



# Millennials in Philadelphia

A Promising but Fragile Boom

## Overview

The growth of Philadelphia's young-adult population in recent years has been hailed as one of the more positive developments in the city's recent history and a possible key to its future.

Since 2006, when the city's population reached its lowest point in a century, no major city has experienced a larger increase in 20- to 34-year-olds than Philadelphia, as measured by the change in their percentage of each city's overall population.

This boom, however, appears to be as fragile as it is promising. Young adults—members of the nation's vast millennial generation—are drawn to the city by its vibrancy, diversity, culture, and nightlife. But many of them voice a familiar set of concerns about life in the city, bemoaning the dirty streets, the crime, and the perennially troubled school system. And they are contending with a local job market that many consider to be lacking in the kinds of opportunities that lead to careers.

In a Pew Charitable Trusts poll, half of the 20- to 34-year-olds questioned said they definitely or probably would not be living in Philadelphia five to 10 years from now, compared with about 3 in 10 for the rest of the city's adult population. The millennials cited job and career reasons, school and child-rearing concerns, and crime and public safety as the primary reasons for their potential departures.

Using demographic data, focus groups, and polling results, Pew took a close look at Philadelphia's young adults, a group that has brought the city a renewed sense of vitality and hope and has enlivened its streets, day and night. Among the findings:

- The city's population of 20- to 34-year-olds increased by about 100,000 from 2006 through 2012, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates. When the city's overall population is divided into age groups of five years each, the 25- to 29-year-olds and 20- to 24-year-olds are by far the largest, followed by the 30- to 34-year-olds.
- Although the growth in Philadelphia's millennial population has been exceptional over the past several years, the current share of the city's population represented by young adults—26 percent—is near the median for the nation's 30 most populous cities.
- The racial and ethnic makeup of Philadelphia's young adults is slightly different from that of the rest of the population. Overall, non-Hispanic blacks are the largest bloc, accounting for 42 percent of the city's population. Among millennials, non-Hispanic whites are the largest group, representing 40 percent of the total.
- The highest concentrations of millennials are found primarily in Center City and the surrounding areas, including University City and the two ZIP codes that constitute the northern half of South Philadelphia. In addition, Manayunk, East Falls, Kensington/Fishtown, and Roxborough have large percentages of millennials.
- Young adults accounted for nearly two-thirds of the individuals who reported having moved into the city recently, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Areas with high percentages of new arrivals include Center City, Chestnut Hill, Manayunk, and University City.
- Philadelphia's millennials are nearly twice as likely as older Philadelphians to have bachelor's degrees, a wider generational gap on education than has been the case in the past. The city's performance in young-adult educational attainment is greatly improved: 37.4 percent of adults ages 25 to 34 have college degrees. A few years ago, Philadelphia trailed other major cities in this category, but now it is near the median for the 30 largest cities. The same is true for the share of young adults with graduate and professional degrees. Still, more than 3 in 5 millennials in the city do not have bachelor's degrees.

Pew's poll found that young adults share their elders' views of Philadelphia in many respects, but in several important areas, they are slightly less positive about the city and less optimistic about its future. For instance, 54 percent said they consider the city an excellent or good place to live, compared with 62 percent for all other age groups.

Of potentially greater import is that only 36 percent of millennials said they would recommend the city as a place to raise children, while 56 percent would not. With many young adults starting to raise families or thinking about doing so, this view is a not a positive sign.

These results suggest that the millennials' affection for Philadelphia is conditional. And for the city, the stakes in meeting those conditions are very high.

## Philadelphia's growing young-adult population

For the first time in more than half a century, Philadelphia's overall population has grown in recent years. An increase in the number of young adults, ages 20 to 34, is one of the main reasons, along with foreign immigration.

In 2006, Philadelphia's population fell to its lowest level since the census of 1900, but then it began to rebound. According to census estimates, the population grew by nearly 59,000 in the next six years, reaching 1,547,607 as of July 1, 2012. During that same period, the share of Philadelphians in the 20-to-34 age group rose from 20 percent to 26 percent of the total.<sup>1</sup> This change indicates that about 100,000 more young adults lived in the city in 2012 than lived there just six years earlier.

### What is a millennial?

There is no universal agreement about precisely who is part of the millennial generation. According to one definition, the generation starts with people born around 1980 and ends with those born around 2000, meaning it encompasses individuals roughly ages 14 to 34.

In this report, we chose to concentrate on men and women ages 20 to 34. We did so primarily because our focus is on the relationship between millennials and a specific place, the city of Philadelphia. Few individuals under the age of 20, including college students, make their own decisions about where they intend to live.

To some degree, Philadelphia is benefiting from a strong affinity for urban life that is widespread among today's young adults, members of one of the largest generations in American history. They value a dense urban setting for the excitement, convenience, and variety of experiences that it provides and for the diversity of people, job opportunities, and lifestyles. Carol Coletta of the Knight Foundation, an expert on the development of cities, said that young adults' preference for close-in neighborhoods is "a 40-year trend that just keeps accelerating."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to all of those elements, Philadelphia has other attributes that make it particularly attractive to millennials. Among them are a relatively low cost of living (compared with some other major East Coast cities), a large and active cultural sector, and a number of up-and-coming neighborhoods not far from the city center. In the Pew poll, 66 percent of millennials said they would recommend Philadelphia as a place for young adults to live.

Ashley Scott, 24, who grew up in Bucks County and now lives in the city's Northern Liberties section, is one of them. "I can literally walk down one side of my street and be in one neighborhood and then the other side and



be in another—two different styles of food, two different styles of entertainment,” she said. “It’s just different everywhere. I feel like I’m growing here, finding myself.”<sup>3</sup>

With 26 percent of its population between the ages of 20 and 34, Philadelphia is not exceptional. In fact, it is near the median for the nation’s 30 most populous cities. Young adults make up substantially higher shares of the population in Boston (35 percent) and in Austin, Washington, and Seattle (31 percent each).<sup>4</sup>

Where Philadelphia stands out is in the growth of its young-adult population. In the six years since its population bottomed out, Philadelphia’s increase in millennial growth, as measured by the percentage-point increase in the size of its 20- to 34-year-old age group, has been as large as that of any major city. Other big cities with similarly large millennial growth over that period include Boston, Nashville, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Denver. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1  
**Growth in 20- to 34-Year-Olds**  
 As share of overall city population, 2006-12

City	Change in percentage points
Philadelphia	6.1
Boston	5.7
Nashville	5.6
Baltimore	5.4
San Francisco	5.3
Denver	5.0
30-city median	2.7

Among the nation’s 30 largest cities, Philadelphia’s gain in young-adult population has been as large as any, measured by the percentage-point change in the age group’s share of the overall city head count.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, One-Year Estimates, 2006 and 2012  
 © 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

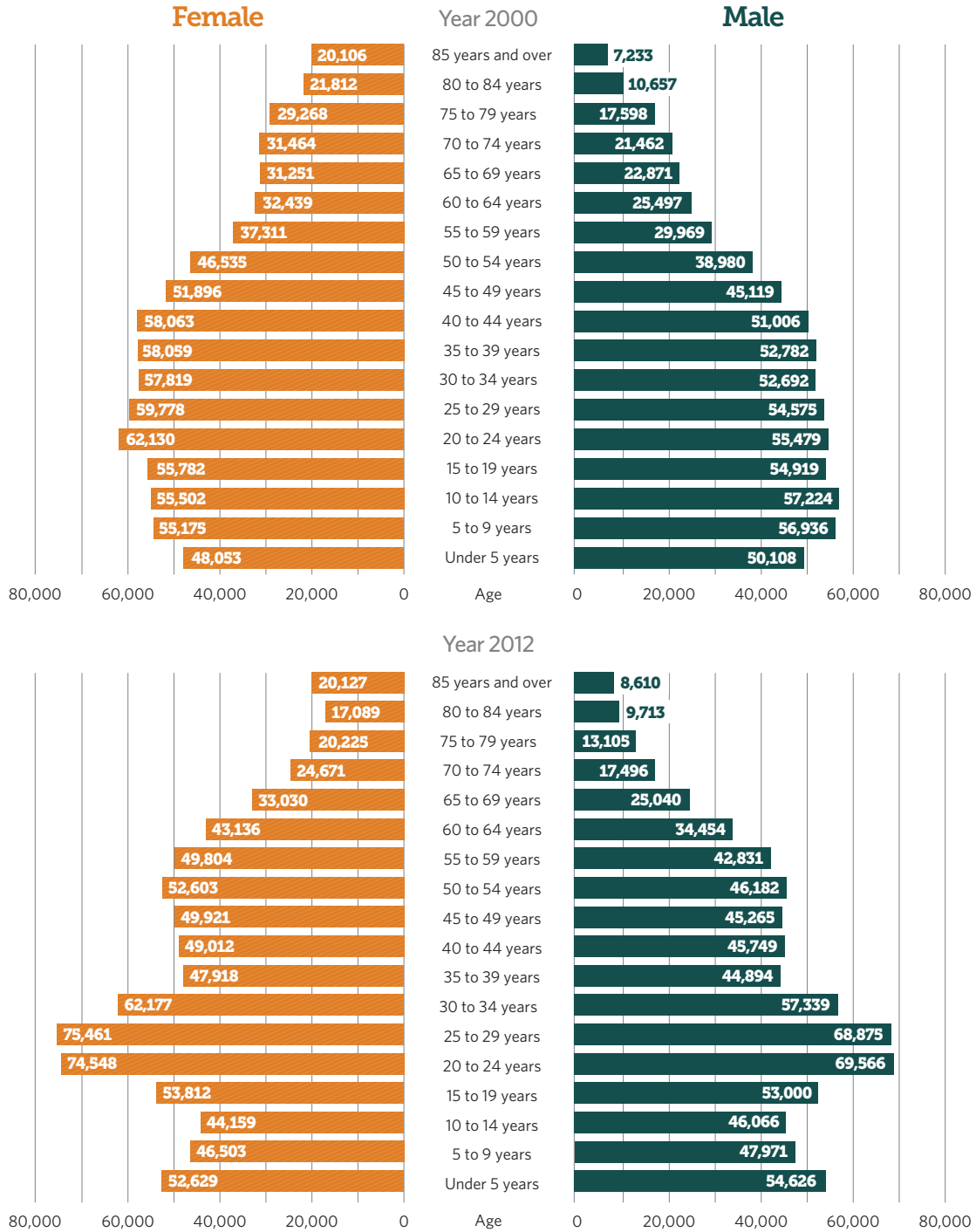
Here is another way to think about Philadelphia’s millennial population. When the city’s overall population is divided into five-year age groups, the three largest groups in the Census Bureau’s estimated 2012 population are the ones that constitute millennials.

They were the 25- to 29-year olds, numbering 144,336; the 20- to 24-year-olds at 144,114; and the 30- to 34-year-olds at 119,516. Only two other age groups, the 15- to 19-year-olds and those younger than age 5, had more than 100,000 members.<sup>5</sup> In the 2000 census, this was not the case; the young-adult age cohorts were about the same size as groups younger and older. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2

## The Changing Age Profile of Philadelphia's Population

From 2000 to 2012, Philadelphia's age profile changed substantially with the expansion of the three prime millennial age groups: 20 to 24, 25 to 29, and 30 to 34.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2012 Population Estimates  
 © 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

"It feels like a young city," said Alexis Howland, 28, who moved to Philadelphia in late 2013 from Massachusetts with a master's degree in city planning and no full-time job. "I have the impression of a burgeoning, creative culture here and a lot of innovation in technology and other fields. And it's more affordable than Boston or New York."<sup>6</sup>

The young-adult population in Philadelphia is more heavily female than those in most other large cities, according to census estimates. Fifty-two percent of 20- to 34-year-olds in the city are women.<sup>7</sup>

The presence of large numbers of young adults is widely considered a boon to any city. Young adults make a city vibrant, and they populate its streets day and night. They bring energy and fresh ideas and are open to new experiences. They pay taxes but make relatively few demands on city services. Employers covet them for their ambition, their flexibility, and their willingness to work for relatively low wages. And if a substantial number of them put down roots and raise families in the city, they will help enhance its viability for years to come.

## **Where Philadelphia's young adults live**

In Philadelphia, the presence of 20- to 34-year-olds varies widely from one part of the city to another. (See Figure 3.)

Of the city's 46 residential ZIP codes, seven have young-adult populations in excess of 40 percent. Those ZIP codes are located in Manayunk, Center City, University City, and Fairmount. Seven others have young-adult populations between 30 and 40 percent. They are found in South Philadelphia, East Falls, Roxborough, Northern Liberties, Kensington/Fishtown, and the section of North Philadelphia near Temple University.<sup>8</sup>

Many of those neighborhoods are among the areas that have experienced the greatest gain in their young-adult populations since 2000. (See Figure 4.) The largest increases in terms of percentage points were in Manayunk, Fairmount North/Brewerytown, the northwest part of South Philadelphia, Northern Liberties/Spring Garden, and Kensington/Fishtown.

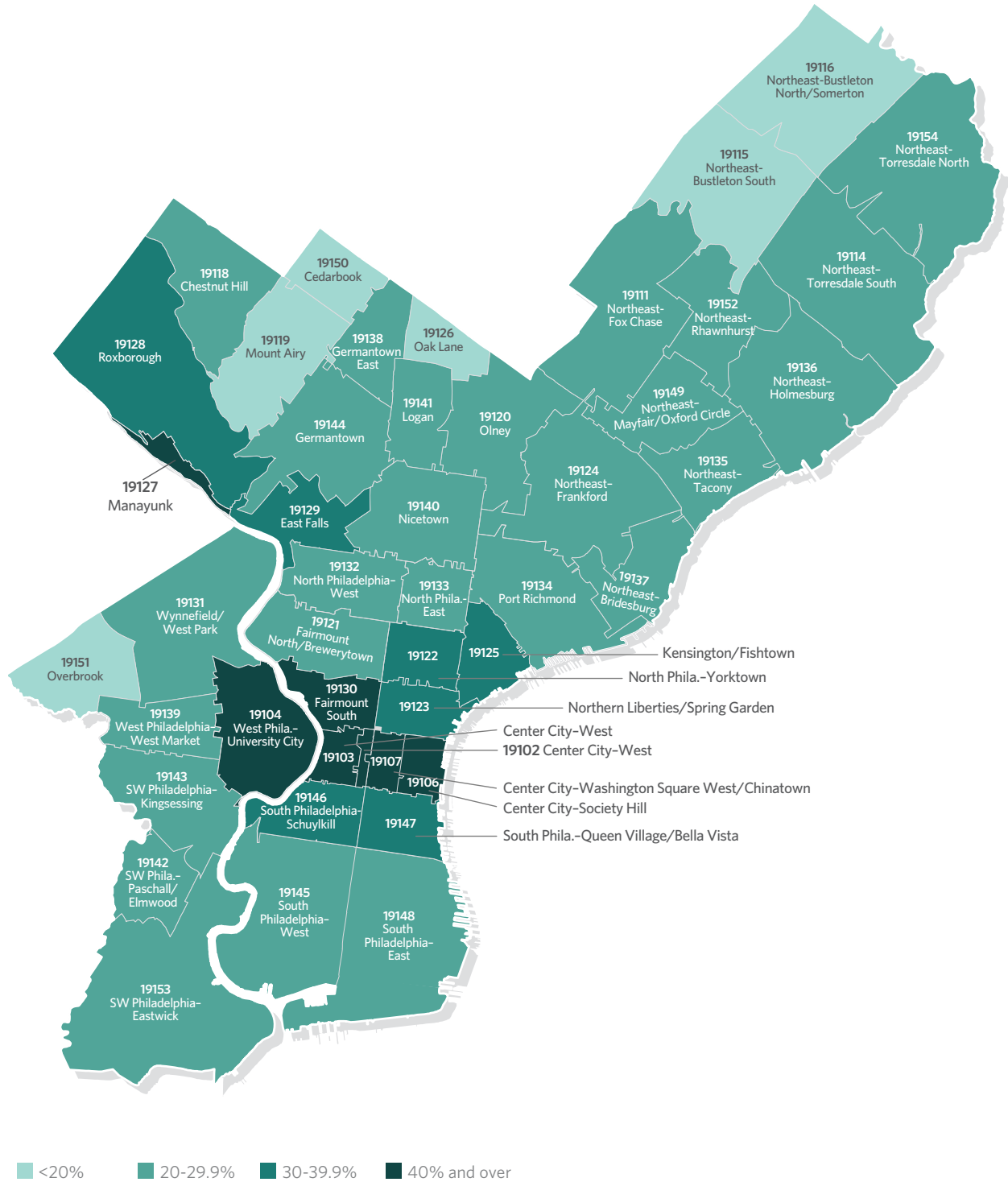
## **Where Philadelphia's young adults come from**

Much of the growth in Philadelphia's young-adult population is due to the sheer size of the millennial generation, which is roughly twice as large as the generation that preceded it; in recent years, a lot of individuals who were already living in the city aged into the 20- to 34-year-old age group while fewer people aged out of it. So the young-adult population in the city probably would have grown without any migration.<sup>9</sup>

But a substantial number has moved into the city. Compared with the rest of the city's population, more of the young adults now in Philadelphia came from somewhere else and arrived in the city recently.

The Census Bureau reports the state in which individuals were born, not the city, so it is not possible to determine the percentage of the young adults now living in Philadelphia who were born elsewhere in Pennsylvania. What can be said is that about 38 percent of the city's 18- to 34-year-olds (which is how the census divides the population on this topic) were born outside the state; the comparable figure for older Philadelphians in 2012 was 30 percent.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 3  
 Where 20- to 34-Year-Olds Live in Philadelphia  
 Percentage of overall population by ZIP code



ZIP code	Percentage Age 20-to-34	ZIP code	Percentage Age 20-to-34
19102	51.1	19132	21.4
19103	44.3	19133	22.6
19104	44.1	19134	22.0
19106	41.3	19135	21.7
19107	49.6	19136	26.1
19111	23.4	19137	20.5
19114	21.8	19138	22.0
19115	17.6	19139	22.0
19116	19.1	19140	20.8
19118	21.8	19141	23.8
19119	18.1	19142	20.4
19120	23.6	19143	24.7
19121	29.5	19144	24.1
19122	30.4	19145	21.7
19123	35.0	19146	34.9
19124	22.4	19147	36.1
19125	32.6	19148	26.8
19126	16.6	19149	23.5
19127	59.1	19150	15.9
19128	33.5	19151	19.2
19129	30.4	19152	20.4
19130	43.4	19153	21.5
19131	26.5	19154	20.4

