The South El Monte-El Monte community is often characterized by residents’ strong sense of pride and high level of connection to their fellow neighbors. This is evidenced by the number of young adults who have moved from the area for employment or education opportunities elsewhere but return to live and work in the community. Focus group participants expressed hope for positive changes in this community if this asset could be harnessed.

Community leadership in South El Monte-El Monte is described as “homegrown,” “emerging,” “connected to education,” “connected to residents,” “reaching out” and “examining trends.”

Why El Monte-South El Monte

Recent data tell us that South El Monte-El Monte have twice as many resident adults (age 25+) without high school diplomas or equivalencies compared to adults in Los Angeles County. The population of South El Monte-El Monte is also predominantly non-English speaking which may require increased language support for residents to access County and local services. Area children also participate at a higher rate in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program than Los Angeles County children in general.

Compared to rates per capita for zero-to-five year olds, South El Monte-El Monte has high numbers of support groups and a large amount of parks and open spaces. The area also has a high number of philanthropic institutions focused on the prenatal-to-five year old population. There is a history of collaboration that includes a number of First 5 LA collaboratives specifically, the San Gabriel Valley Best Babies Collaborative, Partnership for Families, the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project, and some smaller collaboratives in the community focusing on specific projects. Focus group participants described these collaboratives as evolving and working together through both formal and informal channels.

### South El Monte-El Monte Ethnicity/Race 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity/Race</th>
<th>So. El Monte-El Monte</th>
<th>L.A. County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% adults (age 25+) w/o a high school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% population (age 5+) speaking language other than English at home</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of zero-to-five year olds participating in WIC programs</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nielsen Claritas, Inc., 2009
Leadership
“The community lets you know what the needs are. We send people from the community to talk to residents individually, door to door.”

South El Monte-El Monte leaders learn about emerging community issues via direct community outreach and analyzing trends in the data. As one leader said, “Our outreach told us that parents want more access to education in terms of ESL and GED classes. So we developed a parent diploma project.” Some networks existed at a small level prior to funding being available, but now there are more formalized resources and collaboration. South El Monte-El Monte residents are described as engaged in the community and will “turn out for workshops and information sessions on various topics.” There is also a community Neighborhood Action Council called “Unity in the Community” which is considered “a great place for organizing.”

Infrastructure
“El Monte Adult School has seen a large influx of parents. It’s a gem in this community. It’s amazing in terms of counseling and the certificate programs they offer.”

The infrastructure in South El Monte-El Monte varies from traditional family-focused organizations to adult educational institutions. The local Boys & Girls Club is a key landmark in the community and a primary resource for families. The El Monte Adult School offers several programs aimed at improving language and job skills for area adults. The community is serviced by large, stable organizations with a geographic scope larger than the South El Monte-El Monte area. The California Community Foundation (CCF) is also planning to improve the infrastructure of El Monte as part of their Community Building Initiative.

Engaging Multiple Sectors
Organizations “make the effort to engage and bring those services to the

South El Monte-El Monte is experiencing a growing level of engagement with various sectors. Representatives from the City of El Monte have recently started engaging with community partners to reduce obesity. According to focus group participants, the City has also started working with the local public school system to partner with Rio Hondo College and University of California, Irvine on a new initiative for students. The public education sector is heavily involved in engaging parents through the El Monte Adult School.

Investments
“The city is trying to bring revenues into the community and that makes a big difference as far as servicing the public.”

The South El Monte-El Monte community has received First 5 LA investment through the Healthy Births, Partnership for Families and School Readiness Initiatives. The California Department of Education has given the El Monte Unified High School District a grant to improve the coordination of support and provide encouragement for students to graduate from high school and continue their higher education. El Monte is also the demonstration community for the 10-year Community Building Initiative, a place-based strategy, for the California Community Foundation. This project is currently in its third year and provides up to $1 million per year to improve the physical environment, better coordinate social services, and increase engagement in local decision processes, in an effort to improve the quality of life for residents.

*Unless otherwise noted, this profile was informed by community focus groups and interviews.