

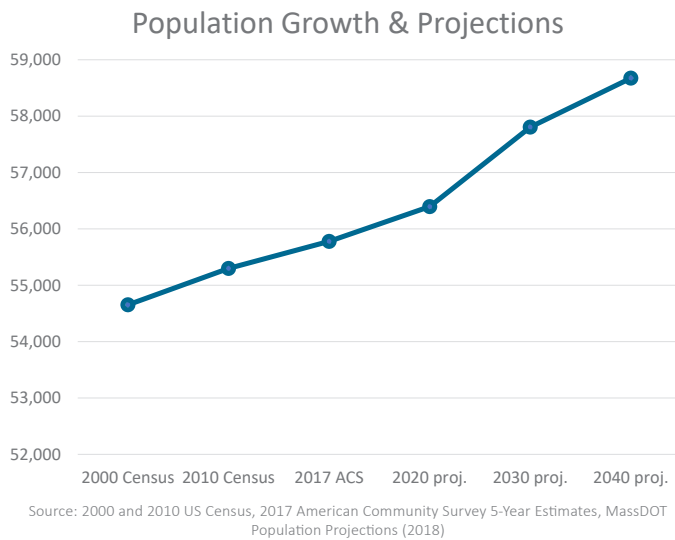


KEY TAKEAWAYS • DEMOGRAPHICS •

WHY DEMOGRAPHICS MATTER

Understanding the make-up of people that live in our community gives the City of Chicopee guidance into future needs for housing, social services, recreation, transportation, and other factors that contribute to our residents’ quality of life. Important attributes of Chicopee’s population to consider are age, racial and ethnic background, household composition, income, and special needs. Shifts in these characteristics within Chicopee and the region can give insight into trends and changing preferences.

POPULATION GROWTH



Chicopee’s population is growing slowly but steadily. The City gained 1,125 residents between 2000 and 2017 to 55,363, a growth rate of approximately 2.1%. According to MassDOT projections (Socio-Economic Projections for 2020 Regional Transportation Plans), Chicopee is projected to grow 5.2% between the years 2017 and 2040 to a total population of 58,674, a little higher than the 4.5% growth rate for Hampden County. Massachusetts as a whole is expected to grow a much more significant 12.7%.

However, there is really no way to predict future population with certainty. If Chicopee is successful in planning for housing and jobs, population may grow faster. If the economy slumps, it might be slower.

HOUSEHOLDS

Married couple households with children have been a small portion of households in Chicopee for many years and now represent only 12.8% of households.

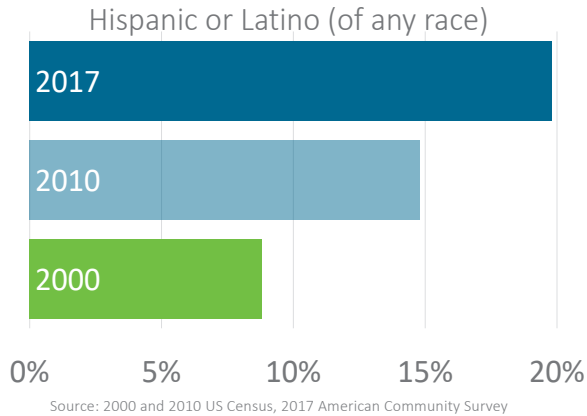
The number of children in Chicopee has been declining and only about 25% of households had children as of 2017. However, with the uptick in young adults in Chicopee, there may also be an uptick in young children in the next ten years.

VETERANS

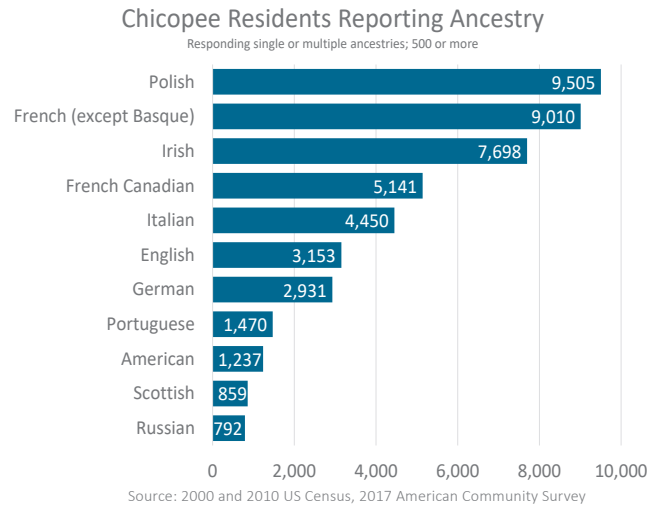
Almost 10% of Chicopee’s adults are Veterans. Compared with non-veterans, Veterans in Chicopee have higher median incomes, lower unemployment rates, lower rates of poverty, and better educational attainment. However, nearly 30% of Chicopee Veterans report some sort of disability – much higher than non-veterans. This may be a testament to the success of the many local support programs available to Veterans in Chicopee, the continued support for Veteran physical and mental health will be important now and in the future.

RACE, ETHNICITY, & ANCESTRY

Chicopee is becoming more diverse. Most notably, the Hispanic or Latino population (which is largely people of Puerto Rican decent) has more than doubled between 2000 and 2017.

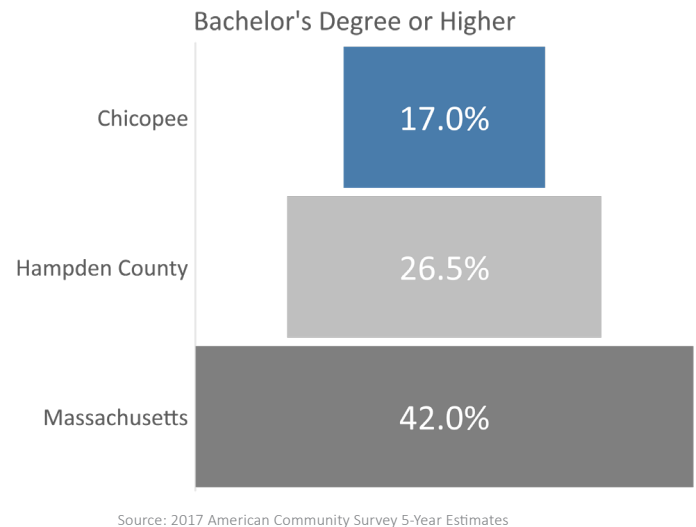


A significant portion of Chicopee's residents claim Polish, French, Irish, and French Canadian ancestry.



EDUCATION

Chicopee adults tend to have lower levels of formal education than in Massachusetts overall, with about half having only a high school degree or less. However, the percentage age of people with high school and college diplomas has been improving over time. Since 2000, the portion of adults with a high school degree or higher has increased by over 11 percent and the number with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased by 4.7 percent.



MEDIAN AGE

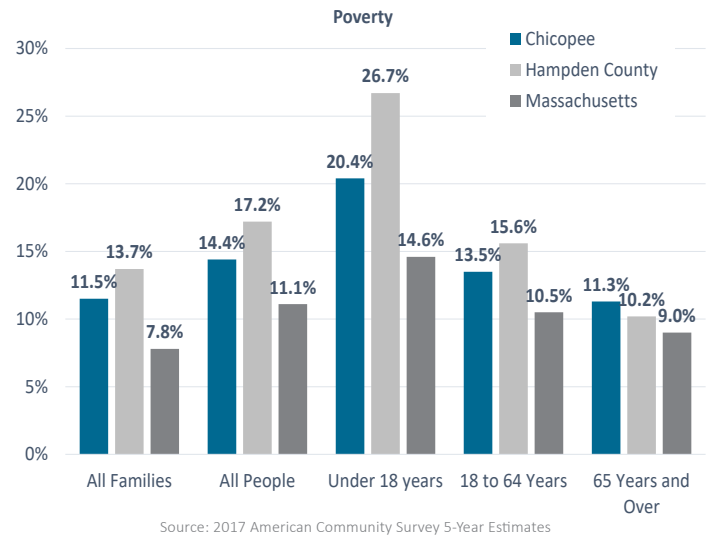
Unlike the rest of Massachusetts which is quickly growing older, Chicopee has grown a bit younger since 2010, from a median age of 40.1 in 2010 to 39.6 in 2017. This is an unusual trend for New England cities and towns, and one that could be very positive for Chicopee if it continues.

