



# Latino/a/e Community Wellbeing Assessment

Insights for the Behavioral Health Commission  
*February 7, 2024*





# Your role is key!

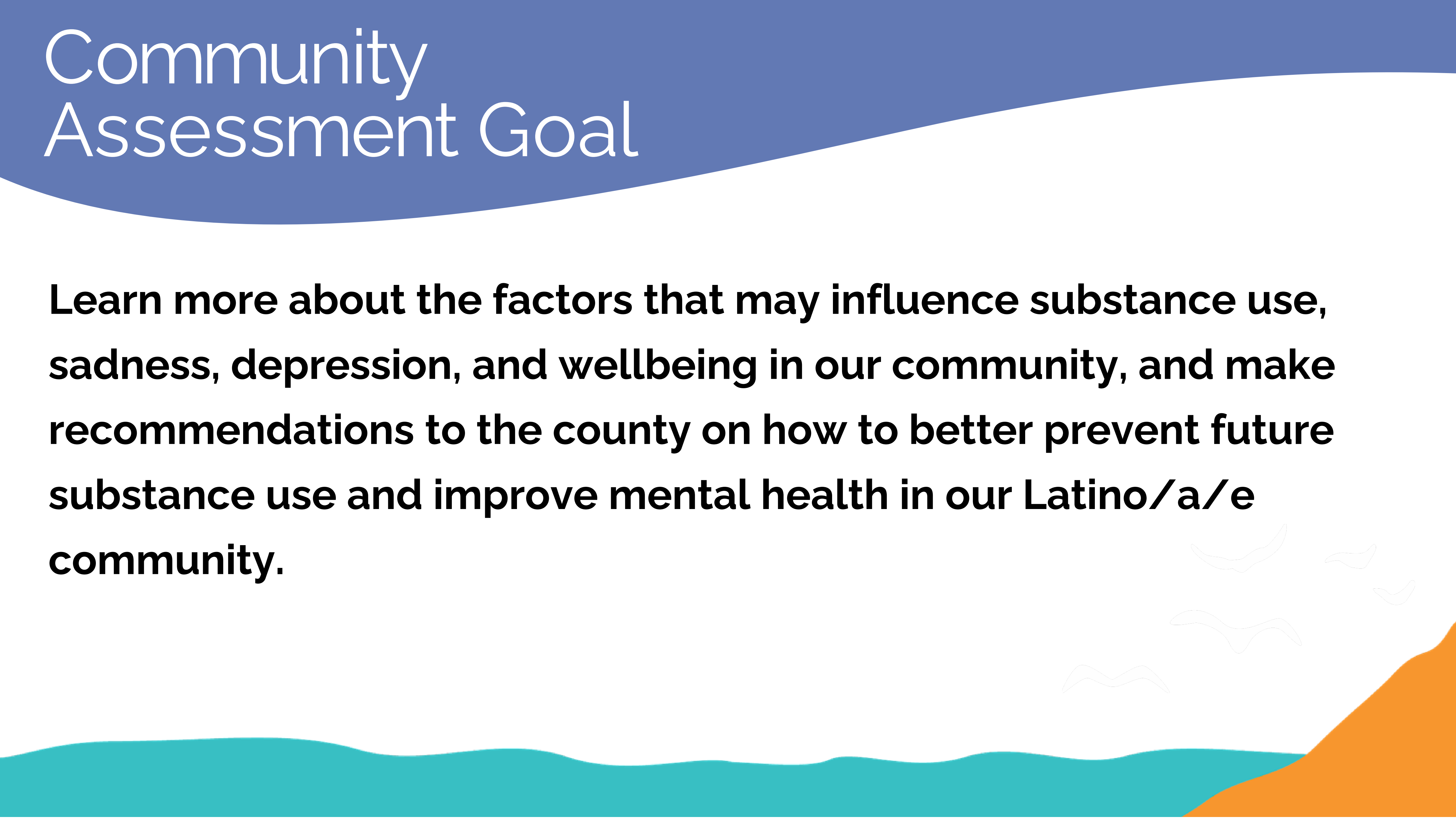
How can you help implement these recommendations to improve resources and help Latino youth and families?





