

HEADS UP

UPDATES AND ISSUES

DIVERSITY AND
CIVIL RIGHTS

UtahState
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COOPERATIVE
extension

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Diversity: The Opportunities Await Us!

Have you noticed that the proportion of ethnic minorities in Utah is increasing? Although in Utah the statistics are not approaching levels of the “majority-minority” status that this nation will reach by 2042. Utah has historically ranked among the top states with a dominant white population at 35th. Today, non-white population growth is contributing to a measure of diversity, providing Extension with opportunities to build successful productive communities throughout the Beehive state.

Utah is slowly beginning to look more and more like the nation as a whole. As of 2005, nearly 8% of Utah’s population was foreign-born-ranking Utah as 21st in the nation. Two-thirds of Utah’s minorities are Latino, a group whose numbers swelled by 105,000 between 2000 and 2007 to reach a statewide population of more than 305,500. By 2010 minority groups will make up 20% of Utah’s population. San Juan County and Salt Lake County have already surpassed this mark with 60% and 23.5% of the population, respectively and are increasingly ethnically diverse. Diversity in Utah’s population is here to stay and will increase significantly in the foreseeable future!

So what does this mean for Utah State University Cooperative Extension?

- These ethnic populations will not contribute to the aging of our society since birth rates among immigrants are nearly 40% higher than the overall U.S. population.

Targeted programs and services for children and youth will be needed.

- Embracing cultural diversity in Utah is an essential part of a healthy statewide economy.

Developing an understanding and sensitivity for a multiplicity of cultures will be needed if Extension is to be successful in serving these populations.

- A significant portion of Utah’s minority population falls in the prime working age between 25-39, according to estimates of age and race from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Expanded workforce development will meet critical needs with these populations.

- English language ability is correlated with educational attainment among immigrant populations.

Extension has a great opportunity to work with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) participants by assisting them in developing language skills that will open doors to higher education.

"Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution."