



What Do Women Need?

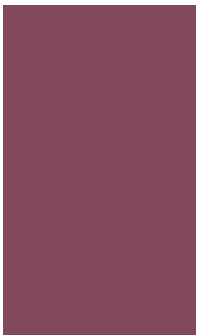
Issues Impacting Women & Girls in San Luis Obispo County, 2015



Created by the

**WOMEN'S
LEGACY FUND**

a fund of
THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY



For many people, San Luis Obispo County offers an idyllic quality of life. However, even in this idyllic place, some women and girls struggle to meet their basic needs. The goal of this report is to shine a light on some facts of life that deserve the community's attention.

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Overview

This project was conceived during a strategic planning retreat for the Women's Legacy Fund in October 2014. Over the following year, a group of volunteers reviewed a wide array of current research in order to present a concise report on the most pressing issues for women and girls in San Luis Obispo County.

The purpose of this report is to:

- **Increase public awareness of the needs of girls and women in San Luis Obispo County**
- **Educate community leaders, stakeholders and non-profit organizations about the current status of girls and women here**
- **Inform grant-making decisions by the Women's Legacy Fund**

The mission of the Women's Legacy Fund is to be a catalyst for philanthropy that improves the lives of women and girls in San Luis Obispo County. Grants from the fund support local organizations that help women and girls to strengthen their physical, emotional, intellectual and financial well-being.

To identify the most pressing needs, in 2010 the Women's Legacy Fund conducted research and provided its first report on the needs of women

and girls in San Luis Obispo County. That information has been used to inform decisions regarding grants.

This 2015 report is based on a careful review of dozens of sources, considering data generated by various government and non-profit agencies. Many agencies generate data on important topics impacting people's lives, but not all report data by gender; this report uses only sources that provide data on women, specifically. Resources are listed and numbered in the Sources section and cited throughout the report by numbers in parentheses. An explanation regarding the selection of sources and filter of data is provided in the Methodology section.

The report reviews the demographics of all women living in San Luis Obispo County, and highlights findings on the issues of economics, child care, safety, health and substance abuse. The report also focuses on three specific populations – teens, seniors and Latinas.

For many people, San Luis Obispo County offers an idyllic quality of life. However, even in this idyllic place, some women and girls struggle to meet their basic needs. The goal of this report is to shine a light on some facts of life that deserve the community's attention.

**Among the most compelling facts about women and girls in
San Luis Obispo County:**

- **Chronic sadness** is a growing problem among teenage girls. More than 40% of 9th-grade and 11th-grade girls say they felt so sad and/or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks last year, they stopped doing some of their usual activities. That alarming percentage grew by more than five points between 2009 and 2014. [more](#)
- The rate of reported **forcible rape** is almost double that of the state – 39 per 100,000 population here versus 20 per 100,000 population statewide. [more](#)
- Local women 21 and older engage in **binge drinking** much more than women statewide, with 46% reporting an episode in the past year, compared with 33% statewide. Of all California counties, SLO County ranks first (with Marin County) regarding the incidence of binge drinking among women. “Binge drinking” is defined as consuming four or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion. [more](#)
- Latinas make up 28% of the female teen population and account for 56% of the **teen pregnancies**. Thirty-two percent of Latinas 25 and older have no high school diploma or GED, compared to 7% of non-Latinas. Hispanic families are three times more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic families, and 42% of Latina householders with no husband present live in poverty. [more](#)
- Senior women represent 18% of the female population, and that percentage is expected to grow significantly. More than 25% of women 75 and older say they have **difficulty living independently**. Availability of care is an issue in SLO County, and so is cost. Skilled-nursing costs run from \$6,000 to \$13,500 a month, and residential care from \$3,500 to \$7,200. Only three residential-care facilities accept low-income clients; their beds are full and waiting lists are closed. [more](#)

THE BASICS

Facts about Women in San Luis Obispo County

San Luis Obispo County is home to 133,000 women and girls ⁽¹⁾. Compared to women statewide, women in San Luis Obispo County are:

- Older
- More often Caucasian
- Less often Latina or in another minority group
- More likely to have at least some college training, but not more likely to be college graduates
- More likely to be employed, and more likely to be employed part-time
- Earning less money
- Slightly more likely to be married

Women Residents	SLO County	CA
% of population	49%	51%
Median age	41.7 years	36.6 years
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian (Incl. Latina)	86%	62%
Black/African American	1%	6%
Asian	4%	14%
Other Race	6%	14%
Two or more races	3%	4%
Latina	20%	38%
Education		
Less than high school diploma	10%	18%
High school grad/GED	20%	21%
Some college/AA degree	38%	30%
College/post degree graduates	32%	31%
Employment in past 12 months		
Total employed	72%	66%
Employed 35+ hours	40%	44%
Employed less than 35 hours	32%	22%
Not employed	28%	34%
Median income in past 12 months		
	\$22,110	\$26,552
Marital status		
Ever been married	71%	68%
Currently married	48%	45%

For more information on demographics, please see [Seniors](#) and [Latinas](#)
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As noted earlier, the female population in SLO County is older than the state's female population. Within the county, 54% of women/girls are younger than 45, compared to 62% statewide. Forty six percent are 45 and older versus 38% statewide. The largest age groups here are 21 and younger, and 45 to 64.

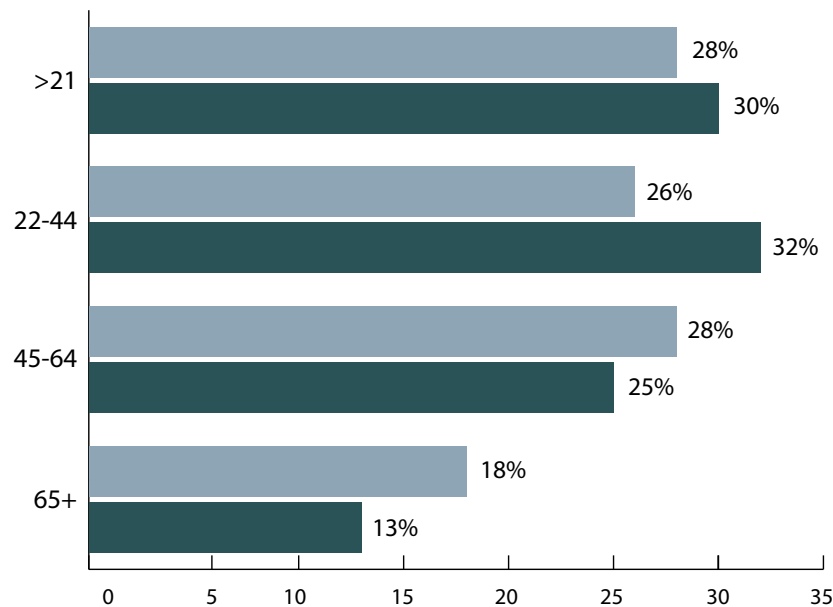
The U.S. Census Bureau divides San Luis Obispo County into five Census County Divisions (CCDs).* The female population, like the county's population, is not evenly distributed across these five divisions. Thirty

percent live in the Arroyo Grande CCD (including Nipomo, Grover Beach, Oceano, Pismo/Shell Beach and Arroyo Grande). Twenty percent live in the San Luis Obispo City CCD (including Avila Beach). Nineteen percent of the county's women live in the Paso Robles CCD. Seventeen percent live in the Atascadero CCD (including the sparsely populated eastern portion of the county). Fourteen percent live in the North Coast CCD (Los Osos north to the county border).

* See map in Methodology section for specific boundaries; these designations are used throughout this report.

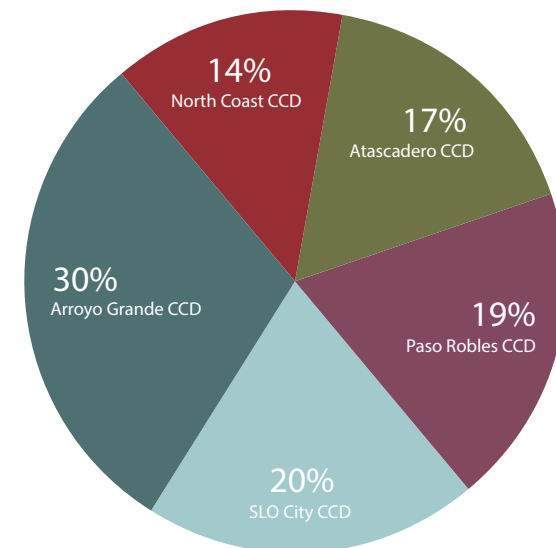
Age Distribution of Female Population

■ San Luis Obispo County vs. ■ California



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Distribution of Women Across County Regions



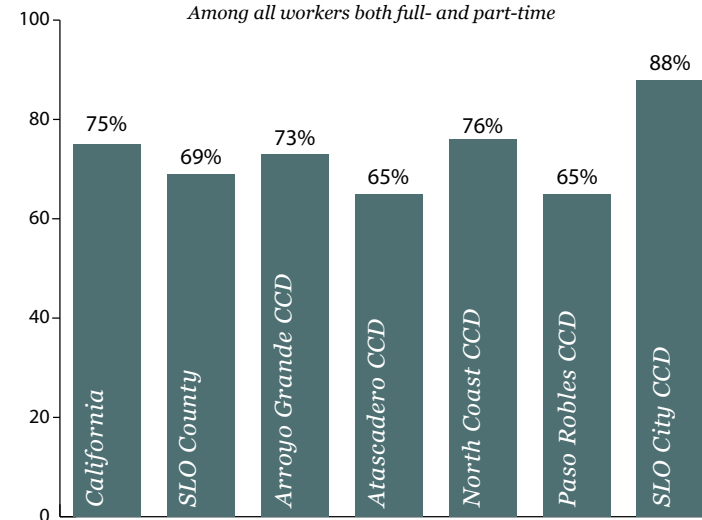
Economics

Income Disparity

In California, among all workers both full- and part-time, women earn 75 cents for every \$1 earned by men. The income disparity is even greater in San Luis Obispo County. In 2013, women in SLO County earned 69 cents for every \$1 earned by men. Income disparity is greatest in North County (Atascadero and Paso Robles CCDs), where women's median income is 65% of men's. ⁽¹⁾

