The Palmdale community is often characterized by being located in the most Northern region within Los Angeles County, which isolates it from resources in the Los Angeles basin, such as treatment centers and specialty healthcare. However, the distance has resulted in the community becoming more resourceful and utilizing what is available to the best of their ability. There is a strong presence of regional collaboration in the community, which allows organizations to participate in collaborations without having to travel long distances. Organizations have made an extra commitment to be active in the community.

Palmdale Community leadership in Palmdale is described as “strength-based,” “cohesive,” “growing,” “developing,” “improving” and “conservative.”

Why Palmdale

In 2008, Palmdale had a high percentage of births to mothers receiving late or no prenatal care. Palmdale also has a higher rate of births to teen mothers, and births with low birth weights when compared to other communities in Los Angeles County. In 2009, Palmdale reported a higher proportion of children and adults participating in a WIC program compared to Los Angeles County as a whole.

While there are many challenges in Palmdale, the community does benefit from having large areas of park and open space acreage and high numbers of schools per zero-to-five year olds. The community also benefited from high amounts of Los Angeles Universal Preschool expenditures in 2010 and has a relatively high rate of other zero-to-five year old philanthropic investments.
Community leaders in Palmdale demonstrate strong collaboration in order to coordinate the limited resources the community has available. Emerging issues are discovered through participation and networking in collaboratives, “where we disseminate information freely amongst each other.” Leaders discovered that “being so involved with the families definitely gives a lot of insight into what is needed.” County departments also host community forums with local organizations to “keep abreast of a lot of the needs of the community and resources.” Collaboratives are used for information sharing, referrals, and service coordination. These collaboratives are a means for providers to support each other. Residents also participate in community forums with the City of Palmdale and in school district meetings.

Organizations with a focus on young children have developed strong bonds throughout the Antelope Valley and have increased their presence in the region. Two issues that are a focal point for leaders within these organizations are safety and family security. For the first time in nearly two decades, a hospital will soon be opening in Palmdale, providing maternity services in the city. The High Desert region also contains many large green and open spaces, some designated as parks. This sprawling landscape presents many transportation issues to the population of the Antelope Valley, yet providers have worked to overcome these issues by developing mobile clinics to deliver services to outlying towns.

There is a very concrete sense of collaboration in Palmdale and engagement in all sectors. A faith-based network takes an active role in providing services to families, including child preventative care. The aerospace industry also provides resources to local programs, as well as offering employees opportunities to donate to the community. Schools are engaged through an educational outreach program (AV Partners for Health) focusing on healthy eating and exercise.

Palmdale benefits from investments made in the community that aim to address specific issues. First 5 LA has invested in the community through the Family Literacy, Healthy Births, Partnership for Families and School Readiness Initiatives. There are two Department of Children and Family services (DCFS) regional offices in the Antelope Valley with County-contracted mental health providers. Through the County’s Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP), nearly $300,000 was earmarked for innovative child abuse prevention. Additionally, a grant through the Supervisor’s office enabled a group home/foster care provider to establish transitional housing for aged-out foster youth and provide mental health services within the community.

*Unless otherwise noted, this profile was informed by community focus groups and interviews.