

Women peak 2008

A Women's Needs Assessment



2008 Needs Assessment for Women and Girls in Marin County

Conducted by the
Marin Women's Commission

January 2009

MARIN WOMEN'S COMMISSION *Mission Statement*

The Marin Women's Commission advocates for equity and parity, diversity, self-sufficiency, leadership and access to resources, to enhance the quality of life for Marin County women at all stages of life.

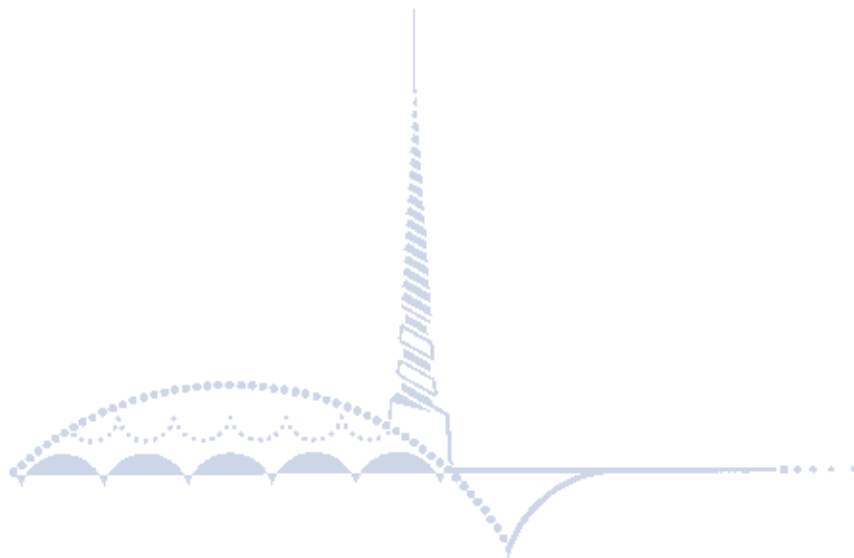


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1. Introduction

This 2008 Needs Assessment builds on information from the five years of the Marin Women's Commission Community Summits. The 2008 assessment enables MWC to continue to evaluate its own strategic direction, examine current trends and prioritize community needs.

The Commission envisions that the findings and recommendations of this report will be used as a tool by the Board of Supervisors, County of Marin, other governmental agencies, nonprofits and the business community.

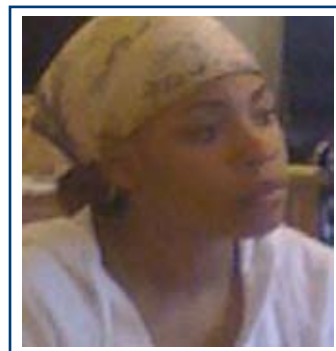
The Commission selected health, education, transportation and seniors as topics of concern for women and girls and chose the Canal, Novato, Southern Marin and West Marin as areas in which to concentrate our inquiry.

In this report, we provide information based on qualitative research and include supplementary quantitative data. Unless otherwise noted, all findings and recommendations are based on the interviews conducted by our consultant and the input of women and girls in recent town hall meetings.

MWC views this assessment as an opportunity to listen to the concerns, challenges and ideas of today's Marin women and girls. Informed by these voices, our goal is to help create solutions for improving the status of women in Marin County by strengthening the advocacy efforts on their behalf.

A key finding expressed by both girls and parents throughout the County is the need to help girls navigate the teen years. One of the Commission's recommendation is to work with the Board of Supervisors to develop a Girls Teen Summit to address issues raised in this report. More educational opportunities beyond the schools are needed for teen girls.

The Commission appreciates the Board of Supervisors' continuing funding and support for the Commission's advocacy for women's needs. According to the Women's Foundation of California, applying a gender lens to direct funding dollars has proven to increase equity and opportunity for women and girls, and thus for our communities and society as a whole.



II. Continued Gender Disparities

In 1983, the Marin Women's Commission completed a comprehensive assessment of women's needs in Marin County. The assessment evaluated the services available to Marin County women, recommended improvements and suggested additional programs that were lacking at that time. The report resulted in the creation of a number of agencies including the Family Law Center (now the Family and Children's Law Center) and the Women's Coalition that brought women's non-profit organizations and county agencies together for a number of years to discuss issues of importance to women and girls.

During the last 25 years, many laws have been enacted and policies created to further women's progress. However, as the Commission has evaluated that progress, in various areas from employment to healthcare to leadership, we noted that women continue to suffer from lower employment in high paying jobs, make less than men in the same professions, and are underrepresented as elected and appointed officials.

Marin Gender Wage Gap 2000 US Census

ratio for full-time, full-year workers

\$61,282.00

Men's Median Annual Earnings

\$45,448.00

Women's Median Annual Earnings (74 cents to the male dollar)

Domestic violence is now the number one crime police respond to in Marin County, and women and girls remain the primary victims. A major gender income gap continues and the challenges of older women— such as isolation and lower income levels— are increasing. Our findings indicate that women's lives have continued to be disproportionately affected by domestic violence, poverty, lack of cost-effective childcare, rising housing costs, divorce and the high costs of health care. These issues require attention and action. When women's needs are addressed and women prosper, the community prospers as well.

In 2004 MWC celebrated its 30th anniversary and held its first *Women Leading Community Change Summit*. This Summit brought local women together for a dialogue about women's issues, highlighting the Commission's four focus areas: Access to Resources, Self Sufficiency, Leadership and Equity and Parity. This initial event, held with Dominican University's Institute for Leadership Studies, became an annual event, entitled *Women Leading Community Change*. The Commission uses this event to inform and gather input from the community.

In 2007, the fourth annual Community Summit titled, "How Far Have We Come?" presented a panel of experts discussing women's progress in the Commission's four focus areas. At that summit, it became clear that in spite of today's enlightened environment, women face continued disparities.

A summary of the Community Summits is available as a PDF at the MWC website, www.marinwomenscommission.org

III. Report Process and Methodology

In early 2007, the Commission engaged the services of Mary Jo Lazear, a local consultant specializing in women's issues, to interview Marin county agencies, stakeholders and leaders in the community to form the backbone of the Needs Assessment. The Qualitative Report *Preserving the Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Services for Women and Girls in Marin County* is available as a PDF at the MWC website.

Initial meetings with the consultant resulted in the selection of four major areas of research that have a tremendous impact on women and girls, and could be investigated within the time and budget constraints of the MWC:

Health
Education
Senior Women
Transportation

Research focused on four Marin communities of special concern:

West Marin
Novato
San Rafael Canal Area
Southern Marin/Marin City

Dominican University students compiled the basic demographics in the fall of 2007, which were modeled after *Status of Women in Your County ToolKit*, a resource kit developed at the Institute of Women's Policy Research. This statistical information is drawn from the 2000 census and interviews with county officials.

Town hall meetings were conducted in both English and Spanish in the spring of 2008. These meetings were designed for women and girls from West Marin, Novato, Southern Marin and the Canal area of San Rafael, to discuss their concerns and needs. The Commission sought to know how community women experienced gaps in services, inadequacies of services; and to gain information on cultural gaps as well. MWC Commissioners from those communities organized the meetings.


In these community meetings, the Commissioners focused on the four major topic areas and encouraged participants to speak on all critical concerns relevant to women and girls in the County. In addition, girls focus groups were held throughout the County and those meeting notes can be found at the Commission website.

The Qualitative Report: *Preserving the Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Services for Women and Girls in Marin County*, the basic demographics and the town hall notes are available as a PDF at www.marinwomenscommission.org.

Town Hall Meetings- Flyers

THE MARIN WOMEN'S COMMISSION INVITES YOU TO A

Marin County Women & Girls Town Hall Meeting



Wednesday, April 30, 2008
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Pickleweed Park Community Center
50 Canal St. San Rafael

Refreshments, and Interpretation to Spanish and Vietnamese will be provided

**Join us to imagine the future for women & girls in Marin!
Let's also honor together women that are making a difference in our community!**

What is a Town Hall meeting?
Come as you are and tell us what today's challenges are for women and girls.
Gender bias? Media images? Dating violence? Disease? Isolation?

We need to hear from San Rafael, Corte Madera y Larkspur
Your input will be included in a new Needs Assessment for policy makers in Marin County. By established ordinance, the Marin Women's Commission advises the Marin County Board of Supervisors and other governmental and community agencies on the needs of women and girls.


All are welcome: teens, mothers, grandmothers, workers, business owners, professionals!

Facilitated by District 4 Commissioners Catherine Ward-Sciesz and Kate Kain
For information contact: Ericka D. Frickson - (415) 571-6649
ericka@co.marin.ca.gov or marinwomenscommission@co.marin.ca.gov
Other Town Hall meetings being held in southern Marin and Novato

Event supported by Canal Welcome Center, Canal Alliance, Councillo del Canal, Parents Service Project, y Grassroots Leadership Network of Marin

The Marin Women's Commission Invites You to

A TOWN HALL MEETING FOR WOMEN & GIRLS



Sponsored by the
Marin Women's Commission

Friday, April 18, 2008
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Margaret Todd Senior Center
1560 Hill Road, Novato
Light Snacks & Treats Provided

Spanish Interpretation Provided

**Join us for the fun of imagining the future
for women & girls in Novato**

What is a Town Hall meeting?
Come as you are and tell us what today's challenges are for women and girls.
Gender bias? Media images? Dating violence? Disease? Isolation?

What's on Your Mind? Come & Share!!
Your input will be included in a new Needs Assessment for policy makers in Marin County. By established ordinance, the Marin Women's Commission advises the Marin County Board of Supervisors on the needs of women and girls.

We need to hear from Novato!

THE MARIN WOMEN'S COMMISSION INVITES YOU TO A

West Marin Women & Girls Town Hall Meeting

Spanish Interpretation Provided
Guest Performers: Harmony and Heartsong Singers

Thursday, January 31, 2008 Dance Palace Church Space
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Treats & Snacks provided

**Join us for the fun of imagining the future
for women & girls in West Marin**

What is a Town Hall meeting?
Come as you are and tell us what today's challenges are for women and girls.
Gender bias? Media images? Dating violence? Disease? Isolation?

We need to hear from West Marin
Your input will be included in a new Needs Assessment for policy makers in Marin County. By established ordinance, the Marin Women's Commission advises the Marin County Board of Supervisors and other governmental and community agencies on the needs of women and girls.

All are invited: teens through seniors of all interests and backgrounds welcome!


Facilitated by Commissioners Kate Kain, Moreva Selchie and Ericka Erickson
Contact: Kate Kain, Commissioner, District 4
kathleen@horizoncable.com or marinwomenscommission@co.marin.ca.us
Other Town Hall meetings b

**Check This Out!!!
Two Meetings**

**Are you a young adult? (18-25)
Can you afford an apartment in Marin?
Do you want affordable housing for your age group?
Come and speak out with other young adults!!!**

When: June 3, 2008
Where: Marin City Senior Center
Time: 4:00 p.m.

Food, Prizes, & Childcare



**Your Voice
Come all Women!!
Voice your concerns about your community!!**

When: June 3, 2008
Where: Marin City Senior Center
Time: 6:00 p.m.

Food, Prizes, & Childcare

Sponsored by: Marin Women's Commission
415-499-6195
Supported by: Family Services Agency
Marin City Network
ISOL, Stater Keepers
Facilitated by: Tiawana Bullock & Ebony McKinley

Marin City Senior Center
630 Drake Ave.
Marin City, CA 94965

IV. WomenSpeak 2008: *Key Findings and Recommendations for Change*

In the community town halls, the MWC undertook a process of listening to WomenSpeak and recording the voices of women and girls. The impact of WomenSpeak was far greater than the MWC anticipated. It created an environment that gave women and girls the opportunity to place their concerns and challenges in a framework that may have shaped the reported problems. It also placed women and girls at the center of the community process for moving forward.

WomenSpeak gives women and girls a place to:

- ◆ Speak their minds
- ◆ Share with other women
- ◆ Affect each woman present
- ◆ Examine problems and develop possible recommendations together

The findings that follow were developed from the town hall meetings combined with material from the qualitative report. The findings convey the voices of the participants and the many concerns that were reported.

These findings and recommendations represent the opinions of those who participated in the 2007 Qualitative report and the 2008 town hall meetings. The recommendations take into consideration all the source materials found in the PDF at the commission website*. In writing this report the MWC also drew upon the Commissioners' areas of expertise and relevant reference sources.

KEY FINDINGS— *Health*

Concerns addressed health and health-related needs of girls, especially teens. MWC identified the following needs:

- ◆ Additional education about drugs, alcohol, and sexuality/fertility
- ◆ Additional funding for health education programs in the schools
- ◆ Improvements in the quality of the food in the schools, to combat poor nutrition, obesity and eating disorders
- ◆ Programs to raise self-esteem for girls and teens, especially when connected to health-related issues

KEY FINDINGS– *Health* (cont.)

Both women and girls felt public health education needs to be a greater part of the educational system as a way to increase accessibility to health and prevention information.

In both the town hall meetings and the 2007 Qualitative Report, women’s healthcare concerns centered on affordability and accessibility. Medical insurance is not affordable for many. Increasing numbers of women in the county are medically underserved and uninsured. An increasing number of providers do not accept MediCal.

Combining services in Novato and the new San Rafael Wellness Campus raises crucial issues of transportation to access these services from other areas of the County.

The participants noted a lack of mental health services for women, including help for postpartum depression, for the intense pressures of parenting (which are magnified for single parents) and for eating disorders in girls. West Marin is especially lacking in mental health services.

“There is not enough health care for teens out here. I grew up here. I wouldn’t walk into the clinic if I was a teen, because everyone knows you in the waiting room.”

West Marin Participant

Other health concerns that were stressed included:

- ♦ Lack of infant formula at the clinics
- ♦ A need for training public health nurses as lactation specialists
- ♦ A need for more in-home healthcare
- ♦ Pesticide use as a cause of health problems

*“We have an oven at school but we don’t use it.
We use packaged food only”*

Novato Participant

In addition, there is strong opinion that Marin City is much less well served than other areas in the County and needs a funded community clinic branch five days a week with paid physicians.

The Commission notes that the Novato Wellness Center is a unique model that provides mental health, substance abuse, reproductive health and case management under one roof. It builds upon linkages already in place and avoids duplication of services.

