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Map shows states Americans moved from and to in last 10 years

Story by Giulia Carbonaro • 3h • 7-7-2025

Tumbling birth rates and slowing immigration are making domestic migration—the movement of Americans around the country—increasingly important for states' demographic growth.

And yet, no state—not even those that have traditionally attracted the highest number of newcomers—can rely on a steady flow of new residents.

Recent data released by the Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) of Harvard University shows how domestic migration has changed in patterns and scale in the decade between 2014 and 2024, as Americans chase better jobs, cheaper housing and a greater quality of life.**Domestic Migration: Winners and Losers**

Back in 2014, North Dakota was the absolute winner of domestic migration across the country with a net growth rate of +13 percent, followed by Nevada (+8.5 percent), South Carolina (+8.3 percent), Florida (+7.5 percent), Colorado (+7.3 percent), Arizona and Texas (both at +6 percent), Oregon (+5.6 percent) and Idaho (+5.2 percent). These rates are proportionate to the states' population and do not refer to numeric gains.

10 years later, things looked much different. In 2024, North Dakota was losing residents, with a net domestic migration rate of -0.37 percent. Oregon had also slid among the states reporting a negative rate, at -0.27 percent.

Three states were still experiencing gains of over 5 percent, including Nevada (+5.3 percent), Idaho (+8.2 percent) and South Carolina (+12.5 percent). Florida and Texas, which are still some of the fastest-growing states in the country adding thousands of newcomers every year, both reported a net domestic migration rate of +2.8 percent last year.

Three Southern states had joined the list of the biggest gainers, with Alabama reporting a net domestic migration increase of +5.1 percent, Tennessee of +6.7 percent and North Carolina of +7.5 percent.

Numerically, Texas experienced the biggest gain, adding 85,267 new residents to its population. It was followed by North Carolina (82,288), South Carolina (68,043) and Florida (64,017).

In 2014, the states hemorrhaging the most residents were Alaska (with a net domestic migration rate of -13 percent), Illinois and New York (-7.4 percent), Connecticut (-7 percent), New Mexico (-6.6 percent) and New Jersey (-6 percent).

10 years later, the biggest losers had become the states experiencing the most acute housing affordability crisis, including Hawaii (-6.5 percent), California and New York (-6.1 percent) and Alaska (-5.1 percent). Numerically, California experienced the biggest loss in the country, with 239,575 losing the state. Note

How Has Domestic Migration Changed

"The actual rate of migration across states has pretty much stayed at a pretty low level in the last several years," William Frey, a demographer and senior fellow at The Brookings Institution, told *Newsweek*.

"It has gone down from what it was 20 years or 15 years ago, there are now fewer people moving across state lines than there were in the past. It goes up a bit, down a bit from year to year, but the general levels are sort of low."

According to the latest Current Population Survey, about 8.3 percent of households (10.9 million) reported moving over the past year, a rate unchanged from a year earlier and down from 9.8 percent (12.6 million) before the pandemic, in 2019. Last year, the homeowner mobility rate dropped to an all-time low of 3.1 percent, down from 3.7 percent in 2023 and 4.3 percent in 2019—meaning that U.S. homeowners made 24 percent fewer moves last year than in 2019.

What is really important, Frey said, is understanding why people move, and how that is going to change in the coming years. "People move largely because of jobs," Frey said. "North Dakota is just a little state, but it had a lot of jobs in the early 2010s. You normally wouldn't think of it as an attractive state [for movers], but it had a big domestic migration during that period."

The rise of remote work during the pandemic had a huge influence on domestic migration rates across the country, allowing many Americans to relocate across state lines. Many went to states with lower taxes, cheaper housing and sunny weather, with Florida and Texas benefiting greatly from this influx of newcomers. Many relocated to smaller towns close to the metropolises where they used to work.

But all that has nearly come to an end, experts say. "The strong shifts that went from New York and California to Florida and Texas and similar kinds of states have softened," Fry said, because of recent return-to-office orders by employers.

These states, and many of their biggest cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City, have not lost as many people in the last couple of years as they had during the pandemic. "There's a return to more normal migration patterns that weren't as severe as we had during those years," Frey said.

Fewer people are moving out of California than they were during the pandemic, for example, but many are still leaving. "Some of the basic driving forces which preexisted prior to the pandemic and more extensive remote work remain," Hans Johnson, a demographer at the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), told *Newsweek*.

"We've done a lot of work here at PPIC looking at why people are leaving and who's leaving [California], and the short answer is that the cost of living and especially housing are major factors," he said. *Note

"When we look at people who are leaving, we see that they tend to be lower- or middle-income and people without a college degree," Johnson explained. "And when we look at people who are moving to California, they tend to be more highly educated and earn higher incomes."

Fundamentally, the Golden State continues attracting people who can afford it—while those who can't look for cheaper options elsewhere.

The Growing Importance Of Domestic Migration

A growing population often means a thriving economy. Domestic migrants and immigrants tend to be younger people, Frey explained, often including a majority of people in their 20s and early 30s, "so domestic migration tends to make those states younger," he said.

This offers a lifeline to a state's job market and social security net at a time when the U.S. population, nationwide, is aging, with experts talking of a "Silver Tsunami" hitting the country once Baby Boomers reach retirement age.

Young people, additionally, make states more racially diverse. "The younger part of our population is much more racially diverse than the older part of the population, so when you attract a lot of domestic migrants, you're getting not just young white people but young Latino people, young Asian people, African-American people," Frey said. "It helps to make the state attractive to a broad array of people in terms of their racial and ethnic backgrounds."

As birth rates fall and immigration slow downs, partially in response to the Trump administration's mass deportation efforts, domestic migration could soften the blow for the states who would benefit the most from it.

"If immigration goes down again, because of policies here that have been instituted, there may be a bigger demand for domestic migrants in some of the places that have more opportunities," Frey said. "But it's hard to know now. To me, that is kind of a wild card in all of this."