

A Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of Allen County, Indiana based on the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey

Executive Summary

Overview of the Project

In late 2010, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Fund awarded a grant to the Community Research Institute at IPFW (CRI) to review, analyze and make available to community the demographic and socio-economic data on Allen County being released by the U.S. Bureau of the Census through both the American Community Survey (ACS) program and the 2010 Decennial Census. There have been numerous changes in the population composition and economic condition of our community over the past ten years, and those changes can be assessed by reviewing this Census information. The population continues to become more racially and ethnically diverse and the impact of slower economic growth has impacted our residents.

Two of the key focus areas of the Knight Foundation Fund are to improve community leadership and engagement. Access to reliable and current indicators of community trends can be a significant foundation for good organizational decision-making. It should also be a foundation for further meaningful community engagement in addressing issues highlighted by this statistical profile.

2010 and 2011 is also a watershed mark in the process used by the Bureau of the Census for collecting and presenting traditional “census” data. Considerable information is now currently available more frequently than once every ten years through the annual American Community Survey. Concurrently, substantial less information will come from the traditional decennial census that we have become accustomed to as the primary source of data regarding the demographic, social and economic characteristics of our residents. The annual American Community Survey data certainly offers a more timely perspective of the community than waiting for the Census information every ten years. However, because of the smaller sample sizes we must live with much larger margins of error in the data, particularly when examining smaller geographic areas such as Census Tracts. A more detailed explanation of these changes is presented in the “Reengineering the Census” component of this project. Users of the data are strongly encouraged to read that section first in order to better understand the important difference between the information gathered through the American Community Survey and the decennial Census.

In order to present the information available from both the American Community Survey and the 2010 Census in a manner that can best be used by organizations and individuals in our community, this project has been divided into seven primary subcomponents – Population, Households, Educational Attainment, Income, Poverty, Housing, and Economic Well-Being and Other Census Data. Each component concentrates on a specific focus area, but the understanding of the changes taking place in the community is best gained by reviewing all seven. Key observations from the data are made at the beginning of each section. All seven components of the project, along with the “Reengineering the Census” can be found at www.ipfw.edu/cri. Note that all planned updates by CRI to include decennial census data release later in 2011 and 2012 have now been incorporated into this Profile.

In 2003, the Community Research Institute prepared a review of the information from the 2000 Census which was presented in the report entitled *A Demographic Profile of Allen County*. Users of the information in the current project may also wish to reference that document which remains available at the CRI website (<http://new.ipfw.edu/dotAsset/174219.pdf>). Numerous comparisons with the information presented in the 2003 study are made in the seven subcomponents of this project.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Fund is held at the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne. The Community Research Institute wishes to express its gratitude for the financial support provided to this project from the Fund. Additionally, the City of Fort Wayne has provided assistance with the mapping of the information presented throughout the report subcomponents. Paul Spoelhof, Senior Planner with the City's Division of Community Development was instrumental in providing this graphic assistance.

Key Observations

What are the key findings that arise from this review of the American Community Survey and 2010 Census data for Allen County? Certainly individual readers of the project's reports will find those facts and trends which are most critical to their interests. The Community Research Institute would suggest that the following observations are among the most significant. However, we urge those interesting in understanding the demographic dynamics of Allen County to not stop with just these points – review the entire project and come to your own conclusions.

*The population of Allen County during the past decade grew more rapidly than did the population of the state of Indiana, but less rapidly than did the nation (Allen County growth at 7.1%; Indiana growth at 6.6%; United States growth at 9.7%). This was the same relative pattern that was experienced in each of the past two decades. Our population growth, as documented by the 2010 Census was actually higher than the state demographer's recent projections for Allen County.

*Allen County's population continues to become more diverse. Our Hispanic population grew by 66% over the past decade from 13,877 in 2000 to 23,093 in 2010. Our Asian population grew by 109% over the decade from 4,652 in 2000 to 9,721 in 2010. Those reporting to be of "Two or More Races" increased by 76% from 5,946 in 2000 to 10,477 in 2010. The Black or African American population grew by 11%. Conversely, the growth in the White population was 2%.

*During the past few decades the growth in households in Allen County has exceeded the rate of growth for the total county population. This contributed to the demand for more housing units than would have been expected based on population growth alone. In the most recent decade this pattern changed and the number of households grew at the same pace as did total population.

*The median household income in Allen County has now fallen below the national median household income level. While we have seen this change coming through other sources of income data, the 2005-2009 American Community Survey data reinforces the relative decline in household income (Allen County MHI in 2005-09 was \$47,901; Indiana MHI in 2005-09 was \$47,465; and the United States MHI in 2005-09 was \$51,425).

*The Allen County adult educational attainment by level of education is similar to or better than the state or nation until the Masters Degree or higher level. We have actually lost comparative ground at the later level since 2000.

*There are significant differences in educational attainment in Allen County by race and ethnicity. Of particular concern are segments of the population which have high percentages of those without a high school diploma. For example, almost 40 percent of Hispanic females do not have a high school diploma – compared with 35 percent a decade ago.

*Not surprisingly, the data illustrates a strong correlation between educational attainment and income. 20 of the 23 Census Tracts where more than 20% of adults did not have a high school diploma were also poverty or extreme

poverty areas. Conversely, 9 of the top 11 Census Tracts ranked by Median household Income are among the top 11 Census Tracts when measured by percentage of adults with a Bachelors Degree or higher.

*Blacks in Allen County have made substantial gains in the percentage of adults with Associate degrees and with Bachelor degrees.

*The 2009 American Community Survey data was the first time we experienced the percentage of Allen County's population being "in poverty" as defined by the Census being higher than the percentage for either the state or the nation. The American Community survey indicated that 17,883 Allen County households were in poverty in 2009, up from 11,071 in 2000.

*One out of every five children in Allen County in 2009 was living "in poverty". This is an increase from the 2000 Census when one out of every eight children lived in poverty (12.9 percent in 1999). Child poverty in Allen County is now at the same level as nationally, rather than our historical place of child poverty being substantially below the national average.

*The gap in the ratio between the Allen County White population Median Household Income and that of other racial and ethnic population is growing. The gap for Blacks and Hispanics is substantially greater in Allen County than it is nationally.

*The percentage of Allen County owner-occupied housing units without a mortgage has increased in Allen County over the past decade, notwithstanding the impact of the recession and the relative decline in incomes. However, the percent of mortgage-free owner-occupied units in Allen County, 26.4 percent, is below the state and national averages of 27.9 percent and 30.3 percent respectively.

*14.6 percent of Allen County residents indicated that they had no health insurance coverage based on the 2005-09 American community Survey. This was slightly lower than the national average of 15.1 percent.

These are but a few of the important observations than arise from the data. There is much more within the respective subject area reports and we encourage you to examine each and draw your own conclusions regarding the vitality of and challenges facing our community.



Prepared by
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