About ACTION for Healthy Communities

ACTION for Healthy Communities is a collaborative of individual agencies and public and private organizations committed to improving the overall quality of life in San Luis Obispo County. A list of those organizations is found in the introduction to this report. ACTION completed its first benchmark study of community issues in 1999. This report represents the group’s seventh report and provides valuable comparative results in a number of criteria that measure local community health and well-being.

About the Researcher

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm dedicated to helping people build better communities by collecting meaningful data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. The firm was founded on the principle that community improvement, sustainability, and program success are closely tied to assessment of needs, evaluation of community goals, and the development of appropriate responses.

Locations

Central Coast Office:
55 Penny Lane, Ste. 101
P.O. Box 1927
Watsonville, CA 95077 (831) 728-1356

Bay Area Office:
1871 The Alameda, Ste. 180
San Jose, CA 95126 (408) 247-8319

www.appliedsurveyresearch.org

Applied Survey Research Staff

Project Director:
Susan Brutschy

Analysts and Researchers:
Angie Aguirre
Jennifer Anderson-Ochoa
James Connery
John Connery
Audra Eads
Javier Salcedo
Josaphine Stevenson
Michelle Luedtke
Alvaro Zamora

Graphic Design and Layout:
Michelle Luedtke
# Table of Contents

## Project Overview
- Introduction
- Mission, Guiding Principles, and Project Goals
- Desired Outcomes
- The Community Assessment Process

## Data Report
- Overview
- Data Report
- Legend
- Suggested Uses of this Report

## Acknowledgments
- Steering Committee
- Major Financial Sponsors
- Collaborative Partners

## 2016 Highlights

## Demographics
- Population
- Basic Demographics

## Basic Needs
- Basic Needs Summary
- Basic Needs

## Social Characteristics
- Poverty Level
- Self-Sufficiency Income Standards
- Social Services

## Housing
- Affordable Housing
- Housing Prices
- Rent Prices and Fair Market Rents

## Homelessness

## Food Security
- Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Meals

## Education
- Education Summary
- Family Reading
- Child Care/Early Childhood Education
- Student Enrollment
- School Capacities

## School Attendance
- Suspension and Expulsion

## Test Scores
- California Assessment of Student Performance (CAASPP)
- California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
- SAT and ACT

## English Learners

## High School
- High School Graduation Rates
- High School Dropout Rates

## Higher Education
- College Preparation Courses
- Educational Attainment

## Economy
- Economy Summary
- Financial Well-Being and Income
  - Financial well-being
  - Household Income
- Employment
  - Concern about Employment Opportunities
  - Unemployment Rates
  - Pay for Selected Occupations
  - Child Care Supply
  - Net Job Change
- Retail Sales
- Travel Spending and Related Impacts

## Health
- Health Summary
- County Health Rankings
- Access to Health Care
  - Source of Primary Health Care
- Last Routine Checkup
  - Inability to Receive Medical Care
- Health Insurance
  - Low-Income Health Insurance
- Prenatal Care
- Birth Outcomes
  - Birth Rates
Table of Contents

Adolescent Birth Rate ........................................ 80
Pre-Term and Low Birth Weight Births .......... 81
Infant Mortality .................................................. 81

Immunizations ................................................. 82

Oral Health ....................................................... 88
  Regular Source of Dental Care .................. 88
  Preventive Dental Care ........................... 89

Mental Health .................................................... 90
  Access ........................................................... 91
  Hotline Calls ............................................... 92

Physical Health and Activity .................. 94
  Physical Health and Activity .............. 95
  Exercise ................................................... 96
  Nutrition ................................................... 100
  Obesity .................................................... 106

Alcohol Use .................................................... 107
  Alcohol Use and Availability ............. 107

Substance Use ................................................. 109
  Concern about Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol Abuse ................. 109
  Substance Use among Students ............ 112
  Smoking .................................................... 113
  Youth-Reported Tobacco Use ............ 113

Reported Communicable Diseases ................. 115

Causes of Death ............................................... 116
  Leading Causes of Death ...................... 117
  Suicides ................................................... 118

Natural and Built Environment ............. 119

Natural and Built Environment Summary ............ 120

Concern for the Environment ............. 121

Agriculture and Open Space ................. 123
  Parks ....................................................... 123

Water Use ....................................................... 126
  Water Supply .......................................... 126
  Water Quality ......................................... 130

Transportation ............................................ 131
  Roadway Congestion .............................. 134

Air Quality .................................................... 136

Energy Use ..................................................... 138

Public Safety ................................................. 140

Public Safety Summary ......................... 141

Public Safety Concerns .......................... 142
  Concern about Crime ............................... 142
  Neighborhood Safety ............................ 145
  School Safety ..................................... 147

