



COMPTON MAYOR AJA BROWN TO LAUNCH COMPTON PLEDGE GUARANTEED INCOME INITIATIVE

Residents to Receive Recurring Direct Cash Payments

PRESS RELEASE

Compton, CA, October 19, 2020 – Compton Mayor Aja Brown today announced The Compton Pledge, a landmark guaranteed income initiative that will distribute recurring, direct cash relief to approximately 800 low-income residents for two years, starting in late 2020. Among city-led guaranteed income initiatives in the United States, the Compton Pledge will be the largest pilot, and is intentionally designed to challenge the racial and economic injustice plaguing both welfare programs and economic systems. It plans to reach irregularly or informally employed residents, immigrants of varied legal status, and the formerly incarcerated.

The [Compton Pledge](#) is led by Mayor Aja Brown in partnership with the [Jain Family Institute](#), an applied research group, and the Fund for Guaranteed Income, a registered public charity launched to steward guaranteed income as a path to racial justice. The Compton Pledge is supported by a Community Advisory Council of trusted leaders and activists to co-design the mission-driven initiative. Among the groups represented are: CHIRLA, One Fair Wage, My Brother's Keeper, Shields for Families, Neighborhood Housing Services, Color Compton, Sylvia Nunn Angels, Vecinos Unidos Por Compton, Compton YouthBuild, Compton College, Compton Advocates, and Originals Nation.

Under the program, to be launched in late 2020, a pre-verified group of low-income Comptonians will be notified of their selection and begin receiving cash transfers shortly thereafter. Recipients will be able to choose between multiple payment options to best suit their needs. Unbanked Comptonians will be provided with no-cost financial services; and, in partnership with a broad-based community coalition, a new online platform will facilitate applicants' access to existing legal, psychosocial and counseling services, while lowering the burdens of enrollment. All funds are being raised privately.

Aja Brown, Mayor of Compton, said, "I know firsthand what guaranteed income could have done for my mother. I've watched the many sacrifices she made, including walking to work to provide for my brother and I. Like most Americans, we were one emergency away from having to move, which we did many times, if anything unplanned happened because of her restricted income and prioritizing being present for her children. People in our community are going through tough times, and I know that guaranteed income could give people a moment to navigate their situation, and have some breathing room to go back to school, explore a new career path, spend time with their children, or improve their mental and emotional wellbeing. Ensuring all people are able to live with dignity is something we should all strive for in America."



Patrisse Cullors, an advocate of the Compton Pledge and co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, said, “Guaranteed income is an urgent and necessary strategy for addressing the economic realities of racial injustice. I’m thrilled Mayor Brown and Compton are leading the way in this growing national movement.”

The case for guaranteed income nationally and in Compton is undeniable. Compton, a city of 95,000 residents, acutely faces many of the issues that have defined a national conversation about racial injustice and structural inequality. Many of Compton’s residents, of whom 30% are Black and 68% are Latino, are either unemployed, poorly paid, or ineligible for government assistance. Upwards of 1 in 5 Comptonians live in poverty—double the nationwide average. Local housing assistance in Compton is at capacity, presenting unaffordable hardships for a city where 46% of residents are renters. In Compton, rates of unemployment have risen to 21.9% since the beginning of COVID-19, and a growing number of residents regularly rely on food pantries.

The program will be rigorously evaluated by an independent research team. Participant names will be kept anonymous, but preliminary findings will be reported at six-month intervals and a live data dashboard will be shared once disbursements begin. The Compton Pledge builds on the results of previous pilots to study many of the key unanswered questions about the policy: the optimal implementation and design, as well as ideas towards long-term financing at the municipal level. Ambitious in its scale and strategy, it aims to inform the state and federal guaranteed income agenda.

Compton joins a growing movement of cities across the country experimenting with guaranteed income in response to the financial precarity exposed by the COVID-19 crisis. Mayor Brown in June 2020 became a founding member of the Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, a consortium of 25 American Mayors committed to advocating for a national system of direct, recurring payments to vulnerable families.

Michael Tubbs, Mayor of Stockton, California, said, “Guaranteed income will afford people the dignity of an income floor and agency to make choices for themselves. I look forward to seeing the data support what Mayor Brown already knows to be true of her constituents: poverty stems from a lack of cash, not a lack of character.”

To learn more about the Compton Pledge or how to get involved, contact media@comptonpledge.org.