

Population Dynamics

State Population Is Growing, But Unevenly

At 10.3 million people, North Carolina is the ninth most populous state in the nation. Population growth has remained strong, with the state growing by roughly 738,000 people between 2010 and 2017. During this period, North Carolina experienced the fifth largest numeric growth and added more people than New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, combined. North Carolina's growth was surpassed by only Texas, California, Florida, and Georgia.

Between July 1, 2018 and July 1, 2019, OSBM projects that the state will grow by an additional 115,000 people, from 10.4 million to 10.5 million people. This is equivalent to adding an entire city slightly smaller than Wilmington to North Carolina. In other words, the state will be adding a net 316 people every day or about 2,220 people every week.

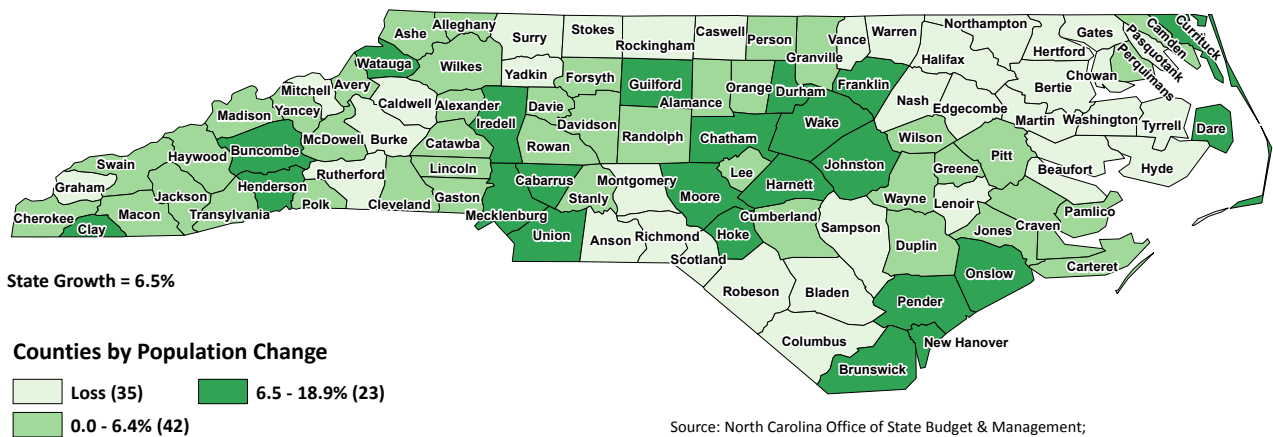
If these trends continue, North Carolina's population will reach 10.6 million people by 2020 – the year in which the next decennial Census is conducted. Given population trends in other states, North Carolina is expected to gain at least one Congressional seat after the 2020 Census enumeration.

But growth has not been distributed equally throughout the state. Between 2010 and 2016, 23 counties grew faster than the state's population growth of 6.5% (Figure 9). These faster growing counties were primarily metropolitan in nature, with much of that growth occurring in the major metropolitan areas of Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham. At the same time, 35 counties lost population – well above the seven counties that lost population in the previous decade. These counties are primarily nonmetropolitan in nature, with the largest concentration located in the northeastern and southern portions of the Coastal Plain.

In the coming years, due to a variety of factors, including an aging population, North Carolina will experience population growth slower than that experienced over the previous two decades. During the 1990s and 2000s, the state grew by 21.3% and 18.5%, respectively. OSBM projections show an expected percentage growth of 11.4% over the current decade – about the rate of growth experienced in the 1960s (and slower than any rate of decadal population growth since the 1860s). North Carolina is pro-

