



**Great Cities  
Institute**

**Fact Sheet:  
Black Population  
Loss in Chicago**

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**Great Cities Institute  
University of Illinois at Chicago**

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This Fact Sheet provides population figures from as early as 1950 to the most recent American Community Surveys (2013-2017 and 2017) for Chicago’s majority black neighborhoods, the City of Chicago, select similar and non-similar cities, Cook County, the Chicago metro area, and Illinois. This data was compiled for Dr. Cordova’s appearance on [National Public Radio & WBUR-FM’s “Here and Now” in a story on Chicago’s declining African-American population.](#)

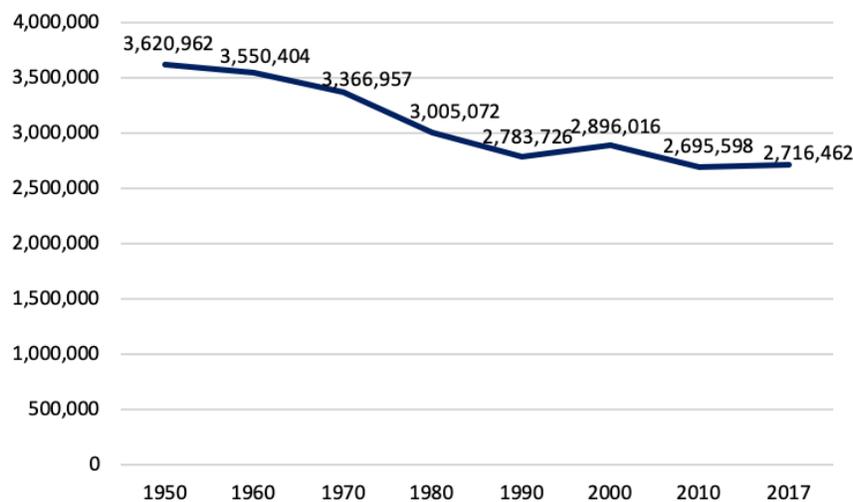
**Data Highlights**

- Chicago has experienced a decline in black population since a peak in or around the 1980 census.
- Since a peak measured in 1980, Chicago’s Black population has declined steadily from 1,187,905 in 1980 to 797,253 in 2017, a decrease of 390,652 or 32.9%.
- There were 29 majority Black community areas in 1980, all of which have lost black population ranging from a 10.9% in South Deering to 65.9% in Washington Park, with Englewood and West Englewood losing the highest number of residents, -34,326 and -33,242, respectively.
- Before 1980 when the city’s black population peaked, neighborhoods such as Grand Boulevard had a black population peak in 1950 (113,374) and lost 92,236 Black residents, a decrease of 81.4% between 1950 and 2013-2017.
- North Lawndale had a peak black population in 1960 (113,827) and lost 82,557 black residents by 2013-2017, a decrease of 72.5%.
- Chicago’s black population loss in percent is most similar to that of Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Detroit and St. Louis in contrast to cities that have seen slight or large increases in black population such as Indianapolis, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and New York City.

**Total Population in Chicago, 1950-2017**

- Chicago’s total population peaked in 1950 at 3,620,962 and decreased steadily over the next 40 years to 2,783,726 in 1990, a decrease of 23.1 percent. The population increased slightly from 1990 to 2,896,016 in 2000, fell slightly to 2,695,598 in 2010, and increased to 2,716,462 in 2017.
- From 1950 (population of 3,620,962) to 2017 (population of 2,716,462), Chicago population has decreased 904,500 or 25.0 percent.

**Figure 1: Total Population in Chicago, 1950-2017**

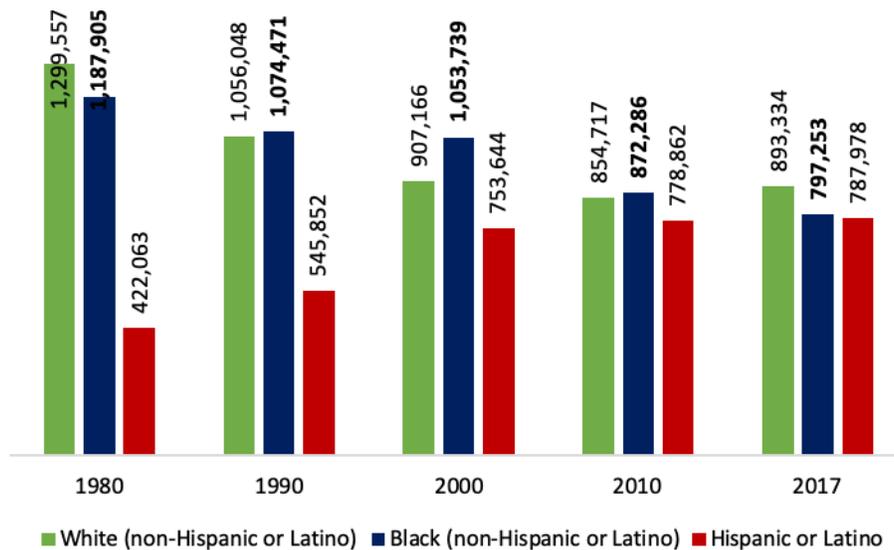


Data source: 1950-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey.

### Population by Race/Ethnicity in Chicago from 1980-2017

- Chicago's Black population peaked in 1980 at 1,187,905
- Chicago's Black population declined steadily from 1,187,905 in 1980 to 797,253 in 2017, a decrease of 390,652 or 32.9%
- Chicago's White population had a similar trend declining from 1,299,557 in 1980 to 893,334 in 2017, a decrease of 406,223 or 31.3%. This is despite a slight White population increase from 2010 to 2017 of 38,617 or 4.5%.
- The largest decade of Black population loss in Chicago occurred between 2000 and 2010 where there was a decrease of 181,453 or 17.2%

**Figure 2: White (non-Hispanic or Latino), Black (non-Hispanic or Latino), and Hispanic or Latino Population in Chicago, 1980-2017**



Data source: 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

### Black population loss by Community Area, 1980 to 2013-2017

- There were 29 majority Black community areas in 1980 when Chicago's black population peaked and 26 majority Black community areas in 2013-2017.
- Three neighborhoods lost over 30,000 Black residents from 1980 to 2013-2017. These neighborhoods include Englewood (-34,326), West Englewood (-33,242), and Grand Boulevard (-31,958).
- 9 Community Areas (Englewood, West Englewood, Grand Boulevard, Near West Side, Washington Park, West Garfield Park, Douglas, Oakland, and Fuller Park) had Black population declines of over 50%, with the highest being Washington Park with 65.9%.

**Table 1: 1980 and 2013-2017 Black Population, Change, and Percent Change in Majority Black Community Areas**

<b>Majority Black Community Areas</b>	<b>1980 Black Population</b>	<b>2013-2017 Black Population</b>	<b>(Sorted by) Population Change</b>	<b>Percent change</b>
Englewood	58,037	23,711	-34,326	-59.1%
West Englewood	60,546	27,304	-33,242	-54.9%
Grand Boulevard	53,096	21,138	-31,958	-60.2%
South Shore	73,312	45,727	-27,585	-37.6%
North Lawndale	61,534	35,947	-25,587	-41.6%
Austin	101,341	76,989	-24,352	-24.0%
Near West Side	42,452	18,151	-24,301	-57.2%
Roseland	62,424	40,849	-21,575	-34.6%
Washington Park	31,550	10,760	-20,790	-65.9%
Auburn Gresham	63,708	44,435	-19,273	-30.3%
West Garfield Park	33,281	16,199	-17,082	-51.3%
Douglas	30,769	14,718	-16,051	-52.2%
West Pullman	40,441	25,625	-14,816	-36.6%
Greater Grand Crossing	44,466	30,556	-13,910	-31.3%
Woodlawn	34,560	20,867	-13,693	-39.6%
East Garfield Park	31,058	17,736	-13,322	-42.9%
Oakland	16,557	5,959	-10,598	-64.0%
Chatham	39,910	29,780	-10,130	-25.4%
Washington Heights	35,644	26,293	-9,351	-26.2%
Riverdale	12,984	6,882	-6,102	-47.0%
Calumet Heights	17,667	12,426	-5,241	-29.7%
Kenwood	16,908	11,724	-5,184	-30.7%
Fuller Park	5,707	2,170	-3,537	-62.0%
Morgan Park	18,226	14,710	-3,516	-19.3%
Avalon Park	13,185	9,754	-3,431	-26.0%
Pullman	7,872	5,495	-2,377	-30.2%
Burnside	3,470	2,197	-1,273	-36.7%
Near South Side	6,788	5,537	-1,251	-18.4%
South Deering	10,509	9,360	-1,149	-10.9%

Data source: 1980 Decennial Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

### Black population loss by Community Area, Peak Year to 2013-2017

The table below shows community areas that lost more than 20,000 black residents from their **peak year** to 2013-2017

- From 1950 (113,374) to 2013-2017 (21,138) Grand Boulevard lost 92,236 Black residents, a decrease of 81.4%.
- From 1960 (113,827) to 2013-2017 (31,270) North Lawndale lost 82,557 Black residents, a decrease of 72.5%.
- From 1970 (86,503) to 2013-2017 (23,711) Englewood lost 62,792 Black residents, a decrease of 72.6%.
- From 1950 (76,421) to 2013-2017 (14,718) Douglas Boulevard lost 61,703 Black residents, a decrease of 80.7%.
- Seven community areas (Grand Boulevard, North Lawndale, Englewood, Douglas, Woodlawn, Near West Side, and Washington Park) lost more than 70% of their Black population from peak years to 2013-2017.
- Six Community areas (Grand Boulevard, North Lawndale, Englewood, Douglas, Woodlawn, Near West Side) lost about 50,000 or more Black residents.

Area of Chicago	Community Area	Peak Black Population Year	Peak Black Population	2013-2017 Black Population	(Sorted by) Population Change	Percent change
South Side	Grand Boulevard	1950	113,374	21,138	-92,236	-81.4%
West Side	North Lawndale	1960	113,827	31,270	-82,557	-72.5%
South Side	Englewood	1970	86,503	23,711	-62,792	-72.6%
South Side	Douglas	1950	76,421	14,718	-61,703	-80.7%
South Side	Woodlawn	1960	72,397	20,867	-51,530	-71.2%
West Side	Near West Side	1960	68,146	18,151	-49,995	-73.4%
South Side	Washington Park	1950	56,178	10,760	-45,418	-80.8%
South Side	West Englewood	1980	60,973	27,304	-33,669	-55.2%
West Side	East Garfield Park	1970	51,128	17,736	-33,392	-65.3%
West Side	West Garfield Park	1970	48,947	16,199	-32,748	-66.9%
South Side	South Shore	1980	74,078	45,727	-28,351	-38.3%
West Side	Austin	1980	101,731	76,989	-24,742	-24.3%
South Side	Greater Grand Crossing	1960	54,257	30,556	-23,701	-43.7%
South Side	Roseland	1980	62,698	40,849	-21,849	-34.8%

