

The Future of Higher Education Enrollment in California

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An uncertain time in higher education

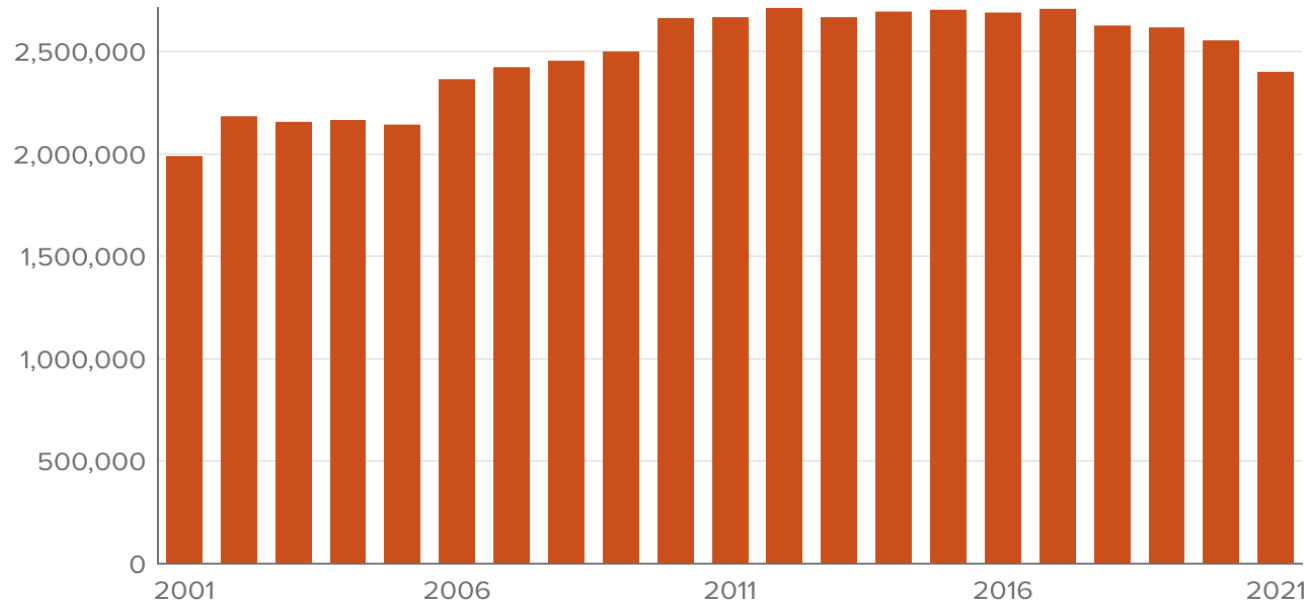
- Unprecedented slowdown in California's population growth
- Declines in enrollment at some colleges
- Questions about the value of a college degree

Goals of this research

- Develop new projections of undergraduate enrollment and completion to 2040 overall and across major sectors:
 - California Community Colleges (CCC)
 - California State University (CSU)
 - University of California (UC)
 - Private nonprofit colleges
- Explain the drivers of projected enrollment trends
- Assess the achievability of the state's degree attainment goal
 - 40% of 25-to-64-year-olds holding bachelor's degrees by 2030

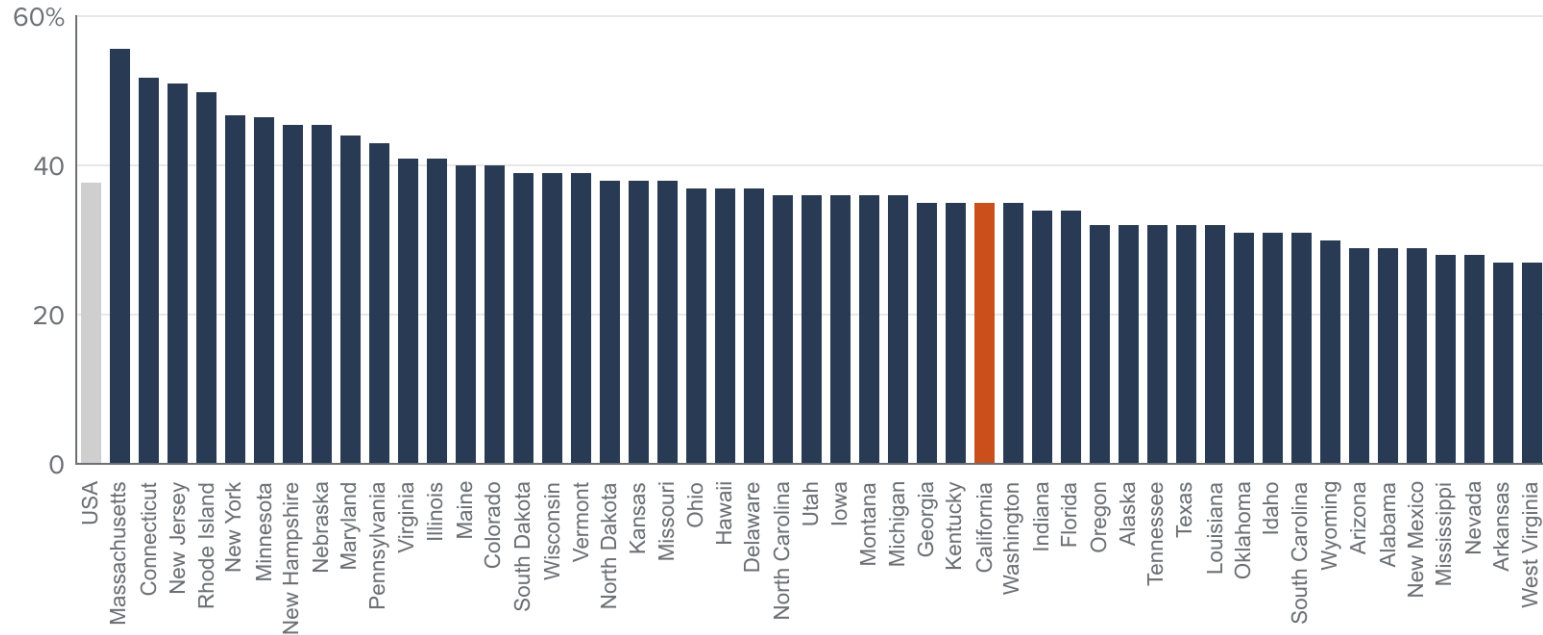
The number of undergraduates in California has declined in recent years

