

Executive Summary

*An Examination of African American
Experiences in Los Angeles*

INTERIM REPORT

AUGUST 2024

City of Los Angeles Reparations Advisory Commission



LA Civil Rights



CITY OF LOS ANGELES
REPARATIONS
ADVISORY COMMISSION
A Unit of LA Civil Rights



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Los Angeles City Councilmember




HEATHER HUTT
LOS ANGELES COUNCILWOMAN
10TH DISTRICT



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LA Civil Rights



On behalf of the City of Los Angeles' Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights) and its Reparations Advisory Commission, I am honored to present our comprehensive report, *An Examination of African-American Experiences in Los Angeles*.

LA Civil Rights produced this report in partnership with California State University, Northridge, and Mockingbird Analytics, which details more than 100 years of harms experienced by African American community members in Los Angeles. To develop this report, we conducted over 18 months of original research, analysis, and public participation, including nearly 60 community engagements and webinars, more than 600 survey responses, and 18 focus groups and interviews with current and former Angelenos.

Community members helped drive the pace and pursuit from our Reparations Advisory Commission and Office of Race and Equity to take a truthful look at the past while remaining hopeful for a more equitable and repaired Los Angeles.

Throughout the history of Los Angeles, African American residents have faced both systemic and institutionalized racial violence. This history manifests itself in modern Black life, from health to homeownership to education. In Los Angeles, a sprawling and diverse city, Black Angelenos still experience significant housing instability, making up 35% of all unhoused individuals (LAHSA 2024), while also seeing the lowest homeownership rates of any group in Los Angeles County (ARDI 2023). Less than 75% of Black students obtain a high school degree, compared to their white counterparts at roughly an 87% completion rate (ARDI 2023).

As LA Civil Rights' Founding Executive Director, I am committed to bringing restorative, equity-focused programming and policy to the City of Los Angeles. Although this report lists past — and even present — impacts of institutional racism, our City leaders have already started to right many historic wrongs. LA City Council has taken historic steps to address the legacies of harms, including providing \$8.5 million for community-based projects administered through L.A. REPAIR, the City's first Participatory Budgeting Pilot Program operating in nine neighborhoods, which were redlined, and experienced high COVID-19 mortality rates, pollution, unemployment, and other challenges exacerbated by both institutional and overt racism. We take another step forward with this report.

This study would not have been possible without Mayor Karen Bass, Los Angeles City Council President Pro Tempore Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Councilmembers Curren Price and Heather Hutt, the Reparations Advisory Commission, Commission Counsel Heather Aubry and Anne Haley, and the tireless efforts of LA Civil Rights staff. Their commitment to this work cannot be understated. To our community members, thank you for your contributions, and we invite you to follow our work to deliver reparations recommendations. Together, we can continue to lift a better Los Angeles.

Keep the faith and keep the fight —

Capri Maddox, Esq.

Executive Director, LA Civil Rights



As Councilmember of the 8th District I want to express my deep commitment to advancing reparations in the City of Los Angeles. Reparations are crucial in addressing the historical and ongoing injustices faced by marginalized communities in our city.

For many residents, particularly in Council District 8, the legacy of systemic inequities has had a lasting impact on economic opportunities, educational access, and overall quality of life. Reparations are not just symbolic; they are an essential step towards rectifying these disparities.

My constituents have long advocated for meaningful change, and reparations are a key part of this effort. They represent a necessary acknowledgment of the resilience and contributions of affected communities and are fundamental to building a more equitable future. This commitment reflects our values of justice and fairness, ensuring that the voices of those most impacted by historical injustices are recognized and addressed.

I also want to acknowledge the outstanding leadership of Executive Director Capri Maddox from the Department of Civil, Human Rights, and Equity and the Reparations Advisory Commission. Their tireless efforts and dedication have been instrumental in pushing this important initiative forward.

I stand firmly behind this initiative, understanding its importance in fostering healing and promoting a more inclusive and just Los Angeles for all.

With Hope,

Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Los Angeles City Council President Pro Tempore, Eighth District



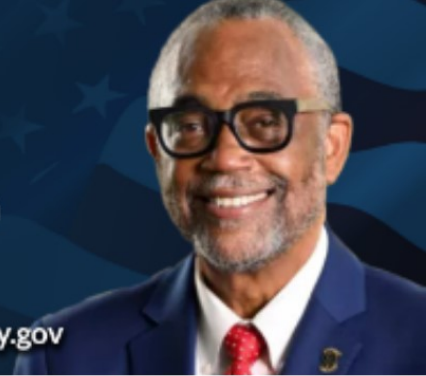
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Dear Angelenos,

The idea of reparations in Los Angeles has been evolving over the years with the future of Black Angelenos resting heavily on how the playing field can be leveled. Today marks a new chapter with the release of a vital Reparations Report that highlights the Impact of the Black Experience in Los Angeles.

As the representative of District 9, a community I grew up in, I witnessed the struggles of an area that was being ravaged by the undercutting of opportunities, redlining, white flight, and blockbusting—reaching a boiling point during the Watts riots in the 1960s. The history we look back on was not long ago.

This time in history would become a pivotal moment of the Civil Rights movement here in Los Angeles. It was then that Black consciousness began to take flight and we gained some momentum in our stand against the discrimination, exclusion, and disenfranchisement the Black community had been forced to endure for centuries.

Today, reparations signify a commitment to confronting the legacy of racism with sincerity and integrity. Although we've made progress our ancestors could only dream of, much work remains to change hearts and minds, and Los Angeles will continue to be a leader in these long-overdue efforts.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Department of Civil, Human Rights, and Equity Executive Director Capri Maddox and members of the City of Los Angeles Reparations Advisory Commission for taking on this important initiative. Their dedication and hard work are crucial in moving our city towards meaningful change and justice.

I am deeply committed to ensuring our policies reflect equity, justice, and recognition. In doing so, we acknowledge historical injustices and strive for a future where all Angelenos can thrive equally one day.

With hope,





August 2024

The City of Los Angeles has been steadfast in their efforts and commitment to the reparations movement. As a Councilwoman, I firmly believe that addressing and rectifying the injustices of the past is not only morally imperative but also a crucial step towards building a more equitable and inclusive future for all residents across our beloved City.

Reparations are made to relieve some of the impacts of historical injustices that have enduring scars. By confronting the hardships of the past and taking tangible steps towards reparative measures, we are not only acknowledging the suffering endured but also paving the way for healing and reconciliation.

This movement is profoundly meaningful, and represents a commitment to repairing the harms inflicted upon marginalized communities, ensuring that we do not repeat the mistakes of history. It is an opportunity to address systemic inequalities and foster an inclusive environment that gives every individual the opportunity to thrive.

In addressing past harms, we are making a conscious choice to move forward with a renewed sense of justice and unity for all people in our City. It is through these efforts that we honor the resilience in our communities and build a foundation for a brighter and more just future for us all.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this imperative cause. Together, we will continue to work towards a Los Angeles where justice prevails and every resident can share in the promise of a more equitable tomorrow.

Sincerely,

HEATHER HUTT
Councilwoman, 10th District



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Introduction and Historical Background

Executive Summary Overview

In June 2021, the City of Los Angeles established the Reparations Advisory Commission, a Blue-Ribbon Task Force, composed of leading partners in activism, academia, law, and racial justice. In 2023, the Commission launched a study to document the Black Experience in Los Angeles, how harm may be quantified or calculated, and the funding structures City officials may consider for implementing reparations. The Commission's academic partner, California State University, Northridge (CSUN), and fund development partner, Mockingbird Analytics, have produced a body of work founded on community conversations and original historical research that can support policymaking in the City of Los Angeles. The scope of the project was to primarily research happenings from the City's 1925 charter until today. Foundational to this comprehensive study and part of a wider effort to map Black voices in Los Angeles, was *The African American Experience in Los Angeles Survey*. The survey, focus groups and interviews, commonly known as The Black Experience Study, led by CSUN, garnered hundreds of responses from former and current Angelenos.

The landscape analyses of 12 areas of harm and the survey of Black voices featured in this Executive Summary provide insight into past City policies and actions, as well as historic and contemporary experiences resulting from other public agencies, private citizens and institutions, national ideologies and practices. It is important to note not all harms can be remedied solely by the City of Los Angeles, as some experiences articulated in this report are beyond the scope of the City's organizational or geographic jurisdiction. However, this report illuminates a path forward toward reparations and reconciliation.

Introduction

Black Americans have historically faced profound racial hostility, as symbolized in the 1868 Presidential campaign slogan of Horatio Seymour and Francis Blair, who boldly emblazoned the slogan, "This is a White Man's Country: Let White Men Rule" on campaign badges.¹ Racial animus placed formerly-enslaved and free-born Black Americans in a consistently precarious and often dangerous positions as new citizens of the United States (U.S.). While the end of the Civil War and ratification of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865 ended legalized chattel slavery, the harms suffered from the passage and enforcement of Jim Crow laws and institutional customs that excluded African Americans from nearly all walks of social, political, and economic life has, for the past 128 years led to negative outcomes for African Americans. More Americans are increasingly coming to terms with the structural systems that work to hinder African Americans from fully realizing equitable outcomes with other racial groups. The recent number of high-profile killings of unarmed Black men and women by law enforcement officers, and most notably, the murder of George Floyd in 2020, gave many Americans another reason to reexamine the ways in which systematic racism continues to plague the United States.

A faculty research team at the California State University, Northridge (CSUN) was selected by the City of Los Angeles Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights) to research, study, and present data on the harms that have affected African Americans while residents and visitors to the City of Los Angeles. The data in this study is presented after extensive historical research and communication with African American residents and former residents of Los Angeles. The information presented here is an overview of existing reports, books, and numerous studies that present verifying harms caused by racial animus directed toward African Americans. Angelenos, like other citizens of the United States, perpetuated slavery era pseudo-scientific racist ideas that argued African Americans were either subhuman, unintelligent or uncivilized. These pseudo-scientific ideas were foundational to cultures within governmental agencies, and practices by private citizens, institutions and business. This Report addresses the history of the City of Los Angeles's role in explicitly creating anti-Black policies or supporting private citizens in their own efforts to discriminate.

¹ Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, The New York Public Library. "Our ticket, Our Motto: This is a White Man's Country; Let White Men Rule." Campaign badge supporting Horatio Seymour and Francis Blair, Democratic candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States, 1868." *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. 1868. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/62a9d0e6-4fc9-dbce-e040-e00a18064a66>

Study Structure

The complete study, which is forthcoming, is divided into 10 parts. Part I contains acknowledgments. With this Executive Summary (Part II), we summarize the scope of the research and findings, and provide preliminary recommendations. Part III is an introduction to the study and provides information on the methodology and approach to the report. Part IV offers an overview of the study framework and methods. Part V, the Landscape Analysis, summarizes the compounding harms that have affected African Americans and their communities throughout Los Angeles. Part VI provides the ethnographic research conducted using interviews and focus groups of African American constituents. Part VII is the *Cost of Inequity in City Services* report based on research by the study's fund development partner, Mockingbird Analytics (MA). That component outlines the possible culpability of City departments given their histories of racialized injustice for Black Angelenos over time. Part VIII provides a summary of the study findings and offers recommendations for next steps. References (Part IX) and the Appendix (Part X) wrap up the report.

Historical Summary

From its beginning as a Spanish Pueblo, Los Angeles had a significant Black population. Los Angeles was founded on *Tongva* land in 1781 by *Los Pobladores*, a group of 44 people of mixed Native, European and African ancestry, of which 26 were of African descent.² These 26 pobladores, who volunteered for the expedition to Alta-California, were part of the nearly 2,500,000 Africans forcibly imported by Spain and delivered throughout the Spanish empire. People of African descent shared in the building of the Los Angeles pueblo and became some of its most recognized *Californio* residents.³ Over a century, the number of residents of African descent receded as the non-Indian population increased.

California quickly achieved statehood due to the Gold Rush. Although it came into the Union as a free state, Californios and other non-European residents were quickly challenged by the new majority of European Americans who migrated to California from the Midwest, New England, and the Deep South. African Americans counted among the migrants to Los Angeles during the latter half of the 19th century as train service expanded to western states and cities. Eventually, competition among the railways lowered the cost of travel, while Pullman Porters and newspapers advertised the benefits of migration, with emphasis on the weather, access to land, and more freedom.

The end of the Reconstruction in 1877 ushered in a cascade of “legal” racist laws meant to erode the protections Black people gained from the passage of the 14th (due process) and 15th Amendments (protection against political disenfranchisement). In many cases, Reconstruction amounted to a “second slavery” when newly enacted southern labor laws were enacted to force/coerce newly freed African Americans to return to the plantations,

Black Angelenos suffered socially, politically and economically from the nation's caste system.

workhouses, factories to work for former plantation owners for little no compensation. Black cities, towns and communities were constant targets of White Terror. African Americans were violently murdered and expelled from cities, such as East St. Louis, I.L. (1917), Tulsa, O.K., and its Black Wall Street (1921), and Rosewood, F.L., (1923). In other cases, legal power was used unjustly in

² Jack D. Forbes, “The Early African Heritage in California,” in *Seeking El Dorado, African Americans in California*, ed. Lawrence De Graff, Kevin Mulroy, Quintard Taylor (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 73.

³ Leonard Pitt, *Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846-1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

politics by the policymakers in the City of Manhattan Beach. They stripped Black individuals of their property and eliminated an African American Resort (1924)⁴, sustaining the racial wealth gap and eliminating vestiges of Black cultural and intellectual life. Racial housing covenants,⁵ urban neglect and decay-environmental racism,⁶ police brutality,⁷ institutionalized and personal racism, and a precarious labor market worked to limit equal access to educational and economic opportunities for people of African descent and created urban ghettos, and by default, worked to undermine Black families. The Watts (1965)⁸ and Los Angeles uprisings (1992)⁹ underscored the dimensions of generations of racism toward the Black community and were the manifestation of generational harm African Americans in Los Angeles had endured.

By 1900, there were 2,131 African Americans residing in Los Angeles, representing 3% of the City's population and the second-largest Black population in the State of California. By 1920, the African American population who hoped to benefit from the promises of Los Angeles had increased exponentially. These new migrants encountered a gap between their expectations and growing White hostility. Citywide policies contributed to a local caste system and the erosion of rights of Black residents. They also encountered violence and personal harm as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and police brutality ravaged their neighborhoods.

Much of the race and ethnicity-based legislation directed at African Americans can be clearly traced to policies formed at the federal and state levels, most of which remained unchallenged by local officials. Chief among the local codes were the racially restrictive covenants that prohibited Black and other non-Europeans homebuyers from owning homes in desirable neighborhoods. Black residents were often relegated to the worst parts of the city. Black neighborhoods were often neglected and even abandoned by the City government, leaving Black constituents with poor infrastructure, inadequate transportation, inferior schools and parks, and limited access to economic and educational opportunities. Restrictive covenants and federal redlining policies profoundly affected the ability of African Americans to accumulate generational wealth, and the effects have proven to be both exceptionally durable and deleterious. Segregation was rampant, as Black people were barred from business establishments and leisure spaces, including a variety of hotels, swimming pools, and public beaches. They were also excluded from City jobs, including roles with the, police and fire departments.

To combat disparate treatment, African Americans joined organizations in unprecedented numbers. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) became the most powerful civil rights organization, fighting diligently to prohibit formal and informal rules that blocked its community from full access to opportunities. In concert with other community-based organizations, churches, and the Black press, NAACP activism forced public institutions' departments to integrate.

All told, billions of dollars in unrealized wealth have been denied to Black families in Los Angeles that make it difficult for them to remain in wealthier westside neighborhoods. Simultaneously, authorities and public officials across many agencies have delivered a century or more of appalling infrastructure, substandard schools, unsafe neighborhoods, dangerous levels of exposure to pollution, and harmful environmental conditions to the working class and poor.

4 Allison Rose Jefferson, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites During the Jim Crow Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020); R. J. Smith, *The Great Black Way: L.A. in the 1940's and the Lost African American Renaissance* (New York: Public Affairs 2006)

5 Lawrence B. DeGraaf, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890–1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 1970 39 (3): 323–352.

6 Chip Jacobs and William Kelly (2008). *Smogtown: The Lung-Burning History of Pollution in Los Angeles* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2008).

7 Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

8 Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1995); A Report by the Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, December 2, 1965. (McCone Commission).

9 Lou Cannon, *Official Negligence: How Rodney King and the Riots Changed Los Angeles and the LAPD* (New York: Basic Books 1997); Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

Study Framework & Methods

Methodology

Examining the impact of enslavement and disenfranchisement on Black Los Angelenos, a *Justice-Centered Design Thinking* framework was employed in this study. We also applied an Afrocentric lens to assess the harms committed against African people and their descendants in Los Angeles. The study incorporates both political and justice analysis that include analyses of state and local policies that impacted African Americans, and a landscape and Geo-spatial analysis of historical and contemporary data, mapping the geographic parameters of Black Los Angeles. Census data research documenting population statistics, landownership, employment, and other indicators of disparities, was also conducted.

Program Design (Justice-Centered Design Thinking and Afrocentricity)

Justice-Centered Thinking has been conceptualized as an action-driven model that is social and political.¹⁰ It entails both understanding what is equitable and correcting inequities.¹¹ A *Justice-Centered Design Thinking* framework adds the dimension of *Repair*, which is essential when envisioning and reflecting solutions to injustices faced by communities that have been systemically harmed. The *Repair* phase is intended to apply a corrective lens throughout the design, research, and analysis process in order to make amends for harms and injustices and to make the communities impacted whole. In this research, this process will be embedded in every phase and includes a constant examination of systemic injustices. In this case, racism and systemic inequities. Studying reparations with a Justice-centered Design Thinking framework implements a restorative mission within the research project in order to aim the communities toward wholistic resolutions.

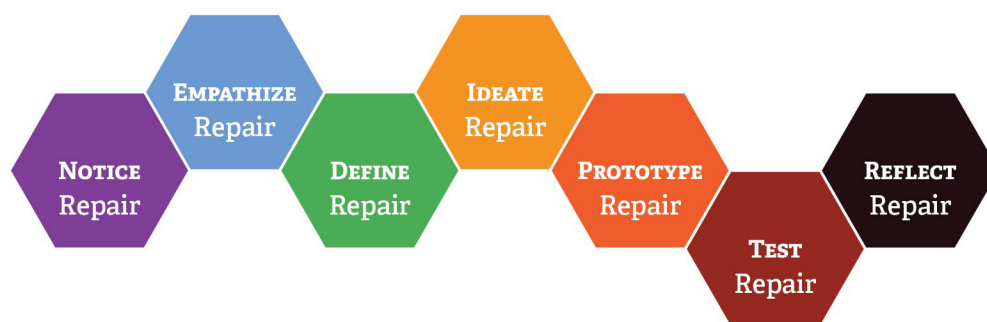


Figure 1. Justice-Centered Design Thinking Approach expanded from Equity-Centered Design Thinking (Clifford, 2017).

Utilizing a reparations methodology, this study attempted to undergo a process that assures that African-descended persons in Los Angeles harmed by enslavement, systemic discrimination and institutional racism are able to have cultural truths exposed, accountability enacted, and continued harm disrupted and ceased. This methodological approach is aimed at providing a reparative effect that addresses the needs, violations, and injustices experienced by African Americans.¹²

Additionally, an Afrocentric lens was applied to provide a culturally attuned assessment of the harms committed against African people and their descendants in Los Angeles as a result of enslavement and systematic racism including political disenfranchisement, voter suppressions, redlining, educational inequity, subprime lending practices, racial and police terrorism, and employment inequities, and underemployment. Afrocentricity is a

10 Roldan, W., Badillo-Urquiola, K., Sobel, K., Lee, K. J., J. Wisniewski, P., Ahn, J., ... & Yip, J. (2021, June). Justice-Centered Design Engagements with Children and Teens: What's at Stake, the Actions we Take, and the Commitments we Make. In *Interaction Design and Children* (pp. 666-669).

11 Roldan, W., Badillo-Urquiola, K., Sobel, K., Lee, K. J., J. Wisniewski, P., Ahn, J., ... & Yip, J. (2021, June). Justice-Centered Design Engagements with Children and Teens: What's at Stake, the Actions we Take, and the Commitments we Make. In *Interaction Design and Children* (pp. 666-669).

12 Sarkin, Jeremy. "Providing reparations in Uganda: Substantive recommendations for implementing reparations in the aftermath of the conflicts that occurred over the last few decades." *African Human Rights Law Journal* 14.2 (2014): 526-552.

methodology that centers African peoples' cultures, experiences, worldviews, and ways of being in any analysis of African phenomenon.¹³ Afrocentricity prioritizes the subject place of Africans and is grounded in African agency.¹⁴ The liberation of African peoples is the ultimate aim of Afrocentricity.¹⁵ Applying this paradigm allows the researchers to engage Black communities with humility and respect and also empowers the communities to define resolutions and reparations from their own cultural perspective.