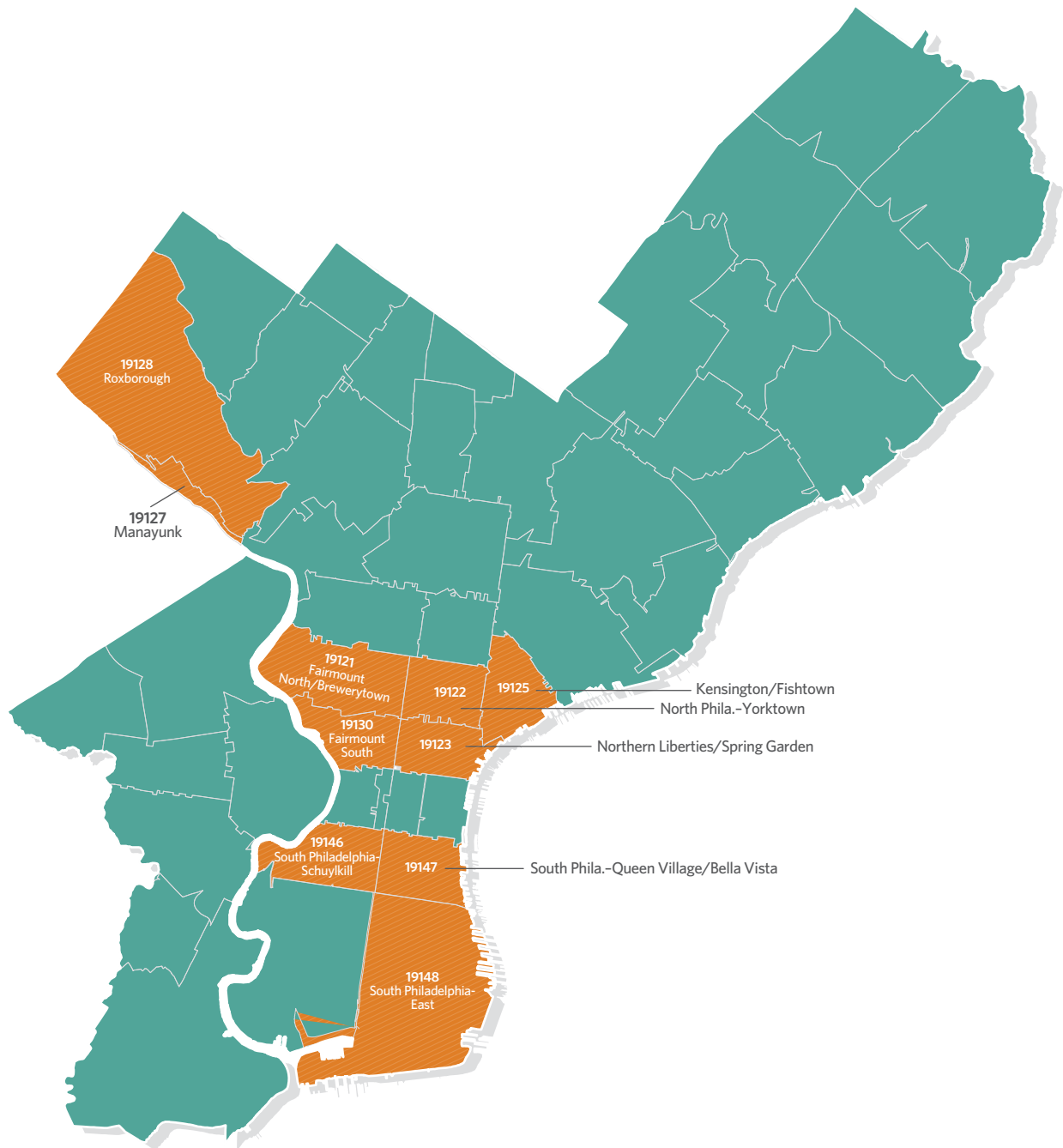
The ZIP codes with the largest percentage of millennials are 19127 (Manayunk), 19102 (Center City), 19107 (Center City), 19103 (Center City), 19104 (University City), 19130 (Fairmount South), and 19106 (Center City).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimate, 2008-2012  
 © 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts



Figure 4

## ZIP Codes Where Philadelphia's Young-Adult Population Has Grown the Most Since 2000



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1 (SF-1) Data, and American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimate, 2008-2012  
© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

ZIP code	Area	Change in young-adult population in percentage points
19127	Manayunk	16.7
19146	South Philadelphia-Schuylkill	11.4
19123	Northern Liberties/Spring Garden	11.3
19121	Fairmount North/Brewerytown	10.8
19125	Kensington/Fishtown	10.5
19130	Fairmount South	7.9
19128	Roxborough	7.6
19122	North Philadelphia-Yorktown	7.2
19147	South Philadelphia-Queen Village/Bella Vista	6.5
19148	South Philadelphia-East	6.2

The greatest growth in Philadelphia's millennials, in terms of the increase in the share of the overall population, has come in these ZIP codes.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 1 (SF-1) Data, and American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimate, 2008-2012  
 © 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

In addition, 18- to 34-year-olds accounted for nearly two-thirds of all the people who told the Census Bureau's American Community Survey in 2012 that they had moved into Philadelphia from other counties, states, and nations during the previous 12 months. (See Figure 5.) The largest percentages of newly arrived young adults were living in Center City, Manayunk, Chestnut Hill, East Falls, and University City.

"Everybody I know lives in the city," said a male paralegal, who grew up in the suburbs and now lives on the fringe of Center City, during one of the focus groups.

Anna Stormer, 28, a Manayunk resident, moved to Philadelphia from Akron, Ohio, two years ago, on the strength of her positive impressions of the city while visiting a friend attending St. Joseph's University. She did not have a job but has since found work at a nonprofit and has come to love the city. "People say there's not enough opportunity here," she said, "but there's more than in Akron."<sup>11</sup>

The Pew poll asked young adults who had moved to Philadelphia within the past 10 years why they came. Three responses were by far the most common: family and friends (37 percent), school or college (21 percent), and a job (20 percent).

Figure 5

## Former Locations of People Who Moved to Philadelphia in Previous Year

In 2012, about two-thirds of all newly arrived residents in Philadelphia were ages 18 to 34.

Previous place of residence	18- to 34-year-olds	Other age groups
Another county in Pennsylvania	17,708	8,308
Different state	20,887	9,007
Foreign country	6,941	6,668
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,536</b>	<b>23,983</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, One-Year Estimate, 2012  
© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

### The racial and ethnic breakdown

In Philadelphia as a whole, African-Americans were the largest single racial or ethnic group in 2012, representing about 42 percent of the overall population, followed by non-Hispanic whites at 36 percent. Among 20- to 34-year-olds, however, the picture was different: Non-Hispanic whites were the largest bloc, amounting to about 40 percent of the overall age group, with blacks at about 35 percent.<sup>12</sup>

This phenomenon has contributed to the apparent stabilization of the size of Philadelphia's overall non-Hispanic white population after decades of decline. According to the most recent census estimates, the number of non-Hispanic whites in Philadelphia was about 566,000 as of 2012, virtually unchanged from the official count in the 2010 census.<sup>13</sup>

Asians represented a higher percentage of millennials in 2012 than they did in the rest of the city's population, 8 percent compared with 6 percent, while the share of the Hispanic population was about the same among both age groups at 13 percent.

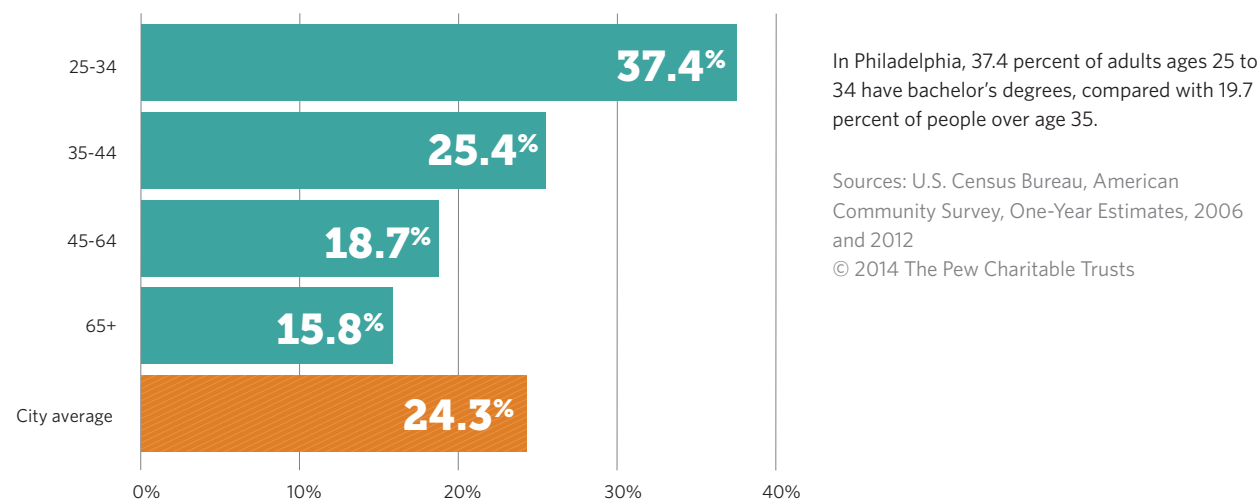
### Educational attainment

As a group, Philadelphia's millennials are much better educated than older city residents, and their educational levels are typical for young adults in large cities.

The census tracks educational attainment for individuals age 25 and over. Among Philadelphians ages 25 to 34, the percentage reporting bachelor's degrees or higher was 37.4 percent in 2012 (up from 30.5 percent in 2006), compared with 19.7 percent for Philadelphians age 35 and over.<sup>14</sup> (See Figure 6.) The gap in education between young adults and their elders has grown as well. In 2006, the gap was 12.1 percentage points in the young adults' favor; in 2012, it was 17.7 percentage points.

Figure 6

## People Who Have Bachelor's Degrees in Philadelphia, by Age



The level of educational attainment for young adults in Philadelphia was not exceptional for a large city in 2012. Philadelphia ranked near the median among the 30 biggest cities; in Washington, San Francisco, Seattle, and Boston, more than 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds were graduates of four-year colleges.<sup>15</sup> In Philadelphia, more than 60 percent in that age-group did *not* have bachelor's degrees, although many had associate's degrees or had attended college without getting any degrees.

Philadelphia was well above the median, though, in terms of how its percentage of well-educated young adults has changed in recent years. Its improvement between 2006 and 2012— 6.9 percentage points—ranked ninth among the 30 cities. (See Figure 7.)

It is impossible to tell from the data precisely what is driving the change. There is some evidence that more students educated at Philadelphia area colleges and universities are opting to remain in the region after graduation. Another possibility is that young adults who went away to college after growing up in the area now see the city as a more attractive destination than did their counterparts in years past.

The city's percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds with graduate or professional degrees, about 13 percent, also puts it in the middle ranks of large cities, far behind Washington, Boston, San Francisco, and Seattle but well ahead of Charlotte, Dallas, and Houston.<sup>16</sup>

## Health insurance and lifestyle

As is the case nationally, Philadelphia's young adults are far more likely to lack health insurance than are members of the city's other age groups, many of whom get coverage through their places of employment or government programs such as Medicaid and Medicare.

About 22 percent of Philadelphians ages 18 to 34 had no health insurance in 2012, a rate about twice as high as that for all other city residents. In fact, this age group accounts for nearly half of all uninsured Philadelphians.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 7

## Growth in Percentage of 25- to 34-Year-Olds With Bachelor's Degrees 2006-12

City	Change in percentage points
Denver	14.6
Dallas	10.2
Chicago	10.0
Houston	9.2
Oklahoma City	7.8
Washington	7.7
Nashville	7.5
Baltimore	7.2
Philadelphia	6.9
Charlotte	5.9
30-city median	4.7

Among the nation's 30 largest cities, Philadelphia had the ninth-highest growth in the percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds with bachelor's degrees or higher.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, One-Year Estimates, 2006 and 2012

© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Young adults in Philadelphia also are somewhat more likely to be poor than is the city's overall population. Among 18- to 34-year-olds, nearly 30 percent were considered to be below the federal poverty line in 2012; the citywide figure was 27 percent.<sup>18</sup> A recent Census Bureau report suggests that poverty rates for 18- to 34-year-olds are somewhat inflated—particularly in places with large numbers of colleges and universities, such as Philadelphia—because many undergraduate and graduate students living off campus and not with their parents are counted as poor in the official estimates.<sup>19</sup>

Millennials also are far more likely than other Philadelphians to rent rather than own their homes. Seventy-five percent of residents ages 25 to 34 are renters; the figure is below 40 percent for the rest of the city's population.<sup>20</sup>

Young adults appear to be somewhat less engaged in the public life of the city than are other Philadelphians. In the poll, 71 percent of the 20- to 34-year-olds said they followed local government and public affairs at least some of the time, compared with 85 percent of people 35 and older.

In addition, millennials get their information about what is happening in the city through a different mix of sources from their elders. Both groups named television as the place they turn to most often for information about Philadelphia, but young adults were less dependent on television than were older residents and were twice as likely to turn to the Internet. Although young adults are heavy users of social media, many do not depend primarily on such sources for local news. (See Figure 8.)



Figure 8

## How Philadelphians Get Most of Their Information About What Is Going On in the City

	Millennials		Older adults
Television	32%	Television	42%
Internet	25%	Newspapers	18%
Newspapers	14%	Combination	13%
Combination	13%	Internet	12%
People	10%	Radio	8%
Radio	5%	People	7%
Social media	1%	Social media	0%

Both millennials and older adults rely on television as their No. 1 source for local information. For millennials, the Internet is a close second, while older adults list newspapers as their second-most popular source.

Source: The Pew Philadelphia Poll  
© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Source: The Pew Philadelphia Poll  
© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

## Young adults' views of Philadelphia

In many ways, today's young adults' attitudes about the city, as measured in a Pew poll in July and August 2013, are similar to those of their elders.

Fifty-nine percent of millennials said they would recommend the city to a friend as a place to live. For non-millennials, the figure was 62 percent. Fifty-four percent of millennials expect Philadelphia to be better five years from now, and 27 percent expect it to be worse. For non-millennials, the corresponding figures were 51 percent and 26 percent.

On some key measures, though, young adults expressed more negative views than did older Philadelphians. That is of particular importance, because young adults are more mobile than older people and may be more inclined to leave if they are unhappy with life in the city.

For instance, only 54 percent of adults ages 20-34 said they would rate Philadelphia as an excellent or good place to live, compared with 62 percent of everyone else. In the focus groups, some millennials became quite passionate in describing unsafe neighborhoods, abandoned buildings, and littered sidewalks.

"The amount of homelessness and poverty was more than I expected," said Gerardine Jean, 28, a graduate student at Temple University who expects to return to northern New Jersey after completing her studies.

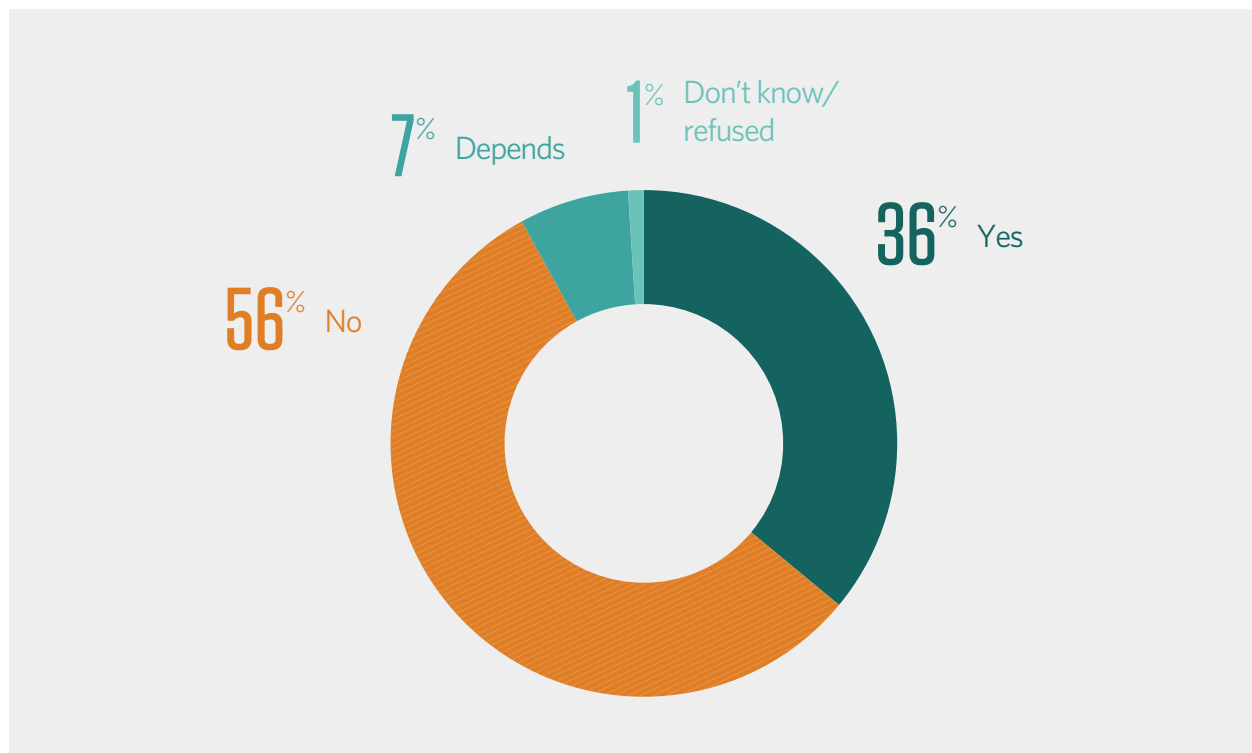
"Philadelphia could probably offer me the career opportunity I'm looking for, but with the crime, the dirty streets, I don't want to stay."

Only 36 percent of young adults said they would recommend Philadelphia as a place to raise children, while 56 percent said they would not. (See Figure 9.) The condition of the School District of Philadelphia, beset by an ongoing funding crisis, weighs heavily on millennials. In the poll, only 16 percent of them said they had a positive impression of the job the schools are doing, and 81 percent had a negative impression; 18 percent of older adults were positive about the schools, and 76 percent were negative.

Jim Saksa, a board member of the group Young Involved Philadelphia, wrote last year: "Our love for the Phils and the Art Museum can do only so much in the face of better career prospects and better schools for our kids [elsewhere]."<sup>21</sup> One focus group participant, a 20-year-old mother of two very young children, said simply, "I'm going to want to move out to get better schools for my kids."

