



POPULATION BRIEF

Trends in the Western U.S.

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New Mexico

The population of the State of New Mexico has grown rapidly in recent years, increasing from 1.3 million in 1980 to almost 2.1 million in 2010, a 58 percent boost. In the rapidly growing West, seven states had higher growth rates than New Mexico during these three decades. New Mexico gained 240,133 residents between 2000 and 2010, an increase of 13.2 percent.

Table 1 presents data showing population changes in New Mexico counties from 1980 to 2010. It is obvious that population change patterns varied widely. In three counties (Dona Ana, Sandoval and Torrence) the population more than doubled. All three of these counties are metropolitan. Dona Ana comprises the Las Cruces Metropolitan Area and Sandoval and Torrence are a part of the Albuquerque Metropolitan Area. The most rapid growth rate in the state is Sandoval County, which grew from 34,799 residents in 1980 to 131,561 in 2010, a 278.1 percent increase. The most extensive numerical increases were in Bernalillo (242,864), Dona Ana (112,893) and Sandoval (96,762) Counties. In contrast to this rapid growth, five New Mexico counties (De Baca, Harding, Hidalgo, Quay, and Union) had smaller populations in 2010 than in 1980. All of these counties were nonmetropolitan. Further, between 2000 and 2010 there were 14 New Mexico counties that had population declines.

Figure 1 shows that distribution of the New Mexico population. This graph shows that in 2010, 43.1 percent of the state's residents lived in the four county (Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrence, and Valencia) Albuquerque Metropolitan Area. An additional 23.5 percent lived in the state's other three metropolitan counties (Dona Ana – Las Cruces; Santa Fe – Santa Fe; and San Juan – Farmington). The remaining 33.4 percent lived in the 26 nonmetropolitan counties. Figure 1 shows that since 1980 the percentage of residents living in the metro counties has increased while there has been a steady decline in the percentage of nonmetro residents. This trend is apparent in Figure 2, which shows that from 1980 to 2010, there was a 91 percent population increase in the other metro areas, a 69.6 percent growth in the Albuquerque Metro Area and a 30.8 percent population increase in the nonmetro counties. Between 2000 and 2010, the population growth rate in the Albuquerque Metro Area exceeded the growth rate in the other metro counties.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of the New Mexico Population

As presented in Table 2, 40.5 percent of the New Mexico population was White in 2010. New Mexico is one of four states in the United States that is majority minority (the other three are Hawaii, California and Texas). The proportion of the population that is minority has steadily increased from 47.4 percent in 1980 to 59.5 percent in 2010 (Figure 3). In 2010, New Mexico became the first state in the United States where the number of Hispanic residents exceeded the number of White residents. In 2010, Hispanics represented 46.3 percent of the population. Native Americans also represent a significant share of the state's population at 9.4 percent.

The racial/ethnic composition of the population varies extensively in different parts of the state. The population is more than three-fourths White in Los Alamos (76.3 percent) and Catron (76.0 percent) Counties. In contrast, 20 New Mexico counties are majority minority. McKinley County is only 10.3 percent White, with 75.5 percent of the residents Native American. In Rio Arriba County, 12.8 percent of the residents are White while 71.3 percent are Hispanic. In 12 counties, more than 50 percent of the population is Hispanic.

Educational Attainment in New Mexico

Over 80 percent of New Mexico residents' age 25 and older had at least a high school degree in 2010, while 25.1 percent are college graduates (Table 3). Only California had a lower proportion of high school graduates than New Mexico, while Idaho, Wyoming, and Nevada had a lower proportion of college graduates. The proportion of adults who have a high school degree ranges from 98.7 percent in Los Alamos County to 67.1 percent in Luna County. While 63.4 percent of Los Alamos adults are college graduates, this proportion is only 8.3 percent in Guadalupe County.

Educational attainment varies widely for different segments of the population. Especially significant are variations by race/ethnicity. As is evident from Figure 4, more than 90 percent of White and Black adults have completed high school in New Mexico, compared to 73.4 percent of Hispanics and 72.6 percent of Native Americans. Also, 44.3 percent of Asians and 38.7

percent of Whites have completed college, while this proportion is only 14.1 percent for Hispanics and nine percent for Native Americans. The data in Figure 5 show that metro residents have higher levels of educational attainment than nonmetro residents.

