

2023

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

COMMISSIONED BY THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
PREPARED BY MOUNT SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
ADVOCATING FOR THE LIVES AND WELL-BEING OF WOMEN

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Introduction and Editor's Note

This 2023 Report on the Status of Women in Los Angeles County (Status Report) is the latest in a series of reports commissioned by the Los Angeles County Commission for Women and prepared by the Center for the Advancement of Women at Mount Saint Mary's University. For the 2023 Status Report, the Commission prioritized four broad interdependent areas that would inform their work on the behalf of women: education, economic security, health, and safety. Data in the report may be useful in setting priorities in the Commission's advisory capacity to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, as they develop policy and partnerships that will impact women.

Editor's Note: About the data in the Status Report

The Status Report utilizes information from large databases, drawing heavily on the annual American Community Survey carried out by the U.S. Census Bureau and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additionally, the voices of Los Angeles County women can be heard more distinctly in smaller surveys such as the California Health Inventory Survey (CHIS) and the Los Angeles County Health Survey coordinated by the Los Angeles Department of Public Health. Information from these sources reveal positive trends as well as challenges facing women, but frequently do not reveal the underlying causes of these challenges. As in many cases, good data lead to complex questions and identify areas where more research would be helpful.

As you read the Status Report, please keep in mind the following points about the data presented.

- ***A data point is a snapshot at the time the measurement was made.*** This report makes use of multiple-year trends through 2019 to determine how women's status is changing. However, a discontinuity is seen in some of the 2020 and 2021 data as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ***All statistical data are imprecise.*** The reliability or precision of data relies on the size of sample studied and how representative the sample is of the population as a whole. This uncertainty or imprecision in the data is generally acknowledged by reporting a margin of error that establishes a range around the measured value that has a high (e.g., 95%) probability of containing the true value. For simplicity, margins of error are not given in this report and data are generally rounded to whole numbers. For this reason, caution is urged when comparing numbers that are close in value. Specific margins of error can be found in the cited references.
- ***Survey data are only as accurate as the respondents' answers.*** When using survey data, it is assumed that respondents answer as truthfully as they can based on their understanding of what is being asked and their knowledge of factual answers. Survey results may vary based on the participants involved.
- ***Inferences made when there is no current direct input from Los Angeles County women.*** In a few cases, Los Angeles County women have not been surveyed recently on the topic of interest. More recent surveys of women across California may be used as context for the county.

Report Highlights

In previous reports, positive trends as well as persistent challenges facing women in the county have been identified. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused discontinuities in many earlier trends. As yet, a new “normal,” has not been established and special challenges arising from the pandemic continue to develop. Examples of highlights of this year’s report include the following.

Positive highlights:

- Girls continue to graduate from high school at a higher rate than boys, and women over the age of 25 years hold the majority share of bachelor’s and master’s degrees; they hold almost half of professional and doctoral degrees. Since 2017, there has been an increase in the percentage of women in each of the county’s four major racial/ethnic groups holding a postsecondary degree.
- Nearly three-fourths of women participate in the labor force, and women are well represented in occupational clusters which include well-paying jobs.

Concerns and challenges:

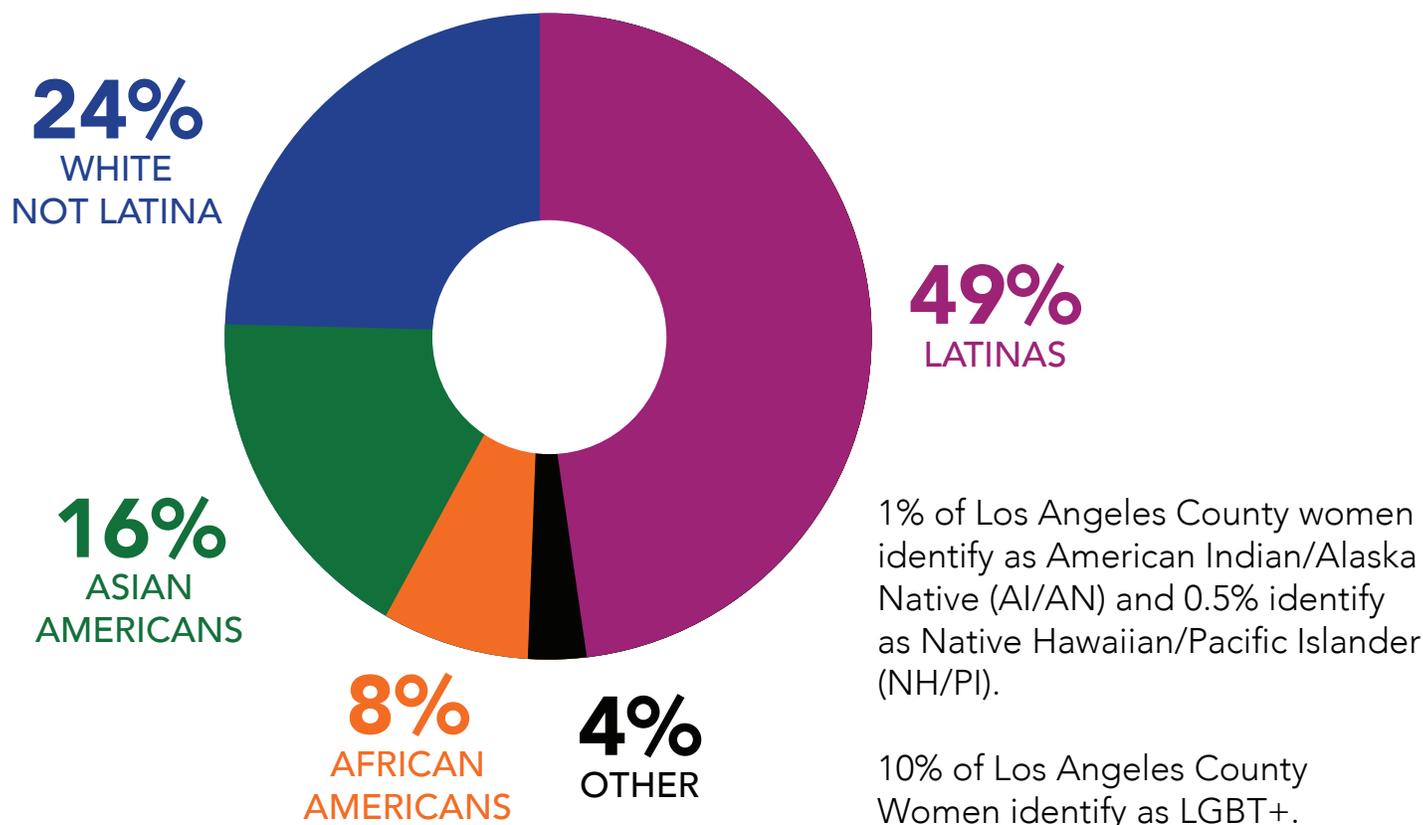
- The economic security of Los Angeles County women, despite their having attained a higher level of education than men, is much more fragile than the economic security of men. Relative to men, women have lower median earnings in every occupational cluster tracked by the U.S. Census Office, and they accumulate far fewer assets over their lifetime. Women experience higher unemployment rates and a higher rate of poverty than men. As a group, women are disadvantaged relative to men in every measure of economic security.
- Disparities among women based on race/ethnicity are evident throughout the report. Over half (54%) of both Asian American and white women hold a 4-year college degree or higher, compared to 17% of Latinas and 32% of African American women. While white women earn 81% of what white men earn, Asian American women earn 69%, African American women earn 60%, and Latinas earn 43%. Poverty rates range from 21% for African American women, 18% for Latinas to 11% and 12% for white and Asian American women, respectively. Women of color are disadvantaged relative to men and also relative to white women in virtually every measure of wellbeing: education, employment, economic security, and health.
- The data in relation to single mothers are alarming. There are over 200,000 homes in the county headed by single mothers with their own children under the age of 18 years. Where the mother has 1-2 children, 29% live in poverty; in homes with mothers of 3-4 children, 63% live in poverty. In 2021, over 35,000 single women gave birth, including 1200 girls 15-19 years of age. Single mothers are disadvantaged relative to single women who are not mothers or who are not caring for their own children; they are disadvantaged relative to single fathers and to coupled families in terms of education, employment, childcare, and economic security.

These concerns and challenges prompt discussions about policies and practices that will be effective in:

1. reducing barriers that women face in securing employment in higher wage jobs,
2. mitigating inequities (education, employment, earnings, health) among women of different races, and
3. providing paths out of poverty for single mothers.

