

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY SERVICE AREA

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OVERVIEW

This report analyses demographic changes that have taken place during the past decade and contextualizes the current social and economic environment within the Kent District Library service area, covering all of Kent County, except Grand Rapids City, Cedar Springs City, Solon Township, and Sparta Township (including the Village of Sparta).

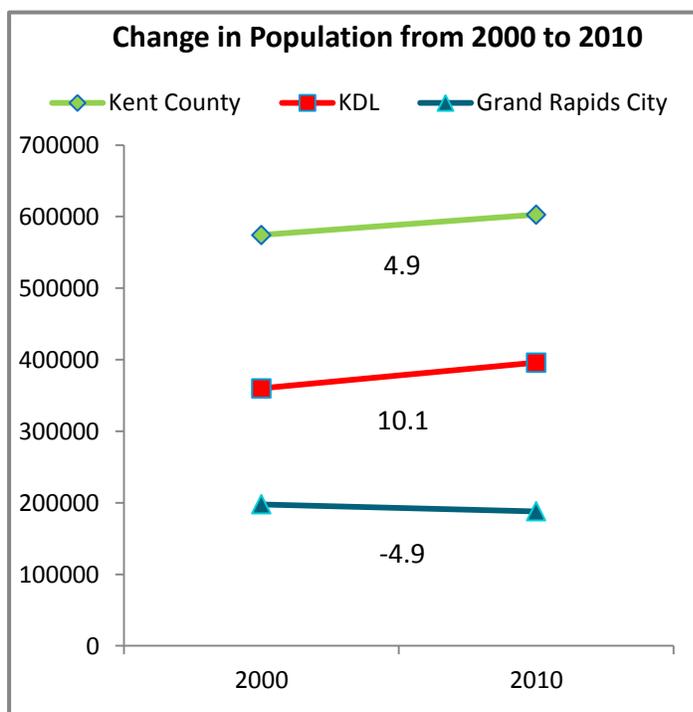
- The KDL service area has experienced significant population growth over the past decade.
 - It has grown twice as fast as the Kent County regions not included within the district.
 - It is growing much faster than the State of Michigan.
- The average age of KDL residents has increased over this period, which is in line with demographic changes in the rest of the US.
- Household size has decreased slightly.
 - Single-family households are growing faster than married households.
 - Household growth would be even larger if it were not for growth in the number of other relatives, like elderly parents, living with families.
- While not as diverse as Grand Rapids City, the population is becoming more diverse along with the rest of the country.
 - Growth among racial minority populations is much greater than that among the majority White population.
 - About 3 percent of KDL residents are not citizens.
 - Just fewer than 10 percent of residents speak a language besides English in the home.
- KDL area residents are more educated than their neighbors in Grand Rapids and much of Michigan and have higher incomes. This will likely continue to attract a diverse group of residents to the area and sustain growth.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS FROM 2000 TO 2010

Statistics reported in this section use data from the 2010 and 2000 Censuses. The 2010 Census data is the most reliable for reporting recent demographic statistics, because it covers the entire KDL service area. Surveys have been performed within the KDL area since the last census, but a large enough sample of data has yet to be collected to report accurate statistics about the years 2011 to 2013.

OVERALL POPULATION

According to United States Census data from the 2010 census, the Kent District Library (KDL) service area has a population of 395,989. This



compares to a county-wide population of 602,622. The population of KDL has grown by just over 10 percent since 2000, compared to only 4.9 percent population growth in all of Kent County and a reduction of 0.6 of the Michigan population in the same timeframe (the only state to lose population during this time frame). KDL's growth rate (10.1%) is also slightly faster than the country as a whole experienced from 2000 to 2010 (9.7%). Grand Rapids City, on the other hand has experienced a decrease in their population of 4.9 percent. Thus, the growth in the suburban and rural areas in Kent County served by KDL is

clearly driving population growth in the county.

HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households covered by KDL has also increased over the past decade by 11 percent to 148,298, signifying a small decrease in the size of households over that time period and an increase in the average age of the population. The number of children in the population only increased by 6.9 percent to 128,087, while the number of "other relatives" living in one's home besides one's immediate family has

increased by a very significant 55 percent to 14,890 from 2000 to 2010. Currently, just fewer than 57 percent of households are composed of married couples. This is only a slightly smaller percentage of households that were composed of married couples than in 2000.

Household and Family Sizes 2000 and 2010

	2000*		2010*		% Δ from 2000 to 2010
Households	133,575	100%	148,298	100%	11.0%
Married	78,391	58.7%	84,292	56.8%	7.5%
W/ Own Children < 18	50,463	37.8%	50,709	34.2%	0.5%
Husband-Wife Family	39,682	29.7%	37,782	25.5%	-4.8%
Male, No Wife	2,575	1.9%	3,279	2.2%	27.3%
Female, No Husband	8,206	6.1%	9,648	6.5%	17.6%
*Columns do not add up to 100%, because all percentages are based on the number of households.					

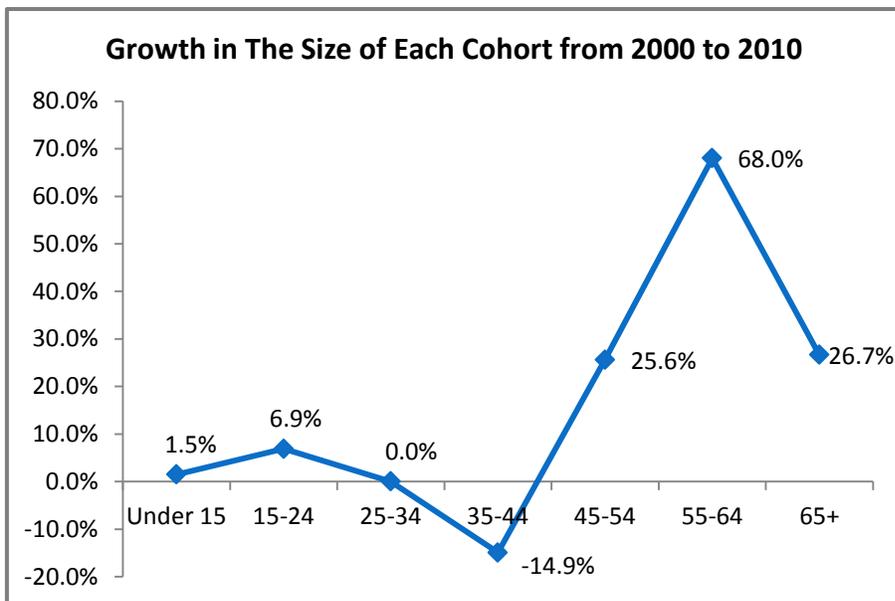
Families with their own children make up just over 34 percent of households, down from just fewer than 38 percent of households in 2000. Single parent families only make up a slightly larger share of all households compared to their share in 2000, but the total number of single-parent male households has increased by 27.3 percent and the number of single-parent female households has increased by 17.6 percent over the past decade. The number of husband and wife families with children under 18 has fallen by 4.8 percent since 2000.

About 76 percent of households own their home, while 24 percent rent. This percentage remains the same as it was in 2000. However, indicative of the recent increase in the foreclosure rate, close to 6 percent of housing units in the KDL service area remain vacant, which is almost double the amount of vacant housing that existed in 2000.

In sum, the total number of households has increased slightly faster than population growth. Some of this growth in the number of households may be attributed to the large increase in the number of smaller single parent households and slow growth in the number of children per family. Were it not for the significant growth in the number of larger households that include “other relatives”, such as an elderly parent, this growth would be even greater.

