

*Race and Ethnicity in California: Demographics Report Series—No. 6 (February 2002)*

**Citizenship and Language Use in California:  
Profiles from the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey**

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## **Executive Summary**

In order to provide more timely demographic information to governmental agencies, policymakers, researchers, and so on, efforts are underway to replace the long form of the U.S. Census with the American Community Survey (ACS). Data from this survey will be released annually, in contrast to information from the census long form, collected and compiled every ten years. In preparation for these changes in how the Census Bureau gathers demographic data, the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey (C2SS) was administered. The C2SS was designed to use in combination with data from ACS site tests, to produce estimates for states, counties, and cities with 250,000 people or more. Though this sample size is smaller than that for the census long form and than that of what will eventually be used for the ACS when it is fully launched, the information gathered via the C2SS offer a glimpse of the data to be released from the Census 2000 long form in mid-2002. This report examines the statewide estimates from the C2SS on citizenship and language use in California.

Regarding citizenship, data presented in this report indicate that 74.1 percent of California residents are native-born U.S. citizens. Of the 25.9 percent of the state's population that is foreign-born, 39.5 percent have become naturalized citizens. Foreign-born people who moved here prior to 1980 are the most likely to be naturalized citizens (70.7 percent), in contrast to those who entered the U.S. between 1980 and 1990 (41.9 percent) or between 1990 and 2000 (12.8 percent).

Just over half of the people living in California who were born in Asia (55.9 percent), Europe (55.5 percent), or North America (54.5 percent) besides Mexico and the U.S. are naturalized citizens, compared to about 41 percent of people from Africa and Oceania, and 26.6 percent of people from Latin America. Latin America accounts for the majority of the foreign-born population in California, 54.8 percent, followed by Asia with 34.0 percent. Within the broad category, "Latin America," 79.7 percent of this foreign-born group is from Mexico; overall, 43.6 percent of the total foreign-born population in the state is from Mexico.

In terms of language use at home, a larger percentage of people age 65 and up (72.3) speak "English only" than people ages 18 to 64 (59.7) or age 5 to 17 (57.4). Spanish is the second most common language spoken in California, and a larger percentage of children ages 5 to 17 speak it (32.0), compared to adults age 18-64 years (24.8) or age 65 and up (12.3).

Of people who primarily use non-English languages at home, children age 5 to 17 speak English better than adults, particularly adults age 65 and older. Also, people who speak Indo-European languages (besides Spanish) are the most likely to speak English "well" or "very well." For the age groups 5-17 and 18-64, Asian and Pacific Islander language speakers are the next most likely to speak English well or very well; however, just over half of the adults age 65 and up who use Asian and Pacific Islander languages at home speak English "not well" or "not at all."

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