

NEWS > PENNSYLVANIA NEWS

4 facts about Berks County that the 2020 Census revealed

The county grew by 5% in the past decade, but how it grew tells a bigger story.





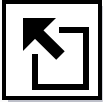
(Reading Eagle)

9/17/13 photo Ryan McFadden Aerial photographs around Berks County; city of Reading landscape, skyline, overview, sovereign center, courthouse, services center, penn street



By **ADAM RICHTER** | arichter@readingeagle.com | Reading Eagle

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The 2020 census revealed on Thursday that the [Berks County population grew by nearly 5%](#) in the last decade, reaching nearly 429,000.

A deeper look Friday into the 2020 census shows some of the ways that Berks County and Pennsylvania have changed over the decade:

Multiracial identity became a much bigger part of the census in 2020 than it was a decade ago.

In Berks, for example, fewer than 5,000 residents identified themselves as more than one race — just over 1% of the county population.

Fast-forward 10 years, and it's now 9% in Berks, ranking the county third in the the state in percentage of multiracial population.

Only Lehigh County at 10% and Monroe County at 9.6% were higher. The number of Berks County residents who reported being two or more races rose more than sevenfold from the last census to 38,465.

That's higher than the population of nearly all municipalities in Berks. It also affects other demographics.

White-alone population falling

The number of people who identify solely as white has dropped over the last decade.

In Berks County, the white-alone population fell by 7,299, a drop of 2.3% from 2010. The county went from 76.7% white in 2010 to 72.08% white last year.

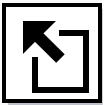
The same thing happened in 61 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Philadelphia, Chester, Lancaster, Lebanon, Cumberland and Butler counties were the only counties that saw an increase in people who identify as white alone.

Some of it is tied to overall population changes.

Susquehanna and Cameron counties had the biggest population losses, and they also lost the most in the white-alone demographic. Cumberland, Lebanon, Lehigh and Chester, meanwhile, saw some of the biggest overall population gains.

In Berks, most municipalities lost residents who identified as white-alone but Reading gained in that demographic.

Those who gained ground in that demographic tended to be the



Of the increase, 3,261 identified as white-alone.

Nearly 30% identified as white-alone in 2020, up from 28.7% in 2010.

In Ontelaunee Township, the population rose by more than 900 — a 50% jump from 2010 to 2020. The white-alone population rose by 733. But the percentage of people who identify as white-alone fell, from 83% in 2010 to 81% in 2020.

There were only five places where the percentage of people identifying as white alone increased from 2010: Reading, New Morgan, Lenhartsville and Bern and Marion townships.

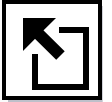
Latino population growth

The Latino population in Reading rose by more than 14,000 from 2010 to 2020. Latinos are now 69% of the city's population.

The Census Bureau defines Hispanic or Latino as an ethnicity, not a race, so Latinos can be of any race. The numbers released Thursday don't parse racial groups by ethnicity, so it's impossible to get a closer look than simply comparing the Latino population to the non-Latino population.

All but five municipalities in Berks saw gains in Latino residents.

The only ones that didn't were New Morgan, Lenhartsville and Marion, Bethel and Upper Bern townships. Every other place had increases of 10% or more. In half of Berks' municipalities, the Latino population more than doubled.



Where Black population rose

The Black-alone population in Berks rose by about 5,000 in the last decade, from 16,517 in 2010 to 21,992 in 2020.

Reading's Black-alone population rose to 10,779, an increase of 23%.

Blacks now make up 11% of the city's population.

The other municipalities that saw the largest increase in the Black

But West Reading, Mount Penn, Sinking Spring and Douglas, Maxatawny, Muhlenberg and Spring townships have the highest percentage of residents who identify as Black alone: between 6.2% and 8.4%.

But that's not the complete picture of Berks County's Black population.

As noted, in 2020 the Census Bureau asked more detailed questions about race.

So while the number of people who identified as Black-alone in Berks was 21,992, the number who identified as Black alone or in combination with another race was significantly higher: 32,326.

In Reading, 5,317 identify as Black with at least one other race.

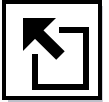
The uncertainty principle

In 2010, the Berks County population was 411,442. Its 2020 estimate was 421,017.

The actual 2020 census, however, showed that Berks has 428,849 people.

The 2020 population estimate was wildly different from Thursday's population numbers because the estimates were based on trends in 2010.

Have a question about the 2020 census? Email arichter@readingeagle.com.



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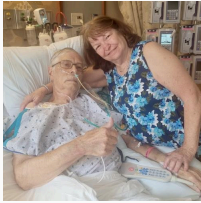


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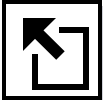


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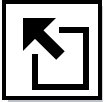
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