



# 2023 Community Needs Assessment Summary

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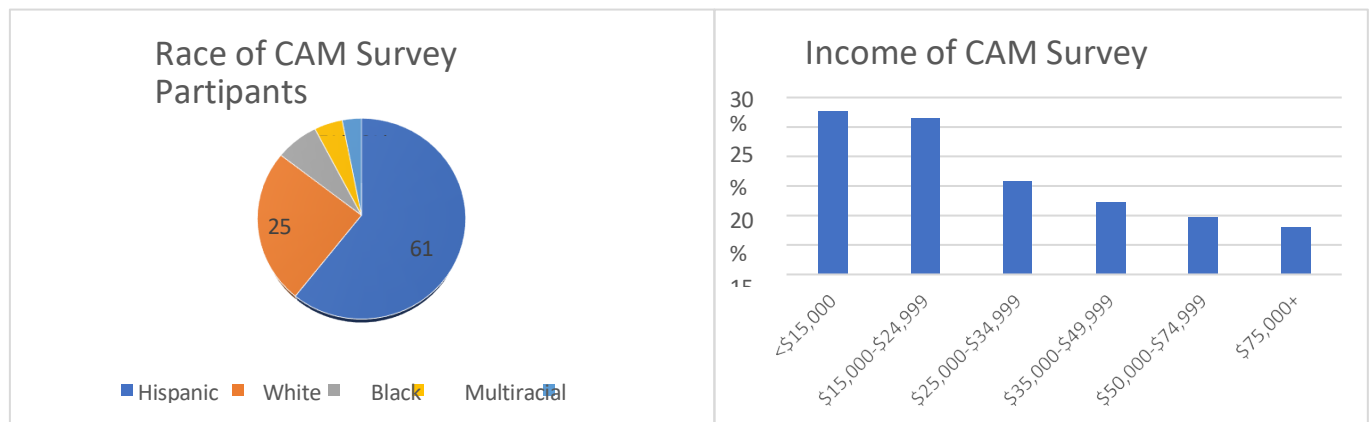


## Needs of Children, Families, and Residents of Marin

Community Action Marin (CAM) makes it possible for people to achieve well-being by providing the vital services they need and breaking down the barriers that get in the way of fair and lasting change in service to better outcomes for all. We are more effective in advancing our mission by understanding the needs of our fellow Marin residents, including the families in our early childhood programs, clients receiving other CAM program services, partner agencies, and the community at large. Community needs are multi-faceted and interconnected, so we continually strive to better understand those needs through both the formal needs assessment process as well as on-going engagement with those we serve, our employees, our fellow service providers as well as public and private partners across the county.

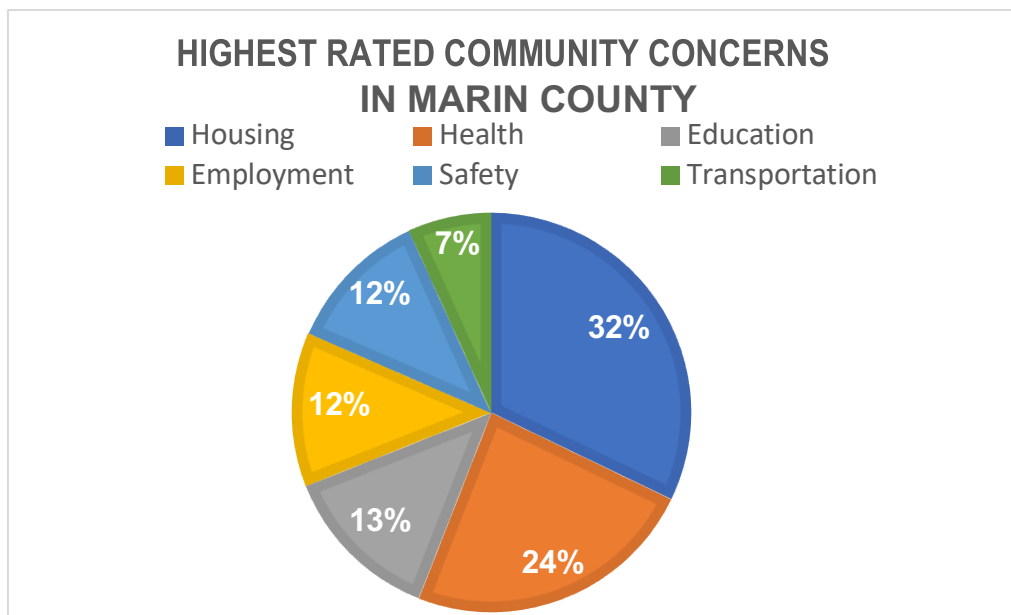
As part of this 2023 Community Needs Assessment process, CAM conducted a community needs survey in February 2023. We made the survey available in multiple languages to clients receiving CAM services, including our early childhood education (Head Start/Early Head Start) programs, and other members of the Marin County community. We sent the survey to community members by email through community partners and shared the survey link in-person outside local businesses, schools, community clinics, food distribution sites, and other locations in the community that are frequented by our target populations.

The results reported here reflect a total of approximately 600 completed surveys, coming from all of the distinct geographies in our county. The racial and income demographics of survey participants tend toward community members who have sought assistance with basic needs.



This section of our Needs Assessment is organized by areas of community concern in order of priority by respondents of the community needs survey. Housing and Health were rated as the highest areas of community concern.



