

Press Release

Wednesday, August 21, 2013
For Release September 9, 2013

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Poverty Report to be Released, Presented to Board of Supervisors

Santa Barbara, CA, August 26: A new report, "A Snapshot of Poverty in Santa Barbara County," aims to analyze how well resources and services in the county are aligned to areas and populations of greatest economic need. It suggests focus areas where the County, other government agencies, community-based organizations and funders can better partner to enhance our critical social safety net infrastructure and reduce the effects of poverty. The report is available online, and will be summarized in an hour-long presentation before the Board on September 10.

The Snapshot reports the findings of the Poverty Initiative, a study launched by the Board in January 2012. In the wake of the recession, public and non-profit safety net providers requested this geographically-based study to help them find some balance between the growing need for services and diminishing resources available to provide them.

The Snapshot shows poverty clustered in 18 high-poverty tracts in 4 main areas (in Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, and Isla Vista). Among other recommendations, it suggests co-locating and consolidating services in those areas, aligning resources in Lompoc and North County to address service gaps, setting goals and standardizing data collection to track their attainment, adopting best practices in philanthropy and public funding, and increasing enrollment in CalFresh (food stamps). These focus areas are offered to initiate community discussions, build upon local and national best practices, and provide a tool to develop new strategies to help Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable communities climb out of poverty.

The study was funded by the Santa Barbara Foundation and federal funds, and carried out by the Insight Center for Community Economic Development in partnership with the Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services. It employed census data, locally collected data, and GIS mapping; surveys of 178 local organizations and interviews with 16 public and non-profit leaders; and analysis of 44 indicators of well-being.

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and community will hear the findings in a one-hour presentation by Insight and the Department of Social Services at the regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors hearing on September 10, beginning at 9:00 am, televised live on CSBTv Channel 20 from the Joseph Centeno Betteravia Government Administration Building, Board Hearing Room, 511 East Lakeside Parkway, Santa Maria.

The full 124-page report is available online, along with the 30-page executive summary, presentation slides, and board letter, at the Department of Social Services website. Visit <http://www.sbcsocialservices.org> and choose "Poverty Initiative" from the left menu, or use this direct link:

http://www.countyofsb.org/social_services/default.aspx?id=44131.

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