

# The Child Welfare System and CalWORKs: Overlap in California Child Populations

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# Questions

- How many children enter the Child Welfare Services system with a history of CalWORKs welfare aid?
- Do children in Child Welfare Services with CalWORKs aid history differ from children without CalWORKs aid history by:
  - gender
  - ethnicity
  - age group
  - referral reason into CWS
  - county
- Does use of Child Welfare Services and CalWORKs correlate with county socioeconomic characteristics?
- What are the implications for program coordination between Child Welfare Services and CalWORKs services?

# Main Findings

- Statewide, 60 percent of children in the Child Welfare System (CWS) received AFDC or CalWORKs aid prior to CWS -- about 85 thousand children.
- These 85 thousand children in CWS represent 2 percent of children who received AFDC or CalWORKs since 1993
- However, counties vary widely. The percent of children entering CWS with prior AFDC/CalWORKs aid varies:
  - lowest rate: 44 percent
  - highest rate: 87 percent
- The percent of children in CWS with AFDC or CalWORKs aid history may be even higher. This study is limited by: data available for matching, and a 1993 time time boundary in the AFDC/CalWORKs data.

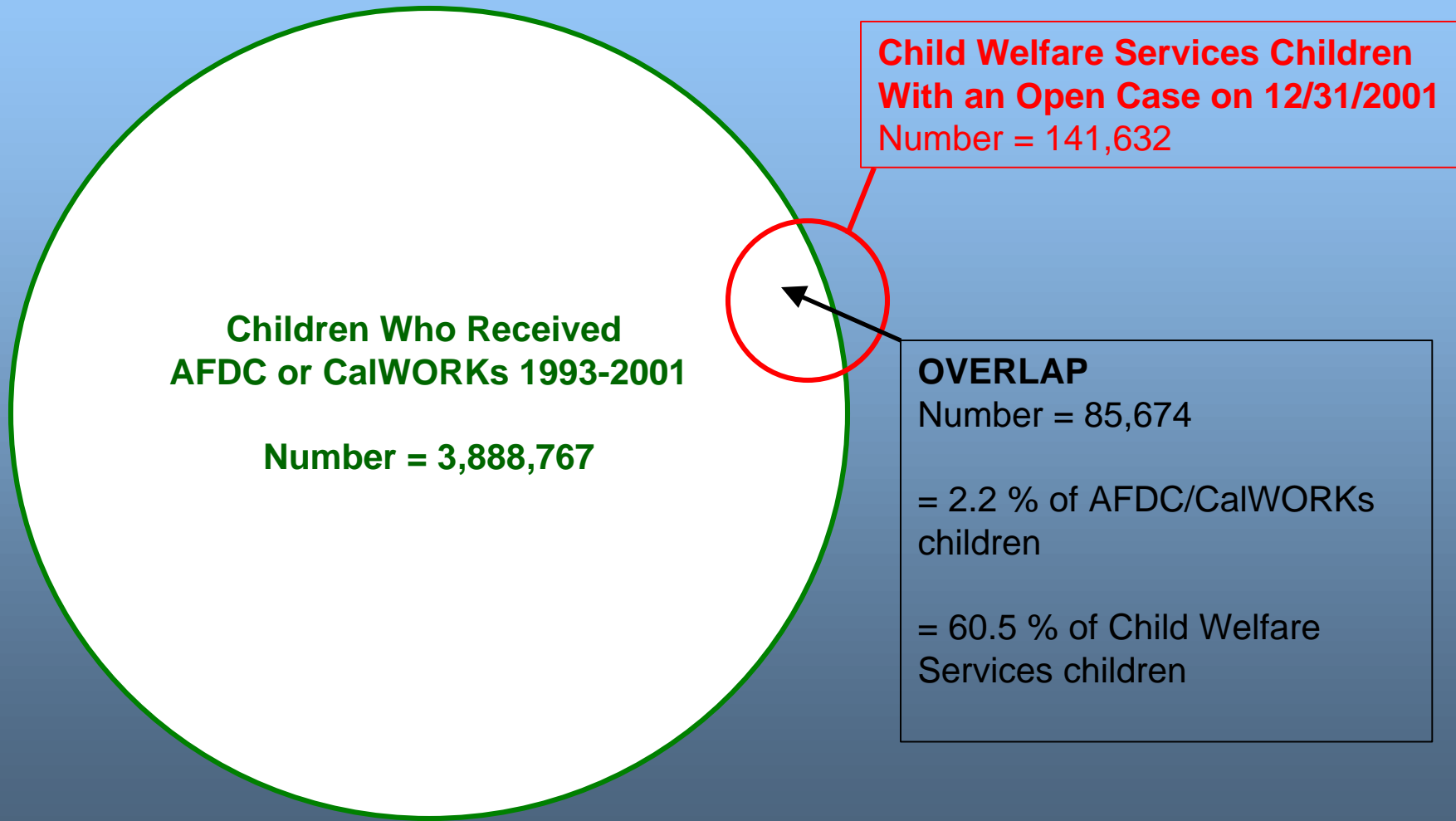
# Main Findings

- What explains county differences for Child Welfare Services use? Among a set of county socioeconomic characteristics:
  - Child Welfare Services use is predicted by:
    - AFDC/CalWORKs use rate
    - unemployment rate
    - family poverty rate
    - county population size
  - The percent of CWS children entering with AFDC/CalWORKs aid is predicted by:
    - AFDC/CalWORKs use rate
    - county population size

# Main Findings

- Characteristics of children in CWS with and without CalWORKs history by:
  - Gender
    - Almost identical
  - Ethnicity
    - Hispanic children are largest group with CalWORKs aid before CWS
    - American Indian children have highest rate of CalWORKs before CWS
  - Age group
    - Children entering CWS with CalWORKs are most likely to be ages 5-9
    - Children entering CWS without CalWORKs are likely to be ages 0-4
  - Referral reason into CWS
    - CalWORKs children are *slightly* more likely to be referred for neglect
  - County
    - Counties vary widely for CWS rate and percent of CWS children with CalWORKs aid history

The overlap in California child populations is about 85 thousand among 3.8 million CalWORKs children and 141 thousand CWS children.



# Methods

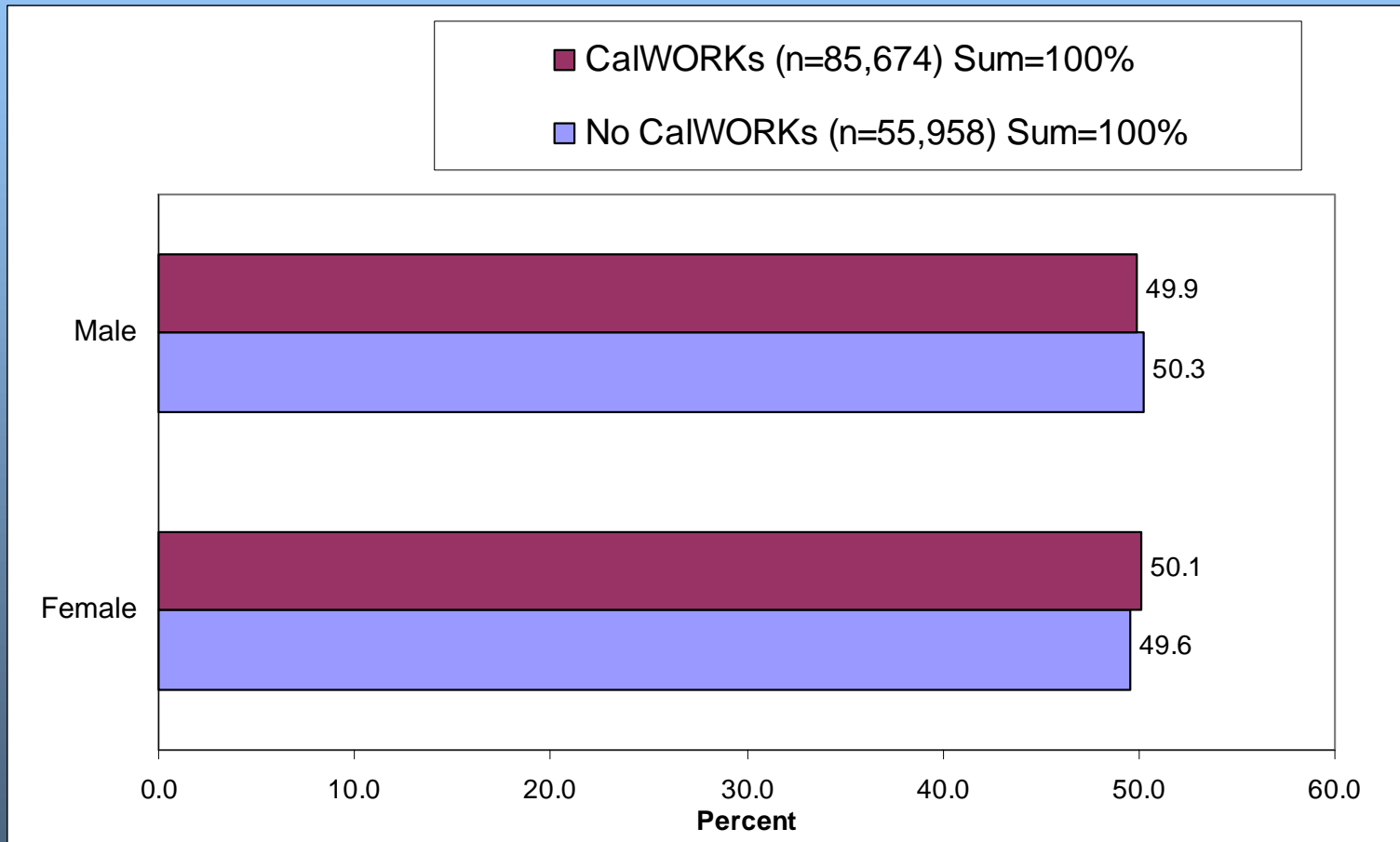
- Retrospective Analysis: Looking backwards from one time point in Child Welfare Services data to find the same children in AFDC/CalWORKs data
- Overlap definition for CWS and AFDC/CalWORKs child populations:
  - Child currently has open case in CWS
  - Child has ever received AFDC or CalWORKs
  - Child's AFDC/CalWORKs aid was received before start date of current CWS case
- Record linkage between CWS and AFDC/CalWORKs data files using:
  - Social Security Number
  - Unique Identifier: constructed from name + gender + birth date
- Correlation and regression with county-level data, to understand differences across counties

