

LA CITY & LAUSD IRC | RECOMMENDATIONS BRIEF



APPROACH TO DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

OUR LA integrates a racial and economic equity lens in developing policy recommendations for an LA City and LAUSD Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) centered in the experiences, needs, and priorities of low-income BIPOC Angelenos.

The IRC Policy Workgroup developed recommendations from resident feedback gathered in March through:

- Community surveys
- Four in-person community convenings held in the Eastside, Central Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, and South Los Angeles

The workgroup analyzed the findings and themes from the survey and the convenings, conducted additional research, and integrated our coalition's values and goals into the drafting of recommendations. This document summarizes the primary goals our policy recommendations seek to accomplish.

These recommendations will be presented to community partners and residents across the city in late summer to gather feedback and further refine them before submitting to the LA City Council.

ORIGINS OF OUR LA

The LA City scandal has caused deep wounds across communities and exposed inequities in how city government operates. While the political and civic leaders involved in the scandal must be held accountable, intercommunity healing and a more equitable future will require more than just resignations. A new vision of city governance is needed, and that vision needs to be rooted in and shaped by the perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income Angelenos. In collaboration with residents, OUR LA will work to realize this vision and advance a community-based reform agenda.

OUR LA is a multiracial, multi-generational, and multi-intersectional coalition of community-based organizations and racial justice advocates committed to community voice, multiracial solidarity, power-building, racial equity, structural reform, and transparency.



PRIMARY GOALS FOR AN LA CITY AND LAUSD IRC

OUR LA's policy recommendations seek to:

- **Eliminate barriers** for BIPOC, low-income, immigrant, youth, non-English proficient speakers, and other impacted communities **to apply for commissions** and **fully engage** throughout the redistricting process.
- **Ensure commissions reflect** a robust and expansive intersection of **LA's diverse populations**, cultures, languages, regions, and socio-economic groups.
- **Secure sufficient funding, resources, staffing**, training, and implementation timeline to set up commissioners and communities for success.
- **Enhance meaningful public engagement by partnering with and funding CBOs** and other trusted messengers to lead educational outreach and mobilization efforts, especially with underrepresented/impacted communities.
- **Codify transparency, accountability**, and values centered on **equity and inclusion**.



LAUSD-SPECIFIC GOALS

- **Center youth and parent/caregiver** participation throughout the redistricting process.
- **Ensure youth are decision-makers** in the process as official members on the commission with a defined role & scope of work.

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LA CITY & LAUSD IRCS | FULL RECOMMENDATIONS



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The workgroup analyzed the findings and themes from the survey and the convenings, conducted additional research, and integrated our coalition's values and goals into the drafting of the recommendations.

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GOAL 1: ELIMINATE BARRIERS FOR BIPOC, LOW-INCOME, IMMIGRANT, YOUTH, NON-ENGLISH PROFICIENT SPEAKERS, AND OTHER IMPACTED COMMUNITIES TO APPLY FOR COMMISSIONS AND FULLY ENGAGE THROUGHOUT THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS.

• Inclusive criteria to apply for commissions

- Clarify that applicants do not need to have or show any formal education or experience to be qualified to serve.
- Clarify that applicants need not use English as a primary language. This will help commissions engage more meaningfully with the majority of Angelenos who speak a language other than English at home.
- Applicants must demonstrate a record of civic engagement, which may include but not be exclusively limited to having voted in recent elections. Requiring a voting record bars from participation any non-U.S. citizens and restricts participation by formerly incarcerated persons. The city already has a model for a broader, more inclusive definition of civic engagement in its Neighborhood Councils.

• Inclusive public hearings & meetings

- The commissions must host a MINIMUM of 3 regional meetings at every phase of the redistricting process. This facilitates community involvement and increases outreach by the commissions at every stage of the process.
- At least 80% of public meetings and hearings must be held in the evenings on weekdays and weekends.
- All public meetings/hearings must be made accessible online, phone, and social media.
- Provide at least 14-day notice for all public meetings and hearings.
- Facilitate a queue of public speakers across virtual and in-person formats to ensure equitable participation of the public attending in-person, via phone, or online. For example:
 - Timeslots should be made available for the public to sign up to provide public comment;
 - A queue should be set in place to inform how many individuals are ahead of the caller;
 - Multiple blocks for public comment should be set throughout the agenda, including at the start and end of a public meeting/hearing.
- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment where stakeholders and residents feel safe, respected, and comfortable in being themselves and expressing all aspects of their identities.

• Language Access

- Interpretation & translation services MUST be done by a team of professionals hired by the IRC that span all languages spoken by at least 5% of the population as the minimum threshold based on the Bilingual Service Act (§7296.2). Google Translate or AI alone is NOT sufficient.
- Language interpretation services shall be provided to all languages that meet the 5% threshold.
 - For languages that do not meet the minimum threshold, commission webpages shall have a user-friendly

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GOAL 1: CONTINUED

section to request interpretation services for all public meetings/hearings. Constituents must submit request before attending a meeting.

- Commissioners must work with CBOs to inform the translation of outreach materials to be culturally appropriate and effective, as well as to help disseminate these materials across communities.

• **Universal Access**

- Commissions must ensure universal accessibility that is inclusive of working class families, non-English speakers, and persons with disabilities.
- Accessibility applies to both in-person and virtual/teleconference hearings.
- All meetings must have a sign language interpreter.
- Immediate technical assistance must be made available to access virtual meetings and public comment online and via phone.
- Provide various formats to submit public comment: in-person, via virtual/remote participation, text message, voice recording (can be automatically transcribed), written formats, social media, etc.
- Create culturally responsive and culturally proficient marketing materials tailored by demographic groups (e.g., immigrants, LGBTQ+, different ableism, youth, elder, race/ethnicity, tribal/indigenous identity, socioeconomic status, monolingual non-English speakers, low technology savviness, etc.)
- Establish a suggestion box/system to report barriers for community input that would be reviewed regularly to improve community sessions.
- Literacy access - Decrease governmental jargon and use simple, clear language in all communications and be cognizant of overusing acronyms.
- For Angelenos in digital deserts, the commissions must partner with CBOs, public libraries, schools, churches, etc. to set up “virtual hubs,” so residents may view and participate in public meetings/hearings from these locations.



GOAL 2: ENSURE COMMISSIONS REFLECT A ROBUST AND EXPANSIVE INTERSECTION OF LA'S DIVERSE POPULATIONS, CULTURES, LANGUAGES, REGIONS, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

- **Size of LA City IRC: 21-25 commissioners**

- The former commission in 2021 was made up of 21 members. This is a strong baseline for the minimum number of commissioners, which demonstrated they were able to work effectively and allowed for greater representation of LA's diversity.

- **Criteria to apply for commissions**

- Applicants must demonstrate relevant skills, which include skills related to public and community outreach, education, and engagement, especially with respect to reaching underrepresented communities and non-English speaking communities. Conducting a robust public process that empowers Angelenos to participate in redistricting is just as critical as analyzing mapping data and applying legal requirements.
- Commissioners must demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of Los Angeles as it relates to race, ethnicity, national origin, language, immigration/citizenship status, income, homeownership status, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, profession, and incarceration history.
- Commissioners must be residents of Los Angeles for at least three years.
- Remove partisan balancing as a criteria to consider for selecting commissioners.

- **Applicants should be disqualified from consideration if:**

- In the past 8 years, the applicant or their spouse was an elected or appointed official, or a candidate for elective office.
- In the past 4 years, the applicant or their spouse served as an officer of, employee of, or paid consultant to, a campaign committee or a candidate for elective office.
- In the past 4 years, the applicant or their spouse served as an officer of, employee of, or paid consultant to, a political party or as an elected or appointed member of a political party central committee.
- In the past 8 years, the applicant or their spouse served as a staff member or consultant to, or who has contracted with, a currently serving elected officer of the City of Los Angeles/LAUSD.
- In the past 8 years, the applicant or their spouse has been registered to lobby in the City of Los Angeles.
- In the past 4 years, the applicant has contributed \$900 or more in a year to any candidate for an elected office in the City of Los Angeles/LAUSD.

