



# EMPOWERLA BUDGET PRESENTATION

Proposal for Fiscal Year 2026-2027



NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS  
**EMPOWER LA**  
Department of  
NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT



# About the Department

## Mission

EmpowerLA inspires Angelenos to **shape the future of their neighborhoods** through civic engagement and community advocacy, **working with Neighborhood Councils** to strengthen grassroots democracy across the City of Los Angeles and **build people power** from the ground up.

## Vision

EmpowerLA envisions a co-governing Neighborhood Council system that represents and serves all Angelenos, bringing equity, democracy, and local power to every community in the City. Through the Neighborhood Council system, EmpowerLA aspires to a decision-making process that is equitably shared with people and policymakers throughout the City.

# EmpowerLA Guiding Mantras / Values



## Transparency

Trust is critical to our work. In order to be strong partners that can steward civic engagement and local democracy, we must center and communicate transparency in all that we do.



[www.EmpowerLA.org](http://www.EmpowerLA.org) • [EmpowerLA@city.org](mailto:EmpowerLA@city.org) • (213) 978-1551



## Collaboration

Collaboration is essential to EmpowerLA's relationship not only with the Neighborhood Council system, but also with the City Family and other stakeholders.



## Community

Community is at the heart of EmpowerLA's work. We value building deep, authentic, lasting roots into all 99 communities represented in the Neighborhood Council system, and beyond.

# Executive Management Team



**Carmen Chang**

General Manager



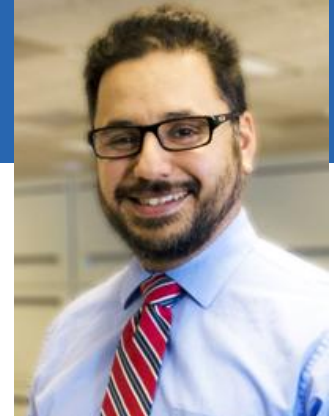
**Vanessa Serrano**

Managing Director of Field  
Operations



**Thomas Soong**

Managing Director of Programs



**Armando Ruiz**

Managing Director of  
Administrative Services

# EmpowerLA Operations

Civic Leadership

Policy, Government, & Innovation

Awareness & Engagement

Administrative Services

# Civic Leadership

**Mission:** To provide efficient and responsive direct Neighborhood Council support to Neighborhood Council leaders through inclusive and accessible support and regulatory infrastructure.





# Policy, Government, & Innovation



**Mission:** To foster strategic partnerships between Neighborhood Councils, elected offices, and City departments to ensure Neighborhood Council priorities are addressed and to support the implementation of Mayoral and City Council directives.



# Awareness & Engagement

**Mission:** To connect communities throughout Los Angeles to the Neighborhood Council system through direct public engagement programs, awareness messaging campaigns, strategic community partnerships, civic participation and Neighborhood Council Elections.

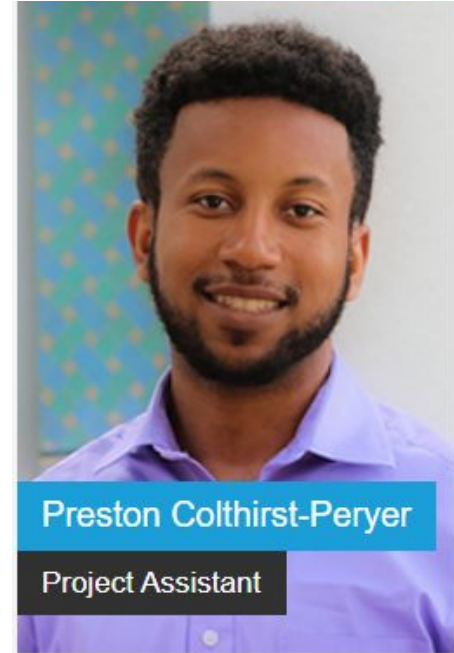
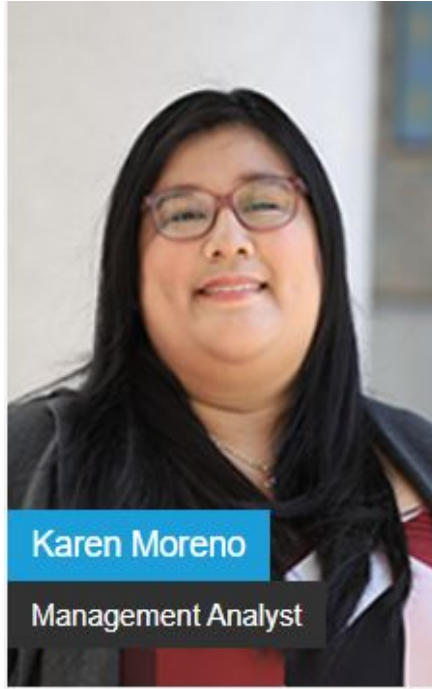


# Administrative Services



**Mission:** To design and implement an exceptional administrative support and technological framework for the Department and Neighborhood Councils. This is accomplished by recognizing the institutional knowledge of the department's City partners and collaborating with volunteer leaders to create new and innovative practices.

