QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS

Crime

Traffic

Quality of Education
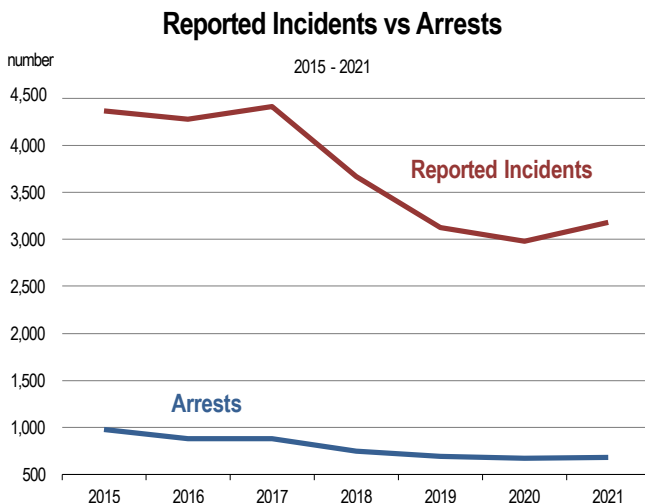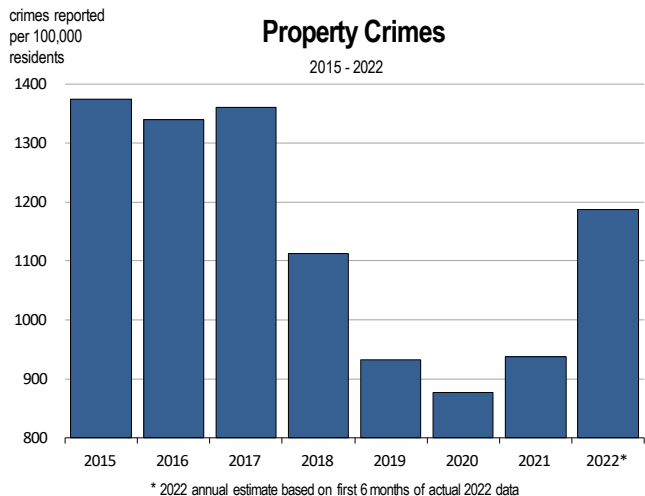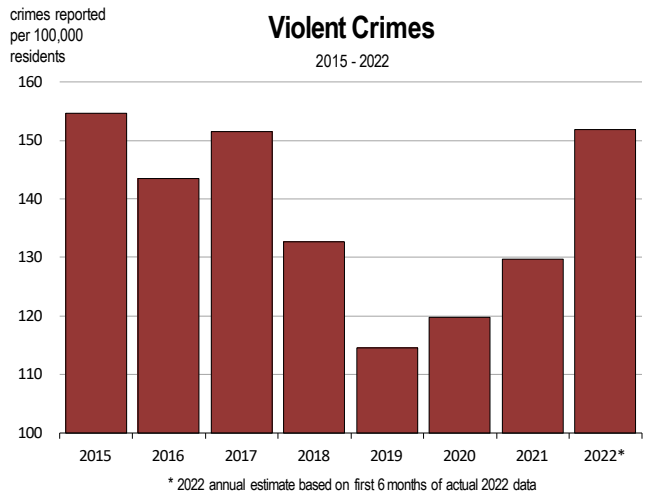
Children Living in Poverty

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. These crimes are classified as Part 1 crimes. The most recent information describes crime levels in 2022 up to June.

• In 2022, crime levels in the Santa Clarita Valley have risen drastically from 2021 numbers. Comparing the first half of 2021 to 2022 we see a rise of over 26% in violent crimes.

• Using data from the first half of 2022, we estimate the Total Crime Index will be 1,339 crimes reported per 100,000 residents in Santa Clarita Valley by the end of 2022. The Total Crime Index hasn't been this high since 2017.

• Property and Violent Crimes have been on the rise since lows in 2019 and 2020 respectively. Burglaries (property) and Aggravated Assault (violent) have seen sharp increases in the first half of 2022 of 44% and 53%.

Violent Crimes

crimes reported per 100,000 residents

2015 - 2022

* 2022 annual estimate based on first 6 months of actual 2022 data

Property Crimes

crimes reported per 100,000 residents

2015 - 2022

* 2022 annual estimate based on first 6 months of actual 2022 data

Reported Incidents vs Arrests

number

2015 - 2021

Reported Incidents

Arrests

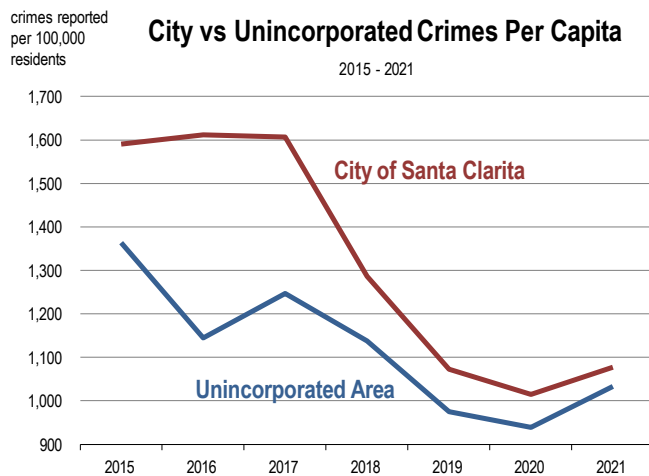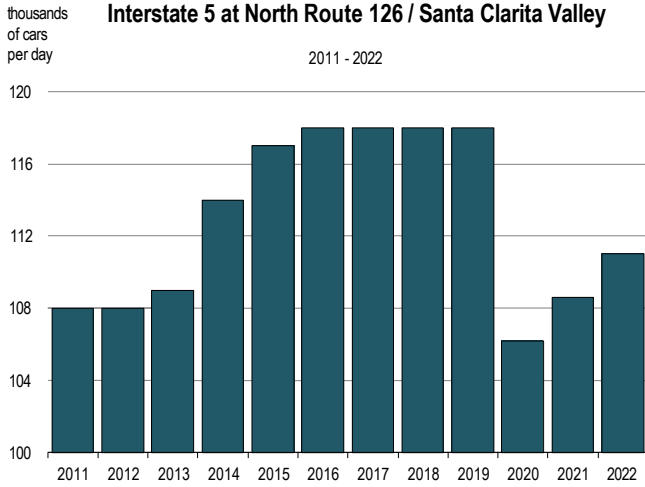| Crime Rates	Santa Clarita Valley						2015 - 2022	
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	– crime reports per 100,000 residents –							
City of Santa Clarita								
Willful homicide	11	8	6	4	4	4	6	3
Forcible rape	53	55	59	67	65	55	59	44
Robbery	139	139	145	118	108	90	90	53
Aggravated assault	238	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

• 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.

• According to data from 2019, Santa Clarita is one of the safest cities in Los Angeles County, with violent crime rates that are consistently lower than in other regions. Out of the 87 cities in Los Angeles County, Santa Clarita had the 15th lowest violent crime rate in 2019.

• Unfortunately, the FBI ceased its mandate requiring annual crime data so data from 2020 and on is not available.
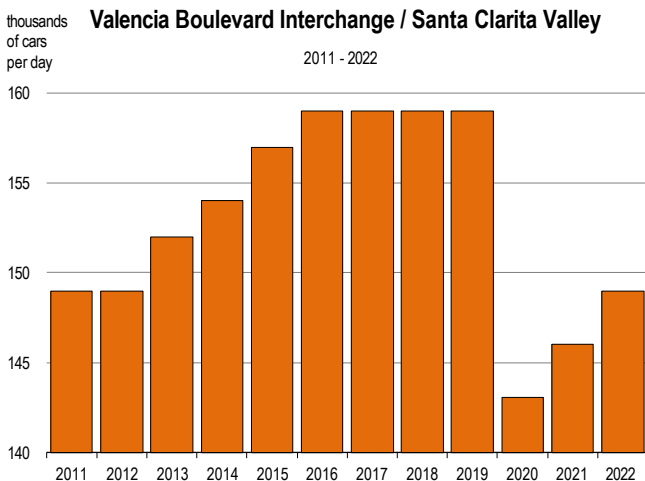
Traffic

