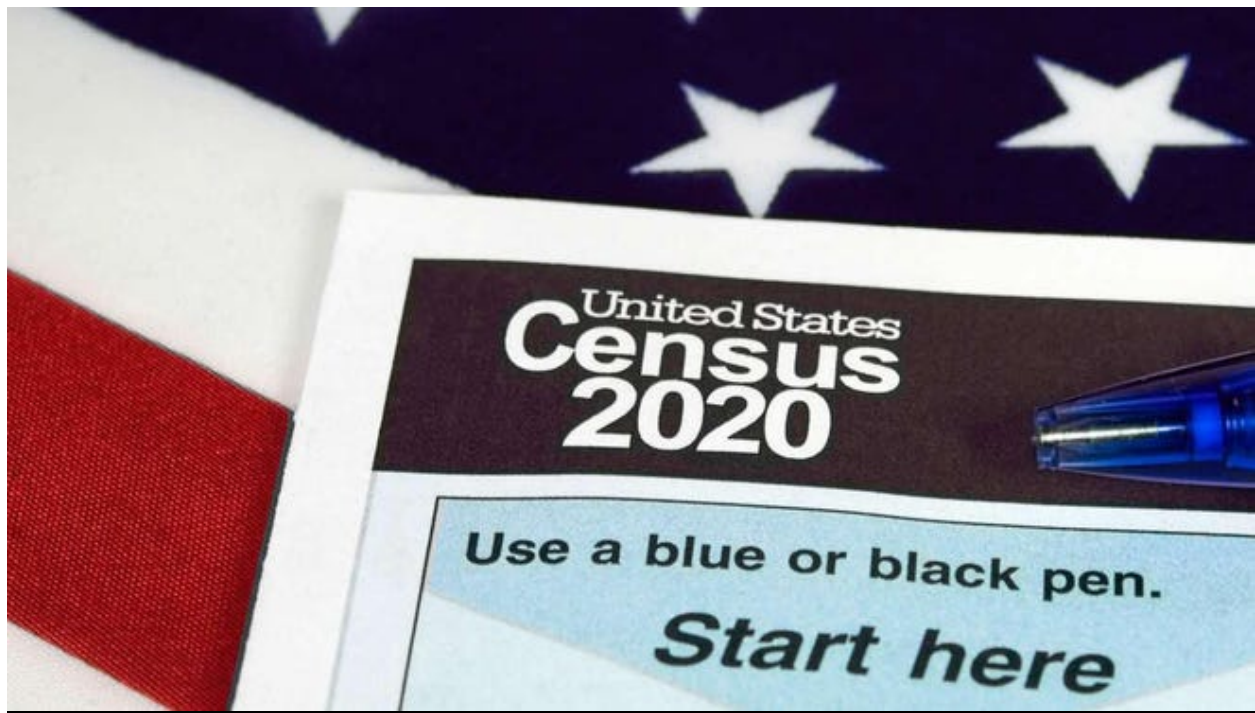


Non-Hispanic white share of Jacksonville shrinking as city population grows

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For years people interested in demographics have talked about the day white Americans in Jacksonville would stop being the majority.

If last year was the tipping point, it happened quietly.

“Everybody gets along,” Jose Betancourt said about his Southside Jacksonville neighborhood, a place the 2020 U.S. Census counted as having one of the biggest increases in diversity within Duval County.

After decades of white majority, the census said non-Hispanic whites accounted for 49.4 percent of Duval County’s population last year, or 492,032 people. The rest, numbering 503,528 people,

were Hispanic or from other races or had multiple racial ancestries.

Whites of all ethnicities still totaled 514,782 people, or 51.7 percent of the county.

Florida: Population tops 20 million as state grows faster than all others except Texas

The change (non-Hispanic whites had been 56.6 percent of the county in 2010) is part of a national shift. But it's also part of a difference in the way people choose to identify themselves, Nicholas Jones, a division director and senior adviser in the U.S. Census Bureau, told reporters as his agency rolled out early results from the decennial census last week.

Changes in the way questions were asked helped show the country is "much more multiracial and more ethnically diverse than we measured in the past," Jones said.

In Jacksonville, the changes aren't all on paper.

