

California's major growth took place in the late 1950's and 1960's when the State experienced a remarkable population explosion and when numerous industries were established. Many of these industries have rapidly grown to national leadership status. Today, virtually every manufacturing industry is represented in the State and everything is produced from steel to aeroplanes and electronics; from furniture to canned fruits and vegetables. California offers a wide variety of goods to consumers and services a wide variety of local, national, and international markets. The State is also the leading producer of agricultural crops in the United States and ranks amongst the nation's top fish producing states. There is now a growing trend for companies that have traditionally based themselves in the East and Midwest to relocate their manufacturing plants and headquarters in the West and in the "sunbelt" regions.

California is an industrial giant. If the State were a separate nation, it's gross regional product would rank eighth among the world's top ten industrial economies. In terms of national scale, about one-tenth of the United States' population and employment is to be found in California. It is the focal state in the Western United States, containing 60 percent of the population of the seven western states*. California offers approximately 60 percent of all the employment in the western region. The State showed a 28.4 percent increase in employment in manufacturing between 1970 and 1980, compared to a 5.1 percent increase for the United States as a whole, and compared with Chicago (-12.4%) or Greater New York (-19.1%) over the same period.

*The seven western states include Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington