



POPULATION BRIEF

Trends in the Western U.S.

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Nevada

In the past three decades, population growth in the State of Nevada has been the fastest of any state in the country. From 1980 to 2010, the population grew from 800,493 to 2,700,551, an increase of 237.4 percent. In the decade from 2000 to 2010, Nevada gained 702,294 residents, a 35.1 percent boost – again the highest in the country.

Table 1 presents data showing population change in Nevada counties from 1980 to 2010. This table shows that in seven of the state's 15 counties, the population more than doubled. In two of these counties (Clark and Nye) that population more than quadrupled, while in another county (Lyon) the population more than tripled. In Nye County, the population increased from 9,048 in 1980 to 43,946 in 2010, a 385.7 percent increase. By far the greatest numerical increase was in Clark County (Las Vegas) where the number of residents increased by nearly 1.5 million in the three decades from 1980, a 321.4 percent increase. Between 2000 and 2010, Clark County gained 575,504 residents, a 41.8 percent increase. In contrast to areas of rapid growth, Mineral County had fewer residents in 2010 than it had in 1980 and Lander County experienced a population decline from 2000 to 2010.

The Nevada population is heavily concentrated in metropolitan counties, and especially in the Las Vegas-Paradise (Clark County) Metropolitan Area. Figure 1 shows that 72.3 percent of the residents of Nevada live in Clark County, a proportion that has been steadily growing as a result of the very rapid increases in Las Vegas. An additional 17.8 percent of Nevada residents lived in the state's other metropolitan counties that include Reno-Sparks (Washoe and Storey Counties) and Carson City (Carson City County) in 2010. Finally, less than 10 percent of the Nevada population lived in nonmetropolitan counties. Figure 2 shows that while population growth have been significant across the state, population increases in Clark County far exceed those in other areas. Between 1980 and 2010, the population of Clark County increased by 321.4 percent, compared to 116.2 percent in the other metro counties and 143.6 percent in the nonmetro counties.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of the Nevada Population

As presented in Table 2, 54.1 percent of the Nevada population was White in 2010. The minority population in the state has grown very rapidly from 16.8 percent in 1980 to 45.8 percent in 2010 (Figure 3). In three states in the western region (Hawaii, California and New Mexico) the proportion of the population that is minority is higher than in Nevada. Growth of the Hispanic population has been especially rapid. In 2010, 26.5 percent of Nevada residents were Hispanic. The proportion of the population that is Hispanic is highest in Clark County. In four Nevada counties, more than 80 percent of the residents are White. Clark County is the only county in the state that is majority minority. Clark County also has significant Black and Asian populations, while Mineral County has a substantial Native American population.

Educational Attainment in Nevada

The data in Table 3 show that 83.7 percent of Nevada residents' age 25 and older had at least a high school degree in 2010, while 21.5 percent of these individuals were college graduates. Only two states in the western region had a lower proportion of high school graduates, while Nevada had a lower proportion of college graduates than any other western state. In Douglas County, more than 90 percent of adults are high school graduates, compared to only 69 percent in Lander County. The percent of adults with college degrees are highest in Washoe (26.5) and Douglas (25.6) Counties, while they are lowest in Mineral (8.5) and Nye (8.9) Counties.

Educational Attainment varies widely for different segments of the population. Especially significant are variations by race/ethnicity. As shown in Figure 4, more than 90 percent of White and Asian adults in Nevada are high school graduates, compared to only 63.1 percent of Hispanics. Likewise, 37.9 percent of Asians and 26.8 percent of Whites are college graduates as opposed to only 8.7 percent of Hispanics and 10.5 percent of Native Americans. Figure 5 shows that metro residents are slightly more likely to have a college degree than non-metro residents.

Income and Poverty in Nevada

The median household income in Nevada in 2009 was \$53,310 (Table 3). Seven states in the western region had median household incomes that were higher than Nevada. Incomes varied widely by county. In three counties (Douglas, Elko and Lander), the median household income was more than \$60,000, while it was \$36,017 in Mineral County. Table 3 also shows that 12.4 percent of the residents of Nevada were living in poverty in 2009. In only four western states was this percentage lower. Again, there were substantial variations in poverty rates by county. Thus, 8.2 percent of Elko County residents were living in poverty compared to 18.3 percent of persons living in Mineral County. Finally, Table 3 shows that the median value of owner-occupied homes in Nevada was \$275,300. These values ranged from \$393,600 in Douglas County to \$72,500 in Esmeralda County.

