



MAPPING AMERICA'S FUTURES, BRIEF 6

# 2000–2010 Population Profiles

Atlanta, Las Vegas, Washington, DC, and Youngstown

*Allison Stolte, Kaitlin Franks Hildner, Nan Marie Astone, Steven Martin, Rolf Pendall, H. Elizabeth Peters, and Austin Nichols*

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**The Mapping America's Futures project has developed multiple population projections by age, race, and ethnicity for the 740 commuting zones in the United States. This brief examines diverse population structures and growth patterns across four commuting zones in 2010 to illustrate the diversity in populations across the United States that influence the 2030 projections.**

This brief is one of a series that demonstrates the potential for policy and social investigation using the "Mapping America's Futures: Population" tool. In this brief, we examine the population and growth structure of four commuting zones in 2010. Other briefs in the series examine projections for overall population growth ("Scenarios for Regional Growth from 2010 to 2030"), for changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the population ("Evolving Patterns in Diversity") for changes in the age structure of the population ("Children and Youth in an Aging America"), and for changes in America's labor markets ("The Labor Force in an Aging and Growing America"). The online tool allows the viewer to see the implications of different assumptions about future fertility, mortality, and migration, all of which are explained in "Methodology and Assumptions for the Mapping America's Futures Project." Our population projections are divided geographically across 740 commuting zones of the United States. We also combined the commuting zones into 24 regions with boundaries built from reviews of literature and observed differences in recent patterns of population change.

## Commuting Zones and 2010 Populations

Projections provide an opportunity to explore possible futures. When considering how policies can affect the trajectory, it is helpful to understand the current demographics of an area. In this brief, we review the

2010 populations and 2000 to 2010 population growth of the Atlanta, Las Vegas, Washington, DC, and Youngstown commuting zones. Commuting zones consist of one or more counties or county equivalents combined as a spatial measure of a local labor market; they identify shared economic and social activity. Focusing on a commuting zone allows our projections to account for the economic and social patterns occurring at the local level that influence growth patterns. Though other local geographies, such as metro areas, leave gaps, commuting zones include both rural and urban areas and collectively cover the whole United States.

Table 1 outlines basic geographic information on the four commuting zones discussed in this brief. Located in distinct geographic regions, these commuting zones have land areas ranging from about 2,600 to about 54,000 square miles and population densities ranging from 14 to just over 1,000 people per square mile in 2010. The varied age and racial and ethnic structures of these four commuting zones represent the diversity of populations not only within commuting zones but also among commuting zones.

**TABLE 1**

**Characteristics of the Four Commuting Zones**

|                              | <b>Atlanta</b>          | <b>Las Vegas</b>       | <b>Washington, DC</b>                    | <b>Youngstown</b>       |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Region                       | Piedmont                | Southwest Triangle     | Northeast Corridor                       | Great Lakes             |
| States included              | Georgia                 | Arizona, Nevada        | District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia | Ohio, Pennsylvania      |
| Number of counties           | 18                      | 5                      | 19                                       | 5                       |
| Land area (rank)             | 5,354 sq. miles (165th) | 53,967 sq. miles (4th) | 5,259 sq. miles (172nd)                  | 2,612 sq. miles (457th) |
| 2010 total population (rank) | 4,721,936 (11th)        | 2,215,115 (30th)       | 5,381,333 (7th)                          | 762,509 (82nd)          |
| 2010 population density      | 882 people per sq. mile | 14 people per sq. mile | 1,023 people per sq. mile                | 848 people per sq. mile |

**Note:** See more details about the 24 regions used in this project in the “Methodology and Assumptions for the Mapping America’s Futures Project” brief.

## Atlanta

The Atlanta commuting zone contains 18 counties in Georgia (figure 1). It is one of several highly populated commuting zones in the Piedmont region, ranking 1st in total population in the region and 11th in the country in 2010. The Atlanta commuting zone experienced significantly larger population growth rates in the first decade of the millennium, growing 2.13 percent a year, while the other commuting zones in the region grew 0.74 percent on average (and the US national growth rate was 0.94 percent a year). Atlanta’s 2000 to 2010 growth rate ranked 30th in the country amongst commuting zones. Figure 2 shows the 2010 population structure for the Atlanta commuting zone.

## Las Vegas

The Las Vegas commuting zone consists of one county in Arizona and four counties in Nevada (figure 3). The commuting zone is highly populated, ranking 4th in total population among the Southwest Triangle region’s six commuting zones in 2010 and 30th in the country. Las Vegas experienced significantly larger population growth rates in the first decade of the millennium than both regional and national trends. Growing 3.47

percent a year, Las Vegas had the second-fastest growth rate in the country between 2000 and 2010. Figure 4 shows the 2010 population structure for the Las Vegas commuting zone.

## **Washington, DC**

The Washington, DC, commuting zone contains the District of Columbia, 6 Maryland counties, and 10 Northern Virginia counties (figure 5). Ranked fourth in total population among the commuting zones in the Northeast Corridor and seventh in the country in 2010, the DC commuting zone had population growth rates in the first decade of the millennium of 1.45 percent a year (a rate only surpassed by much smaller commuting zones in the region: Charlottesville and Fredericksburg, Virginia), but ranked 94th in the country. Figure 6 shows the 2010 population structure for the Washington, DC, commuting zone.

## **Youngstown**

The Youngstown commuting zone, in the Great Lakes region, consists of three counties in Ohio and two counties in Pennsylvania (figure 7). It ranked 9th in total population in the region of 43 commuting zones in 2010 and 82nd in the country. Youngstown experienced population loss between 2000 and 2010, growing at -0.57 percent a year. Youngstown was one of the slowest-growing commuting zones in the United States, ranking 633rd in growth in the country. Figure 8 shows the 2010 population structure for the Youngstown commuting zone.