# Data Sources

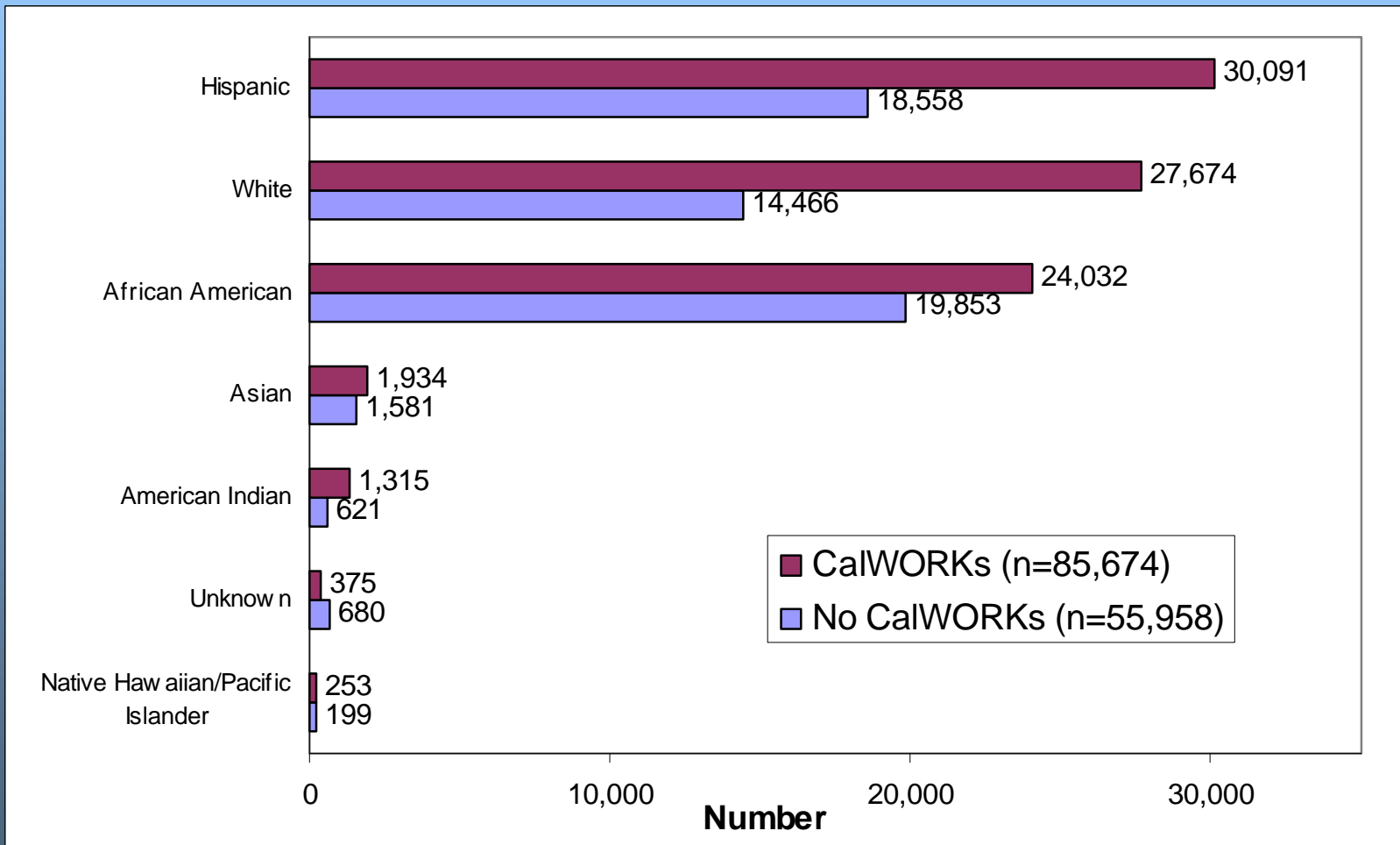
- Child population overlap (data on individual children)
  - Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) database: all open cases on one day, December 31, 2001
  - MEDS Medi-Cal Eligibility file for 1993-2001 (with welfare aid codes)
- Welfare use rates (county-level data)
  - AFDC/CalWORKs recipients per capita (CDSS, CA 237 Data, July 1999)
  - CWS child cases per capita (CDSS, CWS/CMS, December 31, 2001)
  - Population size (California Department of Finance - July 1, 1999 and January 1, 2002)
- Socioeconomic characteristics (county-level data) for 1999, the average year of entry into CWS for children with CalWORKs aid history
  - Unemployment rate (California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information, annual rate for counties in 1999)
  - Percent of families in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, for 1999 poverty rate)



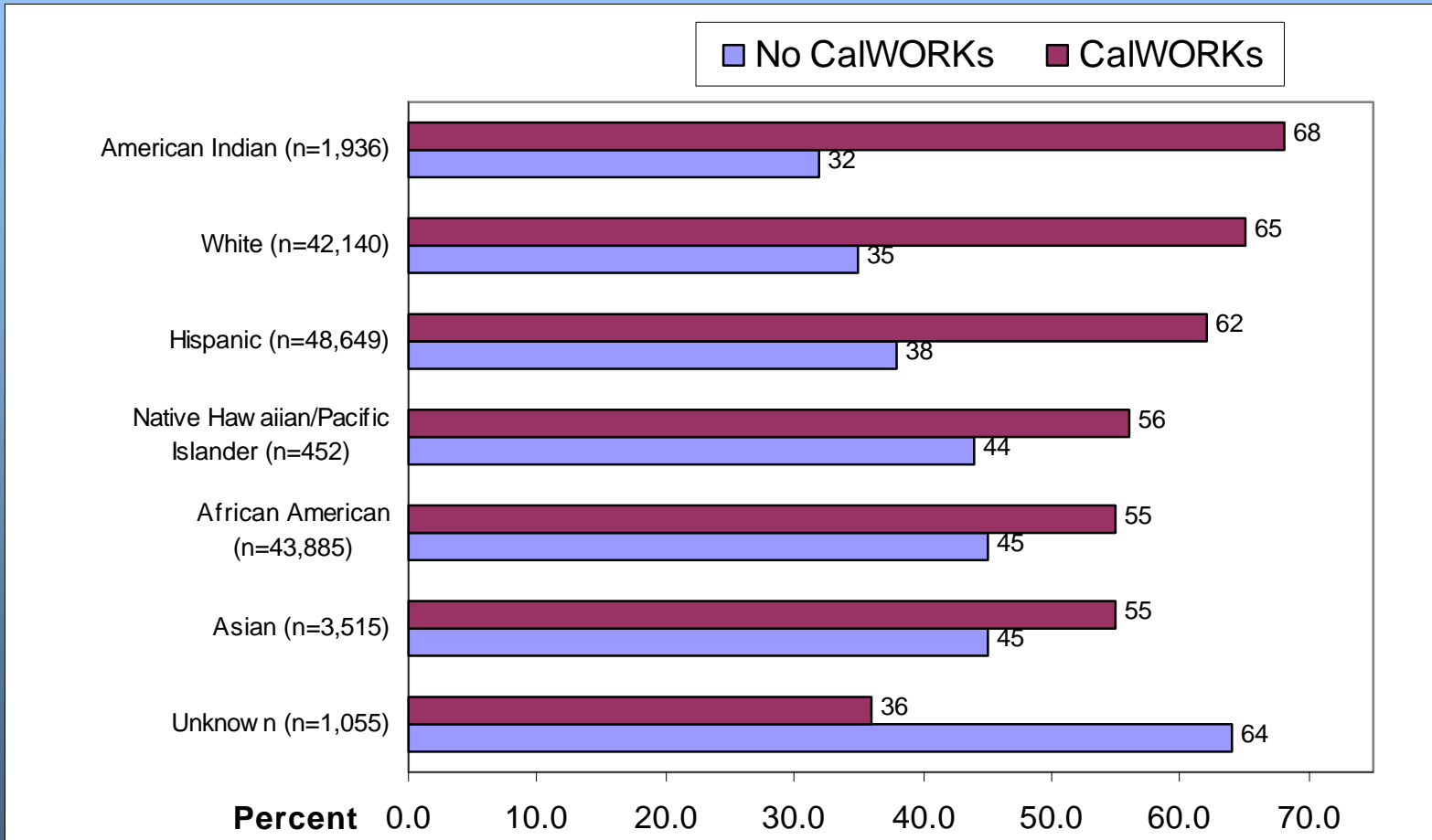
## Does CalWORKs aid before CWS entry differ by gender? No. CalWORKs history is almost identical by gender.



