Southeast Los Angeles
Supervisor Gloria Molina, District 1

The Southeast Los Angeles community is focused on working together to advocate on behalf of the individual cities to enhance access to resources and improve the sustainability of their programs. The existing collaboratives have been growing and although they are not as established as in other communities, these collaboratives are seen as tremendous assets to the community.

Community leadership in Southeast LA is described as “passionate,” “committed,” “resourceful,” “vibrant,” “emerging,” “connected,” “collaborative” and “engaging.”

Why Southeast Los Angeles

Southeast Los Angeles is home to relatively high percentages of zero-to-five year olds. When compared to Los Angeles County as a whole, the area also has high numbers of zero-to-five year olds participating in Women, Infant and Children (WIC) programs. In this area, the rate of families in poverty is higher than the County rate, and nearly nine in ten residents (age 5+) speak a language other than English at home, which may require increased language support for residents to access County and local services. More than two in three adults in Southeast Los Angeles (age 25+) do not have a high school diploma or equivalent.

The Bell Gardens portion of Southeast Los Angeles has a strong nonprofit investment infrastructure as measured by nonprofit expenditures, expenditures per capita zero-to-five year olds, mean expenditures per capita zero-to-five year olds and total public support per the zero-to-five year old population. There are also more foundations in this area, per capita zero-to-five year olds. The Bell Gardens and Bell/Cudahy portions of Southeast Los Angeles also have more libraries per person age zero-to-five when compared to other communities, as well as large amounts of open space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas of High-Need</th>
<th>Southeast LA</th>
<th>L.A. County</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% children age 0-5 of total population</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nielsen Claritas, Inc., 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of zero-to-five year olds participating in WIC programs</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
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<td>PHFE WIC Data Mining Project, 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>% adults (age 25+) w/o a high school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
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<td>Nielsen Claritas, Inc., 2009</td>
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Southeast Los Angeles Ethnicity/Race

Nielsen Claritas, Inc., 2009

![Southeast Los Angeles Ethnicity/Race](image)
Leadership

“Residents are seeing they have more power than they thought, taking on more leadership roles and volunteerism, taking ownership of their child’s education, breaking down the isolation and connecting with others, building careers, demanding more responsive services.”

Leadership in Southeast LA is characterized by very strong parent involvement, and high engagement with some local County agencies as well as school districts. Leaders discover emerging issues through the Neighborhood Action Councils and through the relationships they built in the community. Leaders often bring back “grassroots information” to their collaborators. There is an emergence of collaborations over the last five years which has been attributed to the Southeast LA Community Collaborative work of “unifying goals within all the service providers.” Collaborations are also leading to resident empowerment, with residents “taking on more leadership roles and voluntarism, and breaking down the isolation and connecting with each other.” Community members are outreaching to family members and neighbors for support, recognizing “it’s okay to ask for help when you need it.”

Infrastructure

“You need a more regional approach because individual cities would not have the resources to build a comprehensive health center. It would take all the cities to work together with elected officials to accomplish this.”

The growing community infrastructure supports residents. Families in the Southeast LA cities socialize through school and around activities such as soccer and baseball leagues and cultural activities. Residents within one city often seek services at providers located in other cities in the area. Organizations in the area also do not view city boundaries as barriers. Hometown associations conduct cultural and education activities (e.g., scholarships) for residents. A dearth of physical space has contributed to some organizations co-locating services with each other.

Engaging Multiple Sectors

“We have built “those relationships in the community so we can connect the families to the community resources.”

Southeast LA has numerous and diverse examples of collaboration among CBOs that work across all the cities, partially because there are not a lot of strong anchor institutions. The cities located in the Southeast LA community have a strong role in serving families and work closely with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). They are leaders in coordinating efforts for partnerships and referral networks. City governments can be an asset in some issues. Public education is also well-engaged with the community with the Elizabeth Learning Center building trust and bringing families together.

Investments

“The California Community Foundation investments are part of their education portfolio working with parents of young children in that area.”

The Southeast LA community takes the opportunity to leverage other resources with the investments made by some funders in the area. First 5 LA has invested in Family Literacy, School Readiness and Partnership for Families Initiatives that serve the area. Vernon brings in money to the surrounding communities because of the power plant. Bell Gardens and Commerce have casinos and, as a result, more resources. The California Community Foundation has funded some groups in Southeast LA, primarily community clinics and parent engagement groups. The local Assembly member’s office has worked with the United Latino Fund and the Supervisor’s office to host a “Meet the Funders” event.

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