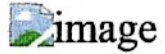


Data show how immigration restrictions slow growth in U.S. population.



Los Angeles, Miami Populations Drop

By Paul Overberg, Harriet Torry and Max Rust

Some of the biggest U.S. metro areas are shrinking, new government data show.

The driver is a sharp slowdown in immigration, coupled in many places with losses from people leaving for other parts of the country.

The result: the Los Angeles, San Diego and Miami areas—three of the 20 largest metros in the U.S.—all saw population declines in the year through June 2025, according to Census Bureau estimates released Thursday. The data also show New York City shrank for the first time in three years, though the much larger metro area grew.

The new census figures include population changes for metro areas and counties, plus select cities such as New York that fit neatly within county lines. The numbers show in closer detail how immigration restrictions have significantly slowed U.S. population growth.

“The vast majority of the slowdown of immigration is because of policy shifts,” said Eric Finnigan, vice president of demographics research at John Burns Research & Consulting.

Strong growth continued in many metro areas, too, often in midsize and smaller ones across the Carolinas, Texas and the Mountain West. Among those growing at four times the national rate or more: Austin, Texas; Raleigh, N.C.; Ocala, Fla.; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Wilmington, N.C.; Boise, Idaho and St. George, Utah.

At the start of President Trump’s second term last year, government agencies stepped up efforts to detain and deport migrants, tightened pathways to legal immigration and effectively shut down crossings on the southern border. The latest census data also reflect curbs on the admission of people seeking asylum that the Biden administration adopted in its waning months.

The Census Bureau previously reported that the U.S. population only grew by 0.5% in the year ended last June, the slowest pace since Covid-19 cut off immigration flows and caused a surge in deaths. The year before, the overall population grew almost twice as fast. A near-record-low U.S. birthrate and an aging population also brake U.S. population growth.

The immigration drop-off is having a profound effect on places that rely on newcomers for growth. Half of the 50 largest metros lost more people than they gained from the rest of the U.S. in the year through June. In 10 of those 50, domestic losses topped immigration gains.

These declines hit the core of some of America’s biggest metro areas. In the most recent measured year, the Los Angeles region’s modest 38,500 net gain in immigration was nowhere near enough to balance a net loss of nearly 131,000

domestic migrants. A similar issue shrank the population in metro Miami, another pricey region that is losing people rapidly to other parts of the U.S. The Miami area saw a net loss of nearly 114,000 domestic migrants in the year through last June.

New York City swung to a slight loss after two years of gains, leaving a population of 8.58 million, down 2% from 2020, when Covid started causing a big exodus. The net gain of about 66,000 immigrants in the most recent year was down 70% from the influx a year earlier and was too small to offset people moving away. The huge New York metro area—which includes 17 counties outside the city—grew by 0.2%.

Note
Populations shrink or grow based on three factors: domestic migration, international migration and the difference between births and deaths. Big urban areas tend to win young people at the start of their careers and then lose them to the suburbs when they have families. Urban hubs also attract the lion's share of immigrants.

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