Number of undergraduates in California



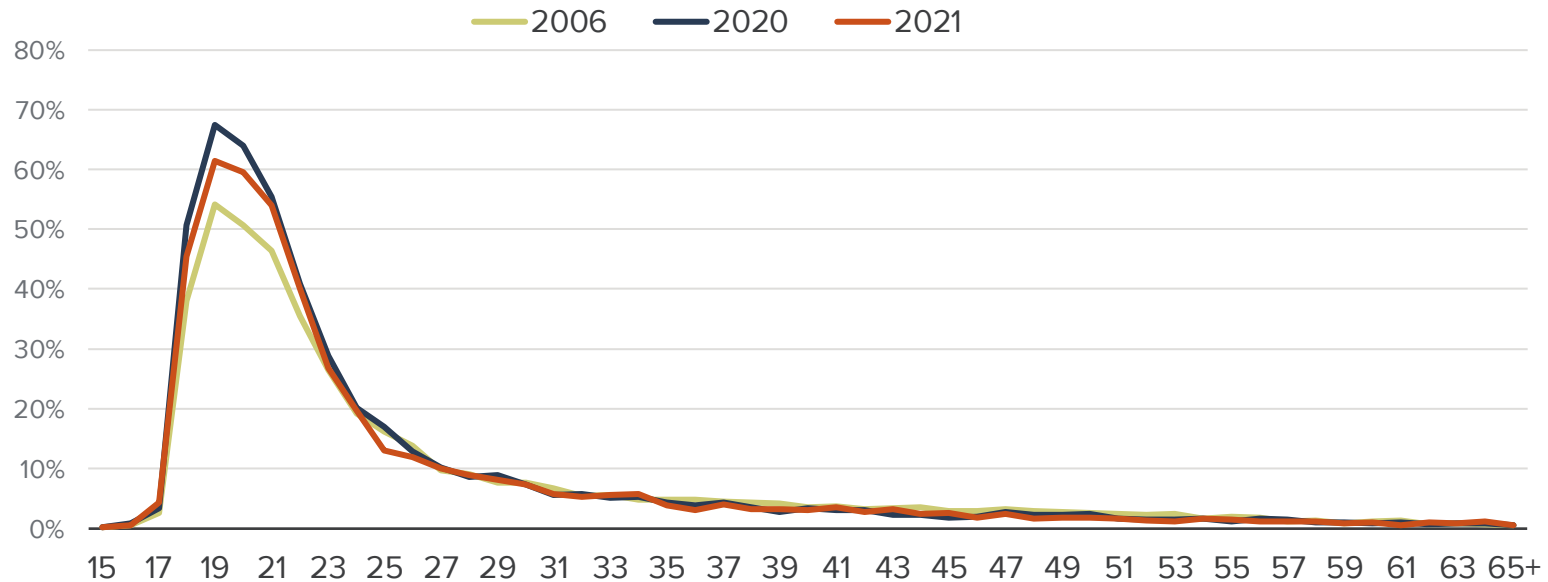
California has a lot of room for improvement in degree attainment

Share of 25-to-29-year-olds with a bachelor's degree, by state of birth, CA ranks 31st



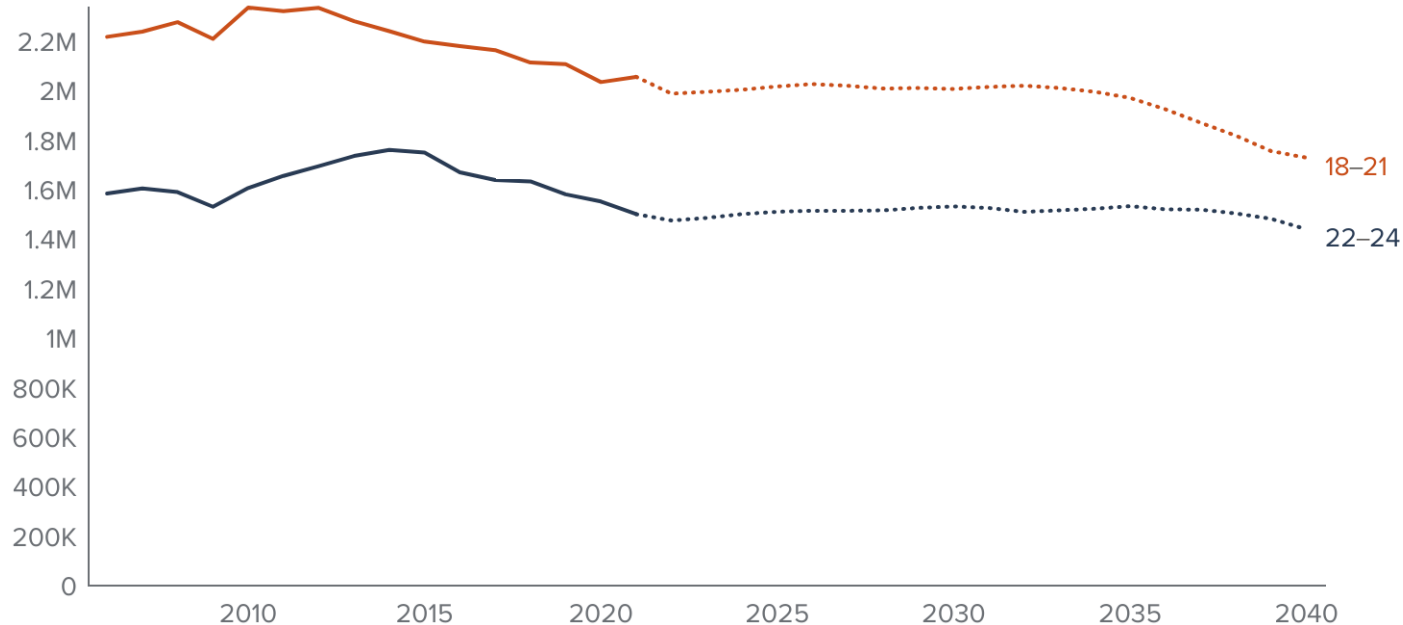
The vast majority of undergraduates are young adults

College participation rate by age and year (undergraduates, CA ACS data)

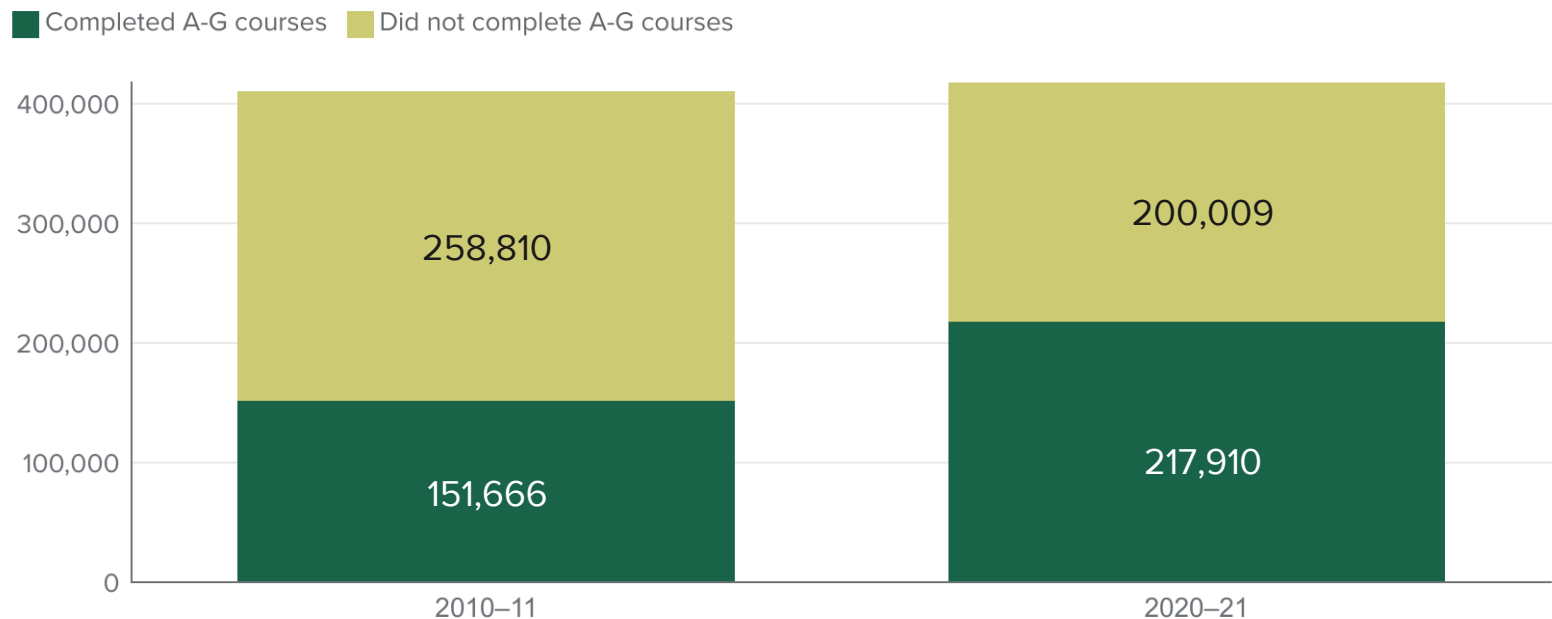


Population projections suggest little or no growth in key college-going age groups

Population of key age groups

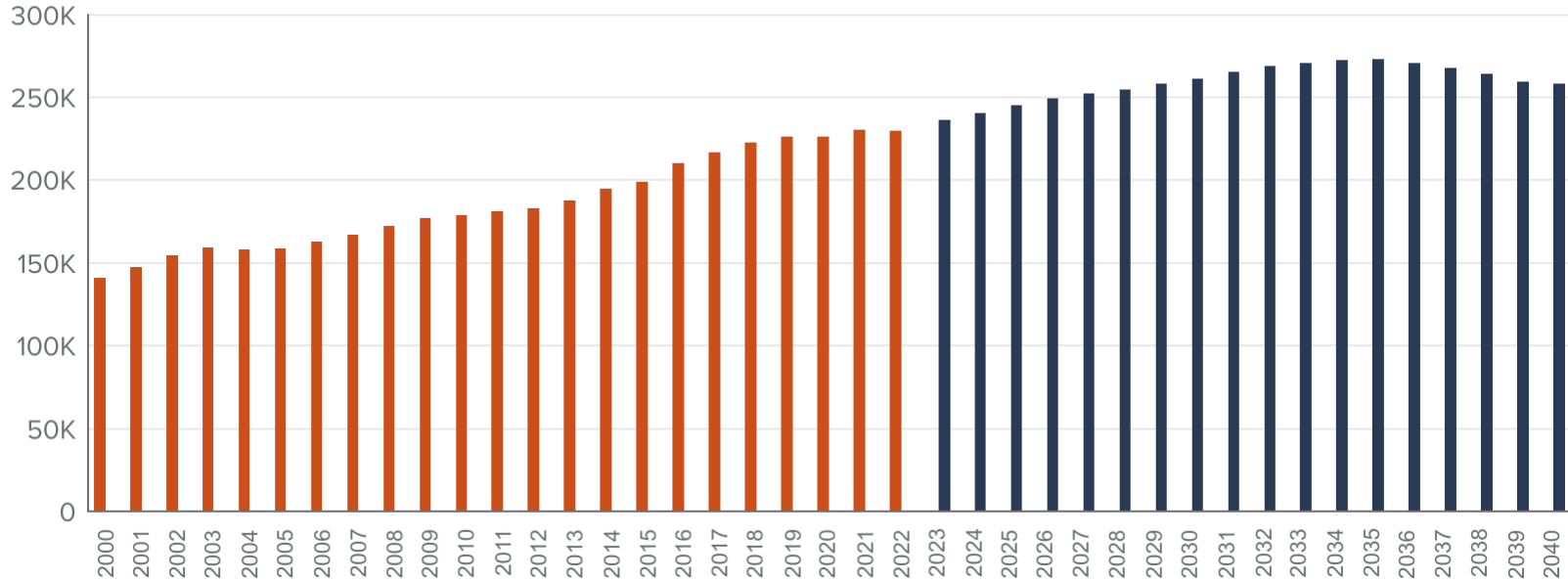


College readiness has been growing among California's high school graduates



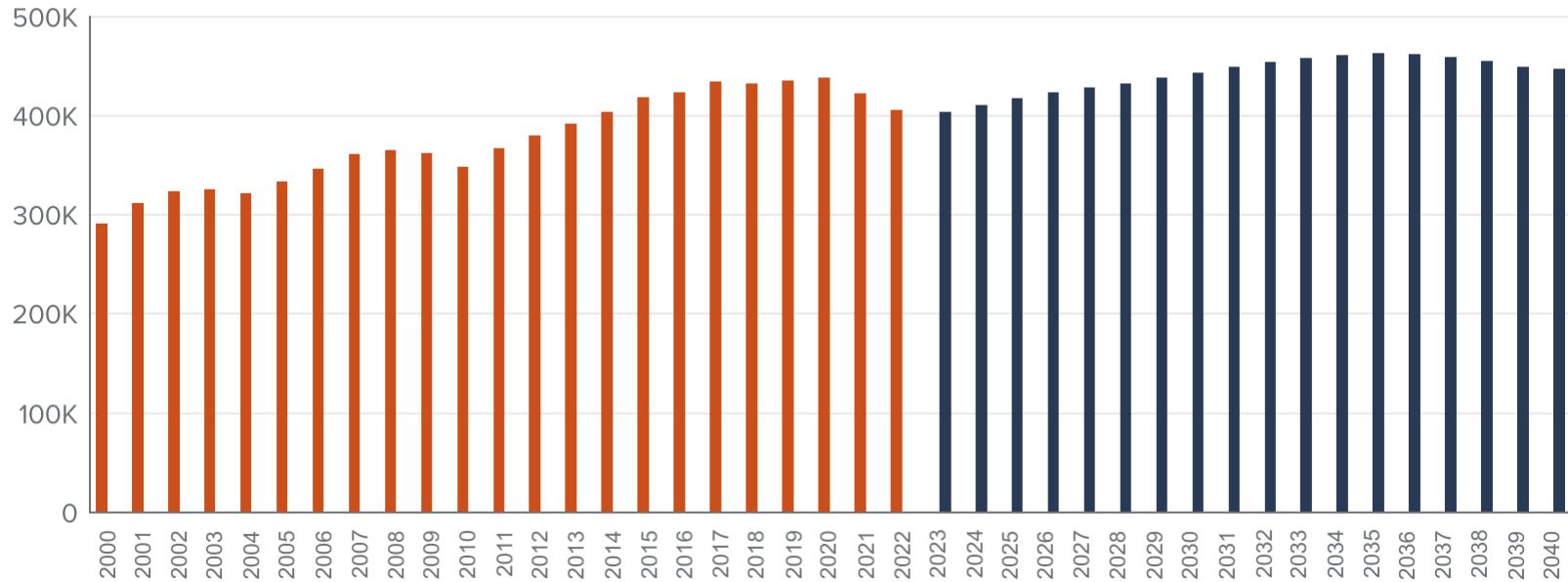
Undergraduate enrollment at UC will continue to grow