FIGURE 1

Atlanta Commuting Zone

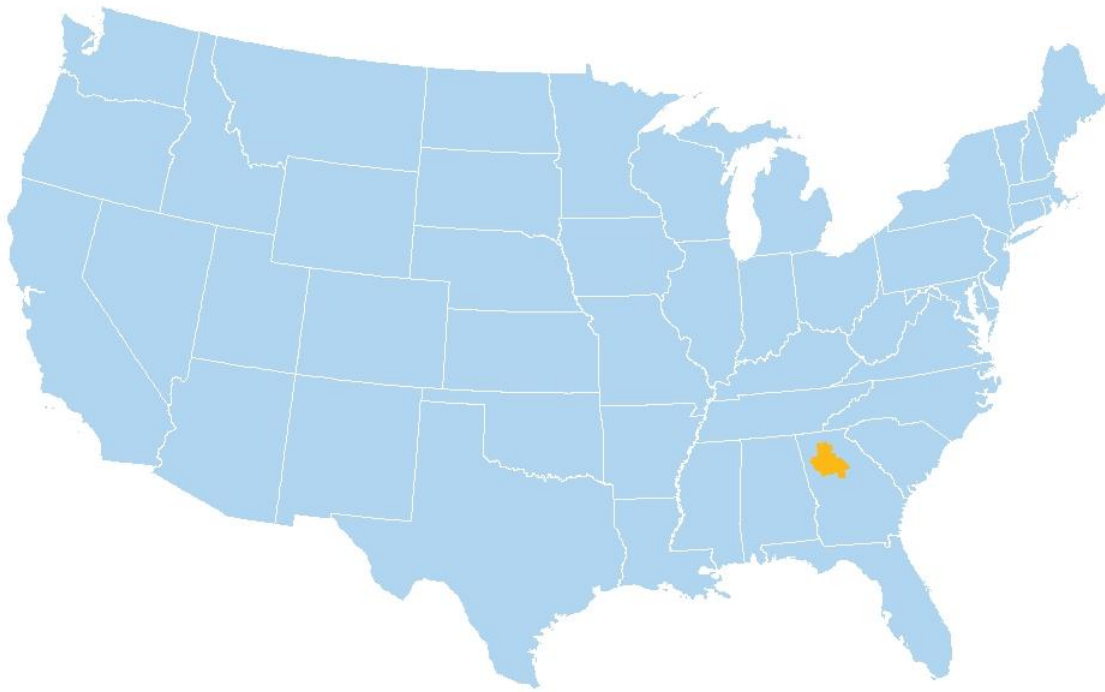
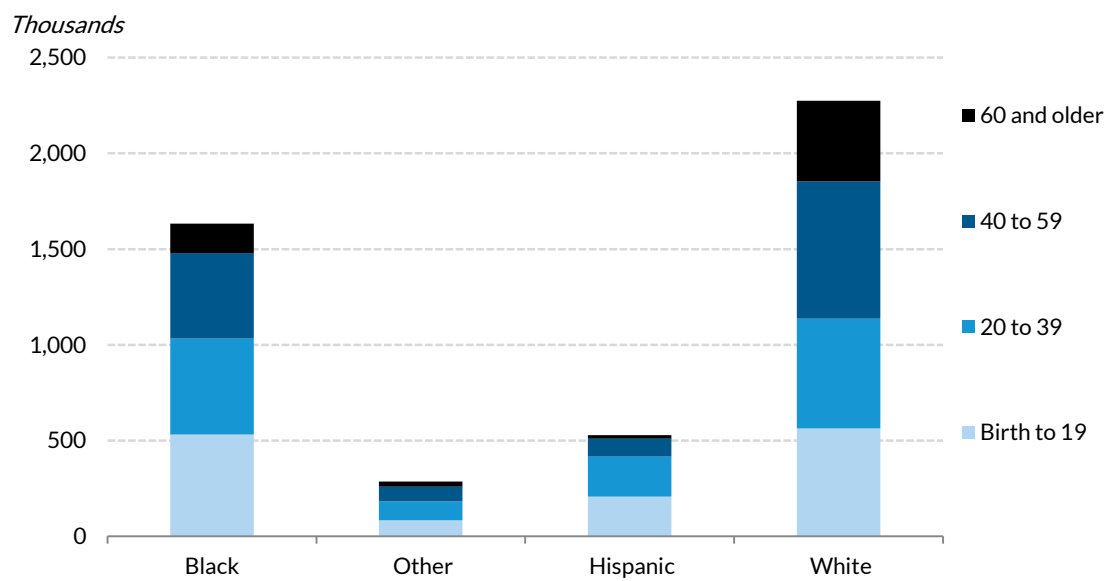


FIGURE 2

Population Structure of the Atlanta Commuting Zone  
2010



Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010.

