

Nebraska's Youth Data from the 2010 Census

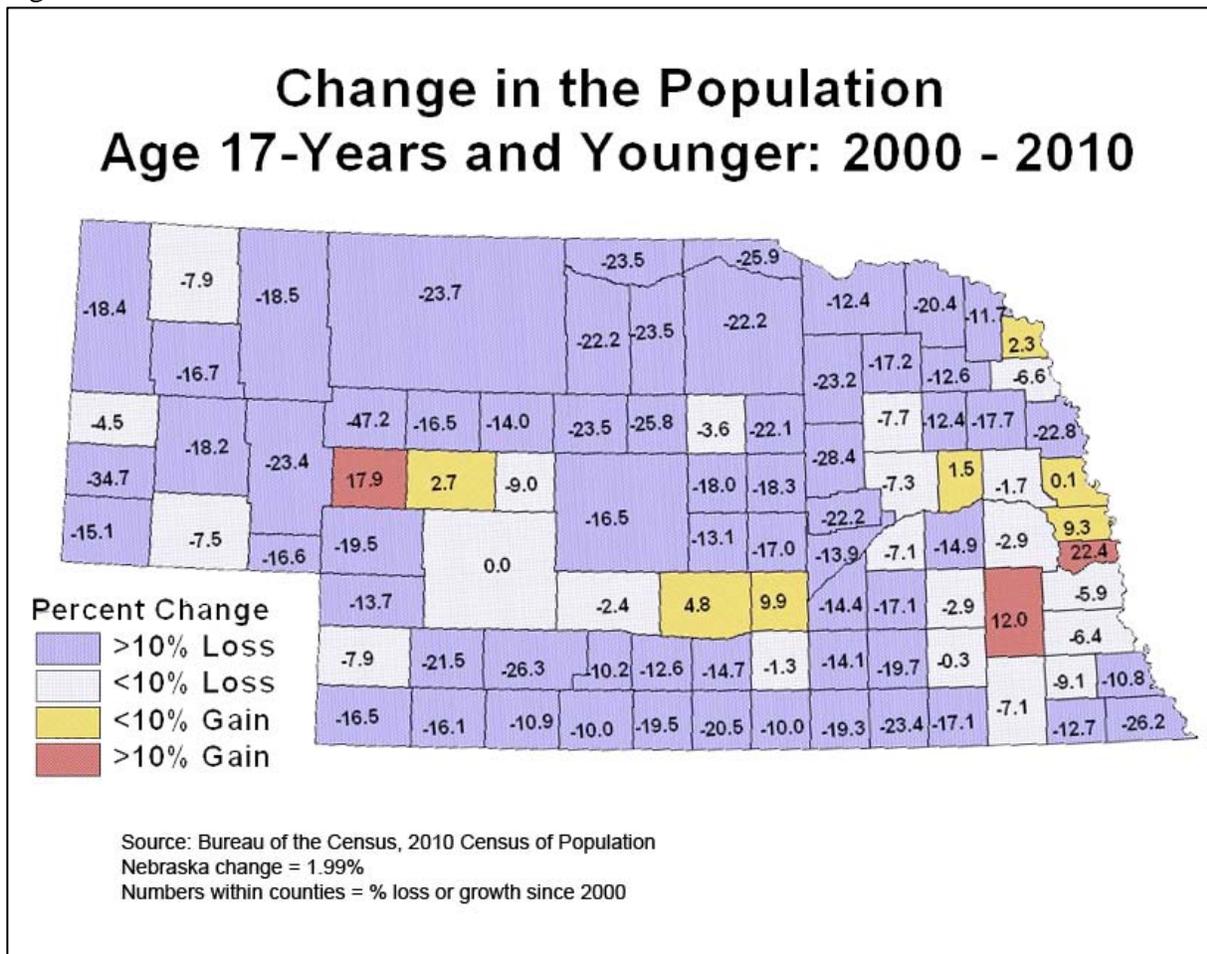
Nebraska saw modest population growth between 2000 and 2010. The 2010 Census counted 1,826,341 Nebraskans, an increase of 6.7% (115,078 residents) since the 2000 Census. This growth resulted from both an excess of births over deaths and net in-migration over the last decade.

Overall, 24 Nebraska counties recorded population increases, with most of those increases occurring in eight Metropolitan counties. While Metropolitan Nebraska's population grew by 13.7%, the state's 84 Non-Metropolitan counties saw a net population decline of 1.8%.

