

Massachusetts State Data Center Newsletter

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MISER 1996 and 1997 Population Estimates

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On November 1, 1999, the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) released population estimates for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These estimates were produced using the same methodology as the previously released estimates for 1991-1995, and thus a time trend analysis is possible using these numbers.

In 1997, MISER estimated the population of Massachusetts to be 6,227, 622. This represents an increase of 0.70% since 1996 and an increase of 3.51% since the last Census in 1990. The Massachusetts population in 1997 was 87.1% White, non-Hispanic; 4.5% Black, non-Hispanic; 3.0% Asian/Native American, non-Hispanic; and 5.5% Hispanic. The Asian/Native American, non-Hispanic population has shown the highest rate of growth since the 1990 Census (21.8%) followed closely by the

Hispanic population (19.9%). In 1997, 26.0% of the Massachusetts population was under 20 years of age, 13.3% were over age 65, and 1.8% were over age 85. When analyzed in five-year age groups, people age 35 to 39 comprised the largest segment of the 1997 population (8.4%). This age group corresponds to the younger portion of the Baby Boom generation.

With the exception of Berkshire and Hampden Counties (with slight decreases of 0.47% and 0.09% respectively), all counties in Massachusetts showed population increases since 1996. The counties with the highest rates of growth were Dukes (4.32%) and Nantucket (2.46%) Counties. These two counties are also those which have shown the highest rates of population growth since the 1990 Census (Dukes with a population increase

of 20.71% and Nantucket with an increase of 23.99%). The only counties with population decreases since 1990 are Hampden (with a 0.79% decrease) and Suffolk (2.44% decrease). The trend in Suffolk County, however, may be reversing with an increase in the population of Boston since 1996. This increase to a population of 559, 379 in 1997 represents an increase of 0.23% from the previous year.

The MISER population estimates are available by age, sex, and race for the 351 cities and towns of Massachusetts as well as for the 14 counties and the Commonwealth as a whole. Individuals interested in accessing these data can obtain them through the Web site at www.umass.edu/miser/population/miserest.html. Estimates for 1998 are expected to be released early in 2000.



Why Does the Census Miss Children?

The goal of Census 2000, just like previous censuses, is 100-percent participation by every man, woman and child living in the United States. However, experience tells us that some people will be missed — and a surprisingly large share of those missing will be children. The 1990 census missed about 4 million people. As many as half of these missing persons were under the age of 18 and many of these children were under the age of 10.

Even if the undercount is no worse than it was in the 1990 census, missing children can lead to real errors in planning services for children. In New York City, for

instance, an estimated 76,579 children under the age of 18 were missed in the 1990 census. Those missing children are about the same number that would be affected if school opened this September short 114 schools and 5,038 teachers.

In an effort to improve Census 2000, the 1990 numbers were reviewed in order to find out about who was included in the previous census and who was not. While the results are not conclusive, they do provide us with some insights into why children are not always included on the household census form.

Children could be missed because:

- The person filling out the form didn't understand that children should be listed.
- Their houses are overlooked.
- No one is sure where they belong.
- There wasn't enough room on the Census Forms.
- Adults don't want to participate in the Census

Computer Use Up Sharply: One in Five Americans Uses Internet

About one-half of the nation's population age 18 and over used computers in 1997, up significantly from 36% in 1993 and 18% in 1984, according to a report by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

Access to the Internet is one reason for the big increase in computer use in the last decade as 1 in 5, or 57 million people, 3-years old and older surfed the 'Net in 1997. "The Internet will play a major role in disseminating social, economic and housing information collected in Census 2000," said Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt. "Modern technology will make it possible to get Census 2000 statistics in the hands of data users faster and more efficiently than ever before."

About 92 million adults (47%) used a computer in one or more places: 64 million at work, 56 million at home and 11 million at school. Of the adults who used

computers at home, 71% did so for word processing.

Other common uses included games (54%) and e-mail and communication (45%). About 8 in 10 adults who used the Internet at home used it for e-mail or for finding government, business, health or education information. The next most common uses were looking for news, weather and sports (50%); followed by checking schedules, buying tickets or making reservations (25%).

Children who used the Internet at home used it to find government, business, health or education information (76%); to send and receive e-mail (58%); to participate in chat rooms (32%); and to look for news, weather and sports (28%). Census Bureau analyst Eric Newburger said, "Public school students in grades K-12 used computers while in school. Yet at home, public school children had much

lower rates of computer use than private school children." The report, [Computer Use in the United States: October 1997](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/1999/cb99-194.html), includes detailed tables with characteristics of households, children and adults, by the presence of computers in the home, whether or not they use computers and their access to the Internet.

For more information, go to:
[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/
www/1999/cb99-194.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/1999/cb99-194.html)

A Fond Farewell...

The State Data Center would like to wish Dave Crout the best of luck on his move to Portland, Oregon. Dave has taken a job with TRI-MET, which is the Portland metropolitan area's transit agency. He'll be using databases and GIS to analyze the on-time performance of buses. Dave will be greatly missed around here!

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