

## Demographic Profile



The City of Durango grew 12.0% during the 1990s while the County grew by 36.1%.

## OVERVIEW

Rapid population growth has created consistent challenges in Durango and La Plata County for the last 15 years. Demographic trends and projections shape Durango's needs and opportunities. Changes in the size and characteristics of the City's population may have profound impacts on the fiscal, economic, social and natural environment. Population increases generate demands for additional facilities and services. Different age and income segments of the population have different needs, which shape demands for housing, services and infrastructure.

This Chapter examines historic and projected population growth, as well as residential and non-residential development trends. These trends provide baseline assumptions upon which future land uses, fiscal needs, housing needs, public infrastructure and service demands will be measured.

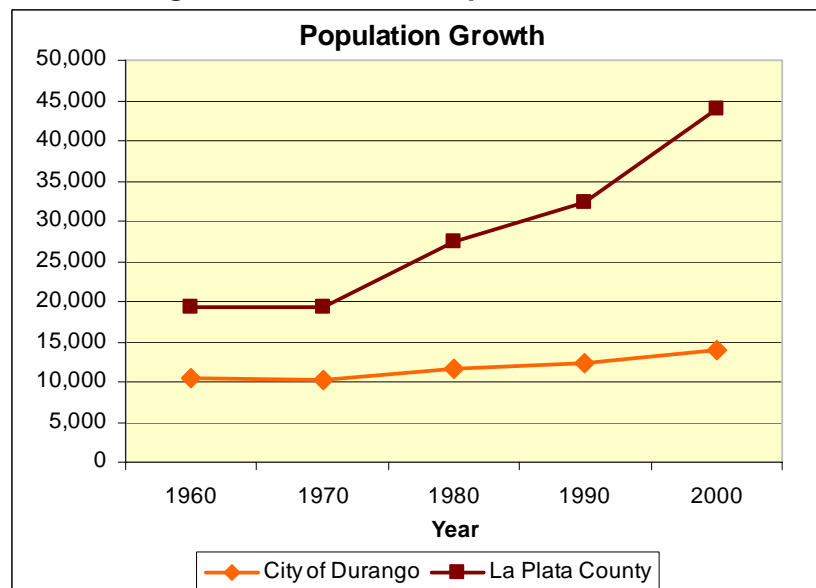
The data estimates and projections included in this summary are derived from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Bureau of Census, 2030 Trip: The La Plata County and City of Durango Regional Transportation Study, the Sonoran Institute's SocioEconomic Profiles of Durango and La Plata County, and the City of Durango.

## POPULATION

### Historic Trends

United States Census data shown in **Figure 1** indicate that the total population of both the City and County have increased in each of the last three decades, after a slight dip during the 1960s. LaPlata County's population steadily increased from 19,199 in 1970 to 43,941 in 2000, while the City of Durango's population also increased, from 10,530 in 1960 to 13,922 in 2000.

Figure 1: Historical Population Trends



Source: U.S. Census

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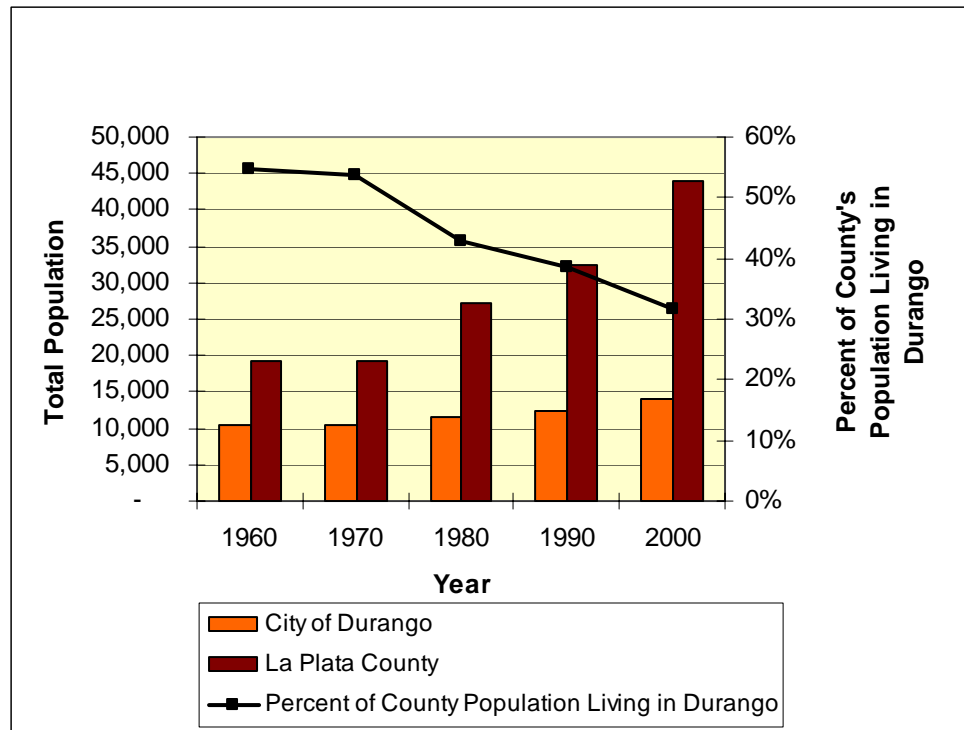
An increasing proportion of La Plata County's population growth has been occurring in unincorporated areas. The growth rate for both the City and County was substantial during the decade of the 1990s. During that decade, the County grew substantially with an average annual growth rate of 3.13%, while the City grew at a more modest but still significant average annual rate of 1.14%. This resulted in a total 36.1% population gain for the County and a 12.0% gain for the City. While Durango has continued to grow, it comprises a decreasing proportion of the County's total population over the past 40 years. This trend is illustrated in **Table 1** and **Figure 2**.

