

## Focus on: **Colorado**

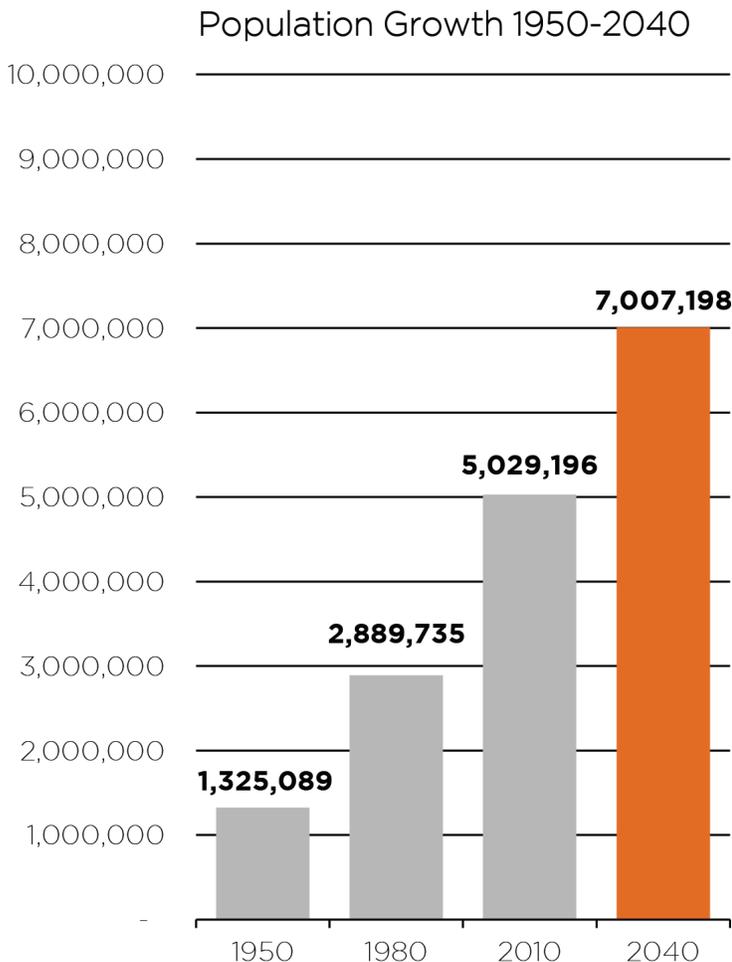
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Colorado's population was the 24<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation in 2000. Resident counts were estimated at over 5.26 million in 2013. With a growth rate of 22.4% from 2000, Colorado has grown at nearly double the U.S. average over the same period. Colorado now has almost quadrupled

the number of citizens it had in 1950. The 2010 U.S. Census also showed that, with over 600,000 residents, Denver was Colorado's largest city. At 3,922.6 people per square mile, Denver is over 80 times more densely populated than the state of Colorado overall.



### Colorado's Population Growth

Changes in population size are dependent on net migration (people moving into the state minus people moving out) and natural increase (births minus deaths). During the 1990s, Colorado's population enlarged by over 30%.



### Fertility

According to the Centers for Disease Control, Colorado's fertility rate in 2012 (births per 1,000 women aged 15-44) was 62.0, just below the U.S. average.

### Net Migration

The population of Colorado is increased by international immigration as well as state-to-state migration within the U.S. According to Census Bureau reports, between 2000 and 2013 Colorado gained over 967,000 new residents — most of which was due to net migration.

According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, 9.7% of Colorado's population was foreign born. The Center for Immigration studies found that Colorado's immigrant population (both legal and undocumented) grew by 34% between 2000 and 2010 – over 21% higher than the U.S. average rate. As immigration and migration into Colorado continue, the state's overall population grows higher and higher.

### Projections

Assuming no changes in demographic behavior (excluding a small increase in life expectancy), the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service projects Colorado's population will reach 7,007,198 by 2040. This represents a 33% increase from 2013, launching the state to the 19<sup>th</sup> most populated in the nation.

# NPG State Fact Sheet

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## Impacts of Population Growth

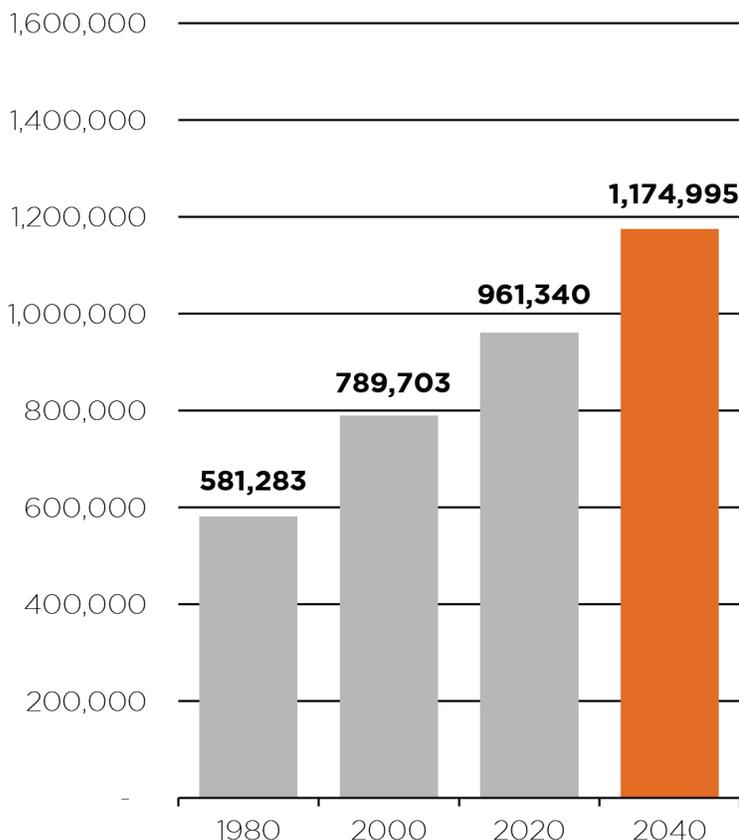
*What does such staggering population growth mean for the quality of life in Colorado?*

As of 2000, Colorado's population density was 41.5 people per square mile, ranking 39th in the nation. By 2010, it had climbed to 48.5, representing a nearly 17% increase in just 10 years. Colorado has become 6.5 times more densely populated than it was in 1910, when it ranked just 42<sup>nd</sup> in the country.

## Education

According to the Colorado Department of Education, the 2010-2011 school year yielded 843,316 enrolled students in state public schools, representing 16.77% of Colorado's 2010 population. Assuming no change in these rates, by 2040 Colorado's public school system could host almost 1.2 million students. At approximately 1,000 students per school and 30 students per teacher, that would require the state to build 331 new schools and hire more than 11,000 new teachers.

School Enrollment 1980-2040



## Green Space

American Farmland Trust shows that between 2002 and 2007, Colorado lost 139,000 acres to development — the 5<sup>th</sup> largest loss in the U.S. A 2001 *Ridder/Braden* poll commissioned by NPG showed 71% of citizens in Colorado felt houses were being built too fast in their communities. 82% felt the pace of development was a serious threat to open spaces and the rich beauty of the state's environment. Over a decade has passed since this NPG survey, yet Colorado continues to grow. More and more of the green spaces are disappearing to accommodate a burgeoning population.

## Air and Water Pollution

Environment Colorado estimates that the state's coal-fired power plants emit hundreds of thousands of pounds of toxic mercury into the air each year. This hazardous material then falls back to earth as rain, contaminating Colorado's rivers, lakes, and streams. Scientists found that even a gram of mercury (about one drop) placed in a mid-sized lake over a year was sufficient to account for all of the subsequent mercury found in that lake's fish population. Population growth means more pollution, as increasing demands are placed on Colorado's energy infrastructure.

*"In wilderness I sense the miracle of life, and behind it our scientific accomplishments fade to trivia."*

— Charles A. Lindbergh



Negative Population Growth (NPG) is a national non-profit membership organization. Our focus is educating the American public and political leaders about the detrimental effects of overpopulation on our environment, resources, and quality of life.

This State Fact Sheet is one of a series designed to bring useful population growth statistics to our nation's legislators, citizens, and classrooms. Please visit our website, [www.NPG.org](http://www.NPG.org), for more information.