

**Legal Immigration To California In
Federal Fiscal Year 1996**

**State of California
Gray Davis, Governor**

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LEGAL IMMIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA, FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 1996

Immigration to the United States in 1996

Besides natural increase (births minus deaths) and interstate migration, immigration is the other factor that impacts California's population growth. As this report shows, California continues its historic designation as the top-ranked destination state for immigrants.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) admitted over 900,000 immigrants as legalized permanent residents (LPRs) to the United States in federal fiscal year 1996¹. About 200,000 or 22 percent listed California as the intended state of residence, whereas in 1996 California comprised only 12 percent of the nation's total population. In fact, the top six receiving states account for 69 percent of 1996 admissions, while making up only 38 percent of the U.S. population (Table 1). The population-to-immigrant ratio² reflects the 1996 population estimate and the number of immigrants selecting to reside in that state in 1996. While California received the most immigrants, two states -- New York and New Jersey -- have a lower population-to-immigrant ratio.

Table 1: Top Receiving States for Legal Immigrants, FFY 1996
(State of intended residence)

	Percent of Immigrants	Percent of U.S. Population	Population: Immigration Ratio
California	22	12	158:1
New York	17	7	118:1
Texas	9	7	233:1
Florida	9	5	181:1
New Jersey	7	3	126:1
Illinois	5	4	278:1
Total	69%	38%	

Sources: INS Public Use Tape FFY 1996; INS Statistical Yearbook FFY 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census

¹ Federal fiscal year runs from October through September of the indicated year.

² The population estimate would include immigrants, so the measure is not a perfect ratio, but does illustrate the point.

Admissions

In 1996, over 900,000 immigrants were *admitted* to the U.S., of which about 200,000 were intending to reside in California. There is a distinction between *arrival* and *admission*. *Admission* is the term used by INS for immigrants processed as legal permanent residents in a given fiscal year and can indicate either arrival through a port of entry (a traditional notion of immigration) or a *change in status* to legal permanent resident regardless of year of entry into the United States. For example, a person may have arrived in 1975 and gained admittance as a legal immigrant in 1996 (Table 2). In fact, over 80,000 (41 percent) immigrants admitted in 1996 and intending to reside in California arrived prior to 1995. About half of this number (41,000) arrived before 1991. Rather than being recent arrivals in this country, these immigrants are going through a change in status (“adjusting”) and are now being counted as a new admission.

Adding to the complexity of admissions are changes in processing. Changes in immigration law in 1995 mandated that the INS process paperwork, which formerly had been the responsibility of the U.S. State Department. This led to a backlog of hundreds of thousands of applications for legal permanent resident status.³ Therefore, increases or decreases from year-to-year may be over- or understated. *Year-to-year* changes in admissions simply denote the difference in the number of immigrants *processed* from fiscal year to year either as recent arrivals (flow) or status changes (stock). Admissions are a combination of events (flow and stock) that can be influenced by processing delays.

Table 2: Year of Entry, Adjusters*, FFY 1996

Pre-1988	18,374
1988	7,473
1989	7,748
1990	7,387
1991	7,324
1992	6,141
1993	7,521
1994	20,368
1995	15,897
1996	<u>1,316</u>
Total	99,549

Unknowns=1,387

*Includes Refugees and Asylees

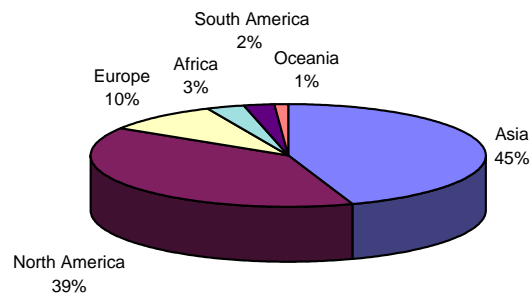
Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

³ (1996 Statistical Yearbook of the INS, p.13)

Region and Country of Birth

In 1996, immigrants from Asia numbered highest among admissions in California (Figure 1). Immigrants from North America, largely from Mexico, ranked a close second (Table 3). Mexico is the biggest sending country, outpacing the number two country -- the Philippines -- by more than two and a half times. Vietnam and China are the third and fourth largest in admissions. The top four countries represented over half of all admissions attributed to California in 1996, with Mexico alone contributing nearly one-third of the year's admissions, dominating the immigration picture for California. The number of admissions from Mexico was nearly double the number in 1995 (33,467) and about 25 percent higher than in 1994 (49,964). The number of admissions from the Philippines and China was fairly close to admissions in the prior year. Vietnam showed a decrease of about 3,000 admissions, or 19 percent. Among the top six states for immigration listed in Table 1, Mexico led in admissions to California, Texas, and Illinois.

