

# An Equitable Growth Profile of Long Beach: Summary

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February 2019

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## **A Foreword from East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice**

Long Beach is home to a rich tapestry of cultures and history that have been woven together out of opportunity and tragedy—the city is home to Tongva people who are the original inhabitants of this land and still go unrecognized, the Japanese community who inhabited Terminal Island until forced removal and internment during World War II, one of the largest Cambodian enclaves outside of Cambodia formed by refugees fleeing the Khmer Rouge, Filipinx immigrants and African Americans from the South who moved to find employment at the now-closed Naval Base, and the large Latinx community who makes up the backbone of our service industry. It is a vibrant and beautiful city that half a million people call home, thanks to these working-class and immigrant residents.

Long Beach has evolved over many decades to form what we see now, and though there exists a historic and continued practice of displacement of marginalized peoples, it is the power of the most disenfranchised that has fueled progress for change in this city. From minimum-wage increases through Measure N, inclusion of the Community Stability Toolkit in the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan, the Values Act to protect all those living in Long Beach, and youth successfully moving the city to allocate \$200,000 for the development of a strategic plan to establish a Long Beach Children and Youth Fund, community leaders have never been afraid to take on the status quo to fight for better living and working conditions. We hope that this report serves as a reminder to those of us struggling for an equitable world that when we fight together we take the necessary steps to actualize a better society that functions for all.



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## A Foreword from the City of Long Beach

For many people, Long Beach is a great place to live, work, learn, and play. Yet as this equity profile describes, racial and social inequities affect our economic well-being, our neighborhoods, and our health. While the city has been making investments and progress on many fronts, many of our communities still need better access to grocery stores, banks, good jobs, safe parks, and affordable housing.

The Long Beach Office of Equity strives for a city where everyone can reach their highest level of health and potential for a successful life, regardless of their background, neighborhood, or identity. We do this by partnering with those most affected to advance policy and systems changes, making injustice visible using data and storytelling, and by building the city's capacity to advance equity through trainings, tools, and technical assistance.

By engaging with community members and partnering with initiatives like the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, we have a better understanding of government's role and responsibility in explicitly advancing equity through our programs, services, and policies. This kind of culture shift requires a long-term commitment and a willingness to co-create with communities in responsive and engaging new ways.

It's exciting to be part of this movement in Long Beach. We celebrate our progress toward a more equitable community with achievements such as the creation of the city's Office of Equity and the Everyone In economic inclusion initiative. I look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to make Long Beach a place where everyone is healthy, safe, and thriving.



Katie Balderas, MPH  
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City of Long Beach

## Introduction

Like many other cities in the nation, Long Beach, California, is at a critical juncture. On the surface, it appears headed for an economic resurgence, as construction is booming and new residents are moving into the city. But the picture is not as rosy for current residents as for newcomers. In particular, people of color and immigrants, whose needs have long been ignored, may be left behind. This dichotomy has its roots in the city's history, which has been marked by periods of prosperity for some while others experience hardship.

Long Beach is well known for its bustling port—one of the world's largest shipping ports—and for its popular beach-front entertainment district lined with restaurants and hotels. Despite being the third-largest city in Southern California, Long Beach is often eclipsed by the city of Los Angeles, its neighbor to the north, or is seen as an extension of Orange County, its neighbor to the south. Yet the city has historically been a powerhouse in its own right. In addition to the port, the city has been known for its robust manufacturing base, which included automotive and aircraft plants, as well as oil and energy production. Beyond the shimmering coastline, however, is a city that continues to contend with complex issues. Manufacturing has been on the decline in Long Beach, and other changes are also underway, such as the rapid demographic shifts occurring within the city's population that spell the need for a more inclusive approach.

Equity—just and fair inclusion—is both a moral imperative and the path to a prosperous and inclusive new economy, and cities like Long Beach have a crucial role to play in leading the way forward. Cities have the economic power, diversity, and innovation required to forge new models of equitable growth. By making equity a core operating principle and implementing policies and strategies that ensure low-income people and communities of color can reach their full potential, Long Beach can become a stronger city for all.

The *Equitable Growth Profile of the City of Long Beach* explores the long-term demographic and economic trends of the city and dozens of equity indicators disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and focuses on barriers as well as opportunities to foster inclusion. It was produced by PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) at the University of Southern California, and is designed to be a resource for all seeking to enhance prosperity for everyone in Long Beach, including advocacy groups, government agencies, elected officials, funders, business and civic leaders, and more. This summary report highlights leading indicators, and offers policy recommendations.

The information included in the profile was drawn from the National Equity Atlas indicators database, a resource developed by PolicyLink and PERE. The database incorporates data from public and private data sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., and provides equity indicators deeply disaggregated by race and ethnicity as well as gender, nativity, education, and income.

In addition to the data analysis contained in the profile, this summary report draws upon insights that were shared during more than 20 interviews conducted with local community leaders and residents. Their comments helped shape the policy recommendations included in the summary. While this document does not exhaustively address every challenge facing Long Beach, nor every asset available in the region, our hope is that it can help guide efforts to grow an equitable and inclusive city.



## Profile Highlights

### Changing demographics

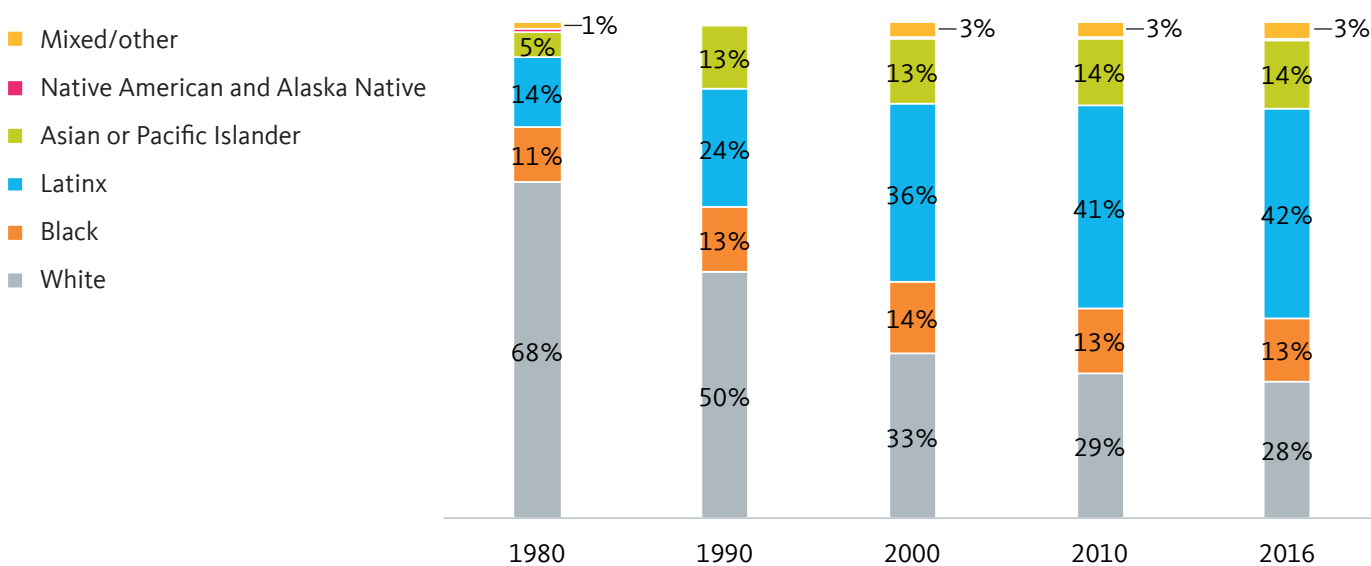
Although the share of people of color in Long Beach has increased in recent decades, they are not new to the area. People of color have been part of the fabric of the city since its inception, beginning from the Tongva people who inhabited the area thousands of years ago. Yet, White residents from the East and from Northern California came to dominate the population, giving rise to the city's nickname as "Iowa by the Sea." In 1980, 68 percent of the population was White. Today, demographics have shifted again and only 28 percent of the city's population is White and about seven in 10 Long Beach residents are people of color.

Latinx people—predominantly those of Mexican descent—comprise 42 percent of the population, with African American, Native American, Asian American or Pacific Islander, and those of mixed or other race comprising the remaining 30 percent of the population. Those broad racial and ethnic groupings only tell part of the story of the city's diversity. The Asian population for example includes residents who are Japanese, Chinese, Filipinx, Vietnamese, Korean, Thai, Laotian, Hmong, and Cambodian. Like other cities in Southern California, Long Beach began experiencing demographic shifts decades earlier, ahead of the national trend, and the pace of change is now slowing.

Still, the numbers are clear—people of color are driving growth and change in the city of Long Beach and must be recognized as an asset. For the city of Long Beach to thrive, its communities of color must thrive, and this will require focused efforts on removing racial barriers and fostering inclusion.

### Long Beach became a majority people-of-color city several decades ago.

Racial/Ethnic Composition, 1980 to 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Note: Data for 2016 represents a 2012 through 2016 average.

## The state of equity in Long Beach

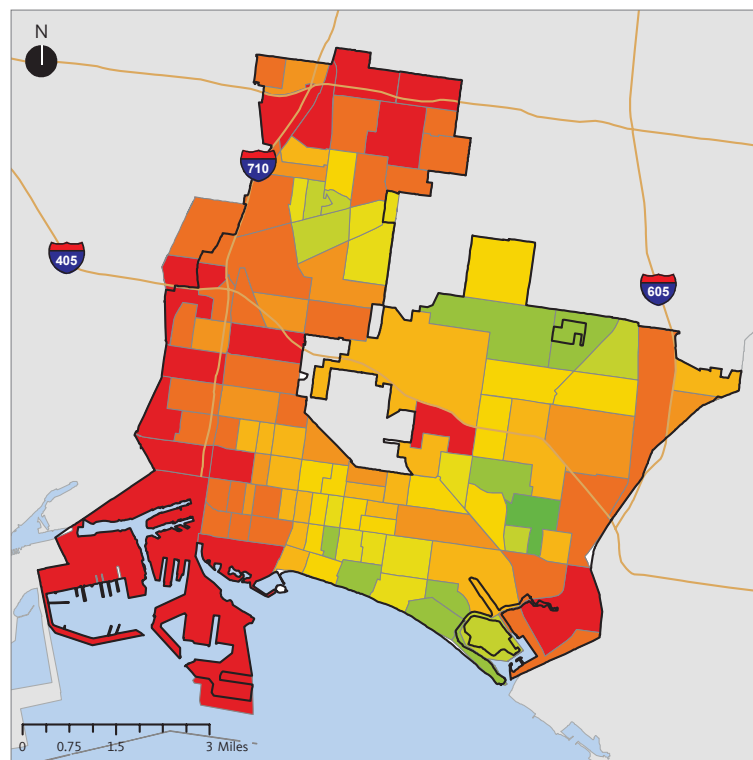
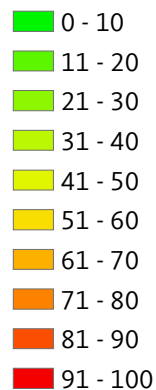
An examination of the quality of life for people of color in Long Beach reveals deep and persistent racial and economic inequities, cutting across many arenas. For example, health disparities, including rates of chronic disease, are greater for people of color than their White counterparts, and people of color are more exposed to the toxins and environmental hazards that contribute to health inequities, largely because they live in lower cost homes located near polluting industries.

Long Beach has some of the worst air pollution in the nation, caused in large part by the very industries and land uses that spurred the city's economy decades ago. Diesel exhaust from trucks, ships, and trains pose extreme health hazards, and the hazard is exacerbated by the wind patterns that push pollution

directly into the city. Oil refining has compromised water quality, and water quality problems are exacerbated by toxic runoff from the Los Angeles River that becomes trapped by breakwater in the bay, causing pollutants to accumulate. Long Beach is particularly susceptible to water pollution during rains because the Los Angeles and San Gabriel rivers empty into the ocean there and the breakwater jetties limit ocean circulation that would otherwise help disperse the pollution farther offshore. Exposure to toxins is compounded by the fact that housing that is affordable for low-income residents is typically adjacent to polluting industries, both because land costs are lower and because industries site their facilities more frequently in communities of color which lack the political power to protest them. All of this leads to low-income residents of color being more likely to be subjected to environmental hazards than high-income White residents.<sup>1</sup>

### Some Long Beach communities are burdened by a high concentration of pollutants.

CalEnviroScreen  
Pollution Burden Percentile  
by Census Tract



**Source:** California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, CalEnviroScreen 3.0, June 2018 update.

**Note:** The CalEnviroScreen 3.0 model is based on CalEPA's definition of cumulative impacts. The pollution burden score is made up of 12 pollution indicators related to exposure to contaminants (e.g., diesel emissions, drinking water contaminants, pesticide use) and environmental hazards (e.g., solid waste sites and facilities). The scores shown in the map reflect a statewide percentile ranking of pollution burden scores across all census tracts in California. A higher score indicates worse pollution outcomes. Methodology available here: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/scoring-model>.

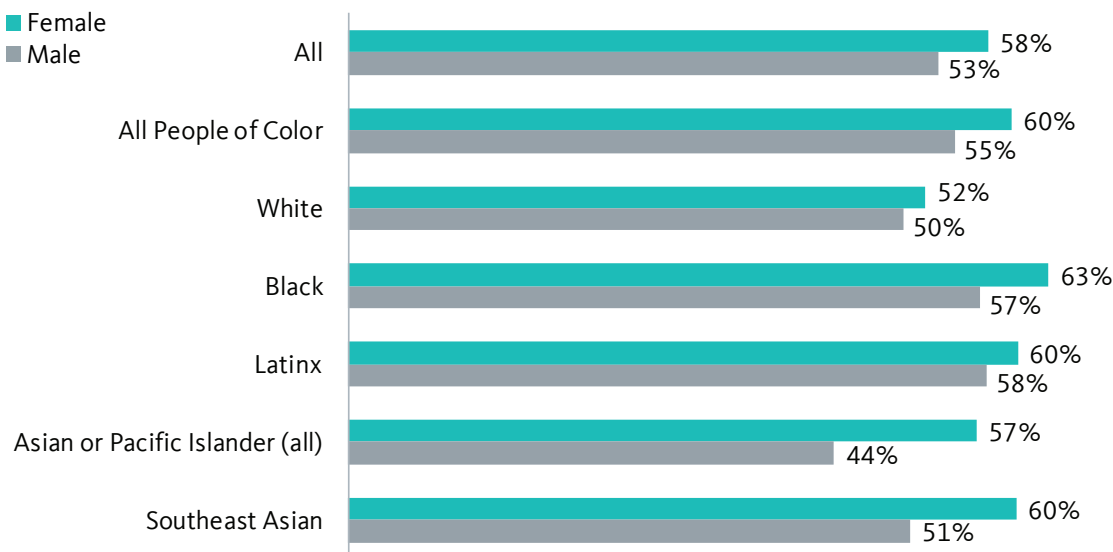
## Housing affordability is a major concern for low-income residents, particularly women of color

Long Beach is in the midst of a housing crisis that is hitting low-income residents the hardest. The extreme shortage of affordable housing is compounded by rampant gentrification. New housing is focused on attracting more affluent newcomers to the city, while long-term residents are being displaced, pushed out of their homes and out of the city.<sup>2</sup> The result is that low-income neighborhoods are rapidly changing, as both residential and commercial development goes upscale. The data indicate that women of color are hardest hit. Consider the data on those who are rent burdened—when renters pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing—by race and gender. Sixty-three percent

of Black women heads of household are rent burdened compared with 52 percent of White women heads of household. Although Asian or Pacific Islander households as a whole are less likely to be rent burdened compared with the average renter household, certain subgroups within the Asian or Pacific Islander community face greater challenges in housing affordability. For example, according to our analysis, two-thirds of Cambodian households are rent burdened. Women in Long Beach are also clustered in low-paying jobs, such as in the fast-food and hospitality industries. Low wages make it nearly impossible to pay escalating rents. Additionally, beyond their limited legal rights, renters have no protections against unreasonable rent increases or eviction without cause, which exacerbates housing insecurity. These data demonstrate the compounded burden of housing on Long Beach residents.

### Women heads of household are more likely to be rent burdened than men.

Rent Burden by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2016



**Source:** Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Universe includes all renter-occupied households with housing costs.

**Note:** Data represents a 2012 through 2016 average. Rent burden is a measure of housing affordability that looks at the proportion of renter households that are paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs (which include contract rent and utilities). No rent burden data by gender is shown for Native American or mixed/other households due to small sample size.

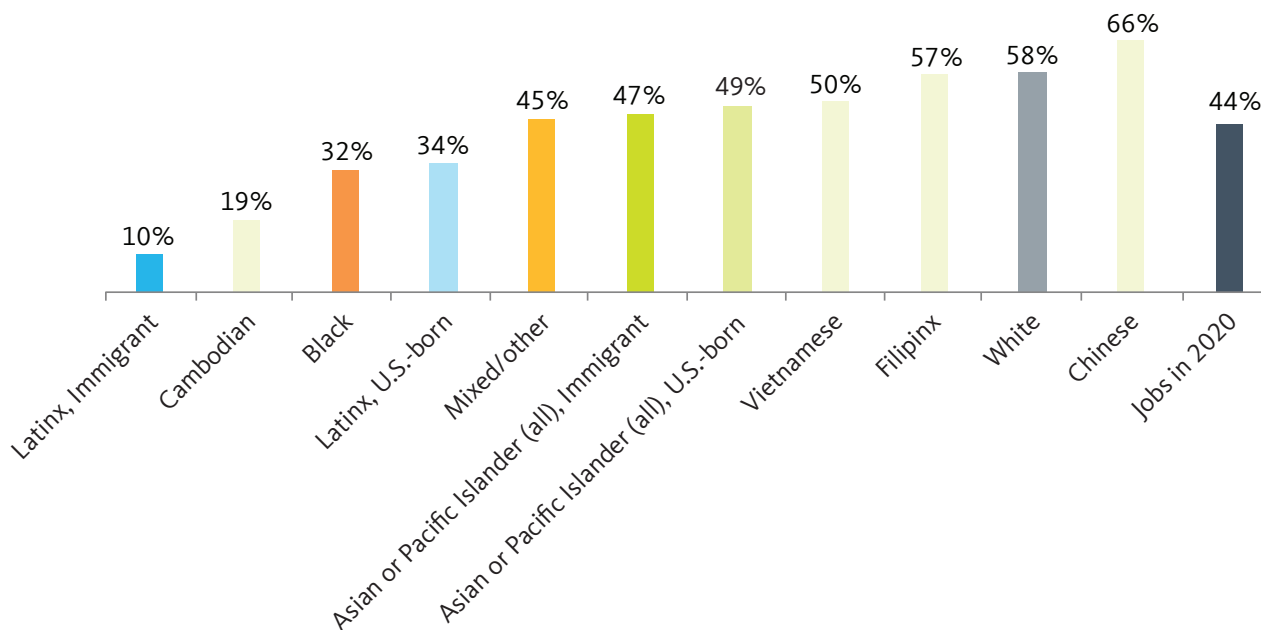
## Long Beach residents face barriers to economic security

Educational attainment also varies by race. An estimated 44 percent of jobs in California in 2020 will require at least an associate's degree, but only 34 percent of U.S.-born Latinx residents, 32 percent of Blacks, and 10 percent of Latinx immigrants hold an associate's degree or higher. Looking at the Asian or Pacific Islander population either born in the U.S. or born abroad, both groups have the education needed for the jobs of the future. These averages across large groups however may obscure differences and mask challenges faced by particular subgroups. For example, only about one in five persons of Cambodian ancestry (19 percent)—including

both immigrants and the U.S. born—hold at least an associate's degree, which is well below the average for all Asian or Pacific Islanders combined and underscores the challenges faced by specific communities. Moreover, education alone does not eliminate racial inequities. African Americans who have attained greater levels of education still face much higher levels of unemployment than other groups. Discrimination persists in the labor market: White applicants receive 36 percent more callbacks for jobs than African Americans with the same qualifications, and this has not improved in 25 years according to a national study.<sup>3</sup> Wage and employment inequities deepen the racial income gap and the racial wealth gap for African Americans in Long Beach, further entrenching inequality into subsequent generations.

### By 2020, an estimated 44 percent of jobs will require at least an associate's degree.

Share of Working-Age Population with an Associate's Degree or Higher by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, 2016 and Projected Share of Jobs that Require an Associate's Degree or Higher, 2020



**Sources:** Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce; Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Universe for education levels of workers includes all persons ages 25 through 64.

**Note:** Data for 2016 by race/ethnicity/nativity represents a 2012 through 2016 average and is at the city level; data on jobs in 2020 is at the state level. Data for some groups by race/ethnicity and nativity are not shown due to small sample size.

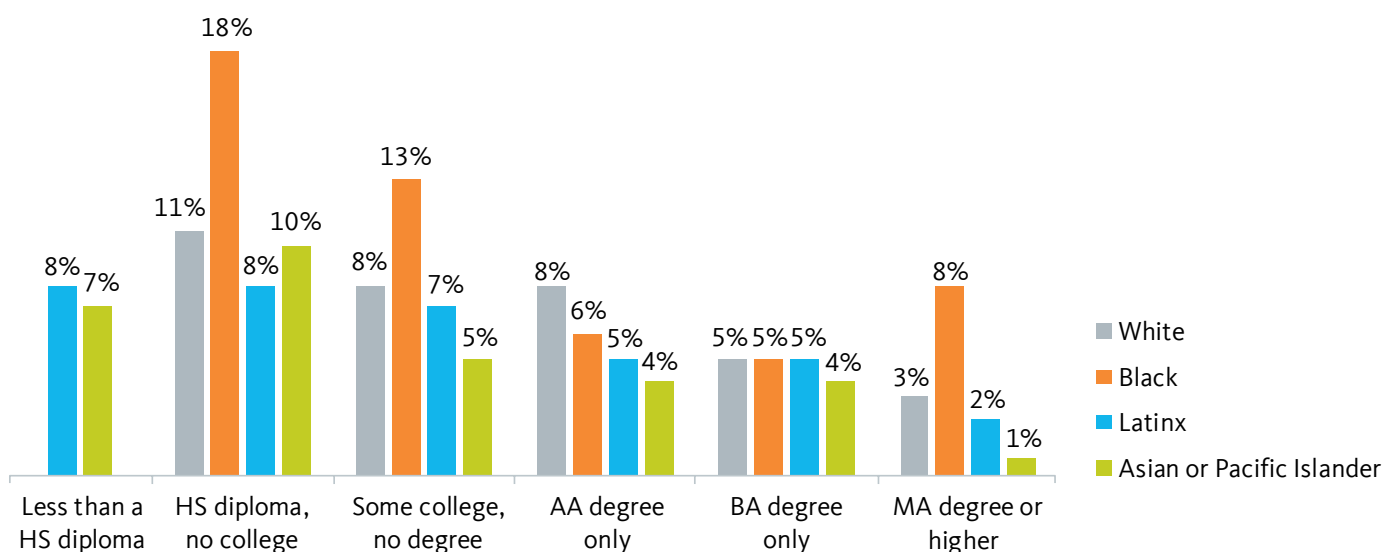


Wages also show broad gaps when viewed by racial/ethnic groups even with individuals who are employed. While Long Beach is experiencing robust job growth, the jobs that are being created are not going to the current low-income

population, which is predominantly made up of people of color, including immigrants. Like housing, the jobs that are being created are going to newcomers.<sup>4</sup>

### Racial inequities in unemployment and wages exist even for workers with advanced levels of education.

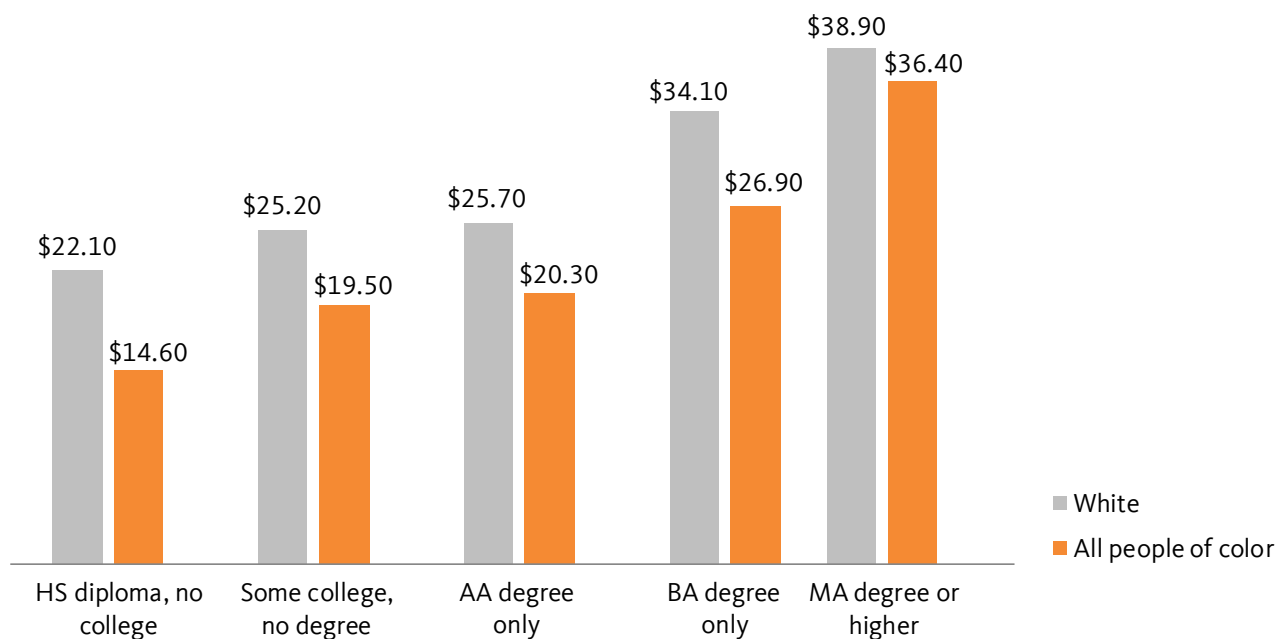
Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, 2016



**Source:** Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Universe includes the civilian noninstitutional labor force ages 25 through 64.

**Note:** Unemployment for Whites and Blacks with less than a high school diploma and for Native Americans and mixed/others at all education levels is excluded because of small sample size. Data represents a 2012 through 2016 average.

Median Hourly Wage by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, 2016



**Source:** Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Universe includes civilian noninstitutional full-time wage and salary workers ages 25 through 64.

**Note:** Data represents a 2012 through 2016 average. Values are in 2016 dollars.

## Moving Toward Economic Inclusion

The current level of inequity in Long Beach substantially hampers the city's ability to thrive. As people of color are the majority of the population, the city's prosperity hinges upon their well-being. It will take deliberate and intentional action to expand equity in Long Beach.

