

# An Examination of African American Experiences in Los Angeles

Final Report  
January 2025

City of Los Angeles Reparations  
Advisory Commission

Prepared by:  
California State University, Northridge

**Note.** Williams, C. (1962). Baldwin School Integration. Los Angeles, 1962 [Photograph]. California State University Northridge. University Library. Special Collections & Archives. Tom & Ethel Bradley Center.



**Note.** Williams, C. (1951). Group Portrait. Los Angeles, 1951 [Photograph]. California State University Northridge. University Library. Special Collections & Archives. Tom & Ethel Bradley Center.



**Note.** Jackson, V. (1946-47). Picket to demand an end to employment discrimination at the corner of 35th Place and Normandie. Los Angeles [Photograph]. California State University Northridge. University Library. Special Collections & Archives. Tom & Ethel Bradley Center.

## **GRAPHIC CONTENT WARNING**

The following contains information and content that may be triggering to some. The content addresses race-based harms, intergenerational trauma, oppression, and real historical events, which may be disturbing or re-traumatizing for some individuals. Your discretion is strongly advised.

# Table of Contents

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| I.    | Letters from City, Elected Officials, & Acknowledgements          | 4   |
| II.   | Introduction & Historical Background                              | 12  |
| III.  | Study Framework and Methods                                       | 18  |
| IV.   | Landscape Analysis of Harms                                       | 22  |
|       | 1. <i>Vestiges of Slavery</i>                                     | 23  |
|       | 2. <i>Racial Terror</i>   | 30  |
|       | 3. <i>Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect</i>                    | 45  |
|       | 4. <i>Racism in the Environment and Infrastructure</i>            | 68  |
|       | 5. <i>An Unjust Legal System</i>                                  | 88  |
|       | 6. <i>Housing Segregation</i>                                     | 119 |
|       | 7. <i>Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity</i>                   | 136 |
|       | 8. <i>Separate and Unequal Education</i>                          | 159 |
|       | 9. <i>Political Disenfranchisement</i>                            | 170 |
|       | 10. <i>Pathologizing the Black Family</i>                         | 184 |
|       | 11. <i>Control Over Creative, Cultural, and Intellectual Life</i> | 197 |
|       | 12. <i>The Wealth Gap</i>   | 212 |
| V.    | Ethnographic Report   | 221 |
| VI.   | City Department Inequities Report                                 | 342 |
| VII.  | Summary of Findings   | 366 |
| VIII. | Recommendations for Reparations and Restorative Justice Efforts   | 372 |
| IX.   | Resources   | 385 |





LA Civil Rights



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



**CURREN D.  
PRICE, JR.**  
Los Angeles City Councilmember



THE **ONE FIVE**  
*district communities*  
COUNCILMEMBER  
TIM McOSKER



**CSUN**





# 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 pleased and honored to present our comprehensive report, *An Examination of African-American Experiences in Los Angeles*.

This report, produced in partnership with California State University, Northridge and Mockingbird Analytics, details more than 100 years of harms experienced by Black residents and community members, and is the result of 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, yet be hopeful for a more equitable and repaired Los Angeles.

Throughout the history of Los Angeles, Black Angelenos have faced both systemic and institutionalized racial violence. This history manifests itself in all walks of modern Black life, from health to homeownership to education. As the Executive Director of the LA Civil Rights, I am committed to continuing to bring restorative, equity-focused programming and policy to the City of Los Angeles. Although this report lists past — and even present — impacts of institutional racism, City leaders and other departments have already started to right many historic wrongs.

The City 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 that were redlined, as well as those that experienced high rates of COVID-19, overcrowding, 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 Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Councilmembers Curren Price, Heather Hutt, and Tim McOsker, the Reparations Advisory Commission, Commission counsel Heather Aubry and Anne Haley, as well as the tireless efforts of current and former LA Civil Rights staff. Their commitment to this work cannot be understated, and emphasizes the ideals of the LA Civil Rights. To our community members, we thank you for your contributions and invite you to continue to follow the Commission's work to deliver its 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MHD' with a long, sweeping underline.

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



# CURREN D. PRICE, JR.

Los Angeles City Councilmember

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THE  
**NEW 9<sup>th</sup>**



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







As the Councilmember representing the One-Five, I firmly believe that advancing Reparations in our city is a crucial step toward addressing the harms caused by systemic inequalities. The deep and lasting impact of these injustices has been felt by countless communities across Los Angeles, and I am committed to ensuring that we take meaningful action to right these wrongs. The inequities we face in our city are not just historical—they are present and ongoing.

Reparations are not just a matter of policy for me; they are a moral imperative that will allow us to begin healing and building a more equitable future, not only for the residents of the One-Five but for all of Los Angeles.

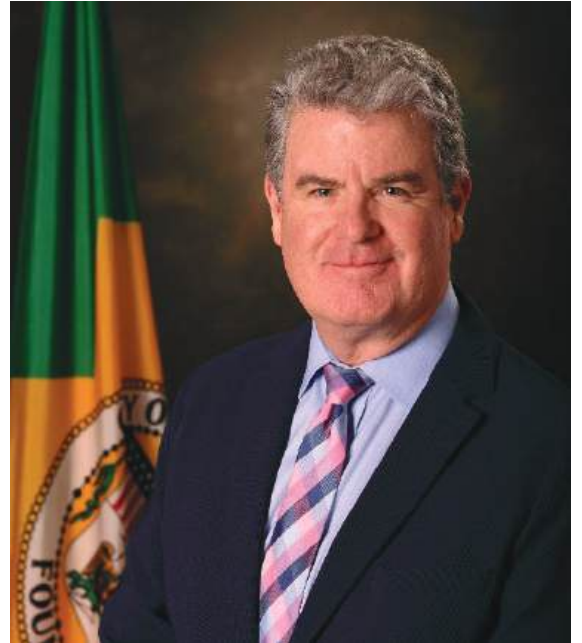
I want to take this opportunity to thank the leaders who have been instrumental in pushing this initiative forward.

The work of Capri Maddox, Executive Director and General Manager of the Civil, Human Rights, and Equity Department, has been invaluable, and I am deeply grateful for her leadership. Additionally, I want to express my gratitude to the Reparations Advisory Commission for their tireless dedication to this cause. Their contributions are essential in moving this initiative toward meaningful progress.

As we continue this work, I remain steadfast in my commitment to creating a city rooted in justice and equity. Reparations are an important part of that vision, and I am proud to stand in support of this crucial effort. This initiative is not only about repairing the past but also about ensuring a future where we can all live in a city that fully embraces the principles of fairness and equality. Together, we will build a Los Angeles that is truly just and reflective of the values we hold dear.

In Solidarity,

TIM McOSKER  
Councilmember, 15<sup>th</sup> District



# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction and Historical Background

## Study 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 (MA), 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 racially relevant happenings from the signing of 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, was led by CSUN and garnered hundreds of responses from former and current Angelenos.

The team's research allowed landscape analyses on 12 areas of harm, and the survey of Black voices featured in this report provide insight into past City policies and actions, as well as historic and contemporary experiences resulting from other public agencies, private citizens and institutions, and national ideologies and practices. It is important to note not all harms can be remedied 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 based on information available during the study, conducted from January 2023 to August 2024.

# Introduction

Black Americans have historically faced profound racial hostility, as expressed by the 1868 Presidential campaign slogan of Horatio Seymour and Francis Blair, who boldly emblazoned, "This is a White Man's Country: Let White Men Rule" on campaign badges.<sup>1</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 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 of and visitors to the City of Los Angeles. Mockingbird Analytics was selected to research funding structures the City may explore and analyze the fiscal implications of harms experienced by Black Angelenos. 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 verified 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,

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

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 role in explicitly creating anti-Black policies or supporting private citizens in their own efforts to discriminate.

## Contents

The full Harms Report is divided into nine parts. Part I contains acknowledgments. Part II is an introduction to the study, provides historical background, and outlines the approach to the report. Part III offers an overview of the study framework and methods. Part IV, the Landscape Analysis, summarizes the compounding harms that have affected African Americans and their communities throughout Los Angeles. Part V provides the ethnographic research conducted using interviews and focus groups of African American constituents. Part VI is the *City Department Inequities Report* based on the study's fund development partner, Mockingbird Analytics' research on the exposition of possible culpability of City departments given their histories of racialized injustice for Black Angelenos over time. Part VII provides a summary of study findings and Part VIII offers recommendations for

reparations and restorative justice efforts. Part IX, Resources, wraps 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 whom 26 were of African descent.<sup>2</sup> These 26 pobladores, who volunteered for the expedition to Alta-California, were part of the nearly 2.5 million 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.<sup>3</sup> Over a century, the number of

***The result of the Fugitive Slave Act (1850) and the Dred Scott decision (1857), contributed, in part, to the precarious nature of Black life along with the erosion of Black rights.***

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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).



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 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

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 14 (due process) and 15 Amendments (protection against political disenfranchisement). In

many cases, Reconstruction amounted to a “second slavery” when new enacted southern labor laws were enacted to force or otherwise coerce newly freed African Americans to return to the plantations, workhouses, and factories to work for former plantation owners for little or 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, Illinois (1917), Tulsa, Oklahoma, and its Black Wall Street (1921), and Rosewood, Florida (1923). In other cases, legal power was used unjustly in politics by policymakers in the City of Manhattan Beach. They stripped Black individuals of their property and eliminated an African American resort (1924)<sup>4</sup>, sustaining the racial wealth gap and eliminating vestiges of Black cultural and intellectual life. Racial housing covenants,<sup>5</sup> urban neglect and decay, environmental racism,<sup>6</sup> police brutality,<sup>7</sup> institutionalized and personal racism, and a precarious labor market

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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).

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)<sup>8</sup> and Los Angeles uprisings (1992)<sup>9</sup> 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.

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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).

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-European 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 profoundly affected the ability of African Americans to accumulate generational wealth; this was in addition to redlining policies from the federal government, significant effects of which 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 advocacy 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 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 pollutants, and harmful environmental conditions to the working class and poor people.



# Study Framework & Methods

This section provides an overview of the *Justice-centered Design Thinking* framework we employed in this study. We also applied an Afrocentric lens to assess the harms committed against African people and their descendants in California. This section also describes the qualitative and quantitative methods and research design proposed in this research. The study incorporates both political and justice analysis that include analyses of state and local policies that impacted African Americans, and a landscape and geospatial analysis of historical and contemporary data (populations statistics, land ownership, employment, etc.) that mapped the geographic parameters of Black Los Angeles. Examining the impact of enslavement and disenfranchisement on Black Los Angelenos, this study will implement an ethnographic research study including interviews, focus groups, and town halls. Surveys will also be developed to assess the experiences of African Americans in Los Angeles and how they have been impacted by structural racism.

## Program Design (Justice-Centered Design Thinking and Afrocentricity)

Design Thinking is a process of inquiry where reflection in the acquisition of knowledge is foundational and solution-based problem identification is employed with intentional efforts to envision resolutions to problems. The process requires both iterative and emergent processing of information collected while simultaneously rotating back and forth between the problems and solutions while empathizing and being self-reflective in order to envision prototypes of solutions with the community. However, design thinking when applied to marginalized communities requires an additional layer that is reflective of the cultures and communities of people impacted. Khalil & Kier (2020)<sup>1</sup> suggest that,

*While design thinking is a tool that leaders may apply when considering school wide initiatives, without attending*

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1 Khalil, D., Kier, M. (2020). Equity-Centered Design Thinking in STEM Instructional Leadership. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 24(1), 69-85.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458920975452>

to the culture, value, and ethos that affect a one's interpretation of problems and solutions, design thinking poses the risk of reducing decisions to a set of principles and steps that are exclusionary of vulnerable minoritized populations.

The *d.K12Lab Network*, a Stanford *d.School* project extends Equity-Centered Design Thinking, grounding the design process with two additional phases, *Notice* at the frontend and *Reflect* at the backend. These additional phases are cyclical and are operational throughout the research process. This model allows for the cultures, beliefs, values and customs of communities to shape the research process. Design Thinking has been as noted by Clifford (2017)<sup>2</sup> embodies an equity-centered lens to problem solving that provides communities space for culturally focused solutions that at germane to their ethos and values.

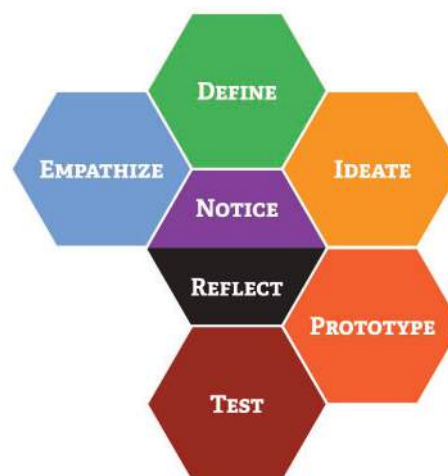
The *Equity-centered Design Thinking* framework includes the following seven phases:

- *Noticing* the inherit basis the researcher brings to the study
- *Empathizing* with stakeholders

- *Defining* specific problems of practice
- *Ideating* a multitude of solutions
- Developing a *prototype* or strategic plan of implementation
- *Testing* implementation strategies while documenting the opportunities and impediments of the prototype.
- *Reflecting* on the research process

Given the nature and scope of the Los Angeles Civil Rights Reparations study, we find that an additional layer centering justice with the aim of correcting harms and repairing injustices and inequities.

**Figure 1.** Adopted from (Clifford, 2017) illustrates the Equity-Centered Design Thinking Process

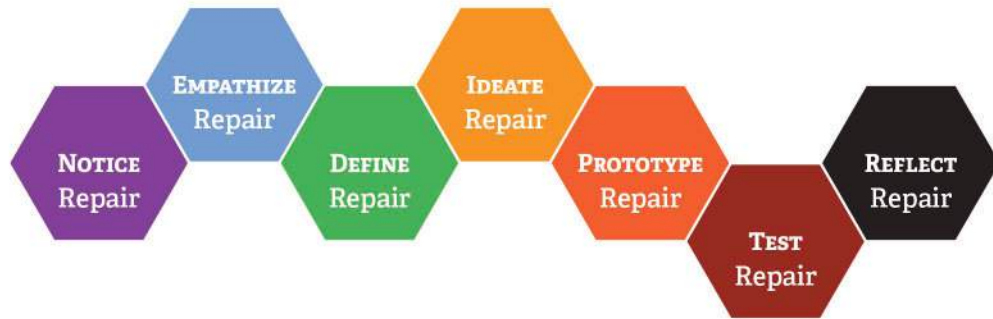


Justice-centered thinking has been conceptualized as an action-driven model that is social and political. It entails both understanding what is equitable and correcting inequities (Roldan et.al, 2021).<sup>3</sup> The *Justice-centered Design Thinking* framework

<sup>2</sup> Clifford, D. H. (2017). Equity-centered design thinking [PowerPoint presentation]. *d.k12Lab Network*. Stanford *d.School*.  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1S-7fZojfgGs3M3T110vaXZFztRvjmMdkCjJ4UilQ5i0/edit#slide=id.g1f13b8acbf\\_0\\_459](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1S-7fZojfgGs3M3T110vaXZFztRvjmMdkCjJ4UilQ5i0/edit#slide=id.g1f13b8acbf_0_459)

<sup>3</sup> Roldan, W., Badillo-Urquiola, K., Sobel, K., Lee, K. J., Wisniewski, P.J., Ahn, J., Clegg, T., & 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. *Interaction Design and Children*, 666-669.

**Figure 2.** Justice-Centered Design Thinking Approach expanded from Equity-centered Design Thinking (Clifford, 2017)



adds the dimension of *Repair*, which is essential when envisioning and reflecting on solutions to injustices faced by communities that have been systemically harmed. The element of Repair is intended to create space for a corrective lens throughout the design, research, and analysis process in order to make amends for harms and injustices, and to make the impacted communities whole. The CSUN Research Team embedded this methodology in its study and included a constant examination of racism and systemic inequities. Studying reparations with a *Justice-centered Design Thinking* framework fulfills a restorative mission to propose holistic resolutions.

Utilizing a reparations methodology, this study attempted to implement practices which assured African-descended persons in Los Angeles harmed by enslavement, systemic discrimination, and institutional racism were able to see cultural truths exposed,

accountability enacted, and continued harm disrupted and ceased. This methodological approach was aimed at providing a reparative effect that addressed the needs, violations, and injustices experienced by African Americans.

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 suppression, redlining, educational inequity, subprime lending practices, racial and police terrorism, employment inequities, and underemployment. Afrocentricity is a methodology that centers African peoples' cultures, experiences, worldviews, and ways of being in any analysis of African phenomenon. Afrocentricity prioritizes the subject place of Africans and is grounded in African agency. The liberation of African peoples is the

ultimate aim of Afrocentricity. Applying this paradigm allows the researchers to engage Black communities with humility and respect while also empowering those communities to define resolutions and reparations from their own cultural perspectives.



# **Landscape Analysis of Harms**

- 1. Vestiges of Slavery**
- 2. Racial Terror**
- 3. Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect**
- 4. Racism in the 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

## Abstract

Despite California's official status as a "Free State," illegal enslavement of Black citizens and persistent racism against those who were legally free (often at the hands of local government officials) deprived many Black people, including those living in Los Angeles, of equal rights and opportunities well into the 21st century. The legacy of enslavement, as manifested in segregation and discrimination, 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 Angelenos.

## Key Terms

**Enslavement (American):** A system that exploited people for their labor, attempted to dehumanize them, and denied both their human rights and right to citizenship. Chattel slavery treated enslaved people as property that could be bought, sold, loaned, and inherited. In other slavery systems throughout history, those enslaved maintained some basic human rights, and their children weren't automatically enslaved. However, in the U.S., their status as property was hereditary, meaning that their children were automatically born into slavery.

**Free State:** Refers to a U.S. state where slavery was prohibited by law, meaning that owning slaves was illegal within its borders.

## Overview

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. Enslaved Black people had also been brought to California during these two periods, leading to the growth of Los Angeles' African American community.

Enslavement in Los Angeles existed before

the United States annexed California in 1848. During the Spanish Colonial 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.<sup>1</sup> After the United States

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<sup>1</sup> Pfaelzer, J. (2023). *California, a Slave State*. Yale University Press.; Pitt, L. (1966). *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846–1890*. University of California Press. 56–57.; Smith, S. L. (2011). *Remaking slavery in a free state: Masters and slaves in gold rush California*. *Pacific Historical Review* 80 (1). University of California Press. 28-63.

acquired California following the Mexican-American War, American settlers brought more enslaved people to the area, thus expanding that population. In 1850, California was admitted to the Union as a free state. The California Constitution prohibited the practice of slavery in Article I, Section 18: “Neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crimes, shall ever be tolerated in this state.”<sup>2</sup> However, forced labor persisted because abolition laws were rarely enforced.

Although the numbers were much larger, the 1850 census documented that 12 African Americans resided in Los Angeles County compared to “3,456 whites and 62 Indians. The first California census in 1852 counted 962 individuals of African heritage in the state.”<sup>3</sup> The illegality of slavery ensured that it would always be an underground practice, and the “owners of people” often disguised enslavement as indentured servitude with sham contracts.<sup>4</sup> Among the slaveowners were Jonathan R. Scott, who held 11 persons in bondage, and Robert Smith, with five. Wealthy Californian families such as the Ávilas,

Sepúlvedas, and Picos were also slaveholders, utilizing enslaved people on their ranchos for tending livestock, agriculture, and domestic labor. As more American settlers arrived, the documented population of enslaved people in the City grew to 42 by 1852.<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding the constitutional prohibition against slavery, other state legislation passed during this period overtly violated the human rights of Black Californians. The Compromise of 1850, which allowed California to enter the Union as a free state, also included the federal Fugitive Slave Law, which required free states to cooperate by returning enslaved people who had escaped back to slaveholders upon capture. In 1852, California passed its own fugitive slave law that was even harsher than federal law, as it included steeper penalties and mandated the return of escapees to their enslavers. Figure 1 shows one aspect of the Fugitive Slave Law’s implementation in California and demonstrates how advertisements were used to incentivize the return of enslaved persons. Other state laws were enacted that forbade interracial marriage, prohibited Black people from voting, and banned them from public

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2 Constitution of the State of California, art. 1, sec. 18, (1849), <https://archives.cdn.sos.ca.gov>.

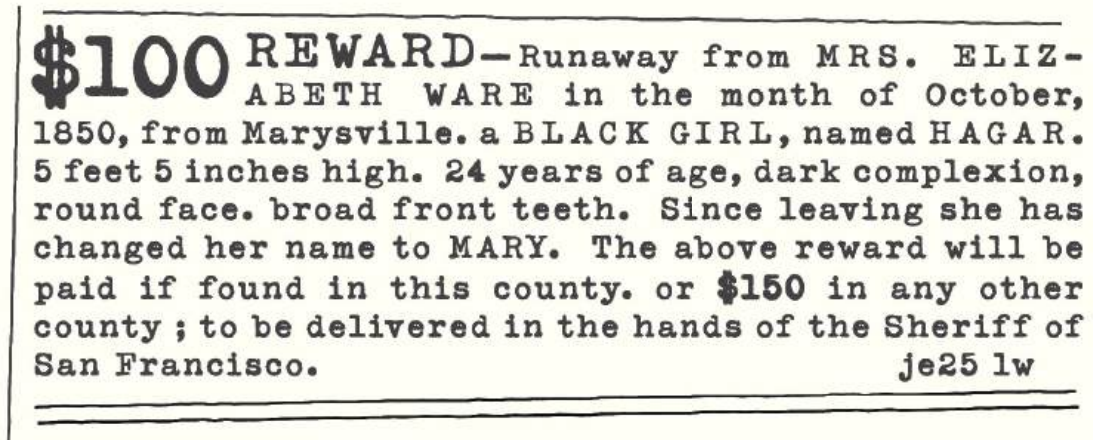
3 Marne C.L. (2016). *Making Black Los Angeles: Class, Gender, and Community, 1850-1917*. UNC Press Books. 31. Table 1.6 Race in Los Angeles, 1850.

4 Jean Pfaelzer, J. (2023). *California, a Slave State*. Yale University Press. 125.

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5 State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2023, June). *The California Reparations Final Report*.

**Figure 1.** Advertisement from the San Francisco Herald offering a reward for the return of a “fugitive” slave.  
**Source:** *California's Hidden History, The case for reparations - Gold Chains: The Hidden History of Slavery in California* | ACLU NorCal. American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California.  
<https://www.aclunc.org/sites/goldchains/explore/case-for-reparations.html>



Advertisement from the *San Francisco Herald*, 1852.

lands. Schools were segregated and funding to help Black children attend public school was denied. Furthermore, the state prohibited Black people from testifying in court cases involving White people. A noted example of this prohibition arose during the trial of Bridget “Biddy” Mason in 1856, an enslaved woman who sued for her freedom but was required to speak only in the judge’s chambers to avoid violating state law.<sup>6</sup>

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 a street named *Calle de los Negros*, commonly

called “N– Alley.” (See Figure 3.) Likewise, the Dominguez Hills / Carson area, south of Los Angeles, was referred to as “N– Slough.”<sup>7</sup> The logging site of Robert Owens, who bought his freedom in Texas before opening a lumber business in Los Angeles County, was called

<sup>7</sup> Estrada, W. D. (2017, October 20). *Calle de Los Negros: LA's 'Forgotten' Street*. PBS SoCal. <https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/lost-la/calle-de-los-negros-l-a-s-forgotten-street>.

**Figure 2.** Photo of Bridget “Biddy” Mason.  
**Source:** “Los Angeles Public Library. (2003) Los Angeles Public Library photo database & virtual gallery.



<sup>6</sup> Reiniche, A. (2023, March 7). *Bridget 'Biddy' Mason*. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/people/bridget-biddy-mason.htm>.



"Negro Canyon."<sup>8</sup> After John Ballard escaped enslavement in Kentucky and moved to Agoura Hills, the area where he lived was named "N-head Mountain."<sup>9</sup> In 1862, 242 Black Californians petitioned the U.S. Congress to allow them to form a separate country so they would not be subjected to this type of racist degradation.<sup>10</sup>

During the American Civil War (1861–1865), multiple Los Angeles County law enforcement

officials openly supported the Confederacy. In March 1861, Los Angeles County Undersheriff Andrew Jackson King founded a secessionist militia group called the Los Angeles Mounted Rifles, also known as the "Monte Boys." Other law enforcement officers, including Sheriff Tomás Ávila Sánchez, who was a member of the Los Angeles Common Council, were members of the militia. Albert Sidney Johnston, a former U.S. Army general, relocated from San Francisco to Los Angeles and also joined the Monte Boys.<sup>11</sup>

8 Lapp, R. M. (1977). *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (Vol. 29). Yale University Press. 119.

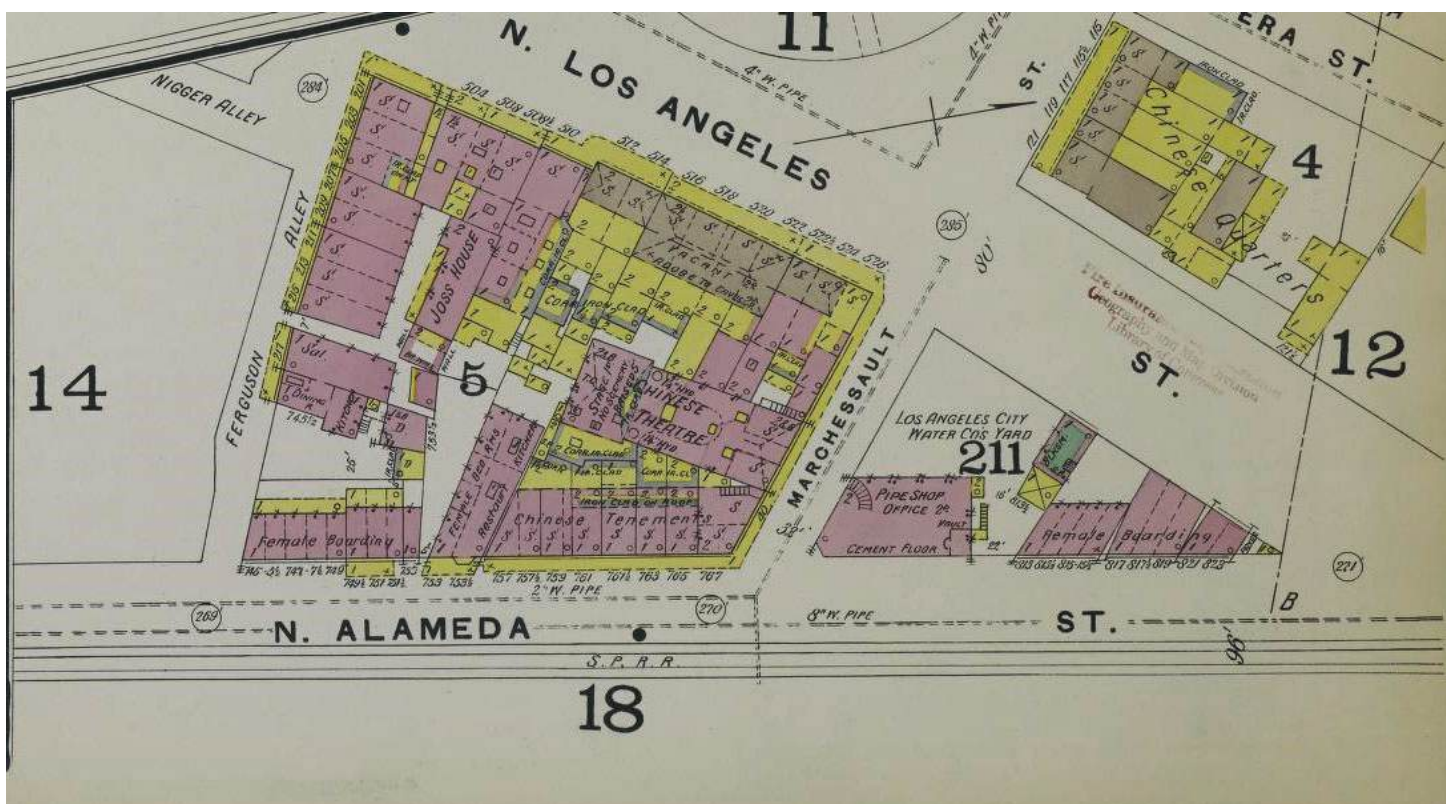
9 National Park Service. (2022, September 22). *Ballard Family*. <https://www.nps.gov/samo/learn/historyculture/ballard-family.htm>.

10 Goode, K. G. (1974). *California's Black Pioneers: A Brief Historical Survey*. McNally & Loftin. 88.

11 Waldie, D. J. (2017, July 10). 'We Have Been and Are Yet Secessionist' — *Los Angeles When the Civil War Began*. PBS SoCal. <https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/>; Richard Hurley, R. (2017). *California and the Civil War*. Arcadia Publishing. 45.

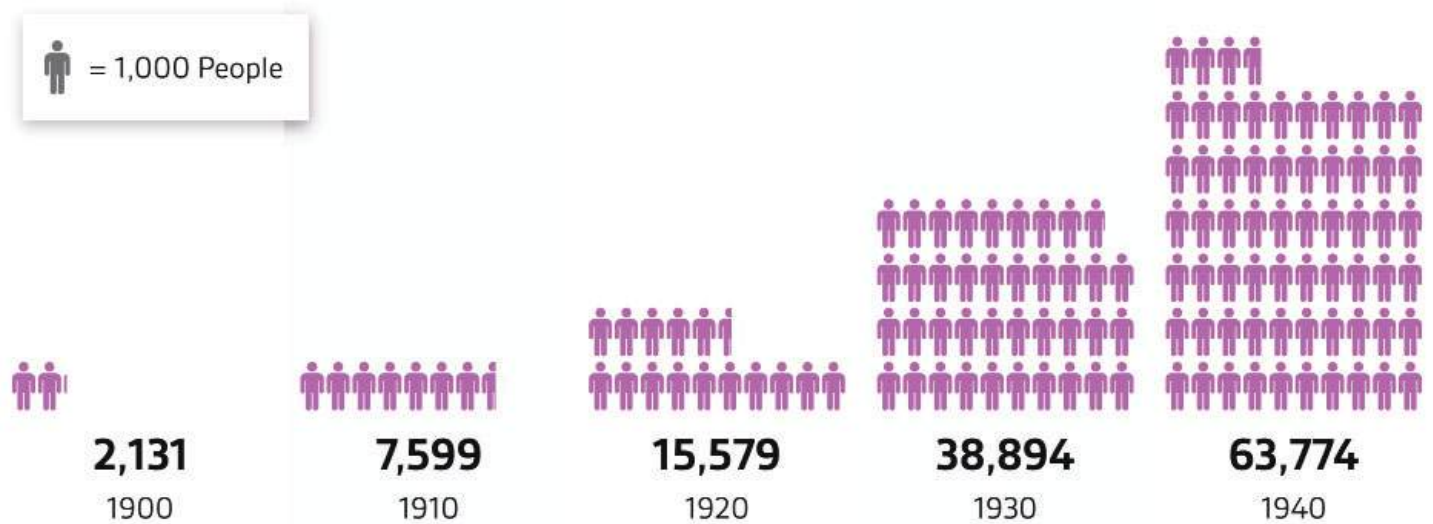
**Figure 3.** Map depicting the location of "N– Alley" in Downtown Los Angeles.

**Source:** (1894) *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California*. Sanborn Map Company, ; Vol. 1. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00656\\_003/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00656_003/).



**Figure 4.** Black population in the City of Los Angeles from 1900 to 1940.

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau.



To combat racial violence and discrimination after the Civil War, African Americans established civil rights organizations to protect their communities. Groups such as the Franchise League, the National Afro-American Council, the Los Angeles Forum, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) played key roles in overturning discriminatory laws. However, some African Americans did not believe discrimination would end during their lifetimes and became involved in the national “Black Town Movement” to establish municipalities governed entirely by Black people. In 1908, Allen Allensworth and William A. Payne of Los Angeles eventually founded a Black town in Tulare, a few hours north of the City.<sup>12</sup>

By 1910, Los Angeles had become the center of African American politics and commerce in California. The Black population of the area increased from approximately 2,100 in 1900 to around 15,000 by 1920.<sup>13</sup> The Central Avenue neighborhood was the hub of Black cultural life, featuring jazz clubs, theaters, and markets. *The California Eagle*, an African American newspaper that John J. Neimore established in 1879 as *The California Owl*, continued to operate until 1966, and the Black-owned Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company opened in 1925.<sup>14</sup> A growing middle class of African American doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs had emerged.

13 1900 U.S. Federal Census cited in City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources. (January 2018). *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement Context: African American History of Los Angeles*.

14 Flammig, D. (2005). *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*. University of California Press. 104, 377.

12 Royal, A. C. & Ellinger, M. (2008). *Allensworth, the Freedom Colony: A California African American Township*. Heyday Books.

However, Black Angelenos continued to experience systemic oppression via de jure and de facto discrimination. As referenced in subsequent chapters of this report, housing and education were segregated; African Americans were not allowed in public places, including cinemas and restaurants, and employment discrimination was the norm. The Ku Klux Klan had a strong presence in Los Angeles in the 1920s, and Klansmen permeated local governments and police departments. Klan membership peaked after World War II when African Americans sought to move into White neighborhoods.<sup>15</sup>

The disparities between the lives of White and Black Angelenos in the 1930s were enormous. While the global Great Depression impacted all Angelenos, Black residents faced additional challenges, such as restrictive housing covenants and exclusion from major industries which survived the economic downturn. As a result of segregation, school spending per student was also significantly lower for Black students. Due to racial discrimination, Black workers were particularly vulnerable to the economic crisis and, by 1934, were unemployed at a rate 50% higher than that of White workers. Black people were less likely to benefit from President Franklin D.

Roosevelt's New Deal programs, but more likely to encounter racial discrimination and violence.<sup>16</sup>

Important legal victories in the 1930s and 1940s were vital steps on the slow march to overcome the injustices African Americans had suffered since the era of enslavement. According to Flaming (2005), Black Angelenos led the nation in initiating lawsuits to eliminate racially restrictive housing covenants, while civil rights activist Rebecca "Betty" Hill led the court battle to desegregate the City's playgrounds. Summer camps, swimming pools, and beaches were also desegregated during this era. The demand for civil rights and equal treatment among Blacks required generations of effort on the streets, in the courts, and in the press to overcome local government authorities' active and passive resistance.

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 196.

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 296-297.

## Summary of Findings

Despite the official status of California as a “Free State,” illegal enslavement of Black citizens and persistent racism toward 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.
- The legacy of enslavement, as manifested in segregation and discrimination, made it difficult for Black people 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, including those residing there today.
- Fugitive Slave Laws at the federal level (1850) and harsher state laws (1852) upheld enslavement and mandated the return of enslaved escapees.
- Racist state laws banned interracial marriage, participation in elections, access to public lands, and 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

## Abstract

This chapter exposes local, private, and public forms of racial terror, including judicial violence, police brutality, and other government-administered harms or sanctions of private violence. Police violence and aggressive policing, coupled with racial terror exercised by neighborhood vigilante groups and the Ku Klux Klan, exacerbated 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 wider anti-Black culture that shaped many of the City's practices and policies.

## Key Terms

**Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD):** The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, officially the County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, is a law enforcement agency serving Los Angeles County, California. This law enforcement agency is independent of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), which serves the City of Los Angeles.

**Zoot Suits:** Characterized by high-waisted, wide-legged, tight-cuffed, pegged trousers, and a long coat with wide lapels and wide padded shoulders, the suit is most notable for its use as a cultural symbol among the Hepcat (Black) and Pachuco (Mexican) subcultures.

**Neo-Nazi / Neo-Nazism:** Terms describing post-World War II militant, social, and political movements that seek to revive and reinstate Nazi ideology.

**COINTELPRO:** The Counterintelligence Program, or COINTELPRO, was a series of covert and illegal projects conducted between 1956 and 1971 by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) aimed at surveilling, infiltrating, discrediting, and disrupting American political organizations and individuals the FBI perceived as subversive, particularly those advocating for African American civil rights or political power.

## Overview

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 and 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 placement.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, in California — in Los Angeles in particular — racial terror has been effectively deployed to maintain claims of White superiority, destroy Black economic wealth, and limit Black political influence in civic governance.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Los Angeles: “A ‘bad town’ for Negroes”***

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.”<sup>3</sup> By all indications, African Americans enjoyed higher standards of living and housing in Los Angeles than in many 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 feared the encroachment of African Americans in what they believed to be their neighborhoods and public spaces. A critical source for maintaining White-only spaces was the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), along with neighborhood vigilante groups that organized themselves whenever they felt Black residents were encroaching. Figure 1 highlights an incident in Eagle Rock, a neighborhood northeast Los Angeles, where members of the neighborhood protested the sale of a home to Black homebuyers.

**Figure 1.** Newspaper clipping: “Fiery Cross Protests Home’s Possible Sale.”

Source: Fiery Cross Protests Home's Possible Sale. (1948, Sep 09). Los Angeles Times (1923 -1995) <https://libproxy.csun.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/fiery-cross-protests-homes-possible-sale/docview/165895924/se-2>

#### **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.

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1 National Park Service. (2009). *Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights*. National Historic Landmarks Program. 4; For a discussion of the “caste” term, see Wilkerson, I. (2020). *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. Random House.

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

3 McWilliams, C. (1973). *Southern California: An Island on the Land*. Peregrine Smith Books, 324.

Over the course of the 20th century, the LAPD conspired with private individuals to force African Americans from their homes. For example, in 1948, a mob of White residents in the all-White community of Eagle Rock attempted to intimidate the sellers of a home that an African American family purchased. As a more recent *Los Angeles Times* opinion piece noted in 2020, the mob consisted of, "esteemed businessmen and homeowners, as well as a uniformed police officer."<sup>4</sup> Upon arrival at the house, the mob proceeded to torch a 12-foot-tall cross reminiscent of those burned by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). In fact, the cross burning, witnessed and sanctioned by members of the LAPD, achieved the same effect as if the Klan had been involved in the cross burning.

### ***Los Angeles and the Klan***

As noted in other studies, "Los Angeles was the epicenter of KKK activity in California."<sup>5</sup> The Klan was so popular in the City that the *Los Angeles Times* kept its readership informed on changes to the group's administration.<sup>6</sup> The KKK also maintained an office in the

**Figure 2.** Map showing documented Ku Klux Klan activity in and around Los Angeles from 1923-1935  
Source: Virginia Commonwealth University, "'Mapping the Second Ku Klux Klan, 1919–1940' Project," [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/hist\\_data/1/](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/hist_data/1/).



Haas Building at 7th Street and Broadway in Downtown Los Angeles. According to testimony related to a gunfight in the nearby City of Inglewood involving Klan members, this office served as a repository for documents linking the terrorist organization in Los Angeles to, "beatings, hangings and tar and feathering in the Kern County, [California] oil fields."<sup>7</sup> The Klan established branches in cities throughout

<sup>4</sup> Fleischer, M. (2020, August 11). Opinion: How white people used police to make L.A. one of the most segregated cities in America. *Los Angeles Times*.

<sup>5</sup> California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals..., Interim Report, 99.

<sup>6</sup> (1926, November). California Ku Klux Klan in A new Line-Up: 'Realm Government' Has Supplanted Provisional in State Regime. *Los Angeles Times*.

<sup>7</sup> Rasmussen, C. (1999, May 30). Klan's Tentacles Once Extended to Southland. *The Los Angeles Times*.

Figure 3. Los Angeles City Councilman Ralph Luther Criswell's Ku Klux Klan application.

## *Is This the Signature of City Council's President?*

**To His Majesty the Imperial Wizard, Emperor of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku KLUX KLAN (Inc.):**

I, the undersigned, a native born true and loyal citizen of the United States of America, being a white male Gentile person of temperate habits, sound in mind, and a believer in the tenets of the Christian religion, the maintenance of White Supremacy, the practice of an honorable clannishness and the principles of a "pure Americanism," do voluntarily most respectfully, seriously and unselfishly petition you for citizenship in the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and be a CHARTER MEMBER of a Klan to be located at Los Angeles State of Calif.

I guarantee on my honor to conform strictly to all rules and requirements regulating my "naturalization" and the continuance of my membership, and at all times a strict and loyal obedience to your constitutional authority and the constitution and laws, and all regulations and usages of the fraternity. The required "donation" accompanies this petition.

Signed— Ralph L. Criswell, Petitioner.

Date Feb 14 1922

Endorsers will sign on other side.

Residence Address City Hall

Business Address 529 W. 41st Place

Occupation Councilman

NOTICE: Check the address to which mail may be sent.

Los Angeles County, including Santa Monica, Huntington Park, Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, Long Beach, Inglewood, Glendale, San Pedro, and Anaheim. (See Figure 2).

The LAPD was a bastion for members of the Klan, and at least 150 "pillars of the community" were known to have joined.<sup>8</sup> According to the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, which conducted an investigation in 1922 into the murders of Basque migrants from Spain by the KKK, there were even three members in its own ranks. During that era, the LAPD's Chief Louis D. Oaks and Los Angeles County Sheriff William I. Traeger were also members. By 1923, the Klan had entered growth mode in Los Angeles. Ralph Luther Criswell, a known

White supremacist who was elected to City Council in 1921 and served for 10 years, was a charter member in the City. His application for membership (Figure 3) was printed in The Los Angeles Times with his oath reading:

*To His Majesty, the Imperial Wizard, Emperor of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Inc.): I, the undersigned, a native-born true and loyal citizen of the United States of America, being a white male Gentile person of temperate habits, sound in mind, and a believer in the tenets of the Christian religion, the maintenance of White Supremacy, the practice of an honorable clannishness and the principles of "pure Americanism," do voluntarily most*

<sup>8</sup> ibid.



*respectfully, seriously and unselfishly petition you for citizenship in the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and be a CHARTER MEMBER of the Klan to be located in Los Angeles, Calif.*<sup>9</sup>

Criswell was a staunch advocate against equality for all minorities, not just Black people. For example, in April of 1919, he submitted an anti-Japanese resolution to City Council against a covenant proposed by Japan's government for "racial equality" in international affairs at the Paris Peace Conference at the end of World War I. He argued, "Whereas, the experience of California with oriental immigration has shown that these privileges cannot be granted without imperiling the welfare of the White population and ultimately of American civilization."<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> While reforming the LAPD into a "professional" organization in the 1950s, Chief William Parker believed that White communities needed to be protected from both African American and Latino

criminals, claiming that there was a direct correlation between race and crime. He described his approach to what amounted to racial profiling: "The demand that the police cease to consider race, color, and creed is an unrealistic demand. Identification is a police tool, not a police attitude."<sup>12</sup> Parker thereby directed police resources to suppress the African American community and instill fear.

### ***The "War on Drugs"***

The state of California led the nation by passing some of the earliest anti-drug laws in the United States, with San Francisco passing an anti-opium law in 1875. In the early 20th century, the country began leading a global campaign to criminalize the production, sale, and use of drugs, beginning with the Harrison Narcotics Tax Act of 1914. This legislation restricted and taxed opiates and cocoa products. In 1919, the 18th Amendment prohibited the manufacture, sale, and distribution of alcohol. In 1937, the Mellon and Hearst families successfully lobbied for the "Marihuana" Tax Act that placed a duty on cannabis and hemp. These tariffs were meant to curb the proliferation of certain narcotics, but did not signify a total war on particular groups or users. That attitude

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9 Criswell's Application to Join the Klan Forged? (1922, June 6). *Los Angeles Times*.

10 Council Opposes Racial Equality: Anti-Japanese Resolution May Be Cabled to Peace Conference. (1919, April 11). *Los Angeles Times*.

11 Fleischer, Opinion: How white people used police...

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12 Quoted in Monico, R. (2018). *Racial Criminalization and the Origins of the Los Angeles Drug Wars*. [Thesis] San Francisco State University, 31–32.

would not take hold until Congress passed the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, which categorized certain drugs according to their potentiality for abuse and addiction. John Ehrlichman, who served as a political aide to President Richard Nixon, described how such legislation was leveraged to target certain groups of people, especially by race:

*The Nixon campaign in 1968 and the Nixon White House after that had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.<sup>13</sup>*

The “war on drugs” was launched during the Nixon administration (1969–1974); however, Los Angeles waged its own earlier version of

the drug wars in the 1950s as part of a larger systematic strategy to both stigmatize the Black community and increase arrests in order to subjugate and terrorize the City's growing African American population. As we have noted in other areas of this study, the LAPD, civic leaders, and local press all played roles in demonizing minority communities in order to inflate the public's concern for safety. Recent scholarship has shown that these actions led to unwarranted hysteria and worries that minorities represented a threat to public safety, particularly in White neighborhoods. Racial segregation was then used as an antidote for White juvenile delinquency, the belief being that White youths were prone to the negative influence of deviant behavior in Black culture, which was associated with jazz, dance, and drugs. The only way to protect the White youth was through strict enforcement of segregation laws and a “war” on drug pushers. The 1950s war on drugs, “reflected bipartisan support and received near unanimous legislative majorities, accompanied by pusher-victim discourses in political culture that emphasized the dual imperatives of protecting White middle-class youth from the drug market alongside the criminal control of their urban

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<sup>13</sup> Baum, D. (2016, April). Legalize It All. *Harper's Magazine*.

minority counterparts.”<sup>14</sup>

In turn, the LAPD linked the concern for public safety to drug abuse within minority communities.<sup>15</sup> Figure 4 was clipped from a news article that seemingly points the finger of blame for the spread of drugs from Los Angeles to Mexico, as noted by Chief Parker’s comments at a town hall luncheon. Chief Parker’s strategy to win support for a “war on drugs” worked, as neighborhood groups and civic organizations representing over 1 million residents across California petitioned the state for mandatory minimum sentences for, “dope pushers who supplied marijuana and heroin to teenagers, with considerable public sentiment for life imprisonment or the death penalty.”<sup>16</sup> Whipping up a furor that was rooted in racist ideologies enabled Parker to secure additional funding to recruit officers, increase salaries, buy more equipment, and enjoy complete autonomy to run the department without civilian oversight — all with the goal of preventing Black and Brown criminals from entering White communities.

One example of the terror created by the LAPD stemmed from the disproportionate number

of arrests the department made in Black neighborhoods during its rampant anti-drug campaign. In 1956, the Central Avenue district, where a large majority of African Americans in Los Angeles resided, was subjected to

**Figure 4. Drug scare newspaper clipping.**  
Source: Los Angeles Times. Aug. 14, 1951

DOPE EVIL'S SPREAD SEEN AS ALARMING: Time Has Come to Ask Mexico to ...  
Los Angeles Times (1923-1995), Aug 14, 1951; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times  
pg. A3

## DOPE EVIL'S SPREAD SEEN AS ALARMING

**Time Has Come to Ask Mexico to Stamp Out  
Poppy Fields, Chief Parker Tells Town Hall**

Narcotic addiction is increasing alarmingly, Chief of Police Parker told a Town Hall luncheon at the Biltmore yesterday. And in answer to a question from the floor, he said he soon will make some concrete suggestions about the problem which is nationwide.

“The time has got to come when the State Department will ask Mexico to stamp out its poppy fields,” the Chief declared. “Half of our narcotics come from Europe which we get by way of New Jersey with distribution in the Chicago district. The European drugs are mostly heroin, which is the great problem today. This drug is outlawed, even for medical use.

### Over the Border

“The other half of the narcotic drugs comes over the border from Mexico. Opium derivatives come from parts of that country where poppies are grown for opium manufacture. We also get Mexican heroin which can be distinguished from the European heroin.”

The chief said heroin now is used by the criminal element where cocaine formerly was the most popular drug. Opium, morphine and heroin are all derived from the poppy flower. Cocaine comes from the coca leaf grown in South America.

The Chief did not mention marijuana, which is a drug that can be easily grown in most parts of the United States. Marijuana addicts thus are supplied in good part from their own localities.

Chief Parker said that narcotic arrests in Los Angeles have increased 57% since a year ago.

### Moral Degeneration

“Fundamentally there seems to be a moral degeneration of the people of America, which may

account for our troubles with narcotic drugs, illegal gambling and other problems,” the Chief declared. “Use of narcotics among children may be a symptom rather than a disease.

“There is not the same home influence as there was 40 or 50 years ago. The television may bring people back into the home and if the programs are of the right kind the proper home influence may be revived in some part. The home again may mold the character of our young people.”

The chief said that some of the men in the department had been working in what amounts to 40-hour shifts during investigation of the recent gangster killings. He said that during one bookmaker investigation some of the police had worked as long as 50 hours without rest.

“They did this,” the speaker continued, “because they were working on loose ends and if they stopped there simply wouldn’t be any loose ends.

“I mentioned this the other day in speaking before a labor group. I said that if the time ever came when the police would refuse to do that kind of work in an emergency, God help America. They took this as a criticism of labor unions, which was not at all intended.”

The Chief said that the local department numbers about 4100, that ideally it should have about 6000 men.

14 Lassiter, M.D. (2015). Pushers, Victims, and the Lost Innocence of White Suburbia: California’s War on Narcotics during the 1950s. *Journal of Urban History*, 41 (5), 788.

15 Monico, Racial Criminalization..., 43.

16 Lassiter, Pushers, Victims... 787.

tactics that helped produce 37% of the City's narcotics charges, even though the Black population in those areas only represented 7.6% of the City's overall population. In the same year, arrests along Central Avenue and Newton, another area heavily populated by African Americans, amounted to 75.3% of, "all total arrest bookings."<sup>17</sup> Black residents began to increasingly fear that they were being viewed as prey by the LAPD in their own neighborhoods, in many cases just for being Black.

In the summer of 1951, California signed various increases in mandatory minimum sentences for drug distribution into law. At the federal level, legislation also began to target drug users that year. The Boggs Act of 1951 amended the Narcotics Drugs Import and Export Act of 1922 by setting mandatory minimums for marijuana possession: two to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$2,000. On January 5, 1952, just a few months after the Boggs Act was signed into law by President Harry Truman, *The New York Times* reported that in a series of nationwide, dawn-to-dusk narcotics raids, federal agents arrested 500 suspected marijuana sellers.<sup>18</sup> In California, the vast majority of drug-

related arrests were made in Los Angeles County, which largely paralleled existing police practices that terrorized minority communities. One scholar noted that in 1950, Los Angeles County prosecuted 62 minors and 1,029 adults arrested for drug violations; 60% of those cases were for marijuana. The majority of people who were arrested were poor and/or working-class minority residents.<sup>19</sup> Chief Parker continued to play an oversized role in stoking the racially-motivated uproar by claiming that half of the crime committed in Los Angeles could be attributed to drug addicts.<sup>20</sup> The combination of legislation that created harsher penalties for drug offenses and accompanying escalation of police activity fed White fears concerning people of color and increasingly criminalized Black communities — twinned effects that only reinforced one another.

### **Zoot Suit Riots**

In Los Angeles, White anxieties about Black culture were not just entangled with racist associations surrounding drugs, but also music, dance, and even clothing — all with violent repercussions. The mass attacks in 1943 known as the Zoot Suit Riots also reflected how the widespread hysteria and

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<sup>17</sup> Monico, *Racial Criminalization...*, 62.

<sup>18</sup> Kennedy, P.P. (1952, January 5). Nearly 500 Seized in Narcotics Raids Across the Nation. *The New York Times*.

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<sup>19</sup> Lassiter, *Pushers, Victims...* 791.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 796.

criminalization of Black and Brown youth was characteristic of beliefs across Los Angeles, the state of California, and the United States. Much of the history surrounding these riots, which took place from June 3 to June 8, has been obscured by stories that depict the racial violence as being solely perpetrated against Mexican Americans. What has been concealed is that the riots also targeted African Americans and Filipino youth.<sup>21</sup> During the prior decade in the 1930s, Black dance enthusiasts in Harlem, New York, along with jazz musicians and their fans, popularized zoot suits, and originally, the outfits were usually worn by young men of color.<sup>22</sup> This was still the case, at least in part, in Los Angeles in 1943.

Estimates note that 5,000 civilians and servicemen rampaged through Los Angeles for five days looking for anyone wearing the suits. Young men were beaten, and their clothing was ripped from their bodies and burned in the street. LAPD officers, along with off-duty officers who called themselves the “Vengeance Squad,” responded to the initial incidents by joining U.S. Navy sailors and Army soldiers in the assaults, often with clubs. Additionally, officers were told by their superiors not to

arrest any of the servicemembers.

The Los Angeles City Council also responded, not by demanding the LAPD restore calm or arrest the perpetrators, but by pushing a resolution criminalizing the wearing of zoot suits. The Council noted, “We prohibit nudism by an ordinance, and if we can arrest people for being under-dressed, we can do so for being over-dressed.”<sup>23</sup> The City Council did not end up passing the ordinance, which was backed by Mayor Fletcher Bowron, but the mayor made his position known by downplaying the racist aspects of the assaults and blaming local Mexican youth for the violence.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Gangs: Law Enforcement, White, and Black***

While the LAPD was notoriously intertwined with the Ku Klux Klan in the early 20th century, similar associations continue to shadow law enforcement across Los Angeles County to this day, particularly within the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD), which has been a widely publicized source of gangs that terrorize Black and Latino people. These gangs, which have long-been known to residents in minority communities, local news agencies, federal courts, and the U.S.

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21 Arellano, G. (2023, June 2). The untold story of the Zoot Suit riots: How Black L.A. defended Mexican Americans. *Los Angeles Times*.

22 Gregory, A. (2016, April 2016). A Brief History of the Zoot Suit. *Smithsonian Magazine*.

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23 Los Angeles Almanac. (n.d.). Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots, 1943. Retrieved July 17, 2023 from <https://www.laalmanac.com/history/hi07t.php>.

24 *ibid*.



government, have acted with near impunity. In 1991, U.S. District Court Judge Terry J. Hatter Jr. issued a report outlining how a, “neo-Nazi White supremacist gang of deputies,” known as the Vikings operated out of the [County’s] Lynwood station and were an open secret among department officials.<sup>25</sup> Lawsuits filed by residents indicated that deputies carried out, “systematic acts of shooting, killing, brutality, terrorism, house-trashing and other acts of lawlessness and wanton abuse of power,” especially against Black and Latino citizens.<sup>26</sup> Hatter wrote of the neo-Nazis: “The actions of many deputies working in the Lynwood substation are motivated by racial hostility ... These deputies regularly disregard the civil rights of individuals they have sworn to protect.”<sup>27</sup> Judge Hatter went on to note, “There is a direct link between departmental policy makers, who tacitly authorize deputies’ unconstitutional behavior, and the injuries suffered by the plaintiffs.”<sup>28</sup>

The number of gangs currently operating within the LASD is unknown, but other high-profile criminal behavior like that of the Vikings has drawn additional investigations

in recent years. The Executioners, a gang that operated out of the Compton Sheriff’s Station, became known to investigating authorities when Deputy Samuel Aldama shot and killed Donta Taylor, an African American man, as he was walking on August 25, 2016. Aldama admitted in a deposition that he, “harbored ‘ill will,’” against African Americans. According to one report, he later retracted this statement, claiming he did not understand the question.<sup>29</sup> Austreberto Gonzalez, a deputy at the Compton station, provided evidence of the gang’s racist nature, noting that the group does not allow Black members and that future prospects must show a level of aggression on the streets to earn their “ink,” that is, entry into the gang. Gonzalez also described how falsely reporting alleged suspects with guns, also known as “ghost gun reports,” is a typical way that deputies justify their use of force.<sup>30</sup>

County Sheriff’s Department gangs operate in the jail system as well. One of the more well-known cases involved a Black man named Danny Smith, who on August 1, 1998, was beaten to death while in custody at the Los Angeles County (Twin Towers Correctional Facility, commonly referred to as the “Twin

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25 Tobar, H. (1991, October 12). 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*.

26 *ibid*.

27 *ibid*.

28 *ibid*.

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29 Center for Juvenile Law & Policy, Loyola Law School, Loyola Marymount University. (2021, January). *Fifty Years of Deputy Gangs in the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department: Identifying Root Causes and Effects to Advocate for Meaningful Reform*, 11.

30 *ibid.*, 11.

Towers"). At first, the department claimed Smith had "freed" himself from handcuffs and assaulted deputies. Later, the LASD was forced to admit that Smith died while handcuffed. Eyewitness accounts from other inmates alleged that Smith died from a "vicious beating by deputies who held a flashlight across his throat and ignored his protests that he couldn't breathe and had a bad heart."<sup>31</sup> Sheriff Sherman Block fired eight deputies who were involved and acknowledged that a gang known as the Posse existed. Block stated, "There are some people in the system who think we are coddling inmates, and by God, they're going to set up their own brand of punishment."<sup>32</sup>

Clydell Crawford, an African American man who was in custody at an LASD facility, filed a lawsuit after deputies thought to be part of a gang known as the Wayside Whites broke his leg in 1989. Crawford's complaint alleged that the Wayside Whites were "a Ku Klux Klan-type organization espousing White supremacy and having as one of its objectives the subjugation, intimidation and terrorization," of Black inmates.<sup>33</sup> An investigating report noted that one sheriff after another has

pledged to deal with White supremacist gangs within the department. However, once in office, a succession of leaders downplayed the severity of the problem, failed to carry out investigations, and did not make any meaningful reforms. These failures have amounted to what the report called, "tacitly supporting deputy gangs and cliques within the LASD."<sup>34</sup>

White supremacist gangs are not limited to the LASD, as everyday residents have also formed White vigilante groups, a phenomenon that, in turn, has contributed to the growth of Black gangs, in part as a form of self-protection. African Americans who migrated to Los Angeles in the late 1940s with hopes of wartime employment were faced with an onslaught of hostile vigilantism as they searched for adequate housing. Black families that moved south of Slauson Avenue in South Central (now called South Los Angeles) faced a torrent of racial terrorism. Segregation formed by restrictive covenants — in conjunction with poverty, lack of employment, and the fight to integrate historically White neighborhoods — prompted a racial backlash directed at African Americans. One reaction to attempts by Black residents to integrate public schools and neighborhoods was the emergence of

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31 O'Connor, A. (1998, September 12). Inmate's Death Is Ruled a Homicide. *Los Angeles Times*.

32 Center for Juvenile Law & Policy, Fifty Years..., 17-18.

33 *ibid.*, 25.

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34 *ibid.*, 26.

White youth gangs that terrorized Black children. One of the most well-known groups was the Spook Hunters, which roamed their neighborhoods looking for African American youth with the goal of “protecting their neighborhoods” through intimidation and by instigating fights.<sup>35</sup> (See Figure 5). In order to combat White street gangs, young Black people then formed their own gangs as a defense. Black gang members noted that there were certain streets they could not cross for fear of being attacked. As Raymond Wright, one of the founders of a street gang called the Businessmen, stated, “You couldn’t pass Alameda Boulevard, because those White boys in South Gate would set you on fire.”<sup>36</sup> Over time, as White residents fled South Los Angeles for the suburbs, the gangs that proliferated within the community began to turn on each other. So-called “Black-on-Black” gang violence became a growing problem as the 1960s unfolded. However, after the Watts Rebellion in 1965, Black gangs began turning their attention toward police brutality and social problems.<sup>37</sup>

With Black gang members turning to social and political issues and joining organizations like

the Black Panther Party (BPP), gang activity dropped so significantly that the LAPD took notice. The Southern California Chapter of the BPP focused on police misconduct, as did other chapters of the group. Under the leadership of the LAPD Chief William Parker, with the support of Mayor Sam Yorty, LAPD officers consistently violated the rights of African

**Figure 5.** Map showing the “Black Settlement Area” in the 1940s. Black people found outside of this area were often attacked by members of the White Spook Hunters gang.

*Source:* Alex A. Alonso, “Black Street Gangs in Los Angeles: A History,” (excerpts), Fall 1999, “<https://www.streetgangs.com/crips/blackstreetgangs/>.”

*Note:* North boundary is estimate. The Spook Hunter’s Back Settlement Area was defined as “Slauson to the south, Alameda Ave to the east, and Main S to the west.”



35 Alonso, A. (2004). *Racialized Identities [sic] and the Formation of Black Gangs in Los Angeles*. *Urban Geography* 25(7), 664.

36 Quoted in Alonso, *Racialized Identities*, 664.

37 Alonso, *Racialized Identities*, 666.

Americans in pursuit of what they perceived as the need to maintain law and order. These priorities overlapped at times with those of federal law enforcement. To combat the growing militancy of Black youth and destroy the BPP, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) created a counterintelligence program known as COINTELPRO that utilized the resources and officers of the LAPD to neutralize BPP members and their activities. With the assistance of the City's police, COINTELPRO spread anti-Black propaganda, infiltrated BPP offices, exacerbated conflicts

between competing civil rights organizations, and assaulted and murdered members of the BPP in Los Angeles. Perhaps the most notorious incident occurred on December 8, 1969, when the LAPD orchestrated a five-hour assault on the BPP office at East 41st Street and Central Avenue. (See Figure 6). The aftermath included 13 arrests and 72 criminal charges filed against BPP members by the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. A jury found the defendants not guilty on almost all of the charges, including those of assault with a deadly weapon.

**Figure 6.** Los Angeles Sentinel report "L.A.P.D. BLITZ PANTHER SITES."

Source: Cleaver, J. (1969, Dec 11). L.A.P.D. BLITZ PANTHER SITES: BLACK PANTHER RAID AREA RESIDENTS SHOW ANGER OVER SHOOTOUT. *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1934-) <https://libproxy.csun.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/l-p-d-blitzs-panther-sites/docview/564899892/se-2>

# L.A.P.D. BLITZS PANTHER SITES



**CONFRONTATION** — A bullet hole in a storefront window tells the story of the eight to 10 Black Panthers who unsuccessfully fought it out with police. Police used dynamite, tear gas, handguns and

shotguns during the five-hour battle before subduing the Panthers who had barricaded themselves inside their headquarters with automatic rifles and handguns.

UPI Telephoto  
(See Exclusive Photos on Page A71)

## BLACK PANTHER RAID

### Area Residents Show Anger Over Shootout

By JIM CLEAVER

"Police are vamping on the community"—these words came from Franklin Alexander as he addressed some 300 people in a mass rally at Second Baptist church late Monday night.

The meeting came about after a hurried call for an emergency meeting of community people was sent out Monday afternoon. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the raid on Black Panther Headquarters early Monday morning.

Three police officers were wounded and 21 persons were seized during the raids on the three alleged Black Panther headquarters.

At the community meeting, presided over by Rev. Thomas Kilgore, pastor of Second Baptist Church, speakers included Alexander, John Mack of the

Urban League, Rev. H. H. Brooks, Sen. Mervyn Dymally, as well as a young woman (Continued on Page C-12)

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The raid on the BPP office was the first time one of the newly created Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams was mobilized in the United States. The team was deployed not in response to any threat or harm but to serve warrants. Scholar Jonathan Mummolo, who has conducted extensive research on these police units, notes that more than 90% of SWAT deployments have been sent to serve warrants, and the vast majority have been served in Black communities. In other words, such tactics, as in the case of the BPP assault in 1969, were overwhelmingly unnecessary. According to Dr. Mummolo, SWAT raids are not effective in reducing crime and do not make policing safer. Instead, they only seem to foster an erosion of trust in the police, particularly in Black and Brown communities where SWAT tactics have been overwhelmingly used.<sup>38</sup> SWAT tactics can be understood as a means to terrorize Black communities by using over-the-top, military-style tactics and weapons. As civil rights scholar Peter Kraska, who studies the militarization of American policing, argues: "SWAT uses Navy SEAL techniques to go on fishing expeditions. They burst down the door, throw flash grenades, handcuff everyone inside, ransack the

place, and leave. And these techniques are predominately used on communities made up of racial minorities."<sup>39</sup>

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38 Fleischer, M. (2019, December 8). Opinion: 50 years ago, LAPD raided the Black Panthers. SWAT teams have been targeting Black communities ever since. *Los Angeles Times*.

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39 *ibid.*



## Summary of Findings

This chapter summarizes the extensive historical impact of racial terror on Black Angelenos.

Anti-Black policing and police violence combined with racial violence carried out by local white supremacist groups was pervasive. Certain City officials (especially those in the LAPD) were complicit in supporting these activities and events.

- 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 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 harassment and arrests.
- Police chiefs leading the LAPD in the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s used drug campaigns to justify aggressive policing and racial segregation.
- 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

## Abstract

The mental and physical health of Black Angelenos is intrinsically tied to the social and political landscape of the 20th and 21st centuries. Legal policies authorizing the segregation of hospitals and medical facilities by race set the foundation for unequal healthcare and racial bias in medical treatment and in diagnoses. In Los Angeles, segregated medical facilities denied Black residents access to hospitals and denied Black medical professionals access to medical jobs in White-serving medical facilities. Racism in medical practices also subjected Black patients to inferior care, under-treatment, and misdiagnoses. Assessing and mapping health outcomes for Black Angelenos was limited by a lack of City-collected data, on account that the City of Los Angeles does not have a public health agency and thus much of the data discussed in this chapter relies on aggregated and disaggregated data from Los Angeles County data sources.

## Key Terms

***Systematic Racism:*** Institutional discrimination authorized through policies and practices that resulted in unequal treatment and outcomes based on race, often disadvantaged people of color while benefiting White people.

***Segregated Healthcare:*** Segregation in healthcare facilities restricted patients by race and denied Black residents access to quality healthcare and hospitals throughout Los Angeles.

***Racial Disparities:*** Differences in health outcomes by race, often resulting in inequities experienced after the initial policy enactment.

***Tuberculosis:*** A contagious bacterial infection that is spread through the air. It is the world's leading infectious killer, with nearly 4,500 deaths and 30,000 new cases daily.

***YMCA:*** The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), founded in response to British industrialization in 1844, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body.

***Black Panther Party (BPP):*** The BPP, founded in October 1966 in Oakland, California, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, was a revolutionary organization with an ideology of Black nationalism, socialism, and armed self-defense, particularly against police brutality.

***American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU):*** An American nonprofit organization founded in 1920 to safeguard individual civil rights and liberties in accordance with the U.S. Constitution

***McCone Commission:*** A Commission established through the Los Angeles City Charter in 1966 to investigate the causes of the 1965 Watts Uprising, also known as the Watts Riots,

as well as to make policy recommendations to create pathways for the communication of local community concerns to City leadership.

**Medi-Cal:** California's Medicaid healthcare program which pays for a range of services for low-income children and adults.

**HIV-AIDS:** Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the immune system, and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is the most advanced stage of HIV infection.

**Crack Cocaine:** A highly addictive and powerful stimulant derived from powdered cocaine that is consumed by smoking. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 increased penalties for crack cocaine possession and usage, compared to lower penalties for regular powdered cocaine.

## Overview

Racial inequities and systemic racism fostered by the legacy of slavery and White supremacy have caused profound harm to Black Angelenos across many aspects of life, including long-standing unequal access to quality healthcare services. Accordingly, from the 20th century to the present, the African American community has not received appropriate preventive care and effective treatment for illnesses, injuries, and pain, or for the 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.<sup>1</sup>

## *Segregated Care During the Jim Crow Era - and a Pioneering Black Doctor*

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 and economically challenged medical facilities or segregated units within White hospitals, both of which provided inferior care. Likewise, White physicians refused to treat Black patients, even in cases of tuberculosis. The Hill-Burton Act of 1946 even allocated federal funds to segregated healthcare facilities under a “separate-but-equal provision,” worsening discrimination against Black physicians and patients. It wasn’t until the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that fair hiring practices

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<sup>1</sup> Data analyzed in this chapter is sourced from both Los Angeles City and County data sources. City data is largely unavailable or inaccessible.

could be enforced, allowing Black doctors en masse to integrate government-funded hospitals.<sup>2</sup>

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. Dr. Leonard Stovall was a pioneer in the effort to provide equal healthcare to Black people in Los Angeles.

<sup>3</sup>In 1906, Stovall became the first African American to graduate from Hollywood High School. He then supported himself through college by selling produce from his garden from a roadside truck. He became the first African American graduate of the University of Southern California Medical School in 1912. Stovall eventually became a pillar of the African American community and the wider medical community of Los Angeles.

During World War I, Stovall served in France as a member of the U.S. Army Medical Reserve Corps, 365th Infantry. After the war, he became a tuberculosis specialist. He joined

the staff of the Los Angeles City Tuberculosis Clinic and later became the first African American staff member at Los Angeles County General Hospital.

During that time, tuberculosis patients were treated in long-term sanitariums; however, no such facility in Los Angeles would treat African American patients with the disease. Stovall responded in 1935 by founding the Outdoor Life and Health Association, a nonprofit organization that operated a 50-bed sanitarium for patients of all races suffering from tuberculosis. He is reported to have treated over 500 cases of tuberculosis.<sup>4</sup>

By 1954, tuberculosis had largely been eradicated, and the Outdoor Life and Health Association changed directions to focus on the housing needs of senior and disabled populations. Renowned Black architect Paul R. Williams designed the organization's new buildings, and the name of the association changed to the Stovall Foundation in honor of its founder. A previous president of the organization, Jack Thompson, was one of

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2 Largent, E. A. (1974). *Public health, racism, and the lasting impact of hospital integration*. Public Health Reports. Retrieved November 2018 from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6225869/>

3 Scott, P. (1947, March 6). Trail blazers: Leonard Stovall. *The California Eagle*. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/california-eagle-dr-leonard-stovall/129668278/>

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4 African American Pioneer Society. (2015, January 29). Dr. Leonard Stovall MD, The Outdoor Health and Life Association and the Stovall Foundation. Facebook. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanAmericanPioneerSocietyOfLosAngeles/photos/dr-leonard-stovall-md-the-outdoor-health-andlife-association-and-the-stovall-fou/825930247465816/>; The Stovall Foundation. Our Legacy. <https://thestovallfoundation.org/legacy/>

many children who received a free physical examination from Stovall at the 28th Street YMCA so they could attend summer camp.<sup>5</sup> The Stovall Foundation has a rich legacy of offering proper care to Angelenos from marginalized groups. Although the foundation has not been alone in these efforts, it unfortunately remains an anomaly, as, by and large, the Black population does not receive care at the same level as other populations. Though this should not be the case, it often falls on individual people or organizations in Los Angeles to adequately meet the healthcare needs of the African American community.

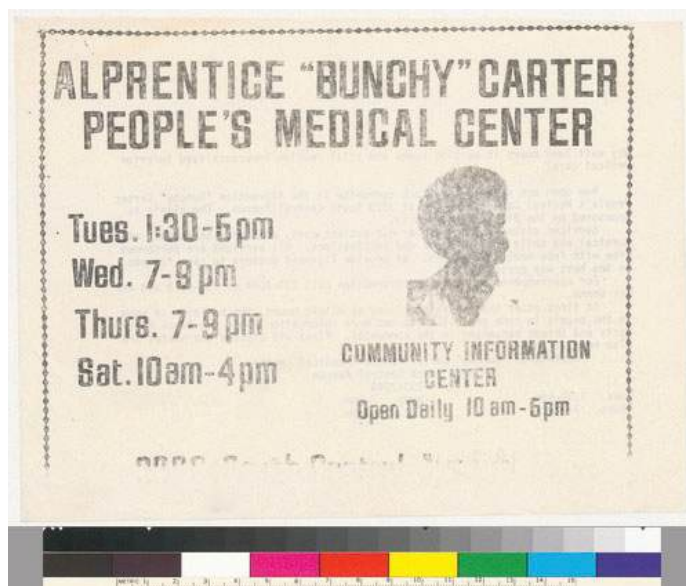
### ***Health Institutions Created by and for Black Residents***

To address healthcare needs, African American community groups established their own healthcare clinics. For example, the Southern California chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP) established free healthcare clinics as part of the People's Free Medical Clinics (PFMC). One of the better-known clinics was the Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter People's Medical Center, which was named after the founder of the Los Angeles area Panthers chapter. (See Figure 1.) The Bunchy Carter Center was a well-known clinic that provided free outpatient care, emergency treatment, immunization, medication, and mental health services. The BPP provided nutrition programs to complement their healthcare initiative, including the renowned Free Breakfast for

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<sup>5</sup> Thompson, J. (2019). Interview with African American Oral Histories.

**Figure 1.** Advertisement for the Bunchy Carter Medical Clinic, 1970. Courtesy of the Charles E. Young Research Library, Library Special Collections, UCLA.





School Children Program. Unfortunately, the Free Breakfast program was intermittently attacked by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). According to Dr. Terry Kupers, a physician at the Bunchy Carter Center, in late December 1969, an LAPD SWAT team raided the site of the Bunchy Carter Medical Center armed with, “bazookas, tanks, helicopters and snipers,” violently apprehending Panthers in the offices above the clinic and effectively halting the PPMC’s operations. Members of the group were assaulted by police officers while in custody and denied medical treatment until intervention by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) took place.<sup>6</sup> Rather than supporting community-led efforts to improve access to healthcare for Black residents, the local government authorized attacks on community leaders — action that ultimately revealed the fundamental lack of concern Los Angeles held for the health and wellbeing of its Black community.

Until the Watts Uprising of 1965, few attempts were made to promote equitable medical care for the Black community. Recommendations by the McCone Commission, established by Governor Pat Brown to investigate the sources of the uprising, included improving access to

healthcare and upgrading health facilities in South Los Angeles by building a new hospital in the area.<sup>7</sup> Construction began in April 1968, and the facility opened on March 27, 1972. It was originally named the Los Angeles County Southeast General Hospital but was renamed to Martin Luther King Jr. General Hospital just days after Dr. King’s assassination. The hospital, also known as the Martin Luther King Jr./Drew Medical Center (typically referred to as King/Drew), became the teaching hospital of the Charles R. Drew Postgraduate Medical School in 1966.<sup>8</sup> Located near streets with high crime rates, the hospital had a very active trauma unit that routinely treated life-threatening injuries. Because of the large number of gunshot wounds the trauma unit treated, U.S. military trauma teams trained there. However, when serious problems with King/Drew’s operations and management later surfaced, the main facility closed in 2007, limiting services to urgent care and outpatient treatment.

In 2014, a revitalized Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital (MLK-LA) was built on the site of the original hospital. It was designed specifically to serve the South Los Angeles community, including uninsured

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6 The Wright Institute. (n.d.). Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Terry Kupers. <https://www.wi.edu/news-faculty-spotlight-dr-kupers>

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7 Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. (n.d.). History. <https://www.cdrewu.edu/about/history/>  
8 *ibid.*

and underinsured patients from the area. The hospital is located in a low-income community where almost all the residents are African American or Latino. Medicare is the hospital's main source of funding, which in California pays its providers very low rates, thus complicating the hospital's mission of serving marginalized groups, members of which make up over two-thirds of Medi-Cal patients.<sup>9</sup> Today, in addition to general acute care and emergency services, MLK-LA offers labor and delivery, radiology, laboratory, and blood bank services, as well as health education and community outreach. MLK-LA is a Los Angeles County facility. There is no comparable City of Los Angeles institution to complement its services.

### ***Segregated Hospitals Today***

According to the Lown Institute's 2021 ranking of racially inclusive hospitals in the United States, Los Angeles is a city with one of the most segregated hospital systems.<sup>10</sup> The institute measured racial inclusiveness by the average number of patients of color that the hospitals served.

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9 Ibarra, A. B. (2023, May 23). California wants to increase pay for some Medi-Cal providers. How it might help patients access care. *CalMatters*. <https://calmatters.org/health/2023/05/medi-cal-providers-pay/>

10 Toleos, A. (2021, May 25). Racial segregation is common in urban hospital markets, analysis reveals. *Lown Institute*. <https://lowninstitute.org/press-release-racial-segregation-is-common-in-urban-hospital-markets-analysis-reveals/>

### ***A Lack of Black Medical Professionals***

The low representation of Black professionals in the medical field was one of the primary reasons why King/Drew Hospital was established, and this issue remains a critical one for Black Angelenos today. Furthermore, this lasting effect of the Jim Crow era's discriminatory practices still contributes to unequal health outcomes in Los Angeles' African American population. Black doctors in the area have been systematically denied admission to White medical schools, refused admittance privileges at predominately White hospitals, and prohibited from joining professional organizations. These and other discriminatory practices have led to a shortage of Black physicians, physician assistants, nurses, and technicians, as well as medical social workers, patient advocates, and other healthcare workers. (See Figure 2).

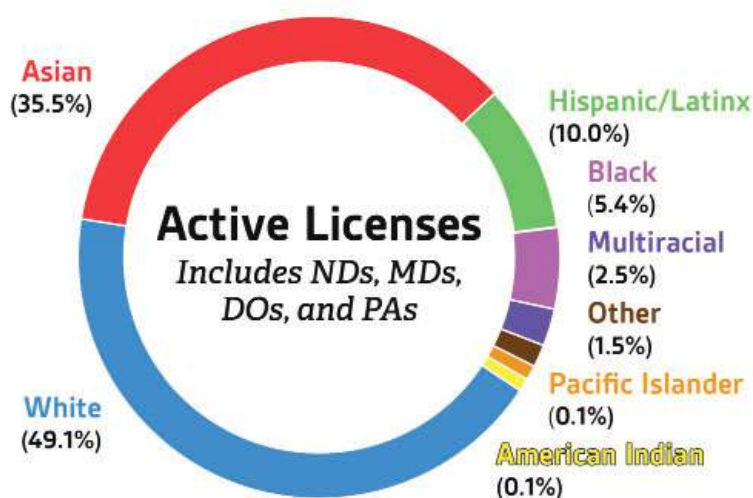
Absent more equitable representation across hospital staff, discriminatory attitudes — and actions — will continue to have devastating impacts on Black families in Los Angeles. The history of forced sterilizations of women of color at LAC+USC Medical Center (now known as Los Angeles General Medical Center) from 1968 to 1974 stands as a case in point. While the forced sterilizations of Latina women

are better documented than those of Black women, there is evidence of alarming anti-Black attitudes within the hospital leadership. A 1978 lawsuit against James Quilligan, the head of Obstetrics and Gynecology, stated that he had reportedly planned to, “cut the birth rate of the Negro and Mexican populations in Los Angeles.”<sup>11</sup> The fact that administrators may have been able to carry out such a racist scheme under the guise of providing medical treatment demonstrates, at the extreme, why equitable representation within the ranks of medical professionals in Los Angeles matters.

### ***Risk Factors for Black Children and Families***

Racial discrimination affecting Black children in the United States, including Los Angeles, has led to diminished health outcomes, which are then intensified by unequal access to healthcare.<sup>12</sup> As a 2022 study noted, “There’s something about racial discrimination itself that is toxic to kids.”<sup>13</sup> Black children face higher levels of poverty and malnutrition compared

**Figure 2.** Race and ethnicity of active-license naturopathic doctors (ND), osteopathic physicians and surgeons (DO), physicians and surgeons (MD), and physician assistants (PA) in Los Angeles County. *Source:* California Department of Health Care Access and Information, “Race & Ethnicity of California’s Health Workforce,” 2023, <https://hcai.ca.gov/visualizations/race-ethnicity-of-californias-health-workforce>



to White children. They disproportionately live in more heavily polluted areas, such as neighborhoods near freeways that are blanketed by harmful emissions from the transportation corridor. (See ‘*Racism in Environment and Infrastructure*’ chapter). Exposure to such pollutants has led Black children in Los Angeles to have the highest number of asthma cases in California. (See Figure 3.) According to state data on health hazards, the highest rates of respiratory issues and low birth weights, among other negative health results in Los Angeles County, are concentrated in South Los Angeles, where

<sup>11</sup> González, D. (2016, May 18). Forced sterilizations: A long and sordid history. *ACLU of Southern California*. <https://www.aclusocal.org/en/news/forced-sterilizations-long-and-sordid-history>

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, A. T., et al. (2020). The detrimental influence of racial discrimination on child health in the United States. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 112(4).

<sup>13</sup> Sharif, M. Z., et al. (2022). Perspective: Racism and structural violence: Interconnected threats to health equity. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.676783/full>

most of the city's Black population resides.<sup>14</sup>

Another factor linked to worsened health outcomes for African American children is the lack of access to proper nutrition. (See Figure 4). Many Black-majority neighborhoods in Los Angeles can be classified as “food swamps” due to the dominance of fast-food restaurants in comparison to grocery stores and restaurants serving nutritious foods in the area. Food insecurity is especially problematic for children and can lead to starkly unequal health outcomes as they age. Moreover, there is a strong relationship between fast food retail density and children's fitness levels. In food swamps, the fitness levels of children are lowered. Data from the California Department of Education and the U.S. Census Bureau shows a disturbing association between childhood fitness levels and the local food landscapes of Los Angeles. (See Figures 5 and 6). After controlling for income, ethnicity, educational attainment, employment, and other factors at the ZIP code level across Los Angeles County, we found that the retail density of fast-food establishments (location quotient) has a statistically significant association with lower fitness levels among

5th graders. (See Figure 7).

To address the unavailability of nutritious food in their neighborhoods, some Black Angelenos have created urban micro-farms, community markets, and local minimarkets.<sup>15</sup> Initiatives such as the Ron Finley Project were established to address a dire lack of fresh produce in Los Angeles, but while community and individual action provide crucial assistance, they are incapable of serving the entire underserved population and solving the pervasive issue of inadequate nutrition in certain regions of the City.<sup>16</sup>

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14 CalEnviroScreen. (n.d.). CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Indicator Maps: What is Asthma? <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ed5953d89038431dbf4f22ab9abfe40d/page/Indicators/?views=Asthma>

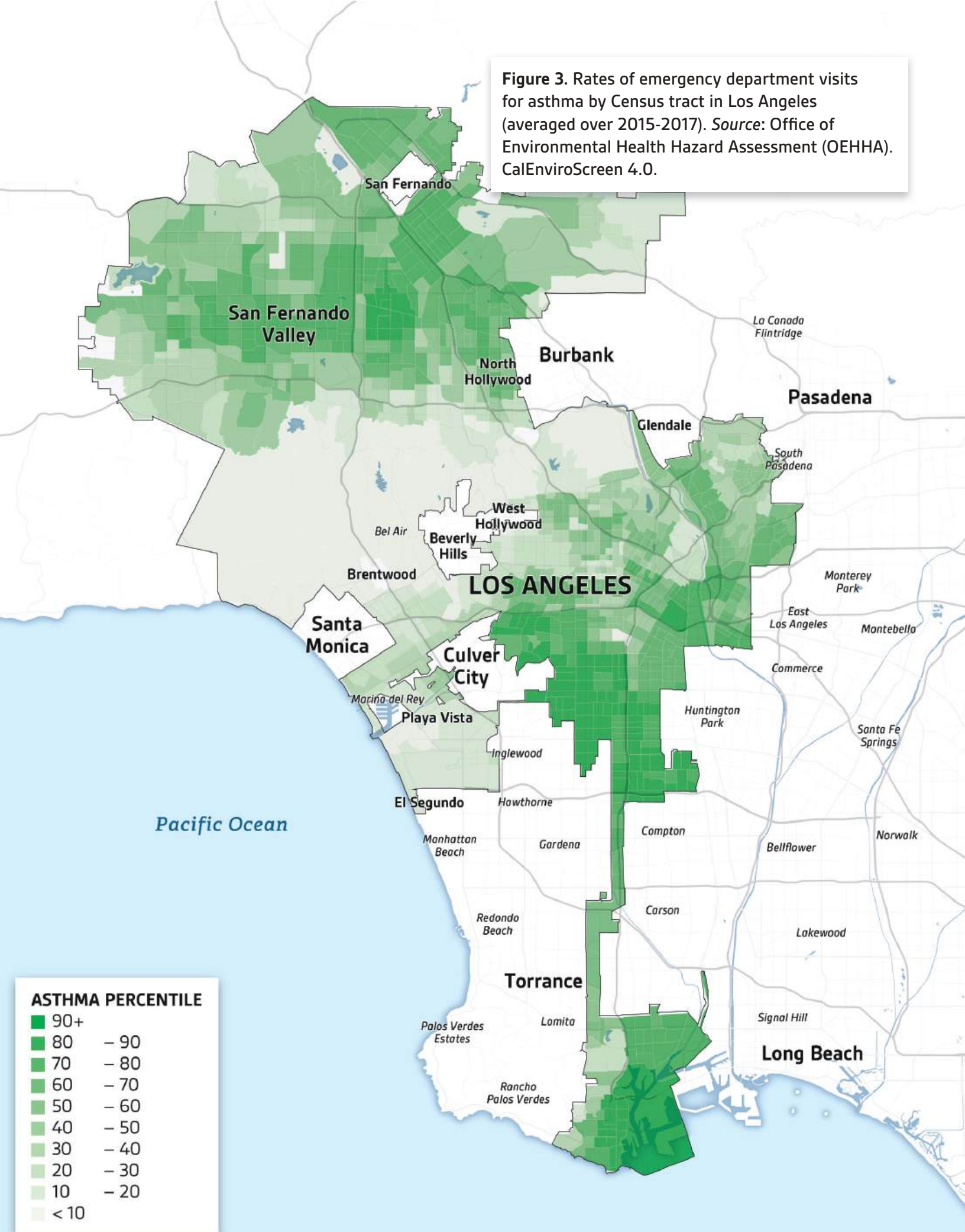
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15 Ramsey, D. X. (2021, May 13). 'Microfarms' come to South L.A. front yards, bringing fresh produce to food deserts. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-05-13/asante-microfarms-jamiah-hargins-south-la-fresh-food-produce>

16 Ron Finley Project. (2024). About. <https://ronfinley.com/pages/about>



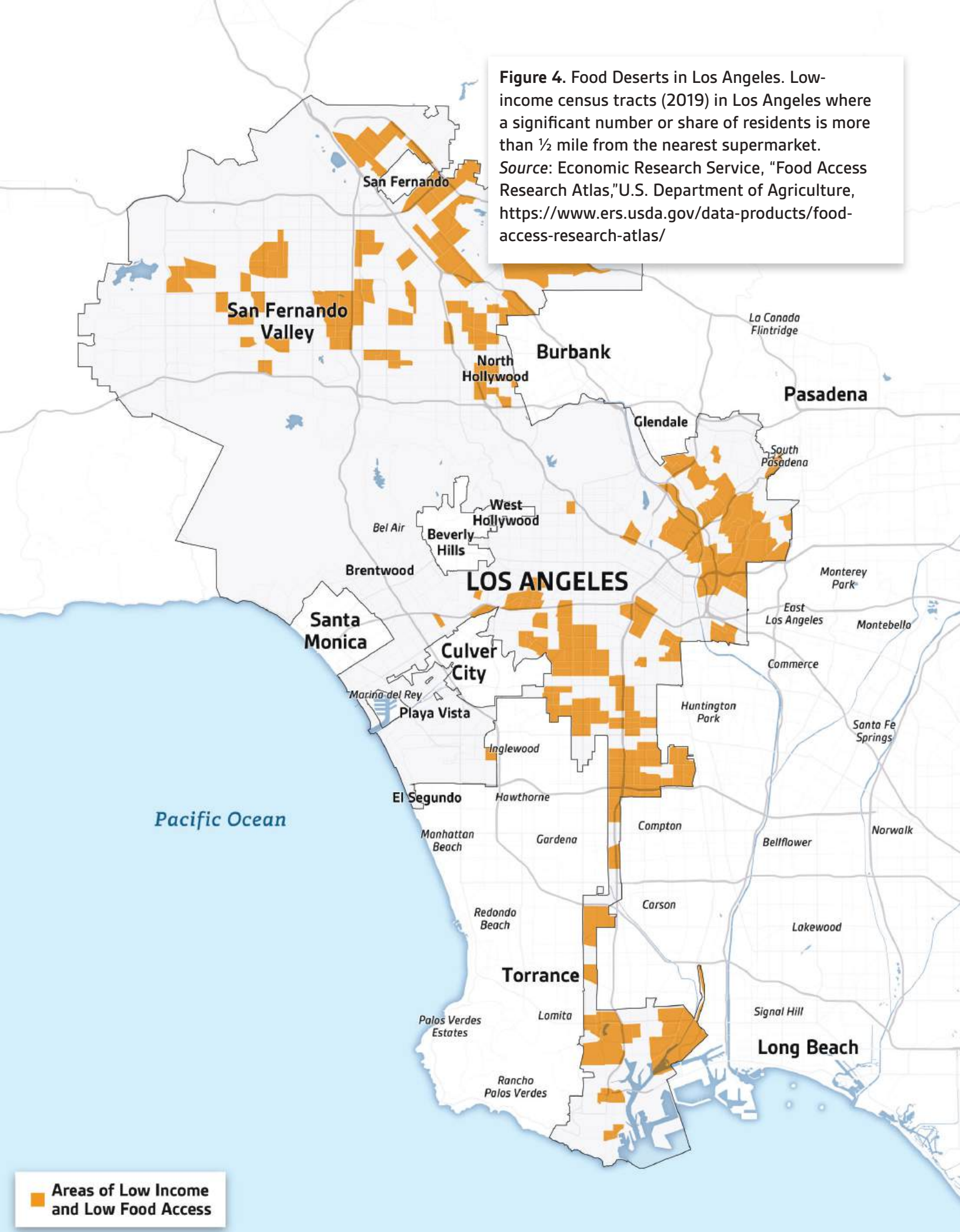
**Figure 3. Rates of emergency department visits for asthma by Census tract in Los Angeles (averaged over 2015-2017). Source:** Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). CalEnviroScreen 4.0.



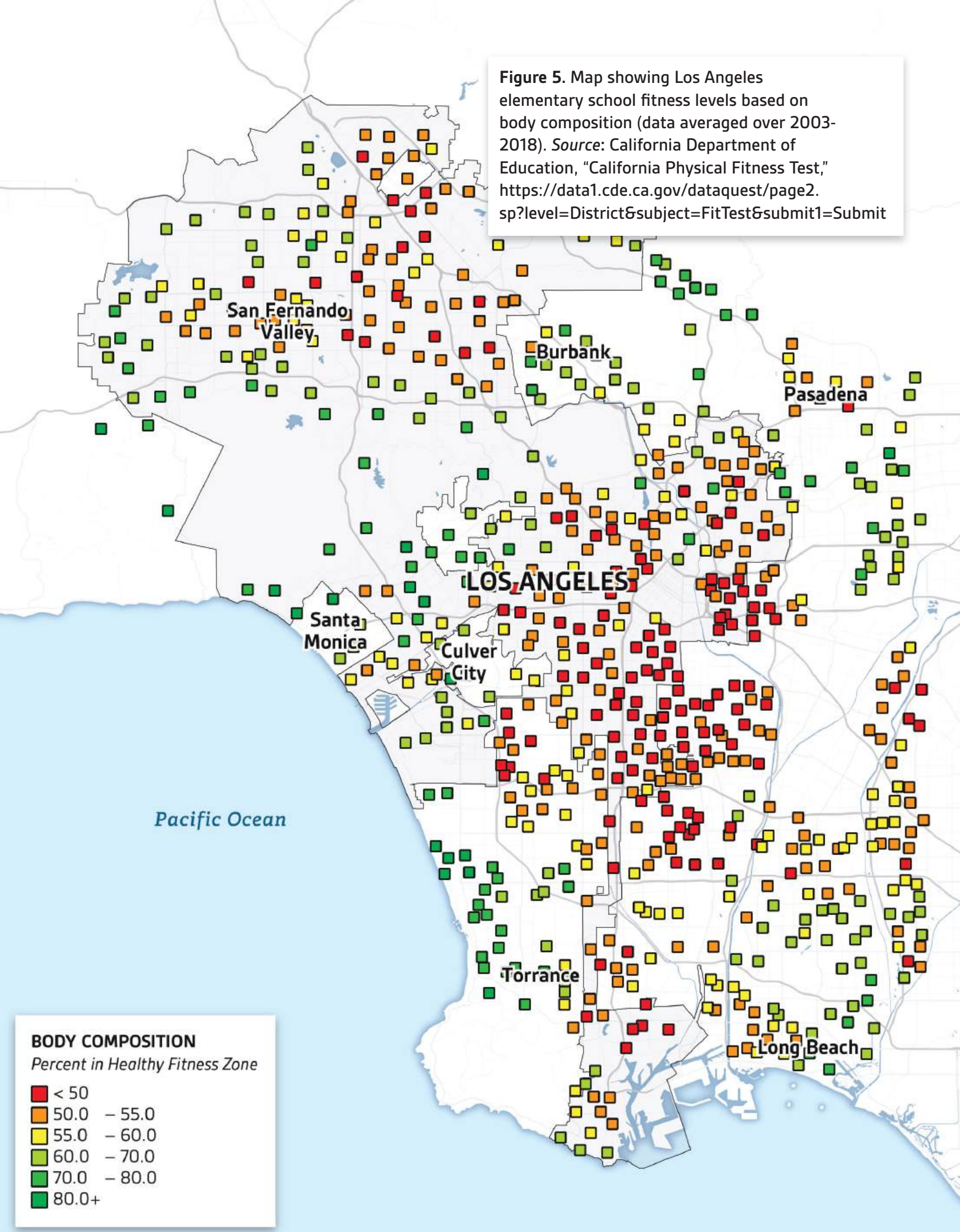


**Figure 4. Food Deserts in Los Angeles.** Low-income census tracts (2019) in Los Angeles where a significant number or share of residents is more than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket.

Source: Economic Research Service, "Food Access Research Atlas," U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>

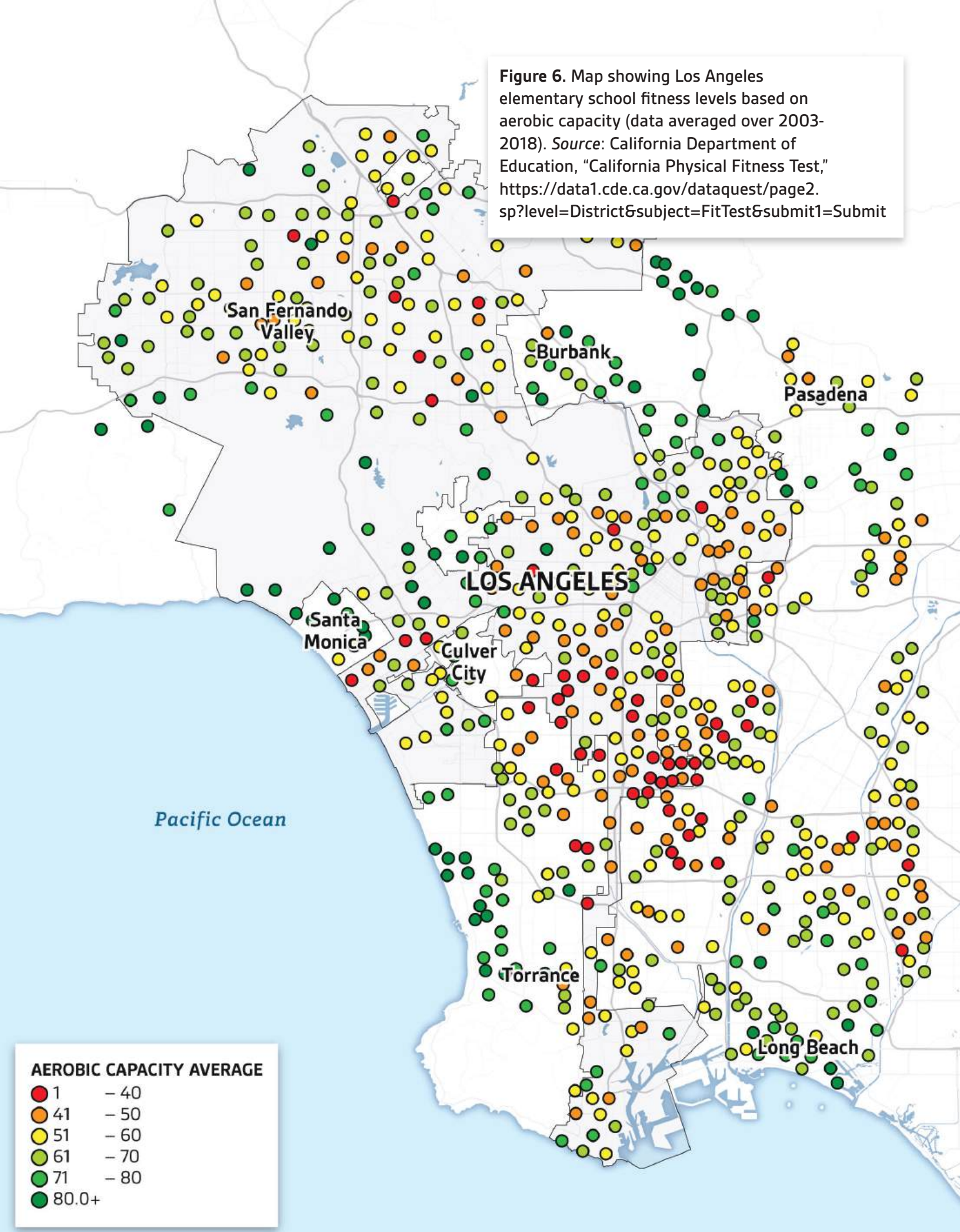


**Figure 5.** Map showing Los Angeles elementary school fitness levels based on body composition (data averaged over 2003-2018). *Source:* California Department of Education, "California Physical Fitness Test," <https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/page2.sp?level=District&subject=FitTest&submit1=Submit>





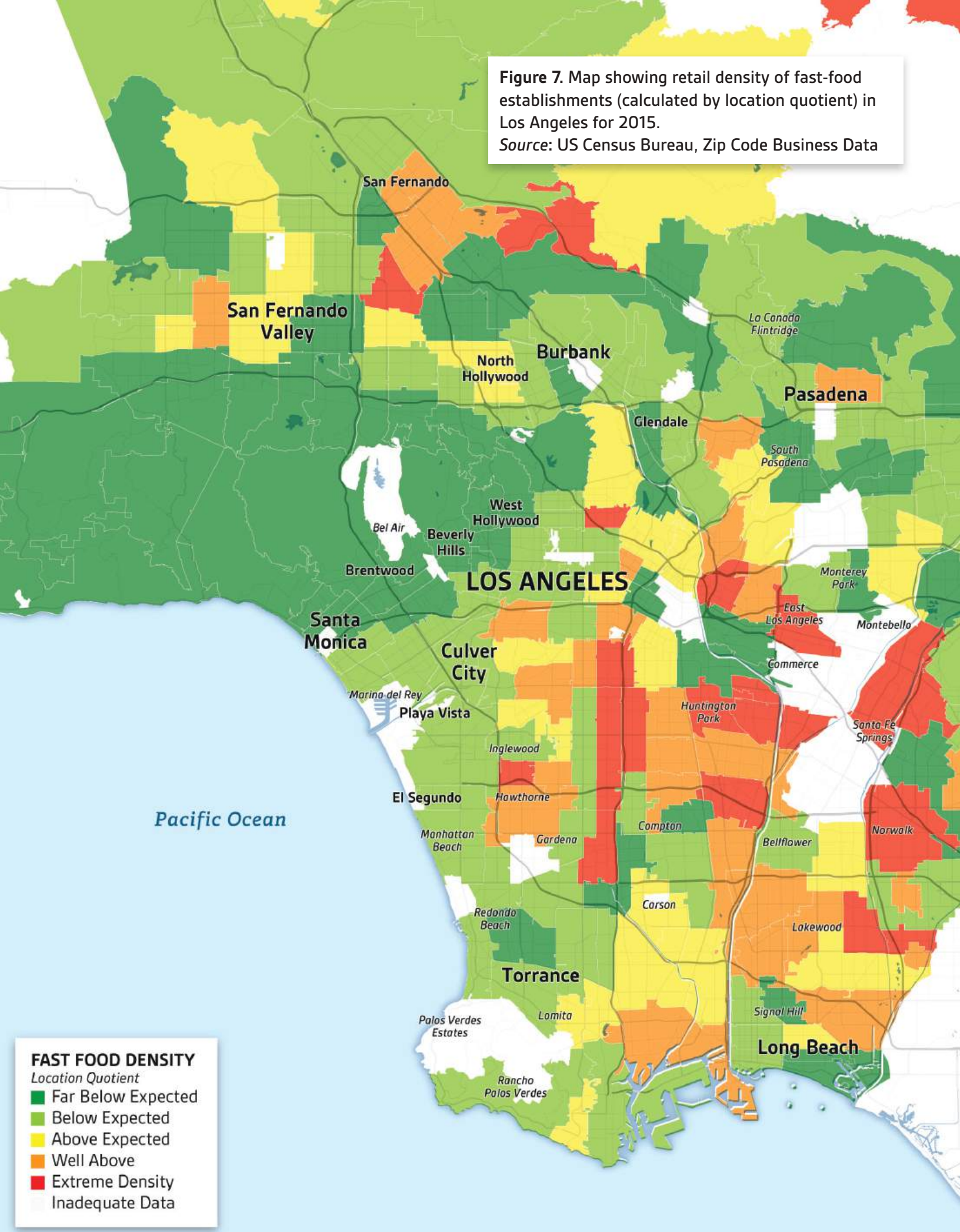
**Figure 6.** Map showing Los Angeles elementary school fitness levels based on aerobic capacity (data averaged over 2003-2018). *Source:* California Department of Education, "California Physical Fitness Test," <https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/page2.sp?level=District&subject=FitTest&submit1=Submit>





**Figure 7.** Map showing retail density of fast-food establishments (calculated by location quotient) in Los Angeles for 2015.

Source: US Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Data



## ***Black Women and Pregnancy***

Black women throughout the country face heightened maternal health risks. Data shows Black women experience race-based disparities, including disproportionately high rates of maternal death, postpartum depression, premature birth, and infant mortality.<sup>17</sup> More specifically, Black women experience higher rates of mortality during childbirth and postpartum depression than any other demographic, with a maternal mortality rate that is 2.6 times higher than White women nationwide.<sup>18</sup>

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in West Los Angeles has been identified as a hospital that has provided inferior care to Black mothers and avoidable deaths have been reported. Several lawsuits indicate pervasive malpractice and unequal care for pregnant Black women in Los Angeles hospitals, including negligence towards patient and family pleas and “sloppy” rushed deliveries.<sup>19</sup> Statistics and specific cases, including a civil rights lawsuit on behalf

of Kira Johnson, who died following childbirth at Cedars-Sinai in 2016, sparked an ongoing federal civil rights investigation into racism and maternal morbidity, but ultimately all lawsuits, including Johnson's, have ended in settlements and denials of wrongdoing on the basis of race by Cedars-Sinai and other medical facilities.<sup>20</sup>

## ***The Effects of Unsafe Environments***

Dangerous environmental conditions are another contributor to disparate health outcomes by race in Los Angeles.<sup>21</sup> Black Angelenos suffer precarious circumstances that stem from historically segregated housing, redlining, and racially restrictive covenants. Consequently, many African Americans in the City live in population centers without access to wholesome food options and clean water.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, there is

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20 Evans, M. (2023, July 11). Cedars-Sinai faces federal civil rights investigation over treatment of Black mothers. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-07-11/cedars-sinai-facing-federal-civil-rights-investigation-over-treatment-of-black-mothers>

21 Coogan, P. F., et al. (2012). Air pollution and incidence of hypertension and diabetes mellitus in Black women living in Los Angeles. *Circulation*, 125(6), 767–773. <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.111.052753>.

22 Sides, J. (2012). *Post-ghetto: Reimagining South Los Angeles*. University of California Press and Huntington Library Press.

**Figure 8 (Following Page).** Map showing existing tree canopy coverage for Census tracts in Los Angeles.

**Source:** TreePeople, 2016 Tree Canopy Coverage Dataset, Loyola Marymount Center for Urban Resilience, 2019, <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=fb26f3ccec60494abfdf23690b7c70a3>.

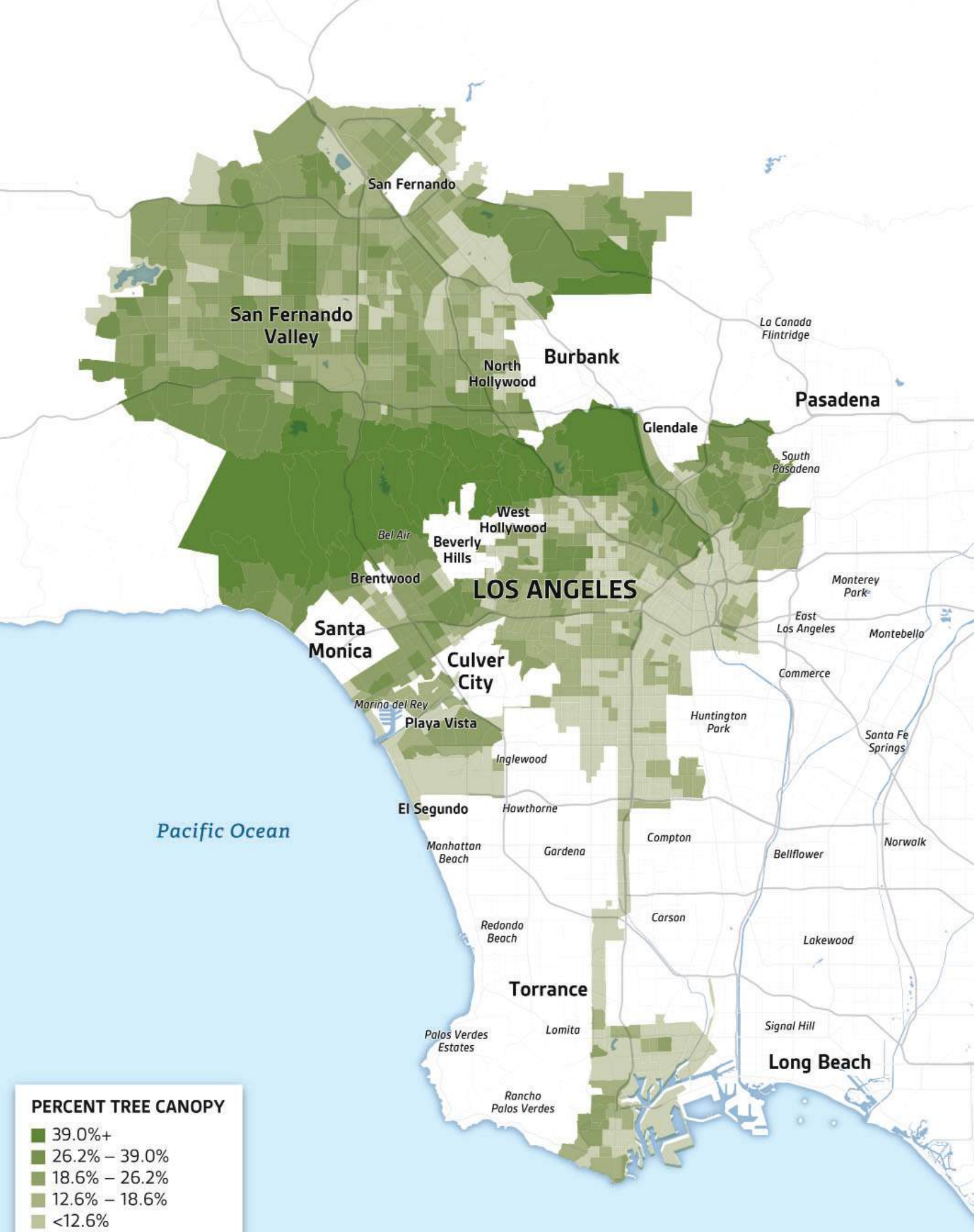
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17 Njoku, A., et al. (2023). Listen to the whispers before they become screams: Addressing Black maternal morbidity and mortality in the United States. *Healthcare*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11030438>

18 Hoyert, D. L. (2021). Maternal morbidity rates in the United States, 2021. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Vital Statistics. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/index.htm>

19 The Associated Press. (2022, May 5). Lawsuit says a Black patient bled to death because of a hospital's culture of racism. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/05/1096833756/racism-lawsuit-cedars-sinai-medical-center-wife-death>





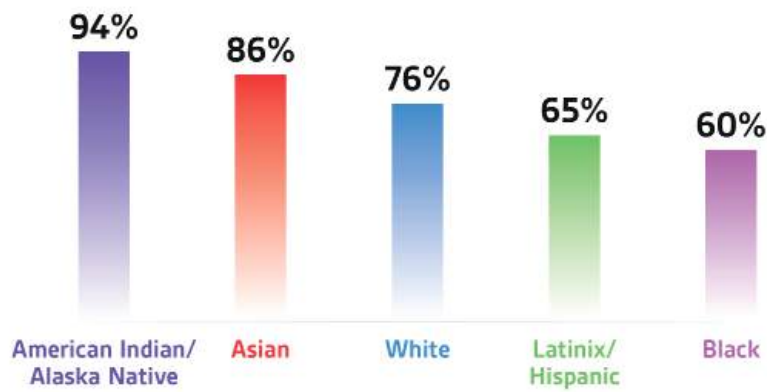
a correlation between the lack of green space and tree canopy and lower life expectancy in many predominantly Black neighborhoods of Los Angeles. (See Figure 8).<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, environmental pollution has been linked to higher incidences of hypertension and Type 2 diabetes in Black women living in the City.<sup>24</sup>

**COVID-19 Pandemic**

The recent COVID-19 pandemic highlighted actual discrepancies in healthcare outcomes across the nation, but especially in Los Angeles. Black residents had the lowest vaccination rate of all racial or ethnic groups in Los Angeles County. (See Figure 9). According to the 2023 *State of Black Los Angeles County*

23 Connolly, R., et al. (2023). The association of green space, tree canopy and parks with life expectancy in neighborhoods of Los Angeles. *Environment International*, 173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2023.107785>  
24 Coogan et al., *Air Pollution...*, 767–72.

**Figure 9.** Percentage of persons six months of age and older by race that have received one or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.  
*Source:* Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, “COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard,” accessed March 28, 2024. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/vaccine/vaccine-dashboard.htm>.



*Report*, they were vaccinated below the County average. These residents, therefore, were and are at higher risk of severe infection and even death, particularly when the lower rates of vaccination were compounded by higher rates of poverty, which determined whether one had the privilege to self-quarantine, work remotely, or access preventative care and medication.<sup>25</sup>

**Higher Risk for HIV and AIDS**

Another effect of inadequate access to preventative healthcare in Black communities is the disproportionate prevalence of HIV and AIDS among the Black population in Los Angeles. (See Figure 10). As of 2022, while Black people only accounted for 7.6% of Los Angeles County's population, they represented over 20% of those living with diagnosed HIV.<sup>26</sup>

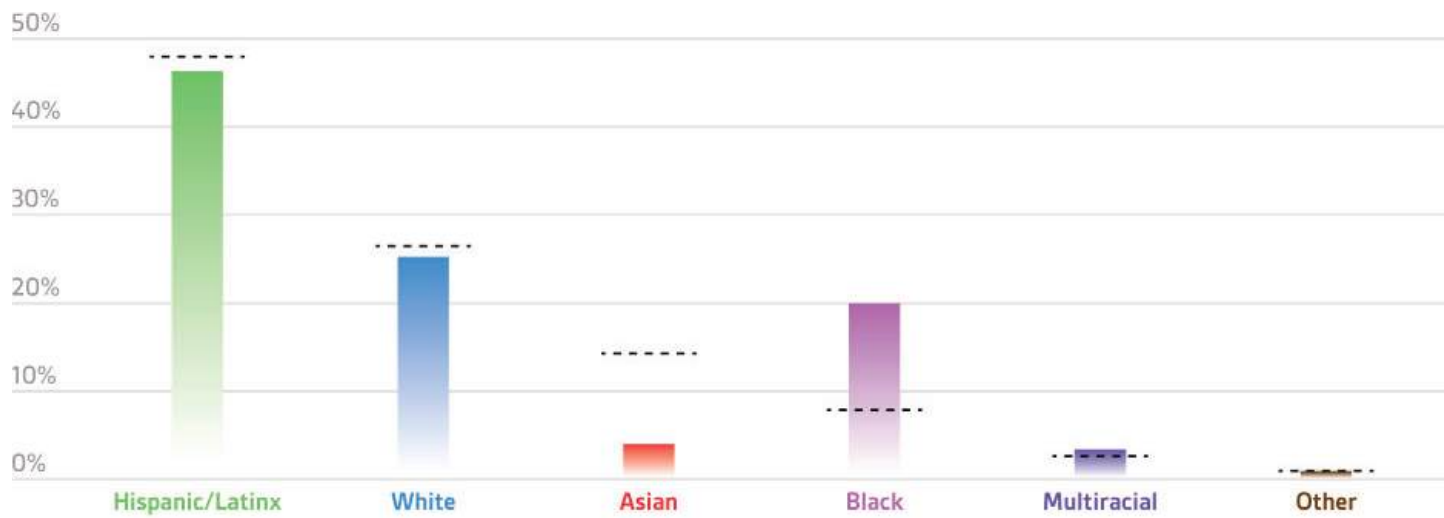
**Disparities in Health Insurance Coverage**

Lower rates of health insurance coverage in the African American community also contribute to unequal access to quality healthcare. Insurance coverage is an important predictor

25 County of Los Angeles, Chief Executive Office. (2023). *State of Black Los Angeles County Report*. <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/sbla/>.  
26 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Division of HIV and STD Programs. (2023, October 25). *2022 Los Angeles County Annual HIV Surveillance Report*. [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/Reports/HIV/Annual\\_HIV\\_Surveillance\\_Report\\_2022\\_LAC\\_Final.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/Reports/HIV/Annual_HIV_Surveillance_Report_2022_LAC_Final.pdf).

**Figure 10.** Persons living with diagnosed HIV in Los Angeles County in 2022.

Source: Division of HIV and STD Programs, Department of Public Health, County of Los Angeles, [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/Reports/HIV/Annual\\_HIV\\_Surveillance\\_Report\\_2022\\_LAC\\_Final.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/Reports/HIV/Annual_HIV_Surveillance_Report_2022_LAC_Final.pdf)



of the level of care a patient will receive for preventive care, health screenings, chronic disease management, acute care, surgical procedures, and access to prescription drugs. While the Affordable Care Act of 2010 reduced the number of uninsured people in the United States, accessing health insurance continues to be a problem for Black Angelenos.<sup>27</sup>

### ***More Mental Health Concerns, Less Access to Treatment***

According to the “State of Black Los Angeles County” report, of all racial or ethnic groups in the County, Black people are the second most likely group after the White population to be, “at risk for major depression,” at 12% compared to the latter’s 15% and to report that they are, “currently depressed,” at 20% to

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

21%.<sup>28</sup> Data from 2016 to 2020 shows Black youth suicide deaths were second to those of Asian/Pacific Islander descended youth, but suicide attempt hospitalizations and emergency department visits were highest among Black youth.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the readily apparent need for care, studies (e.g., *Brown, Joe and Thompson 1985, Los Angeles County Health System 1991, Williams and Shambles 1984*) indicate consistent disparities in access to quality mental healthcare for African Americans, including a lack of providers, shortage of treatment facilities, higher misdiagnosis rate, inappropriate treatments, and affordability of

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. (2016-2020). Youth Suicide and Suicide Attempts in Los Angeles County. <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ovp/GetData.htm>

services.<sup>30</sup> Cultural barriers such as “mental health care stigma” and the lack of culturally-aware practitioners can derail African Americans from getting the mental health support they need.

Mental health decline can be exacerbated by a host of factors, including negative police encounters, which can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. As other chapters in our report note, Los Angeles has a long, often disturbing history of such incidents which have disproportionately impacted Black communities. (See ‘*Racial Terror*’ and ‘*Unjust Legal System*’ chapters). Studies have also found that stress due to racial discrimination is associated with high blood pressure, a condition called hypertension, mental health crises, and increased alcohol consumption.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, stressful events during childhood have a strong influence on adult health, mental health, and socioeconomic outcomes that lead to high rates of intergenerational transmission.<sup>32</sup>

Some social scientists theorize that trauma and psychological injuries stemming from systemic racism can produce mental illness.<sup>33</sup>

Insufficient treatment of mental health illnesses within the Black population in Los Angeles has been linked to higher rates of homelessness and incarceration. Black residents are overrepresented in the unhoused population and make up a large percentage of the incarcerated population due to systemic racial discrimination. Rampant mental illness, fatigue, and trauma make it even more difficult to escape a cycle of homelessness and incarceration.<sup>34</sup> High substance abuse rates among Black people are closely related to high incarceration rates based on longstanding racial disparities in sentencing, which show that African Americans are likely to receive longer sentences for similar crimes to White Angelenos. In particular, during the 1980s and 1990s crack cocaine epidemic in Los Angeles, Black residents arrested on drug charges received higher sentences on average

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30 Stanley, S., Nolan, Z., & Young, K. (1994). Research on psychotherapy with culturally diverse populations. *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change* (4th ed.), Wiley & Sons, 783–820; McGuire, T. G., Alegria, M., Cook, B. L., Wells, K. B., & Zaslavsky, A. M. (2006). Implementing the Institute of Medicine definition of disparities: An application to mental health care. *Health Services Research*, 41(5), 1979–2005.

31 Forde, A. T., et al. (2020, September 1). Discrimination and hypertension risk among African Americans in the Jackson Heart Study. *National Center for Biotechnology Information*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8359680/>

32 Yahuda, R., & Lehrner, A. (2018, September 7). Intergenerational transmission of trauma effects: Putative role

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of epigenetic mechanisms. *World Psychiatry*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6127768/>.

33 Hood, A. M., et al. (2024, February 1). Racism exposure and trauma accumulation perpetuate pain inequities – advocating for change (RESTORATIVE): A conceptual model. *American Psychology*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10071409/>

34 Lopez, S. (2020, June 13). Black people make up 8% of L.A. population and 34% of its homeless. That's unacceptable. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/la-black-people-experiencing-homelessness.pdf>



than members of other groups.<sup>35</sup> In these situations, the fallout from failing to provide more equitable care for members of the Black community has been cyclical, as many individuals struggling with mental health concerns may also struggle with substance abuse.

### ***Hot Spots for Needs That Aren't Being Met***

Several health indicators signal statistically significant spatial clustering patterns for predominantly Black census tracts located in South Los Angeles. Spatial analysis shows this area represents a cold spot (a cluster of low values) for healthcare facilities (see Figure 11) and life expectancy. In other words, in areas such as South Los Angeles where there are fewer healthcare facilities, life expectancy is statistically lower than in neighboring areas.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, South Los Angeles is a hot spot for rates of stroke prevalence (Figure 12), diabetes (Figure 13),

high blood pressure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), low birth weight, and asthma, with statistically higher occurrence rates for these health indicators than in neighboring areas.<sup>37</sup> These results are in alignment with studies that have found that the Black population (and other people of color) in California consistently confront barriers to accessing healthcare, suboptimal treatment, and poor healthcare outcomes.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Social Determinants of Health***

Lower rates of individual actions to improve health, such as quitting smoking, pursuing a nutritious diet, and engaging in physical exercise, is another factor that comes into play. The legacies of enslavement and systemic racism — less household income, reduced neighborhood wealth, lower education levels, lack of health insurance, and transportation challenges — have a direct correlation with racial disparities in access to healthcare and life expectancy. These myriad disadvantages can lead to an accelerated decline in physical health.

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35 United States Sentencing Commission. (1995, February). Cocaine and Federal Sentencing Policy: Special Report to Congress. United States Sentencing Commission.

36 Healthcare facility data retrieved in November 2023 from the California Health and Human Services Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development at <https://oshpd-chhsagency.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/CHHSAgency::oshpd-healthcare-facilities/explore>. Life expectancy data retrieved from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP) at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/usaleep/usaleep.html>. Cluster analysis is based on *Anselin Local Moran's I* statistic using healthcare facilities within a one-mile proximity of census tracts. Cluster analysis results are statistically significant at the 99.8% confidence interval.

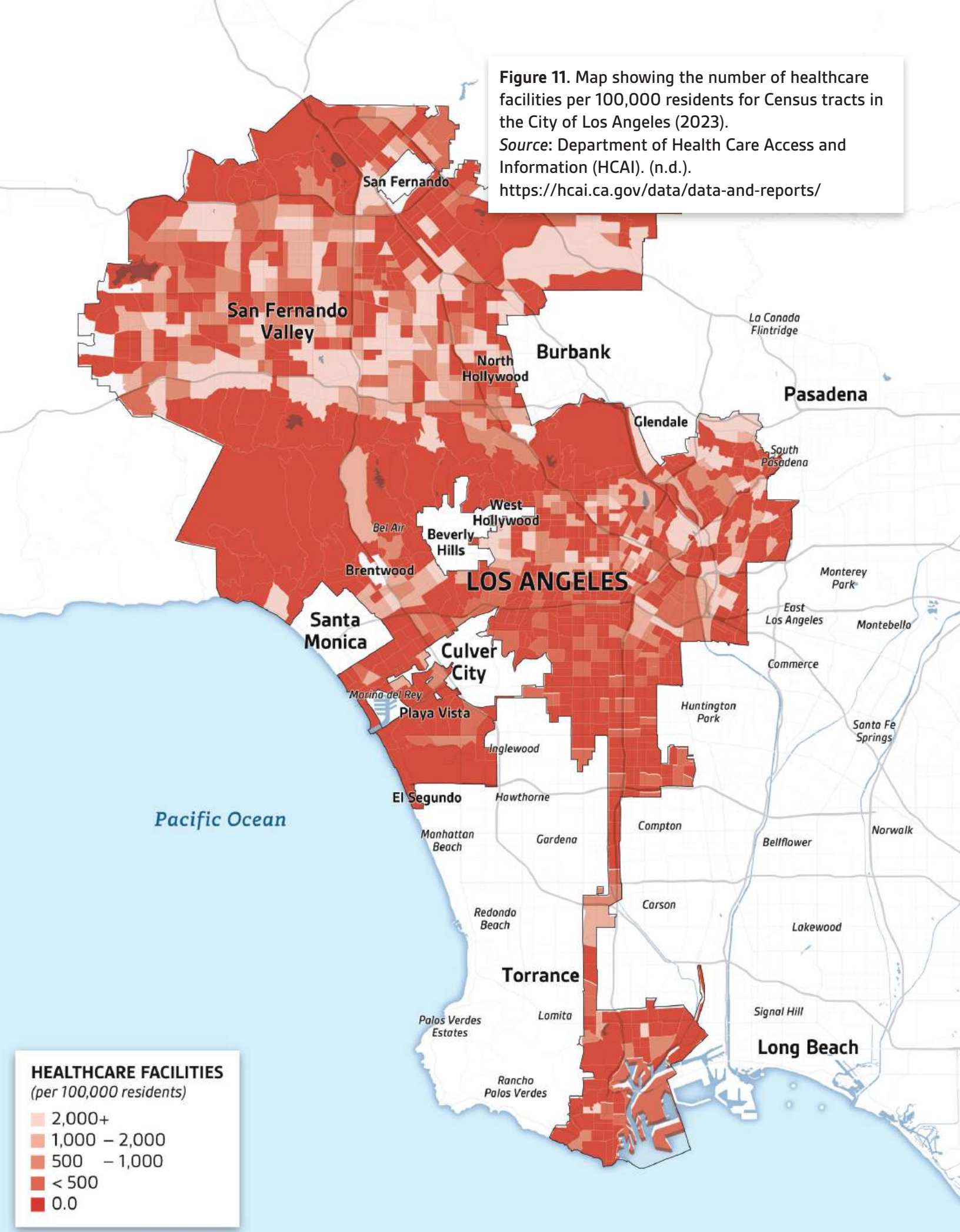
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37 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Population Level Analysis and Community Estimates (PLACES). (2022). <https://cdcarcgis.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=3b7221d4e47740cab9235b839fa55cd7>. Cluster analysis results are statistically significant at the 99.8% confidence interval.

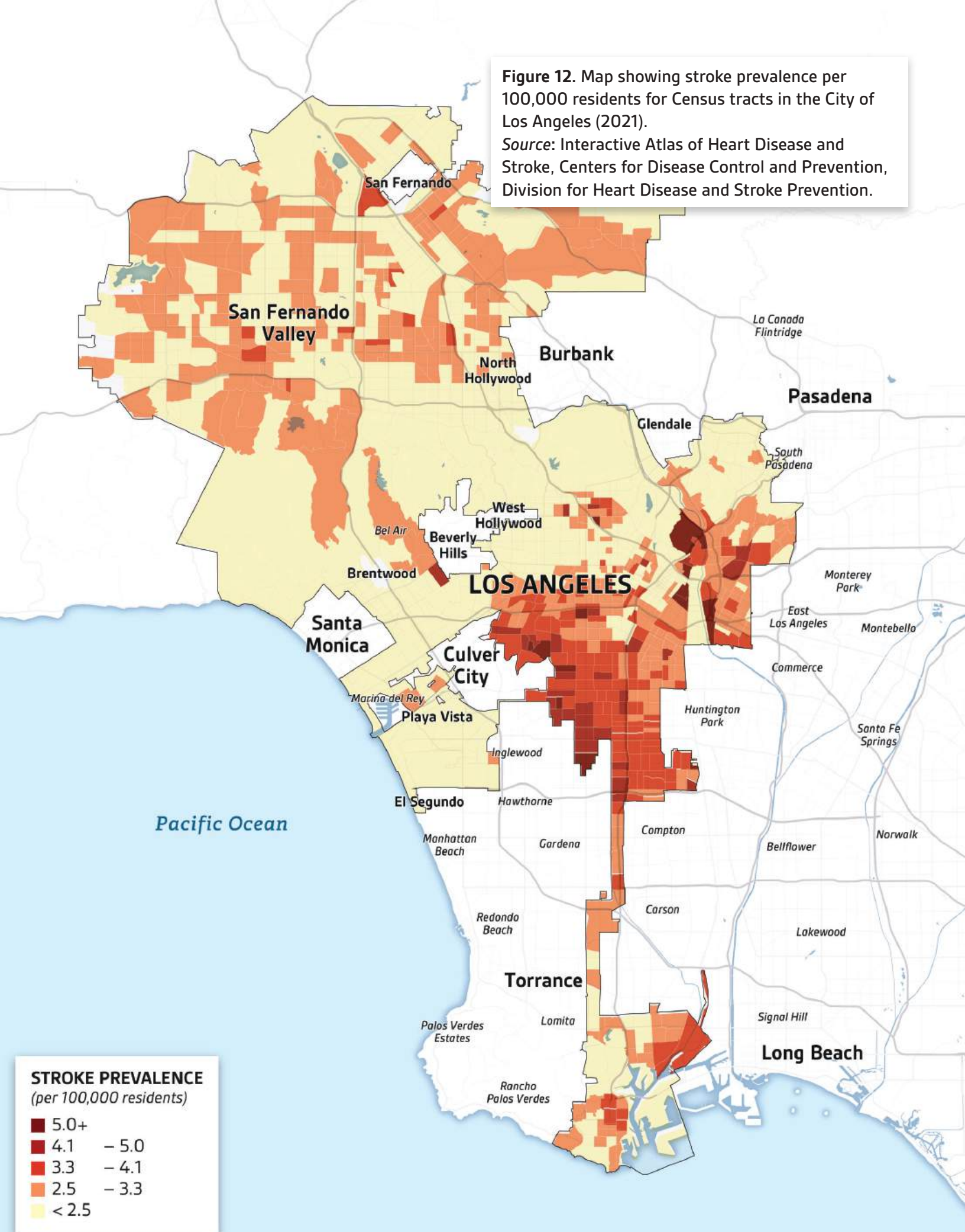
38 California Health Care Almanac. (2021, October). Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity in California: Pattern of Inequity. California Health Care Foundation. <https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/DisparitiesAlmanacRaceEthnicity2021.pdf>.



**Figure 11.** Map showing the number of healthcare facilities per 100,000 residents for Census tracts in the City of Los Angeles (2023).  
Source: Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI). (n.d.).  
<https://hcai.ca.gov/data/data-and-reports/>

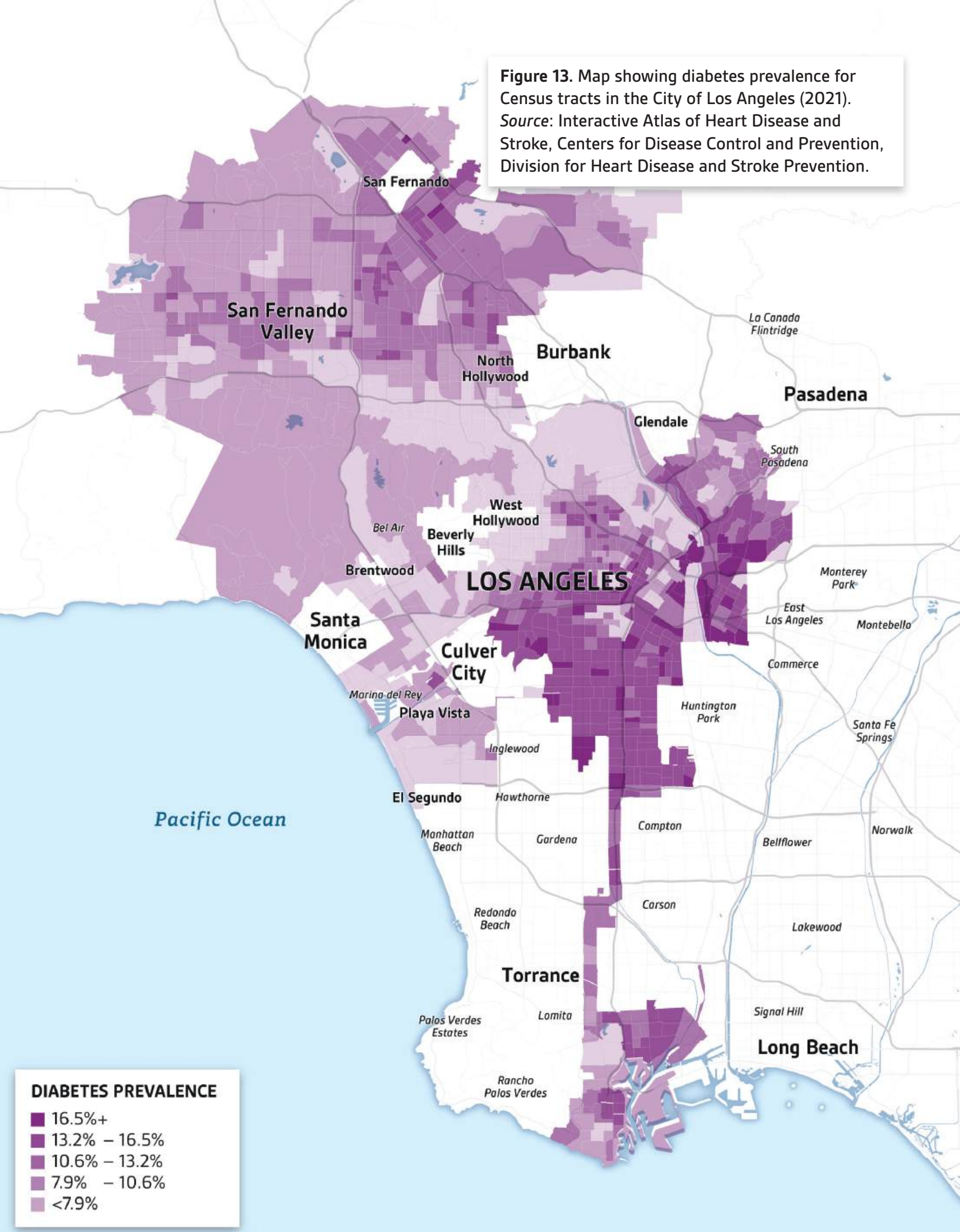


**Figure 12.** Map showing stroke prevalence per 100,000 residents for Census tracts in the City of Los Angeles (2021).  
*Source:* Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention.





**Figure 13.** Map showing diabetes prevalence for Census tracts in the City of Los Angeles (2021).  
*Source:* Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention.



## Summary of Findings

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 Environment and Infrastructure

## Abstract

Like their brethren across many parts of the United States, Black Angelenos have suffered the consequences of heightened exposure to industrial toxins and urban pollutants. Decades of racist housing policy in Los Angeles largely confined Black Angelenos to areas hosting many of the City's industrial polluters, as well as in corridors marked by heavily trafficked freeways — many of which were purposefully built through communities of color. Today, many Black Angelenos continue to inhabit neighborhoods in close proximity to many brownfields and other zones characterized by heightened exposure to pollutants. The long-term effects of the environmental racism that shaped the arrangement of Los Angeles' Black neighborhoods include degraded health outcomes for a host of medical conditions and long-term reduction in Black Angelenos' ability to earn equitable returns on growth in housing values.

## Key Terms

- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** The EPA is an independent federal agency that aims to protect human health and the environment by enforcing regulations and assessing and developing programs.
- **California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA):** A State agency that regulates air, water and soil quality, pesticide use, and waste recycling and reduction.
- **Particulate Matter (PM):** A mixture of solid and liquid particles suspended in the air. These particles can be made up of many different components, including dust, soil, organic chemicals, metals, and acids.
- **Environmental Racism:** Disproportionately exposing marginalized communities to environmental hazards, pollution, waste sites, and land degradation.

## Overview

Environmental racism describes rules and behaviors that create a landscape in which people of color suffer “disproportionate harm from pollution, and the discriminatory systems that have perpetuated those inequities.”<sup>1</sup>

African American citizens of the United States, especially residents of California and Los Angeles, have disproportionately borne the brunt of exposure to environmental toxins and pollutants, resulting in an increased impact of environmental injustice

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<sup>1</sup> Roth, S. (2020, June 4). Why communities fighting for fair policing also demand environmental justice. *Los Angeles Times*.



and racism.<sup>2</sup> Recent high-profile cases of environmental racism illustrate how African Americans across generations have been afflicted by callous disregard and, in many cases, malicious conspiracies to expose them to the worst environmental conditions. Water contamination in Flint, Michigan (where a majority of residents are Black) is an example of how environmental racism can lead to massive harm. Although Flint is the most well-known case, it is certainly not alone. In Lowndes County, Alabama, residents live with raw sewage backups in their yards and homes because basic sanitation is not affordable. In Louisiana's St. James Parish, which is in an area infamously known as "Cancer Alley," African American residents suffer from disproportionately high rates of cancer. It has been long suspected that this is due to a high concentration of petrochemical plants in the vicinity. Studies have shown that 75% of African Americans across the country are "more likely" to live near oil and gas refineries and to suffer premature death due to exposure to power plant pollution.<sup>3</sup>

Much of this vulnerability to adverse environmental conditions is entangled with longstanding, racist housing policies and practices. For example, African Americans were largely excluded on the basis of race from taking advantage of government programs that opened up large amounts of fertile and desirable land to Americans in the 19th century. 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 in Los Angeles — constitutes, in part, increased risks for Black Americans from harmful conditions in their built and natural environments.

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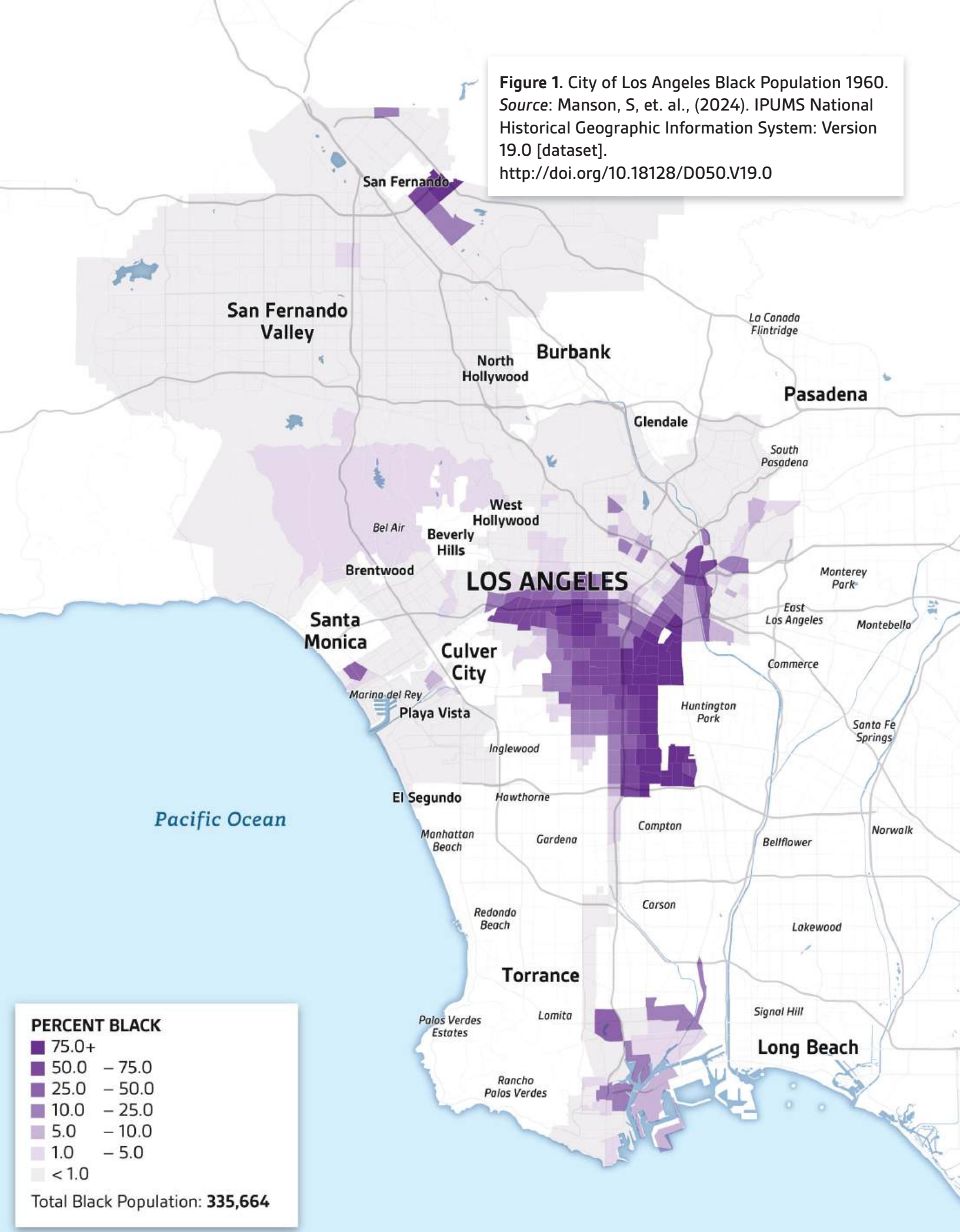
2 Roberts, J. et al. (2022, June). 'I Can't Breathe': Examining the Legacy of American Racism on Determinants of Health and the Ongoing Pursuit of Environmental Justice. *Current Environmental Health Reports*, 9(2), 211-227.

3 Adisa-Farrar, T. (2023, February 2). How 600 Years of Environmental Violence Is Still Harming Black Communities. *Earthjustice*.  
<https://earthjustice.org/article/overlooked-connections-between-black-injustice-and-environmentalism>

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4 National Archives. (1862). *Homestead Act*.  
[https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/homestead-act#:~:text=The%20Homestead%20Act%2C%20enacted%20%20during,the%20government%20\\$1.25%20per%20acre](https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/homestead-act#:~:text=The%20Homestead%20Act%2C%20enacted%20%20during,the%20government%20$1.25%20per%20acre)

**Figure 1. City of Los Angeles Black Population 1960.**  
Source: Manson, S, et. al., (2024). IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 19.0 [dataset].  
<http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V19.0>



## ***Los Angeles: The Link between Segregation and Pollution***

After being denied residence 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. (See Figure 1). Many of the neighborhoods designated for Black residency were undesirable because of numerous industrial hazards found in these areas. While many Black workers employed at industrial facilities may have found living near their workplaces convenient, these employees and their families were much more likely to suffer detrimental health effects than their White counterparts because of their proximity to the various pollutants generated by factories and shops.

Fossil fuel companies have abandoned thousands of wells that have the potential to harm the health of thousands of residents across California. The *Los Angeles Times* estimates that more than 2 million residents live near unplugged oil or gas wells, and the majority are, “Latino, Black and low-income people living nearby at a slightly higher rate than the California population as a whole.

Half of those 2 million people reside in Los Angeles.”<sup>5</sup>

### ***The Exide Battery Processing Facility***

Exide Technologies is one of the largest manufacturers, distributors, and recyclers of batteries in the United States. According to estimates, over a 30-year period starting in the mid-1980's, an Exide plant just south of Downtown Los Angeles in Vernon, California, “spewed more than seven million pounds of lead over the households of 100,000 residents and produced the greatest risk of cancer among all pollution-emitting facilities in the South Coast Air Basin.”<sup>6</sup> The residents most affected were African Americans and Latinos with lower incomes.

In 2020, Exide Technologies filed for bankruptcy and was allowed by the courts to abandon its plant, leaving clean-up of the resulting waste to taxpayers. The plant's pollution spread from its site in the City of Vernon through to neighboring communities, including East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, Maywood, Central-Alameda, and Huntington

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5 Olalde, M. & Menezes, R. (2020, February 6). The toxic legacy of old wells: California's multibillion dollar problem. *Los Angeles Times* and *The Center for Public Integrity*.

6 Vaquero, I. (2022, April 22). Advocating for Southern California Communities of Color Impacted by Environmental Injustice. *Equal Justice Works* (Blog). <https://www.equaljusticeworks.org/news/advocating-for-southern-california-communities-of-color-impacted-by-environmental-injustice>



<https://dtsc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d8a6b586685f46f793e39759c71be3ef>



living nearby, including environmental and health liabilities, reduction of valuable space for housing, business, or recreation, increased sprawl, and degradation of local property values. In addition, cities lose valuable property tax revenue when land is condemned as a result of pollution.<sup>8</sup> African Americans are more likely to live within or near a brownfield than White residents, especially in Los Angeles. This fact is compelling, as it highlights decades of systematic housing discrimination against Black Angelenos.

Los Angeles encompasses roughly 450 square miles. In 1970, the census tracts in which most of Black Angelenos lived housed more than 30% of the City's total population and took up about 50 square miles, or 11%, of total land area within City limits. By mapping today's brownfields, we can significantly reconstruct the industrial hazard landscape of mid-to-late-20th century Los Angeles. Doing so allows us to record the challenges and costs created by forced housing segregation in the region. The map in Figure 3 shows brownfield cleanup sites across the City in 2023 overlaid onto a map of Black Los Angeles by census tract in 1970. Although it should be clear that

neighborhoods where Black families were forced to reside are far more likely to contain a brownfield today, further analysis of the data can provide additional insights into the differing degrees to which Black and White neighborhoods were exposed to the kinds of pollutants that created brownfields.

In 1970, there were 740 census tracts in the City of Los Angeles. In 2023, 81 of those tracts contained an EPA-identified brownfield. Our analysis finds that the average census tract at that time was 17.6% Black, approximating the 20% figure for all of Los Angeles in 1970. However, census tracts with a brownfield were, on average, 34% Black. In other words, the polluted census tracts had almost twice the Black population of the average tract in Los Angeles. The 659 census tracts *without* a brownfield were, on average, 15.6% Black, significantly less than the citywide average.

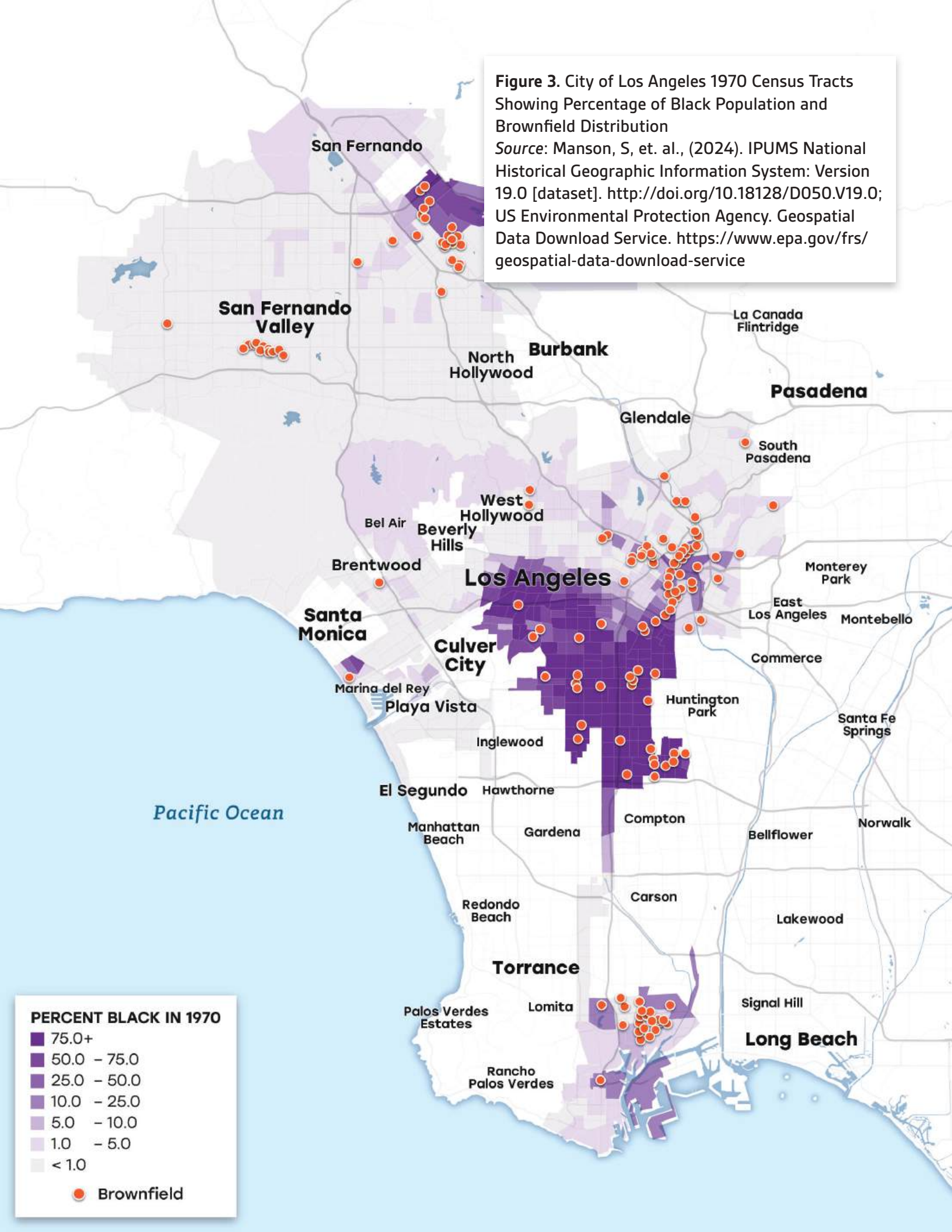
Also, in 1970, there were 538 census tracts with a Black population of less than 5%. In those tracts, there are only 91 brownfield sites today. Put another way, the roughly 73% of Los Angeles' census tracts that were functionally off limits to Black families in 1970 contained only 47% of listed brownfields. Of the eight tracts containing more than three brownfields, half had above-average percentages of Black

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8 Western Pennsylvania Brownfields Center. Frequently Asked Questions. *Carnegie Mellon University*. Retrieved August 22, 2023 from <https://www.cmu.edu/steinbrenner/brownfields/faq/index.html>.



**Figure 3. City of Los Angeles 1970 Census Tracts Showing Percentage of Black Population and Brownfield Distribution**  
Source: Manson, S, et. al., (2024). IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 19.0 [dataset]. <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V19.0>; US Environmental Protection Agency. Geospatial Data Download Service. <https://www.epa.gov/frs/geospatial-data-download-service>



residents. Perhaps a quarter of those mostly-White tracts with a brownfield included an industrial corridor, such as the Los Angeles River or rail lines, and were not generally residential. In White *residential* areas around Los Angeles, industrial pollution was rare in the postwar era.

Put very simply, during the 1950s and 1960s, when Los Angeles was experiencing rapid growth and robust economic expansion, White families could move to the Westside or the western San Fernando Valley, where few industrial sites threatened the health and well-being of their loved ones and undermined the growth of their property values. In contrast, Black families were prohibited from living in and purchasing homes in certain neighborhoods. Instead, the widespread enforcement of restrictive covenants, clauses in deeds that legally prohibited the sale or purchase of a home to a certain group, 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 workers and residents. The subsequent damage to Black families during

the postwar era was significant. The results of systemic racism — erosion of physical health, increased number of deaths, and diminished growth in home equity — due to forced residence near industrial pollutants over many decades produced an enormous burden on Black Angelenos.

Beginning in the 1970s, hard-won victories from the Civil Rights era permitted Black Angelenos to relocate from the most polluted areas of Los Angeles. This shift has catalyzed moves toward Inglewood and Long Beach in recent decades. The result, at least for wealthier Black families, has been generally positive. The current core areas of Black Los Angeles centered around the Crenshaw Boulevard corridor are less polluted and, therefore, healthier than the older core areas anchored by Central Avenue. Still, over the course of the City's history, generation after generation of Black Angelenos faced increased health risks, including a higher likelihood of living near brownfields and industrial pollutants, and thousands continue to live in harm's way.

## ***Air and Other Toxic Pollution from Los Angeles Sprawl***

When it comes to breathing air pollution, a person's race matters. A nationwide study conducted by University of Washington researchers found that people of color are exposed to far more harmful air pollution emitted by motor vehicles and other sources of fossil fuel combustion than White people. The study, which looked at the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010, noted that non-White people experienced 40% higher exposure than White people in 2000 and that by 2010, the gap closed by only three percentage points. Concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), a chemical compound emitted by trucks, buses, cars, and other sources that produces a variety of harmful effects on the lungs, were two and a half times higher in minority neighborhoods than in mostly-White neighborhoods. The study found that, "if people of color had breathed the lower NO<sub>2</sub> levels experienced by whites in 2010, it would have prevented an estimated 5,000 premature deaths from heart disease among the nonwhite group."<sup>9</sup>

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9 Langston, J. (2017, September 14). People of color exposed to more pollution from cars, trucks, power plants during 10-year period. *UW News*. <https://www.washington.edu/news/2017/09/14/people-of-color-exposed-to-more-pollution-from-cars-trucks-power-plants-during-10-year-period/>

The study also addressed the impacts of air pollution stemming from motor vehicles and roadways — two features of Los Angeles that are inescapable — noting, "Both racial minorities and low-income households are disproportionately likely to live near a major road where transportation-related pollution is typically highest. U.S. cities, in general, also tend to be more segregated by race and ethnicity than by income."<sup>10</sup>

Los Angeles is famous for its freeways and car culture. The area is also well-known for its suburbs, which rapidly expanded beyond the confines of the Downtown city center during the postwar era, creating suburban enclaves that were almost entirely White. Government planners and officials thought the emergence of the automobile would create an environment in which suburbanites could drive into the Downtown core and then return home to the residential suburbs. However, suburban sprawl greatly contributed to an increase in traffic congestion. At that time, freeways were seen as the most desirable solution to alleviate street congestion, increase access to Downtown businesses, and curtail the urban decay that was beginning to overwhelm older business districts. In 1937, the Automobile Club of Southern California

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10 *ibid.*

(AAA) proposed a freeway system that, “would allow high-speed automobile transit throughout the City.” The proposal eventually became the impetus for the development of Los Angeles’ current freeway system. City officials worked with the Los Angeles Central Business District Association to convince the federal government to grant \$90,000 to complete a transportation proposal. The Transportation Engineering Board, a local body appointed by Mayor Frank L. Shaw, completed the study, and a committee made up of City and County engineers, alongside private citizens, was created.<sup>11</sup> The City Planning Department 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 existence of racial and ethnic communities.

Approximately 527 miles of freeways were built across Los Angeles County, and many of those developments affected Black and White neighborhoods to divergent ends. In South Los

Angeles, the well-known, upper-middle-class neighborhood of “Sugar Hill,” an area that was home to many wealthy Black celebrities, was bulldozed to make room for the Santa Monica (Interstate 10) Freeway. The destruction of Sugar Hill and much of Boyle Heights to make room for the East Los Angeles Interchange displaced more than 10,000 people, nearly all of whom were of African American, Mexican, or Japanese descent.<sup>12</sup> Urban planning and renewal 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. Decision-makers often cited low financial appraisals for land as one of the factors in choosing to develop in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Racist lending practices, restrictive covenants, and redlining worked to keep Black neighborhoods’ housing stock in substandard condition and ripe for reclamation by government agencies. Furthermore, racist housing practices limited the number of African Americans who could pursue housing in the newly-

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11 Bottles, S.L. (1987). *Los Angeles and the Automobile: The Making of the Modern City*. University of California Press. 213, 216, 218.

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12 Dillon, L. & Ben Poston, B. (2021, November 11). The racist history of America's interstate highway boom. *Los Angeles Times*.

created suburbs. Freeway expansion that eliminated Black and non-White housing stock gave White Angelenos opportunities to create all-White suburban neighborhoods.<sup>13</sup> Attempts to build freeways in affluent White neighborhoods were soundly defeated by grassroots organizing, but similar activism failed to produce the same results in minority neighborhoods.

The net environmental effect of building freeways in Los Angeles, particularly those that cut 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. A study found that Angelenos who commute more on Los Angeles freeways are less likely to be exposed to air pollution.<sup>14</sup> These drivers, who tend to be White and more affluent, drive through African American and other minority neighborhoods and then return to their homes, where they are exposed to less air pollution, a benefit that stems from earlier efforts by White residents to block freeways from being built through their neighborhoods.<sup>15</sup>

Los Angeles is ranked as one of the most ozone-polluted metropolitan areas in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Studies also indicate that Los Angeles is the sixth most-segregated metro area in the country.<sup>17</sup> The City's residents also face higher disease rates due to air pollution than residents of other major metropolitan U.S. cities. An analysis of data provided by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to the CalEnviroScreen tool, which assesses how various pollution factors impact different communities, shows significant progress but continuing inequities in the environmental conditions of Los Angeles' Black communities.<sup>18</sup> Black neighborhoods in the City generally remain worse-off than average on most environmental indices included in the data. The CalEPA publishes a pollution burden index that combines exposure to numerous environmental hazards and then places census tracts statewide in a percentile ranking, making it easy to compare neighborhoods in terms of pollution exposure. In the 25 Los Angeles census tracts that remain

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homeowners and their families. See Barboza, *L.A. keeps building*.

16 American Lung Association. *Most polluted places to live | State of the air*. Retrieved December 6, 2024 from <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/key-findings/most-polluted-places>.

17 Smith, H. (2021, June 28). California still highly segregated by race despite growing diversity, research shows. *Los Angeles Times*

18 California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (2016, February 26). *CalEnviroScreen FAQ's*. <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/calenviroscreen-faqs>.

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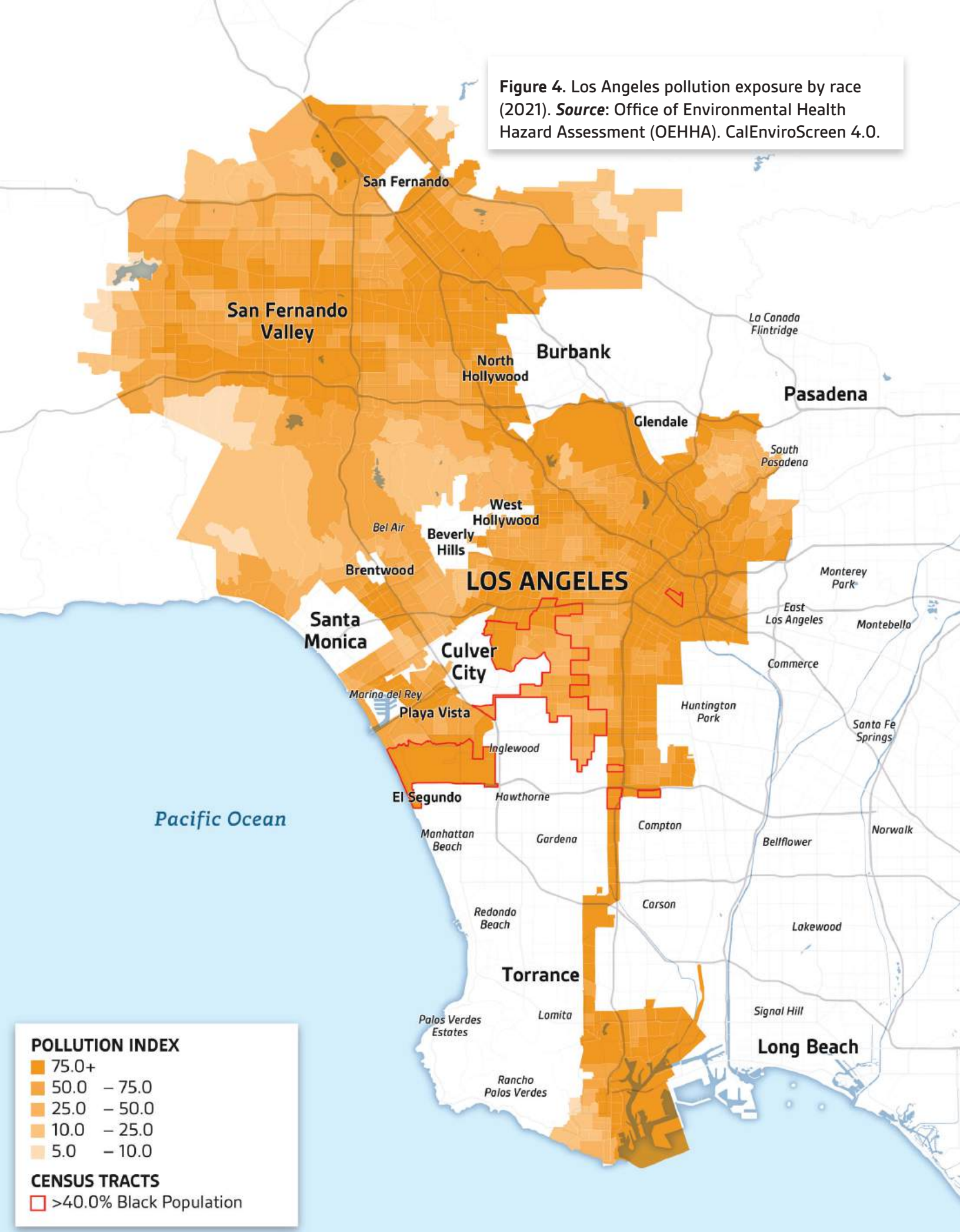
13 Bottles, *Los Angeles and the Automobile...*, 208–9.

14 Barboza, T. and Schleuss, J. (2017, March 2). L.A. keeps building near freeways, even though living there makes people sick. *Los Angeles Times*.

15 It appears that Los Angeles officials have approved the construction of new homes within one thousand feet of a freeway, regardless of the health consequences for the



**Figure 4. Los Angeles pollution exposure by race (2021).** *Source:* Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). CalEnviroScreen 4.0.



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. This is a statistically significant difference. The older Black core areas Black Angelenos left in recent decades are much worse, a damning indicator of the pollution burdens faced by Black baby boomers, their children, and their parents during the postwar decades.

On a few pollution indicators, Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles are no worse off than any other in the City. In some instances, Black neighborhoods fare better than average and, rarely, even better than their White counterparts, largely owing to the effects of the Pacific Ocean on air quality in the Los Angeles Basin versus the inland San Fernando Valley. Exposure to ozone and diesel particulates are two examples.

However, several disturbing inequities in terms of exposure to harmful pollutants remain. Black neighborhoods rank poorly in terms of exposure to air pollutants included in the category known as fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5), which includes dust and a variety of airborne industrial waste.<sup>19</sup> Much

of Los Angeles fares poorly in the PM 2.5 category — the citywide average is worse than the state as a whole — but the City's Black neighborhoods average in the 76th percentile while neighborhoods that are over 75% White are in the 65th percentile on average.

Large discrepancies can be found by looking at the figures for toxic releases, drinking water quality, lead exposure, and hazardous wastes. Exposure to toxic releases from nearby factories and other industrial processes may be the most concerning condition.<sup>20</sup> Though the many industrial processes in Los Angeles can be considered a fact of urban living, Black neighborhoods fare worse than most, landing in the 86th percentile on average. Neighborhoods that are mostly White are, on average, in the 69th percentile. In other words, Black residents are at a significantly higher risk of exposure to hazardous waste than their White counterparts in Los Angeles.

Drinking water contaminants are more prevalent in Black neighborhoods, as well. The EPA requires routine testing for 14 contaminants and three additional water quality parameters. Overall, Los Angeles' water was found to have more contaminants

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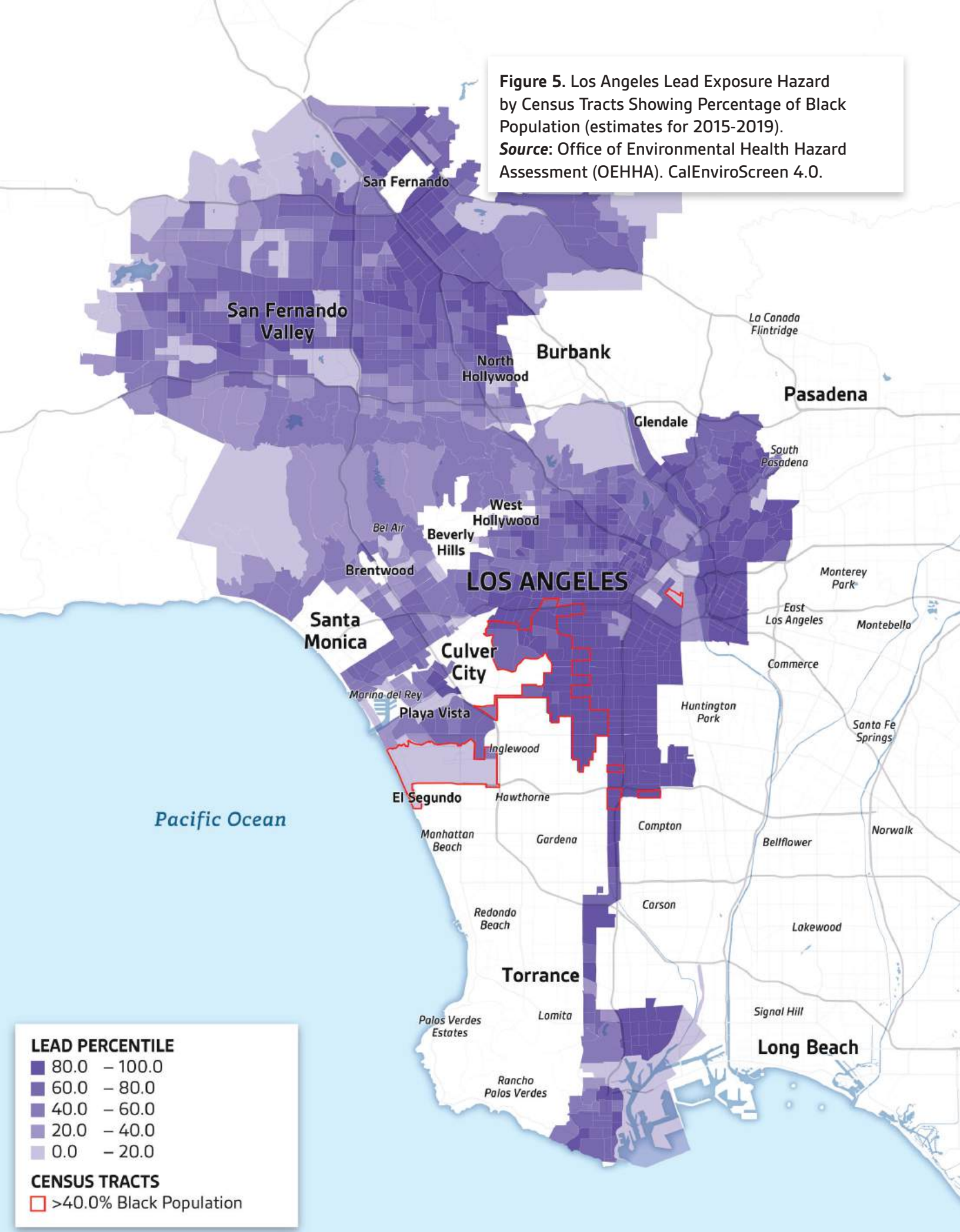
19 Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). *Particulate Matter (PM) Basics*. Last updated July 11, 2023, <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/particulate-matter-pm-basics>.

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20 California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (n.d.). *Toxic Releases from Facilities*. Retrieved August 22, 2023 from <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/indicator/toxic-releases-facilities>.

**Figure 5. Los Angeles Lead Exposure Hazard by Census Tracts Showing Percentage of Black Population (estimates for 2015-2019).**

**Source:** Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). CalEnviroScreen 4.0.





than water in other parts of the state. However, the CalEnviroscreen maps in this chapter show that the highest concentrations of pollutants are found in the southern reaches of the City. As a result, Los Angeles' majority Black census tracts are in the 91st percentile for drinking water contaminants. By comparison, the mostly White census tracts are in the 75th percentile.

The greatest inequity appears around exposure to lead contaminants present among children.<sup>21</sup> By 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 byproduct of institutionalized housing discrimination that began long before the Civil Rights era. Lead paints still threaten Black children at a greater rate than their White counterparts, many of whom live in housing that was built, on average, after the harmful effects of lead were fully realized. As a result, 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 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; in fact, they are far worse than what is found in mostly White areas. Consider asthma, a chronic lung disease that is detrimental, connected to a multitude of health and economic outcomes. In the majority Black census tracts, residents are in the 94th percentile for the condition.<sup>22</sup> Mostly-White census tracts in Los Angeles are in the 19th percentile. The story is nearly the same for cardiovascular health: Majority Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles lie, on average, in the 68th percentile (the three tracts that are over 75% Black are in the 77th percentile), while mostly White census tracts are, on average, in the 27th percentile.<sup>23</sup> It is

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21 California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (n.d.). *Toxic Releases from Facilities and Drinking Water Contaminants*. Retrieved August 22, 2023 from <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/indicator/drinking-water-contaminants>.

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22 California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (n.d.). *Asthma*. Retrieved August 22, 2023 from <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/indicator/asthma>.

23 California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (n.d.). *Cardiovascular Disease*. Retrieved August 22, 2023 from <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/indicator/cardiovascular-disease>.



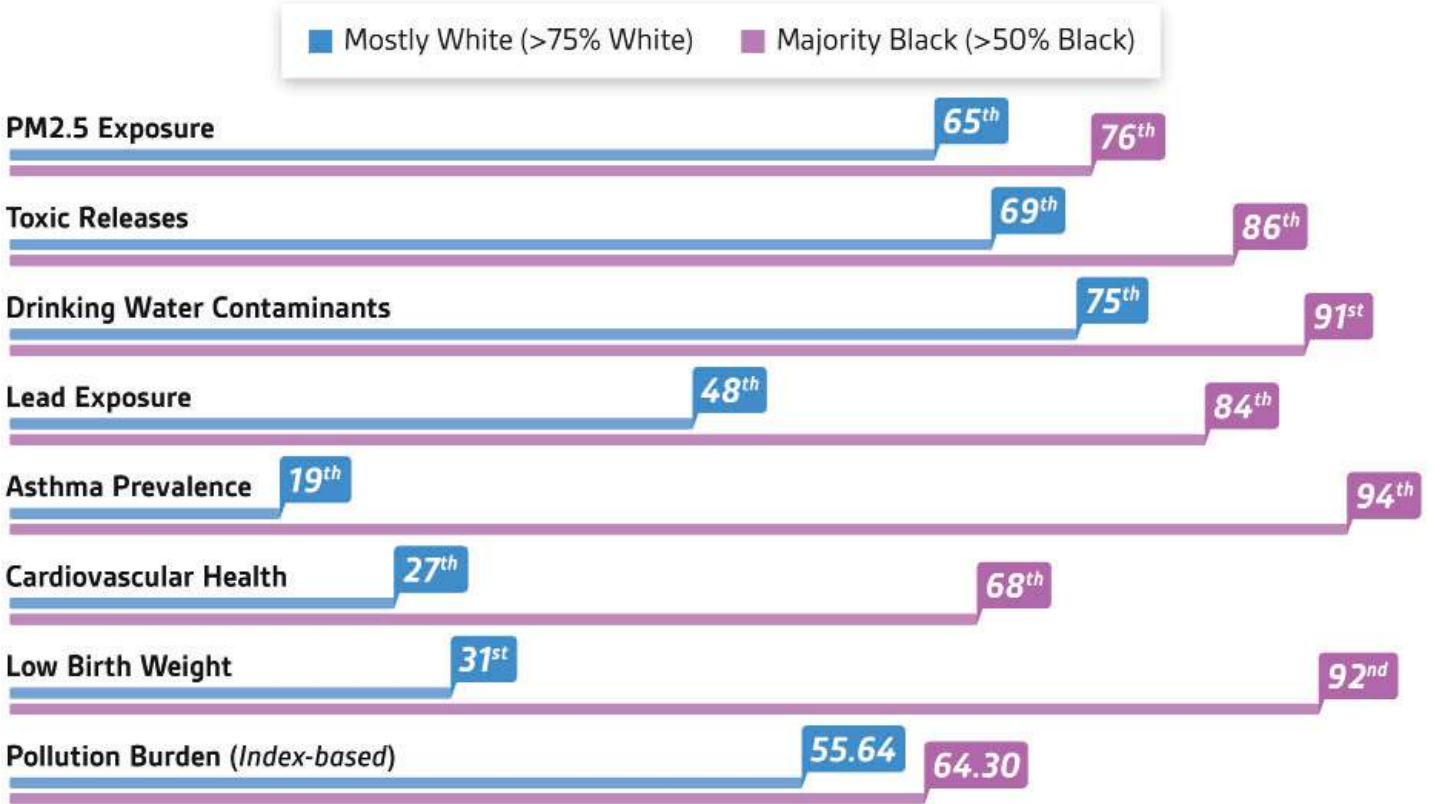
well known that one's residential environment plays a large contributing role in the prevalence of conditions such as asthma and heart disease, so decades of consigning already marginalized — and vulnerable — groups to higher-risk areas, all while maintaining safer environments for White, affluent residents stands as a significant contributor to the vastly uneven health outcomes experienced by current residents of Los Angeles.

Perhaps most distressing is how environmental exposure to toxins and pollutants can affect children before they are even born. Low birth weight, which can

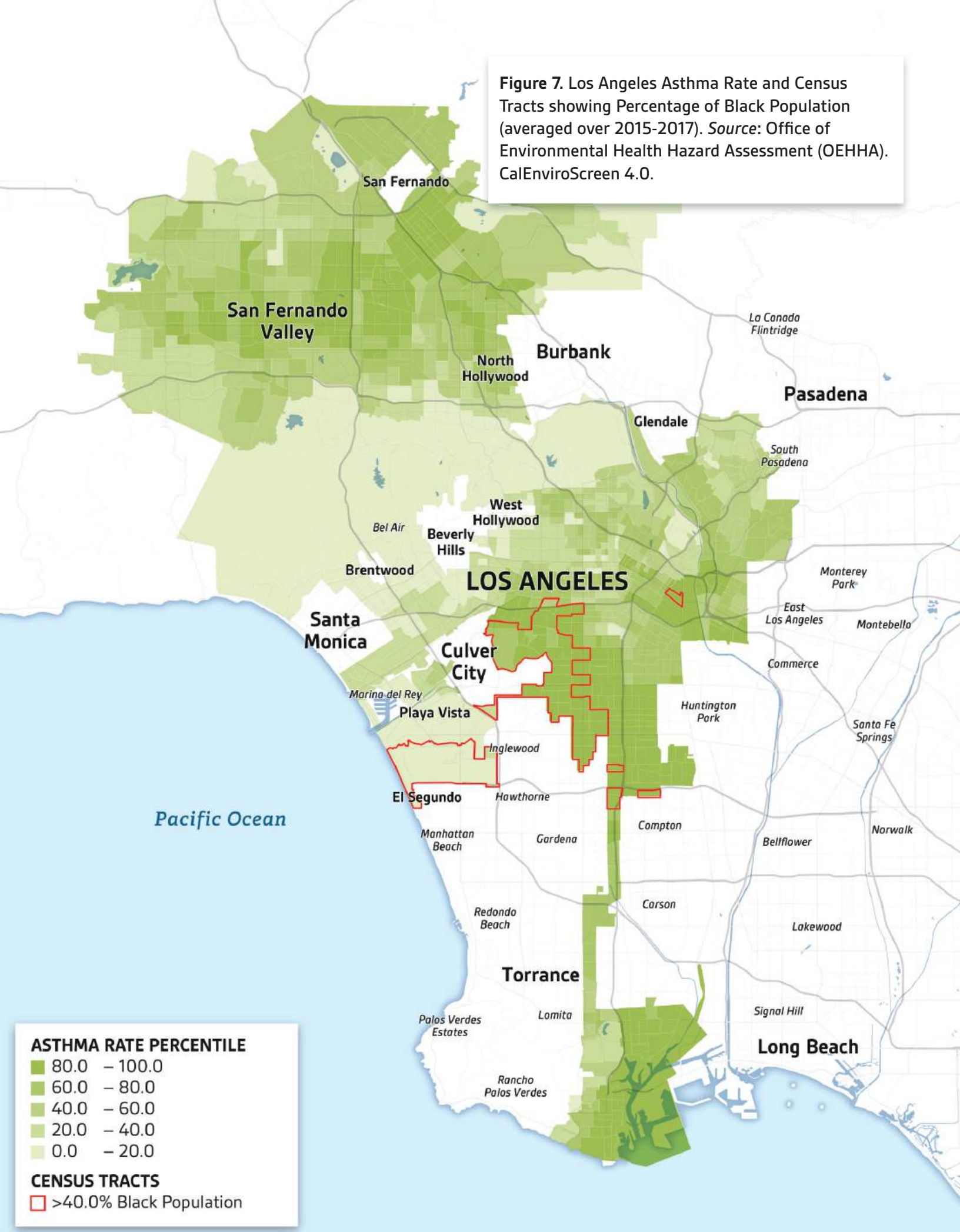
negatively affect children for their entire lives, is known to partly result from exposure to pollution.<sup>24</sup> Babies born in majority-Black neighborhoods tend to weigh less than those born elsewhere, with majority Black census tracts in the 92nd percentile for low birth weight on average. Los Angeles' mostly White census tracts are, on average, in the 31st percentile.

24 California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (n.d.). *Low Birth Weight Infants*. Retrieved August 22, 2023 from <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/indicator/low-birth-weight-infants>.

**Figure 6.** Select CalEnviroScreen indicators and average percentile ranking for mostly White and majority Black Census tracts (2021).  
*Source:* Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). CalEnviroScreen 4.0.



**Figure 7. Los Angeles Asthma Rate and Census Tracts showing Percentage of Black Population (averaged over 2015-2017).** *Source: Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHH). CalEnviroScreen 4.0.*



## ***Climate Change and Race:***

### ***A Deadly Combination***

Climate change is defined by the United Nations as, “long term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns.” While changes in the earth’s climate can and often do occur naturally, changes over the preceding 100 years have largely been brought on by human activity. The burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas), which has led to increases in greenhouse gas emissions, has been the main driver of these changes.<sup>25</sup> Climate change will affect how people live, grow food, and work in ways that are not yet fully known, and they will be particularly disruptive for the lives of vulnerable communities. More specifically, studies suggest that climate change will disproportionately affect impoverished communities of color, as they will pay more for basic necessities and suffer losses in work and jobs, particularly in agriculture and tourism.<sup>26</sup>

Residents of California will be susceptible to the fallout from rising heat, especially those citizens who live in historically under-resourced neighborhoods that have faced

disinvestment in terms of their built and natural environments. Data from one study shows that in nine counties across the state, for every 10°F (5.6°C) increase in temperature, there was a 2.6% increase in cardiovascular deaths. The rate increased for those older than 65 years of age and infants one year old or younger. Increases in temperatures and heat waves increased emergency room visits for heat-related illnesses, straining already overburdened hospitals and clinics. Data analysis shows there was a six-fold increase in heat-related emergency visits across the state.<sup>27</sup> Socioeconomic factors that contribute to heat-related illnesses include, but are not limited to, lack of access to air cooling, transportation, and quality housing. Heat islands are another significant factor: Neighborhoods that report higher rates of poverty often lack quality-built environments with materials that are better able to absorb heat from increased temperatures. The absence of grass, trees, soil, and environmentally designed structures leaves such areas more vulnerable to heat.

African Americans in Los Angeles face unprecedented exposure to heat-related illnesses. As one major study indicated, “African American Los Angeles residents have

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25 United Nations. (n.d.). *What Is Climate Change?* Retrieved August 15, 2023 from <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>.

26 Morello-Frosch, R. et al. (2009). *The Climate Gap: Inequalities in How Climate Change Hurts & How to Close the Gap*. University of Southern California Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, 5.

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27 *ibid.*, 7.

a projected heat-wave mortality rate that is nearly twice that of the Los Angeles average." Los Angeles residents are more likely to not have access to air conditioning than the general population.<sup>28</sup>

The science on illnesses and pollution-associated deaths, which escalate with increased temperatures from climate change, is sobering. For an estimated 1°C rise in temperature in the United States, there are, "an estimated 20–30 excess cancer cases and 1,000 excess air pollution-associated deaths."<sup>29</sup> The same research group noted 300 annual deaths from ozone and particulate matter occur in California.

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28 *ibid.*, 11-12.

29 *ibid.*, 13.



## Summary of Findings

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 Northeast San Fernando Valley and South Central; 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 negative health outcomes in Black communities affected by environmental hazards.
- 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' Black communities.
- Black residents in Los Angeles have higher projected heat-wave mortality rates.

# Unjust Legal System

## Abstract

This chapter is specifically focused on three entities, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, the LAPD, and the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. The focus on these three entities is necessary to understand how these City and County offices worked in concert to inflict harm on the Black community. As there is no shortage of studies that have illustrated the long history of police brutality by the LAPD, we bring into focus the over-policing by 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 a loss of work time and income.

## Key Terms

***The Watts Rebellion (1965)***: Also known as the *Watts Uprising*, the events took place in the Watts neighborhood and surrounding areas of Los Angeles from August 11-16, 1965. The rebellion was motivated by anger at racist and abusive law enforcement practices, as well as grievances over employment discrimination, residential segregation, and poverty.

## Overview

Crime data, legislative analysis, and anecdotal evidence all point to a legal system across the United States that, "disproportionately punishes African Americans."<sup>1</sup> At the nation's founding, enslaved people of African descent were not considered — at least in fundamental legal, or even human, terms — part of the American fabric, as all rights were inherently

vested in their owners.<sup>2</sup> Free African Americans understood that their rights were subject to elimination at the whim of White citizens at any given time or in any state jurisdiction.

The American legal system was instrumental in creating and maintaining a racial hierarchy that placed African Americans in a subordinate position to people of all other races or

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1 Semel, E. et al. (2020). *Whitewashing the Jury Box: How California Perpetuates the Discriminatory Exclusion of Black and Latinx Jurors*. University of California, Berkeley School of Law Death Penalty Clinic. 38. <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Whitewashing-the-Jury-Box.pdf>

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2 For an extensive overview of the inherent master / slave relationship, refer to Patterson, O. (1982). *Slavery & Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Harvard University Press. Introduction, 1-14, and Chapters 1 & 2.

ethnicities. Likewise, at their inception, California laws were designed to mirror what many states had already incorporated into their legal frameworks when it came to African Americans. For example, at the outset in 1850, California criminal law stated, “No Black or mulatto person, or Indian, shall be permitted to give evidence in favor of, or against, any White person.” Their testimony was explicitly prohibited: “The following persons shall not be witnesses: negroes, or persons having one half or more Negro blood, in an action or proceeding to which a White person is a party.”<sup>3</sup> This institutional practice of banning African Americans from testifying remained in place until 1863.

In present-day California, laws do not limit African Americans from testifying against White people, but a more pernicious form of racism still occurs in jury selection. State legislation barring people convicted of crimes from serving on juries has disproportionately affected African Americans. When combined with criminal legislation, i.e., the “War on Drugs” that criminalized specific drug crimes in ways that targeted African Americans, such laws have been effective in barring many

African Americans from jury service.<sup>4</sup> Data estimates in 2021 noted that 19 million Americans had felony convictions. Of these, 36%, or 7 million, were African Americans, a significant number of whom are thereby barred from jury service. California is also one of the few states that allows those convicted of felonies to serve on juries after having completed their sentences, probation, and parole.<sup>5</sup>

The impact of excluding African Americans from juries is not only a matter of legislation. An exhaustive report examining racial discrimination in jury selection in California noted that prosecutors used peremptory challenges to remove Black jurors in nearly 72% of cases.<sup>6</sup> The report noted that “racial discrimination is an ever-present feature of jury selection in California,” and this has the effect, as the report notes, of “whitewashing” the jury box across the state.

Additionally, in California, the arrest and conviction rates of African Americans are starkly disproportionate. Two-thirds of Black men in the state have been arrested at least once between the ages of 19 and 30. In

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4 Jackson-Gleich, G. (2021, February 18). Rigging the jury: How each state reduces jury diversity by excluding people with criminal records. *Prison Policy Initiative*. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/juryexclusion.html>

5 *ibid.*

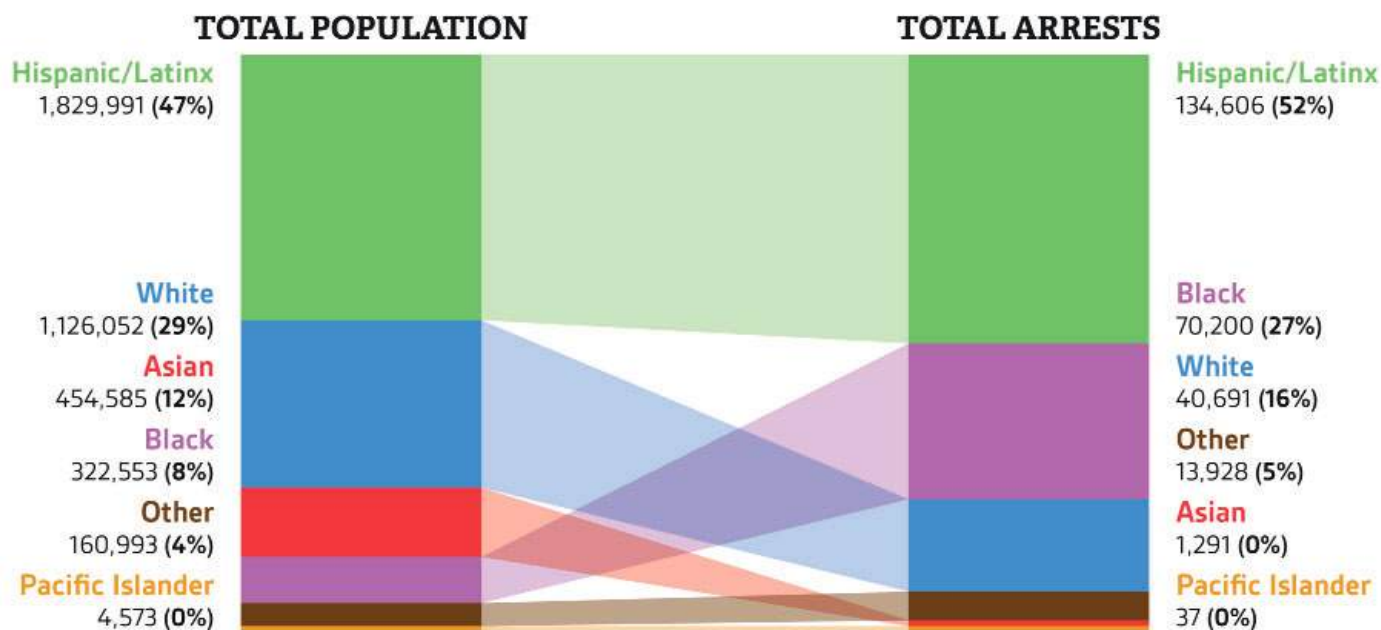
6 Semel et al., *Whitewashing the Jury Box...*, vi.

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3 The Criminal Act of 1850, California, Stat. Ch. 99 § 14 (1850), 230; The California Practice Act, Stat. Ch. 1 § 394 (1851), 114.

**Figure 1.** Percentage of total arrests in the City of Los Angeles by race for 2020–2023.

**Source:** LAPD, “Arrest Data from 2020 to Present.”



Los Angeles, African Americans have been charged at 17 times the rate of White people under California’s “Three Strikes and You’re Out” sentencing measure. This has also played out across the state; for example, data from Sacramento County on drug arrests by race shows that while 78% of county drug users are White, only 34% of those arrested for drugs are White. Meanwhile, 52% of arrests made for drug use or offenses are Black.<sup>7</sup> Recent data reported by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) also reveals substantially disproportionate arrest rates for Black Angelenos compared to other racial groups. From 2020 to 2023, Black people comprised 27% of all arrests despite representing only

8% of the City’s total population. In contrast, White people compose 16% of all arrests despite making up 29% of the total population. (See Figure 1).<sup>8</sup>

Although Black people may have gained more equitable legal rights over the course of the 20th century, the legal system, specifically in Los Angeles, has historically been a source of grievous harm for African Americans, whether in the form of abuse by police as sanctioned by the City’s administrative systems and cooperation with the State’s courts, limited opportunities for participating on juries, documented patterns of harsher sentencing practices as legislated by the state, or City

7 Schiraldi, V. et al. (1996). Young African Americans and the Criminal Justice System in California: Five Years Later. *Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice*. <https://static.prisonpolicy.org/scans/schiraldi2.pdf>.

8 Based on analysis of data from the Los Angeles Police Department. (2024). *Arrest Data from 2020 to Present*. <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Arrest-Data-from-2020-to-Present/amvf-fr72>.



leaders manipulating legal requirements to deny redress for injuries. For Black Angelenos, the lived experiences of interacting with various facets of the region's legal system continues to be plagued by injustice and, in many cases, deadly.

### ***The City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County***

The legal system that directly impacts community members and residents of the City of Los Angeles is composed of three entities: the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. The former has been given significant power in the system, as a legal mandate has charged Los Angeles County's prosecutorial agency with deciding which alleged offenders to prosecute. It works in concert with local police departments to collect evidence and bring charges, "that they believe they can prove beyond a reasonable doubt."<sup>9</sup> A county's district attorney, commonly referred to as a D.A., ultimately decides which charges to bring to court and makes recommendations for punishments. The LAPD is the municipal law enforcement agency of the City of Los

Angeles. The Los Angeles City Attorney's Office is mandated to promote public safety by "pursuing justice and equity in the City's criminal justice system." It also provides consultation to protect the City's interests and residents from unfair and unlawful practices.<sup>10</sup> Since the founding of Los Angeles, each of these arms of the area's legal system has taken a range of unjust actions against Black residents.

### ***Long Histories of Police Brutality Against Black Residents—and Corruption***

Police brutality everywhere is not a case of "victims" or minority communities alleging crimes perpetrated by the police, but unrestrained, often well-documented extrajudicial assaults against those most vulnerable; Los Angeles has unfortunately provided exemplary cases of such abuse. On March 3, 1991, 25-year-old African American motorist Rodney Glen King became the center of one of the most notorious cases of police brutality in America. King was savagely beaten by four LAPD officers after being pulled over for excessive speeding on the 210 Freeway. A civilian's recording from a nearby balcony showed that as King was repeatedly kicked

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9 Kaiser-Nyman, C. (2020). *(In)Justice in LA: An Analysis of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office & Recommendations for Justice Reform*. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Northern California; ACLU of Southern California, 6.

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10 Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. (n.d.). *About*. <https://cityattorney.lacity.gov/about>

and beaten with batons, at least a dozen additional LAPD officers stood by, refusing to intervene while King sustained gruesome injuries, including skull fractures, as well as broken bones and teeth.<sup>11</sup> As a response to the beating of Rodney King in 1991, police chiefs from 10 major cities across the nation convened and declared that, “the problem of excessive force in American policing is real.”<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, all four officers charged with excessive force in the Rodney King case were acquitted by a majority-White jury in 1992.<sup>13</sup> This decision was emblematic of how aggressive LAPD officers were able to circumvent legal repercussions before and after Rodney King, and sparked the largest anti-police brutality protests since the Watts Rebellion in 1965.<sup>14</sup> Los Angeles’ refusal to provide justice for King or denounce the LAPD’s pattern of abuse, even with conclusive video evidence, has contributed to an American amnesia when it comes to remembering the long history of police brutality perpetrated

against minorities, and specifically African American communities.

The LAPD has a long history of corruption, notwithstanding its long and sordid history of police brutality against the Black community, which dates back to the late 19th century.

<sup>15</sup>Allegations that White and Chinese gambling houses were bribing sworn police officers and the chief of police Thomas J. Cuddy, were common knowledge, as they had been well chronicled by the *Los Angeles Times*.

<sup>16</sup>Although there were concerted efforts to root out corruption within the LAPD, racial abuse persisted — and was generally tolerated — at levels almost unseen in other major metropolitan cities.

Postwar Los Angeles saw the rise of William H. Parker, who became Chief of Police in 1950. It has been widely accepted by Parker’s supporters that upon his promotion to chief he set out to professionalize the LAPD and rid the department of corruption.<sup>17</sup> However, his 16-year tenure from 1950 to 1966 was rife with allegations and demonstrable evidence

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11 Krbechek, A. S. & Grisby Bates, K. (2017, April 26). When LA Erupted In Anger: A Look Back At The Rodney King Riots. *National Public Radio*. <https://www.npr.org/2017/04/26/524744989/when-la-erupted-in-anger-a-look-back-at-the-rodney-king-riots>

12 The Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department. (1991). *Report of the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department*, i.

13 Krbechek and Grisby, When LA Erupted...

14 Miller, J. (2022, April 22). ‘Like a stick of dynamite’: USC scholars reflect on legacy of 1992 L.A. uprising and police beating of Rodney King. *USC Today*. <https://today.usc.edu/like-a-stick-of-dynamite-usc-scholars-reflect-on-legacy-of-1992-la-uprising-and-police-beating-of-rodney-king>

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15 Isaac, R. M. & Norton, D. A. (2011). *Just the Facts Ma’am: A Case Study of the Reversal of Corruption in the Los Angeles Police Department*. Florida State University. 14.

16 The Chief of Police Officially Condemned. (1888, August 28). *Los Angeles Times*.

17 Shaw, D. (1992, May 25). Chief Parker Molded LAPD Image—Then Came the ‘60s: Police: Press treated officers as heroes until social upheaval prompted skepticism and confrontation. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-05-25-mn-236-story.html>

of racial abuse by his office toward African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. Parker was able to wield unprecedented influence over the Mayor's Office, City Council, Board of Police Commissioners, and business and entertainment leaders, even though allegations of abuse were well documented. Only the Watts Rebellion in 1965 caused City leaders to begin to rethink Parker's tactics and abuse of power.<sup>18</sup>

In 1963, Hugh R. Manes, a veteran civil rights attorney, chronicled the depth of injustices which Black Angelenos suffered at the hands of the police during Parker's reign. Manes investigation published as *A Report on Law Enforcement and the Negro Citizen in Los Angeles* (1963)<sup>19</sup>, if given full weight, indicates that the LAPD, the County's District Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office, and Police Commission waged a deadly war against Black residents of the City. Despite the notorious tactics used by the LAPD to police minority communities, which Parker sanctioned, City Council generally remained his staunch supporter and praised him for

running one of the best departments in the world. Councilmembers repeatedly initiated resolutions that expressed confidence in Parker's abilities in running an, "outstanding metropolitan police," department that provided, "continuing service to the community," and praised his officers as having, "distinguished themselves by their integrity, professional excellence and unswerving devotion to duty."<sup>20</sup> In other words, the City Council indirectly endorsed the abuse of African American residents.

The cases Manes presents showcase a clear pattern of racial abuse by legal authorities that belies this praise for the LAPD. Innocent Black residents were routinely beaten for doing nothing other than being within arm's reach of the LAPD. 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 District and City Attorneys' Offices played active roles in depriving innocent Black people of their rights. Manes also documented abuses by the LAPD, the District Attorney's Office, and the County of Los Angeles Medical Examiner

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18 Kramer, A. S. (2007). *William H. Parker and the Thin Blue Line: Politics, Public Relations and Policing in Postwar Los Angeles*. [Doctoral Dissertation]. American University], iii.

19 Manes, H. (1963). *A Report on Law Enforcement and the Negro Citizen in Los Angeles*. University of California, Los Angeles. Library of Special Collections.

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20 Kramer, William H. Parker..., 17.

