

Suburbs Diversify: Population Change in Racial and Hispanic Composition

Diversity is an attribute often sought for both social and economic reasons. As Indiana continues to diversify its economy, recognizing its strength in manufacturing while seeking to expand life sciences, logistics, and technology, Indiana's counties have been quietly undergoing their own population diversification. The Census in 1990 marked the first time people of color were counted in each of our ninety-two counties. Since Census 2000, estimates of our population by race and Hispanic ethnicity continue to show significant growth in a number of our counties, not all of them urban.

Eleven Indiana counties saw their African American populations grow by more than 50 percent between 2000 and 2003. (Note: 2000 figures based on the adjusted census base and 2003 figures as of July 1.) Many of these were suburban counties: Hancock, Hendricks, Morgan, and Hamilton counties surrounding Indianapolis and Porter County, nestled between Lake and La Porte counties in the Gary metro area. The largest numbers of African Americans (218,149) live in Marion County, where 25 percent of the population is estimated as being African American. Lake County also has 25 percent of its population identified as part of this racial group. Sixty of ninety-two counties now have at least one hundred or more African Americans, compared to fifty-seven counties in 2000 and forty-nine counties in 1990.

Several counties in the Indianapolis metro area saw the largest increases in the number of blacks. Howard, Tippecanoe, Clark, and Warrick counties also saw large increases in

the number of African Americans, likely due in part to the high-paying manufacturing jobs now available in those areas.

The rate of increase in the Hispanic population (which can be of any race) was slower than that for the black population. Only three counties exceeded a 50 percent growth in the Hispanic population between 2000 and 2003: Shelby (63.2 percent), Hendricks (62.9 percent), and Warrick (52.6 percent).

People identified as Asian now live in every county in Indiana, with the largest Asian populations in Hamilton, Tippecanoe, and Marion counties. Tippecanoe County likely has a significant proportion of its Asian population attending college in that county.

Census 2000 allowed the option of choosing multiple races for the first time, and since then, we have seen the multi-racial component of our population increase. Between 2000 and 2003, eight counties had increases of more than 250 multi-racial persons. The counties differ somewhat from those with the large African American or Asian populations and include St. Joseph, Elkhart, and Vanderburgh counties.

Indiana's complexion is changing. It is more and more likely for Hoosiers to see people of various racial or ethnic backgrounds during their work or leisure times. Change happens and this author will leave it to social scientists to discuss the ramifications of such change.

Much more information on the latest race, Hispanic, and age estimates are available on STATS Indiana (www.stats.indiana.edu), Indiana's information utility. Detailed data and methodology can be found at www.census.gov (click on *Estimates*). ◀

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Figure 1
Percent Change in Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2000 to 2003