SEX AND AGE COHORTS

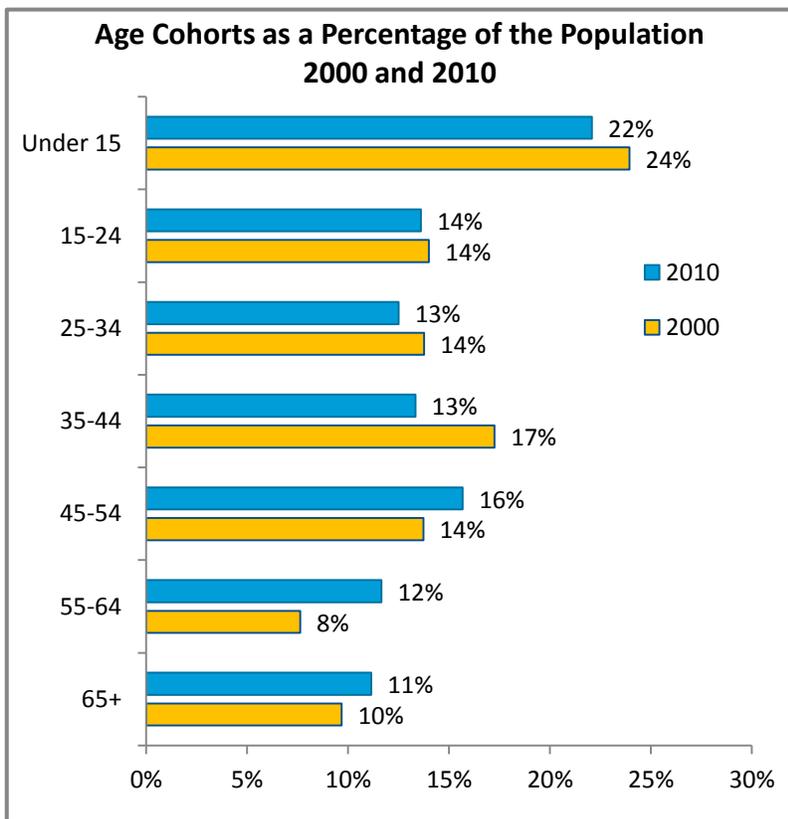
The ratio of males to females in the population has held steady over the past decade. Roughly 51 percent of the population was female in 2000



and about 51 percent was also female in 2010. This matches the percentages in the nation as a whole.

Noted above, KDL has experienced significant growth over the 2000 to 2010 period, but much of this growth is occurring among older age groups. The size of each cohort presented

in the chart above has grown over this period, except for the population aged 35 to 44. The size of this cohort has decreased by nearly 15 percent,



while the sizes of the older cohorts have increased by double digits over the same period. Growth in the younger age groups has been overshadowed by growth in the older cohorts.

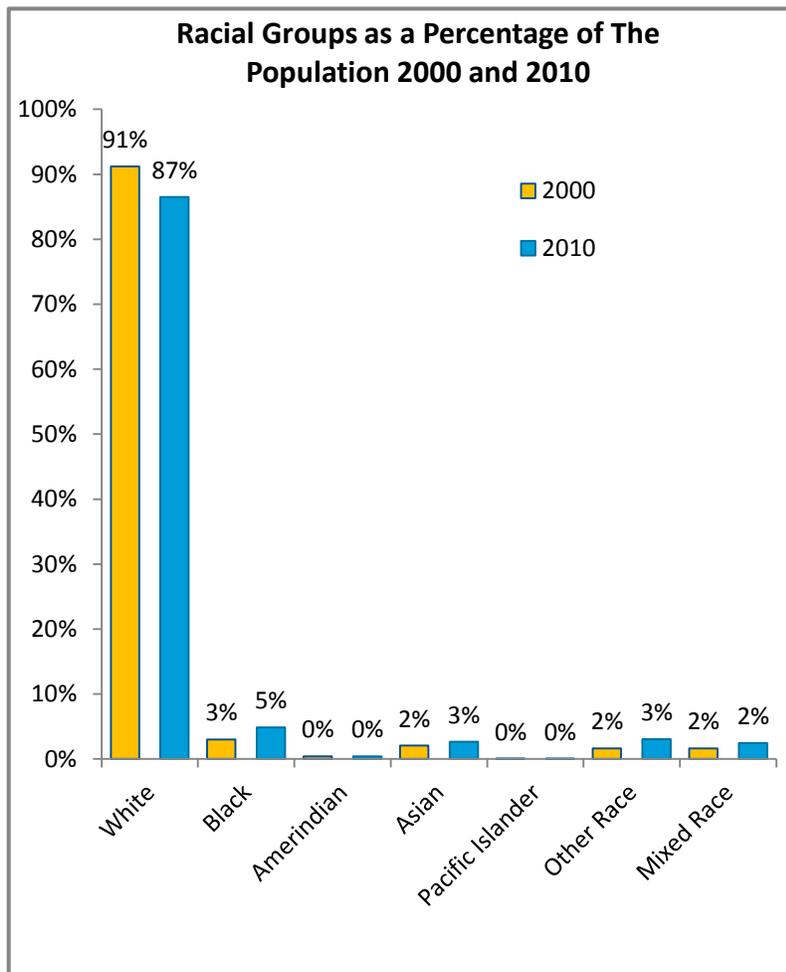
The population in the Kent District Library service area has clearly aged over the past decade. This has led to a higher proportion of residents aged 45 and older living in KDL than did in 2000. In fact, the number of residents under 45 fell by almost 2 percent over the decade to 243,620, while the

number of residents over 45 grew by a very significant 36 percent to 152,369. Residents under 45 still make up the majority of people living in KDL, but they have decreased from about 69 percent of the population in 2000 to 62 percent of the population.

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of population growth KDL has experienced in the past decade has come from these older cohorts. KDL is not unique in this regard. This demographic shift mirrors demographic changes in the rest of the United States.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The overwhelming number of respondents identify as “White” in the KDL service area. However, the amount claiming to be white has declined as a percentage of the entire population. The size of all other racial groups



increased as a percentage of the population from 2000 to 2010, with the exception of Amerindians. Individuals claiming to be “Black” or “African American” and those claiming to belong to other races saw the largest absolute increases. Nevertheless, the absolute size of all racial groups increased over the decade, including those that identify as “White”.

In the United States Census, the categories of “Hispanic” and “Latino/a” are not considered to be racial categories. They are recorded as ethnicities and calculated separately. Thus, one may be both “Black” and “Hispanic” or “White” and

“Hispanic”. The number of KDL area residents that identify as Hispanic has more than doubled over the past decade to 28,389. The Hispanic

ethnic group now makes up just over 7 percent of the entire population, from just fewer than 4 percent in the year 2000.

The KDL area is still not as diverse as nearby Grand Rapids City, with more than 35 percent of the population identifying as something other than “White”. However, growth among minority racial and ethnic groups is greatly outpacing growth among the majority White population in KDL, culminating in a more diverse population in the area.

CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The remaining data in this report was taken from the 5 most recent American Communities Surveys, published in December 2012. While one and three year estimates are also published, data from 2007 to 2011 must be used to get an accurate picture of the KDL service area due to the smaller sample sizes used to obtain the American Communities Surveys. Thus, the statistics reported below should be interpreted as averages over a 5 year period ending in 2011.

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

299,872 residents, or about 76 percent of the population, in the KDL service area are aged 16 or older and are generally considered able to work. Of those individuals, about 64 percent are in the labor force and employed, and another 6 percent are in the labor force (i.e., they are looking for jobs), but are unemployed. Thus, just over 70 percent of individuals over 16 are either employed or looking for work.

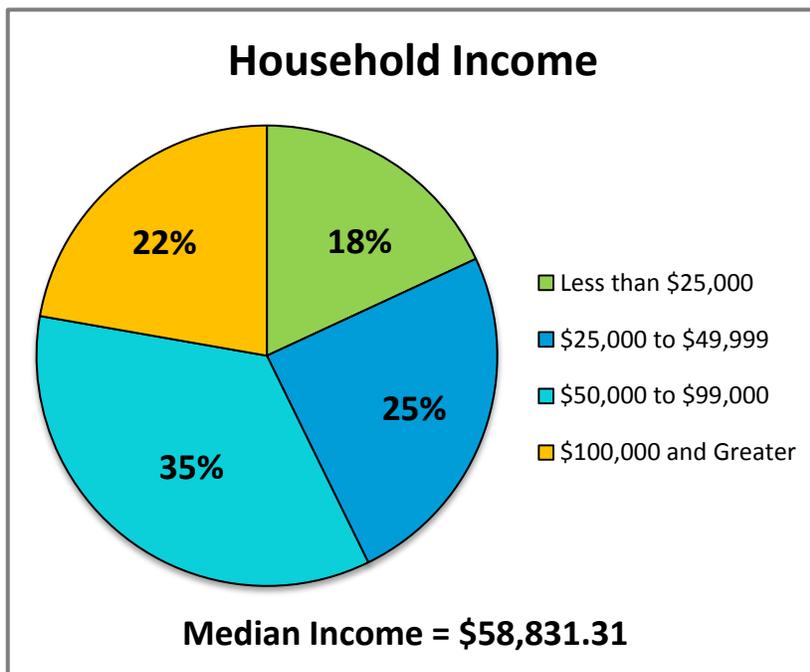
The other 30 percent of individuals over 15 are not in the labor force, because they are likely homemakers, disabled, in school or retired. The unemployment rate, which is generally calculated by dividing the number of unemployed by the number of individuals in the labor force, is 8.5 percent. (Recall that this statistic is an average over the five year period 2007-2011). This compares favorably to the population of Grand Rapids City, which has an unemployment rate of 12.4 percent.

Employment Status

	N	% of Labor Force	% of 16+	% of Total Population
In The labor force, Employed	193,222	91.5%	64.4%	49.1%
In The labor force, Unemployed	17,854	8.5%	6.0%	4.5%
Armed forces	112	-	0.0%	0.0%
Not in the labor force	88,684	-	29.6%	22.5%
Total Labor Force	211,076	100%	-	-
Total Aged 16 +	299,872	70.4%*	100%	-
Total Population	393,709	53.6%*	76.2%*	100%

*These statistics are calculated as the percentage of the column population in the row population.

A majority of residents living in the KDL service area make between \$25,000 and \$99,000. About another 18 percent of residents make less than \$25,000 and close to 22 percent of residents make more than \$99,000. The annual median household income of KDL residents (in 2011 US dollars) is estimated to be about \$58,831. 25 percent of all households

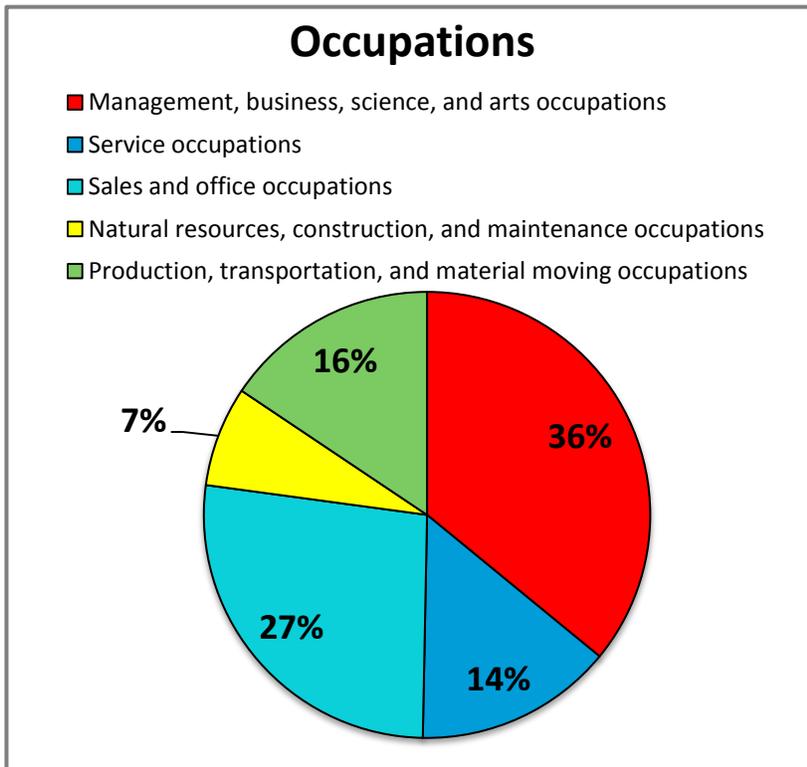


receive social security income and about 9 percent of all households have used SNAP benefits, or food stamps, in the past 12 months. Nevertheless, on average, KDL residents have a much higher standard of living than their urban counterparts living in Grand Rapids City and the average Michigan resident. Those residents make an annual household income of about \$38,731 and \$48,669 respectively.