Female Median Income as % of Male Median Income

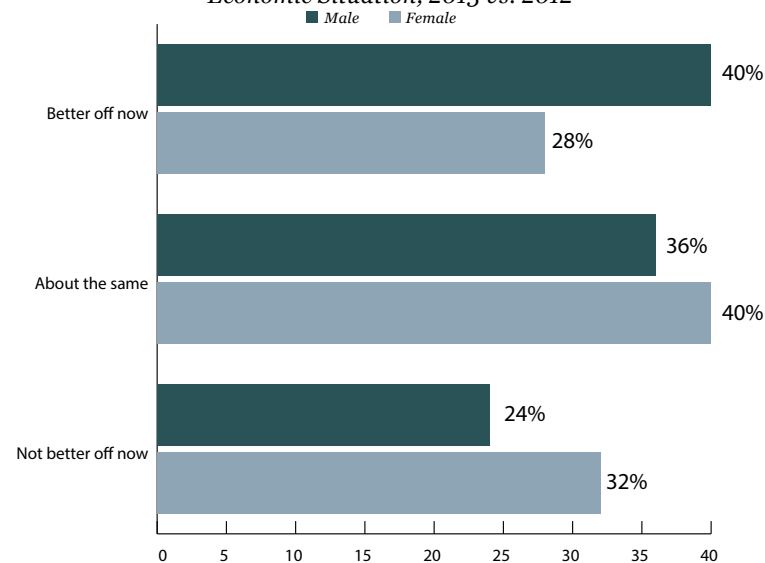
Among all workers both full- and part-time



Perceptions of Economic Stability

When surveyed in 2013, 40% of men versus 28% of women said they were economically better off this year than last. Conversely, more women than men said they were not better off this year (32% of women compared to 24% of men). ⁽³⁾

Economic Situation, 2013 vs. 2012



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Poverty

The percent of SLO County families living in poverty increased from 6% to 7% between 2008 and 2013. The rise was greater for households headed by women (from 18% to 22% for female householders with no husband present, and from 24% to 29% for female householders with children, no husband present). ^(1, 17)

In 2013, 6% of households countywide received public assistance or food stamps (versus 9% statewide), with more than 7% of households in Arroyo Grande CCD and Paso Robles CCD receiving public assistance. ⁽¹⁾

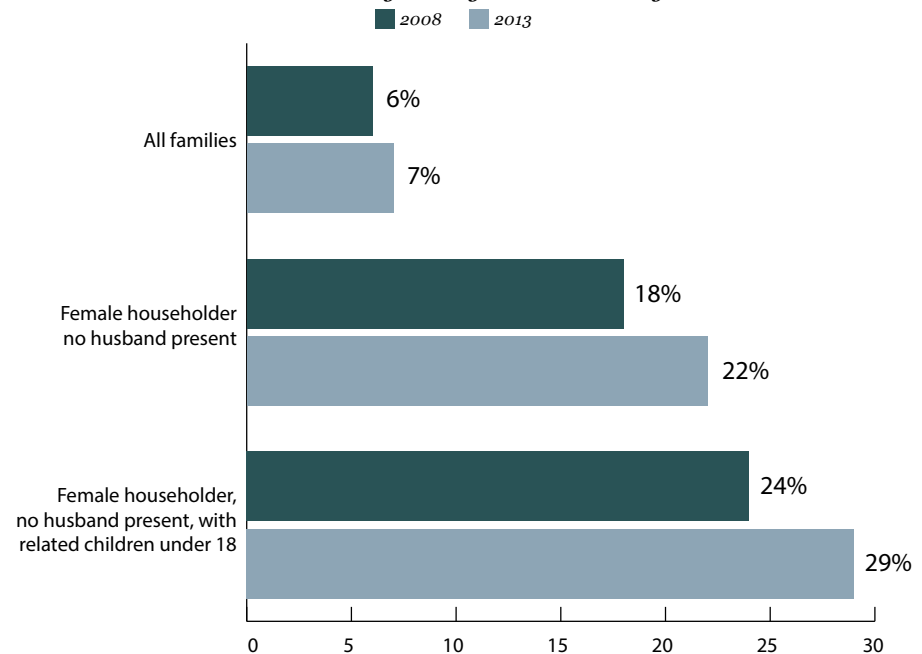
When asked if they had gone without a basic need in the last year, 13% of women said yes. Health care was cited most often, by 9%; 4% said they had gone without food. ⁽³⁾

Homelessness

The Homeless Point-in-Time Census and Survey of 2015 counted approximately 530 homeless women in SLO County, which was 35% of the homeless population; 2% of the homeless population was under 18. ⁽⁸⁾

*For more information on economics, please see [Seniors](#) and [Latinas](#)
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% in SLO County Living Below Poverty Level



Child Care

Availability

Child care is essential to the stability of families and their pursuit of opportunity, yet licensed child care is available to only 36% of children with working parents in SLO County. Child care slots are decreasing in relationship to need. ⁽¹⁰⁾

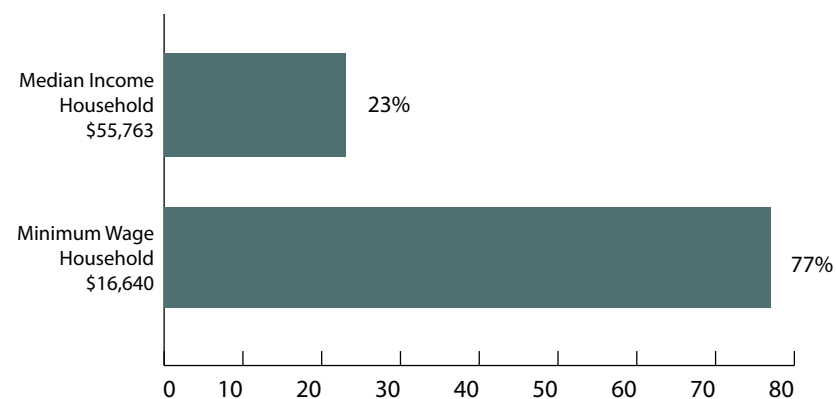
Cost

Even if a family is able to find child care that would meet their needs, high cost limits access to that care. The average annual cost for full-time infant care in a licensed child care center is estimated at \$12,795. That cost represents 23% of a family's income, assuming an income equal to the county's median family income of \$55,763. For a family with one minimum wage worker, child care at a licensed center would cost 77% of the household's \$16,640 income. Nine percent of SLO County families with children fall in this minimum-wage category. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Annual Cost of Full-time Child Care

	Licensed Family Child Care Home	Licensed Child Care Center
Infant	\$9,491	\$12,795
Preschooler	\$8,669	\$9,158

Cost of Full-time Infant Care as % of Household Income



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Substance Abuse

Binge Drinking

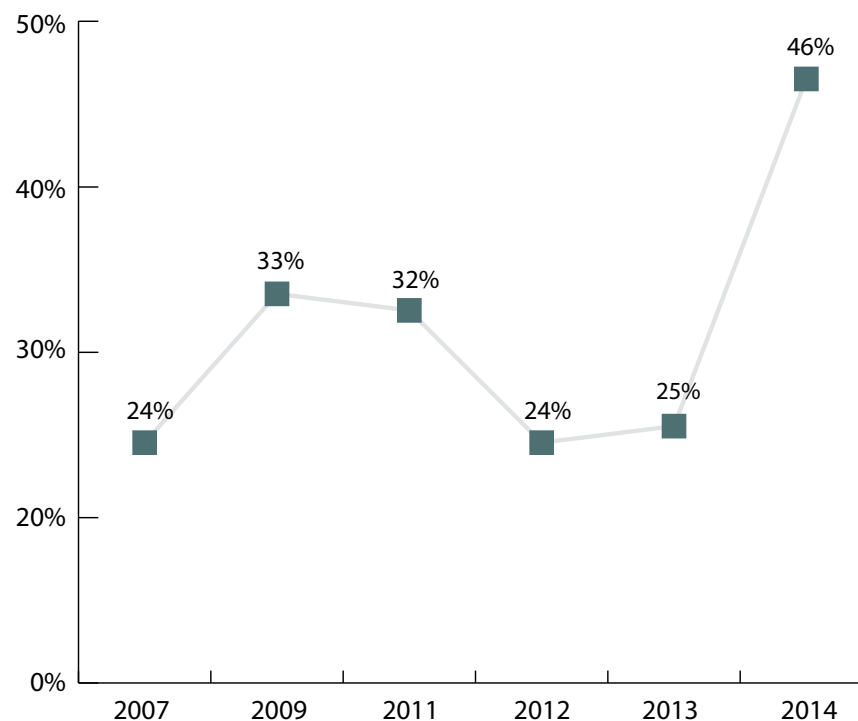
Women 21 and older in SLO County engage in binge drinking* much more than women statewide, with 46% reporting an episode in the past year, compared to 33% statewide. Of all California counties, SLO County ranks first (with Marin County) regarding the incidence of binge drinking among women. (6-b)

Binge drinking in SLO County has surged among women 21 and older, with 46% reporting an episode of binge drinking in 2014 compared to 24% in 2007. (6-b)

Eighteen percent of women in SLO County report binge drinking at least once in the past 30 days. (3)

* Binge drinking for women is defined as consuming four or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion.

SLO County Adult Women Reporting Binge Drinking



CA Counties with Highest Incidence of Binge Drinking Among Women

1.	San Luis Obispo County	46%
2.	Marin County	46%
3.	Santa Cruz County	44%
4.	Santa Barbara County	40%

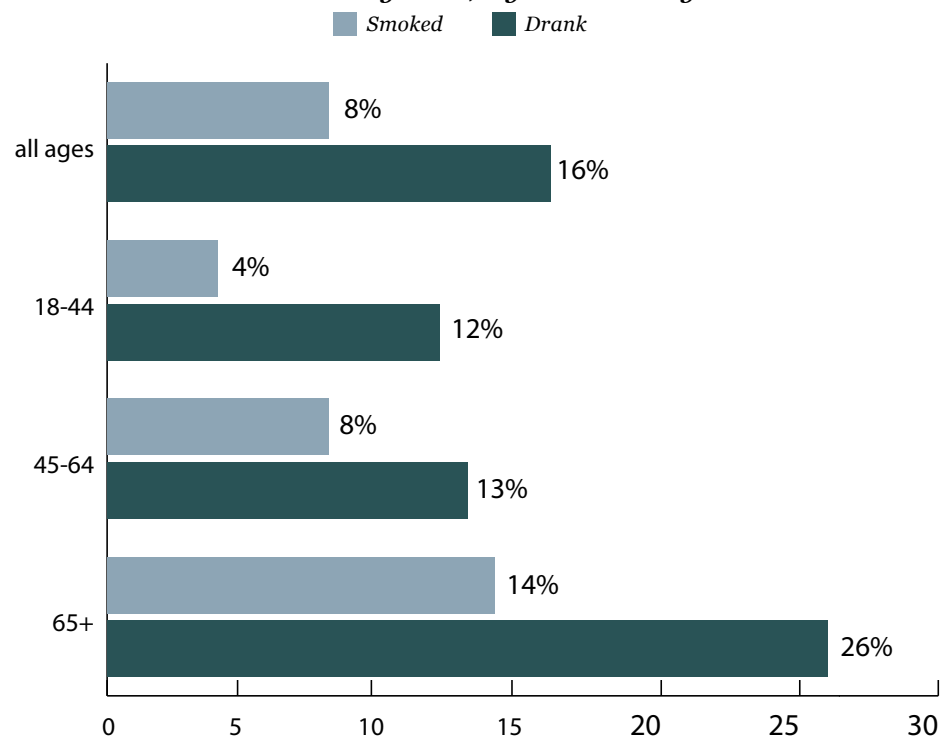
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Smoking

