A publication of the Western Rural Development Center

POPULATION BRIEF

Trends in the Western U.S.

The State of Hawaii

By Don E. Albrecht

Overview

Rural development is the process by which the lives of individuals and families living in rural areas are improved. Effective rural development necessarily involves several components that include 1) good jobs that provide individuals and families the opportunity to earn and maintain a livable income; 2) a chance to complete an education and have lifelong opportunities to learn and improve one's circumstances; 3) and the opportunity to live a reasonably long and healthy life. Communities that effectively meet these conditions are likely to retain existing residents and attract new residents and thus experience population growth.

Additionally, effective rural development means that opportunities to obtain high-quality employment, complete an education, and live a long and healthy life must be available to all residents of the community, rather than only to certain segments of the population.

The first step in advancing an effective rural development program is to carefully assess baseline conditions. In response, the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is providing a set of population briefs that provide some of this baseline information. Each population brief will assess one of the components of rural development listed above. This brief examines population changes in Hawaii. Each brief will explore overall conditions, and then examine the extent to which opportunities are available to all segments of the population by making comparisons on race/ethnicity, gender, family structure or geography. The geographic component will provide comparisons between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas and will compare the west with the remainder of the United States. Further, population briefs for each of the 13 states comprising the western region are developed that provide more detailed information on rural development issues. Data for these population briefs are obtained from the United States Census.

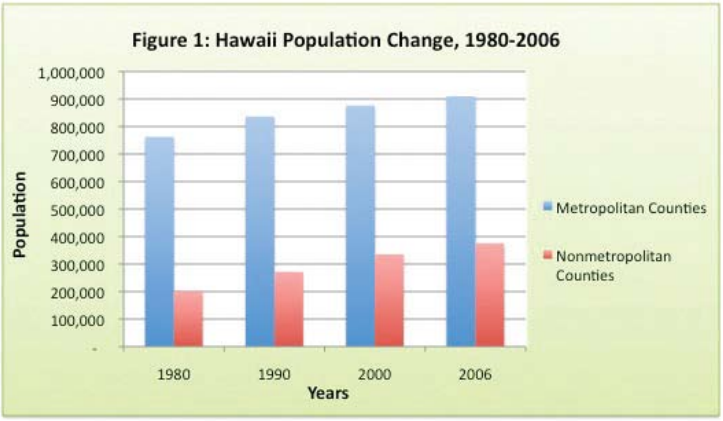
Growth in Hawaii: Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan

The State of Hawaii is comprised of hundreds of islands that form the Volcanic Hawaii Island chain. Nearly all of the population resides on the eight 'main islands' that are at the southeastern end of the chain. Politically, these eight islands are divided into five counties. Kauai County consists of the islands of Kauai and Niihau; Honolulu County is the Island of Oahu; Maui County is the islands of Maui, Lanai, Kahoolawe and most of Molokai; Hawaii County is Hawaii Island (known as the 'Big Island'); and Kalawao County is a small portion of Molokai, separated from the rest of the island by sea cliffs. This portion of the island is a former leper colony. Honolulu County is metropolitan while the remainder of the state is defined as nonmetropolitan.

From 1980 to 2006 the population of Hawaii increased by 33.3 percent, growing from 946,691 to 1,285,498. Over 70 percent of Hawaii residents live on the Island of Oahu in the Honolulu Metropolitan Area (see Figure 1). Honolulu County is the only county in the state with more than 200,000 residents (Figure 2). The Honolulu County population grew by 19 percent between 1980 and 2006, growing from 762,565 to 909,863. Population growth in the nonmetropolitan counties was much more rapid. Combined the nonmetropolitan counties grew from 202,126 residents in 1980 to 375,635 residents in 2006, an increase of 85.6 percent. Kalawao County experienced population declines while the

From 1980 to 2006 the population of Hawaii increased by 33.3 percent, growing from 946,691 to 1,285,498.

Over 70 percent of Hawaii residents live on the Island of Oahu in the Honolulu Metropolitan Area (see Figure 1).



other three nonmetropolitan counties all had very rapidly growing populations. The population of Hawaii County increased by 79,138 people (86 percent), while the population of Maui County almost doubled, increasing from 70,847 in 1980 to 141,320 in 2006 (Table 1).

