A Look at How Northwest Arkansas’ Population is Changing
Friends,

Northwest Arkansas is growing and changing. Driven by economic opportunity and the low cost of living, our region continues to grow, become younger and increasingly more diverse. This is good news for us all.

In addition to increasing cultural diversity that enriches everyday life in Northwest Arkansas, foreign-born residents contribute billions of dollars to our economy each year. This impact will continue to grow, and going forward, it is critical that we take steps to integrate everyone who chooses to live here into the social and economic fabric of the region. We know that diverse communities perform better economically, and in our increasingly global economy, the regions that embrace these challenges of bringing diverse communities together will thrive.

We put this summary together to show the breadth of minority populations in the region and present information about how our region will change over the next five years. Northwest Arkansas is changing by the day. We must take proactive steps to harness the talents and energy of everyone who chooses to make this region home to ensure that it remains one of the nation’s best places to live and work.

Northwest Arkansas’ diversity today looks nothing like it did in 1990 when 95.82 percent of the population was white and Hispanic/Latinos accounted for just 1.3 percent of the population.

Nelson Peacock
President and CEO
Northwest Arkansas Council
The economic contributions of people from all over the world to the Northwest Arkansas economy cannot be overstated. Those who contribute include people who move to the region from other parts of the U.S. and from other counties as well as students attending local colleges and universities.

“Global Talent: The Economic Engine of Northwest Arkansas,” a report published in 2016, found that the foreign-born population contributed $3.1 billion to the region’s economy in 2014.

It’s with that economic importance in mind that the Northwest Arkansas Council created initiatives focused on maximizing inclusion efforts that benefit the entire region, unlock the full potential of all members of the Northwest Arkansas community, and position the region as a globally competitive 21st Century leader.

WelcomeNWA works with Northwest Arkansas counties and cities to implement policies and strategies that attract, welcome and integrate all who choose to call Northwest Arkansas home.

EngageNWA works to broaden integration and engagement of the business community and recent graduates to strengthen the regional economy and position Northwest Arkansas as a community of engaged global talent.

Visit www.welcomenwa.org or www.engagenwa.com to learn more about the work that’s occurring to make living in Northwest Arkansas easier for newcomers.

For Walmart to be successful, we need diversity of thought, gender and every other dimension to be that creative, winning business.

- Doug McMillon
President and CEO, Walmart

Researchers have documented that students’ exposure to other students who are different from themselves and the novel ideas and challenges that such exposure brings leads to improved cognitive skills, including critical thinking and problem solving.

- Amy Stuart Wells, Lauren Fox, Diane Cordova-Cobo
The Northwest Arkansas Council identified a select group of high-performing peer regions and used them as benchmarks in its creation of the Greater Northwest Arkansas Development Strategy. Given the importance of diversity and inclusion to local economies, diversity statistics about those regions are included in this report.

The consensus at the time the strategy was developed was that it made sense to make comparisons to contemporary, high-performing metropolitan statistical areas such as Des Moines-West Des Moines, Iowa; Madison, Wisc.; Austin-Round Rock, Texas; Raleigh, N.C.; and Durham-Chapel Hill, N.C.
City Population Diversity Changes by Year
The population is projected to increase from 73,580 to 93,555 between 2010 and 2022

No other city in Northwest Arkansas will have three groups — Hispanic/Latinos, Asians and African-Americans — account for at least 4 percent of the city’s population by 2022. One unique fact about the Fayetteville School District is how its population is impacted by the diversity of students and faculty at the University of Arkansas. The Fayetteville schools have 130 students who listed Arabic as their home language, and the district’s number of students from counties such as Russia, Iraq and Saudi Arabia is larger than it is at any school district in the region.

School District Diversity

Top languages
Students in Fayetteville schools speak 56 languages

 Origins of birth
Students in Fayetteville schools are from 54 places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Number of students*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>8,835</td>
<td>United States 4,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>Mexico 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Iraq 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshallese</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Russia 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Fayetteville School District didn’t begin collecting data about students’ origin of birth until 2013.

Total Fayetteville School Enrollment: 10,050
Springdale, the region’s second largest city, has the largest population of Hispanic/Latinos and Pacific Islanders. The Hispanic/Latino population approaches 30,000 now, and it should be close to 35,000 within five years. The Pacific Islander population, which is primarily people who are from the Marshall Islands, may be far larger than U.S. Census Bureau statistics show. Some estimates indicate the Marshallese population in Springdale already exceeds 12,000. Springdale is the only large city in the region where white non-Hispanics account for less than 50 percent of the population.

