

New Jersey: A Statewide View of Diversity

A Report on the Leadership Conference on Diversity Issues Impacting New Jersey



Findings of the Statewide Survey of New Jersey Residents' Attitudes About Race and Inter-group Relations

Presenting Partners: American Conference on Diversity
Initiative for Regional and Community Transformation • Leadership New Jersey
New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute

September 20, 2007

INTRODUCTION

New Jersey is recognized as the most racially and ethnically diverse state in the nation. But what are the implications of that distinction to the state's residents and institutions? What challenges and opportunities does the state face in creating inclusive communities, a productive workforce, a responsive educational system, bias-free institutions and a respectful society?

On Thursday, September 20, 2007, the American Conference on Diversity and its presenting partners – the Initiative for Regional and Community Transformation, Leadership New Jersey and the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute – issued results of the 2007 survey they commissioned, *New Jersey: A Statewide View of Diversity*. The survey, made possible by corporate and foundation funding, was conducted by the Edward J. Bloustein Center for Survey Research at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

More than 150 community, civic, religious, educational and healthcare leaders from around the state attended the conference to hear the survey results and discuss their implications.

THE CONFERENCE



Conference partners and morning panel members: (Standing: Tim Evans, Daniel Santo Pietro, Henry Coleman, Ph.D., Roland Anglin, Ph.D., Cliff Zukin, Ph.D. and David Matos; Seated: Mary Regina Guidette, Ed.D., Nina Mitchell Wells, Esq., Sherine El-Abd, Diane Schwartz, Seema Singh, Esq.).

New Jersey at a Glance

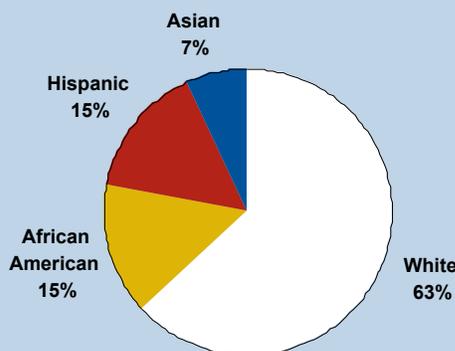


Figure 1. Percentage of New Jersey residents and their racial characteristics.

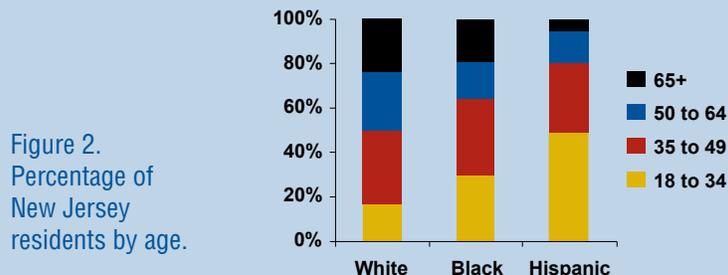


Figure 2. Percentage of New Jersey residents by age.

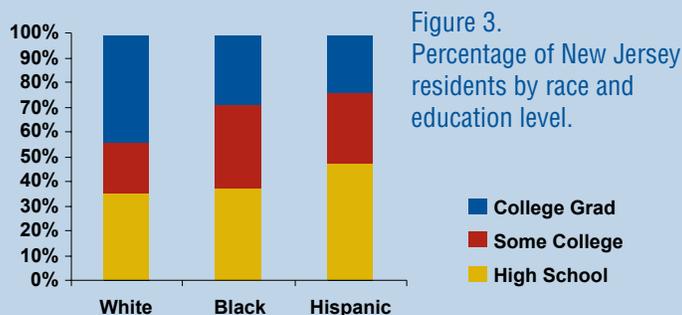


Figure 3. Percentage of New Jersey residents by race and education level.

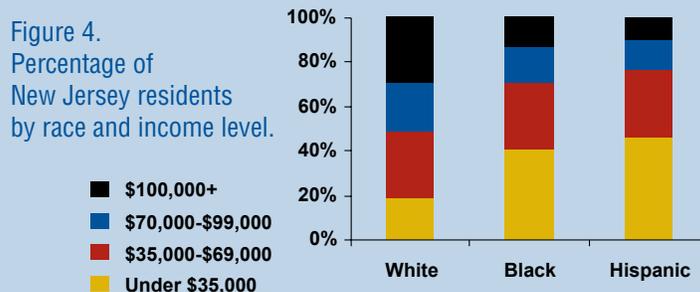


Figure 4. Percentage of New Jersey residents by race and income level.



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JON S. CORZINE
GOVERNOR

September 20, 2007

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to extend warm greetings to the American Conference on Diversity and everyone in attendance for the statewide meeting.

New Jersey is rich in its ethnic diversity – some say it is our greatest strength. As Governor, I am proud of the significant achievements that our diverse population delivers to the community, making important contributions to the social, cultural and economic fabric of the Garden State. I am pleased to recognize organizations that celebrate the varied cultures that inhabit this great state.

Today's conference serves as an opportunity to pay tribute to organizations and individuals who have made exceptional cultural or human development contributions to the community. New Jersey is truly fortunate to benefit from the dedication of civic leaders like you. Through participation in this conference, we can work to develop our next generation of leaders, enhance our individual workplaces, and create inclusive communities.

I commend Secretary Wells for her noble leadership in advancing the goals and achievements of our diverse society. I also recognize our featured speakers: Dr. Cliff Zukin, and Dr. James Hughes. Thank you for inspiring us through your teachings.

Best wishes for a most joyous and memorable conference. It is only through the concern and commitment of individuals such as yourselves that we may hope to build a new and brighter future for all residents of New Jersey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Corzine', written in a cursive style.

JON S. CORZINE

New Jersey is among the most ethnically diverse states in the nation—and it is becoming increasingly diverse. Forecasts are that by the year 2030, New Jersey will be comprised of “a majority of minorities.”

The state’s current racial/ethnic makeup is comprised of 63 percent Whites, just fewer than 15 percent of both African Americans and Hispanics, and 7 percent of Asians. According to the U.S. Census, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority population in the nation, and by the year 2050, nearly one in four people in the U.S. will be Hispanic. Since the last major study conducted in 1996 (“Taking New Jersey’s Pulse”),* there has been both a relative decline in the White population and growth in the number of Hispanics and Asians.

An Historic Perspective

New Jersey has always been comprised of a diverse population. Even going as far back as the American Revolution, as a port of entry to this country, the state has always attracted immigrants, though the cultural make-up of the groups has changed. The first wave, in the nation’s early days prior to the Civil War, included the English, Dutch, Scots, Irish, Swedes, Germans and other Western Europeans.

After 1880 and into the early 20th century, New Jersey served as the gateway for the next great wave of immigration – the Italians, Greeks and Eastern Europeans, including many displaced persons following World War II and refugees fleeing Communist countries and including anti-Castro Cubans. The state was technology-driven and had a strong manufacturing economy. With the needs created by the industrial revolution, a geographic transformation took place; people moved to the urban centers, transforming them significantly, and setting the stage for further state growth and prosperity in the 20th century.



Secretary of State Nina Mitchell Wells addresses the conference

The next major wave began after the 1965 liberalization of the nation’s immigration policy and resulted in an influx of immigrants from Asia, Africa, South America, Central America and the Caribbean.

Now in the 21st century, New Jersey is again the major gateway for a new set of immigrants from European and Latino countries that assist and support our post-industrial, knowledge-based economy. Our economy, geography and demographics have been transformed, setting the stage for the balance of the 21st century.

Because of the state’s post-2002 growth deceleration, New Jersey has experienced net internal migration losses; more people are

moving out of the state than into it—a trend that is expected to continue according to James W. Hughes, Ph.D., Dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Yet the state has avoided a net loss of residents because of a net increase in immigration. The White/non-Hispanic population decreased by 23 percent from 2000 to 2006, but the Hispanic/Latino population increased by 22 percent – or six times faster than the overall population and accounts for the largest share of the growth and the largest minority group, while the Asian population has increased by 36 percent, ten-times faster than the overall population growth. White/non-Hispanics will attain

minority status by 2030; Hispanics will be the largest minority group, while Asians supplant Blacks as the second largest minority group, with Blacks dropping to third place. The state is expected to remain more diverse and wealthier than the nation as a whole, and immigration will continue to account for the majority of population increases.

At the same time, “baby boomers” are fading in significance as the largest generation in U.S. history. By 2030, they all will be over the age of 65 and will not be major players in the workplace and general economy. Instead, the Hispanics (from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru) and Asians (from India, China, the Philippines, and South Korea) will have the most significant impact on the state’s economy.

According to Dr. Hughes, New Jersey today has a powerful economy, with 4.1 million jobs and companies. He noted that have located here because of the quality of life and highly-educated workforce. New Jersey is fifth in the number of adults with bachelor’s degree or higher and third in the number with advanced degrees, PhD. or higher.

“More people are moving out of the state than into it – a trend that is expected to continue.

Yet the state has avoided a net loss of residents because of a net increase in immigration.”

-James W. Hughes, Ph.D.,

Dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

*Taking New Jersey’s Pulse was a joint project of the Partnership for New Jersey and The National Conference. The National Conference subsequently became known as the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). The American Conference on Diversity, formerly NCCJ-NJ, is no longer affiliated in any way with NCCJ. The Partnership for New Jersey is now known as Leadership NJ.

