CARE FIRST BUDGET REPORT
Over the past decade, Angelenos across the County have worked to implement a Care First vision for Los Angeles centered on decarceration, jail closure, upending jail expansion, and shifting resources to support the needs of Black, Brown and Indigenous communities through alternatives to incarceration.

As a result of this advocacy, in 2019, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) committed to prioritizing a Care First vision in LAC and created the Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) workgroup. The resulting ATI Work Group developed and approved 114 recommendations through an intensive consensus-building process involving more than 1,000 government and community stakeholders over the course of ten months. Since then, the LAC BOS has fallen short on its promise to fully invest in community-based programs and alternatives to incarceration despite having clear recommendations and next steps.

Further advocacy resulted in LA County residents overwhelmingly passing Measure J\(^1\), now known as Care First Community Investment (CFCI), in 2020. CFCI, an initiative seeking to correct the historical wrongdoings and move away from a carceral infrastructure, was a momentous step towards realizing a Care First vision for all of Los Angeles. Measure J aimed to change the county charter and require a minimum of 10% set-aside for locally generated unrestricted revenues from the general fund to address the negative impacts of historical racial injustices attributed in part to LAC’s over-populated and dehumanizing criminal legal system.

The ten percent set-aside has a three year ramp up and prohibits the county from using funds for carceral and law enforcement agencies - including Sheriff’s and Probation Departments and the District Attorney’s Office. Although community members continue to advocate for full funding of CFCI, only $88 million in additional funding has been slated in the FY 23-24 Recommended Budget, an amount woefully insufficient in light of the great need in communities across LAC.

The Care First Budget Report outlines the level of investment required to support ATI strategies needed to reimagine Los Angeles and the recommendations elevated by the Reimagine LA Coalition throughout all three years of Measure J and CFCI implementation, and provides an analysis of the full County budget process for fiscal year 2023-2024. The recommended Care First Budget investment of at least $2.017 billion is simply an installment of resources that Los Angeles communities need to repair the harms done by the carceral system, address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and begin the process of racial equity and healing that Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities deserve.

Incarceration doesn’t provide any safety or security for people with mental health needs, and in fact, makes any challenges people are facing far worse. When incarcerated, people can lose employment, housing, custody of children, and income from daily work. Additionally, those that are experiencing homelessness can lose all of their belongings to law enforcement sweeps before or during incarceration. All people, when incarcerated, are exposed to Sheriff’s violence, including sexual violence\(^2\), Deputy Gangs who cause harm inside.
the County jails\(^3\), and re-traumatization because of confined conditions, lack of access to appropriate mental and physical health care\(^4\), and removal from their loved ones and support networks. These conditions, far from being conducive to treat or mitigate mental health crises, instead intensify ongoing or acute mental health needs.

The County, in addition to investing in jail-based diversion, must also invest in alternative crisis response to stop the inflow of people into ensnarement in criminalization. When the only number to call during an emergency is 911, far to many people are exposed to law enforcement violence at the point crisis response; if people are not exposed to acute law enforcement violence in that moment, they are often criminalized with citations, fines, fees, and pretrial incarceration, rather than provided with care, de-escalation, treatment, and resources. Further, we are faced with an ongoing human rights crisis\(^5\) at the Inmate Reception Center in downtown Los Angeles. The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California shared photos that exposed disturbing abuses\(^6\) including overcrowding, lack of sanitation, and human beings being forced to sleep on floors and be chained to chairs in this demeaning and dangerous facility.

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\(^4\) Cosgrove, J. (2022, January 15). After more than six years of federal oversight, dangerous problems persist in L.A. County jails. Retrieved May 6, 2023, from After more than six years of federal oversight, dangerous problems persist in L.A. County jails

\(^5\) JusticeLA. (posted 2022, November 14 from live event on 2023, November 7) Mobile device recording. Retrieved May 9, 2023 from https://www.instagram.com/tv/Ck9tX7YIjaG/

PROPOSALS

THE RE-IMAGINE LA COALITION ASSERTS THE FOLLOWING CARE FIRST BUDGET PROPOSALS FOLLOWED BY SPECIFIC COALITION DEMANDS NEEDED TO CENTER CARE FIRST IN LA COUNTY:

PROPOSAL 1:
LA COUNTY MUST REDUCE INVESTMENT IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SCALE UP INVESTMENT IN NON-LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES TO CRISSES AND COMMUNITY NEEDS.

PROPOSAL 2:
LA COUNTY MUST MAKE THE PROMISE OF YOUTH JUSTICE RE-IMAGINED REAL, AND STOP INVESTING IN FAILED YOUTH DETENTION AND SUPERVISION.

PROPOSAL 3:
LA COUNTY MUST SCALE UP FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DIVERSION FOR PEOPLE WITH UNMET MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

PROPOSAL 4:
LA COUNTY MUST MAKE USE OF THE JUSTICE, CARE, AND OPPORTUNITIES DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE TO FUND PRETRIAL SERVICES THAT ARE COMMUNITY-BASED AND NON-CARCERAL, AND MOVE US SWIFTLY TOWARDS PERMANENT JAIL CLOSURE.

PROPOSAL 5:
LA COUNTY MUST INVEST FULL FUNDING OF CARE FIRST FUNDING STREAMS SUCH AS AB109 AND CFCl INTO NON-CARCERAL SERVICES BASED ON COMMUNITY-LED RECOMMENDATIONS.

PROPOSAL 6:
LA COUNTY MUST HEED CALLS FOR GENDER JUSTICE AND IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENDER RESPONSIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT.

PROPOSAL 7:
LA COUNTY MUST COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTING THE COUNTY’S CARE FIRST VISION THROUGH AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY COLLABORATION, POWER SHARING, AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING TO ENSURE CONSISTENT EQUITABLE INVESTMENT.
THE RE-IMAGINE LA COALITION DEMANDS THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS BE TAKEN WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY:

**DEMAND 1:** Close Men’s Central Jail by setting a concrete timeline that leads to closure and reducing the jail population to less than 8,500 people, allocating $275 million for mental-health treatment beds, and fully funding an independent pretrial services agency.

**DEMAND 2:** Fully fund Care First Community Investment by allocating at least $900 million annually in dollars from the County budget.

**DEMAND 3:** Fund the Care First Budget by leveraging dollars from CFICI and other local, state, and federal resources.

**DEMAND 4:** Fund Youth Justice Reimagined by shifting a minimum of $75 million out of probation as part of the Care First Budget.
Los Angeles County has committed to reimagining the County through a care first, jails last vision. The Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, with the help of community residents and advocates, worked steadily to reimage a new Los Angeles County that move away from the carceral system and prioritize vital care based community services over criminalization. While the county has made significant strides towards creating this vision, its FY 2022-2023 Adopted Budget continues to prioritize public safety departments over care-based services that can transform communities for the better. The County continues to recommend and approve budgets that follow historic trends of allocating its most flexible dollars to public safety departments that are not moving away from the status quo of using criminalization as solutions to social issues.

Los Angeles County in FY 2022-2023 brought in roughly $44.6 billion in total budget for a population of over 10 million people. Additionally, the number of total budgeted full time positions were an estimated 113,592. In locally generated revenues or net county costs (NCC)s –which are the County’s discretionary dollars that come primarily from property taxes—the County brought in $11.3 billion for FY 2022-2023 (close to a quarter of the County’s entire budget).

Net County Costs are the County’s most flexible dollars which can be spent in various ways, and the County has almost unlimited discretion on how these funds can be allocated. In the perspective of dollars spent per resident, the County’s NCC funds for FY 2022-2023 represent approximately $1,150 per resident. Of these flexible dollars (NCC)s, the County distributes to the Sheriff’s department the largest share compared to other departments within the County. And this has been a historic trend both County and nationwide. In FY 2022-2023 “public protection” received around 38% of NCCs funds, with the general government receiving 25%, public assistance receiving 16%, health and sanitation receiving 15%, and recreation and culture receiving less than 4%. Not only are discretionary funds favoring public safety departments like Los Angeles Sheriff’s department (LASD), public safety positions make up a significant portion of the County’s workforce. Of the over 100,000 people working for the county, about one of every six County employees works for LASD.

The next sections take a deeper dive into some departmental budgets within Los Angeles County. This gives us insight on how bloated law enforcement and public safety budgets are, and the need to shift money away from these systems and into services and departments that better help our communities versus punish them.

A. OVERVIEW OF LOS ANGELES SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2022-2023

Los Angeles Sheriff’s Departmental budget for FY 2022-2023 is estimated at $3.37 billion with around $3.17 billion (90%) going towards the department’s spending on salaries and benefits for their staff. Understanding that salaries and benefits represent 90% of LASD’s budget is imperative when discussing the diversion of funds out of LASD. It is important for community advocates, county department heads, and elected officials to think through alternatives to incarceration and a just transition when considering how to move money out of LASD’s budget and into community health.
and systems that allow for job placement and security as part of a just transition.

**LASD Receives Around $1.53 Billion in NCCS for FY ‘22-’23**

About half of LASD’s budget comes from locally generated revenues. This is important because locally generated funds come from taxpayer dollars, which makes clear that residents need to have more say in how the dollars are spent. When community is calling for more dollars to be spent on areas such as food security, temporary and long term affordable housing, and youth development, the Board of Supervisors should listen to community demands and allocate funds based on need instead of following historic racist traditions that have not helped in bettering community health and wellness.

Over the past three budget cycles, from FY 2020-2021 to FY 2022-2023, LASD’s budget has been relatively steady – even during the height of the pandemic when there were significant calls for defunding public safety departments. This shows that even in emergency times LASD’s budget remains untouched, while we saw decreases to other departmental budgets throughout the County. The historical data make clear that “defunding” law enforcement has not been a reality despite the clear calls coming from thousands of Angelenos.

In fact, the Department’s budget allocations from all sources have increased every year other than in FY 2017-18 and FY 2020-21. In FY 2020-21, 8% curtailments were made across all County Departments funded by the General Fund to account for a severe economic downturn related to the public health pandemic. The totals for the last four fiscal years reflect $143.7 million in funds set aside to encourage the Department to make a concerted effort to cut unnecessary overtime and other costs. This money is part of the department’s ongoing operating budget and has been set aside and then released later in each budget cycle since October 2019.
In addition, over the last three budget cycles, LASD has received over $4.8 billion dollars of the County’s most flexible funds. In FY 2022-2023 the CEO recommended increasing LASD’s budget in several ways including $12.3 million for Academy training for a “new generation of deputies,” while also setting aside $143.7 million of the departments ongoing appropriation until the department stabilizes its budget and implements a sound budget deficit mitigation plan. Thus, FY 2022-2023 continues to prioritize public safety spending and neglects the communities continuous calls for better reinvestment allocations to achieve a more care first, jails last vision for Los Angeles County.

The Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department has 17,481 budgeted positions, which is an increase of 350+ positions since last year. The average cost of one position within LASD is $194,000. The department is organized into seven divisions that include: patrol, custody, general support services, court services, detective services, administrative services, and County services. Patrol is the largest division, and has the most sizable budget within the department. LASD’s patrol division has a budget of $1.3 billion and has over 5,690 positions.
Patrol spends over 89% of its time on deputy-initiated stops with only 11% of its time on calls for service. The majority of those deputy-initiated stops are not for violent crimes but for traffic violations – accounting for 84% of deputy-initiated stops. Research shows traffic stops do not effectively deter unsafe driving or increase street safety.\(^7\) And over a third of LASD traffic stops are for equipment and non-moving violations\(^8\). LASD’s own command staff has admitted that patrol deputies do not focus on these traffic stops as a way to address unsafe traffic behavior, but as a means to uncover evidence of other crime when there is not any factual basis to believe crime has occurred – in other words, to carry out dragnet pretextual enforcement. This costly strategy is also ineffective, with fewer than a half of 1% of stops\(^9\) leading to discovery of any kind of weapon. Therefore, LASD has created this large patrol infrastructure accompanied by a massive budget to function as a pretextual traffic stop operation totally ineffective at enhancing public safety.

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\(^8\) Catalyst California and ACLU of Southern California. Reimagining Community Safety in California (see page 15). Accessed May 11, 2023 at https://catalyst-ca.cdn.prismic.io/catalyst-ca/126c30a8-852c-416a-b8a7-55a90c77a04e_APCA+ACLU+REIMAGINING+COMMUNITY+SAFETY+2022_5.pdf

Custody is the second largest division, with a budget of $897 million and over 4,700 positions. In comparison to other positions the custody division has seen a decrease in budgeted funds over the last few years but has not seen a decrease in positions. Although the Custody division’s budget was $897 million for FY 2022-23, it is expected to exceed that amount by $224 million. Expected division expenditures for the year are actually over a billion dollars at $1.12 billion. This mirrors the division’s approach the prior year too: in FY 2021-22 its budget was $843 million but it actually spent $1.01 billion.

This furthers the argument that to see real change in public safety infrastructure there needs to be a decrease in positions, not just a decrease in divisional budgets. During the pandemic there were several protocols put in place to decrease the jail population within Los Angeles County. Though the County saw decreases in the jail population those policy implements were not long-lasting. We see this in the FY 2022-2023 budget – revealing that FY 2022-2023 numbers are the same as FY 2018-2019 – getting back to pre-Covid levels. We also know the number of people dying in the County jail system, such as in Men’s Central Jail, has increased on an annual basis.

For FY 2022-23, the sheriff’s General Fund budget was $3.6 billion but the sheriff’s estimated expenditures – that is, how much the sheriff actually spent – exceeded that by $402 million. In other words, the county spent $41 more per resident on the sheriff’s office than they budgeted. Estimated expenditures were 11% higher than the county budgeted, with the county spending an estimated $4 billion on the sheriff’s office.

Data Source: LA County CEO 2023-2024 Recommended Budget Part I, section 60.1, page 477
The LASD’s Homeless Outreach Service Team (HOST) budget for FY 2022–2023 was $3.753 million, which diverted funding that could be spent on addressing the root causes of houselessness, and instead increased LASD’s already excessive budget. HOST’s spending includes costs such as deputy overtime, weapons, and policing equipment - all of which are counterproductive responses to houselessness. Although HOST markets itself as a “humanitarian” arm of the department, the team does more harm than good and routinely displaces unhoused people from their encampments.10

Deploying police to unhoused encampments is harmful and dangerous, even when they receive specialized training.11 HOST deputies receive only 40-80 hours of specialized training and do not have the skills or expertise to interact with unhoused individuals in a humane way and connect them to services they need. Studies show that exposure of unhoused people to law enforcement increases the likelihood of their criminalization.12 Further, studies confirm that encampment displacements, which are often carried out by law enforcement, harm the health of encampment residents.13 The CDC advises municipalities not to move people from encampments unless individual housing units are available.14

HOST does not provide any services to unhoused people, nor does the team track outcomes related to housing or services. Rather, they rely on local organizations to connect unhoused people to services. HOST is a multi-million-dollar law enforcement middle-man that effectuates encampment displacements and relies on nonprofits to provide outreach to the people they displace. Investing in police as responders to the crisis of houselessness is the wrong approach. Funding spent on the HOST program should be reallocated to Housing First programs and voluntary outreach and support services.

10 For example, in 2021 the HOST team dismantled encampments all along the Venice Boardwalk and displaced as many as 300 people without connecting them to housing. See Matthew Hall, Sheriff Returns to Venice to Halt Homelessness, Santa Monica Daily Press (Sept. 8, 2022), https://smdp.com/2022/09/08/sheriff-returns-to-venice-to-talk-homelessness/
11 For example, in Orange County two deputies in the Sheriff’s “Homeless Outreach Team” instigated and recklessly escalated an encounter with an unarmed individual over alleged jaywalking, and ultimately shot and killed him. Both deputies had completed 40 hours of crisis intervention training as well as training on “[homeless] outreach, de-escalation tactics, crisis avoidance and how to interact with people who have mental health and addiction issues.” Kim Bellware, A deputy fatally shot a Black homeless man during a jaywalking stop. He won’t face charges (Feb. 12, 2022), https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/02/12/kurt-reinhold-orange-county-homeless/.
The county should divest the nearly 4 million dollars of Los Angeles County budget spent on HOST from LASD’s budget. The money being spent on LASD’s HOST program “outreach” should be spent on community-based outreach. Civilian nonprofit teams are experts in trauma-informed outreach and are best positioned to support unhoused community members, without the potential for harmful, armed escalation that can result from a law enforcement response. Effective outreach requires development of rapport and trust, as well as a trauma-informed approach.15 Evidence shows that community-based service providers are the best people to connect houseless people to services, not law enforcement. County funds intended to provide outreach services should be spent on community-based outreach efforts, not law enforcement.

B. OVERVIEW OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET FY 22-23

The Los Angeles Probation Department (PD) Budget is approximately $1.3 billion for FY 2022-2023. Within this departmental budget around 80% – over $1 billion – comes out of the General Fund. This is the fund that contains the County’s most flexible dollars. Los Angeles County has increased its spending on this department for the last few years. For FY 2022-2023 the County plans to spend around $130 million more from the General Fund. This is a 14% increase from how much the County spent on the Probation department two years ago.

The majority of PD’s budget is spent on paying out salaries and benefits. Similar to LASD’s budget expenditures a bulk of the spending goes towards staffing. The County is spending over $800 million on salaries and benefits for employees. The PD has over 5,520 budgeted positions with the average cost of one position in this department being around $147 thousand. Further, the department is broken up into six areas including: juvenile institutions services, field services, support services, special services, community-based contracts, and care of juvenile court wards.

The largest division is juvenile institutions services, with 2,127 positions and a budget of $423 million. The second largest division within this department is field services with 1,904 positions and a budget of $345 million. This data shows us that over half of the department’s budget is dedicated to paying staff that institutionalize youth. The department spends 45 times more on juvenile institutions than on community-care based contracts to prevent violence and serve youth.

In addition, in FY 2022-23, community-based contracts had a budget of $9.5 million, but is estimated to have only spent $2.6 million. Perhaps as a result, this year, its recommended budget is only $2.9 million. Like care of juvenile court wards, community-based contracts have no staff budgeted. Ultimately, this departmental budget displays the same themes as LASD and the County prioritizing punitive solutions versus alternatives that help support communities.

C. DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Los Angeles Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Department of Public Health (DPH) are both departments within the County that have seen more investment during pandemic years. For FY 2022-2023 DMH estimated a budget of $3.1 billion—which equates to $315 per resident. In the same fiscal year DPH has a budget of $1.9 billion; roughly $193 per resident. However, both departments see very few dollars coming in from the County. Most of these department funds come from state or federal sources. For DMH the NCCs only allocates $78 million ($8 dollars per resident) and DPH receives $259 million ($26 dollars per resident) for FY 2022-2023. Therefore, of the NCC’s representing around $1,250 per resident, the County is only spending $8 per resident on mental health services. The County is making significantly less investments into these departments than it is into LASD and probation.

The rationale behind this disparity in funding is that other departments are able to acquire more funds from other sources outside of locally generated revenues, where LASD and probation are not able to do so. This, however, is out of alignment with the County’s Care First priorities.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE’S RECOMMENDED BUDGET FY 2023-24

The FY 2023-24 Recommended Budget totals $43 billion. That’s about $4,300 per resident.
It includes 114,106 budgeted positions and is said to “accelerate” the emergency response to homelessness through services launched during the pandemic.

1. $692 million to mobilize the emergency response to the humanitarian crisis of homelessness with extensive investments in mental health outreach, supportive services, and a wide range of housing programs to increase the supply of affordable housing and move people off the streets and into safe living conditions in collaboration with our city governments.\textsuperscript{16}
2. $88.3 million, for a total ongoing investment of $288.3 million, for Care First and Community Investment (CFCI, formerly known as Measure J) projects and programs to address racial disparities in the justice system.\textsuperscript{17} This amount however, does not fulfill the County’s commitment to allocate a full 10% of its locally generated unrestricted revenues by June 2024 to direct community investments and alternatives to incarceration. In fact, this amount is woefully inadequate to address the needs of Angelenos.
3. Nearly $50 million to “improve” conditions in the jails.
4. A whopping $6.6 million allocated towards law enforcement to “address” deputy gangs, and for the Sheriff to establish the Office of Constitutional Policing that will monitor consent decrees.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} id.
\textsuperscript{18} id.
While LA County faces uncertainty about the impacts of the State budget deficit, a substantial halt in local real estate transactions that adversely affect property taxes, and an economic downturn, the LA County CEO’s office has recommended the county invest in empty promises for law enforcement “reform”. A few critical issues facing the county include an estimated 3,000-plus potential claims alleging childhood assault at county facilities and other locations and an estimated $84 million in LA County Sheriff’s Department litigation that is expected to grow to $164 million over the next five years.

Right now, the county is estimated to have more than $1.9 billion in unmet needs requests from county departments. Of those, some $813.2 million are deferred to future budget phases, which leaves about $1.1 billion in unmet needs remaining.

The largest portion of the county budget, about 33%, or $14.1 billion, goes toward health and public works sanitation. Another 26%, or $11.1 billion, goes toward public assistance, with $10.5 billion for public protection, and $5 billion for general government.

The most effective way to address overcrowding and inhumane conditions in the jail system, is to simply decrease the number of people going in and driving releases for the people who are held inside by investing in real community driven solutions, reducing the number of Sheriff’s deputies patrolling criminalizing community members, and aggressively investing in mental health treatment beds.

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PROPOSAL 1: LA COUNTY MUST REDUCE INVESTMENT IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SCALE UP INVESTMENT IN NON-LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES TO CRISSES AND COMMUNITY NEEDS.

For the upcoming FY 2023-24, the county is budgeting $3.7 billion from the General Fund for LASD, an increase of 4%, or $136 million, compared to last year’s budget.

This doesn’t even include funds for the Sheriff’s office that are outside its main departmental budget. For example, the Capital Projects/Refurbishments budget unit includes $135 million for capital projects/refurbishments in the Sheriff’s department ($130 million NCC). It doesn’t include all funds for the sheriff’s office that are currently held in the Provisional Financing Uses (PFU) budget unit, which “serves as a temporary budget for program funding that has yet to be allocated to a specific budget unit.” The PFU budget unit currently includes $229 million for the Sheriff’s department. This is almost four times more than the PFU has reserved for any other department.

It also doesn’t include $226 million in Special Revenue Funds for the sheriff’s office, the largest of which are the Automated Fingerprint Identification System Fund ($60 million), Inmate Welfare Fund ($49 million), and Sheriff Automation Fund ($32 million).

Last year the county’s budgeted NCC for the sheriff’s office was $1.69 billion, but the estimated NCC is $2.07 billion. The prior year (FY 2021-22), the NCC budgeted for the sheriff’s office was $1.6 billion but the actual NCC was $1.75 billion. Thus, year after year, the sheriff’s office is exceeding its budget by hundreds of millions of dollars. In fact, last year, the amount that the sheriff’s office exceeded its budget by – its excess spending – was more than the total amount actually spent by the CFCAI budget unit. This drives home the gap between Care First rhetoric and Care First spending, and compels the county to bridge the difference between the two.

The County must divert excess spending of NCC out of LASD and into the proposals outlined in this report.

PROPOSAL 2: LA COUNTY MUST MAKE THE PROMISE OF YOUTH JUSTICE REIMAGINED REAL, AND STOP INVESTING IN FAILED YOUTH DETENTION AND SUPERVISION.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed the motion titled “Youth Justice Reimagined: A New Model for Youth Justice in Los Angeles County” on November 24, 2020. This motion
represented a commitment by the County to transform the youth justice system to prioritize youth development, care, and racial equity over the current systems of surveillance and punishment. In 2021, the CEO stated that funding YJR was "premature," but after months of tireless advocacy, YJR was allotted $17.3 million to expand the Youth Development Department (YDD) and granted $27.9 million for the Youth Justice Reimagined Development Fund. On March 1, 2022, the Board passed a motion titled "Care First, Jails Last: Establishing a Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department to Promote Collaboration and Transparency in a Person-Centered Justice System," affirming the launch of a new Department of Youth Development (DYD) by July 1, 2022.21

These initial investments, along with the creation of the Department of Youth Development (DYD), marked crucial advancements in Youth Justice Reimagined. On May 9, 2022, youth advocates and allies sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors detailing a need for $152.5 million in ongoing funding to successfully stand up DYD and fund urgently needed youth services. Yet, the CEO only allocated the Department of Youth Development a budget of $53.2 million for FY 22-23, and a recommended $50.5 million for FY 23-24.

In comparison, the CEO has once again invested over $400 million into caging youth, specifically recommending $416 million for the Probation Department’s juvenile institutions services budget in FY 23-24. This consistent, inordinate funding dedicated to the incarceration of our young people does not represent a commitment to advancing Youth Justice Reimagined, nor does it contribute to the dismantling of an institution the Board of Supervisors has acknowledged is fundamentally flawed. The cost of Probation extends well beyond this juvenile carceral line item of $416 million, as the County will set aside up to $3 billion for thousands of claims alleging child sexual abuse at County facilities. This investment has proven to yield nothing but harm.

