

## Introduction

The **Southwest Colorado Index – Data and Trends**, previously called the Pathways to Healthier Communities Indicator Report, was first published in 1996 by Operation Healthy Communities Inc. (OHC). That first edition was conceived before data was readily available on the Internet, and there was a tremendous need for localized data as well as a single document to measure community trends. OHC developed vision statements with broad-based community input that defined what a healthy community would look like, and various measures were collected and developed to track changes and evaluate trends over time. After producing five editions of the Indicator Report, OHC closed its doors at the end of 2006 and the Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado (Region 9) took over publication of the document.

### About Our Indicators

The data in this report provides information about the overall health of our communities and whether the region is headed forward or backward, improving or deteriorating. Since all aspects of community are intricately linked to one another, an indicator changing in one area can affect many other areas. Each indicator in this document is chosen based on research considerations such as validity, reliability, availability, timeliness and responsiveness. We strive to provide the latest data, but data is not always readily available. Some data is only released every 2 years, or in many cases, after a calendar year ends. It can also take many agencies an additional six months to close out their year and release their numbers.

The format and content of this document is always evolving to reflect our region. New indicators are included as appropriate and others are dropped if data is no longer consistently available. This 2008 edition includes: emerging issues, less narrative and more data, direct links to resources, and a new name. Emerging issues are topics that need to be addressed, though do not yet have a way to be quantified. Some of the Emerging Issues receiving attention in this Index include methamphetamines, and home health care. Our Index Advisory Committee helped us revamp the Index to take into account comments from users like you, and help make this resource available. This document includes the input of numerous individuals who are experts in the various topics covered in this report. If you need any additional information or have any questions please contact Region 9 at (970) 247-9621 or [laura@scan.org](mailto:laura@scan.org).

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