

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Santa Barbara County offers idyllic settings for residents and visitors. Located approximately 100 miles northwest of Los Angeles and bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and south, it is known for its mild climate, picturesque coastline, vineyards, scenic mountains, and numerous parks and beaches. The County's median household income is the 18th highest out of 58 counties in California at \$60,078.¹ Beneath the surface, however, increasing poverty threatens the overall economic, social, and community well-being of the County.

The Recession of 2007–2010 resulted in a 52 percent increase in residents living below the Federal Poverty Thresholds and a 61 percent increase in child poverty in Santa Barbara County.² Yet, just as the community need for human service programs grew, state and federal budget deficits resulted in deep cuts in human services programs. These cuts have strained the public and non-profit safety net infrastructure, leaving Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable community members without adequate resources to make ends meet.

In 2012, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors requested this geographically-based study to identify ways in which the Recession has impacted Santa Barbara County. Through data collection, a Service Provider and Funder Survey, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, and stakeholder interviews, the purpose of this assessment is to analyze how well county resources and services are strategically aligned to areas and populations in greatest economic need and to make recommendations for improvements. Commissioned by the Santa Barbara Department of Social Services and supported in part by a grant from the Santa Barbara Foundation, this report includes the following components:

- ▶ An overview of Santa Barbara County's population and geography (Section I);
- ▶ Data analysis and mapping of 44 indicators in the areas of: poverty, employment, income, education, public benefits, housing, transportation, childcare, and health. This includes analysis of how each indicator correlates to poverty, as well as a compilation of the major data indicators into quintiles – or fifths – to identify the degree of need specific to each census tract or zip code. (Sections II, III, and the Appendix);
- ▶ A survey distributed to 460 local public agencies, foundations, service providers, and public officials to understand how well services, resources, and program capacities align to meet greatest needs; challenges faced by low-income residents and providers who serve them; and recommendations for helping more residents move out of poverty (Section IV);
- ▶ Stakeholder interviews of 16 public and non-profit leaders to enrich and explain the data findings (Section V);
- ▶ Recommendations to improve service delivery, resource alignment, and—ultimately—outcomes for Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable residents (Section VI).

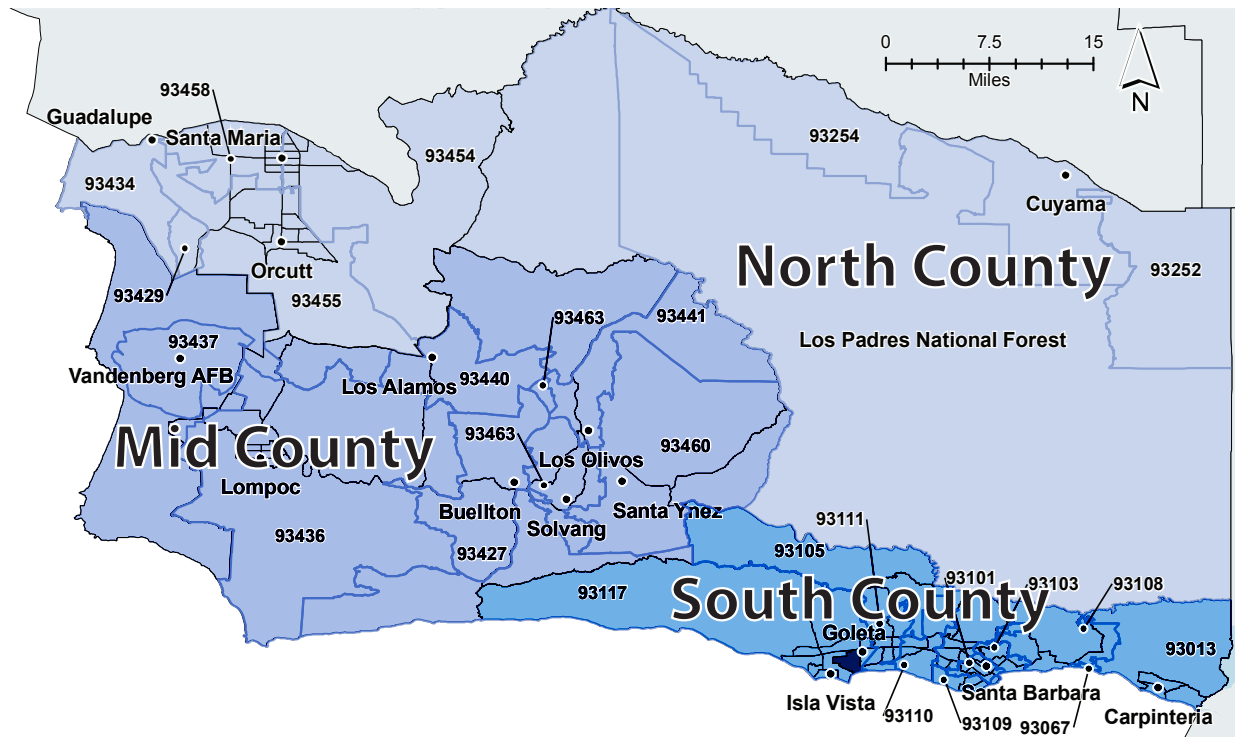
Santa Barbara County Geography

Santa Barbara County spans across 2,735 square miles and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and south, and one third of the County is located in the Los Padres National Forest to the northeast. This assessment analyzes data based on geographic subdivisions throughout the County. The most often analyzed geographic subdivisions are census tracts and zip codes. There are 91 census tracts (87 of which are populated) and 24 zip codes in Santa Barbara County. Since census tracts do not cleanly overlap with zip codes and sometimes cross over into more than one zip code, regional boundaries were determined based on where the greatest concentrations of people live. In order to aggregate the data collected, the County was divided in three major regions – North County, Mid County and South County as depicted in Map E. 1 on the following page. County and Regional data are provided to enable the reader to visualize the magnitude of disparities across the varying geographic areas of the County. Graphic representations of the data (including tables, bar-graphs, pie-charts, and other figures) are also used to illustrate disparities among census tracts, zip codes, and other sub-regional levels, as well as to make comparisons to County level averages.

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Map E.1 Santa Barbara County Census Tracts, Zip Codes and Regions

Santa Barbara County: Census Tracts, Zip Codes and Regions



Data Source: US Census and Santa Barbara County (regions)

87 Census Tracts, 24 Zip Codes, and 3 Regions Based on Zip Code Boundaries

- Region
- Zip codes
- Census tracts
- Municipal Airport

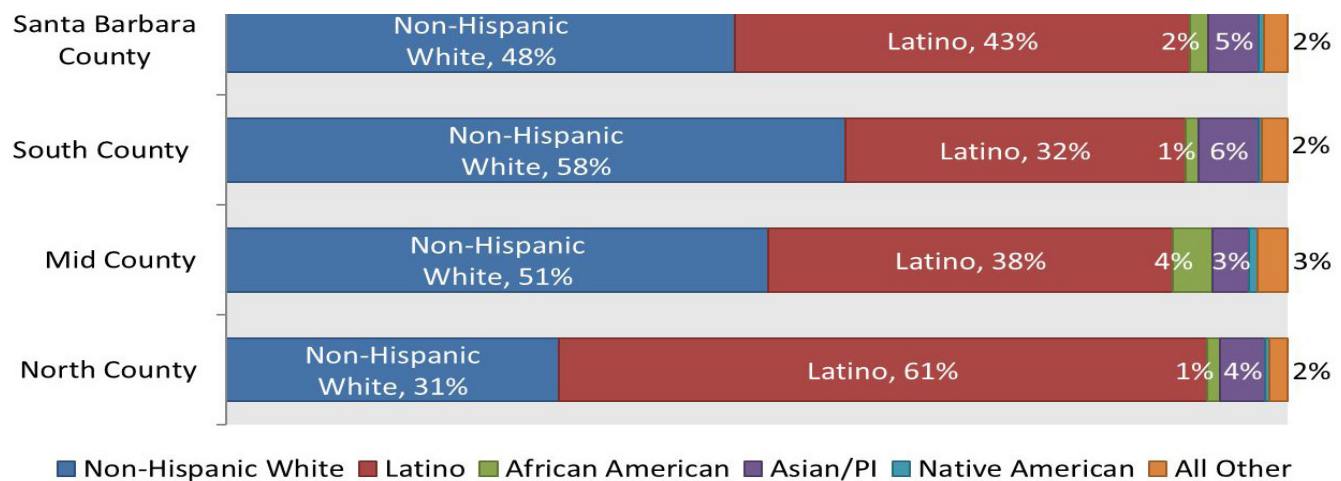
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Santa Barbara County Population

According to 2006-2010 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, Santa Barbara County had a population of 416,051. Its two largest cities, Santa Maria and Santa Barbara, had populations of 94,645 and 87,859 respectively, followed by: Lompoc (41,864); Goleta (29,397); Carpinteria (13,122); Guadalupe (6,770); Solvang (5,283); and Buellton (4,609).

Non-Hispanic whites make up almost half of the population at 48 percent, and Latinos are 43 percent. Asian/Pacific Islanders are 5 percent, the African American population is 2 percent, and American Indian and all other populations are about 2 percent. The regional population distribution by race and ethnicity is illustrated in figure E.1 below.

Figure E.1 Percent Population Distribution by Race and Ethnicity, County and Regions



Adults make up 63 percent (253,911) of the County population, children are 24 percent (94,795) and seniors are 13 percent (51,878)³. Most children (43 percent) live in the North County, while most adults (51 percent) and seniors (54 percent) live in South County. South County has 47 percent of the County population, North County 34 percent and Mid County 19 percent.

