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## The Desert Southwest: Population Growth 2010-2020

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## THE DESERT SOUTHWEST: POPULATION GROWTH 2010-2020

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Prepared by: Kelliann Beavers, Joshua Padilla, Katie M. Gilbertson, and William E. Brown, Jr.

### PURPOSE:

In 2021 the United States Census Bureau identified the Desert Southwest as one of the fastest growing regions in the country.<sup>1</sup> The Desert Southwest encompasses portions of five states (Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas) including forty counties and ten metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs).<sup>2</sup> Using data from the Census Bureau, this fact sheet showcases population growth within Desert Southwest counties and metropolitan statistical areas from 2010 to 2020.

### ABOUT THE DATA:

The Census Bureau gathers national data on demography and the economy. The Desert Southwest encompasses nine counties from Arizona (Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Yuma), four counties from California (Imperial, Inyo, Riverside, and San Bernardino), one county from Nevada (Clark), eight counties from New Mexico (Chaves, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro), and eighteen counties from Texas (Brewster, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, Ector, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Kinney, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Val Verde, Ward, and Winkler). The region includes four metropolitan statistical areas from Arizona (Sierra Vista-Douglas Metro Area, Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler Metro Area, Tucson Metro Area, Yuma Metro Area), two from California (El Centro Metro Area, Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario Metro Area), one from Nevada (Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise Metro Area), one from New Mexico (Las Cruces Metro Area), and two from Texas (Odessa Metro Area, El Paso Metro Area). Together, these states, counties, and MSAs comprise the Desert Southwest.

### KEY FINDINGS:

1. Of the 40 counties grouped in the Desert Southwest, 18 experienced a population decrease from 2010 to 2020: Cochise (AZ), La Paz (AZ), Chaves (NM), Grant (NM), Hidalgo (NM), Sierra (NM), Socorro (NM), Crockett (TX), Culberson (TX), Hudspeth (TX), Jeff Davis (TX), Kinney (TX), Loving (TX), Pecos (TX), Presidio (TX), Terrell (TX), Upton (TX), and Val Verde (TX).
2. The Odessa, TX Metro Area was the fastest growing MSA at 20.45 percent, while the Sierra Vista-Douglas, AZ Metro Area was the only MSA to experience a decrease in population at -4.49 percent.
3. With a population of 4,420,568, only Maricopa County, AZ had a 2020 population above 4 million people.
4. Three counties had 2020 populations within the 2-3.9 million population range. These counties were Riverside County (CA), Clark County (NV), and San Bernardino County (CA), totaling in at 2,418,185 people, 2,265,461 people, and 2,181,654 people, respectively.
5. Pima County, AZ had a 2020 population that fell between the 1-1.9 million range with a total of 1,043,433 people.

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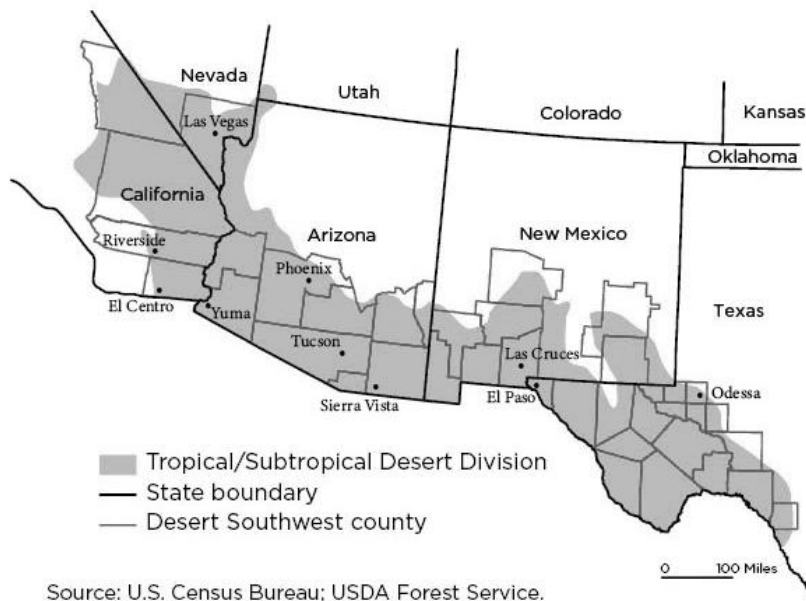
<sup>1</sup> Hait, Andrew. "Business Growth in Desert Southwest More than Twice National Average." 2021. *United States Census Bureau*. ([www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/09/business-growth-in-desert-southwest-more-than-twice-national-average.html](http://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/09/business-growth-in-desert-southwest-more-than-twice-national-average.html))

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

6. El Paso County, TX had a 2020 population that fell between the 500,000 - 999,999 range with a total of 865,657 people. The other 34 counties had 2020 populations that fell below 500,000 people.
7. Six counties contained populations between 100,000 - 499,999 people and seven counties totaled populations between 25,001 and 99,999 people. Twenty-one counties reported populations under 25,000.

Figure 1 is a map which presents the Desert Southwest, as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The locations of the largest principal cities in each of the ten MSAs in this region are included.

**Figure 1: The Desert Southwest**



\*Adapted from Andrew Hait, "Business Growth in Desert Southwest More than Twice National Average," 2021.

Table 1 presents the population change from 2010 to 2020 in counties located within the Desert Southwest. Clark County, Nevada (16.1 percent) enjoyed the most population growth. Maricopa County, Arizona had the largest population in 2020 at 4.4 million people, while Loving County, Texas had the smallest population at 64 people.