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GOAL 2: CONTINUED

• Guiding Criteria for the Selection Process of Commissioners:

- The Commissions should, to the greatest extent possible, represent the diversity of Los Angeles by encompassing an intersection of the following groups:
 - Race/ethnicity (AAPI subgroups, Latinx subgroups, Black/African American, SWANA communities, AI/AA & Indigenous subgroups, Jewish, White/European subgroups, etc.)
 - Tribal nations (both recognized and non-federally recognized)
 - Gender
 - LGBTQ+ identities
 - Age groups (youth, middle age, elderly, etc.)
 - Immigrant & refugee communities
 - Non-citizenship status
 - People with disabilities
 - Non-proficient English speakers
 - Income levels (representation from various income brackets)
 - Education levels (no education, H.S diploma, Associates degree, etc.)
 - Religion
 - Renter-Homeowner parity
 - Length of residency in LA (combination of members living 3-5 years, 5-10, 10-20 years, etc.)
 - Skill sets, professions, work/community/school experience, etc.

• Management & Implementation of the Application Process

- The entity managing the application process and the entity if any, selecting the Commissioners, must reflect and appreciate the diversity of the city based on the selection criteria above. The City Clerk, Personnel Department, Ethics Commission, the newly established IRCs for subsequent cycles, or some combination, are reasonable options due to their capacity, expertise, or experience.
- The entity managing the application process must work with the City's Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department and other City and LAUSD departments/offices who regularly interface with the public in order to publicize the application process in a culturally and linguistically accessible way that centers racial equity and justice.
- Applications must be published for public review and the public must be permitted to seek dismissal of an application for failure to meet qualifications, in order to provide transparency and oversight and engender public confidence in the ultimate selection of the commissions.

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GOAL 2: CONTINUED

- The Ad Hoc Committee on City Governance Reform should engage in further study and invite public and community feedback on the selection process, including how to ensure geographic diversity and selecting the “most qualified” candidate vs random selection.



GOAL 3: SECURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING, RESOURCES, STAFFING, TRAINING, AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE TO SET UP THE COMMISSIONERS AND COMMUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

- **Commission Term Limit**

- Commissioners to serve for 10 years until the next commissions are selected.

- **Robust funding must be allocated to:**

- Secure sufficient resources and staffing for community engagement, translation/interpretation, materials, tools, public hearings, etc. to ensure barriers to participation are eliminated for all Angelenos and “hard to reach” populations are engaged;
- Provide financial support for commissioners, especially from marginalized communities and youth, to be able to carry out their role and duties without jeopardizing their household’s financial health (childcare cost, transportation, out-of-work-time, etc.); and
- Provide financial support for CBOs and other trusted messengers in the community to maximize outreach and engagement of underrepresented communities.
- We recommend the streamlining of LA City and LAUSD redistricting processes that helps maximize participation for both and optimizes potential cost efficiencies without hindering the aforementioned operational needs of the commissions.

- **Mapping Tool**

- We suggest *Districtr*, a tool provided in the 2021 LA City redistricting process that was a user-friendly way to draw maps.
 - We recommend the city invest in opening up public libraries as places where community residents can access and use the tool, and make the tool available to home-users. The tool is compatible with PDI and uses neighborhood maps and color coding that is already familiar to most residents.

<https://districtr.org/event/MapsofLA>

- **Commission Process**

- In order to have an efficient and inclusive redistricting process, we propose four phases for the commissions’ workplan:
 - **Phase 1 | Commission Onboarding & Staffing**
 - The first meeting of the commissions should be held by September 1 of the year preceding the commission deadline to ensure that the commissions have at least 11 months to engage the

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GOAL 3: CONTINUED

community.

- Onboarding phase should last at least 60 days
- Key activities: establish principles, shared values, and workplan of the commissions; in-depth training on the redistricting process; and hiring of staff.

■ **Phase 2 | Outreach Planning & Implementation**

- Commissions shall plan, coordinate, and implement public education and outreach in partnership with trusted messengers, non-profit organizations, faith-based communities, and civic institutions.
- Commissions shall provide redistricting education to the public prior to input sessions.
- Listening sessions shall be scheduled and held through in-person and hybrid virtual forms to gather community feedback on their communities of interest (COIs).

■ **Phase 3 | Draft Map Phase**

- Community stakeholders and residents shall be encouraged to submit and present on map proposals to the commissions, prior to the commissions commencing the drawing of their first draft maps.
 - Map submissions include partial and/or full maps
- A special public hearing series shall be designated for community stakeholders and residents to come and present on their map proposals to the commissions.
- All map boundaries should be drawn and voted on by the commissions in public meetings. At a minimum, this phase should take at least 70 days.
- The draft map(s) prepared by the commissions shall be posted for public consideration for at least 72 hours before any public hearings to consider those maps.

■ **Phase 4 | Final Map Phase**

- The commissions shall approve a map of the new City/LAUSD districts no later than September 30, 2031, and thereafter, each subsequent tenth anniversary of that date **OR** 180 days before the next regular election occurring after January 1 in each year ending in the number two, whichever provides a longer timeline for robust public engagement in the redistricting process.
- The final map prepared by the commissions shall be posted for public consideration for at least 3 weeks before any public hearings to consider that map.
- A supermajority of the commissions shall be required to approve the final map.

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GOAL 4: ENHANCE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT BY PARTNERING WITH AND FUNDING CBOs AND OTHER TRUSTED MESSENGERS TO LEAD EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH AND MOBILIZATION EFFORTS, ESPECIALLY WITH UNDERREPRESENTED/IMPACTED COMMUNITIES.

- Commissions shall partner and provide funding/grants to CBOs and other trusted messengers (i.e. established coalitions, nonprofits, tribal organizations, faith-based institutions, and other civic leaders/institutions) with demonstrated history to advancing equity and experience in community outreach and engagement to lead and conduct redistricting outreach, educational workshops, and engagement efforts with the public.
- Create and implement an educational outreach campaign with CBOs and other trusted messengers at every phase of the redistricting process, including educational videos, materials, and tools that are tailored and translated for LA's diverse communities.
- Disseminate written information to CBOs and other trusted messengers in a timely manner, translated into the City's languages that meet the 5% threshold, and with content written for diverse literacy levels.

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GOAL 5: CODIFY TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND VALUES CENTERED ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION.

- **IRC Purpose Statement:** To strengthen the governance of the City of Los Angeles/LAUSD by empowering its communities to have their diverse needs served through fair, transparent and inclusive representation.
- **Values to guide the commissions' approach, community engagement, and line-drawing process:**
 - Equity
 - Integrity
 - Transparency
 - Respect
 - Compassion
 - Dignity
 - Data-driven
 - Solution-oriented
 - Interdependence
- **Mapping Criteria**
 - Primary Criteria
 - We affirm the Voting Rights Act & California Voting Rights Act must be followed and equal population of each district is required as the top criteria for drawing district lines.
 - Population is adjusted to count incarcerated people at their home address, not their prison address.
 - Additional criteria (in order of priority to be applied):
 - **Communities of Interest Preservation** to the extent practicable. A "community of Interest" is a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single supervisorial district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.
 - **Geographic Contiguity** to the extent practicable. Areas that meet only at the points of adjoining corners are not contiguous. Areas that are separated by water and not connected by a bridge, tunnel, or regular ferry service are not contiguous.
 - **Geographic Integrity** of a city or census designated place shall be respected to the extent practicable.
 - **Geographic Compactness** should be encouraged to the extent practicable, where it doesn't conflict with previous criteria, and in a manner to ensure that nearby areas of population are not bypassed in favor of more distant populations.

