

## Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Child Population

### Headline

The percentage of children in the United States who are Hispanic more than doubled between 1980 and 2004, from 9 percent to 19 percent, and is projected to increase to nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of the child population by 2020. ([See Figure 1](#))

### Importance

The United States has a long history of ethnic and racial diversity in its population. That diversity has accelerated in recent decades, a trend which is expected to continue into the future.

Race and ethnicity are important for many reasons including their relation to culture, identity, and well-being. Children of different races and ethnicities often show large differences in areas of well-being including health, mortality, school performance and attainment, and access to family and community resources.<sup>1</sup> These and similar disparities are also evident in adulthood.<sup>2</sup>

According to a recent report from the National Research Council, race is determined both by physical traits (skin color, hair, and so on) and by the “individual, group, and social attributes” associated with those characteristics. It is distinguished from “ethnicity,” which does not include physical characteristics as part of its definition.<sup>3</sup>

The federal government recently changed the way it defines and measures race. A key feature of the new definition allows respondents to identify themselves as more than one race. This new classification was used in the 2000 Decennial Census, and is being implemented in all Federal surveys and administrative data collection efforts.<sup>4</sup>

### Trends

From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of non-Hispanic white children fell from 74 percent to 62 percent. ([See Table 1](#)) Between 2000 and 2004, the percentage of children who were non-Hispanic white only (following the new classification system used in the 2000 decennial census, in which respondents were categorized based on single race estimates) declined slightly from 61 percent to 59 percent, and is projected to decline to 53 percent by 2020. ([See Figure 2](#))

The percentage of the child population that is Hispanic increased from 9 percent to 19 percent between 1980 and 2004, and is expected to increase further to 24 percent by 2020. ([See Figure 1](#)) Non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander children increased from 2 to 4 percent of the child population between 1980 and 2001. ([See Table 1](#)) Asian only children made up 4 percent of the child population in 2004, and are expected to increase to 5 percent of the population by 2020. ([See Figure 2](#))

The percentage of the child population that is non-Hispanic black has stayed relatively constant at about 15 percent since 1980, where it is expected to remain in 2020. Note, however, that race categorization has changed slightly, making estimates after 2000 not directly comparable to earlier estimates. ([See Figure 2](#))

According to data from the 2000 Census, children of one race constituted roughly 96 percent of the child population. ([See Table 2](#)) Among children who identified with more than one race, the majority were white combined with one other race (3.1 percent), with .8 percent identifying as white and black, .6 percent identifying as white and Asian, and .5 percent as white and American Indian or Alaska Native. ([See Table 2](#))

### **State and Local Estimates**

Estimates from the 2000 Census are available for states, counties, congressional districts, metropolitan areas, and cities at <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/census/>

State population projections of the child population for 1995-2025 (based on the 1990 census) are available by race and Hispanic origin at <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/state/stpjage.txt>

### **International Estimates**

None

### **Data Source**

Data for 1980-1999 from *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002*, Tables POP1 and POP3. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Tables POP 1 <http://childstats.gov/ac2002/tbl.asp?id=1&iid=8> and POP 3 <http://childstats.gov/ac2002/tbl.asp?id=1&iid=10>

Data for 2000 and 2001 non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, non-Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic American Indian from original analysis by Child Trends of *Bridged Race 2000 and 2001 Population Estimates for Calculating Vital Rates*, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2003. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/popbridge/popbridge.htm>

All other data for 2000-2002 and data projections from *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2004*, Tables POP1 and POP3. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Tables POP 1 <http://www.childstats.gov/ac2004/tables/pop1.asp> and POP 3 <http://www.childstats.gov/ac2004/tables/pop3.asp>.

Data for 2003 and 2004: Child Trends calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program. "National estimates by demographic characteristics - single year of age, sex, race, and Hispanic Origin," Monthly Postcensal Resident Population, July 2003, July 2004. Available at <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html>.

Data for Table 2 from unpublished estimates from the 2000 Census, produced by the Population Reference Bureau.

### **Raw Data Source**

All estimates in Table 1 are from the Census Bureau's Population Projections and Estimates Branch, based on models that draw on many data sources.

Estimates for race and Hispanic subgroups that use data from the 2000 Decennial Census can be calculated (for 1990-2001) using the bridged race estimates available from the National Center for Health Statistics, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/popbridge/popbridge.htm>

Estimates based on the 1990 Census are available from the Census at <http://eire.census.gov/popest/estimates.php>

All Estimates in Table 2 are from the 2000 Decennial Census. <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>

### **Date of Next Update**

Spring 2006

---

<sup>1</sup> Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. 2002. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*. Available online at <http://www.childstats.gov>

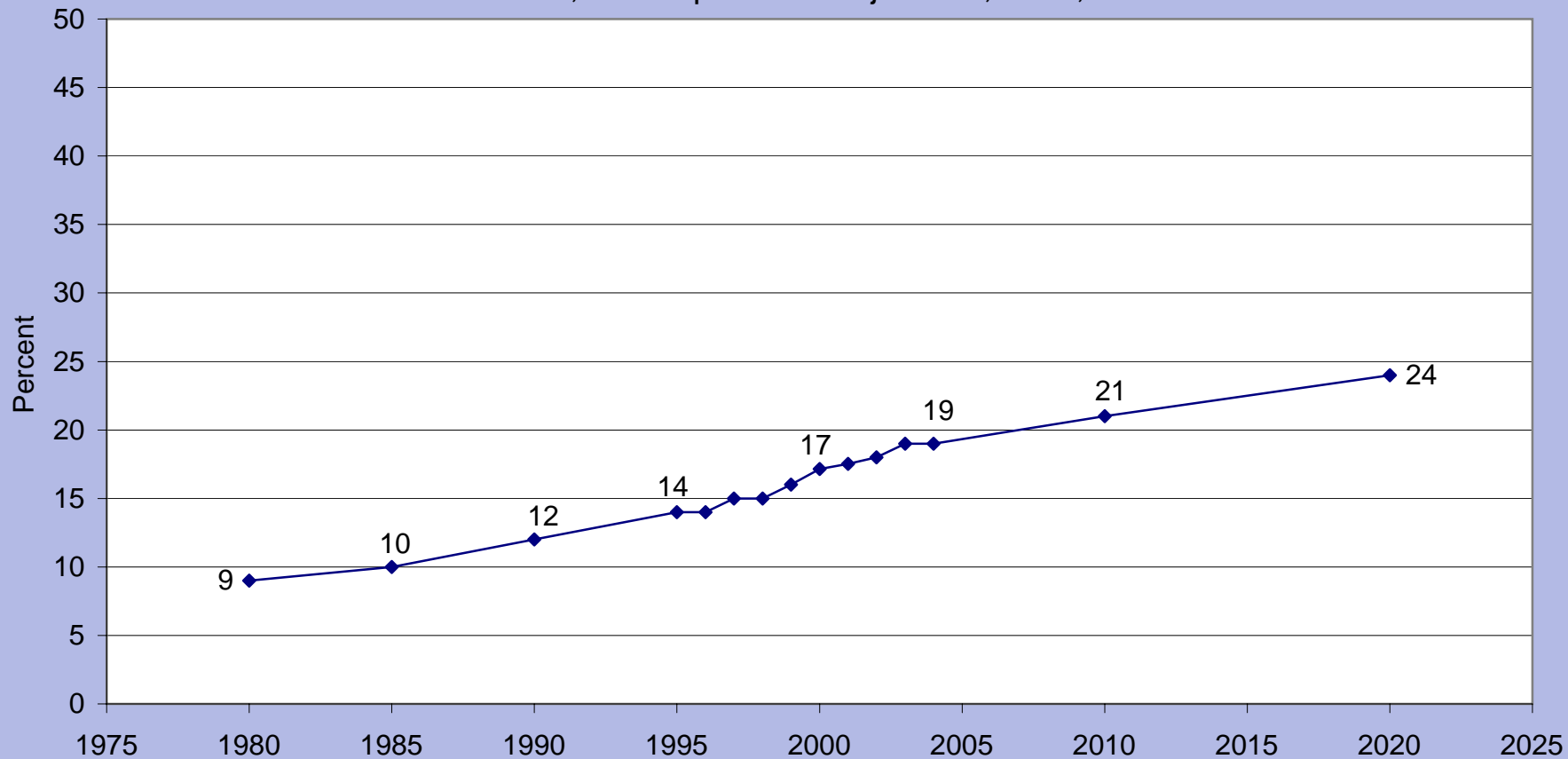
<sup>2</sup> Blank, R. 2001. An Overview of Trends in Social and Economic Well-Being, by Race. Chapter 2 in *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences, Volume 1*. Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell, Editors. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Available online at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9599.html>

<sup>3</sup> Smelser, N., Wilson, W., Mitchell, F. 2001. Introduction. In *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences, Volume 1*. Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell, Editors. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Available online at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9599.html>

<sup>4</sup> Office of Management and Budget. 1997. Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity. Available online at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/ombdir15.html>

Figure 1

### Percentage of Child Population Under 18 of Hispanic Origin, <sup>1</sup> Selected Years, 1980 to 2004, and Population Projections, 2010, 2020



<sup>1</sup> Those of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

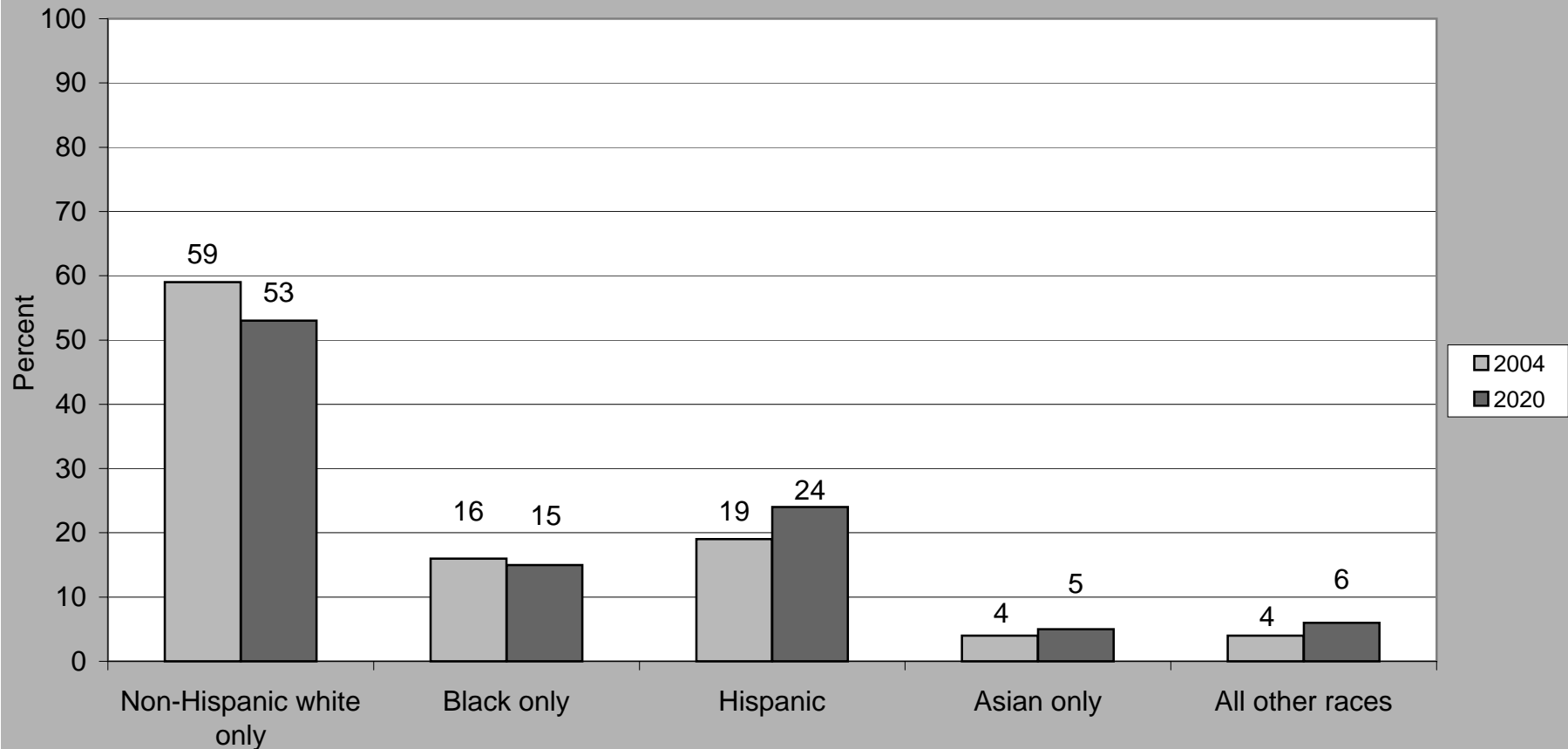
Source: Data for 1980-1999 and projections from Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2002, Table POP3. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Data for 2000-2002, and projections from: America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2004, Table POP3.

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Data for 2003 and 2004. Child Trends calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program. "National estimates by demographic characteristics - single year of age, sex, race, and Hispanic Origin," Monthly Postcensal Resident Population, July 2003, July 2004. Available at <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html>.



Figure 2

### Percentage Distribution of Children Under Age 18 in the US, by Race and Ethnicity, 2004 and Projections, 2020



Note: Data reflect new race categories from the 2000 decennial census and only include those respondents who identified with a single race. Those who chose multiple races are included in 'all other races.' Other races also includes American Indians and Pacific Islanders. Those of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: Data for 2020 projections: America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2004, Table POP1 . Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Data for 2004. Child trends calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program. "National estimates by demographic characteristics - single year of age, sex, race, and Hispanic Origin", Monthly Postcensal Resident Population, July 2003, July 2004. Available at <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html>.

Table 1

## Percent of Children Under Age 18 by Race and Hispanic Origin, Selected Years, 1980-2020

	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000 <sup>1</sup>	2001 <sup>1</sup>	2002	2003	2004	Projections	
														2010	2020
Total Number of Children (in millions)	63.7	-	64.2	68.5	69.1	69.6	69.9	70.2	72.3	72.6	72.9	73.0	73.2	74.4	80.3
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>															
White, non-Hispanic	74	72	69	67	66	66	65	65	62	62	-	-	-	-	-
White, non-Hispanic only	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61	61	60	60	59	56	-
Black, non-Hispanic	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	-	-	-	-	-
Black only (includes Hispanic)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	16	16	16	16	15	-
Hispanic <sup>2</sup>	9	10	12	14	14	15	15	16	17	18	18	19	19	21	24
Asian or Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-
Asian only	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	4	4	4	4	-
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
All other races <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	4	4	4	5	6

\* - Indicates data not available  
 Note: Beginning in 2000, respondents were able to select multiple races. Therefore estimates after 2000 are not strictly comparable estimates.  
<sup>1</sup> Estimates for 2000 and 2001 based in part on 2000 Decennial Census estimates. Estimates for 1990-1999 based in part on 1990 Decennial Census estimates. This difference accounts in part for the sudden jump in the population between 1999 and 2000.  
<sup>2</sup> People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.  
<sup>3</sup> Includes American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and all multiple race (two or more races).  
 Source: Data for 1980-1999 and projections from Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007 Tables POP1 and POP3. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007. Data for 2000 and 2001 estimates for estimates in which answers may include more than one race are from original analysis by Child Trends of Bridged Race 2000 and 2001 Population Estimates using Vital Rates, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2003. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/popbridge/popbridge.html>. Data for 2002, 2010 and 2020 projections, and all other 2000 and 2001 data are from Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007 Tables POP1 and POP3. Data for 2003 and 2004. Child trends calculations of U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Estimates Program. Estimates by demographic characteristics - single year of age, sex, race, and Hispanic Origin, Monthly Postcensal Resident Population, July 2003, July 2004. Available at <http://www.census.gov/ipeds/data/tables.html>.

Table 2

## Single and Multi-Race Children Under Age 18, 2000

	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>	72,293,812.00	100.0
<b>Population of one race:</b>	69,436,926.00	96.0
White only	49,598,289.00	68.6
Black or African American only	10,885,696.00	15.1
American Indian and Alaska Native only	840,312.00	1.2
Asian only	2,464,999.00	3.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander only	127,179.00	0.2
Some other race only	5,520,451.00	7.6
<b>Population of two or more races:</b>	2,856,886.00	4.0
<b>Population of two races:</b>	2,638,229.00	3.6
White; Black or African American	562,914.00	0.8
White; American Indian and Alaska Native	337,298.00	0.5
White; Asian	445,082.00	0.6
White; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	46,250.00	0.1
White; Some other race	772,663.00	1.1
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native	58,325.00	0.1
Black or African American; Asian	49,141.00	0.1
Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	11,165.00	0.0
Black or African American; Some other race	164,092.00	0.2
American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian	16,774.00	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2,736.00	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race	31,731.00	0.0
Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	40,313.00	0.1
Asian; Some other race	86,408.00	0.1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	13,337.00	0.0
<b>Population of three races:</b>	197,254.00	0.3
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native	47,418.00	0.1
White; Black or African American; Asian	14,032.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,876.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; Some other race	26,110.00	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian	12,789.00	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2,368.00	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race	11,196.00	0.0
White; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	44,436.00	0.1
White; Asian; Some other race	17,178.00	0.0
White; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	3,521.00	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian	2,382.00	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	443.00	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race	2,653.00	0.0
Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2,343.00	0.0
Black or African American; Asian; Some other race	3,497.00	0.0
Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	835.00	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,260.00	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race	846.00	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	235.00	0.0
Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	1,836.00	0.0
<b>Population of four races:</b>	18,389.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian	4,400.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	486.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race	1,912.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,200.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; Asian; Some other race	728.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	180.00	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3,720.00	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race	610.00	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	156.00	0.0
White; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	4,131.00	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	314.00	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race	146.00	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	43.00	0.0
Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	277.00	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	86.00	0.0
<b>Population of five races:</b>	2,736.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,871.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race	269.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	32.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	151.00	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	365.00	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	48.00	0.0
<b>Population of six races:</b>	278.00	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	278.00	0.0

Source: Unpublished estimates from the 2000 Census, produced by the Population Reference Bureau