



POPULATION BRIEF

Trends in the Western U.S.

The State of Oregon

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 Oregon. 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

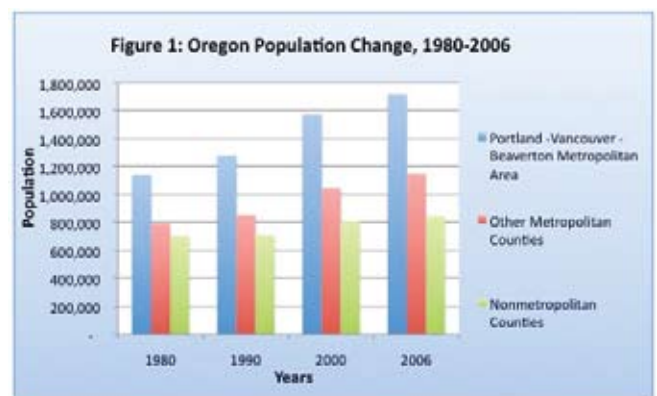
the west with the remainder of the United States. Further, population briefs for each of the 13 states comprising the western region are developed that provide more detailed information on rural development issues. Data for these population briefs are obtained from the United States Census.

Growth in Oregon: Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan

Between 1980 and 2006, the Oregon population grew from 2.6 million to 3.7 million, an increase of 40.5 percent. Nearly one-half (46.3 percent) of Oregon residents live in the Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton Metropolitan Area. The population of this metropolitan area increased from 1.1 million in 1980 to 1.7 million in 2006, an increase of 50 percent (Figure 1). An additional 423,771 people live in the greater Portland metropolitan area on the Washington State side of the border. Each of the five other metropolitan areas in Oregon (Corvallis, Bend, Eugene-Springfield, Medford, and Salem) also experienced significant population growth. Population growth was especially rapid in Bend (Deschutes County) where the population grew from 62,142 in 1980 to 149,140 in 2006, an increase of 140 percent. The 25 nonmetropolitan counties in the state had a population increase of 19.2 percent, growing from 703,830 in 1980 to 839,222 in 2006. Three nonmetropolitan counties (Crook, Jefferson and Morrow) had population increases of over 50 percent. In contrast, seven Oregon nonmetropolitan counties (Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Lake, Sherman, Wallowa, and Wheeler) had population declines from 1980 to 2006 (Table 1). As is apparent from

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Figure 2, all of the counties with declining populations are in the central and eastern part of the state. In these regions of the state Figure 3 shows that the counties with declining populations tended to be counties with small populations. Figure 3 also shows that the counties with the largest populations are located along the Willamette Valley in western Oregon, which was the region settled by early travelers of the Oregon Trail, and the region that has always been the political and cultural center of the state.



Minority Population Growth

Between 1980 and 2000, the Oregon population became much more racially and ethnically diverse. In 1980, the Oregon population was over 93 percent White. In the ensuing two decades, the White population increased by 16 percent. In comparison, the Hispanic population grew from 66,164 to 273,938, an increase of 314 percent, while the Asian population grew from 40,958 to 105,163, an increase of 157 percent. Consequently, by 2000 the proportion of Oregon residents that were White was reduced to 86 percent (Figure 4).

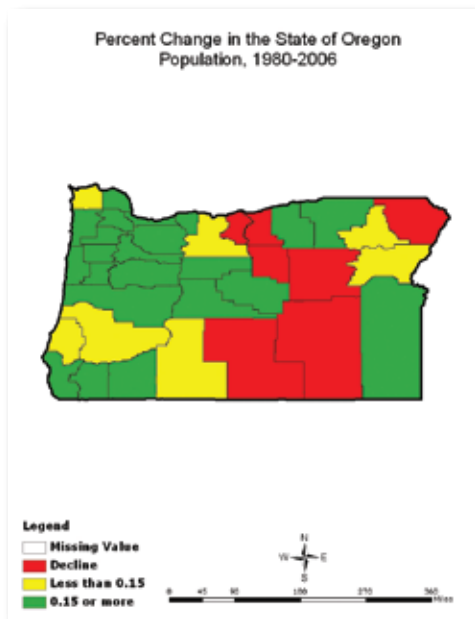


Figure 2

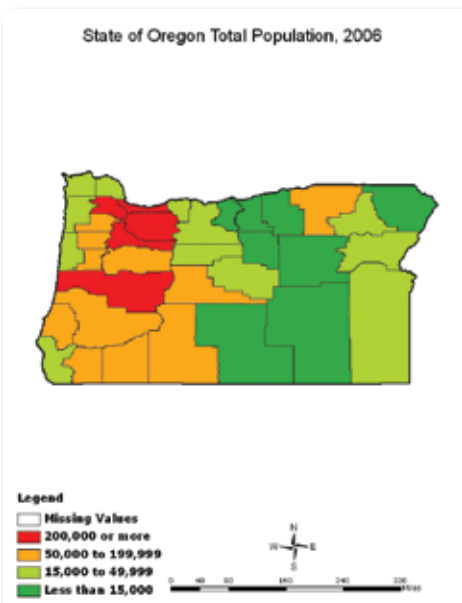


Figure 3

Income, Poverty and Education

In 2000, the median household income in the average Oregon County was \$36,382. This was relatively low compared to other states in the Western Region, where only Arizona, Idaho, Montana, and New Mexico reported lower median household incomes. In the average Oregon County, 12.9 percent of households were living in poverty. This proportion was better than most western states, and only Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming had lower poverty rates. There were, however, important differences on income and poverty for persons with different characteristics. Specifically, households in metropolitan counties were doing much better economically than households in nonmetropolitan counties, and White households were doing much better than minority households. Figure 5 shows

