

2006

Sonoma County Indicators



Prepared by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board,
in partnership with the Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board

January 2006

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) is pleased to present the *2006 Sonoma County Indicators* report. This report, a pilot project of the EDB, attempts to present some significant economic, environmental, and social statistics on Sonoma County in an attractive and easily accessible format. The hope is that the collection of information on a broad array of issues facing Sonoma County will encourage informed discussion on how the continued success of Sonoma County may be best ensured.

Several themes emerged in the preparation of the *2006 Sonoma County Indicators*. Overall, Sonoma County is a splendid place to live. We enjoy a remarkably low unemployment rate due to our strong and diverse economy. We also benefit from a comparatively high quality of life. And, perhaps consequently, on many of the issues which plague communities across America, Sonoma County has outperformed its peers. For example, our crime rate is 32% below the state average, and nearly 92% of Sonoma County residents are covered by health insurance.

At the same time, Sonoma County faces several challenges. The median price of a home has nearly tripled in only seven years, creating housing affordability issues for employers and residents. Traffic has become increasingly congested in recent years, and currently many employers cite traffic as one of their greatest concerns. And new issues will continue to emerge in the future — for example, Sonoma County will soon face the challenge of managing a limited supply of water for an increasing population.

The EDB hopes that *Sonoma County Indicators* will eventually grow to include dozens more indicators covering every important economic, environmental, and social issue facing our community. We expect much of this expansion to come from the helpful suggestions of a variety of groups, including nonprofit organizations, local businesses, educational institutions, public agencies and residents of the county. While this year's pilot report was developed by selecting those indicators most commonly used in reports prepared in other regions, we look forward to incorporating local input into the development of future Sonoma County indicators.

Lastly, we would like to encourage those who are interested in learning more about any of these issues to contact the agencies and organizations listed in the "For More Information" section of each indicator. We prepared these lists with the help of a variety of agencies, but we may have missed some invaluable organizations. We welcome any suggestions for additional resources, and look forward to including them in the *2007 Sonoma County Indicators* report.

Key Strengths and Challenges

- Low unemployment and relatively strong economy
- High quality of life
- Rising cost of housing
- Increased traffic congestion



James Bielenberg
Chair
Sonoma County Economic Development Board



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Executive Director

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What is an Indicator?

An indicator is a statistic that measures an issue of widespread importance for a community. A good indicator should be easily measurable, should be updated frequently, and should be presented in a manner that is easy to understand. Indicators allow a community to compare itself to other communities, and should allow a community to monitor its progress on a particular issue.

Comparison Counties

In order to better understand a particular issue, it helps to compare Sonoma County to other areas. Throughout this report we have compared Sonoma County to several counties, including Marin, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and Mendocino. We have generally endeavored to compare Sonoma County to other California coastal counties with similar attributes, such as strong agriculture, tourism, and technology sectors and a high quality of life.

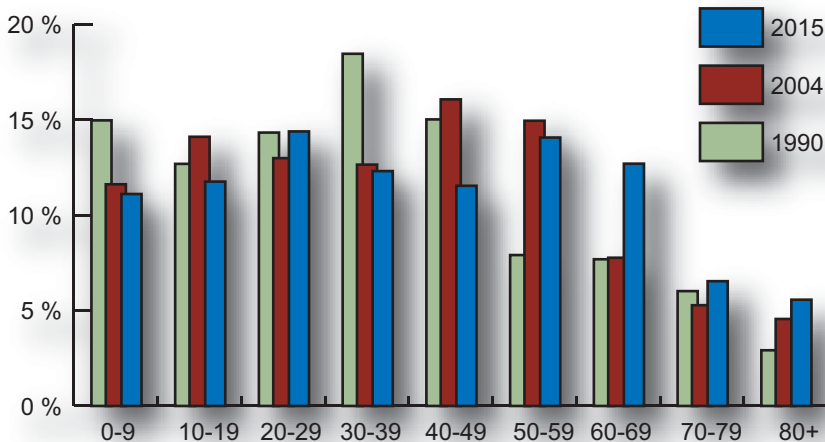
Sonoma County is home to 472,700 residents, and is projected to have 580,000 people by 2015. It has experienced steady population growth over the last two decades, with an average increase of more than 7,000 people per year (about 1.5% per year).

Sonoma County has a total land area of 1,576 square miles, and in 2004 had a population density of 300 people per square mile, more than the California average of 232 people per square mile. In 2015, Sonoma County is projected to have a population density of 343 people per square mile.

As of 2004, 18.5% of Sonoma County residents classified themselves as Hispanic, compared to 35% in all of California. In Sonoma County, 73.3% of residents classified themselves as white in 2004. Sonoma County's population is expected to grow increasingly diverse in the future, with an expected 22% of the County classifying itself as Hispanic in 2015.

The population of Sonoma County is expected to include more older residents over the next decade. By 2015, it is expected that 13% of residents will be between 60 and 69 years of age, compared to the 8% share of that range today.

Population by Age, 1990 - 2015

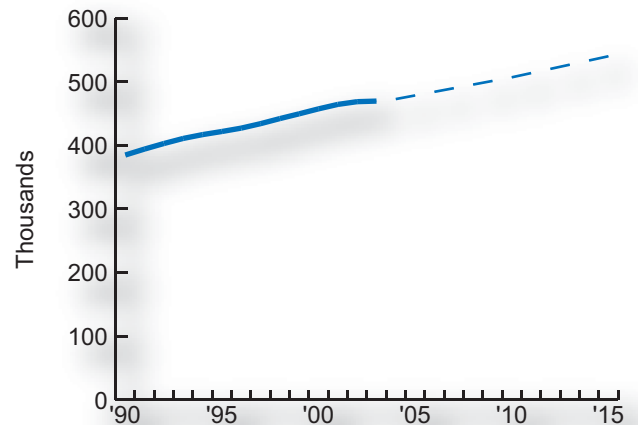


Source: California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit (<http://www.dof.ca.gov>)

Sonoma County is home to a diverse economy with many strong sectors and no single area of the economy employing a majority of the workforce (For more on the economic diversity of the County, see page 6). In October 2005, Sonoma County had a labor force of 263,600, approximately 252,400 of whom were employed.

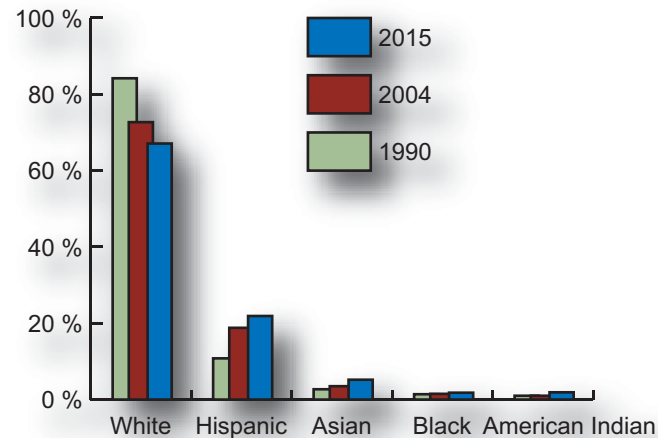
Sonoma County has had and continues to have a lower unemployment rate than both California and the nation throughout the recent past. It is expected that Sonoma County will continue to have a comparatively low rate of unemployment in the foreseeable future.

Population, 1990 - 2015



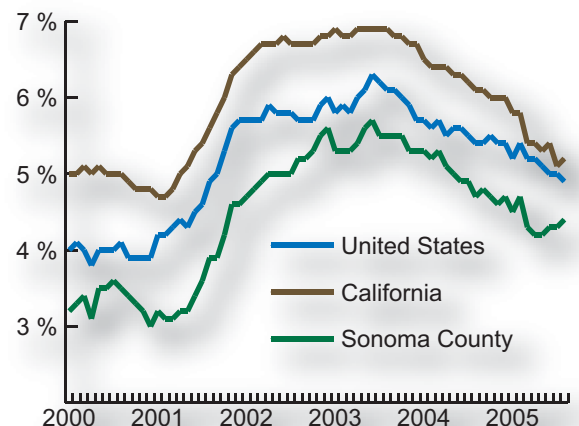
Source: California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit (<http://www.dof.ca.gov>)

Population by Race/Ethnicity, 1990 - 2015



Source: California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit (<http://www.dof.ca.gov>)

Unemployment Rate, 2000 - 2005



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data is seasonally adjusted by the EDB. (<http://www.bls.gov>)



Economy



Tourism Industry Grows

How is Sonoma County Doing?

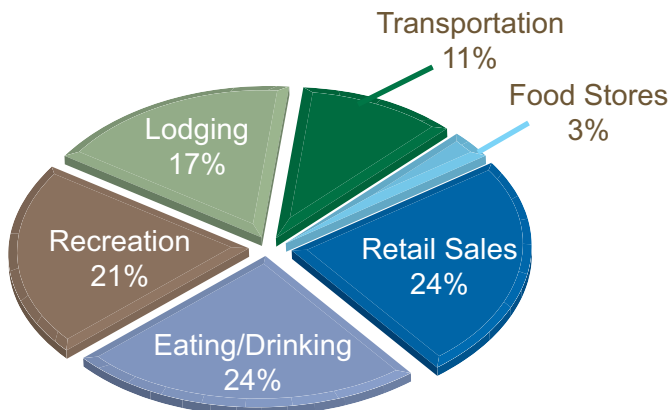
The Sonoma County tourism industry has been rapidly growing over the past decade, increasing destination spending from \$685 million in 1993 to \$1.02 billion in 2003, an annual growth rate of more than four percent. According to the California Travel and Tourism Commission and D.K. Shifflet & Associates, Sonoma County received 7.4 million visitors in 2004, 76.5% of whom were leisure visitors who, on average, spend 38.3% more per day than business visitors.

The industry experienced a recession after 2000 with industry revenues declining for the first time after several consecutive years of solid growth, and with tourism-related firms cutting approximately 1,500 jobs between 1999 and 2002. However, since 2002, revenue and employment have been rising, with visitor spending again surpassing \$1 billion in 2003.

Why is it Important?

