

Tracking California Housing Attitudes Over Time

September 2023

Californians are losing confidence that there is a solution to the housing crisis, and continue to believe the situation is either getting worse or staying the same. Other foundational beliefs remain fairly stable:

- The share of Californians who are confident that there is a solution to the housing crisis has fallen significantly* since April 2022 (37%).
- Californians continue to view the state of housing availability as getting worse (63% up 9 points since October 2020) or staying about the same (32%).
- The share of Californians who believe that access to housing that is affordable should be *guaranteed* has remained stable (56%).
- When asked who was responsible for ensuring people have access to affordable housing, 54% of Californians said the Government, 30% say individuals, and fewer say communities (15%).

Overall, support for each of the 3Ps remained high:

PRODUCTION



68% of Californians support production in California, a significant increase since June 2021 (63%).



64% of Californians support production in one's community, a significant increase since November 2021 (59%).



59% of Californians continued to support increased housing density, following a significant increase since June 2020 (53%).

PRESERVE EXISTING HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE



65% of Californians support preservation, similar to previous waves.



Support for right of first refusal and 1-1 replacement remains high (both 60%).

PROTECTING CALIFORNIANS FROM LOSING THEIR HOUSING



67% of Californians support protecting people from losing housing due to rising costs. This is a significant decrease since last wave (72%), but equal to the November 2021 level.



84% of Californians support tax breaks to help homeowners, while 76% support tax breaks for tenants.



77% of Californians support rent control.

BEHAVIOR



15% of Californians say they have taken some action related to housing affordability in the last three months.

The majority of actions include sharing messages on social media or signing a petition.

The September 2023 omnibus section included questions estimating support for tax initiatives on housing and homelessness assistance, and support for social housing:

- Californians support new tax initiatives to fund housing and homelessness assistance programs, including for low income individuals and communities of color.



59% support building new affordable housing.



60% support rental assistance.



56% support social services to help currently or formerly unhoused people.



57% support subsidies for middle-income people.

- 68% of Californians support social housing as a way to make housing more affordable in California, though support can drop as low as 60% depending on how advocacy for social housing is framed.

Key definitions

***Significant:** In this brief, this term refers to a statistically significant difference. That is, the measured difference in attitudes is more than can be explained by chance alone. **Our benchmark for significance is a 5% chance.**

***Sample margin of error:** This measures how close estimates from the survey sample are to the measures we would get if every registered voter in the state answered the survey.

Methodology

The annual housing tracker measures levels of awareness, salience, and sentiment toward key housing issues and housing affordability policies among California registered voters over time. The tracker was conducted twice a year from May 2020 until September 2022, and starting in 2023 runs annually. The seventh wave of the tracker was completed in September 2023.

Attitudes measured in the tracker include support for the "3Ps" (**Production** of housing in California and in one's community, **Preservation** of below-market housing, and **Protections** for renters) as well as specific policies related to the 3Ps. The tracker also measures foundational beliefs about housing such as whether access to a safe and affordable home is something that should be guaranteed or earned, or whether ensuring access to safe and affordable housing is an individual or community responsibility. The tracker also includes an omnibus section that provides space for CZI partners and grantees to ask one-off timely questions.

The full sample margin of error* for the September 2023 estimates is 3.5%.

The 16-minute survey was fielded in English and Spanish using the probability-based KnowledgePanel developed by Ipsos. This survey was completed online by n=1,015 registered voters in California. The full sample margin of error is 3.5%. Weighting accounted for different probabilities of selection and post-stratification weights were applied to adjust for demographic imbalance among sampled registered voters. Weighting benchmarks included gender, age, education, and race/ethnicity.

*All respondents were shown the following text describing social housing; one-third of respondents were shown this text alone; while one-third also read text describing social housing's success in Singapore and Vienna; and the final one-third read text describing advocacy for social housing California:

One approach to making housing more affordable in California that has been proposed in recent years is "social housing." Social housing is government-owned housing where individuals and families of different income levels live together.

In social housing developments, all residents pay lower rates than they would in market-rate housing, because public and government ownership removes the need to increase rents for profit. However, higher-income residents still pay more than lower-income individuals and families, which helps reduce the burden on those with the most need.