



June 21, 2018

RESEARCH BRIEF

2017 State and County Detailed Population Estimates: Growth in the Aging, Asian, and Hispanic Populations

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvanians are getting older and more diverse according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2017 State and County Detailed Population Estimates released today. The release features age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin data down to the county level and allows state and county agencies to better understand their changing populations.

An Aging Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania followed the national trend of an increasing median age from 2010 to 2017, although Pennsylvania’s median age in 2017 (40.7 years) exceeded that of the United States’ (38.0 years) by a considerable amount. Pennsylvania had the seventh-highest median age in 2017 among states in the U.S. preceded by Maine (44.7 years), New Hampshire (43.1 years), Vermont (42.9 years), West Virginia (42.5 years), Florida (42.1 years), and Connecticut (40.9 years). States with the lowest median age in 2017 included Utah (30.9 years), District of Columbia (34.0 years), Alaska (34.3 years) and Texas (34.6 years).

The 55 years and over population, consisting of Baby Boomers and to a lesser extent the Silent and Greatest Generations, grew by 14.2 percent from 2010 to 2017, the largest increase among all of the generational cohorts. Persons age 19 years or younger (Post-Millennials) decreased by 5.4 percent from 2010 to 2017 while persons age 20 to 34 (Millennials) grew by 5.7 percent during that time. Middle-age adults 35 to 54 years (Gen-Xers) shrank by 10.4 percent from 2010 to 2017. This caused a shift in the age composition of Pennsylvania as those 55 years of age and over grew from 28.2 percent of Pennsylvania’s total population in 2010 to 32.0 percent of the population in 2017 [Figure 1].

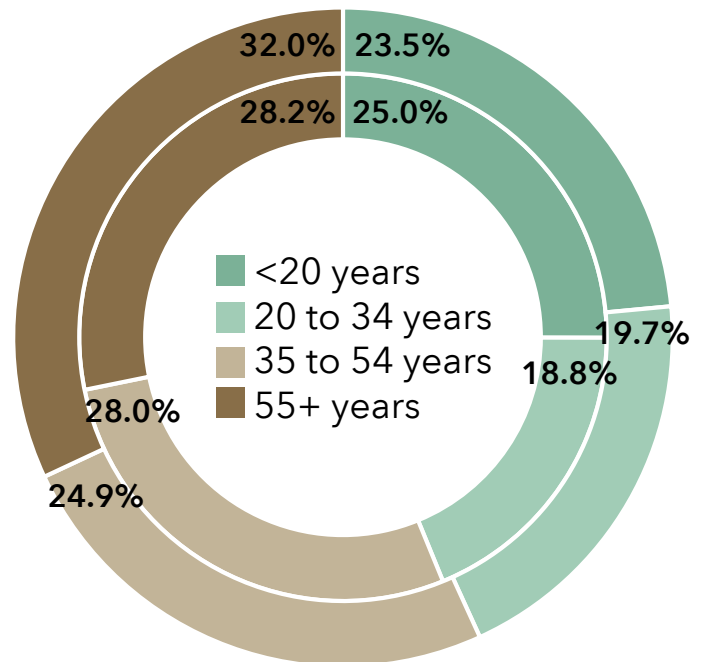


Figure 1. Age composition by generational cohort of Pennsylvania in 2010 (inner) and 2017 (outer).

A Diversifying Pennsylvania

The non-Hispanic White alone population was the only racial or ethnic subpopulation to decrease from 2010 to 2017 [Figure 2]. Non-Hispanic whites decreased by 3.1 percent from 2010 to 2017, and the non-Hispanic Black or African-American alone population increased by just 3.8 percent during the same period. The non-Hispanic Asian alone population and the Hispanic and Latino population of any race saw significant increases from 2010 to 2017 of 28.9 percent and 30.7 percent respectively.

The increasing non-Hispanic Asian alone and Hispanic or Latino populations coupled with the decreasing non-Hispanic White alone population caused shifts in the racial composition of Pennsylvania's population. From 2010 to 2017, the non-Hispanic White alone population decreased from 79.6 percent of the total population to 76.5 percent while the Asian alone (non-Hispanic) increased from 2.8 percent to 3.5 percent and the Hispanic or Latino population increased from 5.7 percent to 7.3 percent of the total population.

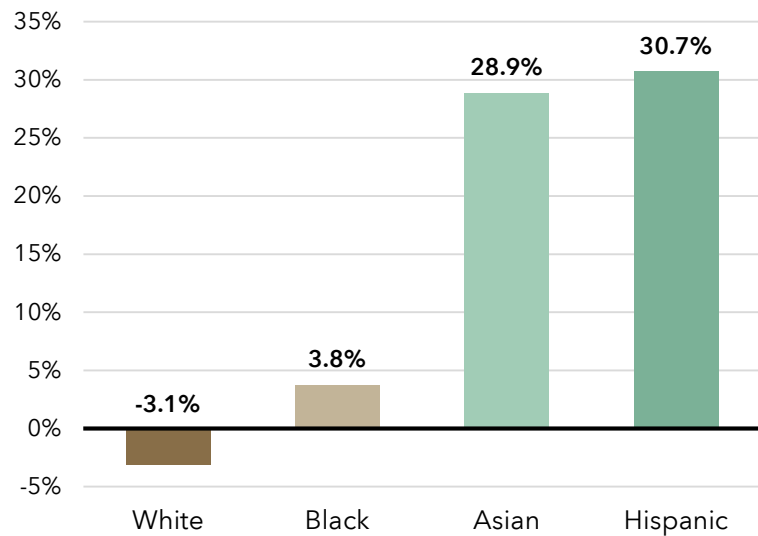


Figure 2. Percent change by racial or ethnic subpopulation in Pennsylvania from 2010 to 2017.

Generational Diversification of Pennsylvania

The non-Hispanic White alone and non-Hispanic Black or African American alone populations experienced decreases in their youth (19 years or younger) and older adult (35 to 54 years) cohorts and growth in their 55 years and over population from 2010 to 2017 [Figure 3]. The youth cohort of the White alone (non-Hispanic) population decreased by 10.8 percent while the older adult cohort decreased by 15.3 percent. For the Black alone (non-Hispanic) population, those age cohorts decreased by 6.8 percent and 6.2 percent respectively.

The non-Hispanic Asian alone population and the Hispanic or Latino population of all races increased among every age cohort from 2010 to 2017. The largest increases were for the aging cohort (55 years and over) for which the Hispanic or Latino population increased by 61.0 percent and the non-Hispanic Asian alone population increased by 50.8 percent.

References of White, Black, and Asian in figures refer to those non-Hispanic and single-race alone. Hispanic or Latino includes all races.

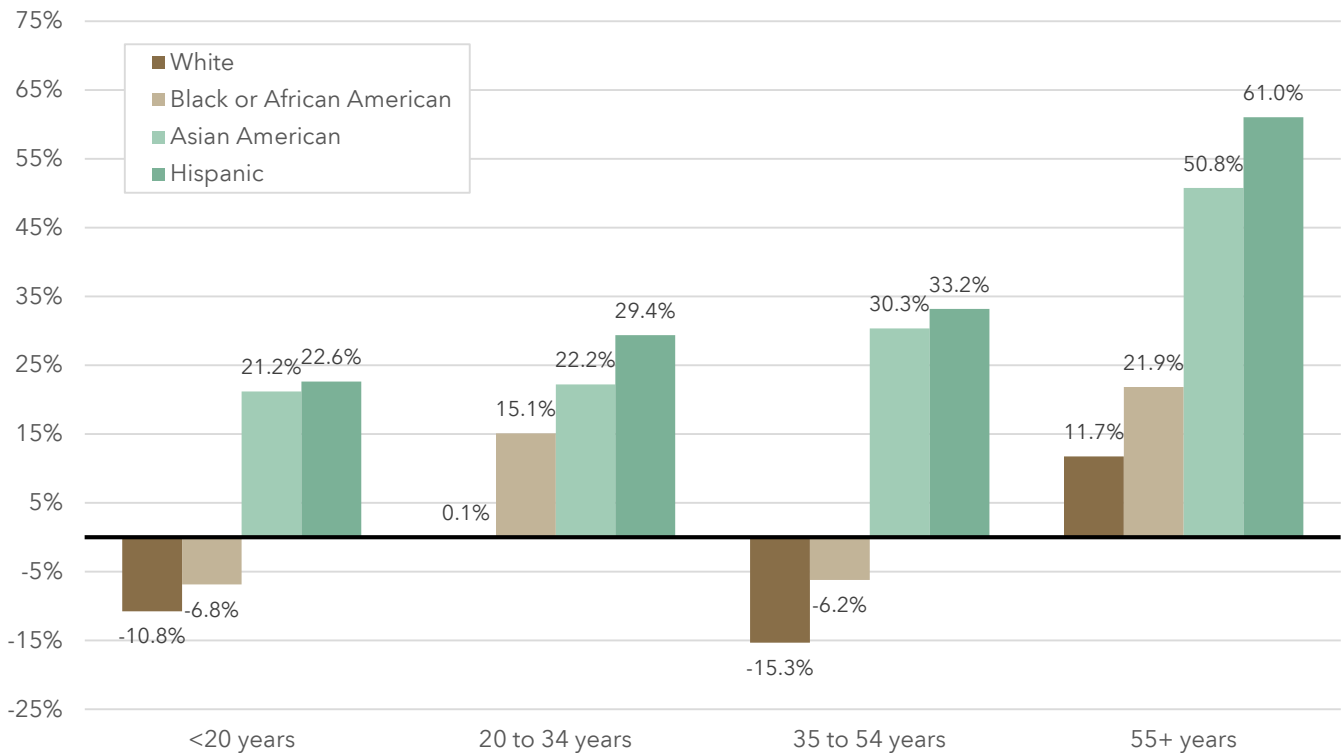


Figure 3. Percent change in age cohort by race from 2010 to 2017 in Pennsylvania.

The aging non-Hispanic White alone population of Pennsylvania increased in its percent of the total population from 2010 to 2017 from 25.0 percent to 27.7 percent. Aging Pennsylvanians in general increased their share of the total population from 28.2 percent in 2010 to 32.0 percent in 2017. By 2017, the aging cohort of each race had increased in proportion.

Persons age 55 years and over accounted for 36.2 percent of non-Hispanic white Americans, 23.4 percent of non-Hispanic African Americans, 18.7 percent of Asian Americans, and 12.2 percent of Hispanic or Latino Americans. The youth and older adult cohorts share of the total population decreased by 1.5 percent and 3.1 percent respectively from 2017.

County-Level Changes in Age, Race, and Origins

The median age increased in 62 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties and statewide it increased from 40.1 in 2010 to 40.7 in 2017. Sullivan and Cameron Counties had the highest median ages at 53.4 years and 51.3 years respectively. Pike and Fulton Counties experienced some of the highest increases in the median age of their populations with an increase of 4.2 years (9.6 percent) in Pike County and an increase of 3.6 years (8.6 percent) in Fulton County. The counties with the lowest median age in Pennsylvania included Centre (32.0 years) and Philadelphia (34.4 years). The median age decreased the most in Allegheny County where it fell by 0.6 years (1.5 percent) from 2010 to 2017.

References of White, Black, and Asian in figures refer to those non-Hispanic and single-race alone. Hispanic or Latino includes all races.

Forty-eight of Pennsylvania's counties had a percent increase of 10.0 percent or more in their aging population. Sullivan and Cameron Counties had the highest proportion of persons aged 55 years and over. Approximately 47.1 percent of Sullivan's population was 55 years of age or older in 2017, up from 40.8 percent in 2010, while Cameron's increased from 38.3 percent to 44.1 percent. Centre County's population had the smallest share of those 55 years and over in 2010 (21.0 percent) and 2017 (25.0 percent) followed by Philadelphia (2010: 22.7 percent, 2017: 25.0 percent).

Lehigh County ranked highest in 2017 with its share of Hispanic or Latino residents at 24.6 percent (up from 18.8 percent in 2010). Berks County also had a high share of Hispanic or Latino residents with 21.0 percent of its total population in 2017 identifying as Hispanic or Latino (up from 16.4 percent in 2010). Luzerne (74.0 percent), Schuylkill (53.2 percent), Cumberland (50.5 percent), Lebanon (49.3 percent), and Lackawanna (48.0 percent) counties had the highest percent change in Hispanic or Latino populations of counties that had 6,000 or more Hispanic or Latino residents of all races (22 counties) in Pennsylvania.

More on Population Estimates

The U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates are created using records of births, deaths, and migration to account for yearly population changes since the last Decennial Census. Specifically, the Census Bureau used a distributive cohort component method to develop the July 1, 2017 estimates of the resident population by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, for all of the nation's states and counties. Using previously developed resident national population estimates by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, the Census Bureau estimated the age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin distributions for each state by estimating post-censal change in the corresponding populations with a cohort component model. The same method was then used to develop the county-level estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Division, 2017 Detailed State and County Population Estimates.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Questions? Contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at **717.948.6336** or online at pasdc.hbg.psu.edu.

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