

# **Top 15 Best Banks in California | 2017 Ranking | Review of the Top California Banks**

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## **2017 RANKING & REVIEWS TOP RANKING BEST BANKS IN CALIFORNIA**

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### **Intro: Finding the Best Banks in California**

Being considered one of the best banks in California is no small achievement.

While the banking landscape in California may have changed significantly over the past two decades, the state remains a highly competitive battleground for financial services companies.

There is a dynamic mix of national and regional banks in California, with local, private, public, and international ownership structures as well as non-bank lenders and other financial services providers.

This includes banks in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and other areas in Southern and Northern California.



*Award Emblem: Top 15 Best Banks in California*

According to [usbanklocations.com](http://usbanklocations.com), there are currently more than 240 banks actively operating across Southern and Northern California, with almost 7,200 branch banking locations.

The top banks in California represent some of the best managed and financially vibrant institutions in the state as well as in the nation.

While we were able to identify some of the best banks in Los Angeles, best banks in San Diego, and other best banks in Southern California, several of the institutions on our top banks in California list represent smaller markets in Northern and Central California.

Other banks have extensive retail branch networks that span wide areas of the state.

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## AdvisoryHQ's List of the Top 15 Best Banks in California

List is sorted alphabetically (click any of the names above to go directly to the detailed review section for that bank)

- [Bank of the West](#)
- [BBVA Compass Bank](#)
- [CIT Bank/OneWest Bank](#)
- [Citibank](#)
- [City National Bank](#)
- [Comerica Bank](#)
- [East West Bank](#)
- [MUFG Union Bank](#)
- [Pacific Western Bank](#)
- [Rabobank](#)
- [Tri Counties Bank](#)
- [U.S. Bank](#)
- [Umpqua Bank](#)
- [Wells Fargo Bank](#)
- [Westamerica Bank](#)

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### Top 15 Best Banks in California | Brief Comparison

| Banks in California    | Highlighted Features                     |
|------------------------|--|
| Bank of the West       | Small Business Lending                   |
| BBVA Compass Bank      | HOME Program                             |
| CIT Bank/One West Bank | Equipment Financing                      |
| Citibank               | Financial Education on Wealth Management |
| City National Bank     | Reading is the Way up® Initiative        |
| Comerica Bank          | Premiere Checking                        |
| East West Bank         | Focus on International Trade             |
| MUFG Union Bank        | Small Business Resource Center           |
| Pacific Western Bank   | Business Lending                         |
| Rabobank               | Rewards Checking for Businesses          |
| Tri Counties Bank      | SBA 504 Loans                            |
| U.S. Bank              | Online Investing                         |
| Umpqua Bank            | GreenStreet Lending                      |
| Wells Fargo Bank       | Certificates of Deposit                  |

|                  |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Westamerica Bank | Cash Rewards American Express card |
|------------------|------------------------------------|

*Table: Top 15 Best Banks in California | Above list is sorted alphabetically*

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## AdvisoryHQ's Selection Methodology

What methodology does AdvisoryHQ use in selecting and finalizing the credit cards, financial products, firms, services, and products that are ranked on its various top-rated lists?

Please click here "[AdvisoryHQ's Ranking Methodologies](#)" for a detailed review of AdvisoryHQ's selection methodologies for ranking top-rated credit cards, financial accounts, firms, products, and services.

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## Detailed Review—Top 15 Best Banks in California

Below, please find the detailed review of each firm on our list of the best banks in California. We have highlighted some of the factors that allowed these California banks to score so high in our selection ranking.

***[See Also: The Best Banks For Students This Year | PNC vs Bank of America vs U.S. Bank Student Banking](#)***

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## Bank of the West Review

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[Bank of the West](#) has grown through branch openings and acquisitions in recent decades to become one of the largest banks in California.

Established in the Golden State in the 1870s, this California bank now [operates](#) more than 600 retail branches and business offices in 23 U.S. states. This top bank in California has more than [\\$82.6 billion in assets](#).

Bank of the West is a subsidiary of [BNP Paribas](#), one of the largest financial companies in the world and headquartered in France. BNP Paribas came in

24th on [Forbes's Global 2000 List in 2016](#). BNP Paribas has [€2,076,959,000,000](#) (approximately \$2,231,038,203,415 U.S.) in assets as of December 31, 2016.



