

# **DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY (First Assignment)**

Assemblymembers and staff must understand the demographics of their districts to properly represent their constituents and develop the appropriate and best policies. Demographics should be presented in a readable and visually understandable way, allowing for quick comparisons among categories and throughout periods. This is achieved through histograms, cluster bar graphs, 100% composite bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts and tables. This assignment will first help you understand the characteristics of your Assemblymember's district and second develop your data presentation skills.

In addition, political and policy consequences should be determined from the demographic.

Please provide the following information (be sure to label each graph or table using the boldface demographics in the question, i.e., Age Groups and use the categories of each demographic found in the parenthesis).

## **Part I – Demographics of the District**

### **The Composition of the District**

- 1) Is the **population** in your district stable, growing, or declining? Use a line graph to indicate the change of population (2010, and 2020).
- 2) Using vertical cluster bar graphs (percent), indicate the following demographics and any change from 2010 through 2020:
  - a) **Racial Make-up** (African American/Black, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, White, and/or other significant - 1% or more - category/categories).
  - b) **Age Groups** Two Graphs (First graph - 2010 using under 5, 5-17, 19-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60 and over categories; Second Graph - 2020 using 0-9, 10-19, 20-29,30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80+ categories)  
**Average Age** for each decade below the graph
  - c) **Education Levels** (No HS Diploma, HS Graduate, Some College, AA, Bachelor's Degree, Post-graduate Degree) Include AA only if the data exists.
- 3) State whether your Assemblymember's district is primarily urban, suburban, small town, rural or some combination of these? Are these demographics changing? If so, how? (A Graph is not necessary) (Ask your supervisor or Assemblymember)

### **Economic and Employment Demographics:**

- 4) Using a horizontal cluster bar graph, indicate the four to eight (the number depends on your district) **Top Industries** in the district and any changes between 2010 and 2020. If you cannot find data for 2020 use 2000 and 2010
- 5) Graph (line graph) **Unemployment** in the district for 2010 and 2020
- 6) Using a histogram (bar graph), indicate the **Household Income** for 2020 and below the graph, indicate the **Average Household Income**.
- 7) Using a 100% composite (stacked) bar graph indicate the ratio between **Homeowners and Renters** for 2010 and 2020.
- 8) Indicate, using a pie chart (percentage):
  - a) The **Means of Transportation** people use in 2020 (Three categories: Car, Truck, or Van; Public Transportation; Other).
  - b) The **Travel Time** to Work (less than 10 minutes; 10 to 24 minutes; 25 to 39 minutes, 40 to 60 minutes; more than an hour) in 2020 and indicate the **Average Travel Time** below the pie chart

- 9) From the above demographics, discuss if there is a lot of employment in the district or do people commute out of the district to work?

**Note:** some updated information is not available (especially data from LATFOR), in which case you are not expected have data from the 2020 census.

### **Political Demographics**

- 10) Create a table indicating the following:
  - a) The current Party Enrollments (Democrat, Republican, or Independents—Note: the term “Independents” refers to voters who are unaffiliated with a party, not a member of New York’s Independent Party.)
  - b) How the district voted (by percent) in the 2020 Assembly and Presidential Elections, and the 2022 Governor’s Elections (Indicate Parties and Candidates)
- 11) State whether the State Senator in the district is of the same party as the Assemblymember of the district?

### **Part II – Political and Policy Consequences of the Demographics**

In three and a half to four and half pages, discuss the following. You may need to interview your Assemblymember (or Supervisor) for answers to some of the questions below. Your discussion should refer to the relevant graphs, charts, and tables you created in Part I (above)

- 12) Discuss whether each demographic is stable or changing. Can any of the significant demographic change be attributed to the redrawing of district lines? Explain.
- 13) What policy implications might result from any changes? If there is movement into or out of the district, who is moving in and who is moving out? If the population size and the composition are changing, is this creating a problem that government might address (housing, transportation, schools, etc.)? What are some policies that might address some of the demographics and changes above?
- 14) Are there any characteristics of the district or its population which are likely to create unique policy concerns (such as high property taxes, a high percentage of unemployed, renting, poor, using mass transit, public housing, commuting out of the district, relying on day care, working in particular industries, etc.)? What bills has your Assemblymember introduced or sponsored related to the characteristic of the district?
- 15) Considering all the demographics (Composition, Economic/Employment, and Political) affect the political concerns of your Assemblymember? Considering the characteristics of the district, what policy areas is your legislator most likely to be concerned? Does the nature of the district push your Assemblymember to be liberal, moderate, or conservative, or is the district too complicated for such a simple response?
- 16) Are there any demographic changes over the last three decades that might inform you of future district changes? If so, how might these demographic changes require focus on new policies?
- 17) How important are state programs and state funding for your district? Does your district rely on state programs (which ones) or are state programs not that important to your district?
- 18) In what ways is your district different from other districts and in what ways is it similar? How do these similarities and differences affect the chances of bills (beneficial to the district) being passed in committee and on the Assembly floor?

## TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY

The District Characteristics Survey is a conversation between you and your Assemblymember. (As a practical matter, you may have to rely on the answers from your supervisor, if the Assemblymember is not available.) The point is to have a discussion with your Assemblymember to gain a political perspective on your Assemblymember's district and constituency base. Schedule a time to discuss the questions and to record the information that you find out. It is okay if your Assemblymember does not have exact statistics; his or her personal knowledge can be used to answer the questions.

Consult the district office for additional information. They often keep track of such district/demographic information.

Use the links below, especially Census Reporter, LATFOR (although somewhat outdated), and yje NY Board of Elections.

You might also contact the legislative librarian in the Assembly or the New York State librarian. They may have a copy of the most recent State Assembly District Profile document that is published by the **Legislative Task Force**.

- **Census Reporter**  
<https://censusreporter.org/search/?q=new+york+assembly>
- **New York Board of Elections** – see recent election results by county.  
<http://www.elections.ny.gov>
- **New York State Data Center** – demographic information such as age, race, Hispanic origins, household relationships, and housing occupancy for each county, municipality, Indian Reservations, and Congressional District within New York State. You can search by county and then scroll down to see town information within the county.  
<http://labor.ny.gov/nys-data-center/index.shtm>
- **NYS Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment** (Best source for this assignment) – Detailed district data from the 1990, 2000, 2010 and census  
<https://www.latfor.state.ny.us/profiles/?sec=1992a>  
<http://www.latfor.state.ny.us/profiles/?sec=2002a>  
<https://www.latfor.state.ny.us/profiles/?sec=2012a>
- **U.S. Census Fact Sheets** – social, economic and housing characteristics, by zip code.  
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>
- **Urban Search** – offers an interactive map of districts with some ethnic characteristics.  
<http://www.urbanresearchmaps.org/nystatelegislature/map.html>
- **Statistical Atlas** – data from the US Census by Assembly District  
<http://statisticalatlas.com/state-lower-legislative-district/New-York/District-102/Overview>
- **Ballotpedia** – Scroll down to see the District links  
[https://ballotpedia.org/New\\_York\\_State\\_Assembly](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_State_Assembly)