



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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A Portrait of Los Angeles County Reveals Large Gaps in Well-being across Location, Gender, and Race within Los Angeles County

New report by Measure of America uses the American Human Development Index to examine 106 cities and unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County; the report also identifies trends and recommendations for progress.

San Marino has the highest Los Angeles County score on the index, a value of 9.43 out of 10; Florence Graham has the lowest score, 2.44. Within the City of Los Angeles, Bel Air - Beverly Crest tops the rankings with 9.51, while Southeast Los Angeles scores 2.26; Latinos face tremendous challenges in both education and earnings yet have the second-highest life expectancy of the six major racial and ethnic groups in the study.

NEW YORK — [Measure of America](#), a project of the Social Science Research Council, today released *A Portrait of Los Angeles County (Portrait of LAC)*, a comprehensive report that measures well-being across race, place, and gender in Los Angeles (LA) County. Using the American Human Development (HD) Index—a standardized metric created by Measure of America that combines health, education, and earnings data—*Portrait of LAC* examines 106 cities and unincorporated areas in LA County as well as thirty-five community plan areas within the City of Los Angeles. The data is further broken down by race and ethnicity and by gender to reveal critical gaps and areas for improvement. The report, developed in collaboration with LA County departments and the Southern California Grantmakers, will help policymakers, businesses, philanthropists, and advocates identify areas of need and tailor interventions accordingly, building the capabilities people need to seize opportunities and live up to their full potential.

LA County Supervisor and incoming Board Chair Sheila Kuehl said, “This newer and smarter way of measuring well-being will allow us to understand how income, health and education all intersect to contribute to whether you and your community experience well-being or live at a great disadvantage. We knew there were grave disparities across the County, but now we have a more reliable way of geographically pinpointing the areas of greatest need.”

“The County has been prioritizing data collection and analysis to enable us to make smarter decisions to support the well-being of our 10 million residents. This report provides us with a portrait that can begin

to immediately inform County decision-making,” said LA County Supervisor and outgoing Board Chair Mark Ridley-Thomas.

“While metrics like GDP measure how the economy is doing, the American HD Index measures how people are doing, offering a more accurate and nuanced perspective on opportunity and well-being,” said Kristen Lewis, co-director of Measure of America and co-author of *A Portrait of LAC*. “This study shows that some groups of Angelenos have the highest levels of well-being in the United States—and others have some of the lowest.”

On the ten-point HD Index scale, the highest- and lowest-scoring communities are separated by an astounding seven points. In LA County, San Marino, Manhattan Beach, and Palos Verdes Estates top the list, all scoring over 9.3 on the HD Index. Lennox, East Rancho Dominguez, and Florence-Graham each score lower than 2.7. Within the City of Los Angeles, broken down by community plan area, the gaps are even larger. Bel Air-Beverly Crest and Brentwood-Pacific Palisades are on top with scores of 9.51 and 9.24, respectively, and Southeast LA is at the bottom with 2.26.

Among major racial and ethnic groups, Angelenos of Asian origin have the highest score at 7.37, while Latinos have the lowest, 4.32. The report recognizes that neither of these groups is homogenous, however, and so also presents scores based on country of origin to highlight inter-group differences. Among Asians, Indians have the highest score and Cambodians the lowest. US-born Latinos have more education and earn more than their foreign-born counterparts. Although black Angelenos earn more than the county median, their health outcomes are concerning; a black baby born today in Los Angeles County can expect to live eleven fewer years than an Asian baby and over eight-and-a-half years fewer than a Latino baby. Adding in gender, Asian women have the highest well-being score, 7.43, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander women have the lowest, 3.70.

The HD Index was adapted from the UN’s Human Development Index, which was designed as an alternative to measuring well-being solely using economic indicators. Like the UN’s index, the American HD Index measures how people are doing across three critical categories that shape individuals’ access to opportunity and quality of life—health, education, and income.

“*A Portrait of Los Angeles County* is designed not only to measure well-being and reveal critical gaps in opportunity, but also to provide a base to inform future policies and programs and to assess progress moving forward,” said Sarah Burd-Sharps, Co-Director of Measure of America and Co-Author of *A Portrait of LAC*. “Thanks to the generous support of our partners and donors, we see great potential for positive change in LA County and are excited to take the information gleaned from this report and challenge ourselves to achieve better outcomes for all.”

Educational Disparity between, and within, Demographic Groups

LA County’s Education Index score (4.96) falls slightly below that of the United States as a whole (5.11), with one in five adult Angelenos lacking a high school diploma. Latinos in particular face steep educational challenges, with four in ten adults lacking high school diplomas. Limited educational attainment contributes to low earnings among Latinos.

Asians broadly surpass the average LA County and US Education Index scores. There is, however, considerable variation among Asian subgroups. More than 90 percent of LA County Korean, Indian, Japanese, and Filipino adults completed high school, compared with fewer than 70 percent of

Cambodian and Vietnamese adults. Large disparities also separate foreign-born and US-born Latinos in LA County. Less than half of foreign-born Latino adults hold high school diplomas, compared to more than 80 percent of US-born Latinos.

Minorities, Women Face Uphill Battle for Income Equality

Mirroring education metrics, white and Asian Angelenos earn significantly more than their black, Latino, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander counterparts. Median personal earnings likewise vary sharply across the county; in Palos Verdes Estates, median personal earnings exceed \$80,000, while in Southeast Los Angeles, typical earnings are under \$17,000 annually.

Income gaps between women and men in LA County are also particularly salient. Despite women outscoring men on the overall HD Index as well as in health and education metrics, men earn more than women across every racial and ethnic group. This gender wage gap is most pronounced between white men and women; white women typically earn \$15,000 less per year than their male counterparts. The gender wage gap hurts LA County families, as one in four LA County households with children is headed by a single mother.

The Latino Health Paradox

While average life expectancy in LA County exceeds the national average by nearly three years, significant disparities exist within the county. Asians enjoy the longest life expectancies in LA County, living an average of 87.3 years, nearly a decade longer than NHOPI and black Angelenos. LA County Latinos outlive every racial and ethnic group other than Asians, despite having some of the lowest educational outcomes and earnings. This contradiction is known as the Latino health paradox.

Neighborhood conditions are strongly associated with health and well-being. Thirteen of the lowest-scoring communities in the county are clustered together along the I-710, a major commercial artery connecting the Long Beach port to railyards and distribution centers in the middle of the county; roughly 260,000 cars and 40,000 diesel trucks travel this route every day.

Looking Ahead – Reducing Disparities and Increasing Wellbeing:

Portrait of LAC culminates in a call for a common goal of increasing the overall LA County HD Index score by one point by 2025. The report outlines ambitious but attainable benchmarks for health, education, and income in order to reach this goal.

Health:

- Increase LA County life expectancy at birth by six months from 82.1 to 82.6 years.
- Increase life expectancy at birth of black, NHOPI, and Native American residents—groups whose current life expectancies sit below 77 years—to at least 80 years.

Education:

- Increase school enrollment and educational attainment by 10 percent.
- Focus enrollment and attainment policies and programs on the lowest-scoring areas of the county, with particular attention to Latino families.

Earnings:

- Lift LA County median personal income by \$8,000, from \$30,645 to \$38,645.
- Lift earnings in the lowest-scoring areas of LA County from \$19,000 to \$27,000.

- Narrow gender wage gap across all racial and ethnic groups.

The report concludes by recommending ten high-value investment areas, such as reducing the toll of violence and trauma, investing in high-quality early care and education for infants and toddlers, expanding affordable housing, addressing racial and ethnic disparities, and helping young people graduate high school and transition to adulthood.

L.A. Counts, funded by the California Community Foundation and major supporter of *Portrait of LAC*, is launching a new free, open-source platform of data resources. *Portrait of LAC* will serve as the platform's first featured story and as an example of how data can be used to assess the state of LA County and identify key areas of need.

"We are proud to launch the L.A. Counts website alongside the release of *A Portrait of Los Angeles County* because the data and stories it tells brings change-makers together to advocate on behalf of L.A.," said John E. Kobara, Chief Operating Officer at the California Community Foundation. "*Portrait of LAC* embodies our mission to empower data practitioners, civic activists, policymakers and philanthropists to continue—and in some cases begin—the journey of using data to investigate the unmet and underserved needs of L.A. County."

A Portrait of Los Angeles County was a collaborative effort between Measure of America and partners that include Southern California Grantmakers and the Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection, Department of Children and Family Services, and Department of Public Health. It was made possible with funding from the Annenberg Foundation, BCM Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, California Community Foundation, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, Citi Community Development, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, Leonetti/O'Connell Family Foundation, Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission—Productivity Investment Fund, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Sony Pictures, United Way of Greater Los Angeles, and the Weingart Foundation.

The full report is available at <http://www.measureofamerica.org/los-angeles-county/>.

About the SSRC

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) is an independent, international non-profit with the mission of mobilizing social science to disseminate essential knowledge. Founded in 1923, the SSRC fosters innovative research, nurtures new generations of social scientists, deepens how inquiry is practiced within and across disciplines, and mobilizes necessary knowledge on important public issues.

About Measure of America

An initiative of the **Social Science Research Council**, Measure of America provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding the distribution of well-being and opportunity in America and stimulating fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: health, education, and living standards.

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