Incomes and poverty levels also varied widely for people with different characteristics. Figure 6A shows that while median household incomes were \$57,486 for Asians and \$54,600 for Whites, median household incomes were only \$31,200 for Native Americans. Similarly, Figure 6B shows that 7.7 percent of Whites and 8.0 percent of Asians were living in poverty in 2009, compared to 17.9 percent of Native Americans and 17.3 percent of Blacks. Figures 7A and 7B show that incomes were higher and poverty rates lower for metro compared to nonmetro residents. These differences, however, were not as extensive in other states. ❌

Figure 1. Distribution of Nevada Population, 1980-2010



Figure 2. Percent Population Change in Nevada, 1980-2010

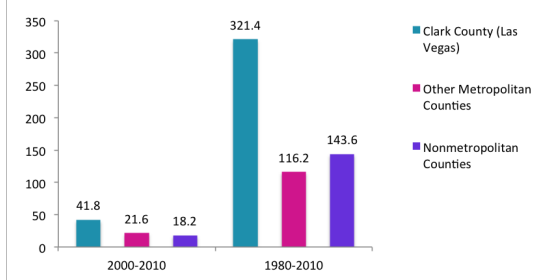


Figure 3. Racial/Ethnic Composition of the Nevada Population (Percent), 1980-2010

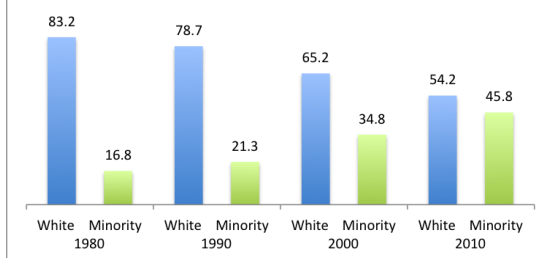


Figure 4. Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity in Nevada, 2009

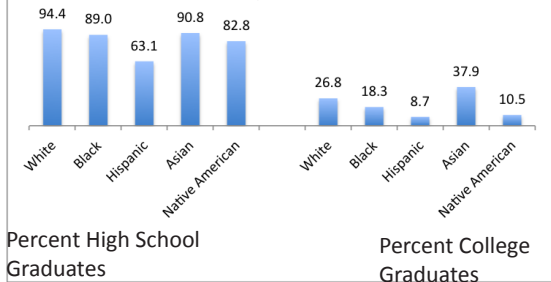


Table 1. Population Change in Nevada Counties, 1980-2010

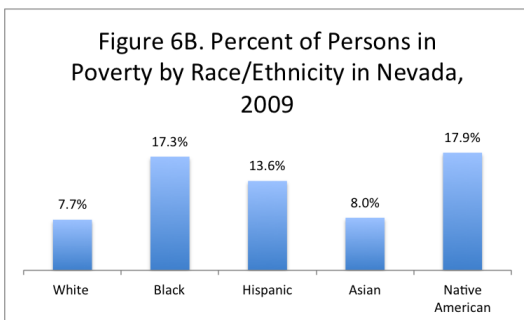
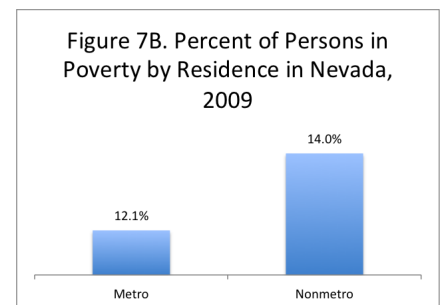
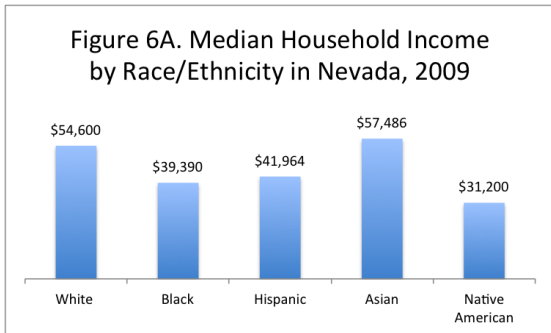
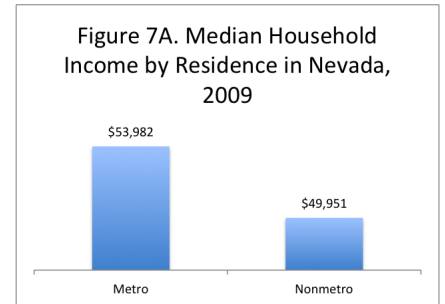
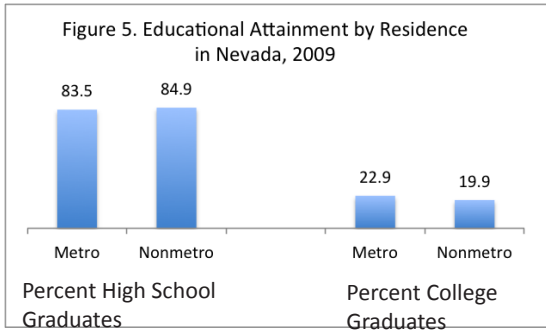
County	1980-2010				Change			
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000 - 2010		1980 - 2010	
					Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Carson City	32,022	40,443	52,457	55,274	2,817	5.4	23,252	72.6
Churchill	13,917	17,938	23,982	24,877	895	3.7	10,960	78.8
Clark	463,087	741,459	1,375,765	1,951,269	575,504	41.8	1,488,182	321.4
Douglas	19,421	27,637	41,259	46,997	5,738	13.9	27,576	142.0
Elko	17,269	33,530	45,291	48,818	3,527	7.8	31,549	182.7
Esmeralda	777	1,344	971	783	-188	-19.4	6	0.8
Eureka	1,198	1,547	1,651	1,987	336	20.4	789	65.9
Humboldt	9,434	12,844	16,106	16,528	422	2.6	7,094	75.2
Lander	4,076	6,266	5,794	5,775	-19	-0.3	1,699	41.7
Lincoln	3,732	3,775	4,165	5,345	1,180	28.3	1,613	43.2
Lyon	13,594	20,001	34,501	51,980	17,479	50.7	38,386	282.4
Mineral	6,217	6,475	5,071	4,772	-299	-5.9	-1,445	-23.2
Nye	9,048	17,781	32,485	43,946	11,461	35.3	34,898	385.7
Pershing	3,408	4,336	6,693	6,753	60	0.9	3,345	98.2
Storey	1,503	2,526	3,399	4,010	611	18.0	2,507	166.8
Washoe	193,623	254,667	339,486	421,407	81,921	24.1	227,784	117.6
White Pine	8,167	9,264	9,181	10,030	849	9.2	1,863	22.8
State Total	800,493	1,201,833	1,998,257	2,700,551	702,294	35.1	1,900,058	237.4

