It's Our Orange County

The dream of a more vibrant, prosperous Orange County is within our reach. To achieve it, we must understand and confront the difficult realities faced by too many of our residents.

Through ConnectOC, we are making local knowledge and networks available as never before—to all who want to make a difference in Orange County. And we’re showing the promising approaches that are making an impact today. Already, we are making strides toward the dream we share for Orange County.

In the coming months, this information will help shape the ways we plan, act and give back as a community. No single individual or organization can do it alone. The Orange County Community Foundation invites you to learn, be inspired and get involved!
Our Orange County
Your Community Foundation

The Orange County Community Foundation helps people support the causes they care about most.

We collaborate with individuals, families and businesses to match their charitable interests with our community’s needs. We strengthen local nonprofits through grants and supportive resources. We incubate new ideas and bring leaders together to address our community’s most pressing needs.

Since our inception, OCCF has granted $225 million to meet needs in Orange County, across the nation, and around the world – with $190 million granted in the last decade alone. ConnectOC will take our impact even further.

Ready to make a difference? We can help. Visit oc-cf.org today!

ConnectOC shares local knowledge vital to the county’s well-being—and suggests strategies and opportunities to make life better for all of us who call Orange County home.

We invite you to explore ConnectOC.org for eye-opening facts of life in our community today—and opportunities for us to work together to build a brighter Orange County.

Acknowledgements

ConnectOC reflects the combined efforts of many dedicated organizations and individuals. We recognize the following for their invaluable contributions:

We gratefully acknowledge McKinsey & Company for their pro bono contribution of fact-based research and expertise in the development of the ConnectOC community report.

MCKINSEY & COMPANY
Lynn Dorsey Bleil, Partner
Todd Harris
Paul Kagoo

LEADERSHIP CABINET
Marcia Adler
Dick Allen
Randy Barth
Vicki Booth
Supervisor
Bill Campbell
Ranney Draper
Sister Regina Fox
Kim Goll
Bill Habermehl
Julie Hill
Ed Kacic
Timothy J. Kay
Paula Mathis
Mike Mussallem
Michael Stephens
Wallace Walrod

Table of Contents
3 A Community of Contrast
4 Three Critical Issues
5 Safety Net
9 Health & Wellness
13 Education
17 Learn, Find, Share
Orange County is a community of contrast.

A dream destination for visitors and residents alike, Orange County has much to offer. Sandy beaches. Picturesque mountains. Thriving business and culture. This community’s wealth of natural and human resources is unique and well recognized.

Alongside the dream, however, lives a more difficult reality in Orange County. Not far from opulent homes, families struggle to find shelter for the night. In the shadow of luxury spas, there are men, women and children who can only hope for good health, with no insurance and nowhere to go for medical care. Amid bright-eyed scholars are thousands of children missing basic essentials like attending preschool, mastering language skills and even eating regular meals. These disparities have deepened with a challenged economy and rising cost of living.

The Orange County we dream of is ours for the making. But first, we must understand and address these critical realities.
The future of Orange County depends on our success in addressing three critical areas of need that today drive down quality of life for thousands of residents and our community as a whole: the safety net for our community’s most vulnerable, the health and wellness of children and families, and the education of our youth.

Community needs in the areas of safety net, health and education are complex and entrenched, in large part because they are highly interrelated. High cost of living and low-paying jobs leave many without sufficient means. And it’s hard to work or learn while hungry, hurting or homeless. Unemployed adults and under-educated children are greatly challenged to find pathways out of poverty.

McKinsey & Company analyzed multiple sets of data and summarized key findings on these issues that together have serious implications for the long-term health of Orange County.

Now is the time to work together on some of the most difficult, complex and interconnected issues facing Orange County. To do this, we need to understand these issues deeply, along with the effective strategies and solutions that are already moving the needle in significant ways.

These approaches give us hope and the beginning of a blueprint for creating an Orange County that reflects vibrancy and possibility for all.

THE ISSUES ARE CONNECTED. THE SOLUTION INVOLVES YOU.

LEARN about key community issues and real-life solutions at ConnectOC.org/learn

FIND organizations and individuals leading the way. Get connected through ConnectOC Nonprofit Central, an online database hub launching soon at ConnectOC.org/find

SHARE your own community stories and ideas at Facebook.com/OCCommunityFdn and on Twitter using the hashtag #ConnectOC

ACT on your passion for our community today! Call OCCF at 949-553-4202 to learn how you can make a difference.
Hanging by a Thread

Outside appearances paint Orange County as a vibrant community filled with happy, active families and a thriving economy. But what you don’t see on the surface tells the tale for thousands of Orange County residents who are unemployed or underemployed, homeless or insecure in their housing, and hungry or hard-pressed to find adequate food for themselves or their children.
Significant income disparity coupled with a high cost of living challenges many families and individuals to meet even their most basic needs. Multiple families often share crowded living spaces. Seventy percent of Orange County’s homeless are families with children. And one in five Orange County children lacks a reliable source of healthy food.

NOT WORKING
Lack of steady, sufficient employment can create immediate and generational poverty, increasing risk for low education levels, poor nutrition and health, and increased incidence of family violence.

Those who lose their jobs are not only more likely to have financial difficulties, but also are more likely to report poor physical health, depression, anxiety, insomnia and related disorders. These problems can arise at the same time a worker is losing employment-based health insurance.

Nearly half of OC students live in families making the equivalent of $40,000 or less per year for a family of four.

Areas with high unemployment create pockets of extreme poverty surrounded by affluence, a startling juxtaposition within a single county. Struggling families are faced with the same grocery, gasoline and housing costs as higher-income neighbors, creating an ever-widening gulf of disparity.

HUNGER PAINS
In a county known for its affluence, a shocking number of Orange County residents go to bed hungry—and most distressing of all, many are young children. Fundamental to brain and body development, proper nutrition is essential for growing bodies and minds. Unfortunately it is a “luxury” that too many Orange County families can’t afford.

Nearly half of our county’s students—almost 222,000 children—receive free or reduced price lunch. And for many, scant resources at home make their school lunch the most nutritious meal of the day.

NO PLACE TO CALL HOME
A home is a sanctuary, the ultimate symbol of safety and security for many Americans. Yet in Orange County, high housing costs combined with lower income means that too many residents are homeless or live in unstable housing.

A minimum-wage worker must work 133 hours a week—three full-time jobs—to afford to rent a one-bedroom apartment in Orange County. To make ends meet, many households are forced into double and triple occupancies. More than 26,000 Orange County children live in unstable housing, a number that is increasing each year.
Moving the Needle

We can offer greater security and hope by strengthening the safety net for our community’s most vulnerable children and families.

FAMILIES FORWARD

Families Forward provides safety net services to families in Orange County who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Rather than simply providing temporary shelter, the organization supplies the tools for families to retain their dignity and become independent, productive residents of the community.

Last year, Families Forward served 126 families and 395 individuals through homeless prevention programs, and helped thousands more through its food pantry program, career coaching and other services.
What We Can Do

**IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE TRAINING**
With increased vocational training and relevant job skills, more Orange County residents will have the tools they need for success.

**Career advancement training**
Additional training for unemployed or underemployed individuals can help them qualify for positions with a sustainable wage.

**Technical education and training**
To meet specific hiring needs, vocational training for both high school students and adults can be tailored to the unique growth industries in Orange County.

**Job search skills**
By strengthening their job search skills—including English proficiency—and promoting better use of existing job search resources, we can help more Orange County residents find meaningful, sustainable employment.

**PREVENT HOMELESSNESS AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO HOUSING**
By increasing resources for individuals and families facing homelessness, and improving access to affordable housing, we can ensure a safe haven for vulnerable children and families in Orange County.

**Prevent homelessness**
Identifying and bringing supportive services to families at risk can help them avert a crisis before it occurs.

**Emergency response**
Supportive services tailored to meet individual needs can ensure a successful transition to permanent housing.

