



## **Studies in the News**

California Research Bureau, California State Library

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*Check out our newest topic area, Science & Technology!*

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## ECONOMY

***Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit.* Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Feb. 2017. 33 p.**

[https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/interactives/householdcredit/data/pdf/HHDC\\_2016Q4.pdf](https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/interactives/householdcredit/data/pdf/HHDC_2016Q4.pdf)

“Aggregate household debt balances increased substantially in the fourth quarter of 2016. As of December 31, 2016, total household indebtedness was \$12.58 trillion, a \$226 billion (1.8%) increase from the third quarter of 2016. Overall household debt remains just 0.8% below its 2008Q3 peak of \$12.68 trillion.... Mortgage originations ... were at \$617 billion, the highest level of originations seen since the beginning of the Great Recession. There were \$142 billion in auto loan originations in the fourth quarter, making 2016 the highest auto loan origination year in the 18-year history of the data.... Delinquency rates were roughly stable in the last quarter of 2016.” California has the highest per capita debt balance among states reported, due to large mortgage debt, but is the lowest in all delinquency measures reported.

## EDUCATION

***From Hammer to Flashlight: A Decade of Data in Education.* Data Quality Campaign. Jan. 2017. 34 p.**

<http://dataqualitycampaign.org/resource/from-hammer-to-flashlight-a-decade-of-data-in-education/>

“For years the public education sector has been building data systems and developing a culture of data use to better inform and reach its goals. Although much work remains before education becomes a truly evidence-based field, its incredible progress offers many lessons. This paper seeks to highlight the successes and illuminate the challenges that have accompanied this progress, both for other sectors to learn from and for the education field to examine as it continues to build the culture, capacity, and conditions to use data to improve education for all students.”

## EMPLOYMENT

***Emergency Medical Services in California: Wages, Working Conditions, and Industry Profile.* By Ken Jacobs, et al. UC Berkley Labor Center. Feb. 2017. 3 p.**

<http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/emergency-medical-services-in-california-wages-working-conditions-and-industry-profile/>

“Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics are the backbone of California’s emergency medical services (EMS) system.... The majority of workers in this growing sector are employed by private providers.... Wages for private-sector EMS workers are low and stagnating.... EMS work can be dangerous, with high rates of mortality, injury, and mental and physical trauma.... Low wages and difficult working conditions exacerbate turnover among private-sector EMS workers.” The report concludes with ways state and county governments might improve wages and working conditions in this sector.

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

***Progress Report: Subsidence in California, March 2015 – September 2016.* By Tom G. Farr, et al. CA Institute of Technology. Feb. 2017. 37 p.**

<http://www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/docs/2017/JPL%20subsidence%20report%20final%20for%20public%20dec%202016.pdf>

“Subsidence caused by groundwater pumping in the Central Valley has been a problem for decades.... The new Sentenel-1A data show the two known main subsidence bowls in the San Joaquin Valley: The

larger is centered on Corcoran and extends 60 miles to the NW (northwest), affecting the California Aqueduct.... [The] maximum total subsidence was found to be 22" near Cocoran. A second bowl is centered on El Nido and is approximately 25 miles in diameter, encompassing most of the East Side Bypass." Other subsidence locations include Davis and Woodland (2"), Arbuckle (12"), and Sierra Valley, north of Lake Tahoe (6").

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***What's at Stake in Federal-State Fiscal Relations.* Federal Funds Information for States. Jan. 2017. 16 p.**

<http://www.ffis.org/system/files/private/client/2017/sa17-01.pdf> (Available at the California State Library)

The 115<sup>th</sup> Congress has a new ambitious agenda that could affect current federal-state fiscal relations. The analysis framework identifies the four sources of risk at which state and local grants could see major changes: programs vulnerable to the appropriations process, reconciliation process, debt limit concessions, and regulatory process. Possible changes include: repeal/replacement of the ACA (impacting Medicaid), federal tax reform, conversion of mandatory programs like Medicaid and SNAP to block grants, changes to discretionary program funding, upheaval from debt limit debate, and reform or elimination of certain regulations.

## HEALTH

***Drugs, Alcohol, and Suicide Represent Growing Share of U.S. Mortality.* By Shannon M. Monnat. Carsey School of Public Policy. Winter 2017. 6 p.**

<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/drugs-alcohol-suicide>

"Though deaths from drugs, alcohol, and suicide accounted for just 4.2% of all U.S. deaths in 2010–2014, this is up from 3.0% in 2000–2004—a substantial increase in one decade." This brief discusses mortality rates from drug poisoning, alcohol poisoning and suicide, with an emphasis on the differences between race and gender. "Not all demographic groups are at equal risk of drug, alcohol, and suicide mortality. The highest rates are among young and middle-aged non-Hispanic white males, especially those in nonmetropolitan areas.... Although black male drug and alcohol mortality rates exceeded those of white males in the early 2000s, by the end of the decade the rates for black males had declined and were lower than those for white males."

## HUMAN SERVICES

***How States Use Funds Under the TANF Block Grant.* By Liz Schott, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Jan. 5, 2017. 19 p.**

<http://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/how-states-use-funds-under-the-tanf-block-grant>  
**State Fact Sheet:** <http://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/state-fact-sheets-how-states-have-spent-funds-under-the-tanf-block>

"States spend only half of their combined federal and state dollars under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) on core welfare reform areas—basic assistance for families with children, child care for low-income families, and work-related activities or supports—and a handful of states spend less than 20% on these areas." This report also found that in 2015, "states spent a quarter of their federal and state TANF funds on one of these core areas: basic assistance to help very poor families care for their children and meet very basic needs such as shelter." California spent about \$6.6 billion in federal and state funds under the TANF program. It spent 72% of these funds on core welfare reform activities, which is among the highest in the United States.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**2016 Deloitte-NASCIO Cybersecurity Study - State Governments at Risk: Turning Strategy and Awareness into Progress.** By Doug Robinson, et al. National Association of State Chief Information Officers and Deloitte & Touche, LLP. Sep. 2016. 32 p.

<http://www.nascio.org/Publications/ArtMID/485/ArticleID/413/2016-Deloitte-NASCIO-Cybersecurity-Study-State-Governments-at-Risk-Turning-Strategy-and-Awareness-into-Progress>

“The following key themes emerged from our analysis: Governor-level awareness is on the rise ... [but] a confidence gap still exists between IT and the business, emphasizing the need for better communication of cyber risks.... States taking a proactive approach to strategy setting and communication are more likely to see improvements in funding and access to talent.... [And finally] states are pointing to job stability and the opportunity to “give back and make an impact” as compelling reasons to gravitate towards state employment. These—along with a rich training and development program—are becoming the basis for a campaign to recruit millennial talent.”

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***If You Build It: A Guide to Economics of Infrastructure Investment.*** By Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, et al. The Hamilton Project at Brookings. Feb. 2017. 12 p.

[http://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/if\\_you\\_build\\_it\\_guide\\_economics\\_infrastructure\\_investment.pdf](http://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/if_you_build_it_guide_economics_infrastructure_investment.pdf)

“[T]his paper seeks to provide an economic framework for evaluating infrastructure investments and their methods of funding and finance. Why should we invest in infrastructure, what projects should be selected, who should decide, and how should those investments be paid for are all questions that can be better answered with the help of sound economic theory and evidence.” This report summarizes factors that determine the economic returns to spending on infrastructure, and describes the way investments increase when interest rates are low.

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