



VENTURA COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Human Services Agency
4601 Telephone Road, Suite 117,
Ventura, CA 93003

Mailing Address: 4651 Telephone Rd, #200
Ventura, CA 93003-8393
(805) 658-4193
www.vccw.net

November 20, 2012

Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject:

Presentation and Receipt of the "Status of Women and Girls in Ventura County" Research Project Report

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Accept the Presentation on the report "Status of Women and Girls in Ventura County;" and
2. Accept the Report on the "Status of Women and Girls in Ventura County."

Reason to Receive the Report:

The Board of Supervisors approved and authorized on March 6, 2012 the research project on the Status of Women and Girls in Ventura County funded by grants from the Women's Legacy Fund and the William A. and Cynthia D. Fairburn, Jr. Memorial Fund, administered through the Ventura County Community Foundation, researched and prepared by K&M Enterprises, and directed and overseen by the Ventura County Commission For Women which has resulted in the attached document valued through funding and in-kind contributions of more than \$75,000.00, and will be used to improve the quality of life for women and families in Ventura County.

Fiscal Impacts:

There is no fiscal impact in receiving the report.

The Report (Exhibit 1):

As a result of the research the study:

1. Provides data to develop programs to reduce systemic social inequalities and lead to positive social change;
2. Is available to be used to inform and advise policy-makers on the matter of gender equity in Ventura County;
3. Establishes a baseline of measurement for future studies;
4. Demonstrates the necessity of collecting statistics of women of all races and ethnicities;
5. Statistically targets origins of differences between men and women; and,
6. May be used to remove barriers women face to allow them economic self-sufficiency and social independence.

Discussion of Recommendation:

The Ventura County Commission for Women (VCCW) was established in 1981 by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors with the mission to encourage, support, and facilitate the empowerment and education of Ventura County women. The commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and advises on issues impacting and/or relating to women and families. The commission also coordinates efforts with federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, and groups to enhance and/or improve the "quality of life" for women and families. The VCCW is comprised of fifteen (15) members (currently 14) – three (3) members from each of the five (5) supervisorial districts – who serve at the pleasure of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors.

During the Ventura County Commission for Women's more than thirty (30) years of service, it has accomplished much through collaborations, partnerships, and individual efforts to bring awareness and societal change in the areas of leadership, child care resources, employer-provided child care, development of a countywide child care resources network, and awareness and education related to domestic violence and other forms of violence against women and girls. During this time, the commission has also initiated and/or been at the forefront of efforts to recognize and honor important historical events involving women and their accomplishments.

In 2007 the Ventura County Commission for Women broached the idea of conducting a comprehensive study of women and girls in Ventura County and approved and launched the Status of Women and Girls in Ventura County study.

The commissioners consulted with the California Commission on the Status of Women and the Institute for Women's Policy Research. As a result, the Status of Women in San Diego County emerged as a preferred model for the Ventura County report.

VCCW commissioners have been determined that the study to be a "living" document that would be an important tool, utilized by many organizations. As an umbrella organization to the women's organizations in Ventura County, the

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VCCW led and guided the design and completion of the report. The study as envisioned includes input from women, women's organizations, and girls from throughout Ventura County and reflects the "voices" of women from all races, ethnicities, religious denominations, and political affiliations.

Because the VCCW is a non-funded county commission, commissioners sought a like-minded financial partner to serve as the fiscal sponsor. Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), a philanthropic steward in Ventura County since 1987, served as Fiscal Sponsor to administer the grant. This organization is under the leadership of the visionary Hugh Ralston.

In May 2011, Professor Downey and four sociology students: Mia de Paula, Celene Fuller, Marisol Rincon, and Bernadette Kajaty researched, compiled and completed the initial phase of the report, compiling information from the census on women and girls in Ventura County which was helpful in obtaining the funding for the county's first comprehensive study of women and girls.

The Women's Legacy Fund (WLF), a network of donors dedicated to advancing the status of women and girls in Ventura County, approved funding of \$10,000 for the VCCW study and the William A. and Cynthia D. Fairburn, Jr. Memorial Fund contributed \$10,000. The VCCW, itself, contributed \$2,500. As a result, funding for the report and its dissemination totaled \$22,500.

K & M Enterprises, a research and fund development company developed in Ventura County in 1992, and today, is one of the nation's largest grant writing and social research firms with unparalleled grant funding success rate. In April 2012, K & M was hired to update the Initial Phase using 2010 census data and other resources and to complete balance of the project under the oversight of the VCCW. K & M's in-kind professional services contribution to the study totals nearly \$50,000.

The Commissioners themselves have contributed many hours of time and labor over the 5 years of its planning and preparation. In addition, a total of 206 community members participated in focus groups and interviews, representing a mix of perspectives across sex, race/ethnicity, age, income level, and political perspective, as well as representation from each city within the county and a good mix of private and public entities, profit and nonprofit organizations, and faith-based organizations. All this facilitated by K & M's team of independent researchers.