The intense attention on the rate of breast cancer in the County has led to major regionally and nationally funded research on the disease. The Marin Women’s Study, conducted by the County Epidemiology Department is one of the largest county-run breast cancer research studies in the country. County support for the Breast Cancer Coordinating Council is a positive model for coordination of county and private breast health service providers and addresses efforts to increase awareness of low-cost/subsidized mammograms and treatment services for uninsured women.

HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

Health Recommendations for Girls/Teens:

- ◆ Increase awareness and availability of more health education, mentoring and support programs for young girls/teens, including a focus on healthy relationships to prevent relationship violence
- ◆ Provide mobile pregnancy and birth control clinics at public high schools
- ◆ Increase education programs in public schools on pregnancy and control of fertility
- ◆ Incorporate boys and men into education and prevention efforts regarding sexuality, dating and domestic violence

Health Recommendations for Women:

- ◆ Review the accessibility of current healthcare services (health/wellness facilities, YMCA, public pools, and fitness classes for all ages) by looking at available transportation used by the neediest populations. Meeting their needs achieves the goals of access to needed resources for the underserved populations and of building community among groups
- ◆ Prioritize researching/securing funding for the Marin City Community Clinic to meet community needs and achieve parity in services with other areas of Marin
- ◆ Prioritize researching/securing additional funding for West Marin and Novato clinics. Work with communities to establish a volunteer program to help staff the clinics
- ◆ Ensure that all community food banks have adequate supplies of food, especially protein and specifically infant formula each month and develop infant formula milk bank
- ◆ Offer affordable in-home healthcare by public health nurses and lactation specialists
- ◆ Offer additional affordable preventive healthcare that prioritizes breast cancer, early intervention and detection
- ◆ Increase awareness of toxic pesticide effects and employ regulatory powers to eliminate toxic pesticides used aerially and on the ground. Get informed consent of affected neighborhoods before pesticide spraying. Eliminate the use of toxic chemicals in public-supported housing
- ◆ MWC strongly recommends that the County view the findings from HHS Safety Net Project with a gender lens to ensure that the female 50 percent of the population is addressed with a preventive model and has a safety net

KEY FINDINGS—*Health* (cont.)

HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

Health Recommendations for Women (cont.):

- Ensure that any community clinic include women’s health priorities: early intervention and detection of breast cancer, maternity, preventive services, family planning and teen pregnancy prevention, prescription drug coverage and provision of in-home healthcare by public health nurses and lactation specialists

“Whoever is running the food pantry in Novato has set up their own guidelines and policies about who gets food, when, under what conditions. Real problem is patchwork of services...if you’re hungry on Wednesday and can’t get food from your community until Friday, what do you do?”

Novato Participant

2004–2006 California Healthy Kids Survey (data on Marin County)

Selected Alcohol Measures

	7th Grade		9th Grade		11th Grade		Non-Traditional	
	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %
LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT (High Risk Patterns)								
<i>During your life have you ever...</i>								
been very drunk or sick after drinking alcohol?	5	9	35	25	59	49	69	63
<i>During the past 30 days did you...</i>								
drink 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a couple of hours?	2	4	17	13	34	32	34	41
ATOD USE AT SCHOOL								
<i>During your life have you ever...</i>								
been drunk/high on school property?	3	4	14	12	28	29	41	53

Provided by the Marin County Division of Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Programs

Violence-Related Behavior and Experiences

	7th Grade		9th Grade		11th Grade		Non-Traditional	
	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %
<i>During the past 12 months at school, have you ever been harassed or bullied for any of the following reasons?</i>								
Race, ethnicity, or national origin	10	17	12	19	8	17	14	21
Religion	7	14	11	14	8	10	7	11
Gender	15	8	15	8	13	6	16	9
Gay, lesbian, or someone thought you were	7	14	8	10	4	7	7	12
Physical/mental disability	5	6	6	10	4	6	6	12
Any other reasons	26	29	27	27	17	18	23	23
<i>During the past 12 months at school, have you</i>								
been in a physical fight?	13	34	12	27	8	17	18	29
<i>During the past 12 months did your boyfriend or girlfriend</i>								
ever hit, slap, or physically hurt you on purpose?	1	5	4	5	5	6	14	9
<i>Feels safe at school</i>								
	69	67	63	65	75	74	76	62
<i>Currently belongs to a gang</i>								
	7	11	7	9	4	11	6	16

KEY FINDINGS—*Education*

Healthcare needs overlap with the need for drug, alcohol, fertility and sexuality education. Girls throughout the County expressed a need for more help to successfully navigate the teen years. Parents and girls alike requested more opportunities to learn about and support girls in making positive decisions about their sexuality, drug/alcohol use, healthy relationships and body image. Support programs for parents who struggle economically often fall to the schools that are under funded to provide comprehensive programs.

Girls face injustices (including bullying, harassment, date rape, sexism and racism) that impact them greatly on and off school campuses.

“How can we ask the schools to provide the bulk of emotional and social prevention and education while at the same time providing the academics?”

Novato and West Marin Participants

Our participants indicate that girls would like to have:

- ♦ Stronger support programs, additional counseling and mentoring in the areas that specifically affect girls:
 - Self-valuation, self-perception and double-standard issues
 - Gender-balanced education in curricula, especially in history
- ♦ Better education regarding drug or substance abuse
- ♦ Violence free communication and dating

Although there is an effort to teach about healthy relationships and some bullying prevention programs are presented in the schools, sexual harassment and negative attitudes toward girls from boys and peers are a continuing challenge.

Women and girls struggling with affordable housing, transportation, childcare and play spaces are unable to take advantage of many available educational programs.

More targeted vocational training opportunities are needed to enable women and girls to gain the skills required to earn an adequate income in Marin.

Immigrant women and girls face additional challenges, both economic and social. Lack of English skills becomes a major barrier for women to advance in both areas. Yet, in spite of a desire to acquire bilingual skills, women must first overcome multiple barriers, long work hours, lack of childcare and/or transportation to attend English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. In addition, women report waiting lists for classes and that men's acquisition of English skills takes priority.

Participants also emphasized the need for more ESL classes for women, as well as other educational opportunities for adult women. Many of the existing classes are full or at times that do not fit into the schedules for working mothers. Programs where women can practice their English skills would be very helpful.

Access to ESL classes gives women and girls an opportunity to move beyond economic and social barriers to self-sufficiency and create a stronger community for all. Enabling women to take advantage of programs and opportunities that increase their earning power is paramount to future success for women and families.

KEY FINDINGS—*Education* (cont.)

