

FINDING POSITIVE HEALTH IN “FORTALEZAS” AND “COMUNIDAD”: A Case Study of Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley



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Comments and requests:

Comments or requests for a copy of the report should be sent to Dr. Daniela Domínguez at dedomínguez@usfca.edu.

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Entire sections of this report may have been used in scientific manuscripts and journals.

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We gratefully acknowledge the five researchers of our CERT: Noemi Degante-Blancas, Richard De León, Steve Juárez, Eloísa Ruano González, and Madeline Chadwick. Special thanks to the Hanna Institute Co-Directors Erin Hawkins and Nick Dalton for providing oversight for our case study. We would like to thank the University of San Francisco for providing institutional review board approval (IRB); Dr. Robert Macy from the International Trauma Center (ITC) for his continuous supervision of our work; Dr. Joop de Jong from Netherlands’ Erasmus University Rotterdam for offering an external evaluation of our community-based participatory research (CBPR) design; Ana Lugo from Equity First Consulting for acting as our equity, diversity, and inclusion consultant; Alison DeGraff Ollivierre from Tombolo Maps and Design for her cartographic and geographic information systems (GIS) expertise and support; and Sarah Hamilton from the University of San Francisco’s Graphics Center for designing this report’s cover page.

We dedicate this report to the Sonoma Valley residents who shared their gifts, talents, and wealth of diverse experiences with our research team. We hope that through the use of the asset maps on this report, Sonoma Valley residents will bear witness to the significance of Latino/X “fortalezas” [strengths] and communal spaces. We also hope that the recommendations provided in this report will help improve Latino/X access to services and the creation of initiatives that lead to the well-being of Sonoma Valley communities. By developing interpersonal trust, community engagement, and reciprocal partnerships, our case study was possible.



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Community-Based Partnerships

The future of Sonoma Valley depends on the contributions of its local community-based organizations and the region’s residents. Therefore, the Hanna Institute, the University of San Francisco (USF), the Center for Well-Being, La Luz Center, Nuestra Voz, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley, the Sonoma Valley Community Health Center (SVCHC), the Latino Advisory Committee, the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, Raizes Collective, LGBTQ Connection, Latino Service Providers, and the Sonoma Valley Unified School District (SVUSD) have partnered to bring visibility to the unfair conditions and unequal access to resources that have impacted the lives of Sonoma Valley Latinos/X.

As a coalition of community partners, these organizations are invested in developing and promoting culturally relevant initiatives and services that enhance wellness and positive health among underserved communities. Members of these organizations recognize the importance of addressing barriers to care and focusing attention on maximizing the assets and “fortalezas” [strengths] that are prevalent among Sonoma Valley Latinos/X.

Members of these organizations may have participated in focus groups and in-depth interviews; supported our recruitment efforts and participatory mapping process; and/or facilitated the distribution and dissemination of this report, which we titled *Finding Positive Health in “Fortalezas” and “Comunidad”: A Case Study of Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley (2020)*. Prior to publication, this report was reviewed and approved by our community partners.



Richard De León discusses the findings in this report at the 2019 Latino Health Forum. (Pocho, 2019)



Daniela Domínguez discusses the methodology used in this case study at the 2020 Hanna Institute Summit. (Community-Engaged Research Team, 2020)

List of Community Partners

La Luz Center



Nuestra Voz



Raizes Collective



Sonoma County Community Development Commission



Sonoma County Community Development Commission

University of San Francisco



LGBTQ Connection



Sonoma Valley Community Health Center



Center for Well-Being



Hanna Boys Center



Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley



Sonoma Valley Unified School District



Latino Service Providers



Notes on Contributors

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Dr. Daniela Domínguez is the research director at the Hanna Institute and an assistant professor in the Counseling Psychology Department at the University of San Francisco, where she coordinates the Marriage and Family Therapy program at the Santa Rosa Campus. As a licensed psychologist, Dr. Domínguez works in the area of Latino/X mental health, immigration concerns, and LGBTQIA+ matters. Previously, her program of research has focused on understanding how Latinos/X and immigrants cope with risks, threats, demands, and stress and use specific strategies to draw upon resiliencies to achieve positive health.

The Cartographer and Certified GIS Professional

Alison DeGraff Ollivierre is a cartographer and certified GIS Professional (GISP) with a strong focus on participatory mapping. She has received cartography awards from the Cartography and Geographic Information Society (CaGIS), the American Association for Geographers (AAG), and the National Geographic Society. Alison currently works as a cartographer at National Geographic Maps and conducts freelance work at Tombolo Maps and Design.

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The Hanna Institute

The Hanna Institute envisions a world where every child grows up resilient and healthy, regardless of personal circumstances. It seeks to raise awareness about child trauma and early adversity while promoting the resilience and recovery of children and adults. As a leading provider of trauma-informed care training in Sonoma County and Northern California, Hanna Institute's mission is to support parents and child-serving systems with resources that build resilience and hope.



Foreword

Our community-engaged research team celebrates the beauty of Latino/X cultural health, wealth, and wisdom.

A critical need exists for health researchers, social scientists, policymakers, and community members and practitioners to further advance the scholarly exploration of Latino/X health and well-being in the region. To advance Latino/X scholarship, our community-engaged research team (CERT) seeks to facilitate a deeper understanding of the multiple assets and resources that Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley employ to promote their well-being, which may contribute to findings from previous research studies and literature (Sonoma County Summary Measures of Health 2015-2017, 2019; A Portrait of Sonoma County, 2014; Sonoma County Community Health Needs Assessment, 2016; The Sonoma County Remaining Uninsured Study, 2017; Sonoma County Economic Development Board, 2017).

