

# Justice for Young Families: Uplifting the Experiences of Young Parents and Families

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## Abstract

- Young parents and their families experience significant challenges in accessing health care services and other basic needs
- The reproductive justice framework was created from a human-rights approach following the 1994 International Conference on Population Development<sup>1</sup>
- The reproductive justice framework is a theoretical framework that recognizes the intersectionality between reproduction and other systems of oppression, such as racism, homophobia, ableism, and ageism
- California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ) is the only Latine-led organization in California that adopts the reproductive justice framework<sup>2</sup>
- CLRJ's Justice for Young Families (J4YF) initiative champions young people's rights to self-determination and bodily autonomy<sup>3</sup>
- This target population of young parents are a historically marginalized group that experience higher health disparities compared to non-parenting young people
- CLRJ's strategies of community-informed research and engagement includes the formation of a Young Parent Leadership Council (YPLC)
- the YPLC are a cohort of young parents that gather monthly to build leadership skills, inform research and policy advocacy through listening sessions, and shift culture narratives about pregnancy and parenting youth
- During these listening sessions, the YPLC identified significant structural barriers including discrimination, when trying to navigate healthcare, social services, and other institutions

## Objectives

- CLRJ and the most recent cohort of the YPLC sought to explore the experiences of other young parents in Los Angeles through a needs assessment survey
- The aim of this survey is to understand some of the most important issues impacting young parents and their families



## Methods

- Because one of CLRJ's main strategies includes undertaking community-informed research, the YPLC were active stakeholders at every stage
- Three Community Researchers were hired from the YPLC to aid in the creation, planning, and development of our needs assessment, as their lived experience and expertise was valuable
- This needs assessment survey will be a cross-sectional study with a non-probability sample of 500 young parents selected through snowball sampling
- Because survey respondents will be receiving monetary compensation in the form of a gift card, the needs assessment survey will be sent to trusted networks to avoid individuals outside of the eligibility criteria to take the survey.
- The eligibility criteria includes being a young parent (age 12-24) living in Los Angeles County
- the survey will be offered in both English and Spanish
- Eligible participants will be administered a digital questionnaire that gathers data on six themes: demographics, housing, social support and relationships, school and education, childcare, and income/basic needs

- the needs assessment survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The survey will be taken digitally on Qualtrics and was tailored to be completed either on a web browser or on a mobile device
- The survey was piloted and approved by all the young parents in the YPLC
- The next phase of outreach and recruitment is currently making efforts to share the survey opportunity with their networks
- The needs assessment survey will help inform equitable policies, local advocacy efforts, and resources for current and future young parents and their families in Los Angeles County

## Hypothesized Result

- At this stage, data collection is still ongoing. During the YPLC meetings, significant structural barriers including discrimination in healthcare, social services, and other institutions were identified
- CLRJ has completed other qualitative research on young parents through interviews that were published in the 2021 and 2023 "A Day in the Life of a Young Parent" – a digital archive intended to dismantle negative stigmas

## Implications

- There is little data and research focused on identifying the needs of young parents and their families
- CLRJ has conducted a previous needs assessment survey in the city of Bell Gardens, and housing was identified as the most pressing issue<sup>4</sup>
- Martha Pineda, the Lead Community Organizer, partnered with the Unión de Vecinas, a community group of tenants in Bell Gardens affiliated with CLRJ
- Founded in 2019, the Unión de Vecinas is composed of working-class, immigrant Latine grandmothers, mothers, and parents<sup>4</sup>
- Through coalition building, civic engagement, and digital direct actions and press conferences, the Bell Gardens City Council unanimously passed a rent stabilization ordinance that limits annual rent increases to once a year and to not exceed a 4% ceiling in August 2022<sup>4</sup>
- Additionally, CLRJ and the Unión de Vecinas were able to establish just-cause evictions
- CLRJ will use the collected data to inform future policy advocacy for young parents

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2. California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. About us. <https://californialatinas.org/>  
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