



POPULATION BRIEF

Trends in the Western U.S.

The State of Washington

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 Washington. 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.

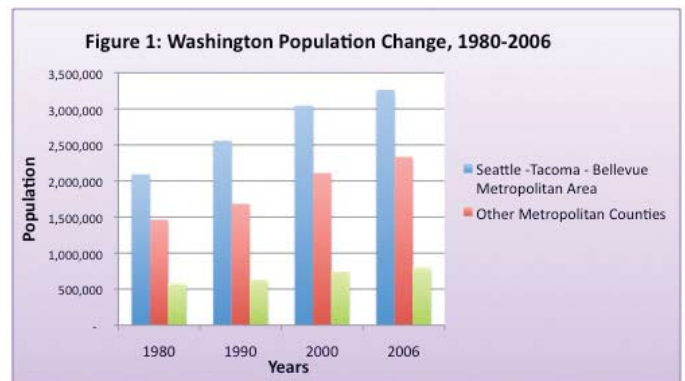
Growth in Washington: Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan

Between 1980 and 2006, the population of the State of Washington increased from 4.1 million to 6.4 million, an increase of 54.8 percent. During this time period, Washington was the 10th fastest growing state in the nation in terms of percentage growth, and was the 8th fastest growing state in terms of the number of inhabitants. In 2006, Washington was the second largest state in the Western Region in total population, behind only California. Just over one-half of the Washington population lives in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metropolitan Area. This three-county (King, Pierce and Snohomish) metropolitan area grew from 2.1 million inhabitants in 1980 to 3.3 million inhabitants in 2006, an increase of 55.9 percent. The eleven other metropolitan areas in Washington (Bellingham; Bremerton-Silverdale; Kennewick-Richland-Pasco; Longview; Mount Vernon-Anacortes; Olympia; Spokane; Wenatchee; Yakima; Lewiston, Idaho; and Portland, Oregon) also experienced significant population growth. The most rapidly growing metropolitan county in the state was Clark County in southern Washington, which is actually a part of

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the Portland, Oregon Metropolitan area. Clark County grew from 192,227 residents in 1980 to 412,938 residents in 2006, an increase of 114.8 percent. Snohomish County (Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metropolitan Area) increased by 98.4 percent, growing from 337,720 in 1980 to 669,887 in 2006. Combined the state's 22 nonmetropolitan counties grew from 574,255 in 1980 to 797,801 residents in 2006, an increase of 38.9 percent. Six nonmetropolitan counties (Grant, Island, Jefferson, Mason, Pend Oreille, and San Juan) had population increases of more than 50 percent. In contrast, two counties (Garfield and Whitman), both located in the southeast corner of the state, experienced population declines (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

Figure 2 shows the concentration of Washington's population in the western part of the state, while Figure 3 indicates that



rapid population growth was widespread throughout the state.

Minority Population Growth

In 1980, over 90 percent of the residents of the State of Washington were White. From 1980 to 2000, the White population increased by 24.5 percent. During this same time period, minority populations increased at a much faster rate. The Hispanic population increased by 263 percent (from 121,286 to 439,841), the Asian population increased by 204 percent (from 111,607 to 339,365), the Black population increased by 73 percent (from 104,085 to 179,920) and

the Native American population increased by 53 percent (from 54,984 to 83,877). As a result, the proportion of the state's population that was White was reduced to 81.6 percent by 2006 (Figure 4).

Income, Poverty, Education

The median household income in the average Washington County in 2000 was \$38,331. This was about average for states in the Western Region and is lower than Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah. In the average Washington county in 2000, 13.8 percent of households were living in poverty. Among western states, poverty rates were lower in Alaska, Colorado,

Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming than in Washington. Compared to other western states, Washington adults are relatively well educated with only Colorado, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming reporting high school graduation rates higher than Washington's 83.4 percent. Also, 20.8 percent of Washington adults have at least an undergraduate college degree with only Colorado and California reporting higher proportions of college graduates among the western states.