## **Key Factors That Enabled This Firm to Rank as One of the Top Banks in California**

Below are key factors that enabled Bank of the West to be rated as one of this year's top banks in California.

### Consumer Loans

Bank of the West has a wide range of loans, credit lines, and easy-to-use online account management tools. In addition to mortgage, secured and unsecured lines of credit, and credit cards, Bank of the West is among the best California banks that provide loans for building improvements and RV purchases. Available credit products for qualified borrowers [include](#):

- **Personal loans:** Unsecured personal loans that can be used for anything from a medical procedure to a wedding or home improvement project

- **Personal lines of credit:** Unsecured lines of credit which can be tapped into without having to repeatedly apply for a loan
- **Home equity lines of credit:** Use your home's equity to secure funds for renovation, debt consolidation expenses, and more
- **Mortgages:** A wide variety of financing solutions, as well as a mortgage comparison tool, to see what will work best for you
- **Construction financing:** Loans for major renovations and home additions
- **Car, RV, and boat loans**

### Small Business Lending

Bank of the West is one of the [100 most active SBA 7\(a\) lenders](#) as of December 31, 2016. This best bank in California participated in 81 SBA-backed loans to small business borrowers in the past year, totaling more than \$61 million in loan proceeds.

### Online Banking

With the power of a multi-national financial institution behind it, this top California bank offers a very functional [web-based banking platform](#). Deposit, loan, investment, and business customers can access their accounts in a single location on the web. Cash management tools and online bill pay makes accessing money and information with this bank in California easier than ever.

### Online Bill Pay and Popmoney

Bank of the West has a very functional online bill payment service and is also one of the top banks in California that offers the Popmoney payment product. [Popmoney](#) allows customers to send and receive payments to and from virtually anyone with a bank account.

Providing responsive products, like Popmoney, and delivering small business capital in emerging communities are just two of the reasons that Bank of the West made the list of the top banks in California.

**[Don't Miss: The Best Banks for College Students This Year | Chase vs Wells vs Bank of America](#)**

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# CIT/OneWest Bank Review

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Headquartered out of Pasadena, CA, [OneWest Bank](#) provides customers with consumer, small business, and middle-market banking services, specializing in companies in specific industry segments as well as consumers within its retail branch network.

OneWest Bank is a division of [CIT Bank](#). The parent company, CIT Group (NYSE: CIT), is a New York–based public company founded in 1908 that owns CIT Bank as well as [BankonCIT.com](#).

OneWest bank operates as the company’s retail, small business and wealth management banking arm. Closely aligned, CIT Bank operates in 30 industry segments providing middle-market banking and cash management services. CIT’s global reach makes it one of the most diversified among the best banks in Southern California.

## **Key Factors That Enabled This Firm to Rank as One of the Top Banks in California**

Below are key factors that enabled CIT/OneWest Bank to be rated as one of this year’s top banks in California.

### Consumer Banking and Private Banking

Consistent with our other top banks in California, OneWest Bank provides traditional checking, savings, consumer and business loans, and other [essential retail banking services](#) via its branch system located throughout Southern California.

In addition, CIT/OneWest offers a wide variety of deposit and loan products for wealthier individuals, including high-yield demand deposit accounts, asset acquisition loans, jumbo mortgages, commercial real estate loans, interest-rate hedging, and foreign exchange services.

### Commercial Banking



For small- and mid-sized businesses, CIT Commercial Finance provides loans, leasing, and treasury management services throughout the United States. CIT's Commercial Finance Unit focuses on specific industries, [including](#):

- Aerospace & defense
- Business services
- Communications
- Consumer goods
- Energy
- Entertainment
- Gaming
- Healthcare
- Restaurants
- Retail
- Technology
- Sports & media

### Equipment Finance

Among our best banks in California, CIT's [Equipment Finance](#) business stands out. CIT provides financing solutions to small businesses and middle market companies looking to acquire new equipment from a set of printers to a fleet of street sweepers.

This specialty leasing business allows companies to identify the investments they need to grow and to tap into a financial partner to assist in the financing of such large-scale capital improvement projects.

### Real Estate Finance

CIT's [Commercial Real Estate Financing](#) service is also a standout among our best banks in California. CIT provides senior secured commercial debt to real estate developers and other commercial real estate investors. CIT offers financing to qualified commercial borrowers to develop or acquire office, retail, industrial, apartment, and condominium properties as well as hotel and resort properties.

