

LACMC CONNECT



2025 LACMC Spring Conference



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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy Spring to everyone, and welcome to all our new members; I'm sure you will find LACMC's training, networking, and conferences very worthwhile and rewarding. The contacts and relationships made through membership in LACMC will have positive impacts on your leadership role in LA County.

2025 has already been a year that challenges all we know as leaders. Sometimes it feels like we are moving at lightning speed to be as responsive as possible. We are applying lessons and best practices we have learned in the past years to make us more resilient and collaborative as we deliver services to the residents of Los Angeles County. How do we make sure we are making the right decisions when the stakes are high, and time is short?



For insight into answering this question, I recommend an excellent book on leadership, "The Tao of Leadership" by John Heider. This book provides simple and clear advice on how to be the very best kind of leader. It explores the profound principles of Taoism and their application to modern leadership. This unique synthesis reveals that true leadership transcends traditional authority, embracing qualities like humility, wisdom, and intuition. The book encourages leaders to nurture their inner selves, fostering an environment where collaboration and creativity flourish. Readers are drawn into a journey that challenges conventional management practices, inviting them to lead with authenticity and purpose. Dive into this transformative guide and discover how to inspire greatness in yourself and those around you.

Because leading is about balance; I also recommend another exceptional book, "The Water Knife" by Paolo Bacigalupi. This book is about the conflicts that arise in a world of severe water scarcity, where water is more valuable than gold. The book is not just a story about

water and survival but a cautionary tale that reflects contemporary issues regarding climate change, resource scarcity, and social justice. Bacigalupi effectively utilizes the characters' struggles to explore profound ideas about power, morality, and the choices we make as individuals and societies when faced with dire situations.

I recommend these books for your team and yourself to both inspire you and make time to just turn it off and drift into a world that could be.

Warm regards,

Ricardo D. Garcia
President, Los Angeles County Management Council

A MESSAGE FROM THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

Hello, LACMC members! We appreciate the opportunity to update you on the latest at LACERA. Thank you for your ongoing partnership and sharing important information with your employees (our members!).

LACERA Supports Its Members Impacted by Wildfires

As we all continue to assist with recovery and rebuilding efforts in the wake of the January wildfires, LACERA is focused on directly supporting our affected members and connecting them with the resources they need. At last count, over 200 LACERA members were directly impacted by the fires and almost 190 of them lost their homes (of those, 110 were retirees or surviving members).

In the weeks after the fires, LACERA proudly worked side by side with the County, outside agencies, and insurance carriers to assist members. LACERA participated in six County events at various locations, helping active members access their benefits and comprehensive wellness, employee assistance, insurance, and recovery resources. In February, LACERA organized two emergency retiree assistance events at LACERA's offices. Thanks to the participation of multiple County departments—as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Small Business Administration, Retired Employees of Los Angeles County, retiree healthcare providers, and other organizations—we were able to provide onsite, one-stop service and benefits assistance.

At the same time, we continue to serve our wider member audience through all our communications channels, reassuring them that LACERA is there for them now and into the future, with a stable pension fund and secure member benefits. If you know of any LACERA members who need support, please encourage them to contact us.

Meet LACERA's New Board Members

We are pleased to welcome two new trustees to LACERA's boards and provide their bios.

In January, Lisa Proft began serving as the acting ex-officio trustee on both boards. Trustee Proft is the Chief Deputy and the Principal Deputy Public Administrator for the County of Los Angeles Department of Treasurer and Tax Collector, where she oversees departmental operations. She began her County career as a Legislative Deputy for the County Board of Supervisors, working for the

late Supervisor Gloria Molina. She subsequently served as a trial attorney in the Dependency Court, Appellate Courts, and County Counsel's Probate Division, where she handled estates and advised the County's Public Administrator. In 2016, Ms. Proft accepted the position of Assistant Treasurer and Tax Collector and in 2025, assumed the position of Chief Deputy.