Historic Projected



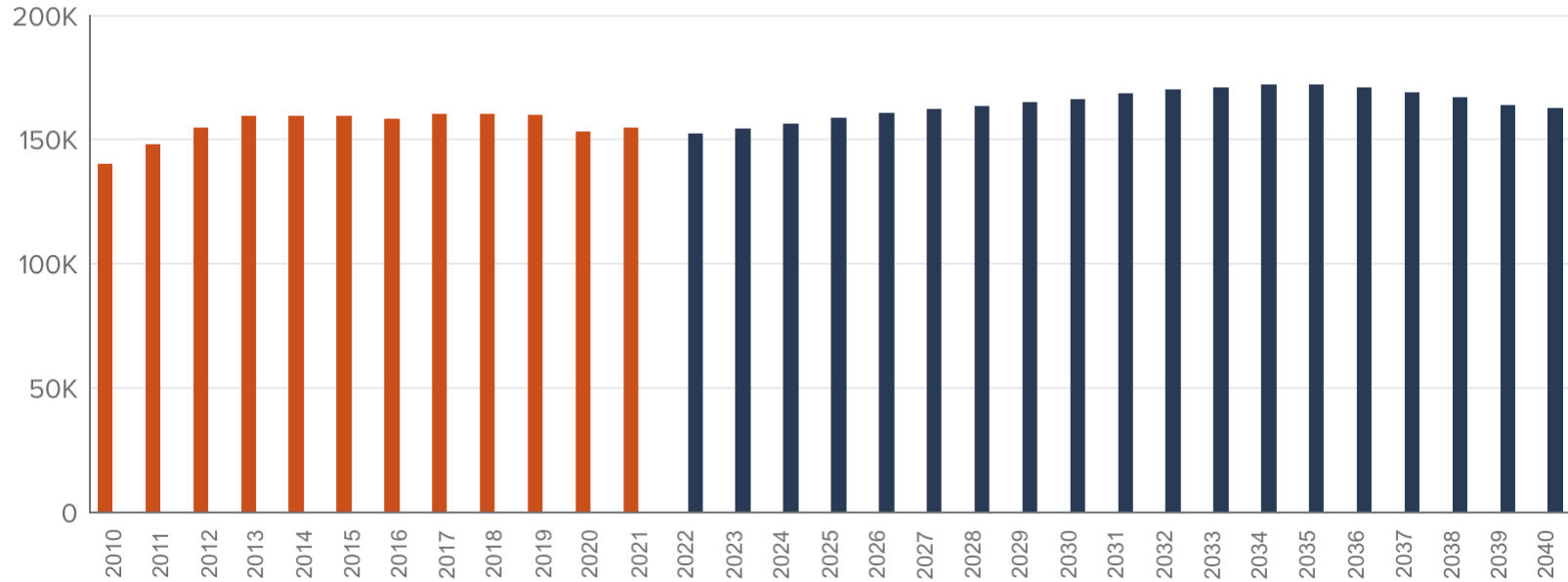
Undergraduate enrollment at CSU will increase slowly