Presently, Latinos/X rank lowest in welfare, education, and income levels compared to other ethnic and racial groups in Sonoma County (A Portrait of Sonoma County, 2014). Our CERT proposes that these rankings are due, in part, to existing structural inequities and disparities that hinder the political, educational, and financial power of Latinos/X in the region. While these disparities create an unfavorable social stratification in Sonoma Valley, Latinos/X often harness their “fortalezas” [strengths], assets, power, and resilience to cope with and overcome stress. They employ these “fortalezas” with integrity, courage, strength, and creativity.

This report, which includes findings from our case study titled *Finding Positive Health in “Fortalezas” and “Comunidad”: A Case Study of Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley (2020)*, describes these assets and “fortalezas” in detail while highlighting the disparities in income, housing opportunities, health care access, educational attainment, and the obstacles to proportionate leadership representation that impact their quality of life. The assets described in this study include community, political, spiritual, cultural, and physical resources that Latinos/X perceive to be important contributors to their health and well-being.

Using geospatial information, this report also includes two asset maps that offer a clear representation of the physical and communal assets that emerged during the participatory mapping process of our research. “**Assets**” in this report are defined as resources, tangible or intangible, individual or collective, that can be leveraged to produce possible solutions, value, positive health, and well-being. We end this report with data-supported recommendations to help elicit and amplify the “fortalezas” [strengths] and spirit of “comunidad” [community] that exist in Sonoma Valley today.

Note: Although the CERT prefers to use the gender-neutral term “LatinX,” Sonoma Valley community members and leaders expressed concern that this term may be unfamiliar to some Latinos/X and “offensive” to those interested in “preserving the essence of the Spanish language.” Thus, rather than replacing Latino with LatinX, community practitioners and residents proposed placing the “X” next to the word Latino. Mindful of the core principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR), our CERT adopted the term proposed by the community — Latino/X.

Executive Summary

Contributions:

- In this report, our community-engaged research team (CERT) proposes that current Latino/X quality of life (QOL) rankings are due, in part, to existing structural inequities and disparities that hinder the political, educational, and financial power of Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley. We bring visibility to the inequitable conditions and unequal access to resources that have impacted their lives.
- This case study advances existing scholarship on Latino/X health and well-being in the region. To our knowledge, this is the first report to include information on the age, gender, heritage, language spoken at home, citizenship status, household income, education, and health of Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley.
- Using asset-based community development (ABCD) and community-based participatory research (CBPR), our CERT identified and explored the “assets” that Sonoma Valley Latinos/X rely on to overcome stress and adversity (based on a sample of 54 participants). Our case study focused on understanding participants’ resilience, strength, and creativity rather than a sole focus on the challenges and adversities impacting them. This is the first report in Sonoma Valley to study Latino/X “fortalezas” [strengths], assets, support systems, and coping strategies.
- Using participatory mapping, Sonoma Valley’s community-based organizations, Latino/X residents, and members of our CERT collaborated in the development of two asset maps that offer a representation of the physical and communal assets that Latinos/X access for formal and informal support. These maps were created to document the gathering spaces where Latinos/X feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed.
- Rather than rely on “expert-based” recommendations for supporting Sonoma Valley Latinos/X, we included participant-endorsed recommendations that seek to build capacity for existing Latino/X “fortalezas” [strengths] and assets.

Background: Psychological literature and needs-assessment reports emphasize that Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley continue to be impacted by the detrimental effects of the 2017 Northern California wildfires (Dominguez & Yeh, 2018), current immigration enforcement practices, higher rates of poverty, lower educational attainment, persistent barriers to health care access, and obstacles to proportionate leadership representation compared to White American families. To cope with these disparities and navigate life adversities, Sonoma Valley Latinos/X often rely on “fortalezas” [strengths] and community, political, spiritual, cultural, and physical assets. These assets, which often include meaningful interactions with family, friends, neighbors, folk healers, faith-based organizations, and community members, must be incorporated when health care, community, and social service initiatives are designed and implemented.

Method: Our community-engaged research team (CERT) used asset-based community development (ABCD) as a conceptual framework (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) and community-based participatory research (CBPR) (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003) as a methodological approach to explore the assets and “fortalezas” [strengths] that have enabled Latinos/X to overcome adverse experiences in Sonoma Valley. Five focus groups and 29 in-depth interviews were conducted because these methods are well-suited for Latino/X relational styles of “platicando” [small talk] (Delgado-Romero, Singh, & De Los Santos, 2018). Participants were 18 years or older, lived or worked in Sonoma Valley, and self-identified as Latino/X. Our sample included Latino/X parents, grandparents, artists, folk healers, health and social service providers, community leaders, students, and school personnel. Specific locations where interviews took place include the Hanna Institute, Nuestra Voz, La Luz Center, Center for Well-Being, Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley, the Family Resource Center in El Verano, the Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, participants’ houses, and the broader Sonoma Valley community. Our research prioritized depth of relational engagement rather than sample size (Bowden, Caine, Yohani, 2017). We discontinued data collection once our research objectives were achieved and data saturation was accomplished. For data analysis, we used quasi-statistics to quantify the frequency of asset endorsement; open, axial, and selective coding to identify and categorize the assets; and GIS software for the creation of our two asset maps.

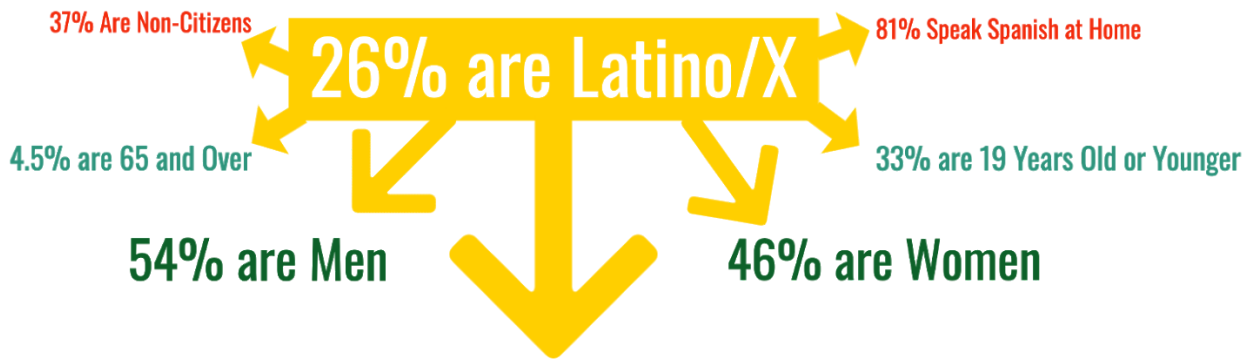
Findings: Findings indicate that Latinos/X are marginally positioned within Sonoma Valley society. Latinos/X have coped with and adapted to adverse conditions and disparities using and relying on a variety of informal networks and formal sources of support. Their decision to rely on one source of support over another is often based on (a) the extent to which they can afford the services or support required; (b) their particular needs, goals, or objectives at the time the help is needed; (c) their preference for support resources that honor “respeto” [respect], “personalismo” [a preference for close personal attention in relationships], and stable and welcoming intimate relationships with others; (d) the accessibility associated with pursuing these support services (e.g., geographic and transportation limitations); and (e) the extent to which culturally relevant and Spanish-speaking support can be found.

Dissemination: All data in this study is co-owned with the Sonoma Valley community. With the help of our community partners, this report was disseminated in Sonoma Valley during community meetings and forums, offering residents the opportunity to provide feedback, debate preliminary results, and assess whether their voices were captured accurately. Once the community expressed that the findings were representative of the Latino/X experience in Sonoma Valley, we finalized recommendations to assist community members, government officials, and health care and social service providers in designing culturally informed social, health, and/or community programs.

Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley

The second largest racial and ethnic group in Sonoma Valley

Sonoma Valley has 40,553 residents



Heritage

86% are Mexican

4.1% are South American

2.8% are Central American

1.6% are Puerto Rican

47% were born outside of the US



Latino/X families are younger and have more children than White families.

Adversities & Challenges Impacting Participants



Housing Concerns & Socioeconomic Challenges. Across all age groups, participants reported stress and diminished quality of life due to housing concerns, socioeconomic challenges, and difficult employment conditions. Housing concerns (the most frequently endorsed concern or challenge) included elevated housing costs, substandard living conditions, fear of residential displacement, and the impact of gentrification. In addition to unaffordable housing, participants perceived economic hardship to be associated with low wages and high out-of-pocket fees due to limited or lack of health insurance coverage. Those who identified as “parents” in our study expressed feeling concerned about the frequent and prolonged absence from their children as a result of their significant employment demands and long work shifts. For elders, concerns around their limited or lack of retirement plans emerged.



Barriers to Health Care Access. Participants said they underutilized health care services given their limited or lack of health insurance coverage; the limited supply of Spanish-speaking providers and specialists (e.g., culturally informed pediatricians) in Sonoma Valley; concerns around not understanding “confusing” health care eligibility requirements and applications; high out-of-pocket fees for medical care; and transportation difficulties for health care visits.



Living Unincorporated. Participants living in unincorporated areas reported feeling neglected, overlooked, left out of local decision-making, and with limited access to public transportation and other public services. They expressed feeling more segregated, disadvantaged, and with “less say and power per voter” than residents in incorporated areas, which they believe results in unequal and unfair political representation.



Impacted by Wildfires. Participants reported stress responses in the aftermath of the 2017 Northern California wildfires, including anxiety, hypervigilance, vivid memories of the fires, and sleep disruptions. Previous literature suggests that undocumented Latinos/X perceived limited access to support and resources, in part, because some undocumented adults were unable to take advantage of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) cash assistance programs due to FEMA’s citizenship and immigration requirements. Participants endorsed feeling hypervigilant and anxious about future wildfires in Sonoma County and their potential impact on their health.



Immigration Enforcement Practices & Anti-Immigrant Sentiments. Participants reported “miedo” [fear] given the intensified anti-immigrant sentiments and current immigration enforcement practices across the U.S., which sometimes resulted in perceived psychological distress and diminished quality of life. Concerns related to anti-immigrant sentiments included fear of White supremacy groups, racism, and violence against Latino/X communities. They reported “ansiedad” [anxiety] because of previous use of immigration enforcement practices, including raids, expedited deportation proceedings, and arbitrary removals in Sonoma Valley. For Latino/X parents, the fear of being separated from their children due to deportation generated concern for their family’s well-being.



Undocumented & Uninsured. Undocumented adult participants expressed concerns about their inability to enroll in tax credits, federal subsidies (e.g., Medicaid), and FEMA cash assistance programs given their immigration status. Uninsured and underinsured undocumented participants described their experiences in health care agencies as frequently uncomfortable and anxiety-provoking, especially when asked about their payment for health services.



Lower Educational Attainment. Participants attributed the lower educational attainment of Latinos/X (compared to White residents) to the high cost of higher education; language barriers; literacy concerns; difficulties managing employment and educational demands; and limited opportunities for mentorship and vocational guidance from parents, individuals in higher education or professional roles, and Latino/X leaders in positions of power.



Lack of Proportionate Representation in Leadership Roles. Participants reported disproportionate representation in leadership roles across a variety of sectors throughout Sonoma Valley, including government offices and top leadership positions. They believed this disproportionate representation impacted their visibility, the power of their voice, and investment in the issues and matters that Latinos/X often care about (e.g., immigration reform, housing concerns, job security).

Support Systems & Coping Strategies Benefiting Participants

Formal Support



Formal support is defined as individuals from local organizations or agencies that provide help or support services to the Latino/X community.

Participants reported benefiting from formal sources of support. Formal services were pursued when critical elements of participants' personal networks were insufficient, unresponsive, or when their needs, given their complexity or severity, could not be addressed by friends, "comadres," family members, or neighbors because of their lack of specialized skills or health care training. Their use of formal services often depended on whether the agency or organization was perceived to be inclusive and "supportive" to the Latino/X community and whether Latino/X or Spanish-speaking professionals were available to provide services.

Participants reported that learning about formal services from their personal networks increased their readiness and confidence in pursuing health care and social services. Participants were more likely to seek help from organized care settings if they had previously experienced positive and validating interactions with culturally informed and/or Spanish-speaking practitioners.

Most Frequently Used Formal Sources of Support

Social and Community Services

- La Luz Center
- Nuestra Voz
- St. Leo's Catholic Church
- Friends in Sonoma Helping (FISH)
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley

Health Services

- Sonoma Valley Hospital
- Sonoma Valley Community Health Center

Informal Support



Informal support is defined as resources that are part of participants' personal social networks.

"La familia" [family] was the most frequently endorsed asset in this case study. Participants perceived adversities as collaborative challenges that needed to be dealt with by the family system. For those who were uninsured, underinsured, undocumented, or unable to receive immediate services (e.g., those waitlisted by social service agencies), family support between relatives was essential given their accessibility and affordability concerns and the existing limitations with formal care. For undocumented participants, including those granted relief through the DACA program, they endorsed finding protection, consolation, and support in family, friends, allies, and other undocumented Latinos/X.

Coping Strategies



Coping strategies are defined as behaviors that participants frequently used to adjust and adapt to challenges.

Participants reported using several strategies to deal with stress, including:

- (a) spending time with family, neighbors, friends, and the local community to enjoy safety, care, and nurture;
- (b) participating in cultural traditions and rituals in "comunidad" [community], such as attending Cinco de Mayo and Día de los Muertos events;
- (c) being engaged in faith-based services and indigenous healing practices to experience feelings of hope and inspiration;
- (d) and working diligently in their occupation to ensure their family's economic "sobrevivencia" [survival] which, in turn, lowers their stress levels.

Latino/X Assets in Sonoma Valley Community



Community



Political



Spiritual



Cultural



Physical

Community Assets

A community asset is defined as a resource or collective experience that can be leveraged to enhance people’s well-being and quality of life and that can be used to promote effective solutions.

- La Familia [Family]
- Las Comadres [Intimate Friends]
- Los Amigos [Friends]
- Los Voluntarios & Las Promotoras [Volunteers & Community Health Workers]
- Los Vecinos [Neighbors]
- The Caretakers
- Los Mentores & Maestros [Mentors & Teachers]
- Los Trabajadores [The Workers]

Political & Legal Assets

A political asset is defined as a resource that generates the power or influence needed to mobilize community members/voters, achieve policy reforms, or accomplish political goals.

- La Residencia Permanente & Ciudadanía [Permanent Residence & Citizenship]
- Líderes Latinos/X en la Comunidad [Community Leaders] and Grassroots Organizing
- Allies

Cultural Assets

A cultural asset is defined as a resource that has value because of its contribution to a culture’s heritage, creativity, knowledge, traditions, meaning, and vitality.

- Las Raíces [Roots]
- La Celebración [Celebration]
- La Danza y La Música [Dance & Music]
- La Comida [Food]

Spiritual Assets

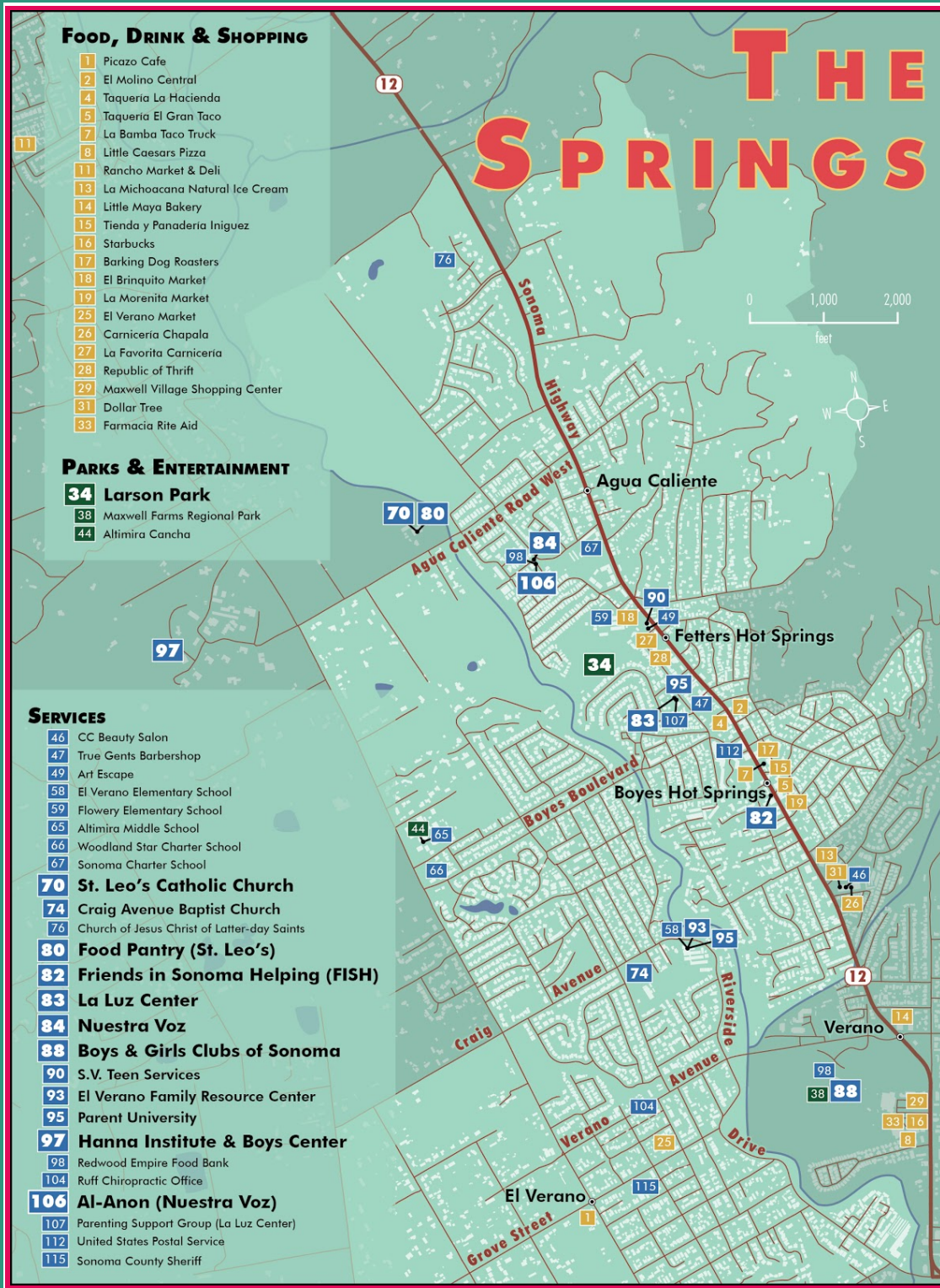
A spiritual asset is defined as a resource that enables the Latino/X community to engage, receive, and benefit from acts of compassion, mercy, justice, and indigenous healing.

- La Iglesia [Church]
- Folk Healers
- Alternative Treatments
- Spiritual Practices

Physical Assets

A physical asset is defined as land, buildings, and spaces where Sonoma Valley Latinos/X congregate and enjoy “comunidad” [community].

Participants identified local businesses, restaurants, bakeries, coffee shops, markets, shopping centers, parks, community centers, school facilities, and public libraries as valuable assets where they engage in “convivencia” [engaging in community] and share sociocultural histories. The process of transforming these physical spaces into community resources reveals residents’ resilience. In these physical spaces, participants share support, debate local politics, discuss goals and plans for achieving them, and dream for a better tomorrow. Next, we include two maps locating these assets.



The "Springs" asset map locates the resources and gathering spaces where Latinos/X provide or receive support and congregate in "comunidad" [community]. In the *physical assets* section of the full report, we provide contact information and a brief description of the specific services provided at each location.

Note: The font size of each identified asset represents the frequency of self-reported participant utilization, with larger font sizes suggesting higher frequency of use.

Data collection: Data was collected through surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. We used participatory mapping during focus groups to identify these sites geographically. Surveys were used with all participants to measure frequency of asset use. Participants were asked:

(a) Please identify the resources you use when needing support or facing adversity. Please indicate how often you seek support there. (1-5 scale)

(b) Please list the community spaces or events where you spend time with friends, loved ones, and Sonoma Valley community residents.

Data analysis: To learn more about the methods used to analyze the data collected, please read the *methodology* section of our full report.

Latino/X Asset Map



This asset map locates the resources and gathering spaces in the city of Sonoma where Latinos/X provide or receive support and congregate in "comunidad" [community]. In the *physical assets* section of the full report, we provide contact information and a brief description of the specific services provided at each location.

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Data analysis: To learn more about the methods used to analyze the data collected, please read the *methodology* section of our full report.

Latino/X Asset Map

Recommendations

We hope to help practitioners, providers, and community leaders understand, elicit, and build on the “fortalezas” that enable “sobrevivencia” and thriving among Sonoma Valley’s Latino/X residents with the following recommendations. These recommendations are grounded on the understanding that Latinos/X (a) value trustworthy environments and social connectedness and (b) often rely on informal networks of support before contacting a local social service or health care agency to obtain professional services. Our recommendations integrate a strengths-based approach along with cultural considerations, and propose that attention to racial and cultural diversity, including immigration status, be a central component of all initiatives and programs implemented in Sonoma Valley. If health care providers, social service practitioners, and community leaders do not consider and incorporate Latino/X cultural values and strengths into the services they offer, the pattern of disparity in utilization and health outcomes will persist.

We acknowledge the significant efforts and serious investments made by local community organizations, as well as the hard work of Sonoma Valley practitioners and providers. We, however, recognize that there are provider shortages and service limitations that make it difficult for Latinos/X to access social and health care programs. Therefore, we recommend building capacity for the services and programs that Latinos/X consider beneficial for their well-being and developing new and non-traditional partnerships and initiatives to eliminate health disparities.

Rely on the Community for Support and Build Capacity for the Use of Informal Networks

- 1. Look beyond the individual and into the community.** We recommend that social service agencies and health care clinics look at each Latino/X individual “within the context of his or her family, and at the same time, understand Latino/X families within the context of their culture (Bernal & Sáez-Santiago, 2006, p. 127).” Traditional individual-based services and support, while helpful in some cases, may fail to consider the person in the context of community systems (Chiang, Hunter, & Yeh, 2004). Thus, Sonoma Valley organizations and agencies should move beyond Western and eurocentric individual approaches and invest in initiatives that consider the systemic interactions of Latino/X families and communities and their social and cultural values and interests. Moving beyond practitioners’ offices or medical rooms and offering services in communal spaces could help increase access to services. Please see asset map to locate the communal spaces that Latinos/X frequently access given their welcoming and affirming atmospheres.
- 2. Leverage Latino/X traditions, spirituality, and celebratory nature.** Latinos/X in our study perceived their positive health as being rooted in culture, tradition, faith, hope, celebration, and support from family and community members (e.g., support from comadres, friends, and neighbors). They reported finding great joy in cultural events such as Cinco de Mayo, Día de los Muertos, and Sentimiento Mexicano. We recommend that these events be advertised and promoted through in-person, social media, and group messaging platforms. Participants reported hearing about events most often through Facebook, Nextdoor, and WhatsApp. In short, agencies should prioritize cultural initiatives that focus on leveraging the celebratory nature, spirituality, and traditions of the Latino/X community, and its appreciation for music, “danza” [dance], “comida” [food], and

“pachanga” [party]. These cultural events should continue to receive the community’s support given their power to restore well-being in Latino/X individuals.

3. **Support programming that strengthens Latino/X cultural identity.** Developing initiatives and programs that strengthen Latino/X cultural identity helps promote positive health in Sonoma Valley. Research suggests that while acculturation is associated with a variety of negative externalizing symptoms, such as substance use, delinquent behavior, or negative peer relationships (Gonzales, Knight, Morgan-Lopez, Saenz, & Sirolli, 2002), positive ethnic and cultural identity is associated with more positive mental health outcomes (Smith & Silva, 2011). We recommend supporting Sonoma’s ballet folklórico and danza programs (e.g., Quetzalén, Grupo Folklórico El Verano, Grupo Folklórico de Woodland Star, Nuestra Voz’s danza classes) and other initiatives that empower the community through cultural art and environmental education (e.g., Raizes Collective). These efforts may lead to positive health outcomes given their emphasis on developing positive cultural identities.
4. **Collaborate with White allies.** Latinos/X in our case study identified “White allies” as individuals who use their White privilege to create safer and more equitable spaces for Latinos/X without taking over those spaces (e.g., promoting the recruitment and retention of Latino/X board of directors). Sonoma Valley allies encourage members of other privileged and dominant groups to listen, learn, engage in coalition-building, and support initiatives that the Latino/X community believes will improve its well-being. Members from privileged communities may be better positioned to offer assistance by learning about the social conditions that may contribute to the suffering, marginalization, and exclusion of Sonoma Valley Latinos/X, including the impact of microaggressions, racism, and anti-immigrant sentiments on their health.

We recommend that leaders and community members in the region develop *guidelines for being fair and strong White allies* to communities of color. These guidelines should be designed to encourage critical self-reflexivity regarding biases and assumptions about race, class, and immigration status and to dismantle the ways in which Sonoma Valley’s institutions and culture perpetuate oppression through the consolidation of power and privilege by a few dominant groups. Honest and thoughtful community conversations between White allies about how they have benefited from a racially stratified system may help to increase their awareness around racial, economic, and other forms of injustice.

Build Capacity for Leadership and Mentorship Programs for Latinos/X

5. **Support Latino/X leadership and civic engagement programs.** Latinos/X in our study expressed a desire to be more engaged in leadership positions and public decision-making. Civic engagement programs could center around supporting organizations, decision-makers, and leaders who are already energizing Latinos/X to participate in political endeavors. For instance, those interested in participating in civic engagement could be encouraged to join La Luz Center’s efforts, which include voter education and registration, census participation, “know your rights” forums, and leadership training programs for Latinos/X. Emerging leaders interested in developing their leadership skills also could be referred to La Luz Center’s Latino Leadership Program. Advertising and promoting successful leadership development and civic engagement programs for Latinos/X are vital.

