

# **Executive Summary for the Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County (2009) and supplemental research for Issues Ballot**

Following are highlights from the **2009 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County** by Janet Armentor-Cota, Ph.D./Monique Ferranto-Joyner, B.A. The full Report can be found at [ww.kernfoundation.org](http://ww.kernfoundation.org). Updates are by Judi McCarthy, gleaned from *The Bakersfield Californian*, and Kern County Network for Children's 2011 Report Card. Research facilitates the Women's & Girls' Fund Issues Ballot.

## **Population Demographics**

This brief section uses data from the United States Census Bureau, the California Department of Finance, and the American Community Survey. It includes estimates for Kern County's population by sex, age group, ethnicity, and race.

- ◆ *Between 2000-2010, Bakersfield has been one of the fastest growing metro cities in the U.S., and grew more than any other city in California, now ranking #9 in size. The ten-year growth rate was 41%.*
- ◆ *In 2010, the total population of Kern County was 839,631, and Bakersfield grew to 347,483.*
- ◆ *In 2009, 48.2% of the population was female, and 31% of the population was under age 18.*
- ◆ *In terms of the county's racial diversity, about 44% of women reported their race as White, 37% Hispanic/Latino, 5% African American, 4% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2% reported two or more races.*

## **Basic Needs and Services**

This section uses data from the California Health Interview Survey, the California Childcare Resource and Referral Network, the United Way of Kern County, and the American Community Survey. It includes information on food bank access, nutrition, food stamp assistance, housing homelessness, and transportation.

- ◆ *In 2009, 20.6% of Bakersfield residents were living in poverty, up from 16.7% in 2008. The poverty rate for Kern County was 22.4% in 2009. The weighted average poverty threshold for a family of 4 in 2009 was \$21,954.*
- ◆ *In 2011, 47.% of Kern single moms with children live at the poverty level.*
- ◆ *In 2010, 51,013 Kern households participated in the CalFresh (food stamps) program, a 66% increase since 2007.*
- ◆ *Only 5% of Kern County women in poverty received public housing assistance in 2003.*
- ◆ *The 2011 Homeless Census counted 1,418 homeless people in Kern, with 92% in Bakersfield. In 2006, the Bakersfield Homeless Shelter reported that 66 % of those who received services were women.*
- ◆ *Almost twice as many women used public transportation than men in Kern County in 2007. More men had access to personal vehicle use than women.*
- ◆ *Among Kern County renters in 2007, 38% spent 35% or more of gross household income on rent.*

## **Economic Stability**

This section uses data from the American Community Survey, the California Employment Department, the California Health Interview Survey, and the California Childcare Resource and Referral Network. It includes information on labor force participation, paid family leave, earnings and occupations, poverty, public assistance, and childcare.

- ◆ *As of January 2011, Kern's unemployment rate was 16.9%,*
- ◆ *Communities with the highest jobless rates in June 2010 included Arvin (38.7%), Delano (37.5%) and McFarland (31.3%). Lowest rates were in Ridgecrest (9.1%), Tehachapi (10%), Bakersfield (11.1%).*
- ◆ *In 2008, women made up approximately 43 % of Kern County's labor force. The occupation most frequently occupied by Kern County women was Office/Administrative Support.*

- ◆ Women made up 70% of single parent households in Kern County during 2007.
- ◆ *Licensed care and school age programs in Kern County were available for only 34% of children with working parents in 2009, compared with 37% in 2008.*
- ◆ *Nationally, women with full-time jobs now have weekly earnings equal to 80.2% of what men earn.. For the second quarter of 2008, Kern County women made 60 cents for every dollar earned by Kern County men. The greatest income disparity by gender was among doctors, dentists, and diagnosticians. CSUB's 2011 State of Kern County Economy report states that our "gender earnings gap (37%) must shrink."*
- ◆ *Unincorporated communities are among the most poverty-stricken in the San Joaquin Valley. In Kern, such communities include Lamont, Weedpatch, and Pixley.*
- ◆ *Of California's former foster youth, 65% emancipate without a place to live and 51% are unemployed. 50% will become homeless within two years of emancipation. Approximately 300 young people "age out" of Kern County's foster system each year.*

## **Education and Training**

This section uses data from the California Department of Education and the American Community Survey. It includes information on enrollments, educational attainment, dropout rates, high school exit exam results, STAR test scores, and college prep classes.

