

Chronology of Los Angeles County and Economic Roundtable Data Sharing and Research

Dates	Events
2005 to 2011	<p><i>Board of Supervisors approves motion to provide linked administrative records to Economic Roundtable, agreements negotiated, and data obtained.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Supervisors approved a motion on June 7, 2005, instructing the Departments of Public Social Services (DPSS), Mental Health, Health, Children and Family Services, and Sheriff to provide information to the Economic Roundtable about services received by past and current public benefits recipients, requesting the state Employment Development Department to provide employment records, and authorizing the Economic Roundtable to carry out wide-ranging research to identify programs and policies that will improve the well-being of poor parents and their children. Funding for the research was to be obtained from private foundations.¹ • The Board motion instructed departments to provide data within 90 days, or by September 7, 2005.² • On June 19, 2006, the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) and DPSS executed an agreement with the Economic Roundtable in which the CAO agreed to integrate and de-identify records from all five departments. The benefits identified for the county from the research included Identifying factors affecting the well-being of families and children, and best practices for improving those outcomes.³ • DPSS required a second contract with the Economic Roundtable, which was executed on June 4, 2009. The contract called for research to be completed on August 31, 2012.⁴ • The short completion date created problems because it did not provide sufficient time for carrying out the project, which required: obtaining data from other agencies, integrating, de-identifying and de-duplicating records, obtaining foundation funding for research (which was scarce in the aftermath of the 2008 recession), building a useable database, and carrying out complex, multi-faceted research. • DPSS began providing data in February 2010 and the transfer of data was completed in March 2011. • More than six years passed before DPSS provided the needed data. This was 26 times longer than the 90-day time limit specified in the Board motion.
2011 to 2017	<p><i>Collaboration with the county to extend the term of the project, completion of the first research report, and return of data provided by DPSS.</i></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Economic Roundtable’s first report using data provided by the county, <i>All Alone: Antecedents of Chronic Homelessness</i>,⁵ was forwarded to DPSS for review on December 9, 2014. • On December 10, 2014, the director of research for DPSS responded, “This is timely given our continued interest in research on the homeless. . . Let’s talk about whether you want to continue to use our data for future reports. “⁶ • On January 29, 2015, the Economic Roundtable requested that the research database be preserved, pointing out that the research was carried out in response to a request by the Board of Supervisors and that there might be further need for the data.⁷ • On January 29, 2015, DPSS responded that the request was reasonable and extended the contract termination date to June 30, 2015.⁸ • On June 24, 2015, DPSS requested that the Economic Roundtable submit a new proposal if it wanted to retain the data for another year or two.⁹ • On August 31, 2015, the Economic Roundtable submitted a new proposal to DPSS titled, “Dynamics of Poverty and Los Angeles County Record Linkage Project.” The benefit identified for the county was to “provide reliable information that will support operational progress in strengthening health services, employment programs, reducing homelessness, and improving the long-term well-being and self-sufficiency of low-income residents.”¹⁰ • On November 5, 2015, the director of research for DPSS wrote, “The proposal is under review in the Department. I hope to obtain approval within the next two weeks.”¹¹ • On May 27, 2016, DPSS wrote, “I wanted to let you know we are on track for the approval process, just a week or two delayed.”¹² • On May 6, 2016, under the subject line, “Keep DPSS data in your possession,” the director of research for DPSS wrote, “You have the choice of deleting or returning DPSS data or requesting permission to keep data in your possession and use it for new reports.”¹³ • On June 8, 2016 the Economic Roundtable proposed an additional area of research to DPSS – mapping the last known address of children who have experienced homelessness and may be at risk of lasting harm.¹⁴ DPSS responded the following day, requesting a proposal for this additional research.¹⁵ • On September 2, 2016, DPSS wrote, “We are almost to the end of the clearance process on the two Economic Roundtable proposals.”¹⁶ • On November 1, 2016, DPSS wrote that “the two ER proposals are at the last stage of clearance” to extend agreements for data use to December 31, 2018.¹⁷

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On March 14, 2017, the Economic Roundtable received a telephone call from DPSS and was informed that Ms. Spiller, the director of DPSS, had not approved the Research Committee’s recommendation to extend the agreement with the Economic Roundtable. The Roundtable was requested to return the CDs containing the data it had received from DPSS. • On March 15, the Economic Roundtable responded to the call from DPSS, pointing out that it was no longer working with the LEADER records provided by DPSS, but rather with derivative data in the form of de-identified linked records that include data that originated from DPSS as well as data from other county departments. The email also requested a meeting with Ms. Spiller, the director of DPSS.¹⁸ There was no response to this request. • On April 21, 2017, the Economic Roundtable shipped all 322 data CDs provided by DPSS back to DPSS by certified mail.¹⁹ • On July 27, 2017, DPSS confirmed having all of the returned data CDs in its possession.²⁰
2017	<p><i>Collaboration with county in building and integrating predictive models to combat homelessness.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive Office (CEO) invited the Economic Roundtable to participate in its predictive analytics solicitation for using data to combat the homeless crisis.²¹ • The Economic Roundtable submitted a statement of qualifications in collaboration with the SAS Institute and signed the data use protocol for obtaining the de-identified county records that were provided as part of the solicitation.²² • The CEO informed the Economic Roundtable that “you are good to go” for developing predictive models using the data provided by the county.²³ • The Economic Roundtable reviewed the records provided by the county and found that they provided only limited information about the timing of homeless episodes.²⁴ • The Economic Roundtable proposed modifying the exercises proposed in the CEO’s solicitation to address a polity-relevant problem that aligned with the strengths of the data. This was suggested because each of the predictive models the Roundtable has developed have required one person-year of work for data clean-up, database construction, and model development, testing and validation. In order to be able to invest that amount of time, the work needs to break new ground and produce a useful tool for addressing homelessness.²⁵

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO staff responded that it would “be quite a disappointment were ERT not to participate in the process,” and raised the option for the Roundtable to submit an alternative proposal.²⁶ • The Economic Roundtable submitted an alternative proposal to combine de-identified records previously provided by the county with the records provided by the CEO for the predictive modeling solicitation in order to provide more information about individuals before and after they became homeless. This would support predictive modeling to identify youth at risk of homelessness and persistent homelessness.²⁷ • CEO staff expressed interest in the proposal but concern that if the LEADER records that had been provided by DPSS were used, DPSS would oppose the proposal.²⁸ • The Economic Roundtable responded that the LEADER records had been returned to DPSS and that the proposal entailed using de-identified records previously provided by the CAO together with the more recent records provided by the CEO.²⁹ • CEO staff responded, “I think the projects you describe have considerable potential and I’m happy to work to gain approval for them.”³⁰ • The Economic Roundtable submitted a proposal that included the suggestions of CEO staff to emphasize:³¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Combatting homelessness and adopting an increasingly preventive approach to the homeless crisis ○ Employment ○ Preventing youth homelessness ○ No costs for the county • CEO staff corresponded by email with the Economic Roundtable about the support of three Board Offices and two Public Social Services Commission members for the proposal and shared a memo to CEO management recommending approval of the proposal.³² • The Economic Roundtable confirmed that it was proceeding with the predictive modeling described in the proposal.³³
2018	<p><i>Collaboration with county in reviewing homeless reports and planning development of new homeless typologies that are linked to service needs and early intervention.</i></p>

Dates	Events
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Economic Roundtable met with Phil Ansell and other CEO staff on August 29, 2018 to provide a briefing on results from the Economic Roundtable’s predictive model to identify workers who become persistently homeless after they lose their jobs.³⁴ • On September 7, 2018, the Economic Roundtable invited CEO staff to participate in a project to develop new typologies of homelessness that will categorize homeless outcomes in ways that are operationally useful.³⁵ • On September 28, 2018, CEO staff confirmed their interest in participating in the homeless typologies project and also the interest of staff from the departments of Health Services and Mental Health.³⁶ • On October 29, 2018, the Economic Roundtable met with CEO staff to provide a briefing on results from two predictive models that identify unemployed workers and young adults who become persistently homeless within three years.³⁷ • On November 7, 2018, the Economic Roundtable followed up on a discussion about data use that was raised in the previous week during the briefing. The email pointed out the use of the data was consistent with the research that the Board of Supervisors asked the Roundtable to carry out, that research timelines had been extended because of the six-year delay in obtaining the data required for this research, and most importantly, that the research is now being carried out using a derivative database of de-identified records.³⁸
2018	<i>Predictive modeling report sent to CEO and DPSS staff for review and comment.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On December 20, 2018, the Economic Roundtable sent a draft report to CEO and DPSS staff on two predictive screening models for intervening early to help individuals who would otherwise become persistently homeless is attached. The first tool identifies the 8 percent of low-wage workers who become persistently homeless after losing their jobs. The second tool identifies the 8 percent of youth receiving public assistance who become persistently homeless in the first three years of adulthood. These screening tools are important for the county’s efforts to combat homelessness because they match scarce resources with high-need individuals before those individuals are harmed by prolonged homelessness.³⁹
2018	<i>County letter demands destruction of database built by Economic Roundtable and suppression of report on predictive models that identify individuals who become persistently homeless</i>

Dates	Events
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On December 20, 2018, the same day the predictive modeling report was sent to the CEO and DPSS for review, the county responded by emailed letter, asserting that the Economic Roundtable had made unauthorized use of county data. The letter demanded that the Economic Roundtable destroy its database of de-identified records and not release the report on predictive models that identify individuals who become persistently homeless.⁴⁰ The letter does not respond substantively to the value of the two predictive models, which identify 29 percent of people who become persistently homeless, making it possible to help these individuals before they are badly damaged by homelessness. Nor does the letter acknowledge the value of information in the report describing the attributes and needs of unemployed workers and young adults who become persistently homeless. The letter does not take account of the exceptional value of the de-identified database, built with foundation funding and Roundtable work, for informing and strengthening county efforts to combat homelessness.
2019	<i>Economic Roundtable response to Los Angeles County</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Economic Roundtable letter pointed out that the report the county wanted suppressed provides tools that have immediate, practical importance for identifying over one-thousand County residents who become homeless each month and go on to remain persistently homeless. These are workers who have just lost their jobs and youth entering adulthood who will become persistently homeless within three years.⁴¹ The response stated that the Roundtable has a responsibility as a public benefit, nonprofit research organization to develop information useful for systemic change and the public good, and to provide immediate, free access to information we produce.
2019	<i>Letter from County Counsel to Economic Roundtable</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On February 26, 2019 sent a letter to the Economic Roundtable requesting certification that the Economic Roundtable no longer possessed five data sets provided by the county and the state.⁴²
2019	<i>Economic Roundtable Procedures to De-Identify Longitudinal Linked Records</i>

Dates	Events
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 5, 2019, the Economic Roundtable met with county staff and provided documentation of procedures followed to de-identify the longitudinal dataset of linked administrative records that it had built.⁴³ The Economic Roundtable provided the de-identified data set to county staff on flash drives and requested that the county share this data set with other researchers.
2019	<i>Certification for data sets 1 to 4.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 6, 2019, the Economic Roundtable transmitted certification to County Counsel that it did not possess data sets numbers one to four of the data sets identified by County Counsel.⁴⁴
2019	<i>Certification for data set 5.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 12, 2019, the Economic Roundtable transmitted certification to County Counsel that it did not possess the fifth and final data identified by County Counsel.⁴⁵
2019	<i>Data Use Request to Los Angeles County</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 15, 2019, the Economic Roundtable submitted a request to the Los Angeles County Chief Information Office for approval to continue using the database it built. This application followed the procedure agreed to in the March 5, 2019 meeting The application specifies that the data will be used to develop typologies that identify long-term outcomes of homelessness and to develop additional predictive screening tools.⁴⁶
2019	<i>Los Angeles County Letter Returning Flash Drives to Economic Roundtable</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter dated April 9, 2019, from Los Angeles County’s Chief Information Office transmitted the three flash drives given to the county back to the Economic Roundtable. The letter steps back from allegations of improper use of state data and accepts that the dataset is de-identified, but states that the county “cannot use nor provide this data to others for use in their research endeavors.”⁴⁷

Dates	Events
2021	<i>Los Angeles County Auditor Controller review of county procurement procedures for predictive model</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From March 9, 2021 to April 21, 2021, nine emails were exchanged between the Los Angeles County Auditor Controller and the Economic Roundtable in response to the Auditor Controller’s request for information about whether the Chief Executive Office’s procurement procedures for predictive analytic screening tools for homelessness were fair and impartial. The Auditor Controller made a follow-on request for information to support the Economic Roundtable’s assessment that the county acted in bad faith. In response to the Economic Roundtable’s request for information from the review, the Auditor Controller responded, “Unfortunately, I am prohibited from sharing information since this is a confidential review.”⁴⁸ 	

Endnotes

¹ Motion by Supervisors Zev Yaroslavsky and Yvonne B. Burke, June 7, 2005, county reference number 18893. Document 01 in the project archive.

² Board of Supervisors minute order for June 7, 2005 meeting. Document 02 in the project archive.

³ Memorandum of Understanding between Economic Roundtable, California Institute of Mental Health, Los Angeles County Chief Administrative Office, and Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services for Family Centered Research Project. Executed June 19, 2006. Document 03 in the project archive.

⁴ Contract By and Between Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services and Economic Roundtable for Family-Centered Welfare Research Project. Executed on June 4, 2009. Document number 04 in the project archive.

⁵ All Alone: Antecedents of Chronic Homelessness was released to the public on August 25, 2015, after extensive review by and discussion with DPSS. The report is document number 05 in the project archive. The report was transmitted to DPSS for review in an email from Dan Flaming to Michael Bono, December 9, 2014. Document 12, page 42 in the project archive.

⁶ Email from Michael Bono to Dan Flaming, December 10, 2014. Document 12, page 41, in the project archive.

⁷ Email from Dan Flaming to Michael Bono, January 29, 2015. Document 12, page 41, in the project archive.

⁸ Email from Michael Bono to Dan Flaming, January 29, 2015. Document 12, pages 40-41, in the project archive.

⁹ Email from Michael Bono to Dan Flaming, June 24, 2015. Document 12, page 40, in the project archive.

¹⁰ Dynamics of Poverty and Los Angeles County Record Linkage Project is document 06 in the project archive. It was transmitted to DPSS in an email from Dan Flaming to Michael Bono, August 31, 2015. Document 12, pages 39-40 in the project archive.

¹¹ Email from Michael Bono to Dan Flaming, November 5, 2015. Document 12, page 39, in the project archive.

¹² Email from Jenny Zogg to Dan Flaming, May 27, 2016. Document 12, pages 36-37, in the project archive.

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- ¹³ Email from Michael Bono to Dan Flaming, May 5, 2016. Document 12, page 38, in the project archive.
- ¹⁴ Email from Dan Flaming to Jenny Zogg, June 8, 2016. Document 12, page 36, in the project archive.
- ¹⁵ Email from Jenny Zogg to Dan Flaming, June 9, 2016. Document 12, page 35, in the project archive.
- ¹⁶ Email from Jenny Zogg to Dan Flaming, September 2, 2016. Document 12, page 34, in the project archive.
- ¹⁷ Email from Jenny Zogg to Dan Flaming, November 1, 2016. Document 12, page 33, in the project archive.
- ¹⁸ Email from Dan Flaming to Jenny Zogg, March 15, 2017. Document 12, page 31, in the project archive.
- ¹⁹ Economic Roundtable letter dated April 21, 2017. Document 07 in the project archive.
- ²⁰ Email from Jenny Zogg to Dan Flaming, July 27, 2017. Document 12, page 30, in the project archive.
- ²¹ Email from Max Stevens to Dan Flaming, June 6, 2017. Document 12, page 29, in the project archive. The solicitation is document 08 in the project archive.
- ²² The data use protocol was transmitted by email from Dan Flaming to Max Stevens, June 17, 2017. Document 12, page 27, in the project archive. The protocol is document 09 in the project archive.
- ²³ Email from Max Stevens to Dan Flaming, June 17, 2017. Document 12, page 26, in the project archive.
- ²⁴ Overview of Predictive Analytic Records, June 26, 2017. Document 10 in the project archive.
- ²⁵ Email from Dan Flaming to Max Stevens, June 26, 2017. Document 12, page 25, in the project archive.
- ²⁶ Email from Max Stevens to Dan Flaming, June 26, 2017. Document 12, page 24, in the project archive.
- ²⁷ Email from Dan Flaming to Max Stevens, June 28, 2017. Document 12, page 22, in the project archive.
- ²⁸ Email from Max Stevens to Dan Flaming, June 29, 2017. Document 12, pages 20-21, in the project archive.
- ²⁹ Email from Dan Flaming to Max Stevens, June 29, 2017. Document 12, pages 19-20, in the project archive.
- ³⁰ Email from Max Stevens to Dan Flaming, June 30, 2017. Document 12, pages 18-19, in the project archive.
- ³¹ Analyzing Homeless Population Attributes and Building Predictive Models to Support Los Angeles County's Coordinated Effort to Combat Homelessness, July 28, 2017. Document 11 in the project archive. Suggestions from CEO staff are in email from Max Stevens to Dan Flaming, July 25, 2017. Document 12, pages 15-16, in the project archive.
- ³² Max Stevens and Dan Flaming exchanged emails from August 2 to September 7 about the support of three Board offices and two Social Services Commission members for the proposal. Document 12, pages 9-15, in the project archive. The memo to CEO management is document 13 in the project archive.
- ³³ Email from Dan Flaming to Max Stevens, December 15, 2017. Document 12, page 9, in the project archive.
- ³⁴ Homeless Dynamics and Smart Targeting. Document 14 in the project archive.
- ³⁵ Email from Dan Flaming to Phil Ansell, September 7, 2018. Document 12, pages 6-7, in the project archive.
- ³⁶ Email from Phil Ansell to Dan Flaming, September 28, 2018. Document 12, page 4, in the project archive.
- ³⁷ Persistent Homelessness and Early Interventions. Document 15 in the project archive.
- ³⁸ Email from Dan Flaming to Phil Ansell, November 7, 2018. Document 12, pages 2-3, in the project archive.
- ³⁹ The draft report was transmitted by email from Dan Flaming to Phil Ansell, December 20, 2018. Document 12, page 1 in the project archive. The report, Persistent Homelessness and Early Interventions, is Document 16 in the project archive.
- ⁴⁰ Letter from Max Stevens to Dan Flaming dated December 20, 2018. Document 17 in project archive.
- ⁴¹ Letter from Dan Flaming to Max Stevens dated January 25, 2019. Document 18 in project archive.

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- ⁴² Letter from County Counsel to Dan Flaming dated February 26, 2019. Document 19 in project archive.
- ⁴³ Economic Roundtable Procedures to De-Identify Longitudinal Linked Records. Document 20 in the project archive.
- ⁴⁴ Certification executed by the Economic Roundtable. Document 21 in the project archive.
- ⁴⁵ Certification executed by the Economic Roundtable. Document 22 in the project archive.
- ⁴⁶ Application submitted to Los Angeles County Chief Information Office by the Economic Roundtable. Document 23 in the project archive.
- ⁴⁷ Letter from Peter Loo, Chief Deputy, County of Los Angeles, Office of the Chief Information Officer, dated April 9, 2019. Document 24 in the project archive.
- ⁴⁸ Email chain between Timothy Takara, Los Angeles County Auditor Controller Department, and Daniel Flaming, Economic Roundtable. Document 25 in the project archive.