



**2020**

**Voices of Sonoma County  
Women Report**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *2020 Voices of Sonoma County Women Report* was prepared by the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women. The data included in this report was generated from Listening Sessions held throughout the County and with the women housed at the Sonoma County Main Adult Detention Facility, in addition to the Voices of Sonoma County Women survey. Data was collected between January 2019 and January 2020.

The intention of this project is to gain a deeper understanding of the status of women of all backgrounds in Sonoma County and to respond to the specific needs and concerns they have. The Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women encourages you to read and share this report as a means to advocate on behalf of the women and girls in the county more effectively.

The *2020 Voices of Sonoma County Women Report* identifies numerous structural and individual challenges currently facing women and girls in our communities. The following section provides a brief synopsis of the top issues facing women in Sonoma County collectively, by race, by housing status, and by income. By breaking down the data in this way, we demonstrate the role that social categories can play in shaping the barriers that women face in their daily lives.

### TOP ISSUES FACING WOMEN IN SONOMA COUNTY | **OVERALL**

- **Lack of affordable healthcare** and **lack of low-income housing** are the top issues facing women in Sonoma County
- Women also struggle with finding **access to quality, affordable childcare**
- **Mental health issues** and **lack of mental health services** are also top concerns

### TOP ISSUES FACING WOMEN | **BY RACE**

- Women in the County who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native identify **domestic and/or intimate partner violence** as the top issue they face, followed by **lack of low-income housing** and **substance abuse/addiction**
- Asian/Asian American women say that **the number of women in leadership positions** within the County is their biggest concern
- Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx women identify the **lack of low-income housing** in the community as a top concern
- White women and women who list more than two races are mostly concerned with the **lack of affordable healthcare** services in the County

### TOP ISSUES FACING WOMEN | **BY HOUSING STATUS**

- Women in Sonoma County who own their home cite **retirement insecurities** as their top concern
- However, women who rent, live with family or friends, are homeless, or incarcerated all say that **the lack of low-income housing** in the County is the biggest challenge they face

### TOP ISSUES FACING WOMEN | **BY INCOME**

- Women with incomes less than \$20,000 per year identified **low-income housing, poverty, and substance abuse/addiction** as the top three issues they face
- Women making over \$100,000 per year are concerned with **retirement insecurities, caring for aging parents, and the number of women in leadership positions**

## **BARRIERS TO RESOLUTION AND REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the section that follows, we outline the perceived barriers to resolving the issues identified by women in the County, followed by the recommendations that emerged from this study, and a note regarding our research within the context of COVID-19.

### **BARRIERS TO RESOLVING THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY WOMEN IN THE COUNTY**

Women in the County identified the following barriers to resolving the concerns we outlined in the Executive Summary:

1. Lack of finances
2. Unaware of what services are available and how to access them
3. Lack of transportation
4. Language barriers

### **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Women in the County feel that they and their communities would benefit from:

1. Community centers or gathering places that provide a space where people can meet and share ideas, access information on resources, form support groups, and receive education and training.
2. Increased access to low-income housing
3. Government responsiveness to gender bias and racial profiling
4. Increased attention to job and income insecurity

### **OUR REPORT AND COVID-19**

With the current state of the world and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that our report results may be considered obsolete. However, as numerous studies have demonstrated, the coronavirus has not changed the struggles that we face, but have instead exacerbated existing inequalities, particularly across lines of race and gender. Therefore, we submit this work along with the caveat that we should assume the challenges and barriers Sonoma County women faced in 2019 have only been amplified in 2020.

### **THE IMPACT OF THIS REPORT**

To our knowledge, this data collection project on the status of women in Sonoma County is the first of its kind. Additionally, we are among the first to offer incarcerated women the opportunity to participate in such a study. In doing so, we offer a unique set of perspectives on the issues facing women in our community. Thus, the potential for the data within this report to positively impact the lives of women and girls in Sonoma County cannot be overstated. As such, after sharing this report with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, we intend to communicate our findings with our local governments (e.g., City Councils and Mayors), as well as with community based organizations that we feel could benefit from the information we have collected.

### **FUTURE VOICES RESEARCH**

The Commission on the Status of Women is passionate about hearing from women from a wide range of backgrounds. As we continue with our 2021 Voices research, we plan to expand recruitment efforts and include additional questions that capture a wider array of experiences.

## INTRODUCTION

The *2020 Voices of Sonoma County Women Report* emerged from the 2018 National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) conference. Inspired by the Maryland Commission for Women’s Voices project presentation, Commissioners Janice Blalock and Trisha Almond returned to Sonoma County with an eye toward implementing a similar project in their own communities. The Voices of Sonoma County Women project was proposed to the Commission during our Fall 2018 Strategic Planning meeting. The project was chosen and was selected as an Ad Hoc Committee that would span the next two years. The Voices Ad Hoc Committee is comprised of Commissioners Janice Blalock (District 1), Trisha Almond (District 2, Chair), Jenny Whyte,<sup>1</sup> Dianna MacDonald,<sup>2</sup> Peggy Rogers (District 5), and Katie Gordon (District 2).

The CSW collected data for this report through Listening Sessions and through Surveys. We held in-person Listening Sessions in each District in the County, in addition to two Sessions we held with the women housed at the Sonoma County Main Adult Detention Facility.

The overarching intention of this project was to gain a deeper understanding of the status of women of all backgrounds in Sonoma County, and to be responsive to the specific needs and concerns they have. The *2020 Voices of Sonoma County Women Report* identifies numerous structural and individual challenges currently facing women and girls in our communities. The Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women encourages you to read and share this report as a means to advocate on behalf of the women and girls in the county more effectively.

## PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THIS RESEARCH

- Establish trusting relationships between the CSW and our communities
- Develop an understanding of the important social and personal issues women and girls face in Sonoma County
- Identify challenges women and girls face in the community and engage their support in developing solutions
- Increase the visibility, credibility, and efficacy of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women
- Cultivate and strengthen partnerships with organizations in Sonoma County that provide services and support for women and girls
- Produce actionable data, analysis, and policy recommendations to local, State, and National leaders
- Utilize this report to make data-informed decisions about future Commission projects and committees

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<sup>1</sup> Jenny Whyte has since moved out of the area.

<sup>2</sup> Dianna MacDonald has since left the CSW.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The *2020 Voices of Sonoma County Women Report* was prepared by the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The data included in this report was generated from Listening Sessions held throughout the County, as well as from the first *Voices of Sonoma County Women* survey. Data for this project was collected between 2019 and early 2020. In-person listening sessions were held as town-hall style community meetings throughout Sonoma County. The *Voices Survey* was available to fill out in hard copy or online. During the Listening Sessions, participants were asked to discuss the most pressing issues in the community and the challenges that impacted them personally. The Sessions were small and intimate, but participants were very passionate about the issues that concerned them. The Listening Sessions consisted of local community leaders and involved citizens. The *Voices Survey* incorporated the questions from the Listening Sessions and collected demographic information as well. The CSW received 429 *Voices Surveys* during the data collection portion of the project. 16 surveys were not included in our analysis because the respondents were not residents of Sonoma County, leaving 413 unique cases in our dataset.

## HISTORY AND MISSION STATEMENT

The Commission on the Status of Women was established on December 23, 1975 (Ordinance No. 1850) with the charge to “take affirmative action to eliminate the practice of discrimination and prejudice because of gender in the areas of housing, education, community services, and related fields.” Since that time, appointed Commissioners have worked tirelessly, on a voluntary basis, to keep Sonoma County’s governing body aware of the issues that impact women and girls in the County.

The purpose of the Commission on the Status of Women is to promote equal rights and opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls, and to address issues of discrimination and prejudice that negatively affect women in Sonoma County. In support of the mission statement above, through 2020, the Commission will focus on the following issues that affect women and girls:

- Empowering Women & Girls
- Marketing SoCo CSW
- Voices of Sonoma County Women

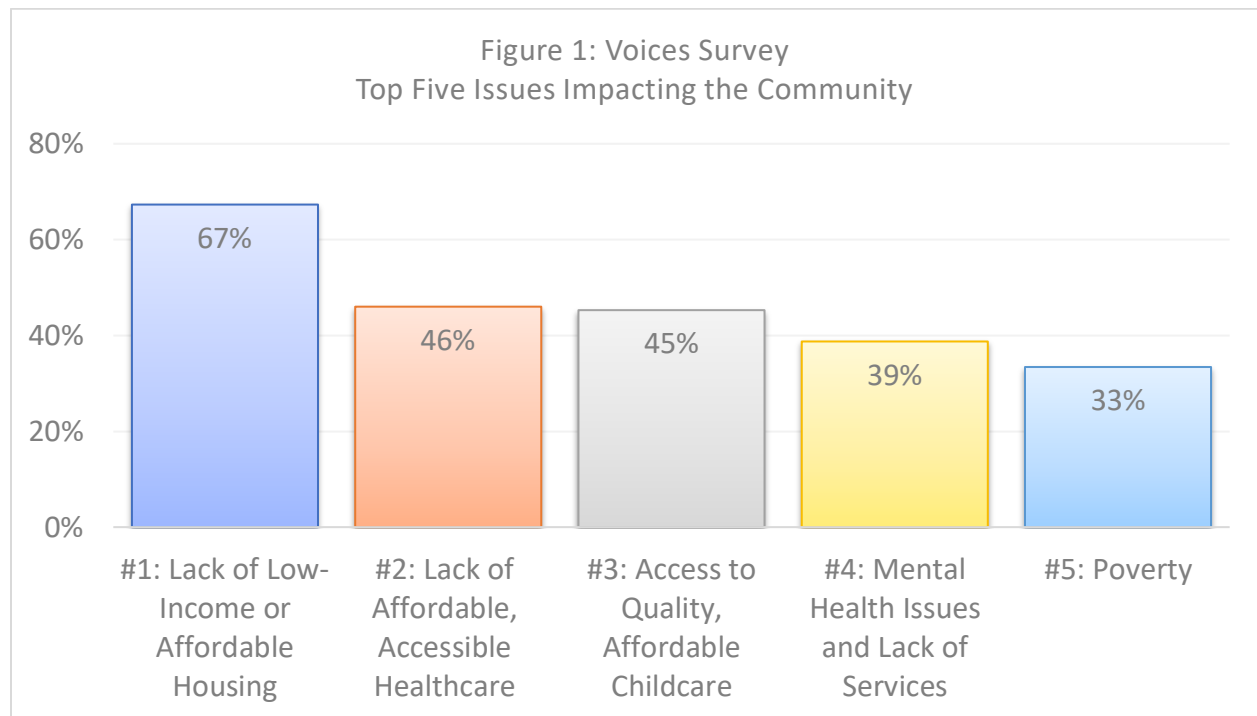
Additionally, the Commission provides mentorship to youth in the form of the Junior Commissioner Project, and through collaboration, outreach, and the work of the Legislative Affairs Committee, the Commission supports community efforts to:

- Encourage women to seek elected and appointed office
- Eradicate human trafficking
- Prevent elder abuse
- Protect the reproductive and healthcare rights of women and girls

## VOICES OF SONOMA COUNTY WOMEN SURVEY RESULTS

Results from the *Voices of Sonoma County Women Survey* are outlined below. First, we briefly outline the top five issues impacting women and their communities overall, as well as the perceived barriers to receiving support with these issues. Next, we provide descriptive statistics on the demographic composition of our survey population and zero in on the top three personal issues faced by women in each demographic category. We include all data in our Figures, though we limit the data in our Tables and exclude the categories of *Other* and *Prefer to Not State*. Last, we amplify women’s voices by including direct quotes from respondents throughout the Survey results described below. In doing so, we maintain and protect participant confidentiality by excluding any identifying information accompanying these quotes.

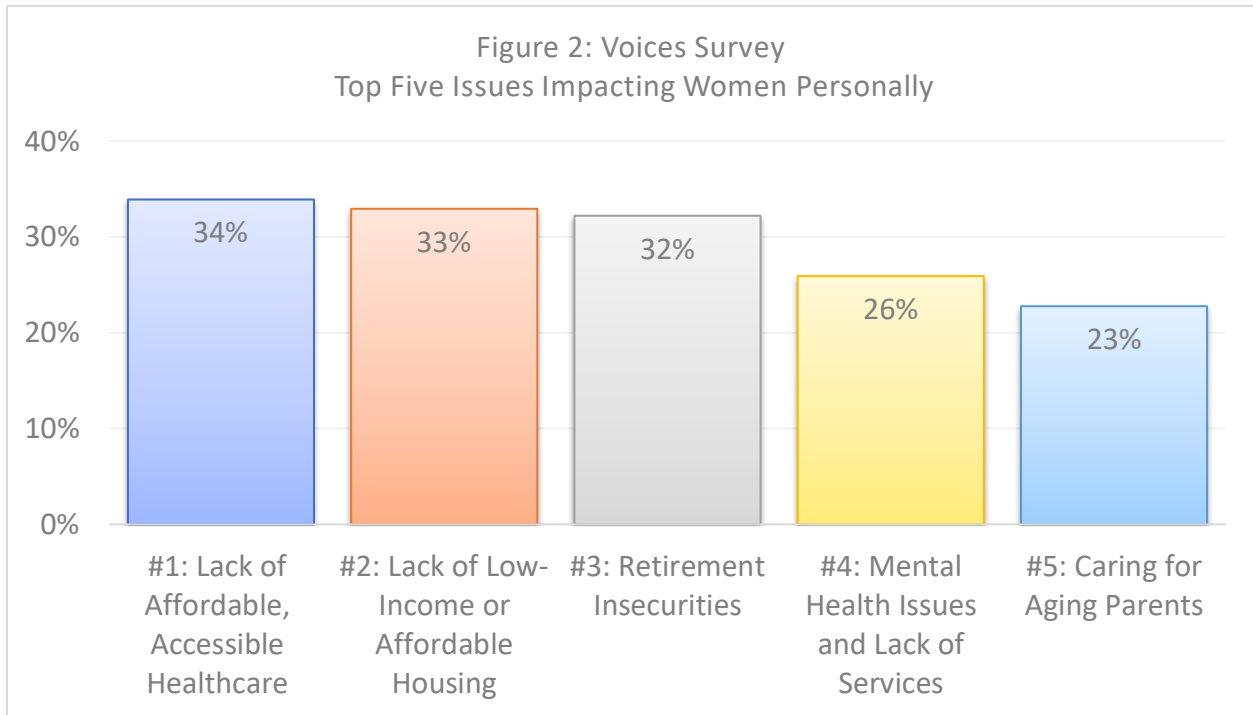
### VOICES SURVEY: TOP FIVE ISSUES IMPACTING THE COMMUNITY<sup>3</sup>



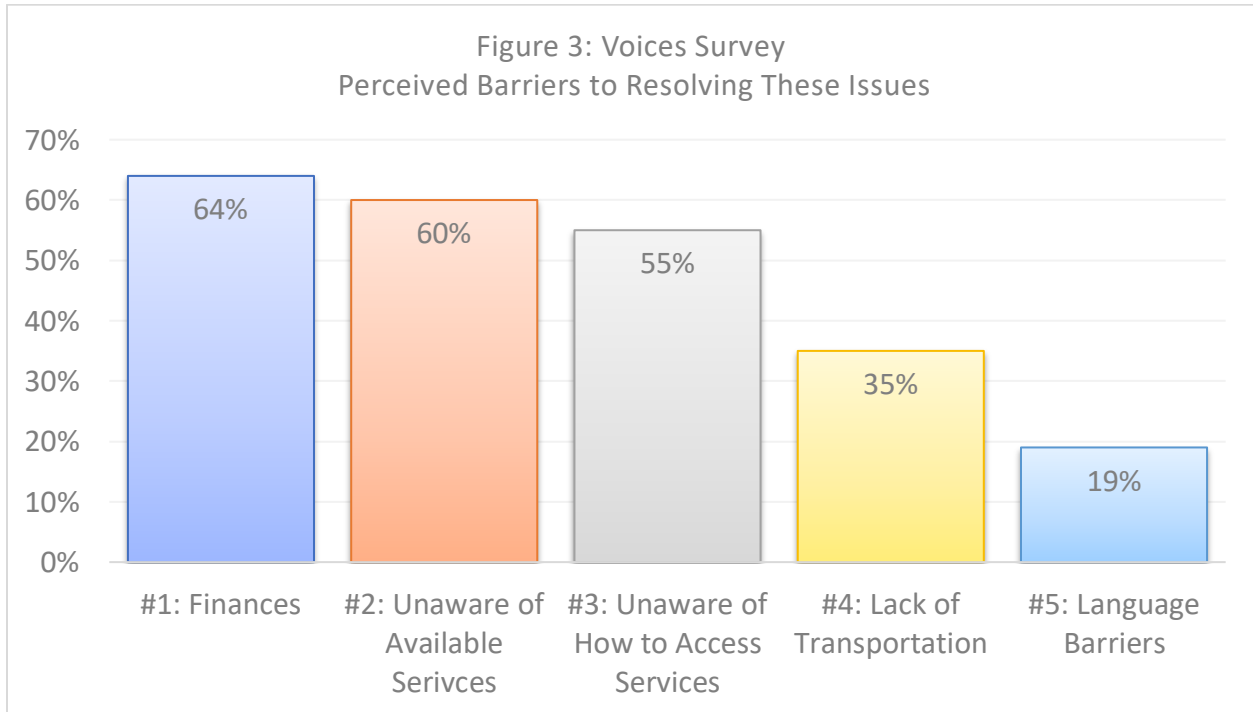
<sup>3</sup> Percentages may add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than one category



## VOICES SURVEY: TOP FIVE ISSUES IMPACTING WOMEN PERSONALLY



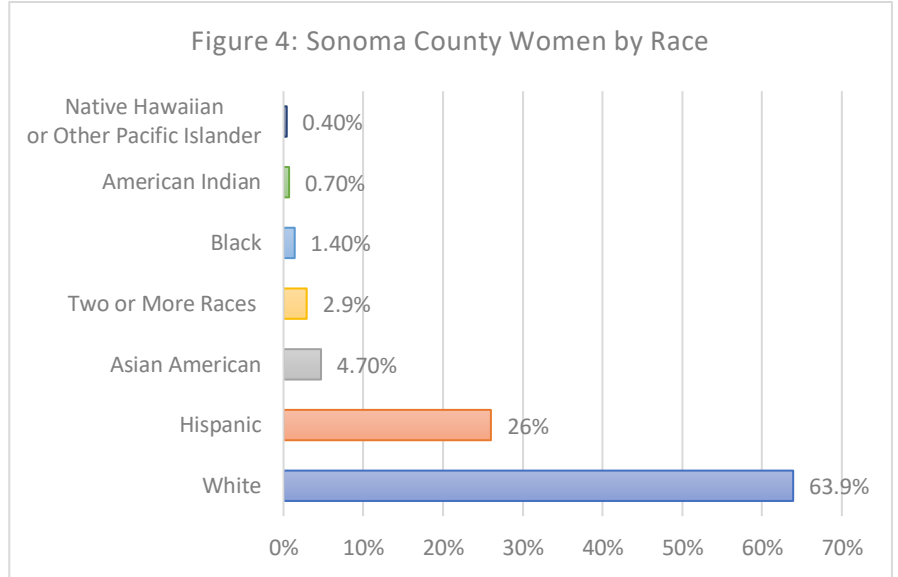
## VOICES SURVEY: BARRIERS TO RESOLVING THESE ISSUES



## DEMOGRAPHICS

### RACE/ETHNICITY

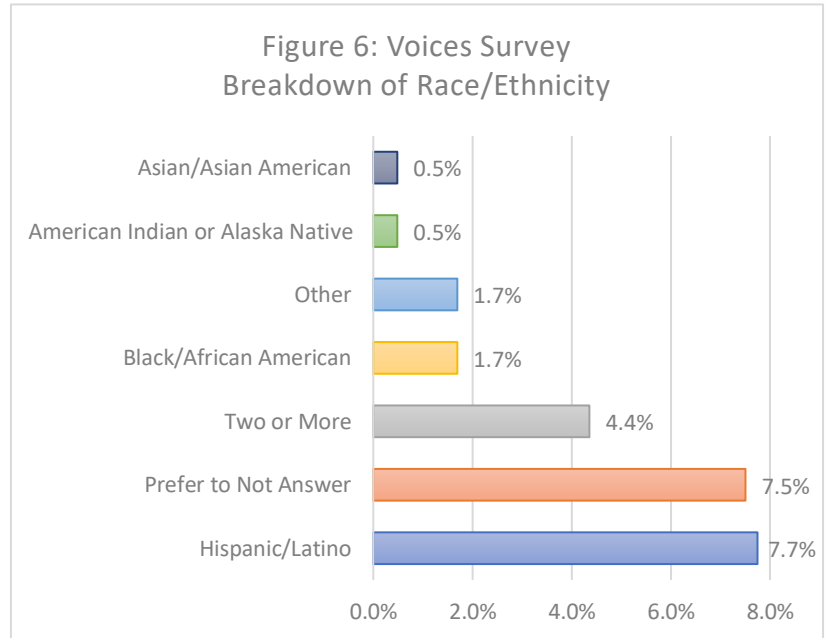
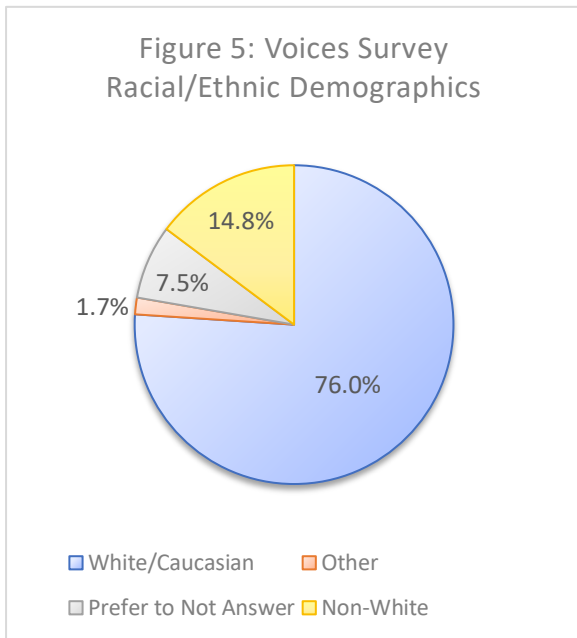
According to the United States Census Bureau, Sonoma County’s population is comprised of 253,115 (or 51%) women and girls.<sup>4</sup> While the majority (64%) of Sonoma County’s women and girls are White, thirty-six percent identify as women of color. Figure 4 provides more details about the racial and ethnic distribution of women in Sonoma County.



Source: U.S. Census County Population by Characteristics: 2010-2019

The racial/ethnic composition of the *Voices*

*Survey* respondents is outlined in Figure 5. The Figures below demonstrate that the *Voices of Sonoma County Women* survey population is overwhelmingly White. As the overrepresentation of White women in our sample dominates any data visualization, Figure 5 consolidates our non-White participants into one category. We then provide additional details about the distribution of women of color participants in Figure 6.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Source: County Population by Characteristics: 2010-2019

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-counties-detail.html>

<sup>5</sup> *Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander* was offered on the *Voices* Survey. However, this category was not selected by our participants. Therefore, we have excluded this category from the Race/Ethnicity analysis.

## TOP THREE PERSONAL ISSUES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Table 1 displays the Top Three Personal Issues identified by women in the Voices Survey, organized by Race/Ethnicity. These findings are distinguished from Figure 2, where we identified the top personal issues faced by women in Sonoma County at the group level. By breaking apart the data in this way, we can see that race and ethnicity play a role in determining the barriers that women face in their daily lives. For example, the top issue for women in Sonoma County overall is lack of affordable, accessible healthcare, while the top issue for women who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native is Domestic and /or Intimate Partner Violence. Similarly, lack of low-income housing is the number one issue facing Black and Hispanic women, while White women and women of two or more race said that healthcare was their most pressing concern.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1: Voices Survey Participants  
Top Three Personal Issues by Race/Ethnicity**

Race/Ethnicity	1	2	3
American Indian or Alaska Native <sup>7</sup>	Domestic and / or Intimate Partner Violence	Low-Income Housing	Substance Abuse and Addiction
Asian/Asian American <sup>8</sup>	Number of Women in Leadership Positions	-	-
Black/African American <sup>9</sup>	Low-Income Housing	Transportation	Public Safety
Hispanic/Latino	Low-Income Housing	Access to Quality, Affordable Childcare	Workplace Challenges
White/Caucasian	Healthcare	Retirement Insecurities	Low-Income Housing
Two or More	Healthcare	Low-Income Housing	Substance Abuse / Poverty

### In Their Own Words...

*“Justice for African American women in the local legal system [is a concern] ... The number of women in leadership positions is totally irrelevant if these women do not serve the interests of women as individual citizens with human rights.”*

### In Their Own Words...

*“[We need] Native American social service programs for support around suicide, pregnancy, drug addiction, and gangs.”*

<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Census collects race and ethnicity data inclusively, letting respondents choose a race in addition to being Hispanic or non-Hispanic. The Voices of Sonoma County Survey had mutually exclusive categories for race that included Hispanic. The U.S. Census race/ethnicity data displayed in this report includes the percent of the population that identified as each race while also identifying as non-Hispanic and the percent of the population that identified as Hispanic of any race.

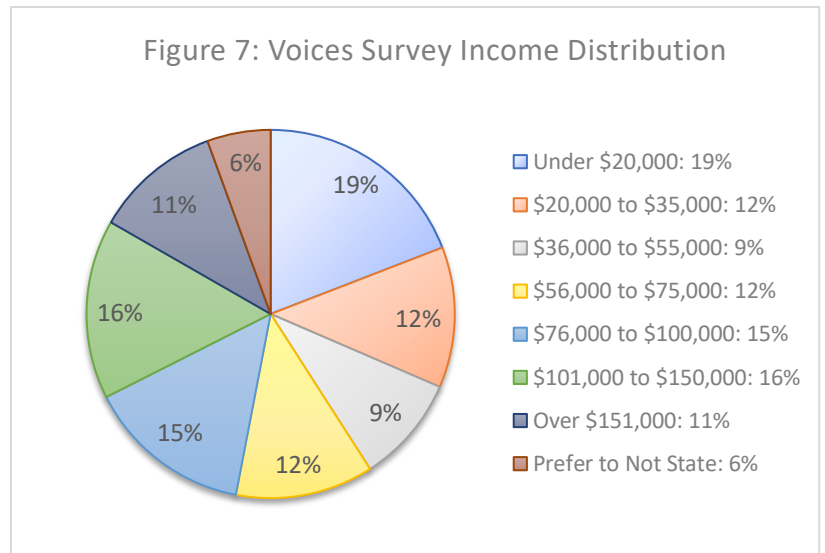
<sup>7</sup> All three responses were tied for first place within this racial category.

<sup>8</sup> Due to the low number of Asian/Asian American participants in our survey, only one personal issue was identified in the data.

<sup>9</sup> Public Safety, Retirement insecurities, Sexual Harassment and Assault, Unemployment, Hunger/Food Insecurity, Healthcare, and Poverty tied for third place within this racial category.

## INCOME

Figure 7 displays the income distribution of Voices Survey participants.<sup>10</sup> Women earning less than \$20,000 per year make up the largest portion of our Survey population (19%), followed by women making between \$76,000 and \$100,000 (15%) and between \$101,000 and \$150,000 (16%).



## TOP THREE PERSONAL ISSUES BY INCOME

Table 2 displays the top three personal issues among Voices Survey Participants organized by income bracket. For women earning less than \$35,000 per year, low-income housing is the most pressing issue they face, while women in the \$36,000 to \$55,000 income bracket are most concerned about healthcare. As we move into the higher income brackets, the number one issue concerning women in Sonoma County shifts away from housing and healthcare concerns. Women making between \$56,000 and \$75,000 worry about their retirement, as do women with an annual income between \$101,000 and \$150,000.