Minority Population Growth

The proportion of the Hawaii population that is White is smaller than any other state in the country. In 2000, 22.8 percent of Hawaii residents were White, while almost one-half (49.7 percent) were Asian, 18.6 percent were Native Hawaiians, and smaller proportions were Black and Hispanic. Hawaii has a higher proportion of mixed race people than any other state. Figure 3 seems to indicate that there was a rapid growth in the Native Hawaiian population; however, this change is more a reflection of Census counting procedures than actual changes in the Native Hawaiian population.

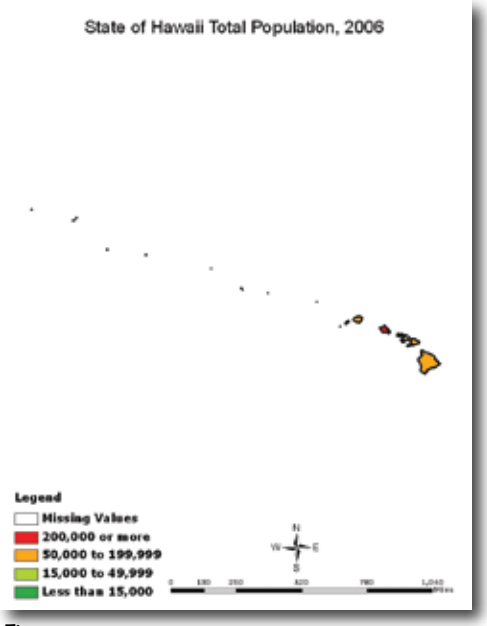


Figure 2

Income, Poverty and Education

Household incomes in Hawaii tend to be relatively high. The median household income in the average Hawaii County was $39,112. Only Alaska, California, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah had higher average household incomes, and only in Alaska was the median household income in metropolitan counties higher than in Hawaii. The poverty rate in Hawaii (17.3 percent) is relatively high, and only Arizona and New Mexico have higher poverty rates.

Three-fourths (75.1 percent) of Hawaiian adults have completed high school, which is the lowest proportion of any state in the Western Region. One in five Hawaiians is a college graduate, which is a higher proportion than all of the Western States except California, Colorado, Washington, and Wyoming. Figures 4 through 8 show there are extensive differences in economic standing and educational attainment levels for persons with different characteristics. Specifically, White and metropolitan households tend to be much better off than minority and nonmetropolitan households.

One in five Hawaiians is a college graduate, which is a higher proportion than all of the Western States except California, Colorado, Washington, and Wyoming.

Figure 4 reveals that household incomes for White households in metropolitan counties average $52,472. In comparison, household incomes for White households in nonmetropolitan counties average $43,360, household incomes for minority households in metropolitan counties average $41,546 and $32,208 for minority households in nonmetropolitan counties. Figure 5 shows that minority households in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties were more likely to be in poverty than White households. Finally, Figure 6 indicates a strong relationship between poverty rates and households structure. While about 5 percent of married-couple households live in poverty, the proportions are much higher for female-headed households (22.7 percent in metropolitan counties and 26.6 percent in nonmetropolitan counties). Also, there are major differences in educational attainment by metropolitan status and race/ethnicity. While 94 percent of White adults in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties have completed high school, 82.1 percent of the minority

Table 1: Population change for Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Counties in Hawaii, 1980 - 2006

	1980	1990	2000	2006	Change 1980 - 2006	
					Total	Percent
State						
Total	946,691	1,108,229	1,211,537	1,285,498	320,807	33.3
Metropolitan Areas						
Honolulu						
Honolulu County	762,565	836,231	876,156	909,863	147,298	19.3
Nonmetropolitan Counties						
Total	202,126	271,998	335,381	375,635	173,509	85.8
Hawaii County	92,053	120,317	148,677	171,191	79,138	86.0
Kalawao County	144	130	147	120	-24	-16.7
Kauai County	39,082	51,177	58,463	63,004	23,922	61.2
Maui County	70,847	100,374	128,094	141,320	70,473	99.5

residents of metropolitan counties and only 58.6 percent of the minority residents of nonmetropolitan counties are high school graduates. Similarly, there are major differences on college graduation rates. Over 40 percent of White adults residing in metropolitan counties have completed college compared to 24.1 percent of the White residents of nonmetropolitan counties, 25.4 percent of minority residents of metropolitan counties and 15.2 percent of the minority residents of nonmetropolitan counties.

Health

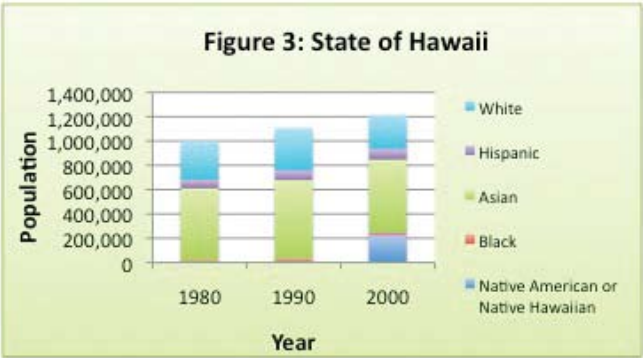
Hawaii has many positive health benefits when compared to other states. The average life span (81.7 years) in Hawaii is longer than in any other state. By comparison, average life expectancy in the United States is 78.0 years. Hawaii has a very high proportion of practicing physicians. There are 31 physicians per 100,000 people in Hawaii, compared to a national average of 26.3. Hawaii is second only to Minnesota in having the lowest percentage of people without health insurance. Only 9.6 percent of Hawaiians lack health insurance, compared to a national average of 16.6 percent.

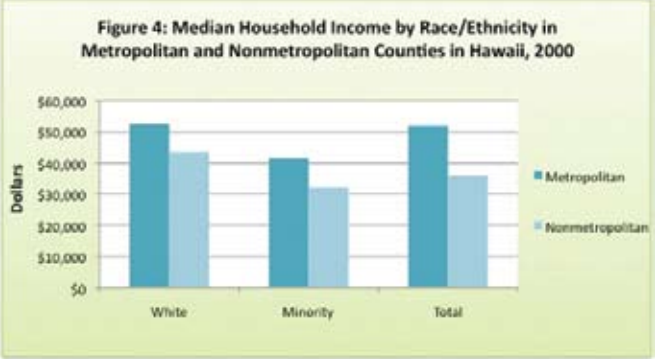
Conclusion

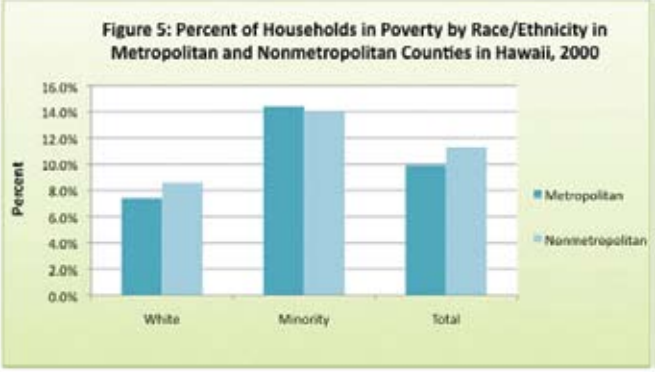
While the benefits of living in Hawaii are extensive, there are numerous issues that remain a concern for policy makers and development specialists. Specifically, the extent of inequality between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan residents and inequality between White and minority residents are prominent.

