



North Carolina's Shifting Demographic

NC Forestry Association Annual Meeting
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Data for the People

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About Carolina Demography

Who we are

Carolina Demography is the applied demography unit of the Carolina Population Center (CPC) at UNC-Chapel Hill. We are a non-partisan team of population scientists working for the people of North Carolina.

Our Mission

We help people understand a changing North Carolina to make informed decisions.



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About Carolina Demography: What We Do



Find and Collect Data

We work with you to determine the data you need, and where and how to access that data.



Clean, Analyze, & Interpret Data

We use rigorous methods to translate the data and provide meaningful context.



Communicate data and engage stakeholders

We strengthen the capacity of your organization to communicate data-driven ideas.

What are the big demographic stories in NC?



Growth

- NC has grown faster than the nation every year since 1970



Urbanization

- The majority of growth is occurring in urban areas, widening the urban/rural continuum



Aging

- Age structure of the state is becoming older



Diversity

- North Carolina continues to become more diverse every decade

10,835,491

2023 North Carolina total population



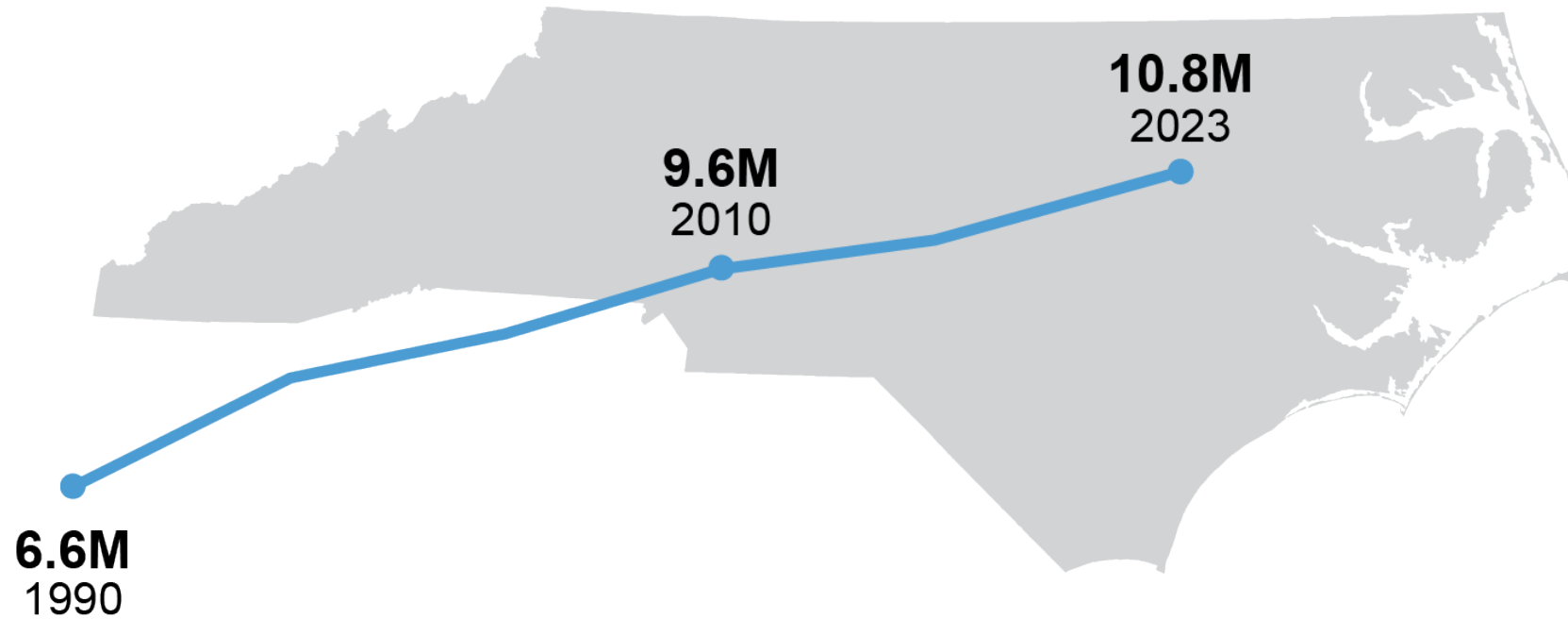
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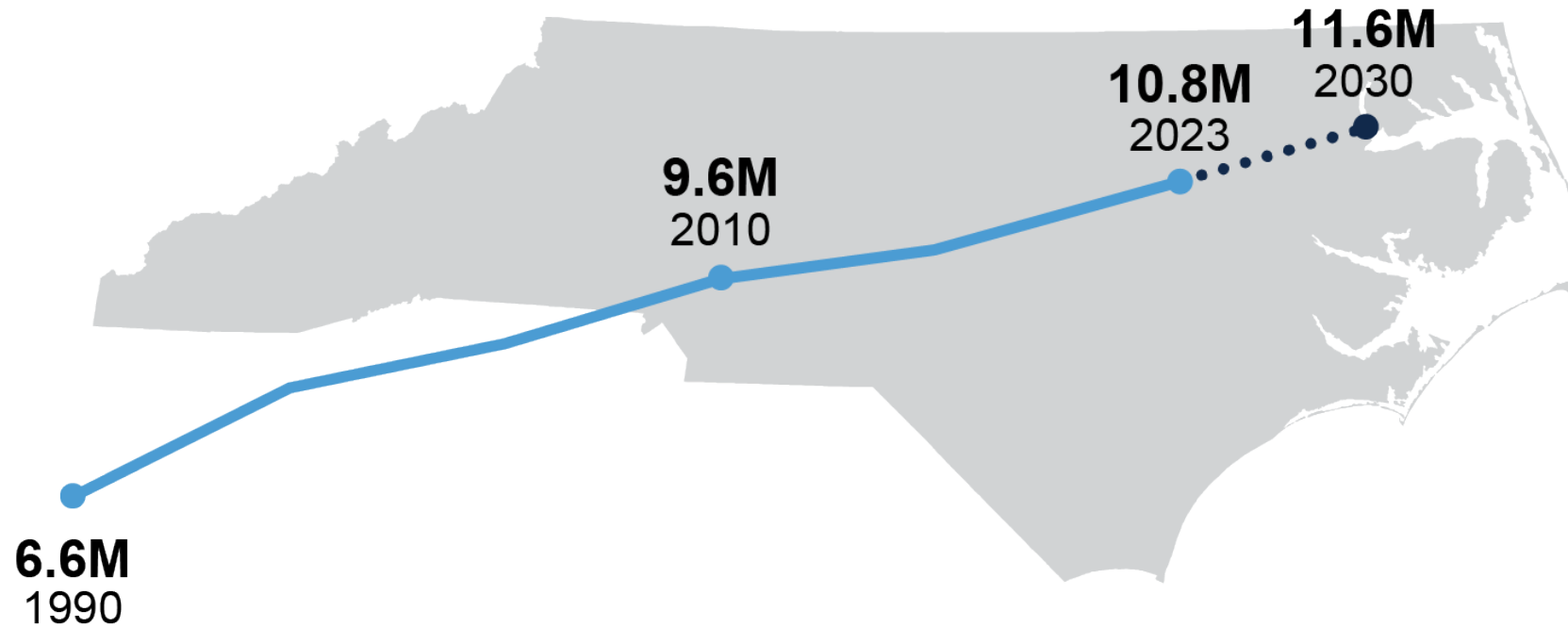
Current population

+ 4.1 million new North Carolina residents since 1990



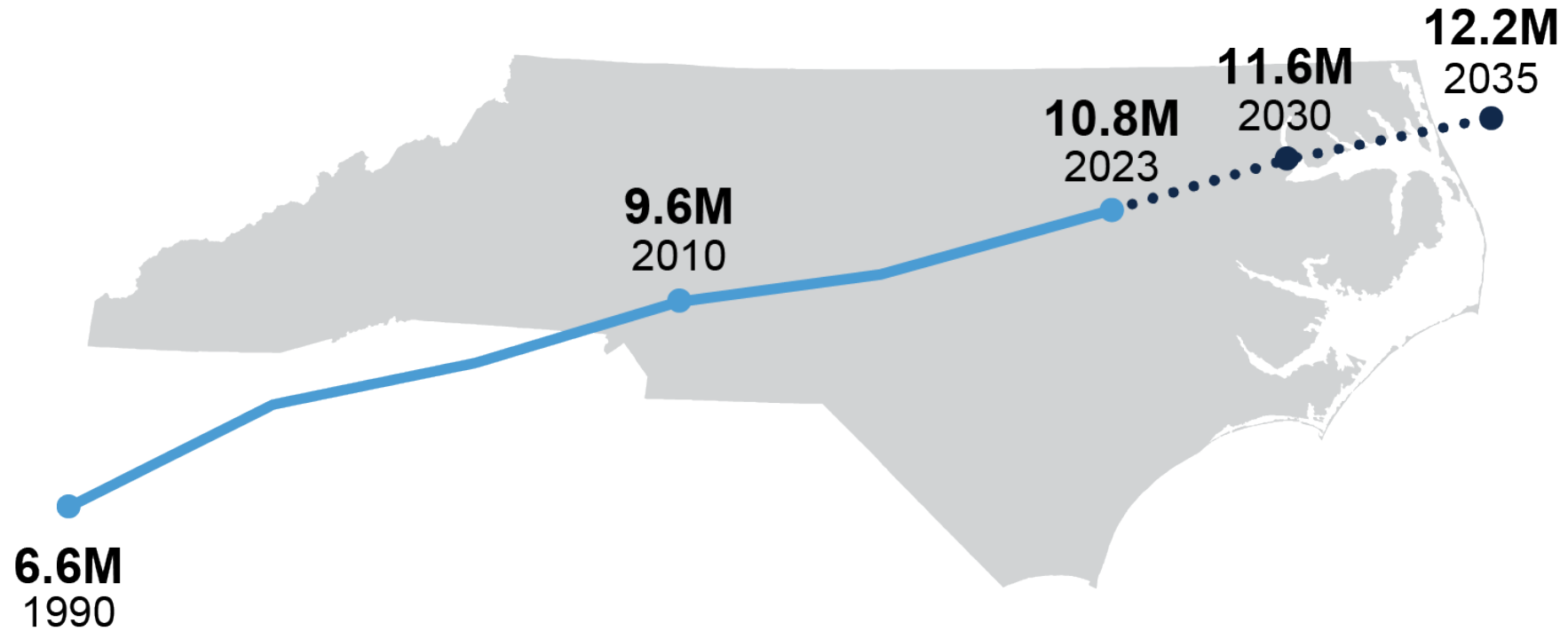
By 2030 11.6 million

Projected population growth



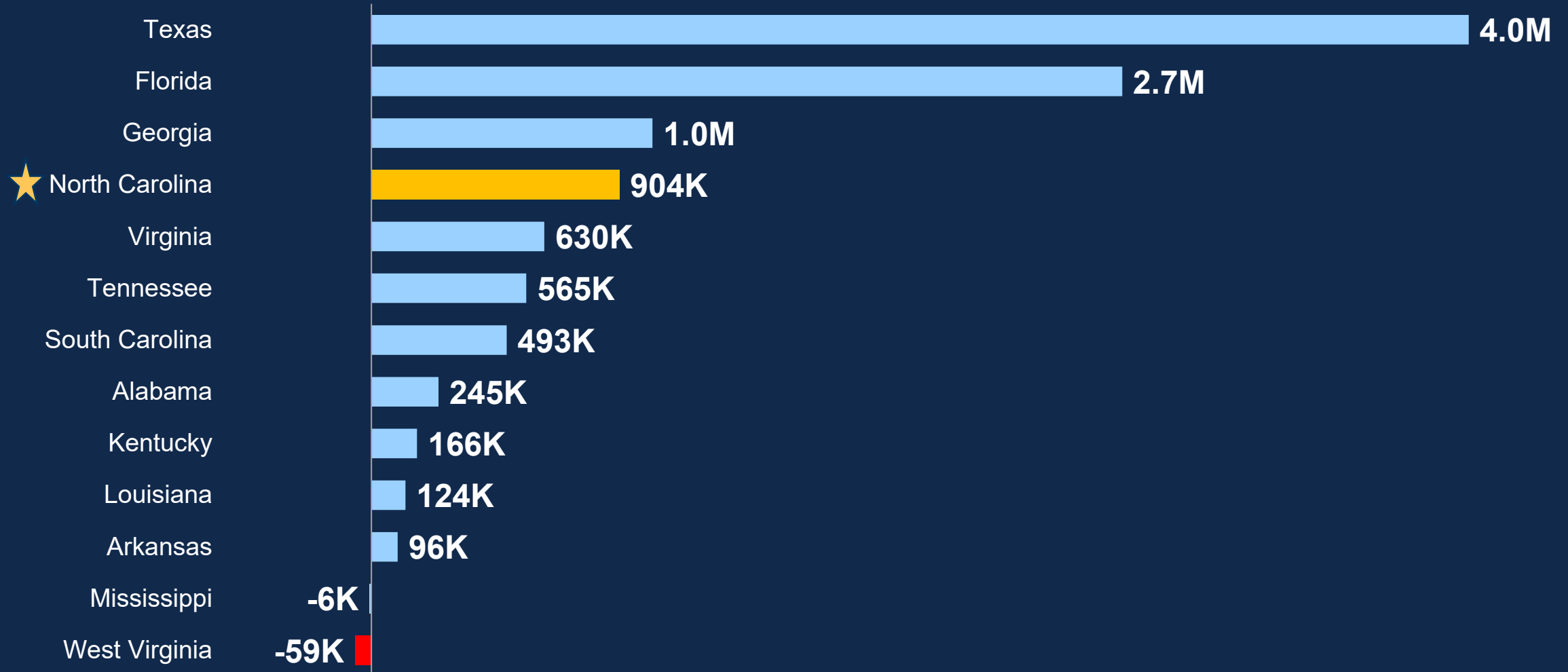
Population set to reach 12.2M by 2035

Projected population growth



NC growth 4th largest among South, 6th nationwide

Numeric change in total population for Southern states, 2010-2020



**North Carolina is growing...and it's mostly
in urban areas.**

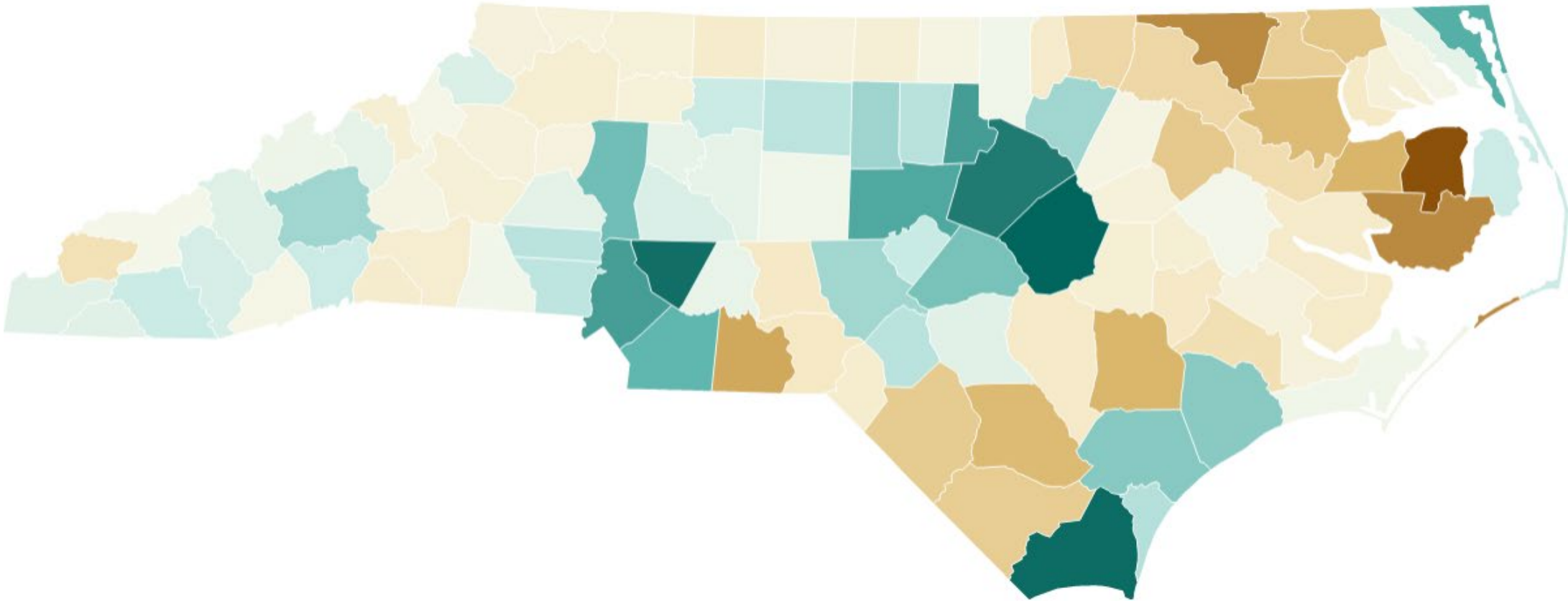


67%

of NC residents lived in an urban area
in 2020

Fastest growth in Triangle, Charlotte, Wilmington areas

