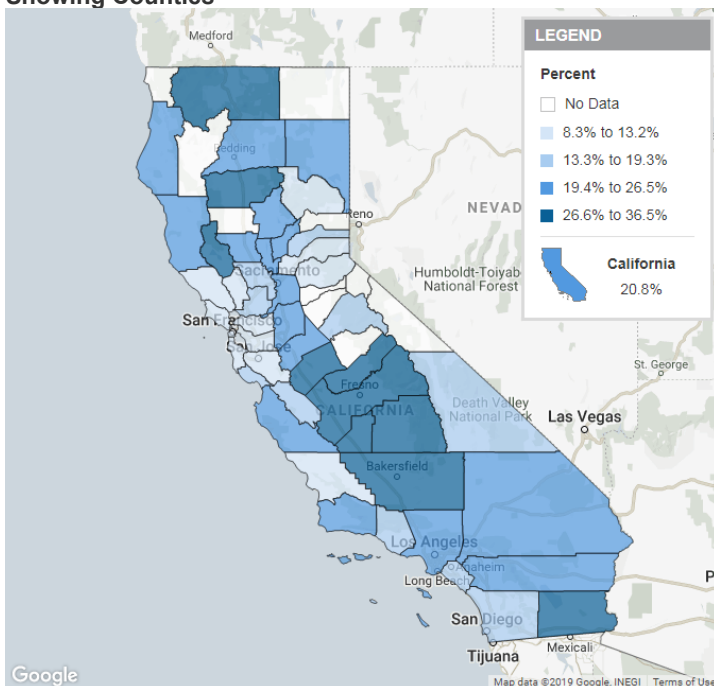


Family Income & Childhood Poverty in California

Children Living in Poverty - Official Poverty Measure: 2013-2017; Showing Counties



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 in living situations with incomes below their federal poverty threshold, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2013-2017, 32.4% of African American/black children in California lived in poverty).
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (Dec. 2018).

Children Living in Poverty - California Poverty Measure: 2014-2016

Locations	Percent
California	22.0%
Alameda County	18.6%
Contra Costa County	16.9%
Fresno County	21.0%
Kern County	20.8%
Los Angeles County	27.8%
Orange County	24.3%
Riverside County	19.5%
Sacramento County	18.4%
San Bernardino County	19.9%
San Diego County	22.9%
Santa Clara County	17.1%

Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in families with resources below their California Poverty Measure (CPM) poverty threshold (e.g., in 2014-2016, 22% of California children lived in poverty, according to the CPM).
Data Source: Public Policy Institute of California, & Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, California Poverty Measure (Nov. 2018).

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, family income and poverty are measured against a variety of income, resource, and self-sufficiency criteria:

- [Federal Poverty Threshold](#)
- [Federal Poverty Guideline](#)
- [Supplemental Poverty Measure](#)
- [California Poverty Measure](#)
- [Self-Sufficiency Standard](#)

For each of these measures, kidsdata.org provides estimates of the share of children (or families with children) without the economic means necessary for an adequate standard of living. Depending on the data source, additional measures and breakdowns also are available.

Why This Topic Is Important

Income and well being are intricately linked. Poverty can alter children's developmental trajectories in cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical health. The effects of poverty on child health and well being can begin during pregnancy, as low-income women are more likely to experience malnutrition and stress, and are less likely to receive adequate prenatal care. Children who face economic hardship when they are young, or who experience deep and prolonged poverty, are at greatest risk for poor outcomes. The effects of poverty and the stress associated with it can be lasting, contributing to increased risk of dropping out of school, poor adult health, and poor employment outcomes, among other adverse consequences. The impacts extend beyond individuals, too. For example, it is estimated that the total annual cost of child poverty in the U.S. is more than a trillion dollars, due in part to loss of economic productivity and increased health costs. In addition, for every dollar spent on poverty reduction strategies, the U.S. could save an estimated \$7 related to the economic costs of poverty.

The link between income and wellness is evident even for those living above the poverty threshold. A health gradient exists along the economic spectrum such that health status improves as income level increases; e.g., the health of those in the middle-income range tends to be inferior to those in higher-income groups. This is especially concerning given that income inequality in the U.S. has been increasing in recent decades.

