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Creating a Community of  
Engaged Global Talent  
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**DIVERSITY**

A Look at How Northwest Arkansas' Population is Changing

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

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.

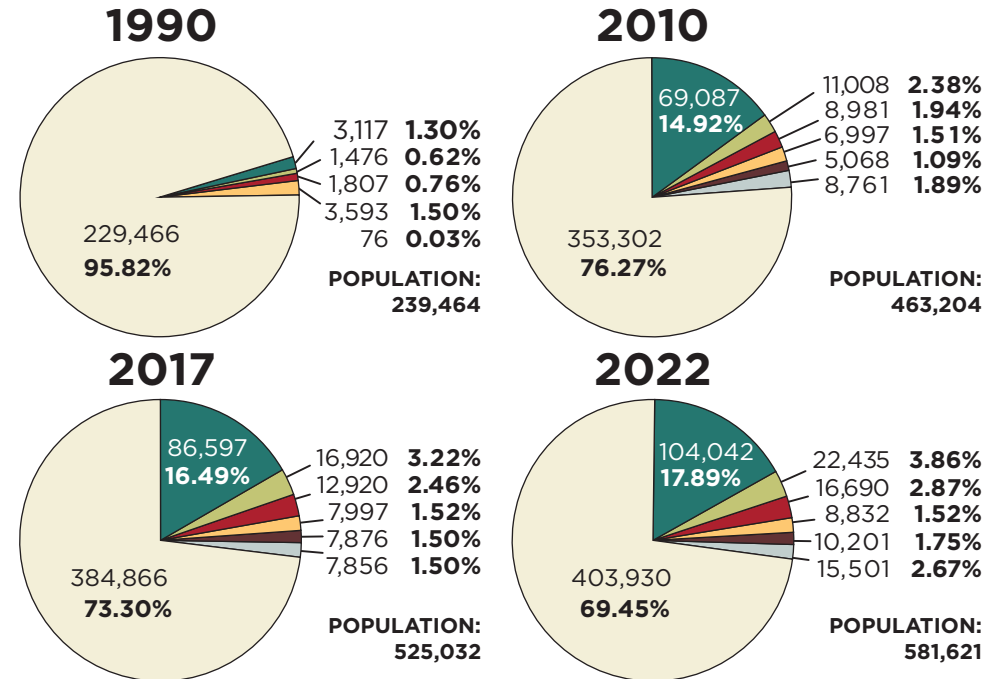
In addition to increasing cultural diversity that enriches everyday life in Northwest Arkansas, foreign-born residents contribute billions of dollars to our economy each year. This impact will continue to grow, and going forward, it is critical that we take steps to integrate everyone who chooses to 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.

**Nelson Peacock**  
President and CEO  
Northwest Arkansas Council

# NORTHWEST ARKANSAS DIVERSITY

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.



# GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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](http://www.welcomenwa.org) or [www.engagenwa.com](http://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. ”

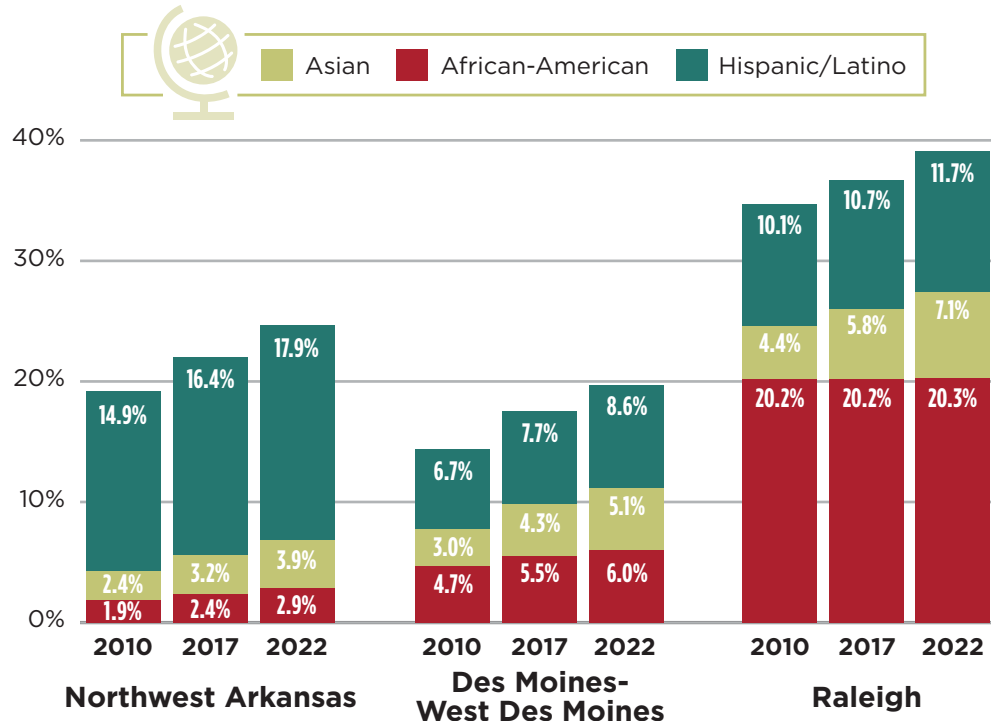
- **Doug McMillon**  
President and CEO, Walmart