Methods

Historical, Political, and Justice Analysis

An analysis of public policies and laws at the federal, state, and local levels was conducted to ascertain the legal impact of racial discrimination against African American descendants of enslaved Africans in the City of Los Angeles. Federal laws, policies, and the U.S. Supreme Court rulings, such as the Fugitive Slave Act (1850) as well as racially restrictive covenants, Dred Scott v. Stanford (1857) and Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) ushered in a host of racist public policies that emboldened states to enact racially discriminatory laws and policies that restricted and/or denied African peoples the rights and privileges of citizenship and human dignity. A critical analysis of California and the City of Los Angeles' public policies equipped the study with systems-based analysis to understand the resulting impact on Black lives in Los Angeles.

Landscape Analysis

The landscape analysis of the harms that the City of Los Angeles committed or was complicit in perpetuating against enslaved persons, formerly enslaved persons, or their descendants largely involved a data-centric approach. Both spatial and non-spatial information was combined and layered with other project tasks (such as ethnographic work) to inform the study. This landscape analysis process included three major components: data acquisition, analysis, and presentation (visualization and dissemination) of findings.

Data acquisition was instrumental throughout the study. We developed a comprehensive database of relevant data in the form of maps, spatial data layers, and non-spatial (e.g. tabular) data. To achieve this goal, the project team employed data discovery efforts to identify existing data from various sources such as public agencies, nonprofits, and academic institutions.

Various analyses were performed to identify and quantify harms committed against Black residents in Los Angeles. Specifically, the project team utilized acquired sources such as redlining maps and census data to identify locations and movement of the Black community impacted by inequity, consequences of inequality and the legacy of slavery. Two specific analyses include housing equity and identification and impact of linear barriers.

Our team collected demographic and housing data at the neighborhood level to document and calculate the differential rate of equity growth (1930-2020) for neighborhoods affected by discriminatory housing policy versus those neighborhoods where minority residents were prohibited from purchasing real estate. This data was used to demonstrate the loss of equity incurred through discriminatory housing policy endorsed by local city officials.

Ethnographic Surveys, Interviews and Focus Groups

The CSUN Research Team administered *The African American Experience in Los Angeles* survey from June 19, 2023, until its close on February 29, 2024, the end of Black History Month. The purpose of this survey was to learn how the City of Los Angeles has impacted Black/African American lives and ways to repair harms. Therefore, we sought to obtain participants experiences and thoughts on issues that may help the city understand how to effectively serve Black/African American communities.

Between July 2023 and February 2024, the CSUN Research Team conducted nine individual interviews and nine focus groups with Black community members residing in the City of Los Angeles. These three participatory

¹³ Asante, M. K. (2007). *An afrocentric manifesto: Toward an African renaissance*. Polity.

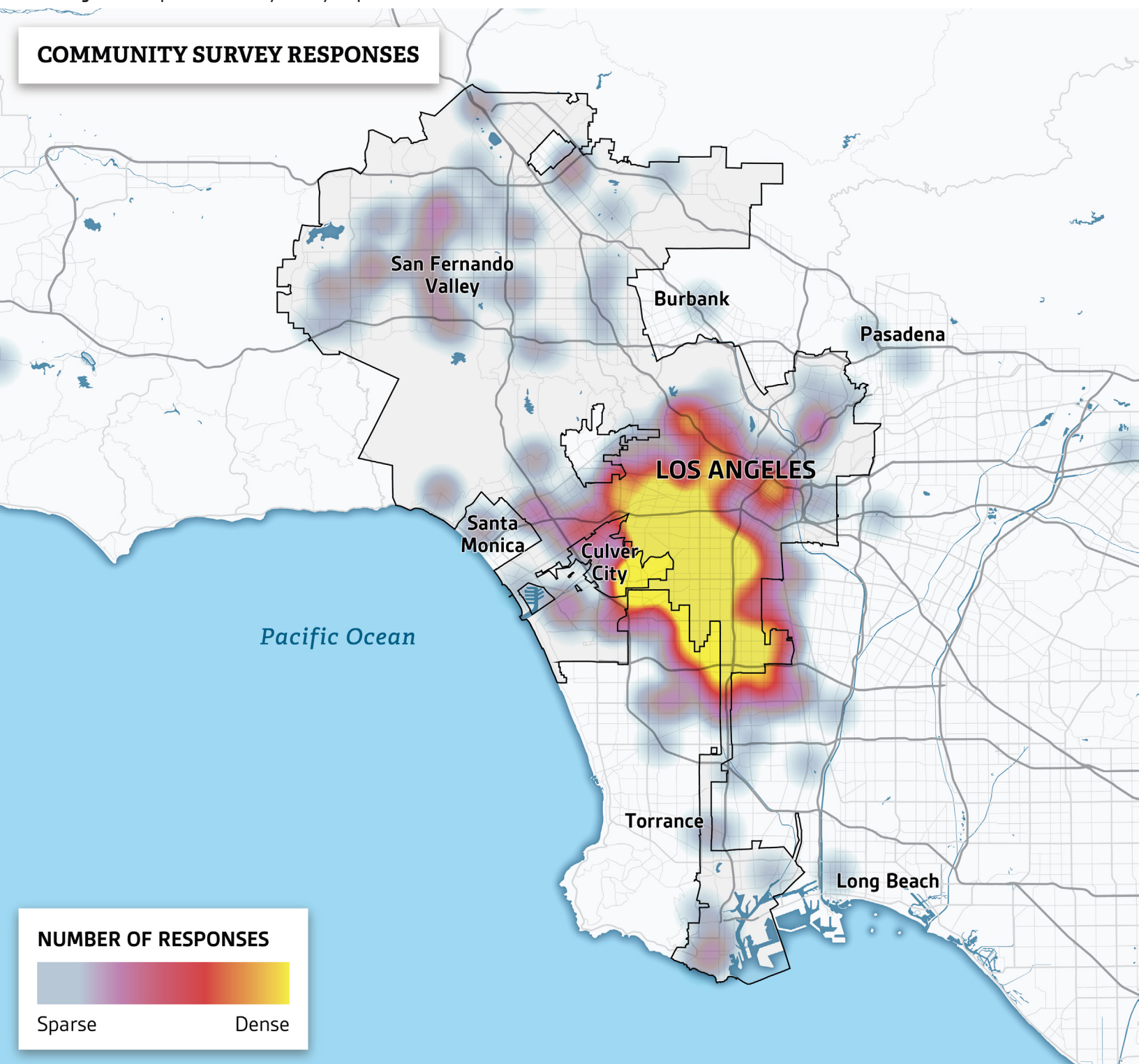
¹⁴ Asante, M. (2011). *Afrocentric idea revised*. Temple University Press.

¹⁵ Mazama, A. (2001). The Afrocentric paradigm: Contours and definitions. *Journal of Blackstudies*, 31(4), 387-405.

research activities — the survey, focus groups, and individual interviews — were commonly known as the Black Experience Study.

The goal was to launch the survey on Juneteenth 2023 in conjunction with events in celebration of African Americans liberation from enslavement. LA Civil Rights and its Reparations Advisory Commission, which funded the study, conducted outreach to learn from a diverse pool of respondents with some history of residence in the City of Los Angeles. Activities include approximately 30 presentations at meetings and community events, including church services and festivals. The department advertised with print, digital, and radio outlets, and held public forums and webinars to advertise the study. Figure 2 provides a heatmap showing the reported residential locations of respondents.

Figure 2. Map of community survey responses.



Surveying Black Voices

A total of 618 individuals identifying as Black and/or Black and multi-racial heritage completed the *African American Experience in Los Angeles* survey. About 60% of respondents (n=372) identified as cisgender women and 198 identified as cisgender men. Another 2% of respondents identified as gender non-conforming and an additional 6% selected the other/prefer not to answer option on the survey. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 97 with majority ranging from 50-69. Information regarding participants relationship status was also collected. Around 43% of participants reported being single, while 28% were married, 14% were divorced, and 6% were widowed.

Over 75% of respondents note that the city policies and law enforcement practices negatively impact them.

— Reparations Study Ethnographic Report Survey Results

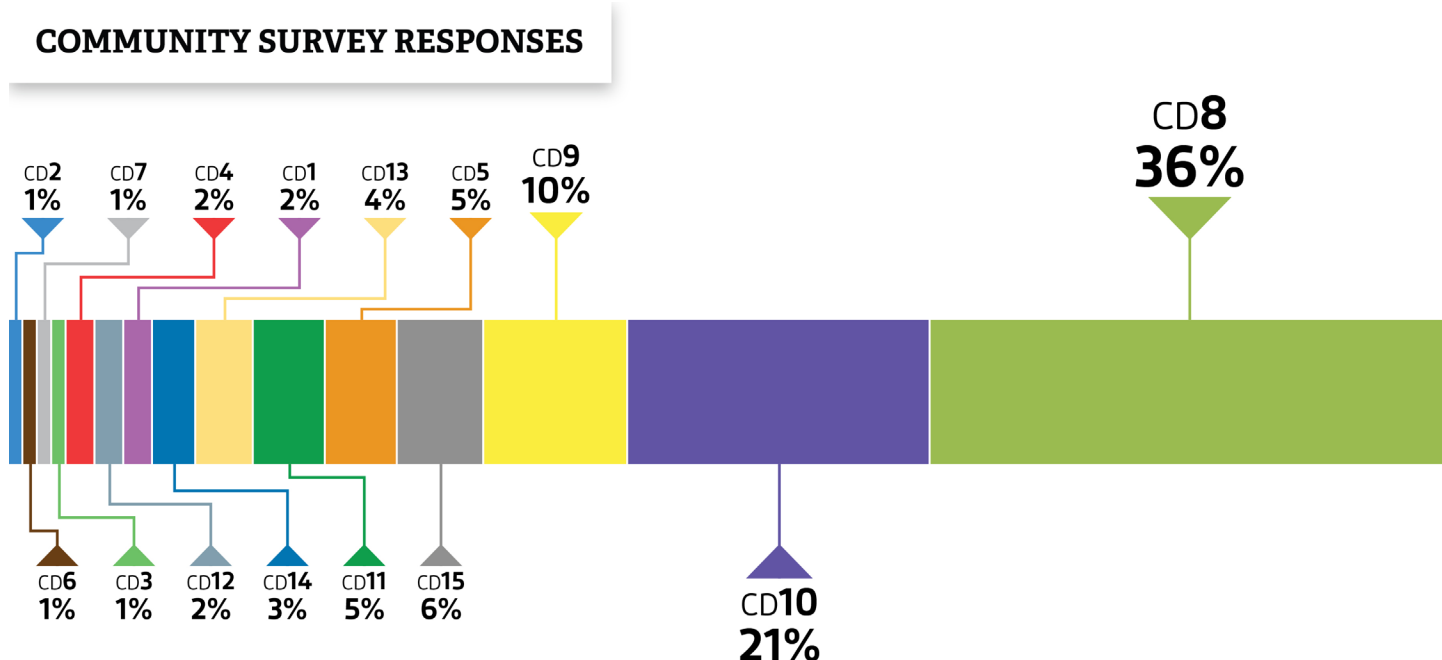
Survey participants' education levels ranged from less than a high school diploma to doctorate or terminal degrees with most individuals reporting some level of higher education. Roughly 18% of participants reported their highest level of education as earning a high school diploma or equivalent, such as the General Educational Development Test (GED) or the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET). Participants completed associate degrees (11%) and earned bachelors (25%) or master's degrees (24%).

Respondents were also asked to provide their income. 19% reported earning less than \$25,000 a year. A total of 14% of participants reported earning between \$25,000 and \$49,999 annually. Roughly 28% of respondents reported yearly income ranging between \$50,000 to \$99,999. Another 26% of participants reported income above \$100,000 annually.

Survey responses were also tracked by LA City Council Districts. Council District 8 accounted for 36% of the total responses and Council District 10 accounted for another 21%. 10% of respondents reported residency in Council District 9, with 15 making up an additional 6%. Additionally, Council Districts 5 and 11 each made up 5% of the response pool. All other Districts accounted for less than 5% of the response rate.

Focus group and interview participants' identities were coded and aliases were used during the transcription process and write-up. The ages of participants ranged from 24 to 76.

Figure 3. Community survey responses by Council District.



Summary of 12 Areas of Harm

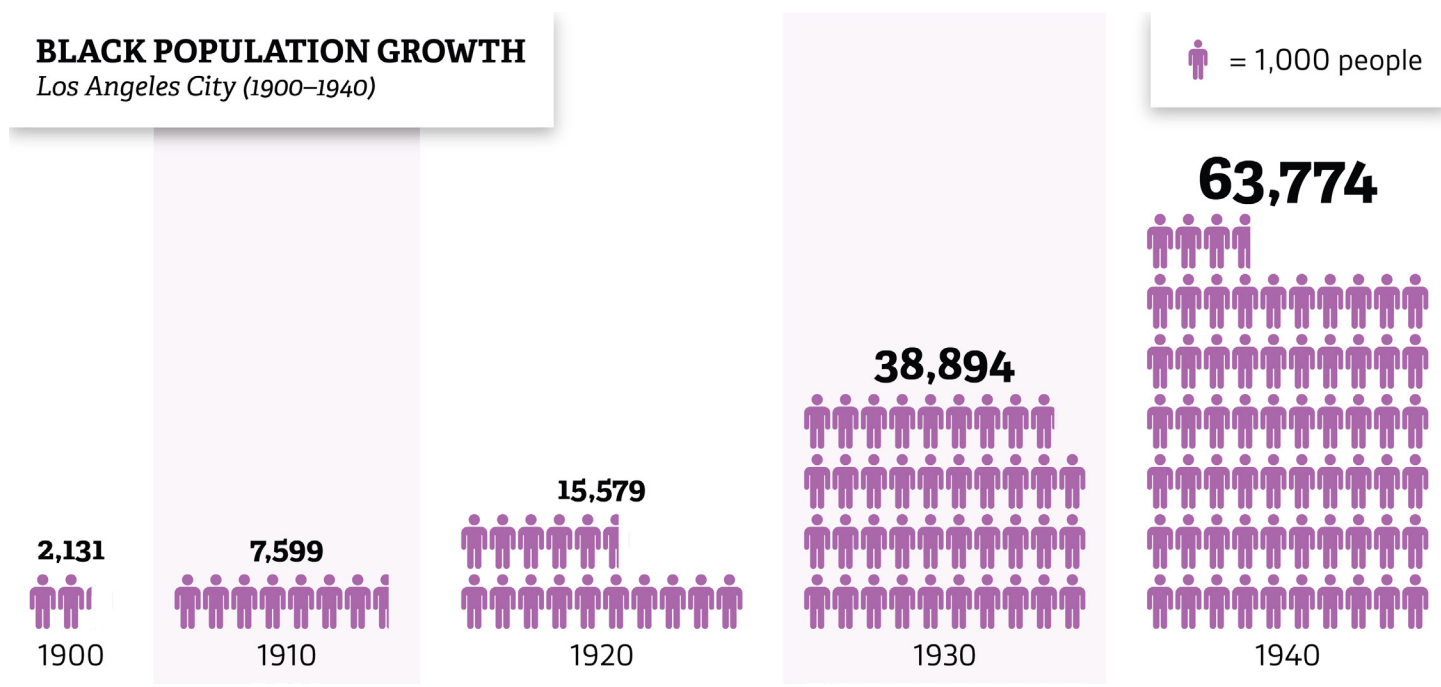
The 12 Landscape Analyses provide historical, economic and other evidence, which demonstrates that violence against African Americans is an incontrovertible fact of American history. Nationally, African Americans have experienced a myriad of forms of anti-Black violence, which included lynching; death by burning and mutilation; bombing and arson that destroyed communities and homes; physical assaults; kidnapping; and murder. Modeled after the *California Taskforce to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans' Interim Report* (June 2022), this study includes the following 12 areas of harm:

1. *Vestiges of Slavery*
2. *Racial Terror*
3. *Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect*
4. *Racism in Environment and Infrastructure*
5. *An Unjust Legal System*
6. *Housing Segregation*
7. *Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity*
8. *Separate and Unequal Education*
9. *Political Disenfranchisement*
10. *Pathologizing the Black Family*
11. *Control Over Creative Cultural and Intellectual Life*
12. *The Wealth Gap*

Vestiges of Slavery

Enslaved Black people were brought to California during the period of the Gold Rush (1848-1855), primarily from southern states. After the Gold Rush receded, a large population of migrants settled in California and made their homes in Los Angeles, fostering a diverse populace. This early period led to the growth of Los Angeles's African American community. Despite the official status of California as a "Free State," illegal enslavement of Black citizens and persistent racism of those who were legally free, often by local government officials, deprived many Black people, including those in Los Angeles, of equal rights and opportunities well into the 21st century. The legacy of enslavement, as manifested in segregation and discrimination, has made it difficult for them to fully participate in civil society and achieve economic prosperity on par with other groups. The effects of historical injustices stemming from slavery have impacted opportunities and outcomes for generations of Black people in Los Angeles.

Figure 4. Black population in the City of Los Angeles from 1900 to 1940. *Source: US Census Bureau*



Enslavement existed under Spanish, Mexican, and early American rule despite legal prohibitions and abolition laws, which were rarely enforced. Discrimination and enslavement were also authorized through legislation. Federal Fugitive Slave Laws (1850) and harsher California law (1852) mandated the return of enslaved escapees. Racist state laws banned interracial marriage, Black voting, and access to public lands, segregated schools and prohibited court testimonies from Black people against White people.

In Los Angeles, government-sponsored subjugation created a culture of oppression where racial slurs were prevalent. During the Civil War Era (1861–1865), Los Angeles' law enforcement officials openly supported the Confederacy. Combating racist violence and discrimination Post-Civil War, African Americans established groups like the NAACP, the Franchise League, and the National Afro-American Council to fight discrimination.

The Black population in Los Angeles grew exponentially during the early half of the 20th century. Los Angeles became the center of Black politics and commerce in California. Central Avenue became the center of Black cultural life and new businesses were started. A growing middle class of African American doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs emerged. Despite growth, Black Angelenos continued to experience systematic oppression via de jure and de facto, legal and practiced but not enforced by law, discrimination. Housing and education were segregated, African Americans were not allowed in public places, including cinemas and restaurants, and employment discrimination was the norm. The KKK had a strong presence in Los Angeles, especially when African Americans sought to move into White neighborhoods post-WWII.

Racial Terror

The greatest threat facing African Americans in the United States has been racial violence and the fear that comes with it. This violence has manifested in a variety of forms, including lynchings, the burning and destruction of communities, homes and physical assaults. Both private and state-sanctioned violence has been prevalent from our nation's inception. Free African Americans were constantly on guard against being wrongly sold into slavery or beaten while attempting to carry out legal activities such as voting, purchasing property, or even walking on public streets. Historically, the goal of racial violence has been to buttress White supremacy and subject African Americans to second-class citizenship or a subordinate racial caste.¹⁶ Likewise, in California —Los Angeles in particular — racial terror has been effectively deployed to maintain claims to White superiority, destroy Black economic wealth and limit Black political influence in civic governance.¹⁷

Carey McWilliams, one of California's most well-known historians and chroniclers of Los Angeles, writes about the environment for African Americans in the city: "Sympathetic to the cause of the Confederacy, Los Angeles was for years a 'bad town' for Negroes."¹⁸ By all indications, African Americans enjoyed higher standards of living and housing in Los Angeles than many African Americans had in other cities. However, just underneath the surface of a burgeoning African American "colony," as McWilliams referred to the early 20th-century community, was a growing and sustained hostility that presented itself in the form of racial terrorism whenever White Angelenos

NEIGHBORHOOD AROUSED

Fiery Cross Protests Home's Possible Sale

A flaming cross high on an Eagle Rock hillside last night was not the work of Ku Klux Klansmen but apparently a protest against the possible sale of a home in the neighborhood to Negroes, investigation revealed.

The cross, about 12 feet high, burned on a sharply sloped vacant lot across the street from 4475 Derby Place. Down the street approximately 75 persons stood silently in front of the home of Mrs. Betty Brunner, 4485 Derby Place,

There was no other demonstration. And after the fire on the cross flickered out, the crowd silently dispersed.

Mrs. Brunner later said: "It's true the house is up for sale. Yes, several Negroes have inspected it as possible purchasers."

She added, however, that she would sell the house to anybody who met her price.

Figure 5. Newspaper clipping: "Fiery Cross Protests Home's Possible Sale".

¹⁶ National Park Service, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights* (Washington, DC: National Historic Landmarks Program, 2009), 4. For a discussion of the "caste" term, see Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* (New York, NY: Random House, 2020).

¹⁷ Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans, State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, *Interim Report*, June 2022, 97.

¹⁸ Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith Books, 1973), 324.

