



# Fewer Youngsters Today, Fewer Workers Tomorrow?

What the Current Decline in 0-19 Year-olds Means for our Region's Future

# INTRODUCTION

In April of 2018, the LIA Research Institute issued a [report](#) showing that between 2000 and 2016, the total number of annual births on Long Island fell from 37,226 to 29,888, and that the general fertility rate had fallen sharply. The number of births over deaths (“natural increase”) had fallen from 14,395 in 2001 to only 5,623 by 2016, a drop of 61%.<sup>1</sup>

The 2018 report warned that this general decline in the number of births would show up in smaller youth cohorts immediately and in young adult cohorts later on, having noticeable effects on the regional economy. The most recent available census data on age group populations confirms this.

***From 2010 to 2017 (the latest year available for age group data), the population of 0-19-year-olds in Nassau-Suffolk has declined by 55,948, or 7.5%<sup>2</sup>.***

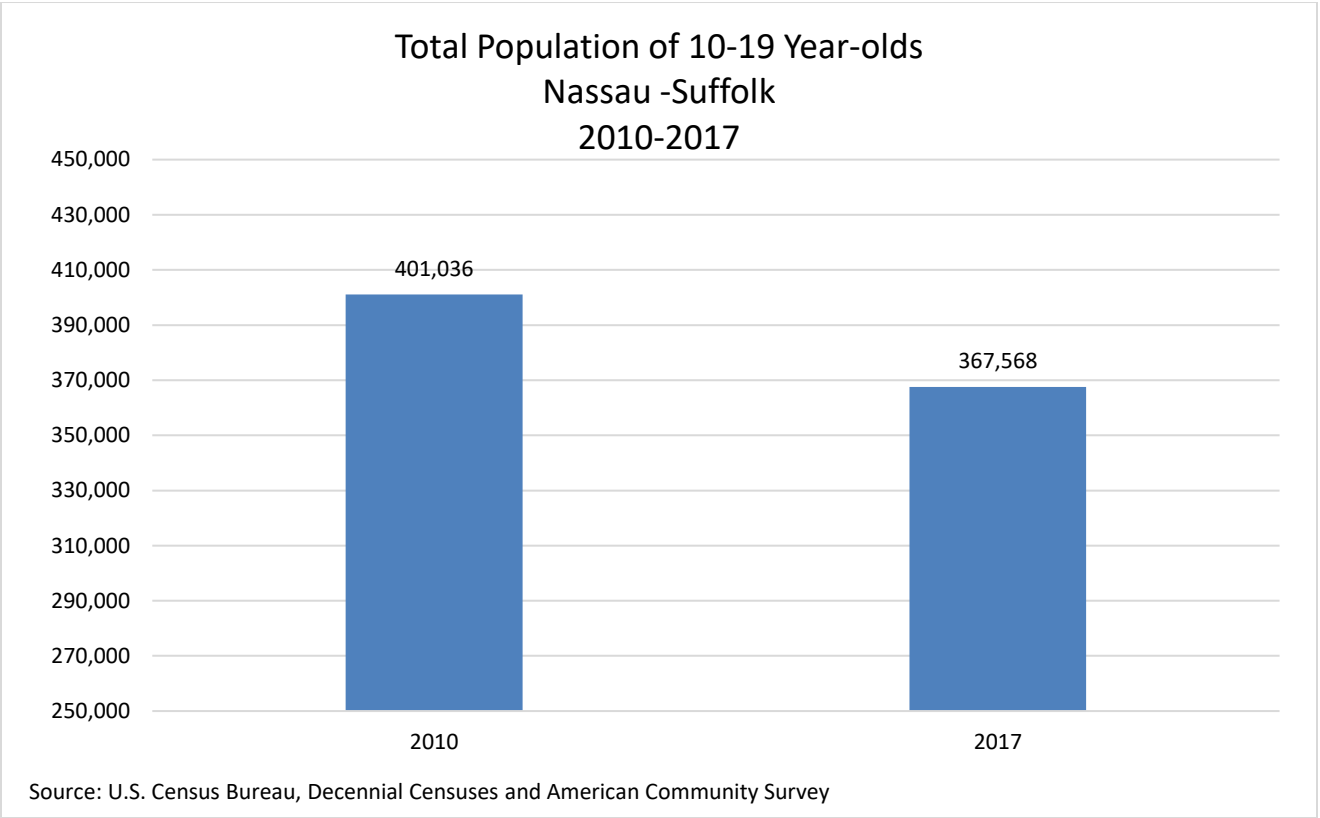
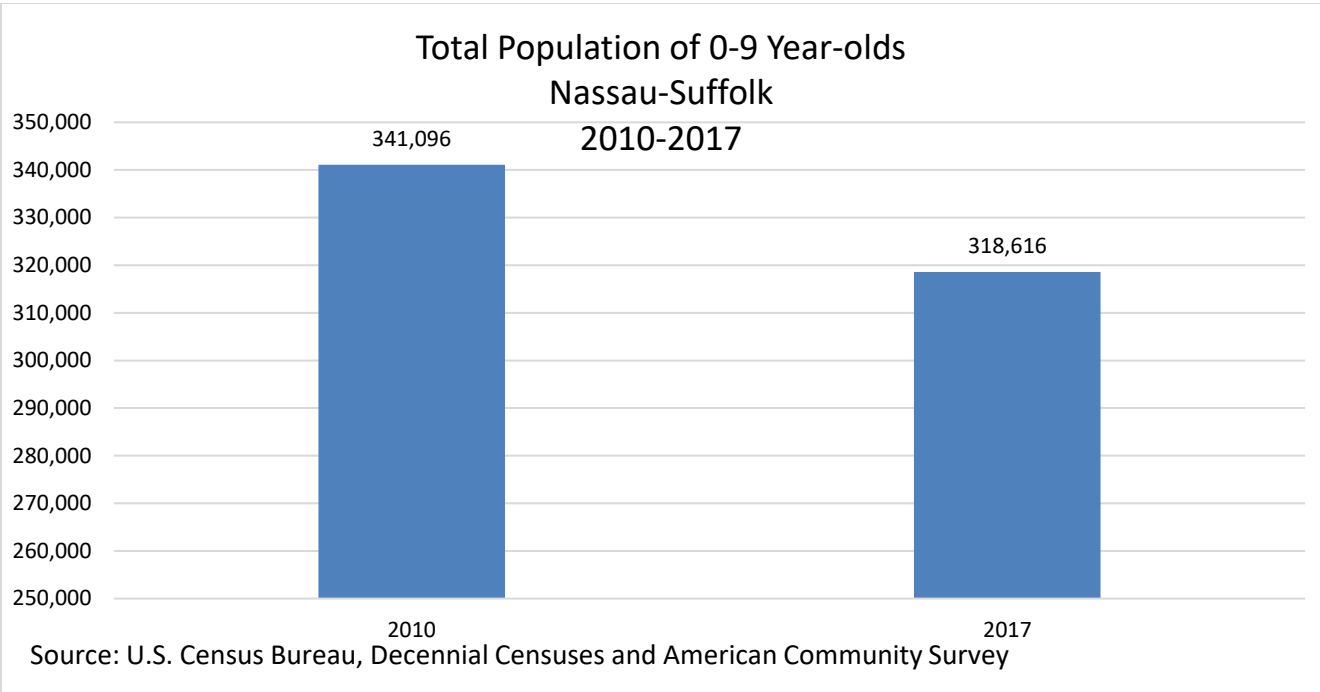
Nassau-Suffolk Population by Age				
Age	2010	% of Total Population	2017	% of Total Population
0-4	159,872	5.6	153,914	5.4
5-9	181,224	6.4	164,702	5.8
10-14	199,974	7.1	179,832	6.3
15-19	201,062	7.1	187,736	6.6

***From 2010 to 2017, the population of 0-9 year-olds in Nassau-Suffolk declined by 22,480, or 6.6%, while the population of 10-19 year-olds declined by 33,468, or 8.3%.***

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<sup>1</sup> The decline in births has spanned nearly twenty years and is reflected in the decline of component age groups of ten-year intervals.

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the millennial population for ages 20-34 increased in the same period. Not surprisingly, the 55 and over population continues to rise. (See appendix A)



## Impact

Over the next ten to twenty years, regional industries and institutions that either serve or depend on people between the ages of 20 and 39 (often the same industries or institutions) will likely feel the effects of the 0-19 population decline, as that smaller sized population group grows older. The number of young adults in the 20-39 year-old age group is a critical component of the expansion of primary

markets. People at these ages tend to buy homes and rent apartments, and are therefore likely to spend money in consumer and service markets necessary to encourage and sustain households.

Colleges and universities in particular are likely to be the institutions most directly affected by the decline in youth population. Young adults aged 17-26 made up 76.4% of all Long Island residents enrolled in college in 2017, and are the primary applicants to Long Island colleges. Thus, the region's colleges may likely see a decline in enrollment in the near future unless enrollment of people from older age groups or from off Long Island recruitment increases.

Among the industries and businesses that most heavily employ workers aged 20-39 are regionally critical hospitals, nursing homes, social service agencies, construction firms, elementary and early childhood education, child care, government, and finance/insurance/real estate.

<b>Top 20 Industries for 20-39 Year-olds on Long Island</b>	
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Number</b>
Child Care Services	7,844
Accounting	7,891
Landscape/Horticulture	8,701
Miscellaneous Recreation/Leisure Services	8,997
Legal Services	9,701
Computer and Data Processing	10,612
Social Services/Residential Care	11,164
Department Stores/Miscellaneous Merchandise	11,575
Medical Offices	12,509
Apparel/Shoes	12,830
Miscellaneous Retail Stores	14,057
Banks/Savings Institutions/Credit	14,094
Groceries/Bakeries/Food Stores	16,709
Colleges and Universities	17,962
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	23,686
Public Admin./Armed Services	24,189
Eating and Drinking Places	36,735
All Construction	39,994
Elementary Schools	50,547
Hospitals/Nursing Home Care/Miscellaneous Health	59,014

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017*

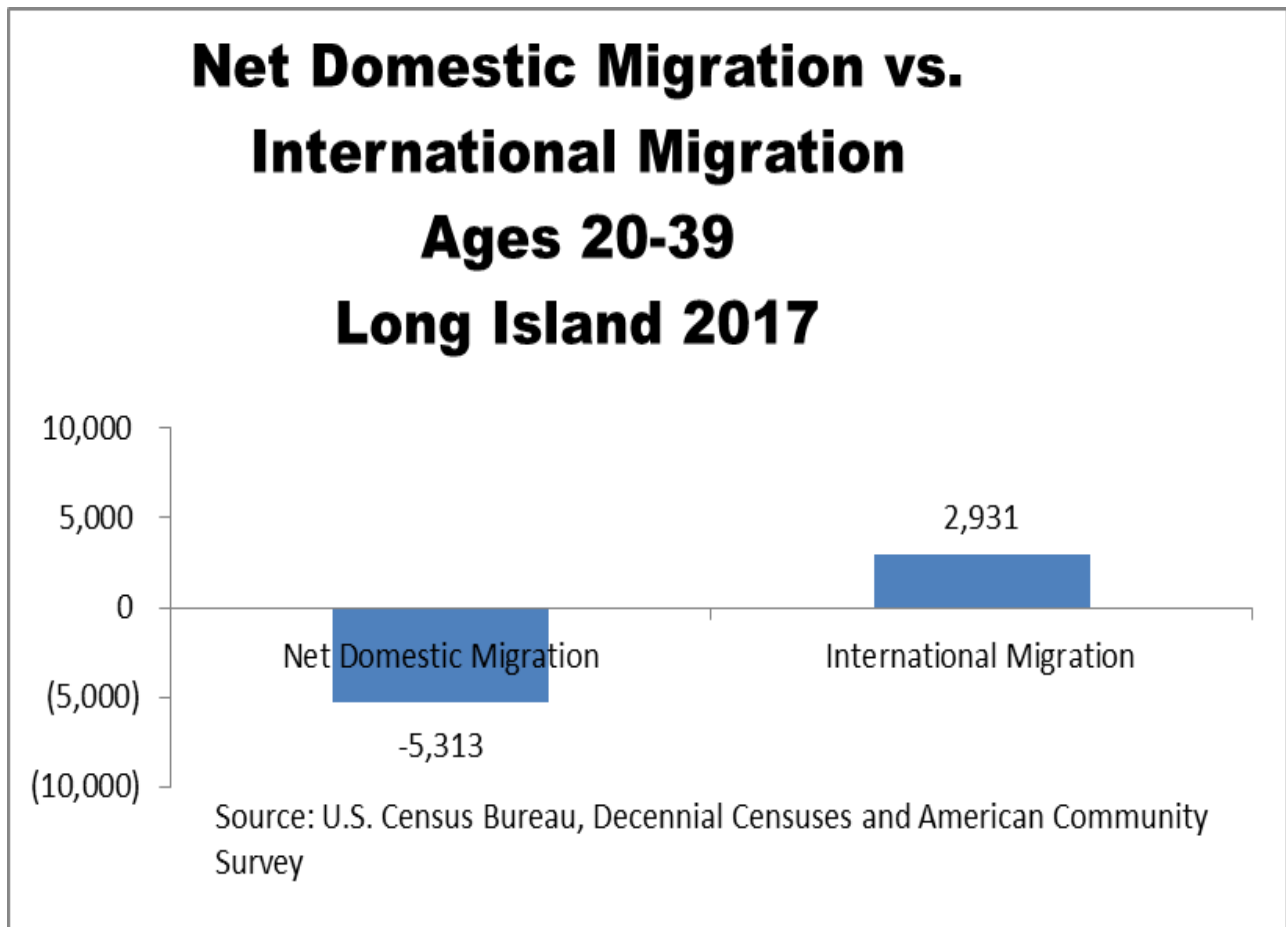
Among the occupations that could potentially experience worker shortages are teachers, librarians, police, registered nurses, salespeople, construction supervisors, laborers, and drivers.

<b>Top Occupations of 20-39-Year-olds on Long Island</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number</b>
Child Care	7,159
Gardeners/Groundskeepers	8,273
Machine Operators	8,594
Health and Dental Technicians	8,768
Clerks/Bookkeepers/Record Keeping/Billing	8,878
Engineers/Architects/Construction Management	9,200
Accountants/Auditors	9,683
Janitorial	9,912
Customer Service Reps	10,417
General Office/Administrative Help	12,253
Truck/Bus/Taxi Driver	15,065
Registered Nurses	15,672
Police/Security	16,423
Construction/Laborers	17,276
Dental Assistant/Health Aide (except Nursing)	18,461
Construction Supervisor/Construction Trades	20,384
Office Supervisors/Clerks/Secretarial/Receptionists	24,361
Bartender/Waiter/Kitchen Help	30,193
Retail Sales Clerks/Cashiers	34,742
Teachers/Librarians	58,265
Sales/Sales Supervisors	59,095
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017</i>	

### **Potential Sources of More 20-39 Year-olds**

Aside from natural increase, the other major component of population increase is “net migration,” or the movement into the region of more people than move out of the region. However, while the Nassau-Suffolk region continues to attract a significant number of people, especially from other countries, it has not been enough to offset the number of Long Islanders moving away from the region to other parts of the United States (“net domestic migration”).

In 2017, the net loss of 20-39 year-olds from Long Island to other parts of the country (-5,313) exceeded the number of immigrants in that age group from abroad (2,931) by 2,382, or 81.3%.