Figure 1
Immigrants Admitted by Region, California, FFY 1996



Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

Table 3: Immigrants Admitted by Country of Birth, California, FFY 1996

<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>Number of Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
1. Mexico	62,550	31.4
2. Philippines	23,421	11.7
3. Vietnam	13,549	6.8
4. China, mainland	10,863	5.4
5. India	7,751	3.9
6. El Salvador	6,715	3.4
7. Taiwan	6,061	3.0
8. Iran	4,762	2.4
9. Korea	4,424	2.2
10. Guatemala	3,580	1.8
11. Hong Kong	3,399	1.7
12. Ukraine	2,630	1.3
13. Russia	2,377	1.2
14. United Kingdom	2,148	1.1
15. Armenia	1,955	1.0
All Other	<u>43,298</u>	<u>25.7</u>
Total	199,483	100.0

Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

Major Category of Admission

Immigrants can enter under one of several categories of admission. Type of admission is divided among three classifications: new arrivals, adjustments, and refugees and asylees. Adjustments and refugees and asylees are status changes to legal permanent resident. Refugees and asylees must wait approximately one year to apply for LPR status. New arrivals are what one might think of as the typical immigrant scenario: immigrants arriving at a port of entry, having applied from their home country for LPR status in the United States. The major categories are given in Table 4 with information by type of admission.

The major categories of admission are also differentiated by cap restrictions. The first three listed in Table 4 are subject to a numerical cap or limit. The caps are not always hard limits, however, and can be increased. The remaining categories are not subject to numeric limits, but this does not appear to lead to overwhelming numbers in the exempt categories (Table 4). In fact, for both new arrivals and adjustments, the admissions under the capped categories outnumber those under the exempt.

Table 4: Immigration by Major Category of Admission, California, FFY 1996

MAJOR CATEGORY	New Arrivals		Adjustments		Refugees and Asylees		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Subject to Numerical Cap								
Family-Sponsored	54,245	55.0	32,247	40.0	--	--	86,492	43.4
Employment-Based	5,616	5.7	13,060	16.2	--	--	18,676	9.4
Diversity Programs	7,132	7.2	1,407	1.7	--	--	8,539	4.3
Exempt from Numerical Cap								
Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens	31,010	31.5	30,394	37.7	--	--	61,404	30.8
Refugees and Asylees	--	--	--	--	20,233	100.0	20,233	10.1
Other	544	0.6	3,595	4.5	--	--	4,139	2.1
Total	98,547	100.0	80,703	100.0	20,233	100.0	199,483	100.0

Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

*Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Both new arrivals and adjusters gain admission largely through family relationships either in the capped or exempt categories. Family-sponsored immigrants subject to the numerical cap can include relatives of U.S. citizens as well as relatives of legal permanent resident aliens. Employment-based immigrants are more likely to be adjusters as opposed to new arrivals. Diversity programs are available to natives of countries that were limited by the 1965 Act.⁴

County of Intended Residence

Not surprisingly, Los Angeles County exceeds by a significant proportion the next ranking county, San Diego, as the intended county of residence (Table 5). San Diego ranked fourth in the prior year with 7.1 percent. Riverside moved into the top ten in 1996 while ranking twelfth in the prior year. Fresno dropped from the top ten to fourteenth in 1996. The top ten counties comprise roughly eighty percent of admissions, essentially unchanged from 1994 and 1995.

