

# 2017

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# STATE OF THE REGION REPORT

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# VENTURA COUNTY CIVIC ALLIANCE

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**ADVANCING REGIONAL  
STEWARDSHIP & DIALOGUE**





# Ventura County Community Foundation

[www.vccf.org](http://www.vccf.org)

## William A. and Cynthia D. Fairburn Jr. Memorial Fund

William and Cynthia Fairburn used the fortune they made from manufacturing matches for the purpose of enlightenment.

The late Ojai couple believed the finest legacy they could leave was education.



*Before her death in 2001 Cynthia Fairburn, the widow of William Fairburn, created funds at VCCF that empower Ventura County through education.*

Through their funds at the Ventura County Community Foundation:

- They have granted more than 940 scholarships totaling more than \$1,792,400 since 1994.
- Their fund has generously supported the Ventura County Civic Alliance's State of the Region Report, which offers impartial data to assess the progress and the challenges facing Ventura County, since 2005.

***Let us help you create a legacy that speaks to your heart.***

Because of the unique way VCCF invests charitable capital for Ventura County, our donors' funds will generate support for their favorite causes for generations to come.

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**The William A. and Cynthia D. Fairburn Jr. Memorial Fund at VCCF  
is pleased to support the State of the Region Report.**



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## CONNECTING BUSINESS & EDUCATION

The Ventura County P-20 Council is a regional collaborative that helps students advance from preschool (P) through grad school (20) and into rewarding careers. We have facilitated more than \$71 million in grants for local education. Be part of our effort to build a skilled local workforce ready to meet the needs of Ventura County business.

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VENTURA COUNTY  
**P-20  
COUNCIL**

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**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!**



# ABOUT THE VENTURA COUNTY CIVIC ALLIANCE

## OUR MISSION: TO PROMOTE A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE VENTURA COUNTY REGION

Founded in 2001, the Ventura County Civic Alliance is a coalition of civic leaders with a shared commitment to the three Es – the Economic, Environmental and social Equity interests of our region. This balance ensures our research and community dialogue is embedded with a broad and diverse set of perspectives and priorities. We are a neutral convener on community issues, with an emphasis on creating civic dialogue around Ventura County's quality of life.

As part of our growth, the Civic Alliance is in the process of becoming an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Ventura County Community Foundation, our parent organization, has provided exceptional support over our 16 year history and we will continue our strong relationship with them as we take this next step in our development.

## THE CIVIC ALLIANCE FOCUSES ON THESE AREAS:

The **Livable Communities Initiative** works with local governments and civic groups to increase understanding and support for integrating livable community principles into development decisions, and to showcase how those principles are being used throughout Ventura County.

The **Alliance for Linked Learning** is an innovative collaboration between the Oxnard Union High School District, businesses in Oxnard, Port Hueneme and Camarillo, and local organizations and leaders determined to ensure that graduating seniors are prepared for college, career and life. This effort promotes diverse high school academies centered around career exploration to engage students and allow them to understand the modern economy so they excel in their college pursuits or immediately in careers. The Civic Alliance is proud to serve as the business intermediary.

**Civic Dialogue** is a core mission of the Ventura County Civic Alliance, and we continue to explore and promote forums and technologies to engage our community and foster dialogue between residents and community leaders. The State of the Region Report, and its fact-based research, is a tool to better inform all stakeholders.



# CORE PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The Alliance holds a set of core beliefs that guides its mission: regional stewardship, open dialogue, collaboration, evenhandedness, unbiased research, the building of community capacity, and decision-making by consensus. We bring together residents and civic organizations to cooperatively explore the complex economic, environmental and social equity challenges of our region, with the goal of finding integrated solutions to those issues and problems.

The Alliance welcomes supporters to become members for a small annual fee. Members receive discounts to special events, newsletters, invitations to participate on committees, and most importantly, the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring Ventura County's quality of life. To join, visit [CivicAlliance.org](http://CivicAlliance.org).



## VCCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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**Nancy Stehle**  
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**Tom Tarantino**  
*City of Santa Paula*

# KEY STATISTICS

## VENTURA COUNTY

### POPULATION

**2015:** 840,833  
**2013:** 829,017  
**2005:** 782,759  
**2000:** 753,197  
**Number of Veterans:** 44,586  
**Persons per household:** 3.08  
**Land Area (2010):** 1,843 sq. miles  
**Persons per square mile:** 456.2

### MEDIAN AGE

**2015:** 37.1  
**2013:** 36.6  
**2011:** 36.2  
**2005:** 35.4  
**2000:** 34.2

### INCOME

**Percent of residents below the poverty level:** 11.1%  
**Per Capita Income:** \$33,435

**Median Household Income:** \$77,348  
**Median Family Income:** \$79,587

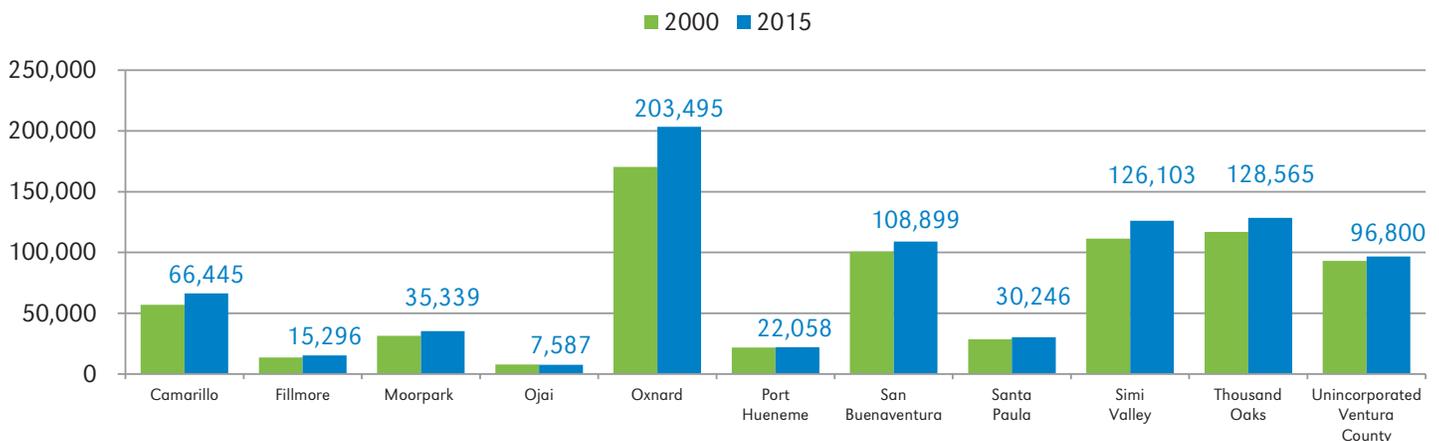
**Household income** includes all households, regardless of size; **family income** only includes households with two or more persons related through blood, marriage or adoption.

### EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, AGE 25+

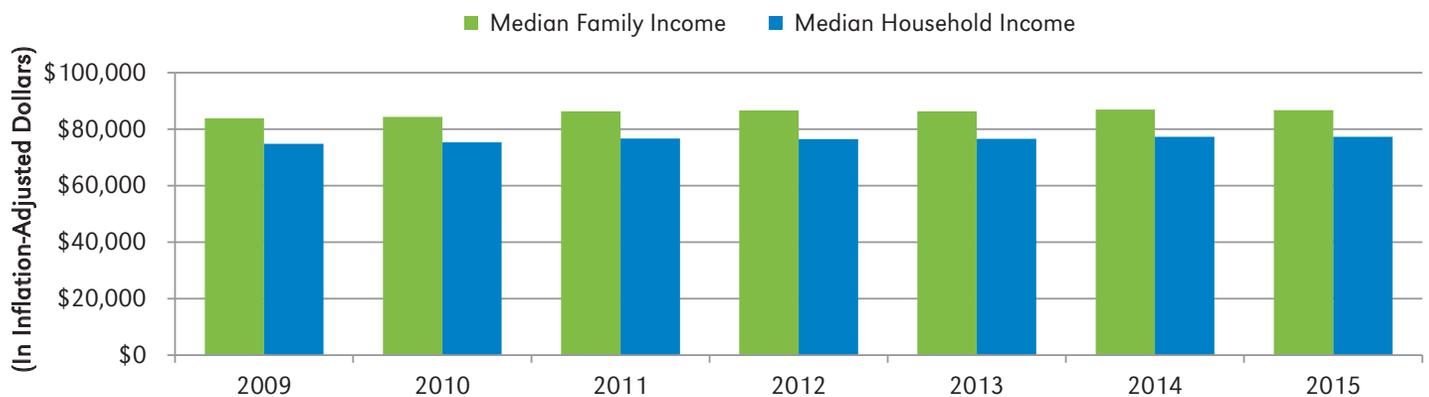
**High school diploma or higher:** 83.1%  
**Bachelor's degree or higher:** 31.7%

All information listed is for 2015, unless otherwise noted.

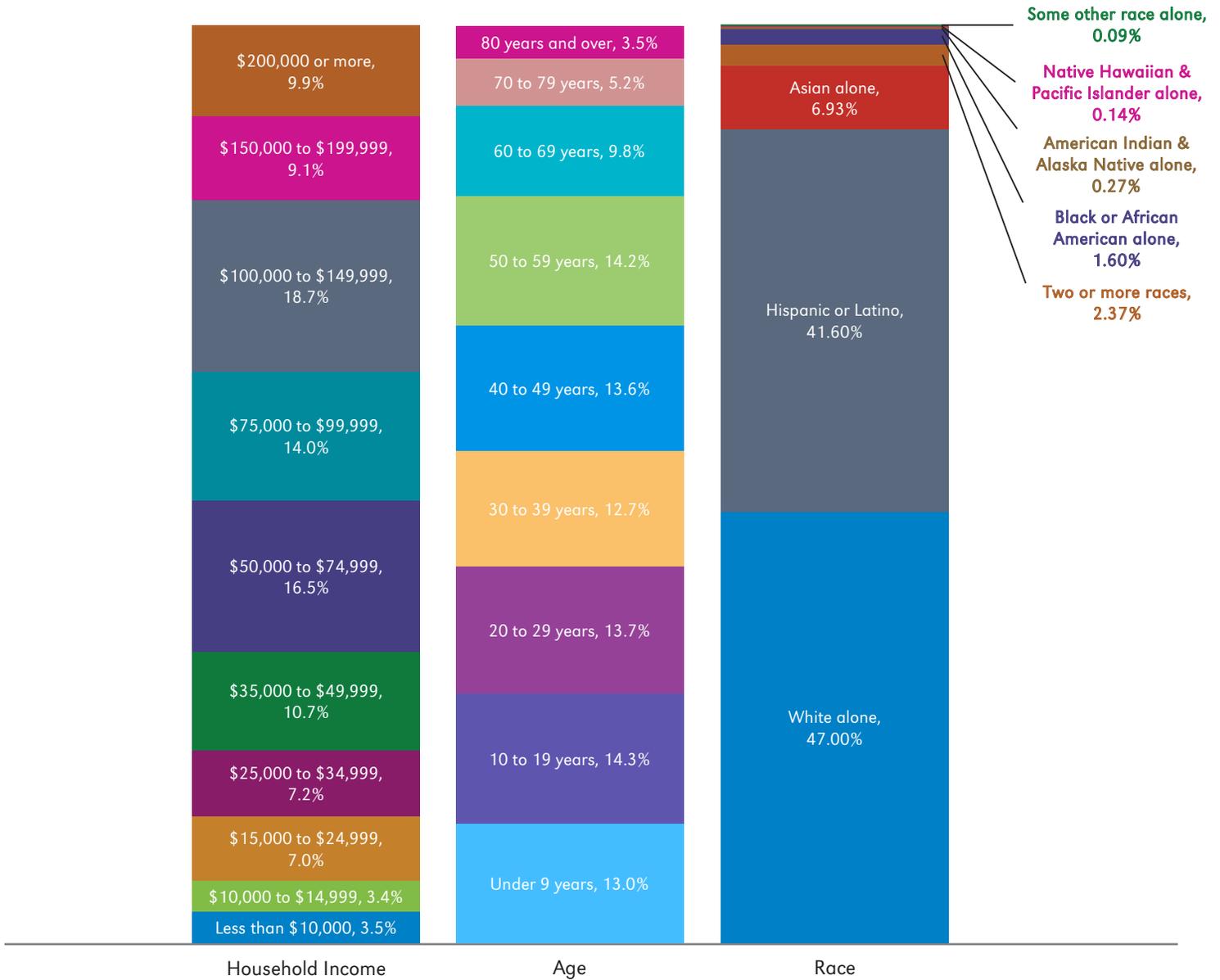
### Population by City in Ventura County (2000, 2015)



### Ventura County Median Household & Family Income in Inflation-Adjusted Dollars (2009 - 2015)



# Ventura County Population by Household Income, Age and Race (2015)



# THE STATE OF THE REGION, VENTURA COUNTY 2017

The Ventura County Civic Alliance (VCCA) is proud to publish this 2017 version of our State of the Region report examining 10 domains of interest to residents. We believe accurate, unbiased data is essential: First to focus awareness and civic dialogue on the complex issues we face in our region, and later to guide the formation of policy to respond to those challenges. We also use this data to direct our efforts to promote a healthy and sustainable future for Ventura County.

We are grateful for the generous support of our sponsors who enable us to produce and distribute this report. Please see their messages beginning on page 113 and view a complete list of sponsors on the inside back cover.

We have again contracted with the California Lutheran University School of Management to research this report under the direction of Jamshid Damooei, Ph.D. His team has carefully compiled the data from national, state and local sources which are listed beginning on page 110.

To remain relevant, this report includes several new indicators with a “New This Year” flag on each page and in the Table of Contents. Other indicators that have not had any new research in years have been dropped.

This report requires considerable effort to produce and we are thankful to all who participated. Please see the Acknowledgments section of the report for a list of our contributors.

This report is also available on our website along with other information about the Civic Alliance. You can download the report by visiting [CivicAlliance.org](http://CivicAlliance.org).

Our goal is to provide accurate data that assists business leaders, elected officials, community organizations and others to achieve effective solutions to the challenges our region faces. Ventura County is an extraordinary place to live and we look forward to working with you to preserve the best of our region and pass it on to future generations.

**David Maron**  
*State of the Region  
Report Committee Chair*

**Tracy Perez**  
*VCCA Chair*

**Sandy Smith**  
*Past VCCA Chair*

**Katrina Maksimuk**  
*VCCA Board Member*



# AGRICULTURE

Ventura County survives as Southern California's last coastal community with a major agricultural industry, and its farmers are nothing if not resilient. The industry faces water shortages, an uncertain labor supply, increased global competition, ever-changing regulation, development pressure as well as new and potentially disastrous insect invaders. And yet, Ventura County farms continue to set sales records nearly every year, reaching nearly \$2.2 billion in total revenue in 2015.

The six-year drought, though it ended in the winter of 2016/17, still poses a challenge to Ventura County's farmers. Ventura County was among the last parts of the state to emerge from the drought. In fact, in March 2017, the county was still classified as being in "moderate drought" by the National Drought Mitigation Center — an improvement after years of "extreme" or "exceptional" drought, but still abnormally dry, in historical terms. Even with the drought over, it will take years of above-average rainfall to replenish groundwater aquifers, refill reservoirs and return the state to normal.

For farmers, the drought made water more expensive, lower in quality and often harder to obtain. Growers of

strawberries and other crops followed some of their land because water was unavailable or too costly. While not widespread, that trend was common enough to contribute to a noticeable drop in acres under production as the drought deepened in 2014 and 2015.

Growers responded with innovation. Many replaced old sprinklers with more efficient irrigation systems. Water suppliers are building infrastructure and pursuing a plant that would desalinate brackish groundwater. And farmers and other water-rights holders are creating a market to buy and sell water allocations that rewards conservation.

Adding to its challenges, Ventura County's agricultural industry is battling two recently arrived non-native pests. The Asian citrus psyllid spreads an as-yet incurable disease that can ravage citrus groves, and the polyphagous shot hole borer carries destructive fungi that threaten avocado orchards. The disease carried by the psyllid — which devastated the citrus industry in Florida — has yet to be discovered in Ventura County. In the meantime, county citrus growers are mounting a complex, costly spraying campaign to reduce the psyllid population while researchers work to cure the disease it carries.



# HARVESTED ACRES

## FARMING PERSISTS IN FACE OF ADVERSITY

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of crop-producing acres in Ventura County. It includes all irrigated acres and dry-land farmed acreage. Pastureland that is irrigated, fertilized and otherwise cultivated for grazing is included; rangeland, which is natural land used for grazing, is not. The measure excludes agricultural lands that are not producing crops.

### Why is the measure important?

The tally of total harvested acres illustrates how much of the county is being put to productive agricultural use. When compared to the county's agricultural output, harvested acres can provide a rough gauge of the land efficiency of the area's farmers. It gives insight into the severity of the drought, as acres fallowed due to lack of water are removed from the total. It is also a measure, though an imperfect one, of how much farmland is converted to urban and suburban development. Finally, the harvested acreage data is broken down into types of crops, so it describes how the agricultural industry is changing as growers adapt to different crops.

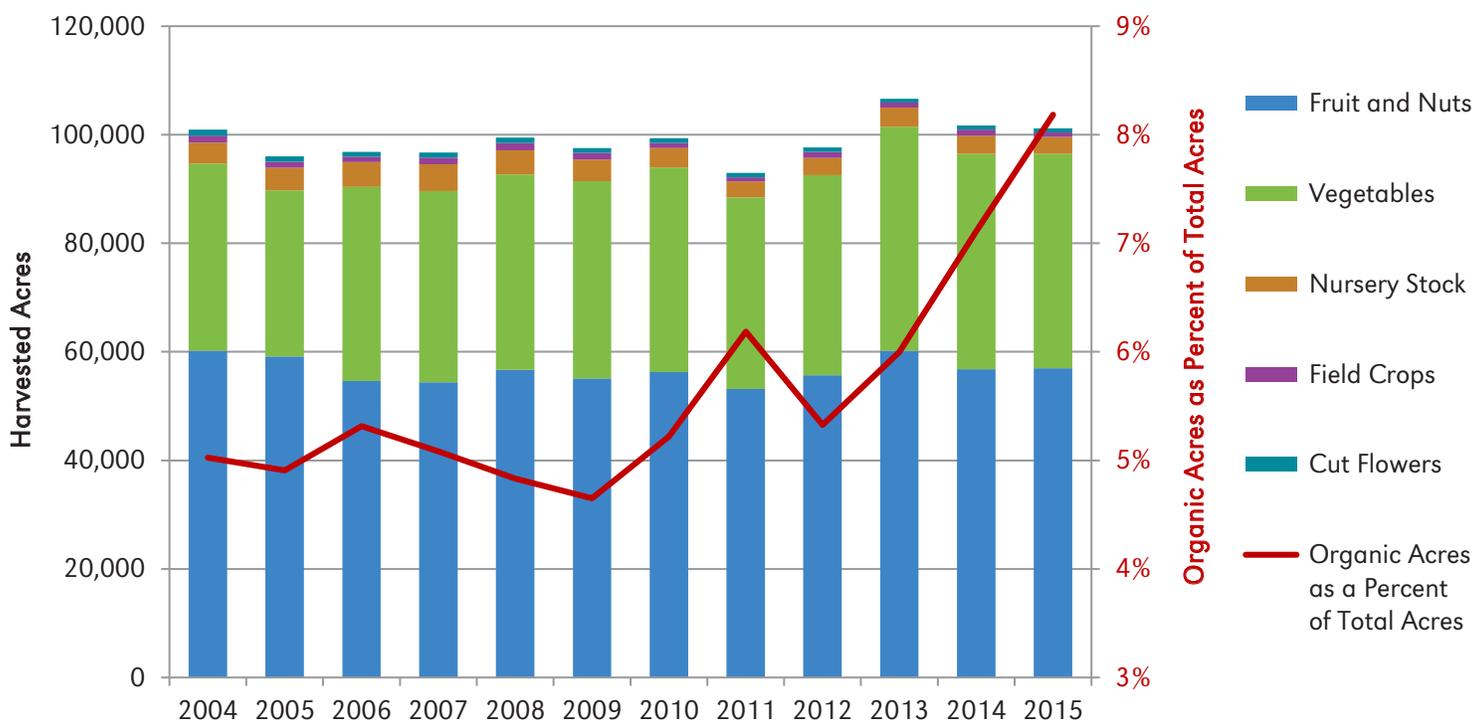
### How are we doing?

Ventura County's active farmland peaked in 2013, at 106,613 acres, and dropped by 4.6 percent the next year. The drought appears to be the likeliest culprit, as farmers took acreage out of production when water became more expensive or harder to obtain.

Active farmland in 2015 stood at 101,182 acres, below the 2013 peak but still more than the area farmed for most of the previous decade. Between 2004 and 2011, harvested acres dropped from just over 100,000 to a little below 93,000. Three likely factors were at work: a shift toward berries, which use less land than other crops; the long-term decline of the region's orange industry; and, before the real estate crash in 2008, development of farmland for residential or commercial uses.

The county's farm industry has become more diverse over the past decade. The acreage devoted to fruits and nuts — the county's largest crop category — dropped slightly between 2005 and 2015, while vegetable acreage grew by 29 percent in that time.

### Total Harvested Acres in Ventura County (2004 - 2015)



# CROP CHANGES

## STRAWBERRIES STILL TOP CROP

### What is the measure?

The measure is a breakdown of the 10 most valuable crops in Ventura County in 2015, by total revenue, and a snapshot of the top crops in previous years.

### Why is the measure important?

The specifics of what's grown here are crucial to the region's economy, ecology, aesthetic appearance and culture. Changes in crop production are also a window into our evolving tastes and demands as consumers.

### How are we doing?

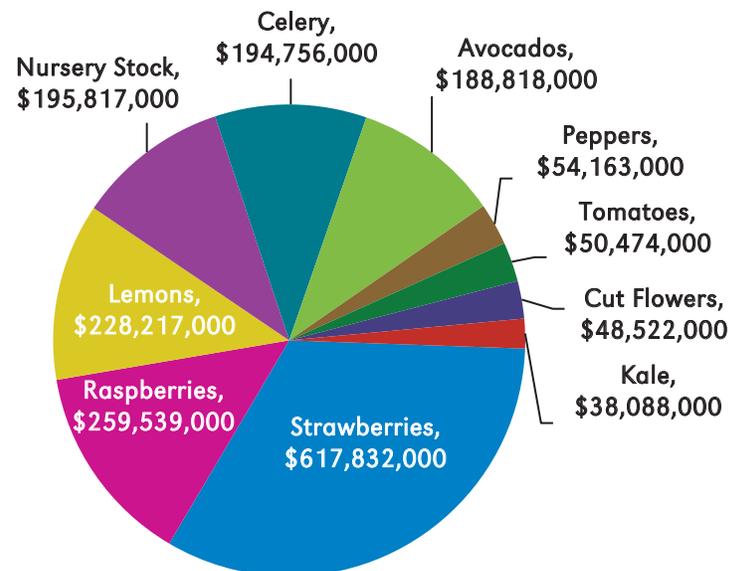
Strawberries have been Ventura County's top crop since the 1990s. In 2015, strawberries brought \$617.8 million in revenue to the county's growers, more than double the income from the next most lucrative crop, raspberries.

Lemons, nursery stock and celery rounded out the top five in 2015. Avocados, which had been the second biggest crop in 2013, ranked sixth in 2014 and 2015.

A century ago, Ventura County agriculture was dominated by beans, citrus, walnuts and sugar beets. Citrus prevailed by the mid-20th century, and since then the county's farmers moved away from citrus orchards and toward berry fields. Lemons are still a major crop, but they are nowhere near as important or widespread as they once were. Oranges have disappeared almost entirely from the region. Vegetables — including tomatoes, peppers and kale — are popular crops.

One common thread in these long-term changes is a shift away from crops that take a lot of land and relatively little labor, like beans, and toward crops that take less land and more labor, like berries. Farmland in Ventura County is extremely expensive compared to agricultural acreage almost anywhere else in the United States, so growers face strong incentives to make efficient use of their land.

### Top 10 Ventura County Crops (2015)



### Crop Changes in Ventura County (1922 - 2015)

Crop Ranking	1922	1952	1982	2015	2015 Value
1	Beans	Lemons	Lemons	Strawberries	\$617,832,000
2	Lemons	Valencia Oranges	Celery	Raspberries	\$259,539,000
3	Walnuts	Beans	Poultry and Dairy	Lemons	\$228,217,000
4	Apricots	Misc. Vegetables	Strawberries	Nursery Stock	\$195,817,000
5	Valencia Oranges	Walnuts	Valencia Oranges	Celery	\$194,756,000
6	Sugar Beets	Livestock	Seed	Avocados	\$188,818,000
7	Navel Oranges	Poultry Products	Nursery Stock	Peppers	\$54,163,000
8	Hay	Dairy Products	Lettuce	Tomatoes	\$50,474,000
9	Grain	Navel Oranges	Avocados	Cut Flowers	\$48,522,000
10	Misc. Citrus	Grain	Broccoli	Kale	\$38,088,000

# CROP VALUE

## 2015 ANOTHER RECORD YEAR

### What is the measure?

The measure is the total wholesale value of all crops and livestock produced in the county, as reported annually by the Ventura County agricultural commissioner. The commissioner's annual Crop Report is drawn from surveys of county farmers.

### Why is the measure important?

Crop value measures the size of the county's agricultural industry in economic terms, as well as its growth or contraction from year to year. It measures gross revenue, so it does not reflect growers' profits or losses.

### How are we doing?

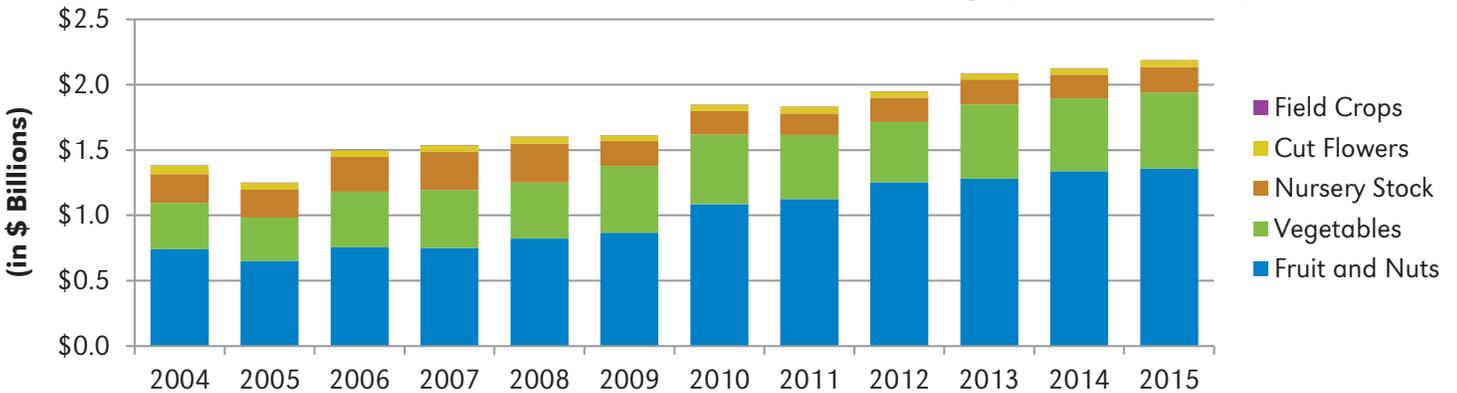
Farm revenue hit a record high in 2015, at more than \$2.19 billion, an increase of 2.9 percent over the previous year. That marked the fourth straight year of revenue growth, with a total increase of 19.3 percent since 2011. Agriculture's share of the Ventura County economy has grown gradually over the past decade and has hovered around 4.5 percent in recent years.

Increases in the county's largest crop categories — fruits and nuts, vegetables and nursery stock — drove growth in 2015. Nursery stock showed an especially strong revenue rise, at 8.5 percent.

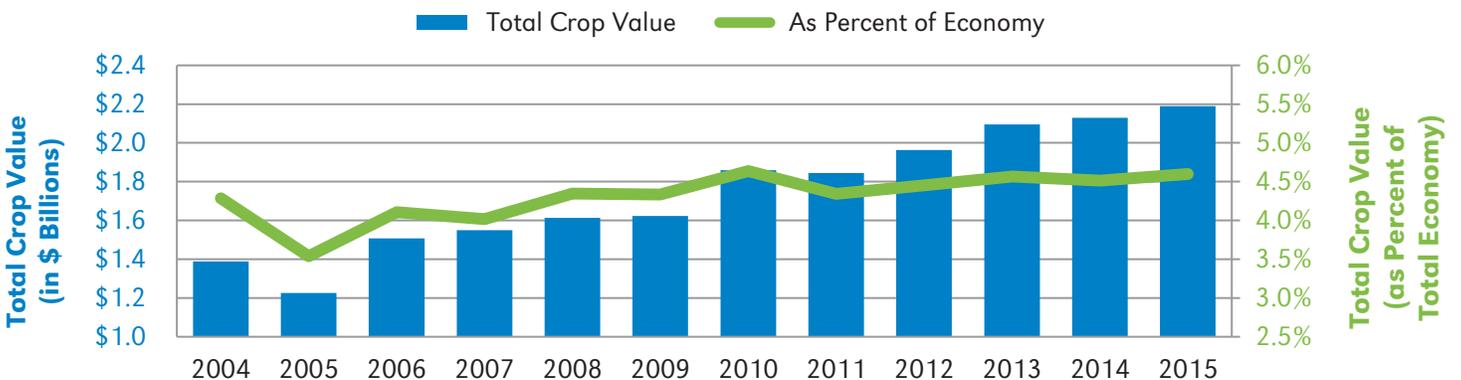
However, a closer look at the 2015 Crop Report reveals a relatively weak year for many of the county's major individual crops. Raspberry revenue fell 5.2 percent from 2014; lemons were down 3.7 percent; and strawberries dropped 1.6 percent.

The boost in overall revenue was largely due to an excellent year for avocado growers. Avocado revenue jumped from \$128 million in 2014 to \$188.8 million in 2015, an increase of nearly 50 percent in a single year. Avocados, though, are a cyclical crop; growers tend to see high-volume harvests for a year or two, followed by a year or two of comparative slump. The harvest was very good in both 2012 and 2013, before dropping in 2014 and recovering in 2015. We don't have data yet that goes beyond 2015, but anecdotal evidence from growers suggests that 2016 was another strong year, and 2017 is likely to be a weaker one.

**Value of Harvested Acres in Ventura County (2004 - 2015)**



**Total Crop Value as Percent of Total Ventura County Economy (2004 - 2015)**



# ORGANIC PRODUCTION

## ORGANIC ACREAGE HITS RECORD HIGH

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of acres devoted to organic farming. According to federal standards in place since 2002, organic food is defined as having been produced without most conventional pesticides; without fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; without bioengineering and without ionizing radiation. Animals raised in an organic operation must be fed organic feed, have access to the outdoors and cannot receive antibiotics or growth hormones.

### Why is the measure important?

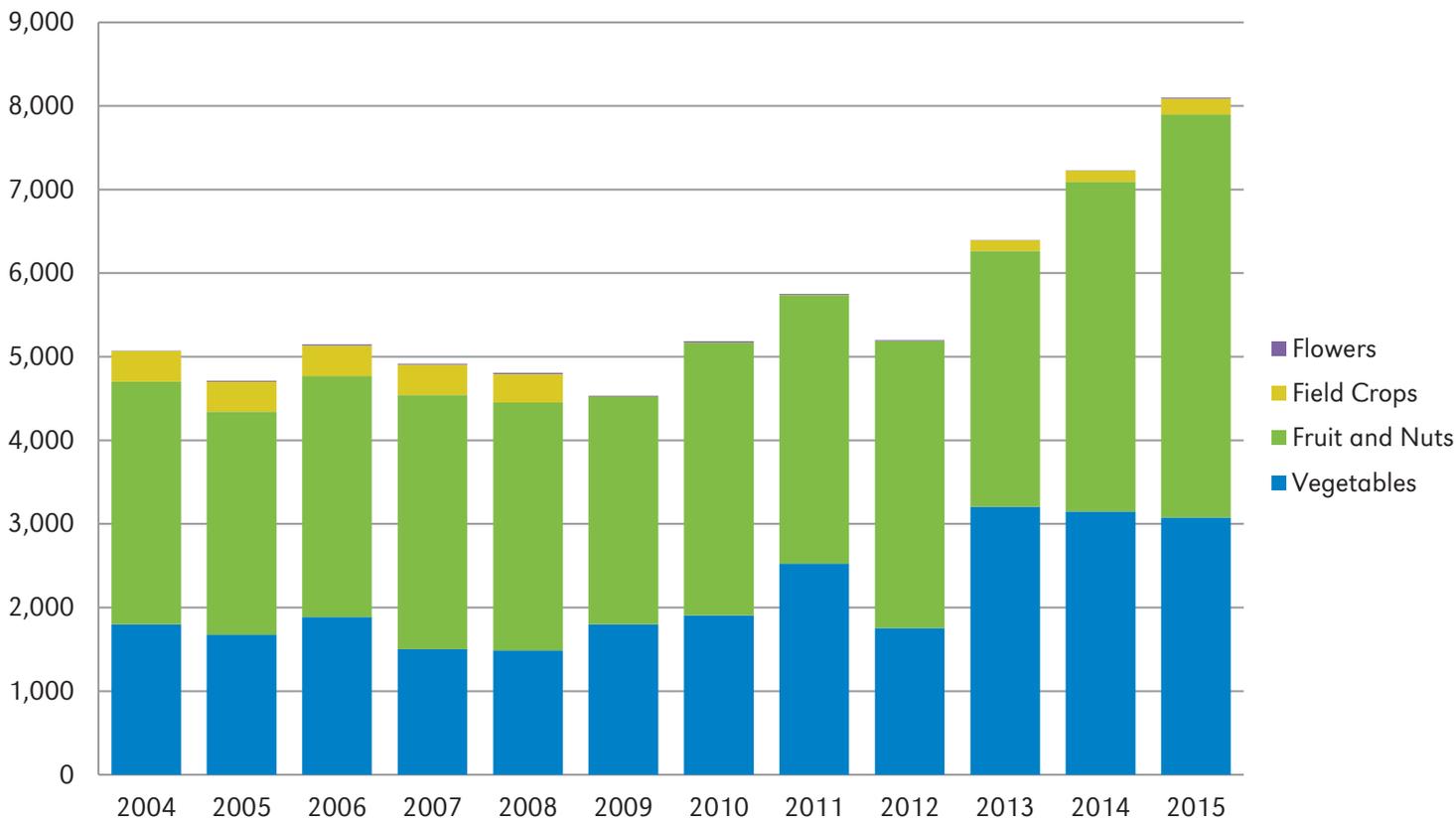
Organic farming is a large and rapidly growing part of the American agricultural industry. Every major grocery chain now offers a full selection of organic produce, elevating the goods beyond their niche of farmers markets and health food stores. Organic goods tend to command higher prices than conventional ones, which makes them potentially lucrative for farmers, particularly in areas like Ventura County with high land costs.

### How are we doing?

Ventura County's organic acreage hit a record high in 2015, for the third straight year, at 8,097 acres. Fruits and nuts were the largest category of organic crops, at 60 percent of the total acreage. Vegetables made up most of the remainder, at 38 percent of the total acreage.

Organic farming remains a small part of the county's agricultural industry, at around 8 percent of total harvested acres in 2015. But organic farming has grown much faster in recent years than conventional agriculture. The number of registered "organic" growers in Ventura County grew from 85 in 2014 to 137 in 2015. The county's acreage in organic production grew by 55.7 percent between 2012 and 2015, after eight years in which it hardly changed at all. The share of active farmland with certified organic crops stayed around 5 percent from 2004 through 2011. It has since grown and seems to be on a steady climb.

### Acres of Organic Farming in Ventura County (2004 - 2015)



# LAND VALUES

## VALUE OF VENTURA COUNTY CROPLAND 18 TIMES NATIONAL AVERAGE



### What is the measure?

The measure is the median value of one acre of agricultural land. The land is divided into land used for row crops, such as berries, and for different types of tree crops. The estimates are drawn from property sales compiled by a statewide professional appraisers association.

### Why is the measure important?

Land, whether bought or leased, is one of the biggest costs for any agricultural operation. At the same time, land is an asset to farmers who own it, and their businesses can benefit from rising property values.

### How are we doing?

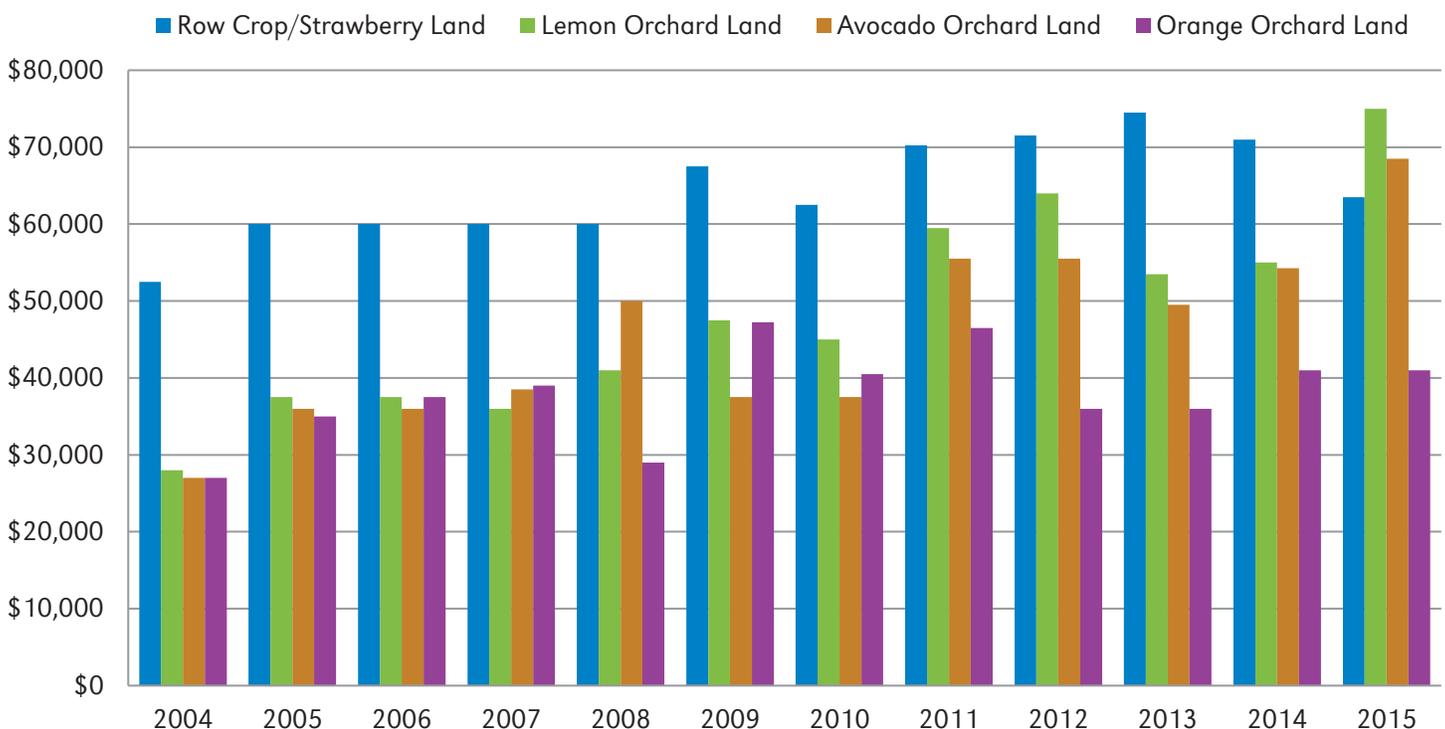
Ventura County has some of the most expensive farmland in the United States. In 2015, the median acre of land for row crops in Ventura County was worth \$63,500, down 10.5 percent from the year before. Land for lemon orchards

was valued at \$75,000 per acre and avocado orchards were valued at around \$68,500 per acre.

By contrast, the average nationwide value of cropland in 2015 was \$4,130 per acre, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ventura County's land is extremely expensive even for the West Coast; in California as a whole, cropland was worth \$10,690 per acre.

The value of orchard land in Ventura County skyrocketed from 2014 to 2015, both in absolute terms and relative to other types of farmland. The average acre of lemon orchard appreciated by 36.4 percent in a single year, and land for avocado orchards grew in value by 26.3 percent. Meanwhile, row crops – used primarily for strawberries – dropped in value by 10.6 percent in a single year. The result was that for the first time in recent history, orchard land was worth more than row crop land. It remains to be seen whether this is an aberration or the beginning of a trend.

## Estimates of Crop Land Values Per Acre (Midpoints) in Ventura County (2004 - 2015)



# EXPORTED AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

## JAPAN IS TOP EXPORT MARKET

### What are the measures?

The measures are the leading agricultural exports from Ventura County, expressed as shares of the total number of shipments exported, and the countries that make up the biggest markets for those exports.

### Why are the measures important?

The market for Ventura County agriculture is a global one. When growers here think about which crops to plant, they must take into account what customers in Asia, Europe and elsewhere want to buy.

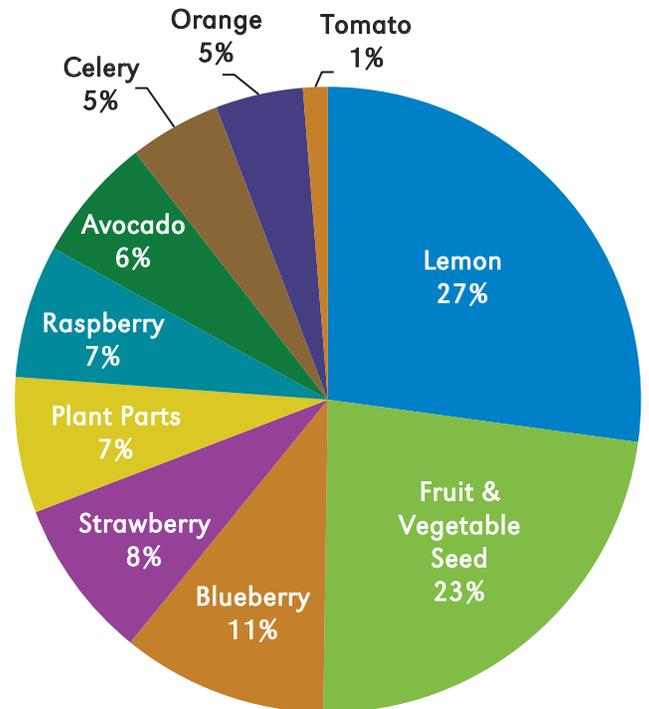
### How are we doing?

Lemons are the region's biggest agricultural export, accounting for 28 percent of farm exports in 2013. Fruit and vegetable seeds were next, at 23 percent, followed by blueberries and strawberries.

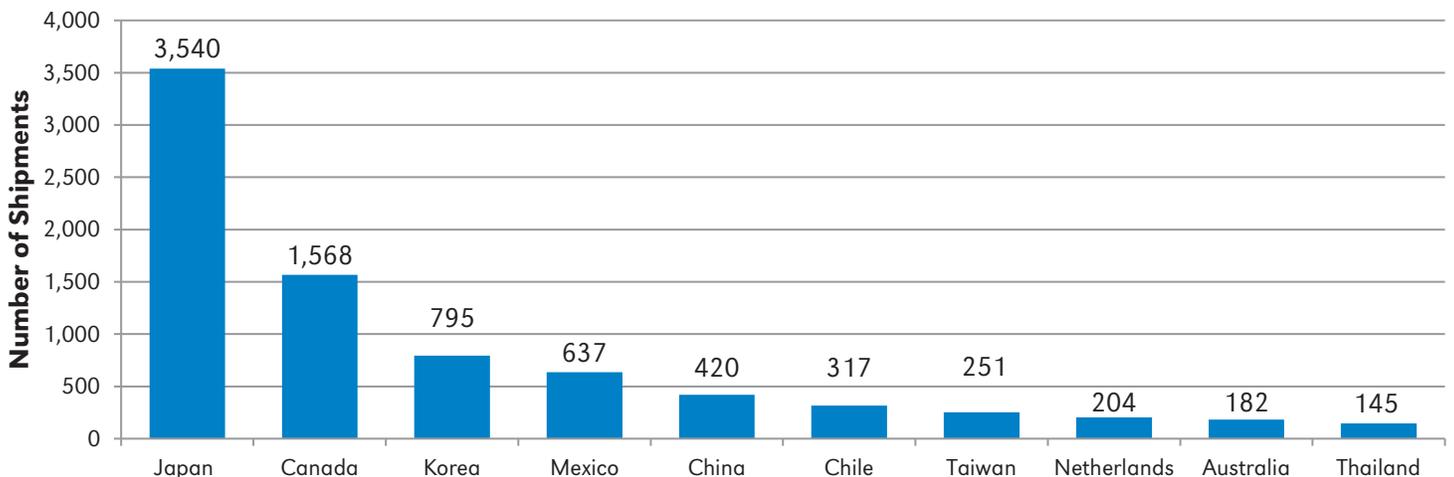
Demand for lemons has grown around the world in recent years, particularly in developing economies. The biggest Ventura County grower, Limoneira, reports surging exports to China and other Asian countries.

Japan is the recipient of by far the largest chunk of Ventura County exports, followed by Canada, South Korea, Mexico and China.

**Top Ten Agricultural Commodities Exported from Ventura County (2013)**



**Top Ten Export Countries for Ventura County Agricultural Commodities (2013)**



# EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

## WAGES UP, JOBS DOWN

### What are the measures?

The measures are the real and nominal agricultural wages, employment by job category and wages by job category.

### Why are the measures important?

Though agriculture is a small portion of the Ventura County economy, the sector employs thousands of people. In addition to paying their rents and feeding their families, workers' wages support local businesses in a wide array of industries. If their income is too low, governments and charities end up providing aid to help them afford basic necessities.

### How are we doing?

There were 26,500 agricultural jobs in Ventura County in 2015, a number almost unchanged over the previous four years. Farm employment followed the trends in the larger economy: it grew in the early 2000s, shrank during the recession in 2008 and 2009 and then recovered gradually.

Agricultural workers earned an average salary of \$30,793 in 2015. Wages grew steadily since 2011. When adjusted for inflation, the average salary went up 14.7 percent between 2011 and 2015.

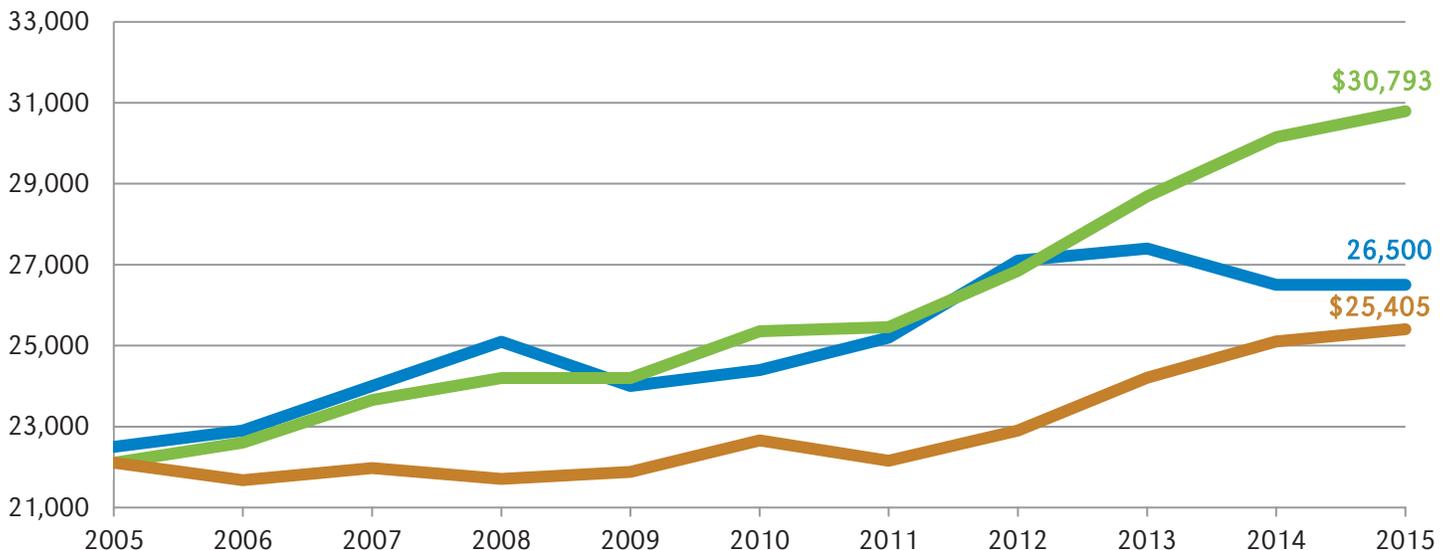
It is a bit misleading to consider the "average" agricultural salary, though, because wages vary widely within the sector. In 2016, the average salary ranged from \$21,720 for graders and sorters to \$39,883 for first-line supervisors and managers.

By far the largest category of agricultural employees are field and greenhouse workers. They are also among the lowest paid workers in the sector. However, their wages climbed significantly in 2015 and 2016. As of the first quarter of 2016, the median field or greenhouse worker made an annual salary of \$23,906, up 23 percent from the median wage two years before. Other types of agricultural workers saw their wages grow by similar margins, except for equipment operators, who made 16.9 percent less in 2016 than in 2014.

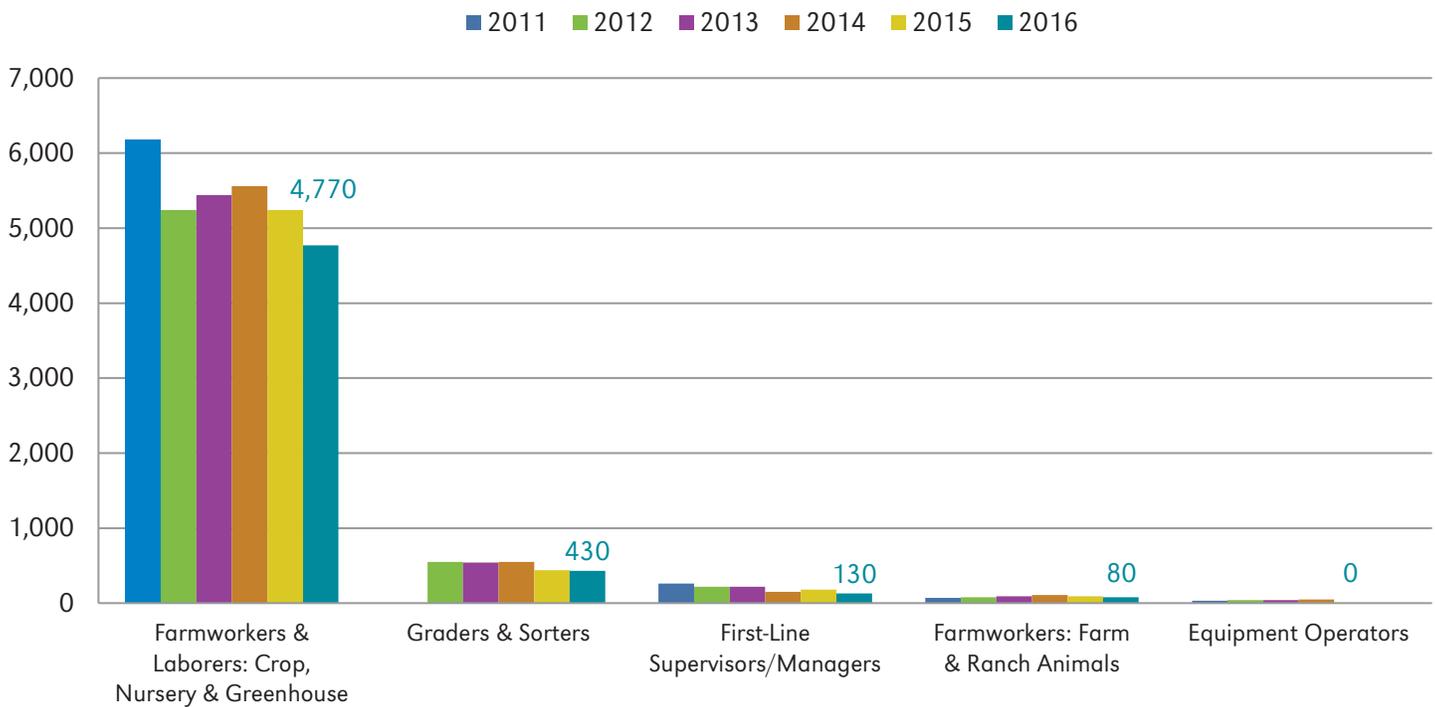
As wages for field workers grew, the opportunities available to them shrank. There were 4,770 of those jobs in the first quarter of 2016, down 9 percent from a year earlier.