Visitors traveling to Sonoma County for pleasure/leisure and business generate revenue and jobs for the local economy. With travel spending generating more than 15,000 jobs, the tourism industry directly employs nearly 6% of the Sonoma County labor force. A variety of businesses throughout the County benefit from visitor spending. Tax receipts (including receipts from the Transient Occupancy Tax, a tax applied to hotel charges), create a source of revenue for government, with local tax revenue from tourism estimated to be in excess of \$20 million dollars per year.

Distribution of Visitor Spending

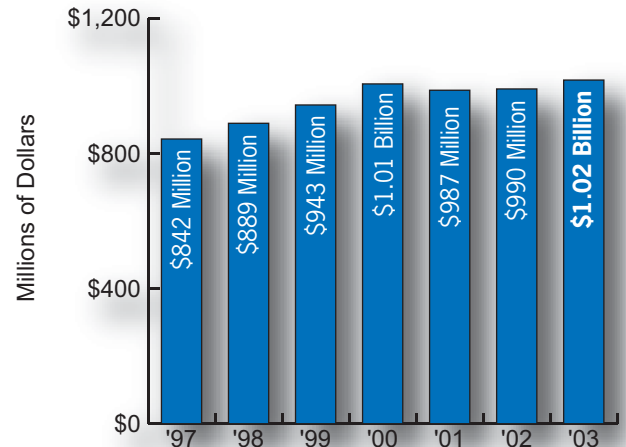


Source: Dean Runyan & Associates

For More Information on Tourism

The Sonoma County Tourism Bureau
<http://www.sonomacounty.com>

Visitor Spending in Sonoma County, 1997 - 2003



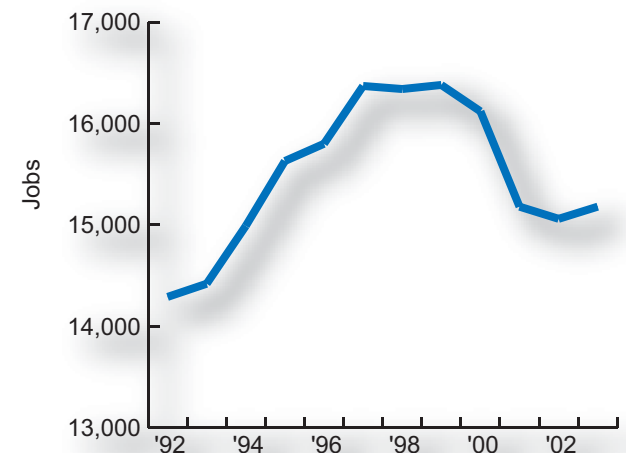
Source: California Division of Travel and Tourism, California Travel Impacts by County, 2003. (<http://www.visitcalifornia.com>)

Tourism-Related Tax Receipts, 2003



Source: California Division of Travel and Tourism, California Travel Impacts by County, 2003. (<http://www.visitcalifornia.com>)

Employment Generated by Travel Spending, 1992 - 2003



Source: California Division of Travel and Tourism, California Travel Impacts by County, 2003. (<http://www.visitcalifornia.com>)

Business Confidence Remains High

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Sonoma County executives have held an optimistic outlook on local economic performance for nearly two years. In the survey for the quarterly Business Confidence Report produced by the Economic Development Board, local executives routinely rank local economic performance above national economic performance, a strong indicator that local executives believe the Sonoma County economy is especially strong.

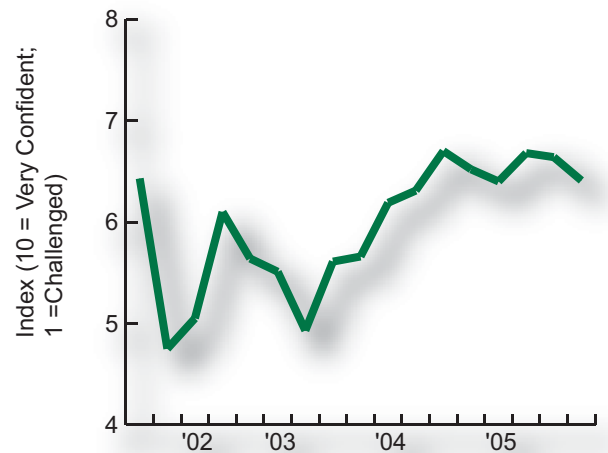
However, executives routinely indicate during the survey that increasing housing prices and traffic congestion have a detrimental effect on the economic success of Sonoma County.

The Forbes "Best Places for Business" ranking evaluates regions across the country in terms of a variety of characteristics the magazine believes are most important to business success. The Forbes ranking for Sonoma County has consistently been high, peaking at second in the nation in 2002. However, recently the ranking has fallen to 65th out of 150 in the nation. This fall is most likely a combination of a rapidly increasing cost of living, a slowing economy in comparison to the late nineties, and changes in the methodology of the ranking.

Why is it Important?

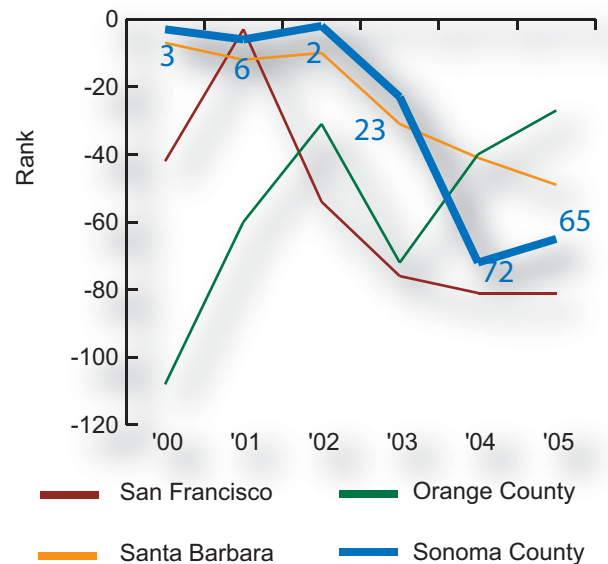
A strong business climate is vital to the attraction and retention of businesses and entrepreneurs in Sonoma County. A region that is desirable for business should experience strong job growth and healthy economic conditions.

Business Executive Confidence, 2001-2005



Source: Sonoma County Economic Development Board
 (<http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb>)

Forbes Ranking of Sonoma County, 2000-2005
 (Lower Numbers are Better)



Source: Forbes
 (<http://www.forbes.com/2004/05/05/04bestplacesland.html>)

For More Information on Business Climate

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb>

Forbes Rankings, 2005 by County

(Lower Numbers are Better)

	Engineers Per Capita	Cost of Doing Business	Cost of Living	Crime Rate	Culture & Leisure	Educational Attainment	Income Growth	Job Growth	Net Migration	OVERALL
Sonoma County	30	139	141	31	46	37	32	94	69	65
Santa Barbara	41	126	144	9	68	28	15	41	124	49
Orange County	18	143	148	13	19	23	23	35	90	27
San Francisco	55	132	150	60	3	1	10	148	149	81

Source: Forbes (<http://www.forbes.com/2004/05/05/04bestplacesland.html>)

Industry Employment Remains Diverse

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Sonoma County has traditionally had a diverse economy, with no individual sector holding a disproportionate share of employment in the County. This diversity helps minimize the effects of recessions in key sectors on the economy as a whole.

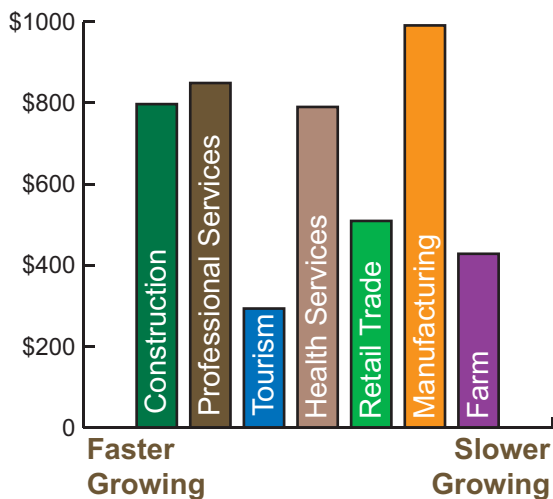
The two largest sectors in Sonoma County are Manufacturing and Retail Trade, which each employ just under 10% of the County workforce. Manufacturing, which includes wine and food production, is the County's single largest sector.

From 1995 - 2004, the Construction sector added 6,000 jobs, increasing 79% in size. The Professional and Business Services sector grew 39%, and Leisure and Hospitality grew 31%. Some relatively high wage sectors, such as Manufacturing, have been growing relatively slowly. In fact, Manufacturing in particular has been declining for nearly five years.

Why is it Important?

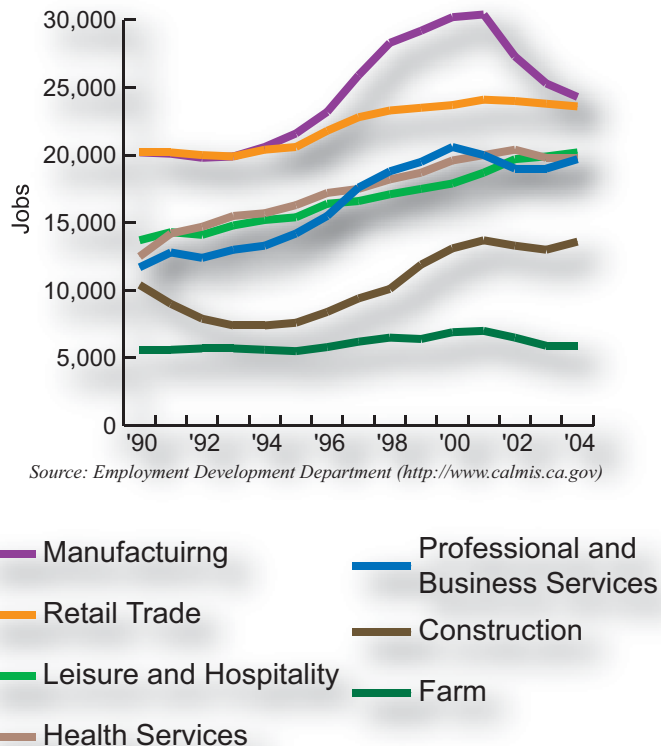
Changes in the size of the sectors which comprise Sonoma County's economy affect the needs for workforce and economic development and strategic planning. Particularly, a significant decline in an important sector can reduce a region's income and quality of life.