**Permanent housing**
Improved access to affordable, permanent housing lessens the burden on shelters and helps Orange County residents retain their dignity.

**INCREASE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOODS**
Improving access to nutritious foods can reduce hunger and improve health throughout our county.

**Expand capacity of programs addressing food insecurity**
Improved countywide access to nutritious and affordable foods for vulnerable populations means no one—young or old—has to go hungry.

**Outreach and education**
Increased awareness and education about existing food resources help reach those in greatest need.

**Meal services**
Increasing the capacity of food distribution programs and meal service providers at locations throughout the county can help individuals with limited access, including transportation barriers.

---

**SENIORSERV**
Since 1967, SeniorServ has been at the forefront of creating programs and services that reduce hunger and improve wellness for impoverished seniors in Orange County. These services often provide the only regular human contact these seniors have.

Core safety net programs include Meals on Wheels for homebound older adults, the Senior Lunch Program that provides a hot, nutritious lunch at 26 senior centers and adult day care.
Failure to Thrive

Poor health impairs learning ability and quality of life, hurts productivity and drains family savings. In Orange County, serious health issues for some threaten the well-being of the entire community.
Orange County ranks as one of the healthiest counties in the United States overall. But a closer look shows significant disparities between affluent and impoverished areas. Research shows residents in challenged communities bear a greater burden of illness, suffer from poor nutrition and exercise habits, and struggle to provide for the basic needs of their families. These deficits diminish the quality of life for our county as a whole.

1 in 3 Orange County residents is uninsured or underinsured

Source: UCLA: California Health Interview Survey, 2009

Holes in the System
Access to quality, affordable health care is essential to improve and maintain overall community health. But the economic downturn coupled with rising unemployment has left one in six Orange County residents uninsured and another one in six underinsured.

People without adequate insurance coverage often defer medical care, leading to more serious ailments. And most uninsured individuals—many of whom are unemployed—are not financially prepared to handle a catastrophic illness.

Epidemic Proportions
For many Orange County residents, lack of access to nutritious foods, high stress levels, extreme time constraints and a poor understanding of nutrition lead to obesity and increased risk of serious health problems.

Childhood obesity is causing a broad range of health problems previously not seen until adulthood, such as high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and elevated blood cholesterol levels. Additionally, obese children are more likely to become obese adults with even more severe weight-related health issues.

All Told
112,000 youth are overweight in Orange County

IN HARM’S WAY
In a community that prides itself on being safe and welcoming, thousands of Orange County children and families live in fear of violence at home or school.

Nearly 40,000 incidents of child abuse are reported each year in Orange County—an average of two per classroom. And childhood bullying is a growing epidemic, touching one out of every seven students nationwide.

The physical and emotional scars of childhood abuse can last a lifetime, leading to mental health problems, substance abuse and often a cycle of perpetuating violence. These issues negatively affect future work performance, education, interpersonal relationships and emotional and physical well-being.

Source: UCLA: California Health Interview Survey, 2009


SHARE OUR SELVES (SOS)

Share Our Selves (SOS) emphasizes care of the whole person by providing comprehensive health care services for struggling Orange County residents. These services include free or low-cost medical and dental care in addition to social services, ensuring a seamless system of care to those in need.

Each year, SOS provides services that improve the health and well-being of thousands of Orange County children and families.
What We Can Do

INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE
We can improve local health care capacity and help Orange County residents understand their options.

Availability of cost-effective services
Community-based and mobile clinics, sliding-scale services and affordable prescriptions help residents gain access to health care they would otherwise lack.

Outreach and education
Programs that provide outreach and education help uninsured and underinsured residents better utilize available health care resources.

Systems of care
Coordinated care is proven to enhance access to services, improve quality of care and lower overall medical costs.

PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES
By providing more opportunities for increased physical activity and healthier eating habits, we can help Orange County residents stay well.

Greater physical activity
To reverse the epidemic of obesity, we must increase opportunities for children and adults to incorporate physical activity in their daily lives.

