ENGAGE THE FUTURE
A LOOK AT THE GROWING DIVERSITY IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
MARCH 2020
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Northwest Arkansas looks nothing like it did 30 years ago. Significant economic growth, a low cost of living, thoughtful investments in infrastructure and improvements to the quality of life are contributing to an influx of dynamic, diverse talent across the region.

The Northwest Arkansas Council is working to promote an inclusive environment to harness the economic and social impact of that diversity.

People of diverse backgrounds enrich communities with innovative ideas and creative solutions to challenges, and their unique experiences strengthen the talent pool of workforce available to our companies.

EngageNWA is a Council initiative that works to bring diverse audiences and perspectives together to strengthen the economy and position Northwest Arkansas as a community of engaged global talent.

More diverse and inclusive communities perform better economically. Diverse populations bring considerable economic power – contributing billions of dollars annually to the region’s economy. The impact will continue to grow, and we are committed to making Northwest Arkansas an inclusive community that supports all who choose to live here.

Nelson Peacock
President and CEO
Northwest Arkansas Council

Margot Lemaster
Executive Director
EngageNWA
Northwest Arkansas has experienced rapid population growth in the past decade – increasing by more than 20% since 2010. Census estimates show the region’s population experiences a net gain of 30 people per day. The population is expected to grow an additional 10% by 2024.

Between 1990 and 2010, the region’s racially and ethnically diverse populations increased from less than 5% in 1990 to nearly 24% in 2010. Since then, the diversity has continued to increase. In 2019, the region was nearly 28% diverse and is expected to grow to almost 31% by 2024. The region’s Hispanic/Latinx population saw the largest gains, accounting for close to 17% of the population in 2019 and forecasted to grow to over 18% by 2024.

The school districts in Northwest Arkansas are also experiencing a rapid growth in enrollment. In many cases, the diversity in these school districts is growing at a faster pace than the diversity of the overall population of the region. These numbers demonstrate that school districts in Northwest Arkansas, like those across the nation, are on the frontline of demographic change. Rogers and Springdale, for example, are both now majority students of color.
Northwest Arkansas population increased by +20% since 2010.

Northwest Arkansas has a net gain of 30 people per day.

Northwest Arkansas schools have more than 90 countries represented and 87 languages spoken.

Diverse populations increased in Northwest Arkansas from <5% to >28%.

Hispanics/Latinx in Northwest Arkansas represent 17% up from 1.3% in 1990.

At 51.6%, Springdale is the most diverse city in Northwest Arkansas.

Fayetteville's diverse populations account for nearly 23% of the city's population.

The school district is 34% diverse.

Rogers is 42% diverse.

Springdale's population grew 42% from 2009 to 2019.

Bentonville's Indian population increased 239% from 2011 to 2018.

Siloam Springs: Hispanics/Latinx account for 23% of city population and 31% of school district.

Rogers School District: 56% students of color and 47% Hispanic/Latinx.
The United States is experiencing dramatic demographic shifts which is reflected in an increasingly racially diverse workforce. At the same time, the country's consumer base is more diverse and multicultural than ever before. African American, Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx consumers account for more than 38% of the total population, according to recent data compiled by Nielsen. The U.S. Census Bureau projects people of color will account for the majority of the population by 2044.

Engaging this diversity across all levels, sectors, and communities is how the region will secure its place as one of the nation's best places to live and work.

A recent report by consulting firm FSG highlights that employers of frontline talent are leveraging opportunities to advance racial equity as a source of competitive advantage. With expansive buying power and unique consumption habits, customers of color are a growing consumer base, with purchasing power that exceeds $3 trillion annually, according to Nielsen.

In addition, research shows the value of inclusion and diversity. Businesses led by culturally diverse teams are more likely to develop new products. In a 2018 report by McKinsey & Company, it was demonstrated that gender diverse teams are 21% more likely to outperform their peers. The same is true for ethnically and culturally diverse teams that are 31% more likely to outperform their peers.

