POPULATION BRIEF
Trends in the Western U.S.
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California

With 37,253,956 residents, California is the nation's most populous state. More than one-half (51.8 percent) of the residents of the 13 states in the western region live in California. Of the 13 counties in the western region with more than one million residents in 2010, nine of them are in California. California has also experienced substantial population growth in recent years. In the decade from 2000 to 2010, the population of California increased by 3.4 million or 10 percent. In the 30 years from 1980 to 2010, California gained 13.6 million residents, a 57 percent boost.

The data in Table 1 show that population trends varied extensively by county in California. In nine California counties, the population more than doubled between 1980 and 2010. The most rapid rate of increase was in Riverside County where the population more than tripled, growing from 663,166 in 1980 to 2,189,641 in 2010. Riverside County was also the fastest growing county in the state by percent in the first decade of the 21st century as it gained 644,254 residents or 41.7 percent. In the three decades from 1980 to 2010, the county with the greatest numerical gain was Los Angeles, which had a population increase of over 2.3 million. Four other counties (Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego) also gained more than a million residents during these three decades. The largest numerical increase from 2000 to 2010 was in Riverside County. At the opposite extreme, three nonmetropolitan counties (Alpine, Inyo and Sierra) had a 30-year population growth rate of less than 10 percent, and the population of Sierra County declined from 2000 to 2010.

Figure 1 presents data showing the distribution of the California population. This graph shows that over one-half of the state's residents (57.4 percent in 2010) lived in seven Southern California metropolitan counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura). An additional 20 percent lived a highly urbanized 11 county region in Northern California (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma). Another 20 percent lived in the states 19 other metropolitan counties, with the remaining 2.3 percent living in the 21 nonmetropolitan counties. Figure 2 shows the percent population change for these four geographical groupings. It is obvious that the most rapid growth was in the state's other metropolitan counties, which grew by 17.9 percent from 2000 to 2010 and 86.4 percent from 1980 to 2010. In comparison, from 1980 to 2010 the Southern California metropolitan counties increased by 56.7 percent, the nonmetropolitan counties by 48.4 percent and the Northern California metropolitan counties by 38.5 percent.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of the California Population

California's population is very racially and ethnically diverse. In 2010, 40.1 percent of the residents were White, making California one of the four states in the nation where a majority of the population is minority (Table 2). Figure 3 shows that the minority population has increased steadily and rapidly from 33.4 percent in 1980 to 59.9 percent in 2010. Numerically, the largest minority group is Hispanics, which now comprise 37.6 percent of the state's population. California also has substantial Asian and Black populations. As a result of population dynamics, there is little doubt that the proportion of the population that is minority will continue to grow. For example, the 2010 Census found that there were 4.8 million Hispanics age 17 and younger compared to 2.5 million Whites in this same age group. The younger Hispanic population is likely to have a much higher fertility rate in coming years than the older White population.

The racial composition of the population varies widely by county. In eight counties, more than 80 percent of the residents are White, while 27 counties are majority minority. In Imperial County, 13.7 percent of the residents are White while 80.4 percent are Hispanic. In eight additional counties, more than one-half of the residents are Hispanic. Asians comprise a substantial proportion of the population in Santa Clara (32.0 percent), Alameda (26.1 percent) and San Mateo (24.8 percent) Counties.

Educational Attainment in California

Over 80 percent of adults (age 25 and older) in California have a high school degree, while 29.7 are college graduates. California has a lower proportion of high school graduates than any other state in the western region. On the other hand, only two western states have a higher proportion of college graduates than California. Educational attainment levels vary widely across the state. More than 90 percent of adults are high school graduates in nine California counties, while in four counties (Colusa, Imperial, Merced and Tulare) less than 70 percent of adults are high school graduates. In San Francisco and Marin Counties, more than one-half of adults are college graduates. In comparison, the percent of college graduates is 11.5 percent in Kings and Lassen Counties and 11.9 percent in Imperial County.

Educational attainment varies widely for different segments of the California population. Especially significant are differences by race/ethnicity. While 95.2 percent of White adults are high school graduates, this proportion is only 61.9 percent for Hispanics (Figure 4). Similarly, 48.6 percent of Asian and 39.7 percent of White adults have a college degree, compared to 11.1 percent of Hispanics. Figure 5 shows that metro residents (32.6 percent) are more likely to be college graduates than nonmetro residents (20.5 percent).

Income and Poverty in California

The median household income in California in 2009 was $58,925 (Table 3). In the 13 states of the western region, median household incomes were higher in only two states (Alaska and Hawaii) than California. Incomes varied widely by county. Median household incomes were $86,658 in Marin County, $84,990 in Santa Clara County and $84,678 in San Mateo County. In contrast, median household incomes were less than $40,000 in Del Norte, Humboldt, Imperial, Lake, Merced, Modoc, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, and Tulare Counties. Table 3 also shows that

14.2 percent of the residents of California were living in poverty. Five western states had a higher proportion of their residents living in poverty than California. Again, there were substantial variations in poverty rates by county. Only 7.2 percent of Placer and 7.3 percent of Marin County residents were living in poverty compared to 24.6 percent of Merced County residents. Table 3 also shows that the median value of owner-occupied homes in California was $479,200. This was much higher than in any western state except Hawaii. These values ranged from $880,000 in Marin County to $160,100 in Modoc County.

Incomes and poverty rates also varied widely for people with different characteristics. Figure 6A shows that while household incomes averaged $66,066 for Whites and $68,546 for Asians, they were only $45,786 for Blacks, $42,588 for Hispanics and $41,543 for Native Americans. Similarly, Figure 6B shows that while only 6.6 percent of Whites were living in poverty, more than 19 percent of Blacks and Native Americans were in poverty. Figures 7A and 7B shows that incomes were higher and poverty rates lower for metro as opposed to nonmetro residents.

Figure 1. Distribution of California Population, 1980-2010

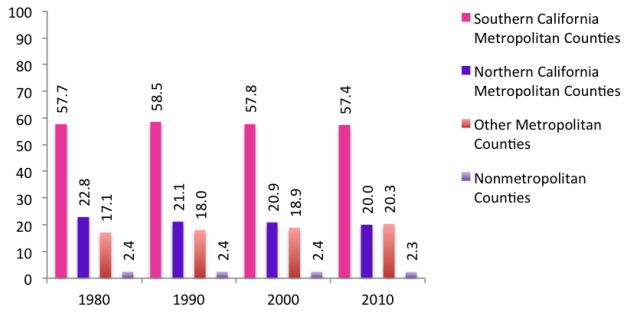


Figure 2. Percent Population Change in California, 1980-2010

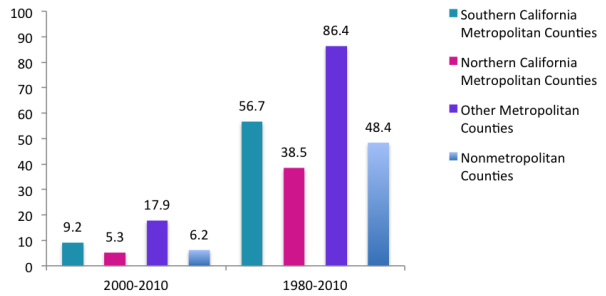


Figure 3. Racial/Ethnic Composition of the California Population (Percent), 1980-2010

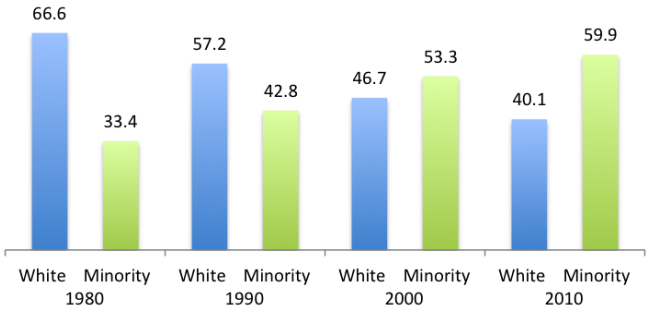


Figure 4. Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity in California, 2009