5 MILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS LIVE IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

MORE THAN 1.7 MILLION ARE IMMIGRANTS

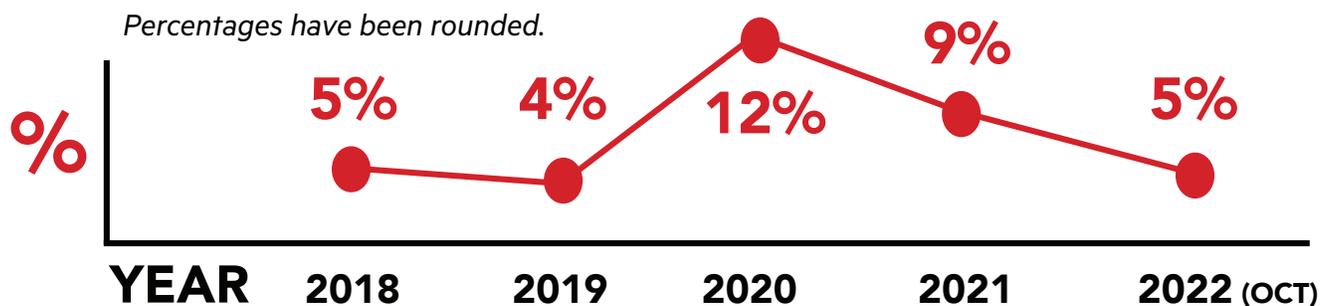


EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATIONS

3 OUT OF 4 WOMEN ARE IN THE LABOR FORCE

Unemployment

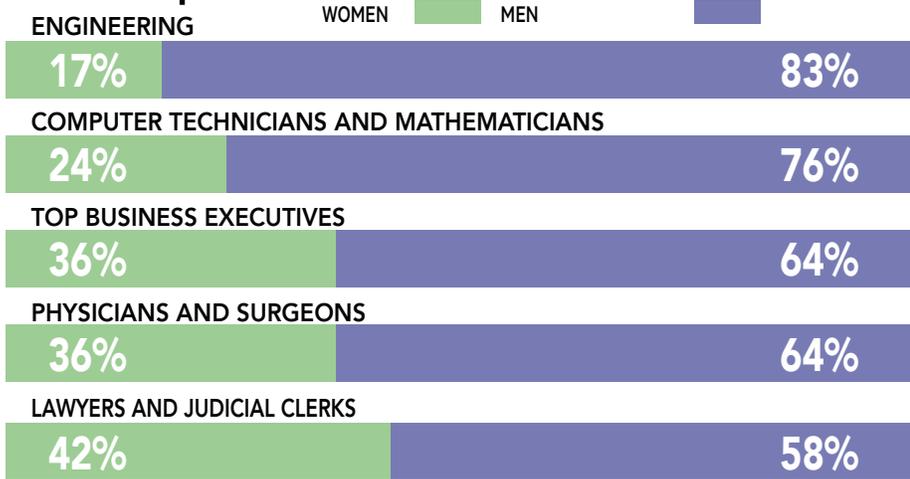
The COVID-19 pandemic caused an immediate and sudden spike in the county's unemployment rate for women and men in 2020, for an annual unemployment rate of 12.3% after a recent historic low of 4.4% in 2019.



OCCUPATIONS

Nearly 700,000 full-time working women in Los Angeles County hold jobs in management, business, science, and arts.

Full-time working women are underrepresented in these occupations:



Women are overrepresented in these occupations:



Essential front-line workers

More than 1 in 4 Los Angeles County residents is estimated to be an essential worker.

California women are overrepresented in several low-paying jobs:

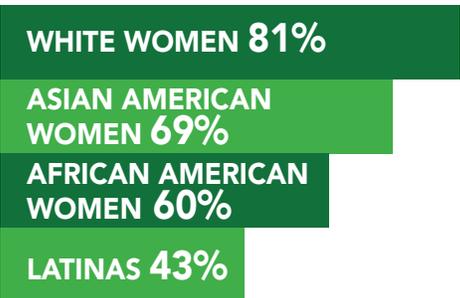


ECONOMIC SECURITY

Median earnings - full-time

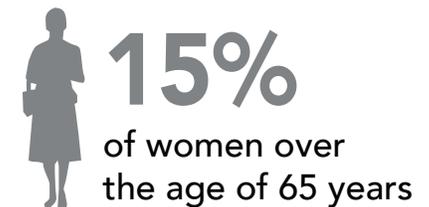
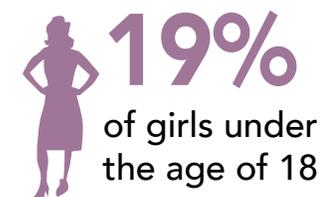


Earnings relative to white men, who have median earnings of \$93,250



POVERTY

Percentage of women by age group who live in Poverty



Poverty rates for all women increased by 1 percentage point in 2021 relative to 2019 due to COVID.

POVERTY

Poverty rates are higher for families when children are present.

- 20%** Women-headed family households
- 26%** Women-headed families with 1-2 related children

Single-mother families with their own children

- 1-2 children 29%**
- 3-4 children 63%**

Single mothers and their families

Over 200,000 Los Angeles County homes are headed by single mothers caring for their own children under 18 years of age. In 2021, over 100,000 county women (15-50 years of age) gave birth:

- 1400 mothers were **15-19 years of age** and 84% of these teen mothers were unmarried.
- **35% of all new mothers** had a high school education or less.
- **20% lived in poverty**, with another 20% in near poverty.

HEALTH

Los Angeles County men feel they are in better health than women do.



	Women	Men
“Excellent” or “Very Good”	46%	49%
“Good” or “Fair”	51%	48%
“Poor”	4%	3%

Life Expectancy of California Women from Birth has decreased by over **1 year** due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has negatively impacted the emotional and mental wellbeing of more Los Angeles County women than men.

Likely experienced psychological episode in the past year

	2019	2021
Women	14%	20%
Men	11%	13%

VIOLENCE

More Los Angeles County women than men experience crimes of sexual violence and violent abuse inflicted by an intimate partner.

FORCED TO HAVE SEX WITHOUT CONSENT

2019		2020	
WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN
12%	3%	12%	2%

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE INFLICTED BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER EVER EXPERIENCED AS AN ADULT

WOMEN 23% MEN 10%



EDUCATION

Los Angeles County girls graduate from public and charter schools at a higher rate than boys.

GIRLS BOYS

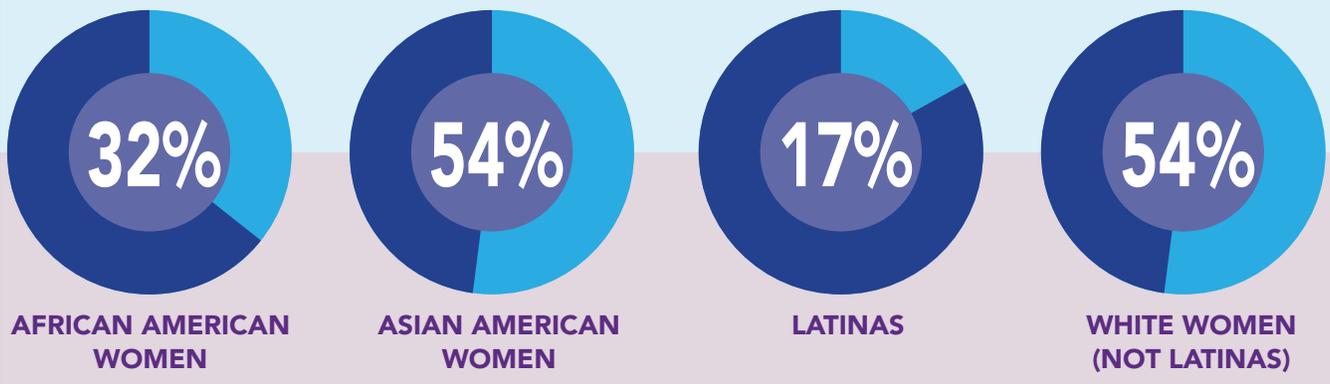
All LA County pupils	89%	84%
African American	84%	75%
Asian American (including Filipino/a)	96%	95%
Latinx	88%	82%
White, not Latina	91%	88%

1 IN 3 (36%)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY WOMEN HAVE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER.

ALMOST HALF OF DOCTORATE AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREES ARE HELD BY WOMEN.

Percentage of Los Angeles County women holding a bachelor's degree or higher



The median income of Los Angeles County of women 25 years and over increases with increasing education.

Total	\$40,000
Less than high school	\$21,000
High school diploma	\$30,000
Some college, associate degree	\$36,000
Bachelor's degree	\$56,000
Graduate or Professional degree	\$79,000

Women and men with less education are more likely to live in poverty.

Less than high school	21%
High school	16%
Some college/associate degree	11%
Bachelor's degree or higher	7%

Poverty rates of families decrease with increasing educational attainment of householder.	FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS		SINGLE-WOMAN HOUSEHOLDS	
	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	20%	31%	
	HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	15%	27%	
	BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER	5%	10%	

A Snapshot of Los Angeles County Women (Based on 2021 Data, Except as Noted)

Population¹

	Los Angeles County	California
Total	9,829,544	39,237,836
Women	4,958,636	19,618,902
Men	4,870,908	19,618,934
Percent women	50%	50%

Disability Status

Eleven percent of women and men in the County (and statewide) identify as having a disability² associated with difficulty of hearing, vision, cognition, ambulation, self-care or independent living. Twenty-five percent of residents reported a disability status in the 2018 Los Angeles County Health Survey³ based on limited activity because of physical, mental, or emotional problems; required use of specialized equipment; or self-perception.

Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Los Angeles County Women and Girls⁴

	Los Angeles County	California
Total Women and Girls	4,958,636	19,618,902
African American	8%	5%
Asian American	16%	16%
Latina	49%	40%
White (not Hispanic)	24%	34%
Others	4%	5%

Note: This figure shows the racial distribution of women across all ages; since median ages of the racial/ethnic groups differ, the racial/ethnic composition of age groups will differ. For example, while Latinas comprise 49% of women across all ages, they comprise 61% of girls 5-18 years and 32% of women over the age of 65 years.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In recent years, the California Health Interview Survey has asked respondents to self-identify their sexual orientation and gender identity. Fewer women are now identifying as heterosexual and more diversity in sexual orientation is reported.⁵ About 10% of Los Angeles County women identify as LGBTQ+ in the

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates. Table B01001: Sex by Age. <http://data.census.gov>

² U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table DP02: Selected Social Characteristics. <http://data.census.gov>

³ 2018 Los Angeles County Health Survey (2019). Health Assessment Division, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/LACHSDDataTopics2018.htm

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates. Tables B01001B, D, H, I: Sex by Age. <http://data.census.gov>

⁵ California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) for the years listed. Subject area: Sexual Orientation. Despite pooling the data over 3 years, the sample population is small and the results may be statistically unstable. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Fielding School of Public Health. <https://ask.chis.ucla.edu>

2021 California Health Interview Survey. The sexual orientation of Los Angeles County women mirrors that of the state.

Sexual Orientation of Los Angeles County Women

	2016	2021	California Women, 2021
Heterosexual	91%	90%	90%
Gay or lesbian	2%*	2%	2%
Bisexual	3%	7%	7%
Other	3%	2%	1%

Note: An asterisk indicates that the figure is not statistically reliable. The accuracy of survey data on sexual orientation and gender identity is difficult to assess; the population may be undercounted due to a reluctance to divulge personal information. For example, a 2020 Gallup survey estimated California’s LGBT population at 5%, while 2021 Census Pulse Surveys lead to an estimate of 9% of California adults who identify as LGBT.⁶

When asked about gender identity in 2020, the small number of Los Angeles County women who identified as transgender led to suppression of results.⁷ Figures in the table (omitting “other” identities) are not inconsistent with an estimate of 5% of the LGBT population (just over 500,000 individuals, nearly 60% of whom identify as women) in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Statistical Area (includes Long Beach and Anaheim).⁸

Median Age of Los Angeles County Women (in years)⁹

	Los Angeles County	African American	Asian American	Latina	White
Women	38.8 years	41.4 years	45.2 years	33.6 years	46.4 years

Los Angeles County women tend to be older than men who have a median age of 36.8 years. Among women, Asian Americans are the oldest women and Latinas are the youngest. Women in the county are about 0.2 years younger than women across the state.

Marital Status of Women, 15 years and over¹⁰

Of the 4,129,000 women living in Los Angeles County who are 15 years and over:

- 40% have never been married,
 - 99% of teens 15-19 years have never been married
- 43% are married

⁶ Johnson, H. (June 2022) Blog Post: California’s LGBT Population. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://ppic.org/blog/californias-lgbt-population/>

⁷ California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) for the years listed. Subject area: Gender Identity. Despite pooling the data over 3 years, the sample population is small and the results are statistically unstable or suppressed. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Fielding School of Public Health. <https://ask.chis.ucla.edu>

⁸ Conron, K., Luhur, W., Goldberg, S. (December 2020) March 2021 Brief: LGBT Adults in Large Metropolitan Statistical Areas. The Williams Institute, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu>

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Surveys 1-year Estimates. Tables B01002, B01002B, D, H, I: Median Age by Sex. <http://data.census.gov>

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B12002: Marital Status by Age for the Population 15 Years and Over. For single mothers, see Table S1101: Households and Families. <http://data.census.gov>

- 37% are married and living with spouse
- 6% are married, but spouse is absent
- 7% are widowed, and
- 10% are divorced.

There are 202,000 single mothers (no spouse present) in the county with children under 18 years.

Fertility¹¹

In 2021, just over 101,000 Los Angeles County women (ages 15-50 years) gave birth to children; about 1.5% of new mothers were teens 15-19 years of age and 37% were mothers 35-50 years of age. Less than 2% of new mothers were teenagers, but 84% of teen mothers were single.

Los Angeles County Women Who Gave Birth in 2021

Age	Number of births	Single mothers
Total	101,024	35%
15-19 years	1,382	84%
20-34 years	62,030	44%
35-50 years	37,612	18%

Los Angeles County Residents Born in Another Country

In Los Angeles County, roughly 1 in 3 women and men have been born outside the United States (34% women compared to 32% men).¹² For the population 18 years and older, 42% of women and 40% of men were born in another country. The 1.7 million female immigrants in the county come from all parts of the world, but the majority are from Latin America.¹³

Birthplace of Immigrant Women and Girls Living in Los Angeles County

Europe	5%
Asia	38%
Latin America	54%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Caribbean ● Mexico ● Other Central America ● South America 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1% ● 34% ● 16% ● 3%
Other areas	3%

Of the roughly 3.3 million women and men who have immigrated to Los Angeles County, 90% speak a language other than English at home.¹⁴ Among immigrants in the county, over half (52%) speak Spanish in their homes.

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1301: Fertility. <http://data.census.gov>

¹² U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B05003: Sex by Age by Nativity and Citizenship Status. <http://data.census.gov>

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B05008: Sex by Place of Birth by Year of Entry for the Foreign-Born Population. <http://data.census.gov>

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1603: Characteristics of People by Language Spoken at Home. <http://data.census.gov>

Education

Educational Attainment¹⁵

Of the estimated 3.5 million women in Los Angeles County who are 25 years or older, just over one-third have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 1. Educational Attainment of Women, 25 Years and Over

	Los Angeles County	California
No formal education	5%	4%
Nursery – 12 th grade, no diploma	13%	10%
High school diploma	20%	20%
Some college	18%	20%
Associate degree	8%	9%
Bachelor's degree	23%	23%
Graduate/Professional degree	13%	14%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Figure 2. Educational Attainment of Los Angeles County Women by Race/Ethnicity
25 Years and Over¹⁶**

	African American	Asian American	Latina	White
Total women	289,366	612,299	1,543,729	951,141
Less than high school	7%	12%	35%	4%
High school diploma	22%	14%	24%	16%
Some college	29%	13%	18%	17%
Associate degree	10%	7%	5%	9%
Bachelor's degree	18%	37%	12%	32%
Graduate/Professional degree	14%	17%	5%	22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Roughly one-third of Latinas have less than a high school education and 17% have a bachelor's degree or higher. One-third of African American women have a four-year college degree or higher and only 7% have less than a high school education. Over half of Asian American and white women have a bachelor's degree or higher.

In comparison to men, more Los Angeles County women than men hold a bachelor's degree and a master's degree; they hold nearly half of both professional school and doctorate degrees.

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B15002: Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over. <http://data.census.gov>

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Tables B15002B, D, H, I: Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over. <http://data.census.gov>

Figure 3. Los Angeles County Women’s Share of Post-Secondary Degrees

	Women	Men	Percent share to Women
Bachelor’s degrees	809,617	744,697	52%
Master’s degree	325,144	254,855	56%
Professional school degree	85,275	97,801	47%
Doctorate degree	47,589	52,858	47%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community 1-Year Estimates

K-12 Enrollment and Outcomes

Enrollment. In 2021-22, 1,336,558 pupils were enrolled in Los Angeles County public and charter schools, representing 23% of California school children.¹⁷ Just about half of the pupils enrolled (49%) are girls. Latinas comprise nearly 2/3 of girls enrolled.

Figure 4. K-12 Enrollment of Girls in Los Angeles County Public and Charter Schools by Race/Ethnicity: 2021-22

	Number of girls	Percent
Total	648,973	
African American	45,130	7%
Asian	50,450	8%
Filipina	13,651	2%
Latina	429,200	66%
White, not Latina	82,944	13%
Other races	27,597	4%

Source: California Department of Education

Graduation rate. The 4-year graduation rate for girls is 89%, compared to 84% for boys. Girls in Los Angeles County public and charter schools graduate at a slightly lower rate than do girls across the state (89% versus 90%), as do Los Angeles County boys (84% versus 85%).¹⁸

Figure 5. Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate of Los Angeles County Pupils, 2021-2022

	Graduation Rate		Dropout Rate ¹⁹	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
African American	84%	75%	10%	10%
Asian	96%	95%	2%	3%
Filipina/o	96%	95%	2%	2%
Latinx	88%	82%	7%	11%
White, not Hispanic	91%	88%	6%	7%
LA County	89%	84%	7%	10%
California	90%	85%	6%	10%

¹⁷ California Department of Education. Data Query online tool (accessed December 2022). Annual enrollment 2021-22. <http://Dq.cde.ca.gov>

¹⁸ California Department of Education. Data Query online tool (assessed December, 2022). 2021-22 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Report. <http://dq.cde.ca.gov>

¹⁹ California Department of Education. Data Query online tool (assessed December, 2022). 2021-22 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Outcome Report. <http://dq.cde.ca.gov>

Note: These figures account only for those who graduate in four years; at the end of four years, some students are still enrolled. Additionally, there is a small percentage of the cohort that receives a certificate of completion, but not a high school diploma.

Source: California Department of Education

Regardless of race/ethnicity, a greater percentage of girls in Los Angeles County graduate from high school in four years than do boys (89% vs 84%). The greater completion rate of girls is accounted for in part by the lower dropout rate for girls than boys (7% vs 10%). Of the 89% of girls who graduated in the 2021-2022 four-year cohort, 65% have met UC/CSU academic requirements for admission.

Employment and Occupations

Employment²⁰

Nearly three-fourths (73%) of women in Los Angeles County are in the labor force; 66% are employed and the rest are seeking work. The unemployment rate in 2021 was 9%.

Figure 6. Labor Force Participation of Women

	Los Angeles County women	California women
Percent of women in labor force	73%	72%
Unemployment rate (2020)	9%	8%

Note: These figures are for women 20-64 years of age.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

The 2020 unemployment rate is much higher than in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, when the pandemic was declared, the unemployment rate quickly spiked as businesses closed and isolation measures took effect. The good news is that unemployment rates decreased in 2022 to equal pre-pandemic levels.²¹

Figure 7. Unemployment Rates for Los Angeles County

Time period	2018	2019	2020	2021	April 2022	October 2022
Unemployment rate	4.6%	4.4%	12.3%	8.9%	4.7%	4.5%

Note: These data are not disaggregated by gender; unemployment rates are seasonally unadjusted.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupations

The Census Bureau clusters occupations in its statistics. Within each cluster there are a wide diversity of occupations, some requiring an advanced academic degree or professional training, while others may

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S2301: Employment Status. <http://data.census.gov>

²¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unemployment Rates for Los Angeles County (also known as the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale Metropolitan Division). These data are available online through the Unemployment Rate and Labor Force Data Search Tool (accessed December 2022). <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov>

require a high school diploma or less.²² Figure 8 shows the percentage of women relative to men who work full-time in each occupational cluster.²³

Figure 8. Occupations of Los Angeles County Women Who Work Full-Time: 2021

Occupational cluster	Number of women employed	Percent of workers who are women
Management, business, science, and arts	685,751	48%
Service	207,433	49%
Sales and office	349,209	57%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	8,753	3%
Production, transportation and material moving	88,898	22%

Note: To learn more about jobs within each cluster, please see footnote 22.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Most full-time working women and men hold jobs in the management, business, science, and arts cluster of occupations; in Los Angeles County women hold 48% of these jobs and men hold 52%. Women hold over half of the sales and office jobs and half of the service jobs. They hold only 3% of jobs in the natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations; 97% of these jobs are held by men.

But women are not equally represented within any one of the broad occupational clusters, as shown by jobs within the management, business, science, and arts occupational cluster.²⁴

Figure 9. Percent of Full-time Working County Women in Jobs Within the Management, Business, Science and Arts Occupational Cluster

	Percent women	Percent men
Management, Business, and Financial	48%	52%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top Executives • Financial Managers • Human Resource Workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% • 54% • 89% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64% • 46% • 11%
Computer, Mathematical, Engineering and Science	43%	57%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer and Mathematics • Engineering • Life and Physical Sciences • Social Sciences and Related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% • 17% • 44% • 72% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76% • 83% • 56% • 28%
Education, legal, Community Service, Srts, Media	56%	44%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and Social Service • Lawyers and Judicial Law Clerks • Judges, Magistrates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% • 42% • 37% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% • 58% • 63%

²²Note: On the American Community Survey respondents are asked for their occupation and a description of their main duties/activities; coders then assign the occupation to a cluster according to the 2018 coding guidelines developed by the Census Bureau. For an understanding of more specific jobs within each occupational cluster, see Table S2402 or Table B24020 which breaks down the clusters into more specific jobs. <http://data.census.gov>

²³ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S2402: Occupation by Sex for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. <http://data.census.gov>

²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B24020: Sex by Occupation for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. <http://data.census.gov>

Healthcare diagnosing and treating practitioners	65%	35%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicians and surgeons • Therapists • Registered Nurses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% • 67% • 79% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64% • 33% • 21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Los Angeles County women are underrepresented among top executives (36%), but overrepresented among human resource workers. They are underrepresented among engineers (17%), and in computer and mathematical jobs (24%). County women are overrepresented among registered nurses (79%), community and social service workers (70%), and therapists (67%). With respect to other occupational clusters:

- Women hold half of the jobs among service occupations, but they are underrepresented among protective services (26%) and overrepresented among childcare workers (93%).
- In sales and office positions where women hold 57% of the jobs, women are overrepresented among secretaries/administrative assistants (86%), bookkeepers (80%), and cashiers (61%), but are underrepresented in supervisory positions of sales and related workers (40%).

Essential Workers

There is a critical subset of workers essential to maintaining public health and safety. These are workers that cross industrial segments but whose occupations are essential to the continued operation of critical infrastructure and public services. California’s essential workers were identified in 2020 when the pandemic was declared as those employees who would need to remain on the job; if their work could not be carried out remotely, they were referred to as front-line essential workers. Front-line essential workers hold jobs, for example, in food and agriculture, health care, construction, transportation, utilities, and personal care.

While an accurate count of the number of California workers in front-line essential jobs isn’t provided, it has been estimated that front-line essential workers comprise about 44% of California’s employed workforce.²⁵ Many of these jobs in California are low-wage jobs: over half (52%) of low-wage workers hold front-line essential jobs while 39% of mid- and high-wage workers hold front-line essential jobs.²⁶ Overall, the number of California women and men working in front-line essential jobs is about equal; however, women are greatly overrepresented in a number of low-wage occupations including secretaries (91% women), personal care aides (81%), office clerks (79%), cashiers (69%), and janitors/building cleaners (60%).

In 2021, 64% of the county’s population 16 years and over was in the workforce;²⁷ applying California’s 44% of the population as essential workers would mean that about 28% of the county’s population are essential workers. Based on these numbers, more than 1 in 4 Los Angeles County residents (16 years and older) are essential front-line workers.

²⁵ United Way (May 04, 2020). U.S. States with the Most Essential Workers. (Estimates are based on 2020 Bureau of Labor Statistics data.) <https://unitedwayca.org/blog/us-states-with-the-most-essential-workers/>

²⁶ Thomason, S. and Barnhardt, A. (14 May 2020) Front-line Essential Jobs in California: A Profile of Job and Worker Characteristics. University of California, Berkeley Labor Center. <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/publications>

²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S2301: Employment Status. <http://data.census.gov>

In a 2021 survey of 5,500 Los Angeles County adults, 29% of the respondents identified as essential front-line workers.²⁸ The report of survey results disaggregated essential workers by race, identifying nearly two-thirds (64%) as people of color:

- 9% African American,
- 14% Asian American,
- 41% Latinx, and
- 36% white.

We don’t know how accurately this racial/ethnic breakdown represents the entire cohort of Los Angeles County essential workers, but it is consistent with the understanding that people of color are more likely than whites to be the front-line workers who are critical to maintaining the operation of the county’s essential services.²⁹

Economic Security

Earnings of Los Angeles County Women

The median earnings of Los Angeles County women are slightly less than women statewide, but white women earn more than those across the state.³⁰

Figure 10. Median Earnings of California Women: 2021

	Los Angeles County	California
All women	\$34,868	\$36,228
African American	\$39,228	\$38,608
Asian American	\$45,722	\$50,375
Latina	\$27,769	\$27,700
White (not Hispanic origin)	\$51,465	\$47,225

Note: These figures represent all earnings of women with earnings from full- and/or part-time work. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

As is the case in most locations, the median earnings of men are greater than those of women. The disparity in earnings is often reported for full-time workers by showing women’s earnings as a percentage of men’s earnings. To emphasize the earnings disparity, women’s median earnings are also compared to earnings of white men (the highest earning wage group).³¹

²⁸ Nicholas, W., Sood, N., Lam, C., Kotha, R., Hu, H., and Simon, P. (20 February 2022). Did prioritizing essential workers help to achieve racial/ethnic equity in early COVID-19 vaccine distribution? The LA pandemic surveillance cohort study. (April 2022). American Journal of Industrial Medicine, Vol 65 (4), pp 231-241. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.23335>

²⁹ Thomason, S. and Barnhardt, A. (14 May 2020) Front-line Essential Jobs in California: A Profile of Job and Worker Characteristics. University of California, Berkeley Labor Center. <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/publications>

³⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Tables B20017, B20017B, D, H and I: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Populations 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months. <http://data.census.gov>

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Tables B20017, B20017B, D, H and I: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in the Past 12 Months for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings in the Past 12 Months. <http://data.census.gov>

Figure 11. Full-Time Working Women’s Median Earnings as a Percentage of Men’s: 2021

Los Angeles County	All women to all men	African American women	Asian American women	Latina	White women
Women compared to all men	90%	95%	110%	69%	129%
Women compared to white men	56%	60%	69%	43%	81%

Note: 2021 median earnings for all full-time working Los Angeles County men are \$58,588; for white men, median earnings are \$93,250.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

The earnings disparity is stark: Latinas who work full-time earn less than half of what white men earn; white women earn 81% of what white men earn.

Earnings and Occupations

Figure 12. Occupations³² and Earnings³³ of Los Angeles County Full-Time Workers: 2021

Occupational cluster	Number of women employed	Percent of workers who are women	Median earnings of women	Median earnings of men	Women’s earnings/men’s
Management, business, science and arts	685,751	48%	\$76,819	\$93,081	83%
Service	207,433	49%	\$31,615	\$35,920	88%
Sales and office	349,209	57%	\$45,325	\$50,667	89%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	8,753	3%	\$35,211	\$46,877	75%
Production, transportation and material moving	88,898	22%	\$31,851	\$40,426	79%

Note: The earnings in the table represent the median earnings of respondents to the American Community Survey who hold jobs in that occupational cluster. The cluster of occupations with jobs in management, business, science, and the arts have the highest-paying jobs, while the cluster of service occupations have the lowest paying jobs. To learn more about jobs within each cluster, please see footnote 22.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Although we do not separate out the occupational clusters to show comparisons of earnings in more specific occupations, Figure 12 indicates that women tend to have higher representation in service as well as sales and office jobs which pay less than those in management, business, science, and arts. But

³² U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B24020: Sex by Occupation for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. <http://data.census.gov>

³³ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B24022: Sex by Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. <http://data.census.gov>

this report does not explore whether women doing equivalent work to men are paid less. However, in every one of these broad occupational clusters, the median earnings of women are less than that of men. Data at this level do not tell us why women receive lower earnings. It is likely a combination of factors, such as:

- employment barriers when professional stereotypes are embedded in management;
- education/training barriers in disciplines long considered men’s work; or
- a woman’s choice in recognition of the need for life-work-family balance given societal expectations of a woman as wife and mother.

The consistent disparity in earnings hints at a gender bias and begs for further research comparing earnings of women and men in more equivalent occupations than these data allow.

The main point of Figure 12 is to note that the highest pay is earned by county women (and men) who hold jobs in management, business, science, and the arts; women (and men) earn the least in service occupations (examples include food servers, home health caretakers, and public protection/security personnel). For economic security, the probability of a high-paying job is more likely in management, business, science, and arts occupations than in service occupations.

Wealth

Wealth is an even more powerful indicator of economic security than earnings. Wealth, or net worth, is calculated as the value of assets someone has, minus any debts owed. In times of need—unemployment, illness, or other financial stress such as a pandemic—wealth can be used to cover expenses. Other assets that contribute to wealth include financial savings in retirement or savings accounts; investments in stocks and bonds; and ownership of property, businesses, and vehicles.³⁴

The racial/ethnic wealth gap. Estimates of household and individual wealth vary widely depending on assets and liabilities included in the calculation. However, regardless of the data source, households and individuals of color own assets with much less value than those of white women and men. Data from the 2014 Survey of Consumer Finances used to calculate net worth of Los Angeles households illustrate the disparity between household wealth based on race of the householder.³⁵

Figure 13. Net Household Worth in Los Angeles by Race/Ethnicity

	White	Asian	African American	Latinx
Los Angeles, 2014	\$355,000	\$592,000 (Japanese) \$460,000 (Asian Indian) \$408,000 (Chinese)	\$76,000	\$46,000

Source: California Budget and Policy Center. Data from 2014 and 2016 Survey of Consumer Finances.

³⁴ Eggleston, J. and Munk, R. (2019). Net Worth of Households: 2015. Current Population Reports. (Report No. P70BR-164). U.S. census Bureau. <http://census.gov/library/publications/2019/demo/p70br-164.html>

³⁵ Hutchful, E. (2018). The Racial Wealth Gap. California Budget and Policy Center. <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/the-racial-wealth-gap/>

The asset of greatest value for most households is equity in an owned home. In California, the 2020 median value of assets for households was \$247,000 and home equity accounted for 71% of that figure.³⁶

Home ownership in Los Angeles County is lower than that across the state and nation. In 2021, homeownership rate across the nation was 65%.³⁷ In California, 56% of housing units are owner occupied, but in Los Angeles County, fewer than half of the housing units (47%) are owner-occupied. Further, the rate of home ownership varies with race/ethnicity. More than half of whites (63%) and Asians (58%) own their own homes while fewer than half of Latinx (42%) and African Americans (33%) own their homes.³⁸ More than 2/3 of homeowners have a mortgage; 32% of homes are owned outright.³⁹ Low percentages of home ownership and the proportion of homes with mortgages mean fewer assets and, thus, lower household wealth.

The gender wealth gap. In addition to the racial wealth gap, there is a significant gender wealth gap. Across the nation, the wealth of single women is significantly lower than that of single men, regardless of race or ethnicity, and regardless of the data source. In one calculation based on the 2016 Survey of Consumer Finances, African American and Latinas own less than 10% of the wealth of white men.⁴⁰

Figure 14. The Wealth Gap and Median Wealth of U.S. Single Women and Men, 2016

	White	African American	Latinx	Other
Women	\$66,930	\$6,000	\$6,700	\$22,600
Men	\$83,440	\$9,100	\$12,070	\$44,650
Percent (Women/White Men)	80%	7%	8%	27%
Percent (Women/White Women)	----	9%	10%	34%

Note: These figures are based on the 2016 Survey of Consumer Finances and do not include the value of vehicles. "Other" includes Asians, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders and any other racial groups not accounted for as white, African American (Black), or Latinx.

Source: Asset Funders Network

The gender wealth gap—expressed as the percentage of women’s wealth to that of white men—is much more significant than the earnings gap seen in Figure 11. Figure 14 shows, for example, that while African American women earn 60% of what white men earn, they have accumulated assets only 7% of that of white men; Latinas earn 43% of what white men earn but have accumulated assets that are only 8% of white men. Moreover, the racial wealth gap among single women is nearly as significant as the

³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021) Wealth and Asset Ownership Data Tables. Table 1: Median Value of Assets for Households, by Type of Asset Owned and States: 2020. <http://census.gov/topics/income-poverty/wealth/data/tables.html>

³⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics <http://data.census.gov>

³⁸ Hutchful, E. (2018). The Racial Wealth Gap. California Budget and Policy Center. <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/the-racial-wealth-gap/>

³⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics. <http://data.census.gov>

⁴⁰ Darity, W., Camara, M., Zaw, K., Murphy, M., Aurelien, M., Fan, A. (2017). Unlocking Assets: Building Women’s Wealth Through Business Ownership. Asset Funders Network, Closing the Women’s Wealth Gap Initiative. <https://assetfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/AFN-Webinar-on-Unlocking-Assets-2019.pdf>

gender wealth gap. Compared to \$100 of wealth held by white women, African American own \$9 (9%) and Latinas own \$10 (10%).

Although wealth is one of the best indicators of economic security, accruing assets is generally a long-term process requiring interest in and knowledge of investment strategies, discretionary income for investment, and a long-term view of financial growth. Because women in general have lower earnings than men and less discretionary income, it is particularly difficult for women to accumulate assets. Lower incomes and less time in the workplace (e.g., due to family care responsibilities) also lead to lower retirement savings relative to men. One recent national study estimates that by retirement, women have accrued just over 70% of what men have in terms of wealth.⁴¹

Some strategies for growing net worth include a focus on developing investing skills;⁴² others focus on entrepreneurship and building ownership in property or establishing a business.⁴³ While income is important for economic security, wealth is a better indicator. In times of crisis and uncertainty, individuals and families with little or no financial resources in reserve may end up in poverty or without a home.

Poverty

While there are several measures of poverty, for this report a person is living in poverty when their annual income (not including in-kind assistance programs such as food stamps or housing vouchers) is below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).⁴⁴ In 2021, the FPL threshold for individuals is \$13,788;⁴⁵ any individual whose annual income falls below this level is said to live in poverty. For families, the threshold varies by size of family and the number of related children in the household. For a family of four with two children under the age of 18 years, the threshold is \$27,479. When the total income of the family is below this value, the family is living in poverty.

Of the 4,880,557 women and girls in Los Angeles County whose poverty status was determined, 15% were living on income below the Federal Poverty Level in 2021.⁴⁶ The poverty rate for county girls (under the age of 18 years) is 19%; for women 65 years and over, the poverty rate is 15%. Across California 13% of women and girls live in poverty.

⁴¹ World Economic Forum. (November 25, 2022). Wealth Equity for Women can be Achieved. Here's How. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/gender-wealth-equity-women/>

⁴² 2022 Global Gender Wealth Equity Report. (November 2, 2022). The role of gender in wealth equity. WTW and World Economic Forum. <https://www.wtwco.com/en-US/Insights/2022/11/2022-global-gender-wealth-equity-report>

⁴³ Darity, W., Camara, M., Zaw, K., Murphy, M., Aurelien, M., Fan, A. (2017). Unlocking Assets: Building Women's Wealth Through Business Ownership. Asse Funders Network, Closing the Women's Wealth Gap Initiative. <http://assetfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/AFN-Webinar-on-Unlocking-Assets-2019.pdf>

⁴⁴ An example of an alternate measure of poverty is the California Poverty Measure (CPM) which sets a poverty threshold based on costs required to meet basic needs by accounting for local housing costs. But it includes resources from social safety net programs as income in determining financial need.

Bohn, S., Danielson, C., Levin, M., Mattingly, M., Wimer, C. (2013) The California Poverty Measure: A New Look at the Social Safety Net. https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/content/pubs/report/R_1013SBR.pdf

⁴⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. Historical Poverty Thresholds. (2022). <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>

⁴⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. <http://data.census.gov>

Figure 15. The Number of Women and Girls in Poverty and the Poverty Rate⁴⁷

	Los Angeles County	California
Number of women and girls in poverty and poverty rate by race/ethnic group		
All women and girls	744,425 (15%)	2,575,503 (13%)
African American	80,016 (21%)	211,989 (20%)
Asian American	92,707 (12%)	328,096 (11%)
Latina	419,115 (18%)	1,284,310 (17%)
White (not Hispanic origin)	129,443 (11%)	631,274 (10%)

Note: The Poverty Rate is the percentage of that population of women and girls living on incomes below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

One in five African American County women (21%) lives in poverty, and nearly 1 in 5 Latinas (18%) are in poverty.

Where families are involved, the poverty rate varies by type of household, as well as by race/ethnicity of the householder. Family households as an aggregate have a poverty rate of 11%, but for households headed by women with no spouse present, that rate nearly doubles to 20%.⁴⁸

Figure 16. The Poverty Rate of Los Angeles County Families

	All families	Married couple	Female householder, no spouse present
Total	11%	7%	20%
With related children under 18 years of age	16%	8%	31%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

In households where children under the age of 18 years are present, the poverty rate is higher than those where no minor children live: nearly 1 in 3 households (31%) headed by single women with children live in poverty. The proportion of families in Los Angeles who live in poverty (11%) is greater than for families statewide (9%).

Single Mothers

In Los Angeles County, there are 1,670,000 homes with women as head of the household; women live alone in nearly one-half million (476,000) of these homes.⁴⁹ Another 202,000 households are family homes headed by single mothers who live with their own children under 18 years of age.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Tables B17001, B17001B, D, H, I: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Age. <http://data.census.gov>

⁴⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1702: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families. <http://data.census.gov>

⁴⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B09019: Household Type (Including Living Alone) by Relationship. <http://data.census.gov>

⁵⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1101: Households and Families. <http://data.census.gov>

Some women choose to be single mothers; however, as a group, single mothers are particularly vulnerable to economic insecurity. Single mothers bear the major, if not the sole, responsibility for financial resources, housing, care of home, and care and emotional support of children. If the mother becomes ill, then support networks need to be in place to assist the family through times of need. Many single mothers experience poverty. The extent of that poverty varies by the race/ethnicity of the mother; but regardless of race, single mothers have the highest rates of poverty of all family types.

Figure 17. Poverty Rates by Family Type and Race/Ethnicity of Householder⁵¹

	All family types	Married couple	Female householder
All families	11%	7%	20%
African American householder	16%	6%	24%
Asian American householder	8%	7%	15%
Latinx householder	14%	9%	23%
White (not Hispanic) householder	6%	4%	12%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Married couple households have the lowest poverty rate, while households headed by women with no spouse present have the highest by family type. Households headed by an African American, regardless of family type, experience the highest poverty rates, followed by households headed by Latinx. The highest poverty rates among households listed in Figure 17 are headed by African American women (no spouse present) at 24% and by Latinas at 23%.

In 2021, 101,000 Los Angeles County women gave birth; over one-third of these women (35%) were single.⁵²

Figure 18. Demographics of New Mothers: 2021

Race/Ethnicity		Educational attainment		Income relative to FPL	
African American	7%	Less than High school	13%	< FPL	20%
Asian American	14%	High School diploma	22%	1-2 times FPL	20%
Latina	56%	Some college/2-yr degree	29%	>2 times FPL	60%
White	20%	4-year college degree	24%		
Other identities	10%	Graduate/professional	12%		

Note: The three demographic traits—race/ethnicity, educational attainment, and income relative to the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)—are independent; percentages for each are based on the population of all 101,000 Los Angeles County mothers who gave birth in 2021.

The majority of all new mothers in 2021 identify as Latina; over one-third of new mothers have a high school degree or less; and one in five (20%) live in poverty on incomes below the FPL. These figures include nearly 1400 new teen mothers (15-19 years), 84% of whom are single.

A Comparison of Poverty Rates, 2019 and 2021

⁵¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1702: Poverty Status of Families. <http://data.census.gov>

⁵² U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1301: Fertility. <http://census.data.gov>

Prior to 2019, the poverty rate of women overall had been decreasing; in Los Angeles County, the poverty rate of women was down from 20% in 2013 to 14% in 2019.⁵³ However, in 2021 the poverty rates of individuals overall are higher than in 2019 prior to the pandemic. Across the nation as well as the state, poverty rates have increased from those in 2019 by about 0.5 percentage points.

The impact of COVID-19 (among other factors) on the poverty rate is more significant in Los Angeles County than statewide. For Asian American and white women in the county, the poverty rate has increased by about 1.5 percentage points.⁵⁴

Figure 19. Poverty of Women in Los Angeles County: 2019 and 2021

	2019	2021	Percentage point change
All women	14.4%	15.3%	0.9
African American	20.1%	21.1%	1.0
Asian American	10.6%	12.2%	1.6
Latina	17.4%	17.6%	0.2
White, not Hispanic	9.7%	11.1%	1.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

In addition to having more women in the county with income below the Federal Poverty Level, there is a greater proportion of women living in “extreme poverty” on incomes less than one-half of the threshold. In 2019, 6% of women lived in extreme poverty and in 2021, 8% of all women in Los Angeles County are living on incomes less than 50% of the Federal Poverty Level.⁵⁵

Social Safety Net Programs and Alternative Measures of Establishing Financial Need

The FPL has long been disputed as a good measure of financial need; however, it has persevered because it is a simple measure to cite and is applied nationwide. Its main criticism is that the FPL does not account for living costs which vary widely across the state and the nation. As a result, several supplemental measures of poverty have been developed which might better reflect financial need. The California Poverty Measure (CPM) is a good example. Unlike the FPL, the CPM accounts for local housing costs in setting the poverty threshold, but it also includes in-kind resources from public assistance programs (e.g., food stamps and housing vouchers) as part of the family’s income in establishing financial need. In 2021, the average poverty rate in Los Angeles County was 13.7% based on the CPM⁵⁶ and 14.2% based on the FPL.⁵⁷

The Social Safety Net Programs which offer both state and federal assistance to low-income families generally focus on families with children. Families with low income may be eligible for assistance with

⁵³ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey for years listed. Table S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. <http://data.census.gov>
⁵⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Tables B17001, B17001B, D, H, I: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Age. <http://data.census.gov>
⁵⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1703: Selected Characteristics of People at Specified Levels of Poverty. <http://data.census.gov>
⁵⁶ Poverty in California: 2021. Public Policy Institute of California. (Data using the interactive tool accessed December 27, 2022). <https://www.ppic.org/interactive/california-poverty-by-county-and-legislative-district/>
⁵⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. <http://data.census.gov>

housing, food, and healthcare subsidies. Many of these programs establish an income limit for eligibility based on the FPL or some multiple of it—i.e., 150%, 200%. Other programs use supplementary poverty guidelines that account for income and expenses that are more appropriate for where the family lives.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), for example, establishes income limits for eligibility based on the median family income of the area, also known as the area median income (AMI). The 2021 median family income for Los Angeles County was determined by HUD to be \$80,000.⁵⁸ By comparing family income to this figure, families can be classified as low-, very-low, and extremely low-income. Families classified as very low or lower are eligible for housing assistance. For a family of one, in 2021, the annual income limit for eligibility for housing assistance was \$41,400; for a household of four, the limit was \$59,100. For 2021, the FPL was \$13,788 for one and \$27,479 for a family of four. Unlike the federal poverty level, the area median income is based on the median income of families adjusted for area characteristics such as high rental-housing costs in relation to median income.

For food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) as well as other assistance programs including Head Start, School lunch, energy assistance, and children’s health insurance, a multiple of the FPL is used to determine eligibility. Roughly speaking, a gross income of less than 130% FPL will establish eligibility for SNAP and a gross income of less than 200% FPL will establish eligibility for CalFresh; other limits are spelled out by the respective programs.

For health insurance, consumers whose gross income is up to 138% FPL are generally eligible for MediCal; for incomes up to 400% FPL, individuals and families may be eligible for a Covered California Policy.