# Community Assessment Goal

**Learn more about the factors that may influence substance use, sadness, depression, and wellbeing in our community, and make recommendations to the county on how to better prevent future substance use and improve mental health in our Latino/a/e community.**





# Honoring our Ancestors

"I honor those who came before me,  
I learn from their stories,  
Find strength in their struggles,  
Feel love in their embrace,  
And experience fullness in their presence.

I pass on these gifts to future generations,  
So that they may live their lives to the fullest,  
And honor those who came before them"



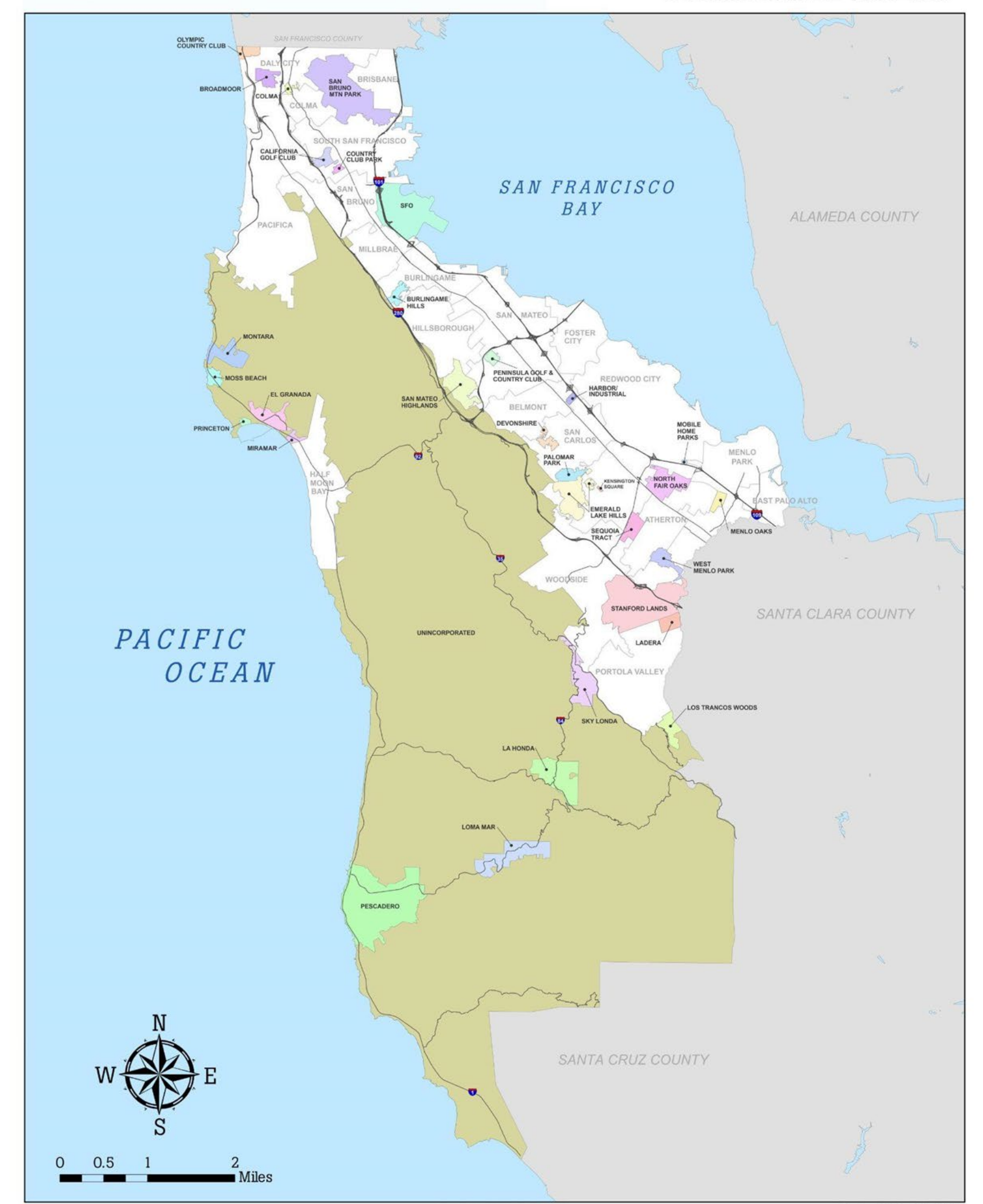


# Respeto a las generaciones futuras

*Honoring the future generations*



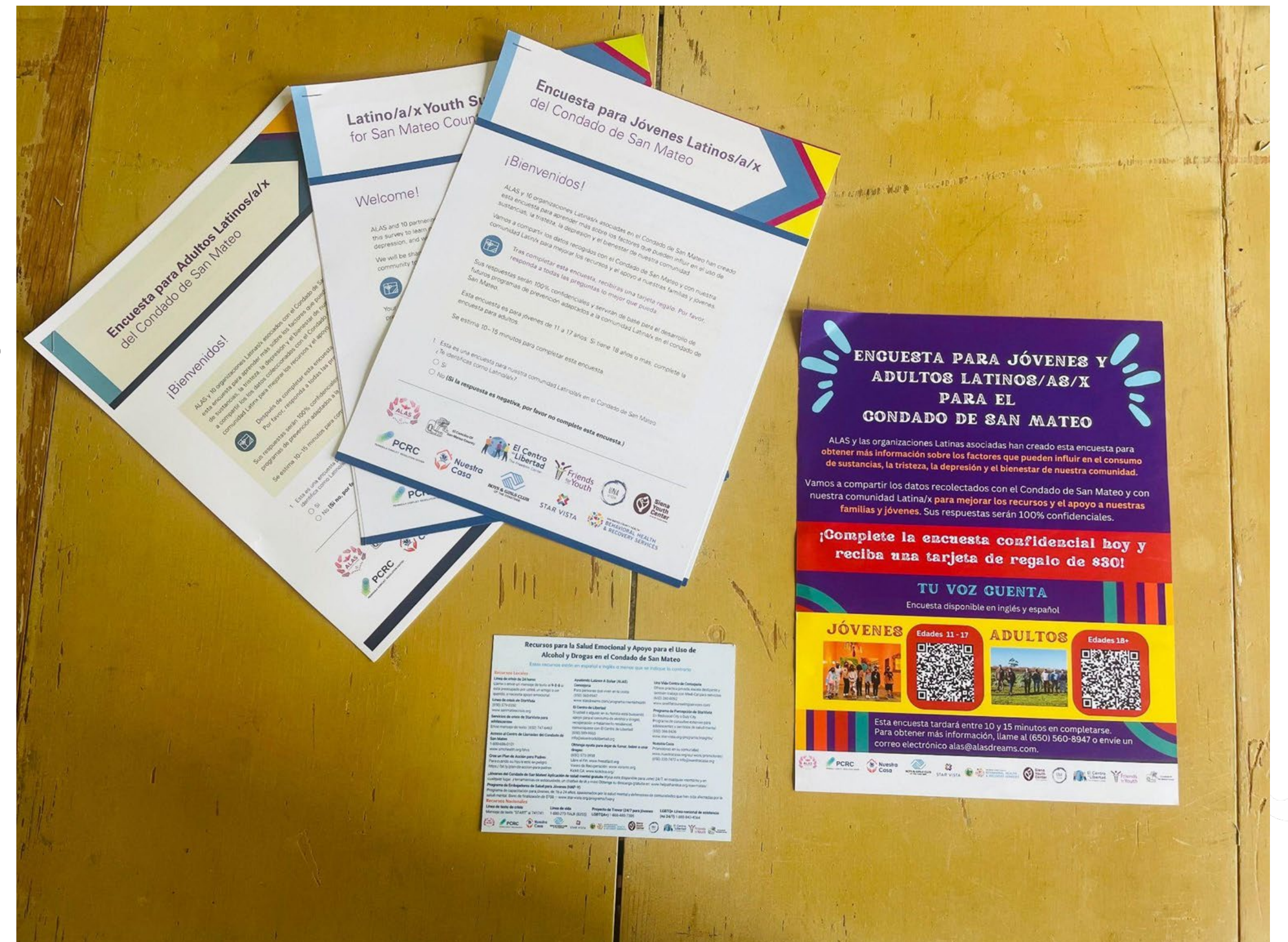
# Thank you to our Steering Committee





# Survey Distribution

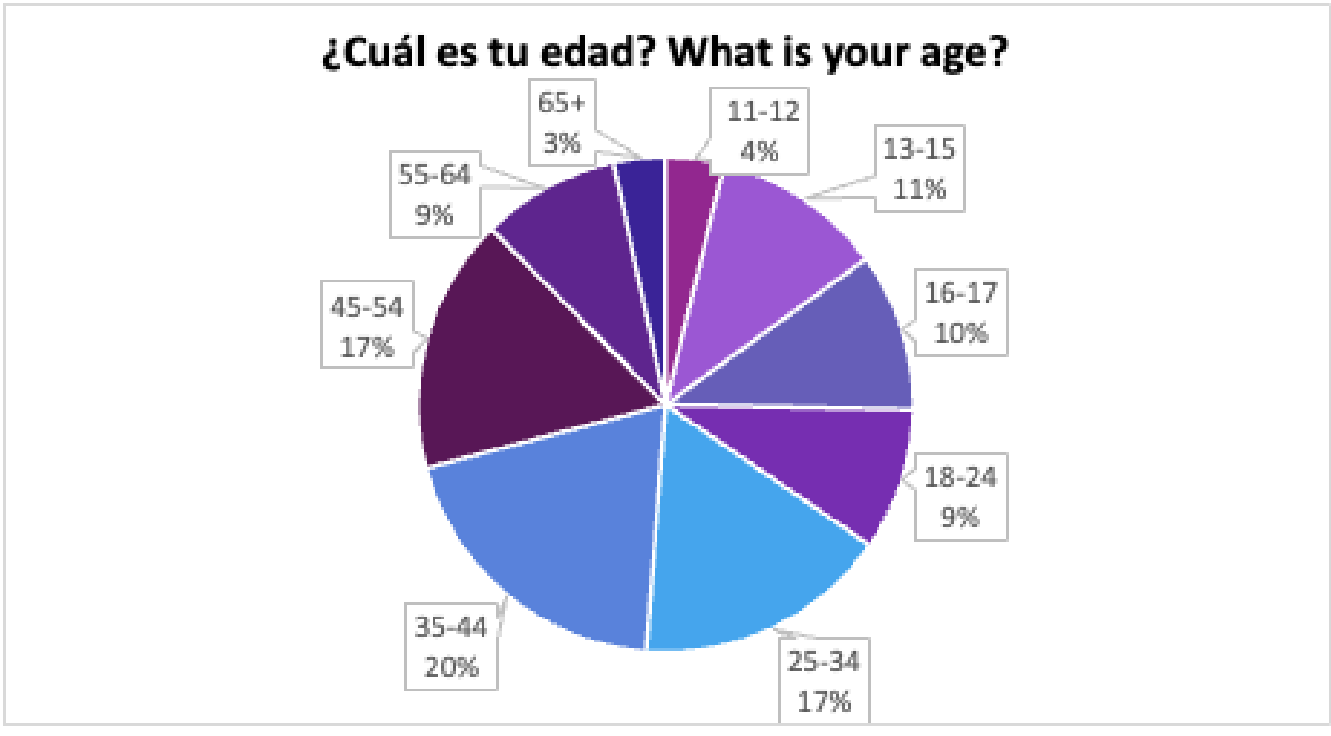
- **481** total surveys collected & **117** people participated in focus groups & interviews
- Two different surveys: **Youth** (11-18 years) and **Adults**
- Survey created **in Spanish** and **English**, **on paper** and **online**
  - Most people took the **survey in Spanish (78%)** and on **paper (77%)**
- Every participant received a **resource postcard** + **\$30 gift card**
- Our **focus groups were key** to understanding underlying issues and strengths beyond the survey
- Be aware of **survey fatigue**... it is crucial to implement our recommendations!
- Community **trust at the heart** of the project





# Who did we hear from?

- **481** Total surveys collected
  - 123 Youth surveys
  - 358 Adult surveys
- **117** people participated in focus groups & interviews
- Participants were ages **12-65 and older**, with a slight majority between the ages of **35-44 (20%)**.



