

2011

Hispanic/Latino Changes in Nebraska's Population: 1980-2010

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Recommended Citation

Drozd, David J., "Hispanic/Latino Changes in Nebraska's Population: 1980-2010" (2011). *Publications since 2000*. 5.

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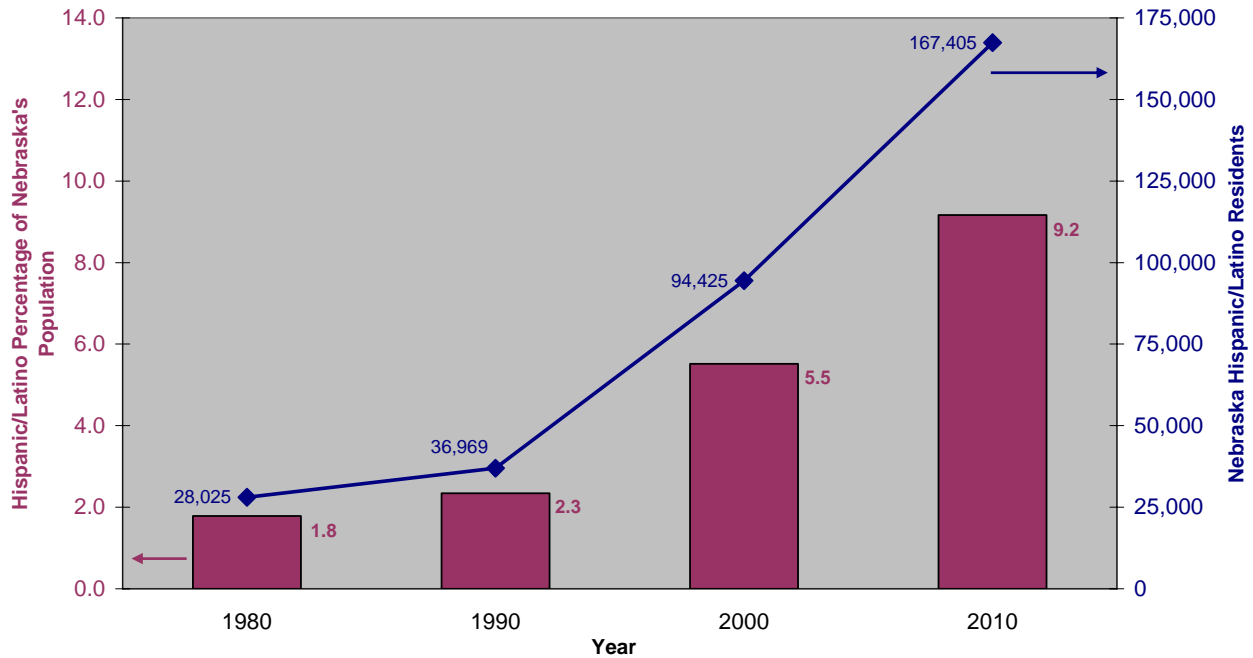
A brief prepared by: David Drozd, Research Coordinator, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research

Introduction

The Hispanic/Latino population has risen dramatically in Nebraska. After totaling about 28,000 Nebraska residents in 1980, the Hispanic/Latino population increased by about 9,000 or 32 percent to about 37,000 in 1990. Then the Hispanic/Latino population more than doubled in the 1990s, to more than 94,000 persons, an increase of more than 57,000 or about 155 percent. The 2010 census showed continued growth and more than 167,000 Hispanic/Latino Nebraska residents, an increase of nearly 73,000 or 77 percent since 2000.

These growth levels are the highest for major racial and ethnic categories the Census Bureau defines. The 77 percent increase among Hispanic/Latino residents compares to growth rates of 47 percent in the 2000s for non-Hispanic Asians/Pacific Islanders, 20 percent for non-Hispanic Blacks, and a mere 0.4 percent growth rate for non-Hispanic Whites in Nebraska. It is not surprising then, that Hispanics and Latinos comprise an ever increasing percentage of Nebraska's total population – only 2.3 percent of Nebraska's population was Hispanic/Latino in 1990 but that more than doubled to 5.5 percent in 2000 and nearly doubled again to 9.2 percent of the total population in 2010.