In February, Bobbie Fesler was appointed to the BOR. She is a retired Senior Assistant L.A. County Counsel who served the community for over three decades. She also previously served the Los Angeles Unified School District as General Counsel. Trustee Fesler earned her undergraduate degree at UC Santa Barbara and her Juris Doctor degree at UCLA. As a LACERA retiree and Retired Employees of Los Angeles County board member, Ms. Fesler is an advocate for protecting members' benefits and financial security. She also volunteers and has held leadership positions with several nonprofit and community organizations.

Investment Update From Chief Investment Officer Jon Gabel

The market value of LACERA's pension fund (the Fund) as of December 31, 2024 was \$81.2 billion, with a net return for the year of 8.8 percent. The Fund has continued to perform consistently across varying market cycles, generating net returns of 7.9 percent over five years and 7.7 percent over ten years, outperforming its benchmark returns for the three-, five-, and ten-year periods.

Looking ahead to 2025, the investment environment faces new uncertainties due to changing international trade relations and persistent inflation. Despite these challenges, LACERA's Board of Investments remains committed to executing its disciplined investment strategy. This strategy includes maintaining a diversified portfolio across different asset classes, consistent with the strategic asset allocation adopted by the Board in 2024, to achieve sustainable long-term returns.

In January, the Board approved LACERA's 2025 Strategic Framework and Initiatives, which applies a principles-based investment approach, supported by a robust governance structure and a commitment to continuous improvement and learning. This framework positions LACERA to adapt to changing macroeconomic conditions, technological advancements, and workforce trends. As part of its strategic direction, LACERA will continue efforts to enhance operational effectiveness, optimize its investment model, maximize stewardship and ownership rights, strengthen its influence over fees and the cost of capital, and advance its T.I.D.E. (Towards Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity) initiative. The Strategic Framework and Initiatives enhance LACERA's ability to execute its strategic asset allocation and ultimately fulfill its mission.

LACERA remains steadfast in its mission to produce, protect, and provide the promised benefits to its members, while maintaining a disciplined focus on optimizing asset allocation and advancing its strategic initiatives.

Until our next article, LACERA thanks you and your employees for your ongoing contributions to our community. Take care and stay safe!

Luis A. Lugo

LACERA Deputy Chief Executive Officer

LOS
ANGELES
COUNTY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL









2025 Summer Mixer



July 31, 2025

Registration 5:30 pm
Mixer 6:00 pm-9:00 pm

\$65 per person*

-  **TopGolf Game**
-  **Board Games**
-  **Fajita Fiesta Buffet**
-  **Beverages**
-  **Last day for refunds is Friday, July 11, 2025.**
-  ****LACMC members are allowed one guest.***
-  **Guests must be 21+ to participate.**
-  **Visit Summer Networking Mixer - LA County Management Council to register.**

Questions? Contact:
specialevents@managementcouncil.lacounty.gov

LACMC INTERVIEWS

Yelena Oganessian
County of Los Angeles
Aging & Disabilities Department

Q1) Why did you join LACMC?

I first became acquainted with LACMC in August 2024 when I started my role as a Management Fellow with the Aging and Disabilities Department. My decision to join LACMC was driven by my manager's endorsement of the excellent training and networking opportunities available, which are designed to foster personal growth and leadership development within the County.

Q2) How long have you worked for the County of Los Angeles (County)?

I have been employed by the County since 2015.

Q3) Was the County your dream job as a child? If so, why? If not, what was your dream as a child and how did you land with County?

Growing up, I aspired to be a lawyer, driven by a passion for public service and helping as many people as possible. However, as I matured, I realized that there are numerous careers beyond the legal profession that also make a positive impact. My journey with LA County began as an Eligibility Worker II with DPSS, followed by a role as a Judicial Assistant with the Superior Court of CA, County of LA. Currently, I serve as a Management Fellow for the A&D Department, contributing to the PALA (Purposeful Aging Los Angeles) initiative. Each of my positions within the County has played a pivotal role in transforming my dream of helping others into a reality.

Q4) Are you a 1st-generation County employee? If not, tell us about it.

No, I am a second-generation County employee. My mother dedicated 25 years to the Department of Public Social Services before retiring in 2024. She has always exemplified integrity, honesty, and hard work, and I am honored to follow in her footsteps.

Q5) How can LACMC improve on creating and developing its members?

