

Housing Affordability and Resources in California

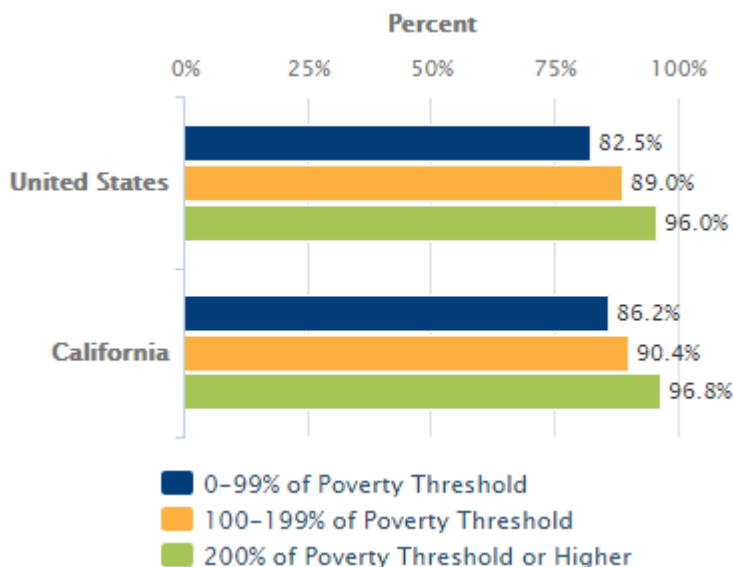
Households with a High Housing Cost Burden: 2016-2020

Locations	Percent
United States	31.3%
California	41.2%
Alameda County	37.4%
Contra Costa County	37.0%
Fresno County	39.2%
Kern County	38.8%
Los Angeles County	46.9%
Orange County	41.7%
Riverside County	41.0%
Sacramento County	38.6%
San Bernardino County	40.8%
San Diego County	43.0%
Santa Clara County	35.5%

Definition: Estimated percentage of households that spend at least 30% of household income on rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, utilities, and other related housing costs (e.g., in 2016-2020, 41.2% of California households experienced a high housing cost burden).

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#) (Aug. 2022).

Children Living in Households with a Broadband-Connected Device, by Income Level: 2019



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in households with a desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone, or other computer connected to high-speed internet service, by income level (e.g., in 2019, among California children living below the federal poverty threshold, 86.2% lived in households with a broadband-connected device).

Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau [American Community Survey](#) public use microdata (Oct. 2020).

What It Is

Kidsdata.org provides four measures related to housing affordability and resources:

- [Fair Market Rent, by Unit Size](#)
- [Households with a High Housing Cost Burden](#)
- [Children Living in Crowded Households](#)
- [Children Living in Households with a Broadband-Connected Device](#)

Why This Topic Is Important

Housing plays a critical role in children's health and well being, beyond providing immediate shelter. Children and families need affordable, stable, safe homes, adequate household resources, healthy neighborhoods, and access to quality opportunities, education, and services—all of these factors are intricately connected and influence life outcomes at all ages. However, housing system inequities persist, limiting access to safe, affordable housing and related resources for vulnerable groups, including low-income families, people of color, and those with disabilities.

The U.S. has set a public health objective of reducing the proportion of families whose housing costs represent more than 30% of total household income, the level at which housing is considered affordable. California housing is among the most costly in the nation, creating a significant challenge for many of the state's middle- and low-income families. According to 2021 estimates, only 39% of low-income children in the U.S. and 27% of low-income children in California lived in affordable housing. Spending more than 30% of income on housing may mean forgoing food, health care, or other essential items, which is associated with an increased risk of disease and mental health problems. Families with a high housing cost burden also may struggle to afford important resources such as broadband-connected devices, which are increasingly important for education, employment, access to health care, social connections, and other family needs. Statewide and nationally, this digital divide has a disproportionate impact on rural populations, people with disabilities, families of color, and those with less education.

In some cases, a lack of affordable housing can result in families living in crowded households. Residential crowding is linked to poor health outcomes, including infectious disease transmission, sleep problems, stress, and mental health difficulties. Even when families are not in crowded homes, unaffordable or

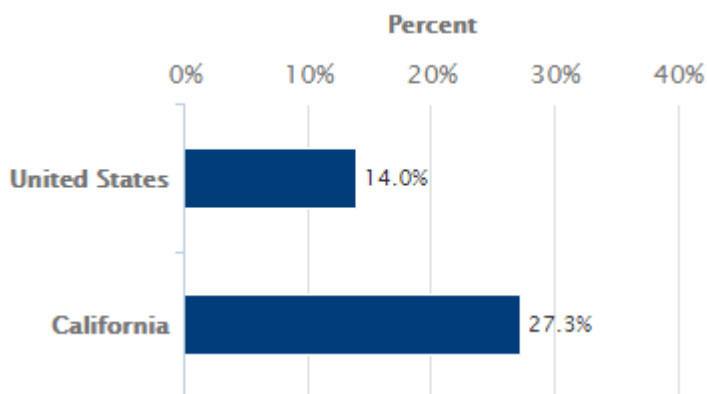
Fair Market Rent for a Two-Bedroom Unit: 2020

Locations	Monthly Cost
Alameda and Contra Costa Counties	\$2,239
El Dorado, Placer, and Sacramento Counties	\$1,349
Fresno County	\$980
Kern County	\$946
Los Angeles County	\$1,956
Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties	\$3,339
Orange County	\$2,216
Riverside and San Bernardino Counties	\$1,289
San Diego County	\$2,037
Santa Clara County	\$2,970

Definition: Estimated monthly cost of rent and all tenant-paid utilities (excluding telephone, internet, and cable or satellite television services) in standard-quality rental housing, by unit size (e.g., in fiscal year 2020, fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit in Los Angeles County was \$1,956).

Data Source: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, [Fair Market Rents](#) (Apr. 2020).

Children Living in Crowded Households: 2016-2020



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in households with more than one person per room of the home (e.g., in 2016-2020, 27.3% of California children lived in crowded households).

Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau [American Community Survey](#) microdata files (Aug. 2022).

unstable housing can disrupt children's health and diminish their opportunities for educational success due to increased chances of moving, changing schools, and interrupting instruction.

How Children Are Faring

Fair market rents vary widely across California regions, from \$770 (Modoc County) to \$3,339 (Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties) per month for a two-bedroom unit in fiscal year 2020.

In 2016-2020, an estimated 41% of California households were housing cost-burdened, meaning they spent at least 30% of income on housing. This figure is down from 48% in 2008-2012 but remains higher than national estimates which were lower than 38% over this period. Among counties with data in 2016-2020, estimates ranged from 28% (Inyo) to 47% (Los Angeles) of households experiencing a high housing cost burden.

The share of California children ages 0-17 living in crowded households (i.e., in homes with more than one person per room) was 27% in 2016-2020, nearly twice the estimate for children nationwide. Similar to other housing and economic measures, percentages vary at the local level; for example, across California cities, school districts, and legislative districts with data in 2016-2020, the proportion of children experiencing household overcrowding ranged from 1 in 125 to nearly 2 in 3.

According to 2016-2020 estimates, 93% of California children lived in households with a device connected to high-speed internet service, similar to 92% nationally. Children's internet access at home varies by region and demographic characteristics, with children in higher-income households, those living with two parents, and Asian American, multiracial, and white children more likely to have broadband-connected devices in the home than children in other groups. In 2019, 81% of California children living in limited English-speaking households had a broadband-connected device at home, compared with 95% in English proficient households.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:

<https://kidsdata.org/topic/41/housing-affordability-and-resources/summary>



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