Traffic counts can reveal information about economic and demographic trends. In general, traffic counts decline during periods of economic weakness and grow during periods of strength. This occurs for several reasons, including the increased transportation of goods, a larger number of individuals commuting to work, and higher disposable incomes that can be spent on cars and gas.

• Traffic volumes plummeted during the coronavirus pandemic.

crimes reported per 100,000 residents

City vs Unincorporated Crimes Per Capita

2015 - 2021

City of Santa Clarita

Unincorporated Area

Interstate 5 at North Route 126 / Santa Clarita Valley

thousands of cars per day

2011 - 2022

Traffic Counts / Northbound Interstate 5 Junctions Santa Clarita Valley
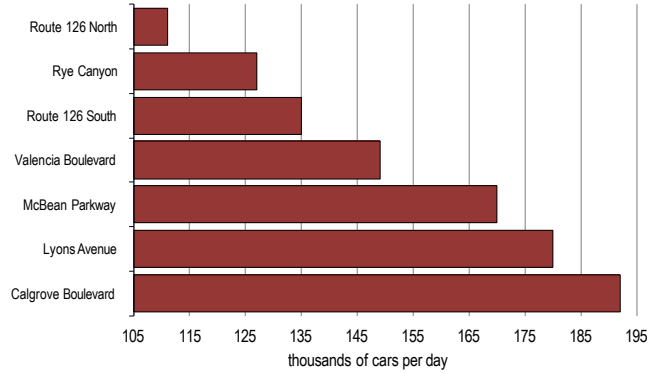
2022

thousands of cars per day

- 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 from pandemic-level lows. Mid-2022 traffic reports indicate total traffic has risen around 10% since 2021.

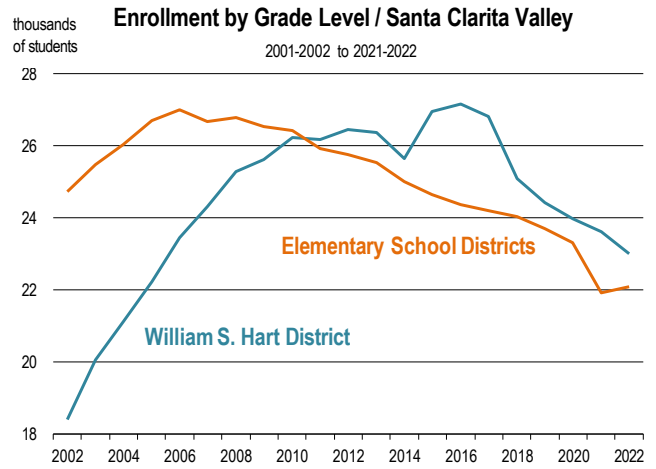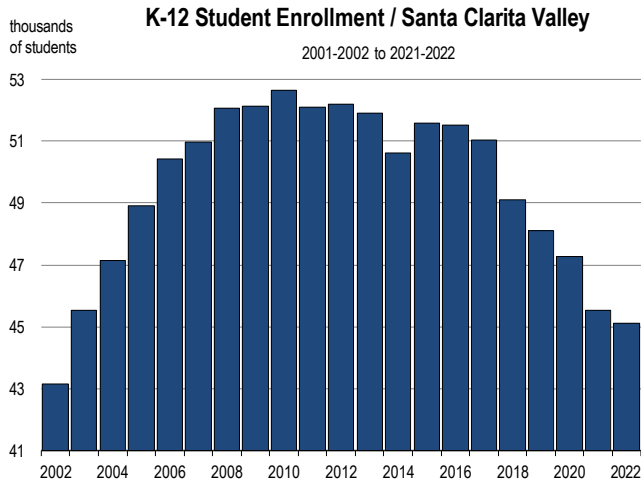- Despite the increase, traffic still hasn't reached the pre-pandemic levels seen in 2019.

