

# *The Virginia* **NEWS LETTER**

## *A Decade of Change in Virginia's Population*

by Qian Cai

### **The Changing Census**

As the 2010 census data are gradually being released, users may soon notice that the releases contain less information than the previous censuses, especially detailed demographic, socioeconomic and housing data. This is because the 2010 census, and every decennial census thereafter, has changed.

Detailed data collected in previous decades were from the census "long form," which, for example, was sent to one in every six households in 2000. During that census, all other households were sent a "short form," which asked only a few questions about each household member: name, sex, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship with head of household, and housing tenure (owner or renter). The long form was used to obtain detailed data on communities throughout the country. The short form was used to collect the basic information required to fulfill the constitutionally mandated purpose of a decennial census: to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and redistrict state legislatures.

Beginning in 2010 the census had a short form only. The short form was sent to every household and collected the same basic information detailed above. The census long form has been replaced by the annual "American Community Survey," also conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Each

community in the nation, instead of having a snapshot of its population taken once every ten years, now has a snapshot every year.

This article is based on the 2010 census redistricting data for Virginia. The data contain information on total population, race and Hispanic origin, and voting-age population.



Qian Cai

### **State Population Growth**

The results of the 2010 census show that Virginia experienced another decade of steady growth, reaching over 8 million. Virginia's growth rate (13 percent) outpaced the nation (9.7 percent) and was only slightly lower than the 14.4 percent growth rate of the prior decade. Typically, large population states lead in numerical growth, and smaller states lead in growth rates. Bucking the trend, Virginia ranks high on all three measures: population size (13th), numerical growth (6th), and growth rate (16th). Virginia's growth reflects a continuing national population shift toward southern and western states.

Population growth is the result of two factors: natural increase (more births than deaths), and net in-migration (more people moving in than moving out). These two factors do not always trend in the same direction, and the contribution of each to total population change may vary significantly.



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For example, more than 90 percent of the growth in California in the last ten years came from natural increase, while in Florida, net in-migration accounted for more than 80 percent of the growth. In Michigan, net out-migration of more than 462,000 people in the decade offset a natural increase of 406,000, resulting in net population decline.

Population growth in Virginia is well balanced. Virginia is the only state in the country in which natural increase and net in-migration contributed equal shares to population growth. Virginia remains a highly attractive state for people from other parts of the nation and the world to come to work and live, ranking 7th nationwide in the number of net in-migrants.

### Population Distribution and Change

In the past decade, Virginia’s population distribution and change trends continued a pattern evident in the 1990s, magnifying distinctions between the Urban Crescent, which arches across the Northern Virginia, Richmond and Hampton Roads metropolitan areas, and communities in the regions of Southside, Southwest, Valley and Eastern.<sup>1</sup> Appendix A provides a list of Virginia’s metropolitan areas.

Virginia’s population continues to concentrate in three large metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs): Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Hampton Roads. These three areas combined are home to 70 percent of the state’s population and accounted for 82 percent of the state’s total population growth. Northern Virginia alone composed more than half of the state’s growth. Three of its counties (Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William), fueled by both high birth rates and large net in-migration, generated 40 percent of the state population growth.

The Richmond metropolitan area contributed 17 percent of the state’s total growth. Five counties in the Richmond area (New Kent, Caroline, Goochland, Powhatan, and Chesterfield) were among the top 20 fastest growing localities in the state. For the first time in four decades, the city of Richmond gained, rather than lost, population over the last ten years. Its growth rate was 3.2 percent.

**Table 1: Fastest Growing and Declining Virginia Localities, 2000-2010**

Ten Fastest Growing		Ten Fastest Declining	
Locality	Percent Growth	Locality	Percent Loss
Loudoun County	84.1	Accomack County	-13.4
Prince William County	43.2	Danville City	-11.1
King George County	40.4	Buchanan County	-10.7
Stafford County	39.5	Martinsville City	-10.3
James City County	39.3	Highland County	-8.5
Manassas Park City	38.7	Grayson County	-8.0
New Kent County	36.9	Henry County	-6.5
Culpeper County	36.3	Bath County	-6.3
Spotsylvania County	35.4	Hampton City	-6.1
Suffolk City	32.8	Alleghany County	-5.6

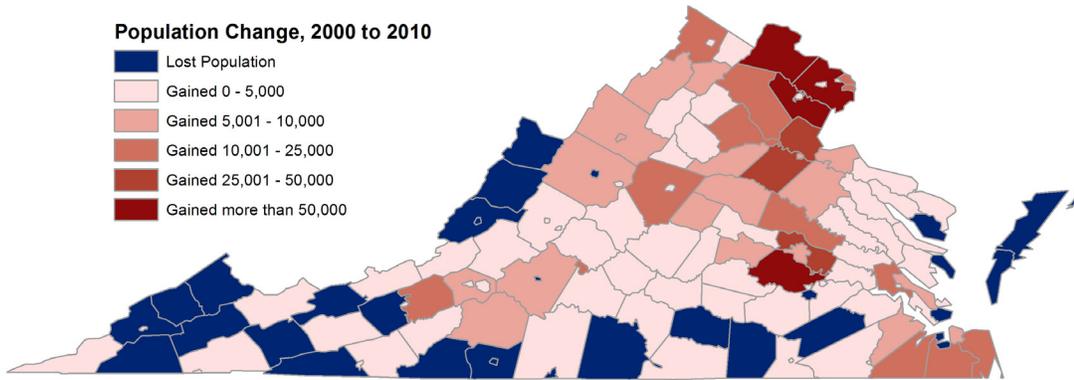
In contrast, Hampton Roads experienced low growth in the last decade, with a gain of only 5.7 percent. Only two of the region’s localities (James City County and Suffolk City) made the top 20 fastest-growing list. At the same time, five cities in Virginia with the largest net out-migration are all in Hampton Roads: Virginia Beach, Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk, and Portsmouth, even though more military population moved into the area during the decade.

Among the remaining eight metro areas in the state, growth patterns vary considerably. The Winchester metro area, which was the least populous in 2000, surpassed the Bristol area in 2010 with a whopping growth rate of 26 percent, mainly due to spillover effects of Northern Virginia growth. Two metro areas with large universities, Charlottesville (University of Virginia) and Harrisonburg (James Madison University), also experienced high growth rates of nearly 16 percent. Danville is the only metro area in the state that lost population.

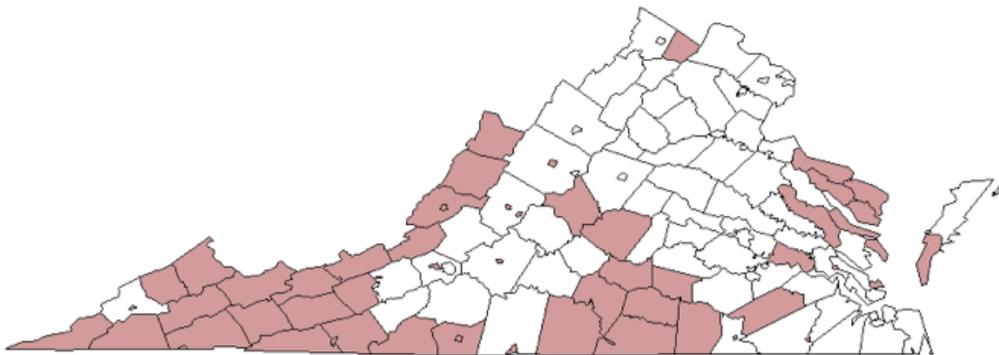
At the locality level, defined in this article as county and independent city, Fairfax County remains the state’s most populous, with more than 1.1 million residents. Highland County remains the least populous, with a population a little over 2,300. **Map 1** shows growth and loss in each city and county between 2000 and 2010. Major urban counties led in growth with Loudoun topping the list for the largest numerical growth, as well as the fastest growth rate, adding more than 142,000 people – a growth rate of 84 percent. While most of Virginia’s 134 cities and counties experienced a population increase, 30 experienced a population decrease. Danville had the largest decline, losing 11 percent of its population.

<sup>1</sup> For more information about Virginia’s eight regions as defined by the Cooper Center’s Workforce and Demographics Group go to: <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/virginias-regions>

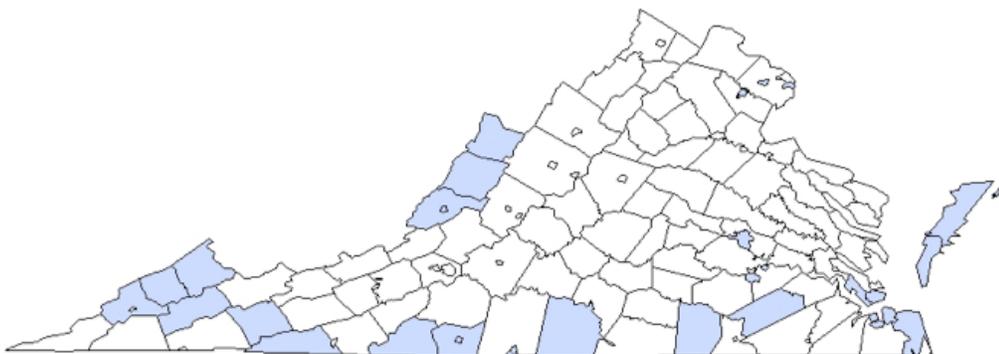
**Map 1. Population Numerical Gain and Loss, 2000 to 2010**



