

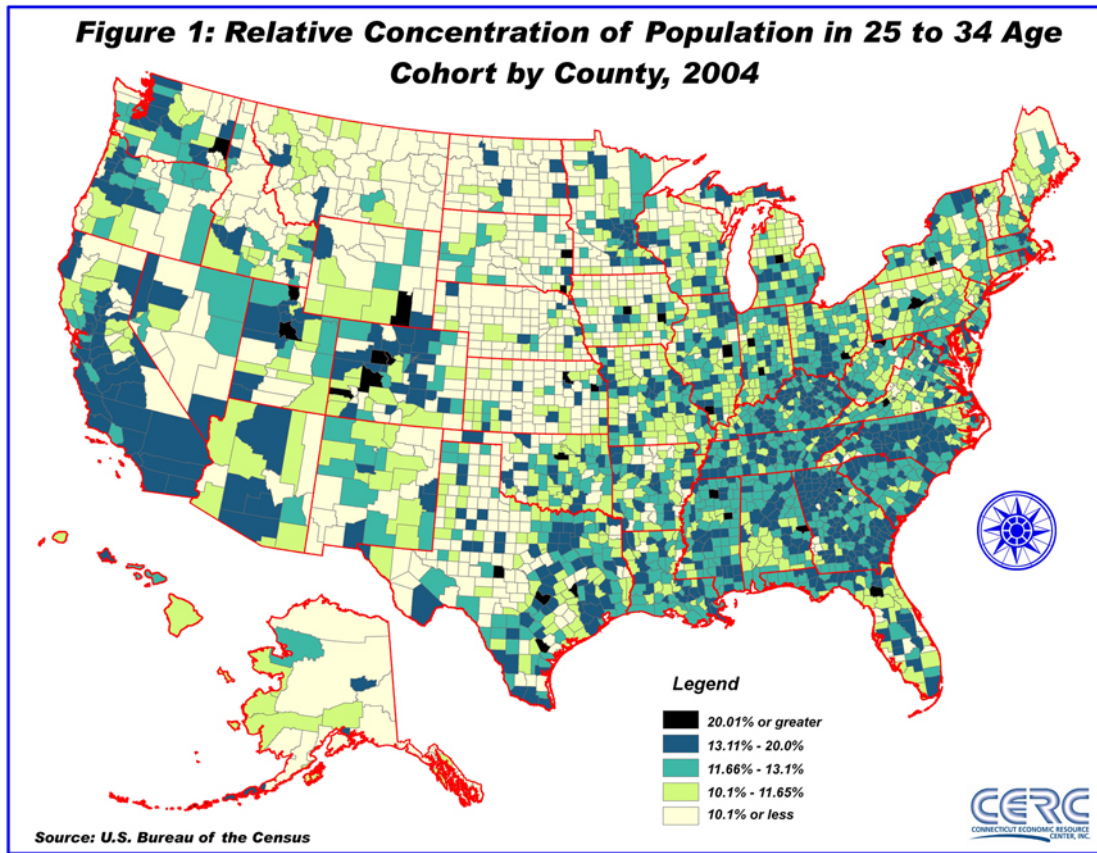
## **Where are the Young Americans? Population Distributions of the 25-to-34-Year-Olds by County and State.**

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The age distribution of a region's population helps explain some of the factors currently influencing the economic performance of the region and its future challenges. The 25-to-34-year age group is often viewed as a critical measure of the overall health of a region's economy. The human capital that these young people provide, through their creative energies, skills, and growing incomes, can significantly impact a region's economy as they settle, join the workforce, form households and invest their futures in a region.

Retail profiles, housing requirements and economic measures associated with employment and labor force participation are influenced by regional concentrations of this age group. Regions with larger shares of their populations in these groups or cohorts will have relatively more entry-level jobs, better affordable housing opportunities and will in general have assets that are more desirable to people in this age group.

An understanding of some of the valuable economic potential that exists in this 25-to-34-year age cohort, as well as the needs of this group, will provide important clues to the current conditions of a region and potential future trends. Figure 1 shows a map with the 2004 share of each county's total population in the 25-to-34-year age group. The counties with relatively fewer people in that cohort, or smaller shares, are shaded light yellow, the darker counties have higher concentrations, with the counties shaded black having more than 20 percent of their populations in this cohort.



The lightest colored counties, the counties with concentrations below 10.1 percent of their total populations between 25 and 34-years old, dominate the Central Plains states of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Western Oklahoma, West Texas, and the northern parts of Idaho and Wyoming. Even within these regions the urban areas often show up with darker colors indicating relatively higher shares of younger people in that age group.

A summary of the visual overview for the area east of the Mississippi is that the entire area has a higher concentration of its population in this age group. Most impressive, when looking at the Eastern U.S. in Figure 1, are the clusters of counties in the southeastern states which are shaded dark blue, indicating the share of the total

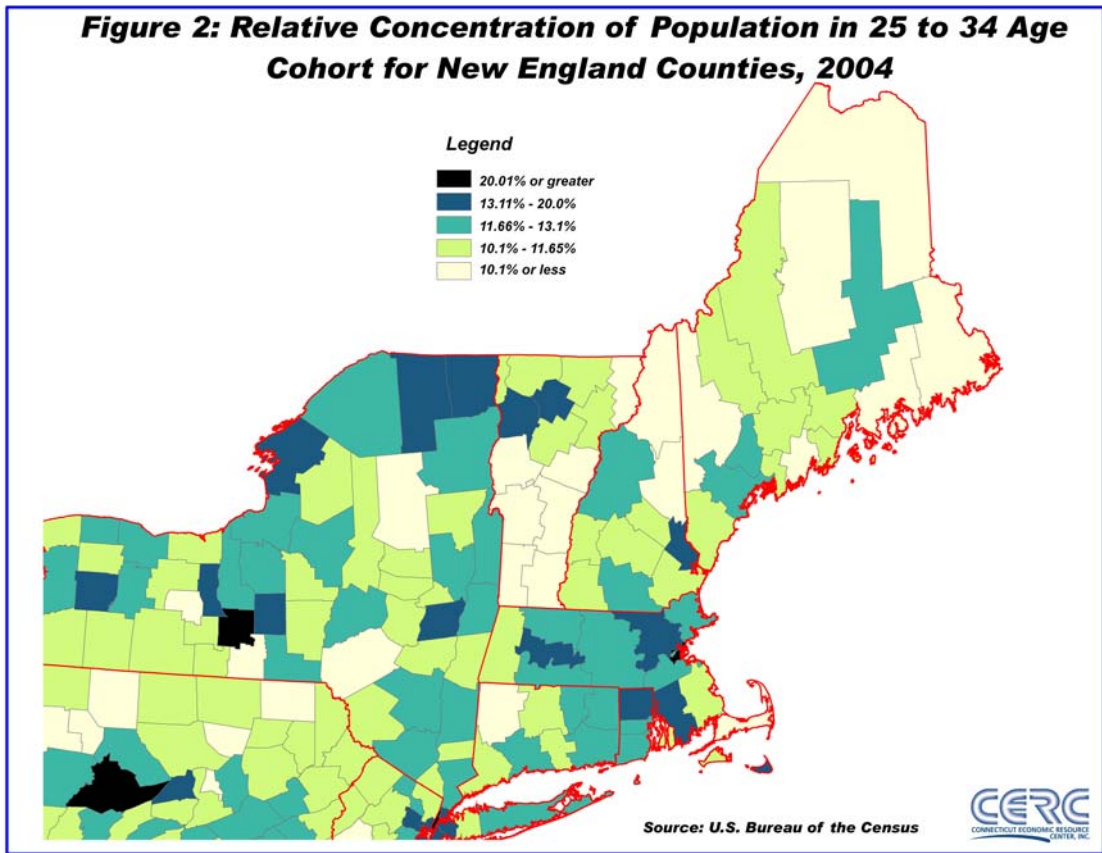
population between 25 and 34 years of age accounts for 13.1 to 20 percent of the total population in the county. These clusters of counties reflect both densely settled areas with well know urban markets as well as areas of more traditional “small-town” America. The area in central Ohio, from Columbus south into Kentucky, includes both the densely settled area of Columbus as well as the counties that link up south of the city that are not identified with any larger urban areas. The same is true for many of the other southern states. As another example, the area in northern Georgia shaded dark blue with relatively high concentrations in this cohort exceeds far beyond the urban confines of Atlanta. In fact in Georgia, 97 out of 159 counties have young adult populations that account for between 13.1 and 20 percent. Likewise, 46 out of 100 counties in North Carolina have between 13.1 percent and 20 percent of their populations in this cohort reflecting the urban centers of the Durham/Raleigh and the Winston/Salem metro areas as well as the more rural counties around them. Similar distributions are also present in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Figure 1 also shows that the counties in the Mountain States of Colorado; Utah; and Arizona; as well as most of the counties in southern California; in the Portland, Oregon area; and in the Seattle, Washington area all have large amounts of their total areas dominated with counties shaded dark blue to indicate the second highest grouping for the concentration of their populations in the 25-to-34-year age cohorts.

The darkest-colored counties shown in Figure 1, the counties with more than 20 percent of their populations in this young adult cohort reveal an interesting story. Thus, before

zooming in to concentrate on New England and Connecticut, the story for these 42 counties with more than 20 percent of their populations in the 25-to-34-year age cohorts needs to be examined. Nearly all of these counties have large universities with graduate programs and relatively small total population sizes. For example: Cornell University and Ithaca College in Tompkins County, New York; Penn State in Centre County, Pennsylvania; Ohio University in Athens County, Ohio; and the University of Florida in Alachua County, Florida.

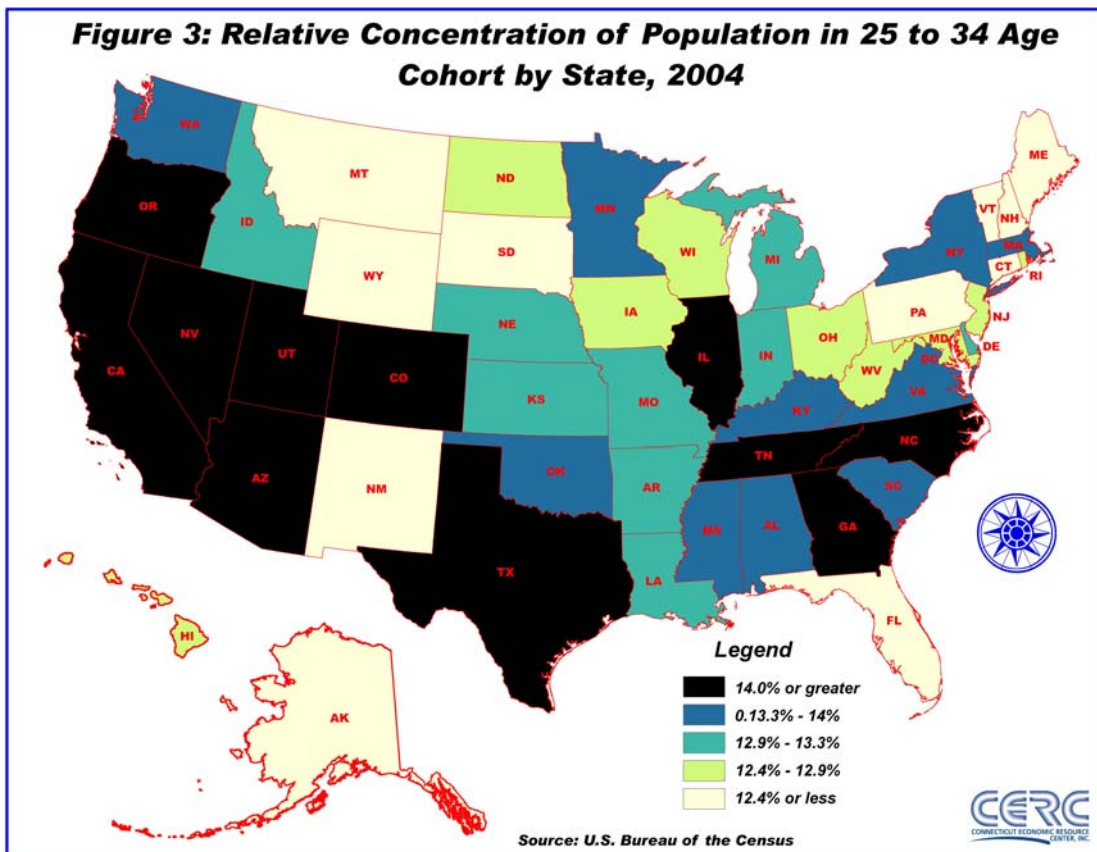
Figure 2 presents the same information shown in Figure 1 but focuses on New England. The more rural areas in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine have relatively small shares of their populations in the 25-to-34-year age cohort. Litchfield County, Connecticut; Bristol County, Rhode Island; and Barnstable County, Massachusetts also have less than 10.1 percent of their populations in the 25-to-34-year age cohort and as a result they are colored yellow in Figures 1 and 2. Two counties in Vermont (Lamoille and Chittenden) as well as four counties in Massachusetts (Bristol, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Nantucket,) Strafford County, New Hampshire and Providence County, Rhode Island all are shown in blue in Figure 2 and have between 13.1 and 20.0 percent of their populations in the 25-to-34-year age cohort. Suffolk County, Massachusetts is the only county in New England with the share of its total population in that cohort greater than 20 percent which reflects again the high concentration of young adults in a university setting as mentioned above.



At first glance, with only one of its counties light yellow, indicating the lowest share concentration, the share of Connecticut’s population between the ages of 25 and 34 does not appear to be weak. However, the more densely populated urban counties in Connecticut, (Fairfield and Hartford) as well as the less urban Middlesex County are shaded light green and have a surprisingly few number of people in the 25-to-34 year cohort. The relatively low shares in these densely populated counties results in a very low share for Connecticut in the 25-to-34-year cohort.

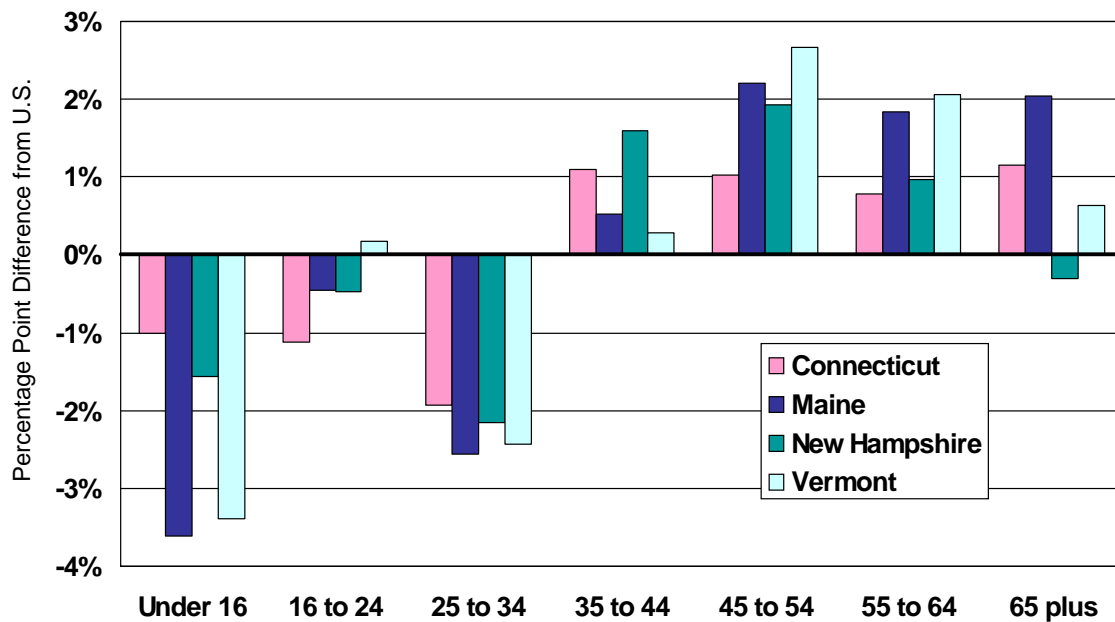
Connecticut’s relatively low share of 25 to 34 year olds in its most densely settled counties results in the state being the 46<sup>th</sup> largest share in this age group out of the 50 states. Connecticut has 11.7 percent of its entire population in this cohort while for the

U.S. overall, slightly more than 13.6 percent are in this cohort. Interestingly, the other New England states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont are also in the bottom quintile with shares less than 12.4 percent: Maine ranks 50<sup>th</sup>, Vermont 49<sup>th</sup> and New Hampshire 48<sup>th</sup>. In case you're interested, Montana at 47<sup>th</sup> disrupted the potential clean sweep by New England states for this ranking. Although there are six other states shown in yellow on Figure 3, the four New England states of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont have similar age distributions and have experienced similar growth rates in the number of people in the 25 to 34 age group since 1990.



The age distributions for these four New England states are shown in Figure 4 as percentage point differences from the U.S. In Connecticut, 11.7 percent of the population is in the 25-to-34 year age cohort, while in the U.S. the share in that cohort is 13.6 percent. Thus, Figure 4 shows that Connecticut is nearly 2 percentage points below the U.S. measure for this cohort while Maine is 2.6, New Hampshire is 2.2 and Vermont is 2.4 percentage points lower than the U.S.

