

# BRIGHT SPOTS

2020 MY LA2050 SUBMISSIONS REPORT

LA2050

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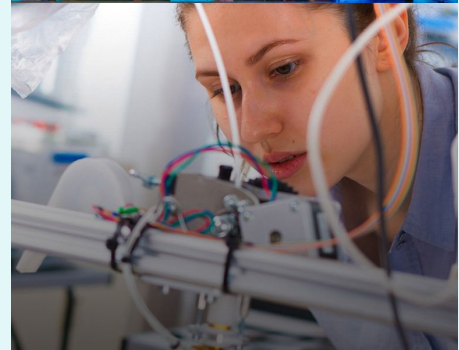
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LA2050 is a community-driven initiative that inspires progress toward a shared vision of a vibrant, thriving, and equitable Los Angeles in the year 2050.

Our movement launched in 2013, when we engaged 30,000 Angelenos and social impact leaders in outlining an aspirational vision for LA's future. The input we received led us to create our five goal categories — making LA the best place to **LIVE, LEARN, CREATE, PLAY**, and **CONNECT** — and to establish our 60+ regional progress metrics.

In January 2020, we launched the seventh My LA2050 Grants Challenge. At the time, we had no idea that this year's grants challenge would overlap with two historic, world-changing events: the arrival of COVID-19 and the uprisings in response to the killings of George Floyd and others. Both crises led us to issue extensions, postponing the submission deadline and public voting period to ensure that our applicants, many of whom work on the frontlines of service and advocacy in our region, could dedicate themselves to caring for their communities. For the first time, we also gave applicants the opportunity to revise their proposals between the evaluation and voting phases due to the circumstances of COVID-19. Their responses revealed the extraordinary resilience of the social

impact sector, from adapting existing programs to virtual formats to launching new initiatives in service of the emerging needs of our region.

We were honored to receive 285 submissions from organizations on the frontlines of change in our region — bright spots of hope and encouragement in stark contrast to the difficulties of this year.

Angelenos staying safe at home agreed; over the eight-day online voting period, more than 105,000 votes were cast by 32,000 individuals in support of our 25 finalists.

This report dives into the data gathered from this year's grants challenge submissions and highlights the trends we observed, providing important insight into the future of LA's social impact sector through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.



## 2020 SUBMISSIONS DATA

Each year, we are proud to receive submissions from organizations of all structures, sizes, and backgrounds that are working to make Los Angeles better.

### Types of Organizations

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Of the 285 proposals we received in the challenge, **80 percent were from nonprofit organizations**. About nine percent of proposals came from for-profit organizations, and another nine percent came from fiscally sponsored groups. We received five proposals from social enterprises or B-corps, and three proposals from government entities.

### Organization Sizes and Budgets

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A majority of organizations that applied to the grants challenge had relatively small staff sizes, with **70 percent of organizations reporting fewer than 20 employees** and 43 percent reporting between zero and five employees.

But, when it comes to organizational budgets, there was a wider range: **58 percent of applicants had annual operating budgets under \$1 million**, while 42 percent of applicants had budgets greater than \$1 million. Of the smaller organizations, 18 percent reported budgets in the range of \$100,000 to \$500,000.

### Types of Proposals

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Each year, we ask organizations to share what stage of development their projects are in. This year, **72 percent of applicants to the challenge sought to expand an existing program** at their organization, 20 percent were looking to launch a pilot program, and six percent wanted to apply a proven solution to a new issue area. Only one percent of proposals were seeking support for research projects.

### Regional Impacts

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Applicants also indicated which communities they would reach with their proposals. They had the option to select one or more specific geographic areas or an overarching region — Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, or the Los Angeles Unified School District. **Nearly half of all submitters boldly sought to impact the whole of Los Angeles County**. 38 percent of proposals selected South LA as a focus of their work, 32 percent selected Central LA, and 27 percent selected East LA.