To effectively build a foundation for youth justice and healing in LA County that does not rely on the current carceral response, dollars must be divested from Probation, starting with cutting 296 excess positions identified by the CEO’s staffing analysis of Probation’s juvenile halls, camps and field operations. A Care First budget cannot include funding locking up youth, but must instead prioritize robust funding for the Department of Youth Development and community-based youth services.

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21 Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Revised Motion, “Care First, Jails Last: Establishing a Justice, Care and Opportunities Department to Promote Collaboration and Transparency in a Person-Centered Justice System,” (March 1, 2022), http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/166845.pdf.
22 LA Youth Uprising Coalition. (2022, May 9) Letter to the Board of Supervisors. LAYUP Coalition. Accessed May 12, 2023 at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y_WCS4M3mqr7jm5dq_M700kG7nCGCKGqwvZCZelso/edit
26 LA County Office of the CEO. (2023, April) Youth Justice Reimagined: A New Model For Youth Justice in Los Angeles County (Item No. 19, Agenda of November 24, 2020); Fulfilling Los Angeles County's Commitment to a New Youth Justice Model (Item No. 33, Agenda of July 13, 2021); And Care First, Jails Last: Holding The Probation Department Accountable and Advancing Youth Justice Reimagined (Item No. 6, Agenda of March 21, 2023). Fesia Davenport. Staffing analysis on page 46. Accessed May 11, 2023 at https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/179128.pdf
PROPOSAL 3: COMMUNITY-BASED DIVERSION

PROPOSAL 3: LA COUNTY MUST SCALE UP FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DIVERSION FOR PEOPLE WITH UNMET MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Men’s Central Jail is also now currently 70 beds over capacity27; LA County is going in the wrong direction. We must safely divert people, rather than continue the bloated pipeline to carceral harm. On any given day, approximately 40% of the people currently being incarcerated in LA County jails have a mental illness. These approximately 6,000 people could and should be diverted to permanent supportive housing, mental health diversion programs, and other treatment programs that have proven models of success, like the Office of Diversion and Reentry. The Office of Diversion and Re-Entry has been in operation for over six years, and offers a powerful alternative to the harms of incarceration.

The Office of Diversion and Reentry has several successful programs in place. Through their jail-based diversion and community-based diversion/ harm reduction programs28, they have demonstrated an ability to divert people out of Los Angeles County jails, and provide services, rather than incarceration, to vulnerable community members like people who use drugs, people who engage in sex work, and the unhoused community.

As of February 2022, ODR had released a total of 7,414 people out of jail and into the community (ODR PSRT Presentation, Slide 4). Of this 7,414 people, 3,723 people were released from incarceration via access to ODR Housing, 2,138 were released through Misdemeanor Incompetent to Stand Trial Community-Based Restoration, 983 were released through the Felony Incompetent to Stand Trial Community-Based Restoration, 208 pregnant people were diverted from custody as a results of pregnancy diversion, and 362 were diverted from DSH Diversion (or Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital Diversion), (ODR PSRT Presentation, Slide 4). In sum, all of these various jail-based diversion successes show proof points for the expansion of ODR.

Further, ODR has also demonstrated an effective ability to divert people before incarceration and save lives via their community-based harm reduction programs. Specifically, ODR operates the LA County Department of Health Services Overdose Education & Naloxone Distribution (OEND) Program, a harm reduction opioid response for people with justice system involvement. Within the scope of this program, AB 109 dollars have funded the following (ODR PSRT Presentation, slide 26):

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28 LA County Office of Diversion and Reentry. (2022, April 21). Office of Diversion and Reentry. Public Safety Realignment Team. ODR. Accessed May 12, 2023 at https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f496-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/518bc62e-fc0-470f-899d-13b8d65701ac/ODR%20PSRT%20Presentation%20April%2021%202022.pdf
• “Harm Reduction Program Expansion (HARP): Capacity building, training and technical assistance for providers to expand harm reduction knowledge and improve engagement with people who use drugs and people who engage in sex work. HARP maintains a clearinghouse of supplies to reduce the spread of HIV and HCV and promote and support wound care and overdose prevention
• Harm Reduction Community Engagement Facilitator: Facilitator approved by community partners for Harm Reduction Stakeholder Committee. Committee is jointly coordinated with DPH + DHS.
• Naloxone direct purchase: Medication purchase for community distribution.
• PWUD Community Engagement: Opportunity to support People Who Use Drugs participating in stakeholder processes and other programming meant to engage and support them
• Harm Reduction Workforce Development: County wide needs assessment, development and implementation of a certified harm reduction community health worker training program for people with lived experience and others moving into this growing field.
• Reentry Mentorship/ Leadership Academy: Adding cohort in existing reentry leadership academy for PWUD and People engaged in Sex Work.”

This breadth of programs is pivotal to address the rising opioid and fentanyl overdose crisis, especially for those either living in unhoused communities and/or re-entering our community after being incarcerated (ODR PSRT Presentation, see slides 18-21). An expansion of this program through ongoing, stable funding will ensure that the vital needs of vulnerable community members are met, and lives are saved.

PROPOSAL 4: LA COUNTY MUST MAKE USE OF THE JUSTICE, CARE, AND OPPORTUNITIES DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE TO FUND PRETRIAL SERVICES THAT ARE COMMUNITY-BASED AND NON-CARCERAL, AND MOVE US SWIFTLY TOWARDS PERMANENT JAIL CLOSURE.

Over 3 years ago, the Board vowed to close the decrepit and lethal Men’s Central Jail without replacing it with a new jail. Two years ago, the MCJ Closure Workgroup detailed in a 148-page report29 how to close MCJ by, among other strategies, reducing the jail population by at least 4,500 and investing “significantly” in beds and services within the community. The closure plan outlined how to close MCJ within 18-24 months.

Since then, the county has reduced the jail population by only about 800 people. And people incarcerated in MCJ are still suffering and dying. Yet the Board has taken little additional action and provided no timeline.

WE URGE THE BOARD TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS IMMEDIATELY:

COMMIT TO CLOSING MCJ WITHOUT A REPLACEMENT BY MARCH 2025

REDUCE THE JAIL POPULATION BY AT LEAST 8,500 PEOPLE

ALLOCATE $275 MILLION FOR MENTAL-HEALTH TREATMENT BEDS AND FULLY FUND AN INDEPENDENT PRETRIAL SERVICES AGENCY.

REDUCE INVESTMENT IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SCALE UP INVESTMENT IN NON-LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSES TO CRISSES AND COMMUNITY NEEDS.
The roadmap is complete. The County must do something immediately to address the crisis inside of jails, release people into supportive community-based structures, and capture savings to reinvest in maintaining the Care First vision.

As stated above, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) committed to a “care first, jails last” approach and have begun to implement the recommendations of the Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) workgroup\(^\text{30}\) developed in 2019. Through this consensus driven process, community advocates laid out a vision for delivering meaningful pretrial and diversion services that prioritized treatment instead of jail time. In 2020, community leaders proposed a community care and support agency (“CASA”) model\(^\text{31}\) a need-based pretrial release system\(^\text{32}\) that provides supportive resources such as court reminders and connections to supportive resources based on a needs and strength assessment that informs the creation of an individualized plan for intervention.

The County had made limited progress in actualizing the ATI recommendations. Based on the recommendation to create an independent pretrial services entity, the BOS created the Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department (JCOD) on November 1, 2022. JCOD’s mission is to reduce the “County’s over-reliance on incarceration of our justice-impacted populations and centralize the County’s efforts to enable a cohesive service delivery model, from prevention to reentry – working between the justice system and other intersecting systems (behavioral health, supportive housing, social services, and workforce development).” Although the department recommended budgeting $58 million for FY 2023-24 for JCOD, this allocation is insufficient based on the department’s mandate and scope. Without proper funding of at least $20 million from the net County costs (NCC), AB109\(^\text{33}\) Criminal Justice Alignment\(^\text{34}\) and other funding streams, the county efforts will fail to make the impact necessary on the jail population to fulfill its obligation under the consent decree\(^\text{35}\).

In comparison, the Sheriff’s department budget is more than $3.8 billion, with more than 17,481 budgeted positions, more than 200 times the 76 positions within JCOD. Most of the resources allocated for JCOD are already spoken for. More than three-quarters of those JCOD resources are earmarked for “services and supplies,” including $39 million for Contracted Program Services. The budget does not specify what specific contracts or services these are, and the community has limited visibility into the terms and deliverables of these agreements. JCOD has 5 positions dedicated to Contracts and Grants.\(^\text{36}\) Since the department is

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\(^{36}\) According to org chart on p. 38.5
The staffing within JCOD has experienced important structural changes. Last year (FY 2022-23), the department had 31 budgeted positions that were transferred from the CEO’s - Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Jail Closure Implementation Team (JCIT). This year, JCOD is projected to add 45 positions, 16 of which will be transferred from the Re-entry Division of the Department of Health Services. Community members do not have insight on how many of JCOD’s positions are currently filled, but it is notable that one of the department’s current “top priorities” is to “fill critical vacancies” (p. 329 of budget).

**PRETRIAL JUSTICE VISION:**

On an average day in 2022, 69% of the people held in LA County jail were held pretrial, meaning that they were legally innocent and had been detained before their trial had taken place. Being jailed for even a day can have detrimental impacts on a person’s housing, employment, child custody, health and safety. While there are limitations placed by the state and the courts on what LA County can do to implement a different pretrial system, countywide investment in services is a critical and actionable step the county can take to reduce its pretrial population.

We are encouraged by the success rate of community held diversion programs like the Bail Project’s national model, which pays for a person’s bail, provides them with a case worker, and connects them to vital pretrial services in the community, rather than in a carceral setting. This model has helped free 17,500 people with a...
96% return-to-court rate\(^{40}\) in 2021 alone. Despite the efficacy of community-based pretrial services models, the county has been slow to adopt and adequately fund services outside of the current probation-led model. Further, even though the LA County Public Safety Realignment Team’s recommendation that $20 million of AB109 funding be used for community based pretrial services in 2021, those funds were not allocated to the recommended purpose by the county CEO. This lack of investment has propelled the increase of the pretrial population since its dramatic decline during the pandemic, and exacerbated the inhumane conditions inside the LA County jail system.

It is wasteful, unnecessary and deadly to incarcerate people pre-trial when there are voluntary and cost-effective strategies for providing pretrial services that are proven to facilitate court appearances. For example, text message reminders\(^{41}\) for people to report to court have resulted in dramatic reductions in failure-to-appear rates in jurisdictions like Washington, D.C. and New York. In neighboring Orange County, childcare is provided to support people attending their court date. Transportation to court continues to be a barrier for many justice involved individuals in the pretrial phase, but also upon release. The urgency to address rapidly declining conditions in the jail must also include these tangible strategies that help reduce the flow of people into the jails.

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\(^{41}\) Fund For Guaranteed Income. (n.d.) Court Date Reminders is a free service that sends reminders to defendants ahead of their court dates. This web page explains the problems and data around missed court dates, including Failure To Appear charges, extra fines, increased jail time, and other punitive responses to missed or late court appearances, and how Court Date Reminders can help mitigate these issues.
I. WHAT IS CARE FIRST COMMUNITY INVESTMENT?
Three years ago, in 2020, 2.1 million voters used their vote to say ‘Yes on J,’ demanding that the Board of Supervisors use Los Angeles County funds to divest from systems of harm and invest in systems of care and opportunity. In 2021, when law enforcement special interest groups challenged the legacy of Measure J in court, the Board made clear their priority to preserve the intent and spirit of Measure J by transitioning the Measure J/ Reimagine LA Advisory Committee into the Care First and Community Investment Advisory Committee. With this shift, the Board solidified their commitment to center Los Angeles community members impacted by state violence and incarceration in a community-driven process that supports equitable distribution of set-aside funding.

II. HISTORICAL AND CURRENT CFCI FUNDING ALLOCATIONS FROM THE BOARD AND CEO
After the first year of the Measure J Advisory Body process, the Board also passed a $187.7 million dollar Care First Community Investment Spending Plan, setting a precedent for ample CFCI funding throughout Measure J’s implementation. In year two (FY 2022), the Board approved an additional $200 million in CFCI dollars to be spent in ways guided by the community. In recent weeks, we learned that the CEO has proposed cutting CFCI funding this year, and recommended allocating only $88,304,000 new dollars towards Care First Community Investment for 2023 - a meager amount compared to the needs presented by a violent and generations-old carceral crisis in Los Angeles County. $88 million for CFCI amounts to roughly only $8 per LA County resident, and based on the pressing issues of joblessness, food insecurity, educational inequity, housing insecurity, wage disparities and law enforcement violence, $8 per County resident is far from the investment that our communities need to thrive.

III. ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION WORKGROUP REPORT:
Further, despite March 10th, 2023 marking the three-year anniversary of the LA County Alternatives to Incarceration Report, the County has failed to act with sufficient urgency. There is more urgency around jail closure now than ever before, with over 55 deaths within the jails in 2021 alone, and eleven in-custody deaths reported by the Sheriff’s Department in the first two quarters of 2023. We cannot stand by while LA County’s deadly carceral facilities continue receiving ample funding.
funding, and our communities are short changed. We must begin to divert people out of pretrial incarceration, incarceration for unmet mental health needs, and criminalization, immediately.

**IV. EXAMINING PREVIOUS FISCAL YEARS’ CFCI SPENDING MORE CLOSELY**

In FY 2022-23, CFCI had a budget of $279 million. However, its estimated expenses were only $81 million. This indicates CFCI spent less than one-third of its budget, money that should have been used to invest in communities.

This year, the recommended CFCI budget is $486 million. However, over 40% of these funds are carried over from last year – that is, they are not new money, but money that should have been spent on programming last year and the year before.

In a FY 2023-3024 budget presentation, the county CEO compared the net county cost (NCC) of CFCI to other departments, showing that the CFCI’s net county cost is hypothetically higher than the DA, Public Defender, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, and Alternate Public Defender. However, the CFCI is not actually successfully spending as much in NCC as these departments. Last year it only spent $87 million.

The CFCI is not spending its full budget partly due to the lack of a dedicated staff that can steward funds and delays in contracting a third-party administrator (TPA) to distribute Year One and Two funding. Other County departments that the CEO compared the CFCI to have a minimum of 350 staff; many of them have more than 1,000 staff compared to 0 staff dedicated solely to CFCI.

What’s more, when looking at total expenditures rather than just net county cost, several departments the CEO compared CFCI to have
much higher budgets than the CFCI does.

The same issues from last year are likely to continue this year: over one-third of the CFCI budget ($169 million) is not yet allocated. This suggests the county will struggle to actually disburse this money for community-driven programming.

Moreover, the TPA was responsible for disbursing nearly $55 million from the Year One spending plan to community-based organizations. However, after releasing a solicitation twice and without any community input, the county did not select a TPA until early 2022 - well into the Year Two process. Amity Foundation was ultimately selected as the TPA and closed the grant application for Year One ARPA funding set aside for Program Area 8 (Community-based Restorative Justice Programs) in April 2023.

According to one applicant who sought TPA funding:

“I can share from experience that many of us leaders in the communities with grassroots organizations face challenges due to lack of funding support for capacity-building. As of today, after applying for grants..., we have had no luck with getting help granted. I have wondered if they are only focused on [funding already] fully-funded organizations with multimillion budgets? [Where does this leave those of us that are] small organizations working twice as hard?... We continue to provide services at a high-demand rate in the county of Los Angeles, even if [this work is funded through] in-kind donations...

People ask, 'Why do you care so much?' My answer is very simple! I care because I have experienced the impact of underserved communities. My children are experiencing the impact of marginalized communities with very few youth services. This is why I founded [the organization I lead] – so that [the next] generations have a chance at a better future. We hope that [the] TPA begins to focus on small organizations’ growth, and provide [the] help needed for capacity-building. On behalf of members [and] leaders in the community facing the same challenges as [our organization], we hope to see [the] TPA bring help to CBO’s currently residing in [high-needs] areas...”

The Need to Disburse Funding:

After years of the community fighting to implement Measure J, the County has adopted a
CFCI budget of $279 million for FY 2023. Notably, this funding is only 7% of the sheriff’s budget. (In other words, the sheriff’s budget is 13 times larger than the CFCI budget.)

This funding will be used to fund the following:
1. $95 million for Health Services,
2. $87 million for Justice, Care and Opportunities,
3. $20 million for Public Health,
4. A relatively small amount for Consumer and Business Affairs ($4 million), Mental Health ($2.5 million),
5. and Economic Opportunity ($2 million)

In FY 21-22, the unit only spent about 20% of its budget, $21 million. This figure is troubling, given that the Care First Community Investment Advisory Body has provided detailed recommendations in Years One and Two of CFCI Implementation, and has a third year spending plan currently being finalized through the Advisory Body meeting and ad hoc deliberation process.

V. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING AND CFCI:

On September 13, 2022, the Board adopted Phase Two spending plan for the County’s American Rescue Plan funding. The cumulative $1.9 billion in American Rescue Plan funding allocated to LA County has provided a significant opportunity to help fund a Care First vision while Los Angeles works towards recovering from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on Black and Latine communities.

ARP PHASE ONE:

In Phase One, advocates appreciated that the county allocated $87.7 million to CFCI, but were deeply discouraged to discover that the County quietly funneled hundreds of millions of dollars—roughly half of its first round of ARP funding—to the LAPD while so many Angelenos suffered and while the County continued to underfund CFCI. We still do not see the LAPD funding reflected in the data dashboard created to show how ARP funds are distributed to more than 20 city agencies and how that money is being spent.

ARP PHASE TWO:

For Phase Two, the County has allocated $19.6 million to CFCI, again despite consistently

underfunding its “Care First” priorities. Advocates hope that if the County is again planning to allocate ARP funds to already-bloated law enforcement budgets in a way not laid out in the current plan, they instead dedicate that funding to CFCI. The County has an important opportunity to transparently allocate remaining ARP funds in a way that will wholly and affirmatively serve Angelenos, rather than maintain the status quo of overfunding law enforcement.

VI. MEASURE J/ CFCI ADVISORY BODY PROCESS

After the Board created the CFCI Advisory Body in 2021 as an adaptation from the 2020 Measure J advisory body, the process had already been honed once and was refined in Year Two. On page 9 of the Year 1 Advisory Body report, find a diagram that details how the Measure J / CFCI Advisory process looked in Year 1, as noted in the Year One Measure J Advisory Body Report and Spending Plan. The flow chart provides a helpful visual representation of how the advisory body collates recommendations from a wide variety of spending areas to provide synthesized recommendations to the CEO and the Board to guide final budget allocations.

VII. SELECTED STRATEGIES FROM THE CARE FIRST COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ADVISORY BODY PROCESS, YEARS ONE AND TWO:

Throughout the Advisory Body process, members of the Body deliberate on strategies for funding Care First across policy areas and areas of community needs. As part of the yearly process, the Body solicits community input and funding proposals, and then spends several weeks during budget season creating a recommended spending plan based on the amount of money that the Board and CEO are projecting to allocate for the following fiscal year. In Year One of implementation, FY 2021-2022, the Measure J Advisory Body created a spending plan that divided recommendations into tiers, with Tier 1 Recommendations totaling $170,905,690, Tier 2 Recommendations totalling $351,968,776.33, and Tier 3 recommendations totalling $54,416,530. (See pages 46-62 of the report, attachments A & B). The total of all three of these recommendation tiers yielded a funding gap of $406,385,306.33 dollars between what the Advisory Body recommended spending, and what the CEO and Board allocated. The intent behind crafting the Advisory Body recommendations in this way was to show the Board what could be funded in the community with the additional dollars that a true 10% of Net County Costs allocated to CFCI would allow; place this in juxtaposition with the CEO’s interpretation of 10% of Net County Costs, and the gaps are stark and punishing.

In Year 2 of CFCI Implementation, the Advisory Body created a spending plan totalling exactly $100,000,000, or the total amount of new dollars that the Care First Community Investment Budget Stream would receive in Year 2.

The Advisory Body’s work during Years Two and Three of Implementation are guided by the following diagram, as found in the CFCI Advisory Body Year Two Report.
Diagram II: CFCI Advisory Body Objectives and Responsibilities for Years Two and Three

Year 3’s spending plan will likely total the projected $88,304,000. In March of 2023, the Advisory Body was informed by the County CEO that this is the amount they will have to make budget recommendations.

Below is a select list of recommendations put forth by the Advisory Bodies in Years One and Two that show a sampling of Care First strategies recommended for funding by the Measure J (Year 1) / CFCI (Year 2) Advisory Body processes.

Because not all of CFCI’s dollars have been spent, not all of these recommendations have been funded yet; despite this, Advisory Body members and community members remain engaged in the process to guide the spending of CFCI funds in Year Three and beyond.
In Year One, the Measure J Advisory Body made overarching recommendations about who Measure J dollars should go to, and how these dollars should be spent. Below, please find a sampling of these overarching recommendations, from the Year One Measure J Report and Spending Plan.

**PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES TO BE PRIORITIZED FOR MEASURE J FUNDING:**
- Measure J funding should prioritize communities and programs focused on people who are impacted by systemic and mass incarceration from the following groups:
  - Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Black women, Reentry community, Two-spirit, Trans, Gender non-binary, Queer, people with disabilities, young people, immigrants, people living in areas in the County that have been underserved or neglected.
  - Black communities, Black-led organizations and Black-owned businesses are the highest priority in Measure J.
  - People who are gang related or impacted Transition-age youth.
  - Areas of highest need according to the Justice Equity Needs Index (JENI) and Justice Equity Supply Index (JESI)
  - Older adults who are formerly incarcerated.
  - Gabrielleño-Tongva, Fernandeño Tataviam, Chumash and Acjachemen tribal communities.
  - Immigrant and refugee communities (including Asian and Black immigrants).
  - People with disabilities and non-apparent disabilities.
  - People living with mental health conditions.

**ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAM TYPES TO BE PRIORITIZED FOR MEASURE J FUNDING:**
- Programs and organizations funded by Measure J should be led by, staffed by and serve people who are most impacted by systemic racism:
  - Including individuals connected to or impacted by gangs.
  - Measure J funding should provide both immediate and long-term support that facilitates community reentry, integration, prevention, and an individual’s ability to thrive.
  - The Advisory Committee recommends that the following people, agencies and programs be prioritized for Measure J funding:
    - Funded organizations should share Measure J and ATI values and employ formerly incarcerated people.
    - Programs and services should meet the multiple and co-occurring needs of community members who are experiencing systemic racism, incarceration, and reentry. This includes wraparound services, coordination of services, support with service navigation, and working in collaboration with other entities and partners.
    - Programs and services should have an approach that is trauma-informed, culturally rooted and healing centered, and that incorporates harm reduction approaches.
    - Funded programs should demonstrate the ability to achieve outcomes, have a track record of success, and have systems and practices to evaluate outcomes.
    - Measure J funds should not support any organization or County program that works directly or closely with law enforcement, probation, and or parole.
The Advisory Body noted that prioritization may be accomplished, for example, through targeted funding initiatives that focus on specific communities, zip codes that consist of economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, and or the assignment of bonus points in scoring for competitive funding proposals processes.

Further, the *Year One* Measure J Advisory Body also crafted guidelines for how these funds should be utilized and administered in *Year One*, and these principles – including the use of a Third Party Administrator – have carried on into *Years Two* and *Three*. Below, see guidelines about how to distribute funding from the *Year One* Measure J Advisory Body Report.  

### GRANT/ FUNDING METHODS AND PRACTICES TO DISTRIBUTE MEASURE J FUNDS:

The recommendations [from the Year One Report] were developed and approved by the community-driven Subcommittees and provide a clear pathway to equitably distribute County funds by building the capacity of existing providers through meaningful technical assistance and support, reducing and or  

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eliminating barriers to access grant dollars, and re-imagining contracting processes and requirements for service providers. This broad recommendation included the following stipulations:

- Infrastructure for Third Party Administrator(s) should be developed for Measure J funding. The establishment of an alternative funding mechanism will provide opportunities for community-based organizations and tribal communities to access funding and remove barriers connected to directly contracting with the County - in particular, for agencies with an annual budget of less than $1.5 million.
- Programs funded through Measure J should distribute no less than 85% of the allocated dollars directly to community-based organizations.
- Contracting requirements for LA County Departments involved with implementation of Measure J funds should be reviewed and modified to remove unnecessary administrative burdens and compliance requirements.
- Providers who are unable to meet LA County’s cost prohibitive insurance requirements should be provided with subsidies to offset the cost of doing business with the County.
- A Stakeholder Advisory Board, like the RHAC, should be identified to be a decision-maker and advisor in the granting, distribution, and accountability of Measure J funds.

