

## **Demographic Makeup and Population Projections for Southern Nevada: Understanding the Emerging Healthcare Needs in Our Community**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Even with a leveling-off of population growth from 2008 to 2011, Southern Nevada had one of the fastest growing populations in the nation over the past decade. While population growth is projected to increase for the next ten years, the rate of growth will be slower than in the past decade. The Hispanic population, as a percentage of the total population, is projected to surpass the White population somewhere near the year 2030. The Southern Nevada population is aging, as the median age in the region increased between 2000 and 2010. The 65+ age group is projected to increase as a percentage of the total population. Public health programs will be necessary to meet the unique needs of these two segments of the population. The region will need culturally competent health care providers and public health programs and an increase in geriatric care availability, chronic disease prevention, and caregiver support.

Southern NV residents had a higher median household income and a lower percentage of people living below the poverty level when compared to the nation. However, compared to peer regions, Southern Nevada had a lower percentage of residents with a Bachelor's degree or graduate/professional degree and highest rates of unemployment. These findings are of concern because of the relationship between health and education and the health consequences of being unemployed.

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is important for public health professionals to know the demographic makeup of

the people they serve to ensure they offer appropriate and needed services. To plan effectively, we need to know who we currently serve and how the demographics of our population are projected to change over time. A growing population, such as in Southern Nevada, needs public health services to grow to accommodate the people living in the area. Population projections are important for public health professionals to plan for the future needs of their community. As our population ages over the next two decades, they are more likely to experience chronic diseases and disabilities and will need access to services and programs such as long term care and geriatric services (Hebert, Scherr, Bienias, Bennett, & Evans, 2003; Houtenville, A. J., Ruiz, T, 2011). The projections also indicate a shift in the racial/ethnic composition of our community. These shifts alert public health professionals in Southern Nevada of the need for culturally appropriate intervention strategies and a need for diversity among public health employees.

### **METHODS**

This manuscript focuses on the demographics of Southern Nevada, how they have changed over time and how they are projected to change. These data will then be used to recommend emerging approaches to prepare for future health care needs. Because of the unique population shifts in Southern Nevada over the past ten to twenty years, few comparisons were made to peer regions with the exception of unemployment and educational attainment. Data sources for demographics and population projections included: US Decennial Census 1990, 2000 and 2010, US Census American Community Survey [ACS] 2006-2010, US Census ACS 2008-2010, US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2008-2012, and the Center for Business & Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas population projections for Clark County 2012-2050. The population projections are a yearly, collaborative effort between the Center for Business & Economic Research (CBER), the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC), Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition (SNRPC), and a group of community demographers and analysts. Because Clark County, Las Vegas Metropolitan Area and Southern Nevada are the same

geographic area, they are used interchangeably throughout the manuscript and are referred to as ‘the region’.

**RESULTS**

**1.1 POPULATION CHANGE**

Southern Nevada’s population increased dramatically between 1990 and 2010 with a 163 percent increase

in the total population (Table 1). Based on US Census estimates, the population of Southern Nevada reached the highest level in 2011 at 1,969,975 people. This represented a 1% population increase from 2010 (US Census, 2012).

**Table 1.**

Southern Nevada Population Growth, 1990-2010 (Clark County Comprehensive Plan, 2011)

	1990	2000	2010	% Change, 2000 - 2010
Clark County	741,459	1,375,765	1,951,269	+163%

Southern Nevada will continue to grow over the next two decades, but at a slower rate than that of the 1990 – 2010 period. Population projections released by the University of Nevada at Las Vegas’ CBER in June 2012 show that the area will continue to grow in the

coming decades. However, the growth rate will be lower than that between 1990 and 2010. (Table 2). Most of the growth is expected as a result of new employment opportunities and net in-migration.