## LA2050 IMPACT METRICS

Each year, we ask applicants to indicate which of our regional progress metrics they will impact through their proposals. In order of popularity, the top 10 metrics across all five goal categories were:

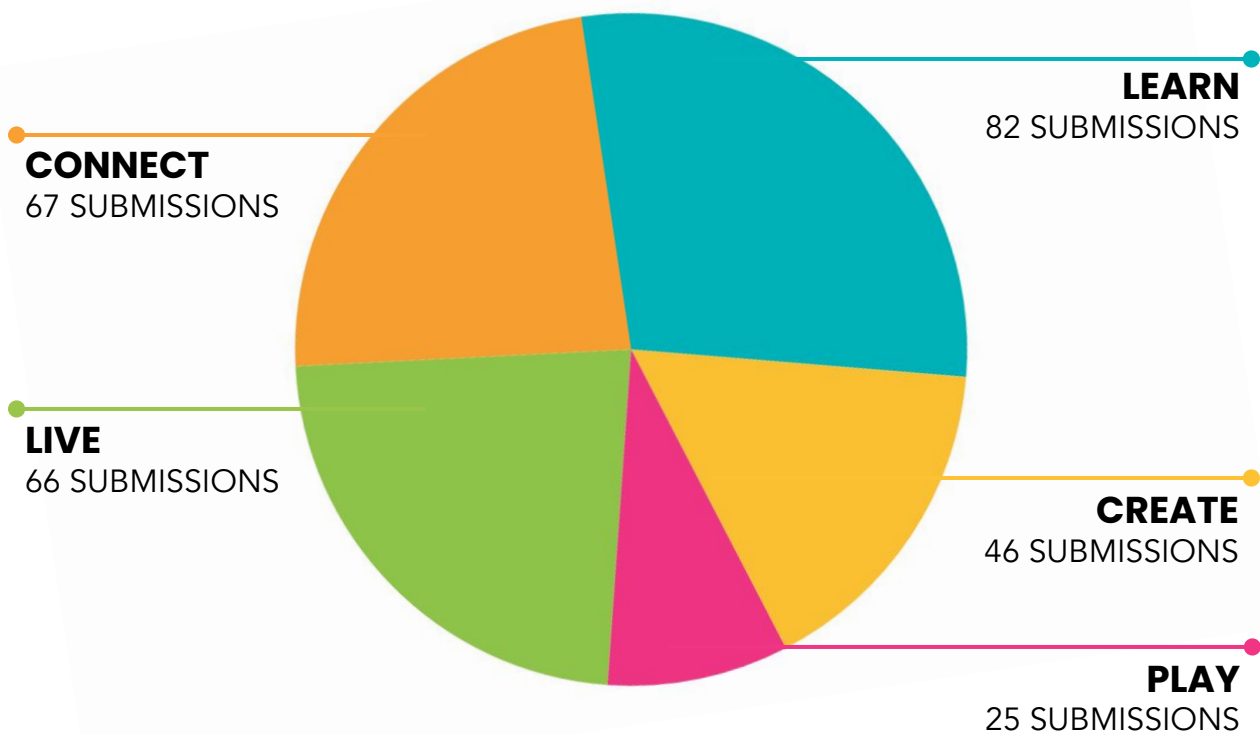
Metric	Goal Category	Number of Proposals
Social and emotional support	CONNECT	40
Arts education	LEARN	37
High school graduation rates	LEARN	36
College matriculation	LEARN	35
Resilient communities	LIVE	26
Volunteerism	CONNECT	26
Public arts and cultural events	CONNECT	25
Food insecurity	LIVE	24
Minority- and women-owned businesses	CREATE	23
Homelessness	LIVE	21

During the time of COVID-19, when many Angelenos were feeling isolated and craving connection, it is not surprising that the “social and emotional support” metric came in at the top of the list.

## LA2050 GOAL CATEGORIES

The My LA2050 Grants Challenge is guided by our five goal categories — making LA the best place to **LEARN**, **CREATE**, **PLAY**, **CONNECT**, and **LIVE**. Each year, we ask applicants to indicate which of the five goals their proposals will most impact.

