

An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury

The nation will be more racially and ethnically diverse, as well as much older, by midcentury, according to projections released Aug. 14 by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Minorities, now roughly one-third of the U.S. population, are expected to become the majority in 2042, with the nation projected to be 54 percent minority in 2050. By 2023, minorities will comprise more than half of all children.

In 2030, when all of the baby boomers will be 65 and older, nearly one in five U.S. residents is expected to be 65 and older. This age group is projected to increase to 88.5 million in 2050, more than doubling the number in 2008 (38.7 million).

Similarly, the 85 and older population is expected to more than triple, from 5.4 million to 19 million between 2008 and 2050.

By 2050, the minority population -- everyone except for non-Hispanic, single-race whites -- is projected to be 235.7 million out of a total U.S. population of 439 million. The nation is projected to reach the 400 million population milestone in 2039.

The non-Hispanic, single-race white population is projected to be only slightly larger in 2050 (203.3 million) than in 2008 (199.8 million). In fact, this group is projected to lose population in the 2030s and 2040s and comprise 46 percent of the total population in 2050, down from 66 percent in 2008.

Meanwhile, the Hispanic population is projected to nearly triple, from 46.7 million to 132.8 million during the 2008-2050 period. Its share of the nation's total population is projected to double, from 15 percent to 30

percent. Thus, nearly one in three U.S. residents would be Hispanic.

The black population is projected to increase from 41.1 million, or 14 percent of the population in 2008, to 65.7 million, or 15 percent in 2050.

The Asian population is projected to climb from 15.5 million to 40.6 million. Its share of the nation's population is expected to rise from 5.1 percent to 9.2 percent.

Among the remaining race groups, American Indians and Alaska Natives are projected to rise from 4.9 million to 8.6 million (or from 1.6 to 2 percent of the total population). The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population is expected to more than double, from 1.1 million to 2.6 million. The number of people who identify themselves as being of two or more races is projected to more than triple, from 5.2 million to 16.2 million.

Other highlights:

-- In 2050, the nation's population of children is expected to be 62 percent minority, up from 44 percent today. Thirty-nine percent are projected to be Hispanic (up from 22 percent in 2008), and 38 percent are projected to be single-race, non-Hispanic white (down from 56 percent in 2008).

-- The percentage of the population in the working ages" of 18 to 64 is projected to decline from 63 percent in 2008 to 57 percent in 2050.

-- The working-age population is projected to become more than 50 percent minority in 2039 and be 55 percent minority in 2050 (up from 34 percent in 2008). Also in 2050, it is projected to be more than 30 percent Hispanic (up from 15 percent in 2008), 15 percent black (up from 13 percent in 2008) and 9.6 percent Asian (up from 5.3 percent in 2008).