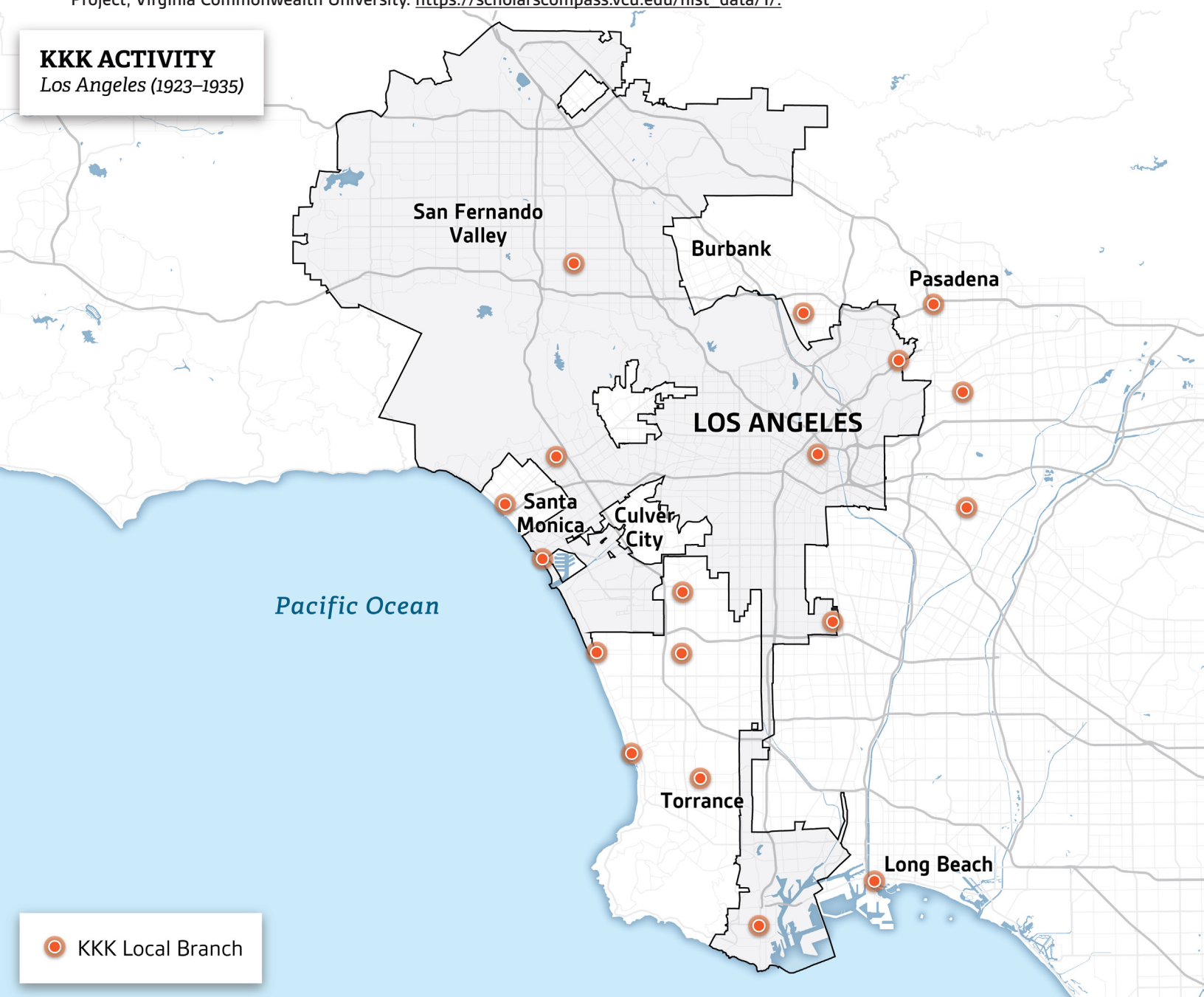
feared the encroachment of African Americans in what they believed to be their neighborhoods and public spaces. Along with neighborhood vigilante groups that organized themselves whenever they felt as though Black residents were encroaching, the LAPD was a central resource for maintaining White-only spaces.

Los Angeles was a major center for KKK activity, with significant involvement from LAPD officers and public officials. The LAPD was a bastion for members of the Klan, and at least 150 “pillars of the community” were known to have joined the hate group. White youth gangs were also prominent within Los Angeles. Hate groups, such as, the Spook Hunters terrorized Black

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), along with neighborhood vigilante groups, actively suppressed African American advancement and enforced segregation.

Figure 6. Map of KKK Activity in Los Angeles (1923-1935). Data source: “Mapping the Second KKK, 1919–1940” Project, Virginia Commonwealth University. https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/hist_data/1/.

KKK ACTIVITY
Los Angeles (1923–1935)



neighborhoods, prompting defensive Black gangs. However, police support allowed for the targeting of Black communities and individuals. Attacks on zoot suit wearers targeted Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Filipinos, revealing racial tensions and police complicity. Over time, the LAPD also served as an engaged accomplice in racial terrorism as part of its “corruption racket,” along with taking bribes and kickbacks.¹⁹

By the 1950s, the drug wars in Los Angeles disproportionately targeted Black communities, escalating police harassment and arrests. Racial profiling was a common tactic used against African Americans. Former LAPD Chief William Parker (1950-1966) used drug campaigns to justify aggressive policing and racial segregation.

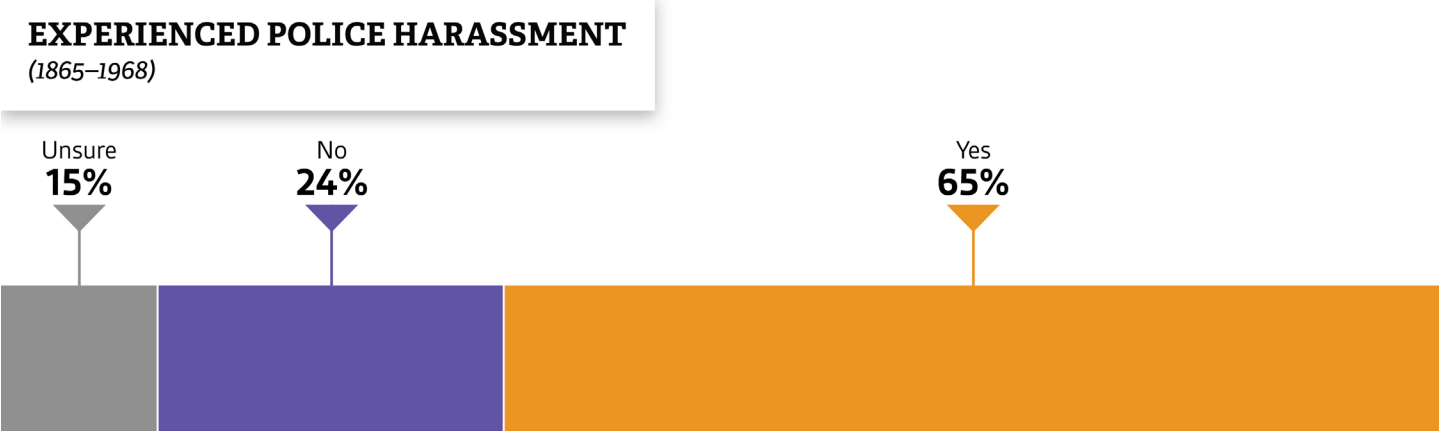
The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department harbored gangs notorious for brutality against minorities, such as the Vikings and the Executioners.²⁰ County deputy gangs served as unofficial governing bodies, who advanced violence against Black Angelenos. African Americans also faced violence while in jails and prisons in Los Angeles. Deputies engaged in racially motivated violence against inmates, highlighting systemic racism. Aggressive policing, including unnecessary raids by the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units, targeted Black communities, fostering distrust and fear. Additionally, the LAPD and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) aggressively targeted the Black Panther Party, using extreme measures to suppress Black activism.

Surveys of African Americans Angelenos demonstrate a persistent impact of state-sanctioned police harassment and violence post-enslavement through the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Over 65% of study participants reported that they or their families experienced police harassment between 1865 and 1968. From the post-Civil Rights Movement through the wake of the Black Lives Matter Movement, starting in 2013, 68% of Black Los Angelenos surveyed indicated that they were impacted by over-policing.

‘My dad told us about running down Compton Avenue to get to his home, and there were Klansmen on both sides of the street with bullwhips. Again, this is Los Angeles in the 30’s [1930s]. You know, so as with all African American families, it’s been a mixed bag as far as being able to progress and to really take hold of the quote unquote ‘American dream.’

— “Melvin” (62) - Reparations Study Participant

Figure 7. Survey responses on experiences of police harassment.



19 Fleischer, “Opinion: How White people used police.”

20 Hector Tobar, “Deputies in ‘Neo-Nazi’ Gang, Judge Found : Sheriff’s Department: Many at Lynwood office have engaged in racially motivated violence against blacks and Latinos, jurist wrote,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1991.

IMPACTED BY OVER-POLICING

(1865–1968)



Figure 8. Survey responses on impact of over-policing.

Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect

Racial inequities and systemic racism fostered by the legacy of slavery and White supremacy have caused profound harm to African Americans in Los Angeles across many aspects of their lives, including long-standing unequal access to quality healthcare services. Accordingly, across the 20th century — and to this day — the African American community has not received appropriate preventive care and effective treatment of illnesses, injuries, and pain, as well as management of long-term health conditions. Black Angelenos continue to encounter explicit and implicit racial bias in medical diagnoses and treatment recommendations, which have led to improper or delayed care, disproportionately higher rates of preventable illness and premature death.

Racial disparities in access to quality hospitals across the United States can be traced to the vestiges of enslavement and discrimination during the Jim Crow era (1865-1965). During that period, African Americans only had access to underfunded, majority-Black, economically-challenged medical facilities, or segregated units within White hospitals, both of which provided inferior care. In Los Angeles, as in other cities across the United States, non-Black physicians often dismissed the idea of treating Black patients, while individual Black doctors worked to create and establish their own entryways to the medical profession.

To address healthcare needs, African American community groups established healthcare clinics. Until the historic Watts Uprising of 1965, few attempts were made to promote equitable medical care for the Black community. According to the Lown Institute's 2021 ranking of racially-inclusive hospitals in the United States, Los Angeles is considered a city with one of the most segregated hospital systems.²¹ Low representation of Black medical professionals contributes to unequal health outcomes for Black residents. Therefore, this lasting effect of the Jim Crow era's discriminatory practices still contributes to unequal health outcomes in Los Angeles's African American population. Unsafe environments, lack of green spaces, disproportionate levels of pollution, unequal access to proper nutrition, and food deserts, communities with limited access to quality and affordable food options, all contributed to the health disparities plaguing Black Angelenos.

Nearly 50% of respondents (n=283) stated they were impacted by being denied access to quality healthcare and culturally competent healthcare professional (53%, n=308). Roughly 27% of respondents reported experiencing denied access to hospitals.

— Reparations Study
Ethnographic Report

21 Aaron Toleos, "Racial segregation is common in urban hospital markets, analysis reveals," Lown Institute, May 25, 2021, <https://lowninstitute.org/press-release-racial-segregation-is-common-in-urban-hospital-markets-analysis-reveals/>.

From maternal and fetal health disparities to childhood illness, Black Angelenos health and overall quality of life have been severely impacted by inequitable and discriminatory healthcare. Several health indicators signal statistically significant spatial clustering patterns for predominantly Black census tracts located in South Los Angeles. Spatial data analysis shows the area represents a cold spot for healthcare facilities and life expectancy. In other words, where there are fewer healthcare facilities, the life expectancy in those areas is statistically lower than in neighboring areas. These results are consistent with research studies that have found that the Black population (and other people of color) in California consistently experience health disparities, including barriers to accessing health care, receiving suboptimal treatment, and experiencing poor health care outcomes.²²

An alarming 67.7% of respondents recalled being impacted by food deserts.

— Reparations Study Ethnographic Report

Racism in the Environment and Infrastructure

During the 1930s and 1940s, Black Angelenos initiated lawsuits to eliminate racially restrictive covenants and other discriminatory policies and practices. Desegregation efforts were led by Black Angelenos. Rebecca “Betty” Hill led efforts to desegregate City playgrounds. Although summer camps, swimming pools, and beaches were successfully desegregated, Black Angelenos experienced persistent ongoing struggles.

African American citizens of the United States are disproportionately exposed to hazardous environmental factors, including poor air quality, waste sites, pollutants and contaminants, resulting in an increased impact of environmental injustice and racism.²³ Recent high-profile cases of environmental racism illustrate the tenor of how African Americans across generations have been inflicted by callous disregard, and in many cases, malicious conspiracies to expose them to the worst environmental conditions. Much of this vulnerability to adverse environmental conditions is entangled with longstanding, racist segregation policies and practices.

57.4% [of respondents] indicated being impacted by environmental injustices.

— Reparations Study Ethnographic Report

The Homestead Act of 1862, which allowed White Americans an opportunity to purchase land, was out of reach for Black people, as the majority were still enslaved and the act required the land to be lived on and developed.²⁴ Over the course of the 20th century, African Americans were also barred from enjoying recreational parks, government-operated swimming pools, and national parks due to segregationist policies. The legacy of this array of restrictions across the country — including Los Angeles — constitutes, in part, increased risks for Black Americans from harmful conditions in their built and natural environments.

In terms of air pollutants, Black Angelenos were at an increased risk of exposure which was linked to city and freeway planning and development. In 1937, the Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA) proposed a freeway system that “would allow high-speed automobile transit throughout the city.” Los Angeles City Planning approved the final master plan for the new freeway system in the late 1940s and construction began in the early 1950s. This series of decisions, which involved a wide range of City leaders and community members — the majority of whom were White — had dramatic impacts, not just on local traffic flows but also on the health and very

22 California Health Care Almanac—Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity in California: Pattern of Inequity” (Oakland: California Health Care Foundation, October 2021), <https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/DisparitiesAlmanacRaceEthnicity2021.pdf>.

23 Roberts JD, Dickinson KL, Hendricks MD, Jennings V. “I Can’t Breathe”: Examining the Legacy of American Racism on Determinants of Health and the Ongoing Pursuit of Environmental Justice. *Curr Environ Health Rep*. 2022 Jun;9(2):211-227. doi: 10.1007/s40572-022-00343-x. Epub 2022 Mar 4. PMID: 35244891; PMCID: PMC8894549.

24 [https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/homestead-act#:~:text=The%20Homestead%20Act%2C%20enacted%20during,the%20government%20\\$1.25%20per%20acre.](https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/homestead-act#:~:text=The%20Homestead%20Act%2C%20enacted%20during,the%20government%20$1.25%20per%20acre.)

existence of racial and ethnic communities. For instance, in South Los Angeles, the well-known, upper-middle-class neighborhood called “Sugar Hill,” an area that was home to many wealthy Black celebrities, was bulldozed to make room for the Santa Monica (Interstate 10) Freeway. Urban renewal and planning decision-making motivated by racism targeted African American neighborhoods through a process that categorized them as “substandard,” which then allowed them to be demolished and replaced with new “urban” projects that included freeways meant to be used by White residents who had fled to the suburbs. The net environmental effect of building freeways in Los Angeles, particularly those that ran through predominately African American neighborhoods, exposed Black residents to conditions that led to higher rates of asthma, heart attacks, strokes, lung cancer, and premature births.

After being denied residency in many parts of Los Angeles during the 1950s and 1960s, Black families found themselves generally confined to neighborhoods in South Los Angeles and the Northeastern corner of the San Fernando Valley. Many of the neighborhoods set aside for Black residency were undesirable because of the numerous industrial hazards found in these areas. In contrast, White families could move to West Los Angeles or the western San Fernando Valley, where few industrial sites would threaten the health and well-being of their loved ones or undermine the growth of their property values. However, Black families were prohibited from living and purchasing homes in certain neighborhoods. The widespread enforcement of restrictive covenants, clauses in deeds that legally prohibited the sale or purchase of a home to certain groups, prevented Black families from moving to those safe and prosperous neighborhoods and instead largely confined them to industrial locations in South Los Angeles and the Northeast Valley, where industrial pollution presented multiple threats to the health and well-being of those people who lived and worked there. The subsequent damage to Black families during the post-war era was significant. The erosion of physical health, increased number of deaths, and diminished growth of home equity due to forced residency near industrial pollutants resulted in an enormous cost of systemic racism in Los Angeles over many decades.

Large discrepancies can be found by looking at the figures for toxic releases, drinking water quality, lead exposure, and hazardous waste. Los Angeles’s majority-Black census tracts are in the 91st percentile for drinking water contaminants. By comparison, the mostly White census tracts are at the 75th percentile. The greatest inequity appears to be in the area of exposure to lead contaminants among children.²⁵ On this metric, Black neighborhoods are far more exposed than most of Los Angeles because of the average age of homes in these areas. This constitutes yet another ongoing by-product of institutionalized housing discrimination that began long before the Civil Rights era.

Hard-won victories during the Civil Rights era permitted Black Angelenos to move away from the most polluted regions of Los Angeles starting in the 1970s. This shift has catalyzed moves toward Inglewood and Long Beach in recent decades. Still, over the course of the City’s history, generation after generation of Black Angelenos

***As soon as you enter
Santa Monica, you see signs
everywhere: Go Green.
I don’t see that in our areas
at all, you know, they’re not
even promoting it. And they
are ripping down all the trees.
I was just asking somebody
that the other day, when
we were growing up, I felt
the best part of going to my
grandma’s was going to put
the palms out for a tree right
here in Baldwin Hills.
But they’re not there anymore.
You know, like
what happened?***

— Effie (39) - Reparations
Study Participant

²⁵ “Toxic Releases from Facilities”; and “Drinking Water Contaminants,” *California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment*, accessed August 22, 2023, <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/indicator/drinking-water-contaminants>.

were put at increased health risk including a higher likelihood of living near brownfields. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines brownfields as “a property where expansion, redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.”²⁶

In neighborhoods in Los Angeles that are predominantly Black, the average census tract fell into the 84th percentile for lead exposure compared to the mostly White census tracts, which were in the 48th percentile. The effects of exposure to heightened levels of air pollution, toxic chemicals, water contaminants, and lead are significant. In addition to regularly degrading the health and well-being of residents who suffer long-term exposure, they can also be deadly. Although hazardous pollutants are not the only factors contributing to diminished health outcomes, conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, and infant health are all disturbingly high in Los Angeles's Black communities. Additionally, babies born in majority Black neighborhoods tend to weigh less than those born elsewhere, with the majority Black census tracts in Los Angeles at the 92nd percentile for low birth weight on average. Los Angeles's mostly White census tracts are, on average, at the 31st percentile. (See Figure 9).

PERCENTILE RANKING MOSTLY WHITE VS. MAJORITY BLACK CENSUS TRACTS

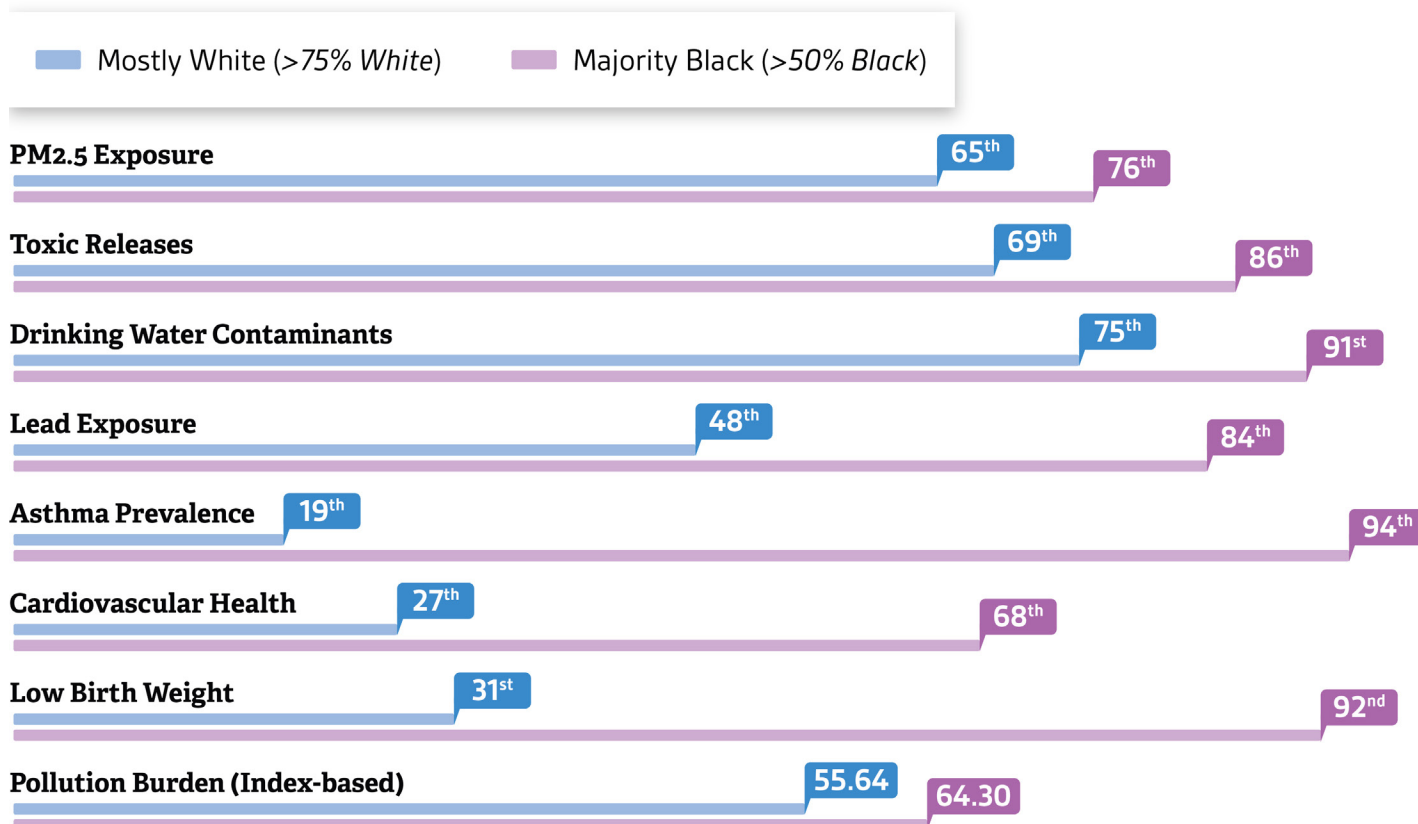


Figure 9. Select CalEnviroScreen indicators and average percentile ranking for mostly White and majority Black census tracts.

