Our community, past and present

A community can best be described as an unfinished quilt: a growing, ever changing patchwork of people, diverse races and ethnicities, and ages. This brochure examines Multnomah County's community, what it looks like, how it's changed, and the challenges ahead. This information is couched in some of Multnomah County's long-term systemic benchmarks: reducing child poverty, reducing crime, and increasing school completion.

The County has seen a growth spurt over the last decade. This growth has been fueled by diverse racial and ethnic populations; most notably Hispanic and Latino immigration. At the same time significant changes are occurring in the age of our population—the baby boomers are aging into retirement and the immigrating Hispanic and Latinos are having children at higher than average rates. These changes pose new challenges for the county as we move to meet the needs of the community. As boomer age-out, greater need will arise in county aging and disability services. How will this impact our economy and the future employment in the county? How will the county deliver services for those who speak little or no English? Are our services located in places where those in need can access them?

These changes we are witnessing are described in the Oregonian as "*a new frontier in the Portland metro that may be unique in the nation*" (3/27/01). They do not occur in a vacuum, but instead act systemically in our communities. For example, a recent Portland Tribune article (10/26/01) reported on lead-based paint poisoning and its health effects upon children also geographically correlates with pockets of poverty, juvenile crime, and county-wide efforts to increase school retention. These pockets also mirror our racial and ethnic communities of interest. How do these health, social and public safety issues working in a system impact the health and economies of individuals, families and the county over the long-term?

When reviewing the brochure pay attention to the colored arrows pointing to specific neighborhoods, and ask yourself what else is happening here? This and other systemic problems directly impact the county's benchmark efforts to reduce child poverty, crime, increase school completion, and everyone's quality of life.

About this project

In November 2001, the Multnomah County Evaluation/ Research Unit (ERU) in direct corporation with the Multnomah County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program produced *The Changing Fabric of Multnomah County from 1990 to 2000: Stitching the Statistics Together with Maps;* a display on the sixth floor of the Multnomah Building. This display portrayed the ever changing nature of Multnomah County's citizens, by examining population changes over the last decade, our diverse racial and ethnicity composition, and our youth, adults, and seniors. This brochure was designed to highlight *some* of the findings outlined in the 20 x 6-foot display. It is also a tool for readers to use, in asking questions about Multnomah County—*Why are these trends occurring? Who will they impact? How best can we respond?* Only by tracking the diverse population and their location in the community along with social indicators over time, can we develop a comprehensive understanding of the citizenry and how best to respond to their diverse needs.

For additional copies of this brochure or other more detailed reports on Multnomah County, its demographics, social services, or trends, call 503-988-5015. Or visit us on-line at http://www.co.multnomah.or.us/dss/budget/eru/

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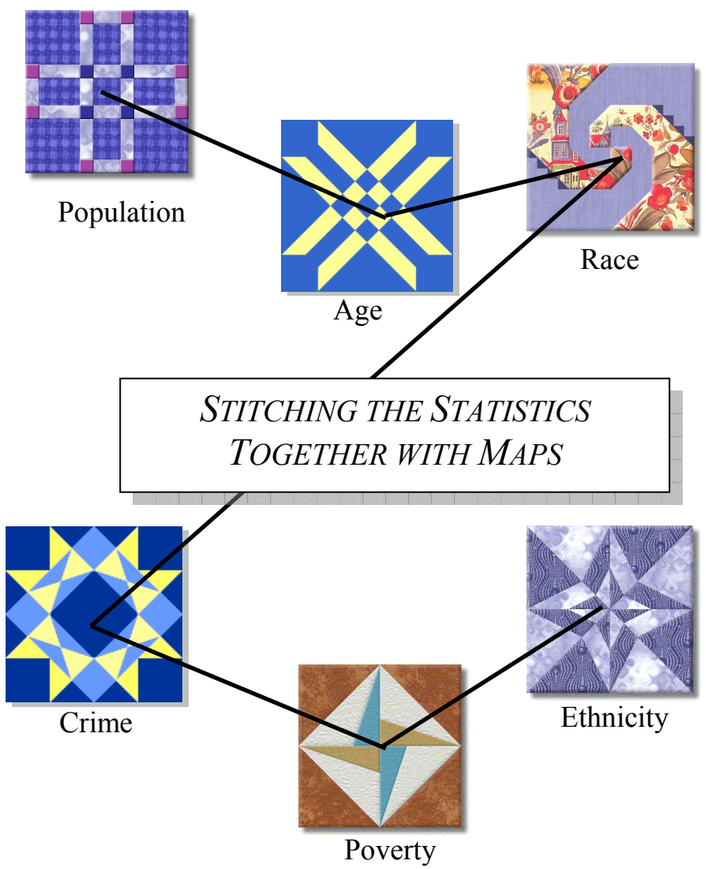
The Changing Fabric of Multnomah County from 1990 to 2000

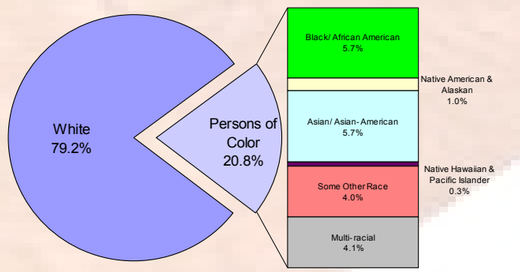


Presented by the Evaluation/ Research Unit and Multnomah County GIS

County Population

Multnomah County has experienced population growth of 13% in the last decade, with 660,486 persons living in the county in 2000. The county has also become more diverse, finding 8% increase in non-ethnic persons of color. In addition, the Hispanic and Latino population more than doubled to 7.5%, making it the single greatest non-white group in the county.

