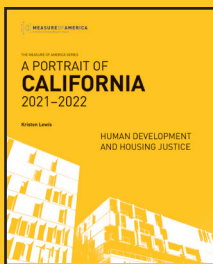
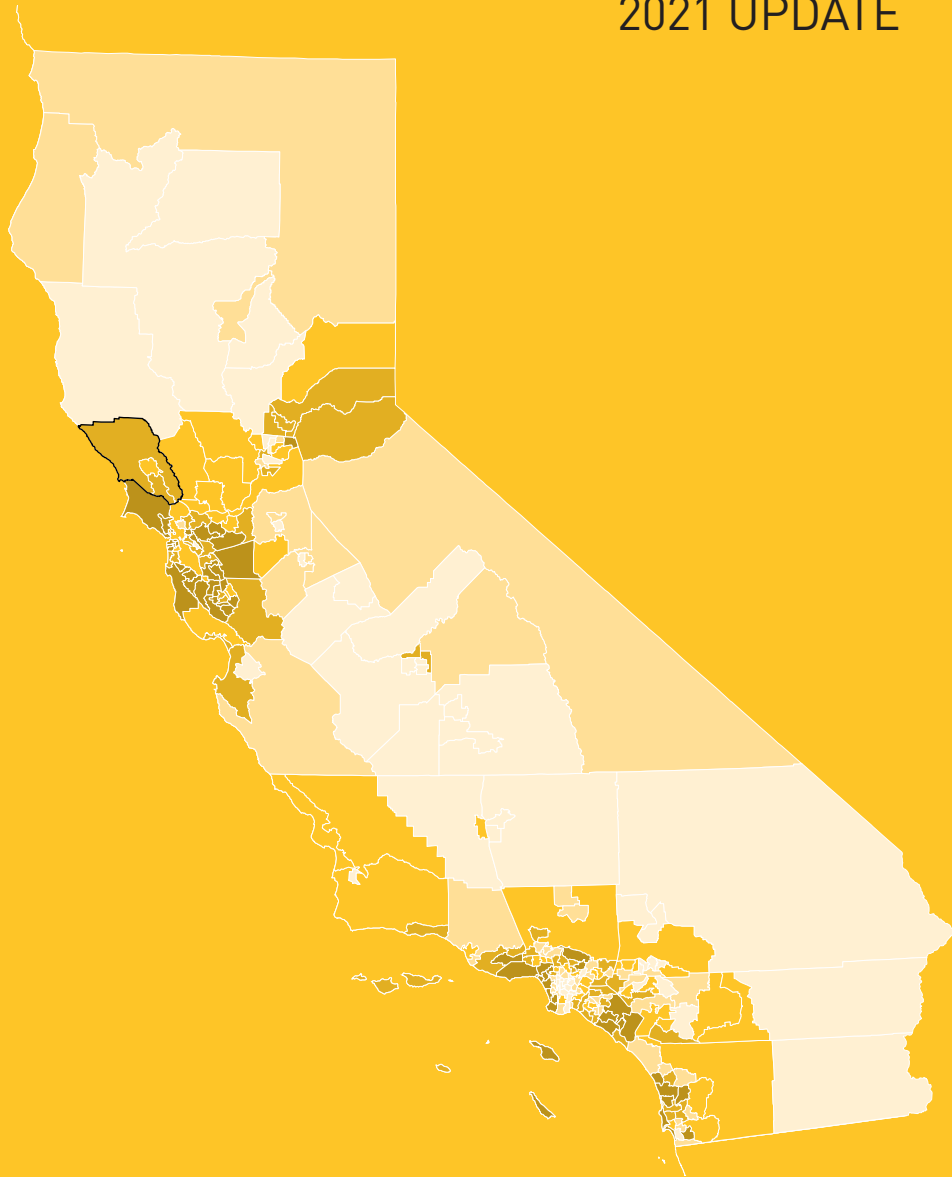


# A Portrait of Sonoma County

2021 UPDATE



REGIONAL REPORT SERIES

A PORTRAIT OF **CALIFORNIA** 2021-2022

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING JUSTICE

A Portrait of

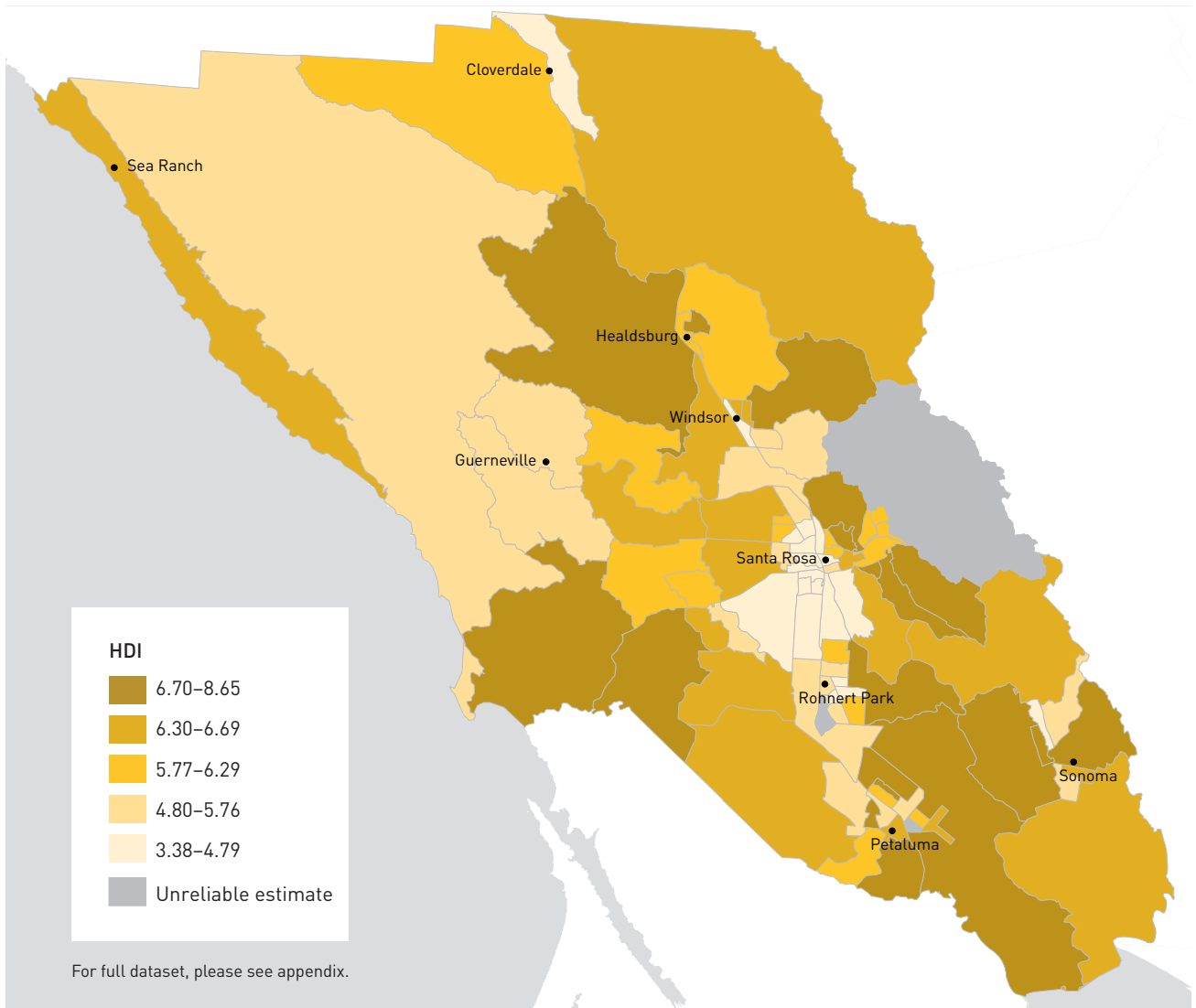
# Sonoma County

2021 UPDATE



HDI **6.19**  
Life Expectancy **82.2 years**  
Education Index **5.85**  
Median Earnings **\$40,531**

MAP 1 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX





# Acknowledgments

*A Portrait of Sonoma County: 2021 Update*, part of the **Regional Report Series** tied to *A Portrait of California 2021–2022*, was made possible thanks to our lead funders, Community Foundation Sonoma County and the Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund, as well as the valuable support from Career Technical Education Foundation, First 5 Sonoma County, Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County, John Jordan Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Petaluma Health Care District, Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation, Sonoma County Office of Education, Providence St. Joseph’s, Sutter Health, and United Way of the Wine Country.

During the course of our research, an advisory panel of eminent public servants, advocates, scholars, and nonprofit leaders from across Sonoma County contributed their expertise to guide our work with vision and care. We would like to thank them for their generous contributions and their support in making this report a reality.

Special thanks to our Social Science Research Council colleagues Anna Harvey, Ron Kassimir, Fredrik Palm, Mary Kelly, Brandi Lewis, Juni Ahari, Lisa Yanoti, Clare McGranahan, Calvin Chen, and Zachary Zinn for their support. We are grateful to Julie Burns and Daniela Guanipa for translating this *Portrait* into Spanish. Thanks as well to Bob Land for his exactlyingly careful proofreading and editing.

We could not ask for better colleagues in our design team at Humantific | UnderstandingLab, the most thoughtful partners we could imagine. Special thanks to Elizabeth Pastor, Garry VanPatter, Patricia Dranoff, and Jon Arriaga.

Lastly, the lion’s share of thanks goes to the Measure of America team: what a privilege it is to work with all of you.

Thank you!  
Kristen

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# Foreword

## *Portrait of Sonoma County: 2021 Update* Leadership Team

In 2014, *A Portrait of Sonoma County* successfully shifted our community's understanding of what determines well-being and how conditions of well-being vary across Sonoma County neighborhoods. *A Portrait of Sonoma County: 2021 Update* builds from this work, helping further illuminate issues of inequity across Sonoma County. Inequity is unjust, and addressing it is a moral imperative. The disparities that Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and immigrant and undocumented community members have and continue to experience should not continue unchecked or unremedied. Inequity harms all of us. From an economic perspective, inequity harms overall growth by decreasing per capita income and disposable income. On a human level, inequity damages health and well-being, resulting in greater levels of unhappiness across our entire community. A deeper understanding of the inequitable outcomes presented in this report will help our community turn the curve on these markers to ensure that Sonoma County is a place where a person's race or ethnicity does not determine their health, well-being, and wealth.

We will apply the findings in the *Portrait* update to create a new Agenda for Action. The agenda, a set of priority areas for investment and attention, will ensure that community leaders, organizations, and local governments focus our collective efforts on addressing those challenges that are creating the most harm in our community. Too often those closest to the problems are closest to the solutions yet furthest from resources and power. Because of this, we will develop an Agenda for Action in partnership with disproportionately impacted community members. Together we can shift resources and power to people who have solutions that will work for them and develop an Agenda for Action to drive meaningful policy and programs to unseat structural racism.

This update of *A Portrait of Sonoma County* was made possible thanks to funding from our lead funders, Community Foundation Sonoma County and the Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund, with additional support from partner funders Career Technical Education Foundation, First 5 Sonoma County, Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County, John Jordan Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Petaluma Health Care District, Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation, Sonoma County Office of Education, Providence St. Joseph's, Sutter Health, and United Way of the Wine Country. Thank you for making this investment in Sonoma County.

We will develop an Agenda for Action in partnership with disproportionately impacted community members.

Together we can shift resources and power to people who have solutions that will work for them and develop an Agenda for Action to drive meaningful policy and programs to unseat structural racism.

We want to acknowledge that developing this report was a learning opportunity. We were compelled to look deeply at how we understand well-being, how we think about social problems, how we define the very concept of progress, and how these concepts and word choices cause harm. Grappling with these issues is difficult and uncomfortable. Can we say that well-being has improved overall in the county if Black community members have lost ground? If too many of our neighbors remain traumatized by wildfires or Covid-19? Or if rising housing costs are forcing county residents out of our communities? We know that a focus on “improvements” risks hiding the very real past harms to Black, Native American, Latino, and Asian people and obscures ongoing marginalization. We also know that people living with disabilities, people who are undocumented, LGBTQ community members, and others are at risk of being left out of the story due to inadequate data. To move beyond these pitfalls, we acknowledge that there is more work to do locally to unravel harmful narratives, ensure that our shared understanding of Sonoma County’s well-being includes non-white perspectives, and redouble our efforts to improve data collection. We hope you will join us in working toward defining and building a more equitable community together as we pursue an inclusive Agenda for Action.

***Portrait of Sonoma County: 2021 Update***  
**Leadership Team**

**PORTRAIT UPDATE  
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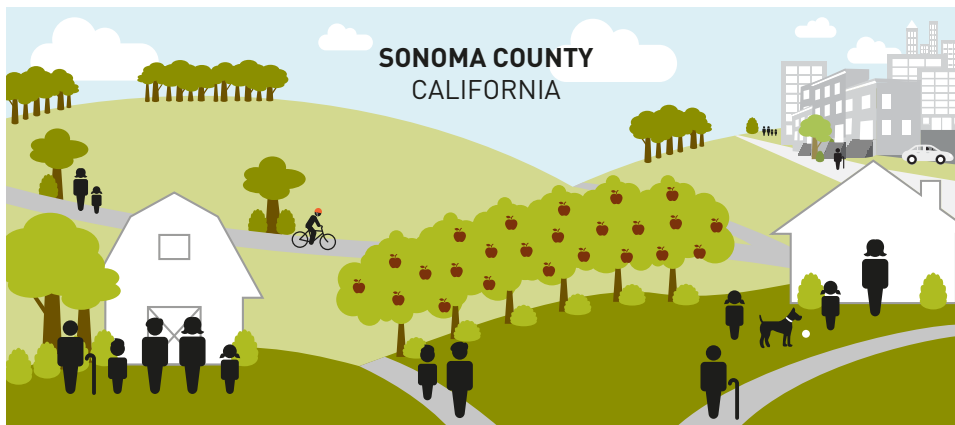
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For more information about the *Portrait of Sonoma County*, please

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# Introduction

In 2014, the Sonoma County Department of Health Services commissioned Measure of America to prepare a report on well-being and access to opportunity, *A Portrait of Sonoma County*. It was intended to provide a holistic framework for understanding and addressing the complex issues the county faced and inform the work of the department's Health Action initiative. Representatives of over fifty organizations contributed to the report's preparation and dissemination, and groups countywide used it for strategic planning, program development, fundraising, and communicating with partners and the community. Over sixty organizations and elected officials committed to using *A Portrait of Sonoma County* in their programming and grantmaking.

This report is an update to *A Portrait of Sonoma County*. It paints a picture of well-being and access to opportunity in Sonoma County today, identifies areas of positive change, and draws attention to both new and persistent challenges. Like the 2014 report, this edition was guided by an advisory group of Sonoma County organizations and individuals. It is part of a larger project, *A Portrait of California 2021–2022*, which explores well-being in the state as a whole, with a special focus on housing.

Today we are living in a world most of us would have been hard-pressed to imagine when *A Portrait of Sonoma County* launched seven years ago. The October 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires, which took the lives of twenty-four community members and consumed more than 5,300 homes, traumatized people across the county.<sup>1</sup> In February 2019, floods swept through the county, causing over \$150 million in damage to homes and infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> At the end of October 2019, the Kincadee Fire forced the evacuation of nearly 200,000 residents, roughly 40 percent of the population and the largest evacuation in county history.<sup>3</sup> This disaster was followed the next year by the 2020 Glass Fire and Walbridge/Meyers Fires. Added to these terrifying and life-changing catastrophes was the March 2020 Covid-19 outbreak and its lasting and devastating health, social, and economic impacts.

The severe wildfire seasons of recent years coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic altered aspects of Sonoma County residents' lives almost beyond recognition, leading to displacement, job loss, educational disruption, significant mental health challenges, and increased deaths due not just to the coronavirus but also to drug overdose. **But some of 2021's challenges echo those of 2014: an even worse affordable-housing shortage, economic insecurity, and disproportionate harm falling on communities of color.** Though the years between 2012 and 2019 saw heartening improvement in some indicators of well-being and a narrowing of the gaps between different places and populations, including more people with health insurance and fewer people living in poverty, deep-rooted challenges and new problems alike demand attention and action.