Social safety net programs rarely lead to long-term economic security for a family, but they are essential for short-term survival. Without social safety net programs, more Californians would live in poverty. In 2021, the Public Policy Institute of California estimated that about 3.9 million more Californians would have been in poverty without safety net programs. In Los Angeles County alone, for example, it was estimated that the number of people living in poverty would have doubled from 14% to 27% of the population.⁵⁹

The Relation of Educational Attainment and Employment to Poverty of Families

While there are many unexpected circumstances (e.g., health issues, medical costs, job loss) that can drop a family or an individual into poverty, the relation between educational attainment and employment of the family householder to poverty status is statistically real.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Los Angeles Almanac. (April 2021). Poverty and Lower Living Income Level Guidelines: Los Angeles County, 2021 and 2011. www.laalmanac.com/social/so24.php

⁵⁹ Danielson, C., Malagon, P. and Bohn, S. (October 2022). Fact Sheet: Poverty in California. Public Policy Institute of California. www.ppic.org/publication/poverty-in-california

⁶⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S1702: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families. <http://data.census.gov>

Figure 20. Educational Attainment and Employment Status of Householder and Poverty Rate

	Family households	Single-woman householder
<i>All family households</i>	11%	20%
<i>Educational attainment</i>		
Less than high school	20%	31%
High school diploma	15%	27%
Some college, associate degree	10%	18%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	5%	10%
<i>Employment</i>		
Any employment in past 12 months	7%	14%
Full-time employment for past 12 months	3%	5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

There is a remarkable decrease in poverty rate as a function of educational attainment of the householder. In households headed by a single woman, nearly 30% of women who head households and who have a high school diploma or less live in poverty; 10% of those who have a 4-year college degree live in poverty. The greater number of hours worked, and the increased stability of a full-time job decreases the rate of poverty by half.

Educational attainment is also correlated with median earnings: in 2021, Los Angeles County women with a bachelor’s degree have annual median earnings of \$56,000 compared to \$30,000 for women who have only a high school diploma.⁶¹ Statistically, educational attainment is one important key to economic security, as is full-time work.

Health

In general, just under half of the women and men of Los Angeles County rate their overall health as “very good” to “excellent”; roughly half rate their health as “good” or “fair”. About 5% rate their health as “poor”.⁶² These results have not changed significantly from 2018-2021. However, there is more variability among women in health status rating: only 36% of Latinas rate their health as “excellent/very good” and 7% of African American women rate their health as “poor”.

⁶¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table B20004: Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (in 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) by Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over. <http://data.census.gov>

⁶² 2018, 2021 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Subject area: Health Status. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Fielding School of Public Health. <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu>

Figure 21. Self-Rated Overall Health Status by Los Angeles County Adults by Race/Ethnicity: 2021

	Men	Women	African American women	Asian American women	Latinas	White women
Rated Health Status as:						
“Excellent” or “Very Good”	49%	46%	42%	47%	36%	62%
“Good” or “Fair”	48%	51%	51%	52%	60%	35%
“Poor”	3%	4%	7%	2%*	5%	2%

Note: An asterisk indicates a statistically unstable result. Percentages have been rounded and may not add to 100%.

Source: 2021 California Health Interview Survey

Regardless of gender or racial/ethnic identity, women with lower incomes rated their health status lower than women with higher incomes.

Figure 22. Health Status of Los Angeles County Women Relative to Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

Income:	Excellent or Very Good	Poor
1-2 times the FPL	31%	5%
2-3 times the FPL	42%	6%*
3-5 times the FPL	59%	2%

Note: An asterisk indicates a statistically unstable result. The Federal Poverty Level is established annually for the United States and is a function of family size and age. For Los Angeles County women with incomes one-half or less of the FPL, 62% (a statistically unstable number) rated their health as “fair”; all other results for women in this FPL range are suppressed due to small sample size.

Source: 2021 California Health Interview Survey

Life Expectancy

Prior to 2020 and the pandemic, the life expectancy of women and men in Los Angeles County had risen slightly over the decade by 0.7 years to reach 82.4 years in 2019: women had a life expectancy at birth of 85.2 years, compared to 79.6 years for men.⁶³

Figure 23. Life Expectancy for Los Angeles Women and Men by Race/Ethnicity: 2010 and 2019

	All races/ethnicities	African American		Asian American		Latinx		White	
	Women and Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
2010	81.7	78.5	72.1	89.2	84.0	86.2	80.7	83.1	78.6
2019	82.4	80.1	72.7	89.9	84.6	87.1	81.2	84.0	79.3

Note: These life expectancies represent the number of years one can expect to live from time of birth.

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

⁶³ Patterns in Mortality and Life Expectancy in Los Angeles County, 2010-2019. (May 2022). Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. (See Figures 5 and A-5) www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/epi

The life expectancy of all races and ethnicities increased from 2010 to 2019, with African American women having made the greatest gain in life expectancy of 1.6 years over this time period. This gain in life expectancy still left African American women in 2019 with the shortest life expectancy among women in the four largest racial/ethnic groups. Asian American women had the longest life expectancy.

Nationwide, COVID-19 decreased life expectancy an average of 1.8 years between 2019 and 2020. In California, the life expectancy of women and men decreased 1.9 years—from 80.9 years in 2019 to 79.0 years in 2020.⁶⁴

Leading Causes of Death of LA County Women

At least since 2010, the leading cause of death in Los Angeles County has been coronary heart disease, at more than twice the rate of death from the second leading cause. In 2015, the second leading cause of death became Alzheimer’s disease, displacing stroke which had been in second place at least since 2010.⁶⁵

However, in late January 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in the county and by the end of 2020, COVID-19 became the second leading cause of death in the county.⁶⁶ By December 2022, there had been more than 3.4 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 32,800 deaths in the county attributed to the disease. Women constituted over half (52%) of the confirmed cases of COVID-19, but men accounted for 58% of deaths from the disease.⁶⁷

COVID-19 was the leading cause of death among Latinx in 2020, accounting for 160 deaths per 100,000 Latinx population.⁶⁸

The leading causes of death differ in ranking among women of different races and ethnicities, but the number of deaths per 100,000 population prior to the pandemic highlight the stark differences in the health status of women. African American women die at a greater rate from nearly all diseases. Deaths from heart disease are significantly greater for African American women than for women of other races and ethnicities; white women die of Alzheimer’s and COPD at the greatest rate.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Arias, E.; Xu, J; Tejada-Vera, B.; Murphy, S. and Bastian, B. (August 2022). U.S. State Life Tables: 2019 and 2020; United States Life Tables: 2019 and 2020. National Vital Statistics Reports 70(18, 19) and 71 (1,2). Reports can be downloaded at <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/index.htm>

⁶⁵ Patterns in Mortality and Life Expectancy in Los Angeles County, 2010-2019. (May 2022). Figure D-1. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/epi

⁶⁶ Mortality in Los Angeles County, 2020: Provisional Report. (May 2022). Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/epi/docs/2020_Mortality_Brief_FINAL_052022.pdf

⁶⁷ Los Angeles County COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard figures obtained on December 28, 2022. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. http://dashboard.publichealth.lacounty.gov/covid19_surveillance_dashboard/

⁶⁸ Simon, P; Ho., A.; Shah, M, et al. (2021). Trends in Mortality from COVID-19 and Other Leading Causes of Death Among Latino vs White Individuals in Los Angeles County, 2011-2020. Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) 2021; 336 (id): 973—974: doi: 10.1001/jama.2021.11945. www.jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2782334

⁶⁹ Patterns in Mortality and Life Expectancy in Los Angeles County, 2010-2019. (May 2022). See Tables B2 and B6. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/epi

Figure 24. Age-adjusted Death Rates of Los Angeles County Women: 2019

	All women	African American	Asian American	Latina	White
Coronary Heart Disease	69.4	106.9	48.9	55.7	78.3
Alzheimer’s Disease	42.1	48.1	24.5	33.5	53.6
Stroke	31.7	45.8	25.0	31.0	30.8
Diabetes Mellitus	21.2	34.9	19.0	26.4	14.3
COPD	21.9	27.0	7.9	11.9	34.0
Breast Cancer	19.1	29.5	14.8	14.2	21.7
Lung Cancer	16.7	22.6	14.7	--	21.9
Pneumonia/Influenza	13.3	17.2	13.7	12.2	12.7
Hypertension	11.7	22.1	9.0	10.7	10.8

Note: Figures represent the age-adjusted death rate per 100,000 population; a dash indicates that the disease was not among the top 10 leading causes of death.

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Chronic Diseases

Chronic conditions generally compromise one’s immune system. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified several chronic diseases, especially those affecting the heart and lungs, which put one at risk to more serious COVID-19 illness. Also identified as co-factors for serious illness are obesity and age. Over 70% of those who died from COVID-19 in Los Angeles County are over the age of 65 years.⁷⁰

When Los Angeles County residents were asked whether they had ever been diagnosed with a chronic disease, 16% of women and 12% of men responded that they had been diagnosed with asthma; however, roughly 60% of these women say they currently have asthma compared to about 50% of men. More men than women report having been diagnosed with diabetes and heart disease.⁷¹ These figures have not changed significantly (are within one percentage point) of 2018 results.

The greatest variation in the proportion of those who experience a chronic disease based on a medical diagnosis is not between genders, but among women of different races/ethnicities.

