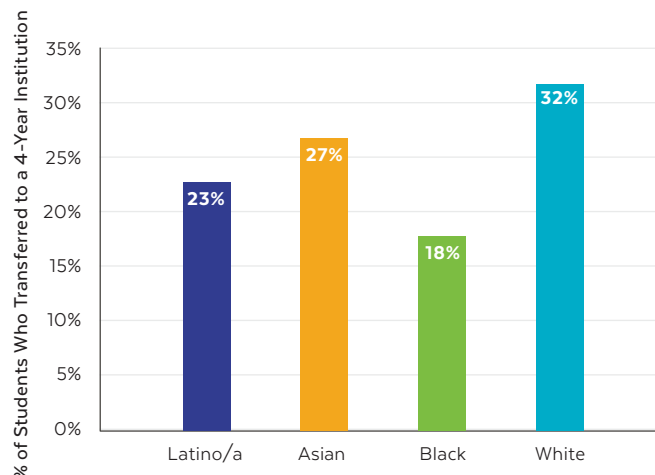
■ Earned an award, transferred to post-secondary, or attained apprenticeship ■ Earned an award (degree, certificate) only



#### 2018-2019 LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT STUDENTS WHO TRANSFERRED TO A 4-YEAR INSTITUTION ACROSS RACE & ETHNICITY\*

Source: Cal-PASS PLUS California Community College, Student Success Metrics 2018-19 Academic Year

\*of students who earned 12 or more units at any time and at any college and exited California Community College by race & ethnicity

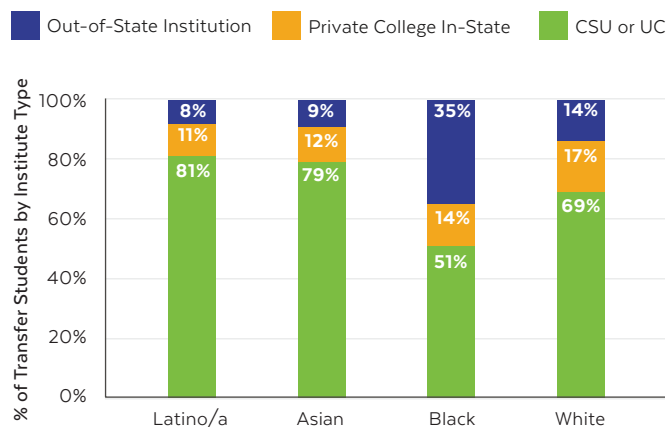


A majority (81%) of Latino/a students who transferred enrolled at either a UC or a CSU, with 11% of Latino/a students enrolling in a private in-state college and 8% transferring to a college out of state. Non-Hispanic White students make up the largest proportion of transfer students who enroll in a private in-state college (17%).

#### 2018-2019 LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT STUDENTS WHO TRANSFERRED TO A 4-YEAR INSTITUTE BY INSTITUTE TYPE ACROSS RACE & ETHNICITY\*

Source: Cal-PASS PLUS California Community College, Student Success Metrics 2018-19 Academic Year

\*of students who earned 12 or more units at any time and at any college and exited California Community College by race & ethnicity



## Undergraduate Graduation Rates

There are numerous four-year universities and colleges in Los Angeles County with Latino/a students. For this report, Latino/a graduation rates among the following colleges were analyzed: CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU Long Beach, CSU Los Angeles, CSU Northridge, UC Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California. Notably, all of the CSU campuses in this sample are designated Hispanic Serving Institutions.<sup>7</sup> Graduation within six years was used to account for nontraditional students. The chart compares Latino/a graduation rates for the 2013 student cohort (students who entered in the fall of 2013) to White students and all students at these campuses.<sup>8</sup> While graduation rates vary widely by campus across most universities in Los Angeles, Latino/as are slightly less likely to graduate than White students. The campus with the largest gap is CSU Northridge with a 16 percentage point difference between Latino/a and White students, whereas the University of Southern California has the smallest gap with one percentage point difference.

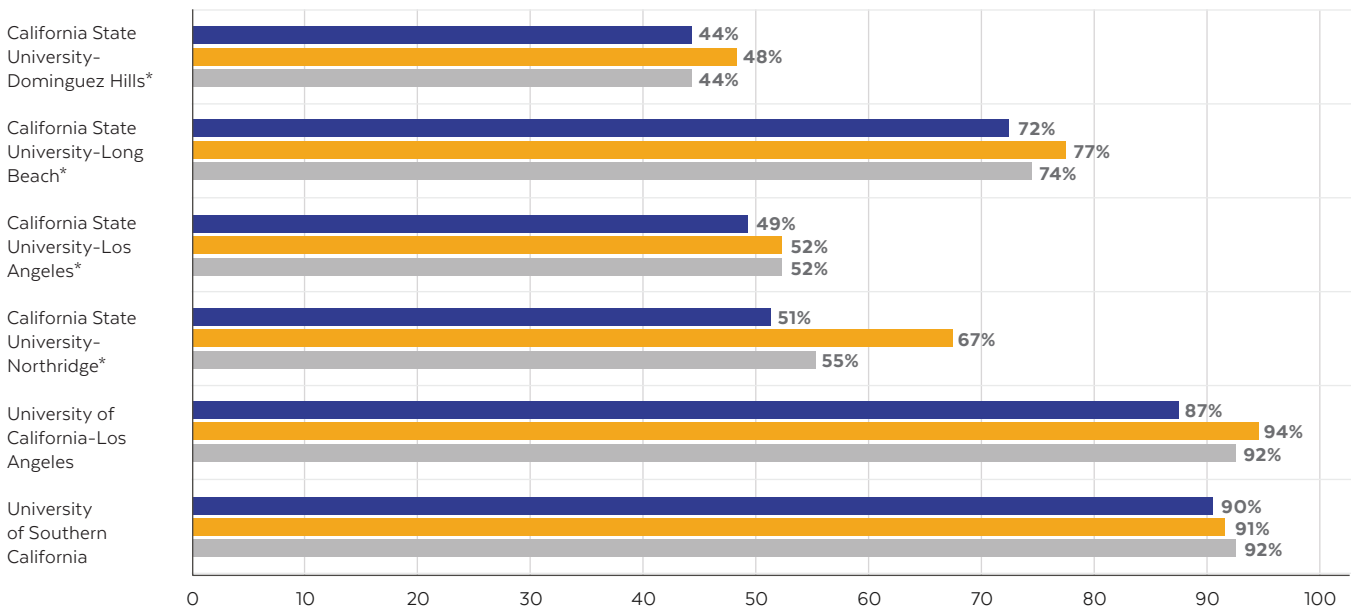
### GRADUATION RATES WITHIN 6 YEARS FOR FULL-TIME DEGREE-SEEKING UNDERGRADUATES (AS OF AUGUST 2019)

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Winter 2019–20, Graduation Rates component. The universities with an asterisk are designated Hispanic-Serving institutions. Graduation rate is calculated as the total number of completers within 150% of normal time divided by the revised cohort minus any allowable exclusions. Normal time to completion is the amount of time necessary for a student to complete all requirements for a degree or certificate according to the institution's catalog. This is typically four years (eight semesters or trimesters, or 12 quarters, excluding summer terms) for a bachelor's degree in a standard term-based institution. Total students, NH White students, and Latino students are part of the 2013 cohort, and the reported information is their status as of August 2019.

#### Subgroup

Hispanic White Total Cohort

#### College



7. "A Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is defined as an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution; and has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application." <https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis/>

8. These rates encompass the entire student population for each campus, therefore including both students who originate from Los Angeles County and those who do not.



## DISCUSSION

While certain advocacy efforts have been successful, such as pushing higher high school graduation rates among Latino/as, there are still many opportunities for policy intervention that could lead to better educational outcomes for Latino/as in Los Angeles County. Beginning with preschool enrollment, Latino/a children have much to gain during early formative years to set them on a more even playing field to their peers. This could yield stronger performance across other education benchmarks, such as reading. Similarly, while Latino/a students are graduating high school at somewhat comparable rates as White students, there are significantly large gaps among those who complete A–G requirements and ultimately enroll in colleges—particularly in four-year universities. At the university level, Latino/as are still slightly less likely to graduate, even at institutions that have been designated to serve Hispanic students. This warrants conversations among advocates and the community about the missing links for adequately supporting Latino/a students in their schools and educational pursuits.

## LIMITATIONS

Limitations in the indicator analysis included data constraints such as lack of data on preschool program quality. Additionally, since the analysis relied on aggregated data, individual student-level educational outcomes were not tracked. Therefore, indicators such as Algebra 1 by ninth grade do not illustrate the full trajectory of a student's enrollment and

performance in math courses over time. This study also does not specifically assess how Latino/a graduates strictly from Los Angeles County schools were retained in community colleges and at four-year universities, rather only overall Latino/a student rates were evaluated. Finally, this analysis does not include school-level outcomes which could account for differential access to resources and funding.

## CONCLUSION

Based on these indicators and analysis, education for Latino/as in Los Angeles County has been assigned a cumulative grade of a C. Given that this data was pre-pandemic, this grade demonstrates how much progress has been made, but also how much progress could potentially be lost due to the disruptions experienced by many students due to COVID-19. Similarly, this grade embodies the opportunities that organizations dedicated to this field can undertake to combat these educational disparities. The following are recommendations for future research:

- Advocate for a common measure to capture the level of quality of early childhood education programs and ensure that measures are publically available for research.
- Determine common core-relevant math benchmarks for future success in order to flag these trackers as more schools fully transition into common core integrated curricula.



# Education: Reflection

## **Roberto Suro**

*Associate Director, USC Price Center for Social Innovation*

*Director, Tomás Rivera Policy Institute*

*Professor of Journalism and Public Policy, University of Southern California*

To understand this Scorecard, it is vital to keep in mind who is being graded. It is not Latino/a students or their families. No, the very disappointing grade of “C” is awarded to the school systems of Los Angeles County and to all the public policies that help determine educational outcomes. The data here tell a very consistent story. It is a long story that begins with toddlers and continues through a dozen or so years of schooling. And although the data measure the varied lives of a highly diverse population as illustrated in the demography section of this report, the results are remarkably uniform. At every stage of their educational journey, Los Angeles Latino/as fare poorly in comparison to Asians and Whites. Even when their school work is comparable, Latino/as come out behind. So, roughly as many Latino/as (53%) as Whites (59%) complete all the high school courses required for admission to the University of California or California State University systems. But then there is a gulf when it comes to actually going to college, with Whites (72%) enrolling at a much higher rate than Latino/as (56%). And worse, the data presented here shows that the disparity has been growing in recent years. Meanwhile, we all

know too well that college going has become one of the great markers of inequality in our society. Those who extend their education beyond high school enjoy far greater earnings and opportunities over an entire lifetime, and those privileges are then passed on to the generation that follows. The grade of “C” is not merely an assessment of how schools perform with Latino/a students; it is also a depiction of the future that those schools help predetermine for Latino/a adults and their children.

According to the Census Bureau estimates, there were 1,315,428 Latino/as under the age of 18 in Los Angeles County in 2019. That was nearly four times the number of White children and accounted for six in 10 of the entire child population of the County. Census data also show that 96% of those young Latino/as are native-born U.S. citizens. They did not come here from anywhere else, and they are not going away. They are our children, and whoever they become as adults will be shaped by what happens to them in our schools. So, it is our shared future, the future of our city, that is being graded a “C” here. Can anyone be satisfied with that?

# ABC's Vision for Our Children

*Policies That Will Provide Los Angeles County's Latino/a Children With the Opportunities They Deserve*

## INTRODUCTION

The struggle to ensure that every Latino/a child in Los Angeles County has the educational opportunities that will allow them to fulfill their potential is not new. The collective work is part of a long struggle to change systems and structures from enforcers of inequity into engines of opportunity and justice. This report arrives at a crucial moment for the movement and for Latino/a students. The data analyzed by research partners at the USC Price Center for Social Innovation samples from key indicators at each stage of children's educational journeys, from early childhood through college graduation. It is clear that while deep, systemic inequities remain, there are areas where policy that is driven by an equity lens has created meaningful progress. In looking forward and committing to a set of policy recommendations that ABC believes will be true drivers of equity for our children, it is important that there is a pause to recognize that all of the data comes from before the COVID-19 pandemic and to take a moment to contemplate how this shapes understanding and the path forward.

The disparate impact of COVID-19 on Los Angeles County's Latino/a community should serve to strengthen resolve. As the world emerges from the worst stages of the pandemic, everything that is known states that the already deep educational disparities have deepened further. Equally alarming is the likelihood that hard-won progress has lost momentum and is at risk of reversal.

Professor Robert Suro powerfully wrote in his reflection on the data presented in the previous section of this report:

**"... it is vital to keep in mind who is being graded. It is not Latino students or their families. No, the very disappointing grade of "C" is awarded to the school systems of Los Angeles County and to all the public policies that help determine educational outcomes."**

As you read the policy recommendations and consider what action you might take, keep this important distinction close to your heart and your mind. The pre-COVID educational disparities were the direct result of policy decisions and the systemic inequities that resulted from those decisions. Similarly, the pain and suffering experienced by Los Angeles County's Latino/a children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic were born of the conditions created by inequitable policies. If the pandemic is not to lead to long-

term educational disparities for children, it will require an intentional effort in identifying and fighting for the policies that will create an education system that provides all children with what they need and what they deserve to thrive.

### COVID-19 IMPACT

**Researchers estimate that students on average can lose five to nine months of learning by the end of the school year, with students of color losing more, likely six to 12 months.**

(GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOW, 2021)

The disparities evident in Latino/a children's educational outcomes are not a product of nature or the fault of the children. They are the result of systemic inequities and disinvestment. The correct response to this is intentional equity in the investments made in the Latino/a community. It is no coincidence that ABC uses the word "invest" many times in the recommendations of policies that will ensure education equity and fair opportunities for Los Angeles County's Latino/a children. The frequency with which this word appears in the recommendations should be a source of both hope and frustration.

There should be hope because while the disparities and inequities are significant, solutions that merely require investment, support, and faithful implementation are known. At the same time, there should be a sense of frustration that these solutions are known and have not yet been provided at scale to all children. It is often said that budgets are a reflection of values. If Los Angeles County values the Latino/a community and Latino/a children, its budget must provide the resources to implement the solutions detailed in this report. ABC believes that the best way to ensure this is to develop and implement an equity-based funding formula, similar to Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Student Equity Needs Index (SENI 2.0), which allocates county resources to invest in programs and services that serve the educational needs of the Latino/a community and in turn promotes intergenerational prosperity.

An equity-driven funding formula is not the only necessary condition for creating a fair and equitable education system in Los Angeles County. This report also recognizes the need for a fundamental shift in how the culture, language, knowledge, skills, and experiences of the Latino/a community are seen and leveraged as assets. The need for cultural competence and asset-based approaches is woven throughout the recommendations. This report is very clear: The Latino/a community in Los Angeles will thrive when the programs and curricula that our children have access to value their culture, language, and families, and when programs engage families as partners.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the curtain has been pulled back on many of the inequities that have been allowed to persist, and on the consequences of these inequities for the Latino/a community. Some of these inequities show that large parts of the Latino/a community do not have access to basic, essential services that other communities take for granted. Along with reforms to health care access and fair employment conditions, access to an increasingly digital world must be urgently addressed.

#### COVID-19 IMPACT

**84% of remote students reported exhaustion, headaches, insomnia, or other stress-related ailments.**

(GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOW, 2021)

The digital divide was most starkly illustrated when K-12 schools were forced to physically close in mid-March, 2020. As education attempted to move to remote learning, it became clear that many Latino/a families in Los Angeles

could not afford high-speed internet at home and did not have the devices needed for education and for professional applications. While this revelation may have been eye-opening for those whose lives at work and at home are dominated by screens and download speeds, it was and should be truly shocking that high-speed internet is not available, even if families could afford it, in some majority Latino/a communities.

While K-12 remote learning provided a powerful example of the digital divide, this inequity increasingly touches every part of the lives of families who are shut out of the digital world. Over the past 15 months, stopgap solutions have been put in place through school systems, government, and private-public partnerships. The consequences of this inequity call for systemic and long-term solutions. Efforts at the state level to ensure that high-speed broadband is available and accessible to all families have been encouraging. Access to devices must be a part of digital equity as well as support for digital literacy. In the recommendation on adult and continuing education, ABC highlights the importance of education for the adult members of the Latino/a community who do not follow a traditional K-college pathway. This should include digital literacy so that all members of the community can fully access the resources available to them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **1. Invest in high-quality early childhood education in underserved communities so Latino/a children are prepared to thrive in school and life**

High-quality early childhood education (ECE) in underserved communities will result in Latino/a children having the strong start necessary to be prepared for their K-12 education and to thrive in school and life. ABC is intentional in using the phrase "high-quality" in discussing this policy focus.

Access to high-quality ECE prior to kindergarten has long-lasting and wide-reaching benefits on the educational and socioemotional development of young children. Early education experiences improve academic skills and foster language development. Structured play, physical and motor development, and the building of positive relationships with adults and peers all promote healthy socioemotional development.



#### COVID-19 IMPACT

**In 2019-2020, 55% of TK-5 Latino/a students were on track to read. In contrast, in 2020-2021 44% of TK-5 Latino/a students were on track to read.**

(GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOW, 2021)

However, despite progress in recent years, far too few Latino/a families in Los Angeles County have access to the high-quality ECE programs that would deliver these benefits to their children. Of the nearly 700,000 children under the age of five in Los Angeles County, about half are Latino/a, and only 6.6% attend a high-quality ECE program.<sup>1</sup> Given how much is known about the benefits of ECE for children, it is unacceptable that they would allow this to continue.

Two areas of intervention in this currently inequitable system have been identified. First, it is not truly known how many Latino/a children attend high-quality ECE programs because too few programs are rated at all. Just over 92% of all students attending an ECE program in Los Angeles County are enrolled in a program that receives no rating. It is obvious that it cannot be ensured that all children have access to high-quality programs if there is no way of assessing the quality of the vast majority of programs. There must be an investment in and consistent use of a clear measurement tool for ECE quality that can be understood by families, educators, and policymakers. It is important that, in recommending an expansion of the existing tools to measure ECE quality, the importance of small ECE programs to the Latino/a communities is recognized. These small programs are currently the least likely to receive a rating. They are also the programs that many families rely on. An expansion of evaluation should be paired with support for these programs so that rating does not inadvertently create a bureaucratic barrier to their operation. Second, children are hurt by chronic underinvestment in both early childhood educators and parent engagement.

Quality ECE must begin with a workforce that is well prepared, receives ongoing professional development, and is well supported. Investments in the quality of children's early childhood experience are crucial as are investments in the adults who shape and deliver that experience. In California, the poverty rate for early educators is 17%, two times the poverty rate of the state.<sup>2</sup> This has a direct detrimental impact on students. Nationally, the turnover rate for early

childhood educators is estimated to be 25%, four times as high as the rate for K-12 educators.<sup>3</sup>

Teaching at any level requires a high level of skill and knowledge that often takes time and experience to develop. A high turnover rate robs many students of access to effective educators. Turnover also prevents new staff from being mentored by experienced colleagues and traps organizations in a cycle of training new staff on basic skills rather than focusing resources on the ongoing development of existing staff. It should also not be ignored that the majority of Los Angeles County's early childhood educators are women of color, many with their own children. Low compensation, poor support, and job instability ripple outward through Los Angeles County's Latino/a community.

Investments in ECE educators, including those that work in community-based organizations, must be made. Latino/a families have built trusting relationships with these providers as they are often community members, predominantly Latina and immigrant. Such investments include early educator pre-service preparation, continued in-service training of early childhood educators and leaders, compensation, and mentorship. Combined, these investments will improve instructional quality, decrease burnout, and increase teacher retention.

As obvious as it is that early childhood educators are key to early childhood education, it should be similarly clear that families play a vital role in the success of their children. While this is true at all stages of a child's education, it is especially important for the youngest children whose parents have a tremendous influence on their development.

ABC believes that, to move beyond a traditional model of family engagement, it is important to define exactly which practices will strengthen the early educational experiences of Latino/a children. These practices begin with a recognition that family engagement must be a two-way flow of knowledge and resources. Rather than merely sharing information with families, early childhood educators must build meaningful relationships with families and be intentional in learning about each child's unique strengths and challenges. Educators must also intentionally embed opportunities to understand families' cultural and linguistic assets, and use this understanding to inform curricula, communication, and classroom practices.

Strong, culturally responsive relationships between families and educators serve to make many of the school's

1. (First 5 LA, 2020)

2. (McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., Whitebook, M., & Olson, K.L., 2021)

3. (Whitebook, M., Phillips, D., & Howes, C., 2014)

resources accessible. Building on the cornerstone of these relationships, schools should engage families with the skills, knowledge, and resources that they need to support their children's development.<sup>4</sup>

In making these recommendations it is vital to recognize that ECE is one piece of the larger early childhood care ecosystem. No part of this system, whether pediatric medical care or education, can fully serve children if it operates in isolation. Strong coordination across sectors is needed. ABC believes that investments must be made to support the cross-sector work of advocates and policymakers. Greater cross-sector coherence will be beneficial to families and children. It is also key that cross-sector collaboration includes those who are not directly in a caring field. The involvement and leadership of business, civic, and political leaders as champions and advocates for young Latino/a children will be necessary to bring the needed attention and resources to the challenges and opportunities in ECE.

## **2. Invest in the expansion of quality early grade programming, including dual language programs, that honors and leverages Latino/a students' cultural and linguistic assets**

Research shows that literacy by third grade is the strongest predictor of high school graduation. Nothing is more fundamental to a student's ability to access content than the ability to read so they can gain knowledge and skills needed for college and career success. In Los Angeles County, Latino/a third graders significantly underperform compared to their White peers. According to the 2019 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) results for Los Angeles County, 42% of Latino/a students met or exceeded standards as compared to 67% of White students in English Language Arts. This gap in literacy skills grows wider at older grades. This calls for addressing the gap by not allowing it to form in the first place. ABC proposes investing in the expansion of quality early grade programming, including dual language programs, that honors Latino/a students' culture and leverages our cultural and linguistic assets.

Instructional approaches that sustain a student's cultural and linguistic assets are the fundamental tenet of the California English Learner Roadmap. Dual language programs achieve

this by strengthening the home language of students which supports the continued familial relationship as children can continue to communicate with parents and other family members who speak only their native language. This also leads to cognitive benefits given that knowing two languages is "associated with superior concept formation, increased divergent thinking, pattern recognition, and problem-solving" which leads to better academic outcomes such as decreasing the likelihood of dropping out and increasing the likelihood of attending college.<sup>5</sup>

These programs have demonstrated significant gains in the development of language, literacy, and cognition. This represents a fundamental shift in how the education system views and serves Latino/a children. While it is certainly important to learn the skills and the curricula associated with dual language and culturally responsive Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs and to put in place culturally responsive family engagement practices, it is not enough. There also needs to be an investment in the time and space for professional development that allows educators, schools, and school systems to examine and shift mindsets so that they truly value Latino/a children's assets.

Before there is a discussion about programs that explicitly address the development of literacy skills, there must be focus on the socioemotional wellness of early grade Latino/a students and on the relationships between their schools and their families.<sup>6</sup> In the ECE recommendation, it was detailed how culturally inappropriate family engagement practices serve as reinforcers of inequity. It is not enough to focus resources, professional development, and system oversight on culturally responsive family engagement in ECE; it must continue through a child's education. For the development of critical early literacy skills, it is vital that schools have strong relationships with families so that they can provide families with the resources and the capacity building to reinforce and support literacy development when their children are at home.

This type of engagement is critical, but it is insufficient for cultural responsiveness to exist in a domain separate from classroom instruction or to be seen simply as the concern of family and community-focused staff. The culturally responsive programs and practices that nurture relationships and a sense of belonging must also be present in the classroom. For all schools to be safe and welcoming spaces for Latino/a students, instructional practices should promote the socioemotional skills of Latino/a students using research-based, culturally responsive curricula and methods.

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4. (Wechsler, M., Melnick, H., Maier, A., & Bishop, J., 2016)

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5. (California Department of Education, 2020)

6. (Connor, R., & Hildenbrand, A., 2020)

It would be dangerous to understate just how large of a shift in beliefs and mindsets this approach may be for the education system. For too long, many Latino/a children were seen as merely having deficits to be fixed. Too many Latino/a families were viewed, at best, as unhelpful in their children's education and, at worst, as detriments. In addressing such fundamental shifts, they can not afford to skimp on staff development or to address only the curriculum. This will require targeted funding for professional development of pre-service teachers and existing staff. It will also require partnership with schools and school districts to ensure they are equipped to understand how to develop and implement an effective change management strategy. Schools and school districts need support, guidance, and best practices to understand what conditions need to be in place at their schools and across their districts to ensure the shifts are being experienced by students and families.

Culturally responsive relationships, engagement, and socioemotional learning will create the baseline conditions to support early grade literacy for Latino/a students. ABC believes that increased investment in dual language programs is a key policy lever to close the literacy gap between Latino/a students and their peers before third grade. Dual language programs build on the linguistic assets of Latino/a families and communities and allow young people to build foundational literacy in two languages with good instruction. Additionally, building a child's home language promotes positive identity development and promotes biliteracy and biculturalism that is a bedrock for the state's economy and social strength.

As investment increases the supply of dual language programs, it will be important that advocates and policymakers attend to issues of quality and access. In any scaling of successful models, it is important to ensure that there is sufficient oversight of program fidelity to ensure that new program sites achieve their intended outcomes. An expansion of dual-language programs in Los Angeles County must also be intentional to ensure equitable access to Latino/a families. This should include community engagement, enrollment policies, and choices about the location of new programs.



### 3. Ensure that educators are reflective of the communities in which they teach by investing in the educator pipeline, in recruitment, and in educator retention

Quality teaching is more highly correlated with student achievement, across all content areas, than other variables such as students' socioeconomic status or the racial composition of the school. Over the past decades, there have been many policy initiatives that have sought to create equitable access to high-quality teaching. Many of these efforts have been costly and contentious, and they have not resulted in the outcomes that they originally promised. There is an emerging body of research that points to teacher diversity as an effective approach to quality teaching. This research comes at a moment when California faces an escalating teacher shortage and when there is growing recognition that schools and school districts do not adequately retain teachers of color.<sup>7</sup> ABC proposes investments in programs that increase and diversify the educator pipeline and initiatives that retain educators who are reflective of the communities in which they teach.

While the importance of educators whose lived experiences reflect those of their students has long been underappreciated, numerous reports point to the importance of educators of color in accelerating learning for students of color. Examination of national data and recent research points out that teachers of color help close achievement gaps for students of color and are highly rated by students of all races.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, while the educator workforce has become more racially and ethnically diverse over the last 20 years, the diversity gap between teachers and students has barely narrowed, and in some cases widened.<sup>9</sup> Latino/as comprise 54% of the students in California and only 20% of the teacher workforce, a gap that has widened by five percentage points during that period.<sup>10</sup> In Los Angeles County, Latino/as comprise 65% of the student population and only 33% of teachers.<sup>11</sup>

7. (Carver-Thomas, D., 2020)

8. (Carver-Thomas, D., Kini, T., & Burns, D., 2020)

9. (Carver-Thomas, D., Kini, T., & Burns, D., 2020)

10. (The Education Trust, 2021)

11. (The Greater LA Education Foundation, 2020)



This is an issue created by barriers at all points of the educator pipeline, and across the country schools do not provide the support or conditions to retain teachers of color, with a greater rate of attrition for teachers of color than for their White peers.<sup>12</sup> In California, there is already an educator shortage driven by the decline in teacher preparation enrollments, increased demand for teachers, and teacher attrition and turnover. It is likely that COVID-19 will accelerate teacher attrition rates. While this is clearly a challenge, it may also present an opportunity as it provides yet another signal that our approach to the educator pipeline must change.

Given that Latino/a students are often first-generation college students, it is significantly more difficult to recruit them to the teacher workforce.<sup>13</sup> Due to the increasing cost of higher education, the cost of teacher preparation programs, high debt burdens, and the low entry salary of educators, the teacher workforce might not be a viable option for Latino/a students. Programs that intend to increase and diversify the educator pipeline must remove barriers for recent college graduates from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds to the teaching profession. Efforts such as teacher residency programs should acknowledge and address the high cost and debt burden barriers by coupling scholarships and grants to be applied towards the cost of college as well as salaried compensation for serving as a teacher resident of schools with the highest needs.

Additionally, initiatives are needed within school districts that focus on early hiring of teachers of color, partnerships with local teacher preparation programs, and offering comprehensive induction programming for new teachers. These are effective recruitment strategies. In order to retain teachers and administrators, intentional support is needed such as coaching and mentoring, time to collaborate with other educators, and creation of career pipelines that keep educators of color in the classroom and in schools.

#### **4. Invest in research-based career pathway programs that contextualize academically rigorous, real-world, and work-based learning opportunities that prepare Latino/a students for college and career**

A focus on increasing the number of Latino/a students who graduate from high school has resulted in notable results. Over the past four years, Los Angeles County has seen graduation rates hover around 80% and reach a high of 82% for the 2019-2020 academic year. Much of the progress could be attributed to quality policies like tutoring, offering additional math and English courses during the school year, and implementing summer bridge programs.

While there is certainly progress to celebrate, there is tremendous work still to be done. The rise in graduation rates has coincided with Los Angeles County's largest district, Los Angeles Unified, lowering graduation requirements and using end-of-year credit recovery campaigns to increase the number of graduating students. This is reflected in the fact that across Los Angeles County, of those Latino/a students that graduated high school, only 53% completed their full A-G course requirements and were eligible for the UC and CSU systems. The goal should be not to merely ensure that children have a high school diploma, but that their diploma signifies that they are thoroughly prepared for college and career. This can be achieved by implementing research-based career pathway programs that contextualize academically rigorous, real-world, and work-based learning opportunities that prepare Latino/a students for college and career.

#### **COVID-19 IMPACT**

**According to the Education Trust, first-time enrollment among Hispanic students sank nearly 20 percentage points across all sectors.**

(ANTHONY, M., NICHOLS, A. H., & DEL PILAR, W., 2021)

Career pathway programs provide a comprehensive approach to high school education by integrating rigorous academics, career technical education, and career-based learning. This is best implemented in small learning communities where

12. (The Education Trust, & Teach Plus, 2019)

13. (Carver-Thomas, D., Kini, T., & Burns, D., 2020)



these contextualized learning opportunities allow students to answer for themselves why school is important for them. According to a study completed by Stanford Research Institute (SRI), Latino/a students who participate in certified career pathways are four percentage points more likely to graduate from high school and graduate with 11.7 more credits.<sup>14</sup> Another SRI study also demonstrated that students who graduated from career pathways were more likely to be employed in a position that provides good benefits such as sick pay and vacation.<sup>15</sup>

As this report previously asserted, when discussing dual language programs, the investment to scale successful school programs must be matched by an equal commitment to monitor and support the conditions necessary for faithful implementation of the program. This includes a scale shift with conditions being created to also manage and sustain the change. Successful career pathways programs allow students to take A-G courses, dual enrollment courses, and career technical education courses. The small learning community also allows for the integration of individualized student supports that extend beyond the classroom and support the socioemotional resilience of students. The integrated student support allows for students to have at least one adult who supports and understands them. This comprehensive approach requires school conditions, such as a different school day schedules, well-trained and supported staff, and adequate resources that allow for the quality implementation of all key aspects.

Career pathway programs are a discrete model that ABC believes holds tremendous potential for Latino/a children's high school achievement and readiness for college and career. Additionally, ABC believes that racial, cultural, and political representation and analysis must be woven through all curricula for our students to truly excel. For too long Latino/a students have sat in courses that did not allow them to develop pride in their own community. Also detrimental has been the lack of relevancy of course work to the world that Latino/a students see around them. As children grow, it is essential that their curriculum helps them to understand how race, language, and power influence their community. This must include teaching a history curriculum that is accurate, is culturally inclusive, and illuminates the root causes of the economic and political realities that students see around them. This is a critical step in their recognition of their own

agency and the power of their community. This will not only nurture the next generation of Latino/a leaders, but through increased relevance and engagement, it will also ensure that more Latino/a students graduate high school prepared for higher education and their careers.

### **5. Invest in programs and services for Latino/a college students that provide culturally relevant guidance and support to graduate from higher education institutions and transition to a career**

In recent years, it has been recognized that the work does not stop when students graduate from high school and enroll in college. While celebrating those key milestones, everyone must be prepared to help students persist in college and make it to their graduation day. This is especially true for Latino/a students, and even more so for those Latino/a students who may be the first in their families to attend college. ABC proposes investment in programs and services for Latino/a college students that provide culturally relevant guidance and support to graduate from higher education institutions and transition to a career.

Latino/a students face many challenges and barriers that can interfere with the successful completion of their college degrees. Too often, they arrive at higher educational institutions underprepared by their K-12 schools and quickly face academic challenges that can feel insurmountable. This self-doubt is compounded when students have had little previous exposure to the non-academic norms, cultures, and expectations in which they find themselves immersed. This can leave students feeling isolated and unsure, but the impact is more than a feeling. A student with previous exposure to college may understand where to find support in choosing their courses or seeking help. A student that does not have that support may end up enrolled in courses that are academically and financially detrimental. These are just two of the reasons why the college-going rate (56%) for Latino/as in Los Angeles County far exceeds the rate at which Latino/as earn a degree: 27%, according to a report published by The Campaign for College Opportunity.<sup>16</sup>

14. (Warner, M. & Caspary, K., 2017)

15. (Warner, M., Caspary, K., Arshan, N., Stites, R., Padilla, C., Patel, D., McCracken, M., Harless, E., Park, C., Fahimuddin, L., & Adelman, N., 2016)

16. (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021)

It is firmly known that Latino/a children can succeed and thrive in college if they have access to programs and services that are rooted in their realities and provide holistic support. For example, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Academic Advancement Program (AAP), a multi-racial program that increases access, equity, and opportunity, graduates the highest percentage of historically underrepresented students in the UC and CSU systems.<sup>17</sup> This program connects underrepresented students with academic supports such as tutoring, academic advising, and academic counseling while also providing welcome days, summer transition programs, peer mentoring, and a sense of community to support students in feeling seen and understood and helping them navigate a new and complex system. Among the students that participate, many of whom are from underrepresented backgrounds and are the first in their family to attend college, 91% said that participation in AAP increased their sense of belonging to the larger UCLA academic community. It is also important to expand systemic initiatives such as the Seal of Excelencia, a certification for institutions that build institutional capacity to align data, practice, and leadership in service of Latino/a students to not only enroll them at higher rates but also to ensure they are supported institutionally to graduate. Institutions must capture accurate data and see positive growth in key data points including enrollment, retention, and degree completion for Latino/a students, among other indicators. They must also intentionally implement practices that have a positive outcome on the indicators identified. Finally, the institutions must demonstrate how they align data and practice in leadership areas such as mission and vision, human resources, and institutional culture. The Seal serves as an important marker to students, families, and guidance counselors that an institution will fully support the potential of a Latino/a student considering their post-secondary options.



17. (UCLA Undergraduate Education, 2021)

## 6. Invest in continuing education, credentialing, and skills training programs for adults that are accessible to the Latino/a community

While recommendations have been made to increase college readiness and college persistence, continuing educational opportunities should be available to support those who do not follow a traditional educational pathway and to increase opportunities for adults so that less students grow up in poverty. As an example, competency-based education allows adult learners to leverage their work experience and passions to demonstrate their learning and progress, making their education relevant and an integrated part of their lives.<sup>18</sup> Investment in each type of program is needed but will only have its full potential impact if these programs are accessible to the communities that they are intended to serve.

Educational institutions have made some investments in services for parents such as English classes, adult education, and GED classes, but the need is vast and complex. Unique challenges of adult learners have also been recognized by leading institutions that schedule courses at night, and on weekends, allow parents to bring children to class and, in some cases, provide child care. Efforts can go further by bringing education to the places where adult learners already are—close to their homes, in their workplaces, in their children’s schools, and in community hubs. Maximizing existing infrastructure would require greater coordination among school districts, higher education institutions, and government agencies, and it would require the engagement of community-based organizations. Multi-layered investments can make our systems more responsive and better equipped to address the barriers inside and outside of the educational system that play a detrimental role in the educational success and attainment of Latino/a adults.

In addition, the urgency for closing the digital divide in the Latino/a community has been detailed earlier. If resources can be marshaled to close this divide, a new world of possibilities will open for adult learners who could have access to continuing education opportunities in their homes and on schedules that work for them. Providers of adult

18. (Roy, L., Fernandez, S., Escalera, L., Korbek-Erdogmus, E., Reid, J., Bush, A., & Saltmarsh, J., 2017)

education should prepare for this day and should be active in advocacy to close the digital divide. These pathways to access have the potential of reaching a vast number of highly skilled, highly motivated workers who otherwise would have no access to economic advancement. The magnitude of this impact on creating multigenerational prosperity among Latino/a families cannot be overstated.

The education recommendations laid out in this section were crafted in response to persistent disparities in the educational opportunities available to Latino/as in Los Angeles County. These disparities have the potential of being catastrophic as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic if effective policy interventions are not immediately implemented. The recommendations are also informed by the meaningful educational progress of the Latino/a community that is now threatened by the pandemic.

Successful initiatives like community schools and policies that are similar to the A-G course sequence have proven what is possible. Similarly, each recommendation highlights practices, programs, and policies that have been proven to work for the Latino/a community. Unfortunately, none of these are universally available. The work ahead calls for representatives,

decision-makers, and those working in systems to take what they already know works and make sure that it is available to the entire Latino/a community, not just some members.

The work ahead will involve a deeper understanding of successful models and the conditions necessary for their implementation. It will also require a bold commitment of going from “some” to “all” and will not be without challenge. Doing so will require fundamental shifts to equity-driven spending structures at all levels. Fierce advocacy for the resources needed to scale and expand programs is essential. Partnerships and collaborations must continue to be strengthened. Solutions must be centered around those most impacted by policies, programs, and practices, and this can only happen when community members are heard so that solutions appropriately address their needs.

Successfully expanding access to effective programs will require more than funding. It will require increased accountability and greater engagement of Latino/a communities. By understanding what is already working, securing the necessary resources, and ensuring tailored responses to the Latino/a community, greater opportunities will be available for all learners to flourish.





Overall  
Grade:

D



## INTRODUCTION

In 2019, at 60,572,237 or 18.5% of the U.S. population, Latino/as were the second-largest racial/ethnic group and growing behind non-Latino/a Whites (60.1%). In 2020, Latino/as were 39% of the nearly 40 million Californians and 48.6% of Los Angeles County, which was the largest Latino/a county population (4.9 million) in the U.S. in 2019. Approximately 36% of this population were immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, and other Central American countries, as well as South American and Caribbean countries. The median age for U.S. Latino/as was 29.8 years in 2019 compared to non-Latino/a Whites at 44. Approximately 65% of students enrolled in the Los Angeles public elementary school population are Latino/a.

Health impacts all aspects of life and is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the “state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” As the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted, important environmental conditions, such as where one is born, lives, learns, works, and plays, shape behaviors and the health of individuals, families, and communities. For example, lack of access to affordable healthy foods makes it harder to have a nutritious diet that promotes health and lowers risk of obesity, diabetes, and other health risk conditions. Similarly, crowded housing and unsafe neighborhoods, poor-quality educational and job opportunities, discrimination, and limited access to quality health care are important environmental

conditions that influence health. These conditions are frequently referred to as determinants of health.

Throughout Los Angeles County and beyond, there are wide gaps in health which are persistent and caused by barriers to a range of determinants of health. It is vital to promote the achievement of health equity which includes increasing opportunities for everyone to live the healthiest life possible, no matter what ethnic group they belong to, where they live, what nation they were born in, or how much money they make. This requires removing obstacles to health including poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, such as powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay,



quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care. Health inequities are reflected in differences in length of life; quality of life; rates of disease, disability, and death; severity of disease; and access to treatment.

Monitoring health indicators is an important tool for achieving and sustaining health equity for Latino/as and other populations. To support Los Angeles Latino/as in monitoring health, ABC developed the Latino/a Scorecard. The Scorecard's health section reports data on Latino/a health indicators and shares this with stakeholders, including community leaders and policymakers, to inform action. The indicators chosen for the health section took into account that the other Scorecard sections are determinants of health, including education, public safety, civic engagement, economic prosperity, and environmental quality and neighborhood wellbeing. As such, these determinants of health that are reflected within the other sections are not explicitly addressed here.

## METHODOLOGY & GRADING RUBRIC

This report focuses on the Latino/a community living within Los Angeles County and compares how Latino/as are doing on a range of health indicators using the Los Angeles County population of non-Latino/as Whites as a reference. Where possible, data on indicators are disaggregated by Latino/a immigrant and nonimmigrant subgroups as well.

The health indicators include life expectancy, suicidal ideation, depression, diabetes, obesity (adult and childhood rates), unplanned teenage pregnancy, cervical cancer, binge drinking, influenza vaccination rates, uninsured rates, access to emotional support, access to oral health care, access to mental health care, Latino/a health professional enrollment, and COVID-19 indicators. The primary data sources are the Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS 2018 and 2015), KidsData, Social Science Research Council Report, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), and the Los Angeles County Cancer Surveillance Program. A brief description of each database can be found in Appendix 3. The section that follows has tables showing the indicator rate for Latino/as and available comparison groups as well as a score and brief takeaway message about the indicator that is presented in each table and/or figure. More details about grading, along with additional background information on indicators and a glossary, may also be found in the Appendix.

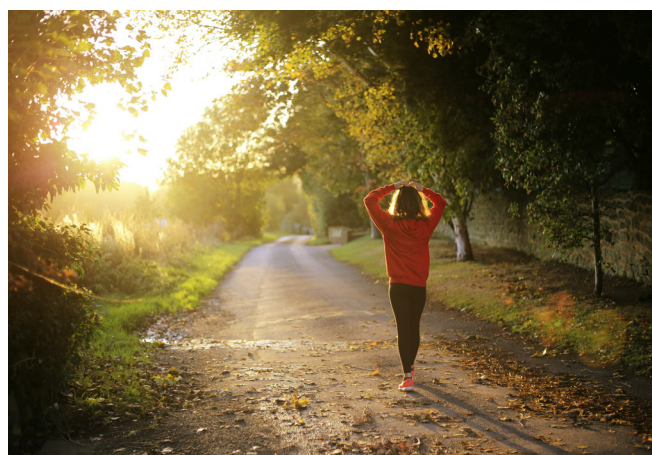
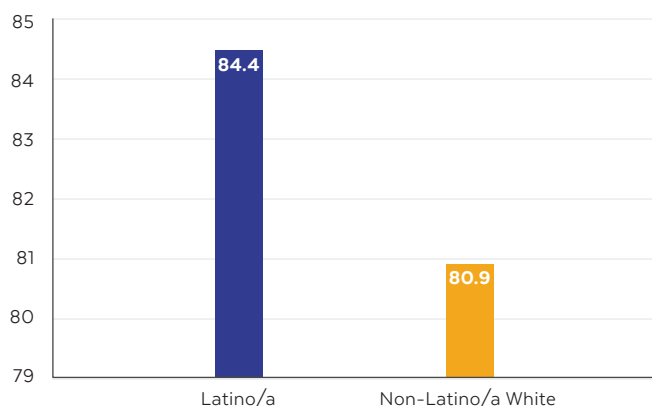
## HEALTH CONDITION INDICATORS FOR LATINO/AS IN LA COUNTY

### LIFE EXPECTANCY | GRADE: B

Life expectancy is an estimate of the expected average number of years of life (or a person's age at death) for individuals who were born into a particular population. It is often used as a general measure of health for the population. The table below for life expectancy in 2015 shows that Latino/as in Los Angeles County had a higher life expectancy (84.4 years) than their White counterparts (80.9 years). However, recently published research shows that between 2018 and 2020, life expectancy in the U.S. decreased by 3.88 years, nearly three times (2.9) the decrease in non-Latino/a Whites, eliminating the Latino/a health advantage held historically since at least the 1980s.<sup>1</sup>

#### LIFE EXPECTANCY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY (2015)

Source: LA County Human Development Report 2017-18



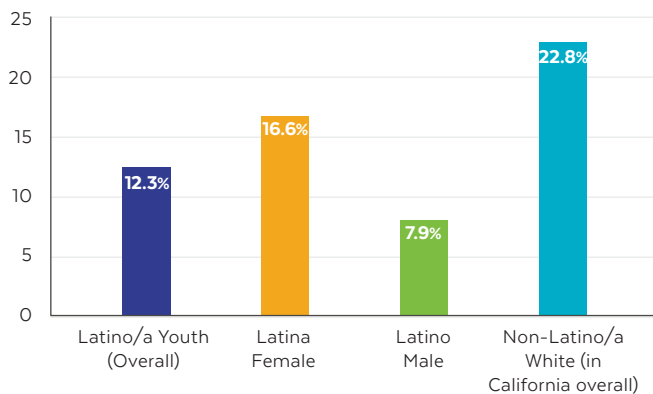
1. (Woolf, 2021)

## SUICIDAL IDEATION | GRADE: D

Suicidal ideation is the term for thoughts of suicide or thinking about taking one's own life and is one of the symptoms of depression and other mental illnesses. It can also occur in response to adverse events without the presence of mental illness. Latina high school students reported having seriously considered suicide at a higher rate than Latino high school students. The percentage of Latina high school students in Los Angeles County who seriously considered committing suicide is 16.6%. Latino high school students who reported seriously considering committing suicide is 7.9%. Lastly, 22.8% of non-Latino/a White students reported having seriously considered committing suicide.

### PERCENTAGE OF LATINO/A YOUTH IN HIGH SCHOOL WHO REPORTED HAVING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED COMMITTING SUICIDE

Source: High School Youth Risk Behavioral Survey 2019

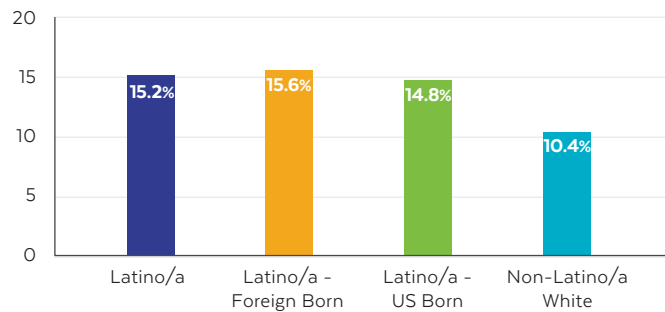


## DEPRESSION | GRADE: D

Depression is a common and treatable but serious medical illness that negatively affects how one feels, thinks, and acts. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyed, can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems, and can decrease the ability to function at work and at home. The graph below describes the percentage of adults, 18 and older, who were likely to have depression in 2018. It shows that in 2018, 15.2% of Latino/as (15.6% of foreign born and 14.8% of U.S. born) in Los Angeles County were likely to have depression versus 10.4% of non-Latino/a Whites.

### PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS (18+) WHO WERE LIKELY TO HAVE DEPRESSION

Source: LA County Health Survey 2018

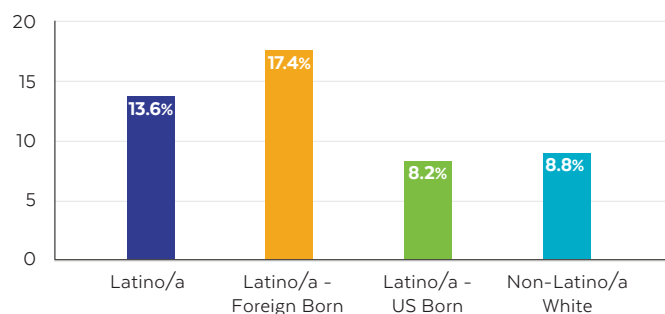


## DIABETES | GRADE: D

Diabetes is a disease that affects the body's ability to produce or use insulin, which leads to high levels of sugar in the blood that can result in serious health issues including heart disease, kidney damage, eye and foot damage, and depression. In 2018, 13.6% of Latino/as (17.4% foreign born and 8.2% U.S. born) in Los Angeles County were diagnosed with diabetes compared to 8.8% of non-Latino/a Whites.

### PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS (18+) EVER DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES

Source: LA County Health Survey 2018

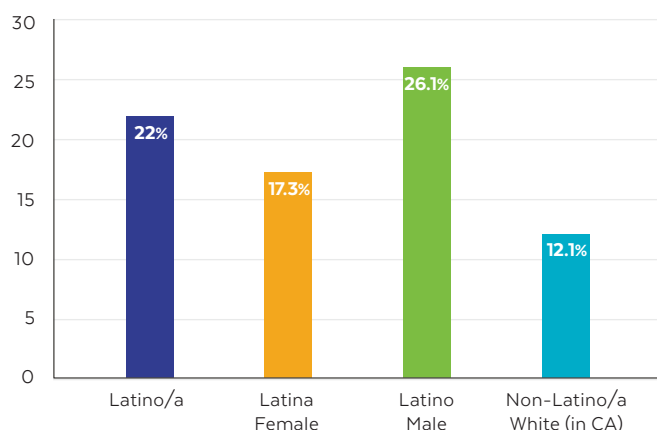


## CHILDHOOD OBESITY | GRADE: D

Obesity is a serious medical condition that can cause complications including high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, high blood cholesterol, cancers, and sleep disorders. In 2019, 22% of Latino/as (17.3% female and 26.1% male) were obese in Los Angeles County compared to 12.1% of non-Latino/a Whites.

### PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO WERE OBESE IN LA COUNTY

Source: Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance System 2019

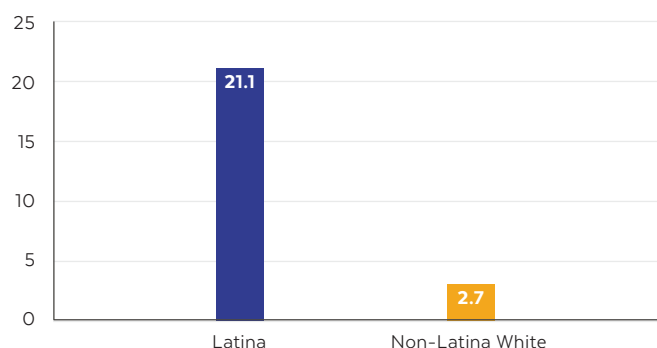


## TEEN PREGNANCY | GRADE: D-

Teenage pregnancy is when a woman under 20 years old gets pregnant. While teen pregnancy has dropped overall since 1990, the declines in pregnancy in the U.S. differ by ethnicity and race. In 2016, for every 1,000 women, approximately 21.1 Latina teenagers became pregnant, compared to 2.7 non-Latina White teenagers.

### PREVALENCE OF TEEN PREGNANCY (15-19 Y/O) IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY (2016) (RATE PER 1,000)

Source: Kids Data Teen Births, by Race/Ethnicity

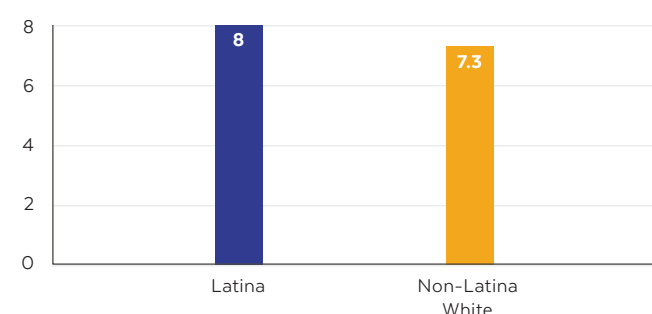


## CERVICAL CANCER | GRADE: C

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control and can lead to death if not treated. Cervical cancer affects the cervix which connects the vagina (birth canal) to the upper part of the uterus (where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant). In 2014, Latina women suffered from higher incidences of cervical cancer than non-Latina White women. For every 100,000 women, eight Latina women were affected by cervical cancer compared to 7.3 non-Latina White women.

### INCIDENCE OF CERVICAL CANCER (AGE-ADJUSTED PER 100,000 FEMALE POPULATION)

Source: Los Angeles County Cancer Surveillance Program (2014)

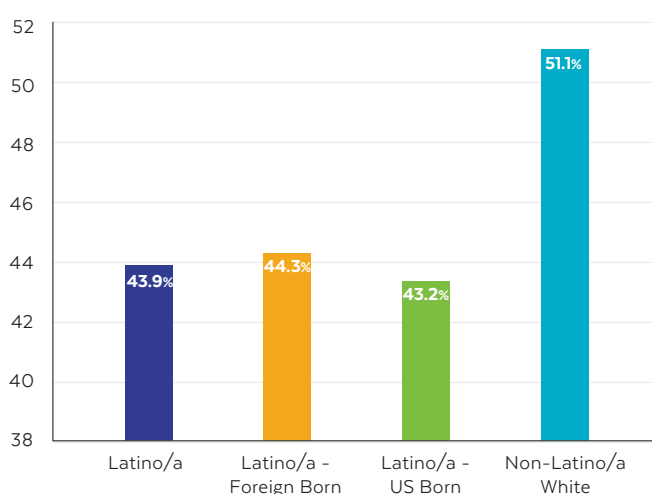


## INFLUENZA VACCINE | GRADE: C-

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and death. An annual influenza (flu) vaccine helps prevent or reduce the risk of flu illnesses, hospitalizations, and death. In 2018, 43.9% of Los Angeles County adult Latino/as reported receiving a flu vaccine in the past 12 months compared to 51.1% of non-Latino/a Whites.

### PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS (18+) WHO REPORTED HAVING A FLU VACCINE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Source: LA County Health Survey 2018

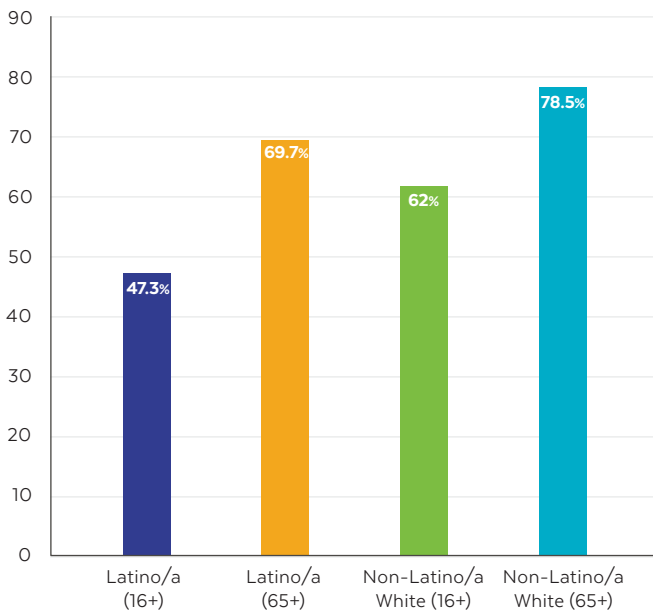


### COVID VACCINATION RATES | GRADE: D

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a coronavirus that can cause a respiratory tract infection and impact the nose, throat, and/or lungs. In December 2019 a new type of coronavirus was detected that quickly spread around the world causing a pandemic. In 2020 a COVID-19 vaccine was developed and made available to the public in 2021. As of May 21, 2021, 47.3% of Latino/as 16 and older in Los Angeles County were vaccinated with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine compared to 62% of non-Latino/a Whites of the same age.

#### CURRENT COVID VACCINATION RATES WITH 1+ DOSE

Source: LA County Public Health Vaccine Dashboard (as of 5/21/2021)

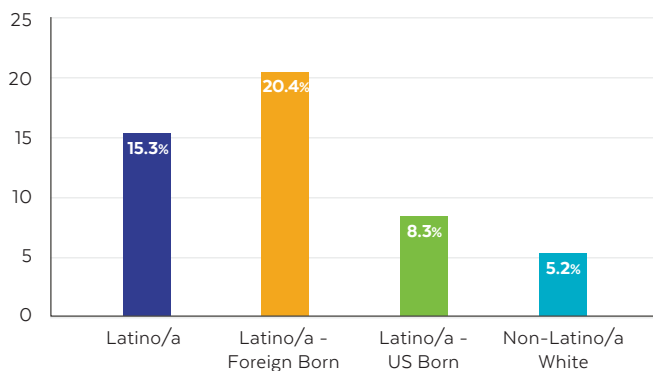


### UNINSURED | GRADE: D

A person is uninsured if they do not have health care insurance coverage for clinical or hospital services through a private, government, or other organization. In 2018, 20.4% of adult foreign-born Latino/as aged 18-64 were uninsured compared to 5.2% of non-Latino/a Whites being uninsured.

#### PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS (AGES 18-64) WHO REPORTED BEING UNINSURED

Source: LA County Health Survey 2018

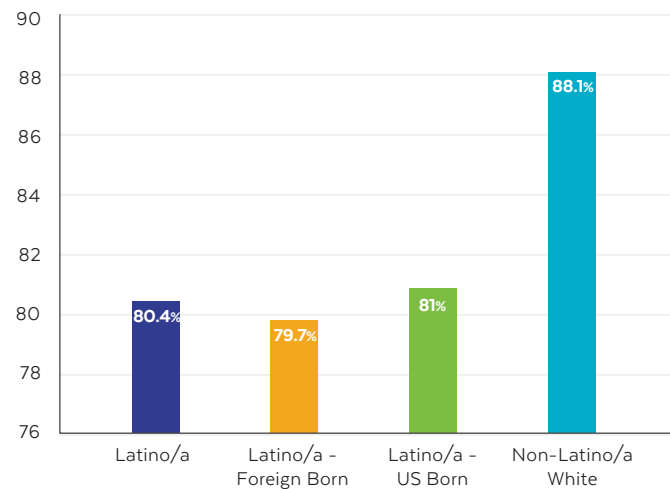


### ACCESS TO REGULAR SOURCE OF HEALTH CARE OR PRIMARY CARE | GRADE: C-

A regular source of health care is frequently referred to as primary care and is a usual source of health care, treatment of disease, chronic disease management, and preventive care including flu shots, blood pressure screenings, and cancer screenings. In 2018, 80% of Latino/as in Los Angeles County reported having a regular source of health care compared to 88.1% of Non-Latino/a Whites who reported having a regular source of health care.

#### PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS (18+) WHO REPORTED HAVING A REGULAR SOURCE OF HEALTH CARE

Source: LA County Health Survey 2018

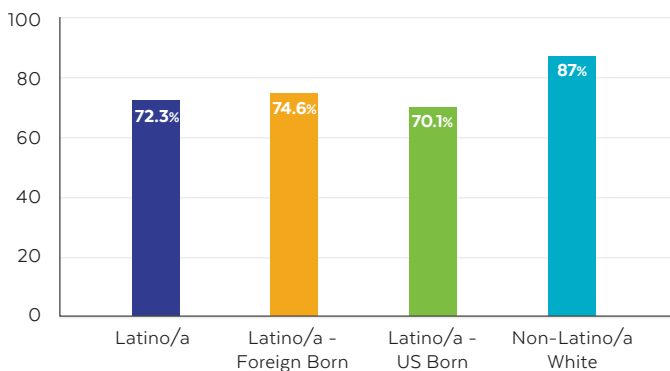


### ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE TREATMENT | GRADE: D

Mental health care services include access to professionals trained to diagnose and treat people with mental disorders including depression, anxiety, and substance use. In 2018, 72.3% of adult Latino/as in Los Angeles County reported receiving treatment for depression with medication or counseling versus 87% of non-Latino/a Whites.

#### PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS (18+) WITH CURRENT DEPRESSION WHO WERE EITHER TAKING PRESCRIBED MEDICATION OR RECEIVING COUNSELING FOR THE DISORDER

Source: LA County Health Survey 2018





## ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS

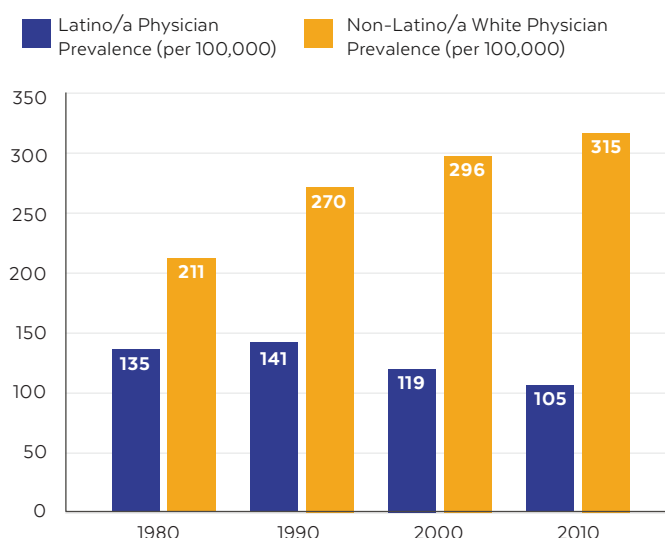
### GRADE: D

For the purpose of this report, enrollment in programs for health professions will be represented through the presence of Latino/a physicians for the Latino/a population and languages spoken in health care.