County Demographics (2000)



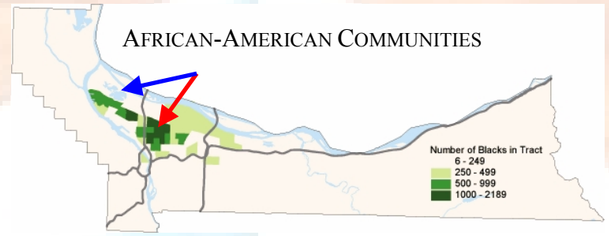
Note. Persons of Color does not include the ethnicity Hispanics & Latinos, which account for 7.5% of the total County population.

Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Office, 2000

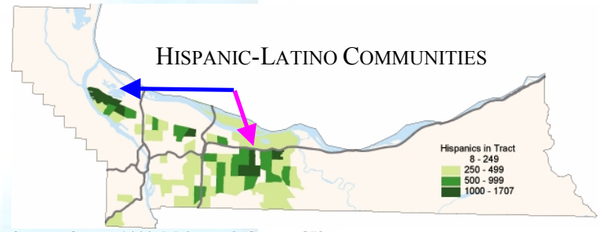
Race & Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic groups tend to congregate in distinct communities of interest. For example dense African-American communities are more prevalent in north and northeast Portland, while Hispanic-Latino communities are predominately located in north and east county.

African-American Communities



Hispanic-Latino Communities

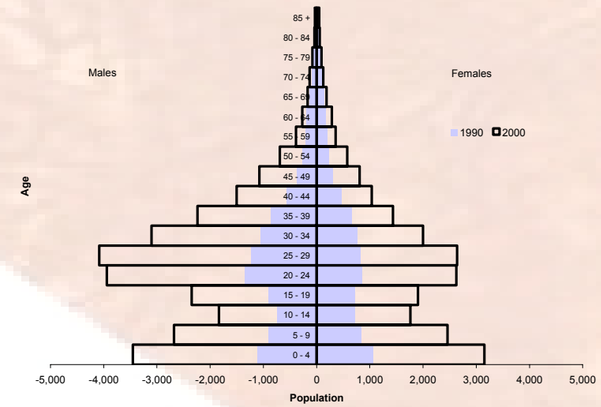


Source: Census 2000, Multnomah County GIS

Age

Dramatic changes in citizenry age have occurred in the last decade with the aging baby boomers. Since 1990, there are 7% less persons 65 and over, while there was a 9% increase in those 18 and under. Young Hispanics and Latinos are having children at considerably higher rates than the county as a whole.

Hispanic-Latino Age Distribution: 1990-2000

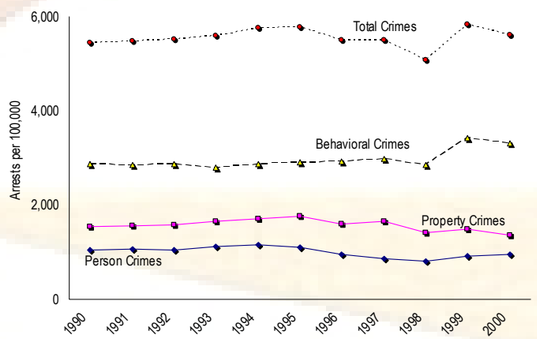


Source: PSU Population Research Center, 2002

County Crime Rates

Index crimes (8 serious crimes tracked by the FBI) have declined in the last 10 years, while total arrest rates have remained stable. Behavioral crimes, which account for more than half of all arrests, have recently increased. Behavioral crimes are primarily driven by drug related arrests, which accounted for 30% of behavioral crimes arrests in 2000.

Multnomah County Total Arrest Rate Trends

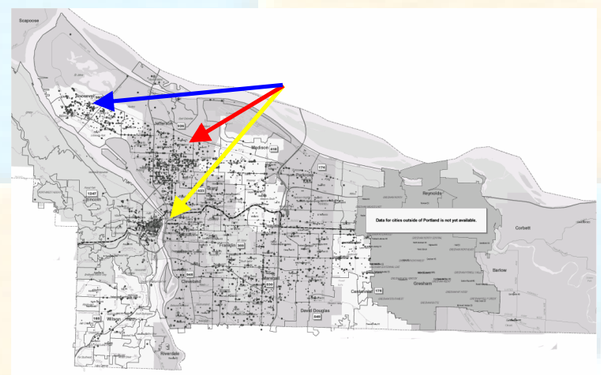


Source: LEDS 2000, Multnomah County Evaluation/ Research Unit

Youth Crimes

Youth crimes accounted for about 20% of all Multnomah County arrests over the last decade. While crimes occur everywhere, there are greater concentrations in specific areas in the county. For example, the downtown core typically has high concentrations of juvenile arrests.