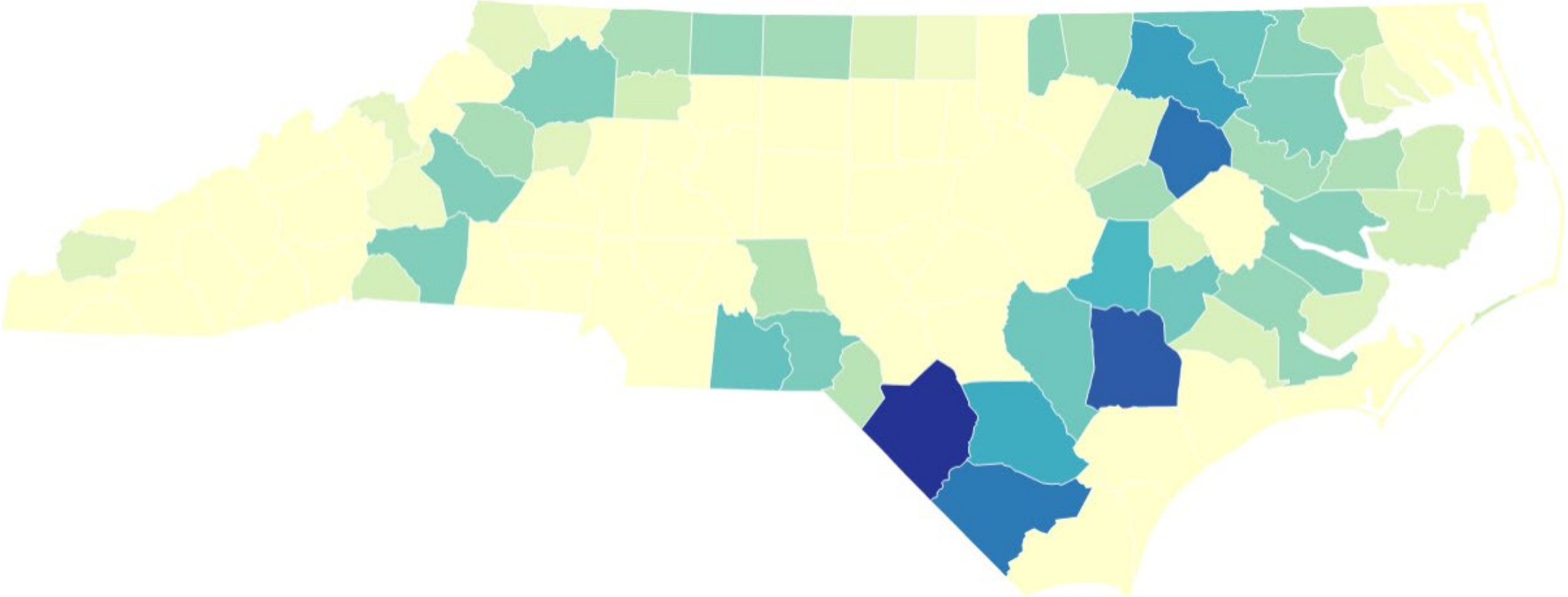
Population growth rate (%) for NC counties, 2010-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Largest population losses in Sandhills, Northeast

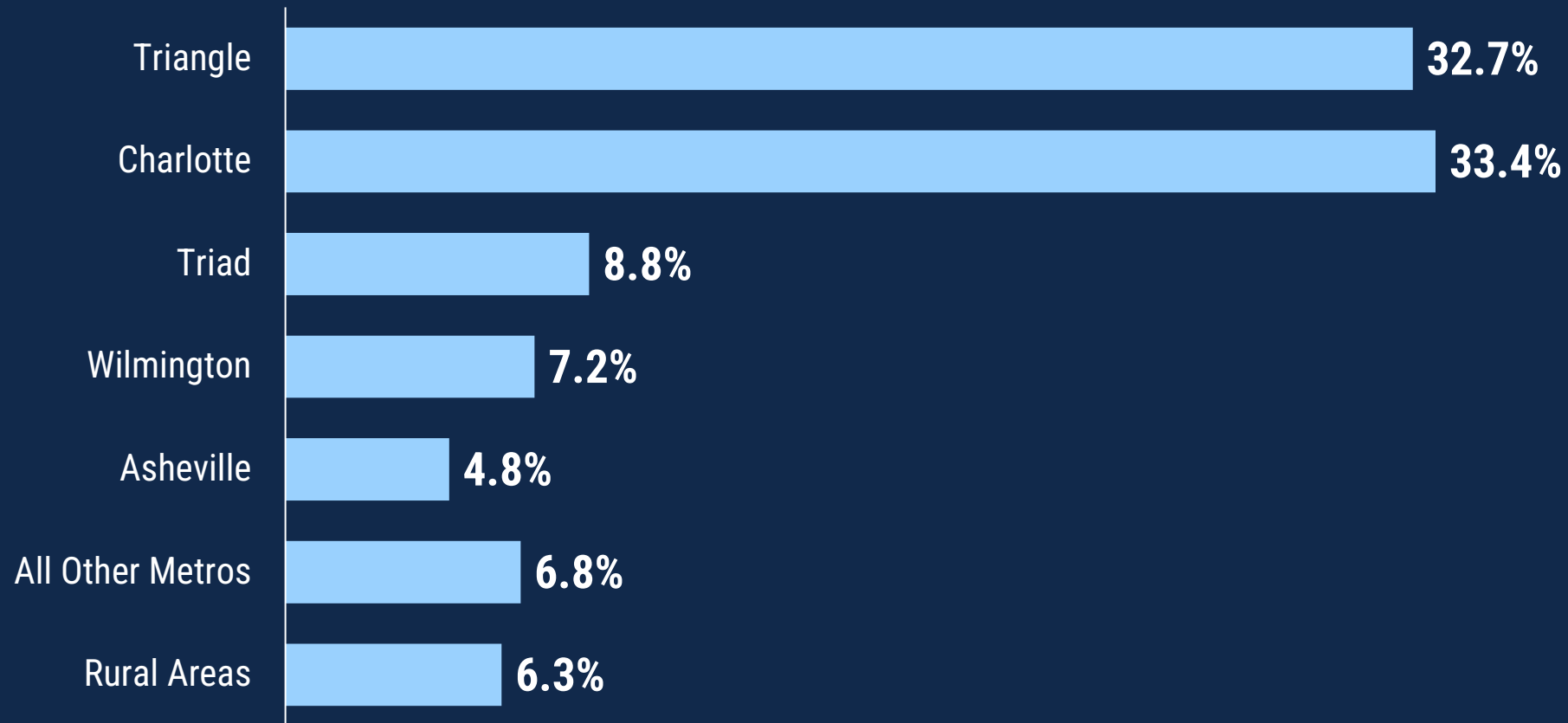
Numeric change in population for NC counties, 2010-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Almost all future growth projected to occur in urban areas

Projected share of 2010-2035 state population growth for select North Carolina metropolitan areas



Source: NC State OSBM

What's Driving population growth in our state?