**SAMPLING OF POLICY-AREA CFCI FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

As elucidated on page 9 of the Year 1 Advisory Body Report, funding recommendations were made in five subcommittee areas that were priorities for CFCI implementation. These areas of focus were: A) Housing, B) Economic Development, C) Re-Entry, D) Health/Behavioral Health, and E) Youth Development. Sample recommendations from each of these policy areas are highlighted below to show the breadth and depth of CFCI spending plan recommendations.

**A. HOUSING**

Example 1. Sample Housing Recommendation from Year 1.

Youth-Specific Housing Interventions: Tier One included a proposal to invest $5 million for new housing programs and interventions tailored for at-risk youth and system-impacted youth. The proposal noted that these programs should be informed by individuals with lived experience with the foster care and/or juvenile justice systems and implemented by providers with lived experience. Funding should not fund interventions that expand the surveillance of families, and supportive services should be provided but not required in order to access youth housing programs.

*Grant Administrator: DHS/ODR YDD and/or Third-Party Administrator*
Example 2. Sample Housing Recommendation from Year 2.

**ODR Diversion Permanent Supportive Housing:** Year Two set aside $29.8 million for the Office of Diversion and Reentry’s housing programs ODR housing and LEAD to reduce the number of people incarcerated in LA County with serious mental illness or other complex health needs.

*Grant Administrator:* County Department

### B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Example 1. Sample Economic Development Recommendation from Year 1.

**Black Homeownership and Wealth Preservation:** Included in Tier Two, this recommendation requested a $2 million investment for homeownership education and credit counseling, down payment assistance, and targeted outreach and marketing to support potential Black homeowners.

*Grant Administrator:* DCBA and Third-Party Administrator

Example 2. Sample Economic Development Recommendation from Year 2.

**From Treatment, Diversion or Jail, to Work!:** Year Two’s spending plan set aside $313,510 to expand job training programs that equitably reduce justice involvement for those who have been in the criminal justice system and prevent or reduce justice involvement for those with substance use disorder and/or experiencing housing stability.

*Grant Administrator:* Third-Party Administrator

### C. RE-ENTRY

Example 1. Sample Community Re-Entry Recommendation from Year 1.

**Support Services for Returning Transgender Identified and LGBQI+ Members:** Tier One allocated $993,600 to expand and create new programs, services and drop-in centers specifically for transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex folks and LGBTQI+ members, including reentry services, violence prevention/domestic violence, workforce development, legal services, transitional housing, food distribution, gender affirming clothing, immigration services, and mental health services.

*Grant Administrator:* Third-Party Administrator and/or DHS-ODR

Example 2. Sample Community Re-Entry Recommendation from Year 2.

**POWR (Providing Opportunities for Women in Reentry):** In Year Two, $3,048,625 was allocated to POWR, a county program that aims to empower and serve systems-impacted women by promoting healthy connections with their children, family, and significant others; increasing economic well-being through education, employment and housing support; and improving health outcomes through addressing substance use and mental illness.

### D. HEALTH/ BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
Example 1. Sample Behavioral Health Recommendations from Year 1.

Close Men’s Central Jail & Divert People with MH/SUD into Treatment: $52 million was set aside in Year One to fund and expand community-based pretrial services, through a pretrial pilot in the communities most severely impacted by incarceration in LA County, which accounted for nearly 30% of the overall Year One funding allocation. Community-based service providers would conduct a strengths-and-needs-based assessment of all individuals in custody to determine a plan of support to get each individual released pre-trial, send court date reminders, provide peer navigation support, and coordinate linkages to supportive services.

\[Grant\ Agency: \text{Various LA County Departments and/or Third-Party Administrator}\]

Example 2. Sample Behavioral Health Recommendations from Year 2.

Harm Reduction Drop-In Centers: A recommended proposal in the Year 2 spending plan allocated $900,000 for drop-in centers across all eight Service Planning Areas that provide essentials, such as food, water, tents, blankets, undergarments, hygiene support, phone chargers, harm reduction supplies. By referral or on-site need, staff at these centers would also provide medical, mental health, and other supportive services to decrease racial health disparities; and incidence of food insecurity, STIs, viral hepatitis, COVID-19 infections, soft-tissue infections, and overdose fatalities among people experiencing homelessness, people engaged in sex work, people who use drugs, and people recently released from incarceration.

\[Grant\ Agency: \text{County Department}\]

E. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Example 1. Sample Youth Development Recommendation from Year 1.

Community based Intervention Services & Prevention Programs for Youth: $3.5 million was set aside in Year Two that would expand existing intervention services and programs for young people to prevent their involvement in the carceral system. Additional services include: transformative justice and community conflict resolution training, case management, academic and vocational training and support, arts and culture programming that affirms their culture, life skills training, violence interruption, services for survivors of human trafficking, and interventions that dismantle the School-to-Prison pipeline.

\[Grant\ Agency: \text{Third-Party Administrator and/or DHS-ODR}\]

Example 2. Sample Youth Development Recommendation from Year 2.

Community Owned and Operated Youth Centers: Included in Year Two, a $13,795,000 proposal was approved that would support community-based organizations in reclaiming existing, vacant spaces in LA County. CBOs along with local youth and residents will shape the process of transforming these spaces into youth and community resource hubs to provide system-impacted and marginalized Black and Brown communities with youth development services, educational access and job readiness training.

\[Grant\ Agency: \text{Third-Party Administrator}\]
VIII. FY 2023-2024 CARE FIRST COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUNDING AND BEYOND:

As the CFCI Advisory Body prepares to finalize their recommendations for Year Three and beyond, it is also important to note that the CFCI Advisory Body has both recommended to the Board that they allocated at least $100 million in CFCI spending this year\textsuperscript{51}, topping up the meager $88 million currently projected. Further, it is important to note that the Advisory Body and members are engaged in advocacy with the Board to ensure that the Advisory Body process remains codified to perpetuity and includes ongoing increases in funding, rather than being curtailed or maintained at the current funding level after Year Three.

\textsuperscript{51} Care First Community Investment Advisory Committee. (2023, March 20) Letter to the Board of Supervisors. Derek Steele, Chair of CFCI Advisory Committee. Accessed May 11, 2023 at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZN5t9R_WcHfXBZeCYLkAx1_iwamfoijIPquhOljmdA/edit
I. WHAT IS ASSEMBLY BILL 109?

Assembly Bill 109 (AB109) aimed to reduce state prison overcrowding and potentially reduce state incarceration costs by shifting responsibility for people who are charged and convicted for non-serious, non-violent, and non-sexual convictions to counties rather than to state prisons. Signed into law in 2011, AB109 expanded county probation departments’ “post release community supervision” responsibilities, increased the length of sentences possible in county jails, and “required” counties to make educational, rehabilitative, and restorative justice programs available.

AB 109 was and is intended to help counties develop and implement alternatives to incarceration, like innovations in re-entry, community-based services and affordable housing. The intent of AB 109—expressed by both the statutory language and the preliminary finding calculations provided by the California Department of Finance—was for counties to focus on non-incarceration alternatives that have a proven track-record of reducing recidivism. The state government officially recognized that we cannot incarcerate our way out of crime and granted Counties the discretion on how to best allocate AB 109 funds within their jurisdictions. So far, AB 109 has not been able to fulfill its purpose of reducing jail populations because the funding has not yet reached community organizations with the deepest impact on reentry needs.

Funding Stream Source: AB 109 funds come from state sales tax and vehicle license fees. The state provides counties an annual guaranteed amount and an additional amount that varies annually depending on funding availability. LA county receives $2.8 billion from the 2011 State Public Safety Realignment (which it classifies as AB118). AB 109 is considered a permanent funding stream, which means it can and should be used to stand up programming that can serve populations vulnerable to incarceration over multiple years.

II. HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE IN LA COUNTY JAILS AS A RESULT OF AB 109? WHO IS THE FUNDING SERVING?

According to the Vera Institute’s Care First LA dashboard, the number of AB109 sentenced people in LA County jail was over 2,500 before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of this writing (April 2023), 1,743 people are now in LA County jails as a result of AB109.

Of these 1,743 people, 1,107 have been sentenced by the County as AB-109. Unfortunately, 397 people have had their Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS) revoked, and are being held in LA County jail as a result. Equally troubling, 174 people are currently held in LA County jail as a result of a parole revocation. 62 people are partially sentenced under AB 109, and 3 people are being held under flash incarceration, meaning that a community member is held in jail for 1-10 days at the discretion of a probation officer, and without a formal hearing.

This VERA data shows us that the over 230 people who are being incarcerated under AB 109 for a PRCS or probation revocation could benefit from a broader network of community-based supports, rather than punitive re-incarceration approaches. Further, the Department of Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) has reported...
staggering data on homelessness among the AB 109 population. Their data\textsuperscript{53} shows that the overwhelming majority of the AB109 individuals the Department supports are without housing – upwards of 75%. This points to the necessity to start redirecting AB109 funds to meet the needs of this population, who need housing and supportive services, rather than incarceration and supervision. Further, the data show that 50% of the people that SAPC treats are between the ages of 18-34, indicating that AB 109 dollars should also be expanded in the areas of youth development, employment, housing and re-entry services.

What’s more, the data\textsuperscript{54} about who is supervised under AB 109 shows an upward trend of people with higher needs (see slide six in the linked presentation). This further indicates that a care first approach is required to serve this group, many of whom demonstrate both complex mental health needs and/or co-occurring substance use. Given that the complexity of the needs of the AB 109 population has trended upwards since 2012, it is important that we consider this urgent crisis as it pertains to funding recommendations.

Finally, 2022 data\textsuperscript{55} from the LA County Probation Department indicates that Los Angeles County Districts 2 and 1 – regions where economic and historical disenfranchisement are at some of the highest rates in the County – are most impacted by AB109. The data show that the AB 109 population is 58% Latine, and 29% Black. This leaves Black community members grossly overrepresented from their 9\%\textsuperscript{56} Census Bureau share of the LA County population, and Latine community members also troublingly over-represented, represented nearly 10% higher than their 49.4\% population share in LA County (according to the United States Census Bureau). This disturbing data indicates that AB 109’s racial disparities leave Black and Latine community members with mental health concerns and problematic substance use incarcerated, whereas in other, more well-resourced/ wealthier districts, mental health and substance use needs are met by resources, treatment, and services.

III. POLICY CONTEXT OVERVIEW:

Given the decrease in incarceration rates of the AB109 population since COVID-19, the Board has the opportunity to shift AB109 funding from jail custody into community resources that keep people home. Putting AB109 funding into the community will help continue to decrease the jail population even further, and will support the county’s efforts to close Men’s Central Jail and capture cost savings for community based services.

The county has successfully decreased the AB109 population and sustained the reduction over the course of the pandemic. This step in the right direction demonstrates that people incarcerated...
because of AB109 are highly eligible for diversion. To keep the jail population down and close MCJ, the county should expand AB109 funding in the areas of youth development, health infrastructure, and re-entry services, including housing, job training, and placement.

This will require an assessment of LA County’s AB 109 base funding to ensure that funds spent on detention and supervision adequately reflect the decreases in the AB 109 population and align with the County’s Care First approach.

IV. BOARD DIRECTIVES
GUIDING THE AB 109 PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION PROCESS:

The LA County Board has put forward several important motions guiding the Public Safety Realignment Team (PSRT), the county commission tasked with developing recommendations that inform AB109 implementation and spending. In a December, 8th, 2020 motion, the Board reconfigured the PSRT to expand community representation on the body and provided guidance on their priorities regarding aligning the PSRT with the alternatives to incarceration vision. Notably, the motion asks that the PSRT “[r]evise the AB 109 Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) implementation plan to reflect the Board’s priorities on alternatives to incarceration, including, but not limited to, diversion programs, substance abuse programs, mental health treatment, housing, restorative justice programs, and community-based services.”

This directive from the Board shifts the PSRT into a Care First body that is tasked with making budget recommendations commensurate with alternatives to incarceration principles and priorities.

It is important that LA County interpret AB 109 more broadly than as a bill to fund local law enforcement. We must mirror other Counties, such as Alameda County and Contra Costa County. In Alameda County, the Board of Supervisors voted to allocate 50% of its AB 109 funding to community-based services. Contra Costa County adopted a series of decarceration policies and, therein dedicated 60% of their AB 109 funding to reentry programs and services. This led to an astonishing 21% drop in Contra Costa County’s recidivism rate. Los Angeles County can and must look to these Counties as examples, and build upon the strategies they’ve modeled.