Historic Projected



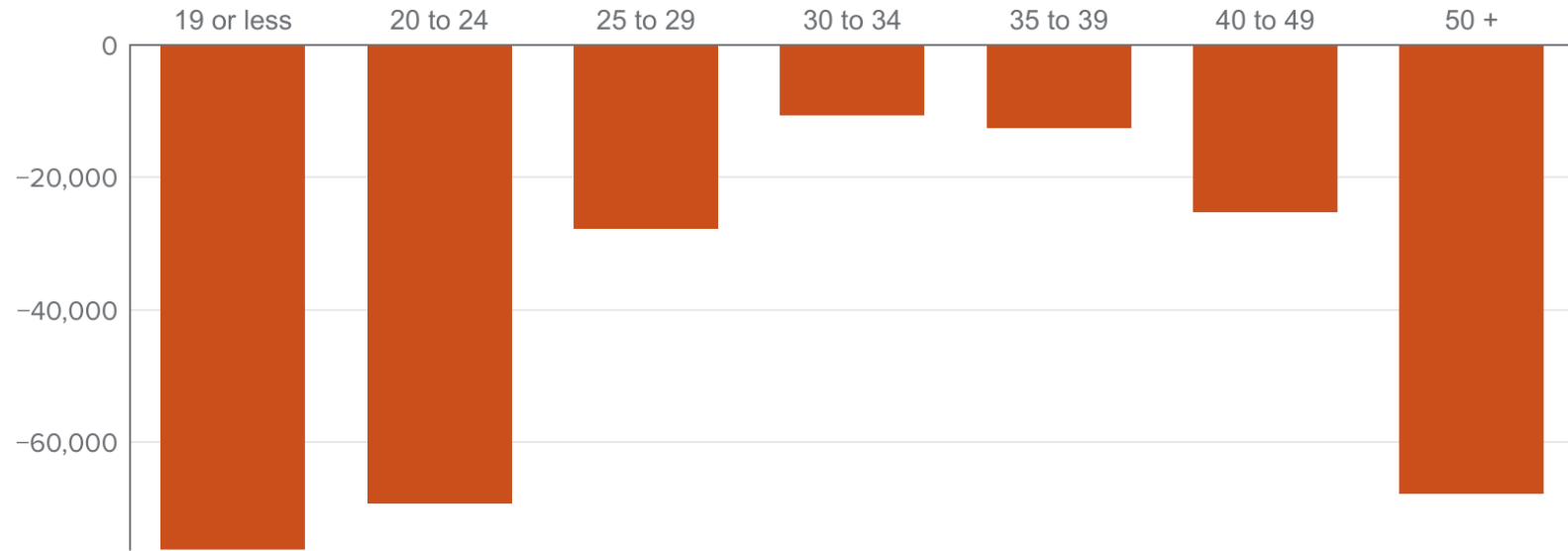
Private nonprofit undergraduate enrollment will increase slightly

Historic Projected



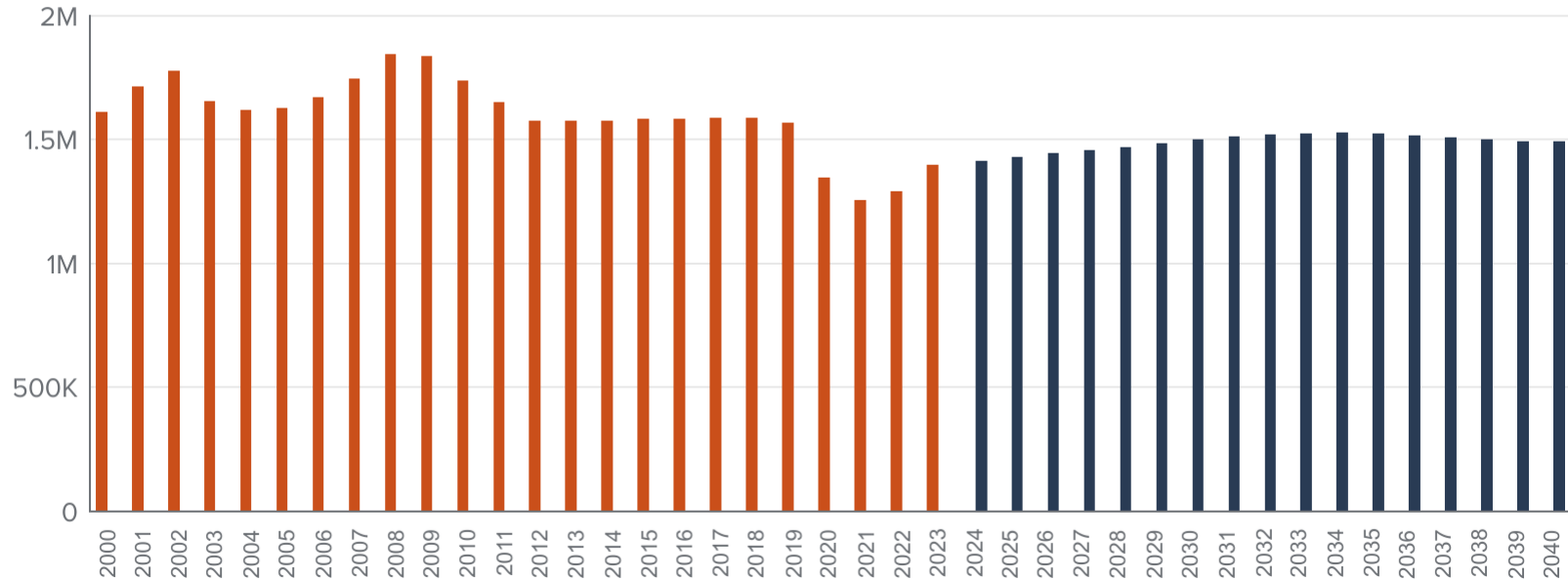
Community college enrollment declines have been concentrated in younger and older age groups

2019–20 to 2020–21



Community college enrollment is unlikely to return to previous highs

Historic Projected



Policy implications

- California is likely to reach its college attainment goal
 - 40% of working-age adults will have a bachelor's degree by 2035
- The state needs to set a more ambitious goal focused on young adults
- Continued improvement in college readiness among high school graduates is key
- Increases in persistence among college students is essential
- Realizing the potential of transfer from CCCs to four-year colleges is critical

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations.

