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## Demographic and Recreation Trends Analysis for the Oak Lawn Park District

Dina Izenstark

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, [dina.izenstark@sjsu.edu](mailto:dina.izenstark@sjsu.edu)

Grace Yan

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Laura Payne

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

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**Demographic and Recreation Trends Analysis  
for the Oak Lawn Park District**

**Written By:**

**Dina Izenstark, B.S.  
Grace Yan, M.S.  
Laura L. Payne, Ph.D.**

**June 27, 2007**

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Office of Recreation and Park Resources  
Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism**

## **Demographic and Recreation Trends Analysis for Oak Lawn, Illinois**

In 2006, the Oak Lawn Park District began a multi-phase strategic planning process. They partnered with the University of Illinois' Office of Recreation and Park Resources to conduct a recreation and park needs assessment/evaluation study. Data for this study was collected from August through December, 2006. In addition to the final study report of findings, the Office of Recreation and Park Resources also conducted an analysis of demographic and recreation trends. Existing data collected by the U.S. Forest Service and the National Sporting Goods Association regarding recreation preferences, behaviors and trends was used in conjunction with the Oak Lawn Park District study findings for this trends analysis. Among the demographics examined, age, race/ethnicity and gender are highlighted in this reported due to their direct impact on people's leisure and recreation decisions and behaviors.

In this report, demographic trends are first presented, followed by detailed analyses of Age, Race/Ethnicity and Gender in regards to recreation trends. Implications for programming within the Oak Lawn Park District are also presented to help with future parks and recreation planning.

### **Demographic Trends Analysis Oak Lawn, Illinois**

**Demographics:** The Oak Lawn Park District in Oak Lawn, Illinois serves nearly 55,245 people throughout Cook County (American FactFinder, 2005). Examining demographic changes in the population is important in order to understand how the changes may impact recreation programs and services. For this analysis, the following demographics were examined: age, race, gender, income, education, and employment.

#### **Age of Residents in Oak Lawn, Illinois**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Oak Lawn 1990</b>	<b>Oak Lawn 2000</b>	<b>Illinois 2000</b>	<b>US 2000</b>
Under 5 years	6.8%	5.4%	7.1%	6.8%
18 years and over	79.7%	78.1%	73.9%	74.3%
65 years and over	20.2%	21.7%	12.1%	12.4%

This data suggests that the proportion of older adults is rising in Oak Lawn, Illinois. In the last 10 years, the population of adults 65 years and over increased by .5% while adults 18 years and over decreased .6% and individuals under 5 years decreased 1.4%. The proportion of older residents in this community is significantly larger (21.7%) than that of both the state (12.1%) and national average (12.4%). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Administration on Aging, 2006), the 65 and older population is projected to double in size by 2030, which means this age group will account for 20 percent of the U.S population. This data is consistent with that projection.

Because a significant percentage of the community is comprised of older adults, it is important to consider the recreation participation trends among this age group. Below is a list of activity preferences according to the National Survey on Recreation and Environment.

**Percentage of U.S. population 65-74 years of age participating by activity:**

- Walking for pleasure (80%)
- Gardening or landscaping for pleasure (76.5%)
- Family Gatherings (67.2%)
- View/photograph natural scenery (52.7%)
- Sightseeing (49.5%)
- Visit Nature Centers (40.7%)
- Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc. (30.8%)

It is also important to note the physical activities in which older adults participate. The following is a list of the most common physical activities:

- Day Hiking (20.1%)
- Bicycling (19.9%)
- Swimming in an outdoor pool (19.2%)
- Swimming in lakes, streams, etc. (18.6%)

Note that statistics illustrate that there is a tremendous decline in physical activities between the ages of 65-74, 75-84, and aged 85 and older.

**Implications for the Oak Lawn Park District**

The following is a summary of suggest strategies the Oak Lawn Park District might consider implementing based upon the older adult activity preferences according to the National Survey on Recreation and Environment (U.S. Forest Service, 2003; U.S. Forest Service, 2005) and the Oak Lawn Park District Community Recreation and Parks Study. Both sets of data were consistent with each other. Each implied a great need for walking, swimming, gardening, and outdoor concerts in the community. Therefore, it is important to utilize this information to improve upon the current programs and facilities to better serve the changing needs of the older adult population.

**Below are several suggestions for integrating more of these activities/programs via the Oak Lawn Park District:**

**1. Walking/Jogging/Hiking Paths for pleasure:**

- Improve the infrastructure of current paths (e.g., clean pathways and creeks/rivers, make it mandatory for dog owners to pick up after their pet(s), make special provisions for safe walkways)
- Provide opportunities for community members to organize walking clubs close to their home (i.e., create a message board, keep track of walkers miles, provide incentives for walking)
- Create more walking, jogging, and biking paths in the community (e.g., build indoor walking track, provide trails with different surfaces, put mile markers within residential areas).