⁴ Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965

Table 5: Top Twenty Counties of Intended Residence, FFY 1996

	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Los Angeles	63,794	32.1
2. San Diego	18,049	9.1
3. Orange	17,598	8.9
4. Santa Clara	13,735	6.9
5. Alameda	10,819	5.4
6. San Francisco	10,438	5.3
7. San Mateo	6,671	3.4
8. Sacramento	6,342	3.2
9. San Bernardino	5,225	2.6
10. Riverside	5,164	2.6
11. Contra Costa	4,921	2.5
12. San Joaquin	3,497	1.8
13. Ventura	3,466	1.7
14. Fresno	3,364	1.7
15. Monterey	2,454	1.2
16. Stanislaus	2,306	1.2
17. Santa Barbara	2,077	1.0
18. Kern	2,008	1.0
19. Imperial	1,821	0.9
20. Solano	1,681	0.8
Other counties	13,269	6.7

Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996 (unknown counties excluded)

Table 6 lists the top eight countries of birth for immigrants in selected counties. Treated as a single group, immigrants from Asian countries remain predominant among admissions in California. Immigrants born in Mexico tended to settle in three southern California counties, San Diego, San Bernardino, and Riverside. Immigrants from Mexico held the first or second place in admissions in eight of the counties listed. In Santa Clara and San Francisco, Mexico ranked third and fifth place, respectively. The Philippines ranked first or second in seven of the ten counties listed. Somalia was the only African country to be listed among the top eight countries of birth for the ten counties and the United Kingdom was the only representative of western Europe in Table 6. Ukraine was among top admissions in San Francisco and Sacramento, and Russia was in the top eight countries of birth in San Francisco.

Table 6: Selected County of Intended Residence and Country of Birth, FFY 1996

Los Angeles	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>	San Diego	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Mexico	16,282	25.5	Mexico	7,651	42.4
Philippines	6,738	10.6	Philippines	3,331	18.5
El Salvador	4,347	6.8	Vietnam	1,165	6.5
China	3,364	5.3	Iraq	526	2.9
Taiwan	2,819	4.4	China	456	2.5
Guatemala	2,468	3.9	Iran	332	1.8
Vietnam	2,407	3.8	Somalia	256	1.4
Korea	2,353	3.7	United Kingdom	222	1.2
Other	23,016	36.0	Other	4,110	22.8
Orange	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>	Santa Clara	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Vietnam	4,697	26.7	Vietnam	2,390	17.4
Mexico	4,636	26.3	Philippines	2,047	14.9
Philippines	1,085	6.2	Mexico	1,704	12.4
Taiwan	702	4.0	India	1,399	10.2
Korea	677	3.8	Taiwan	960	7.0
Iran	654	3.7	China	883	6.4
India	551	3.1	Iran	455	3.3
China	387	2.2	Korea	267	1.9
Other	4,209	24.0	Other	3,630	26.5
Alameda	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>	San Francisco	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Philippines	1,794	16.6	China	2,606	25.0
Mexico	1,473	13.6	Philippines	1,360	13.0
China	1,360	12.6	Hong Kong	705	6.8
India	949	8.8	Ukraine	595	5.7
Vietnam	648	6.0	Mexico	474	4.5
Hong Kong	405	3.7	El Salvador	434	4.2
Taiwan	385	3.6	Vietnam	391	3.7
Fiji	307	2.8	Russia	364	3.5
Other	3,498	32.3	Other	3,509	33.6
San Mateo	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>	Sacramento	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Philippines	1,556	23.3	Mexico	1,131	17.8
Mexico	929	13.9	Vietnam	550	8.7
China	444	6.7	Ukraine	482	7.6
El Salvador	357	5.4	Philippines	473	7.5
Fiji	305	4.6	India	416	6.6
Taiwan	275	4.1	China	328	5.2
Hong Kong	260	3.9	Fiji	246	3.9
India	213	3.2	Laos	192	3.0
Other	2,332	34.9	Other	2,524	39.7
San Bernardino	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>	Riverside	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Mexico	2,251	43.1	Mexico	3,252	63.0
Vietnam	495	9.5	Philippines	424	8.2
Philippines	493	9.4	India	162	3.1
India	215	4.1	Vietnam	152	2.9
El Salvador	153	2.9	Guatemala	97	1.9
Taiwan	115	2.2	El Salvador	80	1.5
China	89	1.7	Korea	60	1.2
Pakistan	86	1.6	Taiwan	59	1.1
Other	1,328	25.5	Other	878	17.1

Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

Age/Sex

Female immigrants outnumbered male immigrants in 1996, making up 56 percent of admissions (similar to the prior year). Males were most likely to be less than 18 years of age, while females were nearly equally divided between the age categories of 25 to 34 years and less than 18 years. The median ages for immigrants showed no change from 1995, with females having a median age of 29 and males of 26. In contrast, the median age by sex for all resident Californians in 1996 was 31 for males and 33 for females⁵. As expected, there are fewer admissions in the older age groups.