**Table 1: City Population as Percentage of County Population**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Durango</b>	10,530	10,333	11,649	12,430	13,922	14,720	15,025	15,324	15,630	15,904*
<b>LaPlata County</b>	19,225	19,199	27,195	32,284	43,941	45,475	46,281	46,790	N/A	N/A
<b>Durango Pop. as % of County Total</b>	55%	54%	43%	39%	32%	32%	32%	33%	N/A	N/A

*Source: U.S. Census, City of Durango*

**Figure 2: Percentage of County Population Living in Durango**



*Source: US Census, City of Durango*

In 1960, City residents comprised 55% of the County's population. By 2000 this figure had dropped to only 33%.

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The population of La Plata County is projected to grow by 84% between 2000 and 2030, for a 2030 population of over 80,000.

**Growth Projections**

The rate of future growth depends on numerous factors, including the technological, political, environmental and economic climates. While past growth is often a good predictor of future growth, uncertainties increase the prudence of using a wide range of projections.

The City's population increased at an average annual rate of approximately 2.0% per year from 2000 to 2003, which was higher than the growth rate of the 1990s. The year 2004 is therefore estimated using a 2.0% annual growth rate, while the remainder of the decade is projected based on three likely annual growth rates. Population estimates and projections for 2000-2009 are shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: Durango Population 2000-2009**

<b>Annual Growth Rate</b>	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>1.75%</b>	<b>2.00%</b>
2000	14,151 <sup>1</sup>	14,151	14,151
2001	14,720	14,720	14,720
2002	15,025	15,025	15,025
2003	15,324	15,324	15,324
2004	15,630	15,630	15,630
2005	15,864	15,904	15,943
2006	16,102	16,182	16,262
2007	16,344	16,465	16,587
2008	16,589	16,753	16,919
2009	16,838	17,046	17,257

*Source: City of Durango*

It is projected in *2030 Trip: The La Plata County and City of Durango Regional Transportation Study* that the County is expected to grow at a rate of approximately 2.06% over the planning horizon. The 2030 population of the County is projected to be 80,921, which is an 84.16% increase over the 2000 population of 43,941. The County, including Durango, was home to 17,346 households in 2000, which is expected to increase with the population to a total of 33,995 households by 2030.

Of those new County households, the majority are expected to be middle income households, which are defined as those households with an annual income of between \$25,000 and \$75,000. Projected households by income level are shown in **Table 3**. Low income households are expected to earn less than \$25,000 per year, and high income households will earn more than \$75,000.

<sup>1</sup> The City of Durango challenged the figure that the 2000 U.S. Census reported for Durango's population, believing the total population to be 14,151, as opposed to 13,922, as reported by the Census. For the purpose of these projections, the higher number is used, while in the tables and calculations throughout the remainder of this Chapter, the Census number is used.

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Factors such as Fort Lewis College and the outdoor lifestyle of Durango are two possible attractors of a younger than average population.

64.3% of the population are of "working age," or between 19 and 64 years old.

**Table 3: Projected County Households by Income (2030)**

	Income Range	Number of Households
Low Income	<\$25,000	9,501
Middle Income	\$25,000-75,000	15,787
High Income	>\$75,000	8,707
Total		33,995

Source: 2030 Trip

**AGE & RACE**

**Age**

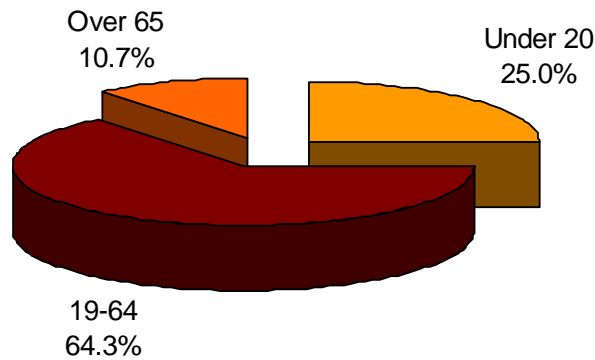
Overall, the population of Durango is younger than that of the nation.

- The median age in 2000 in Durango was 29.2 years, while the median age in the U.S. is 35.3 years.
- In 2000, 12.4% of the US population was over 65 years of age, while only 10.7% of Durango's population was over 65 years.

The largest age category in Durango in 2000 was 20 to 24 years of age, due at least in part to Fort Lewis College. The college student population brings increased education levels, a part-time labor force and a demand for non-single family housing options.

