

Population Trends

NORTH DAKOTA

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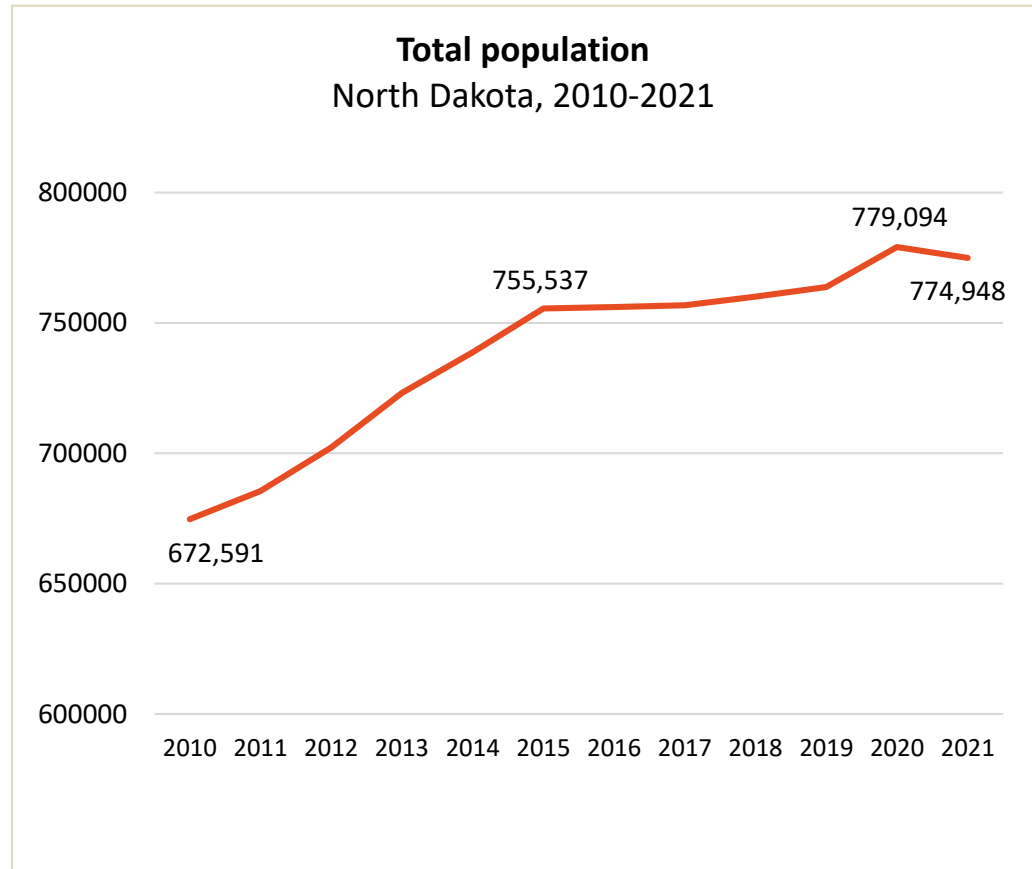
Population Trends Summary

- North Dakota's population has changed dramatically during the past decade (an increase of 106,503 people or 16% from 2010 to 2020). However, the most recent population estimates in 2021 show a substantial outmigration from western counties impacted by another downturn in the oil and gas industry, and a corresponding loss in the total statewide population of 1% to 774,948 people.
- For five years, North Dakota's population grew younger as the median age continually decreased from 37.0 in 2010 to 34.8 in 2015. While the median age slightly increased to 35.7 in 2021, North Dakota was still the only state with a younger median age when compared to 2010.
- While both the male and female population remained relatively stable after 2015, North Dakota is one of few states where males outnumber females overall.
- Racial and ethnic diversity continued to grow in North Dakota. The increase in non-White population from 2010 to 2021 was by far the greatest percentage change of any state.

Total population

After decades of moderate growth, [North Dakota's population](#) increased to record numbers during the past decade, growing by 16 percent from 672,591 in 2010 to 779,094 in 2020. Much of the growth took place in the first part of the 2010s, increasing an average of 2 percent annually from 2010 to 2015. In response to a downturn in the oil and gas industry and workers leaving the state, the annual growth rate slowed to an average of 0.6 percent annually from 2015 to 2020.

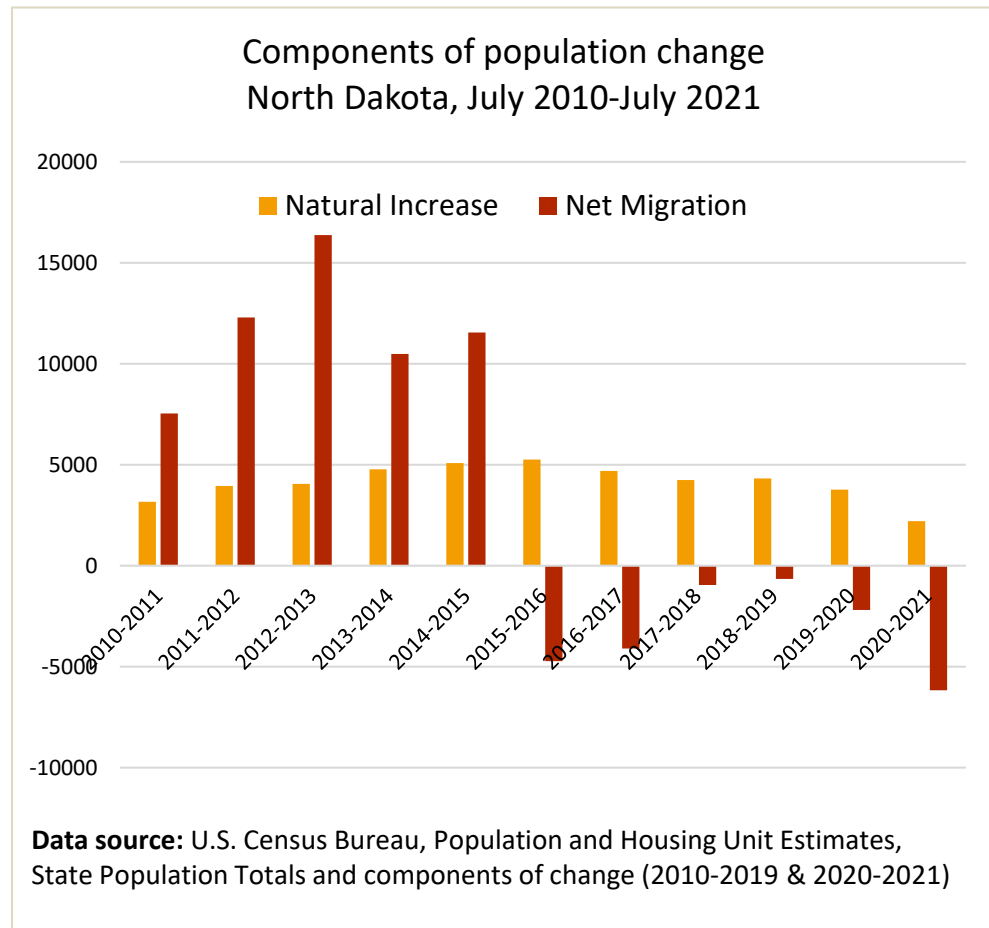
According to the U.S. Census Population Estimates, North Dakota's 2021 population slightly decreased to 774,948.



Components of change

The U.S. Census Bureau's population estimates as of July 1st, 2021, show a decline of 4,014 people in North Dakota's population as compared to the July 1st, 2020 population estimate.

The decrease in population can be attributed to a decrease in the natural change (births minus deaths) and to a substantial outmigration from western counties impacted by another downturn in the oil and gas industry.



Note:

Net migration = number of people who enter the state (in-migration) minus the number of people who leave the state (out-migration)

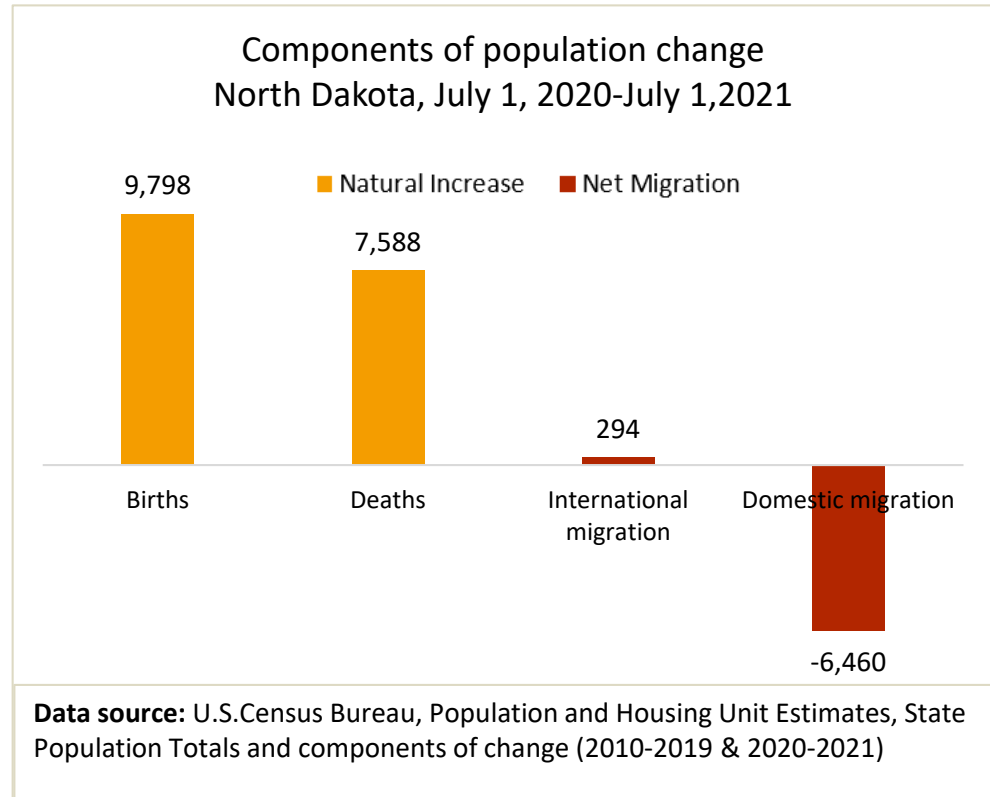
Natural change = Number of births minus number of deaths

Total population change = Net migration + Natural change

Components of change

A closer look at the components of change reveal some insight into the population loss in 2021. The larger number of births compared to the number of deaths kept the natural change positive in 2021.

The negative net migration is due to a large number of domestic out-migration and a very small international in-migration. These changes can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted all components of population change – births, deaths, and migration in addition to changing economic circumstances and immigration policies.



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Natural change = Number of births minus number of deaths

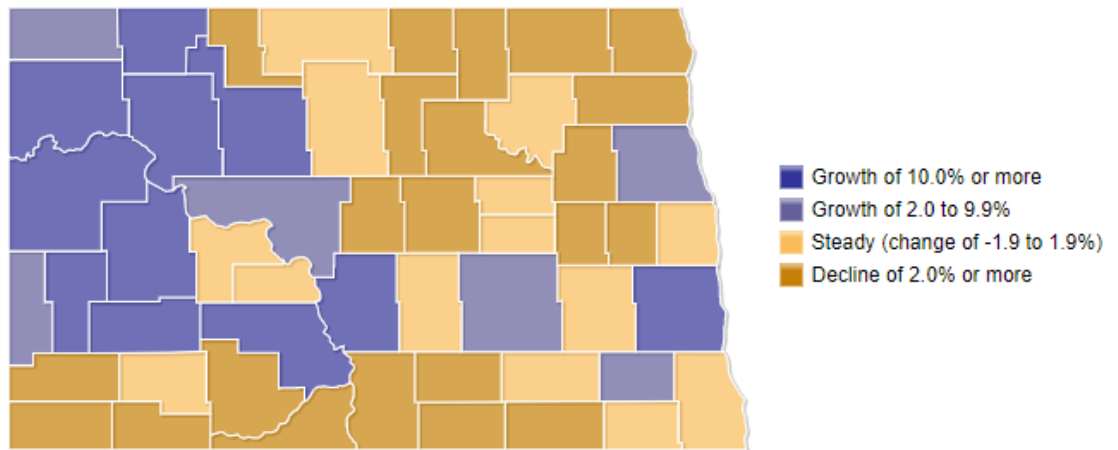
Total population change = Net migration + Natural change

Population change by county

Western North Dakota counties experienced extraordinary growth when [compared to the 2010 Decennial Census](#). McKenzie County more than doubled its population (131% increase) and Williams County almost doubled its population (83% increase).

Despite overall growth during the past decade in North Dakota, most counties in the state experienced population decline from 2010 to 2020 (30 counties out of all 53). While this loss represents a continuation of long-term population trends, much of it is moderate relative to historical declines.

Population change
North Dakota counties, 2010-2020



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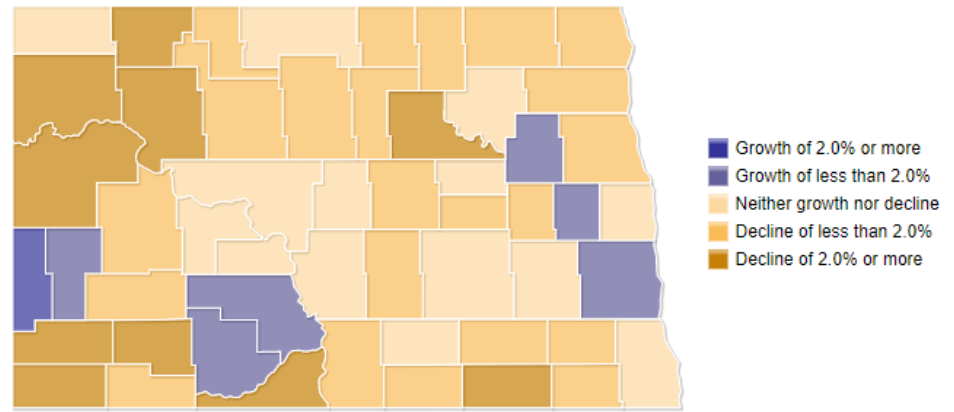
Population change by county

Most of North Dakota's counties decreased their population from 2020 to 2021.

Compared to previous years, the change in population from 2020 to 2021 was much smaller, increases up to 2 percent and decreases up to 6 percent.

McKenzie and Williams counties, two of the core oil and gas producing counties that were gaining population in previous years, had the largest percentage of population loss (6% each) due to significant outmigration impacted by a new downturn in the oil and gas industry.

Population change
North Dakota counties, 2020-2021

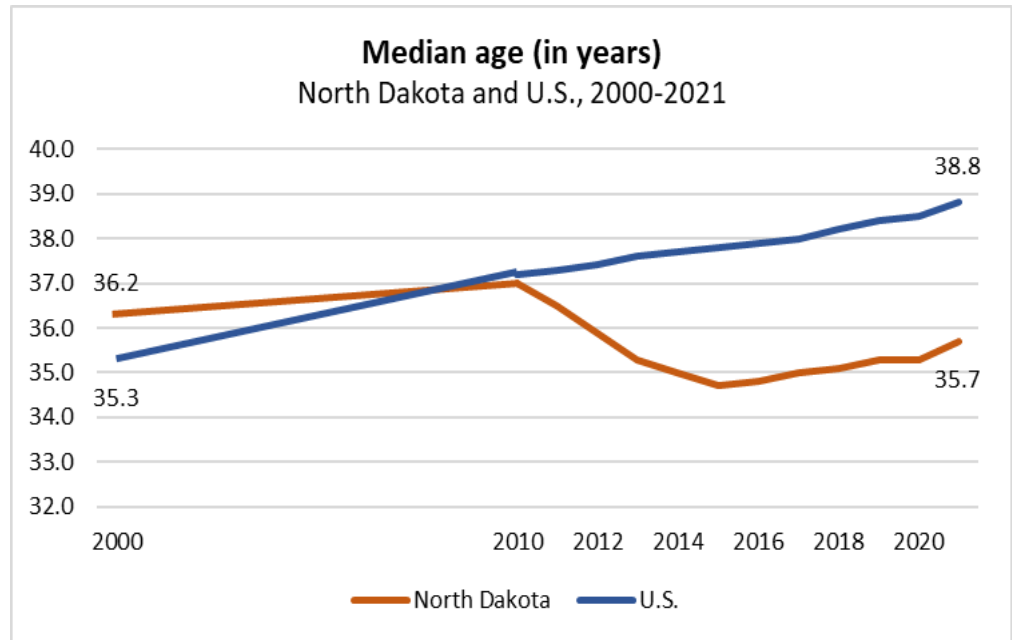


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Median age

The population in most states has increasingly become older. The increase in the median age (the age where half of the population is younger and the other half older) is largely a result of the aging baby boom generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) and increased life expectancy. The [median age in the U.S.](#) steadily increased from 35.3 in 2000, to 37.2 in 2010, to 38.8 in 2021.

However, North Dakota was one of the few states that has reversed this trend. For five years, [North Dakota's](#) population kept growing younger as the median age continually decreased from 37.0 in 2010 to 34.8 in 2015. While the median age started to increase in 2016, North Dakota was still the only state in 2021 with a younger median age compared to 2010 (37.0 years in 2010 to 35.7 years in 2021).

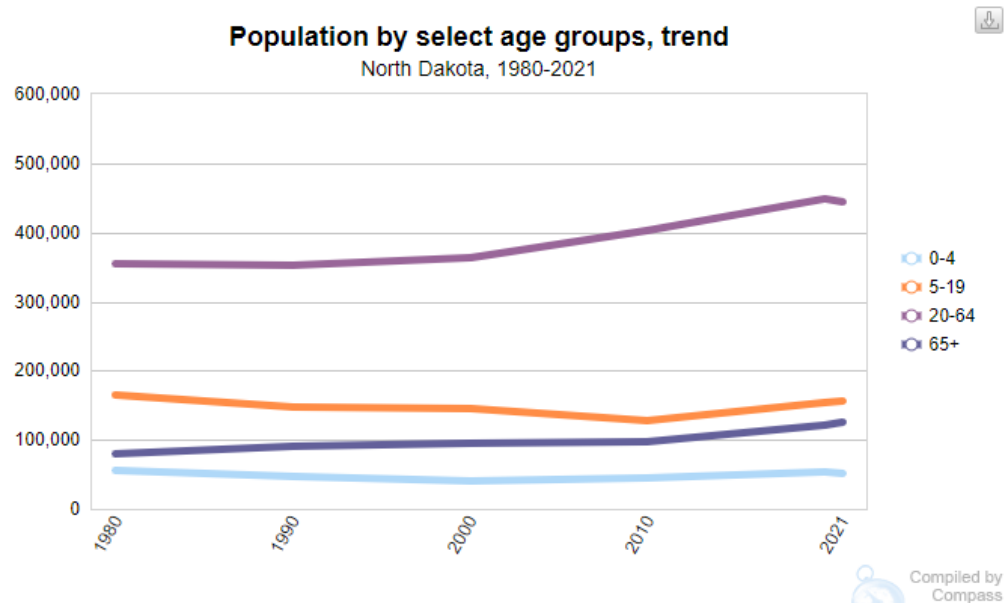


Population by age

The [age structure](#) in the state has been impacted by a strong, diversified economy throughout North Dakota. Driven by an increase in births, the pre-school age population within the state grew, as did the 5 to 19 age cohort.

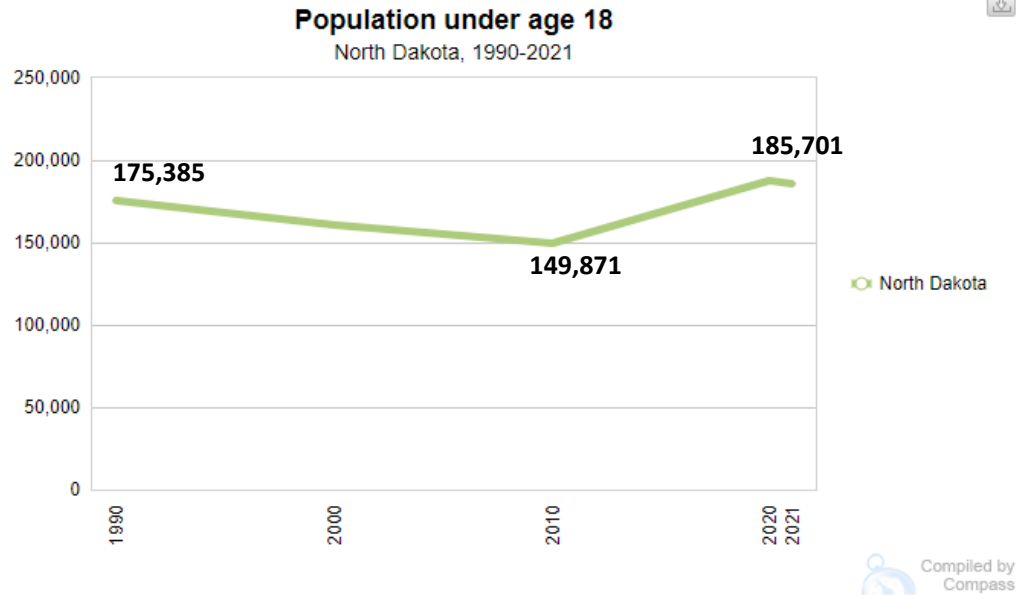
Baby boomers represent a large cohort of people born from 1946 through 1964. The oldest of this cohort began turning 65 in 2011. As a result, the proportion of the state's population ages 65 and older, which saw little change from 2000 through 2010, grew 28% from 2010 through 2021.

As a result of baby boomers aging, the age group younger than 65 started to see a decline from 2020 to 2021.



Child & youth population

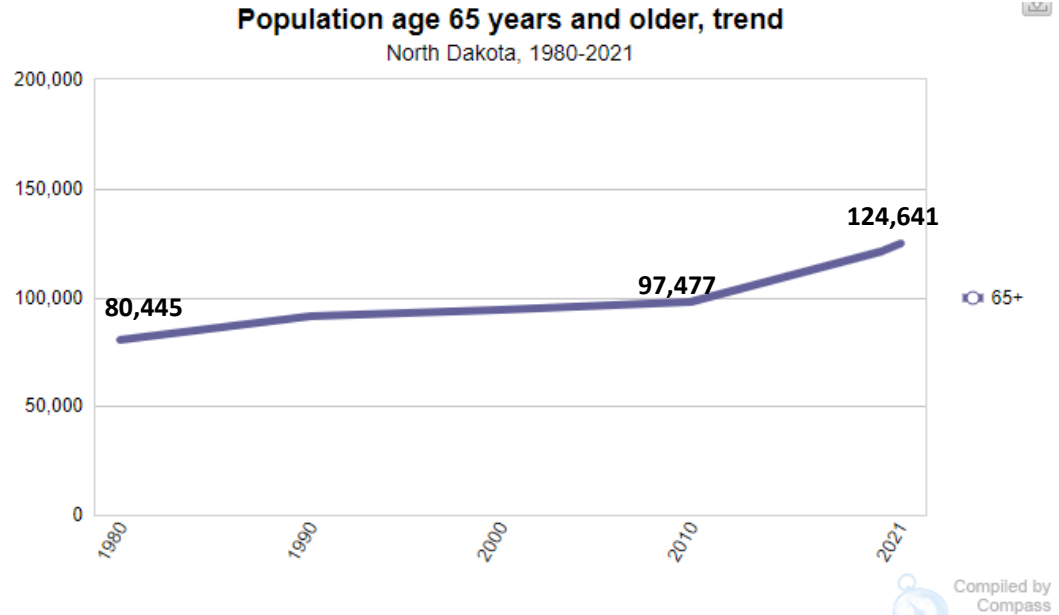
After decades of decline, [the number of children and youth \(under 18 years old\)](#) has been growing from 2010 to 2020. While the growth rate slowed in 2016 and there is a slight decline in 2021, the number of children and youth increased by 35,830 from 2010 to 2021, reaching a population of 185,701 in 2021. In 2021, children and youth (under age 18) comprised 24.0 percent of the total population in North Dakota, a slight increase from 22.3 percent in 2010.



Older adult population

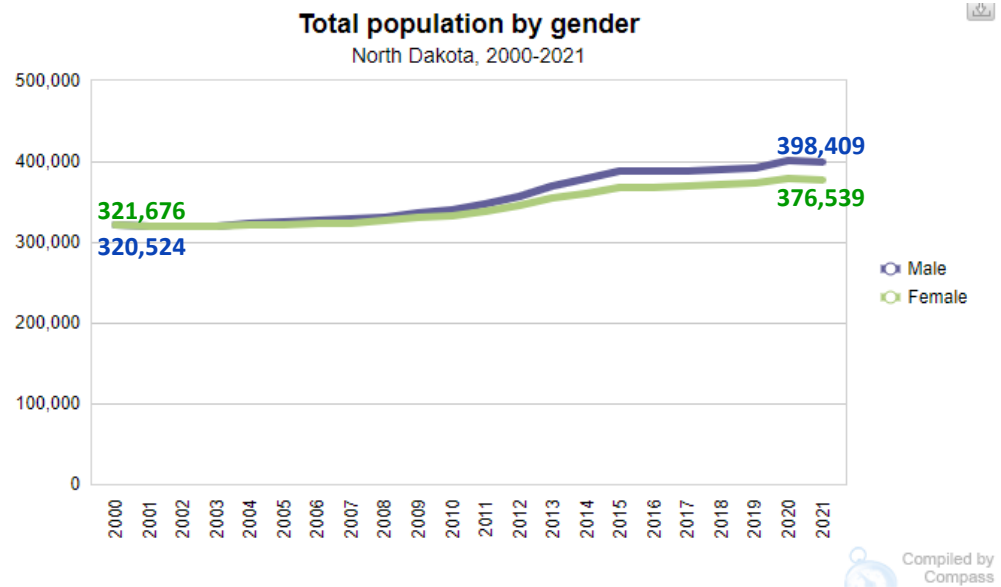
There were [124,641 older adults](#) (65 years and older) in North Dakota in 2021, representing 16.1 percent of the total population.

With the aging of the baby boom generation (the large cohort of people born between 1946 and 1964), the share of older adults in North Dakota's population is expected to continue to increase.



Population by gender

North Dakota is currently one of a few states where males outnumber females. Back in 2000 however, females outnumbered males in the state. From 2003 through 2015, the male population grew, on average, a half percent per year faster than females, resulting in more males than females. After 2015, both the male and female populations remained relatively steady.

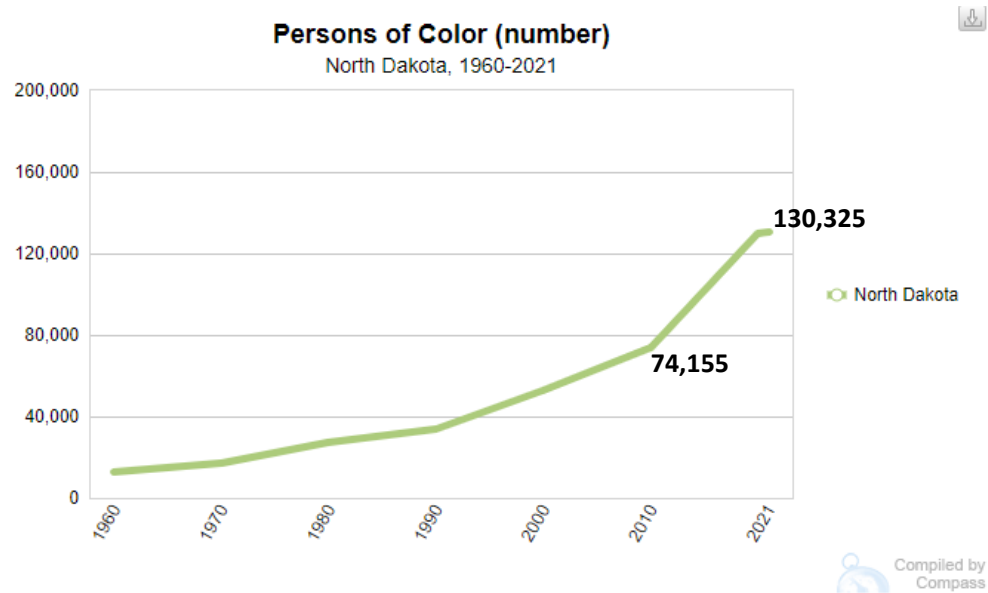


Population by race

Combined, American Indian, Black, Asian, people reporting multiple races, and people who are of Hispanic ethnicity (i.e., population of color) in North Dakota comprised 16.8 percent of the total population in 2021 as compared to 11.0 percent in 2010.

Compared to 2010, North Dakota's population of color saw a 76.0 percent increase, from 74,155 people in 2010 to 130,325 people in 2021. The percentage increase in the population of color from 2010 to 2021 was by far the largest percentage change of any state. For comparison, the U.S. population of color increased by 21.2 percent for the same time period, 2010 to 2021.

However, despite the increase in the population of color, North Dakota was less racially and ethnically diverse than most states (42nd out of 50 states) in 2021.



Population by race

Among the racial and ethnic groups in North Dakota, the Black population increased from 8,248 in 2010 to 27,157 in 2021 (229% increase).

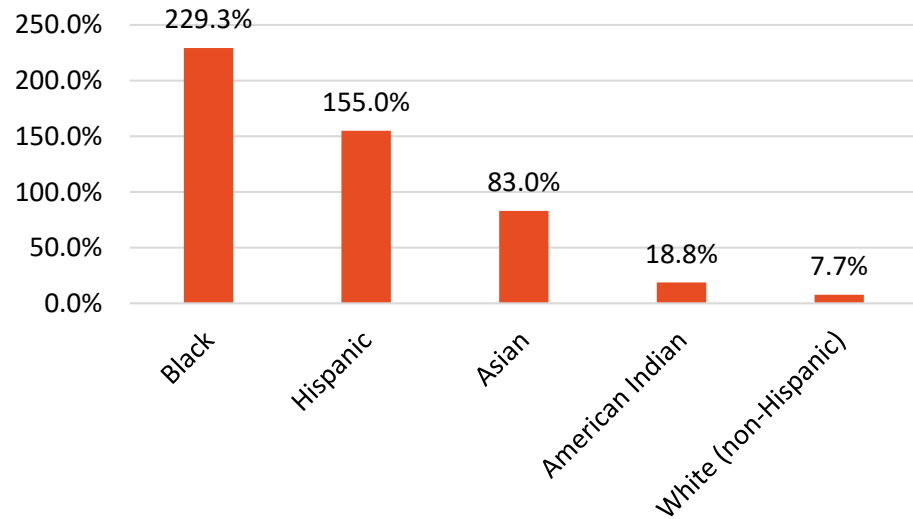
The Hispanic population more than doubled, from 13,467 in 2010 to 34,335 in 2021 (155% increase).

The Asian population also nearly doubled from 2010 to 2021 (83% increase).

The American Indian population continues to make up the largest minority population in North Dakota (43,905 residents in 2021) and saw a 19 percent increase from 2010 to 2021.

For comparison, the white, non-Hispanic population grew 7.7 percent from 2010 to 2021.

Change in population by race and ethnicity
North Dakota, 2010-2021



	2010-2020	2010-2021	2020-2021
Black	228.3%	229.3%	0.3%
Hispanic	150.5%	155.0%	1.8%
Asian	89.8%	83.0%	-3.6%
American Indian	18.8%	18.8%	0.0%
White (non-Hispanic)	8.5%	7.7%	-0.7%