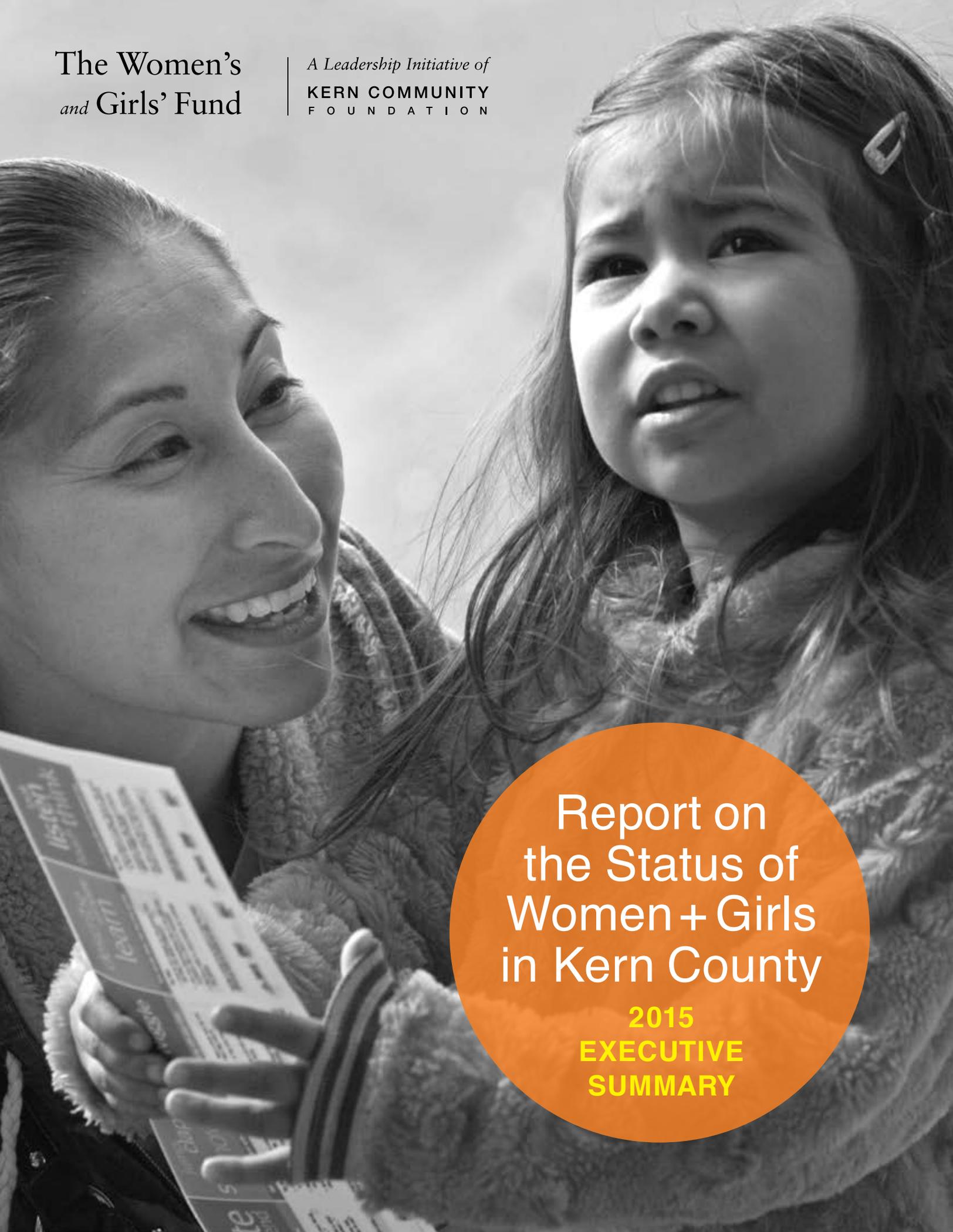


The Women's
and Girls' Fund

A Leadership Initiative of
**KERN COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**



Report on
the Status of
Women + Girls
in Kern County

**2015
EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

Women and girls make up nearly half of Kern County's population. That's not a surprising statistic. But what is surprising is how little we sometimes understand about the factors that affect the well-being of Kern County's female population.

This overview highlights key findings discovered in our comprehensive 2015 report on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County, which compiles the most recent research available on the issues and trends that impact the nearly 425,000 women and girls in Kern County.

Our hope is that this report offers a snapshot of where women are succeeding, where opportunities are most evident, and where obstacles prevent women from fully contributing to Kern County's economic, social and cultural growth. A better quality of life for Kern's women and girls means a better quality of life for everyone.

This report was spearheaded by the Women's and Girls' Fund, a leadership initiative of Kern Community Foundation, and United Way of Kern County Women's Leadership Council. We hope this report informs and inspires a spirit of support for the women and girls of Kern County, and provides guidance for the allocation of local resources in the coming years.

[Read the full report at kernfoundation.org](http://kernfoundation.org)



DEMOGRAPHICS

20%
of Kern County
females were born
in another country;

of those, just over 80% emigrated from Latin America. Three-quarters of Kern households are family households, and 17% of family households are headed by women.

Nearly a third
(30%)
of Kern County's
females are under the
age of 18 years.

Latinas make up half of the County's female population; whites account for 38%; Asian and African Americans, 5% each.

Consistent with the state's evolving demographics, 64% of all girls enrolled in Kern County K-12 schools are Latinas.

The average family size within the County is 3.73, compared with 3.56 in California and 3.26 in the United States. Three-quarters of Kern households are family households. And 17% of family households are headed by women—compared with 14% statewide.

Eight percent of Kern County's 42,805 veterans are women. The percentage is 10% statewide.

EMPLOYMENT & EARNINGS

The official unemployment rate for women in Kern County dropped from 16.7% in 2011 to 11.3% in 2013.

Kern County's year-round, full-time working women earn less than their male counterparts, \$31,853 vs. \$44,704, meaning:

**Kern women make
\$0.71 for every \$1 earned
by Kern men.**

Kern women also earn less than women statewide: \$31,853 vs. \$42,291 on average across California.

Within well-paying professions, Kern County women comprise a minority of the workforce: Women make up 2% of all physicians and surgeons in the County, and 17% of all in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

Nearly
52%
of privately owned
businesses in Kern County
are owned or co-owned
by women, employing more
than 40,000 people.

Kern County veterans have a lower rate of unemployment compared with non-veterans: 8% vs. 12%. Kern County's female veterans make \$0.80 for every \$1 a male veteran makes, compared with a \$0.71 figure for non-veteran women.

EDUCATION

Twenty-one percent of all girls enrolled in K-12 aren't proficient enough in speaking English to effectively participate in a traditional curriculum, and 73% are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

20-25%
of K-12 girls in Kern
County score below
basic level on
standardized tests

in every major subject area (English/language arts, history/social science, mathematics and science).

**Kern County girls
graduate at a greater
rate than boys:
84%**
compared with 76%.

MAKING THE CONNECTION: ETHNICITY, PREGNANCY AND POVERTY



Latinas now account for 50% of all females in Kern County, higher than the percentage of Latinas statewide (38%). Their numbers are growing; Latinas account for 59% of all Kern County women giving birth in a year.

Today, 51% of Kern County births are to single mothers, a greater percentage than the California rate of 35%. Of all Latinas giving birth in Kern County, 54% are single mothers; of all African-American women giving birth in Kern County, 86% are single mothers.

These demographic data are important because poverty in Kern County affects Latinas and single mothers at a greater rate than other females.

Of the entire Kern County female population living in poverty, 62% are Latina. Forty-four percent of all single-mother family households in Kern County live in poverty. For households headed by single mothers who have children under the age of five, 58% live in poverty.

Similarly, 11% of all women in the labor market are unemployed; 16% of all mothers who have children under the age of 5 years are unemployed.