Gun Sales ....................................................... 147

Crime Rate and Arrests ........................ 148
  Crime Rates ............................................. 148
  Juvenile Arrests ...................................... 158
  Driving Under the Influence .................. 159

Disaster Preparedness ............................ 160

Violence ......................................................... 161
  Family Violence and Domestic Violence Calls ................. 161
  Domestic Violence Shelters .............. 162
  Child Abuse ............................................ 163

Social Environment ........................................ 164

Social Environment Summary ................ 165

2-1-1 Calls for Assistance ....................... 166

People with Disabilities ....................... 167

Racism and Discrimination .................. 169
  Hate Crimes ............................................ 170

Community Participation .......................... 171
  Voting .................................................... 171
  Giving .................................................... 172
  Volunteering ....................................... 172

Rating of Local Government .................... 173

Appendices ..................................................... 181
Project Overview

What is the quality of life like in San Luis Obispo County? Do residents feel safe? Are there enough employment opportunities? Do people feel they have access to good schools and services? Is our community healthy?

These are just a few of the questions that a consortium of public and private health, education, business, environmental, human service, and civic organizations set out to answer when they began the ACTION for Healthy Communities project in the late 1990s.

The first wave of data collection occurred in 1999. The project was updated in 2001, 2003, 2006, 2010, and 2013. This 2016 survey represents the seventh report, in which many of the measures have been examined for trends, while some new indicators have been added.

ACTION for Healthy Communities will provide survey results and data to the community through this Comprehensive Report.

For further information, contact ACTION for Healthy Communities c/o The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County, 550 Dana Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 - (805) 543-2323.

Introduction

ACTION for Healthy Communities (ACTION) believes that by sharing resources and working together, more comprehensive and useful planning tools can be developed. ACTION also believes that a more comprehensive approach to assessing the quality of life in San Luis Obispo County will enable organizations that allocate resources to more effectively address critical community concerns.

This comprehensive report is considered the first step in a comprehensive planning process.

ACTION celebrates the collaborative spirit of all individuals and organizations involved with this ongoing effort. We especially thank our financial sponsors for their support, encouragement, and faith in the process.

Mission, Guiding Principles, and Project Goals

The mission of ACTION is to identify and address community needs through collaborative efforts with partners which advance effective strategies, programs, and policies that improve health and well-being in San Luis Obispo County.

ACTION has adopted these guiding principles:

- Long-term approach to planning and program development;
- Creation of a collaborative planning mechanism;
- Commitment to empowerment through a community-driven process;
- Assessment should result in identification of priorities and action plans.
Project Goals:

As defined, the project goals are:

- Raise public awareness of human needs, trends, emerging issues, and community problems;
- Provide accurate, credible, and valid information on an ongoing basis to community service providers to guide decision-making about creation, management, and redesign of programs.

Desired Outcomes

ACTION has developed the following desired outcomes for this community assessment: To study the community health and services that exist in order to:

1. Provide accurate, credible, and valid information on an ongoing basis to health and human services providers, policy-makers, and funders concerning the creation, management, and support of programs.
2. Encourage collaboration and partnerships to facilitate improved service delivery that is coordinated, holistic, and consolidated within the community.
3. Set community indicators that can serve as the basis for the formulation of community goals that will lead to a community-wide vision and plan for improving community health.
4. Reassess key indicators every three years to track progress and to identify emerging gaps and resources so that strategies for responding to the gaps can be developed.

The Community Assessment Process Overview

This community assessment model provides a comprehensive view of the quality of life in San Luis Obispo County. It is based on primary (public opinion) data and secondary (empirical trend) data that are gathered for a series of indicators in seven areas: basic needs, education, the economy, health, natural and built environment, public safety, and social environment.

Data Report

Every three years, the primary and secondary data will be compiled into a comprehensive report (please see Appendix A for the methodology). The intent of this report is to provide an in-depth look at the quality of life in San Luis Obispo County. Geographic areas, age, and target group breakdowns have been incorporated into many of the primary data items as well. Please refer to the legend for explanations of frequently used symbols and notations throughout the report.
### Suggested Uses of this Report

The tips shown below are offered to make the report easier to use.

**For a Broad Overview of Quality of Life Issues**

It is best to review the first page of each of the seven sections of the San Luis Obispo County report: basic needs, education, the economy, health, natural and built environment, public safety, and social environment. Each of these sections begins with a summary of the research area.