Source: NC State OSBM

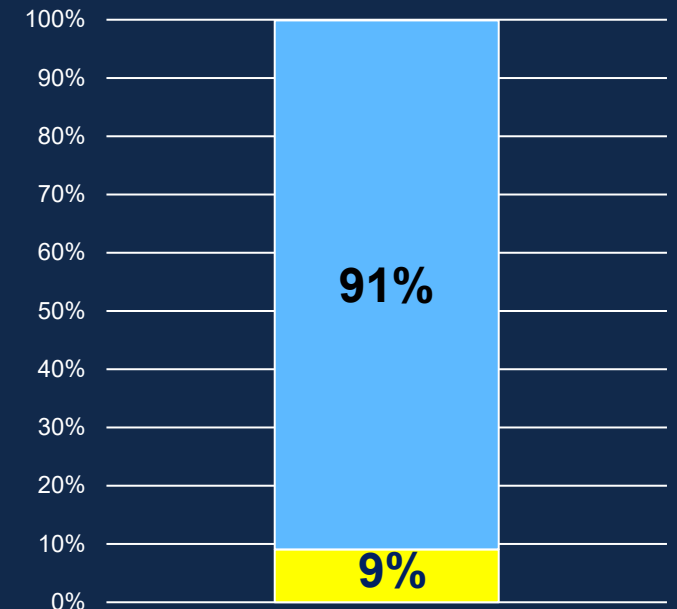
Components of Population Change from July 1, 2022 - July 1, 2023

NC Population change: +139,526

Components of Change:

- Natural Increase (Births – Deaths) = **12,657**
- Net Migration (International + Domestic) = **126,712**

