

The California Policy Measure

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We created the California Poverty Measure with policymakers in mind

- Detail for the most populous state, with many constituencies
- “Robust” safety net programs, but typically evaluated in isolation
- Housing costs feature prominently in policy discussions

...but we also had methodological contributions in mind

- Using **administrative data** on safety net programs to correct for underreporting in the American Community Survey
- Taking care with how we impute benefits to **immigrant households**
- California idiosyncrasies: SSI “cash out”, Prop 13
- The team: PPIC and Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, Caroline Danielson, Sara Kimberlin, Matt Levin, Beth Mattingly, Tess Thorman, Chris Wimer

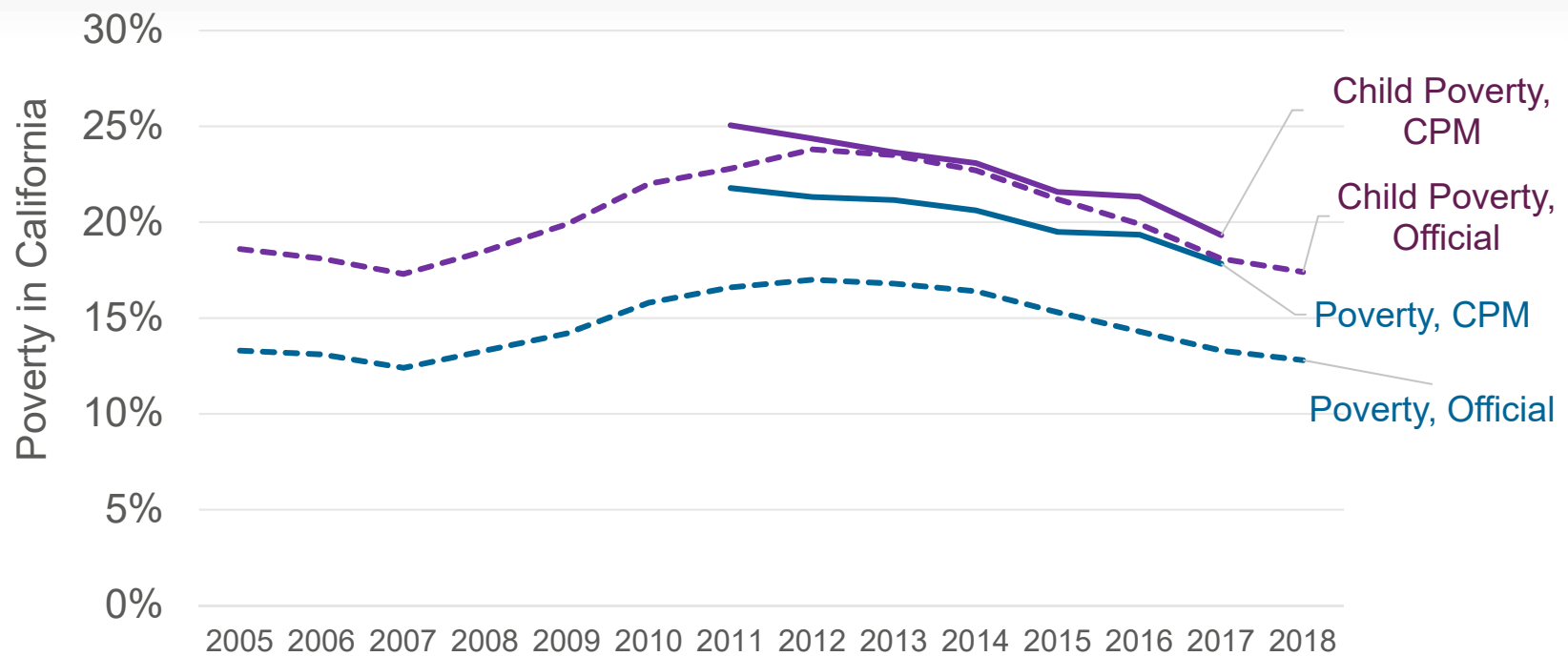
What we've found and where we're going

- SPM and CPM are now regularly used in California
- Most common use: setting context for policy problems
- Challenges arise when applying to specific policy uses
- Our own challenge? Funding! Bandwidth!

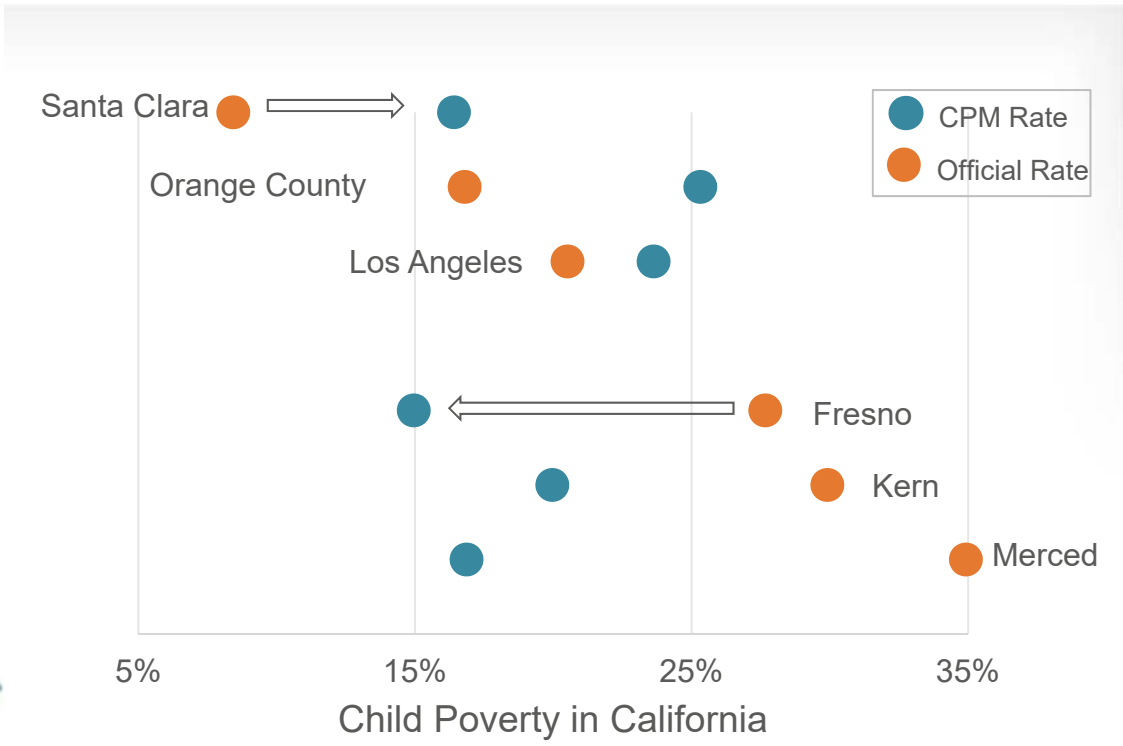
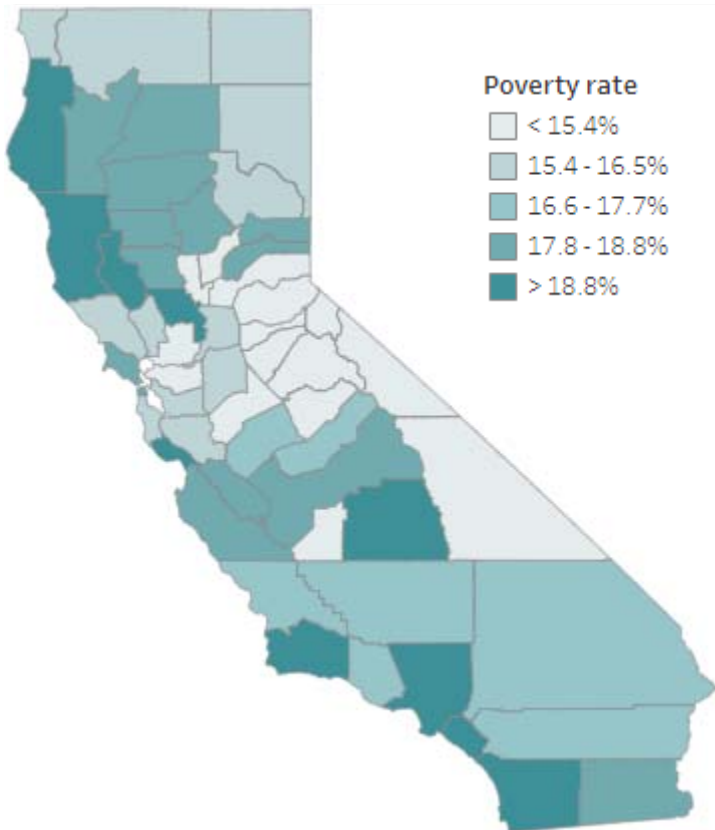
California Poverty Measurement details

- Follows the SPM and Wisconsin Poverty Measure approach
- Core data: American Community Survey 1-year IPUMS
- Plus
 - Custom tabulations of SNAP, TANF, School meals, WIC from administrative sources
 - County-level spending records by program, for most
 - Individual unauthorized immigrant flags, and state totals
 - Current Population Survey ASEC for imputation
 - 5-year ACS files for housing cost adjustments

CPM is higher than the official measure, but less so for children

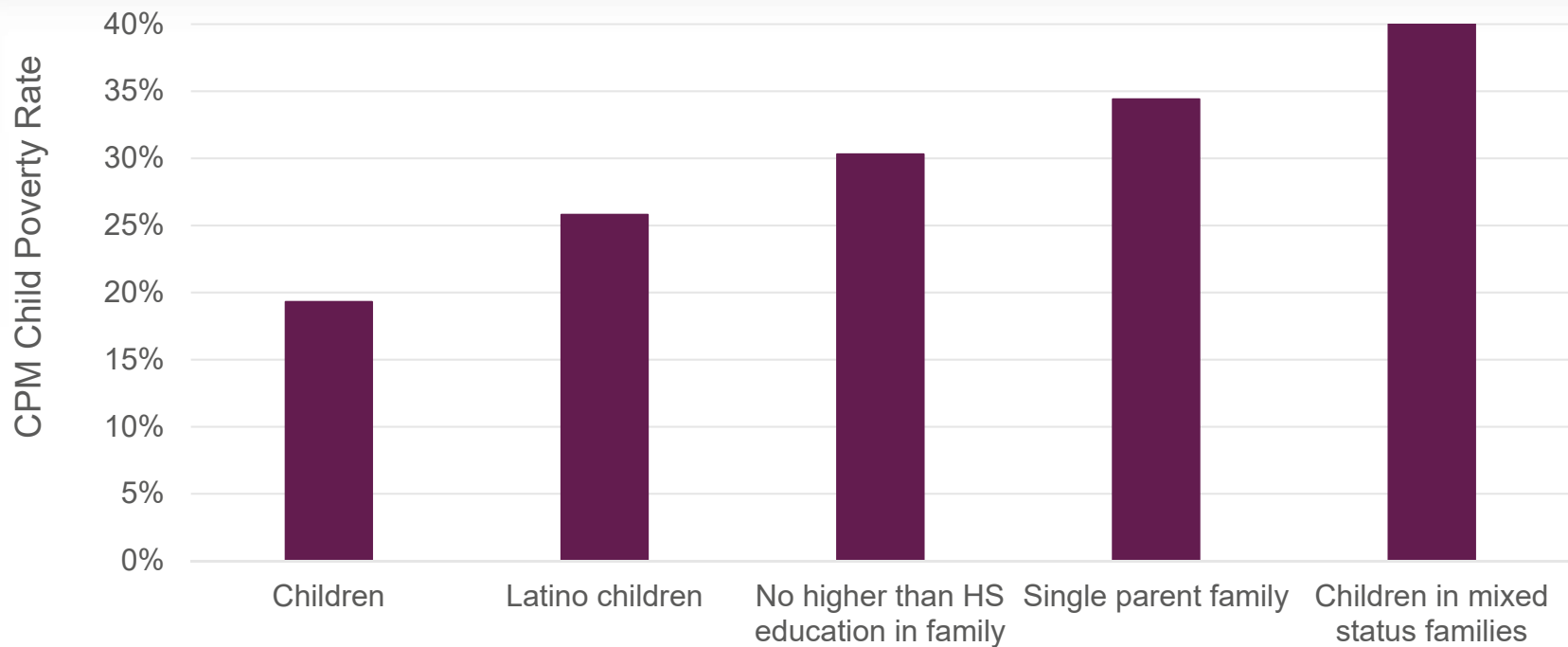


Coastal areas emerge as particularly high poverty

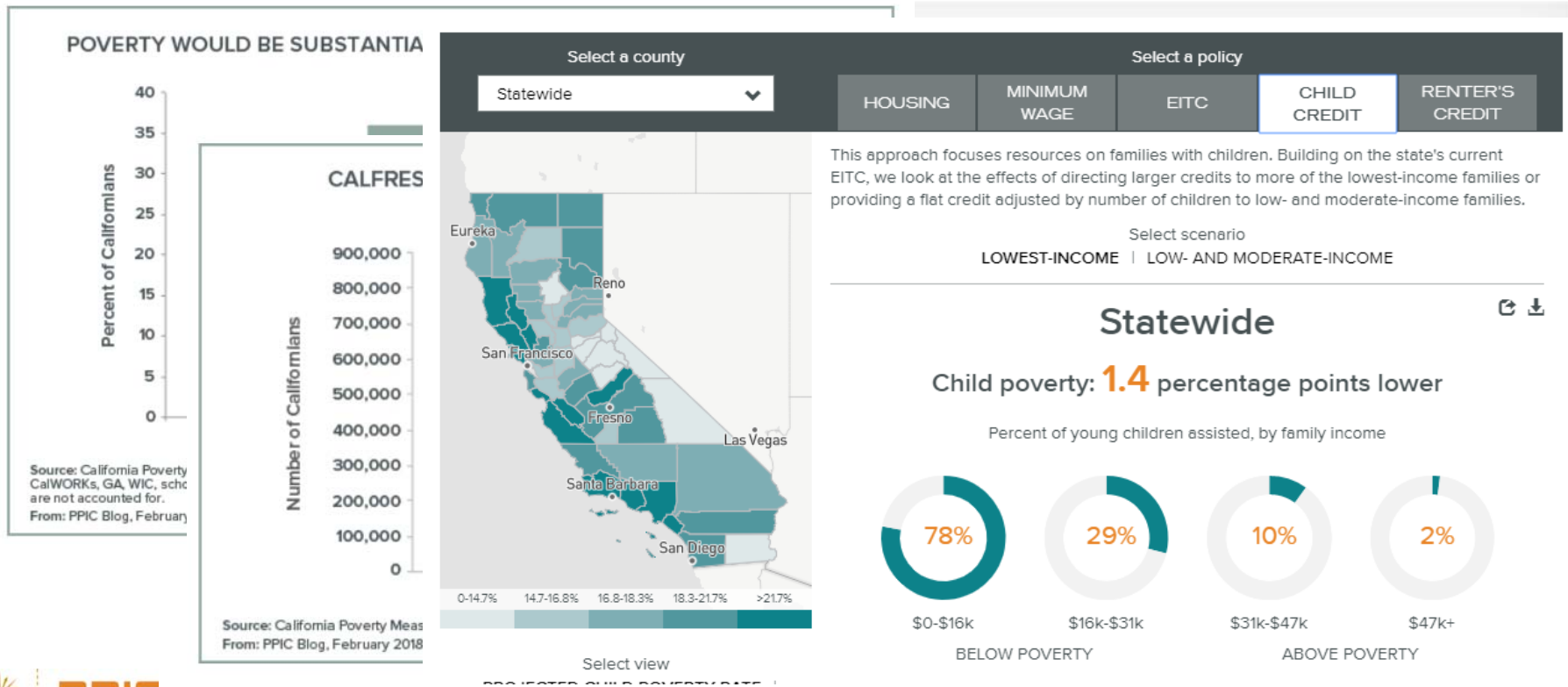


Source: PPIC-Stanford California Poverty Measure and American Community Survey

Some of California's children experience much higher poverty rates



Policy simulations have shed light on the scale and nature of the challenge



How is the CPM & SPM used in California?

- Core metric for the California Legislature’s “Lifting Children and Families Out of Poverty” Task Force (2018)
- Benchmark the generosity of comprehensive services offered through CalWORKs (CDSS “Benefit and Resource Model”)
- Kidsdata.org, Let’s Get Healthy California, Leg Analyst Office, Orange County Child Support Services, First 5 California, Judicial Council Ability to Pay Workgroup, CalFresh Program Access measures

CPM and SPM are used widely to tell the story about poverty in California

Social safety net programs help keep poverty down
The Next Gov. Should Set Goals to Break

Gov. Jerry Brown wants tax credit for poor in
California's budget

More than a quarter of Orange County's youngest kids lives in poverty

aceful

Opinion: Capitol talks about California poverty, but takes little long-term action

Little Dip in Poverty After Recession, Study Finds

Challenges to deepening the impact of these measures for policy

- Cost-of-living-adjusted thresholds creates winners and losers
 - San Francisco threshold increase: \$14,864
 - Fresno threshold increase: \$ 1,058
- There is no clear place in state government to house a state-supported measure
- ACS level of detail not sufficient for many programmatic purposes (e.g. geography)
- Simulations of policy changes lack a true counterfactual

Next steps in our research

- Continue to produce annually, contingent on our institutions' needs and constraints
- Pursue supplemental modules like health insurance, LIHEAP
- Explore administrative data possibilities, including Franchise Tax Bureau, Department of Social Services/ES-202
 - Aim to examine longitudinal picture
 - And additional detail for certain populations

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.