**Table 2: Voices Survey Participants Top Three Personal Issues by Income**

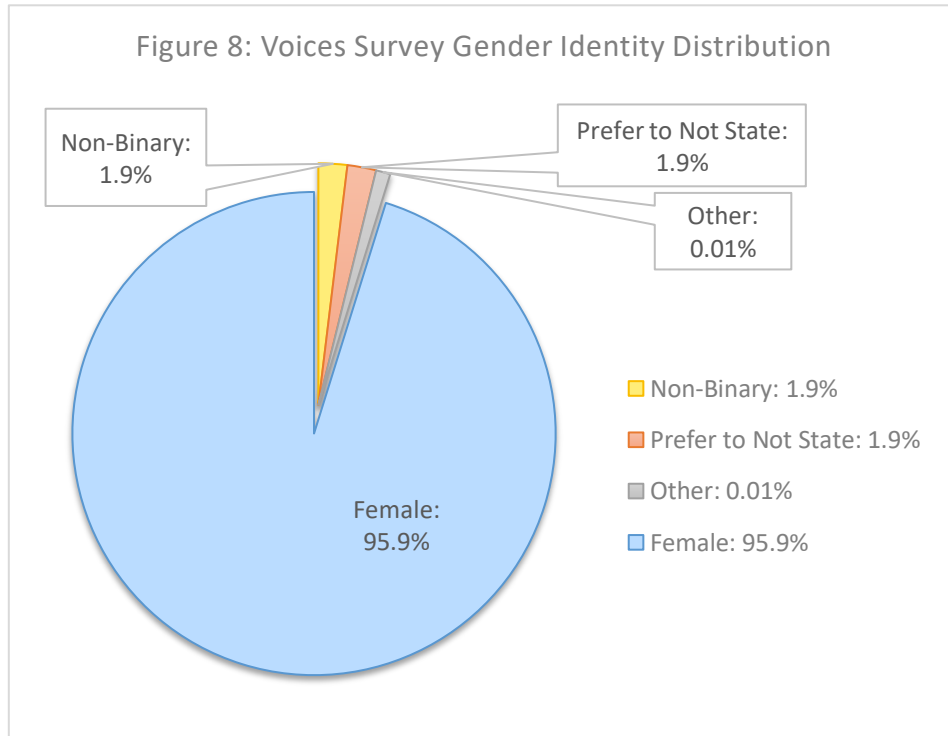
Income	1	2	3
Under \$20k	Low-Income Housing	Poverty	Substance Abuse and Addiction
\$20k - \$35k	Low-Income Housing	Healthcare	Retirement Insecurities
\$36k - \$55k	Healthcare	Low-Income Housing	Mental Health
\$56k - \$75k	Retirement Insecurities	Healthcare	Low-Income Housing <sup>11</sup>
\$76k - \$100k	Number of Women in Leadership Positions	Retirement Insecurities	Healthcare
\$101k - \$150k	Retirement Insecurities	Caring for Aging Parents	Number of Women in Leadership Positions
Over \$151,000	Caring for Aging Parents	Number of Women in Leadership Positions	Healthcare

<sup>10</sup> Income data for women in Sonoma County could not be located for comparison.

<sup>11</sup> Low-Income Housing, Number of Women in Leadership Positions, and Workplace Challenges were tied for third place in this income bracket.

## GENDER IDENTITY

Figure 8 displays the gender identity distribution for our Voices Survey population.<sup>12</sup> The overwhelming majority of participants identify as female, though a small sample of non-binary individuals also responded.



## TOP THREE PERSONAL ISSUES BY GENDER IDENTITY

Table 3 describes the top three personal issues identified in our survey by gender identity. Concerns about low-income housing, healthcare, and retirement insecurities dominate among female-identified respondents in our survey. Among those in our non-binary population, access to mental health services is a primary concern, followed by caring for aging parents and healthcare.

Table 3: Voices Survey Participants Top Three Personal Issues by Gender Identity			
Gender Identity	1	2	3
Female	Low-Income Housing	Healthcare	Retirement Insecurities
Non-Binary <sup>13</sup>	Mental Health	Caring for Aging Parents	Healthcare / Retirement Insecurities

<sup>12</sup> *Transgender* and *Agender* were options offered on the Voices Survey. However, these categories were not selected by our participants, and therefore we have excluded them from the Gender Identity analysis.

<sup>13</sup> Caring for Aging Parents, Healthcare, and Retirement Insecurities tied for second place within this social category.

**In Their Own Words...**

*“We have lost our obstetrics, gynecology, and birthing services at Sonoma Valley Hospital. We were promised that emergency physicians would be trained in the skills necessary to safely attend pregnant women and their babies. I have not heard or seen anything to this effect. Also, the fact that we have a teen parenting program at the high school is not advertised widely enough to reach those in need of this service.”*

**In Their Own Words...**

*“Women are expected to “do it all”. Caregiver, provider, holder of emotions, etc. Often, we have little support and are expected to be “super human”. If we are unable to do it all, we feel inadequate, which is perpetuated by our culture.”*

**In Their Own Words...**

*“I spent half my life in [another country], and back here now I have encountered the worst and most overt sexism of my life in two different organizations in Sonoma County. I wasn't prepared for it, and it was psychologically brutal. The thing that floored me was the way many people just shrugged and commiserated, saying yeah, that's just how it is.”*

**In Their Own Words...**

*“Keeping our families healthy through healthy food and lifestyle options and protecting our families from toxic exposure. Women are responsible for keeping our children, partners, and aging parents healthy to avoid chronic disease, increase quality of life, and increase productivity/income potential. It is increasingly difficult to do this in Sonoma County as a result of unavoidable toxic exposure (pesticide drift, fire air quality issues) and we could use more support.”*

**In Their Own Words...**

*“I am facing challenges in running my women-owned small business. The complexity of state and federal regulations (especially related to federal funding) are hard to understand and difficult to navigate.”*

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The self-identified sexual orientation of our Voices Survey participants is outlined in Figure 9. 77% of our survey population identifies as heterosexual, while 16% selected non-heterosexual categories. As the Figures demonstrate below, the Voices Survey population is overwhelmingly heterosexual. As the overrepresentation of heterosexual women in our sample dominates our data visualization, Figure 9 consolidates our non-heterosexual participants into one category. We then provide additional details about the distribution of non-heterosexual participants in Figure 10.

### In Their Own Words...

*“Being a nonbinary/genderfluid youth of the LGBTQ+ community, I often hesitate to express my gender/gender expression and sexuality in public for fear of hate crime / general discrimination / assault for my identity.”*

Figure 9: Voices Survey Sexual Orientation Distribution

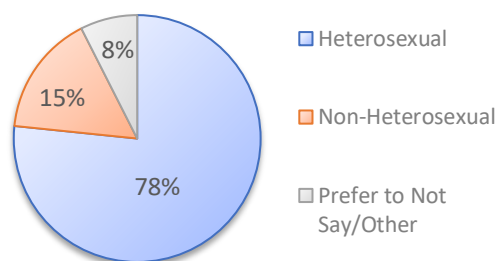
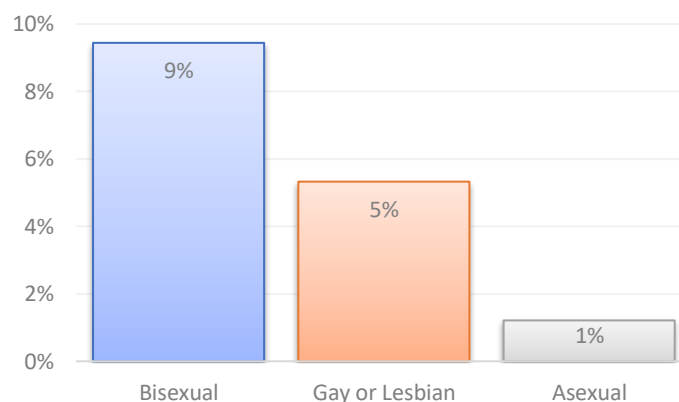


Figure 10: Voices Survey Non-Heterosexual Sexual Orientation Distribution



## TOP THREE PERSONAL ISSUES BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Table 4 displays the top three personal issues identified in our survey by sexual orientation. Collectively, low-income housing, healthcare, mental health, and retirement insecurities are the most prominent themes among these populations.

Table 4: Voices Survey Participants Top Three Personal Issues by Sexual Orientation

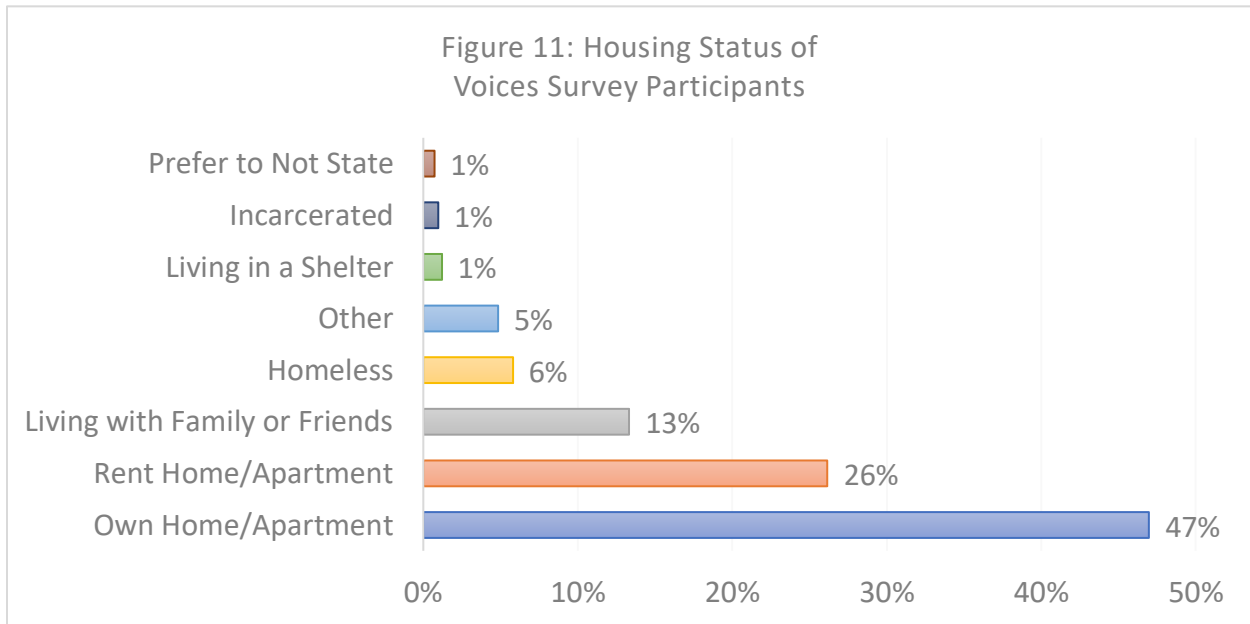
Sexual Orientation	1	2	3
Heterosexual	Low-Income Housing	Healthcare	Retirement Insecurities
Bisexual	Low-Income Housing	Healthcare	Mental Health
Gay or Lesbian <sup>14</sup>	Retirement Insecurities	Number of Women in Leadership Positions	Healthcare / Mental Health
Asexual <sup>15</sup>	Caring for Aging Parents	Healthcare / Mental Health	Retirement Insecurities / Sexual Harassment

<sup>14</sup> Healthcare and Mental Health are tied for third within this social category

<sup>15</sup> Healthcare, Mental Health, Retirement Insecurities, Sexual Harassment, and Number of Women in Leadership Positions all tied for the second most important personal issue faced by Asexual women.

## HOUSING STATUS

We asked respondents to categorize their housing status. A small proportion of women from our survey are incarcerated, living in a shelter, or homeless. A slightly larger percentage of participants are living with family or friends, though it is not clear from our data whether women that selected this category are living in this way by choice or by necessity. In other words, it is possible that a portion of women selecting this option might also be experiencing homelessness but have a support network in place to help shelter them.



### In Their Own Words...

*“Lack of housing for homeless women [is a personal concern]”*

### In Their Own Words...

*“[We need] moderate priced housing. I am not able to sell my home of 25 years and downsize to a smaller house and smaller mortgage. I cannot retire here.”*

### In Their Own Words...

*“Seniors on fixed incomes struggling with rent increases that far exceed cost of living increases to income.”*

### In Their Own Words...

*“Not necessarily low-income housing, but reasonably priced housing [is a concern]. And, the fear of how our grown children will ever afford to move out and live on their own.”*

### In Their Own Words...

*“Housing in general [is a concern] - rent in this area for a 1-bedroom apartment is above \$2,000, but you must make 3x income in almost every city [in the County].”*



## TOP THREE PERSONAL ISSUES BY HOUSING STATUS

Table 5 displays the top three personal issues among Voices Survey participants organized by housing status. For many women, regardless of housing status, low-income housing is a pressing concern. Interestingly, retirement insecurities and caring for aging parents only appear among women that own their home or apartment. Poverty, substance abuse and addiction, domestic and intimate partner violence, and unemployment do not appear among women who are renting or who own the home they currently live in. Additionally, several personal issues tied for our top three among women living with family or friends, living in a shelter, homeless, or incarcerated. This suggests that there are more issues that carry weight for women in these types of living arrangements, relative to women who own or rent in Sonoma County.

**Table 5: Voices Survey Participants  
Top Three Personal Issues by Housing Status**

Housing Status	1	2	3
Own Home / Apartment	Retirement Insecurities	Healthcare	Caring for Aging Parents
Rent Home / Apartment	Low-Income Housing	Healthcare	Mental Health
Living with Family or Friends <sup>16</sup>	Low-Income Housing	Healthcare	Substance Abuse and Addiction / Unemployment
Living in a Shelter <sup>17</sup>	Poverty / Mental Health / Public Safety	Low-Income Housing / Divorce and its Impacts	Domestic and /or Intimate Partner Violence
Homeless	Low-Income Housing	Poverty	Substance Abuse and Addiction
Incarcerated <sup>18</sup>	Low-Income Housing / Unemployment	Substance Abuse and Addiction / Poverty	Legal Services / Healthcare / Women's Health Svcs

### In Their Own Words...

*"Discrimination in housing made me lose my home; skyrocketing home prices make it difficult to purchase my first home. The changes in local communities make it challenging to decide to stay in my hometown or leave, like many others. We shouldn't have to move away from our hometown to be able to live safely and happily."*

### In Their Own Words...

*"Being able to afford living in Sonoma [County], prices are high, taxes are high, gas is high. It is hard to... live in this county with the amount of money I make."*

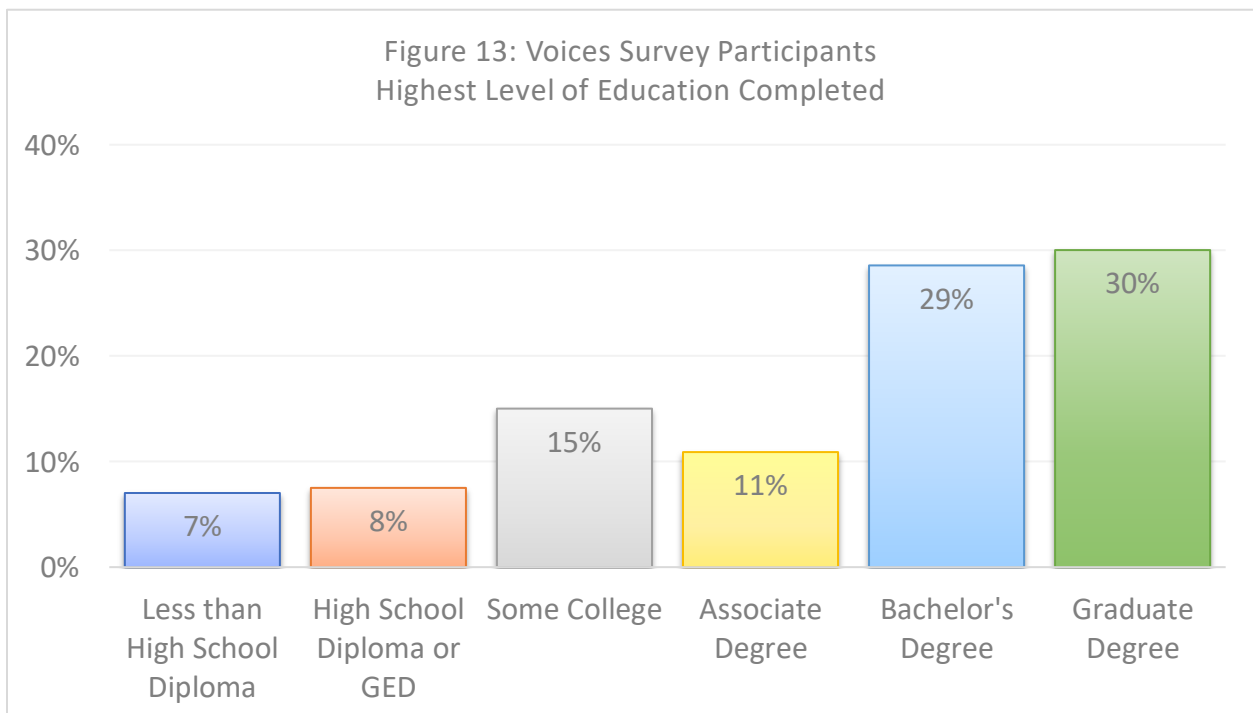
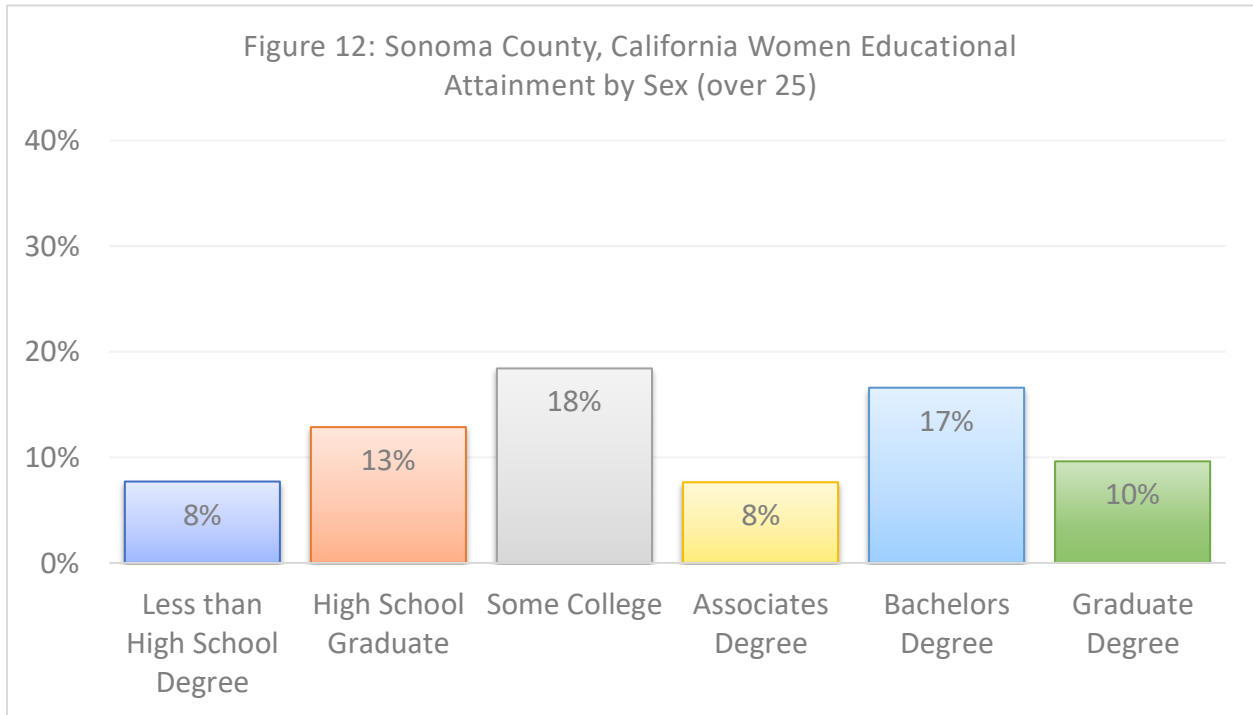
<sup>16</sup> Substance Abuse and Addiction and Unemployment tied for third place in this category.

<sup>17</sup> Divorce and its Impacts, Domestic and /or Intimate Partner Violence, Low-Income Housing, Mental Health, Public Safety, Substance Abuse and Addiction, and Transportation tied for second place in this category.

<sup>18</sup> Healthcare, Legal Services, Low-Income Housing, Poverty, Substance Abuse and Addiction, Unemployment, and Women's Health Services tied for first place in this category.

## EDUCATION

Sonoma County is home to 253,115 women and girls. Figure 12 shows the educational attainment of women in Sonoma County over the age of 25, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Figure 13 shows the highest level of education completed by Voices Survey Participants. A visual comparison between these two Figures shows that women with college degrees are overrepresented in our data, relative to women 25 and over in Sonoma County.



## TOP THREE PERSONAL ISSUES BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

When we examine the personal issues identified by educational attainment in Table 6, it is clear that the top issues identified by women without college degrees varies in comparison to women with college degrees.

<b>Table 6: Voices Survey Participants Top Three Personal Issues by Highest Level of Education Completed</b>			
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Less than High School Diploma <sup>19</sup>	Low-Income Housing	Poverty	Domestic / Intimate Partner Violence
High School Diploma or GED	Low-Income Housing	Substance Abuse and Addiction	Healthcare / Poverty
Some College	Low-Income Housing	Mental Health	Healthcare / Substance Abuse and Addiction
Associate Degree	Healthcare	Low-Income Housing	Retirement Insecurities
Bachelor's Degree <sup>20</sup>	Retirement Insecurities	Healthcare	Caring for Aging Parents
Advanced Degree <sup>21</sup>	Retirement Insecurities	Number of Women in Leadership Positions	Healthcare

<sup>19</sup> Domestic and/or Intimate Partner Violence, Hunger/Food Insecurity, Substance Abuse and Addiction, and Transportation tied for third within this social category

<sup>20</sup> Caring for Aging Parents, Mental Health, and Number of Women in Leadership Positions tied for third place within this social category

<sup>21</sup> Master's, J.D., Ph.D., etc.

## **LISTENING SESSIONS**

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### **County Jail, Unit A Listening Session, March 6, 2019, 3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

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A total of eighty-six incarcerated women participated in the Women's Jail Listening Sessions. These Listening Sessions were broken into two separate Sessions and participation was voluntary. Staff at the Women's Jail were impressed with our rate of turnout. The Listening Session in Unit A was attended by fifty-six incarcerated women and three staff members. Unit A is a lower security facility than Unit B, and women housed here are afforded many more activities and privileges.

## **TOP THREE ISSUES IMPACTING INCARCERATED WOMEN IN UNIT A AND THEIR COMMUNITY**

### **1. Re-Entry Services and Access to Resources**

- The most talked about concern from both groups centered around re-entry into the community. The women seemed unaware of support services available to them, but of those services they are aware of, they expressed no confidence that the services were adequate to meet their needs. Women said that the support agencies don't respond to calls or voicemails, which severely limits their ability to get assistance. Service agencies should do what they say they are going to do, rather than just take the money and do nothing.
- The incarcerated women want to be able to access the resources without jumping through too many hoops and without being disqualified because of their criminal history. The women also discussed domestic violence services, addiction and suicide services, mental health services, vision care, and dental services as supports that could help them be successful when they are released from jail.
- The lack of re-entry services was linked to recidivism. One woman said that she had been in and out of jail for over 25 years because there just isn't enough support to keep somebody from coming back in.
- **Solutions to Re-Entry Services:**
  - Classes and support should be provided to the women while they are incarcerated to help them succeed once they are released
  - There could be a resource center housed on the campus of the jail that women could utilize
  - Formerly incarcerated women could serve as mentors or sponsors to women in the jail
  - Monthly meetings with resource organizations could be held for women in the jail
  - Incarcerated women should have access to healthcare services
  - Women's empowerment groups could come into the jail to offer support and encouragement
  - Women need support in obtaining ID cards. Without an ID card, you cannot access any support services

## **2. Homelessness and Lack of Affordable Housing**

- Many women brought up the issue of housing as one of their biggest concerns. Some mentioned the difficulty of getting or maintaining subsidy vouchers; another mentioned lack of support for renters; and another mentioned lack of shelter space especially for women with children.
- Some women feel that there are too many guidelines to qualify for services like housing. If you have a felony on your record for smoking pot seven years ago, you cannot qualify for housing assistance.

## **3. Job Opportunities and Professional Development/Support**

- More volunteer labor crew opportunities should be available while women are incarcerated
- In addition, services are lacking to help women obtain professional clothing to help support their career opportunities when they are released
- Jobs are also difficult to get with felonies on your record. The opportunities are limited, even if you have business skills and accreditations. When you have a felony on your record, you can't get hired.

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### **County Jail, Unit B Listening Session, March 6, 2019, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

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A total of eighty-six incarcerated women participated in the Women's Jail Listening Sessions. These Listening Sessions were broken into two separate Sessions and participation was voluntary. Staff at the Women's Jail were impressed with our rate of turnout. The Listening Session in Unit B was attended by thirty incarcerated women. Unit B is higher security facility than Unit A, and there is a higher incidence of mental illness among the women housed here. The concerns voiced in this second Listening Session echoed those from the first - many women from Unit B cited similar challenges to the ones discussed within Unit A.

## **TOP FIVE ISSUES IMPACTING INCARCERATED WOMEN IN UNIT B AND THEIR COMMUNITY**

### **1. Re-Entry Services and Access to Resources**

- The most talked about concern from Unit B was also centered around re-entry into the community. The women said that they need more knowledge about the resources available to them prior to their re-entry into the community.
- **Solutions to Re-Entry Services and Access to Resources:**
  - Sober Living Environment (SLE) information and drug rehabilitation services
  - Second Chance Program through the Santa Rosa Junior College<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Second Chance is both a student club and a Student Services Program that provides support and resources for formerly incarcerated students. Formerly incarcerated students taking any number of credit units or who are in SRJC's GED or non-credit programs or classes qualify for this program. More information can be found here: <https://student-services.santarosa.edu/second-chance>

- Self-Esteem classes presented by Verity<sup>23</sup>
- There could be a resource center housed on the campus of the jail that women could utilize, a “One Stop Shop” of sorts
- Incarcerated women need advocacy and support. Many women mentioned that they need the support of counselors that are not beholden to the Detention Facility. They also may need this support for the rest of their lives, because many women in the Detention Facility do not have any other kinds of support (e.g., from family)

## **2. Homelessness and Lack of Affordable Housing**

- As was discussed in the Unit A group, homelessness is a major concern for incarcerated women in Unit B. Homelessness has been exacerbated by recent natural disasters, such as fires and flooding. In addition, there are only two shelters in Sonoma County for women.
- **Solutions to Homelessness and Lack of Affordable Housing**
  - Extended disaster relief. One woman lost her home in the fires. She then moved to Guerneville and lost her home in the flood. She rents and support for renters has run out
  - Increase number of homeless shelters for women overall
  - Create a large facility with a large number of beds that can house hundreds of people
  - Decrease restrictions on existing shelters that do not take women and children

## **3. Job Opportunities and Professional Development/Support**

- Women feel that they experience employment discrimination when employers know their history in the criminal justice system.

## **4. Childcare and Child Welfare**

- Concern for their children was another prominent theme. Participants said they lacked affordable childcare and after school programs. Several expressed concern about navigating the CPS system. Participants said they want their children to grow up in safe and loving environments.
- Women expressed that housing and childcare are critical barriers to success in all areas of their lives. Without secure housing and a safe environment for their children, the women feel they cannot obtain employment or get an education. Without solutions to these two issues, they are less likely to access other resources and services and are therefore less likely to succeed outside the criminal justice system.
- **Solutions to Childcare and Child Welfare:**
  - After-school programs for children
  - County and state communication regarding parenting
  - Parental rights training and advocacy support when dealing with CPS and the court system

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<sup>23</sup> Information on Verity’s sexual assault support groups can be found here: <https://www.ourverity.org/support-groups/>

- Parenting classes for incarcerated women

## **5. Having a Voice in the Community / Representation**

- The women in Unit B of the detention facility also expressed concern about having a voice in the community. They want and need to be heard so that they can get their message to the community. Some expressed that their voices are not counted because of their history with the criminal justice system, their drug history, or their homelessness.
- **Solutions to Having a Voice in the Community / Representation:**
  - Encourage women to attend county meetings to voice their concerns upon re-entry
  - Assign an advocate/representative for incarcerated women to attend county meetings on their behalf.
  - Address discrimination against formerly or currently incarcerated women so that their voices can be heard and are counted

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### **Petaluma Listening Session, March 14, 2019, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

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Our first public Listening Session was held at the Petaluma Women’s Club, immediately following our monthly Commission meeting. The Petaluma Listening Session was attended by a small, but vocal, group of nine local community members. Many concerns, both personal and community based, were discussed during the Session. Not many solutions were offered, largely due to time constraints. We learned from this session to be more mindful of how much time to allow for conversing about the problems versus time to brainstorm solutions.