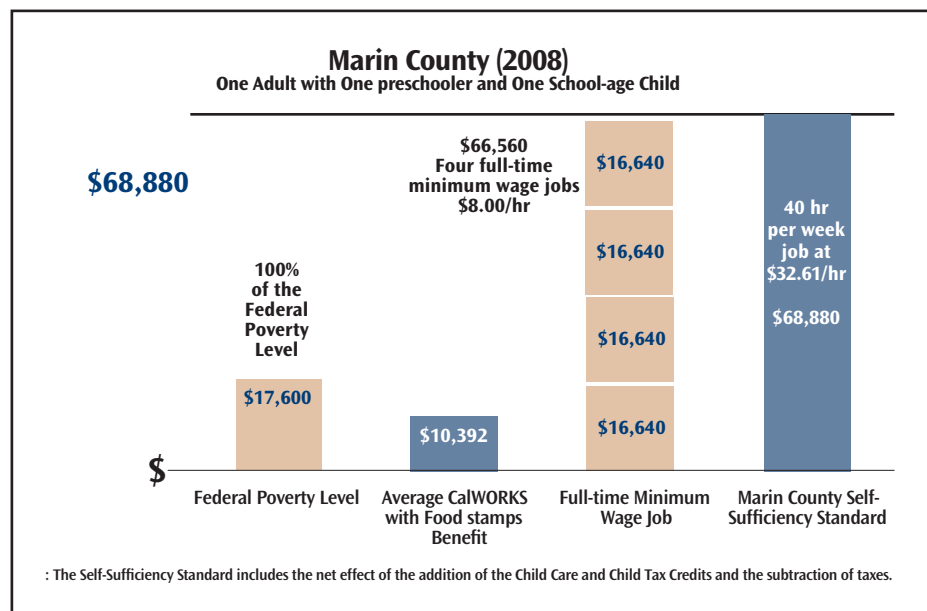
Financial literacy, increased awareness and counseling about careers in science and technology and other nontraditional fields should be expanded in the schools.

Marin County has 19 separate school districts, making a coordinated approach to all the issues facing young girls and women both difficult and imperative.

Participants noted that resources are available in Marin, and recommend improved communications to reach the target populations.

Access to education is critical to women and girls achieving self sufficiency.

Self-sufficiency standard for a family consisting of one adult, a preschooler, and a school age child*.



Basic costs have skyrocketed in Marin County in the past 15 years.

- Childcare costs have gone up 16%
- Healthcare costs have gone up 30%
- Transportation costs have gone up 42%*

Guiding women toward the resources to achieve parity and self-sufficiency from an early age seems to be a common objective in all of the goals and recommendations. Self-sufficient women are more able to access needed services and in turn, create a healthier, more economically and socially sound community for themselves and their families.

**Insight Center for Community Economic Development*

KEY FINDINGS—*Education* (cont.)

Addressing the income gap for Marin County women means:

- ♦ Helping women to move from low-paying jobs to more skilled positions
- ♦ Offering further vocational training in schools and beyond
- ♦ Recruiting and training women to higher paying, nontraditional jobs
- ♦ Making childcare more available to working and reentry parents
- ♦ Increasing focus on counseling young women toward financial literacy, self-sufficiency and leadership skills

Marin women continue to seek economic parity, as do women in the rest of the country. Recognizing this, steps must be taken to prepare women and girls to become, at a minimum, economically self-sufficient, and preferably to move to self-determination of their own success. Self-sufficiency should be defined in the broadest terms to include social, educational and economic perspectives.

Key Points in the Quantitative Report: Ethnic, Income, Employment and Education:

50.2% of Marin County's population are women. Of these, according to the 2000 US Census, 85.2% are white, as compared to 59.6% in California as a whole. In Marin, 9.7% are Hispanic; in California, 31.6%.

Women's median annual earnings were reported as \$45,448, compared to men's of \$61,282. The Marin wage gap is 25.84%. Women make 74 cents to the male dollar in our County. This gap is larger than the State's: in California, women make 78 cents to the male dollar.

64.4% of Marin women participate in the labor force, compared to the state's 55.5%.

34.1% of businesses in the county are owned by women. 52.6% of Marin women are employed in management, professional, and related occupations, compared to 37.99% in the state.

In education, in Marin 50.6% of women age 25 and older have 4 years of college or more; 24.7% in California.



Tomales High School Art Class as shown at West Marin town hall meeting

KEY FINDINGS—*Education* (cont.)

EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- ◆ Bring school districts together to discuss a more coordinated approach to issues of concern for women and girls, possibly through a public hearing
- ◆ Research and promote positive prevention education programs to address gender bias, double standards, racism, religious and ethnic prejudice, bullying and other forms of harassment
- ◆ Increase awareness and accessibility of community programs that value young women and focus on developing their involvement in the larger community, such as International Girls Forum, Girls for A Change, YWCA, and Marin Women Hall of Fame Mentoring Program
- ◆ Work together with the MWC to develop a Girls Teen Summit to address issues raised in this report. More educational opportunities beyond the schools are needed for teen girls
- ◆ Increase accesses to family literacy programs that could be held on Saturdays at County schools, community centers or library sites. Include classes for children, to increase literacy and technology skills as well as classes for parents, in skills including ESL and financial literacy
- ◆ Encourage PTA, Mothers Clubs and ELAC to create community conversation programs. Build community and cultural exchange by holding English/Spanish conversation groups at local libraries. Seniors could also become involved in English/Spanish community activities. These collaborations would provide informal networking and a way to bridge the perceived separateness of the English-speaking and Latino communities
- ◆ Work to increase funding for subsidized slots of day care providers for low income parents. Women are unable to take advantage of equal opportunities because of lack of childcare
- ◆ Provide additional bi-lingual day care providers and staff and non-traditional hours
- ◆ Support the continuation of the College of Marin’s Early Childhood Education Laboratory, the County’s hands-on training program for licensed childcare providers

*“Need funding for after school childcare
in Point Reyes Station 5 days a week”*

West Marin Participant

KEY FINDINGS— *Transportation*

The Marin County Transit District (MCTD), formed in 1964, provides local transit services within Marin County. MCTD contracts with other providers, including Golden Gate Transit and WhistleStop Wheels for local bus and paratransit services.

The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) was created in 2004, with the passage of the County's first transportation sales tax. TAM manages these tax funds and implements the Sales Tax Expenditure Plan. It acts at the County's Congestion Management Agency. Funds from the sales tax are the largest source of funding for the MCTD agency, and the relationship of the two agencies is paramount.

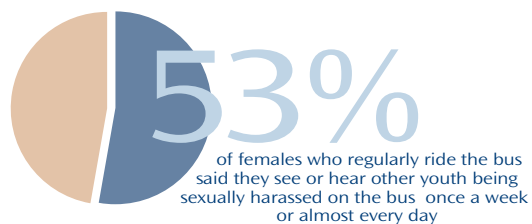
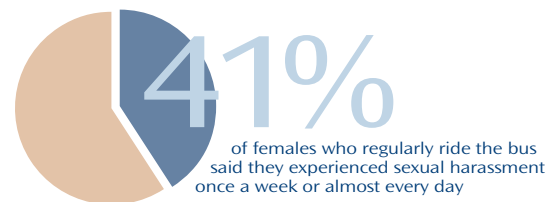
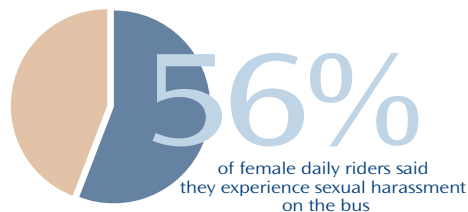
Measure A will provide 55 percent of the sales tax proceeds over the next 20 years in four key areas: local fixed route service, specialized services for seniors, persons with disabilities, youth and low income residents, rural services and transit capital.

Adequate transportation systems are, as one informant said, "a civil right" for women and girls. Security and safety issues are paramount, especially for females. Emergency transport systems are essential for pregnant women. Transport to health facilities and to medical appointments must be available at convenient locations.

