

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 sixth 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 www.ActionSLO.org or at The Community Foundation's web site, under Community Needs, www.cfsloco.org.

We wish to acknowledge ShowTel Video Audio Events Production for providing the photos used throughout the report.

About the Researcher



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

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. 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, 2003, 2006, 2010, and this 2013 survey represents the sixth 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 and Guiding Principles

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

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 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, physical 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.

Legend

Item	Description
North Coast	Baywood, Cambria, Cayucos, Harmony, Los Osos, Morro Bay, San Simeon
North County	Atascadero, Bee Rock, California Valley, Camp Roberts, Cholame, Creston, Lake Nacimiento, Paso Robles, Pozo, Klau, San Miguel, Santa Margarita, Shandon, Templeton
San Luis Obispo	City of San Luis Obispo, Avila Beach
South County	Arroyo Grande, Halcyon, Grover Beach, Nipomo, Oceano, Pismo Beach, Shell Beach
	Indicates data increasing (Upward) trend.
	Indicates data declining (Downward) trend.
	Indicates data inconclusive; variable; no clear trend.
GREEN	Green colored arrow indicates positive trend.
RED	Red colored arrow indicates negative trend.
	Denotes a telephone survey question.
	Denotes a face-to-face survey question.

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, physical 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 which 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 – (805) 543-2323.

Acknowledgements

Steering Committee

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Major Financial Sponsors

County of San Luis Obispo: <i>Administrative Office</i> <i>Planning Department</i> <i>Probation Department</i> <i>Health Agency</i> <i>Sheriff</i>	Dignity Health First 5 San Luis Obispo County San Luis Obispo Council of Governments The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County
Community Action Partnership of SLO County	

Supporting Financial Sponsors

Air Pollution Control District	ARTS Obispo
Area Agency on Aging	CenCal

Acknowledgements

Vital Signs – Understanding San Luis Obispo County

Children’s Services Network
 Coast National Bank
 Community Health Centers of the Central Coast
 Hospice of SLO
 People’s Self Help Housing Corporation
 San Luis Obispo County Housing Trust Fund
 San Luis Obispo County Office of Education

San Luis Obispo Housing Authority
 San Luis Obispo Nonprofit Housing Corporation
 Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center
 The LINK
 Transitions-Mental Health Association
 United Way of San Luis Obispo County
 Workforce Investment Board









Collaborative Partners

Adult Services Policy Council
 AIDS Support Network
 Air Pollution Control District
 Area Agency on Aging
 Arroyo Grande Community Hospital
 ARTS Obispo
 Boys & Girls Club of South San Luis Obispo County
 Children’s Services Network
 Community Action Partnership of SLO County
 Community Health Centers of the Central Coast
 County of San Luis Obispo:
 Department of Social Services
 Health Agency
 Behavioral Health
 Public Library
 Planning and Building Department
 Probation Department
 Sheriff
 Economic Vitality Corporation
 Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo
 First 5 San Luis Obispo County
 French Hospital Medical Center
 Habitat for Humanity of San Luis Obispo County
 In-Home Supportive Services
 Latino Outreach Council
 LifeSteps Foundation
 Long Term Care Ombudsman




People’s Self Help Housing Corporation
 Prado Day Center
 San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce
 San Luis Obispo Childcare Planning Council
 San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
 San Luis Obispo County American Red Cross
 San Luis Obispo County Health Commission
 San Luis Obispo County Housing Trust Fund
 San Luis Obispo County Office of Education
 San Luis Obispo County HIV Prevention, Advocacy
 and CARE Consortium
 San Luis Obispo County YMCA
 San Luis Obispo Housing Authority
 San Luis Obispo Nonprofit Housing Corporation
 Senior Legal Services
 Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center
 The Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County
 The LINK
 Transitions-Mental Health Association
 United Way of San Luis Obispo County
 Victim Witness
 Wilshire Health & Community Services
 Workforce Investment Board

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

Snapshot of San Luis Obispo County

Section	Indicator	Measurement	California	San Luis Obispo County	County Trend
Basic Needs	Basic Needs	Percent of telephone survey respondents who went without basic needs in the past year	NA	15.0%	NA
	Housing Affordability	Percentage of telephone survey respondents who used more than one third of their income to pay for housing	NA	60.7%	
Education Issues	Test Scores	Percent of 3 rd grade students scoring proficient or above in the English-Language Arts subject area on the California Standards Test	46.0%	52.0%	
	Dropout Rates	High school dropout rate	13.1%	7.7%	
Economic Issues	Economic Well-Being	Percent of telephone survey respondents who felt they were financially better off this year than last year	NA	38.8%	
	Annual Average Unemployment	Unemployment Rate	10.5%	8.1%	
Health Issues	Health Insurance	Percent of telephone survey respondents who have health insurance	NA	82.1%	
	Obesity	Percent of overweight or obese adults	59.8%	48.1%	
Physical Environment Issues	Physical Environment Concerns	Percent of telephone survey respondents who said they were “very concerned” and “somewhat concerned” about their water quality	NA	68.8%	

	Parks	Percent of telephone survey respondents visiting any outdoor recreation locations in San Luis Obispo County at least 1 time over the past 3 months	NA	91.9%	
Public Safety Issues	Neighborhood Safety	Percent of telephone survey respondents that felt very safe in their neighborhood	NA	78.5%	
	Crime Rate for Selected Areas	Total crime rate for San Luis Obispo County (<i>per 1,000 residents</i>)	NA	26.7	
Social Environment Issues	Giving and Volunteering	Percent of telephone survey respondents or member of their household who have contributed money or other property to any charitable organization in the past year	NA	82.1%	
	Rating of Local Government	Percentage of telephone survey respondents who rated the emergency services in San Luis Obispo as “Excellent” or “Very good”	NA	50.5%	

 Increasing (Upward) trend;
  Declining (Downward) trend;
  Inconclusive; variable; no clear trend;
 NA Not applicable or data unavailable. Green colored arrow indicates positive trend; Red colored arrow indicates negative trend.

Note: Data presented in table are the most recent data available.

2013 Highlights

OUR POPULATION

- The population of San Luis Obispo County was 274,804 in 2012.
- The majority of residents (70%) were white, about one-fifth (22%) were Latino, 4% were Asian, and the rest were other races/ethnicities. In 2012, 81% of the population 5 years and over spoke only English at home, and 15% spoke only Spanish at home.
- Seniors over the age of 60 are the fastest growing group in the county at 24% in 2012, up from 19% in 2006.



BASIC NEEDS

- Fifteen percent of 2013 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 35% going without health care, 18% without food, and 10% without utilities.
- Fifteen percent of children under 18 were living beneath the federal poverty level in the county in 2012.

Food

- Almost one out of four (23%) county residents were not able to afford enough food in 2012.

Housing

- Sixty-one percent of 2013 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 \$1,215 per month in 2013.
- The median sale price of homes in the San Luis Obispo area was \$354,000 in 2013, down from \$504,000 in 2007.
- In 2013, there were approximately 2,186 homeless individuals counted in a point-in-time count in San Luis Obispo County, and almost 90% were unsheltered.

EDUCATION

Family Reading

- Nearly 60% 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 2013.

School Enrollment

- In San Luis Obispo County, there were 34,674 children and youth enrolled in school in 2012-13, a 2% decline from the 2006-2007 school year.

Test Scores



- Half of 3rd grade students (52%) in the county scored proficient or above in English-Language Arts on the California Standard Tests (STAR) in 2013, higher than California at 46%.
- High school math proficiency remained relatively low, although it was generally higher than the state. For example, 13%-18% of county 11th graders were proficient in Algebra I and II, and Geometry, compared to California (8%-15%).

High School Graduation

- The high school graduation rate in the county has increased to 88% in 2011-12, and was higher than the state overall (79%).

ECONOMY

Economic Perceptions

- More than one-third (39%) of 2013 ACTION telephone survey respondents felt economically better off this year as compared to last year.

Jobs and Earnings

- The annual average unemployment rate was 8.1% in the county in 2012, up from 4% in 2006.
- Median household income in the county was slightly higher at \$60,264 than California at \$58,328 in 2013.



HEALTH

Insurance

- Eighty-two percent of ACTION telephone survey respondents said they had health insurance and 83% said they had a regular source of health care in 2013, down two percentage points for each since 2010.
- Seventy-five percent of Spanish-Speaking face-to-face survey respondents were uninsured in 2013, much worse than in 2010 (53%).

Exercise, Nutrition, and Obesity

- Almost one-half (48%) of San Luis Obispo County adults were considered overweight or obese in 2011-12.
- 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 2013, only half (53%) of ACTION telephone survey respondents achieved that goal.

Substance Abuse

- Among pregnant women who said they were using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs during their pregnancy, 36% reported using alcohol and 25% reported smoking at least once in the last month, according to 2004-2012 cumulative data.
- The percent of county residents ages 21 and older who were binge drinking in the last year was higher (39%) than the state of California (31%) in 2011-12.



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.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Outdoors



- The top three issues of concern for ACTION telephone survey respondents since 2006 are: water quality, air pollution, and traffic.
- 1,207 acres of agricultural land in the county were converted to urban use in 2008-10.
- Nearly 75% of county residents lived within walking distance of a park, playground or open space in 2011-12.

Water Use

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

Energy Use

- Local agricultural electricity consumption went up 26% between 2006 to 2012.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Safety and Crime



- Nearly 80% of ACTION telephone survey respondents felt “very safe” in their neighborhood, but only 37% of Spanish-Speaking face-to-face respondents felt “very safe” in 2013.
- The county crime rate was 26.7 per 1,000 residents in 2012, up slightly from 25.6 per 1,000 residents in 2011.
- The juvenile felony arrest rate in the county was 6.0 per 1,000 youth in 2012, down from 8.4 per 1,000 youth in 2006.
- About two-thirds of all county students in the 7th, 9th and 11th grades felt “safe” or “very safe” at school in 2009-11.
- Gun sales have increased by 145% in the county between 2006 and 2012.
- Adult and juvenile misdemeanor arrest rates for driving under the influence (DUI) in the county have declined since 2006 but have remained consistently higher than the state.
- The rate of substantiated child abuse cases for the county was higher (13.9 per 1,000) than in the state overall (9.2 per 1,000) in 2012.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Community Concerns

- The top concern of 2013 ACTION telephone survey respondents was uncontrolled growth/growing too fast.
- About 58% of 2013 ACTION telephone survey respondents were concerned about racism in their community.
- There were a total of 13 hate crime offenses in 2011.

Community Hotline

- The total number of hotline calls for assistance increased from 3,376 calls in 2010 to 5,196 in 2011. The highest numbers of calls were for mental health and addiction assistance (854 calls).

Giving

- Over 82% of ACTION telephone survey households donated to charities in 2013.
- Forty-four percent of ACTION telephone survey respondents reported volunteering in the past month in 2013.

Areas of Concern with Local Government

ACTION telephone survey respondents gave low rankings to certain public services in the county including roads, planning and building services, and city or county administration in 2013.