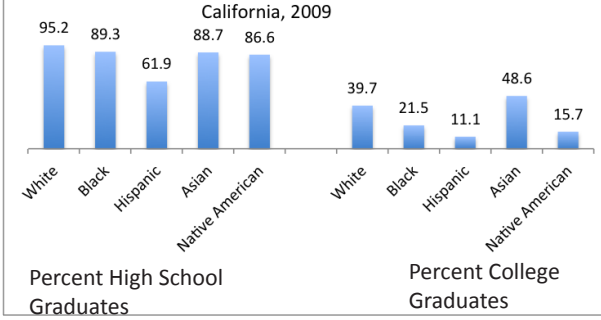
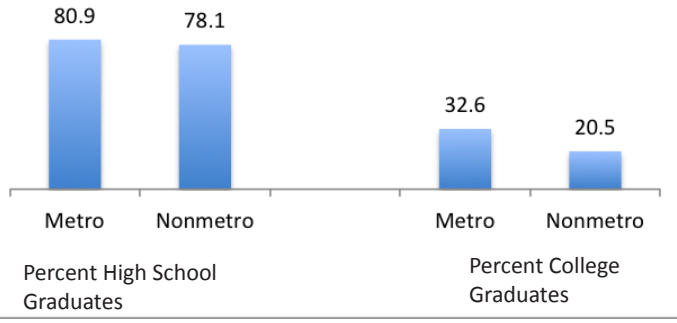
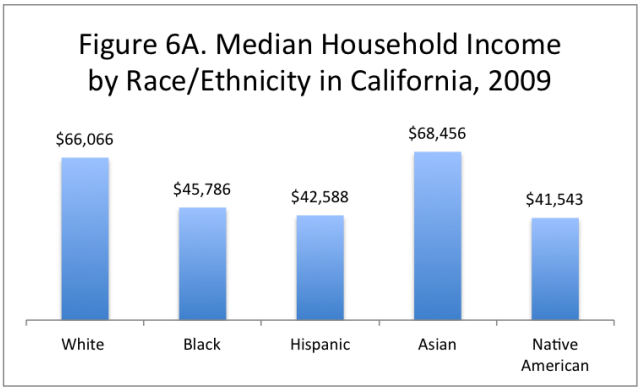


Figure 5. Educational Attainment by Residence in California, 2009





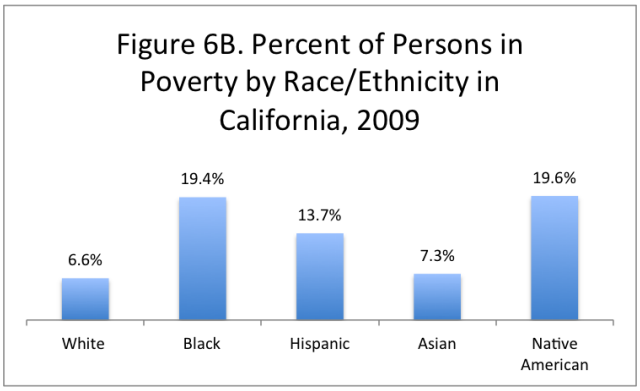
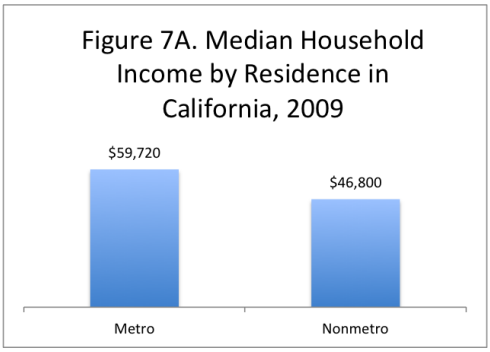


