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Comptroller’s Demographic Profile Shows Nassau County Getting Older, More Diverse

Report and accompanied issue briefs highlight challenges to deliver services to Nassau’s evolving population

Westbury, NY – Alongside local stakeholders, nonprofit executives, and minority and women business leaders, Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman today released a Countywide demographic profile and issue briefs that detail the changing populations specific to Nassau County, including breakdowns by town and city.

This is the latest report to come from the Office of the Nassau County Comptroller’s Policy and Research Unit, a team focused on analyzing data and developing policy recommendations that can be used by leaders throughout Nassau County.

“Our office is taking the data about our changing County and bringing it directly to the local leaders best in a position to make impactful changes. We are taking issues that have previously only been discussed at the highest levels and bringing it to a local audience,” Schnirman said. “Government needs to better serve its entire population if we are to keep growing our local economy. That means we must gear up to better communicate and provide services to an increasingly aging and diverse population while also putting policies in place that will attract young people.”

The initial key findings from the demographic profile include:

1. **The population in Nassau County is growing steadily:** The county’s 4.5% population growth since 2005 has been largely driven by minority communities and foreign immigration.
2. **The population is becoming more diverse:** According to Policy Link, Nassau County will become majority-minority the early 2030s, well ahead of the nation. However, the racial wealth gap remains persistent.
3. **It’s a challenge to attract—and retain—young people and families:** The cost of living, particularly housing costs, has resulted in a “brain drain” of educated young people moving out of Nassau County. Since 2000, the County has seen a 18% decrease in residents ages 25-44.
4. **The senior population is growing.** Nassau County’s large Baby Boomer generation is aging. Between 2000 and 2016, there was an 48% increase in residents age 55-64.
5. **The population is highly educated, with caveats:** There are racial disparities in educational attainment in Nassau County, and it’s vital to remove obstacles hindering achievement in schools and training programs.

“Our analysis shows that our diversity has increased as young people continue to leave Nassau County and our senior population grows,” Schnirman said. “These trends have real-world consequences. It will rapidly change the demand for government services, and we must find innovative solutions to build a more financially sustainable and equitable County.”

In conjunction with the demographic analysis, Schnirman released two policy briefs that touch upon challenges Nassau County faces as a result of demographic shifts. The briefs focused on the 2020 Decennial

Census and Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) growth. Many of these issues were brought to light by the work of the Comptrollers' Nonprofit and MWBE Steering Committees that met throughout 2018.

“Nassau County is at the forefront of a changing nation, and we can’t be left behind if we want to compete on the regional and national level,” Schnirman said. “By highlighting this data to help drive the discussion forward, we can make a positive impact in the lives of residents.”

According to the 2020 Census Issue Brief, census data is used to distribute more than \$675 billion in federal funds and determine whether businesses start or expand in the region. However, there are many obstacles Nassau County faces in achieving an accurate 2020 census count. These challenges include the legal battle over a census question asking citizenship status and a push by the Census Bureau to have residents submit responses electronically.

Furthermore, Nassau County is struggling to increase MWBE outreach. As the County becomes more diverse, it is essential to encourage minority business growth. However, the County is having difficulties in having MWBEs participate in the contracting process.

In the coming year, the Comptroller’s Office will continue to produce data-driven reports and policy recommendation to engage leaders how to build a financially sustainable and equitable Nassau County.

Demographic Profile: <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23924>

2020 Census Issue Brief: <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23925>

MWBE Issue Brief: <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23928>