■ Net Migration
■ Natural Increase

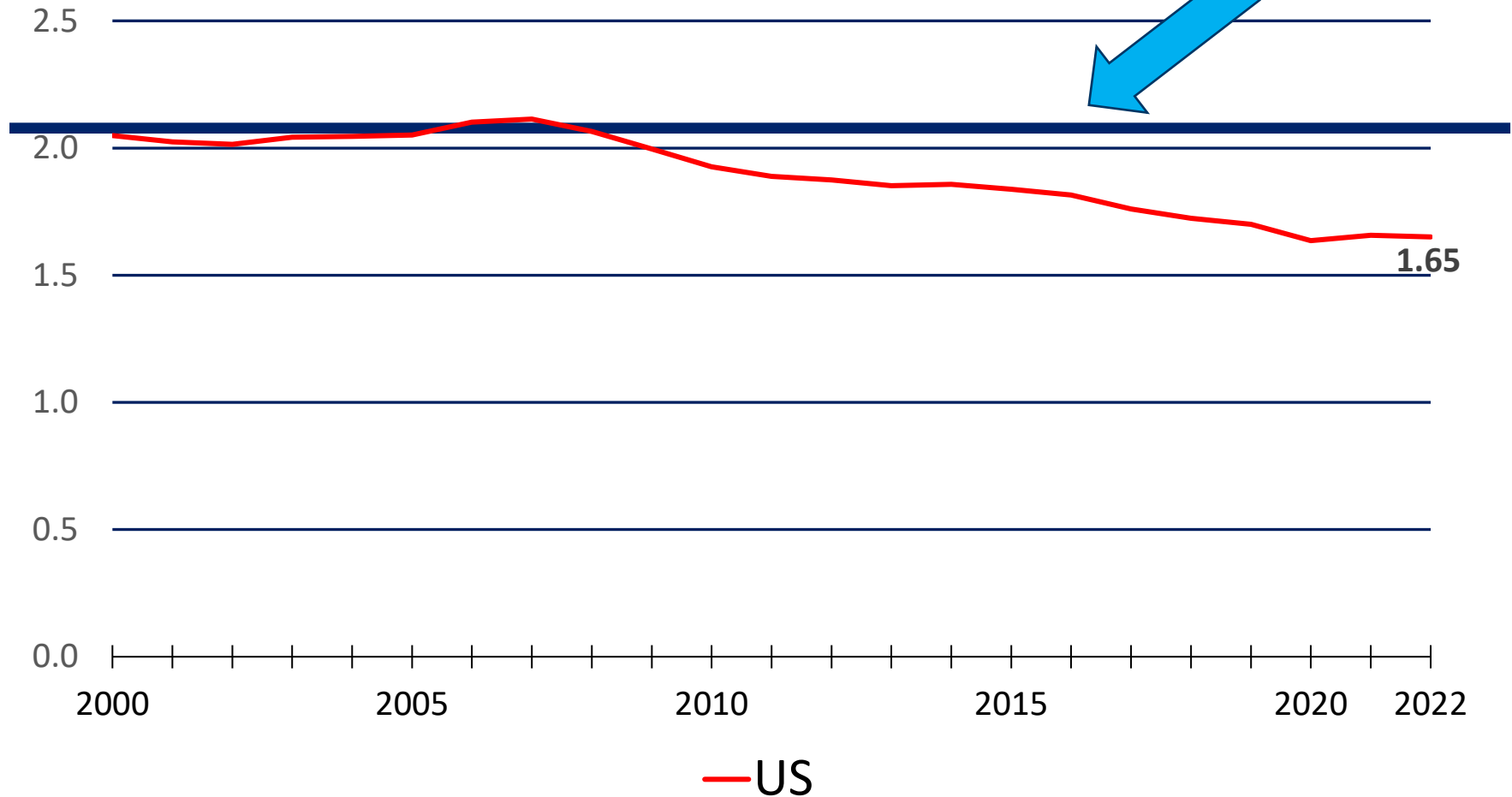


Source: US Census Bureau

Below Replacement Fertility

North Carolina Mirrors National Trend in Declining Total Fertility Rate

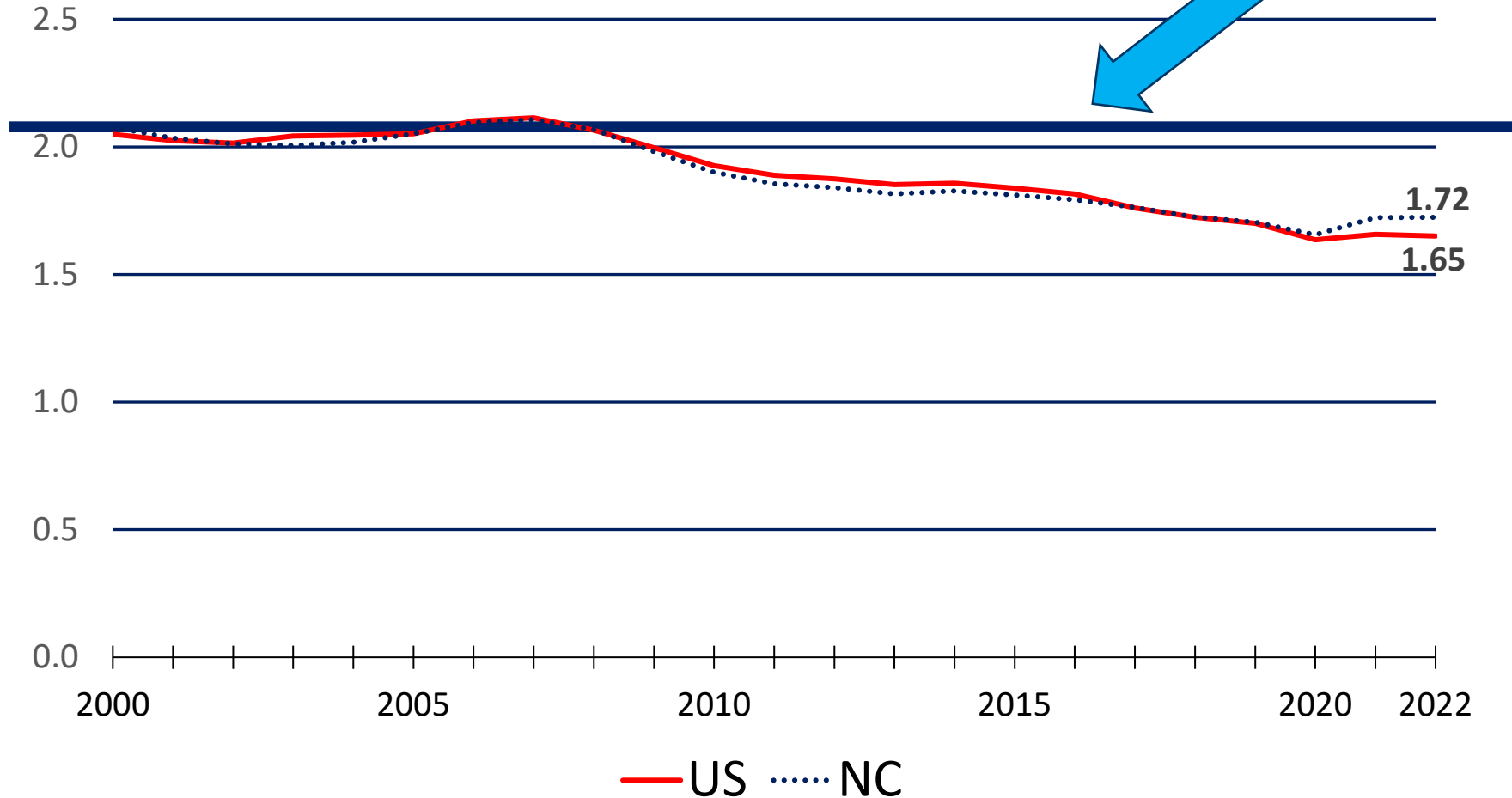
Replacement Level
2.1



Below Replacement Fertility

North Carolina Mirrors National Trend in Declining Total Fertility Rate

Replacement Level
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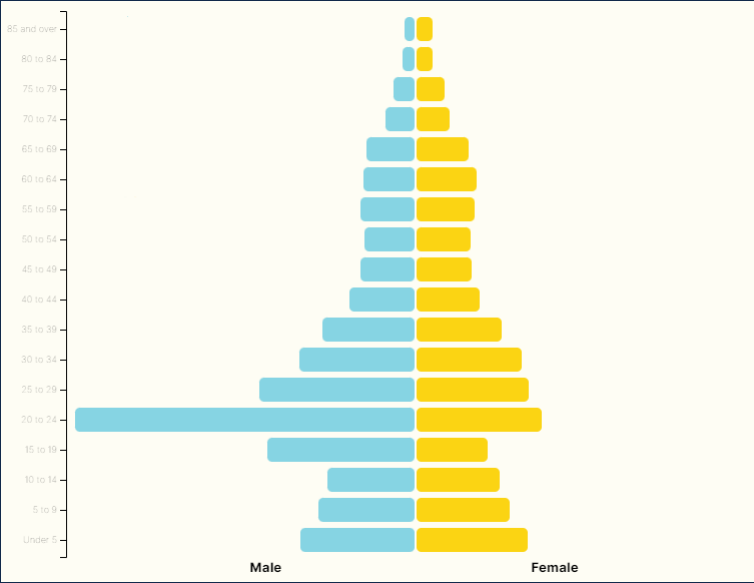
NC Population is Getting Older

County Median Ages Range from:

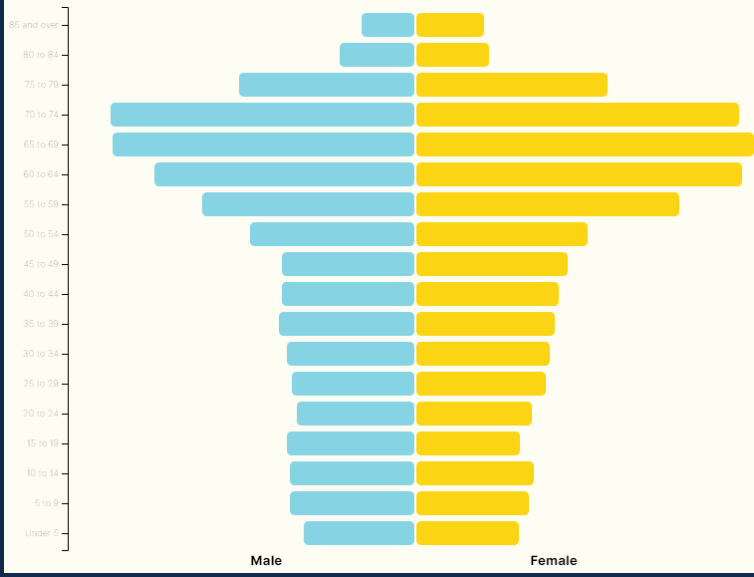
39.3
years

Median Age, 2023

27.6 Years in Onslow County



56.6 Years in Brunswick County



Older Counties tend to be more rural and economically distressed

Ten oldest NC Counties by median age, percent rural, and 2023 County tier designation

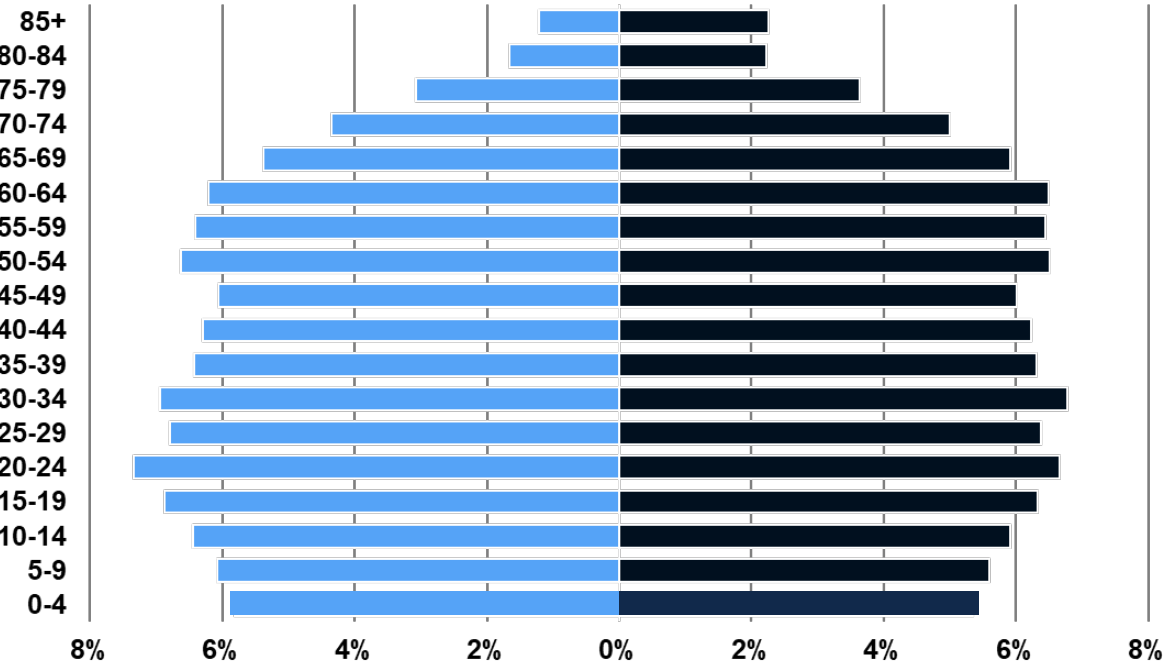
County	Median Age	Percent Rural	Tier Designation
Brunswick	56.6	36.4	3
Clay	55.3	100	2
Pamlico	54.1	100	2
Polk	54.1	91.4	2
Cherokee	53.7	100	1
Transylvania	52.5	60.4	2
Alleghany	51.8	100	2
Northampton	51.8	88.4	1
Carteret	50.8	30.6	3
Macon	50.4	74.7	2
Ashe	50.3	100	2

We are getting older...

