

# 2020-24 Consolidated Plan Community Engagement & Local Jurisdiction Interviews

Understanding the needs of a community is critical to planning the use of federal grant funds. As part of the 2020-24 Consolidated Planning process, Housing and Federal Grants staff (Staff) engaged the community using various methods to gather information about housing, community spaces and infrastructure, and public service needs in Marin. In addition, staff reached out to other jurisdictions implementing federal grant programs to learn smart practices to improve impact and effectiveness of Marin County's federal grants program.

Results from the community engagement and interview process shall guide future planning and program design for the County of Marin's federal grants program.

## Methodology

### *Community Survey*



Online and paper surveys available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese were used to gather community input to inform funding priorities. Surveys were disseminated in partnership with local nonprofit service and housing providers and County departments including Health and Human Services and the Marin County Free Library. To enhance and encourage participation staff attended numerous community events, including weekly Health Hubs organized through the Marin Community Clinics in both Novato and San Rafael, the Canal Alliance food pantry, and events put together by local organizations, including Community Action Marin, the Marin Organizing Committee, and Performing Stars. A total of 322 surveys were collected, with 229 in English, 92 in Spanish, and one (1) in Vietnamese.

### *Services Provider Survey*

An online service provider survey was distributed to over 50 organizations in Marin County. Twenty-five (25) surveys were completed by organizations that provide a wide range of services including childcare, senior, parent support, case management, basic health, and food security services. Survey respondents were asked about their biggest demand for services, funding gaps, and demographic information about their service population.



### *Community Meetings*



In collaboration with Marin Health and Human Services, over the course of four (4) months staff lead seven (7) community meetings and focus groups to gather data. The meetings were held across the County including in Marin City, Kentfield, Novato, San Rafael, West Marin and one meeting in the Canal Neighborhood of San Rafael was held entirely in Spanish. Nearly 300 people participated in these meetings.

## Interviews

Staff reached out to 15 local government entities in Marin for interviews to garner insights into client and service trends, funding available, and demand for services. Of the interviews requested staff were able to conduct 11 interviews—two (2) cities, eight (8) County departments/divisions, and one (1) community service district.



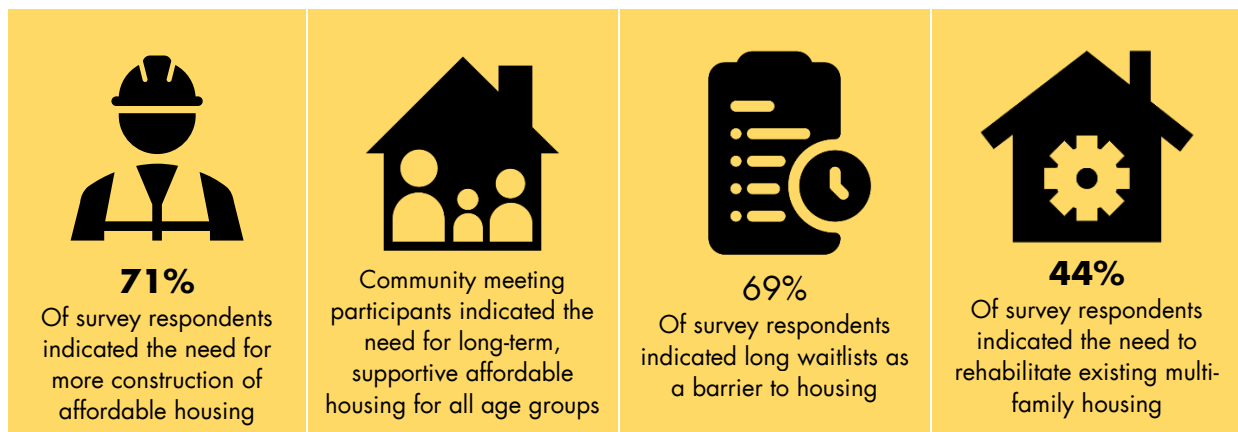
In addition, staff did outreach to nine (9) neighboring jurisdictions that administer federal grant programs similar to Marin's. Of those, five (5) neighboring jurisdictions were interviewed to identify trends and practices that could be applied to Marin's program.