Figure 25. Percentage of Los Angeles County Adults Reporting a Diagnosed Chronic Condition: 2021

Ever been diagnosed with:	Men	Women	African American women	Asian American women	Latina	White women
Asthma	12%	16%	20%	15%	14%	18%
Diabetes	13%	11%	15%	6%	15%	6%
Heart Disease	8%	5%	10%	6%	3%	6%
Obesity	30%	28%	35%	12%	39%	23%

Source: 2021 California Health Interview Survey

⁷⁰ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard (accessed on October 17, 2022). http://dashboard.publichealth.lacounty.gov/covid19_surveillance_dashboard/

⁷¹ 2018-2021 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Subject area: Health Conditions (not Cancer). Respondents who responded affirmatively for questions: “Have you ever been diagnosed with...?” UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Fielding School of Public Health. <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu>

Emotional and Mental Wellbeing

In 2018 prior to the pandemic, 20% of County women and 13% of men reported having been diagnosed with depression at some point in their lives; 14% of women and 9% of men reported that they were currently suffering from depression. Over 60% of women and men experiencing current depression at the time of the survey were on prescribed medication for the disorder.⁷²

When the pandemic was declared in March 2020, access to professional, social, and family support systems became more difficult. Additional stress from financial concerns and increased family care responsibilities heightened anxiety, especially of parents. In 2021, the percentage of women (and men) in Los Angeles County who reported impaired functioning resulting from mental or emotional issues increased and those on prescription medicine for emotional/mental health issues had increased.⁷³

Figure 26. Indicators of Emotional and Mental Wellbeing: 2018-2021

	Likely experienced psychological episode in past year		Taken prescribed medication for mental health issues at least 2 weeks	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2018	13%	10%	13%	8%
2019	14%	11%	10%	6%
2020	14%	10%	9%	7%
2021	20%	13%	14%	9%

Note: Percentages are rounded. The probability of a serious psychological episode is based on answers to several questions about impaired functioning in social and professional settings. For medication, the participant is asked about medication taken over the past year for 2 or more weeks.

Source: 2018- 2021 California Health Interview Surveys

Violence

Nationally sexual violence, including rape and unwanted sexual contact, affects millions of people each year. A disproportionate number of victims are women. When these crimes are perpetrated by an intimate partner, the effects can be particularly disastrous on family life with intergenerational consequences.

⁷² 2018 Los Angeles County Health Survey. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/LACHSDataTopics2018.htm>

⁷³ 2018-2021 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Subject area: Mental and Emotional Health. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Fielding School of Public Health. <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu>

Figure 27. Percentage of U.S. Adults Who Have Experienced Sexual Violence in Their Lifetime⁷⁴

	Sexual Violence		Intimate Partner Violence		
	Rape	Unwanted sexual contact	Sexual violence	Severe physical violence	Stalking
Women	21%	37%	18%	21%	10%
Men	3%	18%	8%	15%	2%

Source: 2015 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

While these numbers are from a national survey, women are also disproportionately impacted as victims of sexual and physical crimes from intimate partners at the state and local levels.

Rape

The California Health Interview Survey has asked Los Angeles County residents about being forced to have sex without consent, i.e., rape. In 2020, the percentage of women who reported ever having experienced rape was six times that of men.

Figure 28. Los Angeles County Residents Forced to have Sex without Consent⁷⁵

	Women	Men
2019	12%	3%
2020	12%	2%

Note: Percentages have been rounded.

Source: 2019 and 2020 California Health Interview Survey

Crimes of sexual or physical violence are often not reported to law enforcement agencies by victims for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons given by women 18-24 years of age include the personal nature of the crime (about 25%), a fear of reprisal by the perpetrator (20%), a belief that the police would or could not help (10%), and the victim’s desire not to cause trouble for the perpetrator (12%).⁷⁶

Despite the fact that these crimes are “officially” undercounted, statistics from law enforcement agencies can provide some important insights to trends in crimes of sexual and physical violence.

⁷⁴ Smith, S.G., Zhang, X., Basile, K.C., Merrick, M.T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M. Chen, J. (2018). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief—Updated Release. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2015data-brief508.pdf>

⁷⁵ 2018-2021 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Subject area: Injury and Violence Prevention. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Fielding School of Public Health. <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu>

⁷⁶ RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network). (Downloaded Nov. 2022). Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics. (Data from the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct carried out January 2020.)

www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence

Figure 29. Annual Number of Rape Crimes Reported in Los Angeles County by the Sheriff and Los Angeles Police Departments⁷⁷

	2018	2019	2020
LA County Sheriff's Department	291	300	270
LA Police Department	2528	2274	1983

Note: These figures only include those crimes reported by the LASD and LAPD, the law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction for the vast majority of the county. The FBI is in the process of migrating its Uniform Crime Reports to the Crime Data Explorer; transition of 2021 data has not yet occurred and are not yet available.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. Reporting agencies: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and Los Angeles Police Department

Information on victim gender is not publicly available but rape crimes reported to law enforcement agencies dipped in 2020 during the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, rates of rape appeared to rise but had not reached pre-pandemic levels.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)/Domestic Violence (DV)

As is the case with crimes of sexual violence, incidents of domestic violence (also known as intimate partner violence) often are not reported to law enforcement agencies and essentially for the same reasons. In 2021, there were nearly 165,000 calls to law enforcement agencies throughout the state for assistance in domestic violence; 47% of these calls involved a weapon of some type. Personal weapons (e.g., feet, hands) were involved in 75% of the cases with weapons, but firearms, knives, or other dangerous weapons were at the scene in nearly 19,000 incidents of IPV.

In Los Angeles County, as well as across the state, calls for assistance to law enforcement agencies for domestic violence have been decreasing in recent years.

Figure 30. Domestic Violence Calls for Assistance⁷⁸

	2018	2019	2020
LA County	38,190	36,707	35,498
California	166,890	161,123	160,646

Note: In 2021, the number of calls for DV assistance was again on the rise; California reported 164,608 Calls for Assistance in Domestic Violence situations.

Source: Crime Reports: Kids Data and California Office of the Attorney General

In 2020 Los Angeles County, which accounts for 25% of the state's population, accounted for 22% of all domestic violence assistance calls across the state.

⁷⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation: Crime Data Explorer. National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Details Reported in California. Accessed December 2022. <https://crime-data-explorer.app.cloud.gov/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>

⁷⁸ Kids Data: California (2020). <https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/12/domestic-violence-calls/table#fmt=940&loc=2,364&tf=110&sortType=asc> ; California Office of the Attorney General. (April 2022). Crime in California: 2021. https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/Crime%20In%20CA%202021_0.pdf

In California, 35% of women and 31% of men report experiencing physical violence, sexual violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetimes.⁷⁹ Roughly 1 in 4 county women report having experienced sexual or physical violence from an intimate partner.

Figure 31. Los Angeles County Residents Who Have Experienced Sexual or Physical Violence from an Intimate Partner: 2021⁸⁰

	Women	Men
Experienced in past year:	2%	3%
Ever experienced since age of 18 years:	23%	10%

Note: Percentages have been rounded; recent previous years are not available at this source.

Source: 2021 California Health Interview Survey

These 2021 reports of domestic violence are consistent with those found in the 2018 Los Angeles County Health Survey coordinated by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Both women and men reported being subjected to more physical violence than sexual violence; 3% of men (compared to 10% of women) indicated experiencing sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner.⁸¹

Figure 32. Los Angeles County Adults Ever Experiencing Abuse by an Intimate Partner: 2018

	Percent Reported Being Hit, Slapped, Pushed, Kicked, or Hurt in Any Way by an Intimate Partner, by Current Gender	Percent Reporting Experiencing Any Unwanted Sex by an Intimate Partner, by Current Gender
Women	16%	10%
Men	12%	3%

Source: 2018 Los Angeles County Health Survey

Intimate partner violence affects women of all races/ethnicities and at all income levels. Its victims may have little education or a college degree, and they may have a disability or not. The rates of IPV for women who responded to the 2018 Los Angeles County Health Survey vary depending on whether the issue is sexual or physical violence, but general observations are these:

- About 10% of women across economic levels, from those living in poverty to those with incomes three times the federal poverty threshold, had experienced unwanted sex, while about 16% experienced physical violence.
- Women with a disability were about twice as likely to experience unwanted sex and/or physical violence compared to women without a disability.
- Among African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinas and white women, the most abused were African American (15% for unwanted sex and 23% for physical violence).
- More highly educated women tended to experience unwanted sex and/or physical violence.
 - 8%-20% of women with a high school education or less were victims of IPV,
 - 13%-19% of women with some college or trade school were victims, and

⁷⁹ National Association Against Domestic Violence. (2020). Domestic Violence in California. https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/ncadv_california_fact_sheet_2020.pdf

⁸⁰ 2021 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Subject area: Injury and Violence Prevention. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the Fielding School of Public Health. <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu>

⁸¹ 2018 Los Angeles County Health Survey. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Topic: Intimate Partner Violence. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/LACHSDATATopics2018.htm>

- 11%-15% of women with a college or post graduate degree had experienced IPV.

Part of the rate of rape associated with educational level may be due to the age of the victim. National studies indicate that college-age women 18-24 years of age are at high risk for rape or sexual assault. Sexual violence is pervasive on college/university campuses, but women who are students are 20% *less* likely to be victims of sexual violence than women of the same age who are not students.⁸²

⁸² RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network). (Downloaded Nov. 2022). Campus Sexual Violence: Statistics. (Data from the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct carried out January 2020.) www.rainn.org/statistics/campus-sexual-violence

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