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Center for
Social Innovation*

RESILIENCE & REBUILDING

Recommendations for an Equitable Recovery from
COVID-19 in South Los Angeles



The Sol Price Center of Social Innovation at USC acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands), and we acknowledge our presence on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Chumash, Kizh, and Tataviam nations. We recognize and are committed to lifting up their stories, culture, and community. We pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), 'Ahihirom (Elders), and 'Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present, and emerging.

Pronunciations:

Tovaangar (To-VAA-ngar)

Tongva (Tong-va)

Chumash (first pronunciation)

Kizh (Keech)

Tataviam

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Acknowledgements
- 2 Executive Summary
- 3 Introduction
- 4 About South Los Angeles
- 5 The Covid-19 In South LA
- 6 Recommendations
- 7 Appendices

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**SOL PRICE CENTER
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USC Price

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Social Innovation*

The mission of the Sol Price Center for Social Innovation is to develop ideas and illuminate strategies to improve the quality of life for people in low-income urban communities. Together with the Price School's academic rigor and practice-based expertise, the Sol Price Center for Social Innovation works to advance new models of equity and opportunity for low-income children and families, as well as advance the field of social innovation through scholarship and rigorous academic inquiry.

With generous funding support from Cedars-Sinai



In collaboration with the Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD)



CRCD's overall approach is neighborhood-based community development. The nonprofit organization has a long-term commitment to improving the quality of life in South Los Angeles, focusing on youth in the community and assisting them with education, opportunities to pursue career pathways, and meet basic needs such as adequate housing. CRCD also addresses the longstanding neighborhood conditions in South Los Angeles – such as poverty, unemployment, public safety issues, and the lack of affordable housing. Since its founding in 2005 by community members, CRCD has partnered in a combined investment of \$125 million in South LA housing and real estate, including 370 units of permanent supportive and affordable housing, plus a community space for support services, youth programs, adult workforce development, reentry services, a homeless youth drop-in center, and commercial space for social enterprise.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



South Los Angeles has a rich history of culture, social cohesion, and resilience. However, the region has also faced economic disinvestment and decades of racist policies targeting Black Angelenos. As a result, South LA has seen fewer jobs and opportunities in recent decades, which was further exacerbated by the unequal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the virus, which was felt more acutely by disadvantaged communities of color, presents unique challenges for the community of South LA, but it also presents an opportunity. Our goal is to provide insight into how renewed resources, investment, and collective action can help South LA not only recover from the devastating impacts of the pandemic, but also return to a position of strength and prosperity beyond its pre-pandemic state.

A vibrant cultural scene built around Central Avenue created a bustling South LA in the 20th century, despite racist housing policies and policing that forced Black Angelenos into segregated areas. Through impactful events and trends like the 1965 Watts uprising, the development of national highways, deindustrialization, the 1992 Rodney King uprising, and redistricting, South LA has continued to adapt to a changing world. Unfortunately, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were not felt by all people equally, and South LA was especially struck, with higher case rates and death rates than the rest of LA County over the course of the pandemic. While vaccine rates have risen to nearly 70% of residents over the age of 12 in South LA, they still lag behind the County's overall rate of nearly 80%, compounding the pandemic's challenges and slowing the area's recovery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONT.

In addition to the direct health impacts of the pandemic, this report also examines the social determinants of health, explored in five key areas. **Health Care Access and Quality** discusses the risk factors associated with experiencing racism, cultural bias in health care, and living in highly urban environments. There is also a gap in access to care in the South LA area, with fewer facilities per resident. In the **Social Community Context**, there are also barriers to care faced by the South LA immigrant community, who may struggle to communicate due to language barriers or may not be eligible to receive certain public benefits. Prior to the pandemic, South LA was already facing challenges in **Economic Stability**, as the median household income in the area was significantly lower than the LA County average. The industries employing many South LA residents also faced the highest number of COVID cases in LA County and the highest rates of unemployment claims. Further, it is possible that, without the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program loans, many South LA businesses would not have survived the pandemic. Similarly, South LA was already facing a crisis in affordable housing before the pandemic. **Neighborhood and Built Environment** examines changes in housing affordability and homelessness as a result of the pandemic, including rising home values and instances of tenant harassment in South LA. Lastly, remote learning challenges and school closures exacerbated existing disparities in **Education Access and Quality**.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

These challenges call for a response beyond simply returning to a pre-pandemic state. An intentional focus on improving pandemic recovery while removing existing barriers to prosperity and equity is needed. In order to achieve equitable improvements in resourcing for South LA, this report makes several recommendations:

- 1** Increase access to preventative health care, including targeted information campaigns on insurance and vaccine options.
- 2** Prepare and connect small businesses to non-predatory lending opportunities, technical support, and other resources for growth, including opportunities through local development projects and infrastructure improvements.
- 3** Prepare and connect residents to regional training and employment opportunities in high growth sectors that lead to family sustaining wages.
- 4** Increase the supply of affordable and permanent supportive housing and public supports to address the disproportionate homelessness rates of the region and increase housing stability of economically vulnerable families and individuals
- 5** Improve educational pathways for high school completion, college access and persistence, and technical training opportunities, including equitable access to technology and broadband.
- 6** Above all, ensure that the resources described above are distributed equitably, including for immigrant populations regardless of citizenship status.

INTRODUCTION

Project Purpose/Intent

The purpose of this project is to conduct place-based research through the lens of recognized social determinants of health in South Los Angeles in order to assess the community level impact and intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic on these existing disparities. This research can be used to inform strategies for equitable long-term recovery and includes recommendations for remedies to directly support transition-age youth (TAY), families, community members, and small businesses in South Los Angeles.

This report seeks to document the impact of COVID-19 on the portion of South Los Angeles east of the 110 Freeway. The South LA neighborhood has a vibrant and multicultural history, but has been impacted by systemic racism, economic disinvestment, and globalization of the workforce like other urban centers throughout the country. In the early to mid-20th century, the region was an economic and cultural epicenter for Los Angeles' Black middle class, home to an abundance of manufacturing jobs, such as the Goodyear factory, and a vibrant jazz and entertainment scene. Since then, disinvestment, outsourcing of labor to global markets, and structural racism have moved jobs and opportunity away from the region. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, South LA faces new challenges that highlight the urgent need for equitable access to increased investment of resources and collective recovery efforts for the community and its residents.

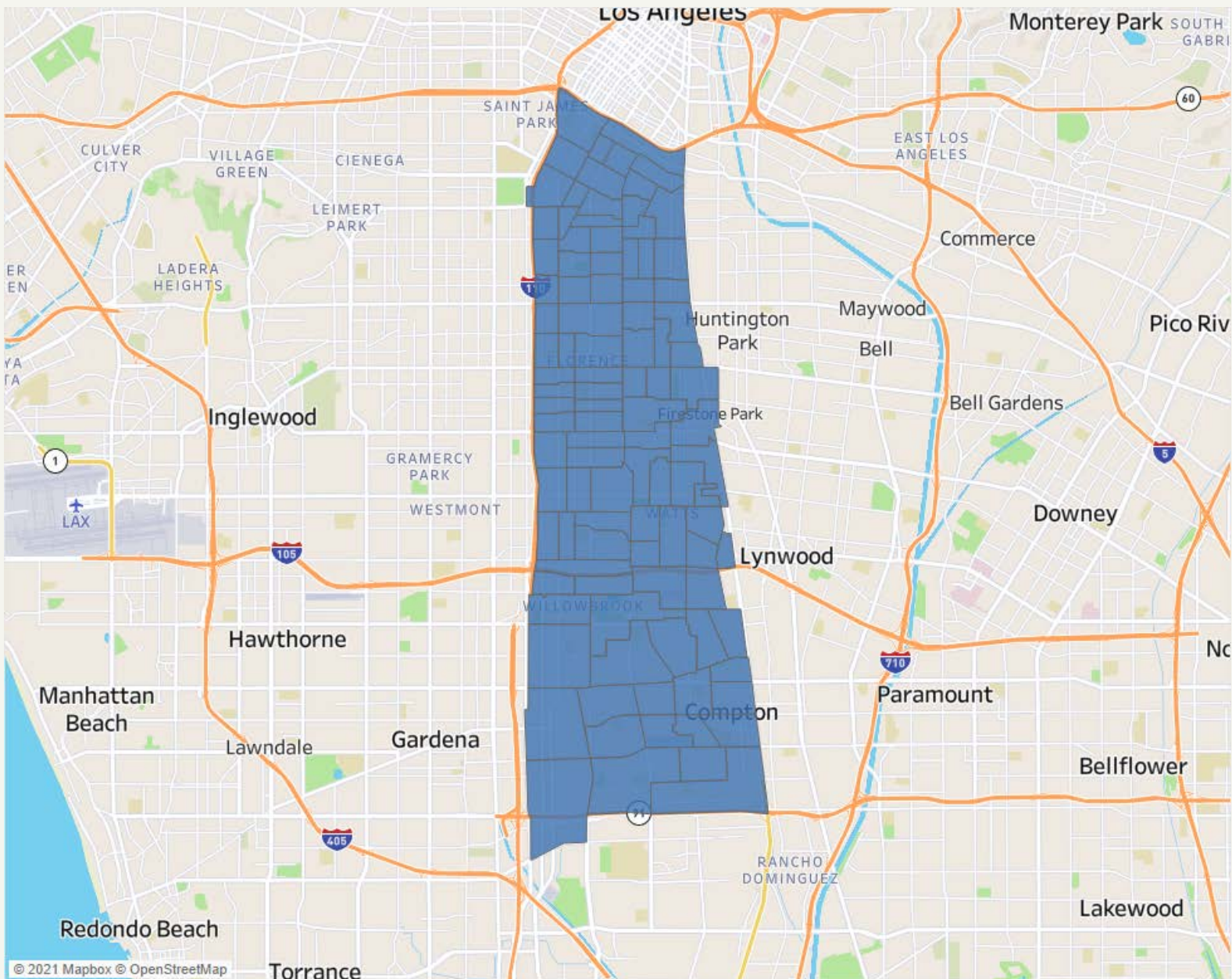


Data & Methods

The majority of the information highlighted in this report was compiled by aggregating publicly available data at the census tract level. Appendix 1 provides a full list of data sources used and Appendix 2 summarizes methodological notes related to data analysis conducted for the report.

ABOUT SOUTH LOS ANGELES

The area under discussion in this report, shown in the map below, comprises 101 census tracts in the eastern region of South Los Angeles and contains parts of both the City of Los Angeles and the City of Compton. It is bounded on the west by the 110 Freeway, on the south by the 91 Freeway, on the east by Alameda Street, and on the north by the 10 Freeway. The area includes the South Central Avenue corridor which is home to historic cultural landmarks including the Dunbar Hotel, the 28th Street YMCA, and the Lincoln Theater. For the purposes of this report, the region will be referred to as South Los Angeles.



South Los Angeles has a vibrant and rich history as a social, cultural, and economic hub for LA's Black community during the 20th century, and the area has been at the center of many social and cultural movements of national and international significance over the last century.

In the early 20th century, a significant migration of Black Americans to Los Angeles took place in part as a result of the city's expanding economy and comparatively low real estate costs. However, these new residents faced racist housing covenants, enforced within property deeds and lending practices, that funneled Black Angelenos into less exclusionary neighborhoods, namely what became Historic South Central. According to historian Steve Isoardi, "By 1940, approximately 70 percent of the Black population of Los Angeles was confined to the Central Avenue corridor and relied upon the Avenue to meet all of its social needs." The Black population in Los Angeles skyrocketed mid-century as a result of growing needs in wartime manufacturing industries which had led the American government to banning discrimination in hiring among contractors. Still, "redlining"¹ and explicitly racist housing covenants provided few places for new Black Angelenos to settle outside of South LA.



Starting in the 1920s, the vibrant cultural scene on Central Avenue began to take root. Clubs and venues like the Lincoln Theater and Club Alabam became the foundation of the "Harlem of the West," playing host to artists like Billie Holiday, Josephine Baker, and Johnny Otis. The center of this dynamism was the Dunbar Hotel, host to the NAACP's first West Coast Convention and short-term home of many jazz luminaries performing along Central Avenue. The presence of relatively well-paying, stable jobs in aerospace and other manufacturing industries helped sustain and encourage the cultural vitality of the area. However, new challenges in addition to the rampant racism of the time arose in the latter decades of the 20th century.

The growing tension between the LAPD and Black Angelenos, manifested in the harassment of businesses and increasingly aggressive policing practices, led to the Watts uprising of 1965. Highway development across the City divided Black neighborhoods and exacerbated segregation, while closures of key manufacturing hubs, such as the Goodyear rubber plant, created a wave of growing unemployment and poverty in the region. As Black families began to move elsewhere in Southern California, South LA became more diverse, with a rapidly growing Latino population. This was the backdrop of the 1992 Rodney King uprising, with a multicultural group of residents voicing frustrations with unfair policing and inequitable economic opportunity.