COMMUTING PATTERNS AND OCCUPATIONS

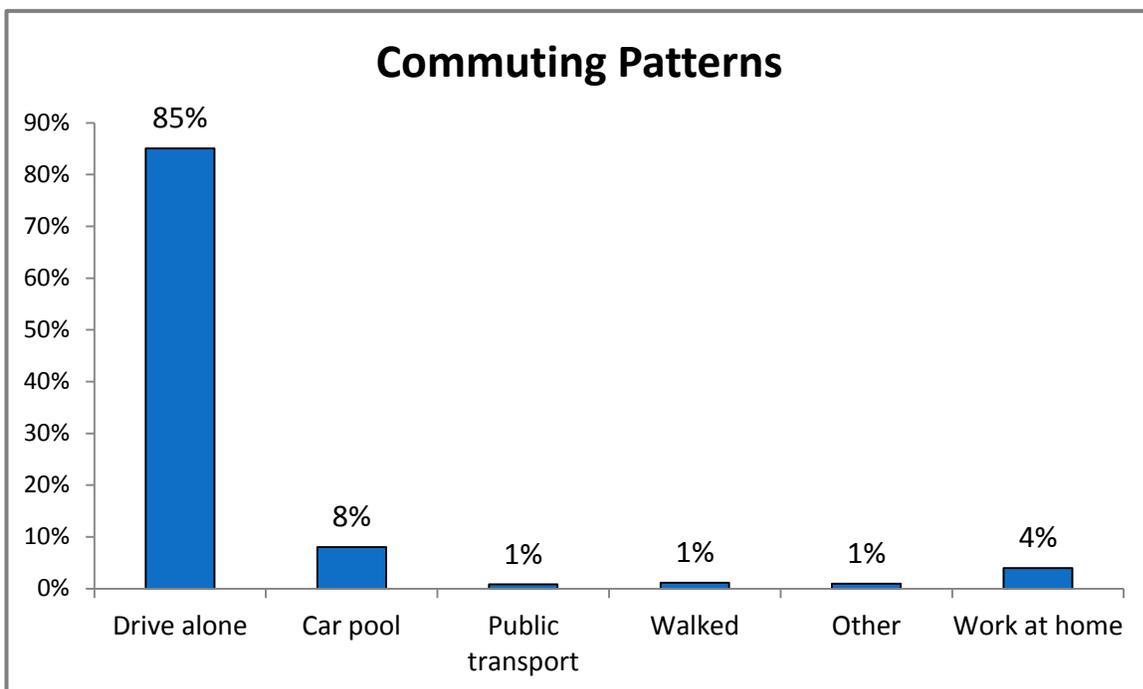
Most workers drive alone to their place of work. Carpooling and using public transportation is either not popular or not available in the KDL service area. Walking is also an infrequent mode of transportation to and

from work, which is understandable in rural and suburban areas. About 4 percent of working residents work at home in the KDL area.