Decision-makers need to be intentional with how they see equity and inclusion, how they conduct programs as well as move toward making sure the people they serve are at the table. We need more conversations with people in communities—in the street roundtables to understand the issues and potential solutions.






Black first-generation Belizean woman who has lived in Sonoma County for nearly three decades

The inequities we see in Sonoma County are the results of decisions and policies people in power—most of them white men—put into action; different decisions can create better, more equitable outcomes. (For a discussion of how California’s history of displacement, exclusion, and segregation shaped the present, see pages 52–63 in *A Portrait of California 2021–2022*.)

The 2014 *Portrait of Sonoma County* concluded with an Agenda for Action; it identified areas in which improvements would increase well-being and access to opportunity for the county overall and narrow the gaps between places and demographic groups. **TABLE 2** shows both improvements and backsliding. For instance, fewer young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are disconnected—neither working nor attending school—but childcare and housing are more expensive than ever. Addressing the lagging areas as well as identifying new post-pandemic priorities is the work that lies ahead.

**TABLE 2 Measuring the 2014 Agenda for Action Recommendations**

AREA	RECOMMENDATION	2014 REPORT DATA	MOST RECENT DATA
 <b>A Long and Healthy Life</b>	Redouble Antismoking Efforts	<b>14.3%</b> of adults smoke	<b>13%</b> of adults smoke
	Increase Access to Health Insurance	<b>15%</b> of residents don't have insurance	<b>6%</b> of residents don't have insurance
 <b>Access to Knowledge</b>	Make Universal Preschool a Reality	<b>~50%</b> of 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in preschool	<b>48.1%</b> of 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in preschool
		<b>\$9,500</b> average annual full-time cost in licensed childcare/preschool centers	<b>\$11,400</b> average annual full-time cost in licensed childcare/preschool centers
	Prioritize On-Time High School Graduation	<b>79.3%</b> of high school students graduate in 4 years	<b>81.1%</b> of high school students graduate in 4 years
	Reduce Youth Disconnection	<b>11.8%</b> disconnected	<b>8.7%</b> disconnected
 <b>A Decent Standard of Living</b>	Raise Earnings: Improve Pay	<b>\$9</b> minimum wage	<b>\$14</b> minimum wage
		<b>\$30,214</b> median earnings <small>(adjusted for inflation, \$33,700 in 2019 dollars)</small>	<b>\$40,183</b> median earnings
		<b>12.1%</b> living in poverty	<b>6.4%</b> living in poverty <small>(the poverty level is annually adjusted for inflation)</small>
	Make Housing Affordable	<b>45.7%</b> spend 30% or more of income on rent	<b>52.4%</b> spend 30% or more of income on rent

Source: See the end of the Notes section for complete sourcing.

# Understanding Human Development

The **American Human Development Index (HDI)** is a composite measure of well-being and access to opportunity made up of health, education, and earnings indicators. The index is expressed on a scale of 0 to 10. Measure of America's HDI calculations provide a snapshot of community well-being, reveal inequalities between groups, allow for tracking change over time, and provide a tool for holding elected officials accountable. Broken down by race and ethnicity, by gender, and by census tract, the index shows how communities across Sonoma County are faring relative to one another and to the state and country as a whole.

The framework that guides this work is the **human development approach**. Human development is an expansive, hopeful concept that values dignity and the freedom people have to decide for themselves what to do, how to live, and who to be. Formally defined as the process of improving people's well-being and expanding their opportunities to live freely chosen, flourishing lives, the human development approach puts people at the center of analysis. It is concerned with how political, social, environmental, and economic forces interact to shape the range of choices open to us.

The human development approach rests on a robust conceptual framework: Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen's seminal work on **capabilities**.<sup>4</sup> Capabilities can be understood as a person's tool kit for living a thriving life. We tend to think of capabilities as an individual's skills and talents. In the human development approach, the word's meaning is far more expansive. Valued capabilities include good health, access to knowledge, sufficient income, physical safety, religious freedom, political participation, love and friendship, dignity and societal respect, high-quality public services, equality under the law, social inclusion, access to the natural world, self-expression, agency, the ability to influence decisions that affect one's life, and more.<sup>5</sup>

Another important idea in the human development framework is the concept of **human security**.<sup>6</sup> Human security is concerned with the safety and freedom of human beings, rather than the integrity and protection of the state against foreign intervention and civil disorder. The crises that have beset Sonoma since 2017, from Covid-19 to wildfires,<sup>7</sup> and the disproportionate effects they have had on some groups, including Black, Latino, and Native American people, children, the elderly, immigrants, people who are undocumented, and low-income communities, call out for a way to understand what is needed to keep people safe. Disasters like these threaten human life, shake our sense of safety, and wipe out years of progress and lifetimes of hard work in a matter of days or weeks. But preparedness, prevention, and protection can mitigate their effects.

The concept of human development is very broad; it includes all the factors that shape our lives. Because measuring everything in a single index is not possible, the HDI includes just three dimensions of well-being: a long and healthy life, access to

The human development approach puts people at the center of analysis. It is concerned with how political, social, environmental, and economic forces interact to shape the range of choices open to us.

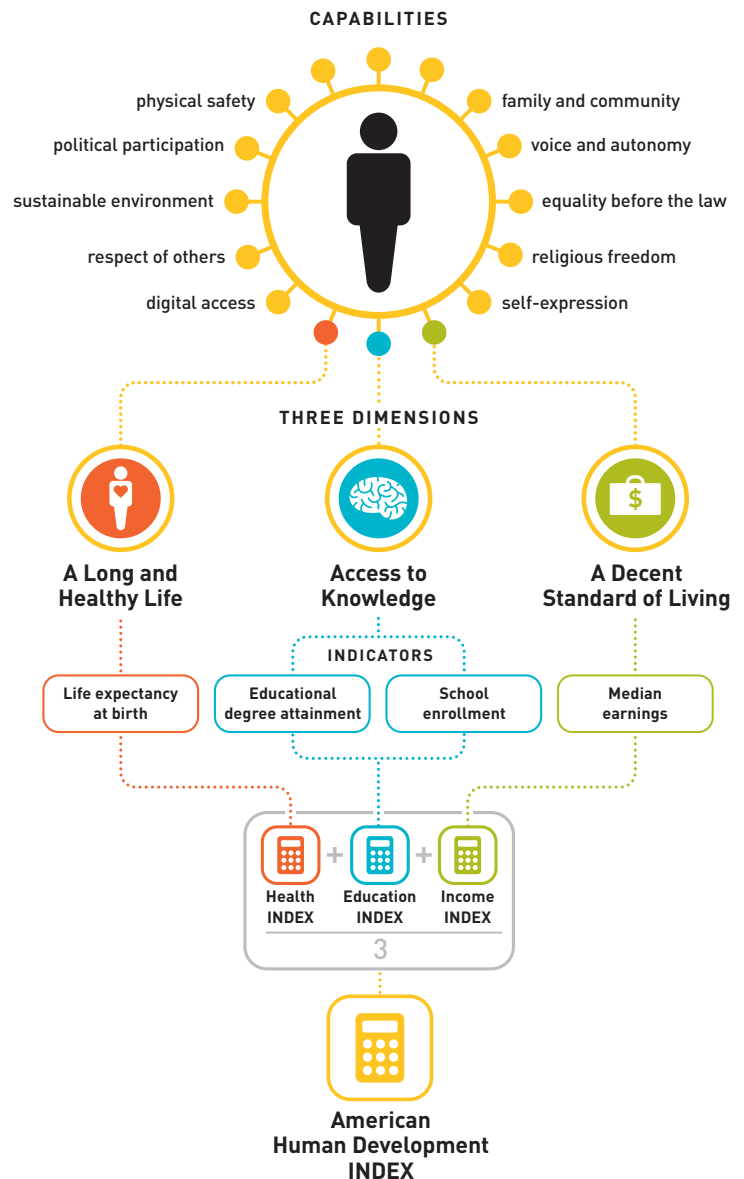


knowledge, and a decent standard of living. People around the world value these areas as core building blocks of a life of freedom and dignity. In addition, good proxy indicators that are collected and tracked in a consistent way across time and place are available for each. These indicators are not perfect, however. For example, one-third of the index is called “access to knowledge,” but the indicators used, school enrollment and degree attainment, measure only *access to formal education*, leaving aside other valuable ways of knowing. A decent standard of living is measured using median personal earnings; this indicator tells us about the salaries of typical Sonomans but nothing about their assets and wealth, such as the value of their homes or investments, which are very important ingredients of human security. It is important to keep in mind that the index is just the start of a conversation about well-being, access to opportunity, and inequality. To understand the *why* behind the scores and craft effective policies to address inequality requires additional quantitative data as well as qualitative data—interviews, narratives, life histories, and more.

**A Long and Healthy Life** is measured using life expectancy at birth, which is calculated using data from the California Department of Public Health, population data from the US Census Bureau, and USALEEP data for census tract-level estimates.

**Access to Knowledge** is measured using data on school enrollment for children and young people ages 3 to 24 and educational degree attainment for adults 25 and older from the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau.

**A Decent Standard of Living** is measured using median personal earnings of all full- and part-time workers ages 16 and older from the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau.



# Human Development in Sonoma County

Sonoma County’s HDI score is 6.19 out of a possible total of 10, up from 5.42 in 2012. This score is well above the United States’ HDI score of 5.33 and the California HDI score of 5.85. Sonoma’s HDI lead over California’s is primarily due to high Health and Education Index scores; median earnings in Sonoma, \$40,531, are just slightly higher than the Californian median of \$39,528. Overall, Sonoma residents can expect to live 82.2 years—one year longer than the statewide life expectancy—and attain high school, college, and graduate school degrees at higher rates than is typical in California.

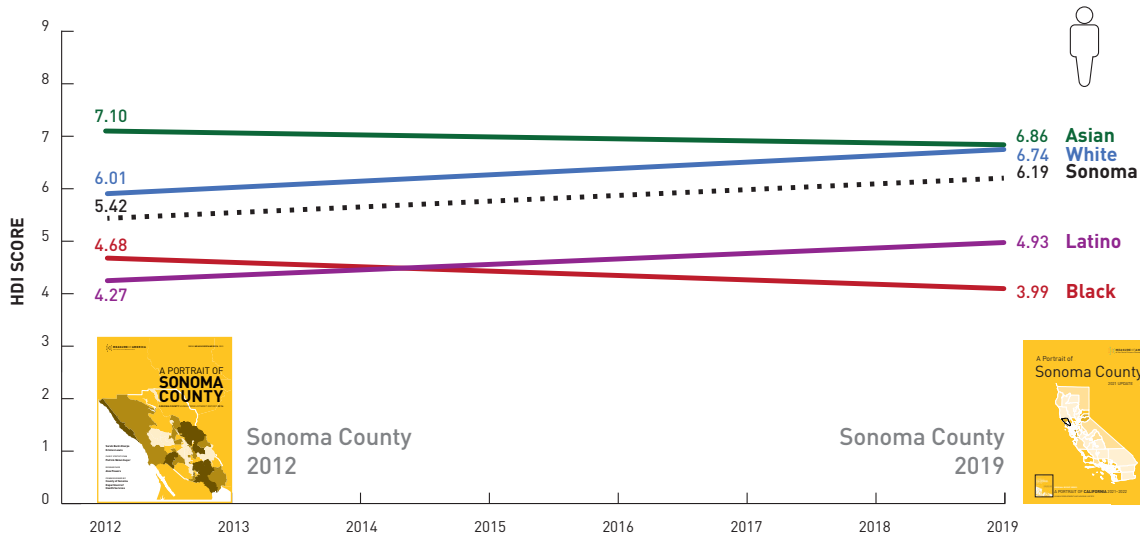
## VARIATION BY GENDER AND BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Men and women in Sonoma County have nearly the same HDI scores: 5.95 for men and 5.87 for women. They arrive at these similar scores differently, however. Women earn \$11,500 less than men, but this monetary deficit is offset (in terms of the HDI scoring calculation) by their longer life expectancy; on average, women outlive men in Sonoma County by four years.

Within the county, the scores for the four most populous racial and ethnic groups range from relatively high levels of well-being among Asian and white residents to far lower levels among Latino and Black residents. Looking at change

Within the county, the scores for the four most populous racial and ethnic groups range from relatively high levels of well-being among Asian and white residents to far lower levels among Latino and Black residents.

**FIGURE 3 HDI in Sonoma County, 2012–2019**



Source: 2012—*Portrait of Sonoma County* (2014). 2019—Life expectancy: Measure of America calculations using mortality data from the California Department of Public Health and population data from the US Census Bureau ACS PUMS, 2014–2019. Education and earnings: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS PUMS, 2019.

since the 2014 report, we see that the scores for **Asian and Black residents decreased** whereas the scores for **Latino and white residents increased**. In addition, Asian and Black residents of Sonoma County score lower than Asian and Black residents statewide, but Latino and white Sonomans score higher than their California-wide counterparts.

**Asian residents** have the highest well-being score among the four most populous racial and ethnic groups in the county, 6.86, though their score has declined since the 2014 report; in other words, they still have the highest score, but by a much smaller margin. Their life expectancy is 85.1 years, nine in ten adults have at least a high school diploma, and 46.3 percent hold bachelor's degrees. Despite having the highest levels of educational attainment, however, Asians in Sonoma earn \$37,083, less than Black (\$38,511) and white (\$44,131) residents. In addition, Asian residents of Sonoma County have lower levels of well-being than Asian Californians overall; their lifespan is two years shorter, and they earn \$14,000 less.

Note that the category "Asian" is an extremely broad one, and significant differences exist between foreign- and native-born Asians as well as among Asian subgroups. The Sonoma County Asian population is too small to allow for disaggregation, but *A Portrait of California 2021–2022* presents scores for ten Asian subgroups at the state level; Asian HDI scores range from 9.58 for Taiwanese Californians to 4.33 for Hmong Californians.

**White residents** have the second-highest score, 6.74, up from 6.01 in the last report. White residents earn the most, over \$44,000, and are the most likely to have earned high school diplomas. Their life expectancy, however, falls below the county average.

**Latino residents** of Sonoma County have an HDI of 4.93, up from 4.27 in the 2014 report. Though they have significantly lower educational attainment rates than Sonoma County whites and earn \$15,000 less, Latino Sonomans have a much longer life expectancy. In addition, life expectancy for Latinos in Sonoma County is over two years longer than life expectancy for Latinos at the state level.

**Black residents** score 3.99, an alarming drop from 4.68 in the 2014 report. Black residents of Sonoma have lower levels of well-being than Black residents of the state as a whole. Black residents of Sonoma County live over three years fewer, on average, than Black Californians. Black children and young adults are enrolled in school at a rate 6 percentage points lower than the Black statewide average. Sonoma County's Black residents have a lifespan ten years shorter than any other racial and ethnic group in the county and have lower educational attainment rates than the county average. In addition, 69.3 percent of Black children and young adults are enrolled in school compared to 77.1 percent of Latino youth, 80.0 percent of white youth, and 87.8 percent of Asian youth.

Sonoma County's Black residents have a lifespan ten years shorter than any other racial and ethnic group in the county and have lower educational attainment rates than the county average.

