

## Maryland's Demographic Diversity

Previous releases of Census 2000 data earlier this year revealed how demographically diverse Maryland has become. Foreign immigration and other domestic migration streams have resulted in a Maryland with a significant minority population. As of April 1, 2000, the non-Hispanic white population in Maryland was down to 62.1 percent (from 69.6% in 1990). The largest minorities in Maryland are Black/African-American (27.9%), Asian (4.0%) and Hispanics (4.3%), which can be of any race but the majority of which are white in Maryland. Additionally, nearly 2.0 percent of the population classified themselves as being two or more races and another 1.8 percent classified themselves as "some other race."

This increasing diversity is beginning to affect the overall demographic characteristics of the State, from age structure to homeownership. The following are some of the highlights of this diversity.

**Median Age** – There is a vast 16.5-year difference between the oldest and youngest race/Hispanic origin groups in Maryland. (See [Chart 1.](#)) Non-Hispanic whites are by far the oldest group, with a median age of 38.9 years. Those who classified themselves as "two or more races" are the youngest (22.4 years) as many of these people are children of bi-racial marriages, which took place in the last few decades. Asians (33.7 years) and Blacks (32.2 years) and Hispanics (27.2 years) are the other numerically significant minority populations with substantially lower median ages than non-Hispanic whites.

As Maryland becomes more racially diverse, and as many of these minority groups have a younger profile, this could have profound effects on Maryland's economy and social structure. Impacts could range from an increase in the labor pool, particularly as baby boomers begin to retire in large numbers, to the need to educate more students than anticipated in the future.

**Household size** – The median age differences by race/Hispanic origin are also reflected to a great extent in the household size data. Those who are the oldest, non-Hispanic whites, have the smallest household size (2.49). (See [Chart 2.](#)) The largest household sizes are from those who classify themselves in the "other race" category – just over 4.0 persons per household, or 61 percent larger than non-Hispanic whites. From other data, it can be determined that a large proportion of the "other race" category are Hispanics, and this is reflected in the relatively large household size of this group (3.66) – nearly 47 percent larger than non-Hispanic whites. Asians also have an average household size above three persons (3.09).

As baby-boomers age over the next two decades, smaller household sizes would mean a demand for smaller types of housing, e.g., apartments, condos or smaller single-family units. Continued growth in minority households may mean stronger demand than is anticipated for larger homes.

**Homeownership rates** are a function of both age and income or relative wealth. In Maryland, as in much of the rest of the U.S., there is a large gap in homeownership rates by race. Just over three-quarters of whites (75.4%) are homeowners. (See [Chart 3.](#)) This is 24 percentage points higher than Black/African-Americans (51.3%) the largest minority in

Maryland. The Asian population, which subsequent data will probably show are the closest to whites in income, have the second highest homeownership rate (60.5%). Homeownership in this group is probably held down somewhat by the fact that many in this group are recent immigrants.

The effect of recent immigration may well be evident when looking at the change in homeownership rates over the 1990 – 2000 period. Asians are the only major race category that showed a drop in homeownership rates, declining 3.8 percentage points. (See **Chart 4**.) Other minority groups did make substantial increases in homeownership rates, however, with both blacks and “other” race groups increasing homeownership rates by more than eight percentage points. For each of these groups, however, homeownership rates were much lower than for Asians in 1990; 43.2 percent for blacks and 35.4 percent for the other race category, compared to 64.3 percent for Asians.

It is clear from the data that for Maryland to increase its overall homeownership rate, programs need to be targeted to minorities.

**Household Type** – Much has been made of the decline in the “nuclear family” – two-parent households with children – both locally and nationally. In 1970, the nuclear family comprised 41.4 percent of all households in the State. Thirty years later, in 2000, the nuclear family made up less than one-quarter (23.3 %) of all households.

The latest Census release shows quite a difference in the proportion of traditional families by race/Hispanic origin. Blacks are the least likely to live in a traditional family – less than one in five households (19.3%) have this structure. (See **Chart 5**.) Those who are self-classified as “some other race,” as well as Hispanics have the highest share of traditional families, 42.9 and 39.0 percent, respectively. Asians also have a relatively high proportion (38.7%) of this household type, while about one-quarter (25.5%) of all non-Hispanic whites do.

Another important way to examine household data is to look at the proportion of all families with children in relationship to the number of parents. **Chart 6** shows by race/Hispanic origin, the percent of all families with children who have two-parents. Nearly 90 percent (87.8%) of all Asian families with children, are two-parent families. Nearly 80 percent (78.2%) of non-Hispanic white families would fit this category as well as just over 70 percent (71.2%) of Hispanic families.

**Chart 7** shows the proportion of all family households with children that are headed by a single parent – either male or female. More than one-half (56.3%) of all black families with children are single-parent households. This is 4.6 times the rate of Asian families, which at 12.2 percent, have the lowest share of single-parent families with children.

It is more than likely when poverty data is released from the Census Bureau next year, particularly for children in poverty, there will be a high correlation with family structure. Measures aimed at reducing childhood poverty will need to also address family structure.

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