**For Information about Trends that May Impact Your Business or Organization**

Within each of the seven research areas, there is a wealth of information on a wide range of issues. One of the most useful features of this report is the display of trend data, where it is available. A tremendous amount of detailed information can be found that may help identify new customers or emerging needs, or explain changes in the local environment that will have future impacts. In selected areas, demographic breakdowns of data, most commonly by geographic areas, age, and target groups, have been included.

**For Data to Support or Refine Your Services and Products**

This information is intended to be used in your own reports and proposals, and as a baseline for performance systems. Whenever report data is used, ACTION should be acknowledged. ACTION representatives are available to speak with groups about the information in this report.

**Supplementary Reports Available**

In addition to this comprehensive report, several issue folios have been developed that highlight and provide analysis of key quality of life indicators. To download additional free copies of these reports, please visit www.ActionSLO.org.

For further information, contact ACTION for Healthy Communities c/o The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County, 550 Dana Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 – Phone: (805) 543-2323.
Acknowledgments

Steering Committee

Jeff Legato, Chair
County of San Luis Obispo Planning and Building Department

Trish Avery-Caldwell
County of San Luis Obispo Department of Social Services

Geoffrey Chiapella
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

Claire Hermann
County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health

Patty Herrera
Dignity Health: Arroyo Grande Community Hospital and French Medical Center

Michael Kaplan
Transitions-Mental Health Association

Michael Latner
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Political Science Department

Rick London
United Way of San Luis Obispo County

Ann McDowell
County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health

Len Smolburd
The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County

Elizabeth “Biz” Steinberg
Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County

Whitney Szentesi
County of San Luis Obispo Administrative Office

Angela Tahti
ARTS Obispo

Jason Wells
First 5 San Luis Obispo County

Janice Fong Wolf
The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County
Central Coast Voices Team:
Kris Kingston-Baker
Christina Lefevre Latner
Fred R. Munroe

Major Financial Sponsors

County of San Luis Obispo
- Board of Supervisors
- Department of Public Health

Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO)

Dignity Health: Arroyo Grande Community Hospital and French Hospital Medical Center

First 5 of SLO County

The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County

Supporting Financial Sponsors

Access Support Network
Area Agency on Aging
Cal Poly
CenCal
Children’s Services Network
Coast National Bank
Community Health Centers of the Central Coast
County of San Luis Obispo
- Department of Behavioral Health
- Department of Planning and Building
- Department of Probation
- Library
Hospice of San Luis Obispo County
Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo
Peoples’ Self-Help Housing
County of San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District
County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health
County of San Luis Obispo Office of Education
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
San Luis Obispo Housing Trust Fund
San Luis Obispo Nonprofit Housing Corporation
Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center
Transitions-Mental Health Association
United Way of San Luis Obispo County
Collaborative Partners

Thank you to all of the organizations and individuals that provided input and in-kind services that made it possible to formulate this report.

Access Support Network
Area Agency on Aging
ARTS Obispo
Children's Services Network
Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO)
Community Health Centers of the Central Coast
County of San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District
County of San Luis Obispo Housing Trust Fund
County of San Luis Obispo Office of Education
County of San Luis Obispo:
  • Administrative Office
  • Adult Services Policy Council
  • Board of Supervisors
  • Department of Behavioral Health
  • Department of Planning and Building
  • Department of Probation
  • Department of Public Health
  • Department of Social Services
  • Library
Dignity Health: Arroyo Grande Community Hospital and French Hospital Medical Center
First 5 SLO County
Peoples' Self-Help Housing Corporation
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
San Luis Obispo Nonprofit Housing Corporation
Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center
The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County
Transitions-Mental Health Association
United Way of San Luis Obispo County

A special thank you to all of the San Luis Obispo County volunteers, organizations, and businesses that assisted in surveying their community!
2016 Highlights

OUR POPULATION

- The population of San Luis Obispo County was 277,977 in 2016.
- The majority of residents (69%) were white, about one-fifth (22%) were Latino, 4% were Asian, and the rest were other races/ethnicities. In 2015, 83% of the population 5 years and over spoke only English at home, and 13% spoke only Spanish at home.
- Seniors over the age of 60 are the fastest growing group in the county at 25% in 2015, up from 21% in 2010.

BASIC NEEDS

- Eleven percent of 2016 ACTION telephone survey respondents said that they went without some basic needs in the last year, but Spanish-speaking face-to-face respondents had an especially difficult time with 17% going without health care, 11% without food, and 5% without utilities.
- Fifteen percent of children under 18 were living beneath the federal poverty level in the county in 2015.

Food

- More than one quarter (27%) of county residents were not able to afford enough food in 2014.