Regarding the use of tobacco, 8% of county women report they often or sometimes smoke cigarettes; this is half the usage of tobacco reported by men (15%). Asked if it was acceptable for a woman who is pregnant to smoke, 7% indicated some degree of acceptance. Asked the same question about drinking wine, 18% indicated some degree of acceptance. (15)

Of county women who have ever given birth, 8% report smoking while pregnant and 16% report drinking alcohol while pregnant. Usage was greatest among women who are now 65 and older and least among women who are now age 18 to 44. Clearly, information regarding the harmful effects of smoking and drinking during pregnancy has helped curtail risky behaviors during pregnancy. However, some women still smoke and drink while pregnant, and find those practices somewhat acceptable. (15)

% of Women Who Smoked Tobacco/Drank Alcohol while Pregnant, by Current Age



For more information on substance abuse, please see [Teens](#)
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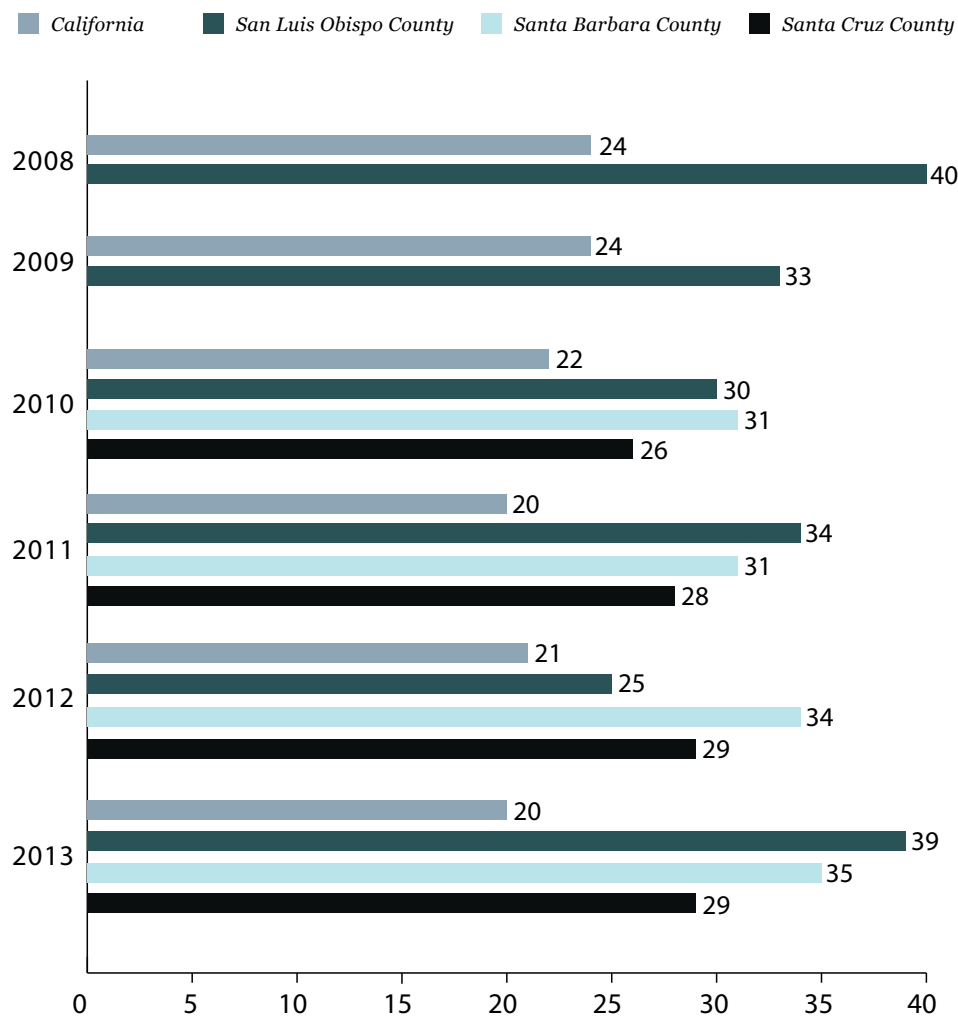
Safety

Rape

The rate of reported forcible rape* in SLO County consistently exceeds the rate statewide. In 2013, the rate here was almost double that of the state (39 per 100,000 population versus 20 per 100,000 population statewide). Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz counties, with college-age populations similar to SLO County, also have higher rates of reported rape, compared to the rate statewide. (4)

* “Forcible rape” is not consensual; “rape” can include statutory rape, which can be consensual but with an underage person.

Rate of Reported Forcible Rape per 100,000 Population



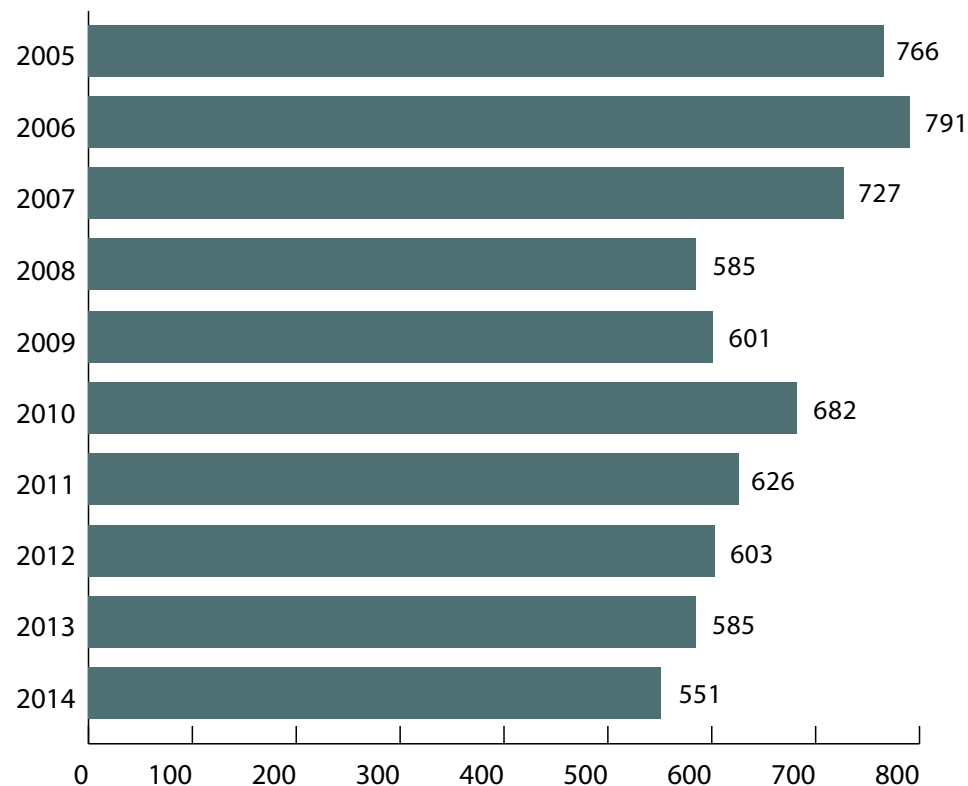
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Domestic Violence

The number of domestic violence calls reported to SLO County law enforcement in 2014 is lower than in previous years. From 2005 to 2014, domestic-violence calls have decreased in the county by 28%. Statewide, such calls for the same time period decreased by 14%. Nonetheless, in 2014, 551 people in SLO County — the majority of whom are women* — called a law-enforcement agency to report an incidence of domestic violence.

* Data on the victims' gender is not available; these statistics include both males and females. Nationwide, in cases of non-fatal domestic violence between 2003 and 2012, the victim was female in 86% of the cases. (4) (11)

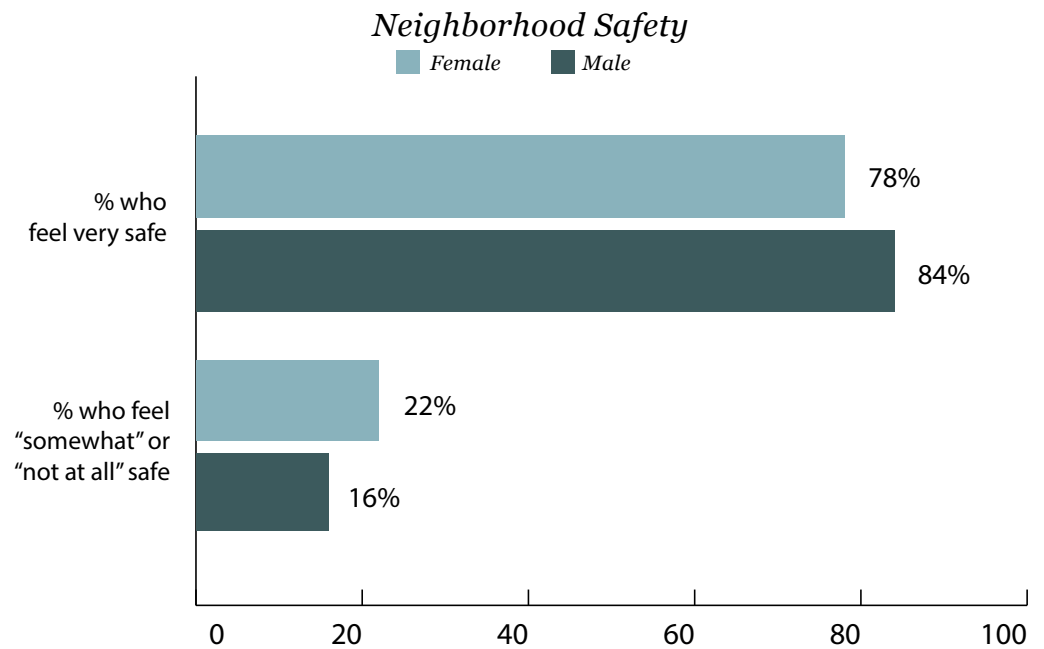
Total Domestic Violence Calls in SLO County



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Neighborhood Safety

Overall, women in the county feel “very safe” in their neighborhoods. However, nearly one in four question their safety to some degree. Of those who feel somewhat or not at all safe, women are slightly more likely than men to be concerned about their safety (22% versus 16%). ⁽³⁾



For more information on safety, please see [Teens](#)
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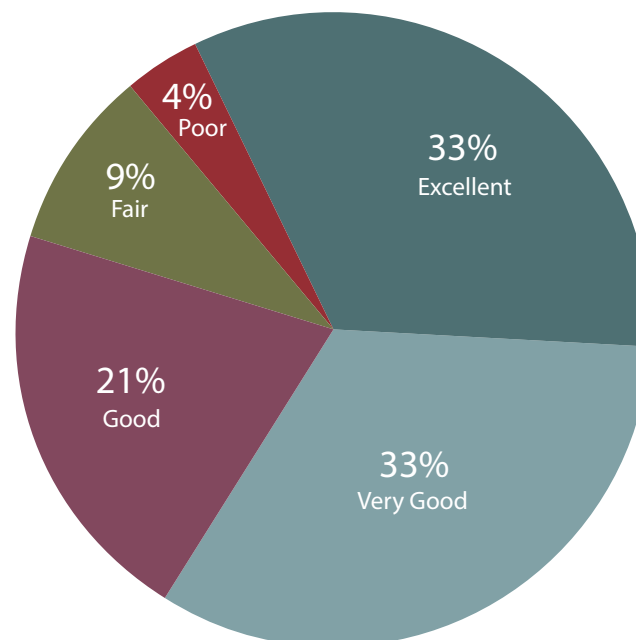
Health

Mental Health

Asked about their mental health (including stress, depression and problems with emotions), the majority of county women say their mental health is excellent, very good or good. Thirteen percent describe their mental health as fair or poor.