2. Swimming:

- Provide additional special programs directed at older adults (i.e. extend early bird swim hours, senior exercise classes, family swim time, water aerobics, perhaps the Arthritis Foundation Aqua class)
- Explore the feasibility of building an indoor aquatic facility that would include a warm-water therapy pool. Healthcare organizations make excellent partners in these ventures.

3. Gardening or landscaping:

- Provide more programs directed specifically at older adults similar to the "Nature's helpful plants of our area program" that teach the basics of vegetable, plant, and flower gardens. Consider partnering with the University of Illinois Extension's Master Gardener Program. To explore potential partnership and programming opportunities, we suggest you make contact with:

**Matthew Kostelnick**  
Extension Unit Educator, Horticulture  
University of Illinois Extension  
Cook County Unit  
300 N. Elizabeth, Suite 310  
Chicago, IL 60607  
P: 312-752-4692  
F: 312-752-4691  
E-mail: [mkosteln@uiuc.edu](mailto:mkosteln@uiuc.edu)

- Implement a community garden (i.e. allowing individuals to be responsible for specific spot of land)
- Organize a tree and flower planting special event throughout the community
- Encourage indoor and outdoor gardening at the home by providing a "How to Garden" education workshop

4. Outdoor Concerts and Movies

- Implement a weekly or bi-monthly outdoor summer concert that the whole family can enjoy (i.e. use local bands and musicians as well as integrating special events like "Oak Lawn/American Idol").
- Implement a monthly family movie/theatre night (i.e. expand the Fall on the Green program throughout the summer)

The above are only suggestions to add to the current programs and facilities. It appears that Oak Lawn provides many swim and nature programs for youth but has limited programming opportunities for older adults. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to consider additional programming within each of these areas in order to better meet the needs of this growing segment of the Oak Lawn population.

## Ethnicity

The Oak Lawn Park District serves a fairly diverse community with various racial/ethnic backgrounds. The table below describes the past and current racial/ethnic composition of the community:

Race/ethnicity	Oak Lawn 1990	Oak Lawn 2000	Illinois 2000	US 2000
White	98.2%	93.3%	73.5%	75.1%
African American	0.1%	1.2%	15.1%	12.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.9%
Asian	1.0%	1.7%	3.4%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Some other race	0.4%	1.6%	5.8%	5.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2.4%	5.3%	10.7%	12.5%

This data indicates some moderate changes in the ethnic composition of the population over the last 10 years. The White population has decreased 4.9% while the number of Hispanics/Latinos of any race, African Americans, and Asians has increased (2.9%, 1%, and .7% respectively). The racial/ethnic diversity in Oak Lawn may appear modest because the percentage of Whites is significantly larger (nearly 20%) than that of Illinois and the U.S. However, these statistics illustrate that Oak Lawn is becoming a more diverse community. The U.S Census Bureau predicts that the ethnic make-up of the U.S will continue to experience a significant rate of growth especially from the Hispanic population. As of July 1, 2005 the Hispanic population became the fastest growing minority group constituting 14% of the U.S population. In 2050 it is projected that Hispanics will comprise 24% of the nation's total population.

Because Whites and Hispanics account for the largest proportion of the community it is important to consider the current recreation trends of these groups. The following is a comparison of both racial/ethnic groups according to the National Survey on Recreation and Environment.

### Percentage of Hispanics of Mexican Origin participating in land-based outdoor activities:

- Family Gathering (68%)
- Walking for pleasure (62%)
- Day Hiking (49.3%)
- Picnicking (49.1%)
- Gardening or landscaping for pleasure (45%)

### Percentage of Whites not of Hispanic Origin participating in land-based outdoor activities:

- Walking for pleasure (85.5%)
- Family Gathering (75.1%)
- Gardening or landscaping for pleasure (70.2%)
- Driving for pleasure (59.1%)
- Picnicking (56.7%)

These statistics suggest that as the composition of the U.S changes so will the most popular outdoor recreation activities.

### **Implications for Oak Lawn**

Based upon the above racial/ethnic demographic analysis and the Oak Lawn Park District study, the following is a list of suggestions for programming and facilities. A few of the activities that have the highest participation rates have been previously mentioned (i.e., walking for pleasure and gardening); however in this section, tips on family gatherings and the provision of diverse recreation opportunities for the Hispanic population are discussed.

**Below are several suggestions for integrating more of these activities/programs via the Oak Lawn Park District:**

#### **1. Family Gatherings**

- Improve current infrastructure through the provision of more picnic tables, barbeques, benches, and cleaner park and picnic areas
- Provide more open spaces designed for families to come and enjoy the outdoors
- Concerts in the park
- Consider creating culturally diverse special events (i.e. Italian Fest, parades, Cinco de Mayo celebration)

The Hispanic population has different recreation needs and it is important to identify those differences when programming for this population. Below some of the identifiable recreational characteristics of the Hispanic population are described in order to assist recreation professionals with program design and delivery for this population.