[1] Redlining refers to a racially discriminatory practice created through the New Deal in the 1930s where the federal government systematically excluded Black people from homeownership by denying them access to government-backed loans to buy homes. The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) created neighborhood rankings from "A" (green) to "D" (red) to show areas where they would and wouldn't provide loans. Neighborhoods where many Black residents lived like South LA were systematically given a grade of "D", excluding residents living in those communities from access to homeownership loans and other financial services that were critical to the economic growth seen in many predominantly white communities. Although redlining was outlawed with the Fair Housing Act of 1968, the impact of the racist disinvestment it caused is still felt in Black and Brown communities throughout the U.S. today (Jackson, 2021).

In the last two decades, South Los Angeles has continued to evolve. The Central Avenue Jazz Festival, started in 1996 in an effort to preserve and highlight the cultural history and significance of Central Ave, has brought thousands of visitors and millions of dollars of revenue to the area, but suffered during the stay-at-home closures of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently, South LA has been home to large protests as part of the national movement against the killing of George Floyd in 2020 coupled with significant loss of life, economic well-being, and disruption of the social fabric during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite persistent challenges stemming from systemic racism and the factors previously described, South LA continues to be a crucial social and cultural center of greater Los Angeles with a resilient and vibrant community. This report will (1) examine the impact of COVID-19 on South Los Angeles within the context of these historical barriers and the inequities they produced and (2) make recommendations for an equitable long-term recovery that is grounded in data/evidence and the history of resilience within the community.



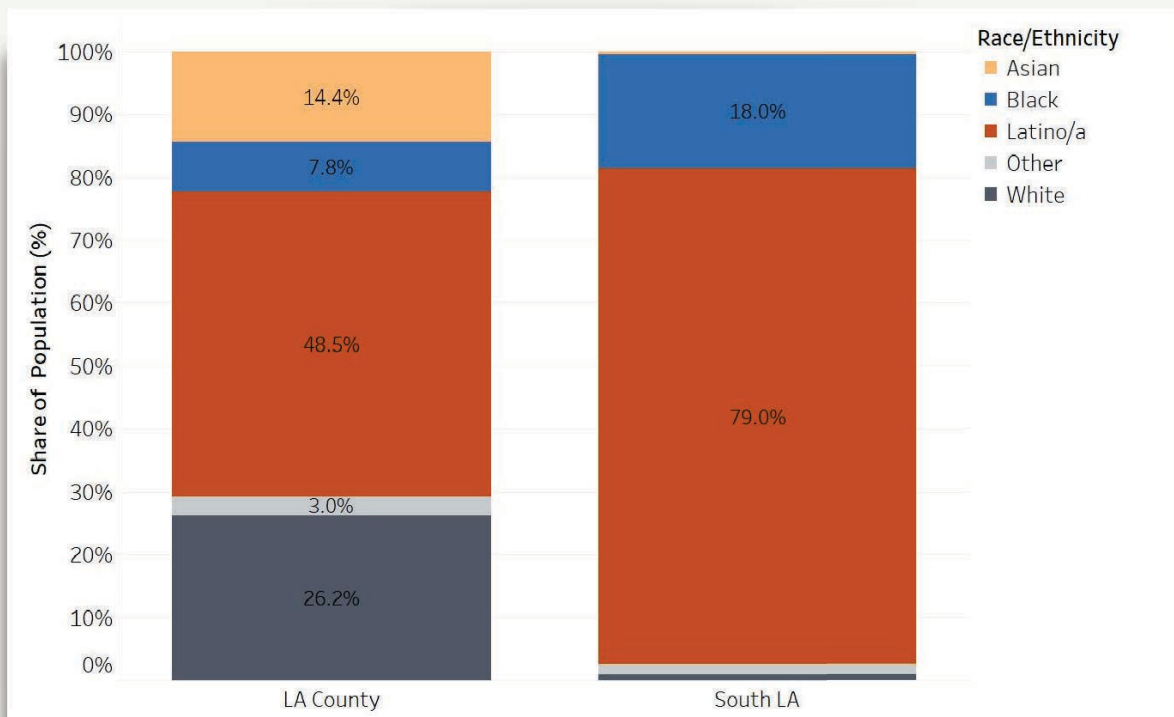
THE COVID-19 VIRUS IN SOUTH LA

According to 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) data, the South Los Angeles area is home to just over 475,000 people, making up just under 5% of Los Angeles County's population (ACS, 2019). South LA is home to many families with children - 43% of households in South LA are families with children, compared to just over a quarter of LA County households (ACS, 2019). As shown in the figure below, approximately 79% of people in the region identify as Latino/a or Hispanic and an additional 18% identify as Black or African American – higher than the Countywide average where 49% of people identify as Latino/a or Hispanic and 8% identify as Black or African American (ACS, 2019).



Race/Ethnicity of Resident Population, LA County & South LA

Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year estimates

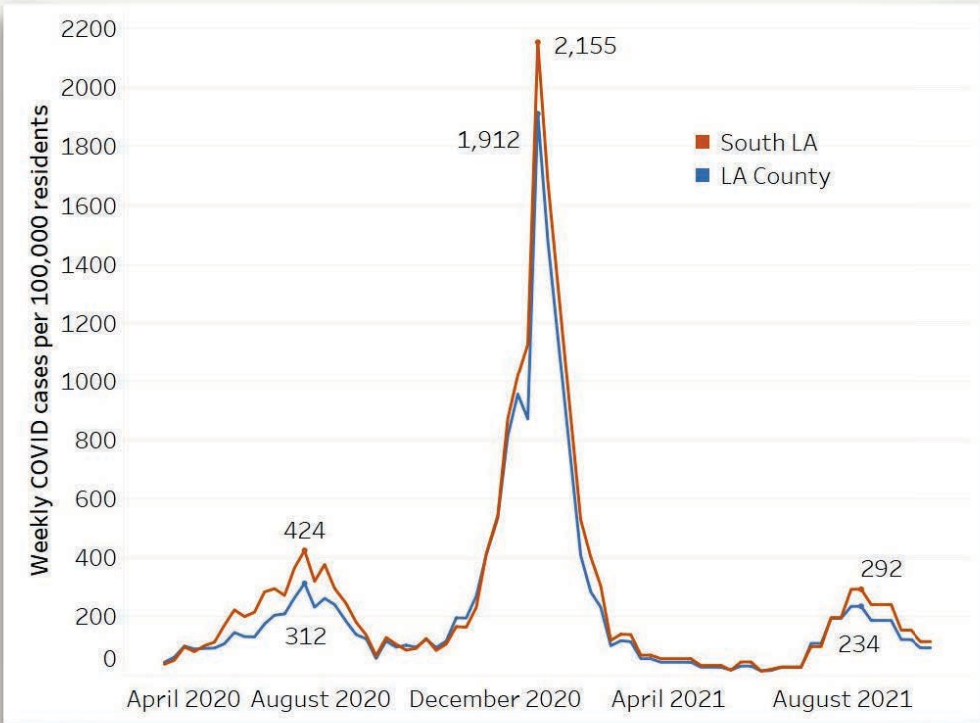


In the wake of the George Floyd protests that coincided with the pandemic, there has been a national conversation about COVID’s disproportionate impact on Black and Latino/a communities. Like many other Black and Latino/a communities throughout the nation, South LA experienced higher rates of COVID-19 cases and related deaths throughout the pandemic than surrounding communities. According to the LA County Department of Public Health (DPH), at the height of the pandemic in Los Angeles during December 2020 to January 2021, one in five LA residents who got tested were infected with COVID-19. During this time, South LA was experiencing a substantially higher rate of new cases than the County average, as shown in the figure below (LA County DPH, 2020).



New Weekly COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 Residents, South LA & LA County

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LA DPH), April 2020 - October 2021

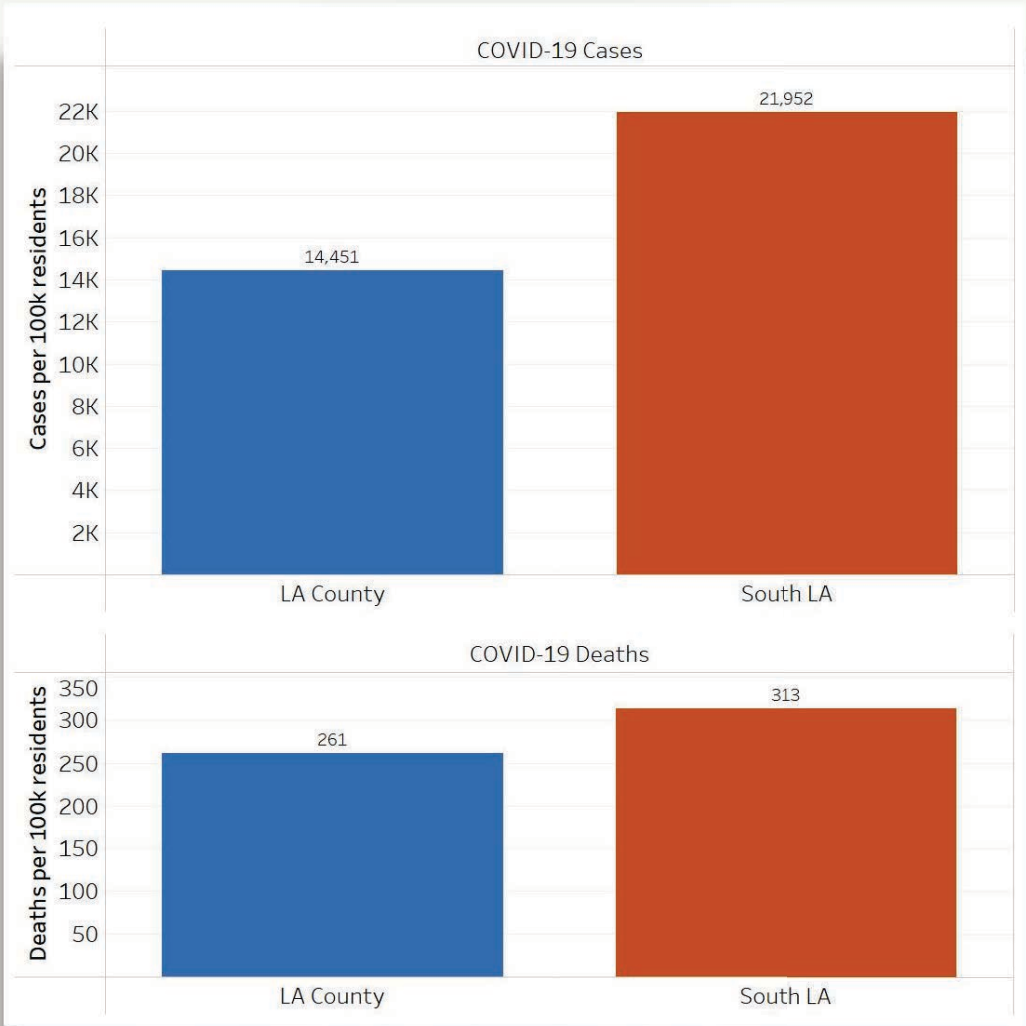


COVID’s disproportionate impact on South LA has remained throughout the course of the pandemic. As of October 1, 2021, the number of cumulative cases in South LA totaled just over 104,000, a rate of 22,000 cases per 100,000 residents, compared to the countywide rate of 14,500 per 100,000 residents. South LA has also faced higher rates of COVID-19 related deaths than other parts of the County. From March 2020 to October 2021, South LA lost nearly 1,500 lives to COVID-19, translating to a rate of approximately 315 deaths per 100,000 residents in South LA to LA County’s rate of 260 per 100,000 residents during the same time period (LA County DPH, 2020-21).

The figure below shows total rates of cases and deaths in South LA and LA County.