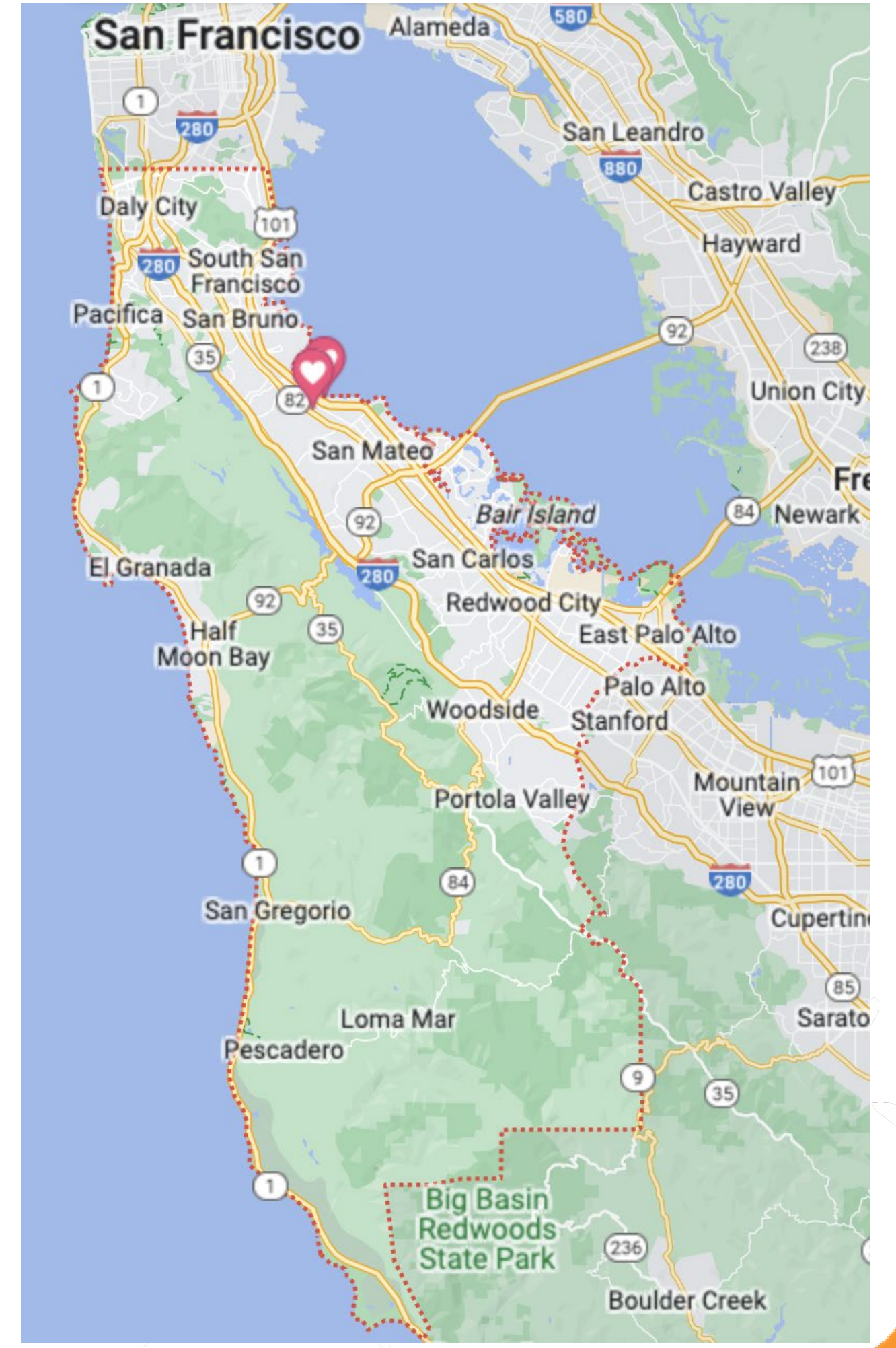
**27%** Redwood City & Fair Oaks  
**24%** San Mateo / Peninsula  
**24%** Half Moon Bay / Coastside  
**7%** East Palo Alto