## Findings

Data from community surveys, service provider surveys, community meetings, and interviews with jurisdictions were synthesized into the priorities listed below. Respondents involved in the engagement process discussed concerns and provided specific comments about issues related to housing, community infrastructure, and public services. These concerns are articulated here as general findings that will be used to inform priorities. For example, comments regarding a leaking roof in a community center were included in a statement about improving and creating new community centers.

## Housing

The findings related to housing focused on constructing, rehabilitating, and preserving affordable housing that could fit the needs of all demographics. The most commonly referenced populations included: families, single individuals, seniors, and populations in need of supportive housing. Most comments specifically related to rehabilitation of existing affordable housing focused on addressing substandard conditions. Respondents commented on the lack of housing affordable to extremely low-income households, and long and inaccessible waitlists.



*Top Four Identified Housing Needs from Community Survey*

## Community infrastructure

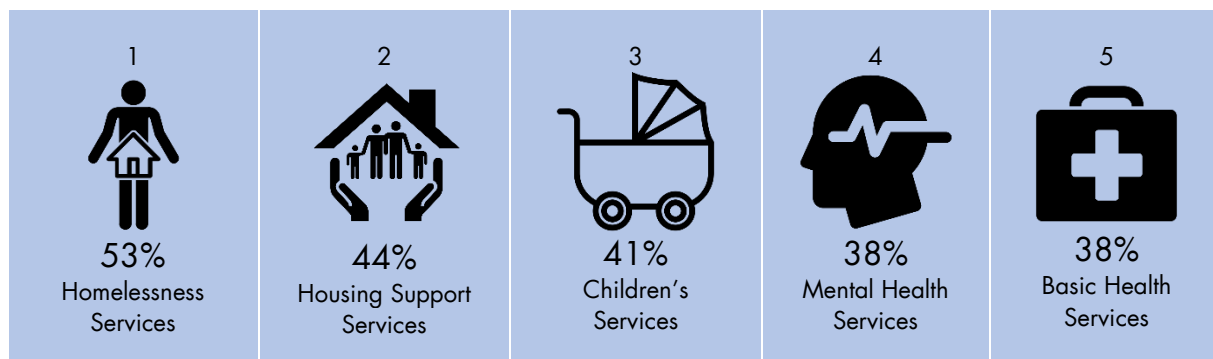
Related to community infrastructure comments ranged from references to specific rooms and buildings, to discussions about infrastructure systems in cities and towns. Many respondents found that communities lacked new and improved community centers for all age ranges, social groups, and needs, including childcare facilities, youth centers, senior centers, and LGBTQ centers. Additionally, respondents showed interest in more informal community gathering spaces. Respondents stated that their communities lack well maintained parks and public spaces, as well as homeless shelters/facilities. Most respondents mentioned the importance of protecting communities from natural disasters by improving infrastructure. Finally, transportation infrastructure improvements were mentioned in most surveys and comments, more specifically related to transit route frequency and reliability and safety measures such as adequate sidewalks and lighting were noted.



Top Three Identified Community Infrastructure Needs from Community Survey

## Public Services

The findings summarized for public services demonstrate the range of diverse needs in Marin County. One of the services discussed most frequently was “homeless services.” Homeless services fit under a larger classification of services that benefit those who are homeless and in danger of becoming homeless. Several of the services mentioned in the findings below are intended to serve these populations. Therefore, homeless services can translate into a wide array of services. For example, housing support services and legal services were two of the most commonly mentioned needs, and these services can support populations that are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. Services for families including children’s services and parent support services were mentioned in most surveys and community meetings. Respondents specified that basic health services for all age ranges were needed throughout the county. Services for very specific populations including seniors and domestic violence victims were mentioned in a majority of survey responses and at several community meetings. Food security was listed as a priority for vulnerable populations. Language acquisition and education along with job training and microenterprise business support were mentioned in many responses regarding public service needs.



Top Five Identified Public Service Needs from Community Survey

## Community-Specific Needs

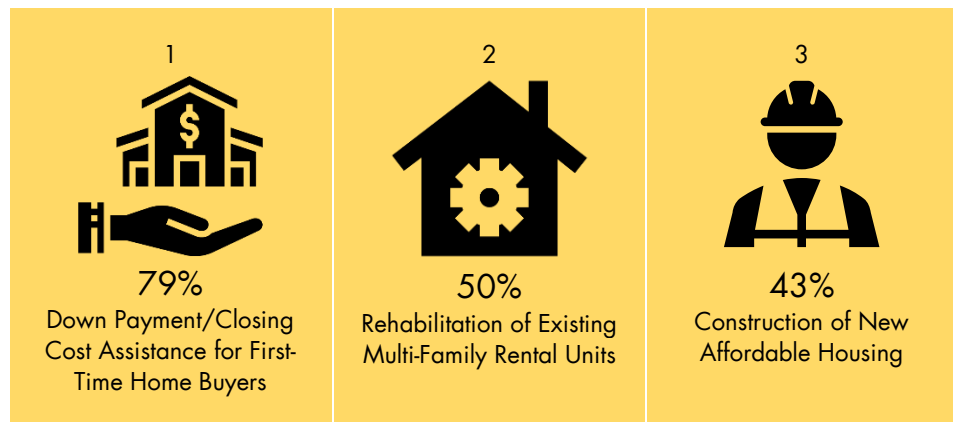
A few of Marin's federal grant program's target populations and communities including Marin City, West Marin, and Marin's Spanish speaking population expressed their community-specific needs and priorities at their respective community meetings. The community survey data was disaggregated by community to allow Staff to pinpoint and highlight these priorities.

### Marin City

#### Housing

Marin City's housing priorities differ from overall survey respondents and indicates a need for more financial assistance for first-time home buyers, rehabilitation of existing multi-family rental housing, and some construction of

new affordable housing. This community faces gentrification and displacement pressures which may explain why rehabilitating and securing homeownership for existing residents is a priority over the development of new housing in the community.



Top Three Identified Housing Needs from Community Survey Amongst Marin City Residents

#### Community Infrastructure

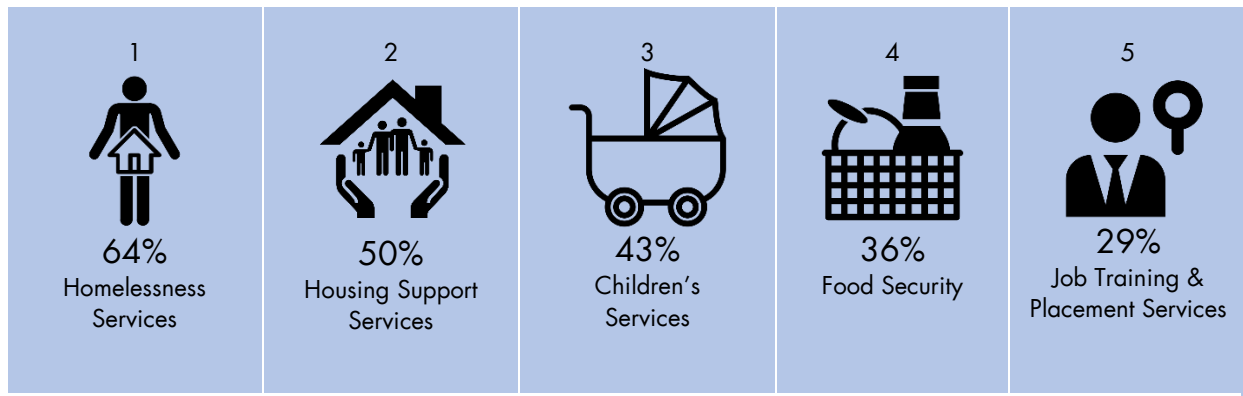
With regards to community infrastructure, like overall respondents, Marin City residents also indicated a priority to focus on homeless facilities/shelters, followed by an interest in more community gardens and gathering spaces, and improvements to nonprofit facilities.



