Population Diversity 2000
percent of total population by county

California is unique among the large populated areas in the world. In no other place have so many people gathered from around the globe.

California has always been a diverse place. Before the arrival of Europeans, the population density and diversity of Native American language groups was greater here than in any other region of the Americas. During the Gold Rush, the Sierra Nevada foothills were home to the most diverse collection of people on Earth.

Of the state’s current 38 million residents, 42 percent identify as White, 37 percent as Hispanic, 12 percent as Asian/Pacific Islander, 6 percent as Black, and one percent as American Indian. Another two percent identify as multiracial.

While these broad ethnic percentages have changed over time, the enduring flow of new immigrants make the Golden State the world’s most diverse region.

People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race.