“ 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. ”

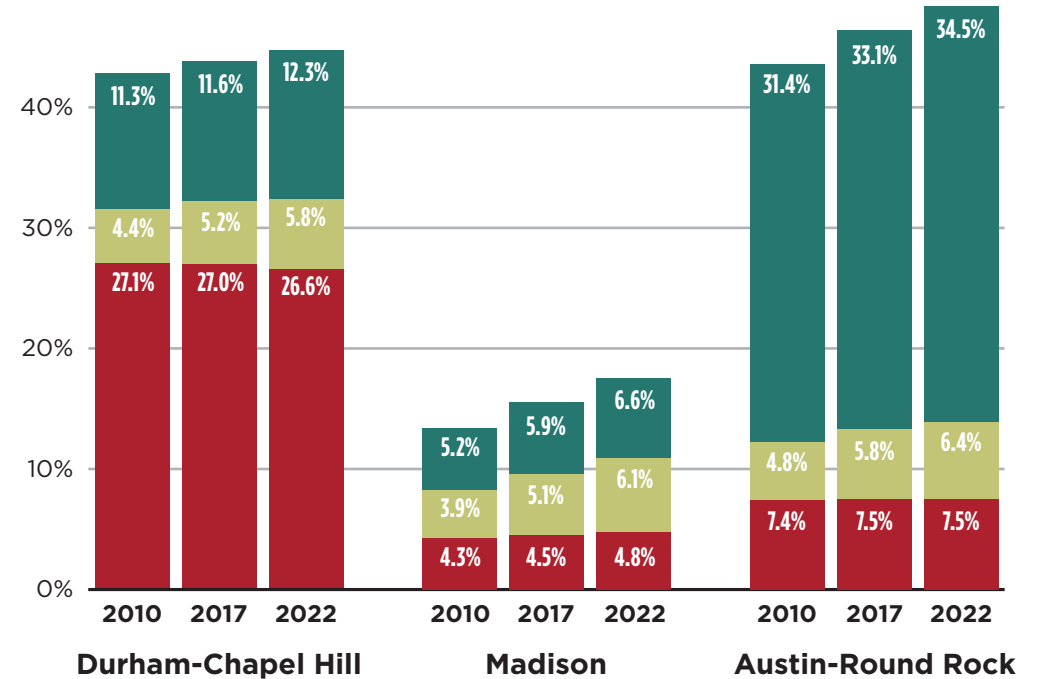
- **Amy Stuart Wells, Lauren Fox, Diane Cordova-Cobo**  
Columbia University’s Teachers College,  
“How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students,” February 2016

# PEER REGIONS

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.

