



Merced County Sentiments: Housing Concerns



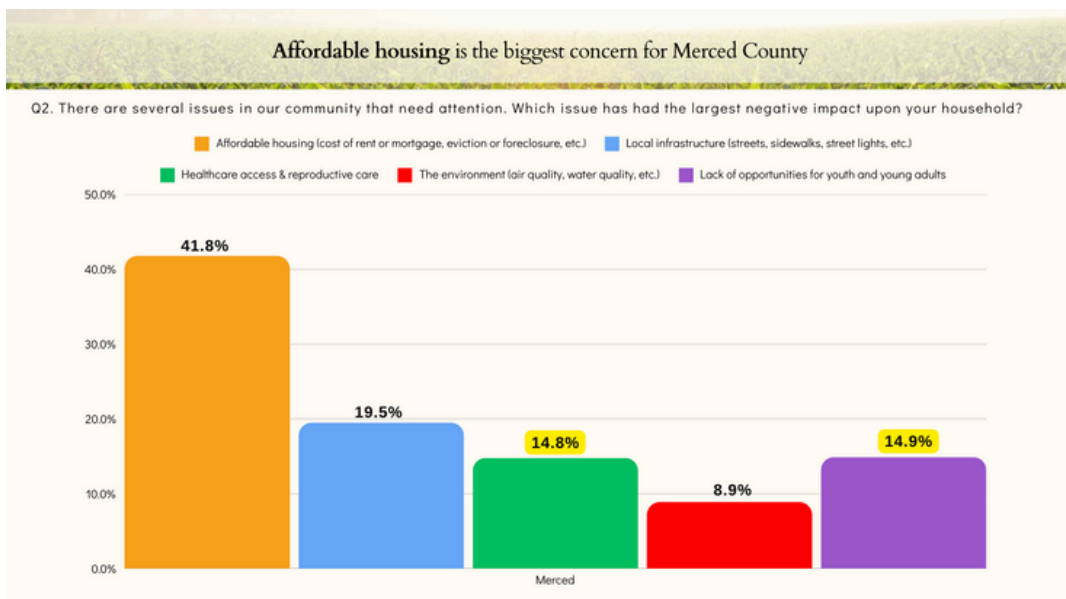
San Joaquin Valley Speaks 2023

Communities for a New California (CNC), in partnership with Mobilize. Organize. Vote. Empower (MOVE) the Valley commissioned Data for Social Good (DSG) to conduct a survey across the San Joaquin Valley. The survey was completed between November 9 and December 3, 2023. A total of 2,616 respondents from Merced, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties completed the survey by email or phone. DSG oversampled Latino, Black, and AAPI respondents to approximate the counties' registered voters, achieving a 2+/- margin of error. Based on publicly available research, this is the largest and most exhaustive Central Valley study conducted in the past two decades.¹ This document solely highlights Merced County survey results.

Executive Summary

Overall, San Joaquin Valley residents, including respondents in Merced County cited affordable housing as having most negatively impacted their households. From a field of choices and asked to choose one:

- **41.8% Affordable Housing**
- 19.5% Local Infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, street lights, etc.)
- 14.9% Lack of Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults
- 14.8% Healthcare Access and Reproductive Care
- 8.9 % The Environment (air quality, water quality, etc.)



1. PPIC Central Valley Research: [1999](#), [2001](#), [2002](#), [2003](#), [2004](#), [2006](#)





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Executive Summary (continued)

Affordable Housing was a top concern for non-Whites, No Party Preference (NPP) voters, 18-35 year-olds, and both men and women. **Of the nearly 42% of respondents that are concerned with Affordable Housing, over half believe the rents are too high and a quarter believe there are not enough affordable homes in the area.** These sentiments were mostly supported by women, AAPI, White, and Latinos, Democrats, and nearly all age groups.

Less than half of the respondents in Merced County own a home (48.7%), while the rest have alternative living arrangements. This is below the California state average of homeowners (55.6%).

- Nearly 63% of respondents who own a home are White
- 66.3% are 65 and older
- 51.3% are male
- 64.2% are Republican

Of the nearly 35% of the respondents in Merced County that rent, 60.2% are Latino, between the ages of 18 and 35, women, and NPP voters. Sixty-one percent of these respondents identified home affordability as their top barrier to homeownership.

A majority of respondents said they own a home because “it provides stability for me and my household,” and “I want to create generational wealth for my children/descendants” was statistically significant at 36.7%.

Conclusion

Merced County has the opportunity to increase funding to the 2025-2026 Budget that can address the housing crisis and its impact on women and people of the global majority/people of color by increasing resources to improve home buyer readiness, housing supply, and development of entry-level housing/starter homes, and budgetary investments in homeownership.