With rapidly growing minority populations, it is critical to examine the extent to which economic and educational benefits

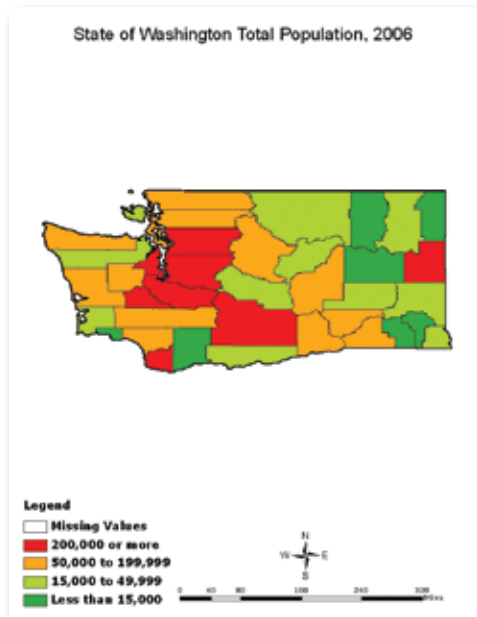


Figure 2

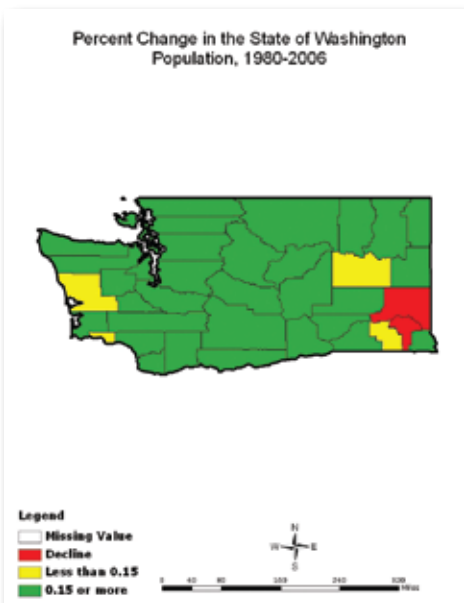


Figure 3

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

Metropolitan Areas	1980	1990	2000	2006	Change 1980 - 2006	
					Total	Percent
Bellingham						
Whatcom County	106,701	127,780	166,814	185,953	79,252	74.3
Bremerton						
Kitsap County	147,152	189,731	231,969	240,604	93,452	63.5
Kennewick - Richland - Pasco						
Total	144,469	150,033	191,822	226,033	81,564	56.5
Benton County	109,444	112,560	142,475	159,463	50,019	45.7
Franklin County	35,025	37,473	49,347	66,570	31,545	90.1
Longview						
Cowlitz County	79,548	82,119	92,948	99,905	20,357	25.6
Mount Vernon - Anacortes						
Skagit County	64,138	79,555	102,979	115,700	51,562	80.4
Olympia						
Thurston County	124,264	161,238	207,355	234,670	110,406	88.8
Seattle - Tacoma - Bellevue						
Total	2,093,112	2,559,164	3,043,878	3,263,497	1,170,385	55.9
King County	1,269,749	1,507,319	1,737,034	1,826,732	556,983	43.9
Pierce County	485,643	586,203	700,820	766,878	281,235	57.9
Snohomish County	337,720	465,642	606,024	669,887	332,167	98.4
Spokane						
Spokane County	341,835	361,364	417,939	446,706	104,871	30.7
Wenatchee						
Total	67,205	78,455	99,219	106,806	39,601	58.9
Chelan County	45,061	52,250	66,616	71,034	25,973	57.6
Douglas County	22,144	26,205	32,603	35,772	13,628	61.5
Yakima						
Yakima County	172,508	188,823	222,581	233,105	60,597	35.1
Lewiston, Idaho						
Asotin County	16,823	17,605	20,551	21,247	4,424	26.3
Portland, Oregon						
Total	200,143	246,272	355,110	423,771	223,628	111.7
Clark County	192,227	238,053	345,238	412,938	220,711	114.8
Skamania County	7,919	8,219	9,872	10,833	2,914	36.8
Nonmetropolitan Counties						
Total	574,255	624,483	740,956	797,801	223,546	38.9
