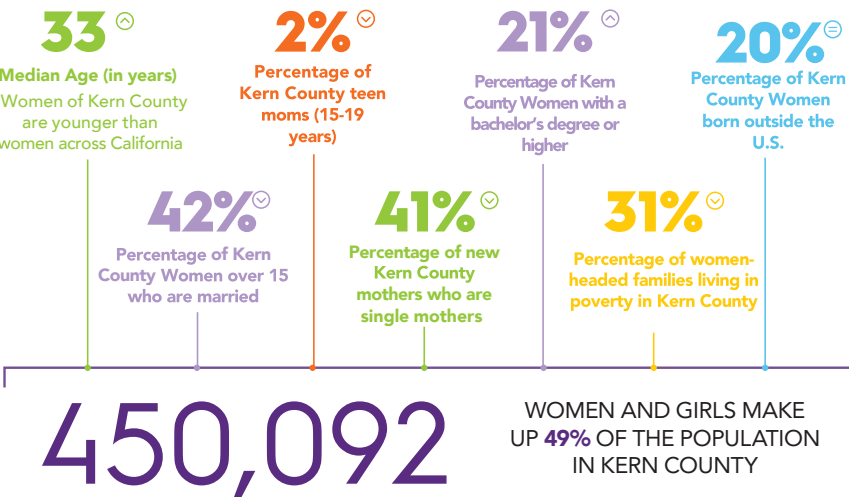


# Kern County Women and Girls Today

⬆ INCREASE FROM 2020 REPORT   ⬇ DECREASE FROM 2020 REPORT   ➡ SAME AS 2020 REPORT



## Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Kern County

ALL AGES: GIRLS (LESS THAN 18 YEARS OLD) AND WOMEN 65 YEARS AND OLDER¹

AFRICAN AMERICAN ASIAN AMERICAN LATINA WHITE OTHER

### ALL AGES



### UNDER 18 YEARS



### 65 YEARS AND OVER



► The racial/ethnic distribution of Kern County girls (under 18 years) is more heavily Latina, while women 65 years and over are predominantly White.



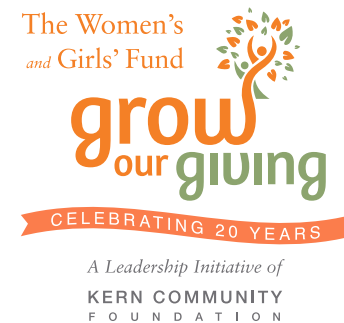
Women's and Girls Fund Vision Committee

## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

KERN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Growing community.  
Growing philanthropy.

**Kern Community Foundation (KCF)** is a vibrant nonprofit enterprise with a powerfully simple mission: "Growing Community, Growing Philanthropy." Since 1999, the Foundation has served as a charitable resource for local donors and corporations to generate capital that provides philanthropic solutions to make Kern County a better place to live, work, and visit. The Foundation is home to over 200 charitable funds. KCF has awarded over \$30 million in grants and scholarships. For more information about Kern Community Foundation visit [kernfoundation.org](http://kernfoundation.org).



**The Women's and Girls' Fund**, a leadership initiative of Kern Community Foundation, allows individuals to make a significant impact on their community through collective giving. Through the Women's and Girls' Fund, one person's gift combines with many others to build an endowment. The assets of the fund are professionally managed and invested by KCF. A percentage of the fund's value is available to grant each year while the principal remains intact, enabling the fund to make grants forever, and to respond to the changing needs of women and girls in Kern County.



**Mount Saint Mary's University** is the only women's university in Los Angeles and one of the most diverse in the nation. Mount Saint Mary's is known nationally for its research on gender equity, its innovative health and science programs, and its commitment to community service. As a leading liberal arts institution, The University provides year-round, flexible and online programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. Weekend, evening and graduate programs are offered to both women and men. Mount alums are engaged, active global citizens who use their knowledge and skills to better themselves, their communities and the world. [MSMU.EDU](http://MSMU.EDU)

## SUMMARY SOURCES

Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (Point-In-Time Count Reports)  
California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO)  
California Department of Education  
California Department of Justice (OpenJustice)  
California Department of Public Health (CDPH)  
California Health & Human Services (CHHS)  
Open Data  
California Health Interview Survey (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research)  
California Healthy Kids Survey (WestEd)  
California Poverty Measure (PPIC)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
City of Bakersfield (Government)  
County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute)

Harvard University – The Pluralism Project  
Jakarta Movement  
Kern Community College District  
Kern High School District (Career & Technical Education)  
National Cancer Institute  
National Center for Education Statistics (PIAAC)  
PIAAC (Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies)  
Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC)  
SoFi (Social Finance)  
The Sikh Coalition  
U.S. Cancer Statistics (CDC & NCI)  
U.S. Census Bureau  
World Health Organization (WHO)

# The Women's and Girls' Fund

A Leadership Initiative of  
KERN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Report on  
the Status of  
Women + Girls  
in Kern County

2025  
EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY



As we Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Women’s & Girls’ Fund of Kern County, we present the 2025 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County. This report was prepared in pursuit of the Fund’s purpose to “Transform the Lives of Women and Girls in Kern County by mobilizing the power and passion of Women working together.”

The 2025 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Kern County was commissioned by The Women’s and Girls’ Fund at Kern Community Foundation and prepared by the Center for the Advancement of Women at Mount Saint Mary’s University, Los Angeles. This executive summary, as well as the complete report, is made available as a gift to the community. The data included in this report, generated from the 2023 American Community Survey and other relevant reports, provide a portrait of the wellbeing and standing of women and girls in Kern County using a variety of economic and social indicators. The 2025 report examines the status of women and girls across the county in terms of economic wellbeing, home and family, health and safety, and educational attainment. The report highlights both progress and persistent disparities.

Good data should lead to complex questions, reflection, and potential new actions. The goal of this report is to help inform the important work of the Women’s and Girls’ Fund of the Kern Community Foundation as it sets priorities and makes other data-driven decisions that will continue to improve the status of Women and girls in the County and the state. Our hope is that the report findings inspire gender equality advocates to make positive change on behalf of the 450,000 women and girls residing in Kern County. The report may also assist Kern County policymakers in providing justification for the allocation of local resources to women and girls in the years to come.

2025 STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN KERN COUNTY

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 49% of population; 57% Latina
- Girls in K-12: 68% Latina, 18% English learners
- Median age 33 (younger than CA avg.)

Women and girls comprise nearly half (49%) of Kern County’s population, with Latinas representing the majority (57%). Girls in K-12 schools are predominantly Latina (68%), and English learner programs are overwhelmingly Spanish-speaking, though Punjabi is the second most common language. Women of Kern are younger than the statewide average, with a median age of 33.

EDUCATION

- 21% hold 4-year degree+ (up from 16% in 2018)
- 42% graduate HS meeting UC/CSU req. (vs 58% CA)
- English learners: 84% grad rate, but 20% meet UC/CSU req.

Educational attainment has improved: 21% of Kern women now hold a four-year degree or higher, up from 16% in 2018. However, disparities persist—only 42% of Kern high school girls graduate meeting UC/CSU requirements compared to 58% statewide. English learners graduate at strong rates (84%) but only 20% meet college admission requirements.

HOME AND FAMILY



Housing costs remain a burden, with nearly half of renters spending more than one-third of their income on rent. Family structures are diverse: 42% of women over 15 are married, while 37% have never married. In 2023, 41% of new mothers were unmarried, with significant racial/ethnic differences in birth rates and single motherhood. The total unhoused population of Kern County declined slightly to 2,606 in 2025, though nearly a third remain chronically homeless.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Higher death rates from diabetes & heart disease
- Valley Fever rate 14x CA average
- Breast cancer mortality highest for Black women
- DV calls ↓ but weapon use ↑ to 76%