In the 2018 and 2019 grants challenges, **CONNECT** was the most popular goal category. This year, we saw a resurgence in proposals to the **LEARN** category, which came in first place, reminiscent of the earlier years of the grants challenge. **CONNECT** stayed near the top in second place, with **LIVE** close behind and **CREATE** in fourth. And, while **PLAY** remained the least popular category, its submissions more than doubled from the previous two cycles.



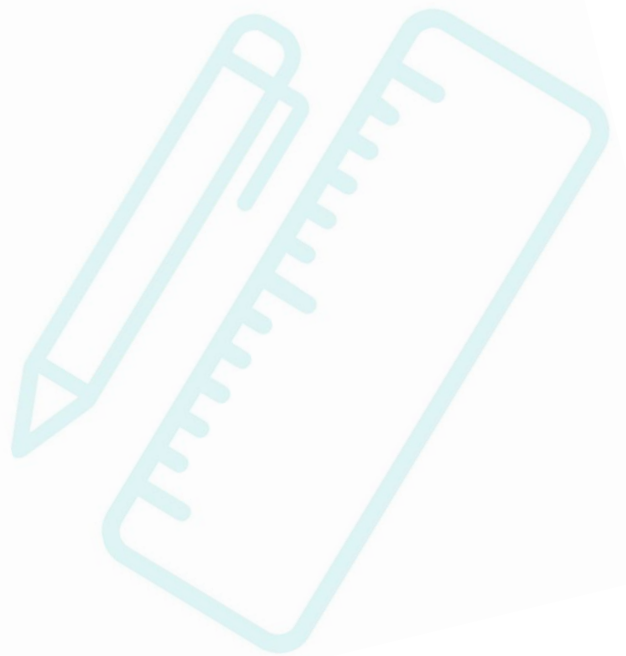
## TRENDS IN THE LEARN CATEGORY

*The LEARN category encompasses learning at all ages, from birth to college and beyond. This category and its metrics represent our vision that by the year 2050, all LA children will have access to high-quality early education programs, every student will graduate college- and career-ready, and all families will be engaged and empowered to direct their children's learning. Our local education system will be equitable, inclusive, and culturally-responsive.*

Nearly 50 percent of proposals in LEARN sought to positively impact [high school graduation rates](#), especially for high-needs groups. Organizations applied with creative ideas to support students outside of the classroom in the form of wraparound services, peer leadership opportunities, arts programming, and more. Submissions in this area included [New Earth](#), [Women's Voices Now](#), [United Friends of the Children](#), and [Ryman Arts](#).

Organizations were focused on not only encouraging high school completion, but also [increasing the number of young people of all backgrounds who continue on to college](#). In this category, 45 percent of proposals sought to improve college matriculation rates in Los Angeles County. Tactics include preparation for the SAT and ACT, providing financial assistance for college, and mentorship programs. Some of these proposals came from [Everydae](#), [Operation Jump Start](#), [CostsBeyondTuition.org](#), [College Access Plan](#), and [CollegeSpring](#).

Similar to past My LA2050 Grants Challenges, we saw many proposals focus on [preparing students for the workforce of the future](#). Organizations were intent on providing educational opportunities that expose students to a variety of careers and prepare them for a diverse and technologically advanced workplace. [The Los Angeles Coalition for the Economy & Jobs](#), [Gladeo](#), [EnCorps](#), [Junior High](#), and [MOSTe](#) all sought to make advancements in this area.

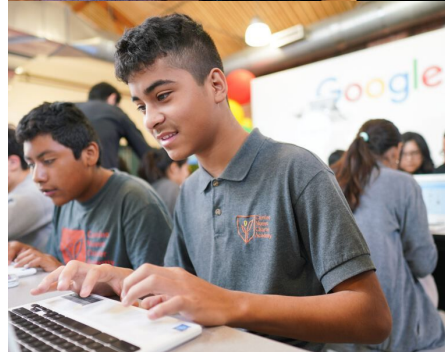


## TRENDS IN LEARN

(continued)

There was a particularly noticeable dearth of proposals focused on the “early education enrollment” metric. Only three out of 82 projects focused on early education enrollment in this year's grants challenge, making it the least popular metric. The three proposals hoping to expand early education came from the Literacy Club, Pediatric Therapy Network, and Education Through Music.

Finally, in response to COVID-19, several organizations sought funding to build out platforms and opportunities for virtual learning, including Write Girl and Heart of Los Angeles. Other organizations sought to address the effects of COVID-19 on young people by providing fresh meals for vulnerable students or preparing student activists to respond to the social challenges of the pandemic.





## TRENDS IN THE **CONNECT** CATEGORY

*The **CONNECT** category represents our hope that Los Angeles will be a place where every resident is empowered to engage with others and contribute to local civic processes. By the year 2050, LA will be the most civically engaged region in the U.S., with abundant platforms for residents to voice their opinions and influence decision-makers. Our voting rates and volunteerism will lead the nation, and an expanded transportation network will facilitate the easy flow of people and ideas.*

While COVID-19 meant we were safer at home, physical distancing gave this category new meaning. We saw a trend in **proposals aspiring to revive our connections to the region and to each other both during and after the pandemic**. Proposals like Inspiring Service, InsightLA, Union Rescue Mission, CHIRLA, and others gave us hope for the future of our region. These organizations sought to inspire people to be part of the solutions to some of LA's most complex challenges, from homelessness to immigrant rights.

Along those lines, 67 percent of submissions to the **CONNECT** category targeted the **"social and emotional support" metric**. Organizations sought to ensure that Angelenos maintained sufficient social and emotional connections through COVID-19 and beyond through a wide range of programs, from mental health services and trauma response to an educational video game for children with autism. Among the organizations focused on fostering supportive connections in Los Angeles were Citizens of Culture, Social Cipher, the Indigenous Circle of Wellness, and more.



## TRENDS IN CONNECT

(continued)

We also noticed a **desire to utilize and activate volunteers across all issue areas**. Volunteering is one of the most important ways that we can engage with local communities, so it is no surprise that organizations like LA Works, 826LA, and PLUS ME Project applied to increase “rates of volunteerism” in our region.

More than one-third of the CONNECT proposals focused on **leveraging the transformative power of public art to inspire civic engagement and to bring people together**. Public music performances from the Neighborhood Music School, a puppet festival from the Skirball Cultural Center, and a pop-up “dancemobile” from Heidi Duckler Dance were just a few of the creative arts-based events that organizations look forward to once we can all gather again.

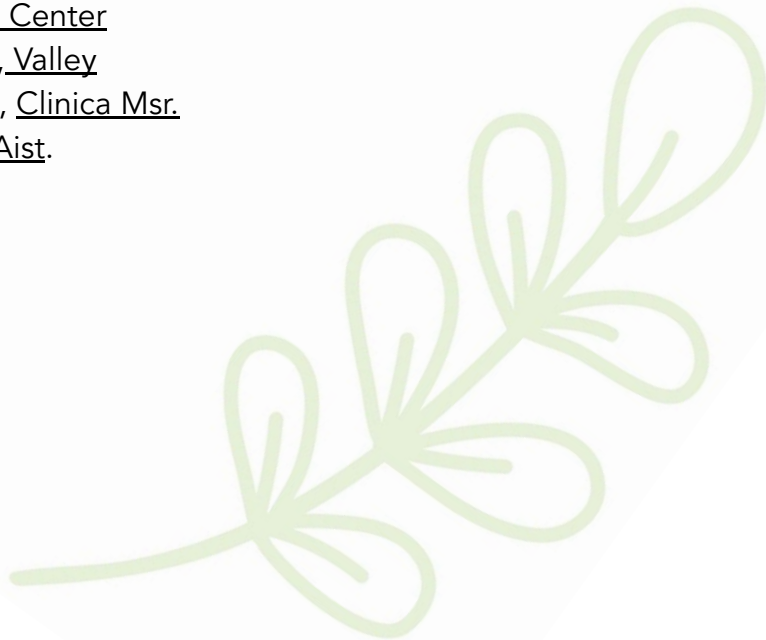


## TRENDS IN THE **LIVE** CATEGORY

*The LIVE category represents our vision of an LA where all communities have the economic means and cultural capital to thrive. By the year 2050, we hope our region will have the nation's lowest poverty rate, and that all families will have access to healthy food, quality health care, safe housing, and a sustainable environment, no matter where they live or how much money they make.*

