

This study was designed based on several important characteristics.

- It is multi-disciplinary, employing the tools of statistics, demography, geography, economics, political science, planning, sociology, anthropology and social media across the fields of education, public health, community planning/development, and social services/juvenile justice.
- It draws upon a diverse set of existing quantitative data from educational, health, labor and other sources that is complemented with qualitative data that includes both ethnographic methods and a variety of community-based participatory research methods such as youth-produced place-maps, photo surveys /digital stories, and youth auto-ethnographies.
- It is multi-scalar and multi-population, and, therefore, sensitive to spatial variations and distributions across the region.
- GIS mapping technologies were utilized to identify and highlight these distributions and any existing disparities.
- To ensure that the research was relevant to policymaking and advocacy efforts in the region, an advisory committee of regional leaders from the business, education, social service, political, and philanthropic sectors as well as nationally-renowned academics was formed to review and comment on the data collection, analysis and documentation throughout the process.

We bound our data collection within California's Capital Region, the nine counties (Sacramento, Yolo, Solano, Yuba, Sutter, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, and Amador) that lie within an approximate 45-minute drive from the State Capitol. This unit matches the definition of region that has been used by the [Sierra Health Foundation](#) for their REACH initiative and it also represents a recognized regional commute-shed. Our youth sample/participants include young people from ages 11-24 (ages 18-24 for voting and employment).



Study Questions

The Healthy Youth/Healthy Regions research design explores the following broad questions:

1. How is the health of the Capital Region's young people shaped by regional structures, systems and patterns?
2. How is the health of the Capital Region shaped by the health of its young people?
3. What Capital Region assets could be mobilized on behalf of healthy youth and a healthy region?
4. What steps could be taken to improve outcomes for youth and the region as a whole?

Research Process

Healthy Youth/Healthy Regions data collection and analysis progressed through six key steps (see appendix figure 1 for a diagram of our research conceptual framework and process):

- A key early decision made by the project team was to examine youth well-being as woven from five "strands" that are fundamental and inter-dependent components of youth transitions to adulthood: education, physical and mental health, work, civic participation, and the built environment
- Organization into three methodological teams (quantitative, qualitative and participatory action research).
- Collecting data within these methodological teams.
- Performing analysis within and across methodological teams and at multiple scales (e.g., individual, population, neighborhood, county, region).
- Development of topical Working Papers as products of cross-cutting methodologies and regional analysis.
- Utilization of Working Papers as an interpretive step towards development of the synthesis report.
- Design supporting products such as a [Youth Story Map](#) and a Healthy Youth/Healthy Regions data system to provide on-going access to and further development of data sets.