



## Epidemiology of Suicide 2024

Prepared by the Public Health Department in partnership with the Behavioral Health Department and San Luis Obispo Suicide Prevention Council

*This fact sheet provides information about deaths by suicide in SLO County. It can be used by community members and coalitions, such as the Suicide Prevention Council, to drive suicide prevention efforts and reduce suicide incidence in SLO County.*

Figure 1. Age-adjusted suicide rates for United States, California, and San Luis Obispo County, 2009-2022

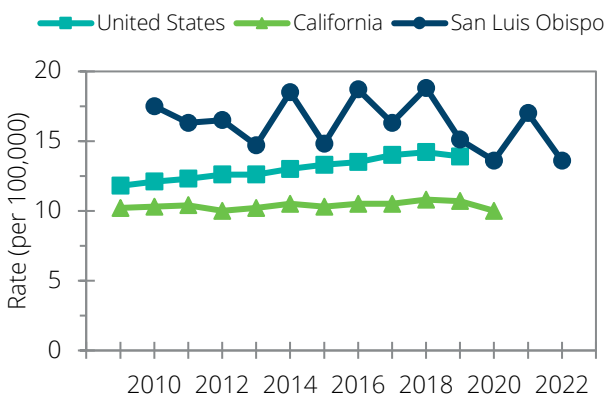
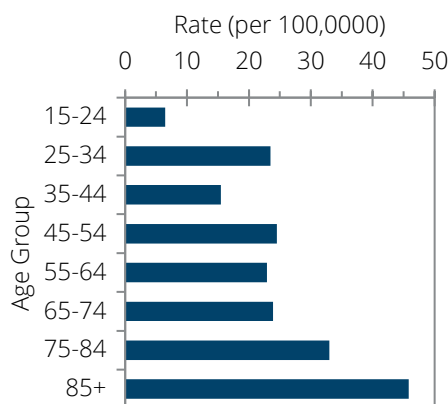


Figure 2. Age-specific suicide rates, San Luis Obispo County, 2018-2022



**For more than a decade, overall age-adjusted rates of suicide in San Luis Obispo County have remained higher than those for both the state and the nation.** In 2022, there were 50 deaths by suicide in San Luis Obispo County. The overall age-adjusted rate for the same year was 14.2, which is one of the lowest rates since 2010 but still higher than both the state and the nation (Figure 1).

**Deaths by suicide occur at higher rates among older adult residents compared to youths and younger adults.** Between 2018 and 2022, individuals 85 years or older had the highest death rate at 45.8 deaths per 100,000 residents, which is more than three times the county-wide, age-adjusted rate in 2022 (Figure 2).

**People who served in the U.S. Armed Forces are disproportionately affected by suicide.** While about 7% of adult SLO County residents are veterans, veterans represent just under 20% of deaths by suicide (Data not shown).

**Males are also disproportionately affected by suicide, accounting for 73% of those who died by suicide between 2013 and 2022.** The most common mechanism of injury differs by sex, with firearms being the most common mechanism among males and poisoning the most common mechanism among females (Data not shown).

**Sources:** Vital Records Business Intelligence System, CA Dept. of Finance Population Projections, National Center for Health Statistics Table SuicMort, CDC WONDER



### Warning Signs of Suicide

- Talking about wanting to die
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about:
  - feeling hopeless or having no purpose
  - feeling trapped or unbearable pain
  - being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings



### What To Do

- **Question:** Don't be afraid to ask someone: "Are you thinking about suicide or wanting to kill yourself?"
- **Persuade:** Persuade the person to allow you to assist them in getting help right now. Say "Will you go with me to get help?"
- **Refer:** Refer the person to an appropriate resource for assistance, whether it is 911 or a local mental health professional.



### Resources

If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call **911**. If you are having a local mental health crisis, call or text the 24/7 Central Coast Hotline at **800-783-0607**. The national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be reached by calling or texting **988**.