**Cumulative COVID-19 Cases & Deaths per 100,000 Residents (as of October 2021),
LA County & South LA**

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LA DPH)

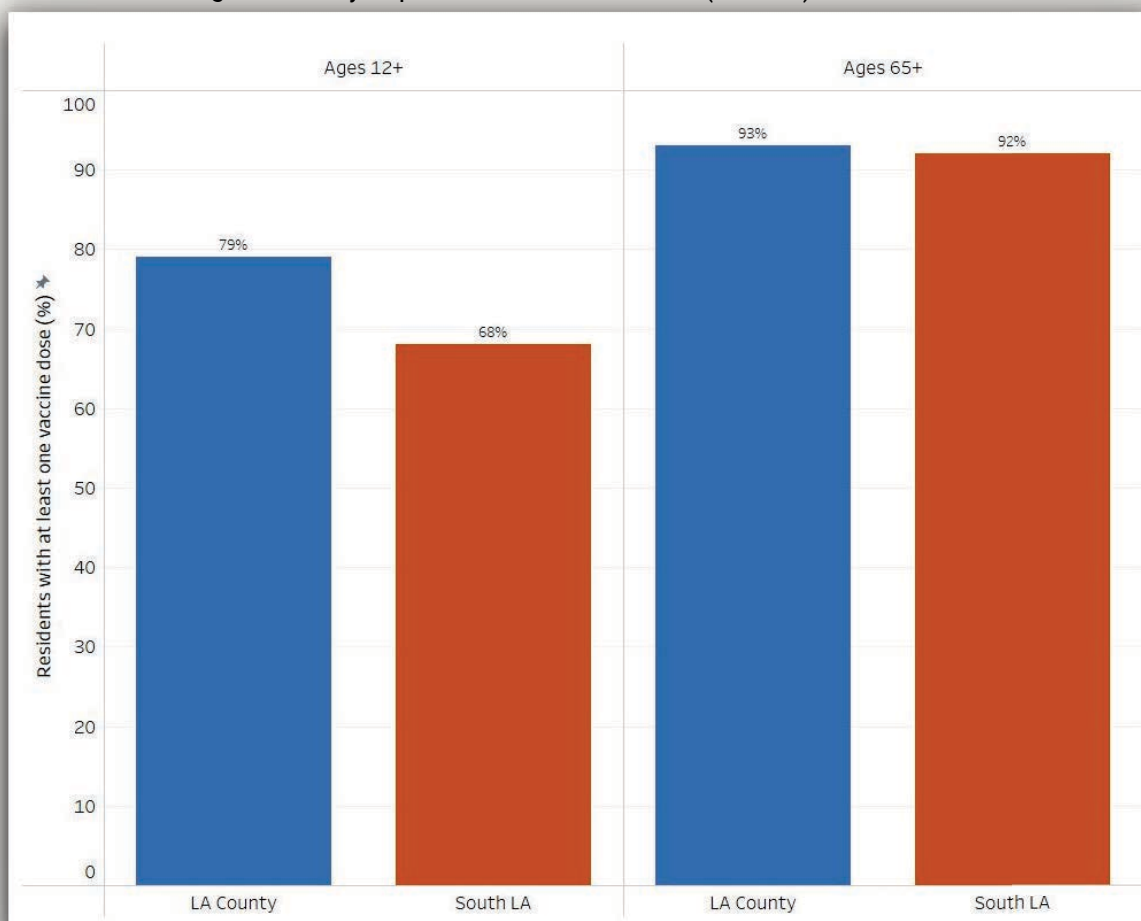


Vaccine Uptake

Despite higher rates of COVID-19 related cases and deaths in South LA, vaccine uptake in the region has been slow. As of October 1, 2021, just 68% of South LA residents over the age of 12 had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine compared to 79% of residents countywide. This gap could be attributable to a combination of factors, including possible skepticism regarding the healthcare system among Black and Latino/a residents, poor communication of public health information, and issues with booking vaccination appointments due to lack of access to internet and computer services (Lopes et al., 2021). Notably, the gap in vaccination rates diminishes significantly among older adults. As of the end of July 2021, 92% of South LA residents over the age of 65 had received at least one dose of the vaccine - in line with the county average of 93% of LA County adults in the same age group (LA County DPH, 2020-21; ACS 2019). The figure below shows vaccination rates among different age groups in South LA and LA County.

Vaccination Rates Among 12 and Older Population & 65 and Older Population (as of October 2021), LA County & South LA

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LA DPH)



Note: Visualization shows share of population in each age group that has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine 13

THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



COVID-19 had a disproportionate viral impact on South LA, but the pandemic was also felt acutely in other areas of life, including the economy, housing, and education. As a result, this report seeks to examine the impact of COVID-19 through the lens of the “social determinants of health.” According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the social determinants of health are the “conditions in the environments where people are born, live, earn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks” (U.S. HHS, 2020).

These social determinants can be grouped into 5 domains: Health Care Access and Quality, Social Community Context, Economic Stability, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Education Access and Quality. The following sections examine some of the social determinants of health in South LA including healthcare access, barriers for immigrant communities, economic stability, housing justice, and K-12 and post-secondary education.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS & QUALITY



WEATHERING & CULTURAL BIAS

Public health experts have attributed the racial health disparities in COVID-19 cases to a number of compounding factors. A Center for Disease Control (CDC) study found that the majority of serious COVID-19 cases involve people with underlying health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic lung disease. According to CDC data, residents of South LA face higher rates of many COVID risk factors including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), obesity, diabetes, and current smoking. As of 2018, 14% of South LA residents had been diagnosed with diabetes compared to 11% countywide (CDC, 2018).

Additionally, 19% of South LA residents reported being current smokers compared to 13% countywide. Research has shown that smoking increases the likelihood of severe COVID-19 cases that require hospitalization (Gülsen et. al, 2020).

The South LA region, which is overwhelmingly industrial and urban, has just 0.86 acres of greenspace per 1,000 people, well below the City of LA's 7.88 acres per 1,000 people (Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment, 2016). Park space is a key mitigating factor for youth & families to maintain healthy lifestyles. An 8-year study in Southern California found that children who lived closer to parks had significantly lower rates of obesity at age 18 than those who did not (Wolch et al., 2010). As of 2018, 36% of South LA residents were considered obese compared to 27% of residents countywide.

In addition to access to greenspace, public health experts also identify the phenomenon of "weathering" as an important factor leading to higher rates of poor health outcomes for communities of color. Termed by Dr. Arline Geronimus, weathering refers to the cumulative effects coping with the stress of discrimination and racism can have on the body (2006). This "wear and tear," as Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones describes it, may lead to a heightened risk of chronic illnesses that have made the pandemic particularly devastating for communities like South LA (2020).

Beyond weathering, the cultural bias that exists within the healthcare system has led to further critical health inequities. The implicit attitudes and behavior of clinicians can cause disparities in access to care, the quality received, and the health outcomes of people of color, even when controlling for income and insurance access. For example, in a national survey conducted in 2017, over one in five Black Americans reported avoiding needed medical care due to fear of discriminatory treatment from medical professionals (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2017). Further early research by the biotech firm Rubix Life Science found that Black patients experiencing COVID-19 symptoms during the onset of the pandemic were less likely to get tested or treated than white patients, leading to more severe cases (Farmer, 2020).

GAPS IN CARE & ACCESS

In addition to bias in the healthcare system, lack of access to healthcare could play a role in the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the South LA area. South LA has just two hospital facilities to serve over 475,000 residents, translating to 43 hospital beds per 100,000 people compared to the county average of 266 beds per 100,000 residents (CHHS, 2019). As a result, hospitals in the South LA area have likely been more stretched for space during the pandemic, particularly during peak times like the spike in December of 2020 through January of 2021.

Furthermore, even when South LA residents could access physical healthcare spaces during the pandemic, affordability and lack of insurance likely created additional barriers. Prior to the pandemic, 16% of residents in the South LA region were not covered with any health insurance compared to 12% in the City of Los Angeles and 10% Countywide (ACS, 2019).

A March 2021 report found that nationally, roughly one out of every three COVID-19 deaths and nearly 40% of COVID-19 infections have been linked to health insurance gaps (Dorn & Gordon, 2021). The following section discusses how gaps in access to insurance and other critical services are intertwined with the social context of South LA's large immigrant community.



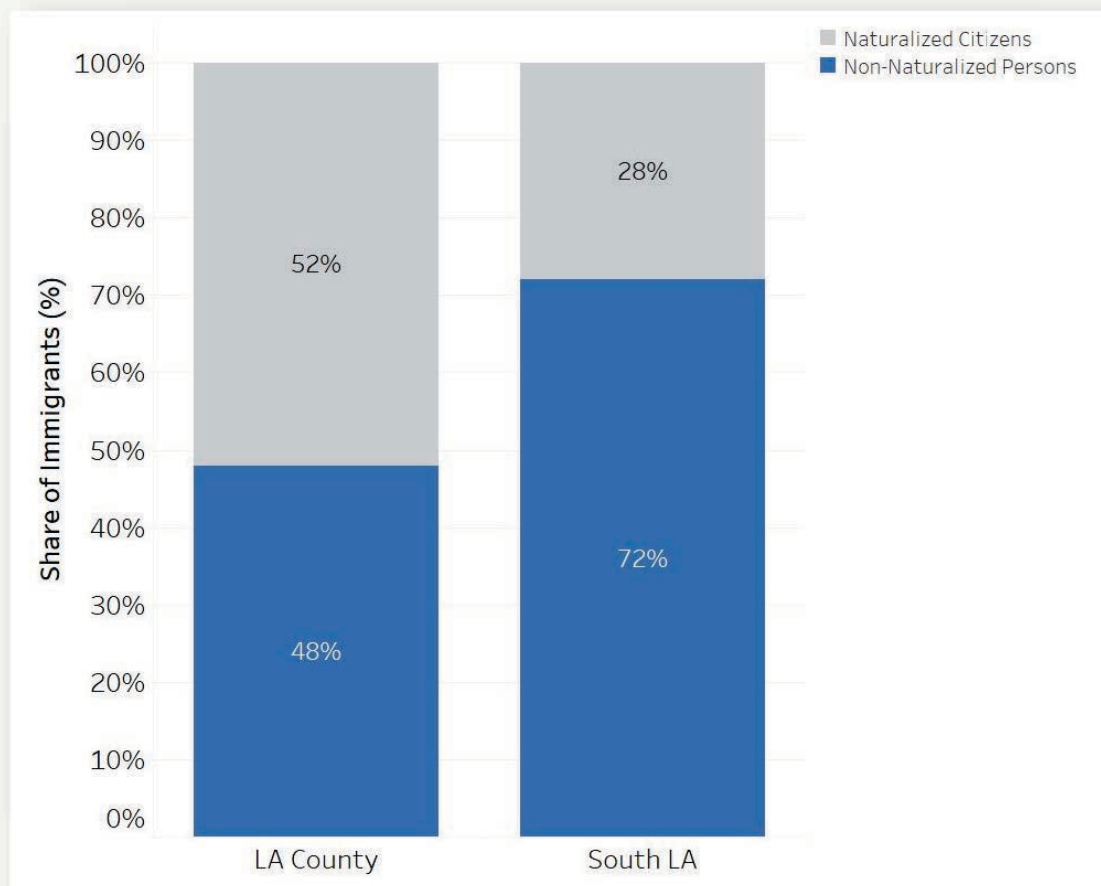
SOCIAL COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Barriers for Immigrant Communities

Part of this gap in health care access could be due to barriers for the large immigrant community in South LA. As of 2019, nearly 176,000 of South LA's residents were immigrants, accounting for just over a third of the neighborhood's population, a similar rate to the LA City and County averages. However, as shown in the chart below, approximately 72% of South LA's immigrant population are not naturalized U.S. citizens,² compared to 48% countywide (ACS, 2019).

Immigrants by Citizenship Status, LA County & South LA

Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year estimates



[2] Non-citizen immigrants encompass a wide group of people, including permanent U.S. residents with authorization documents, temporary migrants such as foreign students, humanitarian migrants such as refugees, and migrants without authorization documents.

For immigrant communities, barriers to accessing healthcare and other services can include language gaps, stigma, difficulty understanding the complex and bureaucratic healthcare system, and, in some cases, the fear of deportation. In conjunction with structural barriers, these factors contribute to a lack of accessibility to the healthcare system for immigrants, both documented and undocumented (Khullar & Chokshi, 2019). As of 2019 in South LA, approximately 17% of households reported that no one over the age of 14 in their household spoke English “very well” - significantly higher than the countywide rate of 13% (ACS, 2019). For these households, language gaps may have increased barriers to obtaining and digesting rapidly changing public health information throughout the course of the pandemic.

Nationally, data shows that 25% of immigrants with authorization documents are uninsured while 46% of those without documentation are uninsured (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2021). Undocumented immigrants (including DACA holders) are generally excluded from receiving federal public benefits.³ Additionally, the Trump Administration’s 2019 changes to the Public Charge Rule continued to limit accessibility to citizenship.

An individual is a “public charge” if she is primarily dependent on the government for more than half of her income. If one is a beneficiary of public benefits (SNAP, Medicaid, Medicare Part D subsidies, and Section 8 housing vouchers), the utilization of these benefits could count against an application for permanent legal residency. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many immigrants have withdrawn from these programs because of their effect on permanent legal residency applications (Khullar & Chokshi, 2019). Given the fluctuating nature of the availability of social safety nets, the following section examines economic stability for South LA residents and businesses in the context of the pandemic.

[3] These include regular Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Undocumented immigrants are only able to access benefits that are meant to address dire situations, such as emergency Medicaid, access to treatment in hospital emergency rooms, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Of non-naturalized immigrants, only those with lawful permanent resident (LPR) status that have resided as a legal resident for five years or have worked 40 quarters under a visa can access federal means-tested public benefit programs such as Medicaid, CHIP, TANF, SNAP, and SSI (National Immigration Forum, 2018; Broder et al., 2021).

ECONOMIC STABILITY

INCOME & PUBLIC BENEFITS

Prior to the pandemic in 2019, the median household income in South LA was just under \$43,500 -- significantly lower than the median income of the County (\$68,000) and U.S. (\$62,800). According to MIT's Living Wage calculator, a living wage for a family of four in Los Angeles County is estimated to be between \$89,000 and \$116,000 - more than double South LA's median income (Glasmeier, 2020).

