GATEWAY TRENDS

THE CHANGING AGE COMPOSITION OF THE ST. LOUIS REGION

Introduction

America's demographic character has changed remarkably over the past 80 years, shaped in large part by widespread fluctuations in fertility and birth patterns and increasing life expectancies. Currently, demographers recognize four distinct "generations" within the population, each of which varies in size and other characteristics. This issue of Gateway Trends describes some of the generational trends in the St. Louis region that will have public policy and other implications for the future.

Where We Stand

Since 1992, East-West Gateway has tracked and compared population trends for more than 30 metropolitan areas in the publication *Where We Stand: A Strategic Assessment of the St. Louis Region*. The most recent edition was released in 1999. The charts that follow, displayed in the trademark *Where We Stand* format, have been updated to reflect the most recent data available regarding the relative size of three key age groups in the population: persons of working age, young people, and older adults.

Of the 2.5 million residents living within the St. Louis metropolitan area in 1998, approximately 60 percent were in what is considered the prime working years—between ages 18 and 64. This ranks the St. Louis metropolitan area 32nd in the proportion of working age population out of the 35 metropolitan areas included in the comparison, although the actual percentage point differences are small between the regions.[1]

With a relatively small working age population, it is not surprising, therefore, that St. Louis has a higher percentage of both young people and older adults than most of the other peer regions. In 1998, persons aged 65 and older comprised 13 percent of the population—7th among the metropolitan regions. The percentage of persons younger than age 18 was 26.5—12th among the metro areas. The region's median age was 34.4 years, slightly higher than the average of 33.8.

"Dependent population" is the term used to describe the combined age groups that are assumed not to be engaged in the workforce, and are therefore "dependent" on the economic output of those who are.

WORKING AGE POPULATION 1998

1	**San Francisco**	**66.3**
2	Washington DC	66.3
3	Atlanta	66.2
4	Austin	65.7
5	Seattle	65.6
6	Columbus	64.8
7	Nashville	64.7
8	Dallas	64.5
9	Denver	64.2
10	Minneapolis	63.5
11	Houston	63.5
12	Portland	63.4
13	Charlotte	63.3
14	Indianapolis	63.1
15	Boston	63.0
16	Baltimore	62.9
	Average	62.7
17	New York	62.8
18	Louisville	62.7
19	Memphis	62.4
20	Los Angeles	62.3
21	Oklahoma City	62.1
22	San Diego	62.1
23	Detroit	62.0
24	Kansas City	62.0
25	Chicago	62.0
26	Cincinnati	61.3
27	Milwaukee	61.3
28	Philadelphia	60.8
29	Miami	60.7
30	Phoenix	60.7
31	Cleveland	60.5
32	**St. Louis**	**60.5**
33	Pittsburgh	60.0
34	San Antonio	59.9
35	**Salt Lake City**	**58.8**

Percent of total population age 18-64

DEPENDENCY RATIO 1998

1	**Pittsburgh**	**37.4**
2	Salt Lake City	37.3
3	San Antonio	36.8
4	Cleveland	36.6
5	Miami	36.5
6	Philadelphia	36.5
7	**St. Louis**	**36.5**
8	Phoenix	36.5
9	Cincinnati	35.7
10	Milwaukee	35.6
11	San Diego	35.3
12	Chicago	35.2
13	Detroit	35.0
14	Kansas City	34.9
15	Los Angeles	34.9
16	Oklahoma City	34.7
17	New York	34.7
18	Memphis	34.6
19	Baltimore	34.5
20	Boston	34.5
	Average	34.4
21	Louisville	34.3
22	Indianapolis	34.0
23	Charlotte	34.0
24	Portland	33.6
25	Minneapolis	33.5
26	Houston	33.4
27	Denver	32.8
28	Nashville	32.6
29	Dallas	32.5
30	Columbus	32.3
31	Seattle	31.7
32	San Francisco	31.5
33	Austin	31.5
34	Washington DC	31.1
35	**Atlanta**	**31.0**

HIGHER — AVERAGE — LOWER

Total dependent population (under 15 and over 64) divided by the total population, 1998

[1] *Metropolitan areas were selected for comparison as our "peers" if they met one of two criteria: the area had a population of 950,000 or more and was within 500 miles of St. Louis, or the area had an economic function similar to that of the St. Louis region.*

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People younger than age 15 and older than 64 are considered to make up this group. The dependency ratio is calculated as the total number of persons in these age groups, divided by the total population. With a dependency ratio of 36.5, the St. Louis metropolitan area ranks 7th among its peers—sharing the same score with Miami, Philadelphia, and Phoenix.

National hot spots for jobs including San Francisco, Washington D.C. and Atlanta top the rankings in working age population with just over 66 percent of their population in the prime working years in 1998. These same metropolitan areas fall to the bottom of the rankings on the dependency ratio with less than 32 percent of their population falling into the dependent age group. Other metropolitan areas, such as Pittsburgh and Salt Lake City, which rank at the top of the dependency ratio chart, had 37 percent of the population in the "dependent" age categories.

