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Colorado's population is still growing, state demographers say. Here's what the numbers show.

Colorado still is adding people but data shows the state is losing its "edge."



Tamara Chuang4:00 AM MST on Nov 9, 2026

Packed with PowerPoint slides and fresh data, state demographers at their annual summit Friday spoke about how Colorado is changing (we're more diverse), needs more housing (affordable, preferably) and is losing its edge (the "secret sauce").

But the one thing that Neal Marquez, who became the Colorado state demographer in July, wanted to iterate was this:

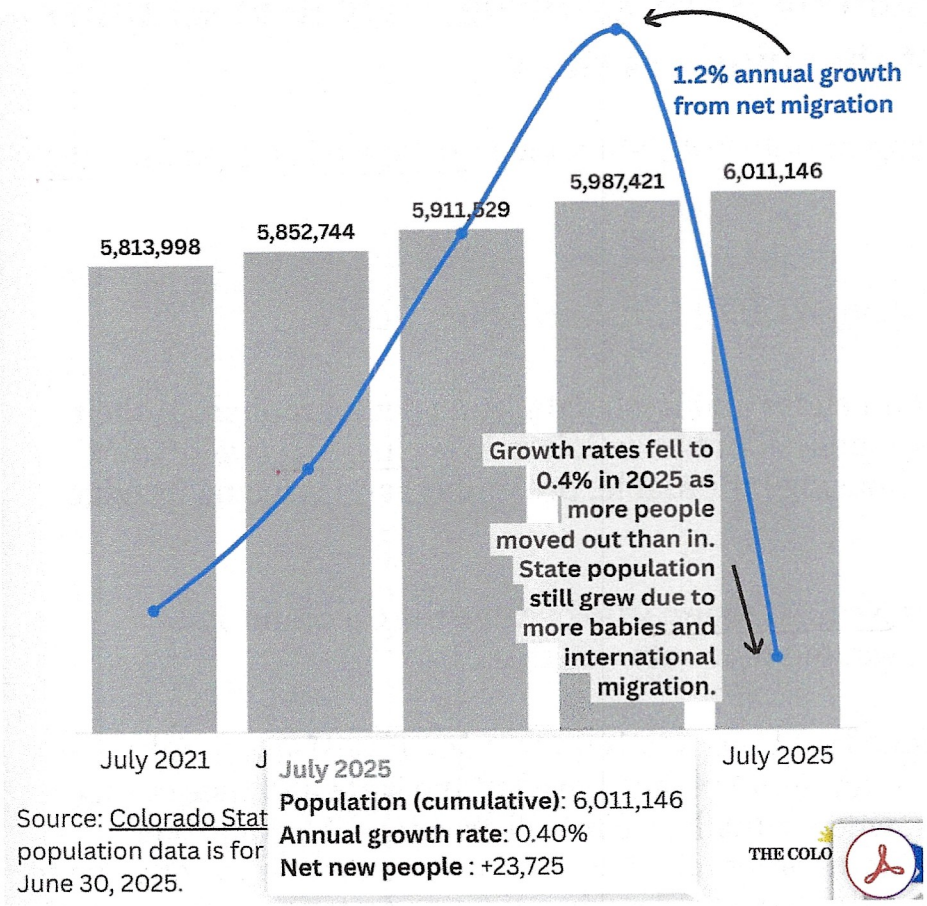
"There's this sort of idea that Colorado is on this downward spiral. And that there are news articles that more people have left the state and there's this decline in population, when actually, we're still growing," Marquez said. "That's not true of all states across the U.S. And we're expected to continue to grow over the next 20 to 30 years and again, at a rate, faster than the United States."

Population estimates have been coming in bit by bit since spring from the U.S. Census Bureau. State demographers also do their own research — "And dare I say better," said demographer Nancy Gideon, who shared population updates at the State Demography Summit. They track population down to the municipal level, by looking at building permits, household occupancy rate and "any information ... on how many new housing units there are."

With the new data, the state's population, as of July 1, 2025, was 6,011,146, up 0.4% from a year earlier. That's 23,725 more people.

Colorado's population 2021-2025

Colorado's population is still rising but in 2025, the annual 0.4% growth rate was the lowest in at least 25 years. The grey bars are the cumulative growth. The blue line is the annual rate of change



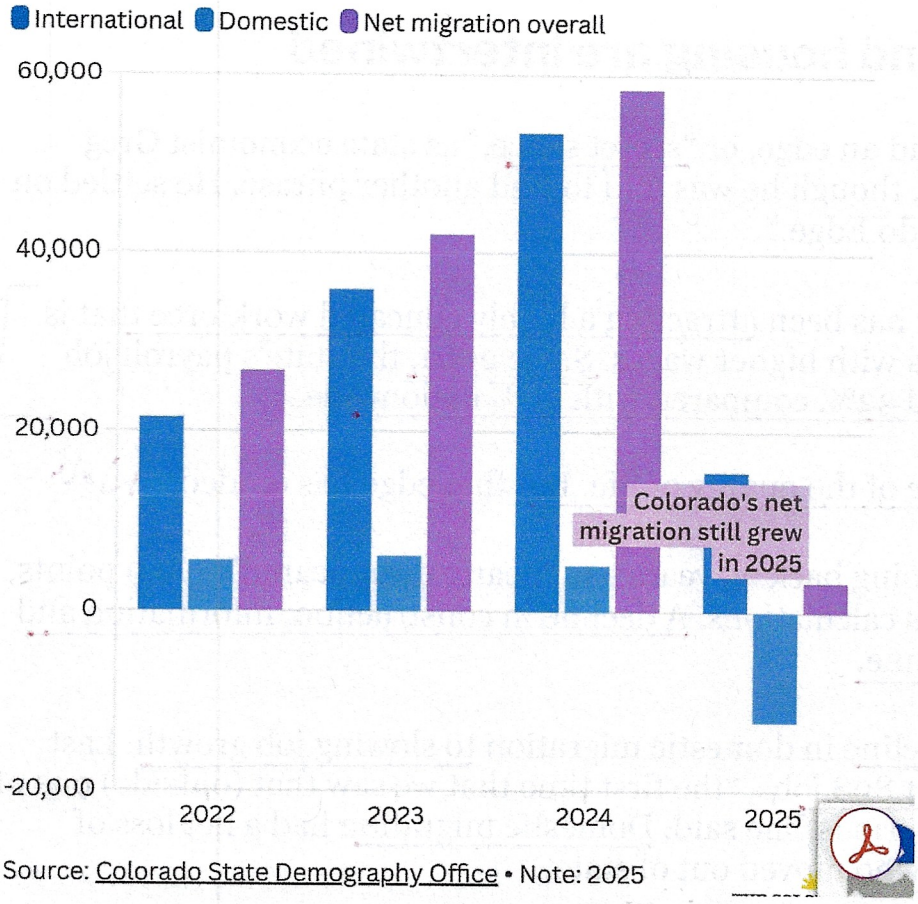
Fewer deaths and more births added 20,000 people to the state's population, or the "natural increase" that takes the net of births minus deaths. It was the highest number of births since 2017, Gideon said.

International migration also added a net 15,000 more people to Colorado last year.

But one important measure did decline: domestic migration, which was negative for the first year since the early 2000s. More people left Colorado than moved in during the 12 months ending July 1, 2025, for a net loss of approximately 3,451.

"Domestic" migration to Colorado fell in 2025

Federal immigration policies in 2025 contributed to Colorado's slowest net migration growth in years. Domestic migration, or people who moved to or from other states, fell sharply, which the State Demography Office linked to "humanitarian migrants" who did not stay in Colorado. The loss was offset by international moves, keeping net migration positive. ➔ **View larger**



Source: Colorado State Demography Office • Note: 2025

Officials credit the dip to "humanitarian migrants," or people from other countries affected by U.S. immigration policies. Those who were bussed in from other states in 2023 and 2024 but did not stay in Colorado were part of the domestic out-migration. States like Texas and Florida also saw big declines last year, though their overall domestic migration grew slower.

Colorado demographers dug further into the population trends because they can get better data by requesting it from local municipalities and counties. While Colorado didn't see its population decline last year or in the past six years, 23 counties did.

Jefferson and Boulder counties lost the most people, at around -3,302 and -2,442, respectively. Both followed the state trend, with an increase in births but a loss of people moving to another state. Weld County gained 46,639 people, thanks to more births and more new residents.

"Net migration has always been the variable that is most fluctuating," Gideon said.

People, jobs and housing are intertwined

Colorado has long had an edge, or "secret sauce," as state economist Greg Totten likes to call it, though he was told to find another phrase. He settled on calling it the "Colorado Edge."

Colorado's speciality has been attracting a highly educated workforce that is coveted by industries with higher wages. Since 2001, the state's payroll job growth has increased 32%, compared with 20% nationwide.

People came because of the quality of life. But that edge has eroded.

That 12-point lead going back 25 years has "nearly disappeared" to 0.9 points, according to Totten's calculations. A decline in construction, information and finance jobs is to blame.

Totten linked the decline in domestic migration to slowing job growth. Last year, the state shed 4,898 jobs, "the first time that we saw that (outside) one of those recessionary periods," he said. Domestic migration had a net loss of about 3,400 people who moved out of state.

The healthcare industry did well, gaining more than 13,300 jobs. But add up all the other sectors and they lost a combined total of 18,300 net jobs. Job growth was slow for the U.S., too, up 0.5%, but Colorado fell further behind last year at negative 0.1%, he said.

"We still had some sectors where we were ahead (of the U.S.)," Totten said. "Where we lag the most is construction and information. And construction, in particular, this kind of ties into the housing story. Construction is expensive here. We're competing nationally, and the last few years, it's also really been supplanted nationally by a lot (of) construction work has been moving into data centers and it's not a big industry in Colorado."

The analysis didn't include the impact of potential new policies, such as Amendment 87, which will raise the income tax rate on the state's highest individual earners and businesses. Many business leaders and organizations opposed it, including Gov. Jared Polis and governor-elect Phil Weiser, saying it would discourage companies from moving or staying here.

Hanna Scovill, vice president and senior economist at Pacey Economics, said Colorado has become more middle of the pack. But it's hard to track all the businesses that are coming or going.

"It's a people issue too," she said. "We do have a really highly educated population. But a lot of that is coming in through net migration, so if we're seeing some of those slowdowns in net migration and we're relying very heavily on our highly educated workforce and our talent, then it's important that we need to keep this all in mind."

Demographers don't set policy though. They just analyze the data to help lawmakers better understand the future. Fertility rates are stabilizing and the under-18 population, which declined post 2020, is expected to level off. Meanwhile, Coloradans are living longer with life expectancy, at 79.9 in 2024, reaching 83.4 by 2060, according to demography data.

And growth, albeit slower growth, is expected for years to come with the state's population expected to be around 7.5 million by 2060, according to state demographic models.

"Yes, we are growing slower than what we've seen in the past," Marquez said, adding again that slowing population growth is a trend nationwide. "Who makes up Colorado is going to be different in the next 10 years than today in the same way that it is different now than it was 10 years ago."

John Frank's Article on Colorado's Population

John Frank's recent Axios report shows Colorado's population topped 6 million in 2024, but growth has slowed to its lowest rate since 1990, with housing costs and job losses now pressing on the state's demographic and economic outlook Axios+1.

Key findings from John Frank's coverage

In his **November 12, 2026 Axios Denver article** Axios, Frank notes that Colorado's "days as a fast-growing state are over." While the state's population continues to rise, **soaring housing costs and job losses** are eroding its competitive edge. The slowdown is reshaping **demographics, economics, and politics**, raising questions about the state's future.

Frank's **January 28, 2026 Axios piece** Axios provided detailed Census Bureau data:

- **Population milestone:** Colorado surpassed 6 million people for the first time in 2024.
- **Growth rate:** Only **0.4% in 2025**, down from 1.29% in 2024 — the smallest increase since 1990.
- **Drivers:** Most of the 24,000 new residents came from natural increase (births minus deaths, +21,000), with migration adding just 15,000 more than departures (–12,000).
- **Context:** International immigration — the traditional growth driver — fell sharply due to tougher U.S. policies. The oil and gas industry's collapse also contributed to the slowdown.

Why it matters

Frank explains that the slowing growth changes the **state's political and economic balance.** With fewer new residents, housing affordability pressures and labor market shifts are becoming more pronounced, potentially influencing policy debates on economics, housing, and migration Axios+1.

If you want to read the full articles, they are available on Axios Denver's site:

- *Colorado population is growing but housing costs and job losses loom* (Nov 12, 2026) Axios
- *Colorado's population is growing, but just barely* (Jan 28, 2026) Axios

These pieces combine **current demographic data** with **analysis of economic and political implications**, making them a comprehensive resource on Colorado's population trends as reported by John Frank.