Continued growth of the Hispanic population is fueling the overall population increase in metro Denver, according to The Piton Foundation’s analyses of the 2010 Census data. The 2010 Census counted 607,694 Hispanics in the seven-county metro area, making up 22% of the total population. The metro area’s Hispanic population, which was 427,692 in 2000, grew 42% over the decade, about the same as the national average. The Hispanic population also accounted for almost half (47%) of the metro area’s growth from 2000 to 2010.

The metro area’s child population, in particular, has become much more racially diverse. Among children younger than 18, one-third (221,213) are Hispanic. The number of Hispanic children grew 47% over the decade. In 2000, Hispanic children made up just one-quarter of the population under age 18.
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Historically, Denver has been the most racially diverse county in the metro region, but that is changing as the suburban counties become more diverse, especially with Hispanics. The share of the metro-area population that is Hispanic grew from 17.8% to 21.8%.

Denver still has the largest number of Hispanics (190,965), but the share living in other metro counties has been growing much faster. Adams County now has the highest proportion of Hispanics, 38% of its population compared to 32% of Denver’s population. Whereas Adams County had a large increase over the decade in the percentage of its population that is Hispanic, from 29% to 38%, Denver’s percentage didn’t change.

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The Hispanic Growth Changes Profile of Suburban Counties

The gray areas reflect the Hispanic population, by county, in 2000. The blue areas represent the growth of the Hispanic population from 2000 to 2010. As in 2000, Denver still has the largest Hispanic population of all metro counties. But the surrounding counties have been catching up: Adams, Arapahoe and Jefferson counties each added more Hispanics in the past decade than Denver.

*Broomfield was not a county in 2000. The 2000 data for Broomfield is composed from parts of Adams, Boulder, Jefferson and Weld counties.

Other counties where the Hispanic share of the population rose significantly include Arapahoe, where it increased from 11.8% to 18.4%, and Douglas, where the Hispanic population grew from 5.1% to 7.5%.

African Americans make up just 4.9% of the metro area’s population. The counties with the largest black populations were Denver and Arapahoe, both with 9.7%. However, Arapahoe saw its proportion of the black population increase from 7.4% to 9.7%, whereas Denver saw a decline from 10.8% to 9.7%, reflecting a trend of black migration from Denver to the inner-ring suburbs.

While whites still are the majority in all metro counties, the share of whites decreased metro-wide from 72.0% to 66.7%. All counties except Denver, which experienced a slight increase (51.9% to 52.2%), experienced a decline in the proportion of their population that is white.

Arapahoe and Adams counties saw the biggest declines because their white populations, while continuing to increase, grew much slower than their Hispanic populations. In Jefferson County, however, the white population actually decreased in size over the past decade by 18,941 people.
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These maps show the relative change in population for each of the three largest racial/ethnic groups—white, Hispanic and black—from 2000 to 2010 by census tract. The maps are shaded by standard deviation and normalized by area. White regions represent average change (people per square mile), red regions represent greater-than-average growth and blue regions represent greater-than-average decline.