Table 7: Immigrants Admitted by Age and Sex, California, FFY 1996

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<u>Total</u>	87,440	112,041	199,481	100.0
Under 18	28,311	26,791	55,102	27.6
18 to 24	13,409	15,344	28,753	14.4
25 to 34	18,076	27,935	46,011	23.1
35 to 44	10,385	17,052	27,437	13.8
45 to 54	7,231	10,571	17,802	8.9
55 to 64	5,224	8,132	13,356	6.7
65 and older	4,792	6,200	10,992	5.5
Unknown age	12	16	28	0.0
Median age	26	29	28	

Note: Table excludes 2 people of unknown sex.

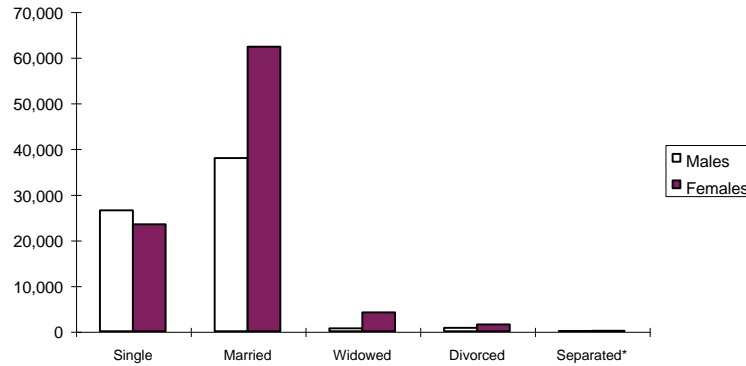
Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

Marital Status

Figure 2 demonstrates that both male and female immigrants 15 and older are more likely to be married. A larger number and percentage of women than men are married (68 percent versus 58 percent). Forty percent of males and 26 percent of females were single. About five percent of females were widows and one percent of males were widowers. Very few of either group were divorced or separated.

⁵ 1996 March Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, tabulated by Demographic Research Unit, California Department of Finance.

Figure 2
Immigrants Admitted by Marital Status, California, FFY 1996



*Separated: Males=57, Females=116

Note: Sex unknown=2; Marital Status unknown: Males=264, Females=344

Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

Occupation

Table 8 lists immigrants 16 to 64 years of age by occupation type. Immigrants who have gained admittance because a need exists for their occupation are listed separately. Among employment-based immigrants⁶, professional specialty and technical occupations are the largest category with over 4,000 or 42 percent. In the “all other” group, operators, fabricators, and laborers make up the largest category of occupations. The second largest occupational category for the employment-based group is executive, administrative, and managerial. Service occupations ranked third for employment-based immigrants, while ranking second for the “all other” group. For those in the professional specialty and technical occupation category, immigrants were most likely to be engineers, surveyors, and mapping scientists (2,534) followed by writers, artists, entertainers, and athletes (1,450).

Table 8: Immigrant Admissions Ages 16-64 by Occupation Type, California, FFY 1996

Occupation	Total	Employment-based	All Other
		Admissions	Admissions
Professional specialty and technical	12,674	4,104	8,570
Engineers, surveyors and mapping scientists	2,534	1,145	1,389
Registered nurses	1,159	420	739
Social, recreation, and religious workers	624	430	194
Writers, artists, entertainers and athletes	1,450	462	988
Mathematical and computer scientists	446	289	157
Physicians	798	127	671
Other	5,663	1,231	4,432
Executive, administrative, managerial	6,968	2,133	4,835
Sales occupations	3,428	189	3,239
Administrative support occupations	5,246	458	4,788
Precision production, craft, and repair	4,281	669	3,612
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	14,335	546	13,789
Farming, forestry, and fishing	3,584	61	3,523
Service occupations	12,856	1,632	11,224
Subtotal	63,372	9,792	53,580
Students or Homemakers	49,980	3,420	46,560
Unemployed or Retired	24,938	1,488	23,450
Occupation not reported	4,198	88	4,110
Total	142,488	14,788	127,700

Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

⁶ The employment-based admissions category may also include the employed persons’ spouses and dependents.