- Traffic counts on Interstate 5 Junctions in Santa Clarita have all grown since 2021. Traffic counts increased between 3,000-4,000 cars per day at each junction.

Quality of Education

Enrollments

- During the 2021-2022 school year, enrollment in Santa Clarita Valley declined sharply in High Schools but increased slightly in 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 at the William S. Hart Union district had the largest decline of any other district in Santa Clarita. The district declined by 604 students.

Valencia Boulevard Interchange / Santa Clarita Valley

thousands of cars per day

2011 - 2022

K-12 Student Enrollment / Santa Clarita Valley
2001-2002 to 2021-2022

Enrollment by Grade Level / Santa Clarita Valley
2001-2002 to 2021-2022

- Enrollment in the elementary districts rose by 165 students from last year's 1,400 student decline.

- Total enrollment hasn't been this low since 2001.

- Out of all the elementary school districts, only Newhall Elementary saw a decline in students. The largest gain came from Sulphur Springs Union Elementary with 119 students.
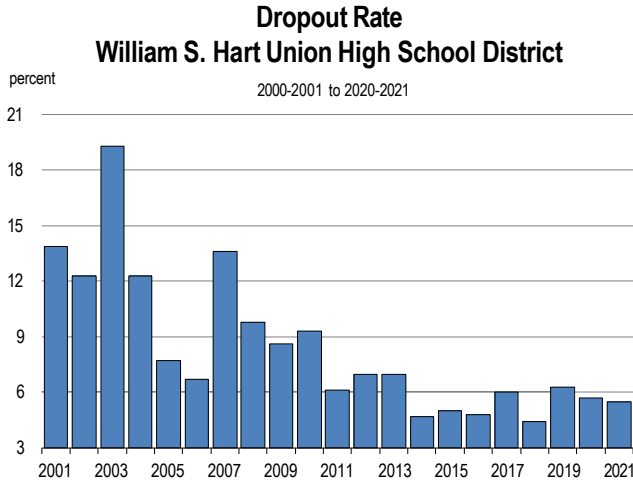
Dropout Rate

The rate at which students choose to drop out 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.

Public School Enrollment	Santa Clarita Valley				2014 - 2015 to 2021 - 2022			
				-school year-				
	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
Castaic Union Elementary	2,568	2,354	2,234	2,153	2,037	2,020	1,860	1,893
Newhall Elementary	6,739	6,650	6,706	6,537	6,539	6,267	5,920	5,834
Saugus Union Elementary	9,911	9,984	9,900	9,960	9,791	9,704	9,071	9,170
Sulphur Springs Union Elementary	5,437	5,383	5,370	5,395	5,336	5,329	5,069	5,188
Total Elementary	**24,655**	**24,371**	**24,210**	**24,045**	**23,703**	**23,320**	**21,920**	**22,085**
William S. Hart Union High	26,938	27,155	26,822	25,080	24,414	23,968	23,623	23,019
Santa Clarita Valley Total	**51,593**	**51,526**	**51,032**	**49,125**	**48,117**	**47,288**	**45,543**	**45,104**

Source: California Department of Education

Dropout Rate
William S. Hart Union High School District

percent

2000-2001 to 2020-2021

CAASPP Test Results
Percentage of Students Meeting Standards / Grade 3

percent of students

2020 - 2021 School Year

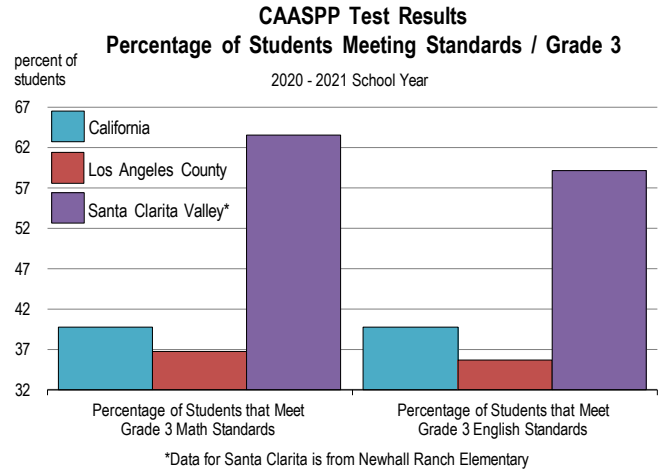*Data for Santa Clarita is from Newhall Ranch Elementary

