

2ND ANNUAL



# Centering Community Voices From the Environmental Justice Frontlines of LA

Extreme Heat and  
Climate Resilience Dialogues

March–June 2023

Prepared For

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY  
MOBILIZATION OFFICE**

Prepared By

**Liberty  
Hill**  
FOUNDATION

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# Introduction

The **Climate Equity LA (CELA) Series Year 2** combined public workshops and focus groups, as well as parallel heat awareness campaigns, to identify and foster community discourse on the impacts of extreme heat in the City of Los Angeles while also augmenting popular education resources and materials. Building on the preceding year's focus on climate equity and building decarbonization, the CELA Year 2 series took place during March through June 2023. The CELA Year 2 **"Centering Community Voices From the Environmental Justice Frontlines of LA: Extreme Heat and Climate Resilience Dialogues"** focused on extreme heat and the disproportionate impacts of heat on frontline communities across Los Angeles, through the lens of community-centered climate resilience, impacts on outdoor workers, and best practices for engaging and raising awareness on resources and damaging effects of extreme heat.

This report is a four-part series summarizing the process and model for the stakeholder engagement co-organized by the **Climate Emergency Mobilization Office (CEMO)**, the **Liberty Hill Foundation**, and community-based organizations (CBOs) as part of the Climate Equity LA (CELA) Public Workshop Series Year 2 in Summer 2023. With the CEMO Director Marta Segura's additional role as Chief Heat Officer of the City of LA, through Ordinance No. 187637, the office became entrusted with "the responsibility of developing and regularly updating a Heat Action Plan, which at minimum includes establishment of an early warning system, interagency response plan, and opportunities to reduce exposure from extreme heat events using long-term strategies to protect communities, especially within the City's most vulnerable areas." The CELA Year 2 series serves to provide initial insight into community priorities and generate greater attention to the impacts of extreme heat and resources currently available leading up to the development of the **City's Heat Action Plan (HAP)** and **Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA)**.

## Advancing a Collaborative Model for Equitable Climate Policy

The goal of the CEMO's collaboration with the Liberty Hill Foundation was to create deep and meaningful engagement with LA's diverse communities, particularly grassroots, frontline communities, to hear their concerns and recommendations to respond to the impacts of climate inequities.

The Liberty Hill Foundation has a long history of supporting community-driven education, environmental justice, and social equity in Los Angeles, as well as significant experience in conducting community outreach to engage CBOs serving low-income, frontline, and communities of color across the city. Liberty Hill's involvement in the co-development of the **Los Angeles County Sustainability Plan** during 2018–2019 exemplifies the kind of deep engagement the CEMO seeks to innovate.

In preparation for the Climate Equity LA Series, the CEMO and the Liberty Hill Foundation convened a Workshop Advisory Committee, comprising representatives from frontline community-based organizations, research institutions, and Los Angeles City and County agencies, to develop a multi-faceted curriculum to guide the CELA workshop series. Participants included members of the Leap LA Coalition, including **Pacoima Beautiful (PB)**, **Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)**, **Esperanza Community Housing (ECH)**, **Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)**, and **Physicians for Social Responsibility-LA (PSR-LA)**, as well as the additional participation of the community-based organization **Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)**. Research institutions including members of the **Los Angeles Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability (LARC)**, **UCLA's Labor Occupational Safety and Hazard Program (LOSH)**, **Center for Community Engagement**, and the **Luskin Center for Innovation**, all participated in the design of the

series, along with public agencies including the City's Emergency Management Department, the Department of City Planning, and the Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office.

These design sessions focused on addressing the systemic and underlying causes of inequities from extreme heat, including historic redlining and disinvestment in low-income and communities of color. Participants iterated that Year 2 should serve to further elevate community voices, perspectives, and the solutions that communities have identified for themselves, including the ways in which local agencies and institutions can best support and champion these solutions.

The Workshop Advisory Committee met for three sessions during spring 2023 to develop and finalize a framework for the workshop series, resulting in the three workshops that compose the bulk of the CELA series. Including the Year 2 Launch, these are:

- **CELA Year 2 Launch:** Equitable Extreme Heat and Climate Adaptation Strategies for LA (March 23, 2023)
- **Workshop 1:** Community-Driven Climate Resilience (April 27, 2023)
- **Workshop 2:** Protecting Outdoor Workers From Extreme Heat in LA (June 1, 2023)
- **Workshop 3:** Citywide Heat Safety Response and Awareness (June 29, 2023)

Prior to the series' launch, the Liberty Hill Foundation organized a workshop to prepare for the facilitation and notetaking of the workshop series. Workshop activities included determination of the cadence of the series, roles, and a review of the purpose of the breakout room discussion as a space of engagement to generate insight into the priorities of community participants throughout the series. In addition to CBO staff, three student volunteers from UCLA also participated, for a total of 23 facilitators and notetakers across both workshops 1 and 2 of the CELA series. In order to accommodate

the programming limitations of workshop 3 due to the extensive resources shared during the finale, breakout groups were supplemented with longer Q&A sessions.

Separate from the workshop series was a focus group series conducted in partnership with seven community-based organizations and tribes, organized and coordinated by the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office and students of the Master of Public Policy program of the **UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs**. The results of these focus groups will be published on the CEMO website at a later date. Participants included representatives of the **Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (FTBMI)**, the **Labor Community Strategy Center (LCSC)**, **Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (CIELO)**, **Black Women for Wellness (BWW)**, the **Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)**, **TRUST South LA**, and the **LA Black Worker Center (LABWC)**.

# Second Annual Launch: Equitable Extreme Heat and Climate Adaptation Strategies for LA

March 23, 2023

On March 23, 2023, 103 participants and production staff members joined the official launch of the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office's "Second Annual Climate Equity LA Series" in a public Zoom event held from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The second year of the Climate Equity LA Series emphasized themes of extreme heat and equitable, community-centered solutions for climate resilience while also announcing the City of LA's first **Heat Action Plan (HAP)**, **Heat Relief 4 LA Campaign**, and **Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA)**. The launch event reflected on the successes and accomplishments from CELA Year 1, highlighting the wisdom from community partners in conversation with public leaders on how the City of LA can improve and meet the needs and priorities of frontline communities most impacted by extreme heat and climate hazards.

Attendees represented a diverse group of stakeholders, with CBO anchors (organizations serving as co-designers and members of the CELA Workshop Advisory Committee for stakeholder engagement) and other community-based groups representing the largest contingent of participants. City of LA departments and offices also made a strong showing, including staff members from the **Department of City Planning**, the **Department of Transportation**, the **Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration and Safety**, the **Bureau of Sanitation and Environment**, the **Emergency Management Department**, the **Mayor's Office of Energy and Sustainability**, and **City Council**, along with representatives of local neighborhood councils, the **LA County's Chief Sustainability Office**, other Southern California city governments, and the **Governor's Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications**.

Attendees included representatives from a variety of nonprofit organizations, two of which were the **Resources Legacy Fund** and the **Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center**. Participants were identified based on organizational or community affiliation, as shown in Figure 1.

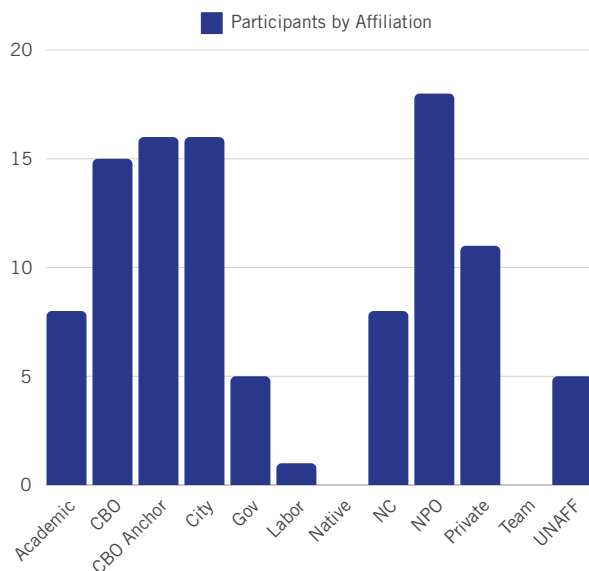
## Workshop Speakers and Panel Participants

TABLE 1. Participation Legend for CELA Year 2 Series

Code	Definition
ACADEMIC	College and university faculty, students, etc.
CBO	Community-based organizations with a base-building focus
CBO ANCHOR	The six community-based organizations that participated in the design and outreach of the CELA Series
CITY	The City of LA Staff and relevant agencies
GOV	All other government representatives outside the City of Los Angeles
MEDIA	News groups and media entities
NATIVE	Organizations led by Native Americans
NC	Neighborhood councils
NPO	Nonprofit organizations
PRIVATE	For-profit organizations include, but are not limited to, consulting groups, for-profit research firms, and lobbying groups
TEAM	CEDO, Liberty Hill staff members, and interpreters
UNAFF	Independent individuals without clear affiliation



**FIGURE 1. Participation in the Climate Equity LA Series Launch Event (March 23, 2023)**



After a welcome from **Liberty Hill Foundation's Strategic Partnerships Director Michele Prichard** and a land blessing and opening remarks by **Fernandeño Tataviam Tribal President Rudy Ortega Jr.**, **CEMO Director Marta Segura** introduced the Climate Equity LA Series with a review of the goals for Year 2 of the CELA Series and outcomes from Year 1. Following Director Segura's introduction, **Mayor Karen Bass** addressed the gathering by video in which she spoke about the pivotal role of CEMO in bridging climate action with community needs. Mayor Bass highlighted the pressing challenges of climate change, especially in communities that face extreme pollution and limited economic mobility. She underscored the specific hazards these communities endure, from urban heat islands to energy poverty. Drawing from her background as a community organizer, Mayor Bass celebrated the transformative power of community engagement in shaping city, state, and national policies and accentuated the importance of centering environmental justice and collective action to forge a resilient and healthier Los Angeles for all its communities.

The second half of the program consisted of a fireside chat between President Ortega and Director Prichard, moderated by Director Segura. Their discussion encompassed various topics related to climate action,

environmental justice, and the integration of Indigenous wisdom and practices into governmental policies.

Director Segura began the fireside chat by acknowledging Indigenous land and its importance as a gesture of respect, recognizing the historical and cultural significance of the land and the role of land blessings and other rituals, along with other traditions, in preserving Indigenous cultures and their profound connection to the land. There was consensus on the significance of honoring Indigenous practices and integrating them into modern climate resilience plans. Their agreement underscores the need for the active inclusion of Indigenous communities in decision-making, emphasizing how land recognition can broadly sustain community relationships and climate resilience. The dialogue stressed the importance of meaningfully moving beyond mere acknowledgment to engaging with Indigenous traditions and culture.

President Ortega highlighted the importance of integrating Indigenous knowledge and its value and traditional practices in responding to climate change and supporting resilience. The return of lands to Indigenous peoples also represents a return of relationships and stewardship with the land, and subsequently, greater environmental and climate resilience. Additionally, a conversation between Directors Segura and Prichard underscored the need to integrate diverse voices representing environmental justice, labor, and tenants' groups in climate resilience decisions alongside government collaborations with Indigenous communities for effective strategy development. They highlighted the importance of grassroots action, the role of local communities, and a holistic approach in integrating Indigenous wisdom, sustainable practices, and technical knowledge as crucial for climate resilience.

The discussion further underscored the value of Indigenous wisdom in combating climate change, with the significance of learning from native communities' historical resilience and survival strategies. Pointing to a need for active listening and incorporating Indigenous wisdom into policymaking as essential, Director Segura

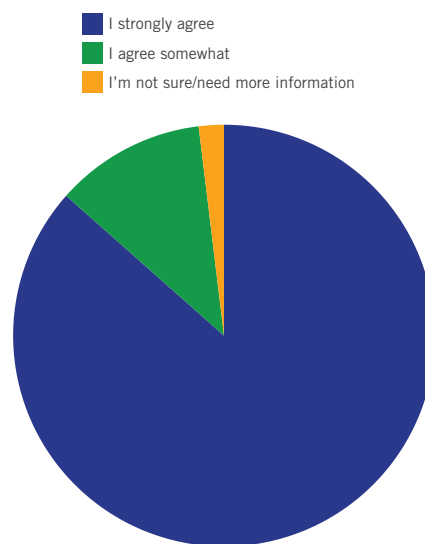
recognized the sustainable practices of Indigenous communities as potential solutions to climate-related problems. Additionally, by aligning community wisdom with policies and technologies, the insight of Indigenous knowledge can drive potential contemporary climate strategies for shaping future initiatives.

Directors Segura and Prichard emphasized the need for active community participation in government decision-making when discussing steps for the City of LA and the various technical impediments in energy resource distribution as well as the need to prioritize frontline communities. Aligning policies and technologies with native wisdom and community commentary is necessary in ensuring an equitable allocation of resources to the most disadvantaged areas. Additionally, Directors Segura and Prichard encouraged changes to governance processes in order to ensure that voices were heard and needs were met when ensuring the balance of diverse interests for climate resilience. Initiatives to restructure government processes to be more inclusive and effective encountered obstacles, including the complexities of mobilizing resources from the Inflation Reduction Act, and the need for redistributive models that serve the intended communities most heavily burdened by the climate crisis.

During the conclusion of the fireside chat, all speakers recognized the threats that climate change impose on vulnerable populations, emphasizing the need for preparedness and adaptability to frequent and severe climate events. Speakers agreed that collective action is vital for responding to these threats and enhancing resilience. Participants acknowledged the urgency to act swiftly to safeguard future generations and Earth's resources. From that discussion, the need to build resilience among vulnerable communities emerged as a priority. Participants stressed the importance of equitable distribution of measures to bolster climate resilience, especially in disadvantaged communities, which requires an intersectional approach to policy solutions for environmental and housing justice and related concerns. The conversation concluded with agreement on the need to align resources and actions with the areas of greatest need, especially in pollution-burdened communities.

After the fireside chat, presenters polled participants on their views, which yielded 52 responses. The poll asked participants for their views regarding the following statement:

**FIGURE 2. Centering the voices of Indigenous, First Nations, and Frontline communities is necessary to effectively create climate solutions for all**



After the poll, CEMO Director Marta Segura reviewed the CELA Year 2 timeline and observed that the launch of CELA Year 2 coincided with the inauguration of the Climate Equity Series, which emphasizes crucial climate resilience and equity issues. Upcoming workshops for the CELA series would encompass topics surrounding community-driven climate resilience, the adverse conditions to which extreme heat subjects outdoor workers, and a community-driven heat relief campaign. With a focus on refining early warning systems against extreme heat, these workshops would especially draw from the experiences and insights of communities in zones adversely affected by air pollution and health disparities. The series will conclude on a potential date sometime in the fall with an in-person Community Assembly, aiming to feed into the decision-making processes of the **Climate Emergency Mobilization Commission (CEMC)** and City Council. Director Segura closed her remarks by pointing to the extreme heat focus groups, supported by the Liberty Hill Foundation and City officials, as instrumental in

a parallel stakeholder engagement process meant to enrich the CELA series and yield diverse insight to inform more equitable climate policy.

Director Segura then opened the meeting to a question-and-answer period, some topical areas of which are summarized below.

## Native Trees and Affordable Housing

A participant raised questions and concerns about incorporating native trees into 100% affordable housing projects, advocating against elimination of environmental reviews. CEMO Director Segura responded by identifying several shade infrastructure projects and approaches that the City is undertaking, under the direction of an urban forest officer to channel commitment and investment in shade equity, topics of discussion to be included in an upcoming tree summit meeting. Michele Prichard acknowledged that a strategic collaboration between the **Urban Forestry Division** and the **Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD)** could yield beneficial results for both sectors by requiring affordable housing to be greener for residents.

## Political Representation for Native Americans

A participant asked about the demographic distribution of political representation for Native Americans at different levels of government, drawing from the importance this has for other marginalized groups to get a seat at the table for decision-making. President Ortega responded by observing that tribes are working to bolster their representation across different levels of government. California only has one tribal assembly member in the State legislature, and there is ongoing momentum, particularly among the youth, to assume pivotal roles in government. Among them, the Department of Interior is witnessing a substantial increase at the federal level in Native American representation.

## Interagency Cooperation on Climate

Asked about the ways in which city, county, and state agencies cooperated on climate solutions, Director Segura explained that CEMO establishes solid collaborations with these agencies for a more coordinated response. CEMO is tasked with de-compartmentalizing or “un-siloing” government functions, fostering a more harmonized approach toward an equitable climate response, with the primary mission of advocating for a health equity-centric approach, especially during critical climate emergencies. Director Segura also mentioned that she has been encouraged by various government agencies that have approached the office for partnerships grounded in collective equitable strategy in resource allocation for frontline communities.

## Rental Units and Building Improvements

A participant raised the concern that many old rental units were insufficient to protect against the increasing heat, and asked how code enforcement and/or implementing building improvement incentives could mitigate this deficiency without passing on the cost burden to tenants. Director Segura explained that the **City of Los Angeles** and the **Department of Water and Power (DWP)** are focused on the pivotal role of decarbonization in facilitating healthier building environments for residents. The City of LA and DWP have initiated and backed pilot programs to prioritize healthy homes, minimize displacement, and mitigate any adverse effects on tenants. As the City Council restarts pivotal conversations on equitable building decarbonization, participants will be notified when they occur.

Directors Segura and Prichard concluded the workshop by thanking and reminding attendees to register for upcoming events. Director Segura reemphasized that these are not ordinary workshops but rather policy advisory sessions, the insights from which will culminate in a report for the City Council, stressing that the criticisms, observations and suggestions from these workshops are invaluable.

Workshop 1 took place on April 27, 2023, from 6 p.m.



# Workshop 1: Community-Driven Climate Resilience

April 27, 2023

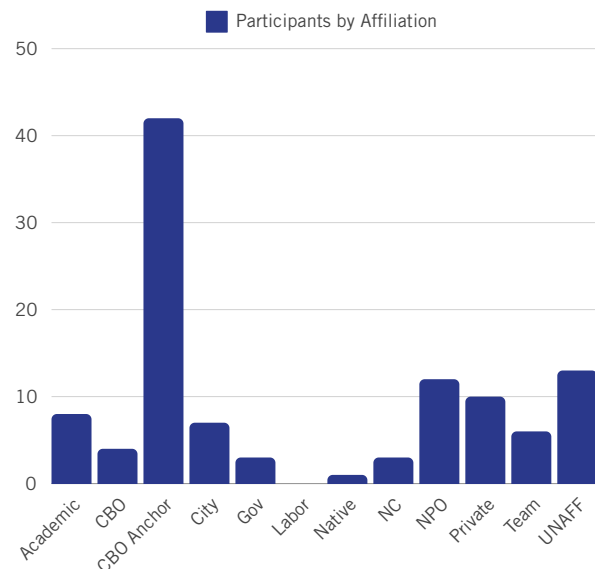
to 8 p.m. in a public Zoom session. The workshop focused on the progress of community experts and organizers in developing solutions to cope with extreme heat in Los Angeles, shaped and driven by community priorities. This workshop aimed to (1) encourage community members describe their experiences and solutions related to extreme heat and (2) join community members in conversation with technical experts and policymakers on how public agencies and local institutions can invest equitably in community-driven solutions.

Liberty Hill and CEMO staff members supported the technical aspects of the Zoom workshop, while the professional agency Interpreters Unlimited provided Spanish-language interpretation for any participant who chose to listen and engage through the Spanish language channel on the Zoom platform. CEMO and Liberty Hill staff members managed preparation for the Launch session, including speaker confirmation, coordination, and agenda development. The Zoom session was video-recorded and posted to the Liberty Hill Foundation website and CEMO's YouTube channel shortly after the event. All registrants for the public Zoom feeds received a follow-up email thanking them for their participation and providing a link to the recording of the speakers' Adobe PowerPoint presentations and other resource materials.

## Participation in Workshop #1

Workshop #1 on Community-Driven Climate Resilience attracted 113 participants, 21 of whom had an active role in the workshop, including speakers, panelists, and support staff members. Breakout group facilitators and notetakers consisted of CBO anchor staff and/or community members. UCLA graduate and undergraduate students also supported and participated in breakout groups.

**FIGURE 3. Participation in the CELA Year 2, Workshop 1: Community-Driven Climate Resilience**



Participants were culturally and ethnically diverse, with strong participation from CBO anchors including CBE, Pacoima Beautiful, PSR LA, Esperanza, SAJE, and SCOPE. Other community-based groups, including **Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California** and **Compton Community Garden**, were represented by staff and CBO members. Representatives of various nonprofit organizations, including **Accelerate Resilience** and **Climate Resolve**, also attended.

City of LA departments and offices, including **Planning, Sanitation and Environment**, and the **Mayor's Office** joined, as did representatives from the **California State Senate**, the **Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority**, and the **South Coast Air Quality Management District**. Neighborhood Council leaders, other private entities and organizations including **Alta Planning and Design**, **ERM**, **Estolano Advisors**, **Frontier Energy**, **Mariposa Community Outreach and Public Affairs**, **LACMA**, **Rhie Planning LLC**, and **Studio-MLA** as did students, faculty members and researchers affiliated

with **UCLA, USC, Occidental College, Chapman University, and Virginia Tech.**

CEMO Director Marta Segura opened the workshop, outlining the office's commitment to co-creation of equitable climate policies alongside frontline communities and experts. She emphasized the critical role of community leaders in tackling extreme heat, noting the disproportionate impact on historically marginalized communities, and the role of the upcoming "Heat Relief 4 LA" campaign in supporting these communities further by offering crucially important resources and support. Director Segura highlighted the City's focus on climate equity, the importance of cooling solutions, and collaboration with local organizations. She also emphasized that rectifying immediate and systemic inadequacies in housing, healthcare, and other areas, is essential. She concluded her remarks with a reassurance that CEMO's mission is to transform Los Angeles into a resilient city with integrated strategies and inclusive decision-making.

#### **Workshop 1 included talks by six speakers:**

- Annakaren Ramirez, Policy Director, Pacoima Beautiful
- Agustin Cabrera, Policy Director, SCOPE
- Maria Montes, Promotora, CBE
- Laura Gracia, Climate Adaptation Resilience Enhancement (CARE) Coordinator, CBE
- Ana Tabuena-Ruddy, Assistant Director, City of LA Bureau of Street Services
- Jason Douglas, Assistant Professor, Chapman University; member of CBE's Board of Directors.

### **Speaker Summary**

Annakaren Ramirez, Policy Director for Pacoima Beautiful, and Agustin Cabrera, Policy Director for SCOPE, initiated the speaker panel by highlighting takeaways from the CELA Year 1 Community-Driven Climate Resilience Report, including progress by City

agencies and areas for greater investment and growth. Speakers enumerated their visions for the Climate Equity LA Series Year 2 and the priorities that came out in the design of the series, including centering current community organizing efforts on heat resilience, community-centered disaster preparation, and response. Agustin spoke first and made these observations about last year's workshops:

- Workshops emphasized the importance of engaging community residents in designing resilience strategies.
- Workshops highlighted the need for localized strategies to protect communities from wildfires, flooding, and extreme heat.
- Workshops stressed a push for multi-benefit solutions for advancing equity and addressing the root causes of climate change.
- Moving forward, the City of LA should listen, engage, and empower frontline community members to attain climate justice, aim for collective decision-making in responding to climate change, and advocate for more in-person community assemblies in frontline communities.

Annakaren then offered their observations:

- Workshops showed how social cohesion is foundational for community resilience and proclaimed the importance of trust and relationships for effective climate resilience programs.
- Current projects by Pacoima Beautiful that aim to build community leadership and trust include the Transformative Climate Communities grant, which funded the planting of 2,000 trees, as well as supporting the creation of an electrically powered bus fleet. Additionally, the Bradley Plaza and Green Alley infrastructure projects in Pacoima are improving community spaces with shade infrastructure, stormwater capture, and native landscaping. Finally, Pacoima Beautiful also has brought connectivity to the community center

with outdoor equity and access, an electric car share program, and electric bike share programs being housed and available for residents in one central location. Plans include development of infrastructure for storing and capturing renewable energy.

In closing remarks, Annakaren emphasized the importance of modeling effective projects on a smaller scale for replication in other areas of LA, and the need for funding and connections at City and Department levels to advance projects in vulnerable communities.