While Northwest Arkansas is making great strides in prioritizing these opportunities through efforts such as diversifying recruitment pipelines and engaging employees top to bottom in education and training opportunities, more work needs to be done in recognizing and addressing attitudes, behaviors and policies that impede progress.

“Advancing racial equity is not as simple as launching a single training or changing a single practice, nor it is a single person’s role — it requires intentionally shifting cultures, behaviors, practices, and policies in ways that contribute to greater equity. It is a new way of doing business.”

- Advancing Frontline Employees of Color
  Innovating for Competitive Advantage in America’s Frontline Workforce
The Northwest Arkansas Council identified a select group of high-performing peer regions that were used as benchmarks to create the Greater Northwest Arkansas Development Strategy. Given the importance of diversity and inclusion to local economies, diversity growth is included from the following regions: Austin-Round Rock, Texas; Des Moines-West Des Moines, Iowa; Durham-Chapel Hill, N.C.; Madison, Wis.; Provo-Orem, Utah; and Raleigh, N.C.

### Peer Regions

#### Austin-Round Rock, TX
- **2019 Total Population**: 2,231,469

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2024 Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Des Moines, IA
- **2019 Total Population**: 680,233

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<th>2019</th>
<th>2024 Projections</th>
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<tr>
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<td>79.3%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
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<td>5.5%</td>
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<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
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#### Provo-Orem, UT
- **2019 Total Population**: 659,955

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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
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<td>6.4%</td>
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<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.03%</td>
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<td>0.03%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.3%</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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#### Raleigh, NC
- **2019 Total Population**: 1,388,381

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<td>11.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
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<td>19.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
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<td>0.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Two or More Races</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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BENTONVILLE CITY POPULATION

2019 TOTAL POPULATION 50,061

While Bentonville is the fourth largest Northwest Arkansas city, its growth rate is the most impressive. From 2010 to 2019, Bentonville's population grew by nearly 42%. By 2024, the city is expected to have grown an additional 15%. Bentonville is becoming increasingly diverse. In 2019, the city was nearly 28% diverse — an increase of over 4% since 2010. Bentonville is expected to grow to more than 30% diverse in 2024. Most notably, the Asian population has achieved significant growth since 2010 where it accounted for 8% of the population. In 2019, Asians accounted for nearly 12% of the population and are expected to account for 14% by 2024. Bentonville's Asian Indian population grew by 239% from 2011-2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
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<th>2019</th>
<th>2024 PROJECTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Two or More Races</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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DIVERSITY | 8
The Bentonville School District is the region’s second largest school district in terms of enrollment. Diverse students account for nearly 28% of enrollment which matches the demographics of the city as a whole. Hispanic/Latinx students account for over 11% of total enrollment. Asian students account for nearly 7% of total enrollment — the largest Asian population in any one school district in the region. Students in Bentonville speak 64 languages, including Spanish, Telugu, Tamil and Hindi.
Fayetteville remains the largest Northwest Arkansas city. The population increased more than 19% from 2010 to 2019 and is expected to increase another 8% by 2024. Each of the city’s diverse populations has achieved steady growth since 2010 and is expected to continue that trajectory into 2024. Fayetteville’s diverse populations account for nearly 23% of the city’s population. In 2024, they will account for over 26%.

Fayetteville has a 6.5% African American population, giving the city the largest African American population in Northwest Arkansas.
The Fayetteville School District is the region's fourth largest school district in terms of enrollment. The school district's diverse student enrollment percentage outpaces the city's diverse population percentage with more than 34% of students identified as diverse compared to the city's 23%. It's notable that students speak 56 languages in Fayetteville schools, including Spanish, Arabic, Marshallese, Chinese and Swahili. The children of University of Arkansas faculty and students contribute significantly to the diversity of the school district's population.

**TOTAL ENROLLMENT 10,487**

**RACE/ETHNICITY FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**

- 66.5% WHITE
- 11.9% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 3.1% ASIAN
- 9.9% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 0.9% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 0.4% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 7.3% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- English Learners
  - 7.7%
- Languages Spoken
  - 56
- Top Languages
  - Arabic, Chinese, Marshallese, Spanish, Swahili
- Top Origins of Birth
  - Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Russia*
- Number of Countries
  - 54*

*based on data from 2017
2019 TOTAL POPULATION 69,971

Rogers is the third largest city in Northwest Arkansas. Since 2010, Rogers has grown by nearly 25% and is expected to grow an additional 13% by 2024.

In terms of diversity, Rogers grew from nearly 38% diverse in 2010 to 42% diverse in 2019. By 2024, the city is expected to be 45% diverse. Hispanics/Latinx residents account for over 33% of the Rogers’ population and the figure should surpass 35% by 2024.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2024 PROJECTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Two or More Races</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
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</table>
The Rogers School District is the third largest school district in terms of enrollment. It’s also a majority diverse district with students from diverse populations accounting for nearly 56% of enrollment. Of those diverse populations, 47% are of Hispanic/Latinx origin and nearly 29% are English learners. Rogers students speak 47 languages, including Spanish, Marshallese, Vietnamese and Hmong.

**TOTAL ENROLLMENT 15,721**

**RACE/ETHNICITY FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**

- 44.1% WHITE
- 47% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 1.9% ASIAN
- 1.7% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 1.9% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 0.7% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 2.8% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **English Learners**
  - 28.8%

- **Languages Spoken**
  - 47

- **Top Languages**
  - Hmong, Marshallese, Spanish, Vietnamese

- **Top Origins of Birth**
  - El Salvador, Guatemala, Marshall Islands, Mexico

- **Number of Countries**
  - 54
Siloam Springs has achieved significant population growth since 2010, increasing by nearly 18%. The population is expected to grow by an additional 10% by 2024. It’s notable that Siloam Springs has become increasingly diverse, accounting for 35% of the population in 2019 — a 3% increase from 2010. By 2024, the city is expected to be 38% diverse.

Although Siloam Springs is the smallest of the largest five cities in the region, it has the third largest Hispanic/Latinx population. Hispanic/Latinx residents make up 23% of the city’s population.
The Siloam Springs School District's diverse population far outpaces the city's diverse population at 46%. Hispanics/Latinx account for nearly 31% of enrollment and nearly 6% of the enrollment consists of American Indians. More than 18% of Siloam Springs students are classified as English learners.

**TOTAL ENROLLMENT 4,371**

**RACE/ETHNICITY FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**

- 54% WHITE
- 30.8% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 3.4% ASIAN
- 1.3% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 0.4% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 5.6% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 4.6% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**English Learners**
18.1%

**Languages Spoken**
18

**Top Languages**
Gujarati, Hmong, Marshallese, Spanish, Vietnamese

**Top Origins of Birth**
Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Philippines, Puerto Rico

**Number of Countries**
18
SPRINGDALE CITY POPULATION

2019 TOTAL POPULATION 81,385

Springdale has the second largest population in Northwest Arkansas. The population increased by more than 15% from 2010 to 2019 and is expected to increase an additional 7% by 2024. Each of the city’s diverse populations have grown steadily since 2010 and are all expected to continue similar growth into 2024.

Springdale’s Hispanic/Latinx population grew by nearly 3% from 2010 to 2019 and is expected to grow by an additional 3% by 2024. Springdale also has the largest population of Pacific Islanders in Northwest Arkansas, which includes a large population of people from the Marshall Islands. Pacific Islanders accounted for nearly 7% of the population in 2019 and are expected to approach 8% in 2024.