**Ways to Reach Out to Hispanics in Recreation according to the National Recreation and Park Association (Gerken, McDonald, & McChesney, 2005):**

- Create “gathering” type of activities rather than organized activities by providing a variety of open spaces and facilities available for social gatherings
- Eliminate language barriers by hiring bilingual staff and using bilingual promotional material that includes photos of diverse people
- Program with diverse groups rather than for them through partnerships and seeking their opinions and hearing what they have to say
- Invite, involve, and include Hispanics in recreation services

### Gender Statistics for Oak Lawn

Gender	Oak Lawn 1990	Oak Lawn 2000	Illinois 2000	US 2000
Male	46.5%	46.9%	49.0%	49.1%
Female	53.5%	53.1%	51.0%	50.9%

These gender statistics indicate very little change (.4%) in the ratio of males to females in Oak Lawn over the last 10 years. However, the household composition of American families has significantly changed over the last decade creating new recreation trends for both males and females. A number of gender factors have had significant effects on recreation participation. For example, a direct effect of higher education levels, workforce participation, delayed marriages, and early-marriage divorce rates has caused more women to become independent and self-reliant (Kelly & Warnick, 1999, p.12).

The increased demand for women's programming has meant more programming for women. Additionally, women are more likely to engage in a variety of recreational activities including ones previously dominated by males (Kelly & Warnick, 1999, p. 27). Therefore, it is important to be aware of the gender differences in the provision of recreation opportunities.

**The following is a description of recreation trends and identifies market participation by gender according to Kelly and Warnick (1999):**

1. Walking for exercise:
  - There is no gender bias in participation rates.
2. Gardening:
  - Females outnumber males and often double the male rate of participation in indoor gardening and outdoor flower gardening. However, gender rates are almost equal in vegetable gardening.
3. Swimming:
  - There is no gender bias in participation rates.
4. Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc.:
  - Females attend country music and classical music concerts more so than men while there are minor gender differences at pop and rock shows.

Recreation participation in terms of types of activities, frequency, and style vary by gender. Thus, it is important to look at the composition of the population in order to determine the recreation demands of the community.

### Implications for Oak Lawn

Based upon the information above, it is important to provide programs that address the needs of both males and females. Since the need for women's programming has experienced steady



growth over the last decade, it is essential to meet the demand of this rising market. Here are some examples of ways to meet this demand:

- Provide adequate programs to meet the recreation demands of women (i.e. Tai Chi, Yoga, Jazz Aerobics, etc.)
- Offer programs specifically designed for individuals and not the whole family
- Provide child care during programs for which there is a need

**Other Demographic Statistics in Oak Lawn: 1990 to 2000 and compared to Illinois & the U.S.**

As a part of the recreation trends analysis, demographic information for Oak Lawn was obtained and is summarized below for the information of Oak Lawn Park District Staff and the Board of Commissioners.

**Income**

Income	Oak Lawn 1990	Oak Lawn 2000	Illinois 2000	US 2000
Median household income	38,724	47,585	46,590	41,994
Median family income	X	60,575	55,545	50,046
Per capita income	16,717	23,877	23,104	21,587
Families below poverty level	7.3%	3.9%	7.8%	9.2%
Individuals below poverty level	X	5.4%	15.1%	12.4%

**Education**

Education	Oak Lawn 1990	Oak Lawn 2000	Illinois 2000	US 2000
Below Bachelor's degree	X	79.1%	74%	X
Bachelor's degree	10%	14.1%	16.5%	X
Graduate or professional degree	3.7%	6.8%	9.5%	X

**Occupation**

Occupation	Oak Lawn 1990	Oak Lawn 2000	Illinois 2000	US 2000
Employed	X	56.2%	61.2%	X
Unemployed	X	2.3%	3.9%	X
Management, professional, & related occupations	X	31.9%	34.2%	X
Service occupations	X	10.7%	13.9%	X
Manufacturing	X	12.1%	16.0%	X

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- Kelly, J., & Warnick, R. (1999). Recreation trends and markets: the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing, inc.