**TABLE 4 Sonoma County HDI by Race and Ethnicity and by Gender**

RANK	HDI	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (% of adults 25+)	AT LEAST BACHELOR'S DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (% ages 3 to 24)	EDUCATION INDEX	MEDIAN EARNINGS (\$)
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>77.3</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>36,533</b>
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>81.0</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>39,528</b>
<b>SONOMA COUNTY</b>	<b>6.19</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>78.4</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>40,531</b>
<b>GENDER</b>								
1 Men	<b>5.95</b>	80.2	12.8	33.8	12.5	79.2	5.54	43,072
2 Women	<b>5.87</b>	84.2	9.6	36.4	13.6	78.8	5.81	31,586
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>								
1 Asian	<b>6.86</b>	85.1	10.5	46.3	18.4	87.8	7.28	37,083
2 White	<b>6.74</b>	81.6	4.0	41.5	15.7	80.0	6.49	44,131
3 Latino	<b>4.93</b>	85.5	36.2	13.3	4.2	77.1	3.02	29,066
4 Black	<b>3.99</b>	71.0	10.1	32.1	4.8*	69.3	4.30	38,511
Native American			13.5	10.4*	2.4*	94.8	5.51	28,864
NHOPI			11.1	23.7*	11.3*	77.2	4.93	26,378*
<b>GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY</b>								
1 White Men	<b>6.59</b>	79.5	4.2	40.5	15.6	79.0	6.34	52,989
2 White Women	<b>6.38</b>	83.6	3.7	42.5	15.8	80.9	6.64	36,215
3 Latino Men	<b>4.85</b>	83.7	40.2	11.9	2.7	77.8	2.79	32,290
4 Latina Women	<b>4.77</b>	87.1	31.9	14.7	5.8	76.3	3.27	23,755
Asian Men			10.0	48.6	20.9	84.9	7.24	38,927
Asian Women			10.8	44.7	16.6	90.7	7.39	35,412
Black Men			10.8	29.0	3.3*	76.1	4.71	44,958
Black Women			9.1	35.8	6.5*	62.9	3.97	21,609*
Native American Men			14.7	18.0*	4.9*	96.2	5.92	28,042
Native American Women			12.5	3.3*	N/A	94.3	5.08	29,890*
NHOPI Men			18.1	12.7*	11.2*	93.3	5.66*	28,358*
NHOPI Women			5.7	32.1*	11.5*	71.8	5.03	22,127*

**DATA SOURCES:**

**Life expectancy:** California and Sonoma: Measure of America calculations using mortality data from the California Department of Public Health and population data from US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample. Estimates for California use 2019 data, and estimates for Sonoma use 2014–2019 data. US: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2019.

**Education and earnings:** Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample. Estimates for the US, California, and Sonoma overall use 2019 data, and estimates for Sonoma breakdowns use 2015–2019 data.

\* Estimates with an asterisk have a greater degree of uncertainty. Due to small population sizes and survey sampling the standard error of the estimate is greater than 20% of the estimate.

**Note:** Life expectancy estimates for Asian and Black residents were calculated with one death imputed into age categories with no deaths. These estimates have a greater degree of uncertainty.



### BOX 5 Why Don't All Groups and Places Have an HDI Score?

On some maps, specific areas appear in gray, and in some tables, values for certain groups or locales are missing or have an asterisk. Gray areas and missing and asterisked values indicate that the data for that place or demographic group are less statistically reliable than data for more populous areas or larger population groups.

We would like to provide scores not just for large demographic groups like Latino and white Sonomans, but also for smaller ones, such as Native Americans and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPI) in the county. The primary barrier to doing so is that the algorithm used to calculate life expectancy at birth requires a minimum number of deaths in each five-year age category. A way to address this requirement is to combine several years' worth of data rather than use data from a single year. In this case, however, even combining the past six years of California Department of Public Health mortality data for Sonoma County did not include any deaths in a number of age groups for either Native American or NHOPI residents, making it impossible

to calculate life expectancy for these groups accurately. Because we don't have life expectancy estimates for Native American and NHOPI Sonomans, we cannot calculate HDI scores for them. We do provide the available education and earnings data, however.

Another limitation in our ability to provide every group an HDI score stems from the way in which the data we use for the index are collected. We would like, for example, to calculate scores for LGBTQ Sonomans, but are unable to do so because the American Community Survey does not provide a way for people to report information about their sexual and gender identities beyond marking the box for male or female. In short, we can only calculate scores for groups that are given the chance to self-identify on the American Community Survey and that are sufficiently large as to allow reliable calculations.

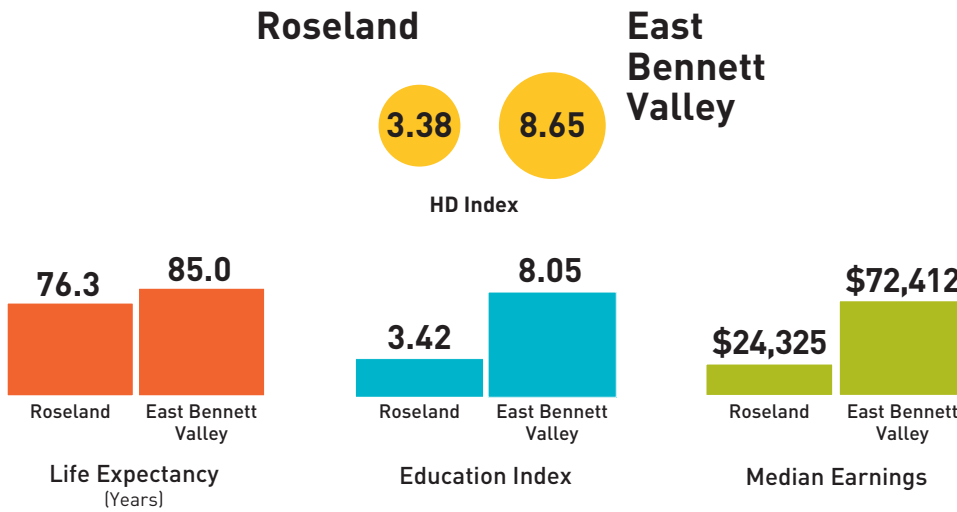
We understand the frustration and potential harms of not having reliable data on each and every demographic group in Sonoma County; vibrant communities can be made invisible in cases like this. To address data gaps,

we provide all the data that make up the education and earnings subindices in the data tables at the end of this report and discuss it in the education and earnings sections. We have also drawn on a variety of other data sources and surveys that provide data broken down by race and ethnicity, age, sexuality, gender identity, and disability status. Finally, we encourage you to read the excerpts of stories shared by community members on their experiences of well-being in Sonoma County. These interviews help both to bring the data to life and help fill in gaps where the data are thin. Of course, each person speaks only from their own experience and cannot be expected to represent a whole community. Some of these interviews are excerpted in this report.

The American Human Development Index is just one way of knowing and understanding Sonoma County; it provides a high-level overview of well-being across the county, but it is not a substitute for direct community engagement. It is best used in conjunction with people's accounts of their lived experiences.

**VARIATION BY NEIGHBORHOOD**

As is the case across the United States and California, HDI scores vary dramatically by geography in Sonoma County—in Roseland, the HDI is 3.38, whereas in East Bennett Valley, it is 8.65. This gap is far larger than the gaps that separate demographic groups in the aggregate. The difference in the HDI between these neighborhoods translates to nearly a nine-year gap in life expectancy, a more than \$48,000 difference in earnings, and a 47.9-percentage-point gap in bachelor’s degree attainment.



In Sonoma County, high human development levels are found in the north as well as the south, and in cities as well as rural areas. However, Santa Rosa and its environs constitute a disproportionate share of neighborhoods with the lowest levels of well-being in the county. These same neighborhoods in and around Santa Rosa are also both more diverse than other areas of the county and home to larger shares of Latino residents. Like most communities across the United States, Sonoma County is bedeviled by residential segregation—by race and ethnicity first and foremost, as well as by national origin, income, occupational category, and education level. In order to truly address segregation, eliminating disparities in tangible resources—such as those detailed in this report—is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for addressing historical and ongoing harms of discrimination.

The purpose of this report is to provide a shared set of data to inform efforts to eliminate inequity in Sonoma County. It includes the most reliable and comprehensive official data available at the time of writing. These data have shortcomings, and we strongly advocate for improved data collection, particularly greater efforts to represent smaller population groups like Native American people.

Sonoma County is made up of ninety-nine inhabited areas (or neighborhoods) designated by the US Census Bureau as census tracts. Each tract generally contains a population of between 1,200 and 8,000 people, with an optimal size of 4,000 people. Together they encompass all the land within the county boundaries, including tribal lands.

**Only four tracts score under 4.00 on the HDI—these are Rohnert Park B/C/R Section, Bicentennial Park, Comstock, and Roseland.** This is a notable improvement since our 2014 report, *A Portrait of Sonoma County*, when three tracts (including Roseland) had an HDI score under 3.00, and ten more had scores below 4.00.

The gap between the lowest- and highest-scoring census tracts has narrowed slightly since the last report. In the 2014 report, the highest-scoring tract was East Bennett Valley (8.47) and the lowest-scoring tract was Roseland Creek (2.79), separated by 5.68 points. Today, the highest-scoring census tract is still East Bennett Valley (8.65), which is separated by 5.27 points from Roseland (3.38), the new lowest-scoring tract. This constitutes an 8 percent reduction in the gap between the top- and bottom-performing neighborhoods. Furthermore, Roseland Creek, once the lowest-HDI tract in Sonoma, has improved its HDI score to 4.37, a striking increase of 57 percent. These improvements were due primarily to increases in earnings and, especially, education—school enrollment in Roseland Creek increased substantially, as did the share of the adult population with at least a high school diploma. There was very little demographic change in these two places over this same time period.

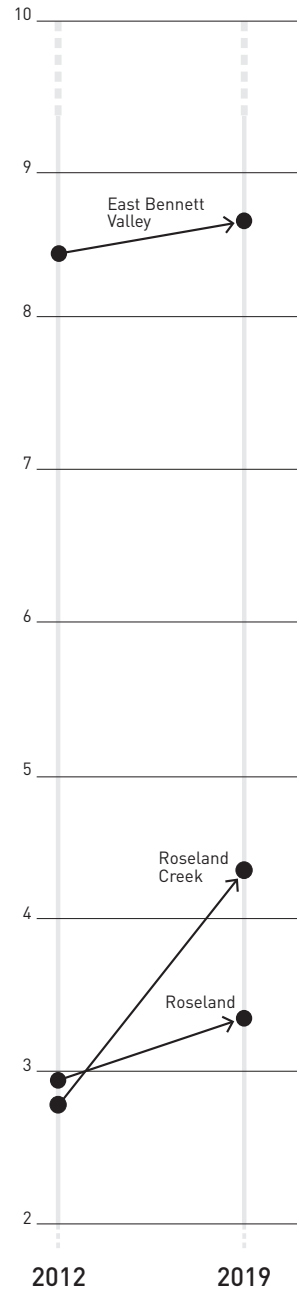
HDI scores in fourteen census tracts have increased by more than one point, with Central Healdsburg seeing the largest point increase in HDI (up 1.77 points). Only three census tracts have seen their HDI score decrease by more than a point—Sonoma City South/Vineburg, Larkfield–Wikiup, and Jenner/Cazadero. Jenner/Cazadero’s HDI score decreased the most (down 1.24 points).

**BOX 6 What Does an Increase in a Census Tract HDI Mean?**

HDI scores in the majority of Sonoma County census tracts improved between 2012 and 2019. This means that the life expectancy, rates of school enrollment and degree attainment, and earnings (or some combination of them) of the residents of those tracts were higher in 2019 than in 2012. If the population of a specific tract was fairly stable over that time, an increase in the score represents a real improvement in some aspect of well-being for the people

living there. If the population changed a great deal, however, a higher score may mean not that the people who had been living there saw well-being improvements but rather that different, more affluent people have moved in. Thus, while rising HDI scores are generally good news, in some instances they may be signs of displacement. Keep in mind that the data used to calculate HDI scores in this report are from 2019, prior to Covid-19.

**The Gap between the Highest and Lowest Tracts Has Narrowed**



**BOX 7 Immigrants in Sonoma**

Immigrants, both documented and undocumented, are the backbone of California’s economy and bring talent and vitality to Sonoma County. Despite their countless contributions, however, they face disproportionate challenges in a number of areas.

About 15 percent of Sonoma residents were born outside of the US, nearly two-thirds of whom are from Latin America and more than half from Mexico specifically.<sup>8</sup> Latino immigration to California surged in the 1980s and 1990s and has plateaued since then. Of all the immigrants from Latin America living in Sonoma County now, only about 10 percent entered the US after 2010; the vast majority are long-settled community members. While most Asian immigrants in Sonoma have also lived in the US for a decade or more, a greater share are recent immigrants; nearly 20 percent of Asian immigrants living in the county entered the US after 2010.<sup>9</sup> Immigrants from Africa make up about 3 percent of the county’s foreign-born population; their share has doubled since 2010.<sup>10</sup>

A substantial portion of Sonoma’s immigrant population is undocumented.

The Migration Policy Institute estimates that 29,000 undocumented immigrants reside in the county, 87 percent of whom are from Mexico or Central America. Over a quarter have been in the US for less than ten years. This group faces

**About 15 percent of Sonoma residents were born outside of the US, nearly two-thirds of whom are from Latin America and more than half from Mexico specifically.**

many labor-market challenges: half do not have a high school diploma, about 35 percent have not completed any education above eighth grade, and four in ten do not speak English well. Four in ten are uninsured, and eight in ten live in rental housing, nearly double the rate in the county overall.<sup>11</sup>

Undocumented workers in the county have been hit particularly hard by wildfires and the pandemic, as many work in industries that have disproportionately been impacted by both. Fires, smoke, and heat waves have decimated the county’s vineyards for multiple years in a row, drying up a crucial source of income for many immigrant workers. At the same time, the pandemic has shut down many job opportunities in hospitality, food service, and domestic work.<sup>12</sup> Undocumented workers were excluded from federal pandemic relief funds and have received meager support from the state. UndocuFund for Disaster Relief in Sonoma County, which was started in the wake of the Tubbs Fire, reactivated for the pandemic and has distributed over \$10 million since its inception.<sup>13</sup> While this funding provided a crucial lifeline for many, it cannot meet the full scope of these multiple and ongoing crises. Sonoma County’s pandemic relief and recovery efforts must focus on immigrant workers in essential yet precarious and underpaid fields and must include undocumented workers in all efforts.

**Housing is a huge issue in the community. However, when we talk about housing we have to talk about livable wages, not minimum wage, as well as access for people to work and make a livable wage. This goes beyond just thinking about people with the privilege of citizenship.**

**We also need to consider people that have migrated or immigrated to this country and are in Sonoma County but are not receiving the same benefits and recognition as humans and people who give so much to our community. The question we need to ask is how are we aligning our respect and dignity for people by providing access to jobs, livable wages, and housing?**



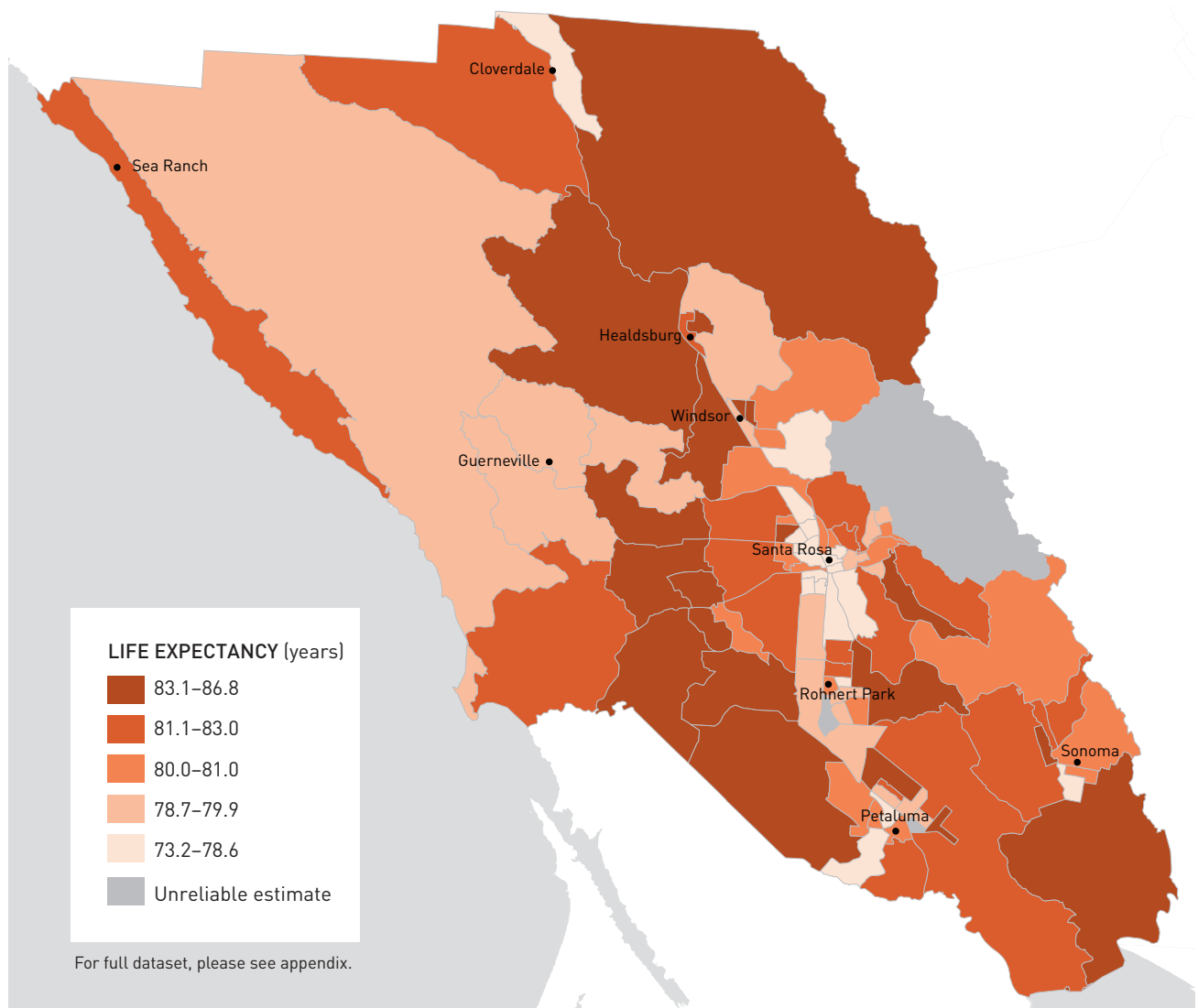
**Queer Latinx Sonoma resident of 11 years**



# A Long and Healthy Life

Improving human development requires, first and foremost, increasing the real opportunities people have to avoid premature death by disease or injury, to enjoy protection from arbitrary denial of life, to live in a healthy environment, to maintain a healthy lifestyle, to receive quality medical care, and to attain the highest possible standard of physical and mental health. Amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, health and its relationship with income and education, safety and human security, and race and place have come into sharp focus.

**MAP 8 Life Expectancy**



In the American Human Development Index, the proxy for a long and healthy life is life expectancy at birth, defined as the number of years that a baby born today can expect to live if current patterns of mortality continue throughout their lifetime. Although living a long life and living a healthy life are not synonymous, in general, those who manage to elude all causes of mortality until their eighties or nineties are healthier than the average person, and life expectancy is a widely used summary measure of population health.

## Life Expectancy in Sonoma County Today

- The average life expectancy in Sonoma County is 82.2 years, 1.2 years longer than the state average. Since 2014, life expectancy in Sonoma County has increased by 1.2 years, jumping ahead of the state as a whole, which has seen its life expectancy drop by 0.2 years.<sup>14</sup>
- The life expectancy of Sonoma County's population varies considerably by race and ethnicity. Nearly fifteen years separate the life expectancies of Black (71.0 years) and Latino (85.5 years) Sonomans. Latino residents outlive white residents by 3.9 years. Asian Sonomans have the second-highest life expectancy, 85.1 years. In California as a whole, Asians live the longest.
- Due to population sizes in Sonoma County, there are only enough data to calculate life expectancy by race/ethnicity and gender for Latino and white residents. Latina women have an expected lifespan of 87.1 years. White women have roughly the same life expectancy as Latino men, 83.6 years and 83.7 years, respectively. White men have a life expectancy of 79.5 years.
- Among census tracts, life expectancy in Sonoma County ranges from 73.2 years in Burbank Gardens (Santa Rosa) to 86.8 years in Old Healdsburg, a difference of over thirteen years.

Among racial and ethnic groups, Latinos and Native Americans in Sonoma County had substantially higher-than-expected 2020 mortality rates.

## Covid-19 and the Leading Causes of Death in 2020

In 2020, the mortality rate in Sonoma County was significantly higher than in previous years. Compared to the rest of the state, Sonoma County has had a much lower rate of Covid-19 deaths per 100,000 people. Sonoma is also among the top ten California counties with the greatest percentage of fully vaccinated adults.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, Covid-19 ranked sixth among the leading causes of death in the county.<sup>16</sup>

Men saw a higher-than-expected number of deaths, about 12 percent higher than the 2017–2019 average. Women, on the other hand, did not see a statistically significantly higher number of deaths. Among racial and ethnic groups, Latinos and Native Americans in Sonoma County had substantially higher-than-expected 2020 mortality rates. Compared to the 2017–2019 average, in 2020, deaths among Native Americans were 38 percent higher and deaths among Latinos were 31 percent higher. In comparison, deaths were only 4 percent higher than expected among white Sonomans. In addition, more deaths occurred in 2020 among Latino residents in

Sonoma County due to kidney disease and suicide than in past years. A greater-than-expected number of deaths also occurred among Native Americans due to chronic liver disease. According to the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, areas that saw significant increases in overall deaths included the Russian River area, Rohnert Park, Petaluma/Penngrrove, and Sebastopol/West County.<sup>17</sup>

Deaths caused by drug overdose increased by a dramatic 78 percent in 2020, from a baseline 2017–2019 average of 82 deaths to 145 deaths in 2020, with a significant increase of drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl. Fentanyl was involved in 91 percent of opiate overdose deaths, and the vast majority of these drug overdose deaths were unintentional. (Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid up to one hundred times stronger than heroin; dealers often add fentanyl to heroin, fueling accidental overdose deaths.)<sup>18</sup> Among Black residents, drug overdose deaths were five times higher in 2020 than the average in 2017–2019.<sup>19</sup>

## Mental Health

Since 2017, a series of disasters has pummeled Sonoma County. The 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires destroyed over 5,300 homes and killed twenty-four people. While the 2019 Kincade Fire thankfully had no casualties, it forced almost 200,000 people to evacuate and caused significant stress and disruption of daily life.<sup>20</sup> The Covid-19 pandemic has turned life upside down for going on two years, disrupting employment and schooling, infecting nearly 40,000 county residents as of September 2021, and killing nearly 400 loved ones and friends.<sup>21</sup> The 2020 Glass Fire and LNU Lightning Complex Fire compounded problems of an already disastrous year. Living through any one of these disasters is a traumatic experience. The combination of all of them is the making of a mental health crisis.

According to a rapid needs assessment that the Department of Health Services conducted following the 2017 fires, 40 percent of households experienced a traumatic event like being separated from a family member, facing threat of death, or suffering a significant injury. Six in ten households reported at least one member experiencing anxiety or fear, nearly double the previous year's rate.<sup>22,23</sup> Among youth in middle and high school who reported any obstacle to learning, those who were moderately or significantly affected by the fires were substantially more likely to report feeling depressed, stressed, or anxious than those who hadn't been affected by the fires at all. Nearly eight in ten affected high schoolers reported these mental health struggles, compared to about six in ten high schoolers who weren't affected. Similarly, one in five youth who had experienced significant impacts of fires or the Covid-19 pandemic had considered suicide in the past year, rates two to three times higher than those who hadn't been directly affected by these crises.<sup>24</sup>

As discussed above, in 2020 there were also substantially more deaths countywide due to drug overdose, kidney disease, and chronic liver disease than in previous years, which may be related to increased use of drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms.<sup>25</sup> Recovering from the pandemic will require substantial

One in five youth who had experienced significant impacts of fires or the Covid-19 pandemic had considered suicide in the past year.

investment in mental health services for children and adults alike; the costs both to the health of individuals and to the well-being of the county as a whole of leaving these traumas unprocessed are astronomical.

These disasters, however, are only exacerbating the mental health challenges posed by day-to-day struggles in “normal” times. Struggling to pay rent and childcare expenses, facing eviction, being bullied or harassed due to your race or sexuality, being incarcerated, and more are at best stressful and at worst traumatic. People who belong to one or more groups that are marginalized or stigmatized situations are often more likely to experience mental health challenges. Multiracial, NHOPI, Latino, and Native American youth in Sonoma County are more likely than white young people to report feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day that they stopped doing some usual activities. Nearly 70 percent of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth also reported these depressive symptoms, compared to just over 25 percent of straight youth.<sup>26</sup> Nearly half of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth in the county had seriously considered attempting suicide compared to about 15 percent of straight youth. Over 25 percent of multiracial youth, 23 percent of NHOPI youth, 21 percent of Black youth, and 19 percent of white youth had considered suicide.<sup>27</sup> Youth mental health in Sonoma deserves serious attention, not least because the county has the second-highest youth suicide rate in the nine-county Bay Area, just behind Solano County.<sup>28</sup>

The confluence of day-to-day stressors and recent disasters has led to growing demand for mental health services in the county. A recent capacity assessment of the county’s publicly funded mental health systems attributed this increase to the fires, rising income inequality, the severe housing shortage, and the growing number of people who are unhoused. The assessment also noted that because it is challenging for existing providers to meet the increased demand, more people seek crisis intervention, are incarcerated, or are placed in services outside of the county. This vicious cycle means that people in crisis are discharged from the emergency room or Crisis Stabilization Unit without available follow-up services and are more likely to end up back in these facilities or behind bars. An estimated 40 percent of people in county jails have a mental health issue.<sup>29</sup> Improving access to culturally competent providers who have expertise serving specific segments of Sonoma’s population is critical. A 2018 Bay Area LGBTQ Needs Assessment identified access to LGBTQ-specific mental health care as critically important for over half of respondents. Over 70 percent of trans and nonbinary respondents said LGBTQ-focused services were critical. Among respondents living in Marin, Napa, and Sonoma Counties, four in ten reported that not being able to afford services kept them from seeking mental health care, and three in ten didn’t know how or where to access services.<sup>30</sup>

In November 2020, Sonoma County voters took an important step toward improving mental health services by approving a quarter-percent sales tax increase. This increase is expected to raise \$250 million over a decade and will help fund behavioral health facilities, emergency psychiatric services, mental health and substance use disorder outpatient services, behavioral health care coordination, and transitional and permanent supportive housing.<sup>31</sup>

**Mental health services are another huge component that needs to be culturally responsive and meet our community members’ standards of what they need as it relates to mental health.**

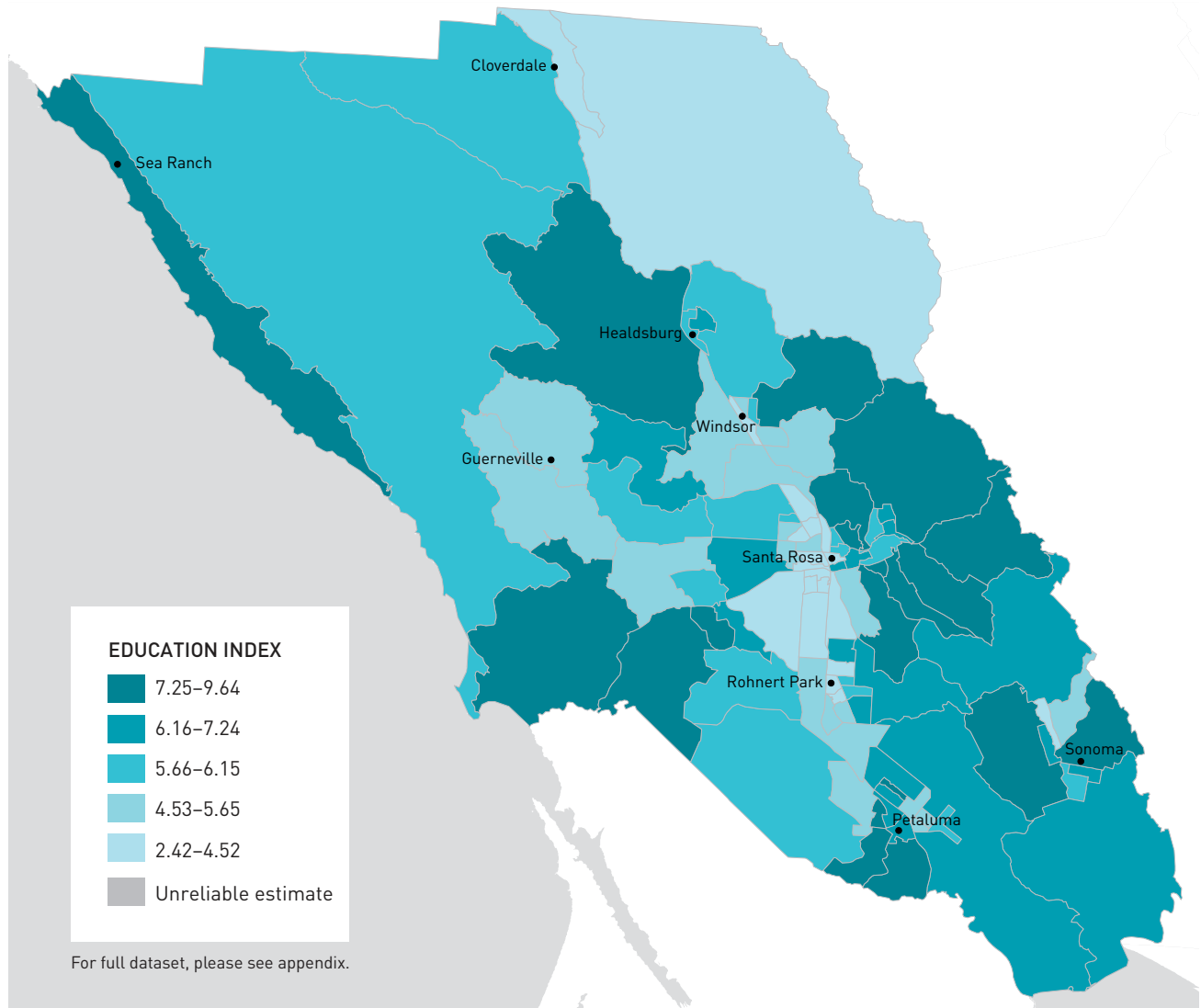


**Queer Latinx Sonoma resident of eleven years**

# Access to Knowledge

It is common knowledge that more education typically leads to better jobs and bigger paychecks—a relationship stronger today than ever before. Since the 1970s, globalization, technological change, changes in social policies, and economic downturns have made it more difficult for people with limited formal education to achieve the economic self-sufficiency, peace of mind, and human security enabled by a living wage.<sup>32</sup> Less well-known are the ways in which education and knowledge more broadly also make desirable noneconomic outcomes more likely. Access to knowledge is a critical determinant of long-term well-being and

**MAP 9 Education Index**

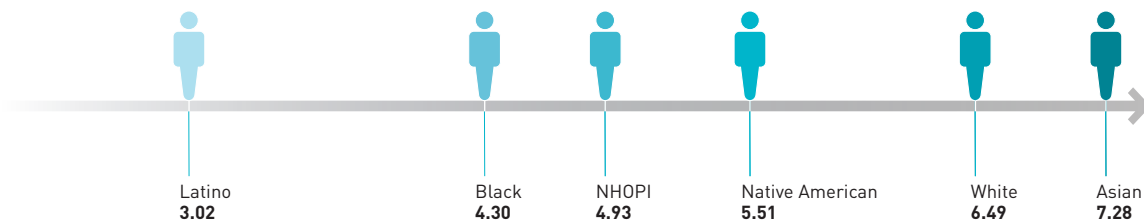


is essential to self-determination, self-sufficiency, and the real freedom a person has to decide what to do and who to be. More than just allowing for the acquisition of skills and credentials, education builds confidence, confers status and dignity, and creates pathways to a wider range of possible futures. More education is associated with better physical and mental health, a longer life, and greater marital stability, tolerance, and ability to adjust to change.

Access to knowledge is measured using data on school enrollment for children and young people ages 3 to 24 and educational degree attainment for adults 25 and older from the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau. It is important to note that the indicators used to measure access to knowledge, school enrollment and degree attainment, measure only *access to formal education*. Using indicators of formal education as a stand-in for the broad concept of knowledge is commonplace in social science research and has many advantages (for instance, the data are collected and made available every year). But doing so leaves unmeasured and unacknowledged all other valuable and important ways of knowing that allow communities to survive and flourish and that are sources of strength, resilience, pride, and identity. Access to knowledge includes not just what people learn in school but also what they learn at home and in their communities about how the world works, what is valuable, what it means to be a good person, how to overcome challenges, and how to carry out most of the practical tasks of living, to name just a few.

Access to knowledge includes not just what people learn in school but also what they learn at home and in their communities.

**FIGURE 10 Education Index by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, 2015–2019.

## Educational Outcomes in Sonoma County Today

- Sonoma residents hold a higher proportion of diplomas and degrees than the population of either the United States or California—37.8 percent of adults in the county hold at least a bachelor’s degree and 14.6 percent hold a graduate degree.
- Women have a slight edge in all educational outcomes (diploma and degree attainment) compared to men, but boys and young men are about as likely to be enrolled in school.
- Despite Sonoma’s high educational attainment, there are significant disparities in degree attainment across geographies. In Sea Ranch/Timber Cove, six in ten adults 25 years and older hold bachelor’s degrees, whereas in Sheppard just over one in ten do.
- These educational disparities exist not only among geographies but also along racial lines. Only 63.8 percent of Latino Sonoma residents hold a high school diploma, as opposed to 96.0 percent of white residents. Latino residents have substantially lower rates of degree attainment than Sonoma residents of any other race. These disparities are largely due to the limited opportunities Latino immigrants had to complete their educations in their home countries. However, Latino youth are enrolled in school at rates similar to the county average: 77.1 percent are enrolled; the county average is 78.4 percent.
- Native Americans have particularly high rates of school enrollment—94.8 percent of Native American children and young people between the ages of 3 and 24 are enrolled in school. Black residents have the lowest rate of school enrollment, 69.3 percent.
- Another disparity that emerged with particular force during the Covid-19 pandemic is access to digital learning platforms. Lack of computer access is a major obstacle to academic success for Sonoma County students, especially those who are English language learners (ELL). Nearly a quarter of ELL students have limited or no access to a computer or device, compared to 10 percent of non-English language learners. Similarly, 37 percent of English language learners have limited or no internet access, compared to 28 percent of non-ELL students.<sup>33</sup>
- In recent years, the percentage of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)—a plan that lays out the special education instruction, supports, and services a student with an identified disability needs to thrive in school—has increased in the Sonoma Valley Unified School District.<sup>34</sup> Students with disabilities typically require in-person education and therapeutic services and have particularly struggled with remote education. There is a need to direct additional resources to students with IEPs, who have disproportionately struggled with remote education and the associated lack of access to services.<sup>35</sup>

Latino residents have substantially lower rates of degree attainment than Sonoma residents of any other race. These disparities are largely due to the limited opportunities Latino immigrants had to complete their educations in their home countries.

- According to the 2021 Youth Truth Survey, 35 percent of staff members surveyed at Sonoma County schools have considered leaving the county due to one or more local issues, among them the high cost of living, wildfires, housing issues, and job availability.<sup>36</sup>

In recent years, we've done a lot in terms of cultural revitalization: bringing back the seven Pomoan languages, revitalizing traditional arts like basketry as well as regalia making. Having our youth be able to celebrate their culture in a way that they can take pride in it has been a bright spot in recent years.

Prior generations grew up and often had to hide their cultural identity or not celebrate their culture out in the open. It's important to be able to bring these things out and breathe life into them again. . . . Being able to educate youth about their history and our traditional ecological knowledge as well as our relationship to our ancestral territory here is really critical to have that connection to place.



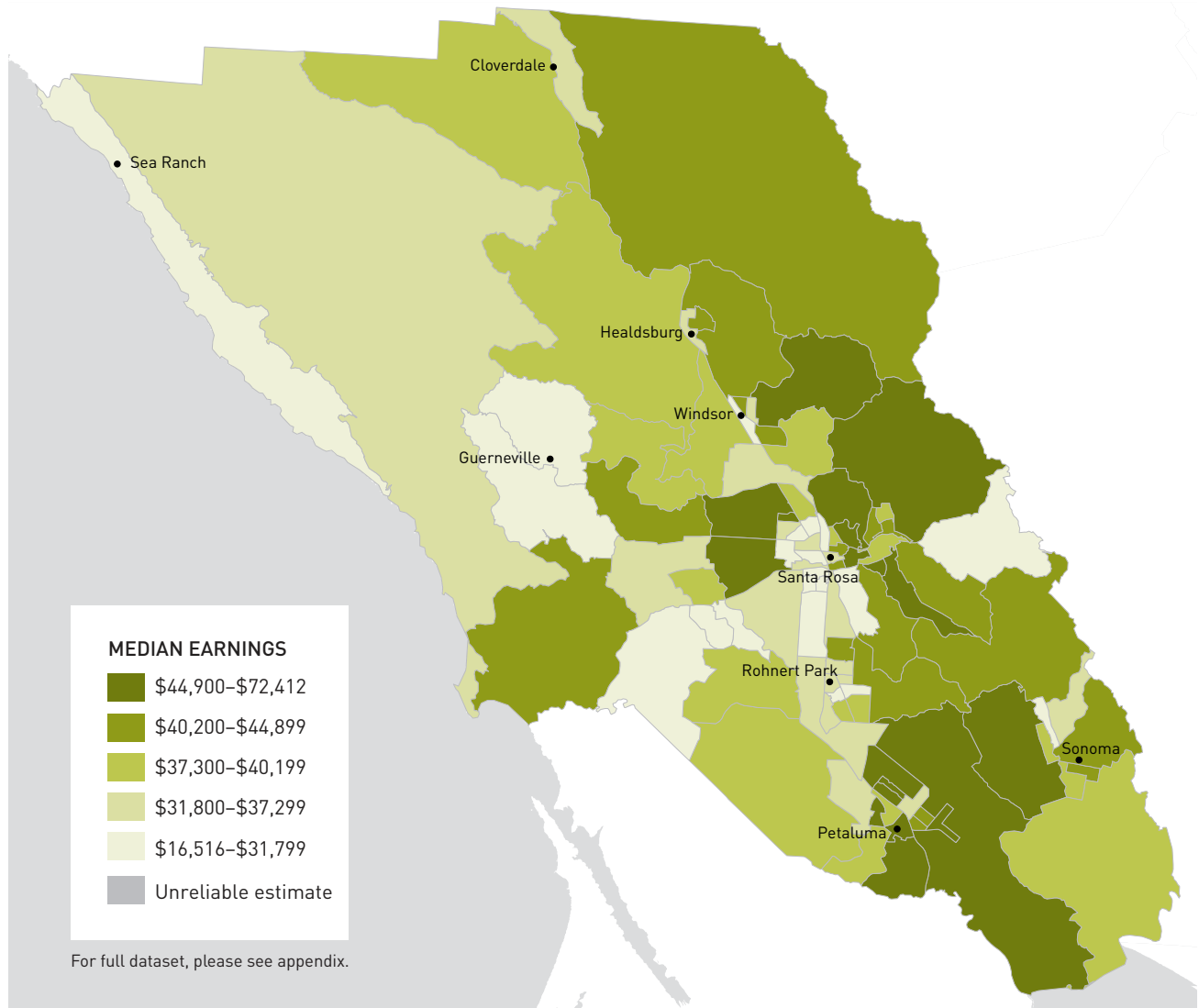
Pomo Indian & Miwok  
Indian community member,  
lifelong Sonoma resident,  
born in Santa Rosa



# A Decent Standard of Living

Money alone is a faulty gauge of well-being; that idea is central to the human development approach. A good life is built on much more: physical health, safety and security, love and friendship, freedom to practice one’s faith, equality before the law, being treated with dignity and respect, and having a say in the decisions that affect us, to name just a handful. But while money isn’t everything, adequate financial resources are nonetheless a critical ingredient for a freely chosen, flourishing life. Without them, the range of the possible is vastly curtailed.

**MAP 11 Median Earnings**

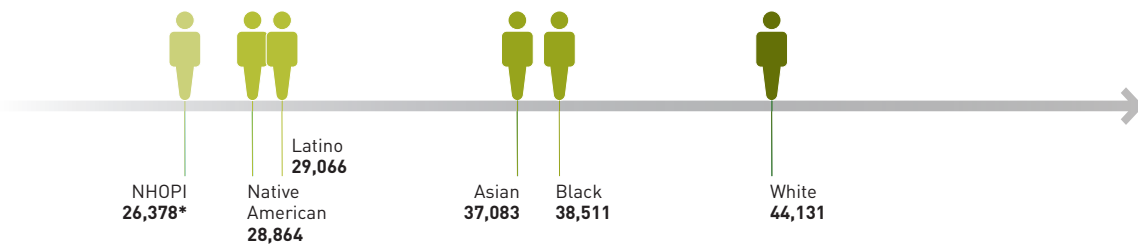


Many different measures can be used to gauge people’s material standard of living. The American Human Development Index uses median personal earnings—the wages and salaries of all full- and part-time workers 16 years of age and older. This measure reflects the resources of the ordinary worker (thus the median, or midpoint, of earnings rather than mean, or average, earnings) and captures the command that both women and men have over economic resources (thus the focus on personal rather than household earnings).

Many people ask if wages are adjusted for cost of living; they are not. The cost of living varies far more within California than between the state and other places, and methodologies for adjusting for cost of living do not sufficiently account for local variation. In addition, living costs are invariably higher in areas with desirable community assets and amenities that are conducive to higher levels of well-being. For example, areas with higher housing costs—and housing costs are the major portion of cost of living—are typically places with more opportunities for recreation and entertainment, safer neighborhoods, greater access to jobs, or warm, sunny weather. These kinds of considerations are baked into the price of a house or apartment. Thus, to adjust for cost of living would be to push to the side some of the factors that the index is measuring. This does not mean that the high cost of living is not a formidable threat to well-being in Sonoma County. It is. It’s just that adjusting for cost of living doesn’t tell us something more than using actual wages does; housing costs are too high for at least half of all Sonomans, no matter how you measure it.

Adequate financial resources are nonetheless a critical ingredient for a freely chosen, flourishing life. Without them, the range of the possible is vastly curtailed.

**FIGURE 12 Median Personal Earnings by Race and Ethnicity (\$)**



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, 2015–2019.

\* Estimates with an asterisk have a greater degree of uncertainty. Due to small population sizes and survey sampling the standard error of the estimate is greater than 20% of the estimate.

## Living Standards in Sonoma County Today

- Overall, Sonoma County residents take home \$1,000 more annually than the typical resident of California. Since the 2014 report, the earnings of Sonoma County residents have increased by about \$7,000 (adjusted for inflation).<sup>37</sup>
- Despite having higher Education Index scores, women earn much less than men, with men taking home \$11,500 more than women in Sonoma County. This gap has widened since the last report, when men in Sonoma made \$8,500 more than women. For all racial and ethnic groups except for Native Americans, men earn more than women.
- In Sonoma County, white residents earn over \$15,000 more than Latino, Native American, and NHOPI residents.
- Latino, Native American, and NHOPI residents of Sonoma County have the lowest median personal earnings among the major racial and ethnic groups, about \$29,000, \$29,000, and \$26,000, respectively. Due to their small population size, the estimate of NHOPI earnings has a higher degree of uncertainty than those for other racial and ethnic groups. Native Americans in Sonoma earn roughly \$3,500 less than Native Americans at the state level. Asian and NHOPI residents earn \$10,000 to \$15,000 less in Sonoma than in the state overall.
- Median personal earnings for Black residents in Sonoma County are \$2,000 higher than the median personal earnings for all Black Californians—\$38,500 and \$36,400, respectively.
- Among census tracts, median earnings range from \$16,500 in the Rohnert Park B/C/R Section to \$72,400 in East Bennett Valley (Santa Rosa).

Despite having higher Education Index scores, women earn much less than men, with men taking home \$11,500 more than women in Sonoma County.

## Low-Wage Work

A significant portion of low-wage workers in Sonoma County are employed in agriculture or the service industry (including hospitality and tourism), and nine out of ten Sonoma County agricultural workers have jobs in the wine industry. In 2018, approximately 11,060 vineyard workers were employed in the county, making possible a grape harvest valued at \$2 billion,<sup>38</sup> yet a Sonoma County Department of Health Services survey released in 2015 estimated that 92 percent of farmworker families in Sonoma County do not earn enough money to meet their basic needs.<sup>39</sup> Farmworkers are more likely to experience food insecurity than the county's poorest residents (those at or below the 200 percent poverty line)—17 percent of farmworkers and 11 percent of residents living in poverty experience food insecurity. Both lack of insurance coverage and unaffordable health care costs are major barriers to well-being for farmworkers; less than one-third report having

some form of health insurance.<sup>40</sup> Farmworkers in Sonoma are approximately 91 percent male and 95 percent Latino. In California as a whole, 90 percent of agricultural workers are immigrants from Latin America, and 57 percent are estimated to be undocumented.<sup>41</sup>

Sonoma County is also home to a significant Indigenous farmworker population, who face additional challenges over and above what other undocumented, non-English-speaking, low-wage workers experience in Sonoma. Many Indigenous residents, not speaking Spanish, may not be able to interpret evacuation orders; some have been coerced to endure horrifically hazardous conditions to work amid wildfires that forced the evacuation of other Sonomans.<sup>42</sup> As Gervacio Peña Lopez, a board member of the Sonoma Indigenous workers' group *Movimiento Cultural de la Unión Indígena*, stated, "There is no resource we can count on, so there's nothing left but to work."<sup>43</sup> This gaping hole in the social safety net can and should be addressed by policy enforcing fair treatment of agricultural workers.

After surveying Sonoma County agricultural workers, North Bay Jobs with Justice developed five priorities to present to community leaders: ensuring that safety and evacuation training is offered in the first language of workers, including Indigenous languages; providing disaster insurance; implementing community safety observers; mandating premium hazard pay; and ensuring that farmworkers have access to clean bathrooms and water. These priorities provide important guidance on improving the conditions of low-wage agricultural workers and lessening their vulnerability to health threats.

In 2019, one in ten workers in Sonoma County worked in hospitality and tourism, and this field has been severely impacted by Covid-19—nearly 27 percent lost their jobs, a total of over 6,000 workers.<sup>44</sup>

### BOX 13 Ensuring a Living Wage: Policy Victories and Setbacks

*A Portrait of Sonoma County* (2014) made a two-pronged recommendation to improve the standard of living countywide: **improve school enrollment rates** (pre-K through high school) and **improve job quality** by raising wages, enhancing benefits, and reducing scheduling variability.

Shortly after the *Portrait's* launch, Sonoma County took up and passed a living wage ordinance at the end of 2015.<sup>45</sup> A coalition of advocates pointed out that this living wage ordinance—nominally designed to ensure a \$15/hour wage—carved out ample exemptions, didn't include sick leave provisions, and didn't index wage floor increases to inflation, thereby perpetuating "paying poverty wages to many employees of firms with economic ties to the county."<sup>46</sup> Sonoma County is out of compliance with the living wage ordinance's requirement to consider annual cost-of-living increases due to multiple natural disasters.<sup>47</sup> When set against

the backdrop of Covid-19—a pandemic likely to continue for the foreseeable future—it is imperative that administrative backlogs caused by natural disasters are not allowed to stand in the way of improving the lives of those most affected by and vulnerable to these same disasters. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors began the work of adjusting the living wage ordinance in a September 2021 meeting, and further action is pending.<sup>48</sup>

Despite slow progress countywide, there have been several successful campaigns to pass living wage legislation at the municipal level. North Bay Jobs with Justice, the North Bay Labor Council, and other labor, environmental, and community organizations have coalesced around this goal, and minimum wage ordinances exceeding statewide minimum wage requirements were passed in fall 2019 in Petaluma, Sonoma City, Santa Rosa, and Novato.<sup>49</sup>

## Where People Live: Housing, Homelessness, and People on the Move

The events of recent years showed more clearly than ever why housing is a critical human development issue. More than just a place to lay our heads at night, housing is a fulcrum of opportunity. Where we live governs which jobs we can easily access, the quality of the air we breathe, how vulnerable we are to the effects of climate change or pandemics, and much more. Stable, affordable housing free of hazards such as peeling paint or fraying electrical wires is particularly important for the youngest Sonomans, whose health and safety are compromised by poor housing conditions, whose school outcomes and emotional health are put at risk by the instability of frequent moves, and whose development is threatened when financial insecurity and overcrowding create toxic stress in the household.