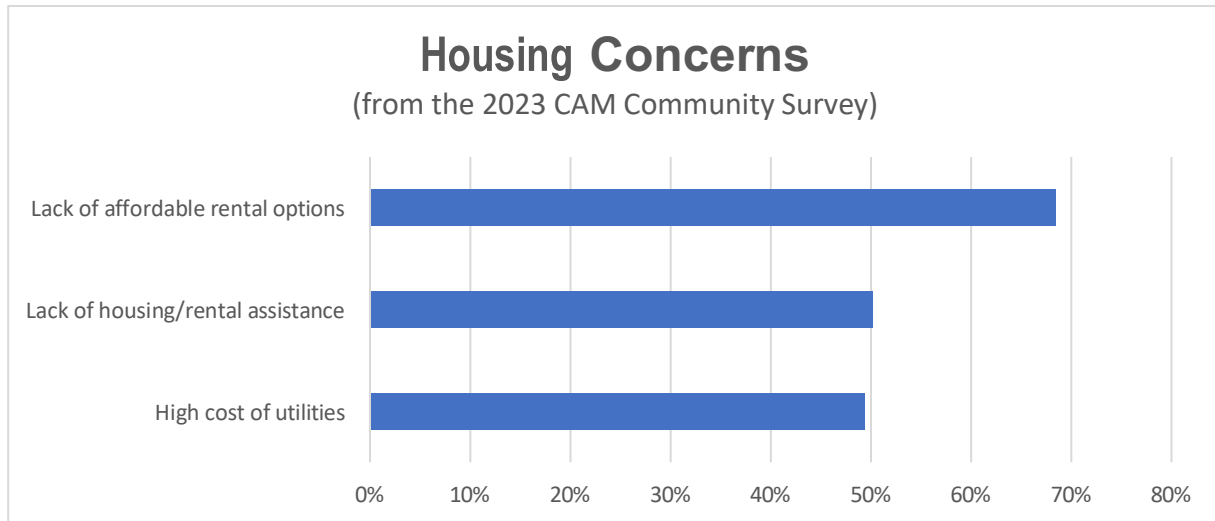


As we discuss the various areas of community concern in this report, it is important to keep in mind that Marin County ranks among the most racially disparate counties in California across all indicators of well-being. The pandemic highlighted many longstanding inequities in our community, including systemic inequality in housing security, economic stability, and healthcare. This needs assessment shows that the burdens continue to fall unfairly on low-income populations and people of color, reinforcing the need for policies and action to help all Marin County residents achieve well-being.

## Housing

Housing was the top concern among those who responded to our survey, with 32% ranking it their number one concern out of six options and 70% ranking it in their top 3 three. Our Community Action Marin staff members also see housing as one of the biggest challenges for clients receiving services across our agency's programs. Laurel Hill, CAM's Director of Safety Net Services observes "Whether a client comes to CAM for financial coaching, utility assistance, or enrollment in early childhood education, housing is almost always one of the biggest challenges for them and their family, with a huge impact on their family's overall well-being".

Our survey asked which aspects of housing were of most concern, and lack of affordable rentals was the most frequently cited issue.



To supplement the quantitative data from our survey, CAM held focus group meetings in March 2023. These focus groups were conducted in English and Spanish and allowed us to gain deeper understanding around specific issues and topics. There was a robust discussion on housing, during which the community participants shared heart-felt comments that reinforce what a major concern housing is in our county:

- “I can’t find anywhere to live – not even a studio – for under \$2,000”
- “They are asking me to prove I make 3-4 times the rent to get approved ... I don’t make that kind of money!”
- “It isn’t fair because I’m not good with technology, so by the time I get help paying the application fee on-line I lose out on the apartment”
- “If you don’t have an advocate, someone working on your behalf – like a case manager – you may get incorrect information and have an even harder time getting housing support”

Table 6 demonstrates the fundamental issue for renters in Marin – the cost of rent is much higher than average in the state and country, and rental costs continue to climb each year.

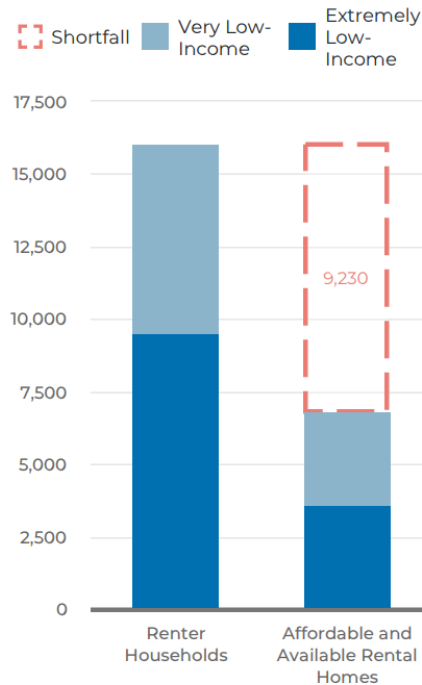
**Table 6: Median Rents, Rent Increases, and Relative Rents<sup>xxxii</sup>**

	Marin County (% increase)	California (% of Marin County)	United States (% of Marin County)
2021	\$2307 (11.5% increase from 2019)	\$1698 (74%)	\$1163 (50%)
2019	\$2069 (11.0% increase from 2017)	\$1503 (73%)	\$1062 (51%)
2017	\$1863	\$1358 (73%)	\$1012 (54%)

There is a very limited supply of affordable or public housing to help buffer these high costs. According to this graphic from the California Housing Partnership, over 9,000 low-income renter households in Marin do not have access to affordable housing.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

### AFFORDABLE HOMES SHORTFALL

**9,230 low-income renter households** in Marin County do not have access to an affordable home.



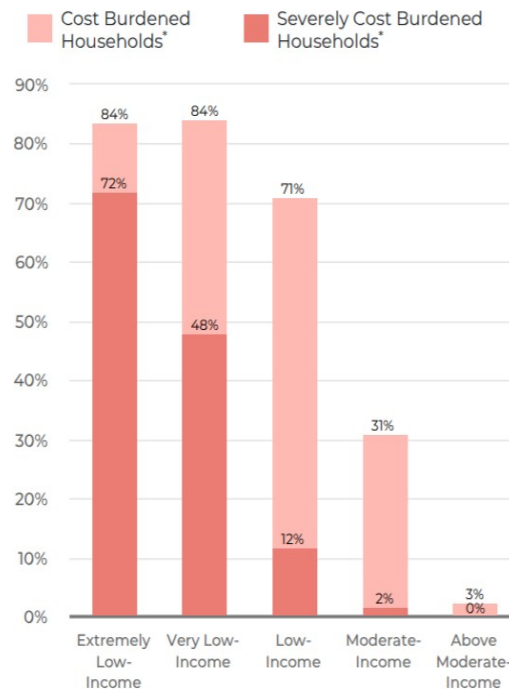
Low-income residents turn to rental assistance to get housed or maintain housing to prevent eviction, but they face challenges. Multiple focus group participants shared that receiving a housing voucher feels impossible because they never seem to move up on the priority list. “It feels like I won’t get housing help until my situation becomes desperate” said one person. Staffing challenges at public and private agencies are also an issue for those seeking housing assistance. One community member observed: “Covid created a lot of barriers. I can’t get anyone to answer the phone, and many service providers are still working from home, so there’s no office to go into and talk to a real person to get help. It is so frustrating!”.

The affordable housing that does exist is sometimes only affordable because it is low-quality and/or overcrowded. A West Marin community member who participated in our focus group expressed frustration that she pays very high rent for very poor-quality housing, but she feels stuck because she doesn’t have a better housing option a reasonable distance from her job.

This graphic from the California Housing Partnership shows that the high cost of housing in Marin County consumes a very large share of lower-income residents’ income.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

### Housing Burden in Marin by Income Level

(Cost Burdened means paying 30% or more of income for rent; Severely Cost Burdened means paying 50% or more of income for rent)



This housing burden falls more heavily on residents of color, with 58% of Latino and 56% of Black renters spending greater than 30% of their income on housing.<sup>xxxv</sup> In addition, Marin has one of the highest gaps in homeownership by race of all counties in California, with 69% of White households owning homes but only 26% of Black households and 33% of Latino households.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Our survey respondents were concerned with racial inequities in housing, with 26% reporting housing discrimination as a concern. Racial inequity in Marin County housing is very visible, with affordable housing often concentrated in certain crowded and segregated neighborhoods, resulting in Marin having some of the most segregated towns in the Bay Area<sup>xxxvii</sup>.

## Health

Health was the second highest concern identified in Community Action Marin's 2023 community needs survey, with 24% identifying it as their area of greatest concern and over 70% ranking it in their top three. In addition, Health was the top community concern identified by the parents of CAM's early childhood education programs.

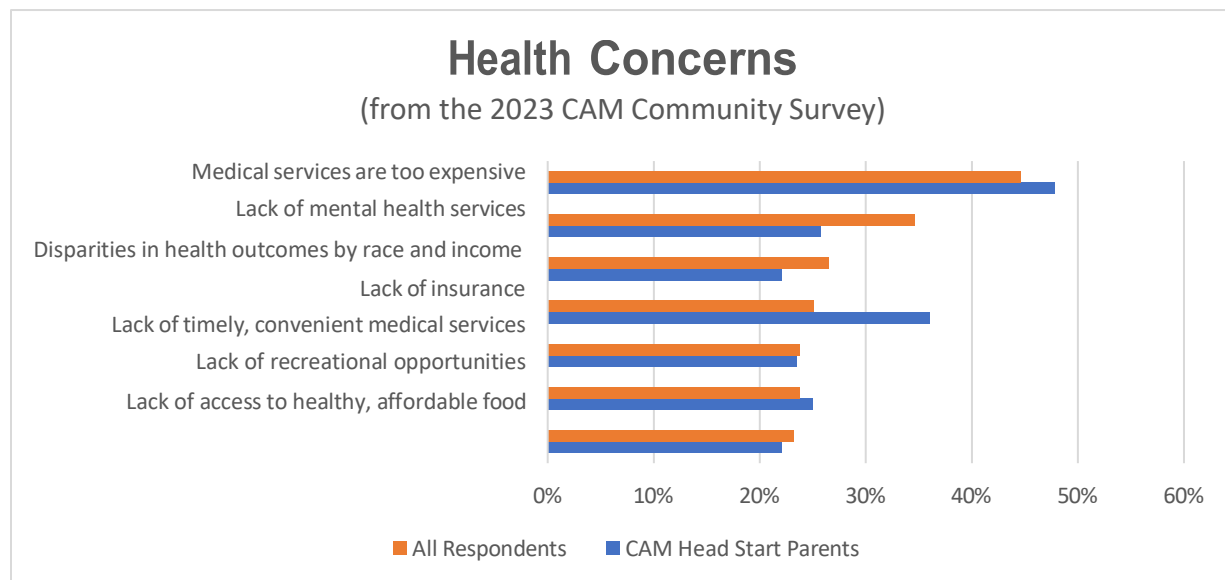
In 2022 MarinHealth, in partnership with Healthy Marin Partnership, completed a Community Health Needs Assessment.<sup>xxxviii</sup> This work is a valuable and comprehensive resource to understand the health needs of our Marin County community. The top items in their list of prioritized significant health needs are:

- Access to basic needs (housing, jobs, food)

- Access to behavioral health, mental/substance use services
- Access to quality primary health care health services

These findings reinforce the strong connection between social issues - such as housing, income, and food – and health, and the importance of collaboration between community organizations to provide services and conduct advocacy with these connections in mind. An example is the partnership between Ritter Center, Spahr Center, and Community Action Marin to field a mobile health and wellness project bringing services to unhoused residents across Marin County. Ritter Center, the primary partner, provides medical and behavioral health services while the Spahr Center provides harm reduction services and Community Action Marin’s homeless outreach team provides homeless outreach services including housing navigation and case management.

In the 2023 CAM community survey, we asked participants to choose their three top concerns from a list of 13 health-related issues. The highest ranked health concerns for all survey respondents and the subgroup of parents of our Head Start preschool students are shown below.



Given the low-income demographics of our survey population (over 50% of respondents earn less than \$50,000 per year) it is not surprising that cost of care and access to services are primary concerns, or that they see disparities in health outcomes due to race and income. Lack of insurance stands out as a concern among our early childhood education families, and concerns about food access are consistent with survey responses about food insecurity.

Marin County ranks very high, and often the best in the state, for health metrics. For example, Marin County ranked 1<sup>st</sup> out of 58 counties in California for access to clinical care, with only 4% of individuals uninsured, compared to 8% statewide<sup>xxxix</sup>. The ratio of Marin County care providers (primary care, dental, and mental health) to individuals is better than the statewide rate and consistent with top U.S. performers.