Population age structure by sex, 2022

Median Age
39.3

Male Female



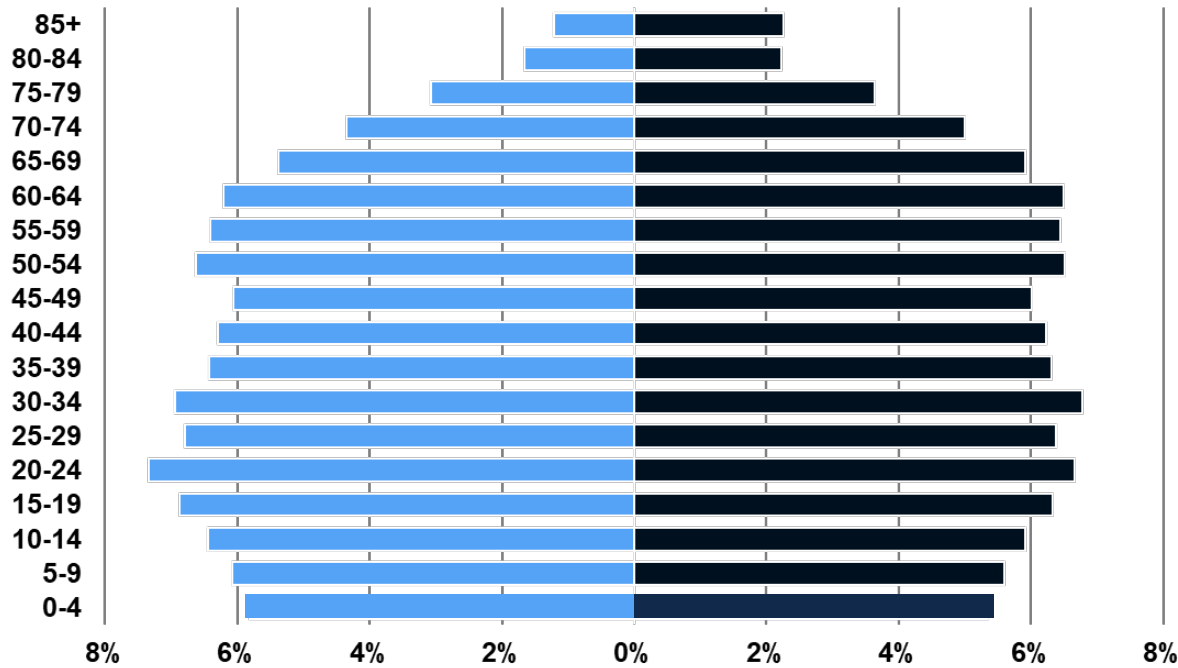
Source: US Census Bureau 2022 Population Estimates