As a result of this in-migration, diversity will continue to increase and the minority population in America, and certainly in New Jersey, will become a majority. In fact, forecasts are that by 2030 there will be no clear majority population in New Jersey. Fortunately, New Jersey is a progressive state and its leaders recognize that New Jerseyans cannot ignore the diversity of its population. And while the *New Jersey: A Statewide View of Diversity* survey revealed that some communities are still primarily comprised of a single ethnic group (especially Hispanic), it also reflected a growing understanding of people from diverse backgrounds throughout the state. Increased exposure to and acceptance of the multitude of ethnicities in the state can ultimately help break down any barriers between people that currently exist.

“THE SURVEY: NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES ABOUT RACE AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS”

Cliff Zukin, Ph.D., Professor of Public Policy at the Eagleton Institute of Politics and the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, was the principal investigator on the survey project.

A major difference between the 1996 “Taking America’s Pulse” survey and the 2007 “New Jersey Residents’ Attitudes About Race and Inter-group Relations” survey is that the 1996 questions centered around *racial* attitudes, not attitudes towards *diversity* and, for example, immigration. But times – and issues – have changed. Nevertheless, some of the same questions were asked in the 2007 survey for comparisons over the 11-year period.



Survey Chief Investigator Cliff Zukin, Ph.D. presents the survey results

The major topics in the 2007 survey – some 90 questions, taking just over 20 minutes per interview – looked at quality of life, education, health care, friendship, race relations, racial and ethnic tension, discrimination, attitudes toward government/public policies, employment and immigration.

More than 1,200 randomly-selected adult New Jersey residents were interviewed over the telephone. Due to the survey focus on racial and ethnic issues, over-samples of African American and Hispanics were randomly selected. Respondents were given the option of taking the interview in either English or Spanish. Just fewer than 10 percent were completed in Spanish – 40 percent of the Hispanic sample. Not enough Asians were interviewed to provide by-group breakouts of their responses. With the growing Asian population in the state, however, an over-sampling should be included in future surveys.

“New Jersey is a microcosm of the nation, though because of our diversity, wherever the country is going, we’ll get there first.”

- Cliff Zukin, Ph.D.,

Professor of Public Policy at the Eagleton Institute of Politics and the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

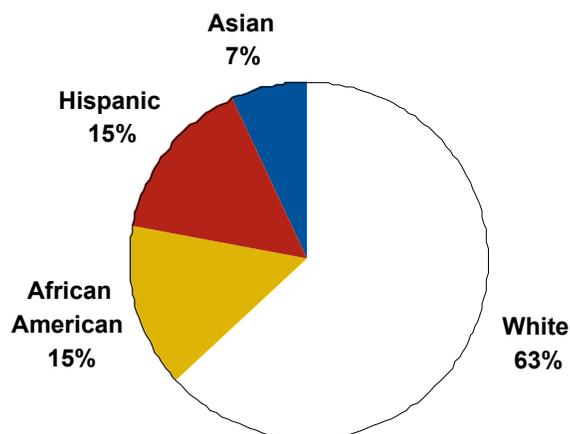
The margin of error for the 1,279 interviewees is 2.8 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. The margin of error for the 569 White residents is 4.2 percentage points; for the over-samples of African American and Hispanic residents, the margin of error is 5.5 percentage points.

More than a third of the state’s population is non-White, with Blacks and Hispanics each representing about 15 percent of the public. Asians comprise a growing minority group in the state and are currently 7 percent of the population. Looked at another way, about 63 percent of New Jerseyans today are White (down from 70 percent in 1997), 16 percent are Hispanic (up from 10 percent in 1996) and 13 percent are African American (up from 10 percent in 1996). Asians account for 7 percent of the state’s population today (up from 4.5 percent in 1996).

“To the extent to which there is change in our communities, this shows that people are *getting it!*” “As we acknowledge our changing cultural demographics, our communities will continue to become more diverse,” according to Dr. Zukin.

New Jersey at a Glance

Percentage of New Jersey residents and their racial characteristics.



New Jersey: A Statewide View of Diversity Survey Highlights

Inter-group Relations

Our Communities are changing and more say it is good than bad that our communities have seen a changing racial/ethnic makeup. We have a lot of inter-racial and inter-ethnic contact with our fellow citizens: 76 percent report having a close friend of a different race or ethnicity.

Attitudes toward Minorities

The overall number of New Jersey residents rating the increase in minorities in their town or city as a “good thing” has increased from 13% in 1996 to 20% in 2007. While perceptions of the number of minorities in New Jersey have not changed over the past decade, attitudes toward the increasing number of minorities have changed. The majority of New Jersey residents feel that the increasing number of minorities in their town or city makes no difference, a finding that is unchanged from 1996 (65% in 1996 and 63% in 2007).