"I've seen the diversity showing up," said Betancourt, 49, whose neighbors on a well-maintained block of Sans Souci include a Black woman on one side of his house and an Asian American couple across the street.

It's in the family, too: Betancourt's ancestry is Cuban and he married a white American woman who lived in her family's house on the other side of the street when they started dating 28 years ago.

Betancourt likes his neighborhood of 12 years off Beach Boulevard, which he says is quiet and friendly, a place where working families pass homes from one generation to the next. He said he might move back to South Florida someday as his relatives there age and need help, but he'd like to see his son keep the house.

Census data said the neighborhood had one of Duval County's strongest shifts in diversity during the past decade.

Breaking it down by county and neighborhoods

Data provided by Gannett, the Times-Union's parent company, said a "[diversity index](#)" measuring variety among residents on a 100-point scale (higher is more diverse), showed the score in Betancourt's census tract shifting from 45 to 72.

As Duval County grew to 995,567 people, its diversity score rose to 69, up 10 points from 2010.

Florida overall scored 75. Clay County was rated at 55, St. Johns County at 43, Baker County at 37 and Nassau County at 32.

Duval County's most diverse areas were census tracts between Beach and Atlantic boulevards east of the St. Nicholas neighborhood and south of Beach east of Spring Glen Road. The least diverse tracts were in heavily Black neighborhoods near Moncrief Road and Edgewood Avenue West.

More: [In last decade, Jacksonville grew slower than other Florida cities](#)

More: [Despite growing diversity, Jacksonville is still the largest majority-white city in U.S.](#)

Diversity has been growing faster than [Duval County's Black population](#), once regarded locally as nearly the sole non-white demographic.

Although the county added about 37,000 Black residents since 2010, bringing the total to 292,337, the Black share of the population slipped a tenth of a point to 29.4 percent.

The number of people identifying as Hispanic grew by more than 47,000 to 112,689, representing 11.3 percent of the county.

But an even bigger increase — another 64,814 people — was the number of people saying they were from two or more races, which increased from 2.9 percent of the population to 9 percent.

The business side of things

The added diversity is turning up in businesses too, where owners are glad to have extra customers.

"We get a lot of people from all different cultures," said Cristina Osorio, who co-owns [Delicias Colombianas](#), a Colombian restaurant and bakery with locations on Beach and on Blanding Boulevard.

"Just at the restaurant, all the people that I'm seeing every day, I hear 'I just moved from up North' or 'I just moved from down South.' I have noticed a lot of people coming [into Jacksonville]." Osorio said her business has been drawing a lot of non-Hispanics, like the crowds who come from nearby churches on Sundays.

There are a lot more Hispanic restaurants these days, said Monica Hernandez, president of the Florida First Coast Hispanic Chamber, who moved to Jacksonville 15 years ago.

There are more Hispanic-owned businesses generally, and Hernandez said people from very different national backgrounds are finding connections with people whose backgrounds are nothing like theirs.

More: [Hispanic, Latinx students in Northeast Florida to receive \\$20,000 in scholarships](#)

More: ['Ask why': Nonprofit charts Jacksonville's past of racial inequity, seeks solutions that stick](#)

"We are different races, colors, religions and political views. So that makes us a very diverse ethnicity," she said. "I'm Colombian and I may look one way and then my other fellow Hispanic can look completely different and still be Hispanic and feel as proud and feel as proud of their own ethnicity."

[Rebecca Dominguez-Karimi](#) is trying to memorialize some of that diversity.

A Mexican American writer, oral historian and public speaker who taught college classes before moving from South Florida, she's working with the Jacksonville Historical Society on a project to record at least 30 oral histories of local Latinos.

In Duval County, she has interviewed people with roots ranging from Argentina to Uruguay.

"What's interesting is that most of them go to Miami first and then they discover ... the Jacksonville area, then they decide, hey, you know, that's not a bad place to settle and so then they come to Jacksonville," Dominguez-Karimi said.

"It's a beautiful, beautiful thing for diversity to come into a community and just see different people from different walks of life with different life experiences," she said. "And most of all, we're happy to be here. We love it here."

<https://www.jacksonville.com/story/news/local/2021/08/14/2020-census-shows-diversity-growing-jacksonville-population/8099598002/>