Figure 3 breaks down the major age groups in the City of Durango in 2000.

**Figure 3: Major Age Groups in Durango (2000)**



Source: U.S. Census

**Dependency**

Table 4 provides youth and aged dependency ratios that reflect the number of young and retirement-aged people who are not in their prime wage earning years to those in the working age population. The youth dependency ratio is a number that expresses the relationship between the number of dependent youth to the number of working people. Likewise, the aged dependency ratio is a

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The total dependency ratios for the City and the County are identical, with 4.76 working adults supporting each person in the youth or retired age group.

number that expresses the relationship between the number of retirement-aged people to the number of working people. The combined dependency ratio is the ratio of youth and retirement-aged people to the working aged population.

The dependency ratio is often used as an indicator of the economic burden the productive portion of a population must carry - even though some persons defined as "dependent" are producers and some persons in the "productive" ages are economically dependent. In general terms, these ratios indicate whether there is a significant imbalance between the workforce and those dependent on the workforce for goods and services. This factor must be considered along with other economic indicators to ascertain the health of the economy.

The 2000 youth dependency ratio for the City of Durango was 0.39, while the dependency ratio for the aged was 0.17. Both of these dependency ratios were lower than the 1990 youth dependency ratio of 0.49 and the aged dependency of 0.20. The combined ratio decreased from 0.69 in 1990 to 0.56 in 2000, meaning that a greater proportion of the population is of working age than in 1990, generally resulting in more income to provide services for children and seniors. The total dependency ratios for the City and County are identical at 0.56.

Durango's dependency ratios are consistent with other demographic data indicators, such as flat school enrollment figures, an increase in median income and a decrease in persons per household. The increase in the ratio of working aged persons to retired aged persons is inconsistent with the overall aging of American population and the increase in the national median age due to the aging of the baby boomer population.

**Table 4: Dependency Ratios**

		Durango		La Plata County		Nation	
		1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
		Percent of Total		Percent of Total		Percent of Total	
<b>Youth (0 - 20)</b>		29.0%	25.0%	30.0%	27.0%	28.7%	28.6%
<b>Working (21 - 64)</b>		59.0%	64.3%	60.0%	64.0%	58.7%	59.0%
<b>Aged (65+)</b>		12.0%	10.7%	10.0%	9.0%	12.6%	12.4%
<b>Total</b>		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Youth Dependency</b>		0.49	0.39	0.50	0.42	0.49	0.48
<b>Aged Dependency</b>		0.20	0.17	0.17	0.14	0.21	0.21
<b>Combined Dependency</b>		0.69	0.56	0.67	0.56	0.70	0.69

Source: U.S. Census

The school aged dependency ratio is significantly lower than the national average of 0.48, and although the retired aged ratio is closer, it still lower than the national average of 0.21.

It is probable that the decline in dependent populations is indicative of the increasing costs of housing in the City and the inability of seniors and young

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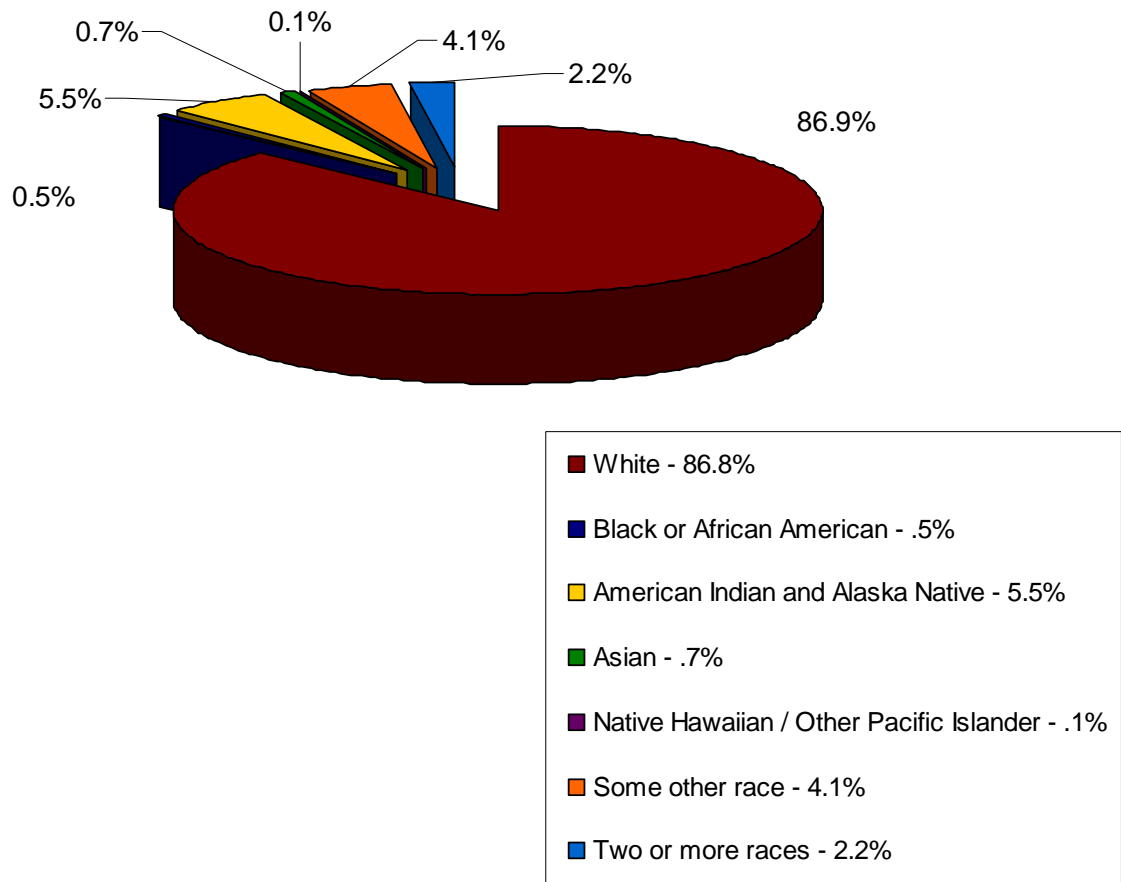
families to afford adequate housing and/or employment within the City and County. Although dependent populations do not make up the majority of Durango residents, it will be important for the City to continue to provide a high level of services for these populations in the coming years, especially as the comparatively large population currently between the ages of 40 and 55 reaches retirement age over the next 10 to 25 years.