The graph to the right explains the ratio between Latino/a and non-Latino/a White physicians and Latino/a and non-Latino/a White populations over the course of 30 years. This figure shows that for every 100,000 physicians, there were 135, 141, 119, and 105 Latino/a physicians in 1980 and the year ranges of 1980-1990, 1990-2000, and 2000-2010, respectively. By comparison, for every 100,000 physicians, there were 211, 270, 296, and 315 non-Latino/a White physicians in 1980 and the year ranges of 1980-1990, 1990-2000, and 2000-2010, respectively. The amount of non-Latino/a White physicians increases over the years, as the amount of Latino/a physicians decreases over the years.

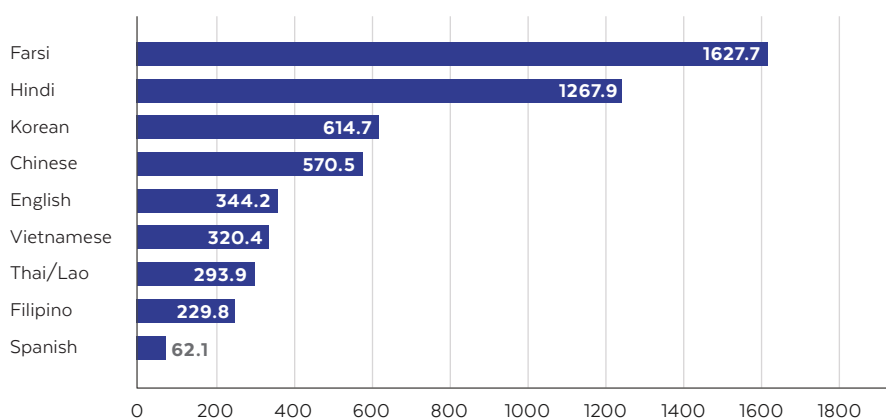
## 30-YEAR TREND OF NON-LATINO/A WHITE (NLW) PHYSICIANS PER 100,000 NLW POPULATION AND LATINO/A PHYSICIANS PER 100,000 LATINO/A POPULATION IN THE US

Source: Sanchez, G. et al. (2015) A Thirty-Year Overview from the Censuses

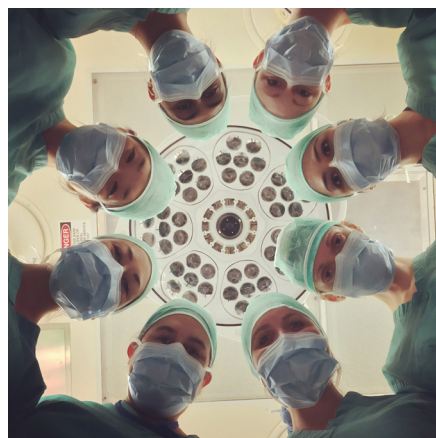


## LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY PHYSICIANS 2015 (PREVALENCE FOR 100,000)

Source: Hsu, Balderas-Medina, Anglin, & Hayes-Bautista (2018)



The graph to the left depicts the prevalence of physicians who could speak a particular language in Los Angeles County in 2018. The language most commonly spoken by physicians was Farsi, with about 1,627 physicians. The least prevalent language spoken by physicians was Spanish, with only 62 physicians.



## DISCUSSION

This health section of the Scorecard highlights important health indicators that are lacking for Latino/as and require action. The fall of U.S. life expectancy for Latino/as by 3.88 years wiped out the Latino/a health advantage that had been maintained for over 35 years and underscores the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which worsened historical inequities. We also found that among Los Angeles County adults, Latino/as report greater percentages of likelihood of depression, diagnosed diabetes, and incidence of cervical cancer. Latino/a adults had a lower percentage of insured and less access to a regular source of health care, as well as a lower percentage of vaccinations for influenza and COVID-19. There was also a trend of low prevalence of Latino/a physicians compared to non-Latino/a White physicians, as well as a low prevalence of physicians who spoke Spanish per population of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles County compared to those physicians speaking other non-English languages per respective populations. Among youth, we found that one in eight Los Angeles Latino/a high school students reported having seriously considered committing suicide in the past year, with Latinas having double the percentage as Latinos—a gender pattern reported in other studies for national populations. Of particular note is the extremely high teen pregnancy rates as well as high obesity among Latino/a youth.

## LIMITATIONS

The findings are subject to limitations. The data comes from different sources that each have limitations in the degree that respondents and their responses reflect the community. However, the data sources are among the best datasets available on health for Latino/as that address Los Angeles County. Some indicators, such as indicators of obesity and suicidal ideation in high school students, have number limitations for comparable Los Angeles County data. Experiences of Latino/as in Los Angeles County are not necessarily representative of Latino/as in other regions. Most of the data presented pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic so does not reflect the impact of COVID-19, with the exception of life expectancy. Finally, this section of the Scorecard is not inclusive of all important health indicators or subgroups due to limited numbers of data and/or disaggregation of data.

# Health: Reflection

## **Dr. Michael A. Rodriguez**

*Professor and Vice-Chair*

*Department of Family Medicine*

*David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA*

This health section demonstrates significant disparities in Los Angeles County Latino/a health indicators ranging from population health and coverage indicators to health system deficiencies. Challenges exist in collecting and reporting data that facilitates communities and policymakers to better understand and ultimately act to address these inequities. While the results come from a limited subset of indicators, the findings are consistent with the published literature. They also underscore the health inequities that Latino/a communities face and the underlying determinants of health that are responsible for these inequities as well as the responses needed. While these indicators may present differently within subpopulations of Latino/as in Los Angeles County, they nonetheless stress how several factors drive the health characteristics of Latino/as. The findings also emphasize how these inequities are varied, interrelated, and have historic roots dating back decades if not hundreds of years. When a range of structural changes shape environmental conditions, there are no single solutions that effectively address these problems. Responses are needed that are tailored to communities and their specific conditions.

The health section, and importantly, the other sections of the Latino/a Scorecard Report, describe Los Angeles County Latino/a communities with health, economic, social, and environmental inequities that have been exacerbated by the current COVID-19 pandemic. These inequities are more clearly understood when the data is

disaggregated by Latino/a subgroups such as immigrant status. While immigrants suffer some of the highest risks for mortality and least amount of assistance, they unfortunately are not consistently included in efforts to mitigate the risks or in the data collection. These findings also remind us how, despite the many advancements made to respond to COVID-19, they have limited impacts if they fail to respond to the needs of all Latino/as. As the County moves forward to recover and rebuild, it is critical that responses focus on the root causes of inequities, instead of only the symptoms. For example, while telehealth may be beneficial for addressing some access to care challenges, it may not address the underlying issues related to recruiting clinicians who are linguistically and culturally competent to the problems related to our access to broadband. This is why in order to achieve health equity it is important to work with trusted Latino/a community stakeholders to appropriately identify subpopulations to prioritize for interventions and tailor interventions to address the specific factors driving health inequities. Responses will be most successful and sustainable using a multi-level approach with coordination across levels of government, industries, and sectors.

Numerous reports have been written on the challenges that Latino/a and other underserved communities face and how the Latino/a communities have often not equally benefited from innovations in science, medicine, and financing. As this Scorecard shows, many of the challenges raised by previous reports over several decades are persistent for Latino/as. Critically, the health challenges of today cannot be solved without addressing the role that social and structural non-medical factors play in the inequities that we see. This includes acknowledging the xenophobia, racism, and other sources of discrimination. The health and wellbeing of Latino/a communities is vital to the future of Los Angeles, California, and the United States. As such, community and policymaker stakeholders are needed to advocate for and implement responses and policies that are

focused on health equity and support conditions for optimal health for all Latino/as. Achieving this vision requires leaders who value all Latino/as and other communities equally without excluding them based on geography, nativity, or ethnicity. It also demands a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of health. These needed changes require supportive policies that value the basic dignity and human rights of all Latino/as and other people, and they require just and humane immigration reform policies that prioritize full integration of immigrants into society, including accessible paths to citizenship. Bold action and leadership are needed to drive the transformational changes necessary to resolve historic injustices, provide resources to those with greatest need, promote health, and achieve health equity.





# ABC's Vision for Health

## INTRODUCTION

Health and the social determinants of health have never been as front and center as they currently are now due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, Latino/a communities in Los Angeles County experienced chronic inequities in access to health care, including routine and preventative care, mental health, and wellness resources. The County and State must continue to make significant increases in funding efforts to improve and strengthen health care services and develop policies that reflect the diverse health needs of the community.

As the worst months of COVID-19 devastated Los Angeles County, there were shocking examples of acute health care disparities in Latino/a communities that reinforced the need to make substantial targeted investments in our health care system. Latino/as represent nearly half of Los Angeles County residents yet hold the highest uninsured rate of all racial and ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> There are a multitude of barriers that prevent Latino/as from accessing holistic health care, but Los Angeles County must meet this moment and reimagine a new health care vision that leads to a healthier and stronger region. The County should work in lockstep with community partners and Latino/a-serving organizations to develop inclusive, community-driven policies that address the health conditions of Latino/as. We must elevate that systems and programs be culturally responsive and embrace the assets of the Latino/a community. It is then that we will be able to realize the vision of a healthier and brighter future.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Develop healthy environments for Latino/as that promote liveable communities with access to more parks and green spaces, areas for recreation and exercise, healthy food and fresh produce, and clean air and water**

In highly dense populated regions such as Los Angeles, it is rare to find well-maintained and easily accessible green spaces and recreation areas, especially in low-income areas. A report by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health found that park space per capita was associated with race/ethnicity. Latino/as were more likely to reside in cities and communities with less park space per capita.<sup>2</sup> The disparities in access is a public health concern as studies have shown parks can be central in promoting physical activity among children and adults alike.<sup>3</sup> Data also suggests that people who live close to parks and open space areas engage in more physical activity, which protects against heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and depression.<sup>4</sup>

1. (Los Angeles County Health Survey, [2018](#))

2. (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, [2016](#))

3. (Cohen D, et al., [2007](#))

4. (Wolch, J., [2011](#))



Researchers have found direct links between increased exposure to nature and improved physical and mental health.<sup>5</sup> Given the high rates of chronic disease in low-income communities and communities of color, local investments to increase open spaces for greater physical activity are vital for improving health outcomes. Moreover, increased exposure to nature can lead to a multitude of health benefits such as improved blood pressure, enhanced brain function in children, improved sleep, and reduced stress and anxiety.<sup>6</sup>

Access to healthy food and fresh produce is also necessary for healthy living. Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color experience greater difficulty accessing healthy food and have higher food insecurity rates compared to higher-income neighborhoods. Many low-income communities are also identified as areas that have food deserts, a term used to describe a neighborhood that is limited in fresh food options and overwhelmed with highly processed food and fast food.<sup>7</sup> Disparities in food access impact quality of life, life expectancy, academic performance, and job productivity.<sup>8</sup> For example, in South Los Angeles where Latino/as represent a majority of the community, higher rates of chronic disease related to nutrition exist; life expectancy is 12 years less than that of West Los Angeles residents.<sup>9</sup>

Meaningful steps can be taken to increase access to healthy food and fresh produce and bring more resources and attention to food deserts such as encouraging more businesses to make healthy food more affordable, accepting CalFresh/EBT, and partnering with local suppliers to help reduce costs. In addition, enforcing existing health code regulations on local grocery stores is needed to keep facilities clean. Many located in low-income neighborhoods have expired food items and unsanitary and cluttered store environments. In addition, food pantries, a growing source to meet the food needs of chronically new food insecure households, can supply more healthy foods that are low in sodium and sugar, as well as fresh produce. Providing fruits and vegetables, which are also more expensive foods, would help to promote healthy eating and protect health.

Environmental injustice describes how people of color have been disproportionately harmed from pollution and the systems that have allowed inequities to persist. There are long-established policies that have resulted in racial

disparities in health outcomes specifically affecting Latino/a communities. For example, the development of freeway interchanges, most notably the East Los Angeles Freeway Interchange, has produced and perpetuated unhealthy air quality for Latino/a communities that result in increased risk of adverse respiratory health effects such as asthma and other illnesses.<sup>10</sup> Research shows that more than 71% of Latino/as live in areas with the most polluted air.<sup>11</sup> The current COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the inequities of living in highly polluted communities, as developing research shows that individuals living in these areas are more likely to experience worse health outcomes from COVID-19.

Inequities also extend into access to clean, affordable, and reliable water, which is experienced differently depending on where someone lives. Low-income communities of color bear the brunt of inequitable access to safe water and are often disproportionately affected by contaminated soil as well as inadequate or unmaintained infrastructure.

It is essential to prioritize new public investments in infrastructures, air quality, and open and recreational spaces in high need, low-income communities. The County and local municipalities must invest in meaningful engagement of community voices on these issues, increasing the capacity of community-based organizations on the full range of park, food, air, and water issues to build a stronger movement for environmental justice and to advance health equity. These steps must also be evaluated by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health for impact and results. The COVID-19 pandemic drastically exacerbated these environmental health inequities. Now is the opportunity to ensure efforts and partnerships are being maximized to respond to specific needs of Latino/a communities.



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5. (Douglas, K. and Douglas, J., [2021](#))

6. (Nature for All, [2021](#))

7. (Los Angeles Food Policy Council, [2020](#))

8. (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, [2017](#))

9. Los Angeles Department of City Planning, [2015](#))

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10. (Estrada, G., [2005](#))

11. (LA County Story Map, [n.d](#))

**2. Declare racism as a public health crisis at the state level; declare discrimination due to xenophobia and other reasons as a public health crisis at the County and State levels**



Racism is embedded within the foundation of long-standing policies and practices in this country and results in significant racial disparities across a continuum of policies tied to the social determinants of health. Research and countless personal stories clearly demonstrate that racism directly and indirectly results in negative mental and physical health for communities of color. The COVID-19 pandemic, the continuous racial reckoning of this country, and the rise in over 50 American municipalities making formal declarations about the harms of racism reaffirm the need for California to declare racism as a public health crisis.<sup>12</sup> The County and the State must also declare discrimination due to xenophobia (fear of foreigners) as a public health crisis.

In Los Angeles County, there are long-established policies that have resulted in racial disparities in health outcomes specifically affecting Latino/a communities. For example,

the development of freeway interchanges, most notably the East Los Angeles Freeway Interchange, has produced and perpetuated unhealthy air quality for Latino/a communities that result in increased risk of adverse respiratory health effects such as asthma and other illnesses.<sup>13</sup> Latino/a Californians living in high-pollution zones near freeways are exposed to a disproportionate amount of air toxins in comparison to non-Latino/a White Californians. A recent analysis from the Union of Concerned Scientists found Latino/a Californians are exposed to the fine particles that create the air pollution 39% higher than White Californians which results in low-quality of life and at times a lower life expectancy.<sup>14</sup>

There are many examples of structural racism that negatively impact the quality of life and shorten the life expectancy for communities of color, and none are more relevant than the COVID-19 pandemic that has disproportionately harmed Latino/a families.

The State of California must meet this moment with a bold declaration that racism is a public health crisis and collaborate with Latino/a-serving organizations to work toward dismantling racist policies and practices while reimagining what a better and healthier future can be for all communities. In July 2020, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to declare racism a public health crisis. The County Department of Public Health and relevant agencies can and should work with Latino/a-serving organizations to engage Latino/a communities to co-design and uplift their experiences to ensure their voices are reflected in the implementation of dismantling racism and explicit bias.

Nativism, or the policy of protecting and favoring the interests of native-born inhabitants over immigrants, has used xenophobia to promote discriminatory policies. These fears are framed as threats to U.S. national security, with the most recent example being that Latino/a immigrants were bringing COVID-19 into the country despite the absence of facts to support that assertion. Latino/as were also blamed for bringing crime and drugs as well as taking jobs away. Using xenophobia as excuses for discriminatory policies against Latino/as was also exemplified through the deportation of more than half a million Latino/as (half of whom were U.S. citizens) during the Great Depression in 1929 and must finally be addressed.

12. (Bellware, K., [2020](#))

13. (Estrada, G., [2005](#))

14. (Reichmuth, D., [2019](#))

### 3. Expand comprehensive access to quality health care regardless of citizenship or legal status

There are stark differences in Los Angeles between those living within the glitz and glamour of Hollywood and Los Angeles life, and the working poor population supporting the vitality of the County. Latino/as have been overrepresented in jobs deemed “essential” during the pandemic, taking on disproportionate risk of exposure while being excluded from federal stimulus payments, unemployment insurance, safety net programs, and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) payments.<sup>15</sup> The jobs that essential workers hold are typically low-wage jobs that do not provide benefits such as health insurance. Removing legal status as an eligibility requirement to access health care would build a stronger, more equitable health care system for all.

#### COVID-19 IMPACT

**As of June 22, 2021, 364 Latino/as per 100,000 died of COVID-19. Latino/as died of the virus at higher rates compared to their non-Latino/a white counterparts whose death rates were 124 per 100,000. The overall total of LA County deaths were 223 per 100,000.**

(LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH)

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) drastically lowered the rate of the uninsured across California and provided significant assistance to millions of consumers to purchase health care from the state marketplace. One major group that was excluded was undocumented immigrants. There are approximately 880,000 undocumented persons in Los Angeles County with 82% born in Mexico, Central America, and South America.<sup>16</sup> Among Latino/as in Los Angeles County, 15.3% are without health insurance, and among these, 20.4% are foreign born and 8.3% are U.S. born.<sup>17</sup> The reasons for not having health insurance vary including affordability and being unable to enroll because of citizenship status.

Undocumented Latino/a immigrants over the age of 50 have not been eligible for most safety net programs despite

being among the most vulnerable groups of Los Angeles County. More Latino/a adults over the age of 50, for example, died from COVID-19 compared to their non-Latino/a White counterparts.<sup>18</sup> This statistic is worse when comparing death rates between Latino/a and non-Latino/a White adults 80 years and older.<sup>19</sup> A historic step was recently taken when California Governor Gavin Newsom announced a budget plan that included the expansion of Medi-Cal, California’s Medicaid health care program, to all income-eligible adults over age 50 regardless of immigration status.<sup>20</sup>

This comes after years of efforts by immigrant and health advocates to expand health care coverage for children and young adults under the age of 26 regardless of citizenship, which took effect January 1, 2020.<sup>21</sup> The next natural step to close a significant gap that remains in our system would be to cover all adults, provide access to comprehensive care, and remove immigration status as an eligibility barrier to Medi-Cal. Together, these are crucial steps toward universal health care and will lead to promoting health, preventing illness, and having healthier communities where more families will be able to thrive. Our health system is stronger when everyone is included.

### 4. Invest in and promote school-based health centers and community-based partnerships and wellness centers as hubs for community health while ensuring that these spaces are welcoming and culturally responsive to the Latino/a community

In recent years, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has vastly expanded the health services available to students on campus through a partnership with community organizations and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. School-based health centers currently serve 20% of Los Angeles Unified students. Simultaneously, LAUSD has invested in the expansion of the community schools model. These schools embed many of the wellness resources that a student or family might otherwise have to seek through

15. (California Immigrant Data Portal, [2018](#))

16. (Migration Policy Institute, [2018](#))

17. (Los Angeles County Health Survey, [2018](#))

18. (Hayes-Bautista, Hsu, & Hernandez, [2021](#))

19. Ibid

20. (Kirshbaum, E., [2021](#))

21. (Caiola, S., [2020](#))

multiple programs within the school setting. Districts such as LAUSD lead numerous internal and external initiatives and maintain various partnerships to deliver services, but oftentimes, these efforts and collaborations require more robust communications to better synchronize and unify efforts with community partners. Improved coordination will be particularly important with unprecedented resources needing to be allocated to increase school support services. The influx of funding through state and federal COVID-19 recovery programs are also sources of hope. This funding will be a boon to LAUSD's efforts to increase the focus on childhood health by building school-based health teams that include nurses, counselors, mental health professionals, and social workers. It will be imperative for LAUSD to allocate appropriate funds for this purpose.

While highlighting these promising practices in the County's largest school district, it is also important to elevate the need for further investment and support for smaller school districts throughout the County that may not have the scale of resources available to LAUSD, but for whom the need is just as great.

In addition, there are promising practices that live at the intersection of college/career readiness and health access. Student health ambassadors are an example of this. High school students can be hired to promote wellness practices in the school community and to increase the rate at which their peers access the services that are available to them. This type of peer outreach has a powerful impact on student health outcomes, especially on health issues that have traditionally carried a stigma, including mental, sexual, and reproductive health. Peer outreach is likely to engage students who might otherwise forgo care and support. These programs serve a dual purpose in that they also provide participating students with access to relevant career pathways as they gain understanding of health care. At a time when many students face the challenge of balancing work and school, peer health programs carry the added benefit that they do not require students to work outside of the school setting.

The importance of increasing access to health care is clear. Special emphasis must be given to access to mental health care and support for our children and young people. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health issues in children and young adults were already increasing, with mental health disorders more highly affecting students of color, immigrant students, and LGBTQ+ students.<sup>22</sup> Since 2007, suicide rates in children aged 10 and up climbed to be the second leading

cause of death among adolescents.<sup>23</sup> Elsewhere in this report, data indicates that suicidal ideation was high among Los Angeles County Latinas in 2019. Additionally, about 4% (2.3 million) of U.S. children suffered from depression.<sup>24</sup> Each of these crises has likely deepened as many students endured more than a year of compounding trauma and isolation.

#### COVID-19 IMPACT

**Adolescents aged 12–17 years accounted for the highest proportion of mental health–related ED visits in both 2019 and 2020, followed by children aged 5–11 years. A large amount of mental disorders develop in childhood, and the pandemic has exacerbated these mental health concerns. The pandemic has disrupted children's daily lives by producing serious fears about infection, social isolation, and disrupted focus on school.**

(CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION)

Both preventive and acute mental health support for students illuminate why school and community-based health centers hold such promise for eliminating health disparities. Schools are, simply put, the place where the majority of students are seen most frequently and where they have the strongest and widest range of relationships. If services and support are available on site, it is far likelier that a student will get the help they need. It is also far likelier that a web of strong relationships may increase access to preventative mental health care, reducing the chances of acute crises.

Schools as the center of the community and as accessible hubs of resources is a powerful vision and a necessary one in which to invest. In too many communities however, it is not the current reality. Inequities in power and class, as well as racial and linguistic biases, leave many Latino/a families and students disengaged from their schools and cut off from access to the resources that the school might otherwise provide.

Advocacy for the expansion of health and wellness resources on school campuses, continued focus on culturally responsive family engagement, assets-based curriculum, and welcoming school environments are necessary to ensure that these expanded resources are accessible to all members of the school community and that schools can truly be a hub that facilitates health and wellness for all.

22. (Panchal, Kamal, Cox, Garfield, & Chidambaram, 2021)

23. (Prothero, 2021)

24. Ibid



## **5. Increase community health education programs to support health literacy, improve physical activity and nutrition, strengthen community-clinical links, reduce obesity, control diabetes, and prevent teen pregnancy**

Increasing community health education programs can help empower Latino/as to improve their health literacy; address significant health disparities such as obesity, diabetes, and other serious health ailments; and develop meaningful relationships with their health care providers. Unfortunately, there are a multitude of barriers that prevent Latino/as from accessing the necessary education and resources needed to treat their health conditions. According to a 2013 report from the U.S. Census Bureau, Latino/as are the least likely racial or ethnic group to see a medical provider as 42% did not visit a doctor once during the year.<sup>25</sup> There are studies and countless personal accounts that show Latino/as are less likely to seek medical treatment or reach out to a medical professional due to a variety of cultural barriers such as language access, trust issues with complex health care systems, and fear of denial due to immigration status. These cultural and social factors unfortunately lead Latino/as to dire health issues and complications, such as obesity and diabetes, that are often untreated, or they receive delayed treatment. The lack of exposure to critical education on health options and resources results in significant health disparities for Latino/as.

Data shows Latino/a adults are diagnosed with diabetes and obesity at significantly higher rates than non-Latino/a Whites. The same comparison is made with Latino/a high school students. Diabetes and obesity increase the likelihood of other long-term diseases, such as heart and kidney disease, and impact the quality of life for most adults experiencing these health issues. Furthermore, Latina teens (aged 15 to 19) experienced pregnancy at an alarmingly high rate in comparison to non-Latino/a White teens. These health disparities have historically impacted Latino/a youth, and now more than ever in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, they will only worsen. The need to immediately scale community health education programs and prioritize school-based programs to prevent these conditions at an early stage is paramount.

Robust partnerships among county agencies, local municipalities, local school districts, and community-based organizations can and must address this health literacy crisis at an early stage to help prevent health issues such as obesity and diabetes which are prevalent diseases for Latino/as. Community health education programs can also strengthen community-clinical linkages that are designed to prevent and control chronic diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines community-clinical linkages as, “connections between community and clinical sectors to improve population health.”<sup>26</sup> A recent CDC guide has uplifted the effectiveness of community-clinical linkages which have improved clinical health outcomes and improved behavioral changes in areas such as nutrition, physical activity, and diabetes self-management.<sup>27</sup> Public and philanthropic resources can support efforts to strengthen communication and ensure effective coordination of County, city, school district, and community partners to provide the health education needed to improve the overall health and life trajectories of Latino/as across the County.

## **6. Strengthen various dimensions of cultural competence in the health care field that impact the quality of care, patient safety, and equity; invest in building a pipeline for future generations in the health care and biotech industries**

Throughout California there is a health care workforce shortage that affects Latino/as residing in some of the state’s fastest growing regions such as Los Angeles County.<sup>28</sup> Within the next 10 years, California is expected to face a shortage of 4,100 primary care clinicians and 600,000 home care workers, and it will only have two-thirds of the psychiatrists that the State actually needs.<sup>29</sup>

Health care professionals with linguistically and culturally diverse patients are tasked with delivering quality health care with the assertion that recommendations given by the professional are suitable and in the best interest of the patient. However, patient safety becomes threatened when problems related to cultural or language issues occur.<sup>30</sup> A 2007

25. (O’Hara, B. and Caswell, K., [2013](#))

26. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [2016](#))

27. Ibid

28. (California Future Health Workforce Commission, [2019](#))

29. Ibid

30. (Kaihalen, Hietapakka, & Heponiemi, [2019](#))

study found that 49.1% of hospital patients with limited English proficiency were involved in some form of adverse event which resulted in their physical harm, compared to only 29.5% of hospital patients who spoke English.<sup>31</sup> Delivering medicine and other health care services in a culturally competent manner can assist with such threats to patients' health. Although California is one of the most ethnically diverse states in the United States, Latino/as are underrepresented in health professions.<sup>32</sup>

According to the Health Policy Institute at Georgetown University, cultural competence in health care is defined as the ability that providers and organizations have to effectively deliver health care services that meet the unique linguistic, cultural, and social needs of patients. Language barriers can affect both the quality and the amount of care received. For example, Spanish-speaking Latino/as are less likely than non-Latino/a Whites to visit a health provider or receive preventive care, such as regular exams or an influenza vaccination. In addition to increasing the frequency of receiving care and minimizing medical errors and direct harm, cultural competency allows for powerful and more meaningful patient engagement, allowing Latino/a patients to have more effective communication and feel as if they are collaborating with the medical staff on their own health.<sup>33</sup> Having a health care system that is culturally competent can help improve health outcomes and quality of care given to patients, and can ultimately help in eliminating racial and ethnic disparities.<sup>34</sup>

#### COVID-19 IMPACT

**As of June 18, 2021, only 52.3% of Latino/as 16 years of age and up have been vaccinated compared to 75.3% of non-Latino/a whites. As for individuals that are 65 years and up, 64.4% of Latino/as have been vaccinated compared to 78.9% of non-Latino/a whites.**

(LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH VACCINE DASHBOARD)

Health care programs and schools should also increase the amount of Latino/as being admitted. There is already a well-documented shortage of Latino/a physicians in California.<sup>35</sup> Shortages of Latino/as are being seen within the mental health field as well with only 4.4% of licensed psychologists

identifying as Latino/a.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, a 2015 study found that in California only 62.1 out of 100,000 physicians spoke Spanish, compared to other languages such as Farsi, which is spoken by 1,627.7 out of 100,000 physicians.

In an attempt to strengthen and heal Latino/a health in Los Angeles County, it is imperative to increase the amount of Latino/a students in medical and other health care sector schools and programs. Pipeline programs encouraging health care must prioritize hiring people from disadvantaged and high-need communities, as well as those experiencing barriers to employment. Investments in these programs currently offered by local and higher education institutions, such as the Los Angeles Community College District, California State University (CSU), and University of California (UC) systems, must be significantly increased. This will create a more well-organized career pathway system in various health fields that will lead to greater opportunities, a more diverse health workforce, and ultimately, a more inclusive economy.

One such health field is biotechnology, which is used to develop products that help improve our lives and the health of our planet. It has the potential for solving societal challenges including health and environmental protection and food and energy supply. It is a fast-growing industry across the world, and in Los Angeles. Traditionally, the biotech industry in California has been concentrated either in the Bay Area or San Diego. However, Los Angeles is emerging as the state's next bioscience hub.<sup>37</sup> World-class universities and colleges, medical campuses, supporting organizations and businesses, and existing bioscience/life science professionals in the County contribute to a favorable ecosystem for this industry. Biotech can create living-wage jobs across the skills ladder, from middle skills positions that could be obtained with a community college certificate to senior research roles supported by research universities. It would be beneficial to develop a talent pipeline from K-12 to mid-career adults to prepare them for careers in the biotech/life sciences in Los Angeles County.

