

# 2022 Santa Maria Needs Assessment

## Summary Report

### ***Background***

Santa Maria, located in northern Santa Barbara County, is the largest city in the County with 109,910 residents, and the 61<sup>st</sup> largest city in California.<sup>1</sup> Santa Maria has unique health needs and community assets that distinguish it from other areas of Santa Barbara County. Federal estimates indicate that about 39% of the Santa Maria residents have less than a high school education compared to about 18% of the overall County population.<sup>2,3</sup> In Santa Maria, approximately 77% of residents identify as of Hispanic or Latino origin.<sup>3</sup> Nearly half of the available housing in Santa Maria is occupied by renters and a majority of renters are spending over 30% of their income on rent.<sup>4</sup> Although about 25% of Santa Barbara County's population live in Santa Maria, 37.3% of County COVID-related deaths and 29.9% of County cases have been among Santa Maria residents.<sup>5</sup> To inform public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and ongoing economic struggles, there is a need for more current information about the overall well-being and challenges of Santa Maria residents.

In October 2022, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (SBCPHD), Cottage Health, Dignity Health, and the Environmental & Occupational Emergency Preparedness (EP) Team at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) conducted a needs assessment using the Community Assessment of Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) methodology to address multiple knowledge gaps about the current health status of Santa Maria residents. The Santa Maria Needs Assessment (SMNA) was one of two subpopulation needs assessments conducted as part of the 2022 Santa Barbara County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

The developed survey included questions on the following topics: economic and housing stability, childcare, healthcare access, neighborhood environment, food access and security, and the impact of COVID-19. Over three days, 192 households were systematically sampled within 30 randomly selected census blocks within Santa Maria by trained field staff. The data were weighted to represent the 29,976 estimated households in the city of Santa Maria.

### ***Findings***

The CHNA included a county-wide random sampling of individual adults, conversely the SMNA collected data on households. With two different units of measure, direct comparisons cannot be made; however, general evaluations can be concluded. The CHNA reported 15.5% of Santa Barbara County residents spoke Spanish/Spanish creole as their primary language, while in the SMNA this number was almost at 55% (Table 1). The CHNA data show that 49% of Santa Barbara County residents reported renting their home. The SMNA revealed that the estimated percentage of Santa Maria households who reported renting their home was at 60%.

<b>Table 1: Demographics of the Santa Maria Household Population, N=29,976.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>95% confidence limits</b>	
<b>Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin</b>			
Yes	84.8	78.2	91.5
No	13.7	7.5	20.0
<b>Households with ≥1 member in the following age categories*</b>			
≤17 years old	67.7	58.1	77.2
18-64 years old	86.8	79.3	94.3
≥65 years old*	31.6	22.0	41.2
<b>Household's total yearly income</b>			
Less than \$35,000	52.7	42.9	62.5
\$35,000-\$74,999	37.1	28.0	46.1
\$75,000 or greater	10.2	3.4	17.0
<b>Own or rent home</b>			
Own	37.5	24.6	50.4
Rent	60.3	47.3	73.3
<b>Primary language spoken at home</b>			
English	40.5	30.3	50.8
Spanish	54.8	45.5	65.3
Other	4.0	0.8	7.3

\* Not mutually exclusive

The number of households reporting physical inactivity of at least one resident was approximately 25% (Table 2), while the county-wide rate was approximately 16%. The number of households reporting unemployment of at least one resident was almost 23%. The Census reported the county-wide unemployment rate of approximately 5%.<sup>2</sup>

<b>Table 2: Reported Health Disparities, N=29,976</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>95% confidence limits</b>	
<b>Housing insecurity</b>	27.9	19.9	35.8
<b>No insurance coverage</b>	5.8	02.2	9.5
<b>Physical inactivity</b>	25.4	18.1	32.8
<b>Long COVID</b>	13.5	07.6	19.5
<b>Unemployment</b>	22.6	13.5	31.7

The most significant association found when comparing demographics and indicators was the increased odds when the primary language within the household was not English. When English was not the main language: Santa Maria households were 4.5 times more likely to be below the 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 3.7 times more likely to have a household member that had seasonal employment, and 2.6 times more likely to report food insecurity (Table 3).

**Table 3: Odds Ratio Estimates of Significant Related Risk Factors When Primary Language Within the Household is Not English.**

Significant related risk factor	Point estimate	95% confidence limits	
Income below 100% FPL	4.5	1.1	18.6
Seasonal Employment	3.7	1.7	7.8
Food insecurity	2.6	1.5	4.6

Note: The degrees of freedom in computing the confidence limits is 29.

### ***Salient Points***

At the time of the survey, COVID-19 continued to impact Santa Maria households:

- 30% experienced job or wage loss
- 39% had a reduction in hours available at work
- 41% faced financial problems
- 20% were unable to get medical care for health conditions
- 14% of Santa Maria households reported COVID symptoms lasting three months or longer (i.e., Post-COVID Syndrome, or “long” COVID)
- Hispanic households were 3.7 times (95% CI: 1.4-9.8) more likely to report being impacted by COVID-19 than non-Hispanic households.

***For complete results and recommendations tied to the data, see the full report at [2022 Santa Maria Needs Assessment Final Report](#).***

### ***Conclusions***

The Santa Maria Needs Assessment was a successful collaboration between the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, Cottage Hospital, Dignity Health, California Department of Public Health, and the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment Collaborative among other stakeholders. The Santa Maria Needs Assessment helped characterize the 2022 physical, emotional, and social health status of Santa Maria residents. The results presented provide useful information about allocating and strengthening resources for Santa Maria residents and further supports the needs identified across Santa Barbara County residents in the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.

## **References**

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2. United States Census Bureau. U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Santa Barbara County, California. Accessed December 23, 2022. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/santabarbaracountycalifornia>
3. United States Census Bureau. U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Santa Maria city, California. Accessed December 23, 2022. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/santamariacitycalifornia>
4. United States Census Bureau. B25072: AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER BY GROSS ... - Census Bureau Table. Accessed December 23, 2022. [https://data.census.gov/table?q=Santa+Maria+city,+California&t=Owner/Renter+\(Householder\)+Characteristics:Renter+Costs&tid=ACSDT5Y2021.B25072](https://data.census.gov/table?q=Santa+Maria+city,+California&t=Owner/Renter+(Householder)+Characteristics:Renter+Costs&tid=ACSDT5Y2021.B25072)
5. Santa Barbara County PHD. Santa Barbara County Community Data Dashboard-ARCHIVED. Accessed December 23, 2022. <https://sbcphd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=55b1e071669c46c1b939126e1c265bae>