As a result, the study we are presenting today to Ventura County Board of Supervisors is valued at **\$22,500.00 in cash** and $[(250 \times 4 \text{ hrs} \times \$25 (= \$25,000)) + 14 \times 36 \text{ hrs} \times 5 \text{ yrs} \times \$25 (= \$63,500)]$ to **\$138,000.00 in in-kind labor** making the total investment **of over \$160,500.00**.

Community members, who will remain anonymous, participated in the seven focus groups, addressing the four Power Issues and represented these various involved communities:

- **Power to Meet Basic Needs:** Women community leaders in Health Services Agency, United Way, water district, child care, philanthropic organizations.
- **Power to Attain Educational and Occupational Goals:** Women community leaders in employment and education (e.g., business owners, small business trainers, teachers, principals, university staff, women's advocacy groups).
- **Power to Stay Safe and Healthy:** Women community leaders in physical health, behavioral health, mental health and safety (e.g., nursing, dental health, health advocacy groups, peer health advisors, Ventura County Public Health, Ventura County Behavioral Health, a nonprofit counseling center, Veteran Administration centers and clinics, California Highway Patrol, county courts).
- **Power to Make Political Policies and Decisions:** Women community leaders in political leadership and political participation (e.g., county commissioners, other than VCCW commissioners), non-partisan political action groups, former and current elected officials, partisan leadership organizations from both sides of the aisle, board members, and community activists.
- **Teen Girls:** 1) A diverse group of 13-18 year olds representing public, private, continuation, and faith-based schools countywide. 2) Teen girls and young women representing Mixteco and other indigenous populations: ages 13-20 attending middle school, high school, community college, and universities.



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- Men's Focus Group: former elected public officials, corporate human resources, education leaders, county leadership, nonprofit youth-serving agencies, faith-based nonprofit organizations, and higher education

The five methods used for the study were Data Collection and Analysis, Focus Groups (held from July 20 to September 10, 2012), Key Informant Interviews, and Focus Group Surveys.

The Report is the result of a comprehensive demographic analysis using data from the United States Census; the United States Census American Community Survey; computer-based research; a wide range of federal, state, and local government agencies; a wide range of local community-based organizations; county and city reports; newspaper articles; and other sources of qualitative data and information (i.e., focus groups, focus group surveys, key informant interviews, etc.). The data that was used represents a "point in time" and the most recent data available.

The 2012 Status of Women and Girls in Ventura County Report provides a statistical snapshot of women and girls in Ventura County as seen through the following **secondary goals**:

- Baseline data compiled about women and teen girls, with special emphasis on women of color countywide within four arenas that measure the power of women in a community:
 - Power to Meet Basic Needs (economic and social autonomy) examines the ability of women to access food, housing, clean water, and medical care
 - Power in Occupation Selection and Flexibility (employment, education/wages) by examines school enrollment, dropout rates, graduation rates, women's educational attainment levels, current trends in women's employment, earning levels, and top employers in the county
 - Power to Stay Healthy and Safe (physical and mental health and well-being) examines prevalent chronic health conditions, access to healthcare, premature causes of death, access to preventive healthcare, mental and behavioral health concerns, victimization trends, and crime rates
 - Power to Make Decisions and Policies (political participation) examines demographics of local, state, and federal elected leaders; barriers that inhibit women from pursuing elected office; and trends in voter registration and voter turnout
- Identifies the most pressing needs and barriers to success of Ventura County women and teen girls within the four (4) power areas.
- Provides a list of relevant recommendations from men, women, and teens countywide for next steps to address pressing needs and reduce barriers within the four power areas.
- Assesses the availability of useful and tractable data segregated by sex and also by race/ethnicity.

The **long-term goal** of the report is to promote gender equity and opportunities for Ventura County women and girls. The desire of the Ventura County Commission for Women is to impact public policy and to promote gender equity in the public and private sectors by assisting governmental and non-governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, policy makers, community activists, advocates, academics, researchers, teachers, parents and individuals to promote gender equity and increase opportunities for all Ventura County women and girls.

In summary, to many Ventura County residents, the county is considered a "paradise on earth." With wonderful weather, a remarkable geographic location, and a fairly high standard of living, the county is fortunate in so many ways. Although Ventura County is a fairly advantaged county overall, it is important to analyze the standard of living for all Ventura County residents and not just the most advantaged. The 2012 Status of Women and Girls in Ventura County Report determined the true standard of living that is being experienced by all Ventura County women and girls – those women and girls who reside in high-income households, as well as, those who reside in middle-income and low-income households and those who reside in households with poverty-level incomes. The study gives a very clear overview of how Ventura County women and girls are managing in 2012. The study includes quantitative and qualitative data that has been collected and analyzed including valuable and insightful input from community members about issues and findings. The report also presents clear and substantial recommendations that can improve the standard of living in communities where change needs to be made.



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The document, "Status of Women & Girls in Ventura County," is attached. The Ventura County Commission for Women hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for many significant large and small "calls to action" throughout Ventura County. The Commission encourages government agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools, clubs, and other groups to review the "snapshot in time" findings in relation to specific areas of expertise and/or interest. Collectively, and as individuals, interested readers can address the disparities that are evident in many areas of the county.

Yours in Partnership,

Lee Riggan
Chair