Figure E.2 Percent Population Distribution by Age, County and Regions

	Children	County Distribution of Children	Adults	County Distribution of Adults	Seniors	County Distribution of Seniors	Total Persons	County Distribution of Total Persons
County	94,795	24%	253,911	63%	51,878	13%	400,584	100%
North County	40,593	43%	79,636	31%	14,625	28%	134,854	34%
Mid County	20,681	22%	45,729	18%	9,339	18%	75,749	19%
South County	33,521	35%	128,546	51%	27,914	54%	189,981	47%

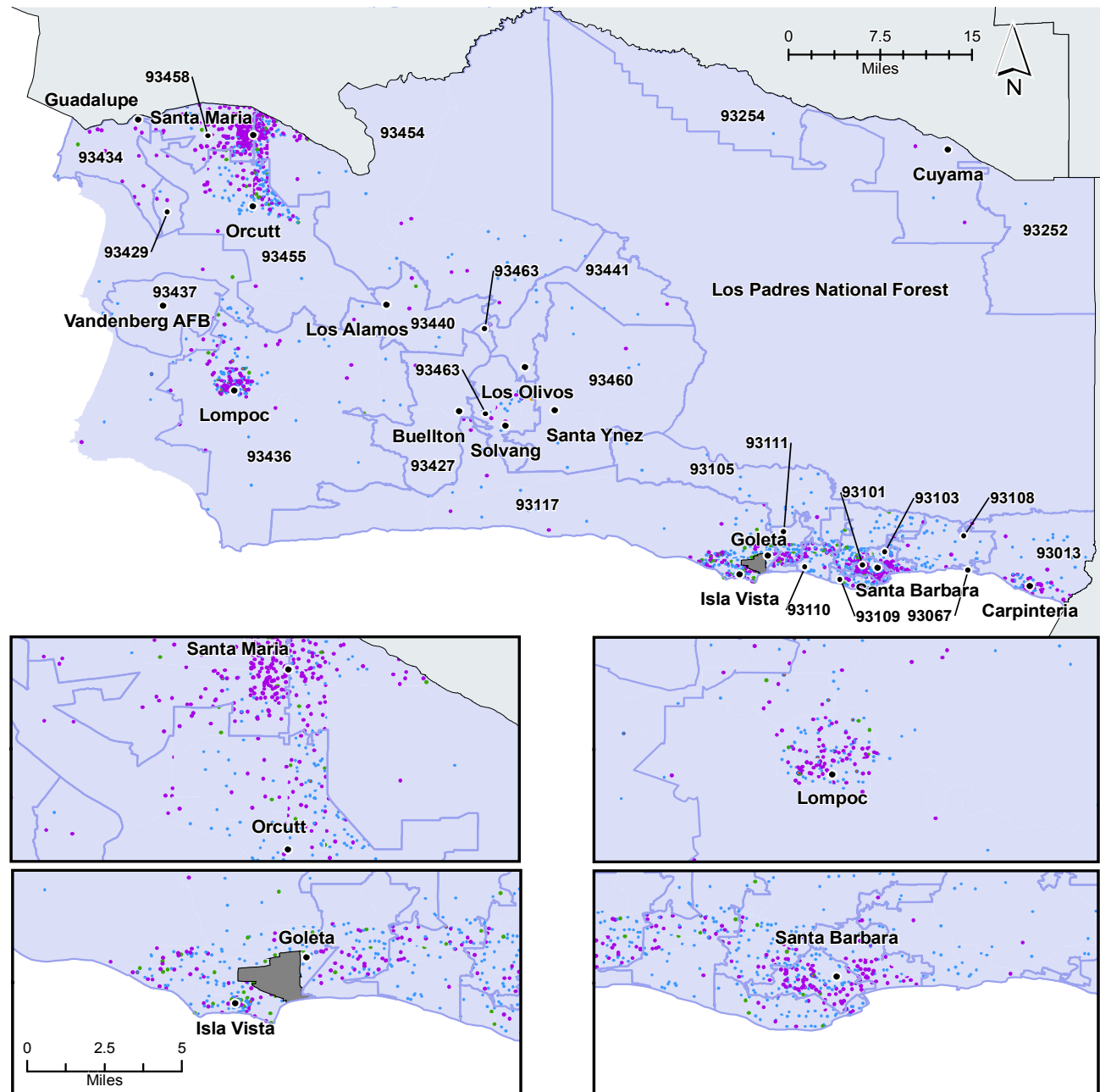
The maps in this report provide geographic context for various indicators examined in this report using both numbers and rates. Maps E.2 and E.3 (on the following two pages), show Santa Barbara County's population density, first by race and ethnicity and then by age. The population density maps provide context when considering service gaps and needs. Some *rates* may be high—for example, a census tract in Montecito has a child poverty rate of 28 percent—but this represents a *small number* of children as there are only 654 children in the area and 185 of those children live in poverty. Also, areas with large concentrations of population sub-groups (i.e. children, adults, seniors) will have differing service needs.

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Map E.2 Santa Barbara County Population Distribution by Race and Ethnicity

Population Distribution by Race and Ethnicity

Number of African-American, Asian, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino and Non-Hispanic White Population by Census Tract with Zip Code Boundaries



Data Source: US Census, 2010 Decennial Count

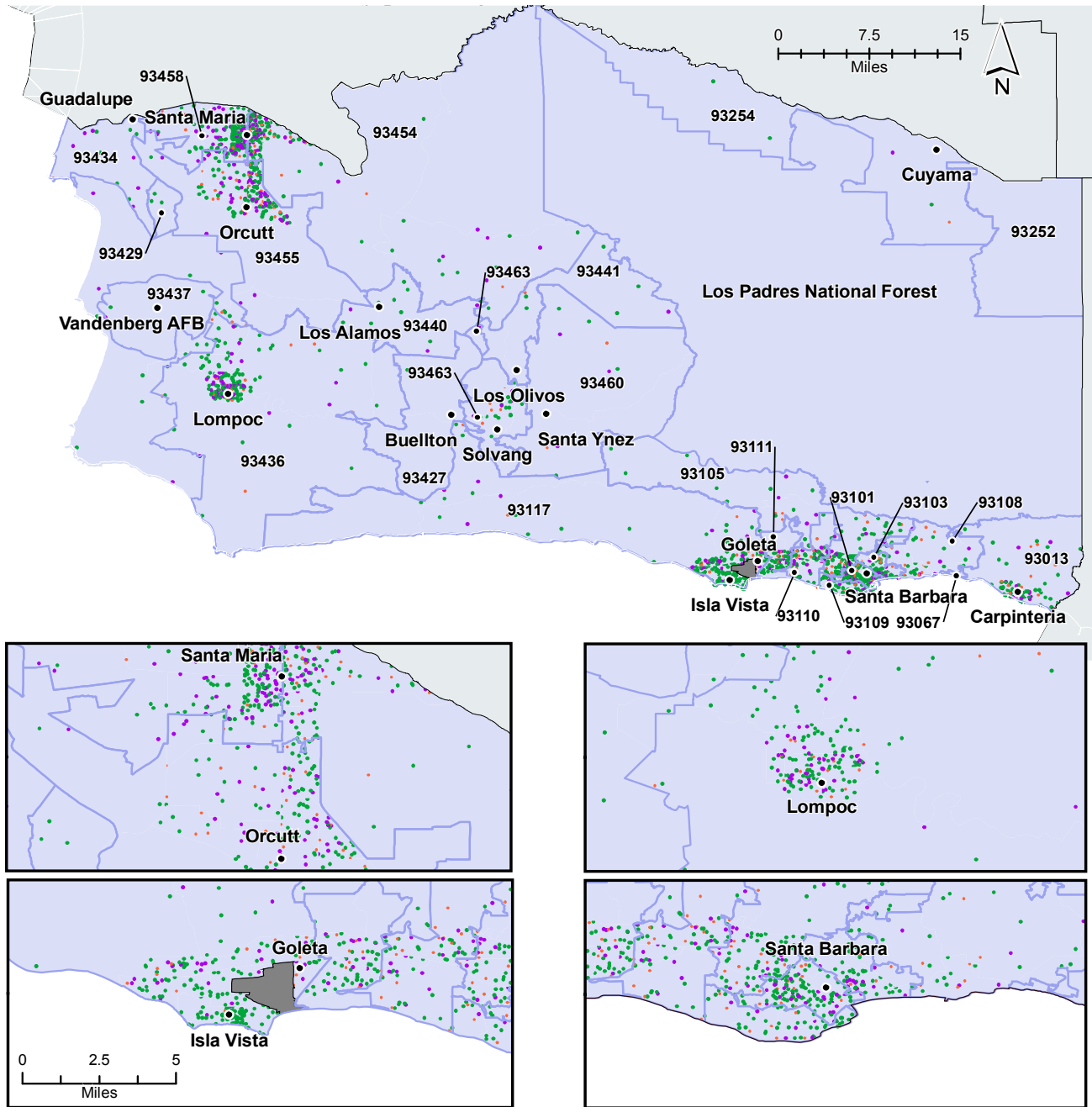
Map E.2 shows the population distribution by race and ethnicity. The Latino/a population is distributed throughout the County, but it is notable that the majority of Santa Maria's population is Latino/a. The County has a foreign born Latin American population of 72,536. This map demonstrates the importance of providing services in Spanish throughout the County.

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Map E.3 Santa Barbara County Population by Age Group

Population Distribution by Age Group

Number of Youth, Adults and Seniors by Census Tract with Zip Code Boundaries



Data Source: US Census, 2010 Decennial Count

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A Snapshot of Poverty in Santa Barbara County

Where Are People Struggling?