Figure 9

Population Change in North Carolina Counties, April 1, 2010 - July 1, 2016



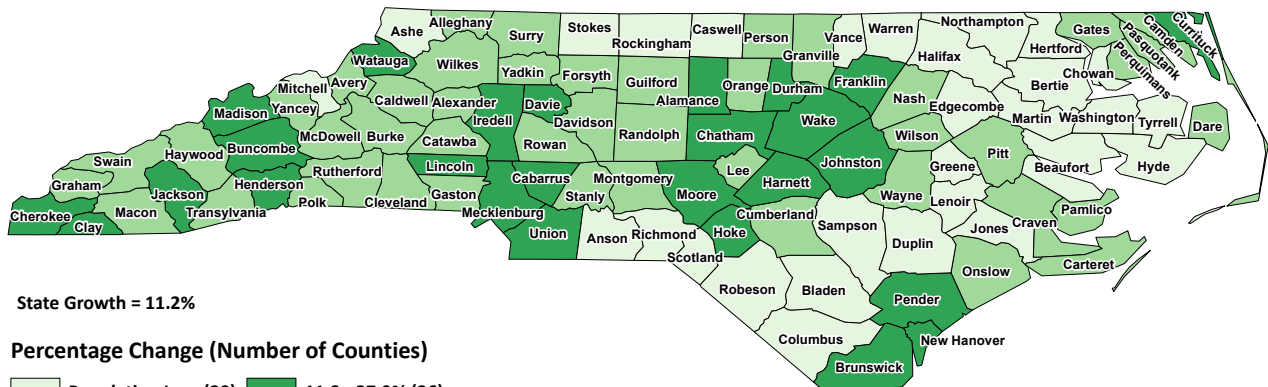
jected to add just over 1 million people during this decade – about 500,000 people less than what was added over the previous decade.

In the next ten years (2017-27), OSBM projects that the population of 29 counties will decline while 26 will experience growth faster than the State of North

Carolina (Figure 10). With few exceptions, the faster growing counties are located within the major metropolitan areas of the state. Those losing population during this period are mostly non-metropolitan (or rural).

Figure 10

Projected Population Change in North Carolina Counties, 2017 - 2027



State Growth = 11.2%

Percentage Change (Number of Counties)

- Population Loss (29)
- 11.2 - 27.9% (26)
- 0.0 - 11.1% (45)

Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management; Demographic & Economic Analysis Branch, 2017-2037 Population Projections.

Migration Continues to Influence Growth

Beginning in the 1970s, North Carolina’s population grew as a result of both natural increase (more births than deaths) and net in-migration (more people moving into the state than leaving). Starting in the 1980s, the majority of North Carolina’s population growth has been attributed to net in-migration (Figure 11). Between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2017, 474,000 net migrants contributed to North Carolina’s population growth (accounting for 64.3% of the growth), while an additional 258,000 people were added through natural increase. Of the 474,000 net migrants the Census Bureau estimated, the majority came from other states (69.1%), but at least 147,000 people migrated from abroad. The number of new migrants was surpassed by only Florida, Texas, and California.

North Carolina has added more net migrants than any of its neighbors. Two of every three of these net migrants moved from another state (domestic migrants). North Carolina was one of only 23 states

(including D.C.) with a net gain in state-to-state migrants between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2017, behind only Florida and Texas.

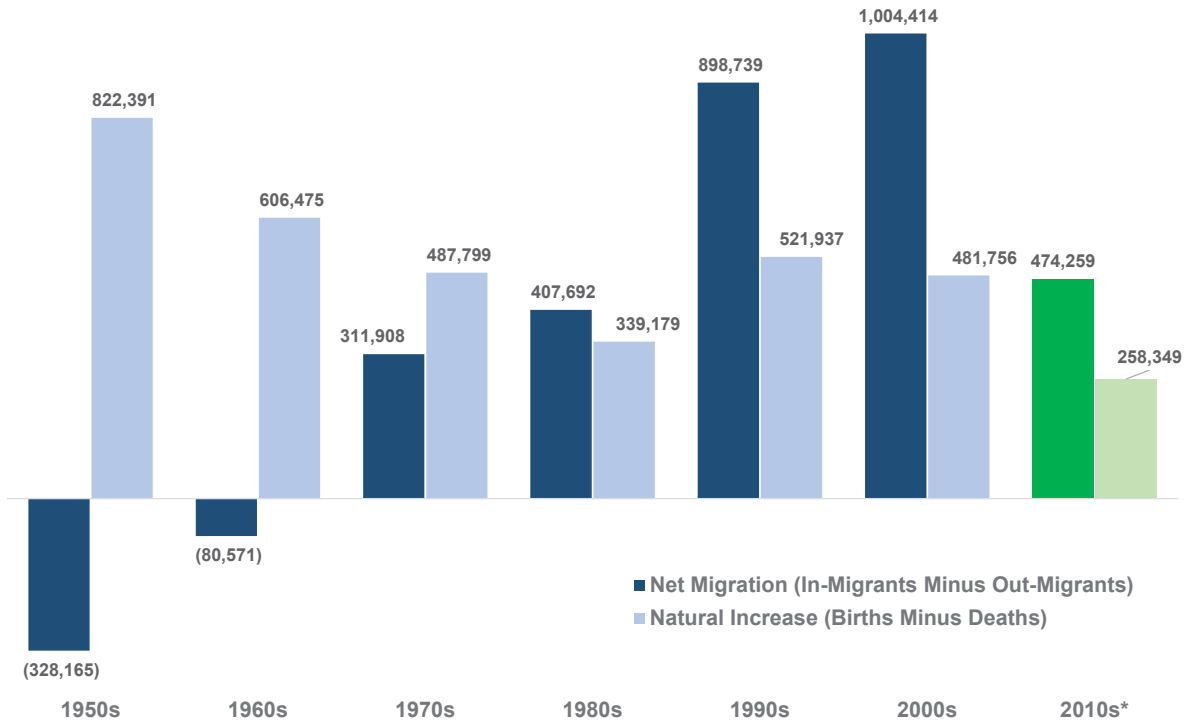
Over time, the historical migration patterns have helped shape the character of North Carolina and will continue to do so. Only 56.8% of the state’s population was born in North Carolina while another 15.0% were born elsewhere in the South (Figure 12). In 2016, 7.8% of the North Carolina population was foreign born (790,000 people). The foreign born have grown from about 5.3% of the North Carolina population in 2000 (430,000 people) to 7.8% (790,000 people) in 2016.

The importance of net migration for population growth is projected to continue due to population aging and long-term declines in fertility rates. Between 2020 and 2030, close to 81% of the state’s growth is projected to be derived from net migration.

Figure 11

Net Migration Influences Growth More than Natural Population Increase

Components of Population Change by Period, 1950 - 2017

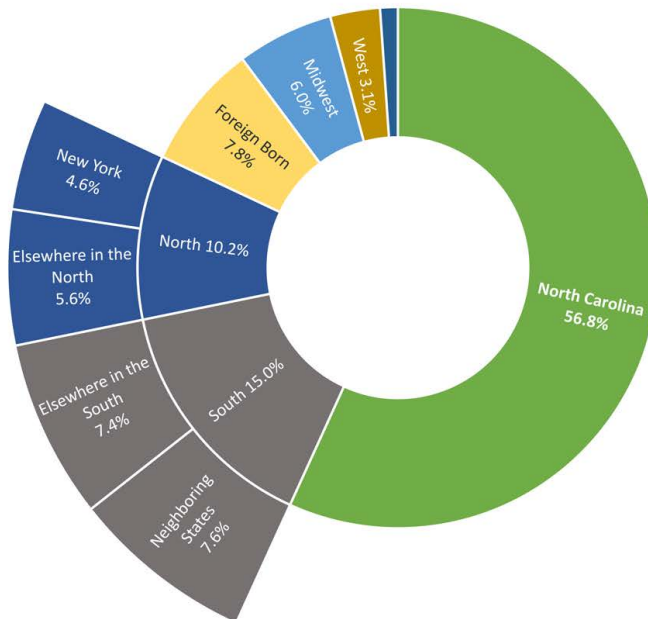


Source: US Census Bureau, State Population Estimates, Vintage 2017; Age-Specific Net Migration Estimates for US Counties, 1950-2010. Applied Population Laboratory, UW-Madison.