Our participants expressed needs for:

- ◆ A variety of choices in transit options to provide access to services and decrease isolation
- ◆ Women expressed concern that Marin Transit uses Golden Gate Transit District buses, which focus on commuters, not day-to-day needs within communities
- ◆ Security and safety issues in public transportation and on roads were of concern. More funds are needed for safer routes, pathways and public awareness programs

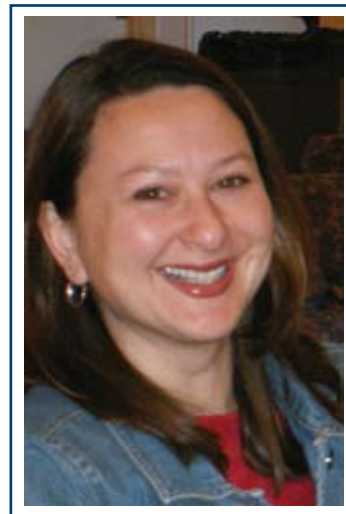
Concerns for girls' transportation safety are underscored by the Youth Commission's Canal Youth Bus Riders survey 2008 that was presented at the August MWC monthly meeting. The following statistics are of special concern:



KEY FINDINGS—*Transportation* (cont.)

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- ◆ Examine existing cross-country transportation systems from two viewpoints:
 - Are they workable for those who have no car or are unable to drive?
 - Are they feasible inducements for leaving the car at home?
- ◆ Identify specific service gaps in transportation options. Expand public or subsidized transportation options, especially in the evening
- ◆ Develop transportation options to clinic services and doctor appointments, especially for teens, moms, and seniors
- ◆ Provide more options and engage community members in the process of matching needs with services in underserved or isolated communities or neighborhoods. Example: after the town hall meetings in West Marin, young women needed transportation over the hill for doctor's appointments, so the community found volunteers to carpool them "over the hill"
- ◆ Investigate a strategy to provide time specific transportation for the s elderly, including use of websites for communications about who needs a ride and who can give a ride
- ◆ Continue discussion of further steps that can decrease feelings of isolation and dependence on cars
- ◆ Allocation of more funds to create safer routes and pathways to schools and for public outreach programs
- ◆ The Commission supports the Youth Commission recommendation to launch an anti-sexual harassment campaign for public transportation. The Youth Commission survey could be an important model in other high school districts of Marin



KEY FINDINGS—*Senior Women*

The town hall meetings and qualitative interviews involved many and diverse senior women and those who work with seniors. However, the more isolated elderly were spoken for, rather than heard from. Their isolated situation is stated well by Director Nick Trunzo of the County Division of Aging:

“...for many older adults, isolation has become a way of life. Health problems, lack of transportation and financial limitations have impeded their ability to access and participate in community life.”

- Great Age Newsletter, Summer 2008

Advocating for senior women, especially the more elderly among them, the Commission presents salient statistics drawn from the County Division of Aging Reports (See source material PDF at the MWC website). This population is growing but support funding is reported to be increasingly inadequate. The statistics available illustrate our qualitative report: “As the population of Marin is graying rapidly, elderly women especially, are disproportionately affected by inadequate services.”

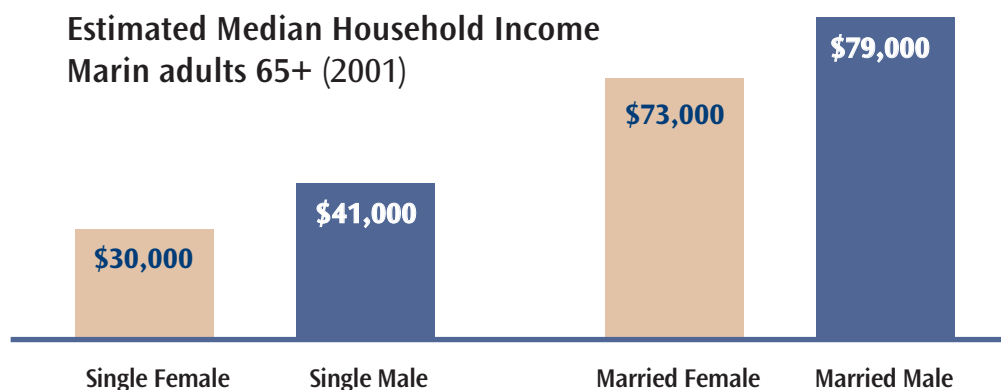
Participants in our study understood the difficulties facing senior women are a concern for all. As Director Trunzo states in the 2008 Great Age newsletter: “Reaching out to elder persons is everyone’s responsibility, and we can start within our own neighborhoods.” Successful programs of intergenerational connectivity such as the Fairfax Vest Pocket (FVP) Community, a shared intergenerational housing project, and the Jewish Family and Children’s Services Senior Companion Program (including teen involvement) show what can be done.

*“How lovely if teens and seniors could spend more time together
and have more connection between generations.*

We all need each other for different reasons and all have much to offer the other.”

Novato Participant

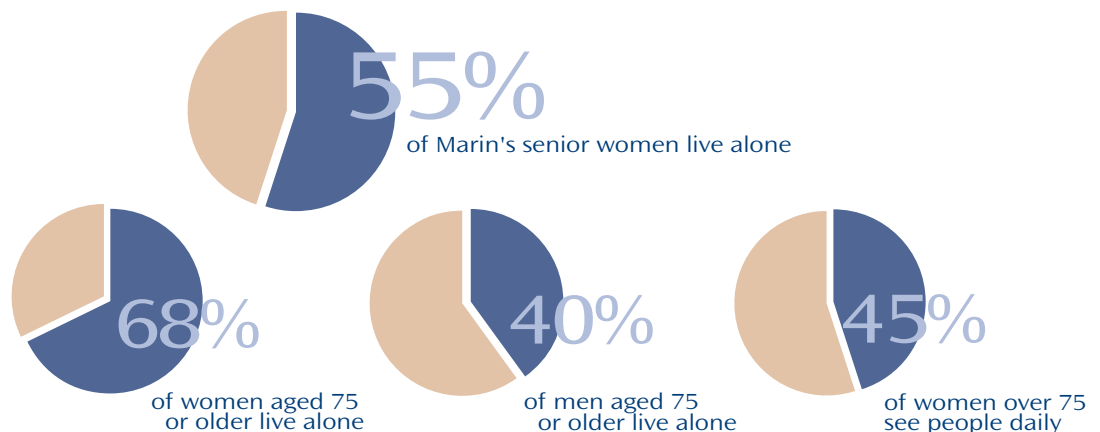
The Division of Aging report emphasizes the “...interconnectedness of needs and issues that affect older adults. The current structure of financing and delivery of services and programs for older adults is fragmented. A more holistic view towards a well coordinated delivery system of programs for older adults is sorely needed.”— Division of Aging Data Report.



KEY FINDINGS—*Senior Women* (cont.)