Which race/ethnic groups received CalWORKs aid before CWS?  
 Hispanic and White children are largest groups with CalWORKs aid.  
 African American children are largest group without CalWORKs aid.

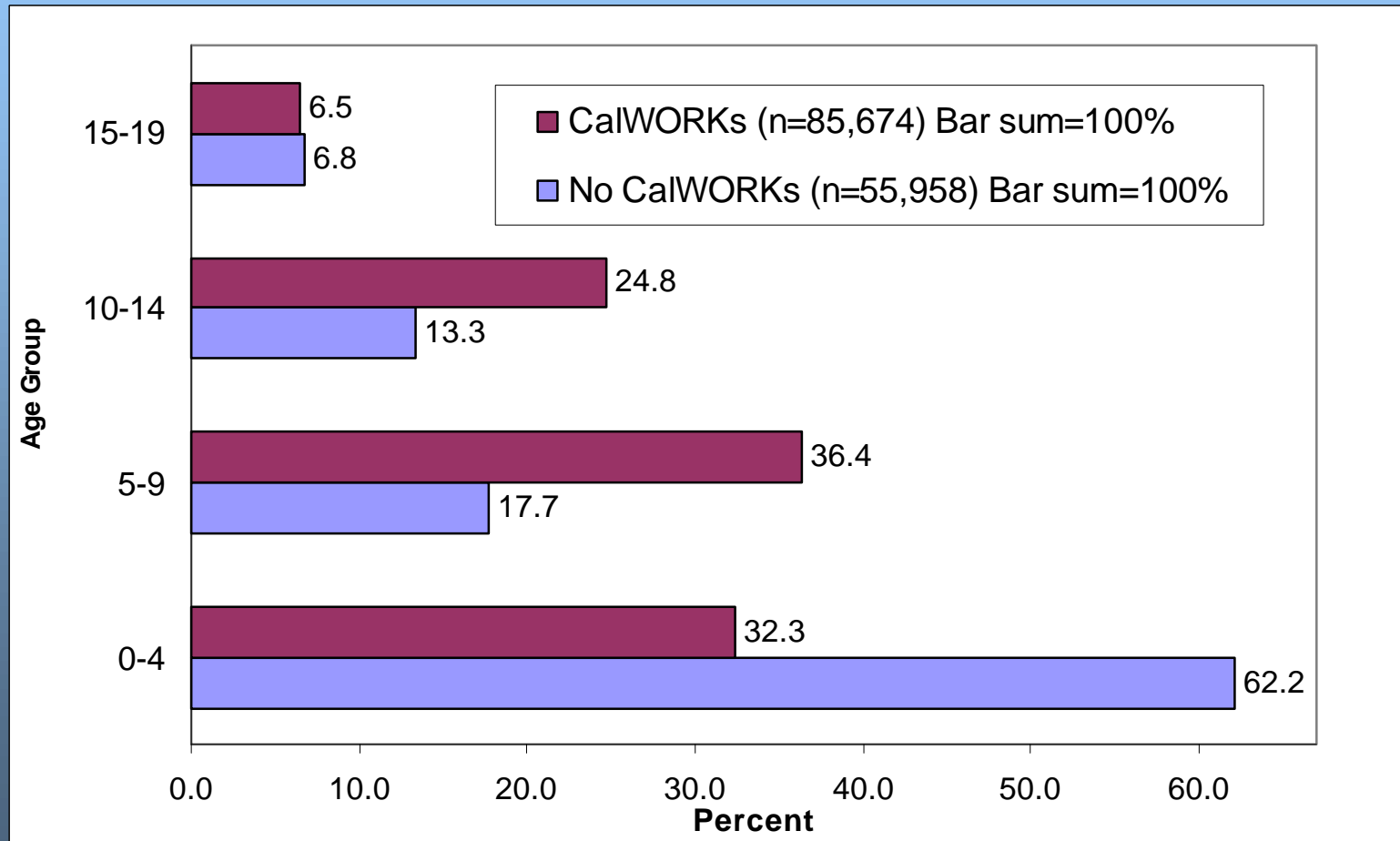


Do rates of CalWORKs aid before CWS differ by race/ethnicity?  
 Yes. American Indian children in CWS have highest CalWORKs rate. African American and Asian children in CWS show lowest rates for CalWORKs. (Race/ethnic group bars sum to 100%).



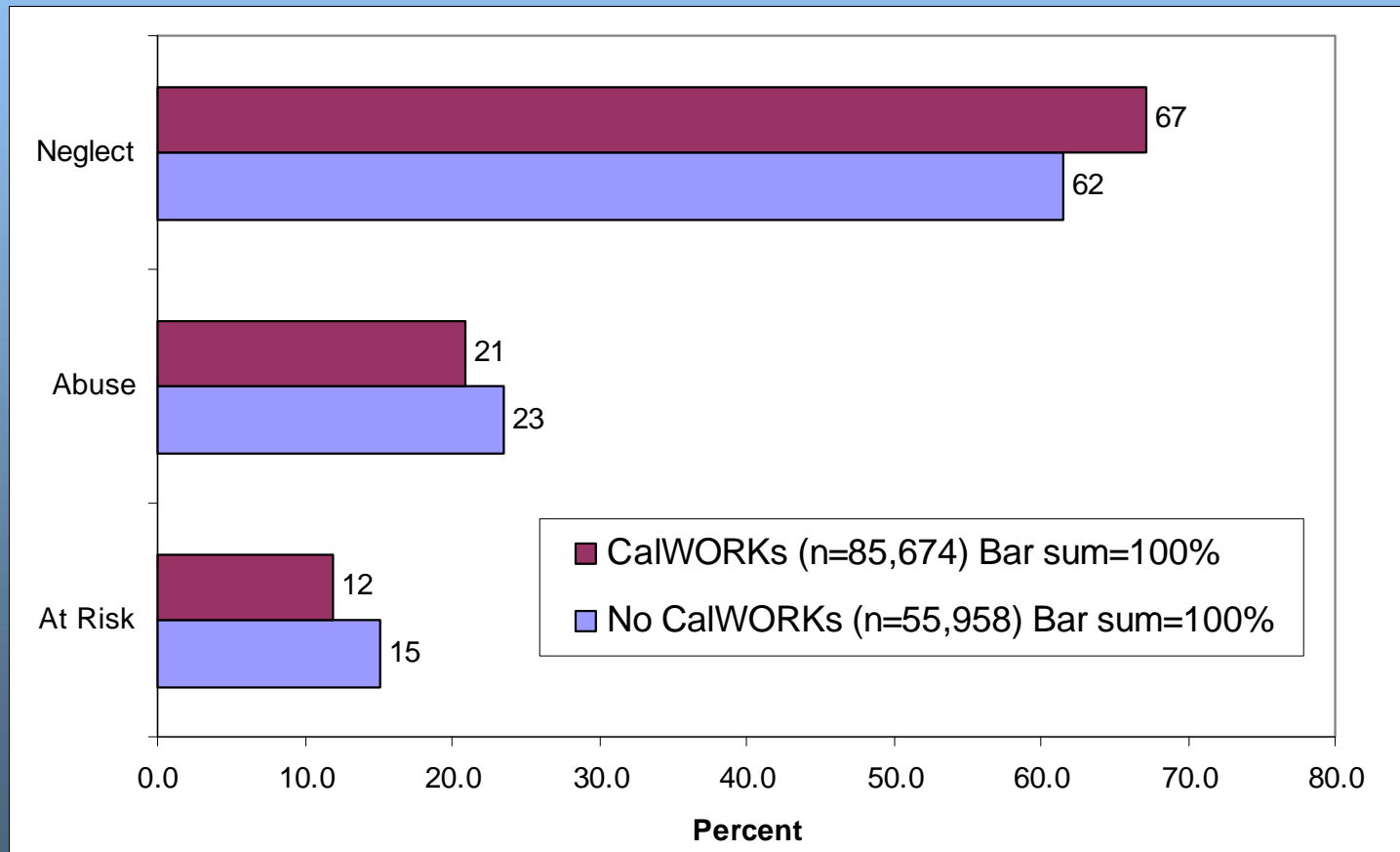
Does CalWORKs aid history differ by age at time of entry into current CWS case? Yes.

Children of ages 5-9 are most likely to have had CalWORKs aid.  
Children of ages 0-4 are most likely to have no CalWORKs aid.



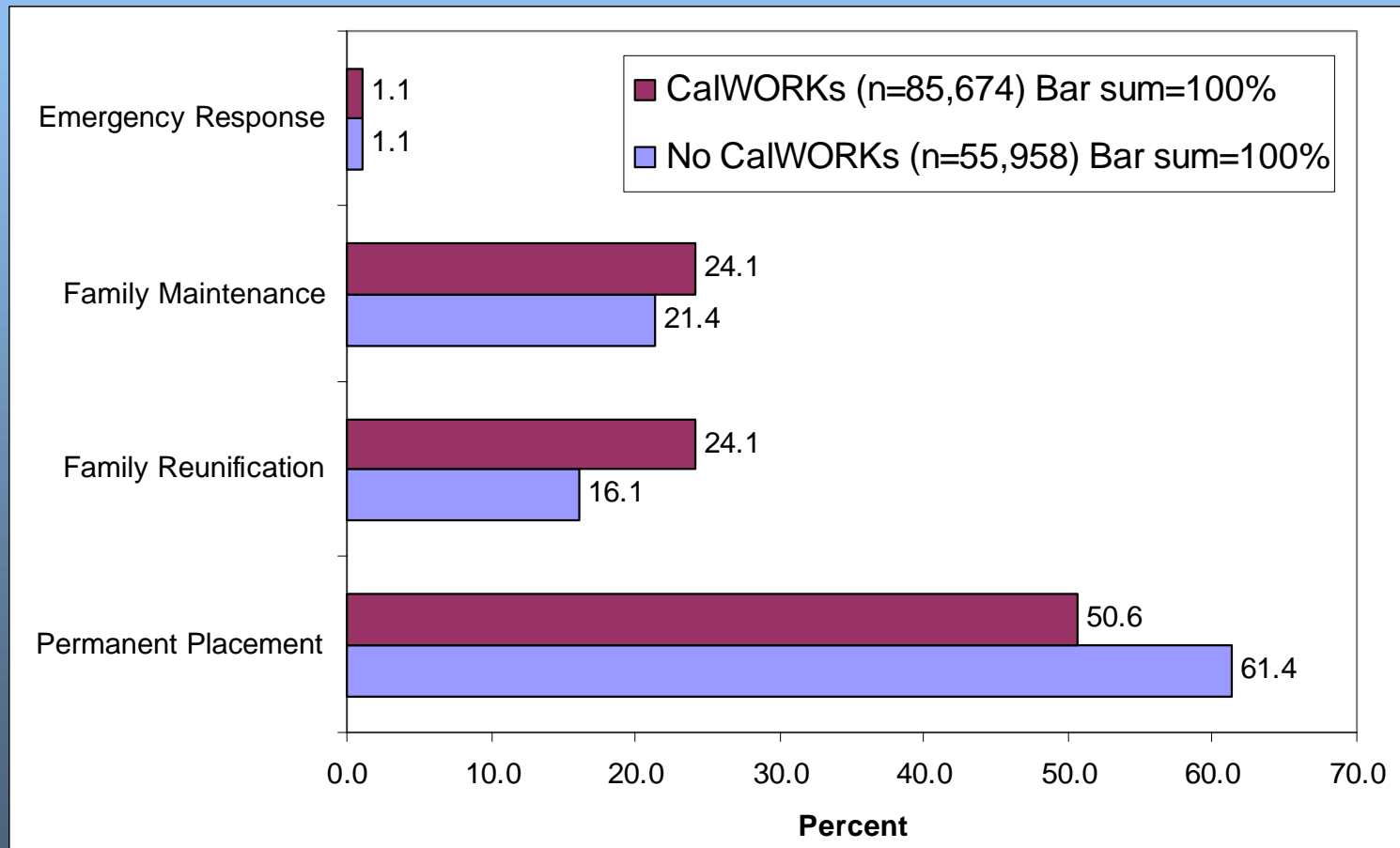
## Are there differences in referral reason for children with and without CalWORKs aid before entry into CWS?

Yes, slightly. Children with CalWORKs history are more likely to be referred for neglect (though this is not a statistically significant difference).



Are there differences in CWS service component for children with and without CalWORKs aid histories?

Yes. Children with CalWORKs history are more likely to be receiving Family Reunification services and less likely to be in Permanent Placement.



## Is the Child Welfare Services rate correlated with welfare use and economic indicators ? Yes.

- Counties with high Child Welfare Services rates have:
  - higher AFDC/CalWORKs rates (r= 0.80) \*
  - higher family poverty rates (r= 0.74) \*
  - higher unemployment rates (r= 0.48) \*

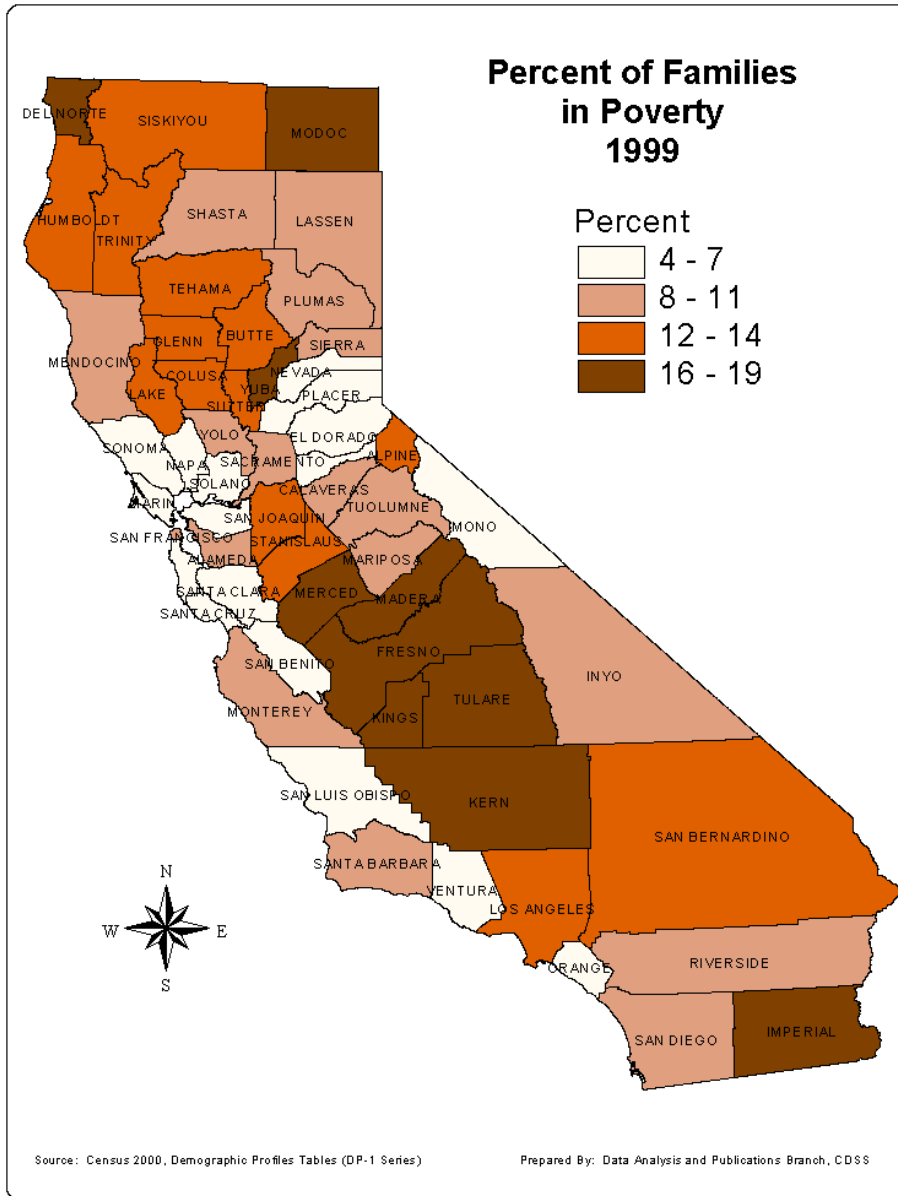
Significance: \* <.0001 for correlation of ranks, n= 58 counties

Does the percent of children entering Child Welfare Services from CalWORKs correlate with welfare use, economic indicators, and county population size?  
Yes.

