El Paso County is located in the south central region of Colorado. As of July 2010, the county had an estimated 627,096 residents and the population is projected to reach nearly 1 million over the next three decades (Figure 1). El Paso County is a mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities with about two-thirds (419,353) of the population residing within the city of Colorado Springs. The variation in population density throughout the county is demonstrated in Figure 2, which indicates the number of people per square mile.

El Paso County’s population is comprised of 50.2 percent females. The median age is 34.1 years, with 26.1 percent of the population under the age of 18 years and 10.0 percent over the age of 65 years (Table 1). The racial and ethnic breakdown in the county shows the population to be predominantly non-Hispanic white (73.9 percent), followed by 15.0 percent Hispanic of any race (Figure 3); non-Hispanic black and other non-Hispanic races comprise 6.3 percent and 4.8 percent of the total population, respectively. Vital statistics data showed that during 2010, there were 9,187 live births and 3,530 deaths in El Paso County.

El Paso County has a large military presence, including four military installations – Fort Carson Army Base, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, and the United States Air Force Academy. A 2011 report from the Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce estimates that these four installations employ nearly 40,500 military personnel and approximately 21,000 civilian/contract personnel. Three-quarters of military personnel are estimated to live in communities outside the military bases. El Paso County is home to 58 percent of Colorado’s military retiree population, according to this report.

The median household income in El Paso County was $51,548 in 2010 (Figure 4), with 19.1 percent of children younger than 18 years and 10.4 percent of families living below the Census Bureau’s 2010 poverty threshold. Families living in poverty are more concentrated in south Colorado Springs, and south-central and eastern El Paso County (Figure 5). An estimated 8.9 percent of households in El Paso County received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) in 2010; among households receiving SNAP, 56.2 percent were below the poverty threshold and 60.3 percent included children younger than 18 years of age. According to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, the average unemployment rate in El Paso County during 2011 was 9.5 percent.

In 2010, 22.0 percent of El Paso County residents ages 25 years and older held a high school diploma or equivalent as their highest degree, and just over one-third held a bachelor’s degree or higher (Figure 6).
The on-time graduation rate, defined as the number of students who completed high school within four years, for the class of 2010 was 78.4 percent. During the same academic year, 2.1 percent of seventh to twelfth grade students dropped out of school in El Paso County.

An estimated 11.0 percent of people ages 5 years and older in El Paso County spoke a language other than Spanish-speaking. Of those speaking a language other than English at home, 36.2 percent were considered linguistically isolated (defined as speaking English “less than very well”).
Figure 2. Population density (people/square mile), by census tract, El Paso County 2010

Figure 3. Hispanic population, percent by census tract, El Paso County 2010
Figure 4. Annual household income, El Paso County 2010

- $75,000 and higher: 32.9%
- $50,000-$74,999: 19.4%
- $25,000-$49,999: 24.6%
- Less than $25,000: 23.2%

Figure 5. Percent of families below poverty threshold, by census tract, El Paso County 2006 to 2010
Figure 6. Educational attainment among adults ages 25 years and older, El Paso County 2010

- Graduate or professional degree: 13.0%
- Bachelor's degree: 21.1%
- Associate's degree: 10.0%
- Some college: 26.8%
- High school graduate: 22.0%
- Less than high school: 7.2%

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