Adams County	13,267	13,603	16,428	16,887	3,620	27.3
Clallam County	51,648	56,464	64,525	70,400	18,752	36.3
Columbia County	4,057	4,024	4,064	4,087	30	0.7
Ferry County	5,811	6,295	7,260	7,560	1,749	30.1
Garfield County	2,468	2,248	2,397	2,223	-245	-9.9
Grant County	48,522	54,758	74,698	82,612	34,090	70.3
Grays Harbor County	66,314	64,175	67,194	71,587	5,273	8.0
Island County	44,048	60,195	71,558	81,489	37,441	85.0
Jefferson County	15,965	20,146	25,953	29,279	13,314	83.4
Kittitas County	24,877	26,725	33,362	37,189	12,312	49.5
Klickitat County	15,822	16,616	19,161	20,335	4,513	28.5
Lewis County	56,025	59,358	68,600	73,585	17,560	31.3
Lincoln County	9,604	8,864	10,184	10,376	772	8.0
Mason County	31,184	38,341	49,405	55,951	24,767	79.4
Okanogan County	30,639	33,350	39,564	40,040	9,401	30.7
Pacific County	17,237	18,882	20,984	21,735	4,498	26.1
Pend Oreille County	8,580	8,915	11,732	12,951	4,371	50.9
San Juan County	7,838	10,035	14,077	15,298	7,460	95.2
Stevens County	28,979	30,948	40,066	42,632	13,653	47.1
Wahkiakum County	3,832	3,327	3,824	4,026	194	5.1
Walla Walla County	47,435	48,439	55,180	57,721	10,286	21.7
Whitman County	40,103	38,775	40,740	39,838	-265	-0.7

are distributed among all segments of the population. The incomes of White households are significantly greater than the incomes of minority households, and the incomes of metropolitan households are significantly greater than the incomes of nonmetropolitan households (Figure 5). Differences are even more pronounced when looking at the relationship between race/ethnicity and poverty rates. About 9 percent of White households in metropolitan counties and 13 percent of White households in nonmetropolitan counties were living in poverty in 2000, compared to 24 percent of minority households in metropolitan counties and 28 percent of minority households in nonmetropolitan counties (Figure 6). The relationship between family structure and