**School District Diversity**

**Origins of birth**

Students in Springdale schools are from 72 places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>9,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>9,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshallese</td>
<td>2,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian; Pha Xa Lao</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top languages**

Students in Springdale schools speak 45 languages

**City Population Diversity Changes by Year**

The population is projected to increase from 69,797 to 86,327 between 2010 and 2022

Projected percentage of total population by 2022

- 2010: 24,762 (8.72%)
- 2017: 29,347 (1.99%)
- 2022: 34,177 (2.67%)
- 39.59%

Springdale School Enrollment: 22,011
The combined population of Hispanic/Latinos in Rogers and Lowell is just about equal to those cities’ non-Hispanic white population. Spanish is listed as the home language for about 42 percent of the Rogers School District students. What’s true in Rogers and many Northwest Arkansas school districts is that increasing numbers of Hispanic/Latino students are born in the U.S. rather than the home counties of their parents. Only Springdale has a larger Hispanic/Latino population in the region.

**School District Diversity**

**Top languages**
Students in Rogers schools speak 49 languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>8,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshallese</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Origins of birth**
Students in Rogers schools are from 56 places

- United States: 8,572
- El Salvador: 201
- Mexico: 189
- Marshall Islands: 90
- Guatemala: 28

* The Rogers School District hasn’t collected origins of birth for all of its students.
While the Hispanic/Latino population is currently larger than the number of Asians in the combined population of Bentonville and Bella Vista, each group will represent about 8 percent of the population by 2022. The statistics provided by the Bentonville School District show a significant number of students listing home languages of Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and other languages spoken primarily in India.

School District Diversity

Top languages
Students in Bentonville schools speak 63 languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>14,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Origins of birth
Students in Bentonville schools are from 71 places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>16,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Bentonville School Enrollment: 16,894
City Population Diversity Changes by Year

The population is projected to increase from 15,039 to 18,203 between 2010 and 2022.

Projected percentage of total population by 2022:
- 2010: 3,128
- 2017: 3,708
- 2022: 4,531

24.89%

As is the case throughout Northwest Arkansas, most racial and ethnic groups in Siloam Springs will see their percentage of the city’s overall population rise over the next five years, including Hispanic/Latinos, Asians and African-Americans. Hispanic/Latinos account for 22.2 percent of the city’s 15,000 residents, but Hispanic students represent 30 percent of the Siloam Springs School District’s enrollment. The city has the region’s largest group of Native Americans with about 900 accounting for 5.5 percent of the city’s population.

School District Diversity

Top languages:
- Students in Siloam Springs schools speak 25 languages:
  - English: 3,160
  - Spanish: 1,003
  - Hmong: 51
  - Vietnamese: 17
  - Marshallese: 12

Origins of birth:
- Students in Siloam Springs schools are from 31 places:
  - United States: 4,086
  - El Salvador: 80
  - Mexico: 34
  - Guatemala: 16
  - Puerto Rico: 14

Total Siloam Springs School Enrollment: 4,281
For purposes of this report, all references to Northwest Arkansas mean the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area. That area includes Benton, Madison and Washington counties in Arkansas and McDonald County, Mo.

There are excellent resources to learn more about Arkansas’ and Northwest Arkansas’ increasingly diverse populations. Most of those resources are accessible on websites.

“A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas” was published by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in 2013. The foundation that same year published a second volume of the report, focusing on the economic and fiscal benefits and costs of the state’s immigrant populations.

Another excellent resource is “Demographic Profile: Northwest Arkansas.” Published in 2015 by the Cisneros Center for New Americans, it describes how the region’s population changed between 1990 and 2014. Northwest Arkansas changed from 1.3 percent Hispanic/Latino in 1990 to 15.5 percent in 2014.

Primary information used in this report comes from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri), an international supplier of information about such things as communities’ economies, populations, demographics and jobs.

For this report, Esri provided the projections for how populations will change in Northwest Arkansas by 2022. The Northwest Arkansas Council subscribes to the Esri information service.

Officials at Northwest Arkansas’ largest school districts provided information about the diversity of their student populations. The school information was collected in December 2017.