



TOWARDS A JUST AND EQUITABLE CENTRAL COAST



University of California Santa Barbara
BLUMCENTER
ON POVERTY, INEQUALITY, AND DEMOCRACY

USC
Dornsife
*Equity Research
Institute*

Foreword

Reimagining long-standing institutions and policies is one of the greatest challenges of our time. In our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, and the destructive impacts of climate change, we recognize that the road to recovery cannot lead us back to the old normal. The time for transformative change is now.

We, on the California Central Coast, have certainly not been spared from the devastating impact of these calamities and must heed the call to take action. We have experienced our share of climate disasters, the legacy of racism, and the devastating human impact of the pandemic. While the region's prosperous economy, based in large part on thriving tourism, agriculture, and growing technology sectors, has benefited many of our residents, many more have been left behind—struggling without a living-wage job, affordable housing, or basic health care.

The Central Coast of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties has a long history of fostering grassroots movements for social, economic, racial, and environmental justice, and The Fund for Santa Barbara (The FUND) has supported many of these efforts through grant funding, capacity-building assistance, and as a trusted table for convenings and coalition building. Therefore, it was a natural expansion of our work to partner with two distinguished research centers, the UCSB Blum Center on Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy and the USC Equity Research Institute, to create an ongoing regional equity research initiative to support much needed policy advocacy and community organizing in the region.

Truly reflecting a broad regional and community-wide effort, this project could not have been carried out without a visionary Project Steering Committee of academic and community leaders, our Community Advisory Committee made up of representatives of 21 university, community, and



Towards a Just and Equitable Central Coast

Prepared by The Fund for Santa Barbara, the UCSB Blum Center on Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy, and the USC Equity Research Institute.

philanthropic institutions from throughout the two-county region, and over 130 additional community members who participated in a series of 16 community consultations. We have been fortunate as well to be working in alignment with the UCSB Division of Social Sciences, with its commitment to fostering community-engaged, regionally relevant research. We also wish to thank the foundations and institutional supporters that provided generous funding for the effort. We extend our deep appreciation to all.

Guided by a transformative vision rooted in equity, sustainability, and justice, together we offer this initiative's first report, *Towards a Just and Equitable Central Coast*, with the hope that it serves as a starting point for discussion about the region's racial, economic, environmental, and political inequities. By providing data-driven analysis of the crises of inequity facing the counties of Ventura and Santa Barbara, we hope to help advance a shared regional vision that recognizes the unique struggles and aspirations of the Central Coast's peoples and communities. Moreover, we hope that the data provided in this report will serve as a benchmark to track progress over time towards a more just and equitable future.

¡Sí se puede! Yes, we can!

Marcos Vargas

Executive Director

The Fund for Santa Barbara

Executive Summary

We are living in a time of unparalleled challenge on the Central Coast and throughout the world, as we grapple with the still unfolding consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, structurally embedded patterns and practices of systemic racism, and the immediately clear and present dangers of human-induced climate change. It is also a time to reassess and reorder our priorities in light of the long-standing inequities this confluence of challenges has brought so starkly into view. *Towards a Just and Equitable Central Coast* marks a critical first step toward initiating and framing that conversation, with research and analysis of equity indicators related to the social, economic, civic, and environmental well-being of our rapidly diversifying region. Here are some summary highlights of what we found:

The two-county region faces a multi-dimensional crisis of inequality that manifests in wages and employment, housing, criminal justice, education, environmental exposures, and access to healthcare. This crisis weighs most heavily on working-class communities of color. The depth and extent of these inequities were brought to the surface by the devastating, racially disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they are rooted in structural trends, policies, and practices that have been shaping regional fortunes for decades.

Key to sustaining regional inequities are employment practices that systematically undervalue the skills and contributions of the workers who drive the agricultural, service, and tourism industries which provide the foundation of the local economy. These practices have put the Central Coast at the leading edge of inequality trends that have gripped the nation for decades. Between 1979 and 2018, the highest-income earners in the region saw their real incomes grow by over 20 percent while the lowest earners in the region saw their incomes shrink by nearly 20 percent.

The cost of housing has reached unsustainable levels as home prices and rental rates skyrocket to levels only the wealthy can afford. Low-wage workers, women, and people of color have paid an exceptionally high price, bearing the brunt of extreme rent burdens, overcrowding, and longer and longer commutes alongside constant threats of eviction.

Structural inequities have been compounded by a pattern of systemic racial injustice that denies people of color equal access to the rights, opportunities, and protections everyone needs to thrive. These injustices—and their consequences—have been manifest in a system of public safety that has done more

Now is the time for us to take a transformational approach to investing in regional equity, a just and adequate infrastructure of opportunity and social provision, and an economy that works for all.



Executive Summary *continued*

to criminalize than to protect communities of color and in environmental practices that leave communities of color acutely and disproportionately vulnerable to the harms of pollution and climate change.

The policies and practices that sustain inequality are as short-sighted as they are unjust, hindering economic growth and prosperity, while undermining civic trust and social capacity to respond in times of collective crisis. Conversely, there is ample evidence that greater economic and social inclusion fosters social cohesion, environmental health, and sustainable prosperity as well as a wider range of civic capacities that enable people from diverse communities to exercise political voice. Justice and equity—full inclusion of all residents in the economic, social, and political life of the region, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, or neighborhood of residence—are not only crucial values in their own right, but essential for regional health, prosperity, and sustainability.

The structural inequities this report documents speak to the urgent need for collective action that draws on the resources of local government, philanthropy, businesses, and academics as well as community activists and social movements. Now is the time for us to take a transformational approach to investing in regional equity, a just and adequate infrastructure of opportunity and social provision, and an economy that works for all.

Acknowledgments

Lead Authors

Alice O'Connor, UCSB Blum Center on Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy

Manuel Pastor, USC Equity Research Institute
Marcos Vargas, The Fund for Santa Barbara

Project Team

Peyton Bivona, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Rebecca Bogdanovic, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Amanda Brush, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Isaac Hale, UCSB Blum Center
Jennifer Ito, USC Equity Research Institute
Sabrina Kim, USC Equity Research Institute

Kathleen Knight, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Joanna Lee, USC Equity Research Institute
Edward-Michael Muña, USC Equity Research Institute
Stanley Tzankov, The Fund for Santa Barbara

Steering Committee

Maria Charles, UCSB Broom Center for Demography and Department of Sociology
Jon Clark, James Bower Foundation
Diane Fujino, UCSB Department of Asian American Studies
Amy Gonzales, UCSB Department of Communication
Charles R. Hale, UCSB Division of Social Sciences
LeeAnne McNulty, Allan Hancock College
Alice O'Connor, UCSB Blum Center and Department of History
David Pellow, UCSB Environmental Studies Program
Marcos Vargas, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Lucas Zucker, Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

Advisory Committee

Emily Allen, Northern Santa Barbara County United Way
Claudia Armann, McCune Foundation
Katy Bazylewicz, Cottage Health
Rick Cole, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Jamshid Damooei, Cal Lutheran University Center for Economics of Social Issues
Rubayi Estes, Santa Barbara Foundation
Geoff Green, Santa Barbara City College Foundation
James Joyce, Office of State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson
Paul Murphy, Allan Hancock College
Andrew Oman, California Teachers Association

Manuel Pastor, USC Equity Research Institute
Bernardo Perez, Ventura County Community College District
Erica Reyes, Office of Rep. Salud Carbajal
Mahil Senathirajah, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Wendy Sims-Moten, First 5 Santa Barbara County
Erik Talkin, Foodbank of Santa Barbara County
Kaia Tollefson, California State University Channel Islands
Luis Villegas, Mechanics Bank
Nancy Weiss, The Fund for Santa Barbara
Sigrid Wright, Community Environmental Council
Zohar Ziv, Deckers Outdoors Corporation, Retired

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Principles and Priorities for a Just and Equitable Central Coast

1 Respect the rights and experiences of Indigenous people

2 Center equity and justice as foundational economic values

3 Invest in inclusive, universally accessible infrastructures of opportunity and social provision

4 Advance racial and intersectional justice

5 Recognize, respect, and protect immigrant rights, civic integration, and political voice

6 Protect tenants, preserve communities, and make housing affordable for all

7 Be a leader in environmental and climate justice

8 Bridge digital divides for underserved communities

9 Create platforms for collaborative, community-engaged equity research

10 Build from our victories

11 Open avenues to participatory democracy

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Introduction

Envisioning an Equitable Central Coast

California's southern Central Coast region, stretching from Ventura County to San Luis Obispo, is known for its stunning coastline and rich agricultural lands. Sometimes touted as the "American Riviera," the region is fueled by tourism and agriculture, both of which rely on a low-wage and immigrant workforce. An economy driven by low wages in a region of rising costs of living are indications of a long-simmering crisis, brought to the surface all-too dramatically by the devastating, racially disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As long as working-class communities of color remain underrepresented in local, regional, and state politics, we are unlikely to change course toward a recovery that recognizes needs in the areas of housing, education, health, and infrastructure development and sets the course for a future of genuinely shared, environmentally just and sustainable prosperity.

Guided by a transformative vision rooted in equity, sustainability, and justice, The Fund for Santa Barbara (The FUND) and the UCSB Blum Center on Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy partnered with USC Equity Research Institute to produce this study, *Towards a Just and Equitable Central Coast*. **The study is rooted in a framework that defines a just and equitable region as one in which all residents experience a standard of living adequate for health, well-being, and human development; have opportunities to contribute to and share in regional prosperity; have access to a fair and nondiscriminatory system of justice; and exercise equal voice in governance.**

We offer this study in hopes that it serves as a starting point for discussion about the region's racial, economic, environmental, and political inequities. By providing data for the counties of Ventura and Santa Barbara, we hope to help advance a shared regional vision that recognizes the unique struggles and aspirations of the Central Coast's people and communities. Moreover, we hope that the data serve as a benchmark to track progress over time towards a more just and equitable future.

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Understanding the Impact of the Pandemic

We started planning for this project in 2019, unaware that our inquiry would soon be caught up in an extraordinary period of upheaval and uncertainty that brought the urgency of community-engaged research and action to the fore. Soon after the global pandemic disrupted everyday life, the brutal murder of George Floyd sparked a sustained period of protest and long-overdue reckoning with the legacies of structural racism, on the Central Coast and across the globe. The wildfires ravaging California with escalating levels of destruction have become visceral reminders of the price we are paying and will continue to pay for climate inaction. Thus, what started as a study of the corrosive impact of inequality on economic growth expanded to include something more: a broader inquiry into the intersecting inequities that have shaped the Central Coast experience of this still-unfolding confluence of public health, systemic racism, and climate change-related crises, and that continue to make us vulnerable to their consequences.

In this report, we focus on trends and data points that are indicators of long-standing inequities that required attention well before the time of pandemic. It combines an analysis of quantitative data from publicly available national sources, administrative data from local agencies, and knowledge and experiences from community members and leaders interviewed for this project. The data from national sources are from 2018 and so do not yet reflect the impacts of COVID-19; however, the data are updated periodically so that progress can be tracked over time and are available nationally so that the region can be compared to other regions, states, and the nation.

What this confluence of crises has made evident is the urgent need to think expansively, and long-term, about moving toward the just and equitable region we seek to achieve. Action is needed to address the immediate health and well-being of people and communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic, systemic racism, and climate injustice. But new thinking is also needed to reshape the institutions, policies, and priorities that have taken us down a pathway towards widening divides and that now stand in the way of a much-needed change of course.

Action is needed to address the immediate health and well-being of people and communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic, systemic racism, and climate injustice.



Co-creating our Future

In keeping with our commitment to actionable data and community-engaged research, the research team conducted 16 community consultations, held virtually with groups of community stakeholders between August 2020 and March 2021. Eight were general discussion sessions and eight were issue-specific, covering K-12 education, public higher education, racial justice, housing and houselessness, access to public health, small business, climate justice, and criminal justice. Over 130 people attended one or more discussion sessions, bringing the perspectives of a diverse array of community-based organizations, academics, local government officials, service providers, and local philanthropies to the conversation.

In addition to providing input on the purpose, priorities, and potential uses of the study, participants contributed insights on the inequities they see and experience in their work and how they can be addressed. It was also an opportunity to reflect upon the social as well as the material impacts of COVID-19, from the grief, trauma, and exhaustion experienced in the community to the openings for change created by the deep inequities it brought to the surface. Despite its widely disparate impacts along lines of race/ethnicity, class, gender, nativity, language, and neighborhood, the widely expressed sentiment from these community consultations was that the experience of the pandemic, as an exceptionally stark reflection of the consequences of the inequities that structure our lives, can be an opportunity to take collective action towards a more equitable future for all.

This study is intended to inform that collective process, with data that illuminate the conditions and experiences of people who, though a large and recognizably essential presence in the region, have for too long been marginalized in local and regional politics, policies, and resource allocation. These are the community members who will keep civic leaders accountable to the change that is needed rather than the change that is feasible. Data and research alone are insufficient. But together with community-based organizing, outreach, knowledge-building, and policy advocacy, data and research provide vital resources for needed change.

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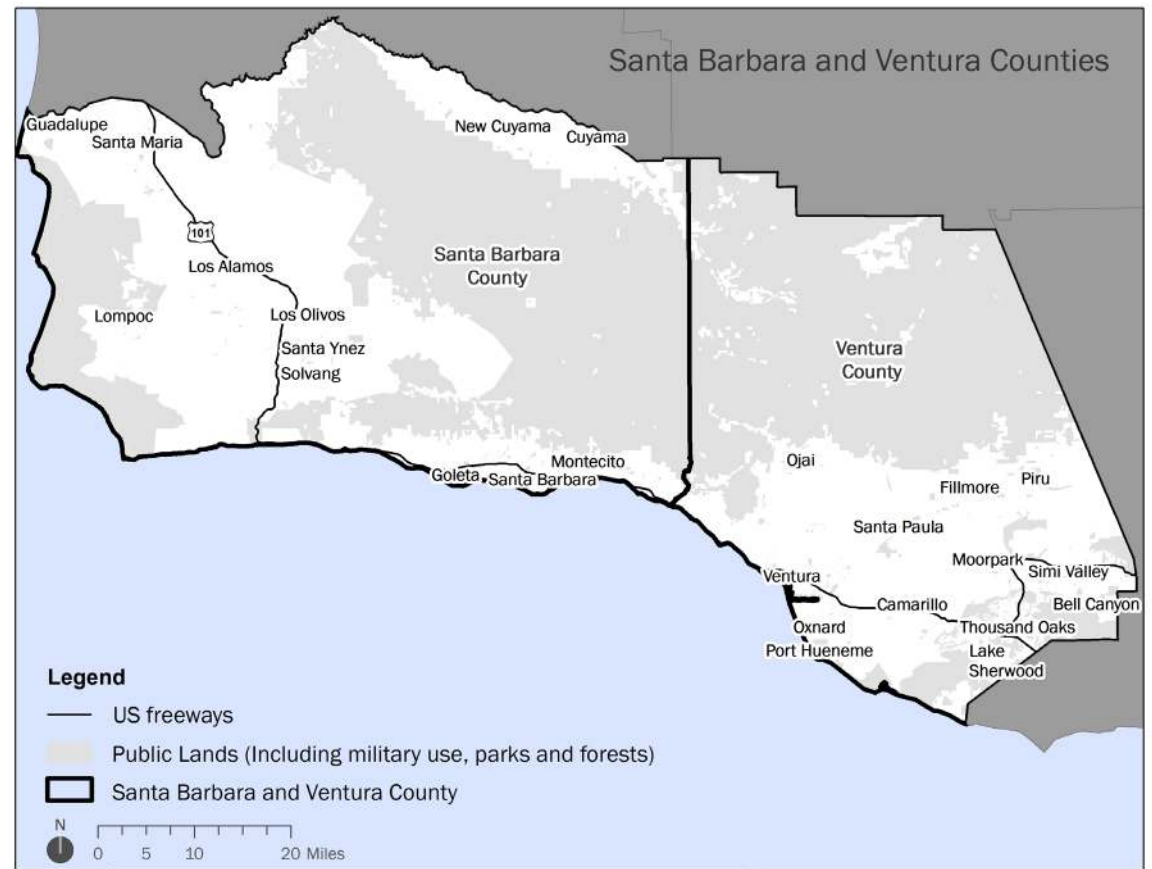


California's Central Coast: Who We Are and Who We Are Becoming

A Diverse Region

For the purposes of this study, we focus on the two-county Central Coast region of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. In the report, we refer to the “region” as these two counties unless otherwise stated; however, it should be noted that each of these counties is considered a distinct Metropolitan Statistical Area by the U.S. Census Bureau, and there are some charts comparing them to the rest of the most populous 150 metro areas in the U.S. Some of the data indicators are for the two-county region while others are reported by county to highlight differences and ensure data accuracy. Maps do not include the islands off the coast of the counties, but data tables and charts will include the small population from these geographies. The map in Figure 1 shows the region of study. Much of the Central Coast of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties is home to portions of government-owned and -managed land which includes mountain ranges and military bases. This map provides topographical context for the maps in this report that feature census tract data. Census tracts are a geographic designation defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and generally have a population size ranging from around 1,200 to 8,000 people. The maps in this report include some census tracts that encompass large geographic areas with numerically small residential populations as well as census tracts that are geographically smaller and more densely populated.

FIGURE 1. MAP OF SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, TIGER/Line Shapefiles; California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (2021)

The two-county region is known as an international tourist destination for its iconic coastline, protected Channel Islands National Park, sprawling mountains, and breathtaking landscapes, as well as being one of the most productive farmlands in the nation. However, the story of this Central Coast region begins with the region's first people—the Native Chumash. Along with San Luis Obispo County to the north, the region makes up the original unceded territory of the various bands of Chumash peoples. Archaeological and anthropological studies document their inhabitation dating back over 13,000 years, where, prior to European occupation, as many as 20,000 Chumash lived from Southern Ventura County north to San Luis Obispo County. The two-county region also includes the ancestral land of the Tataviam people, who inhabited a small portion of southern Ventura County and northwest Los Angeles County.

During the Spanish invasion and colonial settlement of California in the late eighteenth century (c. 1769-1833), the Spanish-imposed mission system deployed violence, genocide, slavery, and forced relocation as well as the cultural suppression associated with religious conversion against the indigenous people of the California Central Coast, including the Chumash.¹ The continued existence of the Chumash people today can be in large part attributed to their many well documented acts of organized resistance and their resilient cultural adaptations. Chumash leaders and grassroots activists today continue to engage in actions of cultural self-determination and the protection of their ancestral land. The Central Coast has been and remains to this day indigenous land, with the Chumash people serving as its original caretakers. The Chumash people remain central to the history and future of the Central Coast.

In addition to this indigenous heritage, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties are joined by a long history of shared experience and socioeconomic interdependence that sets the stage for a broadly encompassing conversation around justice and equity as values critical to the region's future vitality. Together the two counties constitute a major hub in the broader regional, state, and national economy. They are also undergoing tremendous demographic and economic change, marked by racial and ethnic diversification and steeply rising inequality. In particular, the two-county region is home to large communities of low-wage, immigrant, and undocumented workers who drive the agricultural, service, and tourism industries that provide the foundation of the regional economy—and who join growing numbers of working people in long commutes necessitated by the extreme scarcity of affordable housing. Although notably successful in grassroots organizing and in electing candidates to city councils and school boards in recent decades, working-class communities of color remain underrepresented in local, regional, and state politics. In these

The Chumash people remain central to the history and future of the Central Coast.



and other ways, structural inequity has seeped into the very circuitry that connects the two counties to become a defining feature of life on California's Central Coast.

Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties also share an acute vulnerability to climate change, exacerbated by their mutual dependence on the oil industry and heavy use of toxic pesticides among other factors, and Ventura County is now the fastest warming county in the contiguous 48 states.² The threat turned to reality with the outbreak of the Thomas Fire in December 2017—well after the end of what was then California's traditional fire season. The fire spread explosively after starting in Ventura County, driven by high winds, dry foliage, and other climate-related factors to engulf the two-county region for nearly 40 days, burning over 281,000 acres, destroying 1,063 structures, and causing mass evacuation and displacement.³ Swelled by heavy rains and the fire damage to local hillsides, mudslides in Montecito killed 23 people just one month later.⁴ Combined, these two disasters caused over \$2 billion in damage to the region. Less widely recognized was how the disaster played on and amplified regional inequities, leaving tens of thousands of low-wage, immigrant, undocumented, and indigenous migrant workers unaided and unprotected against the ravages of fire, wage and employment loss, and displacement.

In response to these enduring inequities, activists in the region have fostered a robust tradition of cross-county organizing that draws on the energies of diverse, intersectional coalitions of people who share a commitment to economic, social, and environmental justice. Leading the way in this work have been organizations such as Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), Future Leaders of America (FLA), and Mixteco Indigenous Community Organizing Project (MICOP), among others with a presence and extensive networks within and across both counties. Since 2018, these three organizations have collaborated on a collective, cross-county effort known as 805UndocuFund to provide vital assistance to local undocumented immigrant individuals and families who have suffered losses due to the disasters of wildfires, mudslides, and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic but who are excluded from federally-funded safety-net and disaster-relief programs. The 805UndocuFund has distributed over \$8.3M to 6,147 families since its creation, while establishing itself as a trusted source of support for the immigrant community when disaster hits.⁵ It also stands as a powerful expression of what can be achieved through collaboration that is informed by community-engaged research, that is animated by the experiences and aspirations of our essential workforce, and that supports the planning and implementation of policies, programs, organizing strategies, and community-based initiatives that advance equity and justice through systemic change.

Structural inequity has seeped into the very circuitry that connects the two counties to become a defining feature of life on California's Central Coast.



Geography of Diversity

Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties comprise over 4,500 square miles and are home to nearly 1.3 million residents.⁶ The region, which includes mountain ranges to the north and east and the Pacific Ocean to the west, is known for its tourism and agriculture industries. A statewide report on travel spending shows that travel to both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties had been steadily increasing between 2010 and 2019, with visitors in 2019 spending \$2.1 and \$1.8 billion, respectively.⁷ In 2019, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties both grossed over \$1.5 billion in agricultural production, ranking them 11th and 13th statewide.⁸ Although the region features a number of organic farms, agricultural production is weighted toward large-scale industrialized production which, along with the hospitality and service industries, accounts for the bulk of the region's low-wage employment. Much of the produce from industrialized agriculture is slated for worldwide export, situating the two counties among the largest export markets for agriculture in the nation. The Port of Hueneme is another marker of the way the region has positioned itself in the global marketplace. The only deep-water port between San Francisco and Los Angeles, it specializes in automobiles, commercial vehicles, agricultural products and a range of consumer goods. It also generates a considerable amount of pollutants from truck and rail traffic in Oxnard and surrounding areas, leading environmental justice advocates to call on Port officials to transition to zero-emission vehicles in the coming decade. The military also has a presence in the region; Oxnard has two naval bases, and Lompoc is home to Vandenberg Air Force Base. Naval Base Ventura County at Port Mugu is the largest employer in the county. Despite the visibility of an environmental movement that dates back to the massively destructive Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969, the region continues to account for a substantial proportion of California's oil production, with drilling and production sites located in close proximity to working-class communities of color.

Another notable feature of the regional economy is the presence of a number of post-secondary education institutions, including the University of California, Santa Barbara, a tier-one research university that is also officially recognized as a Hispanic-serving institution and is the largest employer in the county, as well as California State University Channel Islands, and a number of highly regarded community colleges and private colleges and universities. In recent decades, the region has become home to a now fast-growing high-tech sector, expanding from the longer-established presence of the aerospace industry. The region has also been known for its extensive nonprofit and small business sectors, although both experienced major setbacks during the pandemic, as was the case in the financial crisis and Great Recession of 2008.

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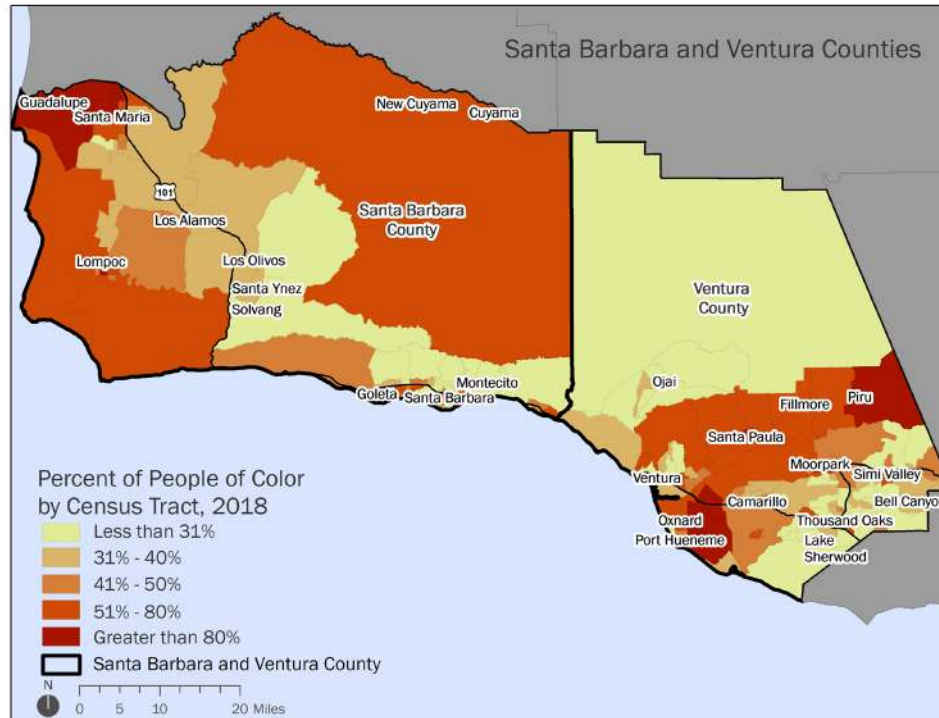
As we will see throughout this study, the diversity of the region's economy has been accompanied, and to a considerable degree enabled, by its changing racial and ethnic demography. It has also produced a labor market that is increasingly bifurcated along the lines of class, race, and immigration status. These developments are reflected in the region's diverse but highly stratified residential patterns, which feature a mix of rural, suburban and urban communities ranging from principally Latinx, indigenous migrant, and immigrant farmworker settlements to majority-white affluent enclaves and some of the most highly segregated metropolitan areas in the country (Figure 2). These patterns of racial and class segregation map onto the social geography of the region's unincorporated areas as well, which span the mostly Latinx, low-income communities along the Santa Clara River Valley and Cuyama Valley and some of the most affluent, majority-white communities in the state, such as Montecito in Santa Barbara and Bell Canyon and Lake Sherwood in Ventura County.

For all the benefits it has brought to the regional economy, including, as we shall see, its officially "essential" workforce, the demographic diversity of the Central Coast has not resulted in an equitable distribution of the region's prosperity. To the contrary, rising inequality has been part of the region for decades, creating prosperity for some while increasing hardship for many, especially those, disproportionately people of color, at the bottom end of the earnings scale. Since 1979, wage growth among the highest earners has been increasing while wages for those earning the least have decreased. Housing in the region has become ever-more unaffordable. The housing market for renters is one of the most unaffordable in the nation. Among the nation's largest metropolitan areas, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties ranked 5th and 11th highest in the percentage of rent burdened households in 2018, respectively, meaning these households pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Additional data on inequality from the National Equity Atlas in 2019 show that Santa Barbara County was ranked 13th out of the largest 150 metro areas in income inequality while being ranked one of the lowest in homeownership rates (147th out of 150 largest metro areas). Ventura County is ranked in the top third of the largest metro areas for exposure to pollution (45th out of 150) while also having one of the longest average commute times nationwide (38th out of 150).⁹

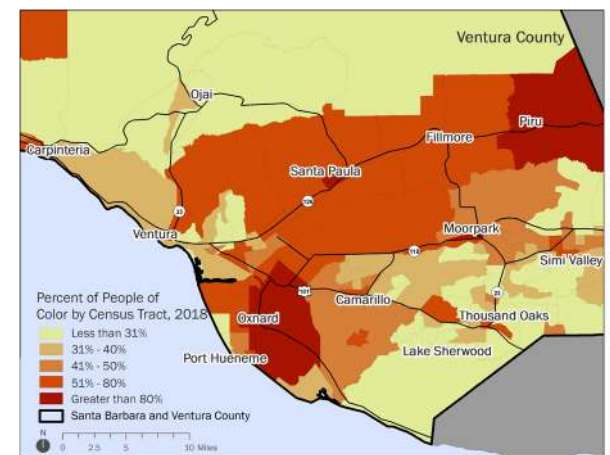
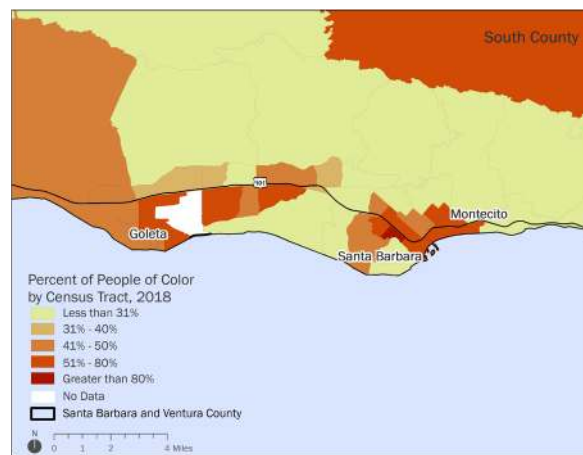
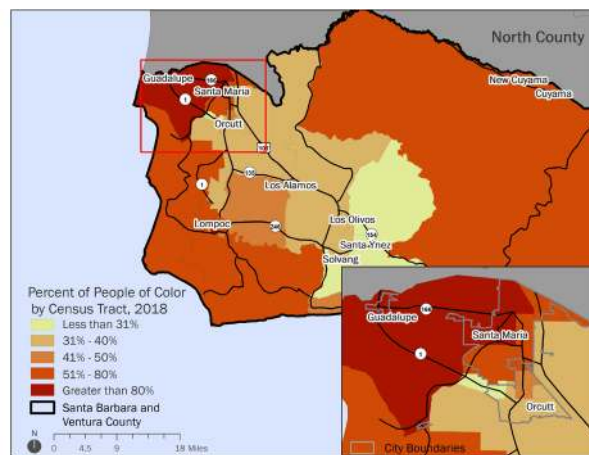
Among the nation's largest metropolitan areas, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties ranked 5th and 11th highest in the percentage of rent-burdened households in 2018, meaning these households pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing.



FIGURE 2. PERCENT PEOPLE OF COLOR, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: TIGER/Line Shapefiles and 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.



Source: TIGER/Line Shapefiles and 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Shifting Demographics

Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties have experienced a demographic shift towards a non-majority white population decades ahead of a similar shift happening nationally. In 2000, around 69 percent of the total U.S. population was non-Hispanic white. Demographic projections estimate that by 2050 non-Hispanic whites will comprise less than a majority (48 percent) of the population. Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties became majority BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) between 2000 and 2010 (Figure 4).^a Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties are more diverse than two-thirds of the nation's largest 150 metro areas. Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties rank 43 and 50, respectively, on the "diversity index," a measure of the racial/ethnic diversity of residents based on six major racial/ethnic groups: white, Black, Latinx, Asian American or Pacific Islander, Native American, and Mixed/other race (see Figure 3).^b Since 1990, the region's population growth can be attributed to the increase in the number of BIPOC. Meanwhile, there has been a consistent decline in the numbers of non-Latinx white people over the past 30 years (Figure 5).

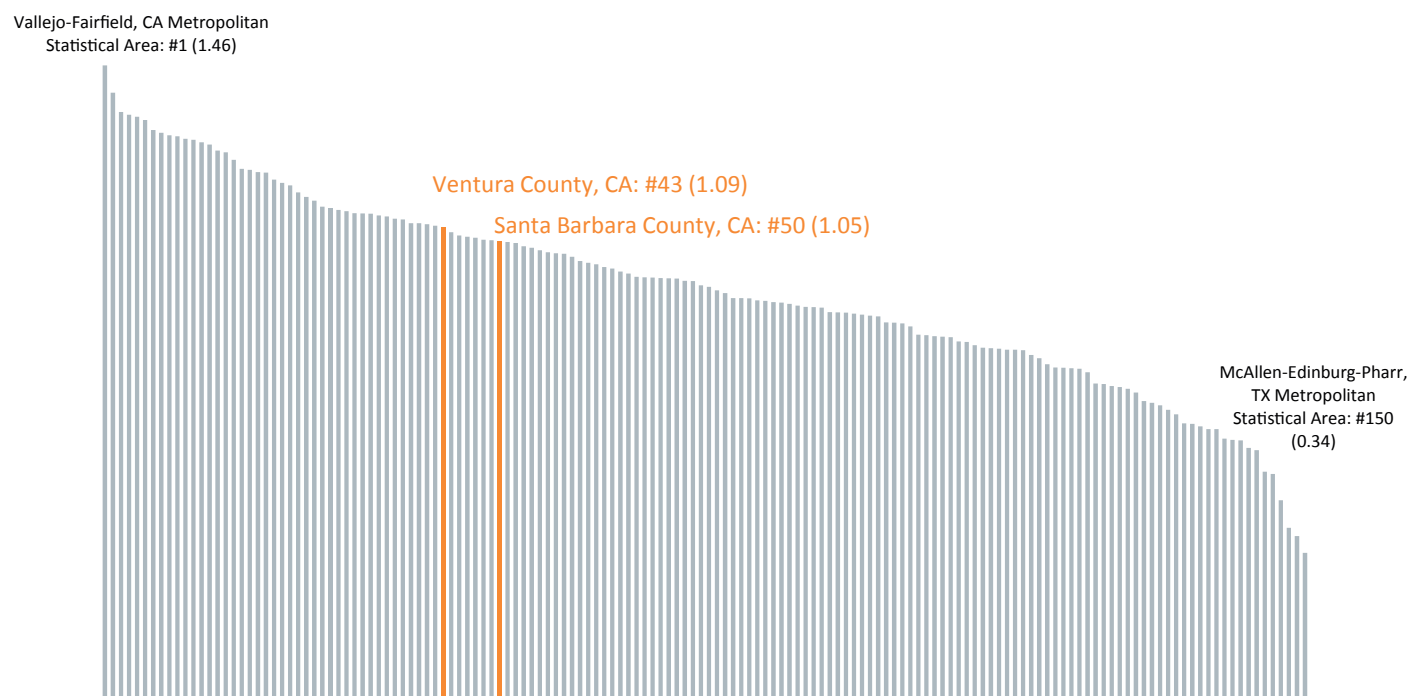
Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties are more diverse than two-thirds of the nation's largest 150 metro areas."



a Those in the "Mixed/other" racial category are individuals who reported being part of one or more racial groups on the census form.