A second pivotal January 2022 AB109 motion from the Board calls for the PSRT to evaluate all County and community programs funded by AB109. While the December 2020 motion called on the PSRT to align funding recommendations with the ATI vision, the January 2022 motion calls for PSRT to do a full evaluation of spending and programming within the budget stream. The motion stated, “… the Board of Supervisors direct the Public Safety Realignment Team (PSRT), in coordination with the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC), Chief Information Officer (CIO), and Chief Executive Office (CEO), to develop a plan to evaluate all County and community programs that receive AB 109 funding in 75 days. The plan should include:

1. Criteria and outcome measures to be evaluated;
2. A timeline; and
3. A plan for stakeholder engagement and community input to help inform the evaluation criteria and process.”

Despite this explicitly clear directive by the Board, currently, there is only a narrow evaluation underway by the County. The County’s plan and timeline for the current evaluation details a timeline for the evaluation between 2022 - 2025.59

The more narrow County evaluation that is underway is outlined in this March 2022 presentation given to the PSRT60 by the County. Page nine in the evaluation plan presentation outlines which programs will be evaluated during the process, excluding “mandated activities and base funding.”

The PSRT Ad Hoc Committee charged with guiding the evaluation process urged the County to expand on this narrow scope to include all AB 109 funding, not just a limited number of programs. According to the CIO’s reporting out of the Committee’s recommendations:

“The committee recommends that the County prioritize their evaluation through other means. These programs should develop evaluation plans to be implemented separately from this evaluation,” (Page 13 of the presentation).61

The CIO’s current interpretation of the Board’s directives continues to be limited.

V. AUDITOR OF STATE THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA: AB 109 AUDIT:

In addition to the County’s evaluation of the PSRT activities, the state conducted its own audit of the AB 109 activities of Los Angeles County. As detailed in Chapter Two of the State Auditor report, the state shares the perspective of the PSRT that the interpretation of AB109 by LA County is too narrow. The County is conceding autonomy and under-leveraging a permanent funding stream by adopting a narrow definition of AB 109 dollars. Instead, the County should be interpreting the uses for this funding stream expansively, allowing for bold and innovative solutions.

The State Audit report also included the following recommendations to Counties, all of which Los Angeles County is working to comply with:

“Unless the Legislature clarifies its intent otherwise, to ensure that the counties prudently and appropriately spend realignment funds, the Partnership Committees at Alameda, Fresno, and Los Angeles should, starting with their next annual budgets, review and make budget recommendations to their boards of supervisors for all realignment accounts, including the accounts that

59 LA County Board of Supervisors. (2021, April) AB 109 Evaluation Plan. Board of Supervisors. Accessed May 10, 2023 from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f9f6-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/200320cc-5b7a-4cd7-bb35-63237aa23c36/AB%20109%20Evaluation%20Plan%20-%20Administrative%20Timeline%20Presentation%20April%202021%20FINAL.pdf
60 LA County Board of Supervisors (2022, March 17). AB 109 Evaluation Plan. Online PowerPoint presentation for the Public Safety Realignment Team. Retrieved May 10, 2023 from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f9f6-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/f5fb984f-e501-444c-a11f-4ff8aa4c9e/AdHoc%20AB%20109%20Evaluation%20Workgroup%20Presentation%20FINAL.pdf
fund non-law enforcement departments and community-based organizations.

- Further, the counties should ensure that they budget all realignment funds to eliminate excessive surpluses in realignment accounts and prevent future surpluses beyond a reasonable reserve.

- To ensure that the programs and services funded by public safety realignment funds are effective, beginning immediately, Alameda, Fresno, and Los Angeles should conduct evaluations of the effectiveness of their programs and services at least every three years.

- To ensure that the counties report accurate and consistent information to the Corrections Board, beginning with their next annual reports, Alameda, Fresno, and Los Angeles should consistently report all law enforcement and non-law enforcement expenditures funded through the accounts that constitute public safety realignment.”

Further, the State Auditor’s report evidences that re-alignment has led to continual over-capacity occupation of LA County jails, well beyond how many people the jails have been deemed safe to house by the State Board of Corrections. This is further evidence that the population currently incarcerated because of AB 109 (realignment) would be better served in the community, receiving services via non-carceral providers.

Below, see a graph from the State Audit report showing how people incarcerated because of AB 109 have continually pushed LA County jails beyond their capacity:

The State audit reveals troubling human rights violations in the LA County jails.

Data Source: Auditor of the State of California
“Los Angeles County... indicated that, as of July 2020, it housed nearly 550 realigned inmates who are serving sentences greater than three years, including 25 inmates serving sentences of 10 years or longer. With limited outdoor exercise areas and resources to provide certain educational or vocational training, inmates in county jails may suffer negative physical and mental health consequences or may not be adequately equipped to reenter the community successfully upon their release from jail... [Further] Los Angeles county jails do not get paid wages for participating in work programs, so restitution is limited to a portion of the funds deposited in inmates’ trust accounts, if any.”

This reporting aligns with the findings of the Court-ordered monitor of the LA County jails, the ACLU, who detail similar human rights violations in their current lawsuits filing to hold the County in contempt for their lack of implementation of safety measures to protect human rights in LA County jails. From LA Times reporter Keri Blakinger about the case (reported April 20th, 2023):

The case that led to Wednesday [April 19th, 2023]’s plans for a contempt hearing was originally filed in 1975. It alleged that conditions in the county’s jails violated the 8th Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The case went to trial, and eventually a federal judge ordered a series of improvements, which the county has yet to fully carry out.

To their credit, the Board of Supervisors has continued to reject jail expansion as an adequate solution for jail overcrowding. However, the County has repeatedly failed to adequately fund the services that will prevent law enforcement contact and incarceration, and support release and transition of those currently incarcerated. Expanding AB 109 funding into mental health diversion, pretrial services, and re-entry services will support the County in meeting its legal obligations to address the many human rights crises in the jail system.

VI. LOOK TO THE EXAMPLE OF PROGRESSIVE COUNTIES:

It is important that LA County interpret AB 109 more broadly than as a bill to fund local law enforcement. We must mirror other Counties, such as Alameda County and Contra Costa County. In Alameda County, the Board of Supervisors voted to allocate 50% of its AB 109 funding to community-based services. Contra Costa County adopted a series of decarceration policies and, therein dedicated 60% of their AB 109 funding to reentry programs and services. This led to an astonishing 21% drop in Contra Costa County’s recidivism rate. Los Angeles County can and must look to these Counties as examples, and build upon the strategies they’ve modeled.

After the Board’s reconfiguration of the PSRT in 2021, the body developed the following recommendations for AB 109 spending\(^\text{63}\) These recommendations were submitted to the LAC CEO for FY 2021-2022. Additionally, the ATI Subcommittee of the PSRT created a series of ATI-informed recommendations\(^\text{64}\) for the PSRT’s spending as informed by diversion principles. The recommendations are spaced out on an intercept model from Intercept 00 (Healthy Community Supports and Infrastructure) to Intercept 5 (Supervision in the Community after Incarceration). Through this intercept model, the PSRT created recommendations for diversion and ATI at each stage of the phases of the current model of incarceration. There are substantive recommendations in the document about harm reduction, transportation, and pre-filing diversion, mental evaluation teams, and numerous other policy strategies to move AB 109 spending to care first, jails last.

Recommendation 1: Funding Pretrial Services:

Among the recommendations submitted by PSRT in FY 2021-2022, the body included a $25 million allocation for community based pretrial services. Notably, 20 people on the PSRT voted to support this recommendation, including the Chief of Probation, yielding a vote of high support\(^\text{65}\) for pretrial services as an alternative to incarceration. This recommendation was not adopted by the CEO or presented to the Board for approval.

AB 109 offers a permanent funding stream to establish and fully implement an independent pretrial services agency – a foundational recommendation of the ATI workgroup\(^\text{66}\) – that is community-based and non-carceral. As outlined in the pretrial services section of this report, despite the fact that community-based pretrial services like the Bail Project’s\(^\text{67}\) are highly effective, the County has yet to fully fund and implement innovative models like these. As a result, LA County has now exceeded its pre-covid pretrial incarceration numbers and is now over the 50% threshold. This trend can be reversed by investing in community-based pretrial services, while the county contends with the current limitations placed by state and judicial policy.

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63 La County Public Safety Realignment Team. (n.d.) Summary of Scores -- AB 109 Budget Requests Submitted to the Chief Executive Office. Retrieved May 10, 2023 from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f96-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/1e7d3f16-981b-4ace-bcb6-050f61dc5e5a/Summary%20of%20Scores.pdf

64 LA County Public Safety Realignment Team. (2021, May 21) Diversion / Alternatives to Incarceration Intercept Model. Alternatives to Incarceration Subcommittee. Retrieved May 10, 2023 from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f96-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/1e7d3f16-981b-4ace-bcb6-050f61dc5e5a/Summary%20of%20Scores.pdf

65 LA County Public Safety Realignment Team. (n.d.) Summary of Scores -- AB 109 Budget Requests Submitted to the Chief Executive Office. Accessed May 11, 2023 at https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f96-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/1e7d3f16-981b-4ace-bcb6-050f61dc5e5a/Summary%20of%20Scores.pdf


67 The Bail Project. (n.d.) http://bailproject.org/ Website. The Bail Project.
RECOMMENDATION 2: PERMANENT EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

The PSRT approved a recommendation for a Community Set Aside in FY 2021-2022. The language of the recommendation reads:

“In order to align the AB109 spending plan with the Board’s directives and the PSRT’s approved implementation plan, funding for community based services should account for at least 30% of the AB109 budget, or a minimum of $150 million, whichever is greater.”

While this 30% amount is lower than the community set asides of progressive counties like Alameda and Contra Costa, the recommendation put forth by Judge Songhai Armstead, Interim Director of the Justice, Cares and Opportunities Department, still included a plan in phases to move PSRT spending in the direction of community-based services. The recommendation further reads:

“These funds will be distributed through County department contracted third party administrators who will fund community based organizations. The County departments will leverage external revenue opportunities toward the Community Services funded programs. The cumulative funds shall be used for harm reduction, non-law enforcement, supports and services in alignment with the County’s Care First, Jails Last Report, the ATI Initiative and recommendations from the Measure J Advisory Board not already funded through Measure J funding. Funds shall be prioritized for service gaps that are not addressed by current funding allocations and programming and for the priority populations outlined in the PSRT Realignment Implementation Plan.”

Despite being overwhelmingly supported by the PSRT, this recommendation was not placed before the Board.

RECOMMENDATION 3: CAPTURE UNEPNT FUNDING TO EXPAND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

In FY 2021-2022, the PSRT submitted the following recommendations for spending through the Local Innovation Subaccount:

“In FY 2021-2022, the Board shall direct all unused AB 109 funding at the end of each fiscal year into the AB 109 Local Innovations Subaccount. Funds shall be used for the following:

- expanding harm reduction, non-law enforcement, community-based services in regions with the highest need, as indicated through the Justice Equity Needs Index (JENI) and the Justice Equity Supply Index (JESI),

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69 LA County Justice, Care, and Opportunities (JCOD) (n.d.) Website address: https://jcod.lacounty.gov/
RECOMMENDATION 4: FUNDING THE BREAKING BARRIERS PROGRAM:

In the Fall of 2022, the PSRT was informed that an additional $43 million of one-time community corrections sub account funding was set aside for the PSRT to provide recommendations. Among its recommendations, the PSRT recommended that $1.5 million be allocated to the Breaking Barriers Program, a program that primarily serves people who are on probation after having been charged with a felony. The program initially served over 200 people, but is now only able to serve 150 people due to budget reductions. The program has been uplifted by the PSRT for funding over multiple budget cycles and has yet to be funded by AB109 dollars. The CEO presented the PSRT with their deliberation on the PSRT’s recommendations during the April 2023 PSRT meeting. A representative from the CEO’s office informed the body that the office rejected the funding recommendation for the Breaking Barriers Program, citing that the program was already funded through other means. It was revealed during that meeting that, in fact, the program was not being funded through other means. As of May 2023, the CEO has yet to identify additional funding to correct this error.

This recommendation was not adopted by the CEO or presented to the Board.


