



Written by [David Kelly](#) on December 20, 2023

Report: U.S. Population Growth Returns to Pre-pandemic Level

The United States saw its largest population gain since before 2020, as more states experienced population growth in 2023 than in any year since the start of the pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau reported Tuesday.

“U.S. migration returning to pre-pandemic levels and a drop in deaths are driving the nation’s growth,” stated Kristie Wilder, a demographer in the Population Division at the Census Bureau in a [press release](#).

“Although births declined, this was tempered by the near 9% decrease in deaths. Ultimately, fewer deaths paired with rebounding immigration resulted in the nation experiencing its largest population gain since 2018.”

The Census Bureau’s new [vintage \(latest-year\) 2023 population estimates](#) showed that the “nation gained more than 1.6 million people this past year, growing by 0.5% to 334,914,895.” The new growth estimate, according to the bureau, is “still historically low but is a slight uptick from the 0.4% increase in 2022 and the 0.2% increase in 2021.”

The nation’s most populous region, the South, “accounted for 87% of the nation’s growth in 2023, as the region added over 1.4 million residents for a total population of 130,125,290.” The South is reportedly the only region to have maintained population growth throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. “The growth in 2023 can largely be attributed to the region’s migration patterns as 706,266 people were added via net domestic migration, while net international migration contributed almost 500,000 to the total,” the Census Bureau stated.

Population in the Midwest region showed a “moderate gain of 0.2%, or just over 126,000 residents,” the first sign of growth in over two years. According to the report, the population growth in the Midwest is the result of a “lower rate of outmigration to other regions, increased international migration, a slowdown in population loss in Illinois, and growth in Indiana, Minnesota and Ohio.”

The West added 137,299 people in 2023, which was a bit lower than the 157,480 people the region added in 2022. The bureau shared that “somewhat higher international migration and slightly fewer deaths were offset by higher outmigration to other regions.” Alaska and New Mexico gained population, while “California, Oregon and Hawaii continued to lose population but at a more modest pace than the prior year.”

The Northeast’s population dropped by 43,330 people this year, less than the “216,576 decline in 2022 or the 187,054 decline in 2021, reflecting substantially less outmigration to other regions.” New York and Pennsylvania were the only states in the region to lose population in 2023.



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America's overall [population growth](#) reflected in the report showed that "42 states and the District of Columbia had an increase in population, up from 31 states and the District of Columbia in 2022 and 34 states in 2021." The bureau found that the number of states with population growth "reflects both the broad national trends of deaths and net international migration returning to pre-COVID levels as well as reduced net domestic outmigration for some of the states."

According to the bureau, population growth is now more widespread and no longer impacting only a few states. The report shared that "four southern states — Texas, Florida, North Carolina and Georgia — accounted for 93% of the nation's population growth in 2022, but only 67% in 2023."

The press release highlighted the states that experienced the largest numeric changes in the nation. Texas added 473,453 people, with Florida adding 365,205 residents. "South Carolina and Florida were the two fastest-growing states in the nation, growing by 1.7% and 1.6%, respectively, in 2023." Georgia reportedly reached a "new population threshold as the state's population exceeded 11 million people in 2023, increasing by 116,077 to a total population of 11,029,227."

California remains the most populous state at 38,965,193, despite losing more than 75,000 people this year. Texas ranks second at 30,503,301, followed by Florida, whose population reached 22,610,726, according to census [data tables](#).



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