

In 2000, the proportion of the workforce to the entire population was the largest in Central Arkansas, with an age dependency ratio of 65.5, while it was the smallest in the White River area, with a high 81.7 age dependency ratio. By 2020, these ratios are expected to decrease in Southwest Arkansas (from 76.3 to 73.2), and marginally in Northwest Arkansas (from 69.3 to 68.3). They are expected to rise in every other emerging urban area, most markedly in the White River area where it will increase to 89.9. It is interesting to note that in every emerging urban area except the White River area the age dependency ratio is lower than the state's ratio as a whole, in both 2000 and 2020. This suggests a larger potential labor force proportion among the populations of the emerging urban areas than in the state.

With regard to specific youth dependency and old age dependency ratios, the youth dependency ratios appeared lowest in the White River area (46.8) and highest in Northeast Arkansas (56.4) in 2000. By 2020, the youth dependency ratio is expected to range from a low of 46.8 in the White River region to a high of 52.2 in Northeast Arkansas.

In 2000, the old age dependency ratio ranged from a low of 16.0 in Central Arkansas to a high of 34.9 in the White River region. In 2020, the White River area's ratio is expected to remain the highest among emerging urban areas, at 48.8, while the Northeast region barely edges out Central Arkansas for the lowest ratio, at 21.4 and 21.5, respectively.

Finally, the ratio of aged persons to youth ranged from 30.3 to 74.6 in 2000, Northeast Arkansas and White River representing the lowest and highest ratios. By 2020, their positions will not have changed, but their ratios will both be considerably higher, with Northeast Arkansas at 41.1 and White River at 119.0.

Table 11
Dependency Ratios in Arkansas in Emerging Urban Areas

Area/Statistic	Year	NWAR	SWAR	CAR	MidNorth	NEAR	White River
Median Age	2000	32	32.9	33.6	34.3	35.2	41.2
	2020	34	35.1	35.6	37.2	37.9	47.0
Age Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	69	76.3	65.5	72.3	73.5	81.7
	2020	68	73.2	67.8	74.8	73.6	89.9
Youth Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	51	54.8	49.6	51.0	56.4	46.8
	2020	47	46.7	46.2	46.1	52.2	41.0
Old Age Dependency Ratio (Per 100)	2000	18	21.5	16.0	21.2	17.1	34.9
	2020	22	26.5	21.5	28.7	21.4	48.8
Ratio of Aged Persons to Youth (Per 100)	2000	35	39.3	32.2	41.6	30.3	74.6
	2020	47	56.7	46.6	62.2	41.1	119.0
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							