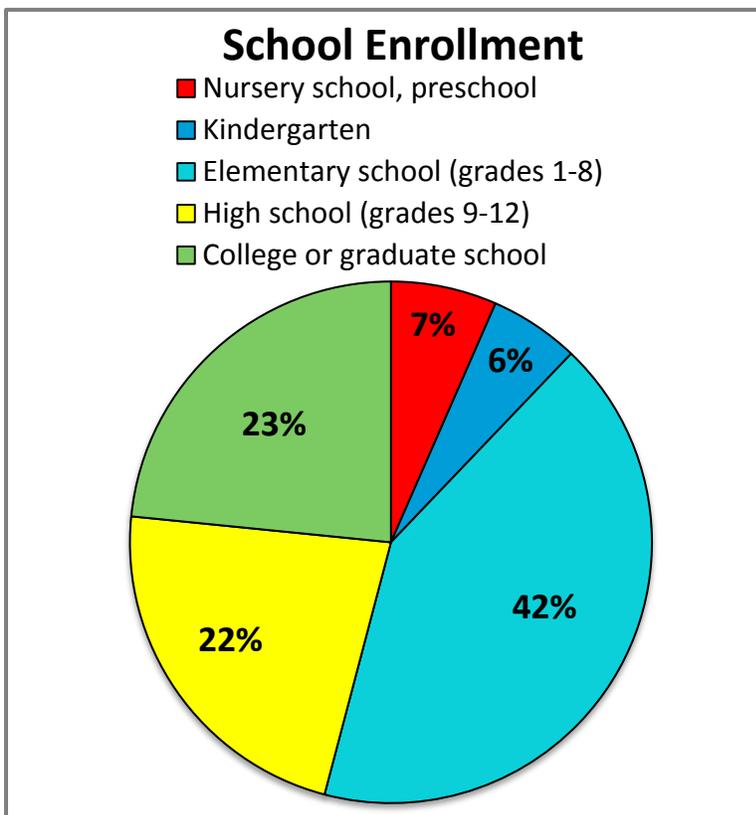
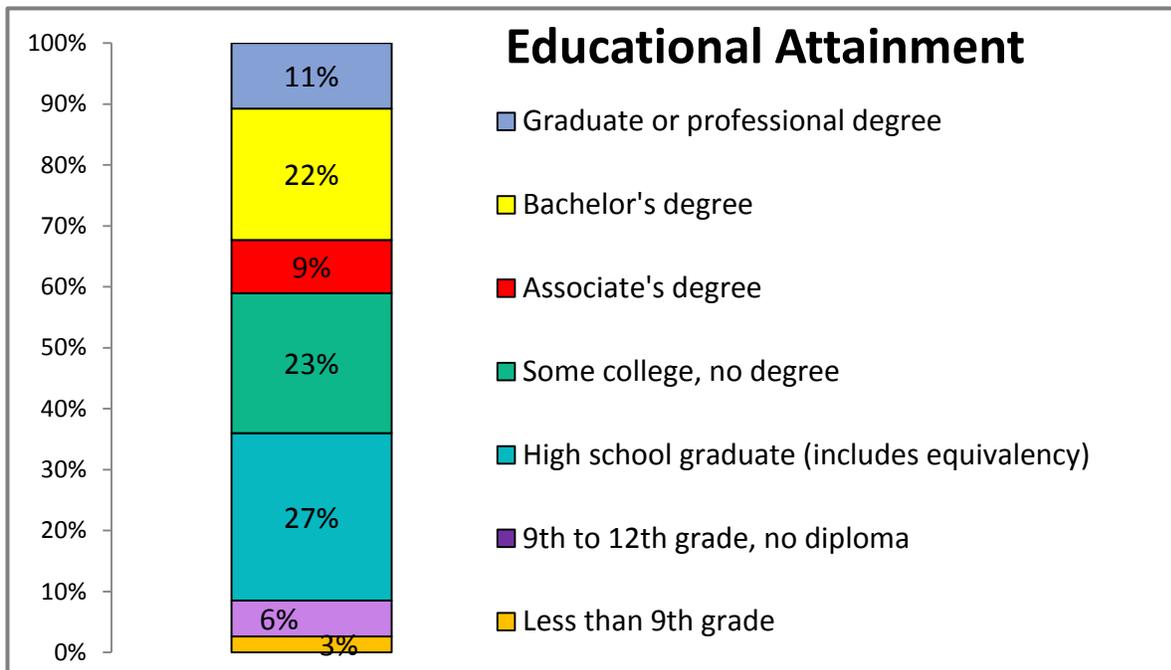
The plurality of residents report working in management, business, science, or occupations in the arts (36%). Another 27 percent of residents report working in sales or other office occupations. These traditionally white-collar jobs make up about 63 percent of all positions held by residents living within KDL. Service work makes up about 14 percent and traditionally blue-collar jobs such as maintenance or construction jobs and production or

transportation jobs together make up about 23 percent of the workforce in the KDL service area.