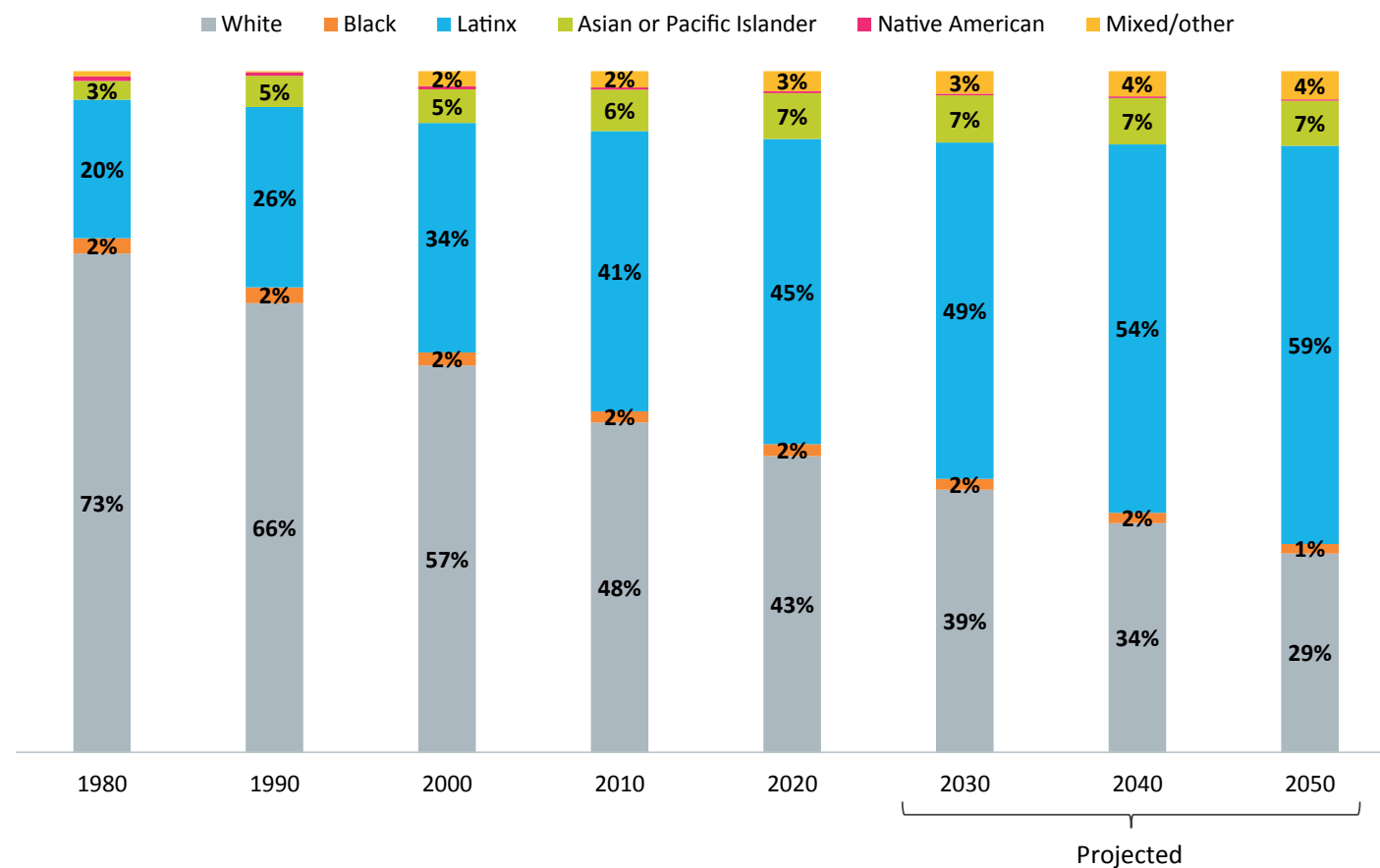
b See data and methods section for more.

FIGURE 3: DIVERSITY INDEX, TOP 150 METRO AREAS, RANKED FROM MOST TO LEAST DIVERSE, 2018



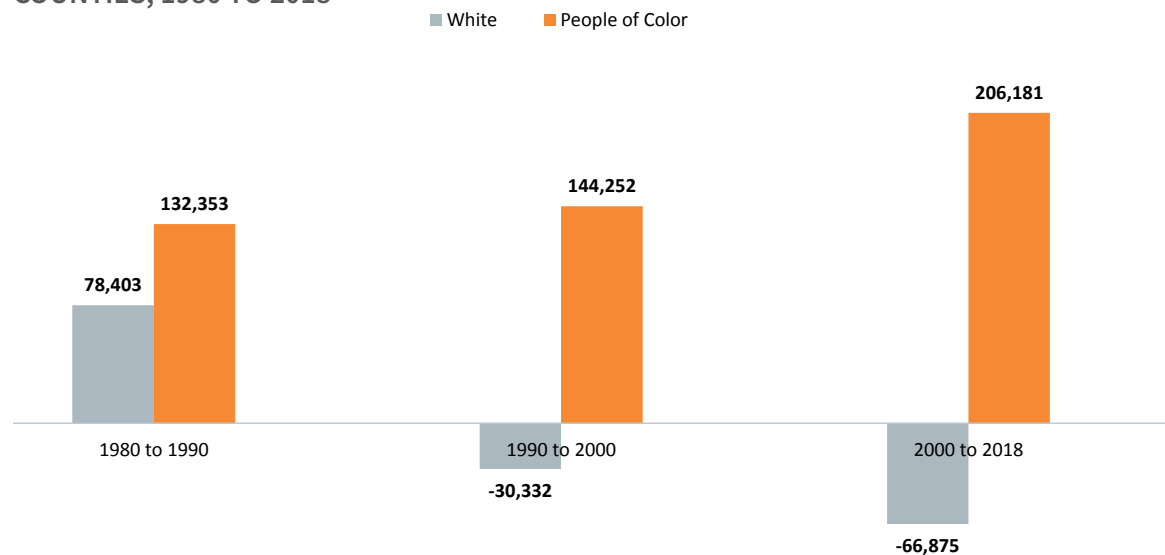
Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Metro regions refer to the largest 150 metropolitan statistical areas in terms of 2010 population, based on the OMB's December 2003 definitions. The diversity score is a measure of the racial/ethnic diversity of residents based on six major racial/ethnic groups (White, Black, Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, Native American, and Mixed/other race). The maximum diversity score (1.79) would occur if each group were evenly represented in the region. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

FIGURE 4: POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 1980 TO 2050



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the decennial census files from the U.S. Census Bureau and Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Note: Much of the increase in the mixed/other population between 1990 and 2000 is due to a change in the survey question on race.

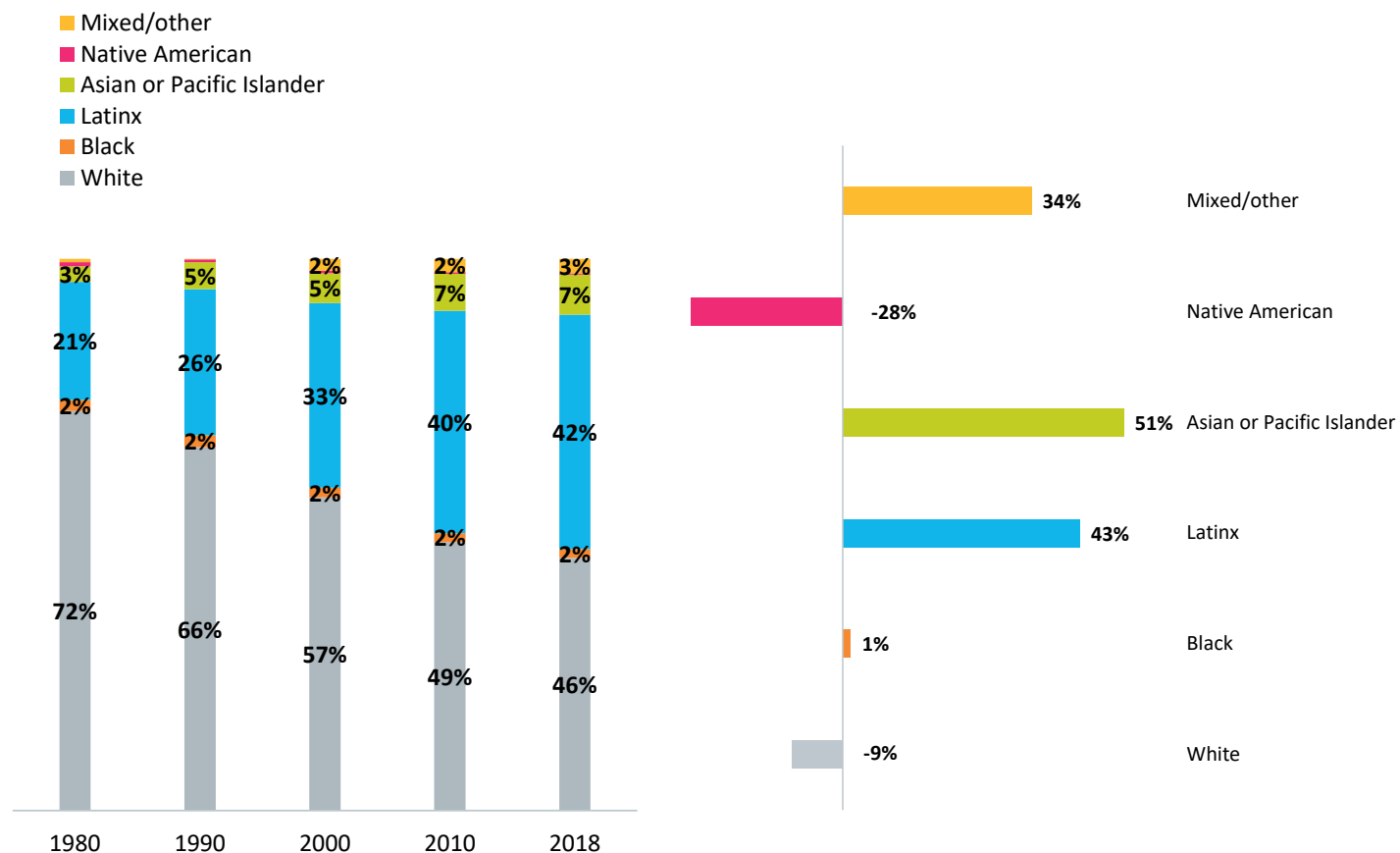
FIGURE 5: TOTAL POPULATION GROWTH BY DECADE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 1980 TO 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 1980, 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census Summary Files and the 2018 American Community Survey 5-year Summary File from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Data for 2018 represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

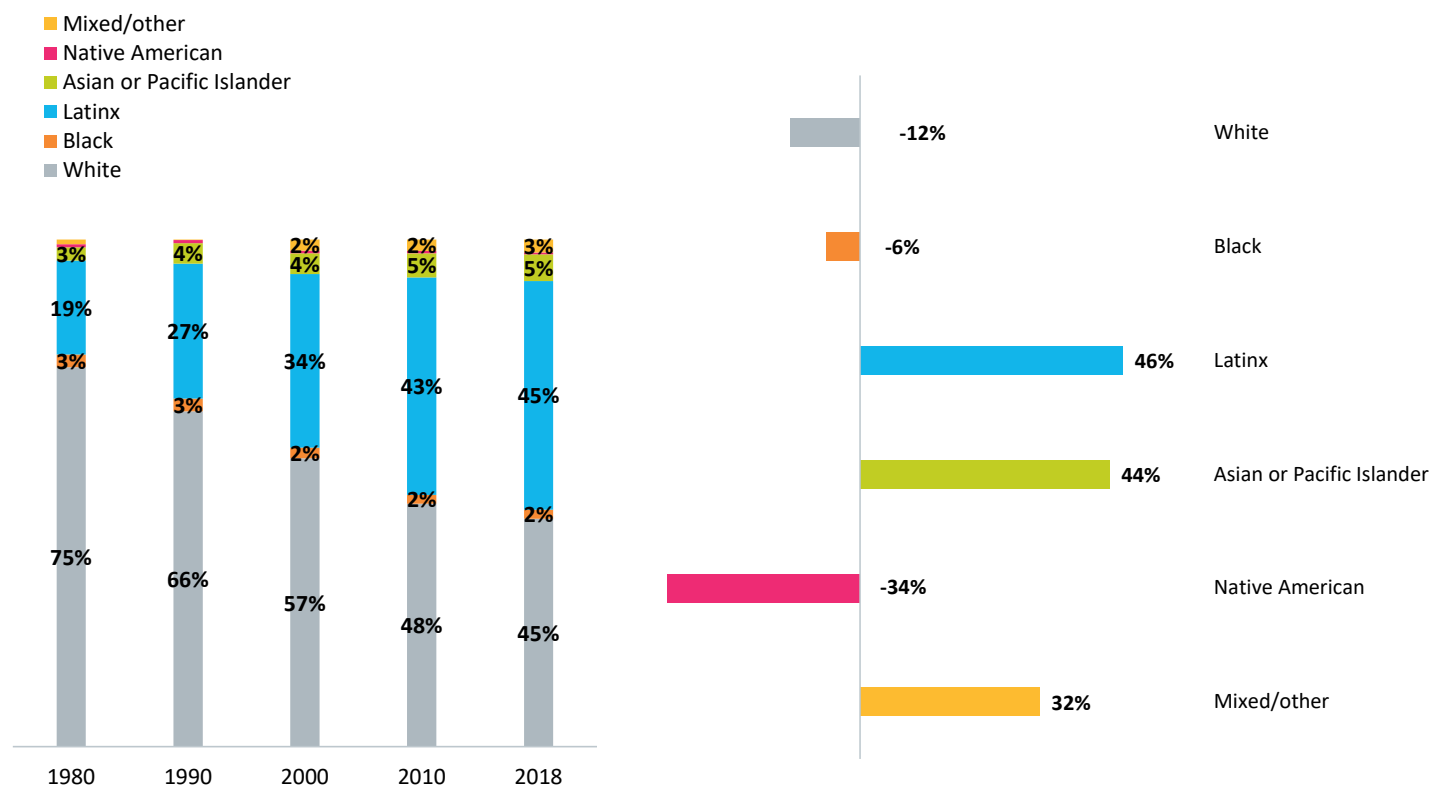
Growth rates by race show that Asian American and Pacific Islander and Latinx populations are contributing to the increase in population over the past two decades. In Ventura County, Asian American and Pacific Islander populations are the fastest growing racial group increasing 51 percent between 2000 and 2018 (Figure 6). The number of Latinx people in Ventura County increased 43 percent over the same time period as well. Santa Barbara County saw similar growth among these two populations between 2000 and 2018 with Latinx and Asian American and Pacific Islander populations growing by 44 percent (Figure 7). There has also been an increase in those reporting that they are multiracial or of another race/ethnicity not among the major groups shown. At the same time, similar to statewide trends, data show that the Native American population has decreased over time, though California is home to the largest number of Native Americans nationwide.¹⁰

FIGURE 6: POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY, VENTURA COUNTY, 1980 TO 2018 (LEFT); POPULATION GROWTH OVER TIME BY RACE/ETHNICITY, VENTURA COUNTY, 2000 TO 2018 (RIGHT)



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census Summary Files and the 2018 American Community Survey 5-year Summary File from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Data for 2018 represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

FIGURE 7: POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 1980 TO 2018 (LEFT); POPULATION GROWTH OVER TIME BY RACE/ETHNICITY, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2000 TO 2018 (RIGHT)



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census Summary Files and the 2018 American Community Survey 5-year Summary File from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Data for 2018 represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Disaggregated Asian American and Pacific Islander data show diversity within these groups. Filipino Americans are the largest ethnic group among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the region, followed by Chinese and Indian Americans. In Ventura County, Indian Americans are the second largest Asian American ethnic group. There are also sizable Vietnamese American, Korean American, and Japanese American communities in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties as well (Figure 8). Though smaller than Asian American ethnic groups, the largest Pacific Islander ethnic groups in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties are Native Hawaiian, Chamorro, and Tongan, with most of the Pacific Islander population residing in Ventura County.

FIGURE 8: ASIAN AMERICAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018

Asian or Pacific Islander (API), Santa Barbara, CA

Ancestry	Population	% of Total API
Filipino	5,196	22%
Chinese	5,108	22%
Japanese	2,303	10%
Korean	1,915	8%
Vietnamese	1,523	7%
Indian	1,338	6%
All other API	5,778	25%
Total API	23,161	100%

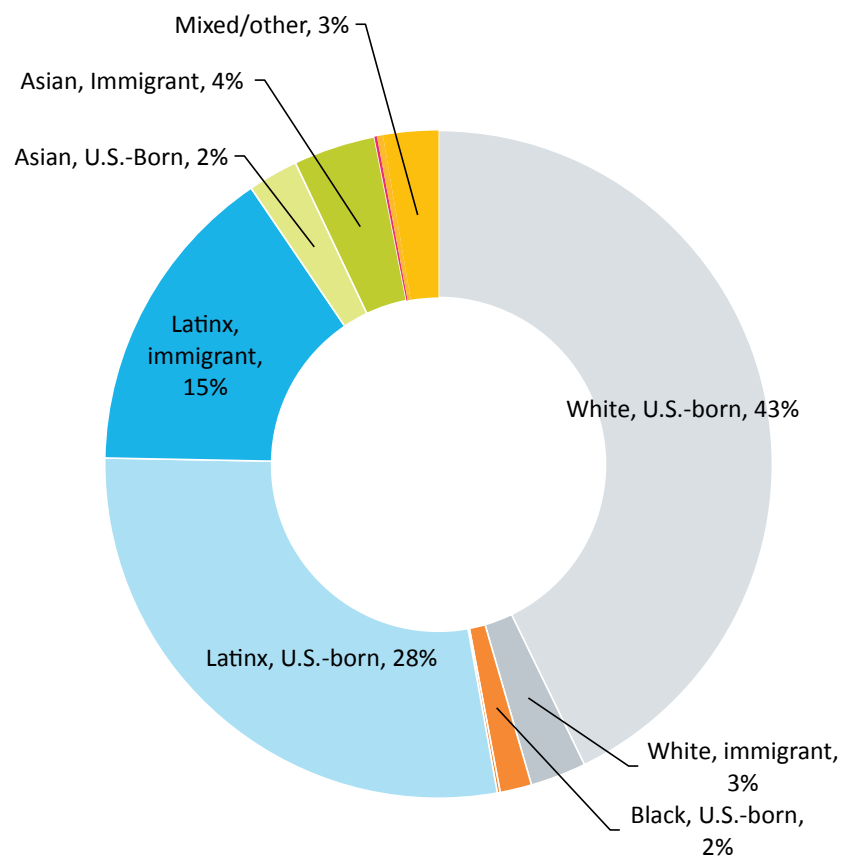
Asian or Pacific Islander (API), Ventura, CA

Ancestry	Population	% of Total API
Filipino	16,711	27%
Indian	11,518	19%
Chinese	8,772	14%
Vietnamese	4,451	7%
Korean	3,456	6%
Japanese	3,421	6%
Taiwanese	1,480	2%
All other API	11,380	19%
Total API	61,189	100%

Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Data on population by race and nativity show Latinx populations are more likely to be U.S. born while Asian Americans are more likely to be immigrants (Figure 9). About two-thirds of Latinx people in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties are U.S. born, while more than one-third of Asian Americans are born in the U.S.

FIGURE 9: RACE BY NATIVITY, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Legacy of Immigration

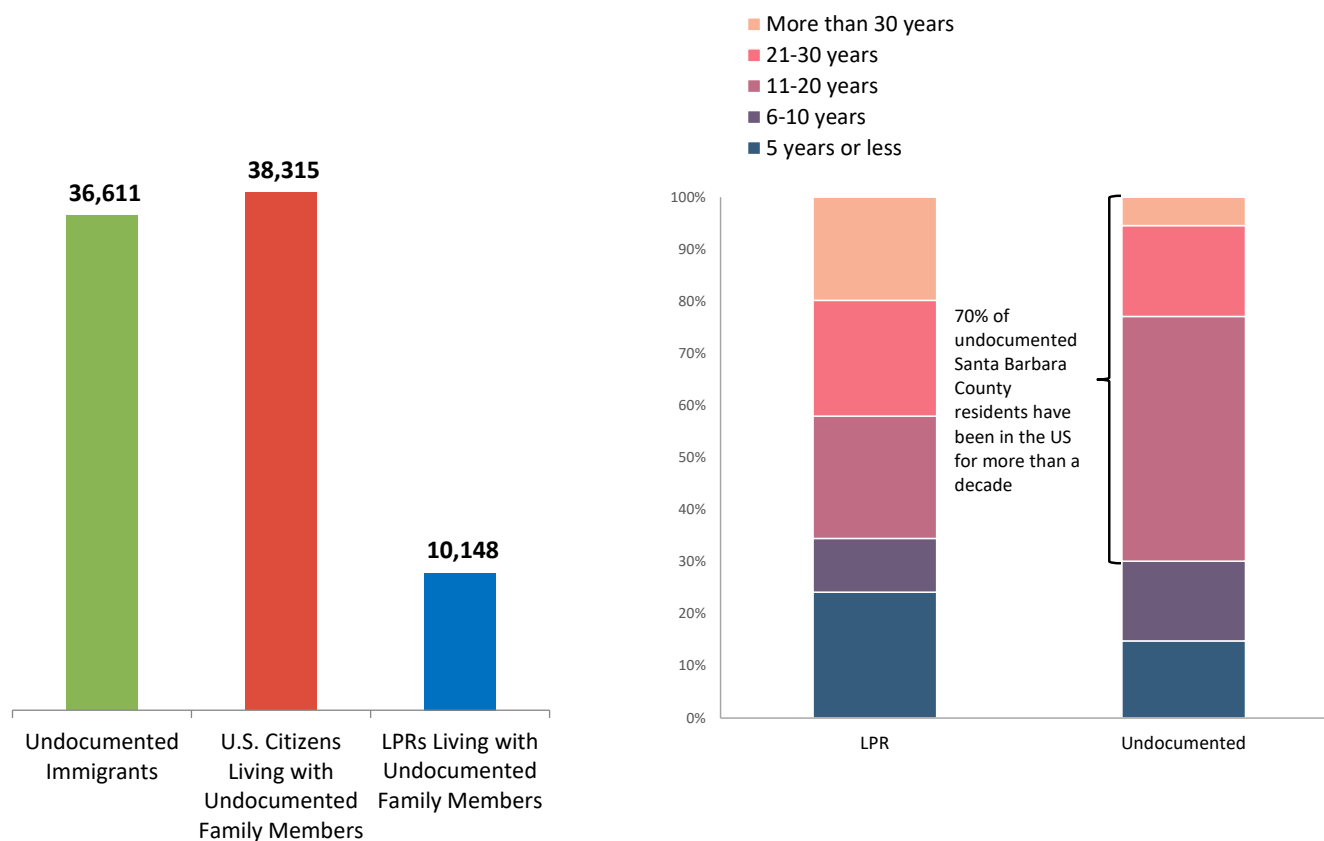
Of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties' total combined population, about 77 percent were born in the United States, and 23 percent are foreign-born. Surprisingly, these figures are exactly the same in both counties. However, when we further break down each county's population by status, we see that in Ventura County, there is a slightly higher percent of naturalized immigrants (11 percent) than in Santa Barbara County (8 percent). In Ventura, six percent of all residents are lawful permanent residents (LPRs), and six percent lack documentation. In Santa Barbara, eight percent have lawful permanent residency, and eight percent lack documentation.¹¹

Although lacking access to the basic rights and protections of U.S. citizenship, the region's undocumented immigrant population is an integral part of the community. Many are long-time residents and contributors to the workforce. Many have family members who were born in the U.S. or have obtained legal immigration status (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). About 70 percent have been in the U.S. for more than a decade. Diverse immigration statuses are prevalent within many immigrant families both in the region and statewide. About 207,000 people in the region are undocumented immigrants or have family members in their households who are undocumented. About 19 percent of Santa Barbara County residents and 14 percent of Ventura County residents either lack documentation or live with a family member who is an undocumented immigrant. Data on mixed-status among families show that many Latinx and Asian American youth under the age of 18 live with one or more undocumented parents in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties (Figure 12).

Although lacking access to the basic rights and protections of U.S. citizenship, the region's undocumented immigrant population is an integral part of the community.

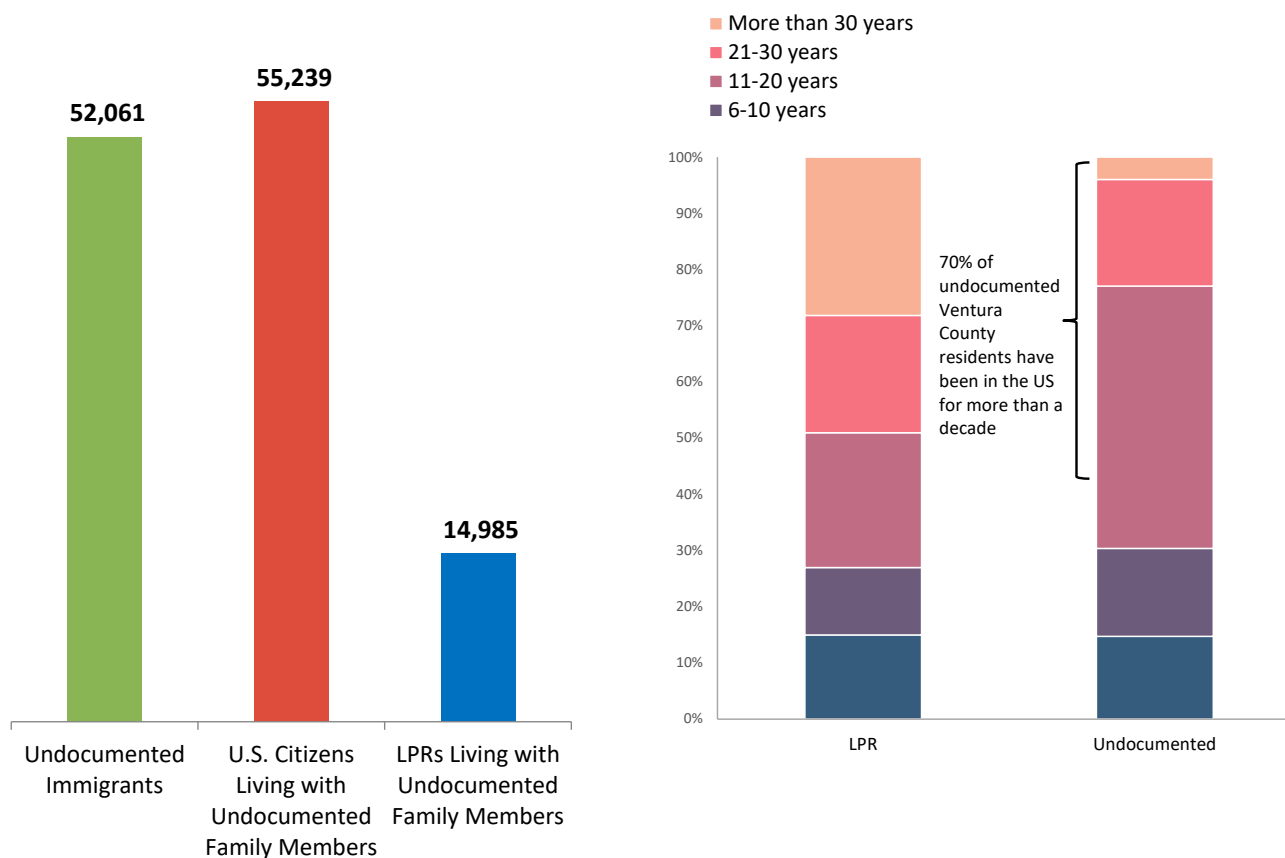


FIGURE 10: IMMIGRATION STATUS AND FAMILY EFFECTS (LEFT); RECENCY OF ARRIVAL FOR LPRS AND UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS (RIGHT), SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018.



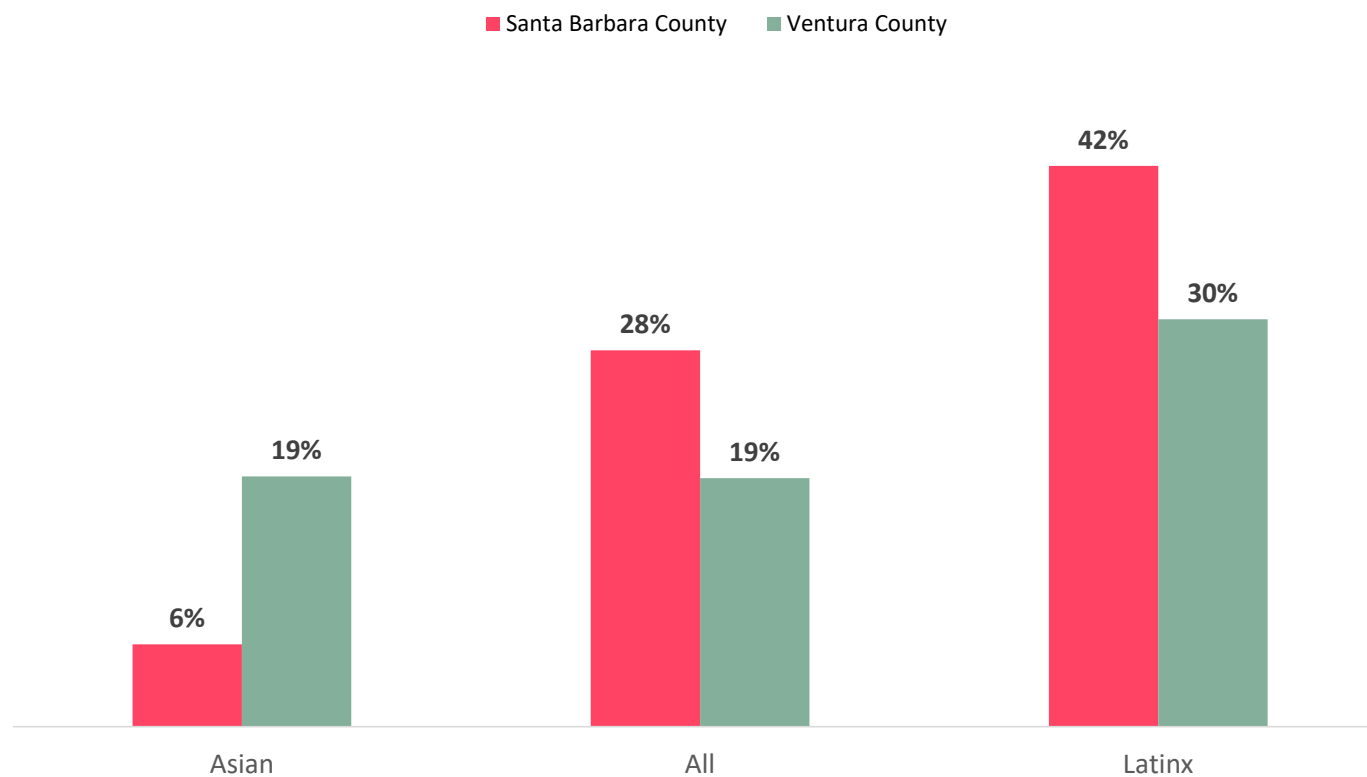
Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average. See https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf for details on estimates of the undocumented LPR population.

FIGURE 11: IMMIGRATION STATUS AND FAMILY EFFECTS (LEFT); RECENTY OF ARRIVAL FOR LPRS AND UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS (RIGHT), VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average. See https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf for details on estimates of the undocumented LPR population.

FIGURE 12: CHILDREN LIVING WITH AT LEAST ONE UNDOCUMENTED PARENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average. See https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf for details on estimates of the undocumented LPR population.

Multicultural Roots

The region's diversity is a reflection not just of recent demographic trends but of historically-rooted indigenous experience, multi-racial and ethnic migration patterns, and community-building and organizing practices that continue to find expression in contemporary civic and political culture. Here again, the broader regional story begins with the Native Chumash, who sustain a distinctive and increasingly influential cultural and civic presence despite census statistics showing some diminishment in the size of the two-county Native American population in recent decades.

While modern Chumash continue to experience generational trauma from settler colonialism and associated practices of removal and relocation from their homelands, Chumash today prove their resiliency as a people as they relearn their neglected languages, songs, and dances, and revive traditional knowledge and connections to the land, its plants, and animal life.

They have also gained recognition for the increasing relevance of indigenous knowledge and land practices to environmental sustainability and as an organized voice for land protection and cultural preservation. The community is, in turn, supported by an established network of Chumash and other Native organizations that provide a variety of education, health, and human services as well as opportunities for community building, networking, and advocacy on behalf of Native sovereignty and cultural self-determination. Prominent among these organizations are the various established Chumash bands, including the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians, the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, and the Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians. Chumash civic engagement efforts in recent years have included active participation in campaigns for land protection and environmental justice as well as Chumash-led efforts around cultural preservation, the teaching of accurate Native history in the schools, and the removal of offensive anti-Native street names and statues.

The Black community has long been an influential presence in the civic and cultural life of the region, although as a percentage of the population it remains comparatively small in size. According to 2018 American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Santa Barbara County is now home to over 12,700 Black or African American residents (2.8 percent of the population). In Ventura County, there are over 23,500 Black or African Americans living in the county (2.8 percent).¹²

The broader regional story begins with the Native Chumash, who sustain a distinctive and increasingly influential cultural and civic presence.



Black freedom, civil rights, and social justice organizing have deep generational roots in the region and extend across the two counties. The region's oldest Black churches date back to the early twentieth century, with the founding of the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Santa Barbara (its 1916 site was recently designated a historic landmark) and the St. Paul Baptist Church in Oxnard (1919). In subsequent decades, African Americans would challenge segregationist barriers to seek opportunities in employment, housing, business, and education. By mid-century, Black community leaders had founded chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in both counties, while also helping to lay the groundwork for the wide array of minority-serving legal, family, neighborhood, and youth-oriented services established in the region since the 1970s. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committees have been active in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties since the formal initiation of the MLK Day federal holiday in 1986, offering a broad reach of community and school-based programming to honor and sustain the coalitional struggles for freedom and social and economic justice that animated his life's work.

In recent years the national Black Lives Matter movement has fostered the formation of new organizations and re-energized older ones in the region. Healing Justice and Juneteenth Santa Barbara represent some of the organizations struggling against anti-Black racism and for the creation of spaces that support and empower Black people, including LGBTQ+, undocumented, and people with disabilities. Black students in the region have also taken leadership roles in local organizing on these issues. In the wake of the police killing of George Floyd in May 2020, there have been noticeable efforts in community organizations, governmental institutions, and in local universities and colleges to raise consciousness about the long-standing patterns of police violence and anti-Black racism existing in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

The Filipino community also extends back generations, is well-established in the area, and has a broad presence as the largest Asian American ethnic group in the region. In the 1930s, Filipino workers came as migrant workers to work in the agricultural industry in the Central Coast region.¹³ They were integral in workers' rights and labor organizing on the West Coast, even predating the United Farm Workers campaigns. As the community experienced growth, networks and organizations were established.¹⁴ In 2019, there were more than 8,200 Filipinos (1.8 percent of the population) in Santa Barbara County.¹⁵ Filipino communities arose in proximity to the U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Center at Port Hueneme and other naval facilities at Pt. Mugu.¹⁶ Up until the 1980s, 'Little Manila' was a Filipino enclave in south Oxnard, but the Filipino share of the population has decreased in recent years. In 2019, there were more

The national Black Lives Matter movement has fostered the formation of new organizations and re-energized older ones in the region.



than 23,300 Filipinos (2.8 percent) in Ventura County.¹⁷

The region's historical diversity is also reflected in a long tradition of interracial and ethnic labor and economic justice organizing, from the Japanese and Mexican farmworkers who, in 1903, went on strike against the sugar beet industry in Oxnard and challenged the racist and elite policies of the American Federation of Labor through the multi-racial coalition of agricultural, service, and municipal workers who have joined in county- and state-level living wage campaigns since the late 1990s.

Of special note are indigenous migrants who have traveled to the region for work. Many come from indigenous communities in Mexico and do not speak Spanish as a primary or second language. For example, there is a large population of Mixtec-speaking farmworkers. The Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) and others find that there are between 20,000 and 30,000 indigenous migrants, who hail from southern Mexico, and who live and work in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.¹⁸ Indigenous workers are also employed in the tourist industry.