FIGURE 3

Las Vegas Commuting Zone

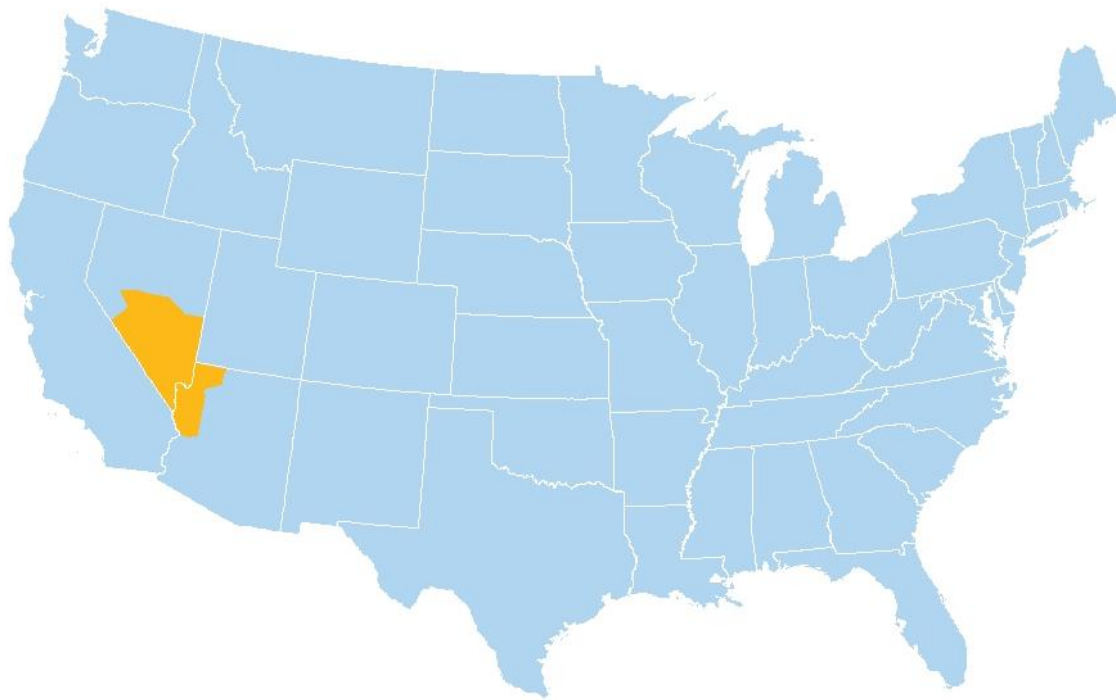
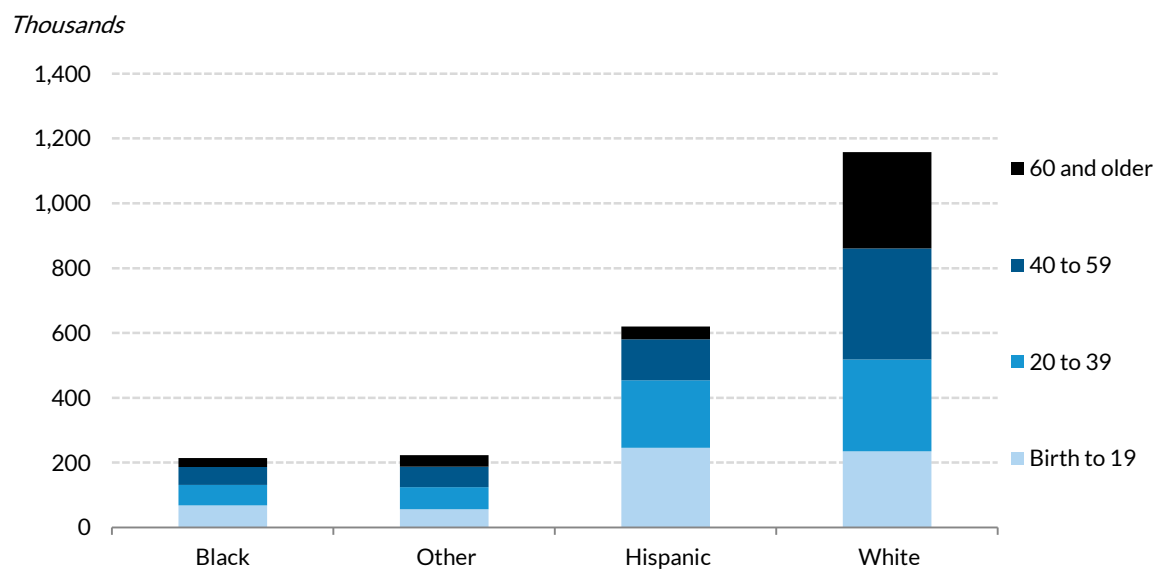


FIGURE 4

Population Structure of the Las Vegas Commuting Zone

2010



Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010.

FIGURE 5

Washington, DC, Commuting Zone

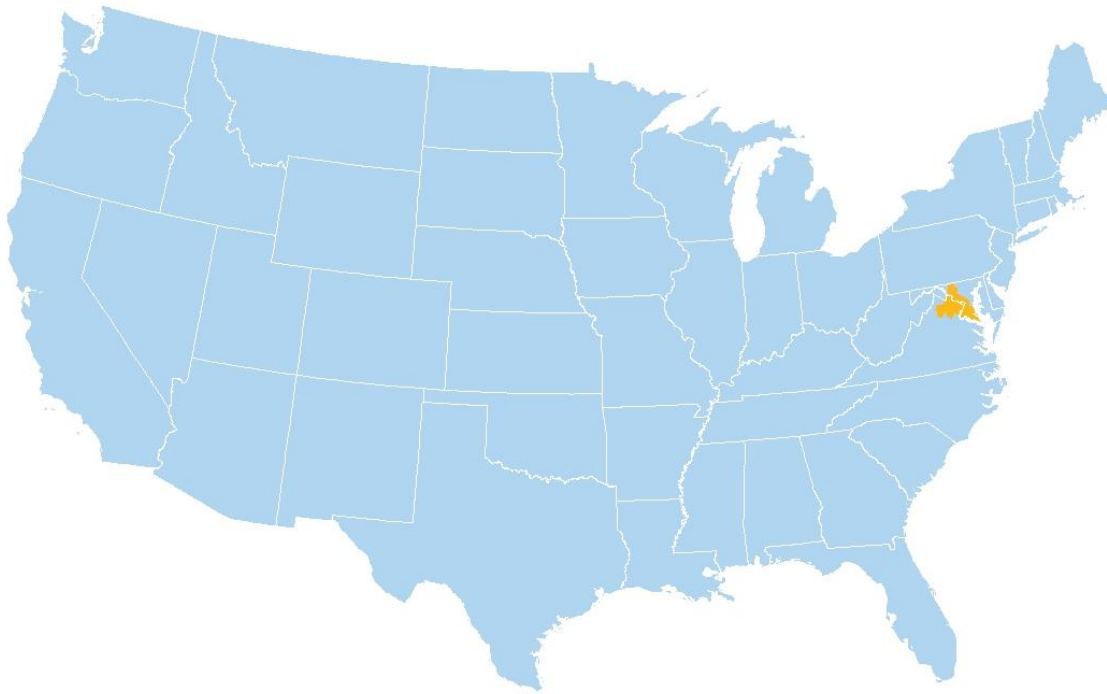
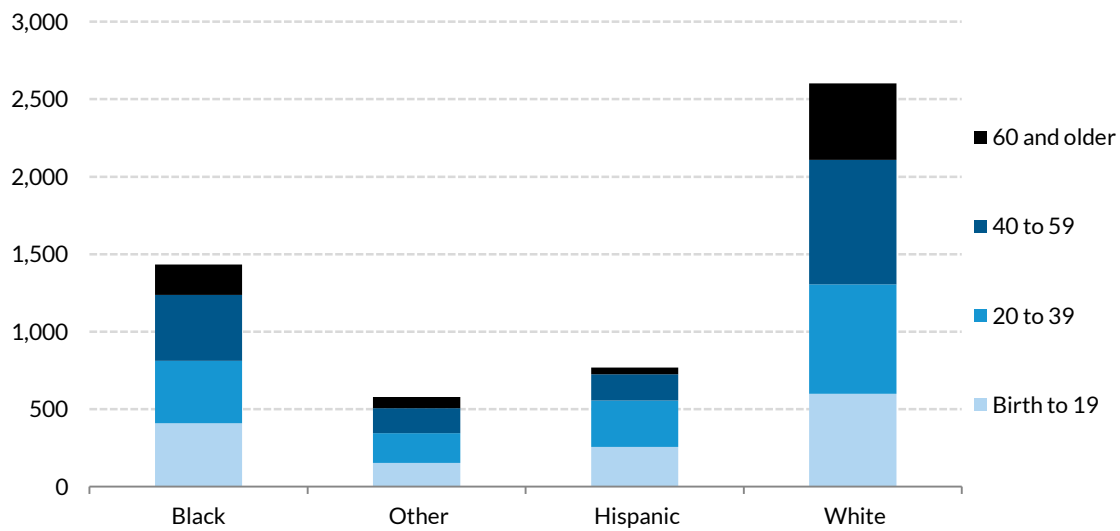


FIGURE 6

Population Structure of the Washington, DC, Commuting Zone

2010

Thousands



Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010.