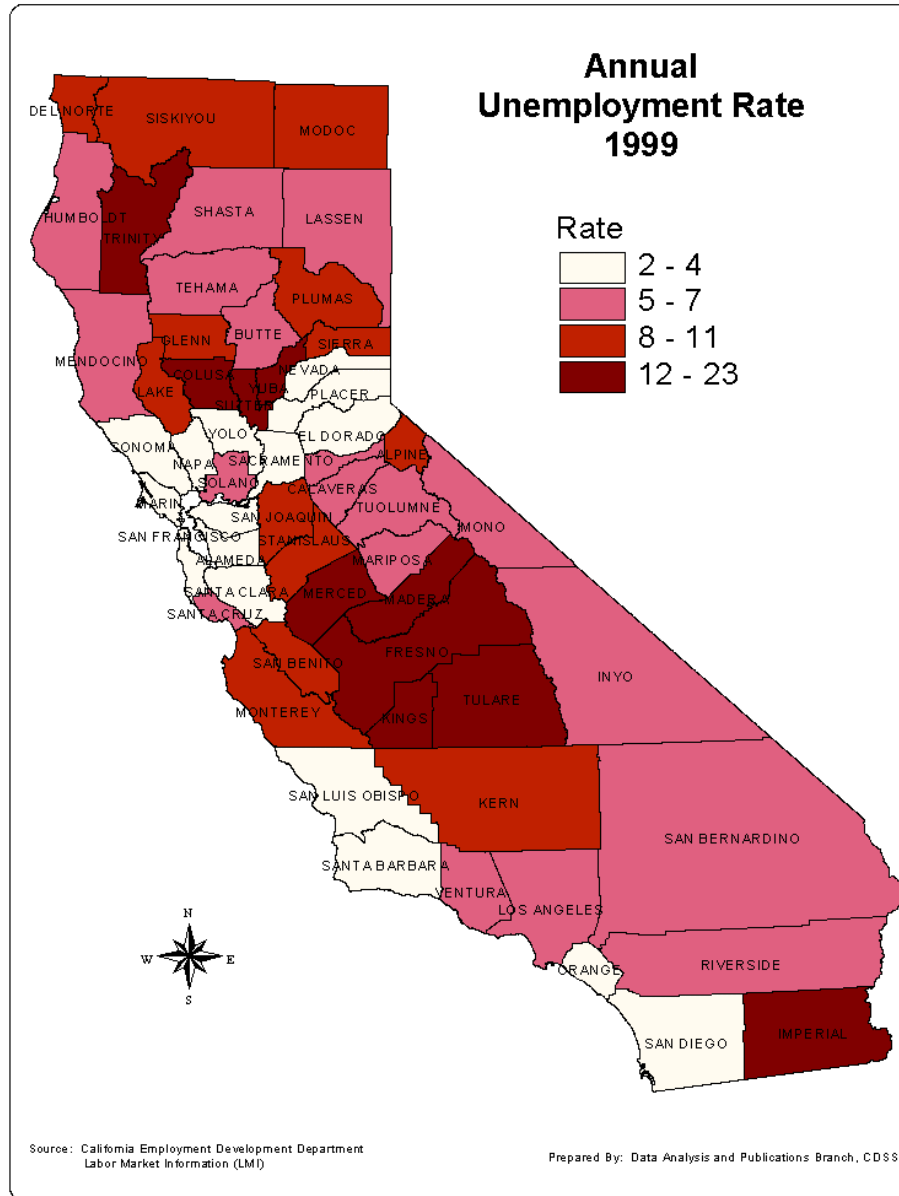
- Counties with high percentages of CWS children entering from AFDC/CalWORKs have:
  - higher CalWORKs rates (r= 0.56) \*
  - higher family poverty rates (r= 0.59) \*
  - higher unemployment rates (r= 0.58) \*
  - *smaller* county population size (r= -0.54) \*

Significance: \* <.0001 for correlation of ranks, n= 58 counties





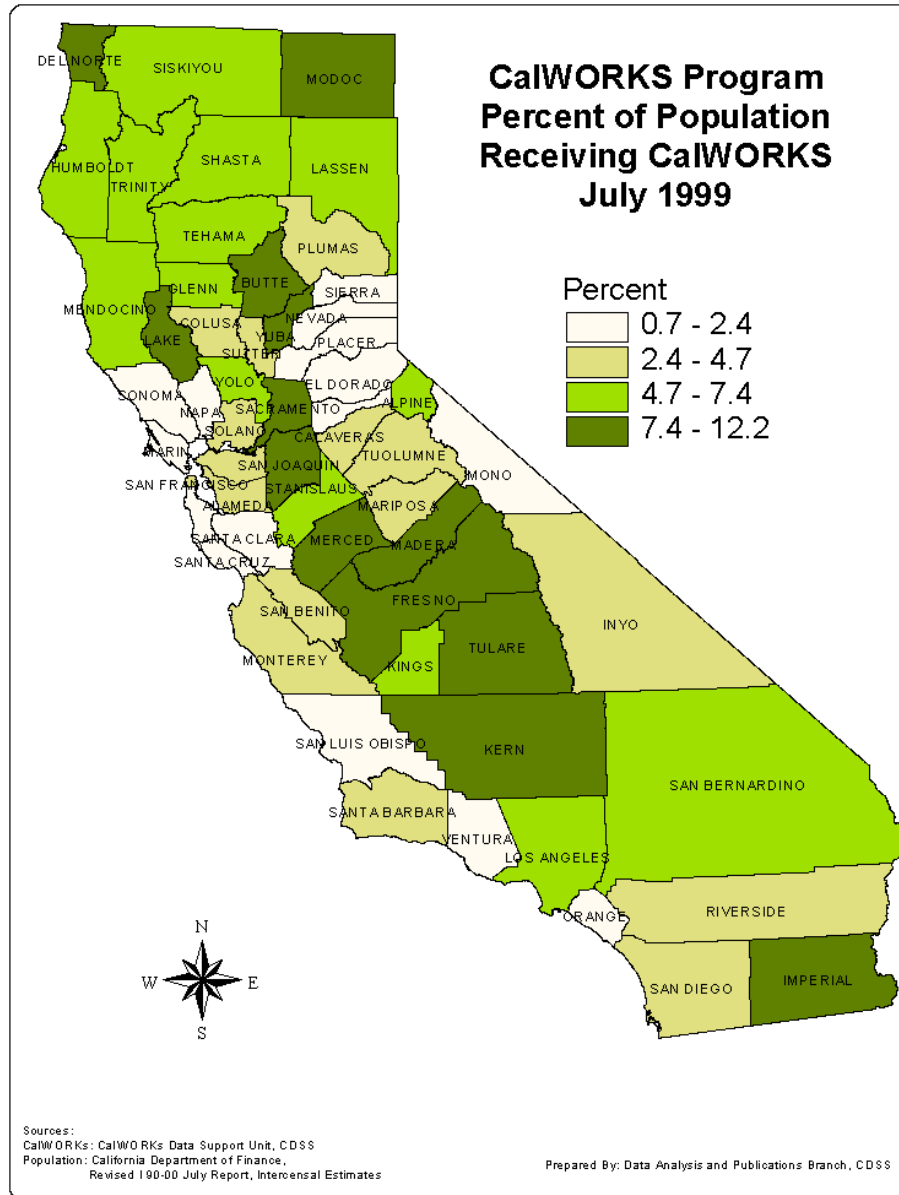
# Poverty



## Unemployment

Similar to:

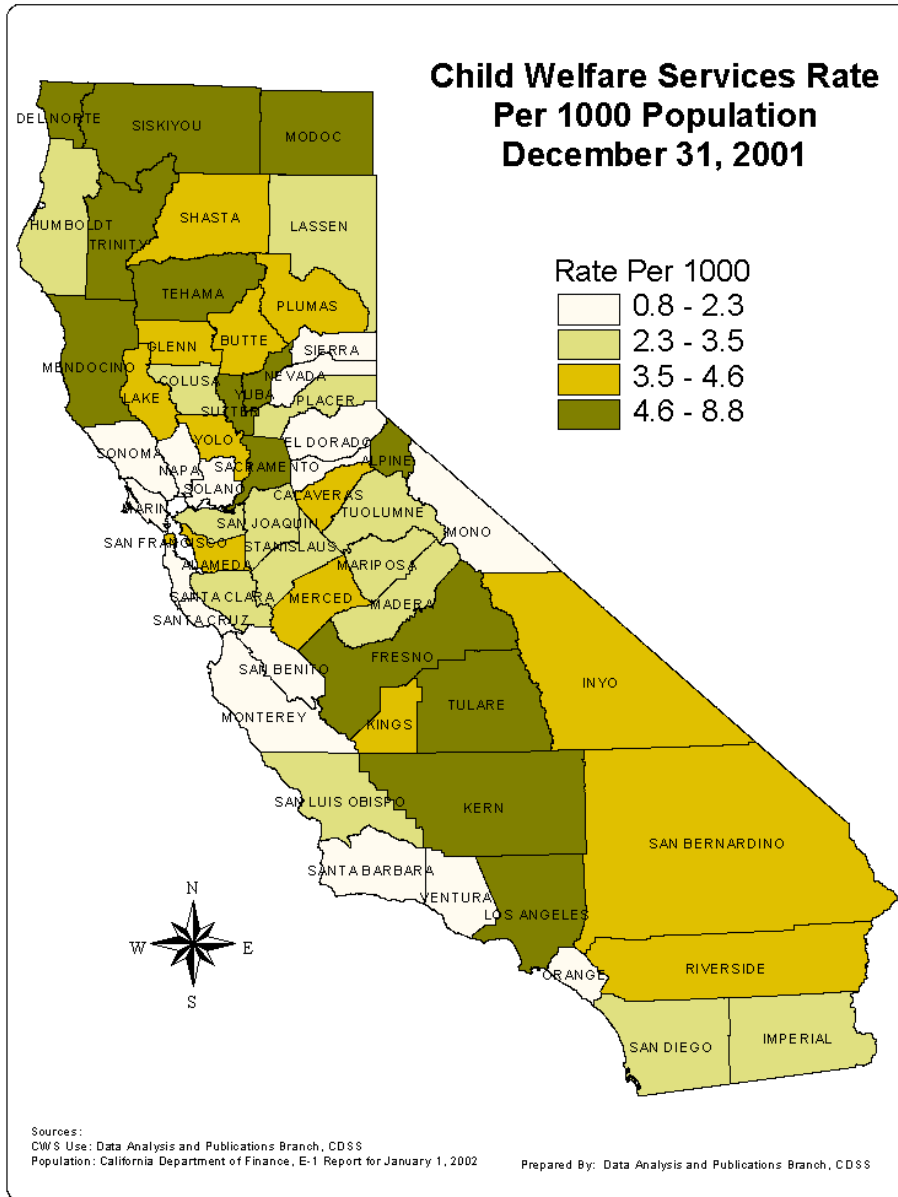
- poverty map



## CalWORKS

Similar to:

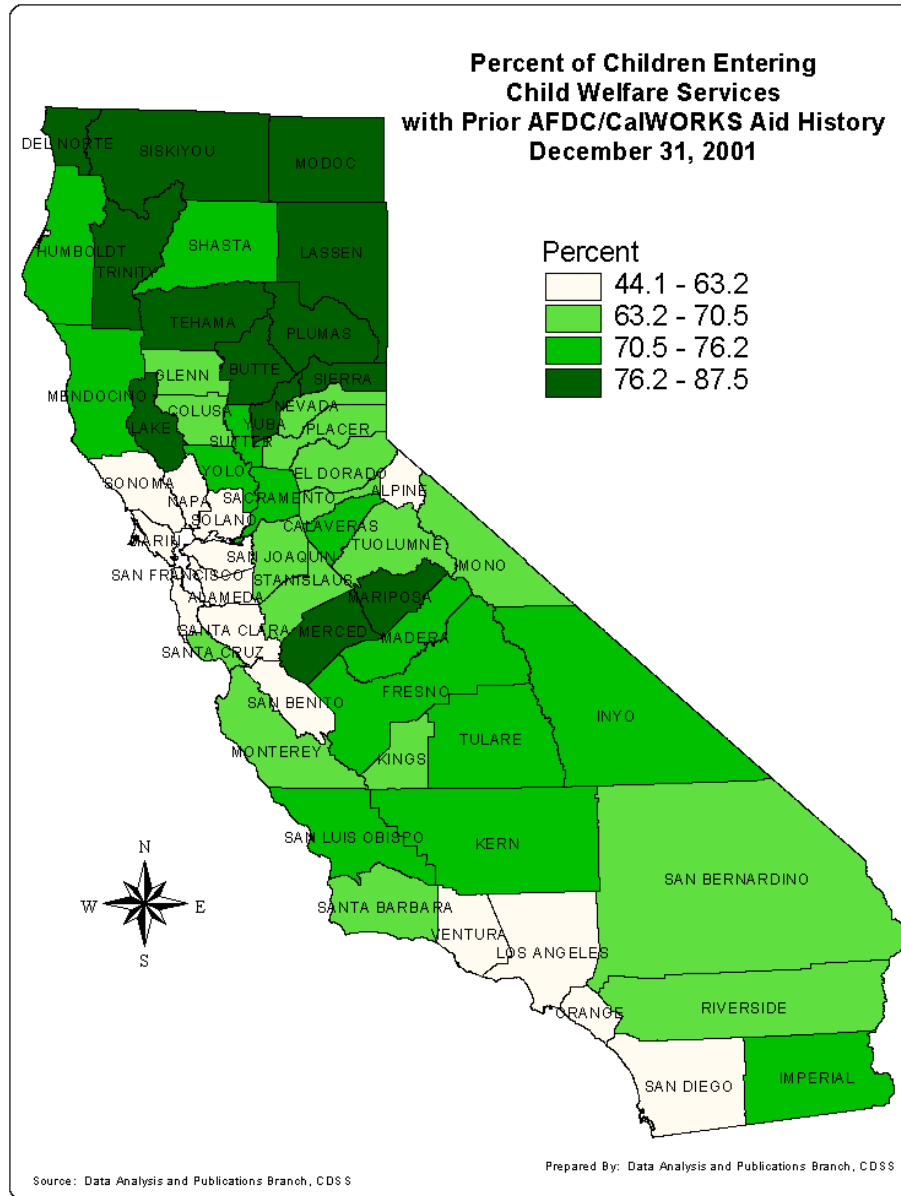
- poverty map
- unemployment map



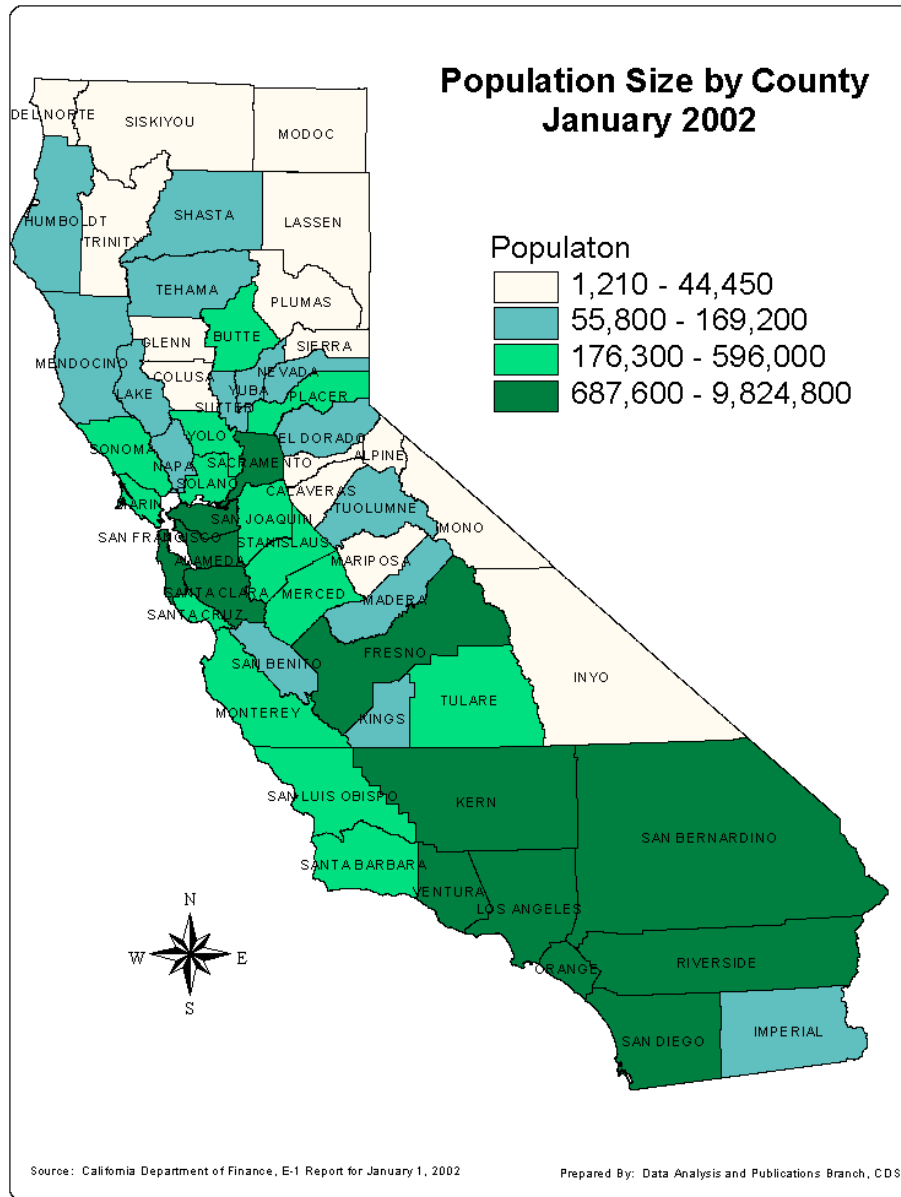
## CWS Use

Broadly similar to:

