

Business First of Buffalo - December 16, 1996

<http://buffalo.bizjournals.com/buffalo/stories/1996/12/16/story6.html>



Friday, December 13, 1996

Hispanic influence grows in population projections

Business First of Buffalo - by [Tracey Rosenthal Drury](#) Business First

When Andres Huerta attends professional engineering meetings or events, he seldom sees another Hispanic.

"I am always looking for people that are Hispanic that could be in this business, but I haven't seen many," said Huerta, president of Systems and Engineering P.C., and former president of the Erie Niagara chapter of the New York State Society of Professional Engineers.

Though Hispanics made up 14 percent of the population in New York state in 1995, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, many are immigrants.

The number of Hispanics in New York will grow faster than any other group during the next 30 years, according to a Business First research report.

The report analyzed projections on population growth from Census Bureau figures in 1995 and for the year 2025.

In 1995, 66.6 percent of the residents of New York were white, 14.5 percent were black, 0.3 percent were American Indians, 4.5 percent were Asian, and 14 percent were Hispanic. It's projected that by 2025 the state's Hispanic population is expected to grow to 21.7 percent, while black and Asian populations grow to 15.5 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively. Whites will fall to 53.4 percent of the population and American Indian percentages will stay the same.

The report also ranked the states according to their projected growth rates. New York, where population

is expected to grow by 9.35 percent to 19.8 million, ranks 46th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The state projected to have the highest growth rate is California. That state's population is expected to grow by more than 56 percent, soaring to more than 49 million people from its 1995 figure of 31.58 million.

On the other end of the chart, West Virginia will experience the slowest population growth, going from 1.82 million in 1995 to 1.84 million in 2025, a rate of less than 1 percent.

The projected change in New York's racial makeup follows an ongoing trend of more blacks and Hispanics in the nation, said Henry Louis Taylor Jr., director of the University at Buffalo Center for Urban Studies and an associate professor of planning.

"These projections tend to follow through with what people have been saying all along, that is what some people call the browning of America," he said. "I think they speak to some very profound and significant realities we have to confront."

Though states like California, Arizona, Nevada and Texas will all see even greater percentages of Hispanic residents, those states are becoming extensions of Mexican territories.

New York, on the other hand, has a different population of Hispanics, made up less of Mexicans than immigrants from Spain, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and people from other islands.

The problem with growth in the black and Hispanic communities is that they are not getting the proper education and training to prepare them for a full and active participation in the labor force, Taylor said.

"You cannot poorly educate people of color and concentrate them in decaying inner city neighborhoods and expect from that same environment a productive work force that's going to keep you competitive with the rest of the world," he said.

Adding to that is the continuing deterioration of inner cities and shift of businesses to the suburbs, he said.

"White America is slow to understand that the suburbs and cities are not separate and independent places that can go their own way, but they are linked and connected and the fate of one is going to impact dramatically on the fate of the other," Taylor said.

Several factors play into the racial composition change predicted in the next 30 years, said Paul Campbell, a demographer in the population division of the Census Bureau, based in Suitland, Md.

Among Hispanics there is a higher immigration rate as well as a higher fertility rate.

Birth rates for blacks has seen a slight drop at the national level, which helps explain why the percentage of blacks won't increase by as much, Campbell said.

Huerta said although he would like to see more Hispanics in professions, education has to begin earlier so that fertility rates can be reduced or controlled.

State officials need to start planning now with education.

"The same explosion in population is happening in Mexico," he said. "It's not good. The quality of life just doesn't keep pace with the growth in population. It's scary."

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.