Average Weekly Wage for Selected Clusters, 2005



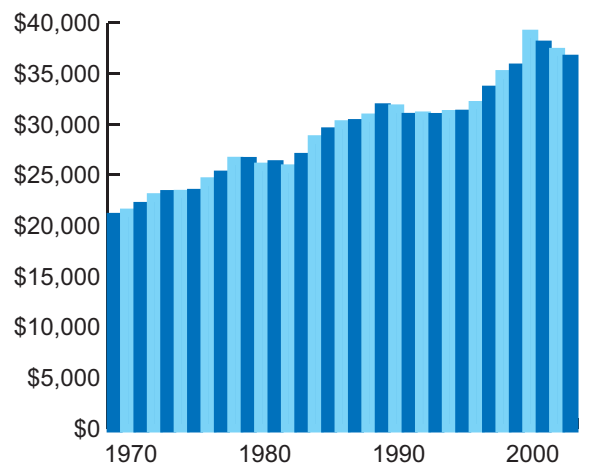
Source: Employment Development Department (<http://www.calmis.ca.gov>)

Employment in Selected Clusters, 1990-2004



Source: Employment Development Department (<http://www.calmis.ca.gov>)

Per Capita Real Income, 1969 - 2003



Source: Employment Development Department (<http://www.calmis.ca.gov>)

For More Information on Employment, Industry Distribution and Economic Development

The Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board
<http://www.sonomawib.org>

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb>

Employment Development Department
<http://www.calmis.ca.gov>

Poverty

How is Sonoma County Doing?

The official poverty rate in Sonoma County in 2004 was 8.1%, well below the California average of 13.3%, and significantly lower than other California counties with similar or larger populations. The poverty rate in Sonoma County has risen from 7.6% in 1989 to 8.1% in 2004.

The low poverty rate in Sonoma County can be somewhat deceptive, however, as the official poverty calculation does not include an adjustment for varying costs of living between regions. Thus, a family earning a given income in Sonoma County is assumed to be as well off as a family earning that income anywhere else in the United States, despite the fact that the costs of living are well above average in Sonoma County. Therefore, the "real" poverty rate is probably significantly higher than official statistics indicate.

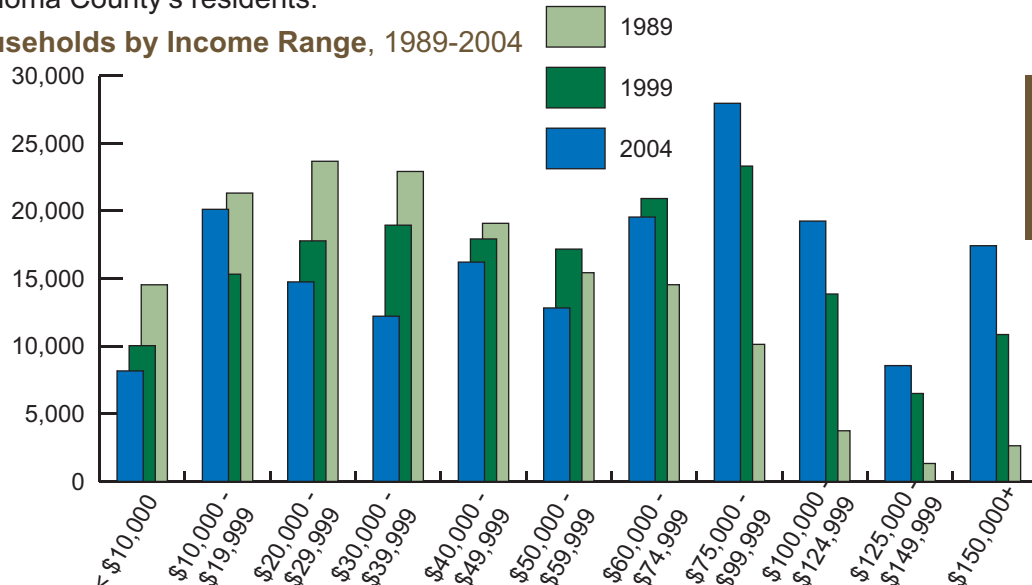
The income range with the most households in Sonoma County was \$75,000 - \$99,999 in 1999. There were 10,040 households with an income of less than \$10,000, and 5,345 households with an income greater than \$200,000. The median household income in Sonoma County for 1999 was \$53,076.

Why is it Important?

A high poverty rate in a given area indicates a weakening economy and underdeveloped business in the community. It may also indicate a scarcity of employment. High poverty rates can lead to significant challenges for a region.

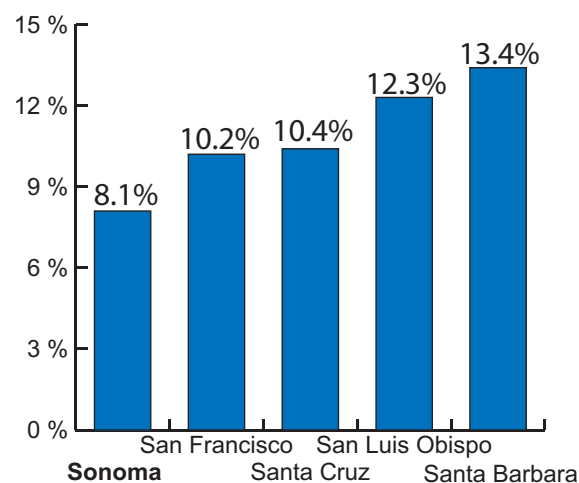
The overall low poverty rate in Sonoma County is indicative of a thriving economy and good employment opportunities in the area. Also, these numbers reflect the high spending power of Sonoma County's residents.

Households by Income Range, 1989-2004



Source: United States Census (www.census.gov). Data is not adjusted for inflation.

Percent of People Below Poverty Line, 2004



Source: United States Census (www.census.gov)

Poverty Rates, by City

	1989	1999
Cloverdale	11.4%	10.4%
Cotati	8.8%	8.3%
Healdsburg	7.7%	9.4%
Petaluma	4.2%	6.0%
Rohnert Park	8.5%	8.0%
Santa Rosa	8.3%	8.9%
Sebastopol	6.1%	6.9%
Sonoma (City)	5.9%	3.7%
Windsor	8.0%	5.1%
Sonoma (County)	7.6%	8.1%
California	12.5%	14.2%

Source: United States Census (www.census.gov)

For More Information on Poverty

The Sonoma County
Department of Human Services
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/human/>

Congestion Increases

Description of Indicator

This indicator measures the average commute time of Sonoma County residents, analyzes the level of traffic on the County freeway system, and compares the capacity growth of the freeway system to the growth of the population.

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Continuing population growth has yet to be matched by an increase in the capacity of the transportation system. Consequently, Sonoma County freeways experience greater levels of utilization than comparable counties, and Sonoma County residents have longer commutes than comparable counties. In fact, the average Sonoma County commute is 35% longer than the average Santa Barbara commute, and Sonoma County freeways carry nearly 50% more cars per lane-mile than San Luis Obispo freeways. On average, each lane-mile of Sonoma County freeway carries 3.0 million cars per year. This means that a one-mile stretch of freeway with two lanes in each direction carries, on average, 12.0 million cars per year. This is an average figure, so those stretches of roadway with above-average congestion would carry more vehicles.

From 1998 to 2003, the population of Sonoma County increased 6%, adding 27,000 new residents. Yet the County freeways added less than four lane-miles of roadway, an increase of less than one percent.

Why is it Important?

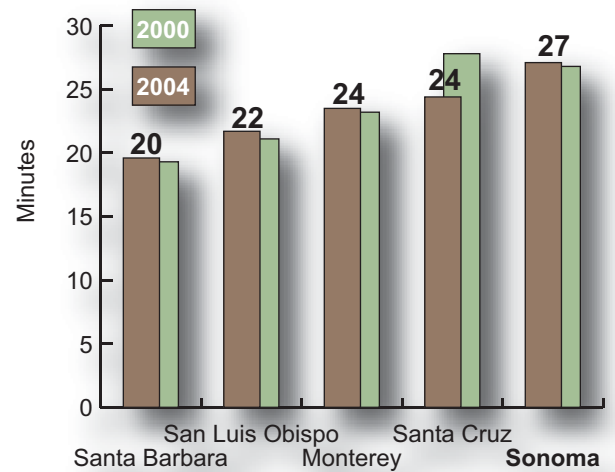
Economic vitality and a desirable quality of life both depend heavily on a region's transportation system. Longer commute times and increased traffic congestion can decrease the desirability of Sonoma County for business, and can greatly detract from the County's quality of life.

