

# QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS

Crime \_\_\_\_\_

Traffic \_\_\_\_\_

Quality of Education \_\_\_\_\_

Children Living in Poverty \_\_\_\_\_



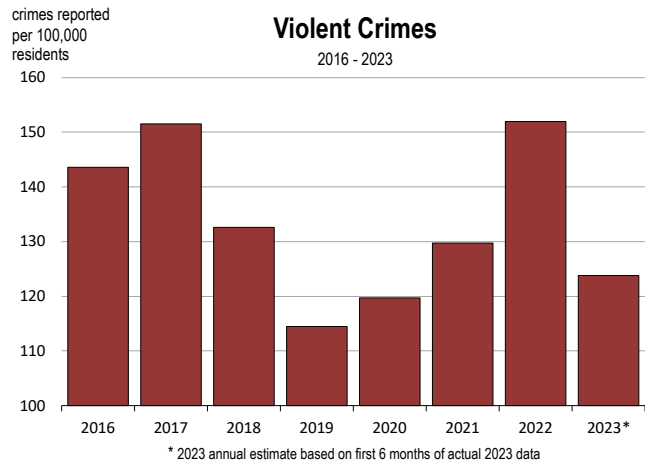
## Quality of Life Indicators

The social environment of the Santa Clarita Valley directly affects local business performance and influences home prices. Public safety, traffic congestion, school quality, and child welfare are important features of this environment. In this chapter, these topics are examined with information on local crime rates, traffic counts, standardized tests, and youth poverty.

### Crime

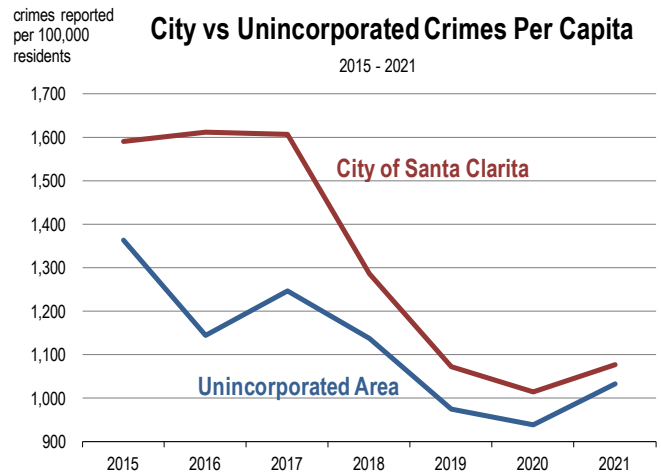
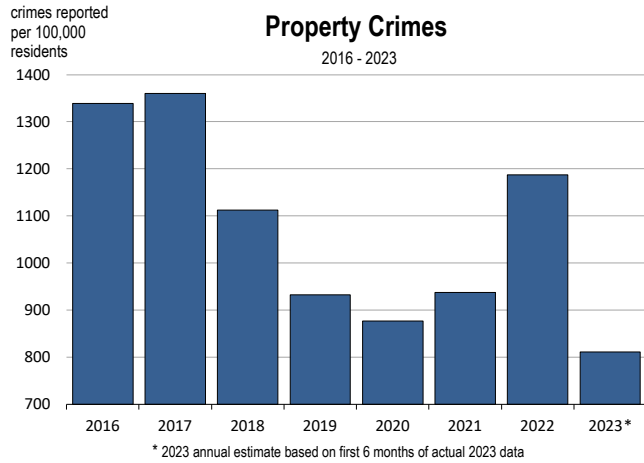
For areas of California, crime levels can be compared to one another on the basis of the Total Crime Index. The Total Crime Index is the sum of the following crime categories: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny, and arson. The most recent information describes crime levels in 2023 through April.

- While crime Levels in the Santa Clarita Valley rose sharply between 2021 and 2022, they appear to be retreating in 2023. If the pace of crime incidence between January and April is consistent for the remainder of the year, crime levels will record a significant drop by the end of 2023.
- The Total Crime Index reported per 100,000 residents in Santa Clarita Valley was 1,236 in 2022. In 2023 however, it is running at 934, which is the lowest index on record. The drop between 2022 and 2023 indicates about a 24% decline.