Housing

- Fifty-nine percent of 2016 ACTION telephone survey respondents spent more than one-third of their income to pay for housing costs.
- The average cost for a two-bedroom rental was $1,310 per month in 2016.
- The median sale price of homes in the San Luis Obispo area was $480,000 in the first quarter of 2016, up from $350,000 in 2010.
- In 2015, there were approximately 1,515 homeless individuals counted in a point-in-time count in San Luis Obispo County, and 74% were unsheltered.

EDUCATION

Family Reading

- Nearly 56.5% of ACTION telephone survey respondent parents said they read stories or looked at picture books every day of the week with their children under 12 years old in 2016.

School Enrollment

- In San Luis Obispo County, there were 34,866 children and youth enrolled in school in 2015-16.
Test Scores

- Half of 3rd grade students (50%) in the county met or exceeded the English-Language Arts California Assessment of Student Performance (CAASPP) Standards in 2016.

- Between 2010 and 2015, the percentage of San Luis Obispo County students who passed the English-Language Arts subject area of the CAHSEE has ranged from 86% to 88% and has consistently remained higher than the state overall (81%–85%).

High School Graduation

- The high school graduation rate in the county has increased to 92% in 2014-15, and was higher than the state overall (82%).

ECONOMY

Economic Perceptions

- More than one-third (35%) of 2016 ACTION telephone survey respondents felt economically better off this year as compared to last year.

Jobs and Earnings

- The annual average unemployment rate was 5% in the county in 2016, up from 10% in 2010.

- Median household income in the county was slightly lower at $62,648 than California at $64,500 in 2015.

HEALTH

Insurance

- Ninety percent of ACTION telephone survey respondents said they had health insurance and 86% said they had a regular source of health care in 2016.

- Fifty-four percent of Spanish-speaking face-to-face survey respondents were uninsured in 2016.

Exercise, Nutrition, and Obesity

- More than half (55%) of San Luis Obispo County adults were considered overweight or obese in 2014.

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that adults get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day for five days a week or more. In 2016, only half (52%) of ACTION telephone survey respondents achieved that goal.
Substance Abuse

- Seventy-four percent of ACTION telephone survey respondents were very concerned or somewhat concerned about drug, tobacco, and alcohol abuse in their community in 2016.

- The percent of county residents ages 21 and older who reported binge drinking in the last year was higher (53%) than the state of California (32.5%) in 2014.

Mortality

- Suicide rates in the county have been consistently higher than the state since 2003.

- The leading cause of death for San Luis Obispo County residents was cancer, followed by heart disease, and stroke.

NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Outdoors

- The top three issues of concern for ACTION telephone survey respondents since 2006 are: water quality, air pollution, and traffic.

- In September 2016, nearly 5,000 acres owned by San Luis Obispo County were for open space and recreation.

- Nearly 64% of county residents lived within walking distance of a park, playground or open space in 2014.

Water Use

- Six out of 19 communities reached a level III severity for their water supply and/or water system in 2012-14, signifying that their water demand exceeded supply or their water delivery system had reached its capacity.

Energy Use

- Local agricultural electricity consumption went up 28% between 2010 and 2015.
PUBLIC SAFETY

Safety and Crime

- Nearly 81% of ACTION telephone survey respondents felt “very safe” in their neighborhood, but only 39% of Spanish-speaking face-to-face respondents felt “very safe” in 2016.
- The county crime rate was 28.7 per 1,000 residents in 2015, up slightly from 25.9 per 1,000 residents in 2010.
- Gun sales have increased by 37% in the county between 2011 and 2015.
- Adult and juvenile misdemeanor arrest rates for driving under the influence (DUI) in the county have declined since 2010 but have remained higher than the state.
- The rate of substantiated child abuse cases for the county was higher (11.3 per 1,000) than in the state overall (8.4 per 1,000) in 2014.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Community Concerns

- A sizeable majority (71%) of 2016 ACTION telephone survey respondents indicated that they were somewhat concerned or very concerned about child abuse in their communities.
- About 59% of 2016 ACTION telephone survey respondents were concerned about racism in their community.
- There were a total of 4 hate crime offenses in 2015.

2-1-1 Community Hotline

- The total number of 2-1-1 calls for assistance decreased from 3,994 calls in 2014 to 3,473 in 2015. The highest numbers of calls were for Housing and Utilities (1,145).

Giving

- Over 64% of ACTION telephone survey households donated to charities in 2016.
- Forty-three percent of ACTION telephone survey respondents reported volunteering in the past month in 2016.
- ACTION telephone survey respondents continue to give low rankings to certain public services in the county including roads, planning and building services, and city or county administration in 2016.