**67%** Mexicano  
**11%** Guatemalteco  
**9%** Nicaragüense  
**8.5%** Salvadoreño



**60%** Mujer (femenino/ mujer cisgénero)  
**35%** Hombre (varón/ hombre cisgénero)  
**1%** No binario/no conforme  
**3%** Prefiero no responder



Youth groups

Social Services Staff

Youth Ballet  
Folklorico class

Providers  
Campesinos

Teachers  
Parents

LGBTQ+ groups

Seniors  
Promotora



# RECOMMENDATION #1

## Address financial challenges to help support families to survive and thrive in this economy.

### Insights on financial challenges & housing insecurity from adult surveys

- **43%** of adults experienced financial hardship in the past year.
- **31%** of adults had COVID-19 related challenges in the past year.
- **20%** of adults reported job loss.
- **26%** of adults had a place to live but worried about losing it in the future.
- **14%** experienced housing challenges in the past year.
- **6%** did not have a steady place to live.

### Families need support with basic needs such as housing, food, and job opportunities.

- Offer **free and low-cost support services** to families who are experiencing stress and anxiety due to financial hardship, such as counseling, support groups, and financial literacy classes
- Provide **financial assistance** to families who are struggling to make ends meet
- Increase availability and access to **affordable housing**
- Provide **job training** and placement services to adults who are unemployed or underemployed





## RECOMMENDATION #2

Provide and create intentional outreach for culturally-appropriate services that are available and accessible.

### Youth

Only **27%** of the youth who were depressed some of the time received counseling services.

### Adults

**32%** of adults reported that they do not know where to go to find resources and support for their family and kids.



**70% of adults speak primarily Spanish at home.**

- If services are not **available in Spanish**, they are not accessible to the Latino community.
- Offer services in **locations** where community members feel **safe and welcome**, such as at community based organizations (CBOs)
- Cultivate a **sense of belonging**
- Learn **outreach strategies** from Latino organizations on how to best engage the community
- Provide a **"warm hand-off"** – resource fliers are not sufficient
- Expand **crisis support** without involving law enforcement (CARES)
- Tailor services for **immigrant families**
- Be aware of and **address the stigma**

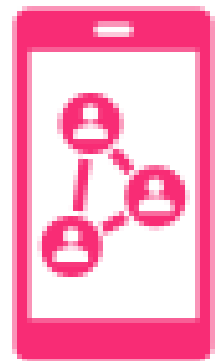




# RECOMMENDATION #3

## Decrease substance abuse and normalization in our community by increasing awareness.

**18%** of youth said they use substances to deal with stress at school and **16%** to deal with anxiety.



**55%** of youth see alcohol & drug advertisement on social media & **43%** see advertisements in local stores illustrating normalization of substance use.

Average age of first use of alcohol and cannabis was around **13-14 years old**.

Youth that had the highest frequency of cannabis and vapes/e-cigs use also reported experiencing depression in the past month.



### Role of Peers and Friends

While **72%** of youth are most comfortable seeking help from their friends, **63%** also report getting alcohol and cannabis from another teenager or a friend.

- **Challenge the normalization** of substance use in the community
- **Provide substance abuse awareness and prevention training** to healthcare providers, promotoras, parents, and staff at work centers and students in public schools with dynamic, engaging programming
- Address the social risk factors that youth named in focus groups including **peer pressure, gangs, bullying**
- Engage **peer-to-peer** prevention strategies
- Ensure that **social media campaigns** developed by the county are culturally-appropriate and resonant with youth
- Address **the underlying causes of substance abuse, such as trauma, poverty, racism and discrimination** through social services, mental health services, and economic development programs.



## RECOMMENDATION #4

# Support youth-driven and family-centered programs and activities.

**25%** of youth are unsupervised for 2-4 hours a day, denoting the need for programs and services after school.

**50%** of youth often exercise and spend time with friends, and only **29%** of youth often spend time outside in nature.



- Create **safe and supportive environments for youth** such as after-school programs, cultural arts (eg ballet folklórico, mariachi, painting), sports, and community centers.
- Build **youth mentorship programs** connecting youth with adults and elders
- **Work with schools** to ensure that all students have **access to the resources** they need to succeed
- **Support and educate parents and adult family members** on how to talk with their teens
- Offer programming in **locations that are accessible**, trustworthy and familiar
- Create a **Latinx youth advisory board** & ensure Latinx student participation on existing county youth boards



# RECOMMENDATION #5

## Build capacity for existing providers to serve larger numbers of Latino youth and families.

Every step of this assessment showed how crucial **community organizations who already have trust-based relationships** in the community are to the wellbeing of the community, and to connecting community members with key resources.

Throughout the county, there are strong community-based organizations that are already doing the work outlined in the above recommendations, but often **lack the funding to meet the demand for these services.**

- **Increase opportunities for collaboration** across organizations, sectors, and promotoras.
- **Build capacity for existing free or low cost services** and to support individuals and families seeking help on a case by case basis.
- Support **mental health and financial sustainability of Latino providers** working on the frontlines of community care, including mental health, financial sustainability, higher education incentives and professional development. **Create incentives for Latino community members to pursue a career in the field of mental health and substance abuse prevention.**
- **Secure long-term funding** not contingent on annual funder interests and time-intensive grant reporting.





# Our Recommendations

1. **Abordar los desafíos financieros** para ayudar a las familias a sobrevivir y prosperar en esta economía.
2. Proporcionar y crear un alcance intencional para **servicios culturalmente apropiados** que estén disponibles y accesibles.
3. **Disminuir el abuso de sustancias** en nuestra comunidad.
4. Apoyar **programas y actividades dirigidos por jóvenes** y centrados en la familia.
5. **Desarrollar la capacidad** de los proveedores existentes para atender a un mayor número de jóvenes y familias latinas.

1. **Address financial challenges** to help support families to survive and thrive in this economy.
2. Provide and create intentional outreach for **culturally-appropriate services** that are available and accessible.
3. **Decrease substance abuse** in our community.
4. Support **youth-driven and family-centered programs** and activities.
5. **Build capacity** for existing providers to serve larger numbers of Latino youth and families.



# In our words....

**“Language is a barrier. People want Spanish-speaking therapists so they can get help for their problems. Once on a call with the county we asked for mental health support in Spanish, but they responded that they did not have Spanish-speaking therapists, and it was in a time of crisis.”**

— Provider Focus Group Participant

**“The struggle mostly lies in finding information on where to go to receive help, not all of us know this, and I, at least, don't even have a cellphone.”**

— Farmworker Interviewee

**“I'm thinking about the cultural feel that people get when they come here to the ALAS mental health clinic - our clinic is happy, vibrant, full of art, the colors are warm... it feels like a home... We value people and let them know they matter.... I guarantee if we had an all white wall clinic with a hospital feel it would impact how many people come back...”**

— Belinda Arriaga, ALAS founder

**“I think that the problem is economic, because earning \$15 it is very difficult to keep up with all the expenses here, life is very expensive and that affects mental health. Everything is very expensive, even if you have two jobs, the money is not enough.”** — Adult Focus Group Participant

**“The main barrier to connecting would be money, since we earn \$16 and a few therapies plus medications is a lot of money.”** — Coastal Farmworker

**“It became easier for me when I learned that ALAS provided free mental health services, because my biggest concern is having money to pay the rent, which is very expensive, as well as the food.”** — Adult Focus Group Participant

**“Anyone can get drugs, like candy. Drugs are easier to access than mental health assistance.”** — Youth focus group participant

**“[Why not] have an ad where we see that to have fun you don't necessarily have to drink or smoke.”**

— Youth focus group participant

**“Something that makes me proud is that my parents are always working hard and bring food to our house - to me that makes me feel full of pride.”**

— Youth focus group participant



# Your turn...

What is one insight you are taking with you from this presentation that can inform your work to help our Latina youth and families?





# Tomando acción juntos

*Taking Action Together*



[alasdreams.com](http://alasdreams.com)