**Millennial web script – 1-17**

**The Millennial generation: A demographic bridge to America’s diverse future**

The millennial generation, over 75 million strong is America’s largest—eclipsing the current size of the postwar baby boom generation. Millennials make up nearly a quarter of the total U.S. population, 30 percent of the voting age population, and almost two-fifths of the working age population.

Most notably, the millennial generation, now 44 percent minority, is the most diverse generation in American history. While its lasting legacy is yet to be determined, this generation is set to serve as a social, economic, and political bridge to chronologically successive (and increasingly) racially diverse generations.

With an emphasis on its unique racial diversity, this report examines the demographic makeup of millennials for the nation, the 100 largest metropolitan areas, and all 50 states. *Download the data appendices for metro and state data >>*

**(Graphic title edit: “Cultural generation gap: Race/ethnicity projection by ages, 2015 and 2035”)**

**CHANGE TO GRAPHIC Generation age labels**

**Top graphic**

**Post-millennials,**

**Ages 0-17**

**Millennials**

**Ages 18-34**

**Pre-millennials**

**Ages 35+**

**Bottom Graphic**

**Post-millennials,**

**Ages 0-37**

**Millennials**

**Ages 38-54**

**Pre-millennials**

**Ages 55+**

Despite today’s divisive generational politics, millennials are poised to become a demographic bridge between the largely white older generations (pre-millennials) and much more racially diverse younger generations (post-millennials). As they progress into middle age, millennials will continue to pave the way for the generations behind them as workers, consumers, and leaders in business and government in their acceptance by and participation in tomorrow’s more racially diverse America.

As the **cultural generation gap** graphic shows, while both the post-millennial and pre-millennial populations were majority white in 2015 (51.5 percent and 68.4 percent, respectively), both population groups are projected to substantially decrease their shares of white population by 2035, to 46 percent and 64.8 percent, respectively. Yet, even in 2035, the millennial generation will represent a bridge to the more racially diverse young adult population. *Read more about the cultural generation gap on page 31 >>*

**What makes millennials unique?**

And how do their characteristics vary by race/ethnicity?

**RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY**

**(HORIZONTAL GRAPHIC)**

**Graphic title should be:**

**Millennials and seniors by race ethnicity, 2015**

**Label for top bar should be Seniors (Ages 55+)**

Millennials are by far the most diverse generation when compared to older generations. Most white baby boomers and their elders were born in an era when immigration was at a historic low point and when the immigrants who did arrive in America were mostly white Europeans. Then, the nation’s much smaller minority population was composed mostly of black Americans, residing in highly segregated cities. The large waves of immigration to the U.S. in the 1980s and 1990s, especially from Latin America and Asia, coupled with the aging of the white population[[1]](#endnote-1), made millennials a more racially and ethnically diverse generation than any that preceded it. *Read more about millennials’ unique racial/ethnic diversity on page 6 >>*

**EDUCATION ATTAINMENT**

**(GRAPHIC TO THE RIGHT OF TEXT)**

**Graphic title should be**

**Education attainment of millennials, ages 25-34, by race/ethnicity, 2015**

Compared to older generations at the same relative time in young adult life, millennials have attained higher levels of education, which, for their generation more than others, is tied to higher future earnings and well-being. More than a third of all millennials ages 25-34 achieved college educations by 2015, up from less than 30 percent for comparably aged young adults in 2000 and not quite a quarter for those in 1980.

Notably, postsecondary education attainment has risen for all racial and ethnic young adult groups. There have also been positive changes in related measures such as declines in high school dropout rates and increased college enrollment for all major ethnic groups. Still, there remain sharp disparities in education attainment across groups, with Hispanic and black millennials falling behind their Asian and white counterparts. *Read more about millennials’ education attainment statistics on page 12 >>*

**HOMEOWNERSHIP**

**(GRAPHIC TO THE RIGHT OF TEXT)**

**Graphic title should be**

**Homeownership rates of millennials, ages 25-34, by race/ethnicity, 2015**

The housing bust and the Great Recession have affected millennials’ short-term, and potentially long-term, ability to buy homes. Nationally, homeownership rates have not shown long-term declines. They stayed relatively stable since the 1960s except for a housing boom from the late 1990s through 2006. The subsequent housing bust occurred just before most millennials entered the market. This tamped down their homeownership rate compared with young adults at earlier ages, as high interest rates, a reluctance to buy, and debt or low savings prompted many millennials to live with relatives or move to rental housing.

All racial groups registered recent housing-bust-related declines in homeownership, but this was especially the case for blacks who, along with many Hispanics, bore the brunt of fewer lower-cost, subprime loans amid a deficit of resources. This delay in homeownership may be robbing millennials of a head start toward a traditional means of wealth accumulation. *Read more about millennials’ homeownership statistics on page 13 >>*

**POVERTY**

**(GRAPHIC TO THE RIGHT OF TEXT)**

**Graphic title should be**

**Poverty rates of millennials, ages 25-34, by race/ethnicity, 2015**

While the economy and employment have climbed back from the worst of the recession and post-recession years, as late as 2015, millennials were more likely to be in poverty than most baby boomers and Gen Xers at similar ages.

A 2016 GenForward Survey of millennials of different racial-ethnic groups found that blacks and Hispanics, in particular, consistently report more economic vulnerability than whites or Asians.[[2]](#endnote-2) Moreover, it has been estimated that the loss of wealth resulting from the foreclosure crisis between 2007 and 2009 disproportionately affected black and Hispanic families, making them less able to provide support for their own and their children’s education and home purchases.[[3]](#endnote-3) *Read more about millennials’ poverty statistics on page 14 >>*

**MARITAL STATUS**

**(GRAPHIC TO THE RIGHT OF TEXT)**

**Graphic title should be**

**Marital status of millennials, ages 25-34, by race/ethnicity, 2015**

Millennials are slower than earlier generations to get married, have children, and leave their parents’ homes. The median age of marriage was lowest during the 1950s—at age 20 for women and 22 for men. By 2015, these rose to ages 27 and 29, respectively. Allowing longer periods for higher education and rising women’s labor force participation have pushed up the ages of marriage and childbearing over the decades. However, the Great Recession and resulting housing crash led millennials to even further delay these domestic milestones.

The broad pattern toward delay in marriage has been followed by millennials in each racial and ethnic group. Blacks continue to exhibit the lowest share of persons who are currently married—halving their share, at ages 25-34, from 47 percent in 1980 to 23 percent. Just as with the national patterns, long term shifts toward later marriage have been amplified for all groups by recent economic conditions. *Read more about millennials’ marriage statistics on page 11 >>*

**Where do millennials live?**

*(5-tabbed interactive map graphic)*

**MILLENNIALS SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION, 2015**

This interactive map presents statistics for the race/ethnicity breakdown and overall millennial population share for the nation’s 100 largest metropolitan areas. ***Note: Hover over each metro area to view relevant statistics.***

Racial and ethnic minorities make up more than half of the millennial population in 10 states, including California, Texas, Arizona, Florida, and New Jersey. In another 10 states, including New York, Illinois, and North and South Carolina, minorities comprise more than 40 percent of millennial residents. Notably, the District of Columbia is a sizeable 34.8 percent millennial.

Among metropolitan areas, the 15 with the highest shares of millennials are all in the fast-growing South and West, such as Austin, San Diego, and Los Angeles. The lowest millennial shares tend to be in Florida, such as Tampa and Miami, in the Northeast, such as Pittsburgh, and in the Midwest, such as Cleveland and Detroit.

**SHARE OF MILLENNIALS WHO ARE WHITE, 2015**

The largest white millennial settlements are in the biggest metropolitan areas—New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles—as well as Philadelphia, Boston, Dallas, and Washington, D.C.

Among the 100 largest metropolitan areas, 18 have millennial populations that are at least 60 percent white, including Seattle, Charlotte, Tampa, and Philadelphia. Only four of the largest 100 metropolitan areas house millennial populations where whites exceed 80 percent (Knoxville, Tenn.; Provo Utah; Pittsburgh; and Spokane, Wash.). Conversely, 30 are “minority white,” including Miami, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta and Chicago.

