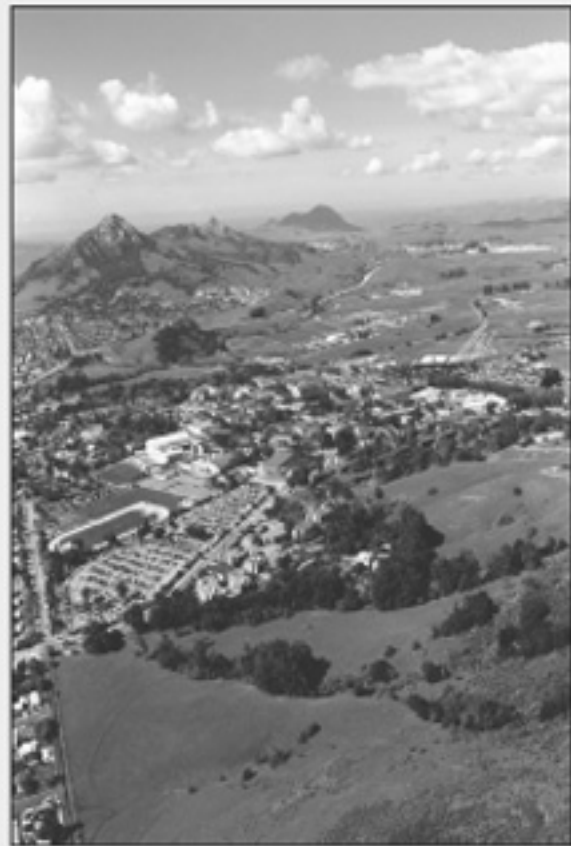


ACTION for Healthy Communities



Comprehensive Report

2003 second printing

About ACTION for Healthy Communities_____

ACTION for Healthy Communities is a cooperative, collaborative effort of individual agencies and organizations, public and private that are committed to improving the overall quality of life of 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 third 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 other reports (for this year and prior years) may be downloaded for free at United Way of San Luis Obispo County's web site, under Community Partners, www.unitedwayslo.org.

About the Researcher_____

UCSB Economic Forecast Project was established in 1981 by the Department of Economics. It is now a research program of UCSB administered by the Office of the Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement. Research funding for the Economic Forecast Project comes principally from the local community in the form of sponsorships. The Forecast Project regularly provides current economic and business information to participating sponsors.

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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. 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. This 2003 survey represents the second follow-up, in which many of the measures have been re-examined for changes. In addition, results of the first two efforts suggested new areas that could be examined. This report includes some information for the first time, that we will begin to track in future years as appropriate.

ACTION for Healthy Communities will provide survey results and data to the community through this Comprehensive Report and a separate Indicators Report. Please visit United Way of San Luis Obispo County's web site for free copies of these reports, www.unitedwayslo.org.

Introduction

ACTION for Healthy Communities believes that by sharing resources and working together, more comprehensive 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 2002, ACTION selected the UCSB Economic Forecast Project to conduct the assessment for San Luis Obispo County.

The Comprehensive Report is considered one step in this comprehensive planning process. The next phase involves identifying goals and action plans.

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 two 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

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. These components are described below.

Methodology

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 the April of 2003 the UCSB Economic Forecast Project conducted a random telephone survey of 500 county residents 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:

- Frail/dependent adults
- Homeless
- Low income Latinos

ACTION developed the Target Group questionnaires in English and Spanish. Fifteen organizations that serve one or more of the three Target Groups then surveyed their clients/patients/constituents using the ACTION questionnaires. Over 700 surveys were completed.

A complete set of computer generated tables of the results are contained in a separate document titled 2003 Target Group Tables, which is available on the United Way of San Luis Obispo County's web site, under Community Partners, www.unitedwayslo.org.

Results from the California Health Interview Survey were also included. CHIS provides public health information for California's population. Results on a variety of health topics are produced for the entire state and most counties every two years. For more information, go to www.chis.ucla.edu.

Secondary Data

Another type of data used for this project is secondary or empirical data. Secondary data is 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 department.

Data Report

Every two 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 all aspects 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

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

North County Atascadero, California Valley, Camp Roberts, Creston, Lake Nacimiento, Paso Robles, Pozo, 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, Grover Beach, Nipomo, Oceano, Pismo Beach, Shell Beach

% Change Describes change in value between the current and previous year data

Suggested Uses of this Report

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:

In San Luis Obispo County it is best to review the first page of each of the seven sections of the 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 42 key Quality of Life Indicators. Separate detailed computer tabulations of the 2003 telephone survey and Target Group surveys are available. These are available from ACTION for free on the United Way of San Luis Obispo County's web site, under Community Partners, www.unitedwayslo.org.

Acknowledgements

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County of San Luis Obispo

Administrative Office

Department of Social Services

Probation Department

Public Health Department

Economic Opportunity Commission of

San Luis Obispo County

First 5 Children & Families Commission of San

Luis Obispo County

Partnership for the Public's Health

San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation

San Luis Obispo County Community Health Foundation

United Way of San Luis Obispo County

Supporting Financial Sponsors

Area Agency on Aging

Atascadero Linkages

Community Health Centers of the Central Coast

Long Term Care Ombudsman

People's Self Help Housing Corporation

San Luis Obispo County Arts Council

San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival

San Luis Obispo Symphony

Collaborative Partners

Adult Services Policy Council	Partnership for the Public's Health
Area Agency on Aging	Paso Robles/San Miguel Health Collaborative
Arroyo Grande Community Hospital/French Hospital Medical Center	People's Self Help Housing Corporation
Atascadero Community Link	SLOCO Access
Atascadero Linkages	San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce
Atascadero Youth Task Force	San Luis Obispo Childcare Planning Council
Children's Services Network	San Luis Obispo Community Health Foundation
City of San Luis Obispo Human Relations Commission	San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
Community Health Centers of the Central Coast	SLO County Arts Council
County of San Luis Obispo: Department of Social Services	San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation
Public Health Department	San Luis Obispo County Health Commission
Library	San Luis Obispo County Prevention, Advocacy and CARE Consortium
Planning and Building Department	San Luis Obispo County Medical Society
Probation Department	SLO Mozart Festival
Economic Opportunity Commission of SLO County	San Luis Obispo County Office of Education
Economic Vitality Corporation	San Luis Obispo County Symphony
Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo	San Luis Obispo County YMCA
First 5 Children & Families Commission of San Luis Obispo County	SLO Symphony
Long Term Care Ombudsman	Taylor Consulting Group
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