

## Population Distribution and Composition, 2000

During the 1990s, the population center of the United States shifted 12 miles south and 33 miles west, from a location near Steelville, Missouri, to a spot near Edgar Springs, Missouri.

Counting every person living in the United States is always a colossal undertaking. Census 2000 was the largest census in the history of the United States, counting 281 million people. In fact, the 33 million people added to the U.S. population between 1990 and 2000 is the largest census-to-census increase ever. New questions and procedures in Census 2000 provide unprecedented geographic<sup>1</sup> and racial detail. And new innovations in products and access modes will provide more data to more people faster than ever.

The decade of the 1990s was the only decade of the 20th century when every state gained population.

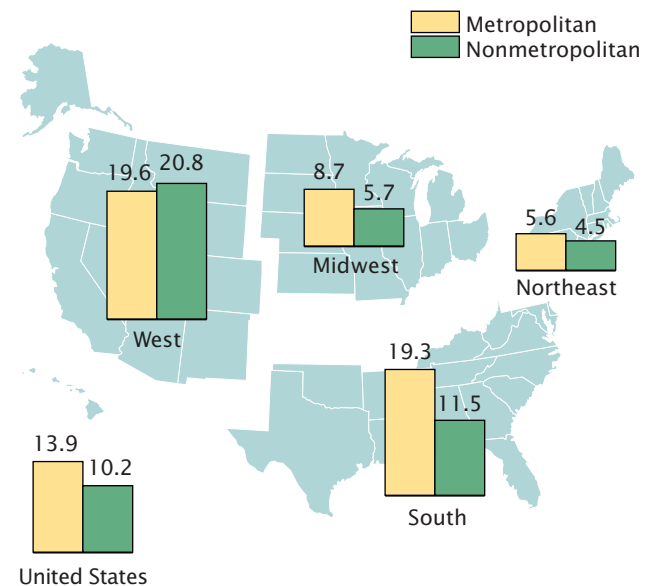
The growth rate during the 1990s (13 percent) was more than the rate in the 1980s (10 percent), but significantly less than the rate experienced during 1950s — when a baby boom contributed appreciably to the 18-percent gain.

With an overall 20 percent growth rate, the West grew more rapidly than any other region. Nevada swelled 66 percent and Arizona gained 40 percent. California had the largest numerical gain of any state, adding 4.1 million people. Altogether, the West gained 10.4 million new residents.

The South was the second fastest growing region, increasing 17 percent. With a 26 percent gain, Georgia was the most rapidly growing state in this region. Texas and Florida had the largest numerical increases in the South, 3.8 million and 3.0 million, respectively. The total gain for the South (nearly 14.8 million) was the most of any region.

<sup>1</sup> The minimum population for Census Designated Places was dropped, generating more information on small areas than ever before.

Figure 2-1.  
Percentage Change in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Populations by Region: 1990 to 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and 1990 census.

The population in the Midwest grew almost 8 percent, adding 4.7 million people. Minnesota was the Midwest's fastest growing state, increasing by more than 12 percent. A band of counties stretching across

### Words That Count

- **Resident population** includes all people living in the United States.
- **The four statistical regions of the United States** are groups of states for which data are presented. They include the Northeast, the Midwest, the South, and the West.
- **Median age** is the age at which half the population is older and half is younger.

Table 2-1.

## Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for the United States: 2000

Race and Hispanic or Latino	Number (in thousands)	Percent of total population
<b>RACE</b>		
Total Population.....	281,421	100.0
One race.....	274,595	97.6
White.....	211,460	75.1
Black or African American.....	34,658	12.3
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	2,475	0.9
Asian.....	10,242	3.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	399	0.1
Some other race.....	15,359	5.5
Two or more races.....	6,826	2.4
<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO</b>		
Total population.....	281,421	100.0
Hispanic or Latino.....	35,305	12.5
Not Hispanic or Latino.....	246,116	87.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

the Great Plains from the Canadian border to the Mexican border lost population.

The increase in the Northeast was 6 percent or 2.8 million people. Within the region, New Hampshire was the fastest growing state, increasing 11 percent. A band of slow growth counties included much of the interior Northeast and Appalachia, extending from Maine through western Pennsylvania and spilling over into the southern states of West Virginia and Kentucky.

In general, metropolitan areas across the United States grew faster than nonmetropolitan areas, 14 percent and 10 percent, respectively. In the Northeast, the population in metropolitan areas increased 6 percent, while population in nonmetropolitan areas increased 5 percent. In the Midwest the metropolitan areas had a 9-percent gain, compared with a 6-percent gain in nonmetropolitan areas. The South saw a population increase of 19 percent in metropolitan areas, compared with an increase of only 12 percent in nonmetropolitan areas. However, the West did not follow the trend. While metropolitan areas in the West increased almost 20 percent, nonmetropolitan areas grew 21 percent.

## For the first time ever, respondents to the census were allowed to indicate more than one race.

The overwhelming majority of respondents to Census 2000 (98 percent) reported only one race. The largest group (75 percent) reported White alone. Another 12 percent reported Black or African American alone. Just under 1 percent of the population indicated only American Indian and Alaska Native, and 4 percent indicated Asian only. Among those indicating only one race, the smallest race group was the population of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, accounting for only 0.1 percent of the total U.S. population. The remainder of the single-race respondents (5 percent) indicated that they were Some other race alone.