Several signs indicate that Long Beach is taking seriously the importance of an intentional focus on equity. In January, 2017, the city created an Office of Equity within the health and human services department, and charged it with focusing attention on equity and social justice, coordinating programs, and building capacity across the city government in racial and health equity. Also in 2017, the city adopted a [Blueprint for Economic Development](#)—a 10-year agenda for enhancing opportunity for the city's workers and entrepreneurs, and includes a section outlining strategies for economic inclusion as a result of the advocacy of community organizations and residents. The blueprint was followed by the [Everyone In](#) initiative, launched by Rex Richardson, a member of the city council and former vice mayor, in partnership with the Los Angeles Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). Its goal is to promote economic inclusion and dismantle barriers that have caused racial and gender wealth gaps.

### The city faces equity challenges and opportunities

Many community stakeholders are aware of the imperative for action. Our interviews with community residents, activists, advocates, elected officials, and civic leaders about the city's challenges as well as opportunities for overcoming them, surfaced the following issues.

- Intractable challenges have plagued the African American population of Long Beach for decades in every aspect of life, including health, housing, employment, entrepreneurship, and policing/criminal justice.
- The expanding population of immigrants from around the globe gives rise to a host of issues, including the need for meaningful language access and relief from the constant fear of deportation.

- Long Beach is home to the largest Cambodian community outside of Cambodia. Through interviews with community members, we learned that the Cambodian community faces particular challenges for full inclusion including high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among children from the stress of resettlement, fear of deportation and family separation, and lack of access to capital among Cambodian entrepreneurs.
- The need for youth development, from early childhood through young adulthood, is imperative. Specifically needed are investments from public and private resources in building pathways for youth of color in education and employment, and investments in their future as opposed to criminal justice approaches.
- The need to address the housing crisis sweeping the city is urgent; specifically, gentrification that is spurring displacement of people of color and low-income residents who cannot afford steep increases in rent and home prices must be addressed.
- Long-standing harm caused by environmental hazards is affecting communities of color and low-income neighborhoods more than others as people of color in Long Beach have a higher pollution index than Whites (an exposure index of 71 versus 66, respectively.)
- Employment opportunities with good wages and working conditions are lacking for people of color and low-income workers. Particular industries, such as hotels and restaurants, must pay a living wage. Further, better paying jobs with career potential, such as union construction jobs created by the citywide project labor agreements, should be directed to local and disadvantaged residents, rather than to newcomers to the city.
- In Long Beach, many people belong to more than one group that is marginalized, and that overlap can compound inequity. City leaders should craft policy strategies to take into account the cumulative impact of various forms of discrimination. For example, LGBTQ youth might also be youth of color, seniors may be immigrants, people with disabilities may be people of color, and of course people may simultaneously belong to multiple groups. Health-care access and services, including mental health and substance abuse treatment, are areas where outcomes could improve with more attention on intersecting dynamics of structural inclusion.

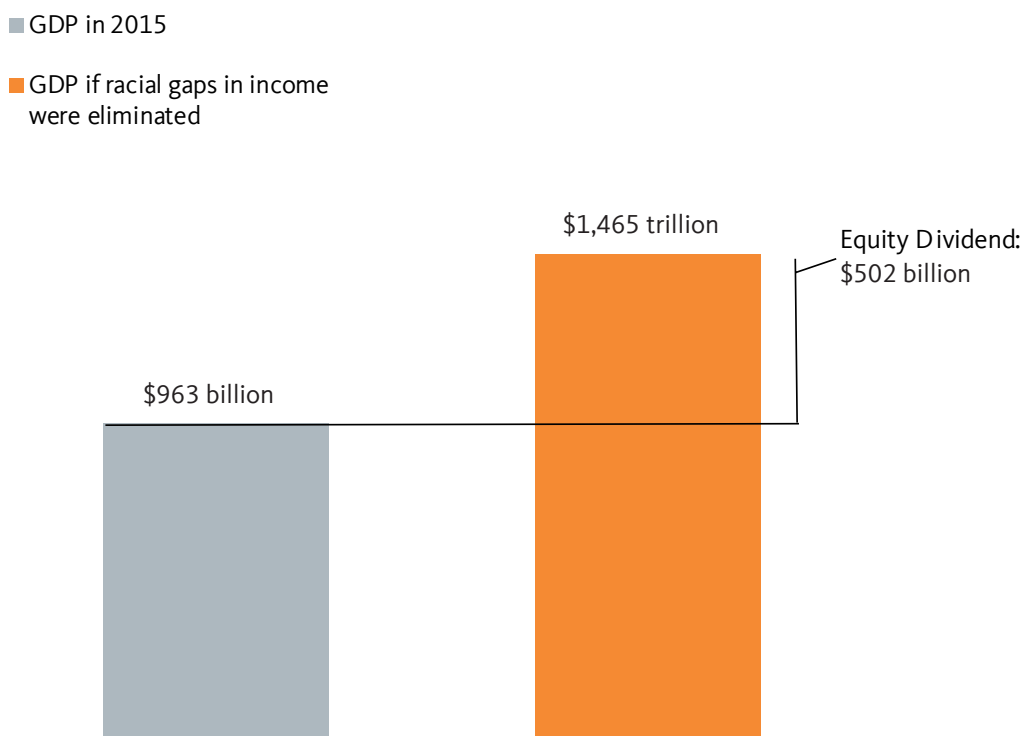
- The relationships are frayed between law enforcement and communities of color and immigrant communities. The police department has a tarnished legacy of racial bias dating back historically to an alleged connection to the Ku Klux Klan. More recently, tensions have emerged between police and African American, Latinx, and Asian youth, and rates of incarceration and police shootings tend to be higher than average for these youth. Instead of tough-on-crime tactics, the focus should be on decarceration and approaches that combat racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Stronger relationships are also needed between police and immigrant businesses.
- Shifts to more inclusive land uses are rebutted by those who live in wealthier, predominately White areas of the city and those who advocate to “maintain the character of the neighborhood,” a character that has been forged through race- and class-based policies such as redlining.

## The economic benefits of equity

The city’s growing, diverse population can be a major economic asset, if its leaders invest in ensuring that all of its residents can access good jobs and contribute their talent and creativity to building a strong economy. Researchers are recognizing that growth and prosperity are hampered by inequality, while racial and economic inclusion foster robust growth and mobility.<sup>5</sup> Long Beach is a crucial part of the Los Angeles regional economy and labor market. According to our analysis, if there were no racial disparities in income, the region’s GDP would have been \$502 billion higher in 2015. The city has demonstrated economic resilience, but persistent inequities for its communities of color and low-income residents are a threat to future prosperity.