Figure 12

Many North Carolinians Were Born Elsewhere

Percent of the North Carolina Population by Place of Birth



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 1-Year American Community Survey

North Carolina's Population Is Aging

By 2030, OSBM projects that one in five North Carolinians will be at least 65 years old, and by 2035 there will be more older adults (ages 65+) than children (ages less than 18). The Baby Boom generation began entering the older adult ages at the beginning of this decade, and for the next several years this age group will increase by about 58,000 people a year (Figure 13). OSBM projects that between 2017 and 2037, the older adult population will increase by just over 1 million people (63.3%) to 2.6 million in 2037, and the oldest adults (ages 85+) will more than double from 181,000 in 2017 to 381,000 by 2037.

In the previous decade the working age population (ages 18-64) increased by an average of 91,000 people a year, while in this decade it has so far increased

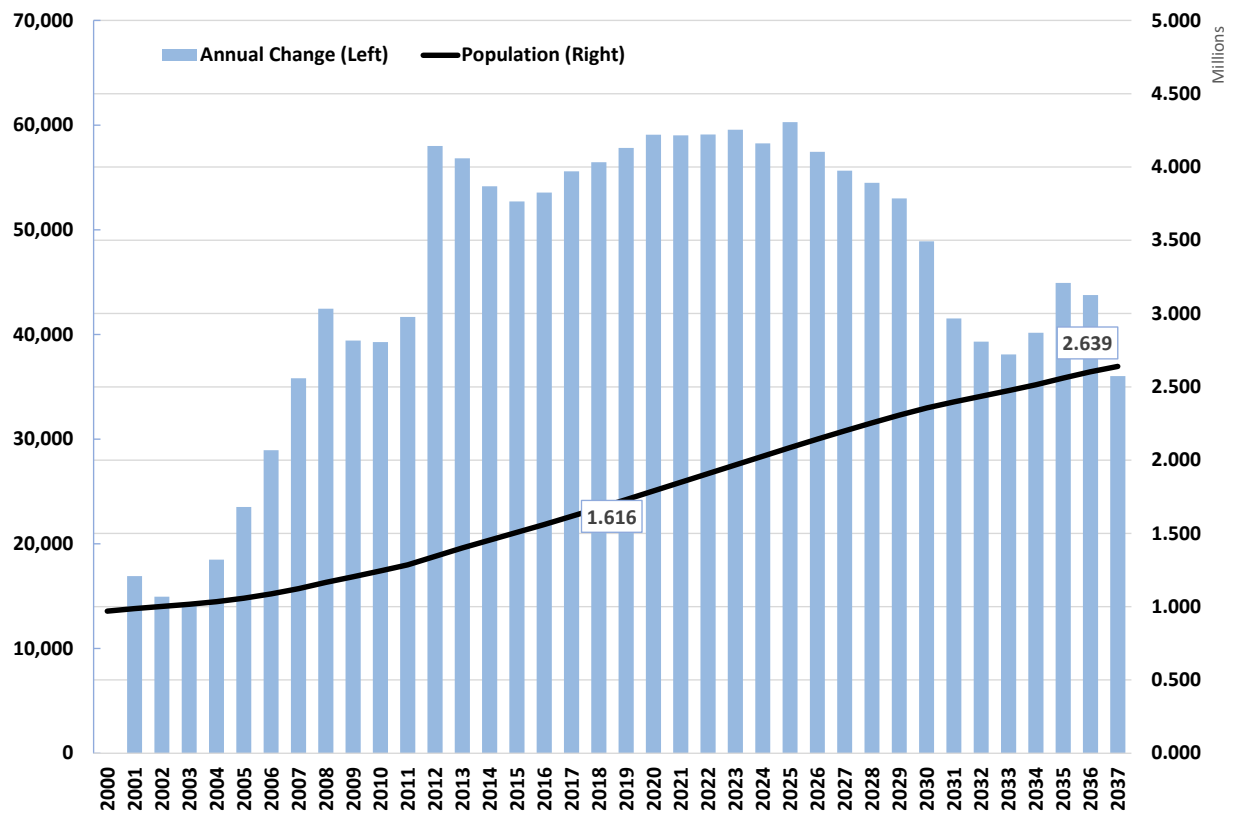
an average of 43,000 people per year (Figure 14). This is due partly to the Baby Boom generation aging into the older age group. OSBM projects that this age group will grow from 6.3 million in 2017 to 7.3 million by 2037, an increase of 982,000 people (15.5%).