Our participants report seniors need:

- ◆ Better public transportation with more volunteers to drive them, especially to health appointments
- ◆ Increased numbers of volunteers to help seniors stay in their own homes
- ◆ More attention to housing shortage. Develop more senior housing
- ◆ Develop programs that include visitors and companions for more intergenerational connections that help alleviate seniors' isolation
- ◆ Access to exercise and recreation facilities which is limited in some areas
Participants in both Marin City and West Marin reported a need for a swimming pool that would benefit children, teens, families and seniors



The Division of Aging Data Report

SENIOR WOMEN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- ◆ Review the availability and accessibility of in-home services to help keep seniors in their homes
- ◆ Develop more senior housing
- ◆ Ensure that adequate training and living wages are provided for in-home care givers
- ◆ Create community-based housing solutions to address the isolation and housing affordability crisis. Increase recreation facilities and improve access to facilities
- ◆ Focus on programs to alleviate isolation and expand intergenerational connection
- ◆ Provide time specific transportation for seniors including a volunteer driving pool to assist seniors locally in West Marin
- ◆ Increase connections between the Department of Aging and the MWC

KEY FINDINGS—*Other Town Hall Concerns and Recommendations*

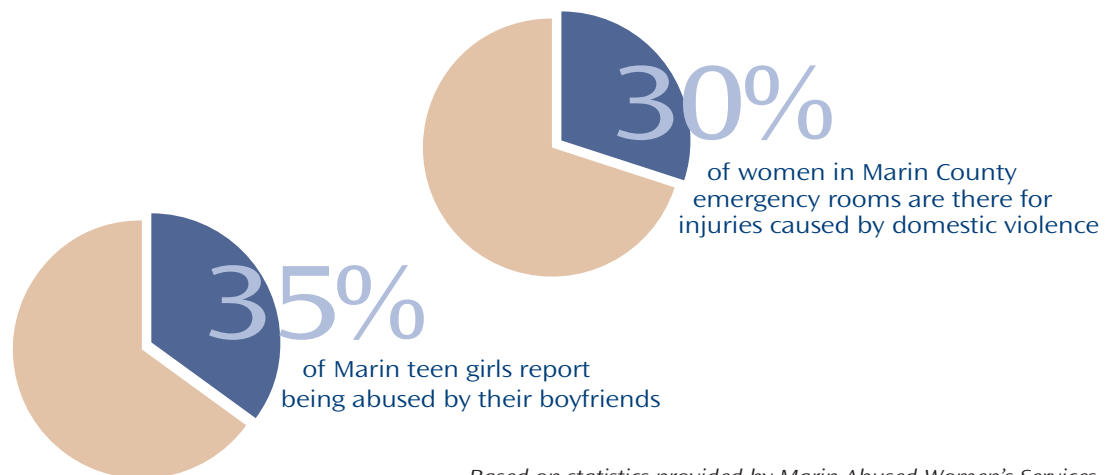
Violence Against Women

Violence against women was a major topic at the town hall meetings. Violence against women is the number one reported crime in Marin according to the District Attorney. Funding is needed commensurate with the extent of the crime.

According to the Executive Director of Community Violence Solutions (CVS), the Rape Crisis Center has shrunk to just two full time employees in the entire County of Marin and is supported by state money only.

With both Marin Abused Women's Services and CVS reporting a crisis in funding, the MWC recommends immediate and serious consideration by the County of more modes of support for crucial efforts to prevent and decrease violence against women, and to shelter and assist the victims.

The complete MAWS and CVS Reports are in the PDF on the MWC website.



Some Participants noticed that there needs to be:

- ◆ An evaluation of mediation procedures in domestic violence cases for possible bias against mothers reporting child abuse
- ◆ Improved response by the Sheriff's Office and increased training, particularly because officers are the first point of contact
- ◆ Improved procedures in Family Court, reporting that Family Court has been unjust in their response to women and that procedures are often "stacked against them"

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- ◆ Bring the programs offered by CVS and MAWS for victims of violence against women into funding parity with other County funded emergency services
- ◆ Fund existing emergency overnight shelters for victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence

KEY FINDINGS—*Other Town Hall Concerns and Recommendations* (cont.)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE (cont.)

- ◆ Continue training of police departments and the Sheriff's Department with special emphasis on immigrant women and gender discrimination
- ◆ Offer bilingual advocacy services for victims of domestic violence in outlying areas

"If the father is abusive, you will find that the father gets a lot of support to hide the domestic violence that is happening."

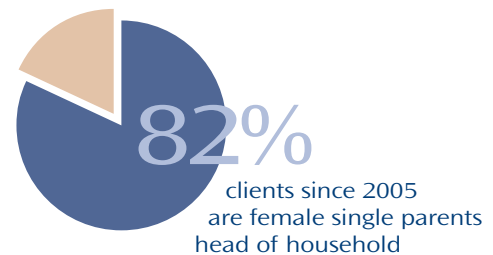
Canal Participant

Housing Support Needs

Housing support for all ages is needed. Our participants noted the need for housing support for homeless young people and for single mothers, as well as a need for more opportunities for them to succeed.

FSS/MHA assists public housing residents in becoming economically independent through education, job training, supportive services and employment. This is accomplished through development of individualized action plans and intensive case management over a five-year period.

A gender breakdown in numbers shows 70% of clients served since Jan. '05 are female single parent heads of household (45 of 64); 82% during the current reporting period (36 of 44) are female single parent heads of household.



..."There are challenges in general when meeting the overall needs of women and girls in public housing. Many women or heads of household, working and/or on benefits (many are working poor) simply do not have enough income for basic standards of living in Marin and in the bay area. Some not all of the women we work with reflect generations of poverty, and lack of education or experience to increase income.

Finances, lack of adequate transportation and maintenance if one owns a car, health (physical, mental), family violence and concerns for their children contribute to depression among many women. However, my experience has led me to believe that the majority of women and girls I met with professionally are highly motivated and have a strong self-assessment of what should be accomplished to obtain goals."

Ruth Cashmere, Coordinator, Family Self-Sufficiency Program,
Marin Housing Authority

KEY FINDINGS—*Other Town Hall Concerns and Recommendations* (cont.)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- ♦ Develop additional transitional housing for women in Southern Marin and a new classification to include transitional youth (age 16-25)
- ♦ Investigate the situation of homeless youth and young mothers. Research models from other communities

ACCESS TO NONTRADITIONAL JOBS

Nontraditional jobs offer a road to self-sufficiency.

Marin County is a leader in environmental awareness and action. Dominican University in San Rafael is the first to offer a “Green MBA.” Community colleges and local green businesses and industries should lead the way in development and vocational training for “green collar” jobs. College of Marin has a solar installation program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- ♦ Conduct a review of currently available programs that encourage and recruit women and girls to nontraditional jobs (both County and private sector)
- ♦ Increase focus on helping girls pursue and feel comfortable pursuing nontraditional occupations and encourage the training of women for the burgeoning “green” industry sector. This can start to level the playing field and help women to reach parity in the job market of the future. The “Green Collar” manufacturing jobs can work in all parts of the County
- ♦ We encourage the County to include goals of women’s self-sufficiency and economic parity in all program evaluations



KEY FINDINGS—*Other Town Hall Concerns and Recommendations* (cont.)

Consolidation and Communication

Our participants expressed needs for more effective communications and consolidations of County and non-profit services.

Services in the County are fragmented; using a Multidisciplinary Team approach in each community might mitigate the problem. In that model, service providers (housing, social services, medical, etc) work together and identify culturally sensitive persons who act as the liaisons between the community and the service provider.

The Multidisciplinary Team approach could help in centralizing social and health services in communities and in developing satellite services in neighborhoods to be within walking distance of each other (clinic, social services, food pantry). More systems of collaboration can be developed such as between juvenile justice, schools, health and human services.