Table 2. Percentage of Population by Race/Ethnicity for Nevada Counties, 2010

County	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American
Carson City	70.7	1.9	21.3	2.1	2.4
Churchill	76.5	1.6	12.1	2.7	4.5
Clark	48.0	10.5	29.1	8.7	0.7
Douglas	83.2	0.4	10.9	1.5	1.9
Elko	69.1	0.8	22.9	0.9	5.3
Esmeralda	77.3	0.0	15.3	0.4	4.2
Eureka	83.6	0.1	12.0	0.9	2.4
Humboldt	68.9	0.5	24.4	0.7	4.2
Lander	73.7	0.3	21.1	0.4	4.2
Lincoln	87.9	2.3	6.2	0.7	1.1
Lyon	78.2	0.8	14.8	1.4	2.5
Mineral	68.5	4.1	9.1	1.1	15.5
Nye	78.9	2.0	13.6	1.3	1.6
Pershing	68.2	3.7	22.3	1.3	3.2
Storey	88.1	1.0	5.7	1.6	1.6
Washoe	66.0	2.3	22.2	5.2	1.7
White Pine	76.3	3.9	13.2	1.0	4.2
State Total	54.1	8.1	26.5	7.2	1.2

Table 3. Economic Conditions and Education for Nevada Counties, 2009

County	Median Household Income	Percent of Persons in Poverty	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Homes	Percent of Persons 25+ with High School Degree	Percent of Persons 25+ with College Degree
Carson City	\$52,548	14.1	\$284,500	86.7	21.4
Churchill	\$52,055	10.0	\$189,800	88.3	18.2
Clark	\$53,512	12.4	\$278,500	83.0	21.3
Douglas	\$60,578	9.4	\$393,600	90.7	25.6
Elko	\$62,091	8.2	\$169,500	82.8	15.7
Esmeralda	\$42,526	14.2	\$72,500	84.8	18.6
Eureka	\$56,815	10.4	\$86,900	88.4	17.6
Humboldt	\$57,309	11.5	\$132,700	81.9	13.7
Lander	\$62,329	10.0	\$99,500	69.0	10.2
Lincoln	\$44,387	13.6	\$131,100	85.6	16.6
Lyon	\$51,151	10.2	\$198,200	86.1	11.8
Mineral	\$36,017	18.3	\$95,500	85.6	8.5
Nye	\$43,215	14.1	\$168,000	80.1	8.9
Pershing	\$45,644	18.4	\$123,600	78.2	11.5
Storey	\$54,246	9.1	\$236,600	89.5	12.9
Washoe	\$53,036	13.2	\$319,500	86.1	26.5
White Pine	\$48,063	13.5	\$107,500	84.9	10.5
State Total	\$53,310	12.4	\$275,300	83.7	21.5



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About the WRDC

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers competitively funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities. Each of the four Centers link the research and extension capacity of regional land-grant universities with local decision-makers to enhance rural prosperity, create thriving communities, and support a sustainable and competitive agricultural system.

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