that households in metropolitan counties have incomes that average about \$10,000 more than households in nonmetropolitan counties. Further, in metropolitan counties, the income of the average White household exceeds the income of the average minority household by about \$11,000. Figure 6 shows that 9.3 percent of White households in metropolitan counties were living in poverty in 2000. In comparison, the percent in poverty was 11.9 percent for White households in nonmetropolitan counties, 23.2 percent for minority households in metropolitan counties and 28.4 percent for minority households in nonmetropolitan counties. Poverty level variations are especially pronounced when comparisons are made by family structure (Figure 7). While only 5.2 percent of married-couple households in metropolitan counties and

	1980	1990	2000	2006	Change 1980 - 2006	
					Total	Percent
State Total	2,633,105	2,842,321	3,421,399	3,700,758	1,067,653	40.5
Metropolitan Areas						
Total	1929275	2130493	2617733	2861536	932261	48.3
Corvallis						
Benton County	68,211	70,811	78,153	79,061	10,850	15.9
Bend						
Deschutes County	62,142	74,958	115,367	149,140	86,998	140.0
Eugene - Springfield						
Lane County	275,226	282,912	322,959	337,870	62,644	22.8
Medford						
Jackson County	132,456	146,389	181,269	197,071	64,615	48.8
Portland - Vancouver - Beaverton						
Total	1,141,345	1,277,399	1,572,771	1,713,794	572,449	50.2
Clackamas County	241,919	278,850	338,391	374,230	132,311	54.7
Columbia County	35,646	37,557	43,560	49,163	13,517	37.9
Multnomah County	562,640	583,887	660,486	681,454	118,814	21.1
Washington County	245,808	311,554	445,342	514,269	268,461	109.2
Yamhill County	55,332	65,551	84,992	94,678	39,346	71.1
Salem						
Total	249,895	278,024	347,214	384,600	134,705	53.9
Marion County	204,692	228,483	284,834	311,304	106,612	52.1
Polk County	45,203	49,541	62,380	73,296	28,093	62.1
Nonmetropolitan Counties						
Total	703,830	711,828	803,666	839,222	135,392	19.2
Baker County	16,134	15,317	16,741	16,243	109	0.7
Clatsop County	32,489	33,301	35,630	37,315	4,826	14.9
Coos County	64,047	60,273	62,779	64,820	773	1.2
Crook County	13,091	14,111	19,182	22,941	9,850	75.2
Curry County	16,992	19,327	21,137	22,358	5,366	31.6
Douglas County	93,748	94,649	100,399	105,117	11,369	12.1
Gilliam County	2,057	1,717	1,915	1,775	-282	-13.7
Grant County	8,210	7,853	7,935	7,250	-960	-11.7
Harney County	8,314	7,060	7,609	6,888	-1,426	-17.2
Hood River County	15,835	16,903	20,411	21,533	5,698	36.0
Jefferson County	11,599	13,676	19,009	20,352	8,753	75.5
Josephine County	58,855	62,649	75,726	81,688	22,833	38.8
Klamath County	59,117	57,702	63,775	66,438	7,321	12.4
Lake County	7,532	7,186	7,422	7,473	-59	-0.8
Lincoln County	35,264	38,889	44,479	46,199	10,935	31.0
Linn County	89,495	91,227	103,069	111,489	21,994	24.6
Malheur County	26,896	26,038	31,615	31,247	4,351	16.2
Morrow County	7,519	7,625	10,995	11,753	4,234	56.3
Sherman County	2,172	1,918	1,934	1,699	-473	-21.8
Tillamook County	21,164	21,570	24,262	25,380	4,216	19.9
Umatilla County	58,861	59,249	70,548	72,928	14,067	23.9
Union County	23,921	23,598	24,530	24,345	424	1.8
Wallowa County	7,273	6,911	7,226	6,875	-398	-5.5
Wasco County	21,732	21,683	23,791	23,712	1,980	9.1
Wheeler County	1,513	1,396	1,547	1,404	-109	-7.2

8.6 percent of married-couple households in nonmetropolitan counties were living in poverty in 2000, poverty rates were much higher for female-headed households. Thus, 29.1 percent of female-headed households in metropolitan counties and 36.8 percent of female-headed households in nonmetropolitan counties were living in poverty.