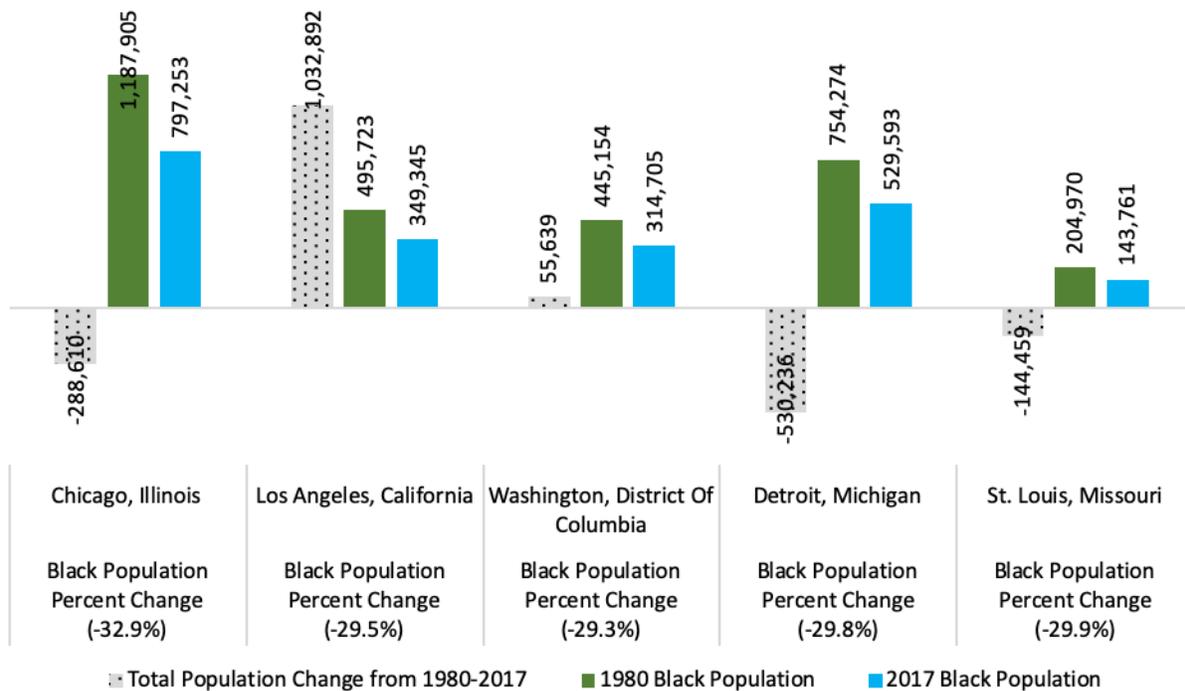
Data source: 1950-1980 Decennial Censuses and 2013-2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

## Population change Chicago, Similar Cities, and Non-Similar Cities, 1980 to 2013-2017

### Similar Cities (Peer cities that have experienced similar levels of black population loss)

- Chicago's Black population loss of 32.9% from 1980 to 2013-2017 is similar to that of Los Angeles (-29.5%), Washington D.C. (-29.3%), Detroit (-29.8%), and St. Louis (-29.9%)
- Although, total population figures were quite different across those cities, with Chicago's total population declining 288,610, Detroit and St. Louis losing larger shares of their total population than Chicago, D.C.'s total population growing slightly, and Los Angeles growing by over 1 million people.

**Figure 3: Total Population Change from 1980 to 2017 and Black Population in Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Detroit, and St. Louis, 1980 and 2017**

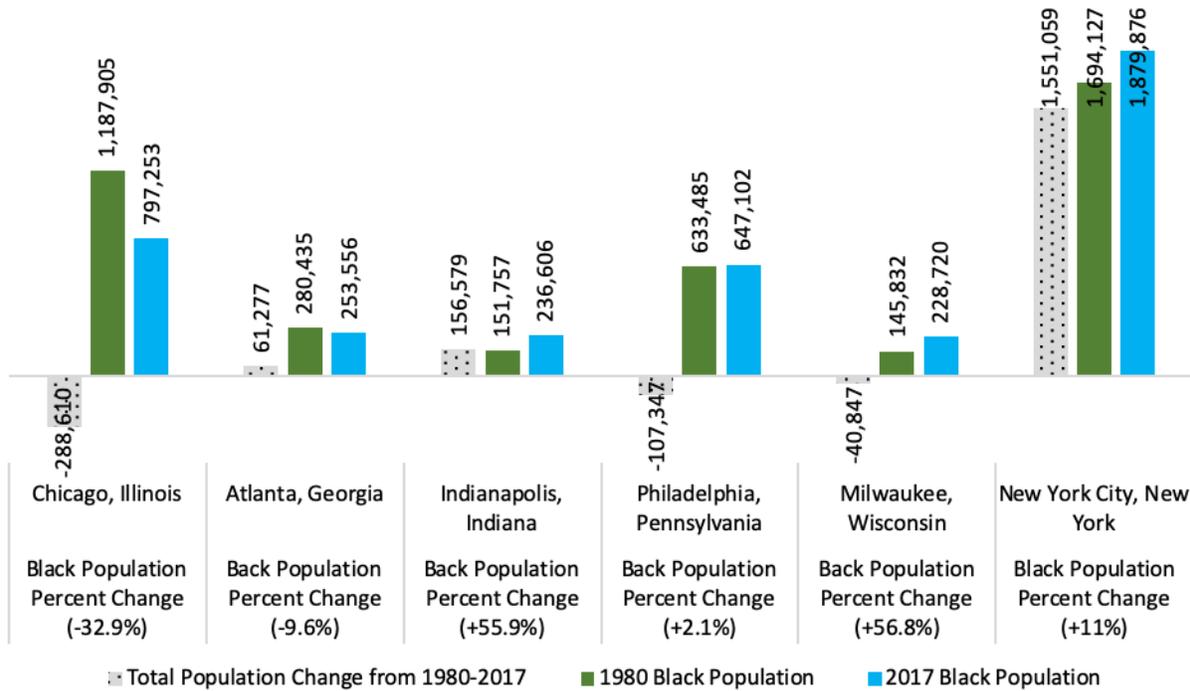


Data Source: 1980 Census and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Non-Similar Cities (Peer cities that have not experienced similar levels of black population loss)**

- Cities with sizable Black populations that saw growth while Chicago’s Black population declined 32.9% were Indianapolis (+55.9%), Philadelphia (+2.1), Milwaukee (+56.8), New York City (+11.0%).
- Atlanta’s Black population declined 9.6% from 1980 to 2013-2017.

**Figure 4: Total Population Change from 1980 to 2017 and Black Population in Chicago, Atlanta, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and New York City, 1980 and 2017**



Data Source: 1980 Census and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

## Population change in Cook County, Chicago Metro Region and State

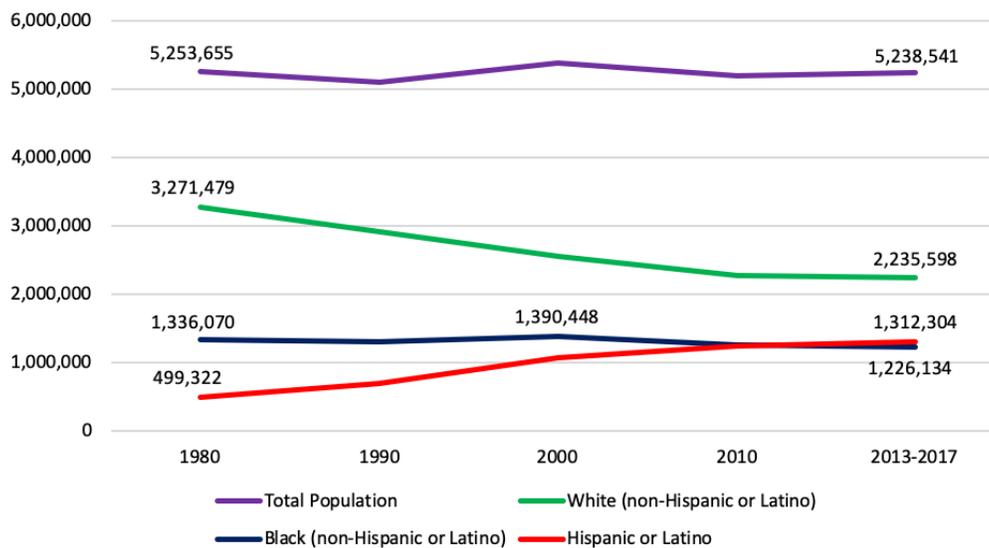
### Proportion of Illinois Black Population in Chicago and the Chicago Metro Region

- 71.5 percent of Illinois's Black population was in Chicago in 1980. This proportion decreased over time to 44.1 percent in 2013-2017.
- 85.2% of Illinois's Black population was in the Chicago Metro region in 1980. This proportion decreased to 79.2 percent in 2013-2017.