Figure 9

## Would Philadelphia Millennials Recommend the City as a Place to Raise Children?



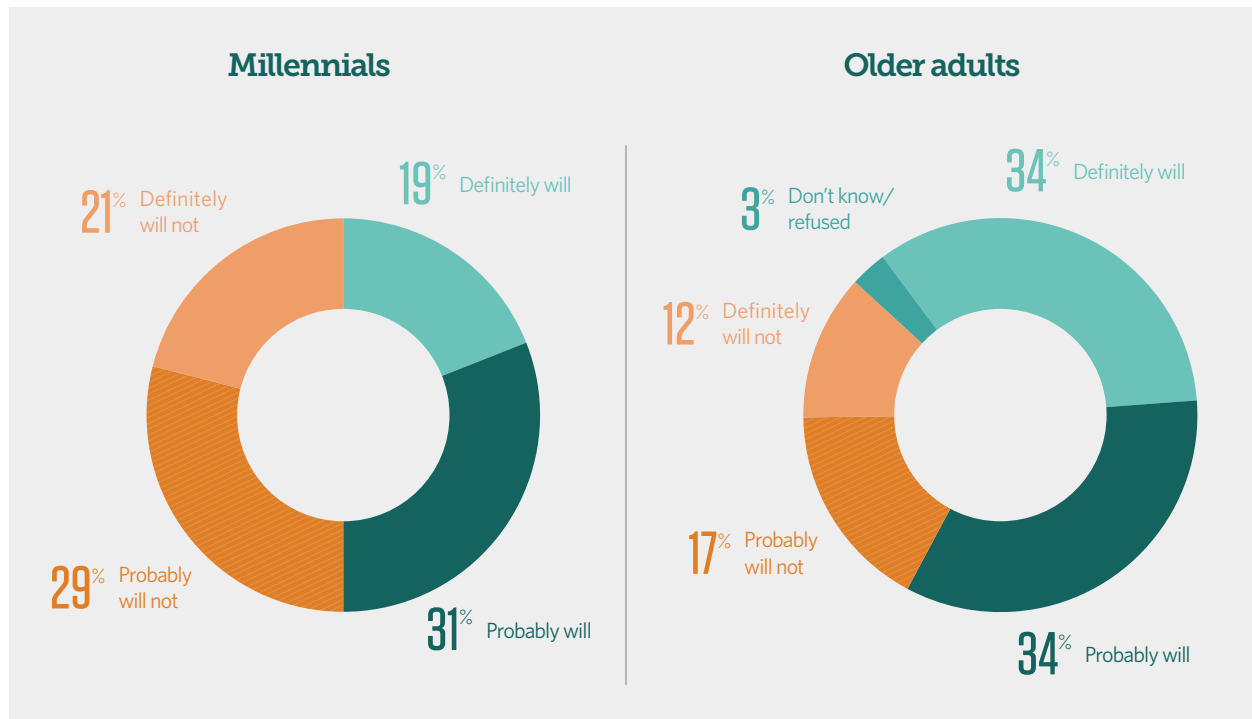
Source: The Pew Philadelphia Poll  
© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

## To stay or to go

Half of the millennials surveyed said they definitely or probably will not be living in Philadelphia in the next five to 10 years. (See Figure 10.) This compared with 29 percent of the older adults.

Figure 10

### How Likely Are You to Be Living in Philadelphia 5-10 Years From Now?



Source: The Pew Philadelphia Poll  
© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Why might young adults leave? Career reasons were mentioned by 38 percent of those who said they might move out, school and child-upbringing concerns by 29 percent, and crime/public safety by 22 percent. Older Philadelphians who were considering leaving the city cited the same three factors but in different order, putting crime first, jobs second, and children third. (See Figure 11.)

“Among millennials, I think that natives and transplants have very different perspectives on this,” said Sophia Hwang, 27, who has lived in Philadelphia for five years and does research at a local hospital. “I came here with Teach for America. What has kept me here is the potential to grow and be innovative. And while I love Philadelphia, what will keep me here or cause me to leave is all about what’s going to launch my career. It’s different if you grew up here. Then maybe you’re thinking more about local issues that affect your current or future family.”<sup>22</sup>

Figure 11

## Main Reasons for Expecting to Leave Philadelphia in the Next 5-10 Years

	Millennials		Older adults
Job/career	38%	Crime/safety/drugs	28%
Schools/child upbringing	29%	Job/career	22%
Crime/safety/drugs	22%	Schools/child upbringing	17%
City going downhill	15%	City going downhill	16%
Family/friends/personal reasons	14%	Government/politics	14%
Prefer suburban lifestyle	10%	Prefer suburban lifestyle	11%
Government/politics	9%	Family/friends/personal reasons	11%

Results are from those people who said they definitely or probably would leave in the next 5 to 10 years. The question was open-ended, not multiple choice, and respondents could give more than one answer.

Source: The Pew Philadelphia Poll  
© 2014 The Pew Charitable Trusts

“I intend to stay,” said Ben Novack, 29, a software engineer who lives in the Bella Vista section. “But the education system is bad enough that when people I know say they have to move because of the schools, there’s no negative judgment from me about that. Nobody I know sees a future in having school-age kids in Philadelphia.”<sup>23</sup>

Young adults also talk about the scarcity of career opportunities for them in Philadelphia, the competition for those opportunities, and the fact that many of the region’s more attractive jobs require a reverse commute to the suburbs. A few suburban-based firms have moved into Center City or opened Center City offices to make themselves more attractive to young city-based talent. But even as Philadelphia’s population has grown, the number of jobs in the city has been essentially unchanged for nearly a decade.

“Unless you’re going to be a lawyer or accountant or something like that, there’s not much here for you,” said a 24-year-old male participant in one of the focus groups.

In the poll, though, most young adults expressed confidence that career reasons will not force them to leave in the immediate future. Eighty percent of working millennials said they think that they can definitely or probably achieve the next step in their jobs or careers while staying in the Philadelphia region. They said this even though only 31 percent of them consider their current jobs to be careers, while 30 percent deem their jobs to be steppingstones, and 37 percent see them just as jobs to get by.

And although the millennials often are described as members of a generation that are not expected to outperform their parents economically, Philadelphia's young adults generally are optimistic about their economic situations. Sixty-one percent of them said they expect to have more financial success than their parents had.