As a new member, I believe LACMC excels in offering training opportunities and hosting engaging events for its members. I am grateful for the chance to join and learn about the numerous wonderful offerings of LACMC and look forward to participating in more training sessions and networking events in the future.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Agnes Michelle Sebastian, DHS
Anna Phong, DHR
Anthony Melgoza, DHR
Camille Chatman, RRCC
David Carroll, YD
Eric Suarez, Fire
Fellipe de la Torre, APD
Ildefonso Cardenas, Probation
Irasema Caldera, DPSS
Jacob Jokisch, CEO
Johanna Hernandez, P&R
Jose Sepulveda, DPSS
Karen Craft, DHS
Karen Ramirez, PD
Laureen Wu, TTC
Lauren Fukai, PD
Mark Gajda, Fire
Robert A. Lopez Mora, DPSS
Stephanie Villalobos, CSSD
Susana Juarez, APD
Suzette Alvarez-Chavarria, DPH
Aaron Broom, Probation
Ani Yeghiyan, CEO
Brenda Gaeta, ACWM
Bryce Kiriya, DMH
Jennipher Baeza, Fire
Jorge Orozco, AC
Lorraine Lazarus, P&R
Luana Enriquez, DPW
Luisa Barreto, DMH
Michelle Mencias, Fire
Nancy Rico, DPSS
Sanders Smith, PD



2025 LACMC Spring Conference

Your Voice, Your Advocate

Are you 5 years or less from retiring from Los Angeles County service? Now is the perfect time to join RELAC — Retired Employees of Los Angeles County. **Your membership will be FREE** until you retire. After that, the cost is minimal – only \$5 a month.

Why Join RELAC?

RELAC is the only organization solely dedicated to protecting and advancing the interests of LA County retirees. We fight for your benefits, your rights, and your voice.

Member Benefits Include:



PENSION OVERSIGHT

RELAC has four trustees serving on Los Angeles County Employee Retirement Association Boards. Their presence gives retirees a strong voice in decisions affecting investments, cost-of-living adjustments, and long term benefit security.

RELAC actively monitors and responds to any threats to your retirement benefits. We have your back at every level: local, state, and federal.

PENSION PROTECTION & ADVOCACY



RECREATIONAL & PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES

RELAC hosts social events like Hollywood Bowl night, Dodger games and golf tournaments to keep members connected. It also supports charitable causes including March of Dimes, food drives, toy donations, and scholarships.

We advocate for retiree health plans and work to preserve and improve your medical and dental coverage.

HEALTH CARE DEFENSE



EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO UPDATES

Stay informed with our quarterly RELAC newsletter, legislative alerts, benefit changes, and other important issues sent immediately via email alerts.

Our sole mission: defending and supporting Los Angeles County retirees

NO POLITICAL AGENDA – JUST RETIREE RIGHTS



What Our Members Say:

“RELAC gave me peace of mind as I transitioned into retirement. They truly fight for us.”
— Former LA County Employee

Who Can Join?

If you're within 5 years of retirement, you're eligible to become an Affiliate Member today and secure your post-retirement support network early. Your membership is free until you retire, and then it's only \$5 a month.

RELAC Fights For You.

Be Informed. Be Protected. Be a Member.

Call (800) 537-3522,
visit relac.org or
scan the QR code to
JOIN NOW





CELEBRATING THE POWER OF COUNTY PROGRAMS: ANGELITA MEDINA'S JOURNEY FROM TOY LOAN RECIPIENT TO LA COUNTY LEADER

As the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) Toy Loan Program marks its 90th anniversary, we spotlight a remarkable story that embodies the profound impact of county programs on individual lives and our greater community. Angelita “Angie” Medina, a current LA County Library Commissioner and retired county manager, traces her lifelong dedication to public service back to her earliest memories as a Toy Loan participant.

A Childhood Shaped by Opportunity

Nearly 70 years ago, a six-year-old Angie Medina eagerly awaited her turn to borrow toys from the Toy Loan program at her school. For Angie and her family, who faced significant financial constraints, the program was more than just a source of play—it was a lifeline. “I remember the excitement of bringing home a Raggedy Ann doll,” Angie recalls. “It was a rare treat for us, and my mother was so grateful for the opportunity.”