This study utilizes the U.S. Census American Community Survey 2006-2010, “Individuals for whom poverty status has been determined”⁴ category at the census tract level to establish a baseline of areas of highest need in the County. **Census tracts in which 20 percent or more of individuals are living below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Thresholds are designated “high poverty tracts” in this report (outlined in red on Map E.4 on the following page).** *Clusters of high poverty census tracts adjacent to one another are designated “high poverty areas” (or HPAs).*

Using this definition, Santa Barbara County’s high poverty areas are located within the cities of Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Lompoc, and Isla Vista.⁵

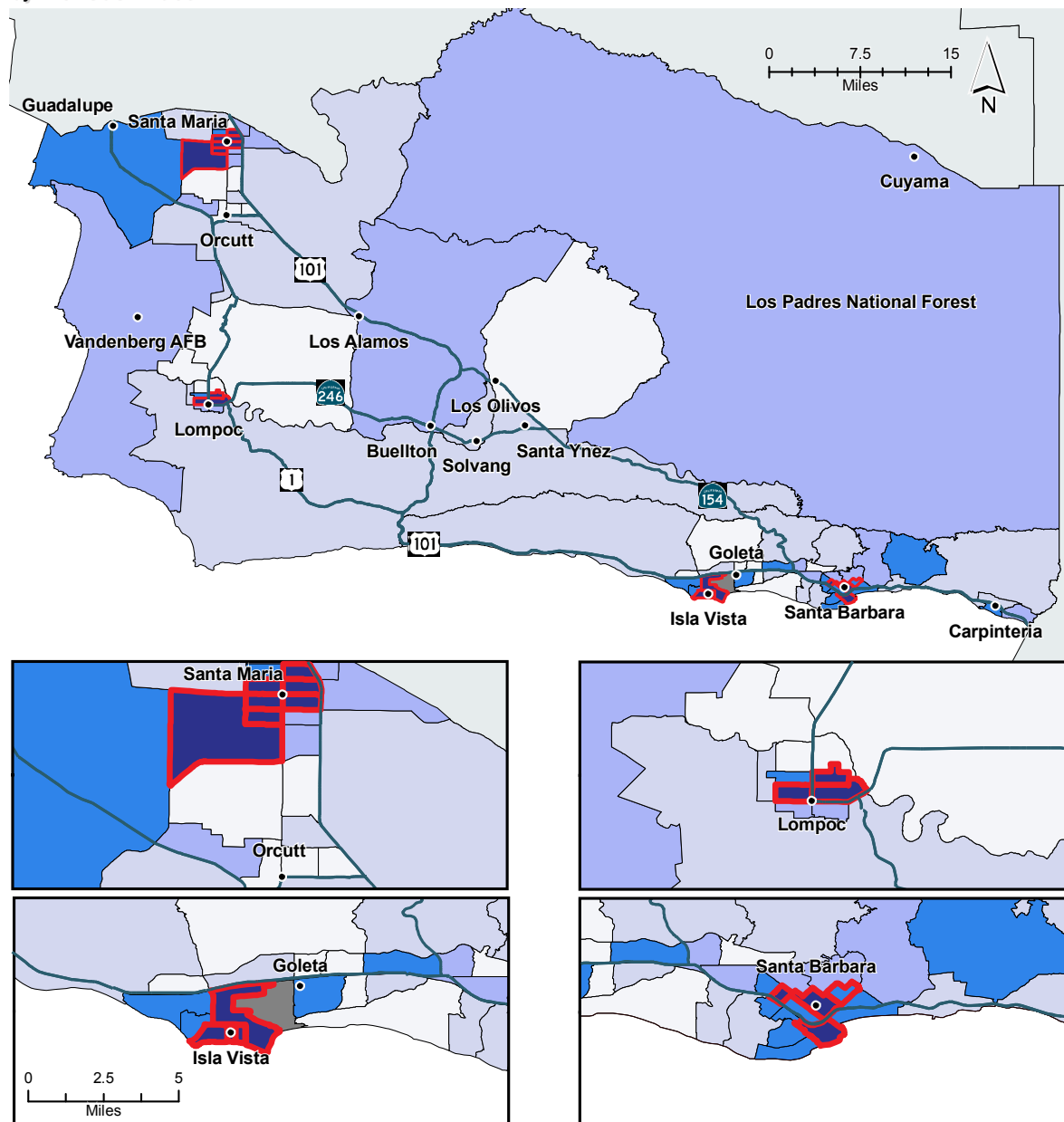
Both historical and 2011 data, however, were also collected by local agencies to supplement the 2006–2010 ACS data and to identify additional areas of need beyond the established ACS census tract-based high poverty areas defined in this assessment. Although Guadalupe and Carpinteria do not meet the 20 percent high poverty threshold used in this report, they have significant numbers of residents struggling economically and display other indications of financial distress (e.g. high rates of benefits usage, overcrowding, and uninsurance). It is also important to note that undocumented workers are not counted in official statistics, so the poverty rates in certain areas are likely to be higher than portrayed.

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Map E.4 Santa Barbara County People in Poverty

People in Poverty, US Census, ACS 2006-2010

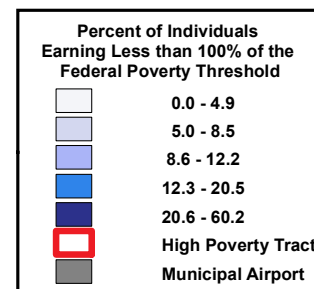
by Census Tract



Data Source: US Census, American Community Survey
(5-Year Estimates 2006-2010)

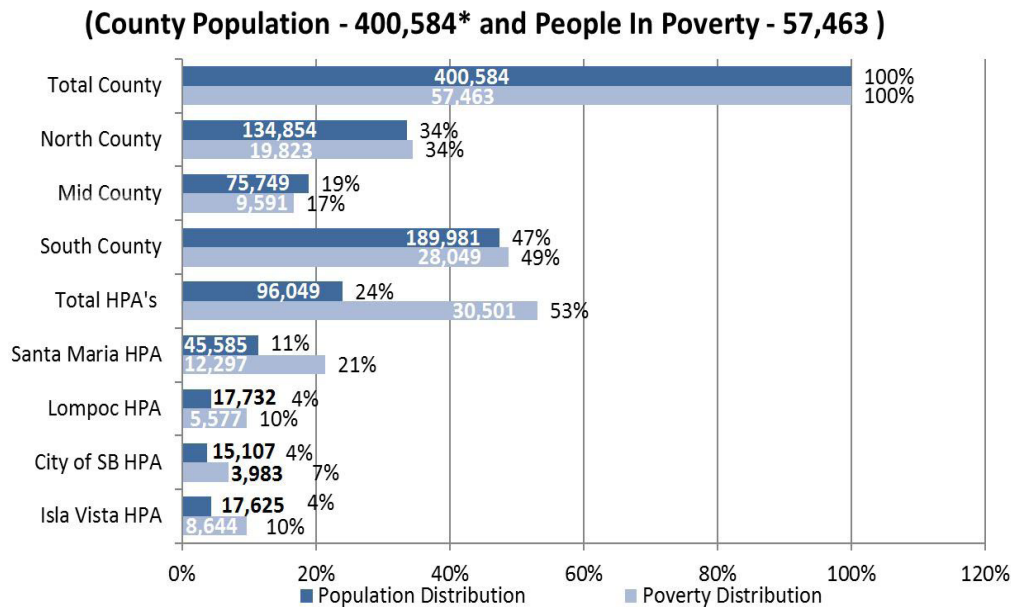
Understanding the Maps

The data displayed in the maps in this report are divided into fifths, or quintiles, ranging from a light to dark color scheme. The darkest color represents a “worst” indicator finding, relative to the other four categories, e.g. *higher* poverty, *higher* unemployment rates, *lower* median household income. The GIS mapping program sets the cut-points of the data ranges for each map such that each color gradient includes roughly the same number of census tracts. Therefore, the data range and groupings listed in the legend for each map will vary depending on the underlying data results.



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Figure E.3 Numbers and Percent Distribution of Population and People in Poverty, County, Region and High Poverty Areas

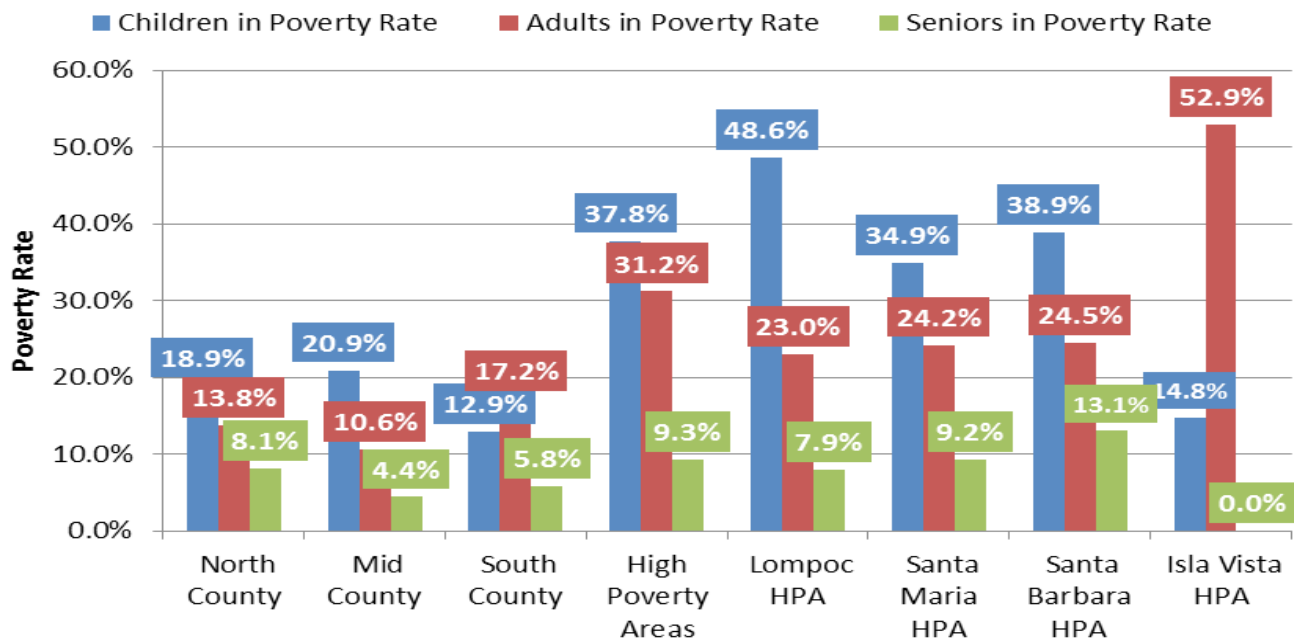


Source: Insight CCED, Based on US Census ACS 2006-2010

*Population Figures based on population for whom poverty status is determined

Figure E.3 illustrates the regional and high poverty area breakdown of the County percentage of people living in poverty compared to the County population distribution. All of the regions show relatively proportional population and poverty distributions. However, high poverty areas have 24 percent of the County residents and 53 percent of all County residents living in poverty. 1 in 3 people in high poverty areas are in poverty compared to 1 in 7 in the County.