Sixteen percent of county women say they have felt the need to discuss problems or situations with a mental health professional, but did not have the money or insurance to do so. (3)

Women's Mental Health in General



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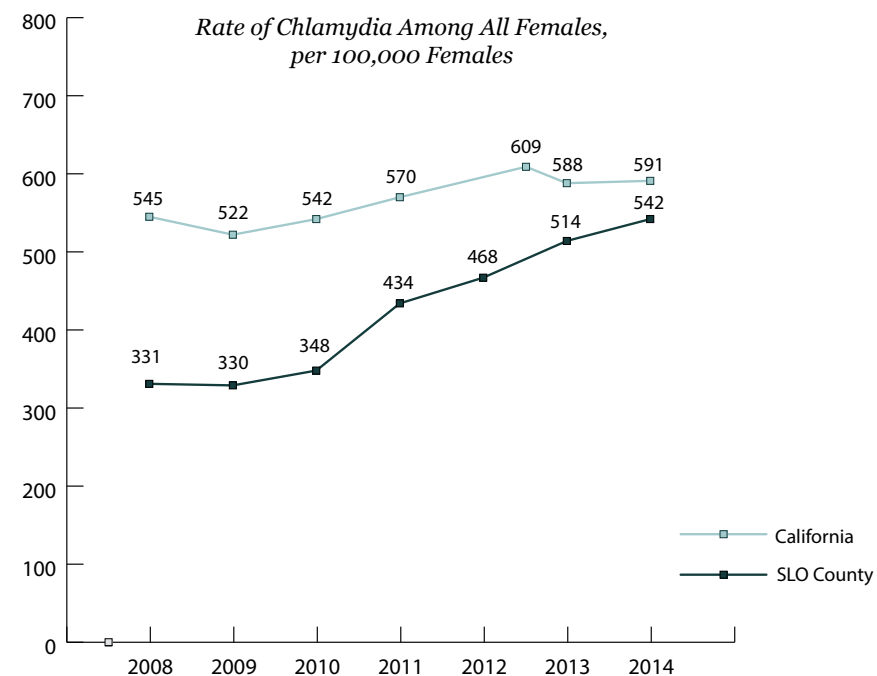
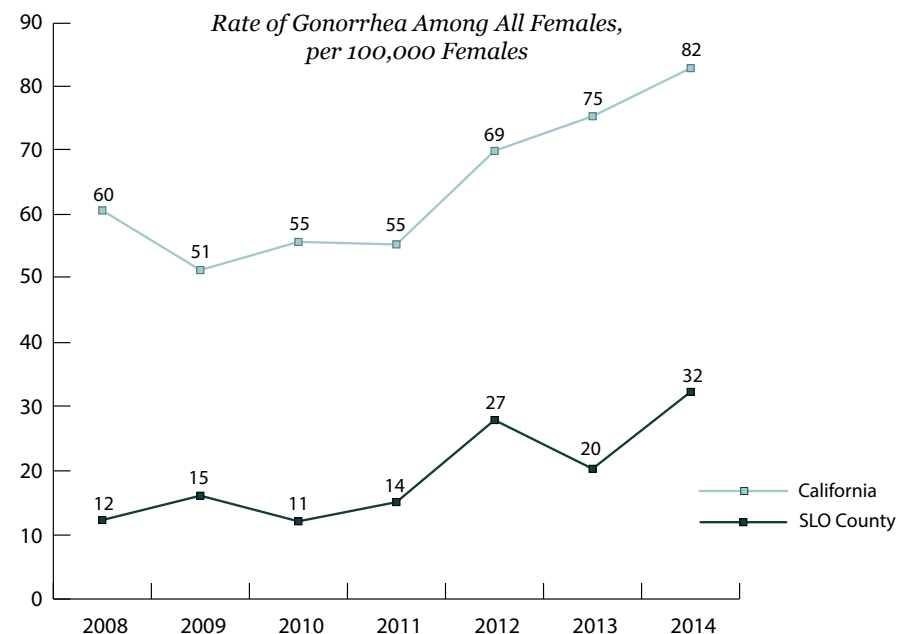
Reproductive Health

Females in SLO County have a lower rate of chlamydia and gonorrhea than females statewide, but the rates of both diseases are increasing faster here than statewide.

In SLO County, the rate of gonorrhea among females rose from 12 per 100,000 females in 2008 to 32 per 100,000 females in 2014 (vs. 60 to 82 statewide). These changes represent an increase of 167% among county women versus an increase of 37% among women statewide. (14)

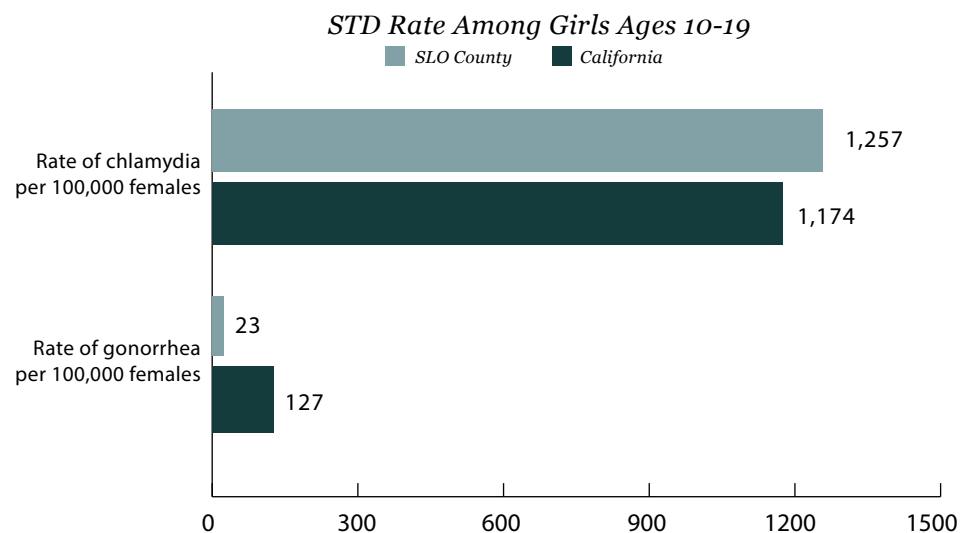
In SLO County, the rate of chlamydia among females rose from 331 per 100,000 in 2008 to 542 per 100,000 in 2014 (vs. 545 to 591 statewide). This represents an increase of 64% in the county versus an increase of 8% in the state.

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Reproductive Health

For girls between the ages of 10 and 19, SLO County has a higher rate of chlamydia than California. In 2013, the rate of chlamydia is 1,257 per 100,000 females versus 1,174 per 100,000 females statewide. Also in 2013, SLO County has a dramatically lower rate of gonorrhea than California (23 per 100,000 females versus 127 per 100,000 females statewide). ⁽¹³⁾

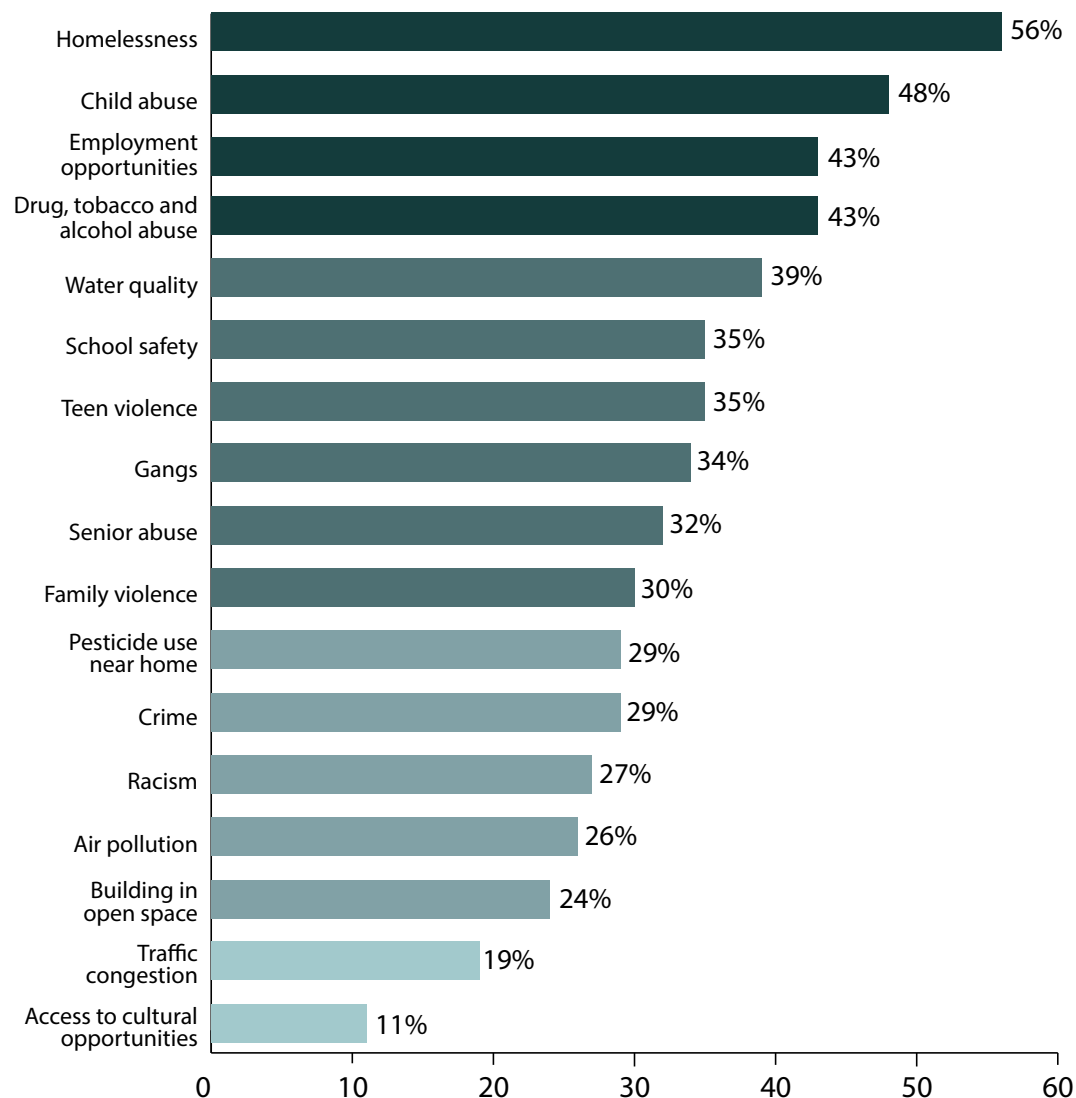


For more information on health, please see [Teens](#), [Seniors](#) and [Latinas](#)
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Issues Women Care About

Asked to indicate their level of concern about 17 community issues, local women expressed the most concern about homelessness and child abuse. More than half of women in SLO County (56%) say they are “very concerned” about homelessness and 47% said they are “very concerned” about child abuse. Also of greater concern are employment opportunities (43%), drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse (43%), and water quality (39%).⁽¹⁶⁾

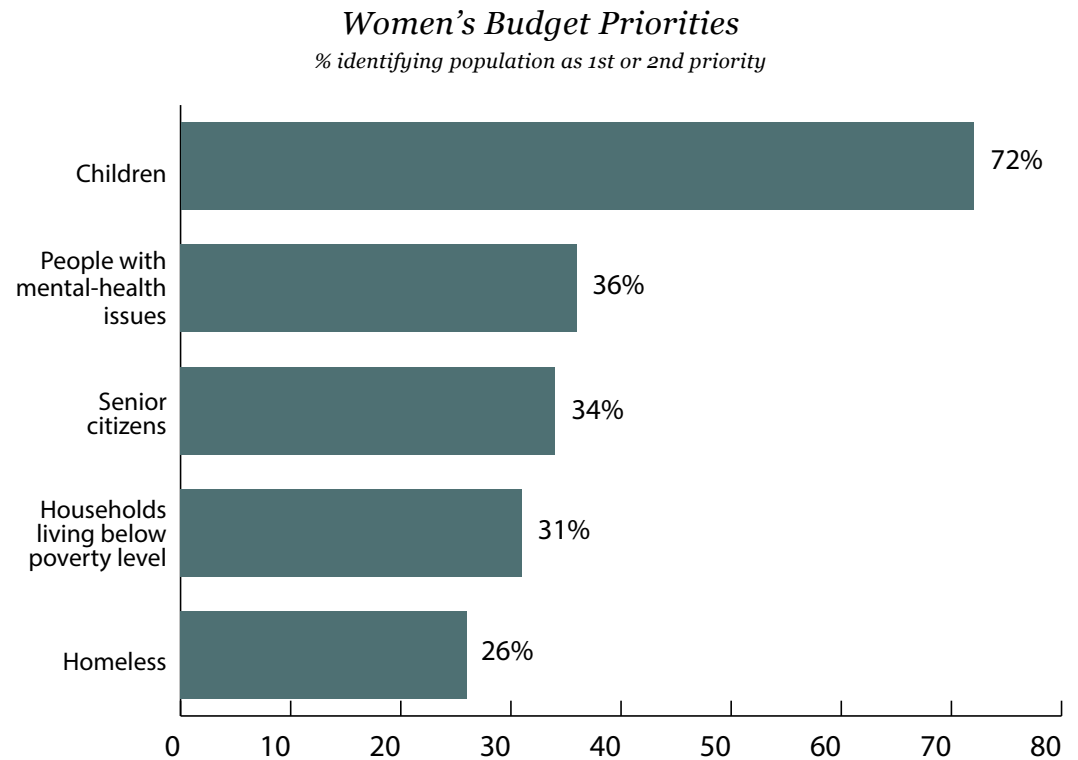
*% of Women Who Say They Are “Very Concerned”
about Selected Issues*



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Highest Priorities

Asked which should be the highest priorities for county spending, considering five specific populations, women ranked children twice as important as any other group (over the homeless, the poor, senior citizens and people with mental-health issues). The homeless were ranked last as a budget priority. ⁽¹⁵⁾

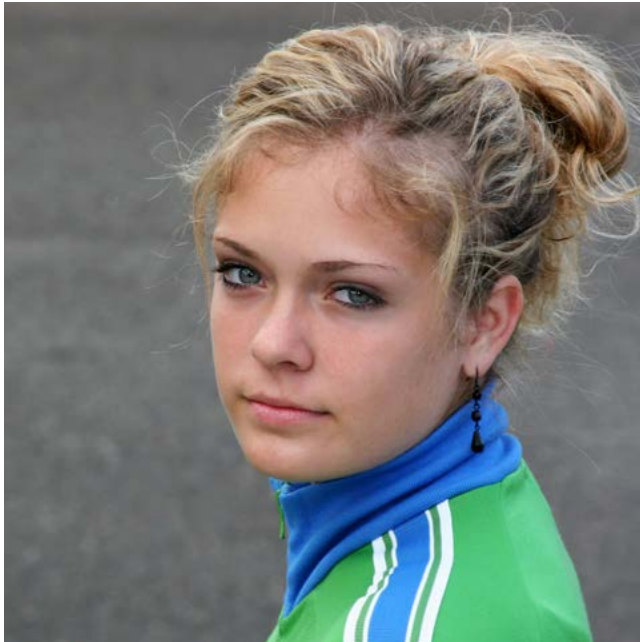


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Specific Groups In Need

Three particular populations in San Luis Obispo County are highlighted to illuminate critical issues affecting their lives:

Teens



Seniors



Latinas



Teens

Ensuring that teenagers are healthy, safe and drug-free is central to their well-being and their academic performance. The following statistics are cause for concern in San Luis Obispo County.

More than **13,000** teenage girls (ages 13 to 19) reside in San Luis Obispo County; they represent about **10%** of the county's female population.

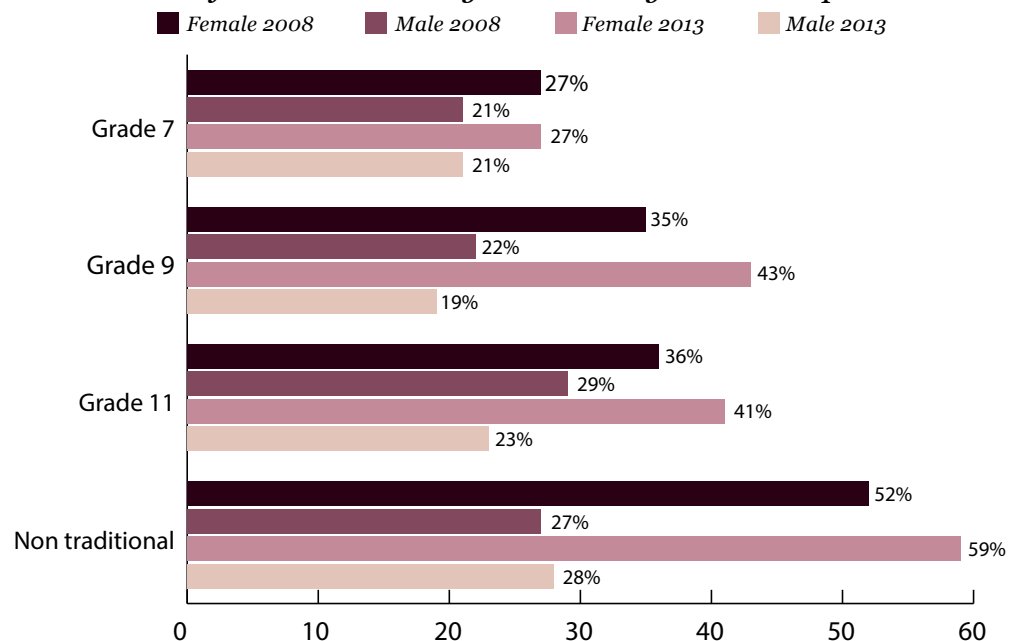
Chronic Sadness

Chronic sadness is a growing problem among teenage girls. More than 40% of 9th-grade and 11th-grade girls say they felt so sad and/or hopeless almost every day for at least two weeks last year, they stopped doing some of their usual activities. That alarming number grew by more than five percentage points between 2009 and 2014.

The incidence of chronic sadness is even greater among girls in non-traditional school environments.

The incidence of chronic sadness among boys is half what it is among girls, and decreased over the same time period. (5)

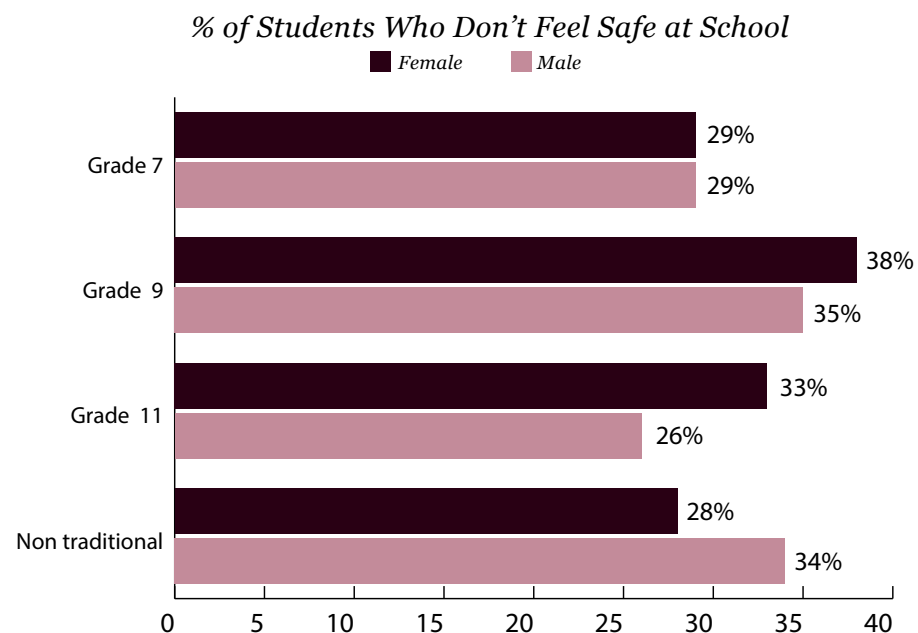
% of Students Feeling Chronically Sad or Hopeless



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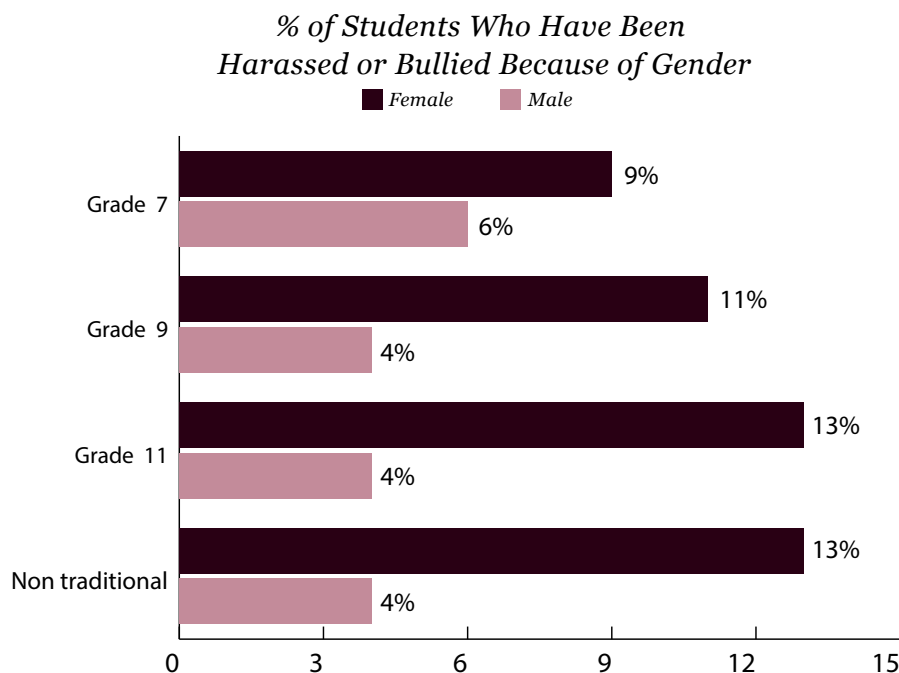
Safety at School

A significant number of girls have concerns about their safety at school. These concerns are greatest among girls in 9th grade.