The DPSS Toy Loan program, established in 1935, has provided generations of LA County children with access to toys, fostering creativity, responsibility, and joy. For Angie, it also planted the seeds of empathy and a desire to give back, shaping her outlook on life and service.

From Recipient to Leader

Angie’s early experiences with the Toy Loan program were a catalyst for a distinguished 33-year career in LA County government. Rising through the ranks, she held significant management roles in health services, overseeing medical applications at county hospitals and leading major initiatives such as a \$25 million Children’s Health Outreach project in partnership with DPSS.

Her commitment to equity and access extended beyond her official duties. Angie served as President of the County Hispanic Managers Association, where she fostered collaboration among diverse management associations and championed public service initiatives benefiting underserved communities.

Giving Back, Then and Now

Even in retirement, Angie’s dedication to county service remains unwavering. As a Library Commissioner, she works tirelessly to expand access to educational and cultural resources for all residents. Her story is a testament to the enduring influence of early support and the ripple effect of county programs on individual lives and community well-being.

“I know firsthand how a simple gesture—like lending a toy—can change the trajectory of a child’s life,” Angie reflects. “That experience inspired me to dedicate my career to helping others through county programs.”

The Legacy of the Toy Loan Program

As we celebrate the Toy Loan program's 90th anniversary, its legacy is evident in the lives of thousands of Angelenos like Angie. Since its inception, the program has served over four million children, providing not just toys, but hope, opportunity, and a sense of belonging.

We invite you to join us in honoring this milestone and recognizing the dedicated public servants—past and present—who help shape a brighter future for LA County. At the upcoming 90th anniversary celebration, Angie will share her story, reminding us all of the transformative power of our collective work.

For more information on the Toy Loan program and its impact, please see the accompanying fact sheet and historical photos included in this issue.

Contributed by James Allen LA County Management Council Communications Chair and Shannon Denby, LACMC Executive Committee member





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Get leadership tips, career development resources, upcoming event news, and inspiration from LA County's best.

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We would like to hear your comments, thoughts, ideas and suggestions.
Please contact the editors at the following email:

LACMC.connect.editor@managementcouncil.lacounty.gov

2025 LACMC Spring Conference





County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES



Toy Loan

The Program with a Heart

FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 1934, during the Great Depression, the manager of a dime store in southwest Los Angeles noticed two young boys wandering around his store, and discovered they were pocketing small toys and materials that could be used to construct toys. The boys were apprehended and referred to the Probation Department. Probation staff then spoke to the principal of the school they attended and found that the boys had good records, but their families could not afford many toys. Together, the store manager, school principal and Probation staff decided something must be done to prevent them from becoming delinquents. From this, the idea of gathering toys and loaning them to children was conceived.

The first Toy Loan Center opened May 6, 1935 in a garage near Manchester Park. The basic ground rules were developed. Toys would be loaned on a weekly basis, and a record would be kept of every toy borrowed. The children would be graded on the care of their borrowed toy, receiving a satisfactory mark for returning their toy on time and in good condition. After 20 good marks, s/he would attain the status of Honor Borrower, which entitled the child to a gift from the Honor Cabinet. In addition, the Toy Loan Honor Code was established to teach honesty, responsibility, courtesy, and integrity.

OVERVIEW

Individuals, groups and toy manufacturers donate toys and books to the Toy Loan Program. Each Toy Loan Centers operates independently. The Toy Loan Centers are located in parks, recreation facilities, children's centers, housing projects and community service buildings. Each center adheres to the basic tenets of the Toy Loan Program.

Currently, the Toy Loan Program supplies toys to over 50 centers throughout LA County and is a resource for various non-profit agencies. Over 30,000 children are served annually by the various services offered by the program.

While the program depends on monetary, toy and book donations from the public and private sectors, the County does provide other key supports such as a headquarters facility and a delivery truck. Toys are sorted and sanitized at the headquarters, then distributed to the various Toy Loan Centers as well as Domestic Violence and Homeless Shelters. At any given time, there are approximately 45,000 toys in circulation and at the headquarters facility.