### The Los Angeles region’s GDP would have been \$502 billion higher in 2015 if its racial gaps in income were closed.

Actual GDP and Estimated GDP Without Racial Gaps in Income, Los Angeles Region, 2015



**Sources:** Bureau of Economic Analysis; Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.

**Note:** Data is for the Los Angeles metro area, including Los Angeles and Orange counties. The “equity dividend” is calculated using data from IPUMS for 2011 through 2015 and is then applied to estimated GDP in 2015. See the “Data and methods” section of the full profile for details. Data is unavailable for the city of Long Beach; however, Long Beach is a part of the broader Los Angeles regional economy: 77 percent of workers living in Long Beach were employed in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan region in 2015, according to the U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data.

## Policy Recommendations: Advancing Racial and Economic Inclusion in Long Beach

Implementation of strategic policy measures can spur equitable growth. Yet, it is not an easy process and will often require that existing policies that have acted as barriers to opportunity and inclusion will need to be acknowledged and dismantled. The experiences of African Americans in Long Beach illustrate the point. African American community leaders have repeatedly and consistently called for action to address discrimination in arenas such as education, employment, housing, and policing, and to produce data documenting the extent of the disparities.<sup>6</sup> Despite these efforts, economic outcomes for African Americans have not improved, in large measure because of how entrenched racial discrimination is in public policies and private practices. Consider the connection between homeownership and the racial wealth gap. African American residents in Long Beach historically experienced steep barriers to homeownership posed by government policies such as mortgage redlining. When they have been able to purchase homes, their investments have been compromised by public and private disinvestment that caused the value of their homes to be artificially suppressed. Further, racial discrimination in financial services made borrowing to make home repairs difficult. And, during the mortgage crisis in the mid-2000s, many people of color were targeted by exploitative subprime lenders, only to lose their homes to foreclosure. The result is that homeownership, which serves as the primary vehicle for building wealth—especially for low- and moderate-income families—has not worked for African Americans. Effective measures that can immediately improve the circumstances of African Americans are long overdue.

Remediating the harm done by discriminatory policies, and creating a new paradigm to advance equity will take concerted action. An added sense of urgency is looming as Long Beach begins to see signs of increasing prosperity. The alarming surge in displacement is giving rise to growing trepidation that current residents will not be around to reap the benefits of future prosperity. It is incumbent upon city leadership to ensure that economic development policies foster inclusion, and to make sure that those currently living within Long Beach are the priority. Transparency in decision-making, along with increased participation by community residents and accountability for government agencies and elected officials can begin to remediate this concern.

Notwithstanding the challenges inherent in effective policymaking, promising practices are emerging. Below we summarize methods other cities are undertaking, as well as some home-grown strategies that have the potential to spur economic growth in Long Beach.

### Three examples that expand business opportunities through equitable procurement and contracting strategies

Two cities that have undertaken efforts to advance equitable procurement and contracting include Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which established its Office of Economic Opportunity, and St. Paul, Minnesota, which created an online platform to streamline bidding. The Los Angeles County Contracting Centers were launched recently to promote awareness of contracting opportunities within the county, and includes [Procurement Technical Assistance Centers](#).

## Grow good, accessible jobs that provide pathways to the middle class

Good jobs that are accessible to workers of color and other disconnected workers form the bedrock of strong local economies. Below are policies targeted at growing more quality jobs and transforming existing low-wage jobs into good, living-wage jobs.

- **Ensure equitable contracting and procurement.** Cities should develop comprehensive strategies to achieve equity in contracting and procurement, which could include setting equity targets for minority-owned and women-owned business enterprises and disadvantaged business enterprises, streamlining certification processes, breaking up large contracts into smaller subcontracts, helping subcontractors grow into prime contractors, and removing onerous financial burdens for small businesses. See the [PolicyLink All-in Cities Policy Toolkit](#) to learn more.
- **Create project labor agreements (PLAs)** that maximize every opportunity to increase employment for community members who have been disproportionately marginalized and impacted by unemployment. The city's current PLA could be strengthened in the following ways to ensure that local and disadvantaged residents benefit from union jobs. (1) "Local" should be defined as the city of Long Beach, not all of Los Angeles and Orange counties. (2) The city should adopt a local hiring policy to ensure programmatic details make local and disadvantaged hiring a reality. (3) The city should require the use of an independent, third-party, nonprofit jobs coordinator to assist with PLA projects.
- **Strengthen the city's first source hiring policy** so that local and disadvantaged residents benefit from non-construction businesses that receive city assistance.
- **Ensure jobs provide living wages**, particularly in tourism-related fields such as restaurant and hotel work.
- **Create worker owned co-operatives**, focusing on local businesses and legacy companies.<sup>7</sup>

## New York City creates employment and entrepreneurship opportunities through its worker owned cooperative development fund

As a result of advocacy efforts by a coalition of community groups, New York City created a cooperative development fund to provide financial and technical assistance for new and existing co-ops. In 2014, the city council passed a budget that included \$1.2 million for the fund. Over the first year of the initiative, 21 new cooperatives were launched across the city, enabling 141 workers to gain employment and business ownership. Overall, through its extensive outreach, education, and training services, the initiative reached nearly 1,300 entrepreneurs and community members. In 2015, the city council invested an additional \$2.1 million to expand the initiative. As of June 2015, the [Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative \(WCBDI\)](#) reported that another 19 new worker cooperatives were in the pipeline, nearly tripling the number of worker cooperatives in the city since January 2014.



## Increase the economic security and mobility of vulnerable families and workers

Economic security—having enough money to cover basic needs and enough savings to weather setbacks and invest for the future—is critical to the health and well-being of individuals and families. Below are policies focused on putting low-income families and workers on a path to economic security.

- **Establish small-business incubators that foster start-up businesses by supplying resources**, such as office space, initial capital investment, and networking, along with small-business development, particularly targeted to people of color and immigrants.
- **Create apprenticeship programs**, which can expand the city's skilled workforce by providing on-the-job training and education to participants seeking to learn a trade.
- **Ensure access to capital and micro lending by building upon Long Beach's new designation as a Kiva city**, an initiative facilitated and partially funded by the Los Angeles Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). The Kiva initiative provides 0-percent interest, no-fee loans to entrepreneurs in Long Beach to help them stabilize or build their businesses. This can be crucial for business operators who lack access to conventional sources of capital, or who have been denied financing due to credit issues.<sup>8</sup>
- **Provide debt reduction assistance**, particularly for student loan debt that can interfere with the pursuit of higher education.
- **Establish community land trusts and other cooperative ownership opportunities** to allow for wealth generation and home ownership opportunities for those who typically find homeownership out of reach.
- **Pass worker "replacement" measures that cultivate a local workforce** that will be prepared to take over jobs as current workers retire, especially jobs in government and public agencies (i.e., airport, seaport, and public utilities). Long Beach is facing substantial turnover as its public sector workforce retires. The city can take advantage of this circumstance and prioritize connecting residents who are typically underemployed and unemployed to these jobs, particularly African Americans and youth of color.<sup>9</sup>

## Implement housing and anti-displacement policies and strategies

Low-income residents and people of color are being hard-hit by the housing crisis in Long Beach. The rapid rise in housing costs, the shortage of affordable housing, and the increase in displacement have created an urgent need for renter protections and anti-displacement policies. Advocates and city leaders should take steps to protect homeowners and the investments they have made in their homes, and expand the ability of low-income residents and people of color to become homeowners within the city. Below are several strategies that can provide relief and enable low-income residents, particularly people of color and seniors, to remain in Long Beach.

### Tenant protections and affordable housing production

- Enact a moratorium on rent increases until a comprehensive policy can be enacted.
- Rent stabilization is a local measure that limits the frequency and amount of rent increases, and gives tenants a level of certainty that allows them to plan for higher rents. Further, keeping rents lower on existing housing increases the likelihood that tenants can remain in place and will not contribute to rising levels of homelessness.
- Just cause eviction requires that landlords have a reason to evict, cuts down on arbitrary evictions, and makes it less likely that evictions will be motivated by the desire for ever higher rents.
- Anti-harassment ordinances protect tenants who have been harassed by their landlords and are left with few options but to leave their homes. Cities that have enacted anti-harassment ordinances include Oakland, San Francisco, East Palo Alto, Santa Monica, and West Hollywood.
- Inclusionary housing is a longer term strategy that helps increase the supply of affordable housing. Construction of new market-rate housing can be tied to requirements to set aside some percentage of the units built for occupancy by low-income or moderate-income residents. Over 800 jurisdictions in the U.S. now utilize some form of inclusionary housing.<sup>10</sup> In Long Beach, this policy should be targeted to those most in need—very low-income and low-income households.
- No-net-loss policies for affordable housing establish replacement requirements for affordable units lost to new development. Affordable units could be defined by tenant incomes and/or rent levels.

- Commercial linkage fees are charged to developers per square foot of new commercial, retail, hotel, and industrial developments to fund the development of affordable housing.
- Affordable housing bonds create supportive housing for homeless populations and rental housing for extremely low-income and very low-income households; this is similar to Proposition HHH in the city of Los Angeles.
- Right to counsel for tenants facing eviction ensures that legal representation is provided for all residential tenants—Los Angeles City and County are considering this proposal and San Francisco and New York have signed this proposal into law.

### Protections for homeowners

- Provide financial assistance to existing homeowners using city-sponsored loans and grants such as “soft” second and repair loans. These products can be low interest or deferred interest, and can be targeted to residents in zip codes that have been previously redlined or are disadvantaged.
- First-time homebuyer programs provide information about how to navigate a home purchase, such as a HUD-certified homebuyer education center.
- Down payment assistance loans can provide help to Long Beach residents seeking to become homeowners.
- Adoption of a housing bond can finance homeowner assistance strategies for those most in need.

## Make a strategic investment in equitable infrastructure

Strategic investments in infrastructure—a city’s physical facilities and systems, such as water, energy, bridges, roads, communication, and more—are a powerful way to generate economic opportunity for low-income people and communities of color. A number of equitable infrastructure investments could be undertaken in Long Beach, including the two highlighted below.

- **Public transportation.** Cities that prioritize equity recognize the importance of effective and accessible public transportation. Long Beach has the opportunity to expand transit access using a variety of methods, including restoring the downtown shuttle that was heavily used by both seniors and workers in the hotel and entertainment district. It could also provide low-cost or no-cost transit to specific populations, such as youth, students, and seniors. A promising strategy being used in Seattle, Washington, offers reduced fares for youth, along with no-cost fares for students.<sup>11</sup> The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority recently incorporated an equity platform into its long-range transportation plan and has committed to partnering to address issues of gentrification, displacement, and affordable housing, and to provide internal equity training and education.<sup>12</sup>
- **Interstate 710.** Decades of controversy about environmental justice issues in Long Beach that stem from exposure to pollution from transportation and goods movement, specifically near the I-710, must be resolved. Community members and advocates have created a proposal that would improve the freeway in a manner that helps, not harms, community health. Recommendations include 1) limiting the expansion of the freeway’s footprint; 2) including a zero-emissions freight corridor; 3) no displacement of homes, homeless shelters, community facilities, and businesses; 4) local and targeted hiring; 5) improvements to the LA River Bike and Pedestrian Path; and 6) increased service and low-cost or no-cost fares for public transit along the corridor.

## Provide consistent support to ensure that youth reach their full potential

Creating an environment where young people can thrive will benefit the entire Long Beach region. Education as well as a focus on programs that foster youth development will be crucial to closing the gap in opportunity that continues to plague young people of color.

- **Education.** Current residents of Long Beach will need to be prepared to fill the well-paying jobs now being created. Lower levels of educational attainment for people of color in the city signal a need for deliberate action to ensure that African Americans, Latinx people, Asians or Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are being adequately prepared and have the necessary resources to successfully complete high school, college, and/or job training. Given the size and diversity of the city's youth population, (86 percent or 97,000 of the city's 113,000 youth are youth of color) their ability to thrive merits focused attention. In addition to high school, job training, and college, early childhood education is fundamental to putting youth on the pathway to success. Local policy goals for supporting very young children and their families are articulated in the [City of Long Beach, California Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan](#) and in sections of the [Building Healthy Communities: Long Beach Community Action Plan](#).
- **Youth development.** Advocates working in Long Beach are unified in their understanding of the issues that youth are contending with, including breaking the school-to-prison/ deportation pipeline, job training, transportation, homelessness, and improved education. To pay for prevention and support services, advocates are urging that funds be redirected from criminal justice and law enforcement and instead applied to programs for young people of color and youth from impacted areas. The [Invest in Youth campaign](#) involves a broad range of community groups, advocates, and activists who are allied in their efforts to deepen understanding of the need for investment in the city's youngest residents.

## Expand democracy and the right to the city

Equitable cities are characterized by an active and engaged population, working on a broad spectrum of policy measures. Below are approaches that can strengthen opportunities for communities of color to be participants and leaders in the policymaking process.

- **Budgets that reflect local values.** “Priority-based budgeting” or “values-driven budgeting” is a strategy that restructures the budget process by fostering participation from a broad spectrum of community members, yielding a budget that is focused on community priorities. A campaign to adopt a [People's Budget](#) is underway in Long Beach.
- **Comprehensive language access.** In a city as diverse and multilingual as Long Beach, an inclusive language policy is essential to civic involvement as well as public health and safety. While Long Beach has adopted a language access policy, it will take additional structural funding to strengthen it and ensure its implementation across all city departments and all aspects of city services, including long-term signage and translation as opposed to on an annual basis. Further, the program could be expanded to include Mandarin and Vietnamese, languages spoken in the community but for which services may not be available. Currently, Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog are covered for translation and interpretation services under the city's language access policy.