Concentrations of Juvenile Arrests

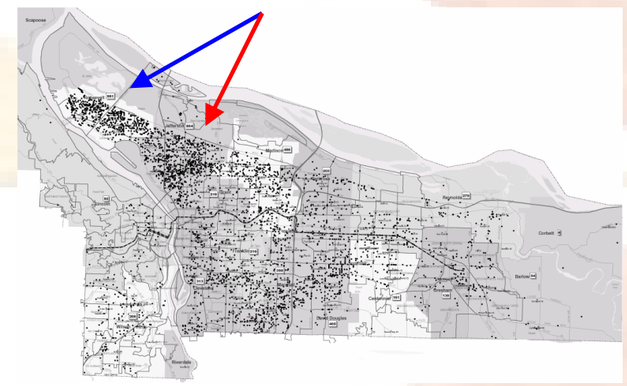


Source: Portland Police Bureau, Multnomah County GIS 1999 (excludes Gresham arrest data)

School Attendance

School Attendance Initiative (SAI) locates chronic absentee students, makes contact with the families and refers students and families in need to appropriate support services. Juvenile crime is associated with school attendance. Note the similar concentration of SAI and juvenile arrests.

School Attendance Initiative (SAI) Referrals

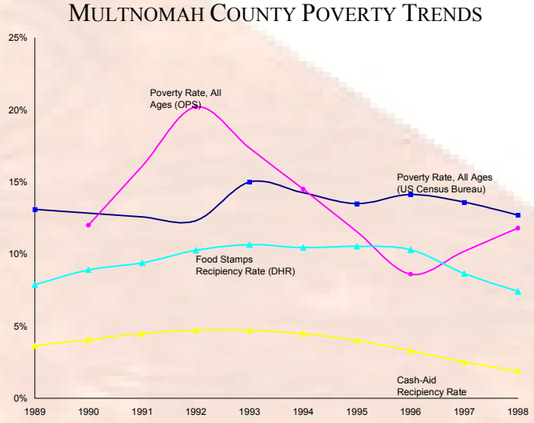


Source: Multnomah County GIS, 1999

County Poverty

Poverty can be measured in a number of different ways. Data from 1989-1998 for all of Multnomah County indicated only slight decreases in poverty rates. Changes in some measures correlate highly with changes in the unemployment rate and times of recession for the county.

Multnomah County Poverty Trends

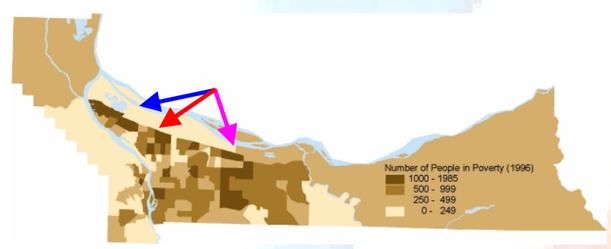


Source: ECONorthwest, Oregon DHR and Population Survey, & Census

Pockets of Poverty

Poverty occurs in various places throughout the county. Like other social problems, there are pockets of poverty where concentration is considerably higher. Tracts of high poverty can be found in north, northeast, and east county. Note these pockets often mirror diverse racial and ethnic communities.

Concentrations of Citizens in Poverty (ACS 1996)

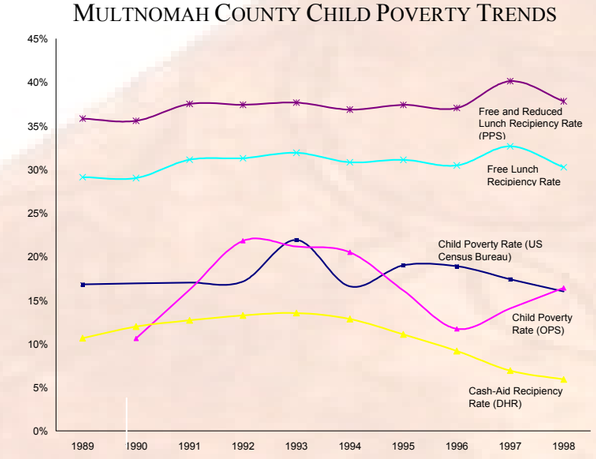


Source: American Community Survey 1996, Multnomah County GIS

Child Poverty

Child poverty can also be measured in a variety of ways. Every indication finds that it is considerably higher, on average, than that of adult poverty. In addition, results of efforts to reduce child poverty in the county are mixed. For example cash-aid fell to under 6% in 1998, while free and reduced lunch rates neared 38%.

Multnomah County Child Poverty Trends



Source: ECONorthwest, Oregon DHR and Population Survey, & Census Bureau