Figure E.4 Percent of People in Poverty by Age Group, Region and High Poverty Areas



Source: Insight Center, based on ACS 2006-2010

Figure E.4 illustrates the percentage of people living in poverty by age group—e.g. youth, adult, and senior—by region and high poverty areas.

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Key findings include:

- ▶ High poverty areas have a child poverty rate of about 38 percent (almost twice the County rate of 21.8 percent); an adult poverty rate of 31 percent, more than one and a half times the County rate of 15 percent; and a senior poverty rate of 9 percent, which is 2 percent higher than the County rate of 7.1 percent.
- ▶ **Lompoc's high poverty area has the highest child poverty rate with nearly half of children residing in this area (48.6 percent) living in poverty.**
- ▶ With the exception of Isla Vista (52.9 percent), adult poverty rates are relatively similar in the high poverty areas at 23 percent in the Lompoc high poverty area and about 24 percent in both the Santa Maria and City of Santa Barbara high poverty areas.

Which Age Groups Are Struggling?

The table below illustrates the number of people living in poverty by age groups—senior, adult, and youth—by county, region, and high poverty areas. The distribution of the age groups also provides information on where the greatest number of children, adults, and seniors in poverty reside within the County. These statistics are useful in trying to understand how services relate to the needs of differing populations.

Of the 57,463 people in Santa Barbara County who are in poverty, 28 percent (16,319) are children, 66 percent (37,942) are adults, and 6 percent (3,202) are seniors. This compares to a total County population of 24 percent children, 63 percent adults and 13 percent seniors. In Santa Barbara County, more than 1 in every 5 children, 1 in every 5 adults and 1 in every 14 seniors are in poverty.

Figure E.5 Number and County Distribution of Poverty by Age Group, County, Region and High Poverty Areas

	Children in Poverty	County Distribution of Children in Poverty	Adults in Poverty	County Distribution of Adults in Poverty	Seniors in Poverty	County Distribution of Seniors in Poverty	Total Persons in Poverty	County Distribution of Total Persons in Poverty
County	16,319	28.4%	37,942	66.0%	3,202	5.6%	57,463	100.0%
North County	7,675	47.0%	10,968	28.9%	1,180	36.9%	19,823	34.4%
Mid County	4,320	26.5%	4,861	12.8%	410	12.8%	9,591	16.7%
South County	4,324	26.5%	22,113	58.3%	1,612	50.3%	28,049	48.8%
High Poverty Areas	9,933	60.9%	20,063	52.9%	507	15.8%	30,503	53.1%
Lompoc HPA	3,185	19.5%	2,301	6.1%	93	2.9%	5,579	9.7%
Santa Maria HPA	5,397	33.1%	6,655	17.5%	245	7.7%	12,297	21.4%
Santa Barbara HPA	1,161	7.1%	2,653	7.0%	169	5.3%	3,983	6.9%
Isla Vista HPA	190	1.2%	8,454	22.3%	0	0.0%	8,644	15.0%

Source: Insight Center, based on ACS 2006-2010

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Where Are Individuals in Poverty?

Of the 57,463 individuals in poverty in the County, 49 percent (28,049) reside in South County, 34 percent (19,823) in North County, and 17 percent (9,591) in Mid County. **High poverty areas contain 53 percent (30,503) of all individuals in poverty**, of which 32 percent (9,933) are children, 65 percent (20,063) are adults, and 2 percent (507) are seniors. The Santa Maria high poverty area has 21 percent (12,297) of all County individuals in poverty and 62 percent of the North regions individuals in poverty. This is about three times that of the Santa Barbara City high poverty area and twice as many as in the Lompoc high poverty area.

Where Are Children in Poverty?

Of the 16,319 children in poverty in the County, 47 percent (7,675) reside in North County, 27 percent (4,324) in South County, and 27 percent (4,320) in Mid County.

High poverty areas have 61 percent of all the County's children in poverty. The Santa Maria high poverty area alone has 33 percent (5,397) of all of the County's children in poverty and 70 percent of the North County children in poverty. Lompoc's high poverty area has 20 percent (3,185) of the County's children in poverty and 74 percent of the Mid County children in poverty.

Where Are Adults in Poverty?

Of the 37,942 adults in poverty in the County, 58 percent (22,113) reside in South County, 29 percent (10,968) in North County, and 13 percent (4,861) in Mid County.

High poverty areas have just over half of the County's adults in poverty, with 22 percent (8,454) residing in Isla Vista. The Santa Maria high poverty area has 18 percent (6,655) of the total County's adults in poverty.

Where Are Seniors in Poverty?

Of the 3,202 seniors in poverty in the County, 50 percent (1,612) reside in South County, 37 percent (1,180) in North County and 13 percent (410) in Mid County.

High poverty areas have only 16 percent of the County's seniors in poverty, with 8 percent (245) residing in the Santa Maria high poverty area, the City of Santa Barbara high poverty area has 5 percent (169), and the Lompoc high poverty area has 3 percent (93) of the County seniors in poverty.

This section provided an overview of places and populations in poverty (more detailed maps showing percent of children, adults, and seniors in poverty by census tract can be found in the Appendix B). The next section provides the analyses of those indicators studied that illustrate place-based correlations between the indicator and the high poverty areas, revealing unmet needs, barriers and impacts of poverty on low-income residents in the County.

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A Snapshot of Indicators of Need

Median Household Income

At \$60,078 a year, Santa Barbara County has a similar median household income as the State of California (\$60,883) as a whole and ranks 18th among all 58 counties in the state. However, the County is marked by significant income inequality. **In the City of Santa Barbara, median household income in the highest income census tract (\$128,775) is more than four times that of median household income in the lowest income census tract (\$28,631), representing a \$100,000 disparity.** Similarly, median household income for Latinos, who comprise 43 percent of the County's population, is \$46,274—only two-thirds the median household income of non-Hispanic white households (\$69,286). In general, lowest income tracts correspond to the high poverty tracts, as expected. However, Guadalupe is an exception: household median income there registers within the lowest quintile in the County, but the census tract that includes Guadalupe has a 16 percent poverty rate and is lower than the 20 percent cut-off for high poverty areas in this report.

Employment

There are two mutually exclusive categories into which people can fall with respect to employment: they can be in the labor force (employed or unemployed) or not in the labor force. Persons who are neither employed nor unemployed are considered not in the labor force. This category includes retired persons, disabled persons, students, those taking care of children or other family members, and others who are neither working nor seeking work. Students in Isla Vista skew employment data. As a result, 16- to 21-year-olds residing in Isla Vista are excluded from the data in the table below.

Figure E.6 Snapshot of Employment Status*

	Total People of Working Age (age 16 and over)	Not in Labor Force	In the Labor Force	In the Labor Force	Unemployed Civilian
County	270,148	24.7%	203,430	75.3%	6.9%
North Region	86,337	25.9%	63,995	74.1%	8.3%
Central Region	53,375	27.4%	38,826	72.7%	7.4%
South Region	130,436	22.8%	100,649	77.2%	5.8%
High Poverty Areas	57,838	26.5%	42,522	73.5%	10.0%
Lompoc HPA	10,831	28.3%	7,765	71.7%	11.0%
Santa Maria HPA	29,229	28.1%	21,016	71.9%	10.5%
City of SB HPA	11,688	21.8%	9,141	78.2%	10.6%
Isla Vista HPA**	6,090	24.5%	4,600	75.5%	4.8%

*Seniors 65 years old and over who are not in the labor force are excluded from this table. **16-21 year olds in Isla Vista are also excluded. Source: Insight Center, based on ACS 2006-2010

- ▶ A quarter of Santa Barbara County residents over the age of 16 are not in the labor force. Mid County has the highest regional percentage (27.4) of people who are work-eligible yet are not in the labor force.
- ▶ The percentage of those not in the labor force in high poverty areas are only 1.8 percent higher than the County average, suggesting no significant difference in the “not in the labor force” populations in the high poverty areas and the rest of the County. The City of Santa Barbara high poverty area has the lowest percentage (21.8) of people who are over the age of 16 and who are not in the labor force—compared to the County, regional, and other high poverty areas.
- ▶ 1 in 10 individuals in the labor force in high poverty areas are unemployed compared to 1 in 7 in the County.

The employment data above illustrates that the **majority of working age residents residing in high poverty areas are either the “working poor” or unemployed.** Further analysis on employment wages and employment sectors follows.

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Wages

The average wage for full-time work in Santa Barbara County in 2006-2010 was \$24.65 per hour. **In high poverty areas, the average wage was almost \$10 less at \$15.48 per hour.** When added up over the course of a year, **the decline in average hourly wages for full-time work led to an average annual wage loss in high poverty areas of \$2,038, compared to an annual average wage loss of only \$20.80 countywide.** (See Figure E.7 below.) If we remove the Isla Vista high poverty area, the average annual lost wage in high poverty areas increases to \$4,846.

While average full-time hourly wage remained stable for the County as a whole between 2000 and 2010, the City of Santa Barbara high poverty area has experienced the greatest reduction in wages, resulting in a \$7,134 annual reduction. This is significant considering the poverty threshold for an individual is \$10,830; for a family of four it is \$22,050.

**Figure E.7 Full-Time Hourly Wage Rate
County, Regions and High Poverty Areas
2000 and 2010**

	Full-Time Average Wage, 2000	Full-Time Average Wage, 2006- 2010	Annual Average Wage Difference: 2000-2010
County	\$24.66	\$24.65	-\$20.80
North County	\$21.37	\$20.87	-\$1,040.00
Mid County	\$24.33	\$23.37	-\$1,996.80
South County	\$26.74	\$27.37	\$1,310.40
High Poverty Areas	\$16.47	\$15.48	-\$2,038.40
Lompoc HPA	\$17.51	\$15.64	-\$3,889.60
Santa Maria HPA	\$15.41	\$13.72	-\$3,515.20
City of SB HPA	\$19.69	\$16.26	-\$7,134.40
Isla Vista HPA	\$13.35	\$16.75	\$7,072.00

Source: Insight Center based on U.S. Census 2000 SF3 Tables P043 and QTP-31 and U.S. Census ACS 2006-2010 Tables B23001, B23022 and B24091. Adjusted for inflation to 2011 dollars.

Regional disparities in full-time wages increased over the decade. The average wage in South County increased 2% percent, while the average wage in the other two county regions declined slightly, resulting in a \$6.50 per hour (\$13,520/year) wage gap between the South and North regions. These wage differentials are likely to be rooted in multiple causes, including access to education, transportation, and jobs that pay fair and living wages.

“ In high poverty areas, the average wage was almost \$10 less [than the county average] at \$15.48 per hour”

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As Figure E.8 shows, employment throughout the County is dispersed across a broad spectrum of economic sectors. About a third of the County's labor force works in educational services, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade sectors combined. Median hourly wages for these sectors are: \$20.78 for educational services; \$20.78 for health care and social assistance; and \$13.57 for retail trade.

Employment varies regionally, however, with some areas relying more heavily on a few concentrated sectors. Two notable examples are: Santa Maria's high poverty area where almost 40 percent of the working population is employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting with a median hourly wage of \$11.82; and Isla Vista's high poverty area where over 20 percent is employed in accommodation and food services with a median hourly wage of \$12.21. **Compared to County percentages, residents of high poverty areas disproportionately (and not surprisingly) work in lower paid sectors: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (notably, more than double the County percentage), and accommodation and food services.** The exception is retail trade, where County percentages are roughly the same as in high poverty areas.

“Compared to County percentages, residents of high poverty areas disproportionately work in lower paid sectors.”

Figure E.8 Employed Labor Force in Select Economic Sectors, 2010
County, Regions and High Poverty Areas

	Median Hourly Wages*	County	North County	Mid County	South County	HPA	Lompoc HPA	Santa Maria HPA	City of SB HPA	Isla Vista HPA
Civilian Employed Labor Force, 2010		196,423	58,217	34,573	103,633	45,234	6,762	18,705	8,736	11,031
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	\$11.82	7.6%	19.7%	5.7%	1.4%	18.3%	11.3%	39.2%	0.4%	1.5%
Construction	\$22.53	6.3%	7.2%	6.6%	5.7%	5.6%	6.5%	6.1%	8.6%	1.7%
Manufacturing	\$26.47	8.1%	7.8%	8.9%	7.9%	5.4%	5.9%	5.7%	4.4%	5.3%
Retail trade	\$13.57	9.8%	9.3%	10.1%	10.0%	9.4%	9.1%	7.0%	12.4%	11.2%
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$15.72	2.2%	1.5%	1.8%	2.6%	1.7%	0.9%	0.9%	4.6%	1.2%
Professional, scientific and tech services	\$28.78	7.1%	3.1%	7.6%	9.1%	3.6%	4.6%	1.4%	8.3%	3.0%
Administrative/support and waste services	\$15.99	4.5%	4.5%	4.0%	4.7%	5.2%	7.0%	4.4%	8.2%	3.1%
Educational services	\$20.78	11.9%	7.3%	8.7%	15.5%	11.5%	5.5%	3.1%	8.7%	31.6%
Health care and social assistance	\$20.78	10.4%	10.1%	8.9%	11.1%	8.0%	10.8%	7.3%	9.8%	6.2%
Accommodation and food services	\$12.21	8.9%	7.3%	11.2%	9.0%	13.3%	17.3%	8.6%	11.9%	20.1%
Other services (except public admn.)	\$11.62	5.3%	4.8%	4.1%	6.0%	4.8%	5.1%	3.8%	7.2%	4.3%
Public administration	\$23.93	4.4%	5.1%	8.5%	2.6%	2.7%	5.6%	2.7%	2.0%	1.5%

Source: Insight Center, based on U.S. Census ACS 2006-2010 Table DP03 *2010 Santa Barbara County Economic Forecast and WIB Industry Cluster Report

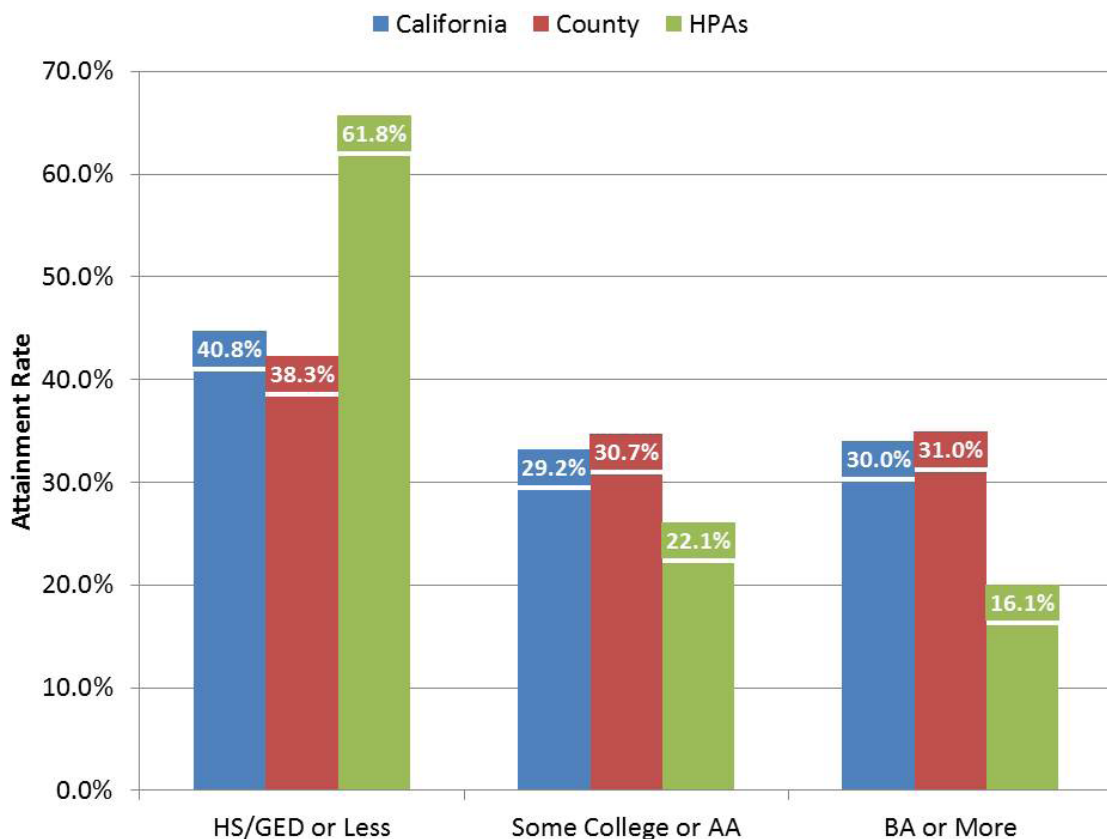
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Education

The high poverty areas have populations of residents 25 years and older that have received significantly less education than the County average. About 62 percent of residents in high poverty areas have a high school diploma, obtained a GED, or received less education. This is 21 percentage points lower than the California average and 23.5 percentage points lower than the County average. Similarly, only 1 in every 6 adults living in a high poverty area has obtained a BA or higher compared to 1 in 3 in the County. This disparity in educational attainment and educational opportunities has an obvious impact on employment opportunities and income levels throughout the County and suggests the need to focus on educational achievement in high poverty areas. Furthermore, studies show that the beneficial effects of parental educational levels when children are young result in, not only academic achievement throughout the child's school years, but have long-term implications for positive outcomes well into their adulthood (i.e. higher education levels, better employment opportunities, etc.).⁶

“About 62 percent of residents in high poverty areas have a high school diploma, obtained a GED, or received less education.”

**Figure E.9 Educational Attainment
Among Residents 25 and Older
California, Santa Barbara County, High Poverty Areas, 2010**



Source: Insight Center, based on U.S. Census ACS 2006-2010

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Housing

Housing is one of the most significant issues facing Santa Barbara County. High housing costs impact the ability of County residents to pay for other basic needs, and they contribute to commute patterns, overcrowding, and homelessness.

There is tremendous variance in median home prices within Santa Barbara County. In 2011, median home prices in Santa Barbara's South Coast were a half million dollars more than median home prices in North County. The median price of a home in North County was also \$29,000 less than the median home price in the State of California.

High rental and home ownership prices cause financial strain throughout the County. More than a quarter of all Santa Barbara County census tracts have a majority of residents who spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing (and are thus considered "housing cost-burdened" by federal standards). The strain is particularly difficult, however, in high poverty areas. **With the exception of four high poverty census tracts, more than half of the residents in all four high poverty areas spend over 30 percent of their income on housing.** (See Map E.5 on the following page for an overview of cost-burdened households.)

To help alleviate housing cost-burdens, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program allows qualifying low-income households to pay approximately one-third of their income on rent and utilities to participating housing providers. The remainder of the rent is paid through federal subsidies to the landlords by the Housing Authorities of the County and City of Santa Barbara (HACSB). In addition, they own and operate 1,360 subsidized public housing rental units. As of 2012, **more than two-thirds of public housing units**

"With the exception of four high poverty census tracts, more than half of the residents in all four high poverty areas spend over 30 percent of their income on housing."

were located in South County. In contrast, the regional distribution of Project-Based Section 8 and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers roughly mirrors the countywide population distribution. However, **families living in high poverty census tracts⁷ have less than half of the total Project-Based Section 8 and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, and they account for less than one-third of those living in public housing units in 2012.** Further investigation is

necessary to determine why more people in high poverty census tracts are not accessing these critical housing subsidies at higher rates and what, if anything can be done about it.

High housing costs, cultural preferences, and other factors lead people to share housing. Some parts of Santa Barbara County exhibit high rates of overcrowding by federal standards.⁸ The three census tracts with the highest rates of overcrowded housing—35, 37, and 44 percent—are all located in Santa Maria's high poverty area. While overcrowded units are clustered in high poverty areas, census tracts in Carpinteria and Guadalupe also have among the highest rates of overcrowded housing units.

