

District of Columbia

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By
Daniel Sheres

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Fertility and Birth Rates in the District of Columbia

In the four years between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2014, the population of the District grew by over 57,000 people. This growth stands in stark contrast to the previous 10 year period, where the District grew by 29,708. This report describes fertility patterns and birth rates in the District of Columbia for the period between 2010 and 2013 and pays particular attention to the contributions of live births to the natural increase component of the District's population growth.

Table 1 shows the population changes between Census 2000 and the latest population estimate for July 1, 2014. This growth can only be explained by a combination of natural increase (the difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths during the year) and net migration, as both contribute to changes in population size.

Table 1: Population in the District of Columbia from 2000 to 2014

Total Population	Census 2000	Census 2010	July 1, 2010	July 1, 2011	July 1, 2012	July 1, 2013	July 1, 2014
District of Columbia	572,059	601,767	605,196	620,378	634,979	649,071	658,856
Change	← +29,708 → ←----- +57,089 -----→						

Source: US Census Bureau

Declining Fertility Rates

From 2010 to 2013, while the District's population has increased by 6.9 percent, which is very close to the 6.8 percent growth of the female population of child bearing age (15-44 years), the number of births has not kept pace, growing only by 1.2 percent (Table 2). While the net number of births increased by 108 over the period, the rising population of women aged 15-44 suggests that women may be shifting their priorities regarding when to have children.

Table 2: Female Population Age 15 - 44, Total Births and Fertility Rates, 2010 to 2013*

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Net Change 2012 - 2013	Percent Change 2010 - 2013
Total Population	604,453	617,996	632,323	646,449	41,996	6.9%
Female Population	318,724	325,713	333,287	340,302	21,578	6.8%
Female Population, Age 15 - 44	163,187	166,114	169,976	174,235	11,048	6.8%
Total Births	9,156	9,289	9,370	9,264	108	1.2%
Fertility Rate (per1,000)**	56.1	55.9	55.1	53.2	-2.94	-5.2%

** Per 1,000 women age 15 - 44 years

*2014 Data not available

Source: Births - DC Department of Health, Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation. Population Estimates – US Census Bureau

The female population, age 15 to 44, increased from 163,187 in 2010 to 174,235 in 2013. This age range represents women with the highest fertility rates and would suggest that the number of births would rise accordingly. If fertility rates were to stay at the 2010 level, this would correspond to approximately 620 more births Districtwide in 2013. The fertility rate, however, has declined over the period from 56.1 in 2010 to 53.2 in 2013, a reduction of 5.2 percent.

Age of Mother

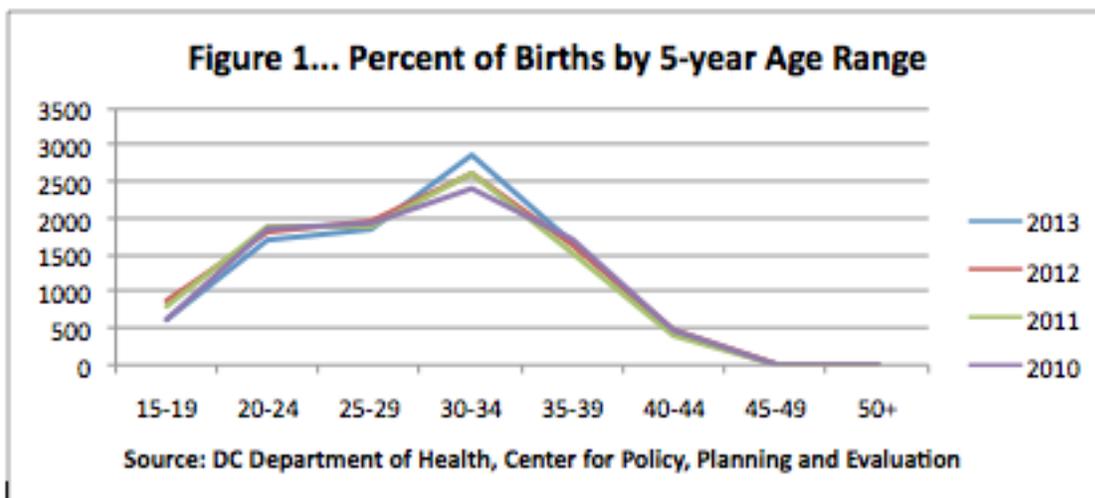
Table 3 shows the percent of births by five-year age range from 15 years old to over 50.

Table 3: Percent Share of Districtwide Births by 5 year age range, 2010 to 2013					
Age of Mother	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change 2010 - 2013
15-19	6.8%	9.5%	8.4%	6.8%	0.0%
20-24	21.8%	22.6%	21.3%	19.9%	-1.9%
25-29	23.0%	22.5%	22.9%	21.6%	-1.4%
30-34	28.4%	31.3%	30.5%	33.4%	5.0%
35-39	20.1%	18.4%	19.2%	19.5%	-0.6%
40-44	6.0%	4.8%	5.6%	5.1%	-0.9%
45-49	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	-0.2%
50+	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Births	9,156	9,289	9,370	9,264	1.2%

Source: DC Department of Health, Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation

The share of births for each five year age group has declined or stagnated for all groups except in mothers 30-34 years old, which saw an increase in share of total births of 5.0% since 2010. This age group continues to represent the highest fertility rates, followed by 25-29, 20-24, and 35-39 age groups. The consistent decline in births to the 20-24 age group supports the shift in age group upward, as more women are waiting to have children into their 30s. And while the 35-39 year age group has experienced a decline of 0.6 percent over the entire period, the cohort appears to be on track to recover the loss in share from 2010 to 2011 in coming years.

The relative spread of births by age group is also reflected in Figure 1, showing the increasing dominance of the 30-34 year age group compared to other 5 year age groups.



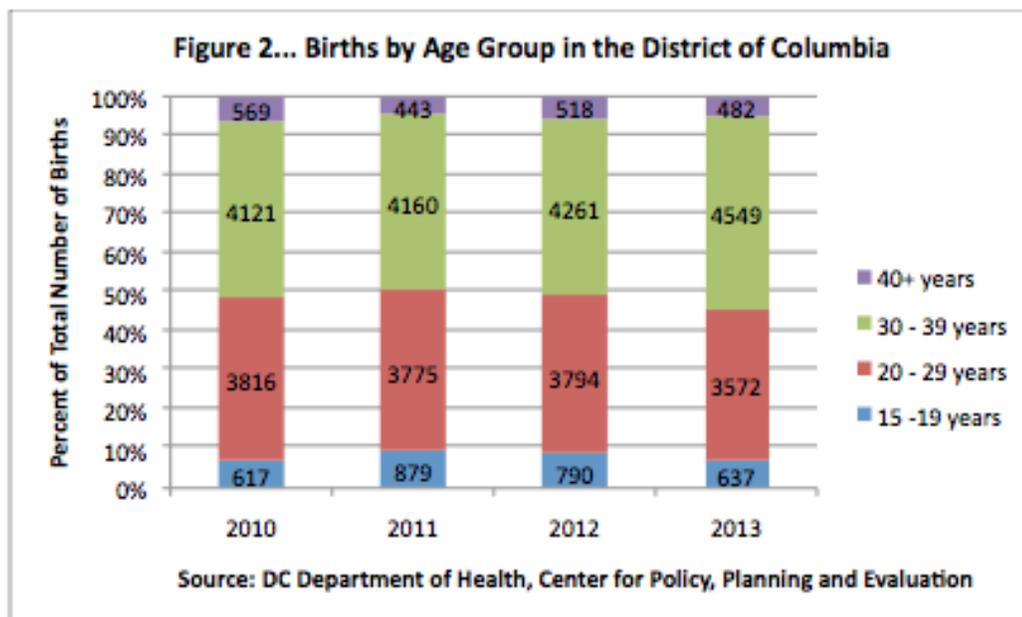


Figure 2 shows the increasing share of births by 10 year age range, further supporting the idea that more women are waiting until their 30s to have children. Also noteworthy is the decline in teen pregnancies which peaked in 2011 at 879 of total births and dropped significantly by 2013 to 637. As the population of female teenagers has increased in the District with the total population, this represents a significant statistical reduction in teen pregnancies over the last three years.