Harassment

Regarding harassment, 13% of 11th-grade girls and girls enrolled in non-traditional schools say they have been harassed or bullied at school specifically because of their gender, as do 11% of 9th-grade girls and 9% of 7th-grade girls.

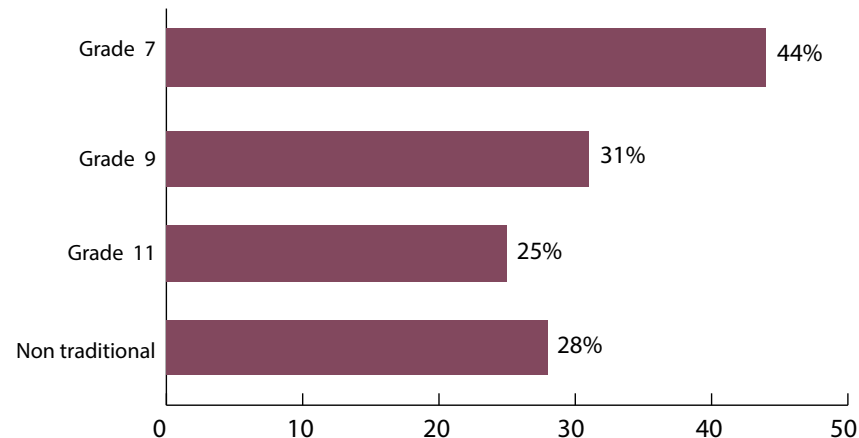


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Academic Motivation

Girls lose academic motivation as they approach high school graduation. Forty-four percent of 7th-grade girls score high in academic motivation, compared to 25% of 11th-grade girls. (5)

% of Female Students Who Feel Academically Motivated



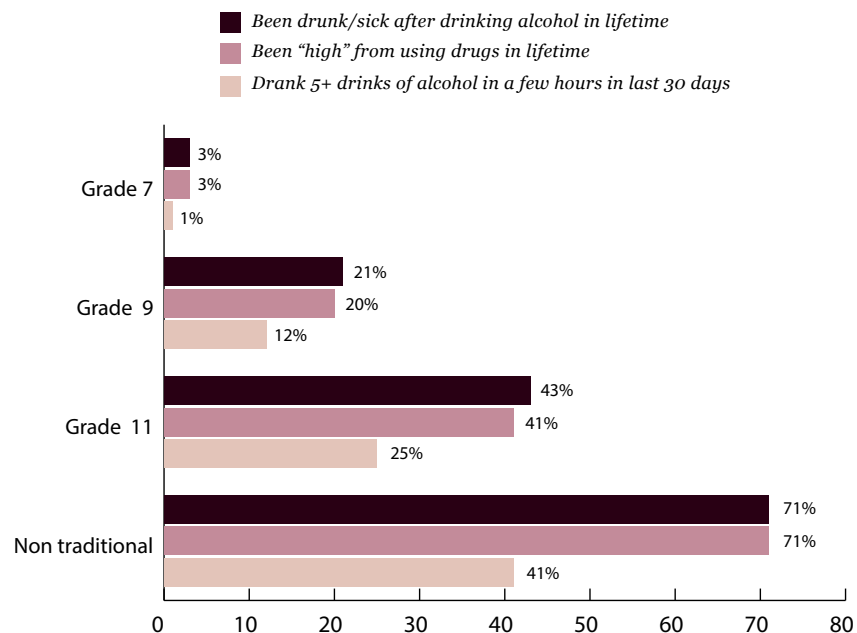
Drug and Alcohol Abuse

High-risk patterns of alcohol and drug abuse are alarming:

- Binge drinking* is reported by 12% of 9th-grade girls and 25% of 11th-grade girls.
- 20% of 9th-grade girls say they have been high from using drugs; 41% of 11th-grade girls say the same.
- 21% of 9th-grade girls say they have been very drunk or sick after drinking alcohol; 43% of 11th-grade girls say the same.
- Female students in non-traditional schools engage in these risky behaviors even more than female students in traditional school settings. (5)

* Binge drinking for females is defined as consuming four or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion; this survey asked about consuming "five or more drinks of alcohol in a couple of hours."

% of Female Students Engaging in Risky Behaviors

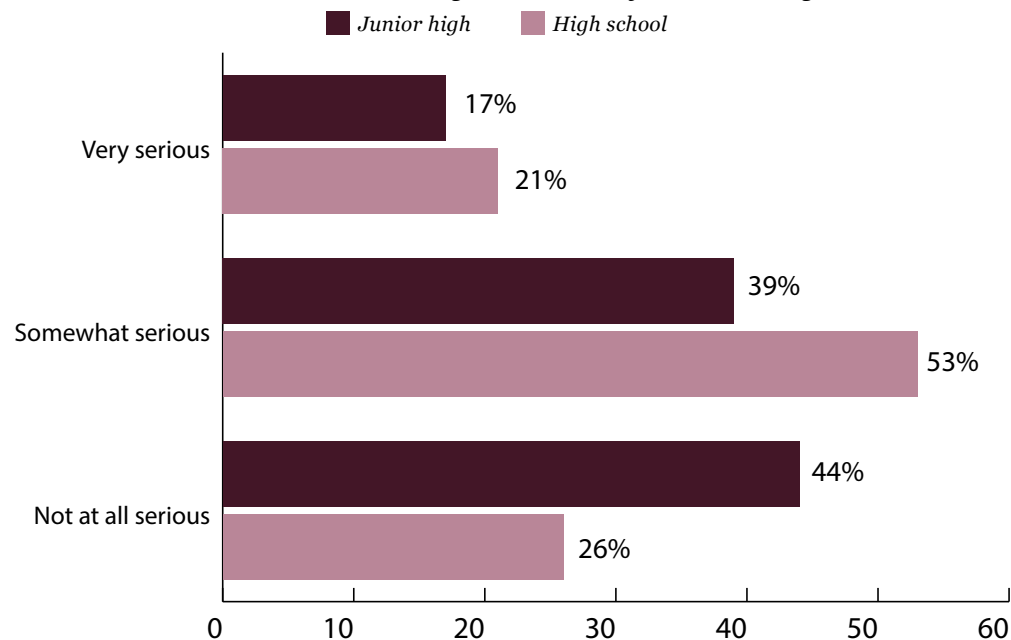


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Parents in Denial

Despite the evidence of serious drug and alcohol problems among school-age children, 44% of parents say substance abuse at their child's junior high or middle school is "not at all serious." Asked how serious substance abuse is at their child's high school, only 21% of parents say "very serious." (3)

Parents' Observations: Substance Abuse by Children of Various Ages



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Seniors

Older women who have difficulty living independently face significant obstacles in San Luis Obispo County. The following statistics are cause for concern.

Population Growing

Senior women (65 and older) represent 18% of San Luis Obispo County's female population, and that proportion is expected to grow. Statewide, the number is 13%.

In San Luis Obispo County, women represent 55% of the senior population, similar to statewide statistics of 56% women. ⁽¹⁾

The increase in seniors, with women making up the majority, is projected to continue in San Luis Obispo County and to outpace other areas of the state. Between 1990 and 2020, SLO County is undergoing a 100-149% increase in the population aged 60 and older, and a 200-299% increase in the population aged 85 and older. This growth rate is significantly higher than that for urban centers such as Los Angeles, San Diego and the Bay Area. ⁽¹⁸⁾

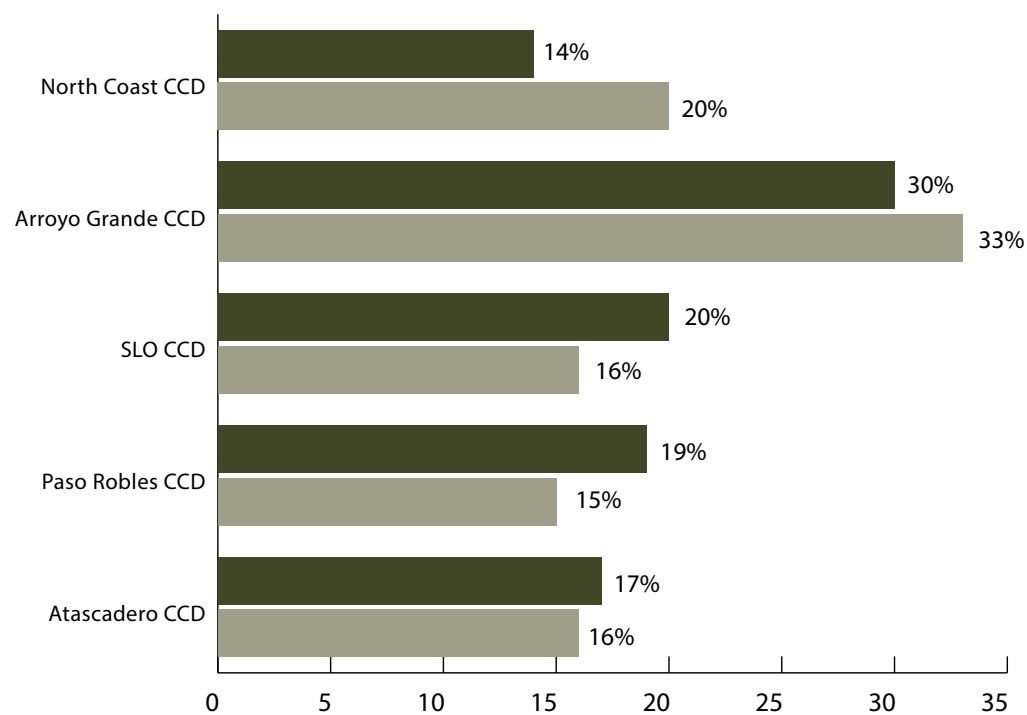
Of the county's senior women, 9% are between 65 and 74, 6% are between 75 and 84, and 3% are 85 and older. This latter group, those 85 and older, is expected to increase in proportion more than other senior groups. ^(1, 17, 18)

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About **23,600** senior women (65 and older) reside in San Luis Obispo County; they represent **18%** of the county's female population.

