Trenton Demographic Profile

(580 words)

The 2015 American Community Survey estimates Trenton’s population to be 84,225, down marginally from the 2000 population of 85,403.

AGE and SEX: Trenton is younger than the county and the state, and has a particular concentration of men between the ages of 20-29. The median age is 33.5, with only minor differences between men (33.2) and women (34.0). These are about five years younger than the median ages in Mercer County (38.3) and in New Jersey (39.3). While there are roughly even proportions of men and women until age 19, men between the ages of 20-24 constitute 9.2% of the population compared to 7.4% women; and between the ages of 25-29, men constitute 8.9%, while women constitute 6.8%. Sex ratios return to parity in the age group 30-34 (8.6% and 8.5%).

NATIVITY: Trenton has a large foreign-born population (19,963, or 23.6%); of these only 22.0% are naturalized citizens. 78.1% of foreign-born Trentonians come from Latin America, and 11.2% from Africa, 6.3% from Europe, and 4.0% from Asia. While Mercer and NJ have a similar proportion of foreign born residents (21.2% and 21.5%, respectively), Trenton has fewer migrants from Asia and Europe and more from Latin American and Africa: in Mercer and NJ, nearly a third of immigrants come from Asia (32.2% and 31.8%, respectively), and about 1 in 6 come from Europe (18.0 and 16.4%).

RACE and ETHNICITY: Blacks/African Americans constitute 50.9% of the population, compared with 20.2% in Mercer County and 13.5% in NJ. Latinos make up 34.0% of Trenton, compared to 15.9% in Mercer and 18.6% in NJ. In contrast, about a third (32.2%) are white, compared to 62.4% of Mercer and 68.7% of NJ. And while Mercer is 9.6% Asian, only 1.1% of Trenton is. Among Latinos, Central Americans make up the largest group-- 13.4% of the city population (with Guatemalans representing 10.2%), followed by Puerto Ricans at 11.7%.

EDUCATION, WORK and INCOME: Trenton has a substantially less educated population than Mercer or NJ, with higher rates of unemployment, lower incomes, and higher poverty rates. 71.3% of Trentonians have a high school degree or equivalent, compared to 87.3% in Mercer and 88.4% in NJ. 10.7% have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared with 39.8% in Mercer and 36.4% in NJ. Related, Trenton’s median income of $35,647 is less than half of Mercer’s ($74,118) and NJ’s ($72,062). Trenton has a higher unemployment rate (11.4%) and lower labor force participation (61.6%) rates than Mercer (6.9% unemployment, 66.4% in labor force) or NJ (6.4% unemployment, 66.3% in labor force). While Trenton has about the same proportion of households receiving Social Security income as Mercer and NJ (27.4%), it has more than double the households receiving SSI (9.1%, compared to 4.2% and 4.3%), and more than three times the households receiving public cash assistance (10.3%, compared to 3.3% and 2.8%). 27.4% of households received SNAP benefits, compared with 9.0% in Mercer County and 8.5% in NJ. Nearly a quarter of families (24.4%) fell below the poverty line, with female headed households with children under 18 the most likely to have incomes below the federal poverty line (46.0%). Children under 18 were much more likely to live in poverty (42.1%) than adults in the city (23.4%), whereas children and adults were much less likely to be poor elsewhere in Mercer, where 16.9% of children and 15.5% of adults lived below the poverty line, or in NJ as a whole, where 15.4% of children and 9.3% of adults lived below the poverty line.