## The future

For Philadelphia, a key question is how many of its millennials will stay in the city as they get older, and for how long.

The big increase in the young-adult population in Philadelphia suggests that millennials are drawn to the city by a number of factors, most of them related to quality of life. In our focus groups, participants mentioned the restaurants, bars, shops, culture, sports, sense of excitement, convenience, and the presence of so many other people like themselves.

What remains to be seen is whether their commitment to city life will turn out to be stronger than that of previous generations. How attractive will Philadelphia look to them when a first child is ready for school? Will those who have the financial wherewithal head for the suburbs to the same degree that their parents did? Or will more of them figure out a way to make their lives and school choices work within the city?

Early indications nationally are that millennials as a group are more likely to remain in cities than were members of previous generations, according to Rolf Pendall, an economist at the Urban Institute, a Washington-based research organization. Millennials are more strongly attracted to the nature and variety of urban life, Pendall said, because their generation is more diverse and less eager to put down roots than its predecessors. They are waiting longer to get married and are having fewer children in early adulthood, trends that lessen or delay the lure of suburbia.<sup>24</sup>

The extent to which these trends apply to Philadelphia is unknown. But their existence suggests that Philadelphia has a decent chance of retaining many of its millennials, assuming they can find satisfying career opportunities for themselves and/or high-performing schools for their children in the city. Those are not small assumptions.

In the years to come, a new crop of young adults will come along to replace this one, and they may find Philadelphia every bit as attractive as millennials do now. The problem is that the next generation is not as big—which is why the millennials are so important to the city's future.



## **About the Pew Philadelphia poll**

The Pew survey was conducted by telephone from July 23 to Aug. 13, 2013, among a citywide random sample of 1,605 city residents ages 18 and older. Interviews were conducted with 575 landline users and 1,035 cellphone users to reach a broad representative sample of Philadelphians.

The final sample was weighted to reflect the demographic breakdown of the city. The margin of error for the entire sample is approximately plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. Surveys are subject to other error sources as well, including sampling coverage error, record error, and respondent error.

In the survey, 524 people ages 20 to 34 were interviewed. For that age group alone, the margin of error is approximately plus or minus 4.3 percentage points.

Abt SRBI Public Affairs designed the survey and conducted all interviewing, working with Cliff Zukin, a veteran pollster and professor of public policy and political science at Rutgers University.

## **About this report**

The report was researched and written by Larry Eichel, project director of the Philadelphia research initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts. The focus groups were conducted by Francesca Gallo of MoStrategy, a research organization based in Medford, NJ. The document was edited by Daniel LeDuc and Carol Hutchinson and designed by Bailey Farnsworth. Photographs were coordinated by Katy Martens.

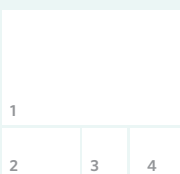
## **About The Pew Charitable Trusts**

The Pew Charitable Trusts is a nonprofit organization that applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and stimulate civic life. Pew's Philadelphia research initiative provides timely, impartial research and analysis on key issues facing Philadelphia for the benefit of the city's citizens and leaders.

---

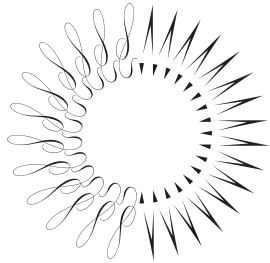
## Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006 and 2012, one-year estimates, "Sex by Age."
- 2 Carol Coletta, Knight Foundation, speech to the National League of Cities, Congress of Cities and Exposition, Seattle, Nov. 14, 2013.
- 3 Interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, Nov. 21, 2013.
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Sex by Age."
- 5 U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Population Estimates, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex."
- 6 Interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, Nov. 22, 2013.
- 7 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Sex by Age."
- 8 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008-12, five-year estimate.
- 9 In the city's Pennsylvania suburban counties from 2006 to 2012, the young-adult population grew by two percentage points in Delaware and Montgomery, fell by one point in Chester, and stayed about the same in Bucks. Over the same period, Philadelphia's young-adult population rose by six points.
- 10 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Place of Birth by Age in the United States."
- 11 Interview with The Pew Charitable Trusts, Nov. 2, 2013.
- 12 The non-Hispanic white numbers come from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Sex by Age (White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino)." Comparable numbers for non-Hispanic blacks are not available in the one-year estimates for 2012. There are numbers for "Sex by Age (Black or American Alone)," a count that does include some black Hispanics. Based on that count, the percentage of 20- to 34-year-olds in Philadelphia who consider themselves black is about 37 percent. But in the overall population, about 5 out of 100 individuals in this category are Hispanic. If that were the case among 20- to 34-year-olds—and there is no way of knowing for certain—then non-Hispanic blacks would account for about 35 percent of the total population of the age group.
- 13 U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Population Estimates, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States, States and Counties: April 1, 2010, to July 1, 2012."
- 14 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Educational Attainment."
- 15 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Educational Attainment."
- 16 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Sex by Age by Educational Attainment for the Population 18 Years and Over."
- 17 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Health Insurance Coverage Status by Sex by Age."
- 18 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Age."
- 19 U.S. Census Bureau, Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division, Poverty Statistics Branch, "Examining the Effect of Off-Campus College Students on Poverty Rates," July 29, 2013.
- 20 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012, one-year estimate, "Tenure by Age of Householder." In this data, only one person per housing unit is counted.
- 21 Jim Saks, "To Keep Young, Fix Schools," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 9, 2013, accessed at [http://articles.philly.com/2013-06-09/news/39851739\\_1\\_budget-gap-young-involved-philadelphia-pew](http://articles.philly.com/2013-06-09/news/39851739_1_budget-gap-young-involved-philadelphia-pew).
- 22 Interviewed by The Pew Charitable Trusts on Nov. 2, 2013.
- 23 Interviewed by The Pew Charitable Trusts on Nov. 2, 2013.
- 24 Rolf Pendall, "Big City, Big Ideas: The Millennials in Cities," speech delivered at the University of Toronto, Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance, April 22, 2013, found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZdtVBRUttc>.



### Cover photos:

1. Fuse 2. Harri's Photography 3. J. Fusco for GPTMC 4. J. Fusco for GPTMC



THE  
**PEW**  
CHARITABLE TRUSTS