Top Three Identified Community Infrastructure Needs from Community Survey Amongst Marin City Residents

## Public Services

Public service priorities in Marin City follows a similar trend to the County as a whole. However, after homelessness services, housing support services and children’s services—Marin City’s specific needs for food security and employment readiness are highlighted.

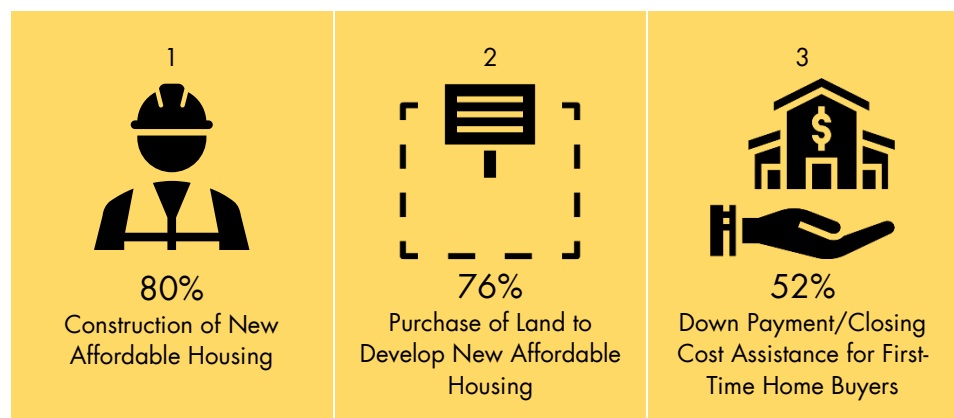


*Top Five Public Service Needs from Community Survey Amongst Marin City Residents*

## West Marin

### Housing

West Marin’s housing needs are largely related to the need for more housing, specifically affordable housing, through the construction of more housing and the purchase of land to allow for more development of affordable housing. West Marin residents also highlighted the need for more financial assistance to first-time home buyers.



*Top Three Identified Housing Needs from Community Survey Amongst West Marin Residents*

### Community Infrastructure

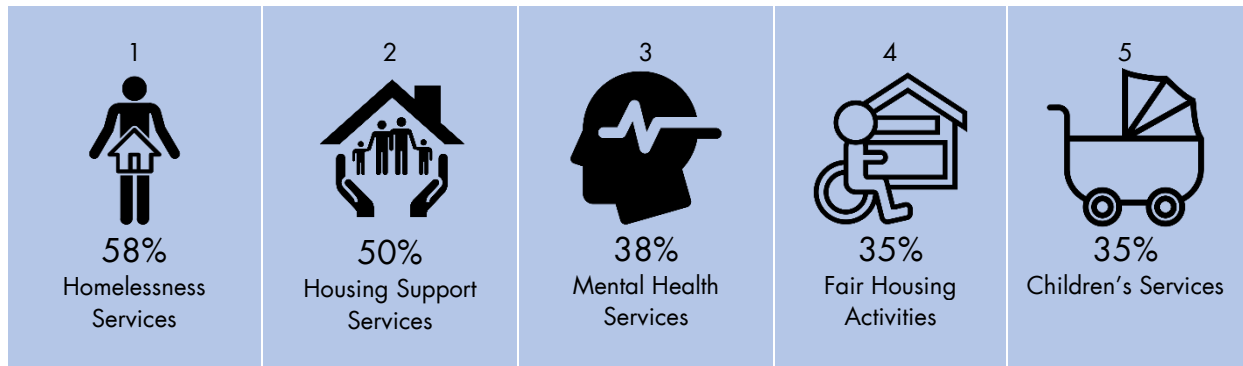
With regards to community infrastructure, West Marin residents indicated the need for facilities across age groups and needs. After homeless shelters/facilities, West Marin highlighted the need for childcare centers and older adult centers.



*Top Three Identified Community Infrastructure Needs from Community Survey Amongst West Marin Residents*

## Public Services

Public service needs in West Marin are also similar to the County: beyond homelessness services, housing support services, and children’s services—West Marin expressed priorities related to mental health services and fair housing activities.