The centrality of housing to well-being means that the affordable housing shortage in Sonoma County shapes residents' choices and opportunities in numerous ways. Housing costs drive the region's sky-high cost of living, entrench generational and racial inequities, and limit poor children's access to quality public schools. As climate change makes wildfires more frequent and severe, families living in ecologically vulnerable areas in the wildland-urban interface are at great risk, as Sonoma County residents know all too well. Funding affordable housing, preserving and acquiring affordable units, and providing rental subsidies and services to vulnerable populations—such as people experiencing homelessness, seniors on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, young people aging out of foster care, people with mental illness, people with very low earnings, and formerly incarcerated people—are necessary to ensure that all Sonomans can live with safety, dignity, and stability.

The high cost of housing in Sonoma County is a long-standing problem that seems to get worse by the day. Fifty-two percent of renters in Sonoma County face a high rental burden (meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their incomes on rent). The burden varies by race and ethnicity. Fifty-two percent of Asian and 53 percent of white renters in the county face a high housing burden, compared to 59 percent of Latino renters and 68 percent of Black renters.

Racial disparities are also apparent in terms of homeownership; two in three Asian and white households in Sonoma County own their own homes, double the rate of Black households (34 percent) and well above the share of Latino households (39 percent) or Native American households (48 percent, though this figure has a high degree of uncertainty due to small population size). Disparities in the value of these homes are striking as well; the median home value for white homeowners is \$598,000 and \$549,000 for Asian homeowners. The median home value for Black and Native American homeowners is roughly \$498,000, and that

Housing is just too expensive, and some people need to work multiple jobs to keep up. We talk about affordable housing, but the definition of what's affordable is different for someone with a higher income compared to someone with a lower income. Therefore, we should be working on creating income-based housing solutions in Sonoma.

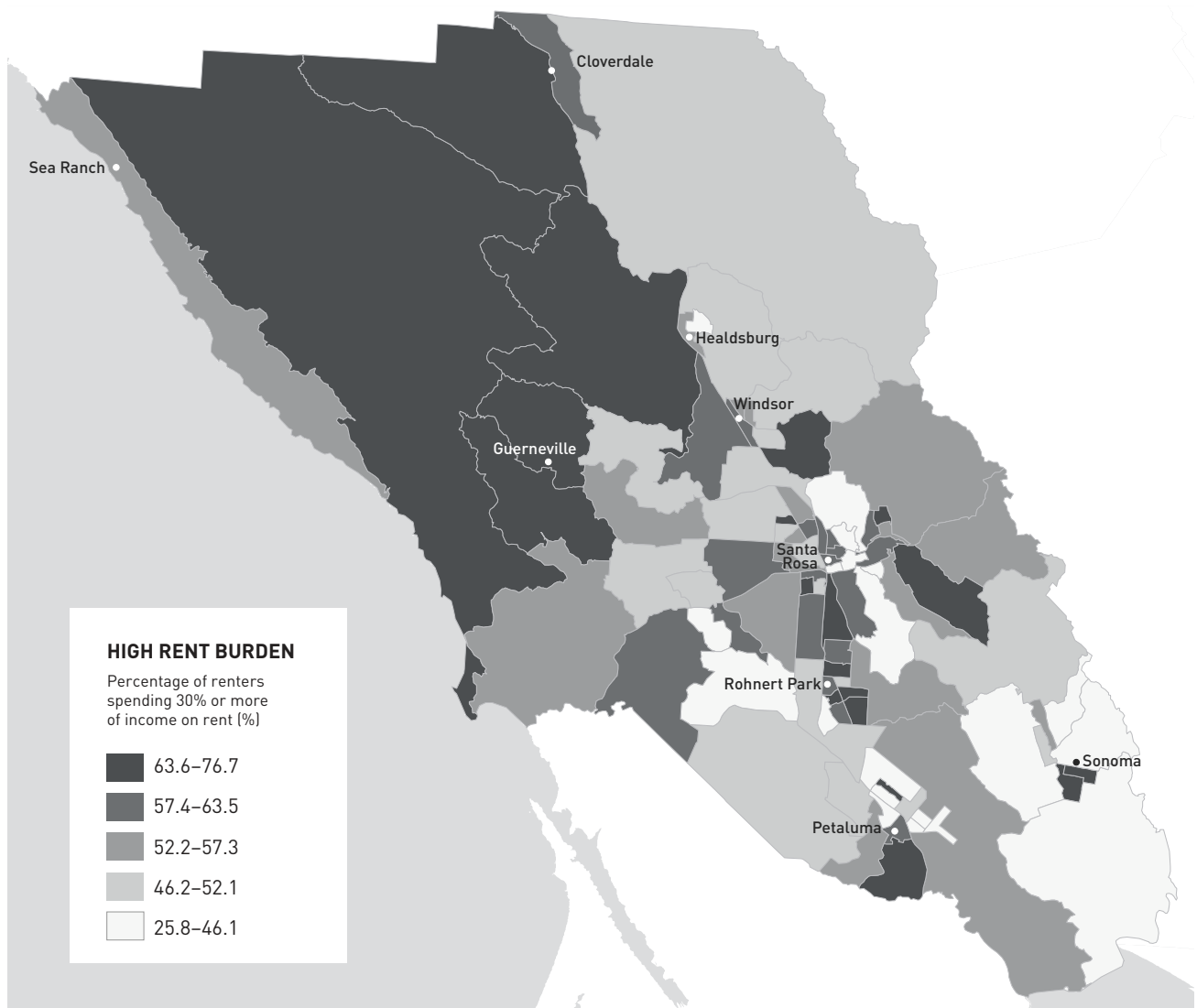


Black first-generation Belizean woman who has lived in Sonoma County for nearly three decades

of Latino homeowners is \$450,000. These differences in both homeownership and home values translate into a significant wealth gap between Asian and white residents on the one hand and Black, Latino, and Native American residents on the other.<sup>50</sup> By census tract, median home values range from \$1.67 million in Dry Creek to \$138,500 in Taylor Mountain.

One might expect a strong correlation between lower-scoring census tracts and high rental burden, or between low earnings and high rental burden, but these links are surprisingly weak. While the general trend is toward higher rental burdens in lower-earning areas, tracts in which half or more of all renters pay 30 percent or more of their income on rent are found across the county, in high-,

**MAP 14 Rent Burden**



medium- and low-income areas. Of course, for a person making \$100,000 per year, paying 30 percent of one's wages in rent still leaves \$70,000 for everything else. The case is very different for a highly rent-burdened person making \$20,000, who would have just \$14,000 per year left for food, health care, childcare, transportation, clothing, and more.

In the last five years, Sonoma County home prices increased by 40 percent. In the months following the 2017 Tubbs Fire, which destroyed 6 percent of the homes in Santa Rosa, rental costs there increased three times faster than usual, and the increase in home prices grew to 12 percent per year, up from 7 percent previously, as displaced families sought new places to live.<sup>51</sup>

Covid-19 has also contributed to a rapid increase in home prices as people able to work remotely, untethered from a physical workplace, leave urban centers for suburban, exurban, and rural areas where they can afford more space—a move strengthened by low mortgage rates. The number of migrants moving from San Francisco to Sonoma County doubled between 2019 and 2020, according to data from the US Postal Service.<sup>52</sup>

## Homelessness in Sonoma County Today

Homelessness in California is driven by a number of factors, chief among them the state's outsized housing costs and related lack of affordable housing. California overall had the largest increase in homelessness of any state from 2019 to 2020, a 6.8 percent increase, roughly three times the national increase of 2.2 percent.<sup>53</sup> The good news is that Sonoma County's efforts at reducing homelessness in recent years have bucked the statewide trend. As of February 2020, 2,745 individuals were experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County, a decrease of 7 percent since 2019.<sup>54</sup>

The bad news is that homelessness has been exacerbated nationwide by Covid-19—loss of work, loss of housing, and public health restrictions on shelter capacity have made the problem worse. The most recent systematic counts of the homeless population in Sonoma County and at the national level concluded in early 2020, before the pandemic began. Even in the best of times, homeless counts understate the true scope of the situation, and that is likely to be particularly true against the backdrop of Covid-19.

In California, 70 percent of unhoused residents are unsheltered, meaning they live outdoors in places like streets or parks, compared to 39 percent nationwide. California has the highest rate of unsheltered homelessness in the country (see **PAGE 49** in *A Portrait of California 2021–2022* for more on homelessness statewide). Sonoma follows this trend; 62 percent of county residents experiencing homelessness are unsheltered. In other words, only about four in ten people in Sonoma County experiencing homelessness have access to temporary shelter (temporary shelter includes a vehicle, emergency shelter, or transitional housing).<sup>55</sup>

When faced with challenges like the wildfires and climate change, Pomo people aren't packing up and moving to Idaho to avoid it. This is our homeland and we're here, connected to it, it's part of our DNA, and we will stand to always protect it.



Pomo Indian & Miwok Indian community member, lifelong Sonoma resident, born in Santa Rosa



Contrary to a common stereotype, people experiencing homelessness in Sonoma (and across California) by and large did not come to the region from elsewhere; nearly nine in ten lived in the county prior to housing loss. Nearly two-thirds had been homeless for a year or more, and almost one-quarter reported job loss as the primary event that led to their homelessness. As is the case with homelessness across the United States,<sup>56</sup> Black and Native American people are overrepresented among Sonoma County residents who are unhoused. Black residents are about 1.5 percent of Sonoma’s population while Native Americans make up under 1 percent, yet these groups constitute 6 percent and 9 percent of Sonoma’s homeless population, respectively. Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders are also overrepresented—they make up 0.4 percent of the county population and 1 percent of the homeless population. LGBTQ residents, too, are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness. Sixteen percent of Sonoma County residents who are unhoused identified as LGBTQ.

Among youth experiencing homelessness, 28 percent identified as LGBTQ.<sup>57</sup> LGBTQ youth who are homeless often experienced family rejection and abuse related to their sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>58</sup> People who have been in the foster care system are also more likely than others to experience homelessness; 14 percent of homeless adults in the county have been in the foster care system as have 28 percent of homeless youth, and 6 percent of homeless youth had been living in foster care immediately prior to becoming homeless.<sup>59</sup>

People with disabilities are more likely to experience homelessness than people without them. In the county, 23 percent of people experiencing homelessness report having a physical disability, and among those over age 55, 34 percent reported a physical disability. Four in ten reported at least one “disabling condition,” a categorization defined as “a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury that is expected to be long-term and impacts the individual’s ability to live independently; a developmental disability; or HIV/AIDS.”<sup>60</sup> By comparison, just 12 percent of Sonoma County residents (excluding residents who are institutionalized) report having a disability of some kind (including cognitive as well as physical difficulties).<sup>61</sup> Eighteen percent of Sonomans experiencing homelessness receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Despite recent funding commitments from the federal, state, and county governments to help residents struggling with homelessness, there is still a need to enact policies that will fully end homelessness countywide over the long term. These measures include providing rental subsidies and services and supporting human-centered, trauma-informed services rather than criminalization. More than eight in ten Sonoma County residents experiencing homelessness reported that they would like affordable housing if it became available soon, and seven in ten cited unaffordable rent as an obstacle to securing permanent housing.<sup>62</sup> Comprehensively addressing the root causes of housing unaffordability and insecurity is necessary to move toward an end to homelessness.

There are food security and homeless issues, but there is another issue that is urgent—affordable housing. In our city and Sonoma Valley, this is a not an easy problem we can solve overnight, it is a long-term issue. We have been working on this for many years. We have made progress, but I’m not satisfied with the progress we’ve made so far.



Decade-long Sonoma resident, landlord, advocate, and member of the Asian community





**BOX 15 People on the Move**

Between 2015 and 2019, 22,000 people moved out of Sonoma County each year, on average. About 24,500 new residents replaced departing residents annually, resulting in a net increase of 2,500 residents, or 0.5 percent of Sonoma’s total population.<sup>63</sup> Who is moving to Sonoma and who is leaving?

Nearly seven in ten people who moved to Sonoma came from other parts of California. Over a quarter of new residents came from the five-county Bay Area, with about 10 percent moving from Marin and 6 percent from San Francisco. The next-most-common places people moved from are the Sacramento, Vallejo, Los Angeles, and San Jose metro areas; each of these places accounts for roughly 5 percent of new residents. About 20 percent of new arrivals came from other parts of the United States, and 10 percent came from abroad.<sup>64</sup>

Of those who moved away from Sonoma County, 62 percent remained in California and 38 percent left the state altogether. The five-county Bay Area was the destination for the largest share of Sonoma-leavers; about 17 percent of those departing the county moved to Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, or San Mateo Counties. (Nearly twice as many people moved in the opposite direction; 27 percent of new arrivals in Sonoma County hailed from the five-county Bay Area.) Nearly 9

percent of departing Sonomans moved to the Sacramento metro area, 7 percent to Lake or Mendocino Counties, 5 percent to the Vallejo or Napa metro areas, and 5 percent to the Central Valley.<sup>65</sup> In sum, more people move from the Bay Area to Sonoma County than vice versa, and people moving away from Sonoma County disproportionately headed north or east to inland California.

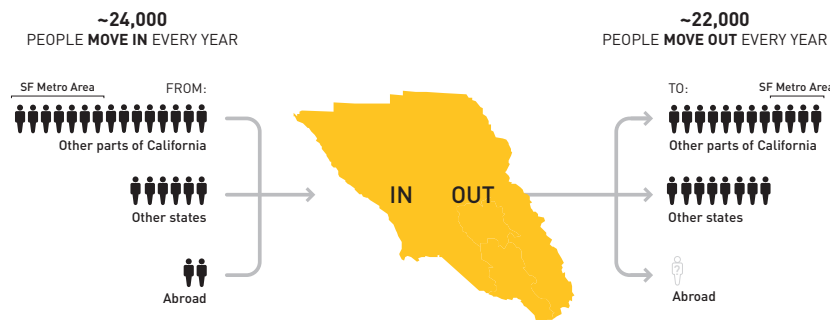
Movers either into or out of Sonoma tend to be younger and better educated and to have lower earnings than the county median. This combination of youth, higher levels of education, and low earnings suggests that many of these movers are recent college graduates relocating for new jobs. Those who moved within the county also tend to be younger and have lower earnings but have similar levels of educational attainment to those who didn’t move at all. (In general, young people move more frequently than older people.) Forty-five percent of adults who moved to Sonoma and 42 percent of those who moved out had at least a bachelor’s degree, compared to 35 percent of those who did not come or go; this may be because people with bachelor’s degrees have more choice in the labor market than those without. The median earnings of those who moved (whether into, out of, or within the county) are \$5,000 to \$10,000 lower than those of residents who stayed in the same home.<sup>66</sup>

In terms of race and ethnicity, there are few differences between those moving into and out of the county. About 65 percent of the people moving in or out of Sonoma are white, very similar to the share in the county population overall. The subset of people who have come from outside of California or left for other states, however, is disproportionately white; white people make up about 80 percent of these groups. Three to four percent of the people moving both into and out of Sonoma are Black; while low, this is more than double their share in the county population overall. Twenty-three percent of those who moved into Sonoma and 19 percent of those who moved out are Latino.<sup>67</sup> This is lower than their share of the county population. This low share of Latinos may be influenced by undercounting of migrant workers in the American Community Survey, or it may indicate that the Latino population in Sonoma is less transient than other racial and ethnic groups.

**We’ve been here since time immemorial, and you know our traditional values connect us to this place. It’s our ancestral territory; it’s also a sacred place to us. That puts us in a unique position because we’ll continue to be here.**



**Pomo Indian & Miwok Indian community member, lifelong Sonoma resident, born in Santa Rosa**



## Conclusion

Between 2012 and 2019, well-being in Sonoma County improved overall. But this aggregate progress bypassed too many, particularly county residents of color and those who are undocumented, and stubborn inequalities between racial and ethnic groups persisted. The inequalities that exist today are not natural or inevitable, nor are they a product of chance; they are the result of policy decisions made by people in power. Different decisions, made through different, more inclusive decision-making processes, can lead to better, fairer outcomes.

The research and data in this report prompt several critical questions that people in Sonoma County, including but not limited to county and city policymakers, must answer to ensure flourishing lives for all of Sonoma's residents:

- What actions can we take in the areas of health, education, and living standards that will improve well-being in Sonoma and narrow the gaps that exist by place, race and ethnicity, and gender?
- What is our commitment to addressing structural issues like racism and gender inequality that hamper progress across all areas?
- What concrete actions can we take to increase human security in Sonoma County in the face of wildfires and the Covid-19 pandemic?
- What options do we have to make affordable housing a reality in Sonoma County?
- How can decision-makers empower communities in the lowest-scoring tracts to make decisions about their own well-being? How can we best ensure that people living there have the resources they need to thrive?
- How can we best support our neighbors across the county who face particular threats, such as being undocumented or homeless?
- What can people living in high-scoring communities do to help make Sonoma County a place where all residents have a fair chance to live flourishing lives?
- How can we fund Covid-19 and fire recovery in ways that don't exacerbate the inequities laid out in this report?
- What are the existing policies and practices that intentionally or functionally exclude groups from obtaining the resources and supports they need to achieve better health, greater access to education, and improved living standards?
- What is my personal role and responsibility in understanding the impacts of these inequities and working to undo them?

In early 2022, the organizations that have spearheaded this project will lead a process of community engagement designed to answer these and other important questions with a view to developing an Agenda for Action to guide the county's collective work over the next five years. This agenda, once completed, will become part of this report.

In our community, numerous people have a lot of experience, time, and talents they want to contribute to our community. This is impressive to me, and also that's the reason I joined a local community board.



Decade-long Sonoma resident, landlord, advocate, and member of the Asian community

I think that there is brightness and hope but there's a long road ahead.



Queer Latinx Sonoma resident of eleven years

# Sonoma County HDI by Race and Ethnicity and by Gender

RANK	HDI	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (% of adults 25+)	AT LEAST BACHELOR'S DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (% ages 3 to 24)	MEDIAN EARNINGS (\$)	HEALTH INDEX	EDUCATION INDEX	INCOME INDEX
<b>United States</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>77.3</b>	<b>36,533</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>5.24</b>
<b>California</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>81.0</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>39,528</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>5.79</b>
<b>Sonoma County</b>	<b>6.19</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>78.4</b>	<b>40,531</b>	<b>6.77</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>5.96</b>
<b>GENDER</b>										
1 Men	5.95	80.2	12.8	33.8	12.5	79.2	43,072	5.92	5.54	6.38
2 Women	5.87	84.2	9.6	36.4	13.6	78.8	31,586	7.56	5.81	4.23
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>										
1 Asian	6.86	85.1	10.5	46.3	18.4	87.8	37,083	7.95	7.28	5.34
2 White	6.74	81.6	4.0	41.5	15.7	80.0	44,131	6.50	6.49	6.55
3 Latino	4.93	85.5	36.2	13.3	4.2	77.1	29,066	8.13	3.02	3.65
4 Black	3.99	71.0	10.1	32.1	4.8*	69.3	38,511	2.07	4.30	5.60
Native American			13.5	10.4*	2.4*	94.8	28,864		5.51	3.61
NHOPI			11.1	23.7*	11.3*	77.2	26,378*		4.93	2.98*
<b>GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY</b>										
1 White Men	6.59	79.5	4.2	40.5	15.6	79.0	52,989	5.62	6.34	7.82
2 White Women	6.38	83.6	3.7	42.5	15.8	80.9	36,215	7.32	6.64	5.18
3 Latino Men	4.85	83.7	40.2	11.9	2.7	77.8	32,290	7.39	2.79	4.38
4 Latina Women	4.77	87.1	31.9	14.7	5.8	76.3	23,755	8.80	3.27	2.26
Asian Men			10.0	48.6	20.9	84.9	38,927		7.24	5.68
Asian Women			10.8	44.7	16.6	90.7	35,412		7.39	5.02
Black Men			10.8	29.0	3.3*	76.1	44,958		4.71	6.68
Black Women			9.1	35.8	6.5*	62.9	21,609*		3.97	1.60*
Native American Men			14.7	18.0*	4.9*	96.2	28,042		5.92	3.41
Native American Women			12.5	3.3*	N/A	94.3	29,890*		5.08	3.85*
NHOPI Men			18.1	12.7*	11.2*	93.3	28,358*		5.66*	3.48*
NHOPI Women			5.7	32.1*	11.5*	71.8	22,127*		5.03	1.76*

**DATA SOURCES:**

**Life expectancy:** California and Sonoma: Measure of America calculations using mortality data from the California Department of Public Health and population data from US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample. Estimates for California use 2019 data, and estimates for Sonoma use 2014–2019 data. US: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2019.

**Education and Earnings:** Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample. Estimates for the US, California, and Sonoma overall use 2019 data, and estimates for Sonoma breakdowns use 2015–2019 data.

\* Estimates with an asterisk have a greater degree of uncertainty. Due to small population sizes and survey sampling the standard error of the estimate is greater than 20% of the estimate.

**Note:** Life expectancy estimates for Asian and Black residents were calculated with one death imputed into age categories with no deaths. These estimates have a greater degree of uncertainty.

# Sonoma County HDI by Census Tract

RANK	HDI	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (% of adults 25+)	AT LEAST BACHELOR'S DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (% ages 3 to 24)	MEDIAN EARNINGS (\$)	HEALTH INDEX	EDUCATION INDEX	INCOME INDEX
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<b>California</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>81.0</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>39,528</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>5.79</b>
<b>Sonoma County</b>	<b>6.19</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>78.4</b>	<b>40,531</b>	<b>6.77</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>5.96</b>
1 East Bennett Valley	8.65	85.0	2.4	62.6	24.1	81.8	72,412	7.92	8.05	9.98
2 Rural Cemetery	8.21	82.5	2.7	59.3	24.7	90.0	63,367	6.88	8.69	9.06
3 Old Quarry	7.94	81.7	3.8	53.8	19.4	93.1	61,250	6.54	8.45	8.82
4 Fountain Grove	7.83	81.6	3.6	60.2	25.6	84.8	60,615	6.50	8.24	8.75
5 Arnold Drive/East Sonoma Mountain	7.47	82.3	1.2	49.2	16.9	90.4	51,447	6.79	8.00	7.61
6 Windsor East	7.40	80.5	2.8	52.2	23.8	89.1	53,807	6.04	8.24	7.92
7 Annadel/South Oakmont	7.40	82.2	2.9	58.1	26.5	100.0*	42,386*	6.75	9.19	6.27*
8 Central Bennett Valley	7.28	78.8	3.6	49.3	22.4	87.2	59,758	5.33	7.84	8.65
9 Cherry Valley	7.23	81.0	2.4	55.9	25.9	83.8	50,000	6.25	8.02	7.41
10 Dry Creek	7.22	84.0	10.7	50.9	22.5	94.5	39,928	7.50	8.29	5.86
11 Old Healdsburg	7.13	86.8	3.7	51.0	17.7	75.1	41,770	8.67	6.55	6.17
12 Meadow	7.10	81.1	5.3	43.9	14.3	90.3	51,014	6.29	7.46	7.55
13 Occidental/Bodega	7.05	82.6	5.2	54.7	23.4	83.3	44,239	6.92	7.68	6.57
14 Sonoma Mountain	6.93	83.1	8.6	44.4	14.1	84.9	46,190	7.13	6.81	6.87
15 Gold Ridge	6.88	84.7	6.5	60.0	27.3	89.3	31,662	7.79	8.60	4.25
16 Rohnert Park SSU/J Section	6.76	83.9	2.4	38.9	12.1	82.8	42,370	7.46	6.55	6.27
17 Sonoma City North/W Mayacamas Mountain	6.74	80.9	8.3	44.5	19.1	89.4	43,971	6.21	7.48	6.52
18 Petaluma Airport/Arroyo Park	6.71	82.9	4.6	46.3	16.5	74.2	46,633	7.04	6.16	6.93
19 Boyes Hot Springs West/El Verano	6.70	83.2	7.8	41.6	19.1	86.2	39,935	7.17	7.07	5.86
20 Sea Ranch/Timber Cove	6.66	81.8	6.6	63.6	36.3	94.4	29,494*	6.58	9.64	3.76*
21 Fulton	6.65	82.8	9.1	32.3	11.1	82.7	47,378	7.00	5.91	7.04
22 West Bennett Valley	6.64	81.5	8.2	49.8	22.2	83.0	42,105	6.46	7.25	6.22
23 Montgomery Village	6.62	79.1	5.7	46.9	17.9	79.7	51,886	5.46	6.72	7.67
24 Casa Grande	6.58	83.7	11.1	44.9	12.6	74.8	44,935	7.38	5.69	6.67
25 Northeast Windsor	6.54	84.7	12.2	26.1	9.4*	84.5	42,250*	7.79	5.59	6.25*
26 Grant	6.54	80.1	15.9	47.5	20.9	79.9	49,103*	5.88	6.45	7.29*
27 Kenwood/Glen Ellen	6.51	80.7	2.7	56.2	22.5	76.2	42,279	6.13	7.15	6.25
28 Laguna de Santa Rosa/Hall Road	6.49	81.3	7.7	33.6	13.8	83.2	46,507	6.38	6.20	6.91
29 West Windsor	6.46	85.6	14.8	28.4	10.6	83.0	39,232	8.17	5.49	5.73
30 Hessel Community	6.46	85.0	4.7	42.8	18.5	73.3	37,718	7.92	6.00	5.46
31 Alexander Valley	6.46	85.9	17.5	37.5	13.3	68.4	44,280	8.29	4.50	6.57
32 Carneros Sonoma Area	6.43	83.8	7.8	40.7	9.8*	83.4	38,036*	7.42	6.35	5.52*
33 Two Rock	6.41	84.7	7.6	34.5	11.1	78.6	39,418	7.79	5.68	5.77
34 Central East Windsor	6.36	84.6	9.2	34.5	14.3	81.2	36,971	7.75	6.00	5.32
35 Downtown Sonoma	6.34	80.2	6.2	48.4	18.3	78.2	43,664	5.92	6.64	6.48
36 Southwest Sebastopol	6.32	84.0	1.7	52.5	19.9	80.5	31,170	7.50	7.32	4.14
37 Russian River Valley	6.30	83.1	2.5	37.1	14.7	74.2	40,873	7.13	5.76	6.02
38 North Sebastopol	6.26	83.1	5.2	44.6	16.6	74.9	38,097	7.13	6.13	5.53
39 Rohnert Park F/H Section	6.25	81.2	6.1	34.6	11.5	83.8	41,606	6.33	6.27	6.14
40 Sunrise/Bond Parks	6.23	78.9	9.8	32.9	11.1	87.0	47,075	5.38	6.31	7.00
41 West Sebastopol/Graton	6.16	84.5	11.1	41.4	15.5	73.1	36,736*	7.71	5.50	5.28*
42 Pioneer Park	6.12	80.0	9.9	24.2	5.7*	88.7	44,932	5.83	5.85	6.67
43 Rohnert Park M Section	6.07	80.0	6.1	38.6	11.2*	85.5	39,583*	5.83	6.59	5.80*
44 Middle Rincon South	6.06	80.0	7.2	39.1	15.2	79.4	41,826	5.83	6.17	6.18
45 Piner	6.02	83.7	7.0	32.7	12.4	75.4	36,857	7.38	5.38	5.30
46 Spring Hill	6.01	77.7	12.3	44.5	17.6	90.0	40,000	4.88	7.29	5.87
47 Brush Creek	5.94	79.1	10.3	38.4	17.3	78.8	42,796	5.46	6.03	6.34
48 West Cloverdale	5.93	81.4	8.8	29.6	8.5*	82.4	39,026	6.42	5.66	5.70
49 Southern Junior College Neighborhood	5.92	78.6	2.9	44.4	17.9	73.2	43,138	5.25	6.12	6.39

# Sonoma County HDI by Census Tract

RANK	HDI	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (% of adults 25+)	AT LEAST BACHELOR'S DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (% ages 3 to 24)	MEDIAN EARNINGS (\$)	HEALTH INDEX	EDUCATION INDEX	INCOME INDEX
<b>United States</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>77.3</b>	<b>36,533</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>5.41</b>	<b>5.24</b>
<b>California</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>81.0</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>39,528</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>5.79</b>
<b>Sonoma County</b>	<b>6.19</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>78.4</b>	<b>40,531</b>	<b>6.77</b>	<b>5.85</b>	<b>5.96</b>
50 Central Healdsburg	5.91	82.0	10.0	35.4	14.8	82.2	34,926	6.67	6.12	4.93
51 Forestville/Rio Nido	5.90	79.1	5.9	40.5	14.7	85.6	37,332	5.46	6.85	5.39
52 Northern Junior College Neighborhood	5.89	80.4	6.1	28.6	9.3	85.1	38,761	6.00	6.02	5.65
53 La Tercera	5.88	79.6	7.1	30.0	8.6	80.2	43,370	5.67	5.55	6.43
54 North Healdsburg	5.87	79.4	5.9	44.6	14.4	72.8	42,060	5.58	5.80	6.22
55 Middle Rincon North	5.79	79.3	9.1	31.1	8.7	87.8	38,417	5.54	6.23	5.59
56 Spring Lake	5.77	80.1	6.7	38.5	15.5	77.2	37,776	5.88	5.96	5.47
57 Windsor Southeast	5.75	80.6	11.7	26.0	5.9*	82.3	40,266	6.08	5.24	5.91
58 McKinley	5.67	78.5	6.7	38.1	12.0	83.9	37,307	5.21	6.42	5.38
59 Southeast Sebastopol	5.64	80.3	7.3	44.7	21.6	79.6	31,676	5.96	6.71	4.25
60 Sonoma City South/Vineburg	5.45	77.1	10.8	38.6	14.2*	80.7	38,828	4.63	6.06	5.66
61 Cinnabar/West Rural Petaluma	5.45	80.8	8.8	32.6	13.4	74.3	35,018	6.17	5.23	4.95
62 Shiloh South	5.44	80.5	12.4	30.3	12.1	75.8	36,429	6.04	5.06	5.22
63 Larkfield-Wikiup	5.43	78.6	10.4	31.9	14.0	74.6	39,959	5.25	5.19	5.86
64 Downtown Rohnert Park	5.31	80.9	13.3	25.7	8.1*	73.6	36,859	6.21	4.43	5.30
65 Jenner/Cazadero	5.30	79.9	5.7	32.0	15.2	78.3	31,946	5.79	5.81	4.31
66 Rohnert Park D/E/S Section	5.30	81.4	14.3	26.8	10.9*	69.9	36,705	6.42	4.21	5.27
67 Olivet Road	5.25	81.0	14.0	24.2	11.5	83.3	30,930	6.25	5.41	4.08
68 West Cotati/Penngrove	5.23	79.6	12.1	32.0	7.7*	82.9	32,264	5.67	5.63	4.38
69 East Cotati/Rohnert Park L Section	5.21	78.8	4.8	35.7	14.2	65.0	38,474	5.33	4.70	5.60
70 Lucchesi/McDowell	5.19	78.7	15.9	25.5	7.0*	81.7	36,685	5.29	5.02	5.27
71 Burbank Gardens	5.15	73.2	11.9	36.4	15.5	86.4	40,456	3.00	6.51	5.95
72 Boyes Hot Springs/Fetters Springs/Agua Caliente E.	5.14	81.1	17.4	31.2	14.0	71.2	33,328	6.29	4.53	4.60
73 Monte Rio	4.91	79.5	8.2	35.6	13.3	73.5	29,654	5.63	5.32	3.79
74 Schaefer	4.82	78.2	14.3	19.0	3.2*	73.3	38,172	5.08	3.84	5.54
75 Guerneville	4.80	78.8	6.5	35.8	11.4	68.7	31,463	5.33	4.85	4.20
76 Wright	4.68	82.3	23.2	14.0	5.1*	68.9	32,196	6.79	2.89	4.36
77 Coddingtontown	4.67	76.9	14.6	21.1	6.8*	82.6	32,851	4.54	4.96	4.50
78 Central Rohnert Park	4.67	74.6	3.8	26.6	6.8*	85.9	32,408	3.58	6.00	4.41
79 Railroad Square	4.57	80.1	15.4	20.9	6.0*	66.3	32,878	5.88	3.34	4.51
80 Central Windsor	4.56	79.1	18.6	25.3	6.5*	74.0	30,984	5.46	4.13	4.10
81 West Junior College	4.53	80.4	12.1	33.6	12.0*	60.7	29,827	6.00	3.77	3.83
82 Rohnert Park A Section	4.50	78.8	15.8	20.6	6.6*	74.7	30,795	5.33	4.12	4.05
83 Kawana Springs	4.45	76.9	27.3	23.5	3.5*	84.7	31,591	4.54	4.56	4.23
84 Fetters Springs/Agua Caliente West	4.44	81.3	31.5	19.4	6.6	71.9	29,860	6.38	3.11	3.84
85 Roseland Creek	4.37	78.4	32.6	13.4*	3.8*	82.9	31,624	5.17	3.72	4.24
86 East Cloverdale	4.37	75.9	25.8	23.6	7.9*	75.8	35,286	4.13	3.97	5.00
87 Downtown Santa Rosa	4.32	75.3	6.8	37.9	10.4*	64.6	33,214	3.88	4.51	4.58
88 West End	4.22	76.7	22.4	24.3	11.1	73.3	31,150	4.46	4.07	4.13
89 Taylor Mountain	4.20	77.4	24.9	15.9	5.0*	75.7	31,893	4.75	3.54	4.30
90 Bellevue	4.16	78.7	25.4	16.2	3.0*	71.7	31,073	5.29	3.06	4.12
91 Sheppard	4.12	77.4	28.7	12.1	3.6*	79.9	30,919	4.75	3.54	4.08
92 Rohnert Park B/C/R Section	3.75	79.1	11.9	26.1	7.0*	87.5	16,516	5.46	5.78	0.00
93 Bicentennial Park	3.68	75.7	30.8	13.6	3.7*	76.9	29,569	4.04	3.23	3.77
94 Comstock	3.46	77.8	30.2	14.1	4.7*	67.4	26,608	4.92	2.42	3.04
95 Roseland	3.38	76.3	31.9	14.7*	3.5*	79.0	24,325	4.29	3.42	2.42
Miwok			11.2	23.2	8.4*	78.6	43,326		4.90	6.42
Downtown Cotati			11.1	26.4	11.0	78.5	36,375		5.15	5.21
North Oakmont/Hood Mountain			2.6	52.7	26.4	84.9*	29,653		7.99	3.79
Skyhawk			3.4	49.2	20.7	85.8	52,038		7.63	7.69