73 Public Safety Realignment Team. (2023, April 20). Fiscal Year 2022-23 Mid-Year Funding Recommendations. Brian Hoffman. Retrieved May 10, 2023 from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f996-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e9499b70a2/32ed0440-daf0-4011-82a4-ca049ffa4703/CEO%20PSRT%204-20-23%20Final%20%280%29.pdf
VII. COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AB109 SPENDING

In accordance with the Board’s commitment to jail closure and court-mandated population reductions, AB 109 should be leveraged to both reduce the flow into the jails and increase the flow out of LA County Jails. The following recommendations build on the PSRT’s recommendations and are informed by community demands:

**RECOMMENDATION 1: RIGHT-SIZING CUSTODY & SUPERVISION SPENDING:**

AB 109 dollars are currently paying for 3,000 jail beds; however, only 1,743 beds are actually occupied by the AB109 population. The county can begin diverting funding allocated for the remaining 1,257 beds unoccupied by the AB109 population while still meeting its legal mandate. This can be accomplished by first leveraging state Medicaid funding to expand ODR mental housing to divert at least 1,257 people from jail, and then capturing the AB109 funding currently spent on 1,257 jail beds for community-based reentry and pretrial services. Based on the estimated cost of $89,580 to incarcerate one person in LA County for one year, a reduction of 1,257 beds amounts to $112,602,060 in annual AB 109 savings.

Additionally, the County should implement a commensurate reduction in supervision spending to mirror the year to year reductions in the AB109 population. Based on reporting from the Probation Department, in December of 2021, the department was actively supervising 8,338 from the AB109 population. Subsequent reporting on changes in the supervised AB109 population, including year to year trends are not readily available and have not been reported to PSRT. However, given the year to year reductions in the incarcerated AB109 population, it is reasonable to conclude that the downward trend of AB109 sentences should translate to a reduction of people receiving state-mandated supervision, and the AB109 funding should be reflecting that shift.

**RECOMMENDATION 2: CONDUCT A FULL ANALYSIS OF AB109**

In order to accurately right-size AB109 spending across all county departments and community programs, it is imperative that the Board of Supervisors provides the directive for a full-scale evaluation of all AB 109 funding, including mandated activities and base funding. As stated above, the state’s audit concluded that the county “should consistently report all law enforcement and non-law enforcement expenditures funded through the accounts that constitute public safety realignment.” The county’s current audit does not include law enforcement expenditures and fails to cover the full scope of other county department expenditures, including the Department of Mental Health and The Department of Children and Family Services. Allowing the PSRT to examine what the county is currently spending in “base funding” and make recommended adjustments

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75 Los Angeles County Probation Department. (2022, January 20) Online Presentation: AB 109 OVERVIEW JANUARY 2022. Howard Wong. Retrieved May 10, 2023 from https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/0234f49e-d2b7-00b6-17a4-b43e949b70a2/764be86b-8118-486d-90ec-e03dd3e481e2/AB%20109%20Overview%20-%20Probation%20Department.pdf
according to current population changes and needs, will provide the CEO and the Board with a roadmap to better leverage this permanent, and substantial, funding stream.

RECOMMENDATION 3: USE AB109 FUNDING TO EXPAND CFCI

Few permanent funding streams are as large and flexible as AB109. This is why realignment funding is a prime candidate to expand – but not supplant – the funding available for LA County Care First Community Investment. As the CFCI section of this report notes, the County has currently allocated $100 million of new dollars each year to the initiative (with a decrease for FY 2023-2024 to $88MM in new CFCI dollars). Although substantial in comparison to prior year investments, this amount grossly under-estimates what is needed to safely and efficiently reduce the incarcerated population. The CFCI process is unique in that recommendations are driven by community feedback, which most accurately reflects the real-time needs of the community compared to other county funding processes. Diverting a designated pool of AB109 dollars from the innovation fund into CFCI can support the expansion of community-based service infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION 4: ADDRESS LABOR ISSUES WITH A JUST TRANSITION

While the recommendations of the PSRT are clear, the LA County CEO has raised concerns in response. In a 2021-2022 memo about AB 109 funding, the CEO stated, “It is important to note that a substantial amount of AB 109 funding — $352.7 million as of FY 21-22 Final Changes Budget — is required to support AB 109 legally-mandated operations. Immediate implementation of some PRST recommendations would require diverting funding from ongoing operations and result in curtailments of County staff, which can only occur after an extensive planning process, including consideration of legal responsibilities/mandates and labor issues.”

Heeding the CEO’s concern, the County must begin to plan for a just transition to secure stable employment for the hundreds of thousands of County employees currently employed in the law enforcement field.

The CEO’s claim that we need to address labor issues that present themselves when we shift the budget highlights an important priority for equity in the labor community: a just transition.

As the just transition is a framework developed to aid in the economic shift away from extractive economies & oppressive systems, such as the oil and gas industry, prisons, policing, and surveillance, towards more sustainable regenerative economies & systems of care, such as green jobs, behavioral health crisis responses, and community based solutions to mass incarceration. A just transition builds economic and political power to support marginalized communities such as: formerly
incarcerated, Immigrant, Black, Indigenous, rural, communities of color and areas of high need. The just transition framework seeks to provide solutions that includes but is not limited to labor, jobs, land use, sustainability and economic stability.

The county has repeatedly heard testimony about the dire labor conditions for law enforcement both working in the Sheriff’s Department and Probation. Nationally, law enforcement officers have some of the highest levels of intimate partner violence78, death by suicide79, and problematic substance use80 – of any profession. Given the trying and harmful working conditions of jail overcrowding, facing the daily complex trauma of incarcerated people, and a historical context of violence and command and control in carceral facilities, community members who work in LA County adult and youth jails and supervision - like probation and sheriff patrol officers – are exposed to continual unaddressed retraumatization in their work environment. It is imperative that the county explore the following just transition strategies:

- Identify both lateral transition and upward transition opportunities for specific job classifications currently held within the Sheriff and Probation Departments.
- Leverage the current workforce development infrastructure in the county to retrain and place Sheriff and Probation staff into non-law enforcement positions.
- Incentive early retirement for those close to retirement age.
- Impose hiring freezes to the respective departments.
- Increase funding for “Care First” jobs that are comparable to the salaries and benefits of law enforcement to incentivize career shifts.
- Invest cost savings from reductions in both youth and adult incarcerated populations into the “Care First Economy”
- Implement hiring bonuses for staff leaving the law enforcement profession for other professions.

In order to address the concerns of the CEO, community and labor, the County must begin to explore a just transition for workers in the law enforcement field, as they also build up the decentralized system of care vision so clearly articulated in the ATI Report, the GRAC Report, the Men’s Central Jail Report, and the Care First Budget Reports. Only when workforce concerns have been addressed can the County turn the corner towards a true integration of Care First principles.

PROP 6: GENDER JUSTICE

INTERSECTIONS: CARE FIRST, GENDER JUSTICE, AND DECARCERATION:

INEQUITY IN THE INCARCERATION OF GENDER-MARGINALIZED PEOPLE:

Although only 54% of women in LA County are Black & Latine, they make up 75.5% of women in jail (as of March, 2023, according to the VERA Care First LA Jail Decarceration Data Tracking Project); Disturbingly, Black women are the most over-represented in jail relative to their population in the community. The K6G Unit – a separate unit that incarcerates TGI+ and LGB+ people in MCJ – has the highest overrepresentation of Black people of any carceral setting in the County, making the need to decarcerate this unit all the more pressing.

According to research done by Million Dollar Hoods\(^\text{81}\) on LAPD arrest data, the top five charges for women in jail in LA County between 2010 and 2016 were:

1. Possession of a controlled substance (14%)
2. Driving on a suspended license/ no license (8%).
3. Theft/ shoplifting (7%)
4. Failure to appear in court (6%)
5. DUI (6%)

This disturbing data indicates that the majority of people being caged in CRDF are there for survival acts related to addiction, poverty, and lack of transportation. Criminalizing these behaviors is criminalizing the economic disenfranchisement of cis women and TGI+ and LGB+ people of color.

LA County must evolve beyond this archaic way of handling inequity, especially for gender-marginalized people; instead, the County must invest in a decentralized system of community-based care that meets the needs of TGI+ and LGB+ people in non-carceral ways.

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HISTORY OF THE GENDER RESPONSIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Gender and racial justice are at the center of LA County’s Care First vision. To actualize a gender justice frame for the Care First vision in LA County’s jails that incarcerate TGI+ people, LGB+ people, and cis women, the Gender Responsive Advisory Committee82 was formed in 2019:

On February 12, 2019, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion, ‘Building a Gender-Responsive Criminal Justice System,’ to help initiate, extend, and maintain efforts to address the needs of justice-involved women. Among its mandates, the motion called to reconstitute the Gender Responsive Advisory Committee (GRAC) with representatives from each supervisorial district as well as the District Attorney’s Office, Public Defender, Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health, and Sheriff’s Department. On July 21st, 2020, the Board revised the February 2019 motion to expand the focus on women as well as transgender, gender non-conforming and/or intersex individuals; any facility these populations may reside; and special recognition of alternatives to incarceration and reentry. GRAC members have worked for the past year to develop recommendations to improve the gender responsiveness of the County justice system and to uplift the Board’s Care First vision. Besides a system wide emphasis, five ad hoc committees were created to concentrate attention on: Alternatives to Incarceration, LGBTQ+, Data, Health, and Reentry.

In October of 2021, the body released the Gender Responsive Advisory Committee Report83, which detailed recommendations for how gender marginalized people can safely and cost-effectively be diverted out of CRDF.

The Report (page 31) shows the disproportionate amount of time that Black women are detained. It states:

Based on a snapshot of people incarcerated in August 2020, the median days in custody for people held in CRDF was 107 and in K6G was 102. A study of people released during the pandemic found that Black women spent more days incarcerated than almost every other group and that Black people with mental health needs were released at lower rates than white counterparts.

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DECARCERATE CRDF AND K6G:

In keeping with the care first priorities mentioned earlier in this report, it is critical that we release people from the Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF, or “Lynwood”) in order to close down MCJ. The County must heed the story of Destiny Ortega, who died inside of CRDF in December of 2022 after she was reincarcerated before trial on the suspicion that she had violated her parole. Destiny should still be with us. As the community honors her life, the need to decarcerate people from CRDF and MCJ and invest in support for parents could not be clearer.

The GRAC Report highlights this need, saying:

*Decreasing the population of CRDF through more efficient diversion off-ramps would bolster MCJ Closure efforts and are in line with the goals of the GRAC.*

The GRAC Report includes recommendations around harm reduction to support people who use drugs and people who engage in sex work, as well as diversion recommendations to mitigate the criminalization of poverty, especially for gender-marginalized people of color.

IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE GRAC REPORT:

The GRAC Report included recommendations across five ad hoc areas:

1. *LGBTQ+ Ad Hoc Recommendations*, including recommendations guiding harm prevention, court support and diversion and re-entry for LGB+ and TGI+ people,
2. *Health Ad Hoc Recommendations*, including recommendations guiding diversion from jail, court and probation recommendations, case management, continuation of care, mental health and substance use recommendations, medical recommendations, and more.
3. *Re-entry Ad Hoc Recommendations*, including family reunification,
4. *Data Ad Hoc Recommendations*, and
5. *ATI Ad Hoc Recommendations*.

Across all of these recommendation areas, there is alignment between the ATI Report and the GRAC Report, with the GRAC Report using ATI principles to guide the decarceration of K6G and CRDF.
In FY 2023-2024, the GRAC has the goal of tracking the implementation of GRAC Report recommendations, to ensure the vision and roadmap laid out by the GRAC Body reaches full implementation. The County must continue to support the leadership of the GRAC to fully implement gender justice and decarceration.

THE NEED FOR MORE COMPLETE DATA HIGHLIGHTING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE OF TRANS, GENDER NON-CONFORMING AND INTERSEX EXPERIENCE:

A key recommendation uplifted from the GRAC Data Ad Hoc Committee was to provide better visibility for TGI+ and LGB+ people that experience incarceration, so that accurate numbers can paint a picture of the extent of the harms of incarceration on TGI+ and LGB+ people.

Specifically, the GRAC Report notes that the Board must do more to report data to VERA and other parties doing data analysis to better track who is in K6G and how long they are being incarcerated there for. It reads:

**Issue:** The data published by LASD includes the number of people incarcerated at CRDF and breaks down key data points by ‘males/females.’ However, it does not include the K6G units.

**Recommendation:** The Board should direct LASD to publish daily information of the number of people in the K6G units. In the longer term, the Board should encourage LASD to provide more cross-cutting daily data in line with the ATI recommendations and the Board’s January 26, 2021 motion\(^\text{84}\) on expanding and standardizing sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data collection. These efforts would allow the county, GRAC, and public to track decarceration progress.

