On February 12, 2019, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion which created the Alternatives to Incarceration Work Group bringing together community advocates, service providers, community members and staff from multiple County departments to provide the Board a Road Map, with an action-oriented framework and implementation plan, to scale alternatives to incarceration and diversion so care and services are provided first, and jail is a last resort.

The ATI Work Group reached consensus on three values to guide the process: (1) equity and racial justice, (2) inclusion of many voices, and (3) human-first language. Through an intensive consensus-building process the ATI Work Group developed and approved 114 recommendations involving more than 1,000 government and community stakeholders over ten months.

Reimagining the LA County Criminal Justice System

Of the County’s ten million residents, 74 percent of people arrested are Black and Latinx. Los Angeles County operates the largest jail system in the United States, which imprisons more people than any other nation on Earth. The profile of incarceration in Los Angeles is consistent with national research showing that a disproportionate number of people admitted to jails are sick, poor, homeless, and struggling with mental health and substance use disorders. In other words, our jails are largely filled with sick, marginalized, and vulnerable populations.

Racial Disparities

There are significant racial disparities in who is incarcerated in the LA County jail, with Black people being booked at staggeringly disproportionate rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In LA County only 9% of people are Black,</td>
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<td>but comprise 29% of people in the jail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black and Latinx women are around 54% of the women in LA County,</td>
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<td>but 75% of women in the jail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black women are the hardest hit. They are only 9% of women in LA County,</td>
<td></td>
<td>but 33% of jail bookings of women.</td>
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Mental Health and Substance Use Needs

A significant portion of people in the LA County jail have identified mental health and substance use needs.

- Nearly 17,000 people are in custody in the LA County jail. 30% of them are in jail mental health housing.
- 21% of people in jail mental health housing have a substance use disorder.

According to RAND, 61% of the mental health population could be appropriate for community release.
The ATI recommendations describe how LA County can transform its criminal justice system from arresting and locking up people experiencing behavioral health crises—compounded by homelessness, poverty and trauma—to assisting people in accessing neighborhood-based treatment, housing, employment, family reunification, community health workers and other strengths-based supports. From operating the world’s largest jail and de facto mental health facility to building a decentralized, restorative and robust community-based system of care and safer, healthier communities. From a jail that disproportionately incarcerates people and communities of color to a system of justice that works to repair harm and equitably distribute resources where they are needed most.

If we can successfully implement the recommendations of the ATI Work Group, some immediately and others over time, we can redefine the roles of our healthcare and criminal justice systems.

With this vision, LA County will provide care and services first, and jail as a last resort.

To ensure the Roadmap was actionable and to kickstart implementation, the 114 recommendations were organized into five overarching strategies and 26 foundational recommendations.

**Strategy 1** – Expand and scale community-based, holistic care and services through sustainable and equitable community capacity building and service coordination.

**Strategy 2** – Utilize behavioral health responses for individuals experiencing mental health and/or substance use disorders, homelessness, and other situations caused by unmet needs; avoid and minimize law enforcement responses.

**Strategy 3** – Support and deliver meaningful pre-trial release and diversion services.

**Strategy 4** – Provide effective treatment services in alternative placements, instead of jail time.

**Strategy 5** – Effectively coordinate the implementation of ATI recommendations, ensuring that strategies work to eliminate racial disparities and to authentically engage and compensate system-impacted individuals.

The full list of citations, approved recommendations and detailed preliminary implementation plans are at [www.lacalternatives.org/reports](http://www.lacalternatives.org/reports)