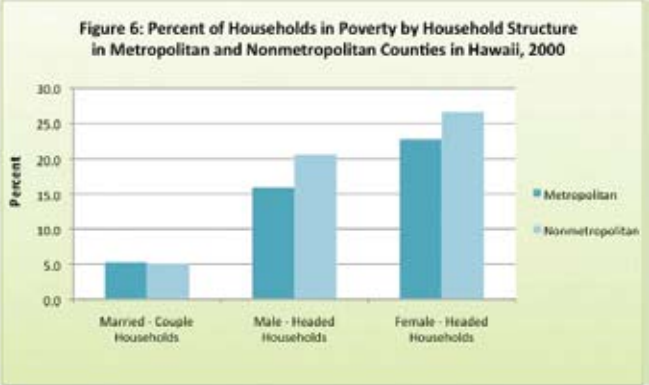
About the Author

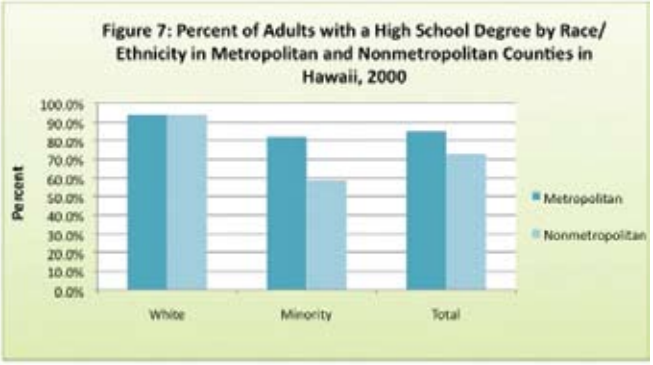
Don E. Albrecht is the Director of the Western Rural Development Center.
don.albrecht@usu.edu
435.797.9732

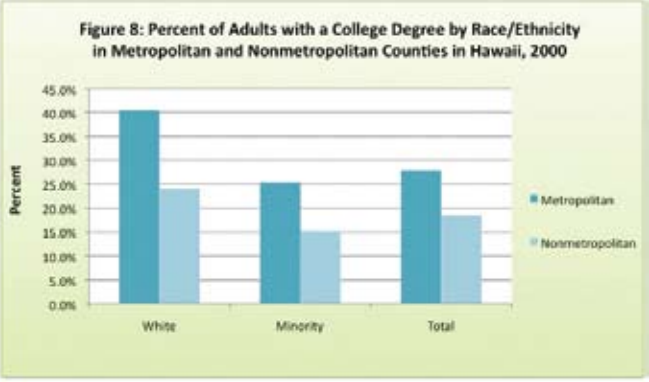












About the Briefs

Published by the Western Rural Development Center
Don E. Albrecht, Director
Betsy H. Newman, Publication Specialist
Trish Kingsford, Senior Staff Assistant
Whitney Mortensen, P/T Staff Assistant

The Population Briefs provide information on the population trends in the western U.S. They are intended to provide both basic information and, when combined with the data tables on the WRDC website, more detailed information for further analysis and application.

The series of Population Briefs will include population trends in the western U.S. related to minorities, natural amenities, education, employment/labor, health, fuel usage, and more. Each topic will include a regional overview and then one brief focused on each of the 13 states in the WRDC's region. The briefs will also include data, where available, related to the population trends in the four western U.S. Territories.

The Population Briefs are available in PDF format on the WRDC website (http://wrdc.usu.edu) under 'Publications' and in paper format through the WRDC offices via email to wrdc@usu.edu.

Data

Data for this series is obtained from the U.S. Census of Population for 1980, 1990, 2000, and, where available, 2006. Data is reported for all persons for whom race/ethnicity was reported.

Data Tables

The data tables are available in MS Excel and PDF format on the WRDC website: http://wrdc.usu.edu. They are listed under 'Rural Resources.'

WESTERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
engaging the future

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Services (CSREES) 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 address a wide range of rural development issues.

The WRDC also receives substantial support from several Utah State University units including Cooperative Extension, the Agricultural Experiment Station and the College of Natural Resources.

Our commitment to the environment

This publication was printed on a Xerox 700 Digital Press using New Leaf Reincarnation paper that is 100% Recycled, 50% Post-Consumer Waste and processed Chlorine Free.

There is a Population Brief for each of the 13 states in the Western Region, and when available, one brief on each of the four U.S. Territories in the region.

To access the state briefs visit 'Rural Resources' on the WRDC website at http://wrdc.usu.edu.

State Briefs are available for:

Alaska
Arizona
California
Colorado
Hawaii
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
New Mexico
Oregon
Utah
Washington
Wyoming