Nebraska's youth age 17 years and younger also grew during the last decade, but more slowly and in an even more concentrated fashion. According to the Census, Nebraska's youth population grew by only 2 percent (8,979) since the year 2000. Thus, only 8% of Nebraska's total population growth resulted from growth in the youth population.

Growth in the population age 17 years and younger was largely limited to the three Metropolitan counties of Douglas, Sarpy and Lancaster, which saw a combined 12.3% increase. Meanwhile Non-Metropolitan Nebraska saw a net decline among younger residents of 8.5%. Between 2000 and 2010, the population age 17 and younger increased in only ten of Nebraska's counties while 62 counties saw their youth population decline by more than 10%.

Figure 1



The rate of decline in youth populations was found to be faster in more rural portions of the state, as seen in Table 1. Nebraska’s 28 most rural “Frontier” counties saw their youth population decline by a total of 18%.

It is important to remember that in very rural counties the numbers involved are quite small, and therefore somewhat volatile. Even then declines in the population of rural youth are notably large, if not surprising. This is because long term population losses in rural Nebraska have resulted in a decline in the number of residents of childbearing age. Nebraska’s median age is currently estimated to be 37.3 years, up from 36.6 years at the time of the 2000 Census (2010 median age data has yet to be released).

The state’s median age is exceeded in 80 of Nebraska’s 93 counties, led by Garden County with a median age of 52.6 years according to 2009 estimates. Garden County experienced a decline in its youth population of 23.4%. Similarly Grant County, which experienced an amazing 47% decline in its youth population to go along with an 18% decline in total population, is estimated to have a median age of 44.4 years. For both counties more than half of the population is thus near or beyond typical childbearing age.

Table 1

Change in Youth Population by County Type*: 2000 - 2010							
	Nebraska	Metropolitan	Non-Metropolitan	Micropolitan Core	Small Trade	Small Town	Frontier
Total							
<18	2.0	10.5	-8.5	-0.8	-13.4	-16.6	-18.0
Source: Bureau of the Census							

*Metropolitan Counties (9): Have a population center of 50,000 or more, or are a neighboring county sharing 20% or more of its labor force with the core county.

Micropolitan Core Counties (10): Have a population center of 10,000 to 49,999.

Small Trade Center Counties (24): Have a population center of 2,500 to 9,999.

Small Town Counties (22): Have no population center as large as 2,500.

Frontier Counties (28): Have no population center of 2,500 and a population density of less than six per square mile.

Latino Effect

It is also important to consider the effect that minorities have on the population age 17 and younger. This is because minority populations are generally younger than the majority population in Nebraska, and can thus be expected to have higher fertility rates.

Statewide, virtually all growth within the youth population is accounted for by growth among minorities and especially within the Hispanic and Latino community (Table 2). Nebraska’s Latino youth numbers increased by 85.9% between the 2000 and 2010 Censuses while non-Latino youth saw a net decline of 5.6% during the same period. Growth in the non-Latino youth population was largely limited to the Metropolitan counties of Douglas, Lancaster and Sarpy while Latinos saw their youth population grow virtually everywhere in the state.