- ◆ *Latinos now account for 60% of all students in Kern and nearly 22% of all students are English learners, with 96% of these Spanish-speaking.*
- ◆ *Out of 100 large metropolitan cities in the U.S., Bakersfield ranks last in bachelor's and graduate degree attainment and 99<sup>th</sup> in high school diploma attainment.*
- ◆ *In 2007, more than 25% of Kern County women over age 25 did not have a high school diploma. Only 12% of Kern County women had attained a bachelor's degree and less than 5% had an educational attainment beyond a bachelor's degree. In 2010, 17% of Kern County adults (both sexes) held bachelor's degrees or higher, compared with 38% statewide and 37% nationally.*
- ◆ *Of those in poverty with less than a high school diploma, 58% were women. Of those who were in poverty with some college or an associate degree, 65% were women. Of those who were in poverty with a bachelor's degree, 61% were women.*
- ◆ *In 2008, less than 25% of female high school graduates met the UC/CSU entrance requirements. Only 20% of boys completed these courses. Less than 22% of all graduates take the SAT exam.*
- ◆ *On the high school exit exam, Kern girls fared better than boys in English and Language Arts, while girls and boys fared similarly in Mathematics.*
- ◆ *On 2008 STAR tests, girls' scores peaked in fourth grade. By 11<sup>th</sup> grade, only 27% of girls scored at or above proficiency in English/Language Arts and only 2% scored at or above proficiency in Math.*
- ◆ *Kern County's truancy rate is 30% (vs 24% in the state), with the highest rate of 64% at South Fork Union (Kern River Valley) and the lowest rate of 2.65% at Pond Union.*
- ◆ *For 2008-2009, Kern County's dropout rate was 26.5% (females = 23%), with the highest rate at Maricopa Unified (65%) and the lowest at Muroc (6.2%), Taft (9.6%) and Wasco (11%).*
- ◆ *Compared to high school graduates, dropouts earn lower wages, pay fewer taxes, are more likely to commit crimes, are less likely to be employed, are more likely to be on welfare, and are less healthy.*
- ◆ *California's "Underachieving Schools List" includes 33 districts (42 schools) in Kern.*
- ◆ *Among California's emancipated foster youth, only 10% attend college, and only 2-3% of these graduate.*

## **Health Care (including data on teen pregnancy and maternity)**

This section uses data from the California Department of Public Health, the California Health Information Survey, the Kern County Department of Health, the California Healthy Kids Survey, the Department of Health

& Human Services, and the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. It includes information on mortality, health risks, health insurance, birth data, and teen pregnancy.

- ◆ *Kern County's rate of uninsured is 29.3%, above the state average of 24.3%. Kern residents with job-based coverage is only 38.8% vs. statewide average of 50.1%.*
- ◆ *In 2009, Kern county again had the highest rate of teen pregnancy in California, consistent among all ethnic groups. Hispanics had the highest rate among Kern girls, but white teens in Kern County gave birth at nearly 2-1/2 times the rate of whites statewide. In 2008, as Kern's rate of teen pregnancy rose, the state average dropped to its lowest point ever. However, the rate of teen births has dropped 43% between 1991-2009.*
- ◆ *Kern's high rate of teen births carries costs to society and to taxpayers. For 2,127 babies born to teen mothers in 2009, the direct cost to taxpayers was \$44 million. Indirect societal costs for these 2,127 babies is estimated at \$180 million for Kern County alone: higher medical costs for teen births, public assistance costs, costs for increased foster placement; behavioral problems; boys who grow up to be incarcerated; girls who become teen mothers themselves.*
- ◆ *70% of teen mothers drop out of high school.*
- ◆ *1 in 4 teen mothers will have their second baby within two years of the first baby.*
- ◆ *The infant death rate is higher in Kern County than statewide. 17% of infant deaths in Kern result from low birth weight or short gestation. African American infants die more frequently than other babies.*
- ◆ *The leading cause of death for women in Kern County in 2007 was heart disease. Kern's rate of heart disease is the highest of all California counties.*
- ◆ *Kern's rate of death from diabetes is second-worst in the state.*
- ◆ *In 2007, nearly 20% of Kern County women were diagnosed with asthma in comparison to 14% of women statewide. Approximately 13% of Kern children have asthma.*
- ◆ *Forty-eight percent of women in Kern County surveyed reported being overweight or obese, in comparison to 43% of women statewide. Kern's childhood obesity rate is 35.8%.*
- ◆ *Kern has the highest rate of Chlamydia in California, with 5,023 cases in 2009. Approximately 75% of cases occur in females, and 29.4% of cases occur in youth. Kern also has one of the highest rates of gonorrhea. Syphilis cases are on the rise in 2011.*
- ◆ *A higher proportion of women statewide are methamphetamine users compared to men. Meth is the most common drug for women users in California (44%).*
- ◆ *African American women suffer death from breast cancer at a higher rate than white women; a new study finds that African ancestry is linked to a more aggressive type of cancer that is more deadly.*

### **Physical, Sexual, and Domestic Safety**

This section uses data from the California Office of Statewide Planning and Development, the California Healthy Kids Survey, University of California, Berkeley Center for Social Services Research, RAND California, the Alliance Against Family Violence (AAFV), and the California Department of Justice. It includes information on injuries, community safety, foster care, domestic violence, sexual assault, adult and juvenile crime.

