



# California's Population

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## One in eight US residents lives in California.

- ▶ With just over 39 million people (according to July 2023 Department of Finance estimates), California is the nation's most populous state—its population is much larger than that of second-place Texas (31 million) and third-place Florida (23 million).
- ▶ The California Department of Finance currently projects that the state's population will reach 40.2 million in 2044, and then decline to 39.6 million by 2060.

## California's population growth has slowed dramatically in the 21st century.

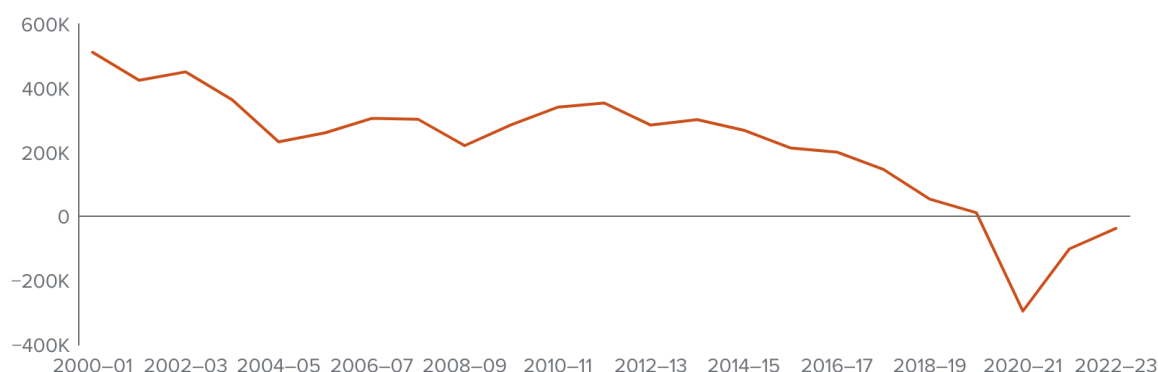
- ▶ Since 2000, California has experienced its slowest rates of growth ever recorded.
- ▶ From 2010 to 2020, California's population grew by 5.8% (or 2.4 million), according to decennial census counts. This was slower than the rate of growth in the rest of the nation (6.8%), leading to the loss of a seat in the US House of Representatives for the first time in California's history.
- ▶ These recent rates are dramatically lower than the growth throughout the 20th century. From 1900 to 1950, California's population rose from under 2 million to 10 million. It more than tripled in the last half of the century, reaching 34 million by 2000, and its growth rate was much higher than that of the rest of the United States.

## California's population declined during the pandemic.

- ▶ California lost 433,000 people between July 2020 and July 2023. Most of the loss occurred during the first year of the pandemic and was driven by a sharp rise in [residents moving to other states](#). But [fewer births](#), [higher deaths](#), and [lower international migration](#) also played a role.
- ▶ The number of residents moving to other states reached its highest level ever during the pandemic, and international migration fell to its lowest level in decades (according to Department of Finance estimates). However, recent estimates show that net immigration to California increased substantially from July 2022 through July 2023, with a net gain of 116,000 compared to a net loss of 22,000 from April 2020 to July 2021.
- ▶ Birth rates have hit record lows, after declining over several decades. Most of the increase in deaths was due to COVID-19, according to the CDC. Birth and death trends are similar in the rest of the nation.
- ▶ The population declines are widespread, with 47 of the state's 58 counties experiencing losses from July 2020 to July 2023.

## California's population has declined in recent years

Annual population change



Source: California Department of Finance Population Estimates (E-7).

Note: July to July changes.

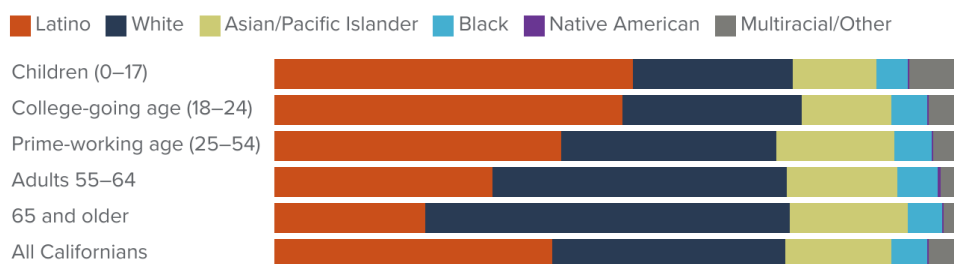
## California's population has become increasingly diverse.

- ▶ No race or ethnic group constitutes a majority of California's population: 40% of Californians are Latino, 35% are white, 15% are Asian American or Pacific Islander, 5% are Black, 4% are multiracial, and fewer than 1% are Native American or Alaska Natives, according to the 2022 American Community Survey. Only five other states (Hawaii, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, and Maryland) have similarly diverse populations.
- ▶ More than half of young Californians (52% of those 24 and under) are Latino. Conversely, more than half of those 65 and older are white (53%).

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## Latinos make up more than half of younger Californians

Percent of population by age group



Source: 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

## Over 10 million Californians are immigrants.

- ▶ According to the 2022 American Community Survey, [27% of Californians are foreign born](#)—more than twice the share in the rest of the nation (12%). Several other states have relatively high shares: New Jersey (24%), New York (23%), and Florida (22%).
- ▶ More than half (54%) of [foreign-born Californians](#) are naturalized US citizens, compared to 39% in 2000.
- ▶ Most other immigrants are legal permanent residents.

## California is aging, but it is young compared to the rest of the country.

- ▶ In 2022, 15.8% of the state's population was 65 or older. The California Department of Finance projects that about one in four (23.1%) Californians will be 65 or older by 2040.
- ▶ California's population is the eleventh-youngest in the nation (Utah's population is the youngest). The median age in California is 37.9, compared to 38.8 nationwide, according to the 2022 American Community Survey.

## Population loss has political consequences.

- ▶ California's lost congressional seat was unprecedented, but this outcome could have been worse.
- ▶ Updated population estimates suggest that if congressional districts had been allocated more recently, the state might have [lost three seats instead of one](#).
- ▶ In addition, sluggish or negative population growth in some parts of the state—including Los Angeles County and most rural areas—has reduced representation for those places compared to faster-growing areas like the Inland Empire or the Sacramento metropolitan area.
- ▶ While most migration out of California is driven by personal and financial factors, the PPIC Statewide Survey finds that people who lean conservative are [more likely to express a desire to leave the state](#). Even a modest partisan imbalance in out-migration could gradually shift California's population leftward.

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Sources: California Department of Finance Population Estimates and Population Projections; US Census Bureau Population Estimates; Decennial Censuses; 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).