Table 1. Population Change in California Counties, 1980-2010

County	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 2000 - 2010 Total	Change 2000 - 2010 Percent	Change 1980 - 2010 Total	Change 1980 - 2010 Percent
Alameda	1,105,379	1,279,182	1,443,741	1,510,271	66,530	4.6	404,892	36.6
Alpine	1,097	1,113	1,208	1,175	-33	-2.7	78	7.1
Amador	19,314	30,039	35,100	38,091	2,991	8.5	18,777	97.2
Butte	143,851	182,120	203,171	220,000	16,829	8.3	76,149	52.9
Calaveras	20,710	31,998	40,554	45,578	5,024	12.4	24,868	120.1
Colusa	12,791	16,275	18,804	21,419	2,615	13.9	8,628	67.5
Contra Costa	656,380	803,732	948,816	1,049,025	100,209	10.6	392,645	59.8
Del Norte	18,217	23,460	27,507	28,610	1,103	4.0	10,393	57.1
El Dorado	85,812	125,995	156,299	181,058	24,759	15.8	95,246	111.0
Fresno	514,621	667,490	799,407	930,450	131,043	16.4	415,829	80.8
Glenn	21,350	24,798	26,453	28,122	1,669	6.3	6,772	31.7
Humboldt	108,514	119,118	126,518	134,623	8,105	6.4	26,109	24.1
Imperial	92,110	109,303	142,361	174,528	32,167	22.6	82,418	89.5
Inyo	17,895	18,281	17,945	18,546	601	3.3	651	3.6
Kern	403,089	543,477	661,645	839,631	177,986	26.9	436,542	108.3
Kings	73,738	101,469	129,461	152,982	23,521	18.2	79,244	107.5
Lake	36,366	50,631	58,309	64,665	6,356	10.9	28,299	77.8
Lassen	21,661	27,598	33,828	34,895	1,067	3.2	13,234	61.1
Los Angeles	7,477,503	8,863,164	9,519,338	9,818,605	299,267	3.1	2,341,102	31.3
Madera	63,116	88,090	123,109	150,865	27,756	22.5	87,749	139.0
Marin	222,568	230,096	247,289	252,409	5,120	2.1	29,841	13.4
Mariposa	11,108	14,302	17,130	18,251	1,121	6.5	7,143	64.3
Mendocino	66,738	80,345	86,265	87,841	1,576	1.8	21,103	31.6
Merced	134,560	178,403	210,554	255,793	45,239	21.5	121,233	90.1
Modoc	8,610	9,678	9,449	9,686	237	2.5	1,076	12.5
Mono	8,577	9,956	12,853	14,202	1,349	10.5	5,625	65.6
Monterey	290,444	355,660	401,762	415,057	13,295	3.3	124,613	42.9
Napa	99,199	110,765	124,279	136,484	12,205	9.8	37,285	37.6
Nevada	51,645	78,510	92,033	98,764	6,731	7.3	47,119	91.2
Orange	1,932,709	2,410,556	2,846,289	3,010,232	163,943	5.8	1,077,523	55.8
Placer	117,247	172,796	248,399	348,432	100,033	40.3	231,185	197.2
Plumas	17,340	19,739	20,824	20,007	-817	-3.9	2,667	15.4
Riverside	663,166	1,170,413	1,545,387	2,189,641	644,254	41.7	1,526,475	230.2
Sacramento	783,381	1,041,219	1,223,499	1,418,788	195,289	16.0	635,407	81.1
San Benito	25,005	36,697	53,234	55,269	2,035	3.8	30,264	121.0
San Bernardino	895,016	1,418,380	1,709,434	2,035,210	325,776	19.1	1,140,194	127.4
San Diego	1,861,846	2,498,016	2,813,833	3,095,313	281,480	10.0	1,233,467	66.2
San Francisco	678,974	723,959	776,733	805,235	28,502	3.7	126,261	18.6
San Joaquin	347,342	480,628	563,598	685,306	121,708	21.6	337,964	97.3
San Luis Obispo	155,435	217,162	246,681	269,637	22,956	9.3	114,202	73.5
San Mateo	587,329	649,623	707,161	718,451	11,290	1.6	131,122	22.3
Santa Barbara	298,694	369,608	399,347	423,895	24,548	6.1	125,201	41.9
Santa Clara	1,295,071	1,497,577	1,682,585	1,781,642	99,057	5.9	486,571	37.6
Santa Cruz	188,141	229,734	255,602	262,382	6,780	2.7	74,241	39.5
Shasta	115,715	147,036	163,256	177,223	13,967	8.6	61,508	53.2
Sierra	3,073	3,318	3,555	3,240	-315	-8.9	167	5.4
Siskiyou	39,732	43,531	44,301	44,900	599	1.4	5,168	13.0
Solano	235,203	340,421	394,542	413,344	18,802	4.8	178,141	75.7
Sonoma	299,681	388,222	458,614	483,878	25,264	5.5	184,197	61.5
Stanislaus	265,900	370,522	446,997	514,453	67,456	15.1	248,553	93.5
Sutter	52,246	64,415	78,930	94,737	15,807	20.0	42,491	81.3
Tehama	38,888	49,625	56,039	63,463	7,424	13.2	24,575	63.2
Trinity	11,858	13,063	13,022	13,786	764	5.9	1,928	16.3
Tulare	245,738	311,921	368,021	442,179	74,158	20.2	196,441	79.9
Tuolumne	33,928	48,456	54,501	55,365	864	1.6	21,437	63.2
Ventura	529,174	669,016	753,197	823,318	70,121	9.3	294,144	55.6
Yolo	113,374	141,092	168,660	200,849	32,189	19.1	87,475	77.2
Yuba	49,733	58,228	60,219	72,155	11,936	19.8	22,422	45.1
State Total	23,667,902	29,760,021	33,871,648	37,253,956	3,382,308	10.0	13,586,054	57.4

Table 2. Percentage of Population by Race/Ethnicity for California Counties, 2010

County	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American
Alameda	34.1	12.6	22.5	26.1	0.6
Alpine	72.5	0.0	7.1	0.6	20.4
Amador	79.6	2.5	12.5	1.1	1.8
Butte	75.2	1.6	14.1	4.1	2.0
Calaveras	83.5	0.8	10.3	1.3	1.5
Colusa	39.8	0.9	55.1	1.3	2.0
Contra Costa	47.8	9.3	24.4	14.4	0.6
Del Norte	64.7	3.5	17.8	3.4	7.8
El Dorado	79.9	0.8	12.1	3.5	1.1
Fresno	32.7	5.3	50.3	9.6	1.7
Glenn	55.9	0.8	37.5	2.6	2.2
Humboldt	77.2	1.1	9.8	2.2	5.7
Imperial	13.7	3.3	80.4	1.6	1.8
Inyo	66.3	0.6	19.4	1.3	11.4
Kern	38.6	5.8	49.2	4.2	1.5
Kings	35.2	7.2	50.9	3.7	1.7
Lake	74.1	1.9	17.1	1.1	3.2
Lassen	66.7	8.1	17.5	1.0	3.5
Los Angeles	27.8	8.7	47.7	13.7	0.7
Madera	38.0	3.7	53.7	1.9	2.7
Marin	72.8	2.8	15.5	5.5	0.6
Mariposa	83.2	0.8	9.2	1.1	2.9
Mendocino	68.6	0.7	22.2	1.7	4.9
Merced	31.9	3.9	54.9	7.4	1.4
Modoc	79.0	0.8	13.9	0.8	3.8
Mono	68.2	0.3	26.5	1.4	2.1
Monterey	32.9	3.1	55.4	6.1	1.3
Napa	56.4	2.0	32.2	6.8	0.8
Nevada	86.5	0.4	8.5	1.2	1.1
Orange	44.1	1.7	33.7	17.9	0.6
Placer	76.1	1.4	12.8	5.9	0.9
Plumas	85.0	1.0	8.0	0.7	2.7
Riverside	39.7	6.4	45.5	6.0	1.1
Sacramento	48.4	10.4	21.6	14.3	1.0
San Benito	38.3	0.9	56.4	2.6	1.6
San Bernardino	33.3	8.9	49.2	6.3	1.1
San Diego	48.5	5.1	32.0	10.9	0.9
San Francisco	41.9	6.1	15.1	33.3	0.5
San Joaquin	35.9	7.6	38.9	14.4	1.1
San Luis Obispo	71.1	2.1	20.8	3.2	0.9
San Mateo	42.3	2.8	25.4	24.8	0.5
Santa Barbara	47.9	2.0	42.9	4.9	1.3
Santa Clara	35.2	2.6	26.9	32.0	0.7
Santa Cruz	59.6	1.1	32.0	4.2	0.9
Shasta	82.4	0.9	8.4	2.5	2.8
Sierra	88.1	0.2	8.3	0.4	1.4
Siskiyou	79.5	1.3	10.3	1.2	4.0
Solano	40.8	14.7	24.0	14.6	0.8
Sonoma	66.1	1.6	24.9	3.8	1.3
Stanislaus	46.7	2.9	41.9	5.1	1.1
Sutter	50.4	2.0	28.8	14.4	1.4
Tehama	71.9	0.6	21.9	1.0	2.6
Trinity	83.5	0.4	7.0	0.7	4.8
Tulare	32.6	1.6	60.6	3.4	1.6
Tuolumne	81.9	2.1	10.7	1.0	1.9
Ventura	48.7	1.8	40.3	6.7	1.0
Yolo	49.9	2.6	30.3	13.0	1.1
Yuba	58.8	3.3	25.0	6.7	2.3
State Total	40.1	6.2	37.6	13.0	1.0