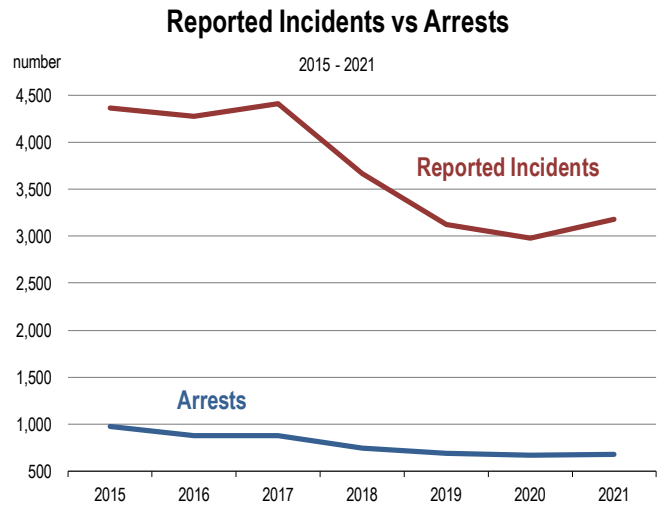


- The increase in 2022 can potentially be accounted for by the pandemic ending. During the pandemic, specifically 2020 and 2021, historically low levels of crime were reported largely due to business closures and the quarantine. Fortunately, the 2023 rate appears to be dropping to levels below the Pandemic rates, reversing the spike that occurred in 2022.
- It is important to note however that despite total crime levels rising in 2022, violent crimes like homicide and forcible rape underwent a significant drop. The decline is not expected to continue for the remainder of 2023 even though the total crime index is declining.
- Both property crime rates and violent crime rates per 100,000 residents are forecast to drop by substantial amounts this year. Comparing the first half of 2022 to the first half of 2023, violent crime rates have dropped by 19% and property crime rates have dropped by 25%.

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- The number of Reported Incidents has been over 4 times the number of Arrests from 2015 to 2021. In 2021, the number of Reported Incidents was 4.71 times the number of Arrests.
- Crime in the City and Unincorporated Area per capita has converged over the past 7 years. In 2021, the Unincorporated Area only had around 50 crimes less per 100,000 people compared to the city.
- Unfortunately, the FBI ceased its mandate requiring annual crime data so data from 2020 and on is not available.



Crime Rates	Santa Clarita Valley						2015 - 2022	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
– crime reports per 100,000 residents –								
<b>City of Santa Clarita</b>								
Willful homicide	11	8	6	4	4	4	6	3
Forcible rape	53	55	59	67	65	55	59	44
Robbery	139	139	145	118	108	90	90	53
Aggravated assault	238	212	232	202	165	209	231	354
Burglary	827	821	823	735	513	465	399	574
Motor vehicle theft	2,692	2,516	2,625	2,146	1,958	1,782	1,935	2,389
Larceny	378	504	498	364	289	365	433	553
Arson	26	22	23	34	24	10	23	31

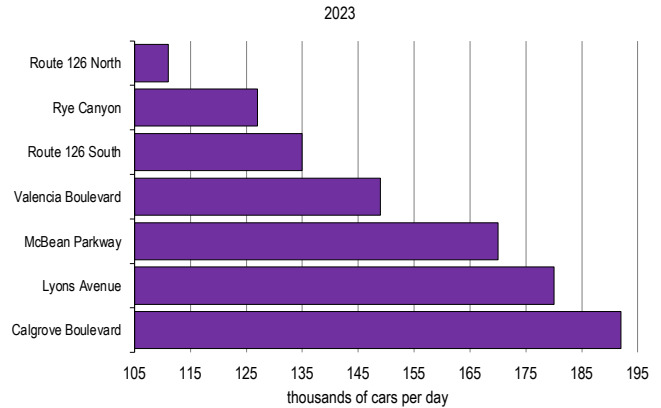
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

## Traffic

Traffic counts can reveal information about economic and demographic trends. In general, traffic counts decline during periods of economic weakness and rise during periods of strength. This occurs for several reasons, including the increased transportation of goods, a larger number of employed workers commuting to work, more people traveling, and higher disposable incomes that can be spent on vehicles and gasoline.

