

A light gray map of North Carolina is centered on the page. The title text is overlaid on the map.

2019 North Carolina Sociodemographic Characteristics

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Division of Public Health
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
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<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/stds/figures.html>

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Sociodemographic Characteristics of North Carolina

Knowledge of sociodemographic characteristics, including education and poverty, are paramount to fully understanding the health risk of a population. Sociodemographic factors affect infection risk and access to care and can be used to focus care and prevention efforts. This knowledge can also assist in identifying underlying factors that influence the overall health at both the individual and community level. North Carolina population characteristics will be explored in this section, including basic demographics, geography, income, and poverty.

Population Demographics

North Carolina has maintained a steady population growth in the past decade.¹ Between 2010 and 2018, North Carolina gained more than 952,000 residents, grew by 10%, and it marks the fourth year in a row that North Carolina has grown by more than 100,000 new residents.¹ The 2019 North Carolina population estimate was 10,488,084, with county populations ranging from 4,016 (Tyrrell County) to 1,110,356 (Mecklenburg County).² More than one-half of North Carolina's population lived in only 15 counties (Wake, Mecklenburg, Guilford, Forsyth, Cumberland, Durham, Buncombe, Union, New Hanover, Gaston, Cabarrus, Johnston, Onslow, Iredell, and Pitt).² The latest data from the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics show that in 2018, the average life expectancy for North Carolinians was 78.0 years, with 118,957 live births and 94,005 deaths in the state.³

Age and gender play an important role in public health planning and in understanding the health of a community. These characteristics are useful indicators of prevalence for certain diseases, especially sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In 2019, 49% of North Carolina's population were men, 51% were women, and 52% were under the age of 40. The majority of people in North Carolina were White/Caucasian, followed by Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino (Table A).

¹Tippett, R. (2020). North Carolina on track to surpass 10.6 million by 2020, gain in the House. Carolina Demography-UNC Carolina Population Center. January 16, 2020. Accessed June 30, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.ncdemography.org/2020/01/16/north-carolina-on-track-to-surpass-10-6-million-by-2020-gain-in-the-house/>.

²National Center for Health Statistics. (2020). Vintage 2019 postcensal estimates of the resident population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010-July 1, 2019), by year, county, single-year of age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 years and over), bridged race, Hispanic origin, and sex. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm_as_of_July_9_2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged Vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group on July 9, 2020.

³North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. (2019). *North Carolina vital statistics, volume 1: population, births, deaths, marriages, and divorces & life expectancy*. [Data file]. Updated November 14, 2019. Accessed July 14, 2020. <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/lifexpectancy/2016-2018/North%20Carolina%202016-2018%20Life%20Expectancies.html>.

Table A. North Carolina Bridged-Race Population Estimates by Gender, Age, and Race/Ethnicity, 2019

Demographics	Men		Women		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Age (Year)						
Less than 13	835,392	16.4	802,158	14.9	1,637,550	15.6
13-14	135,928	2.7	130,764	2.4	266,692	2.5
15-19	350,040	6.9	338,155	6.3	688,195	6.6
20-24	360,724	7.1	338,141	6.3	698,865	6.7
25-29	370,403	7.3	363,173	6.7	733,576	7.0
30-34	335,338	6.6	347,155	6.4	682,493	6.5
35-39	323,077	6.3	339,183	6.3	662,260	6.3
40-44	311,218	6.1	329,949	6.1	641,167	6.1
45-49	335,379	6.6	353,220	6.6	688,599	6.6
50-54	329,291	6.5	346,177	6.4	675,468	6.4
55-59	337,120	6.6	366,174	6.8	703,294	6.7
60-64	309,618	6.1	349,213	6.5	658,831	6.3
65 and older	766,736	15.0	984,358	18.3	1,751,094	16.7
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian/Alaska Native*	59,783	1.2	64,859	1.2	124,642	1.2
Asian/Pacific Islander*	169,085	3.3	179,883	3.3	348,968	3.3
Black/African American*	1,085,382	21.3	1,234,730	22.9	2,320,112	22.1
Hispanic/Latino	528,942	10.4	496,888	9.2	1,025,830	9.8
White/Caucasian*	3,257,072	63.9	3,411,460	63.3	6,668,532	63.6
Total	5,100,264	100.0	5,387,820	100.0	10,488,084	100.0

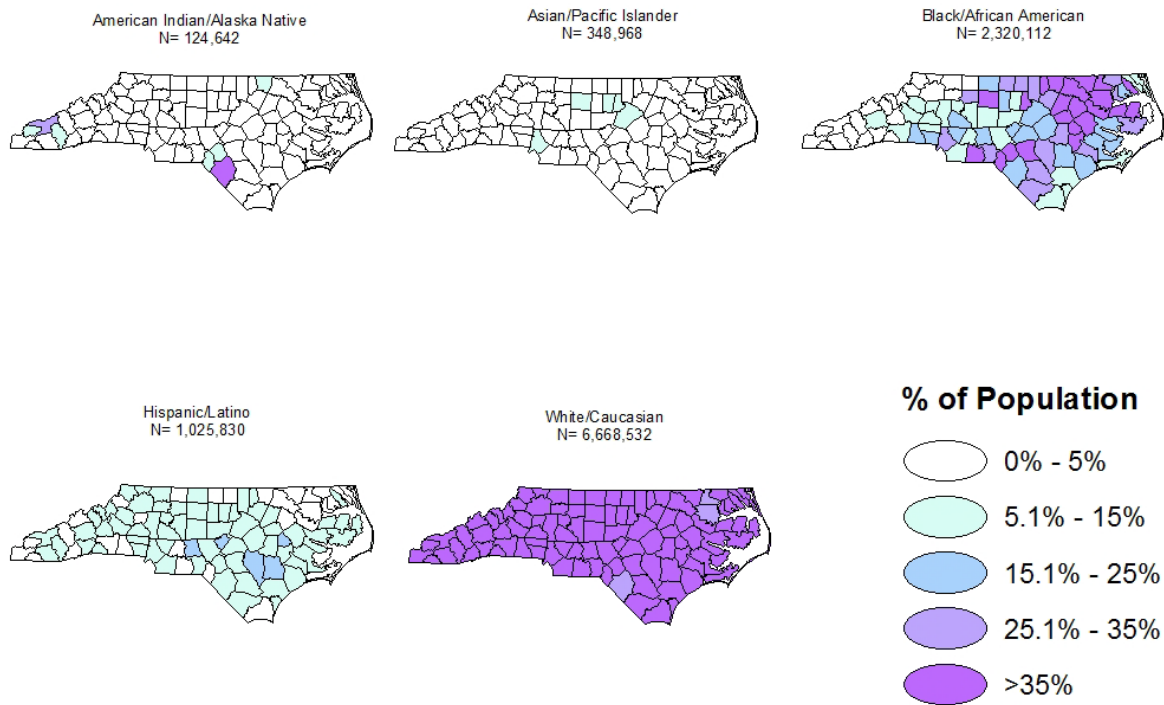
*Non-Hispanic/Latino.

Data Source: Vintage 2019 postcensal estimates of the resident population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010-July 1, 2019), by year, county, single-year of age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 years and over), bridged race, Hispanic origin, and sex. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm as of July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged Vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group on July 9, 2020.

In North Carolina, health disparities, such as higher STD rates, exist among racial and ethnic minorities. These racial and ethnic differences are driven by societal responses to race including racism and historical wealth disparities which result in differential access to quality health care and other resources. Health outcome disparities are documented using public health surveillance and are particularly prominent for HIV/STD morbidity. Figure 1 shows the proportional distribution of race/ethnicity groups across the state. Although the White/Caucasian population is widely distributed throughout the state, other race/ethnic groups are more geographically concentrated (Figure 1). The American Indian/Alaska Native population in North Carolina is one of the largest in the United States at 124,642 people, and the Hispanic/Latino population has increased by 102% across the state since 2004 (from 508,851 to 1,025,830).²

²National Center for Health Statistics. (2020). Vintage 2019 postcensal estimates of the resident population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010-July 1, 2019), by year, county, single-year of age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 years and over), bridged race, Hispanic origin, and sex. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm as of July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged Vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group on July 9, 2020.

Figure 1. North Carolina Population Demographics by Race/Ethnicity, 2019



Data Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Bridged-Race Population Estimates (Accessed July 2020).

Geographic Regions

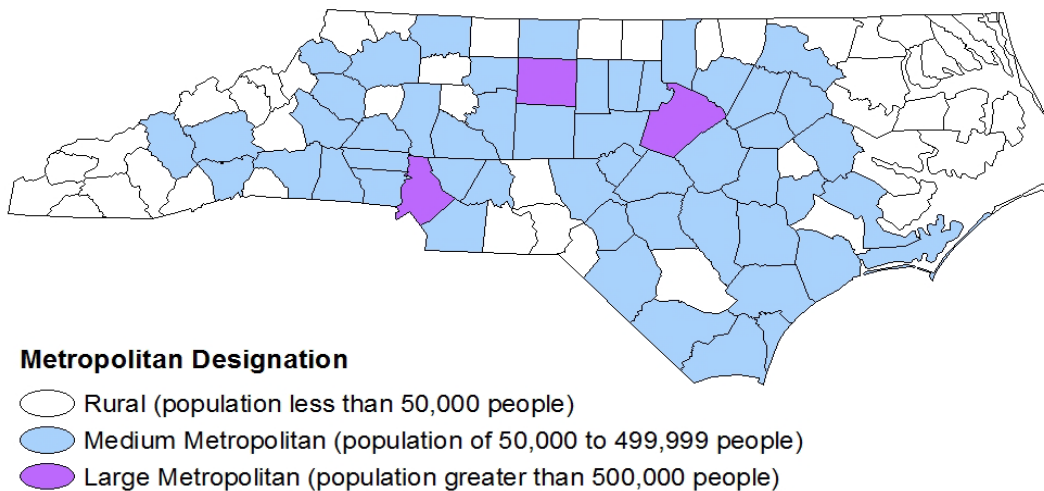
Metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are geographical regions that represent the social and economic linkages and commuting patterns between urban cores and outlying integrated areas. These geographic designations are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to have nationally consistent areas for developing federal statistics. MSAs contain a core urban population of 50,000 or more. In the *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Supplemental Report, Volume 13 Number 2*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) divided urban/metropolitan areas into large- (population greater than or equal to 500,000) and medium-sized urban/metropolitan areas (population 50,000 to 499,999) (all grouped as metropolitan areas). Areas other than MSAs are defined as rural areas.⁴ Three North Carolina counties (Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Wake) are classified as large urban/metropolitan areas. Fifty-one North Carolina counties (Alamance, Brunswick, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Carteret, Catawba, Chatham, Cleveland, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Davidson, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Franklin, Gaston, Granville, Halifax, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Hoke, Iredell, Johnston, Lee, Lenoir, Lincoln, Moore, Nash, New Hanover, Onslow, Orange, Pender, Pitt, Randolph, Robeson, Rockingham,

⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). Cases of HIV infection and AIDS in urban and rural areas of the United States, 2006. *HIV Surveillance Supplement Report*. 13(2), 4.

Rowan, Rutherford, Sampson, Stanly, Surry, Union, Watauga, Wayne, Wilkes, and Wilson) are classified as medium urban/metropolitan areas. The remaining 46 counties are classified as rural.²

Data from the U.S. Census showed that in 2010, 81% of the general U.S. population was living in urban areas and 19% in rural areas.⁵ Using the most recent estimate for 2019, North Carolina has become more urbanized than the nation as a whole, with 89% living in urban counties (blue and purple counties in Figure 2) and 11% percent in rural counties (white counties in Figure 2).² Figure 3 displays the metropolitan designations for North Carolina, separated into rural, medium metropolitan, and large metropolitan areas.

Figure 2. North Carolina Metropolitan Designations



Data Source: Vintage 2019 postcensal estimates of the resident population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010-July 1, 2019), by year, county, single-year of age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 years and over), bridged race, Hispanic origin, and sex. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm as of July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged Vintage 2018 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group on July 9, 2020.

²National Center for Health Statistics. (2018). Vintage 2017 postcensal estimates of the resident population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010-July 1, 2017), by year, county, single-year of age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 years and over), bridged race, Hispanic origin, and sex. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm as of June 27, 2018, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged Vintage 2017 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group on June 27, 2018.

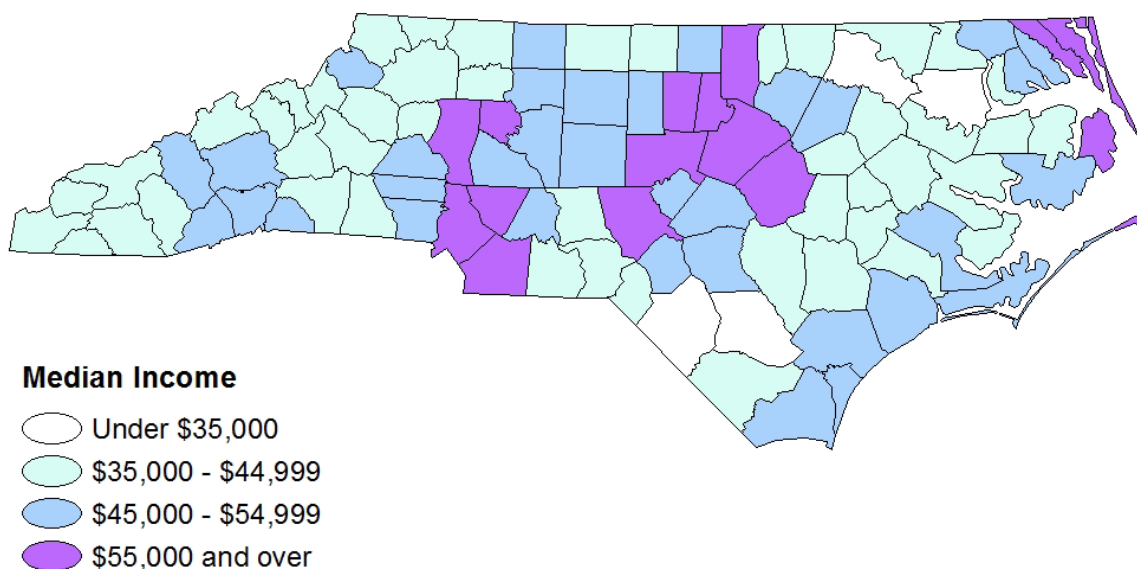
⁵United States Census Bureau. (2010). 2010 Census Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Area Criteria. Revised February 9, 2015. Accessed November 6, 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/urban-rural-2010.html>.

Household Income and Poverty

Contextual factors such as poverty and income, as well as racial segregation, discrimination, and incarceration rates influence sexual behavior and sexual networks. These factors contribute substantially to the persistence of marked racial disparities in STD rates.⁶

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis, the 2018 per capita income for North Carolina was \$46,117, or 85% of the national average (\$54,446).⁷ The 2019 annual unemployment rate in North Carolina was 3.9, down from a rate of 8.0 in 2013.⁸ The median household income in North Carolina was \$53,855 in 2018, lower than the national median of \$61,937.⁹ The median household income distribution by county for 2018 can be seen in Figure 3. The higher median household incomes (\$55,000 and over) are located in the Charlotte area, Raleigh/Durham area, and the northeastern corner of the state (Figure 3).⁹

Figure 3. North Carolina Median Household Income by County, 2018



Data Source: American FactFinder, Compare Counties for Median Household Income, 2018 (Accessed July 2020).

In 2018, 14.0% of North Carolinian families lived on an income below the federal poverty level (FPL), which is slightly higher than the 13.1% seen nationally.⁹ NC populations with the highest proportion of

⁶Adimora, A. & Schoenbach V. (2005). Social context, sexual networks, and racial disparities in rates of sexually transmitted infections. *Journal of Infection Diseases*, 191 Suppl 1, S115-122.

⁷United States Department of Commerce: Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2019). *Regional data: GDP and personal income*. [Data file]. Updated March 24, 2020. Accessed June 30, 2020. Retrieved from <https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=70&step=1&isuri=1&acrdn=6#reqid=70&step=1&isuri=1&acrdn=6>.

⁸United States Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). *Regional and State Unemployment-2019 Annual Averages*. Released March 4, 2020. Accessed June 30, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/srgune.pdf>.

⁹American FactFinder. (2018). *Community facts for North Carolina and United States, 2018*. [Data file]. Accessed July 1, 2020. Retrieved from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

individuals living below the FPL in 2018 included females, children (less than 18 years of age), and Hispanic/Latinos (Table B).⁹ In North Carolina, 32% of the population is considered low income (199% FPL or below).¹⁰

Table B. North Carolina and United States (U.S.) Proportion of Individuals Living in Poverty by Gender, Age, and Race/Ethnicity, 2018

Demographics	North Carolina	United States
	%	%
Gender		
Male	12.7	11.9
Female	15.3	14.3
Age (Year)		
Children (0-18 years)	20.2	18.0
Adults (19-64 years)	13.2	12.3
Elderly (65 years and older)	8.7	9.4
Race/Ethnicity*		
American Indian/Alaska Native [^]	20.1	23.7
Asian/Pacific Islander [^]	12.8/27.3	10.8/16.7
Black/African American [^]	21.1	22.5
Hispanic/Latino	24.8	18.8
White/Caucasian [^]	10.9	11.1
Multiple Race (2 or more races)	19.5	15.9
Total	14.0	13.1

*Percentage is calculated out of the total of each race/ethnicity group, therefore totals will not equal 100.

[^]Non-Hispanic/Latino.

Data Source: United States Census. (2019). Poverty status in the past 12 months: 2018 American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Accessed June 30, 2020. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=North%20Carolina%20Income%20and%20Poverty&g=040000US37_0100000US&tid=ACSST1Y2018.S1701&vintage=2018&hidePreview=true.

¹⁰ The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. (2019). Distribution of the Total Population by Federal Poverty Level (above and below 200% FPL). [Data file]. Updated 2019. Accessed June 30, 2020. Retrieved from <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-fpl/>.