MAKING THE CONNECTION: THE INTERSECTION OF EDUCATION, POVERTY AND EMPLOYMENT



In Kern County, the unemployment rate for anyone without a high school degree is 13%; that percentage plummets to 4% for anyone who attains a bachelor's degree or higher.

Among the County's female population, one out of four women live in poverty (24%). Of those females living in poverty: 37% have less than a high school education, and 22% are employed in lower-paying or part-time jobs that don't raise them out of poverty.

These concrete connections between educational attainment and economic security highlight the importance of education for the County's female population.

Today, 84% of all Kern girls graduate from high school. Of Kern County's 2013-2014 cohort of high school graduates, 38% of girls (and 28% of boys) graduated having completed all courses required for entrance to the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) systems.

Also of note in the 2013-2014 cohort of high school graduates, a greater percentage of migrant education girls (daughters of migratory workers) graduated high school having completed UC/CSU requirements at a higher rate than all girls (45% vs. 38%).

Across California, 61% of women have a high school degree or less. In Kern County, 78% of women have a high school degree or less.

Nearly one in every four Kern County women has less than a high school degree.

Among Kern Latinas 25 years and older, 42% have less than a high school degree.

Kern County employers indicate that potential employees need to have "soft skills" as well as technical skills. Soft skills are universally useful traits such as the ability to communicate well, teamwork, etiquette and work ethic.

Ninety-five percent of California's female veterans have a high school degree. More female veterans have a college degree, too: 46% vs. 40% for all California females.

POVERTY

In the state of California, 18% of all women have an income below the federal poverty level. For Kern County's females, that percentage rises to 25%.

Among Kern County females living in poverty, 44% live in "extreme" poverty—living on less than half of the minimum income used to define the federal poverty level.

Based on a "real cost budget" that takes into account housing, transportation, childcare, healthcare and other basic family expenses,

31% of all Californians and 34% of Kern County residents do not have an income sufficient to meet basic needs.

Women account for 29% of the County's total homeless population.

Within the homeless population, women make up 93% of single adults who are taking care of children.

HEALTH

Kern County mothers deliver a greater percentage of babies prematurely, and a slightly greater percentage of low birth-weight babies than the statewide average.

Teen birth rates have dropped in Kern County, from a high of 65 per 1,000 teens in 2008, to 49 per 1,000 in 2013. Still, that rate is considerably higher than state and national teen birth rate comparisons—16 and 19, respectively, per 1,000.

6% of Kern County women receive no prenatal care or only third-trimester prenatal care—

compared with 3% of California statewide. African-American women give birth to 5% of all children in Kern County, yet sustain the greatest percentage—13%—of all infant deaths in the County.

Compared with all California adults, Kern County adults have a higher rate of smoking, higher obesity, less physical activity, and a greater percentage consume drinks with significant sugar content.

Over a third of the County's adult population, including women, is overweight or obese.

44%
of Kern's children are
overweight or obese.

Kern County children eat more fruits and vegetables than the statewide average; however,

a greater percentage
of Kern children also
drink one or more
sodas/sugary drinks
per day.

SAFETY

The crime rate in Kern County—including both violent and property crime—is greater than that in the state and the nation.

Kern County's violent crime rate is 5.8/1,000 inhabitants, compared with a rate of 4.0/1,000 statewide.

Over the past decade, the number of emergency calls in Kern County for assistance related to domestic violence has increased, from 3,117 in 2005 to 4,666 in 2013.

**In Kern County,
rape accounts for roughly
4% of violent crimes;
aggravated assault
comprises the majority of
violent crimes, at 69%.**

Military sexual trauma affects roughly one in five female U.S. veterans, compared with one in 100 male U.S. veterans.

California is one of three states identified as most affected by human trafficking and slavery. Since 2009, the Central Valley Against Human Trafficking Task Force has provided services to 157 victims of human trafficking.

SUMMARY SOURCES

California Center for Public Health Advocacy

Center for Public Policy Studies

Central Valley Against Human Trafficking Task Force

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports

Kern Council of Governments

Kern County Homeless Collaborative

Kern County School Boards Association

Kern Economic Development Corporation

League of Women Voters of Kern County

Mount Saint Mary's University

National Association of Colleges and Employers

Office of California's Attorney General, CJSC Statistics

State of California, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Department of Education; Department of Public Health

University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Health Policy Research

United Ways of California, *Struggling to Get By: The Real Cost Measure in California 2015*

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Surveys, 1-Year and 5-Year Estimates; Survey of Business Owners*

U.S. Department of Defense

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

MAKING THE CONNECTION: THE LEADERSHIP PIPELINE



In Kern County, as is the case in California and the United States, women are not represented at rates equal to men in elective office. Among all 11 city councils within Kern County, women account for 23% of city council seats—low even compared with a 28% share for women statewide.

Three women serve on the 13-member Kern Council of Governments. In the California State Legislature, women serve in one of four Kern County State Assembly Districts and one of two Kern County State Senate Districts.

Women make up 40% of all elective K-12 school board positions. However, as the grade level rises, the number of women elected to boards falls. Among community colleges in the County, only 25% of all elected trustees are women.

Politics isn't the only leadership pipeline, however. Women *are* leading in Kern County in the business sector, where 32% of businesses are owned solely by women—making them the ultimate decision-makers for nearly one-third of all businesses in Kern County.

PHOTOGRAPHY

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United Way photos

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Women's and Girls' Fund photos

DESIGN

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ABOUT THE PARTNERS

**KERN COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Growing community.
Growing philanthropy.

**The Women's
and Girls' Fund**

A Leadership Initiative of
**KERN COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**



**Mount
Saint Mary's
University**
LOS ANGELES

Kern Community Foundation KERNFOUNDATION.ORG

Kern Community Foundation is a vibrant nonprofit enterprise with a powerfully simple mission of growing community and growing philanthropy. The Foundation is known as a home for local philanthropists, as a results-oriented grantmaker and as a trusted community leader. Since its establishment in 1999, the Foundation has grown to hold more than 110 charitable funds with assets of more than \$18 million, and has awarded more than \$13 million in grants to improve the quality of life for all who live in Kern County.

Kern Community Foundation's Women's and Girls' Fund

A leadership initiative of Kern Community Foundation, the Women's and Girls' Fund allows individuals to make a significant impact on their community through collective giving. The Women's and Girls' Fund combines one person's gift with many others to build an endowment, enabling the Fund to make grants in perpetuity, and to respond to the changing needs of women and girls in Kern County.

United Way of Kern County UWKERN.ORG

United Way of Kern County mobilizes donors, volunteers and advocates to improve lives in Kern County. UWKC brings stakeholders together to generate philanthropy, marshal resources, forge community consensus, and build coalitions and partnerships with all segments of the community. Additionally, UWKC administers and invests in programs that serve low- to moderate-income, hard-working families. The combined result is far greater than the sum of each individual component.

United Way of Kern County Women's Leadership Council

The Women's Leadership Council was established in 2011 to engage women in philanthropic efforts to support the work of United Way of Kern County in the areas of education, income and health. The Women's Leadership Council offers women the opportunity to give, advocate and volunteer. Members are women with the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done.

Mount Saint Mary's University MSMU.EDU

Mount Saint Mary's is the only women's university in Los Angeles and one of the most diverse in the nation. The University is known nationally for its research on gender equity, its innovative health and science programs, and its commitment to community service.

Thank you to the law firm of Klein, DeNatale, Goldner, and to Kern Community Foundation, for sponsoring the printing of this executive summary.

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ATTORNEYS AT LAW

READ THE FULL REPORT

The complete 2015 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County is available for download at kernfoundation.org. It contains additional data for all sections, as well as full source citations. For more information about this report, please call 661.325.5346.