The report further reads that:

**Regular information and data sharing can help system actors divert women and LGBTQ+ people faster and more effectively; it also can allow the county to resource efforts to drive down racial disparities.**

This call could not be more clear; gender justice advocates have named the imperative for accurate gender justice data at the County level and the state level, so as to provide appropriate gender justice services at both levels. In the words of gender justice advocates from TransLatin@ Coalition, “TGI+ people require investment; NOT making that investment makes paying for appropriate resources for TGI+ communities MORE costly in the long-run.” In other words, accurate numbers must be captured for how many TGI+

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people are incarcerated, so that other budget investment asks can be met. The California TGI Policy alliance has made budget requests at the State level. LA County must ensure that sufficient resources for TGI+ people are provided in our County, and can do so by advocating for these budget requests at the State and matching these budget requests in lieu of adequate State funding. Below are the State level asks:

A. FUNDING RE-ENTRY AND GENDER JUSTICE

In addition to the depopulation and decarceration policies, it is imperative for the County to fund community-based and TGI led reentry programs and services for TGI populations, who aside from being overrepresented in County jails and cages, find themselves double system-impacted as Black and communities of color who make up the majority of the TGI population behind bars. TGI people are criminalized for who they are and put in jail, prison or immigration detention. 21% of transgender women (one in five) have spent time in prison or jail, compared to only 5% of all U.S. When released from these facilities, TGI individuals face high levels of discrimination while trying to access the supportive services that will help us reintegrate ourselves into society.

This recidivism process is generated because of the societal conditions experienced, putting TGI folks at risk for economic insecurity, homelessness and reliance on continuous survival in underground economies, further adding to the criminalization and incarceration of TGI people across California. These issues, primarily impact transgender women of color (TWOC) who make the vast population of incarcerated TGI people in California, that is why it is imperative to address these issues by allocating the necessary funds to support the lives of TGI people in California who have experienced any type of incarceration and as they are trying to reintegrate themselves into our society. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), reported that 1,129 of incarcerated people, or just over 1% of the state’s prison population have identified themselves as trans, intersex, or nonbinary. 86 We anticipate that at least 60% of these individuals will be released in the next three years and we want to ensure that they receive the support and services that they deserve. Below is a justification and budget allocation per year of the services needed by TGI people released from incarceration.

A. HOUSING PROGRAMS

Budget Request: $8,000,000: Housing is one of the primary needs of any person being released from any type of incarceration since formerly incarcerated people are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public. 87 We recommend eight million dollars to be allocated

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across the state to fund housing programs that are specifically designed to support housing opportunities for TGI people. Programs should include: emergency and transitional housing with a path to permanent housing. The recommended programs must be directly targeted to support TGI reentry populations given priority to CBOs who’s populations they serve are at least 65% TGI identified people.

C. **WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

**Budget Request: $7,000,000:** TGI people face continuous discrimination when trying to access employment and are often harassed and denied opportunities while employed even after the passing of SB 396, due to the lack of access, discrimination, and implementation. The 2015 United States Transgender Survey states that 27% of trans people who held or applied for a job during that year—19% of all respondents—reported being fired, denied a promotion, or not being hired for a job they applied for because of their gender identity or expression. For individuals being released from incarceration the discrimination is compounded. That is why it is important to design workforce development programs and economic opportunities for ex-incarcerated TGI people. The recommended programs must be directly targeted to support TGI reentry populations given priority to CBOs who’s populations they serve are at least 65% TGI identified people.

D. **HEALTH, SOCIAL HEALTH, AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Budget Request: $10,000,000:** TGI people continue to lack access to social, health and human services. For TGI people who are leaving incarceration and trying to reintegrate into society this is much more difficult as sexual assault is 13 times more prevalent among transgender inmates, with 59% reporting being sexually assaulted while in a California correctional facility adding to ongoing mental and physical trauma. Supported services that include health, mental, spiritual, the arts and social services are critical to support the reintegration of TGI people who have been incarcerated. That is why we recommend a comprehensive approach to better support the livelihood of TGI people and address the health, social and human services needs of TGI people.

**GENDER JUSTICE INVESTMENTS INTO THE FUTURE**

It is imperative that LA County Invest in the decarceration of CRDF and K6G with a lens for how to help Black, Latine and Indigenous TGI+ and LGB+ communities thrive this budget cycle. Further, it is critical that LA County advocate to the state to fully invest in TGI+ communities.

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PROPOSAL 7: COMMIT TO BUILDING THE CARE FIRST VISION THROUGH AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY COLLABORATION, POWER SHARING AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING TO ENSURE CONSISTENT EQUITABLE INVESTMENT.

WHAT IS THE CARE FIRST BUDGET SURVEY?:

Over the past several years, Angelenos have consistently called for investments in systems of care rather than systems of harm and punishment. Whether at the ballot box with a resounding win for Measure J, in packed zoom rooms for meetings of the Board of Supervisors, or in active participation in Care First Community Investment Town Halls and listening sessions, the people of LA County have made it clear that they want to see the Care First Vision realized. However, the County’s willingness to fund a budget consistent with its stated values in support of its existing plans and reports—and responsive to the desires of its constituents—remains less clear.

The RELA Coalition remains committed to amplifying those calls and conducted a survey to identify community concerns and priorities. The results of the survey are reflected in the demands and recommendations included in this report.

SURVEY RESPONDENT DATA:

A total of 936 respondents completed the survey in calendar year quarter one of 2023. In addition to contextual variables including demographics, housing, and lived experience with the criminal legal system, survey respondents were asked to rank budget priorities as well as make investment recommendations for community resources and government agencies.

Survey respondents ranked nine budget priorities, and these rankings were averaged with lower scores indicating higher preference. Overall, housing security was ranked the highest priority (score=1.6), followed by food security (score=3.1), and public health and healthcare (score=3.4).

Survey respondents also made investment recommendations for nineteen community resources and government agencies on a 5-item scale including maximum investment, moderate investment, minimum investment, no investment and divestment. Responses were scored (maximum investment=1 and divestment=5), averaged, and ranked. When necessary, tied scores were broken by a statistical measure of agreement among survey respondents (i.e. standard deviation). Mental health and wellness was ranked the highest investment priority (score=1.22, 83% recommend maximum investment), followed by affordable housing (score=1.29, 78% recommend maximum investment) and community care workers (score=1.41, 68% recommend maximum investment). In contrast, the lowest investment priority was the Sheriff’s Department (score=4.35, 70% recommend divest), after incarceration (score=4.19, 65% recommend divest) and the probation department (score=3.87, 46% recommend divest).

This data clearly reflects that Angelenos want to invest in a care first vision, and do not want to invest in law enforcement.
OTHER BUDGET COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DEMANDS

In addition to the survey data, the community has collated other demands that will improve the budgeting process so that it is more equitable, transparent, and accessible for community input. Specifically, to ensure Los Angeles County is able to realize the dream of a care first, jails last vision, the County needs to prioritize and give power to community needs and voices. Communities experiencing high disparities and negatively impacted by the carceral infrastructure must be prioritized for input. Not only should the needs and voices of BIPOC, low-income, immigrant, unhoused, and other marginalized be heard, but funding also needs to follow the needs and concerns of these communities. In order to do that, the budget process must be improved to allow for accessibility and community input.

A. RESTRUCTURING THE BUDGET PROCESS:

As it stands, the budget process allows for little community engagement or accessibility. Communities have few avenues for influencing the budget or getting their demands heard in a way that impacts the final budget outcome. In mid-April the Recommended Budget is released and presented to the Board of Supervisors by the Chief Executive Officer. By this time, department heads, budget deputies from BOS offices, and the CEO’s office have been developing the budgets for months. Much of this process is done without valuable community insight being solicited. Even when some department heads or BOS offices conduct community engagement to help develop their budget requests, this community engagement is not done consistently across departments within the County. Further, all too often, little is done to include an equity lens in these processes.

After the Recommended Budget is released to the public and presented on by the CEO, there are several public budget hearings that community members can attend to have their voices heard. These hearings are limited, especially in comparison to the months of deep review Departments have the opportunity to do prior to mid-April.

Furthermore, having real impact in making significant changes to the budget between mid-April and when the budget is adopted in June is unlikely. Making matters more complicated, county budgets are not easy for community members without a public finance background to read and understand. All of this results in a heavy burden placed on communities to even have their local officials hear, let alone enact, their demands. Thus, the way the budget process is currently set up, it is a hardship for communities to meaningfully participate. The county must enact more progressive and engaging modes of moving through the budget process, like using participatory budgeting principles and authentic community engagement throughout the budget process. Further, the county can also use data-driven tactics that prioritize high-needs areas that are facing complex challenges for support on previously intractable issues.
B. BREAKING THROUGH EXISTING NARRATIVES AND STRUCTURES IN PLACE:

There is significant power behind the carceral status quo, both in the public imagination, and in the capital infrastructure and human capital investments that the county has made year after year. It is not hard to understand that people want to be safe in their homes and in their communities. Yet, the way our carceral system is set up does not ensure safety; in fact, the LA County jail and LASD sheriff patrol system creates safety risks for most of the community members they come in contact with. Despite this fact, the media and popular culture have bombarded us with ideas that only police can provide safety. Not only are pro-law enforcement narratives strong, but their impact on cultural consciousness – and resulting government budget allocations – are too. The county must invest in narrative shifts to communicate to the general public about the success of programs like the Office of Diversion and Reentry Jail-Based Diversion and Harm Reduction programs, and youth development programs, rather than allowing status quo copaganda to dominate the popular imagination.

C. EQUITY NEEDS:

In order to prioritize equity through racial, geographic, gender, and sexuality lenses in alignment with the County’s stated values, budget investments must reach the communities and neighborhoods with the highest need. The RELA Coalition and the County identified eight neighborhoods in need of prioritization through the ATI Work Group community engagement process, which were selected based on data from Million Dollar Hoods\(^2\) and The Advancement Project (now Catalyst California)\(^3\). Specific data on youth in these select neighborhoods was provided by the USC Center for Social Innovation, using their Neighborhood Data for Social Change\(^4\) tool to confirm that these neighborhoods must also be prioritized for young people. The eight prioritized neighborhoods are Compton, East LA, El Monte, Long Beach, Lancaster, Pacoima, Pomona, and South LA.

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\(^2\) Million Dollar Hoods. (n.d) Website. MDH. https://milliondollarhoods.pre.ss.ucla.edu/

\(^3\) Catalyst California. (n.d.) Website. Catalyst CA. 2023 https://www.catalystcalifornia.org/

Budgets are a clear statement of our values. Los Angeles County’s budget reflects an overinvestment in systems of harm and serves as an indication of the County’s values and leadership. Annually we see the County spends billions of dollars on policing, surveillance, prosecution, and incarceration, while making minimum investments into the systems of care that heal our communities from the harm that has been done throughout history.

For decades, community members and community-based coalitions have pushed the County to shift spending away from the prison industrial complex and into other services which is a true desire for many Los Angeles residents. Community members have provided proven road maps to the County written by directly impacted advocates, and informed by lived experience. While verbal commitments have been made for some time, it is clear that concrete action to realize a care-first vision for LA County has not occurred in a substantial way. Harmful intuitions like Men’s Central Jail remain open and the County is prioritizing current systems that have historically criminalized vulnerable Black, Brown, Indigenous and LGBTQIA+, low-income communities, and other communities of color.

Not only must ATI be fully funded, but it must be LA County’s top priority. The County must align the budget with a Care First vision and fully investment in CFCI investment and reductions in the Sheriff and Probation budgets, as well as commensurate care first alignment of AB109 and Care First spending related to the recommendations of the Gender Responsive Advisory Committee (GRAC) report. The County MUST Close Men’s Central Jail (MCJ) by March 2025 by reducing the jail population to less than 8,500 people.

To align the budget with the County’s priority to close MCJ, we demand the immediate allocation of $275 million to fund 3,600 mental-health treatment beds. Finally, the County must also cut the pretrial population to less than 1,000 people, using a decentralized system of care and without the probation department. Funding a supportive pretrial services system independent from the probation department will support the decarceration of the over 50% of people inside of LA County jails incarcerated at the pretrial phase of the criminal legal process.

As is true every year, the Board of Supervisors has an opportunity and a responsibility to effect social transformation through budgetary accountability. Rather than perpetuate an inequitable, unjust status quo, the Board must actively and urgently pursue its Care First Vision to build a future where all communities have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

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WE URGE THE BOARD TO ADOPT THE PROPOSALS IN THIS REPORT AND WORK WITH THE COUNTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE TO AMEND THE RECOMMENDED BUDGET IN ALIGNMENT WITH A CARE FIRST VISION DURING THIS AND SUBSEQUENT BUDGET CYCLES.

THE REIMAGINE LA COALITION REMAINS COMMITTED TO PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COUNTY TO MAKE THE CARE FIRST VISION A REALITY. TO DISCUSS THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT IN MORE DETAIL, PLEASE CONTACT US AT INFO@REIMAGINE.LA
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