



# Demographic Profile

Veritas Christian Academy (VCA) is currently located in the township of Sparta, NJ which has a population of approximately 19,000 across 36.8 square miles of rural communities. The majority of that population is 40-69 years old (almost half) with a relatively smaller population of young families. That impacts new students for VCA with a challenge to maintain enrollment.

According to a recent census, Sparta Township's race/ethnicity study reflects the following:

87% White	1% Mixed Race
2% Black	7% Hispanic
3% Asian	0% Native, Islander, Other

VCA is representative of these statistics in that while not terribly diverse and mostly white, there are students representing these other designations proportionate to the region.

88% White	4% Mixed
2% Black	6% Hispanic

VCA's population is 54% girls and 46% boys.

Sparta has a slightly higher household income level than the county overall but in both cases, poverty is extremely low, less than 2% in the surrounding area. Accordingly, in Sparta most homes are owned and occupied by the same. Median home values are 378,800. But that is not necessarily representative of the region in which there is much more variation of property values and income levels than in the immediate area. If only looking at Sparta demographic information one might think there is little need for scholarships and need based grants but VCA has a robust Opportunity Fund that assists families financially.

As for employment, it is very common for a Sussex County resident to drive "down below" to commute to work. The average commute is 40-60 minutes which is 25% higher than other commuters through the state. It is one of the reasons that young families and others are making something of an exodus out of the region. During the last census, Sparta recorded a migration rate of nearly 7% while the region of Sussex County was at almost a 10% departure rate. No other region in the state has a population shift occurring at this level. This migration is being filled by the slowly increasing rates of non-white residents, particularly Hispanic residents. A still small but incrementally increasing population of Spanish speakers is bringing a new diversity to VCA and in the years to come will impact the program and State funding for ESL grants which may be needed. The District of Sparta currently receives \$0 for ESL because it did not identify in any of its schools a threshold to qualify for the funds, thus affecting VCA.

According to that same census, Sparta has a population representing a preference for a college degree but not necessarily advanced degrees. There is a very low population not gaining a high school diploma but those numbers about both ends of the spectrum, degree level or high school completion, reverse as you move outside of Sparta to the surrounding county.

No geographic demographic summary would be complete without addressing the Christian community of Sussex County. As a microcosm of this region, there is a distinct influence from the original Reformed Dutch settlers that is still felt. Norwegian settlers throughout the region founded Evangelical Free churches like the one VCA rents from. The impact of these two groups is a strongly conservative county distinct from neighboring New Jersey counties (one of the only "red"

counties in a democratic stronghold “blue” state). Some of the qualities most distinct to this individualistic community would include: hard working, entrepreneurial, conservative, traditional, committed to their churches and neighbors with very strongly expressed opinions, particularly when it involves their community and families. And while Christian education is a priority that can often be accomplished through homeschooling rather than traditional Christian schools. This is a huge issue for VCA enrollment as many parents have experience in and access to others who engage in homeschooling, including established and helpful homeschooling cooperatives to assist them should they choose that educational option.