## Ventura County Agricultural Production Employment & Earnings (2005 - 2015)

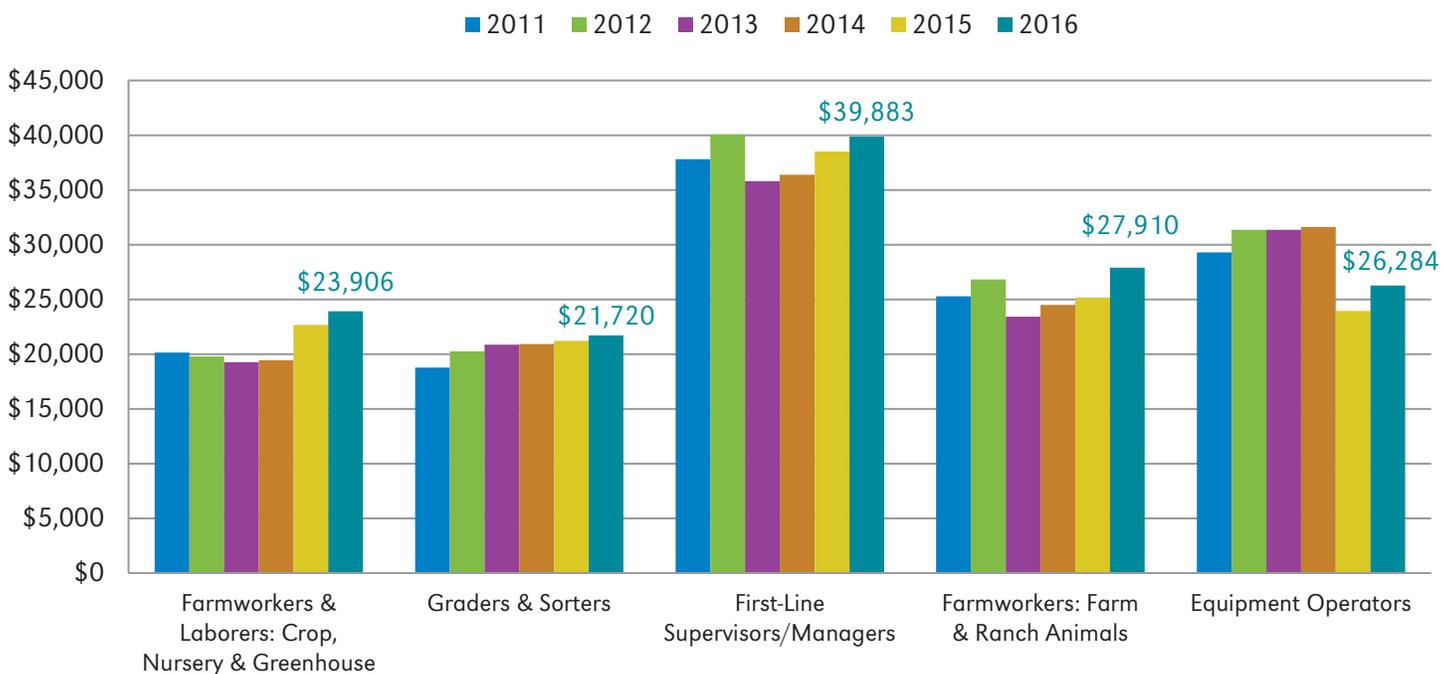
- Employment in Agricultural Production (Number of Jobs)
- Average Annual Salary (\$ per Worker)
- Average Salary in Real 2005 Dollars (\$ per Worker)



## Number of Agricultural Jobs in Ventura County (Q1) (2011 - 2016)



## Agricultural Earnings (Mean Annual Wage) in Ventura County (Q1) (2011 - 2016)





CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS  
CIVIC ARTS PLAZA

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & RESOURCES

Community engagement means actions that people take by choice, without pay, to help their fellow citizens and keep our society running smoothly. These are things that are often difficult to measure. Dollars and cents fall short in gauging the value of the arts, volunteer work and political participation. In this section, we focus on those aspects that we can measure. Voter turnout is among them, as voting is at the core of our democracy, the one act that does more than any other to keep our government accountable to its citizens. We have also collected data on

our county's nonprofit organizations and their financial health. Nonprofits are a frequently overlooked sector of our economy and a crucial element in our social fabric. Together with government agencies, nonprofits provide food, shelter and other support to the neediest members of society. They also make up the backbone of our arts industry and our creative economy. Finally, in this domain we examine the funding of our public libraries, which help us keep our population literate and provide public spaces that benefit our community.



# VOTER REGISTRATION

## REGISTRATION RATE ON THE RISE

### What is the measure?

The measure is the percentage of eligible Ventura County residents who are registered to vote.

### Why is the measure important?

Registering to vote isn't, by itself, enough to make your voice heard in selecting our leaders, but it's a necessary step. In most states, including California, voters must register ahead of time, although California plans to roll out same-day registration for local elections in 2017 and statewide elections in 2018.

### How are we doing?

Most Ventura County residents who are eligible to register do put themselves on the voter rolls. The registration rate has bounced between about 75 percent and 81 percent since 1999, rising in presidential election years, falling in

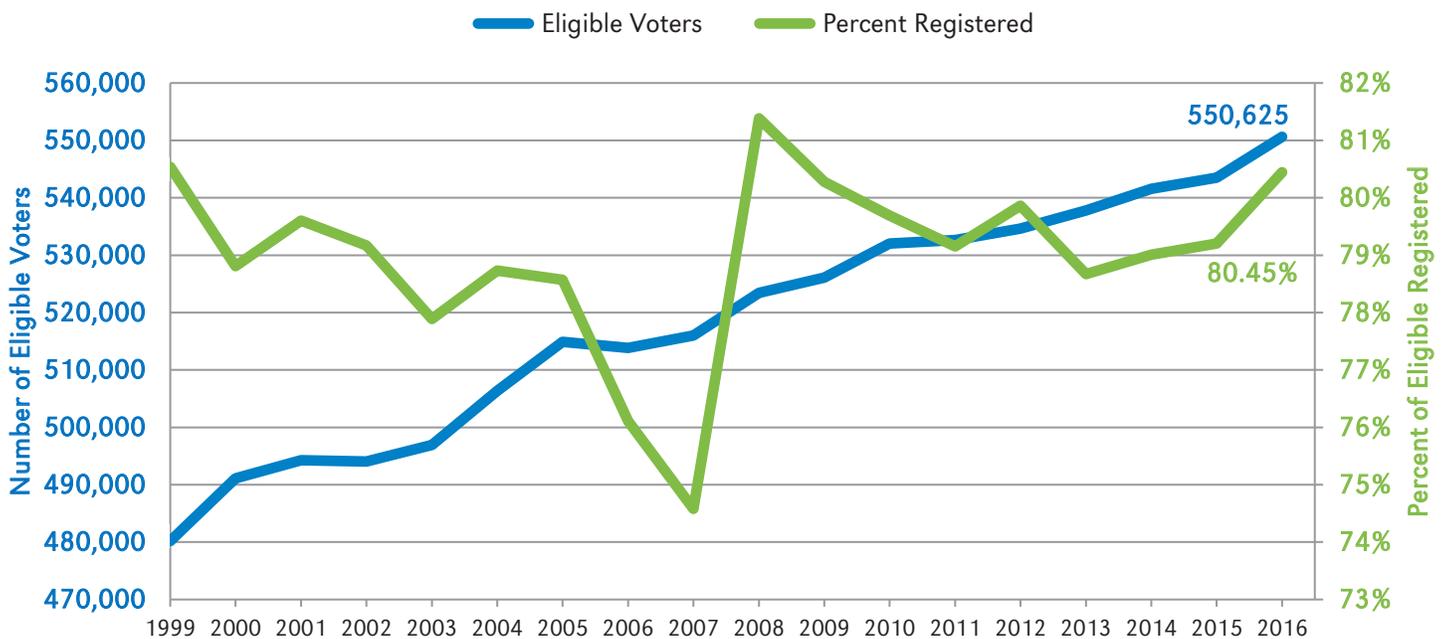
non-election years and hovering somewhere in between in non-presidential election years.

The November 2016 presidential election saw 80.5 percent of eligible voters in Ventura County registered to vote, the highest rate since 2008.

The 2008 election was a watershed in political participation in Ventura County and nationwide. From 1999 to 2007, voter registration rates dropped slowly but steadily, bottoming out at 74.6 percent in 2007. Then, in 2008, the rate shot up to 81 percent and has stayed near that level ever since.

The number of people eligible to vote in Ventura County rises as the county's voting-age population grows. In 2016, it reached an all-time high of 550,625.

### Ventura County Voter Registration (1999 - 2016)



# VOTER TURNOUT

## TURNOUT HIGH FOR 2016 VOTE

### What are the measures?

The measures are the percentage of eligible voters who actually vote; and whether they vote by mail or in person.

### Why are the measures important?

Voting is the essential act of democratic participation. It gives a nation democratic legitimacy and allows representatives to claim they govern with the consent of the people.

Voter turnout is often considered a measure of a government's legitimacy; the higher the turnout, the more likely the results reflect the will of the populace, and not just a narrow subset of the population that decides to vote. A high turnout also indicates a vote of confidence in a country's political system, as it signals that people believe their vote can make a difference.

Many government agencies and some media outlets report voter turnout as a percentage of the number of registered voters. We believe expressing turnout as a percentage of the number of eligible voters, whether or not they are registered, more accurately measures civic engagement. The first step in voting is registering, and when people do not register, the turnout rate should group them with non-voters.

### How are we doing?

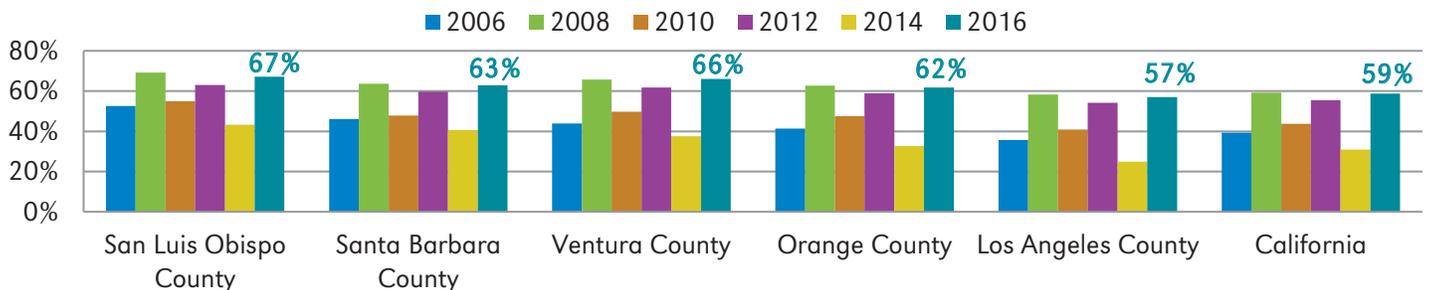
Voter turnout in the 2016 presidential election was extraordinarily high in Ventura County – 66 percent – which exceeded the county's turnout in 2008, an election that had the highest nationwide turnout rates since the 1960s.

Ventura County is a high-turnout county, beating the statewide rate in every election between 2006 and 2016. In 2016, Ventura County's turnout surpassed Los Angeles, Orange and Santa Barbara counties, although it lagged behind San Luis Obispo County.

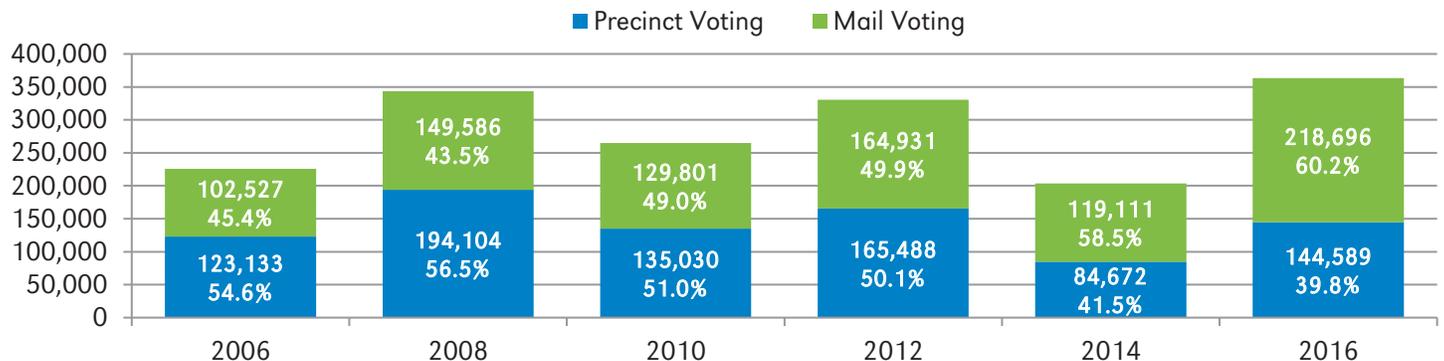
Voter turnout fluctuates greatly with the political seasons. In the 2008, 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, Ventura County's turnout has been 65.7 percent, 61.8 percent and 66 percent respectively. The 2006, 2010 and 2014 midterm elections had turnouts of 43.9 percent, 49.8 percent and 37.6 percent respectively.

Even as turnout rates rise, one part of the voting experience is on the way out: going to the polls. Ballots cast by mail (or absentee ballots handed directly to election workers) made up 60.2 percent of those cast in 2016. That's a record, and the margin has been growing with every recent election.

### Percent of Eligible Voters Actually Voting in California General Elections (2006 - 2016)



### Ventura County Mail-in Ballots vs. Precinct Voting (2006 - 2016)



# PARTY AFFILIATION

## REPUBLICANS CONTINUE TO LOSE GROUND

### What are the measures?

The measures are the percentage of voters in Ventura County who register as Republicans, Democrats or as Other/No Party Preference, which means they are not members of any political party or they affiliate with a smaller party. New this year, we also include the party breakdown of voters in each city in the county.

### Why are the measures important?

The party affiliation of voters in a particular jurisdiction usually decides who prevails in state and federal elections. Although local elections are officially nonpartisan, voter affiliation is often a significant factor.

### How are we doing?

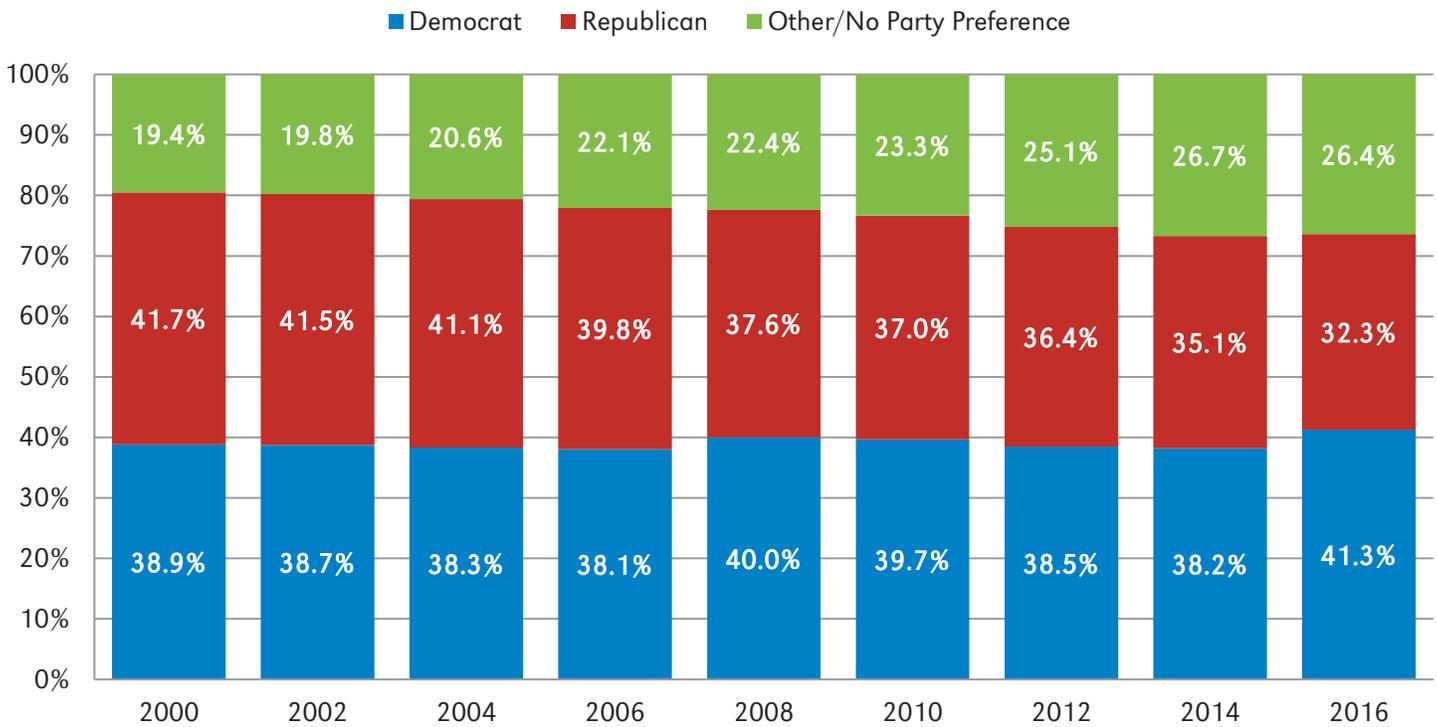
Ventura County is now a solidly blue county. In 2006 — and for decades before that — Republicans outnumbered Democrats. In 2008, Democrats pulled narrowly ahead, and by 2016 they made up 41.3 percent of registered voters, compared to 32.3 percent for Republicans.

The change results more from a decline in Republican voters than from growth in the number of Democrats. Republicans' share of the voter rolls dropped by 9.4 percentage points between 2000 and 2016, while Democrats' share grew by 2.4 percentage points over that period. Republicans' losses instead have been made up mostly by unaffiliated voters and gains among third parties. In 2016, 26.4 percent of registered voters belonged to neither major party, up from 19.4 percent in 2000.

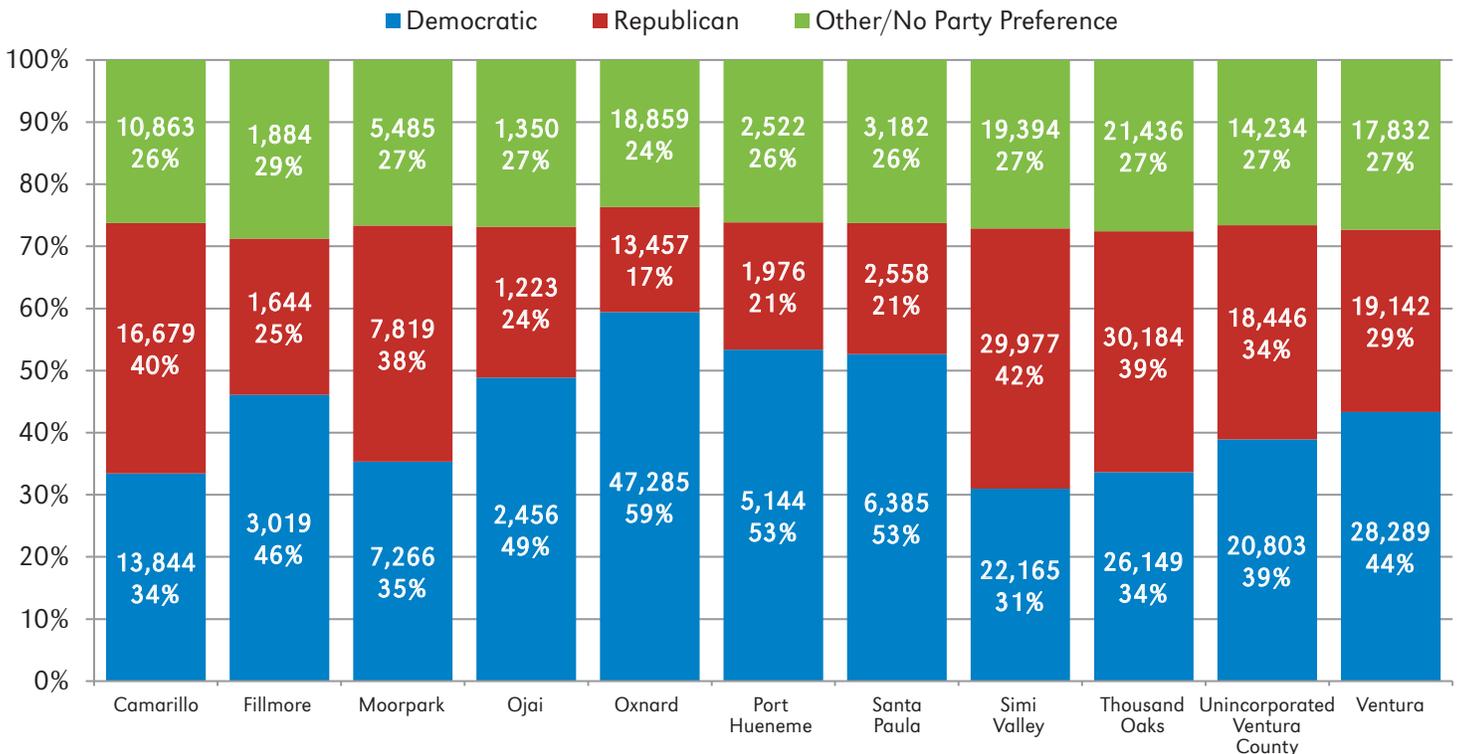
Ventura County is not uniformly blue. It is a collection of distinct cities with their own political identities. The cities fall into two groups when it comes to political affiliation: the East County, plus Camarillo, which is predominately Republican; and the West County, minus Camarillo, which is largely Democratic. For example, Oxnard's registered voters in 2016 were 59 percent Democrats and 17 percent Republicans, while in Simi Valley the voter rolls were 42 percent Republican and 31 percent Democratic. The share of unaffiliated or third-party voters in each city was fairly similar, ranging from 24 percent in Oxnard to 29 percent in Fillmore, without any clear east-west divide.



## Affiliations of Registered Ventura County Voters (2000 - 2016)



## Affiliations of Registered Ventura County Voters by City (2016)



# NONPROFITS

## NONPROFIT GROWTH CONTINUES

### What are the measures?

The measures are the number of registered nonprofit organizations in Ventura County, broken down by type; the total assets and revenues of all Ventura County nonprofits; and the assets and revenues of a selection of the county's largest nonprofits.

### Why are the measures important?

The nonprofit sector is an important part of Ventura County's economy and its social fabric. Some of the region's biggest hospitals and universities are nonprofits, as are most of its arts organizations. Nonprofits also provide a large part of Ventura County's social safety net, helping to feed the hungry and provide shelter to the homeless.

### How are we doing?

The number of nonprofits in Ventura County has grown consistently in recent years, as have their revenues and assets. In 2015, there were 3,295 organizations based in the county registered with the Internal Revenue Service as tax-exempt nonprofits. Of those, 1,397 filed Form 990 with the IRS, meaning they usually report annual revenues of more than \$50,000 and are not churches, political groups or other exempt organizations. In addition, 1,146 more

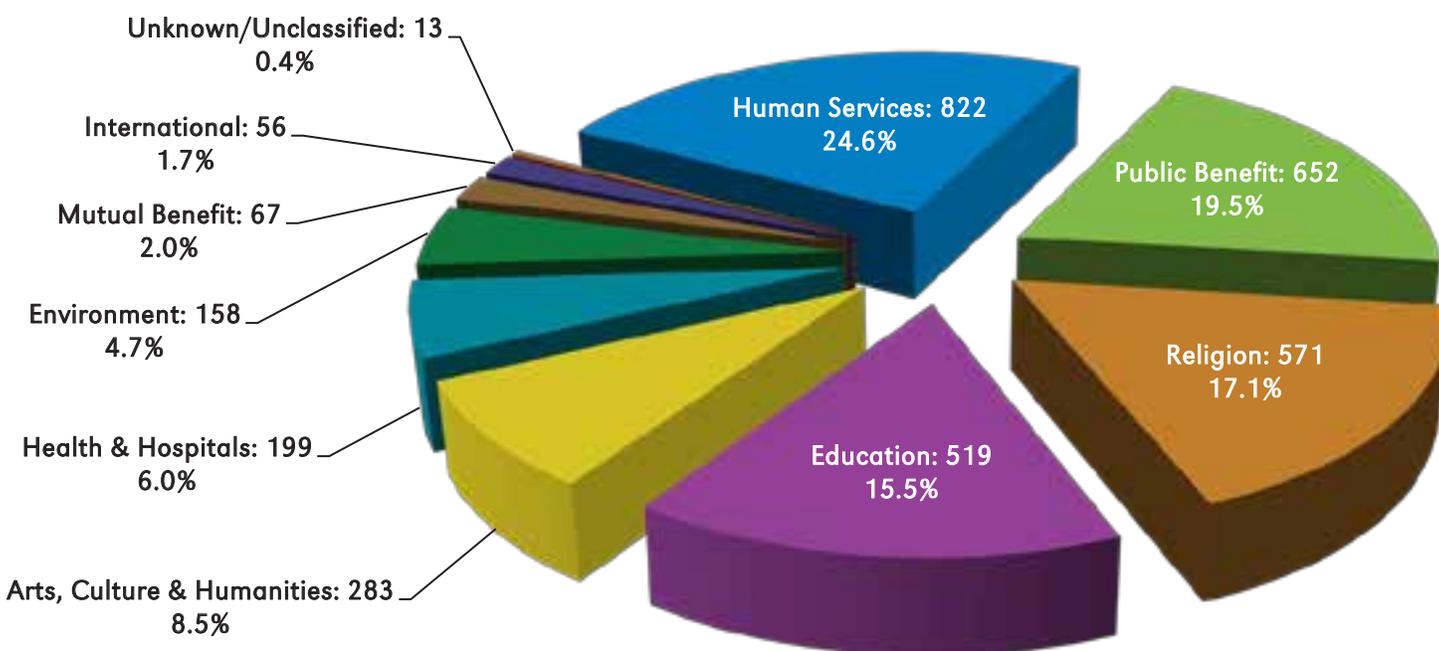
filed Form 990-N, indicating they typically have revenue below \$50,000.

The numbers in every category gradually have increased over the past decade. Between 2005 and 2015, the number of Ventura County nonprofits filing either type of 990 form approximately doubled. Total revenue declared on those 990s went from \$1.4 billion in 2005 to \$2.7 billion in 2015, and total assets went from \$2.3 billion in 2005 to \$5.1 billion in 2015.

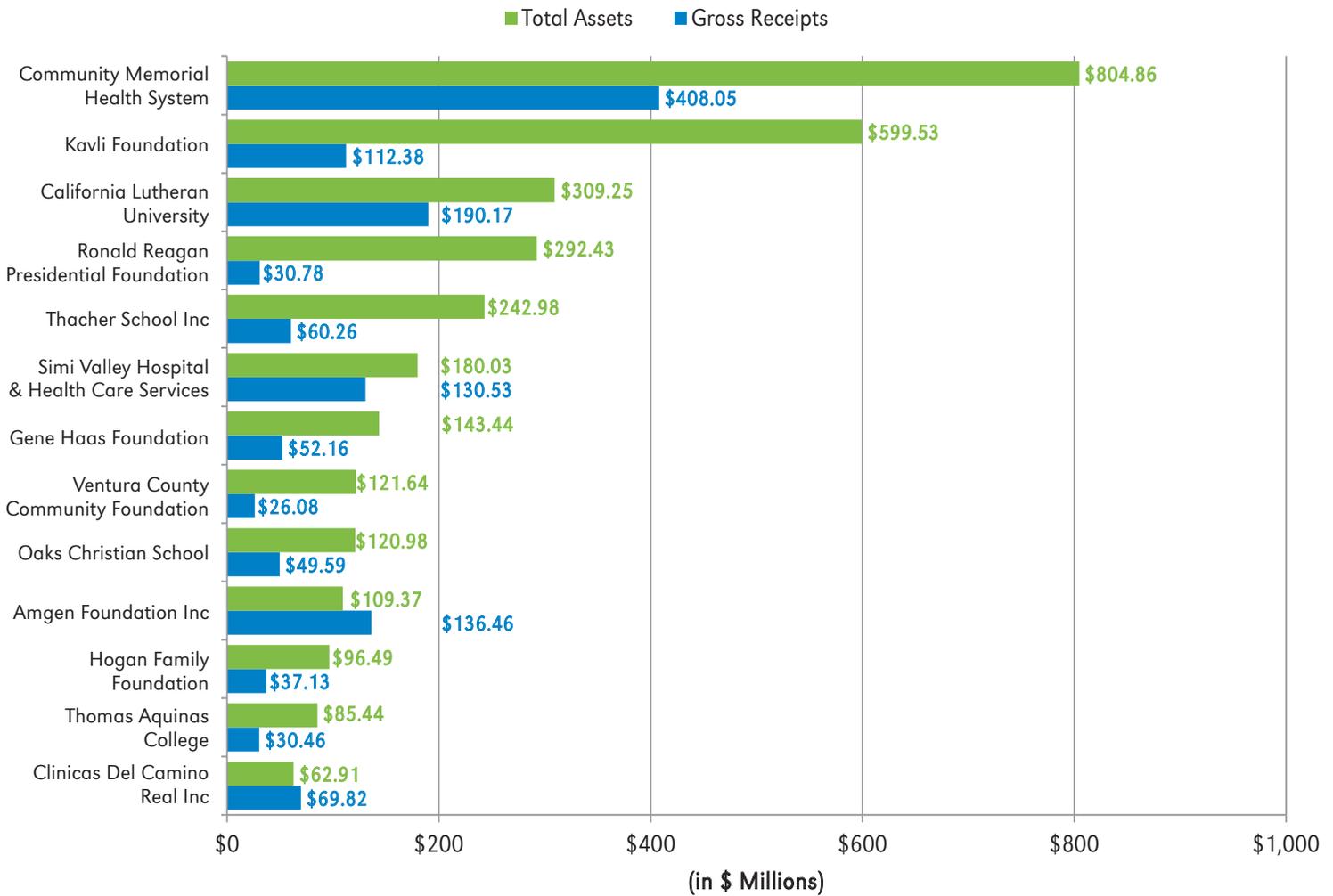
In 2015, the county's biggest nonprofit, by both total assets and annual revenues, was Community Memorial Health System, which owns two hospitals and multiple clinics. It had more than \$800 million in assets and brought in more than \$400 million in revenue.

The second biggest nonprofit by assets was the Kavli Foundation, a scientific research nonprofit founded by the late entrepreneur Fred Kavli. The Kavli Foundation had around \$600 million in assets and \$112 million in revenue in 2015. By revenue, the second biggest nonprofit in Ventura County in 2015 was California Lutheran University, the area's biggest private university, with \$190 million in revenue and \$309 million in assets.

**Number of Ventura County Nonprofit Organizations by Type (2016)**



## Total Assets and Gross Receipts of the Largest Ventura County Nonprofits (2014/2015)



## Comparison of Ventura County and California Nonprofits (2000 - 2015)

	2000	2005	2010	2014	2015
<b>Organizations Filing 990s</b>					
Ventura County	989	1,244	2,206	2,433	2,543
California	51,220	63,296	105,830	114,546	120,062
<b>Total Revenue Reported on 990s</b>					
Ventura County	\$ 683 Million	\$ 1.4 Billion	\$ 1.4 Billion	\$ 2.1 Billion	\$ 2.7 Billion
California	\$ 86 Billion	\$ 178 Billion	\$ 217 Billion	\$281 Billion	\$297 Billion
<b>Total Assets</b>					
Ventura County	\$ 1.1 Billion	\$ 2.3 Billion	\$ 3.2 Billion	\$4.4 Billion	\$ 5.1 Billion
California	\$ 241 Billion	\$ 364 Billion	\$ 457 Billion	\$588 Billion	\$601 Billion
<b>Per Capita Revenue</b>					
Ventura County	\$903.06	\$1,806.22	\$1,738.79	\$2,536.97	\$3,173.06
California	\$2,553.61	\$5,048.06	\$5,826.57	\$7,381.16	\$7,732.80

# NONPROFIT REVENUE

## REVENUE RISES YET LAGS NEIGHBORING COUNTIES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the revenue of nonprofits based in Ventura County, on a per capita basis.

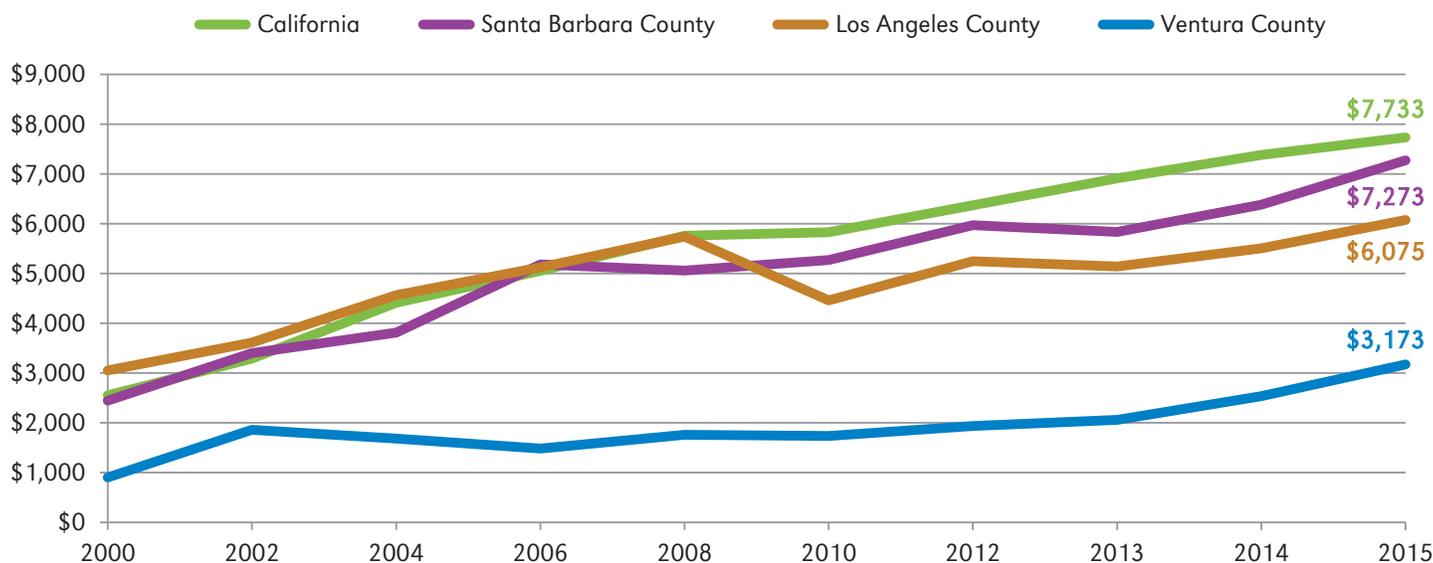
### Why is the measure important?

Revenue, in relation to the county's population, measures how much the county's nonprofits have to work with relative to the size of the market they serve. It also offers an imprecise measure of the philanthropy of Ventura County residents – imprecise because donations to nonprofits based elsewhere are not counted, while contributions to local nonprofits by non-local people are included.

### How are we doing?

Donations and other income to Ventura County nonprofits rose markedly in recent years, though it still lags behind our neighboring counties and the state of California as a whole. In 2015, Ventura County nonprofits took in \$3,173 per county resident, an increase of more than 50 percent since 2013. However, Ventura County's number was less than half of the statewide rate of \$7,733 in nonprofit revenue per person. Santa Barbara County, at \$7,273 per person, and Los Angeles County, at \$6,075, were also well ahead of Ventura County.

### Nonprofit Per Capita Revenue (2000 - 2015)



# CREATIVE ECONOMY

COUNTY EXCEEDS NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

## What are the measures?

The measures are the number of businesses in creative industries in Ventura County and their number of employees, expressed as percentage shares of the total number of businesses and the total workforce. Creative industries are film, radio and television; design and publishing; visual arts and photography, performing arts; museums and collections; and art schools and other support services. This data is based on active U.S. businesses registered with Dunn & Bradstreet; not all businesses choose to register.

## Why are the measures important?

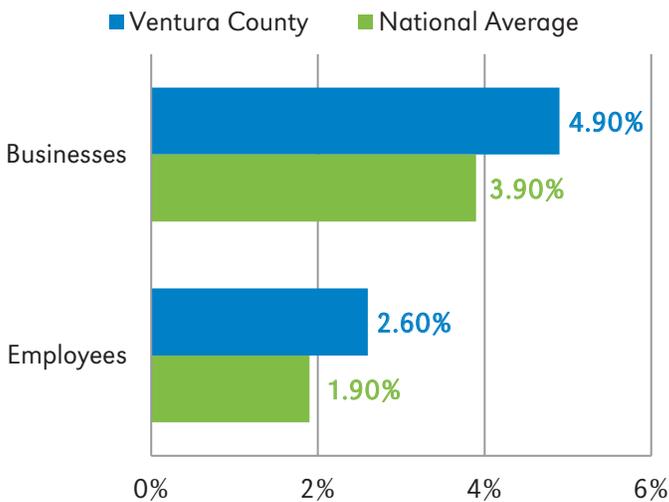
The arts often are overlooked as an economic force. Jobs in creative industries stimulate the larger economy, as people who spend money at concert venues and galleries also tend to patronize restaurants and hotels. And research suggests an urban area's friendliness to artists and creative types correlates positively with many measures of vitality and quality of life.

## How are we doing?

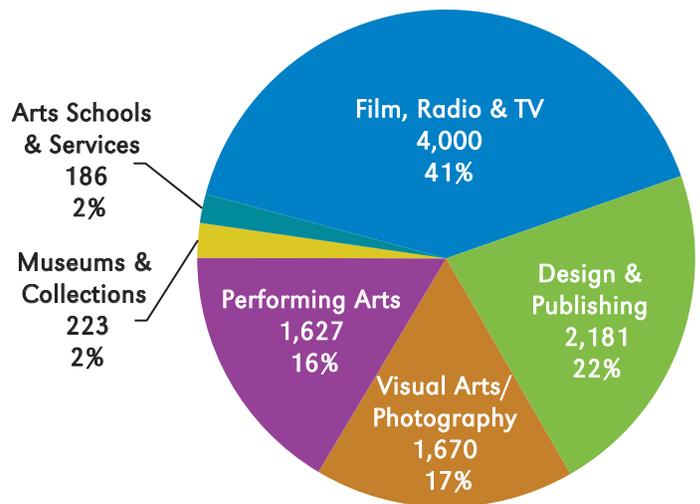
Ventura County exceeds the national averages in its number of businesses and employees in creative industries. In 2015, close to 10,000 people in Ventura County worked in creative fields. That was 2.6 percent of the total county workforce, above the national rate of 1.9 percent. There were just under 2,500 businesses in the county in creative industries, or 4.9 percent of the county's total businesses, above the national rate of 3.9 percent.

The biggest creative industry in Ventura County was film, radio and television, at 41 percent of the creative workforce. Design and publishing was next, at 22 percent, followed by visual arts and photography, at 17 percent, and performing arts, at 16 percent.

**Numbers of Businesses and Employees in Creative Industries (2015)**



**Employees Within Ventura County Creative Industries (2015)**



# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

## LIBRARY SPENDING FALLS SHORT

### What is the measure?

The measure is spending on public libraries on a per capita basis.

### Why is the measure important?

Public libraries are a vital community resource, even in an age when more and more information is available online. Libraries offer free Internet access for people who have no other way to connect. And of course, they put thousands of books at every resident's fingertips. They also promote early literacy, with children's story times, and host lectures and other community events.

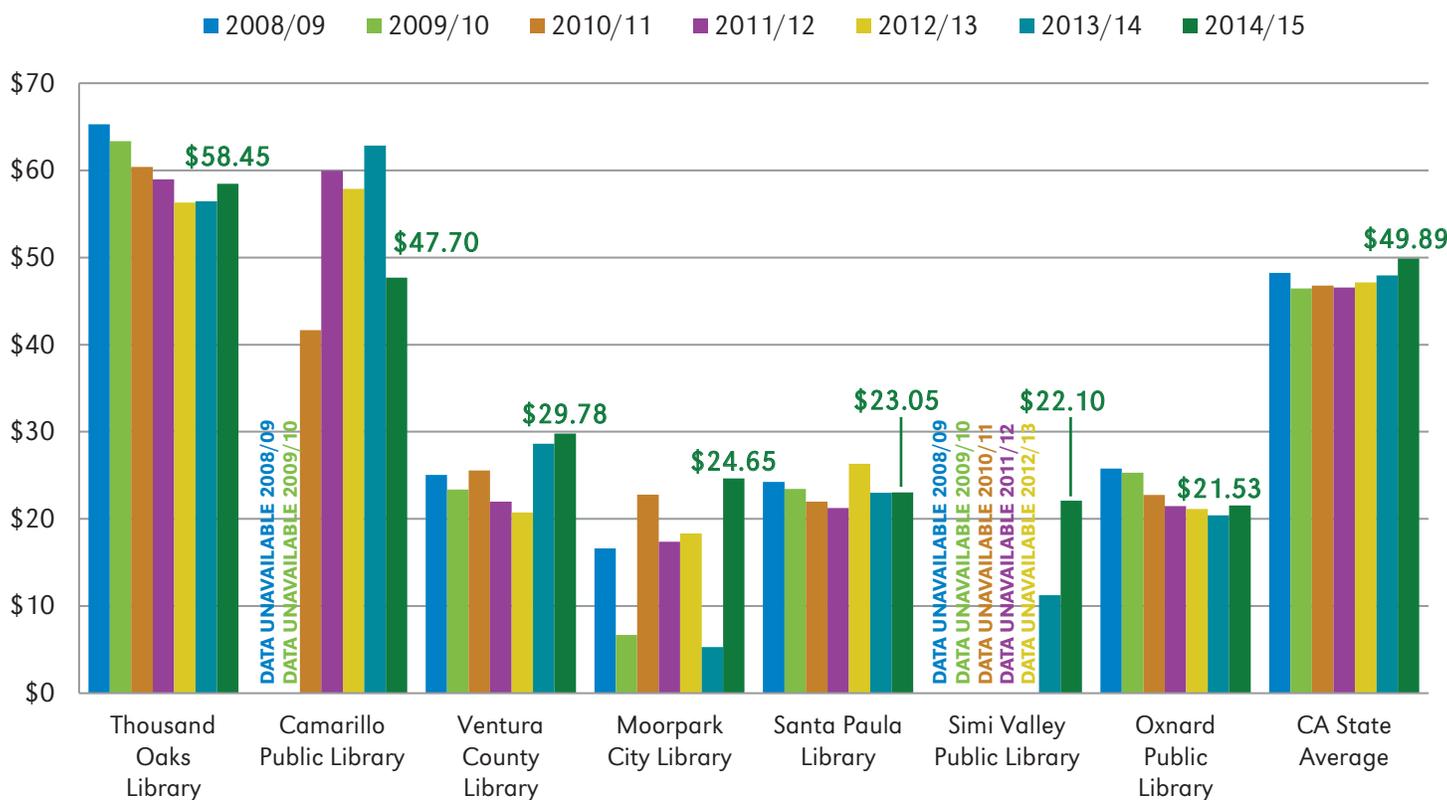
### How are we doing?

Despite the fact Ventura County is a relatively prosperous region, library spending in most of the county falls far short of the statewide average. In the 2014/15 fiscal year, the

state spent \$49.89 per person on public libraries. That was more than six of the seven library systems in Ventura County. The exception was Thousand Oaks, which spent \$58.45 per resident on its libraries. The other library systems in Ventura County ranged from \$21.53 per person in Oxnard to \$47.70 in Camarillo. The remaining library systems ranged between \$22 and \$30 per person in funding, which means most Ventura County residents live in a community that spends about half as much on libraries as the state average.

Ventura County's libraries are decentralized. The cities of Simi Valley, Moorpark and Camarillo contract the operation of their independent libraries to Library Systems & Services, a private company. Thousand Oaks, Oxnard and Santa Paula operate their own independent library systems while the remaining four cities and unincorporated areas are part of the Ventura County Library System.

**Per Capita Expenditure for Ventura County Public Library Systems (FY 2008/09 - 2014/15)**



# ECONOMY

The state of the Ventura County economy depends on expectations. Our economy has expanded compared to where we were eight years ago, or even five years ago. We are still in a period of economic growth and recovery, and we may even be near the peak of the current economic cycle. Unemployment is down to pre-recession levels, and the county's overall economic output has grown every year since 2009. At the same time, the Ventura County economy is struggling when compared to most of our neighboring counties, and when compared to the trajectory we set in the early years of the recovery. Our recovery has slowed down, and our rate of economic growth since 2014 is among the lowest in the state.

Signs suggest all is not well. The biggest such indicator is job growth. The total number of non-farm jobs in Ventura County peaked in 2006 and is not expected to top that number until 2017, according to projections by the Center for Economic Research and Forecasting at California Lutheran University. This sluggish job growth contrasts

to other California regions where the number of jobs now exceeds pre-recession levels.

Our population continues to increase so our slow job growth, coupled with the relatively low unemployment rate, means fewer Ventura County residents are part of the workforce. We are becoming an older community with more retirees who are using the proceeds from decades of work to enjoy our enviable quality of life.

The question remains whether our economy can produce jobs to help today's young workers achieve prosperity. The cost of living in Ventura County is high, as illustrated by data in this domain that shows just how hard it is to support a family with most jobs available here. Ventura County continues to wrestle with balancing environmental concerns and our desire to preserve agricultural land with the need for housing that is affordable to a range of incomes and the economic priorities to attract businesses to the region.



# GROSS COUNTY PRODUCT

## A MODEST, BUT REAL, RECOVERY

### What is the measure?

The measure is gross county product, which is calculated in much the same way as the U.S. gross domestic product: by adding up the market value of all goods and services sold in Ventura County in one year. Gross product counts only the final sale to the consumer, not intermediary transactions among producers and wholesalers.

### Why is the measure important?

Gross product doesn't tell the entire story of an economy, but it is a pervasive macroeconomic statistic and the most common shorthand for describing the economic productivity of a region, whether a nation, province, county or city. It's also the chief indicator of the standard of living enjoyed by the people of that area. On the national level, growth or decline in the gross domestic product is the most accepted gauge of whether the nation is in a period of contraction, known as a recession, or of economic expansion.

### How are we doing?

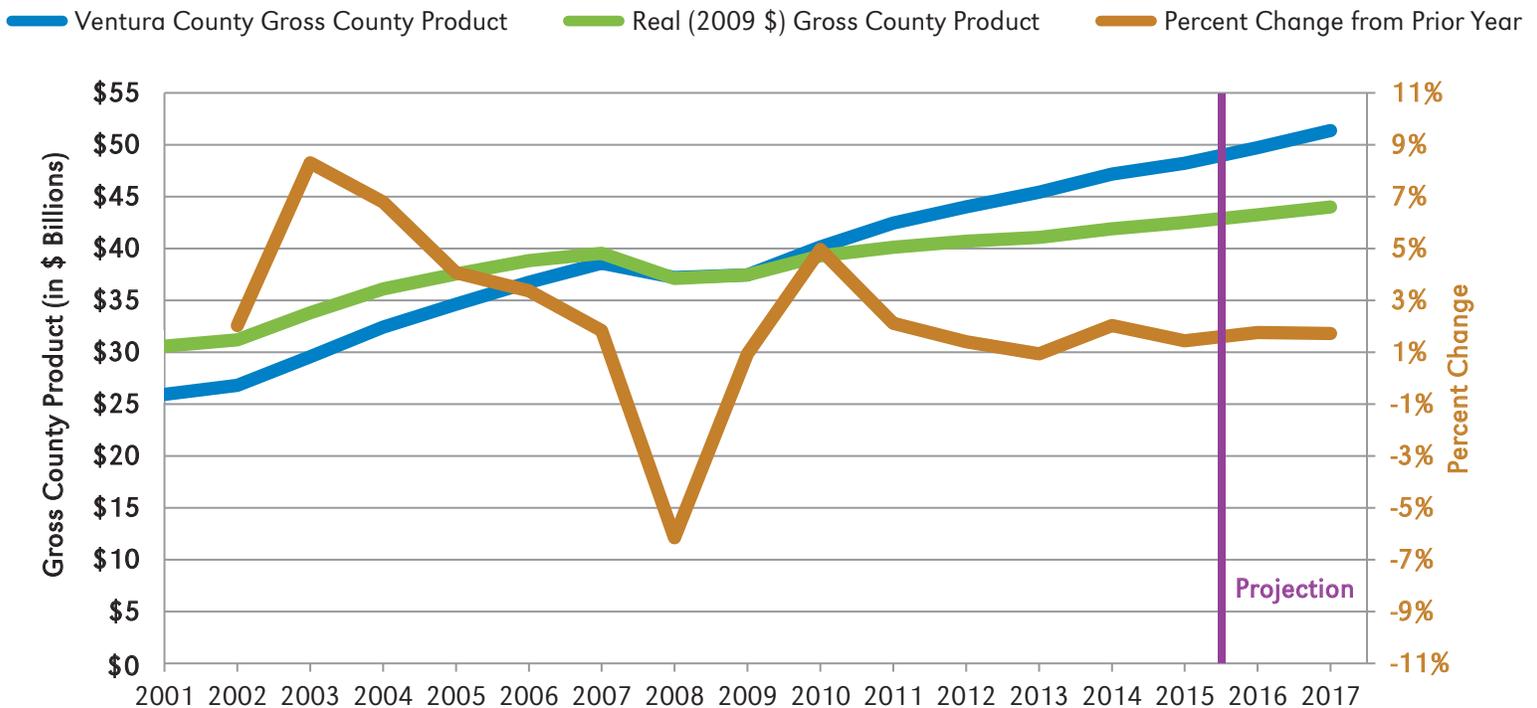
Ventura County's economy has grown every year since the national recession ended in 2009. In 2015, the county

produced \$48.22 billion in goods and services, for an annual growth rate of 1.4 percent. In 2016 it was projected to produce \$49.71 billion, for a growth rate of 1.8 percent, and in 2017, the gross county product is projected at \$51.37 billion, or a 1.7 percent annual growth rate.

The growth rate since 2009 has outpaced inflation, but sometimes just barely. As it has been nationwide, the recovery in Ventura County was slow and meager, when compared to most post-recessionary periods in U.S. history. Our recovery also lagged behind other parts of California, including both the Los Angeles region and the San Francisco Bay Area.

After a stunning 6.2 percent drop in 2008, Ventura County's gross product grew at more than 2.1 percent only once, in 2010, when the county economy recovered at an annual growth rate of 5 percent. Even that year, by far the peak of the most recent recovery, paled in comparison to 8.3 percent growth in 2003 and 6.8 percent growth in 2004. The California Lutheran University Center for Economic Research and Forecasting predicts another year of modest growth in 2017, at 1.7 percent.

## Recent and Projected Growth in the Ventura County Economy (2001 - 2017)



# EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

## COUNTY LAGS IN JOB GROWTH

### What is the measure?

The measure is the annual increase in the number of people employed in Ventura County. It does not include the agricultural industry, which is highly seasonal.

### Why is the measure important?

A robust supply of jobs is the most effective anti-poverty program for any community. If the Ventura County economy generates too few jobs for its residents, many people go without work and others commute to employers out of the county, which increases household expenses, traffic congestion and pollution.

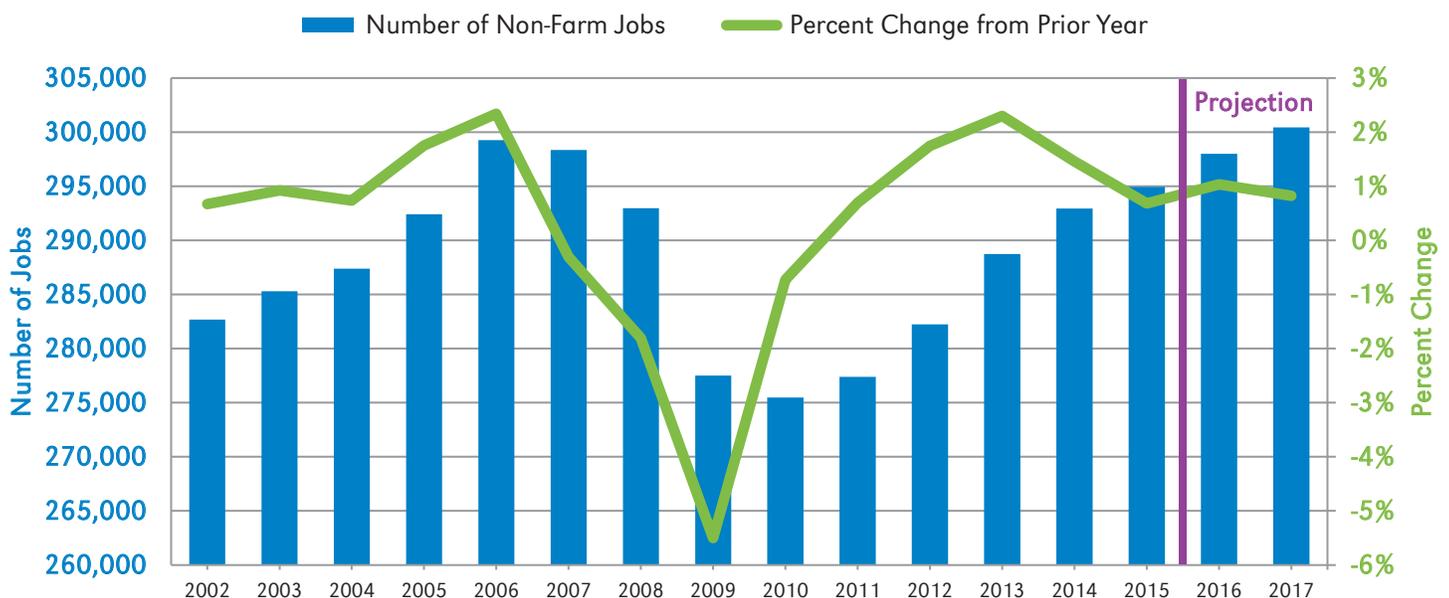
### How are we doing?

Ventura County's job growth has been anemic during the recovery from the Great Recession. In 2015, the county

had around 295,000 jobs, and in 2016 it was projected to expand to around 298,000 — both below the pre-recession peak of approximately 299,000 non-farm jobs in 2006. Economists at California Lutheran University expect the county to finally top its pre-recession job numbers in 2017. If that prediction holds true, it will have taken the county seven years of job growth to make up for the jobs lost from 2007 through 2010. Job losses peaked at 5.5 percent in 2009, and the gains never rose above a peak of 2.3 percent in 2013.

Ventura County has lagged behind other Southern California regions in job growth since the end of the recession. The counties of Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and Orange, along with the Inland Empire, all bested their pre-recession employment peaks years before Ventura County is expected to achieve the same.

## Ventura County Employment Growth (2002 - 2017)



# EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

## SERVICE JOBS DOMINATE COUNTY ECONOMY

### What is the measure?

The measure is a breakdown of employment in Ventura County by industrial sector.

### Why is the measure important?

Employment by sector shows which industries are adding workers. That allows people — as well as businesses, governments, schools and universities — to plan for careers that are the most likely to offer good job prospects in the future.

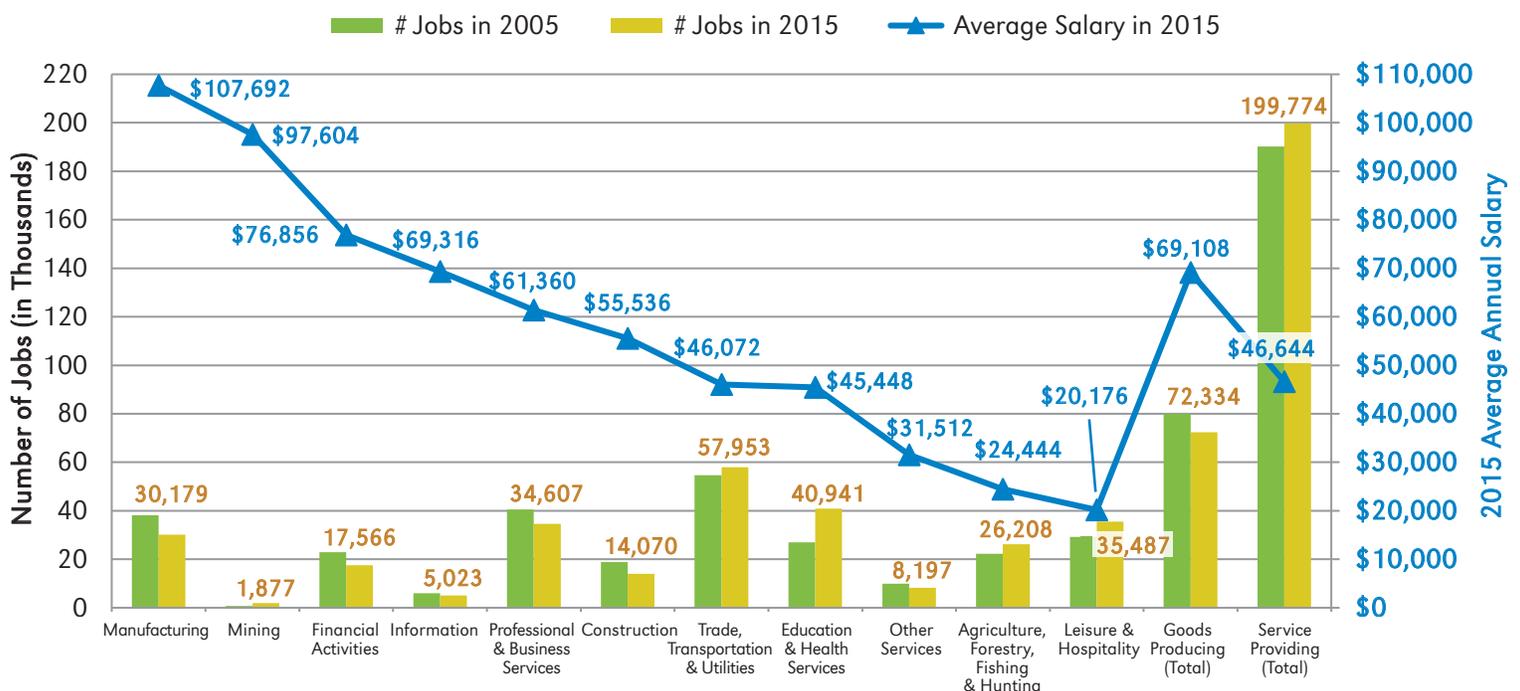
### How are we doing?

There are two broad categories of jobs: those that provide services and those that produce physical goods. As it is nationwide, the service providing portion of the economy in Ventura County is much bigger than the goods producing sector. Furthermore, service jobs are increasing while goods producing jobs shrink. This is a troubling trend for our economy, as goods producing jobs tend to have higher wages than service providing jobs. If service providing jobs continue to replace goods producing jobs, local workers will face decreasing opportunities and increasing inequality.

Between 2005 and 2015 Ventura County lost 9.6 percent of its goods producing jobs, including jobs in manufacturing, agriculture and construction. Construction took the hardest hit as the bottom fell out of the real estate market in 2008. The industry lost 25.3 percent of its jobs between 2005 and 2015. Service jobs in Ventura County grew by 5 percent in the same 10-year period. The biggest gains were in education and health services, with 51.4 percent job growth between 2005 and 2015.

The Ventura County economy faces one of the same major problems as the national economy, but to a far greater degree: The jobs that are growing tend to be relatively low paying, while higher paying work fades away. Manufacturing was the highest paying sector in 2015, with an average salary of \$107,692. But manufacturing provided only about 30,000 jobs in 2015, down 20 percent from 10 years earlier. The lowest paying sector in 2015 was leisure and hospitality, followed by agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting. Both showed strong job growth over the previous 10 years, and jobs in leisure and hospitality now outnumber those in manufacturing in the county.

## Ventura County Employment Growth (2005 & 2015) and Average Annual Salaries (2015)



Goods Producing categories are: Manufacturing, Mining, Construction, and Agriculture. All other categories are Service Providing.

# SALARIES BY SECTOR

## MANUFACTURING JOBS FEATURE BIGGEST PAYCHECKS

### What is the measure?

The measure is the average pay in different employment sectors.

### Why is the measure important?

A person's salary is the most important factor in determining living standard and economic opportunities. Knowing which careers pay well is crucial to gauging whether the jobs being created in the county can sustain prosperity.

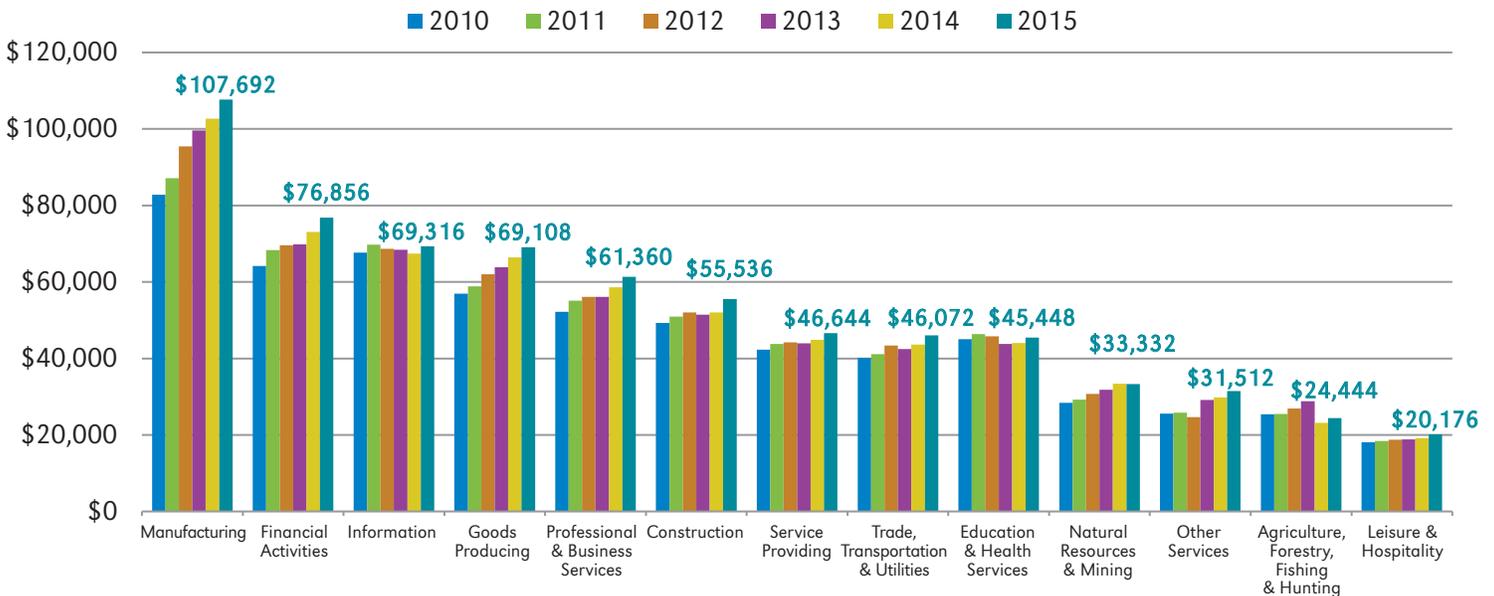
### How are we doing?

Salaries in most job categories have been rising in Ventura County, especially in the post-recessionary period that began in 2009. Manufacturing, the highest paying sector at an average of \$107,692 in 2015, saw pay climb 4.9 percent in just a single year. Between 2010 and 2015,

manufacturing salaries in Ventura County grew by a total of 19.6 percent, when adjusted for the nationwide inflation rate. Salaries in all goods-producing industries — a category that includes manufacturing, agriculture and construction — rose by 4 percent between 2014 and 2015, for an average of \$69,108 in 2015.

Salaries in the service sector increased at a similar rate that year: 3.9 percent. Salaries in service jobs tend to be lower than those in goods-producing jobs, though. The exceptions are financial activities, with an average salary in 2015 of \$76,856, and information, where jobs paid an average of \$69,316. The lowest paying sectors in 2015 were leisure and hospitality, with an average salary of \$20,176, and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting — a category that includes farm laborers — at \$24,444.

## Ventura County Salaries by Sector (2010 - 2015)



# HIGH DEMAND JOBS

## LOW WAGE JOBS DOMINATE DEMAND

### What is the measure?

The measure is the 10 jobs predicted to provide the most openings per year in Ventura County between 2014 and 2024, as projected by the California Employment Development Department, along with their median hourly wages. Openings include both new jobs and the replacement of workers who leave their positions.

### Why is the measure important?

Knowing which industries are growing and how much those jobs pay matters for individuals as they consider their educational and career paths. It's significant for schools, businesses and other institutions that educate and train people. And it's critical for policymakers and regulators as they try to create an environment that will encourage further job growth.

### How are we doing?

The farm and retail sectors lead the list of projected job openings in Ventura County, though due mostly to high turnover in those sectors, not to the creation of new jobs. As immigration has declined, the labor pool has shrunk. State figures predict 6,960 openings per year for farmworkers, and 2,580 more for farmers, ranchers and managers in the

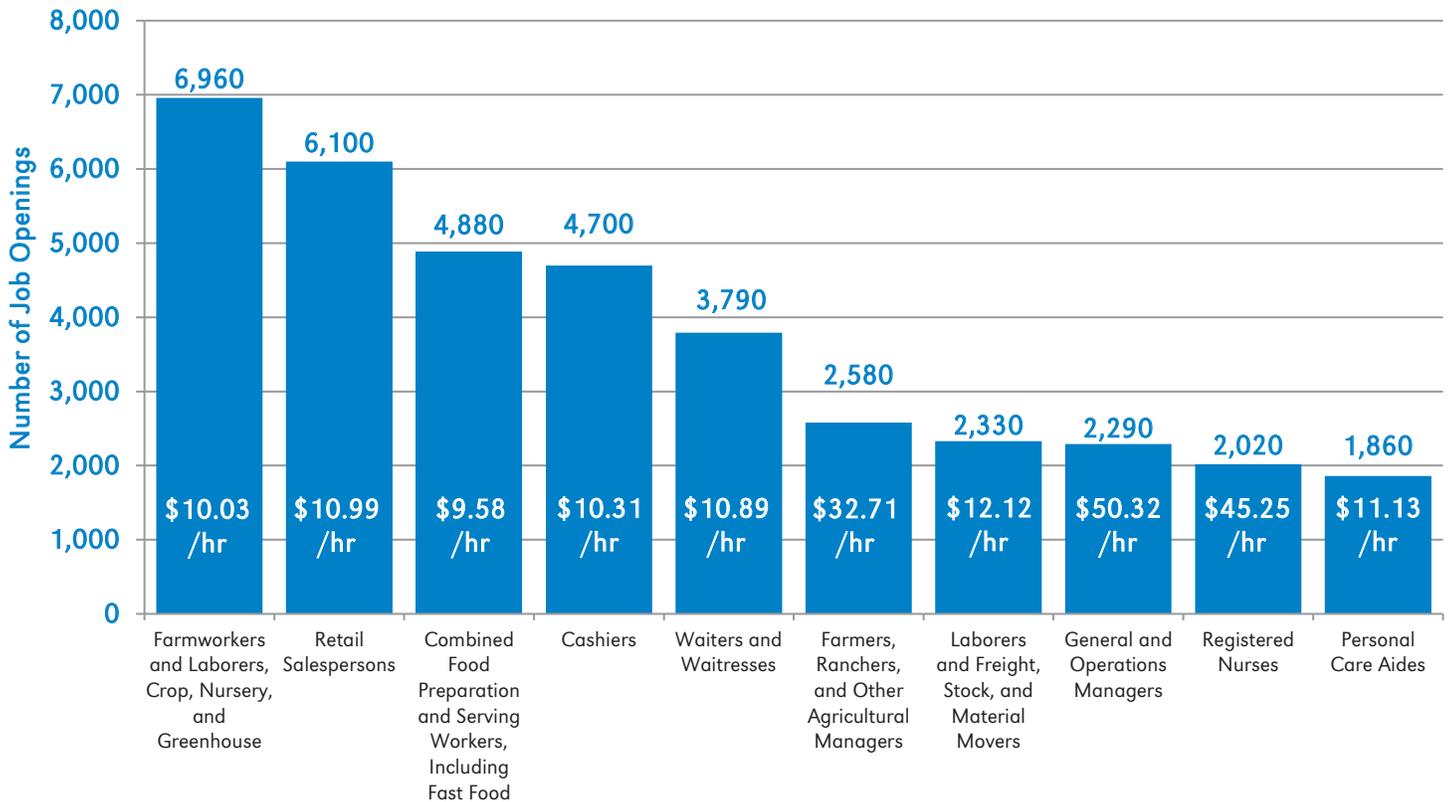
agricultural industry. Retail sales jobs also will be in high demand, with 6,100 openings projected per year.

The job categories with the most openings are generally low paying, with wages of around \$10 per hour in the top five: farmworkers, retail sales workers, food preparation and service workers, cashiers and waiters. Some high-wage jobs made the top 10, though. Registered nurses earn around \$45 an hour, and the state study expects 2,020 openings per year in that career. Openings for general and operations managers, who make around \$50 per hour, are projected at 2,290 per year.

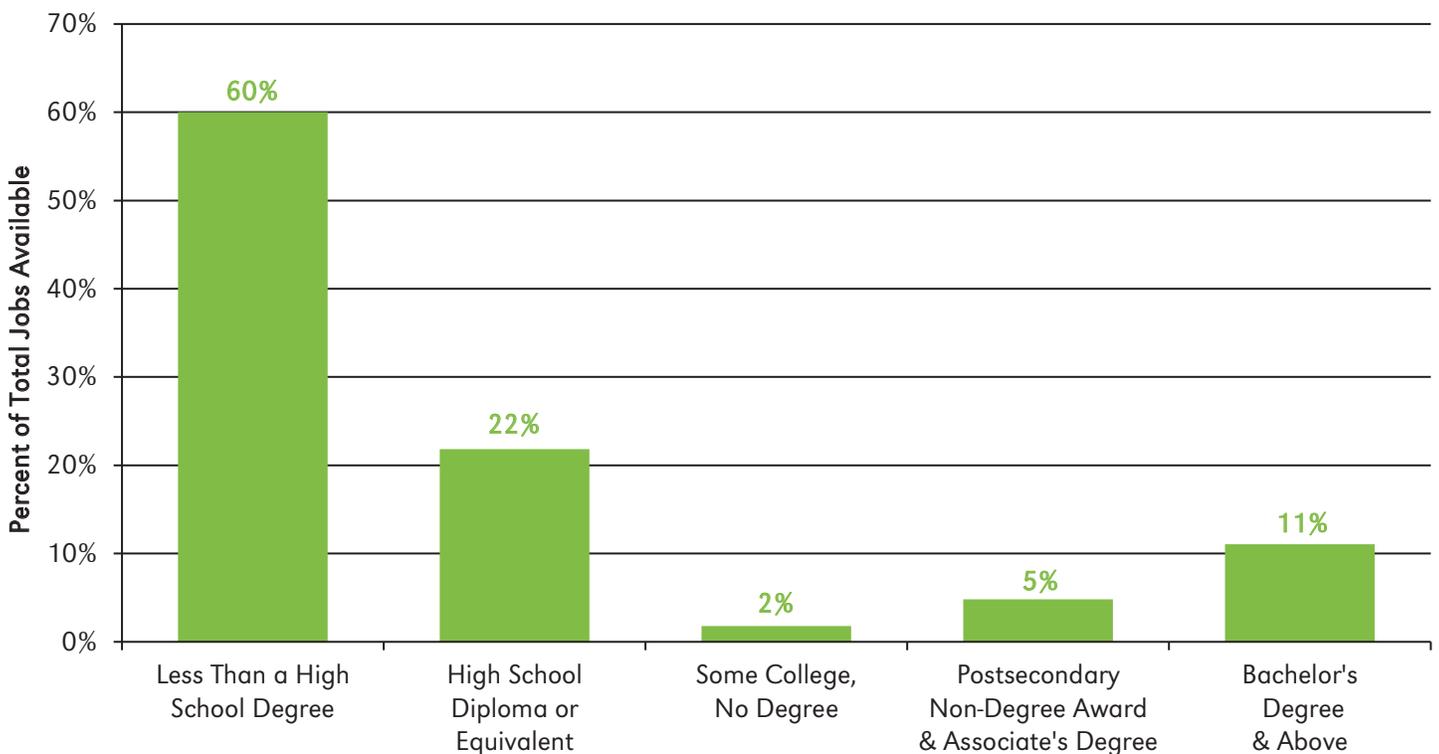
The high demand for farm and retail workers is largely due to the nature of those industries. In both the retail and farm sectors, workers tend to change jobs frequently, which means there are large numbers of vacancies when compared to more stable industries. Still, the relatively high demand for farm and retail workers is a troubling sign for the local economy. Those jobs typically have low pay and do not require much education. Since Ventura County has a high cost of living, workers in those industries cannot easily afford to live here. They face a choice: they must scrape to get by, or commute long distances, which contributes to traffic congestion and environmental problems.



## Projected Top 10 High Demand Jobs & Median Hourly Wage in Ventura County (2014 - 2024)



## Entry Level Education Required for Top 50 Projected High Demand Jobs by Year 2024 in Ventura County (2014 - 2024)



# WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

## MOST JOBS INSUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT A FAMILY

### What is the measure?

The measure is the hourly wage a full-time worker in Ventura County must earn to support a family. It represents the income needed to cover housing, food, child care, transportation, health care and various expenses.

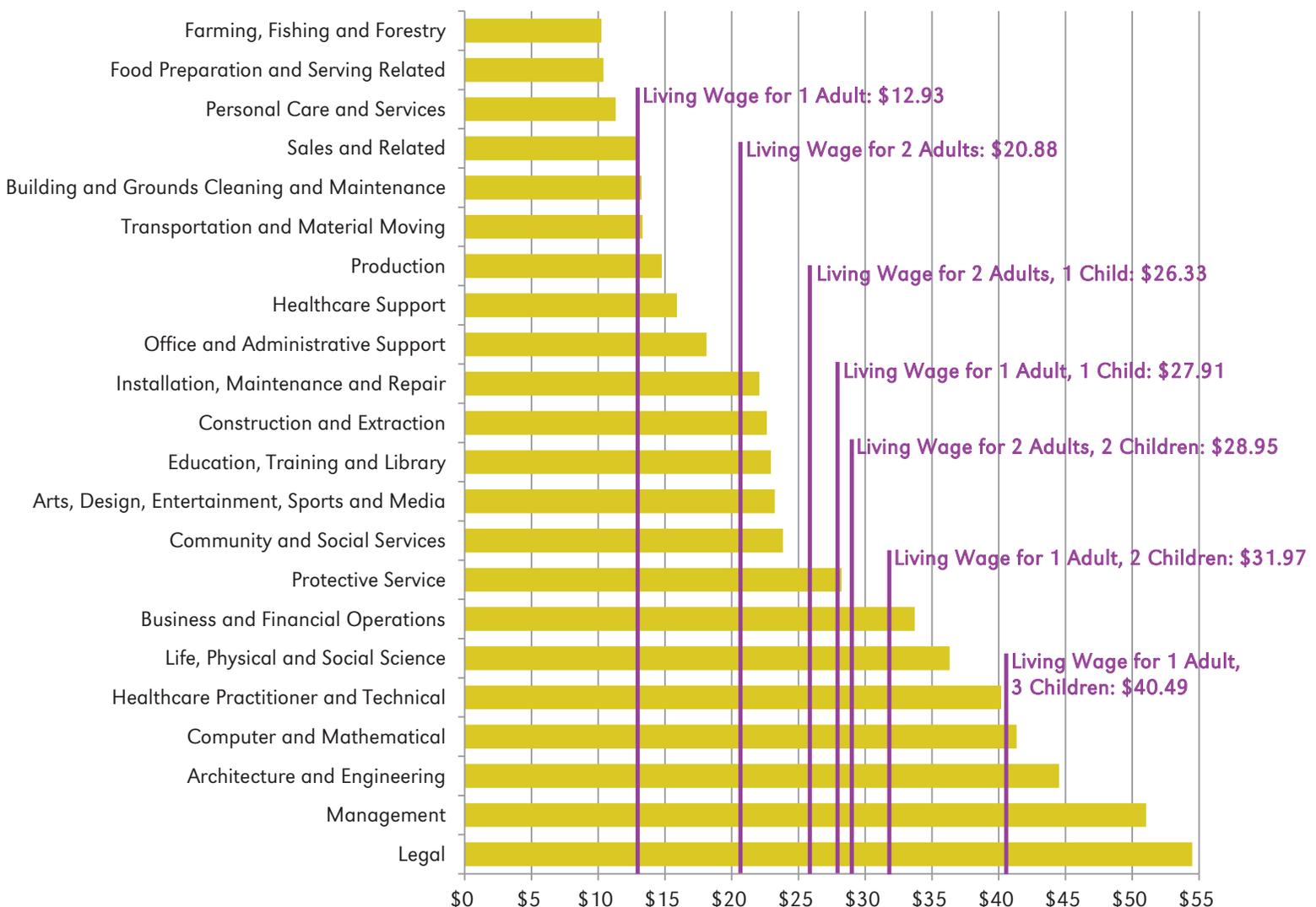
### Why is the measure important?

Wages are just half of a household's financial equation. Expenses are equally important, and they vary widely by region and by household size.

### How are we doing?

The living wage for a single adult in Ventura County was \$12.93 per hour in 2015. Most job sectors in the county pay that much or more, though farm work, food preparation, retail sales and a few other occupations pay less. Once a household has children or other dependents, the living wage skyrockets, and few jobs pay enough. One adult with two children, for example, must earn \$31.97 per hour to cover typical expenses. Only jobs at the top of the pay scale, such as lawyers, managers, engineers, finance workers and healthcare practitioners, earn wages above that level.

## Ventura County Cost of Living and Hourly Wage Comparison (2015)



# COST OF CHILD CARE

## CHILD CARE CAN DOMINATE HOUSEHOLD SPENDING

### What is the measure?

The measure is the cost of child care in Ventura County for different family structures, based on the federal poverty level.

### Why is the measure important?

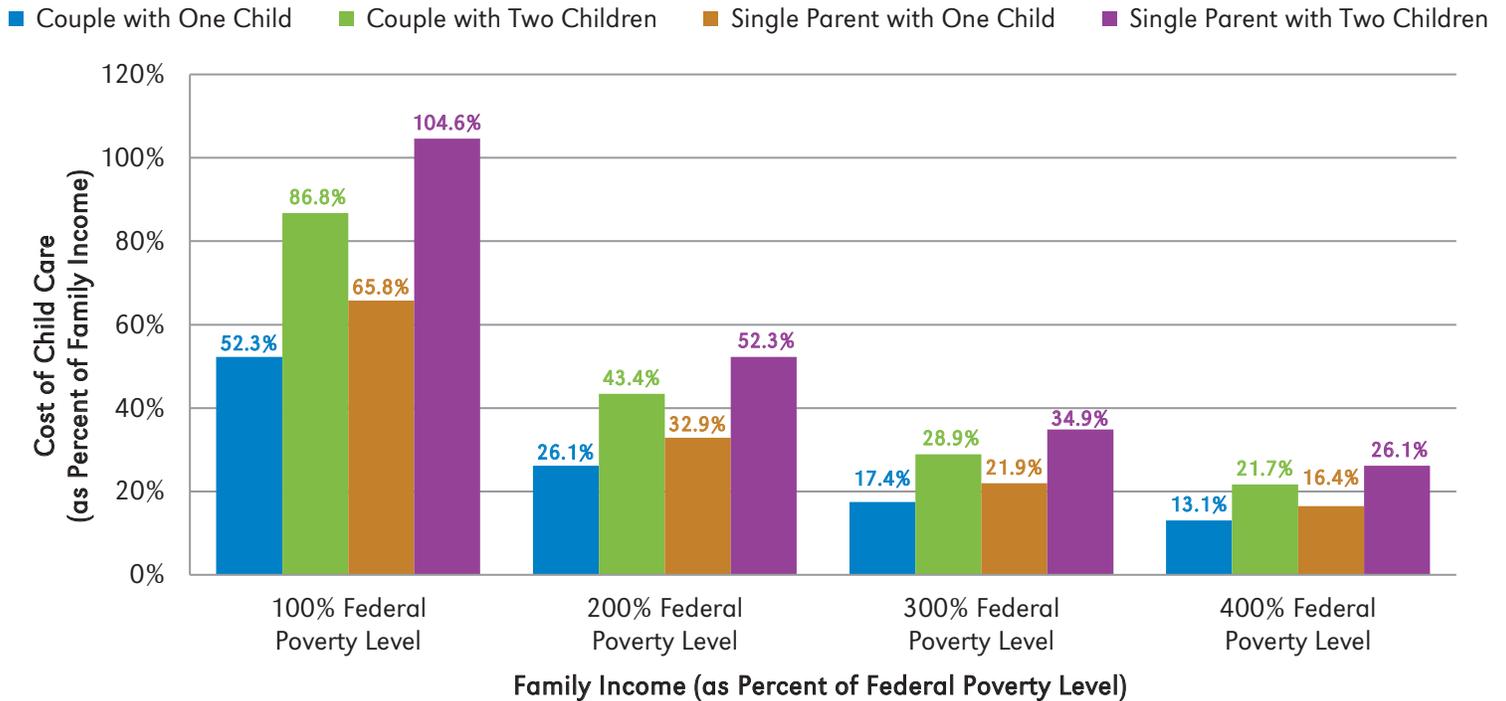
Stay-at-home parenting is now the exception and not the rule, and most families need at least some help with child care. But licensed care can be extremely expensive and unaffordable for many families.

### How are we doing?

Child care can eat up a huge portion of the budget for low to moderate income families. Couples with two children earning 400 percent of the federal poverty level, for example, would need to spend 21.7 percent of their income on full-time child care.

For the truly poor, paying for professional child care is impossible: In 2016, single parents at the federal poverty level would have to spend 65.8 percent of their income on care for one child, and 104.6 percent on care for two children.

## Cost of Child Care as a Percent of Family Income in Ventura County (2016)



# GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PAY

## WOMEN PAID 83 CENTS ON THE DOLLAR

### What is the measure?

The measure is the average annual salaries for men and women in various industries during the 2012-2015 time frame. It covers people over the age of 16 who work full time and aren't in the military. This data compares all full-time workers in different industries. It is not adjusted for individual job descriptions, hours, education level or any other factors.

Additional data on the gender earnings gap is presented in the Education domain.

### Why is the measure important?

When women earn less than men, they face a lower standard of living and have less income to pursue career advancement opportunities. This is also a social equity issue in that women with lower incomes are less able to provide for their families and might need additional part-time work to supplement their wages. Companies that underpay women also run the risk of losing capable and experienced employees to other employers that pay women more equitably.

### How are we doing?

Between 2012 and 2015, a woman in the full-time workforce in Ventura County made an average of 83 cents for every dollar earned by a man. That's a little above the national gender wage gap, which ranged from 77 cents to 80 cents on the dollar during that period.

The wage gap varies widely by industry but never completely disappears. State government had the smallest gender wage gap; women employed in those

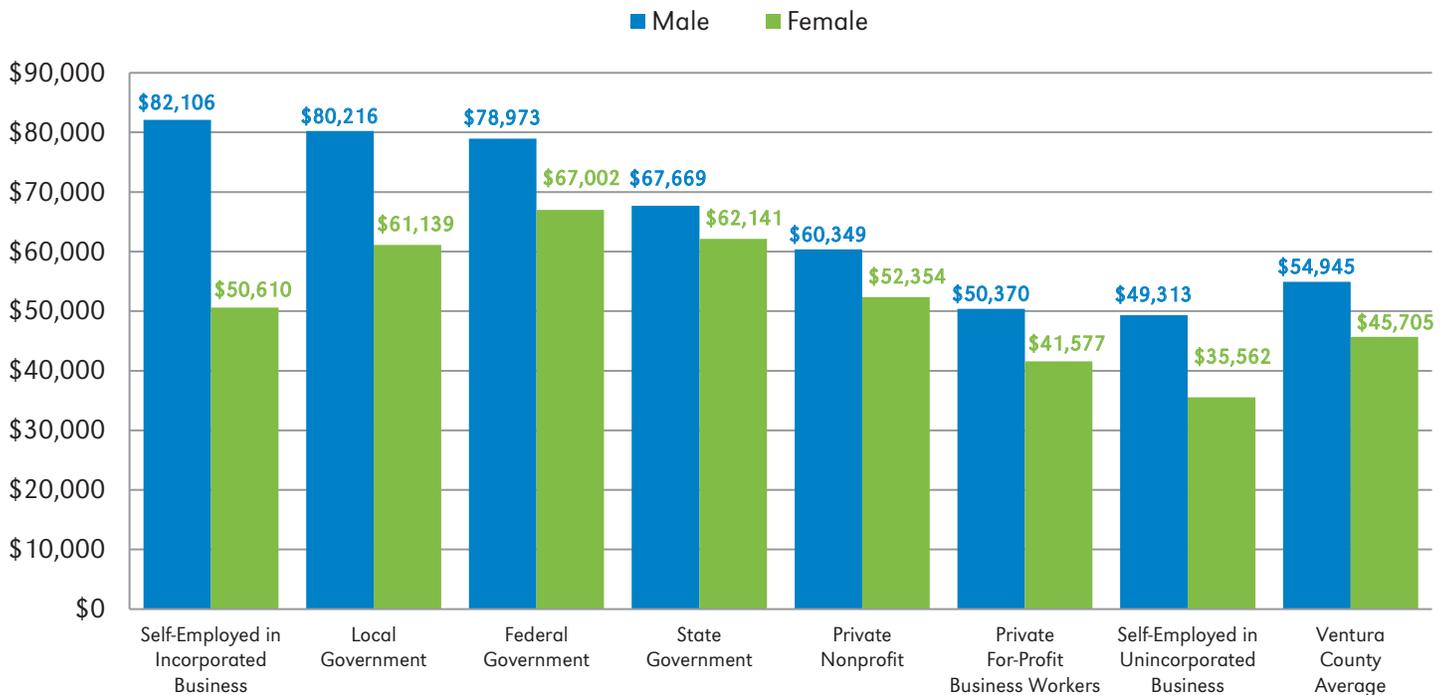
jobs in Ventura County made 92 percent as much as men between 2012 and 2015. The largest gaps were among self-employed people. Women who own their own incorporated businesses made 62 percent as much as men, and women with unincorporated businesses made 72 percent as much as male business owners.

The biggest job creators in Ventura County are the private sector and local governments, and between these, the private sector has the smaller gender wage gap. Women working for private for-profit businesses made 83 percent as much as men, while women working for local government made 76 percent as much as men.

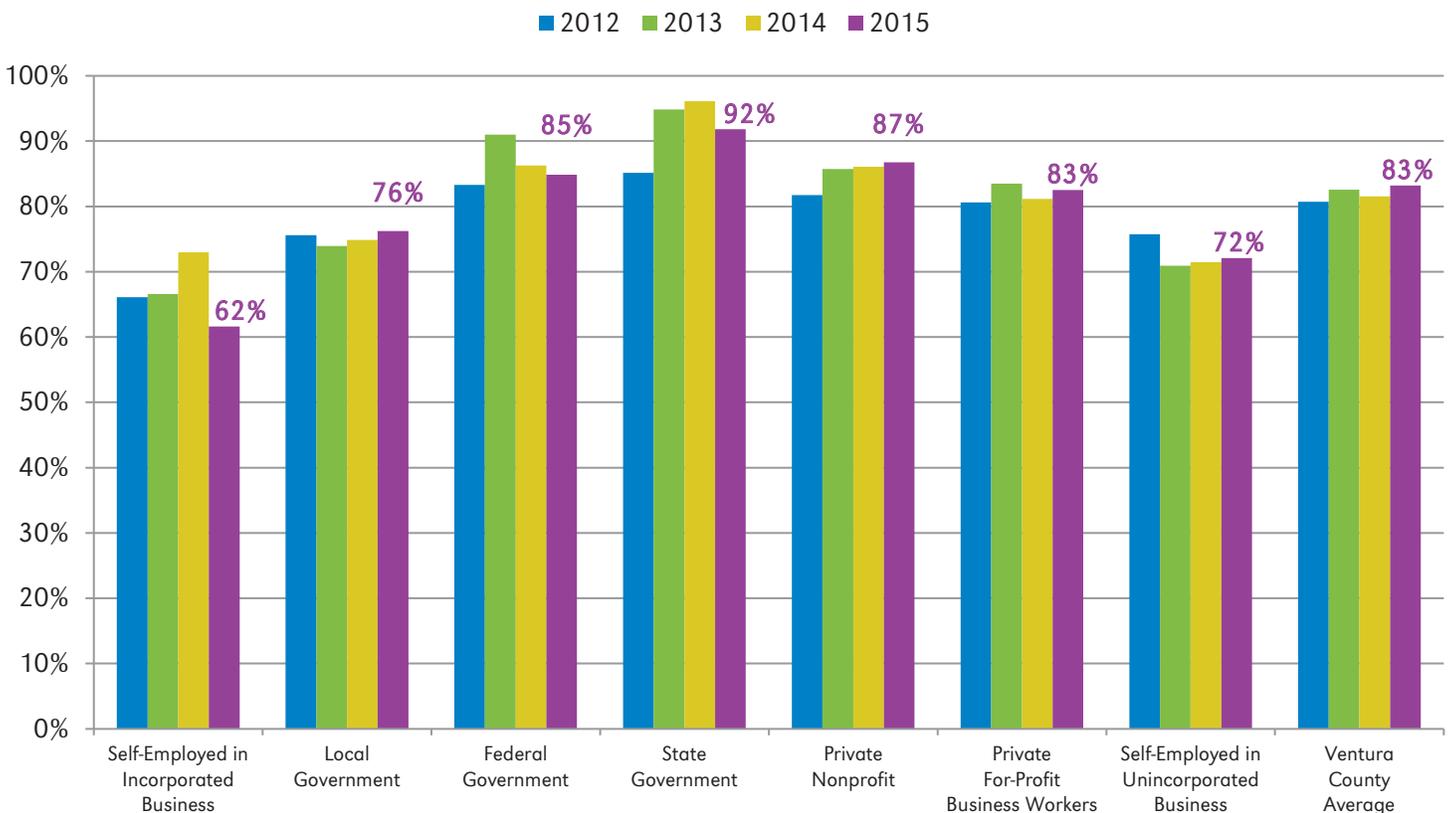
Advocates of gender wage equality have often drawn criticism for presenting the gender wage gap without enough context. The fact that the average woman working a full-time job in Ventura County made 83 cents for every dollar earned by the average man does not mean gender discrimination robbed women of 17 percent of their income. Many researchers have tried to isolate the factors that contribute to this gap, and have found that some of the gap is explained by men and women working different hours, choosing different types of jobs and having different levels of education. But even controlling for all of those factors, a significant number of studies have found a persistent gap that appears attributable to gender. Whether that means employers are exercising conscious discrimination is beyond the reach of these studies. Whatever the reason — whether women are set back at work when they have children, or low-wage service jobs are more likely to be filled by women, or men earn more in certain physically risky jobs — the fact of the gender wage gap remains.



## Pay for Work by Gender, Median Earnings in Ventura County in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars (2015)



## Female Earnings as a Percentage of Male Earnings (2012 - 2015)



# UNEMPLOYMENT

## UNEMPLOYMENT FALLS TO 9-YEAR LOW



### What is the measure?

The measure is the unemployment rate, which is the percentage of people in the workforce without a job. Only people looking for jobs are counted as part of the workforce. The rate is calculated as an average of the monthly unemployment rates for each year.

### Why is the measure important?

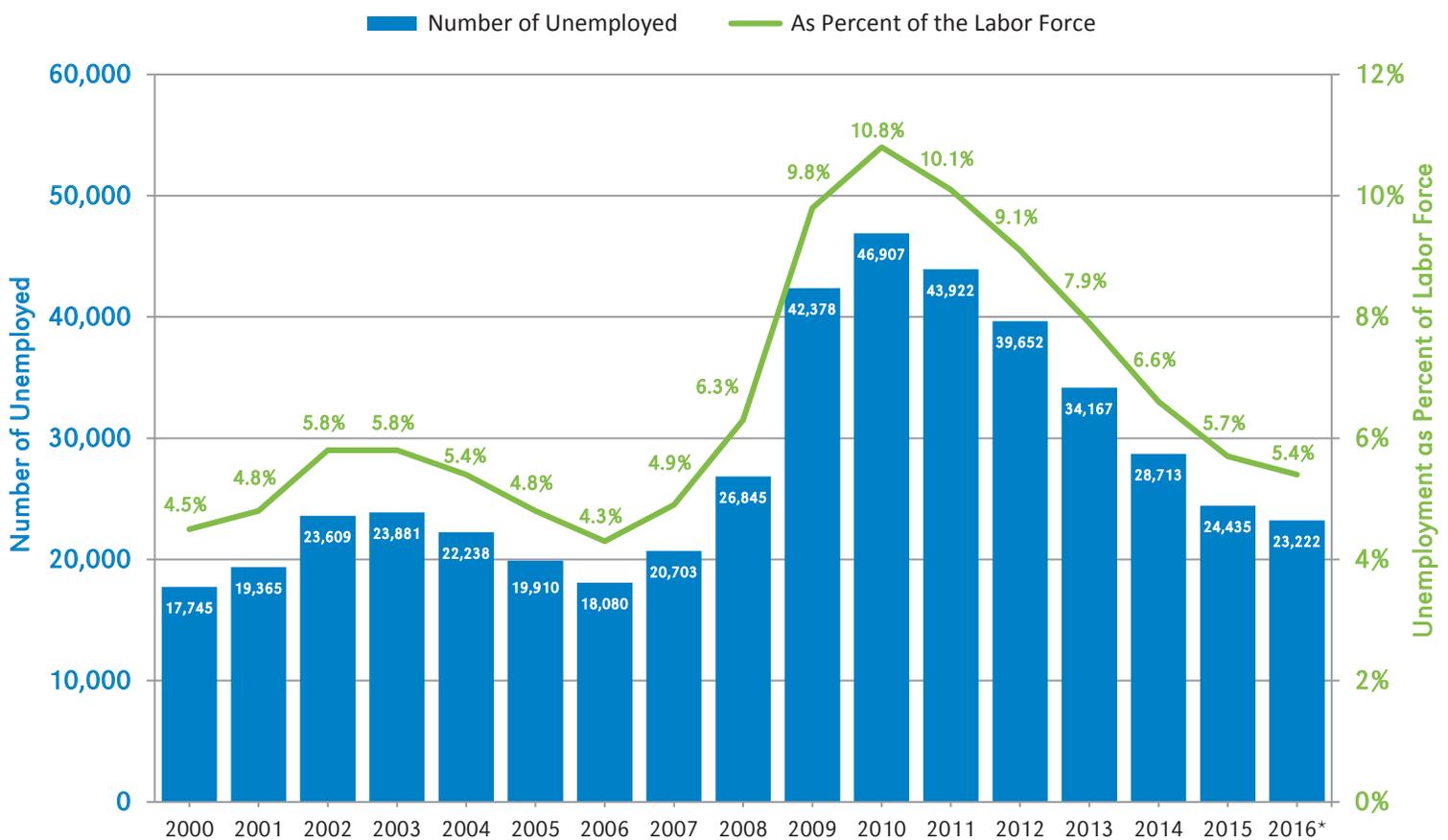
Employment is the primary way people participate in the economy. Without jobs, people stand a greater risk of poverty, hunger and homelessness. Even short-term unemployment can damage a worker's career prospects, and long-term unemployment can be devastating. Though it is not a perfect measure, the unemployment rate is one of the most important macroeconomic indicators used by the general public as a shorthand for the strength of the nation's economy and the prosperity of its people.

### How are we doing?

Looking narrowly at the unemployment rate, our recovery from the Great Recession is complete. The unemployment rate in Ventura County in 2016 was 5.4 percent, the lowest since 2007, before the recession began. The rate was about the same as California's unemployment rate and was slightly higher than the national percentage.

What the unemployment rate masks, however, is that Ventura County's labor force has not grown since the Great Recession. During a period when the county gained around 50,000 residents, we added no new workers. More of our residents are not members of the workforce, whether due to age, disability, or long-term inability to find jobs. Our low rate of job growth has limited opportunities for workers to enter the labor force and given us a less productive economy than we would have with more workers.

## Ventura County Unemployment (2000 - 2016)



\*2016 data is as of June 2016; all other years are annual averages.

# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PORT OF HUENEME

## PORT'S IMPACT GROWS

### What are the measures?

The measures are the jobs related to the Port of Hueneme and the revenue generated by the port to business as well as state and local governments, according to a study conducted by the port.

### Why are the measures important?

The Port of Hueneme is one of Ventura County's chief connections to the global economy. It handles much of the county's exported produce and other goods, and it receives imported automobiles, bananas and other products.

### How are we doing?

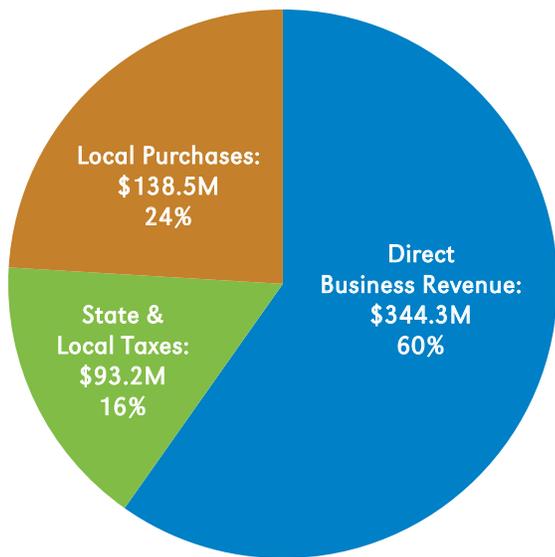
The Port of Hueneme is growing in both employment and revenue generation. The port was responsible, directly or indirectly, for 6,414 jobs in 2015, up from 5,939 jobs in

2013. More than 2,500 people were directly employed at the port's maritime terminals in 2015. An additional 1,239 indirect jobs were attributable to the port, meaning they were generated as a result of local purchases of goods and services by firms operating at the port.

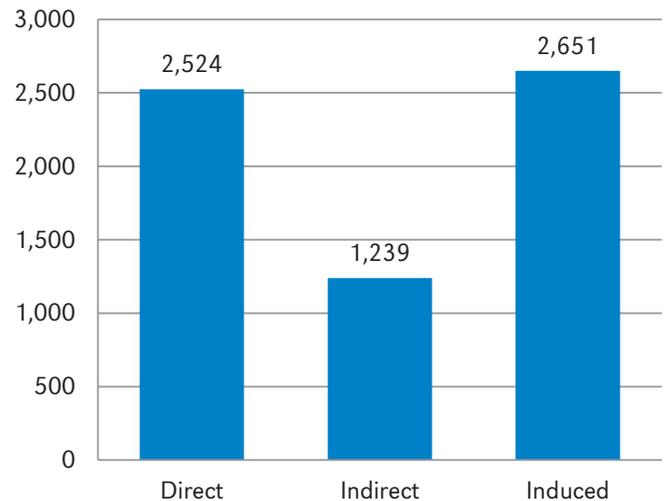
The port was also responsible for 2,651 induced jobs. Induced jobs are those that provide goods and services to firms and workers dependent on the port. For example, the taxes paid by the port support jobs in local government, and the workers at the port go to local doctors for health care.

Business revenue at the Port of Hueneme was \$344.3 million in 2015, up from \$303.4 million in 2013. That led to \$93.2 million in state and local taxes and \$138.5 million in local purchases by firms dependent on port activity.

## Economic, Revenue and Tax Impact (in \$ Millions) from Port of Hueneme Marine Terminals (2015)



## Jobs Related to Port of Hueneme Marine Terminals (2015)





# EDUCATION

Education remains one of the top priorities of state and local governments and a critical concern of Ventura County residents and businesses. However, for the past four years, taxpayers, parents and other stakeholders have gone without comprehensive state-approved data to evaluate our schools.

Primary and secondary education in Ventura County, and in most of the nation, is in a state of flux. The adoption of the Common Core unified curriculum standards that outline what children in each grade should be learning began in 2010 and spread to most states over the next five years. In California, Common Core standards now are taught in every public school classroom. But an information gap opened up when California suspended its statewide standardized testing system in 2013 in order to replace the old tests with ones aligned to the new Common Core standards. While the annual tests are now fully aligned with Common Core, the state stopped using the scores to calculate its Academic Performance Index.

That means that since the 2013/14 school year, we have gone without the API — once the state's primary tool to evaluate schools and also a major part of the education data in past State of the Region Reports. In 2017, the state rolled out its new system, called the California School Dashboard, with plans to implement it in every school district for the 2017/18 school year. The new system includes standardized test results, and also evaluates schools based on attendance rate, suspension rate, graduation rate and other factors.

While we wait for the School Dashboard to provide more performance data on primary and secondary schools, the State of the Region Report focuses on the wealth of other information available about public schools, including class size and school spending. We also look at enrollment trends in our institutions of higher learning, which are engines of economic and cultural growth in the county. And we present socioeconomic data that illustrate economic inequality faced by many children when they enter school.



# PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

## ENROLLMENT SLOWLY SHRINKING

### What are the measures?

The measures are the number of students enrolled in Ventura County public schools from kindergarten through 12th grade, and the public school enrollment by school district.

### Why are the measures important?

A school's average daily enrollment is the most important factor in determining how much funding it receives from the state. Districts with growing enrollment will see their funding increase. While some of that money will be consumed by rising expenses, some will not, as certain costs associated with running a school are fixed. A school with declining enrollment will see its funding drop, and, if the enrollment dips too low, the district may have to consider closing schools, removing programs or reducing staff.

### How are we doing?

Public school enrollment in Ventura County has declined slightly in recent years. In 2016, there were 140,548 students in the county's public schools, 2.1 percent fewer than 10 years earlier. That trend is expected to accelerate, with a decline of 3.7 percent projected between 2016 and 2024.

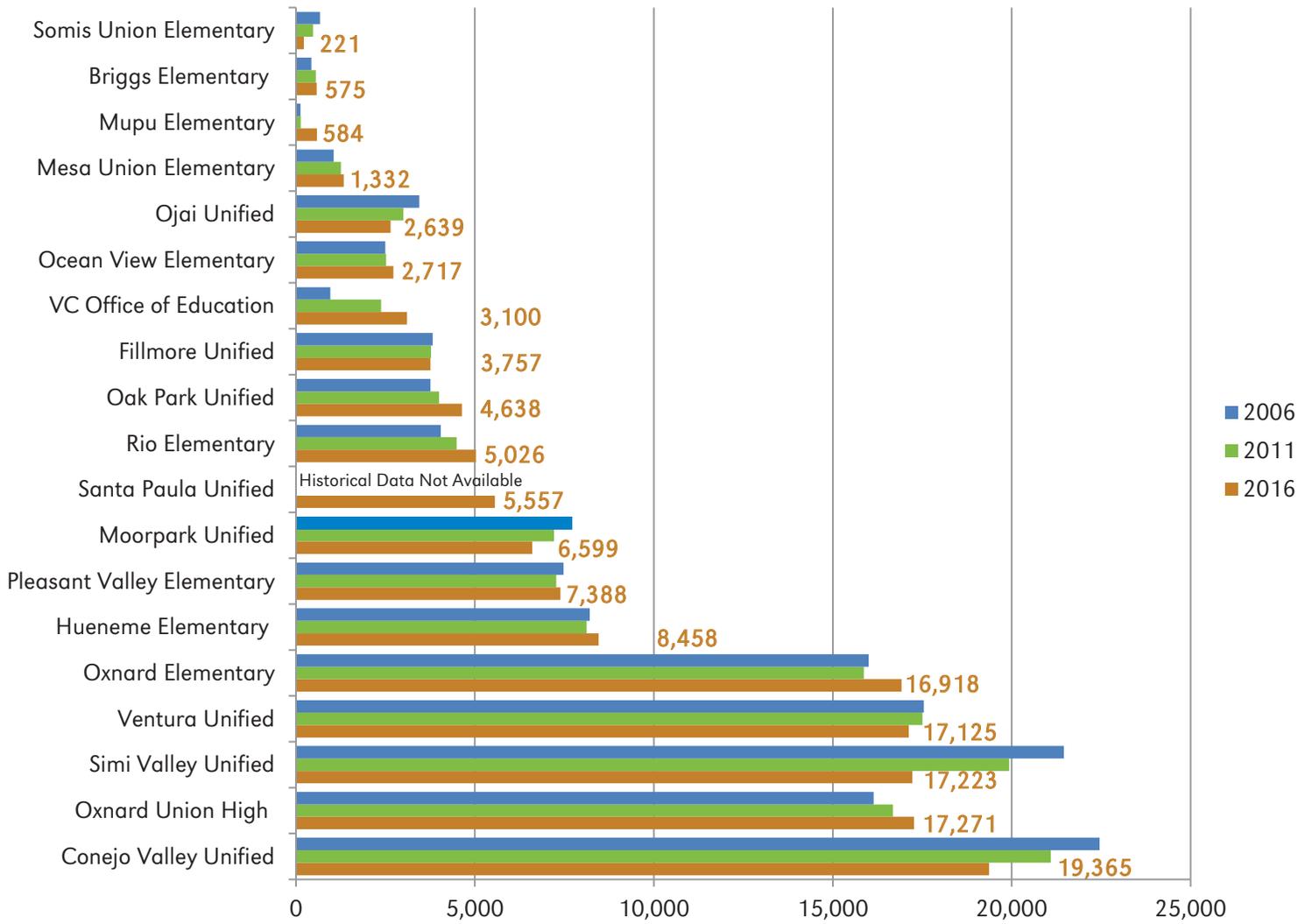
Not every school district is shrinking. Districts in the Oxnard area — including Rio Elementary, Mesa Union Elementary, Oxnard Elementary and Oxnard Union High — all grew between 2011 and 2016. The districts with the most pronounced enrollment declines were Conejo Valley Unified and Simi Valley Unified.

The main driver of enrollment trends is demographics. The millennial generation, born in the 1980s and 1990s, is the largest generation since the baby boomers. When millennials were in school in the 1990s and early 2000s, enrollment grew. Now that the smaller, post-millennial generation has taken their place, enrollment has dropped.