The region's higher education sector is another source of diversity as a venue for research, learning, and innovation that attracts students, faculty, research, and administrative staff from around the world and throughout the United States. At the same time, college-age students, in particular, face serious economic challenges. According to data from the 2016-2017 Student Food Access and Security Study administered by the University of California system, 48 percent of UCSB undergraduates and 31 percent of UCSB graduate students were estimated to be food insecure. Students of color and LGBTQ students are especially likely to be food insecure. Housing insecurity is another major challenge for students in the region. The start of the 2021-22 academic year was especially dire on the housing front, as students region-wide prepared for a return to campus, with no assurance of available units let alone affordable rent, and some resorting to living out of their cars.¹⁹

In another sign of its growing diversity, the region is home to people who speak over 20 different languages. Demographic data from the census and English language learner data from California Department of Education show that Spanish is the principal non-English language spoken in the region, in a range that includes Tagalog, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Mixtec, Hindi, and Arabic as well. (Figure 13 and Figure 14).

The region's historical diversity is reflected in a long tradition of interracial and ethnic labor and economic justice organizing.



FIGURE 13: TOP NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY COUNTY, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018

Santa Barbara County	
Language Spoken	Population
Spanish	137,421
Chinese	4,069
Filipino, Tagalog	3,849
German	2,163
French	1,521
Korean	1,499
Japanese	1,432
Vietnamese	1,335
Arabic	982
All Others	10,292

Ventura County	
Language Spoken	Population
Spanish	241,849
Filipino, Tagalog	13,070
Chinese	6,893
Vietnamese	4,272
South/Central American Indian	2,975
German	2,894
Hindi	2,820
Korean	2,510
Arabic	2,400
French	2,399
Japanese	1,936
Persian, Iranian, Farsi	1,859
Tamil	1,484
Russian	1,415
Hebrew, Israeli	1,367
Panjabi	1,325
Gujarathi	1,199
Italian	1,121
Telugu	1,078
Armenian	1,053
All Others	11,386

Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes the population age five or older. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

FIGURE 14: TOP NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY EL AND FEP STUDENTS BY COUNTY, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018

Santa Barbara County		Ventura County	
Language	Total Number of English Learners and Fluent English Proficient Students	Language	Total Number of English Learners and Fluent English Proficient Students
Spanish	31,343	Spanish	49,917
Mixteco	2,181	Mixteco	1,264
Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)	245	Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)	757
Arabic	140	Mandarin (Putonghua)	596
Vietnamese	103	Vietnamese	498
Mandarin (Putonghua)	80	Arabic	389
Korean	76	Farsi (Persian)	281
Hmong	76	Korean	265
French	75	Hindi	237
Portuguese	67	Russian	219
Russian	67	Telugu	186
German	60	Hebrew	165
Ilocano	57	Japanese	160
Zapoteco	57	German	136
Other non-English languages	733	Other non-English languages	2,076
Total	35,360	Total	57,146

Source: California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office, 2018-2019. Universe includes all English Learners and Fluent English Proficient Students enrolled in school. An English Learner student is defined as a student in grades K-12 for whom there is a report of a language other than English on the Home Language Survey (HLS) and who, upon assessment and from additional information when appropriate, is determined to lack the clearly defined English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing necessary to succeed in the school's regular instructional programs. English Learner students can then be reclassified later along during their academic career when they demonstrate the necessary criteria for Fluent English Proficient status.

Living through the Pandemic: Anxiety, Trauma, and Hope

Disproportionate Impacts of COVID-19

Households throughout the region were deeply affected by the pandemic, often in unanticipated ways. From early on though, it became apparent that its heaviest burdens would be borne by households already experiencing social and economic disadvantages—working-class households not in a position to stay at home, shelter-in-place, and remain employed. According to the California Department of Public Health, socioeconomic disadvantages have been tied to increased risk of infection and severe illness. These social determinants of health, which we cover throughout the report, include low income, high-exposure employment, crowded housing, access to health insurance, and food insecurity.²⁰ A November 2020 study examining county-level predictors of high COVID-19 cases and deaths found that rates were higher in counties that were “more urban or densely populated or that had more crowded housing, air pollution, women, persons aged 20–49 years, racial/ethnic minorities, residential housing segregation, income inequality, uninsured persons, diabetics, or mobility outside the home during the pandemic.”²¹ In addition, uneven federal aid that excluded mixed-status families, paired with premature openings of the economy that sent many more back into the workforce, contributed to the disproportionate impact of the disease on communities of color.

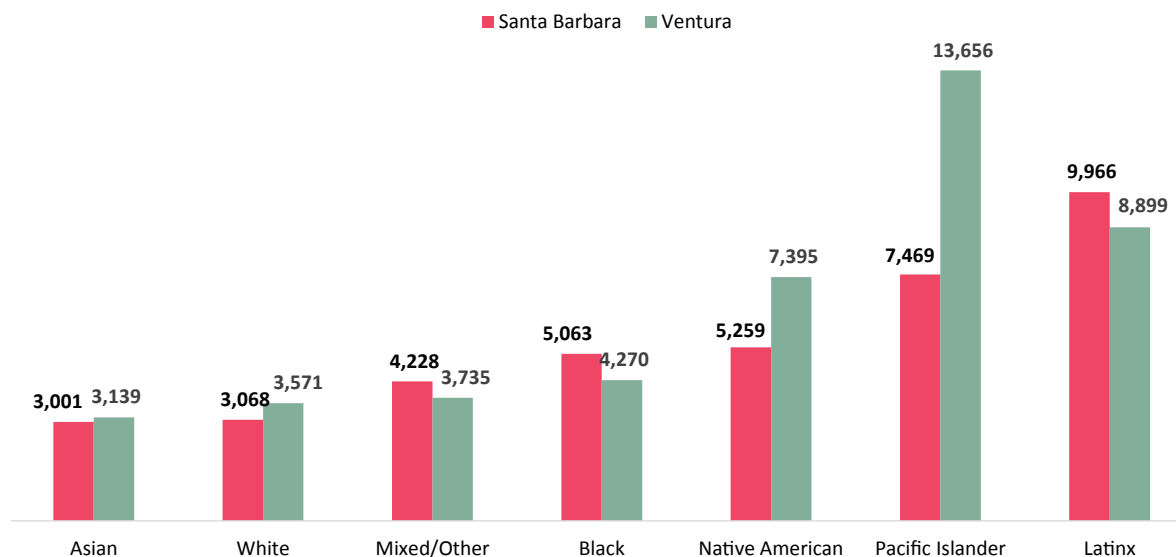
Participants in our community consultations, conducted in the latter half of 2020 when the pandemic was at its height, shared their first-hand observations of these disparate impacts as they were playing out in real time, acknowledging the many ways COVID-19 revealed and further exacerbated already existing inequities of race, class, gender, nativity, language, and location. These discussions also acknowledged the less tangible emotional and psychological dimensions of the pandemic’s toll, making special note of the devastation of losing family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances to the virus; the extreme loneliness and isolation of sheltering in place; and the trauma of being on the frontlines as healthcare providers and bearing witness to tremendous long-term suffering. Other respondents have lost businesses, watched decades of work slip through their fingers, or have been forced to lay off employees they regard as neighbors and friends. More generally, given the prospect of a pandemic with no end in sight, participants in our community consultations expressed deep anxiety about what its unanticipated reverberations would be—including the corrosive impacts of existing and deepening inequality.²²

Participants in our community consultations expressed deep anxiety about what the pandemic's unanticipated reverberations would be—including the corrosive impacts of existing and deepening inequality.



Cumulative data on COVID-19 cases by county show that communities of color have been most impacted (Figure 15). These data show that Pacific Islander, Latinx, Native American, and Black communities were the most affected by COVID-19 cases in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Between March 12, 2020 and May 25, 2021, the rate of COVID-19 cases among Pacific Islanders in Ventura County was the highest among any racial group in both counties. Latinx populations in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties had the second and third highest rates of COVID-19 cases. There was a high rate of COVID-19 cases among Native American populations as well. What is notable is the high rate of cases in smaller, more rural communities such as Piru, Santa Paula, Fillmore and the area covering Sisquoc, Casmalia, Garey, Cuyama, New Cuyama and Guadalupe (see Figure 16). Case rates are also high in the larger cities of Oxnard and Santa Maria. While a case rate could not be calculated due to lack of consistent population data, there have been a large number of cases at the federal prison in Lompoc, which experienced a major outbreak early on in the pandemic with infection rates among inmates reaching 70 percent in May 2020.

FIGURE 15: COVID-19 CASES PER 100,000 PEOPLE BY COUNTY, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, MARCH 12, 2020-MAY 25, 2021



Source: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research's California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) analysis of California Department of Public Health and County Health Department COVID-19 case data.

Data show that Pacific Islander, Latinx, Native American, and Black communities were the most affected by COVID-19 cases in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.



FIGURE 16: CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES AS OF MID-SEPTEMBER, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2021

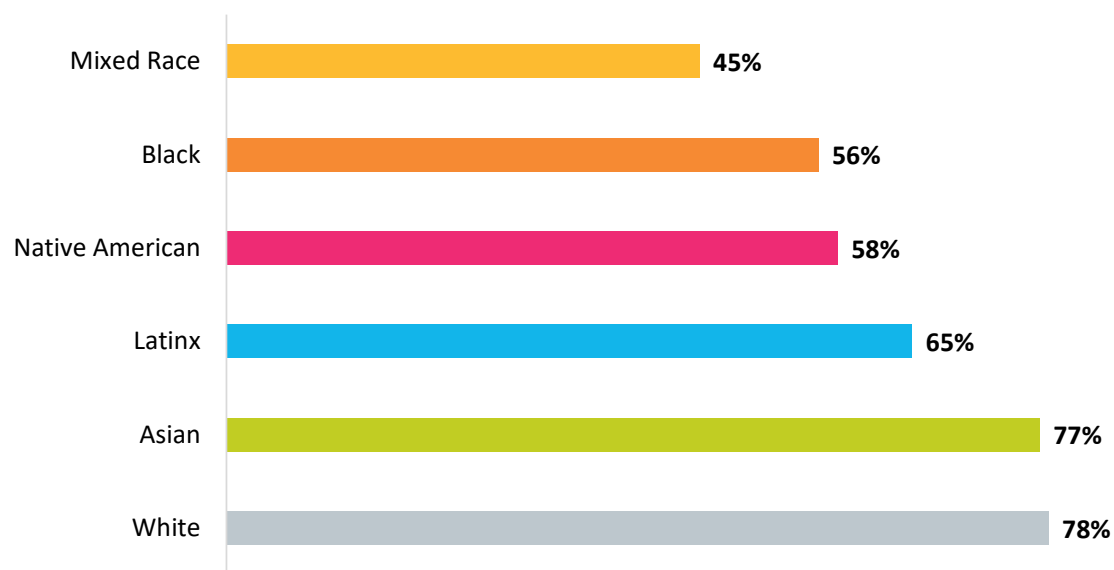
Santa Barbara County			
City/Community	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Population	Cases per 100k People
Sisquoc, Casmalia, Garey, Cuyama, New Cuyama and Guadalupe	1,513	8,632	17,528
Santa Maria	13,435	106,224	12,648
Lompoc/Mission Hills and Vandenberg Village	4,820	55,188	8,734
Santa Barbara/Mission Canyon	7,466	93,884	7,952
Orcutt	2,433	31,118	7,819
Solvang/Buelton/Santa Ynez/Los Alamos/Los Olivos and Ballard	1,367	18,386	7,435
Montecito, Summerland and Carpinteria	1,603	22,594	7,095
Goleta	2,186	30,975	7,057
Isla Vista	1,534	27,707	5,537
Goleta Valley and Gaviota	1,533	N/A	N/A
Federal Prison in Lompoc	1,095	N/A	N/A

Ventura County			
City/Community	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Population	Cases per 100k People
Piru	398	1,827	21,784
Santa Paula	6,091	33,773	18,035
Fillmore	3,037	17,989	16,883
Oxnard	35,381	220,639	16,036
Porte Hueneme	2,766	24,208	11,426
Simi Valley/Santa Susana	12,875	128,290	10,036
Ventura	11,046	115,550	9,559
Somis	291	3,220	9,037
Moorpark	3,343	38,581	8,665
Camarillo/Santa Rosa Alley	6,010	82,115	7,319
Thousand Oaks/Newbury Park/Lake Sherwood and Westlake	9,580	144,951	6,609
Oak View	441	7,179	6,143
Ojai	1,211	19,895	6,087
Oak Park	576	13,853	4,158
Bell Canyon	33	26,341	125

Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the Santa Barbara County Department Public of Health as of September 14, 2021, the Ventura County Department Public of Health as of September 15, 2021 and resident population data from the 2019 5-year American Community Survey summary file from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Population estimates to derive cases per 100k people are based on combined census “Place” level data for Santa Barbara County and combined census “Zip Code Tabulation Area” data for Ventura County for the places listed. Population data for the Goleta Valley and Gaviota, and for the Federal Prison in Lompoc could not be identified.

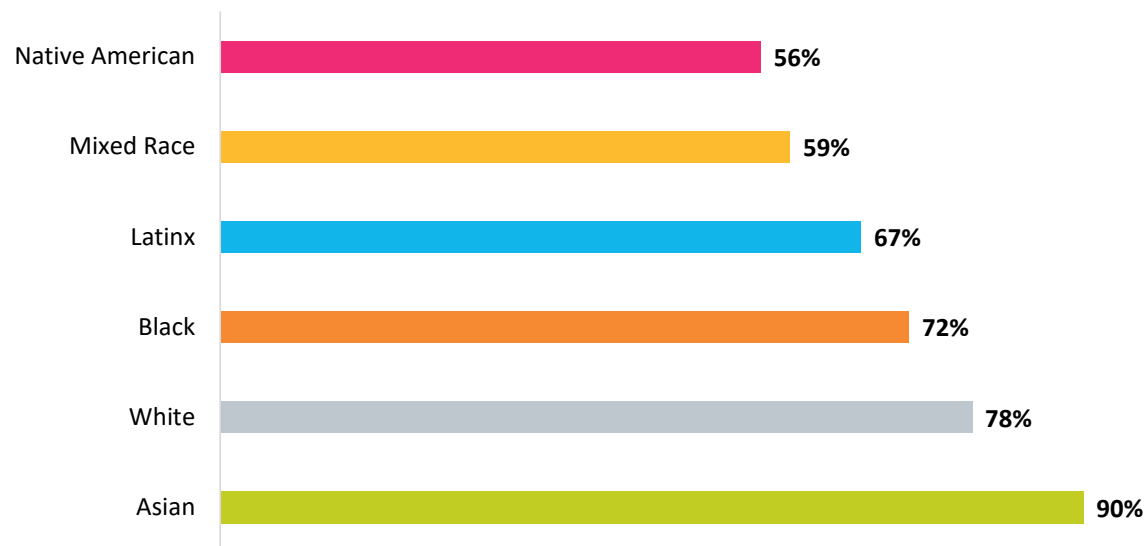
Data on vaccine distribution show that the same communities that have been most impacted have not had equal access to protection from the virus. Native American, Black, Latinx, and multiracial populations have lower rates of vaccination from COVID-19 in both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties (Figure 17 and Figure 18).

FIGURE 17: PERCENT OF 12+ POPULATION WITH AT LEAST ONE DOSE OF COVID-19 VACCINE ADMINISTERED, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, AS OF OCTOBER 25, 2021



Source: California Department of Public Health (October 2021). See <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccination-progress-data/> for more details on vaccine data. Note: Data on Pacific Islander rates per population are not available.

FIGURE 18: PERCENT OF 12+ POPULATION WITH AT LEAST ONE DOSE OF COVID-19 VACCINE ADMINISTERED, VENTURA COUNTY, AS OF OCTOBER 25, 2021

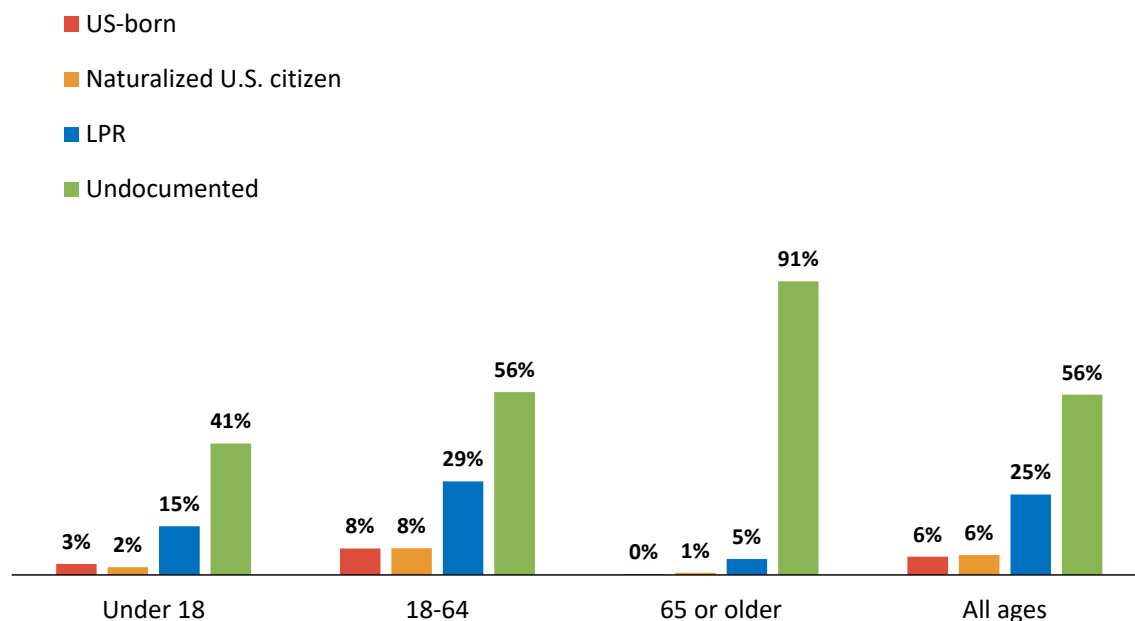


Source: California Department of Public Health (October 2021). See <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccination-progress-data/> for more details on vaccine data. Note: Data on Pacific Islander rates per population are not available.

Additionally, access to healthcare is lower among many the Latinx community. Among adults ages 18-64, Latinx residents are over four times as likely to lack health insurance as white residents. About 27 percent of Latinx people in this age group lack health insurance in Santa Barbara, compared to six percent of white residents. In Ventura, 24 percent of Latinx people between the ages of 18 and 64 do not have health insurance, compared to six percent of white residents.²³

Data by immigration status show that undocumented immigrant residents have the highest proportion of uninsured individuals, 56 percent of adults ages 18 through 64 in the two-county region compared to eight percent of U.S. born residents of the same age. Among seniors, the disparity is very stark: 91 percent of undocumented seniors lack health insurance when nearly no U.S.-born seniors in either county lack health insurance (Figure 19).

FIGURE 19: PERCENT WITH NO HEALTH INSURANCE BY IMMIGRATION STATUS AND AGE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average. See https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf for details on estimates of the undocumented and LPR population.

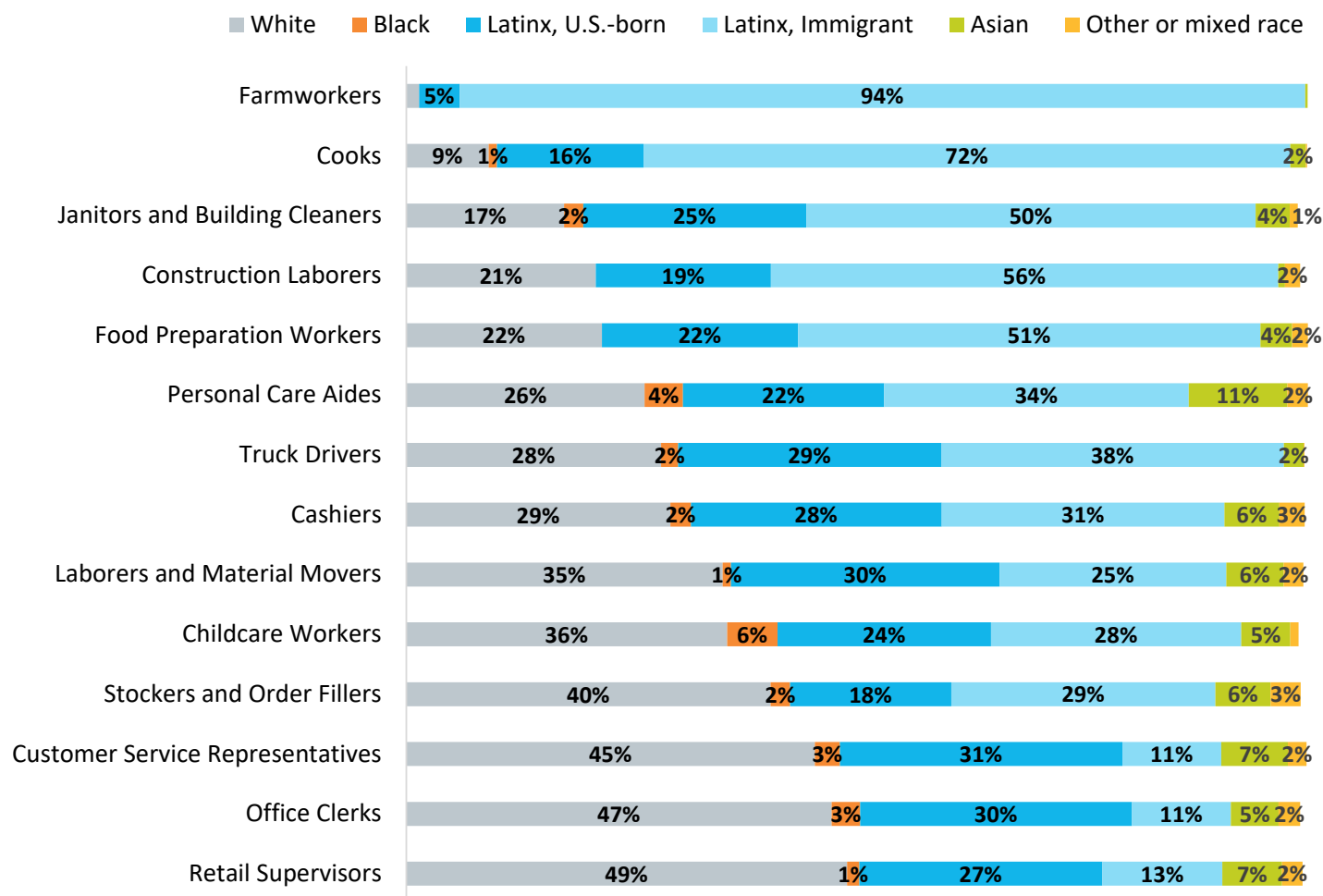
In addition to access to insurance, many in the region do not have a usual source of healthcare, meaning they may lack consistent access to medical professionals who can track pre-existing conditions and provide guidance when changes in their health or public health concerns arise. This lack of healthcare is not experienced equally across racial groups. Over 20 percent of Latinx individuals in the region lack a usual place to go when sick or in need of medical advice, a rate much higher than the region's white population (8 percent).²⁴

A Vulnerable Workforce at Risk

Much of the discussion during our community consultations was centered on the dilemmas of low-wage workers, especially those in jobs designated as “essential,” who faced a near impossible choice between continuing to work despite recognizably unprotected workplace conditions and losing the only source of income they and their families had to get by.²⁵

Data reveal that Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, immigrants, and women were the least able to work from home during this pandemic. They often risked their health and safety to pay their bills and provide the region with essential services during the pandemic. Data by race, ethnicity, and nativity by “essential” occupations and COVID-19 risk, show that 91 percent of Latinx immigrant workers in Santa Barbara County were employed in either essential or high-risk occupations, compared with 63 percent of white workers. In Ventura County, 82 percent of Latinx immigrant workers were employed in essential or high-risk occupations, compared to 58 percent of white workers.²⁶ Most workers in selected front-line occupations such as farmworkers, cooks, janitors, and nurses, deemed “essential” during the pandemic, were people of color (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20: FRONTLINE OCCUPATIONS BY RACE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



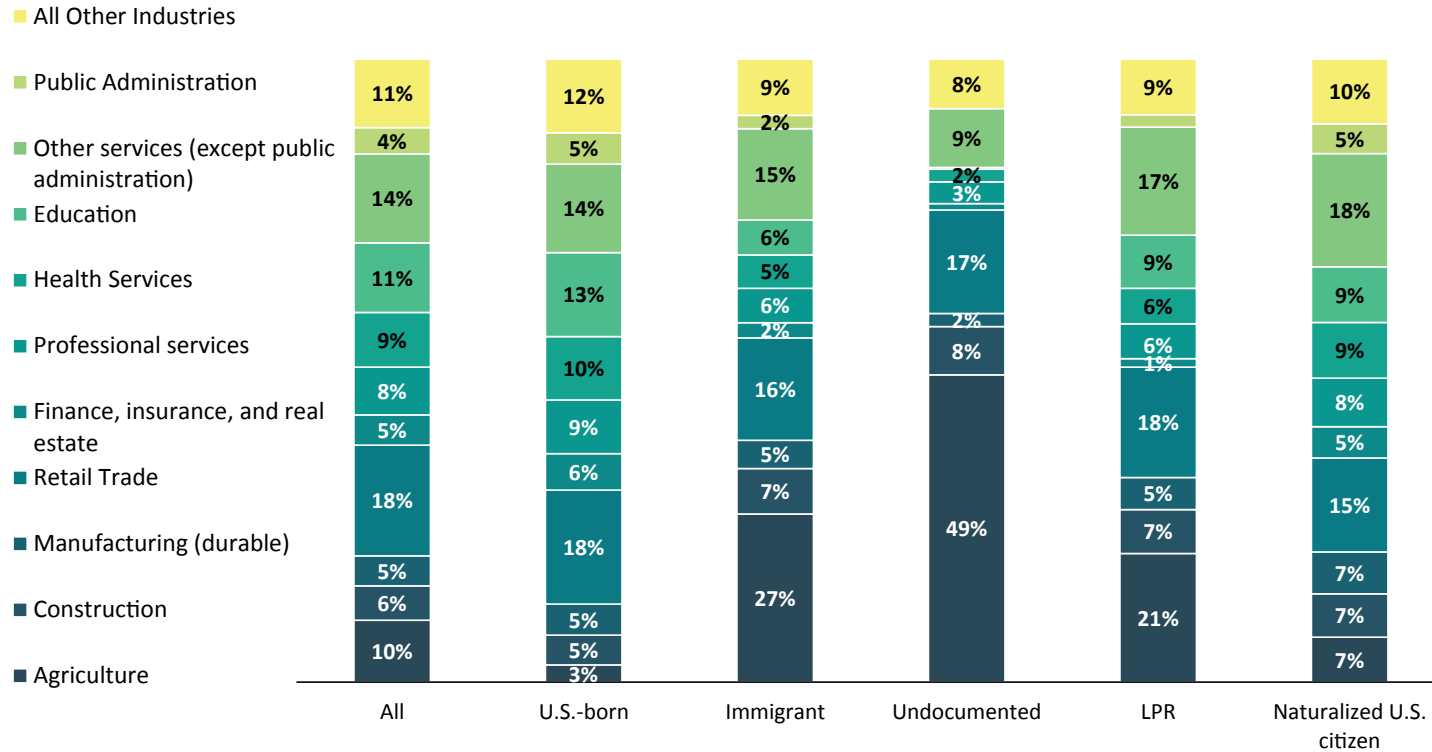
Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Universe includes employed individuals ages 25 to 64. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Like the broader state agricultural industry, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties rely heavily on Mexican farmworkers, most of whom are immigrants.²⁷ However, estimates of the number of farmworkers are difficult to pin down because of the employment cycle, worker mobility, and legal status; nonetheless, for Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, 2018 estimates are just over 18,000 and 14,000, respectively.²⁸ Other estimates for Ventura are higher at 36,000.²⁹ Since the mid-1990s, farm laborers from indigenous communities in Mexico have been the fastest growing share of California agricultural workers.³⁰

Deeper analysis of the occupation data by immigration status show that almost half (49 percent) of undocumented residents in Santa Barbara County work in agriculture (Figure 21). About 41 percent of Ventura's undocumented residents work in agriculture (Figure 22). Farmworkers often face inadequate and under-enforced worksite protections and at the same time were ineligible for vital, albeit woefully inadequate federal aid.³¹ Though the state eventually stepped in to provide limited aid to some undocumented immigrants, these efforts fell short in addressing the needs of immigrant communities.³² Furthermore, the combination of high-density housing and sub-standard worker protections created conditions for the virus to spread among farmworker communities.

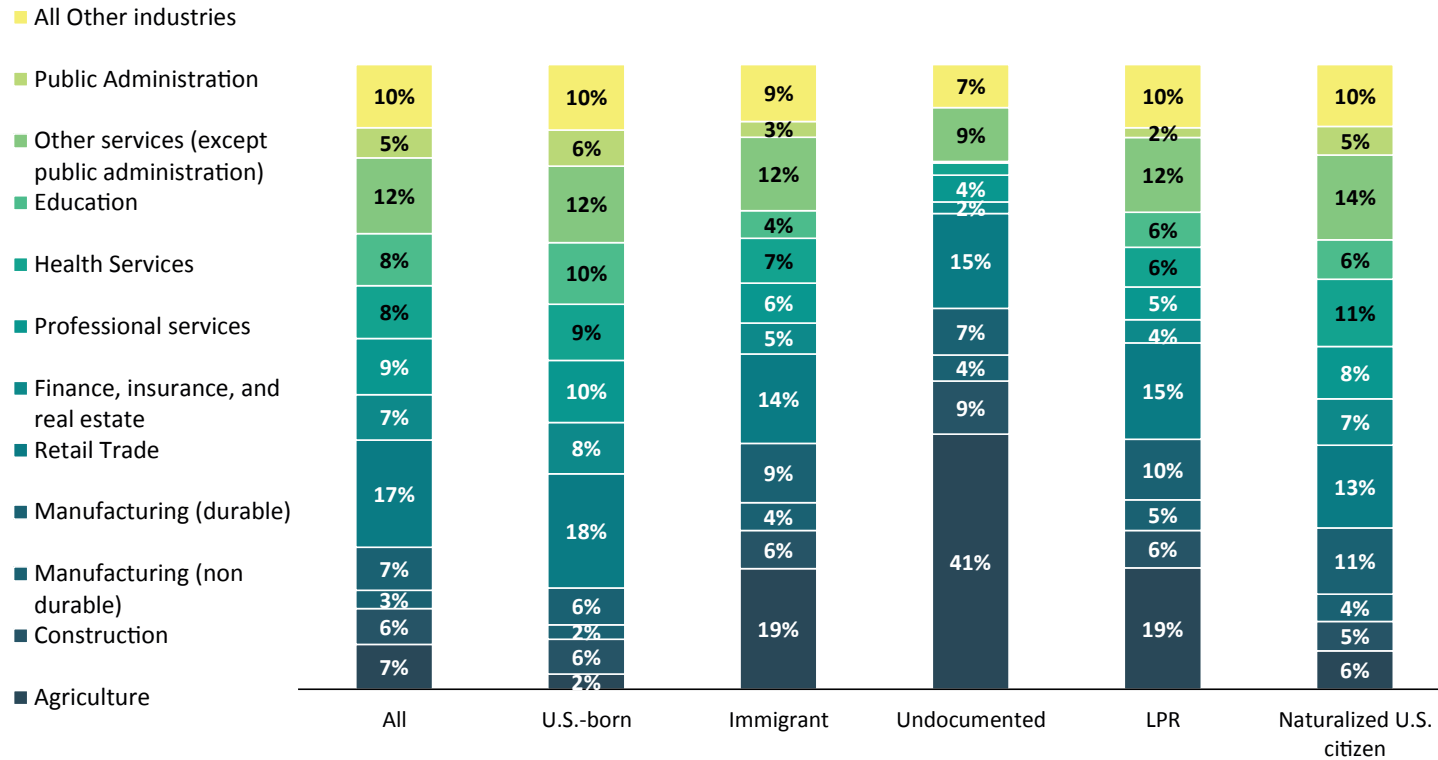
FIGURE 21: EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES BY IMMIGRATION STATUS, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Universe includes employed individuals ages 25 to 64. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

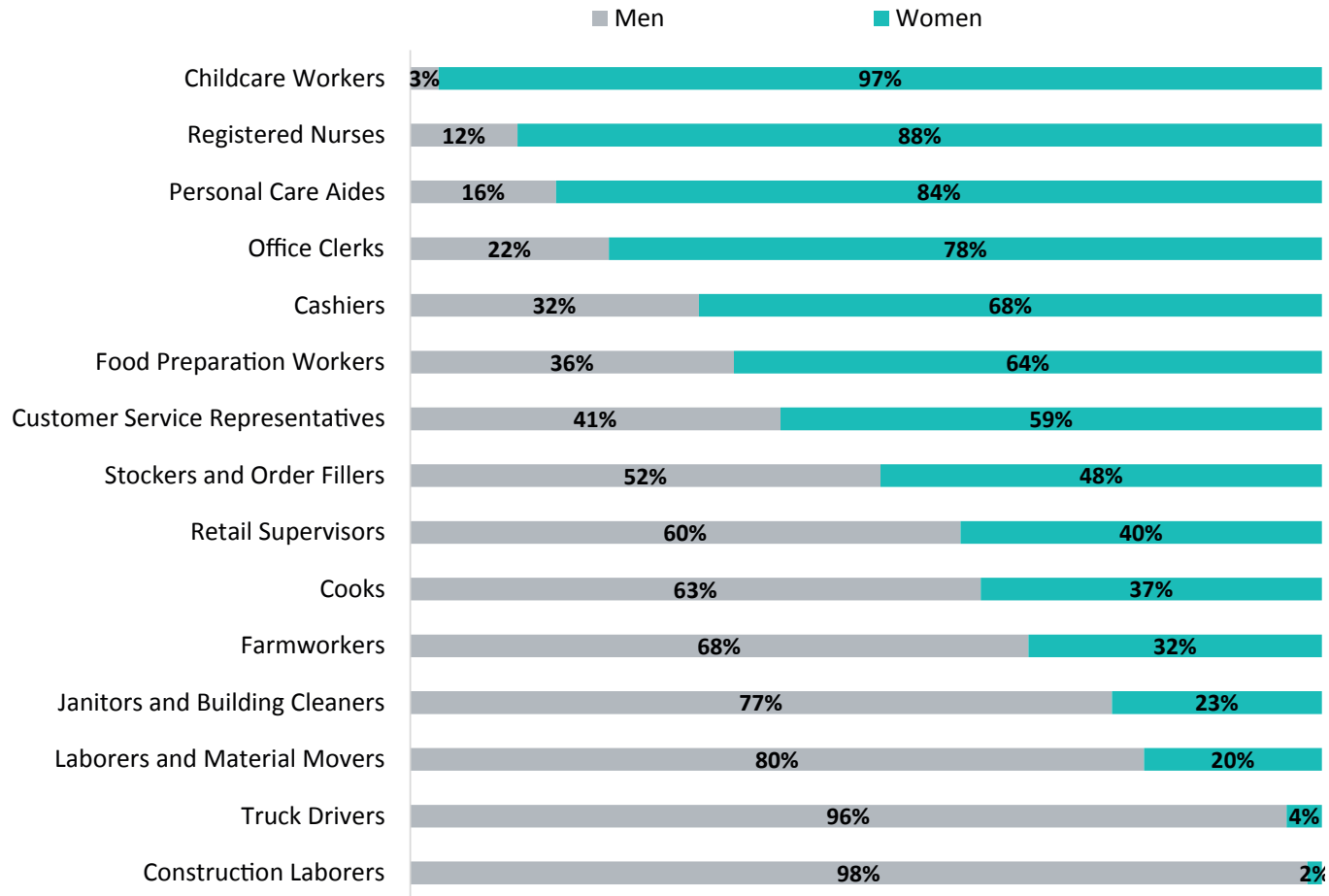
FIGURE 22: EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES BY IMMIGRATION STATUS, VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes employed individuals ages 25 to 64. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

In addition, people of color, especially women, are disproportionately employed in other essential frontline occupations. For example, over a third of nurses are Asian American. Women make up the majority of those working in frontline occupations such as childcare workers, nurses, personal care aides, office clerks and many others (Figure 23). People of color, immigrants, and women disproportionately risked their health and safety during the pandemic, unable to work from home, providing the region with essential services.