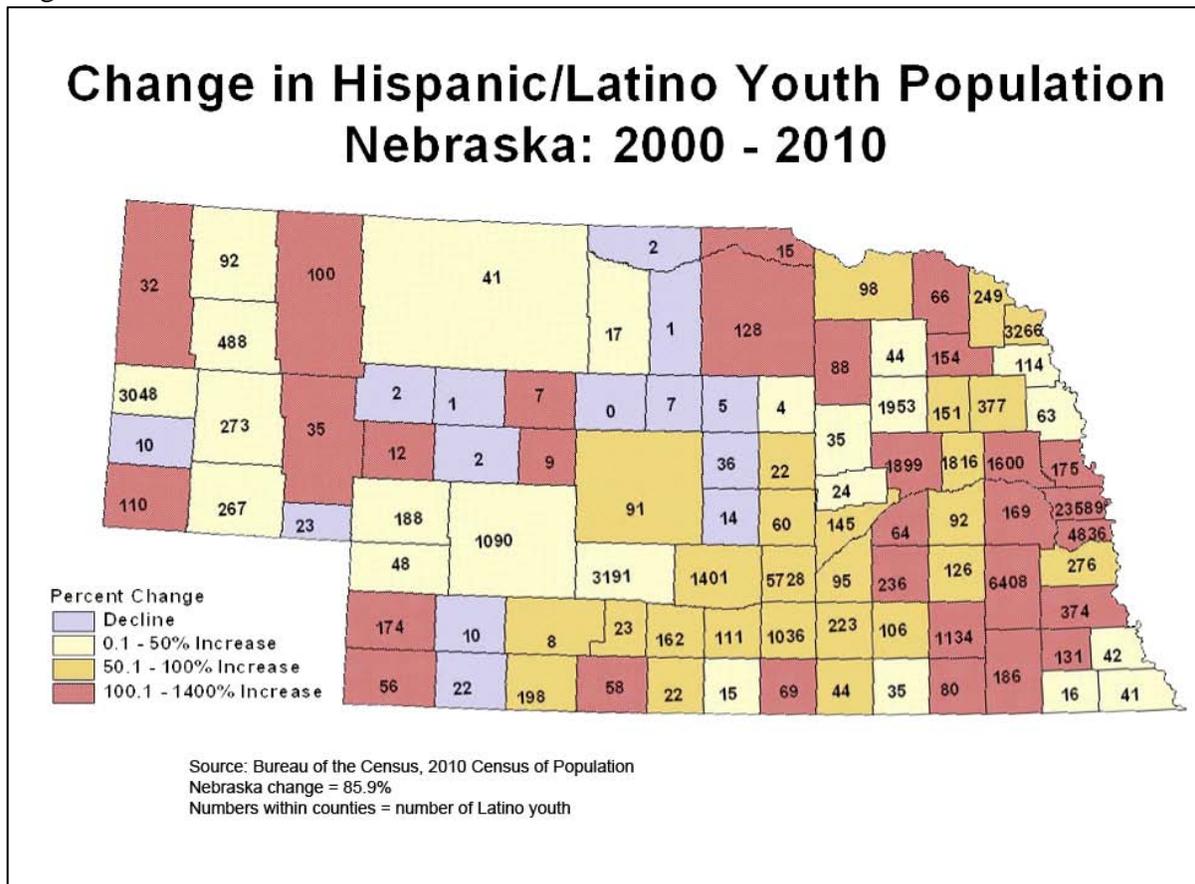
Numerically, the white non-Latino population age 17 and younger declined by 35,329 while the minority youth population (defined as all people of color plus white Latinos) grew by 44,308. An increase of 31,966 in the population of young Latinos accounted for 72% of total growth in the minority youth population.

Table 2

Population Under Age 18 for Nebraska County Types*								
County Type	Total Youth Population			Latino Youth Population			Latino Percent of Youth Population	
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010
Nebraska	450,242	459,221	2.0	37,218	69,184	85.9	8.3	15.1
Metropolitan	248,823	275,018	10.5	19,225	39,094	103.3	7.7	14.2
Non-Metropolitan	201,419	184,203	-8.5	17,993	30,090	67.2	8.9	16.3
Micropolitan Core	91,580	90,883	-0.8	13,003	21,132	62.5	14.2	23.3
Small Trade	60,212	52,141	-13.4	3,536	6,498	83.8	5.9	12.5
Small Town	35,283	29,423	-16.6	839	1,540	83.6	2.4	5.2
Frontier	14,344	11,756	-18.0	615	920	49.6	4.3	7.8

Source: Bureau of the Census

Figure 2



Latinos age 17 years and younger now comprise 41% of Nebraska’s total Latino population and about 15% of Nebraska’s total youth population. In Micropolitan core counties, which have a population center of 10,000 to 49,999, the Census found that Latinos make up 23% of the total youth population.

For small, rural counties the growth rate among Latino youth can belie the actual numbers involved. Boyd County, for instance, saw its population of Latino youth grow from one in the year 2000 to 15 in the year 2010, an increase of 1400%.

Although growing rapidly, Nebraska's Latino population remains a minority and for rural Nebraskans the growth of Latino populations has not been sufficient to offset declines among the majority population.

Youth Populations Still Significant

Despite declining numbers, Nebraska's youth population is 25.1% of the total population and is above 20% in most Nebraska counties.

The youth population is below 20% of the total population in only five Nebraska counties (Dawes, Garden, Grant Johnson and Wayne), and is above 30% in two (Dakota and Thurston). Thurston County's youth population is proportionally the largest in the state at 35.5% while Garden County's youth population is proportionally the smallest at 18.6%.

Interestingly, Dawes and Wayne Counties have notably low median ages (29.5 and 27.5 years respectively). In those counties, each with a State College campus, median age is lowered by the presence of college students. However, that population is not likely to produce significant numbers of children and thus does not add much to the population under age 18.

Figure 3