Despite these potential barriers for immigrants in South LA, usage of public benefits in the region was higher than other parts of the County. As of 2019, approximately 10% of South LA households were on Supplemental Security Income, 10% were on some other form of cash-based public income, and 25% were recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).⁴ However, since 2015, use of these benefit programs has been declining in South LA at a larger rate than the countywide average.

By contrast, the use of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers⁵ in the neighborhood has been steadily increasing since 2014, as shown in the figure below. While this trend could be an indication of increased program access, it is likely a reflection of the increasing need for a social safety to keep housing affordable in the face of rising costs. In 2020, 8,141 South LA households were receiving a Housing Choice Voucher to help supplement the cost of their housing - representing approximately 12% of renter households. Housing affordability is discussed in more detail in the Neighborhood & Built Environment section of this report.

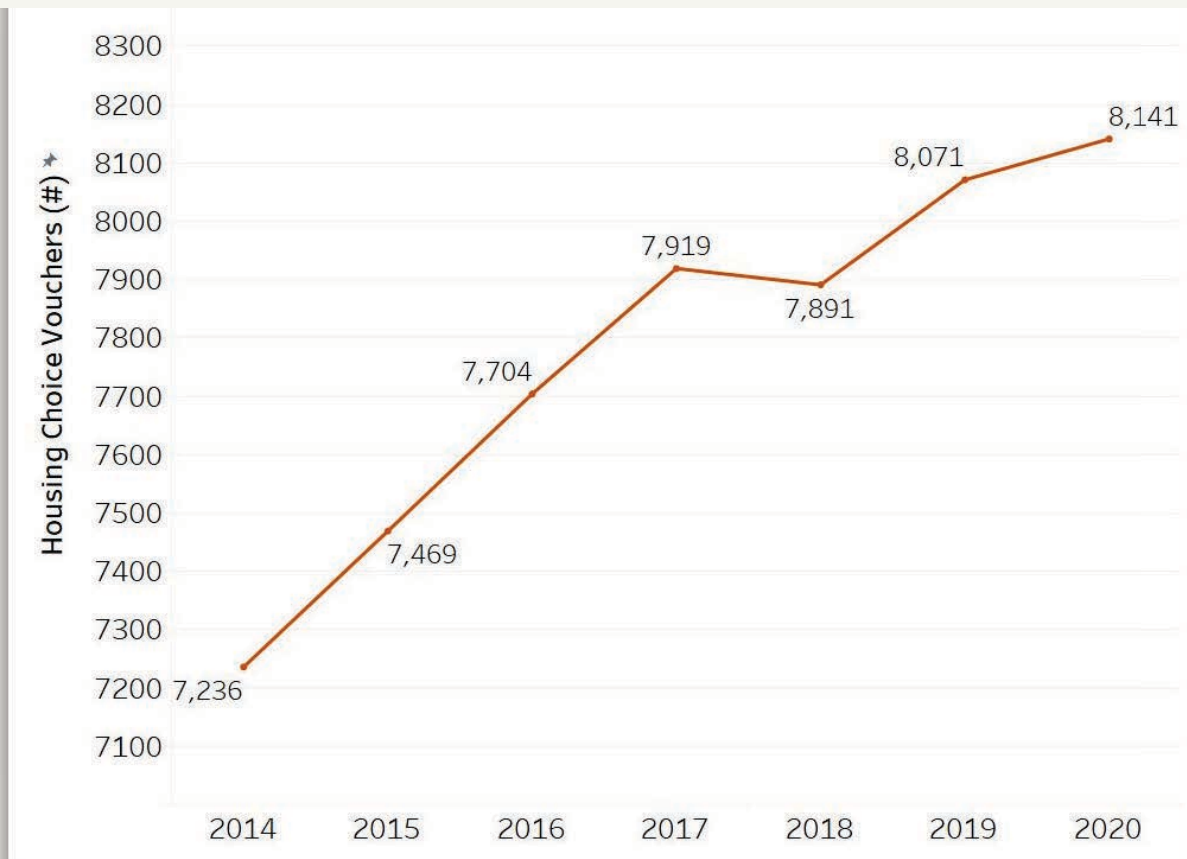


[4] Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal assistance program that guarantees a minimum level of income for individuals that meet the age or disability requirements. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal food-purchasing assistance program, intended to allow low- and no-income people to "obtain a more nutritious diet." SNAP provides households with Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards that can be used to purchase food. Cash-based public assistance refers to any government-based assistance program that provides cash benefits (as opposed to in-kind benefits) to qualifying households (e.g. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families).

[5] The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program is a federal rent subsidy program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Program recipients are able to find a housing unit of their choice with an amenable landlord and appropriate health and safety standards. The housing subsidy is paid directly by a local public housing agency (PHA), and the household pays the remaining difference (which falls between 30%-40% of their monthly income). Program eligibility is determined based on income, age, or disability requirements.

Housing Choice Voucher Use in South LA, 2014-2020

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development



EMPLOYMENT & INDUSTRIES

Prior to the pandemic, South LA residents were facing higher rates of unemployment than both the county and national averages. In 2019, the unemployment rate in South LA was 8.8% compared to 6.1% countywide and 5.3% nationally (ACS, 2019).

The coronavirus pandemic has had wide-reaching and prolonged effects on economies and workers in the United States and around the globe; however, the impacts on individual workers have varied meaningfully depending on what industry they are employed in.

In essential, high-risk industries where work remained operational and workers operated within close proximity to each other (e.g., agriculture, accommodation/food services, transportation/warehousing, health care/social assistance), employees faced higher risks of contracting COVID on the job. In other "non-essential" but close proximity employment sectors such as hospitality, retail, and manufacturing, workers were subject to unpredictable business closures and layoffs throughout the course of the pandemic

According to data from prior to the pandemic, a large share of South LA residents tended to be employed in industries falling into both of those categories.

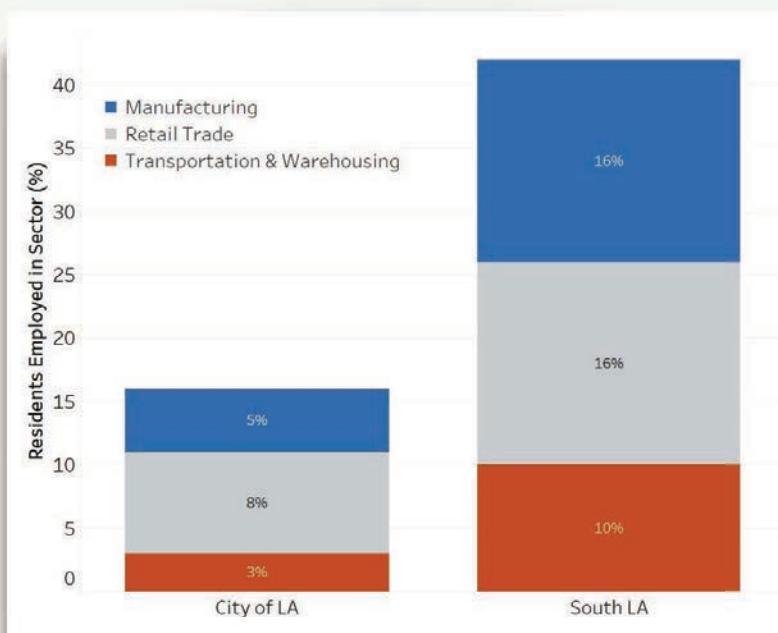
As of 2018, approximately 42% of employed people living in South LA worked in manufacturing, retail, or transportation /warehousing - the three industries with the highest numbers of COVID cases in Los Angeles County (Contreras et al., 2021).

As shown in the figure below, this is well above the City average where just 16% of workers are employed in one of those three industries (LODES, 2018). This suggests that a large share of South LA's workforce was vulnerable to COVID exposure while at work and could have missed workdays, income, or had negative health impacts as a result.



Residents Working in Industries with High COVID-19 Infection Risk, City of LA & South LA

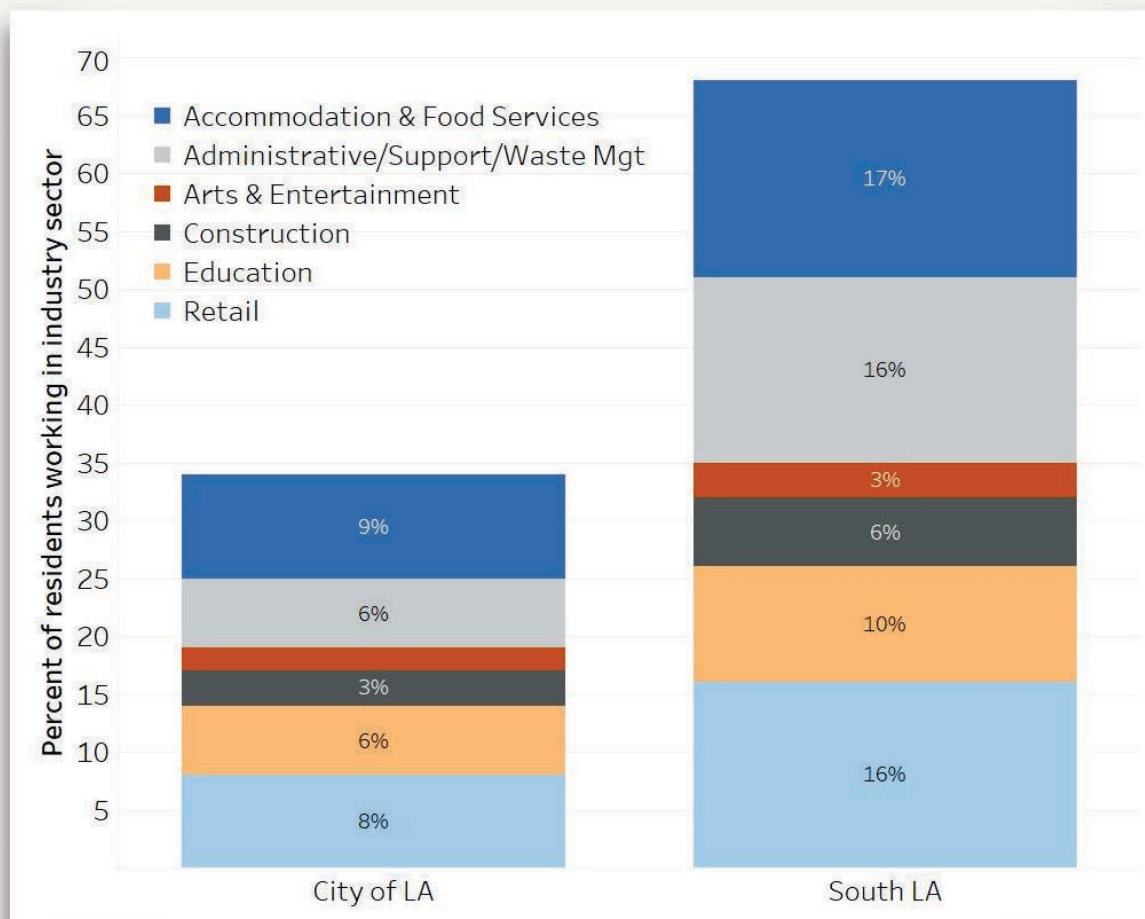
Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), 2018



Similarly, as of 2018, approximately 68% of employed people living in South LA worked in the six industries⁶ with the highest rates of unemployment claims filed during COVID, compared to 34% of workers citywide, as shown in the figure below (Bell et al., 2021). This suggests that the vast majority of South LA workers were subject to the unpredictable business closures and layoffs that afflicted these industries throughout the course of the pandemic. Furthermore, because South LA has a large non-naturalized immigrant population, some impacted workers may have lacked the necessary documentation to apply for unemployment claims, further exacerbating economic vulnerability as a result of widespread layoffs (Pastor & Segura, 2020).