FIGURE 23: FRONTLINE OCCUPATIONS BY GENDER, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Universe includes employed individuals ages 25 to 64. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Though many had no choice but to continue to work during the pandemic, others suffered sudden unemployment, particularly those working in the tourism industry.³³ At its peak in spring of 2020, the region's unemployment rates were between 14 and 15 percent and are still higher than pre-pandemic levels.³⁴ Though data on unemployment claims by race are limited for the region, statewide unemployment claims data show that workers of color were more likely to be unemployed during the pandemic. While many were forced to work, many others became unemployed when businesses shuttered in the spring of 2020. Between March 15, 2020 and February 27, 2021 about 89 percent of the Black labor force filed unemployment insurance (UI) claims statewide. About 51 percent of the female labor force filed UI claims, a rate higher than men (44 percent). Young workers ages 20 to 24 had the highest rate of UI claims, 68 percent compared to rates that ranged from 40 percent to 48 percent among workers ages 25-64.³⁵ Similarly, data on unemployment claims by nativity were not available for the region. However, analysis of state employment figures from the Current Population Survey by the UC Merced Labor Center between February and May of 2020 show that non-citizens experienced job loss rates of around 29 percent, compared to around 13 to 14 percent for U.S.-born and naturalized citizens in California.³⁶

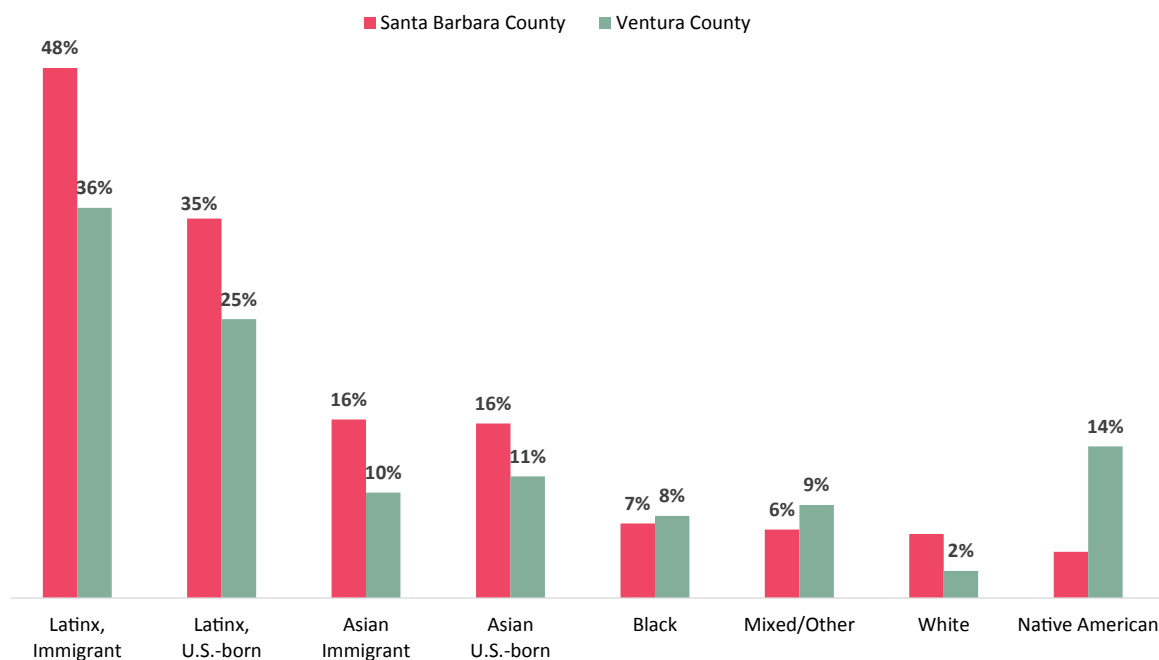
Unemployment claims data show that workers of color were more likely to be unemployed during the pandemic.



Vulnerable Households

Whether grappling with unemployment, working on the frontlines, or working from home, working-class households faced heightened vulnerability to COVID-19 exposure because of the comparatively high numbers of people living in a single household. Data on overcrowded housing (defined as having more than one person per room) by race and nativity in 2018 show that Latinx residents, both U.S. born and immigrant, are more likely to be living in overcrowded conditions (Figure 24). Additionally, as illustrated by the workforce data, Latinx individuals are more likely to be in essential or in high-risk work.

FIGURE 24: PEOPLE IN OVERCROWDED HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE AND NATIVITY, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Overcrowding is defined as having more than one person per room. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average.

These households also experienced inequitable access to internet services, which proved critically important in early 2020, when the state's shelter-in-place mandate shuttered schools, businesses, and services in order to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. As the region pivoted to operating exclusively online, those who lacked access to the internet became disconnected from crucial services, information, and assistance with basic needs such as medical appointments, mental health, filing for unemployment benefits, housing, and nutritional aid. Community-based providers, in turn, found their outreach capacities curtailed by the move to online platforms and the loss of in-person contact.

The dimensions and growing significance of the “digital divide,” often defined as the gap between those with access to home computers or high-speed internet and those without, were duly noted by participants in our community consultations. Those discussions recognized that the digital divide goes beyond gaps in ownership or access to devices to include disparities in reliable, high-speed internet access, and technological and literacy skills required to navigate digital services and communications. Participants also acknowledged that unencumbered internet access is an increasingly crucial part of our society's basic infrastructure, despite uneven access to this essential service. This is underscored by research based on national survey data. Although over 75 percent of American households have a desktop or laptop device, there is considerable variation by race and income.³⁷ Eighty percent of white adults report having a desktop or laptop compared to 69 percent of Black adults and 67 percent of Latinx adults.³⁸ The device ownership gap is even starker by income. While 92 percent of adults in households with income of \$100,000 or more report having a desktop or laptop, only 59 percent of those in households making less than \$30,000 report the same.³⁹ Nor can this gap be adequately addressed by smartphones, which though more widely available provide access to a limited range of activities, creating an added disadvantage for users who rely on them in group settings. This is especially troubling for students, individuals with disabilities or chronic illness, and people experiencing housing insecurity who are particularly reliant on smartphones as their principal means of connecting to the internet.⁴⁰

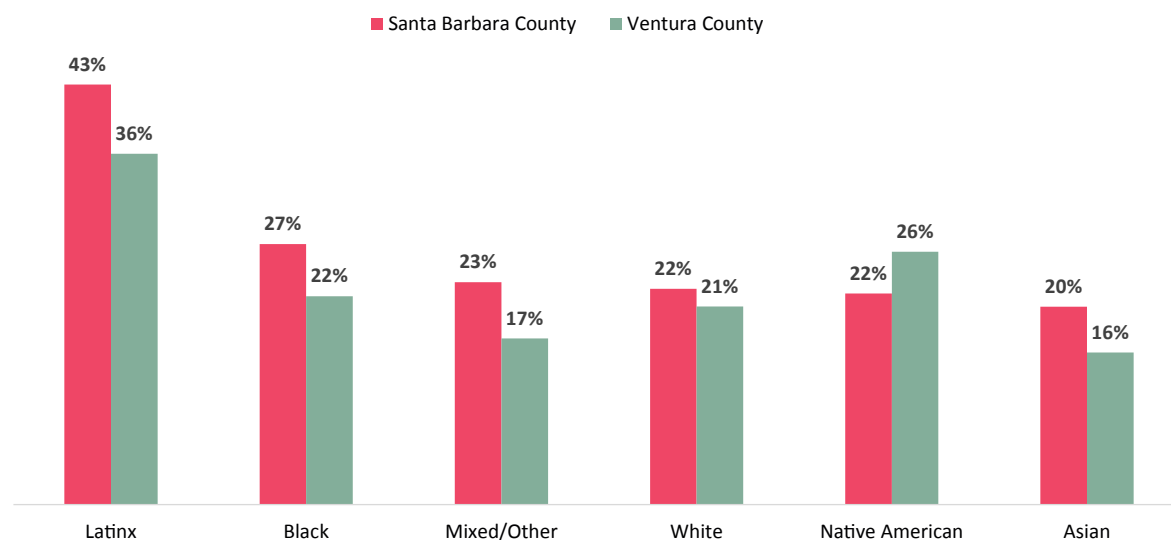
The digital divide in reliable internet service and skills is also a major concern underscored by recent survey data. Internet access is lowest among the elderly, especially among BIPOC elderly and those with low income. In fact, 25 percent of Black, 21 percent of Latinx, and 28 percent of Native American people over 65 still do not have internet access.⁴¹ In the time of COVID, this gap has proved disastrous, with those most susceptible to COVID—low-income, elderly people of color—often struggling the most to get vaccination appointments. With the phone lines of health care providers overwhelmed during the pandemic, those seniors without internet access or sufficient digital literacy often paid the price.⁴²

Unencumbered internet access is an increasingly crucial part of our society's basic infrastructure, despite uneven access to this essential service.



The digital divide was further exacerbated in the areas of healthcare and other vital resources (Figure 25). As the COVID-19 vaccination roll out began in early 2020, people of color were disproportionately impacted by the digital divide and were underserved in the first waves of vaccination. Rates of vaccination among Latinx and Black communities remain lower, despite efforts to expand access. In addition to other barriers, the inability to access online appointments due to lack of digital access was a major challenge for those in communities of color.⁴³ Data on the digital divide from 2018 show that Latinx and Black communities were the least digitally connected even before the pandemic began (Figure 25). These communities faced the most challenges when accessing vital services that moved online. In community meetings, residents shared that lack of affordable and stable internet access was the most pressing challenge, though access to updated devices that can handle the increased broadband usage was also a major challenge.

FIGURE 25: HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT A HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CONNECTION, A COMPUTER, OR BOTH, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes all households (no group quarters). Data reflect a 2014-2018 average.

This lack of access is only further compounded by the lack of linguistically appropriate information and services that impact some of the most vulnerable populations. Throughout the region, the communities with the highest rates of linguistic isolation are in Santa Maria, Cuyama Valley, Oxnard, Santa Paula, and

Data on the digital divide from 2018 show that Latinx and Black communities were the least digitally connected even before the pandemic began.

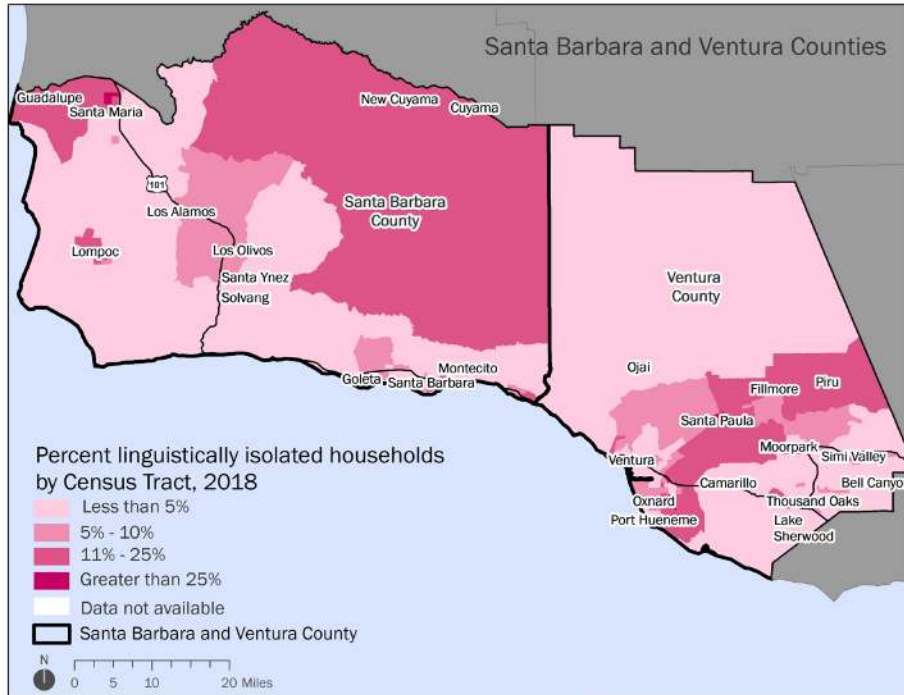


many others (Figure 26).^c

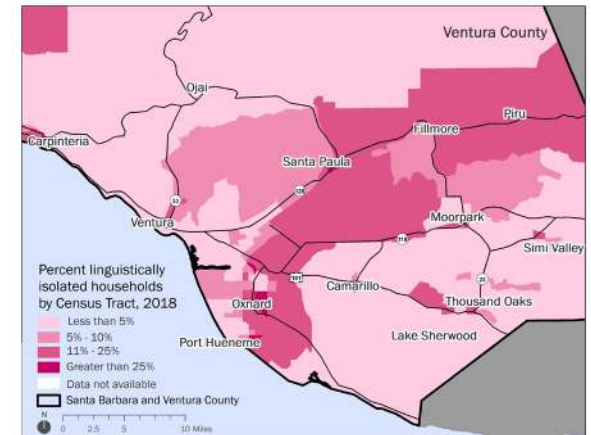
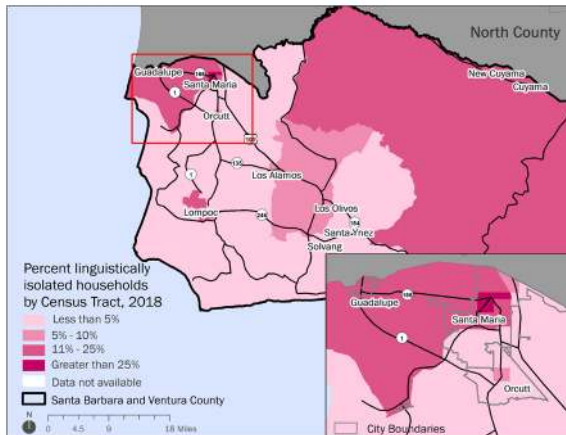
These communities already faced challenges accessing critical services in languages other than English before the pandemic. In community meetings, residents shared their frustrations, with one saying that the “tandem lack of internet connectivity and type of device also significantly impacts older community members and low-income, non-English speakers, who may lack the technology fluency of younger generations.” This concern is reflected in survey data, which show that the elderly (who are among the most at-risk populations for COVID) are the least likely to have digital access.⁴⁴

^c Linguistic isolation refers to households where those age 14 or older all speak English less than “very well.”

FIGURE 26: LINGUISTICALLY ISOLATED HOUSEHOLDS BY CENSUS TRACT, 2018

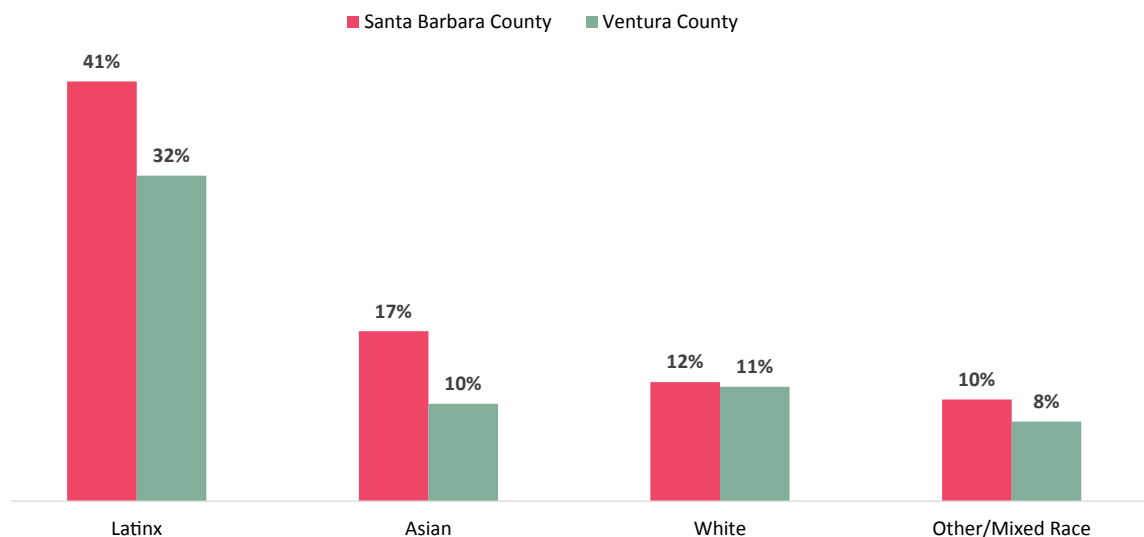


Source: TIGER/Line Shapefiles and 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: A linguistically isolated household is defined as one in which no member age 14 or older speaks English at least “very well.” Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.



As the state closed schools, student instruction moved to an online distance learning model. Data from 2018 illustrate that Latinx students were more likely than white students to lack the necessary technology to successfully attend virtual school, another manifestation of the digital divide. Locally, 41 percent of Latinx students in Santa Barbara County and 32 percent in Ventura County were without a high-speed internet connection, access to a computer, or both (see Figure 27). In community consultations, community members shared that the lack of a device was not the main issue facing students, as many households had access to smartphones, and schools had equipped students with Chromebooks and iPads for distance learning. However, the virtual meeting software used for instruction did not work well on smartphones and tablets, and the technology distributed to students was outdated and did not work well with this newer software. As a result, students were often unable to participate in virtual instruction, leaving many families frustrated and concerned about falling behind other families that could afford newer devices. This also contributed to concerns about increased “digital segregation.”

FIGURE 27: YOUTH IN GRADES K-12 WHO LACK AT HOME A HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CONNECTION, A COMPUTER, OR BOTH, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



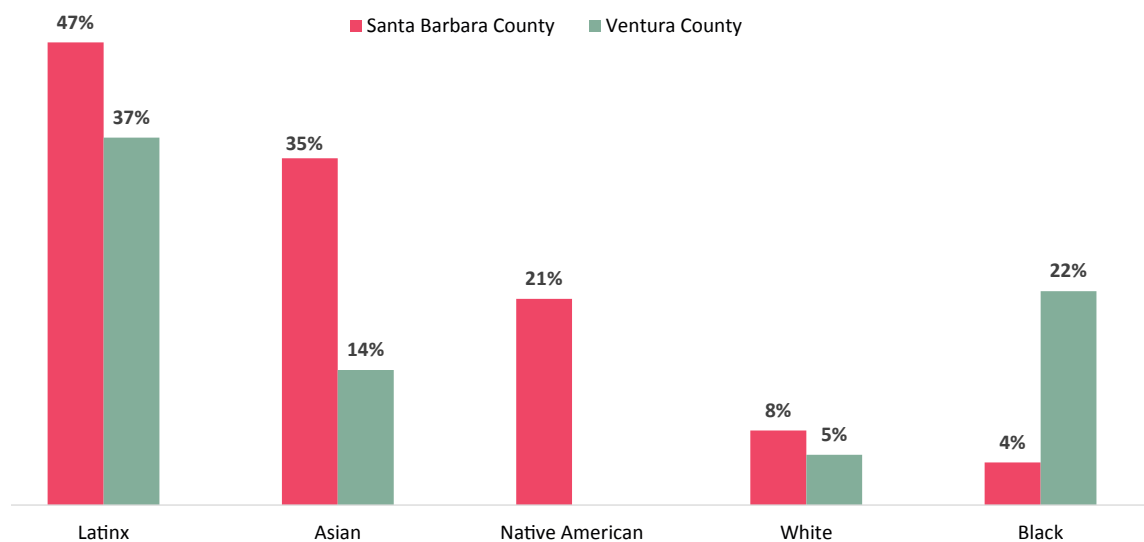
Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes children under 18 years old enrolled in school, grades K-12. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average.

Latinx students were more likely than white students to lack the necessary technology to successfully attend virtual school, another manifestation of the digital divide.



The digital divide has also limited the participation of parents of color in community conversations with school leadership, particularly challenging for Mixtec-speaking families.⁴⁵ In addition, data on overcrowded housing show that these same students are likely to face the challenges of finding space and privacy for remote learning (Figure 28).

FIGURE 28: YOUTH IN GRADES K-12 LIVING IN OVERCROWDED HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018

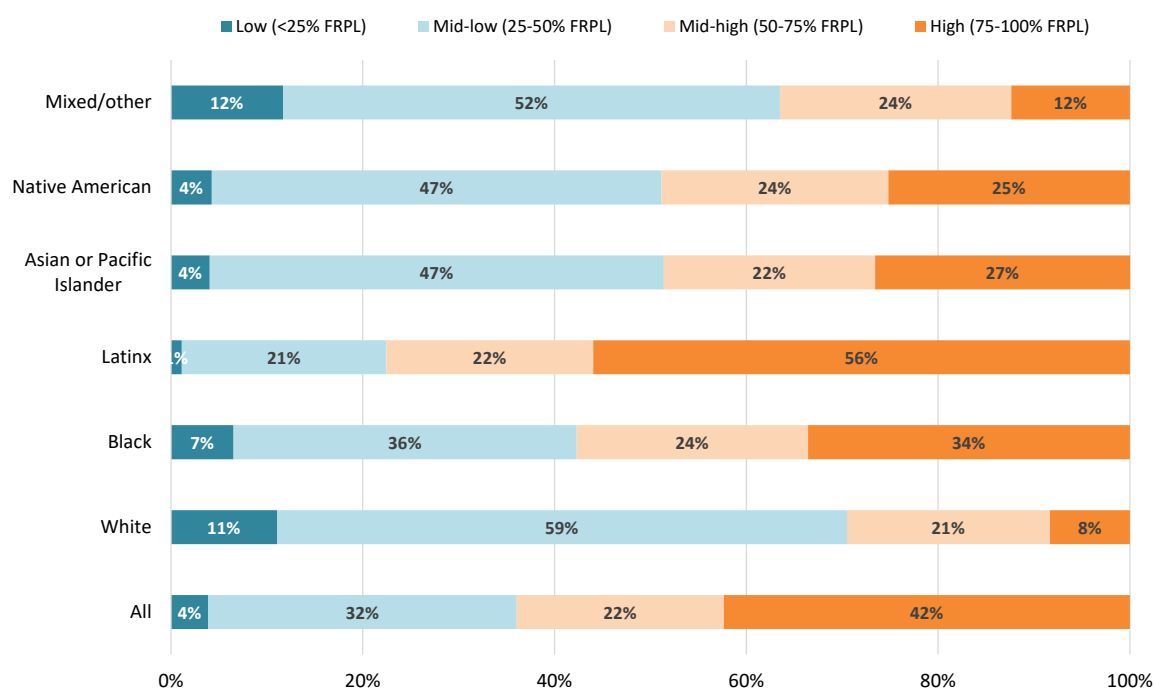


Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes children under 18 years old enrolled in school, grades K-12. Overcrowding is defined as having more than one person per room. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average.

In addition, students of color, and Latinx students in particular, are more likely to be in schools with high percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced priced lunches. These students were not only impacted by the lack of in-person instruction but also by the loss of access to other in-person resources including school-provided meals. In Santa Barbara County, more than half (56 percent) of Latinx students attend schools where most students (75 to 100 percent) receive free or reduced-price lunches, a rate much higher than any other group (see Figure 29). In Ventura County, nearly half (48 percent) of Latinx students

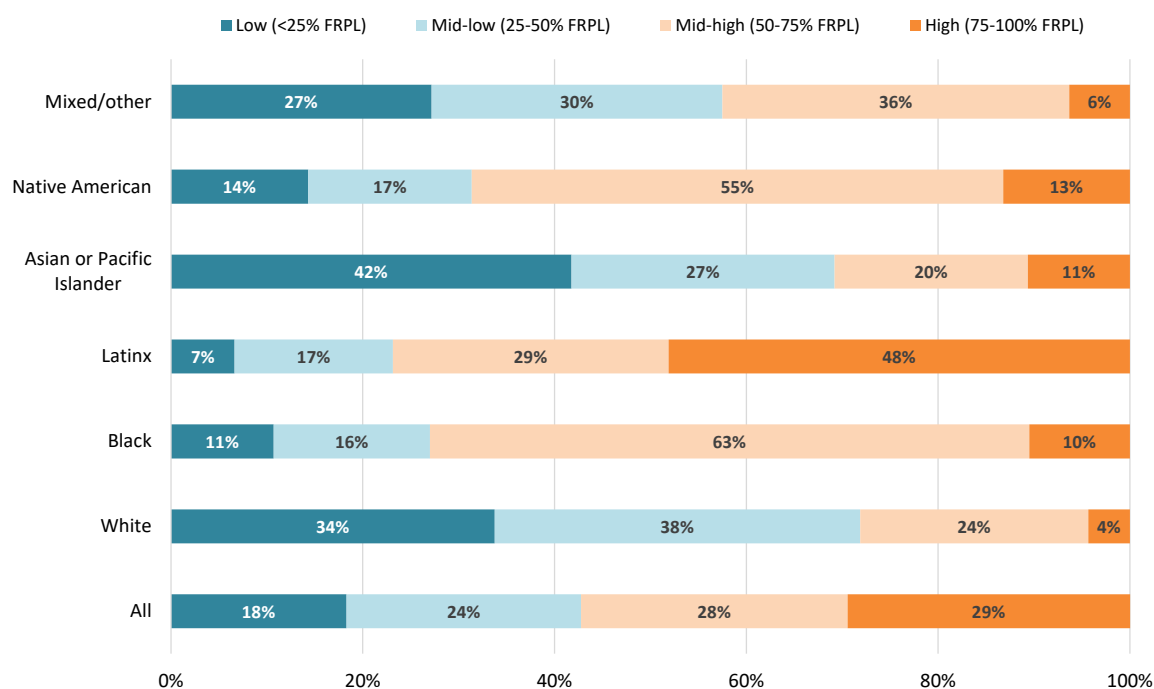
attend schools where most students (75 percent to 100 percent) receive free or reduced-price lunches (Figure 30). While meals were still available for pick-up at schools during remote instruction, students without access to sites where food was distributed lost an essential source of daily nutrition.

FIGURE 29: SHARE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL BY RACE BY TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION ELIGIBLE FOR THE FREE OR REDUCED PRICED LUNCH PROGRAM, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: PolicyLink and the USC Equity Research Institute; National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org, 2021. Note: Universe includes all students attending public elementary and secondary schools. Free or reduced price lunch eligibility levels are defined by the share of students in a school eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch (FRPL). Data are for the 2017-2018 school year.

FIGURE 30: SHARE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL BY RACE BY TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION ELIGIBLE FOR THE FREE OR REDUCED PRICED LUNCH PROGRAM, VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



Source: PolicyLink and the USC Equity Research Institute; National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org, 2021. Note: Universe includes all students attending public elementary and secondary schools. Free or reduced price lunch eligibility levels are defined by the share of students in a school eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch (FRPL). Data are for the 2017-2018 school year.

From 1990-2018, high school dropout rates declined in both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.⁴⁶ Latinx students, who have by far the highest high school dropout rate in the region, significantly closed the gap in dropout rates in the period.⁴⁷ Between 2000 and 2018, the proportion of Latinx 16- to 24-year-olds who had dropped out of high school declined from 54 percent to 27 percent in Santa Barbara County and from 50 percent to 28 percent in Ventura County. While these trends are encouraging, Latinx students continue to experience the highest dropout status rates in the region, indicating that our school systems are not meeting their educational and related needs. Although definitive data are not yet available, participants in community consultations expressed concerns that the pandemic has created further educational disparities between students of color and white students – particularly due to the digital divide.⁴⁸ Post-secondary administrators and professors reinforced these observations about widening disparities in K-12 education, noting that lower-income and first-generation college students faced a host of added burdens during the pandemic as they grappled with the demands of remote learning while taking on added household responsibilities, returning home to crowded housing, and taking jobs to help with household income.⁴⁹

Latinx students continue to experience the highest dropout status rates in the region, indicating that our school systems are not meeting their educational and related needs.



Widening Divides: Trends Exacerbated by the Pandemic

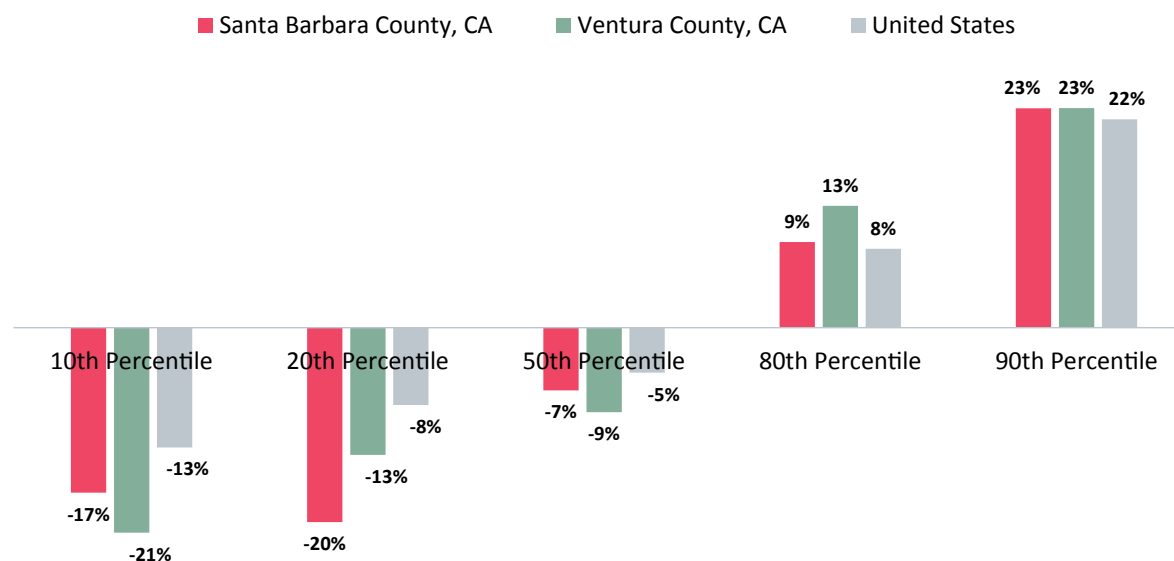
An Income Inequality-Producing Economy

Patterns of income inequality in the Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties predate the pandemic. Over the last four decades, the highest wage earners saw their incomes grow; however, the lowest earners experienced a decline in their earnings between 1979 and 2018 (Figure 31). Data on the distribution of income growth also show that Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties experienced more inequality than the nation as a whole. Those in the highest income bracket experienced real income growth of about 23 percent region-wide while those in the lowest income bracket saw their real incomes shrink 17 percent and 21 percent in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, respectively. It is notable that the region saw wider divides than the nation as a whole – there were larger decreases in real earned income among those in the 10th, 20th and 50th percentile of full-time wage and salary workers and higher income increases among those in the 80th and 90th percentiles. Additionally, data on households by income level show that since 1979, the share of both high- and middle-income households had shrunk, while the number of lower income households had grown in both counties.⁵⁰

Patterns of income inequality
in the Santa Barbara and
Ventura Counties predate the
pandemic.



FIGURE 31: REAL EARNED INCOME GROWTH FOR FULL TIME WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 1979 TO 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes civilian non-institutionalized full-time wage and salary workers ages 25 through 64. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

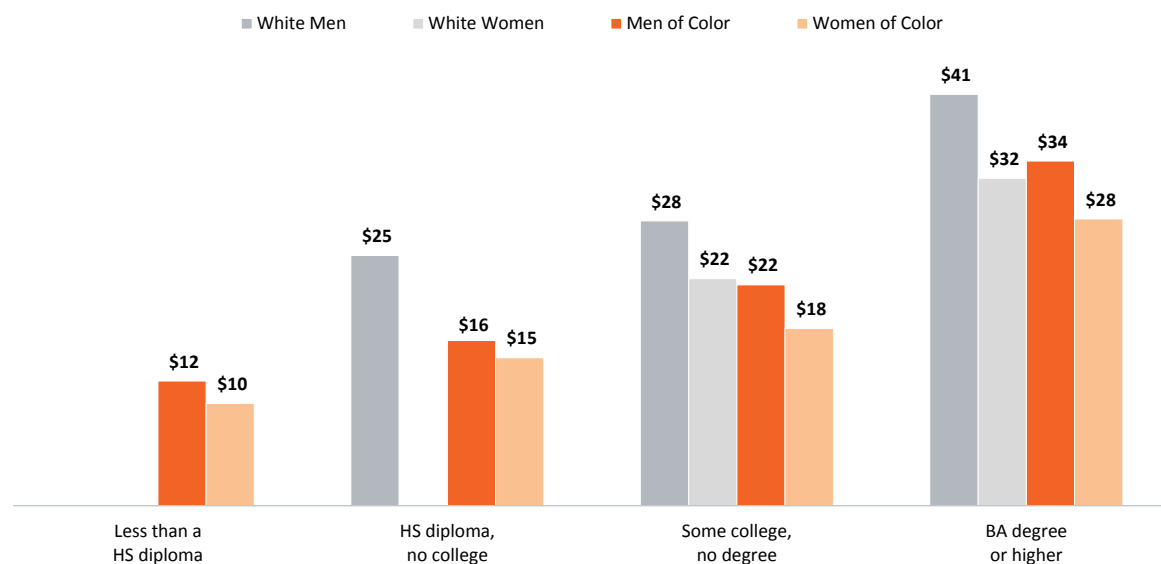
There are clear racial disparities in income across the region as well. The median wages of workers of color, and women in particular, are lower than white workers in the region. Data on median wages by educational attainment, race, and gender show that women of color earned less than their white and male counterparts with the same educational background (Figure 32 and Figure 33). For example, white men with a high school degree and white men with some college made between \$5 and \$11 an hour more than women of color with the same educational background in the region. In Santa Barbara, white men with a bachelor's degree or higher made \$41 an hour while women of color with a bachelor's degree or higher made \$28 an hour, a \$13 per hour difference. In Ventura County, white men with a college degree or higher made \$45 per hour while women of color made \$29 an hour a \$16 per hour difference. These differences

The median wages of workers of color, and women in particular, are lower than white workers in the region.



in income are important when we consider that many women are, according to a Center for American Progress report, “breadwinning” mothers, or unmarried working mothers or married mothers who out-earn their partners. About 37 percent of women in California are “breadwinning” mothers and are more common among low-income families and are more likely to be women of color.⁵¹ Data in 2018 by gender and race, show that 49 percent of Latinx women made \$15 an hour or more compared to 86 percent of white women in Santa Barbara County. In Ventura County, 59 percent of Latinas made \$15 an hour or more compared to 86 percent of white women.⁵²

FIGURE 32: MEDIAN WAGE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, RACE, AND GENDER, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes civilian non-institutional full-time wage and salary workers ages 25-64. Values are in 2017 dollars. Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.

