

## The California Budget & Policy Center and the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls Announce Partnership Supporting Updated CA 'Women's Well-Being Index'

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**Sacramento, CA** – The California Budget & Policy Center, in partnership with the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, will produce a significant update to the [California Women's Well-Being Index](#), which is set to be released in August 2024.

*"The 2024 Women's Well-Being Index will be the first version released since the COVID-19 public health emergency, providing a much-needed update to understand how women are faring in California,"* said Laura Pryor, Senior Policy Fellow at the California Budget & Policy Center. *"The tool offers vital information to inform policy and programming, and we are thrilled to partner with the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and their network to understand key contextual factors and implications underscoring the data. The tool's rich data coupled with meaning making from decision-makers and communities presents a unique opportunity to produce informed and impactful policy solutions that advance gender equity in California."*

The California Women's Well-Being Index (WWBI) is a multifaceted, composite measure of women's well-being that consists of five "dimensions" composed of six indicators each, covering health, personal safety, employment and earnings, economic security, and political empowerment. Together, these 30 values create an overall Women's Well-Being Index score for each of California's 58 counties.

The data will also be featured in the Commission's work, and the Commission is committed to sharing the information with its statewide partners, Commissioners, policymakers, and subject matter experts.

*"The Women's Well-Being Index allows advocates and organizations to help focus policymaker's efforts where they're most needed for women in California,"* said Holly

Martinez, Executive Director of the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. *"We're proud to be supporting the development of the Index's third iteration of updates, providing counties, policymakers, service providers, and advocates with critical data on local measures of need and disparity to help inform their gender equity work."*

Despite decades of progress in job opportunities, earnings, and political leadership, women still face persistent barriers that block access to economic security, physical and mental health care, and representation in elected positions. These economic, health, safety, and leadership disparities are particularly acute for women of color who face the compounding effects of racism and sexism. We know that when women are armed with the data they need to advocate for support at the local level, they, their families, and whole communities thrive.

### **About the Data**

Each dimension of the Women's Well-Being Index is composed of six indicators that are combined to create a score for each of California's 58 counties. Some examples include:

- The health status indicator, which shows the percentage of women in fair or poor health,
- The domestic violence indicator, which measures the average annual calls for assistance that are domestic violence-related, and
- The cost of childcare indicator, which measures the annual cost of child care for an infant and a school-age child as a percentage of single mothers' median income.

The five dimension scores are combined to create an overall WWBI score for each county. In the 2020 iteration of the Women's Well-Being Index, this tool ranked Placer County (with a score of 91.9) as having the greatest well-being for women's safety.

Data are also available for women and men by race and ethnicity at the state level for many of the 30 indicators. This disaggregation by race and ethnicity is critical to

understanding, demonstrating, and ultimately addressing the specific disparities women of color face as they endure the effects of racism and sexism.

Once released, the Commission and Budget Center will engage stakeholders to raise awareness about the Index tool and its contents; make meaning of Index 2024 findings; and generate ideas and opportunities for additional analyses and technical assistance with the goal of advancing public policies that improve the lives of California women.

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### **Origins of the Women's Well-Being Index:**

Kristin Schumacher, a former California Budget & Policy Center analyst, created the Women's Well-Being Index to help advocates and policymakers understand how women are faring in California. Since the WWBI was first published in 2016, the Index has been replicated in several states nationwide. Schumacher is a consultant to the 2024 update of the WWBI and continues to advance this work through her consulting firm, Aster Policy Analytics.

### **About the California Budget & Policy Center:**

The California Budget & Policy Center (Budget Center) is a nonpartisan research and analysis nonprofit advancing public policies that expand opportunities and promote well-being for all Californians. Learn more at [www.calbudgetcenter.org](http://www.calbudgetcenter.org)

### **About the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**

For more than 58 years, the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has identified and worked to eliminate inequities in state laws, practices, and conditions that affect California's women and girls. Established as a state agency with 17 appointed Commissioners in 1965, the Commission regularly assesses gender equity in health, safety, employment, education, and equal representation in the military and the media. The Commission provides leadership through research, policy and program development, education, outreach and collaboration, advocacy, and strategic partnerships. Learn more at [www.women.ca.gov](http://www.women.ca.gov)

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