

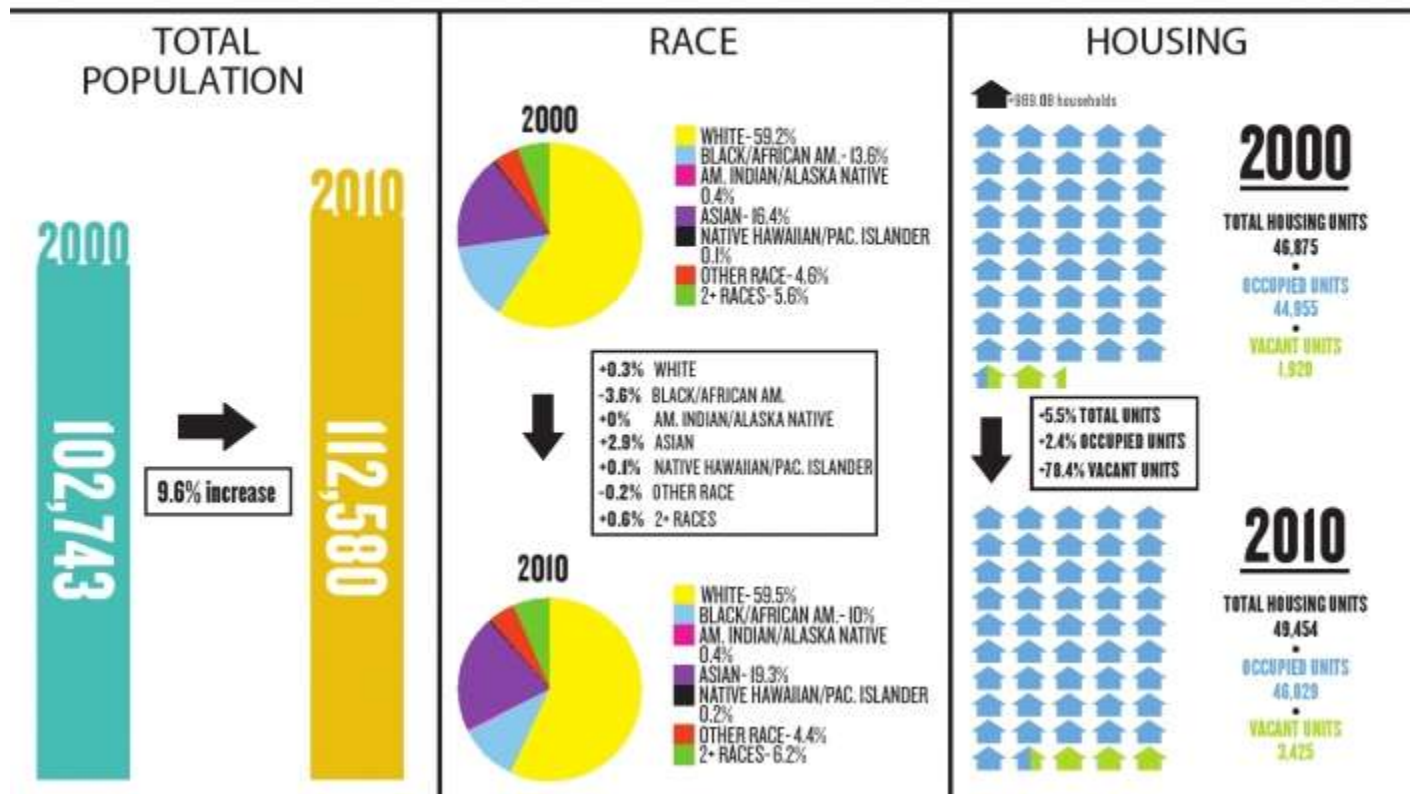
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2010 Census Data for Berkeley Released

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After experiencing a steady decline since 1970, the city of Berkeley's population experienced growth for the first time since the 1960s, according to 2010 census data released yesterday afternoon.

BERKELEY POPULATION TRENDS



[Wook Lee](#)/Staff

In a 9.6 percent increase that marks a return to population levels comparable to those reported by the 1960 census - and closely correlates to statewide growth of 10 percent - the city's total population has reached 112,580 people. The city's racial composition has also shifted since the 2000 census.

Although the statewide population describing itself as white or mainly white has increased to 57.6 percent, white residents constitute a 59.5 percent majority of Berkeley's population - up 0.3 percent since 2000.

While California's black population has risen by 1.6 percent, Berkeley's black population has experienced a 3.6 percent decline.

Changes in Berkeley's Asian population appear to follow those throughout the state. The city's Asian population rose by 2.9 percent since 2000, and the statewide Asian population has risen by 31.5 percent.

Housing trends in Berkeley have also changed significantly. Money flowed into the state in the late 1990s, fueling a building boom in Berkeley after decades of deterioration, according to UC Berkeley economics professor David Card.

The total number of housing units available in the city has increased by 5.5 percent since 2000, census data shows.

Americans across the country have begun clustering themselves in closer quarters since the recession began, according to Census Bureau Director Robert M. Groves' blog.

Census numbers reflect this density change. While the number of occupied units has risen by 2.4 percent, the total number of vacant units has jumped by 78.4 percent.

"The new housing is multi-unit housing," city spokesperson Mary Kay Clunies-Ross said. "There have been changes in density to reflect that."

Following a mistake by census officials in 2000 in which a student dormitory containing 800 residents was counted as a single person - forcing city of Berkeley officials to contest the census - the city has been much more involved in making sure that the population is accurately numbered, said Berkeley City Councilmember Kriss Worthington.

While populations in some communities - such as those mostly composed of racial minorities, renters rather than homeowners or individuals living in group housing - have been historically difficult to tally, the response rates between the 2000 and 2010 census were fairly consistent in Berkeley, according to Jon Stiles, director of research at UC Berkeley's California Census Research Data Center.

"Historically, it's been a problem that there are difficult to count populations," he said.

The census forms used in 2010 contain changes that aimed to address these challenges. In a major move, the Census Bureau stopped using both long and short forms, instead distributing a single form to all households, Stiles said. The new short form contained only 10 questions and resulted in a higher response rate across the board.

Census policy regarding the data about same-sex couples has also changed. In the past, those who reported a same-sex partner on census surveys were reclassified as "unmarried partners" and grouped with heterosexual unmarried partners. However, 2010 data regarding same-sex partners will be made public later this year.

"I thought that's really cool that they've added that in to sort of catch up with the times," Worthington said, who added that he could not report his longtime partner on the census due to the fact that the two do not live together. "I thought that was a nice positive improvement, recognizing reality instead of denying it."