### Cook County

- Cook County's total population has been relatively stable from 1980 to 2013-2017, with the population decreasing slightly from 5.25 million in 1980 to 5.24 million in 2013-2017.
- Cook County's Black population peaked in 2000 at 1.39 million and decreased to 1.22 million in 2013-2017 representing a 11.8% decrease.
- Cook County's Latino population surpassed the black population as of the 2010 Census.

**Figure 5: Population by Race/Ethnicity in Cook County, 1980 to 2013-2017**



Data source: 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 3: Population by Race/Ethnicity in the Cook County, 1980 to 2013-2017**

Year	Total Population	White (non-Hispanic or Latino)	Black (non-Hispanic or Latino)	Hispanic or Latino
1980	5,253,655	3,271,479	1,336,070	499,322
1990	5,105,067	2,915,634	1,301,196	694,194
2000	5,376,741	2,558,709	1,390,448	1,071,740
2010	5,194,675	2,278,358	1,265,778	1,244,762
2013-2017	5,238,541	2,235,598	1,226,134	1,312,304

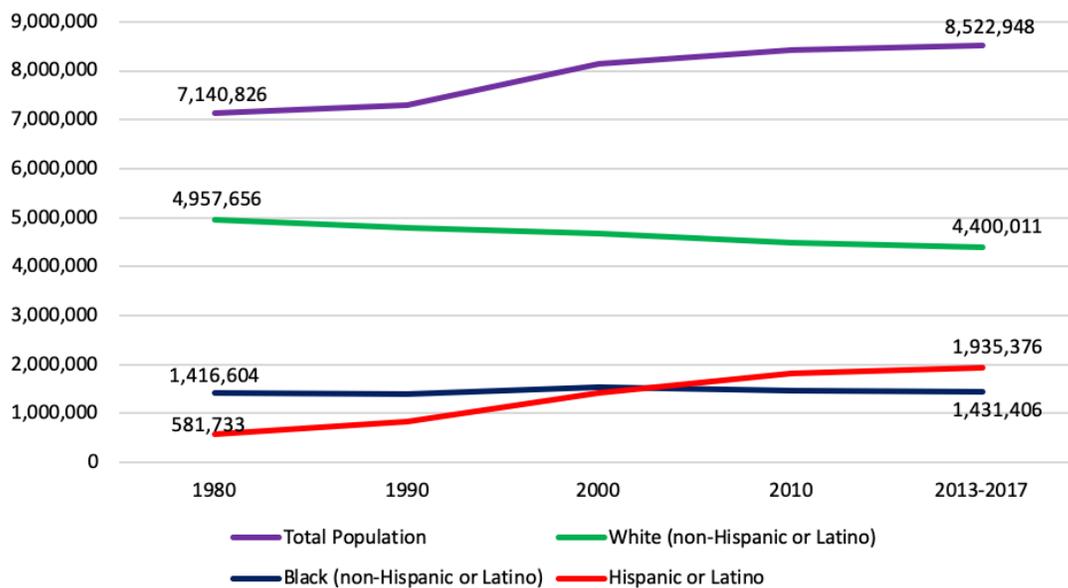
Data source: 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

## Chicago Metro Region

The Chicago Metro Region is defined as Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties

- The Chicago metro region's total population increased steadily from 1980 to 2013-2017, increasing from 7.14 million in 1980 to 8.52 million in 2013-2017.
- The Chicago metro region's Black population peaked in 2000 at 1.54 million and decreased to 1.43 million in 2013-2017 representing a 6.9% decrease.
- The Chicago metro region's Latino population surpassed the black population in the 2010 Census.