Income and Poverty in New Mexico

The median household income in New Mexico in 2009 was \$42,830 (Table 3). This was lower than in all of the western states except Montana and Idaho. Incomes varied widely by county. The median household income in Los Alamos County was \$106,148, which was the highest of any county in the western region. With the National Lab located there, Los Alamos County is very unique. Sandoval County had the next highest median household income at \$57,378. At the opposite extreme, in six counties (Catron, De Baca, Guadalupe, Luna, Quay, and Sierra) the median household income is less than \$30,000. Table 3 also shows that 18.2 percent of New Mexico residents were living in poverty in 2009. This proportion was higher than in any other state in the western region. Again, there were substantial variations in poverty rates by county. While 3.1 percent of Los Alamos and 11.0 percent of Sandoval County residents lived in poverty, this proportion was 30.5 percent in Luna, 28.4 percent in McKinley and 28.1 percent in Socorro Counties. Table 3 also shows that the median value of owner-occupied homes in New Mexico was \$150,500, which was the lowest of any state in the western region. These values ranged from \$287,900 in Los Alamos and \$287,700 in Santa Fe Counties to \$65,300 in Harding County.

Incomes and poverty levels also varied widely for people with different characteristics. Figure 6A shows that while household incomes averaged more than \$50,000 for Whites and Asians, they were only \$35,880 for Native Americans and \$36,387 for Hispanics. Similarly, Figure 6B shows that while 8.3 percent of Asians and 10 percent of Whites were living in poverty, this proportion was much higher for Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans. Figures 7A and 7B show that incomes were higher and poverty rates lower for metro as opposed to nonmetro residents. ✂

Figure 1. Distribution of New Mexico Population, 1980-2010

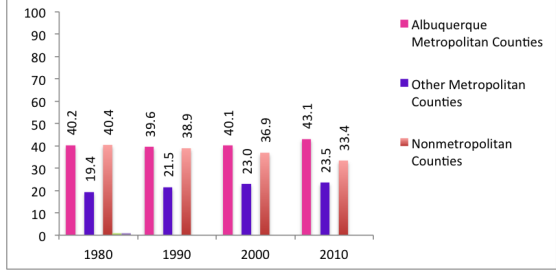


Figure 2. Percent Population Change in New Mexico, 1980-2010

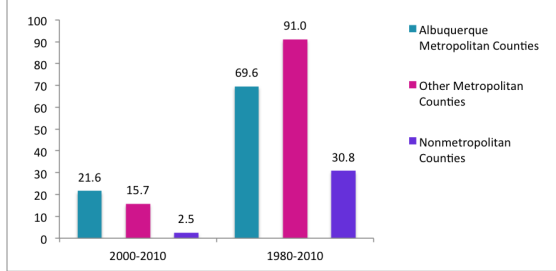


Figure 3. Racial/Ethnic Composition of the New Mexico Population (Percent), 1980-2010

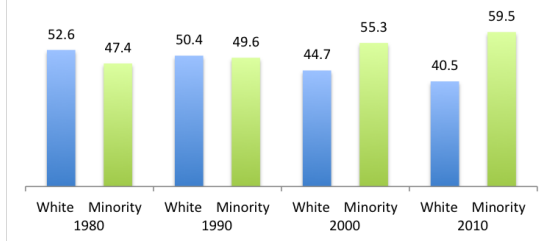


Figure 4. Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity in New Mexico, 2009

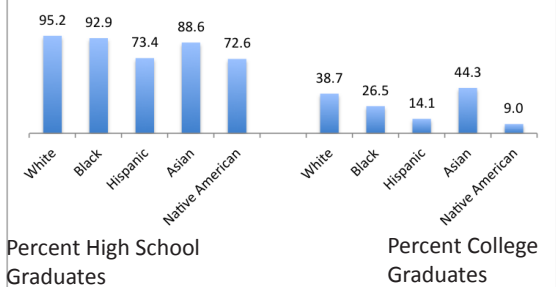


Figure 5. Educational Attainment by Residence in New Mexico, 2009

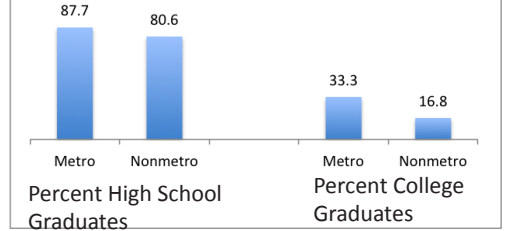


Figure 6A. Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity in New Mexico, 2009

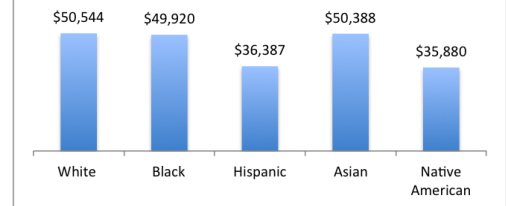


Figure 6B. Percent of Persons in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity in New Mexico, 2009