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Pera, "Ceremony Honors People Who Died in Sonoma County in 2017 North Bay Wildfires."
- <sup>2</sup> Silvy, "Flood Damage Estimates for Infrastructure More Than Double to \$56 Million."
- <sup>3</sup> County Administrator's Office, "Counties and Cities Affected by the Kincade Fire Reach \$31 Million Settlement with PG&E."
- <sup>4</sup> Sen, "Development as Capability Expansion."
- <sup>5</sup> Burchardt and Vizard, "Developing a Capability List."
- <sup>6</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994*.
- <sup>7</sup> Thompson, "A Running List of Record-Breaking Natural Disasters in 2020."
- <sup>8</sup> US Census Bureau ACS table B05006, 2015–2019.
- <sup>9</sup> US Census Bureau ACS tables S0505 and S0506, 2015–2019.
- <sup>10</sup> US Census Bureau ACS table B05006, 2015–2019 and 2006–2010.
- <sup>11</sup> Migration Policy Institute, "Profile of the Unauthorized Population: Sonoma County, CA."
- <sup>12</sup> Espinoza, "'There Is No Work.'"
- <sup>13</sup> UndocuFund, "UndocuFund for Disaster Relief in Sonoma County."
- <sup>14</sup> Lewis, *A Portrait of California 2021–2022*.
- <sup>15</sup> *New York Times*, "California Coronavirus Map and Case Count."
- <sup>16</sup> Mercado, "Review of Mortality in Sonoma County, 2020."
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> US Drug Enforcement Administration, "Fentanyl."
- <sup>19</sup> Mercado, "Review of Mortality in Sonoma County, 2020."
- <sup>20</sup> Chambers et al., *Sonoma County MHSA FY 2016–2019 Capacity Assessment — January 2020*.
- <sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, "California Coronavirus Map and Case Count."
- <sup>22</sup> Chambers et al., *Sonoma County MHSA FY 2016–2019 Capacity Assessment — January 2020*.
- <sup>23</sup> Gardner, *Fire Recovery in Sonoma County*.
- <sup>24</sup> YouthTruth, *Leading through Listening*.
- <sup>25</sup> Mercado, "Review of Mortality in Sonoma County, 2020."
- <sup>26</sup> Population Reference Bureau, "Depression-Related Feelings, by Grade Level."
- <sup>27</sup> Population Reference Bureau, "Suicidal Ideation (Student Reported), by Grade Level."
- <sup>28</sup> Population Reference Bureau, "Youth Suicide Rate."
- <sup>29</sup> Chambers et al., *Sonoma County MHSA FY 2016–2019 Capacity Assessment — January 2020*.
- <sup>30</sup> Horizons Foundation, *San Francisco Bay Area LGBTQ Community Needs Assessment 2018*.
- <sup>31</sup> County of Sonoma, "Measure O."
- <sup>32</sup> Oddo et al., "Changes in Precarious Employment in the United States."
- <sup>33</sup> YouthTruth, *Leading through Listening*.
- <sup>34</sup> Ernst, "Sonoma School District Looks at Changes for Special Ed System."
- <sup>35</sup> Benefield, "Why Aren't Classrooms Reopening for Special-Education Students?"
- <sup>36</sup> YouthTruth, *Leading through Listening*.
- <sup>37</sup> Single-year 2012 estimates were used for county and state estimates of personal median earnings in *A Portrait of Sonoma County* (2014).
- <sup>38</sup> Bennett, "Close to Home: Farmworkers and the Wealth of Wine Country."
- <sup>39</sup> Sonoma County Department of Health Services, *Sonoma County Farmworker Health Survey (FHS) 2013–14*.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>42</sup> Guerrero, "These People Are Bearing the Brunt of California's Climate Crisis."
- <sup>43</sup> Brown, "In California's Wine Country, Undocumented Grape Pickers Forced to Work in Fire Evacuation Zones."
- <sup>44</sup> SonomaCounty.com, "Tourism in Sonoma County."
- <sup>45</sup> Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, "Board of Supervisors Approves Living Wage Ordinance."
- <sup>46</sup> Myres and Rose, "Close to Home: A Token Living Wage Ordinance for County."
- <sup>47</sup> Bennett, "Supervisors to Review County Living Wage Ordinance."
- <sup>48</sup> Murphy, "Sonoma County Supervisors Consider Increasing 'Living Wage' Rate."
- <sup>49</sup> City of Petaluma, "Petaluma Minimum Wage"; City of Sonoma, "Minimum Wage Study"; City of Santa Rosa, "Minimum Wage"; City of Novato, "Novato Minimum Wage."
- <sup>50</sup> All calculations from US Census Bureau PUMS, 2019.
- <sup>51</sup> Rosalsky, "How a Blistering Housing Market Could Be Making Wildfires Even More Dangerous."
- <sup>52</sup> Melgar and Wu, "Americans Up and Moved during the Pandemic. Here's Where They Went."
- <sup>53</sup> US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report."

<sup>54</sup> Applied Survey Research, "2020 Sonoma County Homeless Census."

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Fusaro, Levy, and Shaefer, "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Lifetime Prevalence of Homelessness in the United States."

<sup>57</sup> Applied Survey Research, "2020 Sonoma County Homeless Census."

<sup>58</sup> Youth.gov, "Homelessness and Housing."

<sup>59</sup> Applied Survey Research, "2020 Sonoma County Homeless Census."

<sup>60</sup> US Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Disability Definition."

<sup>61</sup> US Census Bureau, ACS 2019–2015.

<sup>62</sup> Applied Survey Research, "2020 Sonoma County Homeless Census."

<sup>63</sup> Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS Migration/ Geographic Mobility Data Tables, 2015–2019.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS tables B07002, B07402, B07009, B07409, B07011, and B07411, 2015–2019.

<sup>67</sup> Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS tables B07004 and B07404, 2015–2019.

TABLE 2 From top to bottom (row-wise): County Health Rankings, 2021; US Census Bureau ACS, 2019; US Census Bureau ACS, 2019; California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, *2019 California Child Care Portfolio: Sonoma County*; California Department of Education, 2019–2020; Special arrangement with the US Census Bureau, 2015–2019; Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, "Minimum Wage"; US Census Bureau ACS, 2019; US Census Bureau ACS, 2019; US Census Bureau PUMS, 2015–2019.



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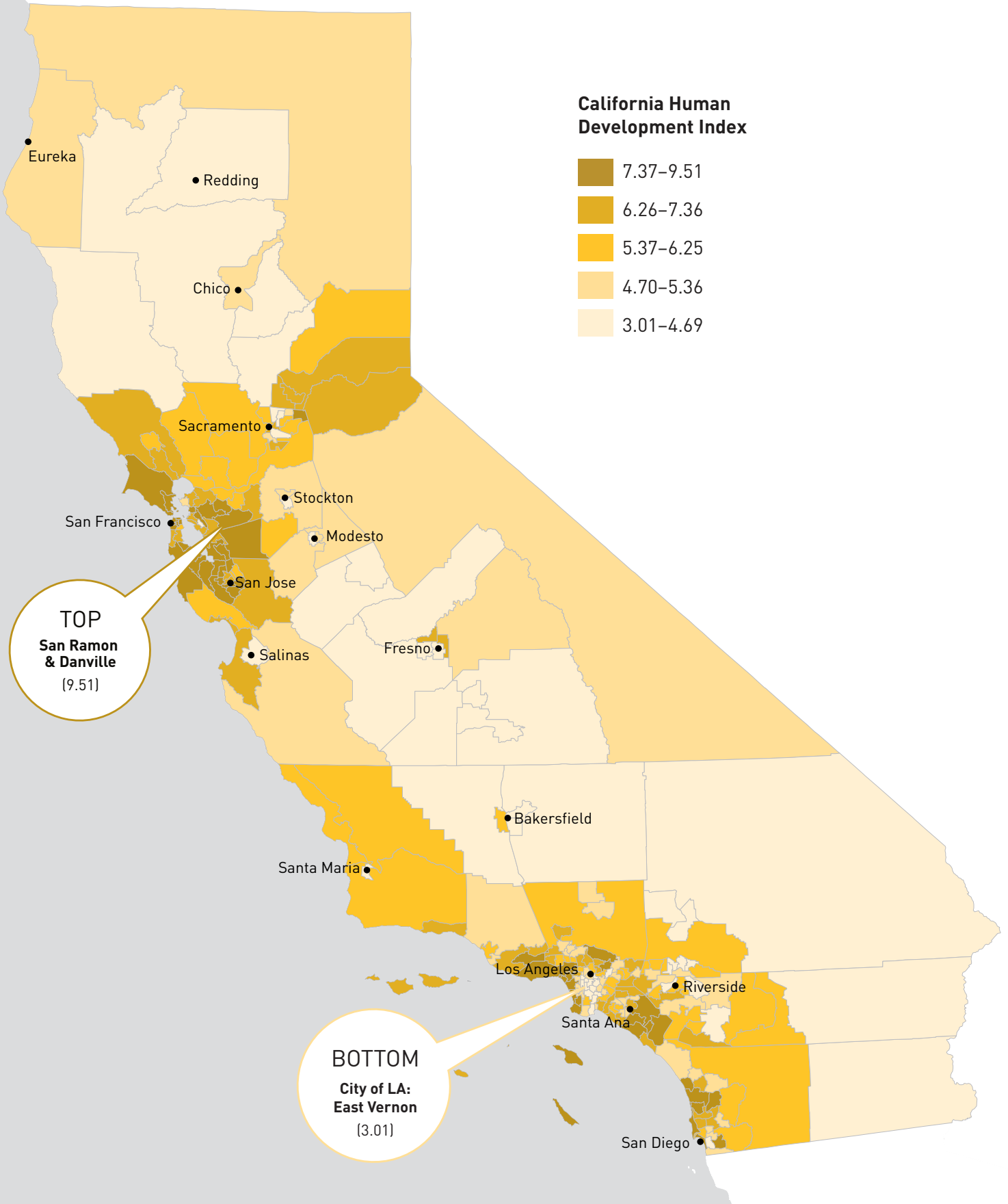
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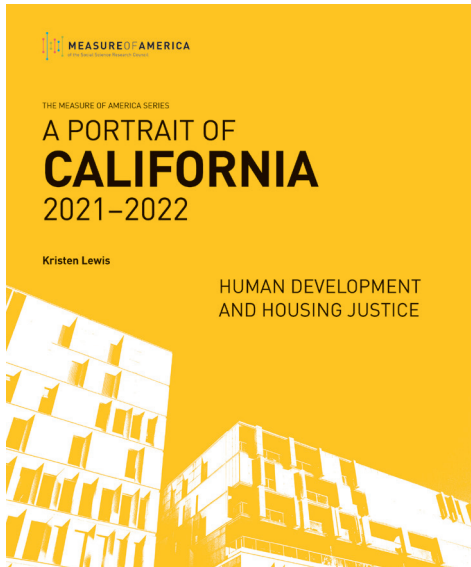
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# CALIFORNIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX



REGIONAL REPORT SERIES  
A PORTRAIT OF SONOMA COUNTY: 2021 UPDATE

A PORTRAIT OF **CALIFORNIA** 2021–2022  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING JUSTICE



*A Portrait of California 2021–2022* uses the American Human Development Index, a measure that distills **health, education,** and **earnings** indicators into a single gauge of well-being, in order to measure and track real progress in quality of life and the opportunities available to all Californians. This regional report shines a spotlight on Sonoma County.

Within *A Portrait of Sonoma County: 2021 Update*, readers will find analysis informed by the Index focused on places (county and census tracts) as well as demographic groups (gender and race and ethnicity). The *Portrait* also contains special features on housing, migration, homelessness, mental health, low-wage workers, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

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*“Studies like this one prove to be invaluable tools for policymakers to understand how the state has changed over time—to know, using data, who has been left behind and how to better serve communities in need.”*

Toni G. Atkins, California Senate President pro Tempore

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

**Measure of America** is a nonpartisan project of the nonprofit Social Science Research Council. It creates easy-to-use and methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being and opportunity in America and stimulates fact-based dialogue about these issues. Through reports, interactive maps, online tools, custom-built dashboards, community engagement, and commissioned research, Measure of America works closely with partners to breathe life into numbers, using data to identify areas of need, build consensus about priorities, pinpoint levers for change, and track progress over time.

**Kristen Lewis** is the director of Measure of America and author or coauthor of The Measure of America series of national, state, county, and city reports.

## ABOUT THE REPORT

*A Portrait of California 2021–2022* is an exploration of how California residents are faring. It analyzes well-being and access to opportunity using the human development framework and index, presenting American Human Development Index scores for California places and demographic groups, and examines a range of critical issues, including health, education, living standards, housing, homelessness, residential segregation, and inequality.

## ABOUT THE DESIGN

**Humantific** is an internationally recognized SenseMaking for ChangeMaking firm located in New York and Madrid.



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