6. **Grow and fund Latino/X mentorship programs.** Latinos/X in our case study reported finding great support in the mentorship and vocational guidance programs that exist in Sonoma Valley (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley). The vicarious experiences of observing successful mentors who share similar interests and cultural identities were considered by participants to be transformative. We recommend that Sonoma Valley support mentors and mentorship programs that focus on cultural identity, civic engagement, academic performance, college preparedness, career counseling, socioemotional development (e.g., coping with bullying and discrimination in the school system), and leadership and professional skills. One way of strengthening youth programs may be to provide additional financial support to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley, an organization that recruits mentors who Latinos/X consider to be trustworthy. In addition, Sonoma Valley could benefit from developing a resource that includes information on professionals who are available to advise and mentor interested youth and adults. Establishing connections between Latino/X mentors and mentees should be a priority, especially because Latino/X youth are the fastest growing population in Sonoma Valley.
7. **Grow and fund programs that create pathways for upward mobility.** Sonoma Valley should consider investing in opportunities that provide business guidance and create pathways to higher incomes through job and skills training. Building capacity for programs like La Luz Center’s microloan program, which provides low-cost loans to foster the growth and success of new and existing enterprises in Sonoma Valley, may improve the well-being of Latino/X families. With more financial assistance, Latinos/X may be in a better position to participate in the social, community, civic, and political opportunities that Sonoma Valley currently offers.

Design Health Services Grounded in “Cultura” and “Fortalezas”

8. **Recruit Spanish-speaking health providers and fund provider pipeline development programs.** Spanish-speaking Latinos/X in our study reported that their decision to rely on one source of support over another is based, in part, on the availability of culturally relevant services and Spanish-speaking providers. Therefore, Sonoma Valley could benefit from the ongoing recruitment of Spanish-speaking providers and community health workers (i.e., promotoras/es), as well as the development of provider pipeline programs. Identifying Spanish-speaking Latinos/X who want to pursue careers in the helping professions and giving them access to training opportunities, guidance, and funding could help Sonoma Valley’s provider recruitment efforts. Sonoma Valley could replicate mental health pipeline programs that exist elsewhere in the county to better serve its Latino/X population. In 2018, the Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County created the Mental Health Talent Pipeline Project to “retain and attract bilingual/bicultural mental health professionals to serve in northern Sonoma County clinics, schools and nonprofit organizations that provide services to north county’s residents.” Participants receive financial support during their graduate program, their post-graduate internship placement, and beyond. Sonoma Valley would greatly benefit from a similar program.

If Sonoma Valley fails to recruit Spanish-speaking providers, existing Spanish-speaking providers will continue to be overburdened by full caseloads, which could result in Latinos/X being waitlisted. Attracting bilingual/bicultural early-career providers into Sonoma Valley’s workforce should be a priority, especially given the region’s designation as a Health Professional Shortage Area.

9. **Offer training to existing health care and social service providers in the areas of Latino/X health, cultural humility, linguistic competency, and indigenous healing.** Researchers have proposed that effective outcomes

with Latino/X individuals are best accomplished when health providers demonstrate awareness and knowledge of the cultural, political, and historical experiences that shape the lives and identities of Latino/X individuals (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Cardemil & Sarmiento, 2009; Gloria, Ruiz, & Castillo, 2004). Thus, health centers and social service agencies could benefit from training that prepares Sonoma Valley providers to adequately address issues located at the intersection of race, ethnicity, immigration status, and health concerns. Collaborating more closely with indigenous healers, promotoras/X, and other trusted members of the community could increase their understanding of Latino/X cultural values. Health care and social service providers may benefit from receiving training on indigenous healing. Conversely, indigenous healers may benefit from additional preventive care training so that they can better screen and refer Latino/X community members to Western medical providers when needed.

Further Integration Between Informal and Formal Networks of Support

- 10. Greater use of promotoras/X and folk healers within social service and health agencies.** Latinos/X in our case study expressed a desire to see further integration and collaboration between indigenous healers, promotoras/X, and health care and social service providers. This is because indigenous and alternative healing systems are perceived by the Latino/X culture as effective in the diagnosis and treatment of ailments. Integrating modern medical care with indigenous forms of healing and alternative treatments may encourage Latinos/X to access needed services at community clinics, hospital settings, and social service agencies. This can be especially helpful as research has found that Latinos/X underutilize formal services because of difficulties finding trustworthy and culturally responsive service providers (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003). Latinos/X may feel more comfortable pursuing formal services if promotoras/X and indigenous healers are integrated into the infrastructure and current models used by health care or social service agencies. In addition to integrating indigenous and alternative forms of healing, agencies also should accommodate larger community and family systems, for example, by having enough space in therapy or medical rooms for the patient's family, curanderos/X, and promotoras/X. For those who may have had previous negative experiences with health care centers and social service agencies, this integration could be particularly helpful.
- 11. Greater use of promotoras/X and folk healers in the community.** Relying on promotoras and indigenous healers could help ameliorate the challenges that arise when (a) geographic conditions and transportation barriers make it difficult for Latinos/X to access formal services and (b) when formal services are limited due to a shortage of social service and health providers. Recruiting, training, and offering fair compensation to promotoras/X are strategies that may help increase access to services. Consulting with agencies such as the Center for Well-being and Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, which have successfully used promotoras in the community, could offer insight into effective ways of recruiting and using community health workers with hard-to-reach populations.
- 12. Strengthen the collaboration between local churches and social and health care agencies.** Latinos/X in our study found the social support offered by local churches to be vital to their well-being. Thus, health care organizations and social service agencies may benefit from developing sustainable partnerships with faith-based organizations, particularly those that act as important gateways to formal services (i.e., St. Leo's Catholic Church). Similarly, faith-based organizations should strive to support the work that health centers and social service agencies (i.e., La Luz Center, Nuestra Voz, FISH, Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma Valley, Sonoma

Valley Hospital, and Sonoma Valley Community Health Center) are doing to address the local socioeconomic and health disparities. Offering health and social services at trusted local churches, such as St. Leo's, could help reduce accessibility concerns around visiting health clinics and community-based agencies.