In the second portion of the event, Maria Montes, Promotora from Communities for a Better Environment, sat down for a one-to-one conversation with colleague Laura Gracia, Climate Adaptation and Resilience Enhancement Coordinator for CBE, on the impacts of equitable heat-resilient strategies. Maria's presentation was part of the Community Voices portion of the workshop, during which community members described their experiences and the obstacles they have encountered in a changing climate. Maria briefly remarked about CBE's organizing model, the approach taken for a recent Community Resilience Survey, their initial work on resiliency projects, and how her organization identifies community needs. Maria explained that the community is not adequately prepared for events related to climatic extremes. She said, for example, that especially during extreme heat events, resiliency centers serve as crucial resources for frontline communities, pointing out the lack of the number of places for the community to seek relief.

For Maria, climate change is not just a future concern but an immediate problem affecting communities now. She stressed the need to educate community members about climate disasters and the value of mutual aid. Maria mentioned that some essential items, including clothes, masks, COVID tests, and hand sanitizers are being distributed to people in need, but the amount available is insufficient. The community requires a centralized location for climate relief, education, and resources, including education and information access, because many community members do not know

where to go or what to do during climate crises, and often facilities are incapable of meeting these needs. Members of vulnerable communities may have difficulty maintaining health or accessing medical help due to prohibitive costs, lack of access to transportation, and other compounding factors. Maria ended by asking City leaders to pursue a transition to renewable energy to improve air quality and health, as well as advocating for regulations to prevent oil wells from operating near homes, policies to help people secure housing options, and enacting stricter controls on refineries to prevent air contamination.

Participants divided among eight breakout groups between the second and third speakers. After participants reconvened from the breakout groups, some of the lead facilitators presented a plenary report in which they identified key themes and topics that arose. Breakout room discussions are described in detail below.

The meeting continued with the third speaker panel, featuring remarks by Ana Tabuena-Ruddy, Assistant Director from the City of LA Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA), and Jason Douglas, Assistant Professor at Chapman University and a Board member for CBE. Ana began by highlighting the role of StreetsLA in supporting some of the solutions and needs that community members identified during the workshop. She discussed current programs and resources that the Bureau of Street Services offers, which resources are already available to communities through the Bureau, and which resources and services the Bureau is still developing to support community-driven solutions to extreme heat. In Ana's presentation she noted that:

- The Bureau of Street Services Urban Forestry Division, the largest municipal street tree network in the nation, is working toward improving planting, watering, and trimming of trees and fostering green infrastructure.
- Trees are critically important in providing relief during extreme heat, particularly in areas where parks or beaches are not easily accessible. Trees offer shade, can help reduce utility bills for

buildings with cooling systems, thereby easing strain on the power grid, and help cool buildings that lack air conditioning.

- The City's **Sidewalk and Transit Amenities Program (STAP)** aims to improve the public transit experience by building more shelter and shade structures for passengers. Their goal is to ensure that 75% of bus stops have shelter, with prioritization based on high transit ridership, exposure to heat, serving equity-focused communities, and other factors.
- By 2028, the program intends to install or replace 3,000 shelters and introduce hydration stations and other cooling features to help people waiting for buses.
- The Bureau of Street Services is currently involved in grant projects focusing on urban greening, stormwater capture, and transportation improvements, emphasizing community engagement to ensure that projects align with community needs.
- The Bureau of Street Services is also working on an inventory to determine potential locations for tree planting, prioritizing underserved areas.
- The department also is focused on protecting existing trees, and an urban forestry permit fee study will be conducted to charge appropriate fees to developers who remove trees in order to ensure that they carefully consider the environmental and public health impacts of tree removal.

In her closing remarks, Ana mentioned that grants totaling \$500 million have been set aside for projects focusing on transportation, stormwater capture, and urban greening, all of which will diminish the effects of urban heat.

Professor Douglas spoke next about his work with CBE, offered some reflections on participatory heat mapping projects in Southeast Los Angeles (SELA), on his work and process with communities in gathering ground-truth

data, and commented on how that data and research led to more support and investments in projects that benefit frontline communities. During his presentation, Professor Douglas made the following key points:

- As a researcher on environmental health disparities, his goal is to empower communities by putting residents in a position to advance the health and well-being of their community, and he stressed the importance of knowledge as power.
- He is the principal investigator of a NASA-funded research project focusing on understanding the distribution of pollutants, urban heat, and green spaces within communities, particularly in areas populated by underserved Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities .
- Residents in southeast Los Angeles are learning to use NASA's remote sensing technology to identify areas with the highest heat exposures, and how to utilize eco-stress, a thermal instrument on the International Space Station.
- By merging community experiences and NASA technology, they can inform NASA how to refine their tools to aid environmental justice communities, and determine which areas burdened by roadways, traffic, and pollutants would benefit most from green spaces.
- Residents of affected communities are best positioned to indicate where resources are needed, and should be able to back their experiences with data to advocate for effective policies and practices.

Professor Douglas concluded that residents with knowledge and tools have initiated projects to combat urban heat, such as painting surfaces in lighter colors to reduce heat exposure, and introducing native flora at schools.

To allow for more in-depth engagement, meeting participants divided into eight breakout groups (BOGs) during the halfway point of the public Zoom workshop, between speakers and presentations. A trained

facilitator led the discussion in each BOG to focus on topics and remain mindful of time limitations, while a trained notetaker participated in every BOG to record comments and ideas. Five of the eight BOGs were conducted in English, and three were in Spanish. On average, each BOG included six to 10 participants.

The BOG facilitator opened with a quick round of introductions and then re-stated the three main questions announced in the plenary session. Facilitators also quickly reviewed “community agreements” to maximize participation by all and to ensure open communication.

The BOG facilitator inductively coded discussion notes to identify key themes. Below is a summary of the takeaways from the Workshop 1 Community-Driven Climate Resilience BOGs:

### **Question #1: How does your community experience extreme heat? How do you deal with it? What are some solutions your community has for extreme heat?**

Though varied in response, participants expressed recurring themes, particularly on the physical impact of heat, as well as the personal or mental impact through compounding stressors, including economic pressures generated from extreme heat waves. Breakout room participants pointed to the lack of air conditioning in their units, which is lacking in many buildings in LA, especially among older housing stock. This causes interior spaces to reach extreme temperatures during heat waves, aggravating people’s physical conditions and limiting spaces within buildings where people can seek heat relief. This exacerbates the conditions of already vulnerable populations, such as elders and children who don’t necessarily have access to mobility or ability to leave the house.

Participants indicated that economic stressors play a large role as well in the ways that communities experience extreme heat. The cost and accessibility of cooling, whether through use of air condition or purchase of fans, present economic obstacles for

many residents who struggle to pay for rising costs. The growing economic burden that confronts frontline communities during periods of extreme heat aggravates the mental health impacts of worsening climate conditions, and forces communities to pick between paying their bills for their utility use or their health care.

However, the most frequent experience that breakout groups identified was the restriction in choices available to communities during an extreme heat wave. Because extreme heat is magnified in older homes and other buildings, and because other spaces that offer cooling relief, such as movie theaters, shops and malls often come with some type of implied or required expense, some residents seek relief in natural “blue spaces” with cooling water, such as nearby beaches, though they are not accessible to all.

*“I live in an older building, and I don’t have AC either, and when it becomes unbearable when the ice and the fans don’t work, we need to leave and go somewhere else, to drive to the beach or somewhere else because it gets to a point where the internal temperature is just too much to bear. And if it happens when people are home on the weekends, it can be worse.”*

— Workshop participant.

### **Question #2: How would investments in climate and heat resilience benefit your community?**

Cooling spaces constitute a vital resource that many pointed to as an area for priority investment. Establishing cooling centers or resiliency centers where people can cool down during extreme heat would provide greater access to heat relief. Pairing these along with easily accessible spaces and with multi-beneficial services could help alleviate a comprehensive set of unmet needs for community partners. Creation of these spaces will be beneficial, however, only if information is disseminated about where they are and how to access them, along with additional resources that could support communities experiencing the worst impacts of extreme heat.



Some breakout group participants advocated additional investment in water and shade infrastructure. People could gain more immediate relief from heat through improved access to hydration, including water fountains, or additional shade structures, especially in public spaces where cooling options are limited. Tree coverage also can play a significant role in diminishing the heat island effect.

Investing in making homes livable was seen as fundamental. Because of the extreme conditions that vulnerable communities face in their own homes, even places that are intended to provide services and comfort can become a vector for worsening the impacts of an extreme heat spell if they lack sufficient cooling capabilities. Ensuring safe and secure housing for all can support not only people living in older housing units, but also housing-insecure communities.

*“So, when I think of investments in our community, I think of building livable homes, just like the earthquake retrofitting program.” —Workshop participant*

### Question #3: What are two or three things you would like City agencies and public offices to do to improve support for your community?

Though not unilateral, three broad topics emerged from the breakout group discussions. Through infrastructure and urban development, the City can enact development regulations that would mandate green spaces in new housing projects and would require any new projects to contribute to the reduction of heat impacts. Although shade should be maintained year round, some breakout room participants described trees being excessively trimmed during some of the worst heat spells. City agencies can prioritize protection of trees by prohibiting their removal or unnecessarily severe trimming in neighborhoods.

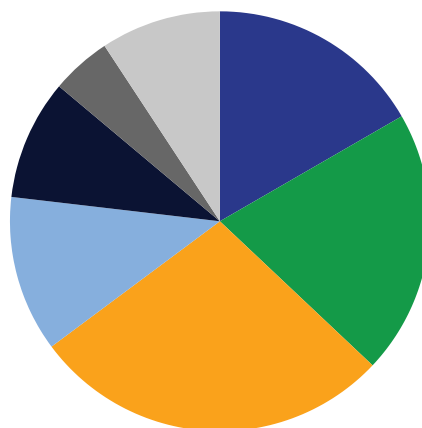
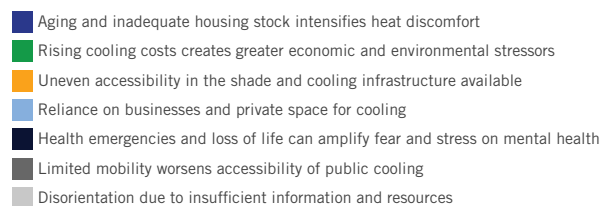
Through financial assistance and equity, many of the economic stressors and pressures of communities can be reduced and mitigated. By offering discounted energy bills and making low-cost utility programs accessible for all, including undocumented residents,

government agencies would help communities gain access to the resources they need, including air conditioning, when appropriate to diminish oppressive heat in their homes. Participants also suggested rectifying wage disparities, especially for BIPOC communities, as another means to mitigate financial strains during heat waves.

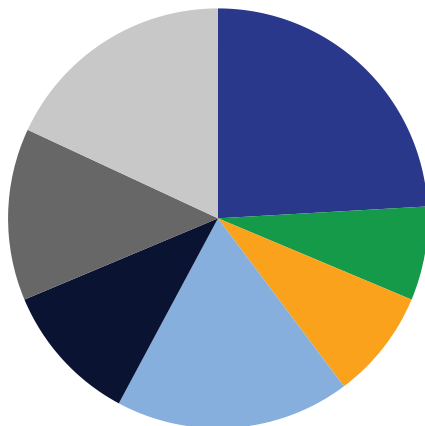
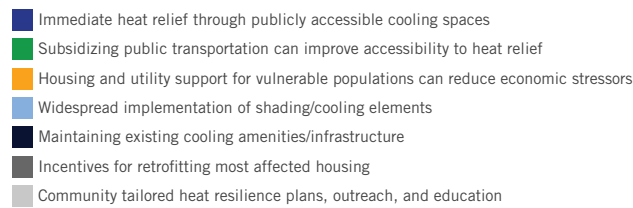
Finally, breakout group participants viewed community outreach as pivotal in spreading awareness of the resources and protections available. Organizing town halls to share information on available resources during heat waves was seen as a way agencies can mobilize to respond to community needs. Strengthening regulations that protect outdoor workers, such as gardeners and day laborers, also could diminish the risks of extreme heat.

*“The majority of our communities need discounted energy bills. Also, I want to make sure that the City doesn’t cut down trees because it takes away the shade.” —Workshop participant.*

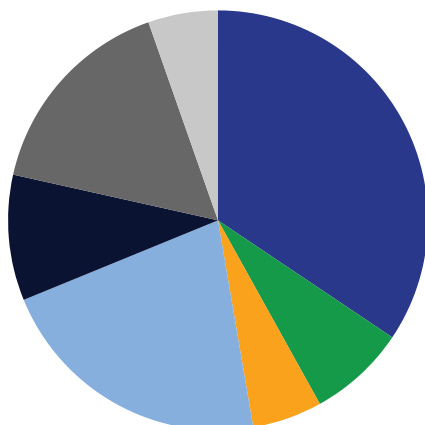
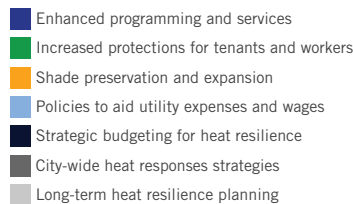
FIGURE 4. Qualitative coding of Question 1



**FIGURE 5. Qualitative coding of Question 2**



**FIGURE 6. Qualitative coding of Question 3**



After the final speaker and presentation, the workshop concluded with CEMO Director Marta Segura thanking participants for their invaluable insights, and describing how their contributions will shape a report for the Climate Emergency Mobilization Commission (CEMC). Director Segura reiterated the significant threat of extreme heat, especially for vulnerable residents, and highlighted the importance of learning from past mistakes through honest community feedback. She also discussed upcoming initiatives exploring pilot programs for building decarbonization, heat resilience, and relief zones, focusing on underserved communities. She reminded attendees about the “Heat Relief 4 LA Public Awareness” campaign that launched four weeks later, on May 24, 2023. Director Segura’s concluding message underscored the importance of prioritizing climate health and green investments to benefit all residents, emphasizing that equity in climate decisions is crucial for the City’s future sustainability and well-being.

# Workshop 2: Protecting Outdoor Workers From Extreme Heat in LA

June 1, 2023

Workshop #2, “Protecting Outdoor Workers from Extreme Heat in LA,” took place on June 1, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in a public Zoom session. This workshop focused on highlighting the problems that extreme heat exerts on the lived experiences of outdoor workers, including landscapers, street vendors, and construction workers, along with their resultant unfulfilled needs. The workshop consisted of four sets of presentations followed by a short question-and-answer session, a presentation by **UCLA Master of Public Policy (MPP)** degree candidates, and breakout group discussions with a short “report back” from a few of the groups. Interpreters Unlimited did Spanish language interpretation throughout, while Liberty Hill and CEMO staff members performed technical functions and coordination for the Zoom online stream.

Workshop 2 included presentations by five speakers:

- Patricia Rizo, Community Health Promoter (Promotora), UCLA Labor Occupational Safety Hazard (LOSH) Center
- Enrique Huerta, Policy Director, Climate Resolve
- Iretha Warmesley, Lead Community Organizer, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)
- Kevin Riley, Director, UCLA LOSH Center
- Hana Abdelatty, and Selena Melgoza on behalf of the UCLA Master of Public Policy (MPP) Community Heat Focus Groups research team

## Participation in Workshop #2

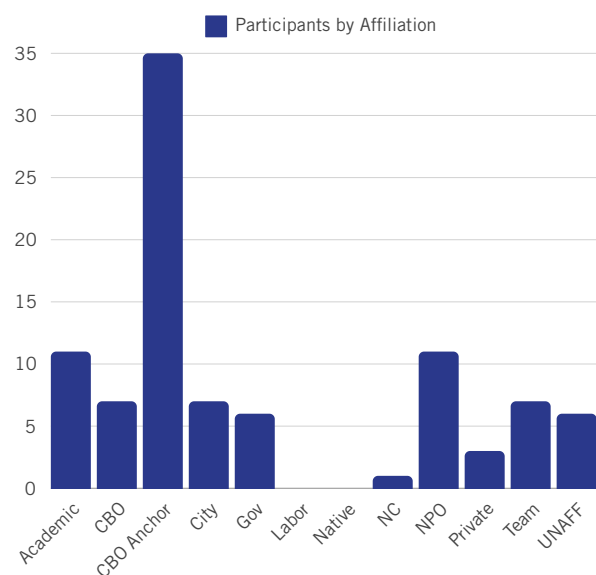
This workshop attracted 95 participants, including speakers, support staff members, facilitators and notetakers from the CBO anchor groups (CBE, PB,

PSR-LA, Esperanza, SCOPE), and UCLA students.

Figure 7 illustrates the participant categories, with CBO anchor groups again accounting for the largest turnout, followed by individuals affiliated with universities (UCLA, USC), members affiliated with city or state government agencies, and NPOs.

NPOs, including Climate Resolve, LA Care, Urban Renewables, and ECODiversity, joined from previous sessions and members of the business community, including ThermoShade. A representative from the **State of California Office of Planning and Research (OPR)** also attended.

**FIGURE 7. Participation in the CELA Year 2, Workshop 2: Protecting Outdoor Workers From Extreme Heat in LA (June 1, 2023)**



## Presentation Summary

The workshop opened with remarks by CEMO Director Marta Segura, who highlighted her connection to the workshop topic through her parents’ experiences as agricultural and cannery workers facing extreme

heat challenges. She emphasized the rising threats of prolonged heat seasons, and the lack of awareness surrounding such climatic changes and their effects on workers. Director Segura shed light on the intertwined history of environmental advocacy and worker safety rights, and presented alarming statistics about outdoor workers' increased risk due to hazardous heat conditions, including the fact that 20% of all workers are outdoor workers. In the U.S. 35 million people have an outdoor job that puts them at 35 times the risk for injury and death from heat exposure. While noting inadequate federal protections, she underscored the cities' crucial roles in heightening awareness and implementing preventive measures. Director Segura also discussed the economic ramifications of heat-induced work losses, particularly in outdoor sectors, emphasizing the disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minorities, ending her opening remarks with an introduction to panel discussions and speakers.

The first presenter was Patricia Rizo, a Community Health Promoter for the UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program (LOSH), a worker outreach, advocacy, and research body focused specifically on the conditions to which workers are subjected during extreme heat, who is most affected, what resources workers need, and what solutions workers have used in adapting to and mitigating the harms of extreme heat. With many years working as a promotora, or community health outreach worker, Patricia spoke to the needs of workers across multiple industries and the general resources needed to prevent health harms. Her presentation included these key points:

- Having interacted with many workers, Patricia noted that outdoor workers, particularly those working during summer, face multiple hazards, including extreme heat, humidity, and elevated body temperatures. This exacerbates their exposure to potential heat-related illnesses. New workers and those with pre-existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable to outdoor heat variables like age, hydration status, knowledge of heat-related sickness identification, and protective measures that can diminish the dangers workers encounter from extreme heat.
- Workers who have previously suffered from heat-related sickness are at a heightened risk of experiencing them again.
- Understanding that this risk spans all sectors and industries, posing risk to indoor and outdoor workers especially when they lack adequate protection, is crucial.
- Laborers who are particularly at risk from extreme heat include construction workers, car wash employees, agricultural laborers, factory workers, landscapers, garment industry workers, and community organizers/promotoras.
- Workers need to be educated about their rights in their workplace, ways they can engage in related discussions without compromising their job roles, and how they can step up as leaders in advocating for improved working conditions.
- Workers often seek more information about hazards specific to their line of work and how to identify and mitigate them, but current resources fall short.

In her closing remarks, Patricia acknowledged that the onus is not only on workers to become more aware of solutions available, but also includes employers who must be responsible for staying informed and proactive in providing adequate resources and creating a healthy workplace. Employers should engage with their teams, inform them of their rights, and foster awareness and resources on the risk of extreme heat.

Enrique Huerta, Policy Director from Climate Resolve, followed with a presentation on worker protections through state legislative powers, future opportunities that exist for greater workforce protections, and policies that can be improved to ensure a more equitable response for outdoor workers facing extreme heat. Below are some of the key points made during the presentation:

- Enrique began with brief remarks about how he worked in construction during high school with his father, which gave him a glimpse of the grueling

experiences and difficulties that outdoor laborers face.

- The risk of severe injury increases with increases in temperature, with the chances of serious injury rising by 7% when temperatures exceed 85 degrees and by 15% when they go above 100 degrees.
- A lack of concentration in an air-conditioned office might lead to minor reprimands, but in construction, such a lapse could have dire consequences, especially when operating heavy machinery.
- In 2006, to protect outdoor workers California enacted its Outdoor Heat Illness Prevention Standard, which if implemented earlier would have benefited far more workers by requiring them to be given regular breaks, access to drinking water and shade, a buddy system, communication tools, and a heat illness prevention plan.
- The law applies only to specific outdoor jobs, like agriculture and landscaping, leaving many sectors vulnerable.
- Language limitations also constitute a significant barrier in safeguarding workers from the dangers of extreme heat. A shortage of inspectors, especially Spanish-speaking ones, complicates regulation enforcement, especially in industries with a large portion of migrant workers.
- Meteorological data indicates that heat records likely will be broken during the next five years, a recent example of which was a heat wave in Los Angeles currently being investigated by the State Department of Public Health to identify how many people were seriously injured and its mortality rate.
- Extreme heat affects many Californians, especially marginalized communities, who face increased risks due to cumulative factors like a lack of shade and water infrastructure and pre-existing health conditions exacerbated by local environmental hazards.

- Despite mandates protecting outdoor workers, no California laws exist to protect against indoor heat illnesses.
- Climate Resolve and partners have championed community cooling solutions, such as tree planting, cool surfaces, shade structures, and public drinking fountains.
- In his attempts to reduce spending, Governor Newsom has proposed to reduce funding for these essential cooling solutions by up to 40%.

In his closing remarks, Enrique emphasized an urgent need for a call to action to stimulate development of more cooling solutions for public areas to ensure the safety of outdoor workers during severe heat waves, which are becoming longer and more severe.

Iretha Warmesley, a Lead Community Organizer at SCOPE, delivered the third presentation. Iretha has been with SCOPE for over 17 years, driven by her determination to help improve the community's well-being and to encourage discussions on the ways in which weather directly influences the collective health of communities in South LA. Pointing to the higher rate of 911 calls and acts of violence recorded during heat waves, Iretha discussed research showing a strong correlation between heat and mental health problems, and how extreme heat has affected both the mental health of workers and the experiences among community members and workers. Her presentation included these key points:

- In South LA, high utility bills coupled with inadequate housing that lacks insulation or cooling systems results in the inability of many workers and community members to find relief from extreme heat even inside their homes.
- Due to the limited access to green spaces, evident in the absence of tree canopies in schools, homes, and the public right of way, communities have insufficient refuge during intense heat waves, especially for the housing insecure. The heat waves exacerbate mental health disorders, leading



to symptoms that include fatigue, irritability, and aggression, and, in severe cases, to higher rates of suicide.

- Temperatures regularly exceeding 90 degrees in Los Angeles, combined with existing stressors — notably rent payments, pollution, over-policing, and limited economic opportunities — multiply pressures that community members feel.
- Heat-related issues lead to increased emergency room visits, with some individuals seeking entry to the hospital purely for access to its air conditioning.
- Iretha emphasized the City's responsibility to offer more services to South LA and similar communities subjected to the adverse effects of the climate crisis and historical racist policies.
- The immediate needs of South LA include reductions in utility bills, access to renewable energy at free or low cost, improved housing, more parks, good union jobs, and targeted community investments.

In her closing remarks, Iretha voices concerns about the increasing frequency and intensity of heat waves, urging the implementation of proactive measures to protect the community.

A fourth presentation was given by Kevin Riley, Director of UCLA LOSH, which focused specifically on the heat risks of outdoor workers that require attention and which resources are needed to support outdoor workers further. His presentation included these key points:

- Kevin expressed his appreciation for the forum and its focus on the difficulties that extreme heat creates for workers, noting that their experiences can differ from those of the general public.
- Workers often endure more frequent, longer, and intense exposure to heat due to job requirements and employer stipulations, with limited personal ability to take protective actions against heat exhaustion while at work.
- California is one of the few states with legal requirements for employers to protect workers when temperatures reach certain thresholds, notably the CalOSHA outdoor standard that has been in effect since 2005–2006.
- This outdoor heat standard mandates that employers take protective measures when temperatures hit 80 degrees, with additional requirements when temperatures reach 95 degrees, including providing more water breaks, rest, and shade.
- Kevin clarifies that the outdoor heat standard applies to any industry in which workers are outdoors, though specific industries, including agriculture and landscaping, have been targeted more than others.
- Worker safety advocates are pressing lawmakers to enact legal standards that would specify indoor heat protection regulations for workers, especially in large warehouses or other environments that can become excessively hot.
- Discussions are ongoing about when this proposed indoor standard should take effect, with the current draft suggesting a trigger response at 82 degrees.
- Stressing the importance of outreach and education for employers about their legal obligations and potential fines, Kevin pointed to the repercussions employers could face when workers are not provided with adequate protections.
- A chief problem in outreach and advocacy is the issue of underreporting, suggesting that many heat-related health incidents among workers might not be captured in official records. One solution proposed was a mandate by the City requiring healthcare providers to inquire about work conditions when treating people for heat-related issues.
- Los Angeles benefits from a diverse range of worker organizations, unions, and advocacy groups, offering the City ample opportunities for collaboration. Kevin

suggests leveraging these connections for deeper insights and understanding.