What is driving this trend and how can Chicopee capitalize being younger? Unlike much of New England, the population in Chicopee between the ages of 20 and 34 has been growing its share as compared to the other age groups. This is probably a positive sign. If the City continues to attract young adults, there could be more young families with children and more working age adults in the next ten years, as compared with its neighbors.

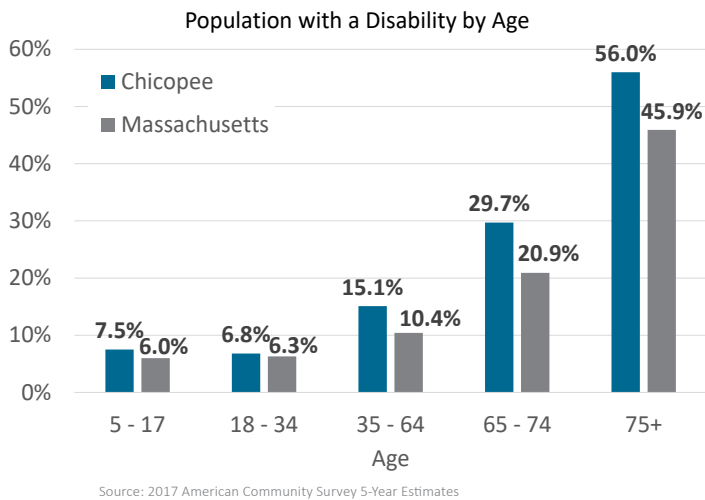


INCOME & POVERTY

When adjusted using the Consumer Price Index, relative incomes actually decreased in Chicopee and Hampden County from 2000 to 2017 while they increased slightly in Massachusetts overall. This means that since 2000, even though people’s incomes have gone up, it is now harder for the average household in Chicopee to pay for goods and services. Poverty is especially a problem for children. In 2017, over 20% of Chicopee’s children were living in poverty, higher than the national average of 16%, versus 13.5% of adults under 65 and 11.3% of adults 65 and older. The Children’s Defense Fund calls this an urgent and preventable crisis.



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Chicopee has a higher rate of disability across all age groups compared with Massachusetts overall. Especially concerning is the rate of disability among working age adults between 35-64 years old, which is 15.1% compared with 10.4% in Massachusetts. This means more working age adults will have difficulty entering the workforce, and in fact people with a disability in Chicopee are far less likely to be employed than in Massachusetts overall. On top of the existing City services geared toward seniors with disabilities, there may be a need for services geared more specifically toward middle-aged adults with disabilities.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental Justice (EJ) is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. EJ is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

MA EEA maintains an EJ policy to better serve the environmental needs of the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable residents and focuses on EJ communities, neighborhoods with lower-income, non-white, and/or non-English speaking residents.

Areas with two or more EJ conditions are clustered in Chicopee Center, Chicopee Falls, and Willimansett. EJ communities in Chicopee are designated for low income alone and located in swaths of Aldenville, Fairview, and Westover neighborhoods.

Envision Our Chicopee: 2040 will commit to EJ communities in order to address historic pollution and other environmental burdens on low income communities and communities of color and increase access to environmental benefits in these neighborhoods, such as parks, public trees, trails, brownfields cleanup, etc.