- ◆ *Unintentional poisoning and motor vehicle accidents were the two leading causes of fatal injuries to women in Kern County in 2006. Falls were the leading cause of non-fatal injuries.*
- ◆ *In 2009, Kern County had the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate in the state for homicide victims between ages 10-24.*
- ◆ *Since 2007, Kern County has had a higher number of reported incidents of domestic violence in comparison to California.*
- ◆ *Kern County had the 10<sup>th</sup> highest substantiated child abuse rate in California. Abuse is highest among Kern's African-American children.*
- ◆ *According to the AAFV, there were 3,322 crisis hotline calls in fiscal year 2009-2010. In the same period, 1,958 clients received domestic violence services. AAFV's shelter housed 159 clients. For the*

same period, the Women's Center High Desert (Ridgecrest) handled 775 unduplicated crisis hotline calls, sheltered 65 adults and 60 children, and facilitated 195 unduplicated restraining orders against domestic violence perpetrators. In 2008, Taft's Alpha House sheltered 74 women and children.

- ◆ In 2009 in Kern County, there were 16 domestic violence-related deaths in 12 separate incidents affecting 30 children.
- ◆ In 2009-2010, AAFV provided sexual assault assistance to 508 clients. In 2009, the Kern County Sheriff's office reported 117 rapes in their jurisdiction. The Sheriff reported 147 incidences of other sexual offense. There were a total of 20 arrests for these offenses.
- ◆ Foster youth who "age out" of the system at 18 are nearly 3 times more likely to be arrested and 70% more likely to end up incarcerated.

## **Senior and Aging Issues**

This section uses data from the California Department of Aging, the American Community Survey, and RAND California. It includes information on population, poverty and disability status, health, safety, supportive services, grandparent-headed households, and assisted living sites.

- ◆ There is a projected increase of 65% in Kern County's aging population by the year 2020. This is 6% higher than the statewide projections for 2020.
- ◆ In 2007, 20% of the aging population in Kern County was in poverty. This is 7% higher than the aging population in poverty statewide. *The Elder Economic Security Standard Index says a person 65+ needs a minimum annual income of \$17,277 for basic needs, yet the poverty guideline for a single adult is \$10,830.*
- ◆ Eighty-seven percent of elder hospitalizations in Kern County were due to accidental falls in 2005.
- ◆ In 2007, 14% of households in Kern County are headed by grandparents with no parent present in the home. This is almost 6% higher than the percentage of grandparent-headed households statewide.
- ◆ *In Kern, the adult protective services hotline fields about 3,000 suspected abuse referrals per year. Across the U.S., there are 1.5 million cases of elder abuse reported each year. It is estimated that only 1 in 14 cases is ever reported, and 86% of the abusers have an ongoing relationship with the victim.*
- ◆ *In California, the average daily private room rate in a nursing home in 2008 was \$249, about \$91,000 annually and well above the national average.*
- ◆ Nearly 17% of Kern's aging population has been diagnosed with a disability. *Currently, Kern County serves 4,621 aged, blind and disabled senior clients by connecting care-givers to them based on income. 175 clients benefit from in-home care through the Multi-Senior Services Program. From Jan. 2007 to Spring 2009, the County's Senior Outreach Assessment Program served 1,267 seniors dealing with behavioral or dementia-related challenges and/or counseling.*

### **Kern County Social Service Professionals Discuss the Status of Women and Girls in Kern**

From 1 to 20, the top issues highlighted were domestic violence, substance abuse, self-esteem, education, lack of mentors, poverty, transportation, resources, teen pregnancy, lack of role models, basic needs, sexual assault, affordable adequate child care, traditional gender roles, pay inequality, fragmentation of services, peer pressure, violence in general, hopelessness, and lack of opportunities.

#### **Previous focus areas and grants from the Women's & Girls' Fund of Kern County**

- 2008 – Education, Training & Mentoring:** CSUB (\$5,000); Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic (\$6,500); Girl Scouts Joshua Tree Council (\$8,500)
- 2009 – Education, Training & Mentoring:** Kern H.S. District Foundation (\$4,000); Garden Pathways (\$7,000); Kernville USD Family Resource Center (\$9,000)
- 2010 – Physical, Sexual & Domestic Safety:** Alliance Against Family Violence & Sexual Assault (\$10,000); Domestic Violence Advisory Council (\$10,000)
- 2011 – Education and Training:** Garden Pathways (\$5,000); Women's Economic Ventures (\$5,000); Kern Economic Development Foundation (\$10,000)