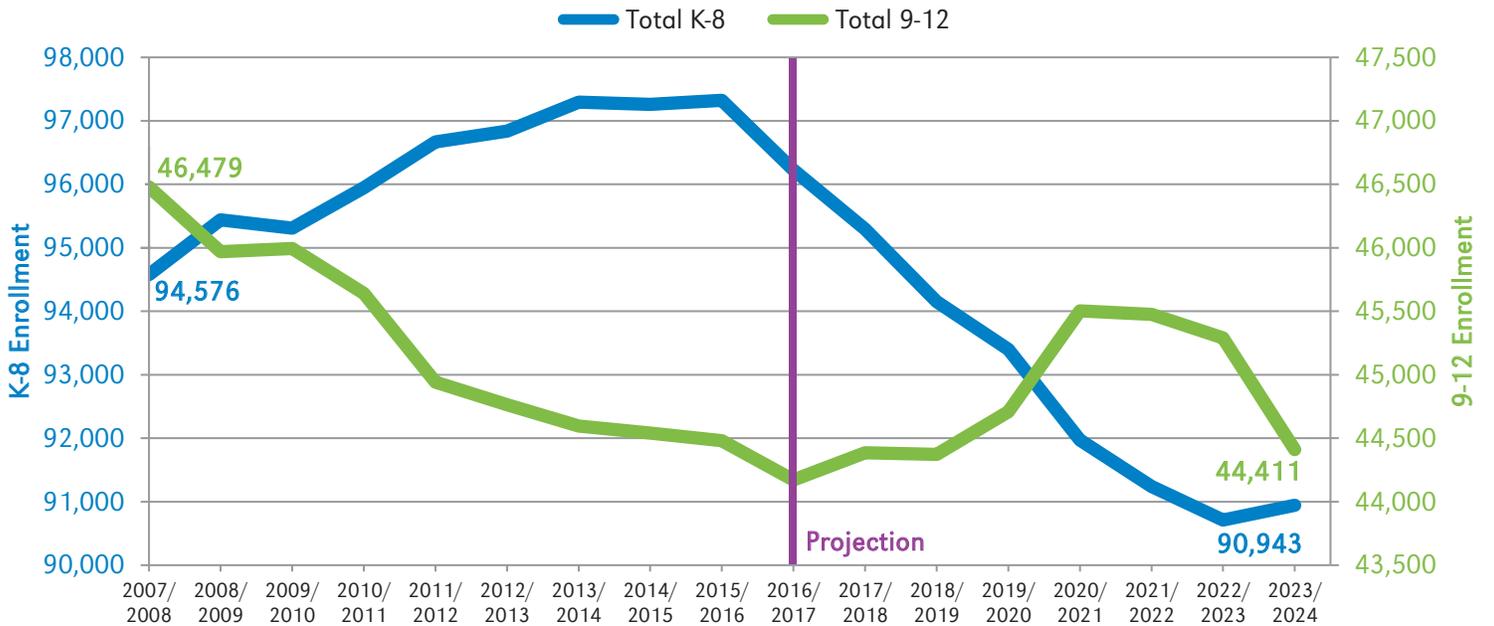
Enrollment numbers in high schools and K-8 schools are usually inversely correlated. A spike in childhood population first results in higher elementary school enrollment, and then greater enrollment in high schools, as the children age. Since around 2009, high school enrollment has dropped while elementary and middle school enrollment has grown. The trends are expected to reverse soon as the post-millennial children age, with high school enrollment growing and K-8 schools shrinking until the early 2020s.



## Ventura County Public School Enrollment (2006, 2011, 2016)



## Ventura County Public School Enrollment (2007/08 - 2023/24)



# PER-PUPIL SPENDING

## SPENDING ON THE RISE

### What is the measure?

The measure is the total spending on a per-pupil basis by seven unified public school districts in Ventura County. Per-pupil spending is calculated by adding up most expenditures, including food services, facilities acquisition and construction costs, and certain retirement benefits. That number is then divided by the district's average daily attendance. These figures include only unified school districts, those that operate schools at all levels from kindergarten through high school.

In 2014/15, the California Department of Education started including state payments to employee pension funds in its per-pupil statistics. Spending totals spiked in that year due to the change and can't be compared directly to the figures from before that point.

### Why is the measure important?

Adequate funding isn't sufficient to ensure a quality school, but it's certainly necessary. Just about everything a school needs to educate children from teachers, to administrators and from books to computers costs money. Looking at how funding changes over time gives insight into whether state, federal and local policymakers are prioritizing education. Comparing funding for different districts can show whether students are getting a fair shake, regardless of where they live.

### How are we doing?

Funding is fairly even across the county's school districts, with those in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods

spending more than those in affluent areas. This is dictated by state law, as most funding comes from the state and a variety of safeguards are meant to either equalize funding or give extra money to districts that need it the most due to higher poverty levels and other challenges.

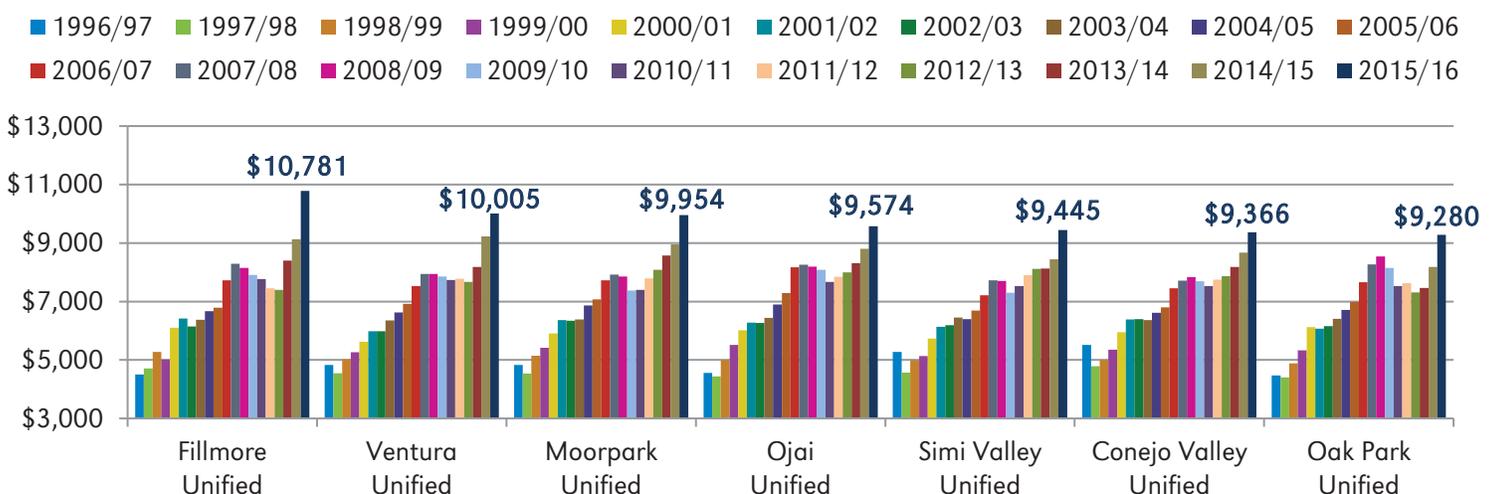
In the 2015/16 school year, all of the selected districts spent between \$9,280 and \$10,781 per pupil. The district with the highest per-pupil spending, Fillmore Unified, is in one of the county's lowest-income communities. Oak Park Unified, the district with the lowest per-pupil spending, serves one of the county's most affluent communities.

The emphasis on directing funds to where they're needed most is fairly new. In 2009/10, Oak Park's spending topped the group of seven unified districts, and Fillmore Unified spent less than Ojai Unified.

Spending in all districts has been on the rise. From 2014/15 to 2015/16, it increased by 18.1 percent in Fillmore, 13.5 percent in Oak Park, 11.8 percent in Simi Valley, 11.2 percent in Moorpark, 8.8 percent in Ojai, 8.5 percent in Ventura and 8 percent in the Conejo Valley.

Under Proposition 98, most spending on K-12 schools is dictated by formula. When the state's overall revenue and spending go up, school spending also rises. The recent spending increases reflect a rebound in the state economy and the state budget. In some districts, they also reflect new programs in Sacramento that drive spending toward school districts with high poverty rates and large populations of English language learners.

## Annual Per-Pupil Spending in Unified Districts (1996/97 - 2015/16)



# AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

## CLASSROOM CROWDING EASES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the average number of students per class in Ventura County and statewide. The California Department of Education did not collect data for the 2009/10 school year, so the chart below excludes that year.

### Why is the measure important?

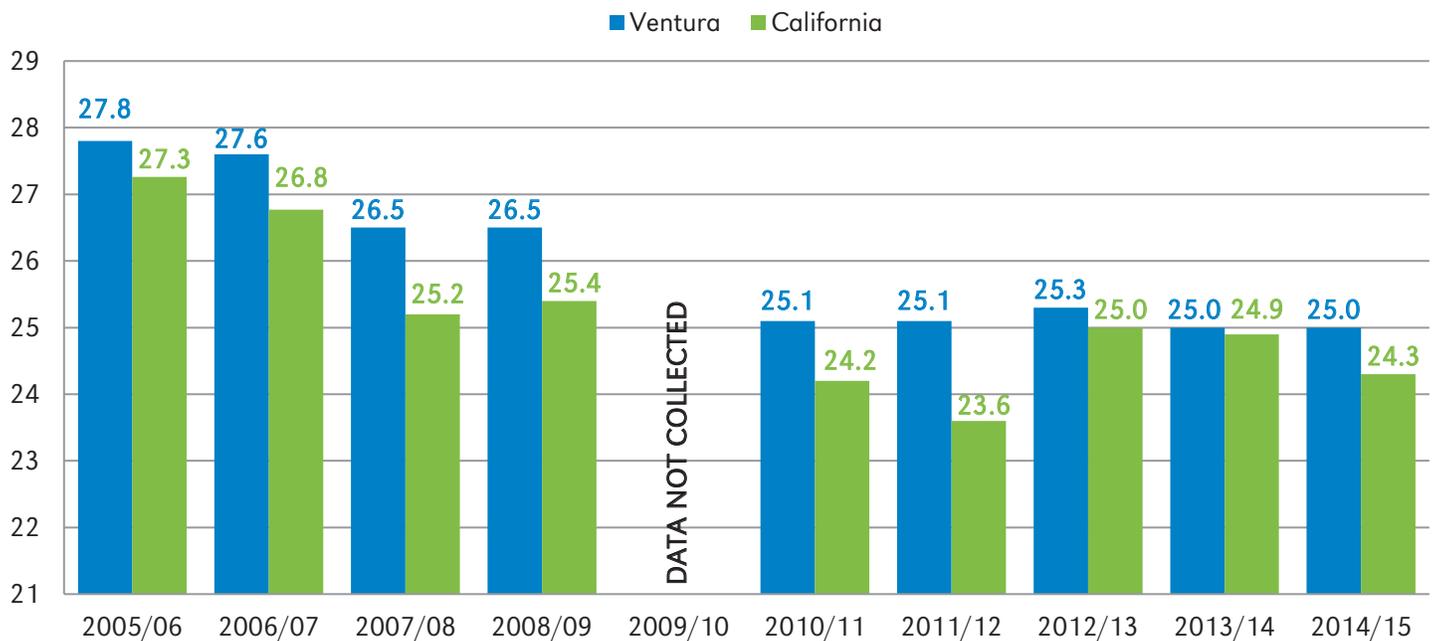
Smaller class sizes offer clear benefits. Students get more individualized instruction, and teachers are better equipped to help those who are having trouble. The research on smaller class sizes is mixed, but many studies have shown some positive impact, particularly in the lower grades.

### How are we doing?

For the past decade, average class size in Ventura County has slightly exceeded the statewide average. In 2014/15, the average class in a Ventura County public school had 25 students, compared to 24.3 statewide.

The average class size in Ventura County dropped from 27.8 in 2005/06 to 25.1 in 2010/11 before leveling off. It has remained at about 25 students per class since then.

**Average Class Size in Ventura County and California  
(2005/06 - 2014/15)**



# ENGLISH LEARNERS

NEARLY 1 IN 4 NEED ENGLISH HELP



## What is the measure?

The measure is the percentage of public school students in Ventura County who are classified as “English learners,” which means they speak a language other than English at home and would benefit from enhanced English language skills to succeed in their school’s core academic programs. Students move out of this classification as their English skills improve.

In 2010/11, the state’s data collection was incomplete, so the statewide figure for that year is unusually low.

## Why is the measure important?

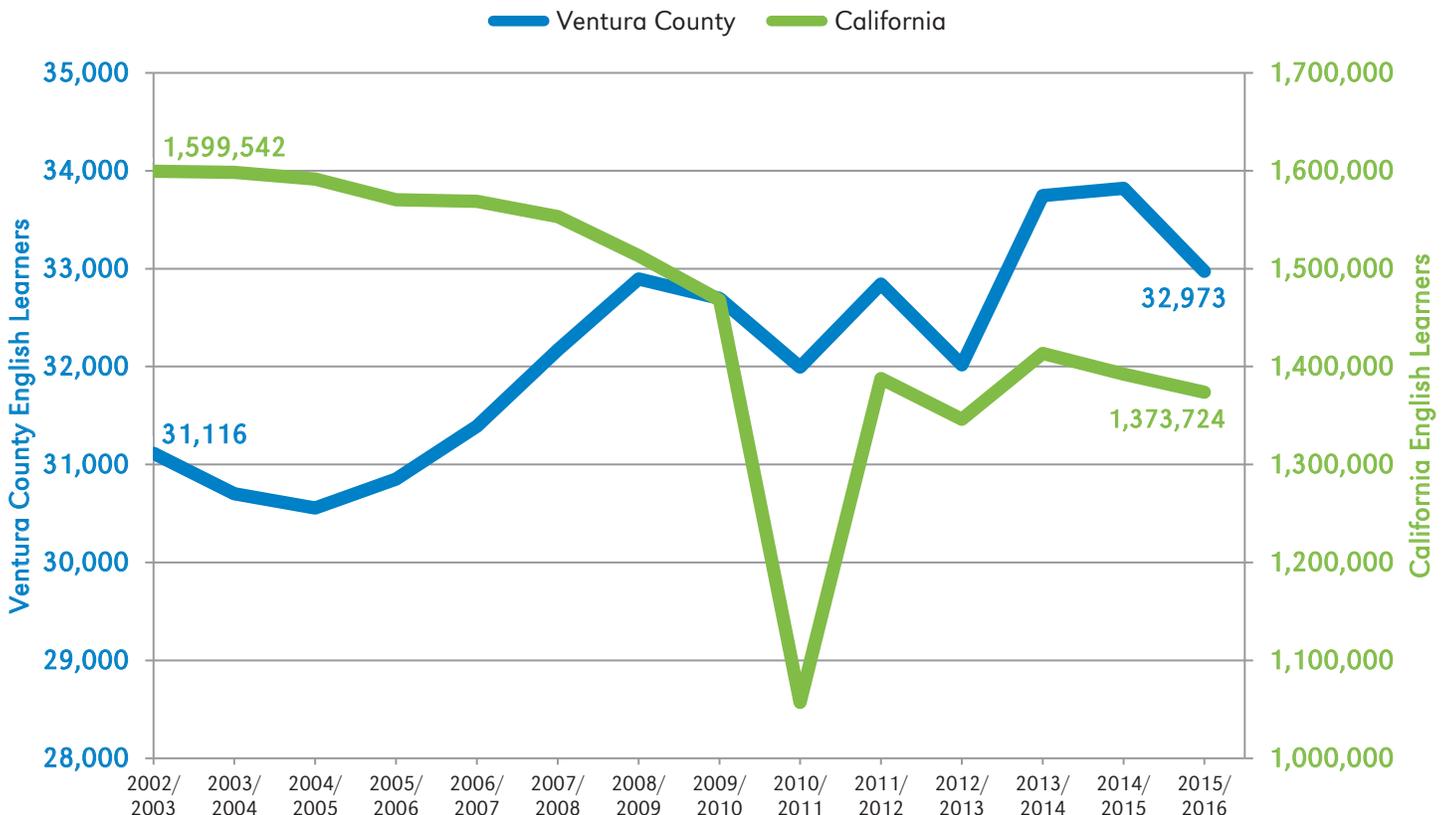
Fluency in spoken and written English is an important skill for students in the classroom and beyond. Students who

don’t speak English well bear an extra burden in school: They are struggling with the language at the same time as they are trying to learn math, history, science and other subjects.

## How are we doing?

In 2015/16, there were 32,973 students, or 23.5 percent of the county’s total, classified as English learners. While the state count has gradually declined by 14 percent since 2002/03, the English-learner population in Ventura County grew 6 percent during the same period. The population is in constant flux; as students improve their English and graduate out of special programs, they are replaced by new students with limited English skills.

**Number of Public School Students Classified as English Learners (2002/03 - 2015/16)**



# HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES

## MORE STUDENTS FINISH HIGH SCHOOL

### What is the measure?

The measure is the percentage of students who drop out of public high schools in Ventura County between the 9th and 12th grades. The formula used to calculate this statistic is based on a “cohort rate,” which tracks a class of students who enter a school or district over their four-year high school careers. Students who transfer into the school are added to the cohort, and those who transfer out are removed. The dropout rate is the percentage of students in the cohort who leave the school without a diploma or its equivalent by the end of their fourth year, and who did not transfer to another school.

### Why is the measure important?

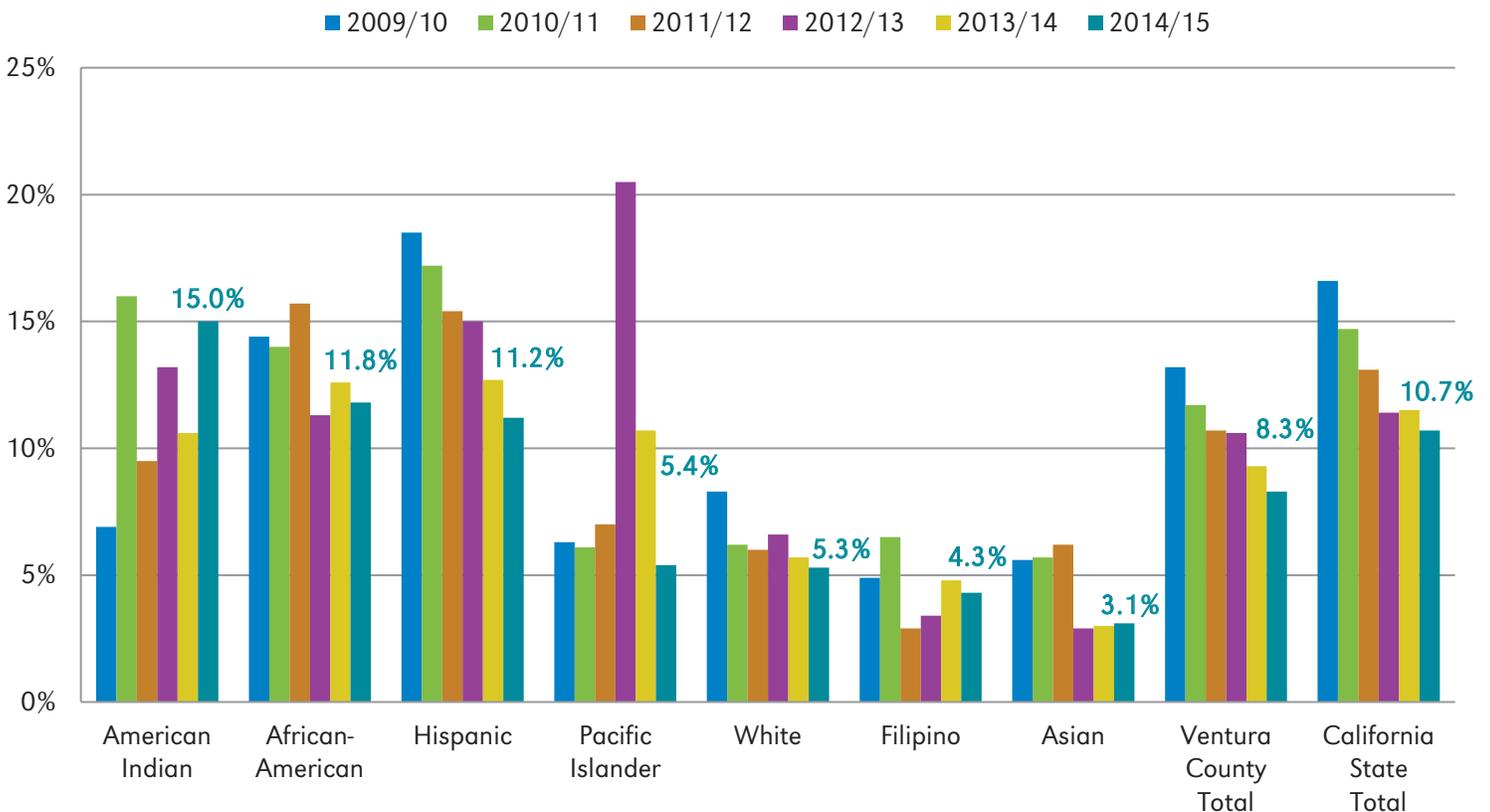
High school dropouts are at a significant disadvantage when compared to their better-educated peers. Their earnings are much lower for their entire working lives, and they are more likely to be unemployed. Even in industries that do not require a college degree, a high school diploma is usually the minimum level of education for jobs that result in long-term prosperity.

### How are we doing?

Ventura County's dropout rate is lower than the state's and has been falling steadily since 2010, when the state adopted its current measurement method. The cohort that finished high school in 2015 dropped out at a rate of 8.3 percent, down from 13.2 percent for the 2010 group. The dropout rate statewide has been declining at a similar rate, going from 16.6 percent in 2010 to 10.7 percent in 2015.

The rate is higher for some ethnic groups, though. In Ventura County, the dropout rate in 2015 was 15 percent of Native American students, 11.8 percent of African-American students and 11.2 percent of Latino students. White students had a 5.3 percent dropout rate, and the rate for Asian students was 3.1 percent.

**Ventura County Public Schools (9 - 12) Cohort Dropout Rates (2009/10 - 2014/15)**



# COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

UNIVERSITIES GROW; COMMUNITY COLLEGES LEVEL OFF

## What are the measures?

The measures are the enrollment at Ventura County's community colleges and four-year universities. The universities are California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks; California State University, Channel Islands, near Camarillo; and Thomas Aquinas College, near Santa Paula. The community colleges are the three campuses of the Ventura County Community College District: Moorpark College, Ventura College and Oxnard College.

## Why are the measures important?

College attendance has become a requirement to participate in wide swaths of the modern American economy. A four-year degree dramatically impacts a graduate's lifetime earnings; even attending college without graduating is very helpful. Community colleges offer important job training and mid-career education, in addition to providing affordable education to students who plan to transfer to four-year colleges.

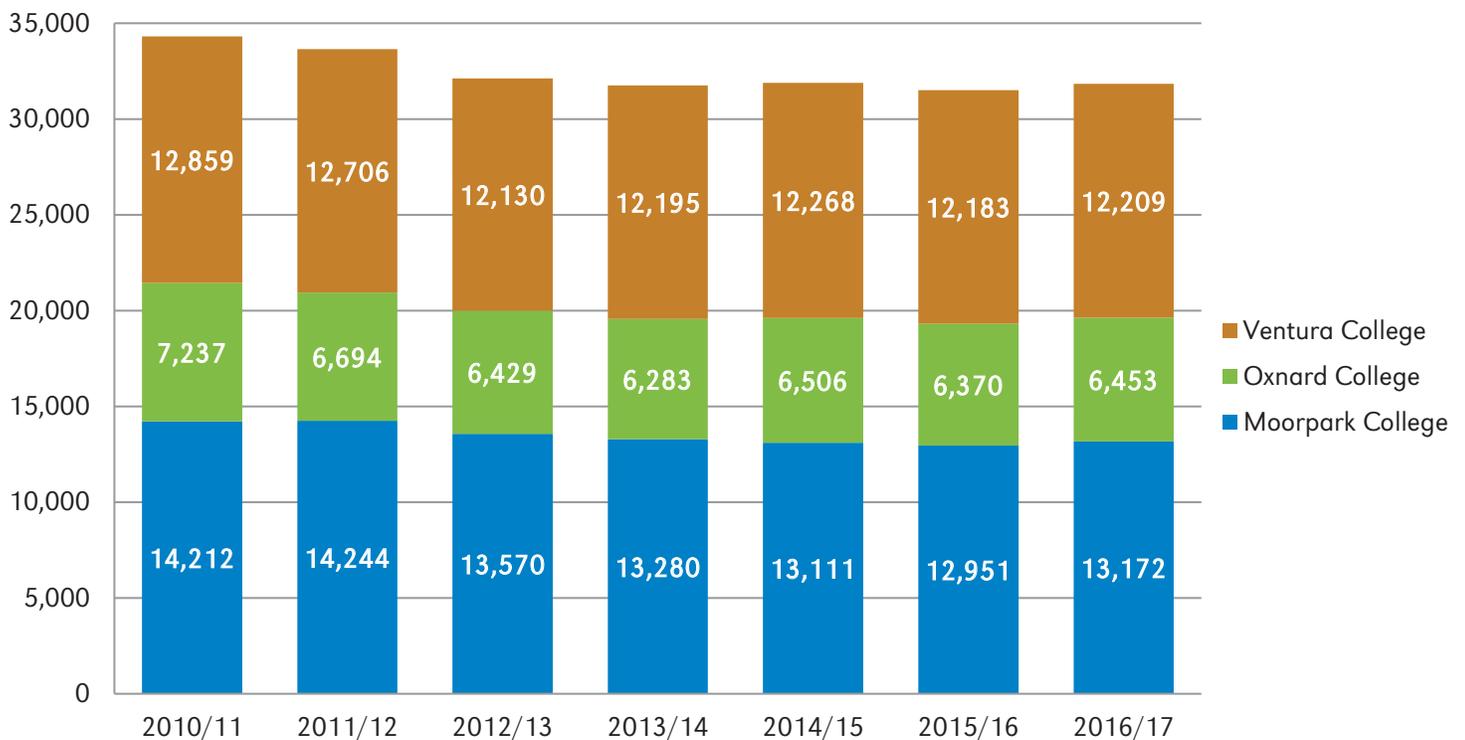
## How are we doing?

Attendance at four-year colleges in Ventura County has been rising in recent years, while attendance at community

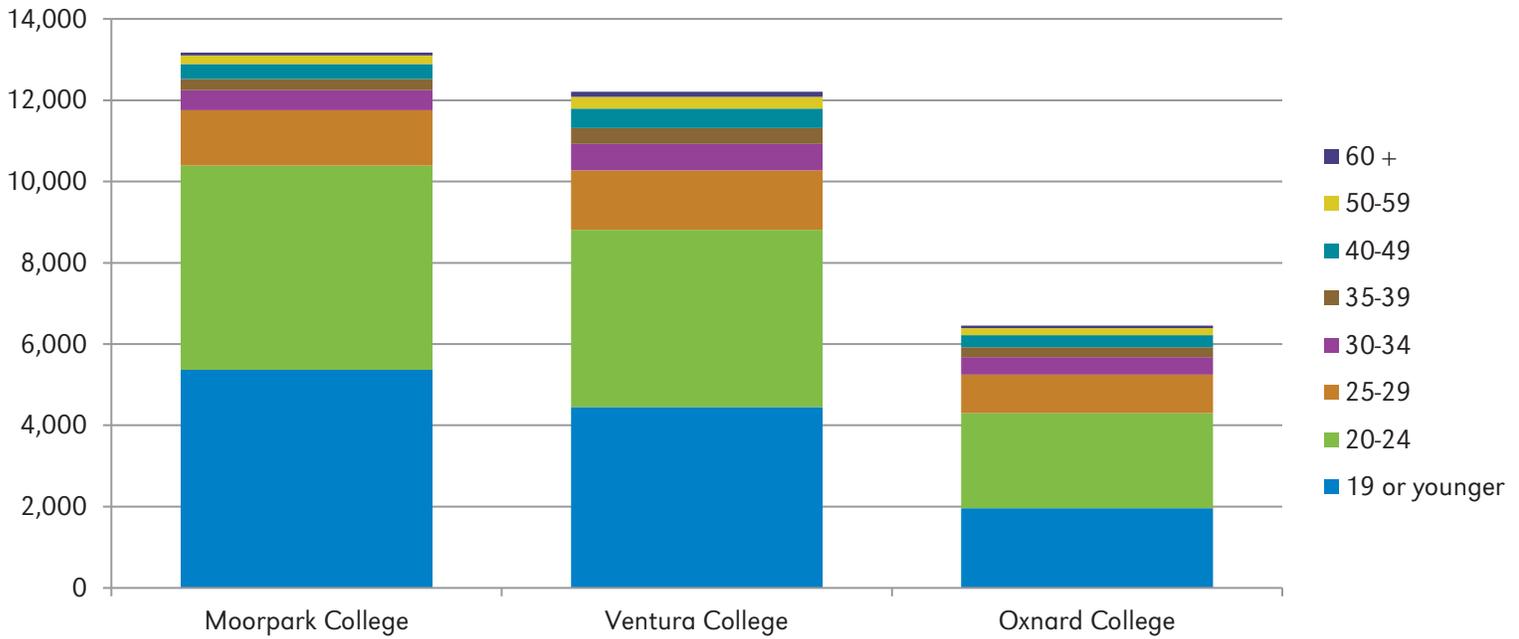
colleges has remained stable. The increase in four-year students has been driven mostly by growth at CSU Channel Islands, which opened in 2002 and has been expanding ever since. Enrollment at CSUCI for the 2016/17 school year reached 6,332, up 7.7 percent from the year before and more than double the enrollment 10 years ago. California Lutheran University has also been growing, though more slowly than CSUCI. In 2016/17, CLU had 2,892 students, 2.9 percent more than the previous year. Over 10 years, CLU's enrollment grew by 36.2 percent. Thomas Aquinas College is a smaller school and has been adding only a handful of students every year. Its enrollment in 2016/17 was 389 students, 12 more than the year before and 38 more than a decade earlier.

Community college enrollment declined sharply from 2010 to 2013 and has stabilized since then. In the fall of 2016, there were 31,834 students enrolled at the three Ventura County campuses, a 1 percent increase from 2015. One likely explanation is community college budgets were cut during the recession, and classes and enrollment had to be reduced. When the economy recovered, funding rose again and some classes were restored.

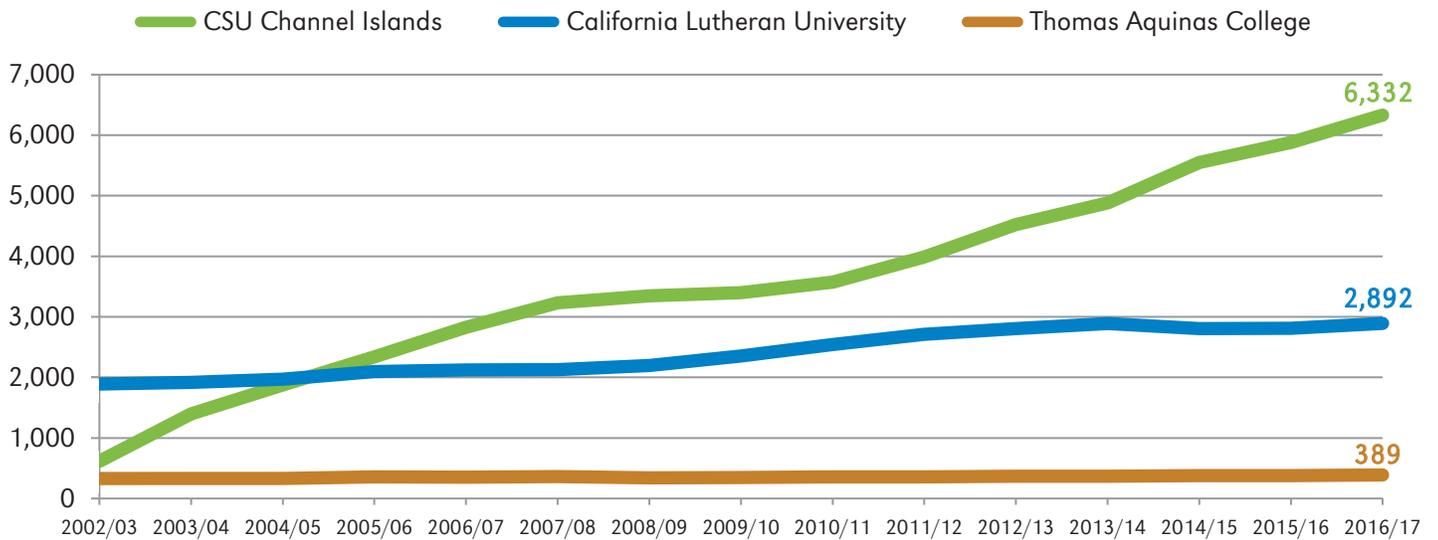
**Ventura County Community College Enrollment  
(Fall Term, 2010/11 - 2016/17)**



## Ventura County Community College Enrollment by College and Age (Fall Term, 2016/17)



## Four-Year College Undergraduate Enrollment in Ventura County (2002/03 - 2016/17)



# EARNINGS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

## EDUCATION PAYS OFF

### What is the measure?

The measure is the median annual earnings by Ventura County residents, sorted by gender and educational level. It includes all county residents 25 and older, whether they work full time or part time.

Additional data on the gender earnings gap is presented in the Economy domain.

### Why is the measure important?

Education is the single most important factor in determining future prosperity. Every level of additional schooling, from high school on, produces lifelong benefits. This is true for men and women; however, there is an across-the-board gender disparity.

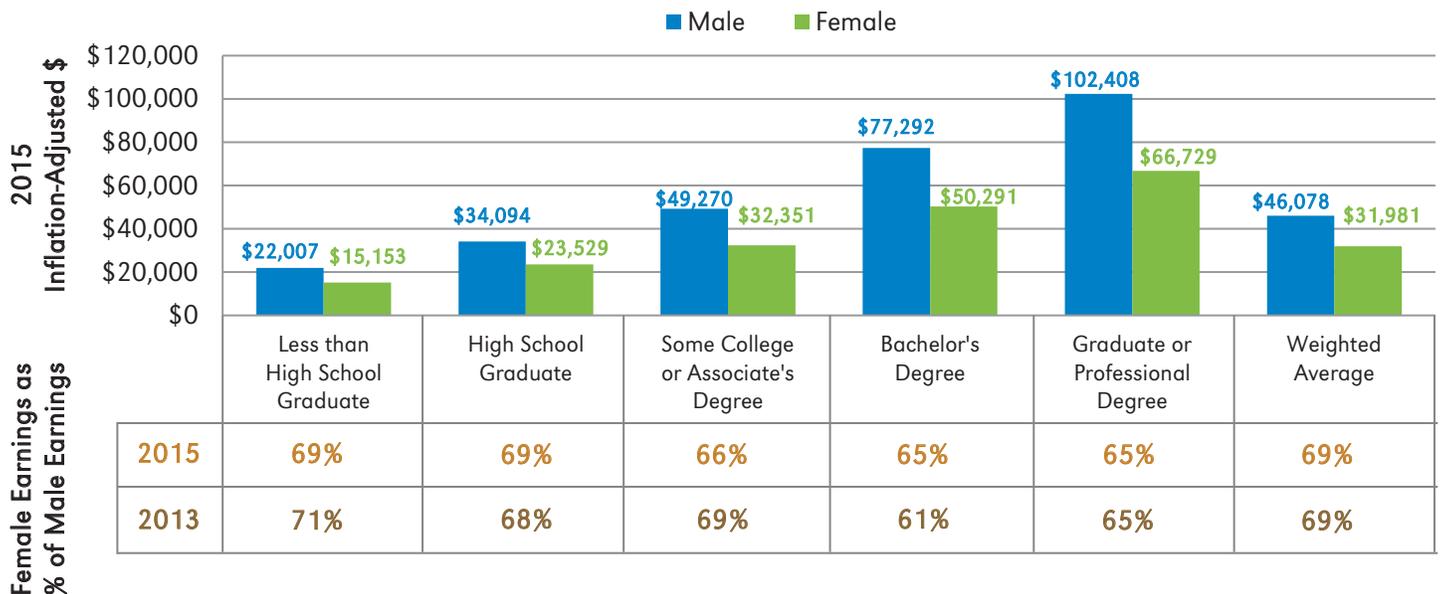
### How are we doing?

The benefits of high school and higher education are enormous. Men in Ventura County without a high school degree earned an average of \$22,007 in 2015, while men with a graduate or professional degree earned \$102,408.

Just graduating from high school provides a huge earnings boost: 55 percent for both men and women, when compared to residents without a high school diploma. A bachelor's degree provides a similar boost when compared to a community college degree or some college experience without a degree. At the level of graduate and professional degrees, the financial returns begin to diminish: residents with those degrees made around 32 percent more than those with bachelor's degrees.

Women earn less than men at every level of education. The difference here appears more pronounced than in the data in our Economy domain on the gender wage gap. There are two reasons for this. First, the gender wage gap data in the Economy domain includes all workers over the age of 16, while this chart includes only those over 25 to properly factor in college degrees typically attained later in life. Second, the data in this section covers all county residents with either full-time or part-time jobs, while the figures on the gender wage gap include only full-time workers. More women than men work part time, resulting in a larger gender gap in this data.

**Ventura County Median Earnings by Gender and Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older (2015)**



# CHILDHOOD GROWTH AND DISPARITIES

## INEQUALITY PERSISTS IN COUNTY

### What is the measure?

The measure is an index known as the “Misery Index,” which is made up of six socioeconomic indicators, applied to 18 school districts in Ventura County. The indicators are: the poverty rate among children 5 and younger; the percentage of women-led households with children 5 and younger who live below the federal poverty line; the percentage of adults 25 and older without a high school diploma; the percentage of people who speak English “less than very well”; the percentage of students classified as English learners; and the percentage of students eligible for free or discounted meals at school. The percentages are added together and weighted equally for the index. A higher index indicates greater socioeconomic challenges.

### Why is the measure important?

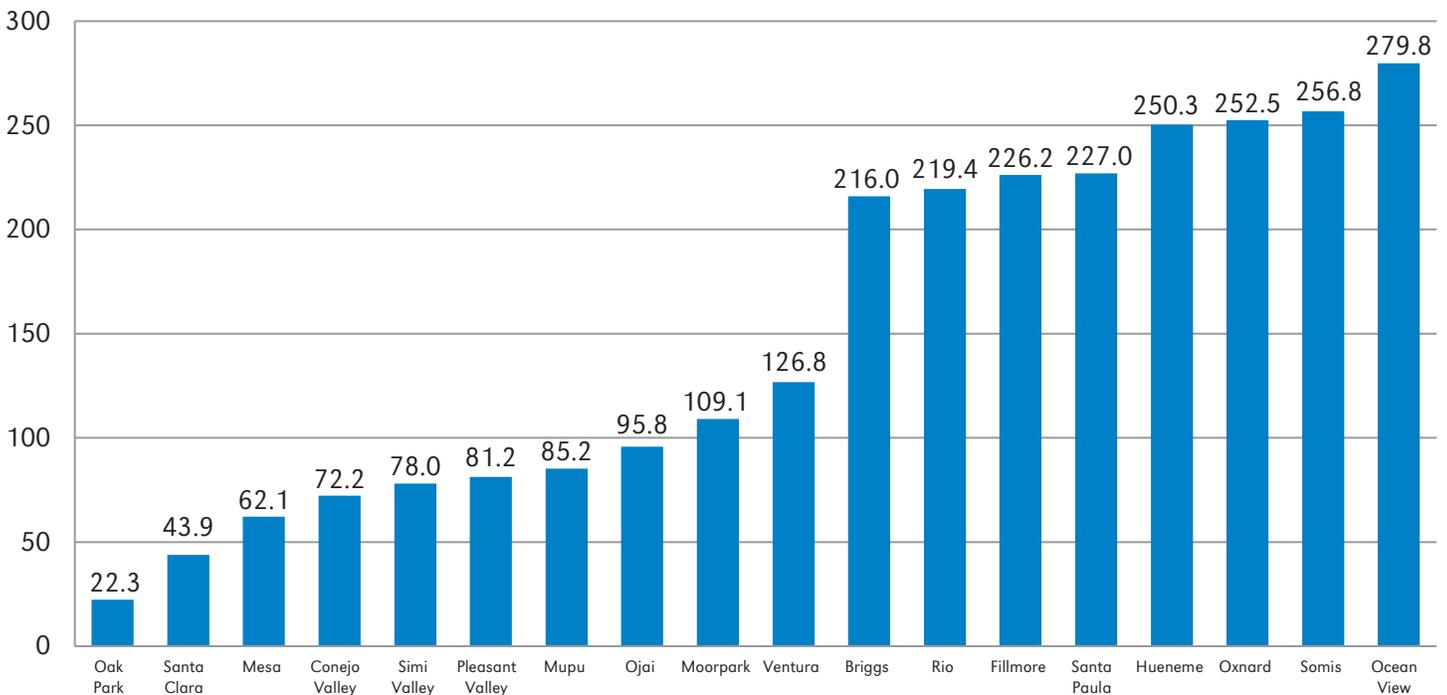
Not all schools have an equal task before them. In some areas, children are much more likely to enter school having grown up poor or without English fluency. These factors, and the rest that make up the index, have long-lasting effects on a child’s success in school and prospects later in life.

### How are we doing?

As the index illustrates, deep socioeconomic divides exist in Ventura County. In Oak Park, which had the lowest combined value of adverse socioeconomic conditions in 2015, only 0.18 percent of children age 5 and younger live in poverty, and 5.4 percent of children are eligible for free or discounted meals at school. Just 1.5 percent of adults 25 and older in Oak Park are without a high school diploma. Other school districts with low scores on the index were in Conejo Valley, Simi Valley and Camarillo.

At the other end of the spectrum, in Fillmore 16.4 percent of children 5 and younger live in households with incomes below the federal poverty line. In Santa Paula, 36.5 percent of adults over the age of 25 lack a high school diploma. And in Oxnard, 30.5 percent of people 5 and older speak English “less than very well.” The Ocean View School District, in South Oxnard, had the highest rate of negative socioeconomic indicators.

“Misery Index” for Selected Ventura County School Districts (2015)



# PRESCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

## PRESCHOOL SPACE IN SHORT SUPPLY

### What is the measure?

The measure is the ratio of demand for preschool among low-income families to the number of spaces available in First 5 preschools in 17 Ventura County ZIP codes.

### Why is the measure important?

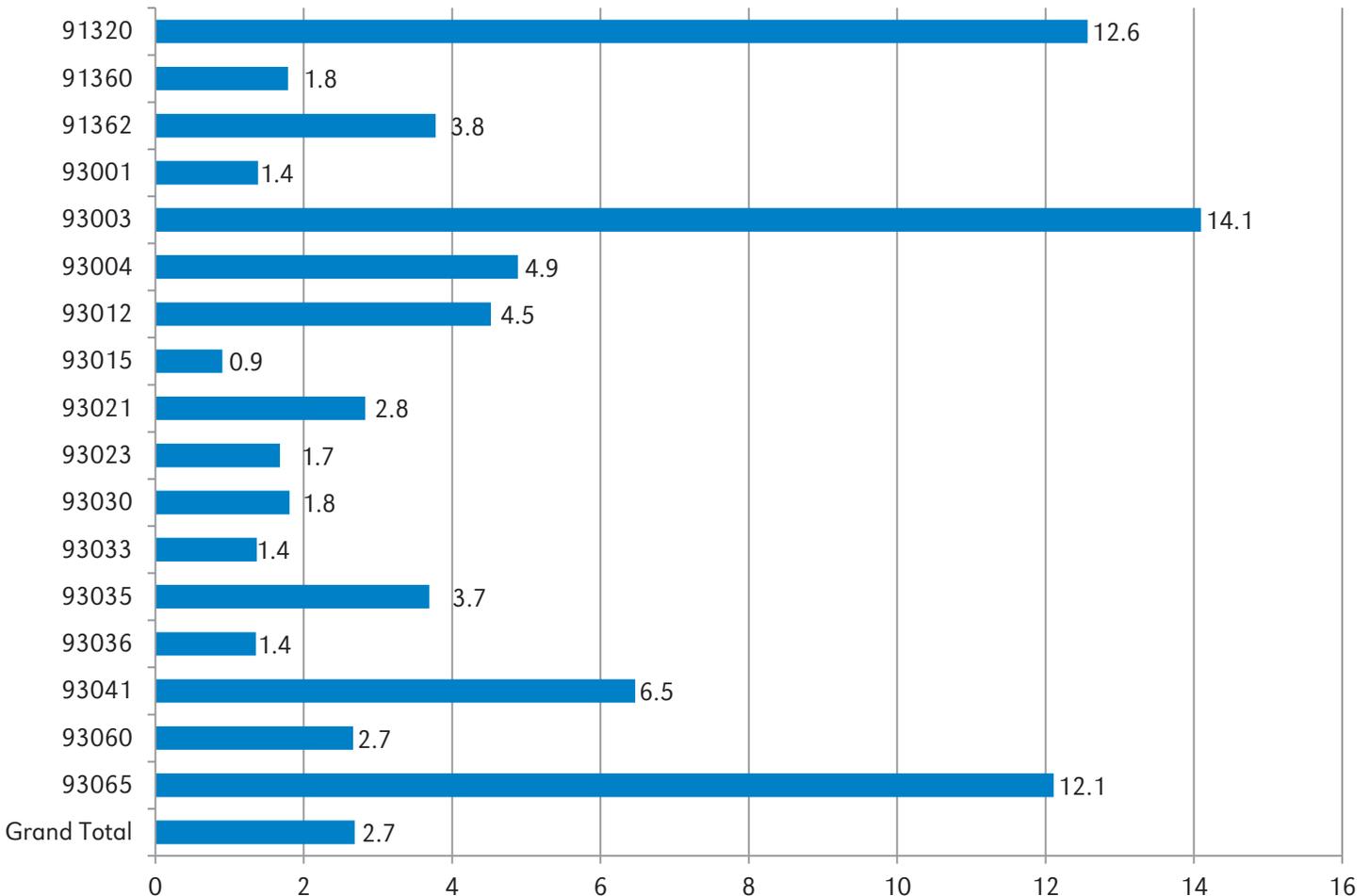
Numerous studies show quality preschool prepares children for school and imparts long-lasting educational benefits, which are particularly helpful to low-income children. But most preschool is privately provided and out of the financial reach of low-income families.

### How are we doing?

In most of the county, the demand for free preschool outstrips the supply. The biggest shortages were in Ventura's 93003 ZIP code, which had 14.1 children in need per open spot in 2016; the 91320 ZIP code in Newbury Park, with 12.6 children in need per opening; and the 93065 ZIP code in Simi Valley, where there were 12.1 children in need per opening.

Only Fillmore and Piru (the 93015 ZIP code) had more openings than children in need, with a ratio of 0.9. Other areas that came close, with ratios between 1.0 and 2.0, were Oxnard (93030, 93033 and 93036), Thousand Oaks (91360), Ojai (93023) and west Ventura (93001).

**Ratio of Demand to Available Preschool Spaces in Ventura County (2016)**



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# LAND USE & HOUSING

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In 2016, Ventura County voters overwhelmingly renewed the county's growth-control initiatives, known collectively as Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources, or SOAR. By extending these measures through 2050, they reaffirmed what's become conventional wisdom over the past two decades: The people of Ventura County do not want suburban sprawl. They want open space along with a robust agricultural sector, without subdivisions encroaching upon either.

SOAR laws are an implicit agreement. By telling developers to avoid rural areas, they send the message that existing urban centers are suitable for development. The "smart growth" vision is one of lush green spaces and thriving farms between the cities, and dense, walkable city centers. But this agreement remains largely unfilled. The public's appetite for density appears no greater than its desire for sprawl. Any proposed housing development that increases a neighborhood's density garners at least some opposition. Buildings of two or three stories are decried as sun-blotting eyesores. City planners and elected officials

often want more development, but the projects that make it through the approval process usually are shrunken versions of their original selves, and they arrive years after they were proposed.

With limited land for new development, and the lack of public support to approve high-density infill projects, the supply of new housing has slowed to a trickle. In 2015, permits were issued for 758 new housing units in all of Ventura County. That equates to one large subdivision, or a few good-sized apartment complexes, in a county of more than 850,000 people.

Meanwhile, home prices have risen every year since the recession ended and show no sign of reversing course anytime soon. It's not accurate to say something must give. Something is already giving. Ventura County is becoming more like its neighbor to the north, Santa Barbara. Wealthy retirees and residents who bought into the market decades ago can afford to live here, while younger working people increasingly cannot.



# ACRES OF URBAN AND BUILT-UP LAND

## SPRAWL SLOWS IN THE AGE OF SOAR



### What is the measure?

The measure is the amount of land in Ventura County devoted to urban purposes, defined as developed to a density of at least one residential or commercial unit for every 1.5 acres.

### Why is the measure important?

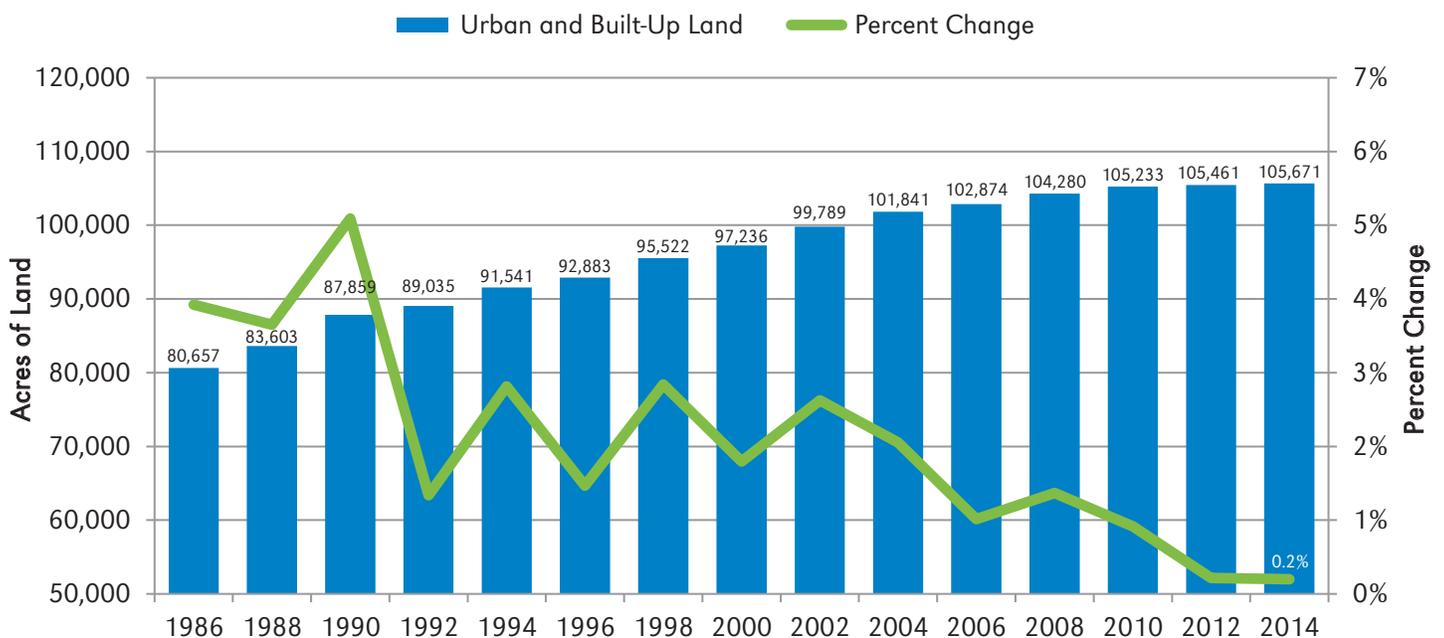
The demand for urbanized land almost always grows, as long as the population and the economy continue to grow as well. If they want to meet that demand and keep housing prices from going through the roof, developers and governments have two choices: increase the density on land that's already urbanized or urbanize more rural land. Developing rural land decreases the amount of farmland and open space in the county, threatens the viability of the agricultural industry and potentially diminishes the region's quality of life. The other option, increasing density within existing urban areas, has frequently been rejected by the community.

### How are we doing?

Ventura County's urban land has expanded little since the Great Recession ended. In 2014, there were 105,671 acres of developed land, an increase of just 0.4 percent over the developed area in 2010. The pace of urbanization was faster during the early 2000s real estate boom, with 2.4 percent growth from 2004 to 2008 and 4.7 percent growth from 2000 to 2004.

The economy and local land use policy drive the pace of urbanization. In Ventura County, the effect of the growth-control laws known as SOAR, or Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources, has been pronounced. Voters passed SOAR laws all over the county between 1995 and 2002. Before that, the pace of urbanization was much faster during both good and bad economic times. From 1986 to 1990, at the peak of a real estate boom, urbanized land in the county grew by 8.9 percent. Even during the recession of the early 1990s, urbanization moved nearly as fast as during the early 2000s boom; the county's urbanized land grew by 4.2 percent from 1990 to 1994, compared to 4.7 percent from 2000 to 2004.

**Acres of Urban and Built-Up Land and Percent Change in Ventura County (1986 - 2014)**



# NEW HOUSING STARTS

## NEW HOMES FEW AND FAR BETWEEN

### What is the measure?

The measure, known as “housing starts,” is the number of building permits issued each year by local governments for new housing units. It does not necessarily reflect the number of housing units actually built in a given year.

### Why is the measure important?

The shortage of housing in most of Ventura County is undeniable. Apart from the years following the crash of 2008, home prices consistently have risen faster than inflation for two decades. Rents are climbing too, and apartment vacancy rates are extremely low. The way to meet rising demand is to build new housing, and for that to happen local governments must issue building permits.

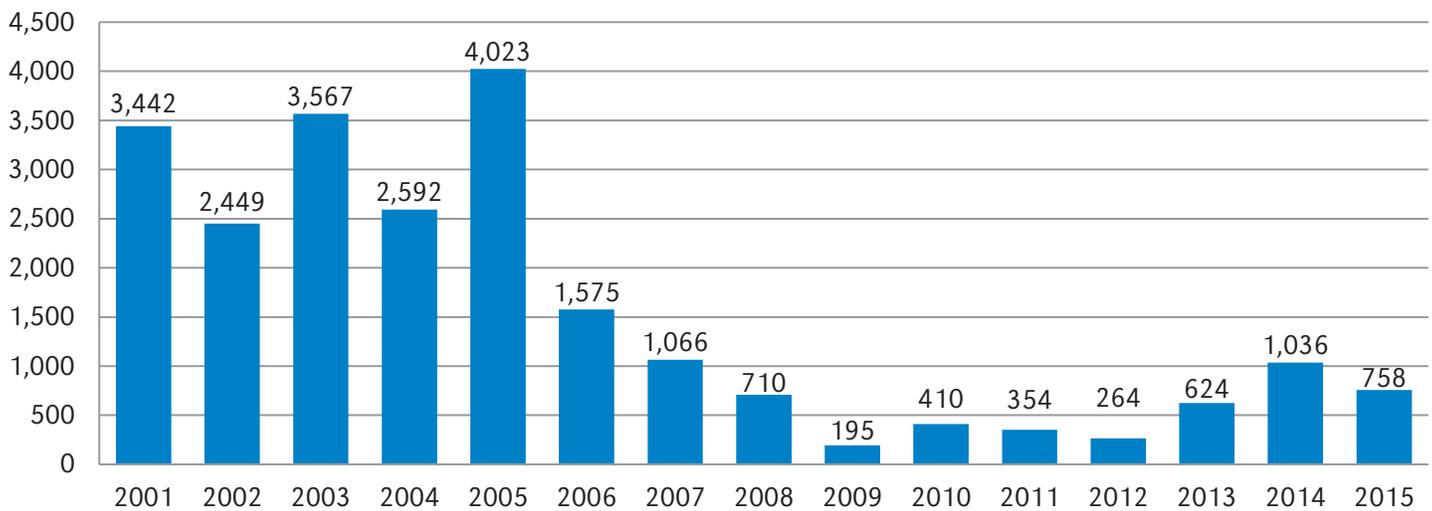
### How are we doing?

Ventura County’s local governments issued 758 permits for new housing units in 2015. That was down from 1,036

in 2014, but well above the lean years of the recession; in 2009, only 195 permits were issued.

The recovery in the home building industry has been meager, though. The 758 permits issued in 2015 are less than one fifth the number in 2005, when the county had 4,023 housing starts. The current figures are inadequate to keep up with the county’s needs. Ventura County’s population grew by 27,173 residents from 2010 to 2015, according to the California Department of Finance. Over that same period, officials approved 3,446 housing starts. Since the average household has around three people, that would house a bit more than 10,000 residents, during a time when the county added nearly three times that many people. This means at our current population growth rates, we would need to add nearly 2,000 units per year to meet demand.

### New Housing Units Permitted in Ventura County (2001 - 2015)



# HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE

## OWNERS OUTNUMBER RENTERS

### What is the measure?

The measure is the percentage of homes occupied by their owners, rather than by renters.

### Why is the measure important?

Promoting home ownership has been a goal of public policymakers and private financial institutions for generations. Home ownership helps families build wealth, and owning a home often fosters connection to the community and neighborhood.

Home ownership also has its drawbacks. Buying a home is a major financial risk, one that can leave a family overexposed to the ups and downs of the real estate market. Families no longer able to pay their rent can seek out a cheaper apartment; however, homeowners who can't pay their mortgages and are unable to sell can lose their homes and see their savings and credit ruined. When the homeownership rate climbs too high, it signals the real estate market might be overheating, as mortgages are extended to more people who might present a credit risk. Home ownership also impairs mobility; homeowners can't move as easily as renters, so if they lose their jobs, it's harder to move to a city with better employment prospects.

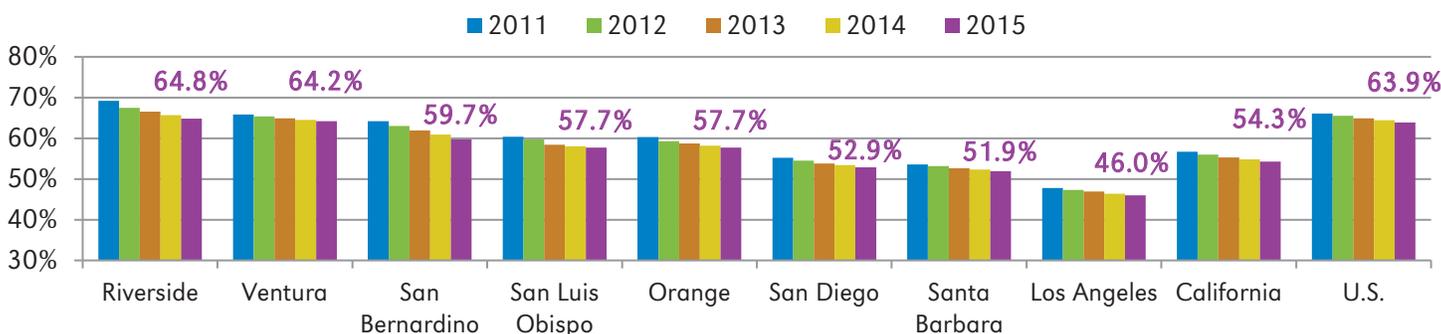
### How are we doing?

Just under two thirds of households in Ventura County are owner occupied. That surpasses nationwide and statewide rates and is higher than most other Southern California counties. The rate in Ventura County is more remarkable in light of the area's high housing prices. People here place a high value on home ownership, and they sacrifice to achieve it.

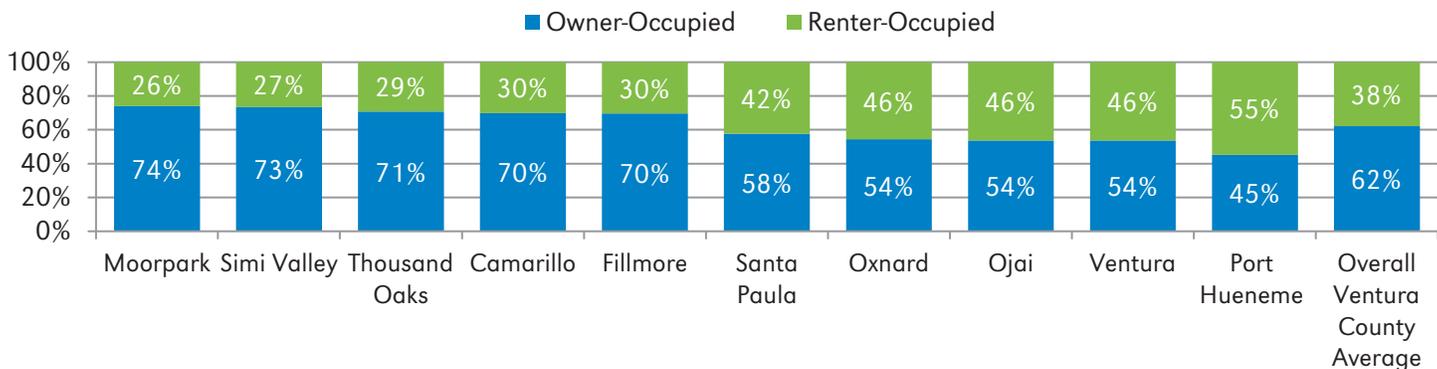
Homeownership rates dropped nationwide when the housing market crashed in 2008, and they have continued to fall ever since. In Ventura County, the rate was nearly 70 percent in 2005. It declined to 66.4 percent in 2010 and to 64.2 percent in 2015.

Home ownership in Ventura County is highest in the eastern half of the county, where the population is older and household incomes are higher. Moorpark, at 74 percent in 2015, tops the list, followed by Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks. Renting is more common in western Ventura County. Oxnard, Ojai and Ventura all had homeownership rates of 54 percent in 2015, and Port Hueneme had the lowest rate, at 45 percent. These western Ventura County cities are all below state and nationwide homeownership rates.

### Homeownership Rate by County (2011 - 2015)



### Percentage of Owners and Renters in Ventura County (2015)



# MEDIAN HOME PRICE

## HOME VALUES ON THE RISE AGAIN

### What is the measure?

The measure is the price of the median home sold each year, including new and existing houses and condominiums. The median is the point at which half of all sales were for higher values, and half were for lower values.

### Why is the measure important?

Home values matter deeply to people who own homes and to people who want to. Rising home values increase homeowners' net worth but make it harder for people who don't own homes to purchase. Falling home values can limit homeowners' ability to sell their home, while people in the market to buy benefit as more homes come into their price range.

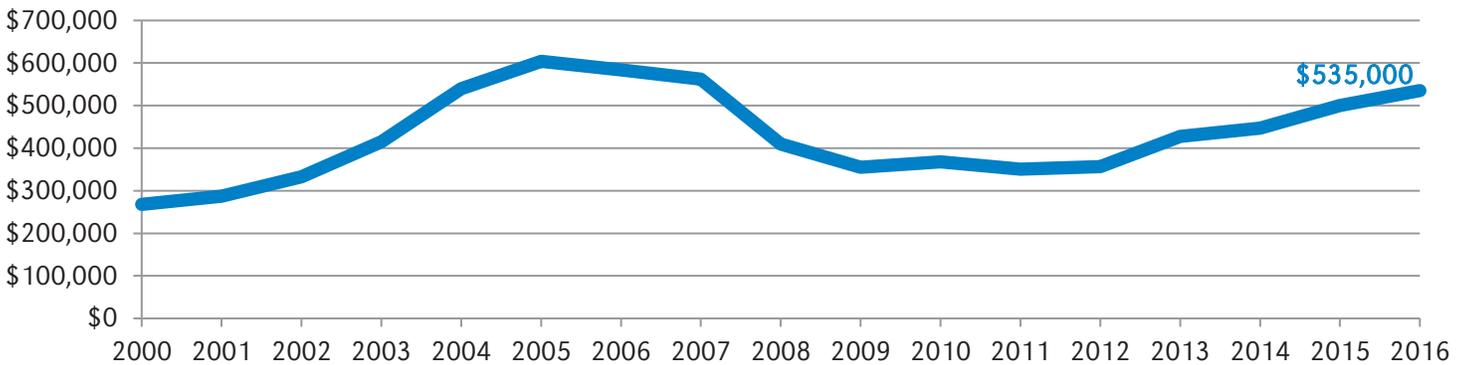
### How are we doing?

The median price of homes sold in Ventura County has risen for five straight years, to \$535,000 in 2016. That was

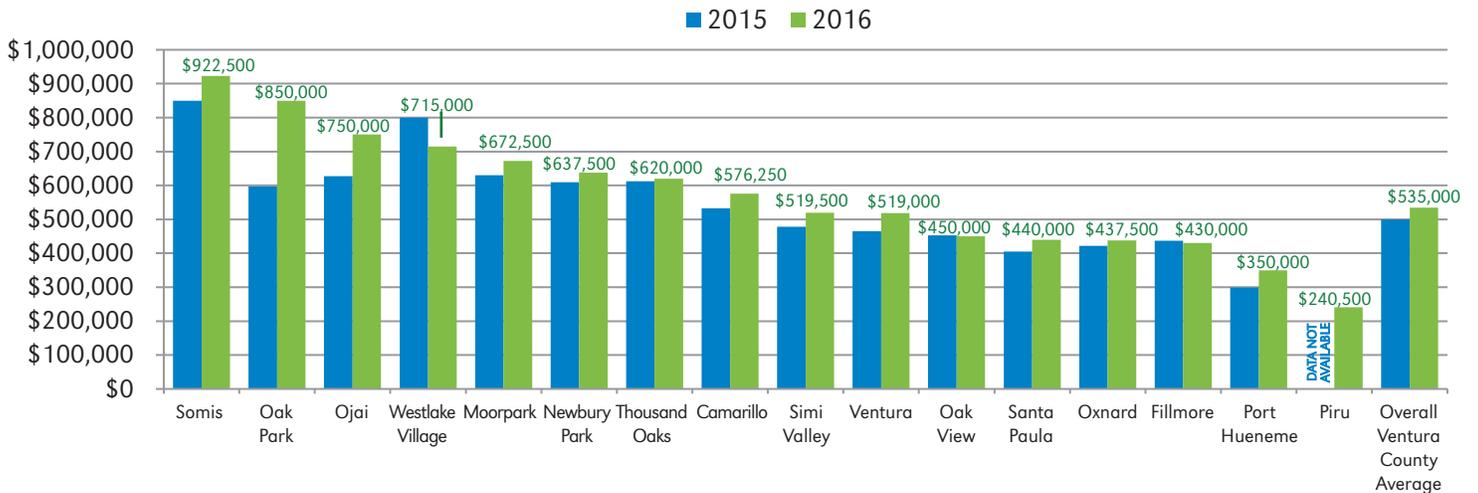
a 7 percent increase over 2015. During the housing bubble of the early 2000s, the median price rose 30.1 percent in 2004 and peaked at \$604,000 in 2005. While prices in Ventura County are still below their previous peak, the dynamics that are causing the current increases are not due to manipulations in lending and banking, which were a significant factor in previous run-ups. Ventura County is a highly desirable place to live. With strong demand and limited supply, prices will rise as well-qualified buyers compete with each other. Less-qualified buyers often are priced out under these circumstances.

Home prices are generally higher in eastern Ventura County than in the west. The highest median prices in 2016 were in Somis, at \$922,500; Oak Park, at \$850,000; Ojai, at \$750,000; and Westlake Village, at \$715,000. The lowest values were in Piru, at \$240,500; Port Hueneme, at \$350,000; and Fillmore, at \$430,000.

**Ventura County Median Home Price, Annual Average (2000 - 2016)**



**Ventura County Median Home Price by City (October, 2015 - 2016)**



# NOTICES OF DEFAULT

## FORECLOSURE CRISIS FADES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of homeowners in Ventura County who are served notices of default in the third quarter of each year. A notice of default is an official notification from the bank that the homeowner is behind on mortgage payments. It is the first step in the foreclosure process.

### Why is the measure important?

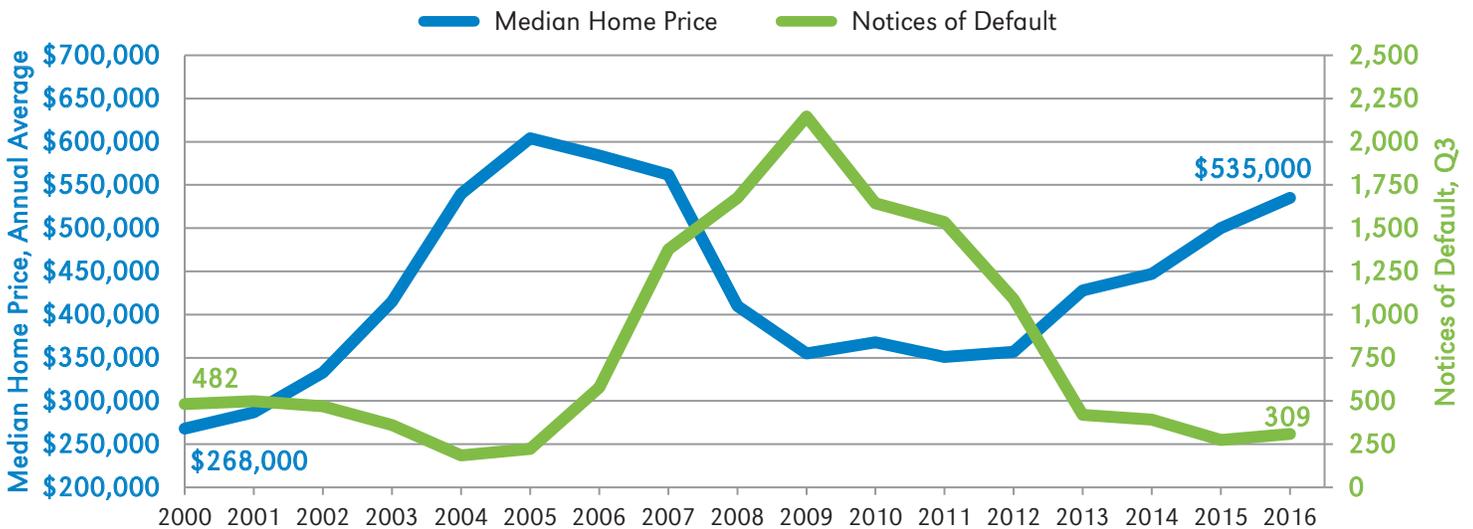
Homeowners who fall behind on their mortgage payments are at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure. That, in turn, puts those families at risk of homelessness. Even if the family finds other housing, a foreclosure seriously harms their credit rating, making it harder to borrow money for any purpose, and to buy another home in the future. On a larger scale, foreclosures can harm a neighborhood, as they often result in homes sitting at least temporarily empty, and they can drive down the value of surrounding homes.

### How are we doing?

Notices of default became rare once home prices started to rise again. In the third quarter of 2016, there were 309 such notices filed in the county, compared to a high of 2,146 in the third quarter of 2010.

Foreclosures and notices of default are inversely correlated to home prices. When prices rise, homeowners who can't afford their mortgages can refinance their loans or sell their homes. When prices fall, many homeowners end up "underwater," owing more than they can sell their homes for. When that happens, they can't sell or refinance, and foreclosure looms if they can't make their payments.

**Ventura County Median Home Price, Annual Average and Notices of Default, Q3 (2000 - 2016)**



# MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

## RENTS ARE HIGH, VACANCIES LOW

### What are the measures?

The measures are average rents and vacancy rates in market-rate apartment buildings in Ventura County, as tracked by Dyer Sheehan Group. For vacancy rates, a weighted average of all apartments is used, regardless of size.

### Why are the measures important?

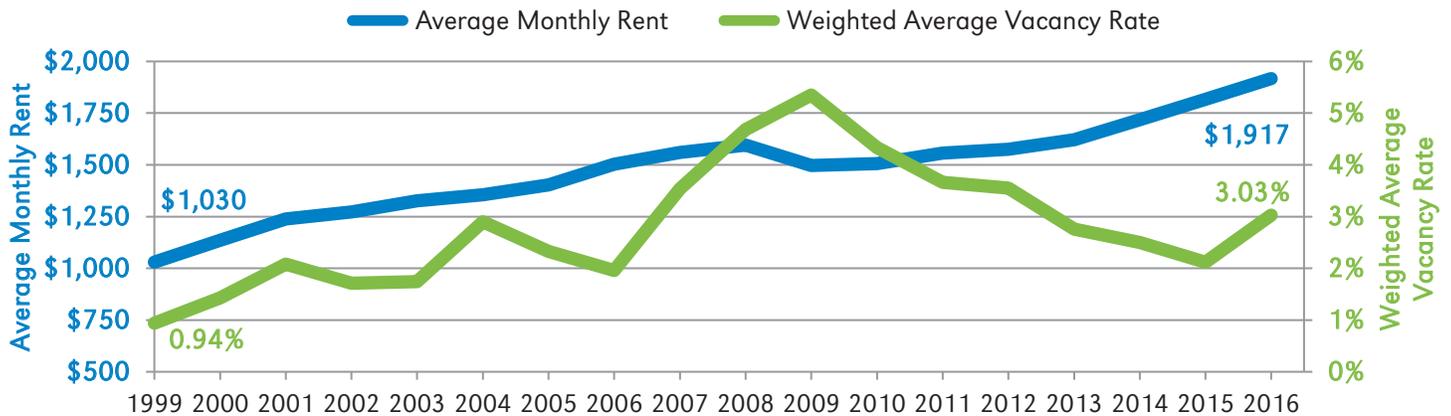
Though Ventura County has a high rate of home ownership, it also has thousands of renters. For almost all of them rent is their biggest monthly expense. The county's population of renters is growing, as developers have turned toward multifamily housing in the wake of the recession and changing market dynamics.

### How are we doing?

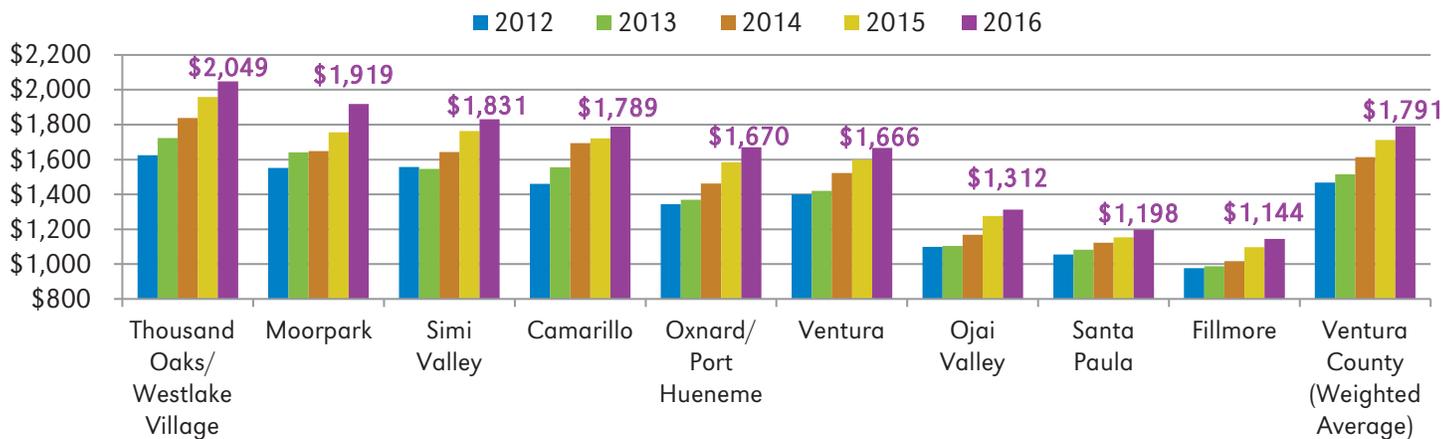
Rents climbed steadily in Ventura County in recent years. In July 2016, the average apartment in the county went for \$1,791 per month, according to Dyer Sheehan's weighted average. That was up 4.6 percent from a year earlier, and up 22 percent from four years earlier. Rent was highest in Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village, at \$2,049 per month in 2016, followed by Moorpark, at \$1,919. The lowest rents were in Fillmore, at \$1,144 per month; Santa Paula, at \$1,198; and the Ojai Valley, at \$1,312.

As a result of limited supply and strong demand, Ventura County has very low apartment vacancy rates. In July 2016, it was 3 percent and has declined steadily since topping 5 percent in 2009. And that was an aberration; the vacancy rate has been below 4 percent for 15 of the past 18 years, rising above that level only from 2008 through 2010.

### Average Ventura County Two Bedroom Multifamily Rents & Weighted Average Vacancy (July, 1999 - 2016)



### Average Monthly Multifamily Rent, All Unit Sizes (July, 2012 - 2016)



# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

## HOMES OUT OF REACH FOR MOST

### What is the measure?

The measure is the percentage of households that can afford to buy the county's median-priced home. The calculation assumes a 10 percent down payment and a 30-year mortgage at prevailing interest rates. If the mortgage payment is less than 30 percent of the household's income, the home is considered affordable.

### Why is the measure important?

Owning a home is a core element of the American Dream, but it often comes at a high price. Ventura County home prices are relatively high, but they are only half of the equation. The affordability index best measures the true cost of owning a home because it factors in the money that people in Ventura County have available to spend on their houses.

If families who live and work in Ventura County cannot afford homes here, they might move out of the area. They might stretch their budgets to buy, which puts them at risk of foreclosure if they suffer even a small reduction in income. They could choose a home that's too small for

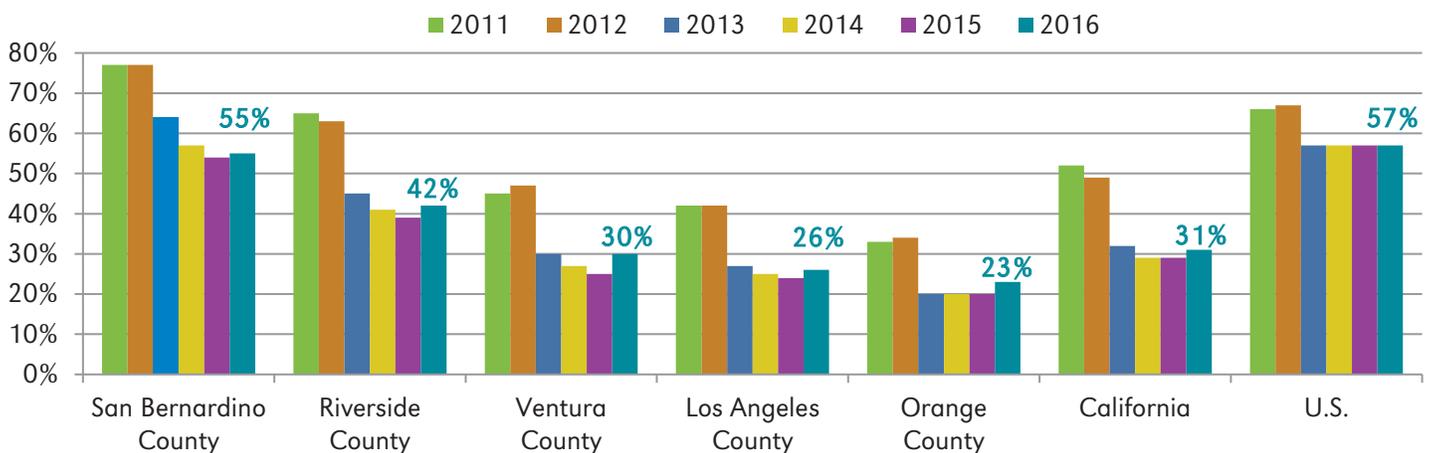
their needs. Or, they might live somewhere cheaper and commute, making the region's traffic congestion even worse. Any of those outcomes have negative impacts for both the family in question and the community as a whole.

### How are we doing?

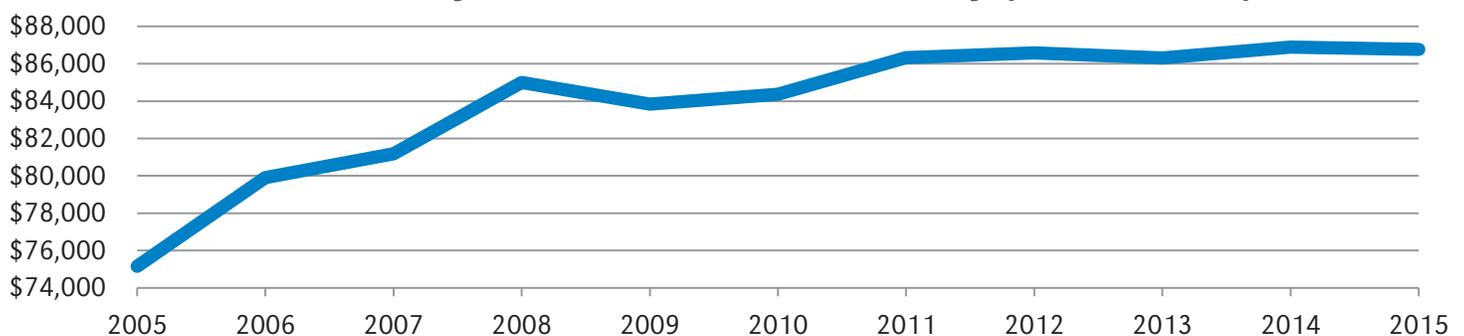
In the third quarter of 2016, only 30 percent of Ventura County households could afford the county's median-priced home. That was higher than the rate in 2014 and 2015, but well below the county's 47 percent affordability in 2012, when home prices were lower.

Ventura County's affordability rate is similar to that of California as a whole. It is well below the national rate, which was 57 percent in 2016. In Southern California, the affordability rate ranged from 23 percent in Orange County to 55 percent in San Bernardino County. The clear trend is that areas with more expensive housing have lower affordability than cheaper areas. In other words, higher wages in more prosperous areas aren't enough to offset the higher cost of housing.

### Housing Affordability Index (Q3, 2011 - 2016)



### Median Family Income in Ventura County (2005 - 2015)



# NATURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Ventura County's natural environment is almost certainly its greatest resource. Its people are, of course, immensely valuable, but the biggest reason they want to live here is the natural beauty. In fact, in 2015 the Washington Post ranked Ventura County the single most desirable place to live in the lower 48 states, based on a U.S. Department of Agriculture database that measures "natural amenities," primarily climate and scenery. "Quality of life," that ineffable thing that draws so many people here, is largely a reflection of the region's natural beauty and bounty.

That desirability is a mixed blessing. Our local governments, businesses and residents must balance attracting jobs, new residents and tourists with preserving the things that make the county desirable in the first place.

Our record in protecting and preserving our environment is mixed, but generally positive. In the big, decades-spanning

picture, our air and ocean water are far cleaner than they once were, and our residents use less water and electricity on a per capita basis.

In other areas we have been less successful. Temperatures in Ventura County have risen, as they have around the globe, and our coast is vulnerable to rising sea levels that would come with significant climate change. And even after a wet winter, the county still is recovering from the worst drought in decades.

In this domain, we attempt to capture the big picture of our environmental progress and the challenges we still face. To do that, we have examined electricity usage, solar power installations, air quality, rainfall and the drought, oil and gas production, and the rate at which we send trash to landfills.



# ELECTRICITY USE

## COUNTY CONSERVES POWER

### What is the measure?

The measure is the amount of residential energy consumption in Ventura County, in kilowatt-hours per year.

### Why is the measure important?

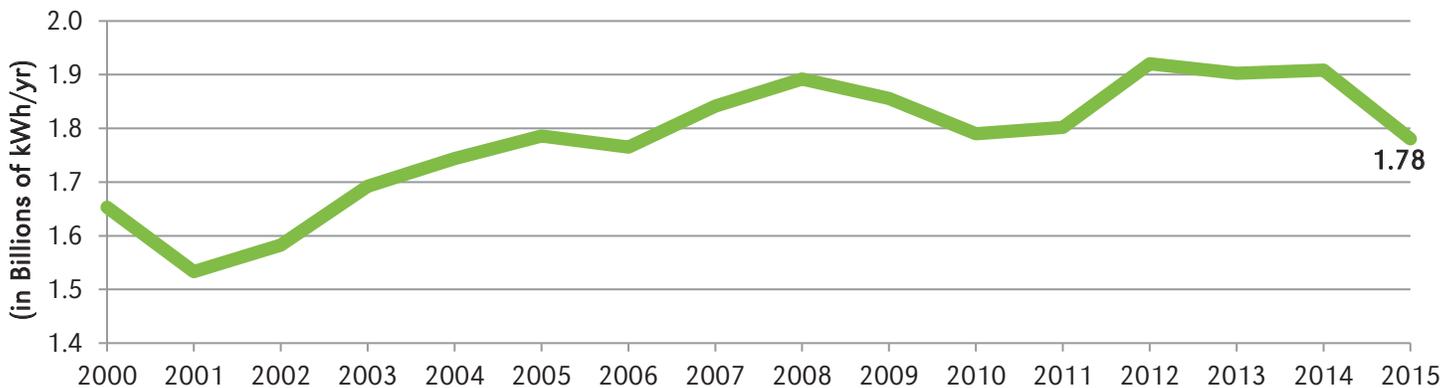
Though renewables are a growing part of the energy market, the majority of our electricity comes from sources that impact the environment in some way. California's top source of fuel for its power plants is natural gas. Burning natural gas produces fewer harmful emissions than burning coal, but it still releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and contributes to climate change. Hydropower dams, a popular alternative to natural gas in California, do not produce carbon, but reservoirs may give off methane, another greenhouse gas. Dams also cause other ecological damage, including diminished fish populations.

Conserving power and more efficient appliances ease the strain on the system, prevent blackouts and brownouts, reduce the need for new power plants and keep our power bills from rising too fast.

### How are we doing?

In 2015, Ventura County used 1.78 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, 6.7 percent less than the year before. Power consumption tends to fluctuate with the economy. In Ventura County, it went up during the boom years of the early 2000s, declined in recession-rattled 2009 and 2010, and recovered after that. But apart from those peaks and valleys, there appears to be a secular trend toward lower consumption. Usage dropped every year between 2012 and 2015, during an economic recovery, and total consumption in 2015 was about the same as it had been a decade earlier. And that's without adjusting for the small annual increases in Ventura County's population. On a per capita basis, electricity consumption in 2015 was lower than it had been in 2005 and about the same as it was in 2000. Our residents and businesses are using less, either through conscious conservation or because our appliances and devices are more energy efficient.

### Ventura County Residential Electricity Consumption (2000 - 2015)



# SOLAR POWER INSTALLATIONS

## SOLAR POWER HEATS UP

### What are the measures?

The measures are Ventura County's solar power capacity each year from 2007 through 2016, and the number of solar projects every year.

### Why are the measures important?

Solar power is a truly clean and renewable resource, and its proliferation is essential if we are to move beyond fossil fuels. When solar fields are built to large enough scale to supply entire cities, they do have impacts on the environment, but those effects are much smaller than those made by natural gas power plants or hydropower dams, the most common power generators in California.

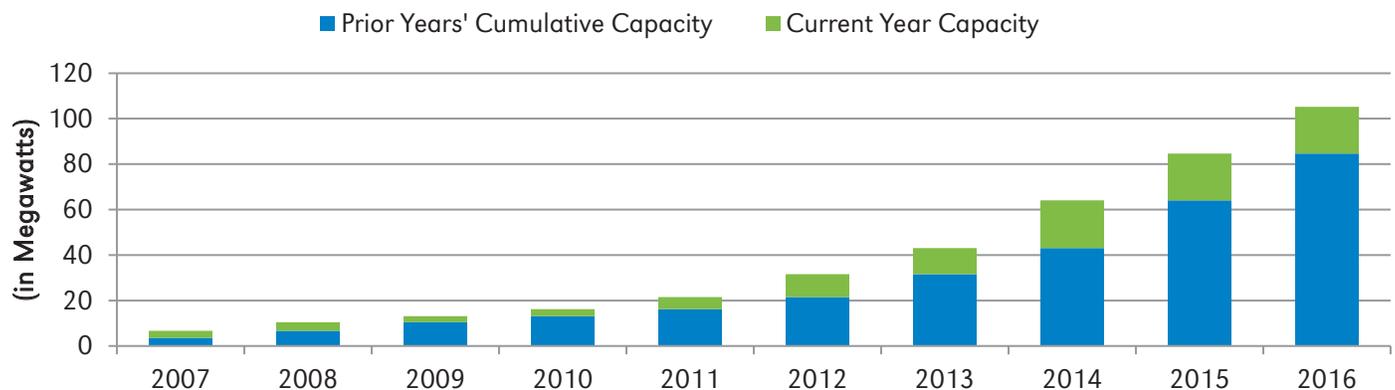
### How are we doing?

Ventura County's solar industry is robust. What's more, property owners and solar companies continued to build

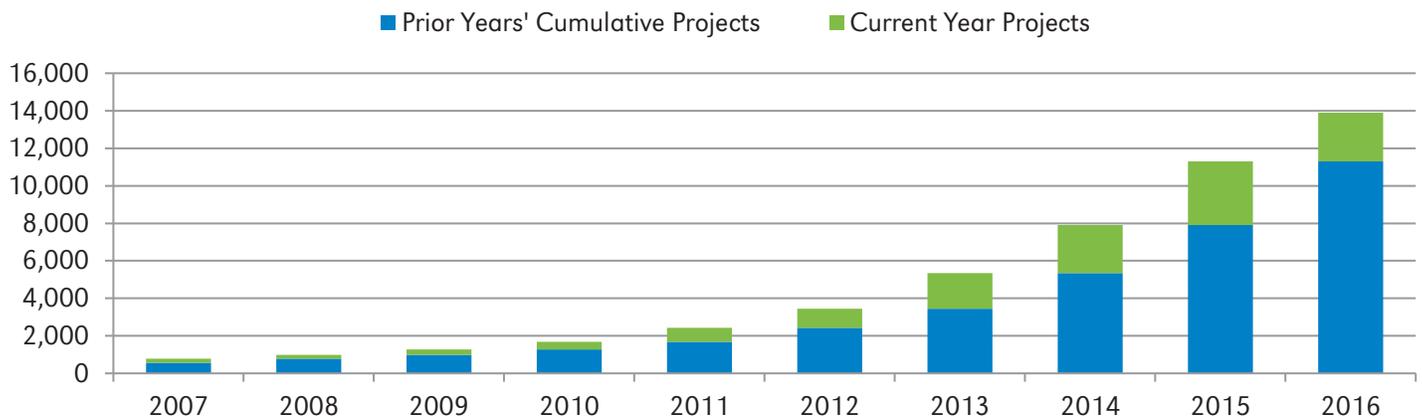
new capacity even after the California Solar Initiative, a state program that paid subsidies for new installations, ended in 2014.

In 2016, there were 2,598 new solar projects, bringing the county to a total of 13,898 solar installations. Most projects in Ventura County are small, consisting of a few solar panels on the roof of a home or a commercial building. The projects that went online in 2016 added 20.5 megawatts of solar capacity, similar to the increases in 2014 and 2015. That gave the county a total solar capacity of 105.2 megawatts — about the equivalent of one mid-sized commercial solar field, such as those operating in the Central Valley or the state's inland deserts. Ventura County's total solar capability is, however, much smaller than the capacity of even one natural gas power plant. For example, the Mandalay power plant in Oxnard has a capacity of more than 500 megawatts.

## Ventura County Solar Capacity (2007 - 2016)



## Ventura County Solar Projects (2007 - 2016)



# AIR QUALITY

## AIR QUALITY SIGNIFICANTLY CLEANER THAN PREVIOUS DECADES

### What are the measures?

The measures are the number of days per year when Ventura County exceeded state standards for ozone and the number of days per year when Ventura County exceeded the state standard for particulate matter.

### Why are the measures important?

The air we breathe is of the utmost importance. These statistics measure different aspects of air quality and have different implications. Ozone, a molecule consisting of three oxygen atoms, is essential in the upper atmosphere as a filter of harmful radiation. Ozone is formed in the atmosphere by complex photochemical reactions of reactive organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen in the presence of sunlight. High ozone levels can cause eye and throat irritation and can reduce lung capacity. It also damages plants and crops, and degrades rubber and other elastomers.

Particulate matter is a mixture of metal, soot, soil, dust and liquid droplets, small enough to be inhaled into the lungs. Particles 10 microns or smaller are known as PM10. Exposure to PM10 can aggravate asthma and other respiratory illnesses and is associated with increased risk of premature death, especially in the elderly and people with cardiopulmonary disease.

### How are we doing?

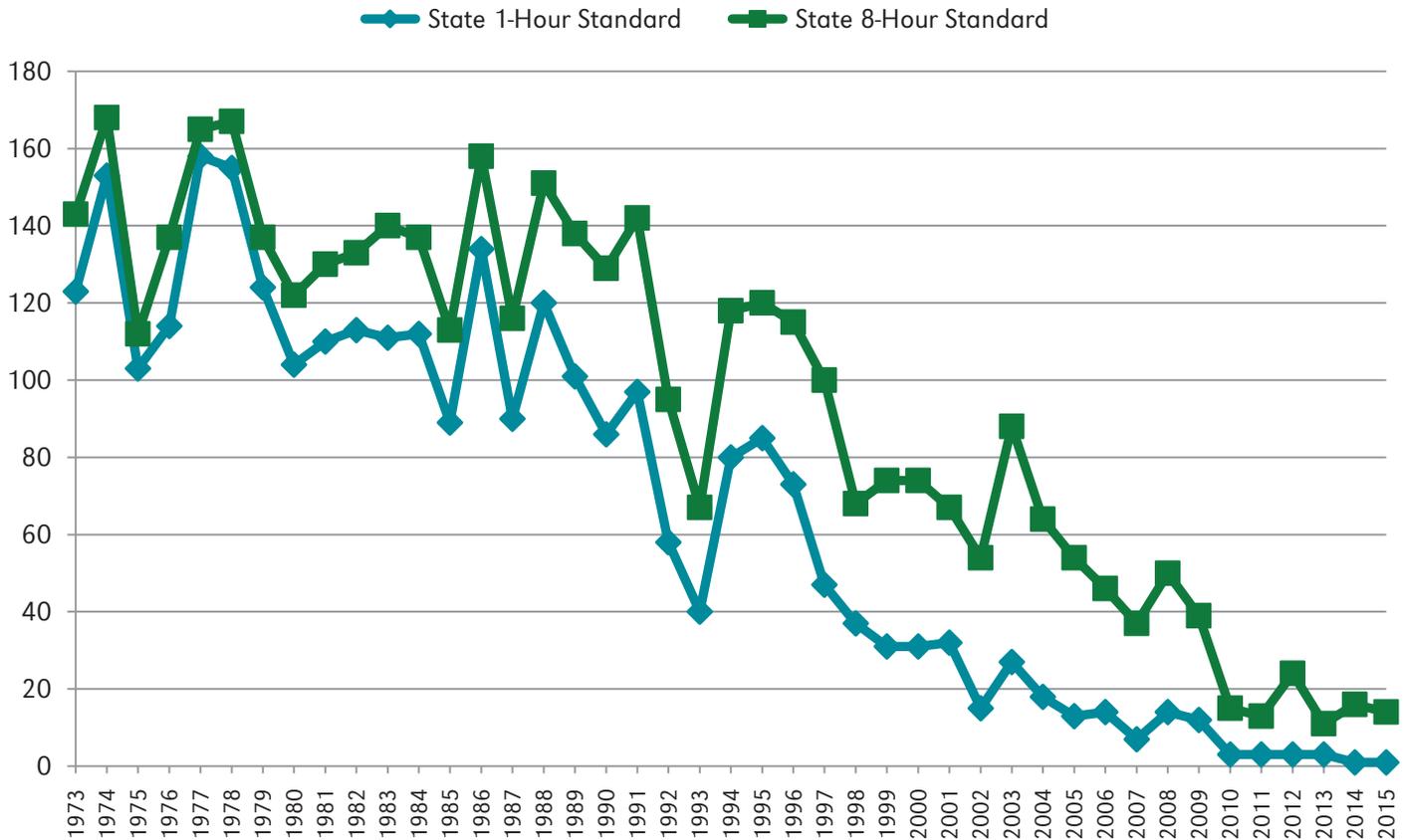
Over the long term, the air in Ventura County has become much cleaner. In 2015, Ventura County exceeded the state one-hour limit for ozone just once, the second straight year it had only one day over that threshold. Before that, the county went three days over the limit every year from 2010 to 2013. The county more often exceeded the state's eight-hour limit, which averages the measures taken each hour for eight hours. It was over the eight-hour limit 14 times in 2015, about the same as its performance since 2010, with the exception of a spike to 24 days in 2012.

By either the one-hour or eight-hour measure, ozone levels have dropped precipitously since the 1980s. In 1986, for example, the county exceeded the one-hour standard 134 times and the eight-hour standard 158 times.

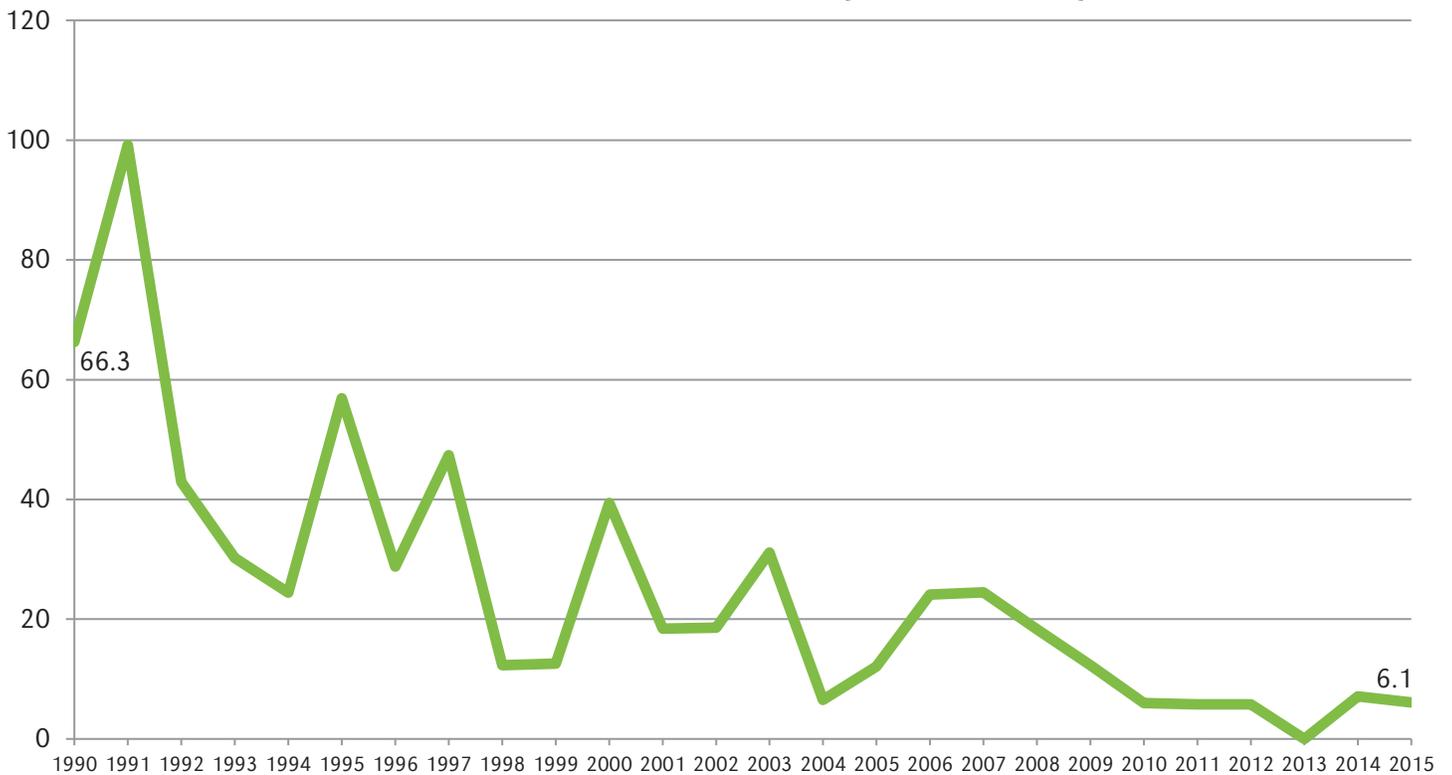
The levels of particulate matter in the air also have dropped significantly over the long term. In 2015, Ventura County exceeded the state's 24-hour standard for PM10 an estimated 6.1 times, far below the state average and down from 7.1 in 2014. The county had no more than 10 days over the standard since 2009, but in the 1990s exceeding the standard was routine. In 1991, the county was over the PM10 standard for an estimated 99.2 days.



## Number of Days Ventura County Exceeded State Ozone Limits (1973 - 2015)



## Estimated Days in Ventura County Above the State 24-Hour PM10 Standard (1990 - 2015)



# TEMPERATURE CHANGE

## RECORD HIGH TEMPERATURE IN 2015

### What is the measure?

The measure is the average temperature each year in Ventura County since 1935, calculated by averaging the mean temperatures for each month of the year.

### Why is the measure important?

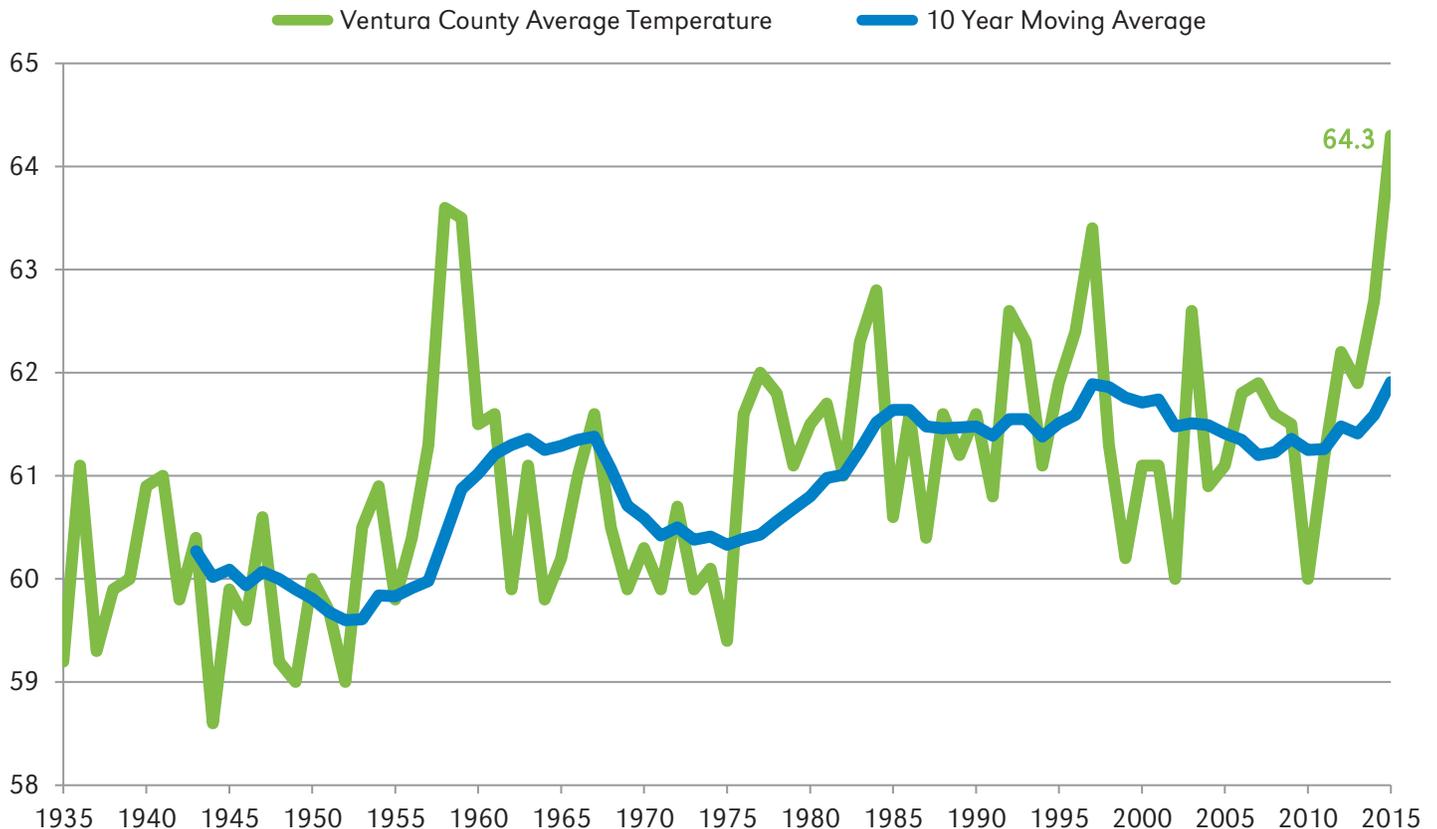
What might seem like a small change in climate can have deep and long-lasting impacts. If the temperature in Ventura County were to rise by just a few degrees, the crops that grow well here could change, fires and floods could become more common and severe, and land that's buildable now could be off limits. If global temperatures continue to increase, sea levels will rise, which could imperil both the natural and built environments of Ventura County's coastal areas.

### How are we doing?

Ventura County had its warmest year on record in 2015, with an average temperature of 64.3 degrees Fahrenheit. It was the first time since 1935 that the average temperature topped 64 degrees, and the fifth time that it hit over 63 degrees.

Temperatures have been rising gradually, though inconsistently, since the mid-1970s. Our 10 year moving average – which averages the previous 10 years, smoothing out the year-to-year fluctuations brought on by weather patterns – was just below 62 degrees in 2015, the highest since 1935.

**Ventura County Average Temperature with 10 Year Moving Average (1935 - 2015)**



# RAINFALL

## THE DROUGHT'S FINAL, DRY YEAR

### What is the measure?

The measure is the amount of rain that falls in different locations in Ventura County during each "rainfall year," from October 1 through September 30 of the following calendar year.

### Why is the measure important?

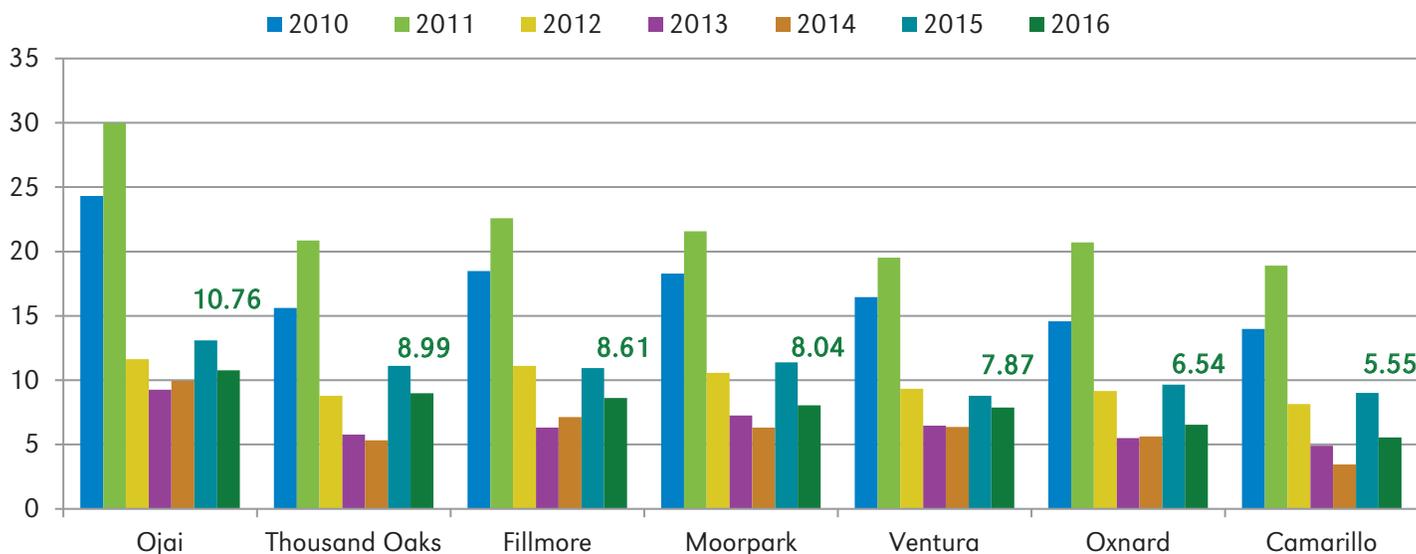
Life needs water. By filling our lakes, rivers and underground aquifers, rainfall is essential to supply both drinking water and agricultural irrigation. It is also crucial to the health of our natural environment. Rain waters our native plants, sustains animal life and reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

### How are we doing?

The last water year ended September 30, 2016, with Ventura County still in its worst drought in decades. Rainfall in that year ranged from 10.76 inches in Ojai to 5.55 inches in Camarillo. The totals were all extremely low, sometimes less than one third of what they were in the last pre-drought year, 2011. That year, Ojai received nearly 30 inches of rain, and Thousand Oaks, Moorpark, Fillmore and Oxnard all recorded more than 20.