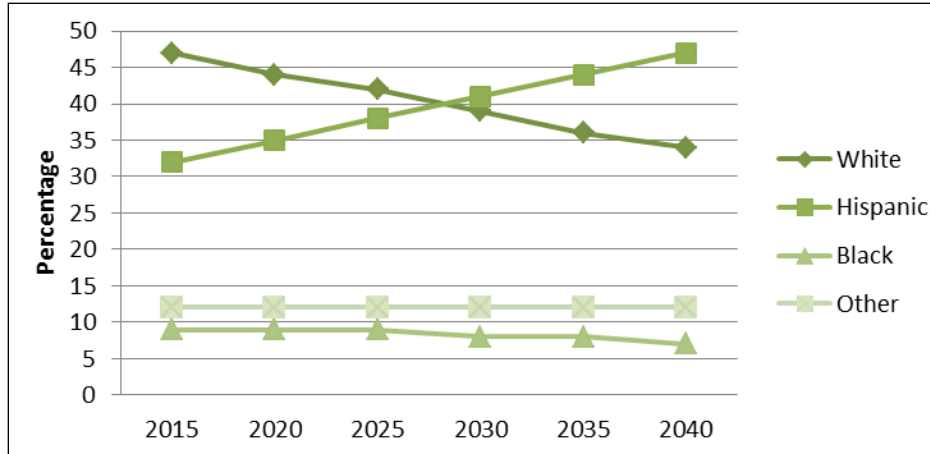
**Table 2.**

Southern Nevada Population Projections, 2010-2030 (CBER, Population Forecast, 2012)

	2010	2020	2030	Change, 2010 - 2030	% Change, 2000 - 2010
Clark County	1,951,269	2,365,000	2,699,000	747,731	38%

Over the next two decades, Southern Nevada will see a large increase in the Hispanic population as a percentage of the total population. The increase in the Hispanic population as a percentage of the overall population corresponds with a decrease in the White population as a percentage of the overall population,

with relatively no change in percent population for Black and other ethnic groups (Figure 1). By 2030, the Hispanic population is projected to be a higher percentage of the population than the White population



**Figure 1:** Population Forecast by Race/Ethnicity in Southern Nevada (CBER, Population Forecast, 2012)

**1.2 HOUSEHOLD TYPE**

Southern Nevada’s percentage of traditional family households has declined. In 2000, over 66 percent of the area’s households were family households (i.e., composed of persons related to each other biologically or by marriage). Married couples comprised more than 48 percent of the households and almost 22 percent were the traditional married

with children type. In 2010, however, family households decreased to 65.4 percent, married couples to 45 percent, and married with children households to 19.9 percent (Table 3). This decrease was accompanied by growth in single-person households and non-family households: non-family households rose from 33.7 percent to 34.6 percent and single-person households rose from 24.5 percent to 25.3 percent.

**Table 3.**

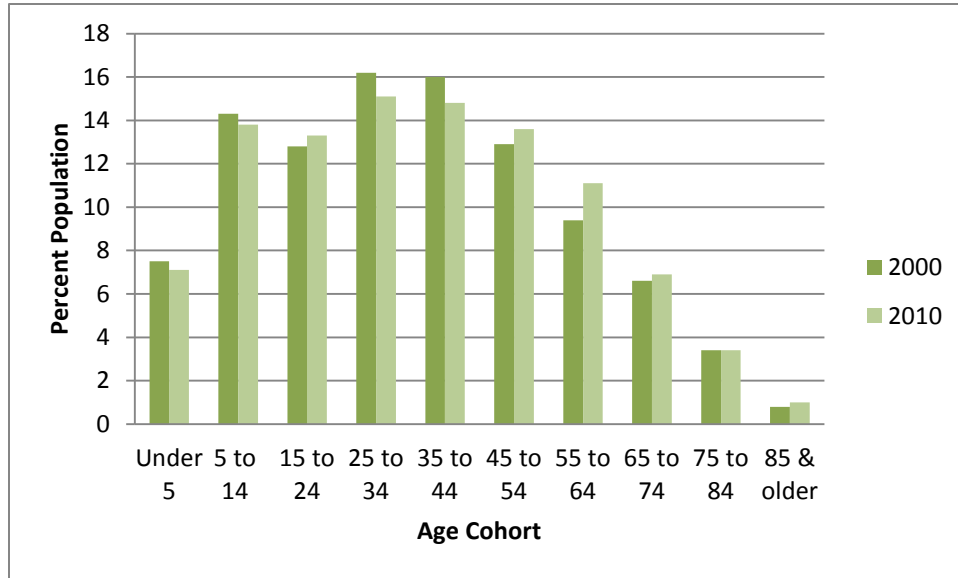
Change in Household Type in Southern Nevada, 2000-2010 (US Census Bureau, Decennial Data, 2000 & 2010)

Household Type	Percentage of Regional Households, 2000	Percentage of Regional Households, 2010
Family	66.3%	65.4%
<i>Married Couple</i>	48.7 %	45%
<i>Married with Children (subset of “Married couple”)</i>	21.7 %	19.9%
Nonfamily	33.7%	34.6%
<i>Single-Person</i>	24.5 %	25.3%

**1.3 POPULATION BY AGE**

The number of households with residents aged 55 and older increased in the past decade in Southern Nevada. Growth during the past decade reflected the aging of the baby boomer generation with the largest rates of increase occurring among the older age

groups (Figure 2). Between 2000 and 2010, the highest growth rates of all age cohorts were those aged 85 and older (87 percent) and 55 to 64 (67 percent). Overall, the 65+ age group is projected to increase as a percentage of the total population from 2015 (15 percent) to 2050 (23%).

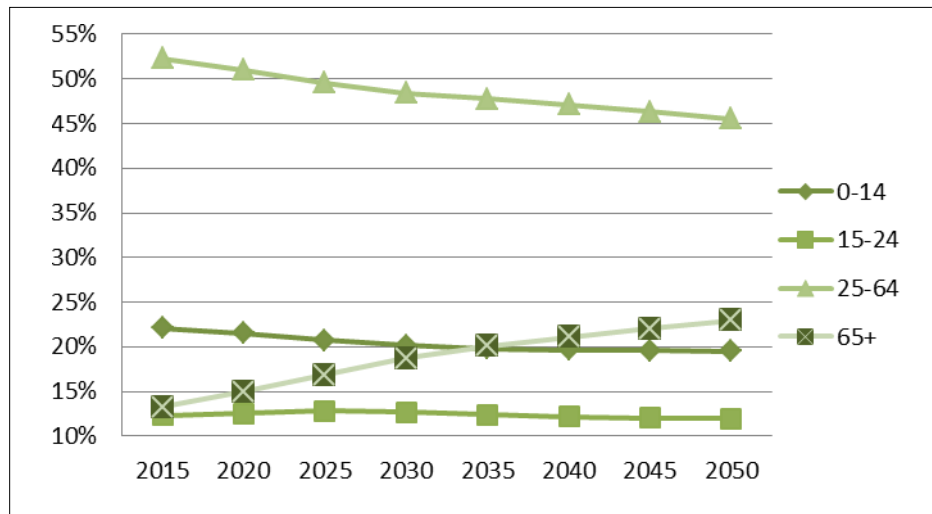


**Figure 2:** Change in Age Cohorts in Southern Nevada, 2000-2010 (US Census Bureau, Decennial Data, 2000 & 2010)

**1.4 AGE PROJECTIONS**

While the 65+ age group is projected to have a 10 percent increase as a percentage of the total population from 2015 to 2050, all other age groups are projected to decrease. Although still the largest

overall component of total population, the 25-64 age group is anticipated to decrease by 7 percent (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** Population Projections, by Age Group in Southern Nevada, 2015-2050 (CBER, Population Forecast (2012)).

**1.5 RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY**

Southern Nevada is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Between 2000 and 2010, all of

area's non-white populations increased. The Hispanic population grew by over 88 percent, representing almost 30 percent of the region's total population. The Black population grew by 56 percent,

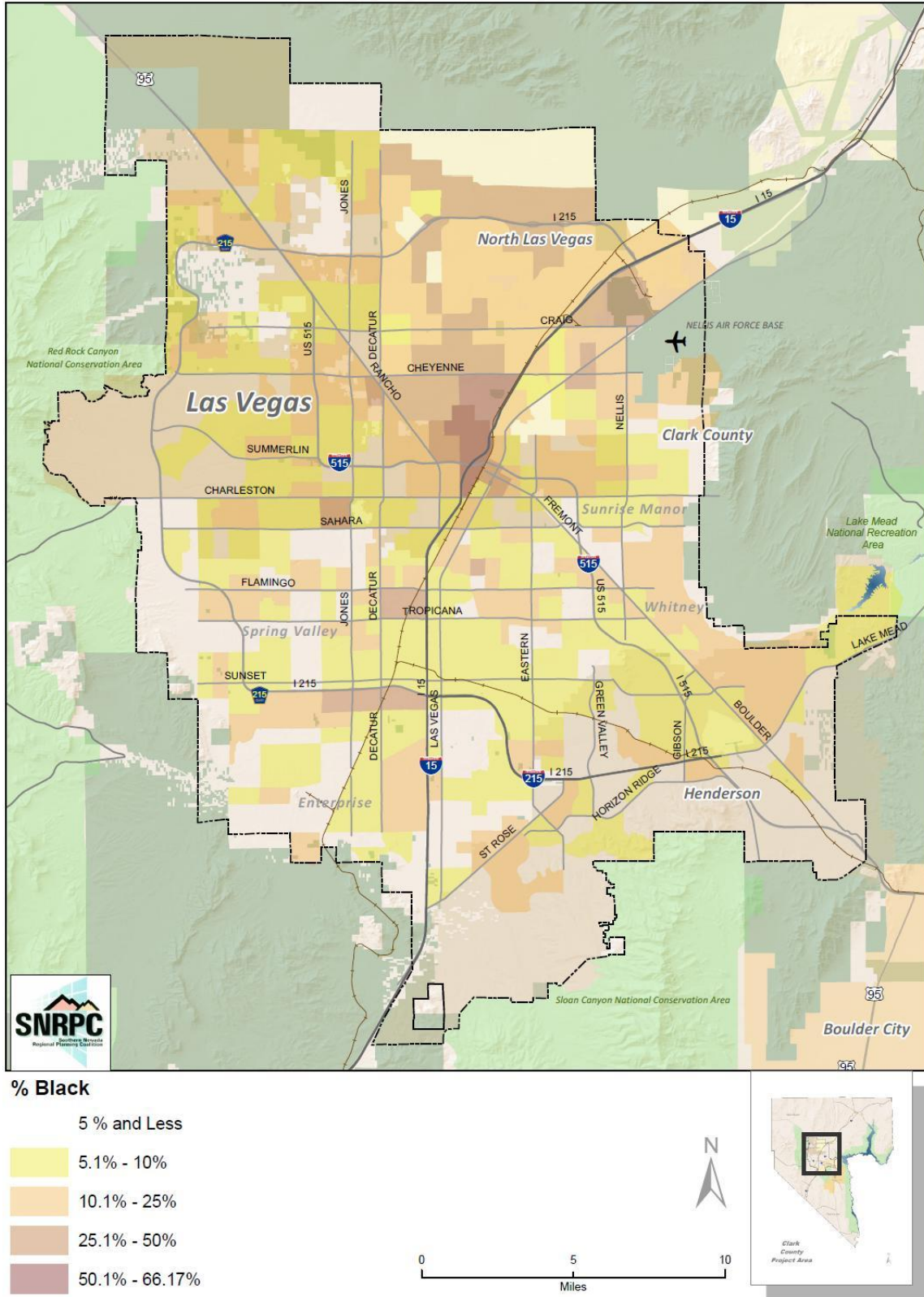
representing 10 percent of the region’s total population. The Asian population grew by over 127 percent, representing 8.5 percent of the region’s total population. Minorities now make up 52 percent of Southern Nevada’s total population (an increase from 39.8 percent in 2000) representing a majority, minority (Table 4). Similar trends are occurring

across the nation (Taylor & Cohn, 2012). Over the last decade, minorities, especially Hispanics and Asians, accounted for the majority of the nation’s population growth. Black and Hispanic populations as a percent of the population vary across the area as shown in Figures 4 and 5.

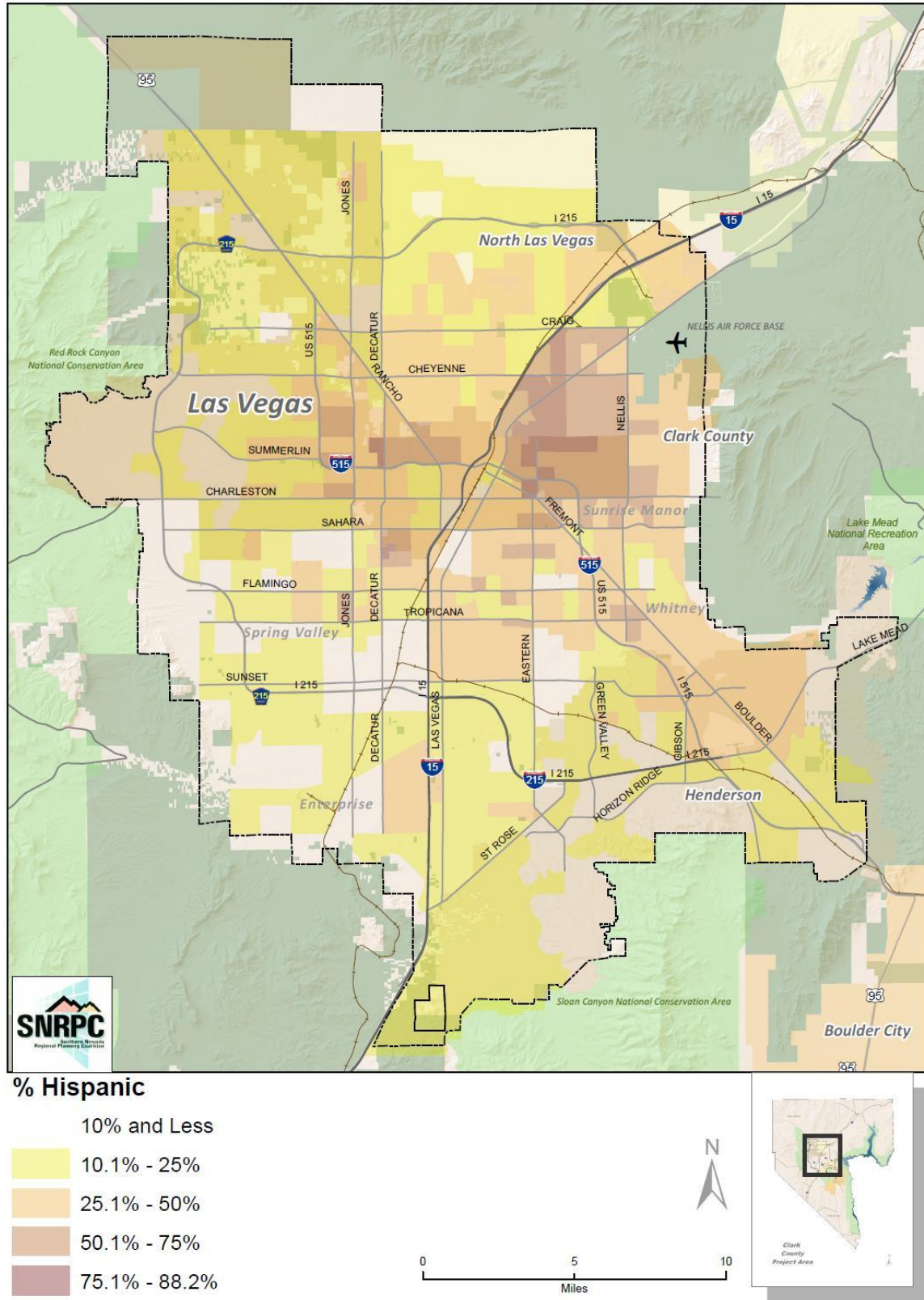
**Table 4.**

Changes in Race/Ethnic Composition in Southern Nevada, 2000-2010 (US Census Bureau, Decennial Data, 2000 & 2010)

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>2000 Population</b>	<b>2010 Population</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>% of Population 2000</b>	<b>% of Population 2010</b>	<b>Difference in % 2010 - 2000</b>
Non-Hispanic						
White	828,669	935,955	12.9%	60.2%	48.0%	-12.3%
Hispanic	302,143	568,644	88.2%	22.0%	29.1%	7.2%
Black	124,885	194,821	56.0%	9.1%	10.0%	0.9%
Asian	72,547	165,121	127.6%	5.3%	8.5%	3.2%
Other	47,521	86,728	82.5%	3.5%	4.4%	1.0%
Total population	1,375,765	1,951,269	41.8%			



**Figure 4:** 2010 Black Population by Census Tract in Southern Nevada (US Census Bureau, ACS 2008-2010)



**Figure 5:** 2010 Hispanic Population by Census Tract in Southern Nevada (US Census Bureau, ACS 2008-2010)

**1.6 HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

The majority of Southern Nevada’s households have annual incomes less under \$50,000. In 2010, 51 percent of the region’s households earned less than \$50,000 annually, and 33.7 percent earned less than \$35,000 (Table 5). Compared to the nation, Southern Nevada residents have a higher median household

income and a lower percentage of people living below the poverty level. The median household income in was \$56,258, compared to a national median household income of \$51,914. In addition, 11.7 percent of the population lived below the poverty level in the region compared to 13.8 percent in the nation. The federal poverty level for a family of four in 2012 was \$23,050 (HHS, 2012)

**Table 5.**

Annual Household Income in Southern Nevada, 2010 (US Census Bureau, ACS 2006-2010)

<b>Annual Household Income</b>	<b>% of Total Households</b>
Less than \$25,000	21.4%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	12.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	17.1%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	15.2%
\$150,000 or more	9.3%

Annual household incomes are higher for White and Asian households compared to Black and Hispanic households. In 2010, 24.6 percent of Asian households and 21.6 percent of White households had incomes higher than \$100,000 (Table 6). In comparison, 10.5 percent of Black and 19.8 percent of Hispanic households had incomes higher than