For More Information on Mobility

California Department of Transportation
District 4
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/>

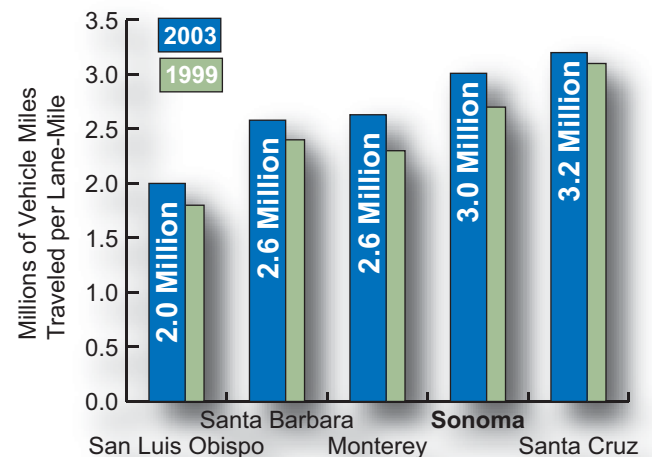
Sonoma County Transportation Authority
<http://www.sctainfo.org/>

Average Commute Time, 2000-2004



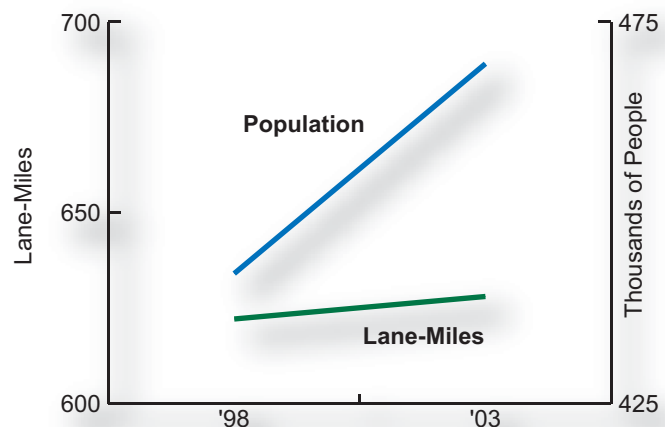
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey
(<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>)

Road Use, 1999-2003



Source: California Department of Transportation
(<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tsip/faqs.htm>)

Lane-Miles and Population, 1998-2003



Source: California Department of Transportation
(<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tsip/faqs.htm>)
U.S. Bureau of the Census (<http://census.gov>)



Environment



Water Conservation on the Rise

Description of Indicator

The indicators of water use and supply in Sonoma County focus on where the County's water is coming from and how much is being conserved or recycled. Water in these graphs is measured in acre feet.

How is Sonoma County Doing?

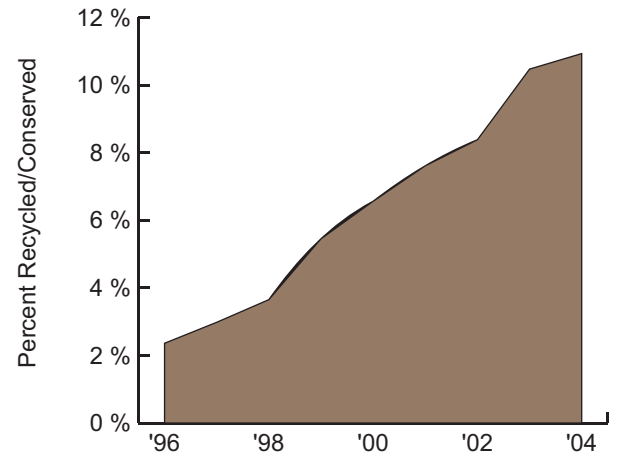
In 2004, Sonoma County consumed 98,474 acre-feet of water. This is a 5.6% increase over 2003, and more than an 11% increase over 1996 water use of 88,155 acre-feet. More than 38% of the County's water supply comes from sources other than the Russian River.

In recent years, efforts to conserve and recycle water have been increasing. From 1996 to 2004 water conservation and recycling increased from 2% to 11%. In 2004, 10,764 acre-feet were conserved/recycled.

Why is it Important?

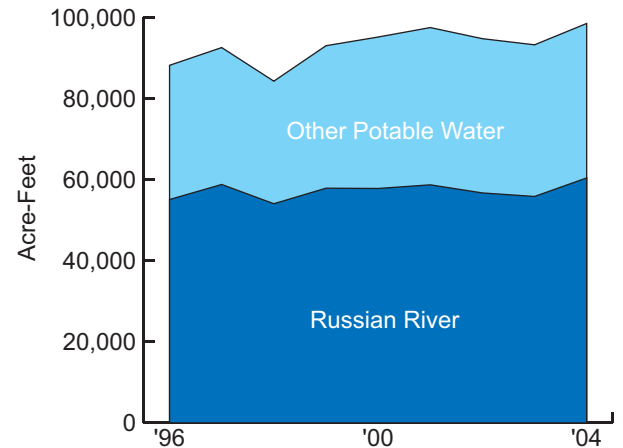
Most of the county's water comes from the Russian River. A substantial percentage comes from wells throughout Sonoma County. As population increases in the area, the demand for water also increases. This may lead to higher water prices and a greater need for recycling and conservation.

Water Recycling and Conservation, 1996 - 2004



Source: Sonoma County Water Agency (www.scwa.ca.gov/swrcbreport.html)

Sonoma County Water Supply, 1996 - 2004



Source: Sonoma County Water Agency (www.scwa.ca.gov/swrcbreport.html)

For More Information on Water Use and Supply

The Sonoma County Water Agency
<http://www.scwa.ca.gov/conservationprograms.html>

The Business Environmental Alliance
<http://www.sonomabea.org>



Conservation/Recycling, 1996-2004

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Urban Recycled	797	702	529	714	1,151	1,188	1,300	1,259	1,478
BMP Conservation	1,287	2,053	2,547	4,353	5,092	6,232	6,640	8,500	9,286

Source: Sonoma County Water Agency (www.scwa.ca.gov/swrcbreport.html)

County Recycle Rate at 56%

Why is it Important?

Assessing the amount of waste produced in Sonoma County will allow us to develop waste reduction plans that focus on increasing diversion from landfills.

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Sonoma County's waste production in 2003 increased 1.2% over the previous year; Sonoma County disposes of 544,757 tons of waste annually.

State law requires that counties divert at least 50% of their waste from being buried in a landfill. Typically, waste is diverted by being reused, recycled or composted. Sonoma County's waste diversion rate for 2003 is 56%.

Following the changeover to the blue "Single-Stream" recycling bin in 2003, residential recycling at curbside increased by about 11%. The blue recycling bins simplified the recycling process by allowing customers to place all recyclable items into the same bin. Monthly residential curbside recycling increased from 47 lbs. in 2000 to 52 lbs. in 2003. Items placed into the blue bins never make it to the landfill; instead they are processed for recycling.

Commencing in October 2005, the County's publicly owned Central Landfill stopped burying waste. Due to concerns about leaks from the landfill's liner, the Regional Water Quality Control Board has prohibited further landfill expansion. (In 2003, the leaks were detected, and the contaminated water was collected and treated. The liner has been repaired.) All waste that is not diverted must now be hauled out of the County to three private landfills—costing the County about \$14 million/year.

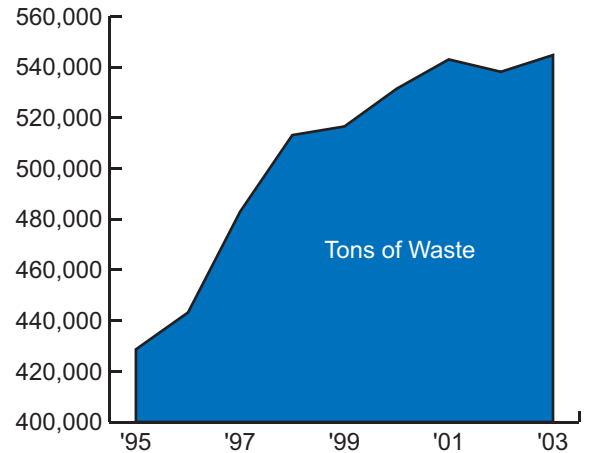
The County, in partnership with the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency, started the Household Toxics Program in 1993. Since 1993, participation has increased nearly 350%. The largest increase occurred in 2005, with the opening of the Household Toxics Facility at the Central Disposal Site. Public access to the program has increased from 11 days/yr in 2004, to over 200 days/yr in 2005.

For More Information on Solid Waste

The Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
<http://www.recyclenow.org>

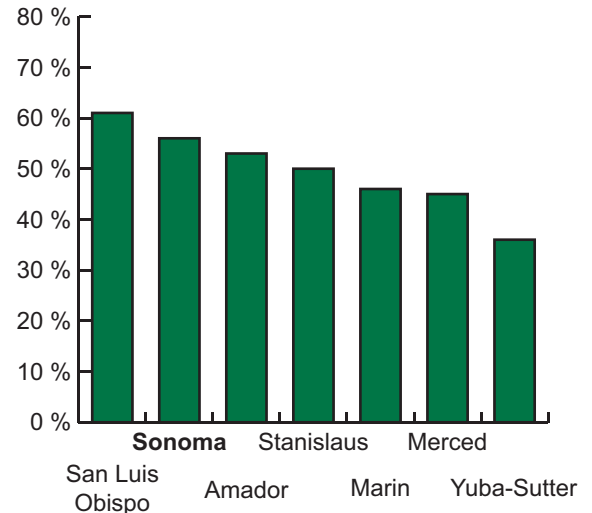


Solid Waste Generated in Sonoma County, 1995 - 2003



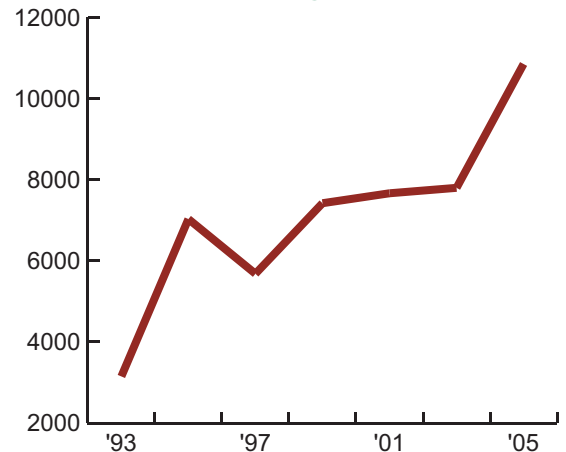
Source: California Integrated Waste Management Board (<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov>)

Comparable Waste Disposal Rates, 2003



Source: Sonoma County Waste Management (<http://www.recyclenow.org>)

Number of Toxics Program Participants



Source: Sonoma County Waste Management (<http://www.recyclenow.org>)

351 “Good” Air Quality Days per Year

Description of Indicator

This indicator measures the trend in the number of days per year when air quality in Sonoma County was “good” according to the Air Quality Index (AQI). Also shown is the number of days in 2004 when air quality in Sonoma County was good, moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups, or unhealthy for all people. In addition, other counties’ air quality is listed in order to compare Sonoma County with other suburban/rural counties in the North Bay.

AQI is a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concerns. The following are the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s definition of the different levels in their Air Quality Index.

“Good” The AQI value for your community is between 0 and 50. Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.

“Moderate” The AQI for your community is between 51 and 100. Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people. For example, people who are unusually sensitive to ozone may experience respiratory symptoms.

“Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” When AQI values are between 101 and 150, members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. This means they are likely to be affected at lower levels than the general public. For example, people with lung disease are at greater risk from exposure to ozone, while people with either lung disease or heart disease are at greater risk from exposure to particle pollution. The general public is not likely to be affected when the AQI is in this range.

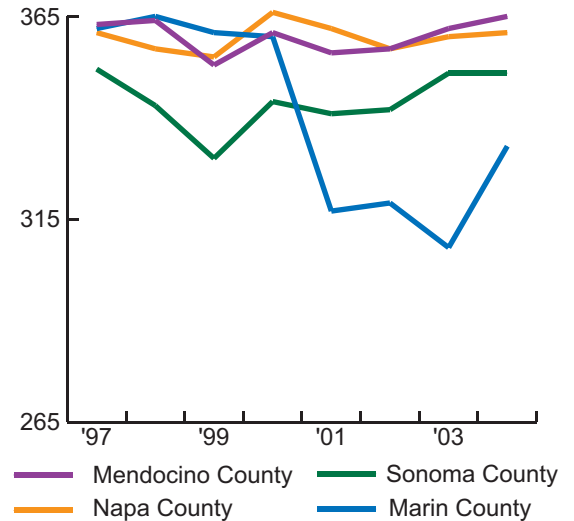
Why is it Important?

Poor air quality can aggravate the symptoms of heart or lung ailments. This is especially true in the case of children and the elderly. Extended exposure increases risks for many health conditions including lung cancer and cardiovascular disease.

How is Sonoma County Doing?

There were zero days of “unhealthy” air in Sonoma County in 2004 and none considered unhealthy for sensitive groups. There were 15 days with “moderate” air quality; this is almost half the days from the recorded high of 31 days in 1999. In 2004, Sonoma County had a majority of good air days with 351 the same number as in 2003. Sonoma County has few days that air quality is less than “good.” Since 2000, we have had more days with “good” air quality than Marin, while both Mendocino and Napa counties both have more days with “good” air than Sonoma County. Mendocino in recent years has had less than five more “Good” air quality days than Sonoma County.

Number of Days When Air Quality Was Good, 1997 - 2004



Source: US Environmental Protection Agency, AIRData (www.epa.gov/air/data/index.html)

For More Information on Air Quality

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<http://www.epa.gov/air>

Sonoma County Air Quality, 2004

Number of Days When Air Quality Was...			
Good	Moderate	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Unhealthy
351	15	0	0

Source: US Environmental Protection Agency, AIRData (www.epa.gov/air/data/index.html)

Natural Gas Use Declines

Why is it Important?

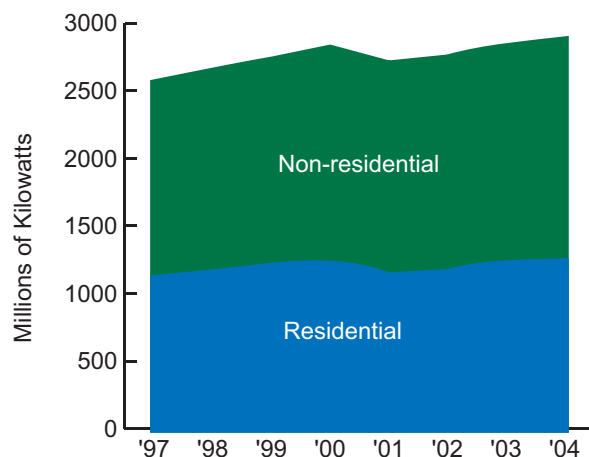
Burning fossil fuel creates over half of the electricity consumed in California. The burning of fossil fuel decreases the quality of air. Increased efforts to use energy more efficiently can lead to higher air quality, conserve natural resources, increase economic competitiveness, and save money. In recent years, energy prices have increased dramatically, leading more individuals and companies to find ways to use energy more efficiently.

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Overall consumption increased slightly from 1997 to 2004 a total of 12 percent. Residential consumption slowed in 2001 during the energy crisis but has picked up since. Non-residential consumption has continued to grow at a steady pace since 1997. The 2001 energy crisis had little effect on non-residential power consumption. Residential Natural Gas consumption grew to a high of 92 million BTUs in 1999. Since then it has dropped to 78 million BTUs in 2004. Non-residential natural gas has followed a similar pattern, hitting a peak in 2000 and slowly reducing since then to 46 BTUs.

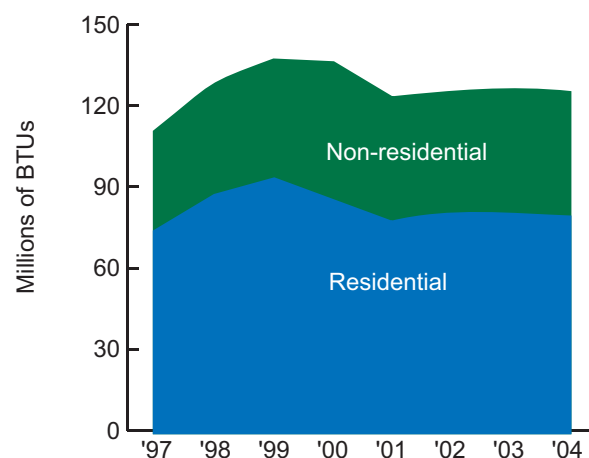
Per-capita electricity consumption is at 2568 Kilowatts a year, less than two percent higher (1.5%) in 2004 than the 1997 per capita of 2530 Kilowatts. Per-employee consumption has grown 1.5 percent in the same period. Per-capita natural gas consumption has declined two percent from 1997 to 2004; current use is 162 BTUs a year. Per-employee consumption of natural gas has gone up 1.5 percent in that period of time.

Electricity Consumption, 1997-2004



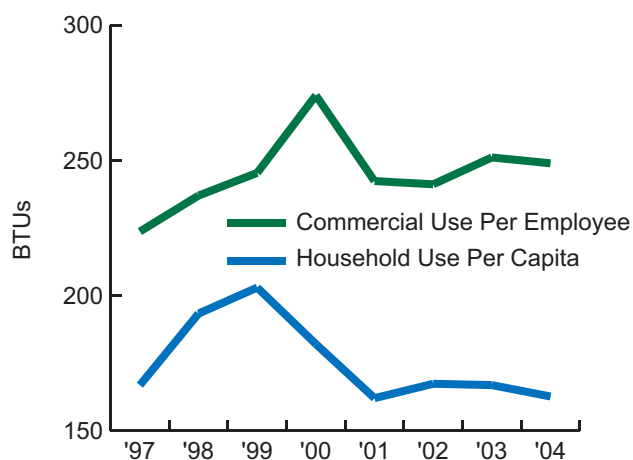
Source: California Energy Commission (<http://www.energy.ca.gov>)

Natural Gas Consumption, 1997-2004



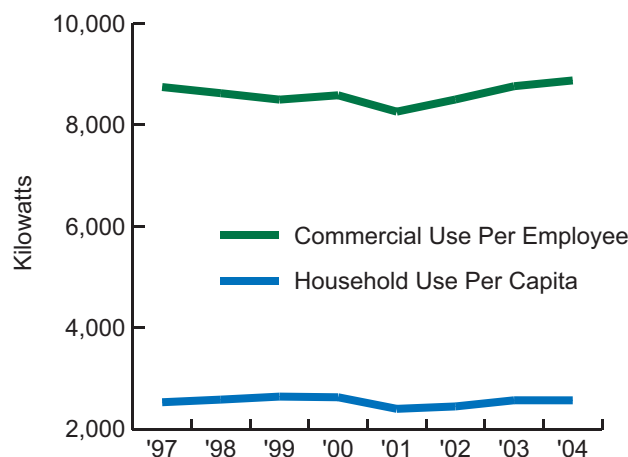
Source: California Energy Commission (<http://www.energy.ca.gov>)

Natural Gas Use, 1997-2004



Source: California Energy Commission (<http://www.energy.ca.gov>)

Electricity Use, 1997-2004



Source: California Energy Commission (<http://www.energy.ca.gov>)

For More Information on Energy Use

Pacific Gas and Electric
<http://www.pge.com>

Preserved Open Space Continues to Grow

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Open Space

Since its creation in 1990 the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District has protected nearly 68,000 acres. Funded by a voter-approved quarter cent sales tax, the District has protected family farms and ranches, natural areas for wildlife and animal habitat, open space between cities and scenic vistas that create community character, and land for recreation.

Agriculture

A total of 604,726 acres of land in Sonoma County was harvested in 2003, accounting for 60 percent of the land area in the County and 2.1 percent of the total harvested land in California. This is an increase of more than 30 percent from the previous year, mainly due to an additional reported 150,000 acres of pasture designated as rangeland. The District has protected over 33,000 acres of farms and ranches by property agreements that allow the land to stay in productive agriculture, including 14 dairies.

Parks

In addition to the District and the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, many of Sonoma County's recreational opportunities lie within the County's 13 California State Parks, encompassing a total of 39,744 acres. Listed here are the 13 state parks in Sonoma County ranked by total acreage. The District has acquired 13,725 acres throughout the County to create and expand parks and preserves, areas for community recreation and to provide public trails.

Why is it important?

Examining land use in Sonoma County is important because of the effect that Agriculture and Tourism have on the County's economy. In 2004, agriculture production generated more than half a billion dollars and tourism generated more than a billion dollars in destination spending. The vineyards and farmlands that generate fresh produce and wine are a central attraction of the booming tourism industry.