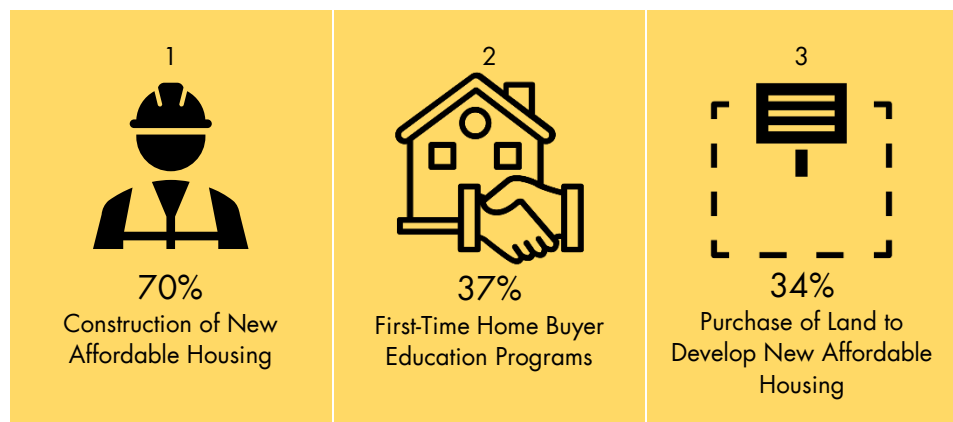
Top Five Public Service Needs from Community Survey Amongst West Marin Residents

## Spanish-Speaking Respondents

### Housing

Spanish speaking respondents indicated a need for more affordable housing, through the construction of more housing and the purchase of land to allow for more development.

Spanish speaking respondents also indicated the need for more education programs for first-time home buyers, highlighting the need for housing education programs in Spanish.



Top Three Identified Housing Needs from Community Survey Amongst Spanish-Speaking Residents

### Community Infrastructure

Spanish speaking residents of Marin County also pinpointed the need for youth centers, childcare centers and the need for accessible facilities for persons with disabilities. This highlights the community’s consistent priority around improved or new community

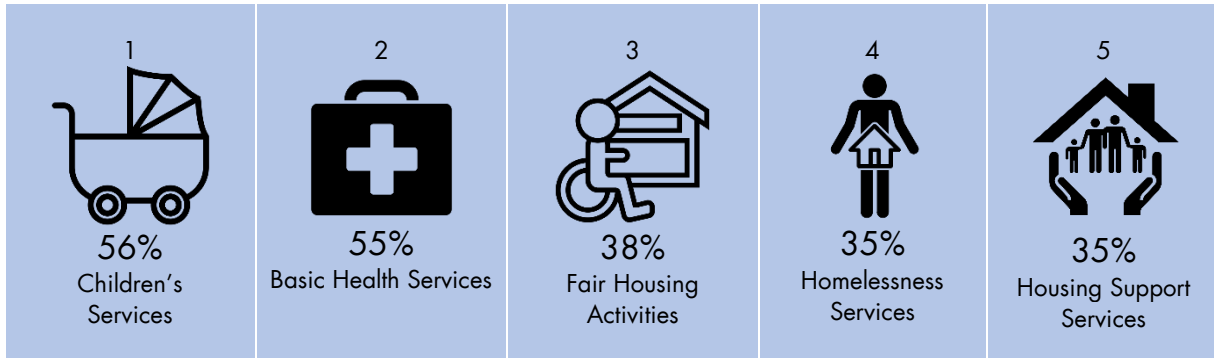


Top Three Identified Community Infrastructure Needs from Community Survey Amongst Spanish-Speaking Residents

gathering spaces, especially for youth in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael.

### Public Services

Public service priorities amongst Spanish-speaking residents in Marin shows a need for children’s services, basic health services, fair housing activities, homelessness services, and housing support services. It is critical to note that many survey respondents in Spanish indicated that they are a one income household, largely due to the high cost of childcare.



*Top Five Public Service Needs from Community Survey Amongst Spanish-Speaking Residents Residents*