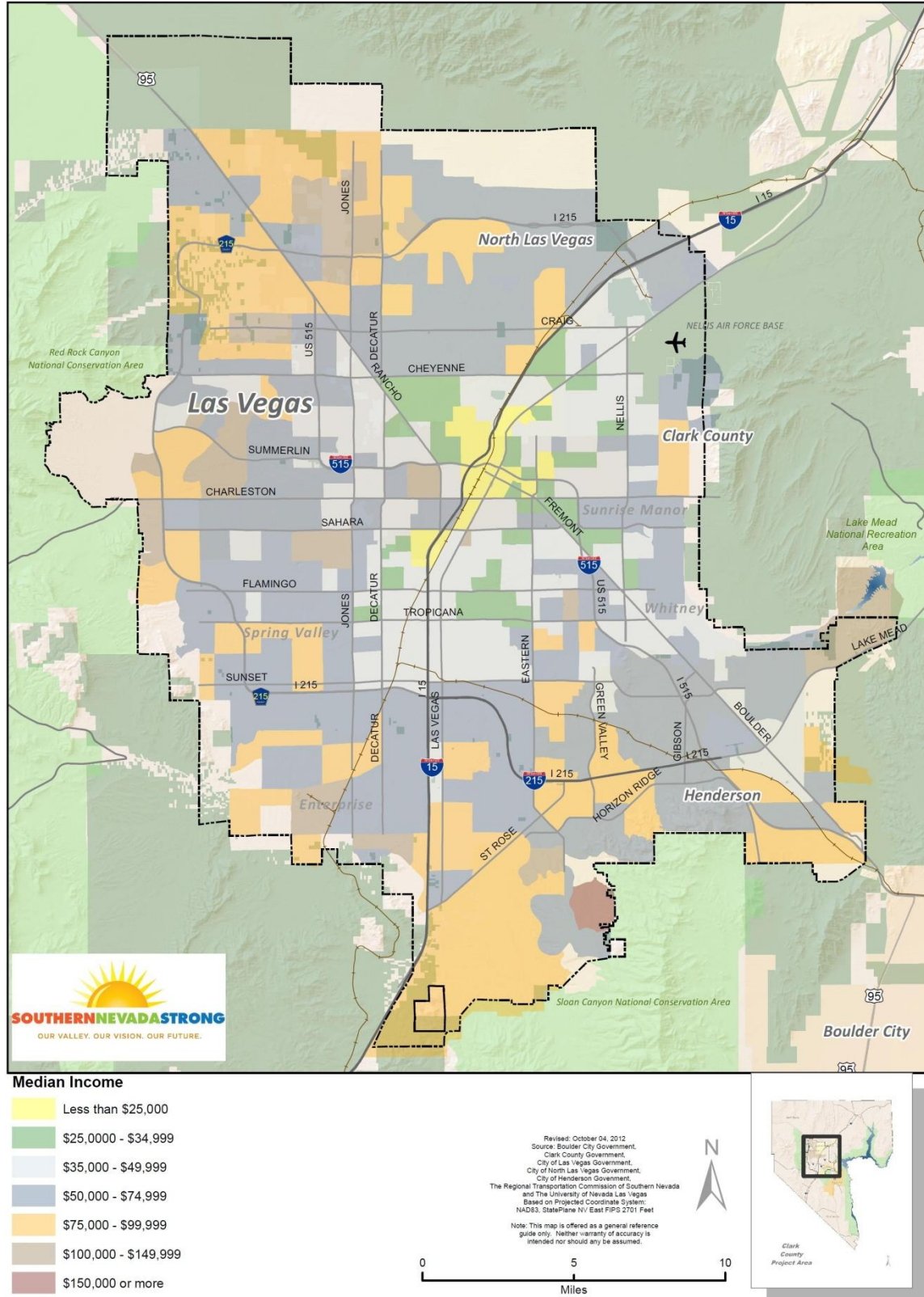
\$100,000. Conversely, 44.5 percent of Black and 36.9 percent of Hispanic households had incomes less than \$35,000 annually. By comparison, 28.7 percent of White and 26.1 percent of Asian households had household incomes less than \$35,000 annually. Median household income varies greatly across Southern Nevada as shown in Figure 6.

**Table 6.**

Annual Household Income by Race/Ethnicity in Southern Nevada, 2010 (US Census Bureau, ACS 2008-2010)

<b>Annual Household Income</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Less than \$24,999	18.00%	17.20%	31.10%	18.90%	21.60%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	10.70%	8.90%	13.40%	7.00%	15.30%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	14.80%	14.10%	15.30%	16.00%	18.10%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	21.00%	21.00%	19.90%	26.80%	22.40%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	13.80%	14.40%	9.60%	16.00%	11.90%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	13.40%	15.80%	7.40%	10.60%	7.90%
\$150,000 or more	8.20%	8.50%	3.10%	4.70%	2.90%