- At the William S. Hart Union High School District, the dropout rate has been exceptionally low for almost a decade.

- In the 2020-2021 school year (the most recent data available), only 5.5 percent of students dropped out. Statewide, 16.4 percent of students dropped out. Across Los Angeles County, 17.6 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).
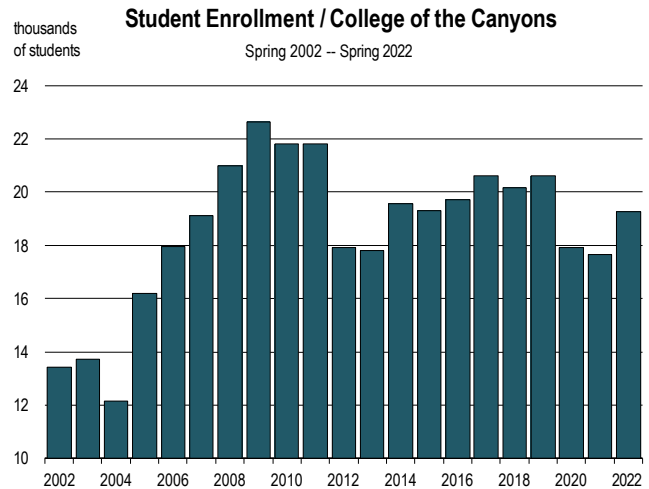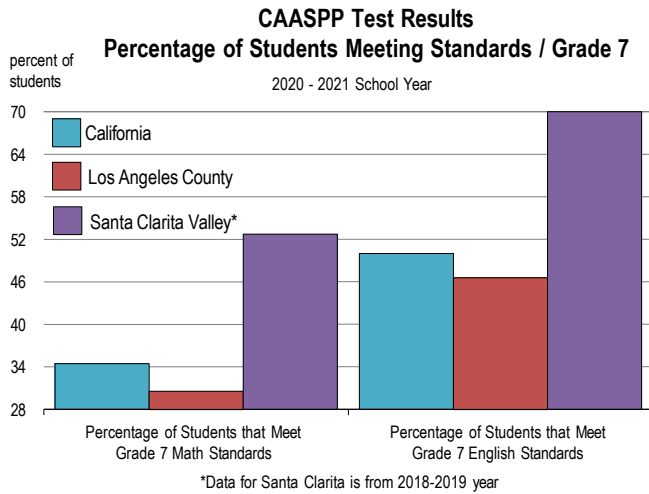
The State of California has established benchmarks for student scores, and schools can be evaluated by the rate at which their students pass these benchmarks.

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 year. Furthermore, testing

participation varied for the 2020-2021 year by district.

- In the Santa Clarita Valley, Newhall Elementary was the only school district to commence in CAASPP testing.

- Newhall Elementary test results found that third-grade students 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 2018-2019, Math and English passing rates only differed by a few percentages.

- Among third-grade students, more than 60 percent of test takers passed Math and 59 percent passed the English tests.

- In Los Angeles County and across California, only 35 percent to 40 percent of third-grade students passed the tests.

