

Population Summary, 2016

Population

In early 2017, the United States Census Bureau (USCB) released its first population estimates for July 1, 2016. Kansas total population was estimated at 2,907,289, down 4,352 from the estimate of Kansas total population for 2015 (2,911,641) released in 2016. Despite appearances, the USCB did *not* estimate that the population of Kansas declined from 2015 to 2016. Instead, it revised its Kansas population estimate for 2015 downwards, to 2,906,721 residents. In light of these revisions, caution should be used when comparing county level populations reported for 2015 to those reported for 2016 (Table B4). [1]

Population Density and Peer Groups

The population density of Kansas was 35.6 inhabitants per square mile in 2016, a 12.3 percent increase from 31.7 persons per square mile in 1997. For comparison, the population density of the U.S. increased from 71.6 to 91.5 persons per square mile from 1997 to 2016, a 27.6 percent increase (Figure B4).

In 2016, 37 of the state's 105 counties had population densities of less than 6.0 persons per square mile. The most sparsely populated county was Wallace, with a density of 1.6 persons per square mile. The most densely populated county was Johnson, with 1,234.6 persons per square mile (Figure B6).

Kansas counties may be assigned to peer groups based on population density. (See the Technical Notes, Appendix 2 for peer group composition.) During the 2012-2016 period, the population of the urban peer group increased by 2.9 percent, while the frontier, rural, densely-settled rural, and semi-urban peer groups decreased by 3.4, 2.0, 1.7, and 1.6 percent, respectively (Table B4).

Natural Increase

In 2016, the rate of natural increase (the birth rate minus the death rate) was 4.1 persons per 1,000 population, a decrease of 4.7 percent from 4.3 per 1,000 population in 2015. Over the past 20 years (1997-2016), the rate of natural increase has fluctuated between a maximum of 6.3 persons per 1,000 population (2007) and a minimum of 4.1 persons per 1,000 population (2016) (Figure B2).

The population of Kansas increased about 211,000 from the 1990 Census to the 2000 Census, and by about 165,000 from the 2000 Census to the 2010 Census. Natural increase accounted for about 68 percent (144,000) of the increase in population in the 1990s, but it accounted for almost 96 percent (158,000) of the increase in population in the 2000s. Net in-migration accounted for about 32 percent (67,000) of the population increase in the 1990s, but it accounted for only about 4 percent (7,000) in the 2000s.

1. Oakley D. "Census Bureau Estimates of 2016 Kansas Population Down From Estimates of 2015 Kansas Population Released Last Year. Did the Population of Kansas Actually Decline?" Kansas Health Statistics Report No. 72 (May 2017), pp. 9-10.

Median Age

The median age of Kansans in 2016 was 36.5 years, a 4.3 percent increase from the median age of 35.0 in 1997. The median ages of Kansas males and females in 2016 were 35.3 and 37.8 respectively (Figure B3, Table B2).

Population Characteristics

The percent increase in the Kansas total population from 1997-2016 was 12.0 percent, including a 13.3 percent increase for Kansas males and an 10.9 percent increase for Kansas females. Shifts in the Kansas population distribution by age from 1997 to 2016 included a decrease in the 35-44 age group of 18.0 percent. An increase of 11.7 percent in residents 45-54 years of age, 79.7 percent in residents 55-64 years of age, and 36.9 percent in residents 65-74 years of age reflected the aging of the baby boomers.² Furthermore, there were 8.4, 4.2, 10.9, 8.1, and 11.0 percent increases in the 0-4, 5-14, 15-24, 25-34, and 75 and over age-groups respectively (Figure B5, Table B2).

According to the 2016 Census Bureau estimates, 76.3 percent of Kansans were White non-Hispanic and 5.8 percent were Black non-Hispanic. Hispanics made up 11.6 percent of Kansas' population (Tables B3 and B5).

2. The common definition of 1946-1964 for the baby boom years implies that in 2016, baby boomers were between 52 and 70 years of age.