**Figure 6: Population by Race/Ethnicity in the Chicago Metro Region, 1980 to 2013-2017**



Data source: 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 4: Population by Race/Ethnicity in the Chicago Metro Region, 1980 to 2013-2017**

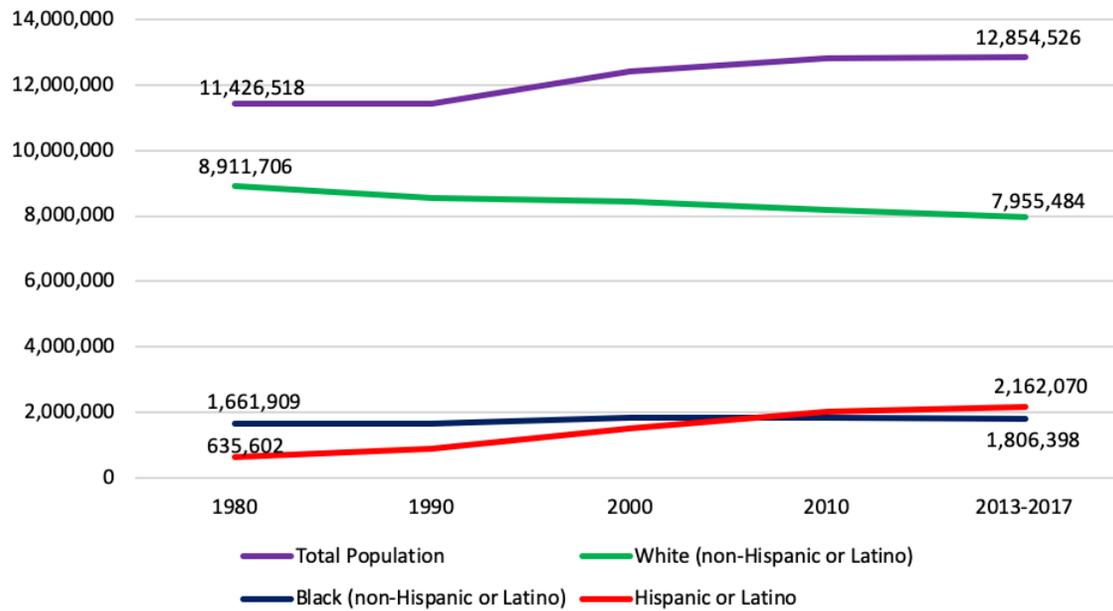
Year	Total Population	White (non-Hispanic or Latino)	Black (non-Hispanic or Latino)	Hispanic or Latino
1980	7,140,826	4,957,656	1,416,604	581,733
1990	7,300,589	4,795,120	1,406,648	838,710
2000	8,146,264	4,687,259	1,537,534	1,409,202
2010	8,431,386	4,486,557	1,465,417	1,823,609
2013-2017	8,522,948	4,400,011	1,431,406	1,935,376

Data source: 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

## Illinois

- Illinois's total population increased from 1980 to 2013-2017, increasing from 11.43 million in 1980 to 12.85 million in 2013-2017.
- Illinois's Black population peaked in 2000 at 1.86 million and decreased to 1.81 million in 2013-2017 representing a 2.7% decrease.
- Illinois's Latino population surpassed the black population in the 2010 Census.

**Figure 7: Population by Race/Ethnicity in Illinois, 1980 to 2013-2017**



Data source: 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 5: Population by Race/Ethnicity in the Illinois, 1980 to 2013-2017**

Year	Total Population	White (non-Hispanic or Latino)	Black (non-Hispanic or Latino)	Hispanic or Latino
1980	11,426,518	8,911,706	1,661,909	635,602
1990	11,430,602	8,550,208	1,673,703	904,446
2000	12,419,293	8,424,140	1,856,152	1,530,262
2010	12,830,632	8,167,753	1,832,924	2,027,578
2013-2017	12,854,526	7,955,484	1,806,398	2,162,070

Data source: 1980-2010 Decennial Censuses and 2017 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

**Technical notes**

Community Area data presented in this document from 1950-1980 does not separate by Hispanic or Latino status. This means that data collected from 1950 – 1980 represents both Black Hispanic or Latino and Black non-Hispanic or Latino populations within the Black population counts. 2013-2017 data is for Black non-Hispanic or Latino population.

2013-2017 figures are used for Cook County and Illinois for comparability purposes with the Chicago Metro Region data, which was aggregated from individual level county level data that was not available in 1-year estimates.