Appendix

Table 1A: Immigrants by Top 100 Countries of Birth, California, FFY 1996

<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>Number of Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>Number of Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
1. MEXICO	62,550	31.4	53. SOMALIA	355	0.2
2. PHILIPPINES	23,421	11.7	54. ITALY	349	0.2
3. VIETNAM	13,549	6.8	55. CUBA	345	0.2
4. CHINA MAINLAND	10,863	5.4	56. SRI LANKA	339	0.2
5. INDIA	7,751	3.9	57. YUGOSLAVIA	323	0.2
6. EL SALVADOR	6,715	3.4	58. BULGARIA	294	0.1
7. TAIWAN	6,061	3.0	59. MALAYSIA	289	0.1
8. IRAN	4,762	2.4	60. SWEDEN	275	0.1
9. KOREA	4,424	2.2	61. BELIZE	270	0.1
10. GUATEMALA	3,580	1.8	62. AZERBAIJAN	265	0.1
11. HONG KONG	3,399	1.7	63. MACAU	265	0.1
12. UKRAINE	2,630	1.3	64. MOLDOVA	261	0.1
13. RUSSIA	2,377	1.2	65. GEORGIA	254	0.1
14. UNITED KINGDOM	2,148	1.1	66. UZBEKISTAN	250	0.1
15. ARMENIA	1,955	1.0	67. JAMAICA	249	0.1
16. PERU	1,859	0.9	68. SUDAN	244	0.1
17. PAKISTAN	1,679	0.8	69. IRELAND	240	0.1
18. NICARAGUA	1,659	0.8	70. PANAMA	238	0.1
19. THAILAND	1,595	0.8	71. KENYA	227	0.1
20. FIJI	1,560	0.8	72. BOLIVIA	225	0.1
21. JAPAN	1,539	0.8	73. HUNGARY	223	0.1
22. CANADA	1,462	0.7	74. SPAIN	219	0.1
23. GERMANY	1,163	0.6	75. CHILE	218	0.1
24. ETHIOPIA	1,152	0.6	76. NETHERLANDS	217	0.1
25. LAOS	1,063	0.5	77. GHANA	214	0.1
26. ROMANIA	989	0.5	78. SWITZERLAND	210	0.1
27. IRAQ	957	0.5	79. PORTUGAL	199	0.1
28. EGYPT	927	0.5	80. COSTA RICA	198	0.1
29. NIGERIA	923	0.5	81. KUWAIT	188	0.1
30. LEBANON	827	0.4	82. SINGAPORE	188	0.1
31. HONDURAS	810	0.4	83. VENEZUELA	182	0.1
32. COLOMBIA	736	0.4	84. NEW ZEALAND	180	0.1
33. JORDAN	729	0.4	85. ERITREA	170	0.1
34. BURMA	707	0.4	86. MOROCCO	160	0.1
35. SYRIA	699	0.4	87. ALGERIA	156	0.1
36. FRANCE	668	0.3	88. TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	153	0.1
37. SOUTH AFRICA	645	0.3	89. GREECE	141	0.1
38. BRAZIL	640	0.3	90. SAUDI ARABIA	130	0.1
39. SOVIET UNION	590	0.3	91. TONGA	129	0.1
40. ISRAEL	565	0.3	92. DENMARK	128	0.1
41. CAMBODIA	550	0.3	93. AUSTRIA	124	0.1
42. BANGLADESH	533	0.3	94. SIERRA LEONE	123	0.1
43. BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	519	0.3	95. KAZAKHSTAN	120	0.1
44. AUSTRALIA	481	0.2	96. GUYANA	106	0.1
45. AFGANISTAN	465	0.2	97. CROATIA	104	0.1
46. INDONESIA	431	0.2	98. BELGIUM	96	0.0
47. ECUADOR	416	0.2	99. HAITI	92	0.0
48. POLAND	414	0.2	100. LITHUANIA	90	0.0
49. BELARUS	400	0.2	ALL OTHER	1,775	0.8
50. TURKEY	400	0.2			
51. YEMEN	379	0.2	TOTAL	199,483	100.0
52. ARGENTINA	377	0.2			