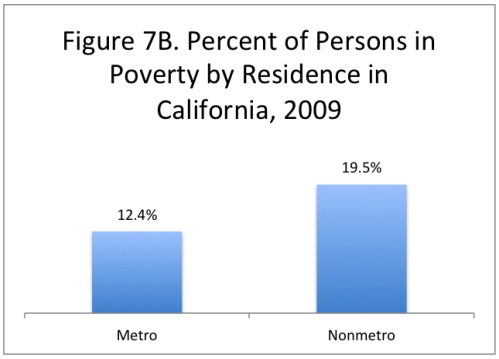


Table 3. Economic Conditions and Education for California Counties, 2009

County	Median Household Income	Percent of Persons in Poverty	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Homes	Percent of Persons 25+ with High School Degree	Percent of Persons 25+ with College Degree
Alameda	$68,258	10.8	$606,700	85.7	39.9
Alpine	$45,391	17.3	$443,300	91.2	26.8
Amador	$54,461	11.3	$354,500	87.3	19.5
Butte	$41,196	18.5	$273,600	85.9	24.8
Calaveras	$51,564	11.3	$370,100	89.4	19.3
Colusa	$47,472	13.4	$290,800	68.0	12.9
Contra Costa	$75,084	9.5	$574,700	88.1	37.7
Del Norte	$38,252	23.1	$246,600	79.7	15.0
El Dorado	$68,778	7.6	$471,200	92.4	31.1
Fresno	$45,219	21.5	$268,800	72.6	19.4
Glenn	$41,904	15.8	$244,800	72.7	14.5
Humboldt	$35,985	19.0	$327,900	89.9	26.9
Imperial	$37,846	22.8	$205,800	63.4	11.9
Inyo	$44,090	12.5	$303,500	89.2	21.2
Kern	$46,938	22.2	$226,800	71.4	14.6
Kings	$44,102	19.5	$221,300	70.5	11.5
Lake	$36,895	22.1	$295,100	86.3	16.1
Lassen	$46,377	18.2	$225,200	79.9	11.5
Los Angeles	$54,375	16.0	$521,900	75.5	28.4
Madera	$42,769	20.6	$297,000	68.3	12.9
Marin	$86,658	7.3	$880,000	92.2	53.9
Mariposa	$42,775	13.5	$287,000	90.0	18.1
Mendocino	$41,488	17.5	$421,500	83.4	23.3
Merced	$39,922	24.6	$282,900	67.0	12.7
Modoc	$34,290	19.0	$160,100	85.5	14.4
Mono	$53,973	11.7	$464,400	89.6	29.5
Monterey	$57,647	17.2	$608,800	70.9	23.6
Napa	$66,970	8.6	$601,800	82.8	30.3
Nevada	$57,250	10.1	$457,600	93.4	32.4
Orange	$71,735	10.7	$625,700	83.0	35.2
Placer	$70,751	7.2	$457,100	92.5	33.5
Plumas	$42,684	12.3	$284,900	90.4	20.8
Riverside	$55,151	13.9	$355,800	79.0	20.4
Sacramento	$52,502	15.3	$346,900	85.0	27.9
San Benito	$61,281	13.9	$594,900	72.8	17.7
San Bernardino	$52,137	17.0	$338,300	77.3	18.2
San Diego	$60,103	12.5	$516,400	85.2	34.0
San Francisco	$70,247	11.7	$781,500	85.6	51.1
San Joaquin	$52,201	15.7	$355,000	76.0	17.1
San Luis Obispo	$55,638	13.2	$534,300	87.9	30.0
San Mateo	$84,678	7.6	$786,500	88.4	43.6
Santa Barbara	$58,555	15.0	$620,800	80.8	31.3
Santa Clara	$84,990	9.1	$704,200	85.8	43.9
Santa Cruz	$60,816	13.9	$675,300	85.2	38.7
Shasta	$42,552	15.5	$269,800	87.4	19.4
Sierra	$41,788	13.1	$346,400	90.6	20.9
Siskiyou	$39,218	16.1	$236,800	87.9	22.0
Solano	$65,079	10.7	$430,700	85.5	23.9
Sonoma	$61,985	9.5	$564,500	86.1	31.1
Stanislaus	$48,550	17.0	$321,700	75.3	16.1
Sutter	$48,073	14.8	$279,800	79.2	18.2
Tehama	$38,179	18.9	$227,900	79.7	13.0
Trinity	$33,546	18.2	$255,200	90.5	18.1
Tulare	$39,876	23.0	$217,500	67.2	12.9
Tuolumne	$48,027	14.2	$339,300	86.8	17.7
Ventura	$71,246	10.5	$593,200	82.3	30.3
Yolo	$56,120	15.7	$413,900	84.0	36.8
Yuba	$40,947	19.5	$242,900	77.6	12.9
State Total	$58,925	14.2	$479,200	80.5	29.7

WESTERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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About the WRDC

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers competitively funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities. Each of the four Centers link the research and extension capacity of regional land-grant universities with local decision-makers to enhance rural prosperity, create thriving communities, and support a sustainable and competitive agricultural system.

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