
SECTION 1.

INTRODUCTION

Race and ethnicity affect almost every aspect of American society, and their importance is likely to increase as the share of people of color in our society increases. At present, people of color account for 33% of the U.S. population and by 2059 this share is expected to increase to 50%.

However, accurate and up-to-date socioeconomic data about racial and ethnic groups in the Pittsburgh region and the nation are not always accessible to policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and members of the community. If data were readily available, many people could have a better understanding of the positive conditions and the problems different racial and ethnic groups face and therefore could provide better strategies for improving conditions.

Pittsburgh's Racial Demographics: Differences and Disparities presents the most up-to-date data on the social and economic status of racial and ethnic groups in four geographic regions: city of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and the United States. This is the first in a series of chartbooks prepared by the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems, which is part of the School of Social Work. It is our hope that this book will promote greater racial and ethnic equality in the Pittsburgh region and the U.S.

The report is divided into six sections: Families, Youth, and Elderly; Education; Economic Disparities; Intergroup Relations; Mental Health; and Criminal Justice. We selected these categories to provide a broad picture of the social and economic conditions facing racial and ethnic groups in the Pittsburgh area. Each section provides key indicators of well-being for four racial groups: Whites, African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics.

The most recent data available for the Pittsburgh area and the nation were used in this report. In some instances, however, only data from the 2000 census were available to make comparisons. It is also the case that data were not available on all of our topic areas in the same years. It is our hope to update this report every three years, particularly if the American Community Survey (which is designed to replace the decennial census) produces regular, reliable data by race for cities, counties, and regions.