*Read more about millennials’ racial and ethnic diversity among metro areas and states on page 17 >>*

**SHARE OF MILLENNIALS WHO ARE BLACK, 2015**

In general, black millennials settle more often in Southern areas (including Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, and Miami, as well as New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.). In Atlanta, Charlotte, and Detroit, blacks are the largest minority group among millennials.

The largest black millennial settlement and young adult gain areas have a distinctly Southern bent. Atlanta ranks first in black young adult gains and second in the size of black millennial settlement. Other metropolitan areas that saw black young adult gain are Dallas, Houston, Washington, D.C., and Miami in the South, as well as New York and Philadelphia.

*Read more about millennials’ racial and ethnic diversity among metro areas and states on page 17 >>*

**SHARE OF MILLENNIALS WHO ARE HISPANIC, 2015**

New York and Los Angeles are major settlement areas for Hispanic millennials. In general, Hispanic millennials settle more often in Southern areas—Houston, Miami, and Dallas—along with Riverside, Calif., and Chicago. Additionally, New York, Los Angeles, and Houston are top gainers for Hispanic millennials.

*Read more about millennials’ racial and ethnic diversity among metro areas and states on page 17 >>*

**SHARE OF MILLENNIALS WHO ARE ASIAN, 2015**

New York and Los Angeles are major settlement areas for Asian millennials. In general, Asian millennials settle more often in the West, including in San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle, along with Chicago and Washington, D.C. Additionally, New York, Los Angeles, and Houston are top gainers for Asian millennials.

*Read more about millennials’ racial and ethnic diversity among metro areas and states on page 17 >>*

**An inclusive, diverse America**

Millennials are already making an indelible imprint on the nation as evident from the tremendous publicity they receive and the consumer base they represent. Yet, the most consequential characteristic embodied by the members of this unique generation, as the country evolves demographically, is their racial and ethnic diversity.

Despite coming of age in the midst of the Great Recession and the subsequent housing market crash, the racially and ethnically diverse millennial generation tends to be optimistic about the future. Amidst signs that the employment situation is improving, and indications that housing affordability is reviving, a majority of millennials say that they want to get married, have children, and purchase a home.[[4]](#endnote-4) Specifically, Hispanic, Asian, and black millennials are more likely than whites to say that they will do better financially than their parents and that the life of their generation will be better than that of their parents.[[5]](#endnote-5)

By example and as advocates, millennials of all racial and ethnic backgrounds can make the case that investing in a more inclusive America is essential to the nation’s economic success and will, as well, benefit older populations. As they move into middle age, millennials will represent the new face of America in business, in politics, in popular culture, and as the nation’s image to the rest of the world.

*This report draws from a variety of U.S. Census Bureau data, including the Current Population Survey, the American Community Survey, census estimates and projections, as well as historical decennial censuses. It also presents metropolitan area projections conducted by the author. Millennials are defined in this report as persons born between 1981 and 1997.*

1. William H. Frey, *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics are Remaking America*. Brookings Institution Press, 2015 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cathy J. Cohen, Matthew D. Luttig, and Jon C. Rogowski, *The Economic Lives of Millennials: GenForward June 2017 Report,* <http://genforwardsurvey.com/assets/uploads/2017/06/Millennials-Economic-Lives.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Thomas Shapiro, Tatjana Meschede, and Sam Osoro, “The Roots of the Widening Racial Wealth Gap: Explaining the Black-White Economic Divide,” Research and Policy Brief, Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Brandeis University, February 2013, <https://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/Author/shapiro-thomas-m/racialwealthgapbrief.pdf>; Rakesh Kochhar and Richard Fry, “Wealth Inequality Has Widened Along Racial and Ethnic Lines Since the End of Great Recession,” Pew Research Center, December 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/12/racial-wealth-gaps-great-recession/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Joel Kotkin and Wendell Cox, “Fading Promise: Millennial Prospects in the Golden State,” research brief, Center for Demographics & Policy, Chapman University Press: 10-12, <http://joelkotkin.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/FadingPromise_Millenial-Prospects-in-CA.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cathy J. Cohen, Matthew D. Luttig, and Jon C. Rogowski, *The Economic Lives of Millennials: GenForward June 2017 Report,* <http://genforwardsurvey.com/assets/uploads/2017/06/Millennials-Economic-Lives.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)