- poverty map
- unemployment map
- CalWORKs map



## Children in CWS with Prior AFDC or CalWORKS



# Population

## Which county characteristics best predict Child Welfare Services use?

- Variables to be predicted:
  - Child Welfare Services use rate (CWS children per 1000 persons in county)
  - Percent of children with AFDC/CalWORKs before CWS
- Candidate predictor variables:
  - AFDC/CalWORKs use rate
  - unemployment rate
  - family poverty rate
  - population size

## Which county characteristics best predict Child Welfare Services use?

Controlling for the other variables in a regression model, significant variables with association directions are indicated below:  
(+) positive association; (-) negative association

- Child Welfare Services use rate is predicted by all four variables:
  - AFDC/CalWORKs use rate (+)
  - unemployment rate (-)
  - family poverty rate (+)
  - county population size (-) (Model Adjusted R-square=0.64,  $p<.0001$ )
- Percent of children entering CWS with AFDC/CalWORKs aid is predicted by two variables:
  - AFDC/CalWORKs use rate (+)
  - county population size (-) (Model Adjusted R-square 0.44,  $p<.0001$ )



# Conclusions - 1

- It may be helpful to integrate CalWORKs with CWS services, since 60 percent of CWS children enter with a history of AFDC or CalWORKs aid
- Demographic characteristics for CWS children with and without CalWORKs aid history are quite similar
- But there are some differences:
  - Children entering CWS with CalWORKs are most likely to be ages 5-9
  - Children entering CWS without CalWORKs are likely to be the youngest, ages 0-4
  - American Indian and White children show highest CalWORKs rates
  - African American and Asian children show lowest CalWORKs rates
  - More CalWORKs children are receiving Family Reunification services than might be expected

# Conclusions - 2

- County economic conditions matter. Use of Child Welfare Services and the percent of children entering Child Welfare Services from welfare are associated with:
  - Higher rates of families in poverty
  - Higher unemployment rates
- Therefore, **strategies for prevention and resolution of child welfare cases must include family poverty issues**

# Limitations of this analysis

- Lack of detailed information about children's families that might be useful for prevention and services planning (e.g., income, education, substance abuse issues, residential stability)
- The percent of CalWORKs children who subsequently entered CWS (2%) was determined for a one-day cross-section of open cases in CWS. Children who left CWS before that date are not included in this analysis.
- The percent of CWS children entering from CalWORKS (60%) may be underestimated because of:
  - Missing Social Security Numbers in CWS/CMS data and Medi-Cal eligibility data. Linking data files without SSN is more difficult. Affected may be children less than 5 years old and undocumented immigrants.
  - Time boundaries in data used for matching. About 10% (or 13,826) children in CWS on December 31, 2001 started their current case before 1993, the earliest date in the Medi-Cal eligibility file used here.

# Strengths of this analysis

- The data files used here cover the universe of aided populations for Child Welfare Services (CWS/CMS) and CalWORKs (MEDS). These data are not sampled, so they are free of sampling error.
- Strong record linkage methodology, requiring three passes through the data to obtain exact matches using:
  - Pass 1: SSN + Unique Identifier
  - Pass 2: SSN only
  - Pass 3: Unique Identifier only
- County patterns in CWS use are linked to socioeconomic data
- Statistically significant patterns provide data-based evidence for policy

# APPENDIX

## Acronyms

- AFDC - Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Federal welfare program before TANF.
- CalWORKs - California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, the state version of TANF, enacted by California on January 1, 1998.
- CWS - Child Welfare Services. Also called Child Protective Services in many counties.
- CWS/CMS - Child Welfare Services/Case Management System. Statewide database system for CWS implemented in California in 1998.
- MEDS - Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System. Statewide data system maintained by California Department of Health Services.
- TANF - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Federal welfare program superseding AFDC, established by Public Law 104-193 on August 22, 1996.

Overlap Definition:  
AFDC/CalWORKs aid code must be found in MEDS file *before*  
start date of current CWS case.

### CalWORKs Aid Codes in MEDS File Used to Define CalWORKs Child Population

- 30 CalWORKs - All Families
- 32 CalWORKs - All Families-State Only (cash)
- 33 CalWORKs - Zero Parent-State Only (cash)
- 35 CalWORKs - 2 Parent -State Only (cash)
- 3L CalWORKs - Legal Immigrant - All Families - State Only
- 3M CalWORKs - Legal Immigrant - 2 Parent - State Only
- 3E CalWORKs - Legal Immigrant - All Families- Mixed
- 3P CalWORKs - All Families - Exempt
- 3R CalWORKs - Zero Parent - Exempt
- 3J CalWORKs - Diversion - All Families
- 3K CalWORKs - Diversion - 2 Parent
- 3X CalWORKs - Diversion - All Families - State Only
- 3Y CalWORKs - Diversion - 2 Parent - State Only
- 3G CalWORKs - Zero Parent - Exempt - State Only
- 3H CalWORKs - Zero Parent - Mixed
- 3U CalWORKs - Legal Immigrant - 2 Parent - Mixed

## Rate Definitions

- CWS Use Rate = number of children with open CWS cases / county population x 1000
- AFDC/CalWORKs Use Rate = number of AFDC or CalWORKs recipients in county / county population x 100
- CalWORKs Before CWS Rate = number of children with AFDC or CalWORKs aid code in MEDS data before start date of current CWS case / number of open CWS cases x 100





## Data Sources

**Note: Internet locations are current as of publication date.**

1. Number of children with open CWS cases. Source: California Department of Social Services. Extract by David J. Dodds from CWS/CMS database, for open cases on December 31, 2001.
2. Number of children with CalWORKs aid code before current open case in CWS. Source: California Department of Social Services Matching by David J. Dodds between MEDS Medi-Cal Eligibility files 1993-2001 and CWS/CMS database extracts. MEDS data were prepared with the assistance of Paul Smilanick.
3. County Population. Source: California Department of Finance.  
1999 Population: Revised I 90-00 July, Intercensal Estimates.  
Internet: [www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/I90-00.doc](http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/I90-00.doc)  
2002 Population: E-1 Report 2002 for January 1, 2002.  
Internet: [www.dof.ca.gov/html/demograp/e-1text.htm](http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/demograp/e-1text.htm)
4. Persons Receiving CalWORKs Aid. Source: California Department of Social Services. CA 237, July 1, 1999. RADD/CalWORKs file of Feb 25, 2002.
5. Unemployment Rate. Source: California Employment Development Department.  
Annual Average Labor Force Data For Counties Year 1999; 2001 Benchmark; Not Seasonally Adjusted  
Internet: [www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfhist/99aacou.txt](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfhist/99aacou.txt)
6. Family Poverty Rate. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000, Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000.  
Internet: <http://censtats.census.gov/pub/Profiles.shtml>

## Acknowledgments

- Lydia Ayon: Maps
- Greg Jones: CalWORKs aid code interpretation
- Arnita Paige: CWS/CMS database assistance
- Paul Smilanick: Medi-Cal eligibility data file preparation
- Mary Tran, Ph.D., M.P.H.: General supervision
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- Helpful reviews and comments made by:
  - CDSS, Children and Family Services staff
  - CDSS, Welfare-to-Work staff
  - CDSS, Data Analysis and Publications Branch staff, especially Children's Program Team members

## Data Tables See Spreadsheets

Table 1. CWS Children With Open Cases on December 31, 2001 (n=141,632)  
 Comparison of Groups With and Without CalWORKS Aid History