Of greater significance to St. Louis, however, is that several of our midwestern neighbors have risen in the rankings since 1990 in the proportion of their population that is of working age, while St. Louis has fallen. Memphis, Minneapolis and Nashville all have moved up seven or more positions since 1990, while Indianapolis and Louisville both improved their rankings by 5 positions. Despite small increases in the working age population since 1990, Oklahoma City, Detroit and St. Louis all fell by one rank.

Looking to the Future

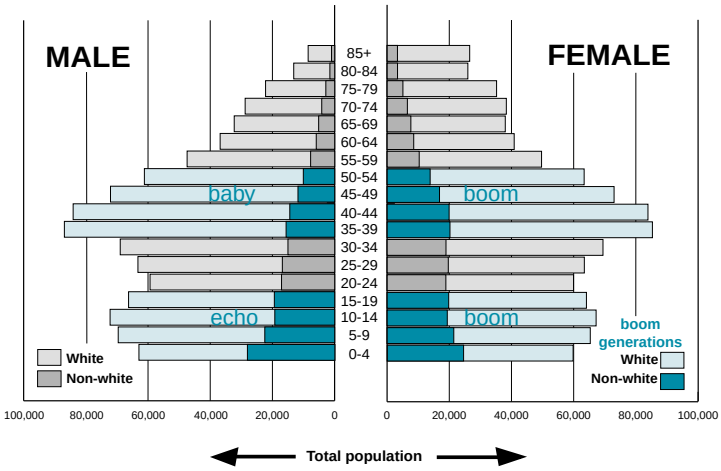
Demographers recognize four broad generations within the nation's current population. Each of these has brought about considerable changes in the nation's social and economic character. These generations are identified sequentially in the chart on page 3. The one that is having—and will continue to have—the greatest effect on American life is the post-World War II baby boom. This generation is the largest of the four: nationally, 74 million persons strong.

The charts on the this page illustrate the way in which the St. Louis region's population is expected to change by age, gender and race over the next 20 years. For the purposes of this analysis, the region is comprised of the City of St. Louis; Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis counties in Missouri; Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois.

The first chart describes the region's population today and the second describes what we might expect for the year 2020.

East-West Gateway Region Population: 2000

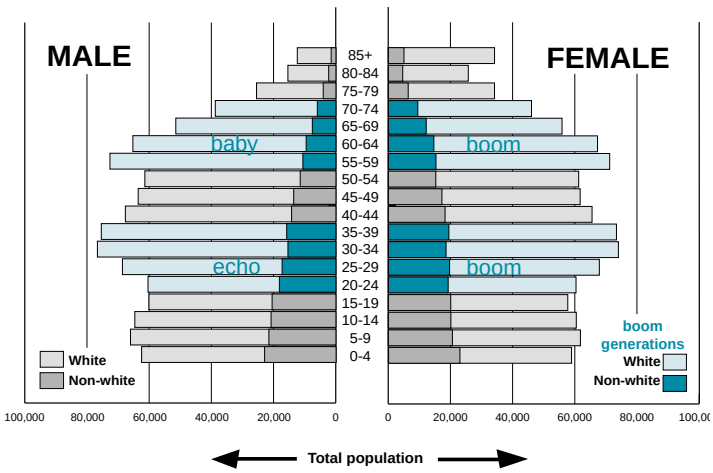
Non-white and White Total Population by 5-year Age Groups



Source: Missouri Office of Administration and Illinois State University
Compiled by staff of East-West Gateway Coordinating Council

East-West Gateway Region Population: 2020

Non-white and White Total Population by 5-year Age Groups



Source: Missouri Office of Administration and Illinois State University
Compiled by staff of East-West Gateway Coordinating Council

Each age category is broken down into five-year increments, which are stacked with the youngest cohorts at the bottom. Males appear on the left side and females on the right side of the chart. The total number of persons in each age category for each gender can be determined by following the bar to its endpoint. The non-white population is represented by the darker shaded areas near the age bar in the center of the chart and the white population is represented by the lighter shaded areas.

The echo boom generation is included in the four lowest bars on the year 2000 chart, shaded in blue covering the years 0 to19. Moving up the pyramid, the baby bust generation, born between the years 1965 to 1980, is reflected in the area shaded in gray for people currently 20 to 34 years old. The baby boom generation can be seen in the area shaded blue for people ages 35 to 54. The depression era birth dearth generation of 1921 to 1945 is illustrated by the areas shaded in gray for people ages 55 to 79. The portion of the population born before 1921 is also represented in a gray shaded area for the ages 80 to 85+.

Looking at the bottom of the chart for the year 2020, a fifth group—the "echo baby bust generation"—will come onto the scene as illustrated

The Aging of the Region's Principal Generations, 2000 - 2020

	Year 2000		Year 2020	
Depression Era Birth Dearth				
born 1921-1945	Age:	55-79	Age:	75-85+
	Number in this group:	433,460	Number in this group:	170,987
	% of Population:	18	% of Population:	6
	% in Working Years (16-64):	48	% in Working Years (16-64):	0
	% Male/Female:	45/55	% Male/Female	36/64
	% Non-white/White:	15/85	% Non-white/White:	14/86
Baby Boom				
born 1946-1964	Age:	36-54	Age:	56-74
	Number in this group:	690,921	Number in this group:	519,855
	% of Population:	28	% of Population:	20
	% in Working Years (16-64):	100	% in Working Years (16-64):	56
	% Male/Female:	49/51	% Male/Female:	47/53
	% Non-white/White:	17/83	% Non-white/White:	15/85
Baby Bust				
born 1965-1980	Age:	20-35	Age:	40-55
	Number in this group:	532,361	Number in this group:	505,042
	% of Population:	22	% of Population:	20
	% in Working Years (16-64):	100	% in Working Years (16-64):	100
	% Male/Female:	49/51	% Male/Female	49/51
	% Non-white/White:	21/79	% Non-white/White:	19/81
Echo Boom				
born 1981 - 1997	Age:	3-19	Age:	23-39
	Number in this group:	594,237	Number in this group:	605,434[2]
	% of Population:	24	% of Population:	24
	% in Working Years (16-64):	23	% in Working Years (16-64):	100
	% Male/Female:	51/49	% Male/Female	50/50
	% Non-white/White:	24/76	% Non-white/White:	20/80

Source: Missouri Office of Administration, Illinois State University and U.S. Bureau of the Census

[2] *The increase in the size of this generation between 2000 and 2020 is due to expected in-migration of persons in this age group.*

in the areas shaded gray for ages of 0 to 19. These are the children that are being born now, the offspring of the 1965-1980 born baby bust.

In 2020, the echo boomers will be aged 20 to 39, as seen in the area shaded in blue. The baby bust generation will be aged 40 to 54 and is shaded in gray. The baby boomers in the year 2020 are depicted in the blue shaded areas for the ages 55 to 74. The depression era birth dearth generation is at the top of the chart, illustrated in the gray shaded areas for the ages of 75 to 85 +.

Following national trends, white and non-white populations demonstrate very different patterns over the spectrum of ages.[3] The impacts of the bulging "baby boom," for example are very pronounced for the white population, but not so for non-whites. Non-white groups exhibit a much more even distribution by age group. Gender differences are most pronounced among all racial groups for cohorts aged 60 and older, when females begin to significantly outnumber the males in their age group.

Some Questions for the Region

The 20-year change in size and age of each generation is also depicted in the table on page 3, which provides basic characteristics of each generation in the years 2000 and 2020. These trends suggest some important questions for the St. Louis region to consider as we move into new decades of increasing age diversity.

- Each of the generations described in the chart is related to the others by means of unique and evolving social and economic roles. For example, members of the "baby boom" are also referred to as the "sandwich generation" because they are likely to have responsibility for both aging parents and young children (and, not infrequently, grandchildren). What new requirements might be expected of the region's human services system from these three interdependent generations in the future?

- Because of differing birth and mortality rates among population subgroups, the oldest members of the St. Louis community in 2020 will be more predominantly white at the same time that there will be higher proportions of non-whites among the youngest members of the community. In a region that already has much work to do to address racial differences, how might these trends affect neighborhood life and the community's ability to work together to address the unique needs of these age groups? How will we anticipate and respond to any inherent challenges?

- With increasing life expectancies, active lifestyles, and more disposable income than previous generations, older adults of the future can be expected to be important players in the regional economy—changing our notions about what makes up the "dependent population." How will the region take advantage of what older adults have to offer—economically and socially? What demands will this make on our transportation, educational, and human services systems?

Readers who would like to suggest other questions and policy implications related to the region's changing age composition are encouraged to do so by sending *d~íÉ ï ~ó=qêÉåÇë* staff a note. We will forward these questions to relevant decision-makers and, periodically, we will share this information with the readership at large.

For More Information

Readers interested in learning more about population projections in the region may want to look at East-West Gateway's website www.ewgateway.org. Additional links to websites of possible interest include:

Administration on Aging
www.aoa.gov

Department of Health and Family Services-Division for Children, Youth and Families
www.state.nh.us/dhhs/ofs/ofsdcyf.htm

Illinois Census and Data Users Services (CADUS)
www.socialresearch.ilstu.edu/cadus/

Missouri Office of Administration-Division of Budget and Planning
www.oa.state.mo.us/bp/plngrsr2.htm

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

[3] *"Non-white" population groups include African-Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and other races.*