



1B.

NATALITY: MATERNAL CHARACTERISTICS AND NEWBORN'S HEALTH

The number of resident births reached its recent peak in 2007 at 102,687 (**Table 1B-2**). In 2008, the number of resident births declined to 99,215; the first annual decline since 1991 (which, like 2008, also was an economic downturn year). Since 2008, the number of births declined until 2011, reaching a low of 85,190 births. In 2012, the number of resident births slightly increased to 85,725. The 84,963 resident births recorded in 2013 is the lowest number of births in Arizona since 1999 (n = 80,505).

There were striking differences in how the number of births changed from 2007 to 2013 by mother's race/ethnicity. Compared to 2007, the number of births for all combined racial/ethnic groups was 17.3 percent lower in 2013, although the number of births rose by 13.5 percent for Black or African American mothers. Hispanic or Latino women experienced a decrease of 27.7 percent during this period (**Figure 1B-1**).

Since the 2008 edition of this report, we have been pointing out that Hispanics, unlike any other racial/ethnic group in the State, faced not only the economic recession (shared by all), but also additional challenges such as the employer-sanction law (a penalty on employers hiring undocumented workers), and a widespread practice of e-verify (checking the legal-residence status of those seeking employment). Considering these factors, the decrease in births to Hispanic or Latino mothers is likely correlated with the social and economic conditions this particular group has been facing, especially considering the estimated number of Hispanic women of childbearing age (15 – 44 years) has increased from 405,306 in 2007 to 452,638 in 2013.