Source: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996

Table 2A: Legal Immigration Rates by County, FFY

	<u>Immigrants</u>	<u>Percent of Immigrants</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Immigration Rate (per 1000)</u>
ALAMEDA	10,819	5.4	1,365,000	7.93
ALPINE	2	0.0	1,190	1.68
AMADOR	33	0.0	32,950	1.00
BUTTE	527	0.3	196,500	2.68
CALAVERAS	25	0.0	36,900	0.68
COLUSA	313	0.2	18,250	17.15
CONTRA COSTA	4,921	2.5	877,900	5.61
DEL NORTE	21	0.0	27,500	0.76
EL DORADO	283	0.1	144,700	1.96
FRESNO	3,364	1.7	769,700	4.37
GLENN	127	0.1	26,700	4.76
HUMBOLDT	125	0.1	125,100	1.00
IMPERIAL	1,821	0.9	141,200	12.90
INYO	5	0.0	18,250	0.27
KERN	2,008	1.0	624,100	3.22
KINGS	430	0.2	115,700	3.72
LAKE	135	0.1	54,900	2.46
LASSEN	20	0.0	32,650	0.61
LOS ANGELES	63,794	32.1	9,396,400	6.79
MADERA	325	0.2	110,300	2.95
MARIN	987	0.5	239,500	4.12
MARIPOSA	13	0.0	15,950	0.82
MENDOCINO	277	0.1	84,800	3.27
MERCED	1,250	0.6	198,400	6.30
MODOC	11	0.0	10,000	1.10
MONO	13	0.0	10,500	1.24
MONTEREY	2,454	1.2	360,200	6.81
NAPA	682	0.3	119,000	5.73
NEVADA	82	0.0	87,100	0.94
ORANGE	17,598	8.9	2,649,800	6.64
PLACER	411	0.2	209,200	1.96
PLUMAS	13	0.0	20,250	0.64
RIVERSIDE	5,164	2.6	1,393,300	3.71
SACRAMENTO	6,342	3.2	1,132,100	5.60
SAN BENITO	257	0.1	44,000	5.84
SAN BERNARDINO	5,225	2.6	1,592,600	3.28
SAN DIEGO	18,049	9.1	2,694,900	6.70
SAN FRANCISCO	10,438	5.3	768,200	13.59
SAN JOAQUIN	3,497	1.8	533,200	6.56
SAN LUIS OBISPO	465	0.2	230,700	2.02
SAN MATEO	6,671	3.4	698,000	9.56
SANTA BARBARA	2,077	1.0	393,700	5.28
SANTA CLARA	13,735	6.9	1,638,300	8.38
SANTA CRUZ	1,170	0.6	243,600	4.80
SHASTA	127	0.1	161,700	0.79
SIERRA	5	0.0	3,370	1.48
SISKIYOU	35	0.0	44,000	0.80
SOLANO	1,681	0.8	372,400	4.51
SONOMA	1,372	0.7	424,500	3.23
STANISLAUS	2,306	1.2	418,500	5.51
SUTTER	741	0.4	74,600	9.93
TEHAMA	83	0.0	54,400	1.53
TRINITY	6	0.0	13,350	0.45
TULARE	1,333	0.7	353,600	3.77
TUOLUMNE	47	0.0	51,600	0.91
VENTURA	3,466	1.7	714,800	4.85
YOLO	1,110	0.6	152,500	7.28
YUBA	408	0.2	60,500	6.74
TOTAL	199,493	100.0	32,383,010	6.16

Unknown county=784

Sources: INS Public Use Tape, FFY 1996; E-2 Report, Demographic Research Unit, CA Department of Finance