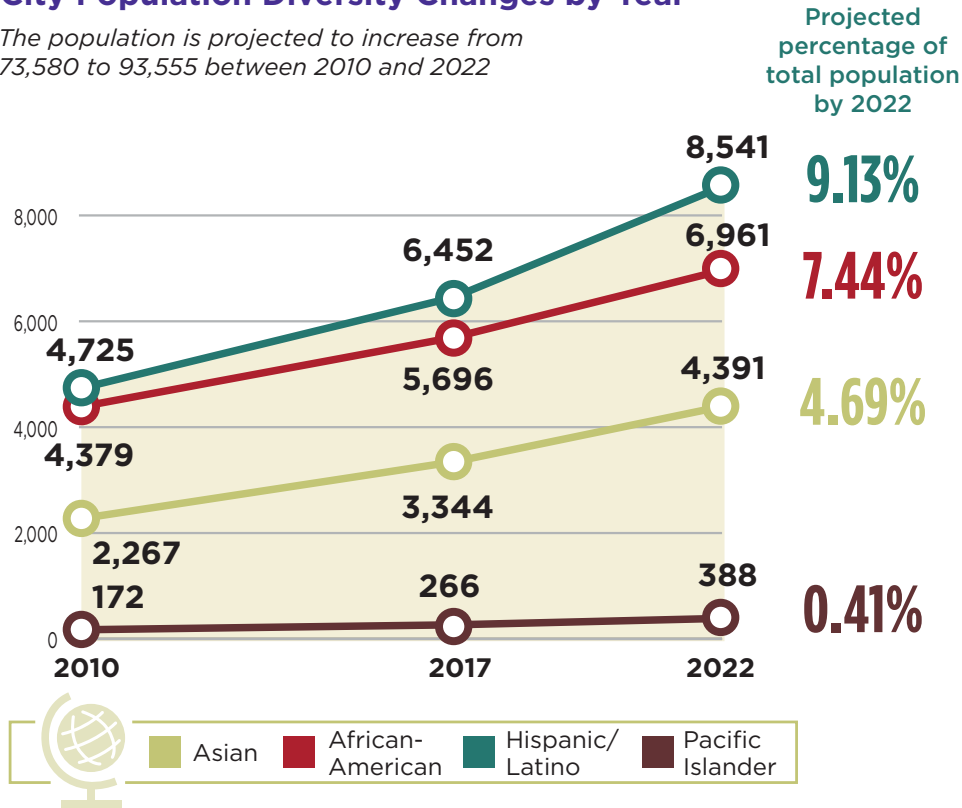


# FAYETTEVILLE



## 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

	Number of speakers		Number of students*
English	8,835	United States	4,018
Spanish	779	Mexico	63
Arabic	130	Saudi Arabia	30
Chinese	79	Iraq	29
Marshallese	51	Russia	14

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

**Total Fayetteville School Enrollment: 10,050**

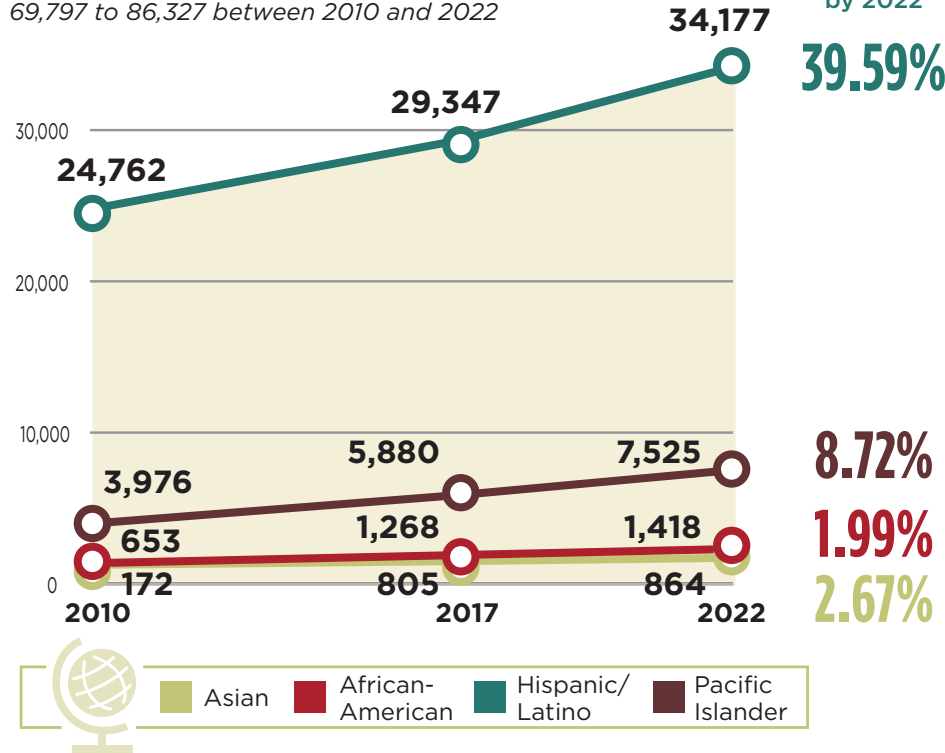
# SPRINGDALE



## 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



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

### Top languages

Students in Springdale schools speak 45 languages

### Origins of birth

Students in Springdale schools are from 72 places

	Number of speakers		Number of students
English	9,896	United States	19,829
Spanish	9,100	Marshall Islands	1,095
Marshallese	2,659	Mexico	514
Laotian; Pha Xa Lao	78	El Salvador	303
Vietnamese	51	Guatemala	57

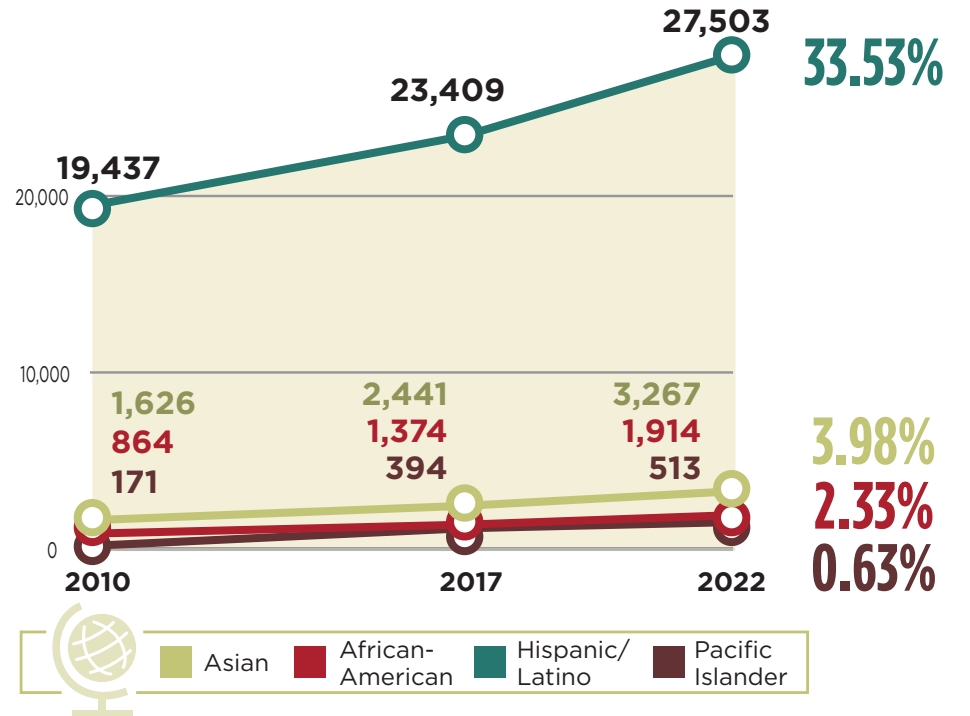
**Total Springdale School Enrollment: 22,011**

# ROGERS/LOWELL



## City Population Diversity Changes by Year

The population is projected to increase from 63,291 to 82,015 between 2010 and 2022



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

	Number of speakers
English	8,492
Spanish	6,581
Marshallese	217
Vietnamese	58
Hmong	25

### Origins of birth\*

Students in Rogers schools are from 56 places

	Number of students
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.

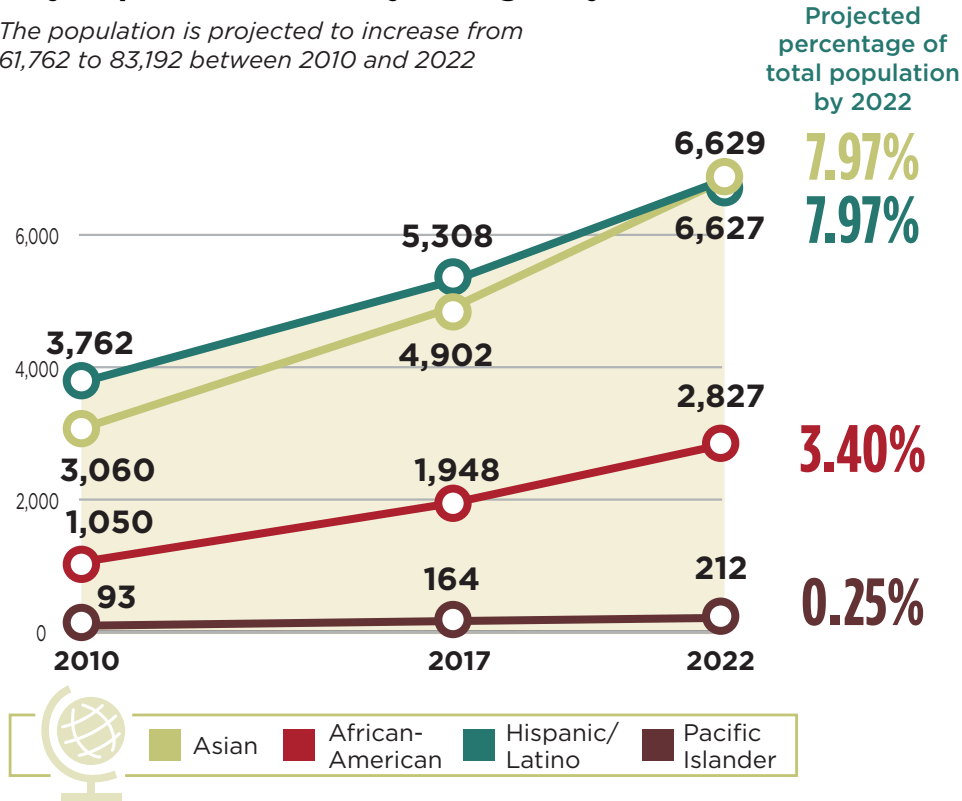
**Total Rogers School Enrollment: 15,622**