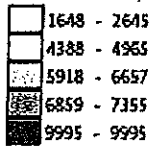
Persons per Square Mile: 2000

Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data  
Oak Lawn village, Illinois by Census Tract

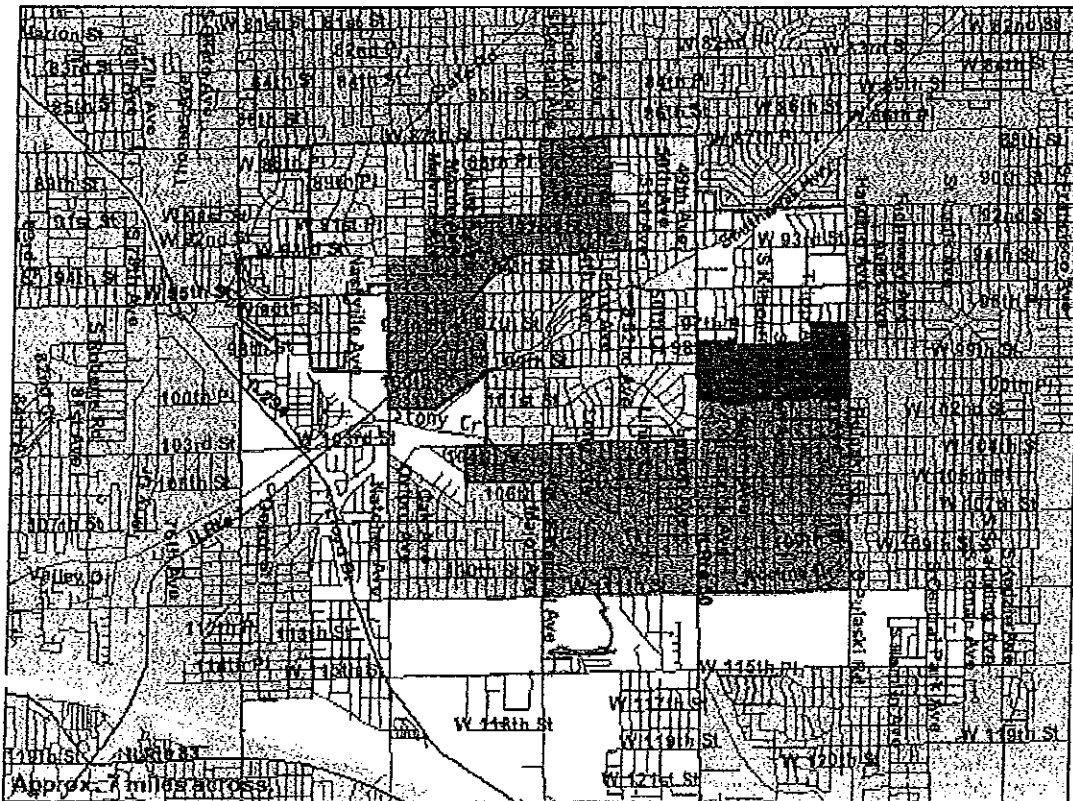
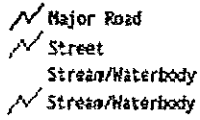
Legend

Data Classes

Persons/Sq Mile



Features



## Demographics

### Oak Lawn (village), Illinois

People	Oak Lawn	Illinois
Population, 2003 estimate	55,136	12,653,544
Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003	-0.2%	1.9%
Population, 2000	55,245	12,419,293
Population, percent change, 1990 to 2000	-1.9%	8.6%
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2000	5.4%	7.1%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2000	21.9%	26.1%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2000	21.7%	12.1%
Female persons, percent, 2000	53.1%	51.0%
White persons, percent, 2000 (a)	93.3%	73.5%
Black or African American persons, percent, 2000 (a)	1.2%	15.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2000 (a)	0.2%	0.3%
Asian persons, percent, 2000 (a)	1.7%	3.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2000 (a)	-0-	-0-
Persons reporting some other race, percent, 2000 (a)	1.6%	5.8%
Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2000	1.9%	1.9%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2000	5.3%	12.3%
Living in same house in 1995 and 2000, pct age 5+, 2000	69.3%	56.8%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2000	11.5%	12.3%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	17.5%	19.2%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2000	83.5%	81.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2000	20.9%	26.1%
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2000	30.8	28.0
Housing units, 2000	22,846	4,885,615
Homeownership rate, 2000	82.9%	67.3%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2000	\$157,000	\$130,800
Households, 2000	22,220	4,591,779
Persons per household, 2000	2.46	2.63
Median household income, 1999	\$47,585	\$46,590
Per capita money income, 1999	\$23,877	\$23,104
Persons below poverty, percent, 1999	5.4%	10.7%

Oak Lawn Illinois

**Business**

Wholesale trade sales, 1997 (\$1000)	71,249	275,968,383
Retail sales, 1997 (\$1000)	1,039,908	108,002,177
Retail sales per capita, 1997	\$17,977	\$8,992
Accommodation and foodservices sales, 1997 (\$1000)	74,442	14,826,805
Total number of firms, 1997	4,040	882,053
Minority-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	5.8%	12.5%
Women-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	24.9%	27.2%

**Geography**

	Oak Lawn	Illinois
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	9	55,584
Persons per square mile, 2000	6,427.3	223.4
FIPS Code	54820	17
Counties	<u>Cook County</u>	