We are getting older and more diverse

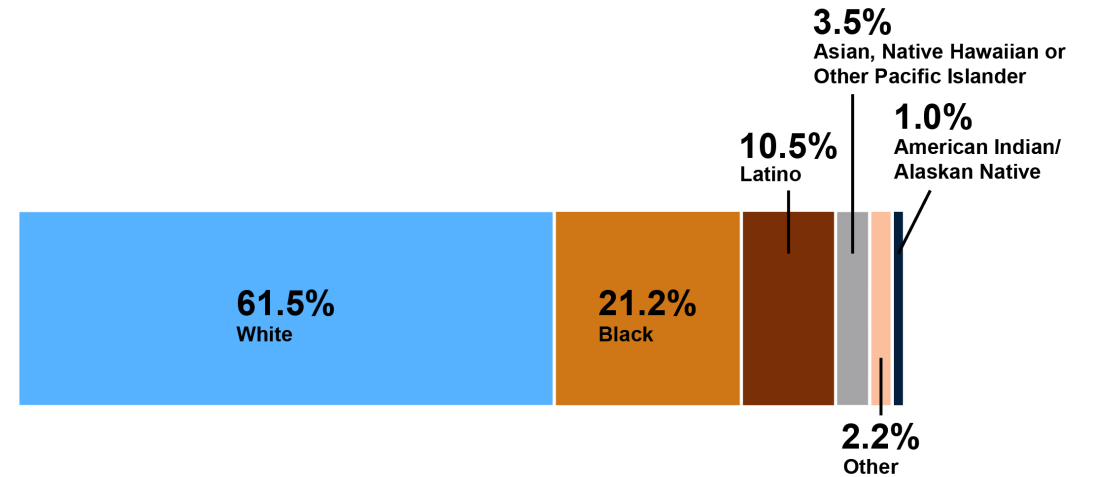
Median Age
39.3

Population age structure by sex, 2022

Male Female

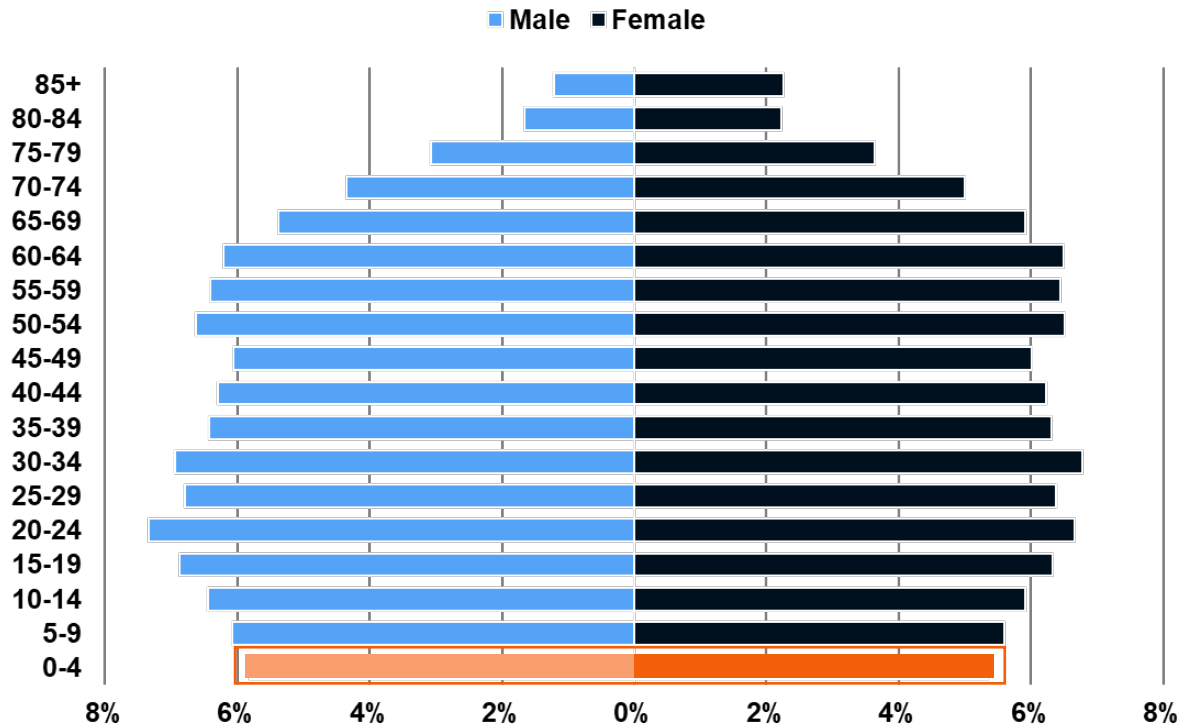


Racial/Ethnic Composition of Overall NC Population, 2022

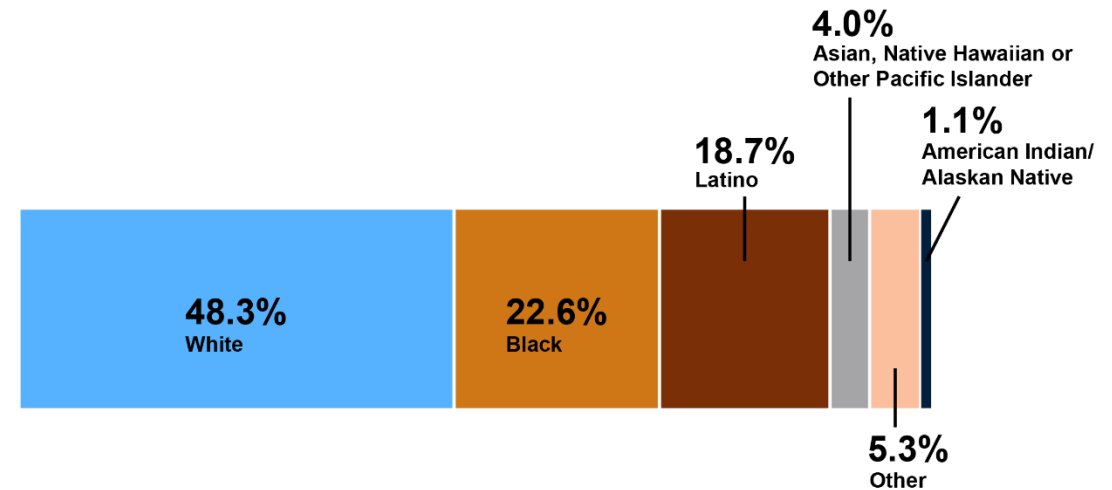


Pre-School Aged Kids are the most diverse

Population age structure by sex, 2022

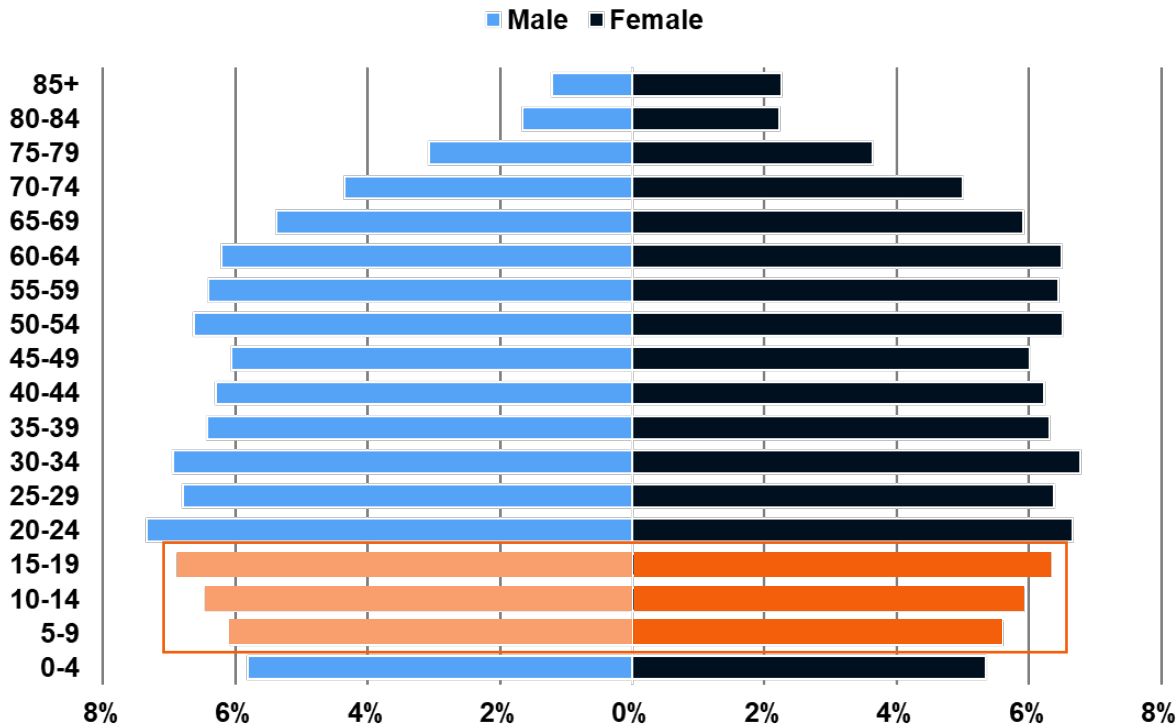


Racial/Ethnic composition of ages 0-4

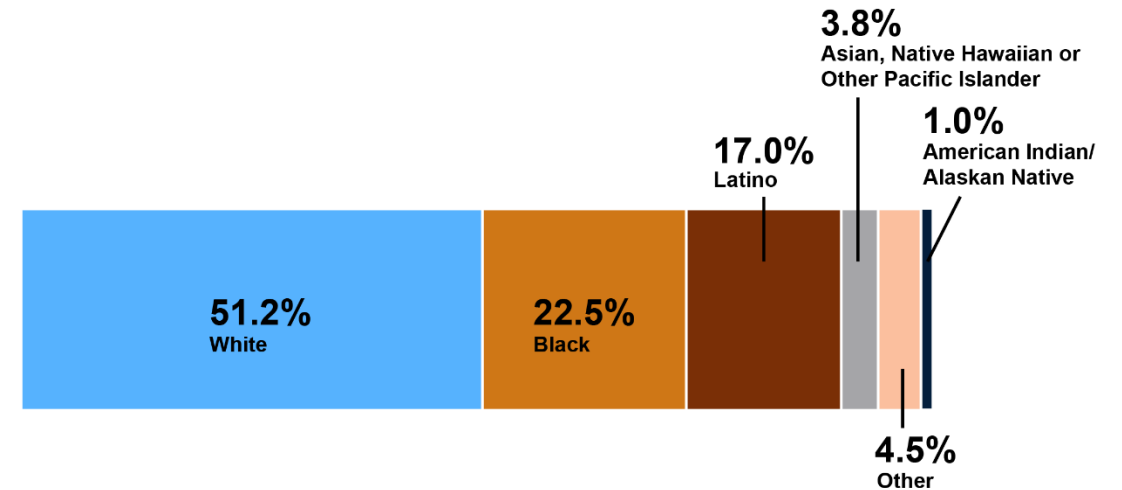


School-Age Children are also more diverse

Population age structure by sex, 2022



Racial/Ethnic composition of ages 5-19



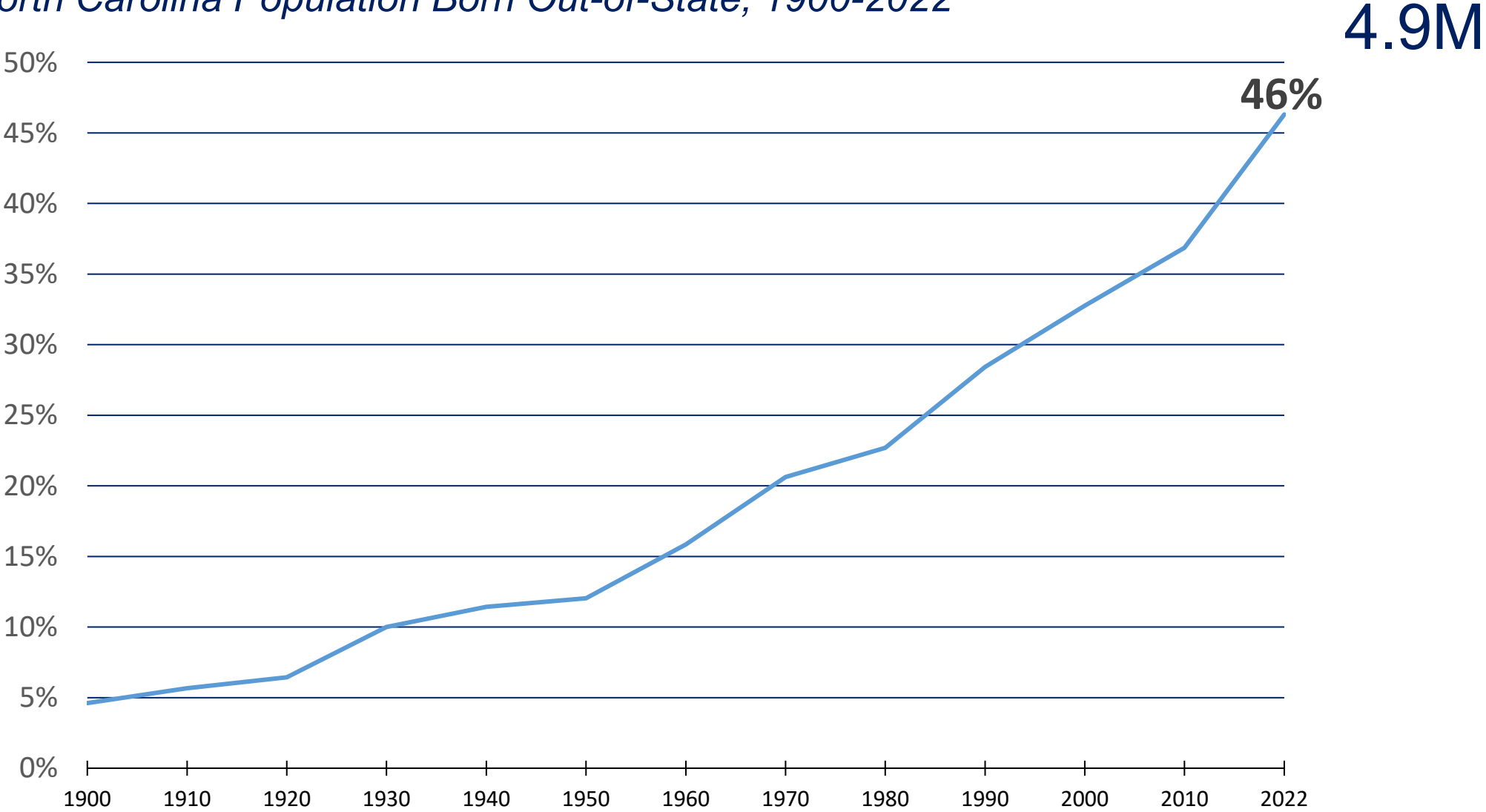
46%

4.9M

of North Carolinians are *not*
NC natives.