(formerly known as the Los Angeles Coroner's Jury). Interactions with Black residents often displayed callousness and vindictiveness, vicious propensities of police officers, harassment of innocents, and the, "arbitrary tyranny of the state statute which places the citizen at the absolute mercy of overzealous police officers."<sup>21</sup> Though Manes' report was shocking, the details of even just two key instances of such violence capture how the lives of Black citizens have been affected over the last two centuries by interactions with the police, that is, the everyday, street-level representatives of the legal system of Los Angeles.

As a precursor to the War on Drugs, the prohibition era was also used as pretext to over-police Black communities, too often resulting in the harassment and death of innocent people, as in the case of Sam Faulkner. On the night of Sunday, April 24, 1927, in the segregated Central Avenue district between Compton and Hooper avenues, 20-year-old Sam Faulkner was fatally shot by two LAPD officers in his sister's home during a baseless raid for illegal alcohol. Sam was awoken by the police clamor and leapt out of bed in his parent's home next door to check on his sister; he was then shot in the head by Officer

Bruce Sheffield in front of his parents who were following behind. Mrs. Faulkner held her son's bloody and lifeless body while Mr. John Faulkner, a formerly enslaved person, cried out, "They killed our boy!" Sheffield, a known terror in the Black community, responsible for the arrest of a full 10% of LA's Black population since 1925, threatened Mrs. Faulkner to move away from her son's body or else he would shoot her, too. Despite multiple witness accounts, Officer Sheffield was exonerated for the death of Sam Faulkner and eventually promoted to Lieutenant Sergeant. The fact that both officers who raided the Faulkner home that night happened to be Black themselves which was the only fulfilled demand made by protestors following the Faulkner trial.<sup>22</sup>

Another example of the routine police brutality suffered at the hands of the LAPD is the case of Greville Mercurius, an African American resident who emigrated from what was known then as British Guiana (Guyana). Mercurius, who was married and the father of two children, worked regularly in a local factory and was described as, "tall, soft spoken, handsome, with a dignified bearing."<sup>23</sup>

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22 Chalton, C. (2019, February 3). Ending Racism Won't End Police Corruption. *Mises Institute*. <https://mises.org/mises-wire/ending-racism-wont-end-police-corruption>.

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

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21 Manes, Report on Law Enforcement..., 7–8.



On November 29, 1959, Mercurius was parked in front of his apartment when an LAPD patrol car drove by, stopped, and returned. An officer approached Mercurius and asked him for vehicle identification, which he provided. The officer “rejected” the document and proceeded to ask for his driver’s license. When Mercurius reached for his wallet, the officer reached into the automobile, grabbed his arm, dragged him out of the car, and applied a chokehold to subdue him. The officer punched Mercurius in the stomach and “allegedly” called him a “smart [N—].” Mercurius was detained and interrogated for 45 minutes. Later, officers claimed that he fit the description of a burglar-rapist who had been committing crimes in the area and that he had been uncooperative, making force necessary.

The vicious propensities that Manes described are still on display today, some 60 years later. On January 2, 2023, Takar Smith, an African American resident of Los Angeles, was having what appeared to be a schizophrenic episode. His wife, Sassie Smith, with few options for help available, walked to a nearby LAPD station for assistance. Six officers showed up at her apartment, and within 15 minutes two of them shot and killed Takar. He had been cornered in the kitchen and was wielding a knife. He was handcuffed and pronounced

dead at the scene. Takar had been diagnosed with mental health issues previously, but he failed to consistently take his medication, which is not uncommon. However, nonviolent methods of assisting him were not deployed. As a result, a young man suffering from a mental health crisis lost his life when the LAPD got involved.<sup>24</sup> The cases of Greville Mercurius and Takar Smith are only two of a host of similar incidents, but they point to both the ongoing legacy and systematic nature of police violence against Black residents of Los Angeles.

African American residents have also endured unreasonable searches and seizures of property, another way the LAPD has failed to safeguard the constitutional rights of those it is sworn to protect. For example, on March 14, 1962, vice squad officers walked into Glen’s Café on Western Avenue, a well-known Black-owned restaurant, without warrants and searched both customers and employees. The owner, Glen Franklin, was taken to a back room and forced to remove his clothing. Officers forced one customer to take them to his automobile, which they searched, “for

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24 CPE statement on the LAPD killings of Takar Smith, Oscar Leon Sanchez and Keenan Anderson, Center for Policing Equity. (2023, January 13). *Center for Policing Equity*. <https://www.policingequity.org/newsroom/official-statements/cpe-statement-on-the-lapd-killings-of-takar-smith-oscar-leon-sanchez-and-keen-an-anderson>.

weapons.” According to testimony by the officers, at the time it was LAPD policy not to obtain search warrants. Furthermore, the County’s District Attorney had told the LAPD that there was no need to apply for such authorization.<sup>25</sup> This episode, which, again, is just one of many similar documented conflicts with police, shows how different branches of the legal system have effectively collaborated to deprive Black Angelenos of basic civil rights.

### ***A Lack of Police Accountability from the County District Attorney and City Attorney***

Neglecting to obtain search warrants was not the only way in which the LAPD historically violated the rights of Los Angeles residents, particularly African Americans. In 1960, Mayor Norris Paulson stated that 250 officers who had been separated in lieu of disciplinary action had cost the City \$765,000 (\$7,880,700 in today’s money). Paulson admitted the LAPD was out of control, with 7,586 cases including excessive force where penalties had been given, unwarranted actions, conduct unbecoming of an officer, insubordination, use of intoxicants, neglect of duty, sex and less important debts, and traffic accidents. In terms of complaints, Paulson 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.<sup>26</sup>

The Manes report adds that the District and City Attorneys were “unrelenting” in their prosecution of citizens, with a specific emphasis on “minority citizens,” especially in initiating a second prosecution when the first was unsuccessful. In response, he asked where the “equally vigorous enforcement of the laws protecting the citizen from the police,” was. Since there was no complaint review board at the time, citizens who filed complaints against officers with the Internal Affairs Division of the LAPD risked prosecution for filing false complaints. The Los Angeles County Superior Court held that this arrangement amounted to an unconstitutional deprivation of the right to seek redress of grievances.<sup>27</sup>

Ever since the Watts Rebellion in 1965, the legal system, which includes statewide policing of Black residents, has been under intense scrutiny for its attitudes toward and injustices perpetrated against African Americans in California, particularly in Los Angeles. Recent data paints a stark picture of the failures of the District Attorney’s Office to hold police accountable. Black residents make

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 43.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 44, 47.

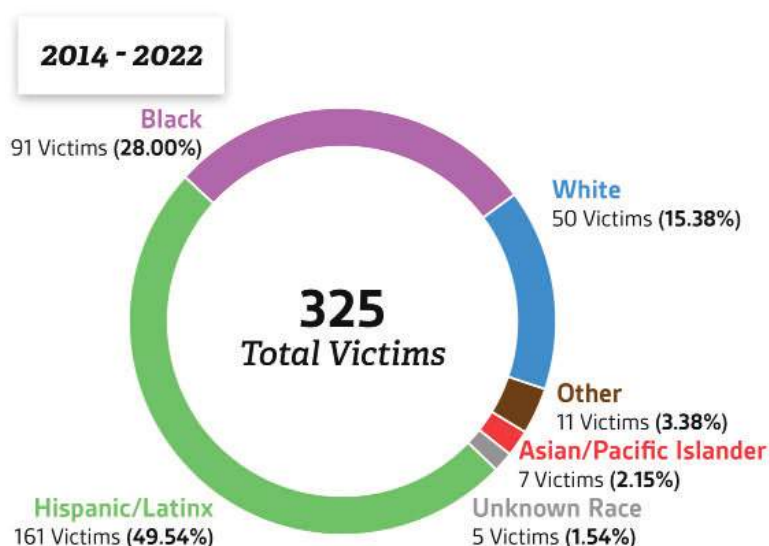
<sup>25</sup> Manes, *Report on Law Enforcement...*, 32–37, 42.

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 data shows that out of 325 officer-involved shooting victims in the City of Los Angeles, 28% were Black. (See Figure 2.) This could lead some people to believe that Black residents are more prone to criminality than other racial or ethnic groups. However, this theory has largely been discredited and does not account for the number of officer-involved shootings (252 shootings from 2012 to 2020) in which the District Attorney declined to prosecute, even when the Chief of Police recommended criminal proceedings.<sup>28</sup>

An investigation carried out 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. LAPD leadership was noted as culpable not only for failing to

**Figure 2.** Victims of LAPD Officer-Involved Shootings from 2014-2022 by Race.

Sources: Los Angeles Police Department. (2018). *Use of Force Year-End Review Report - 2018*.; Los Angeles Police Department. (2022). *Use of Force Year-End Review Report – 2022*.



deal with the problem officers, but in some cases it, “often rewarded them with positive evaluations and promotions.”<sup>29</sup> The level of misconduct, corruption, and police brutality was so widespread that in 2001 the U.S. Department of Justice entered into a consent decree with the LAPD to monitor what were effectively systematic — and systemic — civil rights violations perpetrated on residents of Los Angeles, particularly African Americans.

### ***Police Killings and Broken Relationships with Black Communities***

No one case can sum up the LAPD's significant role in the killings of African Americans, but there are several incidents that typify how

<sup>28</sup> Kaiser-Nyman, (In)Justice in LA..., 4; Staples, R. (1975). White Racism, Black Crime, and American Justice: An Application of the Colonial Model to Explain Crime and Race. *Phylon* 36(1), 14.

<sup>29</sup> The Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department. Report of the Independent Commission..., iii, iv.

and why the LAPD lost the confidence of its Black residents and influenced a generation of activists within the African American community. On January 3, 1979, Eula Mae Love, a 39-year-old African American widow, was shot and killed by two LAPD officers. Her husband William, who earned \$15,000 annually (\$154,118 in today's money), died from sickle cell anemia a few months before the incident. Love, the mother of three young daughters, had struggled to live on \$680 a month in Social Security income. She was clearly agitated when the Southern California Gas Company arrived to shut off her service, and she accosted a utility worker, who reported the incident to his supervisor. Love went to cash a check to pay her overdue bill, but when she returned, a new set of gas company workers had arrived and were waiting for the police. When LAPD officers turned up, she threatened them with a boning knife. In response, the officers fired 12 shots at point blank range; seven shots hit Love, with one killing her. An independent autopsy noted that one of the shots may have been fired when she was already on the ground. The District Attorney refused to file charges against the two officers, effectively exonerating them for the shooting, which had been called a "crime against humanity." The Police Commission

conducted its own review of the LAPD's finding that the officers had complied in, "all respects with Department policies concerning use of firearms and deadly force," ultimately concluding the officers did, in fact, violate those policies and that they, "made serious errors in judgment."<sup>30</sup>

The shooting of Eula Love is indicative of decades of police brutality within the African American community. Recent data analyzed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California provides veracity to this statement, including conclusive evidence that the LAPD targets African Americans at a higher rate than any other racial or ethnic group in the City. From July 2003 to June 2004, African Americans (and Latinos) were, "over-stopped, over-frisked, over-searched and over-arrested." During this period, African Americans were more likely to be stopped than White residents: For every 10,000 Black residents, there were 4,500 stops, as compared to only 1,750 stops for every 10,000 White residents. Findings from just two Los Angeles police divisions (Central and Hollywood) noted,

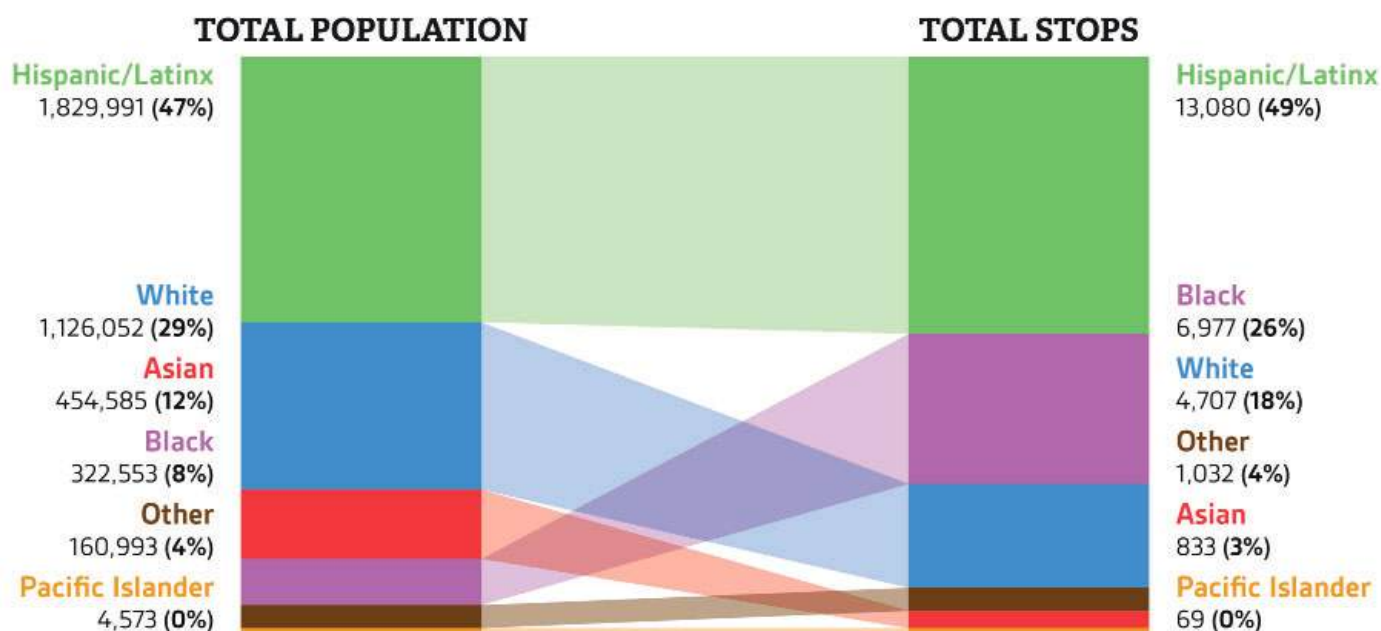
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30 King, J. (2017, April 26). Maxine Waters' battle against powerful white men began when Eula Love was murdered in 1979. *MIC*. <https://www.mic.com/articles/174565/maxine-waters-battle-against-powerful-white-men-began-when-eula-love-was-killed-in-1979>; Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners. (1980). Concerning the Shooting of Eula Love. *Crime and Social Justice*, 2–9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29766096>



**Figure 3.** LAPD stops by race for 2018-2023.

Source: City of Los Angeles. Los Angeles Open Data Portal. <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/LAPD-RIPA-AB-953-STOP-Person-Detail-from-7-1-2018-/bwdf-y5fe/explore>



"there were more stops of African Americans in one year than there were African American residents, meaning that the average number of stops per resident was greater than one."<sup>31</sup> The latest publicly available data suggests that Black Angelenos continue to be stopped at disproportionate rates: For the 2018-2023 period, Black people comprised 26% of all police stops despite representing only 8% of the city's total population. In contrast, White people comprise 18% of all stops despite making up 29% of the total population. (See Figure 3.)<sup>32</sup>

31 Townsend, W. K. & Borowsky, J. (2008). *A Study of Racially Disparate Outcomes in the Los Angeles Police Department*. American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, i, 5. <https://www.aclusocal.org/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/11837125-LAPD-Racial-Profilng-Report-ACLU.pdf>

32 The Los Angeles Police Department. (n.d.). *RIPA (AB 953) STOP Person Detail from 7/1/2018 to Present*. City of Los Angeles. <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/LAPD-RIPA-AB-953-STOP-Person-Detail-from-7-1-2018-/bwdf-y5fe>.

The disparities in stop rates do not correlate to greater crime rates in Black neighborhoods. Instead, they are the result of over-policing. Further, there is a higher likelihood that Black citizens will be arrested when stopped, putting them at a higher risk for abuse by police. This leads to additional complications, such as dealing with an unjust criminal justice system, loss of work time and income due to citations, damage to psyche, and the distinct possibility of physical harm.

Police killings of African Americans in Los Angeles have garnered national and, at times, international headlines. The beating of motorist Rodney King on March 3, 1991, was the most well-known assault by the LAPD to

**Table 1.** Number of police stops per 10,000 residents by race, July 2003-June 2004.

Source: William K. Townsend and Jonathon Borowsky. Permission granted.

**942 Reporting Districts Containing 3,456,086 Los Angelenos**

|                      | <b>White or Other</b> | <b>Black</b> | <b>Hispanic</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 01 - Central         | 4,992                 | 21,447       | 10,178          |
| 02 - Rampart         | 1,623                 | 7,503        | 1,430           |
| 03 - Southwest       | 1,132                 | 3,327        | 1,254           |
| 04 - Hollenbeck      | 975                   | 1,509        | 1,409           |
| 05 - Harbor          | 1,402                 | 3,724        | 1,862           |
| 06 - Hollywood       | 2,932                 | 13,312       | 2,876           |
| 07 - Wilshire        | 2,103                 | 4,792        | 2,003           |
| 08 - West LA         | 1,827                 | 6,755        | 3,294           |
| 09 - Van Nuys        | 1,943                 | 4,220        | 1,981           |
| 10 - West Valley     | 1,187                 | 3,260        | 1,729           |
| 11 - Northeast       | 1,121                 | 3,912        | 1,346           |
| 12 - 77th Street     | 1,954                 | 3,715        | 1,344           |
| 13 - Newton Street   | 4,863                 | 5,773        | 1,604           |
| 14 - Pacific         | 2,469                 | 6,832        | 2,940           |
| 15 - North Hollywood | 1,301                 | 2,641        | 1,305           |
| 16 - Foothill        | 1,568                 | 3,457        | 1,701           |
| 17 - Devonshire      | 1,207                 | 3,056        | 2,169           |
| 18 - Southeast       | 1,254                 | 3,748        | 1,110           |
| <b>Average</b>       | <b>1,750</b>          | <b>4,569</b> | <b>1,773</b>    |

rivet the nation and the world. Four officers were tried on charges of excessive force, three were acquitted, and a jury failed to reach a verdict on the fourth. The 1992 Los Angeles Uprising was a direct result of those legal outcomes.

A slate of other killings by police did not prompt national or international outrage, but they are shocking nonetheless, in part

because they expose how often Black lives are unjustly taken by representatives of the Los Angeles legal system. Some of the higher profile situations include:

- In 1966, 25 year-old Leonard Deadwyler sped through several red lights while rushing his pregnant wife to the nearest hospital, 20 miles away, with a White handkerchief tied to the car's antenna. According to Deadwyler's wife Barbara, Leonard mistook the trailing police car as a police escort before he was pulled over and subsequently shot and killed at

60th Street and Avalon by Officer Jerold Bova. LAPD's hostility and malicious instincts towards Black people escalated a traffic violation to an execution in broad daylight, which was ruled an, "accidental, excusable homicide," by a majority White jury.<sup>33</sup>

- In 1968, William Anthony Leonard, a 19 year-old African American teenager, was killed by LAPD officer Larry N. Fultz. Leonard was babysitting for Augustus and Barbara Mallard when police were called to their home for a domestic disturbance. Leonard was opening a window in a bathroom when Lutz shot and killed him. Leonard had his hands raised and was facing away from the window. In 1968, Leonard's parents filed a lawsuit for \$1 million. The City Council initially denied the payment of funds, and it wasn't until four years later that it voted to pay just \$25,000 for Leonard's life.
- In 1991, Steve Clemons was fatally shot in the back by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Michael Staley in Willowbrook Park while running away because he was carrying a bag containing \$10 worth of marijuana. Eyewitnesses stated that Clemons tried to surrender. The officer who killed Clemons, Douglas Iversen, had a history of misconduct with three suspensions. The LASD ruled that the shooting was not justified.
- In 1992, John L. Daniels Jr. was shot and killed by an LAPD motorcycle officer for no other reason except that he attempted to drive his truck away from officers who had consistently harassed him for the actions of his father, who was also fatally shot by police years earlier.
- In 1993, famed saxophonist Don Myrick, 53, who was section leader of the Phenix Horns who played for Earth, Wind & Fire, was shot by LAPD officers who entered his home and mistook a lighter for a

weapon.

Again, these are only a handful of police killings of Black Angelenos, but they constitute essential examples in the collective body of evidence showing how Black lives have been under threat in the City from agents of the very legal system charged with serving and protecting them. A more exhaustive list is available in Appendix A at the end of this chapter.

### ***The District Attorney and Discriminatory Exclusion of Black Jurors***

Jury service has been described as, "one of the most important civic duties you can perform," so much so that the right to trial by jury is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of California. The Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to a trial by an impartial jury, which means it must represent a cross section of the community.<sup>34</sup> Since the creation of the nation's court systems, Black Americans have been subjected to a jury system that routinely eliminates them from service. In 1879, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Strauder v. West Virginia* that restricting jury service to only White people was unconstitutional.

33 Johnson, J. & Shuster, B. (1996, March 16). Shootings Recall Dangers of Traffic Stops. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1996-03-16-mn-47676-story.html>

34 Martz, C. (2021). *Bill of Rights in Action A Jury of Your Peers*. Constitutional Rights Foundation 36 (4). <https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/a-jury-of-your-peers.pdf>

The mere fact that this was an issue before the High Court reveals that all-White juries were a consistent pattern across the country at the time. All-White juries had the effect of denying African Americans the opportunity to be heard by a jury of their peers and provided them, particularly in the South, with fewer remedies for unbiased redress before the law. Despite the fact that restricting juries by race was illegal, local jurisdictions remained steadfast in their attempts to bar Black people from serving. Methods such as tampered jury lists, unintelligible jury requirements, and intimidation were all used after 1879. Even after *Norris v. Alabama* in 1935, in which one of the Scottsboro Boys was convicted twice by all-White juries, legal actors refused to comply with the law.<sup>35</sup> In California, steps were taken at both the state and federal levels to curb rampant abuse by prosecutors in striking African Americans from jury service. Decisions by the Supreme Court of California in 1978 in *People v. Wheeler* and the U.S. Supreme Court in 1986 in *Batson v. Kentucky* found that striking jurors solely based on their race violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has played a significant role in

"disproportionately" eliminating African Americans from juries through peremptory challenges. Recent in-depth studies that have examined the ways in which the County's district attorneys have used such challenges reveal an overwhelming amount of evidence concluding that implicit racial biases, "play a significant role in prosecutors' peremptory challenges." In some cases, it is hard to deny that explicit biases also play a significant part in eliminating Black jurors as well. The system is designed so that the objecting party or defendant must prove intentional discrimination and that the judge must be able to recognize the intent. As such, the system is described as a, "woefully inadequate tool to end racial discrimination in jury selection."<sup>36</sup> Yet legal actors in California and Los Angeles favor the status quo.

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35 Semel et al., *Whitewashing the Jury Box*..., 3.

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36 *ibid.*, iv, v.



The following are representative examples of the range of specious reasons the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has used to remove Black jurors:

- "his dreadlocks touched the floor, which made him incompatible with a, 'cohesive group of persons of the same, kind of fall into societal norms.'"<sup>37</sup>
- "both did not make eye contact with her, and one was sleeping out in the hallway during break."<sup>38</sup>
- "they all had family members who were convicted of a crime or were in prison."<sup>39</sup>
- "detained for being in the wrong part of town while Black."<sup>40</sup>
- "She was wearing a very short skirt, 12-inch earrings, and had one of these sandals that were blinged out with ... at least 100 cubic zirconia on each one."<sup>41</sup>
- She had "extraordinarily long pink fingernails and braided hair and therefore was likely fairly liberal."<sup>42</sup>
- The juror may have struggled, "to determine whether [the defendant] is guilty or not."<sup>43</sup>
- The juror expressed a, "lack of faith in law enforcement."<sup>44</sup>

- She felt that he just wasn't that bright.<sup>45</sup>
- The juror was previously, "robbed of jewelry at gunpoint yet had failed to report the crime to the police."<sup>46</sup>

These reasons, many of which are rooted in stereotypes or, at the very least, questionable assumptions, demonstrate how both implicit and explicit beliefs and attitudes about Black Americans manifest in one of the few legal mechanisms in which citizens can participate directly. They also stand as evidence of how notions about race, particularly anti-Blackness, persist as a dynamic in the jury selection process in Los Angeles, despite landmark decisions that seek to prohibit such lines of reasoning.

### ***The Role and Culpability of the Mayor's Office and the City Council***

Historically, the Los Angeles mayor's position has been described as "weak" in relation to the City Council's. Nevertheless, the Mayor's Office has played a crucial role in defending the behavior of the LAPD. One of the most vocal opponents of the department's critics was Mayor Sam Yorty, who on many occasions claimed, "The words police brutality are the invention of the Communists ... People who want to break down law enforcement, and

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37 People v. Harris, No. B223174, WL 925723, at \*8 (Cal. Ct. 2011).

38 People v. Russell, No. B258669, WL 588031, at \*3 (Cal. Ct. 2017).

39 People v. Sullivan, No. B216780, WL 1549702, at \*3–6 (Cal. Ct. 2011).

40 People v. Brooks, No. B283558, WL 3153552, at \*4 (Cal. Ct. 2018).

41 People v. Crosby, No. B251779, WL 340803, at \*16 (Cal. Ct. 2015).

42 Davis, WL 3960036, at \*4 (2016).

43 People v. Austin, No. B266558, WL 2011470, at \*9 (Cal. Ct. 2018).

44 People v. Miller, No. B276572, WL 1465807, at \*3 (Cal. Ct. 2018).

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45 People v. Jones, No. B197793, WL 4060941, at \*5 (Cal. Ct. 2008).

46 Semel et al., *Whitewashing the Jury Box*..., 18.

the words are parroted by people who have been fooled by Communists. It is a very clear tactic of the Communists."<sup>47</sup> This was a constant theme of Yorty's, who was in office from 1961 to 1973. His staunch defense of the LAPD echoed the sentiments of most Los Angeles residents, who supported the department's heavy-handed tactics against minority communities. When claims of police brutality were brought forth, Yorty attributed these claims to civil rights groups, such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) or the militant Black Muslim movement. As he once stated, "These groups always holler brutality. We were sure somebody would make charges. I don't think there was any brutality but I'm having a complete investigation."<sup>48</sup> When Governor Pat Brown appointed the Reverend James E. Jones to a commission investigating the Watts Rebellion in 1965, Yorty attacked the appointment by claiming, "[Jones] was among the first to blame the police for the riots." He also stated, "I just want the people to know, that [Brown] has appointed one person to the board who will be given a forum to attack the police department and all these claims of police brutality and unfounded charges against police help inflame the people

and incite them when they don't know the true facts."<sup>49</sup> Although Yorty was perhaps the most vocal of Los Angeles mayors to lean on anti-Black rhetoric, many others have relied on similar thinking to defend the City's police force across the 20th century.

While mayors of Los Angeles have tended toward rhetorical attacks in ways that have denied the concerns of Black residents and residents themselves, the City Council has, at times, marshaled the City's very legal structures to deny redress for Black Angelenos harmed by the LAPD. The Council operated under the codes and rules of the City Charter, one of which required them to hear grievances from the public.<sup>50</sup> This was a prerequisite before a lawsuit could be filed against the LAPD. However, the Council's position was to extend the filing claims to one year and to force lawsuits against police officers as individuals rather than the department. In the process, the City would hear testimony and attempt to settle cases, if meritorious, before they went to trial, saving time and money. One result, however, was that this allowed the County's District Attorney, who often opposed, "compromise and payment of such claims,"

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47 Manes, Report on Law Enforcement..., 14; Editorial. (1960, July 19). *Los Angeles Times*.

48 Mayor Shrugs Off Brutality Claims. (1962, May 3). *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 2.

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49 Riot Prober Under Fire From Yorty. (1965, August 21). *The Spokesman-Review* 1.

50 The now archived Los Angeles City Charter, Section 376 allowed for grievances to be heard by the public.

to delay and prevent cases from promptly reaching the courts. City Council, when approached for a hearing and investigation, replied with, “polite disinterest.”<sup>51</sup> The report by Hugh Manes documents these convoluted legal machinations in the early 1960s, but similar processes at the City level persist in the contemporary moment.

Recent allegations concerning racism in the County District Attorney’s Office are consistent with those portrayed here. The *Los Angeles Times* has reported on allegations made by attorneys within the office about rampant racism that went ignored, even when credible evidence of misconduct had been reported. The allegations include, among others, “racial discrimination and failing to hold police accountable for misconduct.” Accusations range from mocking Black Lives Matter protestors to an overzealous office that prosecuted innocent suspects.<sup>52</sup> Adewale Oduye, a former prosecutor in the office, wrote a series of articles highlighting the racism he witnessed while working there. He introduced his series by declaring:

*As a line prosecutor, I’m required to follow the decisions that my supervisors*

*make about people who are charged with crimes. Most of the time, my supervisors have been White, and the people charged have been Black and Brown. While some of those decisions have been right, too many of them have been wrong—dead wrong. I’m going to talk about some of the wrong ones.*<sup>53</sup>

Oduye may have only been one lawyer among many working for the District Attorney’s Office, but his reports show a pattern that stretches across the organization, as well as across time. In addition to its longstanding practice of backing the LAPD in cases of police brutality, the office has a longstanding history of unjustly prosecuting Black Angelenos.

### ***The Costs of Police Violence***

Assigning a monetary cost to the effects an unjust legal system has on the African American community is not without difficulty. However, there are deep social costs to over-policing, police brutality, and overly aggressive prosecutions of African American communities. These “social costs of policing” are often described as, “people suffering physical and behavioral health problems; losing educational opportunities, jobs, housing, and transportation; and withdrawing from civic

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51 Manes, Report on Law Enforcement..., 56–57.

52 James Queally, J. (2021, August 26). How a Black prosecutor called out racism in the D.A.’s office. *Los Angeles Times*.

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53 *ibid.*

engagement.” As one group researching such damages notes, “even being arrested but not convicted and not having any continuing legal system involvement can cause significant harm.”<sup>54</sup>

Studies have revealed that police killings contributed to 55 million additional poor mental health days per year among Black American adults in the United States.<sup>55</sup> The fact that Los Angeles has been a severe concentration point for the shooting deaths of unarmed African Americans for decades suggests an accumulation of negative psychological and physiological concerns for Black people in the City. In short, a study is needed to determine the direct amount of “painful days” that Black Angelenos experience each year.

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, and then a second time through City and County taxes paid by local governments in lawsuits. *The Washington Post* noted in its review of more than 7,600 officers from Portland,

Milwaukee, and Baltimore that misconduct had led to nearly 40,000 payments totaling more than \$3.2 billion in spent claims. More locally, misconduct by LAPD officers resulted in payments of \$215 million between 2010 and 2020.<sup>56</sup> Tax revenues that could finance teachers’ salaries in lower-income neighborhoods, afterschool programs, tutors, or new schools are instead diverted to pay for police violence.

### ***Unfair Media Coverage and Legislative Outcomes***

The harm the media has inflicted on the African American community is also difficult to quantify, but lived experience reveals irreparable damage to the community’s psychology. Studies show that the media can and does influence voters’ ideas about crime. Media studies conclude that crime is a leading topic of television and radio news, as well as print and online media, hence the quote, “if it bleeds, it leads.” In short, crime is the most reported news topic in American media. Although anxiety and fears about crime are attributable to many factors, print media coverage can, at least in small measure, increase feelings of fear about crime among its

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54 Stagoff-Belfort, A. et al. (2022). The Social Cost of Policing. Vera Institute of Justice, 1. <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/the-social-costs-of-policing.pdf>  
55 *ibid*.

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56 Alexander, K. L. et al. (2022, March 9). The hidden billion-dollar cost of repeated police misconduct. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/police-misconduct-repeated-settlements/>.



readers. Or, in some cases in which the media portrayed Black men as bands of “marauders,” laws that disproportionately impacted Black communities, such as California Assembly Bill 971 (otherwise known as “Three Strikes and You’re Out”) gained significant traction with the wider public.<sup>57</sup> At the end of August 1994, just six months after Governor Pete Wilson signed the measure into law, more than 7,400 second- and third-strike cases were filed statewide. By the end of November 1994, more than 5,000 second- and third-strike laws were filed.<sup>58</sup>

The media indirectly affects legislation aimed at helping poor families, often families of low-income minorities. For example, the media’s failure to report or accurately render issues affecting under-resourced and marginalized groups may render these communities, and their issues, invisible and / or unimportant to the White community. One example of this is how the rules regarding the presence of a man in a household receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) may have been written with intent to protect White middle class tax-paying families rather than

the, “invisible Black child whom the program is supposed to help.”<sup>59</sup>

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57 Callanan, V. J. (2004). *Feeding the Fear of Crime: Crime-related Media and Support for Three Strikes*. LFB Scholarly Publishing, 141.

58 Legislative Analyst’s Office. (1995). *The Three Strikes and You’re Out Law*. [https://lao.ca.gov/analysis\\_1995/3strikes.html](https://lao.ca.gov/analysis_1995/3strikes.html).

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59 Johnson, P. B. et al. (1971). Black Invisibility, the Press, and the Los Angeles Riot. *American Journal of Sociology*, 76(4). 701.

## Summary of Findings

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 is no shortage of studies that have illustrated the long history of police brutality by the LAPD, we bring into focus the over-policing by 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 a 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 1959 illustrate systemic brutality. Recent cases, such as Takar Smith's 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's arrests disproportionately target Black Angelenos compared to their percentage of the city's population.
- The LAPD has violated the rights of Black Los Angeles residents, resulting in complaints, disciplinary actions, and legal cases. In terms of complaints, L.A. 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.
- The U.S. Department of Justice entered into a court-approved agreement with the LAPD due to the latter's history of 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 peremptory challenges to remove Black people from serving on jury trials. Certain felony convictions also prevent residents from serving on juries.
- City officials in 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.

## Appendix A

Sample list of unarmed shootings of African Americans in Los Angeles. Includes anecdotes from both the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

| Date      | Name              | Description  | Source(s)   |
|-----------|-------------------|--|---|
| 5/7/1966  | Leonard Deadwyler | Deadwyler was speeding as he drove to the hospital with his wife, who was in labor. A LAPD officer shot Deadwyler, claiming the vehicle had lurched forward and caused his service revolver to discharge. A coroner's jury later ruled the shooting an accidental homicide.  | New York Times:<br><a href="https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/97/05/18/reviews/pynchon-watts.html">https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/97/05/18/reviews/pynchon-watts.html</a>  |
| 3/9/1968  | William Leonard   | Police responded to reports of a disturbance. Leonard, who babysat for the family of the house, was standing with his arms raised facing away from the window when he was shot. LAPD Officer Larry N. Fultz was later exonerated by a police policy board. The victim's parents received a settlement from the City. | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://www.proquest.com/docview/157044169/81A4214C6BFE46A0PQ/6?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers">https://www.proquest.com/docview/157044169/81A4214C6BFE46A0PQ/6?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers</a><br><br>Los Angeles Sentinel:<br><a href="https://www.proquest.com/docview/565074053/81A4214C6BFE46A0PQ/7?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers">https://www.proquest.com/docview/565074053/81A4214C6BFE46A0PQ/7?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers</a> |
| 6/20/1970 | Jerry Lee Amie    | Police responded to reports of a man with a gun and shot Amie. Police stated Amie reached towards his waistband and had a toy gun on his person, while family stated his hands were raised and the toy gun was planted closer to the scene.  | Los Angeles Sentinel:<br><a href="https://www.proquest.com/docview/564968123/CA6C0D42C5E441A6PQ/9?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers">https://www.proquest.com/docview/564968123/CA6C0D42C5E441A6PQ/9?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers</a>  |
| 9/2/1991  | Steve Clemons     | Clemons was shot in the back by LASD Deputy Michael Staley while fleeing in Los Angeles' Willowbrook Park. The coroner's report confirmed Clemons was shot in the back.  | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://www.proquest.com/docview/1638717395/A97BA64D85A14831PQ/?sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers">https://www.proquest.com/docview/1638717395/A97BA64D85A14831PQ/?sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers</a>   |

|            |                       |   |   |
|------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 5/1/1992   | Charles William Orebo | While driving home, Orebo cut off an off-duty LAPD officer commuting to work. The officer honked and as the officer pulled up next to Orebo at a stoplight, Orebo's passenger pointed a gun at the officer, who then shot and killed Orebo. Orebo himself was unarmed.  | Internet Archive:<br><a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20200727101102/">https://web.archive.org/web/20200727101102/</a><br><br>Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-05-24-mn-378-story.html">https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-05-24-mn-378-story.html</a> |
| 7/1/1992   | John L. Daniels Jr.   | LAPD officer Douglas Iversen and his partner spotted Daniels at a gas station driving his tow truck, which had been mistakenly released to him after being seized. When Daniels attempted to drive off, Iversen shot him. Iversen was charged with murder but was not convicted.  | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://www.proquest.com/docview/1839331315/44ECF1B5414E4016PQ/?sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers">https://www.proquest.com/docview/1839331315/44ECF1B5414E4016PQ/?sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers</a>   |
| 7/30/1993  | Don Myrick            | During a narcotics investigation, LAPD Officer Gary Barbaro shot musician Don Myrick after mistaking a butane lighter for a gun.  | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-08-15-we-24271-story.html">https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-08-15-we-24271-story.html</a>   |
| 10/28/2000 | Anthony Lee           | During a Halloween costume party, a LAPD officer shot actor Anthony Lee after mistaking his rubber gun for a real weapon.   | Spartanburg Herald Journal:<br><a href="https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=dLocAAAAIIBAJ&amp;pg=6865,6263846&amp;dq=anthony+dwain+lee&amp;hl=en">https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=dLocAAAAIIBAJ&amp;pg=6865,6263846&amp;dq=anthony+dwain+lee&amp;hl=en</a>  |
| 8/24/2003  | Deondre Brunston      | LASD deputies were called to Brunston's aunt's home after an altercation. Police surrounded Brunston on a nearby porch, where he said he would shoot a police dog but also stated he did not have a gun. When deputies unleashed a K-9 on Brunston, he threw a sandal at the dog, and deputies shot and killed him and the dog. The canine was airlifted to a hospital, while Brunston was left on the porch steps. | Knock LA: <a href="https://knock-la.com/life-under-the-gun-compton-lasd-shooting-data/">https://knock-la.com/life-under-the-gun-compton-lasd-shooting-data/</a>   |



|            |                     |  |   |
|------------|---------------------|--|---|
| 2/6/2005   | Devin Brown         | Brown died after being shot by LAPD police officer Steven Garcia after leading police on a high-speed chase. Although the Los Angeles Police Commission ruled that Garcia violated department rules, no charges were filed against Garcia. Brown's family received a \$1.3 million settlement in a wrongful death lawsuit filed against the City.            | Our Weekly Los Angeles:<br><a href="https://www.ourweekly.com/2009/01/31/devin-brown-remembered/">https://www.ourweekly.com/2009/01/31/devin-brown-remembered/</a>  |
| 1/10/2007  | Phillip Miller      | Police responded to reports of a disturbance during a party at a Masonic lodge and heard gunshots. A man who had been shot several times exited from the front, followed by Miller, who was holding his waistband. A police sergeant then shot Miller, later telling investigators he believed Miller was reaching for a weapon. No weapon was found on him. | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://www.proquest.com/docview/2214385405/7BA1B51A216A4F4EPQ/?sourcetype=Historical%20Newsapers">https://www.proquest.com/docview/2214385405/7BA1B51A216A4F4EPQ/?sourcetype=Historical%20Newsapers</a> |
| 1/4/2008   | Glen Boldware       | Boldware, who allegedly stole something from a lumber yard, was being followed by LAPD Officer Peter Mah in his unmarked car. Boldware became aware of this and stopped his vehicle. Boldware walked up to Mah's car allegedly carrying a lighter that looked like a small-caliber pistol. Mah then shot Boldware multiple times.                            | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/the-homicide-report-blog/story/2008-01-04/glen-boldware-47">https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/the-homicide-report-blog/story/2008-01-04/glen-boldware-47</a> |
| 3/1/2008   | Maurice Leroy Cox   | After being pulled over, Cox allegedly told officers he would kill them and reached for his glovebox. After a barricade situation, Cox fled on foot and pointed an object at police, who shot him. Cox was holding a cigarette lighter power adapter.  | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://homicide.latimes.com/post/maurice-leroy-cox/">https://homicide.latimes.com/post/maurice-leroy-cox/</a>   |
| 11/11/2008 | Dontaze Storey, Jr. | LAPD police responded to reports of a man with a gun in Koreatown. When officers arrived, Storey fled, and two officers shot him several times. Storey was holding a silver cell phone.  | LAist: <a href="https://laist.com/news/police-public-safety/dontaze-storey-lapd-used-excessive">https://laist.com/news/police-public-safety/dontaze-storey-lapd-used-excessive</a>  |

|           |                    |  |   |
|-----------|--------------------|--|---|
| 7/5/2009  | Avery Cody, Jr.    | After being stopped for jaywalking, 16 year-old Cody was fatally shot by LASD Deputy Sergio Reyes in the back. A revolver was recovered at the scene, but surveillance video of the shooting did not show Cody with a gun, and DNA did not yield a match.                                      | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://homicide.latimes.com/post/avery-cody-jr/">https://homicide.latimes.com/post/avery-cody-jr/</a><br><br>Knock LA: <a href="https://knock-la.com/life-under-the-gun-compton-lasd-shooting-data/">https://knock-la.com/life-under-the-gun-compton-lasd-shooting-data/</a>  |
| 7/10/2009 | Woodrow Player III | LASD deputies shot Player after he ran from police holding a cell phone. Police recovered a gun from Player's vehicle, but witnesses stated he was unarmed when he was shot. According to a deputy, no weapon was found on or near Player after the shooting.                                  | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://homicide.latimes.com/post/woodrow-player-iii/">https://homicide.latimes.com/post/woodrow-player-iii/</a><br><br>California State University, Northridge University Library:<br><a href="https://www.proquest.com/docview/2642530129/BEF5724ADF5C407APQ/1?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers">https://www.proquest.com/docview/2642530129/BEF5724ADF5C407APQ/1?accountid=7285&amp;sourcetype=Historical%20Newspapers</a> |
| 9/14/2009 | Darrick Collins    | A LASD deputy chased Collins up his driveway and into his own backyard, believing he was a robbery suspect. After allegedly witnessing Collins reach for his waistband, the deputy shot Collins through a wooden gate. The bullet fatally struck Collins in the back of the neck, killing him. | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://homicide.latimes.com/post/darrick-collins/">https://homicide.latimes.com/post/darrick-collins/</a>   |
| 3/20/2010 | Steven Washington  | Washington, who was autistic, died after being shot in the head by an LAPD officer in Koreatown. Washington was shot after he allegedly reached into his waistband. No weapons were recovered from Washington.   | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://homicide.latimes.com/post/steven-washington/">https://homicide.latimes.com/post/steven-washington/</a>   |
| 6/16/2010 | Dexter Luckett     | Police responded to reports of shots fired and spoke to informants, one of whom directed officers to Luckett. A LAPD officer shot Luckett after he quickly moved his left hand towards his waistband. No weapon was found at the scene.  | Los Angeles Times:<br><a href="https://homicide.latimes.com/post/dexter-luckett/">https://homicide.latimes.com/post/dexter-luckett/</a>   |

|            |                           |   |  |
|------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| 1/14/2011  | Reginald Doucet           | LAPD officers responded to reports of a man yelling and behaving erratically. After getting into a scuffle with two officers, Doucet was shot. His family filed a lawsuit against the Los Angeles Police Department, but it was dismissed.  | KSBW: <a href="https://www.ksbw.com/article/man-arrested-biting-off-dependent-adults-toe-ben-lomond-fire-department-california/60283417">https://www.ksbw.com/article/man-arrested-biting-off-dependent-adults-toe-ben-lomond-fire-department-california/60283417</a>  |
| 10/27/2013 | William Alfred Harvey III | Two female LASD deputies were called to the scene at an assisted living home where a man was disturbing residents. The man was incoherent and foaming at the mouth. He hit one deputy in the head and knocked the other into a stone fountain. He reached for one of the deputy's guns, at which point she shot and killed him.   | News Broadcasting Company Los Angeles: <a href="https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/two-deputies-injured-in-fatal-shooting-in-bellflower/1963274/">https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/two-deputies-injured-in-fatal-shooting-in-bellflower/1963274/</a>   |
| 11/19/2013 | Tyler Woods               | Following a traffic stop, Woods fled and was found on the roof of an apartment building. After Woods took a kneeling stance facing the LAPD officers, police shot him. No weapons were recovered from the scene.  | Long Beach Post News: <a href="https://lbpost.com/news/city-of-long-beach-will-pay-approx-3-million-to-family-of-tyler-woods-shot-unarmed-by-the-lbpd-in-2013/">https://lbpost.com/news/city-of-long-beach-will-pay-approx-3-million-to-family-of-tyler-woods-shot-unarmed-by-the-lbpd-in-2013/</a>  |
| 8/11/2014  | Ezell Ford                | Ezell Ford died from multiple gunshot wounds after being shot by LAPD officers. After his death, his parents said their son had been diagnosed with depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, and that everybody in the neighborhood, as well as the police, were aware of this. In January 2017, Los Angeles County prosecutors said Officers Wampler and Villegas would not face criminal charges in connection with the shooting. | Los Angeles Times: <a href="https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-shooting-man-mental-illness-20140813-story.html">https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-shooting-man-mental-illness-20140813-story.html</a><br><br>Los Angeles Times: <a href="https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-ezell-ford-no-charges-20170124-story.html">https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-ezell-ford-no-charges-20170124-story.html</a> |
| 1/6/2015   | Brian Pickett             | Pickett's mother called police to report he was under the influence and had threatened her. When police arrived, Pickett allegedly charged at them and was tasered by a LASD deputy. He stopped breathing when the paramedics arrived   | Los Angeles Times: <a href="http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-taser-death-20150107-story.html">http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-taser-death-20150107-story.html</a>   |

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|            |                          | and was pronounced dead at the area hospital. The family later received a settlement from L.A. County.   | <p>KTLA: <a href="https://ktla.com/news/local-news/la-county-to-pay-3-8m-to-family-of-man-who-died-after-being-shocked-by-stun-gun/">https://ktla.com/news/local-news/la-county-to-pay-3-8m-to-family-of-man-who-died-after-being-shocked-by-stun-gun/</a></p> |
| 3/1/2015   | Charley Leundeou Keunang | Charley Leundeou Keunang was ordered by police to come out of his tent in Skid Row after fighting with someone inside the tent. After he refused the police order, they dragged him out of the tent. A physical altercation ensued with several LAPD police officers, during which three officers shot Keunang, resulting in his death. At least two videos captured the incident. According to police, Keunang had gotten hold of an officer's gun during the struggle. While no charges were filed against the officers, the City paid a settlement of \$1.95 million to Keunang's family. | <p>Los Angeles Times:<br/> <a href="https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-charly-keunang-20180510-story.html">https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-charly-keunang-20180510-story.html</a></p>   |
| 5/5/2015   | Brendon Glenn            | LAPD Officer Clifford Proctor shot Glenn during an altercation with another officer, stating he believed Glenn was reaching for his partner's gun. LAPD investigators concluded that Glenn was on his stomach when Proctor stepped back and fired twice, hitting the 29 year-old in the back. Although the Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck recommended Proctor be charged, the District Attorney's Office declined to file charges against the officer.  | <p>News Broadcasting Company Los Angeles:<br/> <a href="https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/venice-police-shooting-lapd-officer/166491/">https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/venice-police-shooting-lapd-officer/166491/</a></p>                                 |
| 12/20/2015 | Leroy Browning           | Browning fled from deputies who were attempting to arrest him for a DUI. Browning allegedly reached for a LASD deputy's firearm during a physical altercation prompting police to open fire.   | <p>American Broadcasting Company:<br/> <a href="http://abc7.com/news/suspect-killed-in-deputy-involved-shooting-at-palmdale-taco-bell/1129777/">http://abc7.com/news/suspect-killed-in-deputy-involved-shooting-at-palmdale-taco-bell/1129777/</a></p>         |



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| 7/28/2016 | Donnell Thompson, Jr. | LASD deputies responded after Thompson was mistaken for a carjacking suspect while lying in a man's yard. After several commands and a flash bang failed to wake him, police used foam bullets, which woke Thompson up. Thompson then ran towards a SWAT vehicle with his hand near his waistband, and a SWAT officer shot him. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a \$1.49 million payout to his father. NBC Los Angeles described Thompson as, "an unarmed heavily intoxicated mentally disabled man."   | <p>Los Angeles Times:<br/> <a href="https://homicide.latimes.com/post/donnell-thompson-jr">https://homicide.latimes.com/post/donnell-thompson-jr</a></p> <p>News Broadcasting Company Los Angeles:<br/> <a href="https://www.nbcsanangeles.com/news/la-to-pay-149m-in-police-shooting-death-of-mentally-disabled-man/23277/">https://www.nbcsanangeles.com/news/la-to-pay-149m-in-police-shooting-death-of-mentally-disabled-man/23277/</a></p>   |
| 2/4/2018  | Anthony Jacob Weber   | LASD deputies responded to a report of a boy pointing a handgun at a motorist. Arriving deputies said the victim had a handgun tucked into his waistband before he ran, prompting the deputies to chase him. According to police, when the victim turned toward the deputies, they shot and killed the victim. No firearm was found, the Sheriff's Department said, reasoning that it could have gone missing in the crowd that formed after the shooting. Anthony's family and community members said the boy was unarmed. L.A. County agreed to pay \$3.75 million to settle a lawsuit brought by the family of the 16 year-old boy. | <p>Columbia Broadcasting System News Los Angeles:<br/> <a href="http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2018/02/05/deputies-shoot-boy-16-angry-mob/">http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2018/02/05/deputies-shoot-boy-16-angry-mob/</a></p> <p>Internet Archive:<br/> <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20201107230717/">https://web.archive.org/web/20201107230717/</a></p> <p>Los Angeles Times:<br/> <a href="https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-anthony-weber-settlement-20190514-story.html">https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-anthony-weber-settlement-20190514-story.html</a></p> |

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| 10/29/2018 | Albert Dorsey     | LAPD Officer Edward Agdeppa and his partner responded to a 24-hour gym in Hollywood after reports of a disturbance and encountered Dorsey, naked, drying himself off in a locker room. After he ignored commands, the officers attempted to handcuff him. According to Agdeppa, the officers tased Dorsey, who fought with officers and straddled Agdeppa's partner before punching her in the face. Agdeppa then said that he told Dorsey to stop, then shot him. However, audio of the shooting does not show Agdeppa telling Dorsey to stop before the officer shot him. The LA Police Commission, an appointed civilian oversight panel, determined in September 2019 that the shooting violated LAPD policy. But despite the commission's finding, a July 2020 report by then-District Attorney Jackie Lacey determined Agdeppa's actions were lawful and that the shooting was in self-defense. | Courthouse News Service:<br><a href="https://www.courthousenews.com/la-cop-loses-immunity-bid-in-fatal-gym-shooting/">https://www.courthousenews.com/la-cop-loses-immunity-bid-in-fatal-gym-shooting/</a>                        |
| 6/16/2019  | Ryan Twyman       | LASD Deputy Andrew Lyons and another deputy responded to an apartment complex and shot Twyman after he put his vehicle into reverse. Lyons then retrieved his semiautomatic rifle and fired again, after the vehicle stopped moving. Twyman was shot at 34 times. Lyons was charged with one felony count of voluntary manslaughter and two felony counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm.  | Fox News Los Angeles:<br><a href="https://www.foxla.com/news/former-deputy-pleads-not-guilty-in-deadly-shooting-of-ryan-twyman">https://www.foxla.com/news/former-deputy-pleads-not-guilty-in-deadly-shooting-of-ryan-twyman</a> |
| 6/10/2020  | Michael L. Thomas | LASD deputies responded to Thomas's home after a domestic violence report. Thomas refused to let the deputies into his home and police shot him after a confrontation. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said Thomas reached to grab  | KTLA: <a href="https://ktla.com/news/local-news/man-shot-by-deputies-in-lancaster-2/">https://ktla.com/news/local-news/man-shot-by-deputies-in-lancaster-2/</a>  |

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|            |                    | a deputy's weapon, while his fiancée disputed this.  |  |   |  |
| 6/11/2020  | Michael Blu Thomas | LASD deputies were summoned by a potential domestic violence in progress call at about 5:20 a.m. Deputies forced their way into the home after Michael Thomas told them it was his right to not let them in. Thomas' girlfriend, who was with him at the time, reported that four deputies proceeded to restrain Thomas, while a fifth shot him in the stomach. LASD Deputies said Thomas was fighting them off as they tried to handcuff him, and that he reached for one of their handguns when he was shot. | LASD deputies were summoned by a potential domestic violence in progress call at about 5:20 a.m. Deputies forced their way into the home after Michael Thomas told them it was his right to not let them in. Thomas' girlfriend, who was with him at the time, reported that four deputies proceeded to restrain Thomas, while a fifth shot him in the stomach. LASD Deputies said Thomas was fighting them off as they tried to handcuff him, and that he reached for one of their handguns when he was shot. | KTLA: <a href="https://ktla.com/news/local-news/man-shot-by-deputies-in-lancaster-2/">https://ktla.com/news/local-news/man-shot-by-deputies-in-lancaster-2/</a>   |  |
| 10/15/2020 | Dana Young, Jr.    | Police attempted to arrest Young for kidnapping a woman at gunpoint. Dana Mitchell Young Jr. had allegedly kidnapped a woman at gunpoint at around 3:30 a.m. She escaped, and deputies caught Young following a short pursuit. Young exited his vehicle and approached deputies holding a black object. A LASD deputy shot him four times after Young raised the object, which was found to be a black surgical mask.  | Police attempted to arrest Young for kidnapping a woman at gunpoint. Dana Mitchell Young Jr. had allegedly kidnapped a woman at gunpoint at around 3:30 a.m. She escaped, and deputies caught Young following a short pursuit. Young exited his vehicle and approached deputies holding a black object. A LASD deputy shot him four times after Young raised the object, which was found to be a black surgical mask.  | LAist: <a href="https://laist.com/news/criminal-justice/la-sheriffs-deputy-kills-man-after-mistaking-covid-mask-for-gun-dana-young-kevin-walker">https://laist.com/news/criminal-justice/la-sheriffs-deputy-kills-man-after-mistaking-covid-mask-for-gun-dana-young-kevin-walker</a>  |  |
| 6/22/2021  | Frederick Holder   | LASD deputies attempted to pull over Holder after seeing his van driving erratically. As they approached the car, they saw Holder holding an L-shaped object and fired. The object was later determined to be a butane lighter with a handle.  | LASD deputies attempted to pull over Holder after seeing his van driving erratically. As they approached the car, they saw Holder holding an L-shaped object and fired. The object was later determined to be a butane lighter with a handle.  | Internet Archive:<br><a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20210710161712/">https://web.archive.org/web/20210710161712/</a><br><br>Whittier Daily News:<br><a href="https://www.whittierdailynews.com/2021/07/10/candlelight-vigil-in-norwalk-honors-man-killed-by-deputies/">https://www.whittierdailynews.com/2021/07/10/candlelight-vigil-in-norwalk-honors-man-killed-by-deputies/</a> |  |

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| 1/3/2023 | Keenan Anderson | <p>Keenan Anderson, a teacher and cousin of Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors, died after he was tased by LAPD officers after a car crash. The specific manner of Anderson's death was undetermined, but the cause was listed as, "effects of cardiomyopathy and cocaine use," and his death was, "determined hours after restraint and conducted energy device use," according to the coroner's report.</p> | <p>USA Today:<br/> <a href="https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/01/12/keenan-anderson-black-lives-matter-co-founder-cousin-dies-lapd-officers-taser/11038325002/">https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2023/01/12/keenan-anderson-black-lives-matter-co-founder-cousin-dies-lapd-officers-taser/11038325002/</a></p> <p>Associated Press News Los Angeles:<br/> <a href="https://apnews.com/article/los-angeles-police-taser-teacher-death-f3f3cff93701069b633ac33dd3b07bae">https://apnews.com/article/los-angeles-police-taser-teacher-death-f3f3cff93701069b633ac33dd3b07bae</a></p> |
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# Housing Segregation

## Abstract

Early Los Angeles was multi-racial, multi-ethnic, integrated, and prosperous. Migration into Los Angeles from overseas and across the United States brought centuries-old biases and prejudices to the city, ushering in a long era of racially-inspired residential segregation, achieved primarily through restrictive covenants. Though declared illegal in 1948, racially restrictive covenants continued to prevent Black Angelenos from moving to more desirable neighborhoods for at least two decades. A significant proportion of the citizens of Los Angeles, their municipal representatives, and the real estate industry collaborated to restrict Black Angelenos to the least desirable, most overcrowded neighborhoods in Los Angeles, many of which had also been redlined in conjunction with federal programs. This greatly diminished the ability of Black families to enjoy the full fruits of homeownership. Black Angelenos were often denied residence in neighborhoods with proper amenities, as well as the opportunity to fully capitalize on the home equity growth that is the basis of intergenerational wealth.

## Key Terms

**Racial Segregation:** State-mandated requirements preventing racial groups from accessing certain spaces, including schools, hospitals, and other institutions which were typically reserved for Whites only.

**Racially Restrictive Covenants:** Clauses in the deeds of homes that prevented people of color from buying or living in certain areas in order to keep those neighborhoods exclusively White.

**Los Angeles Realty Board (LARB):** The Los Angeles Realty Board was organized in 1903 to develop real estate practices for the City of Los Angeles.

**Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC):** The Home Owners' Loan Corporation was created in 1933 to provide mortgage relief to homeowners at risk of losing their homes through foreclosure.

**Redlining:** A term given to a collection of discriminatory loan and financial activities based on maps, largely created by the HOLC, that designated high risk areas based in part on the racial, ethnic and even religious identities of local residents.

**Slum-Ghetto:** A ghetto is a poor urban area in which a minority group may have been made to live as a result of force, affordability, or legal restrictions

**Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB):** The FHLBB was established in 1932 by the Federal Home Loan Bank Act to encourage homeownership by providing low-cost funds to member banks. The FHLBB oversaw the Federal Home Loan Banks, the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation, and nationally-chartered thrifts.

**Federal Housing Administration (FHA):** Established by the National Housing Act of 1934, the FHA's primary function is to provide insurance for mortgages originated by private lenders for various types of properties, including single-family homes.

**FICO:** Originally Fair, Isaac and Company, FICO is a data analytics company founded in 1956 which focuses on credit scoring services. Its "FICO score," a measure of consumer credit risk, has become a fixture of consumer lending in the United States.

## Overview

At the turn of the 20th century, African Americans found Los Angeles' housing opportunities fairly open to them.<sup>1</sup> *African American sociologist and editor of the Crisis magazine*, W. E. B. Du Bois, after a visit in 1913, wrote, "Los Angeles is wonderful. Nowhere in the United States is the Negro so well and beautifully housed, nor the average efficiency and intelligence in the colored population so high."<sup>2</sup> This comment, which was featured in the official publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), *The Crisis* magazine, highlighted the remarkable progress that Black Angelenos shared early in the city's history. The Central Avenue district, the hub of Los Angeles's African American community, was a high-water mark of Black economic,

social, and cultural prosperity, and helped create a broader image of Black prosperity.

However, there were ominous warning signs that this progress would soon be put under threat from prominent private real estate developers and agents working to segregate housing in the city. In 1908, Los Angeles policymakers passed the nation's first citywide zoning ordinance.<sup>3</sup> This unprecedented regulation established seven "industrial districts" for manufacturing centers and workers' homes, mainly along the Los Angeles River on the Eastside, and demarcated the remaining area as "residence districts" for low-density housing, 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

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1 Flamming, D. (2005). *Bound for freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*. University of California Press, 65.

2 Bunch, L. G. III. (2001). 'The greatest state for the Negro': Jefferson L. Edmonds, Black propagandist of the California dream; In De Graaf, L., Mulroy, K., & Taylor, Q. (Eds.). *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*. Autry Museum of Western Heritage; University of Washington Press, 129.

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3 Freund, D. M. P. (2007). *Colored property: State policy and white racial politics in suburban America*. University of Chicago Press, 49.

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 of middle-class, “native” White professionals creating enclaves that were free from factories or other non-compatible structures and enterprises. Additionally, they incorporated the racial thinking of scientists and politicians who espoused the inferiority of African Americans through racial science, and set out to bar Black people and other non-Anglo immigrants from their suburban enclaves.<sup>4</sup> Zoning ordinances enacted by city governments such as Los Angeles’ constituted public-private alliances that limited Black residents from improving their lives through better housing.<sup>5</sup> Those efforts were accompanied by restrictive

4 *ibid.*, 48.  
5 *ibid.*, 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.”

**Figure 1. Black vs.Total Population in Los Angeles - 1890-1930.**  
*Source:* Taken from Lawrence B. De Graff, “The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890–1930,” *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 39, no. 3 (August 1970), Table II, 330. Data from US Census: 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

| Year | Total Population | Black Population | % Black Population |
|------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 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%              |

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, to quote one expert, “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.” Los Angeles proved to be a model example of how zoning and restrictive covenants were enacted to stimulate racial exclusion.<sup>6</sup>

In Los Angeles, Black homeownership, once a marker of pride, increasingly became an issue as the population grew as a result of the Great Migration from 1915 to 1929. Early on, African Americans were subjected to resistance from White residents. For example, the house of a Black resident who moved in at 18th Street

6 *ibid.*, 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.

and Central Avenue was ransacked by a White mob.<sup>7</sup> Only as White residents began to flee Central Avenue were Black migrants able to obtain housing along that corridor.<sup>8</sup> Although the district developed into a beacon of Black culture and refinement, the demand for housing both along and beyond Central Avenue became an urgent crisis as more Black Americans flocked to the city. In 1900, the Black population of Los Angeles was recorded at 2,131 residents.<sup>9</sup> By 1930, there were 38,898 Black residents, a 1,725% increase over just 30 years.<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Effects of Du Jure — and Defacto — Segregation***

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 (see Figure 2) 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 had reserved for Whites.<sup>11</sup> In 1915, the Los Angeles Realty Board (LARB) along with the Ethics Committee Chair of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (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."<sup>12</sup> By 1919, California courts enshrined the basic tenets of racial segregation in state law, declaring in *Los Angeles Investment Co. v. Gary* that while African Americans could purchase homes in

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11 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=njnl9t](https://escholarship.org/content/qt9vx3c796/qt9vx3c796_noSplash_720a4c937cb8e9843f91bf2d4d59a00f.pdf?t=njnl9t); 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* Vol. 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* Vol. 98, no. 3 (2013); Gene Slater, "Op-Ed: 'How Los Angeles pioneered the residential segregation that helped divide America,'" *Los Angeles Times*, September 10, 2021; and Douglas Flamming, *Bound for Freedom*, 65.

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

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7 De Graff, L. B. (1970). *The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890--1930*. Pacific Historical Review, 39(3), 336.. See also, "A Community Survey Made in Los Angeles," (San Francisco, CA: Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1919), 14–15.

8 The Central Avenue district stretched from Downtown past Forty-Second Street.

9 U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900* 1, 120–21.

10 U.S. Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population 2*, 69.

neighborhoods with restrictive covenants, they could not live in them, making the prospects of overcoming housing segregation nearly impossible.<sup>13</sup>

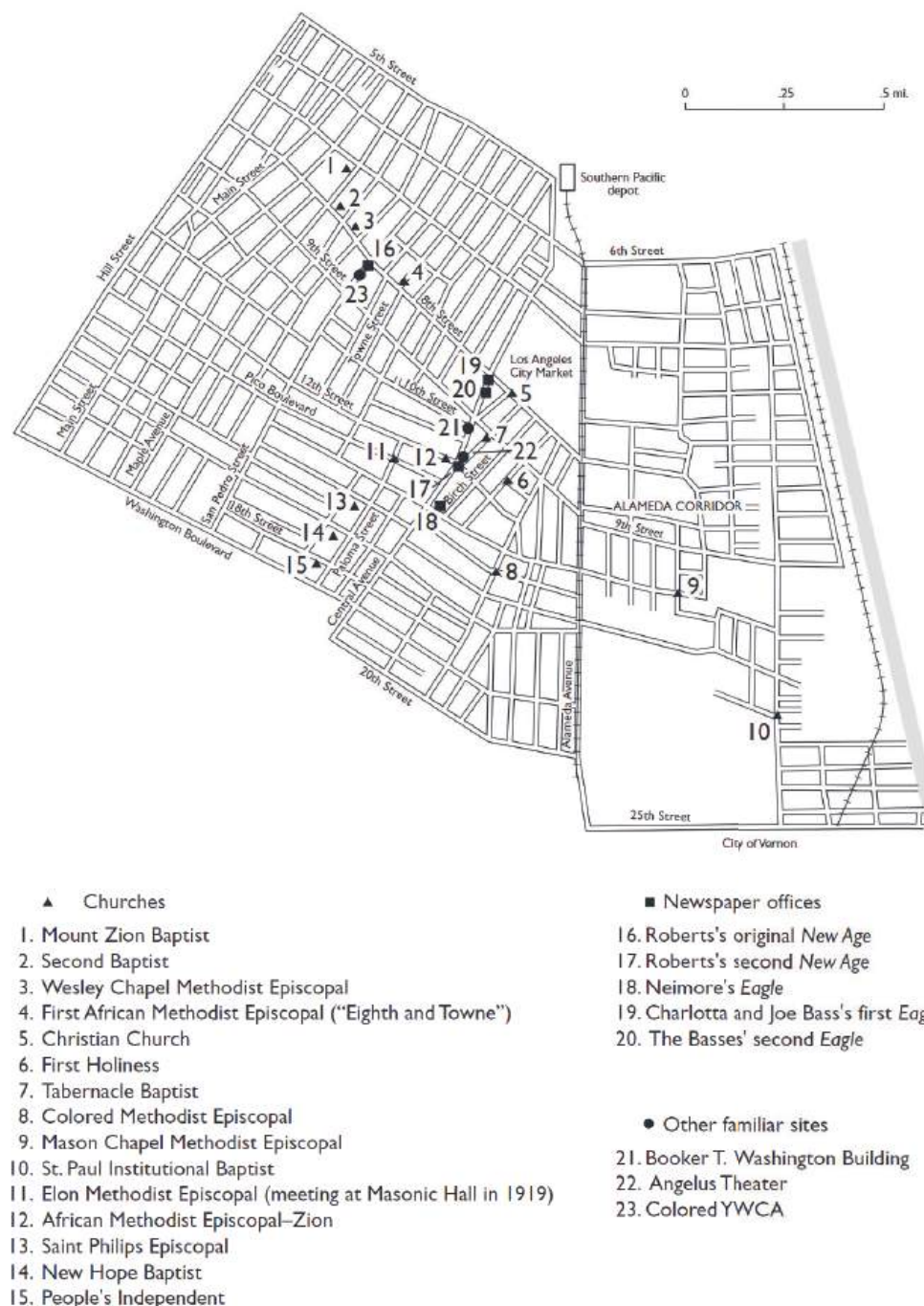
<sup>13</sup> Gibbons, A. (2018). *City of segregation: One hundred years of struggle for housing in Los Angeles* (p. 28). Brooklyn, NY: Verso.

It was not just de jure segregation that kept Black residents from pursuing better housing in other parts of the city, but de facto segregation and violent enforcement as well. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was a significant actor in Los Angeles and surrounding cities.

**Figure 2.** Map of Central Avenue District and adjacent areas, circa 1920.

*Source:* Douglas Flamming, "Claiming Central Avenue," in *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*, 1st ed., (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 92-125.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pnk1t.9>.





Between 1915 and 1944, there were around 18,000 members in Los Angeles distributed among three Klan chapters. In 1922, a membership list revealed that 10% of public officials and policemen in the state belonged to the group. Louis D. Oaks, Chief of Los Angeles Police Department from 1922 to 1923, and William Isham Traeger, Sheriff of Los Angeles County from 1921 to 1932 were both members of the KKK.<sup>14</sup> One example of how Klan members appealed to White Angelenos to help enforce segregation was revealed in a purported "Open Letter" signed by G. E. Price, the Imperial Representative of the group in California, and published in April 1925 by *The California Eagle*, one of the city's Black newspapers. The letter, which was addressed to White residents in Watts, enticed them to work to ensure targeted law enforcement, suggesting ways to "frame" politicians and "social" figures sympathetic to Black residents so that when they were arrested, they would be taken before judges with Klan membership.<sup>15</sup> This indicates that Klan members believed a concerted effort between White citizens and government workers in law enforcement or judicial agencies could ultimately serve to

deny African Americans adequate access to housing.

The overall effect was that Black residents had to find housing exclusively in the limited markets accessible to them, primarily along Central Avenue. By 1930, the area had become what had been deemed a "physical ghetto," a now-antiquated term that meant "an area which houses a people concerned with the perpetuation of a peculiar (and different) culture." 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, South Central Los Angeles, and Watts areas.<sup>16</sup> Few, if any, new homes were built in the district, so the overall quality of housing eroded over the decades. This, coupled with the fact that the district was inundated with industrial manufacturing, home to a growing population, and filled with congestion and old infrastructure, caused the neighborhood to take on characteristics of a "slum-ghetto."

African Americans began attempting to move southward, which displaced White residents, but they were soon threatened with violence from those White residents who remained.

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14 Greene, R. (2020, October 28). How the Klan and the Hillside Stranger play in to the strange history of L.A. County district attorneys. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-10-28/lacey-gascon-los-angeles-district-attorney-history>.

15 Gibbons, City of Segregation, 30, 31, 38.

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16 De Graff, *The City of Black Angels*, 324, 326.

Slauson Avenue became the southern boundary of the Black community until World War II. As deed restrictions lapsed, Black people began moving westward to the West Adams neighborhood and eastward toward Jefferson Boulevard. In an attempt to stem the tide of African Americans moving into these areas, White residents there sought a complete ban on non-White people. African American access to housing in these areas was so limited that prices began to rise, creating an enclave in which only the wealthiest Blacks could afford to live.<sup>17</sup>

While African Americans were trapped on the Eastside of Los Angeles, White Angelenos expanded and developed affluent neighborhoods on the Westside. They adopted comprehensive schemes — sanctioned by public agencies — based on the belief that Black people should not be able to move into their neighborhoods. In the 1930s and 1940s, Golden State Mutual Life Insurance executive Norman O. Houston and film star Hattie McDaniel bought homes in the previously all-White, affluent area of West Adams when the area's covenants had either expired or were near expiration. In response, the West Adams Heights Improvement Association (WAHIA) immediately encouraged White residents

to reinstate the restrictions, and over 100 homeowners signed their names to four limitations, agreeing on the following terms:

*That no portion of any of said lots, pieces, or parcels of land shall ever be occupied, as a residence or for residential purposes, by any person other than of the Caucasian, or White Race, during said term of years. 2. That no person whose blood is not entirely that of the White Race shall live upon any of said real property during said term ... save and except in the capacity of a domestic servant of a White person residing on the self-same parcel. 3. That the foregoing covenants are made, and said limitations and restrictions raised, for the advantage of said parties and for the benefit of said parcels. ... 4. That appropriate legal or equitable action may be prosecuted for any threatened or actual breach of any of said agreements.*<sup>18</sup>

White homeowners went so far as to attempt to void the purchase of homes by Houston, McDaniel, and other African Americans through racially restrictive covenants which had been in place. In court, the White plaintiffs

<sup>17</sup> De Graff, *The City of Black Angels*, 347.

<sup>18</sup> Mandel, J. (2010). *Making a 'black Beverly Hills': The struggle for housing equality in modern Los Angeles* (Doctoral dissertation, University of New Hampshire) (p. 62).

painted themselves as victims, arguing, “The use and occupancy ... by the said [Black] defendants ... makes the plaintiffs’ property undesirable to them, and others of the Caucasian race ... and greatly injures the rental and sale value of the premises.” According to one historian, over 100 African Americans, as well as some Asian and Latino people, were sued to prevent them from purchasing property in the area.<sup>19</sup>

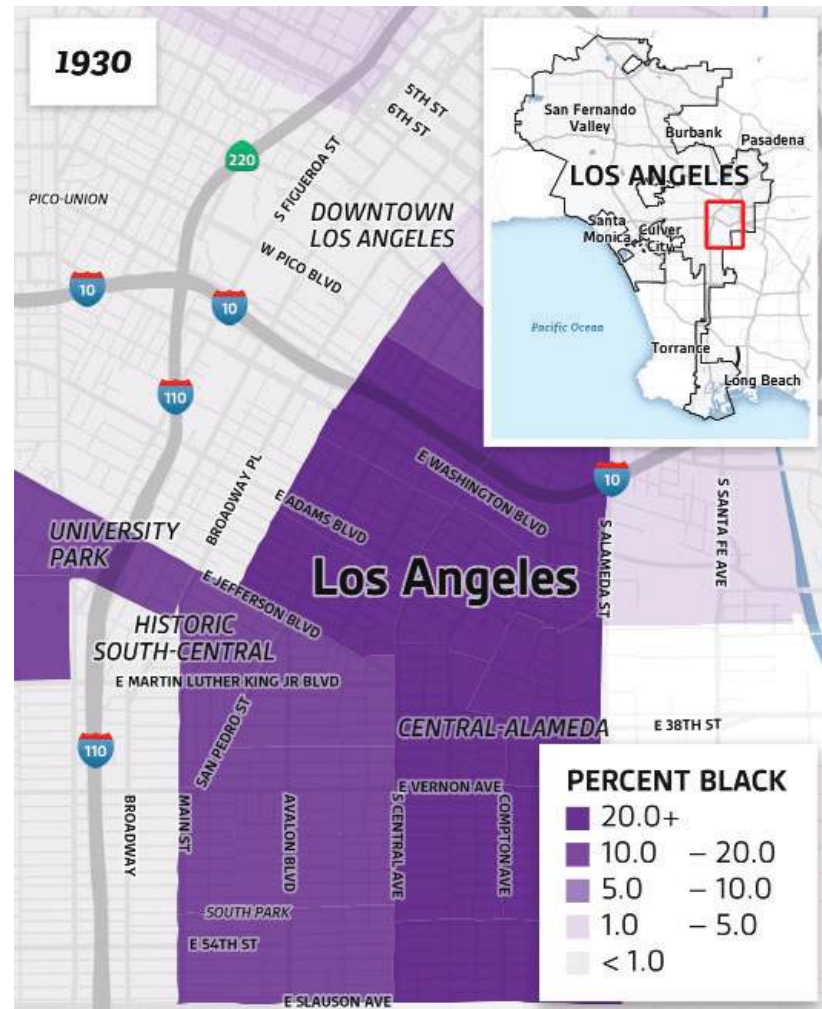
Between 1940 and 1950, African Americans moved into the San Pedro, Ascot Park, Boyle Heights, Atwater Village, Sylmar, Encino, Pacoima, and Hansen Hills neighborhoods, as well as a spattering of areas near Crenshaw Boulevard, and still maintained a dominant presence in South Los Angeles. By 1960, Black Angelenos had been mostly driven out of the San Fernando Valley (Sylmar, Encino, Pacoima, and Hansen Hills) and their presence was greatly reduced in the Pacific Palisades, Beverly Glen, and Westwood regions.

In 1960, Black people were the most segregated racial group in Los Angeles. In fact, of the 461,546 African Americans that lived in Los Angeles County, 68%, or 313,866, lived in the city's Central Avenue district. Nearly 83% lived in areas where non-Whites ranged from

**Figure 3.** Black population percentage for census tracts in/near the Central Avenue District of Los Angeles in 1930.

Source: Figure produced from the IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0 [dataset], by S. Manson, J. Schroeder, D. Van Riper, K. Knowles, T. Kugler, F. Roberts, and S. Rugles.

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65 to 100% of the population.<sup>20</sup>

Although the Black population stood at nearly 65,000 (4.27% of the population) in 1940,

20 Felker-Kantor, M. (2014). Fighting the segregation amendment: Black and Mexican responses to Proposition 14 in Los Angeles. In J. Kun, J., Pulido L. (Eds.). *Black and Brown in Los Angeles: Beyond Conflict and Coalition*. University of California Press, 146.

19 Mandel, Making a 'black Beverly Hills', 76–77.

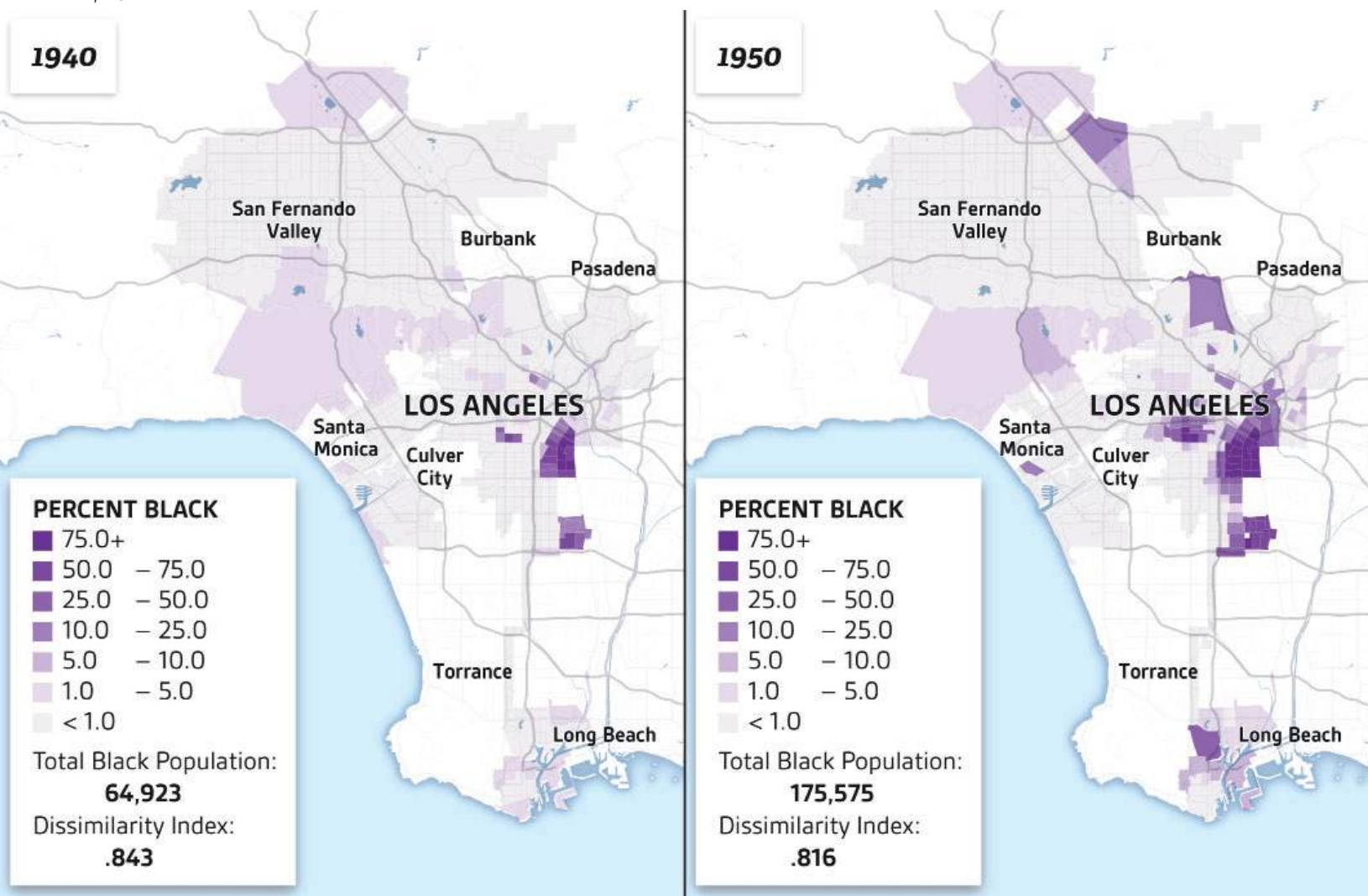
restrictive covenants kept Black families from moving to new neighborhoods. The *dissimilarity index*<sup>21</sup>, a common tool to measure residential segregation, grew substantially just prior to World War II. The index can be interpreted as the percentage of Black people who would have to move to achieve complete racial integration. In other words, about 52,000 of LA's 65,000 Black people (84.3%), would have had to move to make each census tract reflect the city's overall Black population of 4.27%. The African American population in South Los Angeles did

21 Green, R. D. (2024). The dissimilarity index as a tool for accountability in ending racial segregation. Retrieved October 4, 2024.

not begin to recede and diffuse throughout the city until the 1990s. (See Figures 4 and 5).

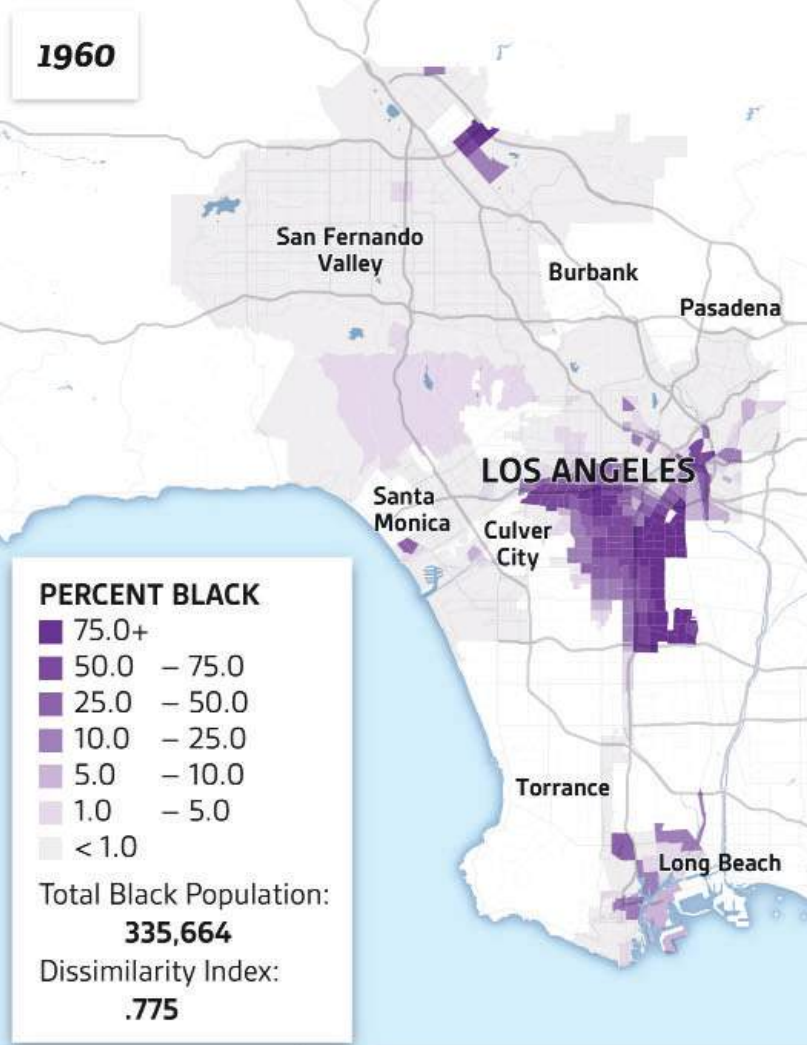
**Figure 4 (Below).** Black population percentage for census tracts in Los Angeles from 1940-1950.  
*Source:* Figure produced from the IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0 [dataset], by S. Manson, J. Schroeder, D. Van Riper, K. Knowles, T. Kugler, F. Roberts, and S. Ruggles. [www.nhgis.org](http://www.nhgis.org). Copyright 2023 by IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota. Adapted with permission.

**Figure 5 (Following Page).** Black population percentage for census tracts in Los Angeles from 1960-1990.  
*Source:* Figure produced from the IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0 [dataset], by S. Manson, J. Schroeder, D. Van Riper, K. Knowles, T. Kugler, F. Roberts, and S. Ruggles. [www.nhgis.org](http://www.nhgis.org). Copyright 2023 by IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota. Adapted with permission.

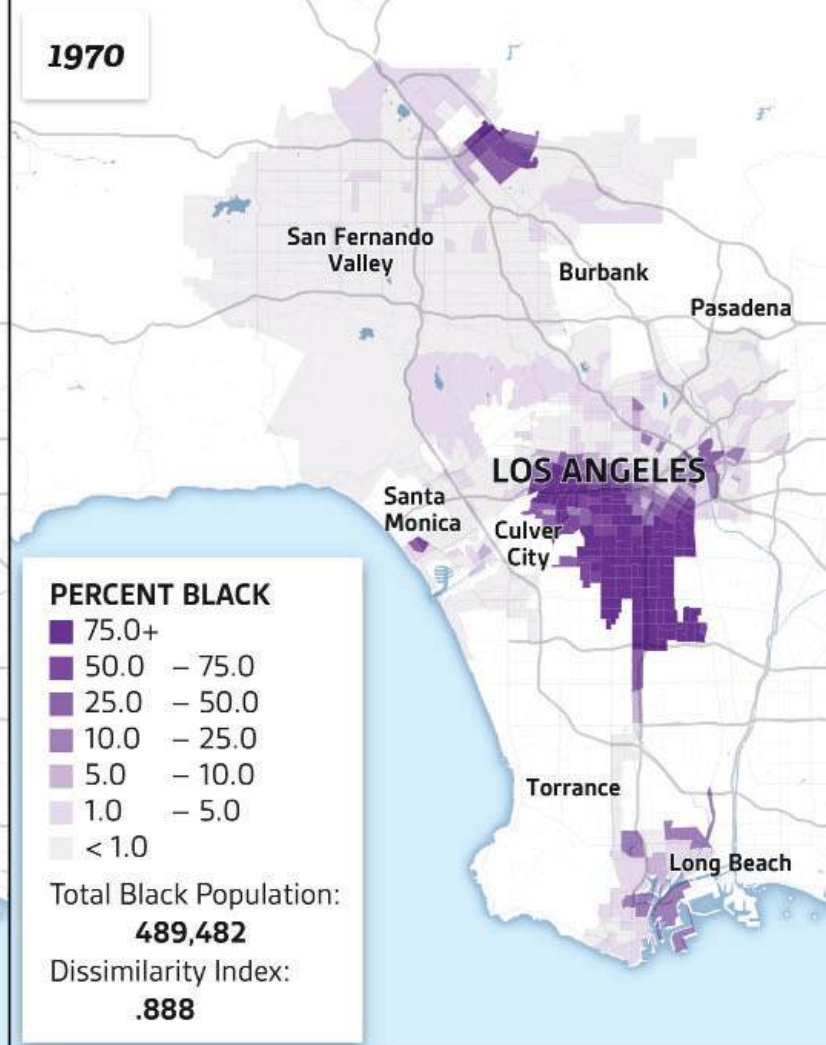




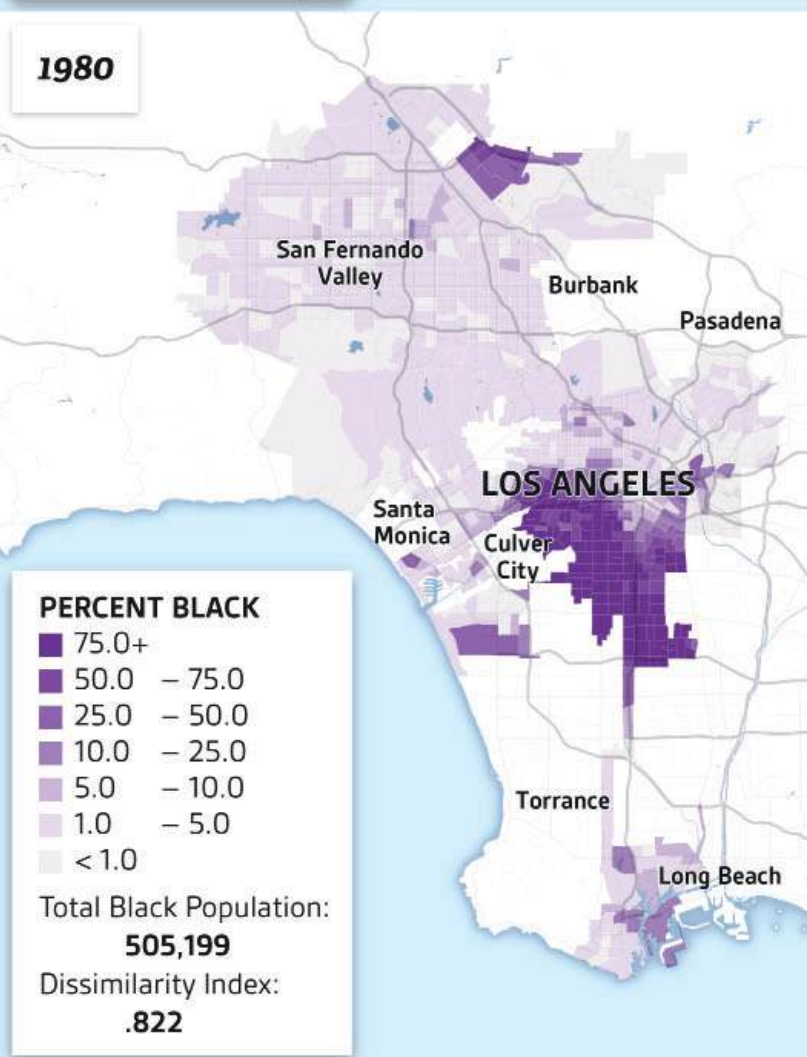
1960



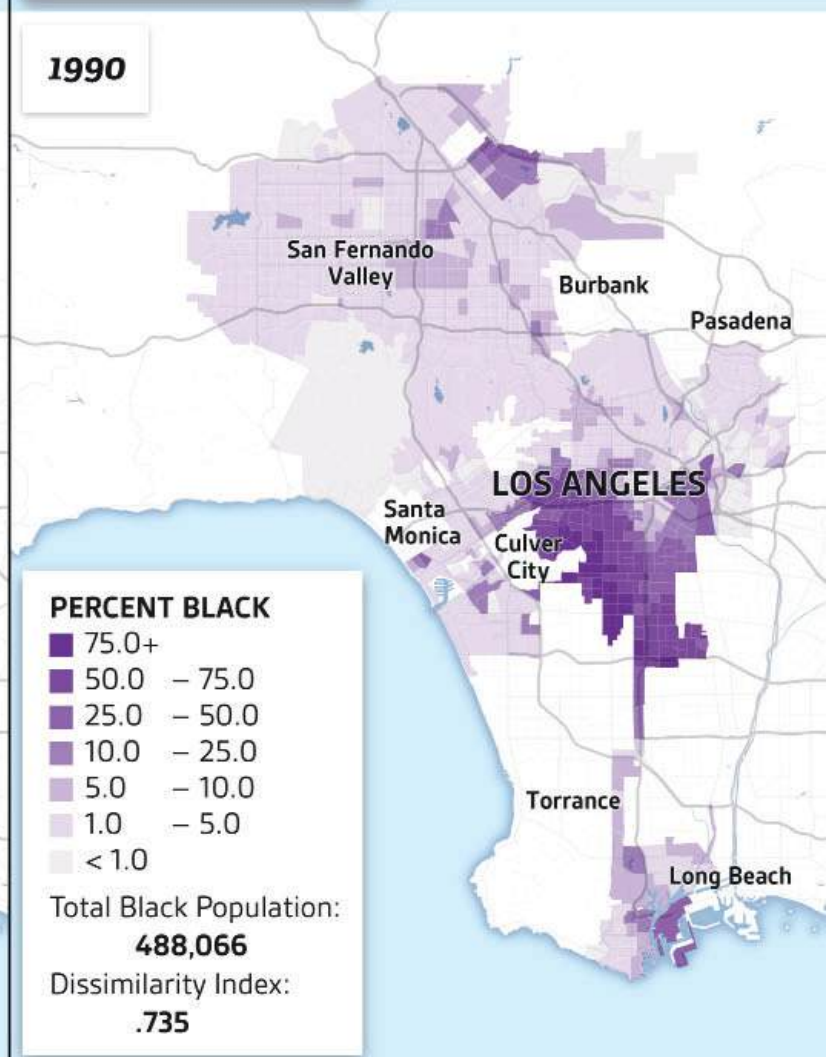
1970



1980



1990





## ***Public-Private Resistance to Integration***

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 in those efforts, as well. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down racist real estate covenants in *Shelley v. Kraemer* was a victory that had the potential to open the doors for Black residents. Loren Miller, an African-American civil rights attorney who served as lead counsel in the case, noted that attempts by private citizens to restrict Black and other minority residents from housing had become a public matter, writing:

*Our increasingly complex urban society has progressively involved the state in a myriad of activities that were once matters of purely private concern. The distinction between "private" and "state" action has worn so thin that it is sometimes said that what the state tolerates, the state commands.*<sup>22</sup>

While City Council members in Los Angeles might not have enacted overt restrictive racial policies, they were certainly aware of them and

failed to ensure that Black residents received equal protection under the law, as was their duty as government representatives sworn to uphold the U.S. Constitution. Furthermore, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) required racially restrictive covenants as a condition for mortgage insurance for home loans in any case.<sup>23</sup>

Even when state legislators moved toward integration, they were often met with staunch resistance from private entities. In 1963, California Assemblyman William Byron Rumford introduced Assembly Bill 1240, which came to be known as the Rumford Fair Housing Act, to the State Assembly. The act was intended to ban racial discrimination in the real estate industry, specifically targeting the very people responsible for acts of discrimination in the LA housing market: brokers, mortgage holders, property owners, and landlords. The bill passed the state legislature and was signed into law by Governor Pat Brown. In an act of defiance, the California Association of Realtors and the Apartment Owners Association of California led efforts to have the bill rescinded through the state's ballot referendum system. The referendum, which was called Proposition 13, stated that neither the state nor any

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22 Miller, L. (1966). *The petitioners: The story of the Supreme Court of the United States and the Negro* (p. 329). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

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23 *ibid.*, 322.

agency, “shall deny, limit or abridge, directly or indirectly, the right of any person, who is willing or desires to sell, lease or rent any part or all of his real property, to decline to sell, lease or rent such property to such person or persons as he, in his absolute discretion, chooses.”<sup>24</sup> On November 3, 1964, California residents — by an overwhelming majority — voted to repeal the Rumford Fair Housing Act. In response, the NAACP filed suit. During the subsequent case, the Supreme Court of California held that Proposition 14 encouraged discrimination, stating that the measure established a, “purported constitutional right to *privately* discriminate on grounds which admittedly would be unavailable under the Fourteenth Amendment *should state action* be involved.”<sup>25</sup> That decision was challenged, but the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the state court’s ruling. The Supreme Court’s reasoning was not unanimous; one of the dissenters was Justice Hugo Black, who had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama. That a law designed to end racial discrimination in the California housing market was challenged all the way to the Supreme Court illustrates just some of the lengths White communities went

to in order to try and maintain segregated neighborhoods.

### ***The Advent of Redlining***

The Great Depression had an immense effect on the home mortgage industry, so the federal government attempted to improve the vast numbers of foreclosures and loan defaults by homeowners. Yet, those efforts, which were organized at the top tiers of the government and real estate industry, were rooted in racist ideologies and ultimately systematized practices that maintained housing segregation — the effects of which are still being lived today. In August 1930, President Herbert Hoover convened the White House Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership with the purpose of examining the nation’s housing and to propose a remedy to stem a national crisis that had resulted in the foreclosure of more than 150,000 residential properties. However, members of President Hoover’s conference were, in fact, influential leaders who were responsible for the country’s restrictive land policies. As one historian noted, the conference, “provided an instructional bridge between the pre-Depression zoning and planning movement and the decades of federal involvement in the housing market that would follow.”<sup>26</sup>

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24 *Mulkey v. Reitman*, 64 Cal. 2d 529. Retrieved from <https://scocal.stanford.edu/opinion/mulkey-v-reitman-27320>.

25 *Reitman v. Mulkey*, 387 US 369. (1976). U.S. Supreme Court. Retrieved April 30, 2023 from <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/387/369/>.

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26 Freund, *Colored Property*, 103, 104.

Depression-era Los Angeles was prime for this type of private-public intervention, as its suburban areas were fertile grounds for (White) Angelenos that wanted to flee the inner city.