- He also emphasized the value of gathering information from unions about best practices, because some have found innovative ways to build protections into their agreements that exceed minimum legal requirements.

In concluding his remarks, Kevin emphasized the increasing health risks due to extreme heat, underlining the importance of adaptive strategies and sharing effective approaches among various stakeholders.

After the panel, a short question-and-answer session was held to resolve any concerns and respond to questions attendees may have had for the speakers. The session began by emphasizing the crucial link between worker protections and climate solutions. Outdoor workers, especially those in areas such as construction and landscaping, are particularly vulnerable to the damaging effects of climate change. A clear need has emerged for climate solutions, including increasing tree canopies and installing hydration stations to protect workers. A notable point of concern is that many of these workers reside in historically disinvested communities, which lack open spaces, resources, and tree canopies, making them increasingly vulnerable to extreme heat.

The discussion focus then shifted to the topic of effective communication, beginning with exploration of the difficulty in conveying to the general public the importance of climate solutions and their direct impact on worker protection. Key players in communicating this information to communities include grassroots organizations and local governments. Current mitigation efforts are characterized by multilingual campaigns to ensure that even hard-to-reach communities are informed of the detriments of intensifying climate conditions.

In discussion of policies and solutions panelists emphasized a pressing need to enforce existing laws and to develop new regulations to offer more robust protections. Increased collaboration with nonprofit

organizations that directly connect with these workers and hold their trust is seen as a potential solution to increase enforcement. A comprehensive approach that safeguards workers at their workplaces, homes, and during commutes was deemed essential. While various state programs have been developed to mitigate problems attributable to extreme heat, they often operate in silos. An integrated, multi-benefit solution approach was proposed as the way forward.

Lastly, the discussion touched on the importance of going beyond basic standards. While Cal/ OSHA standards provide a foundational guideline, stakeholders, including employers, unions, and local governments, can and should strive to exceed these standards to ensure better protections. For example, measures like suspending outdoor work during extreme heat conditions or refining union agreements were discussed. The critical role local governments can play in conveying and enforcing better protective measures was unanimously acknowledged. Session panelists reiterated the interconnectedness of climate solutions, worker protections, and the importance of inclusive and effective communication strategies.

In the fifth and last presentation of the workshop, UCLA Master of Public Policy (MPP) Candidates **Hana Abdelatty, Dimitri English, Adan Garcia, Selena Melgoza, and Austin Mendoza** focused on a research summary from their Community Heat Focus Groups. They conducted that research as part of their report to CEMO that aimed to assess how the City of Los Angeles can better build equitable heat policy and long-term resilience among the most impacted and vulnerable communities. Their presentation encompassed these key points:

#### **Extreme Heat Overview**

- Meteorological scientists predict increased heat waves, with 31% more extreme heat days by 2050.
- Each extreme heat day results in approximately 1,200 additional hospital emergency room visits for treatment of heat-related illnesses.

## Historical Context

- Historical redlining led to health inequities in LA's Indigenous, Black, and Latinx communities.
- Most at-risk areas for heat impact include historically redlined areas, including portions of the San Fernando Valley, East Side, Westlake in Central LA, South LA, and Wilmington.

## Data Collection and Methodology

- Utilized a mixed-method approach.
- Held seven focus groups (encompassing 68 participants) with diverse community-based organizations.
- Special attention was given to outdoor workers and people with diverse language needs.

## Survey Insights

- Gathered responses from 546 people, 334 of whom were identified as frontline community members
- The most vulnerable areas included Westlake and South LA.

## Key Findings

- Outdoor workers are subjected to extreme heat without adequate safeguards.
- Gaps were observed in worker protection during high temperatures.
- Frontline communities need respite and cooling centers.
- Public transportation users lack adequate shade structures in many regions.

## Recommendations

- Centralize heat-related workplace training.
- Partner with organizations like UCLA LOSH for City-run training.

- Introduce a toolkit for frontline outdoor workers, highlighting rights and heat prevention.

The presentation ended with the students informing attendees that the report would soon be released for public access on the CEMO website.

A total of seven breakout group discussions, including two Spanish language groups, were held to allow participants to reflect on the presentations and offer their insights and recommendations. Breakout groups (BOGs) generally included six to 10 people each, and were supported by a trained facilitator and notetaker from the CBO anchor organizations or UCLA student participants. After introductions, the BOGs discussed three key questions to gather personal and community-based perspectives on the impact of extreme heat, especially in the workplace. The questions were designed to elicit detailed responses that provide insight into lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and community-preferred interventions. BOG sessions lasted approximately 40 minutes.

### **Question #1: How do you, your family, friends, and neighbors experience heat at work? How does it affect the health and quality of life of you or your community?**

In discussing their experiences with heat at work, participants overwhelmingly voiced concerns about the lack of individualized options for workers to cope with extreme heat. Many believed this was symptomatic of broader systemic issues, highlighting pronounced disparities in heat experiences among people of differing backgrounds. For instance, they drew attention to the stark differences between affluent White communities and less affluent areas, citing limited access to essential amenities like parks in South LA, Westlake. Some contention arose about space limitations preventing some community residents from accessing these spaces, which can also serve as gathering places for the unhoused and housing-insecure communities.

*“As a promotora, we worked a lot in the street, we had to be well covered up, but the heat was so extreme and suffocating. One day we were sent to many places, and when we are sent to nicer areas with more tree canopy, you can feel the difference and once we go to underinvested neighborhoods the heat is so much worse.” —Workshop participant.*

## Question #2: How do you or your community deal with extreme heat at work? What are some solutions that you recommend?

Participants highlighted the pressing need for immediate, actionable solutions when considering strategies to manage extreme heat at work. Many are on the front lines, experiencing the brunt of intense heat exposure daily. Group members issued a collective call for tree planting and other forms of sustained and proactive environmental investments. On a more immediate scale, participants proposed adaptive work schedules to avoid peak heat hours and establish hydration stations. As an example of how the community can support one another, some participants suggested leaving refreshments near building and residence entries for delivery drivers who often work in vehicles without air conditioning.

*“Workers don’t have options, and bosses are not empathetic. I ask my husband if they get breaks to drink water, and they don’t get any. Bosses only care about output, and workers don’t have other options than to keep working, or they might face retaliation like being sent home. Sometimes there are fans, but it doesn’t make a big impact.” —Workshop participant*

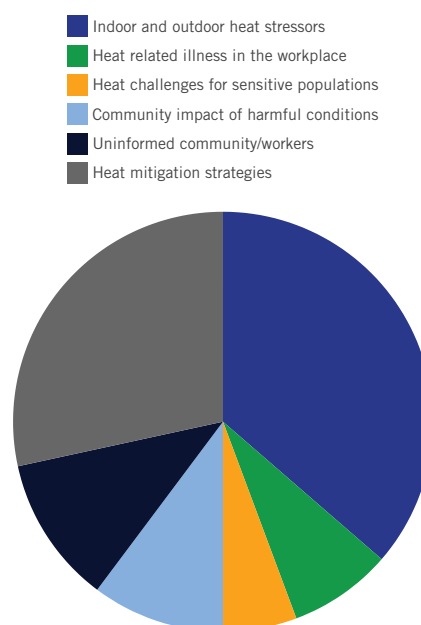
## Question #3: What should be done to protect workers from extreme heat at work? What would you like to see local and state governments do to protect workers?

Regarding protective measures against extreme heat at work, participants emphasized the urgent need for

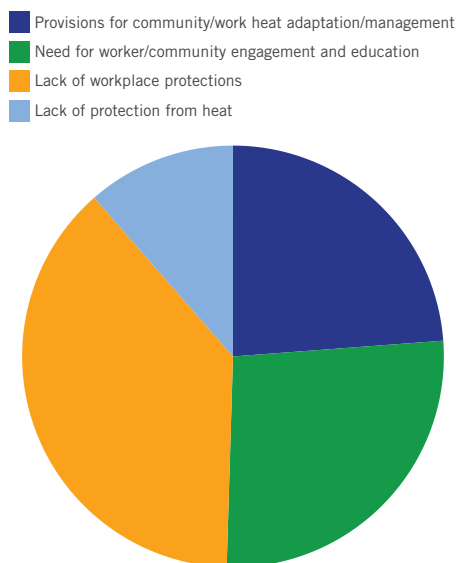
OSHA and other involved government organizations to adapt and update regulations to align with current and emerging climate challenges. They discussed concerns about housing mandates, like those for air-conditioned homes, pointing out potential unintended consequences. For instance, they raised concerns about the financial burden on tenants if landlords decide to pass on the costs. The group members expressed significant support for enhanced government commitment regarding labor enforcement, regulations, and inspection. The discussions underscored the need for more inspectors, especially Spanish-speaking ones, to ensure comprehensive community outreach and protection.

*“The laws that are currently in place are not enforced. We are supposed to have breaks, we are supposed to have access to water, but there is no one ensuring these things are done. Not enough inspectors. We need a champion in Sacramento to make sure these protections are being upheld and have funding for inspectors. We also need nonprofit organizations to help workers understand their rights so these laws can be upheld.” —Workshop participant*

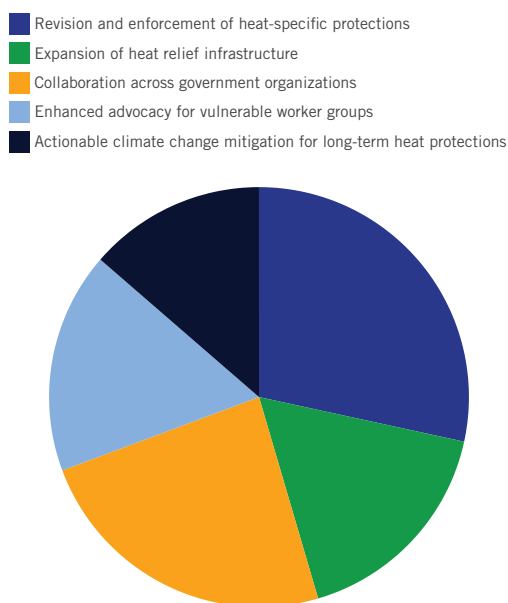
**FIGURE 8. Qualitative coding of question 1 discussed in breakout groups.**



**FIGURE 9. Qualitative coding of question 2 discussed in breakout groups.**



**FIGURE 10. Qualitative coding of question 3 discussed in breakout groups.**



The workshop focus then shifted to a reflection and closing summary from Director Prichard. She began by expressing gratitude for the insights shared during the program, emphasizing the integral role of health in the discussion, and reemphasizing the dual impact of extreme heat on physical and mental health, noting how it intensifies social and economic stressors in vulnerable

communities including South LA, East LA, and the harbor. Group members asserted the City's responsibility for monitoring and regulating these heat-related conditions, and stressed the importance of educating employers, healthcare providers, and nonprofit organizations and working with unions to promote awareness and find solutions. Considering the entire experience of workers, including their commutes, was deemed essential in addressing heat-related challenges. Director Prichard ended by encouraging attendees to be proactive, stay informed about upcoming legislation and policy changes, and participate in future sessions, including the one held on June 29, which focused on effective communication strategies, especially to reach vulnerable groups like the unhoused, elders, and isolated individuals, regarding the impending extreme heat of summer.