Conference Attendees fill the room

Discrimination

The percentage of New Jerseyans who think racial and ethnic discrimination in New Jersey is a problem has declined since 1996. Only 14% of New Jersey residents now say discrimination in New Jersey is a big problem, compared to 21% who said it was a big problem in 1996. However, there are differences between racial groups on the issue of discrimination in 2007 that should be noted. Blacks and Hispanics remain far more likely than Whites to say that discrimination is a big problem in New Jersey (26%, 21%, and 10%, respectively). Although, when asked if this discrimination personally bothers them, the majority of New Jersey residents (58% overall) said that the discrimination does not bother them at all, which includes 61% of Whites, 52% of Blacks, and 44% of Hispanics.

Groups Discriminated Against

To examine the issue of discrimination more closely, in 1996 and 2007, New Jersey residents were asked to note if they felt a number of minority groups (that historically face a high level of discrimination) were discriminated against or not in New Jersey. New Jersey residents think several groups face “a lot” of discrimination in the state: 24% said Muslims face a lot of discrimination followed by 18% who felt Gays and Lesbians face a lot of discrimination; 18% said Blacks face a lot of discrimination 14% identifying Hispanics, 8% women and 3% Asians as facing a lot of discrimination.

Multiculturalism

More New Jerseyans support multiculturalism in 2007 than in 1996 (54% compared to 43%, respectively), which is the idea that it is important for people of different racial and ethnic groups in New Jersey to live, work, and go to school together.

Race and Ethnicity in the Workplace

Of those residents employed in 2007, 55% say that there is a mixture of racial and ethnic groups at their workplace. White residents are more likely than Blacks and Hispanics to report working in an integrated setting (57%, 51%, and 49% respectively).

Immigration has fueled population growth among Hispanics and Asians and a more prominent foreign-born citizenry is no doubt changing attitudes (and eventually public policy), for better or worse, on a range of issues where race and ethnicity intersect.

-New Jersey:
A Statewide View of Diversity.

Government and Diversity

Government policies and regulations have been implemented in order to alleviate institutional racism in housing, education and the workplace. While most state residents support such measures, New Jerseyans are less favorable of more overt efforts at “leveling the playing field,” namely affirmative action and preferential hiring, as measures to ensure equal opportunity.

In 2007, diversity is not limited to race and ethnicity exclusively, with about 19% of the state’s documented residents coming into the US from other countries. Immigration has fueled population growth among Hispanics and Asians and a more prominent foreign-born citizenry is no doubt changing attitudes (and eventually public policy), for better or worse, on a range of issues where race and ethnicity intersect.

Immigration

According to the US Census Bureau’s 2005 American Community Survey, about 19% of New Jersey’s population is comprised of foreign-born immigrants, which is about seven percentage points higher than the national average. As one-in-five state residents were born outside of the US, citizenship status and origin presents unique, inherent challenges for New Jersey, which is home to sizeable Hispanic (15%) and Asian (7%) populations. With Hispanics and Asians as the primary ethnic groups driving the increase in the overall foreign-born population, it is difficult to argue that New Jersey’s immigrants do not contribute to the state’s diversity, cultural landscape and ethnic character. Generally, New Jerseyans view immigrants far more favorably than do people in the U.S. as a whole. Despite the fact that it is difficult to measure the number of undocumented immigrants in New Jersey, overall, New Jerseyans’ are equally divided when asked if they think illegal immigration is a problem in the state.

New Jersey has more immigrants than the country as a whole and New Jerseyans feel better about the contribution of immigrants than is true in the U.S.

-New Jersey:
A Statewide View of Diversity.

Nationwide, a bare majority feel that immigrants are more of a burden than strengthen the country (52 to 41 percent). In New Jersey, however, 57 percent believe that immigrants are an asset, while just 29 percent describe them as a burden. Still, some 40 percent believe undocumented immigrants are a major problem, while 42 percent feel this is a minor problem, and nine percent conclude it is not a problem at all. One-fifth of all New Jerseyans believe that most immigrants are here legally; roughly the same number believe most are here illegally, leaving the bulk to say that “some” are here illegally. The state is also divided on whether undocumented immigrants should get driving privileges, with 42 percent of Whites, 56 percent of Blacks, and 78 percent of Hispanics believing they should.

THE PANEL DISCUSSION

A panel discussion on the survey results followed, moderated by Seema M. Singh, Esq., President of the Asian Indian Chamber of Commerce. Content summaries follow. Views expressed the speakers’ expertise and opinions. Discussion Panelists were:

Sherine El-Abd, former NJ Civil Rights Commissioner and member of the Board of Governors of the Arab American Institute

Tim Evans, Research Director, NJ Future

Mary Regina Guidette, Ed.D., Superintendent, Middlesex County Schools (Ret.)