The Great Recession impacted births in North Carolina above and beyond long term downward trends in fertility. As a result, the childhood population in North Carolina has grown much slower than it did prior to the Great Recession. Between 2010 and 2017, this population grew an average of 4,000 people per year (Figure 15). OSBM projects that between 2017 and 2037 this population will grow by 276,000 people (12%).

Figure 13

Older Adult Population Growing Faster Than Other Age Groups

Annual Population Change in and Population Age 65 and Older by Year, 2000-37



Source: NC OSBM, 2000-2016 Population Estimates and 2017-2037 Population Projections. Population as of July 1.

Figure 14

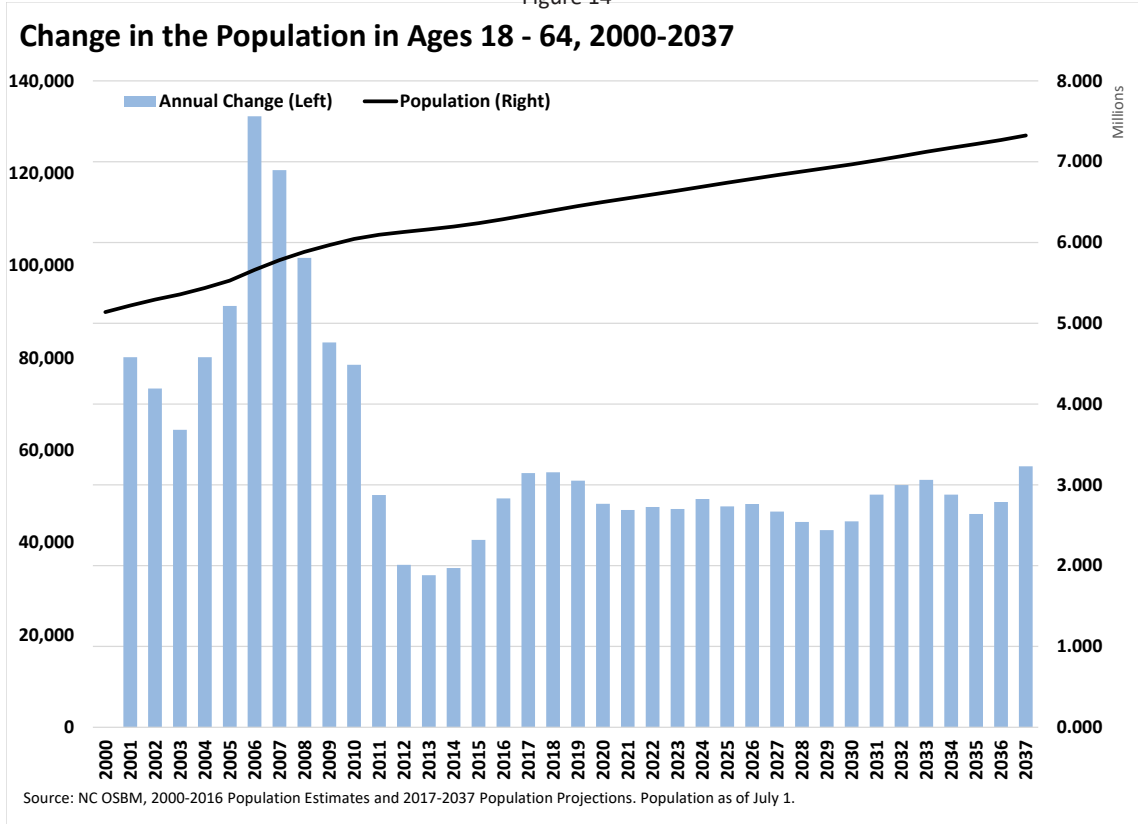
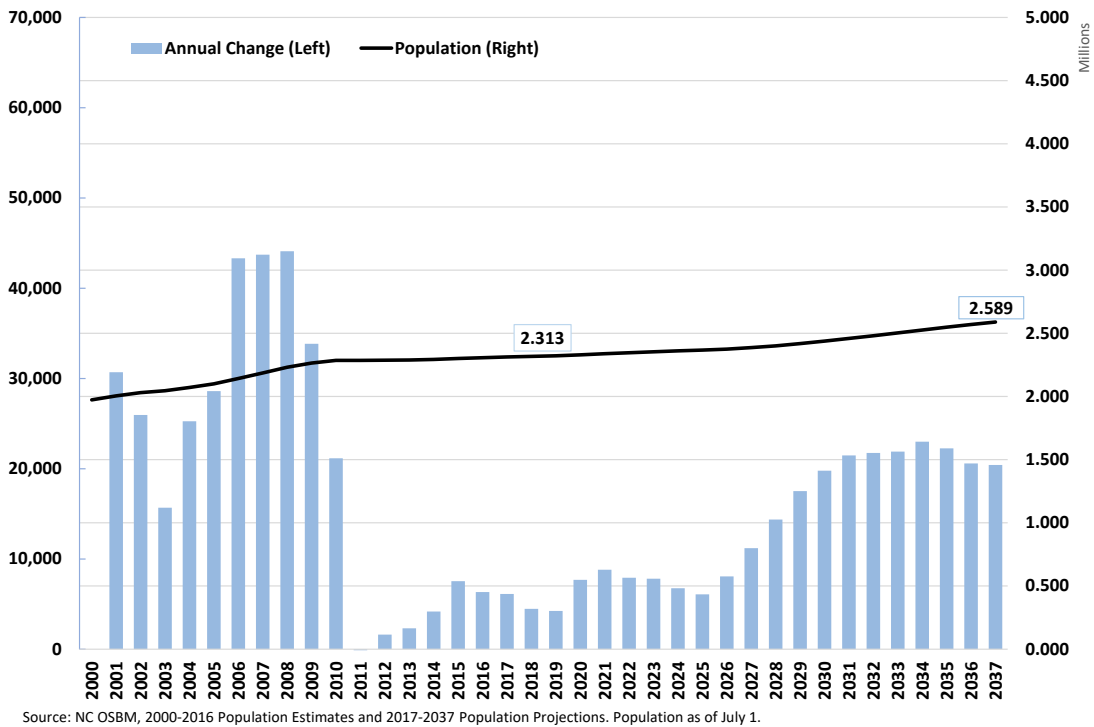


Figure 15

Childhood Population Growing Slowly

Annual Change in and Childhood Population (Ages < 18) by Year, 2000-37



Household Change

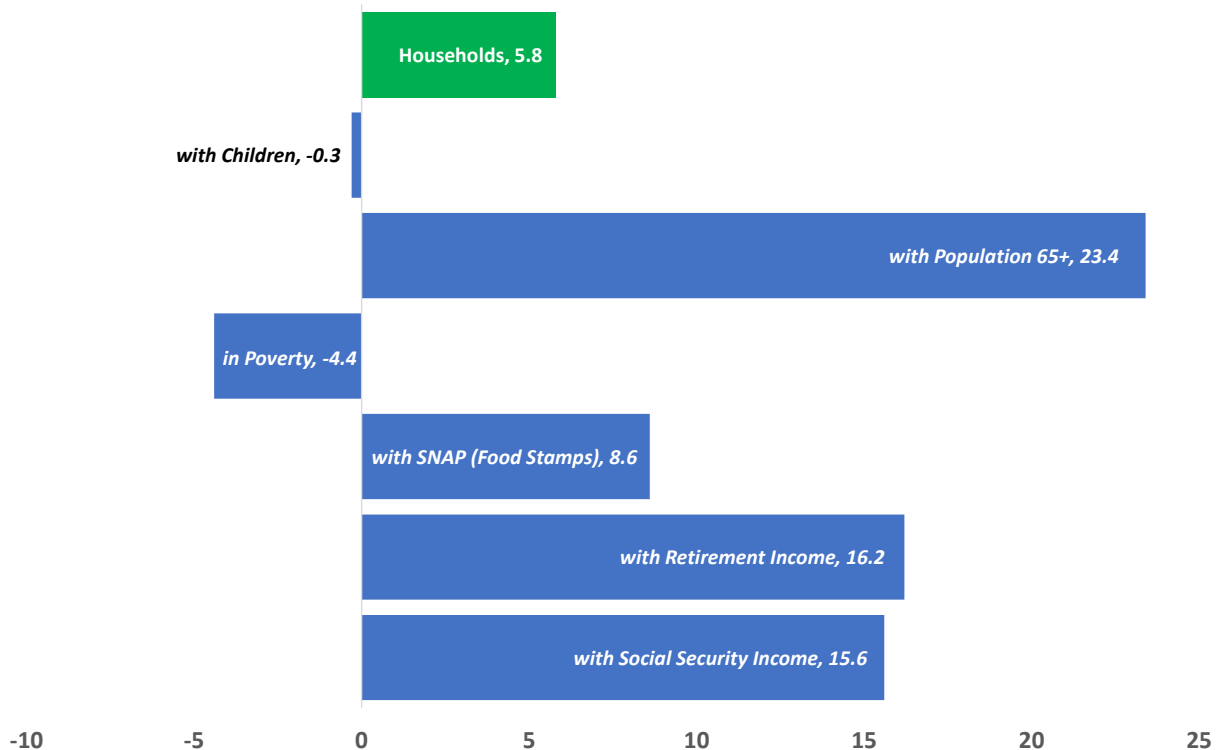
Between 2010 and 2016, household growth in North Carolina has been steady (+212,000 households or +5.8%) but slower than the growth that occurred in the previous decade (about 1.0% annually versus 2.0% annually from 2000-10). There were an estimated 3.9 million households in North Carolina in 2016. At the same time, the number of households with children has declined by an estimated 3,000 house-

holds (-0.3%), while the number of households with older adults have increased by 183,000 households (23.4%). These changes are reflected in the change in the number of households with retirement and social security income. In addition, as the economy has improved, there are fewer households in poverty (a decrease of 26,000 or -4.4%).

Figure 16

Households with Retirement Related Income Growing

Percentage Change in Households and Households by Select Characteristics, 2010-16



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1-Year American Community Survey, 2010 and 2016.

Census 2020

Preparations for Census 2020 have already started. State, tribal, and local governments are participating in programs to establish accurate residential address and boundary information necessary for conducting the 2020 Census. Leading up to April 1, 2020 (Census Day), communities are also encouraged to develop Complete Count Committees that will partner with the US Census Bureau to promote participation in the 2020 Census. These local investments of time and resources for 2020 Census preparation and promotion will play an important role in making sure

every North Carolinian is counted in 2020. In addition to the importance of the Census for determining political representation in Congress and providing complete data for local government services and economic development, an estimated \$16.3 billion in federal funds are distributed annually to North Carolina based directly or indirectly on numbers derived from the decennial census. Another \$1.5 billion in state funds are distributed annually to local municipalities and counties based indirectly on the decennial census.