Additional health metrics are compiled by County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which ranks communities across many health and wellness factors. According to the 2023 rankings, Marin County ranks as the top county in California for Overall Health, including in health factors (Table 7) and health outcomes (Table 8).

**Table 7: Adult Health Factors by Geographic Area<sup>xi</sup>**

Geographic Area	% Smokers	% Obese	Physical inactivity	STD Prevalence Rate (cases per 100,00 population)
Marin County	9% (-10%)	23% (+28%)	14% (+7.7%)	217 (-30%)
California	9% (-18%)	30% (+25%)	21% (+17%)	452 (+17%)

Note: numbers in parentheses are the % change relative to the data reported in our 2021 Community Needs Assessment report

**Table 8: Health Outcomes Data by Geographic Area<sup>xii</sup>**

Geographic Area	Years of Potential Life Lost (yrs prior to age 75 per 100,000 population)	% Poor or Fair Health	Physically Unhealthy Days (in last 30 days)	Mentally Unhealthy Days (in last 30 days)
Marin County	3600 (+12%)	10% (-17%)	2.6 (-21%)	4.4 (+22%)
California	5700 (+7.5%)	14% (-22%)	3.0 (-23%)	4.0 (+8.1%)

Note: numbers in parentheses are the % change relative to the data reported in our 2021 Community Needs Assessment report

In comparing the latest County Health Rankings to the results reported in our 2021 needs assessment, Marin made improvements in some areas such as smoking and physical health. However, several key health indicators moved in a negative direction, namely obesity & physical activity, years of potential life lost, and mental health.

Across all of these measures, it is important to note barriers to access and the impact of the social determinants of health that reflect racial and economic disparities. Without data disaggregated by race, Marin County residents of low income and people of color are often invisible given the broader demographics of our community.

Other Marin health metrics include:

Life expectancy: A census tract analysis shows a lower life expectancy in higher poverty areas such as Marin City (76 years) and in Novato (77 years) compared to more affluent areas such south San Anselmo (91 years).<sup>xlii</sup>

Infant and Child Well-being: The number and percent of infants born at low birth weight is 5.5%, lower than the statewide rate of 6.9%.<sup>xliii</sup> The infant mortality rate in Marin County is 1 per 1,000, lower than the statewide rate of 4 per 1,000. The child mortality rate (ages 0-18) in Marin County is 20 per 100,000, also lower than the statewide rate of 40 per 100,000; however, there are disparities by race and ethnicity.<sup>xliv</sup>

Marin County has one of the lowest rates of reported child abuse and neglect among counties in California, with the most recent data (2020) by Kidsdata.org showing a rate of 19.8 per 1,000. While the rate of reported



abuse and neglect have dropped for all races, there are significant disparities: 88.7 per 1,000 for Black children, 28.1 For Hispanic children, and 11.4 for White children.<sup>xlv</sup>

**Teen Pregnancy:** Teen (ages 15-19) birth rate in Marin County is 6 per 1,000. While this rate is the lowest in the state, California Department of Public Health data reports significant racial disparities, with the teen birth rate 21 per 1,000 for Hispanic, 7 for Black, and 1 for White teens.

**Substance Use:** The percentage of Marin adults that report binge or excessive drinking is 22% (compared to the state rate of 18%). An encouraging trend is Marin County's rate of alcohol-involved driving deaths, which dropped from the 32% reported in our last needs assessment report to 26% (compared to the state rate of 28%).<sup>xlvi</sup> The rate of drug overdose deaths is 17 per 100,000, the same as the statewide rate.<sup>xlvii</sup> California has a relatively low rate of opioid-related drug overdose deaths compared to the national rate, but there has been an increase in overdose deaths due to synthetic opioids (e.g., fentanyl).<sup>xlviii</sup>

**Mental Health:** Mental health is a critical factor in the health and well-being of our community, as seen in the MarinHealth Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)<sup>xlix</sup>. Mental health is a complex issue, intersecting with physical health and social factors. MarinHealth reports these topics in the Access to Mental/Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services section of their CHNA: substance use and substance use care, homelessness and mental health, youth and mental health, and access to mental health care.

35% of the respondents in our CAM community survey ranked mental health as a top three health issue. CAM staff note that mental health is a significant issue with clients, but they often don't have the luxury of addressing mental health concerns because their focus is on basic needs such as housing and food. Mental health is an especially important issue in our housing navigation work, due to the prevalence of mental health issues with the homeless residents we serve. Fatai Tokolahi, who leads CAM's homeless outreach team, observes that "Many of our unhoused Marin residents struggle with mental health, which impacts their ability to meet their basic needs for housing, health care, and food."

In our March 2023 focus group discussions, mental health was a recurring theme, with participants raising issues such as: lack of mental health benefits, inability to get appointments, and reluctance to talk about mental health.

## Food

At a county level, Marin has food access and insecurity rates better than the statewide rates in California, however according to County Health Rankings data for 2021 and 2023, the percentage of the population who lack adequate access to food improved in California but reduced slightly in Marin.

**Table 9: Food Access by Geographic Area<sup>l</sup>**

Geographic Area	% Food Insecurity 2021	% Food Insecurity 2023
Marin County	7%	8%
California	11%	9%

There is one low-income and low-access census tract (i.e. "food desert") in the county, census tract 06041106001<sup>li</sup> in the San Rafael area. Community Action Marin staff note that, while there may appear to be

an adequate number of grocery stores in many communities in the county, there are neighborhoods in which shopping at those grocery stores is cost prohibitive for lower income families.

The pandemic greatly impacted the ability of families to access food – in our 2021 survey 50% of our early childhood education program families reported increased need in this area. Access to food continues to be an issue; 23% of respondents to our 2023 survey ranked “lack of access to healthy, affordable food” one of their top three health concerns.