FIGURE 7

Youngstown Commuting Zone

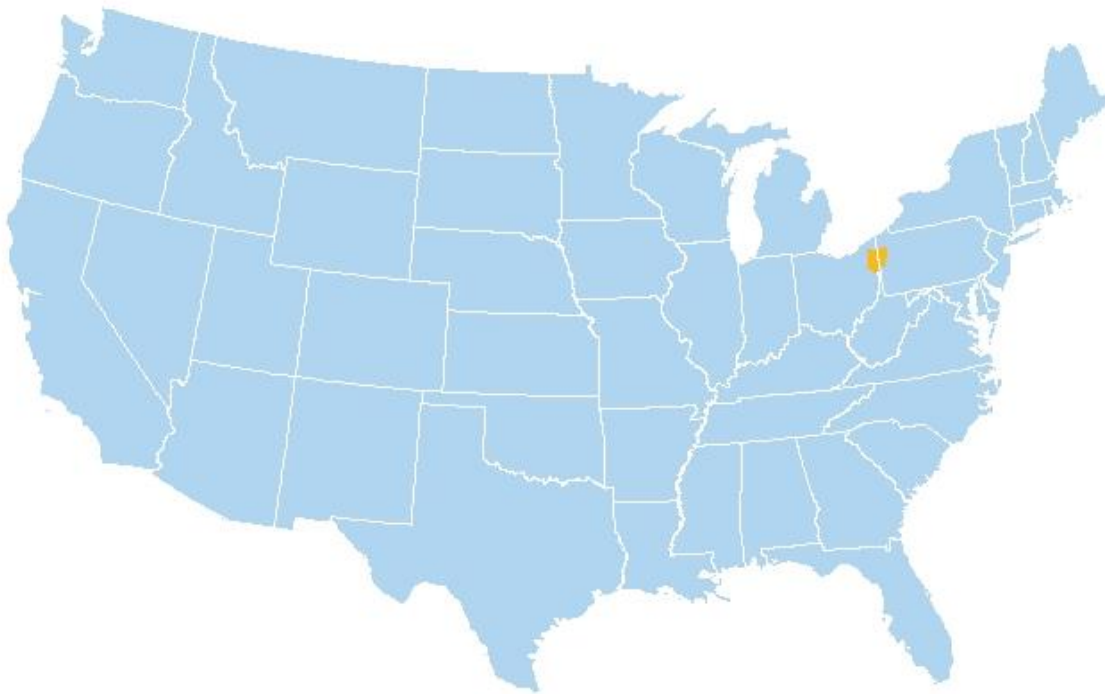
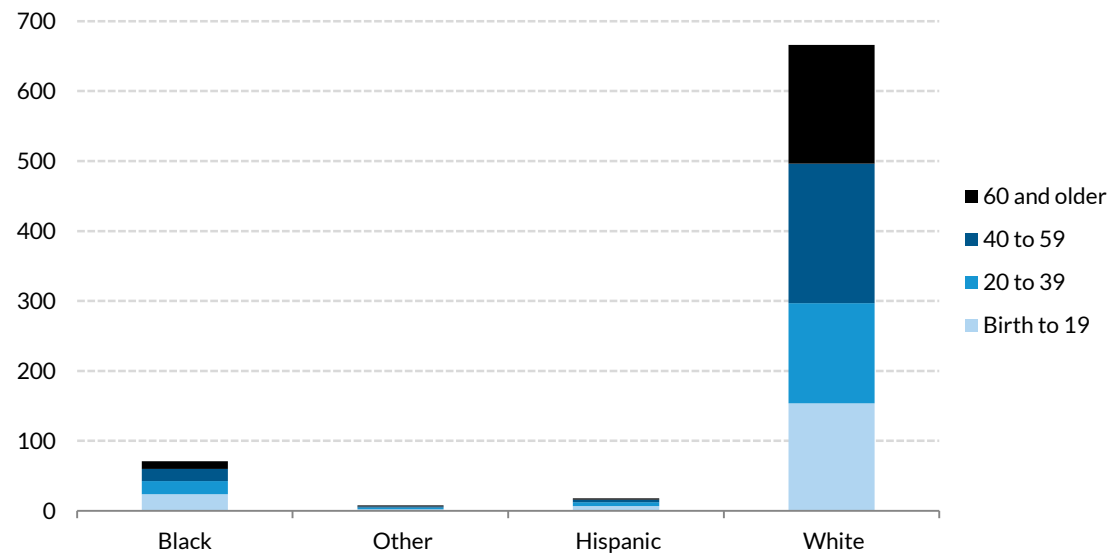


FIGURE 8

Population Structure of the Youngstown Commuting Zone

2010

Thousands



Source: US Census of Population, 2000 and 2010.