The 2015/16 water year was the fifth straight with historically low rainfall. But it was the last, at least for now. The current rainfall year will go down as an unusually wet one when the books close on September 30, 2017.

### Average Inches of Rainfall\* (2010 - 2016)



\* Rainfall is counted on a "water year" which is October 1 through September 30



# DROUGHT

## DROUGHT EASES, BUT PERSISTS IN VENTURA COUNTY

### What is the measure?

The measure is the level of drought across California, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, which is produced by researchers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

### Why is the measure important?

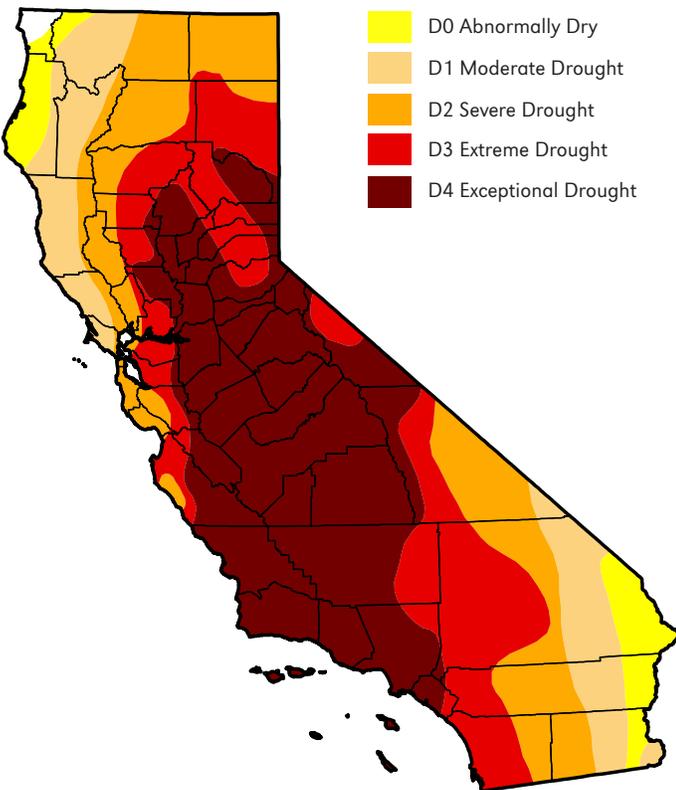
Our economy, ecology and health all suffer during times of serious drought. Water for drinking and irrigation becomes scarce, more expensive and of lower quality. Real estate development and economic growth can stall due to uncertainty about the water supply.

### How are we doing?

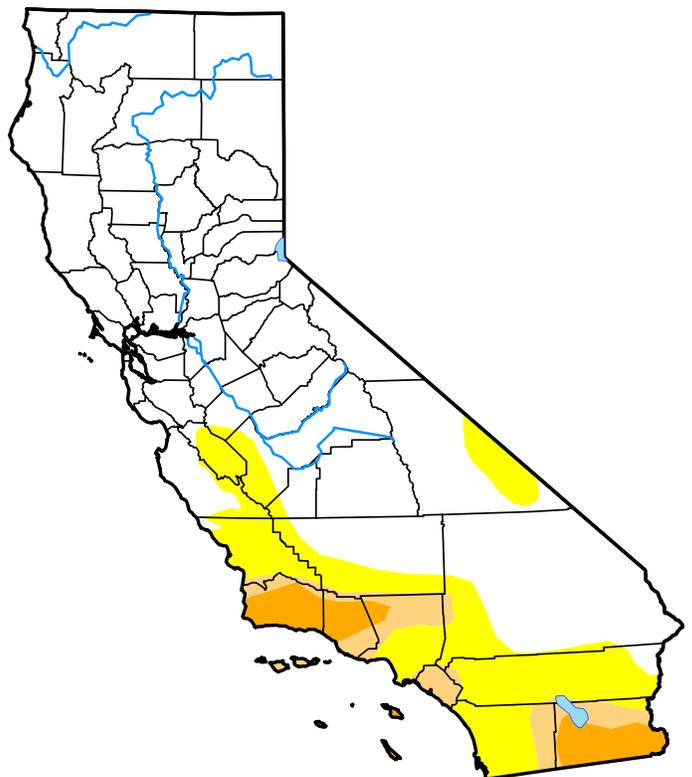
California's drought is, for all practical purposes, over. By the end of February 2017, no areas of California were in "extreme" or "exceptional" drought. Northern California and the Central Valley had returned to normal rainfall, while most of Southern California and the Central Coast were merely "abnormally dry."

Pockets of Southern California remained in "moderate drought," and two regions were classified as in a state of "severe drought": most of Imperial County along the inland Mexican border; and most of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The rains of winter and spring were already on the way to ending that status, and Ventura County was poised to emerge from drought just a bit behind the rest of the state.

February 23, 2016



February 28, 2017



# WATER USE

## LARGE DISPARITY IN USAGE AMONG CITIES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the amount of water used by the average residential customer each day in 2015, in 12 water service areas of Ventura County. Data was unavailable for Ojai and Fillmore, and the statistics for Westlake Village include some residents of Los Angeles County.

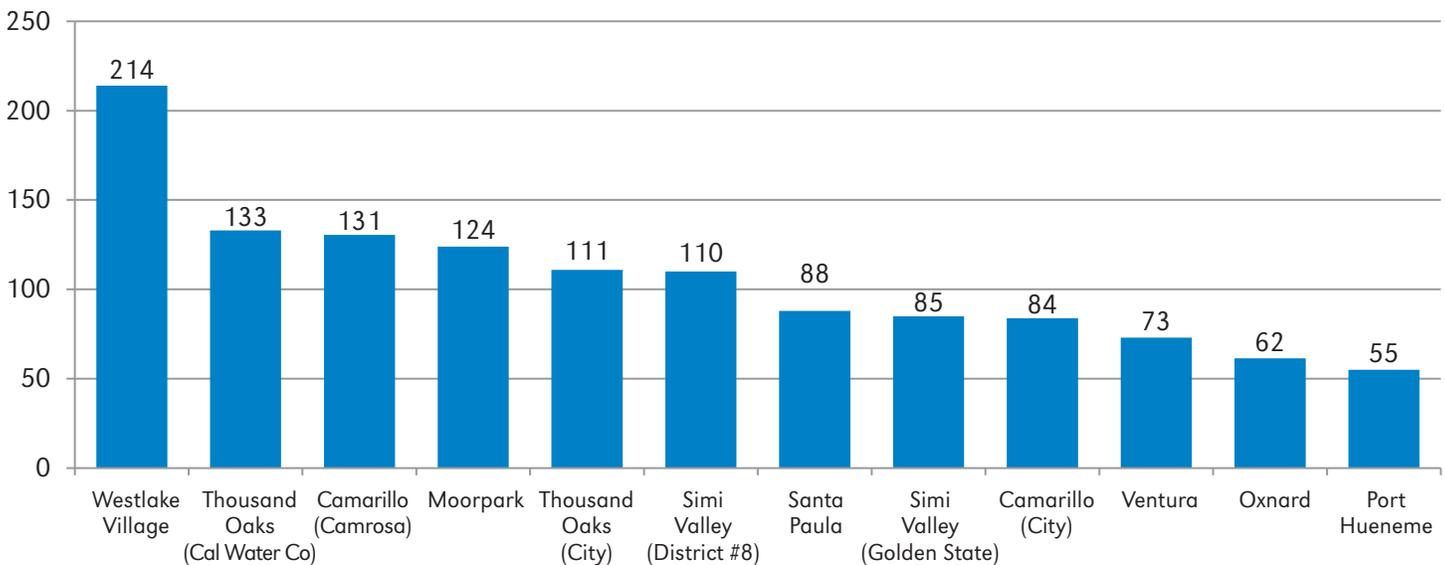
### Why is the measure important?

Water is a precious resource, even when there isn't a serious drought. Ventura County lacks enough locally sourced water for its population and must rely at least in part on water imported from Northern California or the Colorado River. Parts of the county not currently connected to the State Water Project are considering hooking up to it. The recent drought also renewed talk of an ocean desalination plant and other ideas to increase the supply of water. But these sources are expensive when compared to conservation. The most efficient way to deal with a shortage of water is simply to use less of it.

### How are we doing?

The amount of water used by residents of different parts of Ventura County varies widely, based mostly on climate and development patterns. Outdoor landscaping requires much more water than any other residential use, so residents will use more water if they have bigger yards and hotter weather. Westlake Village, a warmer, inland area with large lots and expansive lawns, far and away topped water use on a per-capita basis in 2015, at 214 gallons per day. The areas of Thousand Oaks served by the California Water Company and the parts of Camarillo served by the Camrosa Water District were next, at 133 gallons and 131 gallons per person, per day, respectively. At the other end of the spectrum were coastal cities, where the weather is cooler and properties tend to be smaller. Port Hueneme residents used the least water, at 55 gallons per person, per day, followed by Oxnard at 62 gallons and Ventura at 73 gallons.

**Average Water Use Per Capita Per Day in Gallons (2015)**



# OCEAN WATER QUALITY

BEACH CLOSURES INCREASE SLIGHTLY, STILL HISTORICALLY LOW

## What is the measure?

The measure is the number of days each year beaches in Ventura County were posted as unsafe for public use because of bacterial contamination, for reasons other than rainfall. The Ventura County Environmental Health Division bases these closures on tests for three types of bacteria: fecal coliform, total coliform and enterococcus, all of which are associated with sewage, animal waste and other pollutants.

## Why is the measure important?

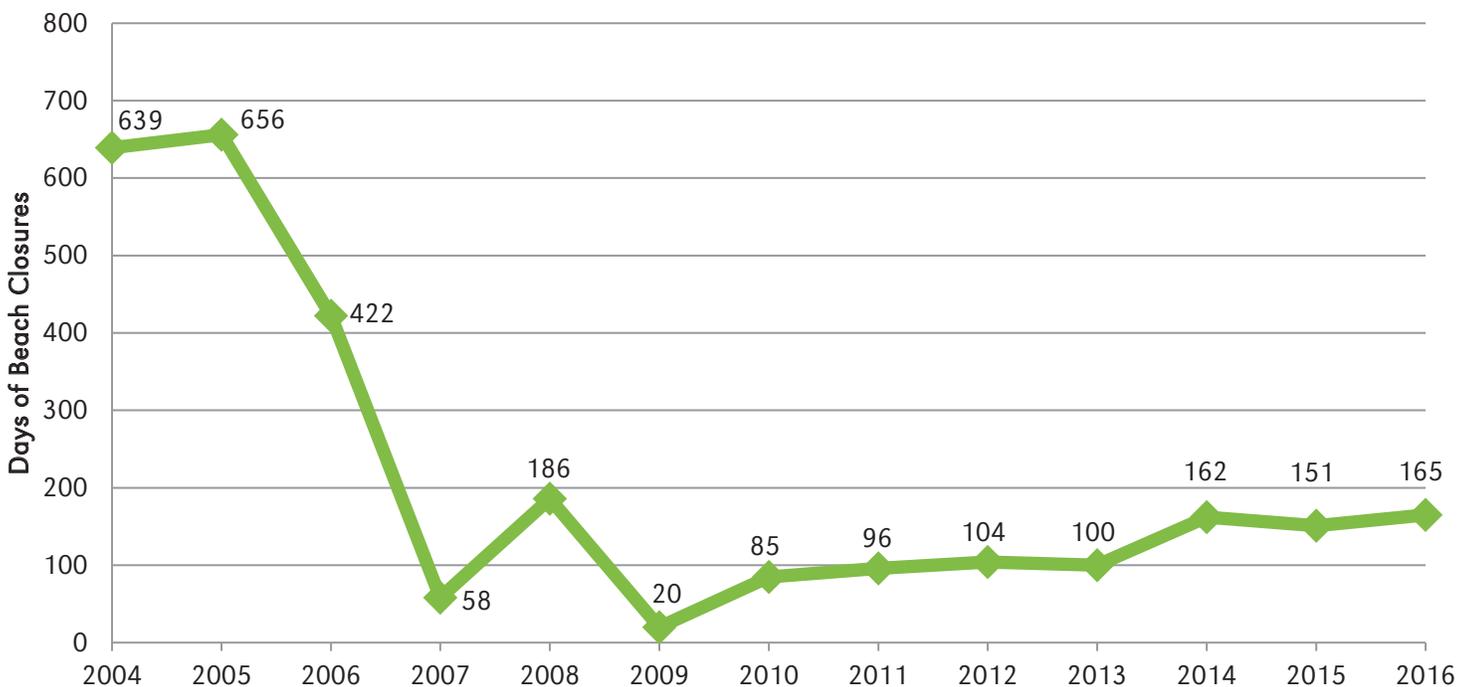
Our coastline is one of our greatest resources, but its value is severely diminished if the water is too dirty to enter safely. Polluted water puts swimmers and surfers at risk of illnesses and rashes. It also hurts our economy, as closed beaches can depress the tourist trade in seaside neighborhoods.

## How are we doing?

Every creek and storm drain in Ventura County eventually leads to the Pacific Ocean, taking with it any pollutants that get caught in the runoff. Ventura County residents and local officials have done a good job in keeping the water clean; our ocean water consistently ranks as the cleanest in Southern California. That's a fairly recent development. In 2005, the county Environmental Health Division closed beaches 656 times for excessive bacteria levels, for reasons other than rain. Just two years later, there were only 58 such closures. A large portion of that improvement resulted from cleaning up a few especially problematic beaches.

It appears Ventura County's ocean water cleanup efforts have plateaued. In 2016, there were 165 closures, 9.3 percent more than the year before and more than in any year since 2008. After reaching a record low of 20 beach closures in 2009, the number crept back up, with a noticeable spike from 2013 to 2014. The water off of our shores is still much cleaner than it was 10 years ago, but it appears we could use a renewed effort at runoff prevention and cleanup.

**Closure Days for Water Quality - All Ventura County Beaches (2004 - 2016)**



# OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION

## 2016 PRODUCTION AT ALL-TIME LOW

### What is the measure?

The measure is the amount of natural gas and crude oil extracted from Ventura County every year from 1980 to 2016. The oil is measured in 42-gallon barrels, abbreviated as BBL, and natural gas is measured in thousands of cubic feet, or MCF.

### Why is the measure important?

Oil and gas are essential to the world economy, and their local production and sale benefit the Ventura County economy. Petroleum extraction requires proper monitoring for spills and other problems.

### How are we doing?

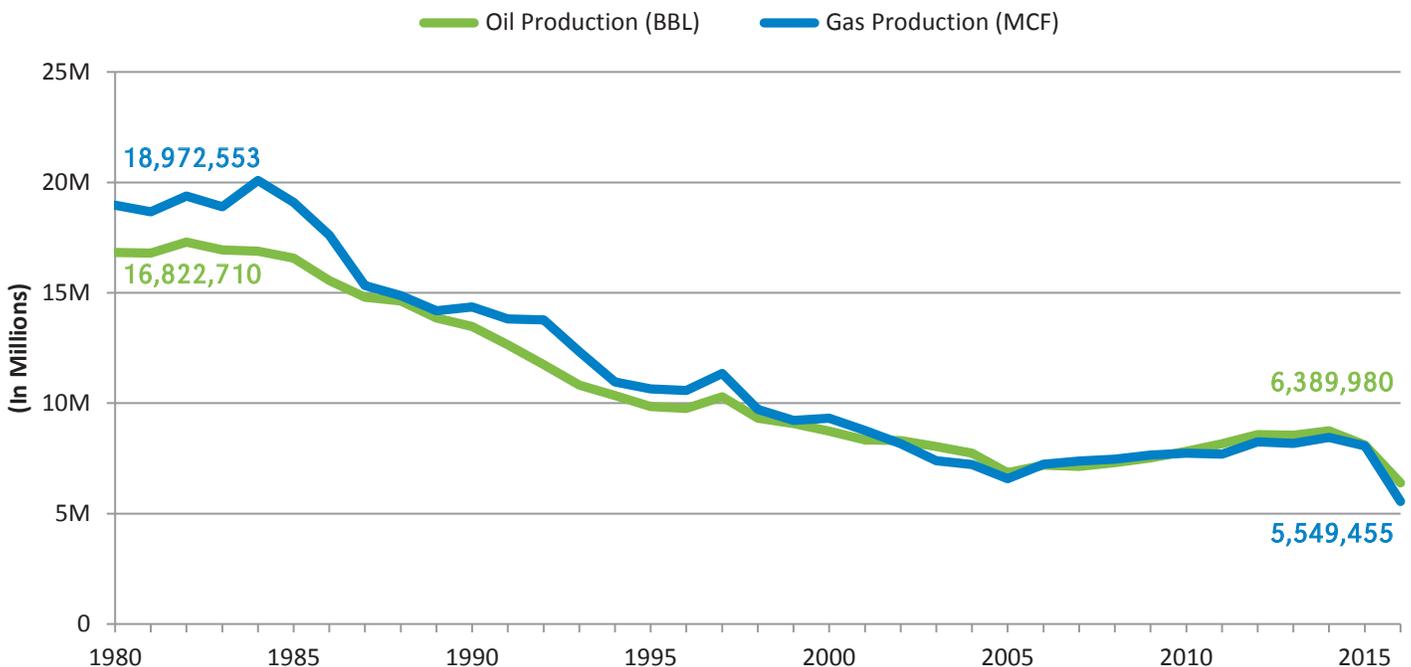
Oil drilling was a founding economic pillar of Ventura, Santa Paula and other West County cities. While production of oil and gas in Ventura County has declined since the 1980s, it is still an important regional industry. In 2016, the

county produced 6.4 million BBL of oil and 5.5 million MCF of natural gas. Oil production dropped 21 percent from the previous year and natural gas production fell 31 percent.

Oil and gas production in Ventura County peaked in the early 1980s. In 1982, the county produced 17.3 million BBL of oil and 19.4 million MCF in natural gas, more than double the production in recent years. 2016 was the lowest production year on record since 1980.

Oil production declined from 1980 through 2005, then gradually rose through 2014, before a sharp drop in 2016. The combined drop in 2015 and 2016 was due largely to market conditions. The low price of oil from overseas put a cap on how much petroleum from Ventura County could be sold, and at what price. As the market shifts, it could become friendlier to oil and gas from our region, especially as companies here use new extraction methods to draw more oil and gas.

### Oil and Gas Production in Ventura County (1980 - 2016) (in BBL and MCF)



# LANDFILL DISPOSAL RATE

## PROGRESS STALLS IN LANDFILL DIVERSION

### What is the measure?

The measure is the disposal rate for Ventura County's 10 cities and unincorporated areas. The disposal rate is the number of pounds of trash per person, per day sent to landfills.

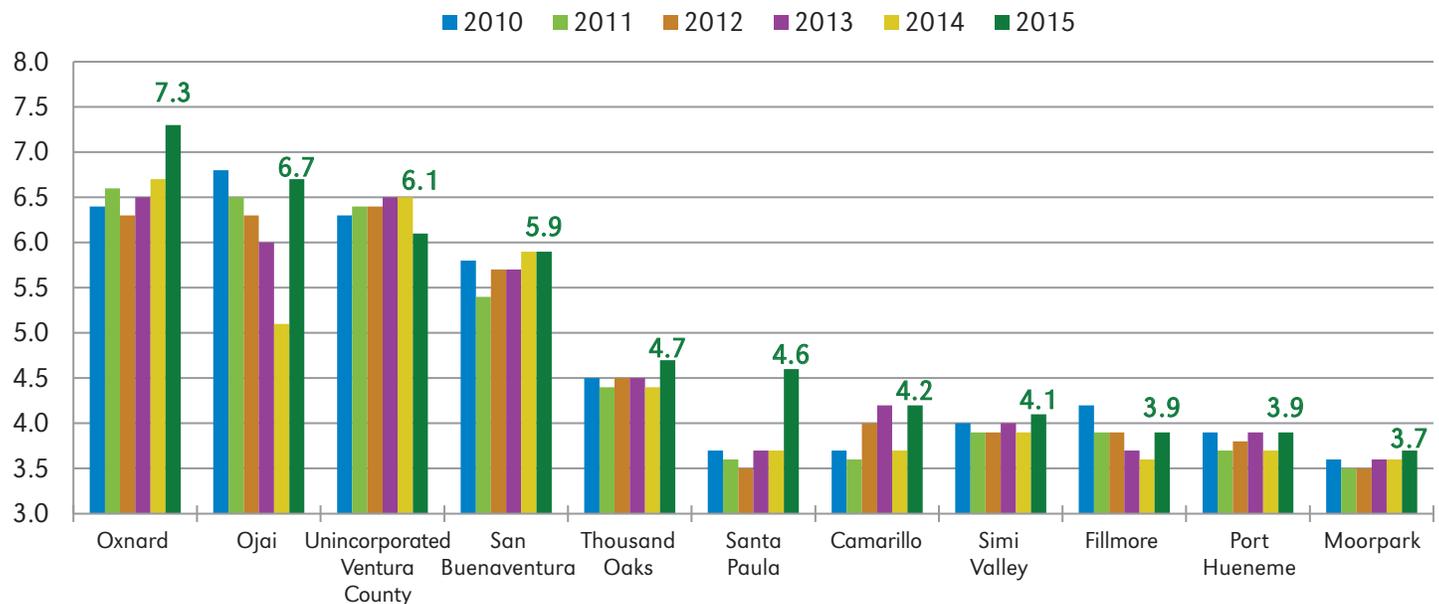
### Why is the measure important?

Trash is a pollutant. Items thrown in landfills can leach toxic substances into the air, ground and water, sometimes for hundreds of years. And the space in our landfills is finite. When a landfill reaches its capacity, it is covered with earth and is usually unsuitable for future development or recreation.

### How are we doing?

Recycling rates are much higher than they were a few decades ago, and disposal rates are much lower, due to both state regulations and a shift in public attitudes about waste and recycling. But the trend has stopped and has even reversed. In 2015, the disposal rates in eight of Ventura County's 10 cities were higher than they had been in 2010. In some cases, the differences were significant: Oxnard's per capita rate went up 14 percent in that five-year period, and Santa Paula's rose 24.3 percent. Nine of the 10 cities saw their rates increase from 2014 to 2015. The only exception was Ventura, where the disposal rate stayed the same. It seems the benefits of the current regulatory regime and public opinion campaign have been fully realized.

### Per Capita Disposal Rates in Pounds/Person/Day (2010 - 2015)



# PUBLIC HEALTH

The story of Ventura County's health in recent years is largely a positive one. When compared to just a few years ago, more people have health insurance, teenagers are less likely to have babies or smoke cigarettes, and fewer people are going to the hospital for asthma attacks.

Many of these trends in public health reflect long-term changes, such as our societal disapproval of smoking and the shift toward waiting until later in life to become a parent. Others are new, like the changes to our health care system brought by the Affordable Care Act and the subsequent growth in insurance coverage. The increase was fairly modest in Ventura County, however, and signals we still have work to do to make our communities healthier.

And although we have improved in many measurable aspects of health, Ventura County has serious issues with health equity. Put simply, people who live in poorer neighborhoods have worse health outcomes and die younger than those who live in richer areas. In many cases, it is our ZIP code, and not our genetic code, that is the strongest predictor of our health. Better educational, housing and employment opportunities would have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Ventura County.

Drug addiction and abuse is also a serious matter in Ventura County, as it is across the nation. In recent years more than 100 people per year have died in Ventura County of drug or alcohol overdoses. Prescription drugs are responsible for the majority of those deaths.



# LIFE EXPECTANCY AND INCOME INEQUALITY

*THE RICH LIVE LONGER, MOST OF THE TIME*

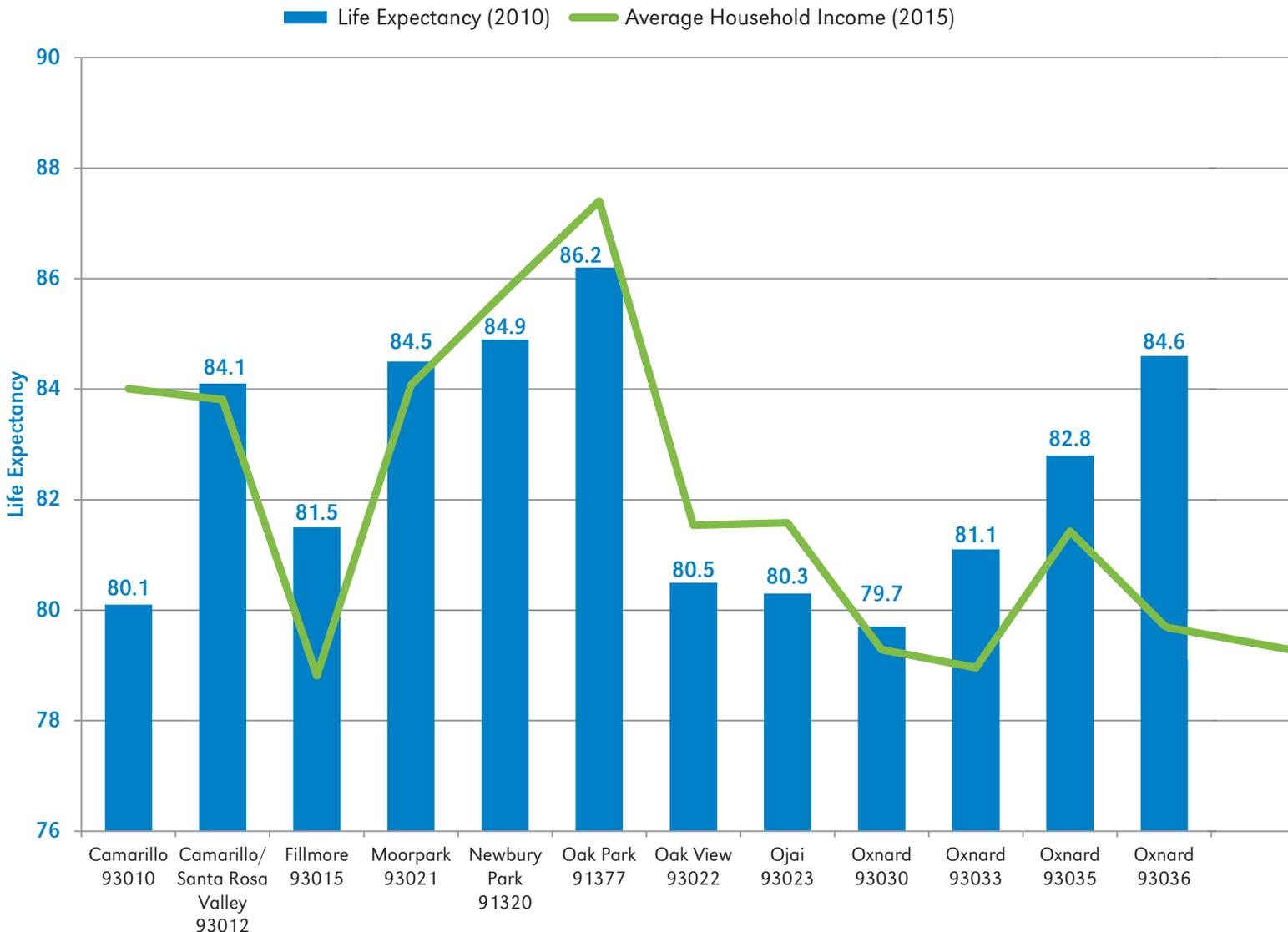
## What is the measure?

The measure is the life expectancy of someone born in 2010 in 23 different ZIP codes across Ventura County, and the average household income in each ZIP code in 2015. This indicator uses data from two different years, because the most recent life expectancy figures are from 2010.

## Why is the measure important?

Life expectancy serves as one of the most important measures of public health and of an individual's quality of life. It often is used as shorthand to compare general levels of health and the quality of the medical system in different countries or regions. Comparing life expectancy to income shows the extent to which wealth determines health outcomes.

## Ventura County Life Expectancy (2010) & Average Household Income (2015)



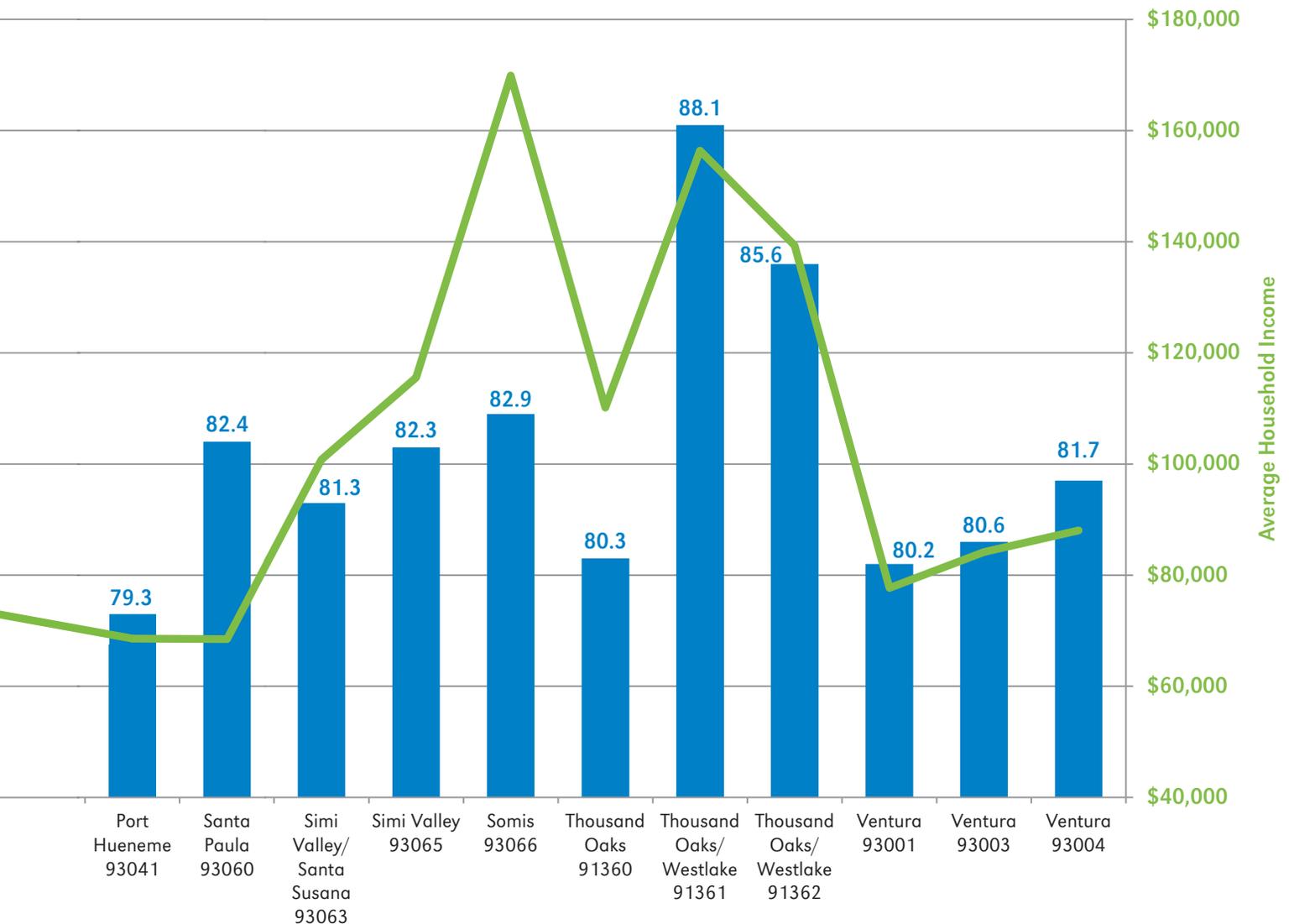
## How are we doing?

With few exceptions, residents in higher income areas of Ventura County can expect to live longer. Often, the differences between rich and poor are stark. The ZIP code with the highest life expectancy, at 88.1 years, covers parts of Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village. The average household income there was \$156,405 in 2015. At the other end of the spectrum, the lowest life expectancy was 79.3 years, in the Port Hueneme ZIP code where the average household income was \$68,582, less than half of the average income in the Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village ZIP code.

The lifespan-wealth correlation holds throughout most of the county, with some exceptions. Somis had the highest average income, at \$169,912 with life expectancy near the middle of the pack, at 82.9 years. Residents of a ZIP code in Camarillo and one in Thousand Oaks both had relatively high incomes but below average life expectancies. And in Oxnard,

people in the 93036 ZIP code had an above average life expectancy, at 84.6 years, yet a fairly low average household income, at \$77,214. Santa Paula had a similar outcome: a life expectancy near the middle, at 82.4 years, and one of the lowest household incomes, at \$68,486.

Some of those exceptions may be related to what in public health circles has been called the “Hispanic paradox” or the “epidemiologic paradox.” This refers to the fact Hispanics in the United States live longer and have better health outcomes than other ethnic groups, especially when controlling for their socioeconomic status and health risk factors. The ZIP codes in Oxnard and Santa Paula with relatively low incomes and high life expectancy are predominantly Latino. Nationwide, Latinos born in 2010 could expect to live 81.2 years on average, compared to 75.1 years for African-Americans and 78.8 years for non-Hispanic whites.



# HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE BY AGE & SOURCE

## JOBS REMAIN BACKBONE OF INSURANCE SYSTEM

### What are the measures?

The measures are the percentage of Ventura County residents without health insurance; and the various sources of coverage for those who are insured. The data is grouped by age.

### Why are the measures important?

The American health insurance system is a patchwork quilt with private insurance, employer-based insurance, public programs and the new exchange market, all serving different segments of the population. Data on who gets insurance from which source gives us insight into how well that patchwork is covering us, and it helps the government and private sector allocate resources to the right insurance providers.

### How are we doing?

Health coverage varies widely by age. Senior citizens are covered by Medicare, so almost everyone 65 and older has insurance. Children are also likely to be covered because they are eligible for more government programs than adults, and because parents tend to purchase insurance for their children before they buy it for themselves. Among Ventura County residents under 18 years old, 93.6 percent were insured in 2015. That was the same as the statewide rate and an improvement over the year before, when 92.6 percent of children in the county had insurance.

Just under half of the children in the county had insurance through a parent's employer. In addition, 31.4 percent were covered by Medicaid or other public health insurance, and 6.8 percent had coverage purchased directly from an insurer.

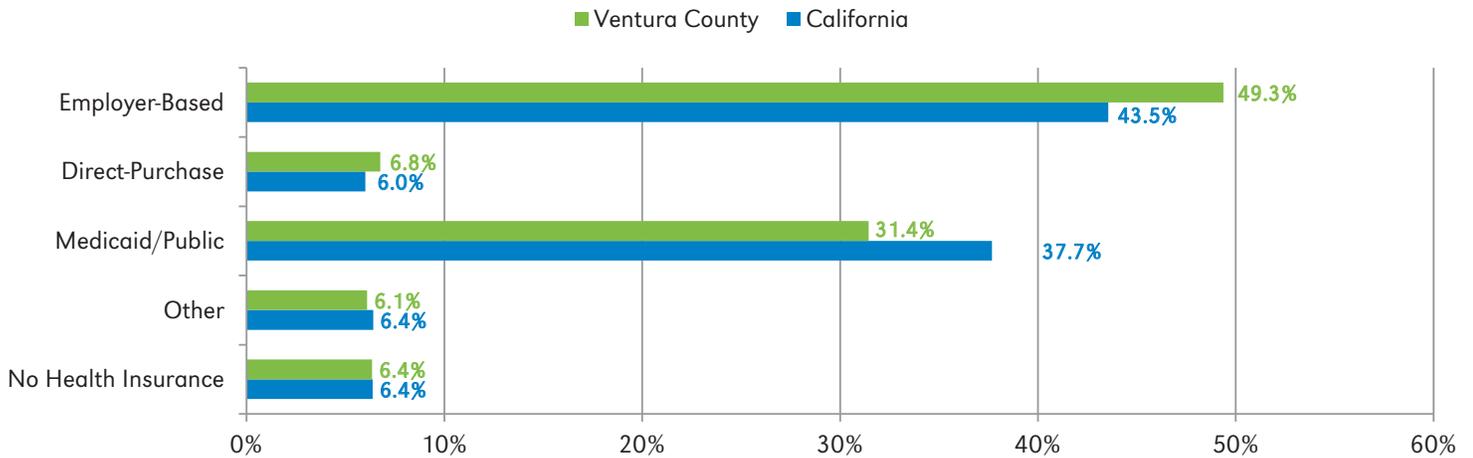
Adults are more likely to be uninsured. The 2015 data showed 26 percent of Ventura County residents age 18 to 34 and 15.5 percent of those 35 to 64 were without health insurance and the statewide figures for both groups were similar. Although the Affordable Care Act has lowered the rate of uninsured Americans, it has failed to make coverage universal. Despite the system of exchanges and subsidies geared to put insurance within reach for everyone, and fines for not carrying insurance, nearly one in four young adults and one in six middle-aged adults still went without coverage in 2015.

Jobs remain the chief source of health care for adults, with employer-based insurance covering 48.6 percent of Ventura County residents between age 18 and 34 in 2015, and 59.7 percent of those 35 to 64. Direct purchases accounted for 8.3 percent of county residents in the younger age range, and 9.8 percent in the older group. Medicaid or other public programs covered 12 percent of county residents age 18 to 34, and 7 percent of those 35 to 64.

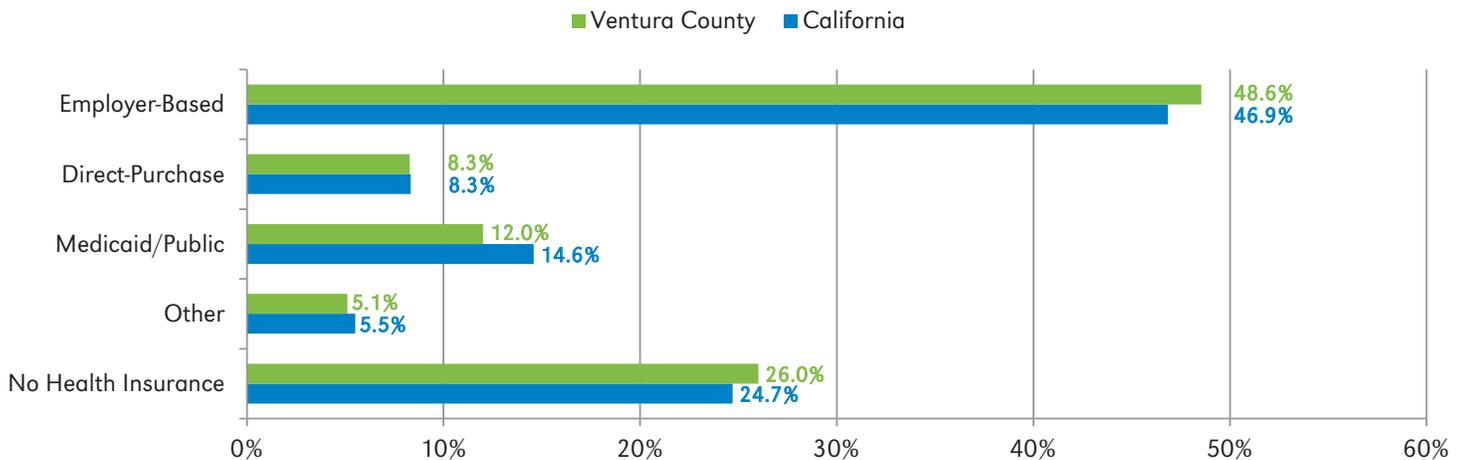
The lower coverage rates among young adults might be explained by their tendency to need less medical care, prompting them to skip coverage. Workers also tend to reach their peak salaries later in their careers, so those under 35 might find insurance out of their financial reach. The latter factor explains why the rate of participation in Medicaid and other public programs is so much higher for adults younger than 35.



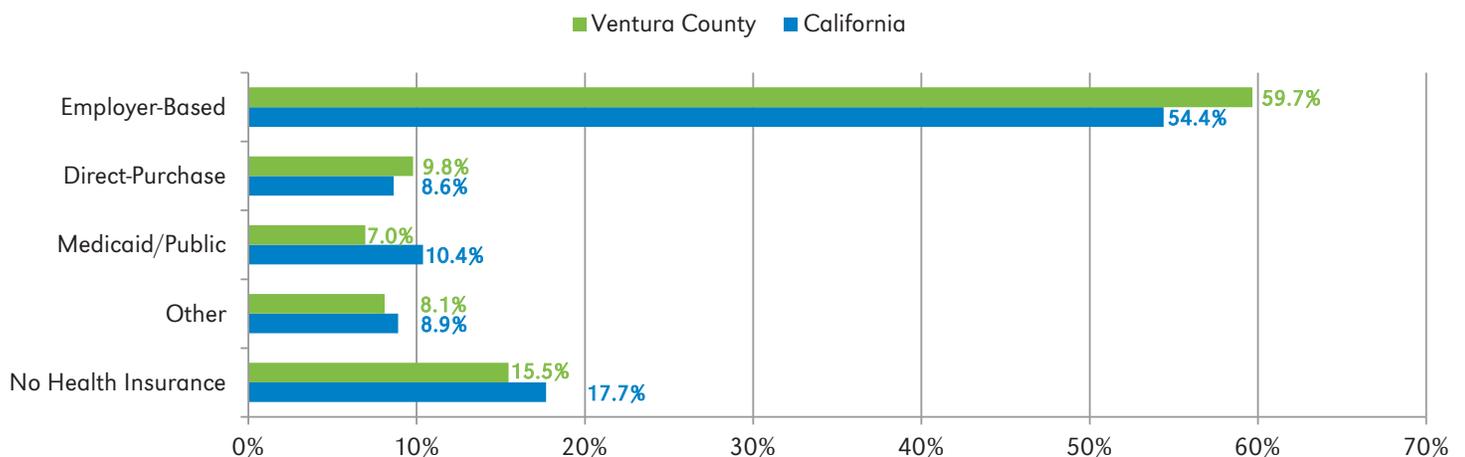
## Sources of Insurance Coverage for Residents Under 18 Years Old (2015)



## Sources of Insurance Coverage for Residents 18 - 34 Years Old (2015)



## Sources of Insurance Coverage for Residents 35 - 64 Years Old (2015)



# HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE BY CITY

## PERCENTAGE OF INSURED EDGES UPWARD

### What is the measure?

The measure is the percentage of people with health insurance in each city in Ventura County and in the county as a whole.

### Why is the measure important?

A large body of research over many years has demonstrated what is intuitively obvious: people with health insurance tend to be healthier than those without it. They are also in a much more secure financial position, as chronic or severe health problems can devastate the finances of the uninsured. Those without insurance are more likely to seek care from hospital emergency rooms, where treatment costs are higher and ultimately might be paid by the taxpayers or passed on by the hospital to other patients.

### How are we doing?

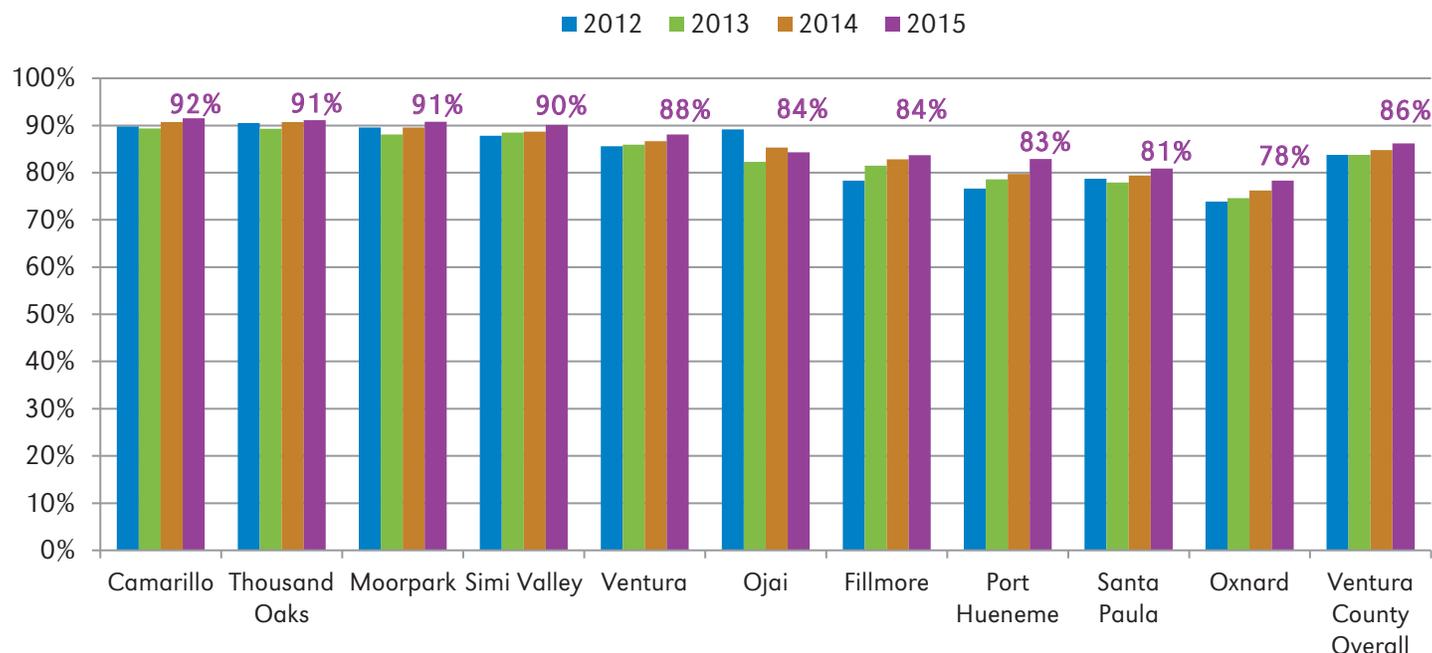
The gradual implementation of the Affordable Care Act between 2011 and 2014 brought only a small uptick in the insured rate in Ventura County. In 2012, the percentage of

county residents with health insurance was 84 percent; in 2015, the figure was 86 percent.

That's an unusually slow rate of improvement, at least when compared to the insured rate in national polls. Gallup found an insured rate of 82.9 percent among U.S. adults in 2013, and a rate of 89 percent in 2016, after the major provisions of the Affordable Care Act took effect. Other polls have found similar nationwide improvements in the insured rate.

The insured rate in Ventura County's cities ranges from a low of 78 percent in Oxnard to 92 percent in Camarillo. Thousand Oaks, Moorpark and Simi Valley also ranked above 90 percent in 2015. Two clear trends emerged: cities with wealthier populations and those with older populations have higher insured rates. Wealth is correlated presumably because it means more money to spend on insurance, and age is correlated because almost everyone over 65 is covered by Medicare.

**Percent of Ventura County Population with Medical Insurance (2012 - 2015)**



# TEEN BIRTH RATE

## MORE TEENS WAITING TO HAVE BABIES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of births to teen mothers (ages 15 to 19), expressed as the rate of births per 1,000 teen girls.

### Why is the measure important?

Giving birth as a teenager has a detrimental impact on the future quality of life of both mother and child. Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of school than their peers, live in poverty, be single parents, lack adequate prenatal care and deliver premature and low birth-weight infants. Children of teen mothers tend to have poorer health and more behavioral problems than children of older mothers, and they are more likely to become teen parents themselves.

### How are we doing?

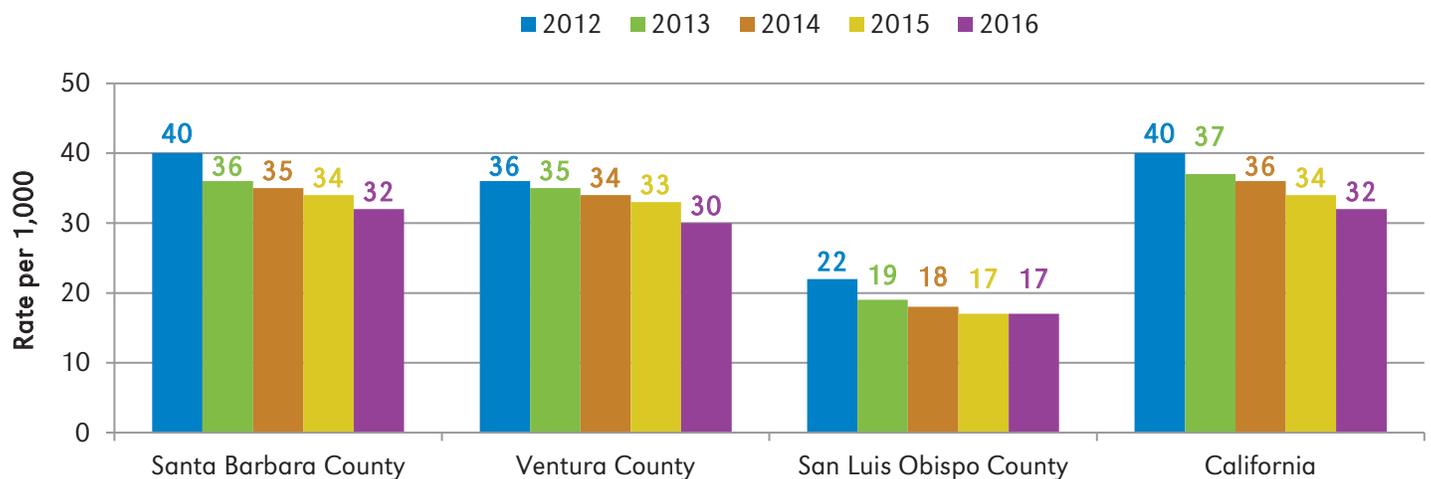
Even after decades of decline, the teen birth rate continues to drop. In Ventura County, the rate was 37 births per

1,000 teen girls in 2010 and 30 births per 1,000 teen girls in 2016, with at least some decline every year from 2012 to 2016.

That decline matches the pattern across the state and in neighboring counties. In California, the teen birth rate dropped from 41 per 1,000 girls in 2010 to 32 in 2016; in Santa Barbara County, the decline was from 38 births per 1,000 teen girls to 32; and in San Luis Obispo County, the rate fell from 21 births to 17 births per 1,000 teen girls.

The long-term data is a true success story. The national teen birth rate in the early 1990s was more than 60 per 1,000 teen girls and has since dropped to around 24 per 1,000. Despite Ventura County's recent improvement, it remains well above the national average, and slightly below the state average.

### Teen Birth Rate for Ages 15 to 19 (2012 - 2016)



# YOUTH SMOKING

## COUNTY KIDS SHUN CIGARETTES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the percentage of children in grades 5, 7, 9 and 11 who report having smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days, according to California’s annual Healthy Kids Survey. The state did not survey 5th graders in 2013 or 2015.

### Why is the measure important?

Few decisions imperil long-term health more than starting smoking. Tobacco use ranks among the leading preventable causes of death in the United States, and cigarette smokers can expect to live at least 10 fewer years than non-smokers, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking is particularly harmful to youth because nicotine is highly addictive and most lifelong smokers begin as children.

### How are we doing?

Tobacco use in the United States continues to drop, even after half a century of decline. The adult smoking rate was around 15 percent in 2015, according to the CDC – down from 21 percent in 2005, and from more than 40 percent in the 1960s.

In Ventura County, the percentage of 11th-graders who said they smoked in the past month dropped from 13 percent in 2009 to 9 percent in 2015. Ninth graders also

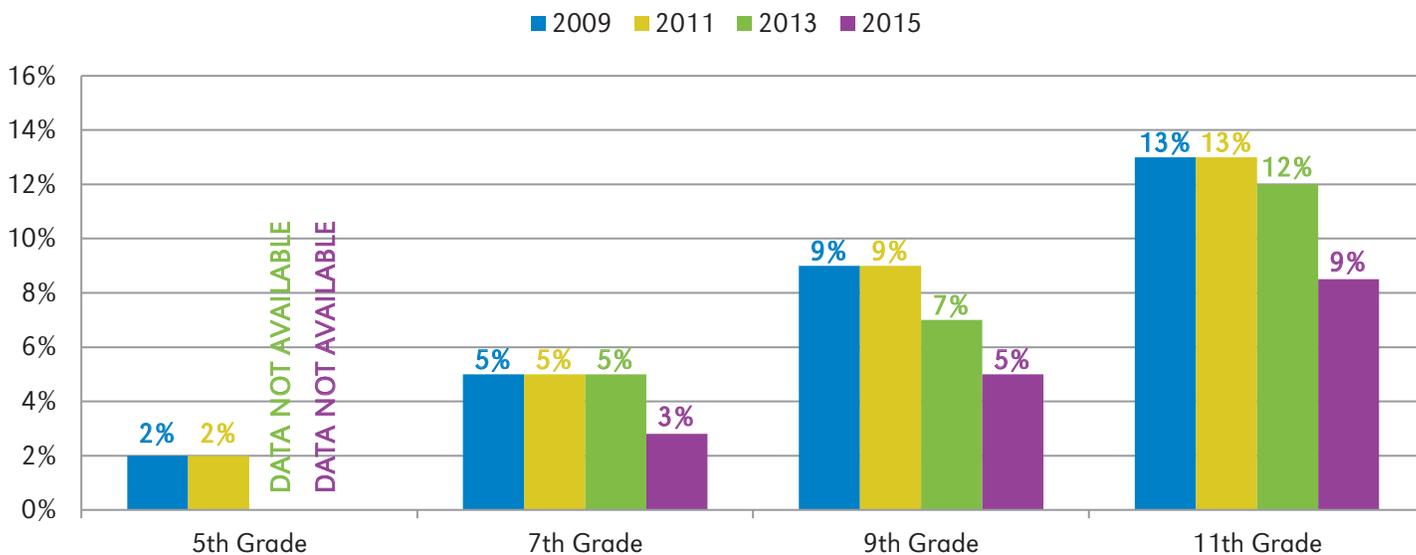
are shunning cigarettes, going from 9 percent in 2009 to 5 percent in 2015, and smoking fell among 7th graders, from 5 percent to 3 percent.

