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Kern Economic Journal

Winner of the Award for Merit from California
Association for Local Economic Development

2025 First Quarter



Featured Articles:



Population Trends and
Education Outcomes in
Kern County



California's New
Workplace Laws



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KERN ECONOMIC JOURNAL is a quarterly publication (February, May, August, November) of California State University, Bakersfield. Its purpose is to track local trends and analyze regional, national, and global issues that affect the economic well-being of Kern County. The journal provides useful information and data that can help the community make informed economic decisions. Sources of funding for this journal include university contributions and sponsorship and subscription fees.

Editorial and analytical articles on important local, regional, national, and international issues and trends are invited for *consideration* of publication in the journal. Articles (not exceeding 800 words in length) must be submitted to the Managing Editor in electronic copy. Individual authors are responsible for the views and research results.

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Kern Economic Journal



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Economy at a Glance!

2025 FIRST QUARTER
BY DR. NYAKUNDI MICHIEKA
& DR. RICHARD S. GEARHART III

National Economy¹

Real GDP decreased at an annual rate of 0.2 percent in the first quarter of 2025. In the fourth quarter of 2024, real GDP increased by 2.4 percent. The decrease in real GDP in the first quarter reflected an increase in imports. These movements were partly offset by decreases in investment, consumer spending, and exports.

Current-dollar GDP increased by 3.4 percent in the first quarter of 2025. In the fourth quarter of 2024, current dollar GDP increased by 4.8 percent (annual).

Current-dollar personal income increased by \$116.8 billion (0.5 percent at a monthly rate) in March 2025. This rise reflected increases in compensation and proprietors' income.

Real disposable personal income, which is adjusted for inflation and taxes, increased by 0.7 percent from March to April 2025.

Personal saving was \$872.3 billion in March 2025 compared with \$843.2 billion in December 2024.

Personal saving rate – personal saving as a percentage of disposable income was 3.9 percent in March 2025. In December 2024, personal saving rate was 3.8 percent.

The Conference Board's Index of Leading Economic Indicators – a measure of future economic activity – decreased by 0.1 percent in May 2025 to 99.0 (2016=100), following a 1.4 percent decline in April. The LEI has fallen by 2.7% in the six-month period ending May 2025.

The University of Michigan's Consumer Sentiment Index decreased from 72.1 in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 64.5 in the first quarter of 2025. The index in the first quarter of 2024 was 78.4 and 64.6 in the first quarter of 2022.

¹U.S. economic numbers were obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis "U.S. Economy at a Glance". This is found at <http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/glance.htm>. The information for the Index of Leading Economic Indicators is found at <https://conference-board.org/data/bcicountry.cfm?cid=1>. The University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index is available at <http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/tables.html>

State Economy²

In California, the unemployment rate increased to 5.4 percent in the first quarter of 2025 compared to 5.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024. The counties with the highest unemployment rates include Colusa (18), Imperial (17.2), Merced (11.2), Monterey (10.2), and Plumas (10.1). Those with the lowest unemployment rates include Marin (3.9), Orange (3.9), San Francisco (3.9), San Mateo (3.7) and Santa Clara (4.1).

California's labor force increased by 13,700 in the first quarter of 2025. During this period, civilian employment rose by 29,067 workers (from 18.61 million to 18.64 million). Nonfarm enterprises hired 6,600 more workers while farm employment grew by 6,433. The mining and logging sector hired 133 less workers while construction and manufacturing hired 8,367 and 6,700 less employees, respectively. Service sector employment increased from 15.83 million to 15.86 million between the fourth quarter of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025. The state government hired 2,367 more workers while local government employment increased by 7,633.

Local Economy

Kern County's labor force increased from 398,133 in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 412,333 in the first quarter of 2025. Civilian employment increased by 14,200 from 366,300 to 374,100. Nonfarm employment decreased by 3,267 while farming employment went down by 13,400.

In Bakersfield, nonfarm employment changed in the following manner: mining and logging lost 733 workers; construction lost 500 workers; manufacturing added 833 workers; and the service industry lost 2,867 workers. Within the service industry, trade, transportation and utilities lost 2,000 workers. Other sectors changed as follows: financial activities lost 200 workers; professional and business services lost 2,100 workers; private education and health services added 2,567 workers while leisure and hospitality lost 1,067 employees. The number of federal government workers decreased by 200

²The California economic numbers were obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics "Local Area Unemployment Statistics Map". This is found at <https://data.bls.gov/map/MapToolServlet?survey=la&map=county&seasonal=u>.

while state government employment increased by 67 workers. The local government added 667 workers.

In Kern County, the unemployment rate varied considerably across cities, ranging from 4.1 percent in Ridgecrest to 23.3 percent in Delano. All cities in Kern County witnessed a quarter-to-quarter increase in the unemployment rate (except Ridgecrest). The biggest quarter-to-quarter increase in unemployment rate occurred in Delano where it rose from 14.9 percent to 23.3 percent. In Bakersfield, the unemployment rate was 6.27 percent in the first quarter of 2025 compared to 6.03 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024. In Kern County, unemployment was 9.3 percent in the first quarter of 2025 compared to 8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024.

In the first quarter of 2025, the median price of a home in Bakersfield was \$416,607 compared to \$413,998 in the fourth quarter of 2024. Home prices were \$18,818 higher than they were four quarters ago. Within the county, the city of Taft had the lowest median home prices, averaging \$211,167, while the region with the highest median home prices was Rosamond, at \$441,333.

The weighted price index for the five publicly traded companies doing business in Kern County (Sierra Bancorp, Tejon Ranch Company, Chevron Corporation U.S., Granite Construction, and Wells Fargo Company) decreased by 4.6 percentage points from \$152.1 to \$145.1 (quarter to quarter). The index was also 23.3 percentage points greater than it was four quarters ago. Companies gained/lost as follows: Chevron (increased 15.5 percent quarter-over-quarter), Tejon Ranch (decreased 0.3 percent quarter-over-quarter), Granite Construction (decreased 14 percent quarter-over-quarter), Wells Fargo (increased 2.2 percent quarter-over-quarter) and Sierra Bancorp (decreased 25.7 percent quarter-over-quarter).

The average price of a barrel of crude oil (WTI) increased by \$1 to \$71.82 in the first quarter of 2025 while the average retail price of a gallon of gasoline in Bakersfield increased by \$0.19 to \$4.41. The unit price of California's Class III milk was \$18.34 in the first quarter of 2025 compared to \$19.71 in the fourth quarter of 2024. The Index of Farm Price Parity in the first quarter of 2025 (0.95) was lower than that of the fourth quarter of 2024 (0.85).



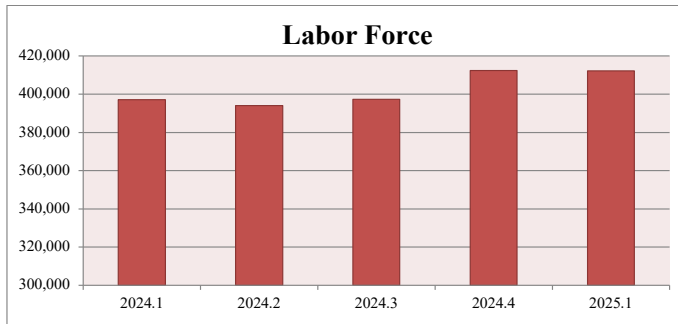
Tracking Kern's Economy¹

DR. NYAKUNDI MICHIEKA &
DR. RICHARD S. GEARHART III
2025 FIRST QUARTER

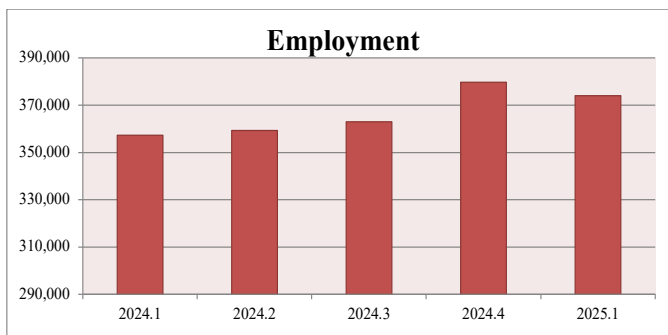
Labor Market

We average monthly data to calculate quarterly figures and then adjust for seasonality in the series.

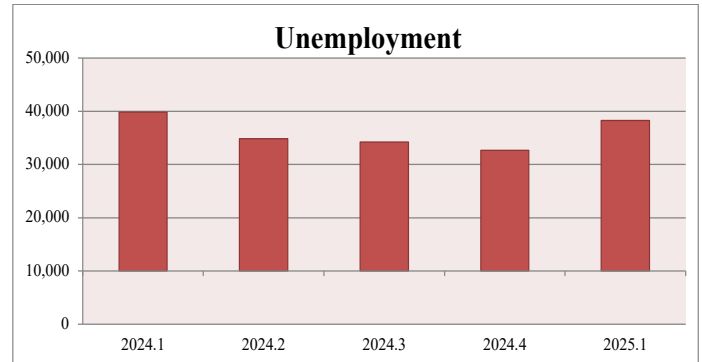
Labor Force – The civilian labor force decreased by 67 individuals, dropping from 412,333 in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 412,267 in the first quarter of 2025. The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines the labor force participation rate as the proportion of the working-age population that is either working or actively looking for work.



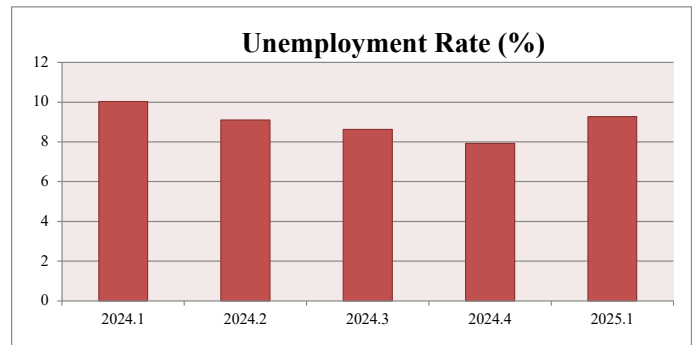
Employment – In the first quarter of 2025, Kern County hired 5,700 less workers (compared to the previous quarter) as total employment decreased from 379,700 to 374,000. This represents a 1.5 percent decrease in employment compared to the first quarter of 2024 when 357,233 persons were employed. Fourth to first quarter employment decreased by 9,367 in 2024 while in 2023, fourth to first quarter employment decreased by 5,433.



Unemployment – Quarter-to-quarter unemployment increased by 5,633 as the number of jobless workers increased from 32,633 to 38,267. The number of unemployed workers is 3.9 percent less than it was four quarters ago. In the first quarter of 2024, there were 39,800 unemployed workers.

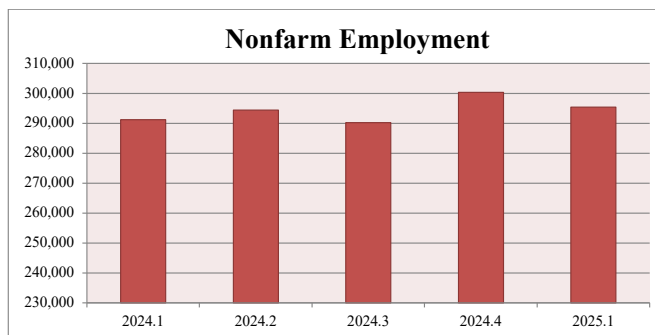


Unemployment Rate – Kern County's year-to-year unemployment rate decreased from 10 percent in the first quarter of 2024 to 9 percent in the first quarter of 2025. The unemployment rate for the fourth quarter of 2024 was 8 percent. Kern County's first quarter unemployment rate in 2025 (9 percent) was higher than that of California's (3 percent).



The unemployment rate varied considerably across cities, ranging from 4.1 percent in Ridgecrest to 23.3 percent in Delano. Quarter to quarter unemployment rate increased in all cities except in Ridgecrest where it decreased by 0.23 percent. The biggest rise in the unemployment rate occurred in Delano, where it increased from 14.9 to 23.3 percent. In Bakersfield, the unemployment rate was 6.87 percent four quarters ago in the first quarter of 2024.

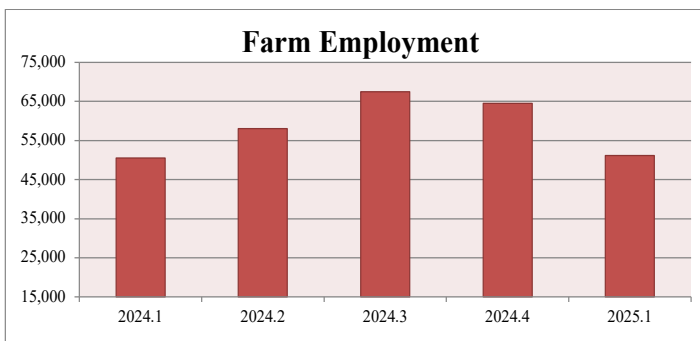
Unemployment Rate of Cities			
Location	Unemployment Rate (%)	Location	Unemployment Rate (%)
Kern County	9.3%	McFarland	10.8%
Arvin	11.7%	Mojave	15.5%
Bakersfield	6.3%	Oildale	11.7%
California City	19.7%	Ridgecrest	4.1%
Delano	23.3%	Rosamond	10.2%
Edwards	11.2%	Shafter	9.1%
Frazier Park	9.4%	Taft	5.1%
Lake Isabella	12.9%	Tehachapi	8.7%
Lamont	9.7%	Wasco	15.4%



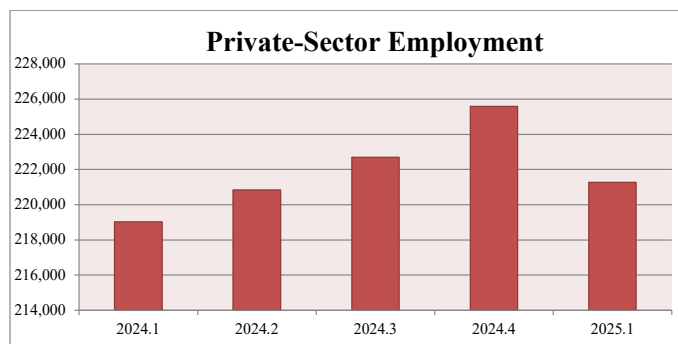
In Bakersfield, nonfarm employment changed in the following manner: mining and logging employment decreased by 733 workers; construction lost 500 workers; manufacturing added 833 workers while the service sector lost 2,867 workers. Within the service sector, trade, transportation, and utilities lost 2,000 workers; financial activities employment decreased by 200; professional and business services lost 2,100 workers; health care and social assistance added 2,500 workers while leisure and hospitality lost 1,067 employees. Federal government employment reduced by 200 while the number of state employees increased by 67. The local government added 667 workers.

Farm Employment – In the first quarter of 2025, Kern County hired 13,367 less farm workers compared to the fourth quarter of 2024. As a result, quarter-to-quarter farm employment decreased to 51,167 from 64,533. An average of 50,567 workers were employed in the farming sector in the first quarter of 2024. The year-over-year number of farm workers increased by 600.

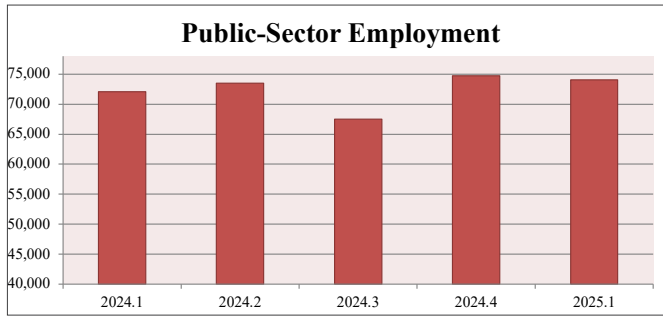
Private-Sector Employment – Nonfarm employment is comprised of private- and public-sector employment. In the first quarter of 2025, private companies hired 4,333 less workers compared to the fourth quarter of 2024. They also hired 1.9 percent less workers in the first quarter of 2025 than they did four quarters ago (in 2024). Currently, the private sector employs 221,267 individuals.



Nonfarm Employment – Nonfarm industries employed 5,033 less workers in the first quarter of 2025, as the number of workers decreased from 300,367 to 295,333. The industries hired 4,200 (or 1.4 percent) more workers compared to four quarters ago.

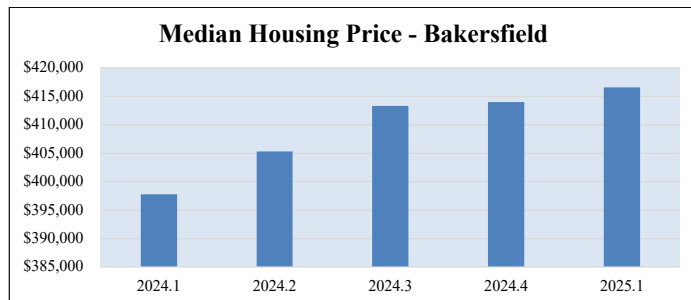


Public-Sector Employment – The public sector consists of federal, state, and local government agencies. The local-government labor market includes workers employed by county and city agencies, and public education. In the first quarter of 2025, government agencies hired 700 less workers, as employment decreased from 74,767 to 74,067 – a 0.9 percent decrease. Compared to the first quarter of 2024, 2.7 percent more workers were hired in the public sector.



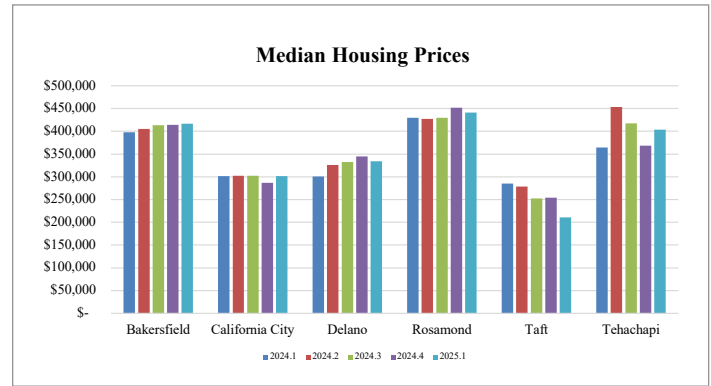
Housing Market

Housing Price – In the first quarter of 2025, Bakersfield’s housing prices rose by \$2,608 (0.6 percent) compared to the fourth quarter of 2024. The median price of a home in Bakersfield averaged \$416,607 in the first quarter of 2025 compared to \$397,788 in the first quarter of 2024. Prices were 4.72 percent higher than they were four quarters ago.



Regional Housing Prices – Changes in housing demand in Bakersfield are likely to spillover to surrounding cities as individuals who are on the margin of buying or selling are likely not located in the Bakersfield Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). An assessment of fourth-quarter (2024) to first-quarter (2025) changes in median sales price indicates that home prices decreased in all cities in Kern County except for Bakersfield, California

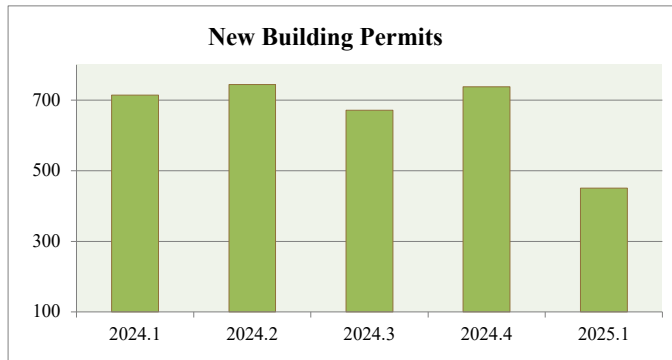
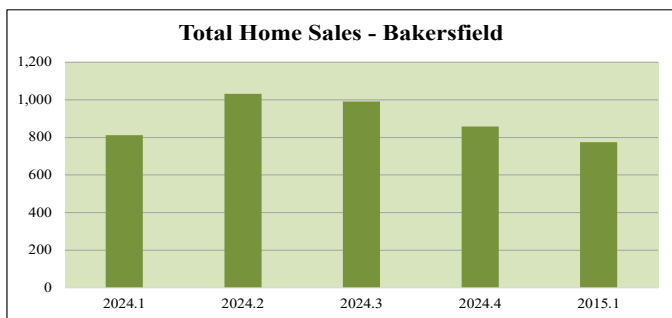
City and Tehachapi where they increased by \$2,608, \$14,500 and \$34,667, respectively. Bakersfield recorded the smallest increase in median home prices (+\$2,608). The average (annual) price change was -1 percent across all regions in our sample. The median home price across all regions was \$346,493 in the first of 2024 compared to \$351,407 in the first of 2025.



Year-over-year home prices changed as follows: Bakersfield (+4.7 percent), California City (-0.1 percent), Delano (+11.3 percent), Rosamond (+2.8 percent), Taft (-26.0 percent) and Tehachapi (+10.7 percent).

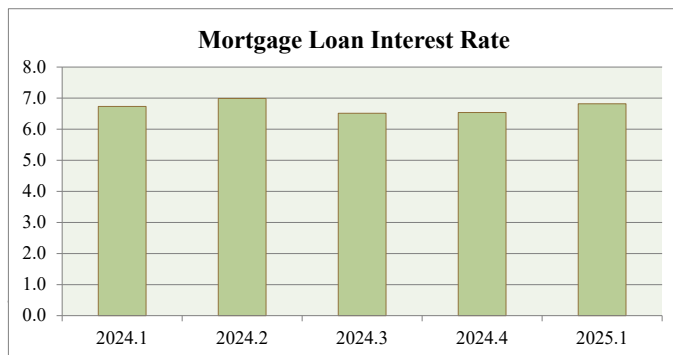
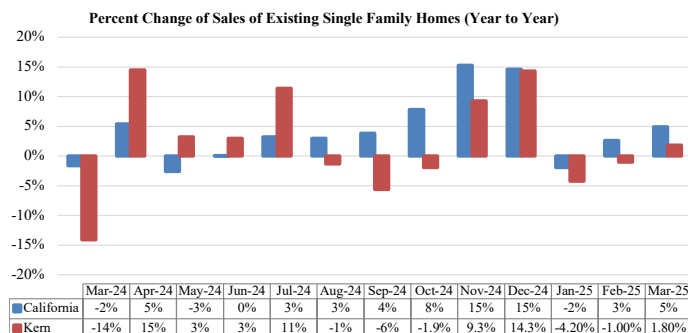
Location	Median Price (last year)	Median Price (this year)	Price Change (\$) (Annual)	Price Change (%) (Annual)
	2024.1	2025.1	2024.1 to 2025.1	2024.1 to 2025.1
Bakersfield	397,788	416,607	18,818	4.73%
California City	301,500	301,333	-167	-0.06%
Delano	300,667	334,500	33,833	11.25%
Rosamond	429,333	441,333	12,000	2.80%
Taft	285,167	211,167	-74,000	-25.95%
Tehachapi	364,500	403,500	39,000	10.70%
Average	346,493	351,407	4,914	0.58%

Home Sales – In Bakersfield, quarter-to-quarter sales of residential units decreased by 84 units, from 858 in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 774 in the first quarter of 2025. An average of 37 less units were sold in the first quarter of 2025 compared to the first quarter of 2024.



Growth in Housing Sales – We compare growth in sales of existing single-family homes in Kern County with growth in sales in California. Positive values indicate that more homes were sold this year compared to last year. In March 2025, 1.8 percent more homes were sold in Kern County compared to March 2024. In California, sales were 5 percent higher in March this year compared to March last year. The average growth in home sales in California between March 2024 and March 2025 was +4.2 percent while the number was +2.3 percent in Kern County.

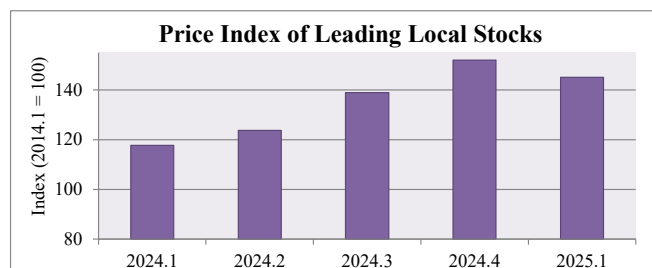
Mortgage Interest Rate – In the first quarter of 2025, the interest rate on thirty-year conventional mortgage loans increased to 6.82 percent (up from 6.53 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024). The interest rate last year (first quarter of 2024) was 6.73 percent



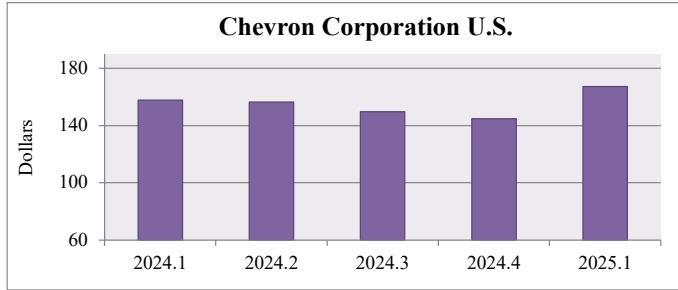
New Building Permits – In the first quarter of 2025, Kern County issued 287 less permits for construction of new privately-owned dwelling units compared to the fourth quarter of 2024. A total of 451 permits were issued in the first quarter compared to 714 in the first quarter of last year (2024). The number of permits issued has dropped following the rise that took place in the fourth quarter of 2024. Over the last five years, the average number of permits issued in the fourth quarter is 538.

Stock Market

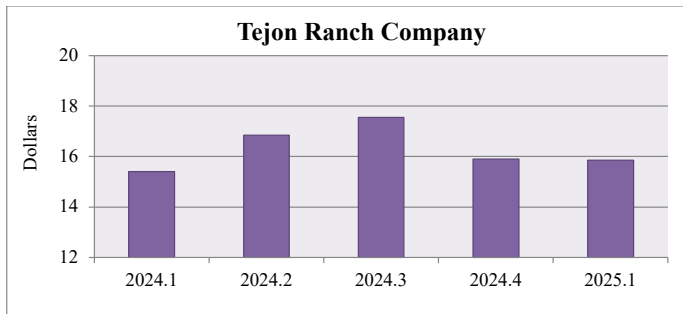
In the first quarter of 2025, the composite price index (2014.1=100) of the five publicly traded companies doing business in Kern County decreased by \$6.97, from \$152.10 to \$145.10 (quarter to quarter change). The index was 23.3 percentage points higher than it was four quarters ago. Average “close” prices were measured for five local market-movers: Chevron Corporation U.S., Tejon Ranch Company, Granite Construction, Wells Fargo Company, and Sierra Bancorp.



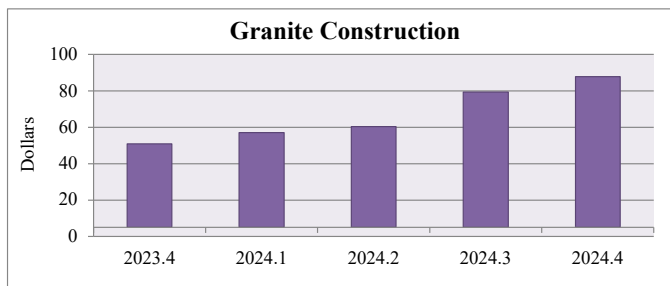
Chevron Corporation U.S.: Compared to the fourth quarter of 2025, CVX gained \$22.45 (or 15.5 percent) per share as its price increased from \$144.84 to \$167.29. Relative to the first quarter of 2024, CVX was up \$9.55 (or 6.1 percent).



Tejon Ranch Company: TRC lost \$0.05 (or 0.3 percent) per share as its stock price decreased from \$15.90 to \$15.85 between the fourth quarter of 2024 and first quarter of 2025. Compared to the first quarter of 2024, TRC stock price was up \$0.44 (or 2.9 percent).

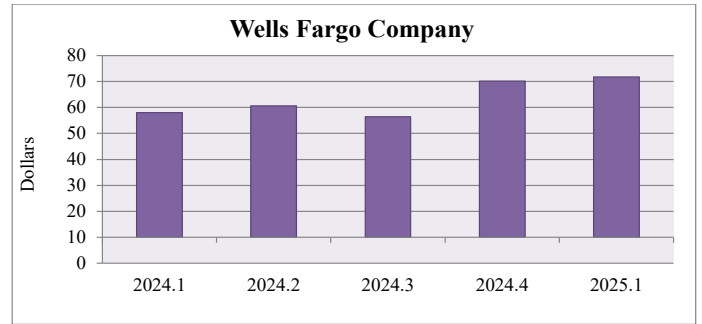


Granite Construction: GVA lost \$12.31 (or 14 percent) per share as its stock price decreased from \$87.71 to \$75.40 between the fourth quarter of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025. GVA gained \$18.27 (or 32 percent) over the last four quarters.

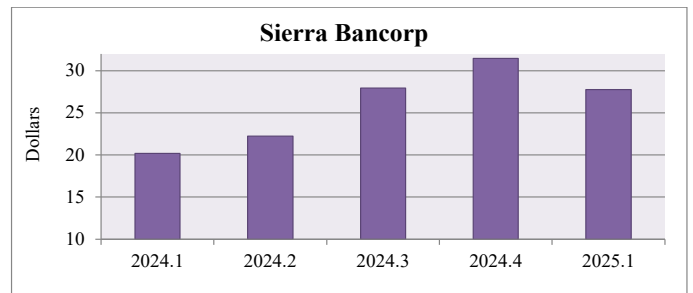


Wells Fargo Company: WFC gained \$1.55 (or 2.2 percent) per share as its stock price increased from \$70.24 to \$71.79 between the fourth quarter

of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025. Relative to the first quarter of 2024, WFC was up \$13.83 (or 23.9 percent).

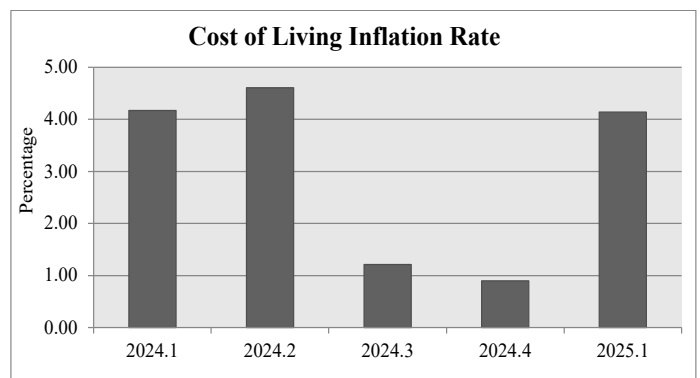


Sierra Bancorp: BSRR lost \$3.70 (or 11.8 percent) per share as its price decreased from \$31.47 to \$27.77 (quarter to quarter). BSRR gained \$7.57 (or 37.5 percent) in the first quarter of 2025 compared to the first quarter of 2024.

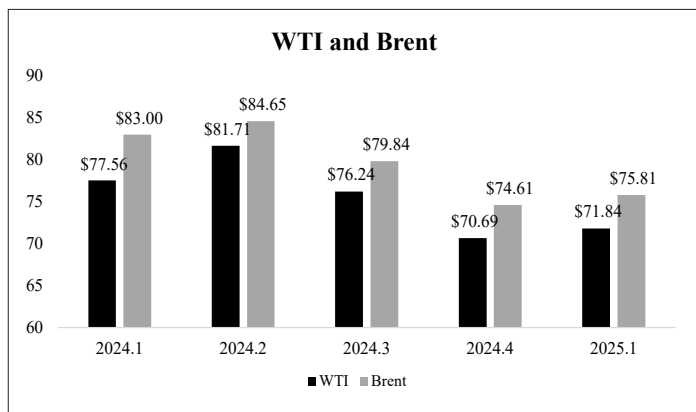
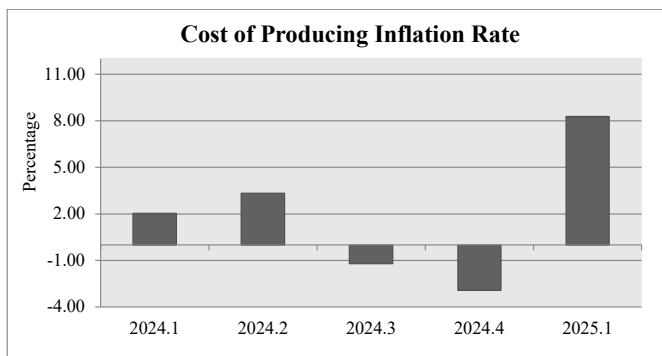


Inflation

Cost of Living – In the first quarter of 2025, the Consumer Price Index for all urban areas (1982-84 = 100) increased from 315.59 to 318.85. As a result, inflation for the cost of living accelerated at an annual rate of 4.4 percent. The index was 310.36 points in the first quarter of 2024.

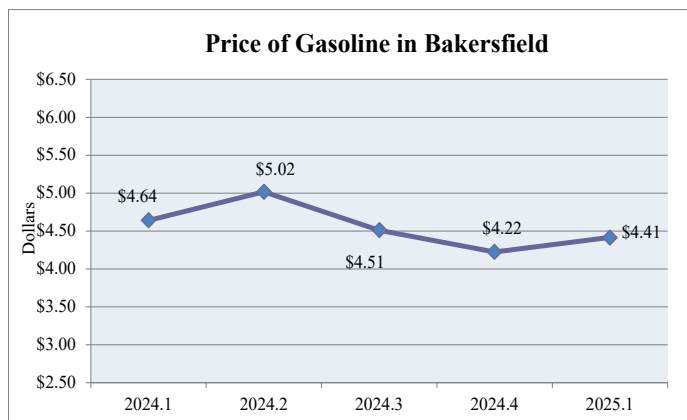
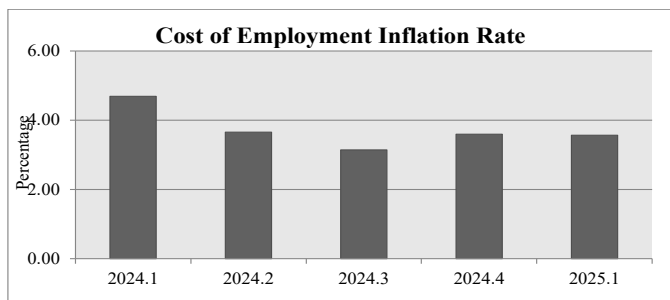


Cost of Production – The Producer Price Index for all commodities (1982 = 100) increased between the fourth quarter of 2024 and first quarter of 2025, from 253.24 to 258.49, respectively. The inflation rate for the cost of producing increased at an annualized rate of 8.29 percent. The cost of production inflation rate was 253.78 four quarters ago.



Price of Gasoline – In the Bakersfield MSA, the average retail price of gasoline increased by \$0.19 to \$4.41 between the fourth quarter of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025. Average gasoline prices were \$4.64 in the first quarter of 2024 and \$4.51 in the first quarter of 2023.

Cost of Employment – The Employment Cost Index (December 2005 = 100) for all civilian workers increased from 168.3 in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 169.8 in the first quarter of 2025, causing quarter-to-quarter employment inflation to rise by 3.57 percent.

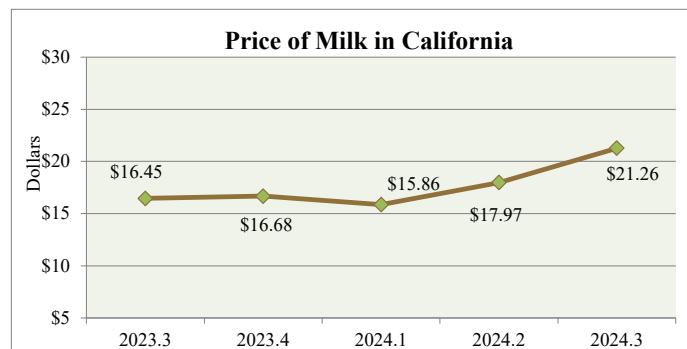


Commodity Prices

Energy

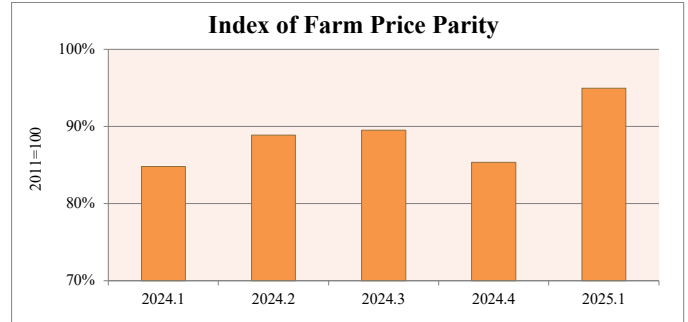
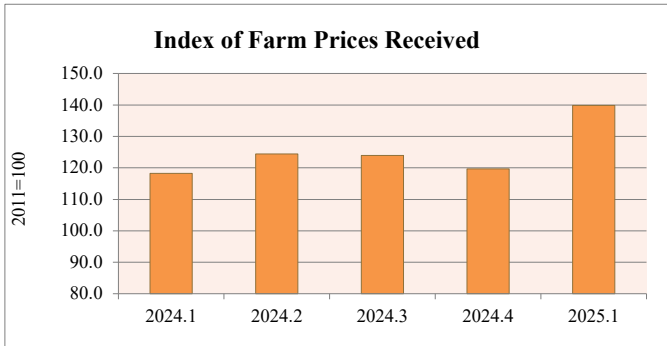
Oil Price – The spot price of WTI in the first quarter of 2025 was \$71.84 compared to that of Brent which was \$75.81. Compared to four quarters ago, the spot price of WTI and Brent was \$6 and \$7 less, respectively.

Price of Milk – The unit price of California’s Class III milk decreased in the first quarter of 2025 by \$0.76, to \$19.71. Milk prices were \$3.85 (or 24.3 percent) higher than they were four quarters ago.



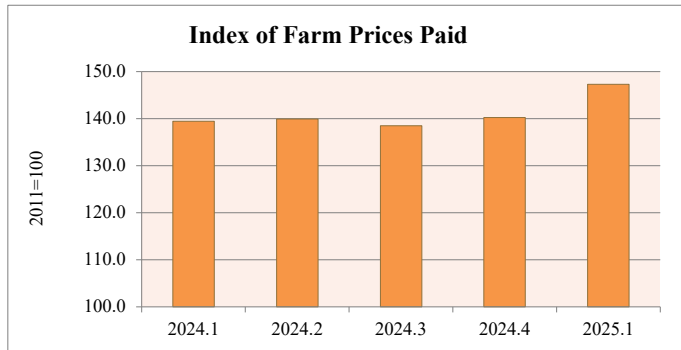
Farm Prices – In the first quarter of 2025, the National Index of Prices Received by Farmers for all farm products (2011 = 100) increased by 20.17 points from 119.7 in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 139.9 in the first quarter of 2025. The index was 18.3 percent higher than it was four quarters ago in the first quarter of 2024.

We measure the Index of Farm Price Parity as the ratio Index of Prices Received to the Index of Prices Paid. In the first quarter of 2025, the Index of Farm Price Parity was 95 percent compared to 85 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024. Four quarters ago, the price ratio was 85 percent.



Meanwhile, the National Index of Prices Paid by farmers for commodities, services, interest, taxes, wages, and rents increased by 5 percentage points. This means that farmers were worse off in the first quarter of 2025 compared to the fourth quarter of 2024.

¹Source – Online databases: <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov>; www.usda.com; www.bakersfieldgasprices.com; www.bea.gov; www.car.org; www.census.gov; <https://www.redfin.com>; <https://www.cafmmo.com>; www.bls.gov; www.eia.gov.



Population Trends and Education Outcomes in Kern County

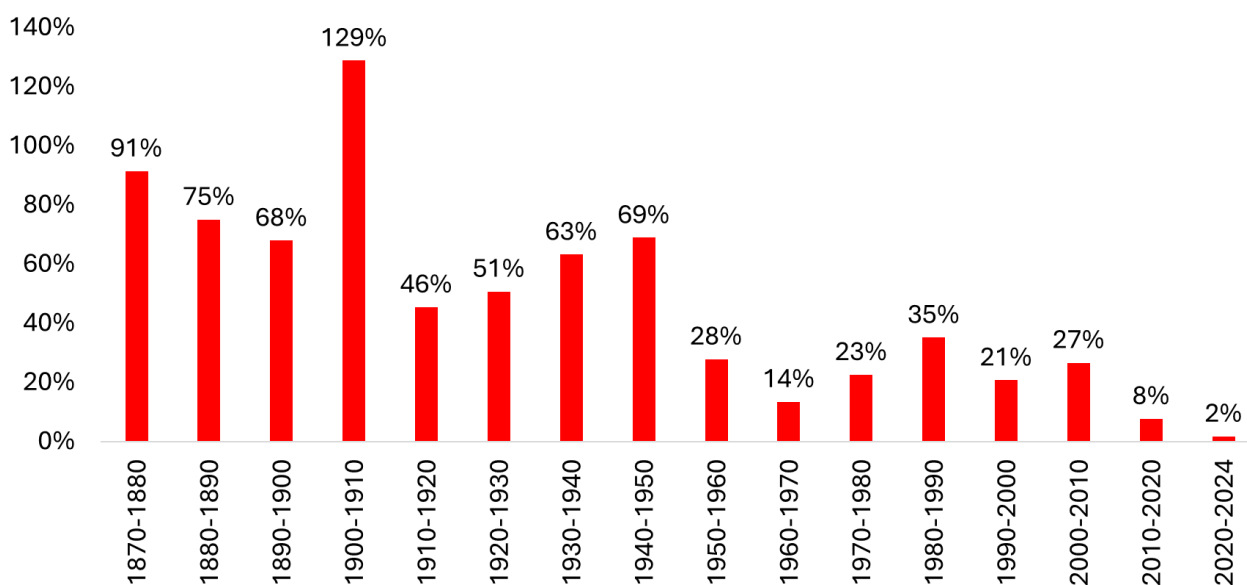
Nyakundi Michieka Ph.D.
Professor of Economics
California State University, Bakersfield

1. Population

1.1. Trends in Total Population

Kern County's population was 2,925 in 1870. Today, the county is home to 922,529 residents. Population growth has fluctuated over this 155-year period. Between 1870 and 1880, the population increased by 91 percent, followed by 75 percent rise in the decade that followed. The most significant boom occurred between 1900 and 1910, as illustrated in figure 1. During the 1990's growth averaged 21 percent, while the early 2000s saw a 27 percent increase. Today, average population growth averages at 2 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2025).

Figure 1: Population Growth Rate in Kern County (1870 – 2024)



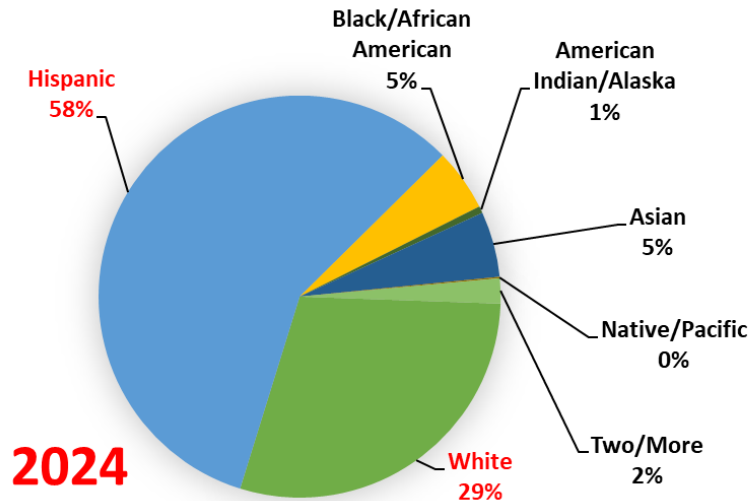
Source: U. S. Census Bureau (2025).

1.2. Population by Race

Over the last 25 years, Kern County's population has been dominated by the White and Hispanic population. In 2000, the White population accounted for 25 percent of the total, while the Hispanic population comprised 58 percent. In 2024, the Hispanic population comprised 58 percent of the total, whereas the white population accounted for 29 percent (see figure 2). The composition of Black/African American, American Indian, Asian and Native/Pacific did not change over this period. More specifically roughly 5 percent of the population has been Black/African American, 1 percent of the population American Indian, 5 percent Asian and 0.4 percent Native/Pacific, over the last two and a half decades (U.S. Census Bureau 2025).

Figure 2: Kern County’s Population by Race

Figure 2: Kern County’s Population by Race

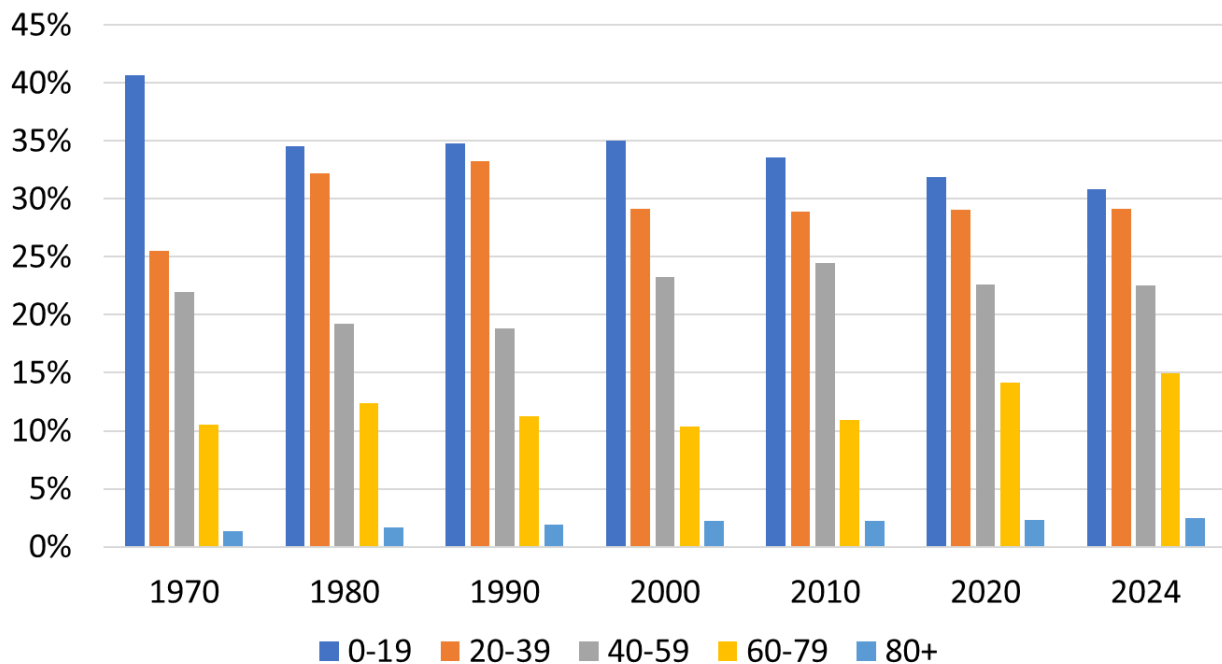


Source: U. S. Census Bureau (2025).

1.3. Population by Age

The age demographics of Kern County have undergone significant changes over the past 4 decades. In 1970, roughly 41 percent of the population was aged between 0 and 19, whereas in 2024, 31 percent of the population was under the age of 20. Further, the population of individuals aged 20 to 29 increased from 25 to 29 percent, while the percentage of those aged 60 and above rose from 12 to 17 percent. These statistics are illustrated in figure 3.