David Matos, Jr., Founder and President, The Matos Group

Daniel Santo Pietro, Executive Director, Hispanic Directors Association of NJ

Nina Mitchell Wells, Secretary of State, State of New Jersey



Seema M. Singh, Esq. moderates the panel discussion

Discussion Point: Quality of Life

Most of the respondents to the *New Jersey: A Statewide View of Diversity* survey rated New Jersey as a good or excellent place to live, with Whites the most positive, Hispanics close behind, and Blacks the least positive. Further, 90 percent of Whites who live in predominantly White neighborhoods are more likely to find their town/city an excellent or good place to live, while fewer find more racially diverse communities as good places to live. Conversely, 54 percent of Blacks who live in predominantly Black communities say their town/city is a fair or poor place to live. Hispanics/Latinos rated their town/city positively regardless of the racial diversity of the area. Life in New Jersey might be improved for all people by promoting diversification.

At the conference during which the survey results were reported, housing patterns and personal economic situations were cited as possible reasons for the disparities among racial groups in their attitudes towards living in New Jersey. Improved housing in the more urban areas, for example, could encourage diversity in

these communities while offering the added benefit of improving the schools – an amenity that not only would help stem “White flight” from urban areas, but also would attract young, middle class families, as well as “baby boomers” interested in moving back to vibrant urban communities because they are great places in which to live.

Greater diversity in urban schools, a result of more attractive housing opportunities for those of all economic levels (and therefore for those who have attained all educational levels), could lead naturally to de facto integrated schools.

Of course, the chicken-and-egg question of “Which comes first: the housing to improve the schools or the schools to improve the housing?” is a natural one to ask. In fact, they need to be addressed hand-in-hand, as state planning focuses on redeveloping the urban centers as preferable to rural sprawl and a necessity, considering New Jersey’s limited buildable land, the desire to maintain green space in the state and the high cost of suburban and infrastructure development.

Another suggested means to improving the quality of life for all New Jerseyans might be to increase the number of regional high schools, where the student populations come from a variety of communities and therefore are more diverse than found in a high school comprised of students from a single community. Again, this “community” would naturally promote interaction among students from all backgrounds, enhancing their understanding and acceptance of all their neighbors.

Wherever these schools are located, whether in urban or suburban settings, it was suggested that both parents and educators must take a proactive role in monitoring the populations in the special education, gifted and talented, advanced placement and honors classes, as these groups are often – whether intentionally or not – a form of discrimination that seldom is acknowledged or discussed.

Discussion Point: Housing

The survey confirmed that Whites live primarily in growing or older towns and suburbs, with very few living in urban areas. Blacks are more likely than Hispanics to live in urban centers, but a significant proportion of Blacks live in suburban communities, especially older towns and suburbs. Hispanics are more concentrated in urban communities, though most live outside of urban centers.

Despite New Jersey’s high cost of living and high property taxes, state residents are mostly satisfied with their current housing. On average, those who own their homes are 15 percentage points more likely than those who rent to be satisfied with their current housing (93% for homeowners vs. 77% for renters). Home ownership tends to be a determining factor in the degree to which New Jerseyans are satisfied with their housing, as Blacks and Hispanics, who are more apt to rent their residence are less satisfied. Higher ratings of satisfaction with housing also were given by those living in suburban communities, with higher income levels and more education.

A regionalized approach to tax base sharing was suggested as a strategy to improve the balance between affordable housing, sprawl and quality of life issues in the state. Because of today’s reliance on property taxes to pay for school construction and operation, towns shy away from building housing that will increase the number of school children. Consequently, there is a shortage of housing overall. This results in enabling the highest income earners to select where they want to live, the next level of wage earners to get the “leftover” or next level of housing and so on, with the lowest income earners squeezed out entirely or forced into marginal housing. A regional tax base system would effect more sharing of infrastructure costs and therefore help blur the lines of stratification.

Additionally, more market rate housing in urban areas not only would help to promote diversity, but also would help improve the quality of urban schools. Schools as well as attractive affordable housing are major factors in determining where people live. So, which comes first – the housing or the schools – is a challenging question. But as New Jersey focuses redevelopment in its urban centers, and residents become more enamored of living in vibrant urban centers, it becomes a question that is much easier to answer and address.



Diane Schwartz welcomes attendees

Discussion Point: Education

In response to the survey, Whites were the most positive in their assessment of the local schools. Hispanics also had favorable opinions of their schools, while Blacks were evenly divided on school performance.

Using the property tax as a base for school funding, as has been the practice in New Jersey since the 1950s, only exacerbates the quality spread between urban and suburban schools. While the Abbott districts, established to close the financial gap between the urban poor and disadvantaged schools and the suburban rich and advantaged schools, do help create parity among districts, they don't address the de facto segregation in the respective districts and the difference in the quality of education students receive in urban versus suburban schools.

While core curriculum standards are now in place in an attempt to ensure that all students have the same opportunities and benefits, the schools can't achieve these objectives alone. They need the support of parents, as well as public and private institutions. New Brunswick, for example, is a model of public and private partnerships on behalf of local education: Johnson & Johnson helps support New Brunswick Tomorrow, which works with the schools, and The George Street Playhouse stages tolerance and diversity programs for students. Until there is true parity between urban and suburban schools – perhaps affected through changed housing patterns – increased educational support is needed to close the achievement gap for all children.