Youth smoking rates can’t be compared to the CDC’s figures for adults. The CDC considers a smoker anyone who reports smoking every day or “some days,” while the state survey classifies children as smokers if they report having just one cigarette in the previous month.

Though cigarette smoking is down, students are using electronic cigarettes. In 2015, when the state began surveying students about their use of electronic cigarettes, 32 percent of 11th graders said they had tried vaping at least once.

“Vaping” an e-cigarette means inhaling a vaporized solution, usually including nicotine, instead of burning tobacco and inhaling the smoke. The effect of vaping’s popularity on public health remains to be seen. Some experts see it as a healthier alternative to smoking, or a way to help smokers quit, because electronic cigarettes don’t put tar and other cancer-causing elements of tobacco into the user’s lungs. Other public health experts consider vaping even more dangerous than smoking, because electronic cigarettes have a variety of potentially harmful chemicals and can introduce nicotine to people who would not otherwise try it.

### Past 30 Day Cigarette Use by Ventura County Youth (2009 - 2015)



# ASTHMA HOSPITALIZATIONS

ASTHMA PROBLEMS DROP, CHILDREN REMAIN AT GREATEST RISK

## What is the measure?

The measure is the number of hospitalizations for asthma symptoms each year in Ventura County per 10,000 residents, sorted by the age of the patients.

## Why is the measure important?

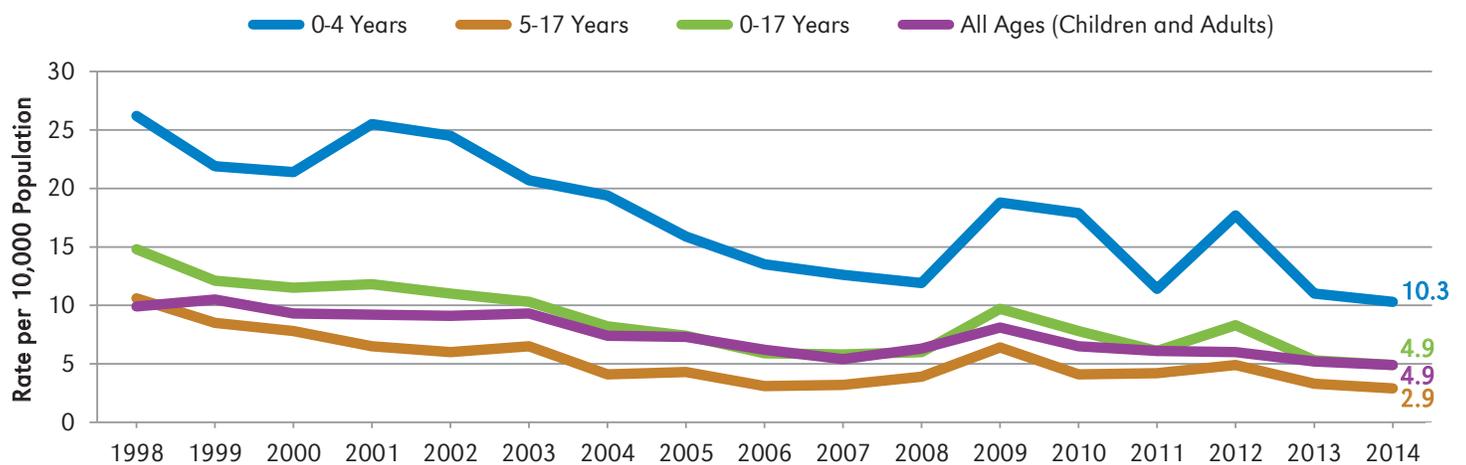
Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease that affects around 8 percent of Americans. It disproportionately affects children, young adults and people living in poverty. The triggers for an asthma attack that may require hospitalization include: allergens; infections; exercise; abrupt changes in the weather; exposure to irritants such as tobacco smoke, dust from farm fields or construction sites; and fine soot in smoke and diesel vehicle emissions.

## How are we doing?

Asthma is becoming more common, but hospitalizations from it are declining. The rate of hospitalizations in Ventura County fell from 10.5 per 10,000 residents in 1999 to 4.9 per 10,000 in 2014. Other than a spike in 2009, the improvement has been steady.

Asthma-related health problems pose the greatest risk to the youngest children. In 2014, children 4 and under were hospitalized at a rate of 10.3 per 10,000 people, compared to a rate of 2.9 per 10,000 for children from 5 to 17 and 4.9 per 10,000 for all children and adults.

## Ventura County Asthma Hospitalization Rate by Age (1998 - 2014)



# LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

## CANCER IS LEADING KILLER

### What are the measures?

The measures are a ranking of the 10 most common causes of death in Ventura County, in California and in the United States; and the 10 causes of death in Ventura County that result in the greatest average number of years lost.

### Why are the measures important?

Accurate information on the top causes of death enables doctors, researchers and public-health professionals to focus their efforts and resources. Knowing what kills us also tells us a great deal about what sort of society we are — for example, the frequency of violent death, whether we tend to live long enough to get cancer before something else kills us, and how greatly we suffer from heart disease and other ailments that might be tied to our diet and lifestyles. Knowing which deaths result in the most years lost lets us focus on premature deaths, an area where public health efforts could be most effective.

### How are we doing?

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Ventura County, followed by heart disease and stroke. The top three are the same statewide but slightly different nationwide. Nationally, heart disease is the leading killer, followed by cancer and chronic lower respiratory disease. Accidents are fourth and strokes are fifth.

Alzheimer's disease is the fourth leading cause of death in Ventura County, marginally higher than its rank in the state

or the nation. Non-alcohol drug-induced deaths are also unusually common here, ranking eighth in Ventura County, 10th in the state and not among in the top 10 nationwide.

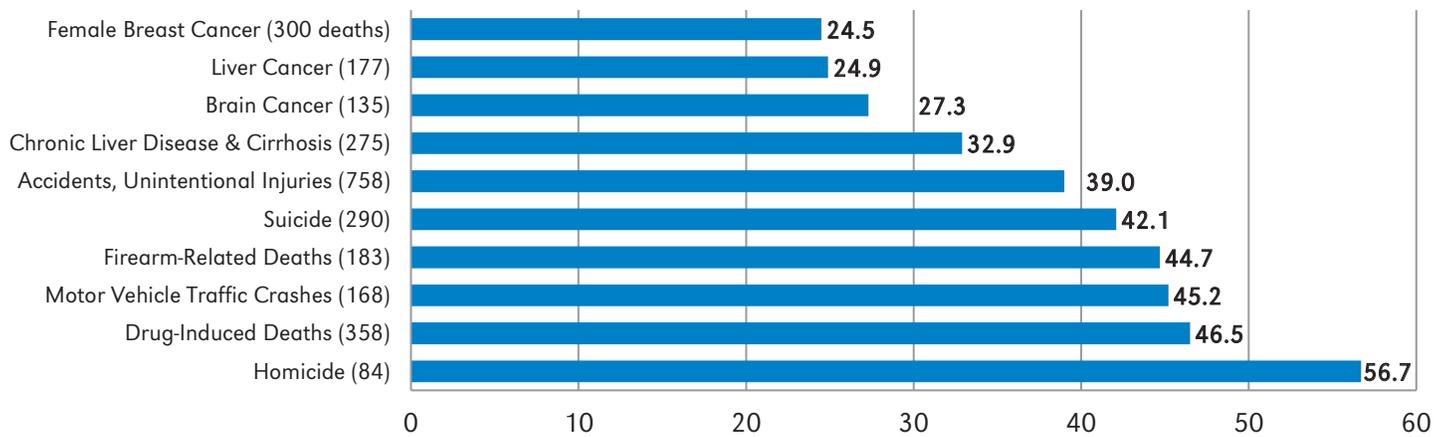
The prevalence of drug-induced deaths suggest a serious issue here with addiction and abuse. On the other hand, our low smoking rate could be why we don't die as often from emphysema and other respiratory illnesses.

Ventura County residents are less likely than the average Californian or the average American to die from influenza or pneumonia. These illnesses can usually be treated before they are fatal, so perhaps Ventura County's affluence means our residents are more likely to seek medical care, or possibly our medical community is unusually effective at spotting and treating them.

Most of the leading causes of death are illnesses that affect older people. The causes of death that result in the greatest loss of life, measured by years lost in the average death, are much different. Homicide, not surprisingly, is at the top of the list: The average homicide victim in Ventura County loses 56.7 years. Other causes of death that disproportionately affect the young include drug overdoses (46.5 years lost), automobile crashes (45.2 years), firearm-related deaths (44.7 years) and suicides (42.1 years). Since these are all preventable causes of death, they are areas where policymakers and public health officials can concentrate their efforts.



## Average Years of Life Lost Per Death in Ventura County (2012 - 2014)



### Leading Causes of Death (Ventura County & California, 2012 - 2014; United States, 2014)

Rank	Ventura County	California	United States
1	All Cancers	All Cancers	Diseases of the Heart
2	Coronary Heart Disease	Coronary Heart Disease	All Cancers
3	Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)	Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease
4	Alzheimer's Disease	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)
5	Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	Alzheimer's Disease	Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)
6	Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)	Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)	Alzheimer's Disease
7	Diabetes	Diabetes	Diabetes
8	Drug-Induced Deaths	Influenza-Pneumonia	Influenza-Pneumonia
9	Suicide	Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	Kidney Disease
10	Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	Drug-Induced Deaths	Suicide



# OVERDOSE DEATHS

754 FATAL OVERDOSES IN 7 YEARS

## What is the measure?

The measure is the number of deaths attributed to overdoses of prescription medications, alcohol, heroin and other drugs. A particular death could be tied to more than one substance, so the figures for each substance add up to more than the total number of overdose deaths.

## Why is the measure important?

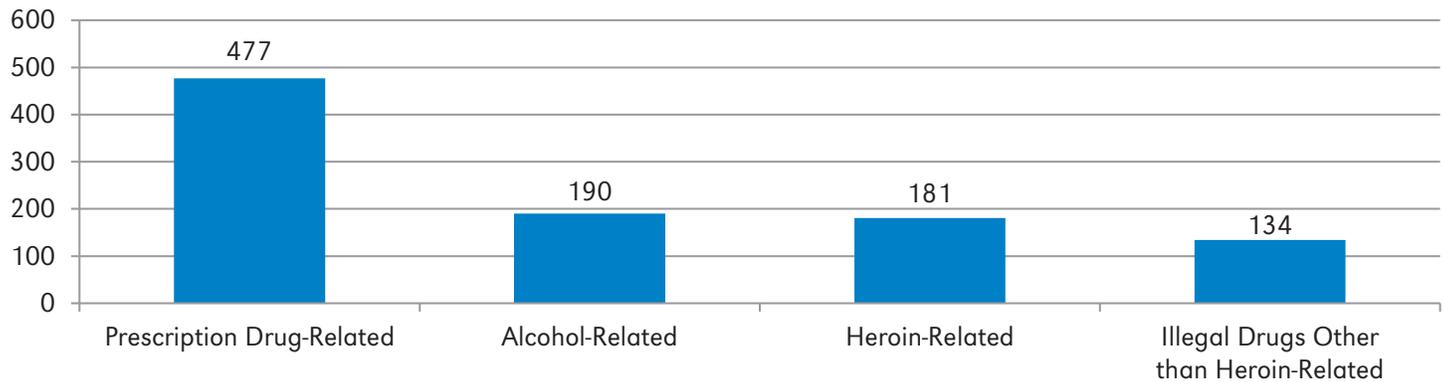
Drug abuse has become a more common cause of death in recent years and now kills more people nationwide than either car accidents or gun violence. Knowing which substances are responsible for overdose deaths in Ventura County can help our public-health and addiction-treatment professionals in their fight against drug-related deaths. It also informs county residents about the types of overdose deaths and how common they are in our community.

## How are we doing?

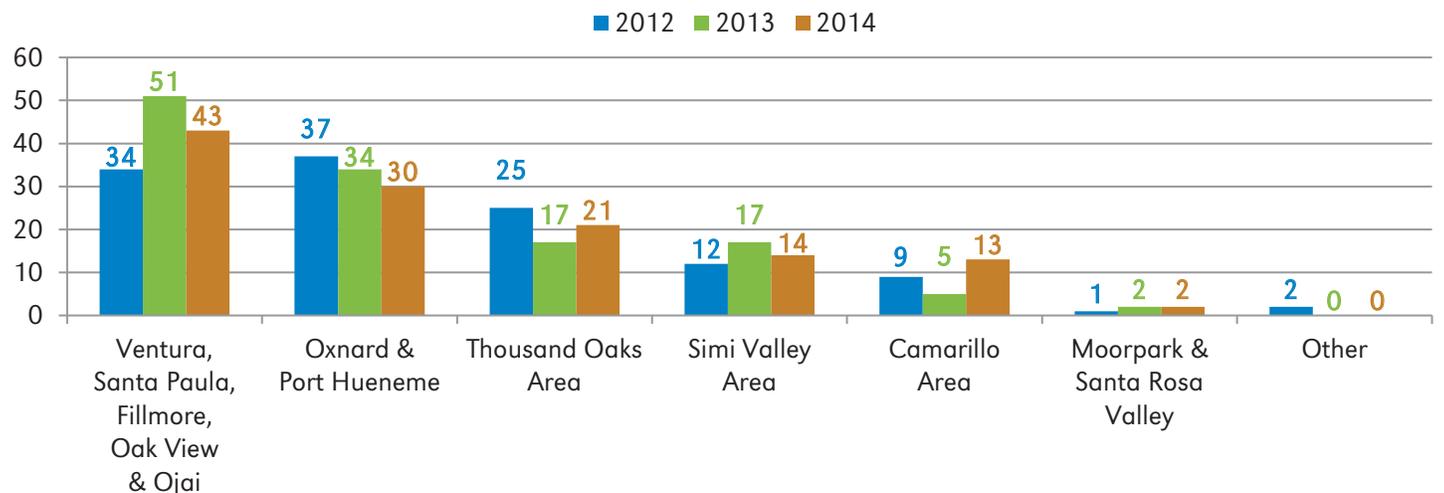
Ventura County recorded 754 deaths due to overdose between 2008 and 2014, an average of 107.7 per year. Prescription drugs were involved in 477 of those deaths; 190 were alcohol-related; 181 involved heroin; and 134 involved other illicit drugs. Prescription drug-related deaths significantly exceed heroin deaths and are likely due to the easy availability of these medications within our culture.

Overdose deaths countywide went from 120 in 2012, up to 126 in 2013 and remains steady at 123 in 2014. Fatal overdoses occurred most often in the Ventura region, composed of Ventura, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Oak View and Ojai, followed by the Oxnard and Port Hueneme region. They are almost unheard of in Moorpark and the Santa Rosa Valley, where five deaths were reported during that three-year period.

**Ventura County Overdose Deaths (2008 - 2014)**



**Ventura County Overdose Deaths by Area (2012 - 2014)**



# PUBLIC SAFETY

In Ventura County, police and fire services are among the top funding priorities of every city council, as well as county government. That investment appears to have paid off: Ventura County consistently boasts some of the safest cities in California and the nation.

Ventura County's crime problems, always smaller than those of other Southern California counties, shrank over the past few decades, but have inched up since 2012. Crime rates across the United States plummeted throughout the 1990s, and Ventura County was no exception. The reasons are not

completely understood, but the prevalence of serious crimes nationwide and locally is about half of what it was in the early 1990s. The typical American city is about as safe today as it was in the 1960s.

Signs are emerging, however, that law enforcement officials, policymakers and the public should keep up their guard. In Ventura County, crime rates have held steady for about the past 15 years, even occasionally ticking upward, but the gains of past decades have slowed.



# COUNTY CRIME RATE

## VENTURA COUNTY AMONG SAFEST LARGE COUNTIES

### What are the measures?

The measures are the number of serious crimes reported per 1,000 residents in Ventura County and 15 other large California counties, and Ventura County's crime rate over time, according to the FBI and the California Department of Justice. The crime rate is based on what the FBI classifies as "Part I crimes," including rape, murder, robbery, aggravated assault, arson and grand theft.

### Why are the measures important?

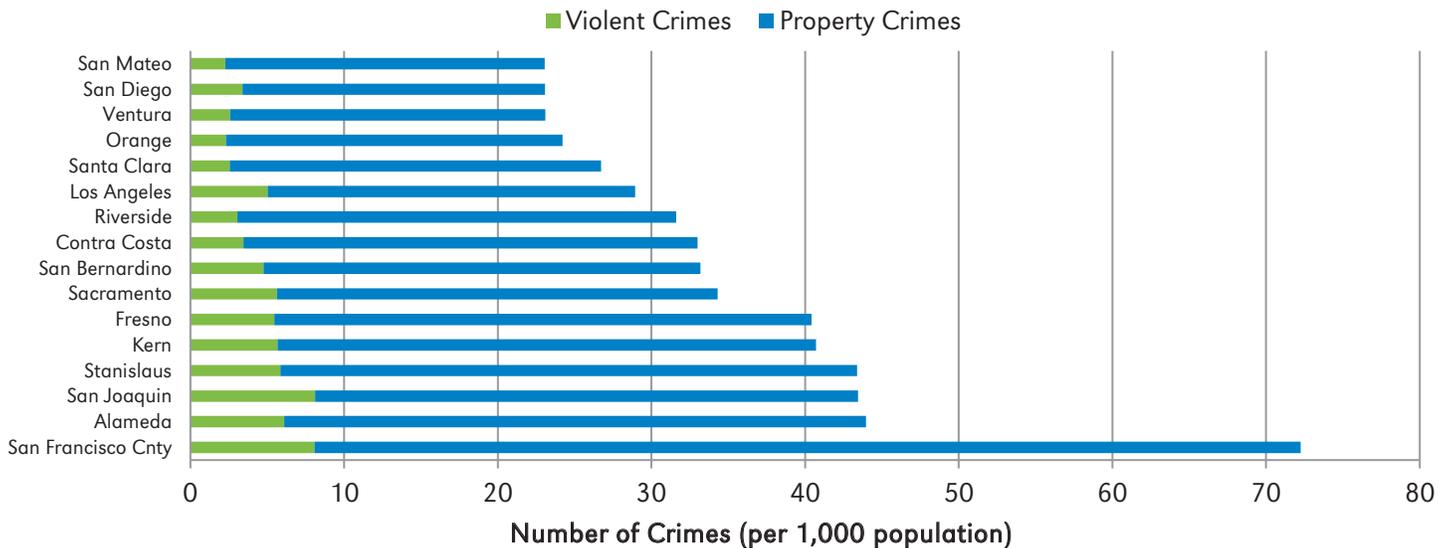
Violent and property crimes are tremendously harmful to a community's quality of life. The victims themselves suffer, of course, but so do other residents who live with the threat of victimization. Crime also consumes public resources, as the cost of investigating and prosecuting crimes and imprisoning offenders falls on taxpayers and takes away from other priorities.

### How are we doing?

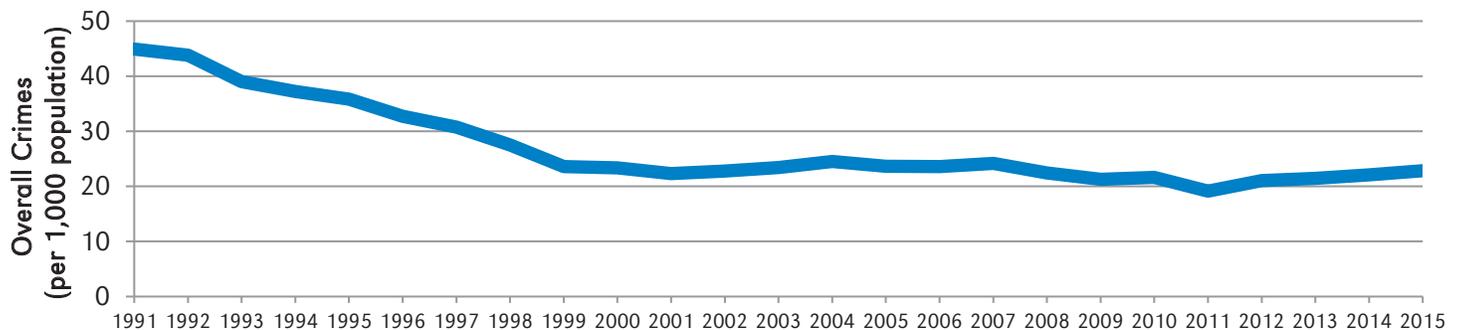
Ventura County was the third safest large county in California in 2015 and just a bit below the two safest, San Diego and San Mateo counties. The rate of Part I crimes in Ventura County was 23.11 per 1,000 residents. Ventura County reported the fourth lowest violent crime rate and the second lowest property crime rate.

Although our crime rate is low when compared to the rest of the state, it no longer is trending in the right direction. Throughout the 1990s, the crime rate dropped precipitously, going from 44.9 serious crimes per 1,000 residents in 1991 to 22.3 in 2001, a 50 percent decline in 10 years. The crime rate then rose slightly in the early 2000s and fell again from 2007 to 2011, before rising slightly and then leveling off. Even with the recent uptick, our crime rate remains about half of what it was in the early 1990s.

### Crime Rates in California's Most Populated Counties (2015)



### Overall Ventura County Crime Rate (1991 - 2015)



# CITY CRIME RATES

MOORPARK, OJAI RANK AS SAFEST



## What is the measure?

The measure is the number of serious property and violent crimes reported per 1,000 residents in Ventura County's cities.

## Why is the measure important?

Ventura County's overall crime rate is important, but it has less impact on residents' day-to-day lives than the specific crime rates in the communities where they live and work.

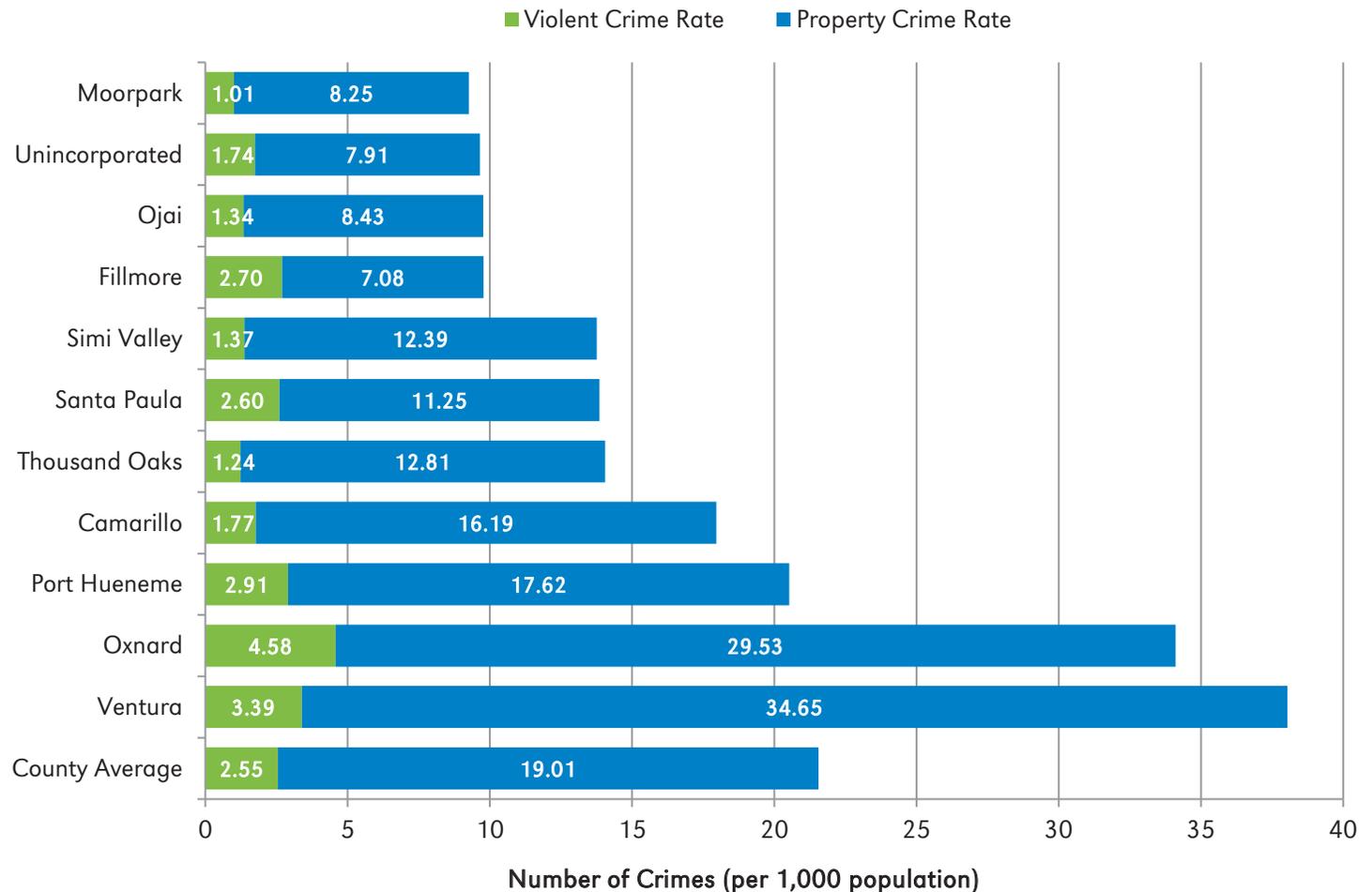
## How are we doing?

Most Ventura County cities have very low crime rates — in fact, eight of the county's 10 cities have rates below the overall county rate. The other two, Oxnard and Ventura, report far higher crime rates that push up the countywide rate.

In 2016, Moorpark had the county's lowest crime rate, with violent crimes at 1.01 and property crimes at 8.25 per 1,000 residents. Ojai was the second safest city, with 1.34 violent crimes and 8.43 property crimes per 1,000 people; Fillmore was third, with 2.7 violent crimes and 7.08 property crimes per 1,000 people. Crime rates in Simi Valley, Santa Paula, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo and Port Hueneme also fell below the overall county figure.

At the other end of the spectrum, rates in Ventura and Oxnard consistently exceed those in the rest of the county. In 2016, Ventura's rate was the highest, with 3.39 violent crimes and 34.65 property crimes per 1,000 people. Oxnard had fewer property crimes, at 29.53 per 1,000 people, but more violent crimes at 4.58 per 1,000 residents.

## Crime Rates in Ventura County (2016)



# PRISON REALIGNMENT

## PROBATION CASELOADS RISE WITH AB109

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of state prisoners released in Ventura County and assigned to local probation officers under Assembly Bill 109. The law, passed in 2011, shifted responsibility for non-violent, non-serious and non-sex offenders from the state prison system to county jails and probation departments.

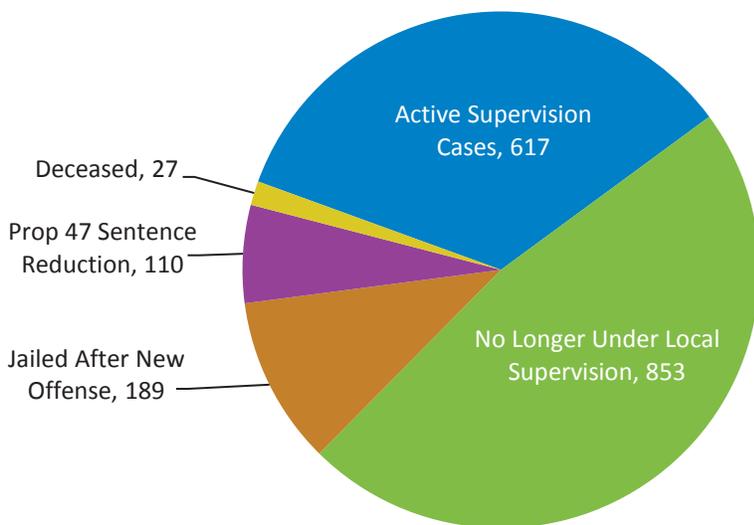
### Why is the measure important?

Realignment under AB 109 represents one of the biggest changes in California's criminal justice system in recent decades. It increased the population at Ventura County Jail and the caseloads of county probation officers. Some law enforcement officials believe it contributed to the recent increase in crime rates.

### How are we doing?

Over the first five years of realignment, from 2011 to 2016, the state released 1,796 inmates in Ventura County under "post release community supervision." Of those, 189 were sent back to jail or prison for a new offense; 27 died; 110 had their sentences reduced due to Proposition 47; and 853 either completed their terms or were no longer under local probation supervision. By the end of 2016, there were 617 active cases remaining, meaning Ventura County probation officers supervised 617 more people than they would have before Assembly Bill 109 became law.

### Breakdown of AB 109 Cases Transferred to Ventura County Probation (2011 - 2016)



# JUVENILE ARRESTS

## YOUTH CRIME DOWN

### What are the measures?

The measures are the number of arrests of people under the age of 18 for felonies and misdemeanors in Ventura County.

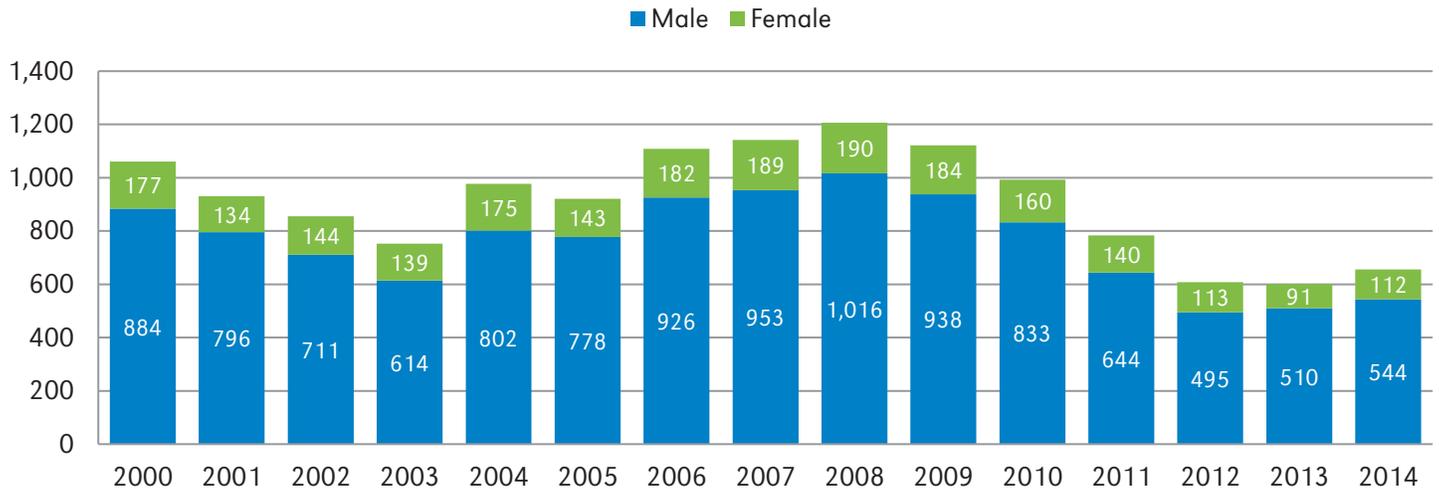
### Why are the measures important?

Crimes committed by children are doubly tragic. They harm society to the same extent as crimes committed by adults, and they also hurt the perpetrators themselves. Entering the criminal justice system at a young age is a predictor of future incarceration and other negative life outcomes. To keep young people off of that track, the juvenile justice system focuses on rehabilitation.

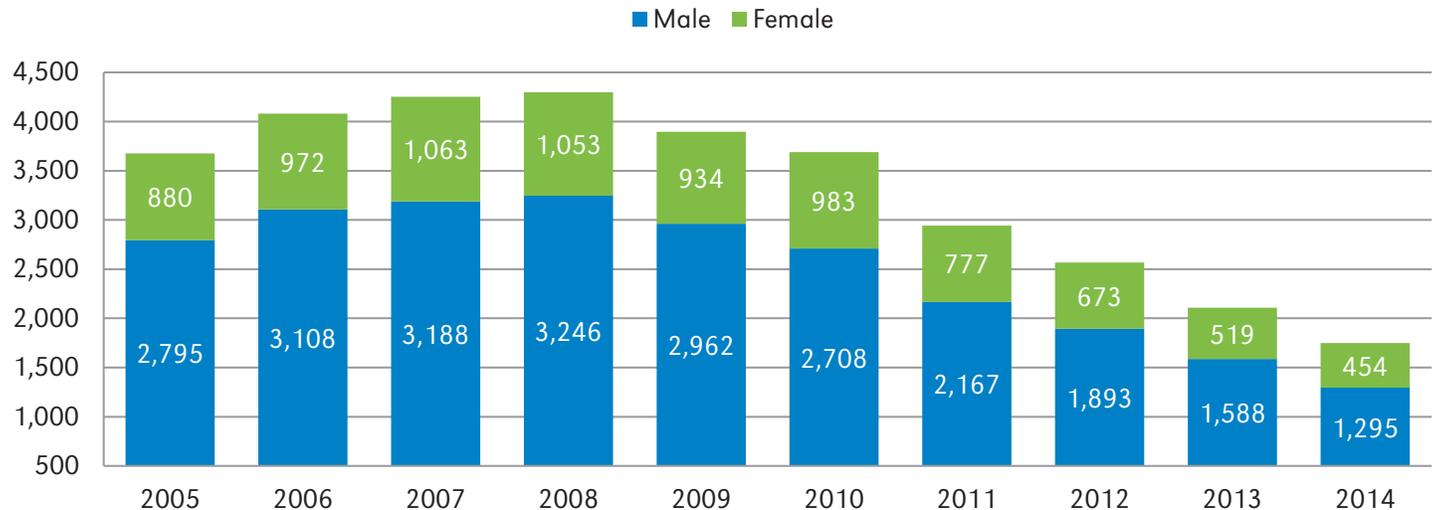
### How are we doing?

Juvenile arrests dropped significantly over the past decade, at a time when the overall crime rate stayed about the same. In 2014, the last year with available data, there were 656 juvenile felony arrests in the county, slightly more than in 2012 or 2013 but 45.6 percent fewer than the total in 2008. There were 1,749 misdemeanor juvenile arrests in 2014, falling 17 percent from the year before and down 59 percent from the peak in 2008.

### Ventura County Juvenile Felony Arrests (2000 - 2014)



### Ventura County Juvenile Misdemeanor Arrests (2005 - 2014)



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS

*MORE THAN 18 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS PER DAY IN COUNTY*

## What is the measure?

The measure is the number of 9-1-1 calls in Ventura County pertaining to domestic violence, including violence against spouses, partners and children. It is expressed as a rate of calls per 1,000 residents.

## Why is the measure important?

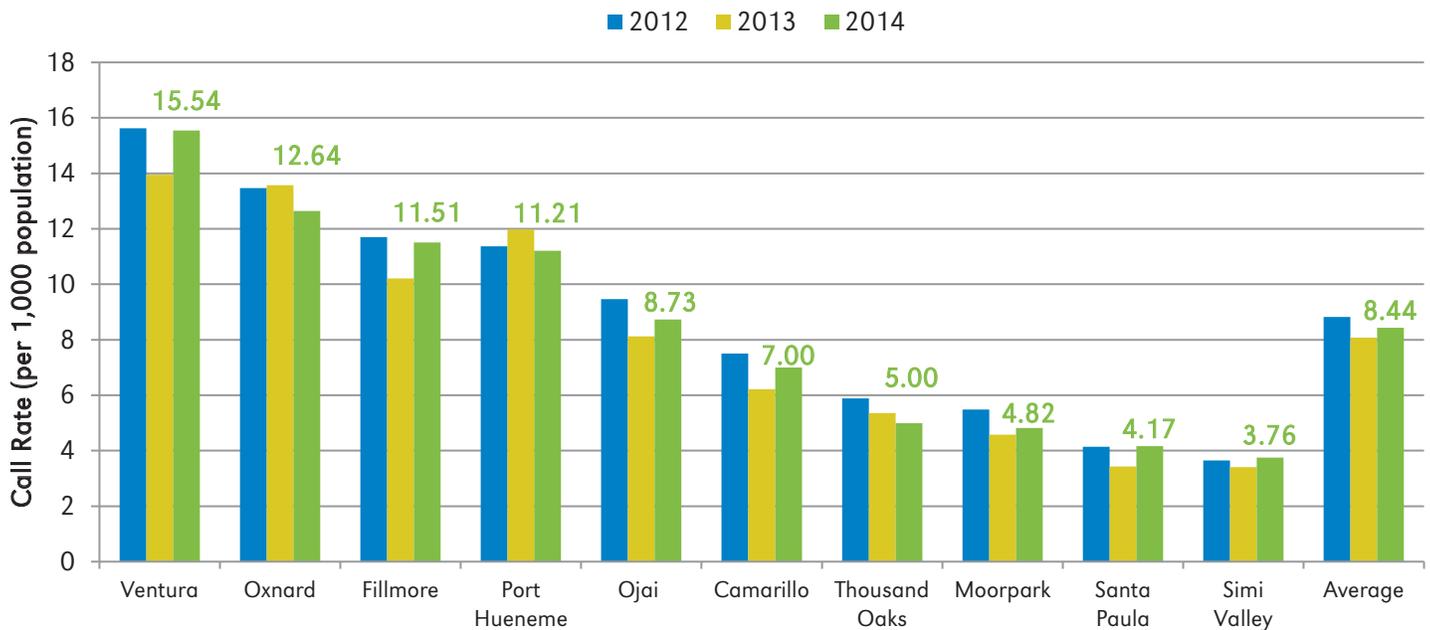
Domestic violence has deep implications for the physical and mental health of adults and children. Its direct effect on victims is obvious and tragic. It also indirectly affects generations of children, as people exposed to abuse at a young age are more likely to be involved in abusive relationships as adults. It is important to note this measure covers only calls for emergency assistance, not actual incidents of domestic violence, many of which go unreported.

## How are we doing?

In 2014, Ventura County residents made 6,591 calls to 9-1-1 related to domestic violence, a rate of 8.44 calls per 1,000 people, and more than 18 calls per day countywide. That was slightly above the rate in 2013 and slightly below the rate in 2012.

The two cities with the highest rates of domestic violence calls were the same cities with the highest overall crime rates: Ventura, with 15.54 calls per 1,000 people, and Oxnard, with 12.64 calls per 1,000 people. Simi Valley logged the fewest calls, at 3.76 per 1,000 people, and Santa Paula was next, at 4.17 calls per 1,000 people.

## Ventura County Domestic Violence Calls (2012 - 2014)



# CALLS TO VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE CALLS DOWN, MEDICAL CALLS UP

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of calls to the Ventura County Fire Department, divided into medical, fire and other types of services. The department serves the unincorporated areas of Ventura County and six of its 10 cities: Ojai, Port Hueneme, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Moorpark and Simi Valley.

### Why is the measure important?

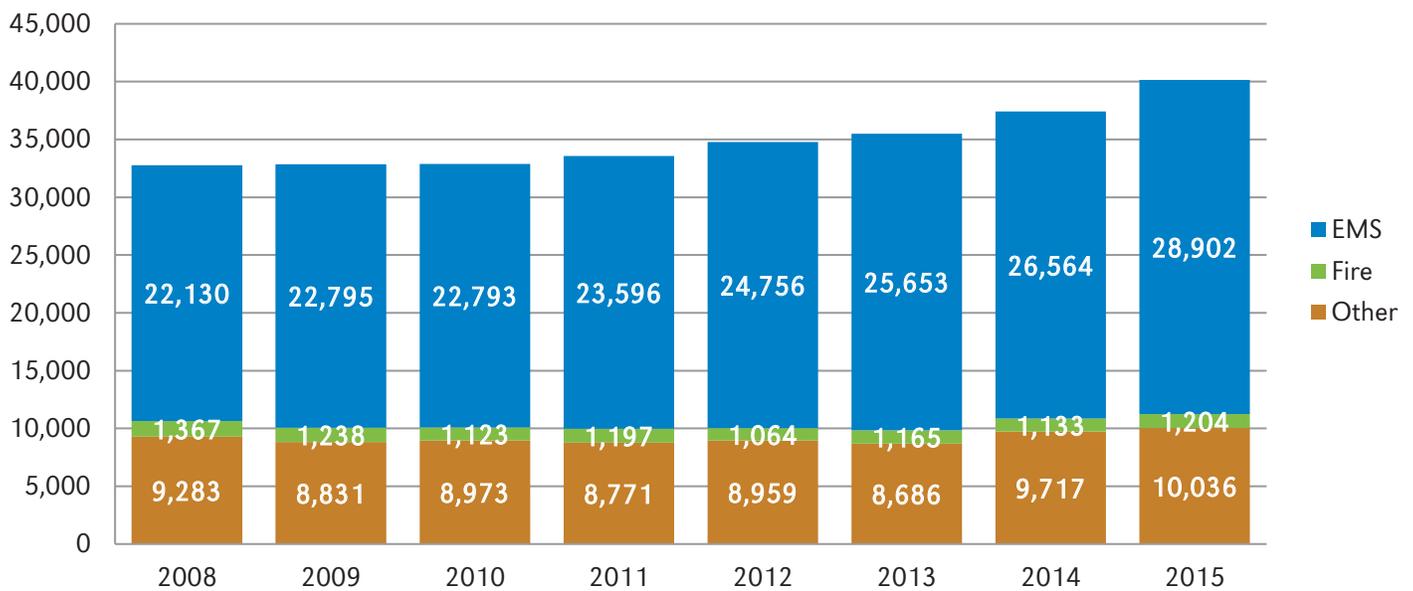
The number of calls that fire departments respond to determines how many firefighters and fire stations are needed, and how much public funding is required. The number of calls responding to fires can be a measure of the community's success at fire prevention, while the number of emergency medical calls likely reflects the age and health of the population.

### How are we doing?

Fires are relatively rare events for a modern fire department. In 2015, only 3 percent of the Ventura County Fire Department's 40,142 calls for service involved fires. Over the years, fires are becoming less common due to better building codes and public awareness about fire safety. The majority of calls for service result from medical emergencies. In 2015, the county fire department responded to 28,902 medical calls, 71.5 percent of the total number of calls.

The county fire department has been getting busier over the past few years: The number of calls increased by 7.3 percent from 2014 to 2015, after an increase of 5.4 percent the year before.

### Calls to Ventura County Fire Department (2008 - 2015)





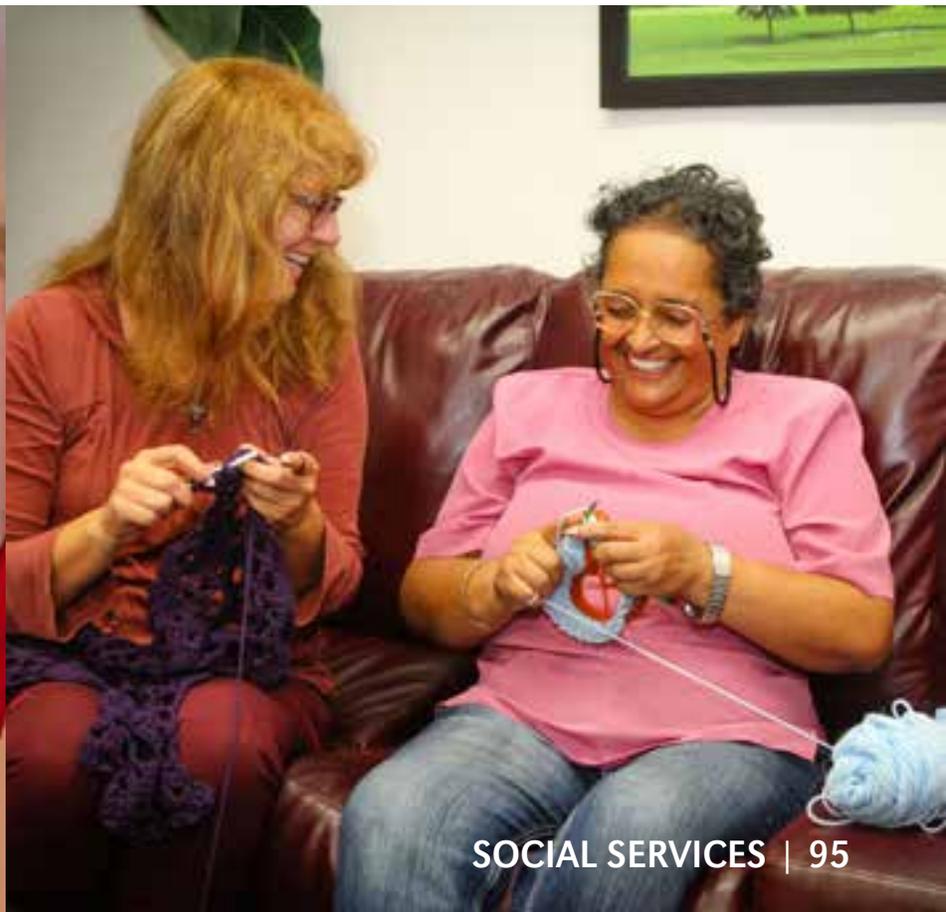
# SOCIAL SERVICES

Ventura County is by any comparative measure extremely well off. Yet, despite our above-average wealth, there are thousands of county residents who struggle to make ends meet. Others have needs that go beyond money, such as family problems or mental health issues. All those needs primarily are addressed through a system of social services that combines the efforts of government agencies, charities, churches, private businesses and volunteers.

These organizations are working to help people survive poverty, illness, unemployment and abuse. In many ways, they are succeeding. In the area of homelessness, for example, the social services community seems to be making real strides. The number of people sleeping on the streets, along our rivers, in their cars or in other unsuitable places has dropped for four consecutive years. Other problems

are proving less tractable. The number of families in near homelessness, living in hotels and shared homes, continues to rise, and there are a distressing number of homeless and near-homeless children in the county. Cases of reported child abuse are up significantly over the last decade and a half, another distressing sign.

Some of the major champions in our battles against these social ills are nonprofit organizations, and these are challenging times for those groups. As detailed in this report's section on Community Engagement & Resources, donations to nonprofits in Ventura County remain smaller than in neighboring counties. And many of our biggest nonprofits have still not fully recovered from the 2008/09 recession.



# 2-1-1 CALLS BY NEED

## HOUSING A MAJOR AREA OF NEED

### What is the measure?

The measure is the volume of calls to Ventura County's 2-1-1 line seeking information about, or referrals to, social service programs. 2-1-1 Ventura County is a program of Interface Children & Family Services in partnership with the County of Ventura, First 5 of Ventura County, local cities and United Way of Ventura County.

### Why is the measure important?

The 2-1-1 program, launched in Ventura County in 2005, is a 24-hour social services hotline. Its operators connect callers to organizations that provide food or rent assistance, substance abuse treatment, help dealing with domestic violence as well as other social services. The hotline receives more than 20,000 calls per year, and its database of calls — organized by need — offers insight into which services Ventura County callers most often demand.

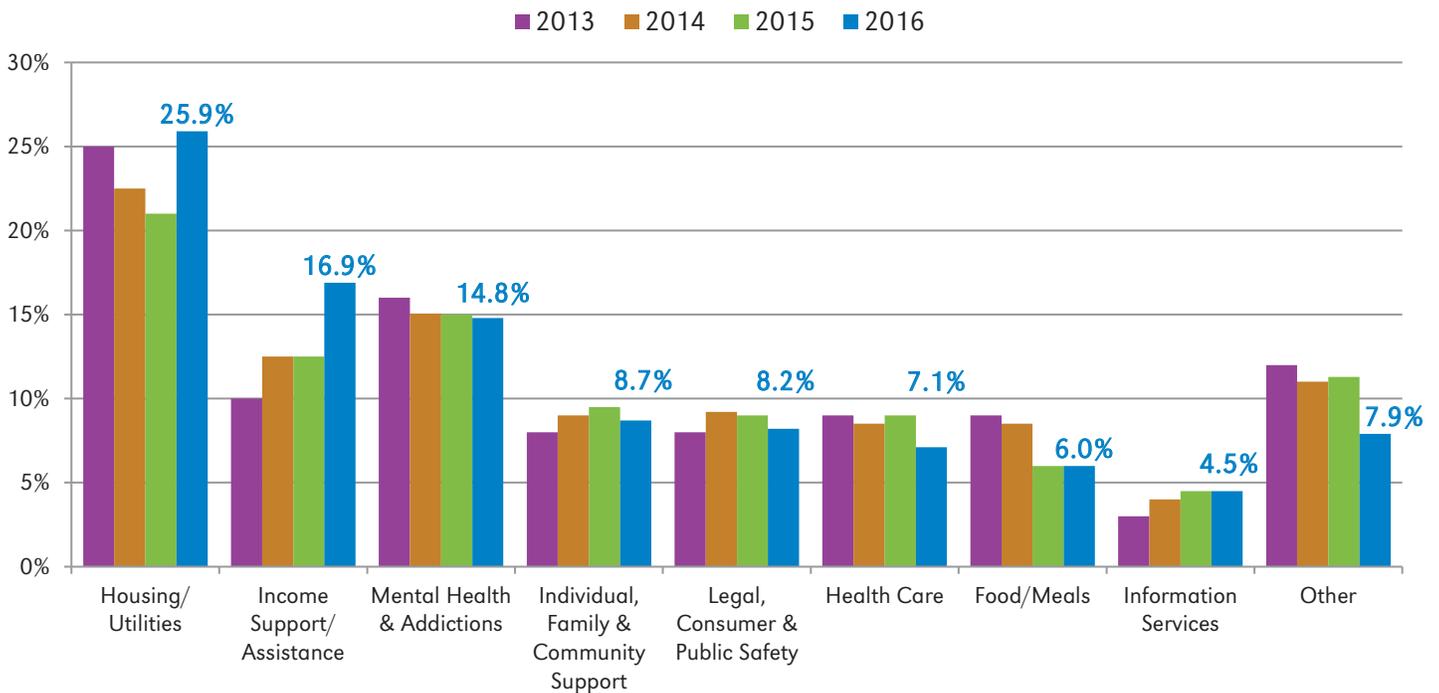
Recently, guided search and two-way texting capabilities were added to make 2-1-1 available to substantially more community members.

### How are we doing?

As befits a county with high rents and low apartment vacancy rates, calls for help with housing and utilities were the biggest category of 2-1-1 calls in 2016, at 25.9 percent of the total calls. Income support and assistance was next, at 16.9 percent, followed by mental health issues and addiction, at 14.8 percent.

When compared to 2015, the share of calls seeking housing assistance rose sharply, from 21 percent to 25.9 percent. Calls for income support and assistance rose as well, from 12.5 percent to 16.9 percent.

**Ventura County 2-1-1 Calls by Category of Need (2013 - 2016)**



# REVENUE TO UNITED WAY

## UNITED WAY STILL RECOVERING FROM RECESSION

### What is the measure?

The measure is the money received each year by the United Way of Ventura County.

### Why is the measure important?

The United Way is only one charity, but it is one of the county's biggest. It also has a very broad mission, and does much of its work by leveraging volunteer resources for countywide nonprofits through its Volunteer Ventura County program and strategically investing large grants in public/private partnerships like 2-1-1 Ventura County that impact thousands of residents.

### How are we doing?

By the 2014/15 fiscal year, the Ventura County United Way had still not fully recovered from the recession. Revenues took a major hit in 2009/10, dropping from \$3.85 million to \$2.12 million. They rebounded after that, to \$2.98 million in 2010/11, but then began to decline again. In 2014/15, the nonprofit's revenue was back down to 2009 levels.

Revenue to United Way of Ventura County (2007/08 - 2014/15)



# HOMELESSNESS

## FEWER PEOPLE SLEEPING IN STREETS

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of people in Ventura County who were homeless on January 26, 2016, as determined by a census overseen by the county of Ventura. The census, taken annually by volunteers since 2009, counted people as homeless if they were living in emergency or transitional shelters, or were without shelter, such as those sleeping in parks, along rivers, on sidewalks or in cars. People living in motels or staying with friends or family were not counted as homeless.

### Why is the measure important?

Homelessness harms not only people without permanent shelter but society at large. Persons without homes typically live without adequate sanitation or protection from the elements. They usually lack decent medical care and often go without treatment for chronic diseases, addiction or mental health problems. They face the threat of theft, violent crime or legal penalties for sleeping in unauthorized public or private places. And while people are generally homeless because they can't afford shelter, their presence on the streets is expensive for society. When they spend nights in jail or the emergency room, it costs taxpayers more than providing them a room where they can sleep.

### How are we doing?

Ventura County's homeless population declined for the fourth straight year in 2016, to 1,271 people. It was a 10.3 percent drop from the previous year's census and a 42 percent decline since 2009.

The census almost certainly undercounts the number of homeless people in the county. It happens on only one day, so it does not capture people who are homeless at other times of the year. And it includes only people who the volunteer census takers can locate, who agree to speak with them and who admit to being homeless. Further, those without permanent housing, such as people or families sleeping on a friend's couch, are not included in the survey. It is also possible a change in methodology affected the

decline from 2015 to 2016: in 2016, the census was taken only in the morning, while in previous years, volunteers hit the streets in the morning and the afternoon. The census used more volunteers in 2016 in an effort to make up for the shorter time frame.

The decline in homelessness is long-term, significant and spread across the county. It has been especially pronounced since 2012. Ventura, which has the county's largest homeless population, went from 701 homeless people in the 2012 census to 300 in 2016. Oxnard's population grew slightly in those years, from 522 to 584 homeless people, and Thousand Oaks also saw a small increase over four years, from 90 to 104 homeless people. But every other city improved to some degree. Simi Valley, for example, went from 284 homeless people in 2012 to 99 in 2016.

