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Analyze demographic and socio-economic profiles of the Chico area in California to understand which groups are most vulnerable in wildfire scenarios

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Population 2024

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Answer

Chico, California has a population of approximately 100,816 as of 2024, with a median age of 30.4 years ¹ ³ . The city's demographic profile reveals several groups that may be particularly vulnerable in wildfire scenarios:

Vulnerable Populations

1. Elderly residents: 14% of Chico's population is 65 years ³ . Seniors may be more vulnerable due to diminished abilities and mobility issues, which can hamper timely evacuation ⁴ .

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2. Low-income residents: The poverty rate in Chico is 22.24% ¹ . People living in poverty are more likely to experience infrastructural limitations and have chronic medical conditions, making them more vulnerable to climate-related hazards like wildfires ² .
3. College-age population: Chico has a significant college-age population living in dense neighborhoods with older structures, often in balloon-framed construction with multiple levels. This group may be at higher risk due to potential egress issues in case of fire ² .
4. Assisted living facility residents: Chico has a large population residing in assisted living facilities, some housing over 100 residents. These individuals may face challenges with evacuation during emergencies ² .
5. Mobile home residents: People living in mobile homes are associated with higher vulnerability to wildfires in West Coast states ⁴ .

Socio-economic Factors

1. Income disparity: While the average household income in Chico is \$89,522, the median household income is significantly lower at \$65,932, indicating income inequality ¹ ⁵ .
2. Racial composition: The majority of Chico's population is White (75.08%), followed by Two or more races (10.07%), and Other race (6.23%) ¹ . This demographic makeup may influence vulnerability patterns and access to resources during emergencies.
3. Housing: The city has 40,176 housing units ³ . The location of housing can affect residents' vulnerability to wildfires.





Regional Context

Chico's vulnerability profile should be considered within the broader context of California and the West Coast:

1. Increasing exposure: The number of socially vulnerable people exposed to wildfires in the West Coast states increased by nearly 250% from 2000-2010 to 2011-2021 ⁴.
2. Spatial patterns: Northern California, where Chico is located, tends to have higher vulnerability compared to central and southern coastal areas ⁴.
3. Climate change impacts: The Chico Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment noted that climate-related effects could disproportionately impact vulnerable populations ².

In conclusion, while wildfires can affect all residents, certain groups in Chico, such as the elderly, low-income individuals, college students, and those in assisted living facilities, may be particularly vulnerable. Understanding these vulnerability patterns is crucial for developing effective wildfire mitigation and adaptation strategies.

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✳️ Answer

Chico, California has a population of approximately 101,301 as of 2023, with a projected decline to 100,391 by 2025 ². The demographic and socio-economic profiles reveal several groups that may be particularly vulnerable in wildfire scenarios:

Vulnerable Populations

1. Elderly residents: 14.1% of Chico's population is 65 years and over ⁴. Seniors may be more vulnerable due to potential mobility issues and health concerns during evacuations.
2. Low-income residents: The poverty rate in Chico is 22.24%, with 12.6% of families living in poverty ^{1 2}. People living in poverty may lack resources for evacuation or home hardening against wildfires.
3. Children: 18.7% of the population is under 18 years old ³. Children may be more vulnerable due to their dependence on adults for evacuation and safety measures.





4. Non-English speakers: While specific data on language proficiency is not provided, 8.1% of Chico residents are foreign-born ⁴ . Language barriers could impede access to critical wildfire information and evacuation orders.

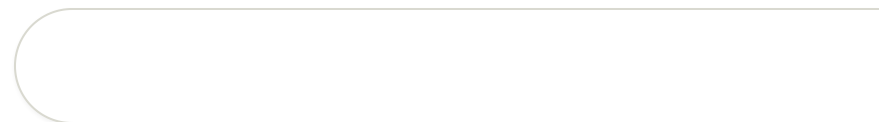
Socio-economic Factors

1. Income disparity: The median household income in Chico is \$67,929, which is lower than the California average ² . Lower-income households may have fewer resources to prepare for and recover from wildfires.
2. Housing: Chico has 41,454 households, with an average of 2.39 persons per household ⁵ . The homeownership rate is 58.1% ³ . Renters and those in multi-unit housing may face additional challenges in implementing fire safety measures.
3. Education: Chico is home to California State University-Chico and Butte College ³ . The large student population may be more transient and less familiar with local wildfire risks and evacuation procedures.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

The racial and ethnic makeup of Chico is as follows:

- White: 72.3% (65.7% non-Hispanic White)
- Hispanic or Latino: 20.7%
- Two or More Races: 12.2%
- Asian: 5.2%
- Black or African American: 2.0%
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 1.0%





- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0.4% ⁴

Minority communities may face additional vulnerabilities due to potential language barriers, socioeconomic factors, or reduced access to resources.

Additional Considerations

1. Veterans: Chico has 3,775 veterans ⁴, who may have specific needs during wildfire emergencies due to potential disabilities or health issues.
2. Persons with disabilities: While specific data is not provided, this group typically requires additional assistance during evacuations and may be more vulnerable to the health impacts of wildfires.
3. Transient population: With a large university presence, Chico has a significant young adult population that may be less prepared for wildfire scenarios due to their temporary residency.

In conclusion, while wildfires can affect all residents, certain groups in Chico, such as the elderly, low-income individuals, children, non-English speakers, and minority communities, may be particularly vulnerable. Understanding these vulnerability patterns is crucial for developing effective wildfire mitigation, communication, and evacuation strategies tailored to the diverse needs of Chico's population.

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Are there specific neighborhoods in Chico that are more at risk during wildfires +