Discussion Point: Discrimination

In both the 1996 and 2007 surveys, New Jersey residents were asked whether they felt a number of minority groups that historically have faced a high level of discrimination were discriminated against in New Jersey. Overall, more New Jerseyans feel that Muslims are being discriminated against a lot compared to other groups – a reaction attributed to 9/11.

Blacks are still more likely than Hispanics or Whites to feel they are discriminated against. Compared any other minority groups, opinions have changed the most since 1996 regarding discrimination against gays and lesbians in New Jersey. Far fewer New Jerseyans today say gays and lesbians are discriminated against in the state than they did in 1996. This change is reflected in the recent policy passed in New Jersey that recognizes same-sex couple civil unions.

As discrimination is largely a result of ignorance, education and increased visibility and socialization among groups can help minimize, if not eliminate discrimination. Recommended efforts to increase understanding and acceptance might include teaching about cultures in the schools, enhanced integration of the various cultures into community and school activities, and more proactive involvement by members of the various racial, ethnic and religious groups.

New Jersey ranks third among the states in the number of foreign born residents at 21% vs. 12.5% nationally. This demographic diversity gives the state an advantage in the global marketplace.

-James W. Hughes, Ph.D.,

Dean of Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Discussion Point: Immigration

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey, about 19 percent of New Jersey's population is comprised of foreign-born immigrants – about seven percentage points higher than the national average. At the state level, New Jerseyans believe immigrants are an asset to the Garden State and are more supportive of measures to help undocumented immigrants obtain legal status than the general public on the national level. Yet reflecting the national average, 7 in 10 New Jerseyans, including majorities among all racial groups, say we should restrict and control people coming into the country more than we do now.

While primarily a national homeland security and border control issue, addressing the needs of the foreign born is most heavily felt on the local level and might best be addressed by analyzing and meeting local needs, with attention to providing equal access for all.

“Plan We Must – A Snapshot of New Jersey's Future”

The luncheon keynote address, “Plan We Must – A Snapshot of New Jersey's Future”, was presented by James W. Hughes, Ph.D., Dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.



James W. Hughes, Ph. D. presents a demographic view of New Jersey's Future

With the survey results now in hand, where do we go from here? Dr. James Hughes, recognized as the state's leading demographic analyst and economic trendsetter, says we can't stand still...for a number of key demographic reasons. New Jersey has the second highest median income in the country which is a third higher than the U.S. average. New Jersey also has the highest housing costs in the nation – 52 percent higher than the national average. New Jersey ranks third among the states in the number of foreign born residents at 21% vs. 12.5% nationally. This demographic diversity gives the state an advantage in the global marketplace. New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation, with 1,176 people per square mile. The state is even more densely populated than Japan (835 people per square mile) or India (914 people per square mile).

In the 1920s New Jersey was the gateway for European immigration. Today, powerful industries and information age economy are driving the second great wave of immigration from Latin America.

In all aspects, our economy, geography and demography are changing. Post 2000, demographics show a 3.7% growth rate in New Jersey, half the U.S. rate. Dr. Hughes predicts that New Jersey will experience a population decline in 2008.

Immigration has helped to sustain our population growth in the current decade and accounts for all of our growth in the last 10 years. The growth rate of Asians in New Jersey is 36% and of Hispanics is 22%. According to Dr. Hughes, our demographic future will be defined by our immigration. New Jersey will be far more affluent and diverse than the U.S. in the future.

“Moving Forward: Charting the Course for a Positive Future”

Following lunch, the attendees separated into four breakout sessions that addressed issues of particular interest to them: Education, Immigration, Public Policy and Housing. Panelists and a facilitator led the discussion with active audience participation. The objective was to come away with ideas for “Moving Forward: Charting the Course for a Positive Future,” considering the survey results. The summaries below reflect the individual panel and audience participants’ discussion and suggestions.

Themes

During the Breakout Sessions, several thoughts and discussion areas became recurrent themes.

- The need for of a comprehensive policy (either national or state) on key issues discussed at the conference, including housing, immigration, and education;
- The need for clear information on key issues impacting our diverse state;
- Home Rule is a detriment to consistent and meaningful state policies on key issues;
- There is a strong need for dialogue and conversation among all groups (racial, cultural, ethnic and religious) on key issues.

Education

Mary Regina Guidette, Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools (Ret.)

Gloria Hancock, Chief School Administrator, LEAP Academy University Charter School, Camden

Khyati Joshi, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Education, Fairleigh Dickinson University

Facilitator: Linda Tondow, Vice President & Associate Executive Director, American Conference on Diversity

There is no question that the state's diversity has a tremendous impact on education. The quality of education in urban areas is significantly affected by housing patterns – and conversely, the state's housing patterns affect the quality of education. The two areas should be addressed hand-in-glove.