²⁶ "About EPA's Brownfields Program," *Environmental Protection Agency*, last updated February 12, 2024, <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/about>.

Unjust Legal System

The American legal system was instrumental in creating and maintaining a racial hierarchy, which placed African Americans in a subordinate position to other races or ethnicities. California laws were also designed to mirror what many states had already incorporated into their legal frameworks when it came to African Americans. Although Black people may have gained more legal rights over the course of the 20th century, the legal system, specifically in Los Angeles, has been a source of grievous harm for African Americans. These harms are experienced in the form of abuse by police, as sanctioned by administrative or court systems; limited opportunities for participating on juries; and exhibited patterns of harsher sentencing practices, as legislated by the state. For Black Angelenos, the lived experiences of interacting with various facets of the local legal system continues to be unjust and, in many cases, deadly.

African Americans in Los Angeles have been charged at 17 times the rate of White people under California's "Three Strikes and You're Out" (Assembly Bill 971) sentencing measure. Recent data reported by the LAPD also revealed substantially disproportionate arrest rates for Black Angelenos compared to other racial groups. For 2020-2023, Black people composed 27% of all arrests despite representing only 8% of the city's total population. In contrast, White people composed 16% of all arrests despite making up 29% of the total population.²⁷

ARRESTS BY RACE RELATIVE TO PERCENT OF POPULATION

Los Angeles City (2020–2023)

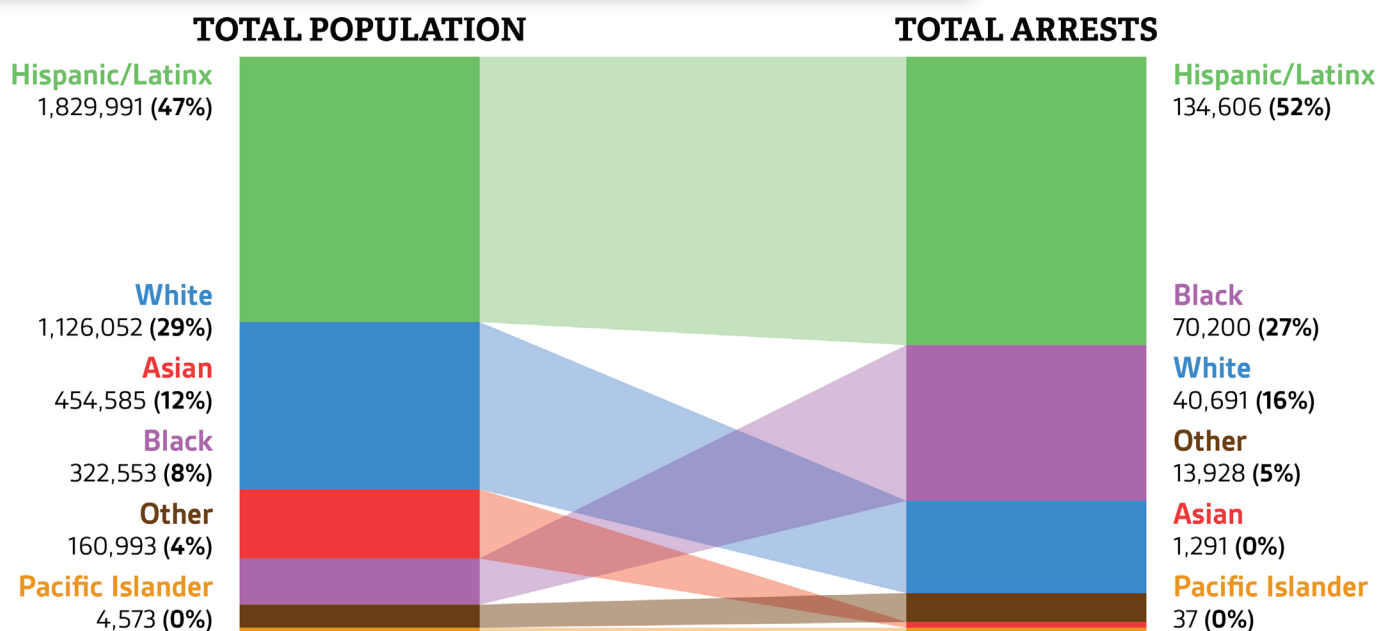


Figure 10. Percentage of total arrests in the City of Los Angeles by race for 2020–2023.

Source: LAPD "Arrest Data from 2020 to Present"

The LAPD has a long history of corruption, notwithstanding its long and sordid history of police brutality against the Black community, that dates back to the late 19th century.²⁸ Although there were concerted efforts to root out corruption among the LAPD, racial abuse persisted — and was generally tolerated — at levels almost unseen in other major metropolitan cities. Post-war Los Angeles saw the rise of William H. Parker, who became Chief of Police in 1950; his tenure was rife with allegations of abuse against African Americans. Only the Watts Rebellion of 1965, more contemporarily known as the Watts Riots or Watts Uprising, caused City leaders to

²⁷ Based on analysis of data from the Los Angeles Police Department, "Arrest Data from 2020 to Present," <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Arrest-Data-from-2020-to-Present/amvf-fr72>.

²⁸ R. Mark Isaac and Douglas A. Norton, "Just the Facts Ma'am: A Case Study of the Reversal of Corruption in the Los Angeles Police Department" (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 2011), 14.

begin to rethink the police chief's tactics and abuse of power.²⁹ The extent to which Black residents were unjustly harassed, beaten, prosecuted, incarcerated, and murdered can in no way be completely determined given the nature of the City's outright failure to reign in police brutality; the ways in which police officers falsified testimony; and how the active roles Los Angeles County District Attorney's and Los Angeles City Attorney's offices played in depriving Black people of their rights, according to the 1963 Hugh R. Manes report.³⁰ African American residents have also endured unreasonable searches and seizures of property, another way the LAPD has failed to safeguard the constitutional rights of people it has been sworn to protect.

The Watts Uprising spurred Black communities' intense scrutiny of the legal system's practices and injustices, including statewide policing. Recent data paints a stark picture of the failures of the County District Attorney's Office to hold law enforcement accountable. Black residents make up just 8% of the population of Los Angeles County but are woefully overrepresented in the statistic of people killed by law enforcement at 20%.

LAPD OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING VICTIMS BY RACE

(2014–2022)

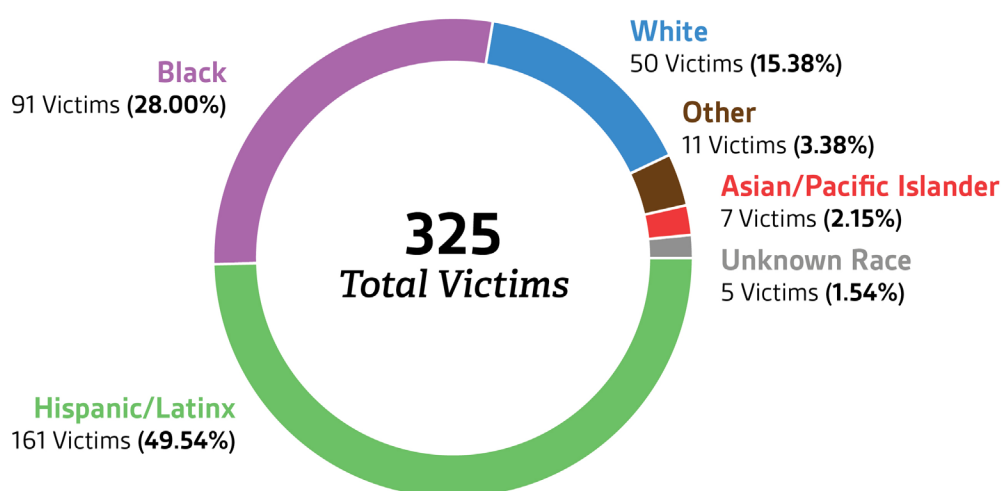


Figure 11. Victims of LAPD officer involved shootings from 2014–2022 by race.

Source: LAPD, *Use of Force Year End Reports for 2018 and 2022*.

An investigation by the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department into the use of excessive force by the LAPD in 1991 “found there is a significant number of officers in the LAPD who repetitively use excessive force against the public and persistently ignore the written guideline of the Department regarding force.” The report went on to acknowledge that much of the excessive force was accompanied by racism and bias. There are several incidents that typify how and why the LAPD lost the confidence of Black residents and influenced a generation of activists within the African American community.

The latest publicly available data suggests that Black Angelenos continue to be stopped by police at disproportionate rates. For the 2018–2023 period, Black people compose 26% of all police stops despite representing only 8% of the City's total population. In contrast, White people compose 18% of all stops despite making up 29% of the total population.³¹ Further, there is a higher likelihood that Black citizens will be arrested

29 Alisa Sarah Kramer, “William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line: Politics, Public Relations and Policing in Postwar Los Angeles” (doctoral dissertation, American University, 2007), iii.

30 https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt6199s3dp/entire_text/

Kramer, “William H. Parker,” 171n47.

31 Based on analysis of data from the Los Angeles Police Department, “RIPA (AB 953) STOP Person Detail from 7/1/2018 to Present,” <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/LAPD-RIPA-AB-953-STOP-Person-Detail-from-7-1-2018-/bwdf-y5fe>.

when stopped, putting them at a higher risk for abuse.

While mayors in Los Angeles have tended toward rhetorical attacks in ways that have ignored Black residents and their concerns, the City Council has, at times, marshaled the City's very legal structures to deny redress for Black Angelenos harmed by the LAPD. Consequently, there are deep social costs to over-policing, police brutality, and overly aggressive prosecutions of African American communities. Furthermore, police violence is a public health issue that not only destabilizes communities but also essentially double taxes them — once for the harm perpetrated upon specific individuals and/or groups, then a second time through city and county taxes that are paid by local governments in lawsuits.

***When you actually do voter registration,
you see who is really calling the shots in this 'great' land.
These are the same people who thought of "three-strikes."
Then they finally gave in and changed it.
But every law that we make to try to make re-entry
[from prison] easier, they want to just put a
stranglehold on people. This system is essentially Jim Crow.***

— Jasmine (58) - Reparations Study Participant

Housing Segregation

The deleterious effects of segregation and the negation of the accumulation of wealth via the inability of Black people to secure adequate homeownership reveals a stark divide among households. According to "The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles" report (2016), in Los Angeles, 68.3% of White households are homeowners, while just 41.5% of Black Angelenos are homeowners. African Americans also have a higher debt-to-equity ratio of 78.4%.³² The current state of Black homeownership is directly correlated to the history of housing segregation in Los Angeles.

In 1908, Los Angeles policymakers passed the nation's first citywide zoning ordinance.³³ This unprecedented regulation established seven "industrial districts" for manufacturing centers and workers' homes, mainly along the Los Angeles River on the Eastside, and the remaining area as "residence districts" for low-density housing, located largely on the Westside. While policymakers used zoning laws to secure land for specific purposes, they also had underlying motives to segregate the urban landscape by class and race. By 1910, residential restrictions began to take hold across the city, mirroring anti-Black residential restrictions in other states. By 1920, the established trend in housing development in Los Angeles and other metropolitan cities throughout the United States was the creation of middle-class enclaves, housing White professionals that were free from factories and other industrial enterprises. Additionally, they incorporated the racial thinking of scientists and politicians who espoused the inferiority of African Americans through pseudo science, and set out to bar Black people and other non-Anglo immigrants from their suburban enclaves.³⁴ Zoning ordinances enacted by city governments,

32 Melany De La Cruz-Viesca et al., "The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles" (Durham, NC: Duke University; New York, NY: The New School; Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles; Van Nuys, CA: Insight Center for Community Economic Development, 2016), 7, 32.

33 David M. P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 49.

34 Freund, *Colored Property*, 48.

such as Los Angeles, constituted public-private alliances that limited Black residents from improving their lives through better housing.³⁵ Those efforts were accompanied by restrictive covenants, a common legal instrument that “restricts” or “limits” how a parcel of land may be used by the seller or buyer. Both restrictive zoning laws and restrictive covenants were, “grounded upon the assumption that certain land uses, and certain populations threatened the value of private property and the ‘health and welfare’ of White property owners.”³⁶ Los Angeles proved to be a model example of how zoning and restrictive covenants were enacted to stimulate racial exclusion.³⁷

In Los Angeles, Black homeownership, once a marker of pride, increasingly became an issue as the population grew throughout the city, a result of the Great Migration, a mass exodus away from southern racial terror and poor labor chances toward opportunity in the north, midwestern and western states, from 1915 to 1929. In 1900, the Black population of Los Angeles was recorded at 2,131 residents.³⁸ By 1930, there were 38,898 Black residents, a 1,725% increase over just 30 years.³⁹

White real estate developers, the City of Los Angeles Housing Commission, and White residents acted in concert to restrict the Black population's efforts to find housing outside the Central Avenue district by enacting policies that caused significant financial harm to Black Angelenos. Real estate developers enacted policies to ensure that Black residents would be shut out of Los Angeles neighborhoods they reserved

My grandmother's house that she purchased was later almost purchased by a Caucasian woman because of the redlining and the racial covenants. My grandmother was somebody that pushed the lines to maintain the house that she lived in. Arlington/Crenshaw was the cut off for the Blacks, and you know, their [grandparents] home that they've had for over 60 years is just east of Crenshaw, because Blacks couldn't live west of Crenshaw. So, when I think about, like, could my family be in Bel-Air or Beverly Hills or Hollywood or somewhere on the Westside where they are a little cleaner, that would have helped me out a lot. It was the redlining that the City of Los Angeles allowed and didn't fight against.

— Felix (45) - Reparations Study Participant

35 Freund, *Colored Property*, 72. Local municipalities relied upon the Supreme Court's decision in the 1926 *Euclid v. Ambler* case to justify the control of development in their cities. Freund notes, “The ruling validated decades of theorizing about the relationship between land-use, science, compatible land uses, compatible populations, and the rights of certain White property holders.”

36 Freund, *Colored Property*, 93–94. By 1928, nearly half of all homes owned by White Americans had covenants written into their deeds and all new subdivisions were restricted to White occupancy. By 1948, Black Americans were barred from 85 percent of the nation's new large residential districts.

37 Freund, *Colored Property*, 93–94. By 1928, nearly half of all homes owned by White Americans had covenants written into their deeds and all new subdivisions were restricted to White occupancy. By 1948, Black Americans were barred from 85% of the nation's new large residential districts.

38 US Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Vol. I*, 120–21.

39 US Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population, Vol. II*, 69.

TABLE II—NEGRO AND TOTAL POPULATIONS OF LOS ANGELES, 1890–1930

	Total Population	Negro Population	Percent of Population Composed of Negroes
1890	50,395	1,258	2.50
1900	102,479	2,131	2.08
1910	319,198	7,599	2.38
1920	576,673	15,579	2.71
1930	1,238,048	38,898	3.14

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population of U.S. at Eleventh Census: 1890*, Vol. I, 451, 452; *Twelfth Census of U.S.: 1900*, Vol. I, 120–121, 134; *Thirteenth Census of U.S.: 1910*, Vol. II, 163; *Fourteenth Census of U.S.: 1920*, Vol. II, 294; *Fifteenth Census of U.S. Population*, Vol. II, 69.

Figure 12. 'Negro' and Total Populations of Los Angeles, 1890–1930. Source: Lawrence B. De Graff, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890–1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 39, no. 3 (August 1970): 336.

for Whites.⁴⁰ In 1915, the Los Angeles Realty Board (LARB) along with the Ethics Committee Chair of the National Association of Real Estate Board (NAREB) instituted a "significant update" to the NAREB's code of ethics for agents and developers, stating that the "ideal neighborhoods for its members are segregated by race and class." The code went further, noting, "A realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in the neighborhood."⁴¹ By 1919, California courts enshrined the basic tenants of racial segregation in state law, declaring in *Los Angeles Investment Co. v. Gary* that while African Americans could purchase homes in neighborhoods with restrictive covenants, they could not live in them, making the prospects of overcoming housing segregation nearly impossible.⁴²

It wasn't just segregation enforced by law that kept Black residents from pursuing better housing in other parts of the city, but also de facto segregation, practiced but not necessarily upheld by laws, and violent enforcement. The KKK was a significant factor in Los Angeles and surrounding cities. The overall effect was that Black residents had to find housing in the only markets available to them, which were principally south of downtown along Central Avenue. Black Angelenos were left with few opportunities to move outside the area, and by 1930, roughly 70% of the city's African American population was relegated to what are now the Central-Alameda, South Park, and South Central Los Angeles areas, and Watts.⁴³ This limited housing access. African Americans began attempts to move southward, which displaced White residents, but they were soon threatened with violence from the White residents who remained. Although private actors, such as the LARB, and individual citizens were largely responsible for enacting policies aimed at keeping certain Los Angeles neighborhoods White, civic agencies and governments were complicit with those efforts.

40 See Laura Radford, "The Promise and Principles of Real Estate Development in an American Metropolis: Los Angeles 1903–1923" (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2014),

https://escholarship.org/content/qt9vx3c796/qt9vx3c796_noSplash_720a4c937cb8e9843f91bf2d4d59a00f.pdf?t=njn19t; Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2006); Louis Lee Woods II, "The Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Redlining, and the National Proliferation of Racial Lending Discrimination, 1921–1950," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 6 (2012); Louis Lee Woods II, "Almost 'No Negro Veteran ... Could Get a Loan': African Americans, the GI Bill, and the NAACP Campaign Against Residential Segregation, 1917–1960," *The Journal of African American History* 98, no. 3 (Summer 2013); Gene Slater, "Op-Ed: 'How Los Angeles pioneered the residential segregation that helped divide America,'" *Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 2021; and Flammig, *Bound for Freedom*, 65.

41 Radford, "The Promise and Principles," 87.

42 Andrea Gibbons, *City of Segregation: One Hundred Years of Struggle For Housing in Los Angeles* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018), 28.

43 De Graff, "The City of Black Angels," 324, 326.

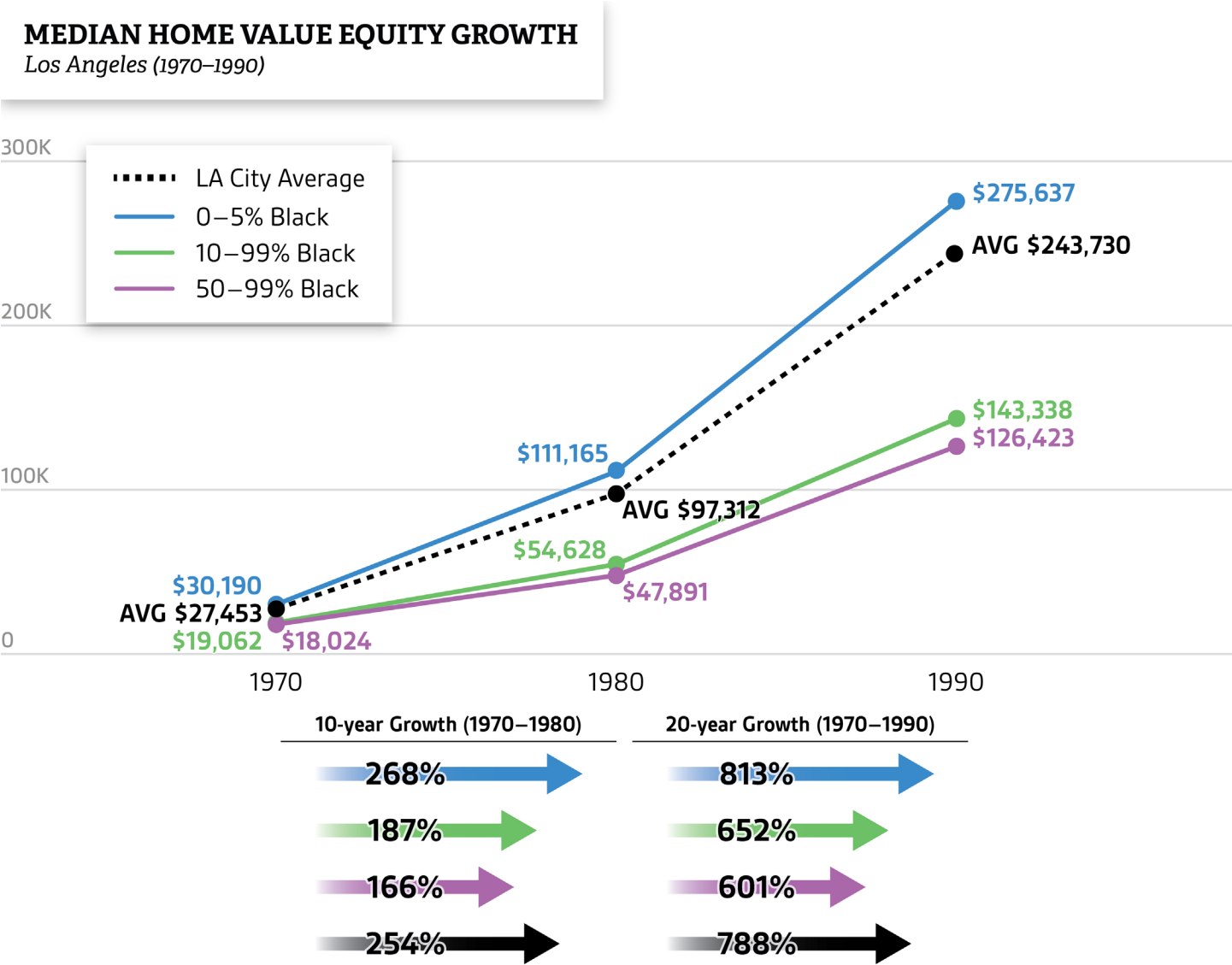
The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), along with the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), created insured new home mortgages, but only in communities designated as the more desirable areas, which opened "a floodgate of new credit to White first-time homebuyers," while excluding African Americans.⁴⁴ The result was the creation of a new stream of wealth through homeownership for White Americans that excluded African Americans. Los Angeles was no exception.