# Demographic Trajectory of Commuting Zones

Understanding current population characteristics is essential to soundly projecting demographic trajectories and understanding geographic diversity in the United States. The racial and ethnic diversity of Atlanta and Las Vegas in 2010 is important for understanding the implications of different racial and ethnic birthrates and migration patterns in these areas. Familiarity with Youngstown's large percentage of residents ages 40 to 59 in 2010 makes it easier to understand why we project a high elder-ratio and population decline in 2030 when using average fertility, mortality, and migration trends.

Our 2030 projections illustrate the implications of different fertility, mortality, and migration assumptions on population growth. Demographic change, however, is driven by factors beyond fertility, mortality, and migration rates, including political, economic, and geographic elements. Moreover, the demographic factors interact with each other differently in different places. The age and racial structure of populations influence fertility, mortality, and migration rates; they also influence local and national policies that can affect population movement and growth. The Urban Institute is conducting more detailed examinations of population demographics at the commuting zone level, covering more commuting zones than the ones described in this brief. The information that we gain from this in-depth review will allow us to more comprehensively understand the many dynamics influencing population growth and movement to better prepare for the needs of future populations.



## About the Authors

**Allison Stolte** is a research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, where her research focuses primarily on policies and service designs relating to the workforce development of low-income individuals and young parents, youth development programs, and child food security. Stolte contributes to all stages of the qualitative and quantitative research process, including research design, data collection, management, and analysis. She has conducted and participated in over 100 data-collection interviews and focus groups across the United States and has conducted statistical analyses using quantitative program data. She also leads quality control strategies and both on-site and webinar trainings for program providers regarding proper data-collection procedures.

**Kaitlin Franks Hildner** is a research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. Her research focuses on using data and analysis to better inform decisionmakers at both the policy and the programmatic levels. Her current work includes providing technical assistance to US Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods grantees on how to use and develop longitudinal data systems and assisting with the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.

**Nan Marie Astone** is a senior fellow in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, which she joined in 2013 after serving 24 years on the faculty of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is a demographer with expertise on reproductive health, the family, adolescence, and the transition to adulthood.

**Steven Martin** is a senior research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, having joined in 2013. He works on various topics in social demography; his particular area of interest has been modeling demographic events across the life course. His recent work has covered a range of demographic topics across the life course, such as nonmarital childbearing, fertility timing, childlessness, union formation and dissolution, and age at entry into sexual activity as well as topics in time use, well-being, the “digital divide” (the unequal diffusion of Internet and computer use in the United States), and the quality of data from event-history surveys.

**Rolf Pendall** is director of the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. In this role, he leads a team of over 40 experts on a broad array of housing, community development, and economic development topics, consistent with Urban’s nonpartisan, evidence-based approach to economic and social policy.

**H. Elizabeth Peters** is the director of the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. An economic demographer, her research focuses on family economics and family policy, specifically examining the effects of public policies such as divorce laws, child support policy, child care policy, taxes, and welfare reform on family formation and dissolution; inter- and intra-household transfers; father involvement; and family investments in children. She recently completed a program project grant funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development on the transition to fatherhood and is currently coprincipal investigator on an Administration for Children and Families project that examines innovative practices involving fathers in home visiting programs.

**Austin Nichols** is an Urban Institute affiliated scholar who specializes in applied econometrics, labor economics, and public finance. His research focuses on the well-being of families and social insurance programs, including work on child poverty, disability insurance, income volatility, and economic mobility (within and across generations). He also studies education, health, and labor market interventions, and determinants of poverty and economic inequality.



2100 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

[www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)

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