RACE/ETHNICITY IN 2010, 2019, 2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
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<th>2019</th>
<th>2024 PROJECTION</th>
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<td>White</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
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<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
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<td>37.9%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
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<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other/Two or More Races</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Springdale School District has the largest enrollment not only in Northwest Arkansas but also the entire state with over 22,000 students. It’s also the most diverse school district in the region with students from diverse populations accounting for nearly 67% of enrollment. Hispanic/Latinx students account for nearly 48% of enrollment with 36% of students classified as English learners. Springdale students speak 47 languages, with the majority of those speaking Spanish and Marshallese.

**TOTAL ENROLLMENT 22,164**

**RACE/ETHNICITY FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**

- 33.1% WHITE
- 47.7% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 1.6% ASIAN
- 2.3% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 13.4% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 0.6% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 1.4% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **English Learners**
  36.3%
- **Languages Spoken**
  49
- **Top Languages**
  Marshallese, Spanish
- **Top Origins of Birth**
  El Salvador, Guatemala, Marshall Islands, Mexico
- **Number of Countries**
  52
Northwest Arkansas is home to numerous high-performing, diverse school districts. In this report, we are including diversity enrollment data for each district in the region. Like the larger districts, diverse enrollment in these smaller districts has continued to grow.
Race/ethnicity in percentages for 2019-2020

**LINCOLN**
Race/ethnicity for 2019-2020 school year
- 79.2% WHITE
- 9.2% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 3% ASIAN
- 1.1% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 0.2% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 3.8% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 3.5% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES

**PEA RIDGE**
Race/ethnicity for 2019-2020 school year
- 87.1% WHITE
- 8.3% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 0.5% ASIAN
- 0.9% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 0.1% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 1.6% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 1.5% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES

**PRAIRIE GROVE**
Race/ethnicity for 2019-2020 school year
- 86.6% WHITE
- 5.7% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 1.2% ASIAN
- 2% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 0.3% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 3.4% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 0.8% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES

**WEST FORK**
Race/ethnicity for 2019-2020 school year
- 86.3% WHITE
- 5% HISPANIC/LATINX
- 1.1% ASIAN
- 1.5% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 0% PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 2.1% AMERICAN INDIAN
- 4.6% OTHER/TWO OR MORE RACES
RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


The data also includes population information from McDonald County, Mo although it was removed from the region’s MSA in 2018 by the federal Office of Management and Budget.

Primary information used in this report comes from the United States census and Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri), an international supplier of information about community economies, populations, demographics and jobs.

References in this report to “diversity” or “diverse populations” includes racially and ethnically diverse individuals also known as “people of color.” In addition, for purposes of this report, individuals of Hispanic plus Latinx origin, including both white and non-white Hispanics, are included within the definition of diverse populations.

Information about enrollment and diversity of the student populations in Northwest Arkansas school districts was collected in December 2019 from the districts and the Arkansas Department of Education. The following school districts are represented: Bentonville, Decatur, Elkins, Farmington, Fayetteville, Gentry, Gravette, Greenland, Lincoln, Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove, Rogers, Siloam Springs, Springdale and West Fork.

For purposes of this report, “English learners” are defined as students from a linguistic background other than English who are learning English and academic content in English simultaneously.

“Languages spoken” refers to primary languages spoken in the students’ home. “Origins of birth” indicates the country in which the student was born.

Special thanks to the Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers, Siloam Springs and Springdale school districts and the Walton Family Foundation for participating and providing photography for this report.

The Northwest Arkansas Council is thankful to the Walmart Foundation and Tyson Foods for their generous support of EngageNWA and dedication to advancing diversity and inclusion in Northwest Arkansas.

Additional Resources

Arkansas Department of Education
https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov

Advancing Frontline Employees of Color
FSG - www.fsg.org

DiversityNWA
www.diversitynwa.com

EngageNWA
www.engagenwa.org

National Equity Atlas
www.nationalequityatlas.org

The Making of a Multicultural Super Consumer
Nielsen - www.nielson.com