## **TOP 5 ISSUES IMPACTING PETALUMA WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITY**

### **1. High Cost of Living**

- **Solutions to the High Cost of Living:**
- Government leadership could prioritize and show support for increasing wages for jobs, such as pre-school teachers

### **2. Affordable Childcare**

### **3. Stigma for Receiving Mental Health Support**

### **4. Affordable Counseling**

### **5. Community Centers**

- The community needs a place where people can connect with others and learn to rely on each other
- The community needs a place where people can discuss issues and take them to the city council
- Create more community focal points like Andy’s Park in Santa Rosa
- Zoning/land use to create more places for the community to come together

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**Roseland Listening Session, May 15, 2019, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

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The Roseland Listening Session was attended by five community members and five Commissioners. Though the turnout was small, this was a very diverse and powerful group of attendees. Two women were strictly Spanish speaking and their comments were translated by one of our Commissioners. During this Listening Session, it was clear that these women have given much thought about what is needed in their community.

**TOP SIX ISSUES IMPACTING ROSELAND WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITY****1. Lack of Resources Overall and Lack of Awareness of Resources Already Available**

- Resources are needed for issues such as the following:
  - Sexual assault/domestic violence
  - Employment
  - Divorce
  - Aging
  - Being a single parent
- **Solutions to the Lack of Resources Overall and Lack of Awareness of Resources Already Available**
- A directory of resources for women could be compiled. This directory would need to be available in multiple formats (e.g., video, print, digital) and in multiple languages. This is critical because many of the women in the area are not literate or speak languages other than English and Spanish. A physical copy of this directory could be housed in the library, as it is a central location in the community. This placement would allow it to be utilized by the county government as well.

**2. Lack of Job Opportunities**

- Women in the community, especially Hispanic women, need opportunities for jobs beyond the lowest paying positions. They need better workplaces, ones that offer benefits. It is hard for families to cover expenses even with two people working. Some men don't want women to work. Many are either not qualified for the current trainings/education that are offered or they are too scared to take them. Women want to come together with their ideas for a business but do not have access to small loans to start the businesses. People in the community have abilities and ideas, just not the opportunities to use them.
- **Solutions to Lack of Job Opportunities:**
  - Women need opportunities for training that will lead to higher paying jobs
  - Funding is needed to start in-home and other types of businesses

**3. Lack of Latinas in Leadership**

- More Latina representation is needed in leadership, especially with respect to government/elected positions. Spanish-speaking women need more opportunities to engage in civic opportunities. This is especially difficult since women are the primary caretakers of their families and the elderly, leaving very little time to do so.



- **Solutions to the Lack of Latinas in Leadership**
  - There is a need to both encourage and support Latinas to run for public office. This may include training in how to run a campaign and also support for her family.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. Mental Health Support Services

- Many women become depressed because they have to stay at home, often living with other families. Their problems pile up when they don't get out or talk to other people. Women are the center or "brain" of the family and can't focus on other things including themselves.
- **Solutions to Mental Health Support Services:**
  - Women need general health classes and mental health classes
  - Women need opportunities to grow personally and realize that language is not a barrier

#### 5. Opportunities for Children

- More opportunities are needed for children, especially teens. Teens run through the neighborhoods with nothing to do. Kids are so focused on their phones or screens that they are not even aware of their own surroundings. Women are worried about the next generation especially when it comes to taking care of the current generation. Children as young as 5<sup>th</sup> graders are vaping and smoking marijuana.
- **Solutions to Opportunities for Children:**
  - Women need parenting classes to learn more ways to deal with their children.
  - Youth need mentors (especially those with substance abuse issues)
  - More childcare subsidies are needed for quality childcare

#### 6. Communication Barriers

- Women in the community have a difficult time asking for help. They need support groups for women as well as classes on health, parenting, jobs, how to start a business. These classes need to be offered at multiple times.
- **Solutions to Communication Barriers:**
  - The best ways to communicate with the women about classes, events, and opportunities include through schools, social media, door-to-door, flyers at places like the laundromat, and asking different organizations to send representatives to events
  - Some churches offer resources and services. The churches themselves and the coalition of churches could be used to communicate about resources.

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<sup>24</sup> Many organizations currently offer free online campaign training courses, such as [EMILY's List](#) and [She Should Run](#).

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**Cloverdale, September 25, 2019 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

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The Cloverdale Listening Session was attended by five community members and five Commissioners. Though the turnout was small, the attendees were very passionate and communicative. The Cloverdale Session attendees included the Mayor of Cloverdale, a City Council Woman, and three engaged community activists.

## **TOP FIVE ISSUES IMPACTING CLOVERDALE WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITY**

### **1. Pay Discrimination/Lack of a Living Wage**

- Local employers are not willing to pay a living wage. Younger residents feel the older business owners are discriminatory in that they do not value their contributions enough to provide a living wage. Community members are forced to work multiple jobs or to commute to other cities, like Santa Rosa. Community members reported experiencing backlash from employers when suggesting that changes be made.
- **Solutions to Pay Discrimination/Lack of a Living Wage:**
  - Sensitivity training, cultural training, and inviting successful businesspeople from other communities to participate in local meetings. The focus here would be to open the eyes of business owners to the needs of the community, especially young people and people of color, to show them a model of what is working in other communities, and how they can benefit as a city by updating their practices.

### **2. Lack of Economic Opportunities**

- The Cloverdale community has many absentee landlords, meaning a person that owns and rents out a property, but doesn't live within the property's local economic region. This aspect of the community leaves empty commercial buildings and a shortage of available rental space for new businesses. This impacts job availability and is an eyesore to have so many 'abandoned' buildings. The area has not evolved from lumber/farming to a service economy.
- The lack of economic opportunities within the Cloverdale community has a negative environmental impact. Many people need to commute to jobs and services outside of the city, and the use of single passenger cars has a huge, negative environmental impact.
- **Solutions to Lack of Economic Opportunities:**
  - Changing tax laws on commercial properties so they are not allowed to sit empty for years at a time
  - Bringing in business mentors for women
  - Finding creative ways to attract new businesses and increase tourism
  - Expand the Smart Train system to include Cloverdale; this could increase community access to jobs and services outside of Cloverdale while reducing the negative environmental impact of single passenger cars<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> A Cloverdale station is currently planned but funding to complete the station is not currently available.  
<https://www.sonomarintrain.org/stations>

### 3. Financial Insecurity/Low Wages

- Community members need help finding and navigating the resources that are available to them. Many people have mobility and/or transportation issues. This area heavily impacts the elderly. People cannot live on social security. Elder abuse, lack of available Medi-Cal beds and lack of support for caregivers are issues.
- **Solutions to Financial Insecurity/Low Wages:**
  - A better understanding of financial positions and income levels
  - Eliminating the idea of dependability within families
  - Financial literacy programs; access to network of estate planning

### 4. Racial Profiling

- Attendees reported that prejudice against non-White community members was a problem in Cloverdale. They felt that attitudes within the police department and schools towards non-White community members are intimidating and unwelcoming. In addition, people with life experiences outside the norm of White Cloverdale residents are not valued.
- **Solutions to Racial Profiling:**
  - Cultural sensitivity training for law enforcement.
  - More exposure to and inclusion of diverse populations and diversity training in general (that also includes the LGBTQIA+ community) for schools, local government, and community.

### 5. Low Availability of Women's Health Services, Reproductive Health Services, and Information

- The availability of information regarding sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy information, and services are impacted by local religious leaders and the Title X domestic gag rule. The Guttmacher Institute estimates that the domestic gag rule has reduced the Title X network's capacity to provide women with contraceptive services by 50-89% in California.<sup>26</sup>
- Transportation to Health Care services is also an issue for some
- **Solutions to Low Availability of Women's Health Services, Reproductive Health Services, and Information:**
  - Informational fairs could be offered in the community. Fairs would host health organizations and advocates who can provide information and a roadmap to additional services
  - Providing speakers at schools could also help with this issue

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2020/02/trump-administrations-domestic-gag-rule-has-slashed-title-x-networks-capacity-half>

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## **Sonoma Listening Session, December 2, 2019, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

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The Sonoma Listening Session was attended by twelve community members and four Commissioners. Though this Listening Session was better attended than the previous Sessions, the attendees were similarly vocal, passionate, and engaged. Attendees included community leaders such as health care providers as well as a former Mayor of Sonoma.