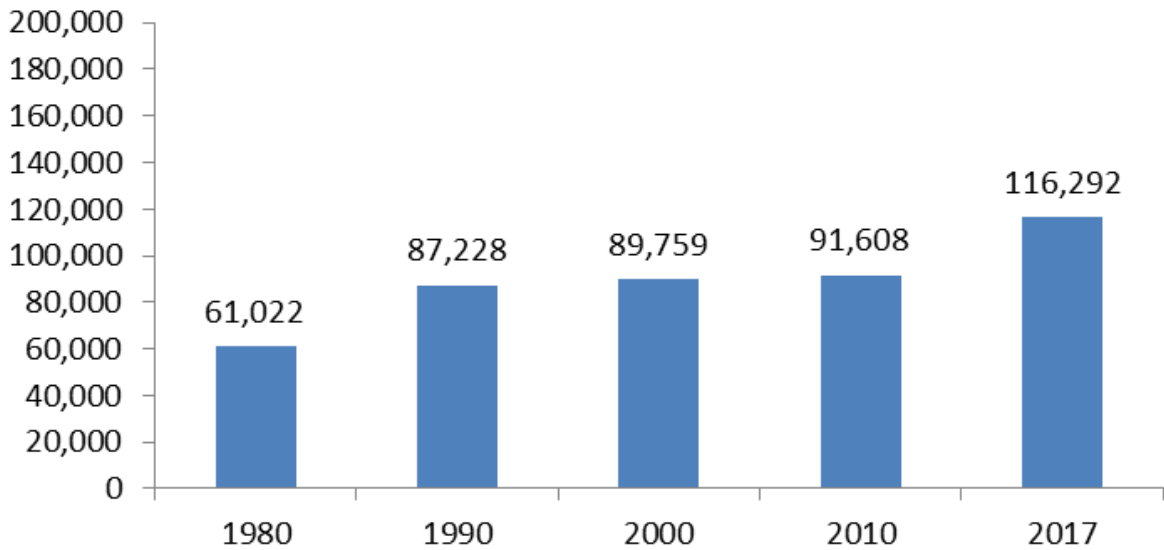


In addition, workers in the 20-39 year-old age group could be drawn from New York City, which has in recent years supplied an increased number of workers to the Long Island region.

**Between 2010 and 2017, the number of people living in New York City and working on Long Island (“reverse commuters”) has increased by 24,684, or 26.9%, going from 91,608 in 2010 to 116,292 in 2017.**

These numbers will likely increase once the LIRR 3<sup>rd</sup> Track and MTA East Side Access Tunnel projects are completed.

## Number of Reverse Commuters from New York City to Long Island



Source: 1980 and 1990 Census Transportation Planning Packages; 2000 Census 2000 5% Sample, 2010 Census, 2017 ACS, IPUMS.org.

Also, a third source of potential workers might be living among us: those individuals aged 20-39 who are not currently participating in the workforce (neither working nor looking for work). Since the severe 2008-2010 recession, the number of people both nationally and locally who do not participate in the workforce has remained stubbornly high, despite several years of near full-employment. That is true for 20-39 year-olds on Long Island as well.

**From 2010 to 2017, the number of people aged 20-39 who are not participating in the workforce has increased by 19,553, or 16.4%, going from 118,975 in 2010 to 138,528 in 2017.**

Nassau-Suffolk Workforce Status Age 20-39				
Status	2010	%	2017	%
Employed	481,468	73.6	528,600	76.3
Unemployed	53,970	8.2	25,240	3.6
Not in Labor Force	118,975	18.2	138,528	20
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and ACS				

## Conclusion

Recent census data shows Long Island suffers from a “birth dearth” as well as a “brain drain.” Without higher natural increase or additional net migration, it seems likely that mitigating any possible worker shortages stemming from population declines of 0-19-year-olds will come from New York City reverse commuters and those currently not participating in the workforce. In addition, it is critically important that the region address any roadblocks to new household formation. Thus, continued investment in childcare, workforce training, mass transit, along with construction of more multi-unit housing to accommodate all household types, will be critical to accommodating a growing local workforce as well as an increased flow of labor from New York City.

## Appendix A

Total-All Age Groups				
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15-19	201,062	7.1	187,736	6.6
20-24	169,747	6.0	187,666	6.6
25-29	152,920	5.4	173,324	6.1
30-34	156,321	5.5	162,141	5.7
35-39	177,030	6.2	167,787	5.9
40-44	213,943	7.6	171,849	6.0
45-49	238,377	8.4	200,991	7.0
50-54	225,390	8.0	222,588	7.8
55-59	188,341	6.6	221,338	7.7
60-64	162,207	5.7	186,031	6.5
65-69	118,231	4.2	151,697	5.3
70-74	88,059	3.1	118,068	4.1
75-79	74,731	2.6	80,848	2.8
80-84	63,555	2.2	59,000	2.1
85+	61,898	2.2	72,955	2.5
Total	2,832,882	100	2,862,467	100

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and ACS.*