Table 1: Population Change in the Desert Southwest Counties, 2010-2020

County and State	2020 Population	2010 Population	Numeric Change (2010-2020)	Percent Change (2010-2020)
Maricopa County, AZ	4,420,568	3,817,117	603,451	15.8
Riverside County, CA	2,418,185	2,189,641	228,544	10.4
Clark County, NV	2,265,461	1,951,269	314,192	16.1
San Bernardino County, CA	2,181,654	2,035,210	146,444	7.2
Pima County, AZ	1,043,433	980,263	63,170	6.4
El Paso County, TX	865,657	800,647	65,010	8.1
Pinal County, AZ	425,264	375,770	49,494	13.2
Doña Ana County, NM	219,561	209,233	10,328	4.9
Yuma County, AZ	203,881	195,751	8,130	4.2
Imperial County, CA	179,702	174,528	5,174	3.0
Ector County, TX	165,171	137,130	28,041	20.4
Cochise County, AZ	125,447	131,346	-5,899	-4.5
Chaves County, NM	65,157	65,645	-488	-0.7
Eddy County, NM	62,314	53,829	8,485	15.8
Santa Cruz County, AZ	47,669	47,420	249	0.5
Val Verde County, TX	47,586	48,879	-1,293	-2.6
Graham County, AZ	38,533	37,220	1,313	3.5
Grant County, NM	28,185	29,514	-1,329	-4.5
Luna County, NM	25,427	25,095	332	1.3
Inyo County, CA	19,016	18,546	470	2.5
Socorro County, NM	16,595	17,866	-1,271	-7.1
La Paz County, AZ	16,557	20,489	-3,932	-19.2
Pecos County, TX	15,193	15,507	-314	-2.0
Reeves County, TX	14,748	13,783	965	7.0
Ward County, TX	11,644	10,658	986	9.3
Sierra County, NM	11,576	11,988	-412	-3.4
Greenlee County, AZ	9,563	8,437	1,126	13.3
Brewster County, TX	9,546	9,232	314	3.4
Winkler County, TX	7,791	7,110	681	9.6
Presidio County, TX	6,131	7,818	-1,687	-21.6
Crane County, TX	4,675	4,375	300	6.9
Hidalgo County, NM	4,178	4,894	-716	-14.6
Upton County, TX	3,308	3,355	-47	-1.4
Hudspeth County, TX	3,202	3,476	-274	-7.9
Kinney County, TX	3,129	3,598	-469	-13.0
Crockett County, TX	3,098	3,719	-621	-16.7
Culberson County, TX	2,188	2,398	-210	-8.8
Jeff Davis County, TX	1,996	2,342	-346	-14.8
Terrell County, TX	760	984	-224	-22.8
Loving County, TX	64	82	-18	-22.0

Table 2 presents the total population in the 40 Desert Southwest counties compared to the U.S. population in 2010 and 2020. The 40 counties in the Desert Southwest had total populations of 13,476,164 (2010) and 14,993,813 (2020) indicating an 11.3% increase in population. The U.S. total population was 308,745,538 (2010) and 331,449,281 (2020), indicating a 7.4% increase in population. The Desert Southwest population as a percentage of the total U.S. population was 4.4% in 2010 and increased to 4.5% in 2020.

**Table 2: Population Change in the Desert Southwest Counties Compared to U.S. Population, 2010-2020**

Year	Total County Population	Total U.S. Population	County Population as a Percentage of U.S. Population
2020	14,993,813	331,449,281	4.5
2010	13,476,164	308,745,538	4.4

\* Adapted from Andrew Hait, “Business Growth in Desert Southwest More than Twice National Average,” 2021.

Table 3 presents the population change from 2010 to 2020 in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) located within the Desert Southwest. The Riverside-San Bernadino-Ontario Metro Area is nested within Riverside County, CA and San Bernadino County CA; the El Paso Metro Area is nested within El Paso County, TX and Hudspeth County, TX. Among the ten MSAs, the Sierra Vista-Douglas Metro Area was the only one to experience a population decrease at -4.49 percent from 2010 to 2020. The MSAs with the most population growth include the Odessa Metro Area (20.45 percent), the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise Metro Area (16.10 percent), and the Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler Metro Area (15.57 percent). The Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler Metro Area had the largest population in 2020 at 4.8 million people while the Sierra Vista-Douglas Metro Area had the smallest population at 125,447 people.

**Table 3: Population Change in Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the Desert Southwest, 2010-2020**

County and State	MSA	2010 MSA Population	2020 MSA Population	Percent Change
Cochise County, AZ	Sierra Vista-Douglas Metro Area	131,346	125,447	-4.49
Maricopa County, AZ	Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler Metro Area	4,192,887	4,845,832	15.57
Pinal County, AZ				
Pima County, AZ	Tucson Metro Area	980,263	1,043,433	6.44
Yuma County, AZ	Yuma Metro Area	195,751	203,881	4.15
Imperial County, CA	El Centro Metro Area	174,528	179,702	2.96
Riverside County, CA	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario Metro Area	4,224,851	4,599,839	8.88
San Bernadino County, CA				
Clark County, NV	Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise Metro Area	1,951,269	2,265,461	16.10
Doña Ana County, NM	Las Cruces Metro Area	209,233	219,561	4.94
Ector County, TX	Odessa Metro Area	137,130	165,171	20.45
El Paso County, TX	El Paso Metro Area	804,123	868,859	8.05
Hudspeth County, TX				

\* Adapted from Andrew Hait, “Business Growth in Desert Southwest More than Twice National Average,” 2021.