

# California

California Department  
of Public Health  
Immunization Branch

Website: [Immunization Branch \(ca.gov\)](http://immunization.ca.gov)

California Immunization  
Coalition

Website: [immunizeca.org](http://immunizeca.org)



## Community Profile

As of 2023, California is the third most populous state in the United States, with nearly 40 million residents spread across 163,696 square miles and a population density of 253.7 per mile. Administratively it is divided into 58 counties featuring a diverse array of coastal, desert, and valley regions. Its most populous cities are Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Jose.



In terms of sociodemographic factors,



**93.5%**

have health insurance



**5.2%**

unemployment rate



**12.2%**

poverty rate



**\$91,551**

median income



**84.4%**

hold a high school diploma

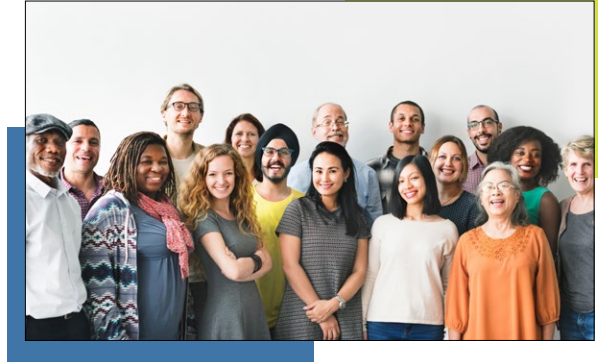


**37.0%**

have a bachelor's degree or higher

## Coalition Overview

The California Immunization Coalition (CIC) started in 1998 as two coalitions. One coalition focused on adult immunization, and the other on childhood immunization. The coalitions joined forces in 2008 to become a single organization that supports the educational, networking, policy, and advocacy work needed to improve immunization rates for all Californians.



The California coalition is a 501(c)(3), dedicated to achieving and maintaining full immunization protection for all Californians to prevent disease, disability and death. CIC, as a broadly-based statewide organization, brings coordination, collaboration, technical resources and cross-disciplinary communication to this important health issue.

There are 6 priority areas for the coalition:

- Improve immunization rates for Californians of all ages
- Encourage community-based advocacy
- Support California's local immunization coalitions
- Provide educational opportunities for health professionals and community stakeholders
- Promote the use of immunization registries
- Reduce health disparities and improve access to vaccines

In 2011 there were around 18 local immunization coalitions, but a reduction in funding in 2010 forced them to disband or reduce services and activities. However, over the past five years, many local coalitions are restarting and there are currently about 10 that the California Immunization Coalition works with. CIC works with local coalitions on state and national immunization awareness and collaborates with them on projects.

## Structure

CIC is governed by a volunteer board of directors and is staffed by a full-time executive director who provides leadership, program coordination, and administrative support.

The state coalition currently employs two full-time staff members. They are able to accomplish their work through an extensive volunteer network made up of vaccine professionals and

community members. The coalition's board of directors includes a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and up to 17 directors at large. A representative from the California Department of Public Health attends board meetings to provide monthly updates but is not a voting member. All board members have health-related backgrounds, with some from medical fields including physicians, pharmacists, infectious disease specialists, nurses, and others from public health including local immunization program managers, analysts, and educators. CIC accomplishes their work through committees including Advocacy, Education, Emerging Issues, Registry, and Governance. Committees are chaired by board members which help to maintain strong communication, coordination and continuity. CIC also utilizes an Advisory Council comprised of immunization and public health experts to advise the coalition on issues usually specific to vaccines and vaccine administration.

## Funding

The coalition is funded through public and private funds, including grant funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via the state health department.

## Coalition Activities

Some of the main activities of the coalition are:

- Developing and producing webinars throughout the year
- Developing [social media materials](#) for use by CIC and partners
- Creating fact sheets, one-pagers, and other related materials
- Advocating for strong immunization policy in the state
- Supporting public health partners and health associations in their work
- Hosting the annual [California Immunization Summit](#)
- Honoring immunization leaders at the California Immunization Champion Awards

For more information about activities that the coalition is involved in see the [coalition's homepage](#).

## Successes

### Strategic Use of Media and Social Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The state immunization program is often limited in their use of the department of public health's social media and communications channels and the immunization branch does not have their own social media platforms. During the COVID-19 pandemic it was important to share

information often, but the immunization program was unable to due to lengthy internal approval processes. So, the immunization program created graphics about the COVID-19 vaccine and was able to provide funding for the coalition to distribute these communication materials in the community. The coalition was able to rapidly share these materials with the public.

## Advocacy Work

The coalition has successfully advocated for vaccination issues in the state legislature by providing testimonies and offering resources during legislative hearings. You can see a list of bills they supported and legislative factsheets from the [2022 legislative session](#).

## A Blend of Institutional Memory and Fresh Perspectives

The coalition and immunization program have benefited from having long-term and consistent staff, as well as recruitment of new coalition members. This has allowed for a combination of institutional memory, lengthy relationships, and fresh perspectives from new colleagues that contribute to the coalition's sustainability.

## Partnerships

The coalition and the state immunization program have a long-standing relationship that has been integral to the coalition's success. Some of the keys to this strong partnership are:

- Mutual patience
- Respect
- Trust
- Balancing personalities in relationship building
- Regular meetings to foster and maintain relationships
- A shared vision
- Frequent communication

## Challenges

The main challenge is coalition funding, which saw a significant decrease after the 2010 H1N1 influenza pandemic due to the financial crisis. Several of the local coalitions reduced activities, and in some cases, disbanded because of these funding cutbacks. The coalition and immunization program navigated this challenge by relying on their strong relationship and finding ways to continue activities wherever possible. The coalition has supported forming local coalitions through technical assistance and resource coordination; however, they cannot support them with funding. CIC coordinates quarterly calls with local coalition leadership, making connections to broaden their network, and communicating about the needs of the local coalitions.



## Advice for building and maintaining a coalition

The coalition director and immunization program manager offered the following advice for program managers interested in expanding coalition work or starting a new coalition:

- Be patient and respect your counterpart.
- Invest time in developing relationships. Get to know your counterpart as a person and have informal casual talks. This helps build trust in the relationship.
- Hold regular meetings and updates between the immunization coalition director and program managers. The frequency depends on communication style. Some people may want to meet regularly (monthly or quarterly), and others may want to meet as needed. Either way, the manager and director must communicate regularly.
- Understand who else is working on immunization issues in the community. Use that information to identify gaps and ensure there is no duplication of services provided.
- Learn what is working elsewhere in the country and choose elements that might be appropriate to replicate in your area. [The National Network of Immunization Coalitions](#) serves as a useful resource hub to identify strategies as well as people and organizations that do the type of work you are interested in doing.
- Use the coalition to help the immunization program manager learn how to navigate the immunization landscape (i.e., obtain funding, overcome bureaucratic challenges, develop relationships).

*“The state [immunization program]’s mission is our mission - we’re all working towards the same thing. Our goals are very similar to their goals. So wherever possible, we work to support what the state is doing.”*

- **Catherine Flores**, Executive Director for the California Immunization Coalition

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