



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF CHILD PROTECTION

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November 28, 2017

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair  
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From: Judge Michael Nash (Ret.)   
Executive Director, Office of Child Protection

### ***A Portrait of Los Angeles County***

On November 29, 2017, Measure of America, in partnership with the Office of Child Protection (OCP), the departments of Public Health and Children and Family Services, and 15 philanthropic funders, will release a comprehensive report on county well-being, *A Portrait of Los Angeles County* (attached).

Measure of America, a nonpartisan research initiative of the nonprofit Social Science Research Council, provides evidence-based, user-friendly tools for measuring well-being. They have published "Portraits" for other jurisdictions around the country, including two California statewide reports and reports for the counties of Sonoma and Marin. The *Portrait of Los Angeles County (Portrait)* measures well-being by utilizing the American Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a conceptual framework developed by Nobel laureate in economic science Dr. Amartya Sen that combines health, education, and income indicators into a single understandable metric to rank well-being in U.S. states, counties, neighborhoods, and census tracts. The human development approach looks at how interconnected issues act together to shape an individual's opportunities in fundamental areas of well-being. This approach has been effective around the world in breaking down policy-making silos and fostering holistic solutions to complex problems.

As no countywide well-being measure currently exists, the data produced by the *Portrait* fills an important gap. Our current data and reports too often treat health, education, and income as separate issues, leading to fragmented and isolated responses by County departments and others. The data provided by the *Portrait* is an important instrument for advancing the County's work across several departments in a more coordinated and effective way, in line with the County's strategic plan. Furthermore, the *Portrait* is an integral part of the County's prevention work, as outlined in the Office of Child Protection's *Paving the Road to Safety for Our Children: A Prevention Plan for Los*



*Angeles County*. The report helps fulfill two strategies outlined in that plan: 1) monitoring the overall well-being of communities; and 2) developing standardized measures of prevention to evaluate the County's efforts. By systematically measuring health and longevity, educational attainment, and economic stability in our region, Los Angeles County can better target family-strengthening prevention efforts in different communities.

While the philanthropic community in Los Angeles raised the funds necessary to conduct the research and publish the report, best practices have found that producing a *Portrait* in and of itself does not automatically achieve the policy changes possible with this powerful tool. Jurisdictions that successfully utilized their "Portraits" had a dedicated capacity to engage key stakeholders concerned with well-being policies and programs, including County departments, policymakers, community-based organizations, and advocates. Therefore, the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships applied for and received (on behalf of the OCP) a Quality and Productivity Grant to fund a part-time consultant to facilitate robust County and community stakeholder engagement around this report for over a year following the report's release, as well as for the development and implementation of the *Portrait's* recommendations.

In May of 2017, the Office of Child Protection convened an Advisory Committee of high-level representatives from the County departments of Children and Family Services, Public Health, Public Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Probation, Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services, and the Chief Executive Office, along with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships, the City of Los Angeles, the Children's Data Network, and First 5 LA. This group was led, convened, and facilitated by the OCP part-time consultant, Cheryl Wold, beginning in August of 2017. The consultant also developed and implemented a strategy to reach new partners and nurture existing ones, as well as drafted sections of the report.

Through the advisory group, the OCP consultant and Measure of America conducted a robust process of stakeholder engagement. This included asking departments to provide important contextual information around the *Portrait's* data. Furthermore, the advisory group developed a set of measurable targets for addressing inequality and disparities in well-being throughout the County (shown in the Conclusion section of the attached). The overall goal is to raise the current Los Angeles County HDI score of 5.43 (out of 10) to 6.43 by 2025, in addition to narrowing the gaps between geographic areas and racial-ethnic groups. Based on the advisory group's recommendations, the *Portrait* identifies 10 high-value, evidence-based areas of investment across health, education, and income that offer great promise for narrowing place-based, racial-ethnic, and gender disparities and improving the overall well-being of County residents.

The advisory group set this goal to energize existing efforts, stimulate new initiatives, and mobilize agencies, organizations, and communities to pull together toward a common end: improving well-being for all Los Angeles County residents and addressing well-being disparities in concrete, measureable ways. This goal provides a framework

for community outreach and engagement and for shaping collaborative partnerships, policies, and initiatives.

The release of the *Portrait* does not signal the end of this exciting work. After the report's launch, the OCP consultant will continue to organize events to engage, energize, and build capacity among important stakeholders. The consultant will also train County personnel and community stakeholders to understand the *Portrait's* findings and methodology so they can utilize this data in their own initiatives. (For example, Parks and Recreation will be utilizing *Portrait* data to inform its business operation/strategic plan.) Furthermore, the consultant will develop steps to continue facilitating partnerships between Advisory Committee members and other stakeholders to help achieve the goals set in the *Portrait*. This will include heavily engaging the community, Prevention and Aftercare Networks, and Best Start Communities to move forward the *Portrait's* recommendations to improve well-being for all Los Angeles County residents.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 893-1152 or by email at [mnash@ocp.lacounty.gov](mailto:mnash@ocp.lacounty.gov), or your staff may contact Barbara Spyrou at (213) 893-2508 or by email at [bspyrou@ocp.lacounty.gov](mailto:bspyrou@ocp.lacounty.gov).

MN:CDM:BS:eih

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# **ATTACHMENT I**