# Meet the Financial Operations & Access Team



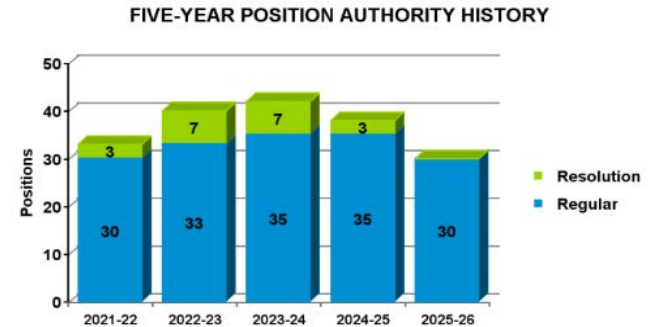
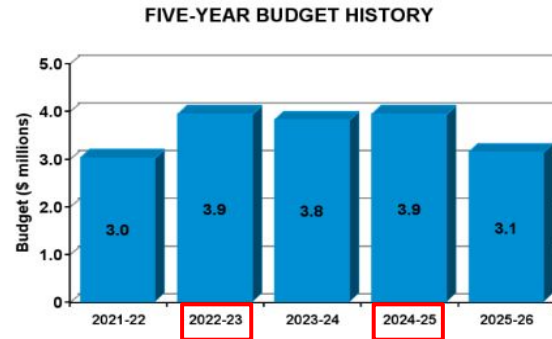
# 2025-2026 Adopted Budget

- 3 Vacant Positions Eliminated
- 4 Filled Positions Eliminated
- Reduction of \$266,000 in expense accounts
- Reduction of \$20,000 for part-time position funding
- 9% Salary Saving Rate
- Preserved 1 Sr Project Coordinator position

• **Total: \$3,097,445**

**\*Election Years**

## FIVE-YEAR HISTORY OF BUDGET AND POSITION AUTHORITIES



\* Neighborhood Council Funding Appropriations are part of the City Clerk's budget

# Mayor's Budget Priorities

- Urgently House Angelenos
- Keep Angelenos Safe
- Make LA Shine
  - Preparing for 2026 FIFA World Cup, 2027 Super Bowl, and 2028 Olympic & Paralympic Games
- Foster Opportunity
  - Enhance access to good jobs, small business growth
- Bolster Crisis Responses
  - Maintain the City's stability & prosperity through swift response
  - Proactive emergency preparedness.

# Challenges

- Projected \$263.2 million City overspend
- External factors (wildfires, shutdown)
- 11 positions lost
- Includes 4 filled positions lost this year
- Cut of \$101,124 base operating budget



# Challenges Cont...

- NEA support ratio will increase to 1:11
- Staffing levels may lead to burnout
- Mandated \$154,872 reduction exercise
- 9% Salary Saving Rate
- Non-revenue generating department

# FY 2026-2027 Budget Proposal Breakdown

- **Baseline Funding:** \$3,250,946
- **Requesting:** \$899,909
  - **\$364,909** to restore four (4) Project Coordinator Positions
  - **\$35,000** for Neighborhood Council Zoom Licenses
  - **\$500,000** for 2027 Neighborhood Council Elections Outreach Campaign
- **Total Budget Proposal:** \$4,150,855

# Request 1: Neighborhood Council Support Staff

- Restore four (4) Project Coordinator positions.
  - Two positions prevent layoffs;
- Improve service and prevent burnout.
- Stabilize ratio from 1:11 to a manageable 1:8.
- Shifts from reactive to proactive support.

# Request 2: Zoom Licenses for Neighborhood Councils

- Standardized Zoom licenses for all 99 Neighborhood Councils.
- Removes the cost and administrative burden from Neighborhood Councils
- Ensures 100% operational continuity

# Request 3 - 2027 Neighborhood Council Elections Outreach Campaign

- Covers essential outreach tools
- Multilingual, targeted outreach for 46 high-need communities
- Aims to increase candidate and voter turnout
- Strengthens the civic leadership pipeline in historically underrepresented communities
- Provides the essential, mobilized community network required to support Mayoral priorities



# 2027 Neighborhood Council Elections: Our Guiding Vision

## Key Drivers for our Election Plan:

- EmpowerLA's Mission & Values
- Equity & Inclusion
- Partnerships & Community Engagement
- Communication & Education
- Innovation Strategies



# City Budget Timeline: Next Steps

## Budget Timeline



- CAO Discussion
- CAO Review (January)
- Mayor's Office Review (Jan-Feb)
- Mayor's Budget (April 20)
- Budget & Finance Committee Hearings (May)
- B&F Recommendations (May)
- City Council Consideration (May-June)
- City Council Approval (June)
- Mayor's Approval (June)

# How to get Involved?

- Agendize discussion of City / Dept budget at Neighborhood Council meetings
- Communicate with Budget Advocates
- Listen to Budget and Finance Committee Hearings
- Listen to Personnel, Audits, and Hiring Committee
- Submit Community Impact Statements
- Keep updated with the CAO's Budget & Financial Information <https://cao.lacity.gov/budget/index.htm>
- Review the City Controller's Financial Data <https://controller.lacity.gov/data>

\* Neighborhood Council Funding Appropriations are part of the Office of the City Clerk's budget