CAASPP Test Results
Percentage of Students Meeting Standards / Grade 7
2020 - 2021 School Year

percent of
students

*Data for Santa Clarita is from 2018-2019 year

Student Enrollment / College of the Canyons
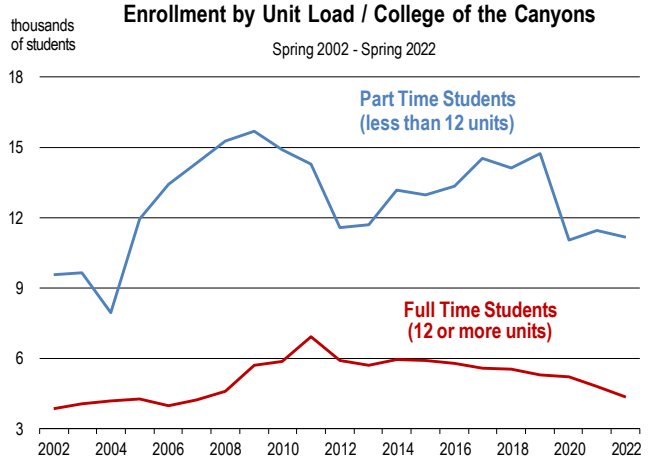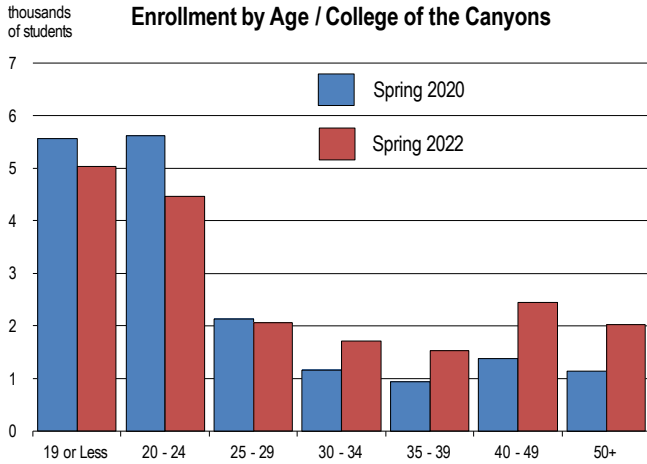Spring 2002 -- Spring 2022

thousands
of students

- There is no data for Seventh-grade test scores in the Santa Clarita Valley. This can be attributed to CAASPP making the test optional due to the coronavirus.

- Using Santa Clarita's 2018-2019 testing scores, 70 percent of seventh-grade students passed the English portion of the test, which is exactly 20 percentage points higher than students across California for the 2020-2021 school year.

- Seventh-grade students struggled with the math section of the CAASPP test in the 2020-2021 school year. California and LA county recorded passing rates of 34.4 and 30.5 percent for math.

College of the Canyons

- In 2021 and 2022, enrollment at College of the Canyons increased from last year's low.

- The largest increases were observed in students aged 19 and under in the Fall, and students aged 40 and up in the Spring. Students aged 50 and up increased by about 600 compared to last spring.

- Despite higher enrollment, there were substantially fewer full-time students.

- Hispanic students accounted for almost half of all enrollments while non-Hispanic White students represented 31 percent of the campus population.

- Male enrollment was very high in the Spring of 2022 at 11,091 students.

- In the Spring of 2022, approximately 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.

Enrollment by Age / College of the Canyons

thousands of students

Spring 2020
Spring 2022

Enrollment by Unit Load / College of the Canyons

thousands of students

Spring 2002 - Spring 2022

Part Time Students
(less than 12 units)

Full Time Students
(12 or more units)

Children Living in Poverty

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. 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.

• In 2022, 4.2 percent of families in the Santa Clarita Valley were under the poverty level.

Approximately 3.1 percent of families with children were in poverty.

• Across California, 8.9 percent of families were below the poverty level, and 6.5 percent of families with children were living in poverty.

• Despite a deep recession, fewer families fell below the poverty line in 2020 and 2021. Why? Because job-related income losses were offset by federal and California stimulus packages. These programs were so large, that some individuals actually earned higher incomes after they lost their jobs.

Families Below Poverty Line

percent of all families

2015 -- 2022

California

Santa Clarita Valley

Families With Children Below Poverty Line

percent of all families with children

2015 -- 2022

California

Santa Clarita Valley