Distribution of Female Population

■ All women vs. ■ Senior women

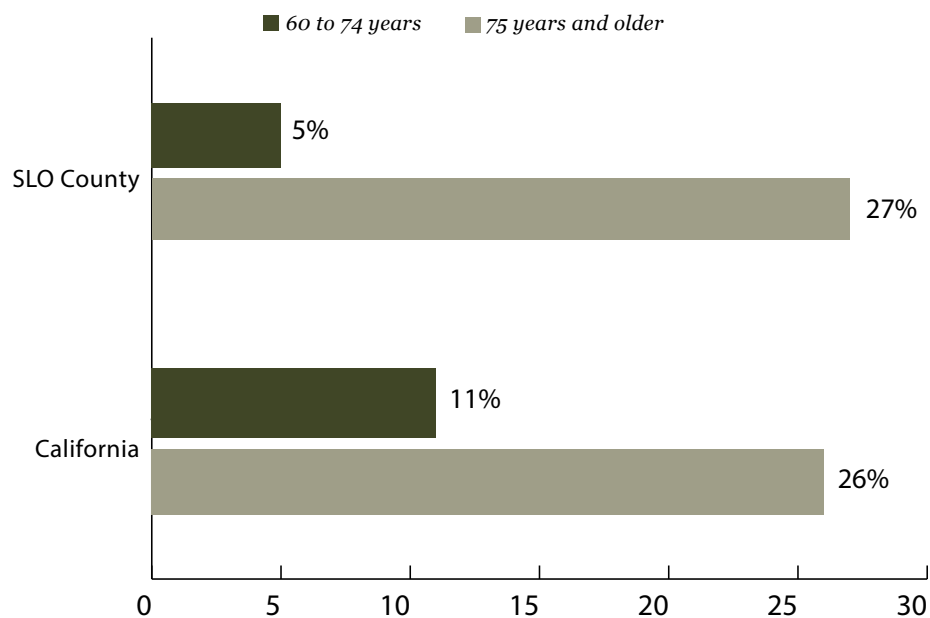


Living Independently

More than 25% of women 75 and older report having difficulty living independently. Availability of care is an issue, and so is cost. Skilled-nursing costs run from \$6,000 to \$13,500 a month, and residential care from \$3,500 to \$7,200. Only three residential care facilities in the county accept low-income clients; their beds are full and waiting lists are closed. (1, 9)

Assisted living costs run from
\$3,500 to \$13,500
a month, depending on level of care.

*% of Women Who Report Having Difficulty Living Independently
SLO County vs. California*



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Latinas

Latinas* face numerous challenges and limited opportunities. The following statistics show how difficult it is for Latinas and their families to thrive.

Approximately **27,000** Latinas reside in San Luis Obispo County; they represent **20%** of the county's female population.

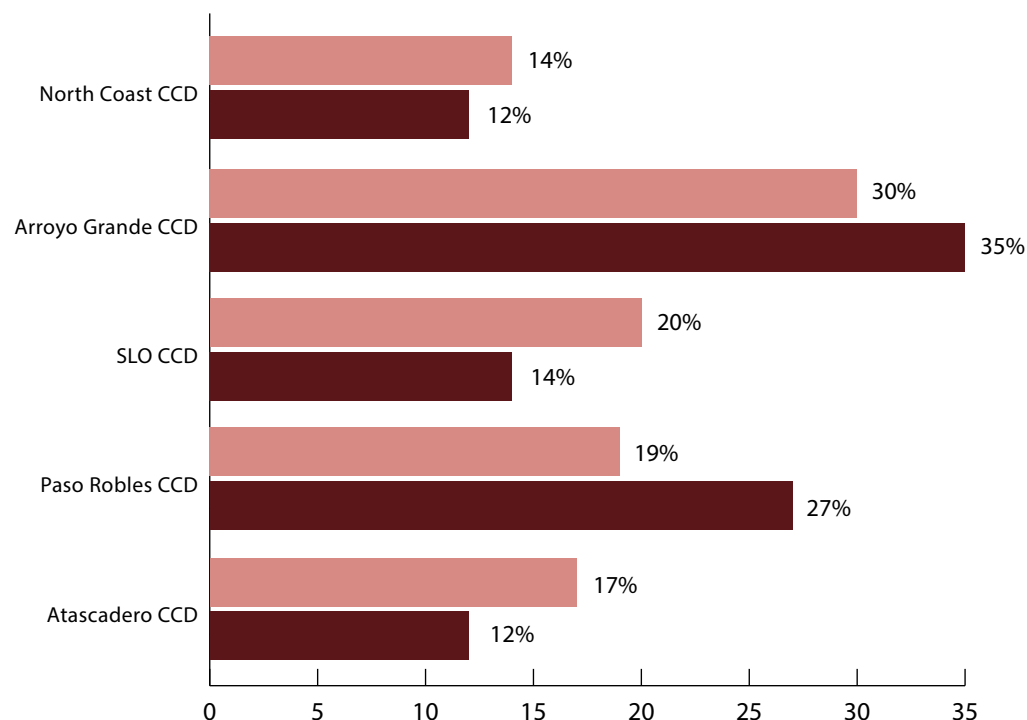
Latinas represent 20% of San Luis Obispo County's female population.

Of the county's approximately 27,000 Latinas, 35% live in the Arroyo Grande CCD, and 27% live in the Paso Robles CCD. Fourteen percent live in the SLO City CCD, 12% in the Atascadero CCD and 12% in the North Coast CCD. (1)

* "Latina" refers to women of Hispanic origin, "Latino" refers to men of Hispanic origin, and "Hispanic" refers to both men and women of Hispanic origin.

Distribution of Female Population

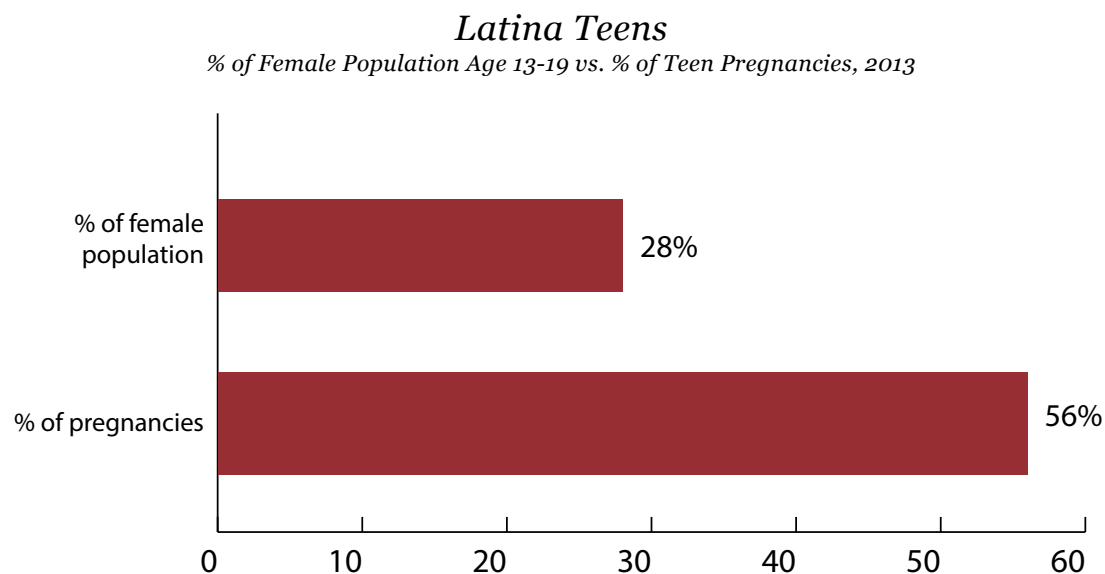
■ All women vs. ■ Latinas



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Teen Pregnancy

A higher birth rate among Latina teens is one significant factor impacting quality of life. In 2013, Latinas made up 28% of the county's female population aged 13 to 19, and accounted for 56% of pregnancies among county teens. Between 2005 and 2013, the rate of Latina pregnancies has fluctuated between 50% and 62% of all teen pregnancies in the county. About one-third of these pregnancies occurred among Latinas younger than 18. (12, 18)

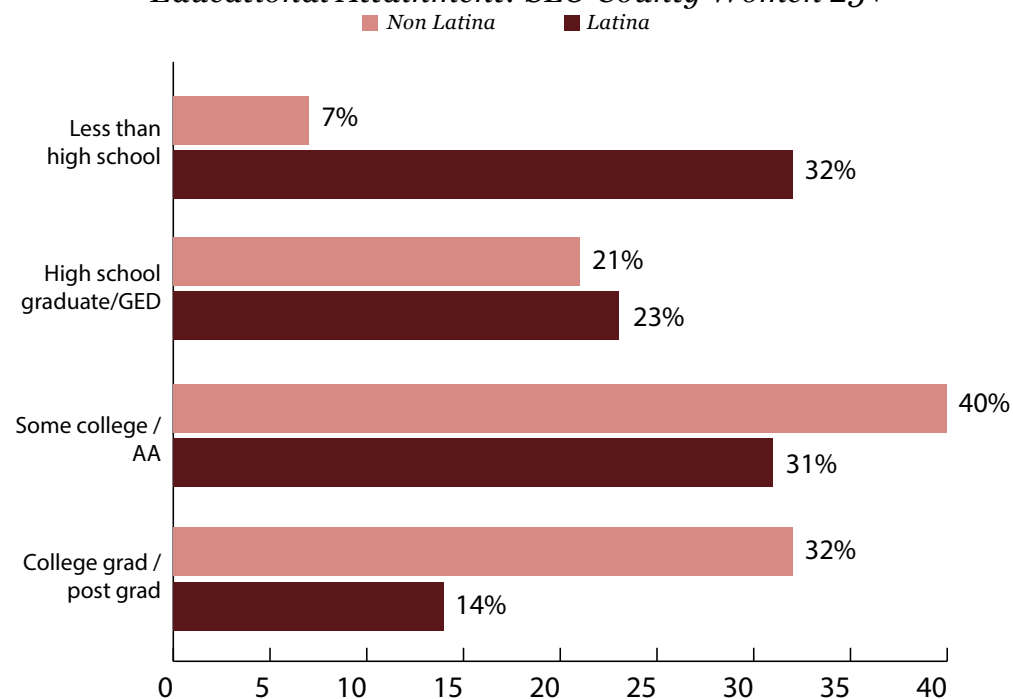


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Educational Attainment

Another significant factor impacting Latinas' quality of life is the gap in educational attainment — 32% of Latinas here (25 and older) dropped out of school before obtaining a high school diploma or GED, compared to 7% of non-Latina Caucasian women. Fourteen percent of Latinas graduated from college, compared to 32% of non-Latinas. ⁽¹⁾