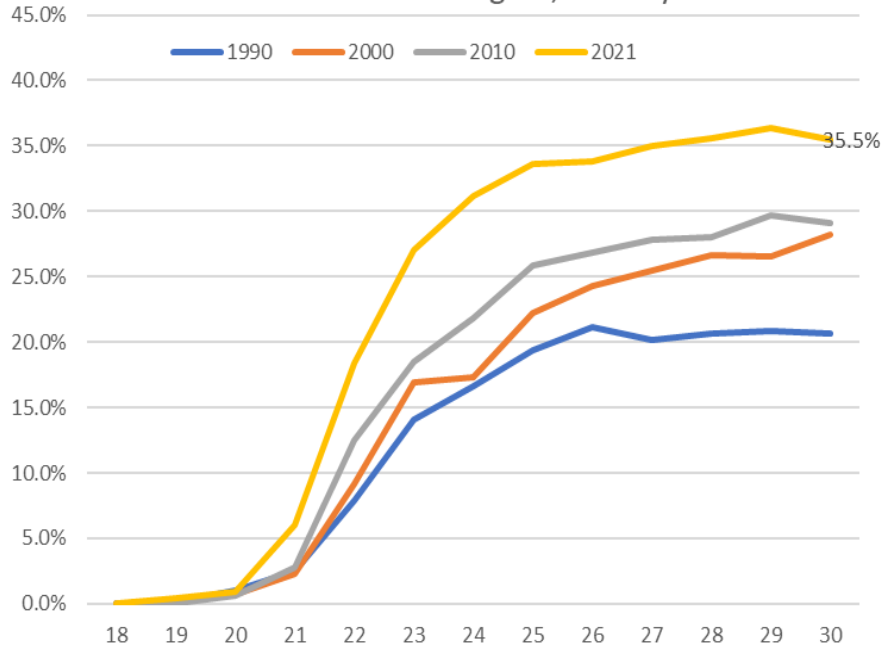
To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Hans Johnson (johnson@ppic.org)

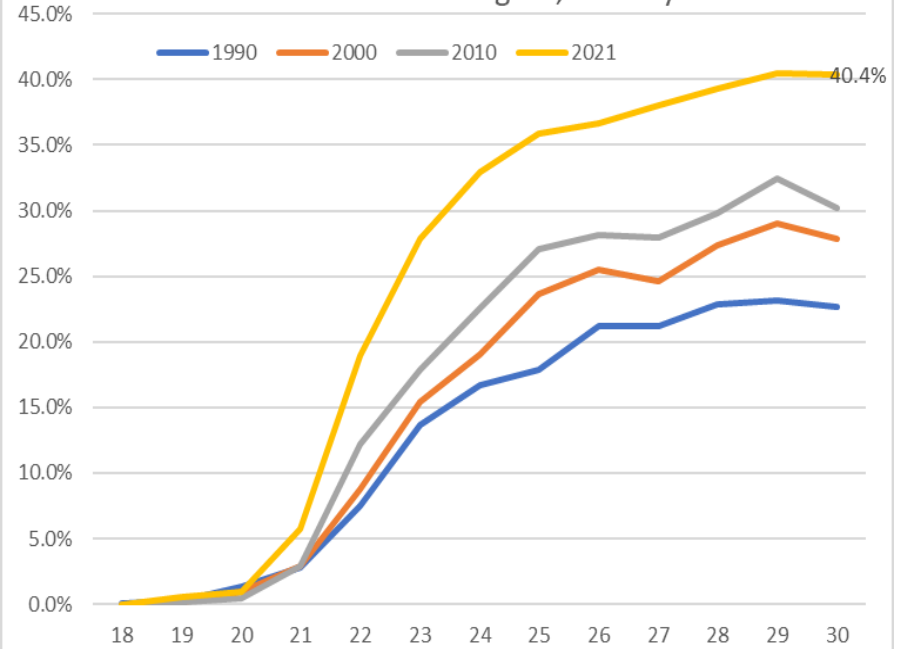
Thank you for your interest in this work.

Extra slides follow

Percent of California-born residents of the US with at least a bachelor's degree, 18-30 year olds

