

As of 2000, the median age among MSA dwellers ranged from 32.0 in the Memphis MSA to 42.4 in the Hot Springs MSA. By 2020, it is projected that the median age will be the lowest in the Jonesboro MSA at 33.5, and the highest still in the Hot Springs MSA, at 46.1 years. The age dependency ratio among the MSAs varied in 2000 from a low of 67.3 in Little Rock-North Little Rock to 81.8 in Hot Springs. In 2020, the relative positions of Little Rock-North Little Rock and Hot Springs will not have changed, though their age dependency ratios will both have increased, to 68.2 and 86.8, respectively. In three of the MSAs the age dependency ratios are projected to increase by 2020: Texarkana, Fort Smith, and Fayetteville. A lower age dependency ratio indicates a larger workforce, proportionate to the whole population.

In 2000, the ratio of aged persons to youth (persons aged 65 and over per 100 persons under 20) ranged from 105.1 in the Hot Springs MSA down to 36.6 in the Memphis MSA. These MSAs are projected to hold the same relative positions in 2020, when the Hot Springs MSA has a 109.3 ratio and the Memphis MSA has a ratio of 38.3.

The relative rankings of the ratios of aged persons to youth in the Hot Springs and Memphis MSAs is due substantially to the numbers of children in the MSAs. In 2000, the child dependency ratio (a measure of persons under 20 per 100 persons aged 20-64) was highest in the Memphis MSA at 55.9 and lowest in Hot Springs at 39.9. By 2020 the ratio is expected to decline slightly to 54.5 in Memphis, while in Hot Springs it increases to 41.4, keeping the two MSAs in the same relative positions. Only two of the MSAs are expected to experience an increase in their child dependency ratios: Hot Springs and Jonesboro, with Jonesboro's ratio increasing a total of 8.7% over the 20 year span.

Table 6
Dependency Ratios in Arkansas by Urban Area

Area Name (*Arkansas share of the MSA whenever the MSA is a multiple state MSA.)	Year	Fayetteville- Springdale- Rogers*	Fort Smith*	Hot Springs, AR	Jonesboro, AR	Little Rock- North Little Rock, AR	Memphis *	Pine Bluff, AR	Texark- ana*
Median Age	2000	33.3	35.6	42.4	34.0	34.8	32.0	35.2	34.9
	2020	35.4	37.3	46.1	33.5	37.5	35.0	36.1	38.5
Age Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	72.9	74.7	81.8	71.2	67.3	76.4	79.5	75.5
	2020	69.3	73.5	86.6	73.5	68.2	75.4	76.1	70.8
Youth Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	49.2	48.8	39.9	46.3	45.2	55.9	51.6	48.0
	2020	46.2	47.2	41.4	50.3	43.6	54.5	49.7	44.6
Old Age Depedency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	23.7	25.8	41.9	24.9	22.0	20.5	27.9	27.5
	2020	23.1	26.3	45.2	23.2	24.5	20.9	26.4	26.2
Ratio of Aged Persons to Youth (Per 100)	2000	48.3	52.9	105.1	53.9	48.7	36.6	54.0	57.3
	2020	50.1	55.6	109.3	46.2	56.2	38.3	53.2	58.7
Dependency Ratio = (Age under 20 + Age 65 and over) / (Age 20-64) X 100									
Youth dependency ratio = Age under 20 / Age 20 - 64 X 100									
Old age dependency ratio = Age 65 and over / Age 20 - 64 X100									

Urban and Rural Areas

One way to differentiate populations is by urban/rural status. By definition, the urban population includes all persons living within a Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The urban areas of the state have been growing in their total share of Arkansas' population compared with the rural areas. In 2000, 56.7% of the total Arkansas population lived in urban areas; by 2020, that percentage is projected to increase to 61%.