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GOAL 5: CONTINUED

- **Easily Identifiable** by residents to the extent practicable, districts shall be bounded by natural and artificial barriers, including streets.
- **Prohibit Favoritism.** No partisan favoritism or discrimination.

- **Data & Records**
 - Commissions and their subcommittees shall keep minutes of all discussion and actions taken at public meetings, including meetings held by commission subgroups outside of public meetings with external stakeholders, and made available in the languages that meet the 5% threshold in the City of LA.
 - The minutes should be discussed and adopted at the next public meeting of that body.
 - All documents, materials, and decisions discussed and/or voted upon during public meetings and hearings shall be made public, translated in the languages that meet the 5% threshold, and easily searchable on the IRC websites by title and public meeting date.
 - To the greatest extent practicable, all public meetings of the commissions and its subcommittees shall be video recorded and made easily accessible and user-friendly to find on the IRC websites with ease, including recording transcripts or audio in the languages that meet the 5% threshold.
 - All records of the commissions relating to redistricting, and all data considered by the commissions in drawing a draft map or the final map, including PL-94 Census data and any racially polarized voting analysis data are public records and easily searchable on the IRC websites.

- **Websites**
 - The commissions shall establish an internet website dedicated to redistricting. The City Clerk shall maintain the websites for at least 10 years after the adoption of new Council/LAUSD district boundaries.
 - Commissions shall provide updates on their progress, timeline, and activities for each redistricting phase on their websites in an interactive format and during public meetings and hearings.
 - The websites shall be user-friendly, ADA compliant, with content, documents, tools, maps, and information that is accessible and easy to find and understand.
 - Include mini-tutorial videos on “how to” navigate webpage and tools (especially for the mapping tool). These can be played during meetings at breaks.
 - The websites shall be made available in the languages that meet the 5% threshold OR at least made available in Spanish.

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GOAL 6 (LAUSD-SPECIFIC): CENTER YOUTH AND PARENT/CAREGIVER PARTICIPATION THROUGHOUT THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS.

- **Hire a Youth Engagement Director**

- This individual will support youth outreach and youth commissioners.
- Responsibilities should include, but not be limited to:
 - Taking notes of commission meetings and updating youth commissioners on anything they missed if they were absent or had to leave early.
 - Supporting with youth commissioners' training and understanding of the redistricting process.
 - Facilitating planning of youth outreach and youth public hearings with youth commissioners.

- **LAUSD Public Meetings & Hearings**

- Before the start of every public hearing, the commission will host a cultural event (inclusive of music, food, art, etc.) to educate community members about redistricting (i.e. Redistricting 101, information on upcoming public hearings, host workshops around COIs, workshops on mapping interface, etc.)
- The commission shall host a series of youth public hearings dedicated to student participation in each region at each phase of the redistricting process.
- When taking public comments, student public comments shall be prioritized to be heard first.
- Public hearings shall be hosted in venues that are accessible to the community and near transit areas. Ensure that the spaces are inviting and culturally relevant to the community.



GOAL 7 (LAUSD-SPECIFIC): ENSURE YOUTH ARE DECISION-MAKERS IN THE PROCESS AS OFFICIAL MEMBERS ON THE COMMISSION WITH A DEFINED ROLE & SCOPE OF WORK.

- Recommend that the **total number of commissioners on a LAUSD IRC consist between 19-21 members, and at least four** of whom would **include youth commissioners** each holding formal voting power and representing a geographic region.
 - Opportunity to ensure that at least one youth commissioner comes from the American Indian/Alaskan Native community.
- The age/grade span of eligible youth commissioners range from rising high school juniors to former LAUSD alumni of 21 years of age, in order to ensure their deep understanding and connection to the district.
- Shorter term limit for youth commissioners on the LAUSD IRC shall apply.
- Two options are recommended to present to convening participants to gather additional feedback and guidance on which option to move forward with:
 - **Option 1:** At least four youth commissioners with formal voting power each representing a region.
 - **Option 2:** At least four youth commissioners with formal voting power who represent youth interests and can lead youth engagement efforts across the LAUSD region.