

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

JUSTICE CARE AND OPPORTUNITIES

DEPARTMENT

FACT SHEET

From Measure J to Care First Community Investment:
Milestones in County's Continuing Commitment to Care First, Jails Last

BACKGROUND

In July 2020, the Board of Supervisors [voted to put an amendment to the County charter](#) on the November ballot to allocate at least 10% of the County's locally generated unrestricted revenues to address the disproportionate impact of racial injustice through direct community investment and alternatives to incarceration.

Ballot Measure J, an expression of the Board's commitment to a vision of "Care First, Jails Last," passed with the support of 57% of voters in November 2020. The Board established the Re-imagine LA Advisory Committee to help develop proposals for spending the 10% set-aside.

Although a court ruled Measure J unconstitutional in 2021, the Board of Supervisors has reaffirmed its commitment to continuing to support Measure J's letter and spirit as a budgeting principle.

METHODOLOGY

County budget analysts worked with departments during the first half of 2021 to set a methodology for calculating restricted and unrestricted locally generated revenues for purposes of the set-aside. A [back-of-the-envelope estimate provided to Supervisors in July 2020](#) suggested that the amount of locally generated unrestricted revenues subject to the set-aside could have been about \$360 million at that time, but the then-CEO stressed that her rough estimate was subject to a more detailed analysis. The budget team subsequently developed a [preliminary \\$300 million estimate of the 10% set-aside](#), again subject to additional due diligence.

In March 2021, the CEO recommended to the Board that \$100 million be set as the [Year One "down payment" for the Measure J set-aside](#). The Board approved that amount—based on an estimate of revenues and restrictions in the previous year— as part of the 2021-22 Recommended Budget in April 2021.

In May 2021, the [CEO reported to the Board on the methodology for calculating locally generated unrestricted revenues and reiterated that the initial set-aside amount is "both an estimate and a projection."](#) The CEO also met with members of the Advisory Committee in a small group discussion to provide some background on the CEO's role and answer questions about the budgeting process.

The County is mandated by law to balance its budget. Locally generated revenues represent a small portion of the overall budget, which relies heavily on federal and State funding. A majority of locally generated revenues are restricted for particular uses such as programs and services mandated by federal and State law, contractual obligations, legal settlements, debt service payments and other budget policies set by the Board. Any funding established for other Care First, Jails Last programs before Measure J was adopted is also deemed restricted under the policy.

THE SET-ASIDE AMOUNT WILL FLUCTUATE ANNUALLY

Since property taxes and other locally generated revenues fluctuate year over year, as does the level of restricted revenues, the 10% set aside must be recalculated on an annual basis. While it will always reflect 10%, the total funding amount may go up or down, depending on the level of local revenues and how much of that money is restricted for other uses.

ESTABLISHING CFCI

Reaffirming its continuing commitment to the spirit and specifics of Measure J following the court's ruling that the measure was unconstitutional, the Board created a new Care First Community Investment (CFCI) budget unit and renamed the Re-imagine LA Advisory Committee as the Care First Community Investment Advisory Committee. The related policy was memorialized in the [County municipal code](#).

In April 2022, the Board approved a second installment of \$100 million in direct community investments and alternatives to incarceration, [bringing Year Two CFCI spending to \\$200 million total](#). This allocation reflected the preliminary estimate, which is expected to change in future years.

OTHER RESOURCES

While the 10% CFCI set-aside provides a substantial, ongoing source of funding for Care First programs, it is far from the County's only investment in programs to improve the justice system and create better outcomes for people in our communities. For example, there are separate funding streams for the new Department of Youth Development and the new Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department, which focus on diversion and alternatives to incarceration, as well as related funding for existing departments such as the offices of the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender. In addition, the County makes significant annual allocations of federal, state and local dollars to combat and prevent homelessness, create affordable housing and alleviate poverty through programs ranging from street outreach by mental health clinicians to job training for residents in transition.