### Ethnicity & Race

In 2000, the US Census questionnaire was altered, expanding the number of racial categories and allowing respondents to identify themselves as one or more races. Additionally, ethnicity is now a separate question, as those of Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race.

The total City population by race in 2000 is illustrated in **Figure 4**. The racial composition of Durango has changed very little since 1990. The majority of the population is white, with those of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race forming the largest minority group. Of the population, 10.3% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Since 1990, the Hispanic population has decreased by approximately 2%. Of Hispanics, the largest number of people reported their race to be "White alone," (50.2%) while the second largest category reported was "Some other race alone" (38.7%).

**Figure 4: City of Durango Total Population by Race (2000)**



Source: U.S. Census

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77% of Durango high school graduates go on to pursue post-secondary studies.



## EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

### Public School Assessment

Overall, the achievement levels of the students of the Durango R-9 School District exceed that of the students of the state of Colorado.

- The district-wide student-to-teacher ratio is 14.2-to-1 compared with an average of 16.8-to-1 statewide and 15-to-1 in Southwest Colorado school districts.
- Durango High School's graduation rate improved from 87.6 percent of Spring 2003 to 91.6 percent in Spring 2004.
- The district-wide graduation rate improved from 76 percent in 2003 to 82 percent in 2004.

The 2005 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) scores for the district in reading, writing, math and science showed that the district beat the state score across every subject and grade level by a significant margin. All scores for the district showed either a stable or upward trend over time.

In 2004, District juniors earned an average composite score of 21.3 points on the ACT exam, compared with 20.2 points statewide, and more than 77 percent of District graduates pursue post-secondary study.

In May, 2005, the Durango School District 9-R Board of Education approved more stringent graduation requirements for district students that more closely align with new college admission requirements that the Colorado Commission on Higher Education adopted in 2004.

### Educational Attainment

As shown in **Figure 5**, the educational attainment of the City of Durango is significantly higher than that of the State and Nation. 90.1% of Durango residents over the age of 25 have graduated from high school, significantly greater than the national rate. Over 70% of Durango residents have at least some College education, and almost half have at least an Associate's degree.

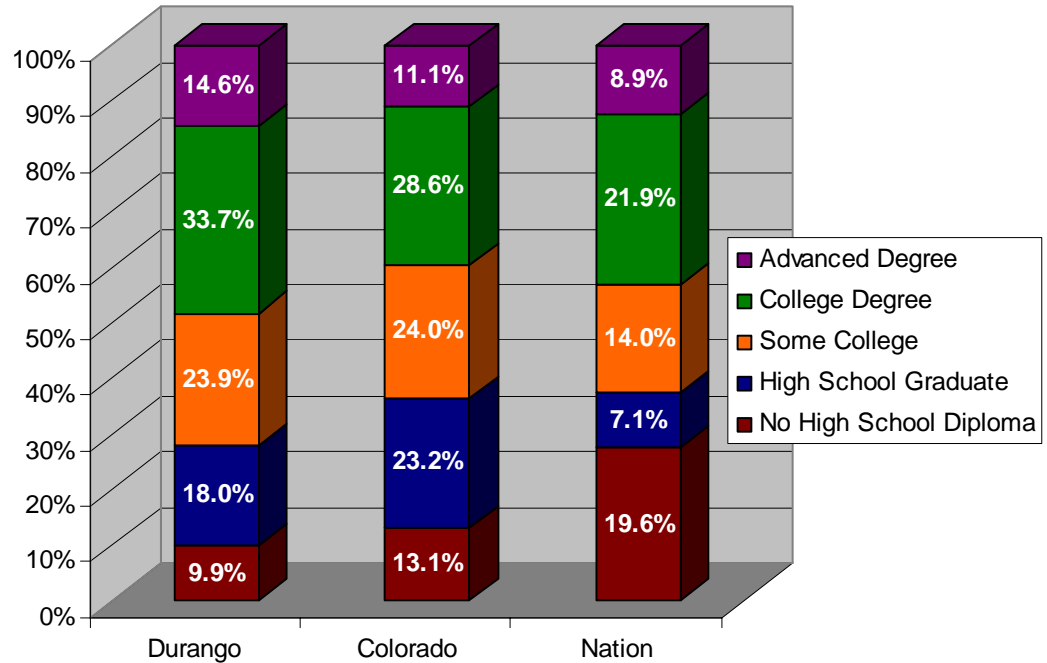
Both Pueblo Community College Southwest Center (PCCSC) and Fort Lewis College are located within the City of Durango. PCCSC is a fully-accredited two-year college with an open door admissions policy. A partnership with San Juan Basin Area Technical School allows students to complete certificate programs and to obtain associate degrees in Nursing, Electronics, Business and Office Technologies. Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Science and Associate of General Studies two-year degrees may also be earned.

Fort Lewis College is Colorado's public four-year liberal arts institution, with a 2005 enrollment of 4,500 student, offering 24 degree programs in the schools of Arts & Sciences, Education and Business Administration. The College is an economic generator for the City, and has invested more than \$40 million in construction projects since 1999. The College contributes to the local and regional communities through the educational and cultural resources and opportunities it provides.

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The presence of Fort Lewis College in the City has a positive impact on the education levels of the population, and the highly educated workforce of Durango is a strength the City can use to aid in any future business recruitment efforts and other economic development strategies.

**Figure 5: Educational Attainment for the Population Over Age 25 (2000)**



Source: U.S. Census

**Size of Labor Force**

Workers over the age of 16 years living in the City of Durango in 2000 formed 52.0% of the City's population, or 7,236 people. Of those, 80%, or 5,806 people, worked within the City, and 97% worked within the County. The total workforce over the age of 16 years in the County was comprised of 22,481, or 51.2% of the total County population.

**Commute Method & Time**

As is shown in **Table 5**, the vast majority of those living in the labor force living in the City of Durango commute via car, truck or van, and well over half of the population drives alone to work. However, although 75% of Durango workers commute via car, truck or van, this is well below the State and National figures, which are above 87%. Durango also boasts a greater proportion of residents who walk or bike to work than the County, State or Nation, at greater than 15%. The ability to walk or bike to work is recognized as contributing positively to the public health and well-being of a community.

More than 15% of Durango residents are able to walk or bike to work.

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Table 5: City of Durango Method of Commute (2000)

Commute Method	
Car, Truck or Van	75%
Drove Alone	63%
Carpool	12%
Public Transportation	2%
Motorcycle	0%
Bicycle	4%
Walked	11%
Other Means	1%
Worked at Home	7%

Source: U.S. Census

The average commute time for workers living within the City has remained fairly consistent, increasing from about 11 and a half minutes in 1990 to 13 minutes in 2000. Three quarters of residents experienced commutes of less than 20 minutes in 2000, which is less than the County average of 19 minutes and the average State and national commute times in excess of 23 minutes.

**Employment by Industry**

The major employment industries for the residents of Durango are shown in **Table 6** and illustrated in **Figure 6**. The categories are listed by the percentage of the labor force that is employed in those industries in descending order. Over two-thirds of Durango's workforce are employed in one of the four industrial categories, with almost a quarter of the population employed in education, health care or social services.

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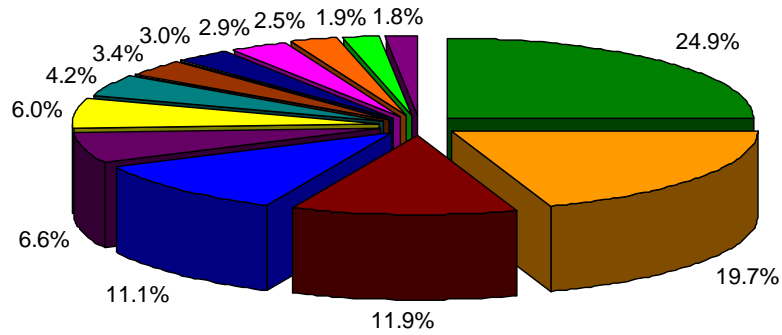
Table 6: Employment by Industry (2000)

	Total Employed	Percent of Total Employment
Educational, health and social services	1,840	24.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1,450	19.7%
Retail trade	881	11.9%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	821	11.1%
Construction	486	6.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	439	6.0%
Other services (except public administration)	310	4.2%
Manufacturing	250	3.4%
Public administration	225	3.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	217	2.9%
Information	188	2.5%
Wholesale trade	138	1.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	133	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,378</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

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Figure 6: Employment by Industry (2000)



- Educational, health and social services - 24.9%
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services - 19.7%
- Retail trade - 11.9%
- Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services - 11.1%
- Construction - 6.6%
- Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing - 6.0%
- Other services (except public administration) - 4.2%
- Manufacturing - 3.4%
- Public administration - 3.0%
- Transportation and warehousing, and utilities - 2.9%
- Information - 2.5%
- Wholesale trade - 1.9%
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining - 1.8%

Source: U.S. Census

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### Employment by Occupation

The largest occupational sector for Durango workers in 2000 was management, professional and related occupations, with sales and office occupations forming the second highest employment category by sector. Occupation by sector is shown in **Table 7**. In the table, first tier categories are highlighted in grey, with sub-categories shown below. **Figure 7** illustrates only the first tier categories.