	CalWORKS (n=85,674) (60.49%)	No CalWORKS (n=55,958) (39.51%)	CalWORKS to No CalWORKS Ratio
<b>GENDER</b>			
Male	49.88	50.27	0.99
Female	50.11	49.62	1.01
Unknown	0.01	0.11	0.09
Sum	100.00	100.00	
<b>AGE GROUP</b>			
0-4	32.32	62.17	0.52
5-9	36.39	17.73	2.05
10-14	24.76	13.34	1.86
15-19	6.53	6.76	0.97
Sum	100.00	100.00	
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>			
Hispanic	35.12	33.16	1.06
White	32.30	25.85	1.25
African American	28.05	35.48	0.79
Asian	2.26	2.83	0.80
American Indian	1.53	1.11	1.38
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.30	0.36	0.83
Unknown	0.44	1.21	0.36
Sum	100.00	100.00	
<b>REFERRAL REASON</b>			
Neglect	67.13	61.52	1.09
Abuse	20.95	23.44	0.89
At Risk	11.93	15.04	0.79
Sum	100.01	100.00	
<b>PRIMARY LANGUAGE</b>			
English	89.04	84.01	1.06
Spanish	9.45	13.44	0.70
Asian Languages	0.94	0.83	1.13
Other	0.57	1.72	0.33
Sum	100.00	100.00	
<b>SERVICE COMPONENT</b>			
ER: Emergency Response	1.13	1.09	1.04
FM: Family Maintenance	24.14	21.4	1.13
FR: Family Reunification	24.09	16.13	1.49
PP: Permanent Placement	50.64	61.38	0.83
Sum	100.00	100.00	

Table 2. County Data

	CWS Children With Open Data: Cases Number	CWS Children with CalWORKs Number	CalWORKs Population Number	County Population Number	County Population Number	CWS Use Rate (per 1000)	CWS Children with Prior CalWORKs (percent)	Population Receiving CalWORKs (percent)	Annual Unemployment Rate (percent)	Families in Poverty (percent)
Time Period: Source:	Dec 31, 2001 CDSS	Dec 31, 2001 CDSS	July 1, 1999 CDSS	July 1, 1999 CA DOF	Jan 1, 2002 CA DOF	Dec 31, 2001 derived	Dec 31, 2001 derived	July 1, 1999 derived	Year 1999 CA EDD	Year 1999 US Census
County										
ALAMEDA	6,252	3,288	66,935	1,423,300	1,486,600	4.2	52.6	4.7	3.5	7.7
ALPINE	6	3	72	1,170	1,210	5.0	50.0	6.2	9.1	12.0
AMADOR	84	59	740	34,750	36,100	2.3	70.2	2.1	4.6	6.1
BUTTE	948	752	15,482	201,600	207,000	4.6	79.3	7.7	6.8	12.2
CALAVERAS	170	123	1,451	40,300	41,700	4.1	72.4	3.6	6.9	8.7
COLUSA	57	39	521	18,600	19,450	2.9	68.4	2.8	15.9	13.0
CONTRA COSTA	3,189	1,885	29,587	937,200	981,600	3.2	59.1	3.2	3.0	5.4
DEL NORTE	244	195	2,520	27,500	27,850	8.8	79.9	9.2	8.0	16.4
EL DORADO	322	221	2,704	154,500	163,600	2.0	68.6	1.8	3.9	5.0
FRESNO	4,267	3,153	81,327	789,700	826,600	5.2	73.9	10.3	13.4	17.6
GLENN	108	71	1,820	26,300	26,800	4.0	65.7	6.9	11.2	12.5
HUMBOLDT	403	303	7,864	126,400	127,700	3.2	75.2	6.2	6.4	12.9
IMPERIAL	520	396	14,475	140,800	150,800	3.4	76.2	10.3	23.4	19.4
INYO	84	61	719	18,050	18,250	4.6	72.6	4.0	5.7	9.3
KERN	3,809	2,697	54,527	653,400	687,600	5.5	70.8	8.3	11.4	16.8
KINGS	569	373	7,443	127,400	133,100	4.3	65.6	5.8	13.1	15.8
LAKE	277	217	5,189	57,600	60,300	4.6	78.3	9.0	7.7	12.9
LASSEN	110	85	1,856	33,650	34,200	3.2	77.3	5.5	7.0	11.1
LOS ANGELES	55,752	30,335	635,176	9,394,200	9,824,800	5.7	54.4	6.8	5.9	14.4
MADERA	438	333	9,528	121,700	129,700	3.4	76.0	7.8	11.6	15.9
MARIN	243	116	2,189	244,900	249,900	1.0	47.7	0.9	1.9	3.7
MARIPOSA	56	43	630	16,950	17,250	3.2	76.8	3.7	7.4	10.5
MENDOCINO	675	487	5,089	85,800	87,700	7.7	72.1	5.9	6.7	10.9
MERCED	933	737	21,886	207,500	218,900	4.3	79.0	10.5	13.3	16.9
MODOC	51	43	713	9,425	9,350	5.5	84.3	7.6	8.5	16.4
MONO	10	7	158	12,600	13,250	0.8	70.0	1.3	6.7	6.3
MONTEREY	543	351	13,431	394,600	409,600	1.3	64.6	3.4	9.6	9.7
NAPA	205	123	1,512	122,800	128,000	1.6	60.0	1.2	3.3	5.6
NEVADA	136	93	1,457	90,900	95,300	1.4	68.4	1.6	4.1	5.5

Table 2. County Data

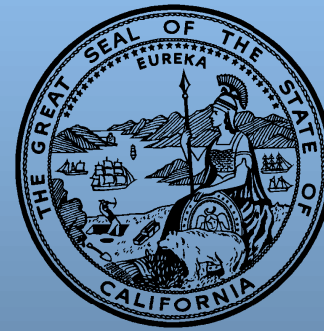
ORANGE	6,501	3,669	58,033	2,802,800	2,939,500	2.2	56.4	2.1	2.6	7.0
PLACER	770	543	4,141	243,300	264,900	2.9	70.5	1.7	3.2	3.9
PLUMAS	82	64	670	20,750	21,000	3.9	78.0	3.2	9.0	9.0
RIVERSIDE	6,884	4,542	67,945	1,514,600	1,644,300	4.2	66.0	4.5	5.4	10.7
SACRAMENTO	7,729	5,603	112,488	1,204,600	1,279,900	6.0	72.5	9.3	4.2	10.3
SAN BENITO	115	71	1,462	52,200	55,900	2.1	61.7	2.8	8.0	6.7
SAN BERNARDINO	7,255	5,021	113,245	1,683,200	1,783,700	4.1	69.2	6.7	4.8	12.6
SAN DIEGO	9,990	5,760	100,009	2,776,300	2,918,300	3.4	57.7	3.6	3.1	8.9
SAN FRANCISCO	3,013	1,329	19,785	766,500	793,600	3.8	44.1	2.6	3.0	7.8
SAN JOAQUIN	2,100	1,380	46,267	554,700	596,000	3.5	65.7	8.3	8.8	13.5
SAN LUIS OBISPO	682	485	5,060	243,700	253,600	2.7	71.1	2.1	3.2	6.8
SAN MATEO	842	387	5,235	700,800	717,000	1.2	46.0	0.7	2.0	3.5
SANTA BARBARA	497	319	10,829	394,900	407,900	1.2	64.2	2.7	3.9	8.5
SANTA CLARA	4,323	2,708	39,547	1,665,600	1,719,600	2.5	62.6	2.4	3.0	4.9
SANTA CRUZ	514	332	5,896	253,200	260,200	2.0	64.6	2.3	6.3	6.7
SHASTA	774	559	11,994	162,200	169,200	4.6	72.2	7.4	7.0	11.3
SIERRA	8	7	90	3,780	3,500	2.3	87.5	2.4	9.2	9.0
SISKIYOU	256	199	2,805	44,250	44,450	5.8	77.7	6.3	10.3	14.0
SOLANO	923	583	16,724	388,300	405,800	2.3	63.2	4.3	4.6	6.1
SONOMA	1,022	624	7,622	453,500	471,000	2.2	61.1	1.7	2.7	4.7
STANISLAUS	1,266	892	27,831	440,900	469,500	2.7	70.5	6.3	10.5	12.3
SUTTER	406	293	3,689	78,000	81,900	5.0	72.2	4.7	13.0	12.1
TEHAMA	311	250	3,570	55,500	56,900	5.5	80.4	6.4	6.7	13.0
TRINITY	80	65	800	13,050	13,100	6.1	81.3	6.1	11.5	14.1
TULARE	1,859	1,394	35,733	364,300	379,200	4.9	75.0	9.8	16.5	18.8
TUOLUMNE	172	119	2,276	54,100	55,800	3.1	69.2	4.2	6.5	8.1
VENTURA	1,030	649	17,024	742,800	780,100	1.3	63.0	2.3	4.8	6.4
YOLO	651	480	8,198	165,300	176,300	3.7	73.7	5.0	4.3	9.5
YUBA	497	388	7,365	60,200	61,000	8.1	78.1	12.2	11.6	16.3

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