Educational Attainment: SLO County Women 25+

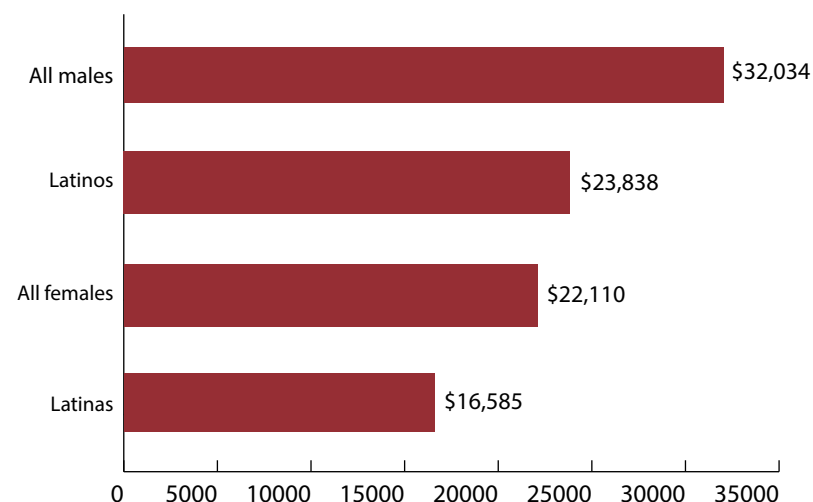


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Median Income

San Luis Obispo County Latinas earn about 75% of the median income for all women in the county (\$16,585 versus \$22,110, respectively). Latinas earn 52% of the median income for all men in the county (\$16,585 versus \$32,034). Latinas in SLO County earn less than Latinas statewide (\$16,585 versus \$18,651). ⁽¹⁾

Median Incomes in SLO County, 2013

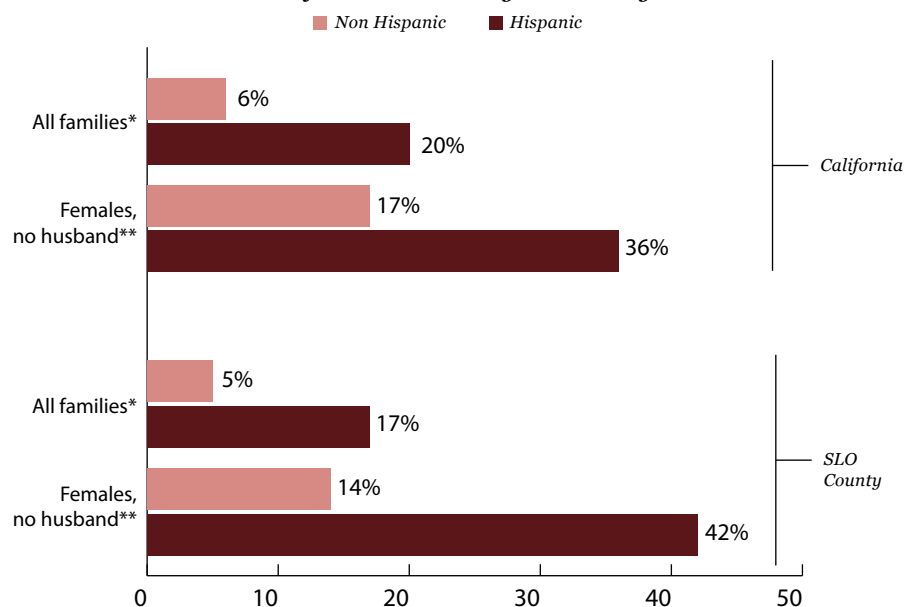


Poverty

Hispanic families in SLO County are three times more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic families. The most vulnerable households are those headed by a Latina with no husband present. In SLO County, 42% of Latina householders with no husband present live in poverty; this is more than the California rate of 36%, and three times the SLO County rate for non-Hispanic women householders with no husband present (14%). ⁽¹⁾

Latinas in SLO County are five times more likely to live in poverty than Latinos. ⁽¹⁾

% of Families Living in Poverty



* "All families" includes families where husband and wife are present, where male householder is present with no wife, and where female householder is present with no husband.

** "Female, no husband" are households where a female householder lives without a husband.

Methodology

This report is based on a compilation of data from a variety of secondary sources about women and girls in San Luis Obispo County. It is not intended to be a comprehensive compendium of secondary data; rather, it aims to highlight the most revealing and compelling information found in an exhaustive search of data about women and girls in the county.

To identify the best sources of information, committee members consulted with Cal Poly's Department of Women and Gender Studies as well as with numerous government agencies and non-profit organizations. Twenty sources are quoted here; many more were consulted. The primary source of information is the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Other frequently quoted sources are the California Health Interview Survey, conducted by UCLA; California Healthy Kids, conducted by WestEd for the California Department of Education; and Vital Signs, a survey of San Luis Obispo County, conducted periodically by ACTION for a Healthy Community.

The Women's Legacy Fund purchased a special tabulation of Vital Signs data showing responses separated by gender on select topics. First Five of San Luis Obispo County, an agency dedicated to helping children and their families in the first five years of life, graciously agreed to share proprietary data collected on their behalf in a recent countywide survey. Other than these two sources, all data is public information and obtainable at sources' websites.

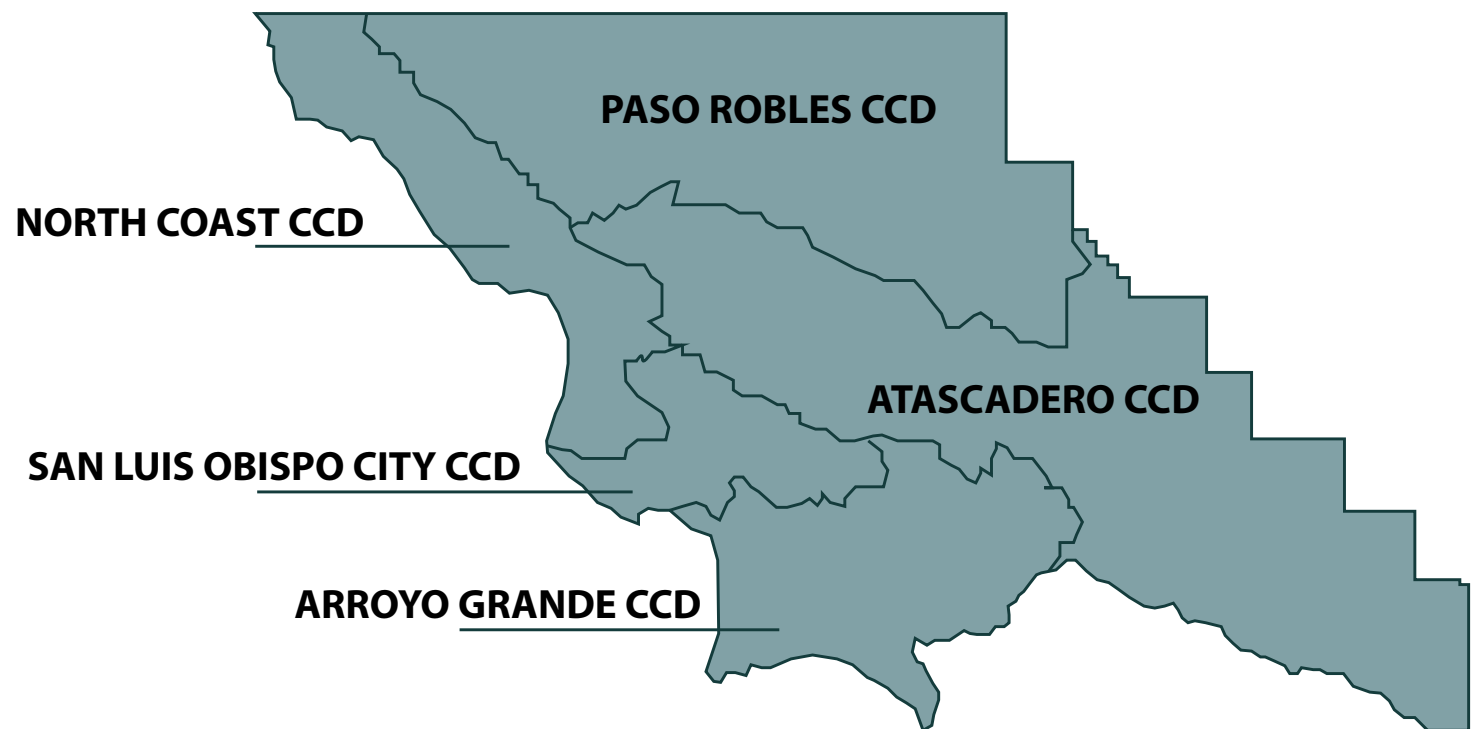
After much research to determine the proper use of the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" (which are described as more and more interchangeable by various agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau), the committee elected to use the term "Latina" to refer to women of Hispanic origin, the term "Latino" to refer to men of Hispanic origin, and the term "Hispanic" to refer to both men and women of Hispanic origin.

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To provide context, data for the State of California and for the county's five regions are presented along with overall county data. When appropriate, data for male residents of the county and state is also presented.

The U.S. Census Bureau divides San Luis Obispo County into five Census County Divisions, referred in this report and census data as CCDs. The U.S. Census Bureau defines CCDs as follows: Census County Divisions (CCDs) are areas delineated by the Census Bureau in cooperation with state, tribal, and local officials for statistical purposes. CCDs have no legal function and are not governmental units. CCD boundaries usually follow visible features and usually coincide with census tract boundaries. The name of each CCD is based on a place, county, or well-known local name that identifies its location.

The Paso Robles CCD includes the community of Paso Robles and all of the county north and east of Paso Robles. The Atascadero CCD includes the community of Atascadero and all of the southeastern portion of the county. San Luis Obispo City CCD includes the cities of San Luis Obispo and Avila Beach. The Arroyo Grande CCD includes Arroyo Grande, Pismo/Shell Beach, Oceano, Grover Beach and Nipomo. The North Coast CCD includes the coastal communities from Los Osos north to the county border.



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Credits

This report was compiled and written for the

Women's Legacy Fund by:

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Additional support was provided by:

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- **Linda Reitner**, chair of the Women's Legacy Fund Committee
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- **Maiya Clark**, a 2015 intern at the Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County who is completing her master's degree in public policy at USC
- **Rachel Fernflores**, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Cal Poly.

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