Director Segura concluded the workshop by expressing deep gratitude to Director Prichard and the Liberty Hill Foundation for their invaluable collaboration on the CELA series. She extended her appreciation to the evening's speakers and facilitators. Emphasizing CEMO's commitment to collaboration, Director Segura highlighted their partnership with LARC and other notable organizations, mentioning that more than 70 organizations would disseminate vital information from these workshops. Resources shared with her office would be distributed to the wider community, underscoring the CEMO's collective mission to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat, combat climate change, and foster a thriving, equitable, and healthy city. Ending on a positive note, Director Segura acknowledged the incredible community dedicated to supporting and uplifting vulnerable communities in Los Angeles and encouraged attendees to continue and expand collaboration.



# Workshop 3: Citywide Heat Safety Response and Awareness

June 29, 2023

Workshop #3, the third and final CELA Year 2 Series session, took place on June 29, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. This workshop, titled “Citywide Heat Safety Response and Awareness,” explored the need to build region-wide awareness about heat safety that meets communities’ communicatory and informational needs and about how the City can deploy emergency response resources to cope with extreme heat. People on the frontlines as well as policy and technical experts spoke at the workshop about ways in which to inform key practices in order to prevent heat-related injury, individually and systematically. These dialogues with practitioners and policymakers also invigorated the ways in which public agencies can strengthen their preparation for the heat season and highlighted the resources available to reduce heat-related deaths and mitigate hospitalizations.

Workshop 3 included presentations and panel participation by nine speakers:

- Marta Segura, CEMO Director, Chief Heat Officer, City of Los Angeles
- Jennifer Lazo, Division Chief, Innovation and Development Division of the Emergency Management Department (EMD), City of Los Angeles
- Micah Castrillo, Climate Adaptation and Resilience Enhancement (CARE) Intern, Communities for a Better Environment
- Crystal Reyes, Community Inspector, Cool Streets Team, Pacoima Beautiful (PB)
- Alicia Morales, Senior Research and Policy Analyst, RePower LA and Education Campaigns, LAANE
- Stephany Campos, Director of Strategic Planning and Special Projects, Homeless Health Care Los

Angeles (HHCLA)

- Brett Feldman, Director and co-founder, Division of Street Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) of USC
- Craig Tranby, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), Distributed Energy Solutions, Partnerships
- Michele Prichard, Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships, Liberty Hill Foundation.

## Presentation Summary

The workshop consisted of three panel presentations, the first two of which were moderated conversations between organizers and community members raising awareness on extreme heat, while the last was a panel presentation with resource coordinators for heat relief. Question-and-answer sessions were held after the second and third panels, followed by an LADWP presentation, and the evening concluded with a short discussion between CEMO Director Marta Segura and Michele Prichard, the Strategic Partnerships Director from the Liberty Hill Foundation. Interpreters Unlimited did Spanish language interpretation throughout, while Liberty Hill and CEMO staff members performed technical functions and coordination for the Zoom online stream.

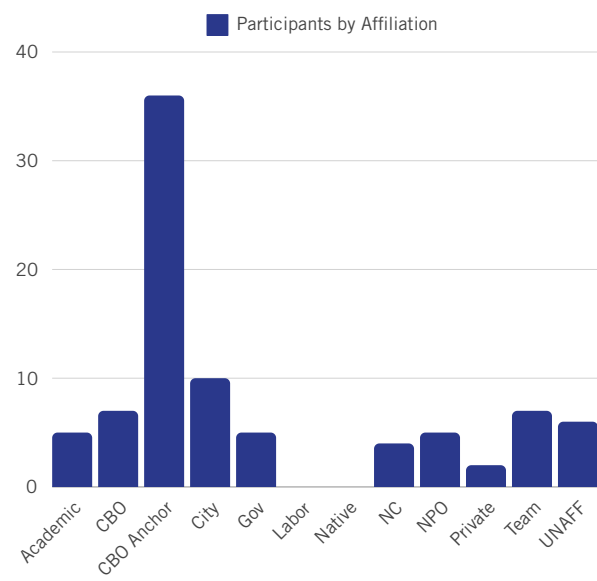
## Participation in Workshop #3

Workshop #3 attracted approximately 87 participants, including speakers, moderators, support staff members, and facilitators and notetakers.

The program had representation from most of the CBO anchors (CBE, PB, PSR-LA, Esperanza, SAJE, SCOPE) for around 36 participants and many nonprofit

organizations (NPOs) that had participated in earlier sessions. Five representatives of some additional NPOs also attended, including **Heal the Bay**, **Bounce Back Generation**, and **Rising Communities**. The **Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance** also sent a participant. Government representation included several from City agencies and departments, including LADWP, EMD, City Planning, and the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability. Personnel from the California Department of Insurance and the LA County Department of Climate Health also attended. LA28 and Anthem Health Insurance were business participants.

**FIGURE 11. Participation in CELA Year 2, Workshop 3: Citywide Heat Safety Response and Awareness**



Opening with a reflection on the wave of recent heat-related deaths across Texas, Louisiana, Mexico, and Central America, Director Segura underscored the urgent need for an equitable response to extreme heat in LA, including an essential heat action plan capable of bringing together City Departments to optimize resources and strategies for vulnerable communities. Current initiatives, including a heat relief campaign and a plan for modernizing climate infrastructure, all emphasize initiatives to align health, equity, and justice in any response to heat hazards. In her concluding remarks, Director Segura thanked the Liberty Hill Foundation for its partnership and support in the CELA series during the past two years.

Following those opening remarks the first panel convened, featuring a conversation between CEMO Director Marta Segura and Jennifer Lazo, the Division Chief of the Innovation and Development Division of the Emergency Management Department. Their discussion primarily centered on LA’s heat awareness and relief campaign initiatives, the mechanisms for early heat event notifications, and proper preparations for an expected heat wave.

Director Segura introduced the discussion by emphasizing the significance of the “Heat Relief 4 LA” campaign, which includes not only meetings like this one within the CELA series but also collaborations with 75 organizations for heat-related community engagement through social media. A collaboration with the LA Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability (LARC) created heat safety advertisements on all metro buses for the summer of 2023. In addition to social media and mass media campaigns, CEMO is partnering with community health educators (promotoras) and using artwork to spread awareness. With the launch of the Cool Spot app, community members can now find cooling locations throughout the City, including public spaces like libraries that can serve as accessible cooling spots for communities.

Division Chief Lazo then explained the Emergency Management Department’s procedures for monitoring and responding to heat events. The EMD works closely with the National Weather Service and the LA County Department of Public Health to disseminate early and crucial information about anticipated significant weather events. The department uses this information and demographic data to determine which communities might be most severely affected by heat. Once they recognize the potential for extreme heat, they convene Citywide meetings to determine which measures need to be implemented, from opening cooling centers to sending out emergency alerts. Chief Lazo offered her insights on protective measures that community members should take to withstand an anticipated heat wave, such as accessing local libraries. Director Segura also recommended that residents download the Cool

Spots LA app or use the City's 311 service to find the nearest cooling centers, including libraries, as a preventive measure for any anticipated extreme heat events.

The conversation between Director Segura and Chief Lazo shows the dedicated efforts of City Departments in prioritizing community safety and awareness regarding heat events in Los Angeles. The combined emphasis on collaboration, early notification systems, and public resources underscores the City's commitment to proactive measures and community engagement in ensuring that residents are informed and prepared for heat waves.

The second panel featured an "interview" style conversation among Micah Castrillo, a CARE Intern at Communities for a Better Environment; Crystal Reyes, a Community Inspector from the Cool Streets Team at Pacoima Beautiful; Alicia Morales, a Senior Research and Policy Analyst from the RePower LA and Education Campaigns at LAANE; and Jennifer Lazo, the Division Chief of the Innovation and Development Division of the Emergency Management Department, moderated by CEMO Director Marta Segura. Their discussion primarily centered on youth and intergenerational climate hazard awareness, specifically the barriers and solutions for communities in accessing and understanding information related to extreme heat and other climate hazards, with an emphasis on the importance of community engagement, youth education, and collaboration across different sectors and generations to build resilient communities. Below is a summary of the questions and their answers:

**Question: What barriers restrict communities from accessing information and resources on extreme heat?**

One major problem that affects multilingual families in particular is the difficulty that they encounter in obtaining accurate information from government agencies they consider trustworthy. Many of these families regard public schools as reliable sources of information. The current "Reclaim our schools"

coalition, composed of educators, parents, and students, has been focused on not only securing investments in public education but also pivoting toward climate justice initiatives. One of the aims of these initiatives is ensuring that crucial information that is currently available in public spaces such as buses is translated and disseminated through the school districts. Such crucial information includes heat warnings and other critically important alerts to ensure the safety and well-being of the community. (Alicia)

**Question: What are some barriers to communicating warnings of extreme heat hazards and other climate hazards to our communities, and what are some things that we can do to enable these communities to access those resources more easily?**

A significant barrier to effective communication about extreme heat hazards is community members' lack of access to technology. Many community members lack smartphones or internet-enabled devices and, due to the demanding nature of their jobs, many in working-class communities rarely watch television, read or hear news reports, or listen to the radio. This need for accessible information underscores the importance of educating the youth and starting these conversations about extreme heat hazards to empower them to understand and address the risks, keep their peers and family safe, and recognize early signs of heat exhaustion. Additionally, since many youths spend time with elder community members or siblings who lack resources to combat extreme heat, focusing on youth education is a pivotal strategy in raising awareness and ensuring community safety across generations. (Crystal)

**Question: Could you tell us what you believe some of the barriers and solutions are for these kinds of communications?**

The digital divide poses a significant obstacle, limiting the accessibility of information. A solution to this is co-

designing alert notifications alongside residents, which would involve considering their consistent feedback and ensuring that the information relayed is in the most effective format. However, beyond just using social media, efforts should be made to distribute information via newsletters, physical campaigns, canvassing, and other diverse means to ensure widespread reach and understanding. (Micah)

**Question: Because you worked on CBE's CARE program and planning with communities for coping with extreme heat, could you describe how that worked?**

The CARE (Climate Adaptation and Resilience Enhancement) program, which operates under the umbrella of Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), prioritizes climate resiliency to ensure that communities are well-equipped and empowered with effective tools that enable them to anticipate and tackle problems related to climate change. As environmental crises intensify and become more frequent, the program strives to ensure that community members are prepared to lead and they possess the necessary skills to navigate these life-altering uncertainties. (Micah)

**Question: What are some of the conditions you identified or observed and then responded to in the Pacoima streets?**

PB representatives recently went canvassing as part of the Cool Streets program, which allowed them to interact with and hear feedback directly from community members. The community's response to the initiative was overwhelmingly positive. A highlight was incorporating art into the cool street pavement in nearby schools and parks, particularly benefiting the community's children. Such initiatives reinforce the idea that children matter and play an essential role in community engagement. Additionally, beyond the cooling benefits of the pavement, residents expressed appreciation because it reflects attentiveness of other

community concerns about streets and the public right of way, such as the prevalence of potholes. Overall, the Cool Streets program proved multifaceted in its benefits, receiving widespread approval from the community. Crystal

**Question: Now that all of our amazing speakers have given their perspectives, can you comment on what you've heard?**

The insights of the other speakers are invaluable and greatly emphasize integrating the community into projects and initiatives. In line with this, EMD (Emergency Management Department) has been proactive by introducing programs this previous year like "Camp Ready LA," a hands-on summer camp initiative targeting youth aged 15 to 25 across Los Angeles. This program is designed to educate youth about the intricacies of emergency management, introduce potential career paths, and offer avenues for active participation. From the response and participation, which aimed to reach out to at-risk communities and those that might be underrepresented in emergency management, it is evident that the initiative has successfully attracted many promising students. Such initiatives underscore the department's commitment to tapping into the rich reservoir of local experiences. By integrating these insights, the EMD aims to enrich its outreach activities and programming by incorporating the invaluable contribution of youth engagement in these processes. (Jennifer)

**Question: In terms of resources that you've determined that LAUSD and students need, which do you want to recommend for the City — and maybe explain with an anecdote?**

In November 2022, the RePower LA coalition successfully advocated for implementing a "no shut-offs" policy at LADWP, which ensured that low-income customers, particularly those enlisted in programs like Easy Save and Lifeline, wouldn't face water and power

shutoffs due to nonpayment. Moreover, the coalition was able to extend these no shutoffs to apply during extreme weather occurrences, providing added relief during acute heat events. However, the challenge now lies in disseminating this information to the communities most in need to ensure that people are aware that during critical weather events, they will not be left without essential services like water and power. As part of the ongoing efforts, RePower LA aims to foster collaborations between LADWP and LAUSD to spread this message more effectively and keep the community informed. (Alicia)

**Question: What resources have you identified that would be beneficial to get from the City or the County? What would you like to see?**

CBE is actively engaged with and has identified resilience hubs as an invaluable resource to the community. These hubs serve dual purposes: they offer education on emerging climate impacts and simultaneously provide a venue for open discussions about the community's needs and concerns. Additionally, a current partnership with Physicians, Scientists, and Engineers for Healthy Energy has developed a specialized tool that enables residents to pinpoint potential locations for these resilience hubs within their neighborhoods. It also empowers community members by providing insights into local climate impacts specific to their area. (Micah)

**Question: What are some resources for communities that you'd like to see come from any level of government?**

A prominent deficiency in the San Fernando Valley is the lack of air conditioning in many homes and businesses. This problem is compounded by the fact that many existing structures are old, often equipped with outdated wall A/C units that utilize freon, a hazardous substance, as well as local regulations that require landlords to provide central heating but not air conditioning, an alarming oversight considering

the San Fernando Valley's hot climate. However, even if residents are fortunate enough to have central A/C, they are still at the mercy of potential breakdowns, expensive repairs, and the bureaucratic procedures property managers put them through, which can result in prolonged periods without A/C. This, coupled with budgeting constraints, often burdens tenants disproportionately.