Leadership opportunities are needed to empower women in district training in community advocacy. They would also provide involvement and development opportunities to earn certificates and degrees. Women would benefit greatly from leadership mentoring as well.

Community leaders from each community could meet with the County acting as organizer to discuss how to coordinate services more effectively and to obtain public input about how to distribute resources differently.

Lack of Community

Participants felt that the County's towns and neighborhoods are too separate and do not communicate. There seems to be a lack of connectivity and a lack of sense of community. Opportunities for building community should happen more frequently.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- ◆ Participants commended the value of public town hall meetings as a vehicle to voice concerns and affect change. They hope that youth might be engaged to help peers and seniors, and to become more involved in community centers and projects



Tomales High School Art Class as shown at West Marin town hall meeting

v. Next Steps/Needs Assessment

This report has highlighted current key needs and concerns of women and girls of Marin.

The initial MWC Needs Assessment of 1983 presented many of the same issues discussed in this report. However, the new issues of homeless women, girls and families reflect the continued rising cost and scarcity of affordable housing. The lack of affordable health care has become an even more acute issue. Senior concerns loom larger and will continue to do so due to "the graying of Marin." Transportation continues to be a county-wide problem and has become increasingly a women's and girls' issue.

We have learned that each community WomenSpeak is unique, yet the different Marin Communities share commonalities of issues. Area uniqueness and county-wide similarities characterize both our 2007 qualitative report, based upon interviews of County and non-profit agency staff, and the MWC findings from the 2008 town hall meetings. In addition, our qualitative findings and the qualitative process of the town hall meetings reveal the same issues for women and girls of Marin. This would indicate the findings are mutually validating.

In order to continue this dialogue and follow up on our recommendations, the MWC will distribute this report to all applicable County departments and agencies, non-profits and community funding sources. The MWC will also make report copies available to town hall meeting attendees.

The Commission's Access to Resources Focus Group will monitor the progress of the continuing dialogue as well as the implementation of the recommendations. Commissioners plan to work with a university student intern who will assist the Commission in the follow-up process. By the end of the 2008–09 Fiscal Year, the Commission anticipates inviting dialogue between County and community stakeholders in public hearings.

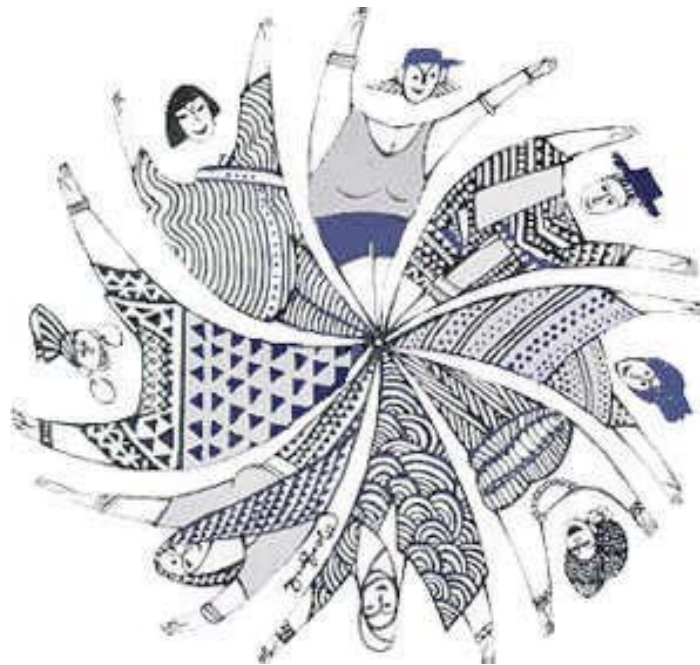
During the two year report process of the Needs Assessment, the MWC has been continuously impressed with the quality and diversity of services offered to residents of Marin. The County of Marin is doing incredible work in areas of concerns of women and girls with limited funding.

It was evident in the town hall meetings that members of the Marin community want to work with each other and the County to make services accessible and affordable. In considering the report findings, the Commission noted two key cost-effective processes: communication and consolidation of services. Public hearings are a valuable vehicle for exploring and evaluating communication and consolidation of services as well as for assessing the services themselves.

This Needs Assessment is primarily a qualitative report. Source material found in the PDF also includes responses to the Commission's requests to various agencies and County departments for data with gender breakdowns. More gender specific data needs to be compiled by agencies and departments for an effective basis for quantitative reports on the status of Marin women and girls. WomenSpeak, however, is invaluable as a portrayal of the experiential needs of Marin women and girls.

VI. Acknowledgements

The Marin Women's Commission especially expresses its appreciation to the many women and girls who attended the four town hall meetings held in Novato, Point Reyes Station, San Rafael and Southern Marin. The MWC much appreciates the support and assistance during the report development process of the Marin County Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator's Office, the Human Resources Department, The Marin Youth Commission and other county departments. We wish to thank our consultant Mary Jo Lazear, and our statistics assistants from Dominican University, Jennifer Williams and Natalie Plaza. MWC past commissioner and current community member, Moreva Selchie contributed as part of the community input process and in writing and editing the report. Numerous organization and community members have generously given much time and thought to the process. The Commission gives thanks to all.



VII. *Supporting Reports, People Contacted/Interviewed and Bibliography*

Supporting Reports

MWC 2007 Qualitative Report: Preserving the Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Services of Women and Girls in Marin County

MWC Demographics based on 2000 Census: *Status of Women in Your County Toolkit*, from the Institute of Women's Policy Research.

MWC 2008 Town Hall Notes, San Rafael/Canal Area, Novato, Southern Marin and West Marin

Marin Girls Focus Groups Meeting Notes

MWC Community Summit Reports *Women Leading Community Change*

Marin County Boards and Commissions: Gender Composition

Marin Teens Data:

- Alcohol & Drug Use by Gender: 2004–06 California Healthy Kids Survey
- Violence Related Behavior by Gender: 2004–06 California Healthy Kids Survey

Marin Youth Commission/Youth Leadership Institute:

The Incidence of Sexual Harassment on Public Transportation– Canal Youth Bus Rider Survey

Notes from Facilitated Discussions at Reunion del Pueblo: 2005

Public Housing Statistics, Marin Housing Authority

Senior Women Demographics from the Marin County Division of Aging

Violence Against Women: Community Violence Solutions Report, 2008, Marin Abused Women Services Report, 2008

Please go to the Marin Women's Commission website: www.marinwomenscommission.org to access the PDF of all the source material used in this report.

People Contacted/Interviewed

Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools,
Marin County Office of Education

Ruth Cashmere, Coordinator, Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Marin Housing Authority

Kristine Fowler Cirby, Attorney-at-Law, Executive Director, Family and Children's Law Center,
MWC Commissioner

Kendra Downey, Nurse Practitioner, Planned Parenthood of the Golden Gate

Juanita Edwards, Marin City Network

VII. *Supporting Reports, People Contacted/Interviewed and Bibliography*

(cont.)

People Contacted/Interviewed (cont.)

