



PRESS RELEASE

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New study on local well-being, inequities to be unveiled at Jan. 26 launch event for Portrait of Sonoma County

SANTA ROSA, CA — A detailed look at the well-being of people living in Sonoma County will be released to the public on Jan. 26 in an online forum, where the community will have an opportunity to shape future policies and investments to address growing inequities in the region.

The community is invited to join the [Jan. 26 launch event](#) for the Portrait of Sonoma County 2021 Update. The 6 p.m. online event will provide the public with its first opportunity to review the findings of the study and participate in the creation of an action plan to deliver tangible improvements in the lives of Sonoma County's residents.

"This is a critical document for Sonoma County as it illustrates where we are — and where there are gaps that need to be closed in key areas such as health, income and education," said Supervisor James Gore, chair of the Board of Supervisors. "I encourage everyone to join the launch event and read the Portrait of Sonoma, as it should guide many decisions going forward."

The 44-page study will update the groundbreaking [2014 Portrait of Sonoma County](#), which shifted our community's understanding of what determines well-being in Sonoma County and how conditions vary in individual neighborhoods. The new study updates key measurements of health, wealth and education in Sonoma County and compares these data across race, ethnicity, gender and geography, giving Sonoma County a detailed picture of where preventable disparities persist in the county.

While many neighborhoods saw improvements in measurements of well-being since 2014, the report also reveals persistently lower scores for members of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and immigrant communities.

“This inequity is unjust and addressing it is a moral imperative. There is no progress without equity,” said Alegria De La Cruz, director of the Sonoma County Office of Equity. “The Portrait of Sonoma County 2021 will help us see where all of our community members stand in comparison to one another. This will help us to focus our efforts. Those inequalities are grounded in historical disinvestment and racism, and the remedy is to address that current injustice with loving attention and equitable resources now.”

The Launch Event, hosted by the Portrait of Sonoma 2021 Update Leadership Team and [On the Margins](#), will include a review of the report’s key findings and gains made since the 2014 Portrait of Sonoma County report. For example, while the gap between people in neighborhoods with the highest and lowest life expectancy has narrowed since 2014, the updated Portrait shows that people living in East Bennett Valley still live 8.7 years longer than those in nearby Roseland. It also shows that Black women in Sonoma County earn \$31,380 less per year than White men.

The Jan. 26 launch event provides a space to reflect on the well-being of Sonoma County’s residents and the need for action to drive meaningful policies and programs that will unseat structural racism. Beyond the invitation to participate in the launch event, community members’ input will shape the collective response to the report’s findings. Attendees will be invited to participate in building an Agenda for Action, which will guide future policy and investment decisions made by local governments, philanthropists, the business sector and community-based organizations.

The event is free, but pre-registration is requested. Information is available here:

https://marincf.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IQIB32UITGefPQ1I_SkS0Q

“It’s vital that our entire community is empowered to take part in making transformative change in our community,” said Karin Demarest, vice president for community impact at Community Foundation Sonoma County. “The data the Portrait of Sonoma gives us access to is just a starting point —

a useful guide showing where inequities lie. As a community, it's our job to take the next steps, to learn from the data and to use it to make policy and funding decisions that will help end the inequities that persist locally."

The Portrait of Sonoma Update project is a multi-sector initiative uniting local governments, nonprofits, philanthropy and the business community to understand the needs of the community and to co-create an action plan rooted in community engagement.

The Portrait of Sonoma County 2021 Update report was produced by Measure of America, an initiative of the Social Science Research Council, in partnership with Community Foundation Sonoma County, the Peter E. Haas Jr. Family Fund, Sonoma County Office of Equity, Upstream Investments and Sonoma County Departments of Health Services and Human Services. Additional funding support was provided by Career Technical Education Foundation, First 5 Sonoma County, Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County, John Jordan Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Petaluma Health Care Foundation, Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation, Sonoma County Office of Education, Providence St. Joseph Health, Sutter Health and United Way of the Wine Country.

The full report and interactive maps will be posted online on Jan. 26. Follow these Instagram channels for updates: [@sonomacountyhumanservices](#) and [@cfsonomacounty](#).

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