Figure 3: Kern County’s Population by Age between 1970 and 2024



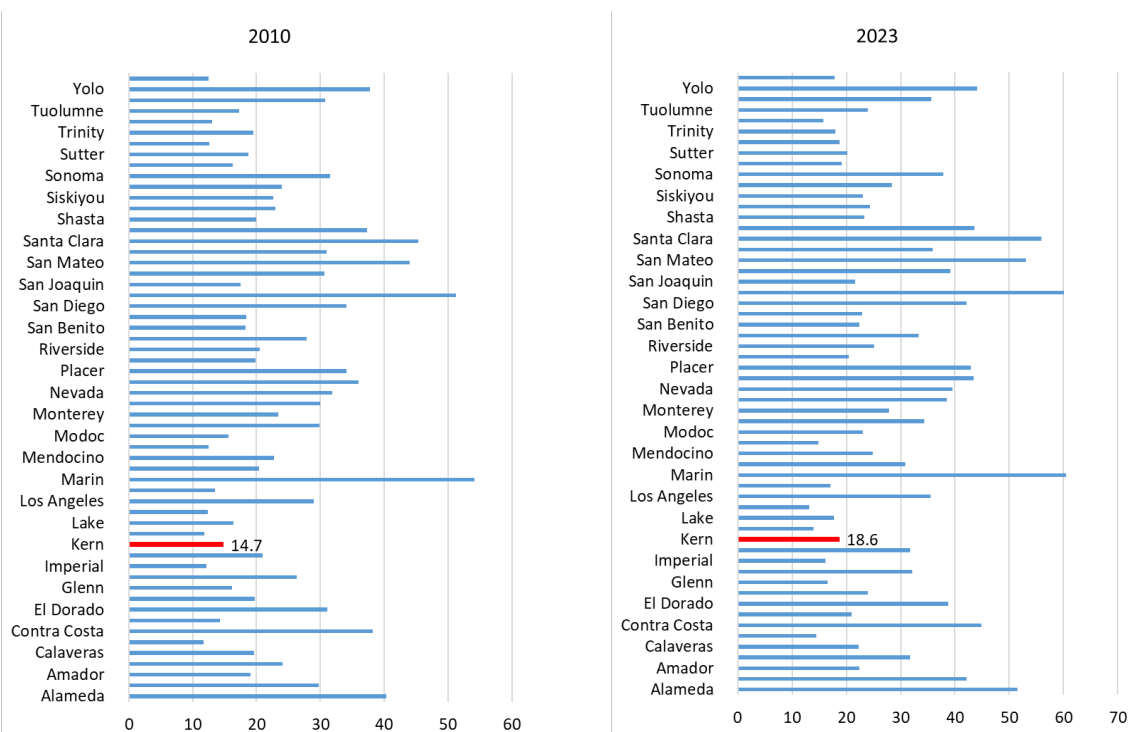
Source: U. S. Census Bureau (2025).

1.4. Education Outcomes

Data from the Federal Reserve Bank (FRED 2025) reveals that in 2010, 71 percent of Kern County’s population aged 18 and over had graduated from high school, while in 2023, the number had risen to 77 percent. The average high school graduation rate in California in 2010 and 2023 was 82 and 86 percent, respectively. High school graduation rates across the state ranged from 62 to 94 percent (FRED 2025).

High school graduation rates differ substantially from college graduation rates in Kern County. Data from FRED (2025) indicate that, on average, 16 percent of individuals in Kern County held a Bachelor’s degree in 2023, compared to 14.7 percent in 2010. At the state level, college graduation rates increased by 5 percentage points, rising from 25 percent to 30 percent over the last two and a half decades. The data also revealed inequalities in the distribution of Bachelor’s degree attainment across California, as indicated in figure 4. The counties with the highest graduation rates in both 2010 and 2023 were Marin and San Francisco where approximately 54 and 60 percent of the population, respectively, held a Bachelor’s degrees (FRED 2025). In contrast, Kings and Lassen Counties consistently ranked among those with the lowest graduation rates.

Figure 4. Percentage of Population with a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher



Source: FRED (2025)

1.5. Apprenticeships

Studies have shown that there has been a mismatch between the skills required by employers and those possessed by employees. This is defined as the skill gap or skills gap (Braun et al. 2022, Enders et. al. 2023, McGuinness et al., 2018), which has led to the rise of apprenticeship programs in California. The U.S. Department of Labor (2025) defines apprenticeships as activities with combine on the job training with classroom instruction to prepare workers for high skilled jobs. Workers gain by receiving specific skills that prepare them for high wage jobs.

In 2025, there were 97,648 active apprenticeships in California and 2,074 programs in Kern County. The counties with the largest number apprenticeship programs include Los Angeles (18,763), Sacramento (10,337), San Bernardino (7,160), Riverside (8,187) and San Diego (8,577). (California Division of Apprenticeship Standards 2025). In Kern County, the largest apprenticeship programs are in the electrical-electronic and firefighter fields, with 366 and 255 programs, respectively. Other prominent apprenticeship areas include personal services, carpentry and plumbing. In contrast, the fewest programs are found in the manufacturing/aerospace and inmate training categories, each which only had one registered apprenticeship program (California Division of Apprenticeship Standards 2025).

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California's New Workplace Laws

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During the past California State Assembly session several state laws, rules and regulations were approved that impact the provision of human resource management in both business and government workplaces. These legislative acts took effect January 1, 2025, and range in impact from minimal to significant. The following is a short overview of the more important provisions.

<p>SB 399: The California Worker Freedom from Employer Intimidation Act</p>	<p>Overview: An employer can no longer require mandatory employee meetings that discuss religious or political matters, including union-representation discussions</p>
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However, as of October 2025, court rulings have blocked the law from taking effect on grounds of federal preemption by the National Relations Labor Act and First Amendment free speech violations, meaning the law is not currently in force. The law remains in limbo pending further legal developments.

<p>SB 2499: Victims of Violence Leave Act</p>	<p>Overview: Employees who are victims of crime or abuse have certain workplace protections expanded.</p>
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This law enhances protections for employees as they seek assistance and adjustment such as [1] protected time off [2] protection from workplace discrimination or retaliation [3] assistance from the state Civil Rights Department if needed [4] increased clarity of what construes acts of violence or abuse [4] protection for employers seeking and requiring documentation.

<p>SB 988: The “Freelance Worker” Protection Act [or FWPA].</p>	<p>Overview: Private employers who hire certain independent contractors will be required to provide a written agreement specifying work terms and to pay their compensation by specified deadlines.</p>
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Implications include [1] a written contract signed by both parties [2] itemized list of services to be provided [3] the rate of compensation for those services [4] due dates of completed and acceptable work [5] a pay schedule. Of course, these requirements seem reasonable and good practice.

<p>SB 1340: Anti-discrimination Act</p>	<p>Overview: This action allows local governments to enforce the state’s employment discrimination claims on both public and private sectors but also local anti-discrimination laws that might be more specific in requirements.</p>
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Private and public employment sectors currently must abide by the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and the Unruh Civil Rights Act. In addition, with this new legislation if a local jurisdiction has more stringent rules regarding anti-discrimination, then the employer must follow those local requirements as well.

<p>AB 2123: Paid Family Leave Act - Amendment</p>	<p>Overview: Past state law authorized an employer to require an employee to take up to 2 weeks of earned but unused vacation before they would be eligible for the family leave act. This bill no longer requires this provision</p>
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Paid Family Leave is a state-run program providing benefits to individuals taking time off to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, parent, or domestic partner, bond with a new minor child, or assist military family members under active duty. Previously, employers could require employees to take up to 2 weeks of accrued vacation before employees could access PFL benefits. As of January 1, 2025, this requirement no longer applies.



HR Workplace Action Plan

Some of these new acts will require significant business and agency review and action. The following are important first action steps that should be taken, they include [1] updating current policy statements to comply with these new regulations [2] train supervisory staff in any updated policy or procedures germinating from these rules [3] alert employees through appropriate methods of any pertinent policy or procedure changes [4] allow consultation time with employees seeking sound understanding, and [5] consult legal counsel if in doubt.



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