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Elgin officials credit big census push for ensuring city’s 6.1% population increase documented

By **GLORIA CASAS**
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Elgin’s population grew by 6.1% over the last decade, according to U.S. Census 2020. Attractions like the downtown Elgin Farmers Market have helped enhance the city's appeal for new residents, officials say. (Gloria Casas / The Courier-News)

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Elgin moved on up the list of the largest cities in the state with a 6.1% increase in population over the last decade, U.S. Census data released this week showed.

The city’s population is 114,797, an increase from 108,188, according to 2020 data. The growth makes Elgin the sixth-largest city in Illinois.

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The only cities with a greater number of residents are, in descending order, Chicago, Aurora, Joliet, Naperville and Rockford.

It's great news for Elgin, Mayor David Kaptain said in a news release. "Elgin is a city of choice, with the highest quality services and amenities. It's no wonder so many are choosing to live here and do business. Elgin's growth will continue to attract new residential and commercial developments."

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Consistent with national and state trends, Elgin's population is more diverse than it was 10 years ago. Hispanic/Latino residents increased from 43.6% to 45.7% and its Asian populations grew from 5.4% to 5.9%, city spokeswoman Molly Gillespie said.

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"I'm proud that Elgin is home to a growing diverse community," Kaptain said. "The 2020 census data indicates our continued need to make sure that those growing populations are represented in government and other areas of decision making."

Key to getting an accurate picture was having as many people as possible complete the census form, Assistant City Manager Karina Nava said in the release.

"I want to thank all of our residents who got counted and who helped get their families counted," said Nava, who served as co-chair of the Elgin's 2020 Census Complete Count Committee.

"We need to continue evolving how we engage with our diverse population. The growing number of Hispanic/Latino residents reaffirms the city's commitment to efforts already underway to expand language accessibility within our city services, engagement and communications."

Getting an accurate count was also critically important for Elgin because the number dictates congressional and legislative representation and the amount of federal funding the city receives for programs, services and infrastructure, Gillespie said.

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federal funding provided to the community, she said.

Elgin formed the 2020 Census Complete Count Committee in 2018 and did extensive outreach work before and during the census.

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targets and push ourselves along to get as many people counted as we could," he said.

Committee members and volunteers went door-to-door throughout the community, including churches, to get people counted, he said.

"They did a lot of work to get this done," Kaptain said.

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"Our subcommittee chairs and their organizations, our advisory council, our 2020 census representatives, our outreach team members, community leaders, and so many people worked tirelessly to get people counted," Denise Raleigh, Elgin's 2020 census co-chair, said in the release.

"When the pandemic hit, people continued to work virtually. This was a remarkable group effort," she said.

Editor's note: A story published Friday incorrectly stated the percentage increase of Elgin's population between 2010 and 2020. The city went from 108,188 people to 114,797, an increase of 6.1%, according to 2020 U.S Census data.

Gloria Casas is a freelance reporter for The Courier-News.

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