**Map 2: Localities Experiencing More Deaths than Births, 2000-2010**



**Map 3: Localities Experiencing Net Out-migration, 2000-2010**



More localities in Virginia experienced population losses during the last ten years than in the previous decade (30 vs. 24). Fifty-five localities had more deaths than births in the last decade (see **Map 2**), compared to 42 in the 1990s. Thirty localities experienced net out-migration (see **Map 3**) compared to 25 in the 1990s. As the older population ages in place and younger individuals and families move out for job and education opportunities elsewhere, many rural communities suffer losses both from more deaths than births and from net out-migration. Danville is a typical example. In a ten-year decrease of more than 5,300 people, 4,200 were due to net

out-migration, and 1,100 were due to deaths outnumbering births.

### Race and Ethnicity

In addition to total population counts, the Census Bureau released data on race and ethnicity (Hispanic origin). Virginia, like the nation as a whole, is experiencing increasing racial diversity with the rapid growth of Hispanic and Asian populations.

Statewide, the most notable changes were: (1) Hispanics, who can be of any race, were the fastest-growing minority group in Virginia; (2) the Asian population grew considerably; and,

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(3) the proportion of the white population continued to decline.

In the last ten years, Virginia's Hispanic population grew by more than 300,000, or 92 percent. Thirty-six percent of this growth was due to natural increase and 64 percent was due to net immigration. Hispanics now comprise 7.9 percent of Virginia's population, compared to less than 4.7 percent ten years ago. Furthermore, growth in the Hispanic population contributed one-third of the state's total growth. In other words, one in every three new Virginians in the past decade was Hispanic.

The Hispanic population increase is also widespread across the commonwealth. Of 134 localities in Virginia, 132 experienced Hispanic population growth. In 26 localities the Hispanic population tripled; in 55 localities, it doubled. Only two counties in Virginia had fewer Hispanics in 2010 than in 2000: Arlington County in Northern Virginia and Buchanan County in the Southwest.

While most localities experienced significant Hispanic population increases, the majority of Virginia Hispanics live in the Urban Crescent and in some pockets of Southside Virginia and the Upper Valley. Northern Virginia is home to more than 60 percent of Virginia's Hispanics.

Virginia's Asian population was the second fastest-growing minority group, increasing by nearly 70 percent in ten years. Asians now account for 5.5 percent of the total population, compared to 4.8 percent in 2000. The geographic distribution of the Asian population, like that of Hispanics, heavily clusters around the urban centers, including the counties of Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and Arlington and Alexandria City in Northern Virginia; major cities in Hampton Roads including Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake and Newport News; and Henrico and Chesterfield counties and Richmond City in the Richmond metro area. In addition, major university centers, such as Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, and Lynchburg (Liberty University, Lynchburg College, and Randolph College), and counties containing or adjacent to large public colleges or universities such as Montgomery (Virginia Tech), Albemarle (University of Virginia), and James City (College of William and Mary) also have sizable Asian populations. In contrast, Asians are very sparse in rural communities.

In addition to the fast growth of Hispanic and Asian populations, Virginia's multi-race population, albeit small, experienced a large increase, from 2.0 percent of the total population in 2000 to 2.9 percent in 2010. This increase is a by-product of population diversity and inter-racial

marriage. The majority of the multi-racial population identified themselves as belonging to two race groups, primarily white and black, and white and Asian. Multi-racial Virginians predominantly reside in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. Manassas Park City tops the list, with more than 5 percent of its residents reporting themselves as multi-racial.

Unlike the nation as a whole, where Hispanics are the largest minority group, the black or African-American population remains the largest minority group in Virginia, accounting for 19 percent of the total population. The growth, from 1.4 million in 2000 to 1.6 million in 2010, or 11.6 percent, was just enough to keep blacks' share in the total population unchanged between 2000 and 2010. The black population is primarily concentrated in the eastern half of the state, particularly in Southside Virginia and the Hampton Roads area. The cities of Norfolk and Richmond have the largest black populations in the state, exceeding 100,000, while Petersburg City has the largest percentage of black residents (79 percent).

The white population grew from 5.1 million in 2000 to 5.5 million in 2010, or, 7 percent; however, in light of other race groups' much faster growth, the proportion of whites in the total population continued a decades-long trend of decline, dropping from 72 percent in 2000 to 69 percent in 2010. The proportion of Virginia's population that is white is now what it was one century ago, when blacks accounted for one-third of the population.

