



A PORTRAIT OF CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2011

NEWS RELEASE

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First-Ever California Human Development Report, *A Portrait of California*, Reveals Californians Experience the Nation's Highest—and Lowest—Levels of Well-Being, Often in the Same Local Area

Report Ranks Health, Education, and Earnings among Major Metro Areas, Racial and Ethnic Groups, Women and Men, Native- and Foreign-Born Residents and 233 Communities for which There Are Reliable U.S. Census Data

Sacramento, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, CA – The [American Human Development Project](#) released today the latest work in its Measure of America series, *A Portrait of California*, the first-ever California Human Development Report, which explores well-being and access to opportunity across the Golden State. Using the American Human Development (HD) Index, a composite measure of health, education, and standard of living, *A Portrait of California* ranks from highest to lowest the state's five most populous metro areas using a single number on a scale from 0 to 10: San Francisco (HDI: 6.97), San Diego (HDI: 5.80), Sacramento (HDI: 5.66), Los Angeles (HDI: 5.52), Riverside-San Bernardino (HDI: 4.58). The report also ranks the major racial and ethnic groups, native- and foreign-born residents, and the 233 neighborhood clusters across the state for which there are reliable U.S. Census data.

A Portrait of California shows that some Californians are enjoying levels of well-being and access to opportunity the nation as a whole will not reach until the 2060s, while others are experiencing health, education, and earnings levels that characterized the U.S. in the 1960s. Nearly a century of human progress separates the best-off and the worst-off areas in the state.

“California is rich in data on social and economic conditions. But too often we use them to identify separate problems requiring separate solutions. The American HD Index at the heart of *A Portrait of California* provides a way to make sense of economic, health, and education challenges in the interconnected way that people actually experience them,” said Sarah Burd-Sharps, co-author of *A Portrait of California*. “Given the current budgetary environment in California, there could be no better time for this nonpartisan, fact-based tool to break down the silos, look at who is thriving and who is merely surviving, and identify the most strategic levers for change,” added Kristen Lewis, co-author of *A Portrait of California*.

A Portrait of California sorts residents into “Five Californias” according to where they fall along the American HD Index:

- **Silicon Valley Shangri-La**, HD Index score of 9.35, comprises the top 1% of the population in terms of well-being levels. These extremely well-educated high-tech entrepreneurs and professionals are fueling, and accruing the benefits of, innovation. Residents of these two neighborhood areas have highly developed capabilities, expanding their freedom to pursue goals that matter to them (Despite its overall high score, however, it is important to note that pockets of poverty exist within Silicon Valley). One in three in this California is foreign-born;
- **Metro-Coastal Enclave California**, HD Index score of 7.92, this group makes up 18% of the state's population. They are located in upscale urban and suburban neighborhoods, chiefly along the coast. Residents of these areas are largely affluent,

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www.measureofamerica.org

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credentialed, and resilient knowledge workers enjoying comparative financial comfort and security;

- **Main Street California**, HD Index score of 5.92, this majority-minority group of Californians experience longer lives, higher levels of educational attainment, and higher earnings than the typical American. Yet these suburban and ex-urban Californians, representing 38% of the population, have an increasingly tenuous grip on middle-class life;
- **Struggling California**, with an HD Index score of 4.17, makes up 38% of the population across the state, from the suburbs, exurbs, and rural areas of the Central Valley to parts of major metro areas and the Inland Empire to swaths of Northern California. Struggling Californians work hard but find it nearly impossible to gain a foothold on security;
- **The Forsaken Five Percent** of Californians are residents bypassed by the digital economy and left behind in impoverished LA neighborhoods as well as in rural and urban areas in the San Joaquin Valley. The Forsaken Five Percent have an American HD Index score of 2.59. These Californians, of whom one-third are foreign-born, can expect to live nine fewer years than those in Shangri-La and face an extremely constrained range of opportunities and choices.

AMONG THE KEY FINDINGS FROM A PORTRAIT OF CALIFORNIA:

Health:

- Life expectancy is longer in California (80.1 years) than in the nation as a whole (78.6 years).
- The range of life spans in neighborhoods across California is 15.3 years, with the high and low— the Newport Beach/Laguna Hills area (88.1 years) and Watts (72.8 years)—in the same metro area.
- The foreign-born outlive the native-born by an average of four years in California.

Education:

- Just 100 of California's nearly 2,500 high schools account for nearly half of the state's dropouts.
- Nearly 44 percent of Latino adults in California do not have a high school degree—almost triple the state average.
- For every 100 men who get a bachelor's degree today, 134 women do.
- Over 50 percent of California's public schoolchildren are Latino; 27 percent are white; 11.6 percent are Asian American; 6.9 percent are African American; and fewer than 1 percent are Native American.

Income:

- A gap of \$58,000 in earnings of the typical worker—double the median personal earnings of the United States—separate the top earners in the Santa Clara-Cupertino, Saratoga, Los Gatos area (about \$73,000) from the lowest earners in the LA-East Adams-Exposition Park area (about \$15,000).
- Median earnings (wages and salaries of all workers 16 and older) for whites range from \$47,000 in the Bay Area to \$28,000 in the Central Sierra region and \$24,000 in Northern California.
- Men earn more than women in every racial and ethnic group. In Silicon Valley Shangri-La, women earn 49¢ for every \$1 men earn; in The Forsaken Five Percent, women earn 77¢ for every \$1 men earn.
- California's Latina women earn the least, at \$18,000—earnings on par with those of the typical American worker in 1960, half a century ago.

A Portrait of California highlights actions that Californians can take to lock in human development successes today while setting the stage for significant budget savings and improved well-being tomorrow. These include investing in public health campaigns and food subsidies for fruits and vegetables; investing in preschool and targeting the worst performing high schools with the highest dropout rates; and taking steps to address gender equality and wage discrimination in the workplace.

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Supporters of *A Portrait of California* are The California Community Foundation, The California Endowment, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. William Draper III, The San Francisco Foundation, United Ways of California, and the Weingart Foundation.

For an interactive map program and more information on *A Portrait of California*, visit: www.measureofamerica.org/california.

About the American Human Development Project

The American Human Development Project provides easy-to-use, methodologically sound tools for understanding the distribution of well-being and opportunity in America and stimulating fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: health, education, and living standards. The hallmark of this work is the American Human Development Index, an alternative to GDP and other money metrics that tells the story of how ordinary Americans are faring and empowers communities with a tool to track progress over time. The Index is comprised of health, education, and earnings indicators and allows for well-being rankings of the 50 states, county groups within states, women and men, and major racial and ethnic groups. Through national and state reports, thematic briefs, and the project's interactive website, the American Human Development Project aims to breathe life into numbers, using data to create compelling narratives that foster greater understanding of our shared challenges and greater support for people-centered policies.

The American Human Development Project is an initiative of the Social Science Research Council ([SSRC](http://SSRC.org)).

About the Authors

Sarah Burd-Sharps and Kristen Lewis are co-directors of the American Human Development Project. Previously, Sarah worked with the United Nations for over two decades, most recently as Deputy Director of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Prior to this, she worked in China and in a number of African countries on gender issues and economic empowerment. Sarah holds an M.I.A. from Columbia University. Kristen also comes from an international development policy background, having worked primarily in the areas of gender equality, governance, environment, and water and sanitation. Kristen is co-author, under the leadership of Jeffrey Sachs' Millennium Project, of the 2005 book *Health, Dignity and Development: What Will It Take?* She worked at the United Nations for some ten years and has served as a consultant for many international development organizations. Kristen also holds an M.I.A. from Columbia University.

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