EDUCATION

Residents in the KDL service area are somewhat more educated than the nation as a whole. Close to one third of residents have a bachelor's



degree or a more advanced degree (32%), compared to about 28 percent in both the national population and in Grand Rapids City. On average, the population of the State of Michigan holds even fewer Bachelor's and advanced degrees (25%).

Just over 91 percent of the population has at least a high school diploma and only 3 percent of residents that live in the KDL service area never attended any high school.

Just about 28 percent of the population, or 111,706 people, are currently enrolled in school.

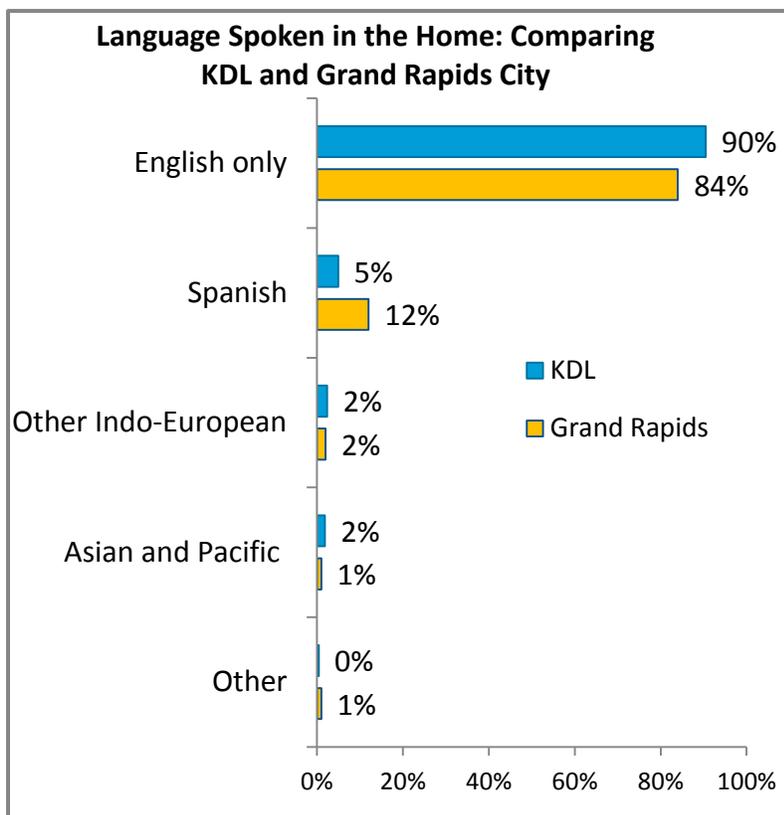
The plurality within that group (42%) is enrolled in elementary school, 22 percent in high school and 23 percent in college or graduate school.

Citizenship and Language

The vast majority of residents in the KDL service area are citizens of the United States (97%). This compares to about 90 percent in Grand Rapids City and 93 percent in Michigan. However, only about 78 percent of KDL service area residents were born in Michigan. Just about 16 percent of residents were born elsewhere in the 50 states or US territories, or abroad to American parents.

Place of Birth

	N	%
Native - Born in United States - State of residence	306,367	77.8%
Native - Born in United States - Different state	59,760	15.2%
Native - Born in Puerto Rico, U.S. Island areas, or born abroad to American parent(s)	3,330	0.8%
Naturalized U.S. citizen	12,053	3.1%
Not a U.S. citizen	12,199	3.1%
Total	393,709	100%



Among those aged 5 or younger, who are generally able to talk, 90 percent speak only English in the home. About 5 percent speak Spanish and another 5 percent speak some other language. In Grand Rapids City, almost 84 percent speak only English in the home and about 12 percent speak Spanish.

The KDL area is not home to as many immigrants as other areas of the state, but this could change since it is growing, becoming more diverse and attracting more residents.