**7. Establish a more structured and “one stop shop” approach to health care through innovative initiatives like CalAIM, which includes broad-based delivery system, program, and payment reform across the Medi-Cal program**

31. (Divi, Koss, Schmaltz, & Loeb, 2007)

32. (Bates, Chapman, & Dower, 2010)

33. (Patient Safety Network, 2019)

34. (Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, n.d)

35. (Hsu, P., Balderas-Medina Anaya, Y., & Hayes-Bautista, D., 2018)

36. (Hamp, Stamm, Lin, & Christidis, 2016)

37. (Biocom California, 2020)

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) is a multi-year initiative by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to improve quality of life and health outcomes by implementing a broad delivery system and payment reform across Medi-Cal programs, which are implemented at the County level.<sup>38</sup> The current health care system in the state poses barriers for individuals to access multiple services at once. DHCS is aiming to address these challenges by integrating access to delivery systems through the CalAIM program. CalAIM would expand services and provide an opportunity for Latino/as to access a continuum of high-quality care that will meet their holistic needs including physical, behavioral, and developmental health.

More Latino/as have become eligible for programs such as Medi-Cal while disproportionately being impacted by COVID-19. As of February 2021, 6.7 million Latino/as in California are eligible for the Medi-Cal program—a health insurance program that supports individuals who cannot afford health care—which equates to nearly half of all eligible individuals in the state.<sup>39</sup> Approximately one-third of California’s population is eligible for the Medi-Cal program, and eligibility has steadily grown over the past decade with the expansion of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In the latest Medi-Cal monthly enrollment report from February 2021, the ACA expansion provided additional health insurance for nearly 1.9 million Latino/as—the largest increase for all racial/ethnic groups in the state.<sup>40</sup> It is imperative that California strengthens and expands efforts to make access easier and less complex. Increasing access to innovative initiatives such as the CalAIM program would provide vulnerable Latino/a communities with the essential health benefits that all individuals rightfully deserve, such as hospital care, preventative care, and maternity and newborn care, and would strengthen the health of our broader community.

Outreach efforts to raise awareness of the various health care programs are essential to decreasing the number of uninsured Latino/as, many of whom are eligible but not enrolled. Los Angeles County should continue to promote various programs and their eligibility requirements—from purchasing coverage through the state’s marketplace, Covered California, to increasing enrollment in My Health LA, a no-cost health care program for low-income individuals who live in Los Angeles County.

There is a significant opportunity to ensure that the necessary information and resources are available to access the CalAIM

program once it becomes available in January 2022. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health can leverage the fiscal recovery funds from the American Rescue Plan to develop partnerships with local school districts, the Los Angeles Community College District, and community-based organizations to amplify how residents can apply for the Medi-Cal program and subsequent CalAIM program. Support funding for qualified organizations with expertise in conducting activities with Latino/a populations could be provided through civic engagement and health awareness grants offered through the County or philanthropic organizations.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further exacerbated health disparities for Latino/as in Los Angeles County, this “one stop shop” approach to health care should empower Latino/a families to access simple, straightforward health care services to meet their essential health needs.

## CONCLUSION

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, expanding comprehensive access to quality health care, investing in a holistic health care system, and proactively responding to the social determinants of health are necessary to build on the progress California has made over the last 20 years in its health care system. There must be a concerted and intentional effort from philanthropic, private, and public entities to engage and fund community-based organizations to build on this new health care vision that leads to a healthier and stronger Los Angeles County. Engaging and investing in community partners centered on the health of Latino/a families will lead to more inclusive, community-driven policies that represent the diverse needs of the community. These investments should be focused on increasing the capacity and power of the residents to address the myriad of health issues and social determinants of health. Furthermore, the building blocks in developing a high quality health care system for Latino/as exist through community clinics and organizations, K-12 schools, and higher education institutions. These vital entities can serve as the cornerstone of reimagining a comprehensive and inclusive health care system in Los Angeles County.

Over the last 20 years, California has made significant strides in closing gaps for those without health insurance and creating greater awareness of health issues while working toward greater equity in health and our environment. This moment calls for a significant investment in high quality health care and liveable communities to ensure that Latino/as thrive for generations to come.

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38. (State of California—Health and Human Services Agency Department of Health Care Services, [2021](#))

39. (California Department of Health Care Services, [2021](#))

40. Ibid.

# Public Safety

Written by: Victoria Ciudad-Real, Karla Fernandez, Molly Creighton, Caroline Bhalla, and Gary Painter, Ph.D. of the USC Price Center for Social Innovation

Overall  
Grade:

C



## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade there have been many efforts to address disparities and disproportionate negative impacts of the criminal justice system among communities of color. The timeline below highlights a few notable policies that have been enacted in the region. These efforts have garnered more attention in 2020, with Black Lives Matter protests taking the forefront of national media coverage and forcing Angelenos to discuss what public safety should and could look like for their communities. The goal of this section is to understand the Latino/a experience with the criminal justice system in Los Angeles and to answer the question: Are there disparities between the Latino/a experience with public safety when compared to the White population? The following indicators were identified to illustrate the public safety of Latino/as in Los Angeles: Latino/as as victims of hate crimes, police-initiated contacts (stops and arrests), Latino/as within the criminal justice system, trust in different law enforcement agencies, and presence of Latino/as in law enforcement and the judicial system.

## DATA

This section relies on data from several institutional reports by state and local law enforcement agencies and recent reports by other organizations, such as the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola

Marymount University, the Vera Institute of Justice, the Judicial Council of California, and the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2019). For a more detailed data description please see Appendix 4.



2010-2020

## Criminal Justice Reform in Los Angeles County



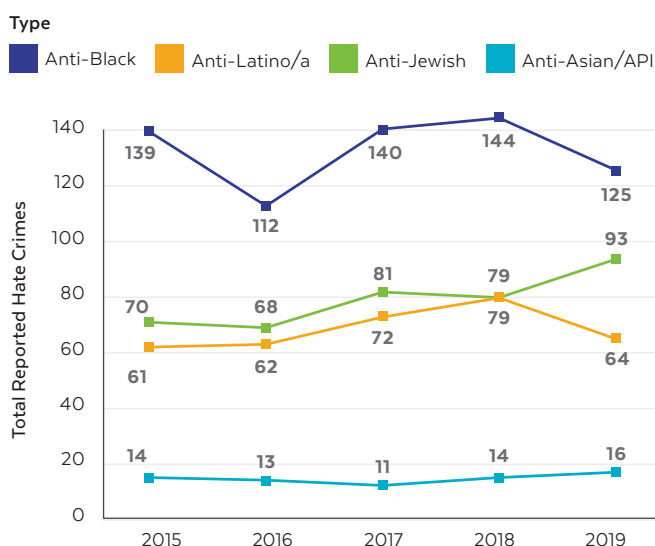
### DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS

#### LATINO/AS AS VICTIMS OF CRIMES | GRADE: B

This indicator uses aggregated data from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations Hate Crime Report (2019). Since the 1980s, the Commission has produced an annual report of hate crime data and has compiled submissions from sheriff and city police agencies, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and individuals themselves. According to the Commission, in 2019 nearly one in four hate crimes (73%) targeted one of these four groups: Latino/as, Jewish persons, African Americans, and gay men/lesbians/LGBTQ+ organizations. The available data focuses on hate crimes filed based on the victim's real or perceived racial or ethnic identity.<sup>1</sup> The chart to the right illustrates hate crimes over time; notably this data does not capture the recent national rising in Anti-AAPI (Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander, trans, and Latino/a hate crimes beyond 2019.<sup>2</sup>

#### REPORTED HATE CRIMES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY BY TARGET GROUP TYPE (2015-2019)

Source: LA County Commission on Human Relations Hate Crime Reports 2015-2019



1. In California, hate crime charges may be filed when there is evidence that bias, hatred, or prejudice based on the victim's real or perceived identity (race/ethnicity, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender, or sexual orientation) was a substantial factor in the offense.

2. (Kaleem, 2019)

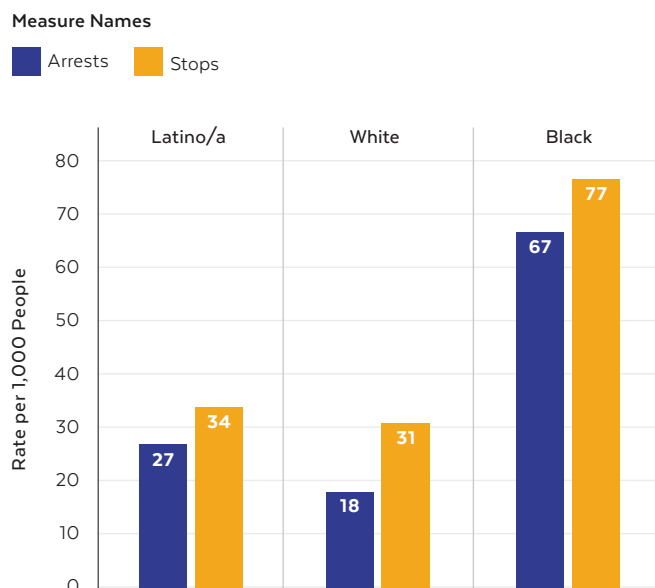
Anti-Latino/a hate crimes have remained at relatively similar levels from 2015 to 2019. During these years, there was an average of about 68 reported hate crimes per year in which Latino/as were the victims. That same year experienced the second-highest reported use of anti-immigrant slurs by suspects (48 counts) since 2001, and the most common victims of homophobic crime were Latino/as (46%). Moreover, the Commission found that in 2019, crimes targeting Latino/as were most likely to be violent (88%), when compared to other groups. When considering violent crimes more broadly, the Los Angeles Police Department reported 13,683 violent crimes in which Latino/as were the victims in 2019. That same year Latino/as also made up 47% of all homicide incidents in the City.<sup>3</sup> Recent reports indicate a rise in homicide rates from previous years.<sup>4</sup>

### POLICE-INITIATED CONTACT: STOPS AND ARRESTS | GRADE: C

Police-initiated contact was examined using stop and arrest rates per 1,000 people by race/ethnicity.<sup>5</sup> This allows for trends to be analyzed while accounting for the relative population size of each ethnic and racial group. The frequency of stops in which the person was Latino/a in the County was slightly higher than Whites. Blacks were stopped nearly two times more frequently than Whites in the County.

#### STOP AND ARREST RATES PER 1,000 INDIVIDUALS BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 2019

Source: CA Department of Justice via Neighborhood Data for Social Change



3. (Los Angeles Police Department, 2020)

4. (Rector, 2021)

5. The stop rate refers to the number of police stops of a vehicle or pedestrian per 1,000 people in that racial-ethnic population. For example the Latino Stop Rate is the frequency of police stops where the person stopped was identified as Latino (per 1,000 people in the population).

During that same year arrest rates<sup>6</sup> were higher among Blacks and Browns. Therefore, while Latino/as and Whites are stopped at somewhat similar rates by the police, Latino/as have higher arrest rates. This is consequential because an arrest can lead to a variety of outcomes such as a formal charge or even conviction. However, even if a person is arrested and the charges are dropped, a record of that arrest could still appear on background checks for housing and employment applications, leading to a lifetime of barriers to opportunity.<sup>7</sup>

### LATINO/AS WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

#### GRADE: D

Under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), Los Angeles County is home to one of the largest jail systems in the country. In 2018 it had a yearly average inmate population of almost 17,000 people. Latino/as made up approximately half (51%) of the total inmate population, which is equal to about 8,700 people. Jail incarceration can differ in cause and length, spanning from a few days to several months. Some inmates are detained adults who are charged with a criminal law violation and are waiting for trial, while others have already been sentenced as criminal offenders, serving jail time (typically less than a year).

The graph on the following page depicts rates of jail and prison incarceration per 100,000 people by using 2015 data from the Vera Institute of Justice. According to this data, in 2015, approximately 20,397 Latino/as in Los Angeles County were imprisoned. Overall, Latino/as have higher jail and prison rates than Whites and the gap is greatest in prisons. Compared to Asians/AAPI, Whites, and Native Americans, Latino/as had the second-highest rates of jailing and prison incarceration, although Blacks have much higher rates of imprisonment across all groups. Latino/a prison incarceration rates were over two and a half times that of Whites, and Latino/a jail incarceration rates were over one and a half times that of Whites. This is made worse when considering studies that suggest Latino/as and Blacks are more likely to receive harsher and longer sentencing than White groups.<sup>8</sup>

6. The number of arrests per 1,000 people for the corresponding ethnic/racial population.

7. (USC Price Center for Social Innovation, 2021)

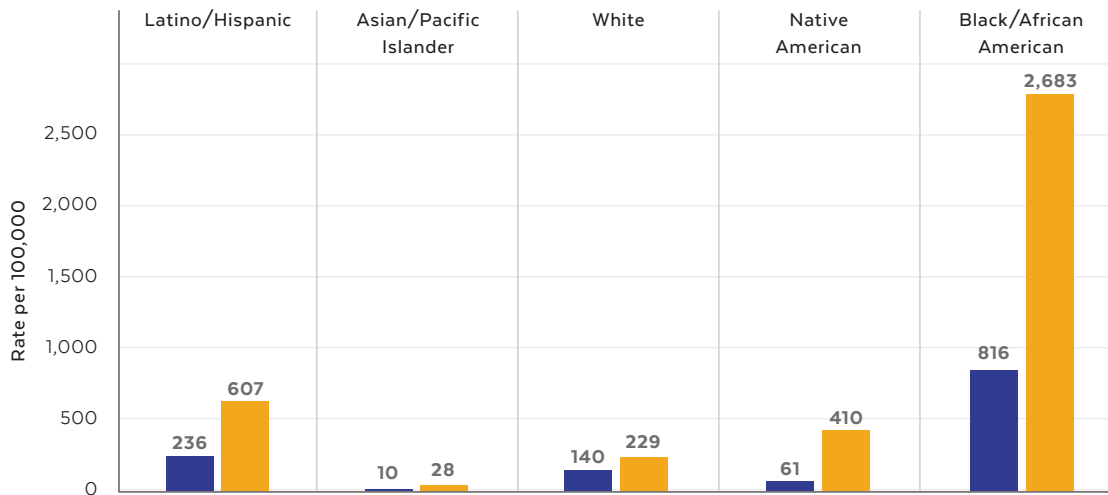
8. (Demuth & Steffensmeier, 2004)

## INCARCERATION RATES PER 100K RESIDENTS AGES 15-64 FOR LA COUNTY IN 2015

Source: Vera Institute of Justice Incarceration Trends

### Population

Jail Prison



## TRUST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT | GRADE: C

To measure trust in law enforcement, this analysis references the 2020 Police and Community Relations Survey conducted by researchers at the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University. This indicator captures the self-reported levels of trust in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and local police officers within the City of Los Angeles' limits. When compared to White respondents, Latino/as were less likely than White respondents to trust the LAPD and local police officers "just about always" or "most of the time." Nonetheless, both Latino/as and White respondents indicated higher levels of trust among local police officers than the LAPD.

Roughly half of all Latino/a respondents indicated that they trust the LAPD "only some of the time" or "none of the time." Nearly twice the amount of Spanish respondents indicated trusting the LAPD "just about always" when compared to only Latino/a respondents. Spanish-speaking respondents reported even higher levels of trust among local police officers than the overall Latino/a population, with only 5% indicating that they trust local officers "none of the time." One explanation for this trend among Spanish speakers can be found in studies suggesting that Latino/a immigrant perceptions of police are more negative after residing in the United States for longer periods of time.<sup>9</sup>

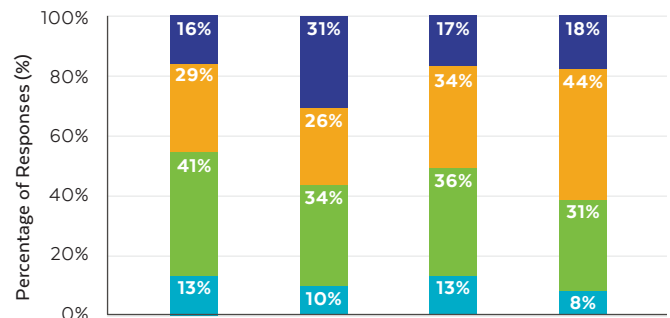
### "HOW MUCH OF THE TIME DO YOU THINK YOU CAN TRUST THE FOLLOWING GROUPS TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT?"

Source: StudyLA's 2020 Police and Community Relations Survey, Police Data Brief

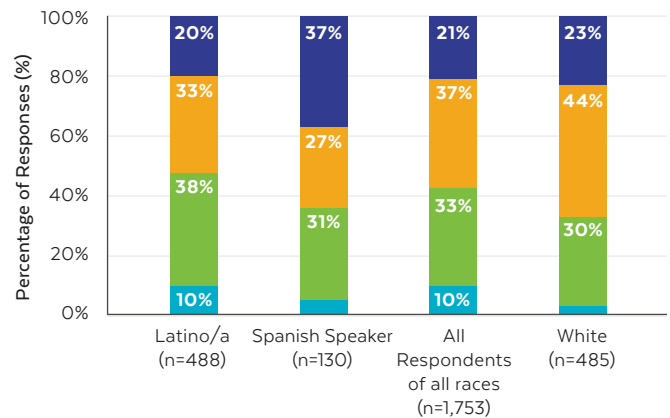
#### Response:

Just about always Most of the time Only some of the time None of the time

#### THE LAPD:



#### LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS:



9. (Menjívar & Bejarano, 2004)

## PRESENCE OF LATINO/AS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

### GRADE: B

Self-reported demographic reports from both the LAPD and the LASD were assessed to determine the presence of Latino/as in law enforcement. For both the LAPD and LASD, Latino/as make up roughly half of the total sworn personnel, at 47% and 50%, respectively. Conversely, roughly a third of sworn personnel in both agencies are White. However, when accounting for positions and rankings, most Latino/a-identifying personnel are concentrated in lower positions and ranks like deputy and sergeant in the LASD and like officer, detective, and sergeant in the LAPD. A “B” was assigned to this indicator because of the improvement in representation among law enforcement since the 2003 scorecard; however, this progress has been slow and has yet to reach the highest ranks of law enforcement. Continued vigilance is important for measuring progress in this area.

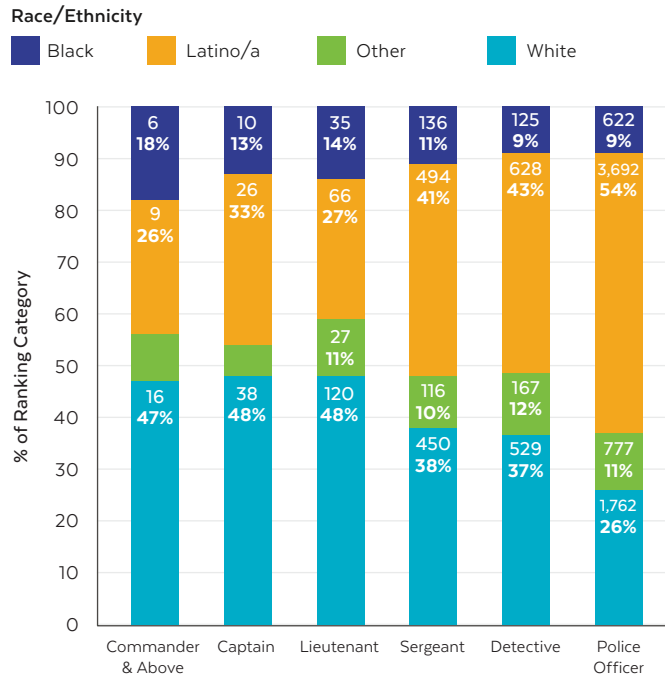
## PRESENCE OF LATINO/AS IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

### GRADE: D

Latino/a representation in the judicial system was also examined using demographic data reported by the California courts. Among trial court judges in LA County, only 15% are Latino/a, whereas 52% are White. This is important since trial courts are where most civilian and criminal cases are undertaken. When examining higher level courts, the 2nd District Court of Appeals has the ability to review trial court decisions and processes. At this level there are no judges that identify as Latino/a and 77% are White, despite covering a larger jurisdiction which encompasses Los Angeles County and parts of Santa Barbara. Therefore, while Latino/as consist of a higher portion of the law enforcement sworn personnel workforce than Whites, Latino/as share a much smaller portion of judges and higher-ranking police officers who have more authority and systemic oversight.

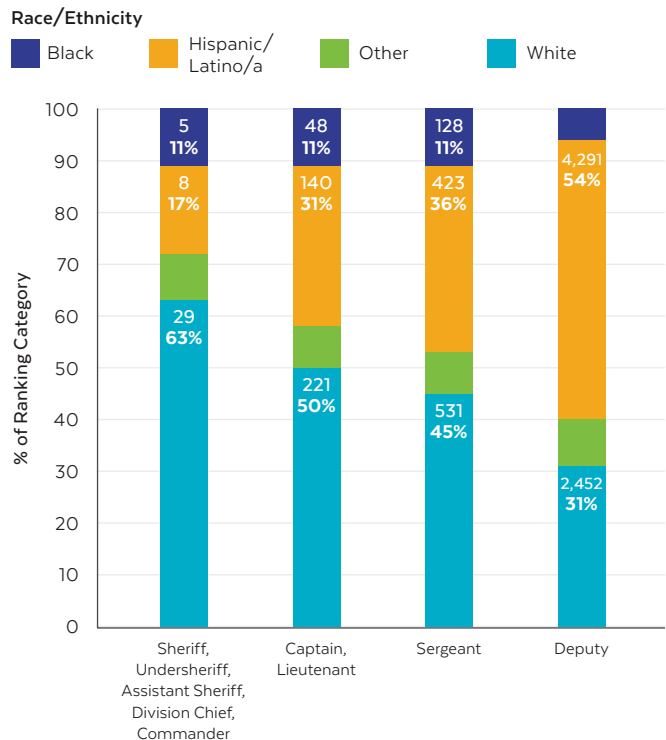
## LAPD DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL RANKINGS BY RACE/ETHNICITY AS OF NOVEMBER 22, 2020

Source: LAPD Report PR91, Sworn and Civilian Personnel by Class, Sex, and Descent



## LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL RANK BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN 2019

Source: LA County Sheriff's Department Crime and Arrest Statistics Report





## DISCUSSION

In light of recent racial reckoning and protests against police brutality, more critical conversations have taken place in the region to discuss how policies can better promote public safety and equitable community investment for all Angelenos. Given this context it is evident that Latino/as are among those disproportionately impacted across measures such as stops, arrests, and incarceration when compared to the White population; however, this report would be remiss if it did not acknowledge the prevalent anti-Blackness in the criminal justice system. This is also in juxtaposition to the improvement in law enforcement representation among Latino/as since the previous 2003 scorecard. This suggests that representation has not necessarily translated into changes at the systemic level for institutions in charge of policing and fostering safety.

## LIMITATIONS

Similar to other sections, data limitations constrained the analysis of certain indicators like hate crimes and trust in law enforcement. The first indicator only accounts for reported hate crimes, which likely represents just a portion of the hate crimes that were actually committed in Los Angeles.<sup>10</sup> Some literature indicates that Latino/a and immigrant communities may be less likely to report hate crimes when they occur due to barriers such as cultural awareness, mistrust of the police, residential instability, and language limitations.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, timely and relevant data on Latino/a public opinion on policing was only available among a sample of Los Angeles City residents; therefore, trends within and across Los Angeles County cannot be definitively extrapolated from this data.

## CONCLUSION

When accounting for the indicators described, public safety for Latino/as in Los Angeles County was assigned a “C” grade. This grade signals that there is still more work ahead to ensure that public safety in Los Angeles is inclusive of the needs and desires of the Latino/a community. With the current policy window at hand, advocates can consider how the reshaping of public safety in Los Angeles during this time can have implications for these communities in terms of prevention, re-entry, building trust, and representation in these systems.



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10. According to the US DOJ, 54% of hate-motivated incidents, including hate crimes, were not reported to law enforcement in a study conducted during the 2011-2015 period.

11. (Shively et al., 2014)

# Public Safety: Reflection

**George Gascón**

*Los Angeles County District Attorney*

Communities must be strong, healthy, and whole to be safe, but the troubling reality is that members of the Latinx community have been incarcerated at an alarming rate.

This inequity has created a destructive recidivism machine, keeping many Latinx people locked up. Our jails and prisons churn out individuals who are hardened, traumatized, less employable, and who statistics show are more likely to reoffend. Those imprisoned leave behind broken homes and the cycle continues. This increases the toll on victims and the harm to our broader community safety.

Many answers to the problems of public safety and a broken criminal justice system lie in rehabilitation, drug treatment, mental health programs, and diversion opportunities for nonviolent offenders. Mass incarceration and focusing on punishment at the expense of rehabilitation has had a devastating effect on our County and country. By getting to the root of the problem and helping individuals succeed, we build healthier and safer communities.

By eliminating cash bail, capital punishment, the use of sentencing enhancements in most cases, the charging of juveniles as adults, and prosecutions of some nonviolent misdemeanors; changing how we respond to nonviolent incidents; increasing accountability for law enforcement; and increasing the representation of the Latinx community in the judicial system, we are breaking away from decades of traditional law enforcement strategy in Los Angeles County, which had become a poster child for the failed tough-on-crime approach.

Additionally, many of the law enforcement use of force incidents involve the death of Latino men, broadening the distrust of the criminal justice system. For the system to work, people must be able to trust the system and trust the work of law enforcement. Police accountability is paramount to public safety.

Research shows that community-based organizations play a strong role in preventing both violent and property crimes. I have been meeting virtually with community-based organizations, law enforcement, local elected officials, and faith leaders throughout the County since my term began. I have two community liaisons who reach out each day to create partnerships with community-based organizations that support victims and work to prevent crime. We are also in the process of creating Community Advisory Boards. It's crucial that some of these boards represent the Latinx communities that we serve. I am pleased that organizations like Alliance for a Better Community offer solutions that reflect the interest of the communities they work with and include the voices of those most impacted by our systems that do not work for everyone. Earlier this year, I put into place the Crime Victims Advisory Board—the first of its kind within my office. Members meet regularly to address the needs of victims. I am committed to continuing to hear from our community.

Albert Einstein once said, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results.” We must evolve as human beings in order to evolve as a society. We achieve a just and safe community through equity and by investing in our people.

# ABC's Vision for Public Safety

## INTRODUCTION

Public safety is one of the primary responsibilities of government. The goal is to make communities more safe and desirable places for people to live and work. It is not only about reducing and preventing injury and crime, but also about developing cohesive, vibrant, and participatory communities. While public safety has various components, including emergency management and national security, public safety in this report was looked at mainly through the lens of several indicators tied to the criminal justice system in Los Angeles County.

The data accentuated the overcriminalization that has long been seen and felt in Latino/a communities. For example, while Latino/as and Whites are stopped at relatively similar rates by police, the arrest rate for Latino/as is higher at 27% than for Whites at 18%.<sup>1</sup> Overcriminalization has led to mass incarceration, with Latino/a prison incarceration rates over two and a half times that of Whites and Latino/a jail incarceration rates over one and a half that of Whites.<sup>2</sup> Latino/as are often unfairly targeted by police and face harsher prison sentences than their White counterparts. The resulting consequences of engagement with the criminal justice system can be lifelong, with barriers to housing, employment, civic participation, and more. While the current system is deeply flawed, there is still a need for strategies for public safety. As noted in the report on indicators, the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations found that in 2019 crimes targeting Latino/as were most likely to be violent (88%) when compared to other groups, and that the most common victims of homophobic crime were Latino/as (46%).

Moving forward, there is a need for stronger community-law enforcement partnerships to reimagine public safety, and to hold the system accountable for fair application of the law and sufficient investment in communities. The data offers a glimmer of hope that this could be accomplished. Since ABC published its Latino scorecard in 2003, there has been a significant increase in the representation of Latino/as on police forces in the County. For instance, nearly 50% of officers in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department are Latino/a. The majority are officers working directly with residents in neighborhoods, offering the opportunity to

build relationships and work together to improve safety. However, there is a need for more Latino/a officers in leadership positions to promote a culture of progressive, community-oriented policing, and police accountability. The recommendations below fall across a spectrum of public safety, including policing in schools, rethinking the role of police in the community, changing the culture of policing, holding police accountable, increasing Latino/a representation in the criminal justice system, and funding programs and services that can prevent crime and violence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Increase awareness, research, and mobilization around accountability for police violence against Latino/as

The year 2020 has raised national consciousness around police violence and systemic racism. Latino/as have suffered from police abuse and a lack of accountability. For example, between 2016 and 2018, Latino/as in California made up 39% of the population but represented 46% of deadly police shootings.<sup>3</sup> In Los Angeles, 67% of the 32 people fatally shot by police officers since 2018 were Latino/a.<sup>4</sup> The experience of Latino/as and police violence requires greater attention.

Latino/a leaders in all sectors—government, community and faith-based organizations, business, media, and more—must speak out in cases of police misconduct and brutality

1. (California Department of Justice, 2019)

2. (Kang-Brown, 2020)

3. (Rosenthal, 2021)

4. (Los Angeles Times, 2021)

against Latino/as and demand that officers be held accountable for their actions. They are in a position to put a spotlight on the issue.

There is also an important role for research. Incidents of police misconduct and brutality of Latino/as are sometimes underreported because of questions around race and ethnicity. Latino/as may also be disinclined to report violent police encounters if they fear it will jeopardize their immigration status or that of family members. In addition, it may be necessary to better understand the perceptions of Latino/as in law enforcement. Data shows an increase in Latino/as in law enforcement nationwide and locally, so it is essential to discern how Latino/a officers see their jobs, communities, and key issues affecting police currently.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, a collective voice must be developed to demand accountability and declare that incidents of police violence against one Latino/a are an attack on the whole community.

Fostering a collective voice and action may require overcoming generational division in the Latino/a community around the role of the police in public safety, with older adults often having a more favorable view of police than young adults and youth (see recommendation three below). While there are grassroots organizations that have tried to bring justice to Latino/a families who have had loved ones killed by police, the Latino/a community does not have strong organization around this issue the way that the Black community does. There needs to be a larger platform and political infrastructure among Latino/s to raise awareness, engage in research, and mobilize for action against police abuse and lack of accountability, in solidarity with and as an ally to the Black Lives Matter movement.