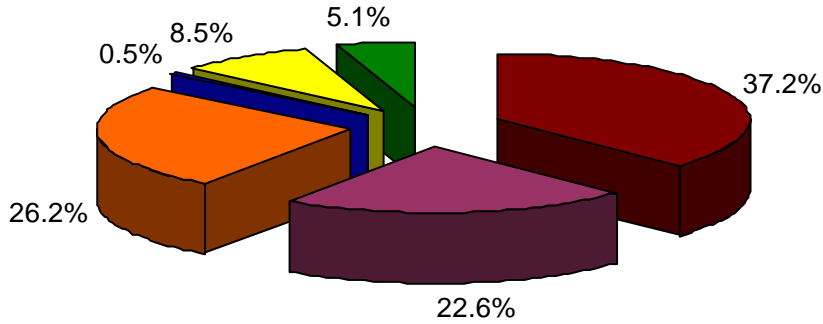
**Table 7: Employment by Sector (2000)**

Occupation	Total Employed	Percent of Total Employment
Management, professional, and related occupations	2,744	37.2%
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	917	12.4%
Professional and related occupations	1,827	24.8%
Service occupations	1,664	22.6%
Healthcare support occupations	143	1.9%
Protective service occupations	109	1.5%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	882	12.0%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	237	3.2%
Personal care and service occupations	293	4.0%
Sales and office occupations	1,930	26.2%
Sales and related occupations	898	12.2%
Office and administrative support occupations	1,032	14.0%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	39	0.5%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	625	8.5%
Construction and extraction occupations	356	4.8%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	269	3.6%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	376	5.1%
Production occupations	183	2.5%
Transportation and material moving occupations	193	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,378</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

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**Figure 7: Employment by Occupation (2000)**



- Management, professional, and related occupations - 37.2%
- Service occupations - 22.6%
- Sales and office occupations - 26.2%
- Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations - .5%
- Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations - 8.5%
- Production, transportation, and material moving occupations - 5.1%

*Source: U.S. Census*

While the total employment in the County in 2002 was 32,287, by 2030 it is projected that there will be more than 51,000 jobs in the County. The projected jobs by sector for the year 2030 are shown in **Table 8**.

**Table 8: County Employment by Sector (2030)**

Employment Sectors	Number of Jobs
Base Employment	14,543
Retail Employment	11,136
Service Employment	25,384
Non-Retail Employment	36,073
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>51,063</b>

*Source: 2030 Trip*

**HOUSEHOLDS & INCOME**

**Household size**

Census data indicates that in the year 2000 there were 5,492 households in Durango, with an average of 2.23 people per household. Durango households decreased in size from 2.5 people per household in 1980, to 2.4 in 1990, to 2.23 in 2000. This local trend mirrors the national trend of shrinking household sizes.

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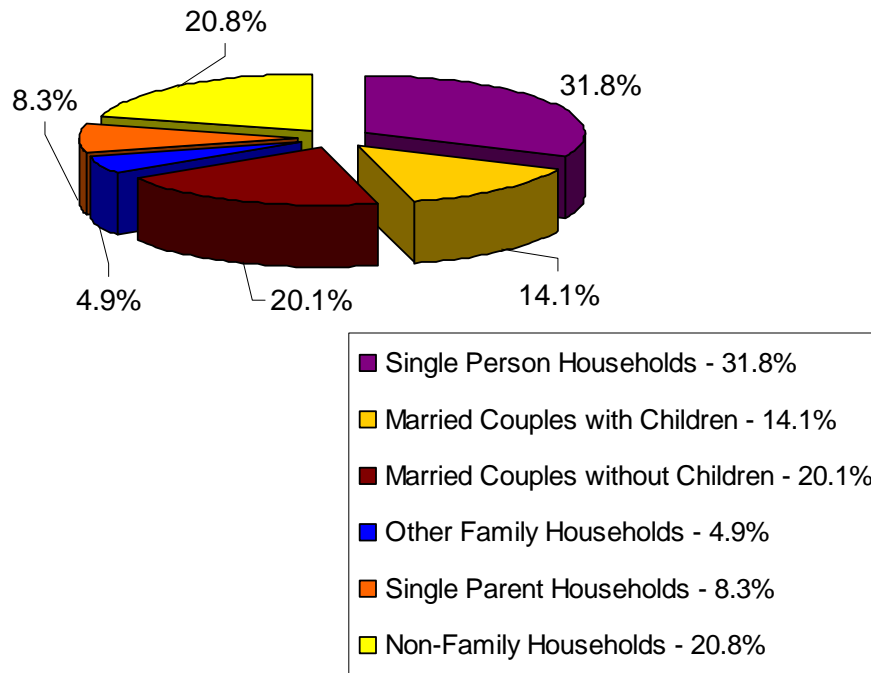
Trends in Durango indicate a need for non-traditional housing options for single people and other smaller household types.

