

Summary of U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 County Characteristics Estimates for Massachusetts Counties

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For Release June 25, 2020

On June 25, 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau released its 2019 State and County Characteristics Estimates for Massachusetts, Puerto Rico, and the United States. These estimates break down the estimated 2019 county populations, released in March 2020, by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin.

The official U.S. Census Release can be found at:

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2020/population-estimates-detailed.html>

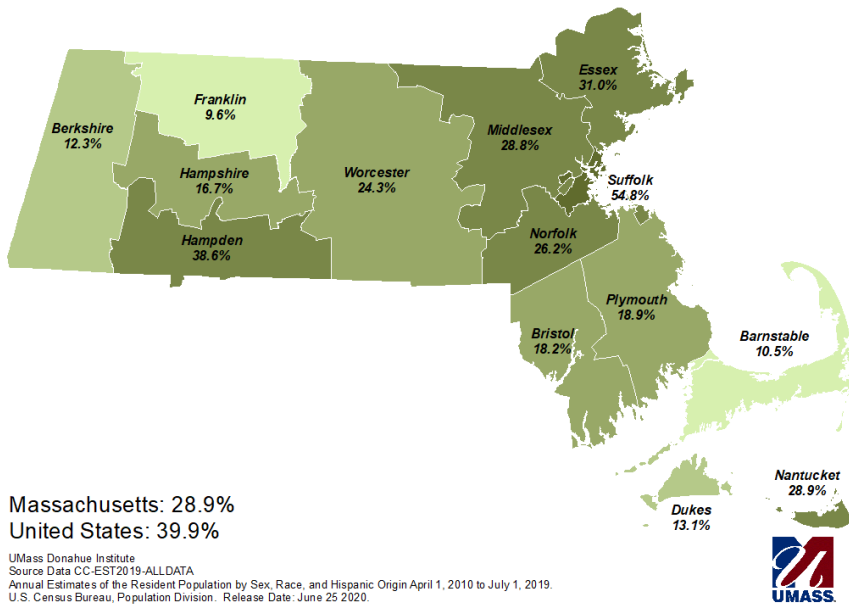
and detailed tables can be found at:

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-counties-detail.html>

Race and Origin

Estimates for Massachusetts follow the national trend, showing a population that is growing older and more racially and ethnically diverse. Even though Massachusetts is less diverse than the U.S. average—with a minority population of just 28.9% compared to 39.9% in the U.S.—the minority population in Massachusetts has been increasing at a faster rate than the U.S. average.¹ From 2010 to 2019, the minority population in the state increased by 5.8 percentage

Estimated Percent Minority Population by Massachusetts County, July 1, 2019

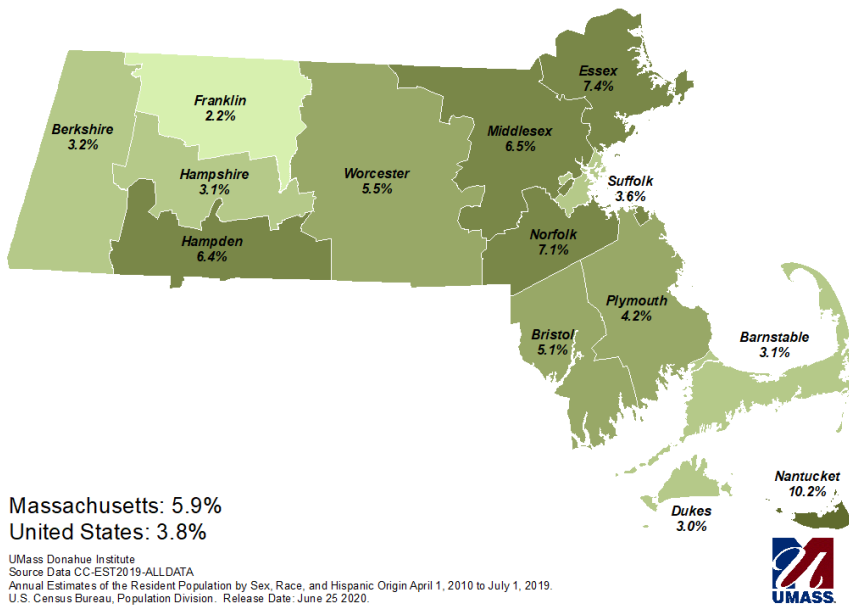


¹ “Minority population” is defined for the purposes of this report as the Hispanic and non-White/non-Hispanic population.

points—from 23.1% to 28.9%—compared to a 3.8 percentage point increase in the U.S. overall. All Massachusetts counties have experienced increasing diversity since 2010 by varying degrees around the state.

The Massachusetts counties with the greatest percentage of minority populations in 2019 were Suffolk (54.8%), Hampden (38.6%), and Essex (31.0%). The counties with the lowest percentage of minority populations were Franklin (9.6%), Barnstable (10.5%), and Berkshire (12.3%).

Percentage Change in Minority Population by Massachusetts County, 2010 - 2019



The largest increases of minority populations as a percentage of the total population since 2010 (by percentage point gain) were seen in Nantucket (10.2), Essex (7.4), and Norfolk (7.1) County. Franklin (2.2), Dukes (3.0), Hampshire (3.1) and Barnstable (3.1) County showed the least amount of increase in minority population (Appendix B). Three of these four counties, Barnstable, Dukes and Franklin, are also amongst the “oldest” counties in the state, ranking 1st, 2nd and 4th respectively in terms of highest median ages. Barnstable and Franklin are also among the three counties in Massachusetts that have lost population since 2010.

The counties with the highest estimated percentage of Hispanic residents in Massachusetts in 2019 were Hampden (26.3%), Suffolk (23.3%), and Essex (22.2%); those with the smallest were Barnstable (3.4%), Dukes (3.9%), Plymouth (4.2%), and Franklin (4.2%). The overall Hispanic population in Massachusetts in 2019 was 12.4% compared to 18.5% in the U.S. overall.

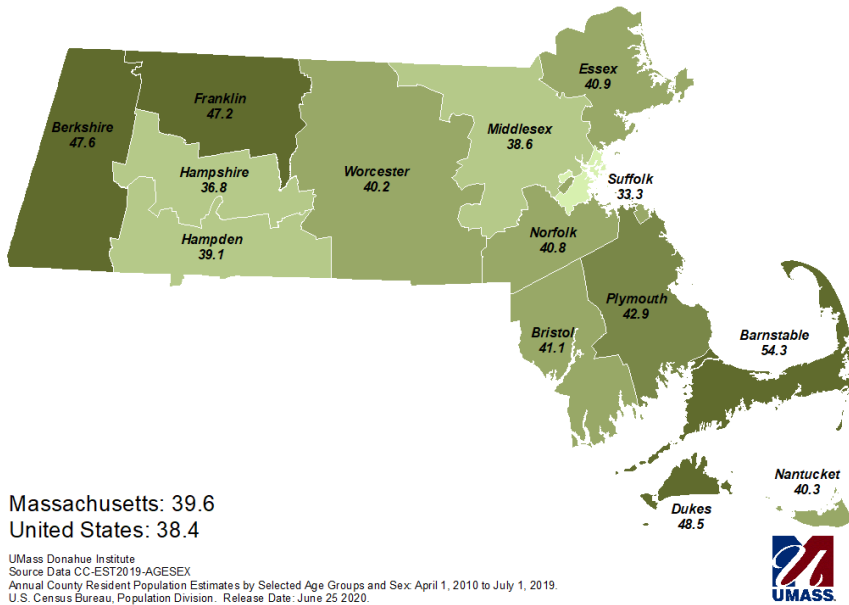
Age

Massachusetts is older than the U.S. as a whole, with an estimated median age of 39.6 years in 2019, compared to a median age of 38.4 in the U.S. overall. As of 2019, 10 out of 14 Massachusetts counties—over two-thirds—have a median age 40 or over. Counties with the highest median age are Barnstable (54.3 years), Dukes (48.5 years), and Berkshire (47.6 years), while the counties with the youngest median ages are Suffolk (33.3 years), Hampshire (36.8 years), and Middlesex (38.6 years). See Appendix C to this report for additional detail.

Since 2010, the median age in Massachusetts has increased by 1.6 years on average across its 14 counties; however, some places are aging significantly faster than others. Barnstable County's median age has increased by 4.4 years since 2010 while the median Suffolk County has increased by only 1.8 years over the same period.

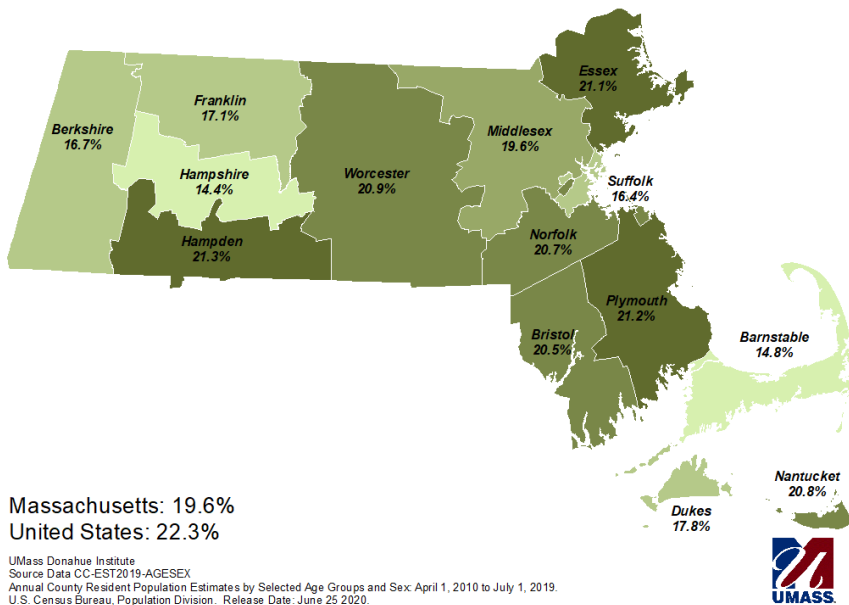
It is not surprising that Barnstable, Dukes, and Berkshire County, given their high median ages, also have the highest percentages of population aged 65 and older in the state at 31.4%, 25.1%, and 23.9% respectively. Counties with the lowest percentages of persons 65 and older include Suffolk (12.3%), Nantucket (14.8%) and Middlesex (15.7%). Overall, Massachusetts has a higher percentage of population aged 65 and older (17.0%) than the U.S. as a whole (16.5%).

Estimated Median Age in Massachusetts by County, 2019



At the other end of the age-spectrum, counties with the highest percentage of children under 18 years of age include Hampden (21.3%), Plymouth (21.2%), Essex (21.1%), Nantucket (20.8%), and Worcester (20.9%). Hampshire County is somewhat of an exception, with the second lowest median age in the state (36.8) but also the smallest percentage of children under 18 in the state (14.4%). In this case, a large percentage of college-aged students brings the median age down. Overall, Massachusetts has a smaller percentage of children under 18 (19.6%) than the U.S. as a whole (22.3%).

Estimated Percent of County Population Under 18 Years of Age, 2019



Trends in Aging

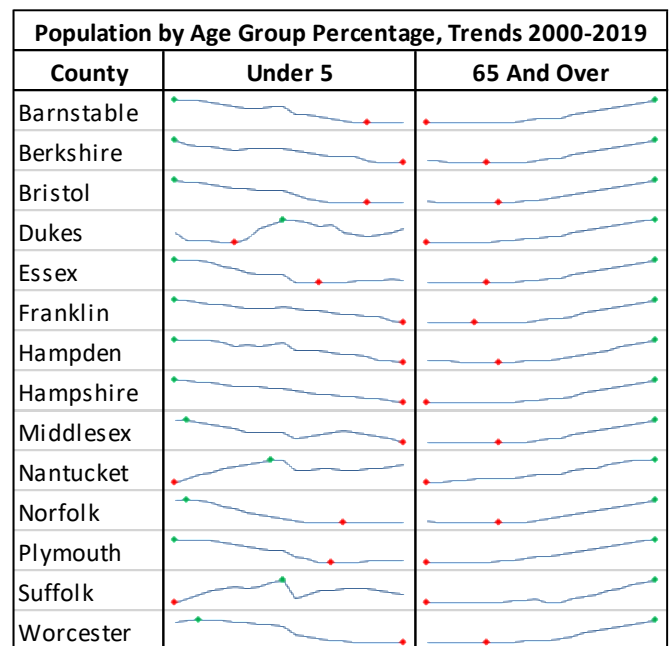
The aging population in Massachusetts, as with the U.S. as a whole, is reflected in the long-term population trends among age cohorts. Since 2000, the percentage of persons over 65 in Massachusetts counties has generally increased while the percentage of children under age five has decreased in most cases. The trend lines below show how the percentages of these age groups have changed since 2000, by county and for Massachusetts and the U.S. The highest points in the time series are represented by green dots and the lowest by red.

When comparing the percentage of the Hispanic population by county against the median age by county, we see that Massachusetts follows the national trend where a higher percentage of Hispanic population generally relates to a lower median age. Estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau for the nation show that the median age of the Hispanic population (29.8 years) is much lower than non-Hispanic populations (40.8 years). Likewise, in Massachusetts the median age of the Hispanic population is a full 13 years younger than that of the non-Hispanic population, at 28.9 years Hispanic compared to 41.5 non-Hispanic.

At the county level, we see that Barnstable and Dukes County are the two oldest in Massachusetts in terms of median age and are the two counties with the lowest percentage of Hispanic population. On the other hand, the “youngest” county, Suffolk, has the second highest percentage of Hispanic population in Massachusetts.

The new Census Bureau data (see Table PEPASR6H) also show that more than half (50.5%) of the nation’s children younger than five belonged to a minority population in 2019, with 26.0% identifying as Hispanic. In Massachusetts that same year, 42.2% of children younger than five belonged to a minority population and 21.4% were Hispanic.

For more details on selected Massachusetts characteristics data and trends, please refer to the appendices to this document. You may also view the complete datasets by visiting the U.S. Census Bureau’s Estimates page at: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/data/tables.html>



Attachments to this report include:

Appendix A1: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Race and Hispanic Origin for Massachusetts Counties, Massachusetts, and U.S. Totals, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019

Appendix A2: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Race and Hispanic Origin as a Percentage of the County Population in Massachusetts Counties, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019

Appendix B: Trends in Minority Population Growth in Massachusetts Counties: Estimated Percentage of Non-Hispanic White Alone Population Compared to Minority Population by County, 2010-2019

Appendix C: Comparison of Selected Age Groups in Massachusetts Counties: Estimated Population and Percent of Population, 2019

Appendix D1: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Selected Age Groups for Massachusetts Counties, Massachusetts, and the U.S., 2010-2019

Appendix D2: Trends in Selected Age Groups as a Percentage of Population for Massachusetts Counties, Massachusetts, and the U.S., 2010-2019

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