County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES



Toy Loan

The Program with a Heart

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How can my child join Toy Loan?

You simply fill out a registration card with name and address. No ID is required.

Q. What is Toy Loan?

It is a free toy lending library. It works just like a library. The child "checks out" the toy and returns it the following week.

Q. Where do the toys come from?

All of the toys are donated from private citizens and toy manufacturers.

Q. What does the child learn from this program?

The child learns about responsibility and cooperation.

Q. What if the toy is broken or lost?

If the toy is broken or lost it will take the child a bit longer to receive his/her "incentive toy".

Q. What is an "incentive toy"?

The child is rewarded with a new "incentive toy" to keep and take home with them after participation in the program for 5, 10, 15 and 20 weeks.

Our Philosophy

The Toy Loan Program is designed to instill self confidence and socialization in the child. Toy Loan believes that every child in LA County, regardless of their family's income level, deserves a toy and playing is an essential component of a child's development.



Where Do the Toys Come From?

Each year, citizens donate thousands of repairable and discarded toys to Toy Loan. Crews repair and assemble run-down toys to make the finished products look as good as new. After the toys are refurbished they are distributed to various Toy Loan Centers for children. The Toy Loan Program also receives donated toys from manufacturers and companies. The Toy Loan Program organizes year-round donation drives throughout schools, establishments and private sponsors within Los Angeles County. Individual donations and participation help the Toy Loan Program extend its varied services to benefit children in the community! The Toy Loan Advisory Board is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible.

Toy Loan Center Sponsors

Toy Loan Centers are sponsored by local clubs, service organizations, volunteer groups, local parks, school districts, etc. The sponsor provides the staff needed to operate the Toy Loan Center which includes a person who loans the toys, also known as a "Toyrarian." The sponsor also provides other activities for children to enjoy.



"Enriching Lives Through Effective and Caring Service."



Toy Loan & Volunteer Services Headquarters

2200 N. Humboldt Street

Los Angeles, CA 90031

Phone **(323) 986-2741**

Fax **(213) 743-9998**

Email **toyloan@dpss.lacounty.gov**

Website **bit.ly/DpssToyLoan**



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Revised (ENG) (5/25)



dpss

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES



TOY Loan

The Program with a Heart

≡ SINCE 1935 ≡

A Free Toy Lending Service

Sponsored by the

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

and the

Department of Public Social Services

Toy Loan is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax-deductible.

What is Toy Loan?

The Toy Loan Program is a free service that allows children to borrow toys from a Toy Loan Center in the same manner in which books are borrowed from a public library. It is a voluntary community effort sponsored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Department of Public Social Services.

Character Building & Good Citizenship

The Toy Loan Program also helps:

- Develop a sense of responsibility in children through the observance of an honor code and merit system that gives praise and recognition to children who are able to return toys on time and undamaged;
- Encourage positive attitudes in children by providing them with an acceptable means of obtaining toys;
- Benefit children by providing a positive outlet for their spare time; and
- Address the needs of children through the voluntary commitments of time and resources from the community.

The success of this concept has been demonstrated over the years and is supported by the fact that the majority of children who borrow toys from the center return them on time and in good condition.



Honor Awards

An Honor Award, which consists of a certificate and all new toys, is achieved when a child is able to successfully borrow "Loaner Toys." This is done by taking good care of the toys they have borrowed and bringing them back on time. A new incentive toy is earned after 5, 10, and 15 weeks of successful borrowing. An Honor Award is given after 20 weeks. This process rewards those who value the Honor Code through the program.



Honor Code

- Patience
- Promptness
- Responsibility
- Courtesy
- Honesty
- Cleanliness
- Cooperation



Toy Loan Needs Your Help

The Toy Loan Advisory Board is always looking for interested people to become members. If you know of a child who would enjoy being a member of the Toy Loan Program or if you are a part of a group that wants to help sponsor a Toy Loan Center, please contact the Toy Loan Headquarters for the address and telephone number of the nearest location. Toy Loan Headquarters staff would be happy to make arrangements to speak with you at your convenience.