80.5% reported their ability to buy in certain neighborhoods being negatively impacted by the city.

— Reparations Study Ethnographic Report

Neighborhoods in Los Angeles that restricted Black people from living there saw greater equity growth in housing prices during the critical decades following the Civil Rights era from 1954 to 1964. Using conservative assumptions, we estimate a potential total loss of \$7.2 billion in today's dollars that were denied to Black homeowners during the period between 1970 and 1990. As demonstrated in Figure 13, neighborhoods that were effectively restricted to Black households had an average home value of \$30,190 in 1970. Neighborhoods that were over 50% Black had a home value of \$18,024. (See "Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity.")

Figure 13. Differential equity growth in housing by neighborhoods based on percentage of Black persons from 1970–1990.



44 Gibbons, *City of Segregation*, 44.

Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity

Since the Reconstruction era, the public sector has been an important source of employment for Black Americans.⁴⁵ For example, the U.S. Postal Service is notable as one of the earliest agencies to hire formerly enslaved people.⁴⁶ The LAPD began hiring Black officers as early as the late 1800s. As government services expanded in the Postwar era, Black people across the nation often found stable jobs with benefits in municipal agencies, including driving city buses, working in health care, and teaching in the school systems.⁴⁷ Additionally, discriminatory wage practices were more generally muted in the public sector compared to the private sector.⁴⁸

65% of respondents reported that they experienced employment discrimination between 1865 and 1968.

— Reparations Study
Ethnographic Report

Like most government agencies, the City of Los Angeles hired African Americans, and as a result, became a major source of employment for Black residents. Some of this can be attributed to the lingering patronage systems, elected officials hiring supporters of their campaigns, that characterized many city governments. Yet, in spite of notable moments in the early history of Los Angeles, by the 1950s it was evident that the best jobs within local government were reserved for White workers. This was especially true in the largest departments: the LAPD and the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD). Both agencies became notorious strongholds of anti-Black sentiment where active and effective resistance to integration lasted for decades and only slowly eased after outside intervention by federal and state authorities. Barriers to wage and employment equity extended to many other racial and ethnic groups and women, but they were especially high for Los Angeles's Black community. While progress has been made on many fronts, the City of Los Angeles admitted that wage parity remains elusive in 2024, as evidenced by the Controller's Office's most current employee data portal.⁴⁹

By the 1950s, the LAFD effectively confined Black firefighters to two stations (No. 14 and No. 30), prohibited their transfer elsewhere, and banned Black firemen from promotions except within those two "Black" stations. In the LAFD, although the department's official segregation policies had been eliminated in the late 1950s, de facto resistance to integration remained very effective despite repeated calls for reform and repeated assertions by City officials that reforms had been enacted. By the early 1970s, when the local labor pool was about 47% White, the LAFD remained 92% White. By the early 1980s, only 7% of firefighters were Black.

Widespread discriminatory hiring practices in the LAPD eventually invited a lawsuit from the U.S. Attorney General in 1977 charging that the City of Los Angeles, specifically the LAPD, had violated the rights of women and minorities. In 1979, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the various plaintiffs, and two years later the LAPD and the City entered into a mutually agreed upon consent decree, a court authorized agreement. The LAPD made progress toward more proportional representation during the 1970s and 1980s.

As the City progressed toward achieving proportional equity in its hiring practices, other challenges became evident, two of which came from the state: a tax revolt and Proposition 209. The tax revolt of the late 1970s presented budget challenges to the City's ability to hire new employees, which meant many agencies remained in a kind of racial and ethnic stasis and understaffed during the 1980s. In the 1990s, Proposition 209, a

45 <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/african-american-workers-19thc.pdf>

46 <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/african-american-workers-19thc.pdf>

47 Timothy Williams, "As Public Sector Sheds Jobs, Blacks Are Hit Hardest," *The New York Times*, November 28, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/29/us/as-public-sector-sheds-jobs-black-americans-are-hit-hard.html>.

48 Steven Pitts, "Black Workers and the Public Sector" (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education, 2011), https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2011/blacks_public_sector11.pdf.

49 City Employee Payroll (Current), https://controllerdata.lacity.org/Payroll/City-Employee-Payroll-Current-/g9h8-fvhu/about_data.

ballot initiative in 1996 prohibiting discrimination or preferential treatment by state and other public entities, eliminated much of the Affirmative Action toolkit that the City could use to achieve a representative workforce. Furthermore, hiring equity does not ensure salary equity or the creation of bias-free workplaces. Lawsuits against public-sector employers in Los Angeles over racial harassment have been a somewhat regular feature in the news for many years.⁵⁰

The City of Los Angeles has made significant improvements in ensuring equity in pay and hiring for people of color over the last few decades. Notably, LAFD, and a few smaller departments continue to merit attention from agencies tasked with ensuring equal opportunity for all in municipal hiring and salary decisions. This progress is laudable, but it does not erase the decades of both passive and active resistance to racial integration, fairness in promotions, and salary decisions by the City of Los Angeles. Hundreds of millions of dollars, or even a few billion dollars, in opportunities may have been denied to residents of Los Angeles, for little other than their racial or ethnic background. This was especially true for Black Angelenos, many of whom came to Los Angeles from the Deep South seeking the opportunities denied to them elsewhere in the United States, and by the very government charged with ensuring those opportunities were available to all citizens.

I am from New Orleans and when I moved here in the 1990's I was sold on their slogan that if you came here, if you had a little change in your pocket, if you worked hard, you could set things up. But I believe the City of Los Angeles allowed for some spillover from the South, especially during the Civil Rights era and pre-Civil Rights era. We were never truly given equal employment opportunities.

— Micheal (55) - Reparations Study Participant

Separate and Unequal Education

In 1954, The U.S. Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision ended de jure, or legal, segregation in public schools. However, the landmark decision had little effect on eliminating de facto segregation, or segregation not legally authorized, but maintained through other means, such as through segregated neighborhoods across the United States. Local boards of education, city governments, and communities across the country have demonstrated a pattern of not providing access to quality education to Black residents. The history of school segregation in Los Angeles follows this familiar path as a host of communities and civic leaders have crafted policies that continue to perpetuate the practice of grouping of students by race.

California schools were officially racially segregated from 1856 to 1880. The state initially hinted at broad segregation of African-American (and Asian) students with its education law in 1855, specifically Section 18, which provided funding based on the number of White students who attended a particular school.⁵¹ One effect of this measure was the sanctioning of school boards that refused to segregate students on the basis of race by threatening to legally revoke state funding. The state reinforced this arrangement with the Revised School Law of 1866, which went so far as to openly stipulate that school districts could refuse to educate children of "inferior races" if there were less than 10 minority children that petitioned the district to build a separate school.⁵² For African-American parents, this meant that they could not rely solely on the state to educate their children, and instead had to rely on their own community efforts to build schools.

50 Emanuel Parker, "L.A. County Firemen File Suit Over Racial Bias," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, March 18, 1999.

51 Jana Noel, "The Creation of the First State-Supported Colored School in Marysville, California: A Community's Legacy" (paper, Annual Conference of the History of Education Society, November 3–7, 2004), 3.

52 Revised School Law, State of California, Sections 57–59 (March 24, 1866).

In Brown v. Board of Education, the U.S. Supreme Court held that segregating children in public schools on the basis of race was unconstitutional, eliminating one of the most important vestiges of the Plessy v. Ferguson decision from 1896 that allowed for “separate but equal” segregation. However, as in other parts of the United States, White parents in California sought to segregate their children from those of non-White families. At the time, California was one of the top four most segregated states (alongside New York, Illinois, and Maryland). The legacy of policies resulting in segregation continues to unfold across our state. Although Black students currently make up only 5.5% of the state’s total school population, 50.8% of them attend schools that are 90 to 100% non-White.⁵³

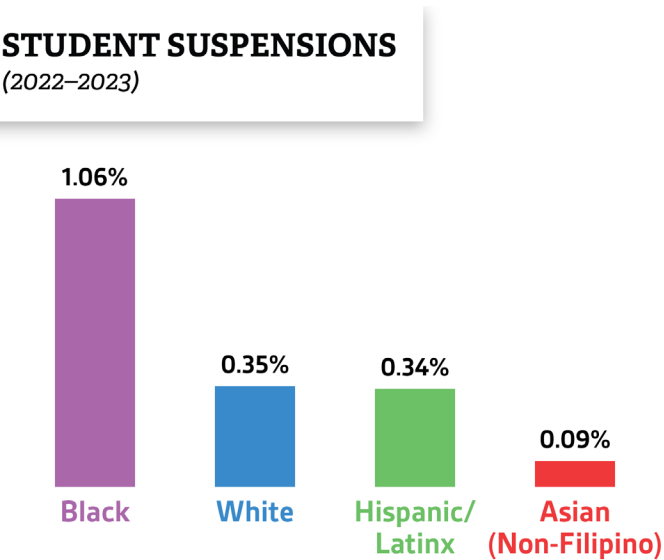


Figure 14. Student suspensions (2022-2023)

Since African Americans were already segregated as a result of restrictive housing covenants and other policies aimed at protecting White neighborhoods, Black children were de facto segregated in Los Angeles schools. In the 1930s, African-American high school students in Los Angeles were largely concentrated in two public schools: Thomas Jefferson High School near Central Avenue and David Starr Jordan High School in Watts. (The name was officially changed in 2020 to remove references to its namesake, who was an ardent proponent of eugenics). Later, John C. Freemont High School became predominantly Black. Younger Black students were also segregated at Carver, Adams, Mount Vernon, Edison, Foshay, Markham, and Gompers.⁵⁴ Additionally, neighborhood schools labeled as “community schools” were a means to segregate children by race without enforcing an official or stated policy of racial segregation. By 1960, nearly all Los Angeles schools were racially segregated. When Black parents protested policies that buttressed de facto practices (i.e., those not authorized by law) segregation, their pleas were rebuffed or flatly ignored. During election cycles, many politicians seeking office ran on “anti-integration platforms,” and when elected, they refused attempts by Black parents to improve educational opportunities for their children. White residents in Los Angeles County comprised nearly 70% of all residents, and used the ballot to elect anti-desegregation candidates who implemented their desires to keep local schools segregated. The totality of efforts by the Los Angeles City Council, school board officials, and White residents denied quality education to Black students.

According to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), African American enrollment has steadily decreased over the past four years, from 2020-2023.⁵⁵ Data also indicates that in the 2022–2023 school year, of the 11th graders nearing graduation, just 13.5% of Black students versus 40.6% of White students were adequately prepared for college-level English. Eleventh graders prepared for college-level math comprised just 3.2% of Black students compared to 20.2% of White students. Similarly, African-American students lag behind other racial and ethnic groups when it comes to enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses at 20.1% of Black students enrolled versus 35.6% of White students. These statistics are part of the ongoing legacy of racial segregation in Los Angeles schools.

The lack of cultural representation and cultural competence is also linked to the disparities in school outcomes. An alarming percentage of White teachers believe in the inherent inferiority of Black students and the superiority of non-Black students. When polled, a shocking 29% of White teachers thought that genetics explained the gap between Black and White students, and 38% thought genetics explained why Asians have better outcomes than

53 Gary Orfield et al., “Harming Our Common Future,” 27, table 6.
54 “The Struggle to Desegregate Los Angeles Schools, 1940–1970, Lesson Plan” (Northridge: California State University, Northridge), 8–10, <https://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/Lesson%203%20%28Interactive%29.pdf>. See also Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 114.
55 See LAUSD Dashboard, <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard#>.

their White peers.⁵⁶ However, the success of wealthy White students who do better on tests can be directly linked to their affluent schools, which, again, are largely segregated by race. Los Angeles schools are not meeting the area averages for preparing Black students to enter the state's university systems. LAUSD is also struggling to prepare Black students for the rigors of higher education in general.

Low performance in Los Angeles schools by Black children cannot be taken out of this social — and historical — context. African-American families have been segregated and restricted to Los Angeles neighborhoods that are in close proximity to environmental hazards. The surrounding conditions for education also include disciplinary issues, both in terms of individual student behavior and student interactions with law enforcement on campus. Los Angeles schools continue to discipline African American students at disproportionate rates. Between 2022 and 2023, for every White student who was suspended, the LAUSD suspended three Black students.

The LAUSD has the largest school police department in the world.⁵⁷ Having a high police presence in schools translates to higher arrest rates for offenses that would ordinarily be categorized as noncriminal and/or typical adolescent behavior. Thus, Black students are introduced into the criminal justice system through their educational institutions, perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline, a "disturbing national trend" in which school-age children are funneled into criminal legal systems.⁵⁸ In LAUSD schools, Black children, who make up just 8% of the overall student population, account for 25% of interactions with school police. Overall, the vestiges of anti-Black sentiment and governmental socio-economic policies created the conditions whereby Black students have historically struggled to reap the benefits of public education. This ongoing struggle requires continued attention and resources.

Political Disenfranchisement

Similar to the rest of the State of California and across the United States, discriminatory laws and tactics have interfered with African-American civic participation and success in Los Angeles. When the original Constitution of California was ratified in 1849, voting rights were restricted to White male citizens of the United States at least 21 years old. Anyone considered "intellectually disabled," or those who had been convicted of a serious crime, which included bribery and forgery, was also prohibited from voting.

Despite the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870, which gave Black men across the country the right to vote, in California, legal tactics such as literacy tests and poll taxes were used to prevent African Americans and other non-White people from casting their ballots. They were also excluded from court testimony and jury service during this period. These discriminatory practices, both official and unofficial, were in effect when the City of Los Angeles was founded on September 4, 1781, and later incorporated on April 4, 1850.

The U.S. Congress passed the Enforcement Act of 1870, which imposed penalties on states that violated the 15th Amendment. Consequently, California officials adhered to this federal legislation, finally enabling Black men to have voting rights. On June 21, 1870, Lewis G. Green made history by becoming the first Black person in Los Angeles to successfully register to vote, thus setting a vital precedent for others.⁵⁹ Still, early discriminatory voting laws and consistent challenges to Black civic participation have left a legacy of apprehension among Black residents with enduring consequences. It also set a precedent, resulting in Black people having to fight for their rights because local government officials either passively or actively worked to deny them, rather than working effectively to either apply the law or create new laws.

Although African Americans possessed voting rights at the time of Los Angeles's charter, they were largely absent from the city's political landscape throughout the first 50 years of the 20th century. Black invisibility in civic life

56 Christina A. Samuels, "Who's to Blame for the Black-White Achievement Gap?" *Education Week*, January 7, 2020, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/whos-to-blame-for-the-black-white-achievement-gap/2020/01>.

57 Johnson Jr. et al., "Beyond the Schoolhouse," 25.

58 "School-to-Prison Pipeline: What's at Stake," *ACLU*, accessed September 8, 2023, <https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/juvenile-justice-school-prison-pipeline>.

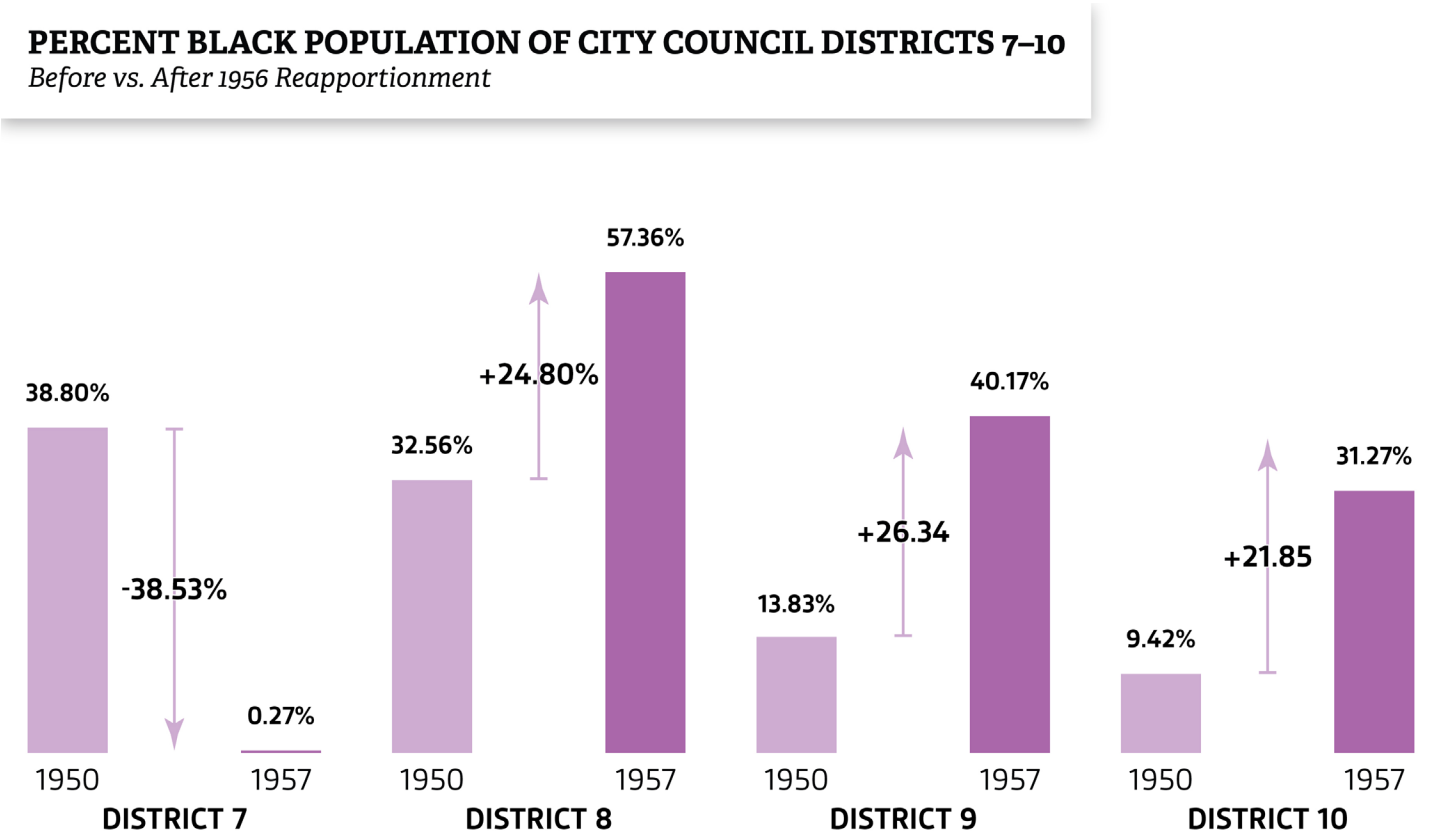
59 Ralph E. Shaffer, *California Reluctantly Implements the Fifteenth Amendment: White Californians Respond to Black Suffrage, March–June 1870* (Pomona: Cal Poly Pomona, 2020), 62-67.

was the result of two primary factors: housing restrictions and economic discrimination, the combination of which led to concentrations of Black people living in the Central Avenue district, an area south of downtown; and living in large Council Districts, which were gerrymandered in such a way that they did not have enough population concentration (near majorities) to win votes from the majority population.