As defined by the U.S. Census, households are composed of one or more people who occupy a housing unit. Family households consist of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people. Non-family households consist of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals.

Family households represent just under half of all households in Durango, which is considerably under the national figure of 68%. Non-family households comprise just over half of all households, which is likely attributable to the high proportion of college-aged people in the City.

Householders living alone comprised 31.8%, almost three times the national rate of people living alone. In 1990, only 6% of households were identified as single person households. The young, college-aged population contributes to the large number of single-person and non-family households. These trends identify the potential need for non-traditional housing options for single people and other smaller household types in Durango. **Figure 8** shows Durango households by type.

**Figure 8: Durango Households by Type (2000)**



Source: U.S. Census

### Household & Family Income

While the 1999 median income for families in Durango was \$50,814, which was slightly above that of the County and Nation, it was below that of the State. The City's household median income of \$34,892 is consistent with the smaller household size for the City, and was below that of the County, state and nation by over \$5,000.

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During the 1990s, the median household income of those living in Durango rose by 52%, while the national median income rose by only 40%.

Between 1990 and 1999, the median income for households in Durango increased by almost 52%, from \$22,996 to \$34,892. While the median household income in Durango was only 76% of the national median income in 1990, by 1999 that number had increased to 83% of the national median. The median household and family income figures for the City, County, state and nation are compared in **Table 9**.

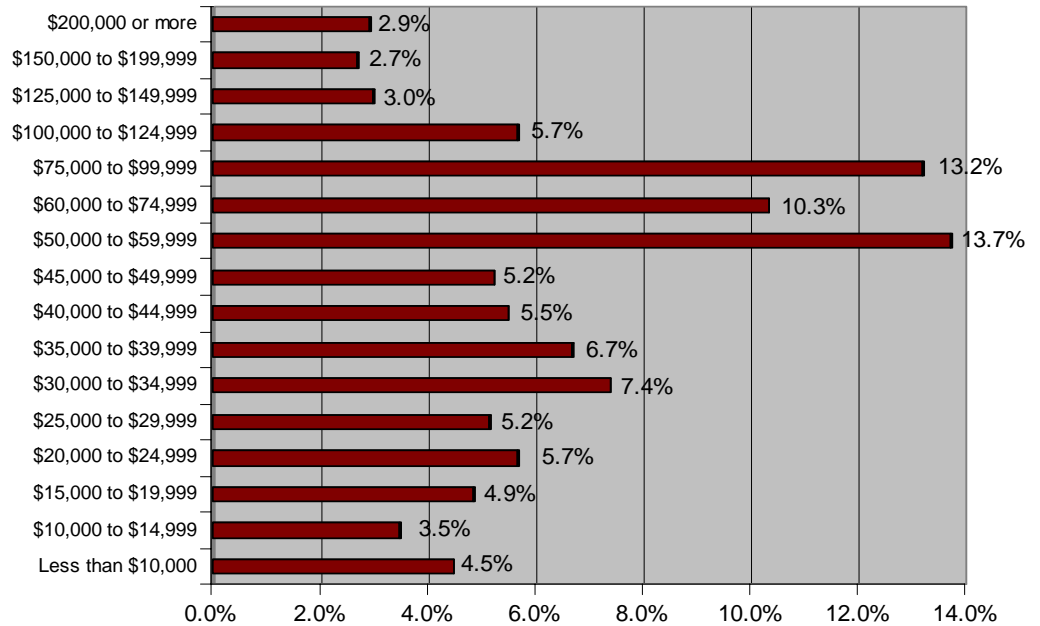
**Table 9: Median Income Comparison (1999)**

	United States	Colorado	La Plata County	City of Durango
Median family income in 1999	\$ 50,046	\$ 55,883	\$ 50,446	\$ 50,814
Median household income in 1999	\$ 41,994	\$ 47,203	\$ 40,159	\$ 34,892

Source: U.S. Census

The income distribution for families is shown in **Figure 9**, and the income distribution for households is shown in **Figure 10**. Of 2,678 total families in Durango, the largest group (13.7%) made between \$50,000 and \$59,999 in 1999. Of 5,538 total households in Durango, the largest group, 11.7% made less than \$10,000.

