Understanding California's Demographic Shifts

Introduction

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Introduction

The California State Library has an expressed goal of adopting innovative methods for meeting the knowledge and information needs of a diverse population. Understanding California's changing demographics will be critical for effectively delivering innovative library services and for accomplishing the State Library's strategic goals. In particular, understanding demographic changes will enable the California State Library to better meet the needs of diverse constituents, to reach more Californians, and to leverage scarce resources.

This project, "Understanding California's Demographic Shifts," was developed to facilitate greater understanding of how demographic characteristics differ across the state and to provide local demographic information so that library managers can adapt their practices and strategies to the changing demographics of their particular communities.

To do this, the Stanford Center on Longevity developed Demographic Profiles for the 183 library jurisdictions in the state. The profiles include charts and data tables covering key demographic variables, including population growth, age structure, racial and ethnic mix, household type, income, and educational attainment. To facilitate comparative analysis and identification of patterns across the state, we used a standard template for all the jurisdictions. Each profile incorporates data from the 2010 Census to illustrate the ten-year population shifts, and data from the five-year American Community Survey, 2005-09, for other variables, such as education, income, and immigration. By focusing specifically on library jurisdictions, most of which coincide with city or county boundaries, we were able to illustrate demographic characteristics that are not always evident when looking at larger regions.

The following sections of the report are designed to help the library managers identify distinctive demographic shifts and characteristics:

- The "California Demographic Overview" introduces the project and provides a broad context for understanding the library jurisdiction profiles.

- The overview is followed by a section called "Drawing Implications from the Demographics." This series of questions was designed to help library managers understand the implications of the demographics of their local communities and to help guide development of library services and strategies that best reflect key changes in the local population.

- Next are "Demographic Profiles" for the 183 library jurisdictions. These are complemented by a series of reference profiles for the component cities of the multi-city jurisdictions and for the counties that have multiple jurisdictions.

- The final section, "Library Jurisdiction Rankings on Key Demographic Indicators," comprises a set of tables that rank the 183 library jurisdictions on key variables included in the profiles. These rankings provide a valuable perspective on the enormous demographic variation across the state and will allow library managers to identify other jurisdictions with similar characteristics.