Number and Percentage of Nebraska Hispanic/Latino Residents: 1980-2010



Source: Decennial Censuses, U.S. Census Bureau

Hispanic/Latino Percentage of Nebraska's Population
Nebraska Hispanic/Latino Residents

Compiled and Prepared by: David Drozd, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research

Reasons for the Change

A population changes due to two factors – the natural phenomena of births versus deaths, and the net movement of people to/from an area. The reason for the increase in Nebraska's Hispanic/Latino population changed between the 1990s and the 2000s. In the 1990s, the increase was driven by net immigration, both from other U.S. states and other countries. Vital records show that in the 1990s

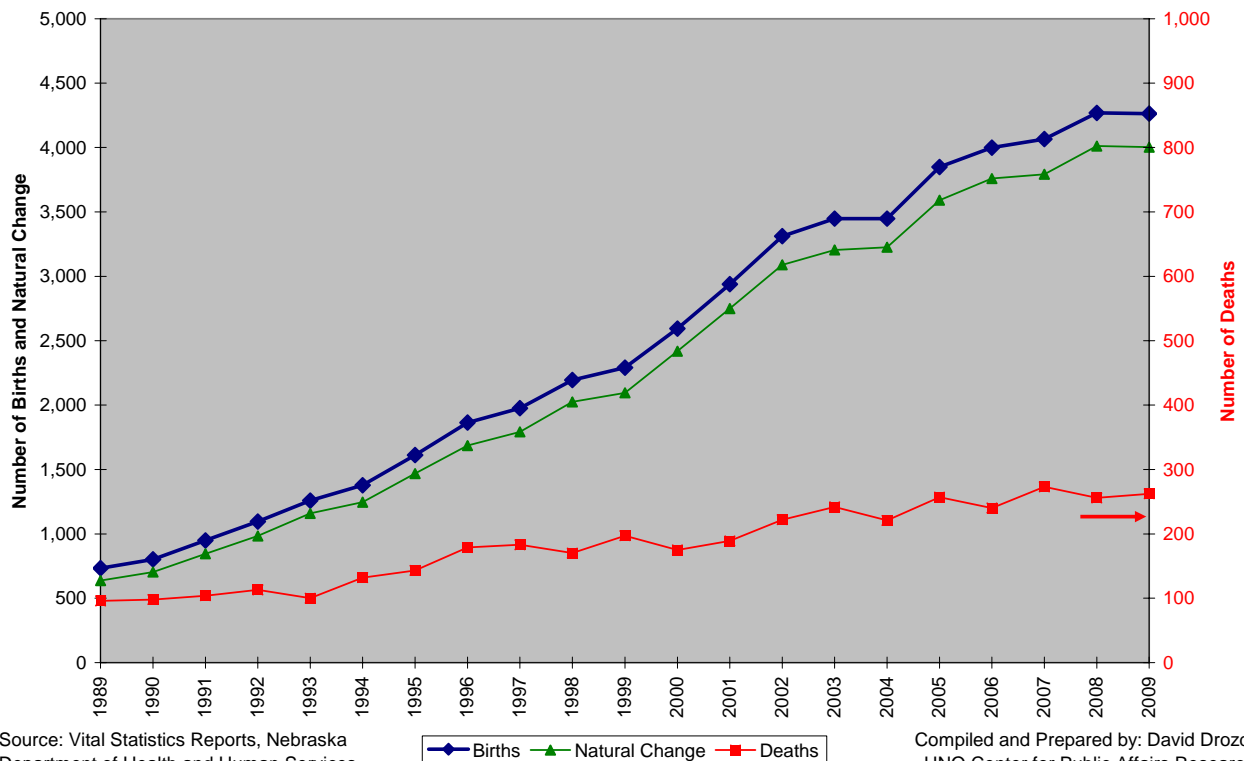
there were about 15,400 births to Hispanic/Latino residents versus about 1,400 deaths, a natural increase of about 14,000. The total Hispanic/Latino population increase in the 1990s was about 57,500, meaning that the remaining population growth of 43,500 or 76 percent of total growth was due to more Hispanic/Latino residents moving into Nebraska than moving away. The immigration rate was three times higher than the natural change rate (66.1 and 21.3 percent respectively).

During the 2000s, births to Hispanic/Latino residents increased to more than 36,000 versus about 2,300 deaths, a natural increase of 33,800, much higher than in the 1990s. The total Hispanic/Latino population increase in the 2000s was about 73,000 and thus net migration equaled about 39,200 or 54 percent of total growth. The immigration rate in the 2000s declined sharply from the 1990s and was nearly identical to the natural change rate (29.9 compared to 25.9 percent for natural change).

Implications

While it is difficult to predict the net migration of Hispanics/Latinos for Nebraska given possible changes in both the national and state economies as well as policies regarding immigration, it is clear that Nebraska's Hispanic/Latino population will continue to grow due to natural increase. The graph below shows that births to Hispanic/Latino Nebraska residents have increased over the past 20 years while deaths have remained remarkably stable. New immigrants tend to be younger and of child-bearing age while the structure of the Hispanic/Latino population has only a small portion at older ages where death rates are higher. During the most recent five years, births have averaged about 4,100 per year versus only about 260 deaths, meaning Nebraska's Hispanic/Latino population will likely increase by about 4,000 per year due to natural change alone. This will have a large impact on fields like health services and education as Hispanics/Latinos, often facing language challenges, will continue to be a growing portion of the child and young adult population.

Nebraska Births, Deaths and Natural Change: Hispanic/Latino 1989 to 2009



Source: Vital Statistics Reports, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

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