### Business and Commercial Aircraft Financing

Fairly unique to our group of top banks in California, [CIT Business Aircraft Finance](#) provides financing to business jet operators such as charter companies. Serving clients globally, CIT provides financing that includes term



loans, leases, pre-delivery financing, fractional share financing, and vendor/manufacturer financing.

CIT provides leasing and financing services to commercial airlines as well. According to the [CIT Bank website](#), the company owns a fleet of more than 350 commercial aircraft that it leases to airlines, and has more than 100 commercial air financing customers in about 50 countries.

### Maritime and Rail Finance

Two other differentiators among our best banks in Southern California, [CIT Maritime Finance](#) offers secured loans, sale-leasebacks, and bareboat charters to owners and operators of oceangoing cargo vessels. CIT Rail offers customized leasing and financing solutions as well as access to its own diversified fleet of railcar assets. CIT Rail serves freight shippers and carriers throughout North America and Europe.

***[Related: Best Online Savings Accounts | Ranking, Rates & Features](#)***

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## City National Bank Review

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[City National Bank](#) offers its customers an upscale banking experience. As the company's tag line—*The way up*®—suggests, this member of the list of top banks in California focuses on assisting successful consumers and entrepreneurs with achieving their financial and business goals.

City National offers its clients highly-personalized consumer banking, trust management, and investment services through [72 offices](#) in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Nevada as well as New York City, Nashville, and Atlanta. City National Bank and its affiliates hold nearly [\\$39 billion in deposits](#) and more than [\\$45 billion in total assets](#) as of January 31, 2017.

| <b>CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (CITY NATIONAL BANK AND MANAGED AFFILIATES)</b> | <b>AT 01/31/2017</b> | <b>AT 01/31/2016</b> |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Total assets:</b>   | \$45.1 billion       | \$36.4 billion       |
| <b>Total deposits:</b>   | \$39.6 billion       | \$31.8 billion       |
| <b>Loans and leases, excluding acquired impaired loans:</b>                          | \$27.1 billion       | \$23.4 billion       |
| <b>Assets under management*:</b>   | \$41.3 billion       | \$40.3 billion       |
| <b>Assets under management or administration*:</b>                                   | \$55.5 billion       | \$53.9 billion       |

## **Key Factors That Enabled This Firm to Rank as One of the Top Banks in California**

Below are key factors that enabled City National Bank to be rated as one of this year's top banks in California.

Starting with a basic premise that "business is personal," City National Bank stays very focused on a specific client base, business approach, and set of products and services when compared to other top banks in California.

Working with the upwardly mobile, entrepreneurs, and their families as well as supporting local communities, City National is able to deliver a highly-personalized client experience. Combing high-end relationship management with quality financial products allows City National to deliver results.

### Banking, Lending, and Wealth Management

For its client base, City National provides a full assortment of traditional consumer banking and wealth management services. Like many of the other top banks in California on this list, traditional banking products offered include checking and savings accounts as well as international banking and treasury and cash management services.

Loan product offerings include credit cards, mortgages and real estate financing, lines of credit, equipment financing, and working capital products.

Finally, City National also provides investment and trust services as well as retirement planning.

### Reading is The way up

[Reading is The way up®](#) (RITWU) is City National's way of making a difference by promoting childhood reading and lifelong learning. This program is unique to City National, helping the bank to differentiate itself from other top banks in California. By providing direct grants to charitable organizations, volunteer opportunities for bank staff, and a variety of employee activities held throughout the year, RITWU provides an opportunity for internal team-building and to make a difference in lives of local youth.

Since the RITWU program's inception, the program has:

- Awarded more than 640 teacher grants
- Supported colleagues who chose to be volunteer readers at schools
- Made a donation of more than 110,000 books to schools

### Going Green

City National administers its own [Green Ladder Council](#) which comprises staff from the organization. The council at this top California bank supports City National by finding ways to reduce environmental impact opportunities to encourage green development. The company has also stated specific goals toward environmental sustainability, including:

- Tracking and reducing the bank-wide carbon footprint
- Continuously increasing the use of renewable/reusable resources
- Creating a healthier environment for employees, clients, and the community

In addition to the Green Ladder Council, City National Bank has installed solar panels at the bank's Riverside, California offices. According to City National, the solar units save over [77,000 kilowatt-hours \(kWh\) per year](#). This is part of a broader green building initiative to improve energy efficiency throughout the organization, setting an example for other banks in California.