Births by Race

While the total number of births has risen only slightly from 2010 to 2013, the percent of births to each race category may offer some insights into shifting demographics in the larger populations. Table 4 shows the annual births by race and ethnicity. White births have increased steadily over the period beginning in 2010 at 28.8 percent of all births and rising to 32.4 percent of all births in 2013. Black births have fluctuated somewhat during the period, yet represent an overall drop from 54.0 percent of all births in 2010 to 52.2 percent in 2013. This data lends validity to the declining Black population in the District relative to White and other races. Births to Asians & Pacific Islanders and Other Races represent the smallest contributions to overall births in whole numbers, even though their numbers have been rising consistently over the period.

The Hispanic population, which has above average fertility rates nationally [1], is represented in the data by a declining share of overall births, decreasing from 14.8 percent in 2010 to 13.4 percent in 2013.

(Calendar Year)	2010	2011	2012	2013*
All Races Total**	9,156	9,289	9,370	9,264
Black	4,940 (54.0%)	4,903 (52.8%)	4,816 (51.5%)	4,840 (52.2%)
White	2,635 (28.8%)	2,843 (30.6%)	2,974 (31.7%)	2,997 (32.4%)
Asian & Pacific Islander	365 (4.0%)	420 (4.5%)	437 (4.7%)	439 (4.7%)
Other	622 (6.8%)	612 (6.6%)	788 (8.4%)	884 (9.5%)
Hispanic Origin***				
Hispanic	1,351 (14.8%)	1,358 (14.6%)	1,370 (14.6%)	1,244 (13.4%)
Non-Hispanic	7,805 (85.2%)	7,931 (85.4%)	8,000 (85.4%)	7,976 (86.1%)
*Preliminary data.				
**Numbers may not add to total due to missing or unreported race/ethnicity information.				
***Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.				
Source: DC Office of Planning State Data Center using data from the Department of Health, Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation				

Births by Ward

Table 5 shows the births by Ward for the ten year period between 2003 and 2013. Since 2007, Ward 8 has had the largest number of births, with Wards 2 and 3 representing the least number of births. Ward 2 births have been the lowest of all Wards going back to 2003. This is generally attributed to the scarcity of single-family homes, the relatively high cost per square foot of living space, and the presence of a large number of college students, who tend to have lower fertility rates than their respective age cohorts in the non-student population.

Table 5: Births by Ward, 2003-2013

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
District Total**	7,616	7,937	7,940	8,522	8,870	9,134	9,008	9,156	9,289	9,370	9,264
1	1,053	1,141	1,123	1,262	1,243	1,306	1,227	1,219	1,174	1,191	1,039
2	759	763	799	846	634	682	693	691	601	632	642
3	956	1,013	936	913	796	786	765	801	842	810	800
4	1,034	1,088	1,196	1,316	1,460	1,467	1,441	1,324	1,423	1,470	1,339
5	791	854	839	898	1,041	1,085	1,099	1,067	1,089	1,104	1,147
6	834	946	949	991	939	998	1,067	1,118	1,245	1,266	1,235
7	932	898	945	1,015	1,210	1,222	1,162	1,218	1,218	1,143	1,190
8	1,252	1,231	1,150	1,249	1,545	1,583	1,521	1,635	1,667	1,619	1,531
*Preliminary data											
**Numbers may not add to total due to missing or unreported race/ethnicity information.											
Source: DC Department of Health, Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Data Management Division											

Conclusions

The contribution of natural increase to the growing population adds thousands to the population of the District each year. However, births are not keeping pace with the rise in the number of women, especially in the most fertile age range of 15-44. The continuing shift toward later and later births has significant implications for the factors families are considering before having children. Financial stability, flexibility in schedule, and greater options for living arrangements all may play a factor in this shift toward increasing births to women in their 30s. The fact that fertility rates are declining overall, however, suggests that the District may have to rely more on net migration in the near term to sustain its fast moving upward trend in population growth in future years.

References:

[1] US Census Bureau- Fertility of Women in the United States: 2012 by Lindsay M. Monte and Renee R. Ellis, Issued July 2014. Publication no. P20-575

For more information contact:
 D.C. Office of Planning State Data Center
 1100 4th Street SW, Suite E650, Washington, DC 20024
 202.442.7600 ph 202.442.7638 fax
www.planning.dc.gov