Our 2023 survey also asked questions about food insecurity. In response to this prompt: “We were worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more”, 67% of respondents said they **often** or **sometimes** had that fear during the past 12 months. Drilling down into the subpopulation of CAM’s early childhood education program parents, nearly 70% worried about having enough food for their families in the past year, and disaggregating the data by race and income, 75% of our Hispanic families with incomes under \$50,000 experienced food insecurity.

Food access was a topic of great interest in our 2023 community focus groups, with participants expressing frustration at the high cost of food due to inflation, poor quality of food available at food banks, challenges getting food for those on restricted diets, and loss/reduction of CalFresh benefits.

Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals (FRPM)<sup>lii</sup> varies widely based on demographics, similar to other poverty measures in our county. In 10 of the 41 public elementary schools in Marin County, over half the students qualify for FRPM, and in four of those schools over 75% of the students qualify. At the same time, in 14 of the county’s elementary schools under 10% of the students qualify for FRPM. Not surprisingly, the schools with the highest rates of FRPM are in low-income neighborhoods with higher populations of students of color.

School	Area	Eligible FRPM 2021-2022
Bahia Vista Elementary	San Rafael (Canal)	97%
San Pedro Elementary	San Rafael	95%
Bodega Bay Elementary	West Marin	72%
Hamilton Meadow Park	Novato	60%
Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy	Marin City	53%

## Education

Education was reported as the top community concern by 13% of all our 2023 community survey respondents and 19% of our early childhood education program parent respondents.

Marin is a highly educated county on average with quality public education, however there are large gaps in measures of academic success by race and income level, consistent with our findings in other areas. Marin County’s population as a whole is much more educated than California’s, with less than half of the rate of

non-high school graduates and a much higher rate with college degrees. As illustrated in Table 10, Community Action Marin serves families with lower levels of educational attainment than individuals in Marin County or California.

**Table 10: Educational Attainment of Families: California, Marin County<sup>lviii</sup> and Served by Community Action Marin Head Start/Early Head Start (highest level of education obtained by parent(s)/guardian(s))<sup>liv</sup>**

	California	Marin County	CAM Head Start Parents
Less than a high school degree	16%	6.6%	52%
High school graduate or GED	20%	10%	27%
Associate's degree or some college	29%	23%	10%
Bachelor's or advanced degree	35%	60%	11%

In Marin, the countywide cohort graduation rate for the 2021-2022 school year was 90.4%, the same as the statewide rate<sup>lv</sup>, but graduation rates vary across schools. Table 11 shows the graduation rates from the county's four public high schools. Tamalpais Union, with a higher population of students from higher-income families, was the best in 2022. For schools with a larger population of students of color and lower-income families, Novato's graduation rate dropped slightly, and San Rafael improved significantly compared to 2020.

**Table 11: 4-Year Graduation Rate for Class of 2020 by School District<sup>lvi</sup>**

School District	Cohort Graduation Rate 2020	Cohort Graduation Rate 2022
Novato Unified School District	92%	91%
San Rafael City High School District	74%	80%
Shoreline United School District	100%	93%
Tamalpais Union High School District	96%	98%

Note: Shoreline has a very small student population - only 38 graduates in 2022 – so their drop in graduation rate is not statistically significant.

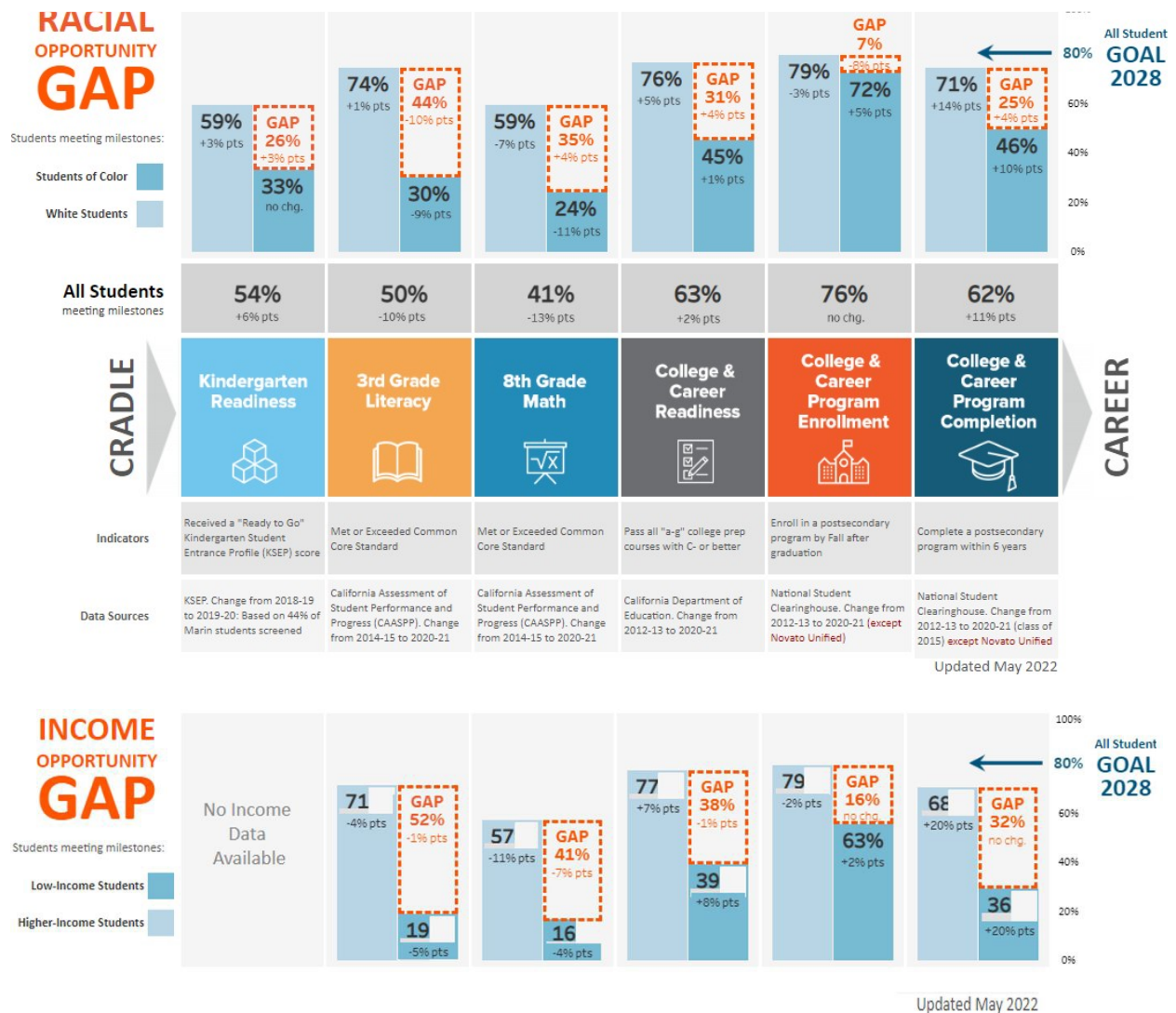
Nearly half of our survey respondents chose “disparities in educational access and outcomes by race and income” as one of their top three educational concerns. These concerns by community members are validated by Marin public school test results in the state's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade Smarter Balanced Assessments. Table 12 shows results for the 2021-2022 school year and gaps in academic achievement between the county overall and students at schools in lower-income areas and with greater numbers of students of color such as Marin City (Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy) and San Rafael (Bahia Vista).<sup>lvii</sup>