## Summary

Virginia's population trends in the first decade of the 21st Century indicate the following developments in the second decade.

- Virginia's population continues to grow, albeit unevenly across regions. Northern Virginia, by its sheer population size, dominates statewide statistics and may mask population trends occurring elsewhere. The impact of Northern Virginia on the overall population is likely to continue, perhaps leading to a bipolar population distribution and potential impact on state and local economies, government, and resource allocation.
- Growth in major metro areas is likely to have spillover effects, stimulating growth in surrounding areas, making Virginia's Urban Crescent larger and wider.
- More rural communities will experience natural decrease, with deaths outnumbering births, as a result of aging of the population and outmigration of the younger population. Hispanic population growth in some of these communities may slow or reverse population

decline, both through immigrants moving into the area, and through a resident Hispanic higher birth rate.

- Virginia's population is more diverse than ever and will increasingly be so. Among Virginia's population under 18 years of age, 61.9 percent are white, and 11.1 percent are Hispanic, compared to 68.6 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively, for the population as a whole. In 22 localities in 2000, the majority of the under-18 population was a racial or ethnic minority. In 2010, that was true in 32 localities. Characteristics of Virginia's children suggest a future of even greater population diversity.

#### *ABOUT THE AUTHOR:*

Dr. Qian Cai (pronounced "chien tsai") is director of the Demographics & Workforce Group at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. Her research focuses on population estimates methodology, migration and immigration, and population aging. She is principal investigator for multiple research grants from the U.S. Census Bureau, Virginia Governor's Office and various state agencies. Qian serves on the Census Bureau's Steering Committee of the Federal-State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates, as well as Population Association of America's Committee on Applied Demography and Committee on Population Statistics. A native of China, Qian received a bachelor's degree in economics in 1991 and a master's degree in demography in 1994, both from Peking University. She received a Ph.D. in sociology from Brown University in 2000.

#### **Appendix A: Virginia's Eleven Metropolitan Statistical Areas** (Based on Office of Management and Budget 2003 definitions)

##### **Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford, VA**

Giles County  
Montgomery County  
Pulaski County  
Radford City

##### **Charlottesville, VA**

Albemarle County,  
Fluvanna County  
Greene County  
Nelson County  
Charlottesville City

##### **Danville, VA**

Pittsylvania County,  
Danville City

##### **Harrisonburg, VA**

Rockingham County  
Harrisonburg City

##### **Kingsport-Bristol-Bristol, TN-VA**

###### **Virginia Portion (Bristol Area)**

Scott County  
Washington County  
Bristol City

###### **Non-Virginia Portion**

Hawkins County, TN  
Sullivan County, TN

##### **Lynchburg, VA**

Amherst County  
Appomattox County  
Bedford County  
Campbell County  
Bedford City  
Lynchburg City

##### **Richmond, VA**

Amelia County  
Caroline County  
Charles City County  
Chesterfield County  
Cumberland County  
Dinwiddie County  
Goochland County  
Hanover County  
Henrico County  
King and Queen County  
King William County  
Louisa County  
New Kent County  
Powhatan County  
Prince George County  
Sussex County  
Colonial Heights City  
Hopewell City  
Petersburg City  
Richmond City

##### **Roanoke, VA**

Botetourt County  
Craig County  
Franklin County  
Roanoke County  
Roanoke City  
Salem City

**Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News,  
VA-NC (Hampton Roads)**

**Virginia Portion**

Gloucester County  
Isle of Wight County  
James City County  
Mathews County  
Surry County  
York County  
Chesapeake City  
Hampton City  
Newport News City  
Norfolk City  
Poquoson City  
Portsmouth City  
Suffolk City  
Virginia Beach City  
Williamsburg City

**Non-Virginia Portion**  
Currituck County, NC

Fairfax County  
Fauquier County  
Loudoun County  
Prince William County  
Spotsylvania County  
Stafford County  
Warren County  
Alexandria City  
Fairfax City  
Falls Church City  
Fredericksburg City  
Manassas City  
Manassas Park City  
**Non-Virginia Portion**  
District of Columbia  
Calvert County, MD  
Charles County, MD  
Frederick County, MD  
Montgomery County, MD  
Prince George's County, MD  
Jefferson County, WV

**Washington-Arlington-Alexandria,  
DC-VA-MD-WV**

**Northern Virginia Portion**

Arlington County  
Clarke County

**Winchester, VA-WV**

**Virginia Portion**

Frederick County  
Winchester City

**Non-Virginia Portion**

Hampshire County, WV

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