



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY CONSUMER & BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Community Navigators to Connect LA County Immigrants to Critical Services

*LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs Announces Public/Private  
Initiative to Inform Essential Workers*

LOS ANGELES – Finding accurate and up-to-date information from trusted sources is a challenge for many Immigrants in Los Angeles County. Despite the devastating impact of the 2020 economic crisis on immigrant households, new research from the Urban Institute demonstrates that 1 out of 4 adults in low-income immigrant families avoided government benefit programs and other assistance because of immigration concerns. The Los Angeles County Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA), part of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, is rising to the challenge to deliver critical information directly to LA County’s immigrants through a new, groundbreaking private-public initiative.

Through the Immigrant Essential Workers Public Charge Outreach and Education Program, the OIA will partner with the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) to train and deploy a cohort of trusted, culturally and linguistically competent community navigators. These navigators will educate the community about accessing LA County services and how use of these vital resources relates to the federal government’s public charge rules.

The Community Navigators program is funded by a grant from Blue Shield of California Foundation, with critical support from Weingart Foundation and California Community Foundation.

“Throughout the pandemic, we have seen how important it is for residents, regardless of immigration status, to receive information in a culturally linguistic and competent manner through the Promotores program,” shared Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Hilda L. Solis. “I am confident the Community Navigators program can achieve that same level of success and create a positive impact by increasing access to essential County services in



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a culturally sensitive way.”

“All immigrants and their families deserve to be safe and comfortable when accessing the County resources they need,” said Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell. “We’re proud to provide this program to help vulnerable communities during these challenging times.”

“Years of surviving and fighting immigrant-bashing, as well as multiple deportations, have fostered understandable fear among our immigrant neighbors, with the result that 1 in 4 are reluctant to apply for services to which they are entitled,” said Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. “Every immigrant in LA County has the right to receive resources, regardless of immigration status. That’s why this program is so important. It creates a safe space so that people who would greatly benefit from services can take advantage of them without fear.”

“The economic challenges of the past 18 months have affected people in all walks of life, including immigrants in Los Angeles County,” said Supervisor Janice Hahn. “Available programs are there to provide help, but only if people feel safe and secure enough to access them. This initiative should help immigrants bridge that gap and get the boost they need.”

“By wisely leveraging public-private partnerships, I applaud County departments, agencies and partner organizations for stepping up to provide critical assistance to vulnerable communities while we collaboratively maintain fiscal responsibility for all of our residents,” said Supervisor Kathryn Barger.

“Educating the community is a critical component of our department’s mission,” said Rafael Carbajal, Director, LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs. “We are thrilled to bring together a partnership from public, private, and nonprofit sectors to provide the best, most reliable education to our County’s most vulnerable.”

“Fear runs deep in immigrant communities about using County support services,” said Rigo Reyes, Executive Director, LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs. “These trusted community-based navigators are essential to heal immigrants’ concerns and help them access the services they and their families need.”

“Too many California communities are facing the compounding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and immigration policy changes,” said Carolyn Wang Kong, Chief Program Director at Blue Shield of California Foundation. “Wherever possible, we need to support trusted community messengers in bringing accurate, actionable information to communities who need it most, so that they can access the public benefits for which they are eligible and that can help ensure healthier futures.”

“We are so pleased to partner with the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs office in order to better assist immigrant families access the services and programs available to them. At a time when so many people feel forgotten and alone, our navigators will bring hope and guidance thanks to this well-thought and proactive initiative,” said Angelica Salas, CHIRLA Executive Director.

“It is crucial for us to protect our immigrant communities,” said Miguel A. Santana,

President and CEO of the Weingart Foundation. “Many immigrants are frontline workers, healthcare professionals, and domestic and agriculture workers who have sustained our region throughout the pandemic. That’s why we’re proud to support LA County’s new Community Navigator program, which will help immigrant communities access vital safety net programs during this challenging time.”

For more information about the LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs, visit [immigrants.lacounty.gov](http://immigrants.lacounty.gov).

### **About Blue Shield of California Foundation**

Blue Shield of California Foundation is one of the state's largest and most trusted grantmaking organizations. Our mission is to improve the lives of all Californians, particularly the underserved, by making health care accessible, effective, and affordable, and by ending domestic violence. For more information, visit: [www.blueshieldcafoundation.org](http://www.blueshieldcafoundation.org).

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*The County of Los Angeles Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) has served Los Angeles County since 1976. We serve consumers, businesses, and communities through education, advocacy, and complaint resolution. We work every day to educate consumers and small business owners about their rights and responsibilities, mediate disputes, and investigate consumer fraud complaints. We enforce the Minimum Wage and Rent Stabilization ordinances in unincorporated Los Angeles County. For more information, visit [dcba.lacounty.gov](http://dcba.lacounty.gov).*

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