Figure E.10 Median Home Price for California, North and South County, Select Cities and Towns, 2011

California	\$286,824
Santa Barbara South Coast	\$774,929
Northern Santa Barbara County	\$257,821
Buellton	\$397,500
Carpinteria	\$917,188
Goleta	\$608,292
Guadalupe	\$131,521
Lompoc	\$195,083
Santa Barbara	\$856,417
Santa Maria	\$218,250
Solvang	\$524,254

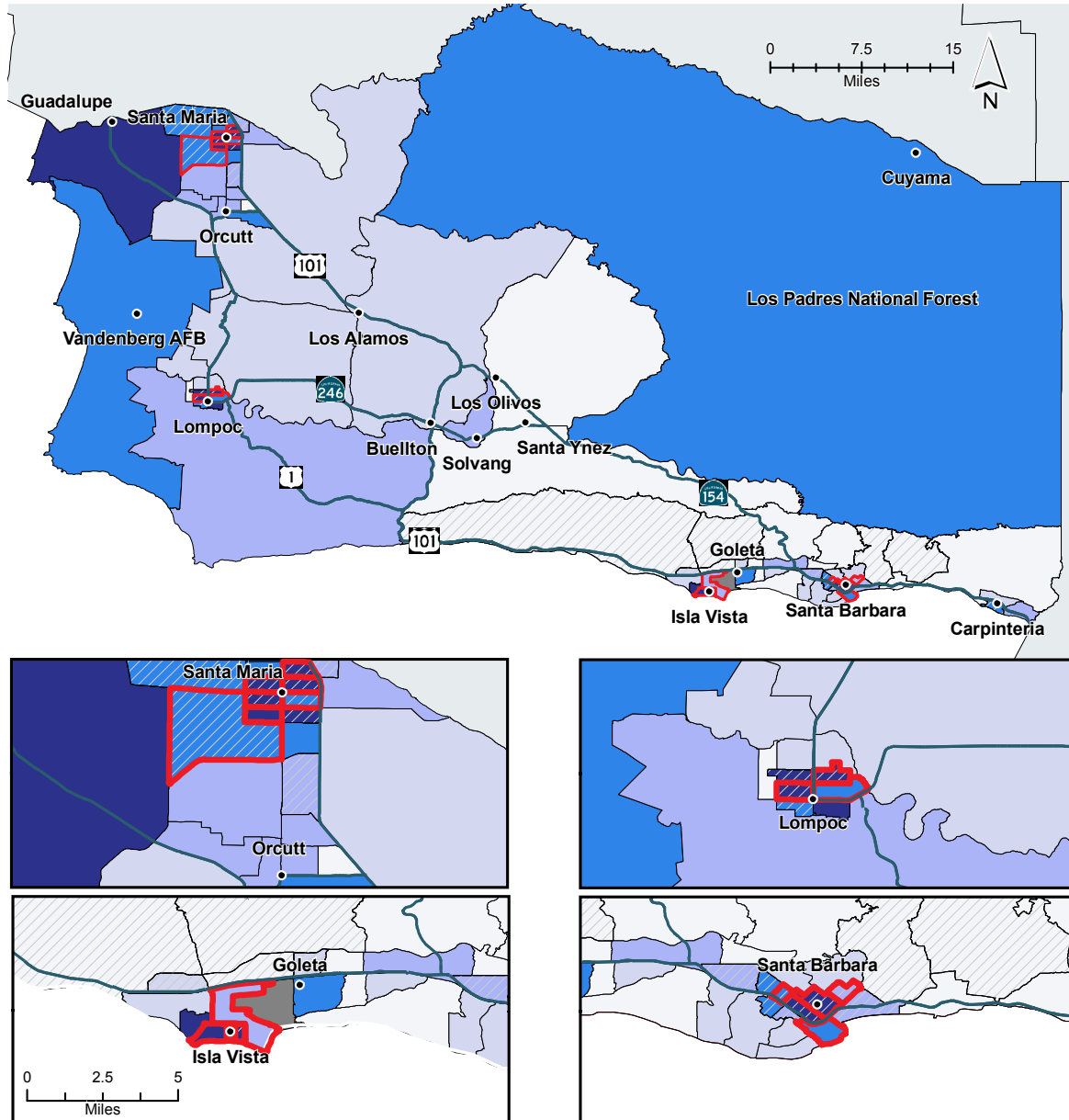
Source: 2012 Santa Barbara County Economic Outlook, UC Santa Barbara Economic Forecast Project May 2012

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Map E.5 Santa Barbara County People with Disproportional Housing Costs and Median Household Income

People with Disproportional Housing Costs and Median Household Income

by Census Tract



Data Source: US Census, American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates 2006-2010)

Housing Cost-burdened households are households paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing (US Department of Housing and Urban Development definition). High cost-burdened tracts are those in which at least 50 percent of households are housing cost-burdened according to this definition.

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Homelessness is a significant issue in Santa Barbara County. Every two years, the Central Coast Collaborative on Homelessness conducts a physical count of the homeless individuals—as encountered by volunteers on the streets and in shelters across the County—during a pre-determined set of days. Below are some results of the two most recent surveys conducted in January 2011 and 2013.

Figure E.11 Homelessness Survey Data Results			
	2011 Survey	2013 Survey	Percent Change
Number of People Encountered	1,536	1,466	-4.6%
Number of Surveys Completed	1,143	1,111	-2.8%
Number deemed “vulnerable” with an elevated risk of premature mortality	932 (82%)	886 (80%)	
Source: Central Coast Collaborative on Homelessness, 2013 Vulnerability Index Survey Results			

According to these counts, of those encountered, Santa Barbara County experienced a 4.6 percent decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness between 2011 and 2013.

Figure E.12 Number of Unhoused People Encountered by City 2011 and 2013					
# of People Encountered by City	2011 No. of Contacts	2011 Percent of total	2013 No. of Contacts	2013 Percent of total	Percent Change
Carpinteria	15	1.0%	10	0.7%	-33.3%
Cuyama Valley	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	-100.0%
Guadalupe	5	0.3%	1	0.1%	-80.0%
Isla Vista/Goleta	114	7.4%	81	6.5%	-28.9%
Lompoc	110	7.2%	104	7.1%	-5.5%
Santa Barbara	1,040	67.7%	946	64.5%	-9.0%
Santa Maria	243	15.8%	300	20.5%	23.5%
Santa Ynez Valley	6	0.4%	24	1.6%	300.0%
Total	1,536	100%	1,466	100%	-4.6%
Source: Central Coast Collaborative on Homelessness, 2013 Vulnerability Index Survey Results					

The City of Santa Barbara has by far the greatest share of the County’s homeless individuals: just under 65 percent in 2013. Santa Maria is second with about 21 percent of the County’s total in 2013. Proportions of homeless individuals across areas remained relatively stable between 2011 and 2013. Santa Maria showed the sharpest increase in homeless contacts between 2011 and 2013.

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Transportation

Access to public transportation or a car improves residents' ability to get to jobs, support services, and childcare. More than half of the County's jobs are located in South County,⁹ thus necessitating significant travel for many residents living in North and Mid Counties. According to U.S. Census ACS 2006–2010 estimates, two-thirds (66 percent) of Santa Barbara County's workers commute alone in a vehicle. Among workers who reside in Santa Barbara's high poverty areas, this figure drops to 53 percent. Notably, nearly four times as many workers carpool (15 percent) than use public transportation (4 percent) countywide. Among workers who reside in the County that report using other modes of transportation, such as a taxi, walking, and riding a bicycle or motorcycle, 40 percent reside in high poverty areas.

Childcare

Like transportation and housing, childcare availability and affordability is a significant issue in Santa Barbara County, especially in high poverty areas. Access to high quality affordable childcare enables parents to go to work or school and children to thrive later in life. According to the Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning Council's "Status of Early Care and Education" report (2010), the mean childcare cost for full-time infant care in a licensed childcare center is \$11,991 annually, or \$7,039 annually at a licensed family childcare home. The average annual cost of full-time preschool care drops to \$8,684 for licensed childcare centers in the County and \$6,854 at licensed family childcare homes.

The parents of 7,299 children were unable to access licensed childcare (e.g. state-licensed child care centers or family child care homes) if they needed it in 2010.¹⁰ **Seventy-two percent of this unmet need is located in the zip codes that encompass the County's high poverty areas, with almost a third of the total unmet need in the zip code associated with Santa Maria's high poverty area.**

Select Public Benefits

Santa Barbara residents turned to the safety net system to survive the recession, with increasing numbers of residents enrolling in public benefits. Two major income support benefits are reported here: California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and CalFresh, formerly called Food Stamps.

CalWORKs provides monthly cash aid and services to eligible California families. The correlation between census tracts with high poverty rates and those with the highest CalWORKs cases is not always consistent. For example, one Santa Maria census tract outside of Santa Maria's high poverty area had the highest rate of CalWORKs recipients in the County: 52 percent. About half of the high poverty tracts fall into the quintile of census tracts with the highest percentages of CalWORKs recipients (26.4 to 52.0 percent) of all households with children, while most of the remaining high poverty tracts fall into the second highest quintile (12.3 to 26.3 percent). It is important to note that these data do not tell us why all census tracts with high poverty rates do not all have the highest percentages of CalWORKs recipients. Discrepancies between caseload data and poverty estimates, eligibility requirements, limits on the amount of time a benefit lasts, outreach efforts, undercounted groups of people, and/or ineligible (but poor) seasonal workers may all affect this discrepancy.

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The CalFresh Program helps people purchase food by issuing monthly electronic benefits—averaging about \$200 per month in California—that can be used to buy most food at many markets and food stores. Here the correlation between benefits and high poverty areas is clear. According to data provided by the Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services, 21,880 (15.4 percent) of the 141,793 County households received CalFresh benefits for at least one month in 2011, compared to a CalFresh participation of 9,037 households, or 32.5 percent, in high poverty areas. Regionally, over half of all CalFresh households reside in North County, 25.9 percent in South County, and 20.1 percent in Mid County. However, the percentage of households receiving CalFresh compared to the overall household population per region, referred to as a “participation rate”, depicts a vastly different story. CalFresh participation in North County is 29 percent, compared to 16.2 percent in Mid County and only 7.7 percent in South County, suggesting the need for significantly more outreach in the City of Santa Barbara and Lompoc.