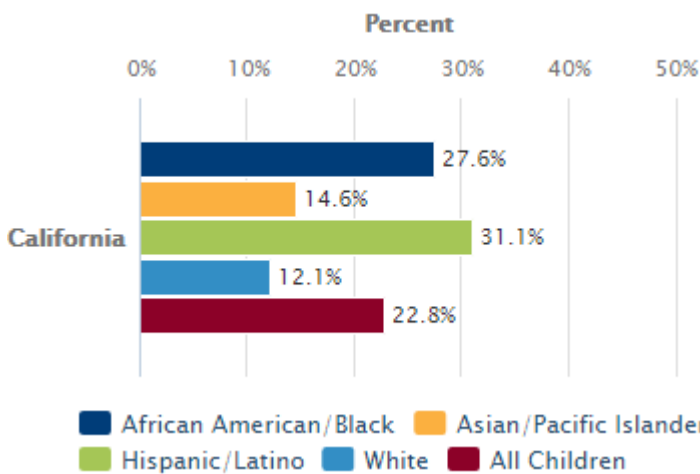
Poverty-Reducing Effects of the Social Safety Net - California
Poverty Measure: 2014-2016

California	Child Deep Poverty	Child Poverty
Safety Net Program		
CalFresh	2.1	4.0
CalWORKs	0.9	2.3
Earned Income Tax Credit; Child Tax Credit	1.9	6.1
Free or Reduced Price School Meals; WIC	0.8	2.0
Housing Subsidies	1.3	1.5
All Safety Net Programs	12.2	14.1

Definition: Difference between the percentage of children ages 0-17 estimated to be in poverty in the absence of social safety net programs and the percentage of children estimated to be in poverty, according to the California Poverty Measure (CPM), by program type and CPM poverty level (e.g., in the absence of the CalFresh program, the child poverty rate in California would have been 4.0 percentage points higher in 2014-2016, according to the CPM).

Data Source: Public Policy Institute of California, & Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, *California Poverty Measure* (Nov. 2018).

Children Living in Poverty - Supplemental Poverty Measure, by Race/Ethnicity: 2014-2016



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living situations with incomes below their Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) threshold, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2014-2016, an estimated 31.1% of Hispanic/Latino children in California lived poverty, according to the SPM).

Data Source: Flood, S., et al. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey*. University of Minnesota (May 2018).

How Children Are Faring

In 2017, an estimated 18% of California children lived below the federal poverty threshold (\$24,858 annually for a family of two adults and two children). Across counties with data in 2013-2017, official child poverty rates ranged from less than 10% in Placer County and parts of the Bay Area to more than 33% in some regions of the San Joaquin Valley. In Fresno and Del Norte counties, more than one in six children lived in deep poverty—i.e., on annual income lower than half the federal poverty threshold (\$12,429 for two adults and two children in 2017).

The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) accounts for expenses (e.g., state-level differences in housing costs) and resources (e.g., government safety net program benefits) not captured in the official poverty measure. According to SPM estimates, 23% of California children lived in poverty in 2014-2016, compared with 16% nationwide. Among California racial/ethnic groups with data, SPM estimates ranged from fewer than one in eight white children living in poverty (12%) to almost one in three Hispanic/Latino children (31%).

The California Poverty Measure (CPM) builds on the SPM by adjusting for California-specific safety net policies and for regional variation in the cost of living within the state. CPM data from 2014-2016 show that 22% of children statewide lived in poverty and 5% lived in deep poverty. In the absence of social safety net programs, it is estimated that the child poverty rate would have been 14 percentage points higher and the deep poverty rate 12 percentage points higher during this period. CPM child poverty rates vary widely across counties, from 11% in Placer County to 28% in Los Angeles County, among regions with data in 2014-2016. Overall, children whose parents are single, non-U.S. citizens, or who did not finish high school tend to experience higher rates of CPM poverty and deep poverty than children in families with married parents, U.S. citizens, and higher levels of educational attainment.

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

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/38/family-income-and-poverty/summary>



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