The savings and loan industry and real estate lobbyists supported Congressional action on the Home Owners' Loan Act of 1933 that, in part, established the creation of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), which in turn built on the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB) previously established under the Hoover administration, to refinance delinquent home loans with long-term and low interest loans.<sup>27</sup> The impact of the HOLC on Americans' ability to purchase homes should not be underestimated. The sheer volume of the agency's national significance is worth noting: By 1936, the HOLC had purchased and refinanced \$3.1 billion in delinquent homeowners' debt. Over 800,000 homeowners were saved from losing their homes, and an estimated 20% of the nation's homes were mortgaged by the HOLC.<sup>28</sup>

Most of the benefits generated by the HOLC went to home owners in White neighborhoods,

while the value of houses in non-White neighborhoods was badly eroded by an HOLC practice known as redlining. The architect of the HOLC's lending policies, Philip Kniskern, who led the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers, designed the program's appraisal policies so that they enshrined the racial preferences of neighborhoods via color-coded maps. This system of color-coding neighborhoods was codified in a series of "Residential Security Maps" by the FHLBB in 1935. What appeared to be seemingly benign appraisal and lending policies soon, "set in motion both a new means of achieving the racial segregation of neighborhoods and new rationale for defending it."<sup>29</sup> These policies were anything but benign. Discrimination was, in effect, built into them, as they were used as the means, "to employ municipal ordinances as instruments of racial exclusion."<sup>30</sup> This scheme unfolded through grades associated with each color. Maps were coded green for A to designate the most desirable areas, which were absent of "foreigner[s] or Negro[s]," blue for B, yellow for C, and red for D, or the most undesirable. Neighborhoods designated D were the color red on HOLC maps and became known as being "redlined." The redlined neighborhoods were often those with large

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27 Gibbons, *City of Segregation*, 42. See also Freund, *Colored Property*, 112. Freund notes that by June 1935 the HOLC had received 1,886,491 applications and processed 1,017,821 of them.

28 Freund, *Colored Property*, 112.

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29 Freund, *Colored Property*, 115.

30 Freund, *Colored Property*, 46.

minority populations, specifically African-American ones. No matter the condition of homes in an area, if the population was majority African American, the neighborhood was designated D.

In Los Angeles, redlined areas were typically designated and/or segregated as being “inner-city.” Reconstructed maps of Los Angeles indicate that “wealthier-affluent communities” were typically in more suburban areas, such as Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, and the upper Northeast.<sup>31</sup> The Los Angeles City Council appeared to be unsympathetic to African Americans’ concerns for adequate housing. For example, in 1946 The California Eagle reported that Los Angeles had lost over 40% of the federal appropriation for clearing slums by declaring that the city did not have any. A source noted, “They [the City Council] refused to let us make a survey of the City’s districts ... they said there were only dirty N— [sic], Mexicans, Chinks, Japs, in these poor districts and they ought to be made to get along the best they could.”<sup>32</sup>

Over the course of the 20th century, White homeowners preferred to live in racially

segregated communities without Black neighbors. The housing industry — and the federal government — was more than willing to acquiesce to these preferences. The FHA, along with the HOLC, created new insured home mortgages, but only in communities located in areas designated as more desirable, which opened, “a floodgate of new credit to White, first-time homebuyers,” while excluding African Americans.<sup>33</sup> The result was the creation of a new stream of wealth through homeownership for White, but not Black, Americans. Los Angeles was no exception.

### ***Estimating Differences in Home Equity by Race***

Neighborhoods in Los Angeles that restricted Black people from residence saw greater equity growth in housing prices during the critical decades following the Civil Rights era from 1954 to 1964. Using conservative assumptions based on data from the NHGIS<sup>34</sup>, the CSUN Research Team estimates a potential total loss of \$7.2 billion in today’s money was denied to Black homeowners between 1970 and 1990. Neighborhoods that were effectively forbidden to Black households had

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31 Melendez, M. (2021). *Redlining in Los Angeles, CA: The effects of historic redlining in today's LA cities*. ArcGIS StoryMaps. Retrieved from <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7c68f65bb296484cbac51eb21dce3999>.

32 The California Eagle, November 18, 1946, quoted in Gibbons, *City of Segregation*, 61.

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33 Gibbons, *City of Segregation*, 44.

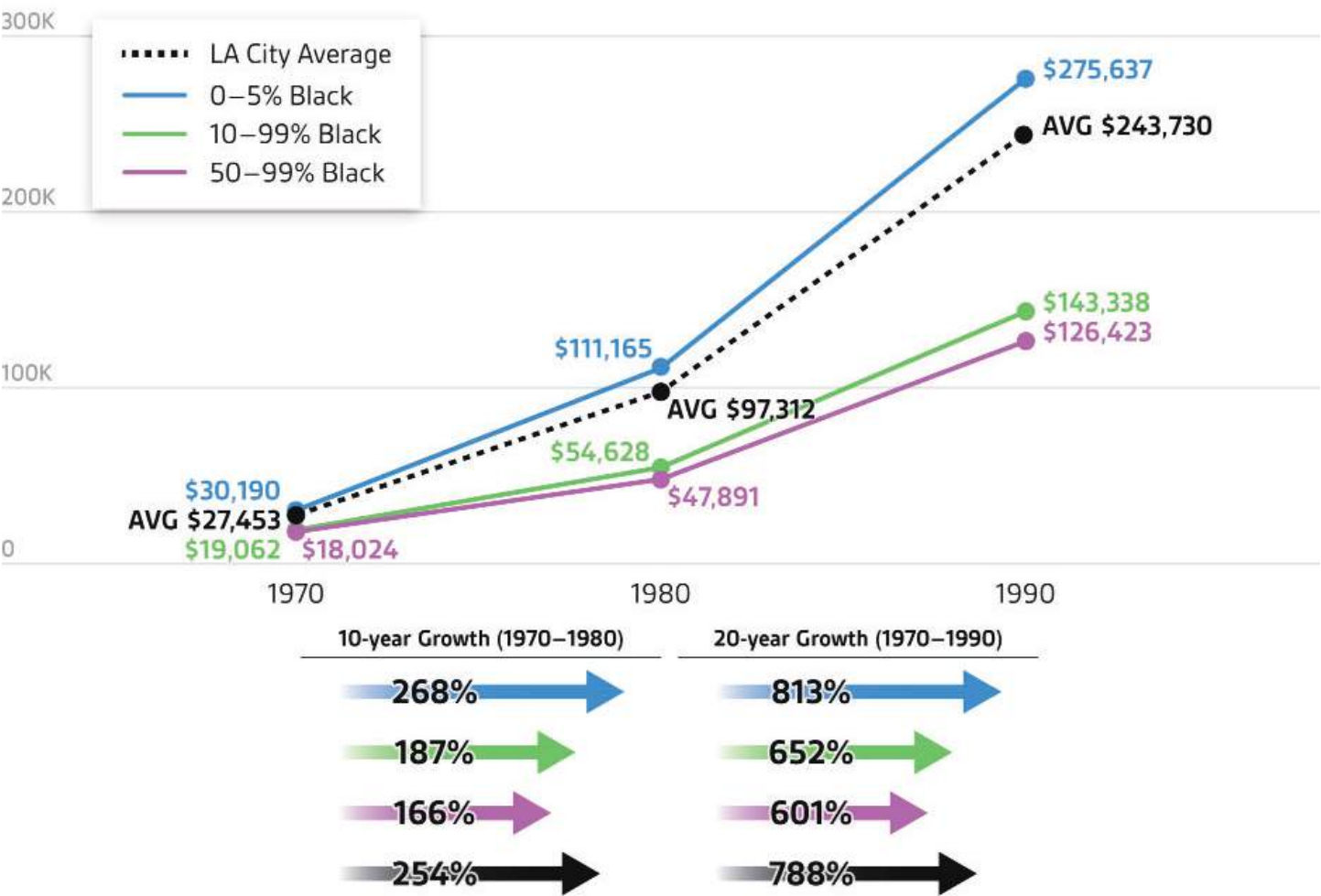
34 Manson, S., Schroeder, J., Van Riper, D., Knowles, K., Kugler, T., Roberts, F., & Ruggles, S. (2023). *IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0* [dataset]. IPUMS . <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V18.0>



an average home value of \$30,190 in 1970. Neighborhoods that were over 50% Black had a home value of \$18,024. The citywide average was \$27,453. Between 1990 and 1970, home values increased citywide by 788% to \$243,730. In neighborhoods where Black residents were largely not permitted to reside, houses increased in value by 813%. In neighborhoods where Black people were allowed to live, the increase was 652%, and in

areas where the majority of Black Angelenos were forced to live, the increase was only 601%. Had Black families been allowed to move anywhere in Los Angeles before 1970, they too could have enjoyed the advantage of greater home equity growth before passing that wealth down to subsequent generations, leveraging it for additional economic benefit, or at least retiring in greater comfort.

**Figure 6.** Differential equity growth in housing by neighborhoods based on percentage of Black persons from 1970 to 1990.  
*Source:* Figure produced from the IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0 [dataset], by S. Manson, J. Schroeder, D. Van Riper, K. Knowles, T. Kugler, F. Roberts, and S. Ruggles. [www.nhgis.org](http://www.nhgis.org). Copyright 2023 by IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota. Adapted with permission.



Assuming an average Black homeowner remained living in a lower-valued house (\$18,024) in a predominantly Black neighborhood in 1970 and enjoyed the same average equity growth as others across Los Angeles, that home would have been worth \$16,000 more by 1980 and \$33,596 more by 1990. Adjusted for current dollars (January 1990 to March 2023), that figure is \$79,596. About 90,000 Black families lived in owner-occupied housing within neighborhoods that were over 50% Black and therefore potentially suffered this differential loss in value. If each Black homeowner in 1970 were to be compensated to account for this differential loss in equity for just those 20 years, the total value of compensation would total approximately \$7.163 billion.

Numerous technical details regarding who would be eligible for compensation are beyond the scope of this report. However, there are currently around 40,000 Black-owned housing units in Los Angeles. Around 60% of these units are owned by Black households that lived in Los Angeles in 1970. If those 25,000 households were to be eligible for compensation, the total value would be approximately \$2 billion.

## ***The Legacy of Segregation in Homeownership Today***

Owning a home is the primary vehicle by which Americans have built wealth since the creation of New Deal housing programs. Homeownership is incentivized through federal tax benefits, and for those who live in the nicer areas of a city, there are accompanying intrinsic advantages, including access to good public schools, greater access to amenities, lower crime rates, and desirable FICO scores for regular on-time mortgage payments. However, homeownership may not be the best investment for Black people, as homes in Black neighborhoods are significantly undervalued. The deleterious effects of segregation and the impediment to wealth accumulation via the prevention of Black people from securing adequate homeownership create a stark divide between households. In Los Angeles, 68.3% of White households are homeowners, while just 41.5% of Black Angelenos are homeowners. African Americans also have a heightened debt-to-equity ratio of 78.4%. The current state of Black homeownership is directly correlated to the history of housing segregation in Los Angeles.

## Summary of Findings

We examined how Los Angeles has evolved into one of the most segregated metropolitan cities in America, and how racial segregation was a factor in the City's development. Turn-of-the-century policymakers passed the nation's first citywide zoning ordinance that, within a few years, opened Los Angeles to policies that allowed for residential restrictions based on race. By examining how racial segregation in Los Angeles brought on a host of social and economic ills, we can begin to assess its economic, social, and psychological toll.

- Racially restrictive zoning in Los Angeles segregated citizens by both 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. White residents also resisted Black migration, sometimes violently.
- In the early 20th century, local real estate and realty boards' ethics codes promoted racial segregation.
- As a result of housing segregation, 70% of the Black population was forced to reside in Central-Alameda, South Park, South Central LA, and Watts by 1930.
- 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 money.
- Segregation and housing policies historically limited Black wealth accumulation through homeownership. Recent data shows 68.3% of White households, versus 41.5% of Black households, own their homes in Los Angeles.

# Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity

## Abstract

The City of Los Angeles once counted among the more progressive city governments in the United States in terms of equitable hiring practices, but during the mid-20th century, much of this early progress was erased and replaced by intransigent racial biases in hiring. Data highlights many decades of racial inequity in hiring, promotion, and wage practices within many departments and agencies across the City. The Los Angeles Fire and Police Departments counted among the largest and most unyielding regarding such practices. As a result, Black Angelenos were denied access to many quality, high-wage career opportunities by the very government that was charged with ensuring equal opportunities were afforded to people from all backgrounds. Estimates point to more than \$1 billion dollars in wages from lost opportunities since the 1950s.

## Key Terms

***Civil Rights Act of 1964:*** An act of Congress which made it illegal to discriminate against an individual based on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in public places, schools, and federally funded-programs. It also prohibited discrimination in hiring, firing, and promotions.

***Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (EEOA):*** A federal law that amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to help combat and prevent employment discrimination.

***The Great Recession:*** A period of market decline in economies around the world that occurred during the very early 2000s.

***Wage Inequity:*** A phenomenon in which employees in similar roles with the same qualifications and skills do not receive equal pay.

## Overview

A variety of laws at the federal and state levels protect workers and prospective employees from discrimination based on their racial, ethnic, religious, and gender identities. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 are key elements in the suite of federal legislation that

focuses on race, color, ethnicity, and national origin. In California, the Fair Employment and Housing Act of 1959 was the first overt attempt to prevent workplace discrimination across the state, including in Los Angeles. This measure has been amended several times over the years to strengthen and expand workplace protections. All these statutes attempt to

ensure that hiring, firing, compensation, and working conditions are fair and equitable for all employees.

Over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, these laws have been partially successful in the private and public sectors, but disparities in hiring — and especially pay — are still evident in both sectors, particularly in Los Angeles. Various parties within City government are responsible for ensuring that a litany of civil rights laws are upheld, yet disturbing inequities remain within City Hall itself and across Los Angeles' numerous municipal agencies, despite more than 60 years of promises to remedy those very issues.

This chapter addresses notable elements of the City of Los Angeles' evolving hiring and wage practices, detailing successes and failures evident from a limited analysis of current data and archival records. Despite repeated requests, the City of Los Angeles was unable to furnish much *historical* data (earlier than the 2020's) on hiring and wages by ethnic or racial group. The data presented here largely comes from secondary sources, e.g., newspaper accounts, a dissertation, and contemporary City documents. The public sector in Los Angeles has made marked improvements towards equity in hiring

and pay, but a historical burden remains, specifically for Black Angelenos and their descendants. Although this cost is difficult to calculate due to the lack of available data, the present monetary inequality is staggering, not to mention the disproportionate outlay of extended benefits. To make it plain, while White employees of the City of Los Angeles, particularly men, have long been able to reap the full fruits of their labor, the work of Black employees has only been partially rewarded, and their very access to City jobs only partially granted.

### ***The Public Sector and Black Workers***

Since the Reconstruction era, the public sector has been an important source of employment for Black Americans.<sup>1</sup> For example, the U.S. Postal Service is notable as one of the earliest agencies to hire formerly enslaved people.<sup>2</sup> In California, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) began hiring Black officers as early as the late 1800s. Georgia Ann Robinson, a Black woman, was hired in 1919, making the LAPD one of the first departments in the country to be so progressive. While some areas of the United States had better hiring records than others, the small, Black population of Los

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1 United States Postal Service. (n.d.). *African American postal workers in the 19th century*. Retrieved December 11, 2024, from <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/african-american-workers-19thc.pdf>.

2 *ibid.*



Angeles prior to World War II precludes serious analysis of its public-sector employment conditions in that period.

As government services expanded during the Great Depression and after World War II, Black people across the nation often found stable jobs with benefits in municipal agencies, including driving city buses, working in healthcare, and teaching in various school systems.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, discriminatory wage practices were generally more muted in the public sector compared to the private sector.<sup>4</sup>

Like most municipal governments, the City of Los Angeles hired African Americans, and as a result became a major source of employment for Black Angelenos. During the early 1900s, this practice was widely linked to the system of political patronage, in which elected officials hired supporters of their campaigns to staff their administrations, that characterized the operation of many large City governments at the time. Yet, despite this practice and the aforementioned trends in the early history of Los Angeles, by the 1950s it was evident that the higher paying jobs within local

government were implicitly reserved for White workers. This was especially true in the two 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, as well as women, but they were especially high for Los Angeles' 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.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Legislative Steps Toward Desegregation—and Equity—in Los Angeles***

More precise characterizations of the ethnic makeup of Los Angeles are made elsewhere in this report, so it will suffice here to remind readers that in the 1950s, Los Angeles was more than 80% White, and the City's politics were dominated by White men who were

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

4 Pitts, S. (2011) *Black Workers and the Public Sector*. University of California, Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education. Retrieved from [https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2011/blacks\\_public\\_sector11.pdf](https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2011/blacks_public_sector11.pdf).

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5 City Employee Payroll (Current). (n.d). Los Angeles Controller's Office. Retrieved December 11, 2024 from [https://controllerdata.lacity.org/Payroll/City-Employee-Payroll-Current/-g9h8-fvhu/about\\_data](https://controllerdata.lacity.org/Payroll/City-Employee-Payroll-Current/-g9h8-fvhu/about_data).

social and economic conservatives. During this time, the connections between City Hall and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the real estate and construction industries, and the popular press — especially the *Los Angeles Times* — were closely woven into a cohesive fabric that acted as an effective barrier to equal access to jobs, housing, political power, and healthy environments for many of Los Angeles' minority residents.

Few legal protections against institutionalized racism existed for non-White Americans during the first half of the 20th century. In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration established the Fair Employment Practice Commission to ban discriminatory hiring for federal and union jobs related to the war effort. Modest efforts made to replicate this federal policy in California were defeated over the next 20 years. It was not until 1952 that the Supreme Court of California overturned the Alien Land Act of 1913, a law that kept many Asian Americans from owning land in the state.

The election of Edward R. Roybal to the Los Angeles City Council in 1949 is instructive for framing the difficulty of securing the most basic of rights for Black people and other minorities in post-war Los Angeles. Roybal, a

Latino who represented a growing minority coalition of Latino, Black, and Asian voters, many of whom lived in Roybal's gerrymandered Council District,<sup>6</sup> campaigned on curbing police brutality, ending discrimination in housing and municipal employment, and establishing a fair employment practices commission for the City.<sup>7</sup> His crusade to create such a commission was repeatedly delayed and then rejected by the Council, but state and federal legislation and commissions eventually forced Roybal's agenda to address widespread discrimination upon City leadership.<sup>8</sup>

### ***LAFD as a Case Study in Resisting Integration***

While the "desegregation controversy was ... raging" in the mid-1950s, the LAPD and LAFD garnered attention as prominent bastions of discriminatory activities. While it appears that some City agencies and departments, including the LAPD, were beginning a desegregation process in their hiring during the 1950s, there were holdouts. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

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6 The Council District included Boyle Heights, Bunker Hill, Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and the Central Avenue region.

7 Underwood, K. (1997) Pioneering Minority Representation: Edward Roybal and the Los Angeles City Council, 1949–1962. *Pacific Historical Review* 66 (3). University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3640203>.

8 FEPC battle in council revived: Parliamentary tangle snarls Roybal motion after adoption. (1956, June 8). *Los Angeles Times*; City FEPC again loses in 7-to-7 council vote: Ballot follows long argument on proposal. (1958, January 8). *Los Angeles Times*.

pointed to the Fire Department as the agency most egregiously ignoring the City's civil rights laws on employment. (See Figure 1.)<sup>9</sup> The battle to bring fair hiring and payment practices into City government is illustrated by an examination of LAFD, in part because academics and journalists have extensively documented that struggle over the years.

By the 1950s, LAFD had effectively confined Black firefighters to two stations (No. 14 and No. 30), prohibited their transfer elsewhere, and banned Black firemen from promotions except within the aforementioned stations. The process of changing these practices, which began in the 1950s with Mayor Norris Poulson's efforts to get the Board of

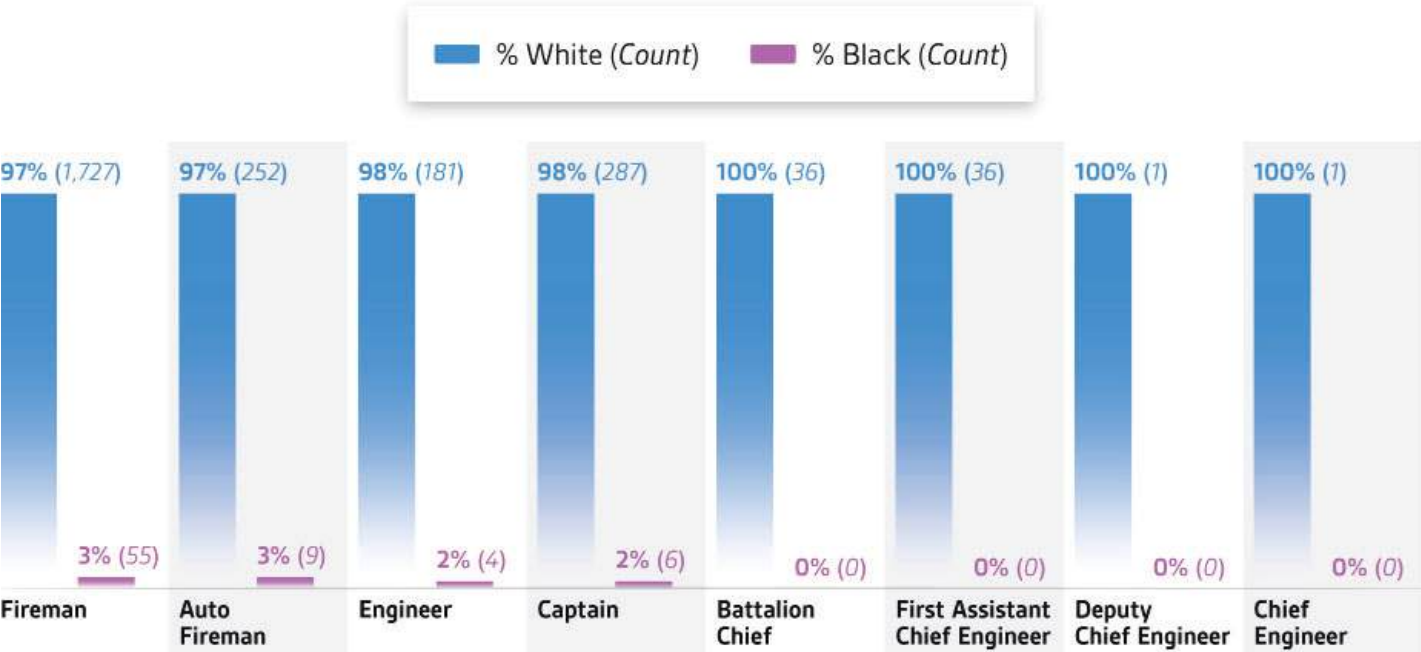
9 Sherwood, F. P., & Markey, B. (1959). *The mayor and the fire chief: The fight over integrating the Los Angeles Fire Department*. University of Alabama Press, 2-3.

**Figure 1.** Comparison of LAFD positions by race, 1953.  
**Source:** Sherwood and Markey, *The mayor and the fire chief*.

Fire Commissioners to accept a policy of desegregation, has been characterized by one white paper as a matter of frequent, “bargaining, pleading, and coercing.”<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that Poulson was not in the vanguard on race issues; as a member of the U.S. Congress, he voted against a fair employment practices bill. Furthermore, some observers claimed his efforts with LAFD were aimed more toward political grandstanding than effective leadership on integration.<sup>11</sup> At the time, the press characterized the fight between the Mayor’s Office and the fire chief as a proxy battle for political wars that were being fought on different fronts.

The City’s governance structure historically made effective changes difficult to achieve if department leadership proved intransigent.

10 Sherwood & Markey, *The mayor and the fire chief...*, 1.  
11 *ibid.*, 1, 3, 7.



Fire Chief John Alderson, who resisted substantive moves toward integration, was a case in point. When pressed for an explanation for the low numbers of Black hires to LAFD in the 1950s, Alderson blamed the situation on the lack of Black candidates with high school diplomas, which he argued was a product of their origins in the pre-war Deep South where they were denied access to education. He also complained that many of the Black firefighters working at the time had been hired illegally in a sort of precursor to affirmative action in the 1930s before his tenure. Alderson, along with much of the LAFD, argued that integration would damage the morale of the force because White firemen would be required to live alongside Black firemen.<sup>12</sup> He argued that his training program, which was integrated, would eventually lead to integrated firehouses and an integrated force. After a brief and very public battle with the NAACP and Mayor Poulson, Alderson and the Fire Commission simply declared LAFD did not discriminate and that there was no problem, so policy changes would not be forthcoming. The NAACP eventually filed suit and court records indicate that the commission, as well as rank-and-file firefighters who were White, supported segregation policies during

their depositions. They also argued that the Black fire stations were, "better than average buildings and facilities."<sup>13</sup> Even in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision in 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education*, Alderson claimed that the interests of the department as a whole superseded the rights of individual employees. This attitude prevailed until there was a change in leadership.

On January 1, 1956, Alderson was fired by a newly formed Fire Commission, which demanded that integration proceed apace. His successor, William Miller, oversaw, at least on paper, the elimination of the segregation policy by 1957, but discriminatory hiring practices continued to characterize LAFD for decades.

### ***Desegregating Municipal Agencies in the 1960s and 1970s***

The troubled 1960s offered the promise of better conditions for Black Angelenos, as well as insight into the scale of inequitable work and the urgency of addressing the issue; this would include hiring practices across Los Angeles' public sector beyond just LAFD. Such changes were on display in the public education system, as the incorporation of Black professionals into the

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

local school district, like other areas, moved slowly. Much like within City Hall and LAFD — and despite California statutes prohibiting discriminatory hiring practices — disparities between the number of Black teachers and teachers of other racial and ethnic groups were significant. Surveys conducted between 1957 and 1961 revealed that only 10 out of more than 100 districts, including the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), even hired Black teachers, and of 19,535 teachers employed locally, fewer than 5% (1,033) were Black. Moreover, Black teachers trailed behind teachers of other racial and ethnic groups documented by about 50%, according to one newspaper account. This data led the Community Relations Conference of Southern California to report that, “Negroes are the only teachers from a minority group likely to meet discrimination in Los Angeles County.”<sup>14</sup>

This disparity had direct impacts on students in the city, particularly young Black people. Research shows that students with access to teachers from their community and/or racial and ethnic groups have higher retention rates and fare better overall in kindergarten through 12th grade and beyond. Therefore, Los Angeles’ failure to employ Black teachers

at a rate proportional to the Black population, as well as other racial and ethnic groups, stands as a disinvestment in both Black educators and Black pupils in Los Angeles, as well as subsequent generations of potential academics, professionals, and educators.<sup>15</sup> To put the LAFD struggle in this context, Chief Alderson’s attempt to deflect blame for the lack of qualified Black firefighters could not all be laid at the feet of the education system in the Jim Crow South; systemic inequality was also built into Los Angeles’ schools.

During this era, historical events — and a historic mayoral election — had some influence on the direction and pace of integration in the area. The Watts Uprising in 1965 certainly caught the attention of city, state, and federal authorities, and it can be argued that some progress may be attributed to that attention, but there is also plenty of evidence to show that at the local level, substantive change was not seriously pursued.<sup>16</sup> One of the likely byproducts of the uprising and others like it across America in the mid-1960s was the advancement of federal and state civil rights legislation during the late 1960s. These new

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15 Perry, A. M. (2019, October 16). For better student outcomes, hire more Black teachers. *Brookings*.

16 Dawsey, D. (1990, July 8). 25 years after the Watts riots: McCone Commission’s recommendations have gone unheeded. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-07-08-me-455-story.html>.

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14 Robertson, S. G. (1962, March 1). L.A. confidential: Does discrimination exist in hiring of Negro teachers. *Los Angeles Sentinel*.



laws gave minority employees and job seekers some means of redress for past injustices starting in the 1970s.

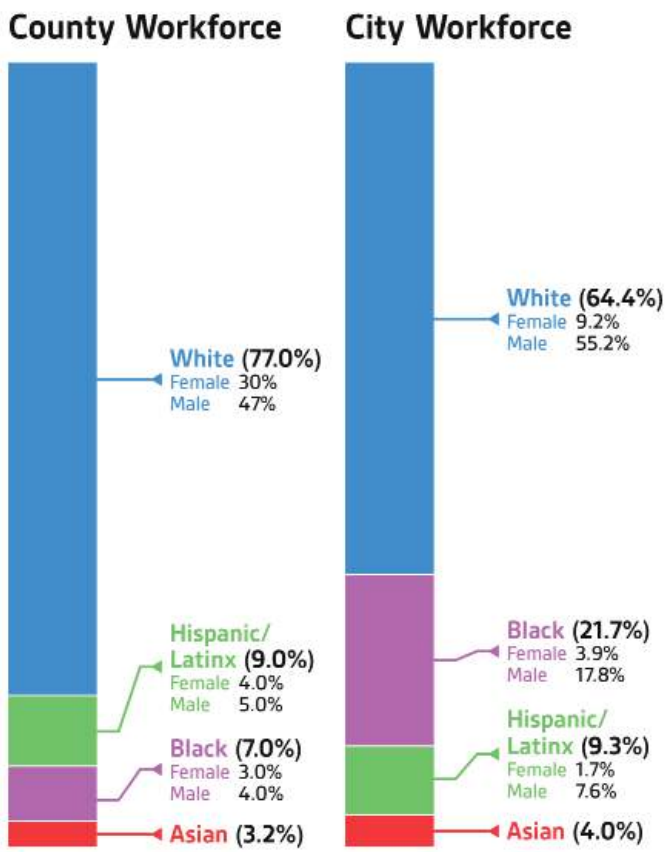
The election of Tom Bradley as the first Black mayor of Los Angeles in 1972 also appears to have given additional force to reform efforts. At the very least, Bradley required all City departments to analyze their workforces for bias and to implement corrective hiring practices where needed. Perhaps as a result, during the 1970s, opportunities for Black Angelenos expanded both at the top and the bottom of the pay scale in some City agencies.<sup>17</sup>

Among the earliest fruits of new civil rights legislation and Bradley's leadership was data on the racial and ethnic makeup and wage profiles of City employees. Finally, systematic evidence of discriminatory practices became public and analyses of the magnitude of inequities were possible.

An early, but important, study by scholar Patricia Huckle, whose research centered on gender equality, offered a penetrating analysis of the employment profile of the City government in the early 1970s that highlighted racial disparities in both who held

municipal jobs and wages. Huckle found that Black and White men were employed by the City, as a whole, at a rate that exceeded their respective proportions in the Los Angeles County area's workforce. (See Figure 2.) Black women were represented proportionately, as were Asian Americans of both genders. White women and Latinos of both genders were underrepresented.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 2.** Race and gender composition of the City of Los Angeles workforce and the overall workforce in Los Angeles County in 1973.  
*Source:* Huckle, Los Angeles City Employment. *Note:* Terms used are those of the study's author and are reflective of that period.  
*Note:* Terms used are those of the study's author and are reflective of that period.



17 Robert Gottlieb et al. (2006). *The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City*. University of California Press.

18 Huckle, P. A. (1974). *Los Angeles city employment of women: Opportunity, policies, and practices* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Southern California.

Huckle's study found that strong biases were evident in the representation and salaries in select areas of City government, particularly in administrative roles, protective services (LAPD/LAFD), and technicians. In 1973, White males occupied 96% of the jobs among officials and administrators, 82% of all professional jobs, 82% of jobs in protective services, and 79% of all technician jobs, despite only constituting 47% of the available workforce in Los Angeles County. (See Figure 3).<sup>19</sup>

Despite containing accurate information, the equally sized square fields in the above graphic suggest an unsubstantiated level of parity between groups. It should also be noted that the "County Workforce" mentioned refers to the entire LA County employment pool.

Even more troubling were the intra- and interdepartmental pay gaps between White males and nearly all other workers. In nearly every job category, people of color made less money than their White male counterparts. (See Figure 4.) Some of the disparity may be explained by differences in seniority. However, if the City had hired and promoted equitably, as it should have since 1950, a more just salary structure would likely have been evident by 1973.

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, 82

**Figure 3. Percent Comparison of Los Angeles City vs. County workforce by occupation, gender, and race in 1973**

Source: Huckle, Los Angeles City Employment.

Note: Terms used are those of the study's author and are reflective of that period.

|                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| % City Workforce    | ♀ | ♂ |
| vs County Workforce | ♀ | ♂ |

| Caucasian                             | Black      | Spanish Surnames | Asian American | Indian  |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------|----------------|---------|
| <b>Officials &amp; Administrators</b> |            |                  |                |         |
| 2%<br>-28%                            | 0%<br>-3%  | 1%<br>-3%        | 0%<br>-2%      | 0%<br>- |
| 96%<br>49%                            | 1%<br>-3%  | 2%<br>-6%        | 1%<br>-1%      | 0%<br>- |
| <b>Professional</b>                   |            |                  |                |         |
| 10%<br>-20%                           | 2%<br>-1%  | 0%<br>-4%        | 1%<br>-1%      | 0%<br>- |
| 82%<br>35%                            | 4%<br>0%   | 5%<br>-3%        | 8%<br>6%       | 1%<br>- |
| <b>Technicians</b>                    |            |                  |                |         |
| 8%<br>-22%                            | 2%<br>-1%  | 0%<br>-4%        | 0%<br>-2%      | 0%<br>- |
| 79%<br>32%                            | 7%<br>3%   | 7%<br>-1%        | 6%<br>4%       | 1%<br>- |
| <b>Protec. Serv.</b>                  |            |                  |                |         |
| 2%<br>-28%                            | 1%<br>-2%  | 0%<br>-4%        | 0%<br>-2%      | 0%<br>- |
| 82%<br>35%                            | 9%<br>5%   | 8%<br>0%         | 0%<br>-2%      | 1%<br>- |
| <b>Paraprof.</b>                      |            |                  |                |         |
| 27%<br>-3%                            | 17%<br>14% | 5%<br>1%         | 1%<br>-1%      | 0%<br>- |
| 55%<br>8%                             | 22%<br>18% | 19%<br>11%       | 4%<br>2%       | 1%<br>- |
| <b>Office &amp; Clerical</b>          |            |                  |                |         |
| 12%<br>-18%                           | 6%<br>3%   | 3%<br>-1%        | 2%<br>0%       | 0%<br>- |
| 6%<br>-41%                            | 2%<br>-2%  | 1%<br>-7%        | 0%<br>-2%      | 0%<br>- |
| <b>Skilled Craft</b>                  |            |                  |                |         |
| 0%<br>-30%                            | 0%<br>-3%  | 0%<br>-4%        | 0%<br>-2%      | 0%<br>- |
| 64%<br>17%                            | 24%<br>20% | 10%<br>2%        | 3%<br>1%       | 1%<br>- |
| <b>Service/Maintenance</b>            |            |                  |                |         |
| 0%<br>-30%                            | 2%<br>-1%  | 0%<br>-4%        | 0%<br>-2%      | 0%<br>- |
| 26%<br>-21%                           | 57%<br>53% | 15%<br>7%        | 2%<br>0%       | 1%<br>- |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          |            |                  |                |         |
| 11%<br>-19%                           | 5%<br>2%   | 2%<br>-2%        | 1%<br>-1%      | 0%<br>- |
| 66%<br>19%                            | 21%<br>17% | 9%<br>1%         | 3%<br>1%       | 1%<br>- |

**Figure 4.** Average salary by occupation, gender, and race compared to White males for Los Angeles City government workforce in 1973.  
Source: Huckle, Los Angeles City Employment.  
Note: Terms used are those of the study's author and are reflective of that period.



## Continued Resistance to Integration in LAPD and LAFD

The long and distressing relationship between people of color and LAPD officers is well-documented throughout this report (especially in “Racial Terror” chapter). Hence, it should come as little surprise that this department

also had a history of discriminatory hiring during the post-war era. Mayor Tom Bradley, who had been an officer before his rise to mayor, gained firsthand insight into the culture that came with such practices. According to one source, when Bradley joined the LAPD in 1940, “he became one of 100 Black officers in

a police department that had 4,000 officers.”<sup>20</sup> Bradley said many years later that he retired from LAPD in part because he found himself unable to rise above the rank of lieutenant. In 1998, he recalled his time on the force: “When I came on the department, there were literally two assignments for Black officers. You either worked Newton Street Division, which has a predominantly Black community, or you worked traffic downtown. You could not work with a White officer, and that continued until 1964.”<sup>21</sup> According to another account, by the time Bradley was elected mayor in 1972, only 5% of police officers in the LAPD were African-American.<sup>22</sup> At that time, Homer Broome was the only African-American captain on the force.<sup>23</sup> One result of those disparities was that at the time of the Watts Uprising in 1965, only five of the 205 police officers in the department's South Central region were Black.

### Widespread discriminatory hiring practices

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20 Merl, J., & Boyarsky, B. (1998, September 30). TOM BRADLEY: 1917-1998; Mayor who reshaped L.A. dies; Leaders: First Black to head city overcame racism to guide explosive growth and build coalitions. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://libproxy.csun.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/tom-bradley-1917-1998-mayor-who-reshaped-l-dies/docview/421313603/se-2>.

21 *ibid*.

22 Cannon, L. (1999). *Official negligence: How Rodney King and the riots changed Los Angeles and the LAPD* (p. 71). Basic Books.

23 Felch, J. (2007, November 27). LAPD's first black commander. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-nov-27-me-broome27-story.html>.

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 that forced the department to revoke policies designed to keep women from accessing a suite of employment categories and to pursue a series of policies to more actively recruit men and women officers from minority backgrounds. As Figure 5 suggests, in the wake of the consent decree, the LAPD made progress toward more proportional representation during the 1980s.

Although LAFD'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 already. By the early 1970s, when the local labor pool was only about 47% White, LAFD remained 92% White. A similar culture was evident in the Los Angeles County Fire Department, which was close to 99% White. Unlike LAFD, the County's fire department was ordered by the



federal government to change its unfair hiring practices. Under federal scrutiny, it appears that LA County Fire enacted a program that was successful in this aim during the 1970s, and the agency moved more rapidly toward proportional representation than their counterpart in the City of Los Angeles.

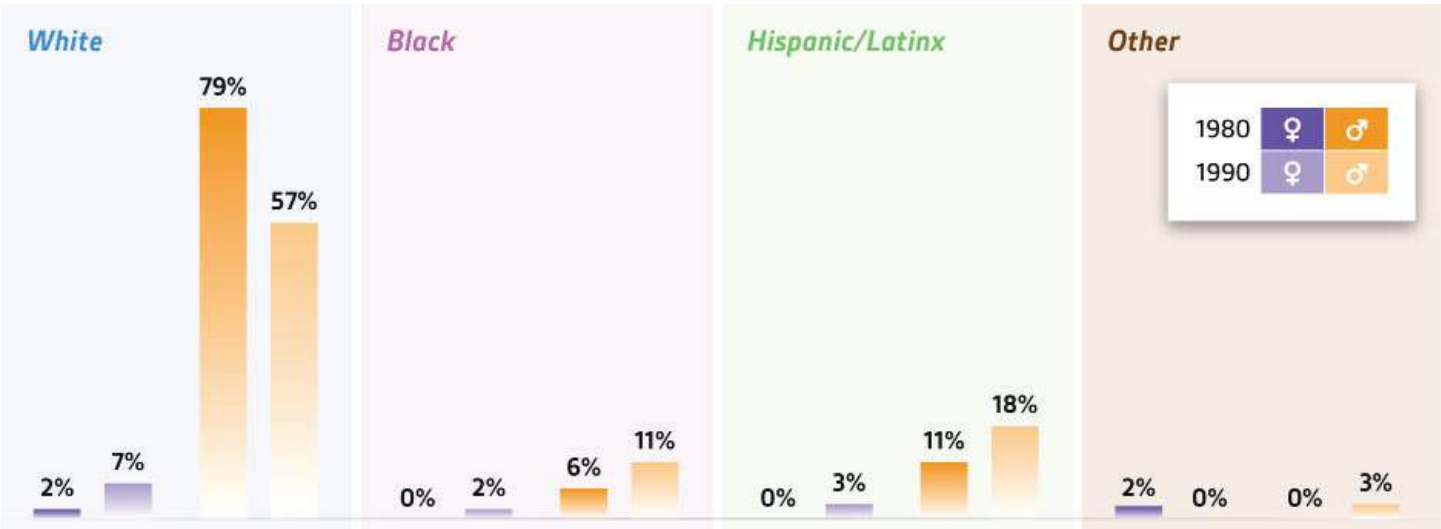
When Mayor Bradley required all City departments with hiring biases to develop a plan to work toward proportional representation, most complied in some fashion. However, LAFD's plan was openly criticized by minority members of the Fire Commission. Commission spokesperson Bertha Manos suggested —quite presciently— that the department's plan was so weak that, "it's going to be 100 years before we have proportionate hiring." Indeed, LAFD continued

hiring mostly White firemen. Minorities represented less than 10% of recruits from 1973 to 1974, despite Bradley's directive. The fire chief, Raymond M. Hill, directed the blame back at minorities, citing their purported "lack of response" to the application process as the central obstacle. The City Council also undermined integration efforts by refusing to fund a program designed to recruit minority firemen directly from colleges unless it removed provisions aimed at minority applicants. Perhaps another key reason for this shortcoming was how existing firefighters recruited friends and family into LAFD training programs as a way to help loved ones access what were lucrative careers.<sup>24</sup>

By the early 1980s, the situation had not

24 Shuit, D. (1974, May 10). L.A. Fire Dept. trails county's minority hiring. *Los Angeles Times*.

**Figure 5.** Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) sworn personnel by gender and race in 1980 and 1990. *Source:* LAPD, Equal Opportunity Development Division, Sworn Personnel by Rank, Sex and Ethnicity, (1975-1990); in George T. Felkenes, G.T., Paul Peretz, P., PhD, and Jean Reith Schroedel, J.R. PhD, (1993). *An Analysis of the Mandatory Hiring of Females, Women & Criminal Justice*, 4 (2), 31-63.



improved much. According to LAFD, only 7% of firefighters were Black, which was a 4% improvement over 1953, but only a 1% improvement over 1973. In 1980, only nine of the 63 training class graduates were Black. One newspaper account noted that although there were 194 Black firefighters, that number would need to increase to 416 to reach the City's target of around 16% of the LAFD force.<sup>25</sup> The statistics show that although the LAFD hiring process had perhaps changed, it was still ineffective — just as its critics predicted. (See Figure 6.)

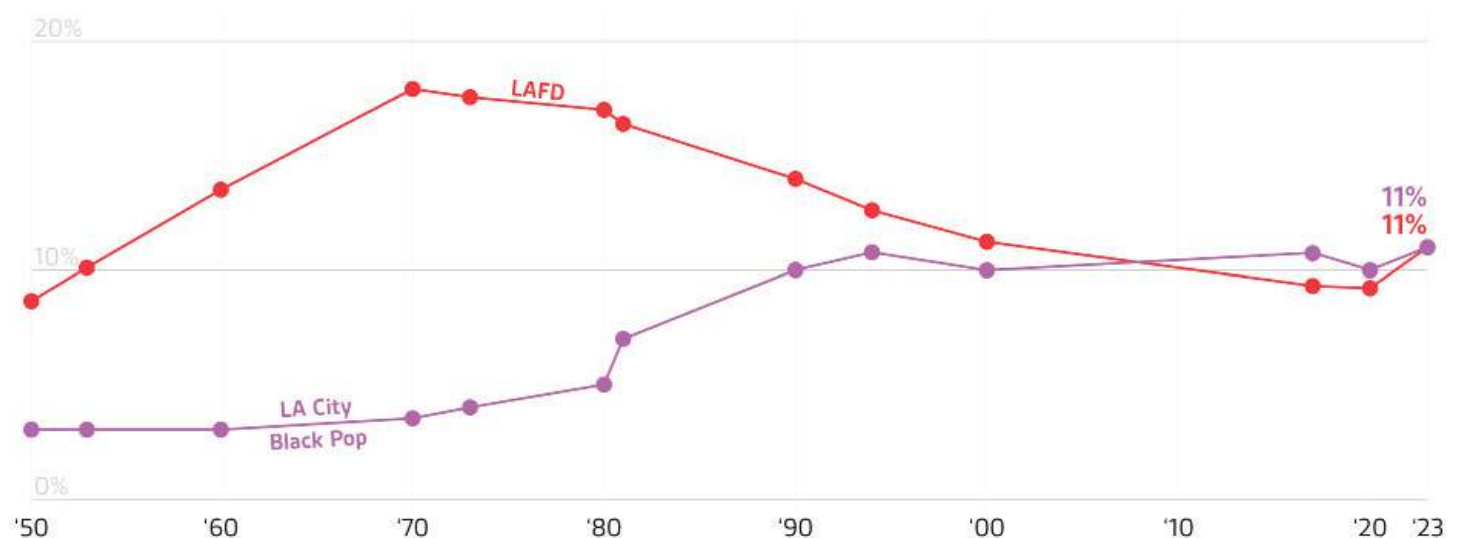
### ***Broader Forces that Hindered Equity in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s***

As the City progressed toward achieving proportional equity in its hiring practices,

25 Yaro, B. (1981, September 26). Fire department to seek nearly all-Black recruit class. *Los Angeles Times*.

**Figure 6.** Black percentage of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) employees compared to Los Angeles City population, 1950-2023.

*Source:* Sherwood and Markey, 1959; City of Los Angeles, 1980; Huckle, 1974; *Los Angeles Times*, 1996; U.S. Census Bureau.



other challenges became evident, including two state-level developments: 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 — as well as being understaffed — during the 1980s.

In the 1990s, Proposition 209, a ballot initiative prohibiting employment 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. The measure, which California voters passed in 1996, prohibited the use of preferential hiring practices that the City had been using to redress decades of discrimination. According

to testimony in a County of Los Angeles report, Proposition 209, “stagnated progress for African Americans in three fundamental areas of public sector employment: public higher education, government jobs, and public contracting.” The report notes that public contracting to minority groups decreased substantially — from 15% to 6% — and eventually the percentage of public contracts secured by Black firms dropped to as low as 0.3%. Despite such stark evidence, when given a chance to mitigate the ill effects of the proposition in 2020, state legislators failed to act.<sup>26</sup>

The Great Recession of 2007 to 2009 added an additional setback to the quest for an equitably balanced employment picture at City Hall. Budget cuts hit the state’s provisions for its neediest populations and resulted in layoffs and hiring freezes. According to a 2015 University of California, Los Angeles study, “During this time, of all demographic groups, Black women who were in the public sector became the most likely to enter unemployment and least likely to find

employment in the private sector, while Black men were most likely to remain long-term unemployed.”<sup>27</sup> While the recession was not the fault of City leadership, the experience of Black workers during that time made clear the lingering effects of decades of racial discrimination against Black Angelenos some forty years after the Civil Rights era.

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.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Transparency Issues***

In a 2004 executive directive on non-discrimination, Mayor James Hahn proclaimed, “For more than 30 years, our City has been a leader in promoting equal employment opportunity.”<sup>29</sup> However, verifying the truth of this assertion proves to be a challenge, in large part because of a lack of data. The City of Los Angeles, which has funded this study, was unable to find or retrieve many of its own

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26 County of Los Angeles Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative. (2022). Income & Employment. *Official 2021-2022 State of Black Los Angeles County Report*. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/86fb5288e0184c53b76b9a6f4ca1e709#ref-n-x03Wus>; County of Los Angeles Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative. (2023). 2022–2023 State of Black Los Angeles County Report: Companion Piece. [https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/lac/1141780\\_20230405StateofBlackLACompanionDocumentv7ARDInew.pdf](https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/lac/1141780_20230405StateofBlackLACompanionDocumentv7ARDInew.pdf)

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27 Ready to Work Uprooting Inequity: Black Workers in Los Angeles County. (2017). University of California, Los Angeles Labor Center. 21. [https://www.labor.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/UCLA\\_BWC\\_report\\_5-3\\_27-1.pdf](https://www.labor.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/UCLA_BWC_report_5-3_27-1.pdf)

28 Parker, E. (1999, March 18). L.A. County firemen file suit over racial bias. *Los Angeles Sentinel*.

29 Hahn, J. K. (2004, August 31). *Executive Directive No. PE-1 (Revised)*. City of Los Angeles. Retrieved from [https://personnel.lacity.gov/documents/exec\\_pe1.pdf](https://personnel.lacity.gov/documents/exec_pe1.pdf).

reports regarding the City's hiring practices. Most of the available historical data presented here on those practices has not come from the City's archives, nor from the records of the City of Los Angeles Personnel Department, or even from the Los Angeles Public Library, but rather from academic sources such as Huckle's 1974 dissertation, which analyzes gender bias in Los Angeles City Hall.

The best data available from the City of Los Angeles comes from the Controller's Office and its 2021 study, commissioned to examine the City's recent hiring practices and salary trends.<sup>30</sup> Once again recognizing that the employment profile of municipal employees should roughly reflect the population of Los Angeles, the report highlighted both the successes and failures of the City's efforts to bring its employment profile in line with its demographic profile and to close the wage and salary gaps that separate employees of various races and ethnicities and men from women. However, data regarding equity-related patterns and trends in hiring has been difficult to obtain: Repeated requests to the City for data from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s have proven fruitless. Information provided by

the Controller's Office for 2013-2018 contains no ethnicity or gender data.<sup>31</sup> Fortunately, the Controller's current employment data portal provides both robust data and transparency.<sup>32</sup>

Using these sources, we can confirm some key elements of the 2021 report, including:

- The municipal workforce reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the regional workforce.
- Asian and Black employees exceed the expected numbers based on the composition of the regional labor pool, and this is especially true for women of color.
- Departments, such as LAFD, Building and Safety, and the Zoo and Botanical Gardens remain out of alignment with local demographics.
- Significant disparities in salary remain within departments and across all agencies. White employees make more money in general, and White men remain the highest-paid municipal employees.
- White men make up more than half of the top 100 paid positions in the City.

Significant progress has been made in the last 15 years in most departments and agencies. Those advances that the City has made should not be discounted. However, the details paint a larger picture of which improvements are still necessary. Although the sheer

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31 Los Angeles City Controller's Office. (n.d.). City Employee Payroll (2013-2018). [https://controllerdata.lacity.org/Payroll/City-Employee-Payroll-2013-2018-/pazn-qyym/about\\_data](https://controllerdata.lacity.org/Payroll/City-Employee-Payroll-2013-2018-/pazn-qyym/about_data)

32 Los Angeles City Controller's Office. (n.d.). City Employee Payroll (Current). [https://controllerdata.lacity.org/Payroll/City-Employee-Payroll-Current-/g9h8-fvhu/about\\_data](https://controllerdata.lacity.org/Payroll/City-Employee-Payroll-Current-/g9h8-fvhu/about_data)

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30 Galperin, R. (2021). *Diversity with equity: Achieving fairness at the City of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles City Controller's Office. Retrieved from <https://controller.lacity.gov/audits/diversitywithequity>.

number of Black workers surpasses overall demographic expectations, they have yet to be fully integrated into certain departments and continue to lag behind in terms of salary amounts. Additionally, while the snapshot of 2021 report is revealing, continued reporting of updated statistics, as well as further study of the City's history with hiring and wages, is absolutely critical.

### ***Estimating Wage Loss Due to Hiring and Wage Discrimination***

Considering the dearth of quality data on employment and salaries for local government workers, this preliminary study is unable to give a robust estimation of wages lost by the City's African American employees. It is assumed that prior to the era of the Civil Rights Movement, there was little to no systematic collection of data on wages and employment by gender or race and ethnicity by City governments. However, an estimate of lost wages since 1973 can be generated using data from Patricia Huckle's investigation into the City's hiring and salary structure in the 1970s and the City Controller's office from recent years.

Had the City acted upon Councilman Roybal's calls for fair employment practices in 1949 or willingly adhered to California's 1959 Fair

Employment and Housing Act, by 1973 there would have been almost no lingering disparities in employment or salary within City agencies. However, active and effective resistance to workforce integration and the call to provide equitable opportunities for advancement have undermined state and national law for many years. As a result, the effects of pervasive systemic bias were still evident when Mayor Bradley demanded a proper accounting of the City's hiring practices, and they continue to be today.

Huckle's analysis of Los Angeles' hiring and salary practices was built on data from an "Employee Survey" conducted by the City and workforce participation data for Los Angeles County broken down by race, ethnicity and gender. (See Figure 7.)

Using Huckle's data, an estimate of lost wage opportunities for 1973 can be calculated by multiplying the number of expected employees per gender and racial or ethnic category based on local labor pool estimates, and then multiplying those results by the average annual salary earned within each category. The difference between realized wages and expected wages is the lost wage opportunity. Then, by adjusting the difference for inflation, we can begin to see how much



earning potential in today's (2023) dollars was denied to women and minorities in 1973 alone, and we can then begin to estimate how much was potentially lost by generations before and after.

Figure 8 is complex but several major points are worth emphasizing. In 1973, White males were vastly overrepresented in employment and salary. White women were the most underrepresented in City government, and the overall salary loss was greatest for that demographic, though this may be a byproduct of low demand among White women for employment with the City at that time. Indeed, women of all races and ethnicities were underrepresented, and women of some groups were completely absent in various occupational categories. For example, there were no Black women among officials and administrators, which required us to use salary figures from White women to estimate the lost potential salary.

Among men, African Americans were the most systematically underpaid. They were the only male demographic earning below the overall average salary. Only in two occupational categories ("Professional" and "Office and Clerical") were Black men at or above parity in terms of salary with their peers. In the skilled

craft and protective services categories, Black men were the most underpaid versus their male peers. Overall, lost wage opportunities for Black workers within City government in 1973 amounted to an estimated \$50 million in today's money.

A similar analysis was conducted for City workers using the data from the 2021 report, which allowed us to identify the salary of each contract position type within each department by race and ethnicity. From that data, we were able to calculate the difference between the total number of full-time employees per job category by race and ethnicity and the expected number based on the demographics of the local labor pool. We also calculated an expected salary per job category using the average salary for all employees with the same job title category. Naturally, discrepancies should be expected between the observed salaries and those of a hypothetically representative workforce in which everyone is paid the same salary as coworkers in each employment category in every department. However, such discrepancies should be within a few percentage points in categories with a large number of employees, within large departments and agencies, and across City government as a whole.

**Figure 7.** Average salary by occupational category, gender, and ethnicity for the Los Angeles City government workforce in 1973.

**Source:** Huckle, Los Angeles City Employment.

Note: Terms used are those of the study's author and are reflective of that period.

| <div># Average Salary</div> <div>♀ ♂</div> |          |                  |                |          |          |
|--|----------|------------------|----------------|----------|----------|
| Caucasian                                  | Black    | Spanish Surnames | Asian American | Indian   | Overall  |
| <b>Officials &amp; Administrators</b>      |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$28,730                                   | -        | \$25,376         | \$19,448       | -        | \$26,442 |
| \$31,148                                   | \$28,938 | \$23,972         | \$39,026       | -        | \$31,070 |
| <b>Professional</b>                        |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$13,182                                   | \$12,818 | \$12,272         | \$13,156       | \$13,364 | \$13,130 |
| \$18,304                                   | \$15,548 | \$16,458         | \$17,056       | \$17,446 | \$15,392 |
| <b>Technicians</b>                         |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$11,674                                   | \$10,608 | \$9,750          | \$11,284       | \$11,648 | \$11,414 |
| \$15,678                                   | \$13,962 | \$14,716         | \$13,754       | \$15,184 | \$15,366 |
| <b>Protec. Serv.</b>                       |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$11,622                                   | \$10,374 | \$12,012         | -              | -        | \$11,362 |
| \$13,728                                   | \$11,726 | \$12,766         | \$12,688       | \$13,936 | \$13,468 |
| <b>Paraprof.</b>                           |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$9,308                                    | \$9,386  | \$9,464          | \$11,232       | -        | \$9,386  |
| \$9,178                                    | \$9,100  | \$9,360          | \$8,778        | \$7,878  | \$9,178  |
| <b>Office &amp; Clerical</b>               |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$9,022                                    | \$8,372  | \$8,268          | \$9,152        | \$8,138  | \$8,762  |
| \$10,972                                   | \$9,958  | \$9,698          | \$9,776        | \$10,270 | \$10,556 |
| <b>Skilled Craft</b>                       |          |                  |                |          |          |
| -  | \$12,012 | -                | -              | \$12,194 | \$12,090 |
| \$14,768                                   | \$12,402 | \$13,312         | \$13,234       | \$13,988 | \$14,014 |
| <b>Service/Maintenance</b>                 |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$8,736                                    | \$7,800  | \$7,592          | -              | -        | \$7,904  |
| \$10,478                                   | \$9,360  | \$9,412          | \$10,166       | \$10,140 | \$9,672  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                               |          |                  |                |          |          |
| \$9,958                                    | \$8,736  | \$8,554          | \$9,672        | \$9,048  | \$9,464  |
| \$14,898                                   | \$10,920 | \$12,220         | \$14,118       | \$14,040 | \$13,780 |

**Figure 8.** Lost yearly wage opportunities by occupational category, gender and ethnicity in 1973 and 2023 dollars.

Source: Huckle, Los Angeles City Employment.

Note: Terms used are those of the study's author and are reflective of that period.

| Caucasian                  | Black                 | Spanish Surnames      | Asian American       | Indian               |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Officials & Administrators |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(966,756.11)             | \$(102,680)           | \$(269,987)           | \$(100,362)          | \$(34,227)           |
| \$157,595                  | \$(83,178)            | \$(676,526)           | \$15,487             | \$(30,988)           |
| Professional               |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(16,086,261)             | \$(1,400,037)         | \$(3,978,865)         | \$(97,632)           | \$(641,443)          |
| \$31,874,380               | \$66,029              | \$2,053,468           | \$4,645,887          | \$146,466            |
| Technicians                |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(24,955,464)             | \$(2,346,367)         | \$(6,257,989)         | \$(695,190)          | \$(1,037,677)        |
| \$5,644,093                | \$(863,874)           | \$(169,421)           | \$(1,852,209)        | \$31,209             |
| Protec. Serv.              |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(25,607,000)             | \$(3,766,043)         | \$(2,775,148)         | \$(914,667)          | \$(914,667)          |
| \$5,247,772                | \$(4,323,034)         | \$(96,061)            | \$(196,828)          | \$78,324             |
| Paraprof.                  |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$9,909                    | \$15,413              | \$2,677               | \$12,884             | \$822                |
| \$(9,628)                  | \$(21,179)            | \$7,302               | \$(9,546)            | \$(8,878)            |
| Office & Clerical          |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(1,077,312)              | \$(6,578,079)         | \$(2,421,599)         | \$(353,318)          | \$(330,811)          |
| \$23,467,841               | \$985,741             | \$961,579             | \$101,338            | \$412,074            |
| Skilled Craft              |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(269,245,784)            | \$(3,818,016)         | \$(35,899,438)        | \$(8,974,859)        | \$(1,152,797)        |
| \$8,049,607                | \$(20,348,762)        | \$(679,478)           | \$(762,441)          | \$(7,242)            |
| Service/Maintenance        |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(10,970,181)             | \$(751,101)           | \$(3,277,871)         | \$(368,727)          | \$(368,727)          |
| \$7,658,464                | \$(5,787,306)         | \$(565,541)           | \$170,614            | \$84,785             |
| TOTAL                      |                       |                       |                      |                      |
| \$(348,898,850)            | \$(18,746,910)        | \$(54,878,220)        | \$(11,491,871)       | \$(4,479,526)        |
| \$82,090,124               | \$(30,375,562)        | \$835,321             | \$2,112,302          | \$705,751            |
| <b>\$(266,808,726)</b>     | <b>\$(49,122,472)</b> | <b>\$(54,042,899)</b> | <b>\$(9,379,570)</b> | <b>\$(3,773,775)</b> |

Our analysis of the differences across all departments in the City indicates that African Americans are currently overrepresented in municipal government by several thousand employees. (See Figure 9). This partly reflects a lag effect caused by an aging Black workforce in City government that reflects hiring targets from 10 to 20 years ago when Black people constituted a larger percentage of the Los Angeles labor pool. Latinos, the fastest-growing population in Los Angeles' labor pool today, are currently underrepresented in City government.

To calculate the entire sum of lost opportunity wages for African Americans since 1950, we chose to conservatively assume that African Americans achieved employment and wage parity in 2010, in part because according to the Controller's 2021 report, 2010 was the year when "people of color" — everyone except non-Hispanic Whites — constituted 69% of the City's labor force, an amount roughly matching the demographics of the local labor pool. Using this timeframe and our estimate of \$50 million in lost opportunity wages in 1973, and assuming that Black wage and employment conditions would have improved at a constant of 1.33% each year between 1950 and 2010 (with 1973 as the anchor year), a sum of roughly \$2.5 billion in

lost opportunity wages emerges. Additional data and a more sophisticated model that includes dynamic adjustments for inflation and the labor market may reduce or increase this estimate.

Regardless of the specific assumptions endemic to a model of lost opportunity wages, over the course of many generations, systemic racism built into Los Angeles' hiring and salary structures has robbed qualified African Americans of both the opportunities to work for the City and the right to be compensated fairly when they were actually hired. The value of these lost opportunities is difficult to calculate, given the lack of quality data at this time, but even conservative estimates are in the hundreds of millions of dollars, if not several billion — and that does not include the unrealized advantages of having access to good healthcare and fringe benefits, as well as the lost economic opportunities to invest in property and familial capital, i.e., college tuition, that comes with employment at many City agencies.

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



**Figure 9.** LA City Employee Profile in 2020.City Government Employment Profile vs. Expected (Local Labor Market) by Ethnicity in 2020.

Source: Ron Galperin, Los Angeles City Controller's Office, 2021.

| <b>Race</b>     | <b>Total City Employees</b> | <b>Expected Employees<br/>(based on local labor market)</b> | <b>Difference</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Asian           | 7,303                       | 6,466   | 857               |
| Black           | 11,254                      | 6,466   | 4,788             |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 28,635                      | 35,203  | (6,568)           |
| White           | 17,692                      | 20,834  | (3,142)           |
| Other           | 6,959                       | 2,874   | 4,085             |

from the various agencies tasked with ensuring equal opportunity for all people in municipal hiring and salary decisions. This progress is laudable, but it does not erase decades of both passive and active resistance to racial integration, fairness in promotion, and equitable pay practices by the City. Hundreds of millions, or even a few billion, dollars in opportunities were denied to residents of Los Angeles, often for little more than their racial or ethnic background. This injustice was especially sharp for Black Angelenos, many of whom had come to Los Angeles from the Deep South seeking the opportunities denied to them elsewhere in the United States and was largely perpetrated by the very government charged with ensuring those opportunities were available to all citizens. It is incumbent upon the residents of Los Angeles, and especially City leadership, to not only recognize the injustices of the past,

but to seek solutions to compensate those families who were denied opportunities which were made freely available to others.



## Summary of Findings

Los Angeles' public agencies have a checkered record when it comes to hiring Black individuals. The City has been a source of employment for many Black citizens since the 19th century, and many departments have displayed a consistent pattern of hiring Black citizens at a rate consistent with the local population profile, especially where wages and working conditions were 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 among the United States Postal Service's and the LAPD's early hires.
- After World War II, the public sector provided stable jobs, but the best positions were often reserved for White workers. Throughout the 20th century, LAPD and LAFD were strongholds of anti-Black sentiment, resisting integration despite external pressures.
- 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.
- Pay parity remains an issue today, 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 potential wages for Black employees since 1950.

# Separate and Unequal Education

## Abstract

In this chapter we examine educational outcomes. Research reveals a stark history of harms that Black children suffered and continue to suffer within the educational system. Since African American Angelinos were already being forced to inhabit segregated communities as a result of restrictive housing covenants and other policies aimed at protecting White neighborhoods, the schools that Black children attended were de facto segregated, as well. Additionally, a host of communities and civic leaders have crafted policies that continue to perpetuate the practice of grouping of students by race, and the lack of cultural representation and cultural competence is linked to disparities in school outcomes. Having a high police presence in schools translates to higher arrest rates for offenses that would ordinarily be categorized as non-criminal and / or typical adolescent behavior, perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline.

## Key Terms

***de Jure & de Facto***: De jure is a legal concept that refers to what ought to be the case according to the law. De facto refers to the actual case in practice or reality.

***Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19)***: A disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

***Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)***: A public school district in Los Angeles County, California. It is the largest public school system in California in terms of number of students and the second-largest public school district in the United States.

## Overview

The right to receive a quality education was one of the major goals of the Civil Rights Movement. However, over the course of the 20th century, that mission met opposition which denied quality education to Black children based, at least in part, on entrenched belief in pseudoscientific theories about the

intellectual capabilities of African Americans.<sup>1</sup> These racial theories served one purpose: to determine the life outcomes of students, whether they were Black or White. School segregation, then, has been rooted in refusing

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<sup>1</sup> State of California Department of Justice/ Office of the Attorney General/Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2022). The California Reparations Interim Report, 97.

African Americans better financial and personal outcomes. Studies show that school segregation by race widens the inequality of outcomes between White and minority students.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, African American students who attend integrated schools achieve more success, “in attending selective colleges, higher income, better jobs, less incarceration, and better long-term health.”<sup>3</sup> This is why educational opportunities for African Americans are imperative to ensuring their sustained health and financial, cultural, and social well-being. Yet, local boards of education, city governments, and communities across the country have a troubled history of failing to provide access to quality education to Black residents. Los Angeles is no different.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ended *de jure* segregation in public schools. However, the landmark decision had little effect on eliminating *de facto* segregation, which was maintained through segregated neighborhoods across the United States as discussed in the “Housing Segregation”

chapter of this report. A prime example of how *de facto* segregation endured is the case of *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* in 1971. In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area of North Carolina, 14,000 Black students attended schools that were either totally or 99% Black. This separation was a remnant of Jim Crow practices that *Brown v. Board* found unconstitutional. The courts ruled that even though Charlotte schools no longer had explicit policies for segregation, they were still *de facto* segregated. In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed schools to use broad remedial plans to achieve integration, including busing.<sup>4</sup> However, challenges to busing in the 1990s enabled White communities to resegregate their schools through the process of creating “neighborhood school zones.” Rather than busing in students who did not live in these zones, they were assigned to other schools. By 2002, schools in Charlotte had been effectively resegregated. The history of school segregation in Los Angeles followed this familiar path, as a host of communities and civic leaders crafted policies that continue to propel the practice of isolating groups of students by race to the present day.

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2 Billings, S. et al. (2013). School Segregation, Educational Attainment and Crime: Evidence from the end of Busing in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 129(1), 435–476. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjt026>; Edsall, T.B. (2023, April 5). Who’s Afraid of Integration? A Lot of People, Actually. *The New York Times*.

3 Orfield, G. et al. (2019). *Harming Our Common Future: America’s Segregated Schools 65 Years after Brown*. University of California, Los Angeles Civil Rights Project.8.

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4 Billings et al., School Segregation, Educational Attainment and Crime..., 2.

The effect of de facto segregation on America's overall educational system has been devastating. The Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), notes that the number of schools in which students of color make up 90% of the student body has tripled over the last 20 years. At least 40% of Black and Latino school-age children attend schools in which nine out of 10 students are students of color. White students attend schools that, on average, are 69% White.<sup>5</sup> Further, the Civil Rights Project has found that students who attend segregated schools are more likely to lack the educational opportunities to develop "emotional and cognitive competencies" necessary to embrace differences in other populations. As this chapter will show, Los Angeles is no stranger to this phenomenon, as many of its Black children are not being prepared by local schools in a variety of measurable ways.

### ***California's History of Segregation***

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.<sup>6</sup> 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 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.<sup>7</sup>

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 communities' efforts to build schools. The first state-supported school for Black students in California opened in 1858 in Marysville, just north of Sacramento. When an African American girl challenged the San Francisco School Board of Education's policy of segregation, the Supreme Court of California upheld a ruling from 1874 that determined segregated schools to be legal in the state. Andrew Moulder, a state superintendent of schools, defended the practice in explicitly

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6 Noel, J. (2004, November 3-7). *The Creation of the First State-Supported Colored School in Marysville, California: A Community's Legacy* [Paper presentation]. Annual Conference of the History of Education Society. 3.

7 State of California Department of Public Instruction. (1866, March 24). Revised School Law, Sections 57–59.

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5 Orfield et al., *Harming Our Common Future...*, 4.

racist terms, stating, “The great mass of our citizens will not associate in terms of equality with these inferior races, nor will they consent that their children do so.”<sup>8</sup> As a result of concerted efforts by White parents, school boards, and the state superintendent, minority students (Asian, Native American, and African American) were segregated from White students until 1880.

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court made it clear that segregating children in public schools on the basis of race was unconstitutional, eliminating one of the most important vestiges of the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that allowed for “separate but equal” segregation. Nevertheless, as in other parts of the United States, White parents in California sought to segregate their children from those of non-White families. In the 1890’s, California was one of the top four most segregated states (alongside New York, Illinois, and Maryland). The legacy of these policies continues to unfold across our state. Currently, although Black students only make up 5.5% of the state’s total school population, 50.8% of them attend schools that are 90% to 100% non-White.<sup>9</sup>

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8 Teach Democracy. (2007). *Mendez v. Westminster: Paving the Way to School Desegregation*. <https://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-23-2-c-mendez-v-westminster-paving-the-way-to-school-desegregation>

9 Orfield et al., *Harming Our Common Future*..., 27, Table 6.

## ***School Segregation in Los Angeles***

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.<sup>10</sup> Later, John C. Fremont High School became predominantly Black. Younger Black students were also segregated at Carver, Adams, Mount Vernon, Edison, Foshay, Markham, and Gompers.<sup>11</sup>

In 1954, the *Brown v. Board* decision had little impact on de facto segregation in Northern and Western cities, including Los Angeles, where the Board of Education’s policy was to assign students based on geographic location rather than by race.<sup>12</sup> Since African Americans were already being forced to inhabit segregated communities 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. Another way all-White schools were maintained in Los

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10 The name of the high school was officially changed in 2020 to remove references to its namesake, who was an ardent proponent of eugenics.

11 The Struggle to Desegregate Los Angeles Schools, 1940–1970 [Lesson Plan]. California State University, Northridge. 8–10. <https://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/Lesson%203%20%28Interactive%29.pdf>; Sides, J. (2003). *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (1st ed.). University of California Press. 114.

12 *ibid.*, 8.



Angeles, as well as in other cities across the state, was through a policy of championing what were referred to as “community schools.” These schools were ostensibly designed to serve specific communities, meaning that even if students lived directly across the street from a school, they may have been forced to attend a different school farther from their homes because the closer school was not designated as being in their “community.” In other words, 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. One study notes that Los Angeles’ Black students largely attended 93 “overwhelmingly segregated, underfunded and overcrowded schools while most of the remaining 400 or so schools were entirely all-White or almost so.”<sup>13</sup> According to the same study, three-quarters of all Los Angeles elementary schools were predominantly White, yet 90% of elementary schools that were overwhelmingly African American and Latino had to limit school sessions to half a day due to overcrowding.

When Black parents protested policies that buttressed de facto segregation, their pleas were rebuffed or flatly ignored.<sup>14</sup> During election cycles, many politicians seeking office ran on “anti-integration platforms,”<sup>15</sup> and, when elected, subsequently refused any 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.

### ***Lagging Educational Outcomes for Black Students***

According to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), African American enrollment has steadily decreased over the past four years. In the 2023-2024 school year, there were 29,887 African American students enrolled in the district’s schools.<sup>16</sup> In 2017–2018, African American students represented

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> According to LAUSD enrollment data, in 2017–2018 there were 50,557 Black students in the district; in 2020–2021 there were 34,233 Black students (around 7% of all students); in 2021–2022 there were 30,919 Black students (around 7% of all students); and in 2022–2023 there were 30,370 Black students (around 7% of all students). See LAUSD Dashboard, <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard#>.

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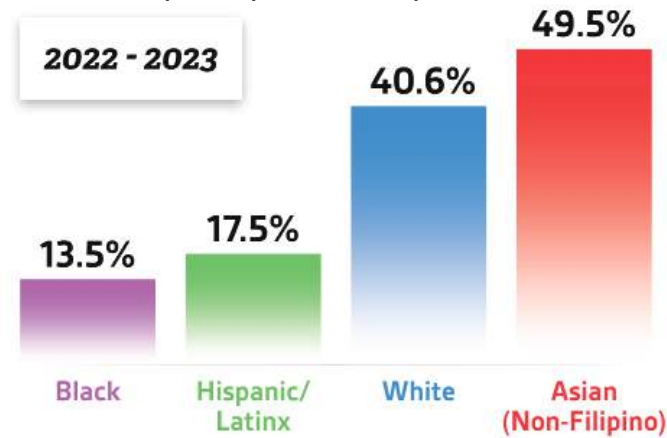
<sup>13</sup> Hartford, B. (2023, August 31). Background: Northern Defacto School Segregation. <https://www.crmvet.org/docs/nor/skools.htm#>

just 8% of all students in the district. Although the percentage may be relatively small compared to other racial and ethnic groups, if African Americans in Los Angeles were taught separately, they would comprise the 11th-largest school district in California.<sup>17</sup>

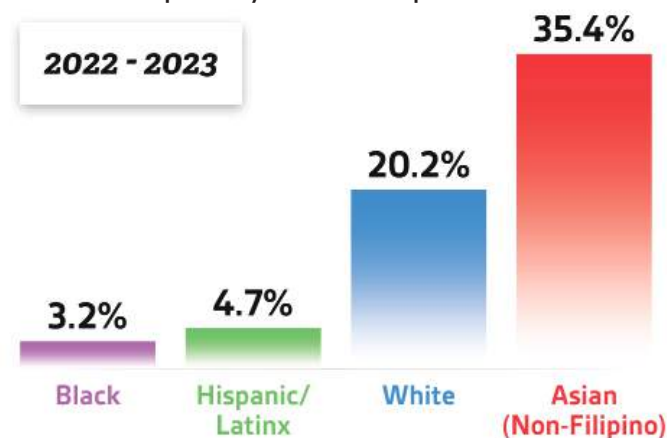
Furthermore, Black students in Los Angeles are not being prepared academically. Data indicates that in the 2022-2023 school year, just 13.5% of Black 11th-graders nearing graduation were adequately prepared for college-level English, compared to 40.6% of White 11th-graders. (See Figure 1.) Just 3.2% of Black 11th-graders were prepared for college-level math compared to 20.2% of their White counterparts. (See Figure 2.) Similarly, African American students lag behind other racial and ethnic groups when it comes to enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, measuring at 20.1% for Black students versus 35.6% for White students. (See Figure 3.) These statistics are part of the ongoing legacy of racial segregation in Los Angeles schools.

Relative to other groups, African American students do not have access to, nor are they attending, high-performing schools. The causes for this failure in achievement

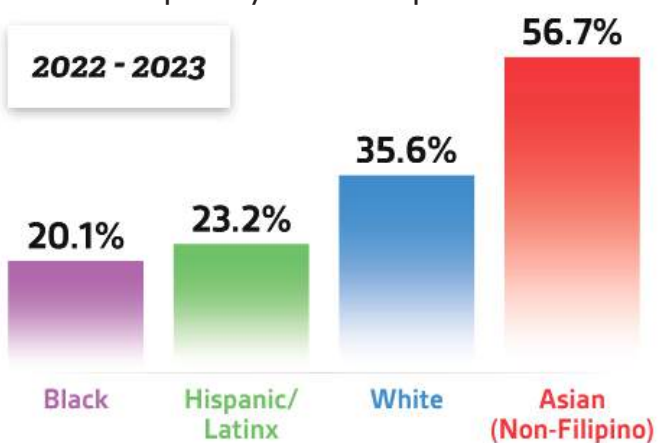
**Figure 1.** LAUSD 11th grade English preparedness by race (2022-2023 school year).  
Source: Los Angeles Unified School District. *Open Data Dashboard*. <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard>



**Figure 2.** LAUSD 11th grade math preparedness by race (2022-2023 school year).  
Source: Los Angeles Unified School District. *Open Data Dashboard*. <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard>



**Figure 3.** LAUSD student AP course enrollment (2022-2023 school year).  
Source: Los Angeles Unified School District. *Open Data Dashboard*. <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard>



17 Central City Neighborhood Partners, (n.d.). Spotlight on African American Students in Los Angeles. [https://innovateschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/LA-African-American-Data-Brief-2017-18\\_Spreads-1.pdf](https://innovateschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/LA-African-American-Data-Brief-2017-18_Spreads-1.pdf)

are complicated yet widespread. A reflexive answer to why African American students perform below standards would place the blame at the feet of their parents. However, a 2017-2018 LAUSD School Experience Survey noted that 56% of African American respondents did not consider their school to be a supportive or academically inviting environment.<sup>18</sup> Only half of the respondents stated that their teachers graded them fairly. A slight majority of African Americans believed Los Angeles schools were failing their children. However, LAUSD has made remarkable strides in making African American students feel more welcome in its schools. Their 2022-2023 School Experience Survey showed an increase of 16 percentage points in African American students who feel LAUSD schools are supportive and inviting.<sup>19</sup>

The assumption that Black parents are to blame for academic disparities stands parallel to White teachers' sometimes shocking beliefs regarding racial differences. 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 their White peers.<sup>20</sup> An alarming percentage of White teachers believe in the inherent inferiority of Black students and the superiority of non-Black students. It can then be inferred that teaching Black students is informed by these pseudoscientific beliefs, and that the "model minority" myth, the idea that suggests that certain minority groups, unlike African Americans, are successful and well adjusted, feeds into lower outcomes for Black students in subjects like math and science. What is consistent across children of all races is that the more financially-distressed students are, the lower their scores will be on all standardized tests. Poverty does not explain this whole phenomenon, but it explains enough. 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. Such inequity explains why Black parents tend to blame the schools themselves for their children's under-performance.

The percentage of Black students attending LAUSD schools who are eligible for the University of California (UC) and California

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18 Los Angeles Unified School District. (n.d.). *LAUSD School Experience Survey Results Student Subgroups 2017-2018*. <https://www.lausd.org/Page/15459>

19 Los Angeles Unified. (n.d.). *LAUSD School Experience Survey Results Student Subgroups 2022-2023*. <https://www.lausd.org/Page/19093>

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20 Samuels, C.A. (2020, January 6). Who's to Blame for the Black-White Achievement Gap? *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/whos-to-blame-for-the-black-white-achievement-gap/2020/01>

State University (CSU) systems remains below the average state and county eligibility standards at just 45.7% in the 2021-2022 school year compared to 50.5% for all students and 62.7% for White students. It can be inferred that the LAUSD may have to make additional strides to prepare Black students to enter the state's university systems and to endure the rigors of higher education in general.

### ***Conditions that Shape Student Performance, with Divergent Results***

A recent UCLA study, *Beyond the Schoolhouse: Digging Deeper — COVID-19 & Reopening Schools for Black Students in Los Angeles*, notes that the impact of “social, health and environmental conditions” has been overlooked by researchers attempting to understand the low academic performance of Black students. The report finds that Black students in Los Angeles County are more likely to be unhoused, diagnosed with learning disabilities, suffer from various forms of trauma and abuse, and experience time in foster care and group homes. In LAUSD, at least 53% of Black families live at a quarter of the federal poverty level, translating to a majority of Black students enrolled in public schools in Los Angeles, both the city and the county,

coming from low-income backgrounds.<sup>21</sup>

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 in and often restricted to neighborhoods in close proximity to environmental hazards. As outlined in the chapter on “Racism in the Environment and Infrastructure” of this report, Black families suffer from higher exposure to pollution than other racial or ethnic groups. This can affect the number of days students spend in class, as well as lead to higher dropout rates and diminished academic performance.<sup>22</sup>

The surrounding conditions for education also include disciplinary issues, both in terms of individual student behavior and student interactions with law enforcement on campus, the latter of which can have high stakes. Los Angeles schools continue to discipline African American students at disproportionate rates: From 2022 to 2023, for every White student who was suspended, the LAUSD suspended three Black students.

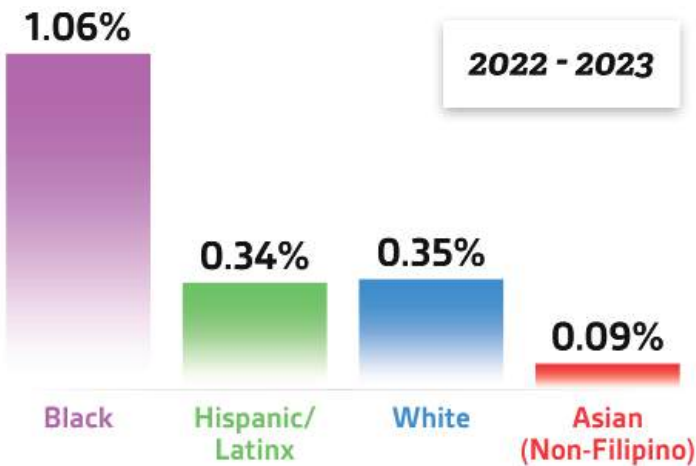
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21 Johnson Jr., S. L. et al. (2021). *Beyond the Schoolhouse: Digging Deeper—COVID-19 & Reopening Schools for Black Students in Los Angeles*. University of California, Los Angeles Center for the Transformation of Schools. 8. <https://transformschoools.ucla.edu/research/beyond-the-schoolhouse-digging-deeper>

22 *ibid.*, 15.

**Figure 4.** LAUSD student suspensions (2022-2023 school year).

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District. *Open Data Dashboard*. <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard>



The LAUSD has the largest school police department in the world.<sup>23</sup> Having a high police presence in schools translates to higher arrest rates for offenses that would ordinarily be categorized as non-criminal and / or typical adolescent behavior. Black students are thus 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.<sup>24</sup> In the LAUSD, Black children, who make up just 8% of the overall student population, account for 25% of interactions with school police.

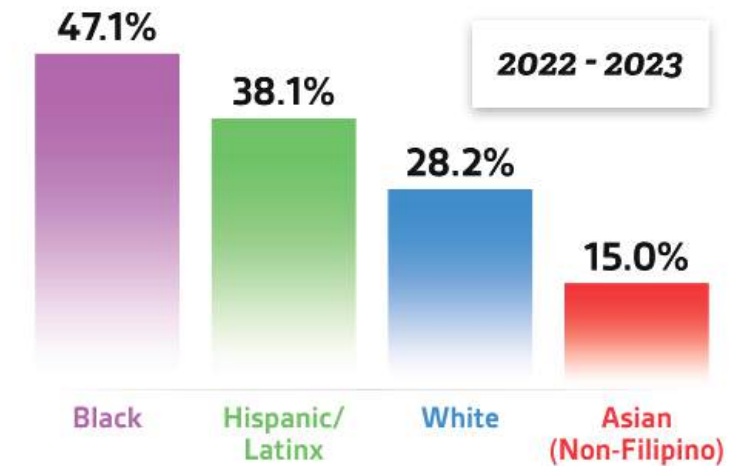
Black students also suffer from higher chronic

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> American Civil Liberties Union. (n.d.). *School-to-Prison Pipeline: What's at Stake*. Retrieved September 8, 2023, from <https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/juvenile-justice-school-prison-pipeline>.

**Figure 5.** LAUSD K-12 student chronic absentee rate (2022-2023 school year).

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District. *Open Data Dashboard*. <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard>



absenteeism rates than their LAUSD peers. From 2022 to 2023, the data paints an even bleaker picture, as 47.1% of African American students were chronically absent versus 28.2% of White students. (See Figure 5.) For comparison, the total Los Angeles County absentee rate was 14%. Only Black students in the Antelope Valley and Centinela Valley school districts had higher rates at 31% and 35%, respectively. The UCLA study noted that COVID-19 played a role in the rise of absentee rates, but it also found that economic forces are likely to have contributed to the higher rates.<sup>25</sup>

In the LAUSD, 82% of Black students enrolled are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Of these, only 79% graduate. The total Los Angeles County graduation rate

<sup>25</sup> Johnson Jr. et al., *Beyond the Schoolhouse...*, 29.



is 82%. For comparison, in the Paramount Unified School District, 9% of Black students who are enrolled come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, yet 84% of them go on to graduate.

Overall, the LAUSD has made considerable strides in making African American students feel that its schools are more supportive and inviting. However, the vestiges of anti-Black sentiment and governmental socio-economic policies created conditions whereby Black students have historically struggled to reap the benefits of public education. This ongoing struggle requires continued attention and resources.

## Summary of Findings

In this section we examine educational outcomes. Research reveals a stark history of harms that 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, de facto segregation in Los Angeles persisted due to housing policies.
- Further school segregation in Los Angeles resulted in the 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 action against Black students adversely affects student performance and is linked to the unjust criminalization and policing of Black students.

# Political Disenfranchisement

## Abstract

Los Angeles' historic participation in the political disenfranchisement of Black citizens mirrored that of governing bodies using similar laws and tactics throughout the country. Gerrymandering and housing segregation worked hand-in-hand to negate Black political power. Discriminatory practices, both official and unofficial, were in effect when the City of Los Angeles was founded in 1781. Since then, the restriction of voting rights, including literacy and poll taxes, and the enactment of discriminatory voting laws and challenges to Black civic participation (housing restrictions and economic discrimination) have left a history of Black disenfranchisement, as well as a legacy of distrust in civic processes. Black leadership in Los Angeles was limited, and not a single African American person held public office in the City until 1963. A more progressive and inclusive governance was not realized until the late Mayor Tom Bradley's tenure.

## Key Terms

***African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church:*** The first African American church denomination, organized in the United States by Richard Allen. Locally, the First AME (FAME) Church was founded in 1872 in Los Angeles.

***Christopher Commission:*** The Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, informally known as the Christopher Commission, was formed in April of 1991 in the wake of the beating of motorist Rodney King.

***Gerrymandering:*** Gerrymandering is the political manipulation of electoral district boundaries with the intent to create undue advantage for a party, group, or socioeconomic class within the constituency.

***Lynching:*** The extrajudicial killing of an individual who has not received due process in a court of law.

***SWAT Team or SWAT Unit:*** Police departments' Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams respond to high-risk situations and crises, possess specialized training, and operate beyond the capacity of regular law enforcement.

***Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC):*** The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was an African-American civil rights organization founded in 1957 in Atlanta, Georgia. The SCLC is closely associated with its first president, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The SCLC in Los Angeles began as the Western Christian Leadership Conference (WCLC) in 1961.

## Overview

Like the rest of California and much of 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 anyone who had been convicted of a serious crime 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, legal tactics such as literacy tests and poll taxes were used to prevent African Americans and other non-White people from casting their ballots in California. They were also excluded from court testimony and jury service during this period. Many other 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.

### ***Voting Rights for Black Angelenos***

In the 1860s, Lewis G. Green became the first Black resident of Los Angeles to register to

vote.<sup>1</sup> Before settling in the city, Green had served in the U.S. Navy and visited California by ship in 1846 during the Mexican-American War. He opened a barber shop and worked as a janitor at the Los Angeles County Courthouse. Furthermore, he played an active role in the city's small Black community and became a founder of the local African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church in 1872. Yet his most significant contribution was his effort to help Black individuals register to vote. The ratification of the 15th Amendment motivated Green to register himself, only to be denied by County Clerk Thomas D. Mott, who claimed California lacked the necessary legislation for such registration. In response, Green filed a lawsuit against Mott, with assistance from Robert M. Widney, a lawyer who later co-founded the University of Southern California. Green sought to compel Mott to allow him and other Black residents of Los Angeles to register. During these legal proceedings, 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, including Green, to have full voting rights.

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1 Spitzer, P.R. (2017, February 23). Lewis G. Green: A Pioneer of the Black Community of Los Angeles, 1850s–1880s. *The Homestead Blog*. <https://homesteadmuseum.blog/2017/02/23/lewis-g-green-black-pioneer-of-los-angeles/>

On June 21, 1870, Green made history by becoming the first Black person in Los Angeles to successfully register to vote, setting a vital precedent for others.<sup>2</sup> Still, such early discriminatory voting laws and consistent challenges to Black civic participation have left a legacy of apprehension among Black residents. It also set a precedent, requiring Black people to fight for their rights because local government officials either passively or actively worked to deny them, rather than attempting to either apply the existing law or create new laws to ensure their protection.

### ***Barriers to Civic Participation***

Ratified by a public vote in 1924, the Los Angeles City Charter became effective on July 1, 1925, setting up a mayor-council system in which the mayor heads the executive branch while the Los Angeles City Council manages legislative functions.<sup>3</sup> This framework includes multiple departments, bureaus, and governing bodies led by managers, advisory boards, and commissions. Currently, residents from each of the 15 City Council Districts elect a member, and the Councilmember serves

up to two four-year terms. Commissioners are appointed by the mayor and must be approved by the City Council. The Council President makes legislative committee chair appointments.

Although African Americans always possessed voting rights under Los Angeles' charter, they were largely absent from the city's political landscape for the first 50 years of the 20th century. Black invisibility in civic life was the result of two primary factors: housing restrictions and economic discrimination. The combination of these led to large concentrations of Black people living in the Central Avenue district, an area south of downtown. Through gerrymandering, their population was dispersed within large Council Districts, where they could not form majority voting blocs. Political scientist Raphael Sonenshein, author of *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles* (1993), contrasts Los Angeles with cities like New York and Chicago which have numerous smaller ward divisions, and therefore, were able to elect African American politicians.<sup>4</sup> Until the Black population in Los Angeles increased or racial gerrymandering decreased, African

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

3 City of Los Angeles. *City Charter, Rules, and Codes*. Retrieved February 17, 2024 from <https://lacity.gov/government/city-charter-rules-and-codes>; Sonenshein, R. (2006). *Los Angeles: Structure of a city government*. League of Women Voters of Los Angeles.

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4 Sonenshein, R. (1993). *Politics in black and white: race and power in Los Angeles*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691188027>; Sides, J. (2004). *L.A. city limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the present*. University of California Press, 34.



Americans had to depend on non-Black candidates to advocate for their interests.

### ***Black Leadership Changes the City's Priorities***

As the number of Black Angelenos increased steadily, the Black vote became more and more significant, which in turn made politicians recognize them as key to winning local elections. The 74th State Assembly District, which covered a significant part of Central Avenue, was where Black residents in Los Angeles first demonstrated their political influence.

In 1918, Ohio-born Frederick Madison Roberts, founder of the Los Angeles Forum organization, member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), publisher of the *New Age* newspaper, and business owner, became California's first Black state legislator. Roberts served the multiracial 74th District, which was 20% Black along with many Northern, liberal White Republicans. During the campaign, he suffered through his opponent's racial slurs and insulting campaign advertisements that openly stated, "My opponent is a [n-]"<sup>5</sup> Roberts' initial victory and subsequent re-

elections were built on a strong coalition with Republicans, demonstrating the growing power of Black voters.<sup>6</sup> For 16 years, Roberts was the sole African American in the state legislature, a noteworthy accomplishment since the 74th District did not achieve a Black majority until the late 1930s. His barrier-breaking tenure paved the way for greater Black representation in California politics.

Roberts was unseated in 1932 by Augustus Hawkins, a Democrat who became the second Black assemblyman in Los Angeles. During that election, African Americans shifted their allegiance from the Republican Party to the more liberal Democrats. This was spurred by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, which created federal relief programs during the Great Depression. Both Roberts and Hawkins advocated for progressive legislation that benefited marginalized communities. As an assemblyman, Roberts sponsored legislation to expand the use of school textbooks, protect civil rights, and prohibit lynching.<sup>7</sup> Hawkins advocated for legislation that prohibited discrimination in the sale or rental of any private housing developments

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6 Flamming, D. (2005). *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*. University of California Press. 124. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520940284>

7 Flamming, D. (2001). "Becoming Democrats: Liberal Politics and the African American Community in Los Angeles, 1930–1965," *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California* (University of Washington Press), 279-308, 281-282.

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5 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People - Los Angeles Chapter. (n.d.). *Historical Notes on the Los Angeles NAACP*. <https://www.naacp-losangeles.org/history.html>

subsidized by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), outlawed employment discrimination, and protected economic rights for domestic workers and low-cost housing.<sup>8</sup> Roberts' and Hawkins' work underscores the significance of community representation as evidenced by their focus on supporting marginalized groups.

### ***“Second-class citizens”: The Struggle for Equitable Representation on the City Council***

During the 1940s, the African American strategy for gaining political power was to exercise influence within the Democratic Party by voting for and lobbying White politicians, such as Kenneth Hahn, a liberal City Council member, and Mexican-American Council member Edward Roybal. With the critical exception of State Assembly member Hawkins and possible district level representation, Black Angelenos had no other political representative in City, county, state, or federal governments, a situation many came to view as simply intolerable.

By the time a core group of Black Democrats in Los Angeles emerged in 1950, the Black

population had grown to 171,209.<sup>9</sup> They met under the banner of the Democratic Minority Conference established by well-respected citizens, including Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Lieutenant Thomas “Tom” Bradley, the third Black woman admitted to the State Bar of California and the first Black woman in California appointed to a judgeship, Vaino Spencer, entertainment and civil rights attorney Leo Branton, Jr., and a former janitor who became Kenneth Hahn's deputy on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Gilbert Lindsay. The Democratic Minority Conference aimed 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, and eventually boasted more than 600 members.

However, the Democratic Minority Conference's concerns regarding reapportionment were ignored. Most frustrating was the redistricting of the 7th City Council District in 1957. The district, which

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8 Sides, “L.A. city limits...”; Assembly Bills, Box 99, Folder 1, Augustus F. Hawkins papers (Collection 1642), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

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9 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 (United States Government Printing Office, 1953), 96–104.

had included West Adams, part of South Central, and had a sizable Black population, nearly elected Black Councilmembers in two elections. But when the City Council conducted its quadrennial reapportionment late in 1956, it decided to move the 7th Council District to the rapidly expanding San Fernando Valley and redistribute the residents of the original district among three others. This effectively prevented Black near majorities in these districts, a major blow to members of the Democratic Minority Conference.

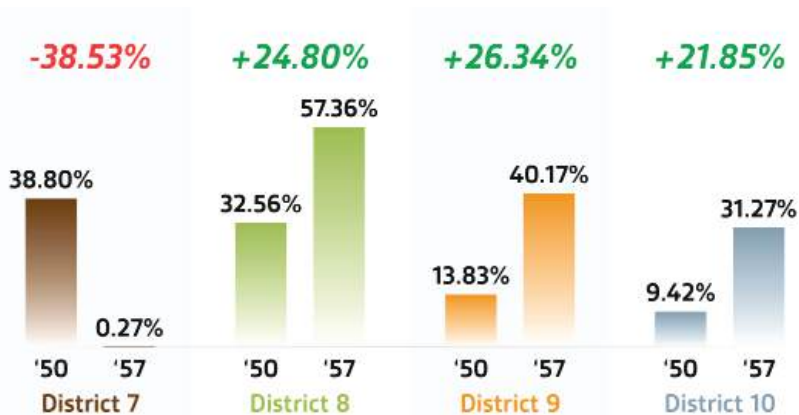
(See Figure 1).

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, but none won. In 1960, City Council approved a

reapportionment that again split the Black vote. In fact, not a single African American held public office of any sort in the City until 1963 when the representative for the 9th Council District vacated his post, leaving it open for an interim appointment. Hahn appointed Gilbert Lindsay, who became the City's first Black officeholder in the 9th District. That same year, two Black candidates won Council races. Bradley, the retired police officer turned lawyer, won in the 10th District, and newcomer Billy Mills, a graduate of Compton College and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), won in the 8th District. Remarkably, three of the 15 Council Districts then had African American representatives; prior to 1963, each of those districts held significant Black populations, but had been represented by non-Black people.

In office, the three Black Councilmembers promoted interests of their Black constituents, such as demanding access to City services, and advocating for the City Council to acknowledge and discuss the growing Civil Rights Movement. For example, as a Council member, Bradley introduced a passing motion of support for the 57 Los Angeles students who traveled to Mississippi to participate in the Freedom Summer Project in 1964. Lindsay, who served from 1963 to 1974,

**Figure 1.** Percent Black populations in City Council Districts 7–10 before and after the 1956 reapportionment.  
*Source:* Calculated using 1950 and 1957 City Council District boundaries and U.S. Census data



urged for community police reform in 1965, as well as state assistance funds to the tune of \$100 million to “rehabilitate” Los Angeles’ Black population in response to the impact of the 1965 Watts Uprising on the 9th District. Lindsay stated that his greatest shame was not the vandalism, but rather that, “society has sat blindly by and allowed such a terrible situation to develop.”<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Rise of Mayor Tom Bradley***

The early history of Los Angeles mayorships demonstrates little support for the African American community, even those whom Black voters helped put in office. Segregation in housing, education, and employment persisted under all previous mayors of Los Angeles until the Civil Rights era. Even Sam Yorty, who was elected with strong African American support in 1961, became a relentless foe of minorities and progressives.<sup>11</sup> While in office, Yorty ignored discrimination and segregation, but most problematic was his continued support for LAPD Chief William Parker, who demonstrated openly racist attitudes toward the Black community. In a 1959 presentation before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in Los Angeles, Parker claimed, “There is no

segregation or integration problem in this community.” When asked about allegations of discrimination against minorities, he replied, “I think the greatest dislocated minority in America today are the police.”<sup>12</sup> The Watts Uprising in 1965 occurred under Yorty’s administration, as did the LAPD SWAT unit’s attack on the Los Angeles branch of the Black Panther Party in 1969, which resulted in a five-hour shootout.

Yorty’s failures prompted Tom Bradley to run for mayor in 1969. As a candidate, Bradley made a stunning showing in the nonpartisan primary, far outdistancing Yorty with 42% to 26% of the vote. However, Yorty’s blatantly racist appeals dominated the runoff campaign, and he succeeded in portraying Bradley, a moderate, as the tool of Black militants and Communists. Bradley lost by a margin of 5%.<sup>13</sup> He ran again for mayor in 1973, but this time with the backing of a multiracial coalition headed by a strong alliance with the Jewish community that built an organizational base in association with liberal White members of the Democratic Party, particularly the California Democratic Council

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10 Erwin, B. (1965, August 17). \$100 million urged to aid negro plight: Lindsay makes plea for federal, state assistance funds. *Los Angeles Times*. ProQuest Historical Newspapers, accessed by California State University, Northridge.

11 Sonenshein, Politics in black and white..., 68.

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12 Sides, L.A. city limits..., 136; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, “Hearings held in Los Angeles and San Francisco, January 25–28, 1960,” (PO, 1960), 326, <https://www2.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/cr12p75.pdf>

13 Sonenshein, “Politics in black and white...”, 93; Goldfarb, L., & Sotomayor, A. (2016). *Bridging the divide: Tom Bradley and the politics of race*. Kanopy Streaming.

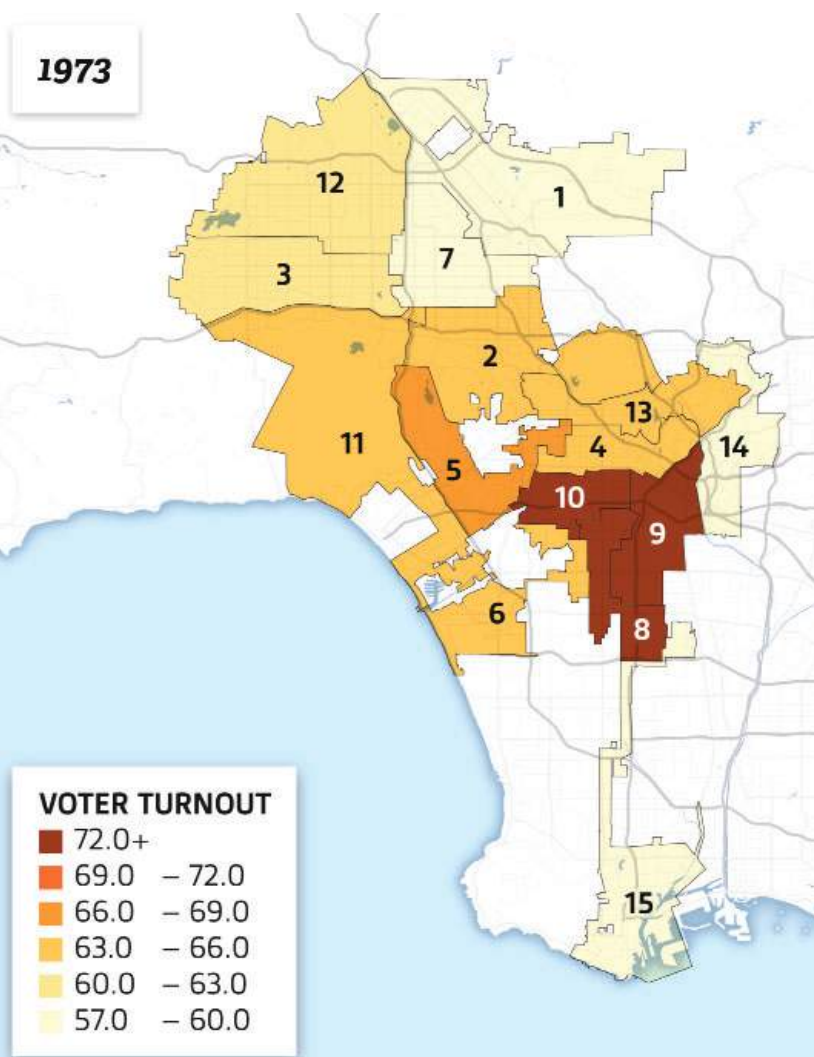
“club movement.” This multiracial coalition was rooted in a shared liberal ideology and common political interests. Bradley won the race with 54% of the vote to become the first Black mayor of Los Angeles.<sup>14</sup> Figure 2 shows the voter turnout rate by Council district for the 1973 General Election.

As a result of Mayor Bradley’s election in 1973, African Americans and other marginalized

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 108.

**Figure 2.** Voter turnout by City Council district, 1973 Los Angeles General Election

*Source:* City of Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk – Election Division



groups were incorporated into City Hall’s governance practices, ultimately benefiting in several areas including representation, City hiring, and police accountability. Bradley appointed diverse individuals to commissions and boards, which brought an entirely new body of personnel into City government. On key commissions such as Public Works and Civil Service, Bradley’s appointees aggressively pursued an agenda favorable to minority interests. For example, Bradley’s administration vigorously increased minority hiring at City Hall, both in overall percentage and in higher-ranked job categories. Black, Latino, Asian-American, and women workers all made significant gains in City hiring during Bradley’s mayorship. (See Figure 3). Equally impressive were the solid gains that all four groups registered in official, administrative, and professional positions. (See Figure 4). Mayor Bradley also won important battles with the LAPD, including tighter controls on police shootings, the department’s budget, and its pension fund. Equally important, while working with City Council and the Police Commission, Bradley secured a moratorium on the controversial chokehold tactic that was responsible for several deaths at the hands of LAPD officers.

Other electoral achievements for Los Angeles’



**Figure 3.** Minority Representation among Bradley Commissioners

Source. Sonenshein, *Politics in black and white...*, 149.

**Minority Representation among Bradley Commissioners,  
1973, 1984, and 1991**

|                    | <i>1973</i> |          | <i>1984</i> |          | <i>1991</i> |          |
|--------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|
|                    | <i>N</i>    | <i>%</i> | <i>N</i>    | <i>%</i> | <i>N</i>    | <i>%</i> |
| Blacks             | 21          | 15       | 23          | 19       | 42          | 20       |
| Latinos            | 13          | 9        | 19          | 16       | 34          | 16       |
| Asian-Americans    | 10          | 7        | 11          | 9        | 28          | 13       |
| Women              | 45          | 32       | 40          | 33       | 99          | 47       |
| Total appointments | 140         |          | 120         |          | 213         |          |

**Figure 4.** Minority Representation in Top-Level City Jobs.

Source. Sonenshein, *Politics in black and white...*, 153.

**Minority Representation in Top-Level City Jobs,  
1973 and 1991 (percent of jobs)**

|                 | <i>Officials and<br/>Administrators</i> |             | <i>Professionals</i> |             |
|-----------------|---|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
|                 | <i>1973</i>                             | <i>1991</i> | <i>1973</i>          | <i>1991</i> |
| Whites          | 94.7                                    | 70.9        | 81.4                 | 54.9        |
| Blacks          | 1.3                                     | 10.5        | 5.0                  | 12.0        |
| Latinos         | 2.6                                     | 7.5         | 4.6                  | 11.1        |
| Asian-Americans | 1.3                                     | 8.0         | 8.0                  | 15.4        |
| Women           | 3.0                                     | 14.9        | 11.9                 | 29.9        |

African American community occurred during this period. Los Angeles resident Mervyn Dymally became the first African American lieutenant governor of California, serving from 1975 to 1979. Yvonne Brathwaite Burke became the first Black woman in the State Assembly, representing Los Angeles's 63rd

District from 1966 until 1972 when she was elected to U.S. Congress, where she served until 1979. Burke later became the first female and first African American Los Angeles County supervisor. In 1975, Gwen Moore was elected as the first Black woman on the Los Angeles Community College District Board

of Trustees. Diane Watson served as the first Black woman on the Los Angeles Unified School Board beginning in 1975 before being elected to the California Senate in 1978. Rita Walters became the first Black woman on the Los Angeles City Council in 1991. Herb Wesson from the 10th District became the first African American Council President in 2011. Karen Bass became the first African American female and second African American elected as Los Angeles Mayor in 2022. Most of these historic firsts for African Americans happened decades after the City Charter was adopted in 1925, and it was only through dedicated political organizing that Black politicians finally overcame segregated districts and gerrymandering.

## Police Reform Followed by Reduced Black Influence

The issue of policing remained a combative topic between Mayor Bradley and LAPD Chief Daryl Gates. Problems were again highlighted in March 1991 by the videotaped police beating of unarmed Black motorist Rodney King as he lay in the street. (See Figure 5). Bradley's allies on the Police Commission tried to remove Gates but were overruled by the City Council. The City Charter provided Civil Service protection for the chief of police, which Gates effectively used to remain in power. Bradley responded

by appointing a commission headed by attorney Warren Christopher to examine the department's conduct. After the Christopher Commission's report was released in July 1991, the City Council placed most of its reform recommendations on the June 1992 ballot,

**Figure 5. Front page coverage of the Rodney King beating in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, March 7-13, 1991**

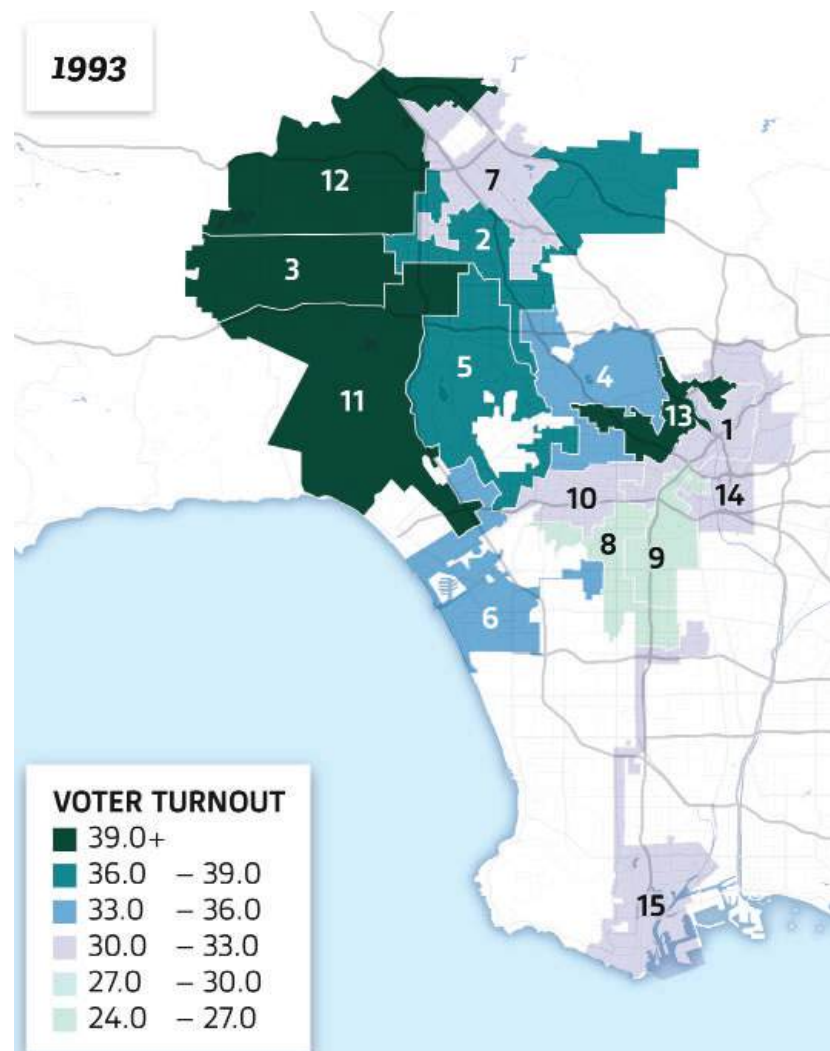


including the proposal that the police chief no longer have civil service protection. The Commission also called for Gates' resignation, he did not formally retire until June 28, 1992, after the Police Commission hired a new chief, Willie Williams from Philadelphia. Williams, who was African American, arrived to wide acclaim and was credited with helping restore frayed relations between the LAPD and the African American community. After several years in office, Williams saw a doubling of the department's approval rating. In June 1992, the Bradley administration notched another victory as voters approved Proposition F, which limited the tenure of the police chief and made the department more accountable to civilian control. The multiracial coalition rose to the occasion again as Black voters joined White liberals, Asians, and Latinos to carry Proposition F by a margin of two to one.<sup>15</sup> This victory ended decades of frustrating efforts by the African American community to create a mechanism to make the LAPD more accountable.

Bradley served five consecutive terms. In 1993, he was replaced by Republican Richard Riordan. Figure 6 shows the voter turnout rate by Council District for the 1993 General Election; lower voting rates were observed

among majority-Black districts. While three African Americans and three Latinos continued to serve on the 15-member Council, their influence was diminished. During Riordan's administration, White individuals joined the City Council who were less liberal and less inclined to form coalitions with minority members. Riordan also fired Chief Williams. African Americans in Los Angeles changed from being the most enthusiastic backers

**Figure 6.** Map showing voter turnout by Council District for the 1993 Los Angeles General Election. Lower turnout rates were observed in majority Black districts.  
*Source:* City of Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk – Election Division



<sup>15</sup> Sonenshein, *Politics in black and white*..., 224, 226.

of the mayor to the most hostile group toward the new incumbent. Riordan's tenure ended in 2001 when he was succeeded by a liberal, James K. Hahn, who was backed by a multiracial base of African American, Latino, and Jewish voters.

### ***Anti-Black Antagonism on the City Council in the 21st Century***

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 made up less than 40% of the city's almost 3.5 million people. The largest group became Latinos, whose numbers had increased significantly.<sup>16</sup> During this same period, the lives of African Americans changed as middle-class Black residents moved out of the inner city and Latino and Asian immigrants moved in. Likewise, the 8th, 9th, and 10th Council Districts, which were historically home to almost all the city's Black residents, transformed into predominantly Latino areas.

Today, three African Americans serve on the Council, and redistricting has become, once again, a tool to diminish the political aspirations and public policy interests of the

city's Black community. These concerns were highlighted on October 9, 2022, when the *Los Angeles Times* revealed a recording of then-Council President Nury Martinez's private conversation with then-Councilmembers Kevin de León and Gil Cedillo and then-Los Angeles County Federation of Labor President Ron Herrera. The leaked audio recording exposed racist and offensive conversations concerning the City's redistricting efforts during the previous year. The recorded Councilmembers also voiced antagonism toward what they saw as the disproportionate political clout of the Black community. They discussed implementing a plan to gerrymander Council District boundaries to increase the voting advantage of Latino candidates. Additionally, Martinez made derogatory remarks about the young Black son of then-Councilmember Mike Bonin, calling him a "monkey" and saying he needed "a beatdown." Martinez also used profanity and racist language to mock Oaxacan immigrants as "short, dark people." Likewise, de León referred to Bonin as the Council's, "fourth Black member."<sup>17</sup>

These offensive remarks about Black people exposed the deep biases of some City Council leaders, as well as their plans to undermine

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16 Mitchell, J.L. (2008, September 14). In South L.A., a population shift. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-sep-14-me-southla14-story.html>

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17 Zahniser, D. et al. (2022, October 9) Racist Remarks in Leaked Audio of L.A. Council Members Spark Outrage, Disgust. *Los Angeles Times*.



Black political power while using redistricting as a tool. Under the current system, redistricting in Los Angeles is controlled by a commission appointed by the Council and other elected officials, and the Council ultimately has the final approval of district boundaries, permitting adjustments to align with the political objectives of Council members. In contrast, County supervisorial, state legislative, and U.S. Congressional districts are determined by independent commissions that are shielded from political interference by potentially affected politicians.

Since the news of the recording, the latest redistricting lines approved by the Council have been criticized as tainted, and some people argue that they should be redrawn for the 2024 elections. Pastor William Smart, president and chief executive of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Southern California, said the public should not have to wait until 2031, when the next redistricting process is set to occur: "They've got to redo them."<sup>18</sup> One week after the audiotope was leaked to the public, the City Council voted to begin the process of placing a measure on the ballot by at least 2024 that would create

an independent redistricting commission.<sup>19</sup> In November 2024, voters approved the measure.

The leaked audiotope also sparked public outrage and demands for the resignation of officials who were involved. Martinez, Cedillo, and Herrera resigned or were removed from their leadership positions, but de León remained on the Council despite immense pressure to remove him, including an attempted recall. The racism the conversation revealed, as well as de León's continued presence on the City Council, demonstrates the African Americans' continued struggle to achieve meaningful participation in City government and shows that remnants of Black disenfranchisement in Los Angeles still persist.

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18 Zahniser, D. and Oreskes, B. (2022, October 16) Racist Audio Leak Has 'Tainted' L.A.'s Redistricting Map: Now Some Want It Scrapped. *Los Angeles Times*.

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19 City News Service. (2022, October 19). LA City Council Backs Putting Independent Redistricting Commission on Ballot. *ABC7 Los Angeles*. <https://abc7.com/los-angeles-city-council-independent-redistricting-commission-virtual-meetings-racist-remarks-leak/12346195/>



## Summary of Findings

Historically, the City of Los Angeles has engaged in extensive discriminatory practices since it was founded. Discriminatory laws, practices, and an absence of Black representation in leadership resulted in barriers to Black civic participation and segregation in housing, education, and employment.

- 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 a legacy of distrust in 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 during 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

## Abstract

Throughout the course of this study, research has been presented documenting the pathologization of the Black family in the City of Los Angeles. This chapter provides a summary of six critical areas that demonstrate the sociopolitical realities faced by Los Angeles Black families. There is limited City data available disaggregated by race. Consequently, much of the data in this section relies on Los Angeles County data.

## Key Terms

**Pathologizing:** Historically, Black family systems have been characterized as dysfunctional and abnormal because they deviate from middle-class White family models. The Black family has been evaluated in relation to the White American family and not culturally-compatible family structures. This faulty assessment has been used to justify the mistreatment of Black families and validate sociopolitical systems that adversely impact Black families, which is institutional racism.

**Reconstruction (1865-1877):** The historical period in the United States after the Civil War (1861-1865), during which 4 million newly-freed African Americans attempted to integrate into social, political, and labor systems within the United States.

**School-to-Prison Pipeline:** School policies that drive many of our nation's schoolchildren into a pathway that begins in school, and through unfair, subjective, and "zero tolerance" discipline policies, students are regularly suspended and expelled from schools often leading to the criminal justice system.

## Overview

### *From Slavery to Freedom:*

#### *The Black Family*

The introduction of British chattel slavery to North America in 1619 presented challenges to the formation and sustainment of families of African descent. Chattel slavery created a reality in which children, siblings, parents, and other relatives could be sold away without warning, precipitating the nebulous nature of Black families that continues to

this day. After slavery was abolished, Black families continued to face obstacles, such as lack of employment, low wages, 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 would often end up negatively affecting the overall health of Black families.<sup>1</sup> In 1965, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Daniel P. Moynihan, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor in President Lyndon Johnson's administration, authored *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, known as the Moynihan Report. This report examined the state of the Black family and was accepted as truth despite its lack of evidence.<sup>2</sup> In the report, Moynihan stated that the "fundamental problem, in which this is most clearly the case, is that of family structure. The evidence—not final, but powerfully persuasive—is that the Negro family in the urban ghettos is crumbling."<sup>3</sup> Moynihan made the specious claim that the primary reason Black people were locked in a cycle of poverty and unable to enjoy success in America was that their families were headed by single mothers, rather than consisting of

two-parent households.<sup>4</sup> After the Moynihan Report was published, "the government created racist, classist policies that incentivized the dissolution (or non-formation) of Black families, then problematized Black people for not having them."<sup>5</sup>

The "prison-industrial complex" is 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—belief that Black people are incapable of maintaining familial relationships.<sup>6</sup> This notion also holds true in Los Angeles County, where the proportion of Black inmates far exceeds that of the countywide Black population. See Figure 1.

However, a raft of issues, particularly in Los Angeles: Homelessness, unfair representations in media, a skewed foster care system, and gendered violence, constitute a set of conditions that disproportionately

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1 White, C. (2006, Summer). Federally Mandated Destruction of the Black Family: The Adoption and Safe Families. *Journal of Law and Social Policy* 1(1). 303.

<http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njls/vol1/iss1/12>

2 Gewertz, K. (2007, October 4). Four decades later, scholars re-examine 'Moynihan Report'. *Harvard News Office*; Geary, D. (2015, September 14). The Moynihan Report: An Annotated Edition. *The Atlantic*; Klug, S. (2016, Winter). The Moynihan Report Resurrected. *Dissent*.

3 Moynihan, D. (1965, March). The Negro Family: The Case for National Action. Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor. <https://web.stanford.edu/~mrosenfe/Moynihan's%20The%20Negro%20Family.pdf>

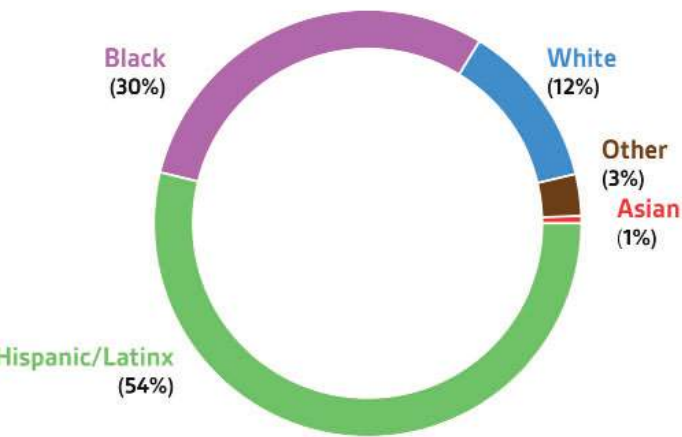
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4 State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2023, June). The California Reparations Final Report. 277.

5 McFadden, S. (2015, September 20). Government policies based on racist myths help dissolve black families. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/20/government-policies-racist-myths-dissolve-black-families>

6 *ibid*.

**Figure 1.** Los Angeles County inmate population by race, October to December 2023.  
 Source: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Custody Division Population Reports, [https://lasd.org/transparency/custodyreports/#adp\\_2024](https://lasd.org/transparency/custodyreports/#adp_2024).



impacts Black families. In other words, it is not that Black families are doomed to become inherently deficient in the way Moynihan described. 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 detrimental effect.

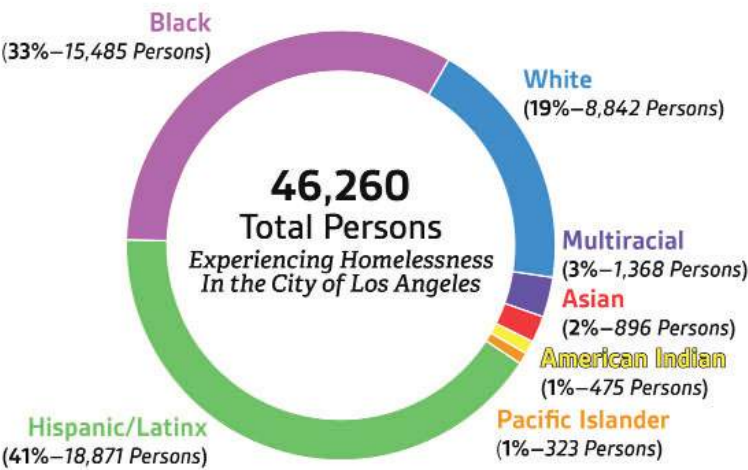
### Race and Homelessness in Los Angeles

Black families 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 the City of Los Angeles and L.A. County was 46,260. Black people made up roughly

33% of that population.<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 2.) The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) indicated the root cause of being unhoused that affects African Americans, as well as Native American populations, as, “institutional racism.”<sup>8</sup> As has been 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 were major catalysts which sowed the seeds of the current Black

7 Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. (2023, June 29). 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count [PowerPoint Presentation]. 8. <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=7232-2023-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-deck.pdf>.  
 8 Lopez, S. (2020, June 13). Black people make up 8% of L.A. population and 34% of its homeless. That's unacceptable. *Los Angeles Times*.

**Figure 2.** Homeless population by race in the City of Los Angeles in 2023.  
 Source: Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count – City of Los Angeles, <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=7680-city-of-la-hc23-data-summary>.



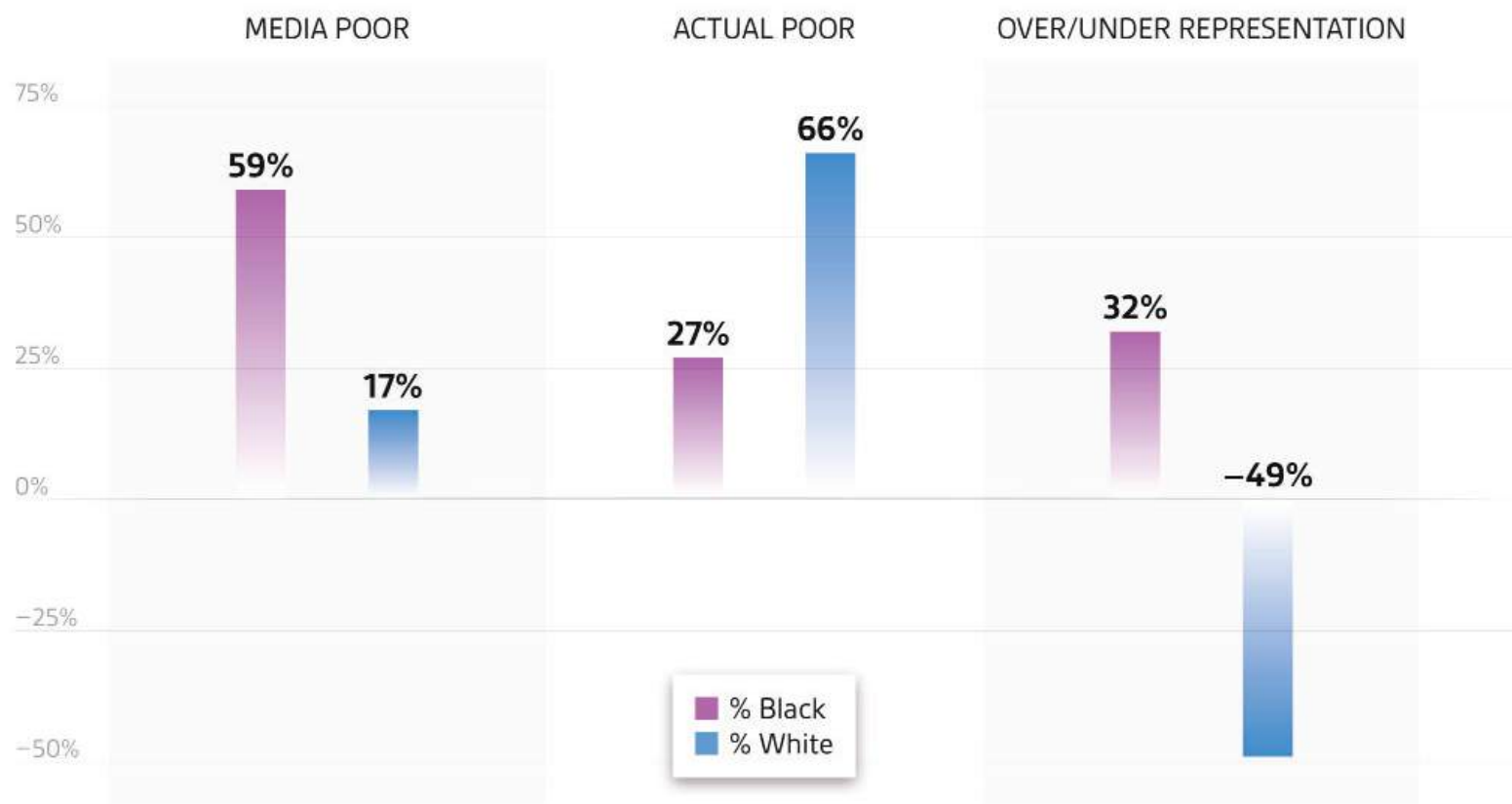
homelessness crisis.

**Distorted Portrayals of the Black Family in Mainstream Media**

As if many Black families did not have enough concerns to navigate on a daily basis, they have long faced broader stigmas and stereotypes as a group, which are promulgated in large part through skewed images in the national media. Studies on the ways various media outlets have portrayed Black people reveal an unsurprising false representation of their communities and families, especially when it comes to depictions of poverty. According to

the racial justice organization Color of Change, Black families are overrepresented in media as living below the federal poverty level by 32 percentage points, while White families are underrepresented by 49 percentage points. White families make up 66% of Americans living in the lowest income bracket, but they are only represented as such 17% of the time in national media coverage. Consequently, Black families only make up 27% of that same income bracket, but they are represented as such over 59% of the time across news and opinion media (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Overrepresentation of Black families as poor in the media.  
*Source:* Dixon, T.L. (2018, January). *A Dangerous Distortion of our Families: Representation of Families, by Race, in News and Opinion Media.* Color of Change.  
[https://colorofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/COC-FS-Families-Representation-Report\\_Full\\_121217.pdf](https://colorofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/COC-FS-Families-Representation-Report_Full_121217.pdf).





Media studies have also shown that Black families are too often — and unfairly — depicted as, “lazy and inept,” and the largest recipients of welfare.<sup>9</sup> When welfare recipients are presented in the media, 60% appear as Black families. However, Black families represent just 42% of those who actually receive support from the government’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Furthermore, the media does a poor job of explaining how institutional racism has contributed to the economic disparities — some of the very conditions that create the need for public assistance — that the Black community faces.<sup>10</sup> 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.

### **Foster Care**

Since 1945, Black children have become increasingly vulnerable to being placed in foster care, a trend that exacerbates the destruction of Black families. The failure of government agencies, especially those in the Los Angeles area, to fairly distribute resources

and the racial prejudice of the area’s social workers have contributed to the rise in Black children being removed from their families.

Nationally, Black children are nearly 14% of the youth population but make up 23% of the foster care population.<sup>11</sup> This overrepresentation is even worse in the Los Angeles area. In 2021, Black children represented 7% of children in Los Angeles County. However, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), 24% of children removed from their homes were Black. In comparison, White children made up 20% of the county’s children, but only 12% of them were removed from their homes. In many instances, Black children face more frequent removal because social workers “make prejudiced decisions based on the family’s race and socioeconomic challenges.” Predominantly Black neighborhoods also generally have higher rates of children in foster care. (See Figure 4). Case studies aimed at understanding how and why such disproportionality between races unfolds have also found that African-American children experience less access to social services, Black families are reported

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9 Dixon, T.L. (2018, January). *A Dangerous Distortion of our Families: Representation of Families, by Race, in News and Opinion Media*. Color of Change.

10 *ibid.*

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11 State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2023, June). *The California Reparations Final Report*. 281.

more often for neglect and abuse than White families, and the overall quality of services are lacking for Black families due to institutional racism in agencies, including DCFS.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Criminalization of Black Youth***

By the time Black children reach the age of 13, they are nearly 3.5 times more likely to be detained by the juvenile justice system than White children. One of the major drivers of this over-incarceration of Black youth is what some researchers call the “School-to-Prison Pipeline,” which is the “mechanism through which students are pushed out of school and into contact with the justice system.”<sup>13</sup> In the 1990s, school systems across the country began to move away from in-school discipline to using police departments to respond to normal adolescent behavior. The shift resulted in schools becoming a major avenue into the juvenile justice system. Leading the way was California, a state that has long been the nation's leader in prison spending per person — while ranking near the bottom (49th) in education spending per person.<sup>14</sup>

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12 Supervisors vote to try child welfare ‘Blind Removal’ project. (2021, August 4). *Our Weekly Los Angeles*.

<https://www.ourweekly.com/2021/08/05/supervisors-vote-try-child-welfare-blind-removal-p/>

13 Chamberlin, M. & Holiday, S.B. (2020, August 12). Elevating Justice Equity in Los Angeles Juvenile and Criminal Justice Reform. *RAND* (blog),

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2020/08/elevating-equity-in-los-angeles-juvenile-and-criminal.html>

14 Freeman, J. et al. (2013, October). Black, Brown, and Over-Policed in L.A. Schools: Structural Proposals to End the School-

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, known as the 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. It was estimated that the police issued 10,000 tickets per school year. Of those tickets, 90% were issued to students of color. The tickets required families to pay \$250 in fines and \$1,000 in additional court fees. As another result, family members, many of whom could ill afford any extra costs, would miss workdays. Additionally, unpaid fines resulted in the suspension of driver's licenses for nearly 300,000 youths. It wasn't until 2012, with the assistance of a broad coalition of concerned groups and U.S. Congressman Tony Cárdenas, that LAMC 45.04 was amended. Since then, truancy and tardy citations are down an estimated 80% as a result of this amendment.<sup>15</sup>

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest school district in the United States, employs nearly 500 officers

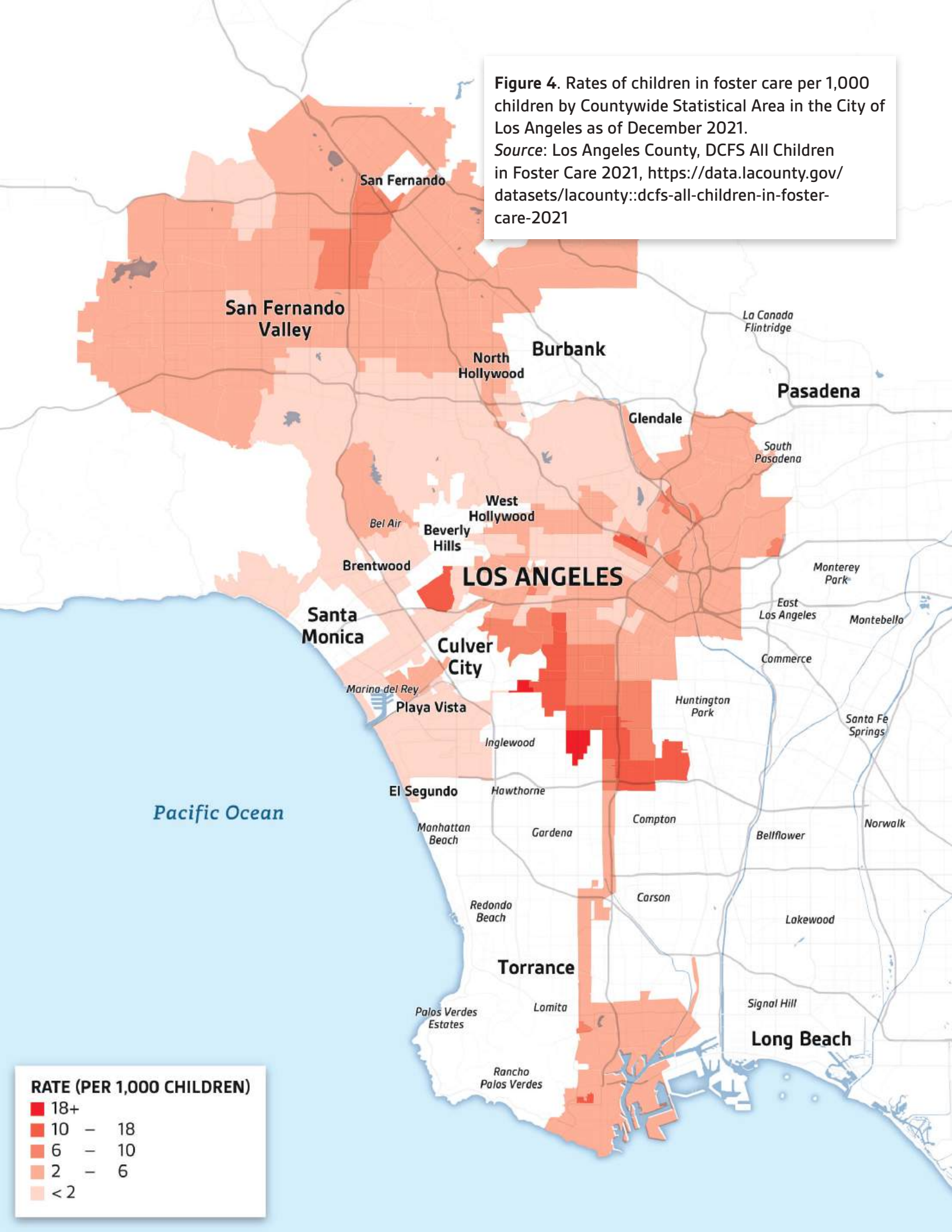
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to-Prison Pipeline in the Los Angeles Unified School District and to Build a National Movement to Stop the Mass Incarceration of Black and Latino Communities. Community Rights Campaign of the Labor/Community Strategy Center.

15 Freeman et al., Black, Brown, and Over-Policed..., 4-5.

**Figure 4.** Rates of children in foster care per 1,000 children by Countywide Statistical Area in the City of Los Angeles as of December 2021.

Source: Los Angeles County, DCFS All Children in Foster Care 2021, <https://data.lacounty.gov/datasets/lacounty::dcfs-all-children-in-foster-care-2021>



**Figure 5.** Youth arrest rate by race in Los Angeles County in 2019.

Source: Los Angeles County Youth Justice Work Group, Los Angeles County: Youth Justice Reimagined, 2020, <https://dyd.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Youth-Justice-Reimagined-Report-2020-1.pdf>



in the Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD) to help manage its school children, beginning in kindergarten and the first grade.

<sup>16</sup>That presence has unequal consequences based on race. Black youth in Los Angeles County are more likely to be so-called “dual system youth,” having been subjected to at least one child welfare investigation before a juvenile justice petition.<sup>17</sup> In L.A. County, the arrest rate of Black youth is six times higher than that of White youth. In 2019, per 1,000 school-age young people in the county, 29.9% of children arrested were Black compared to 3.8% for White and 7.6% for Latino youth (see Figure 5). An illuminating statistic from one study revealed that as the number of youths involved in the justice system decreased, disparities among the racial demographics

increased, indicating this bias is deeply entrenched in the system.<sup>18</sup>

Racial disparities become more evident when the severity of crime increases. Among young people referred to probation for “violent” felonies in Los Angeles County, 81% of Black youth and 75% of Latino youth have a petition filed against them, compared to only 56% of White youth. (See Figure 6.) It’s clear that racism plays a leading role in which children are arrested by the LAPD and LASPD and then have petitions filed against them by the L.A. County District Attorney. A range of remedies to this disparity have been proposed, including prioritizing social justice approaches to core competencies of youth development, connecting youth with mentors who are credible messengers, finding alternatives to school-based law enforcement, creating more meaningful school-community partnerships to increase access to resources, and reducing

<sup>16</sup> Bogado, A. (2013, November 8). Why Does Los Angeles Criminalize Black and Brown Youth? *The Nation*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/why-does-los-angeles-criminalize-black-and-brown-youth/>

<sup>17</sup> A juvenile justice petition is when a government agency files an official plea to a juvenile court claiming that a minor has engaged in an unlawful act.

<sup>18</sup> Freeman et al., *Black, Brown, and Over-Policed...*



the size and scope of the youth justice system through equitable decriminalization and diversion.<sup>19</sup> However, while advocates for reform may be developing alternatives, how are Black families expected to stay cohesive, let alone healthy, under such police surveillance and pressure, especially once a child enters the juvenile justice system?

19 Gaskins, S. and Schooley, T. (2021, February 16). An Overview of Youth Justice Data and Research on Promising Practices to Support Youth Development. Children's Defense Fund. Department of Health Services, Education Access and Youth Development Measure J Subcommittee. [https://ceo.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Youth-Justice-Data-and-Research-Summary-CDF-YDD-2\\_16\\_21-references.pdf](https://ceo.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Youth-Justice-Data-and-Research-Summary-CDF-YDD-2_16_21-references.pdf)

### Violence and Black Women

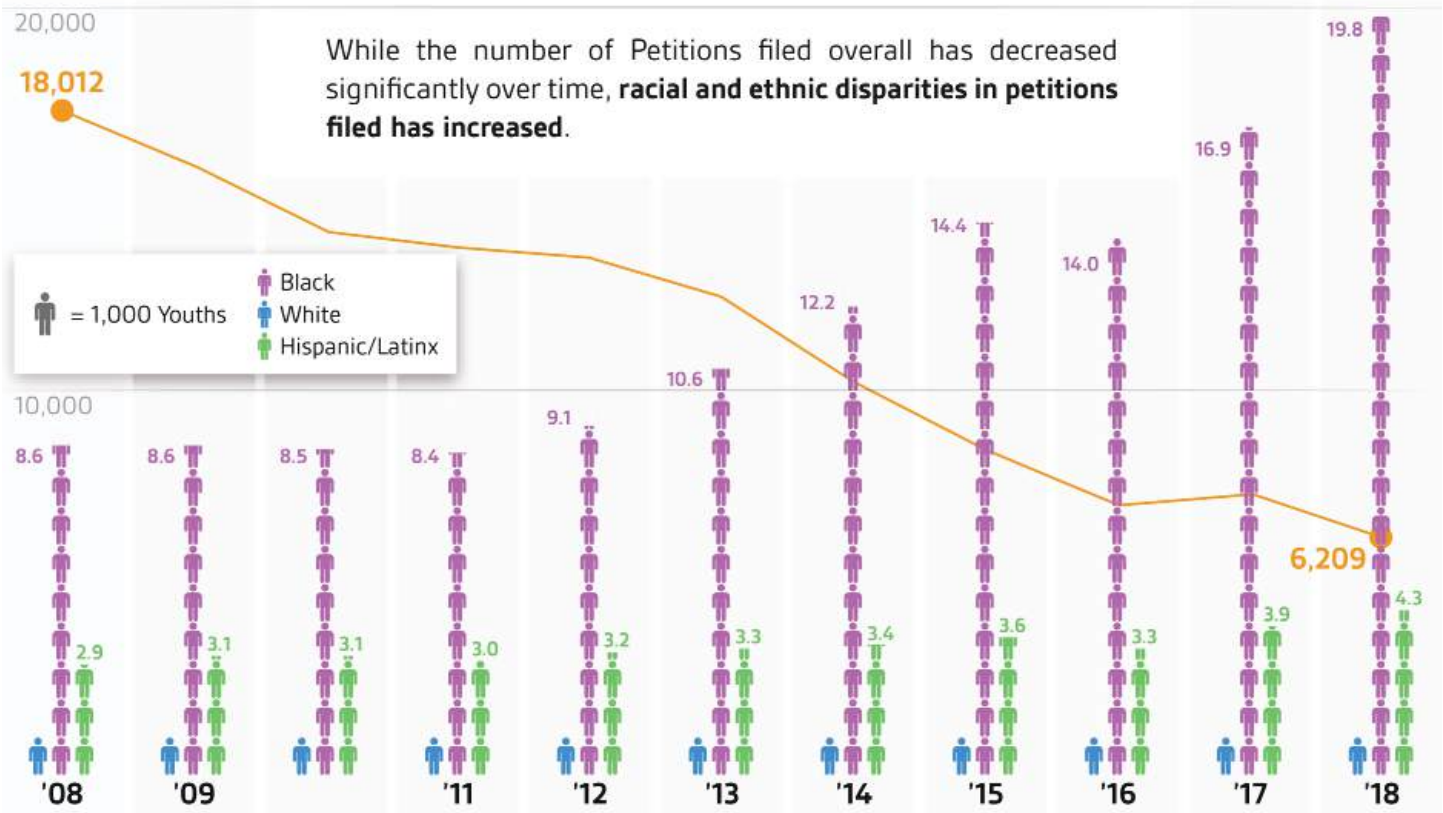
The United Nations has declared violence against women and girls to be a human rights violation.<sup>20</sup> An increase in violence against women since the outbreak of COVID-19 has raised alarm, to the degree that it has been called the “Shadow Pandemic.” This issue is particularly acute in Los Angeles, where violence against women has not fallen at rates consistent with the overall downward trend of

20 UN Women. *The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19*. Retrieved November 12, 2023 from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.

**Figure 6. Trends in Total Petitions Filed and Disparity Gap in Petitions Filed for Black and Latino youth (2008-2018).**

Source: Gaskins & Schooley, An Overview of...

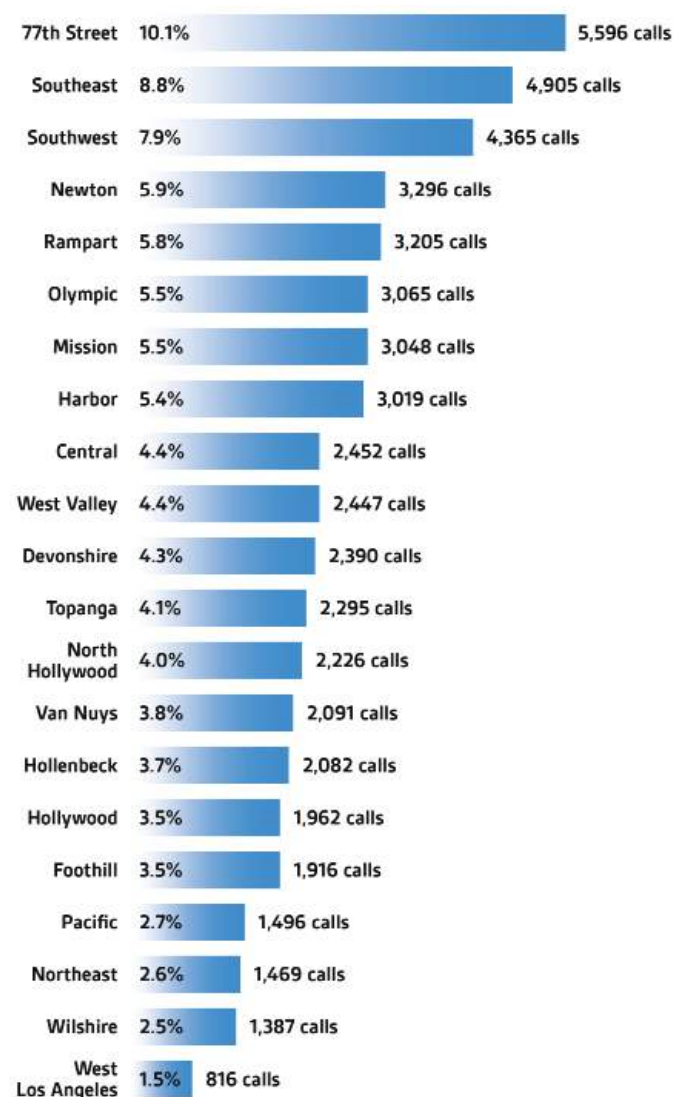
The **relative likelihood** of having a petition filed as a **Black** youth increased by 131% from 2008 to 2018. In 2008, **Black** youth were 8.6 times more likely to have a petition filed than **White** youth. In 2018, **Black** youth were 19.8 times more likely.





violent crime in the City. In fact, reports suggest that violence against women, particularly Black women, has either remained steady or increased. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, although Black women make up roughly 4% of Los Angeles' 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

**Figure 7.** Percentage of domestic violence calls with female victims by LAPD Division for 2022-2023.  
**Source:** Los Angeles Police Department, Domestic Violence Calls from 2020 to Present, <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Domestic-Violence-Calls-from-2020-to-Present/qq59-f26t>



between January 2011 and August 2022.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps an even more dire statistic, Black women made up nearly a third of all female murder victims in Los Angeles, according to a report by the LA Civil Rights Department.<sup>22</sup> While overall domestic violence rates have declined in recent years, Black women saw an increase in domestic violence from 2016 to 2021. In other words, 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. (See Figures 7 and 8.) These are the same areas are also where redlining, high crime, and environmental racism have long been prevalent.

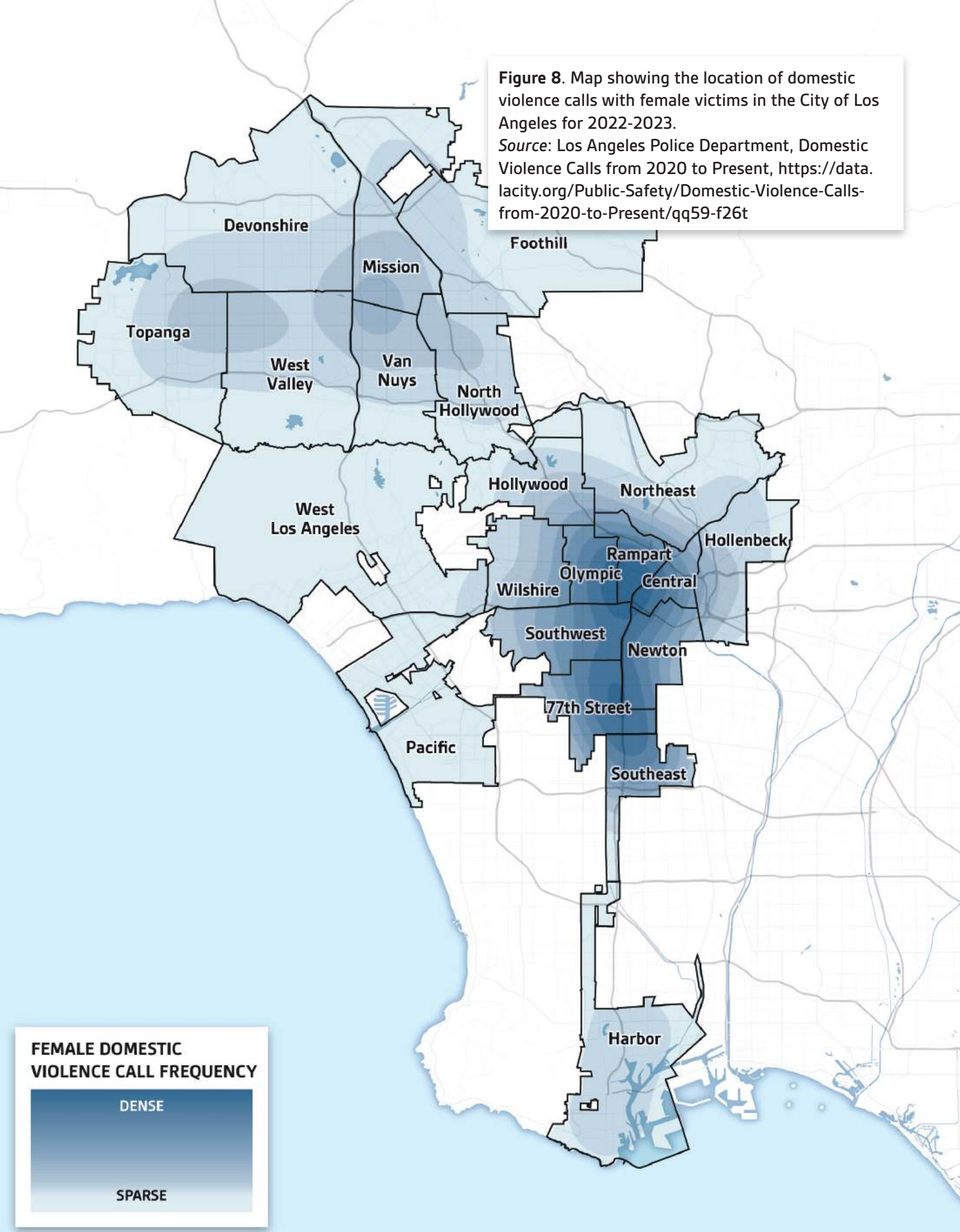
21 City of Los Angeles Civil, Human Rights, and Equity Department. (2023, March 17). *An Equity Analysis on Violence and Crime Facing Black Women and Girls in the City of Los Angeles [Revised]*. 8.

[https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2022/22-0102\\_misc\\_3-17.pdf](https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2022/22-0102_misc_3-17.pdf)

22 *ibid.*, 2.

**Figure 8.** Map showing the location of domestic violence calls with female victims in the City of Los Angeles for 2022-2023.

Source: Los Angeles Police Department, Domestic Violence Calls from 2020 to Present, <https://data.lacity.org/Public-Safety/Domestic-Violence-Calls-from-2020-to-Present/qq59-f26t>



## Summary of Findings

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.

- British 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 often negatively affected the overall health of Black families.
- 1965's *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, commonly known as the Moynihan Report, 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, representing 33% of people experiencing homelessness in 2023.
- Institutional racism in housing policies (e.g. 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.

- Black women in Los Angeles face 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, nearly one-third of all female homicide victims were Black women.
- Black families are not inherently deficient but are disproportionately affected by sociopolitical and racial discrimination.

# Control Over Creative, Cultural, and Intellectual Life

## Abstract

In Los Angeles, social and legal segregation based on race permeated every aspect of creative and cultural life, including leisure activities. Black people were forced to navigate not only laws which restricted their presence in certain areas after dark, but also faced police harassment and racial segregation within both the workplace and the broader artistic community. Hollywood, for example, upheld discriminatory practices in its studio system, while the boards of the city's major museums and cultural institutions have historically lacked meaningful Black representation. Though Black athletes have risen to prominence in professional and collegiate sports, the decision-makers behind Los Angeles' top teams have rarely been Black.

## Key Terms

**Jim Crow Segregation:** Jim Crow refers to Southern segregation laws introduced into the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that separated people by race.

**National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP):** An American civil rights organization founded in 1909 to advance racial justice for African Americans.

**The Great Depression:** A global economic downturn that affected numerous countries from 1929 to 1939.

**World War II:** A global conflict between the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) and the Allied Powers (principally the United States, United Kingdom, France and Soviet Union).

**Ku Klux Klan:** The first terrorist organization founded in the United States on December 24, 1865, in Pulaski, Tennessee. The Klan, or the KKK, is currently and historically considered a far-right terrorist, White supremacist organization.

**Screen Actors Guild (SAG):** An American labor union which represents film and television performers.

**BIPOC:** A 21st century acronym used to acknowledge people who are Black, Indigenous, and those who are people of color.

## Overview

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 originated on plantations and in churches.<sup>1</sup> In Los Angeles, the “color line”

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1 Cox, B. Y. (2001). The evolution of Black music in Los Angeles, 1890–1955. In L. B. de Graaf, K. Mulroy, & Q. Taylor (Eds.), *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*. 251–252. Autry Museum of Western Heritage; University of Washington Press.



cut across all facets of creative and cultural activities, including leisure. In addition to negotiating 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 artistic community. Regardless of talent, Black musicians were forced to relinquish work to White musicians. Hollywood not only upheld discriminatory practices within its studio workforces, but also, and perhaps even more damagingly, produced blockbuster fare that depicted racist ideas about Black people in America, promoting the myth of White supremacy. Boards and governing bodies leading Los Angeles' museums and cultural institutions have 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. And for everyday Black residents, including children, casual sites of outdoor leisure and play have been sites of segregation and, in some cases, civic theft; for example, a Black-owned beach resort in Manhattan Beach, California, 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."<sup>2</sup>

The sociopolitical landscape of Los Angeles, including municipal policies and civic leaders, provided a foundation for such inequalities and injuries. Sundown laws, racist policies that disallowed African Americans within city limits during certain hours. (See Figure 1). Sundown laws hurt Black artists who made their living performing at night. As late as 1964, citizens of 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 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 everyday fans. Through the mid-20th century, the Los Angeles City Council sought to root out what it believed were pro-Socialist

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2 State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. (2022). The California Reparations Interim Report.

**Figure 1.** Map showing sundown towns in Los Angeles.

Source: Loewen, J. (n.d.). History & Social Justice. Sundown Towns – Location: California. <https://justice.tougaloo.edu/location/california/>.



and Communist elements in the city's art scene. Councilman Harold Harby, who served from 1939 to 1942, and again from 1943 to 1957, was instrumental in maintaining hostility against racial equality by seeking to silence certain artists and their art. Harby opposed all forms of modern art and music and held a series of hearings that attempted to uncover alleged subversive elements among artists in Los Angeles. His enmity also extended to other aspects of city life; for example, in 1951 he cast the swing vote that struck down a \$100 million proposal to build a sorely needed public housing project, claiming

the development was evidence of Socialism.<sup>3</sup> This sort of political hysteria and its material implications, other versions of which were not limited to the 1940s and 1950s, effectively curtailed Black performance in the city and negatively affected the lives of average Black citizens.

Black creative expression has been a, if not the, primary influence in American popular culture across all forms and genres, so many of which have emerged and thrived in Los Angeles. For example, Black musical styles

<sup>3</sup> Council About-Face Halts Housing Push: Harby Alters Position to Nullify Approval Given Federal Project. (1951, December 4). *Los Angeles Times*.



have long dominated popular airwaves (and now streaming services) since the early 20th century. However, such wide exposure, or the enormous success and celebrity of individual Black performers, should not be mistaken for true equality and creative ownership, let alone redress for decades of racial discrimination and exploitation. This chapter outlines just some of the ways in which the Black cultural life in Los Angeles, including spaces of leisure, music, movies, or sports, has been impaired by systems upholding White supremacy.

### ***Segregated Sites of Leisure***

Black beaches and 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. (See Figure 2). 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

**Figure 2.** African American-friendly beaches. *Source:* The Cultural Landscapes Foundation. Ocean Park Neighborhood Beach: The Significance of the “Inkwell” in Jim Crow-Era Southern California. <https://www.tclf.org/news/features/ocean-park-neighborhood-beach>; Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office. Returning Bruce’s Beach: A 100-Year Journey to Justice. <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/bruces-beach/>



until almost a hundred years later.<sup>4</sup> On July 20, 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors returned the land to descendants of the Bruce family.<sup>5</sup>

Much like area beaches, outdoor spaces

4 McKenzie, B.A. (2022, June 27). Bruce’s Beach was stolen a century ago. It’s finally been returned. *National Geographic*. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/whats-next-for-california-historically-black-bruces-beach#>

5 Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office. *Returning Bruce’s Beach: A 100-Year Journey to Justice*. <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/bruces-beach/>

designed for young people were also sites of discrimination. In 1926, the Los Angeles Playground Commission officially segregated both recreation centers and public swimming pools. Black residents were only allowed to use the swimming pools and facilities one day out of the week, which spurred lawsuits from everyday African Americans citizens and the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The City and the courts justified the segregation based on the “separate but equal” legal doctrine. After another lawsuit was filed against the playground commission in 1931, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Walter S. Gates ruled against the commission, noting that it illegally segregated Black residents. Some City Council members wanted to appeal the judge’s decision, an action the Council voted on three times. However, intense lobbying by African American residents convinced enough members to vote against appealing the decision.<sup>6</sup>

### Central Avenue

The hub of Black cultural life in Los Angeles, particularly musical entertainment, was located along Central Avenue as shown in Figure 3. The scene there was a source of pride

for Black Angelenos; as some residents spoke eloquently of the music scene of the 1930s, “Jazz was our hopes, our pride, our love of life expressed through music.”<sup>7</sup> The music and cultural scene in this corridor flourished through the Great Depression and World War II, but eventually foundered in the face of police harassment.

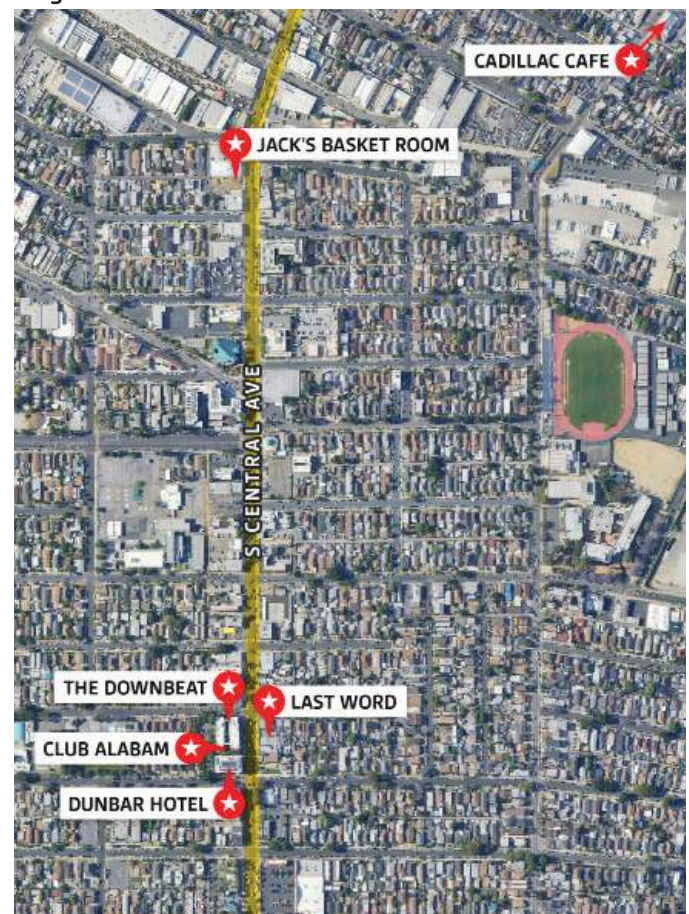
The 1940s was the beginning of a cultural “renaissance of musicians of color” in Black

<sup>7</sup> *History of Los Angeles Project Volume II: Central Avenue*, KCET (PBS SoCal), 1989.

**Figure 3.** Map showing African American-owned jazz clubs along Central Ave.

Source: Abdul-Jabbar, K. (2020, July 18).

Remembering Central Avenue, L.A.’s jazz oasis. Los Angeles Times.



<sup>6</sup> Meares, H. (2019, August 19). Betty Hill's 'Bath House' battle. *Curbed Los Angeles*. <https://la.curbed.com/2019/8/19/20757888/betty-hill-segregation-pools>



Los Angeles.<sup>8</sup> As Black Angelenos were shut out of White-owned clubs, the necessity to develop venues facilitated a flowering of Black-owned entertainment and culture. Black clubs, including The Downbeat Club, Club Alabam, Cadillac Café, Bird in the Basket, Last Word, and the Dunbar Hotel, hosted some of the world's leading jazz artists. Howard McGhee, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Clora Bryant, Coleman Hawkins, Charles Mingus, Buddy Collette, Dexter Gordon, Teddy Edwards, Wardell Gray, and many other greats could be seen at area venues on any given night. Because the music featured the best Black artists, the Central Avenue establishments also attracted White Los Angeles residents, particularly notable actors and other celebrities such as Mae West, Lana Turner, Ava Gardner, Orson Welles, John Barrymore, and John Steinbeck.<sup>9</sup> Not only did the jazz clubs do well, but 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 Los Angeles

Police Department (LAPD), which habitually harassed 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."<sup>10</sup> The harassment became so stifling that musicians moved to neighboring cities to escape the LAPD's reach. In some cases, the department and other officials went so far as to attempt to stop Black musicians from playing in other cities. Since law enforcement officials had the authority to secure the streets and *carte blanche* to control activities in and around the clubs along Central Avenue, Black musicians knew they had to walk a fine line between simply living their lives and being able to work on a regular basis. The presence of several LAPD stations in the area widened the chasm between Black and White residents and contributed to the Black community's distrust of the department. Police persecution on Central Avenue became so pervasive and threatening that many customers, both Black and White, simply stopped patronizing the area establishments, effectively killing the music scene there.<sup>11</sup>

Musicians who worked in the clubs have spoken explicitly about the racist treatment

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8 Yarbrough Cox, B. (1996). *Central Avenue—Its rise and fall (1890–c. 1955): Including the musical renaissance of Black Los Angeles*. BEEM Publications.

9 Gioia, T. (1992). *West Coast Jazz: Modern Jazz in California 1945–1960*. Oxford University Press, 6.

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10 Cox, *The Evolution of Black Music*, 271.

11 Gioia, *West Coast Jazz*, 377.



by the LAPD. As drummer Roy Porter stated, the two obvious reasons for police involvement were to control the spread of interracial dating and what they viewed as the “criminal element,” i.e., narcotics. What is troubling about the nature of police prejudice is that often the conflicts reported between musicians and law enforcement authorities were tainted with venomous bigotry. Saxophonist Ornette Coleman recalled that during his twenties, he was routinely harassed by the LAPD while walking with his instruments under his arm. The racial taunts were never too far from the one he once received from a passing LAPD patrol car: “Hey [n—], where’d you get that horn, let’s see you play it.”<sup>12</sup>

The LAPD had a tremendous amount of institutional backing by White club owners who detested the co-mingling of different races. In 1945, the owner of the Hollywood Cotton Club, Hal Stanley, routinely refused to admit customers of different races. He was once overheard saying that he would not allow “Ofays and Paddy hustlers in his club.”<sup>13</sup> Black jazz audiences, on the other hand, were far more tolerant of racial integration.

It was commonplace to see diverse audiences dominated by White women, who comprised a large percentage of jazz patrons. Attempts by White club owners to minimize race mixing failed.

Discrimination was also prevalent within the city’s unions for musicians. Black artists were denied entry into the all-White Local 47 and relegated to forming their own organization, the Local 767. White musicians received the bulk of contract work from both film and recording studios and clubs.<sup>14</sup> For example, drummer Lee Young was hired at NBC for the Camel Caravan (1933–1954) radio program, but after one performance he was replaced by a White drummer simply because Young belonged to the Black union.<sup>15</sup> The Los Angeles City Council fought to maintain segregated unions, including in 1949 when the Council defeated a proposed ordinance that would have desegregated the musician’s unions and effectively combined them into one, which would have given Black musicians better opportunities to earn work.<sup>16</sup> It was not until the unions merged in 1953 that Black performers saw real movement to bring the two local music cultures together.

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12 Burk, G. (1994, January 7). Ornette Coleman cover story, 1994. *LA Weekly*. [https://www.metaljazz.com/2006/01/\\_ornette\\_coleman\\_cover\\_story\\_1.php](https://www.metaljazz.com/2006/01/_ornette_coleman_cover_story_1.php)

13 “Ofay” was a derogatory slang term used for White people and Paddy referred to pimps.

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14 Cox, *The Evolution of Black Music*, 260.

15 Bryant, C., et al. (Eds.). (1987). *Central Avenue sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles*, 71–72. University of California Press.

16 Widener, D. (2010). *Black arts west: Culture and struggle in postwar Los Angeles*, 54. Duke University Press.

## ***Hollywood: Anti-Black Depictions and a Segregated Workforce***

Hollywood, a cornerstone of Los Angeles' entertainment culture, has a history of racial discrimination on various fronts, both in terms of what it presented on screen and what went on behind the proverbial camera. Hollywood studios have produced many films that have denigrated African Americans. Perhaps the most notorious is the silent epic drama, D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), originally titled *The Clansman*, that became a monumental moment in American film history. Some critics have called the film the "most racist film ever made."<sup>17</sup> The film glamorized the Ku Klux Klan and violence against African Americans in the South. By portraying Black people as lazy, sexually aggressive beasts, the film enticed White Americans to preserve perceptions of American values at the cost of accurately reflecting Black lives during the Reconstruction era of 1866 to 1877. The film was an instant commercial and cultural success among White audiences across the country, including the White House, as it was the first film shown there during President Woodrow Wilson's tenure. Some have argued that the movie inspired the resurgence of the

Ku Klux Klan. After the film was released, White mobs throughout the United States attacked Black people in major cities and smaller locales. It was reported, although there is some controversy, that on April 24, 1916, a White man murdered a Black teenager in Lafayette, Indiana, after watching the film.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, *Gone with the Wind* (1939), which is regarded by many as an American cinematic classic, has been criticized as "whitewashing the horrors of slavery" by portraying enslaved African Americans as happy, well-adjusted, and eager to please. The film won eight Academy Awards for its glamorous portrayal of slavery and the Civil War. Both of these films helped shape negative impressions of African Americans in the minds of White audience members, and the racist tropes the films popularized continue to linger.

Anti-Black racism was also prevalent in depictions in media geared toward children. Warner Bros., known for its distribution of the popular cartoon series *Looney Tunes* and its companion *Merrie Melodies*, produced a number of animated shorts that by contemporary standards are deemed racist, and are generally unavailable for view or purchase. Those cartoons, which have come

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17 Brook, T. (2015, February 6). The birth of a nation: The most racist movie ever made? *The British Broadcasting Company*. <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20150206-the-most-racist-movie-ever-made>

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18 Gallen, I. H., & Stern, S. (2014). D.W. Griffith's 100th anniversary: The birth of a nation, 47. Friesen Press.

to be known as the “Censored Eleven,” feature some of the most racist stereotypes and caricatures of minorities, particularly African Americans, with titles that include *Uncle Tom's Bungalow* (1937), *Jungle Jitters* (1938), *Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs* (1943), and *Goldilocks and the Jivin' Bears* (1944). These productions (and others) were overseen by some of the most celebrated directors in the Warner Bros. stable, such as Rudolf Ising, Fritz Freleng, Bob Clampett, and Chuck Jones.

Warner Bros. was not the only studio that trafficked in anti-Black stereotypes; for example, Disney's animated film *Dumbo* (1941) depicted “Black” talking crows who spoke in caricatured African American dialect. Disney also produced *Song of the South* (1946), which combined live-action and animation in adapting the Uncle Remus Stories created by folklorist Joel Chandler Harris. The film portrays Uncle Remus, an elderly enslaved African American, as a happy and well-adjusted mentor to a young White boy attempting to find his way on a Southern plantation. The film has been largely characterized as racist for its rosy depiction of the South during Reconstruction. Although Disney eventually removed the film from public availability in response to criticism, the company still adapted it as the basis for

the Splash Mountain flume ride attraction at some of its popular parks, some of which were only recently revised.

During the late 1950s, Hollywood began to search for stories that featured America's urban centers, but the results seldom offered authentic, let alone positive, representations of Black life. This was partly the result of the longstanding racial imbalance among studio executives and talent. Tales of drug-induced deaths, the sexual excess of Black jazz artists, and small glimpses into the lives of Black Americans pushed the Hollywood studios toward an initial recognition of jazz as a cultural medium worth featuring in its movies. Executives were convinced that music, particularly popular jazz, could be a winning ingredient to produce movies. Stories of gangsters, troubled youth in ghettos, and action dramas demanded theme songs to help shape the atmosphere of their inner-city settings. However, a major stumbling block to using jazz or jazz storylines was Hollywood's ignorance of the music and its surrounding culture. Major studios, which had no major Black film stars, executives, writers, or directors, were not prepared to handle the subject matter. By 1965, the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) had, out of 22,000, barely 100 Black members. Instead, Hollywood

producers instinctively turned to the growing pool of White West Coast jazz and/or big band musicians willing to work as session men, locking out Black jazz and other musical talent.

Black artists were no strangers to being shut out of the Los Angeles music industry and Hollywood studios. 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 nonexistent and competition was high for the few jobs that were available. Furthermore, the studios had a near blanket policy of discrimination based on race.<sup>19</sup> Acclaimed writers Langston Hughes and Chester Himes both wrote painful remembrances of Hollywood's "wall of racism." Hughes, who was hired to provide dialogue for the film *Way Down South* (1939), recounted that the only work available to Black writers in the late 1930s was to provide "demeaning dialogue for cotton parodies of Black life." His experience in Hollywood was so tainted that he expressed this sentiment: "So far as Negroes are concerned [Hollywood] might

just as well be controlled by Hitler." Himes experienced the same level of racial acrimony when he attempted to take a job in Hollywood with Warner Bros. He was quickly fired by the studio's president, Jack Warner, who, upon learning that Himes was Black, said, "I don't want no [n-s] on this lot."<sup>20</sup>

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 the early 1940s, just 51 African American men listed their occupation as "actor," and there were only 15 Black women out of 743 actresses. Only three African Americans were listed as directors, managers, and officials involved in movie production.<sup>21</sup>

Jazz musician Buddy Collette was one of the few African Americans to receive work in the studios, playing for Groucho Marx's game show *You Bet Your Life*, which aired in the 1950s. Collette recounted obstacles from White band leaders and fellow musicians that made his studio work difficult. For example, many of the musical directors Collette encountered

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19 Robinson, J. T. (2015). *Black Hollywood: The stereotypes, erasure, and social inclusivity of Black entertainers in Hollywood, 1930-60s*. Bard Digital Commons; Waterman, R. W. (2019). *The dark side of the farce: Racism in early cinema, 1894-1915*; Bell, C. V. (2024, February 26). How Black actors broke through in old Hollywood—Day to day, role to role. *IndieWire*.

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20 Davis, M. (1992). *City of quartz: Excavating the future in Los Angeles*, 42–43. Vintage Books.

21 Widener, *Black Arts West*, 40–41.

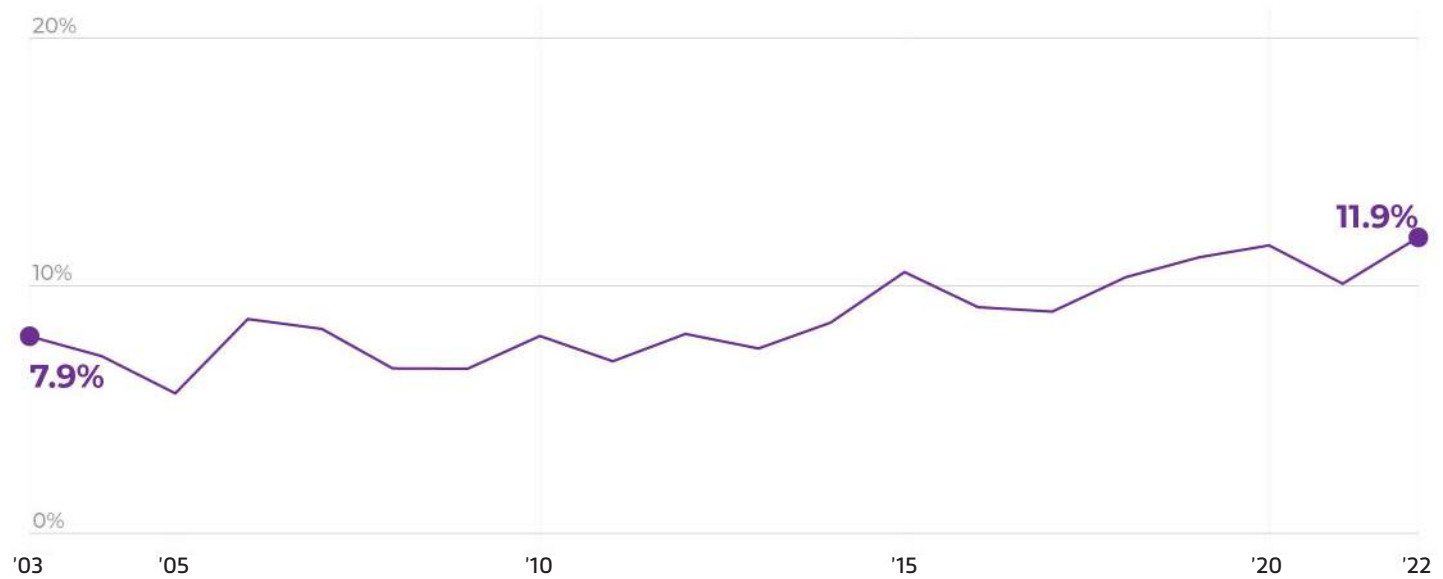
were suspicious of Black musicians' abilities to read sheet music, and they often changed keys or songs at the last minute to keep Black performers who might have marginal technical skills from memorizing the material.

Hollywood continues to make strides in diversity, but data still reveals that African Americans and people from other marginalized groups still face barriers to gaining significant roles, let alone supporting roles in the film industry. In 2023, the *Hollywood Diversity Report* by University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) researchers confirmed that while the minority population of the United States continues to grow, there have only been modest gains in two key areas of employment in the film industry: directors and actors. In 2022, minorities comprised

42.1% of the nation's population, yet they were underrepresented in nearly all sectors of employment in Hollywood. For example, in 2023, minorities made up only 21.6% of film leads and 16.8% of film directors, and in the "streaming" arena, minorities fared a bit better but are still woefully underrepresented. (See Figure 4).

One irony of this situation is that economic data shows that films with strong minority representation in their casting "enjoyed the highest median global box office receipts, while films with casts that were less than 11%... were the poorest performers." In other words, White actors continue to dominate Hollywood films despite the growing minority population in the United States, even when data suggests that American film audiences

**Figure 4.** Percentage of employees that are African American in motion pictures and video industries.  
*Source:* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.





want to see more diversity in film roles. This is especially problematic when it comes to leading roles. The African American share of theatrical film leads was only 8% compared to 78.4% for White performers. In streaming content, African Americans fared only slightly higher at 13.1% of leads. The breakthrough in Hollywood appears to be in minority (supporting) cast share. In 2022, Black people were overrepresented among all theatrical film roles at 14.8% and at 16.2% for all streaming roles. In film writing, African Americans represented only 2.2% for theatrical films and 7% for streaming productions.<sup>22</sup>

Minority audiences for both streaming and theatrical releases make up a significant portion of patrons, yet Hollywood has not been able to make a dent in certain areas of representation in film production. Diverse production teams inherently lend themselves to attracting diverse audiences. And as the Hollywood Diversity Report indicates, "Audiences of color continued to reveal themselves as an important market to a struggling film industry, and diverse content continued to sell."<sup>23</sup>

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22 Ramón, A. C., Tran, M., & Hunt, D. (2023). *Hollywood diversity report 2023: Exclusivity in progress*, 3, 4, 19, 25–26, 41–42). University of California, Los Angeles Entertainment & Media Research Initiative. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2023-Film-3-30-2023.pdf>

23 Ramón, Tran, and Hunt, Hollywood Diversity Report 2023,

## ***Leadership of Museums and Performing Arts Institutions***

Black Angelenos have long been underrepresented on the boards of major museums and performing arts organizations. In 2021, the *Los Angeles Times* published results of a survey they conducted to discover the percentages of Los Angeles County board members who are Black, Indigenous, or other people of color (BIPOC) among the "major" museums and 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, a paltry 5.4%.<sup>24</sup> In Los Angeles County the representation in the performing arts resembled that of museums, as just 5.6% of board members were Black.<sup>25</sup>

A lack of board representation means that Black voices on decisions are not represented. National trends suggest that White male artists are vastly overrepresented in the collections of the top 18 major U.S. museums; in 2019, a study suggested that at least 85%

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24 Artforum. (2021, May 28). Black People Make Up Only 5.4 Percent of Top LA Museum Boards, Study Finds. <https://www.artforum.com/news/black-people-make-up-only-5-4-percent-of-top-la-museum-boards-study-finds-250061/>

25 Vankin, D., & Easter, M. (2021, May 25). Black people hold just 32 of 585 board seats at L.A.'s top arts groups. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2021-05-25/museums-theaters-black-board-of-directors#>

of the art in those collections was by White artists and 87% was by male artists. Only 1.2% of the works nationwide were by African American artists.<sup>26</sup> The lack of BIPOC artists can have a chilling effect on who attends museums, particularly when patrons with different racial and ethnic backgrounds do not see themselves on gallery walls, as well as an overall negative effect on the careers of artists of color. While some museums in Los Angeles have increased the number of BIPOC staff and senior leadership, particularly in the wake of protests after the murder of George Floyd, there is more work to be done.

## ***Athletics***

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, Black coaches continue to be few and far between, 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 that era, the Cleveland Rams of the American Football

League (AFL) moved to the rival league, the NFL. In 1946, a new team in Cleveland, the Browns, replaced the Rams in the AFL. The Rams, hoping to avoid competition from the Browns organization, moved to Los Angeles, bringing with them the racial baggage that was part of professional sports in the United States. Los Angeles' Black residents and Black press rallied against the Rams renting the Coliseum if the team continued its racist agenda of 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. However, some critics suggest that the team still exhibits racial bias in its coaching decisions. The Rams 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 the league's player rosters are roughly 70% Black.<sup>27</sup>

At the two major Los Angeles universities, head coaching jobs also remain elusive for

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26 Bishara, H. (2019, June 3). Artists in 18 major US museums are 85% white and 87% male, study says. *Hyperallergic*. <https://hyperallergic.com/501999/artists-in-18-major-us-museums-are-85-white-and-87-male-study-says/>

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

Black football coaches. The University of Southern California (USC) has never had a Black non-interim head football coach. USC assistant coach Donte Williams was named as an interim head coach in 2021, but the job was ultimately given to Lincoln Riley, formerly of the University of Oklahoma. UCLA has only hired one African American head coach, Karl Dorrell, who led the team from 2003 to 2007.<sup>28</sup> Despite leading the Bruins to five bowl appearances, Dorrell was fired in 2007.

These sorts of imbalances pervade baseball, as well. 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, created by track and field star Jesse Owens and Harlem Globetrotters founder Abe Saperstein, only survived for three months, it highlighted the racial divide in athletics, even in California.<sup>29</sup> 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 Asian MLB manager, Dave Roberts, was not hired until 2016. In 2017, Roberts, who is Japanese-American, became the first Asian manager to win a World Series.

African Americans experienced decades of racism that prevented access to acting roles and lucrative jobs within the industry. Although there has been some movement in terms of casting African Americans and the hiring of African American directors, there still is a persistent barrier to advancement within Hollywood. Given the amount of money African American audiences bring to Hollywood, the industry has not responded in ways that would attest to the desire of this market share to see people from their communities represented. As a significant sector of employment Los Angeles, Hollywood, and the entertainment industry, have a duty to respond to the desires of the African American community to feature casts, directors and skilled artisans that represent the diversity of Los Angeles.

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28 At the time of writing UCLA had not yet hired African American Deshaun Foster as head coach. Foster was hired in 2024.

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

## Summary of Findings

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.

- From the moment African Americans arrived in Los Angeles, they have been influential in shaping the cultural landscape of the city and California, many bringing musical traditions from plantations and churches.
- Black cultural activities were segregated, and laws and police harassment in “sundown towns” restricted Black performers, patrons, and the growth of Black 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

## Abstract

The legacy of discriminatory housing and lending practices arrayed against generations of Black Angelenos has created a significant gap in overall wealth and holdings between White Angelenos and many other racial and ethnic groups. Black Angelenos lag behind all other racial groups in the City on many metrics and measure below their White counterparts on almost every indicator of wealth. Black residents' overall assets only value at about 10% those of Whites, and much of this disparity is the result of decades of housing and lending discrimination. Commonly denied the ability to generate intergenerational wealth via Los Angeles' lucrative housing market, many Black Angelenos were forced to seek loans in more risky financial arenas, resulting in significantly higher debt burdens for cars, housing, and college education. Caught on the most burdensome "debt treadmills," Black Angelenos now wind up more vulnerable in their retirement years, unable to set money aside or invest in other areas of the economy to secure more stable and predictable household budgets. The Great Recession of 2007 to 2009 exacerbated existing conditions, meaning thousands of Black families in contemporary, housing-burdened Los Angeles find themselves in a more hopeless financial situation than their parents or grandparents did in the Jim Crow era.

## Key Terms

**Liquid Asset:** An owned asset that can easily be traded for cash in a short amount of time.

## Overview

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 the Black community in Los Angeles. Study after study analyzing asset and debt accumulations from the last 40 years have 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.<sup>1</sup> In Los Angeles, the only good news on this front in recent years has centered around African Americans who managed to get into the housing market, as the explosive growth in the City's housing prices has far outstripped any debt created by mortgage interest.

Housing discrimination has likely been the greatest contributor to the persistent degradation of intergenerational wealth for Black families, but a host of other factors contribute to a situation that continues to unfold.<sup>2</sup>

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1 See Thorman, T. et al. (2023, March). Income Inequality in California. *Public Policy Institute of California*. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/income-inequality-in-california/>; Poon, L. (2020, February 26). City Lab Daily: How to Actually Close the Racial Wealth Gap. *Bloomberg*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2020-02-26/citylab-daily-how-to-actually-close-the-racial-wealth-gap>; Horowitz, J. M. et al. (2020, January 9). Trends in income and wealth inequality. *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/>; Aladangady, A. et al. (2023, October 18). Greater Wealth, Greater Uncertainty: Changes in Racial Inequality in the Survey of Consumer Finances. *Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System*. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/greater-wealth-greater-uncertainty-changes-in-racial-inequality-in-the-survey-of-consumer-finance-20231018.html>; Howell, J. & Korver-Glenn, E. (2022, November 2). Appraised: The Persistent Evaluation of White Neighborhoods as More Valuable Than Communities of Color. *Eruka*. <https://www.eruka.org/appraised>

2 See Munnell, A. H. et al. (1996). *Mortgage Lending in Boston: Interpreting HMDA Data*. The American Economic Review, 86 (1). 25-53.; Katznelson, I. (2005). *When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*. W.W. Norton & Company; Lui, M. et al. (2005). *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide*. The New Press.; Oliver, M. & Shapiro, T. (2006). *Black Wealth / White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality* 2nd ed. Routledge.; Hamilton, D. & Darity, W. A. (2017). *The political economy of education, financial literacy, and the racial wealth gap*, 99 (1). Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Unfortunately, data on *overall* wealth by race and ethnicity is not systematically collected by local, state, or national authorities, as is the case for many of the other characteristics of families contained in this report. For example, housing data and median household income are collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, but other important metrics of wealth, such as bank deposits, holdings in stocks and bonds, etc., are not. Therefore, this study relies on a few recent authoritative studies on household and familial wealth and the attendant racial dimensions.

### ***The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles***

The most comprehensive account of differential asset accumulation (i.e., wealth and total wealth) in Southern California in recent years is *The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles*, a study published in 2016.<sup>3</sup> This report, conducted under the auspices of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco by a team of researchers from Duke University and the University of California, Los Angeles, 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,

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59-76.

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

disaggregates it by race, ethnicity, and country of origin. The detailed nature of this type of accounting is especially valuable in the exceptionally diverse context of the Greater Los Angeles region, as is the way in which the study treats Black families that originated in the United States as a separate group from Black people who recently immigrated from Africa or elsewhere.

The core findings in this landmark study are unsettling, but although it includes populations sampled from beyond the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles, the picture the study paints may still mask conditions within City limits that result from similar dynamics.

**Table 1.** Median Family Income by Ethnicity.  
*Source:* De La Cruz-Viesca et al., The Color of Wealth...

| <i><b>Ethnicity</b></i> | <i><b>N</b></i> | <i><b>% w/ Bachelor's Degree</b></i> | <i><b>% Married</b></i> | <i><b>Median Age</b></i> | <i><b>Median Family Income</b></i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| White                   | 56              | 56.9                                 | 49.4                    | 63                       | \$95,000                           |
| <b>U.S. Black</b>       | <b>45</b>       | <b>44</b>                            | <b>28</b>               | <b>59</b>                | <b>\$53,500</b>                    |
| African Black           | 23              | 58.9                                 | 59.2                    | 54                       | \$115,000                          |
| Mexican                 | 100             | 17.8                                 | 45.3                    | 45                       | \$50,000                           |
| Other Latino            | 31              | 45.7                                 | 37                      | 62                       | \$40,000                           |
| Chinese                 | 75              | 68.4                                 | 54.2                    | 53                       | \$70,000                           |
| Japanese                | 68              | 68.6                                 | 48.5                    | 63                       | \$75,000                           |
| Korean                  | 77              | 57.1                                 | 58                      | 57                       | \$60,000                           |
| Vietnamese              | 124             | 36.5                                 | 55.2                    | 51                       | \$50,000                           |
| Filipino                | 42              | 76.7                                 | 52.7                    | 59                       | \$80,000                           |
| Asian Indian            | 41              | 79.2                                 | 70.5                    | 50                       | \$100,000                          |

**Drastic Differences in Net Worth**

First among the 2016 study's findings was the 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, just over 1% of the wealth held by White households. Only Mexican Angelenos had less household wealth on average than African Americans, with a median net worth of \$3,500. Other ethnic groups, including non-Mexican Latinos, Vietnamese, and Filipinos, were all significantly more wealthy than Black residents of the City. Households of African-born Black residents reported a median net wealth of approximately \$72,000.

The reasons for these disparities are complex, but the *Color of Wealth* authors point to numerous other studies showing how, “inheritances, bequests, and intra-family transfers account for more of the racial wealth divide than any other demographic and socioeconomic indicators, including education, income, and household structure.”<sup>4</sup> The ability of children or even newly-married couples to benefit from what amounts to a financial “leg up” from parents, grandparents, or other relatives proves to be of enormous value to them when building their own portfolios of assets. Inheriting property, receiving family-based loans for down payments on mortgages, and getting help with college tuition, car loans, or even rent payment helps individuals and families avoid costly entanglements with debt-trap loans while facilitating the acquisition of property and other assets that appreciate over time. Since Black families were so frequently denied common opportunities to build wealth over the past 100 years, current

generations continue to struggle to provide adequate “seed money” to their children and grandchildren. This also explains why many members of immigrant groups who arrive in this country with family wealth are already ahead of the typical U.S.-born Black family. As a result, Black households in Los Angeles, on average, rank near the bottom on nearly every standard accounting of assets and debt, according to the 2016 study.

### ***Disparities in Homeownership***

For decades, homeownership in thriving, safe neighborhoods with quality schools has been the most common means for building intergenerational wealth, yet this path has been aggressively denied to Black Angelenos during the past century. Discriminatory housing practices used against Black families (see “Housing Segregation” chapter) have limited homeownership to around 40% of the current generation of Black Angelenos, compared with nearly 70% of White families. (See Table 2.) Furthermore, African Americans have lower homeownership rates than several recent immigrant groups, including African-born Black people who migrated to the United States with some measure of intergenerational wealth.

U.S. census data suggests the rate of Black

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4 Blau, F. D., & Graham, J. W. (1990). *Black-White Differences in Wealth and Asset Composition*. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 105 (2). Oxford University Press. 321-339; Menchik, P. L. & Jianakoplos, N. A. (1997). *Black-White Wealth Inequality: Is Inheritance the Reason?*. Economic Inquiry 35 (2). Wiley-Blackwell. 428-442.; Dalton Conley, D. (1999). *Getting into the Black: Race, Wealth, and Public Policy*. Political Science Quarterly, 114 (4). Academy of Political Science. 595-612.; Charles, K. K. & Hurst, E. (2003). *The Correlation of Wealth Across Generations*. Journal of Political Economy, 111 (6). The University of Chicago Press. 1155-1182.; Gittleman, M. & Wolff, E. N. (2007). *Racial and Ethnic Differences in Wealth*. Routledge.

**Table 2. Assets by Ethnicity**Source: De La Cruz-Viesca et al., *The Color of Wealth*....

| <b>Ethnicity</b>  | <b>% Liquid Assets</b> | <b>% Checking</b> | <b>% Savings</b> | <b>% Stocks</b> | <b>% IRA, etc.</b> | <b>% Tangible House</b> | <b>% Tangible Vehicle</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| White             | 91.6                   | 90.1              | 71.9             | 40.7            | 63.6               | 68.3                    | 87.4                      |
| <b>U.S. Black</b> | <b>62.3</b>            | <b>68.1</b>       | <b>55.5</b>      | <b>21.5</b>     | <b>37.9</b>        | <b>41.5</b>             | <b>72.2</b>               |
| African Black     | 87                     | 80.3              | 80.3             | 18              | 48.5               | 42.9                    | 99.9                      |
| Mexican           | 53.8                   | 47.1              | 39.8             | 7.6             | 15                 | 44.9                    | 99.9                      |
| Other Latino      | 61.3                   | 54.6              | 44               | 7.3             | 8.2                | 51.3                    | 93.9                      |
| Chinese           | 90.2                   | 85.3              | 81.6             | 48.8            | 48.3               | 67.5                    | 97.4                      |
| Japanese          | 93.3                   | 93.3              | 86.4             | 60.8            | 62.3               | 63.7                    | 91.3                      |
| Korean            | 88.8                   | 81.3              | 57.8             | 23.6            | 27                 | 40.2                    | 89.6                      |
| Vietnamese        | 70.2                   | 54.8              | 37.4             | 9.9             | 17.7               | 53                      | 83                        |
| Filipino          | 85.6                   | 83.7              | 74.6             | 41.9            | 55.6               | 56.7                    | 99.9                      |
| Asian Indian      | 95                     | 86.2              | 76.9             | 58.6            | 38.6               | 40.4                    | 99.6                      |

homeownership within the City of Los Angeles was 6.6% in 2022, about half the rate reported in *The Color of Wealth* six years before. (See Figure 1.) The census figures also show that rates of homeownership are declining overall across Los Angeles as the costs of owning and keeping a home increase, and that among the largest ethnic groups, homeownership has fallen most among Black residents over the last decade, further exacerbating the racial wealth gap. (See Figure 1.)

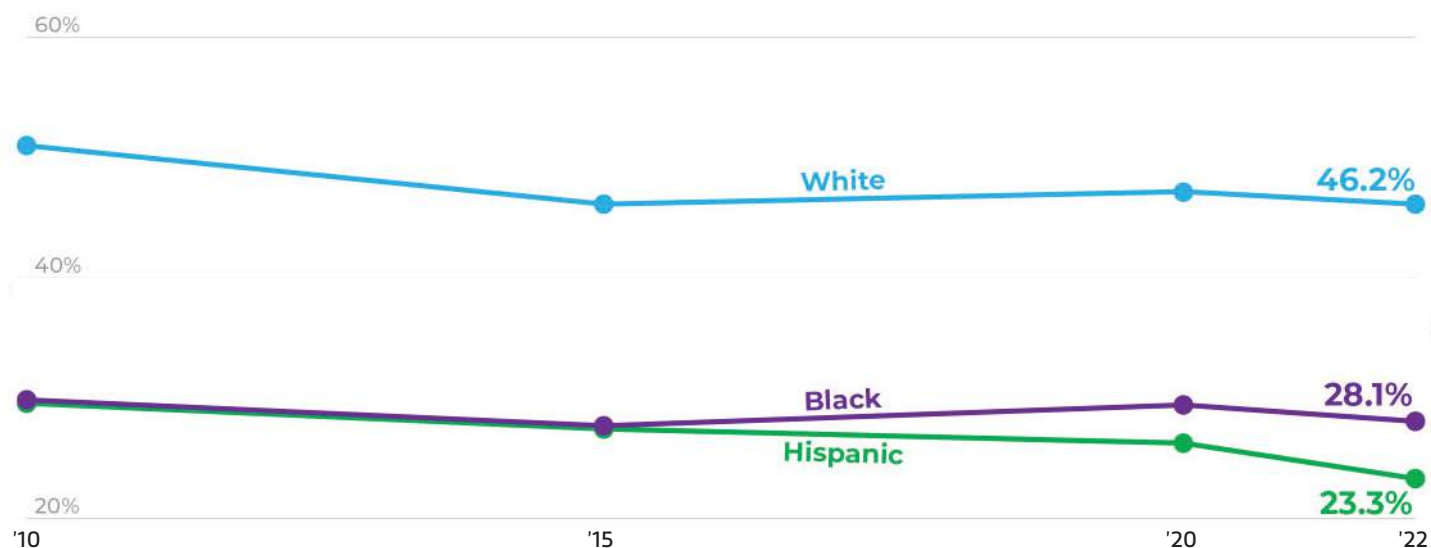
The widening wealth gap has deep roots in a variety of discriminatory 20th century housing policies and practices. As Black families were long denied access to purchasing in areas of Los Angeles where home values appreciated more rapidly, renting likely held more appeal

since it may have seemed, or may have been, the most financially sound strategy.<sup>5</sup> Studies have also shown that African Americans have been subject to unfair mortgage lending practices, making homeownership less appealing given the more burdensome loan conditions, such as higher interest rates. The housing crisis of 2007 to 2010 was particularly devastating for homeowners in Los Angeles' Black communities, as many families took out risky adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) in an effort to break into the lucrative housing market, only to find themselves overburdened by ballooning payments after a series of unfavorable adjustments to their interest

5 Brown, D. (2012, December 10). *How Home Ownership Keeps Blacks Poorer Than Whites*. Forbes. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesleadershipforum/2012/12/10/how-home-ownership-keeps-blacks-poorer-than-whites>

**Figure 1. Homeownership Rates in the City of Los Angeles (2010-2022).**

Source: American Community Survey Data (US Census Bureau).



rates. Those who were unable to “cash out,” or sell, before the housing crash were often forced to abandon their investments and faced foreclosure, bankruptcy, and even steeply-reduced access to quality credit in subsequent years. A Pew Research Center study found a significant increase in the racial wealth gap in the wake of the Great Recession (2007–2009).<sup>6</sup> The effects were particularly devastating in California, where most homeowners in expensive housing markets, such as Los Angeles, risked — and still risk — enormous portions of their wealth in any attempt to own a home. The authors of *The Color of Wealth* also found that among those African Americans who were still homeowners post-crash, nearly 80% were likely to have

“high debt-to-equity” ratios on their homes, continuing a decades-old trend that keeps many Black families on a debt treadmill with multiple side effects.<sup>7</sup>

### **Fewer Liquid Assets**

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. This may help account for the fact that Black Angelenos are less likely to have a savings account (56%) or a checking account (68%) than White residents (72% savings, 90% checking). Also, Black households hold far fewer liquid assets than their White counterparts. (See Table 2.) In 2016, the total assets of U.S.-born Black

6 Taylor, P. et al. (2011, July 26). *Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks, Hispanics*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2011/07/26/wealth-gaps-rise-to-record-highs-between-whites-blacks-hispanics/>

7 De La Cruz-Viesca et al., *The Color of Wealth...*, 46.



Angelenos averaged around only \$30,000, far less than most other racial or ethnic groups and only a fraction of White Angelenos, who averaged about \$335,000 in assets, as also reported in *The Color of Wealth*.