“CalFresh participation in North County is 29 percent, compared to 16.2 percent in Mid County and only 7.7 percent in South County, suggesting the need for significantly more outreach in the City of Santa Barbara and Lompoc”

A 2013 report by the California Food Policy Advocate (CFPA) separately confirmed the need for increased CalFresh outreach and enrollment. Using county-level analyses estimating CalFresh utilization among potentially eligible people, CFPA found that *Santa Barbara County’s CalFresh usage ranks 51st out of 58 California counties.*¹¹ (The county ranked number one has the highest CalFresh utilization rate.) “If CalFresh reached all of these [eligible] low-income individuals in Santa Barbara County,” CFPA’s Press Release states,

“an estimated \$52.2 million in additional federally funded nutrition benefits would be received by local residents each year. Those benefits would result in \$93.4 million in additional economic activity [author’s emphasis].”¹²

**Figure E.13 CalFresh Participation Rates
(Percent of Households Receiving CalFresh)
by County, Region, High Poverty Areas in 2011**

	Total CalFresh Cases (Households)	Total Households	Participation Rate (% of Households Receiving CalFresh)	Distribution of CalFresh Cases
County	21,880	141,793	15.4%	100.0%
North County	11,812	40,706	29.0%	54.0%
Mid County	4,396	27,092	16.2%	20.1%
South County	5,672	73,995	7.7%	25.9%
High Poverty Areas	9,037	27,816	32.5%	41.3%
Lompoc HPA	2,374	5,522	43.0%	10.9%
Santa Maria HPA	5,618	11,585	48.5%	25.7%
City of SB HPA	854	5,506	15.5%	3.9%
Isla Vista HPA	191	5,203	3.7%	0.9%

Source: Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services (2011)

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Health Status and Insurance Coverage

Research from the World Health Organization¹³ and many others demonstrates a clear connection between poverty and health. People in poverty tend to suffer from poorer health and are often under-insured or uninsured. Data findings on Santa Barbara County's residents confirm this trend.

In 2010, the average age of death in Santa Barbara County was 76 years of age; **the average age of death in the zip codes associated with high poverty areas was three years less.**¹⁴

Another common indicator of health status is the number of premature years of life lost (PYLL) due to poor health conditions. PYLL (premature years of life lost) is an estimate of the average years a person would have lived if she/he had not died prematurely. This measure is given more weight to causes of deaths that are more common in young people. It is useful to use this measure when deciding how best to divide up scarce resources for research and other purposes. Areas with the highest numbers of premature years of life lost are in:

- ▶ Guadalupe,
- ▶ the east side of Santa Maria,
- ▶ the area east of Santa Maria,
- ▶ the part of Mid County that includes Lompoc, Los Alamos, and Buellton,
- ▶ the east side of Santa Barbara City, and
- ▶ Carpinteria.¹⁵

With respect to health insurance coverage, 17 percent of Santa Barbara County residents were uninsured in 2010.¹⁶ Every high poverty area except Isla Vista has a higher concentration of uninsured residents relative to their share of the population.¹⁷

Medi-Cal is a public health insurance program for qualifying low-income individuals including: families with children, seniors, persons with disabilities, children and teenagers in foster care, pregnant women, and low-income people with specific diseases. The census tracts with the highest rates of Medi-Cal cases are located in: Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Barbara City, and just west of Isla Vista.¹⁸ The high poverty areas, except Isla Vista, fall primarily into the two highest quintiles of Medi-Cal cases among all census tracts.¹⁹

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Focus Areas

The focus areas are based on a synthesis of the poverty statistics and indicator research findings, in addition to a local service provider survey and 16 stakeholder interviews.

In the fall of 2012, the Insight Center conducted a countywide survey of non-profit service providers, public agencies, educational institutions, funders, public officials, and other leaders throughout Santa Barbara County. The purpose was to gain an on-the-ground understanding of:

- ▶ how well services, resources, and program capacities align to meet greatest needs;
- ▶ challenges faced by low-income residents and the providers who serve them; and
- ▶ recommendations for helping more residents out of poverty.

Thirty nine percent (178) of the 460 agencies contacted²⁰ responded to the survey, and 74 percent (131) of those who responded completed the survey. The survey results were supplemented by interviews with 16 stakeholders, including public and non-profit providers and local foundations.

These focus areas reflect a synthesis of all report findings.

1. Pursue Holistic Approaches

Families have complex and interrelated problems that need integrated, holistic approaches. The most successful local and national anti-poverty efforts address poverty on multiple fronts: education, jobs, housing, childcare, health, transportation, crime, etc.—in part by maximizing resources and targeting them in ways that are proven to work. In order to address barriers that arise from individual life circumstances as well as neighborhood and regional environments, efforts must also be **both people-based and place-based**. Some successful initiatives also use multi-generational approaches, seeking to address the economic security of families over two generations by addressing the academic achievement of children (e.g. Harlem Children’s Zone).

“These focus areas reflect a synthesis of all report findings.”

2. Establish Poverty Reduction Goals and Track Progress Using Standardized Data Collection

Leaders in Santa Barbara County could use the data findings in this report to establish specified 10 year poverty reduction goals in areas of greatest need in the County. They could extract a subset of baseline indicators to track consistently over time and gauge the success of various local anti-poverty efforts, using a clear set of measurable and standardized results. To support any future anti-poverty campaign, the County could also improve the coordination and standardization of data collection, including the development of a “Data Warehouse” that could be accessed by the County Departments and non-profit and community leaders for research, evaluation, fundraising, and community building efforts.

3. Improve Service Delivery Infrastructure and Efficiency

Strategically site and/or co-locate services in targeted, impoverished neighborhoods using a collective impact model.

Implementing more holistic, data-driven strategies requires greater service integration and/or co-location of services. Integrated approaches can increase the “collective impact” of local agencies and ultimately improve outcomes for low-income residents and communities.²¹ Strategically siting or co-locating agencies and services can also reduce costs (agencies can share back-office infrastructure and resources) and improve services for low-income populations (multiple needs can be addressed at the same place

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and transportation barriers reduced).

While some co-location of services and/or collective impact efforts are already underway in Santa Barbara County (e.g. THRIVE SBC, The Central Coast Collaborative on Homelessness) public, philanthropic, and non-profit leaders should use the data findings in this report to expand targeted efforts. The following strategic areas should be considered:

- ▶ Santa Maria (census tracts 21.01, 22.05, 22.06, 23.04, 24.02, 24.03, 24.04),
- ▶ Lompoc (census tracts 27.02, 27.03, 27.06), and
- ▶ the City of Santa Barbara (census tracts 3.01, 8.01, 9, 12.06).

More investigation into Isla Vista's high poverty tracts (29.28, 29.22, 29.24, 29.26) is needed to determine whether these areas also warrant intensive efforts, given its large college student population. (Isla Vista is also home to a smaller, non-student, low-income population.) On the other hand, even though **Guadalupe is not a high poverty area as defined in this report, it shows other signs of financial distress, so it, too,** may be a target for integrated service. Philanthropic and public leaders can contribute to improved service delivery by not only funding the backbone infrastructure necessary for collective impact, but by also collaborating with each other on common goals, strategies, and administrative processes.

Streamline and improve access to services.

The Service Provider and Funder Survey and stakeholder interviewees conveyed the need for more streamlined and accessible services. Public and non-profit service providers should strive to:

- ▶ create “one entry door” for people to get all the services they need at once;
- ▶ ensure hours of services are accessible to working populations; and
- ▶ offer services in other languages, particularly Spanish (but other languages as well depending on the needs of target populations).

Effective use of technology can also increase efficiencies, reduce duplicative services, promote information sharing, and make programs more accessible throughout the County. Examples include using laptops to enroll eligible people in public benefits at schools, places of worship, and community centers.

Consider consolidating in specific areas.

Lompoc and Isla Vista—two localities with several high poverty census tracts—have relatively large numbers of service providers that serve small numbers of people (e.g. 16 survey respondents reported serving fewer than 50 people in Isla Vista and 11 reported serving fewer than 50 people in Lompoc). This survey finding invites further research to analyze whether there may be a need to consolidate services in Isla Vista and Lompoc, in addition to expanding the overall number of people helped in these areas. (It may be that consolidation is warranted, but it may also be that different organizations in these two areas are serving the needs of different populations or neighborhoods.) More investigation into the non-profit service infrastructure in each locality would be needed to determine whether consolidation of organizations is advisable.

Similarly, according to the Service Provider and Funder Survey, there is a relatively large number of organizations serving less than 50 people in Mid County: in Santa Ynez, 14 organizations listed that they serve fewer than 50 people; in Solvang, 13 organizations listed that they serve fewer than 50 people; and in Buellton, 11 organizations listed that they served less than 50 people. While these towns have smaller populations, further research is necessary to determine whether consolidation of services within Mid County localities is recommended.

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4. Address Unmet Needs in North County and Lompoc

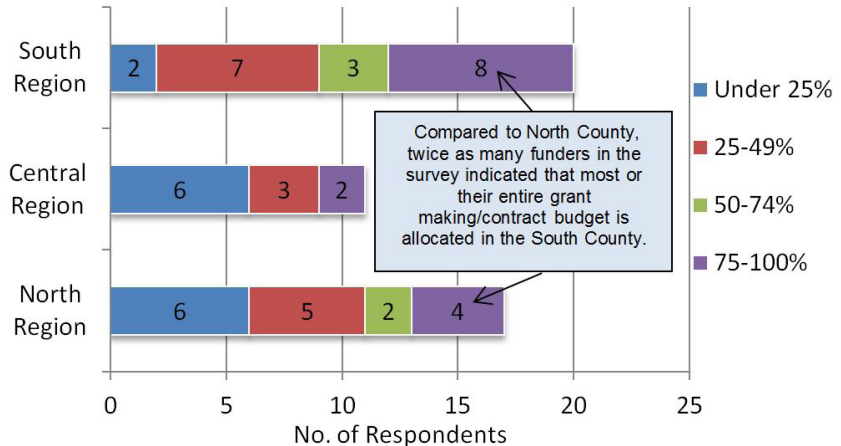
Consider shifting some South County resources to Santa Maria, Lompoc, and Guadalupe.