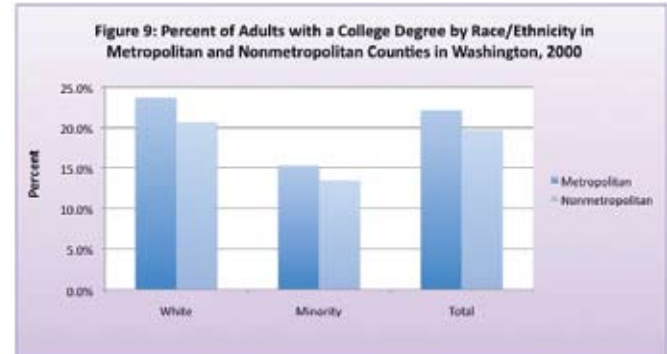
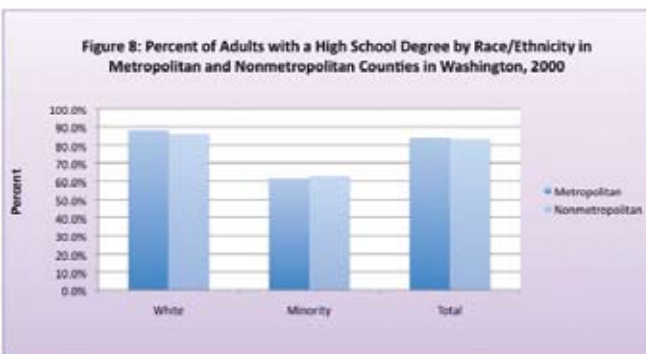
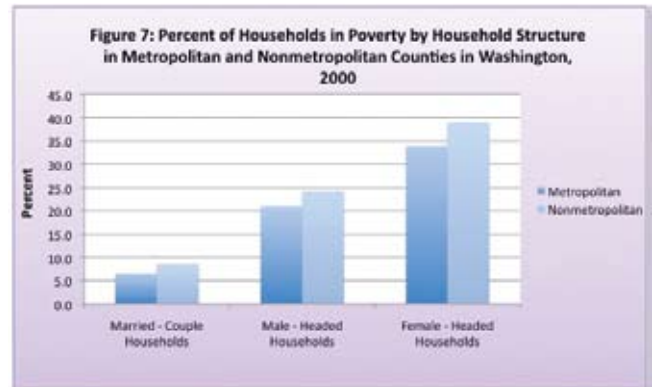
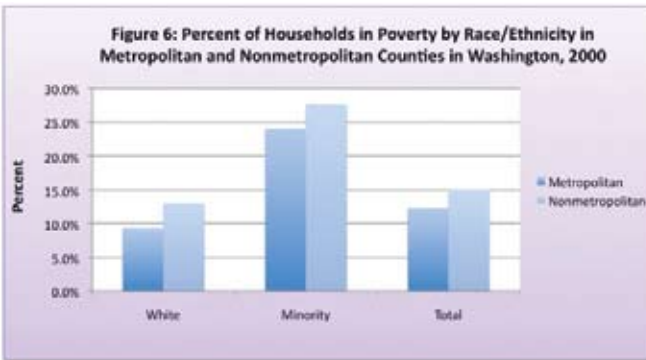
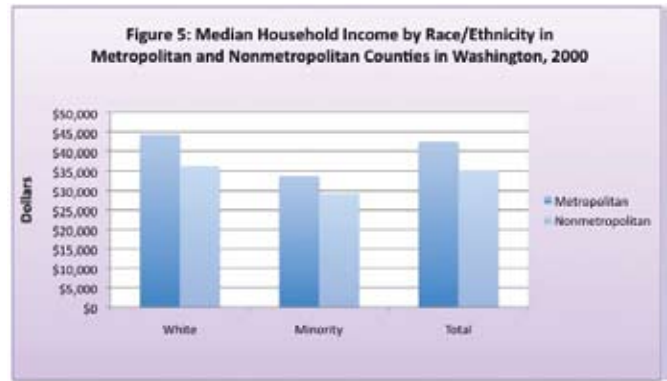
poverty levels is striking (Figure 7). Less than ten percent of married-couple households in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties were living in poverty in 2000. In comparison, 34 percent of female-headed households in metropolitan counties and 39 percent of female-headed households in nonmetropolitan counties were living in poverty.

Figures 8 and 9 provide data showing major differences in education attainment levels by race/ethnicity. In 2000, over 85 percent of White adults in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties were high school graduates, while only 62 percent of minorities in metropolitan counties and 63 percent in nonmetropolitan counties were high school

graduates. Differences were also substantial when looking at college graduation rates (Figure 9). While 23.7 percent of the White residents of metropolitan counties and 20.7 percent of White nonmetropolitan resident were college graduates, significantly fewer minority persons had completed college (15.3 percent in metropolitan counties and 13.5 percent in nonmetropolitan counties).

Conclusion

Policy makers, extension leaders and development specialists will be challenged in the coming years by attempts to cope with rapid population growth, dealing with increased diversity, and seeking and creating economic opportunities in a changing and increasingly global world.●



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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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About the Briefs

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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.

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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