*The Color of Wealth* also states that American-born Black people in Los Angeles are less likely to hold investment assets. Specifically, they are half as likely to invest in mutual funds, investment trusts, and stocks as their White counterparts (21% and 41%, respectively). Black residents are also much less likely to have annuities or individual retirement accounts. Around 64% of White households in the study had private retirement accounts, compared to about 37% of U.S.-born Black residents in the Los Angeles area. This may be

due, in part, to the higher percentage of Black Angelenos who are employed by government agencies (see Table 3), where reliance on Social Security and other government-affiliated retirement systems is more common than among the self-employed and those working in the private sector.

**Debt**

Debt is another major component of the 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. Once again, U.S.-born Black Angelenos are the least likely to possess a vehicle, and those who do own a car are 35.6% more likely to hold debt on the vehicle than car owners who are White.

**Table 3.** Ethnicity by Employment Sector.  
*Source:* De La Cruz-Viesca et al., *The Color of Wealth*.

| <i><b>Ethnicity</b></i> | <i><b>% Business Owner</b></i> | <i><b>% Self-Employed</b></i> | <i><b>% Public Sector</b></i> | <i><b>% Private Sector</b></i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White                   | 11.7                           | 5.9                           | 7                             | 14.3                           |
| <b>U.S. Black</b>       | <b>3.1</b>                     | <b>6.6</b>                    | <b>11.2</b>                   | <b>6.6</b>                     |
| African Black           | 6                              | 6.1                           | 0                             | 7.9                            |
| Mexican                 | 3.5                            | 6.6                           | 9.5                           | 10.6                           |
| Other Latino            | 4.2                            | 13.8                          | 5.3                           | 18.1                           |
| Chinese                 | 15.1                           | 13.8                          | 4.2                           | 16.3                           |
| Japanese                | 10.8                           | 13.5                          | 7                             | 27.1                           |
| Korean                  | 19.6                           | 13.2                          | 7.3                           | 18.9                           |
| Vietnamese              | 2.4                            | 5.6                           | 10.3                          | 35.4                           |
| Filipino                | 8.4                            | 11.3                          | 21.4                          | 22.7                           |
| Asian Indian            | 10.5                           | 9.4                           | 1.1                           | 35                             |

About 60% of U.S.-born Black households in Los Angeles have credit cards, more than double the percentage of White households and three times the percentage of Chinese households who have them. (See Table 4.)

Even when Black families send children to college to try to break the debilitating circle of debt and poverty, student loan debt is more likely to degrade the chances of African American youth moving fully into the middle class. 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%, as opposed to 15% for White households. (See Table 4.)

The consequences of the barrage of discriminatory housing and banking policies,

many of which were both peculiar and local to the City, now comprise a history of additional challenges to building wealth and security through the same means that worked so well for other newcomers to the area. Sadly, despite progress made during the Civil Rights era, challenges to the building of wealth through homeownership seem to have snowballed, gathering momentum as the ever-growing housing affordability crisis requires more capital than ever to overcome the legacy of discrimination. Without exceptional government attention, 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.

**Table 4.** Type of Debt by Ethnicity.  
*Source:* De La Cruz-Viesca et al., The Color of Wealth...

| <i>Ethnicity</i>     | <i>Credit Card</i> | <i>Student Loan</i> | <i>Medical Debt</i> | <i>Mortgage (All)</i> | <i>Mortgage (Owners)</i> | <i>Vehicle (All)</i> | <i>Vehicle (Own)</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| White                | 27.7               | 15.3                | 6.8                 | 46.2                  | 67.7                     | 18.3                 | 21.3                 |
| U.S. Black           | 57.3               | 20.5                | 4.7                 | 32.5                  | 78.4                     | 25.6                 | 35.6                 |
| <b>African Black</b> | <b>64.7</b>        | <b>13.5</b>         | <b>3.4</b>          | <b>32.7</b>           | <b>76.3</b>              | <b>48.5</b>          | <b>48.5</b>          |
| Mexican              | 34.2               | 12.4                | 9                   | 34.6                  | 77.1                     | 29.5                 | 34                   |
| Other Latino         | 38.7               | 4.8                 | 4.1                 | 41.3                  | 80.5                     | 20.3                 | 21.8                 |
| Chinese              | 16.7               | 14.2                | 0.001               | 40.3                  | 59.7                     | 17.1                 | 17.6                 |
| Japanese             | 42.4               | 8.1                 | 2                   | 37.4                  | 58.7                     | 18.2                 | 20                   |
| Korean               | 28.9               | 15.9                | 1.6                 | 26                    | 64.6                     | 22.1                 | 25.1                 |
| Vietnamese           | 23.9               | 12.9                | 1.5                 | 36.2                  | 68.2                     | 9                    | 11.4                 |
| Filipino             | 47.9               | 15.5                | 4.5                 | 49.9                  | 88.1                     | 28.3                 | 28.3                 |
| Asian Indian         | 25.6               | 4.5                 | 0.001               | 24.2                  | 59.8                     | 11.9                 | 12                   |

## Summary of Findings

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 homes in certain areas of Los Angeles.
- The housing crisis of 2007 to 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 persist 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 1% of the wealth held by White households.
- The homeownership rate for Black families in Los Angeles is approximately 40%, compared to nearly 70% for White families.
- 2022 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau) data reveals that Black homeownership in the City of Los Angeles stands at 23.3%.
- Compared to White residents, Black Angelenos have fewer liquid assets, such as savings and checking accounts.
- Black Angelenos may have a 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.
- There are higher rates of credit card ownership and student loan debt among Black residents.

# Ethnographic Report

## Overview of Ethnographic Study

To examine the impact of enslavement and disenfranchisement on Black Angelenos, the California State University, Northridge Reparations Research Team (CSUN Research Team) conducted an ethnographic research study, a method that investigates the lived experiences of a people and their culture, including interviews, focus groups, and town halls. A comprehensive survey was also developed to assess the experiences of African Americans in Los Angeles and how they have been impacted by structural racism. Furthermore, in collaboration with the City of Los Angeles Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights), the CSUN Research Team designed and facilitated three working group sessions to understand community members' reparations recommendations. General public comments related to reparations recommendations were also collected by LA Civil Rights and are documented in this report.

The CSUN Research Team served as an

the academic partner, documenting how systemic racism and discrimination have led to severe disadvantages for Black residents relative to White residents in Los Angeles and offering recommendations for solutions. Our team worked to provide data-driven information and analysis to support general project objectives, layered with other project tasks such as geospatial and ethnographic work to inform the study.

The study was composed of the following components per the Request for Proposals issued by LA Civil Rights on October 3, 2022:

### Part I - Survey

Between June 16, 2023 and February 29, 2024, an inductive survey method was used to gather information about African Americans' experiences while living in the City of Los Angeles. This research design involved outlining hypotheses in the form of survey questions and searching for the development of explanations and patterns derived from observations (Azungah, 2018). Administering the public survey helped the ethnographers gather relevant data, analyze it, and arrive

at objective findings about experiences, perspectives, and community needs. The CSUN Research Team used Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to determine representative samples of survey respondents to ensure a comprehensive approach.

To gather the most relevant responses, the survey included different question types, including Likert scale questions, open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, and close-ended questions. To ensure accessibility, surveys were administered via two modalities: on paper at in-person engagements and electronically on a website. This survey was cost-effective and had the potential to reveal useful insights about Black communities. The survey was open to anyone 18 years and older who wanted to share their experiences while living in the City of Los Angeles.

## **Part II - Interviews and Focus Groups**

Ethnographic interviews are informal interviews that take place in a naturalistic setting and are often the result of participant observation. The purpose of the ethnographic interview is to historically, conceptually, methodologically, and geographically learn more about a community from the members

themselves, in their own words and in a natural setting (Munz, 2017). In global contexts of anticolonialism, decolonization, and human rights, ethnographic interviews were developed to investigate Indigenous or African American pasts in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Europe (Harkin, 2010). Ethnographic interviews emerged in the United States in the mid-1950s during Native American land claims hearings after 1946 (Douglas & Rosa, 2020).

To complete the ethnographic analysis, community interviews and focus group meetings were conducted. The CSUN Research Team used Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software, to read, code, and analyze data that included oral history, text, and images. The data was then triangulated to produce relevant and diverse themes. This methodology allowed researchers to understand additional critical African American histories in better efforts to restore the knowledge of and increase appreciation for their past. Additionally, town halls were used to disseminate findings after key study components were completed.



# Part III - Community Engagement: Working Groups & Public Comments

In September 2024, LA Civil Rights, in partnership with the CSUN Research Team, hosted a series of three community ideation sessions with residents. The goal of these in-person working groups was to offer community members an opportunity to share insights and recommendations for reparations based on the specific areas of harm discussed during each session.

In addition to hosting the working group sessions, LA Civil Rights invited the general public to submit recommendations for reparations for Black Angelenos via physical drop boxes around Los Angeles. The Department launched a campaign to collect electronic responses, as well.

## Part 1: Analysis of Survey Responses

### Methods

The purpose of the survey (see Appendix A) was to learn how the City of Los Angeles has impacted Black/African American lives and to identify ways to repair harms. The CSUN Research Team sought to obtain participants' experiences and thoughts on issues that

could help the City better understand how to effectively serve Black/African American communities.

### Participants

A total of 618 individuals identifying as Black and/or of 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 32% (n=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' ages ranged from 18 to 97, with the majority ranging from

Figure 1. Community Survey Responses – Relationship Status

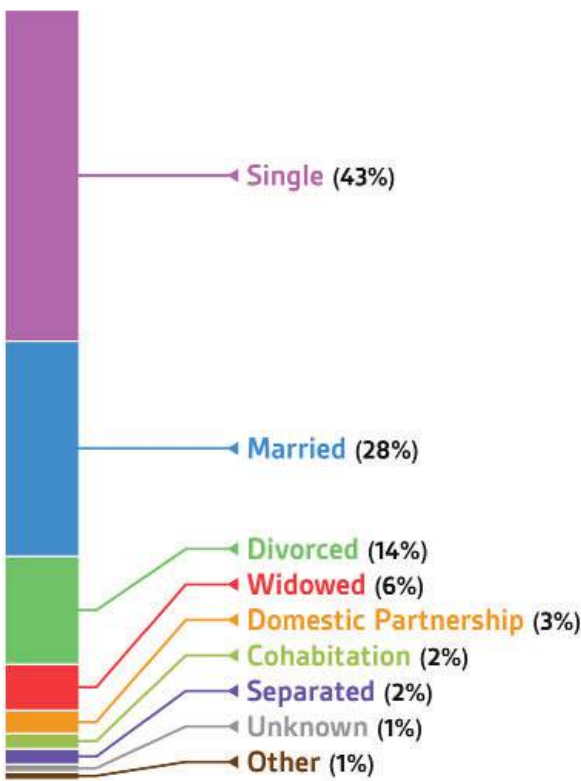
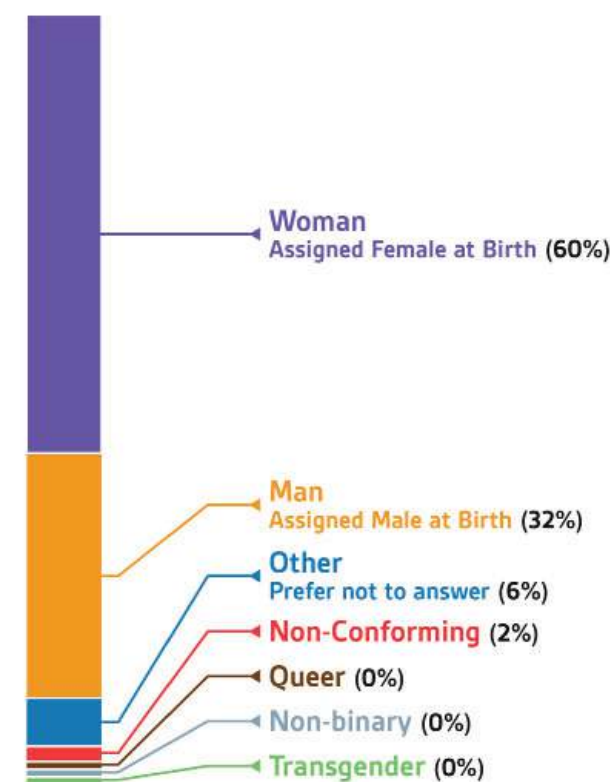
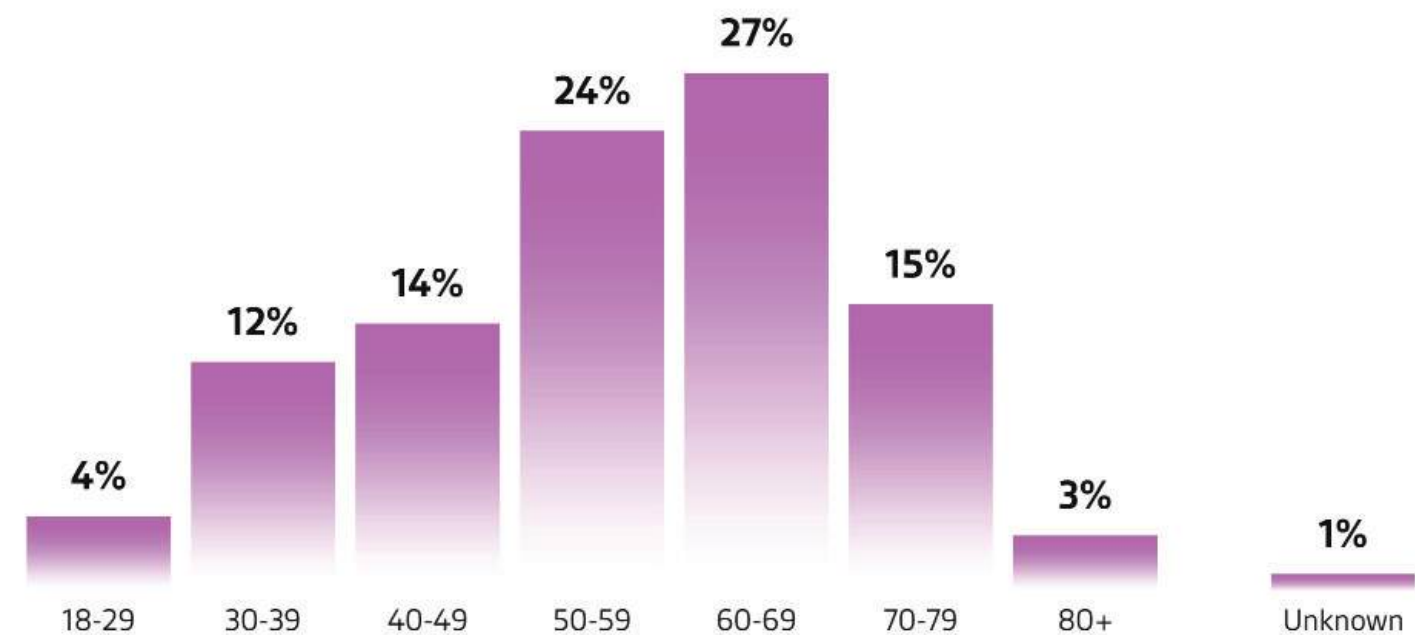


Figure 2. Community Survey Responses – Gender Identity



50 to 69. Information regarding participants' relationship status was also collected. Around 43% of participants reported being single, while 28% were married, 14% were divorced,

Figure 3. Community Survey Responses – Age Range

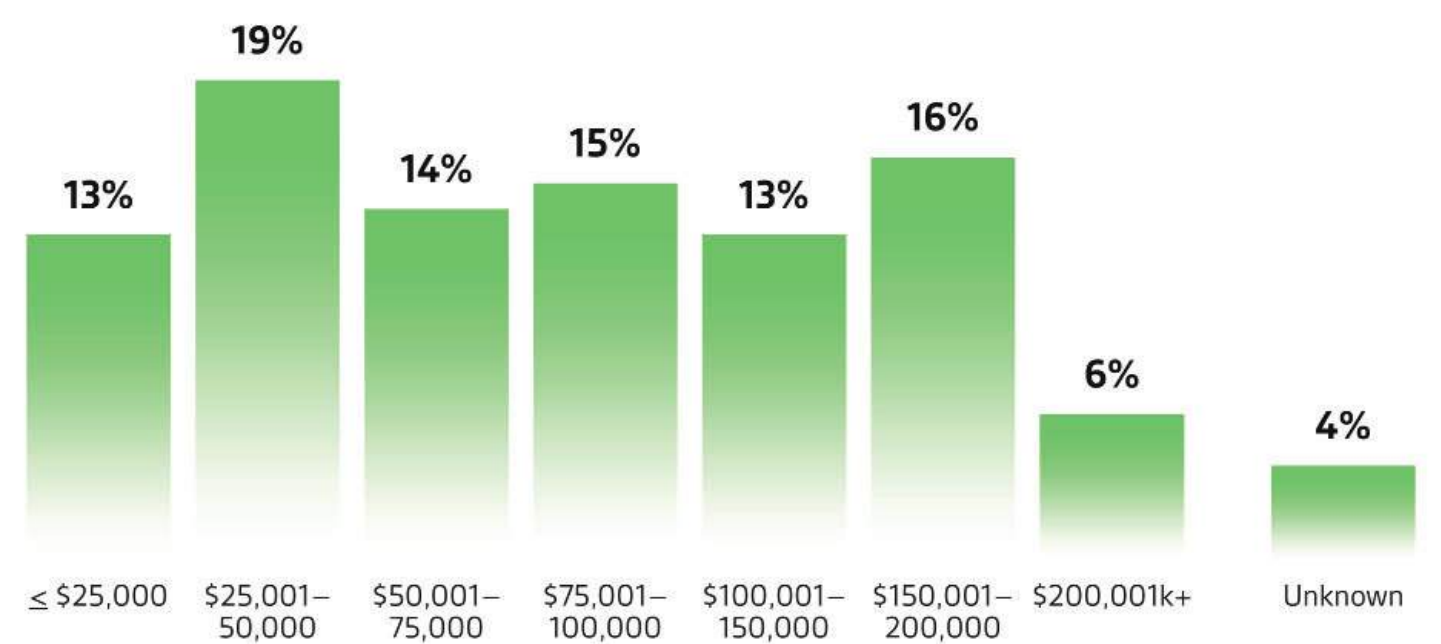


and 6% were widowed.

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 reported completing associate's degrees (11%) and earned bachelor's (25%) or master's degrees (24%).

Respondents were also asked to provide their income level. Nineteen percent of participants reported earning less than \$25,000 per year, while 14% reported earning between \$25,000 and \$49,999 annually. Roughly 28% of

Figure 4. Community Survey Responses – Annual Income



respondents reported yearly income ranging between \$50,000 to \$99,999. Another 26% of participants reported earning income above \$100,000 annually.

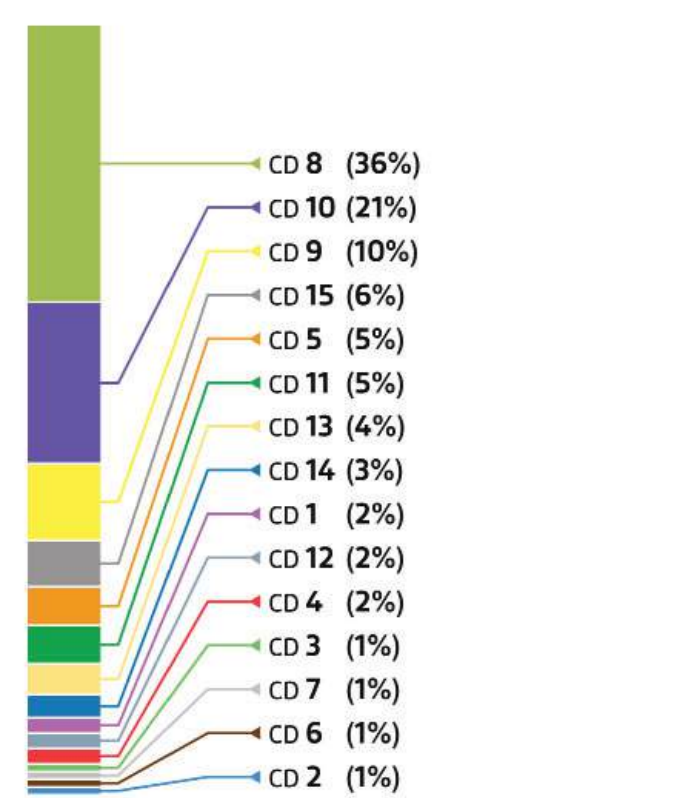
Survey responses were also analyzed by LA City Council District. Council District 8 accounted for 36% of the total responses, and Council District 10 accounted for another 21%. Data showed 10% of respondents reported residency in Council District 9, and 6% reported residency in Council District 15. Additionally,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

**Recruitment**

The survey launched Friday, June 16, 2023, days before the Juneteenth holiday and events

celebrating African Americans' liberation from enslavement. The CSUN Research Team closed the survey on February 29, 2024, the last day of Black History Month. During this

Figure 5. Community Survey Responses by Council District



time period, the CSUN research team worked collaboratively with the City to advertise the study and recruit participants through electronic, social, and community outreach efforts. 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. Outreach activities included approximately 30 presentations at meetings and community events, including church services and festivals. To raise widespread awareness, the Department purchased advertisements with print, digital, and radio outlets, and held public forums and 12 webinars to advertise opportunities to participate in the survey, focus groups, and interviews, which as a collection, was commonly known as the Black Experience Study. Figure 6 shows a heatmap illustrating the reported residential locations of respondents.

We, the CSUN Research Team, anticipated that respondents would share information about the study with family, friends, and co-workers. This method is called snowball sampling and was noted as one of the primary ways individuals learned of the City's study, which led to the comprehensive study we conducted. Similarly, in this study, 20%

of respondents reported learning about the study from a family member or friend, making this the most common reported outreach method. Another 12% of respondents reported learning about the study from a professional colleague or contact.

News advertisements were also used as a tool for recruitment and accounted for the second-largest reported recruitment impact at 15%. The Department and the Commission also hosted a series of community meetings and events which resulted in a reported 14% of respondents learning about the study.

Social media platforms were also used to post recruitment flyers and study announcements. In this study, social media advertisements accounted for 11% of reported outreach.

This multipronged effort to recruit participants for the study allowed for a diverse response pool. Community events were the primary in-person method of outreach. These events included Black in the Valley's Juneteenth celebration and the Taste of Soul event, which spotlights Black businesses and Black cultural heritage. The latter event is hosted in the city during the month of October and is estimated to attract over 300,000 individuals yearly.

**Figure 6 (Following Page).** Heatmap of the reported residential locations of respondents.



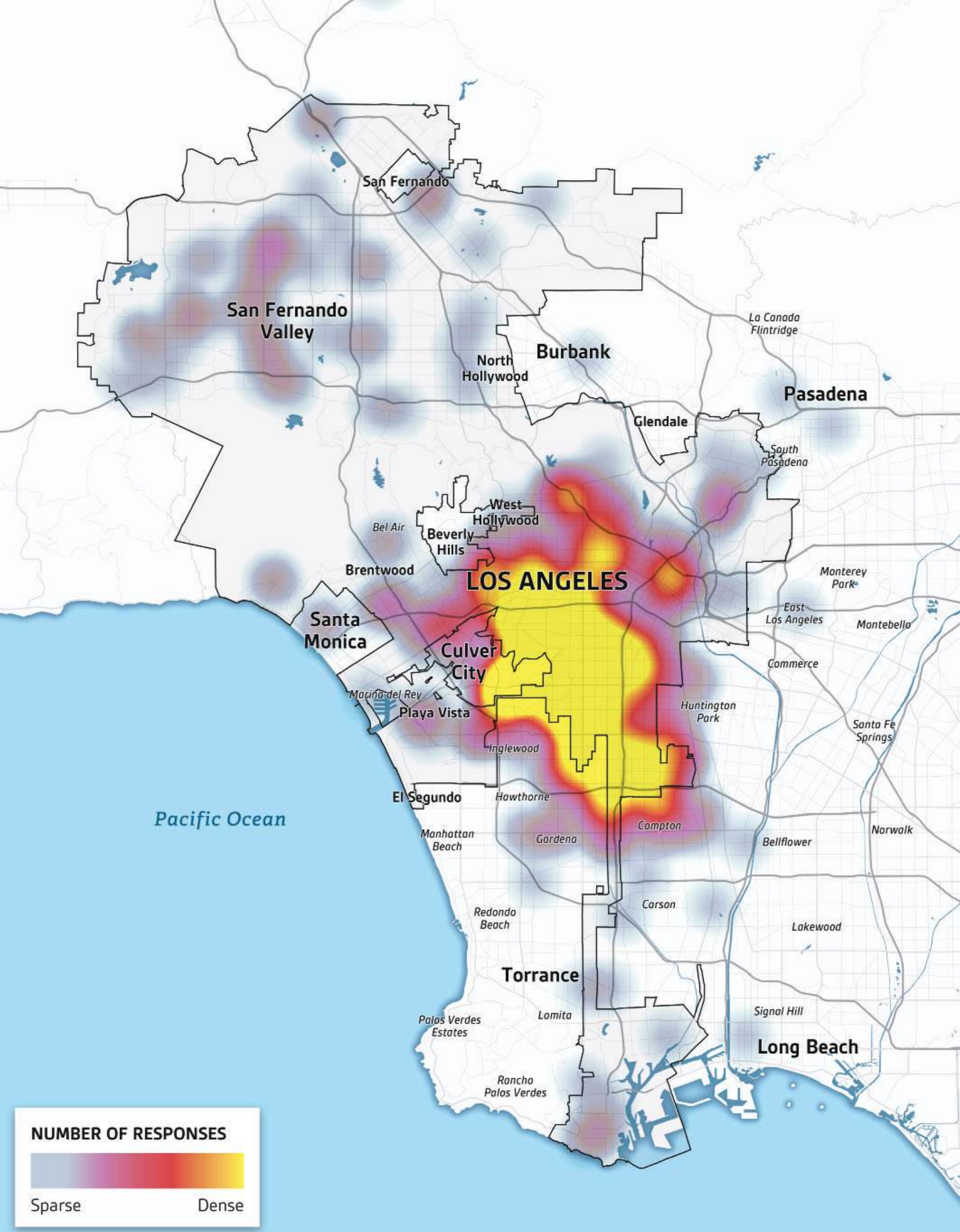
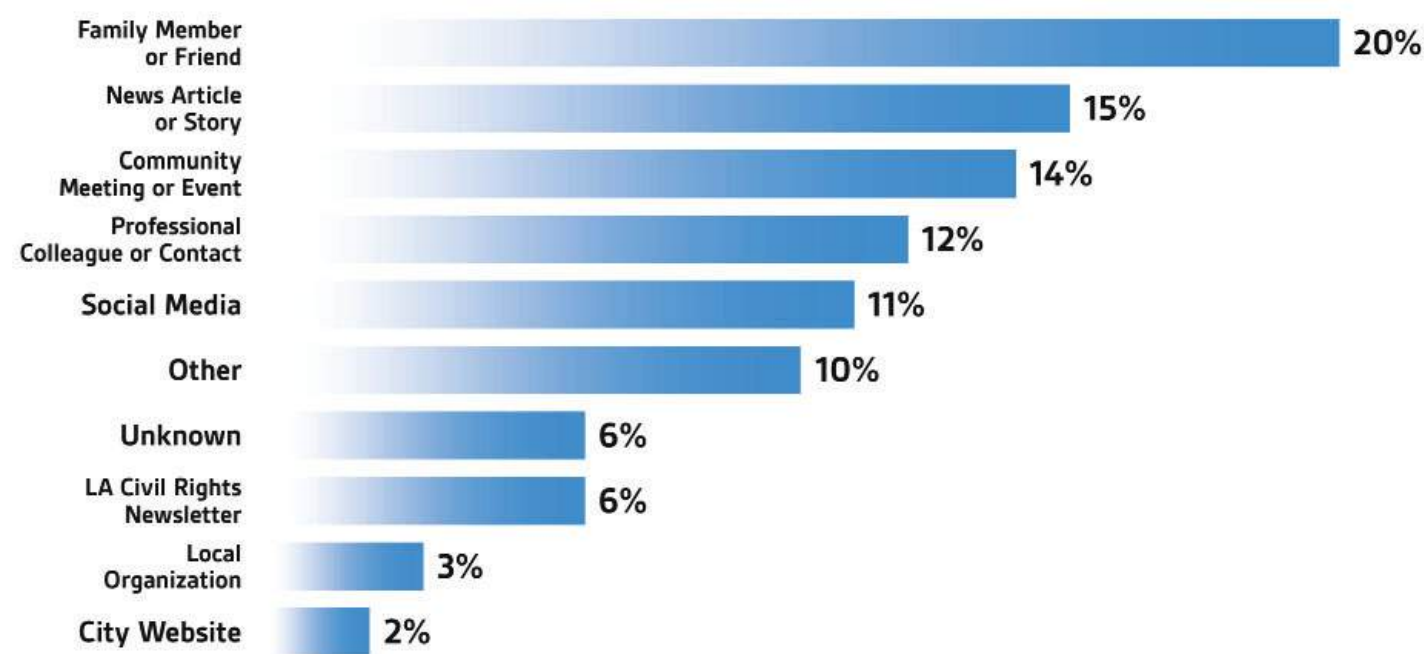




Figure 7. Community Survey Outreach Methods



Canvassing at these major events helped to broadcast the study. However, future studies should consider more residential recruitment approaches, as it was observed that these events were not conducive to potential participants taking 30 minutes or more to complete the survey online.

**Measures/Instrument**

The *African American Experience in Los Angeles Survey* was administered online and on paper at in-person events, and was estimated to take approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete. However, some participants reported that the survey took up to one hour to complete. The survey was completely anonymous and did not require participants to provide identifiable information. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information about African Americans'

experiences living in the City of Los Angeles, how the City has impacted African Americans, and what reparations efforts should be considered to begin repairing harms. Once participants accessed the survey webpage, they were presented with the study description and consent form for review. Those who consented to participate and met the study's eligibility requirements were directed to take to the survey, while those who were not eligible or did not consent were directed to the end of the survey. Individuals were eligible to participate if they were 18 years or older and had previous or current residence in the City of Los Angeles.

The survey contained eight questions establishing participants' residence in the City of Los Angeles, eight demographic questions,

a section on respondents' experiences while living in Los Angeles and experiences with City government, and a section on restorative justice focused on repairing harms and the role of City departments.

Upon completion of the survey, participants were given the option to access a separate link to indicate their interest in participating in a focus group or interview. Participants' survey data remained separate from the focus group interest and signup form and were not linked in any way to focus groups or interviews.

## Study Limitations

The *African American Experience in Los Angeles Survey* attempted to provide Black Angelenos an opportunity to describe their and their families' experiences living in Los Angeles, with a particular focus on how the City's policies and practices have impacted their overall wellbeing. A large-scale, comprehensive survey was developed and distributed throughout the city, primarily through a digital online platform.

This digital surveying approach limited participants' access, specifically those with limited or no access to digital technologies. To address this limitation, paper surveys were introduced. Additionally, some respondents reported requiring more than 30 minutes to

complete to survey. Compensation was not provided for participation. It is imperative to consider compensation models when engaging populations who have been systematically disadvantaged and those whose labor has historically been exploited.

The resulting small sample size limits the generalizability of the data, as a representative sample of the target population was not reached. However, the findings do provide many insights, and the results correspond with the broader landscape analysis and data gathered from focus groups and interviews.

Additional limitations of this study include the study timeframe and survey fatigue. The study was launched days before Juneteenth 2023 and concluded at the end of February, also known as Black History Month, of 2024. The less-than-nine-month timeframe presented obstacles in reaching the target population. Furthermore, public surveys by other entities were administered to this same population during this time period. Participants were often confused about which study they had completed. Streamlined surveys combined with more direct recruitment approaches may aid future studies.

## Survey Analysis

Modeled after the *California Reparations Interim Report* (June 2022), the following survey analysis details the African American experience in Los Angeles through the following topics:

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

To examine these areas in detail, the following research questions were analyzed using data from the *African American Experience in Los Angeles Survey*.

1. What are the experiences of African Americans/Black Americans in Los Angeles, prior to its establishment and since?
2. How has the City of Los Angeles impacted African Americans?
3. What reparations efforts should be

explored by the City of Los Angeles to repair harms against the African American community?

The objective of the *African American Experience in Los Angeles Survey*, Interviews and Focus Groups was to gather information on the historic and contemporary experiences of Black Angelenos within the city and to examine the impact of the City's policies and practices, as detailed above. Additionally, the ethnographic study explored restorative justice approaches to address harms committed by the City of Los Angeles that have impacted the African American community.

### **Research Question 1: What are the experiences of African Americans/Black Americans in Los Angeles, prior to its establishment and since?**

#### ***State-Sanctioned Enslavement***

The United States of America authorized and actively participated in the enslavement of African peoples, with state-sanctioned enslavement legally operating from 1619 to 1865. Additional historical accounts record enslavement in north America prior to 1619 (Bennett, 2024; Berry & Gross, 2020). State-sanctioned enslavement classified persons of African descent as non-citizens, denying them basic human freedoms and liberties.

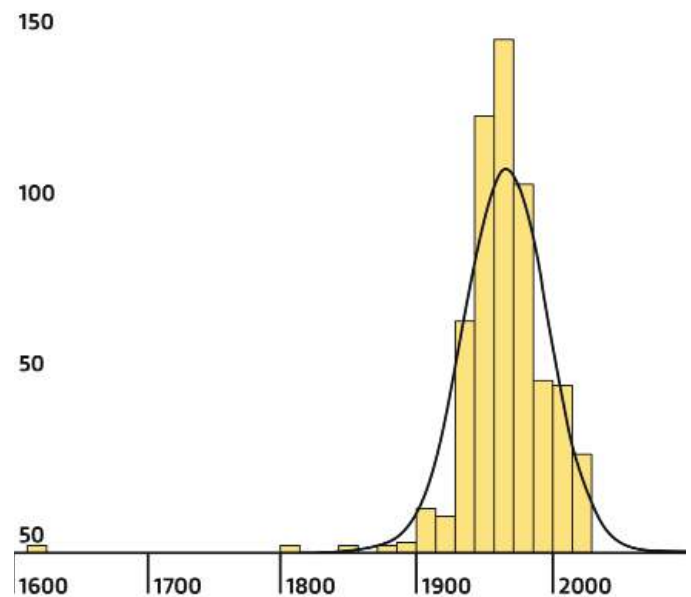
Even Freedmen were denied equal access to citizenship. Persons of African descent experienced extreme conditions of inhumanity and suffering, resulting in death, separation of families, destruction of communities, and terrorism. These conditions were met with rebellion and abolitionist movements. Laws, along with state-authorized policies and practices, ensured the continued enslavement and disenfranchisement of Africans in the United States.

The State of California was officially founded in 1850, and the City of Los Angeles, originally called El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles (The Town of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels), was founded in 1781. Both the state and the city are historically recorded as upholding state-sanctioned enslavement for persons of African descent, as detailed in the study's "Landscape Analysis of Harms" section. The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 freed enslaved persons in the rebellious states, and the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865 officially abolished slavery in the United States.

To understand the history of Black Angelenos during the period of state-sanctioned enslavement, participants were surveyed about their family's history within Los Angeles.

More than 56% (n=348) of participants reported a family history of residing within the boundaries of the City of Los Angeles for five or more decades. On average, individual participants lived in Los Angeles for 34.3 years with a Standard Deviation of 19.82, with most respondents moving to Los Angeles around the 1960s, correlating with a major influx of Black residents in Los Angeles.

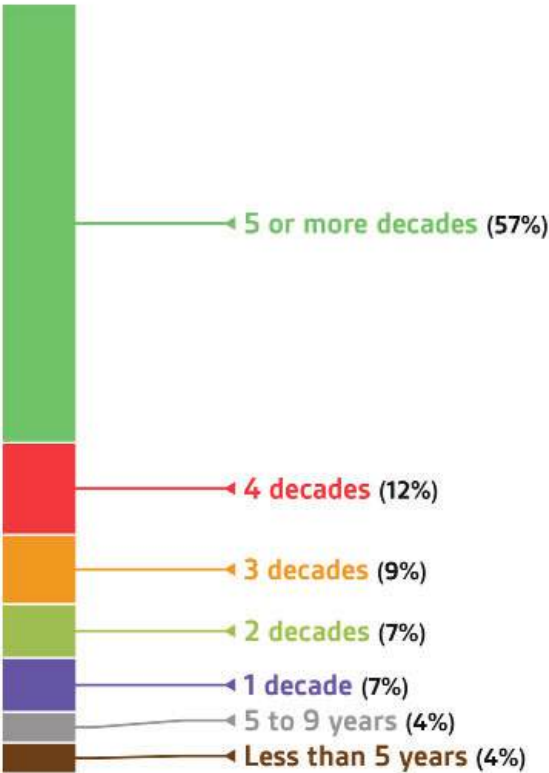
**Figure 8.** Year respondents moved to Los Angeles



Roughly 82% of respondents (n=493) reported a family link or personal lineage to enslavement in the United States. Approximately 25% (n=151) of participants were unsure of their family's history of enslavement. Researchers expected respondents' uncertainty, as enslavement, often resulted in the separation of families and the prohibition of family formation.

Focusing specifically on the period prior to 1865, respondents were asked about their knowledge of the City's impact on their family in the areas of enslavement, fugitive slave laws, confiscated land, seized assets, and racial violence. In most categories, participants did not have knowledge of any family history of state-sanctioned enslavement or were unsure. However, in the area of racial violence prior to 1865, 45% of participants (n=266, N= 590) reported family experiences with racial violence. For all categories of state-sanctioned enslavement assessed, reported injustices increased with respondents' length of residency in Los Angeles.

Figure 9. Decades respondents lived in Los Angeles

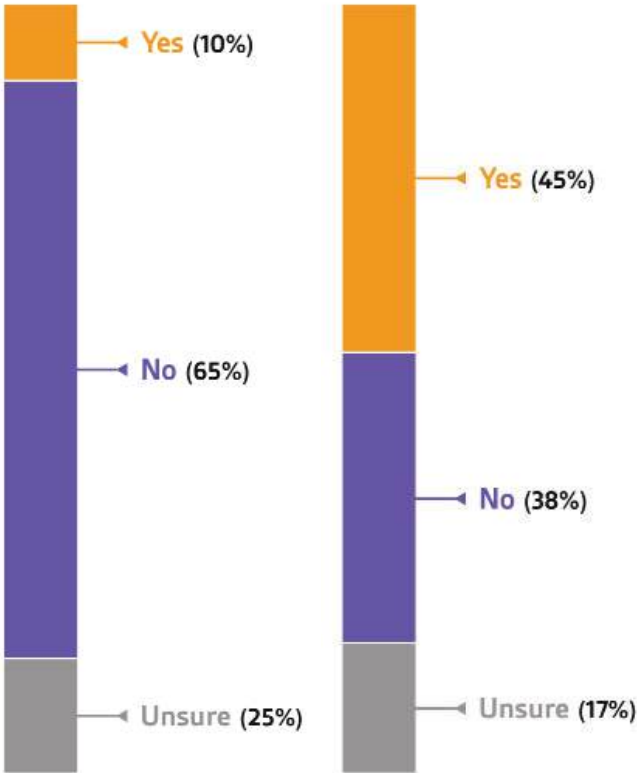


Summary of Findings

- Roughly 82% of respondents had a family lineage of enslavement in the United States.
- Prior to 1865, 45% of participants reported family experiences with racial violence prior to 1865.
- In general, participants lacked knowledge or were unsure of any family history of state-sanctioned enslavement in Los Angeles, which is a consequence of enslavement.

Figure 10 (Left). Respondents' connection to enslavement in California

Figure 11 (Right). Percent of respondents families who experienced racial violence before 1865





State-Sanctioned Civil Discrimination

1866-1968

State-sanctioned civil discrimination was assessed for the period between 1866 and 1968. This timeframe includes the period following the abolition of enslavement, the early advocacy for civil rights in the 1900s and 1920s, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Participants reported housing, education, employment, and policing were major areas in which state-sanctioned civil discrimination impacted Black families in the City of Los Angeles during this period.

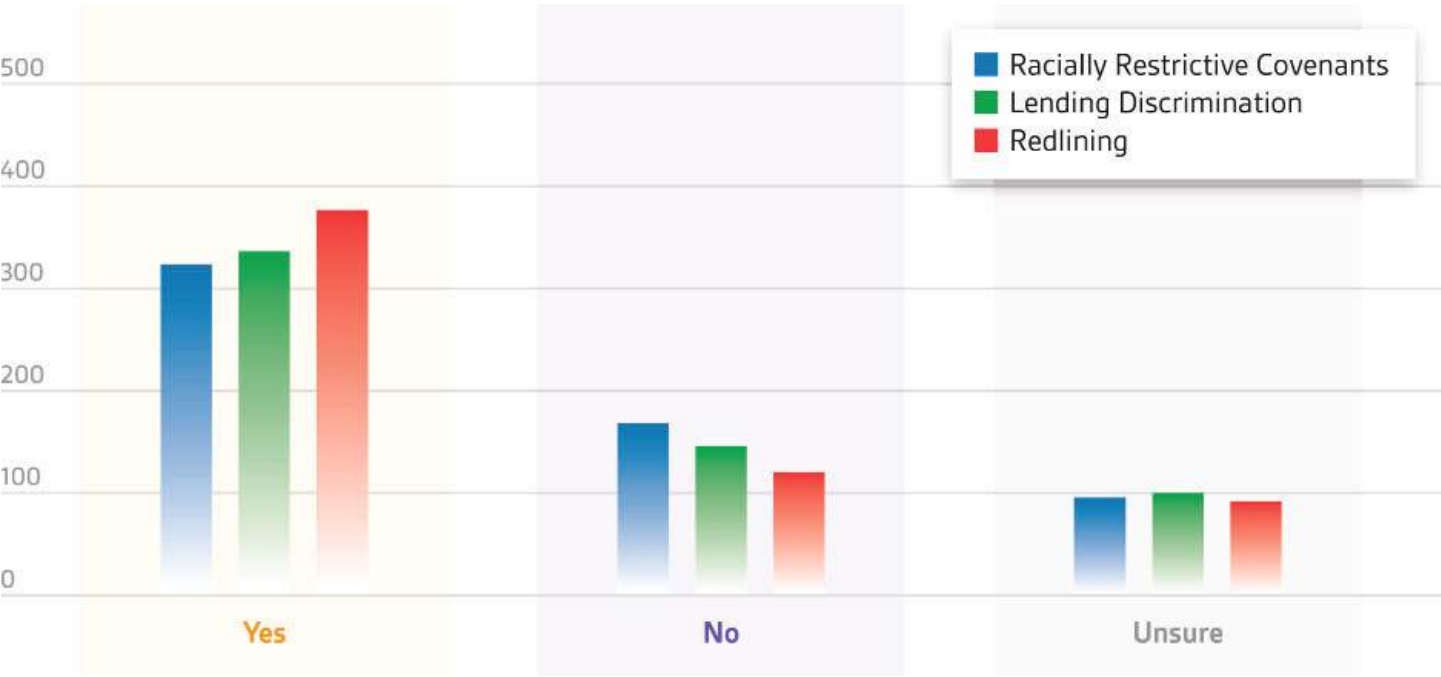
Participants indicated discrimination in housing and lending practices was a significant area of impact for themselves and their families. Historically, African Americans have experienced discrimination in housing access,

affordability, and home/land valuations.

Racially restrictive covenants prohibited African Americans from residing in select locations based on their race, typically reserving these areas exclusively for White residents. The analysis determined 57% of respondents (n=336) reported that their families were impacted by racially restrictive covenants in Los Angeles.

Redlining was another systematic approach used to hinder African American homeownership. Redlining allowed lending institutions to deny loans to African Americans under the assumption that the area in which the latter were buying or attempting to insure a home held a higher financial risk for the lending institution. A total of 383 (64%)

Figure 12. Housing discrimination 1866-1968



**Figure 13.** Family lineage of home ownership



respondents indicated that they and/or their families experienced redlining while residing in Los Angeles between 1866 and 1968. This approach to restricting purchasing by race was also fueled by discriminatory lending practices, resulting in inequitable access to home loans, unfair property assessments, and higher interest rates in the loans African Americans did receive. Race-based housing discrimination severely impacted African American homeownership in the United States. Almost 60% of respondents in this study described a family history of lending discrimination in the City of Los Angeles between 1866 and 1968.

In terms of homeownership, 60% of participants (n=369) reported never owning a home and only 8.9% (n=55) inherited a

home. Of those who have owned a home, only 71% (n=172) report currently maintaining ownership. It is also noteworthy that 43% (n=256) of participants' parents never owned a home, 46% (n=260) of participants' grandparents never owned a home, and 56% (n=298) of participants' great-grandparents never owned a home/land. Around 17% of participants reported a family history of having their land unfairly confiscated between 1866 and 1968.

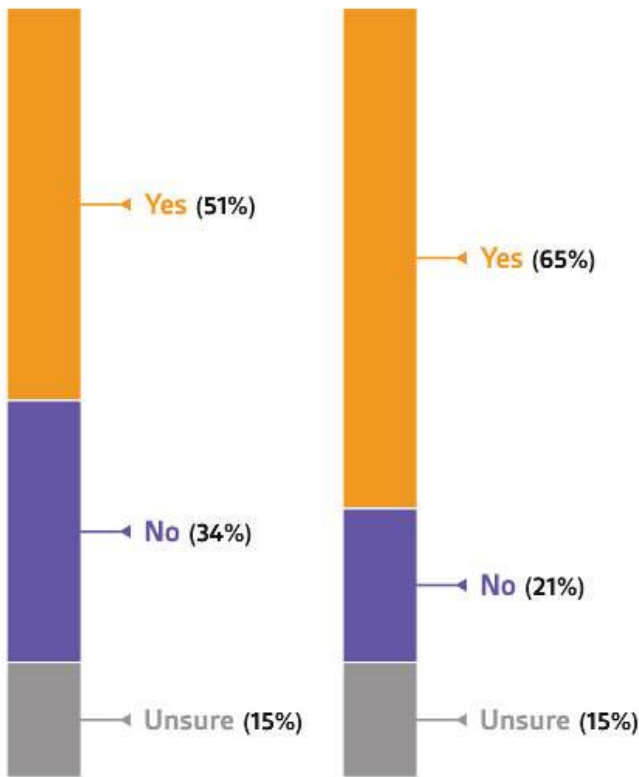
African Americans have had a long and complex history to obtain education in the United States. Laws at the federal and state levels have impeded and restricted African Americans' access to educational systems, schools, and culturally competent curriculum and teachers at both primary and secondary

levels (Johnson, 2014; Orfield & Jarvie, 2020; Rothstein, 2013). School segregation ideologies and resulting legislation have had a devastating impact on African Americans' access to schools and quality education. School segregation occurred in 51% (n=298) of participants and/or their families' experiences from 1866 to 1968; only 34% of participants reported not having experienced school segregation in that time.

Employment was noted as an area of impact on Black families for over 62% (n=384) of participants in this study. Another 14% were unsure if their family members' employment

**Figure 14 (Left).** Experienced school segregation between 1866-1968

**Figure 15 (Right).** Experienced employment discrimination between 1866-1968



and job security had been impacted by the City of Los Angeles from 1866 to 1968. In the Access to Union Jobs category, 48% (n=295) did not indicate a personal or family history of this experience.

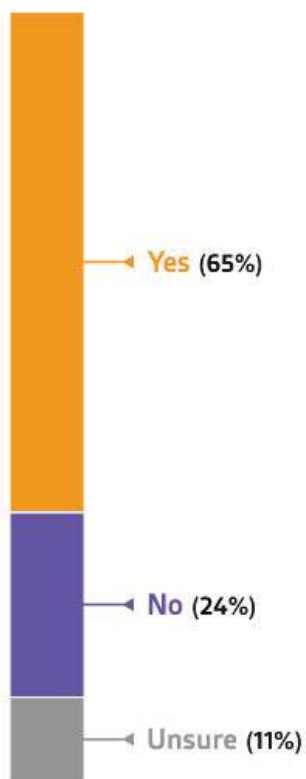
Respondents reported they or their families experienced police harassment, police brutality, and racial violence between 1866 to 1968. Around 50% (n=310) of respondents recounted a family history of experiencing racial violence and 43% (n=266) reported their families experiencing police brutality. Over 65% of participants recalled a family history of police harassment in the City of Los Angeles between 1866 and 1968.

Healthcare access was reported to have impacted 40% (n=235) of participants and Black Angelenos during 1866 to 1968. Another 20% of participants (n=114) were unsure if they or their families had been impacted. When surveyed about access to hospitals, roughly 52% of participants stated they were not denied access between 1866 and 1968 (n=296).

The impact of political disenfranchisement was also studied among Black Angelenos and their families for the time period of 1866 to 1968. African American suffrage and political disenfranchisement, has been

well-documented in the United States as a calculated political method to restrict and deny certain groups voting privileges and political representation. America has a long legacy of politically disenfranchising African Americans. Almost 32% of survey respondents (n=179) indicated they were experiencing political disenfranchisement, while 44% did not. Voter suppression and the loss of the right to vote have impacted African Americans for decades nationally; a host of strategies have been employed to systematically deny countless numbers of African Americans access to voting and influencing legislation. In terms of voter suppression, 31% of surveyed

**Figure 16.** Experienced police harassment between 1866-1968



respondents recounted experiencing some form of voter suppression; 47% (n=273) did not, and almost 22% (n=125) were unsure. Around 26% (n=150) recalled experiencing a loss of voting rights and another 19% (n=108) were unsure.

**Summary of Findings**

Housing

- 57% of respondents' families were impacted by racially restrictive housing covenants in the City of Los Angeles.
- 64% of respondents indicated that they and/or their family have experienced redlining while residing in Los Angeles between 1866 to 1968.
- 60% of respondents experienced mortgage lending discrimination in Los Angeles between 1866 and 1968.
- 60% of participants never owned a home and only 8.9% inherited a home.
- 17% of participants reported a family history of having their land unfairly confiscated between 1866 and 1968.

Education

- 51% of participants and/or their families have experienced school segregation.

Employment

- 62% reported their employment being impacted by the City of Los Angeles.

Policing

- 50% of respondents recounted a family history of experiencing racial violence in Los Angeles.

- 43% reported their families experiencing police brutality in the city.
- Over 62% of participants recalled a family history of police harassment in the city between 1866 and 1968.

### Healthcare

- Healthcare access was reported to have impacted 40% (n=235) of participants between 1866 to 1968.
- 52% stated they were not denied access between 1866 and 1968.

### Political Participation and Representation

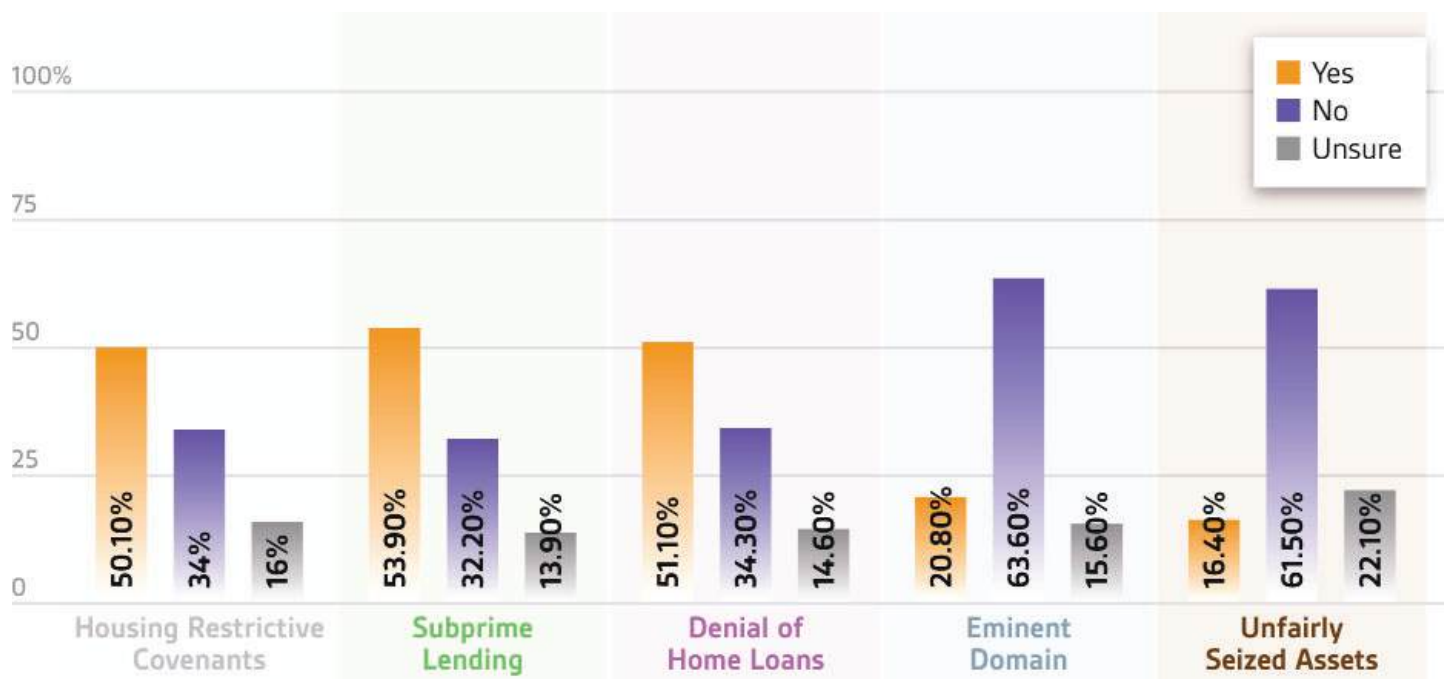
- 32% of respondents surveyed indicated experiencing political disenfranchisement.
- 31% of respondents recounted experiencing some form of voter suppression.
- Around 26% (n=150) recalled experiencing a loss of voting rights.

## Continuous Impact of Discrimination

Despite the passing of the civil rights amendments, there has been a continuous impact of state-sanctioned discrimination against African Americans. We explored this experience among Black Angelenos who completed the *African American Experience in Los Angeles Survey*. First, we assessed the impact of the City of Los Angeles on African Americans who resided in Los Angeles for at least one year. Second, we asked participants to indicate the extent to which the City of Los Angeles impacts them positively or negatively. The latter is discussed under research question number two.

Housing discrimination was reported once again as an area of impact for African Americans during their time of residence

**Figure 17.** Types of housing discrimination





in the City of Los Angeles. Over 50% of participants (n=292) reported being impacted by restrictive housing covenants and almost 54% (n=314) indicated an effect of subprime lending practices. Additionally, denial of home loans was reported as impactful for over 50% of participants (n=298). Around 20% (n=119) indicated being impacted by eminent domain and 16% (n=93) experienced consequences of unfairly seized assets. Nearly 57% of respondents (n=318) did not report experiencing land use restrictions.

Homeownership may also be impacted by housing discrimination. Inequitable home value appraisals are a nationally discussed topic among African American owners. When surveyed, over 50% of respondents (n=290) indicated being impacted by this phenomenon. Almost 57% of respondents (n=318) did not report experiencing land use restrictions and nearly 65% (n=361) did not recall being impacted by neighborhood association fees. Notably, only 39% (n=240) of participants owned a home.

Political Disenfranchisement in the areas of redistricting practices and voter suppression were also assessed. Experiences of disenfranchisement were described by 37.6% of participants (n=212). Voter suppression

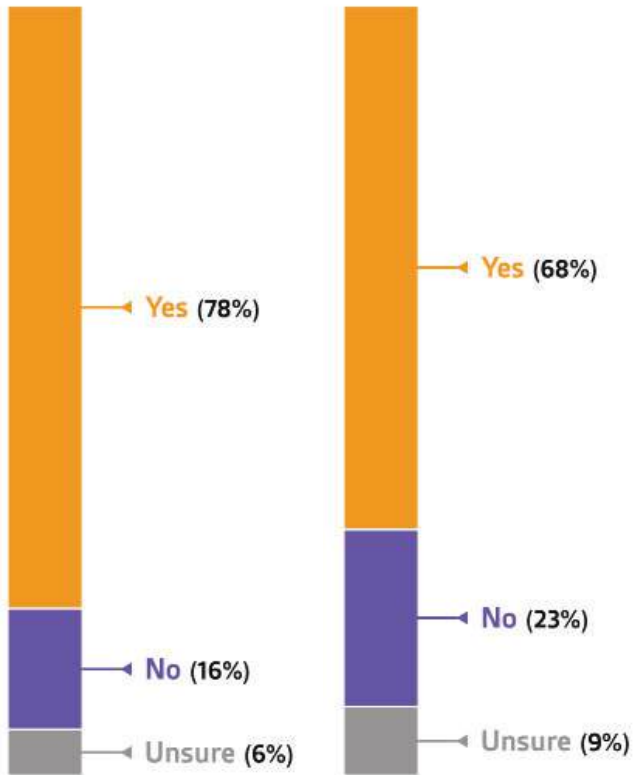
was experienced by 30% of participants (n=170) and redistricting was experienced by 46% (n=263).

Civil unrest was denoted as generally impacting respondents, where 78% (n=460) expressed being impacted by civil unrest. Also, over-policing was stated as an area of impact for 68% of participants (n=398).

Unequal educational opportunities were reported by 62% of participants (n=365). In terms of employment, almost 57% of respondents reported being impacted by limited access to City jobs. Most respondents

**Figure 18 (Left).** Percent of respondents impacted by civil unrest

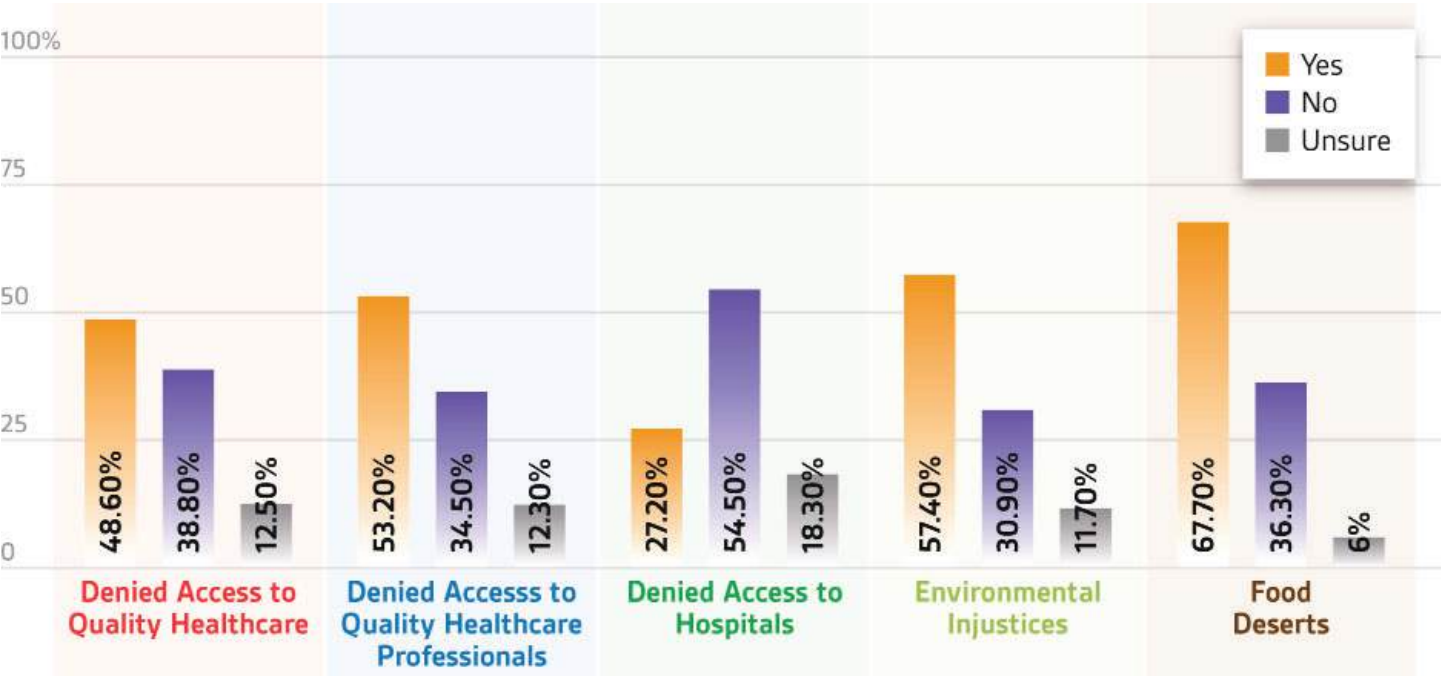
**Figure 19 (Right).** Percent of respondents impacted by over policing



**Figure 20.** Percent of respondents impacted by unequal education opportunities and limited City job access



**Figure 21.** Health and healthcare impacts



did not report being impacted by having been denied access to union jobs (n=316; 56%) and nearly 58% (n=330) did not recall experiencing discrimination in receiving City contracting.

Health and Healthcare impacts were evaluated in a range of areas from environmental justice

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

while 57.4% indicated being impacted by environmental injustices. An alarming 67.7% of respondents recalled being impacted by food deserts.

## Summary of Findings

### Housing

- Only 39% of participants have owned a home.
- Over 50% of participants reported being impacted by restrictive housing covenants.
- 54% were affected by subprime lending practices.
- Over 50% of participants experienced denial of home loans in Los Angeles.
- 50% were impacted by inequitable home value appraisals.

### Politics and Policing

- 37.6% of participants experienced political disenfranchisement.
- 30% of participants reported experiencing voter suppression.
- 46% of participants report being impacted by redistricting.
- 78% expressed being impacted by civil unrest.
- 68% of participants reported over-policing was stated as an area of impact.

### Education and Employment

- 62% of participants were impacted by unequal educational opportunities.

- 57% of respondents reported being impacted by the limited access to City jobs.

### Healthcare

- 50% of respondents were denied access to quality healthcare.
- 53% were denied access to culturally competent healthcare professionals.
- 57.4% were affected by environmental injustices.
- 67.7% of respondents were impacted by food deserts.

## Research Question 2: How has the City of Los Angeles impacted African Americans?

### *City of Los Angeles Impact on Black Families*

In our efforts to assess the degree to which respondents report being impacted negatively or positively by the City of Los Angeles' policies or actions, on a scale of negative to positive, participants were asked to rate their experiences with the City regarding economic wealth and employment, housing, education, healthcare, and neighborhood resources.

Across all 20 general scaled items, less than 4% of respondents indicated that the City of Los Angeles had a direct positive impact on their lives. The overwhelming majority recounted that the City has had a negative

impact on their overall experiences in 18 of the 20 areas assessed.

In one category — Access to City Contracts — 53% of respondents (n=313) reported a neutral impact. In terms of transportation, 49% (n=294) of participants recalled a somewhat negative (n=163) to negative (n=131) impact, while another 37% indicated a neutral impact. While 54.5% of respondents (n=325) scored the impact on business ownership negatively, another 40.6% (n=242) rated it as neutral.

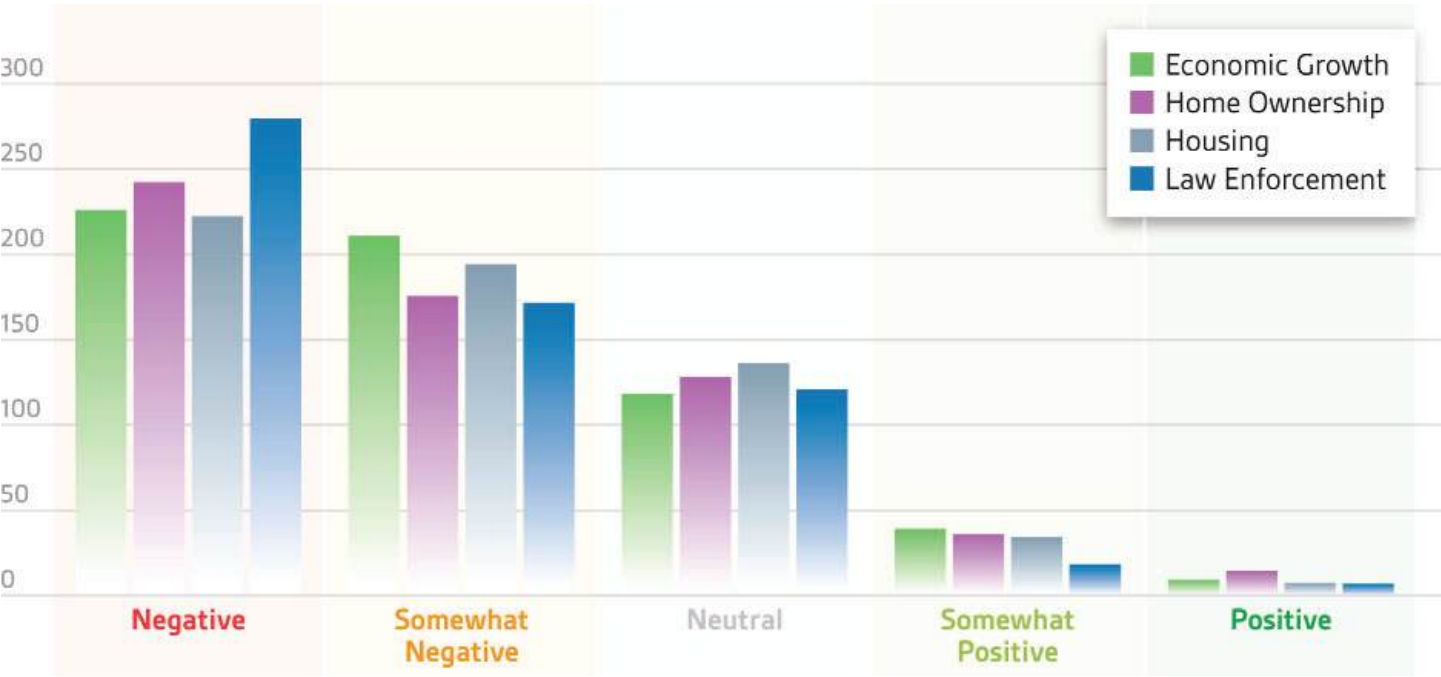
The City of Los Angeles' influence on Black Angelenos' economic growth, home ownership, housing, and experiences with law enforcement were designated by 70% or more of participants to have had a negative impact on their lived experiences. Over 75% of

respondents noted that City policies and law enforcement practices negatively impacted them. In terms of legal policies, 68% (n=403) indicated a negative impact.

Economic growth was rated negatively by 73% of respondents, with only 7.7% indicating a somewhat positive (n=39) to positive (n=8) impact. Additionally, 70% specified a negative impact in the categories of housing (n=425) and homeownership (n=422). Separately, the City's impact on land use and home value appraisal were also rated negatively by roughly 60% each.

For those participants who no longer reside in the City of Los Angeles, they indicated that housing affordability (79%) and crime (69%) were leading factors contributing to their

**Figure 22.** City influence on Black Angelenos economic growth, home ownership, housing, and experiences with law enforcement



migration out of the City.

Additionally, access to education was perceived as negative by 55.6% of respondents. Access to community resources were rated by 56.7% of as negative, and 69% of respondents scored community development negatively.

Health and wellbeing was rated as negative by 62% of respondents and food access was stated to be negatively impacted by the City by 58.5% of respondents For environmental protection, approximately 64% of surveyed respondents (n=384) specified a negative impact.

When assessing political impacts, 64% of respondents (n=390) reported that the City had had a negative impact on their civil rights, with 58.5% (n=352) claiming the same for political representation.

**Economic Wealth and Employment Impact**

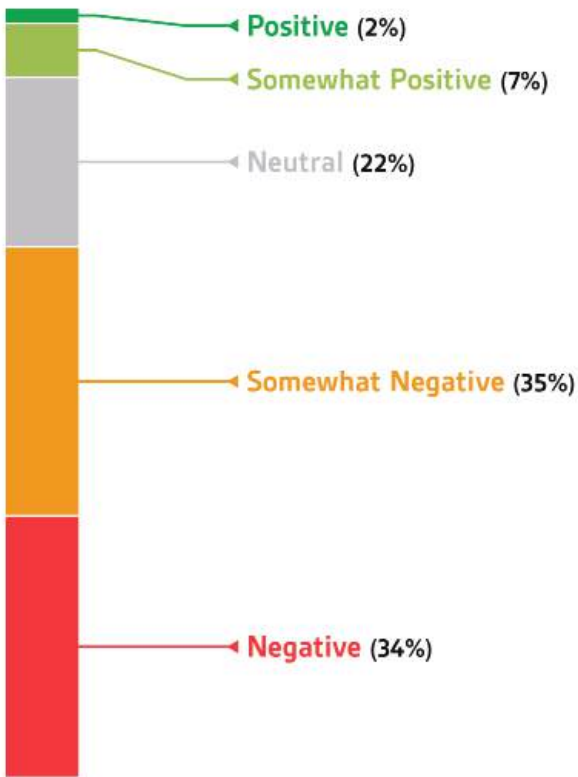
Exploring the economic wealth and employment impact of the City of Los Angeles on the experiences and lives of Black Angelenos in greater depth, respondents were asked to respond to six items assessing the City's impact as a result of its actions and/or policies. We found that less than 3% of respondents rated the City's impact on

their economic mobility and employment positively. The majority reported a negative to somewhat negative experience in five out of the six response categories.

In scoring the category of Union Eligibility, the majority (54.3%) of respondents reported a neutral impact (n=322).

Economic wellbeing and family wealth were believed to have been negatively impacted by the City of Los Angeles for a significant majority of respondents. For family wealth, almost 65% specified a negative impact (n=389). Roughly 68% of respondents (n=414) reported the City to have negatively impacted their economic wellbeing.

**Figure 23.** Impact on Economic Wellbeing





Employment received a negative score in the areas of job access, City jobs, and career advancement. The City's impact on access to jobs was rated negatively by 60% (n=362) of respondents, while 28.7% rated the impact as neutral. Also, City employment opportunities were experienced negatively by 59% of respondents (n=359). In terms of career advancement, 60% of respondents (n=361) reported being negatively impacted by the City of Los Angeles.

**Housing Impact**

Study respondents consistently reported housing as an area of impact. Accessing more specific areas of influence, the 10-item housing impact subscale evaluated the City's bearing on African American homeowners

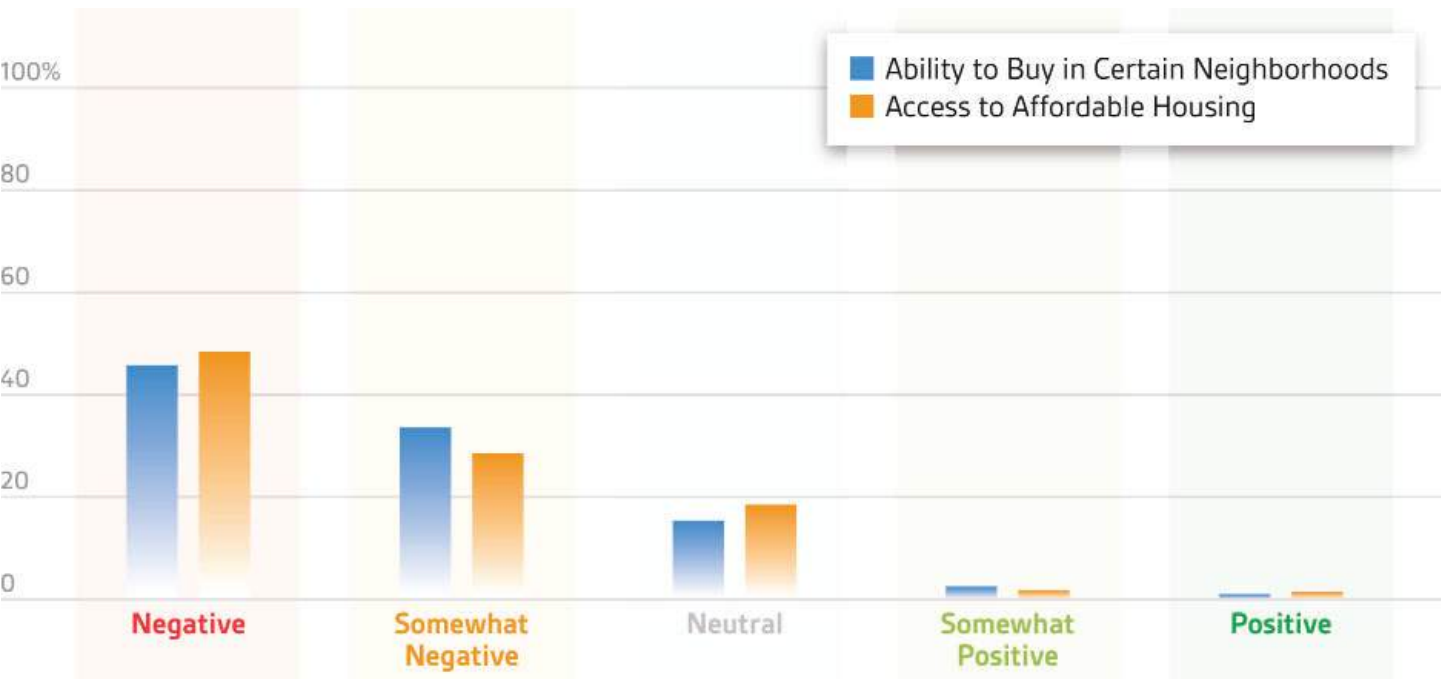
and renters. Housing stability and access were also examined to gain a fuller understanding of the City's impact on housing experiences among participants.

In all 10 categories assessed, 2% of respondents or fewer indicated that the City had had a direct positive impact on their housing experiences. An additional limited number of respondents reported a somewhat positive City impact in all categories.

In the two categories related to market rates, the City of Los Angeles was specified as having a negative impact overall, though a notable proportion indicated a neutral influence:

- 1. Appraised fair market rate: 40% reported a neutral impact (n=234) while 50% reported some degree of negative influence.

**Figure 24.** Impact on housing and home ownership



2. Ability to sell one's home at a fair market rate: 45% indicated a neutral impact (n=267), and 55% (n=322) described a level of negative effect.

When assessing one's ability to buy in certain neighborhoods, 80.5% (n=480) survey respondents reported a negative impact caused by the City of Los Angeles. In terms of purchasing and homeownership, 70% of participants (n=419) saw the City's role as negatively affecting their ability to buy a home and 67% believed the City adversely impacted their ability to secure home loans. Additionally, 60.6% (n=359) described an unfavorable relationship with the City in terms of maintaining homeownership, while 31.8% (n=188) noted a neutral impact.

Access to affordable housing can be a determining factor in housing security. Nearly 77% of survey contributors (n=462) underscored the significance of the City in poorly affecting their access to affordable housing, and 67% (n=398) reported a negative impact relating to general access to housing.

Participants also reported the City negatively influenced their housing stability at a rate of 64% (n=379). Similarly, one's ability to maintain housing was negatively linked by 50% of participants (n=298).

## ***Education Impact***

Factors influencing African Americans' educational experiences in Los Angeles were studied using 11 categories of impact. Participants generally reported the City's role in these experiences to be negative, with some variations demonstrating perceptions of neutral influence. In each category, few respondents described the association between the City and their educational experiences positively.

School access was perceived by 46% of respondents unfavorably (n=274) and another 38% scored the City's involvement as neutral (n=224).

The City's influence on access to quality education was rated poorly by 56.5% of respondents (n=338), with an additional 29% assigning a neutral score (n=171).

When exploring perceptions of the City's role in providing funding and resources, 57% of respondents (n=34) primarily designated the City's influence as adversely impacting them, while another 35.5% reported this relationship as neutral (n=211).

For educational resources access, 55% of respondents (n=331) described a negative association with the City, 30% recalled a

neutral relationship, and less than 12% selected somewhat positive.

Cultural inclusion was examined in two areas: curriculum and teacher representation. For both categories, over 60% of respondents described the City's influence as negative or somewhat negative. Data on culturally compatible curriculum access showed 63% (n=374) reported a negative impact and 29% (n=173) noted a neutral impact. When surveyed about the City's role in respondents' access to culturally competent teachers, 63% indicated a negative impact (n=376), and 27% described the relationship as neutral (n=162). Additionally, the City's influence on equality

and diversity in schools were each primarily perceived poorly, with 58% grading equality negatively (n=346), and 55% grading diversity negatively (n=325).

Access to educational services was rated either neutral (43%, n=255) or somehow negative (45.5%, n=270) by the vast majority of respondents. When evaluating access to Advanced Placement courses, 39% of respondents (n=234) reported the City's involvement as neutral, and 48.5% indicated the City had some level of negative impact (n=288). In terms of access to college preparatory curriculum, 52% of respondents (n=309) denoted an adverse association

Figure 25. Access to culturally relevant curriculum

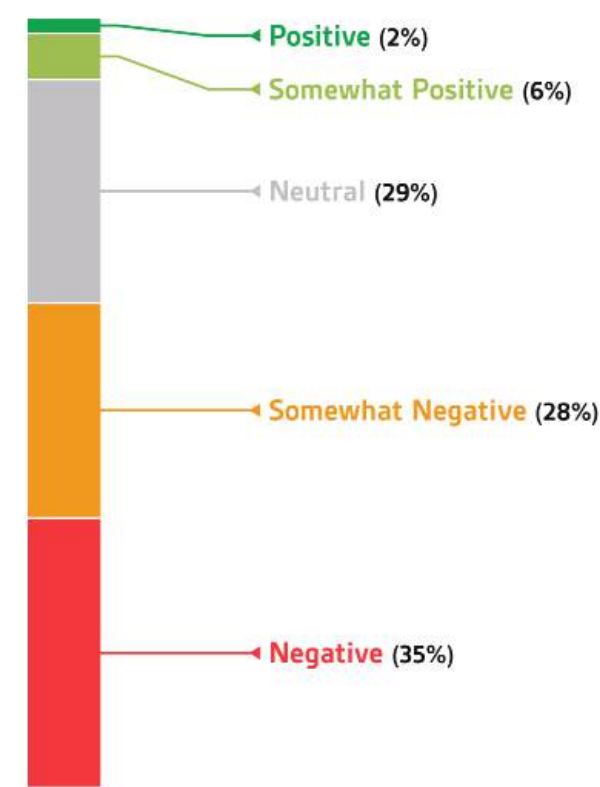
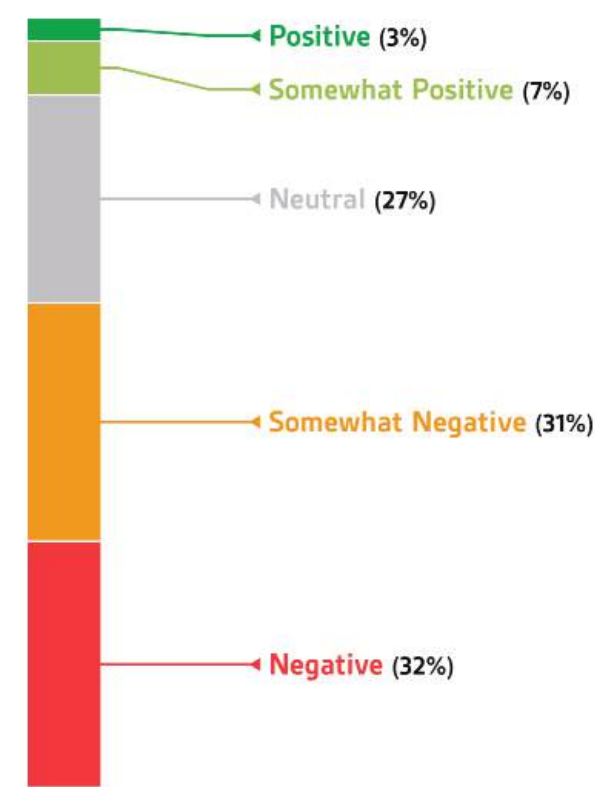


Figure 26. Access to culturally competent teachers

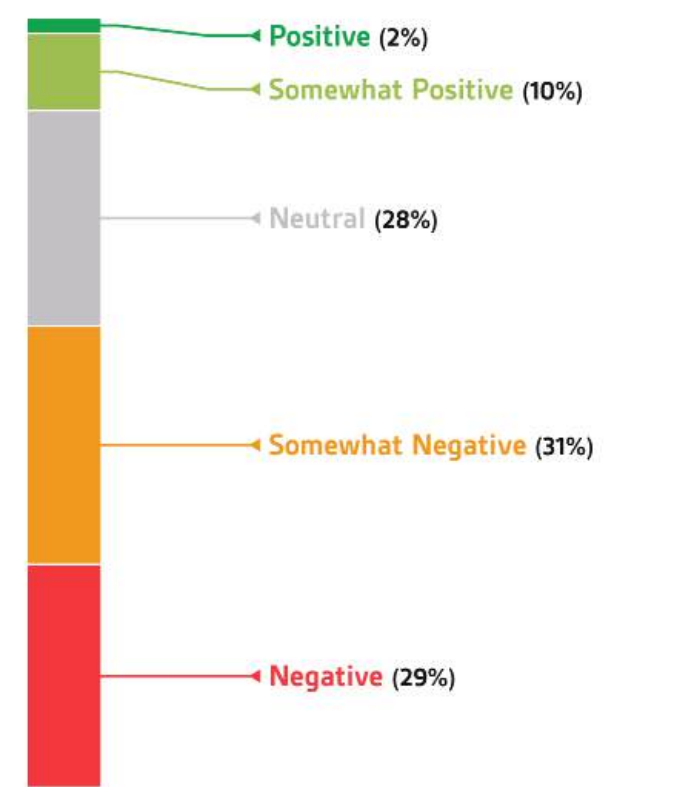


and 33% (n=194) scored this relationship as neutral.

**Healthcare Impact**

Nine categories were developed to ascertain the significance the City of Los Angeles played in the healthcare experiences of African Americans. These categories ranged from access to facilities and services to quality of specialized care. In general, most respondents perceived the City's operations, policies, and practices as having a neutral effect on their overall health experiences. However, access to culturally competent healthcare professionals was rated negatively by 60% of participants (n=360), neutrally by 27.5% (n=165), and

**Figure 27.** Access to culturally competent healthcare professionals



positively by 12.5% (n=75).

Access to healthcare, hospitals, facilities and services was generally considered to have been negatively affected by the City, though to a somewhat neutral impact. Roughly 52% of respondents considered the City's involvement in their access to healthcare to be poor (n=311), and 31% prescribed this relationship as neutral (n=187).

Hospital access received mixed reviews, with 45% recounting adverse experiences (n=269), 36.5% neutral ones (n=219), and almost 19% calling them positive to somewhat positive (n=112).

Around 44% of participants reported the City's influence on their access to healthcare facilities negative (n=264), while 35.5% scored this item as neutral (n=212), and 20% reported positive connections. Furthermore, 46.5% of respondents (n=279) reported the City's impact on their access to healthcare services as unfavorable, 34% (n=202) reported it as neutral , and roughly 20% of respondents (n=119) reported favorably.

In the area of specialized services, most respondents described the relationship with the City as neutral. For access to reproductive services, 48% (n=284) reported the City's

impact as neutral, another 38% reported the City's involvement to be negative (n=224), and 14% indicated a positive to somewhat positive experience. When surveyed about gender affirming care, 66% of respondents (n=376) scored the City's impact as neutral and 26% described this relationship as negative to somewhat negative (n=149).

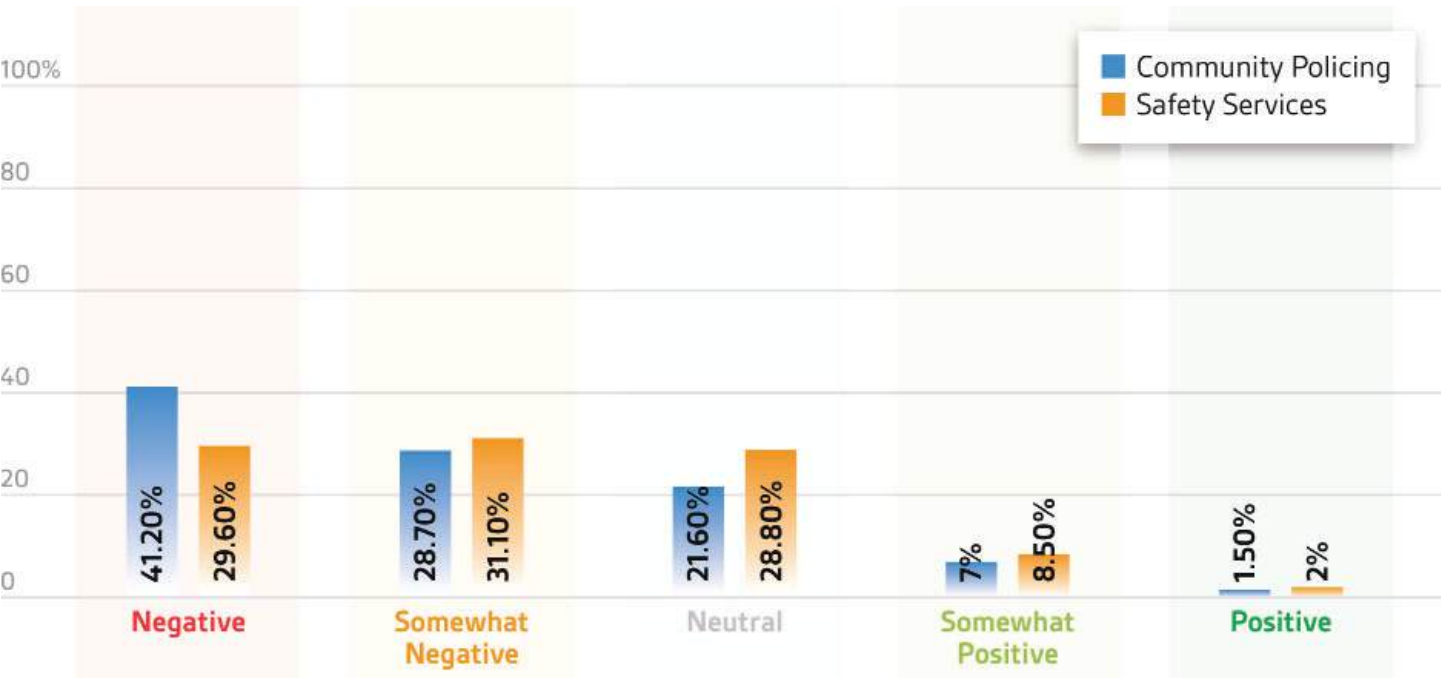
When evaluating the City of Los Angeles' impact on respondents' personal health and wellness, it was found that an undesirable relationship was detailed by participants in this study. For personal health and wellness, around 48% of respondents (n=287) considered its impact negative, and another 35% considered it neutral (n=209). Similarly, for family health and wellness, 49% assigned

a negative rating (n=292) to the City's impact, and 35% (n=206) rated the impact as neutral.

**Neighborhood Resources Impact**

The final area of impact studied was neighborhood resources. A 12-point scale was used to examine the weight of City policies and practices on African American community members. The Neighborhood Resources ImpactScale included amenities and resources, such as parks and grocery stores, and also included services, such as transportation and policing. The relationship between the City and African American perceptions were negatively rated by most participants in two categories: 1) safety and policing and 2) food access. Community policing received a negative score from 70% of participants (n=421). Over

**Figure 28.** Impact of community policing and safety services





60% of respondents also described their experiences with the public safety services in their community as adversely impacting their lives (n=365). 29% labeled this connection as neutral (n=173).

When assessing the City's impact on quality grocery store access, 62% reported it as negative (n=373).

In terms of nutritious food access, 64% of respondents (n=386) considered the City's role to be negative.

Exploring the relationship between the City of Los Angeles' influence on public services and the perceptions of African American respondents, we found a somewhat negative to neutral impact.

Near half or 50.6% of respondents evaluated recreation resources negatively (n=303), and 28% (n=169) provided a neutral evaluation. Access to public bike routes was rated neutral by 43% of participants (n=253) and negative by 43.7% (n=258).

Public parking received a negative score among 50.7% (n=304) and a neutral score among 37.8% (n=227) of participants. Transportation services were described as negative by 39% (n=236) and neutral by 38% (n=231).

Waste management was considered to be negatively affected by 43% of participants (n=261) and neutrally by 35% (n=212).

However, the City's influence on road maintenance was negatively associated by 70% of respondents (n=419).

## Summary of Findings

### Economic Wealth and Employment Impact

- 65% specified a negative impact for family wealth accumulation.
- 68% reported the City to have unfavorably influenced their economic wellbeing.
- 60% of respondents stated that they had adverse experiences in terms of their access to jobs.
- 59% of respondents stated they had negative experiences with City employment opportunities.

### Housing

- 80.5% reported their ability to buy in certain neighborhoods to be negatively impacted by the City.
- 70% of participants saw the City's role as negatively affecting their ability to buy a home.
- 67% believed the City adversely impacted their ability to secure home loans.
- 60.6% described an unfavorable relationship with the City in terms of maintaining home ownership.
- 80% cited the City as poorly affecting their access to affordable housing.

- 67% reported a negative impact relating to general access to housing.
- 64% of housing stability was reviewed by participants as negatively influenced by the City.

#### Education

- 63% note the City's failure to provide culturally compatible curriculum access.
- 65% cite the City as playing a negative role in respondents' access to culturally competent teachers.
- 58% marked equality in schools negatively impacted by the City and 55% graded the City's role in school diversity negatively.

#### Healthcare

- 60% of participants viewed the City's role in ensuring access to culturally competent healthcare professionals negatively.
- 52% of respondents considered the City's involvement in their access to healthcare to be negative.

#### Neighborhood Resources

- 70% of participants have negatively experienced policing in Los Angeles.
- 60% reported public safety services in their community as adversely impacting their lives.
- 62% designated the City's distribution of food resources to be undesirable.
- In terms of healthy food access, 64% of respondents considered the City's role to be harmful.

## Research Question 3: What reparations efforts should be explored by the City of Los Angeles to repair harms against the African American community?

### *Restorative Justice*

Restorative justice is an important part of understanding and executing effective reparations. To assess how Black Angelenos evaluated appropriateness of approaches to repair communities, survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the extent to which certain reparations efforts should be considered and/or pursued by the City of Los Angeles. A total of 13 items were included in the general reparations subscale. Respondents were asked to consider a various forms of repair, such as monetary payments, an apology, historic preservations, and redress for law enforcement injustices. Participants were provided with a five-point scale and asked to rate the level of appropriateness from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least appropriate and 5 being the most appropriate.

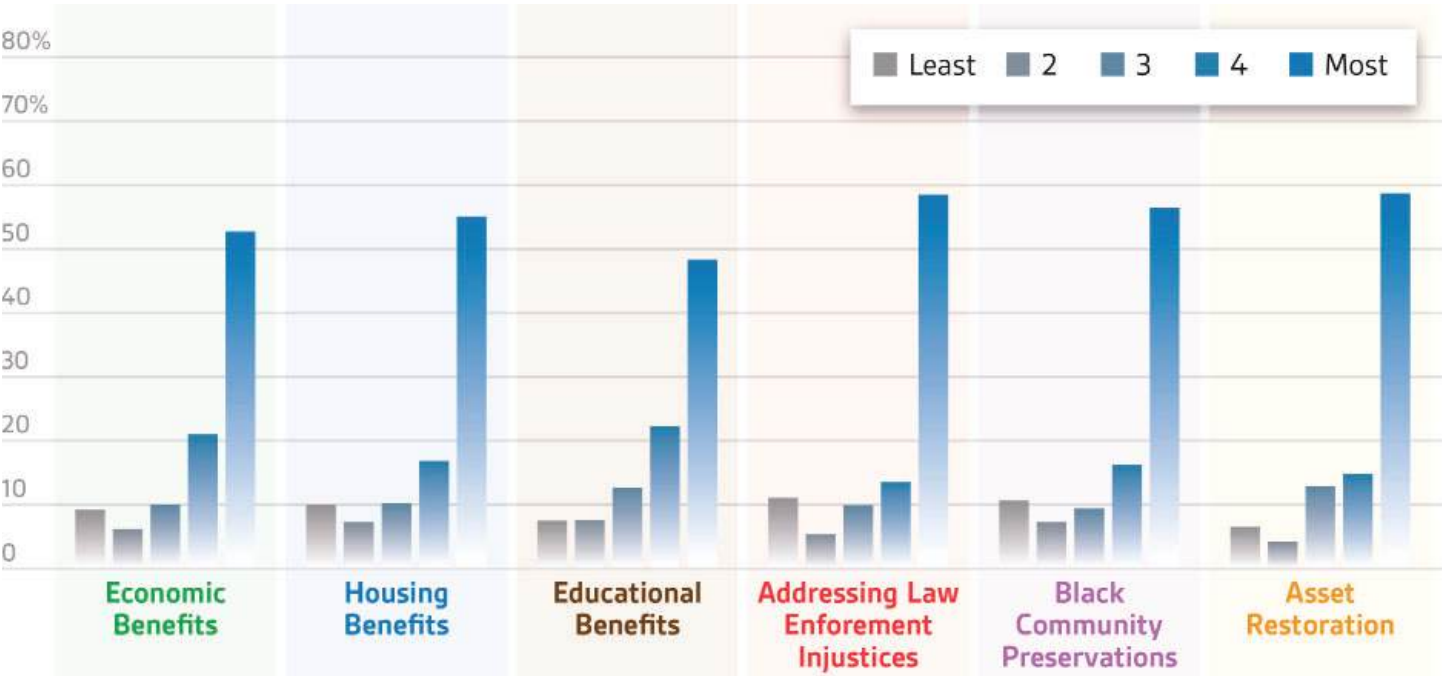
Economic compensation, housing benefits, educational support, addressing law enforcement injustices, asset restoration, and historic preservations of Black communities were designated as highly

appropriate reparations efforts that the City of Los Angeles should consider by over 70% of respondents. The economic benefits item received the most endorsement overall with 74% of participants (n=445) indicating this as a highly appropriate effort for restorative justice. Education benefits were designated a significant level of appropriateness by 71% of respondents (n=429). Associated with this was an equitable distribution of educational resources which was rated very appropriate by 68% of respondents (n=408). Housing benefits were considered effective reparations efforts by 72% of participants (n=433). 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). Asset restoration and historic preservations of Black communities were also highly endorsed by respondents as extremely appropriate for reparations efforts. 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).