5. (Pew Research Center 2017)

## **2. Ensure that funds available for community reinvestment are distributed using an equity lens informed by community voice, including immigrants**

Many neighborhoods with high levels of violence, arrests, and incarceration have experienced decades of racism, residential segregation, and disinvestment that have limited access to resources and opportunities and have set off a cycle of intergenerational poverty. Grassroots campaigns and advocates have pushed for years to rethink the role and scale of policing and invest in policies, programs, and services that prevent people from coming into contact with the justice system in the first place. Priority areas include youth development programs; programs that help youth find employment, especially during the summer months; access to job training and workforce development opportunities for those who most need them; affordable and supportive housing; and community-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment, among others.

In 2020, Los Angeles County voters approved Measure J,<sup>6</sup> also known as “Reimagine LA County.” It requires that 10% of the County’s approximately \$8.8 billion unrestricted general funds go to 1) direct community investments such as affordable housing, job training, and investments in minority-owned businesses, and 2) alternatives to incarceration, such as restorative justice programs, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, and prison reentry initiatives. Of significance is that Measure J codifies the 10% funding mandate into law with no end date. It also prohibits the use of funds on law enforcement or incarceration and prohibits supplanting existing funds for social services or alternatives to incarceration.

The 10% of general funds is estimated between \$360 million and \$900 million per year. The amount could make a considerable impact in low-income communities and communities of color if invested equitably and with local priorities informing the process. It is imperative that a formal in-depth process be developed through which community leaders and representatives—including from the immigrant community—can elevate their priorities and recommendations for the budget through an equity lens and that decision-makers take these into consideration.

6. (Chief Executive Office County of Los Angeles, 2021)



### **3. Foster institutionalization of relationship-based policing strategies that build public trust, while taking into account generational differences in views around policing**

Many communities of color across the Los Angeles region have had a troubled and often violent history with law enforcement. The May 2020 death of George Floyd brought into the spotlight the names of men, women, and children of color around the nation who have died or were severely harmed in police custody. The warrior style of policing that has predominated much of law enforcement, with the use of excessive force, intimidation, and humiliation, along with increased acquisition of military-grade equipment, has eroded public trust and confidence in the institution. This erosion impedes law enforcement's ability to effectively secure public safety.

The 2020 Community and Police Relations Survey by the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University found that 45% of Latino/a respondents reported being able to trust the LAPD to do the right thing "most of the time" or "just about always."<sup>7</sup> Trust was higher in local police officers in bureaus,<sup>8</sup> with 53% indicating their trust in these officers to do the right things "most of the time" or "just about always." To help build trust between communities served and law enforcement, many police departments have been turning to relationship-based community policing. The focus is on building relationships, working in collaboration with the community (including residents, community-based organizations, agencies, and other stakeholders), and taking a problem-solving approach to public safety concerns rather than a suppression-only one (e.g., arrests and citations). Officers are trained in trauma-informed approaches, de-escalation techniques, and strategies to build relationships with community members. The approach offers the possibility for long-term partnering with residents to shape a local plan for public safety.

The same study found support among Latino/as for community policing in which officers build ties and work closely with community members. Of the Latino/as surveyed, 46% strongly supported community policing, 41% somewhat supported the approach, and 13% expressed

opposition. While these results indicate support for community policing, there is a generational difference in opinion that must be recognized. Only 35% of respondents aged 18 to 29 reported strong support for community policing. Support increased with age, with strong support reported by 52% of those between 30 and 44 years of age, 56% of those between 45 and 64, and 59% of those 65 or older. Actions to improve the relationship between law enforcement and the communities it serves and to reimagine public safety must engage the voices of all members of the community, including youth and young adults.

Finally, principles and values of relationship-based community policing such as trust, transparency, respect, empathy, collaboration, and sustained communication should pervade the culture of an entire law enforcement agency, not just one program. Institutionalization of relationship-based policing is influenced by many factors, including leadership, training, and promotion criteria. It is imperative that senior leaders of police departments and divisions express support for relationship-based policing; that staff at all levels and across entire departments be trained on its core tenets and approaches; and that advancements be based on effective relationship building, community building, and promotion of public safety and crime prevention. In discussion around changing the culture of local police departments, it is necessary to stress the importance of increasing the representation of Latino/a officers within the ranks of senior leadership. While Latino/as make up roughly half of the total sworn personnel in the LAPD at 47% and in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department at 50%, they are concentrated in lower ranks like officer, detective, and sergeant in the LAPD, and deputies and sergeants in the Sheriff's Department.

### **4. Support the development of alternatives that limit or shift certain functions that are currently carried out by police to other professionals (e.g., responses to non-violent incidents and to traffic violations)**

Despite increased spending on local police, many communities cannot attest to safety and order. City government must provide low-income communities and communities of color with more than a police presence. The objective of redirecting and reinvesting budget dollars is to reduce the frequency of police encounters in the

7. (Guerra, 2020)

8. LAPD Central Bureau, South Bureau, Valley Bureau, and West Bureau

course of preventing low-level crimes. Citywide and regional cooperation on public safety issues is a paradigm shift that makes policing just one service operating in cooperation with health care providers, social workers, recreation specialists, and a range of others.

There are many interagency collaborative models that different cities have focused on to decrease police presence in nonviolent crime circumstances.<sup>9</sup> For example, the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) model is a community-based approach that exists in over 2,700 communities across the country. CITs help to form a collaboration between law enforcement, mental health providers, hospital emergency services, and individuals with mental illness and their families. CITs keep law enforcement focused on crime and help keep people with mental illness out of jail and in treatment. Another model that rethinks public safety is Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS), which provides medical and behavioral health services as an official part of Eugene, Oregon's public safety system. CAHOOTS is a plan for mental health workers to respond to 911 calls that do not involve crimes. Over its more than 10 years of existence, CAHOOTS has built relationships with the city's police and dispatch workers. CAHOOTS responds mostly to drug- and mental health-related calls and has become the frontline resource for the Eugene area's homeless population.

There are many other projects, programs, and collaborative interventions that are being developed, implemented, and studied throughout the United States to create coordinated efforts to respond more appropriately to calls that pose no threat to public safety. The City of Los Angeles is currently implementing several pilot programs that would provide unarmed crisis response to nonviolent calls for mental health and substance abuse situations. It is vital that these be studied before being taken to scale to understand why some models succeed while others do not. The desired result is a more humane and effective system that provides support to individuals in need and limits unnecessary involvement with law enforcement.

In discussions around reimagining public safety, the role of weapon-carrying police officers in traffic stops also has been questioned. Data has repeatedly shown that Black and Latino/a motorists are more likely to be stopped for minor traffic infractions like expired registration tags or not wearing a seatbelt, with the results sometimes being deadly.<sup>10</sup> Strategies to consider include deprioritizing traffic stops for minor

offenses that do not pose an imminent public safety risk, limiting law enforcement's ability to use traffic enforcement as an excuse to investigate more serious crimes, and developing dedicated traffic agencies focused on road safety.

**5. Strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the Latinx transgender community, and develop training programs and policies sensitive to gender identity to help reduce the rise in violence against Latinx transgender individuals**

Violent hate crimes against transgender people have increased significantly in Los Angeles County in the last few years. The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations reported that there were 40 hate crimes against transgender people in 2019 compared to 25 in 2018, an increase of 60%. Of these crimes, 93% involved an extremely high rate of violence. The majority targeted transgender women (73%); four targeted transgender men (10%); and five targeted cisgender men in the company of transgender persons (13%). In cases where the victim's race was identified, 65% were Latinx. Latinx victims more than doubled between 2018 and 2019, from 11 to 24.

As police work to solve and prevent violent crimes against the Latinx transgender community, it is essential to do so in a way that encourages and reinforces trust. Officers should be trained in how to interact respectfully with Latinx transgender individuals, including asking how the person would prefer to be addressed. They also should be trained in how to investigate crimes against Latinx transgender persons. In addition to training, police departments should consider developing policies and procedures to protect the rights of Latinx transgender victims and suspects—for example, when conducting searches. Latinx transgender community leaders should be engaged when developing these training programs and departmental policies. These leaders, along with LGBTQ+ organizations, are valuable partners not only for improving the culture and practice of law enforcement, but also in community policing efforts. Often the reporting of anti-transgender hate crimes is hindered by lack of trust in law enforcement, so strengthening the relationship with the Latinx transgender community is important to protect the lives of Latinx transgender persons and end this epidemic of violence.

9. (Wilson & Wilson, 2020)

10. (Raguso, 2021)

## **6. Continue substantially reducing the school police budget and reinvesting funds in services and programs that promote positive school climate and support students**

In June 2020, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education voted to cut 35% of the budget of its school police department, which at the time was the largest independent school police department in the nation. Their action was a response to community activism and research that uplifted the limited benefit and significant harm caused by police on campus. The *Policing Our Students* report revealed that the Los Angeles School Police Department made 3,389 arrests while issuing 2,724 citations and 1,282 diversions from 2014 to 2017.<sup>11</sup> One in four arrests made were of students in elementary and middle school. Latino/a students comprised 71% of arrests, citations, and diversions while representing 74% of the student body. The targeting of Latino/a students causes emotional harm, disrupts learning, and increases the likelihood that students are pushed out of school and into the criminal justice system.

In February 2021, the school board voted to replace school police officers on high school campuses with school climate coaches trained in de-escalation strategies and conflict resolution (school police officers remain on call to respond to emergencies and incidents on campus). In addition, they allocated the \$25 million from school police funding to a Black Student Achievement Plan focused on culturally-responsive curricula and instruction, professional development of teachers, student supports, and positive school climate.

The dismantling of structures that criminalize students and the equitable reinvestment in services and programs that promote positive school climate must continue in LAUSD and in other County school districts. Priorities should include school counselors, school climate coaches, psychologists, social workers, nurses, restorative justice practices, enrichment opportunities, and mentors.

## **7. Invest in programs that inspire and support Latino/a students to pursue a career in law**

Much of society is impacted by attorneys, including legislators, politicians, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and in-house corporate lawyers. According to the Judicial Council of California, 15% of judges in Los Angeles County Trial Courts are Latino/a and there are 0% in the 2nd Appellate District.<sup>12</sup> Approximately 13% of the nearly 1,000 prosecutors in Los Angeles County are Latino/a.<sup>13</sup> These numbers are concerning but not surprising given that Latino/as are disproportionately underrepresented in the legal field across the nation. A recent study by the American Bar Association notes that only 5% of lawyers in the United States are Latino/a.<sup>14</sup>

Among the barriers to entry into the legal profession are the academic requirements and the extensive length and high cost of training. Several legal associations have developed scholarship programs for Latino/a students interested in law to help with the cost. In addition to scholarships, early outreach beginning in middle school and high school, mentoring by Latino/a lawyers, information about financial aid, and targeted assistance (e.g., preparing for the LSAT) are some strategies that could be helpful to encourage more Latino/as to prepare for and undertake the journey through law school.

## **CONCLUSION**

These recommendations are presented at a time when there is much interest and action around public safety across the nation. The year 2020 put a spotlight on systemic racism in law enforcement in the United States and activated calls for substantive changes in how police protect and serve the community.

It also drew attention to the need for greater investment in social welfare services that emphasize opportunities and pathways away from violence. The movement for transformation sparked by protests across the nation and world must be sustained. The data in this report show that Latino/as also suffer greatly from injustice and inequities within the criminal justice system. It is pivotal that community-based organizations and community residents be meaningfully engaged in efforts to reimagine and improve public safety in Los Angeles County. It is also vital to maintain diversity among the ranks of law enforcement and the judiciary to facilitate the culture change needed within these institutions.

11. (Allen, et al., 2018)

12. (Judicial Council of California, 2020)

13. (Bies et al., 2015)

14. (American Bar Association, 2020)

# Economic Prosperity

Written by: Victoria Ciudad-Real, Karla Fernandez, Molly Creighton, Caroline Bhalla, and Gary Painter, Ph.D. of the USC Price Center for Social Innovation

Overall  
Grade:

C



## INTRODUCTION

Accounting for approximately half of the Los Angeles County population, the economic wellbeing of Latino/as is vital to the wellbeing of the entire regional economy. According to 2019 estimates, over 761,000 Latino/as in Los Angeles County were living below the poverty level, of whom roughly 78,000 (or 10%) were children under the age of five.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, nearly 488,000 immigrants reported income below the poverty level in 2019.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the contributions and vulnerabilities of the Latino/a workforce in Los Angeles and the perils it faces. Recent studies suggest that Latino/a businesses were hard hit by the pandemic. A March 2020 national survey of Latino/a business owners found that 79% of respondents indicated declining revenue as a negative impact of COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> Across the U.S., the National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that there was a 32% reduction in Latino/a-owned businesses in April 2020.<sup>4,5</sup> Additionally,

researchers found that Latina-owned businesses were foreclosing at higher rates than those owned by men during the pandemic.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Latino/as made up nearly 30% of high-risk essential workers in the County, placing Latino/as as a cornerstone in the pandemic economy and subsequent recovery.<sup>7</sup> These jobs that had to be performed in person came with a disproportionate toll on the Latino/a workforce—a greater number of illnesses and deaths.<sup>8</sup> As of May 24, 2021, Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health reported over 12,000 COVID-related deaths among Latino/as.<sup>9</sup> It may be years before we know the pandemic's full effects.

1. TableID: B17001I <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B17&g=0500000US06037&d=ACS%201-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B17001I&hidePreview=true>

2. TableID: B17025 <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B17&d=ACS%201-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B17025>

3. (Orozco, Tareque, Oyer, and Porras; 2020)

4. (Fairlie, 2020)

5. <https://usc.data.socrata.com/stories/s/PPP-Loans-Data-Story/c24w-y8uq/>

6. (Orozco and Perez, 2020)

7. (Pastor and Segura, 2020)

8. (Garcia et. al., 2021)

9. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/locations.htm>



This section seeks to answer the question: What was the economic landscape for Latino/as in Los Angeles County before the COVID-19 pandemic? The following indicators were identified to estimate the economic prosperity of Latino/as in Los Angeles County: unemployment, household income, homeownership, home values, rent burden, and opportunity youth.

## DATA

This section relies on data collected from IPUMS USA American Community Survey (ACS) to indicate the economic health of Latino/as in Los Angeles County. Economic indicators and demographic characteristics were pulled from IPUMS USA American Community Survey (ACS) for the years 2010, 2015, and 2019. Income was broken into quartiles formed from the full dataset across the three years. The top 25% of individuals and households during the study period earned over \$135,000 per year.

## DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS

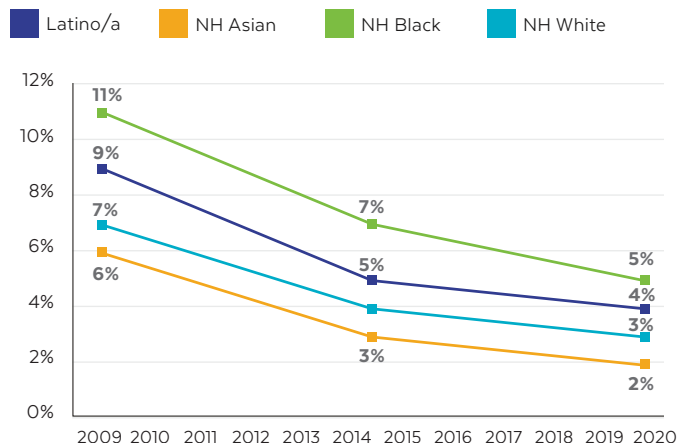
### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE | GRADE: B

The percentage of unemployed Latino/as in the labor force is important for understanding the community's economic health. Over the past decade, the Latino/a unemployment rate has followed rates among other groups, as depicted in the graph below. In 2019, the Latino/a unemployment rate was at 4%, which has been relatively consistent since 2015 (5%). Unemployment among Latino/as has decreased since 2010, when it was nearly twice the rate at 9%.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2010, 2015, 2019)

##### Race/Ethnicity



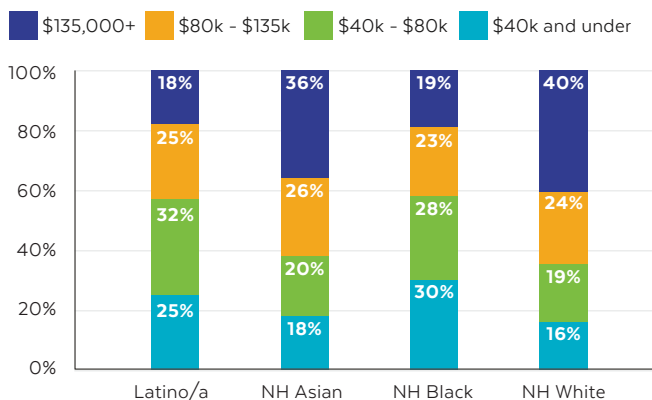
### HOUSEHOLD INCOME | GRADE: C

There are large income disparities between Latino/a and White households in Los Angeles County. In 2019, one in four Latino/a households in Los Angeles County earned less than \$40,000 per year, whereas only 16% of White households fall into this income bracket. This gap is higher among immigrant Latino/a households, with 30% of households earning less than \$40,000 per year. As depicted in the graph below, nearly a third of Latino/a households in Los Angeles County earned between \$40,000 and \$80,000, and approximately 18% of Latino/a households earned more than \$135,000, which are at lower rates than all other ethnicity and racial groups.

#### HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2019)

##### Household Income

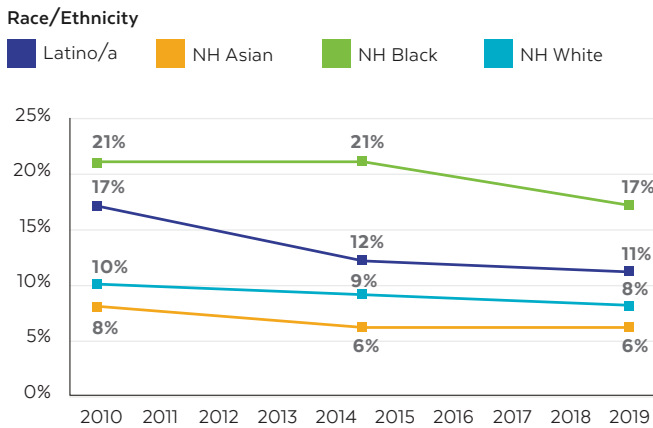


## OPPORTUNITY YOUTH | GRADE: A

An opportunity youth, also referred to as a disconnected youth, is defined as an individual between the ages of 16 and 24 who is neither working nor in school. Special attention is placed on this population because decisions made at these ages can have a long-term impact on an individual's career and life trajectory.<sup>10</sup> Under this definition, Latino/as are more likely to be represented among opportunity youth when compared to Whites in Los Angeles County. The following graph shows the percent of opportunity youth across race and ethnicity from 2010 to 2019. The proportion of Latino/a opportunity youth has declined at higher rates than any other ethnicity or racial group. In 2019, 11% of Latino/a youth between the ages of 16 and 24 were not working or in school, compared to 8% of non-Hispanic White youth.

### OPPORTUNITY YOUTH BY RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2010, 2015, 2019)

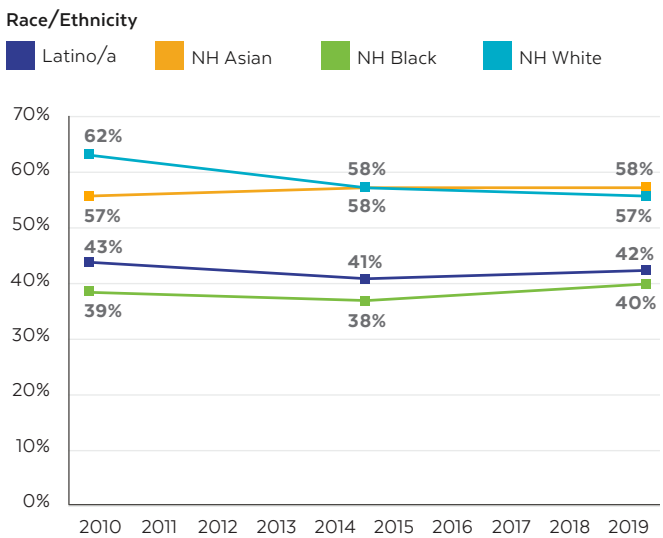


## HOMEOWNERSHIP | GRADE: B

Owning a home is a common means of economic investment. For Latino/as, this is particularly culturally important as owning a home often signals economic stability and wealth building.<sup>11</sup> The following graph indicates homeownership rates from 2010 to 2019 across race and ethnicity. Homeownership rates from 2010 to 2019 have remained relatively stable for Latino/as in Los Angeles County, declining by 1% during the nine year period; however, Latino/a households are less likely to own homes than White households. In 2019, approximately 42% of Latino/a households owned the home in which they currently lived. This is compared to 57% of non-Hispanic White households. Homeownership rates for non-citizen Latino/a households were significantly lower, with only 25% of non-citizen Latino/as owning the home in which they reside.

### HOMEOWNERSHIP RATES BY RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2010, 2015, 2019)



10. (Painter et. al., 2017)

11. (McCabe, 2018)

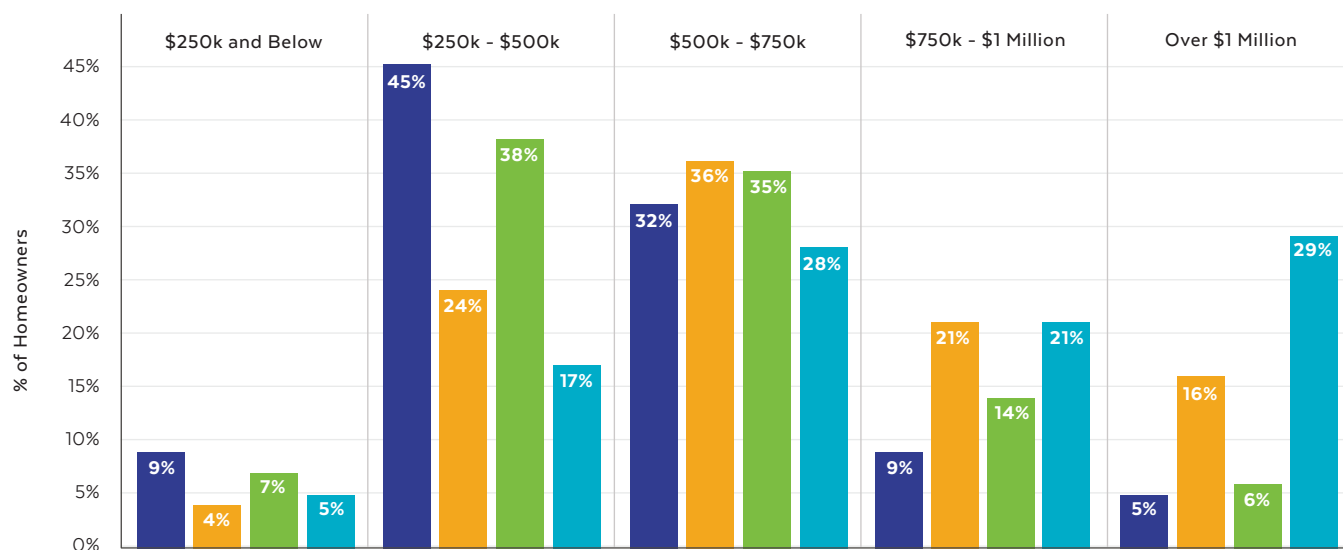
## HOME VALUES | GRADE: C

Given the range of home values in Los Angeles, this section examines home values among Latino/a homeowners. Approximately 23% of Latino/a households own their home free and clear, with over three in four households encumbered by a mortgage or loan. The graph below shows the value of the homes in Los Angeles County across race and ethnicity in 2019. Among Latino/a homeowners, more than half had homes valued under \$500,000, whereas only 22% of White homes were valued in the same range. Home values across native and immigrant Latino/a households follow similar trends. Comparatively, almost 30% of homes owned by non-Hispanic White households were valued over \$1 million.

### HOME VALUE ACROSS RACE & ETHNICITY

Latino/a NH Asian NH Black NH White

Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2019)



## RENT BURDEN SPOTLIGHT | GRADE: C

Given the large proportion of Latino/a renters, growing regional unaffordability, and the housing landscape in Los Angeles, a discussion on economic prosperity would not be complete if it did not examine trends among renters. More than half of Los Angeles County's population lives in a rented unit<sup>12</sup> and in 2019, approximately 58% of all Latino/as households in Los Angeles County rented their home. While rentership rates have remained relatively stable since 2010, the amount of money households spend on housing has increased substantially. In 2010, a third of Latino/a households (33%) spent under \$1,000 on housing each month. By 2019, only 16% of Latino/a households had a monthly rent of under \$1,000. While Latino/as on average spend less money on housing compared to non-Hispanic White households, they spend a higher proportion of their household incomes towards rent.

Households that spend more than 30% of their incomes on rent and utilities are considered to be rent burdened, and those that spend more than 50% of their incomes are considered to be severely rent burdened. Rent burden is an important indicator for tracking affordability and vulnerability. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on rent begin to make significant cutbacks to food, clothing, health care, utilities, and other bills in order to remain housed.<sup>13</sup> More so, these cutbacks lead to other negative impacts to mental and physical health, negative educational outcomes among children, and overcrowded or poorer housing quality.<sup>14</sup> In 2019, over half (54%) of Latino/a renter households were rent burdened and one in four (26%) Latino/a households were considered to be severely rent burdened, which means

13. (Gabriel & Painter, 2018)

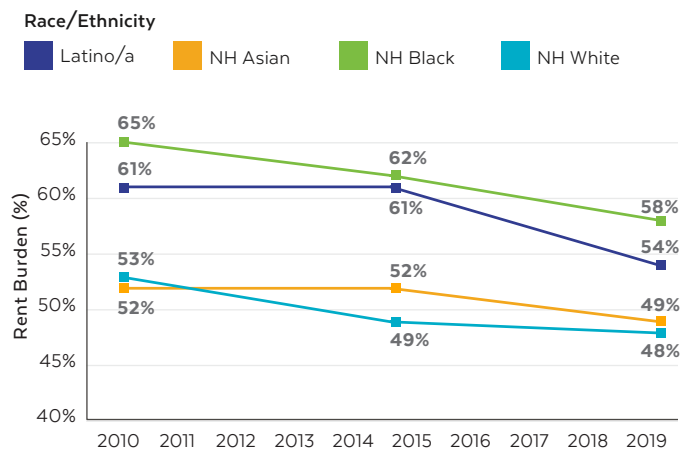
14. <https://usc.data.socrata.com/stories/s/f5vt-neh3>, (Rosen, Angst, De Gregorio and Painter, 2020; Cohen, 2011; Diaz McConnell, 2016; Lopoo and London, 2016)

12. 2019 American Community Survey, 5 year estimates, Table B25003

they spent more than half of their income on rent. Since 2010, the proportion of rent-burdened Latino/a households has decreased by 7%. However, Latino/as still experience rent burden at higher rates than non-Hispanic White households.

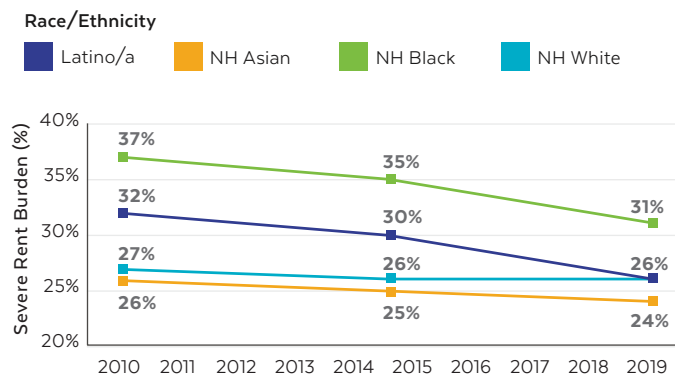
#### RENT BURDEN BY RACE & ETHNICITY

Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2010, 2015, 2019)



#### SEVERE RENT BURDEN BY RACE & ETHNICITY

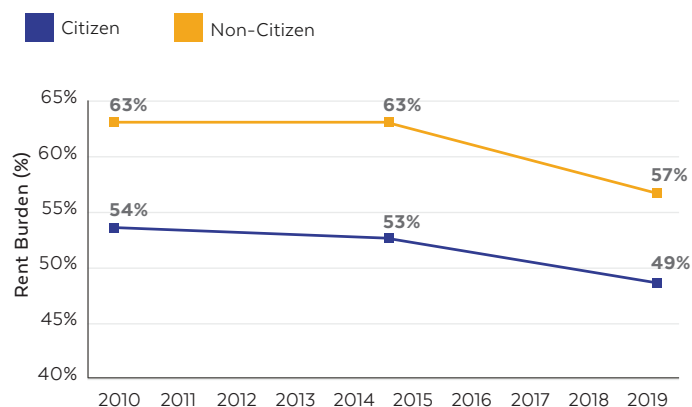
Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2010, 2015, 2019)



Latino/a immigrants and Latino/as without U.S. citizenship experience additional economic hardships that exacerbate housing affordability in Los Angeles County. While the percentage of Latino/as who are rent burdened has decreased substantially since 2010, nearly three in five non-citizen Latino/as were rent burdened in 2019. This is compared to less than half of citizen Latino/a renters (49%). This paints a concerning backdrop before the COVID-19 crisis began to unfold in 2020.

#### RENT BURDEN BY CITIZENSHIP STATUS OF LATINO/AS IN LA COUNTY

Source: IPUMS USA ACS (2010, 2015, 2019)



To alleviate rent burden and unaffordability, income or expenses need to be addressed in order for households to experience stability instead of making drastic choices between a roof and paying for basic necessities. The COVID-19 pandemic presented opportunities for policymakers to enact such measures and deploy tenant resources. On March 4, 2020, Los Angeles County adopted a temporary eviction moratorium to avoid displacement of families during the pandemic.<sup>15</sup> Additionally the Stay Housed LA program was formed from a coalition of County departments, service providers, community organizations, and unions to support tenants in the County.<sup>16</sup> Beyond the pandemic, recovery policies should acknowledge the economic precarity of rent-burdened households, of which Latino/as make up a significant portion.

## DISCUSSION

Even before the pandemic there were barriers that curbed economic prosperity for Latino/as. For example, language access and lack of immigration status can present challenges for Latino/as seeking to own homes.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in 2018 the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) in Los Angeles found that bank personnel provided significantly less business loan information to Black and Latino/a participants which could significantly reduce an owner's access to capital for business growth and stability.<sup>18</sup> More recently, a nation-wide survey between April and May 2020 found that just 12% of Black and Latino/a business owners received the COVID-

15. <https://dcba.lacounty.gov/noevictions/>

16. <https://www.stayhousedla.org/>

17. <https://usc.data.socrata.com/stories/s/Boyle-Heights-Homeownership/ex88-te68>

18. (Lee, Mitchell and Lederer, 2018)



related aid they requested from the federal government.<sup>19</sup> The additional challenges of COVID-19 only build on the systemic issues that long existed before the pandemic. For this reason recovery efforts in Los Angeles will need to consider the unique challenges Latino/as and communities of color face, as well as the role that language and immigration status can play in accessing economic resources and support.

## LIMITATIONS

While stakeholders were interested in tracking home equity data among Latino/as in Los Angeles, this data is not available across race and ethnicity at the County level. Similarly, data limitations for Los Angeles County business ownership did not allow for intersectional factors, such as ethnicity and gender, to be analyzed. It has been found that most primary business data sources have limited samples, which further limits the ability to analyze business by Latino/a country of origin (i.e; Mexican, Salvadoran, Puerto Rican).<sup>20</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Given the assessment of these indicators, the Economic Prosperity issue area earns a “C” grade for Latino/as in Los Angeles County. This score is assigned with the understanding that despite Latino/as working at similar rates as other groups, other factors such as income, wealth, and support for businesses remain to be improved upon.

19. <https://theblackresponse.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COC-UnidosUS-Abbreviated-Deck-F05.13.20.pdf>

20. (Robles and Cordero-Guzman, 2007).

# Economic Prosperity: Reflection

## Dr. Gary Painter

*Director, USC Price Center for Social Innovation*

*Director, Homelessness Policy Research Institute*

*Professor, University of Southern California*

*Sol Price School of Public Policy*

Economic prosperity is the ability to thrive and build a future for you and your family. Households must have enough money to pay for housing and other necessary expenses, but also to save to make investments in one’s business, buy a home, or invest in education for oneself or one’s children. My own research over the last 20 years demonstrates that Latino/a households and immigrants rapidly place down roots in community and invest in homes at rates comparable to non-Hispanic White populations if they have the same incomes.

Unfortunately, there remain persistent gaps in incomes that prevent Latino/as from achieving these goals. The data suggest that while 64% of non-Hispanic Whites earn more than \$80,000, only 43% of Latino/as earn incomes above \$80,000. This explains a large part of the homeownership gap and explains why Latino/as are still more likely to own “starter” homes in terms of housing values. This also explains why Latino/a renters are more likely to pay more than 30% of their income as rent than non-Hispanic Whites (54 vs. 49%). The “rent burden” felt by Latino/a households headed by non-citizens is even larger (57%).

There is no doubt that increasing the supply of affordable and market-rate housing in the region will help improve economic prosperity for Latino/as in Los Angeles County. However, it is also essential that Latino/as receive the support to accelerate wage growth and connect to capital to grow their businesses and take advantage of the relatively high rate of Latino/a business ownership. The data on COVID-related relief to Latino/a businesses is one more signal that the public sector supports, and private capital flowing to Latino/as continue to lag behind what is received by non-Hispanic White households and businesses. Until we close these gaps, economic prosperity can only be graded a “C.”

# ABC's Vision for Economic Prosperity

## INTRODUCTION

The data on the economic prosperity indicators underscore two central messages of this Latino/a Scorecard: 1) The story of Latino/as in Los Angeles County includes Latino/as who are thriving and those who are struggling, and 2) all Latino/as could be enjoying even greater economic prosperity.

For example, in 2019, 18% of Latino/a households earned more than \$135,000, and 25% earned between \$80,000 and \$135,000.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, of the approximately 1,200,000 Latino/a households in Los Angeles County in 2017, 181,484 (18.5%) were living in poverty.<sup>2</sup> Among all Latino/a families in poverty, 37.2% were single mothers with children under 18 years of age, and 35.1% were married couples with children.

In 2019, approximately 42% of Latino/a households owned their home.<sup>3</sup> Among Latino/a homeowners, 23% owned their home free and clear. Nearly half of Latino/a homeowners, however, owned homes valued between \$250,000 and \$500,000. Only 5% owned homes valued at \$1 million or more, compared to 29% of non-Latino/a Whites. Latino/a homeowners also had less equity in their homes, with nearly 75% encumbered by a mortgage or loan. Finally, among renter households in 2019, 48% of Latino/a households were rent burdened and 22% were extremely rent burdened.

There is a wealth gap developing among Latino/as, and there is also a wealth gap between middle- and higher-income Latino/a households and non-Latino/a White households. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this gap, with many losing their jobs and businesses and struggling to not only pay mortgages or rent, but also to pay for daily living expenses. As the economy begins its recovery, it is imperative that advocates push policymakers to create the conditions that will help all Latino/as improve their economic position. The recommendations on the following pages were developed with this intention. (Additional recommendations that influence economic prosperity are included in the education section).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Invest in and build a stronger economic safety net for working and low-income Latino/as through outreach and education around the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) and Young Child Tax Credit programs, and through development of a guaranteed income program open to mixed-status families during economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

The CalEITC and Young Child Tax Credit are two promising programs that can contribute to decreasing income inequality. The CalEITC is a refundable state tax credit for individuals and families who are working but still living in poverty.<sup>4</sup> The money is intended to help families meet basic needs like food, housing, health care, transportation, and education. The earned income tax credit has been shown to be a highly effective tool to fight poverty.<sup>5</sup> It has positive impacts on health and education outcomes, on future salaries for children of recipients, and on increased spending in local communities. The Young Child Tax Credit is an additional tax credit for families who qualify for CalEITC and who have a child five-years-old or younger.

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1. (IPUMS USA, ACS, 2019)

2. (Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, 2017)

3. (IPUMS USA, ACS, 2019)

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4. (Including immigrants in the CalEITC, 2021)

5. (Marr, Huang, Sherman, & Debot., 2015)

In September 2020, Governor Newsom signed AB1876, which expanded access to CalEITC to undocumented Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) filers. This was a significant policy win in support of working, immigrant families—many of whom were on the frontlines during the pandemic, helping to keep the economy moving, yet unable to access unemployment and federal relief. However, now there is great need for year-round education and outreach (EITCs may be claimed past the April 15 deadline and throughout the year).<sup>6</sup> Undocumented and mixed-status families need to know about CalEITC, the Young Child Tax Credit, and resources to help with filing taxes. In addition, there may still be fear in the immigrant community around the public charge rule introduced by the Trump administration but ended by the Biden administration. Despite the change in policy, many in the immigrant community still may be worried about claiming the tax credit due to fear of jeopardizing their immigration status. Encouraging and supporting all eligible families to apply for CalEITC is a significant step in providing them with an immediate economic boost in the short term and helping to reduce generational poverty in the long term.

The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in low-income communities of color that will be felt for generations to come. A survey conducted in fall 2020 demonstrated that about 71% of Latino/a households in Los Angeles County had experienced some type of financial difficulty due to the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> The federal government has stepped in and provided three rounds of stimulus checks<sup>8</sup> to ease some of the economic hardships caused by the crisis.

#### COVID-19 IMPACT

**In a U.S. Census survey conducted in October 2020, 63.5% of Latino/as reported experiencing a loss of employment income since March 2020 and another 42.3% expected a loss of income some time over the next four weeks; both percentages were higher than that of other groups surveyed. In the same survey, 43.1% of Latino/as reported that it was somewhat or very difficult to pay their usual household expenses in the last seven days. In contrast, only 25.1% of non-Latino/a Whites reported this level of difficulty.**

(CALIFORNIA LATINO ECONOMIC INSTITUTE, 2020)

Additionally, in the last few years, guaranteed income pilot programs throughout California have gained attention as a way to prevent people from falling further into poverty, and they have played a more noticeable role in the last year. Public and private institutions should extend these guaranteed income programs during economic recovery from the pandemic. This would create stability and potential opportunities for upwards economic mobility.

## 2. Invest equitably in rebuilding a comprehensive child care system, including opportunities for children ages zero to three

Child care enables parents to work and supports the foundational development of children ages zero to five, a time period that is critical to social and cognitive development and preparation for school. Unfortunately, child care has been a troubled sector since before the pandemic. It is expensive for many parents, and it fails to pay a living wage to a large number of its workers. Market rates for unsubsidized child care can easily exceed \$1,000 per month while preschool teachers earn about \$15 per hour (compared to kindergarten teachers whose hourly wage is approximately \$30).<sup>9</sup> Some working low-income families may lose access to subsidized services because of low-income eligibility thresholds. Even small increases in wages can put some families over the income eligibility limit while not providing them enough money to cover the full cost of child care.

Cost of child care is higher for infants and toddlers than it is for preschoolers, and access is more difficult. There are fewer programs for children between the ages of zero and three at both child care centers and family child care homes. These programs require a smaller teacher-to-child ratio and more space, among other provisions. Before the pandemic, only 15% of eligible infants and toddlers were served in Los Angeles County through subsidized early care and education programs, compared to 41% of eligible preschoolers.<sup>10</sup> (The advent of transitional kindergarten, which is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program for children with birthdays between September and December of their fifth year, has significantly increased educational opportunities for preschool-age children.)

6. (Fryday, 2010)

7. (Fortier, 2020)

8. (Peter G. Peterson Foundation, 2021)

9. (Graves, 2016)

10. (Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee, Los Angeles County Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education, & First 5 LA, 2017)

The context for child care post pandemic is even more dire. A great number of licensed centers and family child care homes closed as a result of low enrollment and higher operating costs tied to COVID-19 health requirements. These closures pushed many out of the workforce, which included parents, most often women, who remained home to care for their children, and early childhood educators, who are predominantly women of color. A sufficiently funded child care industry is essential for an equitable economic recovery.

The federal government took a positive step in this direction with the \$39 billion allocated in the American Rescue Plan (2021) to alleviate the national child care crisis. California also took measures to better support child care with AB82 (2021), with stipends per child and reimbursements to cover COVID-19 related costs, waiver of family fees until July 2021, and emergency child care vouchers for children of essential workers. Robust investment in comprehensive child care must continue, particularly for programs for children ages zero to three, and access to funds should be equitable. The Paycheck Protection Program in 2020 through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act demonstrated the ease of access for larger corporations and organizations compared to the challenges small businesses and organizations faced. To prevent this from occurring among assistance for child care providers, funding should be reserved for greater support to access these funds. Lastly, new outreach opportunities and requirements should target providers in the communities with the greatest need for subsidized child care, and offer information in multiple languages.

### **3. Provide classified employees in public sector positions with a living wage that takes into account the high cost of living in the Los Angeles region**

In the last few years, the City and County of Los Angeles have enacted minimum wage ordinances that are higher than that of the state. Beginning July 2021, the county minimum wage is \$15 for businesses of all sizes. The City of Los Angeles has also set a living wage rate of \$16.25, which provides \$1.25 an hour for health benefits.<sup>11</sup> Several other cities in the county have enacted their own wage ordinances. While these efforts do provide a better wage for residents, they still fall behind the earnings needed to live in the region.

According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Living Wage Calculator,<sup>12</sup> for a family in Los Angeles County with two working adults and two children to live independently with adequate food and housing, each of the working adults needs to earn \$28.04 per hour (about \$58,323 per year each). The model draws upon geographic specific expenditure data related to a family's likely minimum food, child care, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g. clothing, personal care items). The calculated living wage determines the amount of minimum employment earnings to meet a family's basic needs while also maintaining self-sufficiency. It does not provide financial means to enable savings and investment for the purchase of capital assets (i.e., provisions for retirement or purchase of a home).

In this environment, workers at the lower end of the pay scale inevitably struggle to pay for basic necessities and may need to seek out public assistance or suffer consistent and severe housing and food insecurity. Classified workers, who sometimes receive only hourly pay for limited hours and few benefits, are among those who may face economic hardship in the face of Los Angeles' high cost of living. They include child care providers, teacher's assistants, playground and special education aides, custodians, maintenance workers, gardeners, food service workers, and clerical staff, among others. These are essential workers who contribute to the safety, wellbeing, and effective functioning of their organizations. They deserve to have wages that can cover the cost of living in Los Angeles and account for the cost of health insurance (if not provided by their employer). More action is needed around establishing living wages in the Los Angeles region for all jobs. This could begin among the three largest employers in the County, which are public. Los Angeles County employs approximately 95,000 individuals; the Los Angeles Unified School District employs approximately 75,000; and the City of Los Angeles employs approximately 72,600.<sup>13</sup> All public sector jobs should provide a living wage.

#### **COVID-19 IMPACT**

**Approximately 392,000 living wage jobs were lost in Los Angeles County by the end of 2020. It is projected that the 392,000 living wage jobs lost during the pandemic will not be regained until 2024.**

(LAEDC, 2021)

11. (DiMartino, 2020)

12. <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06037>

13. (LA Almanac, 2020)



**4. Partner with educational institutions, community-based organizations, businesses, and the entertainment industry in Los Angeles City and County to provide targeted, creative information and assistance related to workforce training and development opportunities for middle skills jobs in high-growth industries for specific populations like high school students, youth who are not in school and not working, women, and dislocated workers**

According to the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (2021), there are certain industries that are projected to grow in the next five years despite the pandemic. Among these are transportation and warehousing, health care, and construction. It is expected that 139,000 of over 500,000 total jobs to be added to the County between 2020 and 2024 will be middle skill occupations in these sectors. Middle skill occupations are those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a postsecondary degree. Individuals employed in middle skill jobs are trained for their specific occupation and have more opportunities for career advancement than lower skilled workers. Additionally, employees possessing skill sets necessary for a middle skill occupations are less vulnerable to future automation than lower skilled workers. Preparation of workers for middle skill positions in these growth sectors could offer them the opportunity to earn a living wage and serve as a step to an even higher paid career.

In Los Angeles County, there are established pathways to preparing for these high-growth industry jobs including apprenticeships, career technical education (CTE) programs, certificate programs, and degree programs (AA/BA). Apprenticeship programs have been proven to result in increased skills, higher wages, and promising career pathways.<sup>14</sup> Apprenticeships incorporate an “earn-while-you-learn” approach, which provides participants with a salary while enrolled in the program. These paid work experiences build skills and social capital while ensuring basic needs

are met. CTE is primarily provided in high schools and community colleges but can also provide pathways to four-year colleges and universities. Recent studies have found that CTE credentials from community colleges can increase earnings, with health credentials conferring the largest wage increases—as high as 70%.<sup>15</sup> Latino/a and female students are slightly underrepresented in CTE at high schools and community colleges, while across sectors, male students are underrepresented in health and education courses. CTE programs can bridge education and employment, with courses tied to careers and aligned to the economic needs of a geographic area.

An overriding issue is that many youth and adults need guidance and support as well as specific information about these workforce development and training opportunities. Information must be tailored to target populations. In addition to youth currently in high school, it is important to focus specifically on those youth between 16 and 24 who are in neither school nor work. Prior to the pandemic, about 11% of youth in Los Angeles County were opportunity youth.<sup>16</sup> Following the pandemic, this percentage is expected to have risen significantly. Women have also been deeply impacted by the pandemic, with many having left the labor force to assume care-taking responsibilities when schools converted to remote learning and child care centers closed. As women look to re-enter the workforce, they should be aware of the options of higher paid middle skill occupations in growing sectors and how to prepare for them. The same is true for those workers who may have been displaced as a result of the pandemic.

Academic advisors and career counselors at high schools and community colleges provide much-needed guidance and support, however, student-to-counselor ratios often exceed the recommended target. The American School Counselor Association recommends a 250-to-one ratio, but the California state average is 609-to-one.<sup>17</sup> For those currently not enrolled in school, additional sources of guidance and support are needed. Community-based organizations, WorkSource and YouthSource Centers of the City of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County’s America’s Job Centers, among others, are well-positioned to provide information and assistance.

Connecting interested youth and adults with these resources, however, may require imaginative and creative strategies directly addressing differing needs and aspirations. Various choices exist today to reach distinct audiences and actively

14. (The Conference Board, 2019)

15. (CTE, 2021)

16. (IPUMS USA, 2019)

17. (Jones, 2020)

engage potential students, including television and radio ads, videos, websites, social media, traditional print media, and hosted events. With the creative talent available in Hollywood and among community-based organizations, philanthropic organizations, service organizations, education institutions, and businesses, there is the opportunity to create campaigns focused on job preparation information and job opportunities in Los Angeles County. The entertainment industry, in addition to being a partner for raising awareness and educating the public, could itself provide opportunities for middle skill workers. A report by the Center for Competitive Workforce<sup>18</sup> found that some of the most in-demand entertainment industry jobs in the region are middle skill professions that don't necessarily require a four-year college degree.

## 5. Support efforts for student loan debt forgiveness at the federal level

As of 2021, 43 million Americans are plagued by student loan debt, with the typical debt amount ranging from \$10,000 to \$40,000.<sup>19</sup> While student loan debt negatively affects individuals' economic security across all races, it particularly impacts minorities, who are often less financially prosperous than their White counterparts to begin with, leaving them at a financial disadvantage to pay back their student loan debts in full while simultaneously accounting and paying for all other aspects of their lives. Currently, 67% of Latino/a student loan borrowers have accumulated a significant amount of debt, making them the ethnic group with the second-highest percentage of borrowers who have student loan debt.

The number of Latino/as who have student loan debt is continuing to increase due to the rising cost of college and the decline in financial assistance through grants, with the Pell Grant only covering 28% of four-year public college tuition costs and 13% of four-year nonprofit college tuition costs.<sup>20</sup> Due to student loan debt, 51% of Latino/as in California have been unable to save for retirement, 45% were unable to purchase a home, and 30% were unable to finish their degree. Although both Latino/as and Whites take out loans at similar rates, Latino/as take out a larger percentage of private loans, which typically are less secure and have fewer repayment and servicing protections than federal loans. Latino/as are also

more likely to not complete their degree and default on their loans, impairing their ability to achieve financial stability. Even when Latino/as do graduate with a bachelor's degree, they are the ethnic group that has the lowest year-round earnings in their post-grad years. And while as of 2009, all student loan borrowers have had the option to use an income-driven repayment plan, which sets an individual's monthly payment proportional to their current income and family size, many Latino/as have limited access to or are unaware of this opportunity, and therefore struggle to pay off their debt at unnecessarily high rates.

While there is no current plan before Congress to address entire student loan forgiveness, President Biden and Congressional Democrats have proposed a plan to mitigate the negative effects of student loan debt on college and university graduates with a plan that would forgive \$10,000 per individual. This plan would completely wipe out the debt of 1.3 million Californians.<sup>21</sup> (Other Congressional Democrats seek to give more aid by forgiving \$50,000 which would clear the debts of 2.9 and 3.3 million Californians.) This plan would allow lower income students who qualify for the Pell Grant to have a larger portion of their debts forgiven, double the maximum award of the Pell Grant, and make public colleges tuition-free for students from families earning less than \$125,000. For these reasons, ABC encourages the push of student loan debt forgiveness on a federal level so as to ensure that more young people are able to contribute to the economy, sparing many from going into default on their loans, and taking steps toward closing the American racial wealth gap.



18. 2018

19. (Helhoski & Lane, 2021)

20. (UnidosUS, 2019)

21. (Zinshteyn, 2021)

**6. Increase support to Latino/a businesses and entrepreneurs—including small businesses, microbusinesses, and street vendors—by providing access to capital, technical assistance, networking, mentoring, and resources**

**COVID-19 IMPACT**

**Supervisory District 1, which includes Northeast Los Angeles, the Southeast Los Angeles cities on the west border, and the cities out to the Pomona area on the east border, lost 76,907 jobs due to business closures or layoffs during the pandemic—the highest number lost among County Supervisory Districts.**

(LAEDC, 2021)

Latino/a small business owners were the fastest-growing group of entrepreneurs in the U.S. in 2020.<sup>22</sup> Los Angeles County in 2012 was home to 631,218 minority-owned firms: 332,967 Hispanic (29.0%), 213,203 Asian (18.6%), 81,563 Black or African American (7.1%), 11,081 American Indian and Alaska Native (1.0%), and 3,798 Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.3%).<sup>23</sup> About 28% of Latino/a-owned firms in the County were engaged in “professional business services,” including consultancy firms, regional managing offices, and employment placement agencies; 20% were in other services; 13% were in education or health care; and 11% were in construction.<sup>24</sup> Sidewalk vending is also an integral part of immigrant communities in Los Angeles County. Over 15,000 street vendors, many of whom are excluded from other types of industries, depend on the economic opportunity it provides.<sup>25</sup> Once relegated to the informal economy, Senate Bill 946 (2017) legalized street vending across the state, while the City of Los Angeles has passed a series of rules and regulations guiding it.

To ensure that Latino/a business owners increase in number and are financially stable, education or technical assistance programs and resources must be readily accessible and available to them. One of the most significant barriers to Latino/a business growth is the lack of access to financing.<sup>26</sup> According to the 2018 State of Latino/a Entrepreneurship prepared by the Stanford Graduate School of Business,<sup>27</sup> many Latino/a entrepreneurs did not have opportunities for business financing or small bank loans—limiting their investor list and forcing them to turn to personal funds and monetary

support from family and friends to build their business dream. This report shares the stark reality that only 20% of Latino/a owned businesses obtained funding of loans over \$100,000, versus 50% of White-owned businesses in the United States.

It is important for cities in Los Angeles County to expand business loan efforts and to integrate services to help business owners fully understand the range of loan options and requirements that are necessary to launch and maintain a business. Accessible and responsive training, education, mentoring, networking, and/or ongoing technical assistance is crucial. In addition to information about loan options and requirements, it is also important that support be provided in creating a business plan, cash flow projections, and breakdown of sources and uses. These go hand in hand with the expansion of loan opportunities.

Financial institutions should also provide business and personal financing planning services to entrepreneurs to ensure that they are able to access long-term investments. In addition, nonprofit organizations focused on supporting Latino/a entrepreneurs are an important part of the business ecosystem. These organizations can serve as the heart of the system that connects business owners to loan opportunities and information that supports business growth.

22. (Cimini, 2020)

23. (Los Angeles county a microcosm, 2015)

24. (Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, 2017)

25. (Byron, 2021)

26. (Jensen, 2019)

27. (Orozco, Tareque, Oyer, & Porras, 2021)



## 7. Increase the access of low- to moderate-income Latino/a families to programs that prepare them for a path to homeownership

Homeownership offers an opportunity for households to accumulate assets and build wealth—home equity contributes to net worth and becomes an asset to be passed down generationally. Nearly two-thirds of total wealth accumulated by the typical U.S. homeowner is linked to a primary residence. Among Latino/as in Los Angeles County, 42% are homeowners, compared to 57% of non-Latino/a Whites.<sup>28</sup> The homeownership gap can be attributed to various factors, beginning with discriminatory policies going back decades, including redlining practices that segregated and devalued neighborhoods of color and made it difficult to

obtain mortgages. More recently, predatory lending has had devastating impacts for Latino/a borrowers. Prior to the Great Recession of 2008, Latino/a borrowers were twice as likely as Whites to receive high-cost subprime loans.<sup>29</sup> Other barriers to homeownership include lack of access to credit and poor credit history, lack of understanding and information about the homebuying process, lack of capital for down payment and closing costs, and continued housing discrimination.<sup>30</sup>

With the homeownership gap intrinsically connected to the racial wealth gap, it is imperative that more programs be in place to empower low- to moderate-income families with the resources, information, and counseling they need to reach their goals of long-term economic prosperity, including homeownership. Programs should support families in building their knowledge of financial planning, credit management, and financial services and products specifically designed for first-time homebuyers and homeowners. Some of the more effective models in place combine training with ongoing coaching or counseling to support families as they work towards their goals.<sup>31</sup>



28. (IPUMS USA, ACS, 2019)

29. (Badger, 2013)

30. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010)

31. (Lusardi, Michaud, & Mitchell, 2018)



## CONCLUSION

Given that Latino/as are the largest racial or ethnic group in Los Angeles County, their economic wellbeing plays a critical role in the region's long-term economic success. While the data in this report shows that on some indicators, Latino/a economic health is encouraging, there are other areas where significant improvement is needed. Latino/as are both overrepresented in lower-income groups, while also underrepresented among the County's highest-earning households. Policies and resources need to be directed towards pathways that facilitate mobility towards higher income and economic stability. There is a need for a larger Latino/a middle class in Los Angeles County, as well as greater growth in the income of middle-class Latino/a households. In this section, recommendations on the economic social safety net, child care, public sector wages for classified workers, workforce development, student loan forgiveness, entrepreneurship, and home ownership have been presented as strategies to advance the economic prosperity of Latino/as in the region.

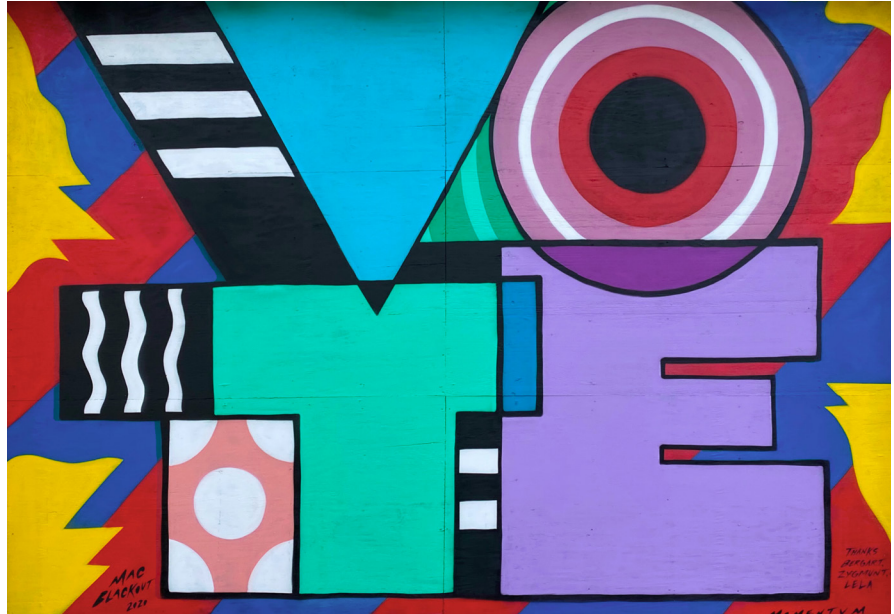


# Civic Engagement

Written by: Fernando J. Guerra, Ph.D., Brianne Gilbert, Alejandra Alarcon, and Max Dunsker of the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles (StudyLA) at Loyola Marymount University (LMU)

Overall  
Grade:

C+



## INTRODUCTION

Civic engagement has long been a topic of interest for activists, researchers, and policymakers. However, conceptualizing the term has proven to be difficult. Civic engagement, in this context, is defined (and measured) by voting. There are many other potential measurements for civic engagement not covered in this research. Unlike some of the other issue areas in this Scorecard, civic engagement is more a *means* than an *end*. To improve in other issue areas (the ends), Latino/as need more voters and representatives (the means). This report analyzes where Latino/as are and how they can improve or increase the number of voters or representatives.

The research questions are as follows: How do we document Latino/a civic engagement as measured by voting, and how do we document Latino/a political representation? After observing the trends in these areas, what are the recommendations for increasing both voting and representation in the near future?

Successful engagement can, and should, lead to being well represented. Political scientists approach the quality of democratic representation in two broad types: descriptive and substantive representation. Briefly, descriptive representation

is characterized by how reflective representatives (e.g., elected officials) are of their constituents' identity and experiences. In other words, do constituents see themselves and make connections with the person elected to represent them? Literature on this topic shows that shared experiences operate as a "critical mechanism for representation."<sup>1</sup> Additionally, that shared identity can be an important connection that encourages representatives to work on behalf of their constituents. That work, in turn, produces substantive policies that directly benefit voters. This increase in descriptive representation can in turn have a positive impact on political participation among Latino/as. This creates a benevolent circle of greater descriptive representation influencing greater participation, thereby further improving representation.

1. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ajps.12443>

2. [https://www.press.umich.edu/352787/ethnic\\_cues](https://www.press.umich.edu/352787/ethnic_cues)

While descriptive representation adds fuel to the engagement and representation motor, it alone is not sufficient to sustain it. Descriptive representation is not sufficient to capture the quality of representation in a democratic system. Substantive representation fills this gap, whereby representatives advocate specifically on behalf of certain groups. One can imagine scenarios in which elected leaders with similar backgrounds are not producing legislation that helps their community. Conversely, many minority communities have historically been in a position of depending on non-minorities to advocate for them at the legislative level, as has been the case in Los Angeles. Through coalition-building, many policies that benefited minorities in the past could not have been achieved without substantive representation of minorities by White elected leaders who responded to minority voices.

Both types of representation are wanted and needed for a community to thrive and be civically engaged. It is important to note that the literature on civic engagement touches on many different aspects, often referencing the metrics of voting. However, civic engagement goes well beyond voting. For this Scorecard, we only focus on metrics of voting capturing political participation.<sup>3</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

First, we examine voting in Los Angeles County in the last three major elections. Most notably, we document the change in demographics and voter eligibility in the 2012, 2016, and 2020 presidential general elections. Next, we examine Latino/a participation in these elections by looking at the turnout of Latino/a registered voters and the turnout of Latino/a eligible voters, comparing both the participation of non-Latino/a voters throughout Los Angeles County.

We also analyze Latino/a civic engagement using a longstanding research project to assess descriptive representation. The Center for the Study of Los Angeles (StudyLA) has tracked the “Top 100 Running Roster”—the individuals holding the top 100 positions of political leadership of Los Angeles County over the past 70 years. The “running roster” of elected officials who have held office since 1960 serves as a barometer for the inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities in Los Angeles County’s highest offices. This running roster elucidates how the observed changes in Los Angeles County’s voter population and behavior impact the racial/ethnic composition and gender breakdown of political leadership. Offices are recognized as part of the “running roster” based on their constituent size, budget, and prestige.

For the compilation of the Latino/a Scorecard in civic engagement, two major indicators are given:

1. How do Latino/as fair relative to the County as a whole in voter turnout?
2. How do Latino/as fair in proportional representation of elected officials?

By looking at the Latino/a turnout of registered voters, it is possible to gauge the civic engagement of those who are already partially in the fold, making sure that Latino/as who have registered to vote are casting their ballots. The turnout of eligible voters illustrates a wider picture by also including those who are not involved in the democratic practices of the County. Ideally, these numbers would be as similar as possible, as a gap between these numbers would indicate a large proportion of eligible Latino/as who have not registered to vote. However, Latino/as have not always been welcome at the polls, and many scholars and activists would argue there are still many barriers to their voting access.<sup>4</sup>

The second indicator embodies the quantifiable outputs of civic participation, descriptive representation. The Top 100 data for 2020 will be compared to demographics from the 2019 American Community Survey and voter participation statistics to investigate whether Latino/a representation is proportional to the demographics of the County and the County’s voter base. Criteria for determining grades for both indicators are included in Appendix 6.



3. <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/civic-engagement/>

4. [https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/6\\_02\\_WaitingtoVote\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/6_02_WaitingtoVote_FINAL.pdf)



## DATA

For the first half of the analysis, researchers looked at a combination of census data at the County level as well as voter data. Los Angeles County data was gathered from the Census Bureau for each major racial and ethnic group from each of the decennial censuses from 1960 to the present, in addition to the most recent County estimates from the American Community Survey. The categories of data included total population, adult population, and the adult citizen population. Moreover, data were pulled from Political Data, Inc. on the number of registered voters as well as actual voters for Los Angeles County overall as well as for Latino/as, for the 2012, 2016, and 2020 presidential general elections.

Data from the Top 100 consisted of the racial and ethnic categories and gender of the individuals in the Top 100 positions in Los Angeles County from 1960 to the present. This list includes the mayor of Los Angeles, county board of supervisors, district attorney, county sheriff, Los Angeles city attorney, U.S. House of Representatives, state senate, Los Angeles city controller, county assessor, state assembly, Los Angeles City Council, LAUSD School Board, and LACCD Board of Trustees.

The data are derived from the U.S. Census Bureau, Political Data, Inc., and proprietary studies conducted by StudyLA. The Registrar-Recorder in Los Angeles does not collect registration data by racial/ethnicity. All data reported here are estimates that Political Data, Inc. has utilized for many years. Their methodology has never been significantly assessed by scholars, but it is the standard that is used by practitioners, journalists, and scholars. We believe this data has the potential for undercounting Latino/a registration.

## DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS

### LATINO/A VOTER TURNOUT | GRADE: C-

Census Bureau data illustrates the dramatic shift in the racial and ethnic composition of Los Angeles County. Estimates show that 9% of Los Angeles County residents were Latino/a in 1960—that number now is close to 48% percent, making them the plurality in the County. The most dramatic shift has been among the White residents of the County: Where they once constituted 82% of the County, they now account for only 26%. Meanwhile, Asian residents have also seen a dramatic uptick as a percentage of the population of the County: Where they were once 2% in 1960, they now make up more than 14% of the population. Black residents, however, have remained stagnant, with very little net change in the percentage of Black residents over the past 60 years.

Recently, Los Angeles County had its smallest growth decade for population in history. Not only is the population stabilizing in its total population, for the first time it is stabilizing in the percent population of each ethnic group. Lastly, two events have occurred: the end of white flight in the County and the end of significant immigration of Latino/as and Asians to Los Angeles County. These are significant developments in the history of the region.



### LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: Census Bureau

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
White	82%	68%	54%	41%	31%	28%	26%
Latino/a	9%	18%	28%	38%	45%	47%	48%
Asian	2%	3%	6%	10%	12%	14%	14%
Black	7%	11%	13%	11%	9%	8%	8%
Other	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	2%	3%



## LATINO/A DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: Census Bureau

The data reflected is a live snapshot of actively registered voters in Los Angeles County in April 2021

		2012	2016	2020
<b>Total Population</b>	Overall	9,962,789	10,137,915	10,039,107
	Latino/a	4,802,133	4,918,830	4,881,970
<b>Adult Population</b>	Overall	7,602,535	7,884,800	7,894,558
	Latino/a	3,329,011	3,529,648	3,566,542
<b>Adult Citizen Population</b>	Overall	5,913,067	6,272,903	6,389,353
	Latino/a	2,149,304	2,408,927	2,525,880
<b>Registered Voters</b>	Overall	3,344,766	4,203,669	5,787,626
	Latino/a	1,078,941	1,434,202	2,032,923
<b>Actual Voters</b>	Overall	2,407,757	3,004,591	4,243,538
	Latino/a	747,678	1,014,586	1,422,310

Looking at Latino/a demographics in the context of civic engagement, it is important to understand how the size of the Latino/a population translates to the size of the Latino/a voter base. Of the total population, only about three in four Latino/as are above the age of 18. This means that Latino/a proportion of the voter base is markedly smaller than their proportion of the population. For the rest of the population of the County, over five out of every six residents are of voting age. Ultimately, this proportionately smaller base of voting-age adults manifests in a proportionately smaller base of Latino/a citizens of voting age, with only slightly more than half of the Latino/a population eligible to vote compared to almost two-thirds of the population of other County residents.



This highlights the importance of civic engagement among eligible Latino/a voters, as they will already be underrepresented in Los Angeles County's universe of voters compared to its population. Unfortunately, there is a large disconnect between Latino/as who are eligible to vote and those who register and cast their ballot. While Latino/as have seen turnout of registered voters similar to that of the rest of the County in the last three presidential general elections, this data point alone obscures a troubling pattern within Latino/a voter participation. When looking at the turnout of eligible voters in those three elections, a large gap appears between Latino/as and the rest of the County. This is because eligible Latino/as are much less likely to register to vote than other residents in the County. In Los Angeles County, whereas 97% of adult non-Latino/a citizens are registered voters, only 80% of adult Latino/a citizens are registered voters. Regrettably, although the percentage of actual voters of the adult citizen population is growing, so has the gap between it and the rest of the County over the last three major presidential elections.

**In Los Angeles County, whereas 97% of adult non-Latino/a citizens are registered voters, only 80% of adult Latino/a citizens are registered voters.**

#### LATINO/A VOTER TURNOUT

Source: Census Bureau

The data reflected is a live snapshot of actively registered voters in Los Angeles County in April 2021

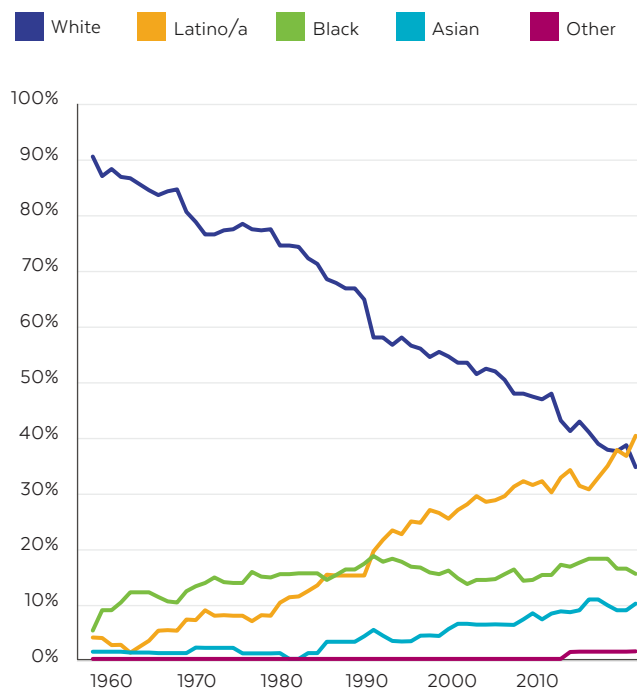
		2012	2016	2020
% registered voters of adult citizen population	Overall	57%	67%	91%
	Latino/a	50%	60%	80%
	Rest of the County	60%	72%	97%
% actual voters of adult citizen population	Overall	41%	48%	66%
	Latino/a	35%	42%	56%
	Rest of the County	44%	52%	73%
% actual voters of those registered	Overall	72%	71%	73%
	Latino/a	69%	71%	70%
	Rest of the County	73%	72%	75%

## PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION | GRADE: B

In the 2020 presidential general election, approximately three-quarters of registered voters in Los Angeles County turned out to vote. With the increase in participation, it begs the question of whether this increase in voter participation would increase descriptive representation. Unfortunately, in other areas of study, the researchers found that despite the jumps in turnout, low voter turnout still exists. Furthermore, nearly all the areas in Los Angeles County with low voter turnout are majority or plurality Latino/a. However, StudyLA's data on leadership suggests that this overall increase in participation may be influencing the continual demographic makeup of our representative bodies in Los Angeles County. The data show that Latino/a representation among the Top 100 elected officials in Los Angeles County has grown tremendously, with Latino/a leaders making up 40%, the plurality, of the elected officials in the Top 100 running roster in 2020. This is indicative of a trend in which Latino/a representation is growing to match population estimates, skyrocketing from only 15% in 1990 to 40% in 2020. While this is still not proportional to the Latino/a population (48%), it is proportional to the Latino/a adult citizen population (40%). In addition, the increase in these influential policymakers is a good sign of future trends.

### POLITICAL REPRESENTATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Source: LMU Thomas and Dorothy Leavay Center for the Study of Los Angeles



Additionally, similar to the increase in Latino/a representation among elected officials in the Top 100, there have also been gains in gender equality in these positions over the past 60 years: While the percentage of women in these offices reached its apex in 2008, we have seen growth in the past few years that indicates that women may soon make up half of Los Angeles County's most influential offices. However, in Los Angeles County, Latinas are the only female racial/ethnic category that has more representation than their male counterparts. For this they earn bonus points!

## DISCUSSION

Los Angeles County voters have made considerable strides in voter participation over the last two decades. The changing demographics, openness to immigration, and lowering of barriers to participation have resulted in considerable progress for Latino/a civic engagement in Los Angeles. Indicators of this improving representation can be seen in the highest offices in the County. Los Angeles voters have elected two consecutive Latino mayors, four of 15 Los Angeles city councilmembers, one county supervisor, the district attorney, eight of 17 congress members, one board of equalization member, and two consecutive speakers of the house, to name a few. These leaders serve as both descriptive and substantive representatives—with the agency to raise up future generations of Latino/as.

In a community as diverse as Los Angeles, it is important to know that generalizability can be problematic when it comes to lessons learned for other cities. However, we can certainly use this data as a framework for understanding political participation across the country in diverse environments.

## LIMITATIONS

As with any research project, data are not free from limitations. The first limitation is the lack of a scholarly consensus on the definition, and, most importantly, the operationalization of the term civic engagement. While many different definitions exist, this is the presently-used interpretation of the term and has a political bent in this context.

Secondly, Los Angeles County has many more than 100 elected offices. While the selection of political offices is a sample of key policymakers in Los Angeles, a County as large as Los Angeles is a dynamic bureaucracy that is impossible to fully grasp. That said, the leaders that make up the many representative bodies throughout the City and County are highly influential in policy-making and a key indicator of the effectiveness of representation.

Latino/as, like any racial or ethnic group, are not monolithic. And what happens at the county level is not necessarily applicable to what happens in local communities within Los Angeles.

Since previous studies have shown how important descriptive representation is to political participation, further investigation on how these leaders encourage political participation is an important topic moving forward.

## CONCLUSION

While proportional representation in Los Angeles County receives a “B” grade, that significant victory is tempered by a “C-” grade in voter turnout. Electoral reforms have coincided with an increase in voter registration and turnout, accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of Latino/a elected officials in the Top 100. However, there is still room for improvement and electoral reforms that can further improve representation for Latino/as.

Looking toward the future, the data are clear that Latino/as would benefit from being more involved at the ballot box as it leads to increases in both substantive policies that directly benefit voters and descriptive representation that can have a positive impact on political participation among Latino/as.



# Civic Engagement: Reflection

**Dr. Fernando Guerra**

*Founder and Director*

*Center for the Study of LA, Loyola Marymount*

While Los Angeles County has a tremendous amount of resources, its greatest resources are its people. The more optimistic, included, and engaged they are, the more this resource is an asset to its community. While the research center I founded nearly 25 years ago, the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, also has data on optimism and inclusion, for this piece we focus on the last component: engagement, namely civic engagement. Civic engagement is the key to achieving a better quality of life for all Angelenos.

Estimates show that about half of Los Angeles County residents are Latino/a, making them the plurality in the County. Logically then, civic engagement in Los Angeles can only improve if Latino/a civic engagement improves. However, in just about every conventional indicator of civic engagement, Latino/as lag behind the County as a whole. While Latino/as are the largest racial/ethnic group in Los Angeles, they continue to constitute a relatively smaller percentage of the voter base. In Los Angeles County, whereas 97% of adult non-Latinas/o citizens are registered voters, only 80% of adult Latino/a citizens are registered voters.

Why do we need to mobilize more Latino/as? There is both a symbolic and substantive reason. Symbolically, democracies should always strive to be inclusive of everyone. You can measure the health of a democracy by the level of civic participation. Substantively, the more Latino/as are engaged,



the more leaders and public policy will reflect the interests of those who voice their concerns.

To that end, we looked at the inclusion of previously excluded groups in the top positions of elected leadership in the County. Over the last 60 years, Latino/as have made incredible strides in countering the systemic racism and exclusion that exists. Our numbers still do not achieve parity (representation equaling our percent of the population), but they are a vast improvement from decades ago. However, we understand that political incorporation is not the end; it is the means to shape opportunity and outcomes in all aspects of our lives. The role of government has never been more apparent than the past year. Whoever controls the government controls the means to shape society at the local and national levels.

While the current political, economic, and social system of Los Angeles County has an unequal distribution of opportunities and outcomes, the system does hold the possibility for reform. For significant reform to occur that changes outcomes throughout the County, a major effort in civic engagement of Latino/as must occur. This effort must be community based, but scalable throughout the County; the effort must also be sustainable.

Although we have discussed civic engagement in a very conventional manner, an additional aspect of engagement is the existence of viable, effective community organizations. In this area, Latino/as and their advocates have been extremely active, given the existence of MALDEF, NALEO, and the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, as well as organizations that supplement Latino/a efforts and often coalesce with Latino/a efforts. The upcoming months for these organizations will be critical as we begin and end the redistricting process on a shorter-than-usual timeline. These organizations need to make up for lost time, budgets, and decisions that were made poorly at the federal and state levels. Imperatively, these organizations need our support to activate and

mobilize our communities of interest during this time, which would likely have a spillover effect on conventional civic engagement. That is, civic engagement of any form brings about additional civic engagement. Once an individual becomes civically engaged, they are more likely to engage in the future. We must break the cycle of powerlessness, which accumulates over time.

It is important to note, however, that mobilization of Latino/as does not come at the expense of others. Given our experience with public opinion, Latino/as continuously express opinions that are more inclusive than other groups. They do not see society as a zero-sum game. Therefore, including Latino/a interest does not lead to the exclusion of others. In fact, collectively, other groups see Latino/as as understanding their life experiences in Los Angeles more than they see other groups. Latino/a political incorporation would lead to a more equitable and just society.

To recap, the absolute number of Latino/a voters has increased dramatically over the last several decades, as has political incorporation. This base of voters and leaders has never existed before. This tremendous resource can lead to further increasing the number of Latino/a voters and align the percent of eligible voters with actual voters. Through this study, we have indicated that there is work to be done to civically engage Latino/as; the recommendations in this Scorecard can assist in this possibility.

Latino/a civic engagement would increase the importance of policy issues such as education, family services, and health care. It would shift resources from reaction to social events to investment in communities. The more you engage Latino/as, the more they will continue to be engaged, and more societal concerns will be addressed. The more you engage Latino/as, the closer we arrive to an equitable and just Los Angeles.

# ABC's Vision for Civic Engagement

## INTRODUCTION

Civic participation, or engagement, can take many forms and encompasses a wide range of activities, such as volunteering in a food bank, serving on a local neighborhood council, writing a letter to a representative, and voting. Civic engagement promotes the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes, as well as individual and collective actions. In Los Angeles County, where approximately half of residents are Latino/a, improving the quality of life can be achieved when the civic engagement of Latino/as in the County is strong and widespread.

Moreover, democracies must always aim to be fully inclusive. Civic engagement allows for the concerns of people most impacted by policies to be addressed by policy solutions passed or adopted by elected officials. Residents best understand the needs of their community and the daily challenges they face when public systems and institutions are not responsive; their voices in these processes are vital.

Voting is one of the clearest modes of civic engagement to measure; it is also the cornerstone of the democratic process.

The U.S. 2020 election saw unprecedented levels of voter turnout. However, in Los Angeles County, Latino/a voter turnout growth has been slower compared to the rest of the County. In raw figures, the number of Latino/as is growing in each major election. However, the rate at which Latino/as are turning out compared to the rest of the County is not. This is problematic. The percentage of Latino/a actual voters (out of the adult citizen population) continues to lag behind the rest of the County. Despite the reforms aimed at closing the gap, much work needs to be done. Targeting resources for Latino/a outreach will be key, along with understanding the reasons why the rate of growth of Latino/a voter engagement continues to lag behind the rest of the County given election reforms that have recently been adopted to make voting easier.

It has never been more important than it is today to strengthen the civic engagement of Latino/as to ensure their needs are raised as federal, state, and local governments make decisions on how to disburse a historic amount of funding to fight the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and fund recovery efforts. Decisions on how funds are to be allocated locally and where investments are to be made will have dire implications, and the voices of those impacted must be heard. Failure to do so not only threatens Latino/as from being included in recovery and jeopardizes the progress made over the decades, but also creates a massive economic, educational, and health setback that could take generations to regain.

As we forge ahead, it is necessary to elevate the disparities among Latino/as who cannot vote, but are still engaged in their schools and communities. Long-term investments from Los Angeles County and philanthropy are needed to implement strategies that recognize the diversity within the Latino/a community, utilize existing infrastructures for more effective outreach, aim to increase civic engagement behavior to be more consistent and frequent, and target civics education early in K-12 schools. This will ensure greater inclusion of more diverse Los Angeles communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **1. Include non-citizen immigrants into the electoral and democratic process by expanding eligibility to vote in K-12 school board elections and codifying their ability to serve on local citizen commissions**

Elections give a voice in the most fundamental way: by deciding who governs. Providing all parents and caregivers with children in local schools the ability to vote for who represents them on K-12 boards of education is aligned with democratic values. The allocation of billions of budget dollars is decided, in part, to close achievement gaps, fund necessary support and services, and increase equity to ensure the success of all children. Removing a citizenship eligibility requirement locally and asking the State to codify the ability of immigrants to serve on citizen commissions at the state, County, and local levels would create more inclusivity of people directly impacted by local systems, cultivate greater civic participation throughout communities, and ultimately strengthen our democracy.

## **2. Increase outreach funding and support for the new voting systems being implemented by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder, and increase responsibility of governments at all levels to develop targeted strategies to get out the vote (GOTV)**

Numerous reforms to increase access and make voting easier have been adopted and implemented by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder. Reforms include allowing same-day voter registration, opening up vote centers for four days (and many up to 11 days for voting), and removing assigned polling places so voters have options of where to vote. Despite these reforms and others, Latino/as still lag behind the rest of the County in the proportion of registered voters who choose to vote. In the 2020 election, just over half of all Latino/a adult citizens voted. Compare that number to the nearly three-quarters of the rest of the County who voted, and we see the perspective that Latino/as have a long way to go to achieve a more balanced representation at the polls. Effective and targeted GOTV efforts must be supported by governments at all levels to maximize voter education and awareness of new reforms and voting systems. Now is the time for Los Angeles County to significantly increase investments to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder and efforts targeting Latino/as by community-based organizations to effectively promote these programs. Local, state, and federal governments can and must assume greater responsibility to develop and utilize new targeted methodologies, strategies, and technologies to also get out the vote.



Latino/a leaders and citizens must increase their public support for the new voting systems being implemented by the Registrar-Recorder. Targeted investments by the County to Latino/a-serving organizations are also necessary to strengthen voter education, engagement, and motivation, and raise awareness of voting systems designed to increase accessibility for all registered voters. Investments to local community-based organizations that are trusted messengers to implement outreach efforts year round, not seasonally or only around election time, and to coordinate efforts targeting Latino/a voters across the County would reflect the needed commitment to a long-term strategy to maximize voting power.

## **3. Invest in funding to Latino/a-serving, community-based organizations and Latino/a-focused efforts to address and better understand civic deserts through increased research, capacity building, and mobilization**

There are significant opportunities to close gaps that exist between the Latino/a population and the Latino/a voter base. Among Latino/as, in the 2020 election, there were over 2.5 million adult citizens and just over two million registered voters, but less than 1.5 million actually voted. This gap of eligible non-voters is significant and would have made an impact on the outcome of local and statewide measures on the 2020 ballot.

While rates of voter participation have grown over the years, as is demonstrated by the increase in the number of registered voters from 60% in 2016 to 80% in 2020, there are pockets where this growth has either not occurred or occurred much more slowly.<sup>1</sup> These pockets are called civic deserts because low voter turnout is consistent and widespread. Furthermore, nearly all of these deserts across Los Angeles County are overrepresented by Latino/as making up over 70% of the population. Some of these deserts, including the San Fernando Valley, El Monte, the Eastside, and South Los Angeles, are locations of growing concern because they indicate that the expansion of deserts with low Latino/a voter turnout is on the rise.<sup>2</sup>

1. (Guerra & Gilbert, 2021)

2. (Loyola Marymount University, 2020)

A focus on civic deserts across the County in regards to research, mobilization, and capacity building is necessary along with prioritizing investments for community-based Latino/a serving organizations. This would highlight the importance of civic engagement among Latino/a voters year round and support the development of culturally relevant strategies to grow and sustain voter participation. In addition, utilizing existing infrastructures that include K-12 public schools, higher education institutions, and community centers, and improving the coordination among them would make outreach efforts more effective.

**4. Invest in comprehensive and inclusive civics education in the K-12 system to support students in becoming informed and engaged members of their schools and communities, including their leadership in local voter registration and citizenship drives**

Providing improved civics education in K-12 schools creates greater opportunities for students to understand civic engagement and how they can participate in their communities through various activities. By increasing civics knowledge, students can be better prepared and more interested in participating in their democracy. Unfortunately, state and federal funding of civics education has decreased over time, and there is a growing need to develop and utilize a robust curriculum that is engaging and inclusive to students and their families.<sup>3</sup>

Such a curriculum would allow students to have a stronger connection to the democratic process and encourage them to take action at different levels and in different arenas. It would also address disparities that exist for Latino/a students in civics education. Gaps persist between the civics exam scores of Latino/a students and those of their White peers as well as by English Learner and income status; the higher the income the greater the opportunities for engagement.<sup>4</sup> In order to address this disparity, all students must have access to robust civics education that is delivered in a manner that is engaging and addresses disproportionality. Ultimately, a

strong civics foundation will lead to greater civic engagement and a stronger understanding of working to make a difference in their community.

In the fall of 2020, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted criteria and guidance to award and recognize civic learning in California. Students that have demonstrated full participation in civics education, and an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government, will receive a State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE) that will be affixed to the student's transcript and diploma. School districts, especially those with high Latino/a student populations, should increase greater awareness of the opportunity to earn this seal and invest in more counseling services that promote civic and community service opportunities. Opportunities such as this pave the way for greater civic knowledge and literacy and impact participation behavior to be more frequent.

Voter registration is an integral part of our democracy and citizenship is critically important to society and the economy. Both help to strengthen the country. Voter registration and citizenship drives and campaigns create opportunities to contribute to and make a difference at all levels. Strategies to grow efforts to increase Latino/a voter registration and citizenship must be prioritized. Latino/as continue to fall behind in eligible adults who are registered to vote<sup>5</sup> and represent the largest percentage of adult non-citizens.<sup>6</sup> There are opportunities to engage Latino/a youth, many of whom also live in mixed status households, and increase the effectiveness of targeted voter registration and citizenship drives. There are community-based organizations and nonprofits that implement powerful methods for both and already incorporate youth in these efforts. Scaled up investments are needed by the public and philanthropic sectors to more effectively increase Latino/a voter participation while cultivating Latino/a youth leadership in civic engagement.



3. (Wallstreet Journal, 2021)

4. (Harris & Wilkes, 2018)

5. (Guerra & Gilbert, 2021)

6. ibid



**5. Develop and invest in a leadership pipeline for Latino/as to elected or appointed public positions to ensure fair representation and full inclusion of Latino/as across all levels of government**

Representation of Latino/as in top positions and elected offices has increased across the County over the years. However, the representation does not equal the percent of the population. As the Latino/a population continues to grow, there must be programs that cultivate leadership and civically engage them to increase representation. To attain this goal, it is important to note where gains have been made, identify strengths and weaknesses to the leadership pipeline, and make investments to widen the pipeline.

Leadership can take roots in high school through civics education and with internship and mentorship opportunities. These can serve as a springboard for youth to participate on boards and commissions. Nonprofit organizations currently providing leadership and civics training should be more strongly supported and resourced by the public sector and philanthropy to address the root causes of the inequities the Latino/a community continues to face. A similar pipeline should be adopted for professional Latino/as interested in an elected or appointed office. Programs that build on existing experience, strengthen leadership skills, and are committed to looking at the critical issues that impact Latino/as need greater, long-term investment. Thoughtful partnerships among Latino/a professionals, leadership associations, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, and the California Latino Legislative Caucus should be formalized to unlock the full potential of leaders. These partnerships will provide a unique opportunity to engage on data that will drive to create a policy and priorities framework that is rooted in historical patterns and progress to ensure success for Latino/as. A clear path to opportunities will achieve true diversity through inclusion and fair representation in Los Angeles County that reflects the power of Latino/as.

## CONCLUSION

Civic engagement is the action needed to sustain a healthy democracy. It must be nurtured, encouraged, and expanded. The data presented in this section demonstrates progress and vast improvements for Latino/as in Los Angeles County made over the years. It is arguably a result of reforms, collective and targeted outreach efforts, and investments made to support this outreach. The data also demonstrates there is much work to be done to close gaps especially in regards to voting. This is why it is important to look at effective strategies that target various groups of Latino/as such as children and younger generations, immigrants, new citizens, professionals, and U.S. born Latino/as.

Since civic engagement activities produce greater civic engagement, it is also important to provide options and various points along an individual's trajectory to engage. The recommendations presented elevate the strategies that separately target specific Latino/a groups and together strive to organically grow interest and opportunities in multiple forms of civic engagement. Investments by philanthropy and government at all levels can recognize the diversity of the community by supporting tailored outreach strategies and the organizations that know how to do this.

The recommendations also call for an investment in a new chapter of support to Latino/a-serving community groups, and unprecedented collaboration that is needed to offset the threat of growing apathy caused by the current polarization in American politics. The power of Latino/as is more than its growing population; it is in the diversity of the contributions Latino/as make culturally, socially, economically, and politically. The vision is one that sees how greater incorporation of Latino/as would lead to more societal issues being addressed and to a more equitable and just Los Angeles.

# Conclusion

“Los niños valen oro” (“*Children are worth gold*”), as Rosaura Andrade, an ABC Parent Leader, wisely reminded us in a July 13, 2021, briefing about ABC’s Latino/a Scorecard Report. Because Latinx children under the age of 18 make up over half (52%) of the population of Los Angeles, the County’s future depends on the ability of institutions to support their health, education, and civic leadership—in other words, to recognize their worth. However, as described in much of this Latino/a Scorecard Report, institutions were inadequately serving the Latinx population before the COVID-19 pandemic. Sadly, the recent pandemic has had a particularly devastating impact on Latinx young people, their families, and other low-income people of color, which makes it more vital than ever to adequately support them.

During the pandemic, Latinx children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (and others similarly situated) suffered significant academic learning losses as they attempted to adjust to online learning and other hardships. The disproportionate poverty faced by Latinx families in Los Angeles County exacerbated the situation, as for some, living in cramped living quarters with limited or poor access to broadband made learning more difficult. Furthermore, for adolescents and young adults, their academic progress was sometimes hampered or stalled by the need to take care of younger siblings while their parents—often essential workers—remained employed in low-wage jobs that put their own health and families at risk. In some cases, Latinx youth found themselves taking care of sick or dying family members, while others had to start working to support their families during the pandemic, especially when household breadwinners were laid off or saw their hours reduced. In a shocking statistic, age-adjusted death rates due to COVID-19 were three times greater among Latinx residents than non-Hispanic White residents, as is found in the health section of this Scorecard. Housing and food instability added to the hardship experienced in some households, particularly those with undocumented members. Moreover, apart from the dire physical cost of COVID-19, the pandemic also took a mental health toll on most people, and the impact on many Latinx children and youth was likely especially severe. All of these factors contributed to an extremely challenging learning and living environment for Latinx youth in Los Angeles County.

Like all young people, Latinx children and youth are resilient and can potentially recover from the heartbreak, stress, and

**Veronica Terriquez**

*Director, UCLA’s Chicano Studies Research Center*



learning loss brought about by the pandemic. This recovery, however, will require directing targeted resources to those low-income communities most harmed by the pandemic. This is only fair and just, as the County’s disparate wealth gap is sustained by the underpaid, and often unrecognized, labor and sacrifices of Latinx workers. To this end, recovery funds should be spent wisely, and plans must be developed to prioritize the equitable distribution of resources and a strong safety net for all. The younger generation will have a greater chance of thriving if policies increase the availability of living-wage jobs, rent-controlled housing, and ongoing training opportunities so that Latinx workers can enter middle skilled professional jobs. The goal should be to minimize the extreme economic and racial disparities that currently exist in Los Angeles County.

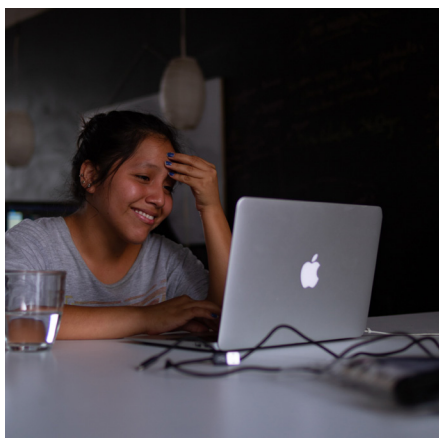
During this process, Los Angeles residents must be vigilant and hold civic leaders and each other accountable. This includes paying attention to how gender and sexuality shape the experiences of Latinx young people and their families. For example, Latino males are sometimes criminalized in schools and communities in ways that produce poor health outcomes and limit their academic, professional, and leadership potential. Women disproportionately attend to the needs of their extended family members and community members, which can delay or sidetrack their education and careers. Furthermore, they largely carry the burden of caring for elders, who too often lack sufficient retirement savings, do not receive access to adequate health care, and cannot

afford other culturally-relevant services. Mothers in particular will need child care options and other forms of assistance when returning to the labor market, as they experienced disproportionate job loss during the pandemic. Meanwhile, targeted services and policies must be implemented to counteract the violence and social exclusion that queer and trans Latinx residents continue to face.

Los Angeles is home to innovative institutions and practices that have supported inclusive leadership, positive health outcomes, and academic successes for Latinx children and youth from modest backgrounds. However, these interventions have, to date, benefited only a minority of their intended recipients. Transformational change that thoughtfully scales up promising, research-based practices can help a greater number of young people recover from emotional hardship and learning loss so that they can reach

their full potential. Part of the solution involves building on the gains in civic engagement among Latinas (featured in this Scorecard) and young people (as documented in my own research).<sup>1</sup> In this way, Latinx residents can better ensure that their interests are represented in government decision-making processes.

The Latino/a Scorecard Report includes broad proposals that can widely benefit children and youth from moderate- and low-income backgrounds. I encourage alignment among Alliance for a Better Community's recommendations and other efforts that prioritize a more equitable and inclusive region. Los Angeles County has an opportunity to lead the state and the country by demonstrating that it recognizes the true value of Latinx children—*"nuestro futuro, nuestro oro"* ("our future, our gold").



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# Appendix 1

## 2003 and 2021 Overall Snapshot

2003 Report Category	Grade (Overall)	2021 Report Category	Grade (Overall)
EDUCATION	D	EDUCATION	C
PUBLIC SAFETY	C	PUBLIC SAFETY	C
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY	C	ECONOMIC PROSPERITY	C
HEALTH	C	HEALTH	D
HOUSING	D	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	C+

**Note:** Housing was a standalone category in 2003 and included in economic prosperity in 2021. Civic engagement was introduced as a new category in 2021.

### STATUS OF SAME INDICATORS IN BOTH REPORTS (IMPROVED / DECLINED / SAME)

2003 Scorecard Indicator	Grade	2021 Scorecard Indicator	Grade	Status
<b>EDUCATION</b>				
Preschool Enrollment	C	Early Childhood Education	C	Same
Math, Language, and Reading Achievement (just the reading indicator)	D	Third Grade Reading Achievement	D	Same
UC/CSU Eligibility	C	A-G Completion	B	Improved
High School Completion	D	High School Graduation (four-year cohort)	B	Improved
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>				
Latino/as as Victims of Hate Crimes	B	Latino/as Victims of Crime (Hate Crimes)	B	Same
Latino/as In Law Enforcement	D	Presence of Latino/as in Law Enforcement	B	Improved
<b>ECONOMIC PROSPERITY</b>				
Income	C	Income	C	Same
Unemployment	B	Unemployment	B	Same
Availability (Home Ownership)	D	Latino/a Home Ownership	B	Improved
<b>HEALTH</b>				
Health Outcomes (Includes Life Expectancy)	A	Life Expectancy	B	Decreased
Healthy Behaviors (Includes Obesity)	D	Obesity	D	Same
Medical School Enrollment	F	Enrollment in Health Professional Programs	D	Improved
Health Insurance	D	Access to Regular Source of Health care	D	Same

# Appendix 2

## Education Data Description

### COMPARISON TABLE OF 2003 AND 2020 LATINO/A SCORECARD INDICATORS: EDUCATION

2003 Latino/a Scorecard	Cumulative 2003 Score: D	2021 Latino/a Scorecard	Cumulative 2021 Score: C
Preschool Enrollment	C	Early Childhood Education	C
Math, Language, & Reading Achievement	D	Third Grade Reading Achievement	D
High School Completion	D	High School Graduation Rates	B
UC/CSU Eligibility	C-	A-G Completion	B
		Reclassification of ELs by Fifth Grade	A
		Algebra I by Ninth Grade	C
		Latino/a Higher Education Enrollment	D
		Undergraduate Retention, Graduation, and Outcomes	B-

#### EDUCATION: DATA DESCRIPTION

##### Early Childhood Education:

This data was taken from the American Community Survey 2019 via the IPUMs database. This report used the IPUMs microdata to develop estimates of preschool enrollment for children ages 0 to 4 across Los Angeles County, by race and ethnicity. Latino/a children ages 0 to 4 were compared to non-Hispanic Asian, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic White, and non-Hispanic other subgroups.

##### Third Grade Reading Achievement:

This report analyzed the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) test scores for students in Los Angeles County, utilizing the data files made publicly available by the California Department of Education (CDE). The ELA data by the CDE includes standardized test performance level percentages for different areas that are tested, including Area 1 for Reading (Literature/Informational), Area 2 for Writing, Area 3 for Speaking/Listening, and Area 4 for Research. This report only assessed Area 1 data to focus solely on reading achievement in 2018-19. Only schools with 10+ Latino/a third graders were included since the dataset omits schools from the dataset when the subgroups are very small due to privacy concerns.

##### Reclassification of English Learners by Fifth Grade:

This report utilized aggregated data on English Learners in the County by race/ethnicity made publicly available by the California Department of Education. Performance level test statistics for the English Language Proficiency for Summative ELPAC were retrieved for fifth grade students across race and ethnicity.

##### Algebra I by the Ninth Grade:

This report utilized 2018-2019 course enrollment data files from the California Department of Education. The report aimed to determine counts by grade level/ethnicity of children enrolled in Algebra I for the 2018-19 school year. The team retained only Los Angeles County data and used the CALPADs course codes file to keep only counts for Algebra I courses that were A-G approved. This included only the following course codes: 2437, 2446, and 2447. These course codes correspond to Algebra 1 – Common Core, Algebra 1A – Common Core, and Algebra 1B – Common Core. This analysis compared enrollment counts in these three courses by grade level and race/ethnicity. This analysis did not attend to the other courses that students may be enrolled in besides Algebra I.

##### High School Graduation Rates (four-year cohort)

The four-year cohort group is composed of students who entered Los Angeles County public schools in the ninth grade

for the first time. The cohort also adds any students who transferred into public Los Angeles county schools during the following years (i.e., anytime in the following three years and in the ninth, 10th, 11th, or 12th grades). This cohort removes any students who transfer out, leave the country, or transfer to correctional facilities during the four-year time period among this same sample of regular high school graduates (of approximately 62,000 Latino/a students).

### **College Going Rate:**

This data is taken from the California Department of Education's college going rate report (CGR), which is collected for public high school students by school year and race/ethnicity and is available at the County level. The CDE's CGR data provides a count and rate of high school completers who enrolled in any post-secondary institution (in-state or out-of-state, two-year or four-year) within 12 months of completing high school.

### **A-G & Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate:**

Four-year cohort graduation rates were taken from data by the California Department of Education's Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) report, which provides data by race/ethnicity for the 2018-19 school year at the County level. This data is provided to the CDE by schools and educational agencies. The most recent comparable years for the ACGR, according to the CDE, are from 2016-17 to 2019-20. In addition to Hispanic/Latino, this report pulled subgroup data to include a few of the major student populations in the County's public schools, including Asian, White, and Black students. The four-year ACGR divides that number of students who graduate from public high school schools in the County in four years with a regular high school diploma, by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class of a given year. This report also provides the data on A-G completion by graduating cohorts, for which this report pulled only that of the class of 2019. The ACGR report also provides a count of the graduates meeting UC/CSU requirements by race/ethnicity. This is a count of cohort graduates in the County who were determined to have met all the A-G requirements for admission to a University of California or California State University school by the local educational institution reporting the information to the California Department of Education. The data for the cohort graduation rate and the percentage calculation of students come from the same ACGR report. For this analysis, percentages were created based on the number students graduating who met A-G requirements divided by the count of regular high school graduates by the count of the graduates meeting UC/CSU Requirements.

### **Latino/a Higher Education Enrollment:**

To measure Latino/a higher education enrollment among Latino/a graduating seniors across the County, this report used the CDE's College Going Rate (CGR) report. The CDE collects information about public high school students and provides data on enrollment counts by postsecondary institution type for a given reporting year, broken down by race/ethnicity. As of the writing of this report, the most recent data available was from 2017-18, with comparable years going back to 2014-15. Thus, the team compared college-going rates as well as enrollment by Hispanic/Latino students by post-secondary institution. For this report, college-going rate is defined as the total percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled in any public or private postsecondary institution (in-state or out-of-state) within 12 months of completing high school, broken down by race/ethnicity. Post-secondary institution enrollment definitions are as follows:

- Enrolled in College (In-State): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled in a public or private postsecondary institution inside California within 12 months of completing high school.
- Enrolled in College (Out-of-State): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled in a public or private postsecondary institution outside California within 12 months of completing high school.
- Enrolled In-State (California Community College): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled in the California Community College system within 12 months of completing high school.
- Enrolled In-State (California State University): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled in the California State University system within 12 months of completing high school.
- Enrolled In-State (Private 2- or 4-Year): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled in a private California 2- or 4-year institution within 12 months of completing high school.
- Enrolled In-State (University of California): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled in the University of California system within 12 of completing high school.

- Enrolled Out-of-State (Public/Private 2-Year College): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled out-of-state in a public/private two-year institution within 12 months of completing high school.
- Enrolled Out-of-State (Public/Private 4-Year College): The number/percentage of Los Angeles County public high school completers who enrolled out-of-state in a public/private four-year institution within 12 months of completing high school.

### **Undergraduate Retention, Graduation, and Outcomes:**

For Community College retention, data was derived from the LaunchBoard, a statewide data system dashboard provided by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. This data system is hosted by Cal-PASS Plus, which provides data to California community colleges on a variety of metrics via the Student Success Metrics portal. Since community college students may have a wide range of degree or educational goals that compel them to enroll in a community college, the portal provides metrics broken out by various subpopulations, including degree/transfer seekers, adult education, and short term career-technical students. This report utilized data only from the Los Angeles Community College District, which includes nine campuses. This report focused on the proportion of students retained from Fall to Spring in 2018-19 for degree-seeking students (at any college within the district, excluding students who transfer or graduate). This percentage metric was pulled by race/ethnicity to compare Latinos to other subgroups, including Black/African American, White, and Asian students in the Los Angeles Community College District. Sample sizes were as follows: Hispanic/Latino - 36,896 of 52,275; Black/African American - 5,330 of 8,437; White - 8,721 out of 11,415; and Asian - 3,536 of 4,511.

Community college success outcomes and graduation rates were also derived from the Cal-PASS Plus Student Success Metrics portal. Data was pulled from the Los Angeles Community College District, focusing on degree/transfer students in the 2018-19 academic year. This report assessed the percentage of students who earned an award/certificate, transferred to a four-year institution, or had any measure of successful outcome upon exiting the community college system in the given year, broken out by race/ethnicity. The variable "earned an award/certificate" was calculating by adding the number of students who either earned an associate's degree, a chancellor's approved certificate, a noncredit certificate, or a community college bachelor's degree. The metric that calculated the number of students who had any successful outcome was calculated using the same variables described above, in addition to students who transferred to a four-year institute and students who attained

an apprenticeship journey status. Additionally, transfer rates were calculated using the variable "transferred to a 4-year postsecondary institution." This variable was also broken down by institution type by the following classifications: CSU/UC institution, private in-state college, and any out-of-state institution. To calculate the percentage of students of each race/ethnicity who had any of the various measure of successful outcomes, the number of successful students was divided by the number of students who earned 12 or more units at and who exited the Los Angeles Community College district at the end of the 2018-19 academic year. The estimates were broken out by race/ethnicity and had the following sample sizes: Hispanic/Latino (18,023), Asian (2351), Black (3918), and White (5003).

For analyzing graduating outcomes at four-year colleges, this report used the National Center for Data Statistics' Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the "compare institutions" data tool to retrieve graduation rate variables for the six local four-year college institutions of interest (i.e., USC, UCLA, CSULB, CSUN, CSULA, CSUDH). IPEDS collects data at the institution level, providing graduation data for full-time, first-time degree/certificate seeking undergraduate students, including the percentage of students who graduate within 150% of the normal time (within six years), by race/ethnicity. The variables used in this scorecard were derived and are based on the August 31, 2019, reporting period. The variables utilized in this report include the graduation rates for the entire cohort, White students in the cohort, and Hispanic students in the cohort.

The IPEDS graduation rates (GR) are reflective of full-time, first-time, degree-/certificate-seeking students who started and finished at the same institution. Students included in graduation rates do not represent all of the students at an institution (e.g., does not include part-time and transfer students). The IPEDS graduation rate is calculated as: GR equals the number of students who completed their program within a specific percentage of normal time to completion divided by the number of students in the entering cohort (adjusted). For the graduation rates variables, the initial cohort only includes full-time, first-time students who started in fall 2013 (for whom August 2019 is within six years of starting their enrollment).



## EDUCATION: DATA REFERENCES

### Early Childhood Education:

IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org)

### Third Grade Reading Achievement:

<https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/DashViewReport?ps=true&lstTestYear=2019&lstTestType=B&lstGroup=5&lstSubGroup=78&lstGrade=3&lstSchoolType=A&lstCounty=19&lstDistrict=00000&lstSchool=0000000&lstFocus=a>

### Reclassification of English Learners by Fifth Grade:

<https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/elpac/DashViewReportSA?ps=true&lstTestYear=2019&lstTestType=SA&lstGroup=7&lstSubGroup=074&lstGrade=05&lstCounty=19&lstDistrict=00000&lstSchool=0000000&lstFocus=a>

### Algebra I by the Ninth Grade:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/df/filesassign.asp>  
(CourseEnrollment18.zip). Filtered for LA County and A-G approved Algebra I courses. File structure: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/df/fsclassectionenr12.asp>.

### College Going Rate by Academic Year:

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/CGR.aspx?aggllevel=County&cds=19&year=2014-15>

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/CGR.aspx?aggllevel=County&cds=19&year=2015-16>

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/CGR.aspx?aggllevel=County&cds=19&year=2016-17>

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/CGR.aspx?aggllevel=County&cds=19&year=2017-18>

### A-G & Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate:

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohRate.aspx?aggllevel=county&year=2018-190&cds=19>

### Latino/a Higher Education Enrollment:

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/CGR.aspx?aggllevel=County&cds=19&year=2017-18>

### Undergraduate Retention, Graduation, and Outcomes:

California Community Colleges: <https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx>

Four-Year Colleges: The IPEDS Compare Institutions Data Tool - <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/InstitutionByName.aspx?goToReportId=1>

# Appendix 3

## Health Data Description

### GLOSSARY: DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS

**Life expectancy:** In Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council's "Portrait of Los Angeles County," life expectancy was calculated using mortality data from the Death Statistical Master Files of the California Department of Public Health and population data from the US Census Bureau for 2010–2014 (pg 21).

**Suicidal ideation:** According to the California High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2019), 13% of students in Los Angeles County reported having had seriously considered attempting suicide during the 12 months before the survey.

**Depression:** In Los Angeles County, according to the LA County Health survey, in 2018 (14.5%) of Latino/as in Los Angeles County on average were diagnosed with depression (LA County Department of Public Health).

**Diabetes:** According to the Mayo Clinic, diabetes can lead to excess sugar in the bloodstream which can result in serious health issues. Chronic diabetes (type 1 and type 2) are more likely to occur due to certain risk factors such as family history, race/ethnicity, and weight. Untreated diabetes can lead to complications such as cardiovascular disease, kidney damage, eye and foot damage, and depression.

**Childhood obesity:** Childhood obesity is measured by body mass index (BMI). Body mass index is calculated by dividing a person's weight (kilograms) by the square of height (meters) (CDC Defining Childhood Obesity). Childhood BMI is separate from adult BMI measures and are age and sex specific. Children at or between the 85th percentile and 95th percentile are considered overweight. Children who are considered obese are at or above the 95th percentile.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Teenage pregnancy, also known as adolescent pregnancy, is considered to be when a woman under 20 years of age becomes pregnant. Typically, teenage pregnancy occurs between the ages of 15 and 19, but can sometimes occur as young as 10 years old. (WebMD). In 2017, the U.S. hit a low trend for teenage pregnancy (CDC); however, the U.S. still ranks higher in teenage pregnancy than any other western industrialized nation (Sedgh, Finer, Bankole, Eilers, & Singh, 2015).

**Influenza Vaccine:** Influenza, also known as the flu, is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and possibly death (CDC). In addition to taking sanitary precautions (e.g., washing hands, keeping away from sick individuals, covering coughs and sneezes), a preventative measure against influenza is getting vaccinated.

**Uninsured:** According to Peterson Health a person is considered uninsured if they pay for their services and if they do not have coverage for hospital/clinical services through a third-party provider such as Medicare or Medicaid.

**Access to regular source of health care:** Access to a regular source of health care can be explained as the "timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes" (Healthy People 2020). Regular access to quality health care services is important and necessary for maintaining and promoting health, managing and preventing disease, and reducing unnecessary disability and premature death (Healthy People 2020).

**Access to mental health care:** The Los Angeles County health survey (2018) defines access to health care as having taken prescribed medication or received counseling for clinical depression.

**Enrollment in programs for health professions:** According to HealthCare.Gov, Primary Care Providers are doctors, nurse practitioners, nurse specialists, and physician assistants who coordinate or help patient(s) access ranges of health care services. To strengthen health care access, cultural sensitivity should be implemented. Cultural sensitivity does not solely mean accepting cultural differences, but in terms of health care, cultural sensitivity takes into consideration and makes use of a patient's language and culture to improve their health outcomes (American Academy of Family Physicians).

## DATABASES USED TO INFORM THE LATINO/A HEALTH REPORT

1. *Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS)* 2018 and 2015 data were utilized. This was the primary database used to inform the following indicators: depression, diabetes, (adult) obesity, substance use (binge drinking), influenza vaccination rates, uninsured rates, access to health care (regular source, emotional support, oral health, and mental health). 2018 data was used for all the aforementioned indicators with the exception of access to oral health care which used 2015 data. 2015 data was utilized for oral health care because the 2018 survey did not have viable information.
2. KidsData.org is a database that promotes the health and well being of California children by providing easy-to-use resources to organizations that work to improve childhood health. The website is affiliated with the Population Reference Bureau. This database was used to inform the teenage pregnancy indicator. The most recent data regarding teenage pregnancy is from 2016.
3. The Social Science Research Council report *A Portrait of Los Angeles 2017-2018* was used to inform the life expectancy indicator. This report is part of the Council's *Measure of America* report, which examines the well-being and access to opportunities based by state.
4. *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (2019)* was used to inform childhood obesity and suicidal ideation trends. This survey is created and administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and monitors six categories of health-specific behaviors that contribute to disability and death among youth and adults.
5. *Los Angeles County Cancer Surveillance Program (2014)* is a report that informs on cancer survival probabilities for a wide variety of cancers diagnosed in those aged 15-39 years old

# Appendix 4

## Public Safety Data Description

### COMPARISON TABLE OF 2003 AND 2020 LATINO/A SCORECARD INDICATORS: PUBLIC SAFETY

2003 Latino/a Scorecard	Cumulative 2003 Score: D	2021 Latino/a Scorecard	Cumulative 2021 Score: C
Latinos as Victims of Hate Crimes	B	Latino/as as Victims of Crime (Hate Crimes)	B
		Police-Initiated Contact: Stops & Arrests	C
		Trust in Law Enforcement	C
		Latino/as Within the Criminal Justice System	D
Latinos in Law Enforcement	D	Presence of Latino/as in Law Enforcement	B
Latino/a Youth Crime	C	Presence of Latino/as in the Judicial System	D
Latinos as Victims of Violent Crime	D		
Latinos as Victims of Property Crimes	C		

### PUBLIC SAFETY: DATA DESCRIPTION

#### Latino/a as Victims of Hate Crimes:

This report used aggregate data from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations *Hate Crime Report* (2019). Since the 1980s, the commission has produced an annual report of hate crime data from compiled reports submitted by sheriff and city police agencies, educational institutions, and community-based organizations. Specifically, when utilizing the 2019 *Hate Crime Report*, the current report attended to “Groups Targeted in Hate Crimes” data points, which focused on the most frequently targeted groups in the dataset: Black, Jewish, and Latino/a groups. The project examined reported hate crimes by most frequently targeted groups from 2015–2019. Due to risk of double counting, the analysis omits LGBTQ+ counts, despite this being one of the four most frequently targeted groups in the County, in addition to Black, Jewish, and Latino/a groups. Additionally, due to recent events and interest from the report’s stakeholders, we included the Anti-Asian count for reported hate crimes from that time period. The API group is not typically identified as being one of the four most frequently targeted groups in the County, but hate crimes against this group have become increasingly more salient as more recent reports increase across the nation.

#### Police-Initiated Contacts (Stops & Arrests):

To understand police-initiated stops, this report used AB 953 Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015 (RIPA) Stop data from the California Department of Justice 2019 report. The act requires that every California state and local agency that employs peace officers report data on the stops conducted by these peace officers to the Attorney General. Specific information is collected by peace officers for each stop, including stop circumstances and the perceived identity of the individual(s) stopped. Law enforcement agencies collect and submit this data on a rolling basis. This project used the most recent RIPA Stop dataset from 2019, which holds stops performed between January 1st and December 31st of 2019 by agencies that employ 667 or more officers. For arrests, this report used the Arrests/Arrest Dispositions dataset provided by the State of California Department of Justice. On a monthly basis, law enforcement agencies report information on felony, misdemeanor, and status offense arrests that occur in California as part of the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register (MACR). The specific dataset utilized provides aggregated counts of arrests by county, gender, race/ethnic group, age group, and offense level.

#### Latino/as Within the Criminal Justice System:

To assess Latino/as in the County jail system, this report used the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department’s custody division population annual reports. The Los Angeles County



Sheriff's Department posts these statistical reports publicly and shares classification and other information related to the incarcerated inmates in the jail system. As of late May 2021, the Sheriff's *Year-End Review* for 2019 has not been made available to the public; therefore, this report used the *Year-End Review* from 2018 instead, which summarizes the quarterly statistical reports for that entire year.

### **Incarceration Trends from Vera Institute of Justice:**

To understand the demographics of incarceration further and to gain a sense of the prison population within the County, this project examined data from the Vera Institute of Justice's In Our Backyards Project. As the Vera project states in its documentation, while state law dictates criminal penalties imposed on individuals, these specific laws are interpreted and deployed by police, prosecutors, judges, and others at county and city levels. Thus the Vera In Our Backyards Project attempts to elucidate how counties across the country utilize the local jail. Specifically, we utilized Vera's Incarceration Rates data tool, which provides information on jail and prison populations in Los Angeles County. Vera assembled the Incarceration Trends dataset utilized for this project with information provided to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) by local corrections authorities and the websites of the local corrections departments.

For the jail population, Vera's dataset shares that the BJS collects two measures of the confined population: 1) the average daily jail population (referred to as the "ADP" by most correctional departments) and 2) the confined population on a given day, which is usually the last weekday in June. The Incarceration Trends project's measure of the jail population is the ADP. The confined population was only utilized when ADP was missing or not collected. The ADP measure was used to determine the project's incarceration rates by county. Through Vera, the aforementioned county- and jurisdiction-level jail data is available from 1970 to 2018.

For the prison population, Vera used data made available by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) through the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP), which contains individual state prison admission and release records for the years 1983-1999, and individual prison term records for the years 2000-2016. The NCRP data includes records regarding the county of commitment, and Vera researchers aggregated records to estimate prison admissions and population at the county level. They also supplemented the data from the NCRP with data from state corrections department reports when the NCRP data was inadequate. They validated estimates by summing data across all counties in a state, then comparing these with state-level prison admissions and population data

available through the BJS National Prisoner Statistics Program. The resulting efforts dataset provides county-level information regarding the prison population and admissions counts from 1983-2016.

### **Trust in Law Enforcement Agencies**

The current project took responses to three questions posed in the Loyola Marymount University Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles ("StudyLA") 2020 *Police and Community Relations Survey*. The survey was conducted in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Korean from August 31st to October 25th, 2020. The survey's respondents were asked a range of questions concerning policing in Los Angeles. The study held 20-minute telephone sessions and online and face-to-face surveys with 1,753 adults living in the city of Los Angeles. The StudyLA 2020 *Police and Community Relations Survey* took place from August 31st to October 25th of 2020. Respondents were asked a range of questions concerning policing in Los Angeles. According to the report materials, the 1,753 responses collected for the survey were weighted based on respondents' self-identified racial and ethnic group, gender, age, and geographic location, and matched to the most recently available population parameters from the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates.

For the survey, there were 130 Spanish speaker respondents (in terms of preferred survey language). These were people who only spoke, or were more comfortable speaking, Spanish. Additionally, there were 488 Latino/a respondents who were identified by their response to the following question: "Which ethnic group do you consider yourself a part of or feel closest to?" The study authors state that the margin of error is +/- 2.5%. Lastly, this survey only targeted the City of Los Angeles in their sample, not residents of Los Angeles County and thus only captures community trust in the LAPD and not the LASD.

### **Presence of Latino/as in Law Enforcement and the Judicial System**

To assess the presence of Latinos in local enforcement, this project utilized the *Crime and Arrest Statistics Report* by Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD), which includes statistics on LASD personnel and is from 2019. The presence of Latino/as in the LAPD was taken from the LAPD's annual report called the *Use of Force End of Year Review* (2019). This report has a section called "Sworn Personnel by Ethnicity" of sworn department personnel. To assess the presence of Latino/as in the trial and appellate courts, this report utilized state demographic data provided by justices and judges, relative to gender, race/ethnicity, and gender identity/sexual orientation via the Judicial Council of California, with data posted from December 31, 2019.

## PUBLIC SAFETY: DATA REFERENCES

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# Appendix 5

## Economic Prosperity Data Description

### COMPARISON TABLE OF 2003 AND 2020 LATINO/A SCORECARD INDICATORS: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

2003 Latino/a Scorecard	Cumulative 2003 Score: C	2021 Latino/a Scorecard	Cumulative 2021 Score: C
Income	C	Income	C
Unemployment	B	Unemployment	B
Businesses Ownership	C	Latino/a Homeownership	B
		Latino/a Home Values	C
		Opportunity Youth	B
		Rent Burden	C

#### ECONOMIC PROSPERITY: EXPANDED METHODOLOGY

##### Race and Ethnicity Calculations:

The ethnicities of “Hispanic”, “Latino,” and “Spanish”, as defined by the United States Census Bureau, can include people from any race. In order to capture the characteristics of all individuals who identify as Latino/a, the Latino/a population is defined as the percentage of the population, of any race, who identify as Hispanic/Latino. Black, White, and Asian populations are defined as the percentage of the population who identify as a non-Hispanic member of that group.

##### Citizen/Non-Citizen and Foreign Born/Native Born Latino Calculations:

The ACS classifies citizenship status into four categories: 1) citizen, 2) born abroad to American parents, 3) naturalized citizen and 4) not a citizen. Respondents who were born abroad to American parents or are naturalized citizens are classified as citizens. In terms of foreign-versus native-born citizens, we distinguish between immigrants who migrated to the United States at some point in their lives versus citizens born abroad to American parents. This allows us to estimate characteristics specific to Latino/a immigrants in the United States.

#### ECONOMIC PROSPERITY: DATA DESCRIPTION

IPUMS USA compiles U.S. census and survey microdata across time and space. The ACS is a 1-in-100 national weighted sample of the demographic, household, education, occupation, and other socio-economic characteristics of the U.S. population.

**Household Income:** The sum of money income received during the previous year of all household members age 15 and over who were present at the time of the survey. Household income is calculated by adding the individual income of the head of a household and the incomes of all other inhabitants, regardless of their relation to the head of the household.

**House Value:** The self-reported estimated value of housing units in contemporary dollars. Quantities are broken into quintiles.

**Opportunity Youth:** The percent of youth ages 16 to 24 who are neither working nor in school.

**Rent Burden:** Renter households who pay more than 30% of their monthly income on rent and utilities.

**Severe Rent Burden:** Renter households who pay more than 50% of their monthly income on rent and utilities.

**Unemployment Rate:** The percentage of people in the civilian labor force (all people of working age 16 and older) who are unemployed and looking for work. This does not include “discouraged workers,” people who are unemployed but have given up looking for work, and active military members.

# Appendix 6

## Grading Method

### EDUCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Grades were assigned relative to non-Latino/a White groups, with two exceptions. The Latino/a English Learner reclassification indicator was evaluated relative to California state outcomes, and the hate crimes public safety indicator was assessed over time. All other indicators were graded using the following rubric:

- “A” if Latinos exceed metrics or are favorable to trends observed by non-Hispanic White populations
- “B” if trends among Latinos are similar to metrics observed among non-Hispanic Whites, or have been improving toward desired outcomes
- “C,” “D” or “F” if improvement is needed to achieve desired outcomes and equitable trends observed between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites

### HEALTH

The scores or “grades” use the following rubric:

- “A” if Latino/as outperform relative to non-Latino/a Whites
- “B” or “C” if Latino/as are on par or have a slight underperformance relative to non-Latino/a Whites
- “D” if Latino/as have large underperformance relative to non-Latino/a Whites
- “F” if Latino/as have very large underperformance relative to non-Latino/as Whites

The overall score for this health sector takes into account all of the scores and gives the most weight to the scores that reflect health (life expectancy, suicidal ideation, depression, diabetes, obesity, teenage pregnancy, and cervical cancer).

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Grades for voter turnout were awarded based on the following criteria:

- “A+” if Latino/a participation outperforms that of other County residents
- “A” or “B” if Latino/a participation is on par with the rest of the County, or within a close range, with the grade depending on the differential in the statistics
- “C,” “D,” or “F” if Latino/a participation underperforms relative to other County residents, with the declining grade depending on the differential in the statistics

Grades for representation were awarded based on the following criteria:

- “A+” if Latino/a representation surpasses the proportion of the Latino/a adult population in the County
- “A” or “B” if Latino/a representation matches or comes close to the proportion of the Latino/a adult population in the County
- “C,” “D,” or “F” if Latino/a representation underperforms relative to the proportion of the Latino/a adult population in the County, with a declining grade depending on the differential in the statistics





## Contact Us

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213.201.1120

[info@afabc.org](mailto:info@afabc.org)

[www.afabc.org](http://www.afabc.org)