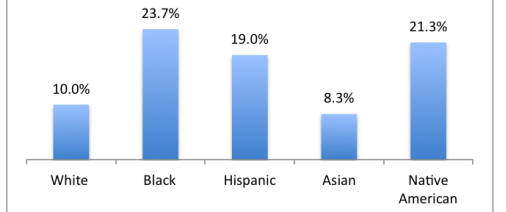


Figure 7A. Median Household Income by Residence in New Mexico, 2009

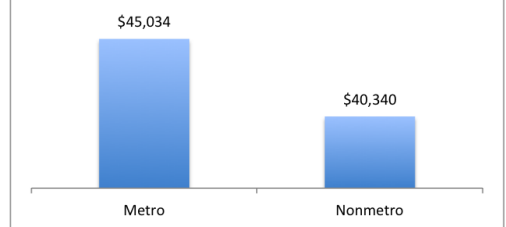


Figure 7B. Percent of Persons in Poverty by Residence in New Mexico, 2009

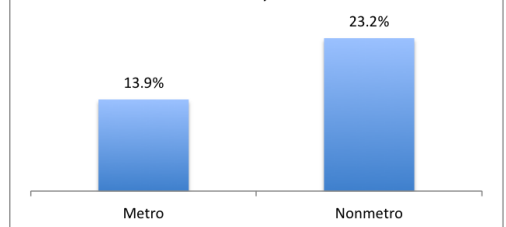


Table 1. Population Change in New Mexico Counties, 1980-2010

County					Change			
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000 - 2010		1980 - 2010	
					Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Bernalillo	419,700	480,577	556,678	662,564	105,886	19.0	242,864	57.9
Catron	2,720	2,563	3,543	3,725	182	5.1	1,005	36.5
Chaves	51,103	57,849	61,382	65,645	4,263	6.9	14,542	28.5
Cibola	-	23,794	25,595	27,213	1,618	6.3	27,213	-
Colfax	13,667	12,925	14,189	13,750	-439	-3.1	83	0.6
Curry	42,019	42,207	45,044	48,376	3,332	7.4	6,357	15.1
De Baca	2,454	2,252	2,240	2,022	-218	-9.7	-432	-17.6
Dona Ana	96,340	135,510	174,682	209,233	34,551	19.8	112,893	117.2
Eddy	47,855	48,605	51,658	53,829	2,171	4.2	5,974	12.5
Grant	26,204	27,676	31,002	29,514	-1,488	-4.8	3,310	12.6
Guadalupe	4,496	4,156	4,680	4,687	7	0.1	191	4.2
Harding	1,090	987	810	695	-115	-14.2	-395	-36.2
Hidalgo	6,049	5,958	5,932	4,894	-1,038	-18.4	-1,155	-19.1
Lea	55,993	55,765	55,511	64,727	9,216	16.6	8,734	15.6
Lincoln	10,997	12,219	19,411	20,497	1,086	5.6	9,500	86.4
Los Alamos	17,599	18,115	18,343	17,950	-393	-2.1	351	2.0
Luna	15,585	18,110	25,016	25,095	79	0.3	9,510	61.0
McKinley	56,449	60,686	74,798	71,492	-3,306	-4.4	15,043	26.6
Mora	4,205	4,264	5,180	4,881	-299	-5.8	676	16.1
Otero	44,665	51,928	62,298	63,797	1,499	2.4	19,132	42.8
Quay	10,577	10,823	10,155	9,041	-1,114	-11.0	-1,536	-14.5
Rio Arriba	29,282	34,365	41,190	40,246	-944	-2.3	10,964	37.4
Roosevelt	15,695	16,702	18,018	19,846	1,828	10.1	4,151	26.4
San Juan	81,433	91,605	113,801	130,044	16,243	14.3	48,611	59.7
San Miguel	22,751	25,743	30,126	29,393	-733	-2.4	6,642	29.2
Sandoval	34,799	63,319	89,908	131,561	41,653	46.3	96,762	278.1
Santa Fe	75,360	98,928	129,292	144,170	14,878	11.5	68,810	91.3
Sierra	8,454	9,912	13,270	11,988	-1,282	-9.7	3,534	41.8
Socorro	12,566	14,764	18,078	17,866	-212	-1.2	5,300	42.2
Taos	19,456	23,118	29,979	32,937	2,958	9.9	13,481	69.3
Torrence	7,491	10,285	16,911	16,383	-528	-3.1	8,892	118.7
Union	4,725	4,124	4,174	4,549	375	9.0	-176	-3.7
Valencia	61,115	45,235	66,152	76,569	10,417	15.7	15,454	25.3
State Total	1,302,894	1,515,069	1,819,046	2,059,179	240,133	13.2	756,285	58.0

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

County	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American
Bernalillo	41.5	3.0	47.9	2.3	4.8
Catron	76.0	0.4	19.0	0.2	2.7
Chaves	43.9	2.0	52.0	0.6	1.2
Cibola	21.5	1.0	36.5	0.5	41.0
Colfax	49.9	0.5	47.2	0.4	1.5
Curry	50.7	6.3	39.5	1.3	1.2
De Baca	59.3	0.1	38.5	0.0	0.6
Dona Ana	30.1	1.7	65.7	1.1	1.5
Eddy	52.2	1.4	44.1	0.7	1.5
Grant	48.6	0.9	48.3	0.4	1.4
Guadalupe	16.1	1.7	79.6	1.3	1.9
Harding	56.3	0.3	43.0	0.0	1.2
Hidalgo	41.4	0.6	56.6	0.5	0.8
Lea	43.0	4.1	51.1	0.5	1.2
Lincoln	66.4	0.5	29.8	0.4	2.4
Los Alamos	76.3	0.6	14.7	6.0	0.8
Luna	35.9	1.1	61.5	0.5	1.3
McKinley	10.3	0.5	13.3	0.8	75.5
Mora	17.9	0.7	81.0	0.3	1.3
Otero	52.8	3.5	34.5	1.2	6.7
Quay	53.6	1.1	42.4	1.0	1.2
Rio Arriba	12.8	0.5	71.3	0.4	16.0
Roosevelt	55.5	1.8	39.9	0.9	1.3
Sandoval	47.5	2.1	35.1	1.5	12.9
San Juan	42.5	0.6	19.1	0.4	36.6
San Miguel	19.7	1.4	76.8	0.8	1.7
Santa Fe	43.9	0.9	50.6	1.2	3.1
Sierra	68.4	0.4	28.0	0.4	1.7
Socorro	37.6	1.1	48.5	1.2	11.7
Taos	36.3	0.4	55.8	0.7	6.2
Torrence	56.0	1.3	39.1	0.4	2.3
Union	56.0	1.8	39.7	0.5	2.0
Valencia	36.2	1.4	58.3	0.5	3.8
State Total	40.5	2.1	46.3	1.4	9.4

Table 3. Economic Conditions and Education for New Mexico 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
Bernalillo	\$45,550	15.6	\$178,900	86.0	31.6
Catron	\$29,853	22.0	\$129,400	88.1	24.1
Chaves	\$34,803	20.8	\$80,800	76.2	15.4
Cibola	\$32,954	25.8	\$71,800	76.4	10.4
Colfax	\$38,856	17.3	\$104,500	84.7	20.2
Curry	\$37,196	17.9	\$89,400	81.1	18.3
De Baca	\$28,564	21.9	\$66,600	78.1	21.3
Dona Ana	\$35,541	24.8	\$128,500	74.4	25.0
Eddy	\$47,117	13.6	\$86,100	79.3	15.2
Grant	\$34,890	19.5	\$124,800	84.7	22.5
Guadalupe	\$27,908	25.9	\$79,500	77.2	8.3
Harding	\$31,242	15.8	\$65,300	86.9	12.2
Hidalgo	\$30,153	23.6	\$90,500	77.5	16.8
Lea	\$44,035	15.2	\$81,100	71.9	12.4
Lincoln	\$37,895	17.4	\$151,300	86.6	24.5
Los Alamos	\$106,148	3.1	\$287,900	98.7	63.4
Luna	\$25,833	30.5	\$85,100	67.1	11.1
McKinley	\$30,794	28.4	\$70,500	68.7	11.2
Mora	\$32,837	23.5	\$111,900	83.9	18.3
Otero	\$35,557	20.2	\$97,400	83.5	15.9
Quay	\$27,517	23.9	\$68,700	78.5	14.9
Rio Arriba	\$39,723	18.9	\$143,900	79.6	15.7
Roosevelt	\$33,167	22.1	\$82,700	75.9	20.4
San Juan	\$46,007	20.6	\$136,800	80.0	14.2
San Miguel	\$31,002	24.8	\$105,000	80.2	22.1
Sandoval	\$57,378	11.0	\$175,000	89.4	27.6
Santa Fe	\$52,220	12.7	\$287,700	85.5	38.7
Sierra	\$26,864	27.0	\$87,400	83.7	17.6
Socorro	\$30,729	28.1	\$105,700	79.2	21.7
Taos	\$31,660	19.7	\$204,100	88.2	29.5
Torrence	\$33,048	24.5	\$91,300	74.8	12.4
Union	\$33,442	16.1	\$89,700	85.1	19.3
Valencia	\$41,494	20.2	\$124,700	80.2	16.8
State Total	\$42,830	18.2	\$150,500	82.1	25.1



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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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