FIGURE 33: MEDIAN WAGE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, RACE, AND GENDER, VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



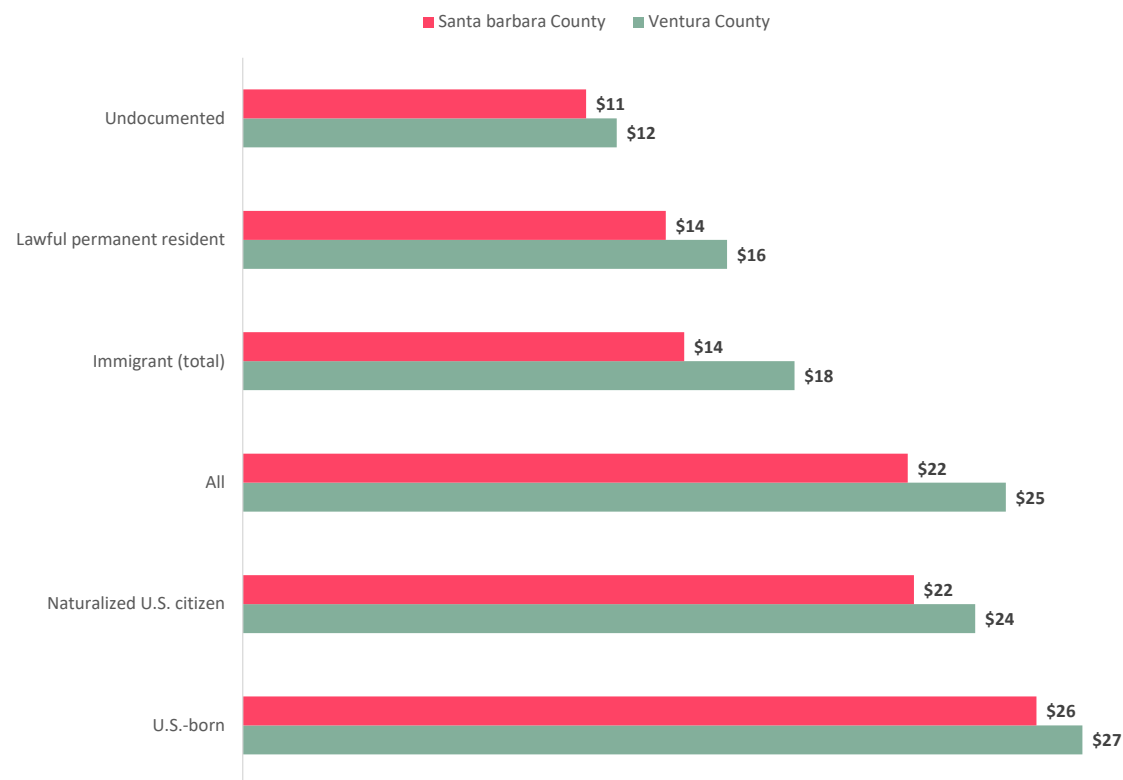
Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes civilian non-institutional full-time wage and salary workers ages 25-64. Values are in 2018 dollars. Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.

When we look at median wages of workers by their immigration status, data show that immigrant workers made much less than U.S.-born workers in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, \$14 to \$18 per hour compared to \$26 and \$27 per hour. Workers who lack documentation and workers who have lawful permanent resident status earn the least among all groups by immigration status. Workers who lack documentation earned only \$11 to \$12 per hour in the region which is far lower than the median hourly wage for all workers in the region (Figure 34).

When we look at median wages of workers by their immigration status, data show that immigrant workers made much less than U.S.-born workers in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, \$14 to \$18 per hour compared to \$26 and \$27 per hour.



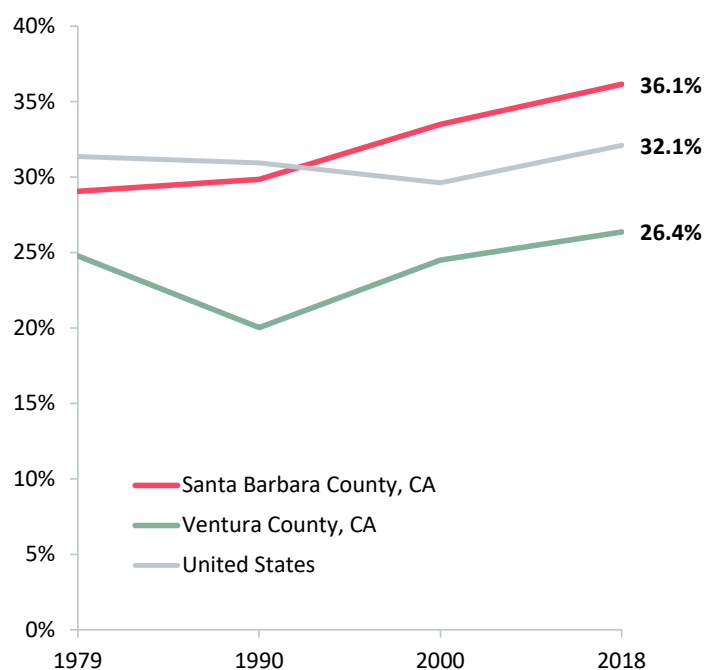
FIGURE 34: MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE BY IMMIGRATION STATUS, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Note: Universe includes full time wage and salary workers ages 25 -64. Values are in 2018 dollars. Data reflect a 2014-2108 average. See https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf for details on estimates of the undocumented and LPR population.

Data on economic hardship further illustrate the regional inequality that has persisted for decades. Economic hardship rates have been on the rise, particularly since the 1990s. Data on economic hardship from 2018, which is defined in this report as having family income below 200 percent of the official federal poverty level, due to the high cost of living in the region (about \$52,000 for a family of four) show that more than one in four Ventura County residents and well over one in three Santa Barbara County residents lived in economic hardship before the pandemic (Figure 35).^d

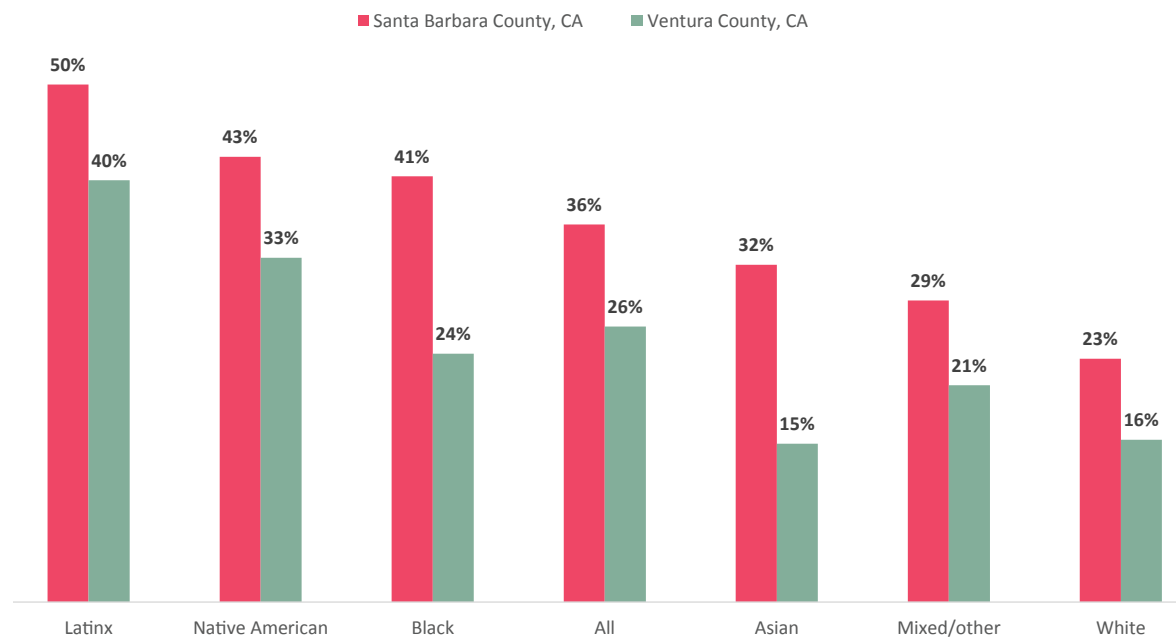
FIGURE 35: ECONOMIC HARDSHIP (BELOW 200% FPL), SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of the 1980, 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census (5 percent sample) and 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes all people for whom poverty is determined. Data for 2018 represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

^d In this report, we define economic hardship as having household income below 200% of the official federal poverty line (FPL). We use this definition to recognize the inadequacy of the federal poverty line (\$26,500 for a family of four in 2021) as a measure of economic hardship, especially in light of the high cost of living in the region.

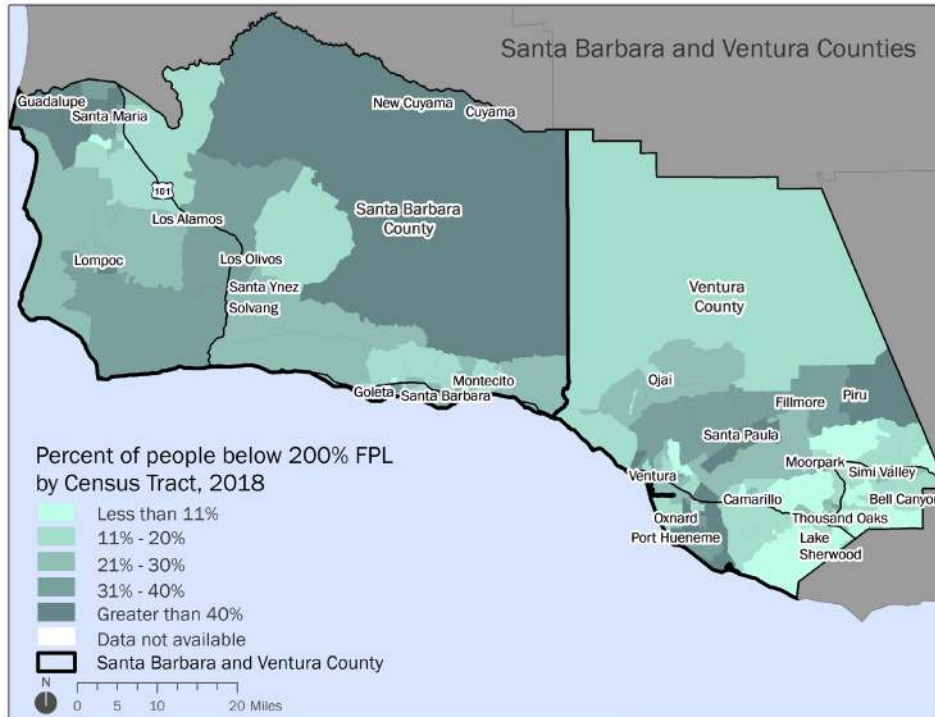
FIGURE 36: ECONOMIC HARDSHIP (BELOW 200% FPL) BY RACE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



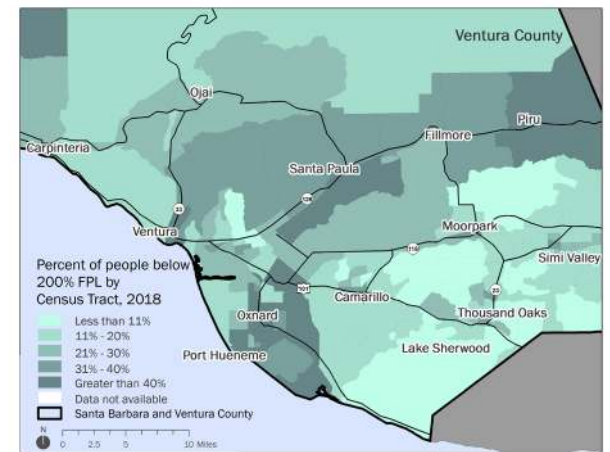
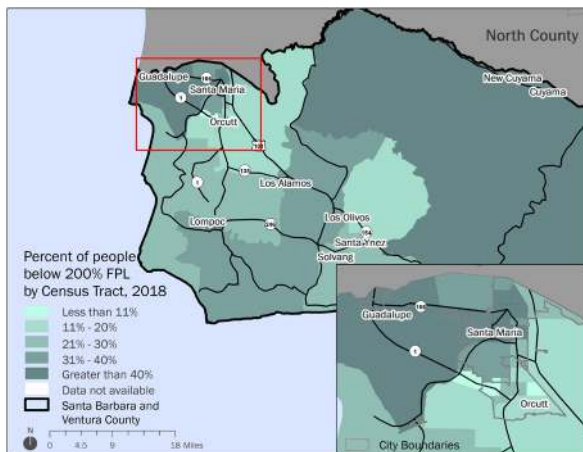
Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Universe includes all people for whom poverty is determined. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

FIGURE 37: ECONOMIC HARDSHIP (BELOW 200% FPL) BY CENSUS TRACT, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: TIGER/Line Shapefiles and 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Universe includes all people for whom poverty is determined. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.



Black, Indigenous and other people of color populations are most impacted by economic hardship as shown in Figure 36. In Santa Barbara County, over half (52 percent) of Latinx women, 47 percent of Latinx men and 43 percent of Black women live below 200% of the federal poverty line, rates higher than any other group. Comparable figures in Ventura County show that around 40 percent of Latinx women and men and 27 percent of Black women compared with 17 percent of white women are living in economic hardship countywide. When looking at economic hardship across the region, communities in Santa Maria, Cuyama Valley, Oxnard, and Santa Paula are some of the areas that face the highest rates (Figure 38). Among cities in the region, Isla Vista (unincorporated), Guadalupe (unincorporated), New Cuyama, Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Paula, Oxnard, and Piru all have economic hardship rates well over their county averages (Figure 38).

FIGURE 38: BELOW 200% OF FPL AND BELOW BY CITY AND CENSUS DESIGNATED PLACE (CDP), SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018

Santa Barbara County		Ventura County	
City/Place	%	City/Place	%
Isla Vista	84%	Santa Paula City	43%
Guadalupe City	51%	Oxnard City	41%
New Cuyama	51%	Piru	39%
Santa Maria City	48%	Port Hueneme City	34%
Lompoc City	44%	Ventura	25%
Cuyama	33%	Ojai City	22%
Santa Barbara City	31%	Simi Valley City	17%
Buellton City	30%	Camarillo City	17%
Santa Ynez	25%	Thousand Oaks City	15%
Solvang City	25%	Moorpark City	14%
Carpinteria City	24%		
Goleta City	22%		
Summerland	19%		
Orcutt	17%		
Los Olivos	14%		
Montecito	14%		

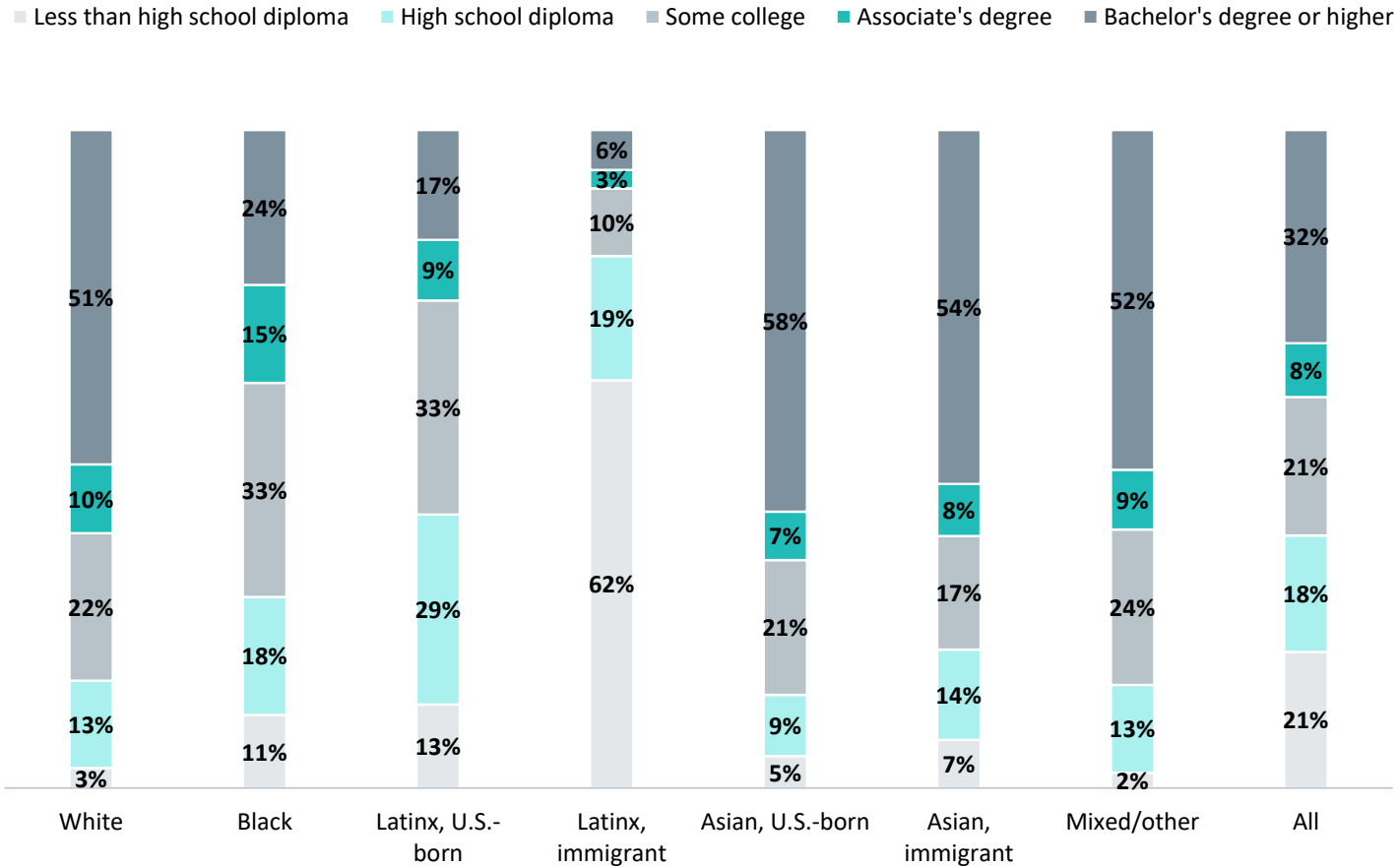
Source: 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Note: Universe includes all people for whom poverty is determined. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

The inadequacies and intersectional disparities in wages and income reported here have been accompanied by varying levels of educational attainment by race (Figure 39 and Figure 40). First viewed in the aggregate, the trends in both counties show that Latinx immigrants, then U.S.-born Latinx, and then Black communities are facing the highest systemic barriers to education. Regionally, more than half of Latinx immigrants have less than a high school diploma. Data on median wages by race and education show that there are still financial benefits to earning a higher education despite wage disparities that persist between workers of color and white workers. This indicates that better job opportunities may be available when workers can access opportunities to further their education including GED programs and community college.

An important note: When charts like these, featuring aggregated racial data on Asian Americans are presented in isolation, they can feed into the “model minority myth” – that is, the assumption that the Asian American community is not facing barriers to education attainment. However, disaggregated data show a different story. In Santa Barbara County, only about 36 percent of Filipino Americans have a college degree or higher, a rate lower than white or Asian Americans on average. In Ventura County, while Asian Americans maybe have high rates of educational attainment overall, disaggregated data show that Vietnamese, Filipino, and Korean American communities have the lowest educational attainment. For example, nearly a quarter of Vietnamese Americans (24 percent) have a high school diploma or less, a rate higher than the average for both U.S.-born and immigrant Asian American communities as a whole and higher than many racial groups.⁵³ Knowing this can lead to different, tailored interventions that can better position workers to develop their careers.

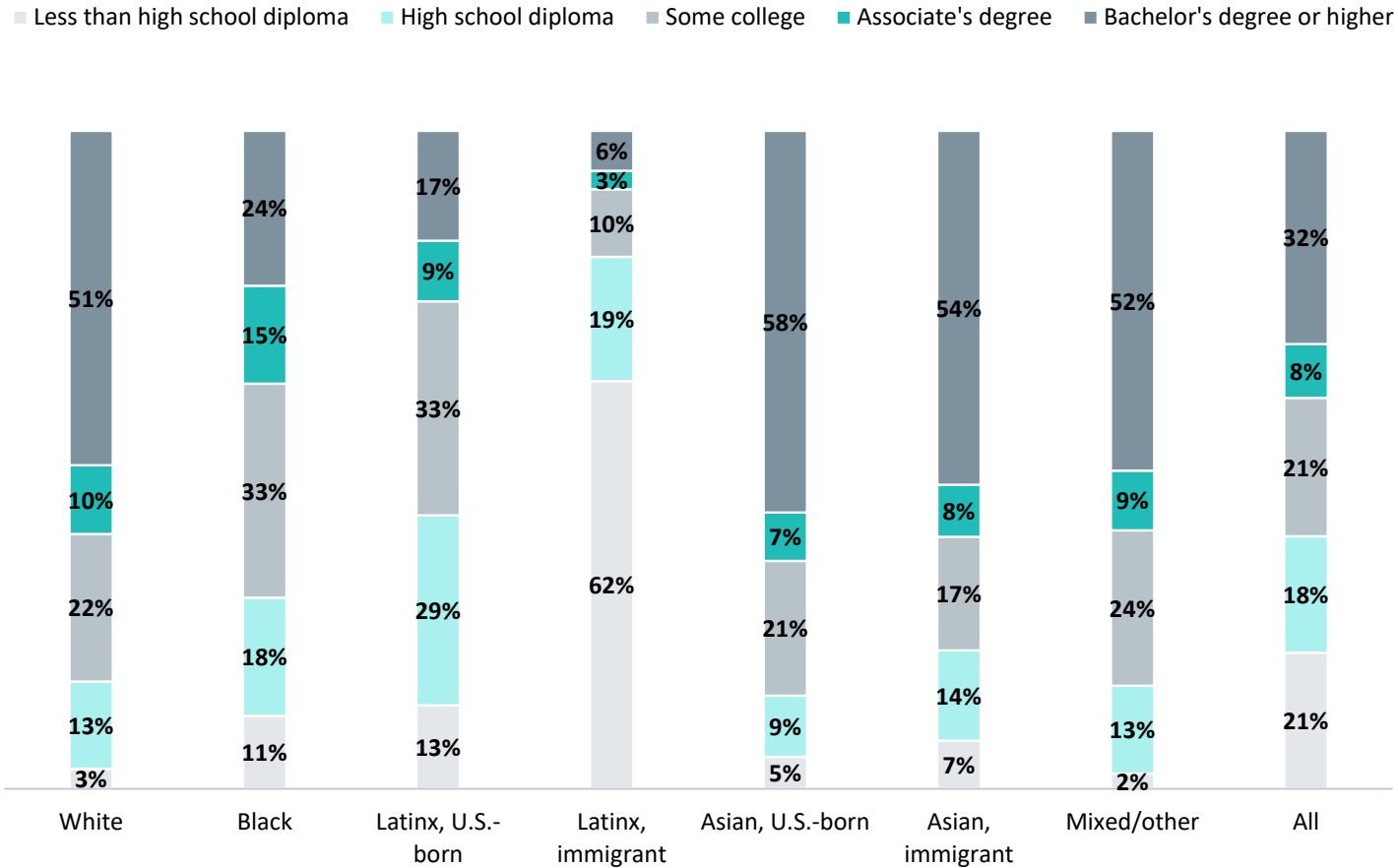
FIGURE 39: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY RACE AND NATIVITY, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA

Note: Universe includes all persons ages 25 through 64. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

FIGURE 40: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY RACE AND NATIVITY, VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Universe includes all persons ages 25 through 64. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Though important as an indicator of systemic barriers to opportunity, these data on disparate levels of educational attainment do not explain the inadequacy of wages and income for the very large numbers of workers who occupy the lower-paid segment of the region's occupational scale. These are the occupations—and workers—that have time and again proved indispensable to the basic functioning of the economy, during the pandemic and over the long term. That they remain undervalued and underpaid is a matter not of necessity but of choice, a driving force of inequality in the region that is subject to challenge and change.

Another major challenge for equity in the two-county region is food insecurity, defined by the US Department of Agriculture as a lack of sufficient food for an active and healthy life.⁵⁴ Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 9.2 percent of Santa Barbara County residents and 7.8 percent of Ventura County residents were food insecure.⁵⁵ This insecurity disproportionately affects children, single parents, low-income households, and Black and Latinx individuals.⁵⁶

While these 2019 rates of food insecurity were already a crisis for the region, conditions worsened significantly over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the state, the California Association of Food Banks reported that hunger increased 154 percent in 2020, meaning that nearly one-quarter of the state's population is now food insecure.⁵⁷ While official estimates are not yet available for the two-county region, local food banks and anti-hunger programs have reported enormous spikes in demand.

The Food Bank of Santa Barbara County quadrupled its food distribution during the first month of the pandemic (March 2020), and within three months was serving 1-in-3 Santa Barbara County residents.⁵⁸ Over the course of fiscal year 2021, the Food Bank delivered over 20 million pounds of food to Santa Barbara County residents – more than double the amount from the previous fiscal year.⁵⁹ Even in 2021, as much of the county reopened, high unemployment kept up demand for food banks in the county.⁶⁰

In Ventura County, a similar narrative emerges. Food Share, the county's largest food bank, saw demand for their services double from 75,000 to 150,000 households over the course of the pandemic.⁶¹ Food Share reported that roughly half of their food bank patrons were first time attendees.⁶² As in Santa Barbara County, this record demand has coincided with huge upticks in costs for the food bank, with their food purchasing expenses rising from \$50,000 a month to \$400,000 per month due to decreased food supply. As of April 2021, Food Share estimated that 1-in-6 Ventura County residents now experience food insecurity – a marked increase from pre-pandemic levels.⁶³

That low-wage workers remain undervalued and underpaid is a matter not of necessity but of choice, a driving force of inequality in the region that is subject to challenge and change.



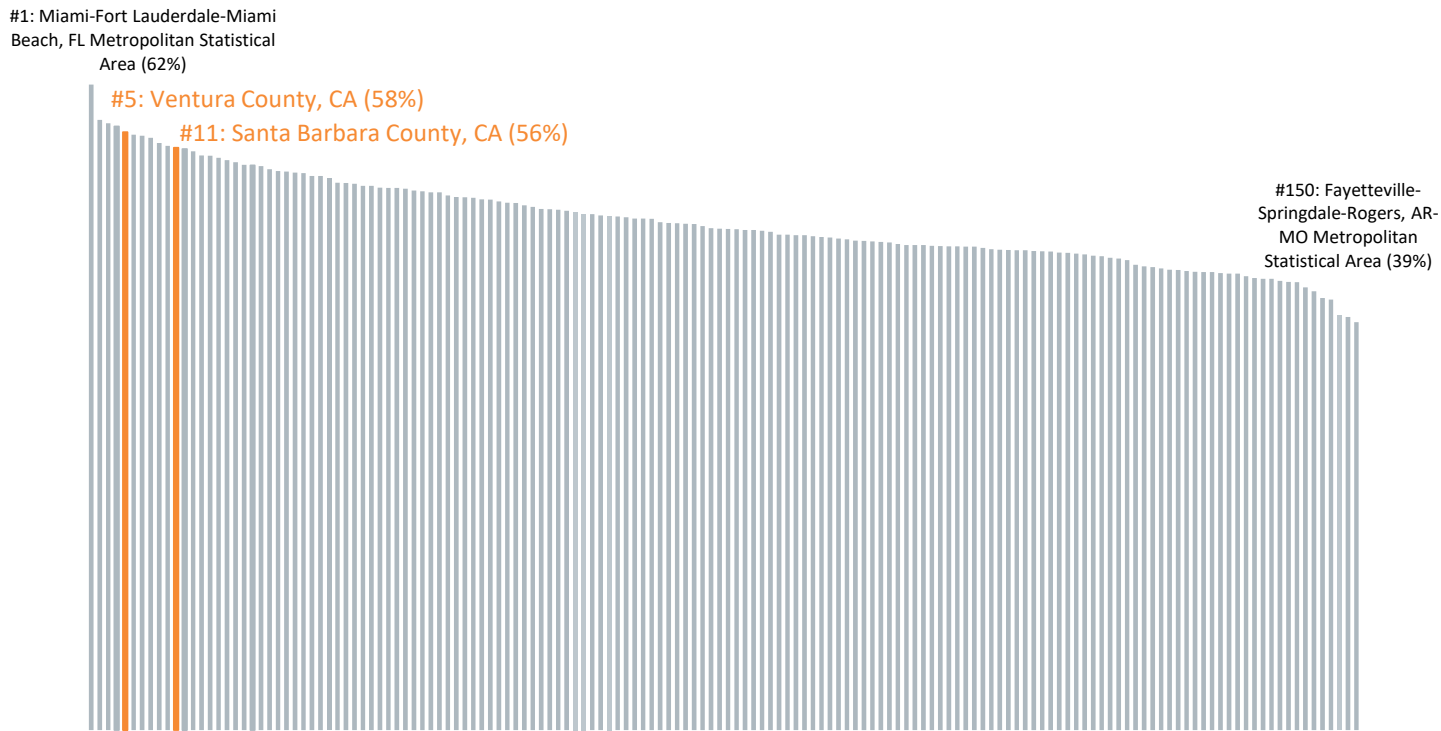
Housing affordability

For many living in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, housing affordability was a persistent challenge even before the pandemic. Data on rent-burdened households (those spending 30 percent or more of their income on rent) show that the region ranks as one of the most unaffordable places in the nation. Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties ranked 5th and 11th, respectively, among the largest 150 metro areas for their share of rent-burdened households (Figure 41). According to a 2019 report on housing by the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) low-income renters are competing in a tight rental housing market while real estate investors are driving up home prices in working-class neighborhoods, resulting in gentrification. In addition, some landlords have found it more profitable to make their housing available to agricultural companies for seasonal housing since federal requirements under the H-2A guestworker program allow for as little as 100 square feet per worker. According to the report, Latinx families have also been moving away from Santa Barbara to more affordable locations such as Ventura, Oxnard, Lompoc, and Santa Maria.⁶⁴ Other reports on housing in Santa Barbara also point to a shortage of affordable housing for low-income and college student residents in the region.⁶⁵ The pandemic only exacerbated already existing challenges with finding affordable housing. Even after the pandemic ends, it seems unlikely that home prices will return to their already-high pre-pandemic levels.

Data on rent-burdened households (those spending 30 percent or more of their income on rent) show that the region ranks as one of the most unaffordable places in the nation.



FIGURE 41: TOP 150 METRO AREAS RANKED BY RENT BURDEN, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Metro regions refer to the largest 150 metropolitan statistical areas in terms of 2010 population, based on the OMB’s December 2003 definitions. Rent burden is defined as paying more than 30 percent of gross income on rent. Universe includes renter-occupied households paying cash rent. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

A major contributor to the high housing prices in the two-county region is the severe shortage in the supply of affordable housing. Since 1969, California counties and cities have been required by state law to plan for adequate levels of low and middle-income as well as market-rate housing development, as part of the Housing Element and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process. For the most recent 2015-2023 housing allotment cycle, the City of Santa Barbara is obligated to construct 4,100 units. As of 2020 less than half had been constructed, the vast majority in the “above moderate” or market-rate category, with no clear pathway to meeting affordable unit goals in sight.⁶⁶ Cities in Ventura County also lag. As of June 2020, no Ventura County cities had completed

even half of RHNA-required construction.⁶⁷

These shortfalls are rooted in decades of diminished federal and state support for affordable housing construction, among other factors. Meantime, the reliance by local government on private developers (rather than direct public investment) has proven to be a major stumbling block for new affordable housing construction. While market-rate units generate substantial profit for private developers, lower-income units do not. The resulting imbalance has been borne out in local construction. While Ventura County cities are far from their overall housing goals, they have actually exceeded the requirements for high-income housing set by the RHNA.⁶⁸

With housing supply falling well short of estimated population needs, regional home prices have soared to record-high levels since recovering from the financial crisis of 2008. The pandemic has dramatically exacerbated those trends. From 2020-2021, the median home price in Ventura County climbed 12.5 percent to \$685,000.⁶⁹ In the City of Santa Barbara, the median home price increased 30 percent to \$1.5 million in the same period.⁷⁰ These prices push the prospect of homeownership beyond the means of all but the affluent. Many have been squeezed out of local rental markets as well. Average rents hovered around \$2300 in the cities of Santa Barbara and Oxnard in August 2021.⁷¹ According to one estimate, the Latinx population in the City of Santa Barbara shrunk by 24 percent between 2011-2018 due to skyrocketing rents.⁷²

Despite soaring prices for both homeownership and rental housing, the issue of housing supply has been a major source of political contention, particularly at the local level. Even in politically liberal areas, research has shown that homeowners are significantly motivated by economic self-interest to oppose new construction that they fear would lower the value of their property.⁷³ These homeowners have clashed with community activists who have called for more housing construction to lower housing costs.⁷⁴ So far however, opponents of new housing (low-income or otherwise) have largely won out in these political battles. In the City of Santa Barbara, homeowners have vigorously opposed the construction of new housing in their neighborhoods and have succeeded in blocking some projects and indefinitely delaying others.⁷⁵

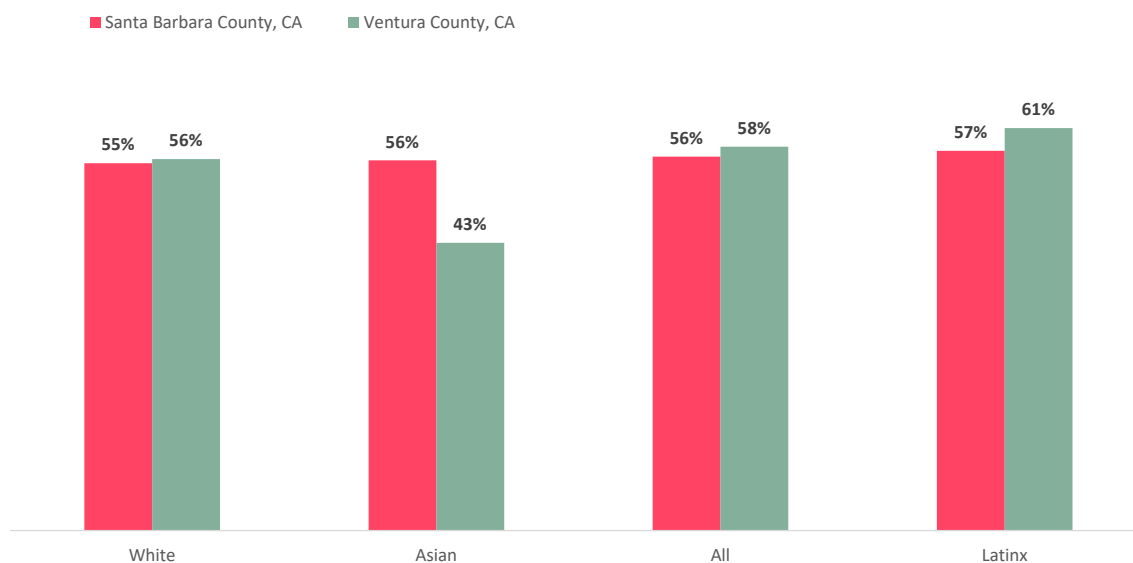
Though many families in the region are affected by the high cost of housing, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color are disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable housing and more likely to be renters. Data from 2018 show that in Santa Barbara County 62 percent of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color households lived in rental housing. Latinx immigrant and Black households are the most

With housing supply falling well short of estimated population needs, regional home prices have soared to record-high levels.



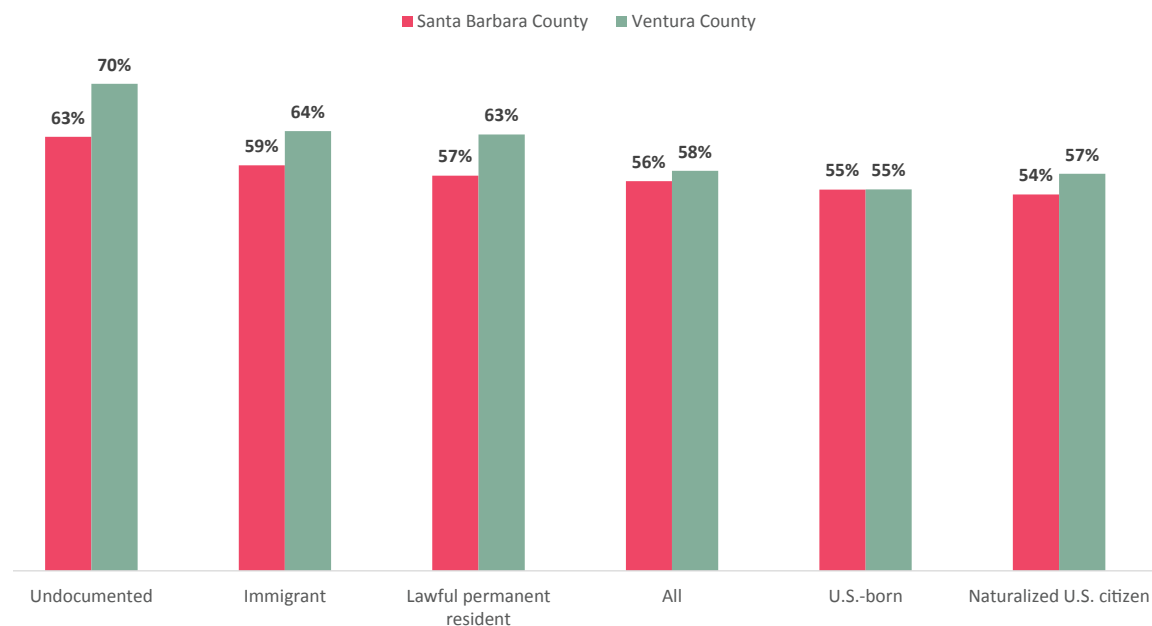
likely to be renters. In Santa Barbara County, 70 percent of Latinx immigrant households and 69 percent of Black households lived in rental housing. In Ventura County, 55 percent of Latinx immigrant households and 50 percent of Black households lived in rental housing.⁷⁶ Among those living in rental housing, 56 percent of Santa Barbara and 58 percent of Ventura County renter households were rent burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing (Figure 42). Rent burden is high across all races in the region, and highest among Latinx-headed households (Figure 42). The disparate impact of high rent burden is further amplified by the racial disparities in overcrowded housing conditions highlighted earlier in this report (Figure 24), showing overcrowding in 48 percent of Latinx immigrant and 35 percent of U.S.-born Latinx households in Santa Barbara County, and 36 percent and 25 percent among comparable households in Ventura County. The experience of rent burden is exceptionally high among undocumented residents. About 70 percent of Ventura County's undocumented renter households and 63 percent of Santa Barbara undocumented renter households were rent burdened (Figure 43).

FIGURE 42: RENT BURDEN BY RACE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Universe includes renter-occupied households paying cash rent (excludes group quarters). Rent burden is defined as paying more than 30 percent of gross income on rent.
Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

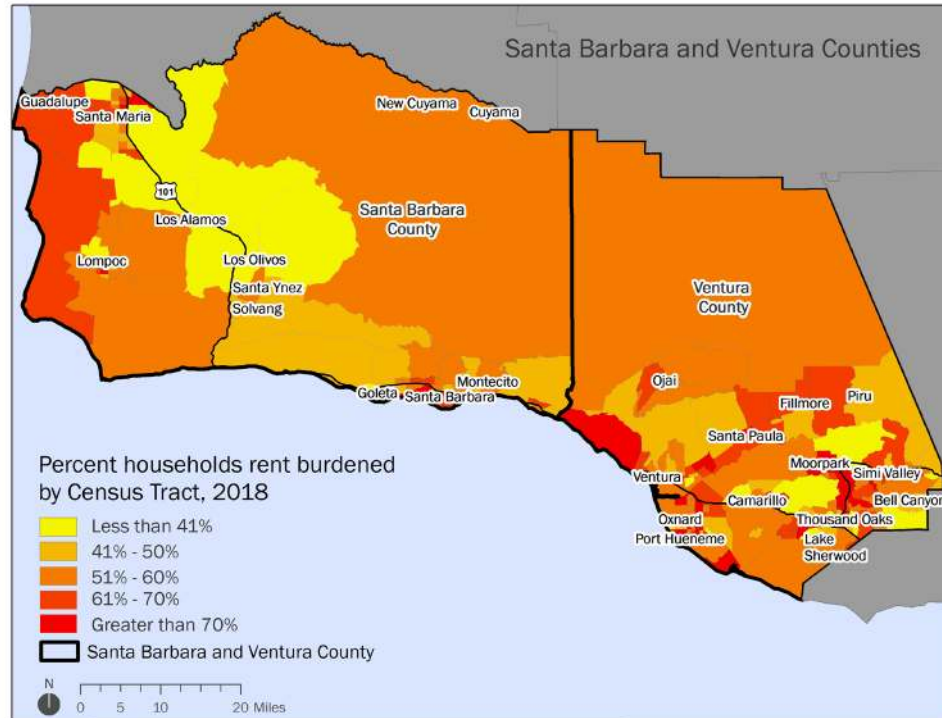
FIGURE 43: RENT BURDEN BY IMMIGRATION STATUS, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



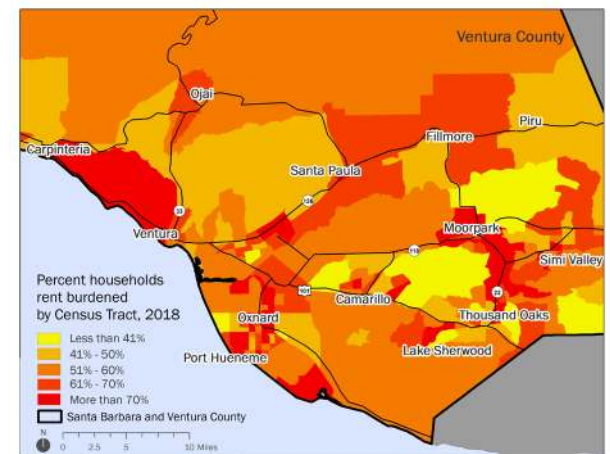
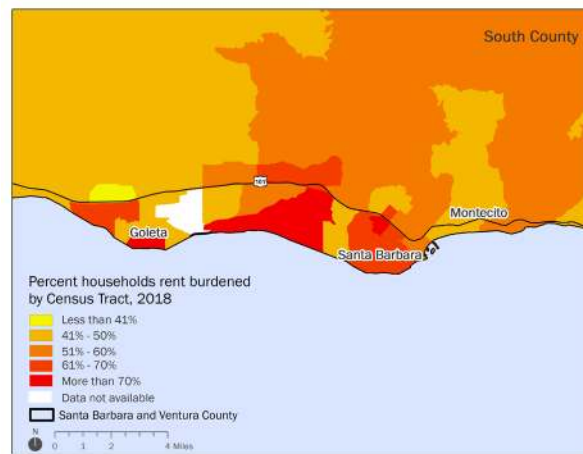
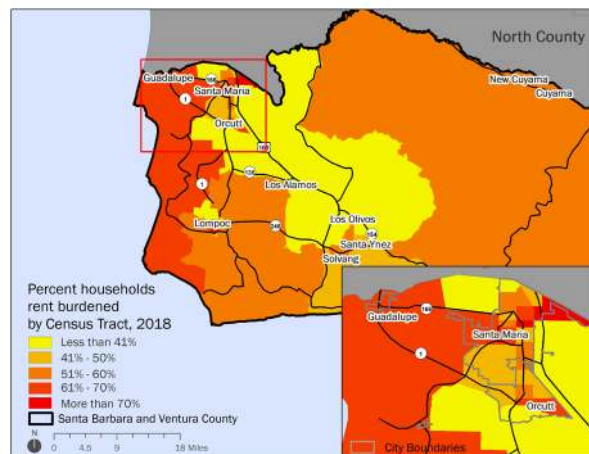
Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Universe includes renter-occupied households with cash rent (excludes group quarters). Rent burden is defined as paying more than 30 percent of gross income on rent. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average. See https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf for details on estimates of the undocumented and LPR population.

Regionally, many rent burdened neighborhoods also are areas with large proportions of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. Housing burden mapped by census tract shows neighborhoods in Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Goleta, Santa Barbara city, Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula, and Simi Valley are some of the most rent burdened areas in the region (Figure 44). Latinx individuals comprise a larger share of residents in many north county communities with estimates at 90 percent in Guadalupe and 75 percent in Santa Maria, according to 2018 American Community Survey estimates. In Ventura County, the Latinx population in Santa Paula and Oxnard are 81 and 74 percent, respectively. Oxnard is home to the largest Filipino community in the area at 5.6 percent.⁷⁷ Unaffordability is especially pronounced in the South Coast communities of Goleta and Carpinteria in Santa Barbara, which is concerning because compared to the rest of the county, this area is “job-rich”.⁷⁸

FIGURE 44: PERCENT RENT BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS BY CENSUS TRACT, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: TIGER/Line Shapefiles and 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Universe includes renter-occupied households with cash rent (excludes group quarters). Rent burden is defined as paying more than 30 percent of gross income on rent. Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.



According to CAUSE’s housing report, this housing crisis has left lower-income families, renters, and immigrant families especially vulnerable as stagnant wages and increasing rents force families to engage in “survival strategies” to make ends meet.⁷⁹ Strategies such as leaving their neighborhoods, picking up an additional job, moving into non-traditional housing, and cutting back on healthcare or food are what individuals and families turn to in order to secure housing. Estimates on the potential gain in “disposable income” for rent burdened households in 2017 show that if renters were not spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, there would be substantial economic benefit. Estimates show that Santa Barbara County would have seen \$352 million and Ventura County would have seen \$490 million in income that could not only be used for other essential expenses but also returned back to the local economy.⁸⁰

In addition to housing affordability, renters in the region are also susceptible to eviction, rent increases, and dealing with problematic housing conditions. Despite the allocation of rental relief funds at both the national and state level, a September 2021 report from the National Equity Atlas finds that 20 percent of renters in California are behind on rent, and that about half of those households are families with children.⁸¹ With the end of California’s COVID-19 eviction moratorium as of September 30, 2021, these households and the communities they live in face a crisis. Among those interviewed for the CAUSE 2019 study of renters in Santa Barbara and Ventura, 35 percent of respondents stated that they were in a month-to-month lease and 19 percent did not have a formal written lease agreement.⁸² In addition, of those surveyed, 75 percent reported experiencing one or more habitability issues such as a leaky roof, pipes, roof, mold, pests, or no heat or hot water, etc. However, the study found that less than half of those with such issues reported them and had them repaired.

The dearth of affordable, safe, and accessible housing is most dramatically manifest in the growing population of unhoused people in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. As housing has become less-and-less affordable in the region, the number of unhoused individuals has risen. According to the most recent Homeless Counts, between 2016 and 2020 the number of unhoused individuals in Ventura County rose from 1,271 to 1,743, and from 1,729 to 1,897 in Santa Barbara County over a comparable period.⁸³ Notably, the number of unhoused individuals is consistently higher in Santa Barbara than in Ventura County, despite the latter having nearly twice the total population. The vast majority of unhoused individuals in both counties are also unsheltered, with most sleeping outdoors or in a vehicle. Surveys also show that unhoused people are mostly local residents who have been living in their home county for a decade or more.

The dearth of affordable, safe, and accessible housing is most dramatically manifest in the growing population of unhoused people in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.



While the problems of housing and homelessness have long since passed the crisis point in the region, the pandemic escalated public consciousness of impending emergency. In a July 2021 statewide poll by Emerson College, Californians ranked homelessness as the number one issue facing the state and housing the second-most important issue.⁸⁴ This statewide concern is reflected in local data. The 2021 homeless population in Santa Barbara County is projected to rise by nearly 300 to 2,195 individuals.⁸⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic has also posed unique challenges for shelters in the region, as the communal indoor environments can lead to outbreaks, forcing shelters to reduce their capacity—and scores of people to seek refuge in outdoor camps.⁸⁶

In interviews on the issue, local officials and advocates praised the COVID-related infusion of money from the state to support homeless services and relief during the pandemic, while expressing concern about the uncertainty of much-needed long-range funding commitments to deal with the underlying crisis. They also recognized the broader challenges associated with procuring or constructing new housing in response to the growing need, especially in the absence of long-term funding streams designated for affordable housing following the dissolution of redevelopment agencies (RDAs) by the state of California in 2012.⁸⁷

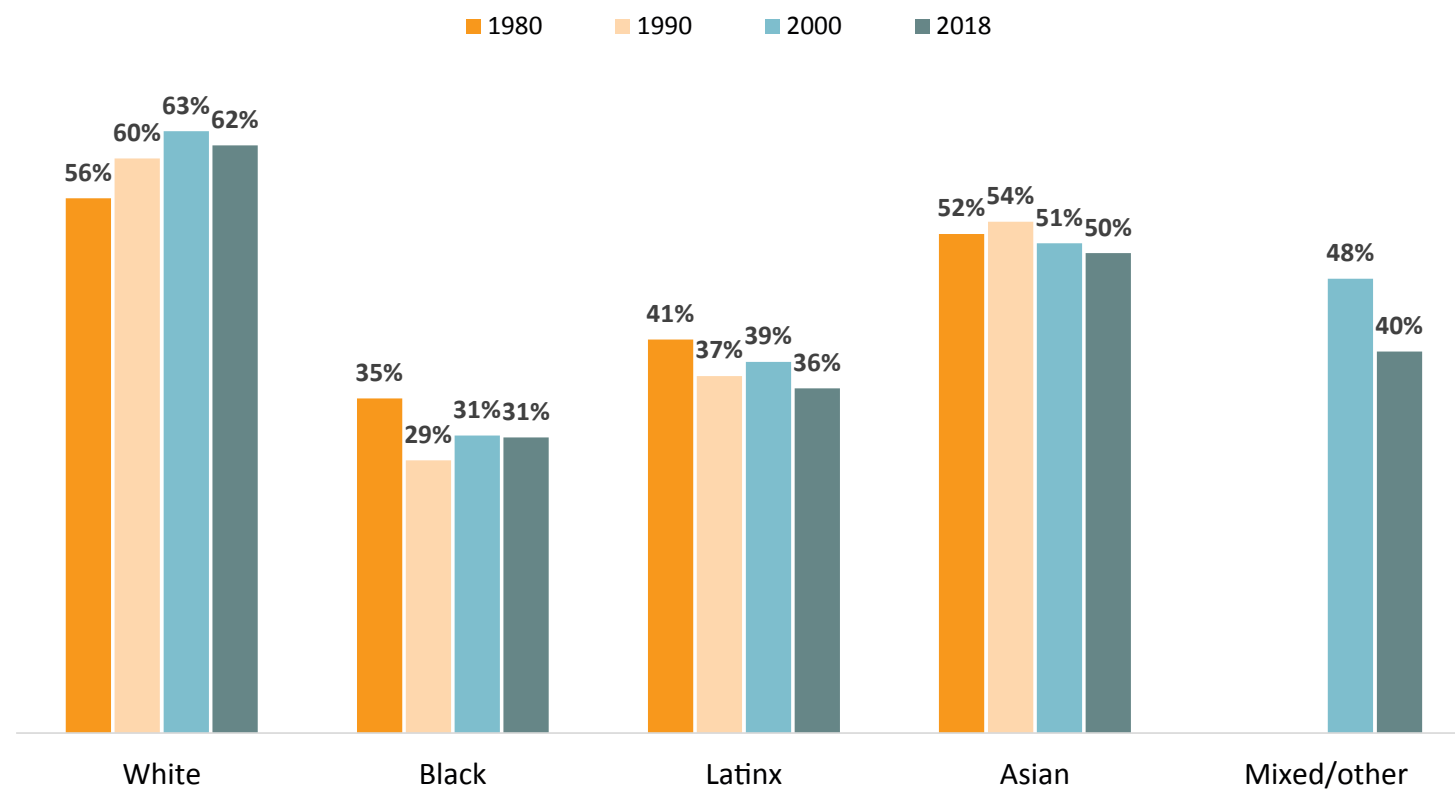
Homeownership

Meanwhile data on homeownership rates over time show persistent racial gaps in access to residential property ownership, and the associated wealth-building and economic security-enhancing opportunities it can bring. From 1980 through 2018, larger proportions of white than non-white populations have been homeowners in Santa Barbara County. Data from 2018 in Santa Barbara County show that while 62 percent of white households owned their homes, only 38 percent of Black, Indigenous and other people of color households lived in homes they owned. In Ventura County, about 70 percent of white households lived in homes they own compared with 53 percent of Black, Indigenous and other people of color households who own their homes.⁸⁸ In addition in Santa Barbara County the proportion of white homeowners increased over the three decades, while among other racial groups it remained the same or decreased over time. In Ventura County, homeownership rates are highest among Asian Americans, however given the high variation in socioeconomic status within this racial group, further disaggregation is needed to understand the significance of these findings.⁸⁹ The pandemic further illustrated and even accelerated these widening divides. Data on home sales in the region show that during the pandemic, while many worried about making rent, investors and those who could work remotely and had a stable income during this time were buying property and contributed to a booming housing market.⁹⁰

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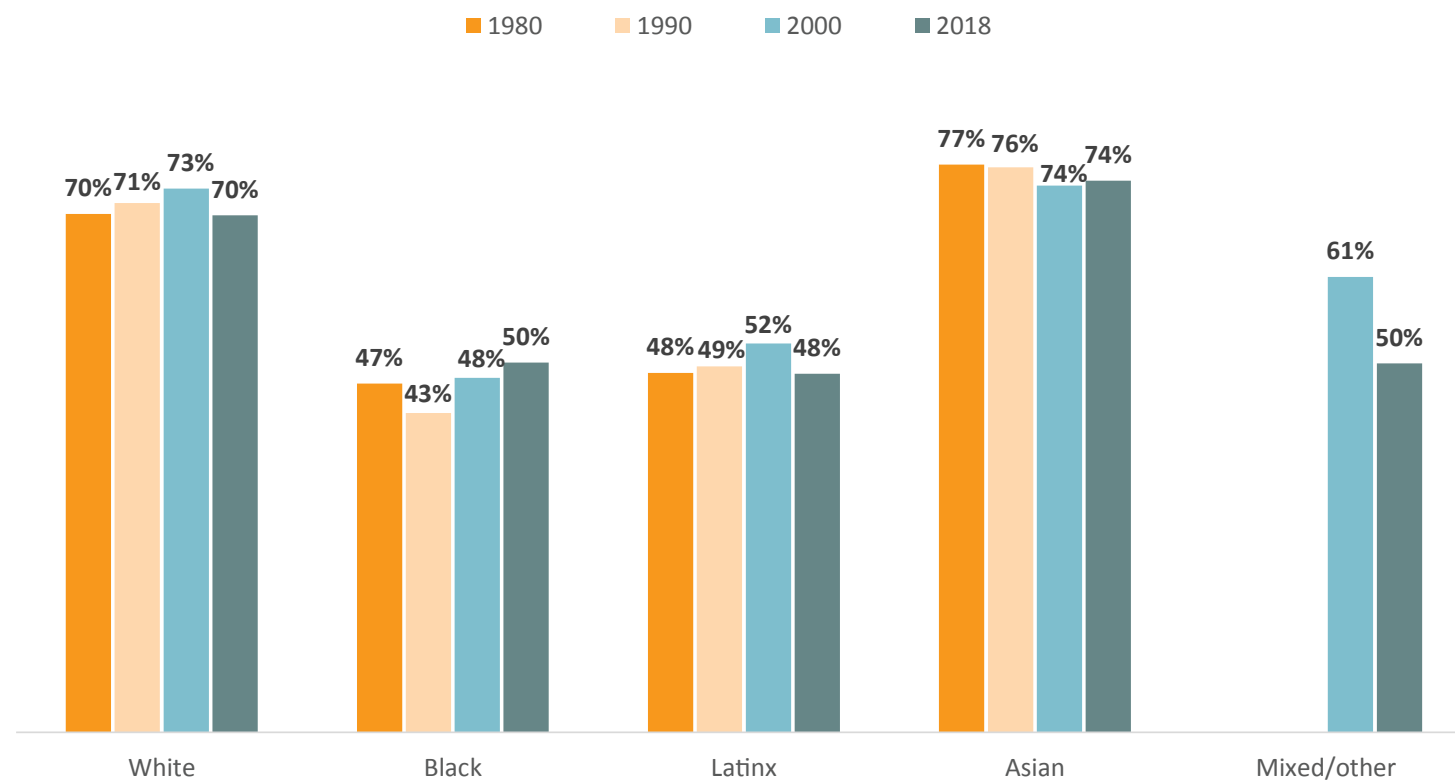
FIGURE 45: HOMEOWNERSHIP BY RACE, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 1980 TO 2018



Source: ERI Analysis of 2018 American Community Survey Microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Universe includes all occupied households. Data for 2018 reflect a 2014-2018 average.

FIGURE 46: HOMEOWNERSHIP BY RACE, VENTURA COUNTY, 1980 TO 2018



Source: ERI Analysis of 2018 American Community Survey Microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Universe includes all occupied households. Data for 2018 reflect a 2014-2018 average.

Racial disparities in homeownership—which have persisted, and in some instances widened over time—take on added significance when we recognize that residential homeownership is the single largest source of household wealth-building in the U.S., serving for many as an important source of long-range financial stability and opportunity, and of basic economic security in uncertain economic times. This is especially the case for non-white and mixed-race households, which are substantially less likely than their white counterparts to have access to inheritances or other sources of intergenerational wealth, or to be employed in jobs that provide access to retirement savings.⁹¹ While data on overall household wealth are not available at the county level, analysis of national level surveys point to the broader trends—toward increased concentration and rising, racialized inequality—that make wealth distribution a critical indicator of economic inequality and that have if anything been more pronounced and visible in our region in recent decades. According to the Federal Reserve’s Survey of Consumer Finances, in 2019, households in the top 10 percent of the overall distribution owned some 76 percent of total U.S. wealth, compared to the mere 1 percent owned by households in the bottom 50 percent. Among those in the bottom half, average wealth holdings amounted to \$22,000, with a substantial portion of families holding \$0 or negative wealth, meaning their liabilities exceed income and assets. In contrast, average wealth holdings among the top 10 percent come to \$5.7 million.⁹²

These and other surveys show wealth to be inequitably distributed by race and ethnicity as well, with white households on average possessing five times the wealth of Latinx households and nearly eight times the wealth of Black households. Moreover, the racial wealth gap persists across income and education levels, reflecting the legacy of historically racist policies and economic practices as well as enduring structural and institutional disparities in access to homeownership, higher education, and employment opportunities. As much as the gaping divide in income and wages, addressing wealth inequities will be critically important to achieving a future of genuinely shared prosperity in the region and nationwide.⁹³

As much as the gaping divide in income and wages, addressing wealth inequities will be critically important to achieving a future of genuinely shared prosperity in the region and nationwide.



Unequal Justice

The inequities in health, employment, and social welfare laid bare by the pandemic are part of a broader pattern of systemic racial injustice that denies people of color equal access to the rights, opportunities, and protections everyone needs to thrive. In recent years these injustices—and their consequences—have been manifest in a system of public safety that has done more to criminalize than to protect communities of color; in environmental practices that leave communities of color acutely and disproportionately vulnerable to the harms of climate change; and in systemic racial imbalances in political representation.

The school-to-prison pipeline

The treatment of Black, Brown, and Indigenous youth in the criminal justice system is an especially urgent concern throughout the region, voiced in community-organized protests against racial profiling, aggressive policing, and the school to prison pipeline, and more broadly in growing momentum behind efforts to reimagine approaches to public safety and criminal justice altogether. In community consultations, participants frequently expressed concerns about the criminalization of Black and Brown youth, and their perception that “justice” in the counties has been focused on retribution rather than on addressing the institutional failings that foster crime.

A major means by which institutions reinforce inequality is the school-to-prison pipeline (SPP), a framework for understanding the disproportionate rate at which disadvantaged youth—low-income, BIPOC, LGBT, and youth who experience abuse or learning disabilities in particular-- are incarcerated in the United States. The SPP functions via “zero tolerance” policies that criminalize disciplinary infractions by minors, reinforced by police presence in schools, and by the high use of suspensions and expulsions against students.⁹⁴ These policies directly contribute to increased likelihood of incarceration later in life.⁹⁵ Notably, research has shown that police in wealthier and whiter schools are more likely to view their role as protecting students from outside threats, while police in lower-income and minority schools tend to view the students themselves as threats.⁹⁶

The seriousness of the school-to-prison pipeline—and its consequences for youth of color in particular—is borne out in local data. Though continuing a gradually declining trend since the 2010s, school suspensions remain high in the region. Reports from the California Department of Justice also show that youth felony arrest rates in the two-county region are higher than those statewide.⁹⁷ BIPOC youth have significantly higher rates of suspension and felony arrest than white youth in the two-county region (Figure 47).⁹⁸

The inequities in health, employment, and social welfare laid bare by the pandemic are part of a broader pattern of systemic racial injustice that denies people of color equal access to the rights, opportunities, and protections everyone needs to thrive.



FIGURE 47: RATES OF PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST STUDENTS (PER 1,000 STUDENTS), CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, AND VENTURA COUNTY, 2018-2019

	California	Santa Barbara	Ventura
SUSPENSION RATE (OVERALL)	34.7	35.6	31.1
BLACK	92.2	74.7	59.7
NATIVE AMERICAN	73.1	54.6	34.7
LATINX	35.5	38.9	36.6
WHITE	29.8	22.0	19.3
YOUTH FELONY ARREST RATE (OVERALL)	4.1	6.2	5.2
BLACK	20.4	*	34.6
LATINX	4.1	7.5	6.6
WHITE	2.3	3.7	2.9

*Fewer than 20 arrests made in this period

Source: Suspension data are from the California Dept. of Education, 2019. Crime statistics: arrests and population estimates are from the California Dept. of Justice & California Dept. of Finance, May 2020. See <https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/77/school-attendance-and-discipline/summary> for more information.

In the age of COVID and Black Lives Matter (BLM), the SPP has received renewed attention among activists and researchers. Even as education moved online due to the pandemic, expulsions and suspensions continued while support services and counseling for disadvantaged students largely evaporated.⁹⁹ Frustration with the SPP has caused many activists to call for removing police from schools. Some school districts, like those in Minneapolis, Seattle, Oakland, Portland, and Denver are fully implementing this policy change, while others like Los Angeles are reducing the number of school police.¹⁰⁰

The SPP has been a target of activists and community members in the two-county region as well. In BLM protests in 2020, the demands of high school students in Santa Barbara included a shift from practices of criminalization to more services for at-risk youth and a call to defund school contracts with Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and Santa Barbara Police Department.¹⁰¹ While the Santa Barbara School Board agreed with the students' demands and outright condemned the SPP, they stopped short of removing police from schools.¹⁰²

The role of police in schools has come under intense scrutiny in Ventura County as well. In response to a campaign promoted by the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), dozens of

Even as education moved online due to the pandemic, expulsions and suspensions continued while support services and counseling for disadvantaged students largely evaporated.



individuals contacted the Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) school board expressing concern about the district's contract with the Ventura Police Department to put officers in schools. While VUSD created a committee to review the contract, they have also declined to end the practice of using police in local schools. In the 2019-2020 school year, Ventura County police embedded in the school district issued 50 citations to students, mostly for truancy or unexcused absences. This program also comes at the expense of other services. VUSD paid \$391,016 for police presence in schools for the 2019-2020 school year.¹⁰³ Meanwhile enrollment and funding in VUSD was in steep decline, leading the district's director of budget and finance to consider reductions in school programs, staff layoffs, and even school closures.¹⁰⁴

Children who enter the criminal justice system at a young age often have significantly worse outcomes in many aspects of their lives. Even if they are not convicted, children who are arrested are more likely to drop out of school, suffer mental health problems, have difficulty finding employment, and be arrested again.^{105,106} In order to avoid these negative consequences, alternatives to the school-to-prison pipeline are needed. Policy interventions such as programs to nurture at-risk youth and programs to combat childhood poverty have proven effective but require additional funding.¹⁰⁷ Given the high costs of incarceration and policing, such a shift is less a question of affordability and more a reflection of whether local, county, and state governments want to prioritize prevention or punishment.

Environmental Inequities

Systemic injustice is also at the root of disparities in the way communities of color have been affected by environmental hazards and climate change, compounding the impact of living and working in a region that has long been witness to higher than average—and rising—climate threats.

The region's accelerated climate risks have been attributed to a number of factors, including its historically rooted—and ongoing—reliance on oil and gas drilling, industrialized agriculture, truck and rail transport arteries, and military bases as engines of growth and development. The two counties are also heavily car dependent, and notably short of adequate public transportation and related clean energy alternatives, contributing substantially to the region's high carbon emissions levels.

Fifty-plus years after the massive Santa Barbara oil spill put the region on high alert, Ventura County and Santa Barbara have been the fastest-warming counties in the state, with average temperatures rising

2.6 and 2.3 degrees Celsius since the late 19th century, surpassing the overall average of 1.0 degree for California, and the “catastrophic” warming level of 2.0 degrees identified in the 2015 Paris Climate Accords. According to a report recently commissioned by the Washington Post, Ventura County is the fastest warming county in the contiguous 48 states.¹⁰⁸

Although local planning agencies have begun to acknowledge and set goals to mitigate these challenges, less often recognized is that working-class communities of color are at the front lines of environmental and climate risks: as agricultural workers exposed to workplace hazards such as pesticides, inadequate clean water and sanitation facilities, and heat exacerbated by drought conditions; as hospitality and service industry workers priced out of unaffordable housing markets and stuck in long commutes; and as residents of neighborhoods located near pollution producing power plants, industrial facilities, oil production and toxic waste sites, and at high risk of fire and flooding.¹⁰⁹

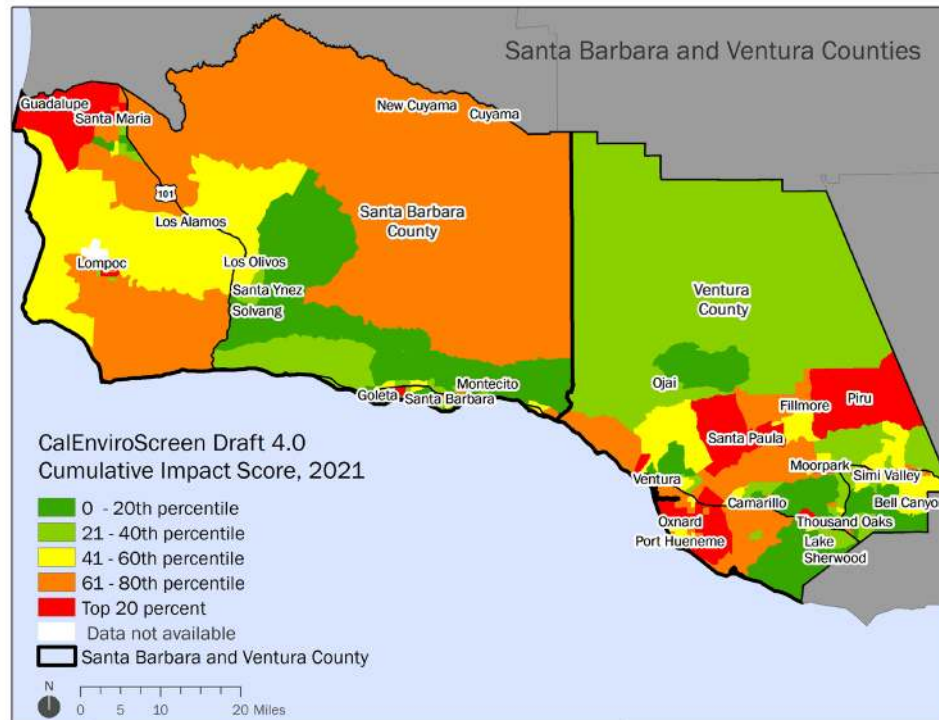
Environmental and climate-related disparities are reflected in the most recently available CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (CES) data. CES is a tool that uses a number of environmental, health, and socioeconomic indicators to identify communities that bear a disproportionate pollution burden and who are most vulnerable to pollution’s negative health impacts. The cumulative impacts and risks of pollution fall most heavily on communities such as Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Oxnard, Santa Paula, and Piru, with substantial nonwhite working-class populations and closely tied to fossil fuel, military, and agricultural industries. By contrast, census tracts with majority white, higher-income populations carry considerably lower pollution burden/risk scores.

Even when considering a single city, such as Santa Barbara, environmental impacts are not experienced equally. Pollution burden scores from CalEnviroScreen show that both low-income racially diverse neighborhoods and affluent white neighborhoods experience high pollution exposure. However, the capacity to address pollution burden differs drastically by neighborhood. In low-income racially diverse neighborhoods, environmental impacts are exacerbated by socioeconomic and public health vulnerabilities. These communities tend to have higher rates of poverty and preexisting health conditions. These communities are also more at risk to environmental burdens, such as toxic exposure and proximity to environmental hazards. The impacts of pollution are not equally felt, and higher burdens are placed upon already vulnerable communities which may limit their resilience to environmental degradation.

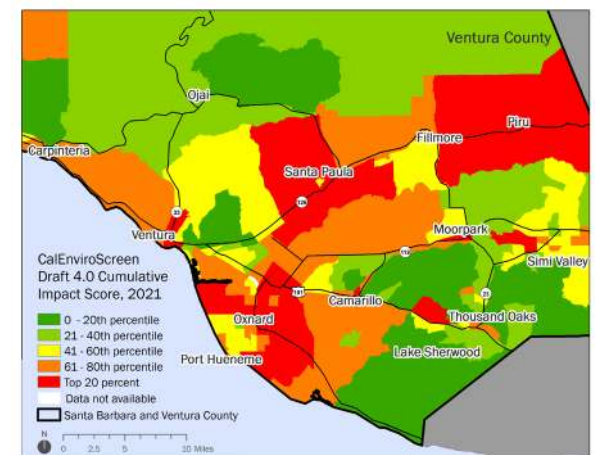
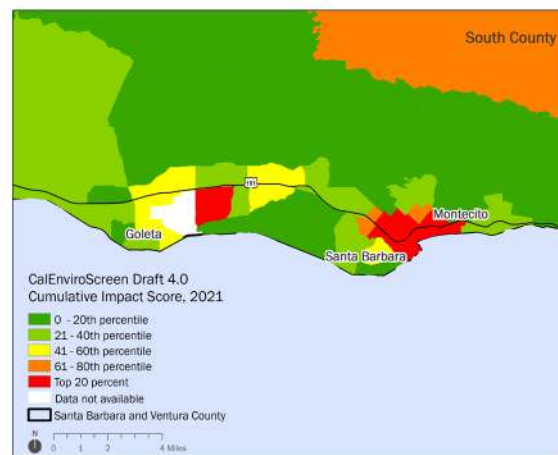
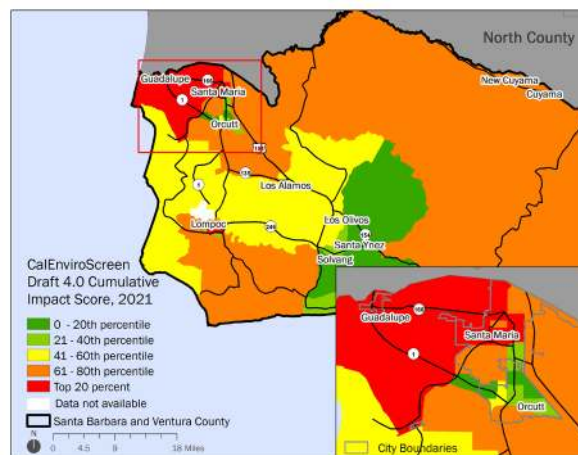
Ventura County is the fastest warming county in the contiguous 48 states.



FIGURE 48: POLLUTION BURDEN BY CALENVIROSCREEN 4.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACT SCORE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2021



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of Cal Enviro Screen 4.0 scores. Note: For the purposes of this analysis, we have taken the CES 4.0 scores for all tracts within Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties and sorted them into quintiles. Therefore, this map is not reflective of the true CES 4.0 rankings and therefore not indicative of Disadvantaged Community status.



What these data don't fully capture is that the most environmentally burdened communities are the least likely to have access to preventive or after-the-fact protections. This became painfully apparent during the course of the devastating 2017 Thomas Fire, when official evacuation and other basic safety information was not made available to non-English speaking communities, local farmworkers were under intense pressure to step up production in smoke-filled fields—and without adequate protective equipment—in order to limit damage to crops, and thousands of housekeeping, landscaping and service industry workers lost income and jobs. Though victim to what was widely and officially recognized as an unparalleled disaster, a large proportion of the region's essential workforce was excluded from state and federal disaster and/or unemployment relief, thanks to policies barring public provision for undocumented immigrants as well as a host of related anti-immigrant and labor practices.¹¹⁰ This pattern of neglect and exclusion was largely replicated during the COVID-19 pandemic, as was the impressive mobilization of county-wide immigrant, labor and environmental justice organizations to step in with much-needed relief and advocacy.

Building from nearly two decades of environmental justice organizing, advocacy and legal action in the region, the two-county regional Central Coast Climate Justice Network (CCCJN) was established in 2018. A network of organizations and leaders committed to a climate movement that advances social, economic, racial, and environmental justice for Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, the CCCJN has been successfully forging a regional partnership between social justice, anti-racism, and environmental movements, with a mission to expand our region's collective power to advance restorative actions and systems changes. Informing the network is a record of targeted, community-based victories in the struggle, including campaigns to restrict the use of dangerous pesticides affecting the health and safety of agricultural workers and nearby residents, and successful coalition building to defeat a proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal off the coast of Oxnard in 2007 and the more recent defeat of the proposed Puente Power Plant. Along with ongoing organizing and policy advocacy, more long-term CCCJN community organizing work has included a two-year grassroots house meeting campaign to design a BIPOC-led Green New Deal for Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

In response to local environmental justice organizing and advocacy, local policymakers are beginning to respond to the threat of climate change, but far more action is needed at all levels of government. While Santa Barbara County pledged in 2015 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% from 2007 levels, emissions in the county continued to rise.¹¹¹ Community leaders interviewed during community

The most environmentally burdened communities are the least likely to have access to preventive or after-the-fact protections.



consultations also expressed concern about the ongoing influence of the oil industry in the region, the lack of investment in public transportation, and the vulnerability of local infrastructure. Railroads, Highway 101, the Santa Barbara Airport, and the Charles Meyer Desalination Plant are all at increased risk of flooding because of rapid climate change in the region.

Nevertheless, community leaders we interviewed expressed optimism that with continued organizing, policy advocacy, and legal actions, environmental justice will win in future policy battles. Several pointed to the imminent launch of a new “community choice program” for energy provision in Santa Barbara County, which will help the county meet climate goals and produce carbon-free energy via renewable sources like wind, solar, and hydropower.¹¹² In future environmental campaigns, activists hope to transition more of the region to community choice energy, create programs to help low-income drivers adopt electric vehicles, reduce food waste, train “climate stewards,” and introduce regenerative soil health practices in local agriculture.

Uneven Political Voice

The swell of community-based voices for structural and systemic change is anchored in a robust infrastructure of intersectional social justice organizing in which people of color—and youth in particular—have played an essential role. However, progressive change coalitions face critical impediments to political mobilization on the Central Coast as well.

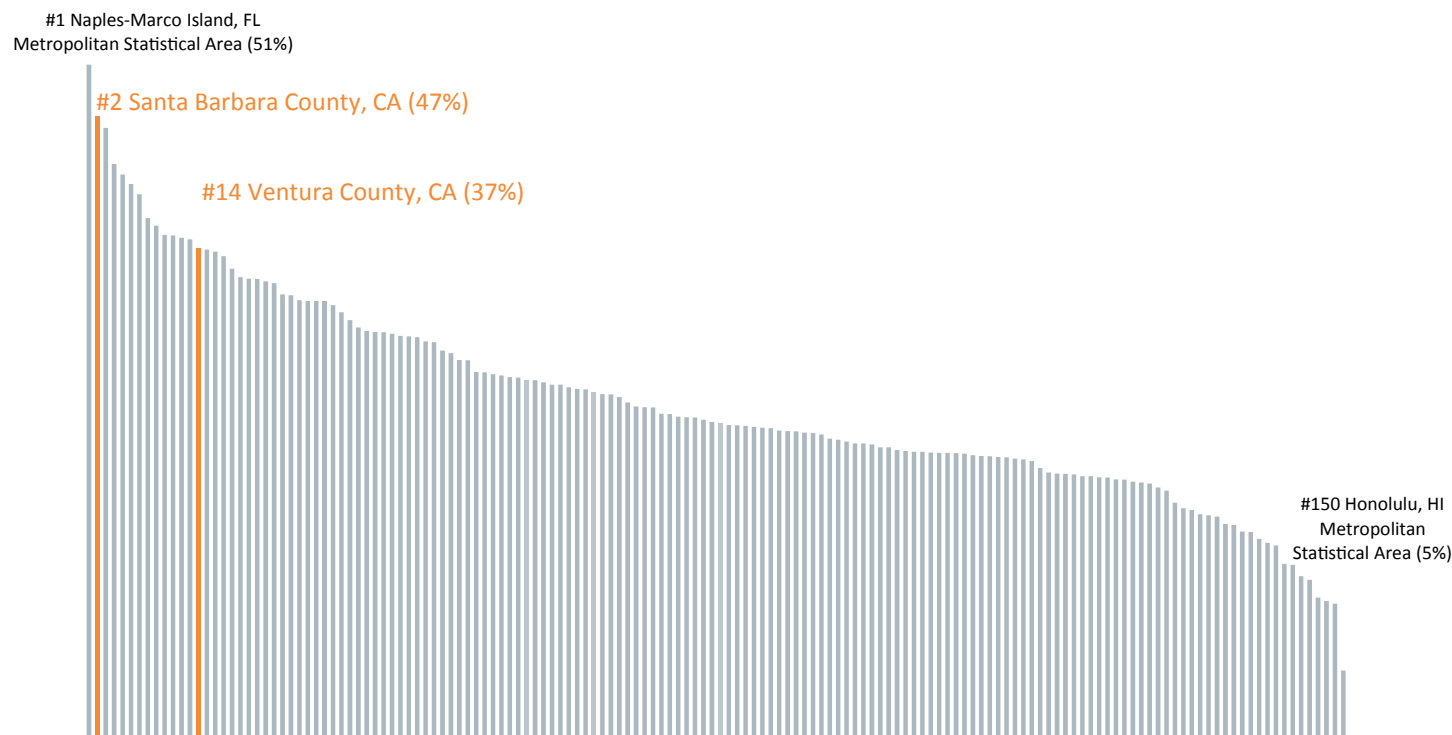
One is the persistence of the racial generation gap—a term coined by political demographers to capture the divergence in the racial and ethnic composition of the nation’s rapidly diversifying, increasingly BIPOC youth (under age 18) and gradually diversifying but still predominantly white senior (age 65 or older) populations. A considerable body of research has tied this demographic divergence to a growing sense of social and cultural distance between older and younger generations and to diminished support among seniors—who are far more likely to vote than younger generations—for spending on education and other youth-serving public investments.¹¹³ In California, as in other states with diversifying populations, the racial generation gap has been linked to diminished state-and county-level spending on K-12 education, as well as to the rise of highly racialized social politics exemplified in the anti-immigrant Proposition 187, which passed in 1994 (and was quickly declared unconstitutional) when California’s racial generation gap was nearing its peak.¹¹⁴

The inequities in health, employment, and social welfare laid bare by the pandemic are part of a broader pattern of systemic racial injustice that denies people of color equal access to the rights, opportunities, and protections everyone needs to thrive.



Though diminishing elsewhere in CA and, more gradually, the nation, the racial generation gap remains exceptionally high in our region. Figure 49 shows the racial generation gap for 150 metropolitan areas across the nation. The Santa Barbara metro area has the second highest racial generation gap nationwide: 47 percentage points. The Ventura metro is not far behind: at 37 percentage points, it has the 14th largest gap. This is a striking data point — particularly given that the racial generation gap in the state is both smaller and on the decline.¹¹⁵

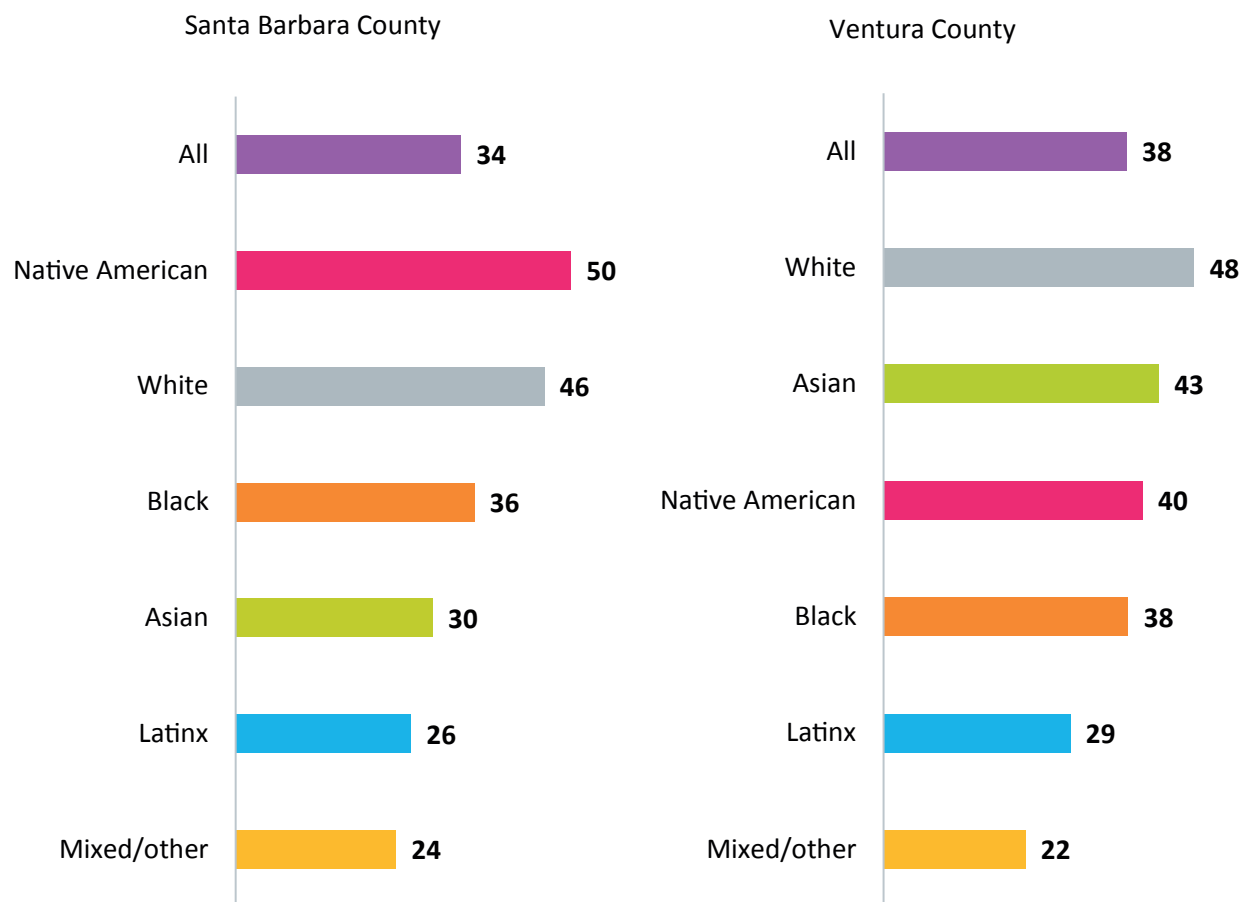
FIGURE 49: RACIAL GENERATION GAP, TOP 150 METRO AREAS, RANKED BY LARGEST TO SMALLEST GAP, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Metro regions refer to the largest 150 metropolitan statistical areas in terms of 2010 population, based on the OMB's December 2003 definitions. The racial generation gap is defined as the difference in the percentage people of color between the youth (under age 18) and senior (age 65 or older) populations. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

These measures come more sharply into focus when viewing the distance between the median ages of white and Latinx populations, by far the largest racial groupings in the region. As shown in Figure 50, there is a 20-year gap in median age between whites and Latinx in Santa Barbara, and a 19-year median age gap in Ventura.

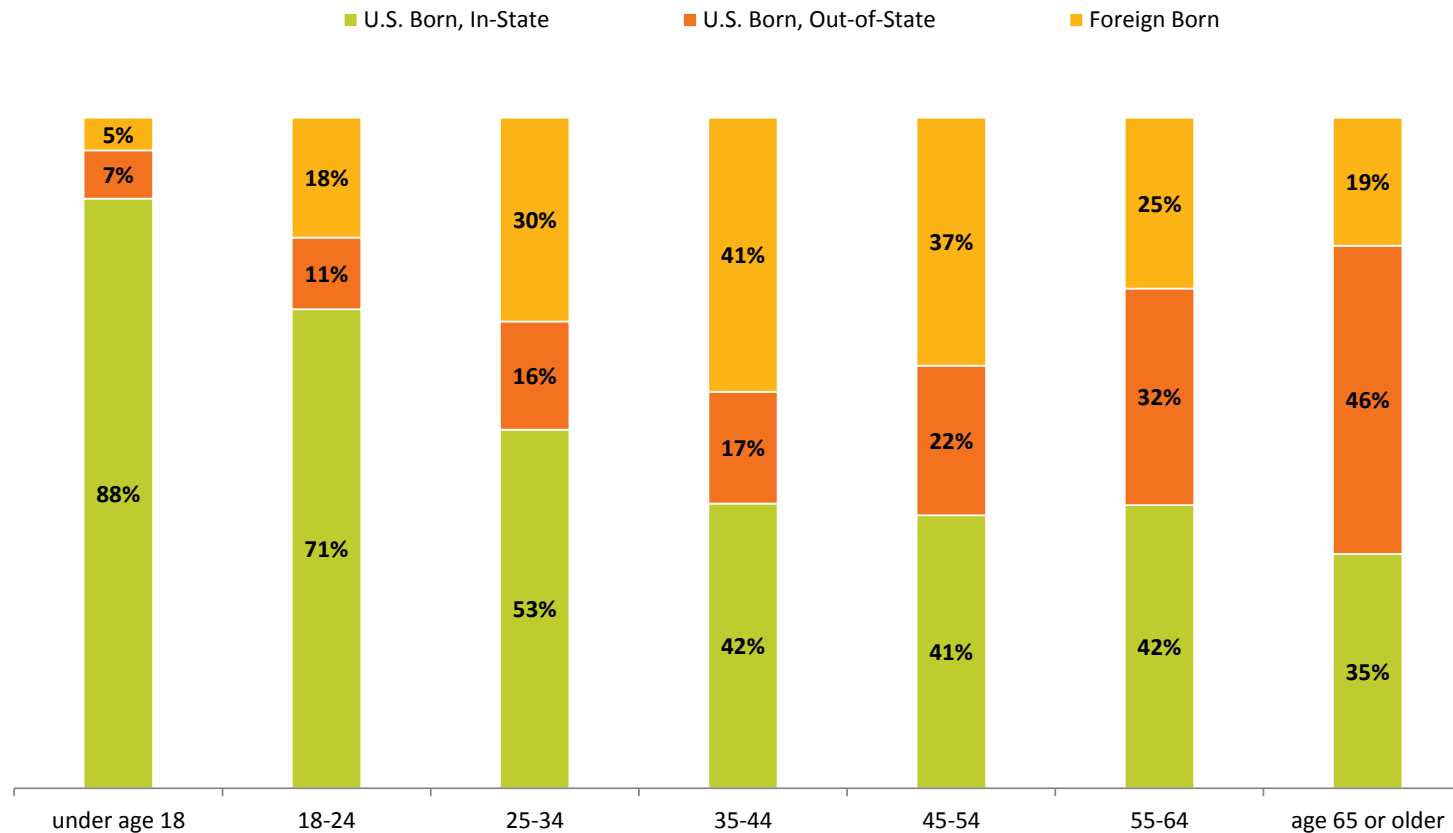
FIGURE 50: MEDIAN AGE BY RACE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.

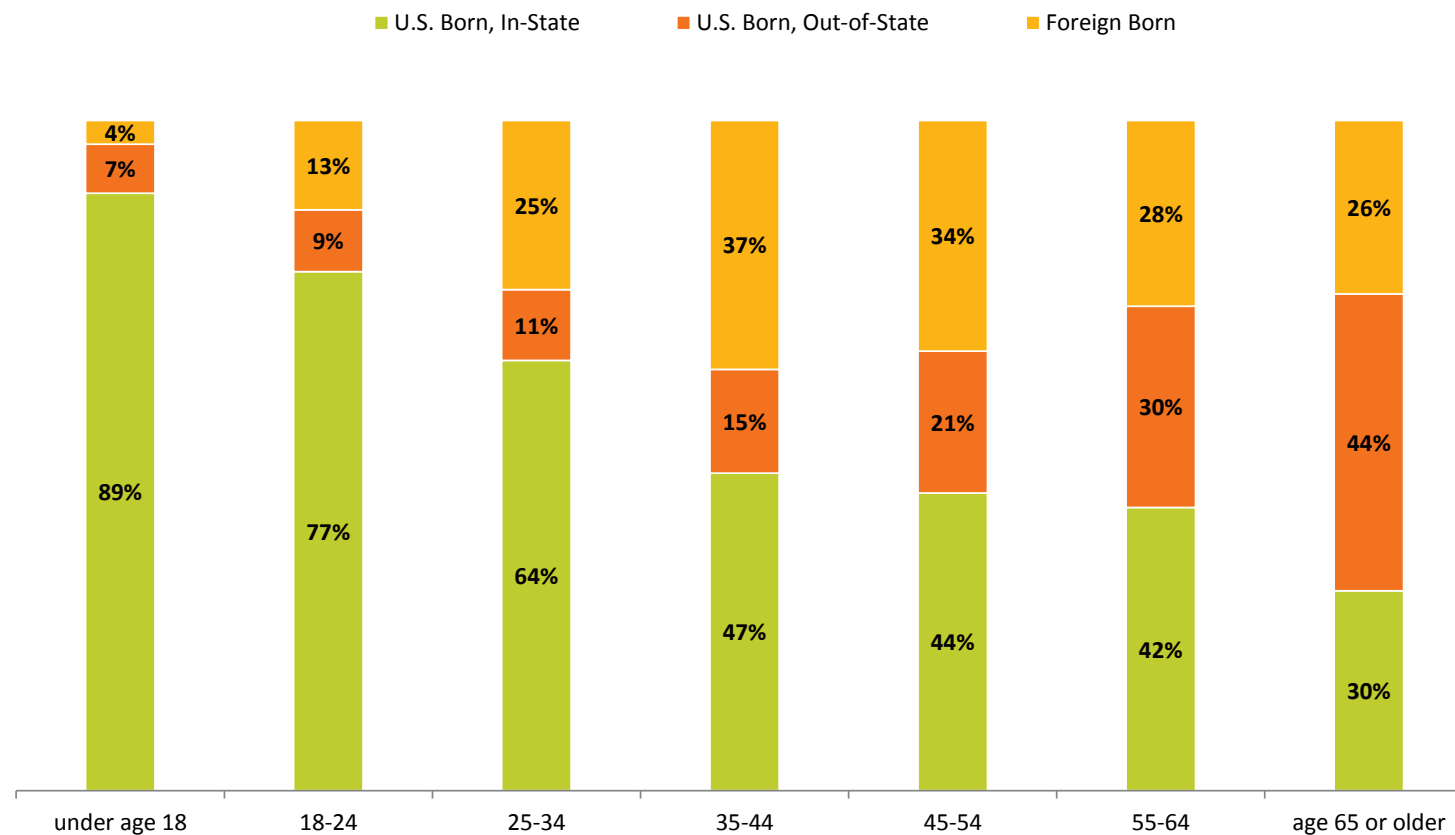
Racial generation gaps have historically been exacerbated by political rhetoric about “waves” of young, racially “other” immigrants moving into the region and laying claim to public resources—a particularly noxious, and utterly false claim that fueled the fires of Proposition 187 and similar anti-immigrant measures. Significantly, data on nativity by age (Figures 51 and Figure 52) show that, in fact, an overwhelming majority of the young people in the region were born in California—88 and 89 percent—compared to only 35 and 30 percent of seniors in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, respectively.

FIGURE 51: PLACE OF BIRTH COMPOSITION BY AGE GROUP, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

FIGURE 52: PLACE OF BIRTH COMPOSITION BY AGE GROUP, VENTURA COUNTY, 2018

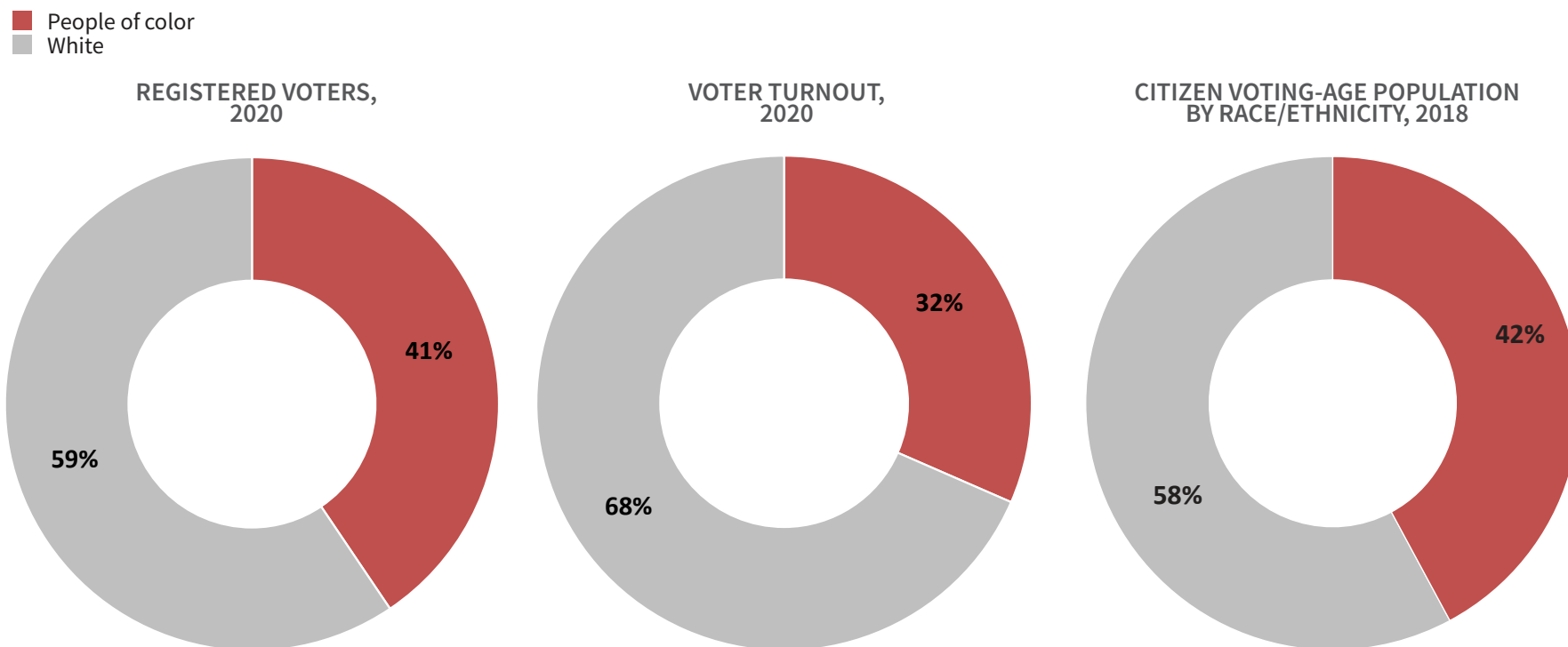


Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Adding to the political imbalances associated with the racial generation gap is a parallel imbalance in the activation of the electorate, notably (though not exclusively) along the lines of race and ethnicity. Even in the 2020 Presidential election, when region-wide voter turnout was record-breaking across all groups, whites in Santa Barbara and Ventura voted at significantly higher rates than voters of color, accounting for more than 2/3rds (68 percent) of the ballots cast despite representing 59 percent of the electorate. Importantly, this is not a reflection of disparities in registration, which closely reflect the demographics of eligible voters in the region thanks in no small part to targeted voter registration drives. The racial gap in voter turnout also parallels trends nation-wide, where 70 percent of white vs. 58 percent of nonwhite registered voters turned out in 2020.¹¹⁶

FIGURE 53: REGISTERED VOTERS AND VOTER TURNOUT IN THE NOVEMBER 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of voter data provided by Political Data, Inc. Voter data include all registered voters who voted in the 2020 election and were present in the voter files in April 2021.

Disparities in activation of the electorate are also apparent when we examine turnout disparities by age. Voter registration leans older in both counties, with a larger portion of registered voters over the age of 56 than under the age of 36, but the imbalance is not extreme.¹¹⁷ However, turnout rates by age reveal a different story. While only 31 percent of voters 18-24 in the region turned out to vote in the 2018 general election, over 75% of voters over the age of 65 did so (Figure 54).

FIGURE 54: ELIGIBLE VOTER TURNOUT RATE BY AGE, CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, AND VENTURA COUNTY, 2018 GENERAL ELECTION

	California	Santa Barbara	Ventura
Overall	49%	54%	55%
18-24	26%	31%	31%
25-34	39%	46%	39%
35-44	45%	44%	50%
45-54	50%	53%	55%
55-64	58%	65%	65%
65+	66%	78%	76%

Source: Center for Inclusive Democracy, University of Southern California

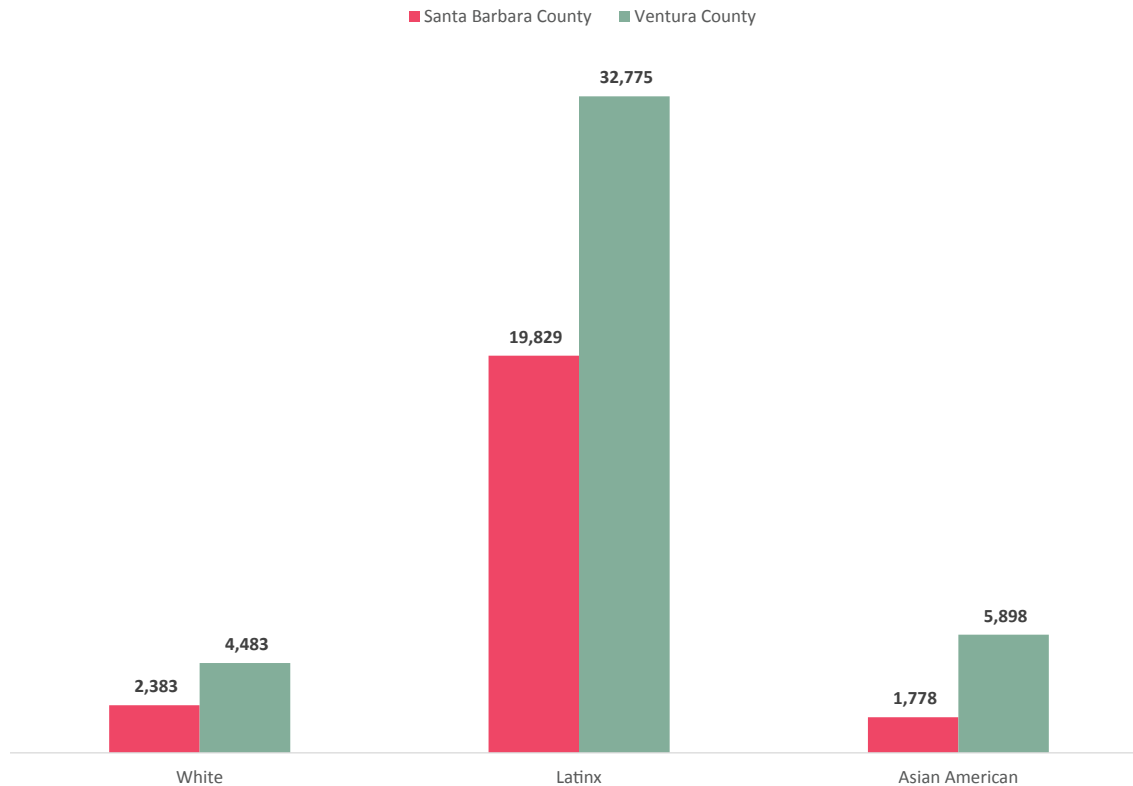
As large as these participation disparities in national and statewide elections are, they actually understate the extent of the problem. Voter participation gaps—by race, age, and income—tend to be substantially higher in local elections, despite the immediacy of the issues at stake. Further research can help to identify the multiple factors at play in the two-county region, including language, employment, outreach, and locational barriers to voting access as well as restrictive electoral practices.

Challenging though the racial generational and voter mobilization gaps may be, they are by no means insurmountable. For one thing, demographically-rooted political tensions are subject to change—through public outreach, education, and coalition-building across racial groups and generations. Community-based organizing can occur around the vital importance of investing in youth in order to ensure the current and future vitality of the region. Demography, that is, need not be determinative.

Equally significant are steps that can be taken to shape a more fully representative and activated electorate. As Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties grow and change, for example, there are more opportunities for engaging those who have been left out of the process. Since 2012, strategic grassroots

integrated voter engagement efforts have had marked results in increasing voter turnout in predominately BIPOC communities in the region. California Calls' regional affiliate CAUSE, along with other allied groups in the region, have successfully mobilized new and occasional voters with nonpartisan cell phone banking and neighborhood canvassing voter education efforts. Another access point to civic engagement is the opportunity for residents to become citizens. Data on those eligible to naturalize show that many immigrant residents have been in the country long enough to apply for citizenship status (Figure 55).

FIGURE 55: ELIGIBLE-TO-NATURALIZE IMMIGRANT ADULTS BY RACE, SANTA BARBARA AND VENTURA COUNTIES, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Note: Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average. See https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf for details on estimates of the eligible-to-naturalize population.

In recent years an ongoing region-wide collaborative network of immigrant legal defense and legal service organizations convened by The Fund for Santa Barbara has been successful in building collective organizational capacity to assist thousands of permanent resident immigrants in the naturalization process. While naturalization campaigns, including community citizenship fairs have been successful throughout the region since the early 1990s, recent efforts have found particularly high success. Promoting opportunities for encouraging eligible immigrants to naturalize, which includes funding programs that help immigrants apply for citizenship, is a step toward building community power.

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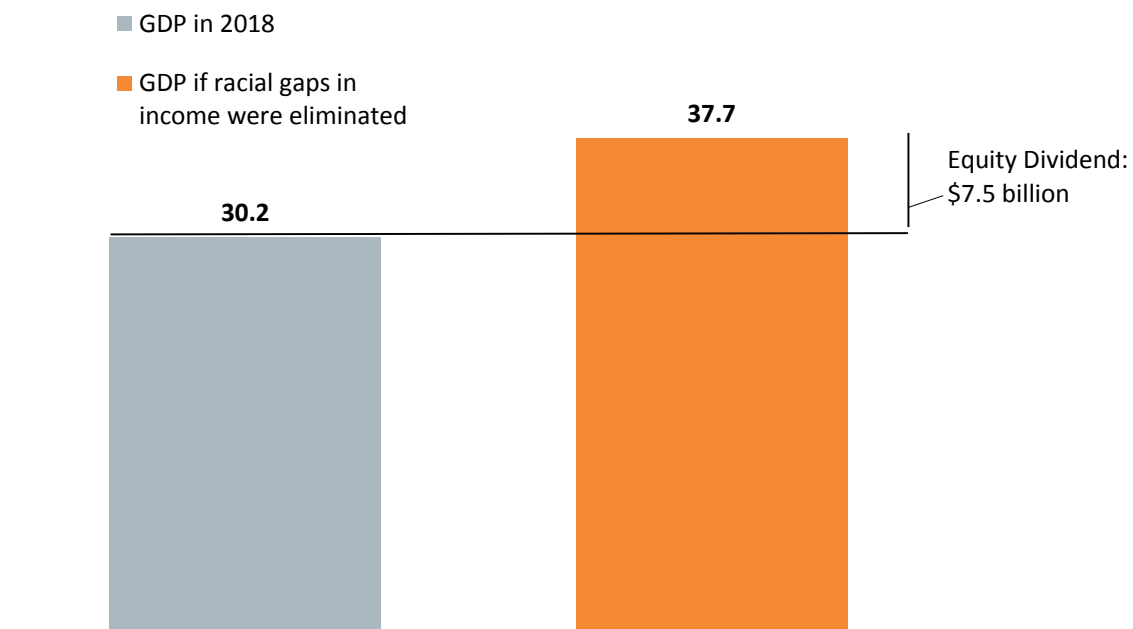
Building for Equity and Justice: Opportunities for Change

The inequities this report has highlighted are deep, longstanding, and immensely consequential, as the disparities unearthed and exacerbated by the pandemic have made all too clear. They are also a starting point for a long overdue conversation about change—transformative, inclusive, community-generated and engaged change—that will lead the region toward a just and equitable future. The urgent need for this conversation was a constant refrain in our community consultations, as was the insistence that it grapple fully and forthrightly with the realities of underpaid and precarious work, unaffordable housing, rising homelessness and social insecurity, carceral and environmental injustice, and gaping income and wealth inequality that for too many have become defining features of life on the Central Coast. It must also, simultaneously, confront the impact of systemic racism on the lives and opportunities of our Black, Brown, Indigenous, Asian, and immigrant communities. This conversation cannot be set aside in a rush to return to an unsustainable pre-pandemic “normal.” Instead, we can take what we’ve learned and come to value during this unprecedented time of crisis as an opportunity to set the foundation for a region that works for all.

What would it look like to put equity and justice at the center of regional priorities? One way to get at this is to consider the economic impact of closing the racial gaps in wages and employment between whites and workers of color, as we have done by calculating changes in average incomes and GDP in a labor market without racial and ethnic disadvantages.^e The gains in such a scenario are impressive, both in terms of economic performance and of improved earnings across the board. Projecting from pre-pandemic conditions, the Santa Barbara economy stands to gain nearly \$7.5 billion (a 25 percent increase) and Ventura County \$13.6 billion (23 percent) in GDP were racial income gaps eliminated (Figure 56 and Figure 57).

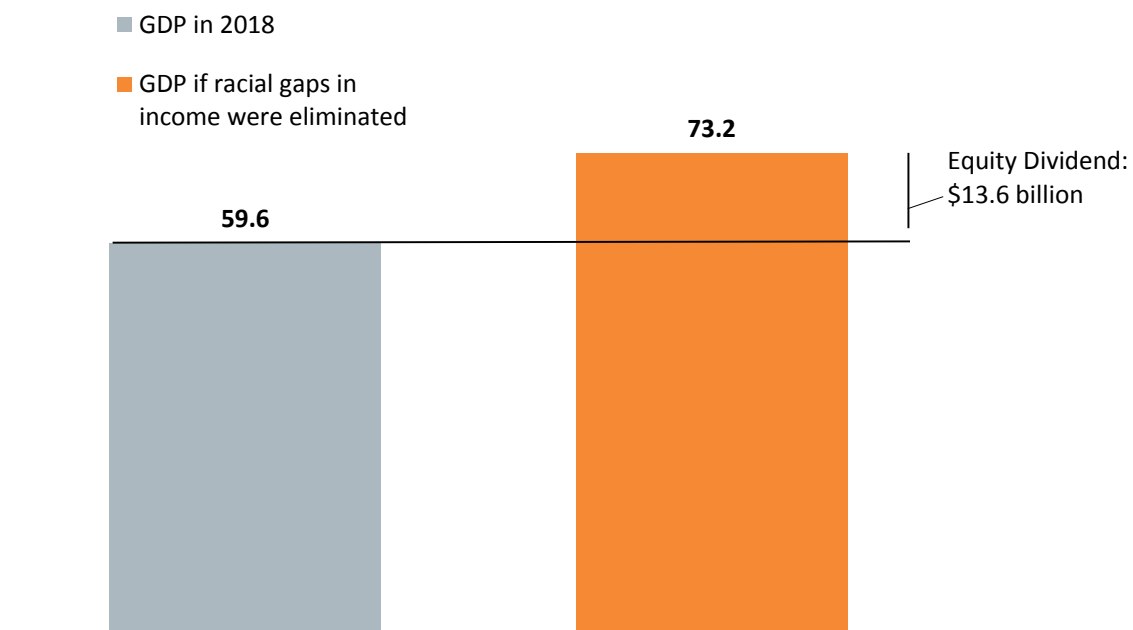
^e For a detailed discussion of the methodology used to estimate income and GDP gains with racial equity, see: <https://nationalequityatlas.org/about-the-atlas/methodology/incgainsre>

FIGURE 56: ACTUAL GDP AND ESTIMATED GDP WITH RACIAL EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE (IN BILLIONS), SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: The “equity dividend” is calculated using data from IPUMS USA for 2014-2018 for the working age population (ages 25-64) and is then applied to estimated GDP in 2018. Values are in 2018 dollars.