**Figure 4: Connecticut and Selected New England States' Percentage Point Differences from the U.S. by Age Group, 2004**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Perhaps most troubling, these four New England states have experienced a significant loss in the overall number of people in the 25-to-34-year age group since 1990.

Connecticut's annual average growth rate between 1990 and 2004 was -2.5 percent.

When ranked by the growth in this cohort among all 50 states, Connecticut ranked 50<sup>th</sup> with the lowest growth rate. The other New England states shown in Figure 4 also had

negative growth in this cohort—Maine ranked 49<sup>th</sup>, New Hampshire ranked 47<sup>th</sup> and Vermont ranked 46<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states. In this measure, Alaska disrupts the clean sweep ranking 48<sup>th</sup>.

In summary, Connecticut has some relatively urban and densely settled counties that should have higher concentrations of their populations in this critical age cohort, however, these concentrations are relatively low and have declined since 1990. As a result Connecticut's age population profile reflects the more rural New England states rather than the more dynamic urban regions. Connecticut's policymakers need to recognize that the population distributions as well as the trends with this important age cohort, if left unaddressed, will have negative implications on the state's future economic growth.

**Summary Table: Selected County Data for 2004.**

State Name	County Name	Total	Density	25 to 34 age group	25 to 34			
					Share	Rank	Annual Average Growth 1990-2004	
							Rate	Rank
<b>Top 10 Counties in U.S. based on Share of Population in 25-to-34 age group</b>								
Colorado	Summit County	24,950	40	6,989	28%	1	-3.4%	2,762
Georgia	Clarke County	103,951	857	28,358	27%	2	-0.1%	918
Kansas	Riley County	63,069	101	15,999	25%	3	-4.7%	2,954
Colorado	San Miguel County	7,116	6	1,701	24%	4	4.2%	47
Texas	Brazos County	156,275	265	37,313	24%	5	-3.5%	2,798
Virginia	Radford City	14,770	1,450	3,520	24%	6	-1.6%	1,925
Washington	Whitman County	40,146	18	9,396	23%	7	1.6%	293
Virginia	Charlottesville City	36,605	3,571	8,518	23%	8	-1.8%	2,045
Mississippi	Oktibbeha County	41,309	89	9,585	23%	9	-0.1%	922
Virginia	Montgomery County	83,959	216	19,457	23%	10	-2.4%	2,457
<b>Connecticut Counties</b>								
Connecticut	Fairfield County	903,291	1,400	100,360	11%	1,905	-3.1%	2,686
Connecticut	Hartford County	875,602	1,167	101,878	12%	1,581	-2.6%	2,533
Connecticut	Litchfield County	189,246	200	18,881	10%	2,411	-2.3%	2,383
Connecticut	Middlesex County	162,295	422	18,191	11%	1,852	-2.9%	2,640
Connecticut	New Haven County	845,694	1,365	104,919	12%	1,138	-1.6%	1,875
Connecticut	New London County	266,466	385	32,445	12%	1,250	-1.5%	1,836
Connecticut	Tolland County	146,667	352	18,203	12%	1,134	-0.5%	1,175
Connecticut	Windham County	114,343	219	14,516	13%	980	-0.9%	1,370
<b>Bottom 10 Counties in U.S. based on Share of Population in 25-to-34 age group</b>								
Texas	Loving County	52	0.1	1	2%	3,132	-2.6%	2,517
Hawaii	Kalawao County	126	9.6	4	3%	3,133	2.4%	171
North Dakota	Sheridan County	1,476	1.5	49	3%	3,134	-3.3%	2,753
South Dakota	Campbell County	1,604	2.1	59	4%	3,135	3.9%	61
Montana	Sheridan County	3,620	2.1	137	4%	3,136	-0.3%	1,028
North Dakota	Cavalier County	4,376	2.9	168	4%	3,137	-5.5%	3,013
North Dakota	Towner County	2,575	2.5	102	4%	3,138	-2.2%	2,322
Texas	Kent County	744	0.8	31	4%	3,139	-5.9%	3,047
South Dakota	Potter County	2,487	2.8	106	4%	3,140	1.4%	346
North Dakota	Wells County	4,658	3.6	201	4%	3,141	-2.6%	2,514

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. <http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.php>