A common theme among the proposals was **COVID-19: its impact on our region and how we might best approach recovery**. Having our grants challenge amidst the throes of the COVID-19, we were glad to see organizations responding to this need and adapting their current offerings and services to benefit the most vulnerable Angelenos. The proposals aimed to help those impacted by job loss, address the inadequacies of our social safety nets, and improve health care delivery. Some of the organizations that focused their proposals on responding to COVID-19 include LIFT, The Dream Center Foundation, LA Forward, Valley InterCommunity Council, Clinica Msr. Oscar A. Romero, and LAist.

Not surprisingly, the number one metric targeted by submissions in the LIVE category was “**resilient communities**.” The COVID-19 pandemic exposed inequities and vulnerabilities that exist in our ability to respond to crisis and at least 25 proposals sought to build community resilience through the provision of trauma-informed mental health services, improving food systems and sustainability, and innovating to house people experiencing homelessness.





## TRENDS IN LIVE

(continued)

An incredible 65 percent of the LIVE submissions intended to impact either the “[food insecurity](#)” or “[access to healthy food](#)” metrics. Organizations like [The Hollywood Food Coalition](#), [United Parents And Students](#), [Meals on Wheels of San Pedro](#), [Sprouts of Promise Foundation](#), and many more proposed providing healthy, fresh groceries and meals to thousands of vulnerable families, students, and older adults.

We also noticed a trend in [repurposing existing space in creative, new ways to be used for housing](#). For example, [Los Angeles Room & Board's Open Spaces project](#) focused on partnering with university housing programs to provide stability to students experiencing housing insecurity. [Safe Place For Youth's Safe Pods for Youth](#) proposed working with PodShare to use its pods as a temporary housing solution for people experiencing homelessness, and [Renovation Planners' Urban \\$marts LA](#) planned to help local residents construct additional dwelling units.



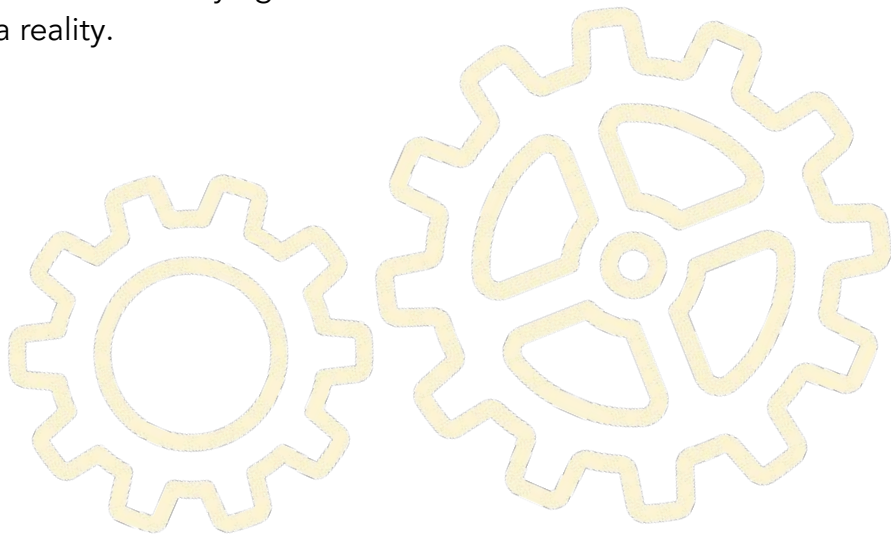


## TRENDS IN THE **CREATE** CATEGORY

*The CREATE category envisions an LA that empowers all of its residents to harness their talents in our region's artistic and economic production. By the year 2050, Los Angeles will play host to the largest concentration of working artists and high-quality arts establishments. Our region will be an international leader in innovation and a center for entrepreneurship that creates jobs and generates wealth for a diverse, inclusive workforce.*