**Table 12: California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, 2021-2022, % of Students who Met or Exceeded the Standard<sup>lviii</sup>**

	Marin County Elementary Schools	Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy	Bahia Vista Elementary	Marin County High Schools	San Rafael City High School
	3rd Grade			11th Grade	
English Language Art/Literacy	59%	28%	19%	65%	48%
Mathematics	60%	26%	19%	45%	28%

Another example of Marin’s educational gaps by race and income is shown in the data compiled by Marin Promise Partnership. Figure 6 shows the projected racial and income gaps between white students and students of color beginning with kindergarten readiness all the way through college and career planning (i.e “cradle to career”). Their latest data shows a racial opportunity gap of 26% for kindergarten readiness for students of color and an income opportunity gap of 52% for students of color based on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy. <sup>lix</sup>

**Figure 6. Marin County Educational Disparities by Race and Income, Marin Promise Partnership**



There are likely lingering educational effects of the COVID pandemic, including disparities by race and income. An income gap for access to technology and the internet was revealed by the pandemic, and while progress has been made, the latest Marin County census data shows 19% of households with income under \$35,000 have no internet access (down from 25% in our 2021 report) compared with only 3% of households making over \$75,000. <sup>lxi</sup> These results are consistent with our community survey, in which 22% of people chose technology access as a significant educational concern. The community consortium Digital Marin is working to close gaps in internet access. <sup>lxii</sup>

## Employment and Income

High-level employment statistics for Marin County are very favorable. The unemployment rate in December 2022 was only 2.4%, one of the lowest in the state, and a significant improvement from 5.5% in December 2020.<sup>lxii</sup> However, there are inequities in employment by race, evidenced by the latest census data showing Black/African American residents twice as likely to be unemployed.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The top three occupations (civilian employed population age 16 and over) in Marin County are: management, business, science and arts occupations (57%); sales and office occupations (20%); and service occupations (14.8%), and education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations (16%)<sup>lxiv</sup>, which overtook service occupations for 3<sup>rd</sup> place since our 2021 community needs report.

The top three industries (civilian employed population age 16 and over) are: educational services, and health care and social assistance (21%); professional, scientific, and administrative services (20%); and retail trade (10%)<sup>lxv</sup> which overtook finance and insurance and real estate for 3<sup>rd</sup> place since our 2021 community needs report.

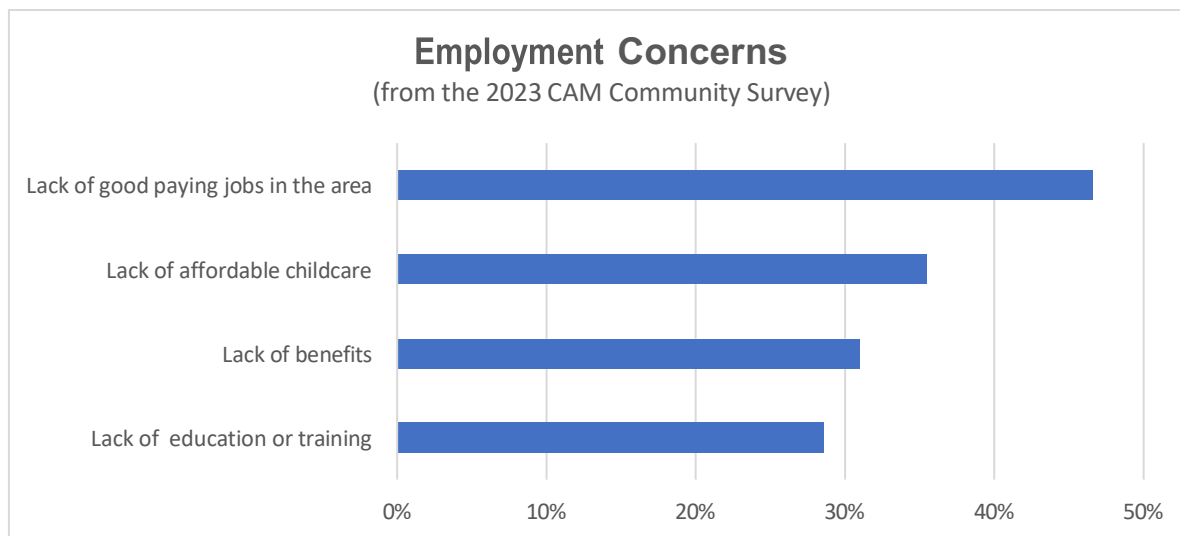
The North Bay Workforce Alliance and partners 2021-2024 strategic plan is a good resource for more detailed additional employment sector data and needs.<sup>lxvi</sup>

Strong employment levels in various industries and occupations contribute to Marin's health economy relative to many parts of the state and country. However, many of our residents struggle to achieve economic well-being because of a gap between wages/income and cost of living, with massive racial disparities in income continuing across races as shown below.<sup>lxvii</sup>

	2019 Median Income	2021 Median Income
Asian	\$107,849	\$155,338
Black or African American	\$48,602	\$60,849
Hispanic	\$58,639	\$67,125
White	\$126,501	\$138,214

For those who responded to CAM's community needs survey, many of whom struggle to meet basic needs, a lack of good paying jobs was the most frequently cited "top 3" employment concern.



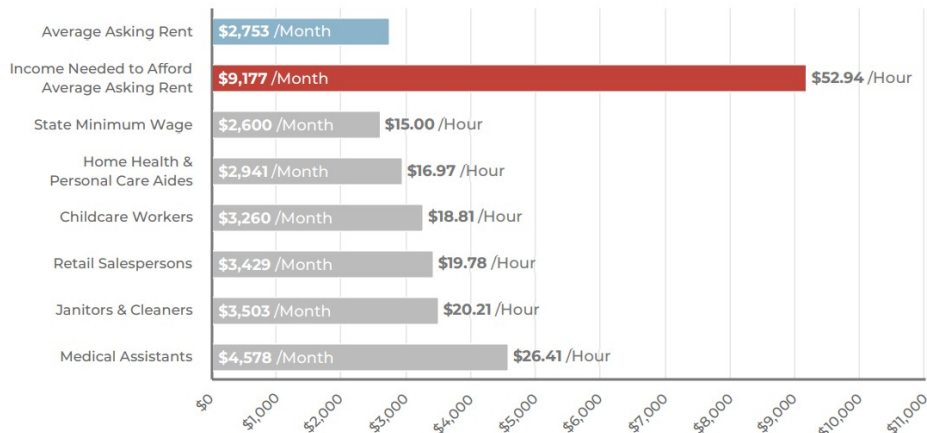


This is consistent with the fundamental connection between income and well-being, and the significance of employment and income in the community needs discussions on housing and health.

The 2022 graphic “Who Can Afford To Rent” from the California Housing Partnership underscores the challenge for low wage workers to afford the high cost of living, especially rent, in Marin County.<sup>lxviii</sup>

#### WHO CAN AFFORD TO RENT

| Renters need to earn **3.5 times** minimum wage to afford the average asking rent in Marin County.



Marin residents in low wage jobs such as home health aides and childcare earn a fraction of what is needed to afford rent in our county, which means living further from work and school. This further strains family schedules and finances with longer commutes and higher transportation costs. 83% of our community survey respondents earn under \$50,000 per year and may be in similar low-income jobs.

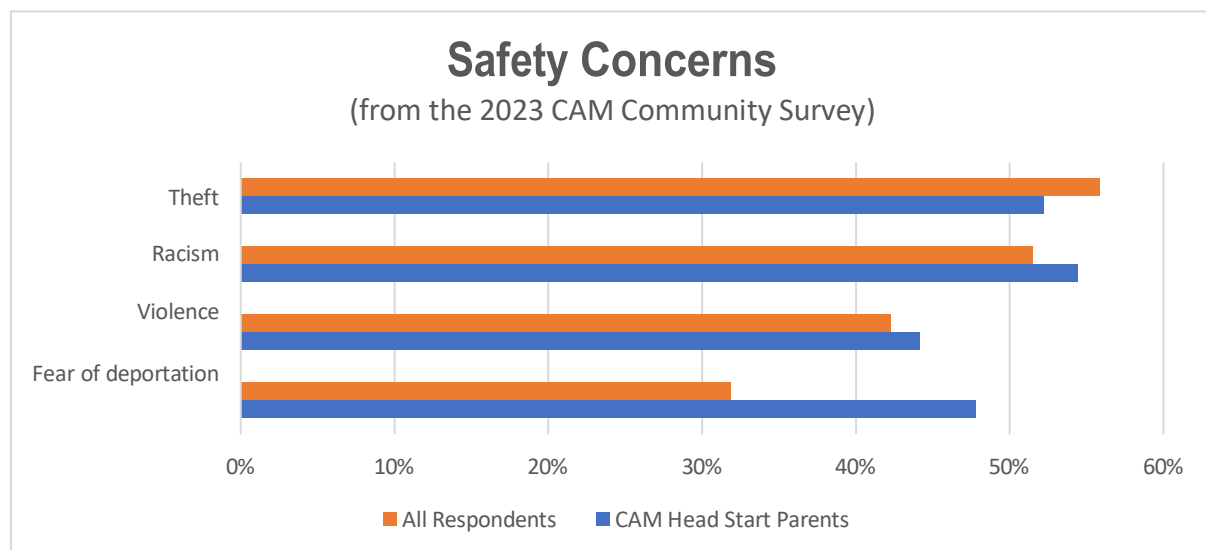
Information from current CAM clients reinforces the financial challenges faced by Marin families. Of 213 responses to a recent new client survey, 80% said if they lost their main source of income they could only

cover their basic expenses for a month or less (56% for less than two weeks, 24% for a month). This data underscores why safety net programs are so critical to low-income Marin residents.

## Safety

Marin is overall a very safe city, with the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of violent crime in the state and low rates of murder, rape and aggravated assault. Rates of robbery, property crime, and larceny theft are higher (ranking 24<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, and 42<sup>nd</sup>, respectively, out of 58 California counties).<sup>lxix</sup>

12% of those who responded to our 2023 community survey ranked safety as their number one community concern, and over 40% ranked it in their top three. A primary safety concern is theft, consistent with county crime data.



These results are similar between all survey respondents and the subgroup of parents with children in our early childhood education programs. The safety results diverge when it comes to fear of deportation, with nearly half of our parents (90% of whom are Hispanic) ranking it in their top three safety concerns. This issue can be a barrier in assisting Hispanic community members applying for government benefits.

## Transportation

County-wide statistics on commuting are shown in Table 13. Updated census results show fewer people driving alone in Marin County compared to the data used in our 2021 report, but also fewer people carpooling and taking public transportation (expected post-pandemic outcomes). Not surprisingly, Marin has seen a sharp increase in people working from home, although this option is more likely for higher-income workers.