***[Popular Article: Top Online Banks | Ranking | Comparison of the Best Online Banking](#)***

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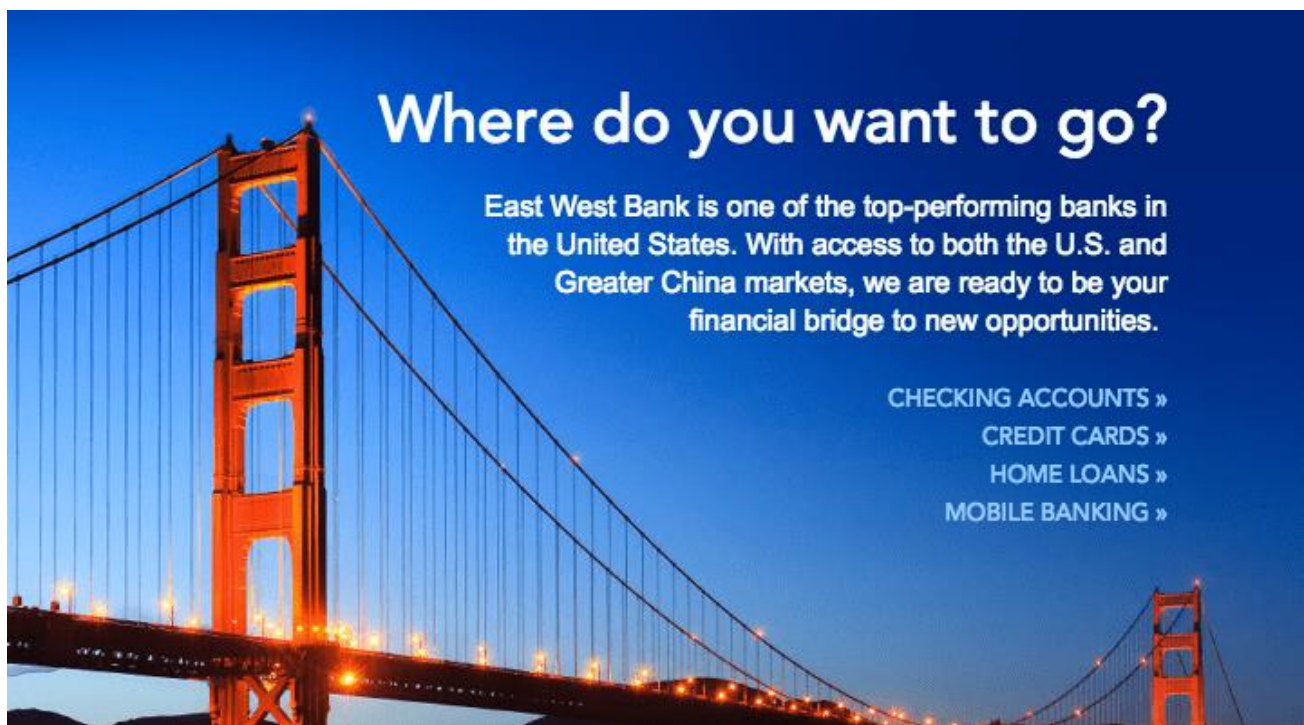
# East West Bank Review

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Opening its doors in 1973, [East West Bank](#) is unique among our best banks in California. East West Bank was the first federally-chartered savings institution focused primarily on [serving the financial needs of Chinese-Americans](#) in Los Angeles.

Over the years, the organization has grown and evolved into a full-service commercial bank with more than [130 locations](#) in the U.S. and Greater China. U.S. markets include California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, Texas, and Washington.

East West Bank [has branches](#) in California. In the Greater China Region, East West has locations in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shantou, Shenzhen, Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Taipei, and Xiamen.



**Where do you want to go?**

East West Bank is one of the top-performing banks in the United States. With access to both the U.S. and Greater China markets, we are ready to be your financial bridge to new opportunities.

- CHECKING ACCOUNTS »
- CREDIT CARDS »
- HOME LOANS »
- MOBILE BANKING »

## **Key Factors That Enabled This Firm to Rank as One of the Top Banks in California**

Below are key factors that enabled East West Bank to be rated as one of this year's top banks in California.

## Consumer and Wealth Services

East West Bank offers a solid set of financial products to consumers and high-wealth clients, similar to our other best banks in California. Deposit products include traditional checking and savings accounts, CDs, and money markets. Lending services include mortgage, personal unsecured loans, credit cards and home equity loans.

The company also offers an array of insurance products through its affiliate, East West Insurance Services, as well as a full-service wealth management and investment division.

## Small Business

East West Bank provides Small Business Administration (SBA) loans to help businesses qualify for financing more easily and receive more flexible terms. It is among the top 100 most active SBA 7(a) lenders with [74 loans totaling more than \\$36 million](#).

## Focus on International Trade

East West Bank has a full assemblage of commercial banking services that work in the import and export industry. Customers can access help with [international trade services](#) and [international trade financing](#) through East West Bank. With a stated goal of helping small businesses in the U.S. to compete globally, this top California bank provides both banking services and technical assistance in the form of seminars, individual consultations, and collaborations with businesses and professional organizations.

## Community Partnerships and Financial Education

Like many of the best banks in California, East West Bank has made it part of its mission to firmly back the communities in which it operates through community partnerships and support for financial education initiatives.

East West's [goal](#) is “to enhance the quality of life in the community by engaging in meaningful and effective programs that reduce homelessness, increase homeownership, preserve affordable housing, promote asset building, and enable more inclusive access to modern banking services.”

East West Bank's community and financial education support includes:

- **Asset Building:** East West Bank partners with community organizations that help people to save and prepare for a brighter financial future. Some of the organizations that East West supports include the South Bay Center for Counseling, Community & Economic Development (SBCC) and Bank On
- **Homeownership Workshops:** East West Bank regularly offers homeownership workshops throughout the communities in which it has branch locations. The company offers mortgage loan product information and assistance in qualifying for loans, grants, and subsidies.
- **Federal Home Loan Bank Grant Program:** As a member of the [Federal Home Loan Bank \(FHLB\) of San Francisco](#) since East West Bank's inception, the bank facilitates FHLB grant programs for its customers and assists local nonprofit organizations. The grant programs supported through East West Bank include the [Access to Housing and Economic Assistance for Development \(AHEAD\) Program](#) and the [Workforce Initiative Subsidy for Homeownership \(WISH\)](#) for first-time homebuyers.
- **Junior Achievement:** Junior Achievement is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial awareness. East West Bank employees regularly volunteer to teach financial education classes at schools in low- and moderate-income communities to students ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade.
- **Los Angeles Urban League:** East West Bank is also a community partner of the Los Angeles Urban League, supporting a variety of youth education and other Urban League initiatives.

**Read More:** [Best Kentucky Banks | Ranking | Top banks in Kentucky](#)

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**To browse exclusive reviews of all top-rated banks in California, please click on any of the links below.**

- [Bank of the West](#)
- [BBVA Compass Bank](#)
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  - [Pacific Western Bank](#)
  - [Rabobank](#)
  - [Tri Counties Bank](#)
  - [U.S. Bank](#)
  - [Umpqua Bank](#)
  - [Wells Fargo Bank](#)
  - [Westamerica Bank](#)
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## **Conclusion—Top 15 Best Banks in Northern, Central, and Southern California**

As we conclude our review of the top banks in California, it is important to note that there are many important factors that go beyond the exhaustive analysis done by AdvisoryHQ. Through providing you with a listing of banks that objectively rose to the top of our analysis of the best banks in California, we hope to provide you with a starting point for your own analysis.

Besides the company's financials, each bank possesses its own unique character, supports communities in its own way, and provides its own brand of customer service. Whether you're opening a bank account, looking for a business loan or investing in bank stocks, performing your own due diligence is the only way to make a well-informed decision.

We will leave you with some key questions you may want to ask before deciding what top bank in California to choose.

Here are some questions to get you started on your bank research:

- What products and services does it feature? While banks can offer a wide array of products, they may only concentrate on certain ones. Ask yourself, is this bank an expert in the areas where I need service?
- What is the geographic distribution of the financial institution? Is it local, national, or international? How large is its branch network? Are there ATMs around that I can access as well?



- Does the bank share my social values? Check out the bank's corporate responsibility report, annual report or its [Community Reinvestment Act](#) public file. Ask yourself, does this institution fit with me, and do I want to do business with or invest in it?

With these questions in mind, remember that your financial future is in the balance, and you deserve the best partner to help you save, pay bills, and work toward a bright financial future.

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