Marin County on the
American Human Development Index

A Portrait of Marin 2012 is an in-depth look at how the residents of Marin County are faring in three fundamental areas of life: health, access to knowledge, and living standards. The Marin report, part of the Measure of America series, examines the surprisingly large disparities within the county among different neighborhoods as well as along the lines of race, ethnicity, and gender. The analysis is based on the American Human Development Index, a composite measure of well-being and opportunity. The Marin Community Foundation commissioned this work to provide a holistic framework for understanding and addressing complex issues facing residents of Marin County.

Marin’s Index score of 7.75 on the scale from 0 to 10 is far above that of California (5.54) and the United States as a whole (5.10). Marin County has levels of well-being and access to opportunity that California will not experience, if trends continue, until 2054. However, significant disparities in well-being and opportunity do exist among the county’s residents. These disparities include lagging educational attainment among Latinos—the fastest-growing population group in Marin and in the U.S.—which has important implications for the future workforce in Marin and across the country.

KEY FINDINGS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

- Marin County has 51 census tracts averaging 4,000 residents in each, with widely varying levels of well-being. At the top of the American Human Development Index rankings by neighborhood is Ross at 9.70, where residents can expect to live, on average, 88 years - an astonishing decade longer than the...
Four out of 5 adults in Ross have a bachelor’s degree or higher and their median personal earnings ($64,378) are more than double those of the typical American worker today.

- At the bottom is the Canal area of San Rafael, with an Index score of 3.18, a figure below that of West Virginia, the lowest-ranked state on the American Human Development Index. Residents of the Canal area can expect to live 80.5 years, 7.5 years fewer than residents of Ross. Educational outcomes are alarmingly low, with over half the adult population lacking the minimum of a high school diploma. The typical worker in the Canal neighborhood earns just over $21,000, about the same as an American worker in the late 1960s.

**KEY FINDINGS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

- In Marin, Asian Americans have the highest human development among the four major racial and ethnic groups, with a score of 8.88 out of 10. Whites have the second-highest score, 8.44. African Americans score 5.72 on the Index, comparable to the score for California as a whole. Latinos have the lowest score, 5.17; however, Latinos in Marin rank much better in terms of well-being than they do statewide (3.99).

- While the median age of whites in Marin County is 48 years old, the median age of Latinos is 30. Across the U.S., as in Marin, Latinos are the fastest-growing population group and are relatively younger.