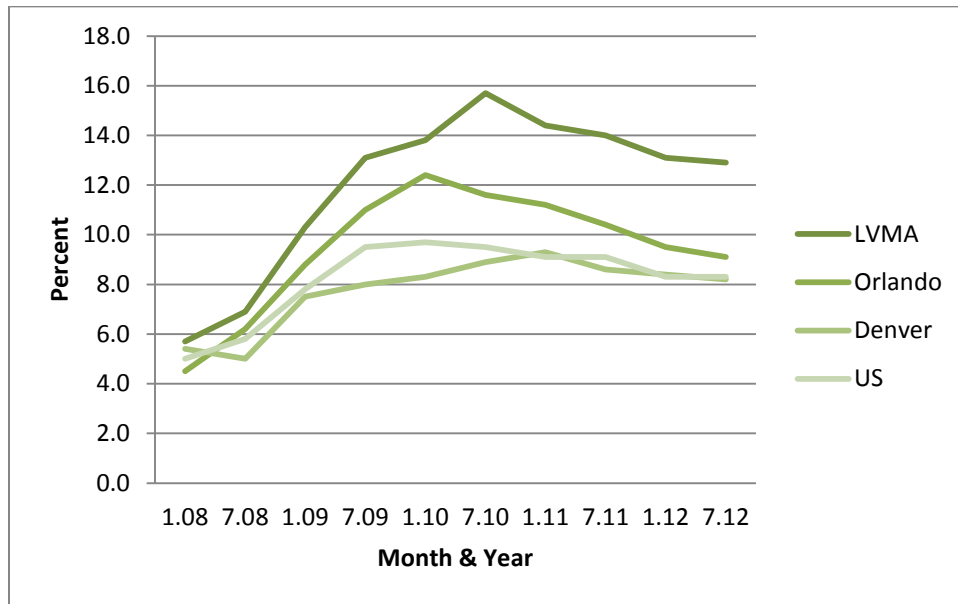


**Figure 6:** 2010 Median Household Income by Census Tract in Southern Nevada (US Census Bureau, ACS 2008-2010)

**1.7 UNEMPLOYMENT**

Unemployment rates in Southern Nevada exceeded national and peer region unemployment rates between 2008 and 2012 (Figure 7). Southern Nevada was hit hard during the economic recession that started in 2008. Nevada had the highest unemployment rates of any state between 2008 and

1st quarter 2012 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). High unemployment rates and slow economic recovery can be linked to Southern Nevada’s heavy reliance on consumption-based industry sectors (construction, tourism and gaming, retail) which are disproportionately impacted by swings in the economy (The Brookings Institute, 2011).

