

# ACTION for Healthy Communities

## Comprehensive Report 2006



San Luis Obispo County



## About ACTION for Healthy Communities

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ACTION for Healthy Communities is a cooperative, collaborative effort of individual agencies and public and private organizations that are committed to improving the overall quality of life in San Luis Obispo County. A list of those organizations involved with the collaborative effort 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 fourth report and provides valuable comparative results in a number of criteria that measure local community health and well-being.

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This and prior reports may be downloaded for free at United Way of San Luis Obispo County's web site, under Community Partners, [www.unitedwayslo.org](http://www.unitedwayslo.org).

## About the Researcher

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Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a nonprofit, 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.

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## Project Overview

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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 1990's. As defined, the project goals are:

- Raise public awareness of human needs, changing trends, emerging issues and community problems;
- Provide accurate, credible and valid information on an ongoing basis to human services planners and those providing funds;
- Provide information for individual institutions to guide decision-making about creation, management, and redesign of programs;
- Establish community goals using measurable Quality-of-Life Indicators that will lead to positive, healthy development for individuals, families and communities;
- Develop and support collaborative action plans to achieve the community goals.

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

ACTION for Healthy Communities will provide survey results and data to the community through this Comprehensive Report and a separate Indicators Report. To download additional free copies of these reports, please visit United Way of San Luis Obispo County's web site, [www.unitedwayslo.org](http://www.unitedwayslo.org).

For further information, or to order these reports, contact: ACTION for Healthy Communities c/o San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1580, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 Voice: 805-543-2323 Fax: 805-543-2346.

## Introduction

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ACTION for Healthy Communities 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.

In 2003, UCSB Economic Forecast Project conducted the assessment for San Luis Obispo County. Applied Survey Research was selected to update and conduct the 2006 assessment and survey.

The 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 and Guiding Principles

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The mission of ACTION is to “develop a comprehensive planning approach to identify and address community needs through collaborative efforts with community partners to implement effective programs that improve community health and well being.”

ACTION has adopted these guiding principles:

- Long-term approach to planning and program development
- Creation of a collaborative planning mechanism
- Commitment to a community-driven process with consumer empowerment
- Assessment should result in identification of priorities and action plans

## Desired Outcomes

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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 service planners, 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. Re-assess 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

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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 environment, public safety, and social environment.

## Methodology

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### Primary Data

Measures of community progress depend upon consistent, reliable, and scientifically accurate sources of data. One of the types of data gathered for this project is primary (public opinion) data. There is much to be learned from people's perception of their community, especially when perceptions contradict the empirical evidence about its conditions. For instance, in the area of public safety, crime rates may be going down while perceptions of danger are going up.

For this reason, in 1999, 2001, 2003 and again in 2006, a random telephone survey of 500 county residents was conducted in both English and Spanish. Telephone numbers were randomly selected from all valid exchanges in the county, including unlisted numbers. The intent of the survey is to measure the opinions of the overall population of the county. In many cases, questions used in earlier ACTION telephone surveys were used for tracking purposes.

It is important to note that all surveys have some inherent error. We are 95% confident the opinions of survey respondents reflect those of the general population within approximately +/- 4.5%.

In addition to the countywide telephone survey, ACTION conducted Target Group surveys of three groups that might not have enough members in the 500 telephone interviews to allow separate analysis of their answers.

The three groups are:

- Seniors and frail/dependent adults
- Homeless
- Low income Latinos

ACTION developed the Target Group questionnaires in English and Spanish. Nineteen organizations that serve one or more of the three Target Groups then surveyed their clients/patients/constituents using the ACTION questionnaires. Over 600 surveys were completed.

### Secondary Data

Another type of data used for this project is secondary or empirical data. Secondary data are collected from a variety of sources including but not limited to: the U.S. Census, federal, state, and local government agencies, academic institutions, economic development groups, health care institutions, libraries, schools, local police, sheriff and fire departments.

#### *Note on Population Figures*

Unless otherwise noted, population data were drawn from the California Department of Finance's annual estimates for January of each year.

#### *California Health Interview Survey for 2001, 2003 and 2005*

Some responses from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) were included in this report. CHIS is the largest health survey of its kind in the nation. Further, CHIS is the largest telephone survey in California, interviewing one adult in 55,000 randomly selected households. The survey reached over 5,000 adolescents (ages 12–17) and, through interviewing their parent, over 12,000 children under age 12. The major areas covered in the survey include health-related behaviors, health insurance coverage, health status and conditions,

and access to health care services. To ensure diverse populations were included in the survey, telephone interviews were conducted in six languages: English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese dialects), Vietnamese, Korean and Khmer (Cambodian).

*Healthy People 2010 Objectives*

The Healthy People 2010 Objectives are a set of health objectives for the nation to achieve over the first decade of the new century. Many different people, states, communities, professional organizations and others can use the objectives to help develop programs to improve health.