Address the Structural Barriers, Disparities, and Inequities Impacting Latinos/X

13. Attend to structural barriers, disparities, and discrimination. As community-based organizations (CBOs) and health agencies strive to design new programs and best-practice initiatives for Latinos/X, these programs will need to attend to the structural barriers, disparities, and discrimination that impact Latinos/X. Community members, government officials, and health care and social service providers can play an essential role in creating structural and systemic changes that benefit Latino/X communities (e.g., addressing housing concerns and the lack of proportionate political representation). They can also offer support by providing detailed information on the culturally informed resources available for Latinos/X in Sonoma Valley. To this end, the asset map included in this report could serve as a referral resource.

14. Confront the housing crisis and preserve the spirit of the Latino/X barrio. Latinos/X in our case study identified unaffordable housing as their most serious economic challenge. Thus, decision-makers must urgently address the housing crisis impacting Latinos/X, prevent the negative impact of gentrification, offer affordable and mixed housing options, and support sustainable homeownership. One solution involves supporting projects that create opportunities for high-density residential development for a Latino/X population that is struggling with low incomes and economic disparities.

New housing units, development projects, and renovations within “The Springs” area must preserve and conserve Latino/X and indigenous architectural, cultural, and historical resources, given the important role that neighborhood context plays in the mental health of individuals (Bostean, Andrade, & Viruell-Fuentes, 2019). Housing should also appeal to Latino/X values and needs. This includes supporting the needs of Latino/X-owned businesses. The safe communal spaces that Latinos/X identified as physical assets where they feel comfortable congregating and socializing without fear of marginalization and persecution need to be preserved as well (see asset map for this information). The availability of affordable housing options for Latino/X families will help to ameliorate their economic hardship.

15. Provide fair working conditions, benefits, and wages. Latinos/X consider their labor to be a resource that strengthens and enriches the region of Sonoma Valley, both culturally and economically. Whether it involves caring for their employers' homes, children, elderly parents, vineyards, or land, Latinos/X feel great integrity in their contributions. To support the well-being of Latino/X workers and caretakers, their work must be recognized, celebrated, and adequately compensated. They should have access to good working conditions, higher incomes, and employment benefits, such as high quality health care coverage. Health care coverage will be especially critical for workers who are exposed to environmental toxins or are more vulnerable to accidents and injuries given the nature of their physically intensive jobs.

16. Improve the educational attainment and achievement of the Latino/X community. Latinos/X in our case study expressed concerns around the lower educational attainment that exists among the Latino/X community compared to White residents. Therefore, we recommend that Sonoma Valley decision-makers and funders invest

in programs that promote Latino/X achievement in higher education (e.g., prevent drop-out rates), such as individualized and group mentoring and tutoring, college preparedness and migrant student educational programs, and diversity training for teachers. Without training that enhances teachers' multicultural and self-awareness, cultural empathy, and critical consciousness, their success in narrowing the educational gap may not be accomplished.

17. **Support and recruit Latino/X leaders.** It is important for Sonoma Valley to build capacity for Latino/X talent and increase diversity on health care and social service organizations' boards and in government positions. Leadership programs must reflect the diversity of Sonoma Valley's population and invest in the preparation of culturally competent future political, corporate, and community leaders. Latinos/X ready to take on appointments to boards and commissions should be identified and supported with the goal of increasing Latino/X representation.
18. **Protect undocumented communities from discrimination, racism, and nativism.** Sonoma Valley should have no tolerance for discrimination, including discrimination based on race and immigration status. Its society could benefit from decision-makers and government officials who make frequent public statements that honor the humanity of undocumented communities and promote their safety. We recommend that Sonoma Valley residents be trained in effective ways to respond to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and police harassment, that Sonoma Valley churches act as congregational sanctuaries, and that allies receive training on bystander intervention.
19. **Vote and Naturalize.** Encouraging Latinos/X to register to vote, as well as to take steps toward naturalization for voting eligibility and other benefits, is critical. The lack of legal status prevents some Latinos/X from participating in electoral processes and civic engagement. Sonoma Valley Latinos/X who are eligible to vote may benefit from campaigning for candidates who support the issues that they care about. These issues may include addressing the wealth, education, and income gap; housing and immigration concerns; and confronting racism and anti-immigrant sentiments against Latino/X families.
20. **Design equitable wildfire and disaster-response strategies that protect Latino/X communities, especially undocumented groups.** The process of recovery from a natural disaster often takes years. To help survivors grow, thrive, and better prepare for future disaster adversities, creative and thoughtful preventive education (Tominaga, 2008) and rehabilitative clinical services must be available in the spaces where Latinos/X live, work, and play. To obtain broader outreach and to help improve social ties and the establishment of social networks, we recommend that these services be offered within the communal spaces that Latinos/X in our study have identified as welcoming and safe (e.g., St. Leo's church, Nuestra Voz, La Luz Center, and Sonoma Valley Community Health Center).