

## INTERPRETATION AND INCLUSION

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The purpose of this column is to address the need for improving our interpretation diversity and developing a broader approach to WHAT we interpret and to WHOM we interpret. This includes changing both our techniques and our subject matter to reflect a more diverse and encompassing education and interpretation program.

### Ø COLUMN NOTES

This is the sixth article in an occasional column on the In Touch bulletin board. HELP - I NEED ARTICLES. Comments, essays, notes, and news, are welcome. You can address to me by cc:mail under my name on the directory. Please indicate if your item is intended for future printing in this column.

### Ø FEATURE ARTICLE

#### Who We Are

Demographics in the United States are continually in flux and images often clash with realities. While the numbers alone may not say much, they are indicators of the influences we face in development of programs and management of park activities and facilities.

Here are some numbers to keep in mind. All numbers and terminology are from the U.S. Census or the Department of Commerce. Figures are from the 1990 census unless otherwise noted.

Total U.S. Population: 249 million

#### Racial/Ethnic Breakdown:

White, not of Hispanic origin: 188 million (75.5 % of total)

Black: 30 million (12%)

Hispanic: 22 million (8.9%)

Asian/Pacific Islander: 7 million (2.8%)

American Indian/Aleut/Eskimo: 2 million (0.8%)

#### Foreign-born Persons Living in the U.S.:

Number of foreign-born living in the U.S. in 1990: 21 million

#### Number of foreign-born as a percentage of total U.S. population:

1990: 7.9%

1980: 6.2%

1970: 4.8%

1960: 5.4%

1950: 6.9%

1940: 8.8%

1930: 11.6%

1920: 13.2%

#### Population Distribution by Age: (1995)

Under 5 years: 7.7%

5-17 years: 18.4%

18-24 years 10.1%  
25-34 years 16.6%  
35-54 years 26.5%  
55-64 years 8.2%  
65-84 years 11.3%  
85 years and over: 1.3%

Persons with Disabilities: (1992)  
49 million (Severe: 24 million, Not severe: 25 million)

Number of People Who Speak a Language Other Than English at Home: 32 million (12.8%)

Households in the U.S.: (1993) 96 million  
Percent that are married couple with children: 26%  
Percent that are married couple without children: 30%  
Percent that are single parent with children: 8%  
Percent that are single people living alone: 25%  
Average size household: 2.63

#### Labor Force

- 60% of mothers with children under 6 are in the labor force.
- 75% of mothers with children 6 to 17 are in the labor force.
  
- There are 10.4 million local government employees
- There are 8.2 million state employees
- There are 3.1 million Federal civilian employees (including Defense and Postal Service)

#### Location

77.5% live in metropolitan areas  
50.5% live in the 39 metropolitan areas of 1 million or more

#### Education

78% have graduated from high school (the highest in our history)  
18% have college degrees

Though things have already changed since 1990, these numbers point out some interesting conditions:

1. The so called "traditional family" (Mom and Dad and kids at home) is now less than half the population lives.
2. The percentage of the population that is foreign-born is smaller than it was in the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's.
3. The non-Hispanic white population is still the overwhelming majority. 87% of the population speaks English as its primary language at home.
4. Most women with children work outside the home.
5. We are an increasingly urban population.
6. There are almost as many people over 55 years old as there are under 17 years old.
7. Though many people work for the government, they do not work for the Federal government. The majority work for

state and local governments.

Census figures and other population statistics are available from a variety of government and private sources. I encourage you to find the statistics for your city or region. Most materials are available in the reference section of your local library (such as the Statistical Abstract of the United States or the Census Report). State and local governments often publish figures as part of planning and development studies and these studies are usually public information. American Demographics magazine is a great source for reporting on trends, niches, and changing conditions. Private companies will sell all sorts of demographic data on disk, CD-ROM, or paper.

The key to knowing your audience is getting the information. Assumptions are often wrong and trends hard to spot by observation. Get the numbers and see where you are. Then match these numbers with your visitation. This can provide insight on how well you are reaching your representative population.