Historical Domestic Migration Trends

Percent of North Carolina Population Born Out-of-State, 1900-2022



Source: 2022 1-year American Community Survey

Where are recent domestic migrants moving from?

Top 3 Sending States to North Carolina, 2021 to 2022



+36,028



+31,502



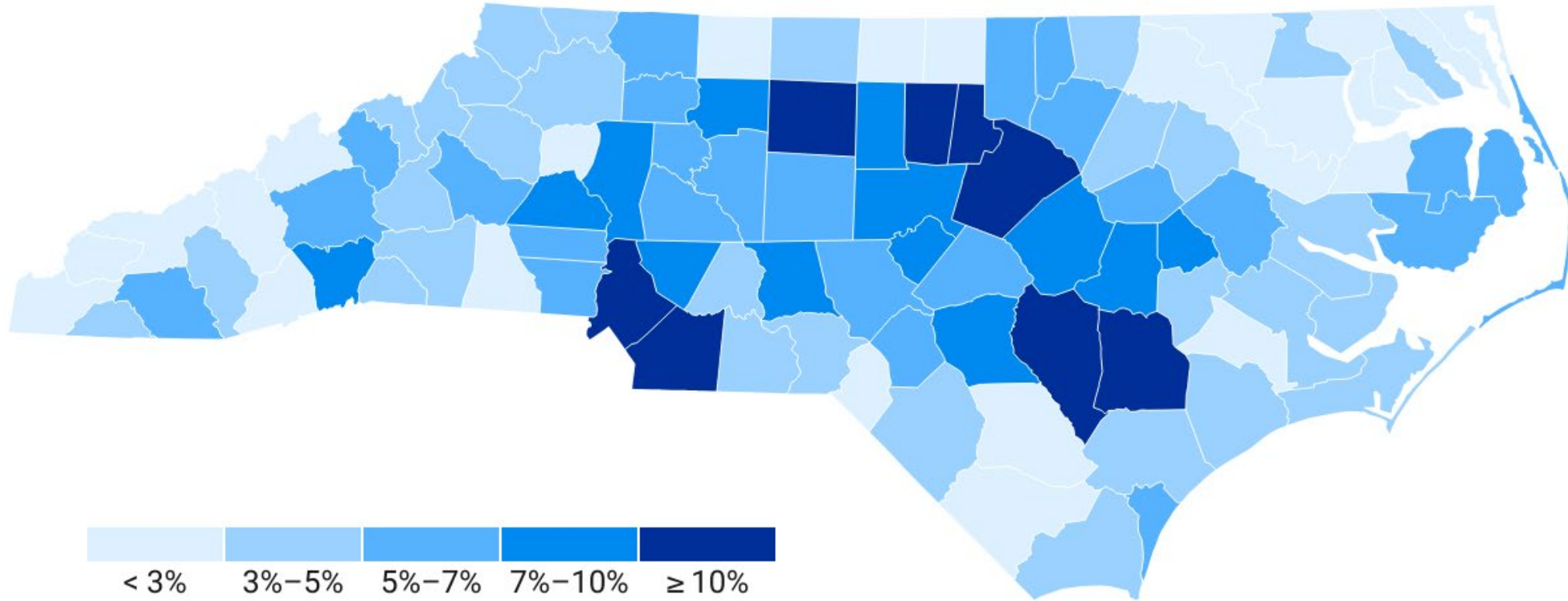
+28,311

8.6%
918K

Of North Carolina's
population is foreign-born

Foreign-born share high in both urban and rural areas

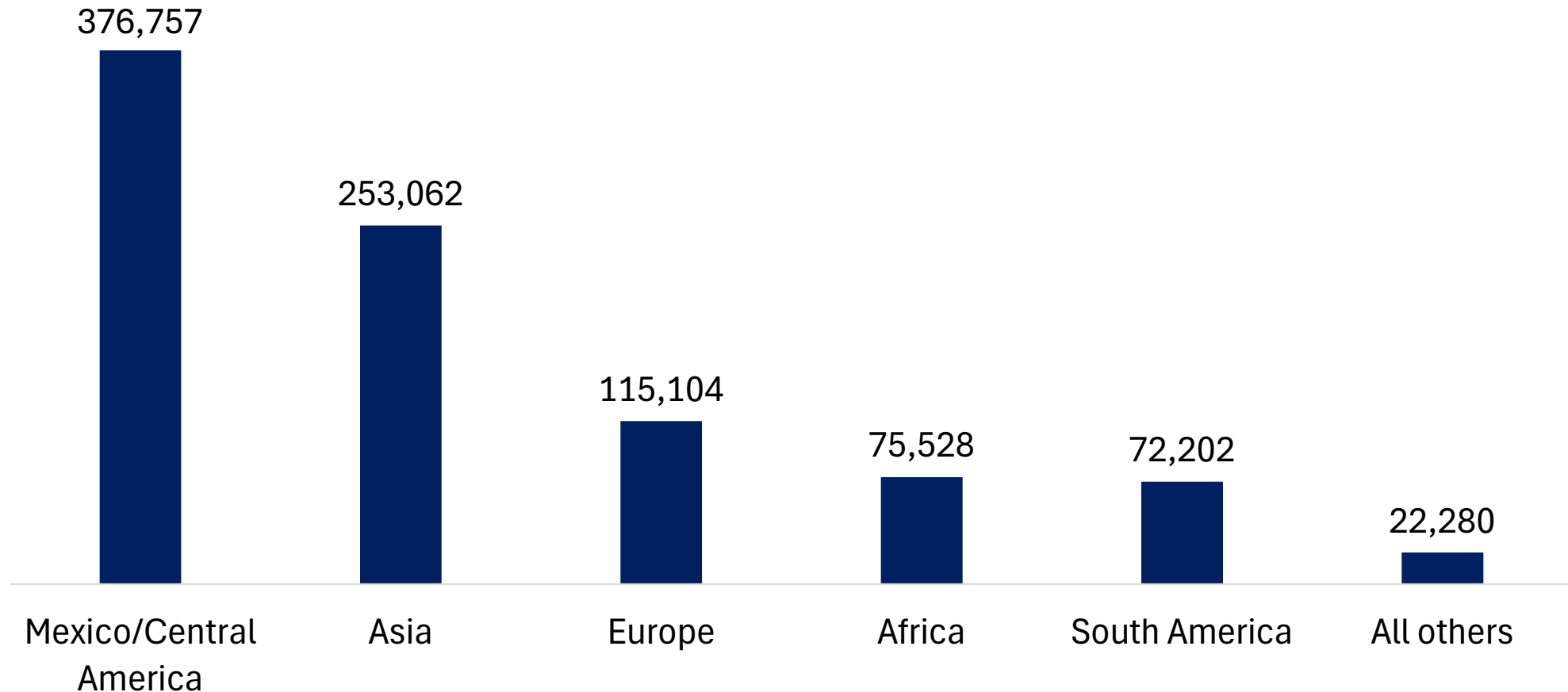
Foreign-born as a share of total population by county, 2021



Created with Datawrapper

Mexico/Central America, and Asia most common regions of origin

NC foreign-born population by world region of birth, 2022



86.4% of NC Children of immigrants
are U.S.-born citizens

The Takeaway

North Carolina's population is projected to become:

1. Larger
2. More urbanized
3. Older
4. More diverse

Work With Us

What questions do you have about your community?

What data do you need to make better decisions?

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