**Figure 9: Median Family Income (1999)**

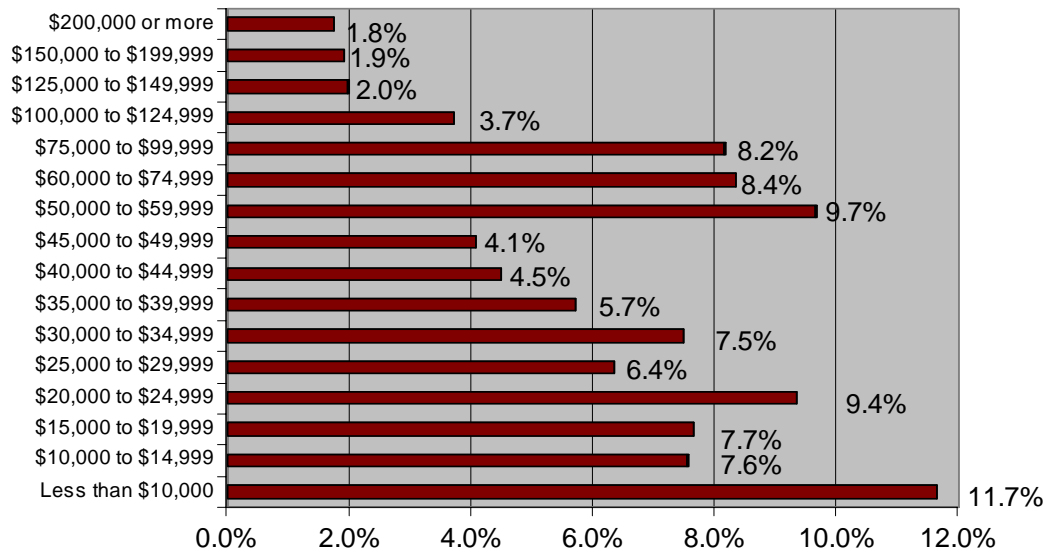


Source: U.S. Census

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The poverty rate in Durango in 1999 was 4.8% higher than the national rate.

**Figure 10: Median Household Income (1999)**



Source: U.S. Census

**Poverty**

For the purposes of the US Census, poverty levels are determined by a variety of factors. As a point of comparison, a family including two adults and two children with an annual household income of less than \$16,895 would be below the poverty line, as of 1999. Of the City's total population, 17.2% were below the poverty line in 1999, an increase from the 1990 poverty level of 16.4% for the City. The national poverty rate in 1999 was just 12.4% of all families.

The majority of those in poverty (81.5%) were working aged, between 18 and 64 years of age. The largest age group in poverty were between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, signaling limited employment opportunities for college aged workers. Of children under the age of 17, 12.9% lived in poverty in 1999, while 5.6% of retirement aged people lived in poverty.

**Housing Tenure**

Homeownership rates often are used to measure prosperity and neighborhood stability. Homeownership also builds personal stability and long-term financial security, and it gives a family a sense of belonging and commitment to their neighborhood and larger community.

While the County, state and nation are very similar in housing tenure statistics, with 66-68% of their respective total populations renting their homes, and 32-34% owning their own homes, Durango boasts much higher home ownership rates. In Durango, the population is almost evenly split, with 52% of households renting a home, 48% owning their home.

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The median house price in La Plata County increased by more than 63% during the 1990s, compared to a 56% increase in median family income.

### Income & Housing Costs

#### Durango

Due to the high percentage of household income that goes to pay gross rent (including utilities) and mortgage costs for those living in Durango, housing is considered to be at a level that is unaffordable for median income households. It takes 26% of the monthly median income to cover the monthly mortgage costs of the median home, while it is recommended that only 25% of a household's income be necessary to make a monthly mortgage payment, indicating that the median home in Durango not affordable for the median income household.

The median gross rent in Durango was \$682 per month in 2000, which was higher than in the County, state and nation. Rent, including utilities, comprised 30% of household income for the median household that rented their home in 2000. This is higher than the national average of 25.5%, and indicates that attaining adequate, affordable housing is an issue for Durango residents earning the median income.

Of those owning their home with mortgage costs in the City, 43% pay more than 25% of their household income on their mortgage, while only 38% of homeowners nationwide pay more than 25% of their incomes on housing.

#### La Plata County

Owner-occupied housing in the County is less affordable than it was in 1989. The median home price in La Plata County was \$183,900 in 1999, up more than 63% from 1990. The median monthly mortgage cost for homeowners increased by almost 3.5% more than the increase in household median income.

The nation-wide increase in median home prices for new and existing homes is partially attributable to the availability of low interest rate loans, which spurred increasing rates of homeownership. The housing affordability index, based on the median income and home price for the county suggests that that median income family cannot afford the median house in the County<sup>2</sup>. In fact, the median income family would need a 3% increase in income to afford to purchase house, while the median household would need a 29% increase in income to afford a home purchase.

### Migration

The population has undergone significant turnover in the past decade, illustrated in **Table 10**. In 2000, only 39% of people living in Durango lived in the same house as in 1995, meaning that 61% of Durango residents moved between 1995 and 2000. Of those moving into Durango during that time period, only 22% were from with La Plata County, and an additional 13% were from within the state. The majority of the remainder, or 24%, were from states other than Colorado.

<sup>2</sup> Source: The Sonoran Institute

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As Durango has a high percentage of college-aged residents, part of the turnover in population is due to incoming and graduating college students moving in and out of the community.

**Table 10: In Migration in Durango (1995-2000)**

<b>Durango - In Migration (1995-2000)</b>		
Same house in 1995	5,307	39%
Different house in 1995:	8,146	61%
In United States in 1995:	7,930	59%
Same county	2,960	22%
Different county:	4,970	37%
Same state	1,765	13%
Different state:	3,205	24%
Northeast	281	2%
Midwest	548	4%
South	967	7%
West	1,409	10%
In Puerto Rico in 1995:	0	0%
Elsewhere in 1995:	216	2%
U.S. Island Areas	0	0%
Foreign country or at sea	216	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,453</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: U.S. Census*