Employment benefits and healthcare benefits were also considered essential reparations efforts by over 65% of survey respondents. In terms of employment, 68.95% of respondents (n=416) viewed this method as very appropriate. Healthcare was scored between 4 and 5 by 68% of participants (n=411) and providing programs and services were labeled

**Figure 29.** Restorative Justice efforts rated highly appropriate by 70% + of respondents



highly appropriate among 68.9% of survey takers (n=415). Relatedly, subsidized and free services were described as appropriate by 66.7% of respondents (n=404). An apology and the removal of monuments were rated neutral and not considered top priorities for reparations.

**Economic Reparations**

When surveyed on appropriate economic reparations efforts, participants' endorsements of financial incentives as a suitable option to repair and correct past harms was made even more evident. The nine-item Economic Reparations subscale evaluated the application of income benefits, employment assistance, and business support. All nine items received positive endorsements from the vast majority of respondents. Debt

forgiveness and equity adjustment in pay disparities each received very high support from over 80% of respondents.

Figure 30 (Left). Debt forgiveness

Figure 31 (Right). Equitable pay adjustments

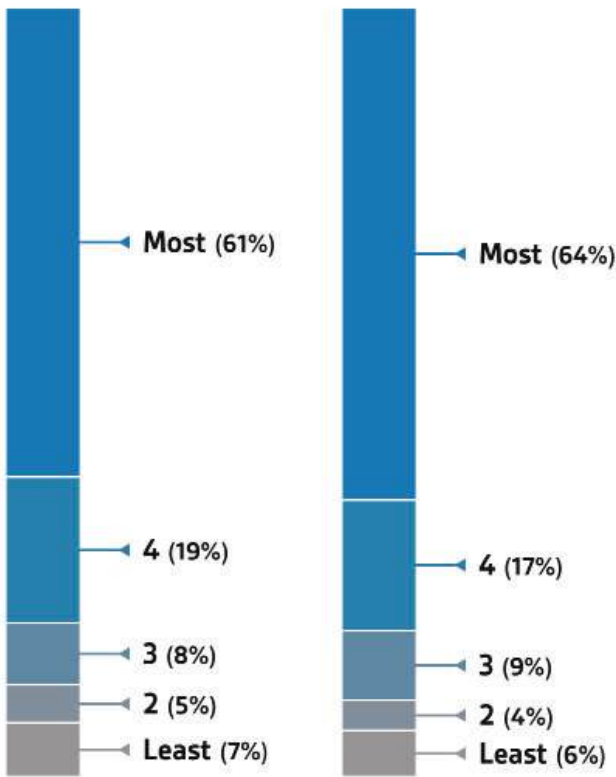
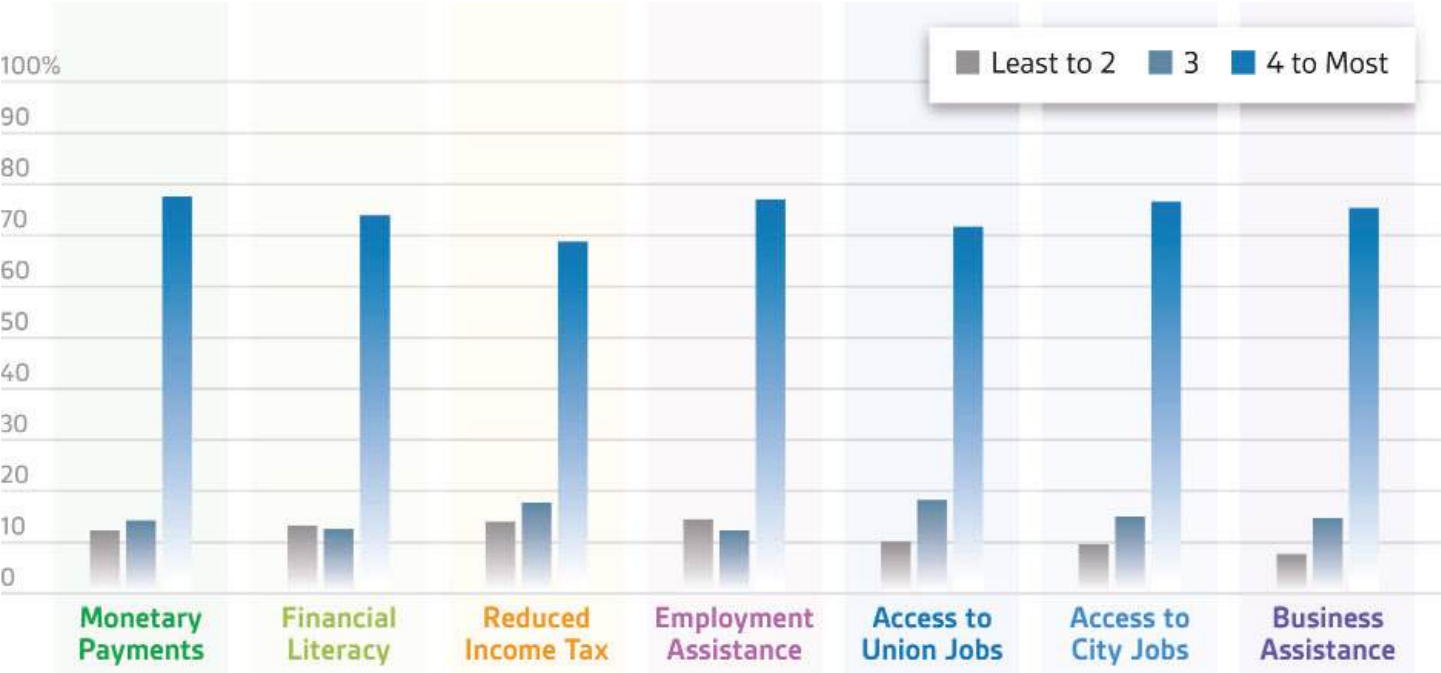


Figure 32. Economic reparations endoresements



Additionally, monetary payments were highly recommended by 76% of participants (n=482), and financial literacy was supported by 74% (n=447). Furthermore, a reduction in income tax was favorably scored by 69.5% of respondents to the survey (n=418).

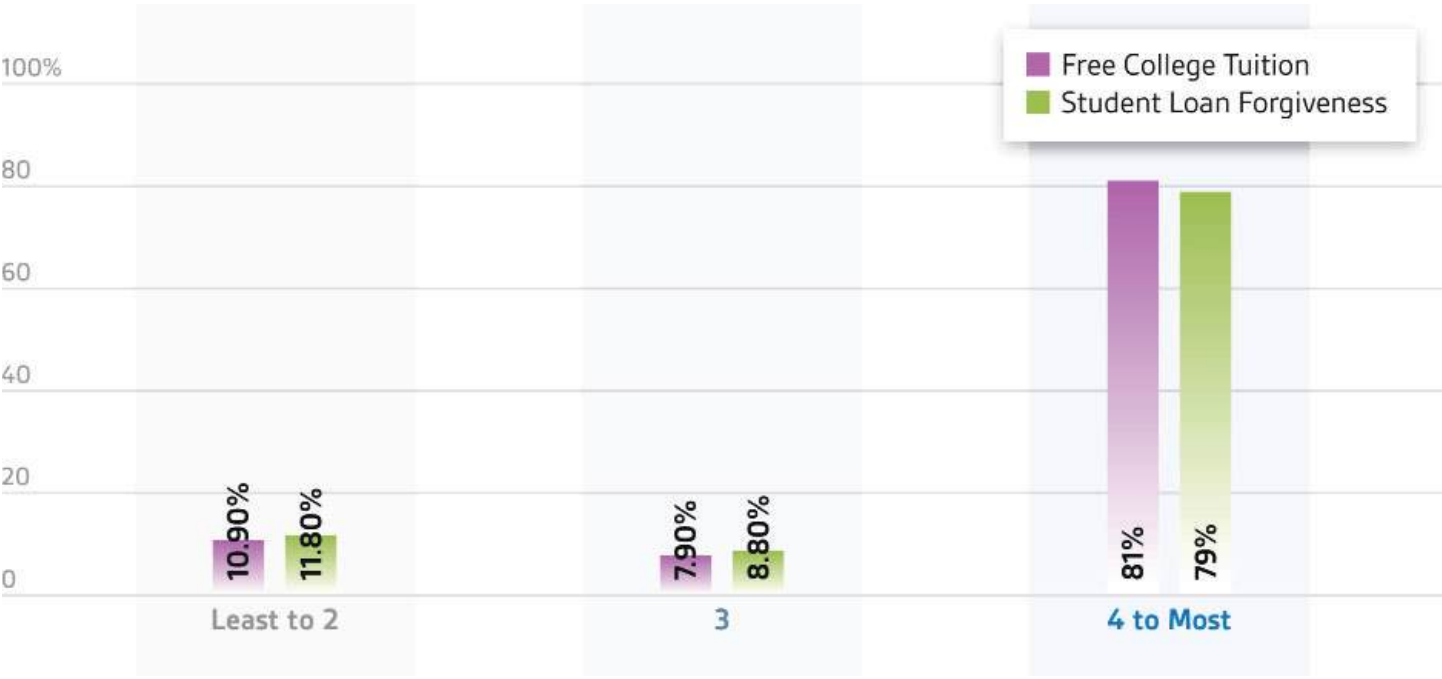
In terms of employment, job assistance was well received by 75% of respondents (n=453) as a highly appropriate reparation effort, and access to union jobs was indicated as a suitable repair effort by 71% (n=427). In particular, access to City jobs was rated highly by 75% of respondents (n=450). Also, business assistance was regarded positively among 75% of respondents (n=451).

**Educational Reparations**

An eight-item subscale was created to evaluate specific areas of concentration for education reparations, which included cultural inclusion, tuition support and access to specialized programs. Free college tuition at public universities in Los Angeles and student loan forgiveness were most favorably endorsed by participants. Free college tuition received 81% (n=491) of respondents' scores of 4 to 5. Student loan forgiveness also received high marks from 79.3% of participants (n=476). Also, free graduate school tuition was rated highly among 77.4% of respondents (n=462).

Cultural inclusion was also considered an important objective for educational reparations. Representation of culturally

**Figure 33.** Educational reparations: Free local college and student loan forgiveness





competent educators was designated as very critical among 77.6% of participants (n=464).

Access to specialized programs, including STEAM and AP courses revealed a strong desire for these programs among respondents. College preparation was labeled appropriate among 79% of respondents (n=478). Access to STEAM was endorsed by 76% (n=451), and AP course access was a priority among 78% of respondents (n=469). Also, open access to LAUSD schools was considered suitable among 70% of participants (n=420).

**Housing Reparations**

Studying the extent to which the City of Los Angeles may consider approaches to housing reparations, we surveyed respondents to ascertain their recommendations for specific

strategies the City may take to begin to repair harms and restore housing security for African Americans in Los Angeles. A seven-item subscale was used to evaluate the various types of housing support. Homebuyer assistance, down payment assistance, appraisal protections, and programs to address housing insecurity were highly endorsed as a legitimate form of housing reparations among over 80% of participants. Around 82% of participants (n=489) rated homebuyer assistance programs very favorably. Also, 82% (n=487) of respondents selected down payment assistance programs as a critical area of support. Programs designed to reduce housing insecurity were highlighted among over 83% of participants for a total of 499 respondents. Additionally,

**Figure 34.** Housing reparations: Highest endorsements



protections for home appraisals were scored high among 80.6% of respondents (n=483).

For homebuyers, soft-second mortgage programs received endorsements by 68.8% of participants (n=410), and mortgage interest rate reduction programs were rated highly among 76.8% (n=462). Subsidized rent was also designated as an important approach for reparations among 76% of respondents (n=458).

**Healthcare Reparations**

Investigating strategic approaches to address injustices in healthcare and health outcomes

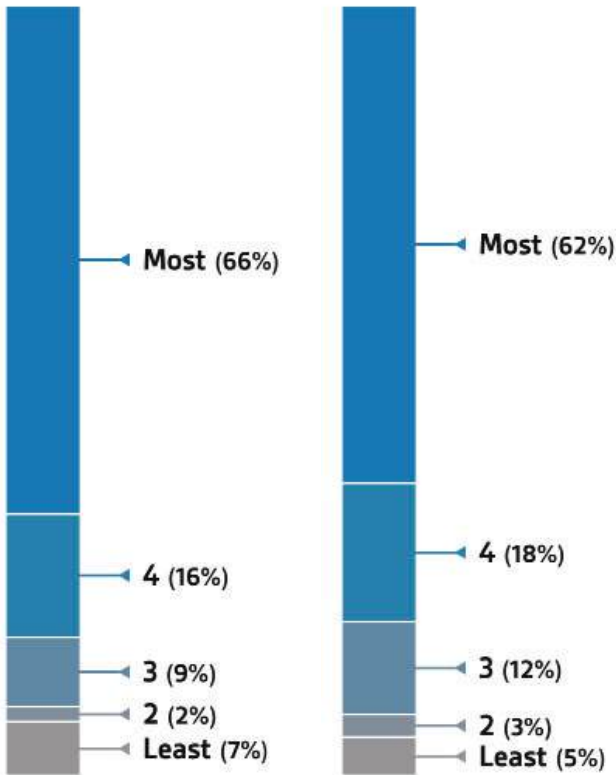
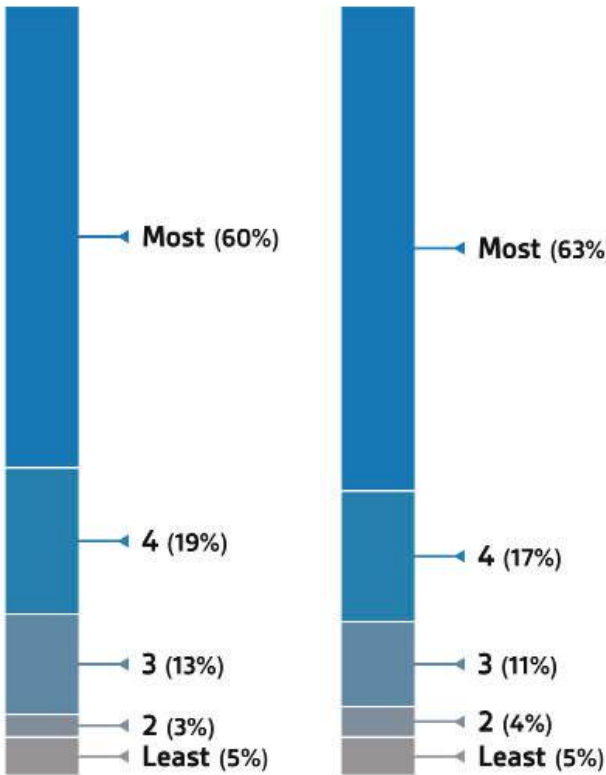
**Figure 35 (Left).** Healthcare reparations: Healthcare insurance

**Figure 36 (Right).** Healthcare reparations: Access to quality hospitals

among Black Angelenos, respondents were asked to complete an eight-item Health Reparations subscale exploring the appropriateness of reparations efforts in terms of insurance, training and education, and select services. Access to quality hospitals was recommended as a restorative justice model by almost 81% of respondents (n=485) and quality health insurance was supported by roughly 79% of participants (n=473). Funding for health organizations was considered positively by 78.5% of respondents (n=469).

**Figure 37 (Left).** Healthcare reparations: Medical education tuition programs

**Figure 38 (Right).** Healthcare reparations: Culturally competent healthcare training



Culturally competent training programs for healthcare professionals and education support were considered favorable options among over 80% of respondents. Healthcare training was assigned a score of 4 to 5 by 80% of respondents (n=478). Medical education tuition programs, including pre-medical tuition assistance programs, were endorsed by 82% of respondents (n=492). Studies on African American health received a rating of 4 to 5 by 76.7% of respondents (n=459).

In terms of selected services, reproductive support services were rated very positively among 72% of participants (n=430). Gender affirming care and services were rated neutral with 32.5% (n=194). Another 45% (n=271) scored this item from 4 to 5 on the level of appropriateness.

### Summary of Findings

- Over 80% of respondents provided very high support for both debt forgiveness and equity adjustment in pay disparities.
- 76% of participants were in favor of monetary payments.
- 69.5% supported a reduction in income tax.
- Access to union jobs was indicated as a suitable repair effort by 71%.
- 75% approved of access to City jobs and business assistance.
- 81% of participants were in favor of free

college tuition.

- 79.3% supported student loan forgiveness as a form of reparations.
- 77.6% of participants identified representation of culturally competent educators as very critical.
- 79% endorsed college preparation and 78% supported AP course access.
- 82% of participants rated home buyer assistance programs very favorably.
- 82% endorsed down payment assistance programs.
- 83% supported programs designed to reduce housing insecurity.
- 80.6% favored protections for home appraisals.
- Access to quality hospitals was recommended as a restorative justice model by almost 81% of respondents.
- 79% of participants supported access to quality health insurance.
- Over 80% of respondents desired affirming healthcare training programs and educational support.

## Part 2: Analysis of Focus Group and Individual Interview Responses

### Methods

Black Angelenos have been an intrinsic part of Los Angeles' cultural and sociopolitical culture and account for the third-largest Black population in the United States. Yet, despite these contributions, many

continue to experience the effects of longstanding, systemic, anti-Black racism, which include disproportionate rates of poverty, homelessness, health disparities, incarceration, and other quality of life outcomes.

The focus groups and interviews exposed a series of challenges facing Los Angeles' Black community. These challenges were grouped together into 6 specific themes. As many of the root issues and problems overlapped, for the purposes of this report, these themes have been consolidated into the following: (1) Income and Employment, (2) Education, (3) Housing and Homelessness, (4) Mental Health, (5) Physical Health, and (6) Criminal Justice. These findings present a clear image of the harms experienced, both past and ongoing, and reveal a pattern of racial disparities and inequity in Los Angeles.

As part of the “Ethnographic Report”, focus

groups and one-on-one interviews were conducted. Inclusion criteria included being 18 or older and residing in the City of Los Angeles for at least one year. To further participate, a formal sign-up process was required. The formal sign-up was embedded in a Qualtrics information page which included a description of the study, an electronic informed consent decree, and the contact information of research personnel. Upon completing the consent form participants were able to select a time slot according to their availability. The individual interviews and focus groups took place in a virtual format (via Zoom), and audio and video recordings were stored on a multi-factor authentication storage system (Confidential Box). Focus groups included 10 questions and were scheduled to take a maximum of 60 minutes, while individual interviews included seven questions and were scheduled to take a maximum of 90 minutes. (See Appendices B and C).

**Table 1.** Consolidated themes of challenges

| INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT  | EDUCATION  | HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS  | MENTAL HEALTH   | PHYSICAL HEALTH   | CRIMINAL JUSTICE   |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of Familial wealth</li> <li>Racism in hiring process</li> <li>Racism in the workplace/lack of opportunities for career growth</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of educational resources</li> <li>Lack of Black teachers</li> <li>Curriculum that does not focus on the Black experience</li> <li>Lack of college readiness</li> <li>High cost of college/student loan debt</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homeownership</li> <li>Home value</li> <li>Discrimination in back loans/mortgage applications</li> <li>Redlining/housing segregation</li> <li>Gentrification</li> <li>Racism among landlords/eviction</li> <li>Housing insecurity</li> <li>Homelessness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depression</li> <li>PTSD</li> <li>Financial barriers to accessing treatment</li> <li>Geographical barriers to accessing treatment</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obesity</li> <li>Diabetes</li> <li>Asthma/respiratory illnesses</li> <li>Access to healthy foods</li> <li>Insurance</li> <li>Maternal mortality</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over-policing in Black neighborhoods</li> <li>Traffic stops</li> <li>Police brutality</li> <li>Incarceration</li> <li>Disenfranchisement</li> </ul> |

Between the months of 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. Focus group and interview participants' identities were coded and aliases were used during the transcription process and write-up to protect confidentiality. The ages of participants ranged from 24 to 76 (it is noted that two participants did not give their exact age during the meetings but completed the consent form). Recordings were transcribed by CSUN Student Research Assistants. The CSUN Research Team then analyzed the transcriptions by performing a Thematic Analysis. A Thematic Analysis is a methodological management tool that involves identifying patterns and assigning meaning within a qualitative dataset (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Accordingly, the transcribed works were sorted into themes and organized by cultural subject matter and relevant shared experiences.

Participant statements reflect the sentiments and opinions of community members. Researchers and the City did not intervene or attempt to correct these perceptions.

## Thematic Analysis

### ***Enslavement and Stolen Labor***

White colonists brought their systems of organized slavery to the United States (U.S.) beginning in 1619. Although California was not legally a slave state, more than 2,000 enslaved Black people were forcibly transported to the state from 1850 to 1860 (Manning, Rose, & Gayle, 2022). State and local government officials also upheld fugitive slave laws. Further, several enslaved Black people were made to participate in the California Gold Rush (1848–1855). Some were able to buy their and their family's freedom with the gold they found (Roberts, 2008). And while some Black families would relocate to other “free” states, many would remain in California and migrate to Los Angeles. Therein, various participants in the individual interviews and focus groups referenced family histories of slavery and devalued labor.

*“Ruth” (72) “I am the granddaughter of an enslaved man. My father, who was a professor at Ohio State, his father was enslaved before the Civil War. And so, our foundation, our success, and our political views were very much shaped by his determination to be free. And that’s what he taught his children. That’s what*



*I brought to Los Angeles, a very strong foundation and political consciousness."*

*"Felix" (45) "African Americans in 2023 are still feeling the impacts of slavery. And then when you look at the history of the state of California, they allowed slaves who traveled through here with slave owners to Utah and Oregon and all those places. California was a free state but the government, the City of Los Angeles, and the County of Los Angeles, didn't do a lot to help those slaves that were here, camping out and resting before they traveled to those other places. The state of California and the local government need to be accepting of their roles in the plight of Black people in America, post-slavery."*

*"Maxine" (52) "A lot of people would think because it's the West Coast that, you know, we weren't so segregated or weren't enslaved, but they don't really get it. We were segregated for a very, very long time. My grandmother was a domestic. And so that was something that impacted me as a kid as well. Like she had to leave home, get on the bus, and go to these White communities, and these Jewish communities, and go clean*

*people's houses. It's just a lot of racism that I experienced."*

Henceforth, as alluded to in the responses, the City of Los Angeles and the State of California have a complicated history with slavery. Mired in contradictions, California was a free state prioritizing slave-holding states' interests (Gillmer, 2023). As such, the local government turned a blind eye while Black people were exploited for labor, a practice that left an impression long past the enactment of emancipation.

### ***Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity***

Black workers generally earn less than White workers across the nation. Much of this is closely tied to their history of being exploited for labor and their labor being financially undervalued. In addition, racist policies and practices, past and present, in the workplace and across many other arenas, drive the inequitably high rate of unemployment for Black residents (Kimberlin & Anderson, 2022). During the individual interviews and focus groups, various personal experiences related to employment, wages, and race were discussed, with age being an additional influential factor. To elaborate, older participants made references to the post-World War II work environment, when Black

residents were marginal workers needed to build the city. However, at a time when they were an integral part of the Los Angeles economy, they were devalued as employees.

*"Robert" (63) "I moved to Los Angeles to pursue work in the entertainment industry. I was able to work in a post-production house called Todd-AO. I was there for about three years. I relocated my family to a wonderful house we found in Northridge. And then participated as the post-production supervisor. After the [Northridge] earthquake I was identified as 'the Black trying to advance within the company' and at the time the company was not ready to see that kind of a change. And so, I was let go from the production facility. I then started my own post-production service and I tried to work as a minority-owned business but was unfortunately not able to get any kind of employment, which eventually led to a divorce, a foreclosure... and a change in my career."*

*"Micheal" (55) "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."*

These experiences stem from the personal biases of many industry employers, as well as the employment gap, allowing White residents to prosper in the City, whereas Black residents were provided with less employment security and fewer opportunities to advance in the workplace. In contrast, younger participants discussed expanded opportunities for employment in Los Angeles, particularly due to the rise of remote jobs and online business ventures. However, they also noted an overall lack of career guidance and wage equality in the workplace. Furthermore, they discussed the impacts of globalization on the Los Angeles job market.

*"Adrienne" (38) "Growing up at a time where there was a crack cocaine epidemic, not being able to go outside and play because of, you know, gangs, which were the result of a number of factors, such as them sending jobs overseas. So, a lot of young Black boys didn't have work and their homes were*

*broken, so they joined gangs. And then we know the drugs were put in the community soon after."*

*"Adrienne" (38) "Another thing I want to touch on is, you know, just my experience working in the entertainment industry, which is really an industry for wealthy White people, and how because they have wealth, they can work at a studio making \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year at an entry level position, but still afford rent in Santa Monica. And that's because their families give them inheritances, they give them cash gifts, and other things to help them maintain that standard of living. But for Black Americans, we didn't inherit the wealth that our families earned. It's just different."*

*"Zamantha" (24) "If you want to work in entertainment, I think it is a little easier now. I mean if you are educated on how social media works and how to sustain a following, you can do things online, but you still have to know people and have startup money. And even if your job is completely remote, you still need start-up equipment. And with all that, you will likely still earn less. At the end of the day, we are not running the same race as*

*White people."*

These experiences highlight generational differences, the influence of changing technologies, and outsourcing in employment, all while speaking to the unvarying circumstances that Black workers are subjected to in and around Los Angeles.

### ***Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect***

Black Americans face persistent disparities in health care and health outcomes. This includes higher rates of illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, asthma, influenza and pneumonia, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS (Office of Minority Health Resource Center, n.d.). Black citizens are also more likely to be uninsured and to go without care due to cost (Pollock, 2021). These health and healthcare disparities are rooted in a long history of racist policies, events, systems, structures, and interpersonal interactions. Furthermore, researchers believe that racial trauma is one of the reasons Black Americans have higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Roberts et al., 2011). Many participants in the individual interviews and focus groups spoke of experiences of discrimination, abuse, and other insidious occurrences that included direct physical and verbal attacks, and indirect stressors such as witnessing people in their

communities succumb to police brutality and substance addiction. These experiences were attributed to weakening their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, many participants alluded that their parents and grandparents had similar experiences, exemplifying cultural intergenerational trauma and its impact on the health of the Black community.

*"Melvin" (62) "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 30s [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.' My son has done better than me, but we share a lot of the same mental health struggles, fears, and trauma."*

*"Phyllis" (45) "We grew up in the community of Watts. My family, we experienced some racism. For instance, my parents told us about the time that the Ku Klux Klan said they would come to the community of Watts to clear it out of African Americans. And my mother*

*would tell the story of seeing her aunt sharpening the butcher knife, so that they could defend themselves. And this was like, the 30s [1930s]. So, my mother said they ended up not coming, but everybody was prepared for them. And now we have the Proud Boys and MAGA supporters. So, the fear and panic, the mental anguish, it never really goes away."*

Participants also highlighted the overlapping characteristics of poor mental health and poor physical health, along with insufficient community care.

*"Effie" (39) "Especially with mental health, because with Black people, we go through so much. So many stressors that are related to finances, living in precarious neighborhoods, and medical issues. I know Black mothers in particular face a higher mortality rate regardless of education because of racism in the healthcare system. And that is a constant worry for me."*

*"Felix" (45) "Let's figure out how to get, you know, locations and treatment centers. Because one thing I can say about other communities, you can drive down the street, and you know, there's a*

*doctor's office, a dentist's office, there's a psychology office, those businesses are there. Let's bring these businesses to our communities. So, if somebody does want to go and seek some type of, you know, a doctor for their physical health or a doctor for their mental health or a dentist. I mean, jeez, right? We should be able to see these things in our community."*

Thus, for Black Angelenos, health is deeply influenced by racism, intergenerational trauma, and daily micro-aggressions. Furthermore, they experience financial, geographical, and structural barriers to accessing care. The combination of these experiences have resulted in a decreased quality of life for many.

### ***Housing Segregation***

Black Americans have been denied the opportunity to build a better life for themselves and their families due to historic discrimination in U.S. housing policies. In 1933, faced with a housing shortage, the federal government began a program explicitly designed to increase America's housing stock. Rothstein (2017) explains that the housing program was tantamount to a "state-sponsored system of segregation," as the government's

efforts were primarily designed to provide housing to White middle-class families. Black citizens were left out of the new suburban communities and pushed into urban housing projects (Rothstein, 2017). While it has been over half a century since the Civil Rights Movement, which fought for the principle that separate is inherently unequal, real estate industry practices and local policies have not been held accountable for making very little progress on integrating neighborhoods. Today, very few Black Americans live in neighborhoods that are affordable, green, close to jobs, and racially and economically integrated. As such, participants noted their struggles with securing housing. Redlining, "White Flights," and unequal access to lending (e.g., credit scores and bank loans) were specifically mentioned. Participants further acknowledged their perception that Black Angelenos were targets of housing segregation in the City in ways that other minority groups were not.

*"Felix" (45) "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."*

*"Sabrina" (76) "This was, if you're familiar with L.A. proper, south of Downtown L.A. What is now the Blue Line that runs from Downtown L.A. to Long Beach was the right of way for the old Red Car Lines. And east of that rail line were mostly poor Blacks and working-class Whites. They are completely changed today and are overwhelmingly Latino. So, I don't know if you would call it redlining or whatever, but there have been very vivid demarcations of living patterns in Los Angeles and now we've mostly been pushed out to limited areas of South LA."*

of both were additionally linked to housing insecurity and homelessness among Black residents.

*"Patricia" (54) "I bought my house about 20 years, 19 years ago in South LA. And for me it is just interesting, like watching the neighborhood change. So, you know, going from South Central and now, we're getting gentrified. And my concern is, where do my kids go to buy a house?"*

*"Patricia" (54) "It's really sad when you have young people, you know, in their 20s that are sleeping in their cars or sleeping in tents. I knew several young people, and that was their experience because they couldn't afford housing here or find, you know, a reasonably priced house."*

*"Ruth" (72) "The unhoused, we can start there, period. They're unhoused and without services. People who are just barely surviving and barely able to feed their families, secure housing that's stable for them. The whole gamut population is just being neglected."*

Other occurrences related to housing segregation included gentrification and the skyrocketing cost of living. The outcomes

These experiences indicate that many areas in the city remain segregated, especially in terms of Black residents' segregation from White

residents. While some of this is due to client-based discrimination from banks, realtors, and housing programs, segregation is exacerbated by modern forms of dispossession such as gentrification and displacement. Thus, Black Angelenos face some of the greatest hostility in the Los Angeles housing market, both past and present.

### **Racial Terror**

Racial terror, a form of domestic terrorism, is intended to create horror, anxiety, or fear in a targeted community and destroy the community's sense of security and safety. Black Americans have been a frequent target of racial terror in the U.S. Historically, Black citizens frequently experienced violence in the form of torture (e.g., being burned, castrated, mutilated, and sometimes killed in public executions, such as lynchings). A report by the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) (2017) documents that between 1877 and 1950, 3,959 lynchings occurred in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. This type of racial terror occurred in secluded (e.g., the woods) and public spaces and was typically carried out by extremists and vigilantes. Further, the EJI report details how lynchings were often committed in front of government officials.

Although the state of California criminalized lynching over 80 years ago, racial terror continues to be experienced in other ways.

*"Benjamin" (68) "We also just celebrated... 'Celebrated' is the wrong word. We recognized and remembered the bombing and the killing of four girls in a church, by a White supremacist. That was in my generation, and we have that same kind of ideology coming down in the media, which is what's happening now. Blacks are being killed by White mobs essentially, and sometimes by government officials. It's happening right here, and right now."*

*"Phyllis" (45) "It is not exactly like it was 30 years ago. Nobody in L.A. is like, 'We don't want a Black neighbor.' You know, but when you move into some of these areas and your neighbors start flying Confederate Flags or MAGA (Make America Great Again) Flags, you can see exactly what they are doing... it's racial intimidation but the City calls it 'free speech.'"*

*"Effie" (39) "I'll tell you; it was violence back then. And in 2023, what is the prevailing contemporary problem that we're facing? Violence on every*

*level. Now, some people think violence is only related to pulling a gun and shooting somebody, beating, stabbing, or robbing, right? Violence is when a child goes hungry. Violence is when a mother doesn't have adequate access to prenatal care. Violence is when that student is seen as less than and not important enough to educate. We never stopped fleeing from violence."*

Alas, racial terror and violence against Black Angelenos continues. In Los Angeles, this is evident in anti-Black political rhetoric, the unjust use of force by law enforcement, and systemic exclusion. Similar to lynchings of the past, this racial terror is often supported or tolerated by government officials (see 'Racial Terror' chapter for details).

### ***Pathologizing the Black Family***

The Black family has been subjected to centuries of contempt and scrutiny. After the passing of the 13th Amendment and as states began restoring legitimacy to enslaved persons' marriages and ending family separations, new laws worked simultaneously to pathologize Black parenthood. As early as January of 1866, states enacted legislation allowing court and county officials to bind out children whose parents were unable to

care for them financially (McMurtry-Chubb, 2016). "Binding out" was a labor system that involved placing poor children or adults in the homes of wealthier families as servants or apprentices. The children or adults, known as "bound out" children or adults, would work for their new family in exchange for food, shelter, and some education. The term of service was usually around ten years, or until the child or adult turned 21. Although laws governing the care of poor children had been enacted prior to this, after emancipation, these laws took on distinct racial characteristics. Naturally, formerly-enslaved mothers and fathers were indigent, had little to no education, were often in poor health, were traumatized, and owned no property (Dunaway, 2003). Thus, by default they were viewed as inferior family units and vulnerable to government sanctioned separation. Modern efforts to pathologize the Black family have been most prevalent in public policy, which targets Black mothers, forcefully removes Black fathers, and neglects Black children. Likewise, study participants spoke of their experiences with poverty, parental trauma, absent fathers, crime, and how these impact Black family structures and community well-being.

*"Nellie" (48) "One of the things that I do now is I work in the foster care industry."*

Children and youth who exit out of the foster care system ... Let me say this another way. They age out of foster care and are often directly placed in adult dependent care systems. So, what I mean by that is they leave foster care and they become homeless. Sometimes they are involved in criminality. They have a mental health disorder, often a substance use disorder, that already existed before they got out of foster care. And many of them end up in prison. So, something has to be done about that. You know, we have to figure out how to keep families together. I had a young woman say to me the other day, she said, 'The foster care system has failed me. They took me from my family under the guise of protection and care. And yet the people that I'm most connected to is my family and they didn't help me to stay connected to them.' The foster care system on the flip side will say, 'Well, we have this, and we have that, and we're doing this and we're doing that.' There's a complete lack of follow-through. And so, these are young people who are going to be citizens in our city [who] are carrying around all this anguish and hatred and disparity and trauma. And

it only makes the situation worse. So, I feel like there needs to be a little bit more accountability with the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services, DCFS, and the Office of Child Protection. They need to work harder to keep families together and provide the services to help families stay together. As opposed to, you know, trying to create these alternative families. And a lot of times, you know, the people who want to become foster parents have good hearts, but they don't know how to help these kids with their trauma. And that is part of this whole situation for me, is that a foster child never asked to be a foster child. They're like the collateral damage of the decisions of adults in their life."

"Nicole" (48) "There's issues in childcare and the situation with children, you know, in Los Angeles and how all that works. Children who have just come out of foster care and what they need to survive. And I think that's part of it because some of those children are in foster care because one or two of their parents couldn't sustain them or they couldn't get wages to keep their family together or, you know, the drugs and all of that."

"Zeke" (29) *"I was born in Lynwood, like I said, running around in Compton with my mom. My mom kind of, like, she kind of does, like, what she wanna do. So, she was like a hippie in a sense. So, she's been just living her life like that. I guess she might have gone through some trauma. So, as I am growing up, I don't really remember my real father much. He was there supposedly until I was two. I guess him and my mom broke up, or he went to jail. And then I remember my stepfather coming in. I guess he was there. He started taking care of my mom. You know, I've kind of been in trouble with the law a few times, in and out of incarceration since I was like 12, juvenile halls, camps, prison terms, county jail terms. I got two kids, two daughters. One is living with her mom and my other daughter is in foster care. Her mom lost her when she was born. Like too many complications. So, I'm just, like, I don't want to say I'm a product of this. I'm one of those stories that's like, 'Whoa, that happened? That's going on?'"*

These responses highlight the notion that Black children being disproportionately taken from their parents and placed in foster care does not derive from differences in the occurrence

of abuse or neglect, but rather reflects the different attention Black families receive from child welfare and family services. Vague or nebulous definitions of "mistreatment" or "family dysfunction" may allow racial bias to intrude upon systems tasked with evaluating Black families. This situation is further compounded by intergenerational trauma and additional systems of discrimination and disenfranchisement in and around Los Angeles.

### ***Racism in the Environment and Infrastructure***

Certain environmental practices, policies, and management strategies can differentially affect or disadvantage individuals, groups, or communities. As resulting disadvantages are frequently experienced by people of color, Black Americans are often the most impacted by disasters, pollution, and foul odors that lower their quality of life. Specifically, researchers have found that Black Americans have the largest particle pollution-related mortality rates nationwide (Berberian, Gonzalez, & Cushing, 2022). This is tied to other sources of inequality, such as urbanization (much of these pollutants come from automobile traffic) (See Pratt et al., 2015), socioeconomic position (Black Americans are less likely to have health insurance and more likely to have



lower quality healthcare) (See Di et al., 2017), and residential segregation (predominantly Black neighborhoods are more likely to be in close proximity to toxic waste and disposal sites) (See Woo et al., 2019). As such, participants in the individual interviews and focus groups referenced racism affecting the environment and infrastructure in three ways: 1) a lack of environmental equity, 2) a lack of access to health foods and resources, and 3) a lack of environmental protection and loss of control.

*"Felix" (45) "I think gardens would be great as part of green spaces so that young people can see that you can plant your own food. So, they can see how it's done. When do you need to harvest? When do certain crops harvest in the fall and in the spring and over the summer? So that they're able to plant year-round. It's been proven that urban communities, and specifically Black communities, are hotter, warmer because of the lack of green and green spaces. We don't even have shade covers. So, you know, bring on the trees. It's also proven that Black communities have a higher rate of asthma. We need green spaces."*

*"Effie" (39) "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 trees in Baldwin Hills. But they're not there anymore. You know, like what happened?"*

*"Gemma" (51) "Like with how pretty the weather is, California is warm and sunny all year round. There should be no excuse for the schools to, you know, have that look. There should be trees covering the kids, grass so the kids can run and, you know, immediate access to food or food services where they can get instant food or pick from trees from a community garden. And then in terms of food, maybe either subsidies or reduced cost, because I could walk down to the liquor store, and I could get two bags of Hot Cheetos for less than a dollar. But we can't even name the chemicals that are inside those bags of chips. And then if we want an apple, it's worth more than that. They need to fix the environment, so that we can build good eating habits*

*to help with our health and everything.”*

*“Zeke” (29) “What would be helpful is really letting us get land/property, not just, ‘Oh, we built a new apartment building, you can move in over here.’ No, let us buy houses, let us buy rights to the land, mineral rights, garden, let us actually own something and be in control of our surroundings for once.”*

Although Los Angeles has been an innovative leader in environmental rights and justice, the City has failed to protect all its residents. Indeed, by discriminating on the basis of race, including air quality and environmental health programs, Black residents are subjected to ongoing disproportionate and adverse health and environmental impacts (see “Racism in the Environment and Infrastructure” chapter for details). Thus, Black communities continue to experience environmental deprivation. Furthermore, these same communities continue to seek fair treatment and meaningful involvement in environmental planning and decisions.

### **Political Disenfranchisement**

As Black Americans were originally deprived of citizenship and personhood, they were also excluded from participating in political processes such as voting. While voting rights

and citizenship were later guaranteed through amendments to the U.S. Constitution, Black citizens continued to be excluded by mechanisms such as redlining, felony disenfranchisement, and voter suppression tactics. One study concluded that Black citizens are currently banned from voting at four times the rate of other races (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013). Other studies have revealed that certain municipalities experience racialized gerrymandering, in which the likelihood of representation among elected officials is reduced for Black communities (Durst, 2018). As recently as 2022, it was estimated that 4.6 million residents were blocked from voting by Jim Crow era disenfranchisement strategies — most of them Black men who had been involved with the criminal legal system (Uggen et al., 2022). Likewise, participants described localized issues with voting and systematic barriers to political involvement.

*“Jasmine” (58) “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."*

*"Ruth" (72) "I'm a voter. I believe in voting because I grew up in the sixties, so I understand. You know, it's my duty. But I just feel like there's so much trickery and lies and, you know, just untruths that are coming from politicians. They can't ban us from voting, well at least not all of us, so they are trying their best to confuse us so that we don't even know what or who we are voting for."*

*"Benjamin" (68) "When it comes to the local government, they're staffed with electees and have to respond to a voting population. And whether or not a voting population is educated to the whims, the elected has a tendency to drive us in a direction that doesn't solve the problem. If you look back, slavery was a legislated entity in the United States. That means the elected were putting laws in place and some of those laws still exist on statutes throughout the country. There are several states that still ban mixed [race] marriages. They don't enforce the bans, but they are there, nonetheless. Just because we can vote, doesn't mean we get to participate, if that makes sense."*

Some participants also spoke about experiencing political disenfranchisement outside of voting, as well as their experiences resulting from reduced social and political power.

*"Cecelia" (54) "A hierarchy system says White is right; Black get back ... A hierarchical system is what was used to say, 'The greatest good for the greatest number.' And so, when you use that kind of that way of thinking, trying to delineate, you're setting up priorities. I remember at one point in Los Angeles working with HIV and AIDS patients. Once they started testing folks, there was a lot of shame associated with it, so people did not identify as a man who had sex with men. But what the system did and what the program, practice, and what the procedure and the policy did, they said, well, since we have such a large number of folks who don't identify, we'll come up with these categories of exclusion like 'Black man and HIV positive,' which is just like what they've come up with now, categories like, 'Black man and felon,' 'Black woman and crackhead.' The policies barely protect Black folks, and they sure don't protect these additional stigmatized groups."*

In sum, Black Angelenos face pervasive issues when attempting to exercise voting rights and civic participation. Multiple marginalized groups further experience “otherness” which prevents them from being included in the political system. These experiences impact Black Angelenos’ sense of belonging and their ability to have a local government that accurately represents their needs and interests.

### ***Separate and Unequal Education***

Racial segregation in public education has been illegal in the U.S. since 1954’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. However, American public schools remain largely separate and unequal — with profound consequences for students, especially for students of color. Many school-aged children are in racially segregated/Black majority school districts. In addition, school districts are often segregated by income. This racial and economic segregation has widened educational gaps between Black and White communities, which is consequential; Black children are either denied an education or provided an education that is inferior to that of White children (e.g., fewer options for AP and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes, higher teacher turnover rates, and fewer academic resources including textbooks and classroom technology) (Johnson, 2014;

Orfield & Jarvie, 2020; Rothstein, 2013). These educational gaps continue into higher education spaces. Accordingly, many focus group and individual interview participants spoke of the inadequate resources and funding in predominantly Black school districts.

*“Effie” (39) “So, we stayed in Compton. And like, I sent my son to private school from kindergarten through graduation [high school] because I knew he was not going to get the equivalent education that White people got. And that cost me a fortune but luckily, I had a little money and was able to do it.”*

*“Felix” (45) “I always think back to when I was in elementary school, and in elementary school, every kid in that classroom had a dream, right? ‘I want to be a firefighter. I want to be this, and I want to be that.’ And some kids were talented in art. Some kids had certain skills, right? And for a majority of my friends that had talent in middle school, it all went away. And I don’t think it just evaporated into thin air. Life happened. And so, it’s like now I got to join this gang to survive. And college, well, that dream’s not for me because my parents can’t pay for college. So, this idea of, oh,*

*how can I water this seed? How's it going to happen? So, when I think about the injustices, when it comes to education, yeah, no one's pouring into Black kid's talents."*

*"Hallie" (47) "I guess it's been a heavy topic lately regarding the school systems, especially those catered to Black youth. It just feels like in terms of, you know, resources, teachers don't care for the kids. The pipeline to prison versus the pipeline to college. It just seems like there's a lack of attention in the area. There's no funding going to those schools despite, you know, our tax is going into it. It's not being distributed to those areas where there's predominantly Black kids there. I've been really noticing that and its prevailing impact for quite some time."*

Furthermore, various participants spoke of the intergenerational and interfamilial impacts of racial and economic segregation in education.

*"Tina" (49) "You know, I have a cousin who wants to be a veterinarian and work with animals, and she just said, 'I can't go to college because I can't afford it.' And I can't help her because my own student loans at this late stage of my life are just*

*astronomical."*

*"Sampson" (69) "I mean, we've had free education, compulsory education in this country for over 100 years. And yet we still have unbelievably high dropout rates for Blacks. And a lot of that is the way the education system treats parents. If I have uneducated parents, or if my parents were limited in formal education, there's only so much help they are going to be able to give. And this city places the burden on families to support these kids, knowing good and damn well they can't because they are also products of the racist school system. The whole thing is a mess."*

Unfortunately, education in Los Angeles is segregated based on income, race, and ethnicity, and this isolation shapes future economic and career opportunities. Low-income Black families are thrown into an underfunded and over-policed school system, while more affluent Black families may be able to buy their way into private schools or move into suburban school districts. This further creates unequal opportunities and access for Black residents.



## **The Wealth Gap**

Systemic inequities and barriers keep people of color from achieving economic security. These disparities are the consequence of ongoing discrimination, structural inequality, and biases across employment, education, and homeownership. In the U.S., Black citizens have struggled to build and maintain wealth at the same rate as White citizens. Although poorer Black households have seen an improvement in their finances in recent years, they are still more likely to be in debt (Kochhar & Moslimani, 2023). New forms of technology including algorithmic financial risk assessment tools and changes in credit rating systems present new threats to racial wealth equality. Indeed, almost all participants discussed various ways that the wealth gap has negatively impacted their ability to obtain property, pursue desired careers, and access resources such as healthcare, equipment, and legal support.

*"Nellie" (48) "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."*

*"Felix" (45) "Why is it that some of the richest people in America don't have issues with health care? Because they just pay for it. And when you talk about injustice in the justice system, the richest people in America, even though they might do something dirty and get into trouble, they know how to get out because they can pay for a good lawyer. Because when you have the money, you can help yourself in these situations. Go down to LA County [Jail] and you will see who has the money and who doesn't."*

*"Effie" (39) "I would like to see financial institutions offer some type of financial literacy for people in the community. When I was elevated from being, you know, from poverty to lower middle class and then to middle class, I didn't really understand finances and how to manage my own money, how to invest my money, or how to make sure that I'm taking care of myself financially before I start taking care of other people. And in the Black community, we spend a lot of money in*

*places that are really more of, you know, looking good as opposed to making sure to balance what our wants and our needs are."*

*"Effie" (39) "I think also the other thing that's really, really disturbing for me, especially in our community, is how, you know, Black women spend a lot of money on hair and makeup and nails, and yet every time I go to one of those places, I don't see a whole bunch of Black people working in there. You know, and I just feel like that's something that we as a community need to take back and own for ourselves. So that's something that I really would like to see some kind of entrepreneurship in. But I think that all goes back to the wealth gap because it's like if we're never educated on wealth, we'll never be able to build it. Coming up, no one ever taught me anything like that."*

*"Patricia" (54) "I have a wealthier family who lives here and it's no better for them. Because even if you are a Black person with a high income, you are still going to have higher rates for loans and insurance and have less benefits. So, reparations to me means that it's*

*going to fill so many sectors. It will heal us from medical, mental, physical, and financial trauma. Because so much was damaged and taken from us, not from our own doing, but from everybody else, you know."*

*"Tina" (49) "You know, in terms of education, in terms of skill development, and especially in the area of technology. There's so much that our community of Black people, that we miss out on. I can probably say that I'm middle class, so I don't see that happening with my own grandchildren as much. But I just feel like there's a lot of people who just don't have access to technology, health care services, and college. And it all goes back to the money."*

In sum, Black families have substantially less wealth than White families, leaving them more economically insecure. Even after considering positive factors such as civil rights-based legislation (e.g., Affirmative Action and Equal Housing) and recent increases to minimum wage at the state level, many Black residents continue to struggle financially. Less wealth translates into fewer opportunities for upward mobility and fewer chances to pass wealth down to future generations.

## **Unjust Legal System**

Lawmakers and the media often refer to the “criminal justice system” or of “criminal justice reform,” but people and advocacy organizations increasingly opt to use the term “criminal legal system” to describe American policing, prosecution, courts, and corrections. This is in part because data shows these systems do not always deliver justice. For example, Black communities are policed more frequently, and Black residents are subject to harsher procedural practices such as non-consensual searches and brutality (Boddie, 2022; Wang, 2022). In courts, due to the wealth gap, many Black citizens cannot afford private counsel and must instead rely on the overburdened system of public defenders (Magaña, 2023; Marcus, 1994; Radda, 2021). Furthermore, when convicted of crimes, Black citizens are punished more severely, with harsher sentences, and often spend more time incarcerated than Whites Americans found guilty of the same crimes (Abu-Jamal & Fernández, 2014; Gottlieb & Flynn, 2021; Witherspoon, 2006). As such, many focus group and individual interview participants expressed various instances of an unjust legal system and a weakened capacity of the legal system to protect their rights.

*“Phyllis” (45) “My aunt, my uncle’s wife, I guess this was in the 50s [1950s], her car broke down in Inglewood by the cemetery and it was towards the evening, so it was getting dark. And she had to walk, you know, during that time you didn’t have a phone on every corner to call for help. And she was walking along the street. I think it was on Manchester. It was either Florence or Manchester. I don’t remember. Anyway, the police stopped her and called her the usual thing and asked her what she was doing in Inglewood. That’s, you know, frightening especially when you need help and they’re asking, ‘What are you doing there?’ and, they told her, you know, that she needed to get out of Inglewood.”*

*“Phyllis” (45) “I was driving in Brentwood, granted at that time my car was ultra raggedy, it was barely moving. But I was in Brentwood and a police officer on a motorcycle flagged me down. And I couldn’t get over, so I pulled up in an alleyway. And he started screaming and hollering at me like, ‘You should have stopped,’ ‘Blah blah blah blah,’ and, ‘What are you doing here?’ But fortunately for me, I stayed as calm as I could be. Because I knew better, I was in*

*an alleyway by myself with this officer of the law."*

*"Maxine" (52) "As far as police are concerned, my son went to an Ivy League school. He graduated from UCLA, I think it's the Anderson School of Business, and he has been stopped, you know, by the police regularly as if he were a criminal. So that has impacted my life. Every time he used to go out, I would always worry and be concerned about whether he would make it home safely. He and all of his friends went to private schools. They were constantly pulled over by the police and questioned about their intentions. Even when I had jury duty, I was kicked off a jury. Well, the question was, 'Do you trust police?' And I said no, because of my experience with the police unit."*

*"Nicole" (48) "I can remember standing on a corner. I had just left work. So, I was standing at a bus stop and a cruiser pulled up and started to ask me questions. 'What are you doing here?' and 'Blah, blah, blah.' Like, 'Was I a prostitute?' You know, 'soliciting' on a corner and there was absolutely no reason to ask the question. And I wasn't dressed provocatively or anything like*

*that. So that was a negative experience. I had at one time a Porsche, and I was pulled over several times just for driving that. Another thing is I do have a son and I know the behavior of the police. So, it is always a concern that somebody would stop him for some reason or no reason."*

*"Ruth" (72) "In my particular family there has been a lot of police involvement. And so, as a result of that, I really don't trust the police at all. I had a jury summons, and I went downtown to participate as a juror. The case was domestic violence and there were police involved, and they were questioning me about being able to participate in the jury. And I just was very honest with them. I was like, you know, I experienced domestic violence, which I saw a lot of as a child. And the judge asked me, 'Do you think that you could put your bias to the side?' And I said, absolutely not. You know, so I was excused."*

*"Zeke" (29) "So L.A. basically made it racial... It made it biased. Let's not say racial. It made it real biased out here because we pipeline from school to the neighborhood to prison and then back out here. So, it's like a little tunnel that*

*we all kind of travel back and forth to. The [criminal legal] system treats us like animals here. It's like we should be tamed, killed, or in prison."*

*"Zeke" (29) "Like L.A. put more drugs in my neighborhood than it do in, you know, a Caucasian neighborhood. We got more guns flowing through our neighborhoods and cops patrolling our neighborhoods, rounding us up, catching us, putting us in the pen like them old days, just in a more technological way now, but it's still barbaric. I see it. But even though they clean it up and try to make it look equal, you know, it's... there's unfairness. Even though L.A. got this, 'It's all fair if you come get it,' and, 'You can find it, it's here for you,' it's still got a big old shadow of like, you gotta get through this door first. And you almost got to act how we want you to act if you want that."*

In short, participants expressed sentiments concerning the criminal legal system and its hostility and indifference towards not only Black residents, but also those experiencing poverty, mental illness, housing instability, and drug-related health issues. This has further cast some of the most vulnerable community members into dire straits. Furthermore, the

criminal legal system targets Black residents attempting to reintegrate following a period of incarceration by imposing fines, fees, and restrictions on employment and housing, making it that much more difficult to earn a legal living. Indeed, the City's unjust legal system has resulted in a cycle of criminalization that is hard to break.

### ***Control Over Creative Cultural and Intellectual Life***

Art and creativity are, in their essence, important because they allow us to share our struggles, triumphs, and gifts. European and Anglo-centric art depicting White values, White life, and American culture, which is perceived as White-centered, has been more visible and acknowledged as the primary form of art in American culture, resulting in an overshadowing of works by people of color. The ideology and perception of European preeminence has contributed to negative — and false — depictions of Africans and African Americans. This includes Blackface, the watermelon stereotype, and the Aunt Jemima archetype have dominated art, media, and entertainment spaces (Harris, 1998; Lemons, 1977; Pilgrim, 2017). During the Harlem Renaissance, a pivotal period of art and creativity from the 1920s to the 1930s, Black Americans shaped their own



identities through music, art, literature, and film, allowing them control over the narrative (Goeser, 2007). Although the Harlem Renaissance enabled Black Americans to pursue creative pursuits, artistic freedom has not been consistent, and creators are still hindered in many ways. Several participants spoke of these hindrances, as they pertain to the Los Angeles area.

*"Cecelia" (54) "I came to Los Angeles a week before Thanksgiving in 1969 and I had the opportunity to work at Shindana Toys, which is considered the first manufacturer of Black ethnic dolls and toys. Right there at 6107 South Central Avenue. It was part of Operation Bootstrap. It came out of the 60s [1960s] Watts Revolt. Not riot, but revolt against economic injustice, unfair employment practices, and overall police intimidation. And so, I got to see firsthand what the Black community could represent if it was given an opportunity. That's where structural and institutional racism lies; the system continues to tell us to be resilient and in other words, keep doing the same thing, expecting different results, preying on other folks, and recruiting folks, all the while the system never changes."*

*'Zamantha' (24) "There's so much creative theft in the entertainment industry. You see it all the time, these little White girls from Brentwood who are making a killing on TikTok doing dances that were created and choreographed by Black artists. And they tell us we should be flattered... Los Angeles really does not take cultural appropriation as serious as they should. This city is full of 'creative' culture vultures."*

*"Nicole" (48) "But I think that one of the things is to teach Black people about their history with our low self-esteem in mind, the idea of thinking that we are actually inferior. This will not change unless we understand what our people have done. Blacks have been conditioned to understand that the things that we use every day were created or invented by White people. Which is not necessarily true. So, they need a little boost in their self-esteem to keep them doing more of the creating and inventing."*

*"Cecelia" (54) "All they're doing is creating a hierarchy, the same thing that Hollywood did. So, they used art to create a society that said Black was insignificant. They wrote the history of*

*who we were, right? What they wanted us to be. And so, for us, let's not allow someone else and a system that has never afforded us the opportunity to, in terms of equity, decide how we should come together and engage each other and save each other. Hollywood has a lot to answer for, that's all I'm saying."*

*"Felix" (45) "Being born and raised in Los Angeles, I've met a lot of smart, articulate, creative African Americans from every industry, and from, you know, I don't want to start naming, but in the catering or the restaurant business. And some of them want to open and have a restaurant. I think it's difficult for our people, you know, in this town. Like where do I start? What's step number one? Is there a place that I could go and someone to speak to? So, I think the city has done a disservice in the African American community with helping creative businesses start."*

*"Lita" (55) "Just historically, looking at all the ways that we've been disadvantaged, you know, the redlining, the disinvestment in our communities, the pooling of funds from our schools, the separate but clearly not equal. That*

*all matters. And for me, I have sort of like a side hustle business that I'm trying to grow, which is centered around bringing creativity to my community, and offering creative classes. So, you know, the foundation of my business would be offering free programming to my community because I know that art and using your hands does a lot to de-stress and help with anxiety and help with mood. So yeah, for me personally, I'd like to grow my own business, which is creativity, but there's just so many other things standing in the way, roadblocks, you know."*

Indeed, Black Angelenos have struggled to obtain the financial and social resources necessary to sustain creative and cultural pursuits. Black art is critical to Black communities, and therefore must be kept alive. To aid its continuation, local Black artists and creatives require support and independence.

## **Conclusion**

In closing, Black Angelenos have greatly contributed to every facet of this country. However, these contributions were often suppressed and rarely celebrated due to enslavement, violence, cultural othering, and exploitation. Indeed, these conditions

have been woven into the fabric of the Black community and have shaped their lived experiences to the present day.

In the course of this study, Black residents shared how the City of Los Angeles has impacted them, through a series of raw emotions, difficult experiences, and a variety of triumphs. While responses did differ depending on age, gender, nationality, and length of time residing in Los Angeles, most shared similar narratives of being treated unfairly by City departments and institutions, barriers to accessing community resources and opportunities, discrimination and being treated with less courtesy and respect as individuals and as a group, and struggling to maintain a quality of life that is comparable to White residents. Furthermore, many participants seemed to have little to no confidence that the City of Los Angeles values and supports Black residents, past or present.

With this supporting data, it is confirmed that social, financial, and political interventions are needed to address the harm done to the Black community in Los Angeles. Accordingly, this is a call to action for City leaders to consider reparations that address the experiences of Black community members. Furthermore, in all individual interviews and focus groups

conducted, a final exit question was posed as to whether participants had any hopes for the City in the area of reparations. All participants expressed interest in receiving reparations in the future and listed a couple of requests. Collectively, these requests included: 1) the prioritization of descendants of slavery, 2) public apologies and the acknowledgment of the racialized harms done to Black residents, 3) access to financial planning and education for any monetary reparations received, 4) more Black representation in City planning initiatives and departments overseeing reparations, and 5) for the City to recognize Black culture as an integral part of Los Angeles' art, history, science, and innovation scene. Henceforth, this study recommends that the City of Los Angeles' Reparations Advisory Commission and other City stakeholders consider participant wishes when planning for future reparations programs. The City must be aware of the complex and multi-generational experiences of Black Angelenos in order to serve them and provide support for their healing and betterment.

# Part 3: Community Engagement - Working Groups & Public Comments

## Overview

In September 2024, LA Civil Rights, in partnership with the CSUN Research Team, hosted a series of community ideation sessions with local residents across the City. The goal of the ideation sessions was to provide community members an opportunity to provide insights and recommendations for reparations based on the area of harm(s) discussed during each session.

In addition to hosting the working group sessions, between August 25, 2024 and September 8, 2024, LA Civil Rights invited the general public to submit recommendations for reparations for Black Angelenos via physical drop boxes around Los Angeles. The Department also launched a campaign to collect electronic responses between August 27, 2024 and September 23, 2024.

Details regarding both the working group sessions and the public feedback are described below.

## Community Working Group Sessions

### *Methods*

The three working group sessions (Repairing Stolen Labor and Housing, Repairing Environmental Injustice and Health Outcomes, and Repairing Racial Terror and Legal Systems) were held over a period of one week from September 10-14, 2024.

Each session was divided into four parts. First, community members received a brief overview of the scope of the larger study of Black residents' experiences in Los Angeles. Second, researchers from the CSUN Research Team provided information on the historical background of the area of harm in question and provided attendees with definitions of key terms to guide them in charrettes, small-group discussions to spur brainstorming and refinement of ideas. Third, a community advocate was invited to speak based on their subject-matter expertise and lived experience on the significance of the area of harm as defined by the researchers. Finally, community members separated into groups and engaged in themed topic discussions for a charrette's activity. The researchers provided topic cards for each theme and the groups could choose from the different topics to discuss or write-in one or two additional topics. Each of the three themes also included a

'free space' option for participants.

### **Session Details:**

- Repairing Stolen Labor and Housing  
*Hosted by Council District 9*  
*Tuesday, September 10, 2024*
- Repairing Environmental Injustice and Health Outcomes  
*Hosted by Council District 10*  
*Thursday, September 12, 2024*
- Repairing Racial Terror and Legal Systems  
*Hosted by Council District 8*  
*Thursday, September 14, 2024*

### **Summary Synthesis of Working Group Sessions**

The following synopsis provides an overview of the larger recommendations ascertained from community outreach and engagement efforts and reflects the collective perspectives of Black Angelenos and their quest for reparations from the City of Los Angeles as a result of the systemic racism and injustices they have experienced over time. Greater detail highlighting public commentary are provided in the ideation sections by topic and theme. In general, we identified five common areas of consideration for restorative justice methods as amplified by residents in the City of Los Angeles: 1) Compensation, 2) Protection, 3) Investment, 4) Assistance and Support, and 5) Representation.

1. **Compensate** for the injustices and harms experienced by Black Angelenos as a result of ongoing systemic injustices enacted by the City, residents, and private agencies. Direct compensatory methods should be explored by the City to provide monetary payments to Black Angelenos. These compensatory systems should not be universally applied to any and every group impacted by the named harms in the Landscape Analysis, but should instead concentrate on repairing harms experienced by Black Angelenos. Future initiatives can be used to evaluate the appropriate reparations for other harmed communities. Given the historic exploitation of Black Americans, and in this case, Black Angelenos, residents find it necessary for the City to build in procedures to ensure that reparations recipients are not further targeted and exploited.



Protective measures safeguarding recipients' funds from price gouging, market inflation, and other predatory practices that lessen the monetary value of reparations should be encoded in the policies and/or legislation governing reparations. Additionally, conditions of receipt or expenditure should not be attached to reparations aid. Black Angelenos should be free to exercise their own self-determination and agency to expend reparative compensation as they so desire.

- 2. Protect** Black communities and Black residents from anti-Black redevelopment and forced removal from Los Angeles. Preservation of Black communities is essential. Migration to other areas, along with the increase in the rates of homelessness, impacts Black Angelenos' ability to maintain residence within the City's boundaries.. Rising costs of housing, along with over-policing and a host of other factors, infringe upon Black Angelenos' continued residency in the city. Protective policies should be detailed in reparations legislation in order to ensure the historic preservation of Black Los Angeles. Redistricting policies and the City Planning departments must adopt historic preservation of Black communities and anti-racism as governing pillars guiding the actions and decisions impacting Black Angelenos. Additionally, Black communities should be protected from predatory and retaliatory actions as a result of reparations policies and legislation.
- 3. Invest** in the infrastructure of Black communities: The historic void in jobs, quality education, affordable homes, and reliable transportation coupled with injustices in healthcare, the environment, law enforcement, and lending have created and maintained inequitable community conditions that have severely and negatively impacted Black residents. Infrastructure investments are needed to correct the historic wrongs and repair underdevelopment in Black communities. Greater access to quality and culturally informed medical facilities, care providers and services, health insurance, access to City jobs, culturally compatible and high-quality education, environmental justice, access to quality food options, and affordable housing access are foundational structures for healthy communities. Addressing the injustices in the built and natural environment (e.g., providing greater access to parks and green space) requires direct investment in the physical infrastructure of Black communities, as well as direct investment in Black residents.

- 4. Assistance and Support** programs that aid Black Angelenos in achieving homeownership, higher education, quality jobs and careers, and business ownership should be considered part of the larger effort to sustain Black communities. Supporting Black families, children, and elders through enrichment efforts that are germane to the cultural heritage of Black Los Angeles demonstrates the value of the people, their culture, and their contributions to the city.
- 5. Representation** by Black Angelenos to serve as guides and advocates for their communities is a necessary restorative justice model. Serving as anchors of their communities, community activists and advocates continue to demonstrate a selfless commitment to the uplifting and betterment of their communities and the families and residents who reside there. Supporting community-based and community-generated initiatives to empower, restore, and enrich Black Angelenos' lives is imperative. Not only should community efforts be supported, but community representatives should occupy space on boards, in offices, and in positions of leadership to ensure Black communities' voices, needs, and concerns are represented at the table. Black Angelenos should have effective representation throughout the City, and especially as members of any entity governing reparations.

## ***Housing***

At the September 10 working group session, the community advocate and subject-matter expert who spoke on the topic of Housing was Jackie Dupont-Walker, MSW, LCSW. Dupont-Walker is the Second Vice Chair of the Metro Board of Directors and Founding President of the Ward Economics Development Corporation. She also provided remarks and facilitated a discussion on Labor and Employment which is captured in the following section.

The following topics and subtopics were provided to guide the discussions.

1. Homeownership
  - *Accounting for Equity Loss*
  - *Homebuyer Programs*
  - *Neighborhood Development*
2. Housing Security and Homelessness
  - *Housing Access*

- *Housing Affordability*
- *Housing Assistance*

### 3. Home Appraisals and Equity Growth

- *Home Equity*
- *Appraisals*
- *Home and Land Values*

A Thematic Analysis of the community's insights is provided below. Under each recommendation, community members' paraphrased or quoted commentary is provided. The statements reflect the sentiments and opinions of community members. Researchers and the City did not intervene or attempt to correct these perceptions.

#### **1. Legislate Restitution Initiatives for Land Return and Protections**

- Policies returning land to families and communities displaced by racism/racially motivated policies.
- Land allocations for specifically Black housing and businesses.
- The number one concern of the group is that other communities (White, LGBTQIA, and migrants) are often prioritized over Black U.S.-born Angelenos when it comes to housing programs. Due to the history of displacement and housing discrimination in Los Angeles, they voiced that there should be housing programs that specifically target Black men and women.
- There are a lot of abandoned buildings and vacant land throughout the city. Not to mention land that sits vacant while developers are trying to get permits. The City should put temporary prefabricated homes at these locations to house Black people instead of just allowing the space to be unoccupied.

#### **2. Institute Homeownership Assistance Programs**

- "We need to bring back Hope 6, the program that allowed people to use their Section 8 income as a mortgage payment."
- Housing assistance for the working class, not just the desperately poor
- Substantial down payment and foreclosure avoidance assistance to Black families
- Funding for housing (Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) could provide support)
- Uplift trusted realtors and realtor associations
- Broad education targeting the Black community to ensure they hear about opportunities such as first-time homebuyer programs

- *Marketing and advertising campaign for services and education*
- *Use trusted community voices and partners to distribute information about any housing-based reparations. Marketing/education campaigns*
- *Funding education for planning 101– ads to let people know*
- Signing bonus \$ for first time homeowners
- Legacy fund– funded by corporations
  - *Legacy fund/consequences (fines) for corporations/developments that have done harm to Black communities*
  - *Cash assistance*
  - *Getting direct funds to communities with the same urgency that arms and financial support are sent abroad*
  - *Cut the check \$\$\$*
  - *No strings attached \$*
- Funding pool to help homeowners who are in the gap between HUD grants (too much income) and ability to pay (not enough income)
  - *Have a funding pool contributed by the City, as well as companies and individuals who would contribute for legacy*
  - *The pool would also be available for upgrading homes (such as for senior citizens, etc.)*
  - *Value capture for new development and transit to fund homeownership opportunities for Black communities*
  - *Create a mutual homeowner down-payment fund from the surplus value accrued from developments and gentrification*
  - *Make Section 8 housing vouchers applicable to mortgages, not just rent*
  - *Funding pool/grants for existing homeowners to make repairs and boost the value and adequacy of their homes*
  - *Allocate funding according to census tracts for historically Black communities and elder homeowners*
  - *Equity in existing housing loan assistance programs— dream program*

### **3. Provide Support for Families with Children and Elderly**

- Give Black families low-interest loans — a funding vehicle ... loan forgiveness after 10 years— including single-family and multi-family
- Affordable childcare
- Foster transitional housing for ages 18 to 26
- Legal services for seniors and families

- *Protection against predators*
- *Destigmatize seniors who have been through fraud*
- *Protections for seniors*
- Neighborhood housing services
- The increased cost of childcare has put an additional burden on housing security. Since they were not able to afford childcare, their partner had to decrease their hours at work.
- The City should provide programs/incentives for childcare geared toward the children of Black households experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

#### **4. Decrease Homelessness and Provide Support for Housing Security**

- Homelessness and housing security is one of the most severe symptoms of systemic Racism in Los Angeles. Individuals facing homelessness and housing insecurity are more likely to deal with medical neglect (mental and physical) as well as encounters with law enforcement. They are some of the more vulnerable members of an already disenfranchised community.
- The City should readjust its perception of homelessness and gather additional data to understand the various ways in which homelessness/housing insecurity exists (i.e., not all unhoused people present as unhoused) and the degree in which Black people may or may not be disproportionately affected by homelessness and housing insecurity.
- In regards to Proposition H, Proposition A, and all the additional funds going towards housing, there needs to be more accountability around where the money is going and how it is being distributed. A percentage of those funds should be designated to go towards a Reparations fund to combat Black homelessness.
- Suite of tenant protections and rental assistance that keeps tenants housed and addresses disproportionate racial impacts of housing displacement and eviction
- Increased funding and infrastructure for community-controlled housing, such as CLTs [community land trusts] and co-ops
- Policy recognizing housing as a human right in Los Angeles County— This would involve a suite of policies and obligate the government to house people.
- Bonuses for employed Black people towards housing
- Grouped living pods or buildings with group kitchens
- A participant who is currently unhoused stated that upon reaching out to a housing program he was informed that his income was above the eligibility threshold. However, he expressed to the group that based on his current financial situation he could not afford housing without additional assistance.
- A participant stated that when struggling to pay for his rent, he applied to get food stamps and only received an additional \$200. The minor amount they received did little to relieve their financial situation due to the rate of food inflation at the time and they became



homeless shortly after.

- Increase the amount of assistance to account for the state of the economy.
- Homelessness exacerbates underlying mental health issues such as anxiety and depression that often lead to drug addiction. There should be mental health services for Black people experiencing homelessness that do not just cater to more severe mental health struggles (e.g., schizophrenia or bipolar disorder).
- A participant stated that this is their second experience of homelessness in the past three (3) years. Not only should there be programs designed to house people, but there should also be programs to support permanent housing and retention.
- Hub to identify the needs of Black homeless
  - *Placement based on matching H1 and H2 [possibly, "A1 and A2"]*

## **5. Increasing Property Values for Homeowners**

- Crenshaw - Transit density bonus
  - *Financial value for homeowners*
- Programs that finance home upgrades
- Funding pool to upgrade homes
- Allocate funding according to census tracts
- Reparative housing—proper amenities and access to upgrades/repairs—homeowner education

## **6. Address Systemic Barriers Plaguing Black Homeownership**

- Gentrification caused by transit
  - *Assess harms of gentrification around transit projects and capital investment projects*
- Retain assets (educating about gentrification)
- Education about homeownership
- Neighborhood housing services
- LA City housing hub and bringing services (e.g. NIH)
- People who can qualify for home buying programs can qualify for a loan
- Add up the dollar cost of everything on these boards
- Check/compensation
- "In the event that if we receive the money, there needs to be a purchase of homes so that

we can start building equity. Also Los Angeles is the epicenter of classic cars, we need to capitalize on that.”

- Increase education and financial literacy
  - *Educate Black homeowners against scams to sell their homes— protect seniors and give them access to legal counsel regarding their rights and obligations as homeowners in order to prevent land seizure.*
- LA City hub to bring resources to communities — so that members do not have to figure out with services they qualify for, and reparations are brought directly to them.

## **7. Investing in Community-Centered Affordable Housing Planning and Development**

- Community reinvestment. Planning department: Map what is in Black communities vs White communities to create equality in resources/amenities/services.
- Some of the existing programs do not take the individual's overall financial situation into account. While they may earn a certain income, they deal with additional financial burdens such as debt, a low credit score, or dealing with the cost-of-living crisis.
- While housing may be cheaper in certain areas, they are often surrounded by jobs that offer lower wages. Transporting to areas with higher-paying jobs increases their financial burden because they have to pay for gas and sometimes lunch.
- Offer remote working positions to people who cannot afford to live in the city to decrease commuting
- Mapping and Planning Department to address spatial inequalities
  - *Housing element*
- Setting intentional goals to center the needs of Black residents
  - *Value capture*
  - *Community reinvestment*
- Government subsidies for developers investing in Black neighborhoods with a priority in retaining Black community members, promoting Black developers and community organizations, Black contractors
- Local hire for development projects
- Promote diversity in affordable housing and luxury housing projects
- Select developers with a mission for equity and reparations. Subsidize projects that will serve the historically underserved population

## **8. Mandate and Advance Equitable Zoning Policies**

- Redlining went hand in hand with racial covenants
  - *The Black community has been cut out of wealth accumulation.*

- *City Planning should be mitigating the disparities.*
- *How can zoning help control environmental impacts?*
- *How do we reclaim development near TOC?*
- Developers are in control of the majority of project budgets.
  - *Community should control more.*
- Free Space-- People are prioritizing commercial over public space— they are competitive
- Most Black communities developed around industrial areas— There has been a push to re-zone areas for dense development.
  - *Will SBG and TOC development push Black communities out?*
- How diverse are staff in the Planning Department? Are Black interests being represented?
- What is the degree of participation in the process, e.g., Neighborhood Councils?
- Census based tax credit for environmentally burdened areas
- Replace brown sites with green jobs
- Federal EPA clean targeted dollars— Job Creation
- Home build incentives to have trees, green builds in burdened communities.

**Departments that could assist in the homelessness and housing security issue:**

- Office of the City Administration
- Community Investment for Families Department
- Economic & Workforce Development Department
- Emergency Management Department
- Office of Finance
- Housing Authority
- Los Angeles Housing Department
- Planning Department
- The Office of Public Accountability/Ratepayer Advocate

## ***Stolen Labor***

The following topics and subtopics were provided to guide the discussions.

1. Wage Parity
  - *Correcting Pay Inequity*
  - *Eliminating Racial Bias*
  - *Racial Representation in Promotions and Leadership*
2. Labor Justice
  - *Preventing Forced Labor*
  - *Labor Exploitation*
  - *Incarceration and Labor Rights*
3. Access to Union and City Jobs
  - *Preventing Discrimination*
  - *Outreach, Recruitment, and Training*
  - *Equal Employment Practices*

Each of the three themes also included a “Free Space” option for participants. In this session, table participants added the subtopic of “Entrepreneurship.”

A thematic analysis of the community insights is provided below. Under each recommendation, community members’ paraphrased or quoted commentary is provided. These statements reflect the sentiments and opinions of community members. Researchers and the City did not intervene or attempt to correct these perceptions.

### **1. Support Black Angelenos Entrepreneurship Opportunities**

- The City cannot facilitate this work
  - *They never have/a part of the problem*
- What is the value of PAIN & SUFFERING?
- Hire convicted felons for nonlethal crimes
- Remove barriers to accessing City services/jobs
- Access to LIVING WAGE jobs
- City raises taxes— homeowners sell— gentrification

- Diversify the hiring administrations/local hires
- Promote entrepreneurship
- Give city, state, county land for Black businesses
- Support trade schools
- Land reallocation to Black communities
  - *Land Reallocation is KEY!*
  - *Common Property and State property— give us (African Americans) our land so we can have businesses (gas stations, banks, schools, business)*
- Entrepreneurship is the key to equitable policies
- Stop pushing business out of the area and dismantling our City infrastructure

## **2. Increase Employment Access and Opportunities**

- Express hiring reparation lane
- Online recruiting fairs
- Tax Assessor is county
  - *Reassessment available (happened in 2023)*
  - *Reestablish principles of CRA*
- The issue is where the jobs are located.
- The City needs to specify and correct job descriptions that are “living wage” jobs. We need a “living wage”
- Focus on needs of Black residents

## **3. Correct Historic Injustices Surrounding Employment**

- Some say that the City cannot facilitate what we have been going through because they have never helped us. The City is a part of the crime and can only assist in “healing it”
  - *The City can help hire convicted felons*
- The City will use new and improved policies to weaponize against communities, so there needs to be policies to remove punitive and harsh policies
- The City takes too LONG and info is inaccessible.
  - *Lack of awareness and full transparency*
- City issue: Constantly changing the policies and making it harder to access jobs



- Management: Nepotism
- "The City needs to leave our taxes alone"
- The City fails to meet and engage in community discussion with African American communities
- Equity is like a rock in a shoe
- Where are we at the City Council Meetings?
- Gentrification is REAL and keeps us from celebrating rich cultures and diversities.

### **Expectations and Concerns for City Reparations:**

1. Reparations
2. Lack of Initiative and Follow-through by the City
3. Real Estate- If we get reparations would we be able to use the money to afford a home?
4. Entrepreneurship- LA, California being the hub
5. Understanding the Conditions
6. (Accountability) City Council to vote/set aside funds for philanthropy donors

## ***Environment & Health Inequities and Outcomes***

The community advocate invited to speak on this topic was Dr. David M. Carlisle, MD, PhD. Dr. Carlisle is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. On September 12, he served as the subject-matter expert and facilitated a discussion on environmental injustice and health inequities in Los Angeles.

The following topics and subtopics were provided to guide the discussions.

### **Environmental Health**

#### 1. Ecological Health

- *Green Space*
- *Air Quality*
- *Land Use*

#### 2. Environmental Protections

- *Hazardous Exposure*
- *Health Outcomes*
- *Environmental Risk*

#### 3. Zoning

- *Zoning Policies*
- *Zoning/Council Boards*
- *Preventing Discrimination*

### **Health Inequities and Outcomes**

#### 1. Healthcare and Hospitals

- *Access to Quality Hospitals*
- *Healthcare Programs*
- *Healthcare Affordability*

#### 2. Cultural Competence in Healthcare and Healthcare Professionals

- *Training and Educational Programs*
- *Representation*
- *Cultural Awareness*

#### 3. Improving Health Outcomes

- *Women's Health*
- *Infant Health*
- *Preventative Care*

A thematic analysis of the community insights is provided below. Under each recommendation, community members' paraphrased or quoted commentary is provided. These statements reflect the sentiments and opinions of community members. Researchers and the City did not intervene or attempt to correct these perceptions.

### **1. Increase Access to Quality, Affordable and Affirming Medical Facilities and Services**

- Establish healthcare services that are local and conveniently located near vulnerable populations
- Expand access to health insurance, particularly for African Americans
- Promote education on health issues disproportionately affecting African Americans
- Increase access to emergency medical care
- Increase access to immediate medical care
- Lower prescription costs
- More emergency facilities open 24 hours in the inner city, underserved, and under-resourced areas
- Affordable prescriptions
- Create program where the public can access a healthcare advocate to help them navigate their diagnosis— advocate for the purpose of managing care
  - *People will come in to get a diagnosis and not understand the next step.*
  - *Education to know what to do*
- Provide and support insurance education opportunities and programs
- Collaborate with institutions like UCLA and LA County to provide educational programs and preventative health initiatives that target African Americans. Addressing these gaps is critical to ensuring equitable health outcomes.
- African Americans often face barriers to insurance coverage and quality healthcare. Addressing these gaps is critical to ensuring equitable health outcomes.
- Require Low-Income Patient Acceptance:
  - *Private healthcare providers should be mandated to accept a minimum percentage of low-income patients, ensuring healthcare accessibility for all, regardless of socioeconomic status.*

- Ensuring Black people have rights when going into these hospitals and are aware of their rights

## **2. Increase Access to Health Insurance**

- Provide reparations for private/public types of healthcare for Black people.
- African Americans need insurance and healthcare.

## **3. Champion Cultural Competence in Healthcare Facilities and Services**

- Support Black midwives and healthy births.
- Study the side effects of medicines and treatment programs effects of Black patients
- Black women maternal health— protect and provide culturally informed care
- End racist thinking about Black pain tolerance
- Protect Black birthing mothers— stop targeting
- Cultural competency and sensitivity training
- Hospital administration training
- We're not diagnosed as Black people, we are diagnosed based on European Western medical practices and the biases built in with that.

## **4. Increasing Access to Quality and Culturally Affirming Women's and Maternity Healthcare**

### *Conditions Discussed*

- Many stories of horror in medical experience
- History of poor care = fear of medical doctors and facilities
- Lack of access to immediate care, have to drive far for care. Concerns about lack of access
- Discrimination at hospitals: Roughly talking to and mistreatment and handling of Black patients

### *Recommendations*

- Doula- Advocate and fathers present; NOT either/or
- Every Black woman that has given birth should be interviewed and paid for their suffering, for not having access to natural birth midwives, programs, and birth plans
- Reparations for Black women and children loss due to poor quality care and doctors' preconceived notions of Black women's tolerance of pain
- Payments for family members' loss

- City to provide quality hospitals that operate 24 hours in inner city neighborhoods
- Access to urgent care facilities.
- Bring OBGYN units back to the hospital
- C-Section rates are high among Black women. There should be alternative options for Black women when it comes to birthing.

## **5. Increase Black Medical Practitioners**

- Increase health professionals that reflect the communities they dwell in
- Pipeline for more Black doctors and other health professionals
- Increase access to qualified and trained medical staff– stop students and interns
- Hire and educate more Black doctors and nurses

## **6. Support Healthy Communities and Healthy Lifestyles**

- Health medicine through green food as medicine; Green food clinics
- Generating our own food supplies, distribution, etc. (Workforce Development)
  - *Analogous model: Crop Swap*
  - *High school CTE [career technical education] and home economics training*
    - Return to this at a young age, public schools
  - *Training Program: Students and administrators composed of the beneficiary class*
- Address food/grocery deserts
  - *BVegAs training model to teach grocery administration*
  - *Return to culture of neighborhood produce vendors*
- Push to bring back vocational skills training (farming, home economics, etc.) with a community focus
- Close down check cashing
- Recreating programs to support teen activities such as something constructive teaching electrical, woodcraft, metal classes or at least to run wiring
- Increase community partnerships
  - *Collaborate with local organizations, businesses, schools, etc.*
  - *Grass roots and community-based organizations*
  - *Develop programs (i.e. college, grad programs, farmer's markets)*
  - *Petition local school boards to include electives in vocational skills*



- Invest in Parks and Green Spaces:
  - *Increase investment in public parks, focusing on underserved communities. Access to green spaces is vital for improving ecological and human health, particularly in areas with limited recreational and natural environments.*
- Create Plan- Subsidize home improvements / Land trust to help current homeowners / The City should step up.

## **7. Build Medical Infrastructure to Equitably Serve Black Communities**

- Models:
  - *Advocate for development models that facilitate the construction of healthcare facilities in underserved areas, which may face restrictions under current land use regulations*
  - *Better access - Local and closer to at risk populations*
  - *Insurance*
  - *Education*
- No One-Size-Fits-All Planning:
  - *Recognize that standardized urban planning models fail to address the unique health needs of different communities, particularly African American populations*
- Land Use Reform:
  - *Initiate "Buy Back the Block" programs to incentivize African American homeowners to maintain and develop their properties. This could involve participatory development strategies directly involving residents and creating a comprehensive plan to support long-term investment in African American neighborhoods.*
- Equitably regulate land use and zoning - "One size fits" planning does not work.
  - *Land use and zoning is not a one size fits all for each community.*
- Sitting Hospitals / Health Centers
- City of LA needs its own Health Department - LA City gets its health services from the county. The City needs its own health department to minimize the amount of people that are falling through the cracks.
- Locating hospitals and open space together. Kaiser is turning their campuses into free green space.
- Stop helicopter planning (Diversify the zoning staff)
- Increase Access to Alternative Healing Centers
  - *Sound*
  - *Acupuncture*
  - *Massage*

- *Therapy*
- *Vedic*
- *Water Therapy*

## **8. Increase Community Involvement in Zoning and Planning to Improve Ecological Health**

- People being unhoused creates more danger to society and to themselves.
- There is a prioritization of commercial development over residential development and public space.
- Black Angelenos need to be educated on existing/proposed legislation such as SB9
  - *Since the 1950s, there's been a push to get the property back.*
  - *Small lot development is targeting Black & Brown communities (especially the lots that have a single home).*
- There needs to be Black Angeleno staff in the Zoning department who have the needs of Black residents in mind when determining zoning.
- Educate people on the planning process. Have more advertisements geared towards Black residents
- Give a vehicle of forgivable funding to existing homeowner's lot
  - *Create an incentive-based tax credit for environmentally burdened areas*

## ***Legal System and Racial Terror***

The community advocate invited to speak on this topic was Tony Tolbert, JD. Tolbert is a professor at the UCLA School of Law and co-host of the *Pay the Tab* podcast. On September 14, he served as the subject matter expert and facilitated a discussion on racial terror and injustices in Los Angeles.

The following topics and subtopics were provided to guide the discussions.

### 1. Policing

- *Policing practices*
- *Policing policies*
- *Policing in schools*
- *Policing funding*

### 2. Courts

- *Access to legal justice*
- *Plea deals*
- *Sentencing practices*

### 3. Corrections

- *Jails and prisons*
- *Detention centers*
- *Parole and reentry*

### 4. Family Services

- *Parents*
- *Youth in foster care*
- *Elderly*
- *Black family and community advocacy*

A thematic analysis of the community insights is provided below. Under each recommendation, community members' paraphrased or quoted commentary is provided. These statements reflect the sentiments and opinions of community members. Researchers and the City did not intervene or attempt to correct these perceptions.

## **1. Enhance Public Safety**

- *Fix the lighting in certain communities to improve public safety*
  - There are non-working lights at intersections
    - Vernon and Western
    - Century and Manchester

## **2. Decrease the Policing Fund**

- *Address the misappropriation of funds in municipal policing*
- *Funding should be shifted to mental health, schools, unhoused populations, transportation, or in collaboration with Measure J*

## **3. Address Policing Socio-Political Practices that Increase Animosity Against Black Residents**

- *Get rid of qualified immunity for police officers*
- *Confront police associations on the ways in which they send out propaganda*
- *Address the lack of neutral parties to receive complaints of police misconduct*
  - LA Civil Rights could be a neutral department to take such complaints
  - Create an assessment of harm
- *Prevent tax dollars from being used in liability payments/lawsuits*
- *Establish a Freedman Bureau*
- *Pass policy around the questioning/interrogating of minors*
- *Ban the practice of police lying to minors during interrogations*
- *Ensure that there is a community advocate for police questioning children to ensure that they are not coerced into confessions*

## **4. Address Access to Legal Justice**

- *Create a more transparent process*
- *Create African American-based legal aid programs*

## **5. Improve Representation in the Judicial System**

- *Implement equitable hiring and screening practices (for potential bias) for legal professionals to ensure diversity and fairness*
  - District attorneys
  - City attorneys
  - Public defenders
  - Judges
- *Encourage regular re-screening and continuing education, including anti-racist and*

*unconscious bias training, to prevent discriminatory practices*

- *Assign independent third parties to oversee cases, ensuring impartiality*

## **6. Improve Trials and Sentencing Practices**

- *Jury selection*
  - Adopt a rigorous jury selection process that screens to ensure no individuals have a history of racial bias
  - Create more balance in terms of race and selection of jurors
- *Sentencing*
  - Put an end to overcharging
  - Sentencing decisions should be compared to similar cases involving other races and nationalities to promote consistency and prevent bias in sentencing outcomes
  - Offer compensation for all improper sentencing that has gone on in African American communities

## **7. Address The Ethics of Plea Deals**

- *Create organizations or independent bodies that thoroughly explain the legal process and plea deals to the accused in a neutral and unbiased manner, ensuring the accused fully understands their rights and legal options without bias*
  - As with sentencing, plea deals should be evaluated by comparing similar cases across races and nationalities to ensure fair treatment

## **8. Create Targeted Interventions**

- *Targeted interventions in juvenile courts can be guided by similar recommendations, as African American youth are also disproportionately affected/targeted*

## **9. Address the Predatory Nature of Housing Court**

- *Create more tenant protections so that lawsuits do not affect their ability to get future housing*

## **10. Implement Wraparound Services**

- *Align rehabilitation with other services such as mental health and housing*

## **11. Address Disenfranchisement**

- *Invest in reentry programs and services (jobs, food, housing)*
- *Abandoned properties in neighborhoods need to be cleared out and utilized for halfway or low-income housing for those recently released from incarceration.*
- *Fund Black business to hire individuals who have been incarcerated/convicted of felonies*
- Create pathways for inmates in fire camps
  - Example: The CalFire program and their use of inmates to fight fires



- Give inmates a life insurance policy to ensure that their families are being compensated should they die in the line of duty
- Help them to become firemen when they are released from incarceration
- *Offer compensation for unjust time served from the War on Drugs*
  - After time served, records should be cleared/expunged
  - Taxes from cannabis should be distributed to the Black community instead of non-Black nonprofits
  - Concern: That marijuana/dispensaries will be like liquor stores in Black communities. This reparation item should be balanced with the health and wellbeing of Black Angelenos in mind

## **12. Address the Traumatic Impacts of Mass Incarceration**

- *Offer counseling services for those recently released, as well as options for family therapy*

## **13. Create an Office of Black Americans that prioritizes supporting Black families**

- *There needs to be options other than welfare/SNAP*
- *Offer services such as mediation, counseling, and job placement to ensure that the child and Black families are being protected*

## **14. Create a Protection Class for Descendants of Slavery**

- *This would ensure that housing, education, and employment are not able to discriminate against descendants of slavery and foster care youth (family separation is a form of slavery).*

## **15. Establish Healing Centers**

- *These would be centers that offer social, economic, or environmental healing programming to meet Black Angelenos needs.*
  - Focus on the traumatic impacts of slavery and systemic racism

## **16. Create a Parenting Plan Policy for Child Support Cases**

- *Some Black residents end up in hard economic times because they cannot afford child support/their paychecks are garnished.*

## **17. Create Recruitment Plans for Black Transitional Housing and Education for 18- to 23-Year Olds Coming out of Foster Care**

- *Title 5D program*
- *Offer mentoring to help guide youth aging out of foster care*

## **18. Increase Resources for Black Family Planning (including contraception, reproduction, etc.)**

- *Expand grant services for Black fertility treatments (including Medicare)*
  - There is grant money out there for fertility treatments for other communities (e.g. the Jewish Community) but not for the Black/African American community

- *Black females should have access to health resources and sperm from African American males*

## **19. Enhance Data Surveillance for Foster Care**

- *There needs to be better data collection for Black youth in foster care (a lot of children and teens get "lost" in the system).*
- *There should be better efforts to prevent exploitation in foster care (families that take Black youth in solely to make money off them).*
- *The proposed Office of Black Americans should have a task force to regulate government involvement and where money for foster care youth is being distributed.*

## **20. Ensure that Black Youth in Foster Care Have an Advocate**

- *There should be better efforts to ensure that Black foster care youth are going to Black homes*
  - For reference, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) prioritizes placing Native American children with family members, other members of their tribe, or other Native American families before considering non-Native American placements; essentially giving preference to keeping Native children within their tribal communities.

## **Expectations and Concerns for City Reparations:**

1. Compensation
2. Investment from City Officials in programming and policy
3. Some institutional practitioners (police officers, lawyers, judges, etc.) may resist anti-bias training.
4. Anti-bias training may not be enough to fix a corrupt system and/or a system that is/was rooted in slavery.
5. Some of these initiatives may need to be changed at the state and federal level.
6. Potential apathy from policy makers and elected officials.

## **General Public Comments**

Between August 25, 2024 and September 8, 2024, LA Civil Rights invited the general public to submit recommendations for reparations for Black Angelenos via physical drop boxes around Los Angeles. The Department also launched a campaign to collect electronic responses between August 27, 2024 and September 23, 2024.

The 15 physical box locations can be viewed in Appendix E. The City attempted to lessen geographical barriers and be as inclusive as possible in their outreach efforts by placing box locations throughout Los Angeles.

The information provided below details the general comments categorized by the 12 areas of harm studied by the CSUN Research Team. The comments are direct quotes from transcription of the public submissions. These community contributions were used to inform the final recommendations made by the CSUN Research Team. These statements reflect the sentiments and opinions of community members. Researchers and the city did not intervene or attempt to correct these perceptions.

### ***Vestiges of Slavery***

1. Monetary Benefit: Provide monetary benefit for over 200 years of free labor, studies for slaves that provided free labor to slave owners.
2. Monetary Compensation: To pay all reparations due to all trans-Atlantic slave descendants and all pan African slave descendants.
3. Rewrite the constitution: Black Americans to be counted as a whole person, not just  $\frac{3}{5}$ , as well as the 13th amendment, which keeps Black women and men in modern slavery.
4. Ancestry Support and Monetary Compensation: Can really trace my family's confusing history. Birmingham, Alabama. Just give me some money to pay off my mortgage.
5. Tax The Wealthy: The founding of this country was financed by cotton and the wealth it generated was on the backs of slaves, the wealth of which the turn of century industrialists amassed untold fortunes. It's time to tax the wealthy to help finance the reparations. It's only fair. I'm not Black, but I know about U.S.A.
6. Black Indigenous: We should consider those who are Black indigenous also not just those from the trans-Atlantic.
7. Public Domain: Erect statues and post historical markers that honor Black community leaders.
8. Economic compensation: Provide compensation for my ancestors who worked in the coal mines and the fields. Also, addressing inequities in educational opportunities and law enforcement injustices.
9. We should receive reparation because my family worked in the fields for years and years. The money should be tax free.
10. I think we should be asking for automatic sovereignty, monetary damages, 40 acres of land and federal laws put in place to protect Blacks from lynching, racial profiling, and unlawful, unjust killings at the hands of all law enforcement agencies in the United States of America! Lastly, we should ask for no state and/or federal taxes for 3-4 generations and all debts be forgiven from the last 7-10 years!

### ***Racial Terror***

1. Address Anti-Blackness: Purge the foster care system, the educational system, and all governmental agencies from anti-Black employees.

2. Fair Treatment: Treat African Americans just as fair as you should treat people who went and off to war for this country. Remember they built this place and breast fed and watched the White people babies for free without the respect they deserve. Shame on you.
3. Law Enforcement: Address racial slurs, hate speech, gender discrimination, and street terrorism committed against Blacks.
4. Housing and anti-racist policies
5. Every time someone is racist to a Black person, they have to pay a large fine.
6. "Here is something that I think you should do some studies on, it's that there is a complicit participation in white supremacy from non-white groups. We are dealing with it in Los Angeles and throughout the country. Anti-Black sentiment has been happening. White supremacy is white supremacy." (August 27, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)

### ***Unjust Legal System***

1. Legal and Social Services: Suggest funding for legal aid and social services for communities impacted by systemic racism. This could include expungement programs for those with minor offenses, support for families affected by the criminal justice system, and resources for undocumented immigrants.
2. Legal Program: Charges reduction on imprisoned inmates and MCJ closed.
3. Divest and Invest: "You can't have it both ways. You can't fund the police with 54% of the budget and then fund reparations. So, you have to make a decision. And of course, through the People's Budget LA that we've been having, we are certainly calling for divest and invest." (August 27, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)
4. Law Enforcement: Controlled and increased police in the community (policing)
5. Law Enforcement: Bring back more motorcycle policing, and cameras at street crossing
6. Law Enforcement: More policing, primarily in Black sections of the city
7. Employment Services: Increase local jobs in the community.
8. Prison System: Prisoners should earn social security.
9. Law Enforcement Injustices: Battering Ram and car chase atrocities needed to be paid immediately.
10. Gangs/Housing/Prisons vs Universities

*Give gang members opportunities to participate in community organizing.*

*Create an app to let gangs know that children and innocent people are nearby.*

*Create Don't shoot zone signs.*

*Give credit to gang groups for helping their community. If they are or have been decreasing in crime.*

*When taken to jail the gang member can say I use GangAPP to keep things safer for my block, neighbors, schools, etc.*

*Cops, prosecutors, public defenders, can use the app to help lighten the sentence of gang member who have proof they have been actively using the app.*

*Maybe helps less shootings, especially of innocent people.*

*Gangs get points for doing fewer crimes.*

*Recognition by City council members that says met with crips, bloods, F 13, etc., and they are doing an outstanding job of protecting the community.*

*Putting faith in and having expectations of certain groups may cause them to improve.*

11. No more prisons
12. Build universities/colleges that have second chance, GED while getting a college degree. Getting bachelor's degree while learning a skill such as plumbing, carpentry, construction, etc. these programs would lead to getting jobs through internships and placement before gaining a degree. But the participants will be able to begin work in their field and start making a living that's above a living wage, which would be a salary instead.
13. I have been a resident of LA County for over 60 years. Addressing Law Enforcement issues in the form of the HARMS Report providing personal narratives and educational initiatives. One of the structures would be to use literature such as the book Mom and Black Sons: A Comprehensive Study of Complex Love and Racial Animus written by local authors, Sharlyn Williams, PHD and Corlis Lewis, MA, MS.
14. "So, we need some protections in place to protect us from that happening again to us. We do have to defund the police. I have to hammer down on what Baba Achille said, we must defund the police because like we heard in here, they're the vehicle who were used to do harm to us." (August 27, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)

## ***Housing Discrimination***

1. 40 Acres or a Community Garden for families to enjoy and feed themselves.
2. Interest-Free Mortgages and Down Payment Assistance for Black Americans.
3. Return Ancestral Property, such as my grandmother's property in Watts, Los Angeles.
4. Consider the "Exodus Plan" by Ted Hughes, a homeless activist, as part of homelessness reform.
5. Provide More Housing Assistance to boost self-esteem and stability for Black families.
6. Assist Current Homeowners, particularly older citizens on fixed incomes, with home repairs without requiring refinancing, which is often a barrier for those on fixed incomes.
7. Support Fair Housing Initiatives: Collaborate with housing programs to offer zero down payment options for first-time homebuyers, empowering families to achieve homeownership.