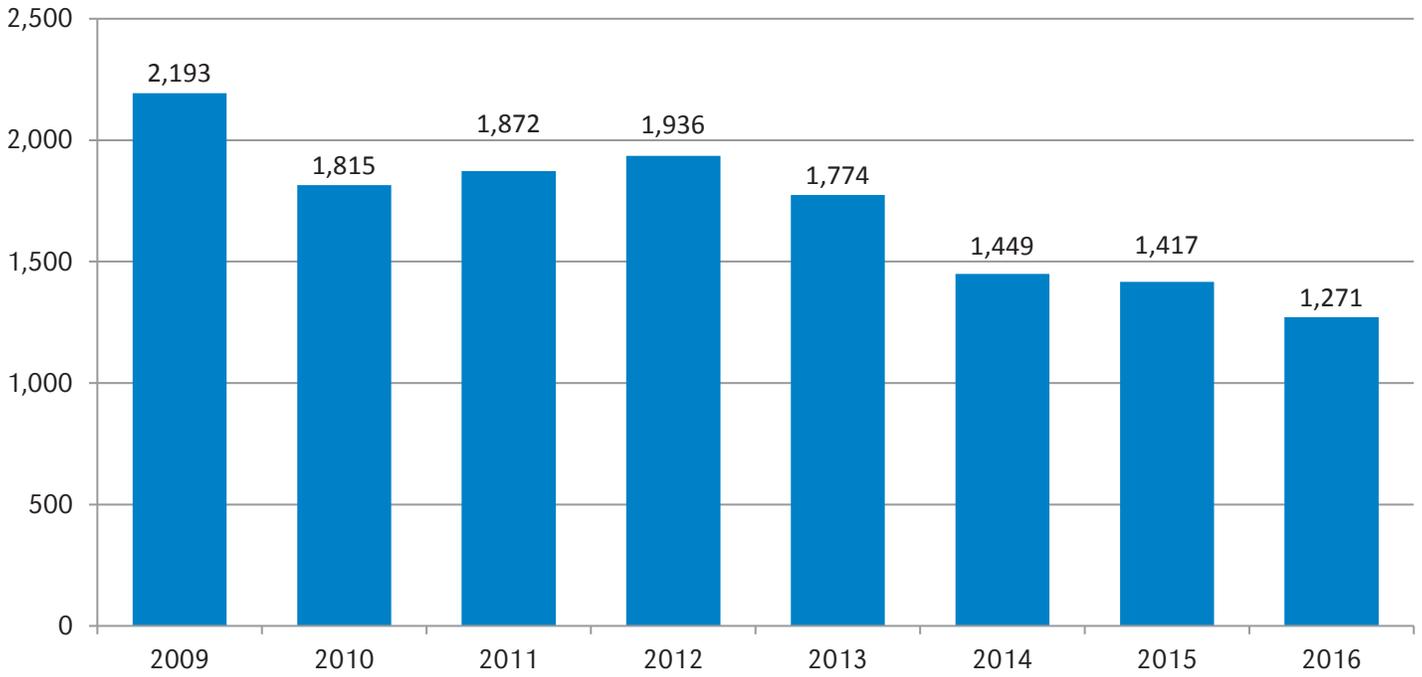
It's unclear whether the decline results from good public policy, a rising economic tide or other factors. Our progress contrasts with the City of Los Angeles which experienced an 11 percent surge in its homeless population from 2015 to 2016.

The latest Ventura County census shows definite signs of progress. Policymakers at the federal, state and local levels aim to eliminate homelessness completely among military veterans by connecting them with already available social services and by building housing specifically for low-income veterans. The 2016 Ventura County homeless count found 57 homeless veterans, down from 87 just a year earlier.

Homelessness policy also is concentrating services and temporary housing on the "chronically homeless," defined as people who have been homeless for at least one full year or on four or more separate occasions in the previous three years, and who have a substance abuse disorder, mental illness, developmental disability or chronic illness or disability. There is cause for optimism there, too; the Ventura County census found 254 such homeless people in 2016, down from 451 the previous year.

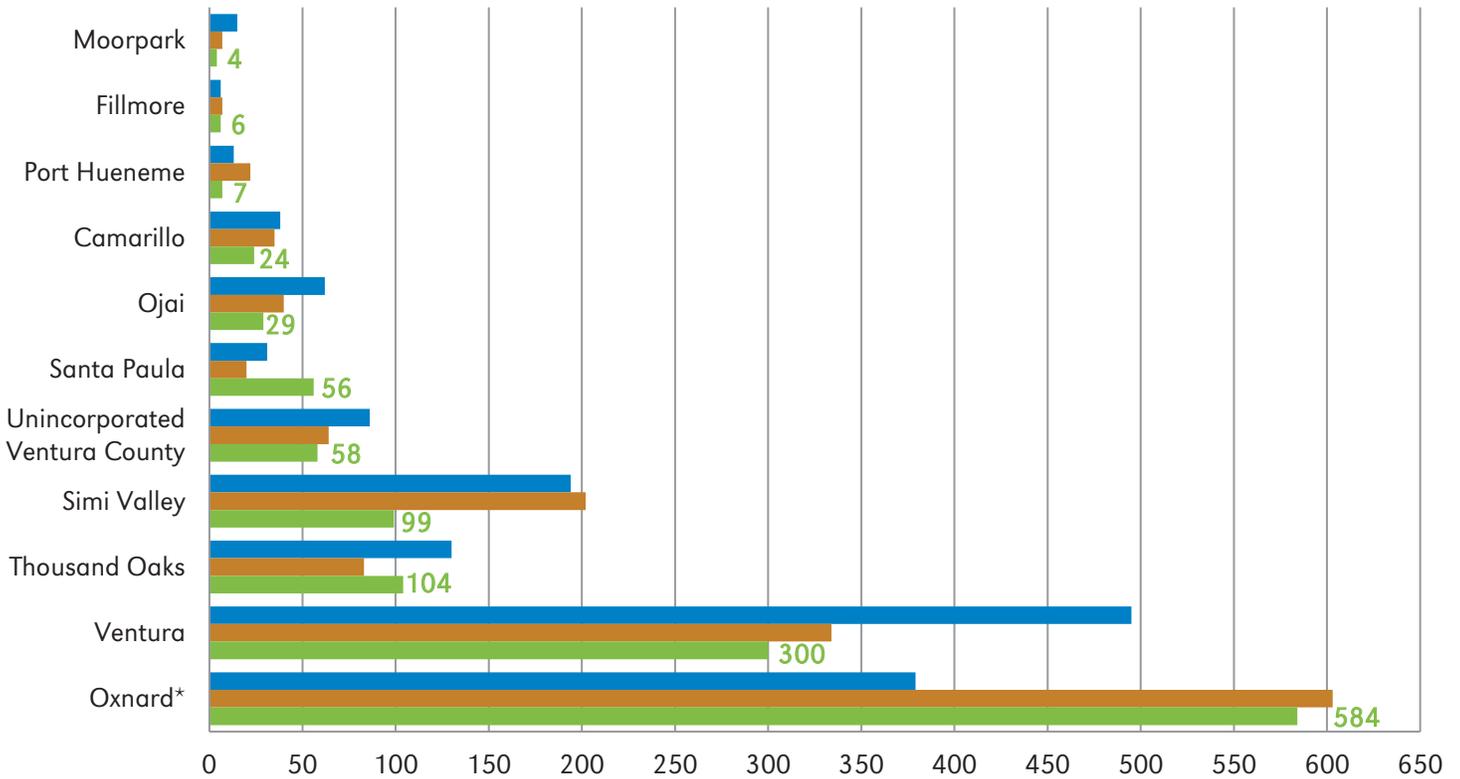


## Ventura County Homeless Counts (2009 - 2016)



## Ventura County Homeless Counts by City (2014 - 2016)

■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016



\*2014 data for Oxnard is lower than the trend due to a reporting anomaly.

# HOMELESSNESS AMONG CHILDREN

*MORE THAN 6,500 CHILDREN HOMELESS OR AT RISK*

## What is the measure?

The measure is the number of students in or near homelessness in each public school district in Ventura County. The numbers are drawn from a California Department of Education survey that differs in two major ways from the annual census of homeless people in the county. First, students are classified as homeless if they live in a hotel or motel or are in shared housing due to economic hardship. The county homeless census only considers people to be homeless if they live in a shelter, a car or outdoors; those in shared housing or hotels are not considered homeless. Second, the county homeless count attempts to measure how many people are homeless on one specific day, while the student survey classifies children as homeless if at any point in the previous year they stayed outdoors, in a shelter, in a car, or in a hotel or shared housing for financial reasons.

## Why is the measure important?

Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for anyone and especially so for children. Children need more sleep than adults, and they have specific nutritional needs as well; both will be neglected without a consistent place to live. A child who is homeless or nearly homeless is likely to be unprepared for school, have an unstable home life and suffer more stress than a child should need to face.

## How are we doing?

The number of homeless or near-homeless children in Ventura County is disturbingly high, and getting higher. In 2014, there were 6,590 children who met the Department of Education definition of homelessness, more than double the number from three years before. The Oxnard Union High School District had the biggest share of those students, at

28.7 percent of the total, followed by the Ventura Unified School District, at 13.8 percent.

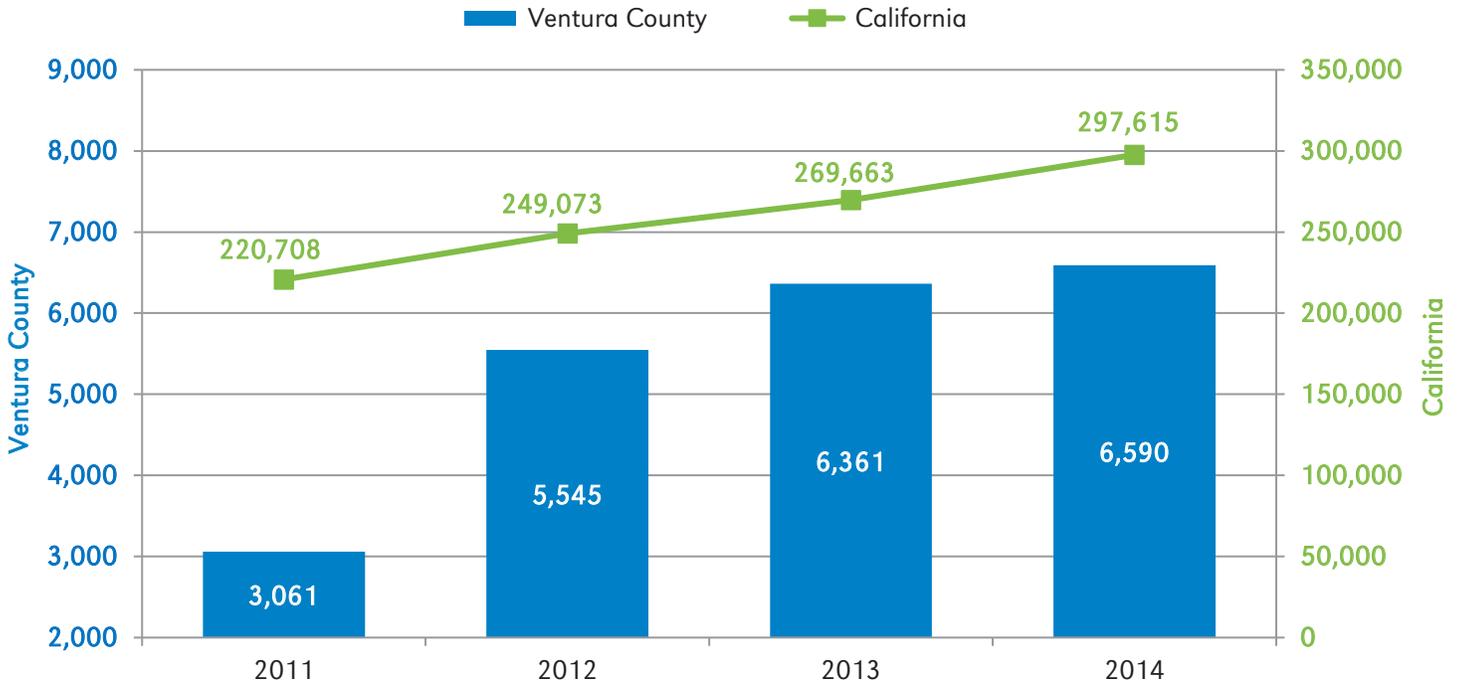
Despite this disturbing trend, it is relatively rare for children to lack any indoor shelter. In 2016, the county homeless count found 68 homeless children, around 1 percent of the total defined as homeless by the school-based survey. However, teenage homelessness is largely not seen. Homeless teens typically do not pursue public assistance, and instead hide in abandoned buildings and seek shelter in groups out of fear of being returned to the juvenile system or abusive parents. Further, the school survey could miss many homeless teens if they aren't in school.

The difference results from the broader definition of "homeless" used by the Department of Education and the school districts. Most likely fewer than 100 children in Ventura County sleep in shelters, cars or outdoors, but thousands live in hotels, in homes shared with friends or relatives and in other situations where they lack a permanent home.

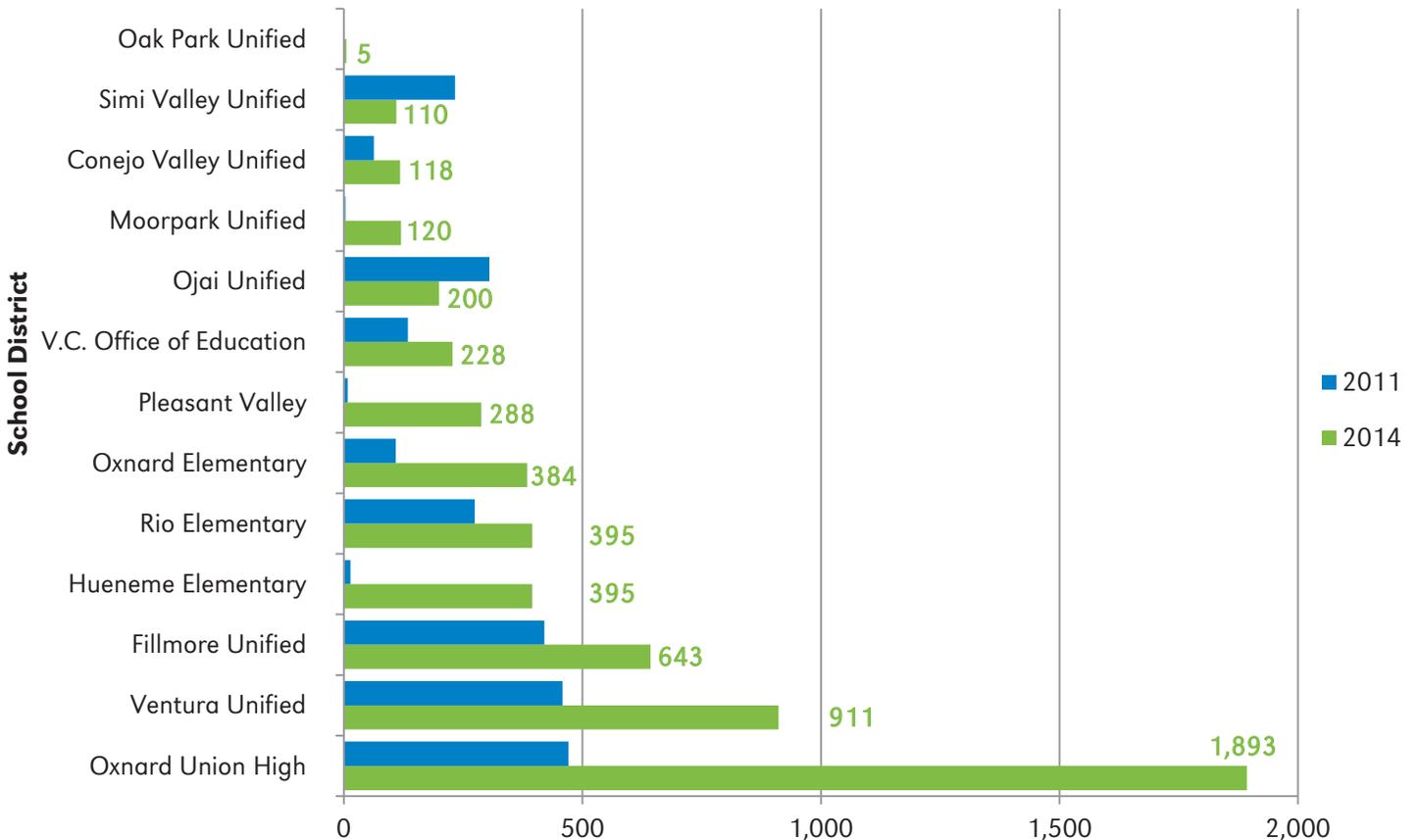
The rising number of homeless and at-risk students requires serious attention. The problem is exacerbated by Ventura County's high cost of housing and low rental vacancy rates. Between 2011 and 2014 — the period in which the number of homeless and nearly homeless children more than doubled — the median home price in Ventura County went from \$369,000 to \$470,000. The housing affordability index — the percentage of households that can afford the median-priced home — went from 45 percent to 27 percent. Some families priced out of the housing market may leave the area, but those that remain face ending up in shared, overcrowded homes or cheap motels.



## Ventura County Public School Student Homelessness (2011 - 2014)



## Homeless Children in Ventura County for Larger Public School Districts (2011, 2014)



# CHILD ABUSE

## DISTRESSING CLIMB IN ABUSE ALLEGATION RATE

### What is the measure?

The measure is the number of children each year reported to authorities as abused or neglected, expressed as a rate per every 1,000 children in the county. The total includes reports that were substantiated, as well as those determined to be inconclusive, unfounded, assessment-only referrals and “not yet determined.” The data counts each child only once per year, even if authorities received multiple reports of abuse or neglect.

### Why is the measure important?

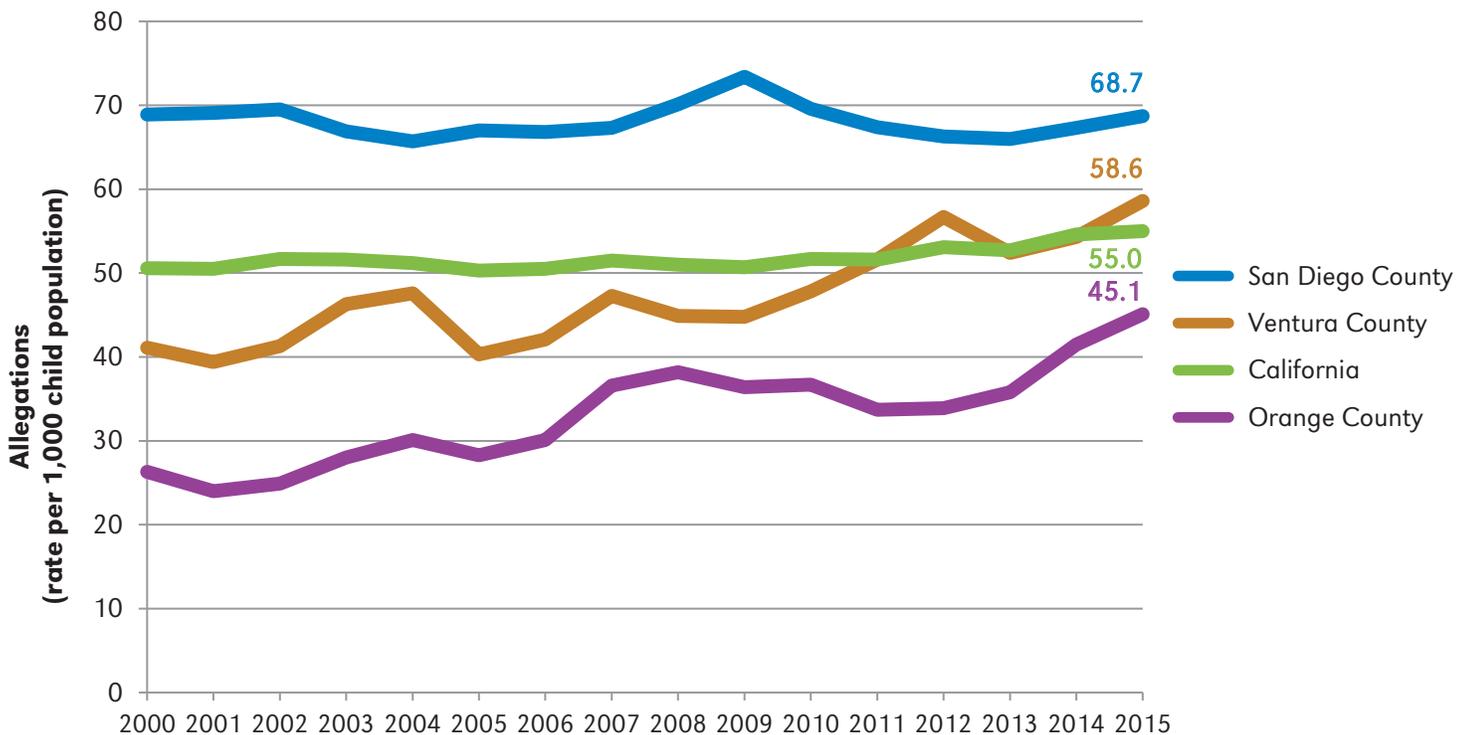
Child abuse does serious mental and physical harm to some of society’s most vulnerable people. The psychological damage can last a lifetime. Victims often grow up to be abusers themselves, or to be victimized again as adults, so stopping abuse in one household can break a multigenerational cycle of trauma, fear and violence.

### How are we doing?

The prevalence of reported child abuse and neglect in Ventura County aligns with the state average; in 2015, there were 58.6 reported allegations per 1,000 children in the county, 6.5 percent higher than the statewide rate of 55.0 allegations per 1,000 children.

While the statewide rate stayed between 50 and 55 allegations per 1,000 children between 2001 and 2015, in Ventura County abuse and neglect reports grew significantly more common over that period. The county’s rate has climbed from 39.4 allegations per 1,000 children in 2001 to 58.6 allegations per 1,000 children in 2015, an increase of 48.7 percent over 14 years. This increase is a bad sign in a measure that should be moving in the opposite direction.

**Child Abuse and Neglect Allegation Rate Per 1,000 Residents Age 0-17 (2000 - 2015)**



# TRANSPORTATION

In Ventura County, as in most of Southern California, “transportation” usually means “driving.” Highway 101 is the backbone of our community in many ways, and secondary highways complete the central nervous system. Around 90 percent of our commuters get to work in private automobiles, despite decades spent encouraging transportation alternatives. Our bus systems move thousands of people through our cities every day, but they still struggle to transport people from one city to another.

Changes are afoot, though. Cities are building more in their urban cores, creating neighborhoods that are easier to navigate on foot, by bicycle or in a bus. And the ubiquity of ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft is helping more people get around without their own cars, at least from time to time.

The next big breakthrough could be self-driving cars, though both their technology and regulation still seem years away

from fully formed. If and when they arrive in mass numbers, they would revolutionize our transportation system. It no longer would be necessary to own a car to commute daily – the driverless vehicle could take you to work, and before it returns to take you home, it could park itself in a remote lot or make itself useful transporting someone else.

Our current transportation system faces big challenges. In 2016, Ventura County’s transportation policymakers failed to win voter approval for a half-cent sales tax to fund infrastructure improvements, including widening Highway 101. Although the measure garnered 58% voter approval, it fell short of the required 2/3 majority. They likely will try again, but for the near future Ventura County will be the only county in Southern California without a tax designated for transportation projects. That means at least for a while, we likely must live with the basic transportation infrastructure we have.



# MEANS TO WORK

## BIKING, TRANSIT STILL NICHE ACTIVITIES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the primary method of transportation to and from work for Ventura County residents 16 years of age or older.

### Why is the measure important?

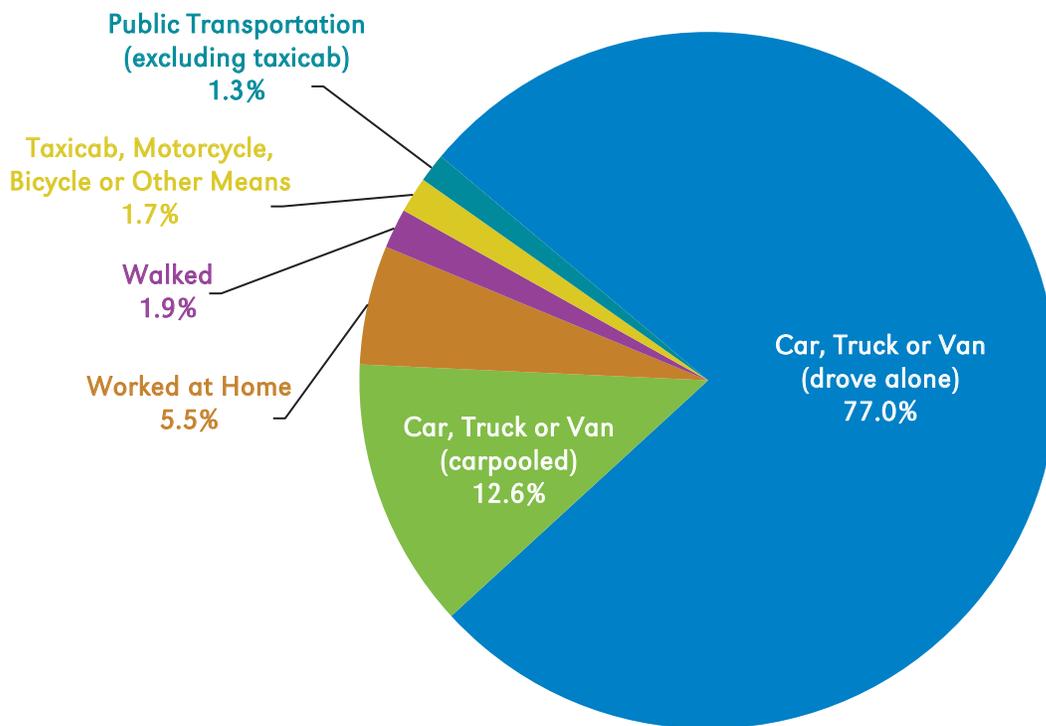
Driving alone – the most common way for Americans to get to work for generations – contributes to traffic congestion and pollution. Charting the means people use to get to work allows us to measure our progress in encouraging carpooling and public transit. It also gives us insight into the type of communities we have built: Denser communities, and those where homes are located close to businesses, are more conducive to walking, biking and public transit.

### How are we doing?

We appear to be moving in reverse. In 2015, 77 percent of Ventura County workers reported driving alone as their primary means of commuting to work. That was up from 76.5 percent in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Carpooling was the second most popular option, with 12.6 percent of workers sharing rides. Another 5.5 percent reported working from home, leaving only 4.9 percent using all forms of alternative transportation: walking, bicycles, taxis and public transportation. Public transit is especially underutilized by commuters; 1.3 percent of workers commute by bus or train, fewer than the portion who walk to work.

### Means to Work in Ventura County (2015)



# TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

OVERALL RIDERSHIP UP 1.5%

## What is the measure?

The measure is the total number of trips on Ventura County's four largest transit systems: Gold Coast Transit, which serves Ventura, Ojai, Oxnard and Port Hueneme; the bus systems in Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley; and the Ventura Intercity Service Transit Authority, or VISTA, which runs longer bus routes between cities in Ventura County and to Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties. Ventura County Transportation Commission oversees the regional service and has recently rebranded it as VCTC, rather than VISTA.

## Why is the measure important?

Buses are the only means of transportation for thousands of Ventura County residents who don't own cars or can't afford to drive. They are also an attractive option for commuters bound for Santa Barbara or Los Angeles.

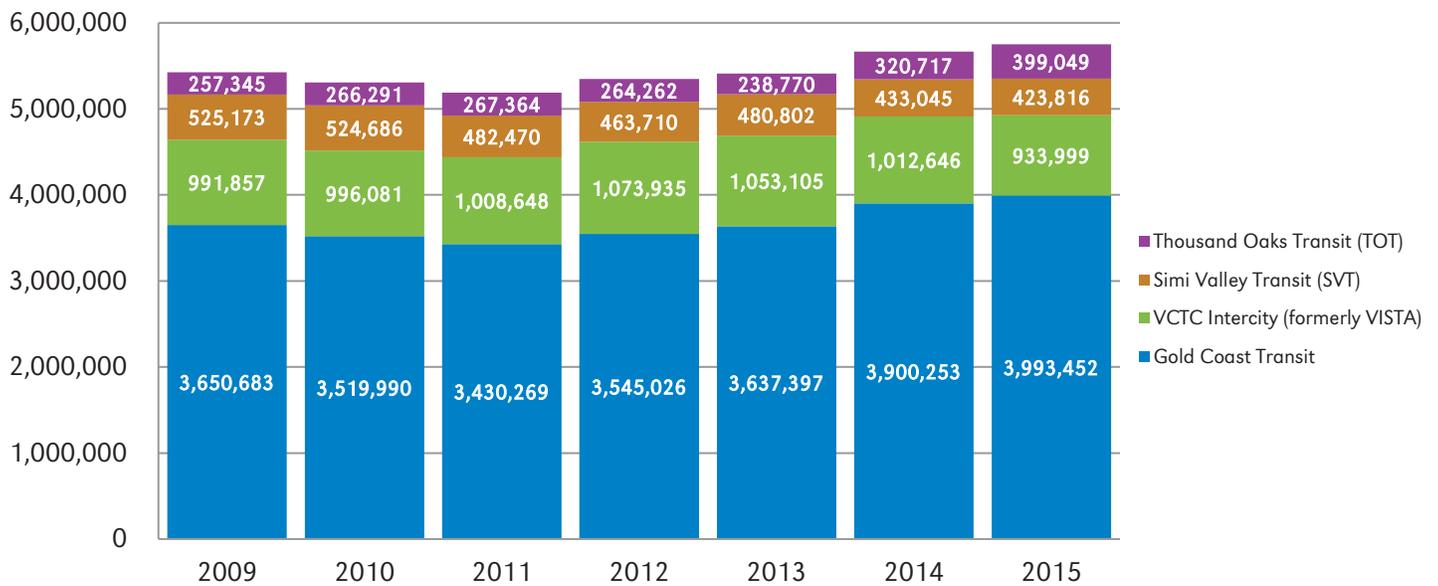
Encouraging transit use is a policy goal of government at most levels, since more bus trips reduce traffic congestion, pollution and gasoline consumption.

## How are we doing?

Total rides on Ventura County's four largest bus systems hit a record high in 2015, at 5.75 million trips. The largest system, Gold Coast Transit, saw a 2.4 percent increase in ridership over the previous year, on the heels of a 7.2 percent increase from 2013 to 2014. Thousand Oaks Transit grew faster, with 24.4 percent more rides in 2015 than in 2014.

Ridership declined on VISTA and Simi Valley Transit. VISTA ridership dropped 7.8 percent from 2014 to 2015, bringing it to its lowest total since 2008. Simi Valley's system is shedding riders even faster. Its ridership fell a total of 19.2 percent between 2010 and 2015.

**Number of Annual Ventura County Unlinked Trips (2009 - 2015)**



# BIKE LANES

VENTURA, THOUSAND OAKS LEAD THE WAY ON TWO WHEELS

## What is the measure?

The measure is the total miles of bike lanes in each city in Ventura County. They are divided into Class 1, where the bike lane is separate from automobile traffic; Class 2, which are bike lanes painted onto the street; and Class 3, bike routes that are designated by street signs but have no painted lanes.

## Why is the measure important?

Most local governments encourage bicycle transportation. Cycling benefits the environment and the health of the populace while it decreases traffic congestion. But our roads are often ill-suited for bicycles, and riding can be inconvenient or even dangerous without designated bike lanes.

## How are we doing?

Ventura County has 483.3 miles of bike lanes, distributed very unevenly. Thousand Oaks, with 91.5 miles of bike lanes, and Ventura, with 88.8 miles top the list and account for 37.3 percent of the county's total, well beyond their combined share of the county's size or its population.

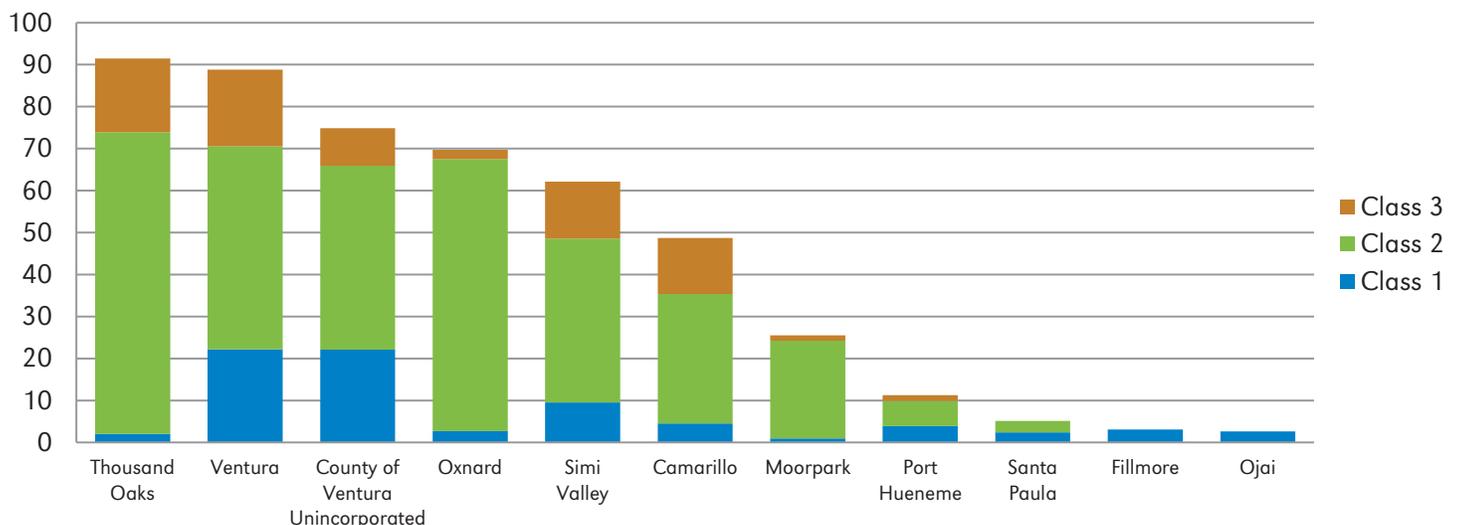
Oxnard, the county's largest city by population and its third largest in area, lags behind them with 69.7 miles of bike lanes.

In the county's smallest cities, bike lanes are nearly unheard of. Santa Paula has 5.1 miles of them, Fillmore has 3.1 miles, and Ojai has only 2.6 miles.

Not all bike lanes are created equal. Class 3 lanes are included in these totals but are more like "bike routes" than "bike lanes." In Class 3, street signs direct cyclists to use a certain route through town, although nothing separates motor vehicles and bikes. Oxnard has only 2.2 miles of those routes, while Simi Valley, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks and Ventura all have more than 13 miles of them.

Though Ventura is second to Thousand Oaks in total bike lane miles, by another measure Ventura is the friendliest city in the county to cyclists. It has 22.2 miles of Class 1 lanes, in which bicycle and automobile traffic are separated. That's more than the entire unincorporated area of the county and more than double the amount in any other city.

**Miles of Ventura County Bike Lanes (2016)**



# TIME SPENT COMMUTING

## WORKERS FACING LONGER COMMUTES

### What is the measure?

The measure is the time it takes Ventura County residents to get to their jobs.

### Why is the measure important?

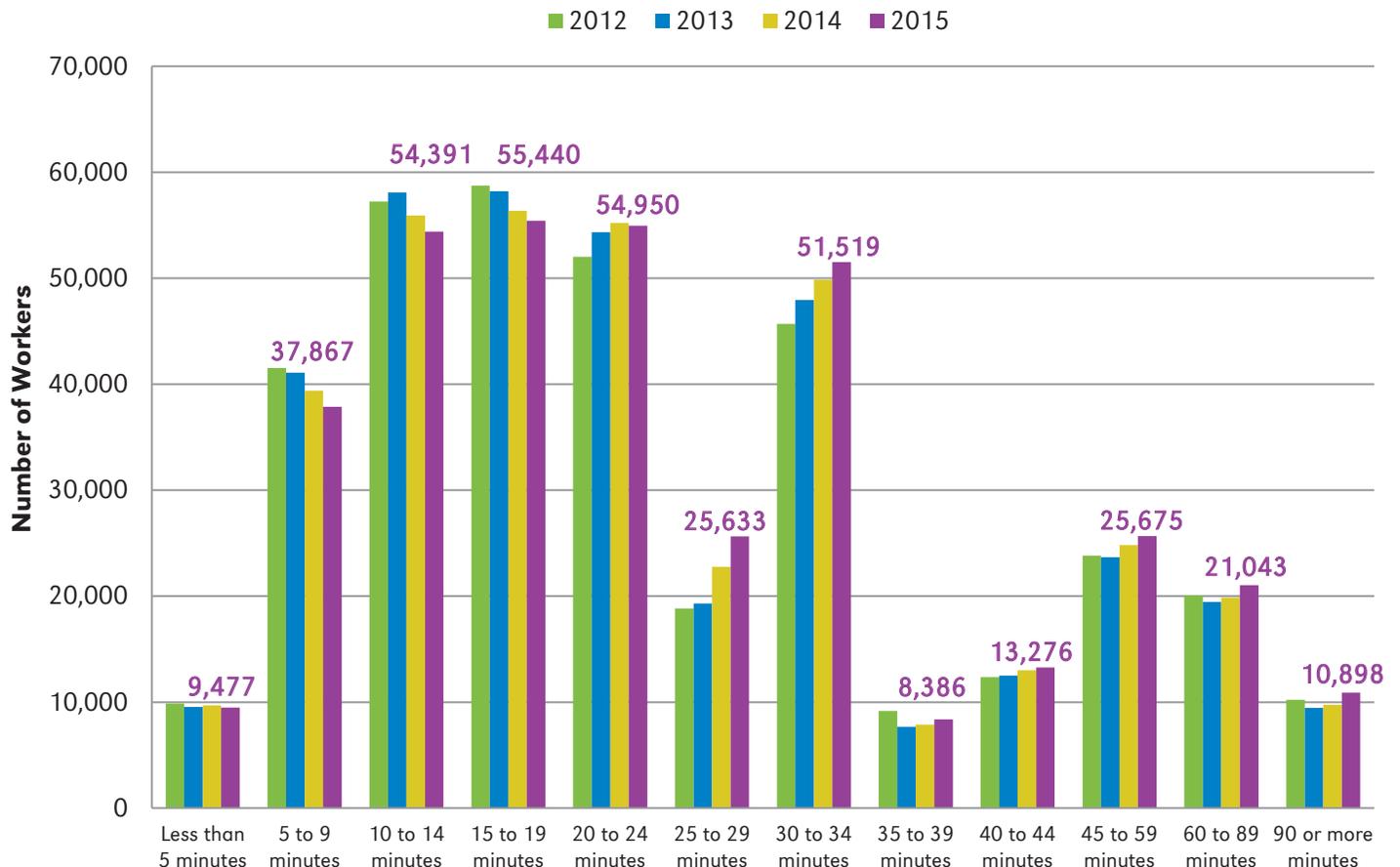
Commute time is an important and often overlooked quality of life measure. The more time people spend sitting in their cars, the less time they can devote to working, relaxing, exercising, sleeping or spending time with their families and friends. Longer commutes also mean more money spent on fuel and more traffic-related pollution, as cars sit idling on the highways.

### How are we doing?

Most Ventura County residents have fairly short commutes. In 2015, 57.6 percent of the county's employed population spent less than 25 minutes getting to work. However, long commutes are growing more common. In 2013, 61.3 percent of workers had commutes shorter than 25 minutes. The share of commuters who spent more than 45 minutes getting to work grew from 14.6 percent to 15.7 percent over that two-year period.

It is unclear from this data whether the increase in commute times resulted from worsening traffic or longer distances traveled. Both elements could be present: Ventura County highways have grown more congested as the population grows, and workers here do face longer commutes to jobs farther away.

### Travel Time to Work in Ventura County (2012 - 2015)



# FUNDING FOR HIGHWAYS

## HIGHWAY SPENDING EXPECTED TO DROP

### What is the measure?

The measure is historical and projected spending on Ventura County highways.

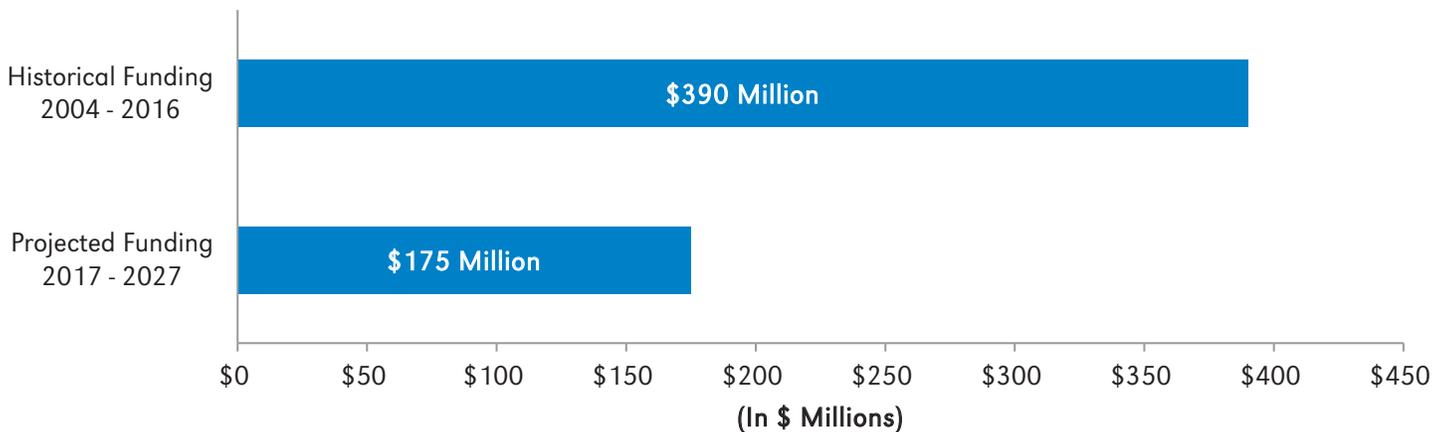
### Why is the measure important?

Ventura County's highways are the backbone of its transportation system. They are responsible for moving hundreds of thousands of people every day, along with most of the goods shipped into and out of the region, including the significant cargo that flows in through the Port of Hueneme each year.

### How are we doing?

With the failure of Measure AA, the half-cent sales tax that would have gone to freeway widening and other transportation projects, Ventura County is looking at a period of low spending on its highways. From 2004 to 2016, \$390 million in federal, state and local money was spent on our highways, much of it to widen parts of Highway 101 in the West County and Highway 23 in the east. Over the next 10 years, the Ventura County Transportation Commission expects that figure to drop to \$175 million due to the lack of dedicated local matching funds, which Measure AA was intended to provide. Eligibility for federal and state transportation funds often requires local matching funds, which puts Ventura County at a disadvantage when competing against neighboring counties.

## Ventura County Highway Total Funding (2004 - 2016, 2017 - 2027)



# TRANSIT COST

## WIDE DISPARITY BETWEEN SYSTEMS

### What is the measure?

The measure is the average cost of providing a trip to each passenger for the four largest transit agencies in Ventura County, for both fixed routes and dial-a-ride service. It is calculated by dividing the total cost of operations for each system by its number of passenger rides for the year.

### Why is the measure important?

The less a transit system spends to transport each passenger, the more people it can serve. By targeting higher density areas and attracting more users along its routes, a system can use economies of scale to deliver services at a lower per-passenger cost.

### How are we doing?

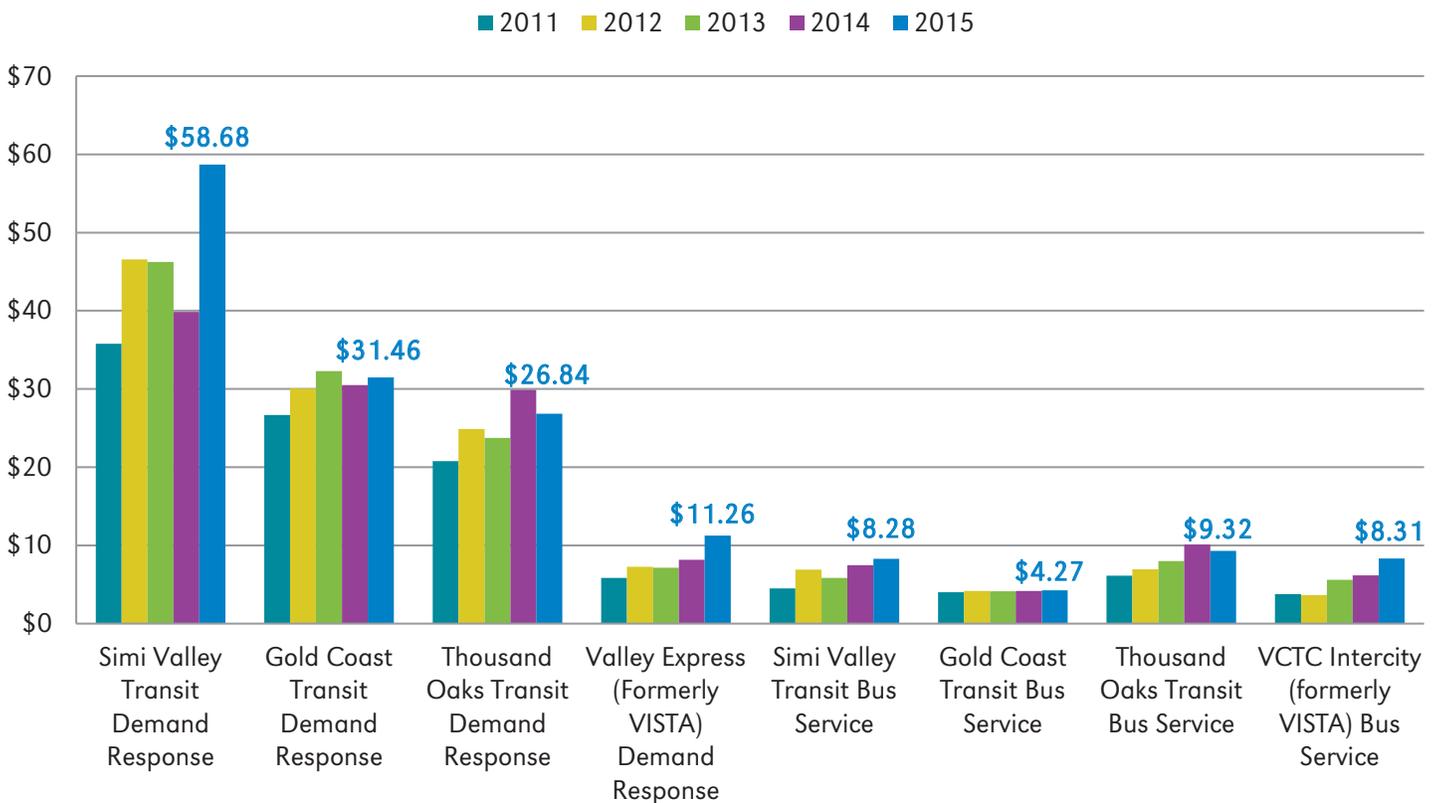
Gold Coast Transit, which serves Ventura, Oxnard, Ojai and Port Hueneme, had the lowest per-trip cost of any of the county's major transit agencies in 2015, at \$4.27 per trip.

That makes sense, since it is by far the largest bus system, and it serves the densest areas. Its costs held steady from 2011 through 2015.

Other systems can have much higher costs. Thousand Oaks Transit spent \$9.32 per passenger ride in 2015. That was the highest of any of the county's large transit agencies, and 52.5 percent higher than Thousand Oaks Transit's per-ride cost in 2011. The VCTC intercity service (formerly VISTA), which takes its passengers on much longer rides than any city bus system, spent \$8.31 per ride in 2015, less than the Thousand Oaks city bus system and comparable to Simi Valley's.

Demand response service, usually known as dial-a-ride, costs much more per rider, than fixed-route bus service. In 2015, Gold Coast spent \$31.46 per dial-a-ride trip, Thousand Oaks Transit paid out \$26.84, and Simi Valley Transit spent \$58.68.

**Public Transit Cost of Operations per Unlinked Passenger Trip (2011 - 2015)**



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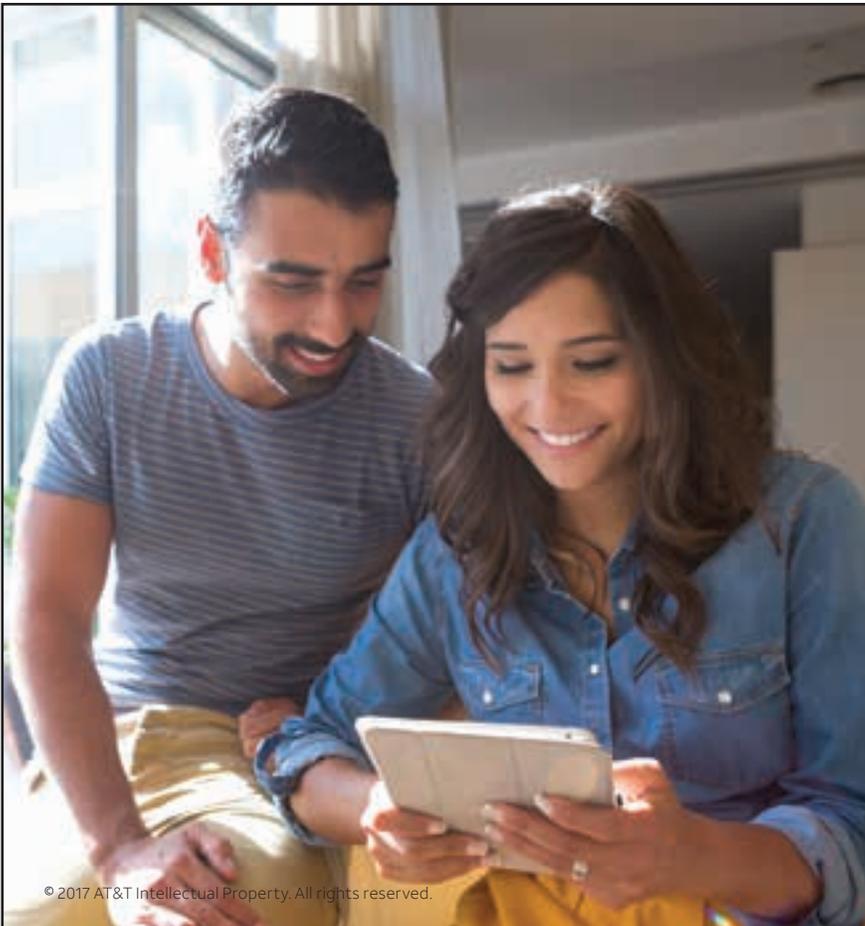
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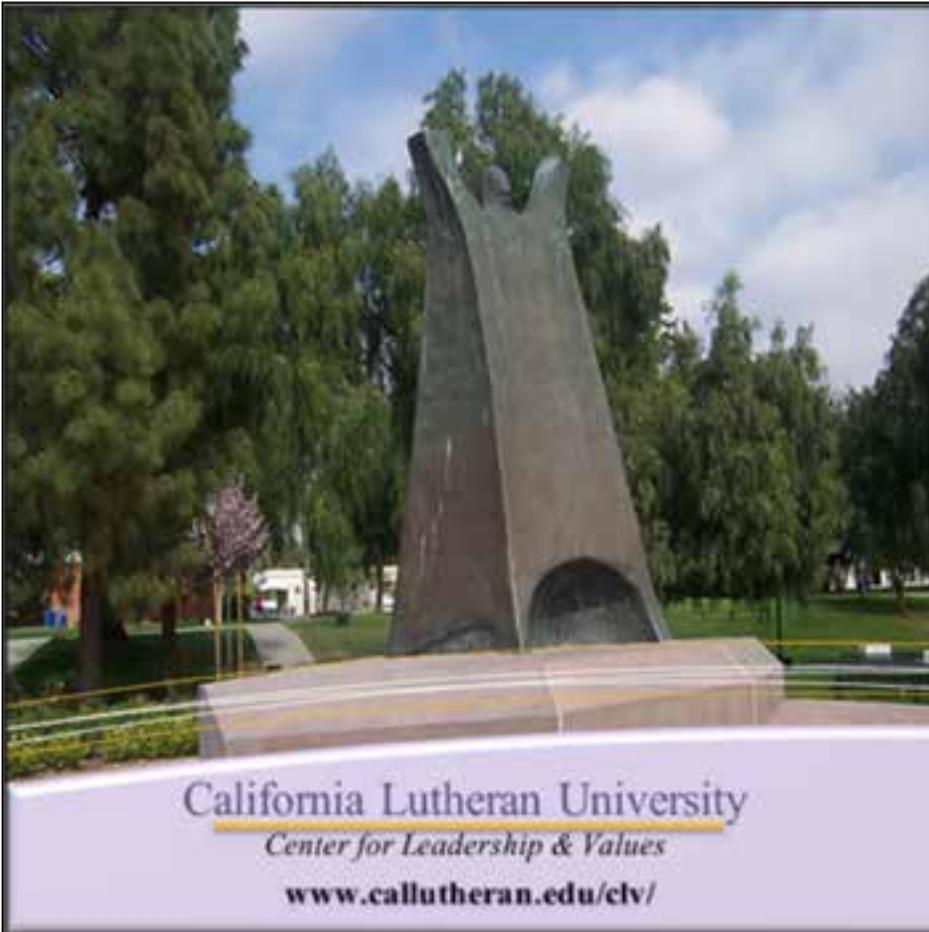
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