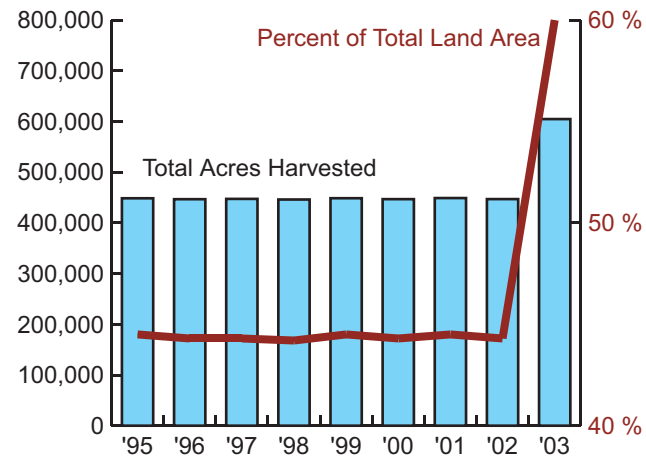
For More Information on Open Space and Parks

Sonoma County Agricultural Preserve and Open Space District
<http://www.sonomaopenspace.org>

Sonoma County Regional Parks
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/parks>

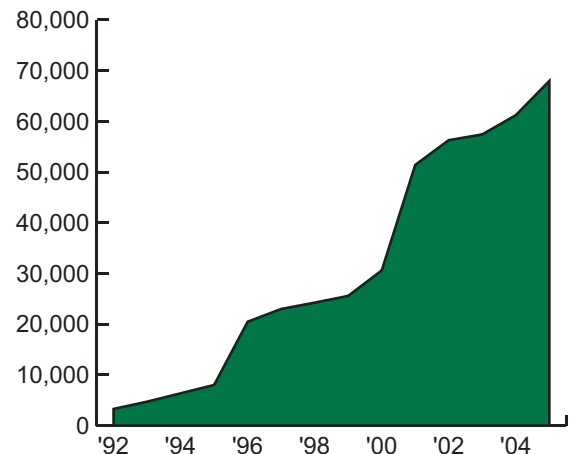
California State Parks
<http://www.parks.ca.gov>

Agricultural Land, 1995-2003



Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service (<http://www.nass.usda.gov>)

Open Space Acreage, 1992-2005



Source: Sonoma County Agricultural Preserve and Open Space District (<http://www.sonomaopenspace.org>)

California State Parks in Sonoma County

Area	Acres
Robert Louis Stevenson SP	5,879
Salt Point SP	5,685
Sonoma Coast SB	5,685
Austin Creek SRA	5,683
Annadel SP	5,000
Sugarloaf Ridge SP	3,783
Fort Ross SHP	3,200
Bothe-Napa Valley SP	1,991
Jack London SHP	1,611
Armstrong Redwoods SR	805
Kruse Rhododendron SR	317
Sonoma SHP	64
Petaluma Adobe SHP	41

Source: California State Parks (<http://www.parks.ca.gov>)



Society

Home Prices Skyrocket

Description of Indicator

This indicator measures the price of the median single-family home, calculates the income needed to afford the median-priced home, and examines the Housing Affordability Index, which estimates the percentage of Sonoma County households that can afford the median-priced home.

How is Sonoma County Doing?

According to the California Association of Realtors, the median sale price of a single-family home in Sonoma County was \$615,000 in September 2005 (an increase of 19% from September 2004) and \$568,000 in California (an increase of 20%). For most of the past several years, high housing prices have been maintained through low interest rates and high housing demand relative to available supply. The California Association of Realtors is forecasting a significant slowing of home price appreciation in the future.

Housing Affordability Index

In May 2005, only seven percent of households in Sonoma County could afford the median-priced home. This compares to 11% of Sonoma County households who could afford the median-priced home in 2004. According to the Housing Affordability Index, Sonoma County and Santa Barbara County are tied as the least affordable counties in the state.

The minimum family income needed to purchase a median-priced home in Sonoma County is \$113,042, based on an average effective mortgage rate of 5.85% and assuming a 20% down payment. The approximate median family income in Sonoma County in 1999 was \$53,090.

Why is it Important?

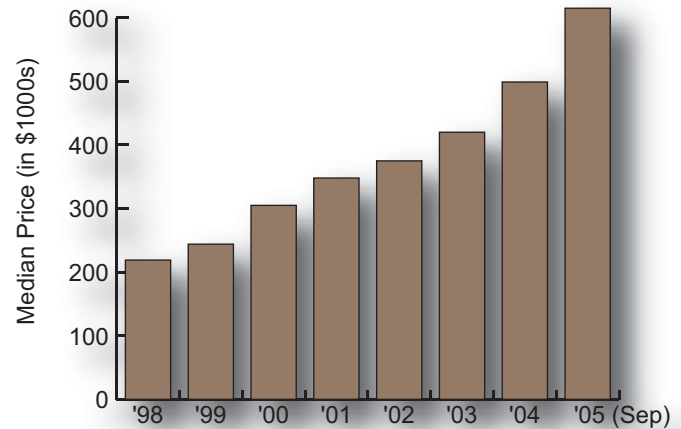
A lack of affordable housing can be a barrier to a strong, reliable economy. High relative housing prices may influence location decisions of businesses. A shortage of affordable housing (particularly for first-time buyers) may discourage young families from moving to Sonoma County or staying here after graduating from local colleges and universities. Sonoma County workers settling outside the county can result in longer commutes, increased traffic congestion and pollution, decreased productivity, and diminished quality of life. Finally, home ownership can be a significant means of personal wealth creation.

For More Information on Housing

The Sonoma County Housing Coalition
<http://www.schousingcoalition.org/>

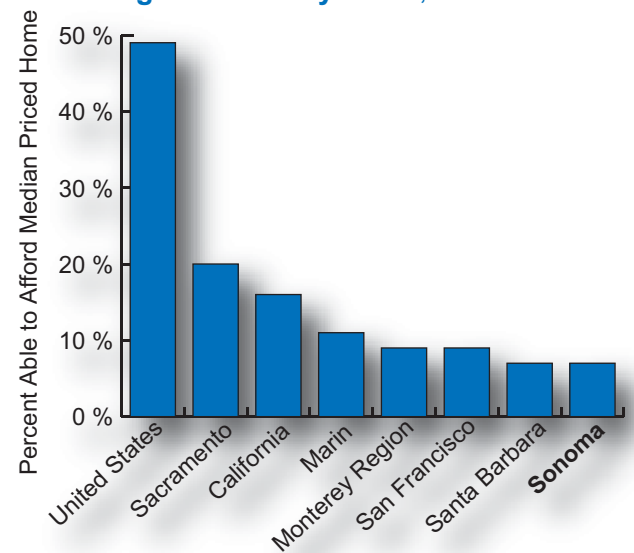
The Sonoma County Housing Authority
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/housingauth.htm>

Median Home Price, 1998 - 2005



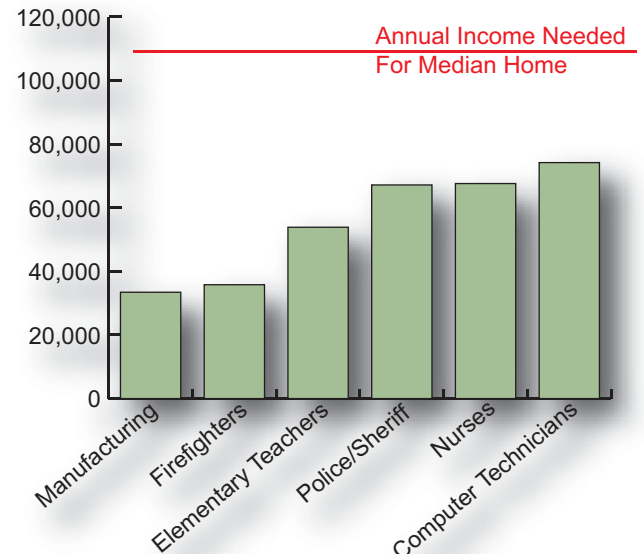
Source: California Association of Realtors (<http://www.car.org>)
 National Association of Realtors (<http://www.realtor.org>)

Housing Affordability Index, 2005



Source: California Association of Realtors (<http://www.car.org>)
 National Association of Realtors (<http://www.realtor.org>)

Median Salaries Compared to Income Needed to Afford Median Home, 2005



Source: California Association of Realtors (<http://www.car.org>)
 National Association of Realtors (<http://www.realtor.org>)

Nearly 90% Voter Turnout in 2004

Description of Indicator

This indicator measures general election participation among Sonoma County registered voters. This indicator also includes a comparison of Sonoma County's voter participation compared to that of neighboring counties and agricultural-coastal counties, as well as the percent of eligible voters to cast ballots in Sonoma County to the state and the nation. The most recent election included is the 2004 presidential election.

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Sonoma County consistently has a high turnout for presidential elections. In the most recent presidential election in 2004, almost 90% of registered voters headed to the polls. When comparing Sonoma County's 2004 voter turnout to that of other counties in the state, only Marin County had a higher percentage of registered voters cast ballots.

Voter participation drops in most regions for mid-term elections, and Sonoma County is no exception. In the 2002 mid-term election, only 53 percent of registered voters cast a ballot on Election Day; this was the lowest turnout in years.

The percentage of eligible voters to cast a ballot in Sonoma County is consistently higher than the state and national average. In the 2004 presidential election, 69% of eligible voters in Sonoma County cast a ballot compared to 57% of state and 61% of the nation's eligible voters. In the last three presidential elections, Sonoma County's eligible voters cast ballots an average of nine percentage points more than the state and seven percentage points more than the nation.

Why is it Important?

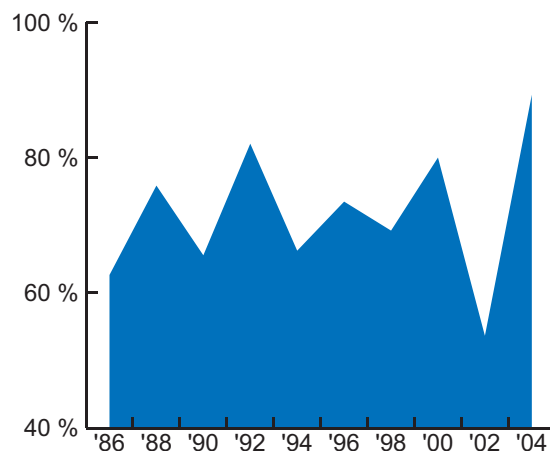
It is important to examine voter participation to gauge a community's interest in the political system. A high level of participation shows people believe that their involvement makes a difference. Higher voter participation also leads to more accountability of the government and higher support for community programs.

Turnout of Eligible Voters in Presidential Elections

	U.S	California	Sonoma County
1996	52%	53%	59%
2000	54%	52%	61%
2004	61%	57%	69%

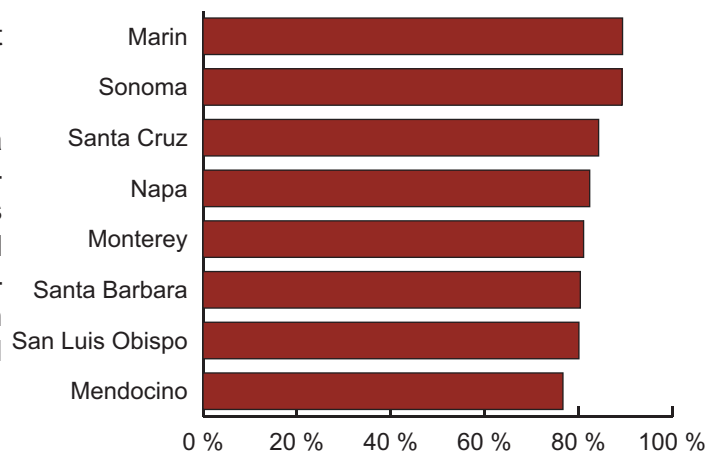
Source: County Registrar / Secretary of State / George Mason University United States Election Project (http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm)

Sonoma County Historical Turnout of Registered Voters, 1986 - 2004



Source: Sonoma County Voter Registrar (<http://www.sonoma-county.org/regvoter>)

Turnout of Registered Voters by County, 2004



Secretary of State (<http://www.ss.ca.gov>)

For More Information on Voting

Sonoma County Registrar of Voters
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/regvoter/>

League of Women Voters of Sonoma County
<http://www.lwvsonoma.org>

Crime Rate 32% Less than State Average

How is Sonoma County Doing?

The crime rate across the state has generally decreased from 1993 to 1999, when the state hit a low of 1763.3 crimes per 100,000 residents. Since then there has been a slight annual increase to 1909.4 crimes per 100,000 residents in 2003; This is still well below the peak crime levels of the early 90's when the crime rate in California hit 3367.8 crimes per 100,000 residents.

Sonoma County has continuously maintained a lower crime rate than the rest of the state. The ten-year high was in 1994, when it rose to 1977.1 crimes per 100,000 residents. Since then, crime has dropped as low as 1005.4 per 100,000 in 1999. After 1999, crime increased 20%. In 2003, the crime rate reached 1210.5 crimes per 100,000 residents. It is still far below the levels seen in 1994.

Juvenile arrests are on a downward trend in Sonoma County. There were 499 property crime arrests in 2003, down from a high of 871 in 1997. Violent juvenile crimes have also decreased, with only 310 arrests for violent juvenile crime in 2003, compared to 431 in 1997.

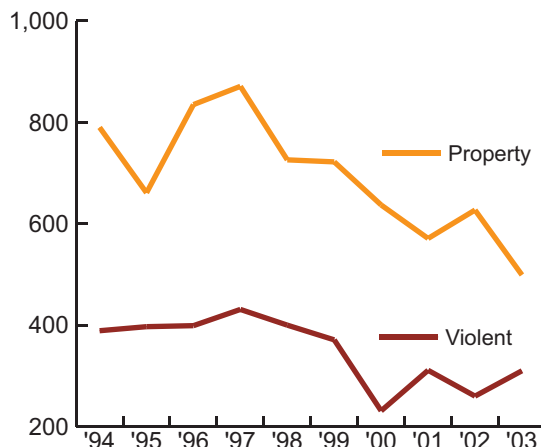
Why is it Important?

The level of crime in an area directly affects the quality of life of the region. Crime rate information is important to determine if the amount of crime in an area is increasing or decreasing. Crime statistics also show how crime rates vary from one region to another. It is critical for a region to study its crime statistics, because safety is an important factor in decisions about where to live. Areas with high crime rates are less likely to be attractive places to live. The number of law enforcement personnel is important because this could affect how safe an area can be. Juvenile crime rate is included due to the detrimental effect involvement in crime could have on a child's development.

For More Information on Crime

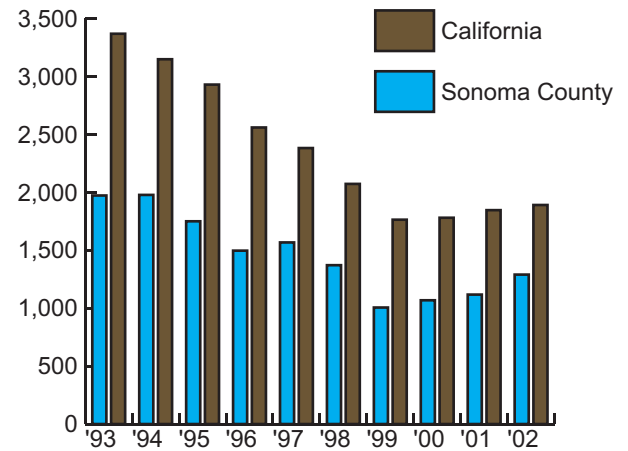
Sonoma County Sheriff's Department
<http://www.sonomasheriff.org/>

Juvenile Crime, Arrests Sonoma County



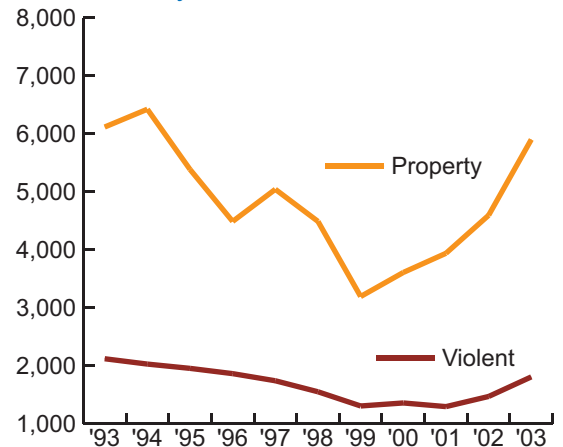
Source: California Department of Justice (<http://caag.state.ca.us>)

Crime Rate per 100,000 Residents



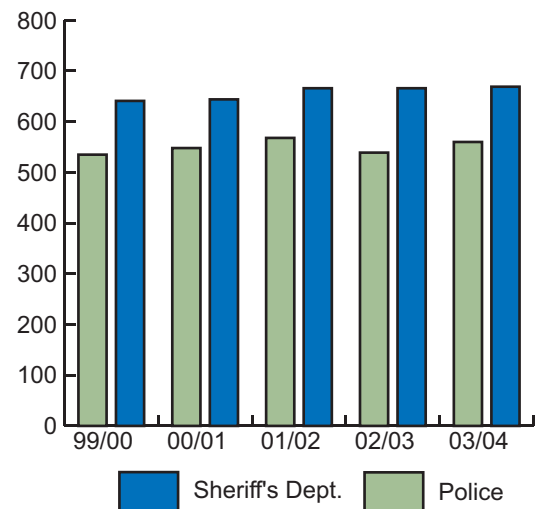
Source: California Department of Justice (<http://caag.state.ca.us>)

Number of Crimes Reported Sonoma County



Source: California Department of Justice (<http://caag.state.ca.us>)

Law Enforcement Personnel, Sonoma County



Sonoma County Final Budget Documents, FY 99/00-03/04

More Than 88% of Residents Have High School Degree

How is Sonoma County Doing?

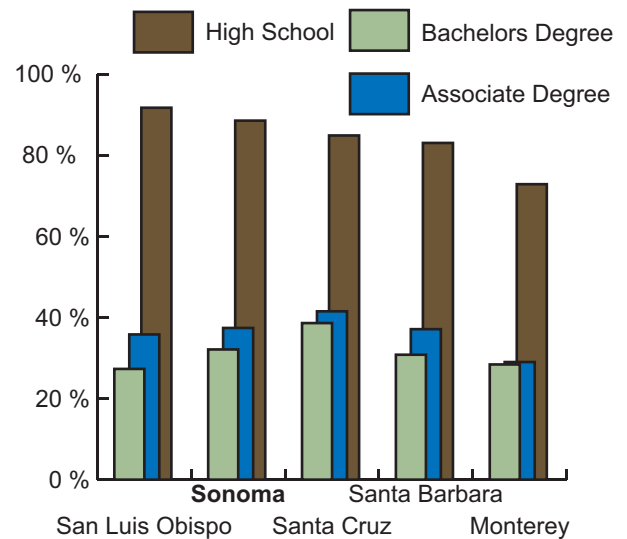
Several measures of educational attainment indicate that Sonoma County has a comparatively more educated populace than most similar counties. In 2004, 88.5% of Sonoma County residents over age 25 have a high school diploma or equivalency, and 32% have at least a bachelors degree. Both of these figures were slight improvements from 2003, and both placed Sonoma County towards the top of comparable California counties.

One measure of K-12 school performance in Sonoma County is the percent of Sonoma County schools that fall into each *decile* of statewide performance. All schools in California are ranked by performance in deciles, with the 10th decile representing the best 10% of schools and the 1st decile representing the worst performing 10% of schools. Viewed this way, Sonoma County has reasonably well-performing schools, with more than 70% of schools in the top five deciles. In other words, more than 70% of Sonoma County K-12 schools are above average in California.

Why is it Important?

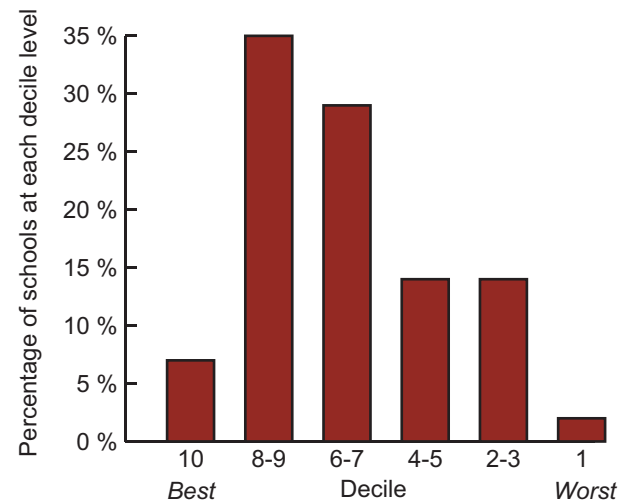
High levels of educational attainment can be critical for attracting and retaining employees in Sonoma County. Vibrant economies depend on a workforce trained to achieve its potential. Additionally, there is a high correlation between educational attainment and lifetime income, so those residents who achieve high levels of educational attainment are most likely to enjoy a higher standard of living.

Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Above



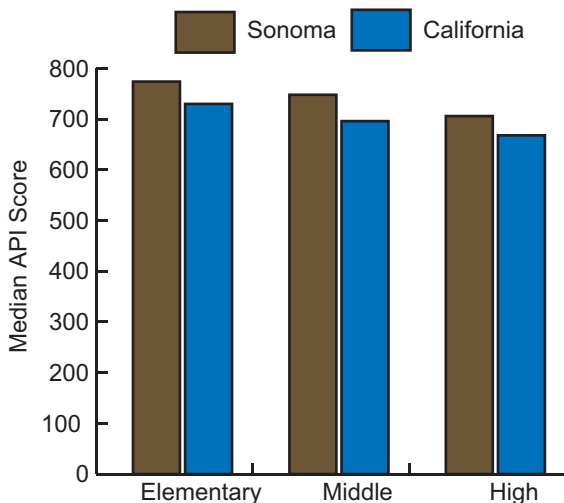
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (<http://www.census.gov>)

Statewide Ranking of Sonoma County K-12 Schools, 2004



Source: Sonoma County Office of Education (<http://www.scoe.org>)

Academic Performance Index, 2004



Source: Sonoma County Office of Education (<http://www.scoe.org>)

For More Information on Education

- Sonoma County Office of Education
<http://www.scoe.org>
- Santa Rosa Junior College
<http://www.santarosa.edu>
- Sonoma State University
<http://www.ssu.edu>
- Empire College
<http://www.empcol.com>

Nearly 92% Covered by Health Insurance

How is Sonoma County Doing?

Nearly 92% of Sonoma County residents reported being covered by health insurance in 2003, according to UCLA's California Health Interview Survey. This places Sonoma County as the 5th-highest rate of insurance coverage of the 41 counties included in the study.

The rates of health insurance coverage varied significantly by income and ethnicity. Only 77.5% of Latino respondents reported being covered by health insurance. At the opposite end of the spectrum, 97.8% of Asian respondents reported being covered by health insurance.

Health insurance coverage rates generally increased with reported household income, with those households earning between \$10,000 and \$15,000 reporting the lowest coverage rate – 58.5%. Households earning over \$135,000 reported a 96.7% coverage rate.

However, the percent of people with employment-based health insurance coverage has dropped in recent years. Data for California show a fall from 58% employer-based coverage in 1987 to 53% employer-based coverage in 2003. Such a drop could indicate that fewer employees are offered health insurance benefits by their employer.

Why is it Important?

Higher rates of health insurance coverage increase access to health care and improve the health of a community.

Health Insurance Coverage by Race/Ethnicity Sonoma County, 2003

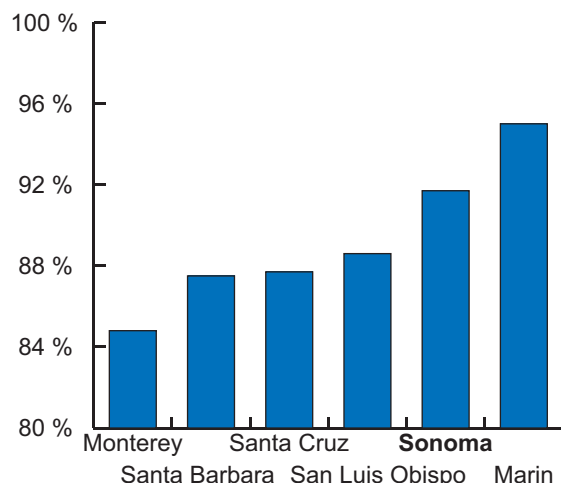
Latino	77.5%
Other Single/Multiple Race	83.3%
White	93.8%
Asian	97.8%

Source: California Health Interview Survey (<http://www.chis.ucla.edu/>)
The data for African Americans and Native Americans was statistically unstable and not provided.

For More Information on Health Insurance

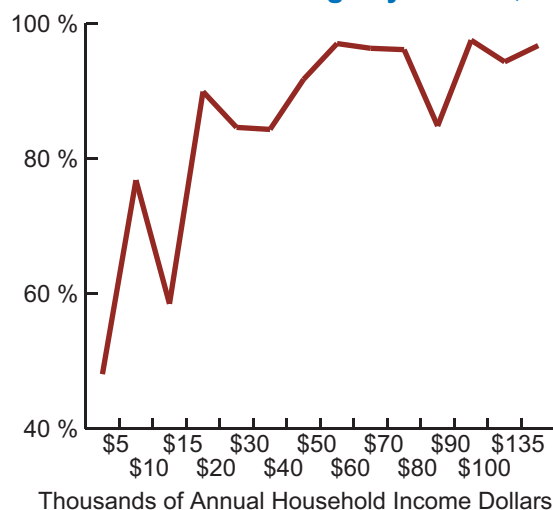
Sonoma County Department of Health Services
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/>

Percent of People with Health Coverage, 2003



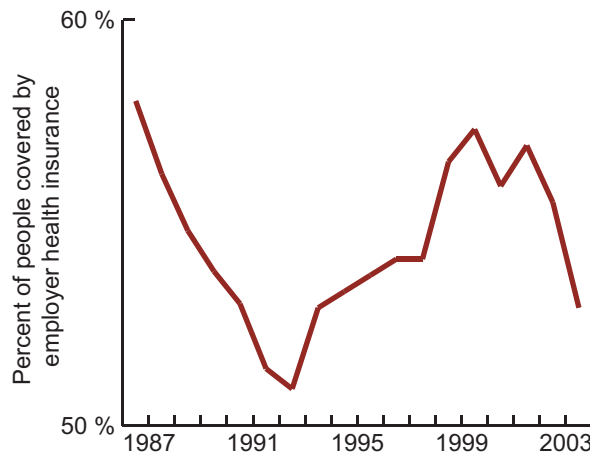
Source: California Health Interview Survey (<http://www.chis.ucla.edu/>)

Health Insurance Coverage by Income, 2003



Source: California Health Interview Survey (<http://www.chis.ucla.edu/>)

Employer Health Insurance Coverage, California



Source: US Bureau of the Census (<http://www.census.gov/>)

Sources

California Agricultural Statistics Service	http://www.nass.usda.gov
California Association of Realtors	http://www.car.org
California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit	http://www.dof.ca.gov
California Department of Justice	http://caag.state.ca.us
California Department of Transportation	http://www.dot.ca.gov
California Division of Travel and Tourism	http://www.visitcalifornia.com
California Energy Commission	http://www.energy.ca.gov
California Integrated Waste Management Board	http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov
California Secretary of State	http://www.ss.ca.gov
California State Parks	http://www.parks.ca.gov
Dean Runyan & Associates	http://www.deanrunyan.com
Employment Development Department	http://www.calmis.ca.gov
Forbes	http://www.forbes.com
George Mason University United States Election Project	http://elections.gmu.edu
National Association of Realtors	http://www.realtor.org
Sonoma County Agricultural Preserve and Open Space District	http://www.sonomaopenspace.org
Sonoma County Economic Development Board	http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb
Sonoma County Office of Education	http://www.scoe.org
Sonoma County Voter Registrar	http://www.sonoma-county.org/regvoter
Sonoma County Water Agency	http://www.scwa.ca.gov
Sonoma County Waste Management	http://www.recyclenow.org
UCLA California Health Interview Survey	http://www.chis.ucla.edu
United States Bureau of the Census	http://www.census.gov
United States Bureau of Labor Statistics	http://www.bls.gov
United States Environmental Protection Agency	http://www.epa.gov

Methodology

Sonoma County Indicators is a partial and/or composite representation of raw data. Although the Indicators do not provide a complete in-depth analysis of each facet of Sonoma County, the information in this report can be used as a starting point for more detailed research. Residents, businesses, and organizations in Sonoma County are invited to offer suggestions of other indicators for future inclusion. Please submit suggestions/comments to the EDB at edb@sonoma-county.org, or fax to (707) 565-7231.

Sonoma County Indicators was developed from established national and local data sources based on models of similar reports produced in other regions around the country. The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB) thanks those organizations that have pioneered the approaches used in indicator reports for their invaluable contributions to the creation of this report.

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board's main purpose in creating this report was to provide a preliminary, comparative study on various economic, demographic, and social facets of Sonoma County. The EDB confined its research to information available on websites and previously published material, citing the appropriate source with each data set. The EDB did not attempt to analyze the data or present it in a specific format. The EDB has received feedback on the Indicators from various community organizations and leaders, incorporating their suggestions wherever possible. The Indicators are a high-level effort to quantify aspects of Sonoma County and should not be used as decision-making tools.

Each graph or chart contains the source for that data set and can be further researched by contacting the source agency. Additionally, readers interested in learning more about a particular issue are encouraged to contact the agency or organization listed in the "For More Information" section of the particular indicator.

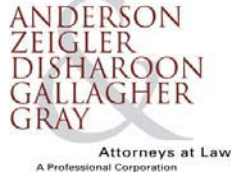
Sonoma County Indicators was prepared by EDB staff members Nick Arevalo and Will Cathcart.

Cover

The pictures on the front of the 2006 Sonoma County Indicators were selected from the film collection of the Sonoma County Film Office (<http://www.sonoma-county.org/film/>) and are pictures from around Sonoma County.



**With Acknowledgment and Appreciation to the Underwriters of the
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 Sonoma County Permit & Resources Management Dept. ■ Sonoma County Office of Education
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 Sonoma County Transportation & Public Works ■ Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board



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