8. Land Distribution: Land Distribution or housing benefits affordable access to owning housing i.e. \$50,000-\$75,000.
9. Housing Reparations: Propose measures to address housing discrimination and gentrification that have displaced many residents. This could involve affordable housing initiatives, rent control policies, and reparations for those who lost homes due to discriminatory practices or eminent domain.
10. Housing Program: Programs should include rehousing/homeless efforts & legal counsel.
11. Land Compensation: Land Compensation, tax exemption, economic compensation.
12. Housing Program: Housing benefits such as down payment and home qualification assistance.
13. Land Compensation: A land grant held in common.
14. Housing: Affordable housing
15. Home Ownership: Give down payments to homebuyers
16. Affordable Housing: Affordability and more senior housing, and more police protection
17. Education Program: Put God and prayer back in schools from preschool to the top of the university level.
18. Housing benefits
19. Home ownership, Affordable housing, better streets and college loan forgiveness.
20. I would like to see more affordable housing benefits, educational financial forgiveness and support. Equal support for teachers and training, financial reparations for African Americans and justice reform in the prison system
21. Community Beautification: The wires (electrical) hanging all around Los Angeles need to be addressed when we go to Beverly Hills, Torrance, Palos Verdes and other areas we don't see.
22. Community Beautification: You should fix the sidewalk so people who are disabled can be able to use it. Also, have more streetlights to keep the street well lit. Have soup kitchens for the homeless or people who are struggling financially.
23. Housing abilities to be able to buy homes
24. Extend swimming pool hours in hot weather: Keep the swimming pools and splash pads open until the end of October. It is 100° degrees outside! Re: Rio de Los Angeles Splashpad etc....
25. Community Beautification: In my honest opinion, I think that you should clean the sidewalks and roads along with adding more wildlife to the environment.
26. Homeless Services: Some place for people to shower when they're homeless.

27. Mixed-use Zoning: Allows for more mixed-use zoning and build spaces for people not automobiles.
28. Asset Restoration: for families impacted by relining and eminent domain confiscations.
29. Housing Benefits: including large scale access to affordable housing specially including government subsidies towards Black and African homebuyers as well as preventing gentrification in these Black communities.
30. Housing: Provide housing down payments so families who were redlined out of buying homes can start creating generational wealth.
31. Transportation: Provide high quality transportation and bicycle infrastructure in historically Black neighborhoods.
32. Community Beautification: More trees and beautification of the city, no more construction of tall buildings, there is not enough parking space.
33. Housing Benefits: No down payment loans. No security deposit. Rent to own options. Help people become property owners.
34. Stop allowing corporations to build affordable housing. Stop allowing corporate landlords to push low-income tenants out of their apartments by charging them for repairs. They also go up more than 10% on rents, pushing tenants out of their units. These greedy landlords also use scare tactics and illegal evictions and harassment to remove tenants from their units. Stop allowing vulnerable citizens to become homeless. This stems from the racist policies that still exist, red lining, residential segregation and racial covenants. Let's create anti-racist policies that protect tenants from greedy landlords. Do not landlords' exemption from rent control, AB 1482, and RSO. How are we supposed to live with this. Use information from the book entitled "Evicted" by Matthew Desmond. He hypothesized if their rent was capped at 30%, they would be able to stay housed even during important life events. This is crucial to diminishing the homelessness issue. Preventive measures are what will decrease homelessness in California and the rest of the US.
35. I have been a resident of LA County for over 60 years. I feel that a HARMS Report should be compiled to address providing grants for down payment assistance for both home buying and maintenance and the creation of new businesses.
36. Housing and anti-racist policies: Stop allowing corporations to build affordable housing. Stop allowing corporate landlords to push low-income tenants out of their apartments by charging them for repairs. They also go up more than 10% on rents, pushing tenants out of their units. These greedy landlords also use scare tactics and illegal evictions and harassment to remove tenants from their units. Stop allowing vulnerable citizens to become homeless. This stems from the racist policies that still exist, red lining, residential segregation and racial covenants.
37. Let's create anti-racist policies that protect tenants from greedy landlords. Do not landlords' exemption from rent control, AB 1482, and RSO. How are we supposed to live with this. Use information from the book entitled "Evicted" by Matthew Desmond. He hypothesized if their rent was capped at 30%, they would be able to stay housed even during important life events. This is crucial to diminishing the homelessness issue. Preventive measures are what will decrease homelessness in California and the rest of the US.

## ***Labor and Employment Discrimination***

1. Increase Opportunities for Black Vendors by actively seeking them out for RFP (Request for Proposal) opportunities.
2. Business Development Program: Education on Business Development, ownership, government paid, management, and legal Defense. Once completed awarded grant based on average cost to operate the chosen business for 5 years.
3. Business Development: In addition to all items mentioned above, tuition assistance (not loans), economic wellness programming, job/career assistance, and assistance to small business owners.
4. Economic Support: Implementing funding into Black businesses to build the Black community into a unified independent ecosystem. Any and all programs unifying us as a community stopping Black-on-Black crime.
5. Better paying jobs is a plus! Better living! Better life!
6. Commute: Facilitate commutes to work and school.

## ***Environmental Harms***

1. Environmental Justice: Push for measures that address environmental racism, such as pollution and lack of ensuring that future developments are environmentally sustainable.
2. Pollution: Address noise and sound pollution resources. Air quality improvements resources-environmental justice pollution challenges addressed.
3. Pollution: Reduce pollution in historically Black neighborhoods.

## ***Mental and Physical Health Harms***

1. Increase Funding for Mental Health services and provide access to private therapists for Black Americans.
2. Free Water, Fruits, and Vegetables for Black families.
3. Establish Mental Health Clinics: Set up mental health clinics across LAUSD to provide accessible services for students, families, and staff, addressing emotional and psychological well-being.
4. Hire More Counselors and Nurses: Increase the number of school counselors and nurses to ensure that students have adequate support for both their academic and health needs.
5. Healthcare Access: Recommend expanding access to quality healthcare services in underserved areas including mental health services, which are often lacking in communities like East LA. This could also involve mobile clinics and community health outreach programs.
6. Health Programs: Funded and evaluated aimed at increasing health education disparages gang violence and sex education.

7. Mental Health: More housing for mental patients
8. Address Anti Blackness in Medical: Revoke license of law and medical professionals who have wrongfully abused Black people but shown preference to others.
9. "Here's the thing though too, you know when it comes to psychology and us having a moment where we can heal, it requires money. Being able to go to a doctor, or a psychiatrist, or a psychologist, you have to have economics to be able to have that type of health benefits or to be able to access that." (August 27, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)

### ***Political Disenfranchisement***

1. Political repenting: All politicians in all levels need to repent before God for all their injustices done to widows and orphans since the funding of this country.

### ***Pathologizing the Black Family***

1. Hire a Genealogist to retrieve ancestral tribe names. Due to slavery, 89% of Black Americans have the names of slaveholders. Bloodline names should be part of reparations.
2. Free Round-Trip Flights to Africa, at the discretion of the user, to any country and at any time.
3. Free Access to Ancestry Records, with research provided by the government.
4. Use Oral Histories to Fill Data Gaps for missing information on Black ancestors.
5. Official Office: I've been asking for a recommendation for an Office of Black Americans at the city level.

### ***Education Injustice***

1. Free Education for All Black Americans for the next 400 years.
2. Eliminate College Costs (tuition & fees): for Black Americans whose grandparents were born in the U.S.
3. Free Education for Students Under 25.
4. Forgive College Loans: for Black Americans.
5. Job Training in High School: should be a requirement for graduation.
6. Teach Financial Literacy to all students.
7. Support Black Teachers in LAUSD, especially older teachers facing challenges due to a lack of resources.
8. Change the City Charter to allow more local jurisdiction over LAUSD.
9. Revamp Education for Black Students in LAUSD, ensuring equitable resources and

opportunities.

10. Establish Teacher Onboarding Programs and address retention issues for Black educators in LAUSD.
11. Improve Training Sites: Upgrade training facilities across LAUSD, Adult Schools, and ROC (Regional Occupational Centers) to provide better vocational and technical education opportunities.
12. Offer Parent Education: Implement parent education programs at all schools to support family engagement and improve student outcomes.
13. Provide Enrichment Opportunities: Expand enrichment programs, from kindergarten through adult schools, to offer students opportunities in arts, sports, STEM, and life skills.
14. Educational Equity: Push for investment in local schools and educational programs that serve predominantly Latino communities. This could include funding for scholarships after school programs, and resources for schools that have been historically underfunded.
15. Education: Make all history museums free for African Americans.
16. Free Education: Free tuition for all descendants of slaves.
17. Student loan forgiveness.
18. Educational Support and housing benefits.
19. Free education: Every Black child should get free college education.
20. College Education: Every Black child should get a free college education.
21. Education: Tuition free education.
22. I have been a resident of LA County for over 60 years. Educational support in the form of the First Repair model providing local to national technology and STEM to cross the digital divide. One of the structures would be to use literature such as the book Mom and Black Sons: A Comprehensive Study of Complex Love and Racial Animus written by local authors, Sharlyn Williams, PHD and Corlis Lewis, MA, MS.

### ***Control Over Creative and Cultural Life***

1. Ownership of the Entertainment & Music Industry should be returned to Black Americans.
2. Cultural Preservation and Celebration: Advocate for the preservation and celebration of Latino culture in East LA. This could involve funding of cultural centers, public art projects, and events that highlight the contributions of Mexican Americans to the city's history.
3. Place Black American Culture First: Stop placing other cultures before African Americans who fought and died in the Civil Rights movement.

### ***Wealth Gap***



1. No Taxes for Black Americans as part of reparations.
2. 40 Acres & A Mule: Grant a program to all Black Americans affected by Jim Crow or descendants of enslaved people. The grant could be used for:
  - *Purchasing a home*
  - *Starting a business*
  - *Buying a vehicle*
3. Monetary Payments or Property Tax Credits equal to the value of reparations owed.
4. Discounts on Utility Bills, Tax Breaks, and other measures to help improve daily living for Black Americans.
5. No Taxes for Black Americans, reiterated as part of reparations.
6. Monetary Compensation: Reparations in the form of monetary compensation and assets of all White owned bank accounts belonging to Black people returned in the 1700 and 1800 hundreds. America (White) has given reparation to other enslaved minorities Jewish, Asian etc. Now it is time to restore historic Black communities and give back their land!
7. Monetary Compensation: I believe that checks should be issued to everyone.
8. Monetary Compensation: That Madam Mayor and The City Council may consider a vote to set aside Money for Reparations from Philanthropy Donors, Businesses plus government Agencies (Federal-State-County).
9. Economic Empowerment Programs: Advocate for targeted economic development programs in historically underserved communities like East LA. This could include grants for small businesses, job training programs, and investment in local infrastructure to create jobs and economic opportunities.
10. Monetary Compensation: Pay us what we worked for; every other nation paid so we need to be paid.
11. Economic Compensation: Economic compensation per head of household who flies taxes and is African American.
12. Financial Compensation: I feel that we should be compensated financially for the unpaid labor of our ancestors.
13. Financial Program: Along with affordable healthcare. We should also be given equal opportunities in housing and education along with Grants and Financial aid that are affordable to us with low interest rates.
14. Monetary Compensation: Monetary reparations would greatly benefit those who have been affected.
15. Financial Literacy: To Whom it May Concern. I would like to see mandatory financial literacy classes attached to any reparations for Black People. A check without knowing how to utilize it to set up generational wealth would not help us solve the myriads of problems facing our community.

16. Monetary Compensation: Calculate the value today of what 40 acres and a mule is in the South e.g. NS, AL, etc. and instead of spending trillions on weapons of mass destruction do the right thing for the people for once.
17. Economic Compensation
18. Monthly Payment Checks: IRA account of \$150,000, free land and paid house.
19. Resources in Poor Areas: More funds in poor areas, and housing for homeless people.
20. Monetary Compensation: Including free health insurance
21. Economic Compensation: Including educational support and more mental health support
22. Taxes: State Tax exemptions for the next 200 years.
23. Money & Social Services
24. Taxes: State Tax exemptions for the next 400 years
25. Cash & Apology: Cash payment to each person and a formal apology from each complicit city department.
26. Economic Compensation: Sales tax and property tax should be exempt. Also, no cost business and marriage license.
27. Pay Up Now: Homeownership, entrepreneurship, capital for business, community to build up for Black People only.
28. Economic Opportunity: Economic compensation in the form of monthly income.
29. Credit and Lending: There should be a community lending bank or institution to help people get loans for all sorts of things like buying a house, house repairs, starting a business, and education. Example watch the Barber of Little Rock who created the People Trust.
30. All money should be tax free.
31. "The compensation should highly be remodeled after the reparations of the Jewish community. And we don't need another grant. This is a state of emergency. And it should be given out to the eldest that are still dying here. They're dying. They're waiting. They're waiting." (August 27, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)
32. I have been a resident of LA County for over 60 years. Addressing Economic Compensation and Educational Support, means the provision of urban renewal access to quality grocery stores and nutritional education through partnering with non-profits such as FEAST (food, educational access, support, together.)

### ***General Community Inclusion and Outreach***

1. Make All Reports More Accessible to communities and institutions where Black populations are dominant, such as:

- *Southwest College*
  - *The California African American Museum*
  - *Local churches*
2. Accessibility: More public meetings because many folks don't have access to the internet.
  3. Increase Efforts to Hear from More Black People regarding policy and reparations.
  4. Push for Governor Newsom to Sign an Executive Order on reparations.
  5. Make Official: "We think whatever recommendation comes from here should be put in the charter because in two and a half years there's gonna be a backlash." (August 27th, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)
  6. Finally, whatever you have created has got to have an independent status. It cannot be connected to the traditional approaches to how we appropriate and use funding. (August 27, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)
  7. Community Involvement in Policymaking: Ensure that communities of color have a strong voice in the development and implementation of policies that affect them. This could involve creating advisory councils with local residents and leaders who can provide input on city decisions.
  8. Services: Housing, Finance, Education, a more legitimate Justice system.
  9. Move this Initiative Forward: Do not keep this initiative at the study level, to just be set aside.
  10. Prioritize Black Americans: Stop putting all groups and culture before the foundational Black American and their offspring who fought and died for the Civil Rights movement. The Asians and the LGBTQ and everyone else outside of FBAs have more rights than I \*we do.
  11. "So, when Black folks do get, or win a little something it goes to everybody else. So, we need to put in some parameters to make sure that we are the beneficiaries of our harm—of the repair." (August 27, 2024, Reparations Public Presentation Comment)
  12. No Reparations: Financial resources are better spent on quality-of-life issues. I.e. public safety, street maintenance, effective safety nets for those legitimately ill and those who have made poor divisions causing them to be in dire straits but are now acknowledging that fact and willing to learn how to make better decisions in their lives. This continued policy of free stuff without accountability does not help our community. It weakens us, it enslaves us to the government. There is injustice but reparations do not fix it. Holding ourselves and others accountable will.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### African American Experience in Los Angeles Survey

This is the complete ethnographic survey available between June 16, 2023 and February 29, 2024

#### Introduction

*The City of Los Angeles seeks to understand Black/African American experiences within the City of LA. The purpose of this study is to learn how the city has impacted Black/African American lives and ways to repair harms. Therefore, we seek to obtain your experiences and thoughts on issues that may help the city understand how to effectively serve Black/African American communities.*

*Participants must be 18 years of age or older to take this survey. Participants must live or have lived in the city of Los Angeles.*

*For some questions, you will select your answer from a list of answers already provided. At other times you will answer by writing in your own words.*

*If at any time you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, please feel free to omit the item; and you can stop at any time. There is no right or wrong answer. We are simply interested in your experience and opinion. We appreciate your time.*

*This survey will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete.*

#### How did you primarily find out about this survey?

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family member or friend                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Professional colleague or contact                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Community meeting or event                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Religious, community, or neighborhood organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | City website                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | LA Civil + Human Rights and Equity Dept newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | News article/story                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____                                       |

## City of LA Residence

1. Have you or members of your family ever lived in the city of Los Angeles?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not sure

2. Do you currently live in the city of Los Angeles?

- ☐ Yes, skip to question 4
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'm not sure

3. What factors, if any, contributed to you moving outside of the city of Los Angeles?

| Factors   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Housing Affordability (e.g., cost of rent, evictions, housing prices) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Educational Opportunities   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employment Opportunities  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family Connections  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lack of Political Representation                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Racial Discrimination   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Over Policing   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gentrification  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Community Resources   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Crime and Violence  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



4. What are the major cross streets of your home address (or former cross streets if you no longer live in the city)? Example: 1st Street & Main Street, Los Angeles, CA

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many years have you lived/did you live in the city of Los Angeles? \_\_\_\_\_

6. In what year did you/your family move to the city of Los Angeles? Examples: 1619, 1781, 1800, 1920, 1940. \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many decades has your family lived/did your family live in the city of Los Angeles?

☐ Less than 5 years

☐ 5 to 9 years

☐ 1 decade

☐ 2 decades

☐ 3 decades

☐ 4 decades

☐ 5 or more decades

8. What LA City Council District do you live in? If you no longer live in the city of Los Angeles, please indicate which LA City Council District you previously lived in. If you do not know which district you live/lived in, please leave blank. \_\_\_\_\_

### Demographic Questions

1. In what country were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you aware of any familial link, or lineage you may have, that includes persons enslaved as part of slavery in the United States?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. What is your race(s)? Please select all that apply.

☐ African/African American/Black

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ Caucasian

☐ Hispanic or Latino/a/x

☐ Middle Eastern

☐ Native/Indigenous American

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your gender identity?

☐ Gender Fluid

☐ Gender Non-Conforming

☐ Gender Queer

☐ Man (assigned male at birth)

☐ Non-binary

☐ Transgender man

☐ Transgender woman

☐ Woman (assigned female at birth)

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Prefer not to answer

6. What is your highest level of education completed?

☐ Less than high school diploma (if selected, answer question 7.)

☐ High school diploma

- ☐ GED
- ☐ License or Certification (e.g., CNA, LPN, Cosmetology)
- ☐ Associate Degree (Two-year degree)
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate or other terminal professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, EdD)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your highest grade level completed? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your annual income (in US dollars)? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your relationship status?

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Cohabitation
- ☐ Domestic Partnership
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Please fill out the chart below. Did your \_\_\_\_\_ own land or a home in the city of Los Angeles?

|         | Yes, still own<br>(including within the<br>family) | Yes, no<br>longer<br>own | No, never<br>owned       | Unsure                   |
|---------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Parents | <input type="checkbox"/>                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|                                       |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Grandparents                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Great-Grandparents (Great Great, etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. Have you ever owned a home in the city of Los Angeles? (If you checked yes, please move on to the next question. If you checked no, please skip to question 15.)

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

12. Did you inherit a home in the city of Los Angeles?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

13. Do you currently own a home in the city of Los Angeles?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

14. How many years have you owned/did you own a home in the city of LA? \_\_\_\_\_

15. While living in the city of Los Angeles I have experienced \_\_\_\_\_.

**Please select the answer below that best fits your experience.**

|                     | Yes                      | No                       |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Housing Instability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Being Unhoused      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### **Experiences within the City of LA**

This section of the survey asks questions about your experiences living in the city of LA.

#### State Sanctioned Enslavement

1. Are you aware of members of your lineage being impacted by the following **prior to 1865** while living in the city of Los Angeles?

|                                     | Yes                      | No                       | Unsure                   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Enslaved in the state of California | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fugitive Slave Laws                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Confiscated Land/Homes              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Seized Assets                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Racial Violence                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

State Sanctioned Civil Discrimination

2. Were you or members of your family impacted by the following state authorized policies and/or practices while living in the city of Los Angeles **from 1866 to 1968**?

|  | Yes                      | No                       | Unsure                   |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Racially Restrictive Housing Covenants                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| School Segregation   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lending Discrimination   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Redlining (i.e., housing segregation, community value assessments) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Voter Suppression (not including felony disenfranchisement)        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Loss of Voting Rights (i.e., felony disenfranchisement)            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Union Denial   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Political Disenfranchisement                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employment Discrimination  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Confiscated Land/Homes   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Yes                      | No                       | Unsure                   |



|   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Seized Assets (personal property outside of land) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denied Access to Hospitals                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denied Access to Quality Healthcare               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Police Discrimination and Harassment              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Police Brutality                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Racial Violence                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. What, if any, of the following have affected you or your family while living in the city of LA at any period in time?

|   | Yes                      | No                       | Unsure                   |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Housing Restrictive Covenants                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Eminent Domain (i.e., losing home to city-approved development) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Subprime Lending (i.e., predatory loans)                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denial of Home Loans  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unfairly Seized Assets  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Political Disenfranchisement                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denied Access to Trade Unions                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Land Use Restrictions   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Over Policing   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Inequitable Home Value Appraisals                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neighborhood Association Fees                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unequal Educational Opportunities                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Voter Suppression   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Redistricting Practices   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Civil Unrest/Riots  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denied/Limited Access to Public Services                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                | <b>Unsure</b>            |
| Limited Access to City Jobs   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denial of City Contracts  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Environmental Injustice   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denied Access to Hospitals  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denied Access to Quality Healthcare                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Denied Access Culturally Competent Healthcare Professionals         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Food Deserts (i.e., limited access to quality healthy food options) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Please indicate the extent to which you think the actions or policies of the City of Los Angeles have impacted you/your family in the following areas by checking the box for the number that corresponds to your response.

**1= Very Negatively**  
**2= Negatively**  
**3= Neutral**  
**4= Positively**  
**5= Very Positively**

|                       | <b>1</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                 | <b>5</b>                 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Economic Growth       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Home Ownership        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Health and Well-being | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Food Access           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Access to City Contracts   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Transportation   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Law Enforcement  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Legal Policies   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | <b>1</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                 | <b>5</b>                 |
| Access to Community Resources  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Civil Rights   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Political Representation   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Community Development  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Land Use   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Home Value Appraisal   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business Ownership Policies  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Environmental Protection Regulations (e.g., waste sites, air quality control, pollution regulations) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Economic Wealth and Employment

This section asks about your employment and wealth development while living in the city of Los Angeles.

**Please indicate the extent to which you think the actions or policies of the city of Los Angeles have impacted you/your family in the following areas.**

**1= Very Negatively, 2= Negatively, 3= Neutral, 4= Positively, 5= Very Positively**

|  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | <b>1</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                 | <b>5</b>                 |
| Economic well-being                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to jobs                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employment opportunities with the City | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Opportunities for career advancements (i.e., promotions) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Eligibility to join unions                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My family wealth holdings (e.g., assets, savings)        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Housing

This section asks questions about your experience with housing while living in the city of Los Angeles.

**Please indicate the extent to which you think the actions or policies of the city of Los Angeles have impacted you/your family in the following areas.**

**1= Very Negatively, 2= Negatively, 3= Neutral, 4= Positively, 5= Very Positively**

|   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ability to buy a home                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to secure a home loan                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to maintain home/land ownership                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to buy in certain neighborhoods                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to sell my home at a fair market rate           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to have my home appraised at a fair market rate | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to affordable housing (i.e., rent)               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to housing                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing stability                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ability to maintain housing (e.g., unlawful eviction)   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Education

This section asks questions about your educational experiences in the city of Los Angeles.

**Please indicate the extent to which you think the actions or policies of the City of Los Angeles have impacted you/your family in the following areas.**

**1= Very Negatively, 2= Negatively, 3= Neutral, 4= Positively, 5= Very Positively**

|  | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Access to schools  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to quality education  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to educational resources (e.g., test and college prep materials, libraries)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to educational services (e.g., special education, transportation, services for visual impairment, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to curriculum that meet colleges admission eligibility  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to advanced placement (AP) courses  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to culturally relevant curriculum   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to culturally competent teachers  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My school's funding  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Racial diversity of my school  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My ability to attend schools equal to my counterparts  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Healthcare

This section asks questions about your healthcare experience while living in the city of Los Angeles.

**Please indicate the extent to which you think the actions or policies of the City of Los Angeles have impacted you/your family in the following areas.**

**1= Very Negatively, 2= Negatively, 3= Neutral, 4= Positively, 5= Very Positively**



|   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Access to quality healthcare                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to hospitals                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to healthcare facilities                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to healthcare services                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to culturally competent healthcare professionals | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to reproductive services                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to gender affirming care                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal health and wellness                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family's health and wellness                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Neighborhood Resources

This section asks questions about your experience with resources in your community in LA.

**Please indicate the extent to which you think the actions or policies of the City of Los Angeles have impacted you/your family in the following areas.**

**1= Very Negatively, 2= Negatively, 3= Neutral, 4= Positively, 5= Very Positively**

|   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Access to parks                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to quality grocery stores          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to healthy food options            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to recreational resources          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to libraries                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Road maintenance (e.g., road, lights)     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Waste management (e.g., trash collection) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to transportation services         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to public parking                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to public bike routes              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Safety services in my community           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Policing in my community                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## **Restorative Justice**

This section of the survey asks questions about how the City can begin to address issues that have impacted the African American experience.

1. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following are appropriate **reparation** efforts by the City of Los Angeles.

**1= Least appropriate, 2= Less appropriate, 3= Neutral, 4= More appropriate,  
5= Most appropriate**

|   | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Economic Benefits                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Education Benefits                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equitable Distribution of Educational Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employment Benefits                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing Benefits                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Healthcare Benefits                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| An Apology                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Monuments Added or Removed                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Programs and Services                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Subsidized or Free Services                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Restoration of Unfairly Seized Assets           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Addressing Legal/Law Enforcement Injustices     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic Preservation of Black Communities      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following are appropriate **economic** efforts by the City of Los Angeles.

1= Least appropriate, 2= Less appropriate, 3= Neutral, 4= More appropriate,  
5= Most appropriate

|                                | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Monetary Payments              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Debt Forgiveness Programs      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Financial Literacy Programs    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employment Assistance Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|                                       |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Access to Union Jobs                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to City Jobs                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equity Adjustments in Pay Disparities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reduced Personal Income Taxes         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business Assistance Programs          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following are appropriate **educational** efforts by the City of Los Angeles.

1= Least appropriate, 2= Less appropriate, 3= Neutral, 4= More appropriate,  
5= Most appropriate

|  | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Student Loan Forgiveness   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Free College Tuition (Undergraduate) at Public Universities in the city of Los Angeles     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Free College Tuition for Graduate School at Public Universities in the city of Los Angeles | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to College Preparation Programs   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to STEAM and STEM Programs  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Open District Access to LAUSD Schools  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culturally Competent Training for Educators  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culturally Compatible Curriculum and AP courses  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following are appropriate **housing** reparation efforts by the City of Los Angeles.

1= Least appropriate, 2= Less appropriate, 3= Neutral, 4= More appropriate,  
5= Most appropriate

|                                 | 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Home Buying Assistance Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Down Payment Assistance Programs  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Soft-Second Mortgage Programs   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mortgage Interest Rate Buy Down Programs                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Home Appraisal Protection Programs                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Subsidized Rent Programs  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Programs to Address Black Residents Homelessness and Housing Insecurity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following are appropriate **healthcare** reparation efforts by the City of Los Angeles.

**1= Least appropriate, 2= Less appropriate, 3= Neutral, 4= More appropriate, 5= Most appropriate**

|   | <b>1</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                 | <b>5</b>                 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Healthcare Insurance  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to Quality Medical Facilities and Hospitals                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Culturally Competent Training for Healthcare Professionals              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comprehensive Studies on African American Health                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tuition Programs for Black Pre-Healthcare and Pre-Medical Professionals | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Funding Programs for Health Organizations Serving Black Communities     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reproductive Health and Fertility Services                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gender Affirming Services and Care                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**This concludes the survey. Thank you for participating.**



## **Individual Interview Discussion Questions**

1. Tell us a little about yourself and your relationship with the City of Los Angeles.
2. How has the City of Los Angeles impacted you, your family, or your community?
3. How do you define "reparations"?
4. Explain how the following entities should be responsible for and participate in Reparations:
  - a. The Federal Government
  - b. State and Local Government
  - c. Corporations
5. Do you believe "reparations" should be tied only to the American Slavery System or should this include other experience(s) of African Americans (Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, etc.)?
6. How would "reparations" address injustices such as:
  - a. Housing
  - b. Education
  - c. Economics/Wealth Gap
  - d. Justice/Justice System
  - e. Healthcare/ Health Disparities
7. Who should be the recipient of "reparation benefits"?
  - a. U.S. born African Americans who are descendants of slavery
  - b. U.S. born African Americans ages 18 and up
  - c. U.S. born African Americans with at least one U.S. born African American parent
  - d. Anyone who defines themselves Black in the United States
  - e. Other
8. What reparations would you like to see from the City of Los Angeles? Are there specific departments that you would like to see involved? How would receiving the following types of Reparations directly benefit you and your community?
  - a. Cash disbursement
  - b. Changing of laws that negatively impact African Americans

- c. Access to institutions which have historically discriminated against African Americans
  - d. Other
- 9. How might "reparations" impact long-term racial justice efforts, programs, and laws such as civil rights legislation and affirmative action? What additional actions should accompany reparation efforts?
- 10. Final comments?

## ***Appendix C***

# **Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. How has the city of Los Angeles impacted you, your family, or your community?
2. What would Reparations for the Black community mean to you?
3. How and who needs to be involved in Reparations?
4. How would Reparations directly benefit you?
5. What Reparations would you like to see from the city of Los Angeles? Are there specific Departments that you would like to see involved?
6. How can Reparations be used for the collective benefit of the Black community?
7. What are your hopes for the Black community, now and in the long-term surrounding Reparations?

Appendix D

# Notice of Approval from the CSUN Institutional Review Board

Federal regulations require that all research involving the use of human subjects undergo review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that ethical research is being conducted.

Date: 4-26-2024

IRB #: IRB-FY23-299  
Title: African American Experience in the City of Los Angeles Study  
Creation Date: 4-24-2023  
End Date: 6-14-2024  
Status: Approved  
Principal Investigator: Marquita Gammage  
Review Board: CSUN Committee for Protection of Human Subjects  
Sponsor: City of Los Angeles

Study History

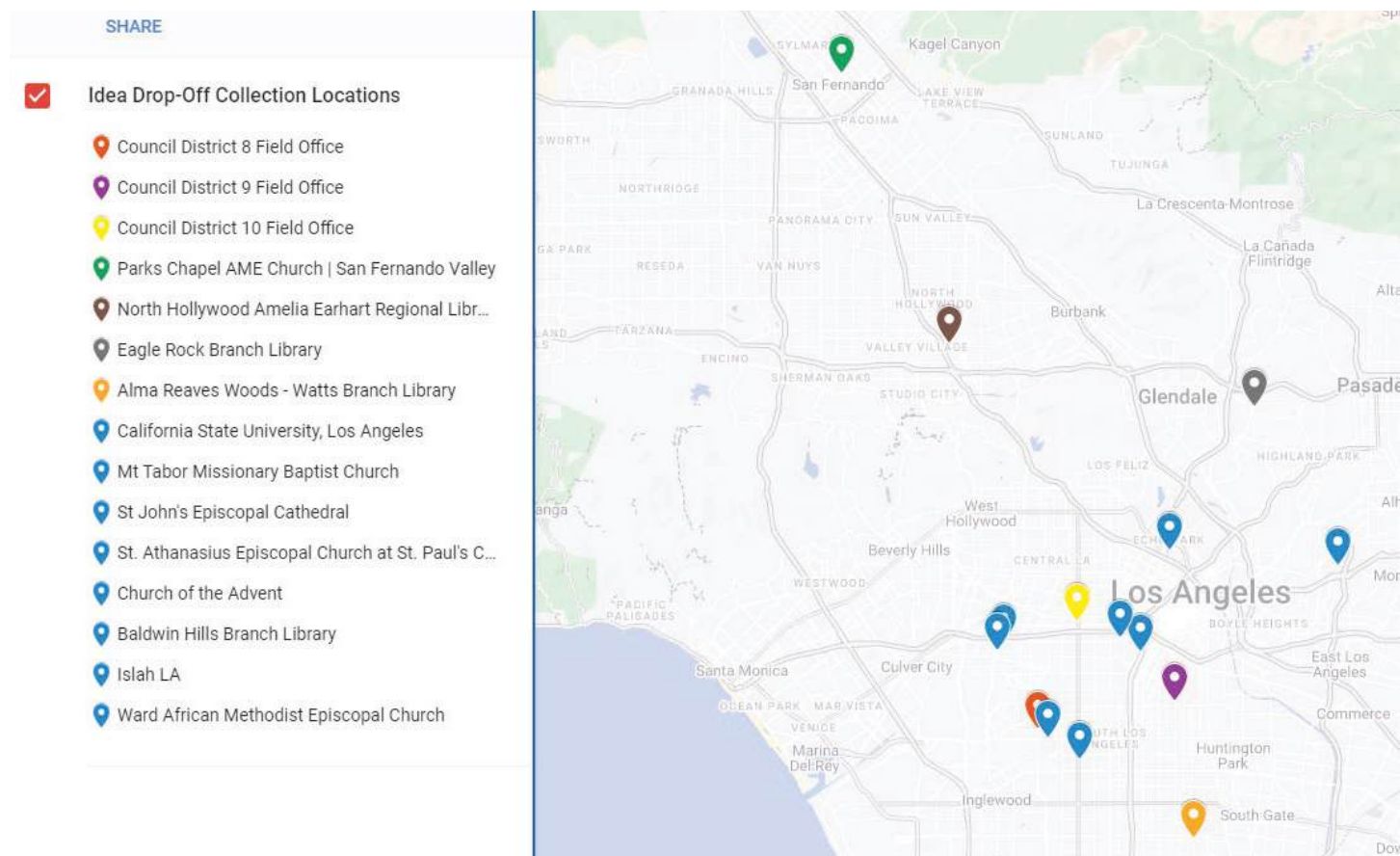
|                 |              |             |           |          |                       |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
| Submission Type | Initial      | Review Type | Expedited | Decision | <span>Approved</span> |
| Submission Type | Modification | Review Type | Expedited | Decision | <span>Approved</span> |

Key Study Contacts

|        |                    |      |                        |         |                           |
|--------|--------------------|------|------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Member | Marquita Gammage   | Role | Principal Investigator | Contact | marquita.gammage@csun.edu |
| Member | Marquita Gammage   | Role | Primary Contact        | Contact | marquita.gammage@csun.edu |
| Member | Brianne Posey      | Role | Investigator           | Contact | briannep@csun.edu         |
| Member | Karin Stanford     | Role | Investigator           | Contact | karin.stanford@csun.edu   |
| Member | W Gabriel Selassie | Role | Investigator           | Contact | gabriel.selassie@csun.edu |
| Member | Danielle Bram      | Role | Investigator           | Contact |                           |
| Member | Ben Chou           | Role | Investigator           | Contact | ben.chou@csun.edu         |

## Appendix E

# Physical Box Drop-Off Locations\*



\*One participating location, Holman United Methodist Church, was not listed above as they asked not to be included in the Department's public outreach and marketing efforts.



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# City Department Inequities Report

## Acknowledgments

The researchers would like to express their deep gratitude to the experts who contributed to building this reparations framework. Their tremendous knowledge of economic and racial justice, housing equity, and Los Angeles has enriched the findings. In no particular order, we would like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Robert Garcia, Dr. Joél Aravizo-Zavala, Dr. Michael Lens, Dr. Michael Stoll, Dr. Thai V. Le, Dr. Sean Angst, Dr. Rebecca Smith, Dr. Lisa Schweitzer, Dr. Geoff Boeing, Dr. Nader Afzalan, Dr. Mildred Warner, and David Rosas Flores.

## Overview & Background

This is a joint report between Mockingbird Analytics (Mockingbird) and California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Mockingbird researchers conducted a thorough landscape analysis to examine possible methodologies for funding a reparations pilot program for Black Angelenos. Despite this report's focus on the City of Los Angeles (and in particular, the South Los Angeles area that, historically, was largely the target of violence and neglect), it also includes Los Angeles County information for context. In particular, researchers outline the California Department of Justice's Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans' (California State Reparations Task Force) recommended formulas for calculating reparations. Mockingbird then began to contextualize the formulas specific to the City

of Los Angeles. Much of the content in the sections below that ties the areas of harm to the City simply summarizes findings from the *Landscape Analysis of Harms* chapters, which can be referred to for details. Mockingbird and CSUN co-created the following research questions, which this report seeks to answer:

1. What data does the City have that would be relevant to reparations?
2. How might financial expenditures be tracked to demonstrate racialized inequities over time?
3. How does the City's spending and decision-making affect the health, safety, and well-being of LA's Black/African American residents?

Based on Mockingbird's research, municipal budgetary data that includes historic tax collections and expenditures has no central location and would require a great deal of additional capacity for City staff in any designated department to locate and



organize. Over time, different departments collected data using different methods and stored them in different places. This lack of centrality creates major challenges for a comprehensive, longitudinal analysis. Additionally, Mockingbird was interested in comparing municipal expenditures in historically Black neighborhoods against expenditures in historically White neighborhoods to calculate relevant racialized inequities in financial distributions. Executing this specific methodology would require substantial support from a cross-departmental coalition of City staff with additional capacity from researchers who could analyze such large datasets. To bolster future studies of this nature, Mockingbird recommends coordination across departments.

Fortuitously, public sociologists Laura Muraida and Eric Wat analyzed the financial equity for the historically Black areas of South Los Angeles in their report *South Central Rooted: A Blueprint to Dismantle Multi-generational Inequity & Restore Community Health in South (Central) LA* (2020). They found that “three South LA city council districts have 20% of the City’s population, but 34% of residents receiving public assistance. In spite of this, the three Los Angeles City Council Districts (i.e., District 8, District 9, and District 10)

combined received just 13% of the targeted allocation for public services, 12% of funds for economic development, and 15% for neighborhood improvements from Fiscal Year 2013-2014 to Fiscal Year 2017-2018” (Muraida & Wat, 2020: 58).

## Methodology

Mockingbird took three main approaches to this City Department Inequities Report for the City of Los Angeles’ Reparations Study:

1. Identified *all* 41 departments and bureaus of the City government (LA City, 2024)
2. Analyzed the landscape based on publicly available data with particular attention paid to racial and socioeconomic data, (in)equity, and programming information that could apply to an LA pilot reparations program
3. Created operating metrics that enable policymakers and residents to understand the impacts of municipal decision-making on equity over time
4. Interpreted the findings using a combination of local historical context on racial dynamics (e.g. redlining) and Artificial Intelligence queries (e.g. what historical trends of racial discrimination occurred in the Los Angeles Transportation Department?). Based on the queries and historical context, departments’ records were interpreted and ranked for possible inclusion in a reparations pilot program based on Likert scales for:
  - Level of responsibility/culpability
  - Level of possible resistance to change

5. Built a data equity framework that creates transparent accountability for a pilot reparations program

It is worth noting that all City departments can be assumed to have a history of racial bias and discrimination, whether or not it was documented. For instance, the Los Angeles Zoo was ranked as irrelevant because it has no clear position of influence over broader living conditions associated with *macro* trends of racial injustice, even though hiring discrimination along racial lines was and still remains commonplace across most City departments. For this reason, community storytelling and grassroots archives can be critical evidence for documenting harms otherwise nonexistent in City archives.

CSUN then integrated key findings from their *Landscape Analysis of Harms* report that support the harm topics discussed in this report. This content bolsters the *Los Angeles Context* sections below by providing evidence linking harms to the City. Collectively, these approaches have allowed Mockingbird and CSUN to have a well-rounded perspective on the landscape of equity within City departments.

## Landscape Analysis of Los Angeles City Departments

Mockingbird conducted a thorough landscape analysis of Los Angeles City Departments to identify their impacts on the experiences of Black Angelenos and their relevance to the development of a reparations pilot program. Researchers identified five departments that warrant consideration for participating in the reparations program, given their histories of racialized injustice which has affected Black Angelenos over time.

### 1. *Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)*

The origins of modern policing stem from the "Slave Patrols" of the 1700s, which had the goal to suppress slave uprisings and return runaway slaves to their owners. In 1869, the City began paying (or hiring) its first police force. The police department is arguably the most difficult department to change because it has been and continues to be a source for maintaining White-only spaces. Throughout the 20th century, the Los Angeles Police Department was a bastion for the Ku Klux Klan where even the Chief of Police in 1922 was a member. Uniformed officers often conspired with white supremacist mobs to force African Americans out of their homes, taking bribes and kickbacks to direct police resources toward

suppressing African American residents (Landscape Analysis of Harms, “Racial Terror” chapter). In 1958, Loren Miller, Board of Directors of the NAACP and Vice President of the National Committee Against Housing Discrimination, testified that 80 complaints of police brutality were filed that year, with only two determined justified. Another 21 complaints of civil rights violations were filed, though none were acted upon. Since a low proportion of complaints were justified, Black residents were punished with fines and jail time because making false complaints to the police was classified as a misdemeanor (Claybrook, 2023). Undoubtedly, the origins of policing in the U.S. lie in the subjugation of enslaved persons, therefore, analyzing the LAPD’s impact on Black Angelenos is critical. The legacy of white supremacist violence has continued to the present day in the form of police terrorizing Black communities through excessive and arbitrary use of force, and racial discrimination in how the law is enforced. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has documented the infiltration of many police departments by explicit white supremacist hate groups. The University of California, Los Angeles’ (UCLA’s) Million Dollar Hoods project offers rich data that documents the disproportionate spending on prisons/jails compared to social services expenditures (Bryan et al., 2019).

## **2. Los Angeles Department of Water and Power**

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) warrants consideration for a reparations program given its history of discrimination in hiring and promotions (LAWA, 2022; Downs v. Department of Water & Power, Cal. Ct. App. 1997). Furthermore, inequitable practices by LADWP contributed to unequal access to basic resources (e.g. water, electricity) and environmental injustice (e.g. access to clean and reliable water and air quality) disproportionately benefitting people living in predominantly White neighborhoods (OEHHA, 2021; Langston, 2017). In recent years, efforts have been made to address historical racial discrimination in public works practices. The utility agency has implemented reforms and policies aimed at promoting equitable access to resources and infrastructure investments, engaging communities in decision-making processes, and prioritizing environmental justice considerations.

## **3. Los Angeles Department of Public Works**

Los Angeles Department of Public Works must be considered for participation in a reparations pilot program due to its role in redlining and housing segregation, freeway construction, unequal resource

allocation that benefits wealthier predominantly White neighborhoods, and environmental injustice (e.g. waste facilities, industrial zoning, poor air/water quality) (Melendez, 2021).

The Los Angeles Times conducted a recent study on service requests that reflects the reality of inequitable service distribution in a very targeted way (Poston & Jamison, 2015a). Service requests are a useful proxy for evaluating resource allocation, particularly waste management. For instance, the article notes "In West Los Angeles, bulky items were picked up by the next scheduled trash collection day more than 97% of the time. In Wilmington, it was less than 40% of the time. And when residents in Mid-Wilshire called for graffiti removal, they waited a median time of more than three days, compared with less than three hours in Sunland." (Poston & Jamison, 2015a). This study confirms another LA Times study (Poston & Jamison, 2015b) that found City crews respond to complaints of illegal dumping of refuse at similarly inequitable rates. The same was found to be true for pothole complaints. Former Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti did conduct an internal study to alleviate these wait times, but inequities appear to persist.

#### **4. Los Angeles City Planning**

Los Angeles City Planning has enforced racially restrictive covenants and redlining that manifested in highly racialized segregation. Additionally, City Planning led to urban renewal and freeway

construction that stole and destroyed major Black neighborhoods despite engineers offering infrastructure plans that would not have displaced any Black residents. In the face of viable alternatives, James Baldwin explained urban planners' choices as "Negro removal." Lastly, City Planning has contributed to land-use policies (e.g., zoning ordinances) that perpetuate environmental racism and injustice leading to Black Angelenos' disproportionately low life expectancies compared to White Angelenos (Faigin, 2023).

Data show 20% of the land in Southeast Los Angeles' planning districts is zoned for industrial use (City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, 1988: 9; Pulido, 2000). Critical geography scholar Dr. Lauren Pulido (2000) explains that this industrial zone designation leads to the prevalence of "small polluting activities and large-scale hazards, such as incinerators, are drawn to these areas" while cleaner industries opt for locations without toxic contamination (32). Industrial land-use designations conflict with residential land-uses by intensifying residents' exposure to environmental hazards.

#### **5. Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles**

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) has made major contributions to Los Angeles' racialized spatial injustice by implementing racially segregated

public housing policies until the mid-20th century. Policies enforced racial segregation and limited housing opportunities for communities of color. HACLA also faced many housing discrimination lawsuits, including allegations of discriminatory practices in the allocation of public housing units and racial bias in tenant selection as well as placement decisions. Urban studies scholars Stefano Bloch and Susan Phillips (2022) examined archival material such as planning data and photographic materials made available by the Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection and HACLA. Bloch and Phillips found that many Los Angeles neighborhoods across the City were redlined during the 1930s and then targeted by HACLA for demolition. HACLA acquired land through eminent domain and “relied on photographic ‘evidence’ of slum conditions in need of remediation” (Bloch & Phillips, 2022: 756). Though these demolitions did make way for public housing projects, Bloch and Phillips argue that this “blighted” designation destroyed the existing social fabric of many Black neighborhoods. For instance, HACLA enacted the federally-sponsored agency, Home Owners’ Loan Corporation’s (HOLC), suggestion that the Central Avenue District and Alameda Corridor be cleared of ‘slums’ to construct the Pueblo

Del Rio housing projects of 1941. Bloch and Phillips found photographs that HACLA commissioned by many photographers, including Leonard Nadel, to make the case for “blighted conditions.” These homes were largely owned by the Black men working along the Alameda Corridor in the munitions factory, which was becoming one of the best paid jobs in the country, offering Black families an opportunity for middle-class life and political representation. The researchers explain that “in many cases, the pictures reveal anything but [blight]” (760). In other words, HACLA razed Black single-family homes that they arbitrarily identified as “blighted.”



# California Assembly Bill 3121: Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Formulas

The California Reparations Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans (AB 3121) recommended how the California Legislature could calculate reparations in a prospective state-level reparations program. Due to these formulas calibrated for the state's scale, the City of Los Angeles might modify the formulas to fit a municipal scale. The California State Reparations Task Force also recommended that a new California American Freedman's Affairs Agency be the responsible intermediary for supporting any residents who inquire about eligibility and funding. The City should create their own, corresponding municipal intermediary to support reparations on a local level. In this section, Mockingbird identifies four recommended methods of calculating reparations to African Americans based on:

1. Health disparities
2. Disproportionate incarceration and over-policing of African Americans
3. Housing discrimination
4. Devaluation of African American labor and property

## The State Context: Calculating Health Harms

In California, differences in life expectancy between African Americans and White non-Hispanics reflect anti-Black inequities in healthcare, labor, and zoning. The California State Reparations Task Force calculated that African American residents of California are entitled to \$13,619 per year of residency in California. Their calculation is as follows:

1. The value of an individual's statistical life can roughly amount to \$10,000,000, which is then divided by the White non-Hispanic life expectancy in California (78.6 years in 2021). Thus, the value for each year of life absent anti-Black racial discrimination is \$127,226.
2. Then, calculate the difference in average life expectancy in years between African American and White non-Hispanic Californians (7.6 years in 2021).
3. Multiply the two to arrive at a total loss in value of life for each African American due to health disparities based on racial discrimination (\$966,918). An African American Californian with an average life expectancy of 71 years of age who spent their entire life in California would be entitled to the full amount.
4. For eligible recipients who spent part of their life in California, an annual value can be obtained by dividing the full amount by the African American life expectancy:  $\$966,918 / 71 = \$13,619$  (California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Executive Summary, 2022: 41-42).

# The Los Angeles Context: Calculating Health Harms

Health impacts resulting from racial inequities and systemic racism fall into two broad categories: 1) access to healthcare and effective treatments, and 2) environmental racism. These health and healthcare disparities are rooted in a long history of racist policies, events, systems, structures, and interpersonal interactions ("Ethnographic Report"). The local context for public health is largely measured in relation to LA County because the City of Los Angeles neither maintains public health data nor provides public health services. In other words, the Department of Public Health solely operates at the County level.

The lack of access to proper health services, spaces, and nutrition reflects municipal neglect vis-a-vis the prevalence of food swamps (areas that commonly have a high amount of less nutritious foods) and food apartheid (general inequities in food access), as well as the scarcity of healthcare facilities for residents in predominantly Black neighborhoods, particularly those in South Los Angeles (Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Gripper et al, 2022). For instance, the Community

Health Council's Health Equity Scorecard (Park & Galloway-Gilliam; 2008) found that South LA has 43% fewer resources relative to Los Angeles County's overall healthcare environment while West Los Angeles has 72% more resources than the County (California Health and Human Services, 2023). Denial of access to quality healthcare and culturally competent healthcare professionals exacerbates health disparities, contributing to higher rates of chronic illnesses and untreated medical conditions.

In terms of environmental racism, former contaminated industrial or commercial sites, known as brownfields, are more likely to be located in areas with higher Black population percentages. This results in the erosion of physical health. Reports indicate high rates of asthma and water contaminants, along with other pollution and health indicators, such as fine inhalable particle pollution (i.e., fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5)), toxic releases, lead, cardiovascular health issues, low birth rates, and overall pollution burden (California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 2021).

Research on South Los Angeles links industrial pollution exposure to health impacts for residents of color. A report based

on California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment found that cities adjacent to South LA neighborhoods, such as Compton, Lynwood, and Vernon ranked among the top 10% most polluted census tracts in California (Janin & Solomon, 2014). More than 24,000 residents live within 500 feet of major pollution exposure (i.e., truck routes). Over 21,000 residents in South LA neighborhoods reside within 500 feet of manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, oil refining, or chemical plants. "In an analysis of five South LA census tracts, 58% of land uses, or 107 individual locations, were misidentified in official land use data sources. Over 64% of the misidentified land uses documented in these efforts were actually industrial uses" (Muraida & Wat, 2020: 104). African American residents of South LA experienced low birth weight (13%) at a rate almost double that of the general population across LA County (7%). Based on data from the County's Department of Mental Health, on average, South LA residents are expected to live five years less, and a Watts resident will live almost eight years less than the average resident of Los Angeles. The City might also address these disparities through remediation tactics, such as improving access to green space and removing neighborhood pollutants to protect residents from continued

environmental hazards.

The difficulty with identifying inequities uniquely experienced by Black Angelenos is that the City has long been home to Asian-American and Latinx residents who have also borne a disproportionate burden of municipal inequities. Thus, distinguishing the disparate impacts unique to Black Angelenos remains difficult. For instance, University of California Merced History Professor David Samuel Torres-Rouff (2013) explains that "in Los Angeles, the City Council ordered sewers to be built at the 'cost and expense of the several parties owning property along [one] route.' However, they declined to compel sewer building in Sonoratown or Chinatown" (224, quoting Los Angeles City Council minutes, April 4, 1873). In other words, it remains difficult to parse out inequity unique to Black residents particularly by isolating divestment and systematic neglect.

# The State Context: Racial Terror, Over-Policing, and Devaluation of Black Labor

The 1971 War on Drugs was an aggressive U.S. government effort to crack down on drug use and trafficking. This campaign further exacerbated racial disparities by disproportionately targeting African Americans for drug-related arrests. This enforcement led to harsher sentences compared to White, non-Hispanic drug offenders. It is worth noting that despite states like California rolling back policies implemented during the War on Drugs (e.g., repealing mandatory minimum sentencing for nonviolent drug offenses), the War on Drugs continues today. Nevertheless, to measure anti-Black over-policing disparities during the past 49 years of the War on Drugs (1971 to 2020):

1. The California State Reparations Task Force estimated "The disproportionate years spent behind bars for African Americans compared to White non-Hispanic drug offenders.
2. Task Force's experts then multiplied them by what California state employees would have earned in a year on average (since incarcerated persons were forced, unpaid "employees" of the state).

3. Task Force's experts then added compensation for loss of freedom, comparable to Japanese American World War II prisoners, and arrived at \$159,792 per year of disproportionate incarceration in 2020 dollars."

To estimate redress for the disproportionately high number of incarcerated African American residents, research from the Task Force's experts computed the difference between total California arrest rates for felony for felony drug offenses and African American felony drug arrests from 1971 to 2020:

1. Task Force's experts "then computed the difference between the percentage of African American drug felony arrests and the estimated African American population percentage for each year. The difference between the two provides an estimate of the percentage of excess African American felony drug arrests.
2. Task Force's experts obtained the number of African American excess felony drug arrests by multiplying the percentage of excess African American felony drug arrests times the total number of felony drug arrests.
3. Task Force's experts then multiplied African American excess felony drug arrests by the average drug possession-related prison term of 1.48 years and the annual reparations amount of \$20,000 and added the annual amounts over the entire time period from 1971 to 2020 to arrive at a total sum of \$227,858,891,023 in 2020 dollars.
4. Disproportionate law enforcement reduced

the quality of life for all African American Californian descendants who lived in California during the War on Drugs. Task Force's experts therefore divided the total sum by the estimated 1,976,911 African American California residents who lived in the state in 2020 for an amount per recipient of \$115,260 in 2020 dollars, or \$2,352 for each year of residency in California from 1971 to 2020. Task Force's experts also recommends that African American California residents who served time for the possession or distribution of substances now legal (e.g., cannabis) should additionally be entitled to sue for compensation for their time in prison or that the State of California create a special compensation fund to allow for specific redress of that specific harm" (Executive Summary, 2022: 42).

## **The Los Angeles Context: Racial Terror, Over-Policing, and Devaluation of Black Labor**

African Americans have been charged at 17 times the rate of White people under California's "Three Strikes and You're Out" sentencing measure (Schiraldi et al., 1996). This policy, aimed at repeat offenders, has disproportionately affected Black communities, perpetuating cycles of incarceration and socio-economic disadvantage. Los Angeles County operates

the world's largest jail system, with the highest rate of imprisonment among people from Compton, a historically Black neighborhood (Widra & Gomez, 2022; Ware, 2024). Economics professor Dr. Ian Ayres found significant racial disparities in the rates at which Black Angelenos are stopped, frisked, searched, and arrested (2008). The disparities are not explained by differences in crime rates in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Ayres found that Black Angelenos were nearly three times more likely to be stopped compared to White residents. The LAPD has faced accusations of disproportionately high arrest rates, including drug arrests, stop rates, and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) deployments in Black neighborhoods (Fleischer, 2019; Monico, 2018; Townsend & Borowsky, 2008). These practices have contributed to an atmosphere of fear and mistrust among residents, further straining community-police relations. Instances of police brutality are also well-documented, such as the LAPD's use of excessive force and officer-involved shootings. Additionally, harsher sentences and penalties have been issued for drug-related offenses (Monico, 2018).

There have been lawsuits by Black plaintiffs alleging harassment and discrimination

by LAPD and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department gangs (Center for Juvenile Law & Policy, 2021; Tobar, 1991). The cost of police violence in terms of misconduct claims and settlements strengthens the arguments for the ongoing struggles faced by Black individuals within the law enforcement system in the City (Alexander, Rich, & Thacker, 2022). A California statute provides exonerees with \$140 per day, including pre-trial time, and an additional \$70 per day served on parole or supervised release solely as a result of wrongful convictions (Innocence Project, 2022). In the criminal court system, the City could look at successful appeals of settlements in cases of wrongly convicted Black residents that are then paid out. Finding civil and criminal data could demonstrate the costs of over-policing on Black communities. The California Victims Compensation Board keeps records of compensation payments to wrongfully convicted residents, and this data depends on the reliable racial and ethnic indicators collected. Settlements in civil rights wrongful convictions lawsuits, however, can be somewhat harder to identify because the settlement agreement may require that the total compensation sum not be made public. Nevertheless, news outlets often pick up cases that are public and the settlements often

comprise millions of dollars. For instance, in the civil trial of *Rodney King v. City of Los Angeles* (1994), a jury found the City liable and awarded King \$3.8 million in damages for the 15-minute beating he received from four LAPD officers in the street (Mitchell & Hubler, 1994). Pulling the data might prove to be a useful strategy for calculating harms, though the City might be challenged in de-coupling municipal courts from county, state, and federal courts. An initial investigation would require locating who captured this conviction data for the City, whether they document race, and how they store the data. The City might need a proxy method to overlay census data onto ZIP codes to understand the impacts on Black communities. The Pew Institute and National Coalition of Housing have used proxy methods which might be useful here.

A survey of more than 1,000 South LA residents conducted by Muraida and Wat shows that prior convictions (31%) and a lack of transportation (28%) were the top two barriers to employment reported among Black survey respondents (2020). A recent study by the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge looked at the economic progress made in South LA between 1960 and 2016 (Ong et al., 2018). It shows a widening gap between median individual earnings over the



past 56 years, finding that “the average South LA worker who is employed full-time, full-year earns about 60 cents on the dollar” compared to the average working person residing in LA County (Ong et al., 2018). In this 56-year time frame, the median earnings for a South LA full-time worker decreased by 20%. Median male full-time earnings in South LA dropped 33%. In 2020, Black people had the highest unemployment rate for any group at 6.4%, which can largely be attributed to the racially-charged effects of mass incarceration given that Black men, in particular, have the highest felony arrest rates and longest average jail sentences relative to White, Asian, Latinx, and Indigenous people for similar offenses (Stoll et al., 2024). The *Million Dollar Hoods* project compares spending on prisons/jails to social services and could have useful data on disparate spending.

The City might calculate lost wages based on the average length of a prison sentence and lost freedom. Court cases could also demonstrate numerical amounts through the enumeration of judgment, suffering, and expected wages lost, with justification in amount. Beyond the irreparable emotional loss, how much money does a family lose when the highest wage earner in the house is killed by police violence? Suppose someone is paid \$25 per hour and

they are out of the workforce for 10 or 30 years. For instance, say a resident earned \$25 per hour, working 40 hours per week for 52 weeks per year, assuming paid time off and sick leave were also included in their annual earnings. They would earn \$52,000 per year before taxes. Assume they received an annual pay raise. The national average pay increase for a private employee each year is 3%, but if this worker is a low-wage public sector worker, then their pay increase might look more like .1%. This scenario could yield a realistic number for wages lost to the tune of roughly \$1.5 million during a 25-year sentence.

Black men's unemployment rate is almost double that of White men's overall unemployment rate of 3.5% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Economists Bayer and Charles (2016) show that mass incarceration not only explains racial inequality among young, less-educated men, but is also the only explanation for the overall Black-White male employment gap. Lifetime earnings might be calculated by the number of years men spend out of the workforce; In this same time, their families, churches, and neighborhoods have to subsist without their income, as well. It should be noted that many Black households are also female-headed, demonstrating additional burdens for Black women. The *LA Times*

database on legal payouts in LAPD lawsuits could be useful as they have documented the nearly 1,000 settlements and judgments that the City has paid to resolve lawsuits against the LAPD. The cases span from 2002 to 2011 and mostly regard civil rights, but with a large portion concerning traffic collisions, as well.

Many cities are in violation of the U.S. Constitution by jailing defendants who cannot afford to pay court fines and fees. The Brennan Center for Justice surveyed the 15 states with the highest prison populations (including California) and found that all of them have jurisdictions that arrest defendants for failure to pay a debt or attend debt-related hearings, a practice Professor Bernadette Atuahene terms “the Predatory City” (Atuahene, 2021). However, this issue has been complex and evolving, particularly with the 2021 ruling in *In re Humphrey* by the California Supreme Court, which established that judges must consider a defendant’s ability to pay when setting bail. Following this decision, California courts have been required to focus more on non-monetary conditions for release rather than setting bail amounts that might be unaffordable for defendants. In Los Angeles and across California, there has been significant advocacy and some policy changes aimed at reducing the impact of fines and fees

on low-income defendants, including efforts to waive or reduce fees and limit the use of probation and parole fees.

In the Superior Court of California within the County of Los Angeles, a clerk and public defender said community service is available as an alternative to incarceration both at sentencing and upon failure to pay fines, but not as an alternative to paying fees. Furthermore, residents can be charged late fees should they fall behind on payments, even if they lack the resources to make the payments or have conflicting obligations (Bannon et al., 2019). Further investigation is needed to examine how the City compares to a place like New Orleans, where they even budget for unconstitutional policing and excessive fines to comprise a portion of their expected revenue. If these fees come disproportionately from Black residents, then the City could calculate the amount of unconstitutional fines imposed on impoverished Black residents to begin estimating the restitution owed.

# The State Context: Calculating Unjust Property Takings & Housing Discrimination

Nationwide, municipalities tore through African American neighborhoods using eminent domain, constructing highways across the center of Black communities. This systematic displacement, along with gentrification from the late 20th century to today and rising housing costs, has significantly contributed to the current wealth gap. Racially and ethnically-minoritized residents face disproportionately lower income levels and asset accumulation compared to their White counterparts, which can be largely attributed to the discriminatory practices in the mid-20th century that restricted wealth accumulation, housing opportunities, and upward economic mobility for marginalized communities, particularly Black Americans. Predominantly Black neighborhoods were frequently marked as high-risk, or “redlined,” which led banks and insurance companies to deny mortgages, loans, and other financial services to residents in these areas. This forced many residents into renting rather than owning homes, preventing them from building wealth over generations through

home equity.

Today, Black communities in Los Angeles continue to shrink as a result of racial gentrification as well as rising housing costs (Stoll, 2024). Housing discrimination vis-a-vis discriminatory lending and racially restrictive covenants that cemented housing segregation has likely been the greatest contributor to the persistent degradation of intergenerational wealth for Black families. However, a host of other factors also contribute to this ongoing situation (Landscape Analysis of Harms, “Wealth Gap” chapter). The California State Reparations Task Force suggested that the California Legislature could calculate losses in property value experienced by displaced Black residents and/or their descendants. They explain:

*This could be done by examining the market value of the seized property at the time it was taken, subtracting the amount paid to the owner after eminent domain, and adding the increase in the property's net value by adding in a fair measure of the estimated appreciation to the present day.*

*A second method of estimating loss could measure the compensation due by using the current value of the property seized*

*from African Americans or descendants. These methods for calculating harm are complicated if the property value has declined in value since it was seized, or if the seized property is now being used for infrastructure whose value is difficult to quantify. But, based on its experts' recommendations, The California State Reparations Task Force suggests some strategies to assist the Legislature in overcoming that hurdle (2022: 46).*

The California State Reparations Task Force presented two possibilities for calculating Black Californians' losses. The first method presented here calculates financial losses from all forms of racialized housing discrimination by:

*Calculating the average per capita White to African American homeownership wealth gap in 2019, and compounding interest on that gap until 2022 (Executive Summary, 2022: 43).*

*The second method calculates losses specific to redlining as a state-sanctioned form of housing discrimination that began with the New Deal in 1933 and continued until the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977. The California State Reparations Task Force argues that*

*the state should have insured redlined homes as a response to the denial of federally insured, affordable mortgages in African American neighborhoods. Because California did not protect African American residents from the inequitable effects of redlining, the State embraced the injustice. It is worth noting that The California State Reparations Task Force's expert team calculated that discriminatory redlining facilitated by the State of California caused the average African American in California to lose \$160,931 in homeownership wealth (2022: 44).*

In estimating financial losses due to housing discrimination, The California State Reparations Task Force estimated that, in 2019, the average home value of an African American non-Hispanic resident in California was \$593,200, compared to \$773,400.78 for the average White non-Hispanic home value. As shown in Figure 1, the racial homeownership gap was 26.4 percentage points in 2019 where 36.8 % of African American Californian households owned their own home, compared to 63.2 % of White Californian household ownership (Figure 1).

The California State Reparations Task Force's

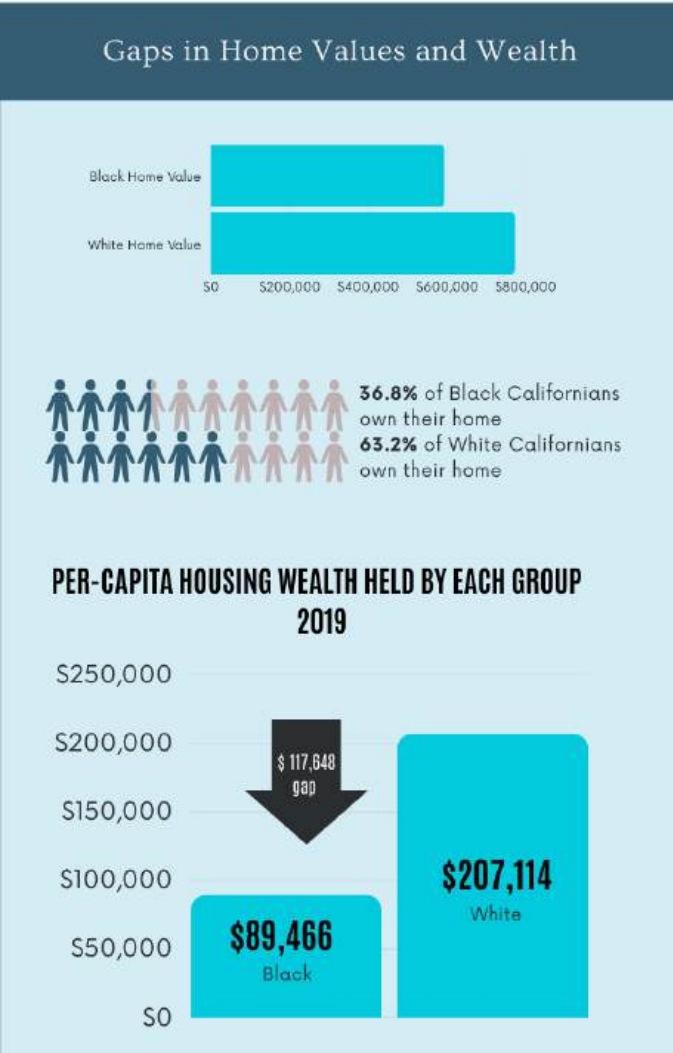
expert team used 2019 census figures to estimate the total wealth in home values controlled by African Americans compared to White Californians per household (Figure 2). After calculating the total housing wealth controlled by each of the two racial groups, the experts computed the estimated per-capita amount held by each group — including those who do not own houses due to housing discrimination.

The experts took the total housing wealth controlled by each racial group and then computed an estimated per-capita amount that each group holds, including residents who do not own houses due to housing discrimination. As shown in Figure 3, comparing the two shows an estimated per capita home ownership wealth gap of \$117,648 in 2019. With a compounded, annual 30-year mortgage interest rate (3.10 % in 2020), the African American and White homeownership gap in California is approximately \$121,295 in 2020 dollars.

While this figure represents the cumulative effect of all sources of discrimination, including individuals (homeowners, real estate agents), corporate banks, local zoning boards, as well as state and federal actors (e.g. through policies like redlining), it represents

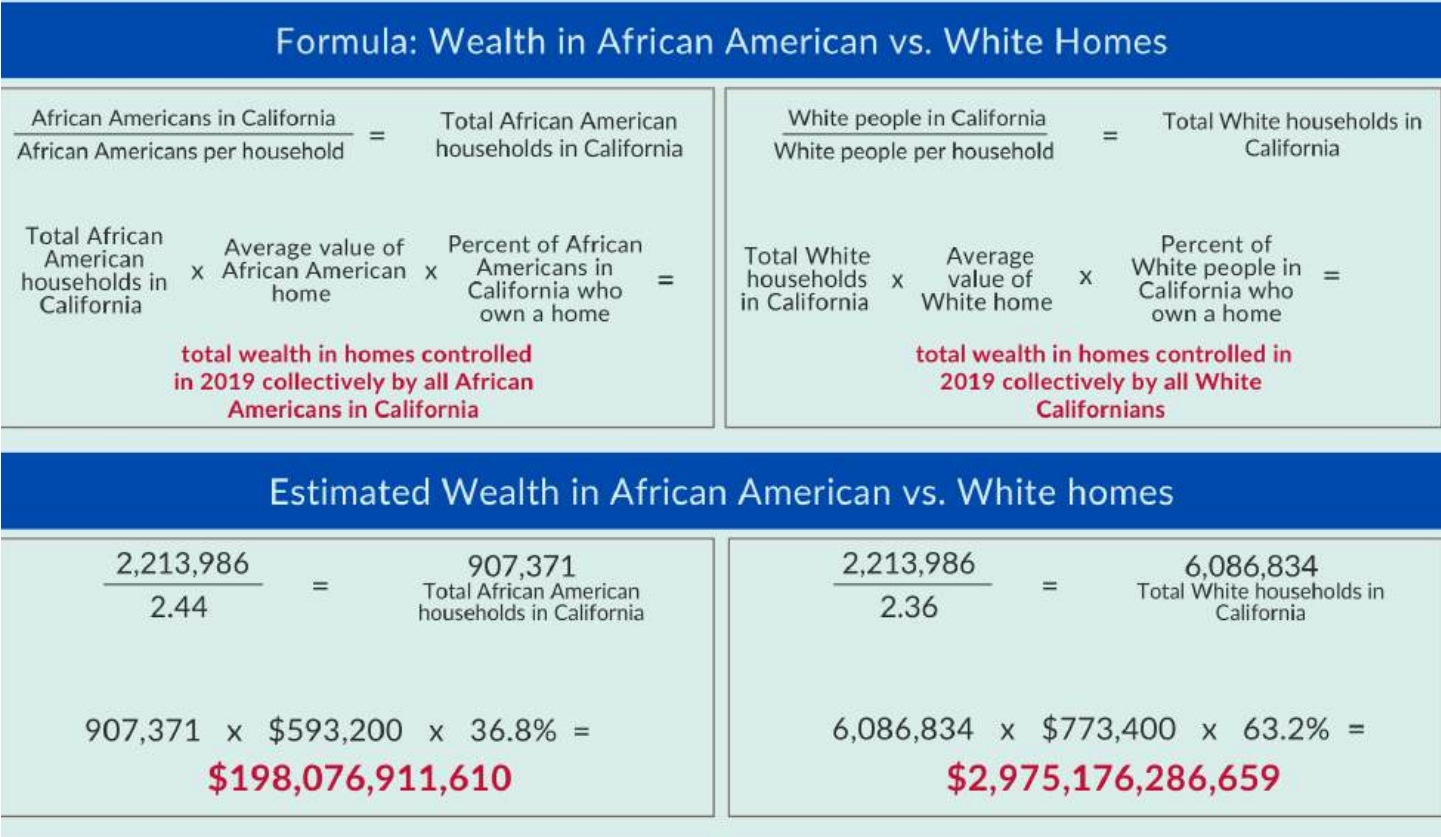
a cautious estimate because it assumes that reparations for de jure discrimination (i.e., redlining) should not have been paid earlier (i.e., after 1977 when the federal government passed a law attempting to counteract the persisting effects of redlining). (AB 3121 Executive Summary, 2022: 43-44).

**Figure 1: Gaps in home values and housing wealth**  
*Source: Adapted from the 'California State Reparations Task Force Report' (2022), by the CSUN Center for Geospatial Science & Technology*

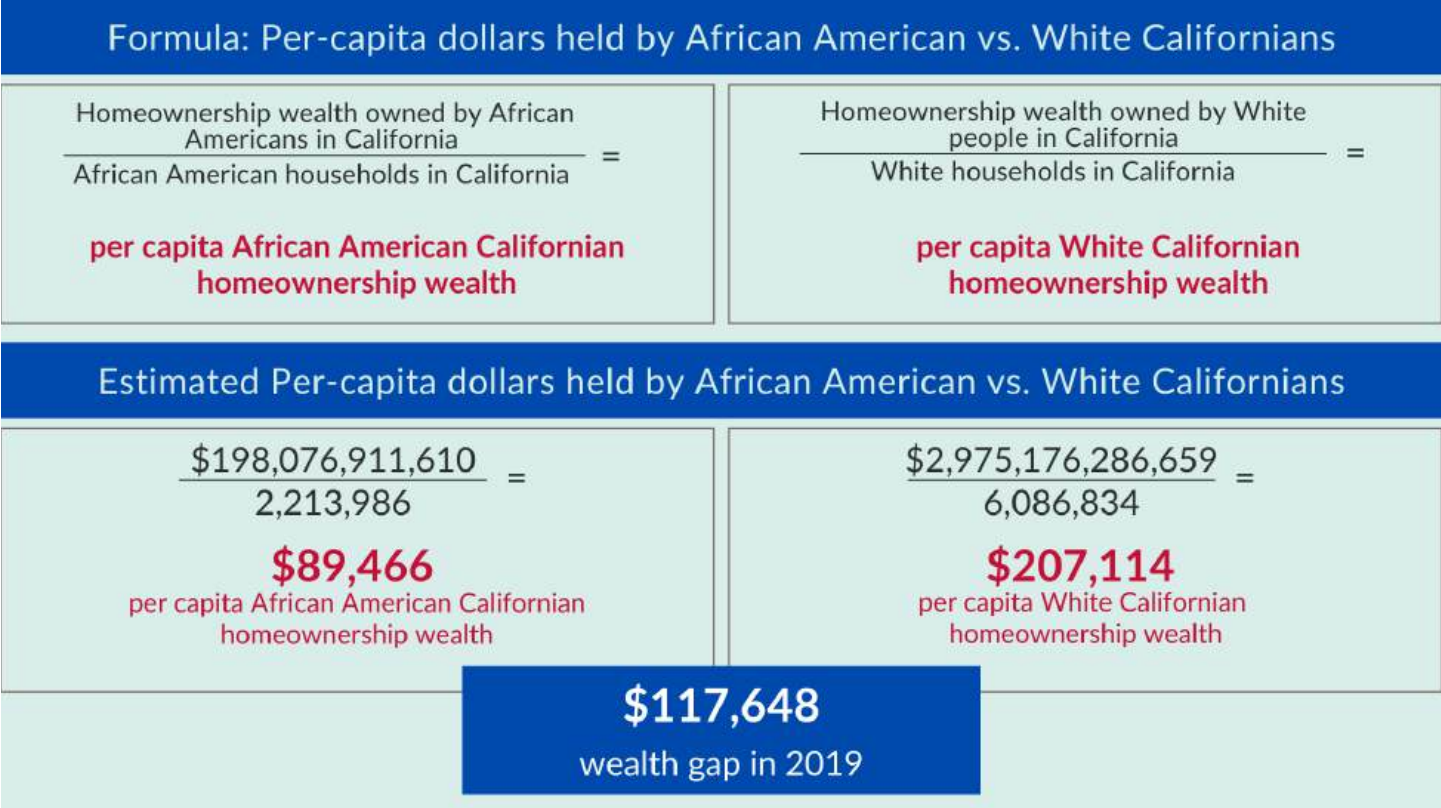




**Figure 2: Estimated racial wealth gaps in housing**  
 Source: Adapted from the 'California State Reparations Task Force Report' (2022), by the CSUN Center for Geospatial Science & Technology



**Figure 3: Estimating per-capita dollars**  
 Source: Adapted from the 'California State Reparations Task Force Report' (2022), by the CSUN Center for Geospatial Science & Technology





# The Los Angeles Context: Calculating Unjust Property Takings & Housing Discrimination

The housing equity disparity between Black neighborhoods and White neighborhoods and the limiting of Black residents to certain areas in Los Angeles (mostly undesirable industrial districts) reflects long-standing patterns of discriminatory housing practices (Landscape Analysis of Harms, “Housing Segregation” chapter). Racially restrictive covenants, mortgage lending discrimination, and unfairly confiscated lands have historically marginalized Black communities, perpetuating cycles of limited opportunities for socioeconomic development.

According to the Black Policy Project's 2024 study, Black people had the lowest rate of homeownership among any racial group in California. Redlining would be a difficult foundation for a reparations program in the City because data to measure redlining comes from the HOLC, which did not actually practice the redlining. Redlining policies generally bypassed the City in favor of suburban development. Thus, redlining is not so much the story of Black neighborhoods overlooked but rather the City in general was overlooked

and received little funding.

Another mode for determining land values and long-term expected earnings would be determining possibilities for chronic undervaluing of land based on median home value in various census tracts over time. The difficulty here is that LA County assesses land values and taxation. Nevertheless, the City might have a role to play, as well. Tax patterns could be overlaid onto racial zoning maps to determine racialized disparities in median home value by census tract over the past four decades. Furthermore, the City could investigate whether property values differ in a radius around toxic plants versus properties in other areas within ZIP codes. It would be difficult to account for the many confounding factors.

Attributing financial costs to the Los Angeles City Council's historically racist gerrymandering practices could also demonstrate inequitable costs to Black Angelenos. During the mid-20th century, the City Council deliberately diluted any political power among predominantly Black neighborhoods such that they did not have enough population concentration (near majorities) to win votes against the majority population, even in areas

where there were concentrations of Black residents (Landscape Analysis of Harms, “Political Disenfranchisement” chapter). This political disenfranchisement reduced Black voters’ voices, perpetuated racist policies, and exposed “the deep biases of some City Council leaders, as well as their plans to undermine Black political power while using redistricting as a tool. Under the current system, redistricting in Los Angeles is controlled by a commission appointed by the Council and other elected officials, and the Council ultimately has the final approval of district boundaries, permitting adjustments to align with the political objectives of Councilmembers. In contrast, County supervisorial, state legislative, and U.S. Congressional districts are determined by independent commissions that are shielded from political interference by potentially affected politicians” (Landscape Analysis of Harms, “Political Disenfranchisement” chapter). In the General Municipal Election of November 2024, Los Angeles voters passed Measure DD, approving an independent redistricting commission (Haskell 2024).

## Conclusion

This report is limited in the extent of possible harms for reparations as themes, such as environmental racism and the predominantly Black residents living on the streets. No calculation of reparations owed will be perfect. Instead, the City can consider its role in harming African American residents from these foregoing harms (e.g., creating local zoning rules enforcing segregation even though the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in 1917). Certainly, the federal government owes reparations to African Americans after building the nation's wealth on chattel slavery and enforcing racist discrimination in myriad ways. The role of a municipal government, such as the City of Los Angeles, might well begin with accountability for histories of injustice underwritten by City officials.

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# Summary of Findings

The City of Los Angeles' direct involvement and complicity in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of African Americans has been consequential in the lives of Black 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 the health and life outcomes of Black residents. This study documents the impact the City of Los Angeles, along with private agencies, institutions, and individuals has had on the overall quality of life and upward mobility of Black Angelenos. Examining the 12 areas of harm, evidence demonstrates a deep and profound negative impact in the lives of Black Angelenos. Particularly in the areas of housing, environment and health, the unjust legal system, stolen labor and hindered opportunity and racial terror, we, the researchers advance that the the City of Los Angeles has a share in the responsibilities to account for the harms committed against the Black population. While not all harms can be remedied by the City of Los Angeles,

it is imperative that the City take proactive steps to begin addressing the systematic injustices plaguing the Black population. The enduring legacy of enslavement and state-sanctioned violence and discrimination fuels and sustains political, economic, and socio-cultural subjugation and disenfranchisement for Black Angelenos. The findings in this report document the role the City of Los Angeles has played in impacting the lives of Black Angelenos while also identifying harms, negligence, and complicity of private and public institutions and agencies affecting Black residents in Los Angeles.

Racial terror has been used as a weapon against the lives and endeavors of Black Angelenos for centuries. From sundown towns to widespread Ku Klux Klan chapters and chapter members dispersed across the greater Los Angeles area, Black Angelenos have had to navigate the City with fear and caution. White supremacist terror invoked fear in Black residents and emboldened White residents to back anti-Black efforts to maintain segregation and to prevent miscegenation. The City's refusal to criminalize anti-Black racial terror while upholding racially discriminatory

laws strengthened the impact of racial terror in the lives of Black Angelenos. Fear disrupted Black Angelenos' basic human rights to safety, rest and peace of mind, while at the same time denying them equitable access to pursue the "American Dream," especially in terms of denied and hindered access to home ownership.

***'I'll tell you; it was violence back then. And in 2023, what is the prevailing contemporary problem that we're facing? Violence on every level. Now, some people think violence is only related to pulling a gun and shooting somebody, beating, stabbing, or robbing, right? Violence is when a child goes hungry. Violence is when a mother doesn't have adequate access to prenatal care. Violence is when that student is seen as less than and not important enough to educate. We never stopped fleeing from violence.'***

***- "Effie" (39)***

The City of Los Angeles has a long-documented history of discrimination in housing and

racially biased housing accessibility. Racially restrictive covenants created segregated neighborhoods that divided the wealth of the City by race. City policies were designed to restrict and forbid Black residents from accessing, via home ownership and visitation, certain neighborhoods reserved for White residents exclusively. Neighborhood vigilantes along with the police were used to reinforcing these restrictions, cementing a culture of anti-Blackness and anti-Black policing. Despite the gains of the Civil Rights Movement and the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, Los Angeles remains one of the most racially segregated cities in the nation. These discriminatory housing policies and practices resulted in increased wealth accumulation for White homeowners in predominately White neighborhoods, while simultaneously creating poverty, slowed wealth accumulation, and loss of wealth among Black homeowners in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Over the years, Black families have struggled to purchase homes, maintain homeownership, and pass accumulated wealth to the next generation. To this day, poverty and homelessness still plague many Black Angelenos and their families.

The combination of racially biased policing and arrests, unjust prosecution and sentencing,

disproportionate incarceration rates, and the post-conviction stigma and loss of civil liberties speaks to a culture of anti-Black policing that has fostered legitimate distrust in the criminal legal system. The City of Los Angeles has failed to provide justice-centered protections and criminal reform for Black Angelenos on par with their White counterparts. Instead, Black Angelenos inherit harassment and brutality, over-policing, criminalization, and unjust targeting for drug crimes. Even Black youth experience higher policing and arrest rates through school policing and disciplinary policies despite their smaller demographic percentage. Police abuse, officer involved death, and terrorism have shaped the public perceptions of policing in the City. On one end, White residents have developed a sense of trust and reliance on police to protect their rights, including upholding racially discriminatory laws and social practices. On the other end, the City has generated fear of policing for Black residents, impacting their psychological wellbeing and ability to seek and receive state protection. These historic injustices have deprived Black residents of their civil rights and basic human rights. In all, policing and the criminal legal system in Los Angeles have been consequential in the lives of Black Angelenos.

***'As far as police are concerned, my son went to an Ivy League school. He graduated from UCLA, I think it's the Anderson School of Business, and he has been stopped, you know, by the police regularly as if he were a criminal. So that has impacted my life. Every time he used to go out, I would always worry and be concerned about whether he would make it home safely. He and all of his friends went to private schools. They were constantly pulled over by the police and questioned about their intentions. Even when I had jury duty, I was kicked off a jury. Well, the question was, 'do you trust police?' And I said no, because of my experience with the police unit.'***  
**- "Maxine" (52)**

The environmental policies and regulations in the City of Los Angeles have failed to provide adequate protections to ensure quality health outcomes for Black Angelenos. Challenges persist with quality water supplies, air quality,

lead exposure, and heat-related mortality rates. Forced for many generations to live in the City's polluted, industrial districts, generations of Black residents lived in proximity to the many toxic waste sites in the City. Black communities are riddled with hazardous environmental pollutants and industrial toxins, and carry a higher pollution burden than their White counterparts. Black youth are more susceptible to environmental illnesses and Black women face increased complications with fetal and maternal health. The failure of the City to invest in physical and ecological infrastructure promoting health for Black communities has left these residents vulnerable to a wide variety of health harms, further complicating their lives and overall well-being.

***'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 trees in Baldwin***

***Hills. But they're not there anymore. You know, like what happened?'  
- "Effie" (39)***

Mental and physical health neglect equates to lower quality health and poorer health outcomes for Black residents in the City of Los Angeles. Black residents face alarmingly high health disparities, including increased risk of preventable illness and death. The political and legal landscape of the 20th century aided in the creation of City policies that authorized racial segregation which contributed to segregation in healthcare. Racial bias in healthcare denied Black residents' equal access to hospitals and medical facilities and resulted in misdiagnosis and inadequate treatment. Discrimination in healthcare has also impacted the growth of Black medical professionals in Los Angeles. The lack of cultural awareness and understanding along with the lack of culturally competent healthcare professionals and medical policies denies Black Angelenos access to safe and affirming healthcare, inhibit their trust in the healthcare infrastructure, and even prevent them from seeking out healthcare in the City, resulting in increased health complications and impacting life expectancy.

Over four centuries, before the signing of L.A.'s 1925 charter and since, the exploitation

of Black labor coupled with the denial of access to City and union jobs ushered in an added layer of systemic oppression for Black Angelenos. Limited and denied access to economic security through public sector employment coupled with restricted access to other industries hindered Black residents opportunities for upward mobility and financial security. Unequal access to jobs, promotions and wage parity in LAPD and LAFD, among other City organizations, has equated to significant wage loss and lost opportunities for Black Angelenos. Despite legal measures, disparities persist in City hiring and wage distribution. Black entrepreneurs frequently report being disproportionately impacted by City policies that unfairly and unjustly restrict their creative and cultural productions, no matter how historic they may be.

Educational disparities and injustice, political disenfranchisement, pathologizing the Black family, and the lack of control over the creative and cultural life of Black Angelenos have marginalized Black Angelenos presence in the City, and many historical and cultural contributions are experiencing erasure. Gerrymandering combined with housing segregation suppressed voting power in the City, limiting Black political participation and influence. Challenges to Black civic

participation, including discriminatory voting laws, equated to political disenfranchisement and limited political representation. Black Angelenos' economic mobility is further reduced by the unequal and separate educational systems and practices that segregate Black children in schools, connect to housing segregation, and deny them access to affirming education. The lack of a culturally inclusive educational environment along with higher rates of policing in schools yields disproportionate outcomes in school achievement for Black youth. These sociopolitical realities have been misinterpreted, resulting in the pathologizing of the Black family, by which Black family characteristics are deemed dysfunctional. Media has been used to advance these racialized tropes and stereotypes and encourage policies that lead to increased social impact on Black residents in Los Angeles.

***'I guess it's been a heavy topic lately regarding the school systems, especially those catered to Black youth. It just feels like in terms of, you know, resources, teachers don't care for the kids. The pipeline to prison versus the pipeline to college. It***

***just seems like there's a lack of attention in the area. There's no funding going to those schools despite, you know, our tax is going into it. It's not being distributed to those areas where there's predominantly Black kids there. I've been really noticing that and its prevailing impact for quite some time.'***  
***-“Hallie” (47)***

The totality of harms committed against Black Angelenos reflects the systemic racism ingrained in the governance, culture, and infrastructure of the City of Los Angeles. Restrictions and denied access to quality education, employment, and homeownership created significant wealth gaps between Black and White residents. This wealth gap seriously hindered and stalled the mobility of Black residents and their families, forcing many to migrate out of the City or suffer homelessness and housing insecurity. Many others are currently witnessing their communities undergo gentrification as City development and planning has historically left these communities out. Historic Black neighborhoods and communities are not being preserved, and Black residents are disappearing from the City en masse. The

City of Los Angeles must begin to develop and implement restorative justice initiatives to combat the lingering and compounding impact of systemic racism and injustice in the lives of Black Angelenos.



# Recommendations for Reparations and Restorative Justice Efforts

In alignment with the Justice-Centered Design Thinking framework, the objective of this section of the study is 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.

Recommendations are based on the findings from the landscape analyses, *Ethnographic Report*, and community working groups, along with the *City Department Inequities Report* by Mockingbird Analytics. For specific recommendations from the community, please see Part III of the *Ethnographic Report*.

# 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 in 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 were 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 acknowledgement of law enforcement injustices were considered highly appropriate by over 70% of respondents.

## ***Recommendation #2: Advance Legislation that Criminalizes Anti-Black Violence and Prohibits 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 resulting 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 reparations 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).

## ***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 rating of 4 to 5 by 80% of respondents (n=478). 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 Culturally Affirming Hospitals and Mental Health Facilities***

Analysis of our survey of Black Angelenos found 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% of respondents.

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

Over 80% of respondents desire 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).

### ***Recommendation #7: Proactively Support Black Maternal and Infant Health***

In terms of select services, reproductive support services were rated very positively among 72% of respondents (n=430). Increase resources for Black family planning, including reproduction and fertility. Address the culture of inadequate and racially biased care impacting the maternal health of Black women. Increase culturally informed maternal and infant health care and support community health and healing practices.

## **Racism in Environment and Infrastructure**

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

Enact laws that ensure environmental protections. Endorse federal legislation prohibiting the targeting of marginalized communities. Develop assessment infrastructure to evaluate the quality of the existing systems and document hazards and pollutants. Ensure impacted communities receive appropriate healthcare support.

### ***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 complete, 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***

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***

Adopt zero-tolerance policies surrounding police brutality, harassment, and unjust killings are strongly recommended. Get rid of qualified immunity for police officers.

***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. Ensure that there is a community advocate present for Black residents during police and judicial interactions.

***Recommendation #5: Create Pathways For Education, Employment, Counseling, and Housing for Those Who have Been Recently Incarcerated***

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

***Recommendation #6: Explore Pathways for the Redistribution of Funding from Policing Services***

Consider decreasing or eliminating existing funding models for LAPD services. Support community-developed and culturally informed safety initiatives.

## **Housing Segregation**

***Recommendation #1: Reinforce Legislation that Protects 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 were also recommended by respondents.

***Recommendation #2: Introduce Legislation that Advances Equitable Home Value Appraisals***

80.6% of respondents favored protections for home appraisals when surveyed.



### ***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. Housing benefits were considered effective reparations efforts by 72% of respondents (n=433).

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

For Black Angelenos, 82% of respondents rated home buyer assistance programs very favorably. Also, 82% endorsed down payment assistance programs. For home buyers, soft-second mortgage programs received approval from 68.8% of respondents (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***

83% of respondents 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 to reconcile pay disparities received very high support from 81% of respondents.

### ***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 reparations effort.

### ***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 highly by 75% of respondents (n=450).

# 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% (n=420).

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

To atone for educational injustices, 81% 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).

## ***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 respondents. 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 students of all backgrounds, and are especially affirming for students of African descent. Investing in these programs affirms the value of diverse cultural communities and supports educational pedagogies that enrich the education of all children.

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

When surveyed, 79% endorsed college preparation and 78% (n=469) supported AP course access as an appropriate reparations approach. Also, access to Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math (STEAM) programs was endorsed by 76% (n=451) of respondents.

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

Adopting 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 civil rights of Black Angelenos, the City should endorse 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 practices that define boundaries of Council Districts. 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 City governance and endorse policies that prohibit discrimination in housing policies.

## **Pathologizing the Black Family**

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

Institute policies and training programs that champion cultural humility and understanding. Cultural competency was supported by the majority of survey respondents, 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***

Propose a measure to ensure the safety and 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.

### ***Recommendation #4: Protect Black Youth in Foster Care and Other Systems***

Make efforts to end the exploitation of Black youth in foster care, this includes routine evaluations of the foster families, their intentions, and their treatment of Black foster youth. Additional protections would be enacted to protect Black youth in detainment facilities and other systems that house youth.

### ***Recommendation #5: Fund the Development of an Institute for the Study of Black Life and Culture in Los Angeles***

Create an institute to serve as the central hub to house historic and contemporary data and cultural artifacts highlighting the history and culture of Black Los Angeles. The center could also provide genealogical services to Black Angelenos, aiding in the recovery of family histories.

## **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 very appropriate by 68.95% of respondents (n=416).

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

Asset restoration and historic preservation of Black communities were highly endorsed by respondents as extremely appropriate for reparations 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 #3: Increase Black Representation on Museums and Creative and Performance Arts Boards***

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

## **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, respondents' endorsement of financial incentives as a suitable option to repair and correct past harms was made even more evident. Monetary payments were highly recommended by 76% of respondents (n=482). Also, a reduction in income tax was favorably rating by 69.5% of respondents (n=418). Developing a strategic model for compensation and economic justice efforts would aid in addressing the wealth disparity experienced by the Black population of Los Angeles.

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

Injustices against African Americans have been upheld 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. Debt accumulation continues to plague Black residents in Los Angeles who have been influenced by a multitude of factors discussed in the Landscape Analysis of Harms, "Wealth Gap" chapter. Developing a model to waive 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 analyses note that Black residents' wealth accumulation has been hindered by a lack of investment opportunities and a reliance on employer-sponsored retirement accounts. Supporting educational programs that empower the Black community's economic

mobility is recommended. When surveyed, 74% of respondents (n=447) supported financial literacy.

***Recommendation #5: Develop Compensatory Measures that Protect Black Angelenos from Further Exploitation***

Measures should be developed to ensure that eligible Black Angelenos who receive reparations are protected from price gouging, post-reparations inflation, excessive taxes, etc. The City's compensation initiatives should be void of restrictions on spendings, penalties, and taxes.

## **General Recommendations**

***Recommendation #1: Fund an Institute to Study the Ongoing Implementation and Progress of Reparations 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 Impacts 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 the unavailability of City-level data proving racial animus and bias in operations, and services, were factors contributing to limitations in research. Throughout this process, researchers and LA Civil Rights learned specific data pointing to disparity in distribution of City resources (i.e., funding, programs, and services) often did not exist, or was not compiled in a way that showed deliberate actions against Black residents. The lack of data infrastructure for this type of research project



made 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 and transparency.

# Resources

## Resources and Reports

**Black Los Angeles: 1930-2020:** A StoryMap illustrating how the distribution of Black communities in Los Angeles has changed over time. California State University, Northridge: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/dfd7cd4341a6493fa6cf38633333cece>

**The California Reparations Report:** AB 3121: Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. State of California Department of Justice: <https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121/report>

**2022-2023 State of Black Los Angeles County Report:** Official Report by Los Angeles County Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative: <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/sbla22-23/>

**Tom & Ethel Bradley Center Photographs:** California State University, Northridge: <https://digital-library.csun.edu/bradley-center-photographs>

**Los Angeles City Charter, Rules, and Codes:** <https://lacity.gov/government/city-charter-rules-and-codes>

**City of Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk – Election Division:** <https://clerk.lacity.gov/elections>

**Press Release: Getty and Los Angeles City Planning Launch African American Historic Places Project:** [https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/6da5578f-3ad7-4220-b2b3-1a478063b6aa/202104\\_LAAAHPP\\_PressRelease.pdf](https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/6da5578f-3ad7-4220-b2b3-1a478063b6aa/202104_LAAAHPP_PressRelease.pdf)

**African American Historic Places in Los Angeles: Getty, Los Angeles City Planning Department - Office of Historic Resources:** <https://www.getty.edu/projects/los-angeles-african-american-historic-places/>

# Data Sources

**California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool - CalEnviroScreen 4.0:** California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment:  
<https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>

**Census Data:** US Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce:  
<https://data.census.gov/>

**Food Access Research Atlas:** Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture:  
<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>

**Education Data:** California Department of Education:  
<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

**Healthcare Access and Information:** California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI):  
<https://hcai.ca.gov/>

**National Center for Healthcare Statistics:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fnchs%2Findex.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fnchs%2Findex.htm)