



San Luis Obispo County Integrated Waste Management Authority



Strategic Plan 2026–2030

Adopted May 13, 2026

Background

The San Luis Obispo County Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA) is a Joint Powers Authority formed in 1994 in response to AB 939 by the County of San Luis Obispo, the Cities, and Community Service Districts (CSDs). The IWMA is governed by a 9-member Board of Directors elected to represent each of our 20 member agencies. The IWMA works collaboratively with waste haulers and our member agencies to implement successful solid waste and hazardous waste recycling programs, serving a population of over 280,000.

This Five Year Strategic Plan presents the agency's Mission, Vision and Values, and details the goals and objectives the agency will pursue over the next five years.

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to make continuous progress towards reducing waste in San Luis Obispo County, to ensure our member agencies fully comply with state waste and recycling policy. We achieve our mission through practical, cost-effective programs, education, and technical support in collaboration with our member agencies.

Vision Statement

Reducing waste to preserve and enhance a safe and healthy environment in San Luis Obispo County.

Values

1. Community Education
2. Stewardship
3. Fiscal responsibility
4. Transparency
5. Collaboration & Empowerment
6. Innovation

Goals, Objectives, and Performance Indicators

Goal 1: Maintain Compliance

Proactively support all member agencies in achieving and maintaining compliance with state waste and recycling regulations, with an emphasis on prevention.

Objective 1.1: Regulatory Expertise – Serve as a clearinghouse for waste and recycling policies and regulations, and ensure all member agencies maintain compliance with applicable requirements, including reporting on behalf of the region. This includes California’s waste reduction mandate (AB 939, 1989) and organic waste reduction regulations (SB 1383, 2016).

Objective 1.2: New Regulatory Analysis – Track new laws and communicate regulatory changes to member agencies and the public through technical assistance and awareness campaigns. This includes new initiatives for reducing plastic packaging (SB 54, 2022) and diverting waste at restaurants and special events.

Objective 1.3: Proactively Avoid Penalties – Develop thoughtful, targeted outreach and education in collaboration with member agencies and our partners to inform affected residents and businesses of existing requirements and new regulations as they emerge, with the goal of avoiding fines, penalties or notices of noncompliance for our region.

Performance Indicators:

- *All member agencies in full compliance*
- *No Notices of Violation or formal enforcement actions issued*
- *Number of proactive compliance outreach activities conducted annually*

Goal 2: Plan for Regional Programs and Infrastructure

Ensure the region has ample and sustainable capacity to meet long-term waste diversion and disposal needs, through coordinated infrastructure planning and strategic implementation of waste reduction programs.

Objective 2.1: Coordinated Countywide Planning – Maintain and update the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan and related elements and reports in coordination with our member agencies and regional partners. Design the collective programs and infrastructure that will ensure sufficient waste disposal and diversion capacity is available now and into the future.

Objective 2.2: Hazardous Waste Management – Maintain an efficient and cost-effective network of facilities and programs that allows residents to properly dispose of household hazardous waste. Provide a convenient option for small businesses and public agencies to leverage this network to cost effectively dispose of small quantities of hazardous waste. Maximize opportunities to provide convenient retail take back options for these products, facilitate safe reuse of products, and encourage product manufacturers to actively participate in the collection and recycling of their products.

Objective 2.3: Enhanced Data Collection – Gather local and regional waste and recycling data to evaluate program effectiveness and support enhanced outreach and education, including regular waste characterization studies to better understand waste generation and disposal by sector and community.

Objective 2.4: Quality of Life – Provide coordination and support for infrastructure, programs and policies that prevent illegal dumping and litter and otherwise fosters the region’s high quality of life.

Objective 2.5: Leverage SB 54 Resources – Lead the region’s engagement in navigating SB 54 (2022, the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act) to maximize infrastructure and program funding allocated to our region, as the Producer Responsibility Organization implements the law to reduce plastic packaging and promote source reduction and reuse/refill for packaging.

Performance Indicators:

- *Residents and businesses in San Luis Obispo County have sufficient transfer, processing, and disposal capacity to meet expected demand over a 15-year planning period*
 - *Member agencies adopt consistent regional policies and programs*
 - *Active stakeholder participation in regional infrastructure planning efforts*
-

Goal 3: Provide Technical Support and Resources to Members

Strengthen member capacity through shared data, reporting tools, training, and equitable technical assistance tailored to agency size and resources.

Objective 3.1: Engagement with Member Agencies – Provide technical assistance and share timely information to all member agencies, on an as-needed basis as well as through regular meetings, for communication, collaboration, and improved decision making. This includes resources for major initiatives such as SB 1383 and SB 54.

Objective 3.2: Provide Regional Support – Identify the unique needs of each member agency, and tailor support and resources based on those needs.

Objective 3.3: Best Practices – Leverage local and regional data to provide examples and templates of best practices for programs and initiatives to support local implementation. This can include effective grant-funded projects to reduce waste, sample language for local hauler agreements, or standards for waste and recycling enclosures.

Objective 3.4: Implementation Resources – Establish a task force to develop recommendations for dedicated support and resources for member agencies to implement proven and effective programs and projects.

Performance Indicators:

- *Use of shared reporting platforms (e.g., SMART1383, RDRS)*
 - *Equitable distribution of technical assistance across member agencies*
 - *Member satisfaction with quality and usefulness of support*
-

Goal 4: Empower Through Outreach and Education

Deliver inclusive, multidisciplinary outreach and education that fosters a culture of stewardship by building public trust, increasing participation, reducing contamination, and increasing the resiliency of local waste systems.

Objective 4.1: Diversify Outreach – Use a variety of outreach channels to engage with a broader audience of SLO County residents and visitors by increasing their exposure to key messaging and connecting with their community priorities and values.

Objective 4.2: Marketing and Communications – Increase IWMA staff expertise in behavior-change marketing and seek out technical support to improve the efficacy of outreach campaigns and initiatives, particularly with hard-to-reach customers such as visitors, students, part-time residents and multi-family residents.

Objective 4.3: Engage with TK-12 Schools – Establish regular communication and collaboration channels between the IWMA and TK-12 schools to support district-level diversion efforts.

Objective 4.4: Engage with Higher Education – Increase communication and collaboration with higher education institutions to support research, economic and workforce development, and consistent outreach messaging.

Objective 4.5: Branding – Establish an IWMA brand for ease of communication, and implement an updated brand toolkit to increase recognition and awareness among SLO County residents and visitors.

Performance Indicators:

- *Reduction in contamination rates by sector*
- *Engagement with media through outreach campaigns*
- *Expanded partnerships with schools, higher education, and multifamily housing*
- *Participation in tours, events, community cleanups and other public-facing activities*

Goal 5: Maximize Grant Funding to Our Region

Prioritize, secure and successfully administer targeted and regional funding opportunities that equitably benefit all member agencies and align with our mission.

Objective 5.1: Maximize Non-Competitive Grants – Ensure IWMA and member agencies receive and make full use of all non-competitive grant funds available to our region.

Objective 5.2: Target Discretionary Grants – Identify the most well-aligned competitive grants to pursue that would advance IWMA’s mission and support our member agencies while minimizing commitments that may detract from the benefits of a grant program.

Objective 5.3: Protect Local Resources – Identify and secure other public and private funding sources that further advance our mission and reinforce fiscal responsibility.

Performance Indicators:

- *Total grant funds secured annually*
- *Number of agencies benefiting from IWMA-administered projects*
- *Local match or administrative cost/benefit*