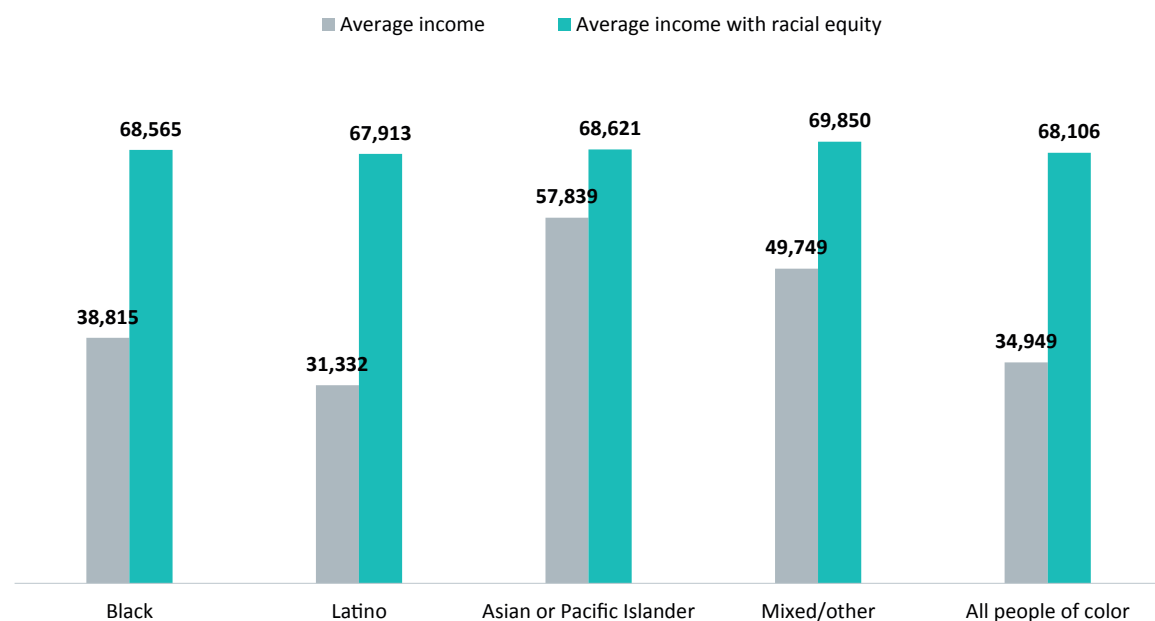
FIGURE 57: ACTUAL GDP AND ESTIMATED GDP WITH RACIAL EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE (IN BILLIONS) VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: The “equity dividend” is calculated using data from IPUMS USA for 2014-2018 for the working age population (ages 25-64) and is then applied to estimated GDP in 2018. Values are in 2018 dollars.

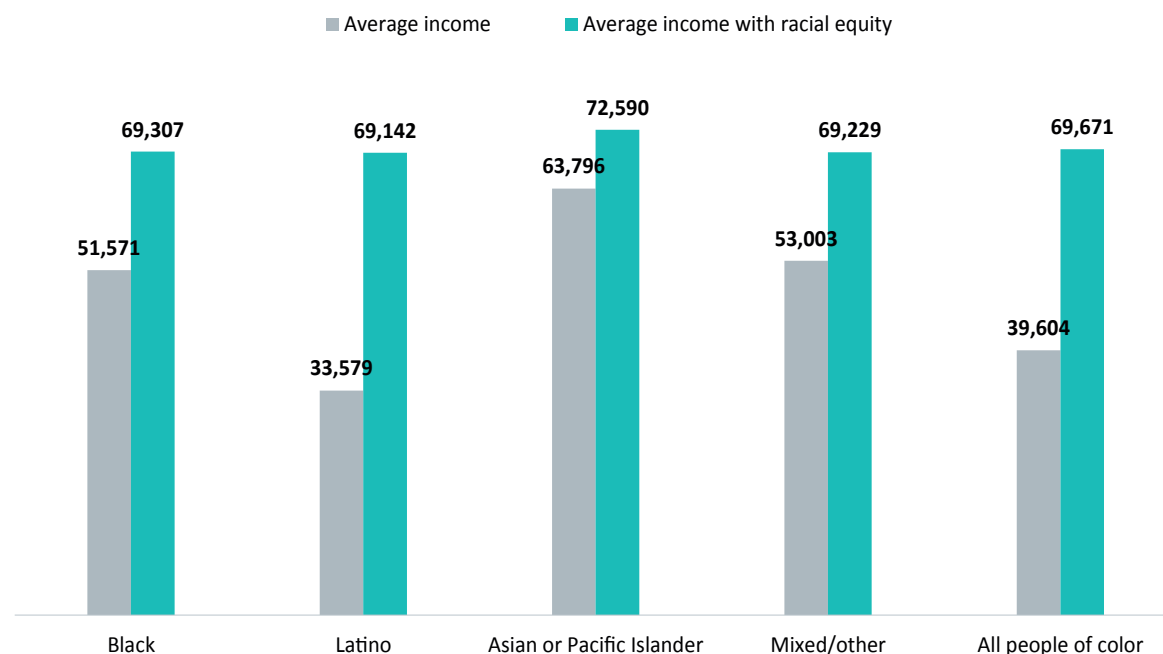
When we look at these income gains implied in this analysis by race for each county, we can see all communities of color faring better if they earned similar average incomes to their white counterparts, controlling for age (Figure 58 and Figure 59). Black and Latinx workers in particular would see greatest gains. Latinx workers would see their average incomes double (and then some).

FIGURE 58: INCOME GAINS WITH RACIAL EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes all people ages 25-64. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average. Values are in 2018 dollars.

FIGURE 59: INCOME GAINS WITH RACIAL EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE, VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes all people ages 25-64. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average. Values are in 2018 dollars.

It is notable that most of these income gains would be earned through an increase in wages as opposed to employment (Figure 60 and Figure 61). In Santa Barbara County, 98 percent of income gains for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color would be through an improvement in wages, with only 2 percent through employment. In Ventura County, 90 percent of income gains for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color would be through an improvement in wages, with only 10 percent through employment.

FIGURE 60: SOURCE OF INCOME GAINS WITH RACIAL EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.
Note: Universe includes all people ages 25-64. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average. Values are in 2018 dollars.

FIGURE 61: SOURCE OF INCOME GAINS WITH RACIAL EQUITY IN THE WORKFORCE, VENTURA COUNTY, 2018



Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.
Note: Universe includes all people ages 25-64. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average. Values are in 2018 dollars.

Three critical insights emerge from these calculations. First is that the region's racial inequities persist at an enormous cost—not just to regional prosperity but to our capacity to sustain, nurture, and adequately compensate the workforce that makes regional prosperity possible. Second is that these inequities stem not from some distant and ineluctable structural forces but from economic norms, practices, and policy choices that are subject to challenge and change. Third and related is that the chief dividends from closing racial gaps in wages and income do not stem simply from economic growth, but from an economy whose benefits are more justly and equitably distributed. This calls for a reversal of economic growth models that have concentrated wealth and income at the very top, in favor of substantially improved labor and living standards for workers who for too long have paid prosperity's price.

Building an equitable region does not end once existing inequities are addressed. Regional equity also requires investing in local grassroots organizations that have been working to improve economic and social life in their communities. Those who are most impacted by economic, racial, gender, and other forms of inequality are often shut out of systems and structures that should be at the forefront of creating a more equitable region. If we hope to move toward a more equitable region together, it is critical to engage and center community members who often have the least power in the decision-making process. Of the estimated 58 BIPOC-led organizations in the region, the majority have budgets below \$15,000, are primarily volunteer-based, and generally fall short of their desired impact largely due to insufficient philanthropic and capacity-building support. Capacity needs include training and consultation on fund raising, strategic planning, communications, as well as community organizing and policy advocacy.

Community engagement and grassroots organizing looked different in 2020 and 2021, as organizers and local service providers pivoted to online platforms in their ongoing work to build community power and address community needs. Though engagement in community meetings declined as folks sheltered in place, innovative models of mutual aid emerged, and community organizers developed new strategies to safely engage residents.

Additionally, many in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties became activated during the national reckoning with the criminal justice system through the widespread protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin in May 2020. The nationwide protests led to conversations that focused on reimagining the criminal justice system and accelerated discussions about strategies to address racism and promote racial equity. Participants in the community consultations

Regional equity also requires investing in local grassroots organizations that have been working to improve economic and social life in their communities.



sensed a shift in consciousness among white people about the urgency of racial injustice, even as they expressed uncertainty over whether this would translate into lasting, multi-racial alliances to combat systemic racism. Still, eager to take advantage of heightened consciousness, racial justice advocates drew on long-standing region-wide experience to challenge punitive models of public safety and community supervision and to identify restorative approaches to criminal justice.

There have been numerous community organizing and advocacy efforts over the last decade to bring about criminal justice reforms in the two-county region, including successful efforts to stop gang injunctions in the Cities of Oxnard and Santa Barbara. More recent campaigns inspired by the growing national abolition movement have emphasized community demands to create civilian police oversight commissions and to redirect funding from policing and incarceration to prevention and programs that seek to reduce recidivism. These campaigns have specifically opposed the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's determined effort to expand the South County Jail. Activists in the community meetings repeatedly said these attempts at reform are not new and that what is needed is greater collaboration among the separate individual campaigns, as well as evidence-based solutions that include centering voices of color in these solutions.

Principles and Priorities for Research and Action

On the Central Coast as in the U.S. and the wider world, the disparities brought to light by the global pandemic, racial uprisings, and climate change-related disasters are a sign of a deeper, political and civic failure to address the inequities that have shaped social, economic, and civic life for decades. They are also a stark reminder of how inequality makes us more vulnerable to crisis and disaster—in no small part by undermining the sense of shared fate and common purpose required for an effective response. As we look to the post-pandemic future, then, it is imperative to set our sights appropriately: not on a return to an inequitable “normal,” but on a transition to a just and equitable future on the Central Coast.

We conclude this report with a set of principles and priorities to move us in this direction and to guide the Central Coast region’s collective equity work. This work will rely on commitments from progressive change organizations, businesses, public and private employers, service providers, educators, researchers, and philanthropic organizations alike. It calls for large public investments in opportunities and social protections for historically underserved communities and an honest reassessment of resource allocations that have privileged the interests of more advantaged constituencies. And it requires a willingness to imagine and act upon policies that push beyond the boundaries of narrowly construed political possibility to lay the groundwork for transformative change.

1 Respect the rights and experiences of Indigenous people

It is important to acknowledge that the Central Coast region is on the traditional, unceded homelands of the Chumash and Tataviam people. We acknowledge and support their ongoing struggles for political rights, cultural recognition, and land protection by recognizing the historical experience of colonization, enslavement, violence, and resource extraction that established the region, and honoring the knowledge, cultural traditions, and resilience that have sustained Native communities over time. As we look to the future planning and development of the region, it is critical that we also center Native principles of stewardship and reciprocity between the land and the lives it sustains. Indigenous peoples, perspectives, and experiences must be centered in processes of acknowledgment and accountability, and in the frameworks we bring to regional equity, environmental, and democratic organizing.

2 Center equity and justice as foundational economic values

This starts with an economic vision that recognizes freedom from want and a justly compensated workforce as signposts of economic strength, that respects workers' rights to labor in dignity, and that embraces goals such as closing racial and gender wage gaps as benchmarks of regional economic success. It calls for public and private investment in strategies that improve labor standards for traditionally undervalued but essential workers and that promote access to high-quality job opportunities for historically marginalized communities. Equity and prosperity can and should be embraced as mutually supportive goals, but only when guided by active measures to assure that the benefits of prosperity are widely and equitably shared.

3 Invest in inclusive, universally accessible infrastructures of opportunity and social provision

A just and equitable region rests on more than an inclusive economy. It requires a robust infrastructure of social investment—in systems of care, opportunity, civic connectedness, and political engagement—that promotes health, education, and human development, assures equal justice for all, and provides assistance in times of need. The vast disparities in access to adequate, affordable quality health care is but one of the major fault lines brought to the surface by the region's experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. All Central Coast residents should have access to basic rights and social goods, such as health care and quality education, which requires accommodating for diverse language, cultural, and technological needs as well as making them available regardless of income, citizenship, or immigration status.

4 Advance racial and intersectional justice

Racial and intersectional justice inform all aspects of equity work, and cut across multiple issue areas, in efforts that seek change at the systemic level. A growing number of intersectional justice initiatives in the region focus on the needs—and draw on the leadership—of youth, who represent the fastest-growing segment of the region's BIPOC population and who have heightened public awareness of how systemic problems of chronic underfunding, criminalized behavior, and discriminatory disciplinary protocols have fed into the school-to-prison pipeline and otherwise failed to nurture students from historically marginalized groups. In these and aligned initiatives, advancing racial and intersectional justice means emphasizing nurturing, culturally relevant learning environments; fully inclusive access to services, educational, and employment opportunities; and restorative approaches to discipline and public safety.

5 Recognize, respect, and protect immigrant rights, civic integration, and political voice

Whether they are recent arrivals or long-standing residents, immigrants are an integral part of the Central Coast region, as contributors to the regional economy, community organizers, educators, students, parents, and neighbors. Fully achieving equity and justice in the region requires that all immigrants, regardless of citizenship status, have full access to the social safety net, emergency relief, and the legal protections accorded workers and tenants. Local political systems should be made more aware, responsive, and accountable to immigrant communities, through immigrant-inclusive organizing, naturalization, and voter registration campaigns.

6 Protect tenants, preserve communities, and make housing affordable for all

The crisis of affordable housing has been woven into the fabric of everyday life on the Central Coast, in the form of out of reach home prices, heavy rent burdens, long commutes, rising numbers of unhoused, unsheltered people, and years'-old affordable development targets gone unfulfilled. It's long since time we stop pretending this crisis can be resolved without massive investments of public resources and reordering of regional priorities to construct and otherwise make available housing that is safe, accessible, and affordable, that adheres to standards of environmental sustainability, and that respects the rights of tenants to live free of the threats of eviction, arbitrary rent hikes, and gentrification.

7 Be a leader in environmental and climate justice

There is no denying that climate change and environmental crises are a reality in the Central Coast. While communities vary in their response resiliency due to factors of inequity, environmental burdens adversely affect all communities regardless of race or affluence. The region has a long history of fighting against offshore drilling, fossil fuel power plants, a proposed liquefied natural gas terminal, and the use of hazardous pesticides on commercial farms. More action is needed to invest in public transportation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and protect local infrastructure from the ravages of climate change. Stronger collaboration between the original stewards of the region's land and water, the Chumash and Tataviam people, and environmental and social justice groups within the region can show the rest of the country dynamic pathways forward toward a more sustainable and just environment.

8

Bridge digital divides for underserved communities

Full and unencumbered digital access is no longer simply a matter of consumer choice in societies that have turned to internet-based modes of learning, health and service provision, communication, and civic engagement, as we have on the Central Coast. It is a basic necessity for full participation in economic, social, political, and civic life. Bridging digital divides starts with the recognition that internet access is an essential public good, bringing public responsibility to provide affordable and equitable access to all individuals, households, and communities that lack the income, technological, and other resources necessary to attain it. It also requires active steps to gauge and remedy the learning losses, social and civic isolation, and service disparities that stem from disparities in connectivity.

9

Create platforms for collaborative, community-engaged equity research

The data featured in this report, gathered in consultation with our community networks, provide aggregate indicators of the equity trends and challenges facing the Central Coast and offer some sense of what it would mean to address them on a region-wide scale. While the need for such indicator-based analysis continues, it is also a jumping off point for a broader program of research that builds regional capacity—and the more variegated, community-rooted knowledge base—for inclusive and equitable planning, policy development, and political action. In addition to the region's academic and independent research institutes, such a program will rely extensively on engagement with too-often unheard community voices, experiences, and expertise from community organizations—especially when it comes to understanding the mechanisms and day to day realities of inequality, collecting ground-level data, and identifying priorities and levers for change. Deepening and diversifying our knowledge base in this way also enhances the capacity to build a shared understanding of the region's problems and prospects, generate alliances across issue areas, and track progress towards equity and justice over time.

10 Build from our victories

Building a just and equitable region requires a long-term commitment, a willingness to confront entrenched forces of resistance, and the often-painstaking work of organizing coalitions on multiple fronts. It draws vital energy from accomplishments along the way. Recent victories give cause for hope. Activists successfully pressured state and local governments to increase funding for tenant protections, affordable housing, and services for the unhoused during the pandemic. Environmental organizations and activists created a carbon-free renewable energy program and established a diversified climate justice network. Grassroots organizations collaborated to provide greater assistance to immigrant families who have faced significant loss as a result of natural disasters. These victories are only a small portion of the overall transformative change that is needed, but they nevertheless demonstrate that such change is possible when communities organize the public, persuade stakeholders, form alliances, and apply political pressure to those in power.

11 Open avenues to participatory democracy

While progress in key areas has been made in recent years, these victories have only been possible because of sustained, targeted organizing campaigns that make concrete demands and electoral strategies to hold elected officials accountable. Broad-based, but unfocused, support for change often loses when the status quo is supported by powerful interests. Organizations rooted in the region's diverse communities are needed more than ever to empower marginalized groups by activating new and occasional voters to build electoral power, pressuring reluctant lawmakers, and building coalitions across groups that have historically been excluded from the political process. Advancing equity on the Central Coast also calls for an expanded toolkit for realizing the region's democratic potential, such as participatory budgeting, equity impact standards, and other measures to promote community engagement in public decision making.

Technical Appendix

Data and Methods

Community Consultations

A core component of the Equity Study was community consultations (CCs). The purpose of CCs was to engage regional stakeholders and community leaders in identifying key topics for the Equity Study and to begin a conversation about inequity in the Central Coast. The CCs were also a community space for participants and facilitators to imagine change, informed by data, and create shared ideas about how to move toward a more equitable future.

Participants for the CCs were located through The FUND's existing networks and invited to participate via email. A total of sixteen CCs, co-facilitated by The FUND and UCSB, were conducted between August 2020-March 2021. The consultations spanned eight general sessions and eight issue-specific sessions covering K-12 Education, Public Higher Education, Racial Justice, Housing & Houselessness, Access to Public Health, Small Business, Climate Justice, and finally, Criminal Justice and Reimagining Community Safety.

CCs were conducted virtually, were recorded, and lasted 1.5-2 hours. While each consultation was unique, naturally dynamic, and free flowing, they all included a brief summary of the Equity Study and its aims, encouragement for an ongoing conversation, and some or all of the following questions:

How has the pandemic affected your work?

What information in our Equity Study would be helpful in your work?

What are the highest priority issues for you?

These CCs provided broad and nuanced insight into systems of inequity in the Central Coast. With the help of several FUND interns, the CC co-facilitators took extensive concurrent notes. The references to CCs throughout the Equity Study are based on these notes and represent syntheses of responses from multiple CC participants rather than direct quotes. While these CCs were not designed to be a representative sample of the Central Coast, they nevertheless provided the Equity Study with valuable guidance in its early stages and will provide the basis for ongoing community engagement and organizing following the Equity Study's release.

Adjustments made to census summary data on race/ethnicity by age

Demographic change and what is referred to as the “racial generation gap” are important elements of the equity study. Due to their centrality, care was taken to generate consistent estimates of people by race/ethnicity and age group (under 18, 18- 64, and over 64) for the years 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2018 (which reflects a 2014 through 2018 average) at the county level, which was then aggregated to the regional level and higher. The racial/ethnic groups include non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic/Latino, non-Hispanic Asian American/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic Native American/Alaska Native, and non-Hispanic Other (including other single race alone and those identifying as multiracial). While for 2000 this information is readily available in SF1, for 1980 and 1990, estimates had to be made to ensure consistency over time, drawing on two different summary files for each year.

For 1980, while information on total population by race/ethnicity for all ages combined was available at the county level for all the requisite groups in STF1, for race/ethnicity by age group we had to look to STF2, where it was only available for non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and the remainder of the population. To estimate the number non-Hispanic Asian American/Pacific Islanders, non-Hispanic Native Americans/Alaska Natives, and non-Hispanic other or mixed race among the remainder for each age group, we applied the distribution of these three groups from the overall county population (of all ages) from STF1.

For 1990, population by race/ethnicity at the county level was taken from STF2A, while population by race/ethnicity and age was taken from the 1990 Modified Age Race Sex (MARS) file—a special tabulation of people by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. However, to be consistent with the way race is categorized by the OMB’s Directive 15, the MARS file allocates all persons identifying as other or mixed race to a specific race. After confirming that population totals by county were consistent between the MARS file and STF2A, we calculated the number of other or mixed-race people that had been added to each racial/ethnic group in each county (for all ages combined) by subtracting the number that is reported in STF2A for the corresponding group. We then derived the share of each racial/ethnic group in the MARS file that was made up of other or mixed-race people and applied this share to estimate the number of people by race/ethnicity and age group exclusive of the other or mixed-race category, and finally number of the other or mixed race people by age group.

For 2018 (which, again, reflects a 2014 through 2018 average), population by race/ethnicity and age was taken from the 2018 ACS 5-year summary file, which provides counts by race/ethnicity and age for the non-

Hispanic white, Hispanic/Latino, and total population combined. County by race/ethnicity and age for all people of color combined was derived by subtracting non-Hispanic whites from the total population.

Adjustments made to demographic projections

National projections of the non-Hispanic white share of the population are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 National Population Projections. However, because these projections follow the OMB 1997 guidelines on racial classification and essentially distribute the other single-race alone group across the other defined racial/ethnic categories, adjustments were made to be consistent with the six broad racial/ethnic groups used in our analysis.

Specifically, we compared the percentage of the total population composed of each racial/ethnic group from the Census Bureau's Population Estimates program for 2018 (which follows the OMB 1997 guidelines) to the percentage reported in the 2018 ACS 1- year Summary File (which follows the 2000 Census classification). We subtracted the percentage derived using the 2018 Population Estimates program from the percentage derived using the 2018 ACS to obtain an adjustment factor for each group (all of which were negative except that for the mixed/other group) and carried this adjustment factor forward by adding it to the projected percentage for each group in each projection year. Finally, we applied the resulting adjusted projected population distribution by race/ethnicity to the total projected population from the 2014 National Population Projections to get the projected number of people by race/ethnicity in each projection year.

Similar adjustments were made in generating county and regional projections of the population by race/ethnicity. Initial county-level projections were taken from Woods & Poole Economics, Inc. Like the 1990 MARS file described above, the Woods & Poole projections follow the OMB Directive 15-race categorization, assigning all persons identifying as other or multiracial to one of five mutually exclusive race categories: white, Black, Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islander, or Native American. Thus, we first generated an adjusted version of the county-level Woods & Poole projections that removed the other or multiracial group from each of these five categories. This was done by comparing the Woods & Poole projections for 2010 to the actual results from SF1 of the 2010 Census, figuring out the share of each racial/ethnic group in the Woods & Poole data that was composed of other or mixed-race persons in 2010, and applying it forward to later projection years. From these projections, we calculated the county-level distribution by race/ethnicity in each projection year for five groups (white, Black, Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Native American), exclusive of other and mixed-race people.

To estimate the county-level share of population for those classified as other or mixed race in each projection year, we then generated a simple straight-line projection of this share using information from SF1 of the 2000 and 2010 Census. Keeping the projected other or mixed-race share fixed, we allocated the remaining population share to each of the other five racial/ethnic groups by applying the racial/ethnic distribution implied by our adjusted Woods & Poole projections for each county and projection year. The result was a set of adjusted projections at the county level for the six broad racial/ethnic groups included in the study, which were then applied to projections of the total population by county from the Woods & Poole data to get projections of the number of people for each of the six racial/ethnic groups.

Finally, an iterative proportional fitting (IPF) procedure was applied to bring the county level results into alignment with our adjusted national projections by race/ethnicity described above. The final adjusted county results were then aggregated to produce a final set of projections at the metro area and state levels.

Selected Terms and General Notes

Broad racial/ethnic origin categories

Unless otherwise noted, the categorization of people by race/ethnicity and nativity is based on individual responses to various census surveys. All people included in our analysis were first assigned to one of six mutually exclusive racial/ethnic categories, depending on their response to two separate questions on race and Hispanic origin as follows:

- “white” and “non-Hispanic white” are used to refer to all people who identify as white alone and do not identify as being of Hispanic origin.
- “Black” and “African American” are used to refer to all people who identify as Black or African American alone and do not identify as being of Hispanic origin unless stated otherwise.
- “Latinx” refers to all people who identify as being of Hispanic origin, regardless of racial identification.
- “Asian” and “Asian American” are used to refer to all people who identify as Asian American and do not identify as being of Hispanic origin. In some cases where data include Pacific Islanders the term Asian American or Pacific Islander (API) is used.
- In cases where “Pacific Islanders” are disaggregated, “Pacific Islanders” can refer to anyone

identifying as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone or in combination. Please check the notation in the figure for further information and clarification.

- “Native American” and “Native American and Alaska Native” are used to refer to all people who identify as Native American or Alaskan Native alone and do not identify as being of Hispanic origin.
- “Mixed/other” and “other or mixed race” are used to refer to all people who identify with a single racial category not included above, or identify with multiple racial categories, and do not identify as being of Hispanic origin.
- “People of color” or “POC” is used to refer to all people who do not identify as non-Hispanic white.
- “Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color” (BIPOC) is used to refer to all people who do not identify as non-Hispanic white, while centering the impact of slavery and genocide experienced by black and indigenous people.

Nativity

The term “U.S.-born” refers to all people who identify as being born in the United States (including U.S. territories and outlying areas) or born abroad to American parents. The term “immigrant” refers to all people who identify as being born abroad, outside of the United States, to non-American parents.

Detailed racial/ethnic ancestry

Given the diversity of ethnic origin and large presence of immigrants among the Latino, Asian American, and Pacific Islander populations, we sometimes present data for more specific racial/ethnic subcategories within these groups. In order to maintain consistency with the broad racial/ethnic categories and to enable the examination of second-and-higher generation immigrants, these more detailed categories (referred to as “ancestry”) are drawn from the first response to the census question on ancestry, recorded in the IPUMS variable “ANCESTR1.” For example, while country-of-origin information could have been used to identify Filipinos among the Asian American population or Salvadorans among the Latino population, it could only do so for immigrants, leaving only the broad “Asian American” and “Latino” racial/ethnic categories for the U.S.-born population. While this methodological choice makes little difference in the numbers of immigrants by origin we report—i.e., the vast majority of immigrants from El Salvador mark “Salvadoran” for their ancestry—it is an important point of clarification.

Other selected terms

Below we provide definitions and clarification around some of the terms used in the equity study:

- The term “neighborhood” is used at various points throughout the equity study. While in the introductory portion of the study this term is meant to be interpreted in the colloquial sense, in relation to any data analysis it refers to census tracts.
- The term “communities of color” generally refers to distinct non-white groups defined by race/ethnicity among people of color.
- The term “full-time” workers refers to all persons in the IPUMS microdata who reported working at least 45 or 50 weeks per year (depending on the year of the data) and usually worked at least 35 hours per week during the year prior to the survey. A change in the “weeks worked” question in the 2008 ACS, as compared with prior years of the ACS and the long form of the decennial census, caused a dramatic rise in the share of respondents indicating that they worked at least 50 weeks during the year prior to the survey. To make our data on full-time workers more comparable over time, we applied a slightly different definition in 2008 and later than in earlier years: in 2008 and later, the “weeks worked” cutoff is at least 50 weeks while in 2007 and earlier it is 45 weeks. The 45-week cutoff was found to produce a national trend in the incidence of full-time work over the 2005-2010 period that was most consistent with that found using data from the March Supplement of the Current Population Survey, which did not experience a change to the relevant survey questions. For more information, see: https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2012/demo/Gottschalck_2012FCSM_VII-B.pdf.

General notes on analyses

Below we provide some general notes about the analysis conducted:

- In regard to monetary measures (income, earnings, wages, etc.) the term “real” indicates the data have been adjusted for inflation. All inflation adjustments are based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI -U) from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, available at: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t01.htm> (see table 24).
- Some may wonder why the graph on page 58 indicates the years 1979, 1989, and 1999 rather than the actual survey years from which the information is drawn (1980, 1990, and 2000, respectively). This is because income information in the decennial census for those years is reported for the year prior to the survey. While seemingly inconsistent, the actual survey years are indicated in the graphs on page 62 depicting rates of economic hardship, as these measures are partly based on family composition and work efforts at the time of the survey, in addition to income from the year prior to the survey

About IPUMS microdata

Although a variety of data sources were used, much of our analysis is based on a unique dataset created using microdata samples (i.e., “individual-level” data) from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), for four points in time: 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2014 through 2018 pooled together. While the 1980 through 2000 files are based on the decennial census and cover about 5 percent of the U.S. population each, the 2014 through 2018 files are from the American Community Survey (ACS) and each only cover about 1 percent of the U.S. population. Five years of ACS data were pooled together to improve the statistical reliability and to achieve a sample size that is comparable to that available in previous years. Survey weights were adjusted as necessary to produce estimates that represent an average over the 2014 through 2018 period. Compared with the more commonly used census “summary files,” which include a limited set of summary tabulations of population and housing characteristics, use of the microdata samples allow for the flexibility to create more illuminating metrics of equity and inclusion, and provide a more nuanced view of groups defined by age, race/ethnicity, and nativity in each region of the United States.

A note on sample size

While the IPUMS microdata allow for the tabulation of detailed population characteristics, it is important

to keep in mind that because such tabulations are based on samples, they are subject to a margin of error and should be regarded as estimates— particularly in smaller regions and for smaller demographic subgroups. In an effort to avoid reporting highly unreliable estimates, we do not report any estimates that are based on a universe of fewer than 100 individual survey respondents

Diversity Score

In the equity study, we refer to a measure of racial/ethnic diversity (the “diversity score”). While the common interpretation of this measure is included in the text of the study, the data used to calculate it, and the sources of the specific formulas that were applied, are described below. This measure is based on census tract-level data for 2018 (which reflect the 2014 through 2018 average) from the 2018 5-year ACS. The formulas for the diversity score was drawn from a 2004 report by John Iceland of the University of Maryland, The Multigroup Entropy Index (also Known as Theil’s H or the Information Theory Index) available at:<https://www.census.gov/topics/housing/housing-patterns/about/multi-group-entropy-index.html>. In that report, the formula used to calculate the Diversity Score (referred to as the “entropy score” in the report) appears on page 6.

Estimates of GDP gains from eliminating racial gaps in income

Estimates of the gains in average annual income and GDP under a hypothetical scenario in which there is no income inequality by race/ethnicity are based on the 2018 5-Year IPUMS ACS microdata. We applied a methodology similar to that used by Robert Lynch and Patrick Oakford in Chapter Two of *All-in Nation: An America that Works for All* with some modification to include income gains from increased employment (rather than only those from increased wages).¹¹⁸

We first organized individuals ages 25 to 64 in the IPUMS ACS into six mutually exclusive racial/ethnic groups: non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, Latino, non-Hispanic Asian American/Pacific Islander, nonHispanic, Native American, and non-Hispanic other or multiracial. Following the approach of Lynch and Oakford in *All-In Nation*, we excluded from the non-Hispanic Asian American/Pacific Islander category subgroups whose average incomes were higher than the average for non-Hispanic whites. Also, to avoid excluding subgroups based on unreliable average income estimates due to small sample sizes, we added the restriction that a subgroup had to have at least 100 individual survey respondents in order to be excluded.

We then assumed that all racial/ethnic groups had the same average annual income and hours of

work, by income percentile and age group, as non-Hispanic whites, and took those values as the new “projected” income and hours of work for each individual. For example, a 54-year-old non-Hispanic Black person falling between the 85th and 86th percentiles of the non-Hispanic Black income distribution was assigned the average annual income and hours of work values found for non-Hispanic white persons in the corresponding age bracket (51 to 55 years old) and “slice” of the non-Hispanic white income distribution (between the 85th and 86th percentiles), regardless of whether that individual was working or not. The projected individual annual incomes and work hours were then averaged for each racial/ethnic group (other than non-Hispanic whites) to get projected average incomes and work hours for each group as a whole and for all groups combined.

The key difference between our approach and that of Lynch and Oakford is that we include in our sample all individuals ages 25 to 64, rather than just those with positive income values. Those with income values of zero are largely non-working. They were included so that income gains attributable to increases in average annual hours of work would reflect both an expansion of work hours for those currently working and an increase in the share of workers—an important factor to consider given measurable differences in employment rates by race/ethnicity. One result of this choice is that the average annual income values we estimate are analogous to measures of per capita income for the 25 to 64 population and are notably lower than those reported in Lynch and Oakford; another is that our estimated income gains are relatively larger as they presume increased employment rates.

Endnotes

- 1 See KCET (2016), “Native People at This Place” at kcet-brightspot.s3.amazonaws.com for map and CNRA (2010-2019), “NAHC Digital Atlas” at cnra.maps.arcgis.com for interactive atlas of Native Americans
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- 5 See 805UndocuFund at <https://805undocufund.org/>
- 6 See US Census Bureau, (2015-2019), “ACS Age and Sex” at data.census.gov for more data
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- 8 From California Department of Food and Agriculture (2021), “County Agricultural Commissioners' Reports Crop 2018-2019” at www.nass.usda.gov for more information
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- 15 See US Census Bureau, (2010-19), “ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates” at data.census.gov for more data
- 16 See Pg.38, at <http://www.csun.edu> for graphic

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- 17 See US Census Bureau, (2010-19), “ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates” at data.census.gov for more data
- 18 From “Not Everyone Speaks Spanish,” by Alena Uliasz and Venessa Terán, (2018), UC Davis, at aghealth.ucdavis.edu
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- 20 See “California’s commitment to health equity”, (2021), at covid19.ca.gov
- 21 From “County-level Predictors of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cases and Deaths in the United States: What Happened, and Where Do We Go from Here?,” by John M McLaughlin and others, (2020), Clinical Infectious Diseases, at doi.org
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- 23 USC Equity Research Institute Analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey Microdata from IPUMS. Universe includes people ages 18-64. Data reflect a 2014-2018 average.
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- 25 Analysis and Summary Report of Community Consultations
- 26 USC Equity Research Institute analysis of data from the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and O*NET. Universe includes the employed civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 or older in occupations with valid data for the O*NET physical proximity score. Essential occupations were identified based on an assessment of information from federal and state sources. Higher-risk occupations are defined as having an O*NET physical proximity score of greater than 3.25. Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.
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- 49 Analysis and Summary Report of Community Consultations
- 50 USC Equity Research Institute analysis of 2018 5-year American Community Survey Microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Universe includes all households (no group quarters). Data represent a 2014 through 2018 average.

Endnotes *continued*

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- 54 See “Food Security in the U.S.”, (2021), USDA, at www.ers.usda.gov for more information
- 55 See “Hunger & Poverty in Santa Barbara County: Before COVID-19”, (2017-19), Feeding America, at map.feedingamerica.org for map; See “Hunger & Poverty in Santa Barbara County: Before COVID-19”, (2017-19), Feeding America, at map.feedingamerica.org for map
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