### **TOP FIVE ISSUES IMPACTING SONOMA WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITY**

#### **1. Gender Bias**

- Girls and boys are treated differently in schools and often in their homes. Women and girls have less of a voice in the community and receive less respect. There is also a lack of support at school and in the community for women and girls.
- **Solutions to Gender Bias:**
  - Offer professional development training for parents and teachers on encouraging girls to pursue STEM fields<sup>27</sup>
  - Provide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to all students
  - Prioritize addressing gender bias with measurable outcomes, utilizing LCAP funding<sup>28</sup>
  - Invite Soroptimists to offer their Empowerment Workshop locally<sup>29</sup>
  - Encourage High School girls to apply to the Junior Commission on the Status of Women and help transport them to meetings

#### **2. Substance Abuse and the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum**

- Alcohol abuse is a big issue in the Wine Country. Drinking wine and beer is highly encouraged and there seems to be a lack of awareness and understanding of the serious health issues that can arise, particularly if drinking while pregnant. There are high incidents of ADHD in the area, likely tied to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum.
- **Solutions to Substance Abuse and the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum**
  - Launch public awareness and medical awareness campaigns regarding the dangers of drinking while pregnant. Include OB clinics, Public Health and Health Fairs
  - Educate everyone that alcohol is not a benign drug
  - Work to get California to recognize Fetal Alcohol Spectrum as a disability

#### **3. Homelessness/Affordable Housing for Women and Families**

- There is a severe lack of affordable housing in Sonoma. Many live in fear of homelessness and there has been a huge increase of homelessness in this area

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<sup>27</sup> STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

<sup>28</sup> LCAP refers to Local Control and Accountability Plan, which is a plan for how California manages its school finances. More information can be found here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>

<sup>29</sup> Soroptimist International is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. More information can be found here: <https://www.soroptimist.org/>

- **Solutions to Homelessness/Affordable Housing for Women and Families**
  - Work on wealth inequality; raise minimum wage to \$15/hr (happening)
  - In addition to providing low income housing, build more medium income housing.

#### **4. Mental Health Issues**

- Participants were not aware of any mental health services offered locally. They also expressed concerns over the ability of the Police Department to manage situations that involve mental health issues
- Solutions to Mental Health Issues:
  - Fund accessible mental health services for the community.
  - Provide mandatory training within the Police Department on how to connect with someone exhibiting a mental health crisis and how to de-escalate situations

#### **5. Lack of Services in the Sonoma Valley**

- Most services are in Santa Rosa and inaccessible to many living in Sonoma Valley due to lack of transportation, family responsibilities, or health issues.
- **Solutions to the Lack of Services in the Sonoma Valley:**
  - Provide satellite services, duplicating some of what is available in Santa Rosa. These include, but are not limited to sexual assault and domestic violence support (such as Verity provides) and a domestic violence shelter (such as YWCA provides), and mental health services
  - Utilize the County buildings that are sitting empty in Sonoma for services
  - Provide a domestic violence advocate in the police department that speaks Spanish as well as English
  - Provide comprehensive sex education in schools, and encourage Positive Images or another LGBTQ organization to be a presence in schools, as well<sup>30</sup>

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#### **Santa Rosa Listening Session, January 27, 2020, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

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The Santa Rosa Listening Session was heavily promoted and received a good deal of interest on Facebook. This final Listening Session was attended by nine community members and four Commissioners. Though the group was small, participants were very vocal and expressed strong opinions about their community.

Unfortunately, this was one of only two sessions without a Spanish-English interpreter, which was an issue as half of the attendees were Spanish-only speakers. After being reprimanded for not providing an interpreter, an attendee was kind enough to provide translations for the Listening Session.

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<sup>30</sup> Positive Images is a grassroots organization whose mission is to provide support, advocacy and education to Sonoma County's LGBTQIA+ community. More information can be found here: <https://posimages.org/>

## TOP FIVE ISSUES IMPACTING SANTA ROSA WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITY

### 1. Issues Specific to Immigrant Populations

- Immigrants feel very vulnerable to low wages, wage theft and housing discrimination. When looking for assistance at City and County agencies, there is rarely anyone who speaks Spanish on site.
- **Solutions to Issues Specific to Immigrant Populations:**
  - Municipal policies to protect immigrant rights, including encouraging the District Attorney to prosecute repeat offenders of wage theft
  - Protection from housing discrimination due to lack of citizenship documentation
  - More interpreters are needed when dealing with agencies like police and other services (including Listening Sessions)
  - Immigrants are over 25% of the population; the system needs to be fixed to serve these communities
  - Propose that all city and county agencies can immediately respond to and serve non-English language speakers, especially Spanish speakers
  - Provide forms and documents in non-English languages at all agencies

### 2. Increasing Rents

- People can't afford the rising rents of current homes. There is a fear of becoming homeless. The elderly are at increased risk, due to low fixed income. Some have little or no Social Security.
- **Solutions to Increasing Rents:**
  - Long-term rent control
  - Stop corporations from buying up housing and price gouging community members
  - Increase building of affordable housing and government owned housing
  - Propose alternative housing arrangement for community members; set aside space for community building-tiny homes, shared homes
  - Regulate vacation rentals and limit the number of them in the community

### 3. Discrimination and Racism in Schools

- Some children have experienced discrimination at school by school staff. They have had to change schools and received no support from the administration. Racism impacts the mental health of families, faculty, and staff.
- **Solutions to Discrimination and Racism in Schools:**
  - Restorative Justice support
  - Formulate county-wide policies in schools to unlearn racism
  - Semi-independent oversight on issues of inequity and race
  - Educate parents of resources, including phone numbers and legal advocates
  - Find out how the "Healthy Kids Survey" is being implemented at the school level<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The California Healthy Kids Survey is A comprehensive student data collection system that addresses school climate, health risks and behaviors, and youth resiliency. More information can be found here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/at/chks.asp>.

#### 4. Job and Income Insecurity

- Immigrant families and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to job and income insecurity. Many families are single income. Many have no health care or sick pay and go without when they cannot work due to illness. Many elderly women live alone.
- **Solutions to Job and Income Insecurity:**
  - Implement a living wage appropriate to Sonoma County (at minimum \$15/hr)
  - Wage enforcement, where oversight is implemented over employers taking advantage of immigrant workers and not paying minimum wage
  - Require agriculture and tourism industries to pay their fair share of taxes
  - More trade schools should be available in the community
  - Get local representatives to support Federal program changes such as Social Security increases, student loan forgiveness, and a 10% flat income tax

#### 5. The Homeless Community

- This Session was held the week that the Joe Rodota Trail was being cleared of a massive homeless encampment. The Board of Supervisors had met on January 14, and approved emergency actions to create an immediate temporary shelter site and navigation center. Some of those homeless were relocated to a temporary shelter near Oakmont and the Juvenile Detention Facility.<sup>32</sup> Participants thought the money being spent on the issue was ineffective. This was a rather heated exchange! Some of these ideas are now being implemented!
- **Solutions to the Homeless Community:**
  - More transparency and oversight on decision making process. This information should be provided to the community
  - More attention should be paid to alternative options
  - There should be more collaboration between city and county
  - Create a pilot program with homeless working and being paid by the city
  - Implement government approved encampments and safe parking areas

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<sup>32</sup> This area is called Los Guillicos Village. More information can be found here: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Homeless-Emergency/Los-Guillicos-Village/>.



## **FUTURE VOICES RESEARCH**

On August 22, 2020, during our Strategic Planning Session, the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women voted unanimously to continue this project over the next two years. We plan to expand our outreach to communities we did not reach, update our survey to address themes that emerged from this report, and hold live or virtual Listening Sessions in Spring 2021. We will gather data until Spring of 2022 and release our findings later that same year. Using this report as a baseline to build from, our next phase of research will help establish the first longitudinal dataset on the status of women in Sonoma County.

In future iterations of the Voices project, we wish to implement the following items to ensure that all women's voices are equally represented:

1. Expand Recruitment of Women in Sonoma County
  - We believe we can increase the diversity of our demographics by:
    - Distributing surveys in Tribal Nation communities.<sup>33</sup> This suggestion emerged from our Listening Session at the women's jail.
    - Distribute information about Listening Sessions and the Survey through schools, social media, door-to-door, and posting flyers at places like the laundromat and churches. This suggestion was given during our Roseland Listening Session.
    - Partner with other organizations in the community and request their assistance in distributing our information to the communities they work with.
    - Hold future Listening Sessions via Zoom, or other virtual conferencing platform, at varying times and days. It is our hope that such an approach will increase the accessibility of such resources to a broader array of women in the county.
2. Include Additional Questions that Capture a Wider Array of Experiences
  - There is a dearth of information on the experiences of women with disabilities in the county. The Voices Project was able to collect some of this data through the open-ended comments section of our Survey. For example, a respondent told us that wheelchair accessible transport is a primary concern, especially during the evening or on holidays when paratransit does not operate. Therefore, we wish to collect additional information on this population by including questions about the experiences of these women in Sonoma County in future studies.
3. Collect District information from Participants
  - The goal of collecting District information is to situate our findings within the County localities, in order to better specify the needs of women in the County to our Board of Supervisors.
  - The 2020 Report asked respondents to identify their city and zip code, while maintaining anonymity. By anonymously collecting District number, this new aspect of our data collection will expand our ability to serve the women in Sonoma County by moving beyond city borders, while retaining relevant geographic particularities.

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<sup>33</sup> There are six Tribal Nations in Sonoma County: Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California, Dry Creek Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewart's Point Rancheria, Lower Lake Rancheria, and Lytton Band of Pomo Indians. More information can be found here: <https://www.etr.org/ccap/tribal-nations-in-california/county-list-of-tribal-nations/>.



## **DISCLAIMER**

This report is the result of a collaboration among interested parties. We make no claims as to accuracy, completeness, correctness, suitability, or validity of any information herein, though we strive to present the most precise data and analysis possible. We will not be liable for any errors or omissions, or any losses, injuries, or damages arising from its display or use.

The intent of this report is to share and amplify the voices of women in our community. Therefore, the views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the research participants and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any other agency, organization, employer or company. Any content provided herein is not intended to malign any religion, racial or ethnic group, club, organization, company, or individual.