Nearly 50 percent of proposals in the CREATE category sought to increase the number of “minority- and women-owned businesses” in Los Angeles. This was by far the most selected metric, consistent with our previous two grants challenges. Los Angeles is an incredibly diverse region, and this continued prioritization tells us that Angelenos want a business ecosystem reflective of that diversity. Our vision for the year 2050 is that 50 percent of businesses will be women-owned, and 50 percent will be minority-owned. Organizations like Grid 110, Kolor Society, LA Plaza Cultura Y Artes, Refoundry, and others are trying to make this vision a reality.

The second most popular metric among submissions to the CREATE category was “employment in the creative industries.” The creative industries are a massive part of the Los Angeles economy, so it is no surprise that dozens of proposals focused on securing career pathways and employment for diverse candidates. Truthseekers Inc, the Los Angeles Center of Photography, the Alliance for Media Arts + Culture, and Las Fotos Project were just a few of the proposals hoping to impact employment in the creative industries.



## TRENDS IN CREATE

(continued)

Workforce development was by far the most popular tactic for producing change. Whether it was creating access in the tech, media, or STEM industries, a majority of the 46 CREATE proposals relied on workforce development to accomplish their goals. Proposals in this goal category focused on a variety of populations—from formerly incarcerated individuals to foster youth and youth with disabilities—but ultimately shared similar tactics. Organizations that submitted workforce development proposals included AltaSea, Youth Business Alliance, Lost Angels Children's Project, COOP Careers, and many more.

The CREATE category received more proposals from for-profit businesses than any other category. Many of these businesses recognized and acknowledged that our economy thrives when small businesses are supported and all people have access to opportunities for employment. It was inspiring to see for-profits like Kolor Society, Startup Coil LLC, and Codemarket working towards greater community benefit.

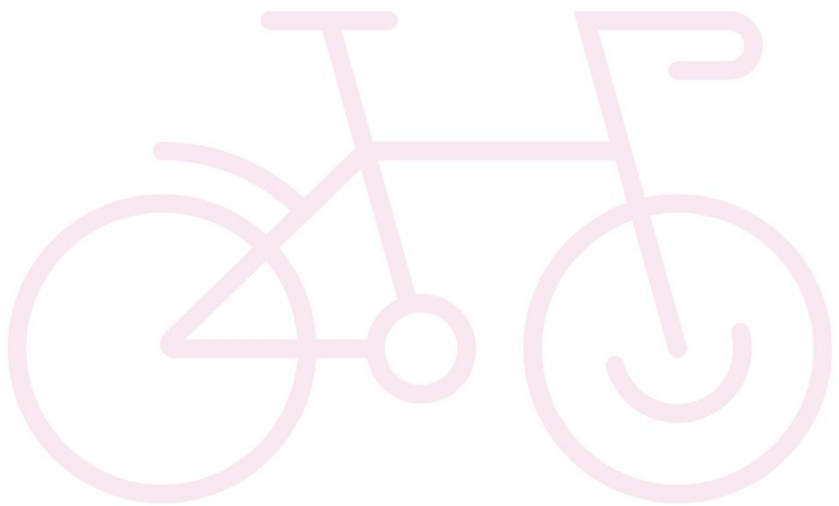


## TRENDS IN THE **PLAY** CATEGORY

*The PLAY category represents our vision of a Los Angeles where residents have easy access to high-quality, sustainable venues to get active, explore the outdoors, and appreciate our natural environment. By the year 2050, we hope that people of all ages will enjoy safe neighborhoods, vibrant park space, and abundant recreational opportunities.*

Proposals focused on **building community and activating neighborhood spaces for play**. Through pop-up events or volunteering, the goals of these proposals were to get people engaged with their communities, create safe, walkable neighborhoods, and increase the number of open space and park facilities. Organizations like the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, Nature for All, and CicLAvia make us hopeful for a time when we can all gather together again!

The most commonly targeted metric in the PLAY category was **"youth sports participation."** This year, 13 organizations aimed to improve the physical fitness of young athletes of all abilities through sports like lacrosse, baseball, and skateboarding. In doing so, they also hoped to teach participants essential life skills and support their educational progress. These organizations included Harlem Lacrosse, the Dodgers Foundation, the Urban Warehouse, and others.





## TRENDS IN PLAY

(continued)

We also saw a trend in PLAY proposals **encouraging Angelenos to get active not just for their physical health, but also for their mental wellness**. Projects from the American Heart Association, Up2Us, Inc., and Cedars Sinai Medical Center specifically highlighted how spending time outdoors and engaging in sports and recreation activities can improve the social and emotional health of participants.

This year, we received **more than double the number of proposals in the PLAY category** compared to both 2018 and 2019. Although PLAY is still the smallest category in this year's challenge with just 25 projects, we were excited to the increase from the previous two years.





## 2020 FINALISTS

The basic structure of the grants challenge has remained the same over time, leveraging two distinct phases to select the final grant recipients — written application review and public voting. However, each year, we iterate and incorporate feedback from our grantees and the Los Angeles community.

This year, winners were selected via a two-step process:

- First, 25 finalists were selected by an external evaluation committee of community leaders led by Social Venture Partners Los Angeles.
- Then, Angelenos voted to determine the final dollar amounts awarded to the finalists in each category.

When the votes were tallied, our 2020 My LA2050 Grants Challenge winners were:

### LEARN:

Pediatric Therapy Network  
SoCal College Access Network  
Reading Partners  
Los Angeles Audubon  
CARECEN-LA

### CONNECT:

Ready to Succeed  
Union Station Homeless Services  
LA Forward  
Boyle Heights Beat  
Creative Acts

### LIVE:

Clínica Msr. Oscar A. Romero  
Crop Swap LA  
Jenesse Center, Inc.  
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy  
Safe Parking LA

### CREATE:

Las Fotos Project  
Lost Angels Children's Project  
LA Sanitation and Environment  
Grid110  
Flintridge Center

### PLAY:

City of LA Department of Recreation  
and Parks  
Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation  
Los Angeles Maritime Institute  
Public Matters  
Urban Warehouse

## VOTER ENGAGEMENT

We're excited to report that **the 2020 My LA2050 Grants Challenge received more than 105,000 votes, cast by nearly 32,000 voters!** These numbers surpass the 100,000 votes cast in last year's grants challenge.

Voters in the grants challenge had the option to cast a vote for one proposal per goal category, totaling five votes. For the second year in a row, we saw voters engaging with more categories; this year, **voters cast an average of 3.3 of their allotted votes**, up from 2.5 in the previous year.

Most significantly, **these voters represented 95 percent of Los Angeles County zip codes**, demonstrating the broad reach of the grants challenge across diverse communities. We are proud that in a time of so much upheaval, we provided Angelenos with a meaningful opportunity to affect change.

### **The top 10 communities with the most voters in this year's grants challenge were:**

1. Boyle Heights
2. Silverlake / Echo Park
3. East Los Angeles
4. Highland Park
5. Palms
6. San Pedro
7. Crenshaw
8. Los Feliz
9. DTLA / Chinatown
10. Mid-City

Thank you, Los Angeles, for making your voices heard and selecting our winners! We could not do this without you.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2020 My LA2050 Grants Challenge. You truly represent the best and brightest in Los Angeles.

And, a very special thank you to this year's inspiring My LA2050 Grants Challenge partners:

[The Annenberg Foundation](#), providing \$50,000 in grant funds to the first place winners to support their efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

[The Snap Foundation](#), granting a total of \$310,000 to five projects that develop pathways to the creative economy for underrepresented youth in Los Angeles.

[Citi](#), providing \$25,000 in funding to an organization working to increase financial security and empowerment in Los Angeles.

[Social Venture Partners Los Angeles](#), serving as our external evaluation partner and leading their members in diligently reviewing, scoring, and evaluating all of this year's submissions to surface our 25 finalists.

