

# THE LONG BEACH PEOPLE'S BUDGET PROPOSAL – FY 22

Since 2018, the People's Budget campaign has forced conversations and action for equity and justice in the Long Beach city budget. Because Black, Latinx, Cambodian, Filipino, White, and other members of the community came together, Long Beach started reversing persistent patterns of disinvesting in communities of color. The past year of the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter uprisings against police brutality have awakened more people to the value of community and humanity. The generational impacts of the still-ongoing pandemic have only widened the existing racial wealth and health gaps. We are all bearing witness to systemic oppressions driven by racism, capitalism, and white supremacy.

Today we are at a critical juncture in the long-term recovery and healing of our city and our nation. With hundreds of millions of federal and state dollars coming into Long Beach, our communities need a just recovery—a People's Recovery—that puts Black lives at the center, prioritizes and protects marginalized communities, and fundamentally reimagines community safety.

As a multicultural and multigenerational alliance, we are calling on Mayor Robert Garcia, all nine City Councilmembers, and City Manager Tom Modica to:

(1) adopt the People's Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 and (2) structurally reform the City budget process to enable earlier and deeper participation from marginalized communities who are most impacted by budget decisions. Black Lives Matter, and all our communities cannot wait any longer.

## 1) DIVEST FROM THE LONG BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Defund the Long Beach Police Department to end their pattern of systemic violence: targeting low-income communities of color, criminalizing youth and poverty, and separating families.**

American Policing—born from slave patrols—is not the answer to our communities' most pressing needs, including affordable housing, jobs, and health. Divest from police and reduce force size. Ban surveillance technologies like license plate readers and facial recognition devices that are laden with racial bias, as they are often used against Black people and inaccurately identify Black faces, especially those of Black women, and are also too often used to target social justice activists and undocumented people. Redirect resources to basic needs and essential services so that Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and all people can live successful, healthy lives.

## 2) REINVEST IN BLACK LIVES, COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, & MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

**Honoring the recognition that racism is a public health crisis, we must reallocate funds and direct additional resources to community-led priorities that create health, opportunity, community, and justice:**

### 1. Reimagine community safety without police terror that is grounded in transformative justice and Black Empowerment:

- Invest in community-led crisis response, violence reduction, and prevention strategies that are unrelated to police, specifically the alternative emergency response teams called for in the City's Racial Equity and Reconciliation Report.
- Provide reparations to Black/African American people as well as victims and their families of racial profiling and police violence prominent during the war on drugs era.
- Prioritize Black business ownership in the cannabis industry, including but not limited to cultivation, production, and distribution. Cannabis tax revenue dollars should be allocated directly to the Cannabis Social Equity Program and the Health Department, instead of to the General Fund. All funding from cannabis taxes must be redistributed toward the restoration of wealth opportunities stolen by the war on drugs and mass incarceration, and in turn, provided directly to impacted Long Beach families and communities.
- Increase the Health Department budget specifically for family reunification and reentry programs, Black infant mortality, mental health, homelessness services, and other programs to address systemic needs beyond equity toward liberation.
- Invest in Black community-led residential, commercial, and recreational spaces and programs to support stronger connections among neighbors and small businesses.

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- 2. Citywide Rental Housing Division:** Establish and structurally fund a fully staffed Rental Housing Division within the Development Services Department to communicate with both tenants and landlords, issue objective bulletins about the laws, monitor and enforce tenant protection laws, centralize information and forms, and administer a tenant habitability program in conjunction with the code enforcement bureau.
- 3. Right to Counsel for All Renters:** Fully fund the Long Beach Right to Counsel program to provide legal resources, outreach, and education to Long Beach renters, regardless of immigration status, effectively reducing evictions, preventing displacement and homelessness, preserving affordable housing, and stabilizing communities.
- 4. Community Land Trusts (CLTs):** Invest deeply in community land trusts to create permanently affordable housing while allowing low-income residents to build generational wealth as homeowners. CLTs play a critical role in stabilizing communities of color and countering market-driven gentrification and displacement.
- 5. Language Access:** Dedicate adequate staff to fully implement the City's Language Access Policy consistently throughout the city and finally create a culture of language justice. Permanently move interpretation and translation services in-house to provide faster and higher quality interpretation and translation for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) residents. Provide Spanish and Khmer interpretation at all City Council and Charter Commission meetings without having to make an advance request. Provide community-based organizations who work with LEP residents ongoing stipends to conduct outreach about the policy.
- 6. Youth Recovery:** Create an age-friendly city by boosting funding to implement the Long Beach Youth and Emerging Adults Strategic Plan to support youth, including transitional-aged youth and disengaged youth. Increase funding for the Hero Program for Youth Workforce Development, Project Labor Agreement community outreach, and youth access to physical and mental health resources and services. Set aside funding for childcare subsidies for a just and equitable recovery for youth and families.
- 7. Older Adult Protections:** Create an age-friendly city by establishing and structurally funding the Office of Aging in the Health Department. Set-aside rental assistance and small business recovery funds specifically for seniors. Build a new senior center and invest in long-term care workforce development.
- 8. Universal Legal Representation for Immigrants:** Boost funding to the Long Beach Justice Fund to provide free universal legal representation to immigrant residents facing deportation, regardless of their background. Publicly funded deportation defense programs like the Long Beach Justice Fund keep families and communities together who are criminalized and targeted by over-policing and increased immigration enforcement.
- 9. Digital Inclusion:** Invest in the implementation of the City's Digital Inclusion Roadmap, specifically expanding high-speed Internet access in low-income and senior communities, free public WiFi, and free access to technology devices.

## ADOPT THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET IN LONG BEACH FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

**The City's budget is a moral document that reflects our City's values and priorities. Adopting the People's Budget is more than just a shift in the way the City has done business—it is a pathway to ending anti-Blackness and structural racism in the City, undoing historical disinvestment that has continued for generations, and moving us closer toward a Long Beach that is safe and healthy for all.**

The People's Budget campaign is led by Black Lives Matter Long Beach, Black Agency, the Housing Justice Coalition, the Language Access Coalition, the Invest in Youth Campaign, Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition, Long Beach Gray Panthers, LA Voice, and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE).

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