Healthy People 2010 goals build on initiatives pursued over the past two decades including Healthy People 2000: National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives developed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The goals of these initiatives were to establish national health objectives and serve as the basis for the development of state and community plans. Like its predecessors, Healthy People 2010 was developed through a broad consultation process, built on the best scientific knowledge and designed to measure programs over time.

## Data Report

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Every three years, the primary and secondary data will be compiled into a Comprehensive Report. The intent of this report is to provide an in-depth look at the quality of life in San Luis Obispo County.

Ethnicity, income, senior and geographic

breakdowns have been incorporated in many of the primary data items as well. Please refer to the legend for explanations of frequently used symbols and notations throughout the report.

## Legend

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Some survey responses are reported by geographic sub-areas. Those sub-areas are organized as follows:

**North County** Atascadero, Bee Rock, California Valley, Camp Roberts, Cholame, Creston, Lake Nacimiento, Paso Robles, Pozo, Klau, San Miguel, Santa Margarita, Shandon, Templeton

**North Coast** Baywood, Cambria, Cayucos, Harmony, Los Osos, Morro Bay, San Simeon

**San Luis Obispo** City of San Luis Obispo, Avila Beach

**South County** Arroyo Grande, Halcyon, Grover Beach, Nipomo, Oceano, Pismo Beach, Shell Beach



Indicates that no new data for a particular indicator are available

**% Change**

Describes a change in value between the current and first year's data. This only applies when the data are not percentages or rates

**Net Change**

Describes the net change between the current and first year's data



Denotes a telephone survey question



Indicates data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), 2001, 2003, and 2005

## Suggested Uses of this Report

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Because the scope of this project is so broad, it may take a while to become familiar with the data and format of the report. The tips shown below are offered to make the report more useful to the user.

### **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 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 ethnicity, income, seniors or geographic areas 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, an Indicators Report is available which highlights and provides analysis of over 40 key Quality of Life Indicators. Separate detailed computer tabulations of the 2006 telephone survey and Target Group surveys are available. To download additional free copies of these reports, please visit United Way of San Luis Obispo County's web site, [www.unitedwayslo.org](http://www.unitedwayslo.org).

For further information, or to order these reports, contact: ACTION for Healthy Communities c/o San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1580, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 Voice: 805-543-2323 Fax: 805-543-2346.

## Acknowledgements

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### Major Financial Sponsors

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County of San Luis Obispo: Administrative Office Department of Social Services Probation Department Health Agency Public Library	First 5 Children & Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County
Economic Opportunity Commission of San Luis Obispo County	San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation
	The California Endowment
	The Tribune
	United Way of San Luis Obispo County

### Supporting Financial Sponsors

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Area Agency on Aging	San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
Arroyo Grande Community Hospital	San Luis Obispo County Arts Council-Arts Obispo
Children's Services Network	San Luis Obispo County Office of Education
Community Health Centers of the Central Coast	San Luis Obispo Symphony
Commission on the Status of Women	Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center
French Hospital Medical Center	Transitions-Mental Health Association
People's Self Help Housing Corporation	

## Collaborative Partners

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Adult Services Policy Council	Habitat for Humanity of San Luis Obispo County
AIDS Support Network	In-Home Supportive Services
Area Agency on Aging	Latino Outreach Council
Arroyo Grande Community Hospital	LifeSteps Foundation
Atascadero Community Link	Long Term Care Ombudsman
Boys & Girls Club of South San Luis Obispo County	People's Self Help Housing Corporation
Caring Callers	Prado Day Center
Children's Services Network	San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce
Commission on the Status of Women	San Luis Obispo Childcare Planning Council
Community Health Centers of the Central Coast	San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
County of San Luis Obispo:	San Luis Obispo County American Red Cross
Department of Social Services	San Luis Obispo County Arts Council-Arts Obispo
Health Agency	San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation
County Medical Services Program	San Luis Obispo County Health Commission
Drug & Alcohol Services	San Luis Obispo County Medical Society
Mental Health Services	San Luis Obispo County Office of Education
Public Health Services	San Luis Obispo County Prevention, Advocacy and CARE Consortium
Public Guardian	San Luis Obispo County YMCA
Public Library	San Luis Obispo Symphony
Planning and Building Department	Senior Legal Services
Probation Department	Senior Peer Counseling
Economic Opportunity Commission of San Luis Obispo County	Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center
Economic Vitality Corporation	Taylor Consulting Group
Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo	The Tribune
First 5 Children & Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County	Transitions-Mental Health Association
French Hospital Medical Center	United Way of San Luis Obispo County
	Victim Witness

**A special thank you to all of the San Luis Obispo County volunteers and businesses who assisted in surveying their community!**