More than four out of every five (83 percent) of Oregon adults have completed high school, and nearly one out of every five (19.2 percent) have a college degree. Only in Colorado, Montana, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, among western states, do higher proportions of the population have a high school education, and only in California, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana,

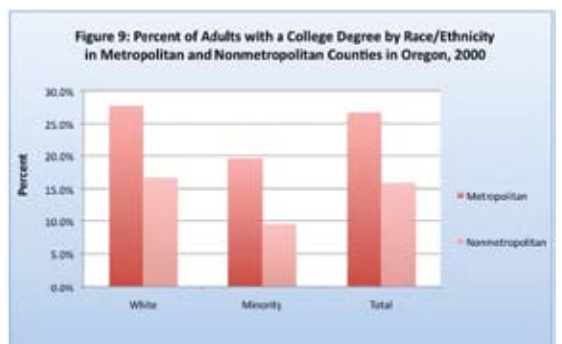
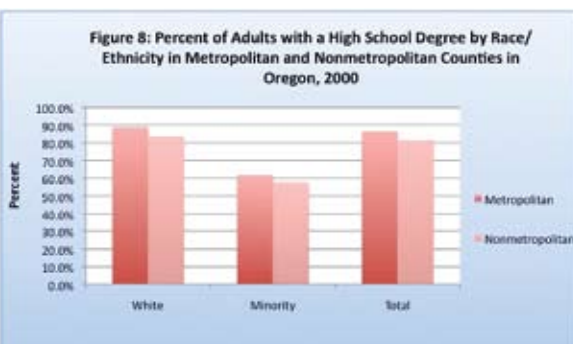
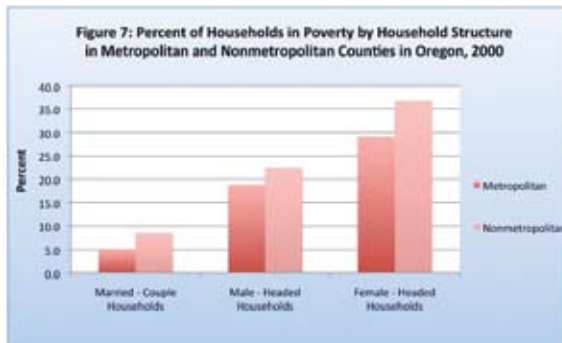
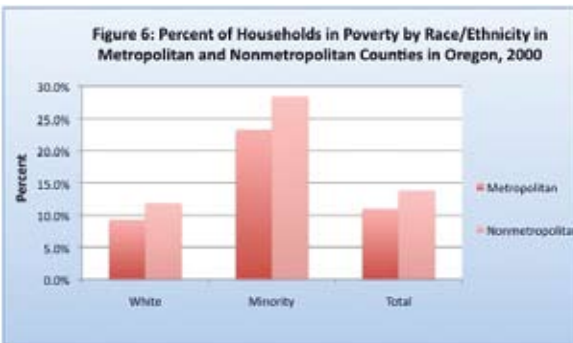
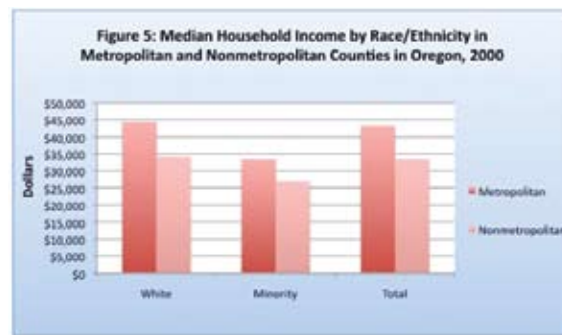
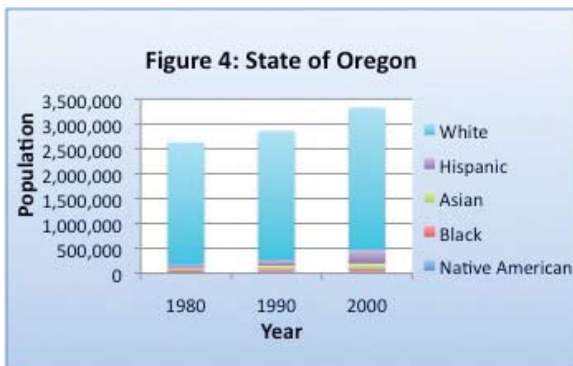
Utah, Washington, and Wyoming do a higher proportion have a college education. While 89 percent of the White residents of metropolitan counties and 84 percent of the White residents of nonmetropolitan counties were high school graduates, only 62 percent of the minority residents of metropolitan counties and 57.7 percent of the minority residents of nonmetropolitan counties were high school graduates (Figure 8). Similarly, while 27.7 percent of the White residents of metropolitan counties are college graduates, these proportions are much smaller for other segments of the population (16.7 percent of White nonmetropolitan residents; 19.6 percent of minority metropolitan residents; and only 9.5 percent of minority nonmetropolitan residents).

Conclusion

Counties in western Oregon have been coping with rapid population growth, while many counties in central and eastern Oregon have been dealing with the consequences of population declines. The challenges of providing jobs and economic opportunities in the sparsely populated counties of rural Oregon remain extensive.●

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About the Briefs

Published by the Western Rural Development Center

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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.



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.

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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>.

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