Until Los Angeles' Black population increased or until racial gerrymandering decreased, African Americans had to depend on non-Black candidates to advocate for their interests. As the Black population increased steadily, the Black vote began to have a stronger influence, which politicians recognized as key to winning local elections. The State's 74th Assembly District, which covered a significant part of Central Avenue, was where Black residents in Los Angeles first demonstrated political influence.

The Black population had grown to 171,209 by 1950 when a core group of Black Democrats in Los Angeles emerged.⁶⁰ They met under the banner of the Democratic Minority Conference established by well-respected citizens. The aim of the Democratic Minority Conference was to support Black candidates, increase voter registration, and ensure fair district reapportionment. The organization cultivated Black political participation by canvassing neighborhoods and raising money through church bazaars, eventually boasting more than 600 members. However, their concerns regarding reapportionment were ignored. Most frustrating was the redistricting of the 7th City Council District in 1957. The district, which had included West Adams, part of South Los Angeles, and had a sizable Black population, nearly elected Black councilmembers in two City Council elections. However, when the Council conducted its quadrennial reapportionment late in 1956, it moved the district to the rapidly-expanding San Fernando Valley and redistributed the residents of the original district among three others. This effectively prevented Black near majorities in the City Council districts, a major blow to members of the Democratic Minority Conference.

Figure 15. Black population before and after reapportionment.
Source: Calculated using 1950–1957 City Council District boundaries and U.S. Census data.



60 Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce, "Part 5: California, Table 34.—General characteristics of the population, for standard metropolitan areas, urbanized areas, and urban places of 10,000 or more: 1950," in *Census of Population: 1950 Volume II Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1953), 96–104.

In response, politically active Black citizens expanded voter registration drives under the auspices of the NAACP. Then, in 1959, five African-American candidates from three districts ran in the City Council election. However, none of them won. In 1960, the City Council approved a reapportionment that again split the Black vote. Not a single African American held any public office in Los Angeles until 1963, when the Council representative for the 9th District vacated his post, leaving it open for an interim appointment and later the election of two councilmembers. While in office, the three Black councilmembers promoted the interests of Black constituents, such as demanding access to City services, and advocating for the City Council to acknowledge and discuss the growing Civil Rights Movement.

The early history of Los Angeles mayorships demonstrates little support for the African-American community, even those mayors, who Black voters elected. Segregation in housing, education, and employment persisted under all previous mayors of Los Angeles until the Civil Rights era. As a result of Mayor Tom Bradley's election in 1973, African Americans and other marginalized groups were incorporated into City Hall's governance practices, and ultimately benefited in several areas, including representation, City hiring, and police accountability. Most of these historic firsts for African Americans happened decades after the City Charter in 1925, and were only realized as a result of dedicated political organizing that finally overcame segregated districts and gerrymandering. During those decades, generations of Black Angelenos were effectively denied effective representation in government.

A significant shift in the demographics of Los Angeles occurred toward the end of the 20th century. Before 1980, most of the city's population was White. But by 1990, White residents comprised less than 40% of the city's almost 3.5 million people. The largest group became Latinos, whose numbers had increased significantly.⁶¹ During this same period, the lives of African Americans changed as middle-class Black residents moved out of the city and Latino and Asian immigrants moved in. Likewise, the 8th, 9th, and 10th City Council Districts in South LA (previously referred to as South Central), which were historically home to almost all Black residents, transformed into predominantly Latino areas.

On October 9, 2022, the *Los Angeles Times* revealed a recording of then-Council President Nury Martinez's private conversation with then Councilmember Gil Cedillo and Los Angeles County Federation of Labor President Ron Herrera, and Councilmember Kevin de León. The leaked audio recording exposed racist and offensive conversations concerning the City's redistricting efforts during the previous year. Those featured on the recording also voiced antagonism toward what they saw as the disproportionate political clout of the city's Black community. They discussed implementing a plan to gerrymander Council District boundaries to increase the voting advantage of Latino Council candidates. The racism the conversation revealed, as well as de León's continued presence on the City Council, demonstrated the continued struggle of African Americans to achieve meaningful participation in City governance, and showed the continuation of Black disenfranchisement in Los Angeles.

Pathologizing the Black Family

After slavery was abolished, Black families continued to face obstacles, such as lack of employment, low wages, incarceration and White supremacist violence. The societal factors that made life unequal and tenuous for Black families persisted throughout the Reconstruction, post-Reconstruction, and Great Depression eras.

When federal, state, and local governments were inclined to attempt any form of social or economic remediation, the resulting systems that were intended to help families were often designed with policies that negatively affected the overall health of Black families.⁶² In 1965, Daniel P. Moynihan, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, authored *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action*, known as the Moynihan Report (1965). The report examined the state of the Black family, and was accepted as truth. "The Moynihan narrative is one of the reasons why the government created racist, classist policies that incentivized the dissolution (or non-formation) of Black

61 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data System: [https://socds.huduser.gov/Census/race.odt?msacitylist=4480.0*0600044000*1.0&metro=msa&frames=\\$frames\\$](https://socds.huduser.gov/Census/race.odt?msacitylist=4480.0*0600044000*1.0&metro=msa&frames=$frames$)

62 Christina White, "Federally Mandated Destruction of the Black Family: The Adoption and Safe Families," *Journal of Law and Social Policy* vol. 1, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 303, <http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njls/vol1/iss1/12>.

families, then problematized Black people for not having them.”⁶³ The “prison-industrial complex,” a process whereby disproportionately large numbers of African American and Latino people are incarcerated, and contributes to the U.S. having the world’s largest prison population. Our nation’s prisons are largely filled with Black men and women due, in part, to a persistent — and false — narrative.⁶⁴ This notion also holds true in Los Angeles County, where the proportion of Black inmates exceeds the share of the countywide Black population.

LA COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT INMATES BY RACE (Oct–Dec 2023)

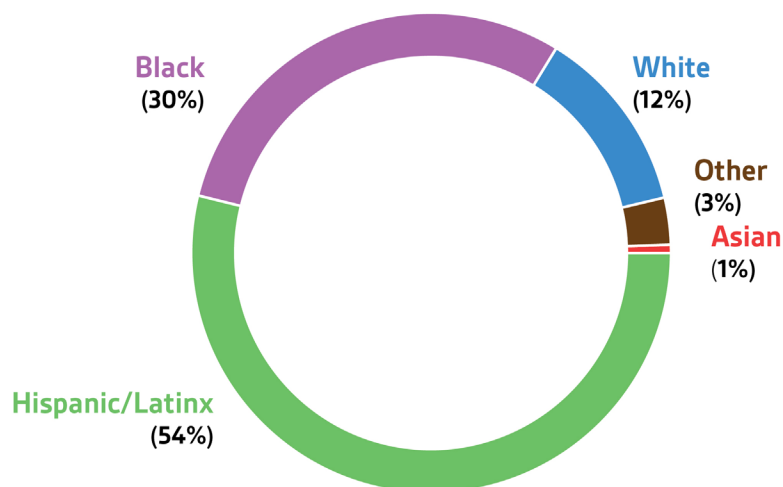


Figure 16. Inmates by Race.

However, a raft of issues, particularly in Los Angeles: homelessness, unfair representation in the media, a skewed foster care system, gendered violence, constitute a set of conditions that disproportionately impact Black families. In other words, it is not that Black families are inherently deficient as Moynihan claimed. Rather, so many families are forced to negotiate sociopolitical phenomena that are exacerbated, if not created, by racial discrimination. This chapter catalogs some of these conditions, detailing how they have impacted the lives of Black Angelenos to unequal effect.

Black families have experienced conditions that have led to the increase of unhoused individuals in the United States, particularly in Los Angeles. In 2023, the total population count of persons experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles and Los Angeles County was 46,260. Black people made up roughly 34% of that population.⁶⁵ The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) noted that the root cause of being unhoused that affects African Americans, as well as Native American populations, is “institutional racism.”⁶⁶ As outlined throughout this Reparations Report, such discrimination has been at the heart of many decisions made by Los Angeles residents, politicians, and housing authorities that have upheld redlining, segregation, and discrimination in mortgage lending practices by banks. Such policies have been major catalysts for sowing the seeds of the current and future Black homelessness crisis.

Studies on the ways various media outlets have portrayed Black people reveal an unsurprising false representation of their communities — and of their families — especially when it comes to depictions of poverty. Black families are overrepresented as living below the federal poverty level by 32 percentage points while White

⁶³ Syreeta McFadden, “Government policies based on racist myths help dissolve Black families,” *The Guardian*, September 20, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/20/government-policies-racist-myths-dissolve-black-families>.

⁶⁴ McFadden, “Government policies based on racist myths.”

⁶⁵ 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count” (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, June 29, 2023), 8, <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=7232-2023-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-deck.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Steve Lopez, “Black people make up 8% of L.A. population and 34% of its homeless. That’s unacceptable,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 2020.

families are underrepresented by 49 percentage points. Media studies have also shown that Black families are too often — and unfairly — depicted as “lazy and inept” and the largest recipients of welfare.”⁶⁷ When welfare recipients are presented in the media, 60% appear as Black families. However, Black families represent just 42% of the families that actually receive support from the government’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Furthermore, the media does a poor job at explaining how institutional racism has contributed to economic disparities — some of the very conditions that create the need for public assistance — that the Black community faces.⁶⁸ These sorts of imbalanced representations set the ideological stage for how many Americans come to understand the lived experiences of Black families, which has had devastating consequences, especially for Black children.

Black youth faced increased victimization in Los Angeles. The failure of government agencies, especially those in the Los Angeles area, to fairly distribute resources and the racial prejudice of area social workers have contributed to the rise in Black children being removed from their families. Also, one of the most ominous policing activities that impacted Black youth in Los Angeles was the City’s Municipal Code 45.04, otherwise known as LAMC 45.04 or the Daytime Curfew Ordinance, which the City Council passed in 1995. This ordinance allowed the police to arrest and ticket students for being absent or late for school. Black youth in Los Angeles County are more likely to be so-called “dual system youth,” having received at least one child welfare investigation before a juvenile justice petition (when a government agency files an official plea to a juvenile court claiming that a minor has engaged in an unlawful act). In Los Angeles County, the arrest rate of Black youth is six times higher than White youth. In 2019, per 1,000 school-age young people, 29.9% of children arrested were Black compared to 3.8% for White and 7.6% for Latino youth.

Equally alarming is the rate of violence experienced by Black women in Los Angeles. According to the LA Civil Rights Department, although Black women make up roughly 4% of Los Angeles’s population, they are more likely to face some form of violence and trauma than other groups; for example, they accounted for 23% of all domestic violence victims between January 2011 and August 2022.⁶⁹ Perhaps an even more dire statistic, for the same 11-year time period, Black women made up nearly a third of all female homicide victims in Los Angeles, according to one study.⁷⁰ Black women are disproportionately overrepresented as victims of domestic violence in Los Angeles. The highest concentrations of violence were reported in the LAPD’s 77th, Southeast, Southwest, Newton, and Central divisions. These are the same areas where redlining, high crime, and environmental racism have long been prevalent.

Control Over Creative Cultural and Intellectual Life

The history of Black entertainment and cultural life in Los Angeles dates back to the 1890s when African Americans came to the city, bringing with them their musical traditions that were born on plantations and in churches.⁷¹ In Los Angeles, the color line, the segregation of people both social and legal based on race away from White people, cut across all facets of creative and cultural activities, including leisure. In addition to navigating laws that barred Black people from even being present in certain cities during particular hours, Black performers and their patrons faced police harassment and segregation within workplaces and the wider artist community. Black musicians were forced to relinquish work to White musicians, no matter how talented or qualified. Hollywood not only upheld discriminatory practices within its studio workforces, but also, and perhaps even more

67 Travis L. Dixon, “A Dangerous Distortion of our Families: Representation of Families, by Race, in News and Opinion Media,” (Oakland, CA: Color of Change, January 2018), <https://colorofchange.org/dangerousdistortion/>.

68 Dixon, “A Dangerous Distortion.”

69 “An Equity Analysis on Violence and Crime Facing Black Women and Girls in the City of Los Angeles [Revised]” (Los Angeles, CA: Civil, Human Rights, and Equity Department, March 17, 2023), 2, https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2022/22-0102_misc_3-17.pdf.

70 “An Equity Analysis on Violence and Crime Facing Black Women and Girls in the City of Los Angeles [Revised]” (Los Angeles, CA: Civil, Human Rights, and Equity Department, March 17, 2023), 2, https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2022/22-0102_misc_3-17.pdf.

71 Bette Yarbrough Cox, “The Evolution of Black Music in Los Angeles, 1890–1955,” in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, eds. Lawrence B. de Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor (Los Angeles, CA: Autry Museum of Western Heritage; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 251–52.

damaging, produced blockbuster fare that depicted racist and White supremacist ideas about Black people in America. The stewardship of the city's leading museums and cultural institutions has long lacked equitable Black representation, a trend that continues to this day. Although Black athletes have come to dominate playing fields, the decisionmakers of the most high-profile Los Angeles teams, both professional and collegiate, have seldom been Black. For everyday Black residents, casual sites of outdoor leisure and play — even for children — have been sites of segregation and, in some cases, civic theft. For example, a Black-owned beach resort known as Bruce's Beach was seized by municipal authorities in the 1920s. That incident exemplifies a common historical phenomenon—state and local governments allowing “White Americans to steal African American art and culture with impunity.”⁷²

The surrounding sociopolitical landscape of Los Angeles, including municipal policies and civic leaders, provided a foundation for such inequalities and injuries. Sundown laws, a racist policy that prohibited African Americans from city limits across California during certain hours, hurt Black artists who made their living performing at night. As late as 1964, Glendale, a city north of downtown Los Angeles, would regularly escort Black musicians out of town at sunset. During the 1930s and 1940s, Black performers were required to have a permit in the Glendale city limits after 6 p.m., denying many Black musicians the right to work with dignity. These sorts of sundown laws were California's equivalent of Jim Crow segregation in the American South. At times, the prevailing political currents had a direct impact on the lives of Black entertainers and fans.

Black beaches and other resorts were an integral aspect of the cultural life of African Americans in Los Angeles County, in part because beaches across Southern California were segregated in the early 20th century. Just two beaches allowed African American patrons: the “Ink Well” section of Santa Monica State Beach and Bruce's Beach in the City of Manhattan Beach. In 1922, White residents in both areas began a campaign to keep Black residents from utilizing the two beaches. Bruce's Beach was taken via eminent domain from its African American owners in 1924 and the land was not returned to the family until almost a hundred years later.⁷³ On July 20, 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors returned the land to descendants of the Bruce family.⁷⁴

The hub of Black cultural life in Los Angeles, particularly musical entertainment, was located along Central Avenue. The scene there was a source of pride for Black Angelenos; as some residents spoke eloquently of the music scene of the 1930s, saying “Jazz was our hopes, our pride, our love of life expressed through music.”⁷⁵ The music and cultural scene in this corridor flourished through the Great Depression and World War II, but eventually floundered in the face of police harassment. The 1940s were the beginning of a cultural “renaissance of musicians of color” in Black Los Angeles.⁷⁶ As Black Angelenos were shut out of White-owned clubs, the necessity to develop venues facilitated a flowering of Black-owned entertainment and culture. Central Avenue also became a hub of Black entrepreneurship. Black-owned hotels, insurance companies, pharmacies, dry goods stores, movie and playhouse theaters, and other businesses flourished in the corridor. Such success also attracted unwanted attention, especially from the LAPD, which habitually harassed both patrons and musicians along Central Avenue. The LAPD, with the approval of the City Council, shut down integrated night clubs and dance halls under the guise that they were “immoral.”⁷⁷ The harassment became so stifling that musicians moved to neighboring cities to escape the LAPD's reach. Discrimination was also prevalent within the Los Angeles' unions for musicians. Black artists were denied entry into the all-White Local 47 and were relegated to forming their own organization, the Local 767. White musicians received the bulk of contract work from both film and recording

72 California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposal for African Americans, “Interim Report” (Sacramento: State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, June 2022).

73 Alison Bethel McKenzie, “Bruce's Beach was stolen a century ago. It's finally been returned,” *National Geographic*, June 27, 2022, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/whats-next-for-california-historically-black-bruces-beach#>.

74 <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/bruces-beach/>

75 *History of Los Angeles Project Volume II: Central Avenue*, KCET (PBS SoCal), 1989.

76 Bette Yarbrough Cox, *Central Avenue—Its Rise and Fall (1890–c. 1955): Including the Musical Renaissance of Black Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, CA: BEEM Publications, 1996), 44.

77 Cox, “The Evolution of Black Music,” 271.

studios and clubs.⁷⁸ It wasn't until the unions merged in 1953 that Black performers saw a real movement to bring the two local music cultures together.

Black artists were no strangers to being shut out of the Los Angeles music industry or Hollywood studio system. Many of them, at least for a brief moment, tried to enter the Hollywood studios in the 1930s, but employment opportunities for Black artists were almost non-existent and competition was high for the few jobs that were available. Furthermore, the studios had a near blanket policy of discrimination based on race. Empirical and anecdotal evidence confirm that Hollywood was committed to racial segregation. According to one cultural historian of Los Angeles, the pool of Black actors employed in speaking parts never exceeded two dozen. In 2023, the "Hollywood Diversity Report" by researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), confirmed that while the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) population of the United States continues to grow, they have seen only modest gains in two key areas of employment in the film industry: directors and writers. For theatrical film, Black directors accounted for 9.2% of the population and Black writers made up only 8.3%.⁷⁹ Also, Black streaming film writers made up 12% of the total population; and near representativeness in the area of streaming films directors at 13%.⁸⁰

Black people in Los Angeles have long been underrepresented on the boards of the city's major museums and performing arts organizations. In 2021, the *Los Angeles Times* survey was conducted to discover the percentages of BIPOC board members of the 10 museums and 10 performing arts centers in Southern California. Data submitted by the participating organizations revealed that Black people held just 18 of 344 board seats for area museums, which was 5.4%. The representation in the performing arts resembled that of museums, as just 5.6% of board members were Black.⁸¹ A lack of board representation means that Black voices on decisions made by museums and arts institutions are not represented.

Los Angeles once played a key role in breaking segregation in professional football—and since then, Black players have come to dominate playing fields, both in terms of performance and their sheer numbers. Yet, the number of Black coaches continue to be few, especially in Los Angeles. One of the most well-known secrets of the National Football League (NFL) was a handshake agreement that banned Black players for 13 years from 1933 to 1946. In 1946, the Rams franchise moved to Los Angeles from Cleveland, bringing with them the racial baggage that was part of professional sports in the United States. Los Angeles's Black residents and the Black press took it upon themselves to rally against the Rams desire to rent the Coliseum if the team continued refusing to hire Black players. The campaign worked to such a degree that the organization agreed to offer contracts to Black players. In 1946, the Los Angeles Rams signed Kenny Washington and Woody Strode, breaking the NFL's stance on segregation, and the team later signed Bill Willis and Marion Motley. Concerns of continued racial bias is evidenced by how the organization has never hired an African American non-interim head coach, and remains one of 13 NFL teams that have never hired a Black full-time head coach, although NFL player rosters are roughly 70% Black.⁸²

Head coaching jobs also remain elusive for Black football coaches at the two major Los Angeles universities. The University of Southern California (USC) has never had a Black non-interim head football coach. UCLA has only hired one African-American head coach, Karl Dorrell (2003-2007). Despite leading the Bruins to five bowl appearances, Dorrell was fired in 2007.

78 Cox, "The Evolution of Black Music," 260.

79 <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2024-Film-3-7-2024.pdf>

80 <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2024-Film-Streaming-5-23-2024.pdf>

81 Deborah Vankin and Makeda Easter, "Black People hold just 32 of 585 board seats at L.A.'s top arts groups," *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2021-05-25/museums-theaters-black-board-of-directors#>.

82 William C. Rhoden, "In 1946, pressure from Black citizens forced the Los Angeles Rams to desegregate," *Andscape*, February 9, 2022, <https://andscape.com/features/in-1946-pressure-from-black-newspaper-reporter-halley-harding-forced-the-los-angeles-rams-to-desegregate/>.

These sorts of imbalances among sports teams also pervade baseball. Through the mid-20th century, Black baseball players and teams were segregated in Los Angeles, as they were throughout the country. The Los Angeles White Sox were in the West Coast Negro Baseball Association, a minor league based in California in 1946. Although the league, which was created by track and field star Jesse Owens and founder of the Harlem Globetrotters Abe Saperstein, only survived for three months, it highlighted the racial divide in athletics, even in California.⁸³ Although the Brooklyn Dodgers were the first Major League Baseball (MLB) team to break the color line in 1947 with the signing of Jackie Robinson. In Los Angeles, the Dodgers' first Black and Japanese-American MLB manager, Dave Roberts, was not hired until 2016. In 2017, Roberts became the first Asian manager to win a World Series.

The Wealth Gap

Measures of familial wealth are some of the most useful metrics for understanding the true extent of the damage caused by generations of systemic racism on the health and well-being of African Americans in Los Angeles. Study after study analyzing asset and debt accumulations from the last 40 years has found a profound and persistent gap between the wealth held by African Americans and almost every other racial and ethnic group in the United States. Recent studies by the Public Policy Institute of California, Bloomberg's CityLab, the Pew Research Center, the Federal Reserve, and the extensive work of sociologist Junia Howell, all point to continuing, and, in many cases, widening gaps between the wealth held by Black people and their White and Asian-American counterparts.⁸⁴

A 2016 study, "The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles" reports drastic differences in net worth by race.⁸⁵ This report, conducted under the auspices of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco by a team of researchers from Duke University and UCLA, features detailed analyses of data collected via the National Asset Scorecard for Communities of Color (NASCC).

The NASCC collects data on household assets and debts and, importantly, disaggregates it by race, ethnicity, and country of origin. Researchers note a stark contrast in overall wealth between White households and other groups in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. White families reported a median net worth of around \$355,000, while Black Angelenos reported a median net worth of only \$4,000, which was just over 1% of the wealth held

Economic wellbeing and family wealth were believed to have experienced a negative impact by the great majority of respondents. For family wealth, almost 65% specified a negative impact (n=389). Roughly 68% of respondents (n=414) found the city to have negatively impacted their economic wellbeing.

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83 DRHART1467, "In Commemoration of Black History Month: Negro Baseball in SoCal," *SoCal Sports Chronicles*, February 15, 2018, <https://socalsportschronicles.wordpress.com/2018/02/15/in-commemoration-of-black-history-month-negro-league-baseball-in-socal/>.

84 See Tess Thorman, Daniel Payares-Montoya, and Joseph Herrera, "Income Inequality in California" Fact Sheet, *Public Policy Institute of California*, March 2023, <https://www.ppic.org/publication/income-inequality-in-california/>; Poon, Linda. 2020. "City Lab Daily: How to Actually Close the Racial Wealth Gap." *Bloomberg*. February 26. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2020-02-26/citylab-daily-how-to-actually-close-the-racial-wealth-gap> Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, and Rakesh Kochhar, "Trends in income and wealth inequality," *Pew Research Center*, January 9, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/>; Aditya Aladangady, Andrew C. Chang, and Jacob Krimmel, "Greater Wealth, Greater Uncertainty: Changes in Racial Inequality in the Survey of Consumer Finances," *Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System*, October 18, 2023, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/greater-wealth-greater-uncertainty-changes-in-racial-inequality-in-the-survey-of-consumer-finances-20231018.html>; and Junia Howell and Elizabeth Korver-Glenn, "Appraised: The Persistent Evaluation of White Neighborhoods as More Valuable Than Communities of Color," *eruka*, November 2, 2022, <https://www.eruka.org/appraised>.

85 Melany De La Cruz-Viesca et al., "The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles" (Durham, NC: Duke University; New York, NY: The New School; Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles; Van Nuys, CA: Insight Center for Community Economic Development, 2016).

by White households. Black families were so frequently denied common opportunities to build wealth over the past 100 years, and current generations continue to struggle to provide adequate “seed money” to children and grandchildren.

Multiple discriminatory housing practices used against Black families (as mentioned in the Housing Segregation section) have limited homeownership to approximately 40% of the current generation of Black Angelenos, compared with nearly 70% of White families. U.S. census data suggests the rate of Black homeownership in the City of Los Angeles in 2022 was 6.6%, which is about half the rate reported in the 2016 “The Color of Wealth” study.

Decades of fraught relationships with the banking industry have likely contributed to African Americans distrusting banks and avoiding their services, which in turn exacerbates a host of other obstacles to accumulating household wealth. As a result, as noted in “The Color of Wealth” study, Black Angelenos are less likely to have a savings account (56%) or a checking account (68%) than White residents (90%). Also, Black households hold far fewer liquid assets than their White counterparts. In 2016, the total assets of native-born Black Angelenos averaged only \$30,000, far less than most other racial or ethnic groups and only a fraction of White Angelenos, who averaged \$335,000 in assets, as also reported in “The Color of Wealth” study.

Debt is the other major component of the wealth gap that characterizes the differences in household wealth among various racial and ethnic groups. In Los Angeles, owning a car is often a key to stable employment. “The Color of Wealth” study also reported that U.S.-born Black Angelenos are the least likely to own a vehicle, and among those who do own a car, they are 35.6% more likely than White car owners to hold debt on the vehicle. About 60% of U.S.-born Black households in Los Angeles have credit cards, more than double the percent of White households and three times the rate of Chinese households. Also, among all racial and ethnic groups in Los Angeles, U.S.-born Black households were the most likely group to report holding student loan debt at 20.5% versus 15% for White households.

Without exceptional government intervention, it is likely that the wealth gap will continue to grow until the dreams of a life of safety, comfort, and freedom from financial ruin are limited to all but a few.

There are lots of White people that are very wealthy. And conversations with them, they're like, “My great grandfather worked hard.” Did he? I mean, or did he figure out how to, you know, sort of, take advantage of enslaved people that couldn't speak up for themselves? And there's so many corporations, insurance companies, and banks and things in Los Angeles who all benefited from our slavery and have never answered for it.

— Nellie (48) - Reparations Study Participant

Summary of Findings

The City of Los Angeles' direct involvement and complicity in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of African Americans has been consequential on the lives of Black Los Angelenos. Investigations of the 12 areas of harm identified by the California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans (California Reparations Task Force), demonstrate a culture of anti-Black racism and violence, racial discrimination, and chronic racial disparities in health and life outcomes of Black residents. The findings in this report document the role the City of Los Angeles play in impacting the lives of Black Angelenos while also addressing harms, negligence, complicity of institutions and agencies, private and public affecting Black residents in Los Angeles.

Vestiges of Slavery

Despite the official status of California as a "Free State," illegal enslavement of Black citizens and persistent racism of those who were legally free, often by local government officials, deprived many Black people, including descendants of enslaved people in Los Angeles, of equal rights and opportunities well into the 21st century.

- *Enslavement in Los Angeles existed before the United States annexed California in 1848. During the Spanish era in the late 18th century, Los Angeles had a small population of African and Native American enslaved people. Under Mexican rule from 1821 to 1848, slavery was illegal but nevertheless existed.*⁸⁶
- *The legacy of enslavement, as manifested in segregation and discrimination, has made it difficult for Black Angelenos to fully participate in civil society and achieve economic prosperity on par with other groups.*
- *The effects of historical injustices stemming from slavery have impacted opportunities and outcomes for generations of Black people in Los Angeles.*
- *Fugitive Slave Laws at the federal level (1850) and harsher California law (1852) upheld enslavement and mandated the return of escapees.*
- *Racist state laws banned interracial marriage, Black voting, and access to public lands; segregated schools; and prohibited court testimonies from Black people against White people.*
- *Despite the legal prohibition of slavery, Black Angelenos continued to face systemic discrimination and inequality.*

Racial Terror

Our study exposes local, private, and public forms of racial terror including judicial violence, police brutality, and other governmental administered harms or sanctions of private violence. Historically, members of the KKK had an established presence within the LAPD, the Los Angeles City Council, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Therefore, it is not surprising that the LAPD sanctioned mob violence, including cross burnings, to force African Americans from their homes.

- *The historical legacy of anti-Black policing in the City of Los Angeles has long contributed to a decreased life satisfaction for African American Angelenos.*
- *Police violence coupled with racial terror exercised by neighborhood vigilante groups accelerated experiences of racial violence for African Americans residing in the City of Los Angeles.*
- *Government-sanctioned violence against African Americans was commonplace in Los Angeles and was in large part symptomatic of the larger anti-Black culture that shaped many of the City's practices and policies.*
- *Los Angeles was a major center for KKK activity, with significant involvement from LAPD officers and public officials.*
- *The 1950s Los Angeles drug wars disproportionately targeted Black communities, escalating police*

⁸⁶ Jean Pfaelzer, *California, a Slave State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2023); Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846–1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 56–57; Smith, Stacey L. "Remaking slavery in a free state: Masters and slaves in gold rush California." *Pacific Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (2011): 28-63.

harassment and arrests.

- *Former LAPD police chiefs of the 1950s, and later in the 1970s and 80s, used drug campaigns to justify aggressive policing and racial segregation.⁸⁷*
- *White supremacist, terrorist groups harassed and enacted violence against Black neighborhoods, prompting defensive Black organizations and gangs that aimed to provide protection for community members given the lack of equal protection provided by law enforcement.*
- *Aggressive policing, including unnecessary SWAT raids, targeted Black communities, fostering distrust and fear.*
- *The LAPD and FBI aggressively targeted the Black Panther Party, using extreme measures to suppress Black activism.*
- *The City of Los Angeles was previously complicit in racial terror enacted against African Americans, and the LAPD historically played an instrumental role in promoting and advancing harassment and violence against Black Angelenos.*

Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect

This section illustrates the complexity and challenges associated with Black residents' access to adequate healthcare resources in Los Angeles. Black residents experience both explicit and implicit racial bias in medical diagnosis and treatment. Discrimination has played a role in the continued shortage of Black physicians and other medical workers.

- *During the Jim Crow era, Black Angelenos faced unequal access to quality healthcare, had limited access to facilities, and were relegated to segregated units and hospitals.*
- *Los Angeles continues to have one of the most segregated hospital systems in the nation.*
- *The low representation of Black medical professionals contributes to unequal health outcomes for Black residents.*
- *Unsafe environments, lack of green spaces, pollution, access to proper nutrition, and food swamps all contribute to the health disparities plaguing Black Angelenos.*
- *Black Angelenos continue to encounter explicit and implicit racial bias in medical diagnoses and treatment recommendations, which have led to improper or delayed care, disproportionately higher rates of preventable illness, and premature death.*

Racism in the Environment and Infrastructure

Black citizens of the United States, particularly those residing in California and Los Angeles, have disproportionately borne the brunt of environmental racism. Due to a combination of public policy and public sanction of private housing discrimination, Black citizens are more likely than any other racial group to suffer from the debilitating effects of toxic environmental conditions. From abandoned wells to deadly levels of lead exposure, Black residents pay an exorbitant price for living in areas that are hazardous. Our research describes how Black citizens were forced into undesirable regions of the city, whereas White citizens were able to flee to safer neighborhoods.

- *Racial segregation confined Black families to South Central, and Northeast San Fernando Valley; Black neighborhoods were seen as undesirable because they were near industrial sites. African Americans were more likely to live within or near a brownfield than White residents.*
- *Historical and systemic racism in urban planning has led to significant environmental health disparities in Black communities.*

⁸⁷ Matthew D. Lassiter, "Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California's War on Narcotics during the 1950s," *Journal of Urban History*, 41(5), 2015 The Marshall Project, 2020, The Short, Fraught History of the 'Thin Blue Line' American Flag

- *In the 25 Los Angeles census tracts that remain over 50% Black, the average percentile score for pollution burden is 64.3, whereas the 70 census tracts that are over 75% White have an average pollution burden score of 55.64.*
- *Older Black core areas show severe pollution burdens, reflecting long-term systemic issues. Black neighborhoods average higher in exposure to fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5), toxic releases, lead, and proximity to hazardous sites. Asthma, cardiovascular disease, and infant health are all disturbingly high in Los Angeles's Black communities.*
- *Black residents in LA have higher projected heat-wave mortality rates.*

Unjust Legal System

This section is specifically focused on three entities, The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, the LAPD and the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. As there are no shortages of studies that have illustrated the long history of police brutality by the LAPD, we bring into focus the over-policing of the Department that results in Black citizens being stopped and harassed with greater frequency than other groups. While officer-involved deaths and brutality can be quantified in terms of the short-term harms, the constant vigilance of the LAPD against residents has caused unquantifiable psychological trauma to the Black community. Racial disparities in policing (e.g., more citations issued) also result in loss of work time and income.

- *The American legal system has been historically instrumental in maintaining racial hierarchy.*
- *Historical injustices among legal agencies in Los Angeles collectively deprived Black Angelenos of civil rights.*
- *Cases like Rodney King's in 1991 and Greville Mercurius' in 1959⁸⁸ illustrate systemic brutality. Recent cases, such as Takar Smith in 2023, highlight contemporary police violence against Black residents.*
- *Black residents make up a disproportionate number of those involved in LAPD officer-involved incidents, representing 28% of officer involved shootings from 2014-2022.*
- *Over-policing still affects African Americans as they are more likely to be stopped than White residents. The LAPD arrests disproportionately target Black Angelenos despite their lower population percentage.*
- *LAPD has violated the rights of Black Los Angeles residents, resulting in complaints, disciplinary actions and legal cases. In terms of complaints, LA Mayor Norris Paulson (1953-1961) admitted that from 1951 to 1960, 33.5% of police complaints were sustained, 31.4% were not, 4% were unfounded and only 7.1% were exonerated.⁸⁹*
- *The U.S. Department of Justice entered into a court-approved agreement with LAPD due to civil rights violations.*
- *Costs of police violence include social costs, such as physical and behavioral health issues, loss of opportunities, and civic disengagement. Also, police violence contributes to poor mental health among Black Americans.*
- *In Los Angeles, there was historical exclusion of Black Americans from juries despite legal protections, and modern-day exclusion is evident in implicit racial biases in preemptory challenges to remove Black people from serving. Certain felony convictions also prevent residents from serving on juries.*
- *City officials of the 20th century, including former mayors and councilmembers, played a significant role in defending the LAPD, and in delaying and preventing cases against the LAPD from reaching courts.*

Housing Segregation

We examined how Los Angeles evolved into one of the most segregated metropolitan cities in America. Racial segregation was a factor in the early development of the city. Turn of the century policymakers passed the

⁸⁸ Manes, "Report on Law Enforcement," 23.

⁸⁹ Manes, "Report on Law Enforcement," 43.

nation's first citywide zoning ordinance that, within a few years, opened the city to racial policies that allowed for residential restrictions based upon race. By examining how racial segregation in Los Angeles brought on a host of social and economic ills, we can begin to assess the economic, social, and psychological toll.

- *Racially restrictive zoning in Los Angeles segregated citizens by class and race.*
- *In the 1910s, residential restrictions mirrored anti-Black laws in other states.*
- *By the 1920s, White professionals created segregated enclaves, excluding African Americans.*
- *Restrictive covenants limited land use based on race, which was upheld by local courts.*
- *The State and City enacted policies, restrictive zoning laws and restrictive covenants, such as Proposition 14 (1964), preventing Black residents from improving their housing conditions, and White residents resisted Black migration, sometimes violently.*
- *Local real estate and realty boards' ethics codes of the early 20th century promoted racial segregation.*
- *As a result of housing segregation, 70% of the Black population were forced to reside in Central-Alameda, South Park, South Central LA, and Watts by 1930.⁹⁰*
- *By the mid-20th century, continued restrictive covenants, real estate practices, and White resistance limited Black homeownership.*
- *Federal housing agencies and their policies discriminated against minority neighborhoods through redlining, which resulted in disparate home values and equity growth between White and Black neighborhoods.*
- *In the post-Civil Rights era, Black homeowners faced lower equity growth, an estimated \$7.2 billion loss in today's dollars.*
- *Segregation and housing policies historically limited Black wealth accumulation through homeownership. Data shows 68.3% of White households versus 41.5% of Black households own homes in Los Angeles.*

Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity

Los Angeles' public agencies have a checkered record in hiring Black individuals. The City has been a source of employment for many Black citizens since the 1800s, and many agencies have had a consistent pattern of hiring Black citizens at a rate consistent with the local population profile, especially where wages and working conditions are ideal.

- *Despite legal measures, significant hiring and pay disparities remain for African Americans, particularly in Los Angeles.*
- *Historically, public-sector employment was crucial for Black Americans, especially for the United States Postal Service's and the LAPD's early hires.*
- *After World War II, the public sector provided stable jobs, but best positions were often reserved for Whites workers. Throughout the 20th century, the LAPD and LAFD were strongholds of anti-Black sentiment, resisting integration despite external pressures.⁹¹*
- *In the 1950s, Black firefighters were confined to two stations with no promotional opportunities and by the early 1980s, only 7% of firefighters were Black.*
- *Today, pay parity remains an issue, especially for Black employees. White employees, especially men, still earn more on average based on job class.*
- *Historical discrimination in local government employment has resulted in a significant loss of wage opportunities for Black employees since 1950.*

90 1 to 5 % lived in the Northeast corner of the San Fernando Valley. 1 to 5 % lived on the Westside. 10 to 25% lived in the Northeast corner (Griffith Park/Los Feliz area south of Burbank)

91 Frank P. Sherwood and Beatrice Markey, *The Mayor and the Fire Chief: The Fight Over Integrating the Los Angeles Fire Department* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1959), 2, 3.

Separate and Unequal Education

In this section we examine educational outcomes. Research reveals a stark history of harms the Black children suffered and continue to suffer within the educational system.

- *Although the U.S. Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education (1954) decision ended legal segregation, segregation persisted due to housing policies.*
- *School segregation in Los Angeles resulted in concentration of Black students in specific schools.*
- *Housing policies aimed at protecting White neighborhoods prevented Black families from accessing housing and certain schools.*
- *In Los Angeles, "community schools" were used to maintain segregation.*
- *White residents helped to elect anti-desegregation candidates to the Los Angeles City Council and LAUSD School Board, which helped to maintain segregation.*
- *In comparison to White students, disparities in academic preparation persist for Black students as they have limited access to high-performing schools.*
- *Racist perceptions of Black students, along with a lack of cultural understanding, led to unsupportive environments and teachers.*
- *Disproportionate disciplinary actions against Black students adversely affect student performance and are linked to the unjust criminalization and policing of Black students.*

Political Disenfranchisement

Los Angeles' role in the political disenfranchisement of Black citizens mirrors that of the same laws and tactics used throughout American society. Gerrymandering and housing segregation worked hand in hand to negate Black political power.

- *These discriminatory practices, both official and unofficial, were in effect when the City of Los Angeles was founded in 1781.*
- *The 1849 California Constitution initially restricted voting rights to White male citizens.*
- *Discriminatory practices restricting voting rights, including literacy and poll taxes, persisted despite the ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870.*
- *In Los Angeles, discriminatory voting laws and challenges to Black civic participation have left a history of Black disenfranchisement and legacy of distrust in the civic processes.*
- *Barriers to civic participation were a result of two primary factors: Housing restrictions and economic discrimination, which eventually led to concentration of Black residents in the Central Avenue district.*
- *Black leadership in Los Angeles was limited, and not a single African American held public office in the City of Los Angeles until 1963.*
- *In Los Angeles, mayors prior to Mayor Tom Bradley (1973-1993), perpetuated segregation in housing, education, and employment. African American communities faced persistent discrimination.*
- *Progressive leadership, notably the late Mayor Bradley's tenure, marked a shift towards more inclusive and progressive governance in Los Angeles.*
- *Audio tapes leaked in 2022 exposed how redistricting has been used as a tool to divide communities and manipulate political power.*

Pathologizing the Black Family

This section is an examination of incarceration and over policing of Black youth. Housing insecurity and negative media representation of Black families are themes addressed in this chapter of the study.

- Chattel slavery introduced in 1619 disrupted the formation and preservation of Black families.
- Post-slavery, Black families faced unemployment, low wages, and White supremacist violence.
- Discriminatory policies during Reconstruction, post-Reconstruction, and the Great Depression periods further marginalized Black families.
- When federal, state, and local governments were inclined to attempt any form of social or economic remediation, the resulting systems that were intended to help American families were often designed with policies that negatively affected the overall health of Black families.⁹²
- 1965's *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, commonly known as "The Moynihan Report" authored by U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, incorrectly blamed Black family structure for economic struggles, influencing harmful policies.
- The prison-industrial complex disproportionately affects Black people, undermining family stability.
- Homelessness in Los Angeles continues to burden Black families. Black people are disproportionately affected by homelessness in the City of Los Angeles, represented 33% of homeless population in 2023.
- Institutional racism in housing policies (redlining and segregation) contributes to high Black homelessness rates.
- Black families are misrepresented in media, depicted more frequently as impoverished and reliant on public assistance. These skewed portrayals reinforce negative stereotypes and ignore systemic causes of economic disparity.
- Black children are overrepresented in the foster care system due to systemic racism and biased decisions by social workers.
- In Los Angeles, Black children make up 24% of those in foster care despite being only 7% of the child population in Los Angeles county.
- Black youth are disproportionately detained by the juvenile justice system due to policies linked to the "school-to-prison pipeline," such as the City's Municipal Code 45.04, also known as the Daytime Curfew Ordinance.
- Los Angeles has high arrest rates for Black youth, driven by biased policing and punitive school policies.
- The City's Daytime Curfew Ordinance (1995-2012) led to high fines and arrests of predominantly Black and Latino students.
- Black women in Los Angeles have faced higher rates of violence, particularly domestic violence. Despite making up roughly 4% of the population, Black women accounted for 23% of all domestic violence victims from January 2011 to August 2022. Within the same time period, Black women were nearly a third of all female homicide victims.
- Black families are not inherently deficient, but are disproportionately affected by sociopolitical and racial discrimination.

