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Many Communities Across California Still Face Significant Economic Challenges

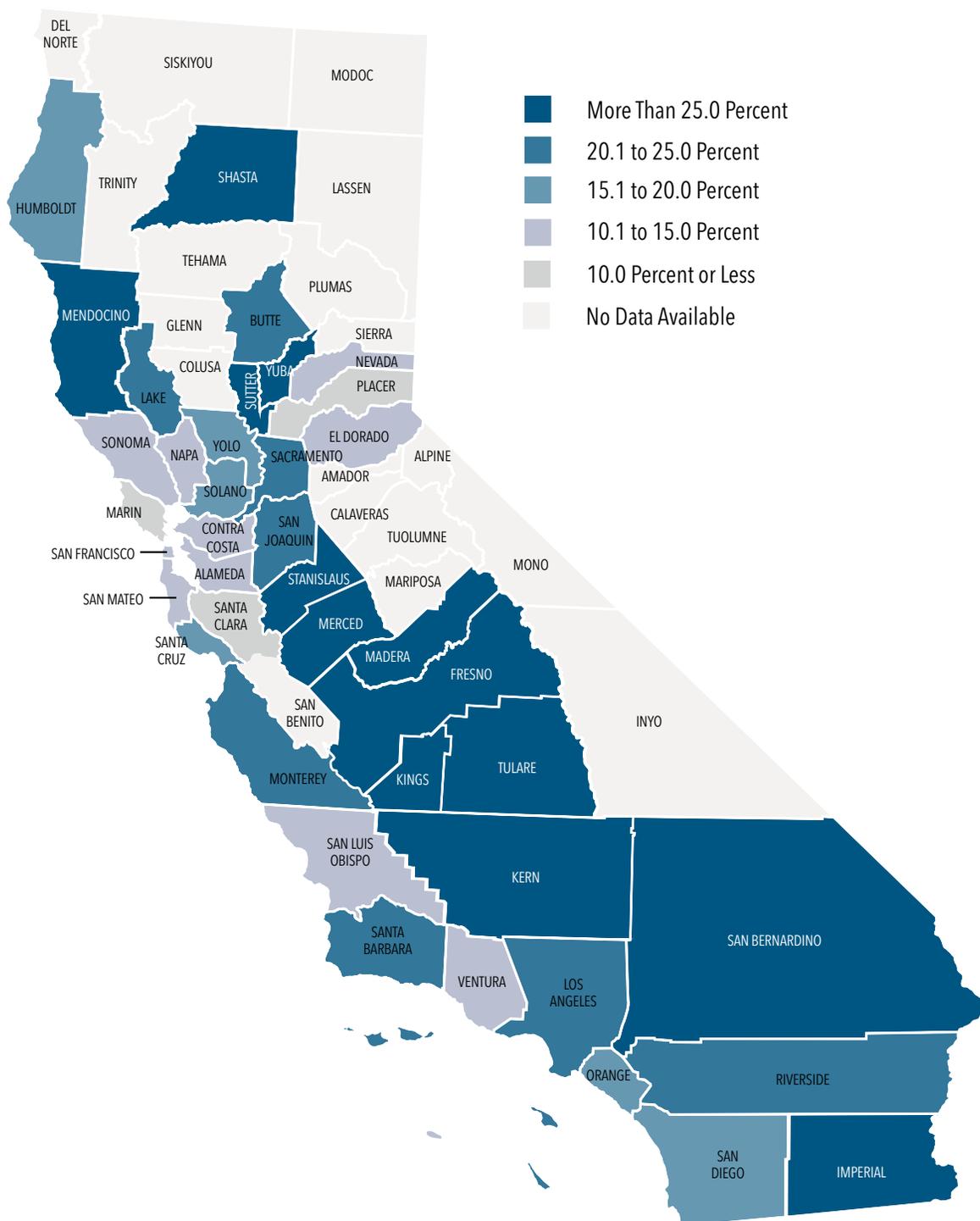
People in many communities across the state are not sharing in California's recent economic gains. Statewide, nearly 6 million people (15.3 percent), including almost 2 million children (21.2 percent), lived in poverty in 2015, based on the US Census Bureau's official poverty line, which is about \$19,000 in annual income for a family of three.¹ Among California's counties, there are stark differences in people's economic well-being. The latest Census figures show that:

- **The share of people struggling to make ends meet varies widely throughout the state.** The official 2015 poverty rates ranged from a low of 7.1 percent to a high of 27.6 percent, while the 2015 child poverty rates ranged from a low of 7.4 percent to a high of 38.5 percent.² (See tables in this companion [Fact Sheet](#) for poverty rates and child poverty rates in each county.)
- **In 11 counties, more than 1 in 5 people lived in poverty in 2015** (see Map 1 on page 2). This includes four counties – Fresno, Imperial, Merced, and Tulare – where more than one-quarter of all residents lived in poverty. Such high poverty rates are particularly striking given that 2015 marked the *sixth* year of recovery from the Great Recession, which ended nationally in 2009.
- **In 21 counties, more than 1 in 5 children lived in poverty in 2015** (see Map 2 on page 3). This includes five counties – Fresno, Madera, Merced, Tulare, and Yuba – where *more than one-third* of all children lived in poverty and another eight counties where between one-quarter and one-third of all children lived in poverty.

MAP 2

Child Poverty Rates Are High in Many California Counties

Percentage of Children Living in Poverty in 2015 Based on the Official Federal Poverty Measure



Source: Budget Center analysis of US Census Bureau, American Community Survey data

¹ All poverty rates reported in this *Fact Sheet* come from the 2015 American Community Survey and are based on the US Census Bureau's official poverty measure. 2015 is the most recent year for which data are available.

² 2015 data are available for only 40 of California's 58 counties.