Nebraska’s population is in a state of great change. These population changes are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. By using population projections, it is possible to get an idea of what Nebraska’s population will look like in the coming years, up until 2050.

There are four ways that Nebraska’s population has dramatically changed in the recent past and will continue to change in the foreseeable future:

- An aging population as the Baby Boom Generation approaches retirement;
- A growing population of people of color – especially among young people;
- Migration of people from rural communities to urban areas; and,
- A change in family structure.

### Aging Population

When comparing Nebraska’s population by age in 2010 to 2050 projections, the increasing age and fairly stagnant population growth can be seen.

### Growing Population of People of Color

When compared to the population growth of all Nebraskan’s, populations of people of color will grow dramatically. The minority population in 2010 was largely young people, and the overall percent of the state’s population will grow steadily from 18.4% currently to a projected 38% in 2050.
Commentary: A Changing Nebraska

Rural to Urban Migration

Nebraska’s 51 most rural counties are experiencing population decline, while metro counties are experiencing population growth. The “Big 3” counties had more than 50% of the state’s population in 2012 – a percentage that is expected to grow. Rural counties are also experiencing greater aging of their population while urban counties have a younger population.

Percent of Nebraska population by county classification (1950-2012)

![Graph showing population distribution by county type]

Changing Family Structure

The percentage of “non-nuclear” families have been on the increase since the 1970s with 31% of Nebraska families being headed by single parents in 2012.

Nebraska Family Type (1980-2012)

![Graph showing family types over time]

Recommendations

1. **Address the imbalance in federal spending on children:** The increasing pressure that the aging population will put on the federal budget will decrease the funds available to help children. The federal government should increase dedicated mandatory streams of revenue available to help vulnerable children.

2. **Increase focus on reducing disparities for children of color:** With the state’s growing population of children of color, it has become more important than ever that the state work to find solutions to barriers to opportunity for historically disadvantaged populations.

3. **Incentivize job development in rural communities:** In order for rural areas of the state to thrive, quality jobs are an essential foundation. The state should partner with state universities and community colleges to increase financial incentives for trained workers in high-need professions like healthcare who agree to work in rural communities.

4. **Support children in non-traditional family structures:** The increased number of children living in single-parent families means that additional supports are needed in order for these families to be successful.

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**voices for children in Nebraska**

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