# BENTONVILLE/BELLA VISTA



## City Population Diversity Changes by Year

The population is projected to increase from 61,762 to 83,192 between 2010 and 2022



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

### Origins of birth

Students in Bentonville schools are from 71 places

	Number of speakers		Number of students
English	14,648	United States	16,339
Spanish	1,142	India	335
Telugu	203	Mexico	89
Tamil	146	El Salvador	23
Hindi	102	China	14

**Total Bentonville School Enrollment: 16,894**

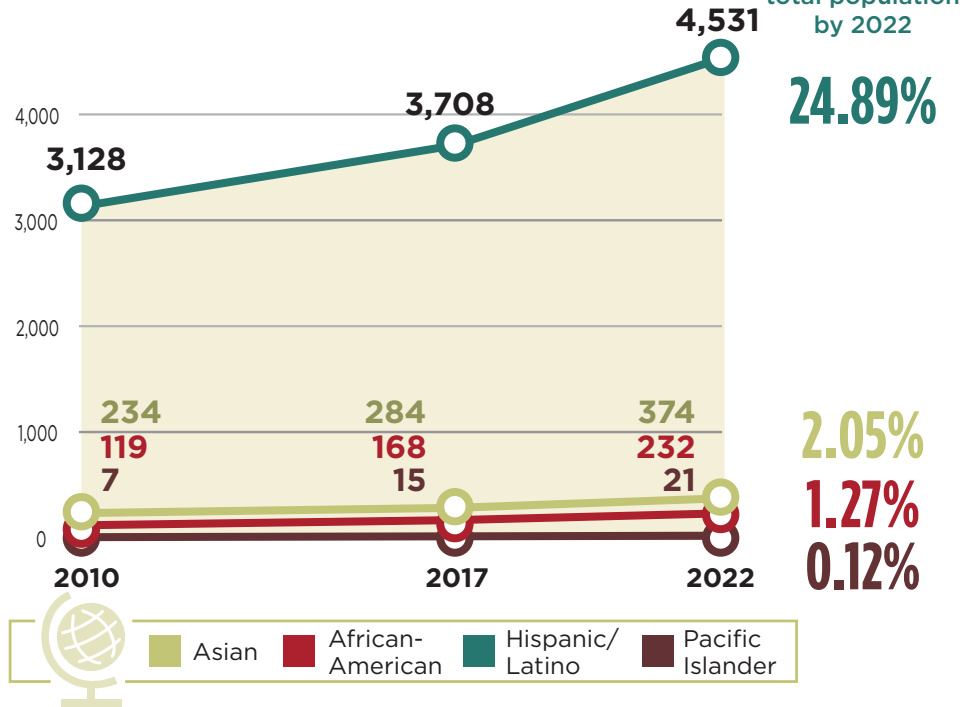


# SILOAM SPRINGS



## City Population Diversity Changes by Year

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



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

### Origins of birth

Students in Siloam Springs schools are from 31 places

	Number of speakers		Number of students
English	3,160	United States	4,086
Spanish	1,003	El Salvador	80
Hmong	51	Mexico	34
Vietnamese	17	Guatemala	16
Marshallese	12	Puerto Rico	14

**Total Siloam Springs School Enrollment: 4,281**

# REFERENCES

## Resources and Acknowledgements

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.