Additionally, residents have little respite from the heat because the community lacks adequate green spaces and trees, and many bus stops lack shade or seating, forcing residents to endure the heat outside their homes. These distressing and inhumane experiences that many in the community face daily underscore the necessity of regulations to ensure every resident has access to air conditioning while ensuring that the financial burden associated with maintaining and running A/C units does not solely fall on tenants.

The need to respond to these pressing issues places great importance on community-based initiatives and resources, like the Cool LA initiative, through which air conditioning units were distributed at no cost to community members in dire need. That program was particularly important for people living in spaces in which the temperature is difficult to regulate, like back houses. Another valuable program is that of the Clean Air Investors, an organization that offers monitors that individuals can install in their homes to keep tabs on the air quality in their immediate surroundings. Additionally, an upcoming initiative by Pacoima Beautiful plans to distribute cooling kits to households, with a goal of helping about 8,000 individuals. While several initiatives and resources are available in the San Fernando Valley to tackle climate issues, community solidarity and collective action are crucial to making meaningful changes. (Crystal)

**Question: Do you have any thoughts on what the community leaders just shared with us?**

The information that speakers disclosed is very insightful and emphasizes the barriers that need to



be overcome to ensure effective communication, of messages and information that will resonate with the intended community. This highlights the importance of considering the community's diverse perspectives, recognizing that people come from different backgrounds and have varying views and unique experiences. That awareness underscores the importance of ensuring that communication is clear, accessible, and relates to the community at large. That is necessary in order to ensure that messages are impactful and meaningful to the intended audience. (Jennifer)

**Question: May I hear more from Alicia about your climate resilience curriculum at LAUSD and the intergenerational discussions that you're having there to process the work and the design with the students and the parents and the teachers?**

There is great importance in responding to the immediate and future needs related to the climate crisis at the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and the need to engage parents and youth in this discourse, ensuring that the climate crisis is approached from both a cultural and racial justice perspective. A notable achievement was the contract secured in April with the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), which includes key community demands, such as the comprehensive implementation of a climate curriculum throughout LAUSD, designed to be practical by allowing students to use their communities as real-world learning environments for understanding the climate crisis. Additionally, a demand has been set for all school yards and schools to achieve at least 30% greening to mitigate the effects of extreme heat through the presence of mature trees, tree canopies, and shade infrastructures. These actions emphasize the need to meet immediate needs while laying a foundation for the future. (Alicia)

**Question: Tell us more about how you raise awareness at CBE and with CARE in these inter-generational dialogues?**

Community engagement to increase awareness is achieved through various strategies at CBE and CARE. One of these strategies is the establishment of resilience hubs that offer residents a conducive environment for open dialogues about the climate crisis. Another key approach involves the development of tangible skills, exemplified by the climate emergency response training conducted in collaboration with the LA Fire Department. In light of the increasing urgency of the climate crisis and the escalating frequency of heat waves and natural disasters, response training can empower residents by equipping them with essential skills. This becomes particularly critical when typical emergency services may not be available. By fostering these skills and insights, residents are further empowered to take leadership within their community in the face of climate challenges, reinforcing the overarching goal of building resilient communities.

To conclude this panel, CEMO Director Marta Segura expressed gratitude to the Strategic Growth Council of California for creating opportunities for nonprofit organizations to obtain funding for community resilience centers, and emphasized the importance of cooperation and communication in developing community-led resources. Additionally, collaborating with the dynamic panel of younger leaders working on climate resilience emphasizes the significance of intergenerational and cross-community collaborations. Underscoring the commitment to prioritize investments in historically marginalized communities that often lack essential resources, infrastructure, and economic resilience, Director Segura emphasized the need to ensure that these communities thrive now and in the future. (Micah)

The session then opened for questions and answers with all four panelists. Key questions and responses included:

### **Question: What are the temperature and weather triggers that create heat warnings?**

The tool referred to earlier is designed to gauge the impact of heat on the community, with a particular focus on the unique heat conditions of California. This new tool was developed because humidity levels predominantly influenced many national heat-related tools and often did not apply as effectively to Los Angeles (LA) because of its characteristic dry heat, unlike the humid conditions experienced in states like Florida or Texas. This meant that LA would never hit certain warning thresholds set by national standards. Therefore, this tool takes a multifaceted approach instead of a specific numerical threshold and evaluates the unusualness of the heat for a given time of year, considers both daytime and nighttime temperatures, and determines if these temperatures pose an elevated risk based on CDC data. Additionally, to make the data more digestible for the public, the tool employs a color-coding system, ranging from yellow to magenta, denoting different levels of heat warnings. Currently, LA is predominantly in the moderate orange and yellow zones. Still, being especially vigilant about rare and unusual heat events is important, because of their potential to exert significant health and environmental damage. (Jennifer Lazo)

### **Question: Is transportation to cooling centers a common barrier to the impacted communities?**

Making cooling or resilience centers accessible for those most threatened by heat is important. The ideal goal is to situate these centers no more than a quarter of a mile from residents' homes to ensure ease of access. Currently, the City is creating more resilience centers, and is looking into options through the Department of Transportation (DOT) for transit to these locations, emphasizing the importance of being intentional and meticulous in designing localized transportation systems to ensure that everyone has equal access to these centers. However, strategies for transporting people to these centers are still being developed for the

current year, and the community will receive updates on this as the year progresses. DOT buses are currently free (a change implemented during the pandemic) and they continue to operate this way. These buses not only provide transportation but also serve as "cooling centers on wheels" that residents can use as temporary refuges from the heat. (Marta Segura and Jennifer Lazo)

### **Question: Do cooling kits include heat relief info and resources?**

As a community member involved in the program, I believe that advocating for including heat relief information and resources in the cooling kits is crucially important. However, determination of the exact contents of these kits is still under way. (Crystal Reyes)

### **Question: How is the City of LA coordinating with LAUSD's greener school efforts?**

The City is collaborating with LAUSD's greener school initiatives, including advocating for the creation of community school parks to transform schools into park spaces once the school day ends. Additionally, conversations are under way regarding introducing language about these community school parks, showing that the City is eager to partner with community stakeholders on this initiative. However, one significant obstacle is the vast number of schools that require greening, so an emphasis is being placed on sourcing state and federal funds to accelerate these projects at the local level. (Alicia Morales)

### **Question: Are any online links available to apply to receive home heat thermal monitors?**

The planning team at Pacoima Beautiful oversees the distribution of home heat thermal monitors, and attendees are encouraged to visit the Pacoima Beautiful website for comprehensive details, because the site will soon be updated with information on the cooling kits and instructions on acquiring an air monitor. (Crystal Reyes)

### **Question: How can we help convert the Las Palmas Senior Center into a cooling center?**

Converting the Las Palmas Senior Center, or any other facility, into an official cooling center in Los Angeles involves adhering to specific criteria. A designated cooling center in the City is an ADA-compliant facility that remains open later, including weekends and holidays, especially during heat waves. If the staff and administrators of Las Palmas wish to facilitate such a transformation, they should contact the Department of Aging, which has strong connections with both the Emergency Management Department and the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office. (Marta Segura)

Additionally, while choosing which centers to operate under extended hours during heat waves, it is crucially important to ensure that operations in the designated centers do not disrupt daily activities or existing services. For example, many senior centers provide cool places for activities on regular days. So, while a cooling center is open to any public member, care must be taken to ensure that usual services are not hindered for the seniors for whom the facility was intended. Another nuance to consider is that the Department of Recreation and Parks manages senior centers while working with the Department of Aging. Therefore, striking a balance is of utmost importance. (Jennifer Lazo)

Although senior centers serve communities during heat waves, perhaps they are not fully utilized, indicating the need to make certain that all seniors in need of these facilities during heat waves have access there, take refuge, and are safe. However, cooling centers should go beyond just offering a cool space; they also should foster community bonding, allowing attendees to engage in activities, access resources, and forge friendships, with the vision being to transform these centers into community hubs rather than just having them as dormant spaces. (Marta Segura and Jennifer Lazo)

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CEMO Director Marta Segura moderated the second-panel presentation, the panelists for which included

Stephany Campos, Director of Strategic Planning and Special Projects at Homeless Health Care Los Angeles, and Brett Feldman, Director and co-founder at the Division of Street Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) of USC. Their discussion aimed to explore and shed light on the services and resources provided to the unhoused and housing insecure, especially during extreme weather conditions, and to delve into the importance of trust, collaboration, harm reduction, and effective strategies in contacting and welcoming these vulnerable populations. Below is a summary of the questions and their answers:

### **Question: What services and resources do you provide to the unhoused and the housing insecure, particularly during extreme heat or weird weather that could put them at risk?**

An array of services are offered in the heart of Skid Row, designed especially for the unhoused and the housing insecure, particularly during weather extremes. Services include the “refresh spot,” a round-the-clock hygiene center accessible seven days a week, and a safe space where individuals can access showers, laundry services, restrooms, device charging, and Wi-Fi. During harsh weather, either intense heat or cold, a limited indoor space is used, even though most facilities are outdoors. The center, spread over 17,000 square feet, was initiated in 2017 and continues to operate without entry restrictions. On average, the center receives about 20,000 intakes each month, which has fostered a collaborative environment with a dozen community partners to cater to the multifaceted needs of the unhoused, going beyond just hygiene. Another initiative is the Cooling Station’s program, initiated two summers ago in collaboration with LADWP and Urban Alchemy, consisting of four flexible outdoor canopy setups fitted with cooling misters that offered immediate relief from the heat while also being staffed around the clock and functioning as resource navigation points for the community, reaching a total of 131 engagements. Additionally, LADWP facilitated water needs by connecting fire hydrants to water bars, allowing stations

to reduce plastic consumption and distribute reusable aluminum containers or paper cups instead. (Stephany):

The primary goal of these initiatives is to provide essential services and foster genuine connections with people being served, understanding their unique needs and striving to fulfill them. This year, the aim is to establish four cooling stations again, building upon the initial 131 engagements during the first year to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the unhoused community in Skid Row.

**Could you also tell us more about the services that you provide, and can you speak about the role trust plays in the Street Medicine's team outreach and how you prepare new team members and collaborators to conduct better outreach for unhoused communities?**

Street Medicine centers on the premise that individuals enduring unsheltered homelessness cannot access health care as often as most other people do, a result of the multiple forms of poverty they encounter, three of which are:

1. Physical poverty, which relates to the lack of basic necessities like housing or food. Responding to these needs can be straightforward if given priority.
2. Health poverty, afflicting many who suffer from untreated physical, psychiatric, and substance use disorders. These issues can become barriers to securing or maintaining housing if unresolved during their time on the streets.
3. Spiritual poverty, perhaps the most challenging to alleviate. This is the feeling of being unwanted or unloved, and it is exacerbated every time one's shelter is moved or when facilities like public restrooms are locked, forcing them into cruel situations.

