

Unemployment in California

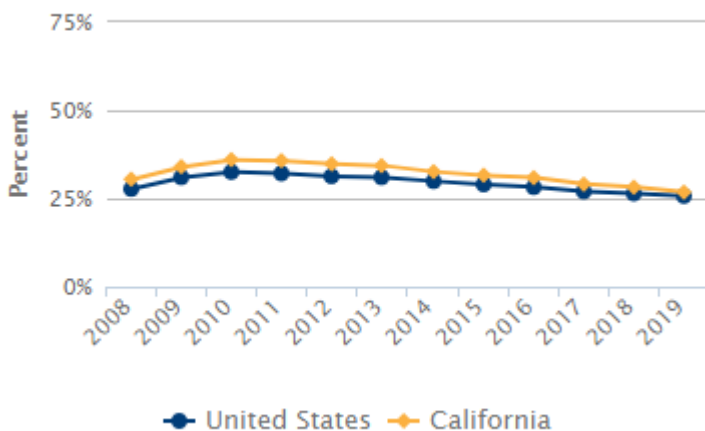
Percentage of Children without Secure Parental Employment: 2016-2020

Locations	Percent
United States	26.9%
California	28.9%
Alameda County	23.0%
Contra Costa County	24.6%
Fresno County	38.1%
Kern County	40.0%
Los Angeles County	30.4%
Orange County	24.3%
Riverside County	28.1%
Sacramento County	30.1%
San Bernardino County	32.2%
San Diego County	24.6%
San Francisco County	26.2%
San Joaquin County	30.2%
San Mateo County	19.8%
Santa Clara County	18.9%
Ventura County	25.9%

Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 in families without a resident parent who worked 35 hours or more per week for at least 50 weeks in the previous 12 months (e.g., in 2016-2020, 28.9% of California children lived in families without secure parental employment).

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

Percentage of Children without Secure Parental Employment



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 in families without a resident parent who worked 35 hours or more per week for at least 50 weeks in the previous 12 months (e.g., in 2019, 26.8% of California children lived in families without secure parental employment).

Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau [American](#)

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, estimates of children under age 18 living in families without secure parental employment (in which no resident parent worked 35 hours or more per week for at least 50 weeks in the previous 12 months) are available for the U.S., California, and [counties and county groups](#) as single-year estimates, and for [regions with populations of at least 10,000](#) and [legislative districts](#) as five-year estimates.

Kidsdata.org also provides estimates of [unemployed persons in the labor force ages 16 and older](#). Unemployment numbers and rates reflect persons who are not employed, are available to work, and have looked for work in the previous four weeks.

Why This Topic Is Important

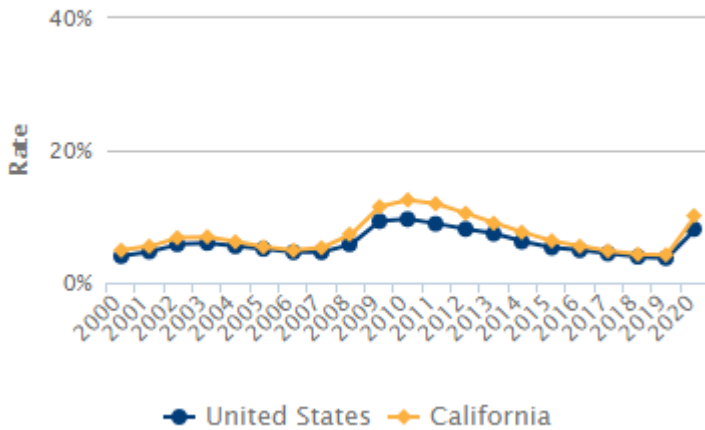
Unemployment and underemployment can limit parents' ability to meet their families' material needs, while financial stress can affect their ability to provide for their children emotionally. Children who experience economic hardship when they are young, particularly hardship that is extreme or prolonged, are at increased risk for negative health and developmental outcomes. Parental unemployment has been linked to short- and long-term mental health problems in children, as well as academic and employment challenges later in life. Secure parental employment (with adequate pay and benefits) can reduce economic hardship and help ensure that children's basic needs are met and that they have family environments in which to thrive. Stable employment also is important for young people when they reach early adulthood, as it decreases the likelihood of long-term employment difficulties and low earnings.

Recent unemployment crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Great Recession, hit certain workers particularly hard, especially women, African American/black men, youth of color, immigrants, and those earning lower wages or with less education. Leaders can address the systemic issues behind these inequities, as well as support programs and policies to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

How Children Are Faring

In 2016-2020, an estimated 29% of California children living in families had no parent with full-time, year-round employment in the previous 12 months, compared with 27% of children nationwide. At the local level, the percentage of children without secure parental employment ranged from less than 10% to

Unemployment Rate



Definition: Estimated percentage of persons in the labor force who are not working but are available to work and have looked for work in the previous four weeks (e.g., in 2020, the unemployment rate in California was 10.1%).

Data Source: California Employment Development Department, [Labor Market Information](#); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [Labor Force Statistics Including the National Unemployment Rate](#) (Sept. 2021).

more than 50% across cities, school districts, and counties with populations of at least 10,000.

California and U.S. unemployment rates, after reaching twenty-year lows in 2019 (4.2% and 3.7%, respectively), more than doubled in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. An estimated 1.9 million California workers (10.1%) were unemployed in 2020, with rates across counties ranging from 7% to more than 20%.

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

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/43/unemployment/summary>



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