Healthy food and beverage choices
By working within schools, neighborhoods, health care settings and after-school programs, and partnering with local businesses, we can increase healthy food and beverage options and make selecting nutritious foods easier.

Nutrition education
More effective education and messaging about food and nutrition can help children and adults make healthy decisions.

PREVENT AND ADDRESS ABUSE AFFECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
We can help end the cycle of family violence with effective prevention and victim support measures.

Abuse prevention
Educating children, teens and adults gives them the tools they need to help prevent abuse and to protect themselves if they are victimized.

Emergency shelters and transitional living
For victims of domestic violence, emergency shelter programs offer a lifeline of safety and support to break the cycle of violence.

Anti-bullying programs
Supporting anti-bullying programs for youth can stop the cycle of violence before it begins.

It’s our Orange County. Get informed, be inspired and get involved at ConnectOC.org.

LATINO HEALTH ACCESS
Healthy eating can be difficult in neighborhoods inundated with fast food options on virtually every corner. In collaboration with Northgate Markets, Latino Health Access (LHA) provides education on maintaining a traditional Latino diet while preparing food in healthier ways.

In addition, LHA promotes healthy lifestyles by training community workers to educate their neighbors about diabetes, breast cancer, obesity, domestic violence, parenting and other serious public health problems affecting the community.
Bridging the Gap

We like to think of our classrooms as level playing fields where any ambitious student can reach his or her full potential. But while a number of Orange County schools are beating the odds, many students are left on the wrong side of a growing achievement gap that becomes harder to overcome without sufficient resources and support.
Helping every child receive a high-quality education is one of the best ways to ensure a productive, successful future. But a startling number of Orange County students don’t have access to the skills and resources they need to succeed.

**1 in 4** Orange County students is not fluent in English

Source: California Department of Education Educational Demographics (Ed Data), Orange County 2010-2011

**LOST IN TRANSLATION**

Students who are still learning English face exceptional challenges. Not only must they learn a new language, but they must also balance the same course load as their English-fluent peers, putting them at a significant academic disadvantage.

Students who struggle with language barriers are far less likely to perform well in school and graduate from high school, significantly diminishing their future opportunities for success.

**A LATE START**

Research shows that children who attend high-quality preschool before beginning kindergarten are ahead in early reading and math skills, an advantage that continues through their K–12 schooling and into adulthood.

But in Orange County, there are only 43,341 licensed, center-based preschool spaces to accommodate 82,613 children—meaning that approximately 50 percent of preschool age children do not receive critical early childhood education.

**SCHOOLS STRETCHED THIN**

California’s drastic budget cuts have stacked the deck against local schools—hitting hardest in communities already facing the greatest challenges. Larger class sizes and fewer school days mean educators have more challenges and less time to tackle the learning divide.

**AVERAGE PER PUPIL $**

Average per pupil spending in Orange County is consistently lower than national and even state averages, with an 8 percent drop over the past three school years.

Source: California Department of Education 2010-2011 Financial Report
http://www.ocde.us/business/Pages/Reports-and-Publications.aspx

The average class size in Orange County is 29 students — compared to a statewide average of 24 students per class. Larger class sizes reduce the frequency of student-teacher interaction and hands-on activities and hinder teachers’ ability to identify learning difficulties in a timely manner. In areas with high English-learner populations, individualized attention becomes even more challenging.

**Only 55 percent of Orange County third graders read at a proficient level**

Source: California Department of Education, 2012 STAR Test Results - Orange County
http://star.cde.ca.gov/star2012/index.aspx
Moving the Needle

We can help all Orange County students realize their full potential and get the educational start they need to be successful in school and in life.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF HUNTINGTON VALLEY

The Twilight Education Project provides low income, English language-learning families an opportunity to acquire language and life skills that will help them thrive. School-age children receive tutoring in English literacy, homework help and computer lab access, while their parents gain proficiency in language associated with safety, medical care, transportation and work. Parents can also get hands-on job skills training to help open the door to greater employment opportunities.