Ericka Erickson, Associate Director, Grassroots Leadership Network

Elberta Eriksson, MWC Commissioner

Celia Graterol, MPH, Associate Executive Director, Canal Alliance

Melissa Fike, MFT, Coordinator, Novato Youth Wellness Collaborative,
Novato Wellness Center

Mary Marie Gaines, Executive Director, Marin City Community Services District,
Marguerita C. Johnson Senior Center

Donna Garske, Executive Director, Marin Abused Women's Services

Terry Green, Director, Marin City Health and Wellness Center

Margaret Hallett, Executive Director, Family Service Agency of Marin

Rhonda James, Executive Director, Community Violence Solutions

Marlene Jones, Ed.D., Executive Director, Marin City Health and Wellness Center

Kate Kain, Associate Director Marin Abused Women's Services, MWC Commissioner

Marcia McLean, MWC Commissioner, Co-chair of Access to Resources

Marin Childcare Council

Ricardo Moncrie, ISOJI, Building Communities from Within

Novato Youth Center

Novato Wellness Center

Rebecca Porrata, RN, PHN, Senior Health Nurse Bilingual, Division of Public Health,
Department of Health and Human Services, Point Reyes Station

Veronica Reed, Executive Director, Novato Youth Center

Kathleen Roach, Public Health Nurse, West Marin

Moreva Selchie, Former MWC Commissioner, member of Access to Resources Focus Area

Michael Graham Squire- Marin Youth Commission

Rachel Somerville, Art Teacher, Tomales High School

VII. Supporting Reports, People Contacted/Interviewed and Bibliography

(cont.)

People Contacted/Interviewed (cont.)

Diane Steinhauser, Executive Director, Transportation Authority of Marin

Jane Stringer, FNP, CNM, Point Reyes Medical Clinic

Frima Stewart, Chief, Public Health, Health and Human Services

Gail Theller, Executive Director, Community Action Marin

Jody Timms, Ph. D., PA, Chief of Women's Health Services, Women's Health Services, Division of Public Health, County of Marin

Tom Wilson, Executive Director, Canal Alliance

Wanden Treanor, Trustee, Marin Community College

Nick Trunzo, Director, Division of Aging, County of Marin

Sharon Turner, Project Director, The Marin City Network

Amy Van Doren, Transit Planning Manager, Department of Public Works, Marin County Transit District

Patricia Warren, President, Marin County Board of Education and former staff to the Marin Women's Commission

West Marin Senior Services, Joan Corbett, Executive Director; Pam Osborn, Program Director

West Marin Community Services, Sarah Atherton, Executive Director

West Marin Community Resource Center, Amy Faulstich, Director

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VII. Supporting Reports, People Contacted/Interviewed and Bibliography

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Vital Signs, Checking the Pulse of Women and Children in Marin County, Marin Council of Agencies, October 10, 1992.

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MARIN WOMEN'S COMMISSION *History*

History of Women's Commissions and Marin Women's Commission's Establishing Ordinance

John F. Kennedy originated the first national Women's Commission after vowing during his campaign to examine the issues and concerns facing women. He established the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in 1961 and appointed Eleanor Roosevelt as the Commission's first chairwoman.

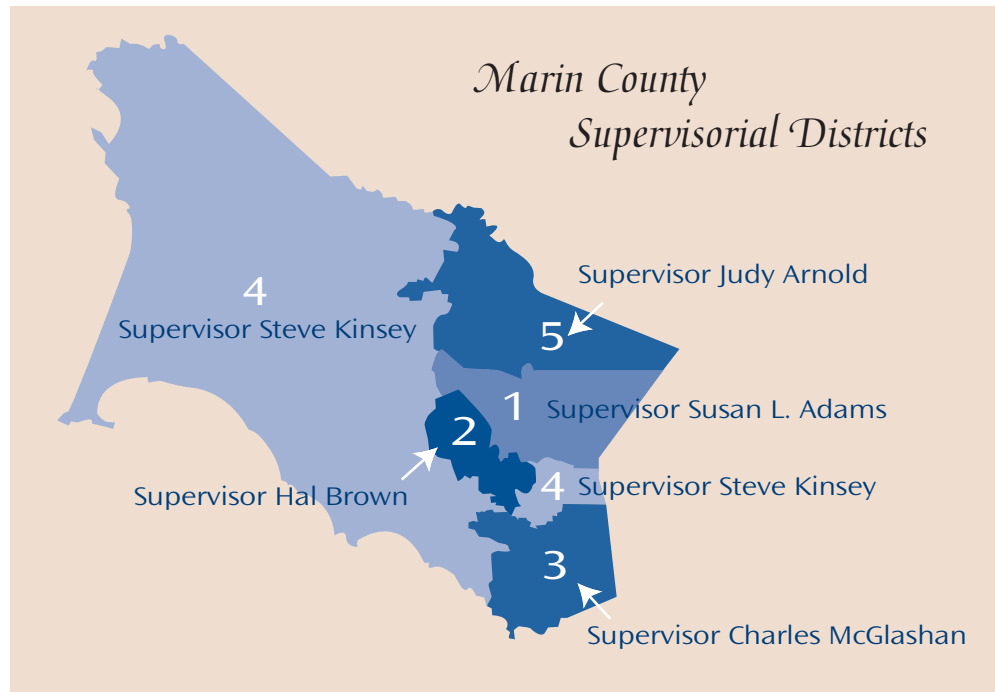
The findings from the President's Commission revealed a staggering number of laws, regulations and traditions that actively discriminated against women. Many states, including California, soon followed the national lead and created state commissions to investigate how the state government hindered women's full and equal status. While few local level commissions were created at that time, Marin County wasn't one to keep silent on issues of inequality.

The Marin County Commission on the Status of Women was created by Ordinance #2078 by the Board of Supervisors in April 1974.

By authority of the establishing ordinance, the Marin Women's Commission is committed to:

- Study and investigate conditions where gender discrimination & prejudice exist
- Advise Marin County Board of Supervisors and other governmental and community agencies on the needs of women
- Advocate and advance economic independence and parity for all women
- Recommend legislation that positively impacts quality of life for women and families
- Recommend programs and practices to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all women
- Maintain an active liaison with groups, organizations, individuals and agencies about issues related to women
- Develop community assets and facilitate access to resources for women in Marin County
- Mediate conflicts and disputes, conduct public hearings within the scope and function of the commission

The first commission in 1974 set the tone for those that followed. Many problems were identified; including the way in which unequal practices within the County government itself impacted women. The Commission lobbied for the establishment of affirmative action guidelines in the county government's hiring and promotion procedures; this was the beginning of the Commission's 34 years of investigations and advocacy for women and girls of Marin.



Marin Women's Commission Commissioners

District 1: San Rafael

Mary Anne Hoover & Marti Rule

District 2: Ross Valley

Laura Adler & Cecilia Zamora

District 3: Southern Marin

Cassandra Anderson & Susan O'Brien

District 4: West Marin/Corte Madera/Larkspur

Kate Kain & Catherine Ward-Seitz

District 5: Novato

Kris Cirby & Pearlene Leary

Commissioners at Large

Elberta Eriksson & Marcia McLean

Former Commissioners During Report Period

District 2 Rosa Maria Hayden

District 3 Barbara Tomber

District 4 Ericka Erickson, Moreva Selchie

District 5 Tricsh Bainer

At Large Yolanda Gibson

MWC Staff Sequential: Carrie Ann Colton, Angela Nicholson, Patricia Warren

Former Supervisor

Cynthia Murray



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