

Living in East Orange, New Jersey for almost 4 years, I've witnessed a lot of unpleasant and pleasant situations. Fortunately, I've lived in many different areas of East Orange and experienced *all* the neighborhoods of East Orange that make up the city. Because of this, I also have a larger perspective on East Orange. East Orange has a higher crime rate than some of its neighboring cities and struggles to compete with the other cities. Living here for as long as I have, it is not hard to believe that. It is a city with many issues that have developed the many attitudes of the people who live here and a city that is in need of repair. Instead of these issues prompting people to do something about them, people have only learned to *deal* with them. Over many years of living life with the people of East Orange, I have witnessed this with my own eyes. A lot of the people here cannot and refuse to help themselves, let alone the community.

The streets are notoriously filled with homeless people and delinquent children who have nowhere to go and nothing to do. Because East Orange is mostly residential, the homeless population doesn't have many options to choose where they'll stay during the day. They spend most of their day roaming the streets or frequenting local businesses, which the owners and community have come to accept. Some choose to beg on the freeway that runs through central East Orange. The homeless people here can be very dangerous and can make a place feel unsafe quickly. This is something one has to accept when living in East Orange. Children (between the ages of 12-18) are notorious for roaming the streets during school hours, which is never a good sign. The local public high schools have bad academic reputations and very low student test scores.

There are a lot of streets that are consumed with abandoned homes. This causes a multitude of issues. In June of 2017, my cousin and I both drove around all of East Orange to count how many of these abandoned homes actually existed. The reality was staggering at about 100 individual homes. Below are some images of abandoned homes that I took.



This home below happens to be located on a busy street of East Orange.



Unfortunately, homes like these become dumping grounds for garbage and opportunities for other unpleasant things.

Beyond some of the hardships that East Orange has, there are people in the community who care about the discomfiting conditions of life here. I have witnessed people in the community who help one another and practice behaviors that keep the community safe and livable such as; picking up trash/ disposing of their own trash in garbage cans, getting to know their neighbors, curbing their dogs, keeping their homes (exterior) neat and tidy and speaking up when they witness unacceptable behaviors. These behaviors decrease fear, which is significant to a community with a high crime rate. Unfortunately, there are only a small amount of people who actually do these things. However, if there were more opportunities for community involvement and togetherness, we would see an increase in these types of behaviors.

According to the United States Census Bureau data as of 2010, 64,270 people populate East Orange, New Jersey. This census gives us direct detail on the statuses of the people who live

here including; sex and age, race and ethnicity and crime. Collecting this kind of data is important because, it is a statistical representation of our population that helps us understand *who* populates our communities and what they are specifically made up of. Below are representations of the population of East Orange, New Jersey.

**AGE**

| <b>Subject</b>    | <b>Population Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Age               |                          |                |
| Under 5 years     | 4,650                    | 7.2            |
| 5 to 9 years      | 4,395                    | 6.8            |
| 10 to 14 years    | 4,468                    | 7.0            |
| 15 to 19 years    | 4,805                    | 7.5            |
| 20 to 24 years    | 4,708                    | 7.3            |
| 25 to 29 years    | 4,567                    | 7.1            |
| 30 to 34 years    | 4,558                    | 7.1            |
| 35 to 39 years    | 4,257                    | 6.6            |
| 40 to 44 years    | 4,465                    | 6.9            |
| 45 to 49 years    | 4,624                    | 7.2            |
| 50 to 54 years    | 4,424                    | 6.9            |
| 55 to 59 years    | 3,634                    | 5.7            |
| 60 to 64 years    | 3,143                    | 4.9            |
| 65 to 69 years    | 2,342                    | 3.6            |
| 70 to 74 years    | 1,903                    | 3.0            |
| 75 to 79 years    | 1,371                    | 2.1            |
| 80 to 84 years    | 991                      | 1.5            |
| 85 years and over | 965                      | 1.5            |

This data collection shows the age ranges of people who populate East Orange. As we can see, the majority of people fall between the ages of 10-54 years old with the median age being 37.

The age range with the highest population number is 15-19 years old. This tells us that there are a lot of teenage children living in East Orange, which makes it even more crucial for the public school system to be strong. Many of the public school students living here are living in poverty, with the children below poverty level standing at 15.3% (as of 2016), which is above the New Jersey state average of 14.3%. Of the residents living in East Orange, 27.2% of them are living below the poverty line, with the New Jersey state average at 13.9%.

Another crucial factor for East Orange (because of their high teenager population) is having places for children and teenagers to go and have something to do when they're out of school. Other than the small amount of local parks and food establishments and the East Orange YMCA, there is not much here for a teenage child to do. I could assume this is a reason that they are notorious for frequenting the streets and getting into troubling behaviors, such as harassing community goers, loitering and breaching peace. In a place like East Orange, is it especially important to have establishments catered to children and young adults so that they don't think about or have time for troubling behaviors.

**RACE**

| <b>Subject</b>                    | <b>Population Number</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Race                              |                          |                |
| White                             | 2,657                    | 4.1            |
| Hispanic or Latino (of any race)  | 5,095                    | 7.9            |
| Black or African American         | 56,887                   | 88.5           |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | 248                      | 0.4            |
| Asian                             | 465                      | 0.7            |
| Some Other Race                   | 2,370                    | 3.7            |
| Two or More Races                 | 1,605                    | 2.5            |

We can see from the chart above that the most populated race in East Orange is Black or African American. This means that East Orange is predominantly one race. This is problematic for children because, they will not be exposed to other races, which could inaccurately morph their perceptions of the world. Specifically for poorer children in East Orange, they already face the challenge of not seeing being able to see the world beyond what they know, because of financial difficulties at home that hold them back.

**CRIME DATA (2016)**

| <b>Statistic</b> | <b>Total Reported</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Murder           | 6                     |
| Rapes            | 22                    |
| Robberies        | 179                   |
| Assaults         | 230                   |
| Burglaries       | 205                   |
| Thefts           | 462                   |
| Auto Theft       | 231                   |
| Property         | 898                   |

From this data, theft is the most commonly committed crime in East Orange. The overall crime rates for East Orange are dispiriting but unfortunately, poverty and crime are usually together. Over many decades East Orange has reduced its crime however, it is still problematic. There are said to be more crimes occurring beyond the “reported” crimes, which I can attest to. I’ve witnessed incidents ranging from trespassing to assaulting that never had police involvement. Some people become so paralyzed with fear that they do not know what to do or how to respond. A lot of people here refuse to risk putting themselves in harms way to get police involved in an issue that does not involve them.