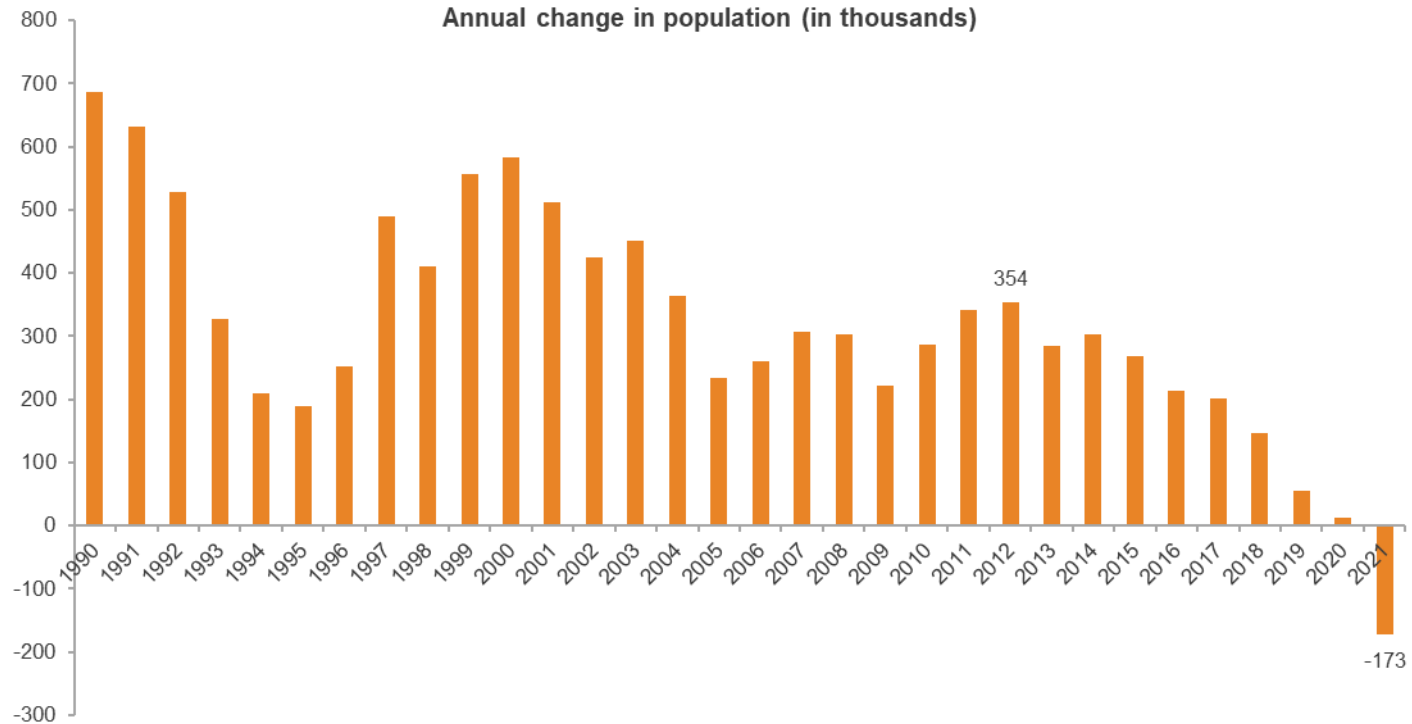


Percent of California residents (born anywhere) with at least a bachelor's degree, 18-30 year olds



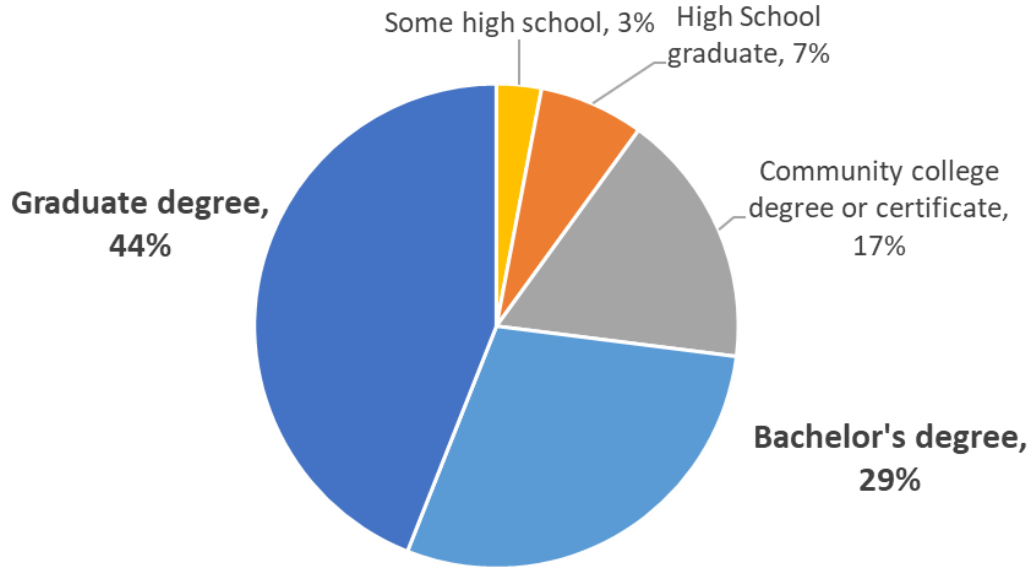
A new demographic era?

California's population has declined since the start of the pandemic



Californians have high educational aspirations

What do you hope will be the highest grade level that your child will achieve?



Data and methods

- Data:
 - California Department of Finance Projections, 2023 series
 - Population by age, race/ethnicity, gender
 - American Community Survey
 - Self-reported college enrollment (and base populations) by public/private and by age, race/ethnicity, gender
 - Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
 - College-reported enrollment of undergraduates by age
 - First-time recent high school graduates by state of origin
- Models:
 - Participation rate
 - Progression rate

Definition of rates

- Participation rate for age i year j :
$$\text{Part.rate}(i,j) = \text{enrollment}(i,j) / \text{population}(i,j)$$
- Progression ratio for year i grade j :
$$\text{Prog.rate}(i,j) = \text{enrollment}(i, j) / \text{enrollment}(i-1, j-1)$$

Disaggregate by gender and race/ethnicity