

## THE VILLAGE FUND

A PROJECT OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN INFANT AND  
MATERNAL MORTALITY (AAIMM) PREVENTION INITIATIVE

# The LA Partnership pioneers a new model of collective impact to reduce Black/African American maternal and infant mortality in Los Angeles County

### THE REAL ROOT CAUSE OF BIRTH DISPARITIES IN LA COUNTY

According to the 2017 report [A Path to Equity](#), Black/African American babies are two to three times more likely to die before their first birthday than babies of other races, and Black/African American women are four times more likely to die as a result of pregnancy complications than women of other races in Los Angeles County. The report showed that systemic racism drove the high rates of Black/African American maternal and infant mortality, and disproved long-standing misperceptions that individual actions were the reason. This was the first time Los Angeles County and the public health system put a stake in the ground on racism as the root cause in driving the maternal health crisis facing Black/African American women and their babies.

### CENTERING BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN COMMUNITY LEADERS

The LA Partnership shared data and stories with its funders who became motivated to get involved with the issue and join the county to reverse the statistics. The LA Partnership began to chart a path forward for philanthropic investment in the local efforts to address the disparities in birth outcomes. In the LA Partnership's meetings with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and leaders working directly with families in Black/African American communities, the county acknowledged that the Black/African American women leading culturally competent interventions who other Black women trusted had not received either the resources or the respect they deserved—an injustice the county was committed to ending.



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We had been talking about Black maternal health for a long time.  
AAIMM makes it tangible and is something funders can directly  
contribute to, which is powerful and thoughtful for funders who in this  
moment are looking to fund racial equity work.

– PIPER KAMINS, THE RALPH M. PARSONS FOUNDATION

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## CREATING A VEHICLE FOR BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN-LED COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

In 2018 the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the Department of Health Services and First 5 LA, launched the African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Prevention Initiative to address the persistent birth disparities. The LA Partnership became the philanthropic partner to administer AAIMM's grantmaking vehicle, The Village Fund. The Village Fund invests in community-driven responses and interventions that are predominantly Black/African American women-led and culturally responsive but fall outside the kind of services funded through traditional county contracting practices. In 2020, The Village Fund launched, guided by a community-led body, to both design the Fund and choose its grantees. Since its launch, the Fund has raised over \$2 million among 13 funders, including LA County contributing \$450,000.

Beyond fundraising, the LA Partnership helped its county and philanthropic partners to reimagine what it meant to fund racial equity and justice by understanding that building trust with the community required investment in deep relationship building through the right staffing and time. The Fund's lead, Kaci Patterson, is a Black woman whose shared experience with the community served by the AAIMM Village Fund became a critical touchpoint in fostering trust between community leaders, and public and private investors.

## PIONEERING PUBLIC-PRIVATE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

With The Village Fund, the LA Partnership pioneered a new model of making community leaders co-equal stakeholders and primary decision-makers by putting those leaders in the driver's seat and trusting their wisdom. The Fund is investing in innovative programming and critical community infrastructure, and has contributed to the ability of grantees to collaborate, draw connections to their work and be in spaces where their voices can be heard.

### FUNDERS

(AS OF APRIL 2022)

**The Atlas Family  
Foundation**

**Baby Futures Fund**  
A project of the LA Partnership for  
Early Childhood Investment

**THE CALIFORNIA  
ENDOWMENT**

**THE CARL & ROBERTA DEUTSCH  
FOUNDATION**

**first 5 la**  
Giving kids the best start

**HEISING-SIMONS  
FOUNDATION**

CONRAD N.  
*Hilton*  
FOUNDATION

**W. M. KECK  
FOUNDATION**

**Liberty  
Hill  
FOUNDATION**

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
Public Health**

**THE  
RALPH M. PARSONS  
FOUNDATION**

**tieks**  
by Gavrieli

**Tikun Olam  
Foundation**

If you would like to learn more about the LA Partnership and investing in children 0-5 in LA County, visit [www.investinkidsla.org](http://www.investinkidsla.org) or contact us at [Partnership@investinkidsla.org](mailto:Partnership@investinkidsla.org).