Residents Working in Industries with High Rates of Unemployment Insurance Claims During COVID-19, City of LA & South LA

Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), 2018



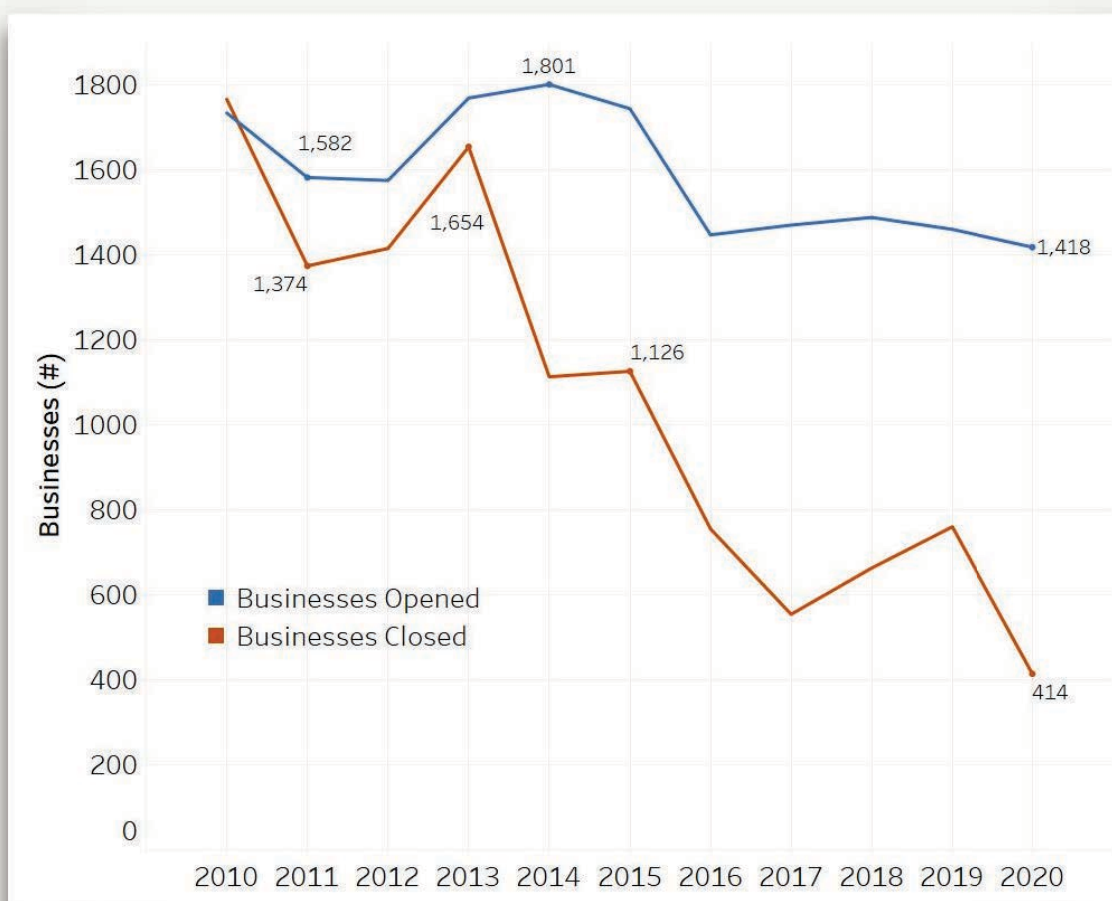
[6] Education Services, Arts/Entertainment/Recreation, Accommodation/Food Services, Retail Trade, Administration/Support/Waste Removal, and Construction

LOCAL BUSINESSES

In addition to workers and employees, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on businesses nationwide - particularly small businesses. Prior to the pandemic in 2019, there were just over 17,500 businesses registered with locations in South LA.⁷ This includes both small businesses owned by local residents as well as chain locations of large corporations and industrial plants. In 2020, approximately 1,400 new businesses opened in South LA - a slight decrease from previous years. However, significantly fewer businesses closed in South LA in 2020 as compared to previous years. In 2020, just over 400 businesses located in South LA closed compared to 760 in 2019. The graph below shows the number of businesses started and closed in South LA from 2010 to 2020 (City of LA, 2010-2020).

Business Openings and Closures in South LA, 2010 - 2020

Source: City of Los Angeles



[7] Data on active businesses excludes businesses in the City of Compton. Refer to Appendix 2 for more details.

One reason for the relatively fewer number of South LA business closures during 2020 could be the availability of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans from the federal government which may have allowed small businesses to stay open until they were able to resume regular levels of sales. The PPP is a low-interest private loan program by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) intended to help small businesses, nonprofits, sole proprietors, and contractors pay their workforce appropriately despite the economic stall of the pandemic (Small Business Administration, 2021). Loan amounts were approximately equal to 2.5 times the applicant's average monthly payroll costs. Businesses were also eligible for loan forgiveness if they spent a designated portion of the loan on payroll and were able to maintain a consistent number of employees at the same compensation level.

Data provided by the SBA shows that many small businesses in South LA took advantage of PPP loans. In total, just over 14,600 loans were distributed to businesses located in South LA, with an average loan amount of approximately \$56,500. Compared to LA County as a whole, businesses in South LA received loans at a higher rate relative to the number of jobs in the area - the SBA distributed approximately 1,400 loans per 10,000 jobs in South LA compared to just over 900 loans per 10,000 jobs Countywide (*Small Business Administration, 2021*). ⁸

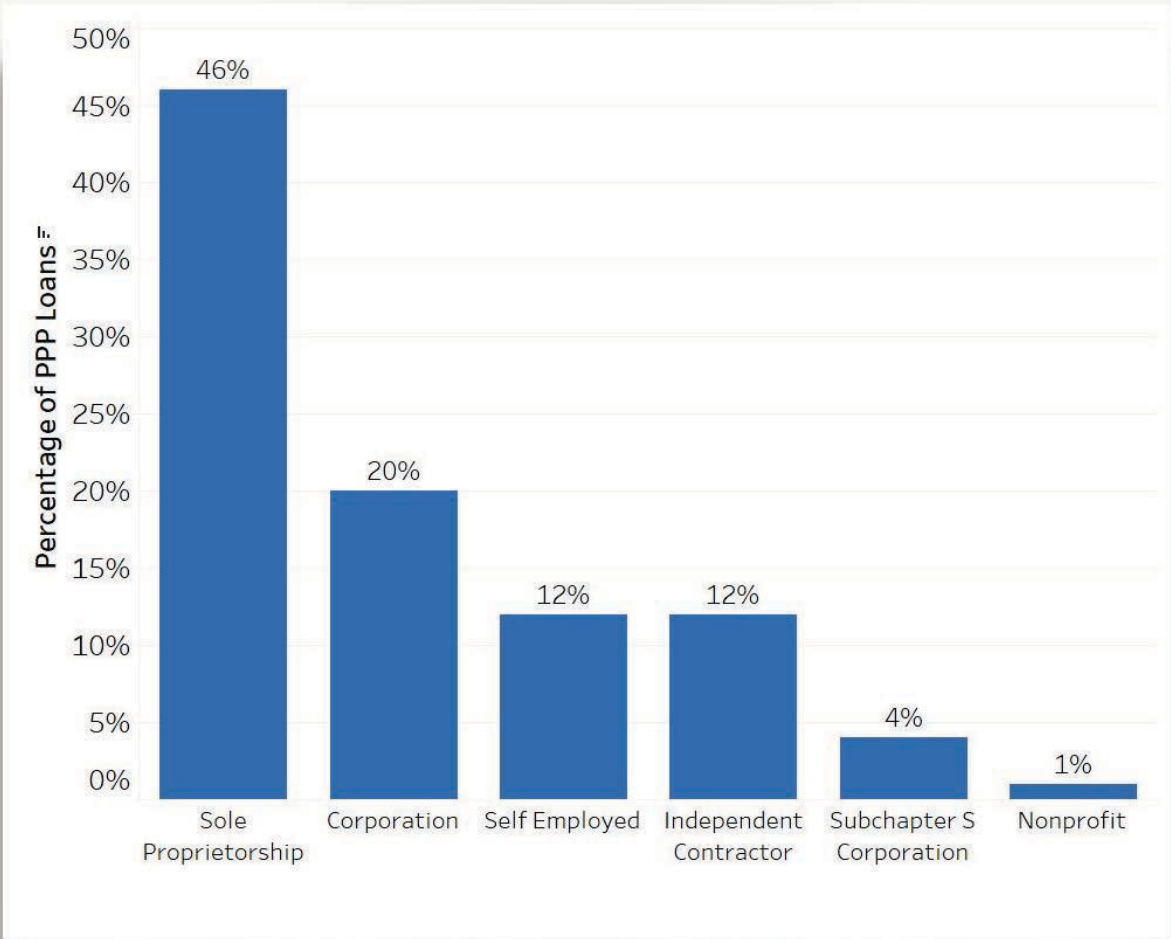


[8] The number of jobs was obtained from 2018 data from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) dataset.

Although South LA is home to a large industrial corridor, the PPP loans distributed in South LA appear to have gone to true small businesses, as 83% of loan recipients in the neighborhood reported having under five employees. Furthermore, as shown in the figure below, 70% of South LA loan recipients identified as either sole proprietors, self-employed, or independent contractors.

PPP Loans by Business Type in South LA

Source: U.S. Small Business Administration, 2020-2021

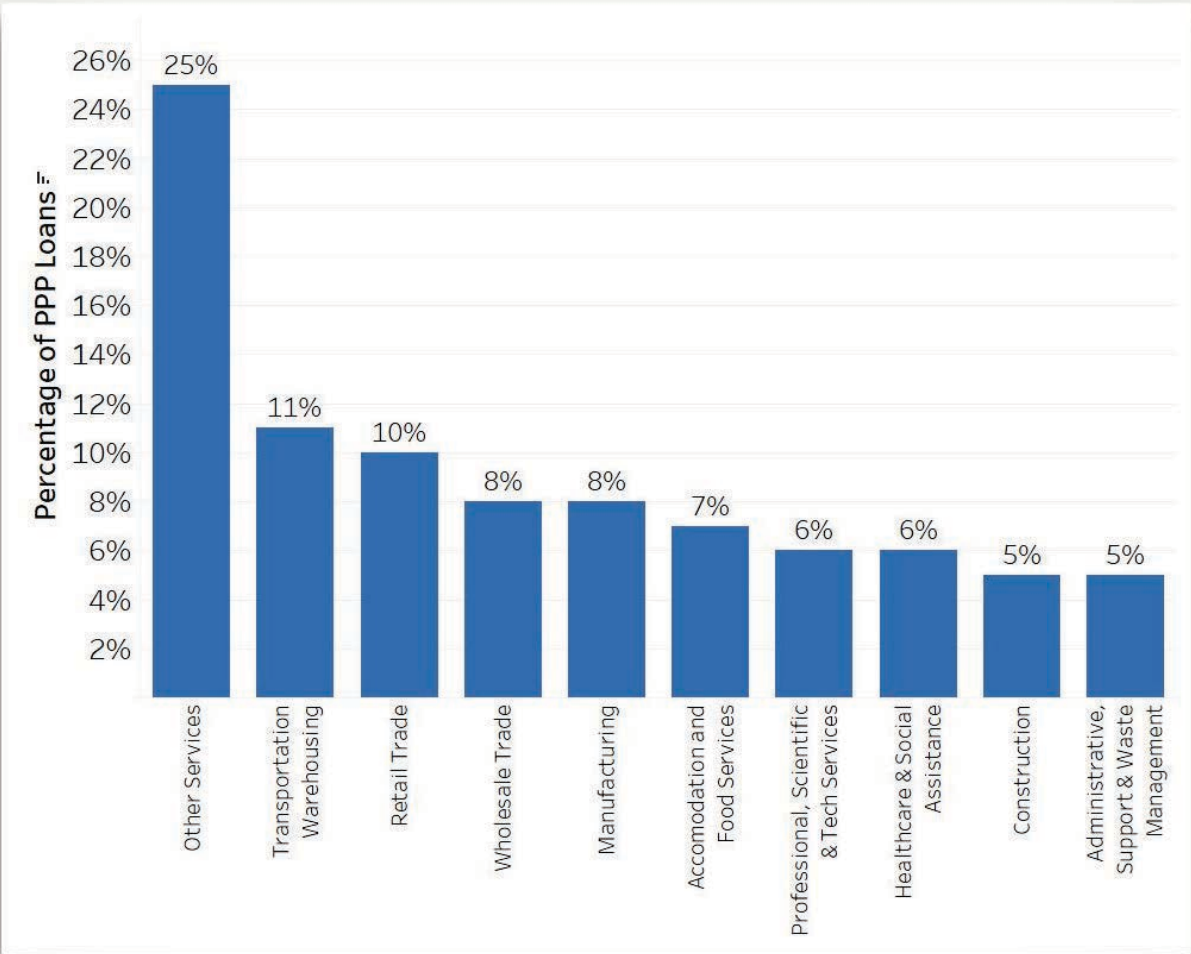


The largest share of PPP loans in South LA went to businesses in the “Other Services” industry category. This is an additional indication that locally owned businesses were likely receiving a large share of the loans in the neighborhood, as this industry category includes businesses like automotive or electronic repair shops, barber shops, nail salons, laundromats, leather repair, and pet care services. The chart below shows the top industries that received PPP loans in South LA.



PPP Loans by Industry in South LA

Source: U.S. Small Business Administration, 2020-2021



Data appears to show that small businesses in South LA benefited from the PPP loan program, and the program could be one reason why there were fewer reported business closures in 2020 than in previous years. However, these data do not tell us whether or not businesses were able to thrive and profit during the pandemic, or if the PPP program provided a vital lifeline for businesses to simply stay afloat in the midst of a turbulent economy. It is important to note that businesses in South LA have been left in more debt by the program than other businesses countywide. According to the SBA, 29% of funds distributed to South LA businesses were forgiven compared to 38% of funds countywide. This discrepancy in loan forgiveness could have resulted from a number of different factors.

First, in order for a loan to be eligible for forgiveness, a business must have maintained the same number of employees at the same compensation level. Given the large number of families in South LA, it is possible that some employees may not have been able to find childcare and were not able to maintain their jobs as a result. If their employer could not hire a similarly qualified individual within a given period of time, they would be disqualified from PPP loan forgiveness.