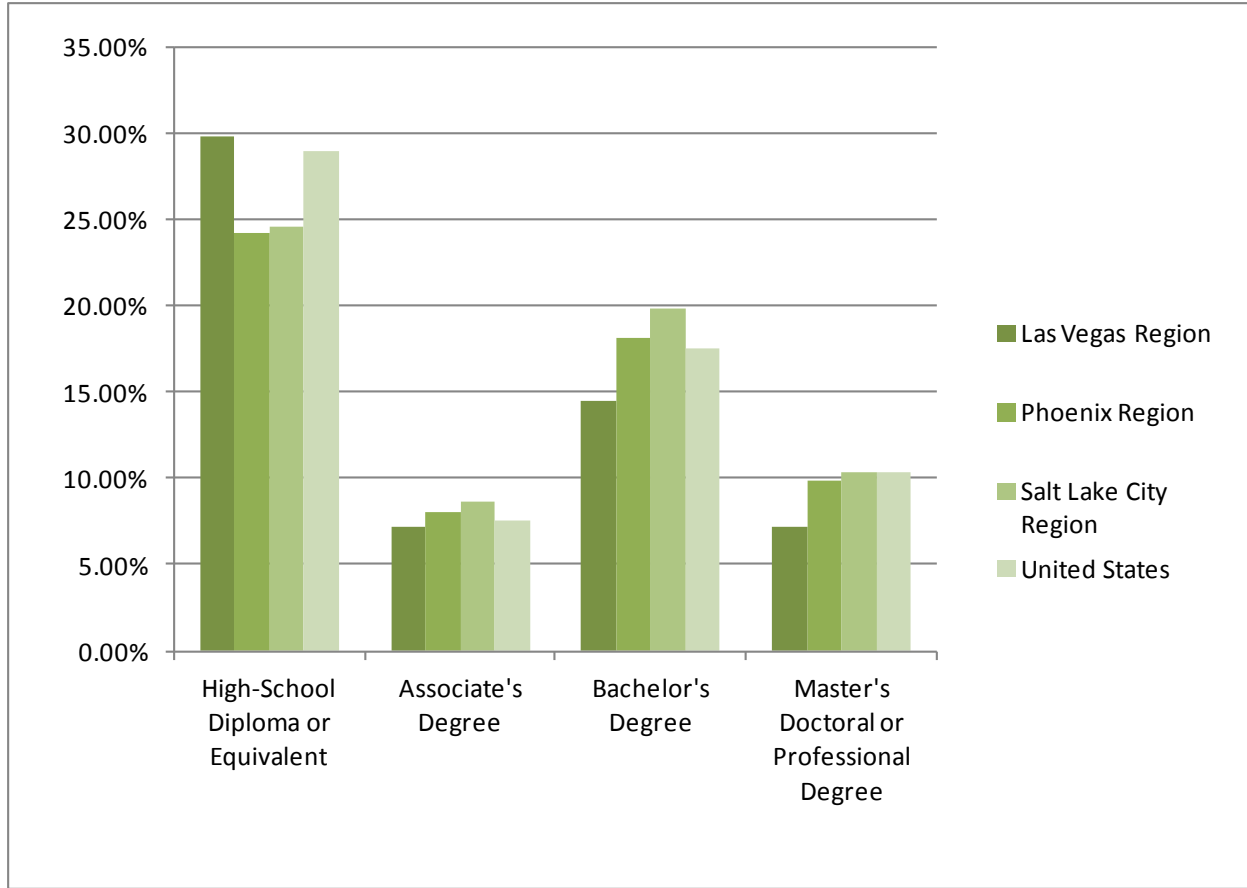


**Figure 7:** Unemployment Rates, January 2008 – July 2012. (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012)

**1.8 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

Educational attainment in Southern Nevada is different from Mountain West metropolitan areas. The percentage of residents who have successfully pursued higher education is lower than both the

Mountain West metropolitan areas and the national average. Among the population 25 years and older, 14.5 percent hold a bachelor’s degree and 7.2 percent hold a master’s, professional, or doctoral degree in Southern Nevada (Figure 8).



**Figure 8:** Educational Attainment, Population 25 and Older in Southern Nevada, 2010 (US Census Bureau, ACS 2006-2010)

Educational attainment is higher for White and Asian populations and lower for Hispanic and Black populations in Southern Nevada. Among the population 25 and older, Asian (38.5 percent) and

White (21.5 percent) have completed a Bachelor’s degree or higher (Table 7). By comparison, Black (16.2 percent) and Hispanic (8.2 percent) residents have completed a bachelor’s degree or higher.

**Table 7:**

Educational Attainment, Population 25 and Older by Race/Ethnicity in Southern Nevada, 2010 (US Census Bureau, ACS 2006-2010)

Highest Educational Attainment	White	Asian	Black	Other	Hispanic
High-School Diploma or Equivalent	26.2%	20.1%	29.4%	27.3%	26.1%
Associate's Degree	6.7%	9.2%	7.9%	12.1%	4.1%
Bachelor's Degree	14.1%	29.8%	10.4%	5.0%	6.1%
Master's Doctoral or Professional Degree	7.4%	8.7%	5.8%	3.5%	2.1%

## DISCUSSION

The population in Southern Nevada is getting older and more ethnically diverse. Over the next twenty years, the Hispanic population and the elderly population are projected to have the greatest growth in Southern Nevada. Southern Nevada is likely to be a majority, minority population by 2030. Public health programs will be necessary to meet the unique needs of these two segments of the population. The region will need culturally competent health care providers and public health programs and an increase in geriatric care, chronic disease prevention, and caregiver support. Based on our data, specific attention should be paid to the Asian and Hispanic populations as they are increasing the most rapidly. Some examples of educational needs may include bilingual health care workers and health literature available in multiple languages. Educational programs such as nursing, dentistry, medical schools and public health programs should be alerted to these emerging trends and place a focus on preparing future healthcare providers to meet the needs. Pipeline programs that encourage underrepresented minority groups to pursue degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) will become increasingly important to prepare for the future racial/ethnic diverse healthcare workforce needed in Southern Nevada. Based on our Economic Development and Education manuscript, healthcare is one of the strongest yet underserved sectors Southern Nevada. Expanding the healthcare workforce to meet the needs of our changing populations will allow for economic diversification and economic growth.

Southern Nevada residents have a higher median household income and a lower percentage of people living below the poverty level. However, we also have fewer people with college degrees. Income and education in the valley vary based on race/ethnicity. Areas of town with a higher percentage of Black and Hispanic populations also have a lower percentage of people with a college degree. Higher educational attainment and income cluster in mostly White areas of the community. Increasing the number of people who pursue higher education is essential and has shown to improve many social determinants that are directly linked to

health outcomes such as lower rates of chronic disease and risky health behaviors. Again, a focus on preparing health professionals from underrepresented groups to meet the needs of our changing community would also result in an increase in the number of people with higher education degrees, particularly the Hispanic population.

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