Difficult as it might be, teachers can be hired and trained who reflect and/or can be sensitive to linguistic, religious and cultural needs and differences. National standards can be followed and applied regionally. Dialogues with parents and parental involvement in schools should be ongoing – and encouraged especially if the parents are from a culture where the educational system is accepted without question or comment.

Parents who might not be aware of resources available to them should be enlightened – whether these are educational resources or financial resources when their children are ready to move beyond the local school system.

Immigration

Ronald Chen, Esq., NJ Public Advocate and Chair, Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Immigration

William Fellenberg, Executive Director, International Institute of NJ

Daniel Santo Pietro, Executive Director, Hispanic Directors Association of NJ

Facilitator: Michael Buensuceso, Vice President-Programs, American Conference on Diversity



Panelists for the Immigration Breakout Session: William Fellenberg, Ronald Chen, Esq. and Daniel Santo Pietro

While immigration is largely a national issue, local communities and residents are most affected when it comes to such issues as health (both physical and mental); employment (e.g., workers' rights, policies regarding undocumented employees); resources for children of immigrants (e.g., educational, outreach counseling, mentoring, training and financial); distorted and misinformation regarding immigrants and immigration; paths to citizenship; anti-immigrant sentiment; and organizations taking advantage of immigrants.

Addressing immigration on the local level should include a commitment to ensuring that communities can be safe for immigrant populations. Further, immigrants' most urgent needs (e.g., health care, employment, and schooling) must be identified and addressed. Government-led initiatives should combat anti-immigrant sentiment and address misinformation in the public realm related to immigrants and immigrant issues, and local policies should clearly state – and immigrant communities should be clearly informed – that public institutions (and their representatives, whether employees or volunteers) cannot demand that individuals reveal their documented status in order to be granted public services.

Both immigrants and those working in law enforcement and social service should be educated about amnesty policies for undocumented immigrants who are victims of or witnesses to crime. Support services for victims of spousal abuse and outreach and counseling for perpetrators whose actions may have been sanctioned within their native countries must become available and actively promoted.

Public Policy

Roland Anglin, Ph.D., *Executive Director, Initiative for Regional & Community Transformation at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

David Matos, Jr., *Founder & President, The Matos Group*

Facilitator: Henry Coleman, Ph.D., *Interim Executive Director, NJ Public Policy Research Institute and Professor, Public Policy, The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

Public policy, formal rules that direct daily governance on the local, county, state and national levels and which can be changed, and diversity converge in such areas as housing, segregation, immigration, schools and politics. As “diversity” is a broad concept, perceived differently by each person based on his or her own background and experiences, when it comes to public policy issues, open discussions to learn all points of view should be encouraged to effect the best decisions, environments and communities for everyone.



The Education Breakout Session in progress

Public policies should be established based on an individual community's diversity and implemented to ensure equality in housing, health services and outcomes, education and senior services, as well as to maintain and maximize a community's competitiveness, to promote an efficient political culture, to meet changing community needs and to create a vision for the community's future.

Public policy might be most effectively developed by first identifying and developing a clear understanding of “perceptions” vs. “reality”. Promoting diversity in schools, perhaps through regionalization, and focusing on educational outputs as well as inputs, and developing a comprehensive housing strategy that may involve providing assistance with home ownership and promoting integration (i.e., mixed-income housing) are key areas for every community to consider.

Housing

Dianne Brake, *President, PlanSmart NJ*

Barbara Heisler Williams, *Executive Director, Fund for an OPEN Society*

Leonard Robbins, *Housing Development Specialist, Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey*

Facilitator: Thomas Dallesio, *Executive Director, Leadership New Jersey*

Especially with today's global economy, which impacts virtually every business, even on a local level, everyone benefits by having strong, diverse and integrated communities – towns and developments that welcome people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, disabilities and sexual orientations. With limited open land left in New Jersey to develop new, “all-inclusive” communities, it is suggested that we need to plan how we will use the land we have – whether through development or redevelopment – to the betterment of all by emphasizing both diversity and integration. Unfortunately, few communities can claim to be doing either.

First, the communities that are – and will continue to be – considered the most attractive for housing are those that offer economic opportunities and job growth. They must be safe, provide a solid education in their schools and should be transit friendly, facilitating movement in our most congested of states.

As they offer a range of job opportunities, they need to meet the range of housing options for those of all job levels and skills – from teachers and municipal employees to entrepreneurs and service workers to corporate executives and professionals. Thus, market rate (and even luxury) housing must be promoted in metropolitan areas and increased density and affordable housing in the suburbs. A “fix-it-first” strategy for developers to invest in redeveloping the metropolitan areas before any public funding is provided for development of open space or in the suburbs should be encouraged.