Second, the process for applying for forgiveness had a strict window with specific calculation and documentation requirements that many businesses may have found too complex to navigate in the midst of other unprecedented challenges.



Initial research has shown that Black business owners faced discrimination and barriers to accessing PPP loans (Lederer & Oros, 2021), and that nationally, Black borrowers were 12 percentage points more likely to access a PPP loan through an online lender than a traditional bank (Howell et al., 2021).

While online borrowing may have reduced barriers in accessing PPP loans for Black-owned businesses, it is possible that an online lender was not a suitable replacement for a traditional lender in navigating the deadlines and complexities of the loan forgiveness process.

From a built environment perspective, South LA has just 4 banks and credit unions per 100,000 residents compared to 59 per 100,000 countywide, leaving local businesses and residents with significantly fewer resources for consultations and access to lending (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 2020; National Credit Union Administration, 2020).

The support of federal PPP loans appears to have brought a vital influx of capital that allowed businesses to survive, indicating that additional infusion of financial resources – coupled with technical assistance for loan applicants – is critical for further revitalization of the South LA economy. The following section examines other aspects of the built environment in South LA, with a focus on housing affordability prior to and during the pandemic.



NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Prior to the pandemic, much of Los Angeles County was facing an affordable housing crisis. A recent report estimates that as of 2019, over 500,000 low income renters across the County did not have access to an affordable home (California Housing Partnership, 2020). Housing affordability is particularly acute in Black and Latino/a communities like South LA, where racist housing policies like redlining,⁹ enacted by the Federal Housing Authority during the 20th Century, and predatory lending practices against Black and Latino/a households by large financial institutions in the years leading up to the Great Recession have led to a systemic wealth gap along racial and ethnic lines.¹⁰

Simultaneously, longtime residents of many Black and Latino/a neighborhoods in cities across the U.S. have been priced out of their neighborhoods in the face of large increases in property values due to an influx of wealthy and oftentimes white residents, a phenomenon known as gentrification. A recent study found that between 2000 and 2013, over 110,000 Black residents and nearly 25,000 Latino/a residents were displaced from U.S. metro areas due to gentrification (Richardson et al., 2019). In South LA, the typical home value has doubled between 2011 and 2019 from just over \$215,000 to \$429,000, according to the Zillow Home Value Index.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



[9] Please refer to footnote number one in the “About South Los Angeles” section for a detailed definition of redlining.

[10] The Great Recession was a severe economic recession in the US from around 2007–2009, facilitated by the bursting of the housing bubble. It was the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, characterized by declining housing prices, abandoned mortgages, and the collapse/bailout of banks. In the years leading up to the Great Recession, real-estate agents and financial institutions targeted Black and Latina/o homebuyers and gave them “subprime” loans, or those with higher interest rates, fees, and risk than typical mortgage loans. Because of the prevalence of these predatory loans in Black and Latina/o communities, during the Great Recession, Black wealth fell by 53% while white wealth fell only 17%. (Famighetti, Hamilton, 2019).

Furthermore, the increase in typical home values in South LA accelerated during the pandemic. In the 18 months between March 2020 and August 2021, the typical home value in South LA zip codes increased by 20%.¹¹ By comparison, in the 18 months preceding the pandemic, typical home value in the area grew by just 9%.

These staggering increases in South LA property values during the pandemic came as many neighborhood residents were already struggling to afford their housing prior to COVID-19. As of 2019, just 37% of South LA residents were homeowners (compared to 46% countywide). As a result, because most South LA residents are not property owners, they would not have seen any increases in wealth due to rising property values.

By contrast, these rising housing costs likely impacted South LA renters in the area who were already struggling to afford rent prior to the pandemic. In 2019, 63% of South LA renters were considered “rent burdened,” spending more than 30% of their monthly income on rent and utilities, compared to 55% of renters countywide (ACS, 2019). Households in South LA are also seven percentage points more likely to be severely rent burdened, a sub-classification indicating a household spends more than 50% of their monthly income on rent and utilities.

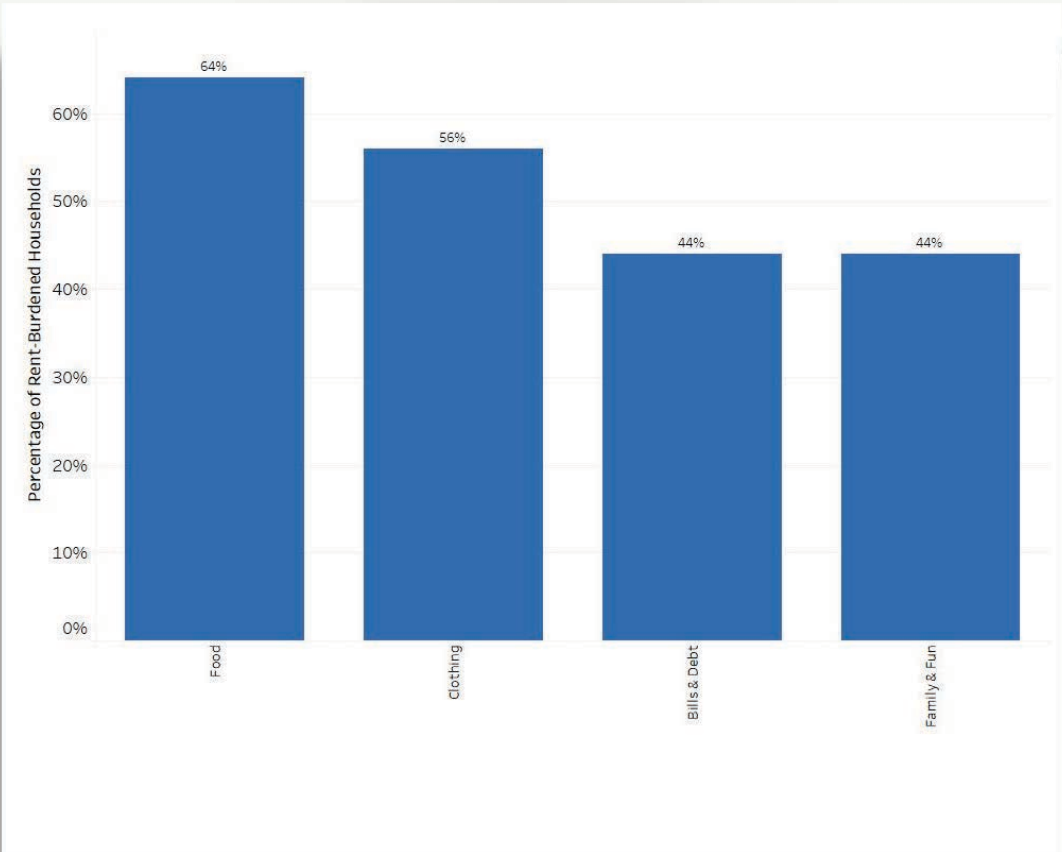
[11] As of August 2021, Zillow reports the typical home value in the area at nearly \$550,000.



Households engage in many different coping mechanisms in order to adjust to rent burden. A recent study by the USC Price Center for Social Innovation investigating the effects of rent burden on residents in South and Central Los Angeles found that households were making significant cutbacks on critical basic needs in order to pay rent. As shown in the figure below, the study found that two-thirds of rent-burdened households cut back on food, while half cut back on clothing, entertainment or family activities, or deferred bill payments and/or took on more debt (Rosen, Angst, De Gregorio & Painter, 2020). The figure below displays these cutbacks.

Cutbacks Made Over Prior Two Years by Rent-Burdened Households in South & Central LA

Source: Rosen, Angst, De Gregorio & Painter, 2020



LOSS OF HOUSING: EVICTIONS AND FORECLOSURES

Research shows that if coping mechanisms are ineffective and households still cannot afford their rent, rent burden could eventually lead to eviction, creating a cycle of housing instability (Lens, Nelson, Gromis & Kuai, 2020). For example, evicted tenants are more likely to be evicted in the future, and may be screened and denied future housing due to the eviction on their record. Furthermore, because over two thirds of South LA residents were working¹² in industries with the highest rates of pandemic-related layoffs and loss of income, households in this neighborhood have likely faced a particularly acute threat of eviction or foreclosure.

In March of 2020, national and state-wide eviction moratoriums were instituted to protect renters who could not pay rent due to COVID-related financial hardship, meaning landlords were not legally allowed to evict them or turn off utilities. Los Angeles County also put additional protections in place for renters, extending the moratorium to “no-fault” evictions, which includes causes such as property renovation, unauthorized occupants, nuisance, or denying entry to landlords (LA County Department of Consumer & Business Affairs, 2021).¹³



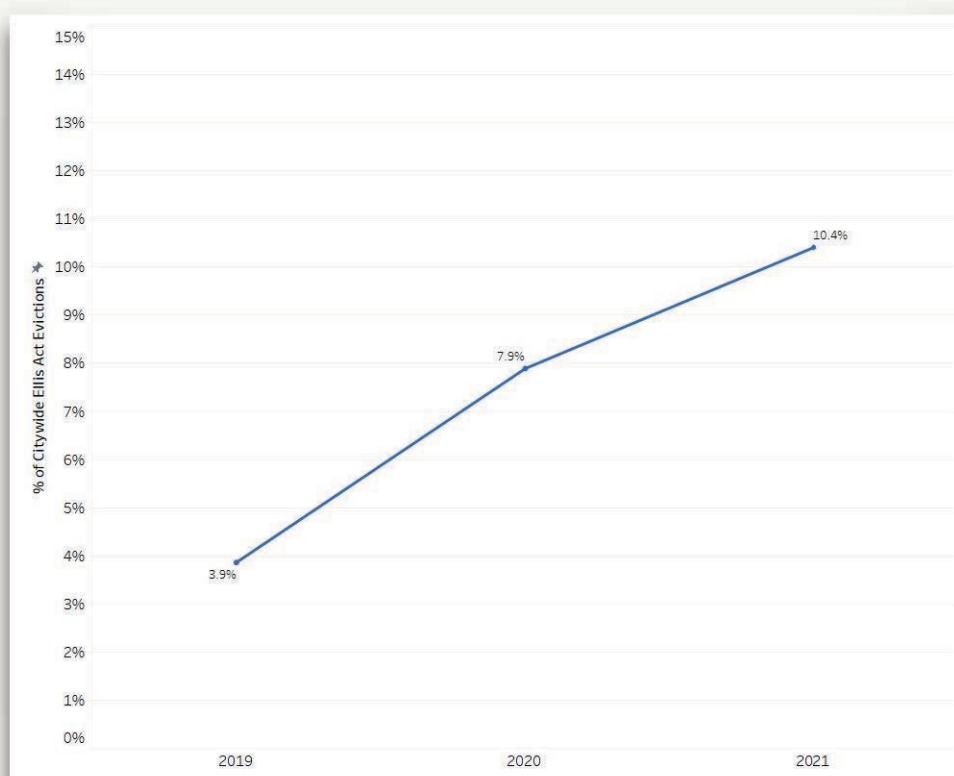
[12] Employment data comes from 2018 and represents an estimate of the number of workers who may have been working in these industries when the pandemic struck during 2020.

[13] Eviction moratoriums for LA County renters will expire in January 2022.

Despite the moratorium on “no-fault” evictions, over 600 of such evictions¹⁴ covered under the Ellis Act¹⁵ took place across the City between March 2020 and July 2021 (City of Los Angeles Housing Department, 2021).¹⁶ Furthermore, the share of Ellis Act evictions that took place in South LA grew significantly during the pandemic. In 2019, 61 Ellis Act evictions took place in South LA - representing 4% of such evictions across the City. In 2020, 48 Ellis Act evictions occurred in the neighborhood, making up 8% of the City’s total evictions - more than double the share of the previous year. This trend has continued through 2021. As of July, Ellis Act evictions that took place in South LA represented 10% of citywide Ellis Act Evictions. The chart below shows the Ellis Act eviction trends in South LA and the city of LA.

Ellis Act Evictions in South LA as a Share of Citywide Ellis Act Evictions, 2019 - 2021

Source: Los Angeles Housing Department



Note: 2021 data is through the month of July only. 2019 and 2020 represent full years of data.

[14] Number of evictions refers to number of individual housing units (rather than properties).

[15] In California, the Ellis Act allows landlords to evict tenants from rent-stabilized properties if they intend to demolish the unit or sell it rather than rent it. Any eviction carried out through the Ellis Act is therefore a no-fault eviction, and contributes to displacement and housing affordability concerns.