Quantitative and qualitative research findings from this study suggest the importance of re-aligning some programs and resources to meet the needs of low-income residents in certain parts of the County. Santa Maria is the most populated city in the County and also has the greatest number of people and proportion of people living below the Federal Poverty Thresholds (17,066 people in poverty in Santa Maria compared to 13,522 in the City of Santa Barbara, according to the most recent Census estimates).²² However, the City of Santa Barbara has more services and resources to serve people in pov-

erty. According to the Service Provider and Funder Survey, twice as many funders support programs in the City of Santa Barbara (8) compared to Santa Maria (4). (See Figure IV.19 on page 101.) Therefore, the City of Santa Barbara has significantly greater service capacity. Similarly, as Figure E.14 above illustrates, local funders tend to direct larger proportions of their grantmaking budgets to South County compared to North County. (Compared to North County, twice as many funders in the survey indicated that most or their entire grantmaking/contract budget is allocated in South County.)

Although Lompoc has far fewer residents in poverty, it has one of the highest percentages of people living below the Federal Poverty Thresholds in the County (more than one in five residents). Lompoc, however, ranks fifth in the number of clients served monthly, and very few funders direct significant resources to Lompoc, according to the results of the Service Provider and Funder Survey. Lompoc was also cited by several stakeholder interviewees as an area of unmet needs. Given limited resources, local leaders should consider realigning some current resources to help struggling residents in both Santa Maria and Lompoc. Finally, while Guadalupe does not meet the 20 percent poverty threshold to be classified as a high poverty area in this report, 16.4 percent of persons (or 1,124 people) in Guadalupe are living below the Federal Poverty Thresholds,²³ yet Guadalupe has much lower comparative service usage numbers. It, too, deserves special consideration. (See Figure E.15 next page.)

Figure E.14 Percent of Funders Budget Directed in Different Regions by Number of Funders



Source: Insight Center, Service Provider and Funder Survey, 2012

**Figure E.15 Number of Provider Respondents
by Clients Served Monthly
in Each City/Town**

Numbers Served	1-49	50-99	100-199	200-299	300-499	500-750	750+	Total Served	
								MIN	MAX
Buellton	*11	5	1	0	2	0	1	**1,711	2,781+
Carpinteria	13	5	5	2	3	1	2	3,313	5,422+
Cuyama	6	2	0	1	0	0	0	1,056	1,541+
Goleta	13	4	10	4	2	1	3	3,863	6,517+
Guadalupe	7	4	1	1	2	0	1	1,857	2,785+
HPA Isla Vista	16	1	4	0	3	0	2	2,116	3,626+
HPA Lompoc	11	2	4	3	2	1	5	2,961	4,728+
Los Alamos	7	4	0	1	0	0	0	1,157	1,788+
New Cuyama	6	2	2	1	0	1	0	1,756	2,689+
Orcutt	10	4	2	0	1	1	1	1,960	3,183+
HPA City of SB	8	5	9	2	11	4	13	7,608	11,415+
HPA Santa Maria	8	3	1	6	4	3	7	4,908	7,278+
Santa Ynez	14	3	1	1	2	0	1	1,814	3,029+
Solvang	13	3	1	1	2	0	2	1,813	2,980+
Vandenberg Village	9	2	0	0	0	1	1	1,359	2,139+
Ventucopa	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	147+

*E.g., 11 respondents who provide direct services to people in Buellton reported serving 1-49 people per month.

** E.g., respondents served in total between 1,711 and 2,781+ people in Buellton per month.

Note: not all providers collect data on unduplicated clients so this table may include some duplicated counts

Source: Insight Center, Service Provider and Funder Survey, 2012

5. Improve Allocation of Existing Resources

Adopt best practices in philanthropy.

Santa Barbara County has more non-profit organizations per capita than any other Southern California county, and one-quarter of one percent of the nation's total non-profits.²⁴ This is a tremendous asset. To increase the impact of philanthropic resources, many foundations across the country (e.g. the Ford Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Atlantic Philanthropies, among others) are adopting new practices whereby they *fund fewer organizations with larger grants over multiple years*. Some foundations also require external evaluations for all grants over a certain dollar threshold (e.g. the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies). These philanthropic leaders have found that focusing investments on a smaller number of well-documented, high performing organizations increases impact.²⁵ Large philanthropic investors in Santa Barbara County should consider adopting this national best practice. If local funders were to adopt a strategy of investing in fewer organizations, it would be even more important to institute strong oversight and evaluation mechanisms to hold those entities accountable. Similarly, philanthropic leaders can also improve how resources are allocated by funding evaluations and sharing findings on lessons learned and best practices with local leaders.

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Adopt best practices in public funding.

Fostering public/non-profit partnerships that capitalize on each sector's relative strengths is another best practice in the field.²⁶ Government's strengths often lie in oversight, quality control, accounting standards, resource allocation, and technical assistance; whereas, the non-profit sector's strengths tend to lie in identifying community needs, building trust with community leaders and low-income populations, and providing flexible services to accommodate local needs. Non-profit organizations also have lower overhead costs and can often leverage public support with private funding. There were several promising examples of local partnerships cited by interviewees that catered to these relative strengths (although interviewees hoped for even more shared decision-making and genuine collaboration). Santa Barbara leaders should consider building upon and expanding successful collaborative models.

Just as more foundations nationally are investing in fewer numbers of organizations over multiple years, the *public sector should consider bundling and consolidating its investments in high-capacity, proven organizations*. Small contracts spread over many non-profit agencies are often less effective than larger, more targeted investments. In particular, interviewees raised a concern that Community Development Block Grants were so small and administratively cumbersome that some agencies simply stopped applying for those funds.

Finally, streamlining public contracting, reporting, and administrative processes would enable local agencies to dedicate more resources to helping people in poverty and less time on contract administration.²⁷ Especially for agencies that are funded annually with consistently high performance, the County should consider requiring less intensive due diligence processes.

6. Expand Targeted, Impactful Public Programs

Increase outreach and enrollment of CalFresh benefits.

Data provided by the County of Santa Barbara Department of Social Services—and California Food Policy Advocate's findings that Santa Barbara County ranks 51st out of 58 counties in CalFresh usage—suggest the need to do significantly more outreach to enroll eligible residents for CalFresh, particularly for residents in the City of Santa Barbara. Given some of the high poverty rates in Lompoc, additional outreach may be warranted there as well. Eligibility rules hamper student CalFresh eligibility, thus resulting in very low CalFresh participation rates in Isla Vista. However, more outreach may be warranted to ensure other eligible residents are accessing CalFresh benefits. Increased CalFresh enrollment would also enable the County to draw an estimated \$52.2 million in federal funding and catalyze \$93.4 million in additional economic activity, according to CFPA.

Create local tax credit programs.

Well-timed and targeted tax credits—including modest expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit, as well as a Making Work Pay tax credit that offsets payroll taxes—helped keep more than three million Americans, mostly those in families with children, out of poverty in 2010 alone.²⁸ These tax credits, particularly the Making Work Pay credit, also reached middle class families, providing help to those families and buttressing the effects of a recessionary economy.²⁹ San Francisco County and other counties have developed effective local working poor tax credit models from which Santa Barbara County could borrow to bolster current local efforts already underway by United Way of Santa Barbara County.

7. Address Affordable Housing, Economic and Workforce Development, and Public Transportation

Convene affordable housing experts in the public, non-profit and private sectors.

As demonstrated by the housing data in this report, affordable rental and homeownership opportunities are an enormous challenge throughout the County, but particularly in South County. Amending zoning ordinances to allow for well-designed, high density development, and investing in, or expanding, workforce homebuyer programs are two suggestions made by interviewees among a host of potential options to address this housing crisis. Convening community leaders and experts in the public, non-profit, and private sectors to craft and implement creative, cross-sector affordable housing programs and policies would be a first step. Given the large number of people struggling to pay for housing and the significant homeless population, it is critically important to develop the buy-in, political will, and financial capital to expand affordable housing options in the County—an assessment confirmed in the stakeholder interviews.

Convene experts in education and workforce and economic development and community leaders to develop a shared vision of economic development.

Attracting large numbers of jobs with family-sustaining wages, mobility, and decent benefits, along with workforce pipelines to train local residents in these kinds of jobs, would help lift many Santa Barbara residents out of poverty. Best practices in the field³⁰ and local leaders suggest that one critical step is to identify and align workforce development systems to meet the needs of growing industry “clusters of opportunities,” identified locally as Health Care, Energy and the Environment, Building and Design, Technology and Innovation, Business Support Services, and Agriculture/Tourism/Wineries.³¹ Intricately related, the disparity in educational achievement among residents in high poverty areas draws attention to the importance of technical training, GED, and other educational opportunities for adults, coupled with efforts to narrow achievement gaps among children. (Notably, very few funders—at least those who participated in the survey—focused on workforce development).

Like affordable housing, however, assessing the best strategies to narrow educational achievement gaps and increase workforce and economic development opportunities merits a study of its own. Most immediately, convening experts in education, workforce and economic development and engaging community leaders in an open dialogue about the most appropriate economic development vision would be a first step to implement a broad, inclusive plan for the County’s economic future. County leaders, however, will need to mitigate competing interests and/or perceptions among environmentalists, the business community, urban agriculturalists, “smart” versus “anti-growth” advocates, and “NIMBYism” to move the conversation forward.

Convene transportation experts and community leaders.

Finally, Santa Barbara County’s geography poses significant transportation barriers, especially for those low-income residents without a car. Only four percent of workers in the County use public transit to get to work, likely reflecting the limited public transit options. Stakeholders interviewed and survey respondents commonly cited transportation challenges that prevented many residents from accessing needed services and employment opportunities. Convening a work group with transportation experts and community leaders to more deeply understand transportation barriers and craft solutions is also warranted.

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Conclusion

Through data collection, GIS mapping, a survey of service providers and funders, and stakeholder interviews, this project brought together a wealth of information to analyze Santa Barbara County's service delivery infrastructure and the alignment of current services and resources to changing local needs. The hope is that these findings and focus areas for improvement will spark community discussions, build upon local and national best practices, and inspire new strategies to help Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable communities climb out of poverty. The County is fortunate to have a vibrant community of non-profit leaders, philanthropists, and public officials which can each play an important role on the journey. The time to act is now.