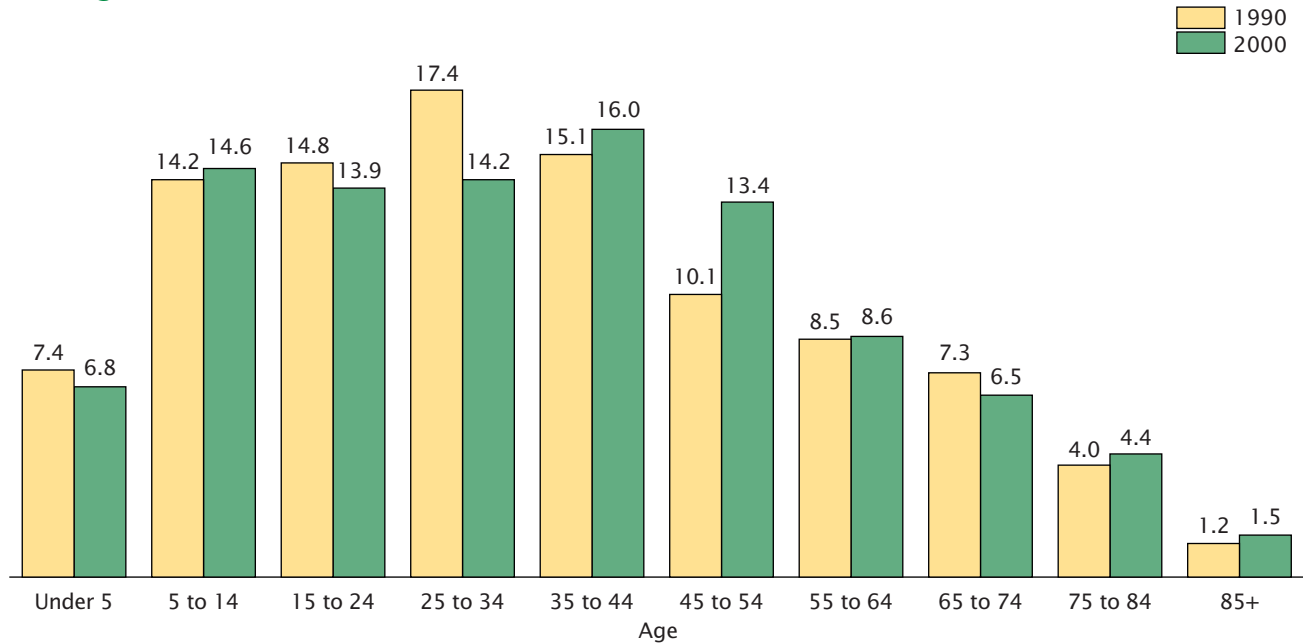
Just over 2 percent of the population indicated more than one race. The most common combination was “White **and** Some other race,” accounting for 32 percent of all respondents in this category. This group was followed by “White **and** American Indian and Alaska Native” (16 percent), “White **and** Asian” (13 percent), and “White **and** Black or African American” (11 percent). Of all respondents reporting more than one race, 7 percent indicated three or more races.

The federal government considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. For Census 2000, about 13 percent of the total U.S. population indicated that they were Hispanic or Latino. The racial distribution of this group contrasted sharply with the racial distribution of the population as a whole. Nearly half (48 percent) of Hispanics indicated that they were White alone. Another 42 percent indicated that they were Some other race alone. Less than 4 percent reported Black or African American alone, American Indian and Alaska Native alone, or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone. Approximately 6 percent of all Hispanics reported two or more races. In fact nearly one-third of all respondents reporting more than one race were also Hispanic.

## The U.S. population is growing older.

The median age of the U.S. population in 2000 was 35.3 — the highest it has ever been. In 1990, the median was 32.9. The rise reflects a 4-percent decline in

Figure 2-2.  
**U.S. Age Distribution in Percent: 1990 and 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and 1990 census.

the number of people aged 18 to 34 and a 28-percent increase in the number aged 35 to 64. As the large generation of baby boomers<sup>2</sup> began passing their 45th birthday, the population aged 45 to 54 swelled 49 percent during the decade.

For the first time in the history of the census, the population aged 65 and older increased at a slower rate than the population as a whole. The percentage of people in this age group fell from 12.6 percent in 1990 to 12.4 percent in 2000. Relatively low birth rates during the late 1920s and early 1930s meant a relatively small number of people celebrated their 65th birthday in time for Census 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Baby boomers are generally defined as people born from 1946 to 1964.

### The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

- For more detailed information, see the following Census 2000 Briefs, *Population Change and Distribution* by Marc J. Perry and Paul J. Mackun and *Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin* by Elizabeth M. Grieco and Rachel C. Cassidy.
- Look for detailed tables on the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) and select "Census 2000."
- Contact the Statistical Information Staff of the U.S. Census Bureau at 301-457-2422 or e-mail [pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov).