

NJ Labor Market Views

issue 11.01

Population Keeps Growing in the Most Densely Populated State

by Sen-Yuan Wu

This report is the first in a new series designed to keep you up to date on the pulse of New Jersey's labor market. Labor Market Views will be published periodically and cover a wide range of economic topics.

What's new in New Jersey since 2000? About 4.5 percent more people live in the Garden State and Census data released recently shows that New Jersey:

- Total population is nearing 9 million, rising to 8,791,894
- Ranked 11th among all states for total population
- Remains the most densely populated state with 1,195 persons per square mile

Gloucester is New Jersey's Fastest Growing County

According to the 2010 Census, Gloucester County had the highest rate of population growth in New Jersey from 2000 to 2010 with a 13.2 percent increase, which was substantially greater than the 4.5 percent rate of growth recorded statewide. The population of nine other New Jersey counties grew faster than the state during the 2000-2010 period: Ocean (12.8%), Somerset (8.7%), Atlantic (8.7%), Middlesex (8.0%), Cumberland (7.1%), Warren (6.1%), Burlington (6.0%), Hunterdon (5.2%) and Morris (4.7%).

Ocean County Adds the Most Residents

Ocean County had the largest net population increase (+65,651) in the state from 2000 to 2010, followed by Middlesex (+59,696), Gloucester (+33,615), Somerset (+25,954), Burlington (+25,340), and Hudson (+25,291) counties. Together, these six counties

accounted for more than 62 percent of the state's total population growth.

Somerset County led the state's population growth during the 1990s (+23.8%), while Middlesex County had the largest numeric gain (+78,382). Population growth rates for all counties in the 1990-2000 and 2000-2010 periods are summarized in the map at the end of this article.

Bergen County Remains New Jersey's Most Populous

With 905,116 residents, Bergen County still had the largest population in the state. Salem County remained the least populated county, with 66,083 residents. Cape May became the only other county with less than 100,000 residents in 2010, due to a population decline (-5,061). Cape May and Essex (-9,664) were the only New Jersey counties to experience a population decline in the last decade.

Between 2000 and 2010, Middlesex replaced Essex as the state's second largest county in terms of population. Other population ranking changes include: Hudson (ranked 4th in 2010) and Monmouth swapped their fifth and fourth positions, and Ocean advanced to the sixth place, edging out Union (ranked 7th in 2010).

Slow Population Growth Continued in the Industrialized Northeastern Counties

Population in the six industrialized counties



New Jersey's distinctive status as the nation's most densely populated state remains unchallenged.



(Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic and Union) in the state's northeastern region declined during the 1980s (-2.4%), rebounded in the 1990s (+6.9%), and continued to grow by 2.3 percent from 2000 to 2010. Morris was the fastest growing county in the region. Its 4.7 percent growth rate was faster than the statewide average. However, population decreased by 1.2 percent in Essex County during this decade. These six counties were home to 43.8 percent of the state's total residents, as of 2010, down from 44.8 percent in 2000.

Population Growth Slows in Rural Northwestern Counties

Sussex and Warren counties in the state's northwestern region experienced significant population gains during the 1990s. However, the rate of population growth in Sussex County slowed sub-

stantially from the previous decade's 10.1 percent to 3.5 percent in the latest decade. Warren County's 6.1 percent growth rate between 2000 and 2010, although faster than the state average, was also much slower than its growth rate in the previous decade (11.8%). Approximately 3

percent of New Jersey's total population resided in these two counties in 2010.

The Coastal Region Still a Population Magnet

Four counties along the state's Atlantic Ocean coast — Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth and Ocean — had the highest population growth during the 1980s (16.0%) and the 1990s (13.4%). Although no longer the fastest growing region, it still accounted for 26 percent of the state's 2000-2010 population increase. Ocean County added more residents than any other county in the state. Atlantic County's 8.7 percent growth was also remarkable. However, Cape May County experienced population decline from 2000 to 2010. The region's share of the state's total residents increased from 17.6 percent in 2000 to 18.0 percent in 2010.



Population Increased Rapidly in Central Counties

Total population expanded by 7.1 percent in the State's central counties (Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset) between 2000 and 2010 — the fastest among the state's five regions. Numerically, the region's net gain of 107,762 residents was also larger than any other region. With an 8.7 percent gain, Somerset led the region's population growth in the last decade. Mercer County's 4.5 percent growth was the slowest in the region, but was on par with the state average. The region's share of the state's total population increased from 18.1 percent in 2000 to 18.5 percent in 2010.

Total Population, New Jersey Counties: 2000-2010

	Population		Change 00 to 10	
	2000	2010	Number	Percent
New Jersey	8,414,350	8,791,894	377,544	4.5
County				
Bergen	884,118	905,116	20,998	2.4
Middlesex	750,162	809,858	59,696	8.0
Essex	793,633	783,969	-9,664	-1.2
Hudson	608,975	634,266	25,291	4.2
Monmouth	615,301	630,380	15,079	2.5
Ocean	510,916	576,567	65,651	12.8
Union	522,541	536,499	13,958	2.7
Camden	508,932	513,657	4,725	0.9
Passaic	489,049	501,226	12,177	2.5
Morris	470,212	492,276	22,064	4.7
Burlington	423,394	448,734	25,340	6.0
Mercer	350,761	366,513	15,752	4.5
Somerset	297,490	323,444	25,954	8.7
Gloucester	254,673	288,288	33,615	13.2
Atlantic	252,552	274,549	21,997	8.7
Cumberland	146,438	156,898	10,460	7.1
Sussex	144,166	149,265	5,099	3.5
Hunterdon	121,989	128,349	6,360	5.2
Warren	102,437	108,692	6,255	6.1
Cape May	102,326	97,265	-5,061	-4.9
Salem	64,285	66,083	1,798	2.8

Source: US Census Bureau

Population Growth Accelerated in the Southern Counties

The population growth rate in the five New Jersey counties that are part of the Philadelphia-Camden-Vineland Metropolitan Area (Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland and Salem) was 5.4 percent between 2000 and 2010, up from the 1990s' 5.0 percent. It is the only region in the state to enjoy an accelerated population growth rate from 1990-2000 to 2000-2010. Gloucester continued to be the fastest growing county in the region. In fact, the county's 13.2 percent growth rate from 2000 to 2010 was also the fastest among the state's 21 counties. Camden continued to experience the most moderate population growth in the region, with a small 0.9 percent gain in the decade. The

region's share of the state's total population increased somewhat from 16.6 percent in 2000 to 16.8 percent in 2010.

Data Availability

State, county and municipal population counts from the 2010 Census are available on the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Labor Market Information web page - [2010 Census Data for New Jersey](#). For more information, contact New Jersey Department of Labor, Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research, P. O. Box 388, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0388.

For information regarding Labor Market Views please contact JoAnne Caramelo by phone at (609)292-2582 or by email at joanne.caramelo@dol.state.nj.us

Population Change by County 1990 to 2000 and 2000 to 2010