Last year, more than 350 children and adults learned side by side in the program’s supportive atmosphere.
What We Can Do

**IMPROVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND PROFICIENCY**
Supported language development and literacy programs for both families and students can ensure that all students are ready for college and career.

**Support for students**
We can support language acquisition through early family literacy programs, early childhood and preschool programs, and learning environments as well as programs that build on students’ natural interests and abilities.

**Support for parents and families**
Effective programs can help families of preschool and school-age children foster the strong language skills critical for lifelong social and academic success.

**ENSURE STUDENTS RECEIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
By making high-quality early childhood education the clear choice and available to all, we can help kids get the strong start they need to succeed in school.

**Increase early education options**
If we increase the number, affordability and quality of early education programs, we can make sure that no child is turned away.

**Parents as teachers**
By collaborating with families to make learning an everyday experience, we can help children become lifelong learners.

**Learning readiness**
By providing a full range of services, including access to medical and dental assessment and care, language and literacy programs, parenting support and related programs, we can help prepare each child for school.

**INCREASE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS**
We can support the learning process through tutoring and mentoring for students, leadership and professional development for teachers, and engaging parents as partners.

**Tutoring for at-risk youth**
Through effective in-class and after-school programs, we can provide academic support, tutoring and mentoring for at-risk youth.

**Leadership development**
We can equip teachers and administrators with the ongoing training and support they need to be successful.

**Parent partnerships**
Training and programs help parents understand how to best work with schools and support their child’s learning.

THINK TOGETHER
Extra time and attention can go a long way in helping struggling students to succeed. THINK Together is helping close the achievement gap for at-risk students through partnerships with school districts to provide afterschool, summer, early literacy and Saturday programs, as well as tutoring.

THINK Together serves over 100,000 low-income residents in Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino and San Diego counties.

It’s our Orange County. Get informed, be inspired and get involved at ConnectOC.org.
It’s Our Orange County.

Visit ConnectOC.org to learn about critical community needs and solutions at work in Orange County today!

We thank the following individuals who, in addition to our Leadership Cabinet, provided input to McKinsey & Company in the development of this report:

Mahboob Akhter
Sam Anderson
Lisa Burke
Jeff Dankberg
Max Gardner
Dr. Manuel Gomez
Scott Green
Paul Heeschen
Doug Holte
Rusty Kennedy
Steve Kight
Dr. Alberto Manetta
Karen McGlinn
Greg Palmer
Bill Podlich
Safi Qureshey
Bill Thompson
Ginny Ueberroth

LEARN about key community issues and real-life solutions at ConnectOC.org/learn

FIND organizations and individuals leading the way. Get connected through ConnectOC Nonprofit Central, an online database hub launching soon at ConnectOC.org/find

SHARE your own community stories and ideas at Facebook.com/OCCommunityFdn and on Twitter using the hashtag #ConnectOC

THANK YOU

We thank the following individuals who, in addition to our Leadership Cabinet, provided input to McKinsey & Company in the development of this report:

Mahboob Akhter
Sam Anderson
Lisa Burke
Jeff Dankberg
Max Gardner
Dr. Manuel Gomez
Scott Green
Paul Heeschen
Doug Holte
Rusty Kennedy
Steve Kight
Dr. Alberto Manetta
Karen McGlinn
Greg Palmer
Bill Podlich
Safi Qureshey
Bill Thompson
Ginny Ueberroth

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE

The Nicholas Endowment for their generous support to help make ConnectOC a reality.
It's Our Orange County

The dream of a more vibrant, prosperous Orange County is within our reach. To achieve it, we must understand and confront the difficult realities faced by too many of our residents.

Through ConnectOC, we are making local knowledge and networks available as never before—to all who want to make a difference in Orange County. And we’re showing the promising approaches that are making an impact today. Already, we are making strides toward the dream we share for Orange County.

In the coming months, this information will help shape the ways we plan, act and give back as a community. No single individual or organization can do it alone. The Orange County Community Foundation invites you to learn, be inspired and get involved!