Control Over Creative Cultural and Intellectual Life

This section illustrates how the "color-line" prevented Black citizens from controlling their own cultural and creative life. The LAPD routinely harassed musicians and patrons on Central Avenue. Black musicians were segregated within the Los Angeles musician's union and received less pay. In addition, the City sanctioned segregated recreation centers and swimming pools.

- Since African Americans' arrival in Los Angeles, they have been influential in shaping the cultural landscape of the city and state. For those African Americans who arrived in Los Angeles in the 1890s, many brought with

92 Christina White, "Federally Mandated Destruction of the Black Family: The Adoption and Safe Families," *Journal of Law and Social Policy* vol. 1, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 303, <http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njlspl/vol1/iss1/12>.

them musical traditions from plantations and churches.

- *Black cultural activities were segregated; laws and police harassment (sundown towns) restricted Black performers, patrons, and businesses.*
- *Black musicians often lost work to White musicians regardless of talent.*
- *Segregation in sports disallowed talented African Americans from having equal involvement in local sports.*
- *Black athletics played a key role in breaking segregation in professional football and baseball.*
- *Black coaches are rare in both professional and collegiate teams.*
- *Hollywood was instrumental in broadcasting racist representations of Black communities. Films like “The Birth of a Nation” and animated shorts, like “Looney Tunes” promoted racist stereotypes and glamorized racial violence.*
- *Black artists faced significant barriers in Hollywood, and were often limited to demeaning roles or excluded from employment.*
- *Hollywood continues to struggle with racial diversity despite incentives.*
- *Black representation on museum and performing arts boards is minimal.*

The Wealth Gap

This topic explores the differential in asset accumulation in Los Angeles. Studies have shown stark differences in the median net worth of Black Angelenos and White Angelenos. There have been impediments, particularly in homeownership that have precluded Black Angelenos from accumulating wealth at pace with other residents.

- *Black families were historically denied wealth-building opportunities, and current generations continue to struggle to provide adequate “seed money” to children and grandchildren.*
- *Discriminatory housing practices, including unfair mortgage lending practices, denied African Americans access to certain areas of the Los Angeles.*
- *The Housing Crisis of 2007-2010 was devastating to Black homeowners in Los Angeles, resulting in high rates of foreclosure, bankruptcy, and debt issues.*
- *Discriminatory banking policies led to mistrust of banks and avoidance of their services.*
- *Disparities continue in terms of median family income. Black residents median family income represents only 55.8% of White median family income. Black Angelenos reported a median net worth of only \$4,000, which was just over one percent of the wealth held by White households.⁹³*
- *Black homeownership rates are at approximately 40%, compared to near 70% for White families.*
- *2022 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau) data reveal that Black homeownership in City of Los Angeles stands at 23.3%.⁹⁴*
- *As compared to White residents, Black Angelenos have fewer liquid assets, such as savings and checking accounts.*
- *Black Angelenos have higher reliance on government-affiliated retirement systems.*
- *Black households are less likely to own vehicles, and more likely to hold vehicle debt and credit card debt.⁹⁵*
- *There are higher rates of credit card and student loan debt among Black residents.*

93 Melany De La Cruz-Viesca et al., “The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles” (Durham, NC: Duke University; New York, NY: The New School; Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles; Van Nuys, CA: Insight Center for Community Economic Development, 2016).

94 American Community Survey (2022)

95 https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/besol/Color_of_Wealth_Report.pdf

Preliminary Recommendations for Reparations and Restorative Justice Efforts

In alignment with the Justice-Centered Design Thinking framework, the objective of this section of the study was to examine reparations and restorative justice initiatives that would atone for the injustices and inequities experienced by Black Angelenos. A crucial aspect of restorative justice involves preventative measures to ensure that similar harms do not reoccur in the future. Therefore, the recommendations detailed in this report are inclusive of restorative, preventative and corrective efforts that address the systematic injustices that have impacted the lived experiences of Black Angelenos. It is important to note not all harms can be remedied solely by the City of Los Angeles, as some experiences articulated in this report are beyond the scope of the City's organizational or geographic jurisdiction. Emphasis is placed on the six major areas of harm: 1) Racial Terror, 2) Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect, 3) Racism in the Environment and Infrastructure, 4) An Unjust Legal System, 5) Housing Segregation and 6) Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity.

Based on the analyses from the Landscape Analyses and Ethnographic Report along with the Cost of Inequity in City Services report by Mockingbird Analytics, we put forth the following recommendations:

Vestiges of Slavery

Recommendation #1: Enact a Resolution Affirming the Civil and Human Rights, and Protections of Descendants of Enslaved People

The City should also consider issuing an official acknowledgement and apology for the injustices of enslavement and Jim Crow in the City of Los Angeles.

Recommendation #2: Advance Legislation Prohibiting the Erasure of African American History and the History of Enslavement in Los Angeles

Document the history of enslavement in Los Angeles and fund studies that detail the operations that led to the marginalization and disenfranchisement of African peoples, work to ensure that the history of African Americans in Los Angeles is not erased, and their continued subjugation is not ignored.

Recommendation #3: Continuously Evaluate and Disrupt the Generational Impact of Injustices Stemming from Slavery

The effects of historical injustices stemming from slavery have impacted opportunities and outcomes for generations of Black people in Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles could take a proactive stance assessing reparations efforts, and on disrupting the impact of injustices on future generations of Black Angelenos.

Recommendation # 4: Fund Government Programs that Address the Culture of Oppression and Racial Degradation

In Los Angeles, government-sponsored subjugation led to a widespread culture of oppression. A manifestation of this toxicity was the prevalence of racial slurs aimed at Black people. For example, during the 1850s, official Los Angeles City maps included racist street names. To remedy these actions, assessments of opportunities to fund programs that work to eradicate the long-standing culture of oppression against African-Americans is recommended.

Recommendation #5: Prohibit Labor Exploitation of Incarcerated Persons and Require Payment at a Fair Market Rate for Labor

Address wage inequity and labor exploitation for persons who are systems impacted. In general, equitable pay models are endorsed by over 80% of survey respondents.

Racial Terror

Recommendation #1: Proactively Address the Historical Legacy of Anti-Black Policing in the City of Los Angeles through Anti-Racist Policies and Compensatory Initiatives

Develop restitution measures to recompense residents for experiences of anti-Black policing and police injustice. Economic compensation and addressing law enforcement injustices were considered as highly appropriate reparations efforts that the city of Los Angeles should consider by over 70% of respondents to the ethnographic survey.

Recommendation #2: Advance Legislation that Criminalize Anti-Black Violence and Prohibit Law Enforcement's and the Public's Targeting and Harassment of Black Individuals and Communities

Enact direct legislation that prohibits anti-Black terrorism and builds understanding. Endorse a City plan to counter anti-Blackness and anti-Black violence as a part of the larger anti-hate agenda.

Recommendation #3: Develop Legislation That Makes White Supremacist Terrorism Illegal

Legally addressing the atrocities of White supremacist terrorism and proactively working to prevent future occurrences is a recommended restorative justice approach.

Recommendation #4: Calculate and Compensate for the Cost of Decreased Quality of Life and Life Expectancy as a Result of Systematic Racial Terrorism

Funding models should be studied to address the lasting impact of racial terror on Black Angelenos and City funding should be dedicated to atone for the life outcomes.

Recommendation #5: Legislate Black Community Historic Preservations and Land Returns

Asset restoration and historic preservations of Black communities were also highly endorsed by respondents as extremely appropriate for reparation efforts. The historic preservation of Black communities was favorably supported by 72% of respondents (n=437). Asset restoration was highly endorsed by 74% of respondents (n=447).

Recommendation #6: Fund Community Efforts that Advance Healing and Restoration of Black Communities

City resources should be directed toward programs that provide community-derived solutions to support the healing and mental health of Black residents.

Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect

Recommendation #1: Calculate and Develop Compensatory Measures for the Health Harms Experienced by Black Angelenos as a Result of Racial Discrimination

Culturally competent training programs for healthcare professionals and education support were considered favorable options among over 80% of respondents. Also, funding studies on African American health received a rating of 4 to 5 by 76.7% of respondents (n=459) from the ethnographic survey.

Recommendation #2: Proactively Address Systematic Inequities in Healthcare and Disparities in Health Outcomes

Support initiatives that work to increase representation of Black healthcare professionals. Healthcare training was assigned a score of 4 to 5 by 80% of respondents (n=478) in the ethnographic survey. Medical education tuition programs, including pre-medical tuition assistance programs were also endorsed by 82% of respondents (n=492).

Recommendation #3: Increase Access to Quality and Cultural Affirming Hospitals and Mental Health Facilities

Surveying Black Angelenos, access to quality hospitals was recommended as a restorative justice model by almost 81% of respondents, and access to quality health insurance was supported by 79%.

Recommendation #4: Champion Cultural Competency in Healthcare and Support the Development of Culturally Compatible Healthcare Professionals

The Ethnographic Report documents that over 80% of respondents desired culturally affirming healthcare training programs and education support.

Recommendation #5: Support and Fund Food Access Initiatives and Programs that Decrease Food Insecurity

Disrupt food deserts and insecurity expansion by funding community-led food access initiatives.

Recommendation #6: Support and Protect Community-Based Healthcare Programs

Funding for community-based health organizations was considered positively by 78.5% of respondents (n=469) in the ethnographic study.

Recommendation #7: Proactively Support Black Maternal and Infant Health

In terms of select services, reproductive support services were rated very positively among 72% of participants (n=430) in the ethnographic survey.

Racism in Environment and Infrastructure

Recommendation #1: Development Legislation and Policies that Advance Environmental Protections for Harmed Communities

Enact laws that ensure environmental protections. Endorse federal legislation prohibiting targeting of marginalized communities.

Recommendation #2: Support Community-Based Programs that Advance Environmental Justice

Address these disparities through remediation tactics, such as improving access to green space and removing neighborhood pollutants.

Recommendation #3: Develop Measures to Determine the Cost of Environmental Injustice

After calculations are determined, measures should be established to compensate harmed communities.

Unjust Legal System

Recommendation #1: Calculate and Compensate for the Cost of Over-Policing, Police Harassment, Unjust Convictions, Inequitable Sentencing Practices and the Loss of Freedom

In the ethnographic survey, the category of addressing law enforcement injustices received the highest buy-in by respondents with 58.3% rating this item as most appropriate and another 14.1% selecting very appropriate for a combined total of 72.4% (n=437).

Recommendation #2: Mandate and Increase Anti-Racism and Racial Justice Trainings and Education Programs for Local Officials

Adopt anti-racism and racial justice trainings along with culturally competent de-escalation trainings.

Recommendation #3: Champion Justice-Centered Policies and Practices Surrounding Policing and Prosecution

Adoption of zero-tolerance policies surrounding police brutality, harassment and unjust killings are strongly recommended.

Recommendation #4: Support and Fund Community-Based Healing and Safety Initiatives

Appoint community oversight and advisory boards. Community-based initiatives provide culturally grounded methods that support the wellness of local residents and aid in community healing.

Recommendation #5: Reconsider Existing Legislation That Disproportionately Target and Impact Black Residents

Evaluate current measures negatively impacting and disproportionately subjecting Black Angelenos to legal penalties and prosecution.

Housing Segregation

Recommendation #1: Reinforce Legislation that Protect Against Housing Discrimination

Consider penalties for agencies that enact discriminatory and predatory housing and lending practices. Efforts to restore land back to Black families and preserve Black communities is also recommended.

Recommendation #2: Introduce Legislation that Advance Equitable Home Value Appraisals

When surveyed, 80.6% of respondents favored protections for home appraisals. (Ethnographic Report)

Recommendation #3: Calculate the Cost of Housing Inequity and Launch Compensatory Efforts

Restorative justice efforts in the area of housing were well received by the majority of respondents in the ethnographic study. Housing benefits were considered effective reparations efforts by 72% of participants (n=433) in the ethnographic survey.

Recommendation #4: Fund and Support Programs that Advance Equity in Homeownership Opportunities

For surveyed Black Angelenos, 82% of participants rated home buyer assistance programs very favorably. Also, 82% endorsed down payment assistance programs. (Ethnographic Report) For home buyers, soft-second mortgage programs received adoptions by 68.8% of participants (n=410) and mortgage interest rate reduction programs were rated highly among 76.8% (n=462).

Recommendation #5: Proactively Address Homelessness and Housing Insecurity Among Black Residents

Survey reports demonstrate that 83% of participants supported programs designed to reduce housing insecurity. Subsidized rent was also designated as an important approach for reparations among 76% of respondents (n=458).

Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity

Recommendation #1: Rectify Pay and Employment Inequities and Wage Loss

Address the inequities that exist in wage and pay practices. Equity adjustment in pay disparities received very high support from 81% of respondents. (Ethnographic Study)

Recommendation #2: Advance Equal and Equitable Employment Opportunities

In terms of employment, job assistance was well received by 75% of respondents (n=453) as a highly appropriate reparation effort. Also, 75% approved of access to City jobs and business assistance as suitable for reparations.

Recommendation #3: Increase Measures to Employ Black Angelenos in City and Union Jobs

Access to union jobs was indicated as a suitable repair effort by 71% (n=427). In particular, access to City jobs was rated high by 75% of respondents (n=450). (Ethnographic Report)

Separate and Unequal Education

Recommendation #1: Uphold and Implement Legislation Preventing Segregated and Unequal Education

Open access to LAUSD schools was considered suitable among 70% of participants (n=420) from the ethnographic survey.

Recommendation #2: Increase Access to Quality and Affirming Educational Systems

To atone for educational injustices, 81% of participants in the survey were in favor of free college tuition, and 79.3% supported student loan forgiveness as a form of reparations. Also, free graduate school tuition was rated highly among 77.4% of respondents (n=462). (Ethnographic Report)

Recommendation #3: Increase Access to Culturally Competent Educators and Support Programs that Build a Pipeline of Black Educators

The representation of culturally competent educators was designated as very critical among 77.6% of survey participants. Considerations for eliminating campus police and student arrest are also recommended.

Recommendation #4: Advance and Fund Ethnic Studies Programs and Adopt Black Studies Curriculum

Ethnic Studies programs and Black Studies curriculum offerings have proven to provide essential education and resources to student of all backgrounds and is especially affirming for students of African descent. Investing in these programs affirms the value of diverse cultural communities and supports the educational pedagogies that enrich the education of all children.

Recommendation #5: Fund Programs that Increase Access to College Preparation and Advanced Placement Courses for Black Students

When surveyed, 79% of survey respondents endorsed college preparation and 78% (n=469) supported AP course access as an appropriate reparation approach. Also, access to STEAM programs was endorsed by 76% (n=451) of respondents.

Recommendation #6: Adopt Policies that Eliminate the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Disciplinary Disparities

Adopt policies that eliminate the "school-to-prison pipeline" and disciplinary disparities is vital in order to advance educational equity for Black students.

Recommendation #7: Fund Community-Derived Programs that Enrich the Educational Experiences of Black Students

Develop models to support community-led programs that work to enhance the educational experiences of Black students and address the inadequacies of public education.

Political Disenfranchisement

Recommendation #1: Protect Civil and Voting Rights of Disenfranchised Communities

In protecting the civic rights of Black Angelenos, the City should advance legislation that allows individuals convicted of felonies to serve on juries and maintain the right to vote in municipal elections.

Recommendation #2: Implement Justice-Centered and Anti-Racist Districting Policies and Practices

Institute policies that advance justice and anti-racism in districting practices. Prohibit the practice of racist redistricting.

Recommendation #3: Advance Anti-Racist Governance of the City of Los Angeles

Endorse policies that promote anti-racism in the governance of the City and that prohibit discrimination in housing policies.

Pathologizing the Black Family

Recommendation #1: Provide Culturally Competent & Family-Centered Family Support Services

Institute policies and training programs that champion cultural humility and understanding. Cultural competency

was promoted by most of the survey participants, especially in the areas of training and professional services. Fund empowerment programs that support Black youth in foster care, and those who have been systems-impacted. Develop a process to evaluate concerns of racial bias in family services.

Recommendation #2: Address Disproportionate Arrest and Detainment of Black Youth

Develop strategic initiatives that support formerly incarcerated Black youth. Fund culturally compatible housing facilities that support unhoused youth and youth in crisis. Considerations for eliminating school arrest, and citations that lead to arrest, should be evaluated.

Recommendation #3: Address Protection for Black Women and Girls

Approve a measure to ensure the safety of security of Black women and girls is a necessary step to protecting Black families. Prioritize the safety and security of Black women and girls and endorse efforts that eliminate human trafficking, sex crimes and kidnapping. Fund safe housing facilities for the protection of Black women and children.

Control Over Creative Cultural and Intellectual Life

Recommendation #1: Mandate Equitable Employment, Pay, and Promotion in Entertainment Industries

Inequitable pay and limited representation, especially in leadership positions, continues to hinder Black professionals in entertainment industries. Employment benefits were considered essential reparations efforts by over 65% of survey respondents. More specially, addressing disparities in employment practices was termed as very appropriate by 68.95 of respondents (n=416) in the ethnographic survey.

Recommendation #2: Issue Historic Preservation Seals and Landmarks for Black Cultural and Historic Sites

Asset restoration and historic preservations of Black communities were highly endorsed by respondents as extremely appropriate for reparation efforts. The historic preservation of Black communities was favorably supported by 72% of respondents (n=437). Asset restoration was highly endorsed by 74% of respondents (n=447). (Ethnographic Report)

Recommendation #3: Increase Black Representation on Museums and Creative and Performance Arts Boards

Employment in City jobs and on boards would increase the influence and representation of Black Angelenos in the creative and performance arts. In particular, access to City jobs was rated high by 75% of respondents (n=450) in the Ethnographic study.

The Wealth Gap

Recommendation #1: Fund and Study Solutions that Address the Racial Wealth Gap in Los Angeles

When surveyed on appropriate economic reparations efforts, participants endorsement of financial incentives as a suitable option to repair and correct past harms was made even more evident. (Ethnographic Report) Monetary payments were highly recommended by 76% of participants (n=482). Also, a reduction in income tax was favorably scored by 69.5% of respondents to the survey (n=418) in the Ethnographic Study. Developing a strategic model for compensation and economic justice efforts would aid in addressing wealth disparities among the Black population in Los Angeles.

Recommendation #2: Endorse State and Federal Reparations Efforts that Eliminate the Racial Wealth Gap

Injustices against African Americans have been enacted at the federal, state, and local levels. Reparations efforts are needed at all three levels to effectively address and remedy the racial wealth gap.

Recommendation #3: Evaluate Debt Forgiveness Programs that Eliminate Wealth Disparities

Debt forgiveness and equity adjustment in pay disparities each received very high support by over 80% of

respondents surveyed in the Ethnographic study. Debt accumulation continues to plague Black residents in Los Angeles which have been influenced by a multitude of factors discussed in the Landscape Analysis. Developing a model to address waiving debt owed to the City of Los Angeles could aid in decreasing the wealth gap among Black Angelenos.

Recommendation #4: Support Investment and Retirement-Education Programs

Findings from the Landscape Analysis note that Black residents' wealth accumulation has been hindered by the lack of investment opportunities and a reliance on employer retirement accounts. Supporting educational programs that empower the Black community's economic mobility is recommended. When surveyed, financial literacy was supported by 74% (n=447) of respondents.

General Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Fund an Institute to Study the Ongoing Implementation and Progress of Reparation Efforts in the City of Los Angeles

Establishing a dedicated task force focused on assessing, tracking and reporting the City's reparation initiatives is recommended. The institute could develop a tracking website that would be used to keep the public informed and hold the City accountable for advancing the accepted reparations recommendations.

Recommendation #2: Engage in Ongoing Studies on the Impact of Enslavement, Disenfranchisement and Discrimination Experienced by Black Angelenos

While the current study attempted to provide a comprehensive analysis of the injustices experienced by Black people residing in the City of Los Angeles, there were several limitations to this study including study timeframe and data accessibility. We recommend ongoing efforts to gain a more robust understanding of the impact City Departments and policies had and continue to have on Black Angelenos.

Recommendation #3: Implement Cross-Departmental Efforts to Centralize Data and Advance Data Accessibility

City data accessibility and transparency were major challenges experienced in this study. The scope of this study, the scale and complexity of the City, the purview of departments, and unavailability of City-level data proving racial animus and bias in operations and services, were factors contributing to limitations in research. The lack of data infrastructure for this type of research project makes it increasingly difficult to examine the City's past. However, the LA Civil Rights Department provided The CSUN Research Team and Mockingbird Analytics resources, connections and access to other City personnel, including the City Clerk's archivist and Records Management Division, departmental and commission reports, support to navigate the City's Council File Management System, and access to subject-matter experts. LA Civil Rights also facilitated access to community voices through branded outreach, advertisements, and approximately 30 community engagements to promote the Black Experience survey, focus groups and interviews. Researchers were able to conduct original research, but also relied on studies and data sources from other agencies, including the County of Los Angeles. For future iterations of City reparations studies, instituting centralized data infrastructures is recommended to increase data accessibility transparency.