Therefore, the Street Medicine's approach is direct by going to the community, initially offering compassion to heal their spiritual needs, followed by medical care

equivalent to that in a conventional clinic. The team, composed of doctors, physician assistants, nurses, and community health workers, provides services on the streets, from dispensing medicines to treating mental health conditions, and is entirely "mobile." Apart from individual treatments, Street Medicine plays a significant public health role, ensuring the containment of outbreaks, monitoring food and water supplies, and more. However, one shortcoming that is repeatedly encountered, especially outside Skid Row (where less than 10% of LA's unhoused population gather), is the scarcity of large encampments to set up these services. That limitation forces individuals to relocate continually, making it harder for them to shield themselves from extreme weather conditions and nearly impossible to escape the relentless heat in LA. (Brett)

**What are some examples of collaboration with City or County public agencies, how have you seen that work, and how could we improve that collaboration?**

Collaboration with public agencies has been instrumental in these efforts. The relationship with the City of LA has become quite strong by regularly engaging with the Crisis and Incident Response through the Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE) team and the mayor's office, both of which are invaluable allies. Additionally, LAHSA also plays a critical role, especially when it comes to housing the individuals under Street Medicine's care, who often are the sickest and most in need. Therefore, communication with the mayor's office occurs almost daily, highlighting the intensity of this collaboration. The Department of Public Health is another entity that is frequently engaged in these collaborations. (Brett)

Building on Brett's points, the mayor's office and LAHSA fund the refresh spot and the cooling centers, establishing a shared close-knit bond between organizations. Additionally, the Department of Health Services also provides a substantial mobile unit at the refresh spot, further amplifying the reach of these programs. Partnerships with LADWP have also been

essential for the community, and partnerships with Hilda Solis' office have helped organize pet resource fairs, which are incredibly important given the number of pets in the Skid Row area. A recent justice resource fair was also significantly beneficial to the community. Therefore, nurturing these relationships and ensuring constant collaboration amplifies these impacts, making the combined efforts more effective for the community. (Stephany)

### **How does harm reduction play a role in the outreach and resources you provide for housing-insecure communities?**

A foundational philosophy of HHCLA [Homeless Health Care Los Angeles] is harm reduction, ensuring that individuals are met right where they are, letting the community identify their needs, and addressing them without casting judgments. This client-centric approach, driven by feedback, is integral to this work. Given the traumas many have faced, including negative experiences with other organizations, HHCLA strives to operate through a trauma-informed model that places importance on compassion, respect, and kindness, and has proven effective in fostering improved wellness and health outcomes. (Stephany)

Previous traumatic experiences with medical systems and actual discrimination make earning the community's trust difficult, and inconsistent outreach efforts only deepen this mistrust. Street Medicine's mission is to earn trust, and providing harm-reduction supplies assists in dispelling misconceptions, fostering initial engagement, and forging strong relationships, eventually leading to housing solutions. Last year alone, 38% of the individuals engaged found housing. Therefore, despite the challenges and perceptions of discrimination, Street Medicine's services can be beacons of hope and support, significantly aiding housing endeavors. (Brett)

### **What are the strategies and moves being undertaken to disseminate information and resources to the**

### **unhoused community and some strategies and information that you found to be most effective?**

Efficient communication and resource dissemination to the unhoused community requires strategic thinking. For example, word of mouth is a potent channel in Skid Row, where news about resources spreads rapidly, ensuring that many are informed. Although distributing flyers is common, the digital divide presents a barrier, because most have access to only basic flip phones, limiting app usage and functionality, and also because of sparse Internet connectivity. To bolster outreach, HHCLA has introduced an initiative employing two golf carts that operate seven days a week throughout Skid Row, primarily responding to potential overdose situations while also serving as an effective communication channel by updating individuals about available resources, including climate-related ones. This direct, face-to-face method of information dissemination is instrumental in ensuring that the community is well-informed. (Stephany)

### **If you had these cool pop-up stations now, in which two other targeted spots would you put them?**

The challenge of going outside Skid Row is the dispersion of individuals, who often cluster in small groups of five to 10 people, and many remain isolated. The recurrent movement of these communities further complicates stationary setups. For example, if a static setup like a cooling station were to be established, it might be rendered ineffective in a week or two due to these shifts. This dynamic poses challenges similar to those observed with porta-potties placed by the City in areas that need them, where constant relocation often means they're no longer in proximity to those who require them. Therefore, Street Medicine's engagement strategy, though labor-intensive, is rooted in constant communication, in which community health workers remain pivotal for our efforts and accompany each team member. Their intimate knowledge of the streets, understanding of population movements, and ability to locate individuals make effective outreach possible.



However, if posed with the decision of selecting two additional locations for cooling stations, parks would be on the priority list, since such spaces have the potential to cater to a fair number of individuals. Yet, considering the sheer number of people on the streets, these additions would only scratch the surface. (Brett)

To conclude this panel, CEMO Director Marta Segura highlighted the logistical challenges the City and County face when moving individuals between camps, especially when the necessary resources are not relocated simultaneously. Therefore, perhaps less emphasis should be placed on pop-up cooling stations and more on advancing Street Medicine, such as the creative proposal of having more healthcare workers on golf carts engaging with the community to ensure the well-being of individuals during heat waves.

The session then opened for questions and answers with the panelists. Key questions and responses included:

### **What can the public do to support our unhoused neighbors during heat waves?**

The primary needs during heat waves are shade and water, with studies showing that shaded areas can be up to 30 degrees cooler than places in direct sunlight. A presenter in a recent global Street Medicine conference pointed out that cooling stations are spread across the city in places like Delhi, India. These stations allow the public to access fountains and other amenities, emphasizing their life-saving potential. Therefore, a simple and more immediate form of support is to carry water and be ready to distribute it whenever you encounter someone in need or consider handing out umbrellas, which can provide immediate relief from the sun. (Brett)

Resonating with Brett's advice on immediate assistance, engaging unhoused communities with empathy is also essential. Drinking water is a priority, especially during intense heat, but carrying non-perishable snacks and hygiene kits can be equally important. Additionally, having items like naloxone on hand to reverse or diminish the effects of opioids can make a significant

difference. These goodwill gestures are often genuinely appreciated and can substantially improve someone's day. (Stephany)

### **Has a cooling strategy been devised for the vehicular unhoused, including mothers and children living in cars, vans, and motor homes?**

Addressing vehicular unhoused populations, especially those living in cars, vans, and motor homes, remains a complex challenge. The immediate recommendation would be to avoid staying inside vehicles during hot weather, especially if they lack functioning air conditioning. Instead, seeking shade, water, or a cooling station is advised. However, the challenge lies in making such resources known and easily accessible to these individuals, and barriers can impede their ability to reach these cooling stations. (Stephany)

Currently, no standardized strategy exists for the vehicular unhoused, which emphasizes the importance of this discussion. (Brett)

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To highlight the severity of these situations, Brett made a few observations from a medical perspective, explaining that heart failure, driven by extreme heat, ranks among the top causes of death in unhoused communities. The condition is typically managed with diuretics or water pills. However, the precise dosage becomes tricky, and giving too much could lead to kidney failure, while too little can induce heart failure. With the summer heat intensifying, the challenges of managing water and food access, wearing multiple layers of clothing due to lack of storage, and the constant movement because of the lack of stable resting places further complicate the medical treatment, resulting in an intricate balance of managing health and survival, emphasizing the need for better strategies and support systems.

To conclude the Q&A session, CEMO Director Marta Segura underscored Brett's observation by drawing attention to the heightened vulnerability of individuals



with chronic illnesses during extreme heat waves. In LA among other places susceptible to high temperatures, heat waves intensify pollution, restricting the amount of oxygen circulating in the body, and amplifying exposure to harmful pollutants. Many illnesses become particularly heightened during these weather events, especially in underprivileged communities already susceptible to over-pollution and cumulative health impacts. These factors emphasize the need for medical professionals to be acutely aware of these amplified risks when tending to patients during heat waves, recognizing that common ailments, like kidney failure, may be exacerbated or even triggered by extreme heat and pollution. Acknowledging this interplay in the healthcare system can improve responses, potentially saving more lives.

The next segment of the workshop featured a presentation by Craig Tranby from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), in which he primarily focused on presenting information about programs that connect financial resources that meet the immediate needs of low-income frontline communities during extreme heat waves. Below is a summary of key points of the presentation:

### LADWP Programs:

- Shade and hydration: LADWP conducts shade tree programs and makes hydration stations available with incentives that make them almost free for users.
- Efficient Product Marketplace (Cool LA program): An efficient product marketplace allows qualifying customers to access air conditioning units with significant rebates, leading to virtually free units in many cases.
- Refrigerator Exchange Program: Qualifying customers and nonprofit organizations can get a free energy-efficient refrigerator, which saves money and reduces heat exhaust within homes.
- City plants: LADWP supplies free shade trees to reduce A/C energy use.
- A/C optimization: Customers can tune up their central A/C systems and potentially get free smart thermostats.
- Home Energy Improvement Program: Offers energy and water retrofits for homes based on assessments.
- Consumer Rebate Program: Traditional rebates for cool roofs, window replacements, and whole house fans.
- Comprehensive Affordable Multifamily Retrofits (CAMR) Program: An affordable multifamily retrofit program requiring landlord and tenant cooperation.
- Power Savers: LADWP can adjust smart thermostats during extreme heat events, offering rebates to participants.

### Financial Assistance Programs:

- Easy Save: Based on income qualifications.
- Lifeline Rate: Discounted rates for seniors or those with qualifying disabilities.
- Level Pay: Offers fixed monthly payments, spreading out the cost over the year.
- State-offered programs: Additional financial and retrofit assistance through State programs like the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).

### Heat Management Tips:

- Use A/C units efficiently.
- Be mindful of fan limitations in circulating hot air.
- Use substantial inside window coverings to block sunlight.
- Apply weather stripping to doors and windows.
- Choose efficient products, like energy-efficient

refrigerators and lighting.

- Plant trees, use window shading, and paint walls with light/reflective colors.
- Enroll in financial assistance programs.
- Minimize appliance use, especially during peak heat times.
- Adopt personal cooling methods, such as cool showers and wearing light clothing.

### Additional Resources and News:

- LADWP's Board suspended bill payment collections and shutoffs during extreme weather events.
- Community partnership grants are available for organizations to share resources with the community.
- An upcoming Pilot Resilience Hub will take place in Boyle Heights, where LADWP and its partners provide the latest clean technologies, systems, and resources.

Craig Tranby concluded the presentation by emphasizing the importance of making these programs accessible and widely sharing them with the community, especially to aid the most vulnerable residents.

Michele Prichard, Senior Director for Strategic Partnerships at Liberty Hill Foundation, and Director Marta Segura, summarized growth areas and future opportunities for CEMO. Director Prichard thanked all participants for a substantial and enlightening program, reflecting on CEMO's second season of educational programming and community workshops, which aimed to promote equity in the City's energy and climate policy through robust community engagement. Throughout the CELA Year 2 series, sessions highlighted the roles of Indigenous communities, the importance of collaboration with tribal governments, the significance of community resilience, and the emphasis on including impacted communities at the forefront of policy making.

The discussions also underscored the necessity of protection for outdoor and indoor workers, emphasizing the dire need for clearer heat exposure standards. Director Prichard recognized the impressive work of community, governmental, and agency representatives in launching innovative programs to support vulnerable populations through preparedness at the individual, community, and policy levels. She highlighted the need for broad education, ensuring that people are aware of heat events and know how to protect themselves. Additionally, the discussions stressed a regulatory and investment approach, ranging from utility rate reforms to workplace temperature thresholds and tenant protections. Investments in infrastructure, such as tree canopies, cool streets, and building retrofitting, are crucial for reducing the carbon footprint while ensuring community safety from extreme heat. Director Prichard expressed her appreciation for the partnership between CEMO and Liberty Hill, underscoring the urgent need for climate action in every sphere.

Director Segura ended by expressing deep gratitude to all involved in these workshops, particularly recognizing the contributions of Director Prichard and the collaborative partnership with Liberty Hill. She emphasized the value of leadership, expertise, and the spiritual guidance received during the sessions, asserting that collective care and support bind and humanize the community. She reiterated the session's aim to underscore that everyone belongs to one interconnected community, emphasizing the importance of mutual aid. She reminded attendees about the valuable resources available, and urged them to join the Heat Relief 4 LA Network and access the heat relief materials available in numerous languages. Acknowledging the diligent efforts of the production team, she praised their dedication over the past two years in producing these successful community-led workshops.