## Examples of where participatory budgeting has made policymaking more inclusive

Cities such as [Boulder, Colorado](#), and [Toledo, Ohio](#), are incorporating transparency, accountability, and meaningful participation by community residents into the formulation of their budget priorities. Several California cities, such as Sacramento and Salinas, are also using priority-based budgeting tools. Visit the [Center for Priority Based Budgeting](#) to learn more.

- **Transparent and equitable governance.** Robust participation in democracy requires that residents have access to relevant information and open lines of communication with government representatives and decision makers. Long Beach uses the council-manager form of government, wherein authority is divided between an elected city council and an appointed city manager. It can be difficult for community members to gain accountability over decision makers who are not elected. Further, although there is some degree of racial diversity among the Long Beach City Council, racial diversity of decision makers and even key city leaders, such as the police chief and the head of the port, may not translate to policies that reflect the needs of low-income communities and communities of color in Long Beach. It is important for city leadership to work proactively to develop a greater understanding of the needs of low-income communities and communities of color, and to achieve greater diversity in staff at the offices of the city manager and other appointed city offices. The recently created Office of Equity is a promising step toward building these bridges and its power should be supported, adequately funded, and strengthened.

## Ensure just policing and a just court system

Cities across the nation are contending with biased policing and discriminatory criminal justice systems. Reducing the use of excessive force and ensuring police accountability are areas of concern for community advocates. Below are important strategies to pursue.

- **Decrease the use of force and officer-involved shootings.** Police departments can prioritize sanctity of life by requiring de-escalation of conflict and attempting other means before resorting to force; mandating proportionality, where the degree of force used is proportionate to the immediate risk faced by the officer and/or the public; providing specialized training related to youth development to improve relations between law enforcement and youth; and partnering with mental health professionals to coordinate responses to mental health crises.
- **Prioritize greater transparency and accountability.** Beginning in 2019, Long Beach residents will be able to take advantage of new laws at the state level that will provide greater transparency in incidents involving the police and the general public. California laws SB 1421, effective January 1, 2019, and AB 748, effective July 1, 2019, would give the public access to police records for cases involving officer-involved shootings, use of excessive force, and confirmed incidences of sexual assault or dishonesty by police or correctional officers, and would require agencies to provide video and audio recordings of these incidents when available.
- **Prioritize positive youth development and prevention.** Community advocates in Long Beach have stressed the need for youth development programs and are concerned that the city's budget directs significant resources to law enforcement instead of to proactive prevention programs for youth. Other jurisdictions have analyzed police funding and learned that the revenue expended on law enforcement comes from fines and fees collected from those convicted of minor traffic violations and crimes. African Americans, Latinx people, and other people of color are disproportionately represented in the population of those involved in the criminal justice system; therefore, the burden of these fines and fees falls most heavily upon them. Alternative approaches to financing the cost of policing warrant further consideration.

## Conclusion

It is heartening that so many sectors within Long Beach are determined to work toward advancing equity. Advocacy groups, government agencies, elected officials, civic leaders, the business community, and philanthropy are demonstrating by both their words and their actions their commitment to building a community that benefits all residents of the city. This is an important step, and must be followed by concrete actions that will result in a growth model that is driven by equity—just and fair inclusion into a society in which everyone can participate and prosper. Investments in educational and economic opportunities along with equitable policies developed in partnership with communities of color will be essential to ensure that the fastest-growing segments of the population are ready to lead Long Beach into the future.



## Notes

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- 6 Alex J. Norman and Lydia A. Hollie. *The State of Black Long Beach: A Call to Action for Black Agenda*, 2013. <http://www.bhclongbeach.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/StateofBlackLongBeach2013.pdf>.
- 7 Project Equity grows community wealth through employee buy-outs of successful local businesses resulting in employee ownership. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.project-equity.org/>.
- 8 Kiva empowers small businesses through capital and community support. To learn more about Kiva in Long Beach, please visit: <https://us.kiva.org/longbeach/>.
- 9 The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) has produced a guide that aids in planning for succession, the State Health Agency Succession Planning Guide, available at [http://www.astho.org/uploadedFiles/10\\_Programs/110\\_Workforce\\_Development/DownloadAsset.pdf](http://www.astho.org/uploadedFiles/10_Programs/110_Workforce_Development/DownloadAsset.pdf). San Mateo County also developed a program to address the changes in its workforce. This resource is available at <https://hr.smcgov.org/sites/hr.smcgov.org/files/documents/files/WorkforceSuccessionMgmtPrgm.pdf>.
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## Acknowledgments

PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) at the University of Southern California are grateful to Citi Community Development for their generous support of this project. The equitable growth profile of Long Beach, California, explores the long-term demographic and economic trends of the city and dozens of equity indicators disaggregated by race and ethnicity as well as gender, nativity, education, and income, and focuses on barriers as well as opportunities to foster inclusion. The profile is designed to be a resource for all seeking to enhance prosperity for everyone in Long Beach, including advocacy groups, government agencies, elected officials, funders, business and civic leaders, and more. This summary report accompanies the profile and highlights leading indicators and offers policy recommendations.

The profile was written by Jamila Henderson at PolicyLink; the data, charts, and maps were prepared by Justin Scoggins at PERE, Jamila Henderson at PolicyLink, and Sabrina Kim at PERE; and Sarah Treuhaft at PolicyLink assisted with editing while Rosamaria Carrillo at PolicyLink helped with formatting and design. The summary was written by Mary Lee at PolicyLink with editing assistance from Kim Tabari at PERE.

In addition to the data analysis contained in the profile, the summary report draws upon insights that were shared during more than 20 interviews conducted with local community leaders and residents. Their comments helped shape the policy recommendations included in the summary.

While the profile and summary do not exhaustively address every challenge facing Long Beach, nor every asset available in the region, our hope is that these products can help guide efforts to build an equitable and inclusive city. We would like to give a special thanks to the following groups that participated in interviews, attended meetings, or provided feedback on the profile and summary:

Advancement Project California  
Cal State Long Beach  
Early Childhood Education-City Health Department  
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice  
Economic & Policy Impact Center  
Housing Long Beach  
Human Relations Commission  
Khmer Girls in Action  
Latinos in Action

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Los Angeles  
Long Beach City College  
Long Beach City Council, District 1  
Long Beach City Council, District 5  
Long Beach City Council, District 9  
Long Beach Community Action Partnership  
Long Beach Development Services Department  
Long Beach Forward  
Long Beach Gray Panthers  
Long Beach Grocery Co-op  
Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition  
Long Beach Office of Equity  
Long Beach Residents Empowered  
Peer Health Exchange  
Power 4 Youth  
Restore I.N.K.  
The California Endowment  
The LGBTQ Center Long Beach  
United Cambodian Community

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