Regional planning at the community level can help achieve these objectives. However, with New Jersey’s strong tradition of Home Rule, this is not an easy task. Local government officials, across community lines, must be willing and committed to plan on a truly regional basis, both giving and taking beyond their own municipal boundaries; New Jerseyans should demand leadership in this area from their state officials and representatives.

Moving Forward

The need for further conversation and exploration of the impact of diversity on our quality of life, workplaces, educational systems, housing and public policy became apparent to the Planning Committee. With the rapid pace of change in our state, it is believed that efforts to address many of the issues noted during the presentation of information and subsequent discussion should be considered and moved forward into the larger context of public policy. To that end, the Planning Committee will convene several focus groups of New Jersey leaders from a variety of disciplines to begin the conversation on a deeper level with an eye towards establishing a diversity initiative which can enhance our state’s community, business and civic life while positively capturing the richness and full advantages that diversity brings to our state.

New Jersey: A Statewide View of Diversity

The Survey and Leadership Conference were developed through a partnership of several New Jersey individuals and organizations.

About the Presenting Partners

The **American Conference on Diversity** is one of the state’s leading human relations organizations dedicated to promoting mutual understanding, educating leaders and instilling the value of diversity and inclusion throughout New Jersey.

The **Initiative for Regional and Community Transformation** (IRCT) is a university-based effort that assists public and private sector community leaders in framing workable policies that will bolster the political, economic, and social participation of marginalized communities within larger metropolitan economies and societies.

The **New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute** (NJPPRI) helps to promote positive outcomes and improved conditions in the African-American community by identifying, analyzing and disseminating information critical to informed public policy development in and for the African-American community in New Jersey and the region.

Leadership New Jersey expands and improves the pool of the state’s civic leaders by engaging those with successful professional lives who also are active in their communities as civic leaders. Through a year-long seminar program and graduate network, Leadership New Jersey informs these community leaders about key issues shaping the future of the state and challenges them to take on which to live and work



American Conference on Diversity™

VALUING DIVERSITY, EDUCATING LEADERS, PROMOTING RESPECT

Dear Friends,

As the most racially and ethnically diverse state in the country, New Jersey faces unique opportunities and challenges to create inclusive communities, a productive workforce, a responsive educational system, bias-free institutions and a respectful society.

The American Conference on Diversity focuses its work on valuing diversity, educating leaders and promoting respect. We do this through conferences, seminars, training and consulting in schools, workplaces and communities across New Jersey.

We are proud to have worked with a group of Presenting Partners on this statewide effort to measure the impact of diversity in our state, and to begin the conversation on a large scale as to what we know, and what needs to be done for the state to reach its potential. We can learn from the results of the survey, *New Jersey: A Statewide View of Diversity*; this conference will help to determine the next steps that we can take to harness and develop the richness of New Jersey's diversity. We believe that this significant asset for our state can and will be used to the best advantage of our residents and our civic, governmental, business and educational communities.

The project was designed to implement a statewide survey of New Jersey residents measuring many aspects of our corporate, civic and community life, and to subsequently plan concrete action steps to address improving inter-group relations.

We thank our Presenting Partners for their leadership and commitment to this effort:

Institute on Regional and Community Transformation
Leadership New Jersey
New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute.

We thank the Conference Planning Committee, which has worked to create a forum for enhanced knowledge and in-depth conversation, and the Survey Design Committee which brought expertise and insight to the development of the survey tool. The individual members of these working committees are listed below.

Roland Anglin Ph.D., Executive Director,
Initiative on Regional & Community Transformation

Henry Coleman, Ph.D., Professor of Public Policy,
Rutgers University and Interim Executive Director
New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute

Thomas Dallessio, Executive Director, Leadership New Jersey

Carmen Torres Izquierdo, Vice President, the Latino Institute

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The Matos Group

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Diane Schwartz, President & CEO,
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Seema M. Singh, Esq., President
Asian Indian Chamber of Commerce

Barbara Heisler Williams, Executive Director,
Fund for an OPEN Society

Cliff Zukin, Ph.D. Professor of Public Policy
and Senior Research Fellow, The John. J. Heldrich Center for
Workplace Development and Center for Survey Research,
The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy,
Rutgers University

We thank our collaborators and co-sponsors whose interest and commitment have enhanced the development of this project: AARP Asian Indian Chamber of Commerce, Fund for an OPEN Society, Latino Institute, New Jersey Human Relations Council, New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition, OCA- New Jersey, PlanSmart NJ, and the Puerto Rican Congress of New Jersey.

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Friends: Roche and United Water.

Their interest in improving our knowledge about key issues impacting New Jerseyans and their support of a public conversation about these important issues is to be commended.

Sincerely,


Diane Schwartz
President & CEO