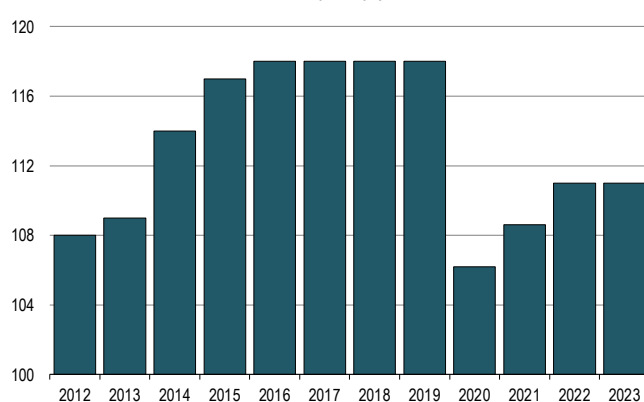
- Traffic volumes plummeted during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Across the Santa Clarita Valley, traffic counts fell by 20 percent in 2020.
- By mid-2021, traffic was still 15 percent below 2019 levels.
- Traffic has continued to rebound steadily in 2022 and 2023 from pandemic level lows. Mid-2023 traffic reports indicate total traffic has stayed steady since 2022.

**Traffic Counts / Northbound Interstate 5 Junctions  
Santa Clarita Valley**

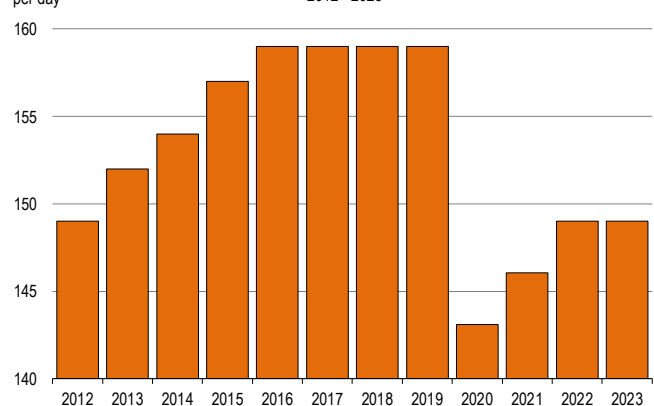


- Despite the increase, traffic still hasn't reached pre-pandemic levels prevailing in 2019.
- Traffic counts on Interstate 5 Junctions through Santa Clarita have all increased since 2021. Traffic counts have increased between 3,000-4,000 cars per day at each junction

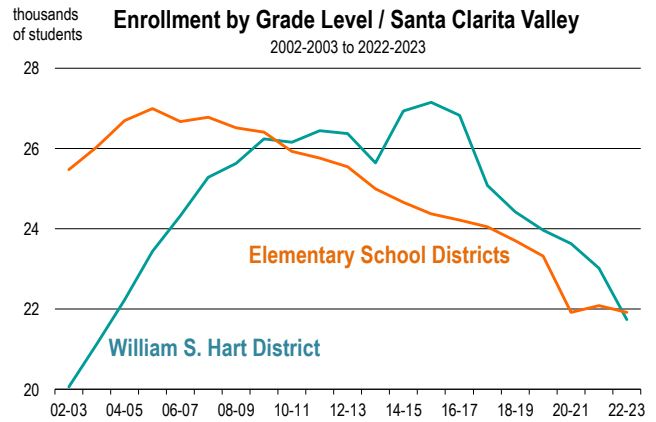
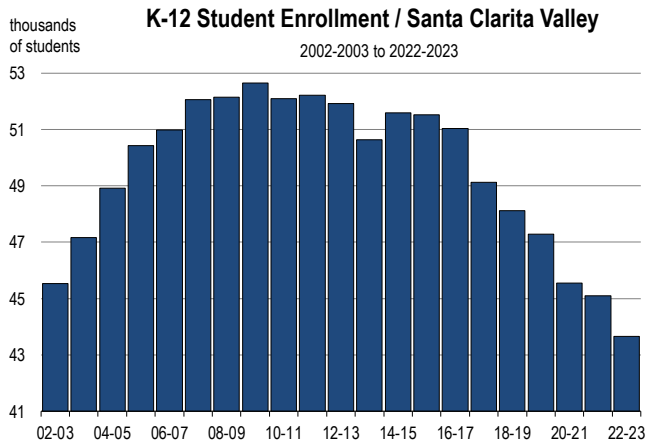
**Interstate 5 at North Route 126 / Santa Clarita Valley**  
2012 - 2023



**Valencia Boulevard Interchange / Santa Clarita Valley**  
2012 - 2023



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Quality of Education

Enrollments

- During the 2022-2023 school year, public school enrollment in the Santa Clarita Valley declined in both High Schools and Elementary Schools.
- Enrollment has been in decline for several years, but the trend was exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. Schools were closed for in-person learning and it was a challenge for some students to attend classes virtually.
- Enrollment numbers that continue to contract can likely be attributed to the overall contraction in the K-12 school age population.
- Enrollment at the William S. Hart Union district had the largest decline than any other district in Santa Clarita, with an enrollment drop of 1,284 students.
- Enrollment in the elementary schools dropped by 171 students after last year's 165 student increase.
- Total enrollment is now at the lowest level since 2001.
- Out of all the elementary school districts, only Newhall Elementary saw a slight increase in students. The largest loss came from Sulphur Springs Union Elementary at 121 students.

Public School Enrollment	Santa Clarita Valley							
	2015 - 2016 to 2022 - 2023							
	-school year-							
	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
Castaic Union Elementary	2,354	2,234	2,153	2,037	2,020	1,860	1,893	1,859
Newhall Elementary	6,650	6,706	6,537	6,539	6,267	5,920	5,834	5,918
Saugus Union Elementary	9,984	9,900	9,960	9,791	9,704	9,071	9,170	9,070
Sulphur Springs Union Elementary	5,383	5,370	5,395	5,336	5,329	5,069	5,188	5,067
<b>Total Elementary</b>	<b>24,371</b>	<b>24,210</b>	<b>24,045</b>	<b>23,703</b>	<b>23,320</b>	<b>21,920</b>	<b>22,085</b>	<b>21,914</b>
William S. Hart Union High	27,155	26,822	25,080	24,414	23,968	23,623	23,019	21,735
<b>Santa Clarita Valley Total</b>	<b>51,526</b>	<b>51,032</b>	<b>49,125</b>	<b>48,117</b>	<b>47,288</b>	<b>45,543</b>	<b>45,104</b>	<b>43,649</b>

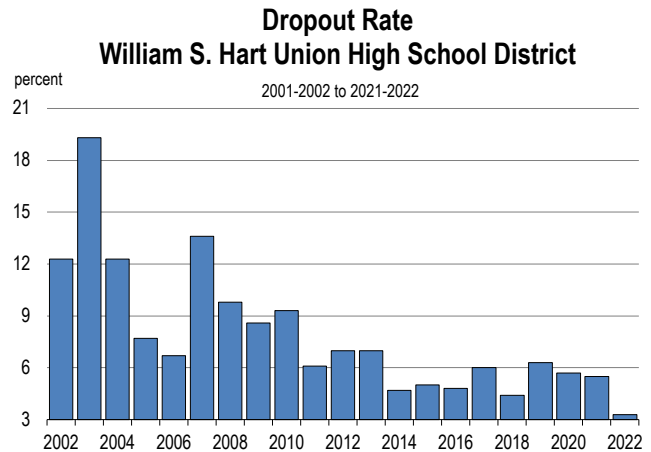
Source: California Department of Education

## Dropout Rate

The rate at which students choose to dropout of school is an important indicator of how well schools are keeping students interested and preparing them for the workplace.

Teens who drop out of high school are unlikely to have the minimum skills and credentials necessary to function in today’s increasingly technological workplace. The completion of high school is required for accessing post-secondary education and is a minimum qualification for most jobs.

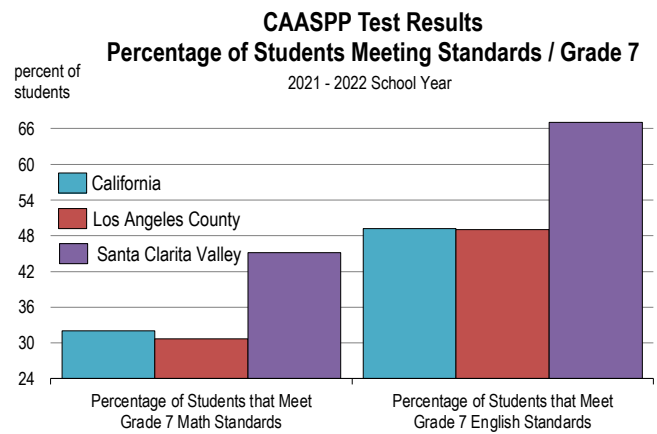
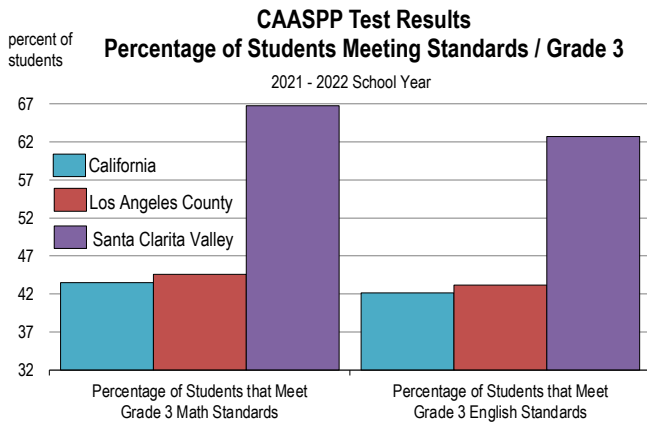
- At the William S. Hart Union High School District, the dropout rate has been exceptionally low for almost a decade.
- In the 2021-2022 school year (the most recent data available), only 3.3 percent of students dropped out. Statewide, 9.6 percent of students dropped out. Across Los Angeles County, 10.4 percent of students dropped out.