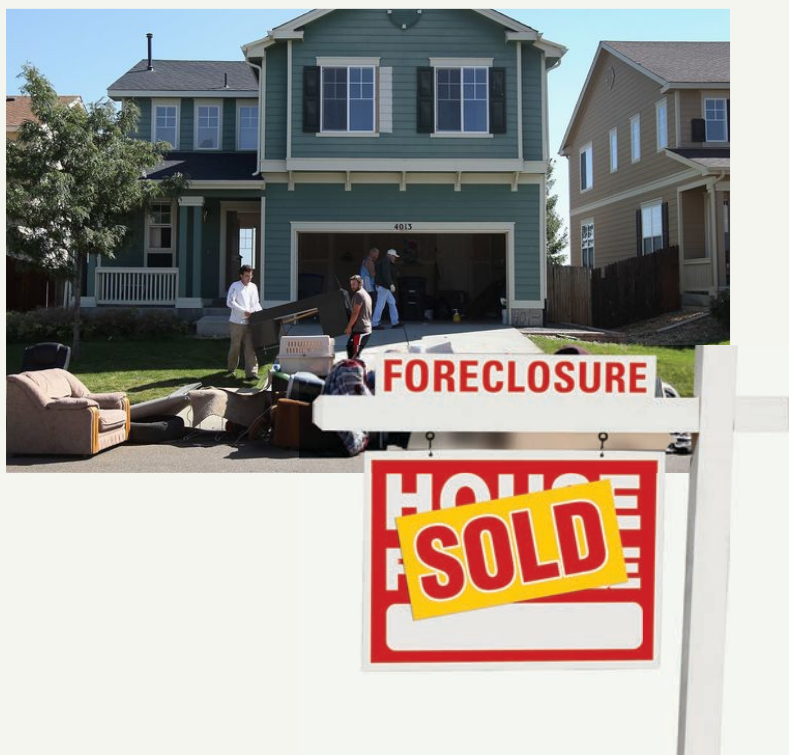
[16] Data on Ellis Act Evictions excludes the City of Compton. Refer to Appendix 2 for more details.

It is difficult to estimate the true prevalence of evictions in Los Angeles beyond Ellis Act Evictions, in part because data on many formal evictions is court-protected information. Further, even if one could access all formal court measures related to evictions, it is likely that many other evictions occur through informal and/or illegal means. While data on informal evictions is limited, one study from Milwaukee found that for every one formal court eviction, two informal evictions also take place (Desmond & Shollenberger, 2015).

One insight into the possible prevalence of informal eviction activity and tenant harassment is the rate of 911 calls regarding landlord/tenant disputes made to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

These calls include issues like landlords or property managers shutting off utilities, changing locks, removing doors, harassing tenants verbally or in writing, or otherwise implementing informal eviction tactics. Prior to the pandemic, call rates about landlord/tenant disputes from South LA have been consistently higher than the citywide rate. In 2019, South LA had a rate of 148 calls compared to the City's 49.¹⁷ These numbers increased in 2020, up to a rate of 172 per 10,000 housing units in South LA and 57 in LA City generally (City of LA, 2019).

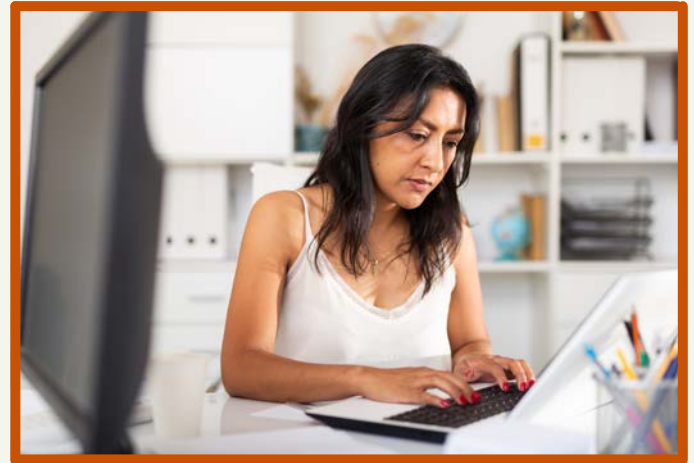
[17] Data on landlord/tenant dispute calls excludes the City of Compton. Refer to Appendix 2 for more details.



This increase suggests that even as many measures were in place to prevent most formal evictions over the course of the pandemic, instances of landlord tenant conflict and anti-tenant harassment rose in South LA during that time period.

While South LA tenants have struggled with both formal evictions and conflicts with landlords during the pandemic, homeowners have faced the threat of foreclosure. Foreclosure rates have been consistently higher in South LA than the City of LA in recent years.

In 2019, South LA experienced 41 foreclosures per 10,000 households compared to 29 citywide.¹⁸ Furthermore, foreclosure rates did not slow during COVID. During 2020, South LA experienced a nearly identical foreclosure rate at 40 foreclosures per 10,000 households, while the citywide rate decreased slightly to 26 (City of LA, 2020). In addition to displacing homeowners, foreclosures also risk the naturally occurring affordable housing stock.¹⁹ If resident-owned housing is being rented, foreclosures can also lead to the displacement of local tenants.



[18] Data on foreclosures excludes the City of Compton. Refer to Appendix 2 for more details.

[19] Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) refers to residential rental properties that maintain low rents without federal subsidy. The relatively low rents of these properties can be attributed to older buildings (typically built between the 1940s and 1990s) with fewer amenities. NOAH is the most common affordable housing in the U.S. (NOAH Impact Fund, 2021).

HOMELESSNESS

One of the direct impacts of the affordable housing crisis in Los Angeles has been an increase in homelessness. The population experiencing homelessness is disproportionately high in South LA compared to the County; more than 10% of the people experiencing homelessness across the County are located in South LA, which makes up less than 5% of the County's housed community (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 2020). The vast majority of people experiencing homelessness in South LA are unsheltered: as of 2020, approximately 4,500 people were experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the region. The number of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) beds in South LA has been increasing in recent years, as of 2019 - there were 920 such beds to house people experiencing chronic homelessness.

The Point in Time Homeless Count was unable to proceed in 2020 due to the pandemic, and as a result, local officials have been unable to fully understand the pandemic's impact on homelessness. However, given the economic and housing instability that COVID-19 has brought on, particularly among families and households that were already economically vulnerable, homelessness should remain front of mind as we continue to gain an understanding of the full impact on South LA residents.

The final section of this report examines the impact of COVID-19 on families and children through the lens of education.



EDUCATION ACCESS & QUALITY

K-12 EDUCATION

Families with children under age 18 make up a much higher percentage of households in the South LA region (43%) compared to the county (28%). Prior to the pandemic, South LA experienced higher rates of chronic absenteeism among its K-12 students than the City or County average. The California Education Code defines a “chronic absentee” as a student who is absent on 10 percent or more of the school days that they are enrolled in for a school year (California Department of Education, 2021). In 2019, 21% of South LA students were considered chronically absent compared to 17% of students Citywide and 12% of students Countywide (California Department of Education, 2019). Chronic absenteeism is typically not just a measure of students skipping school. Any number of reasons could cause a student to be chronically absent including housing insecurity, unreliable transportation, and lack of access to health care. Data analysis from the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) shows that chronic absence is associated with lower academic performance, even after controlling for ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status (Chang & Romero, 2008).



Remote learning during 2020 presented a range of new challenges for K-12 student attendance and achievement. Reliable internet and device access quickly became points of disparity. A UCLA study found that nationwide, low-income households have been most impacted by digital access issues during COVID-19, with two in five households reporting limited access to the internet or a computer during the pandemic - more than twice the rate for high-income households (Ong, 2020). Across LA County prior to the pandemic, students of color were more likely to be without access to high-speed internet and a computer at home. A report by the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity found that in 2018 in LA County, 36% of Latino students and 31% of Black students lack access to high-speed internet and a computer at home, compared with only 11% of white students (Pastor & Scoggins, 2020). This racial disparity in access to technology has been termed the “digital divide”. According to American Community Survey data, as of 2019, South LA households were less likely to have access to the internet (28% of households lacked access) or a personal computer (13% of households lacked access) compared to the countywide average of 15% and 8% respectively. This disparity became considerably more critical when the shift to remote learning meant classroom access, as well as homework, was dependent on computers and internet access.

Districts including LAUSD distributed laptops and tablets to students in need in an attempt to reduce the gap, and worked with internet companies to provide free access to hotspots and waive monthly fees. However, strain on the digital infrastructure from the number of people working and attending school from home added complication. There is also low service coverage in certain LA neighborhoods, making reliable internet uncertain for some households even if they technically have access.

In neighborhoods where overcrowded housing is common, infrastructure is especially strained, and many school-aged children have struggled to find the space for uninterrupted instruction. A report from the USC Rossier School of Education and the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism found that only 1 in 3 families surveyed said they had a place free of distraction for remote learning (Aguilar & Galperin, 2020). A household is considered “overcrowded” if there is more than one person per one room living in the house. As of 2019, 26% of South LA households were overcrowded -- over double the city and countywide rates (ACS). Additionally, the success of remote learning is partly dependent on the participation of parents, a difficulty for low-income families who often had to continue working outside the home through the pandemic.

Despite these remote learning challenges, high school graduation rates in South LA improved during the 2020 school year compared to previous years. In the 2019-20 school year, 80% of South LA’s seniors graduated -- an increase from 78% in the 2017-18 school year.

These numbers are slightly below the district-wide graduation rate of 82% in the 2019-20 school year (California Department of Education). This improvement is a continuation of a gradual district-wide trend upwards in recent years, so while it is potentially notable that the pandemic did not significantly interrupt the upwards progress of district schools, the increase in graduation should not be attributed to the pandemic (Education Data Partnership, 2020).

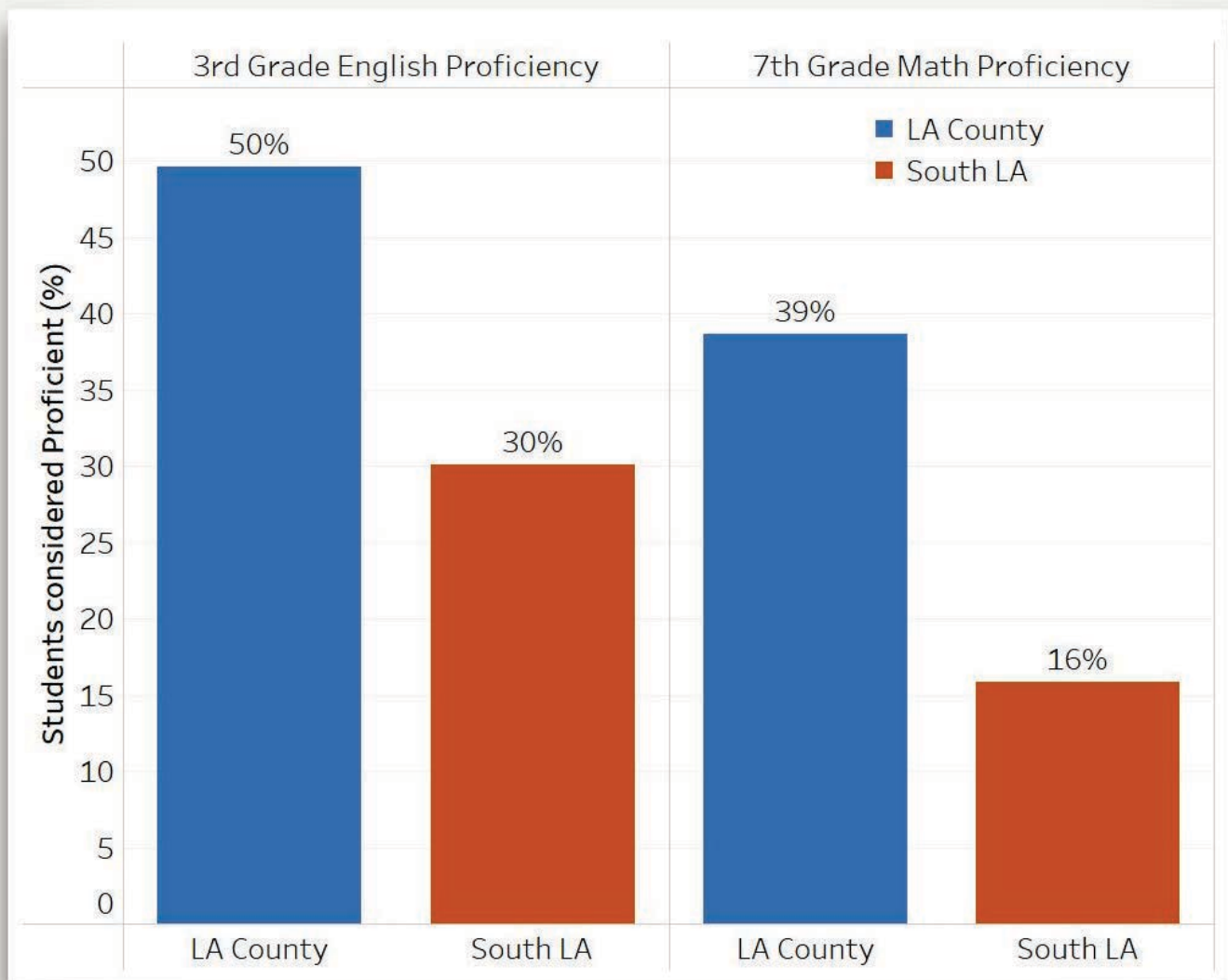
There is also reason to believe that younger students, whose progress is not visible in statistics like graduation rates, may have been more negatively impacted by the pandemic. The barriers to remote education outlined above are particularly concerning for young students learning critical skills. A report on LAUSD students found that students in kindergarten and first grade experienced the most significant learning losses across K-12 students, and young students of color specifically have fallen disproportionately behind in learning how to read (Estrada-Miller & Perla, 2021). There is evidence that students of color, students with disabilities, students from lower-income families or families without housing, and those learning English were set back more significantly at all levels compared to more advantaged students. These setbacks are likely to exacerbate already existing education gaps.



Prior to the pandemic, students in South LA scored consistently lower on proficiency exams in both English and Math than students in LA County as a whole. In 2019, just 30% of third grade students in South LA were considered proficient in English compared to 50% countywide (California Department of Education). Similarly, just 16% of 7th grade students in South LA were considered proficient in math compared to 39% countywide. In recent years, younger students scored consistently lower than high-school students on their age-level exams across the County. These gaps prior to COVID-19 are especially concerning in light of the fact that younger students and students in South LA faced a disproportionate number of barriers over the course of the pandemic likely to contribute to further broadening these inequities.

Third Grade English Proficiency & 7th Grade Math Proficiency in 2019, LA County & South LA

Source: California Department of Education



COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

In addition to K-12 students, older students at the post-secondary level were also hit by COVID. Over the last decade, postsecondary education costs have been rising, making attending college increasingly financially untenable for a large number of students. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that it costs over \$28,000 per year to attend a four-year college institution, and that even at public universities, costs to attend have risen by nearly 30% over the last decade (2021). Given these quickly rising costs at four-year universities, community college has emerged as an important postsecondary institution for many low-income students as a lower cost, more flexible alternative to four-year colleges.

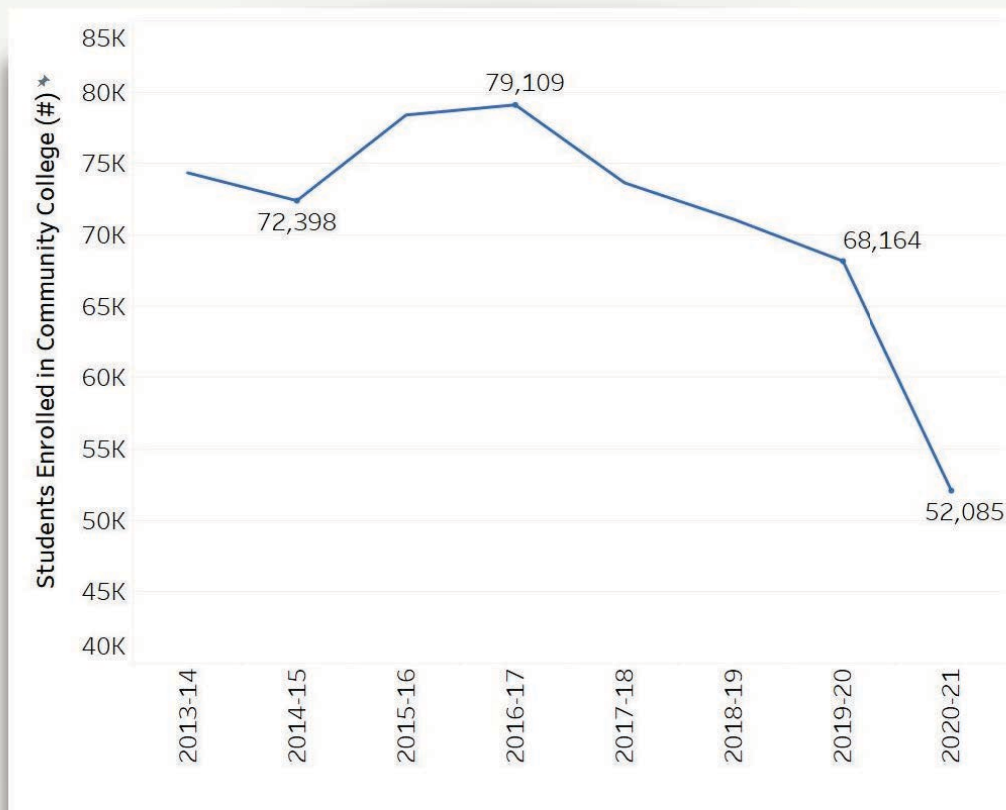
Prior to the pandemic in the 2017-18 school year, the three community colleges²⁰ in closest proximity to South LA had a combined enrollment of over 73,600 students. The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on enrollment figures, with enrollment declining nearly 30% compared to pre-pandemic levels. During the 2020-21 school year, just over 52,000 students were enrolled in South LA Community colleges as shown in the line graph below (California Community Colleges Data Mart, 2017-2021). These drops in enrollment have significant implications for South LA residents in accessing living wage jobs in “middle-skill” occupations such as bookkeeping, legal support, and social assistance. A recent report by the Center for a Competitive Workforce estimates that there will be over 20,000 job openings per year that offer a living wage for community college graduates in the greater Los Angeles area. However, the report found that community college completions in relevant programs have not been keeping pace with the number of projected available jobs (Sedgwick, et al., 2020).



[20] Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, Los Angeles Southwest College, and Compton College

Community College Enrollment in South LA, 2014 - 2021

Source: California Community Colleges Data Mart



Despite the fact that economic recession has historically been met with an increase in community college enrollment, similar decreases in community college enrollment during the pandemic have been observed nationwide, and they have been more pronounced than the decreases in four-year college enrollment (Sedmak, 2020). In a recent survey, community college students cited fear of catching COVID-19 as a reason for not enrolling or continuing in community college (Fishman & Nguyen, 2021). High rates of unemployment have also contributed to the drops in community college enrollment, leading to affordability barriers. Many were also concerned that online education decreased the quality of their courses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Though the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt across Los Angeles County, there was a critical effect on the South LA region. Barriers to crucial services existed prior to the pandemic as a result of decades of systemically racist policies and practices and disinvestment, all of which were exacerbated by the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. The virus and its effects have been especially felt at the community level by families in South LA, many of whom were already disproportionately negatively impacted by the structural barriers outlined throughout this report. A series of recommendations has been developed from the research outlined in this report that would directly support families, community members, service providers, and small businesses in post-COVID-19 recovery efforts. These remedies aim to support the community in recovering from the challenges of the pandemic while improving the overall socio-economic conditions for residents to thrive.

There is an urgent need for equitable investment of resources to strengthen South LA's economic recovery from COVID-19 and to position residents and businesses to benefit economically from ongoing local development and major sporting and cultural events that are coming to the region. Public-private local partnership models that build on the strength of organizations and community members already doing essential work in their communities can facilitate and expedite the distribution of resources needed for COVID-19 recovery efforts.

A recent example of this type of partnership model is the City of Los Angeles Mayor's initiative to distribute "Angeleno Cards," debit cards with emergency COVID-related financial assistance, to more than 100,000 Los Angeles residents regardless of immigration status. Through this initiative, essential financial support was quickly distributed by a network of trusted, existing community and resource centers across the City. The success of the Angeleno Card initiative is a testament to the value of engaging, collaborating, and funding trusted community assets that can quickly and effectively serve their constituents.

A proportionate response is required to meet the needs of the South LA community in an equitable post-COVID-19 recovery. A strong network of existing social and physical infrastructure is positioned to support the community in recovery efforts and operationalize future funding, resources, and investment from public and private institutions to meet the community's disproportionate need. The historical barriers outlined in this report speak to the staggering systemic challenges that the South Los Angeles region has faced for more than a century.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on low-income communities of color and this report shows that the impact in South Los Angeles has been particularly significant. As such, policy and funding interventions to support the South LA region in its recovery should account for both historical inequities as well as those brought by the pandemic.

Concretely, this report proposes the following recommendations:

1. Increase access to preventative health care, including targeted information campaigns on insurance and vaccine options.
2. Prepare and connect small businesses to non-predatory lending opportunities, technical support, and other resources for growth, including opportunities through local development projects and infrastructure improvements.
3. Prepare and connect residents to regional training and employment opportunities in high-growth sectors that lead to family-sustaining wages.
4. Increase the supply of affordable and permanent supportive housing and public supports to address the disproportionate homelessness rates of the region and increase housing stability of economically vulnerable families and individuals.
5. Improve educational pathways for high school completion, college access and persistence, and technical training opportunities, including equitable access to technology and broadband.
6. Above all, ensure that the resources described above are distributed equitably, including for immigrant populations regardless of citizenship status.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Data Sources Table

Dataset	Original Data Source	Years Used
Population; Age Distribution; Race/Ethnicity; Uninsured Rate; Unemployment; Immigration; Linguistic Isolation; Public Benefits; Household Types; Computer and Internet Access; Overcrowding; Rent Burden; Homeownership	American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year estimates	2019
COVID-19 Cases, Deaths & Vaccinations	Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LA DPH)	2020, 2021
Health Conditions (COVID-19 Risk Factors)	U.S. Center of Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)	2018
Hospital Locations & Beds	California Health and Human Services (CHHS)	2019
Chronic Absenteeism; High School Graduation Rates; Student Proficiency	California State Department of Education	2017-2019
Community College Enrollment	California Community Colleges Data Mart	2017-2021
Jobs by Industry; Workers by Industry	Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES)	2018
Business Openings and Closures; Foreclosures; Landlord/Tenant Dispute 911 Calls	City of Los Angeles Open Data Portal	2010-2020

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loans	U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)	2020, 2021
Bank Locations	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)	2020
Credit Union Locations	National Credit Union Administration (NCUA)	2020
Typical Home Value	Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI)	2011, 2019, 2020, 2021
Ellis Act Evictions	City of Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD)	2019-2021
Homelessness, Permanent Supportive Housing Beds	Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)	2020
Acres of Parks and Greenspace	Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment	2016

APPENDIX 2: Data Analysis Methodology Notes

Datasets Excluding Compton

Several datasets used for this report were made available by the City of Los Angeles, and as a result, the portion of the report geography that includes the City of Compton was not represented in those datasets. These datasets include: business openings and closures, foreclosures, landlord/tenant dispute 911 calls, and Ellis Act evictions.

American Community Survey 5-year estimates

All data from the American Community Survey (ACS) are 5-year estimates, or an average of data collected over a five year period. 5-year estimates are used to increase the reliability of the data at small geographies like neighborhoods and census tracts. The years shown in this report represent the final year of the five year average (e.g. “2019” represents 2015-2019 data).

Population data for all rate variables (i.e. those that are calculated per 10,000 or 100,000 residents) was pulled from the 2019 5-year estimates of the ACS.

COVID-19 Cases, Deaths & Vaccinations

All data pertaining to COVID-19 was “crosswalked” from geographic boundaries provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) to the neighborhoods used on the Neighborhood Data for Social Change (NDSC) COVID-19 Dashboard. Crosswalks were developed using a centroid-based spatial join. Countywide data excludes Pasadena and Long Beach.

Eleven NDSC neighborhoods fall in the South Los Angeles boundary for this report: Historic South Central, Central-Alameda, South Park, Watts, Florence-Firestone, Florence, Green Meadows, Willowbrook, West Compton, Compton. COVID-19 cases, deaths and vaccination rates were aggregated across these eleven neighborhoods to provide figures for the larger report geography.

Weekly new COVID cases over time were drawn from LA County DPH community-level data downloaded by the USC Price Center daily (and later weekly) throughout the course of the pandemic. In instances of missing data, we used a moving average imputation to fill in data and create uniform weekly intervals. We verified the validity of this imputation method by comparing Countywide trends of our modified dataset to the unaltered Countywide data (i.e. with no dates dropped or imputed).

For more information about COVID-19 data on NDSC, visit <https://la.myneighborhooddata.org/covid-19/>.

Point-Level Datasets

Datasets that came from the original source at a point-based (address-level) location include: hospital locations/beds, high school graduation rates, community college enrollment, business openings and closures, foreclosures, Ellis Act evictions, landlord/tenant dispute 911 calls, paycheck protection program loans, bank locations, and credit union locations. Each of these point-level datasets were spatially joined to the 101 census tracts comprising South LA and then aggregated to the larger report geography.

Although Compton College technically fell slightly out of the report geography, data about Compton College enrollment was included in the report.

Typical Home Value & Permanent Supportive Housing Units

Data for typical home value and permanent supportive housing units were “crosswalked” from zip codes to census tracts using crosswalks provided by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and aggregated to the larger report geography. Data from the following zip codes were included: 90001, 90002, 90003, 90011, 90059, 90061, 90220, 90222, 90248.

Chronic Absenteeism & Student Proficiency

The chronic absenteeism and student proficiency datasets were aggregated to census tracts using a population-weighted crosswalk between the school attendance and census tract boundaries, and then aggregated to the larger report geography.

High School Graduation Rate

High school graduation rates are four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates (ACGR). The California Department of Education (CDE) summary of this data is shown below:

“The Four-Year ACGR is the number of students who graduate from high school in four years with a regular high school diploma, divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. The four-year cohort is based on the number of students who enter grade 9 for the first time adjusted by adding into the cohort any student who transfers in later during grade 9 or during the next three years and subtracting any student from the cohort who transfers out, emigrates to another country, transfers to a prison or juvenile facility, or dies during that same period.” (CDE, 2021).

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