



NEW HAMPSHIRE CENTER for Justice & Equity

Demographic Profiles of New Hampshire: A Focus on Race and Ethnicity

The population profile for New Hampshire is often over-simplified; conversation typically revolves around New Hampshire’s population being predominantly rural, older, and White. While data supports those generalizations, there is value in digging deeper and understanding the more complex story that emerges when looking at a number of factors that describe the almost 1.4 million people who live here. This brief, which focused on race and ethnicity, is the first in a series that reviews some of these characteristics in more detail.

Where Do We Live?

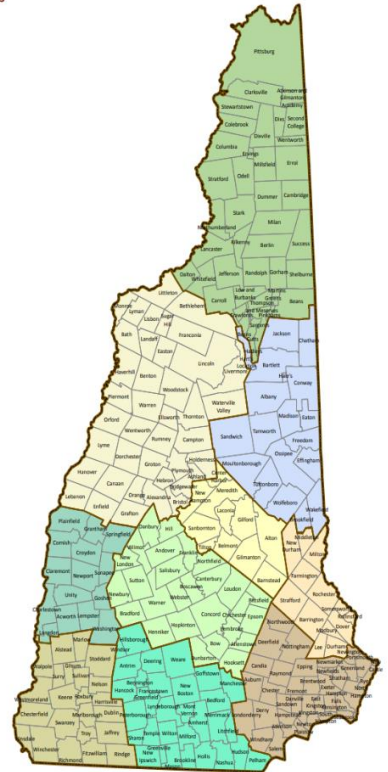
The majority of New Hampshire is designated as ruralⁱ. Although 50% of the landmass in NH is in three Northernmost Counties (Grafton, Coos, Carroll), 10% of the population lives in those counties (Table 1). The largest county in NH, Coos, has 20% of the landmass and 2% of the population. This compares to Hillsborough County, which has 31% of the population living in 10% of the land mass.

Table 1. New Hampshire Population by Location, 2020 US Census

County	Square Miles	% Land Mass	Population	% Population
Belknap	300,786.19	5%	63,705	5%
Carroll	635,817.97	11%	50,107	4%
Cheshire	466,514.34	8%	76,458	6%
Coos	1,171,969.27	20%	31,268	2%
Grafton	1,119,743.95	19%	91,118	7%
Hillsborough	571,152.78	10%	422,937	31%
Merrimack	611,148.30	10%	153,808	11%
Rockingham	465,182.48	8%	314,176	23%
Strafford	244,860.75	4%	130,889	10%
Sullivan	353,361.90	6%	43,063	3%
Total	5,940,537.93	100%	1,377,529	100%

New Hampshire Counties

- Legend
- Belknap
- Carroll
- Cheshire
- Coos
- Grafton
- Hillsborough
- Merrimack
- Rockingham
- Strafford
- Sullivan



Sources: 2020 US Census Bureauⁱⁱ; NH Office of Strategic Initiativesⁱⁱⁱ; NH Department of Administrative Services^{iv}

What is Our Racial and Ethnic Background?

Just over 10% (10.4%) of the population is Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC), according to the US Census data collected from 2016-2020, and 89.6% of the population is White; see Tables 2 and 3. The percentage of people who are BIPOC increased over 3% in the past 10 years; according to the 2006-2010 US Census, 7.3% of the NH population was BIPOC.



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Just under 5% (4.7%) of the population is Hispanic, according to the 2016-2020 estimates, and 95.3% of the population is not Hispanic. This percentage of people who are Hispanic increased almost 2% in the past 10 years; according to the 2006-2010 US Census, 2.9% of the NH population was Hispanic.

The BIPOC and Hispanic populations (approximately 141,000 and 63,000 people, respectively) live all around New Hampshire. For example, 4.5% of people in Carroll County and 16.3% of people in Hillsborough County are BIPOC.

Table 2. Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) Population, by NH County, 2016-2020 US Census

County	% County Population	Estimated Number of People in County
Belknap	5.4%	3,325
Carroll	4.5%	2,173
Cheshire	6.1%	4,641
Coos	5.7%	1,809
Grafton	10.1%	9,131
Hillsborough	16.3%	67,760
Merrimack	8.1%	12,178
Rockingham	8.0%	24,789
Strafford	10.0%	13,010
Sullivan	5.6%	2,399
Total	10.4%	141,215

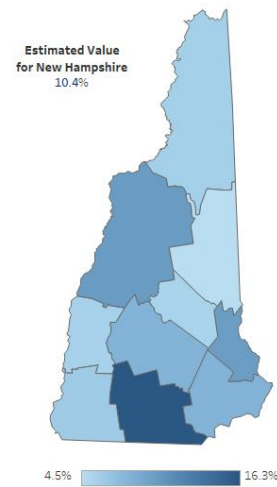
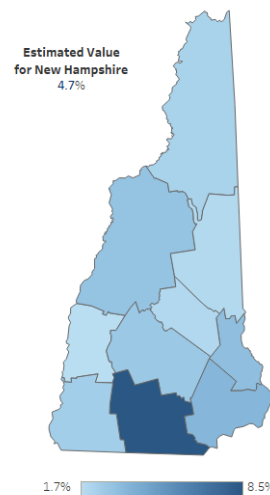


Table 3. Hispanic Population, by NH County, 2016-2020 US Census

County	% County Population	Estimated Number of People in County
Belknap	2.0%	1,218
Carroll	1.9%	921
Cheshire	2.5%	1,890
Coos	2.3%	715
Grafton	3.0%	2,740
Hillsborough	8.5%	35,399
Merrimack	2.8%	4,218
Rockingham	3.6%	11,142
Strafford	3.3%	4,252
Sullivan	1.7%	724
Total	4.7%	63,219



Source: NH Health Data Portal, NH Department of Health and Human Services^v

How has New Hampshire Changed Over Time?

The US Census Bureau uses the [Diversity Index](#) as a summary measure, which indicates how likely that two random people will be from different racial or ethnic groups. New Hampshire’s Diversity Index has increased over time, from 15% in 2010 to 24% in 2020, (see Table 4) aligning with the increasing BIPOC and Hispanic populations in the state. The increase by county ranged from a 6% increase in Carroll County to 10% increases in Hillsborough and Sullivan Counties.

Table 4. Diversity Index, New Hampshire, 2010 and 2020

Diversity Index by County	2010	2020	% Point Difference, 2010-2020
Belknap	8%	15%	7%
Carroll	6%	12%	6%
Cheshire	9%	18%	9%
Coos	7%	16%	9%
Grafton	15%	22%	7%
Hillsborough	23%	33%	10%
Merrimack	11%	20%	9%
Rockingham	11%	19%	8%
Strafford	14%	23%	9%
Sullivan	7%	17%	10%
NH Total	15%	24%	9%

Source: US Census Bureau^{vi}

As described by the University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy’s “[What is New Hampshire?](#)” project, “children are in the vanguard of the state’s growing diversity.^{vii}” The [Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center](#) reporting of race and ethnicity indicates that the NH population under 18 are more diverse than the state overall. The Kids Count Data Center provides age specific estimates, which show that children under 18 range from 16-18% BIPOC and/or Hispanic (using US Census Bureau estimates from 2016-2020).

Table 5. Race and Ethnicity, New Hampshire, Population Under 18, 2016-2020

Age Group	White, non-Hispanic	BIPOC and/or Hispanic
0-4	82%	18%
5-11	83%	17%
12-17	84%	16%

Source: Annie E. Casey Kids Count^{viii}



What Does This Tell Us About the Future?

These data show that, despite being one of the least diverse states in terms of race and ethnicity, NH's BIPOC and Hispanic populations are increasing in number in New Hampshire. Having a state that is welcoming and supportive to people from all backgrounds will allow New Hampshire to stay well, productive, and competitive.

ⁱ https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/DataFiles/53180/25584_NH.pdf?v=0

ⁱⁱ [https://data.census.gov/table?q=population+new+hampshire+2020&g=0400000US33\\$0500000&y=2021&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P1](https://data.census.gov/table?q=population+new+hampshire+2020&g=0400000US33$0500000&y=2021&tid=DECENNIALPL2020.P1)

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nh.gov/osi/data-center/documents/land-area-figures.pdf>

^{iv} <https://www.das.nh.gov/hr/documents/Recruitment/nh-towns-county.pdf>

^v <https://wisdom.dhhs.nh.gov/wisdom/dashboard.html?topic=social-determinants-of-health&subtopic=social-determinants-of-health&indicator=race/ethnicity-and-language>

^{vi} [https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/new-hampshire-population-change-between-census-decade.html#:~:text=Race%20and%20ethnicity%20\(White%20alone,or%20More%20Races%2010.2%25\)](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/new-hampshire-population-change-between-census-decade.html#:~:text=Race%20and%20ethnicity%20(White%20alone,or%20More%20Races%2010.2%25))

^{vii} <https://carsey.unh.edu/what-is-new-hampshire/sections/demography>

^{viii} <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/8446-child-population-by-race-and-ethnicity-and-age-group?loc=1&loct=2#detailed/2/31/false/2048,574,1729,37,871/68,69,67,12,70,66,71,13|62,63,30/17077,17078>