## Elementary School Testing

California schools now administer the CAASPP exam – a replacement system for the old California Standard Test (CST).

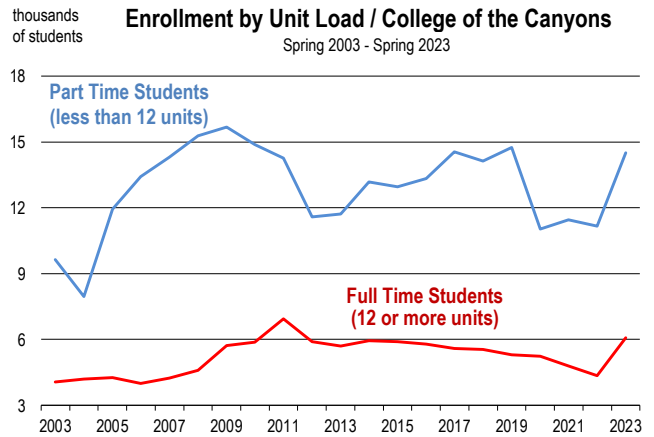
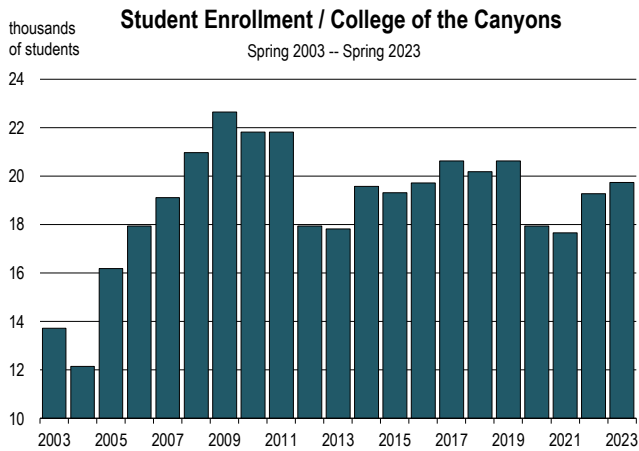
The State of California has established benchmarks for student scores, and schools can be evaluated by the rate at which their students pass these benchmarks.



This analysis (arbitrarily) presents scores for third grade and seventh grade as representative of elementary and junior high students. Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, there was no testing during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 years. The following interpretation of recent public school test scores is based on testing during the 2021-2022 school year.

- Third grade students at Santa Clarita Elementary School significantly outperformed their peers across Los Angeles County and the State of California. This outperformance occurred in both Math and English.
- Comparing these results to testing in previous years, Math and English passing rates only differed by a few percentage points.
- Among third grade students, more than 60 percent of test takers passed the Math and 63 percent passed the English tests.

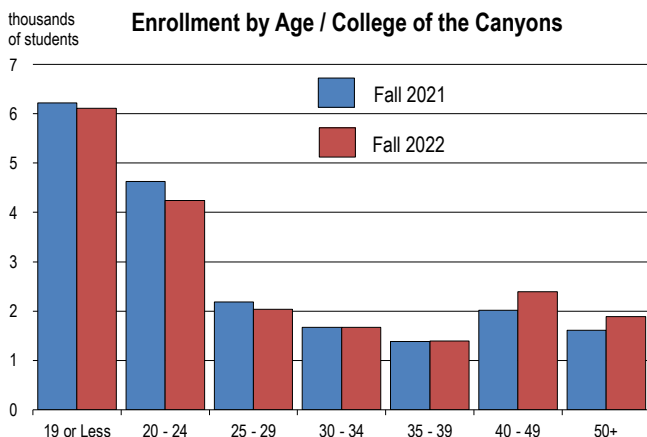
- In Los Angeles County and across California, only 42 percent to 45 percent of third grade students passed the tests.
- The results for Seventh grade testing scores in the Santa Clarita Valley are taken from William S Hart Union High. This is the only public school in the Valley that resumed testing after the Coronavirus Pandemic made testing optional.
- 67 percent of seventh grade students passed the English portion of the test, which is exactly 28 percentage points higher than students across California for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Seventh grade students struggled with the math section of the CAASPP test in the 2021-2022 school year. California and LA county recorded passing rates of 32.0 and 30.7 percent for math. Santa Clarita Valley however reported passing rates of 45.2 percent for math.



### College of the Canyons

- Enrollment at the College of the Canyons had been in decline since the pandemic of 2020. However, as of the 2022-2023 school year, enrollment numbers have rebounded.
- The largest increase of 1,074 students was observed in the age group of 19 and under in the Fall. The largest decrease of only 215 was observed in students aged 20 – 24.
- Since enrollment increased after Spring of 2022, so did the number of full-time and part-time students. In Spring of 2023, there were 6,078 full-time students and 14,495 part-time students.

- Enrolment has not been this high for full-time students since Spring of 2011.
- Regarding ethnicity, approximately 26% of students identified as White in the Fall of 2022, while 51% identified as Hispanic.
- Male enrollment has been at a steady incline since the 2020 pandemic, reported as 11,729 students as of Spring 2023.
- On the contrary, female enrollment decreased by 285 students in the Spring of 2023 relative to Spring of 2022s.
- In the Fall of 2022, approximately 5.5 percent of students identified as Black, 6 percent identified as Asian, 4 percent identified as Filipino, and 3 percent identified with multiple racial cohorts. These shares have not changed substantially over the last decade.

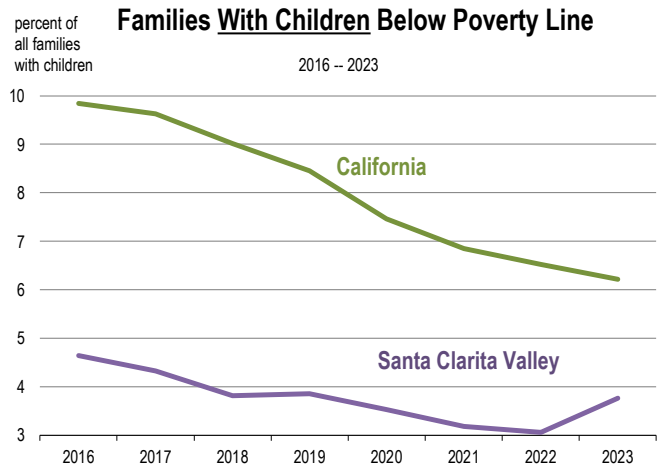
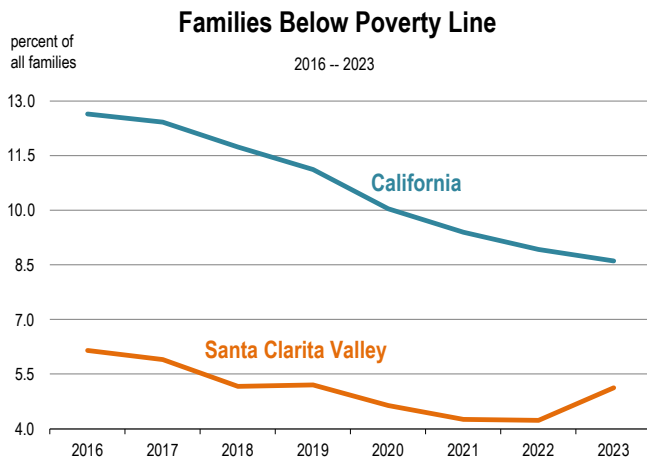




## Children Living in Poverty

Being raised in poverty places children at higher risk for a wide range of problems. Research indicates that poor children are disproportionately exposed to risk factors that may impair the development process and contribute to poor academic achievement.

- Children under 18 are much more likely than adults to be poor. For a family of four with two children, the federal poverty level is \$26,500.
- In 2023, 5.1 percent of families in the Santa Clarita Valley were under the poverty level. Approximately 3.8 percent of families with children did not eclipse the federal poverty level.
- Across California, 8.6 percent of families were below the poverty level, and 6.2 percent of families with children were living in poverty.
- From 2022 to 2023, The number of families below the poverty line with and without children increased in Santa Clarita Valley. However, for California, the numbers have been at a steady decline since 2015.



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## California Economic Forecast

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