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MIGRATION OF MILLENNIALS AND SENIORS IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

Demography Fact Sheet No. 5 | April 2020

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PURPOSE:

This Fact Sheet examines trends in intraregional migration of millennials and seniors since the Great Recession, with a focus on the Mountain West. The data presented were originally published in a report by the Brookings Institution, titled “How migration of millennials and seniors has shifted since the Great Recession.”¹

THE IMPORTANCE OF MILLENNIAL AND SENIOR MIGRATION:

Millennials are a highly educated and diverse generation currently in their late 20’s and 30’s (age 25 to 34). Seniors form the baby boomer population, comprising individuals above the age of 55. Both generations can reinvigorate communities; millennials invigorate the workforce, while seniors bring the wealth and spending capacity of a generation in retirement. The rate of migration has decreased in the United States since the Great Recession and has yet to return to previous levels. Nevertheless, millennial migration rates are typically higher than senior rates, as young adults more often relocate for job opportunities.

WHERE ARE THE CURRENT MIGRATION HAVENS?

One of the key features that attracts millennials to certain areas is the presence of knowledge-based economies. As such, metropolitan areas often attract higher levels of college graduates. Another important feature for millennials is the geographic location of a metropolitan area. U.S. cities found in the South and West – the Sun Belt region – typically see higher migration rates of educated millennials. Senior migration is also attracted to the Sun Belt Region, with cities like Phoenix and Las Vegas as popular destinations for retirees.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. The Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise metropolitan area ranks 13th nationally in average annual net migration of millennials, age 25-34.
2. Only 21% of millennials migrating to the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise metropolitan area are college graduates. The lowest, by far, among the top 53 U.S. metros.
3. Out of 51 states,² Nevada ranks 6th in average annual net migration for millennials.
4. For seniors, the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise metropolitan area ranks 4th in average annual net migration.
5. Out of 51 states, Nevada ranks 5th in average annual net migration for seniors.

¹ Frey, W. H. (31 January 2019). How migration of millennials and seniors has shifted since the Great Recession. The Brookings Institution. www.brookings.edu/research/how-migration-of-millennials-and-seniors-has-shifted-since-the-great-recession/

² The original data source classifies the District of Columbia as a state.

Table 1 presents the 20 U.S. metropolitan areas with the highest average annual net migration of people age 25 to 34. Among metropolitan areas, the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood metropolitan area has the 2nd highest migration influx in the nation, and the highest in the Mountain West. The Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ metropolitan area ranks 9th nationally, while the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV area ranks 13th.

TABLE 1: ANNUAL AVERAGE NET MIGRATION OF MILLENNIALS, BY METROPOLITAN AREA (2012-2017)

Rank	Metropolitan Areas*	Average Annual Net Migration	Age 25-34 % College Grads
1	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	14,767	33%
2	Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	12,667	46%
3	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	12,665	35%
4	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	11,244	45%
5	Austin-Round Rock, TX	8,933	45%
6	Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	8,024	39%
7	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	7,203	41%
8	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	6,849	17%
9	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	6,682	29%
10	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	5,742	42%
11	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	5,709	39%
12	Columbus, OH	4,682	42%
13	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	4,479	21%
14	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	4,168	47%
15	Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade, CA	4,166	31%
16	Raleigh, NC	3,908	47%
17	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	3,496	55%
18	Jacksonville, FL	3,157	32%
19	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	3,010	34%
20	Kansas City, MO-KS	2,621	41%

*The original source provides data on the 53 Metropolitan Areas with the highest annual average net migration of people 25 to 34, and defines metropolitan areas as places with populations exceeding one million persons.

Table 2 shows the top 20 U.S. states for average net migration of people aged 25 to 34. By state, Colorado has the highest net migration in the Mountain West and the 3rd highest in the nation. Arizona and Nevada follow closely, ranked as the 5th and 6th states with the highest migration influx, respectively.

TABLE 2: ANNUAL AVERAGE NET MIGRATION OF MILLENNIALS, BY STATE (2012-2017)

Rank	State	Average Annual Net Migration
1	Texas	32,398
2	Washington	18,174
3	Colorado	16,156
4	Oregon	7,542
5	Arizona	5,742
6	Nevada	5,665
7	Florida	5,459
8	North Carolina	3,835
9	Tennessee	3,559
10	Georgia	3,355
11	New Hampshire	2,972
12	Minnesota	2,494
13	Missouri	1,528
14	Virginia	1,344
15	Maine	1,175
16	Indiana	1,054
17	Montana	960
18	Delaware	936
19	South Dakota	715
20	Alabama	619

Table 3 offers a synthesis of average net migration of people age 55 and older for the top 20 out of 53 metropolitan areas with populations exceeding one million persons. Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale metropolitan area has the highest amount of net migration in the nation and the Mountain West, followed closely by Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise which ranks 4th. Tucson is ranked 6th nationally for migration of seniors.

TABLE 3: ANNUAL AVERAGE NET MIGRATION OF SENIORS, BY METROPOLITAN AREA (2012-2017)

Rank	Metropolitan Areas*	Average Annual Net Migration
1	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	18,275
2	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	8,570
3	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	8,081
4	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	6,864
5	Jacksonville, FL	5,060
6	Tucson, AZ	4,704
7	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	3,639
8	Sacramento--Roseville--Arden-Arcade, CA	3,410
9	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	3,011
10	Austin-Round Rock, TX	2,957
11	Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	2,880
12	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	2,571
13	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	2,443
14	Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	1,757
15	Raleigh, NC	1,721
16	Richmond, VA	1,562
17	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	507
18	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	390
19	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	231
20	Oklahoma City, OK	41

*The original source provides data on the 53 Metropolitan Areas with the highest annual average net migration of people 55 and older, and defines metropolitan areas as places with populations exceeding one million persons.

Table 4 shows the average net migration of people age 55 and older for the top 20 out of 51 states. Arizona is ranked second and Nevada is ranked fifth with the greatest average annual net migration. Rhode Island is ranked 20th and has a negative average net migration for seniors. This means that more people in this age category are moving out of the state than moving in.

TABLE 4: ANNUAL AVERAGE NET MIGRATION OF SENIORS, BY STATE (2012-2017)

Rank	State	Average Annual Net Migration
1	Florida	83,538
2	Arizona	31,759
3	North Carolina	16,709
4	South Carolina	14,088
5	Nevada	9,926
6	Texas	8,749
7	Oregon	6,037
8	Georgia	5,858
9	Tennessee	3,950
10	Delaware	3,271
11	Idaho	3,011
12	Alabama	2,132
13	Missouri	1,759
14	Maine	1,071
15	Arkansas	1,001
16	Mississippi	810
17	Utah	793
18	Oklahoma	535
19	New Mexico	353
20	Rhode Island	-281