**Table 13: Commuting to Work<sup>lxx</sup>**

Geographic Area	Car, Truck, or Van - Alone	Car, Truck, or Van - Carpool	Public Transportation	Worked at Home
Marin County	59% (-5%)	7.8% (-0.4%)	6.6% (-3.0%)	22% (+10%)
California	70% (-4%)	9.6% (-0.5%)	4.1% (-1.0)	11% (+5%)

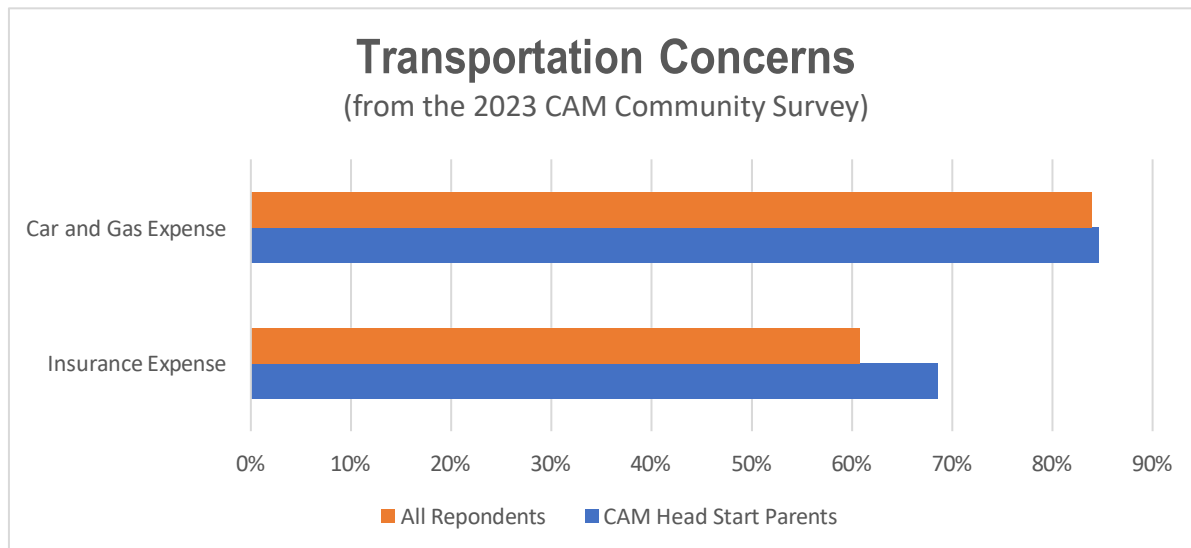
Note: numbers in parentheses are the % change in the data reported in our 2021 Community Needs Assessment report

Marin has a high fraction of people who do not both live and work in the county; at 70% it is among the highest rates in California. Pre-pandemic data (which is the latest available) showed that about one-third of Marin commuters work outside the county, and about one-third of people who commute to jobs in Marin come from outside the county.<sup>lxxi</sup>

Public bus transportation is available in Marin County through Marin Transit bus service, and public train service is available in limited areas of the county through Sonoma-Marín SMART Area Rail Transit. Train stations are in Novato and San Rafael. Public transportation is not available in western Marin County, making low-income residents in these communities more dependent on car transportation.

CAM Head Start/Early Head Start staff report that some families rely on public transportation for travel to our preschool centers and their jobs. In some cases this poses a significant challenge when bus routes are not aligned with their needs.

While only about 7% of our survey respondents ranked transportation as a top community concern, vehicle-related expenses – including gas and insurance – were the top concerns related to transportation.



CAM employees and volunteers working in the Economic Justice program area report that spending related to vehicles is often an important component of their work in helping clients improve their finances. Poor credit scores and lack of consumer awareness lead some Marin residents into high interest auto loans and potentially even predatory lending situations.

## Community Input and Feedback

Input from our Marin County community, including low-income residents who receive services from Community Action Marin and/or other public or private agencies, was included in this needs assessment in various ways:

- participating in our community survey, including providing personal experience and perspective in answering open-ended survey questions
- participating in focus groups
- responding to CAM client surveys, including surveys of parents who have children in our early childhood education programs, and clients of our Safety Net Services and Economic Justice programs
- CAM clients sharing information and perspectives with CAM staff
- Input from CAM staff and Board members

One additional opportunity for input was Community Action Marin's public hearing which was held on 5/9/2023 using a hybrid format with participants online and in-person. We did widespread outreach in advance of the hearing to invite robust community participation and conducted the hearing in English and Spanish. A draft of this community needs assessment was made available for public review prior to the biennial public hearing, and input from community members have been incorporated into the final community needs assessment and CAM's Community Action Plan, which are required of all Community Action Agencies to ensure alignment between agency plans and community needs the participation of the community.

Comments from community members during the public hearing were consistent with the results of our survey and input received during focus groups. There was strong agreement that lack of affordable housing is the most critical issue in our county. One attendee shared she was not surprised by the data we shared about the high cost of housing in Marin County, and that Hispanic families are hit especially hard by housing challenges. She noted three families sharing a small apartment in the Canal neighborhood and knows many people working service jobs who must live outside the county to find affordable housing. She observed that the pandemic has made all these issues worse, with families, especially Hispanic families, having to work and struggle even harder just to meet basic needs like rent and food.

Another community member raised awareness of residents living on marine vessels in Richardson Bay due to a lack of housing. He said his is one of over 50 "anchor out" vessels currently serving as housing, and is very concerned because he said the county plans to remove all "anchor outs" by 2026. He shared that this tight-knit community of residents struggles to meet basic needs and was severely impacted by this past winter's storms, yet they are largely overlooked by social service resources.

Community members also shared concerns on topics such as racial inequities in health outcomes, lack of mental health support for low-income residents, and how transportation challenges impact accessibility of health and mental health care. Comments and input were also provided on our website, including an interest in innovative approaches to helping the homeless, employment challenges for the disabled, and mental health support for girls.

## Footnotes

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