Health outcomes present mixed results. Almost half of women report “very good” to “excellent” health, but Kern has higher mortality rates from heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory conditions than California overall. Valley Fever remains a major public health issue, with Kern’s diagnosis rate over 14 times the state average. Breast cancer incidence is lower than the state but mortality is higher, particularly for African American/Black women. Mental health concerns are significant—nearly one in five women reported a serious psychological episode in 2023, and half of adolescent girls reported chronic sadness. Domestic violence calls have declined since 2021, but incidents involving weapons have sharply increased, heightening risks of severe harm.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

- Median earnings ↑ 23% since 2018 (\$44.7K)
- Women earn 83¢ per \$1 men earn
- 1 in 3 single-mother families live in poverty

Earnings for full-time working women rose 23% since 2018, reaching a median of \$44,700. Despite this progress, wage gaps remain—women earn about 83 cents for every dollar earned by men, with even greater disparities for African American/Black and Latina women. Employment participation is lower than the state average, with 67% of women in the labor force and an unemployment rate of 7.8%. Poverty has declined overall, but one in three families headed by single women live in poverty, and households with multiple children face even greater financial strain.

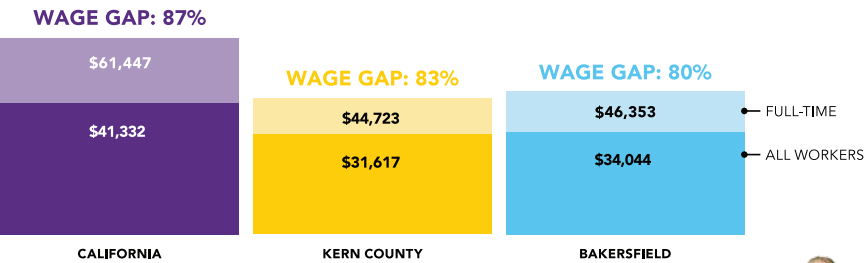
Kern County Women in the Workforce

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN 20-64 YEARS OF AGE<sup>2</sup>



► A smaller percentage of women in Kern County (and Bakersfield) are in the labor force compared to all of CA and more women are unable to find work / are unemployed in Kern County compared to the state-wide figure.

MEDIAN FULL-TIME EARNINGS OF KERN COUNTY WOMEN 16 YEARS AND OVER: 2023



► Kern County Women have lower median earnings than women across the state, but the gender earnings gap is significantly larger for Kern County Women than for California working women as a whole: **83% vs 87%** of what men earn.

► The gender wage gap remains about constant at 83 cents earned by women for every dollar earned by men (2020 and 2025 Reports).



Educational Attainment in Kern County

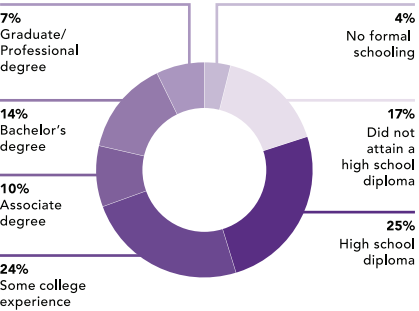
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION<sup>3</sup>

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES MEETING UC/CSU REQUIREMENTS:** A significantly smaller percentage of girls graduate high school in Kern County having completed requirements for admission to the University of California or California State University than do girls statewide (**42% vs 58%**).

**ENGLISH LEARNERS:** Nearly 1 in 5 girls (**18%**) enrolled in Kern County schools are identified as English Learners. Kern County girls in English-Learner programs have a graduation rate of 84% with 20% having completed requirements for UC or CSU.

<sup>2</sup>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 1-Year Estimates. Table S2301: Employment Status  
<sup>3</sup>Source: California Department of Education, 2022-2023

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR KERN COUNTY WOMEN 25 YEARS AND OLDER: 2023



CONCLUSION

The report demonstrates progress in women’s educational attainment, earnings, and reductions in poverty, yet systemic inequities—particularly in income, healthcare access, and safety—continue to challenge Kern County women. Persistent disparities across race and ethnicity highlight the need for targeted interventions. The findings serve as a critical resource for policymakers, nonprofits, and community leaders committed to advancing equity and improving the well-being of women and girls throughout Kern County.



READ THE FULL REPORT

The complete 2025 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.