

A CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE: HOW MASSACHUSETTS COMPARES

Census Bureau [estimates](#) released late last year painted Massachusetts population change in a much different light than in previous years. Rather than losing population, the new data find a [growth](#) of 69,600 residents between 2023 and 2024.

The uptick, although positive, was not enough to catch up with the national average. While the nation as a whole grew by 2.6 percent from 2020 to 2024, the Commonwealth only grew by 1.5 percent—the 33rd fastest rate in the country. It grew slower than regional rivals New Hampshire (2.3 percent), Maine (3.1 percent), and Connecticut (1.9 percent), as well as far below other competitors like North Carolina (5.8 percent), Texas (7.3 percent), and Florida (8.5 percent).

Its population growth was also not evenly distributed across [demographics](#), and there is good reason to believe this change in course is due to an [ephemeral surge in immigrants](#) rather than a structural shift towards growth. The following sections highlight more granular changes to the state's population.

A Shrinking Youth Population

One striking finding in the data is how far Massachusetts, and New England more broadly, lags the rest of the country in [fertility rates](#) and the share of young people (ages 0 to 14) in the population. According to the most recent data, all six New England states ranked among the bottom seven nationally in fertility, and five of the six were in the bottom five for the proportion of children in their populations.

Massachusetts, where children under age 15 made up just 15.5 percent of residents in 2024, was fifth lowest in the country and two full points below the national average of 17.5 percent. To reach that national rate, the Bay State would need an additional 142,000 children aged 0 to 14.

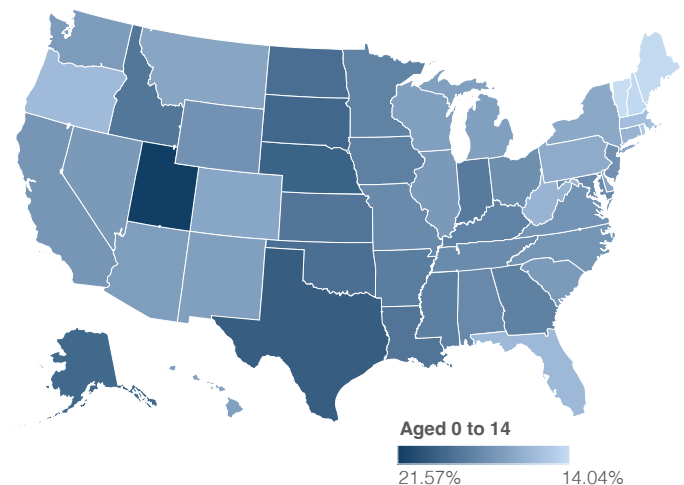
DATA NOTE

The analysis in this newsletter derives data from the Census Bureau's [State Population Totals by Characteristics](#) estimates. They were released in June 2025 and cover the period from April 2020 to July 2024. Each year in the estimates is a snapshot of July of that year, except for 2020 which is a snapshot of April. If you'd like to further investigate demographic changes by state, please visit our [US DataLabs site](#).

The average age in Massachusetts was 40.1 years old in 2024. That makes it the youngest on average in New England but the 17th oldest nationwide.

FAST FACT

Figure 1: Proportion of Population Between 0- and 14-Years Old by State, 2024



Note: Analysis of state demographic change based on Census Bureau [population estimates](#). The reference period is from April 2020 to July 2024.

However, the Commonwealth fared better than other New England states—and even the national average—in changes to the 0 to 14 population from 2020 to 2024. While the number of Massachusetts residents in that age group still declined by 3.1 percent (-35,500), that was a less steep decline than the average for all states (-3.2 percent) and that of every New England state outside of Connecticut (-2.1 percent).

Flat Growth for Prime-Aged Residents

Changes to populations of prime-aged residents (aged 25 to 54) from 2020 to 2024, broadly encompassing the demographics with the highest labor force participation, have fared similarly. The average state grew this population subgroup by 2.5 percent while Massachusetts stood still with a growth rate of only 0.2 percent. Every other New England state grew at a faster rate, including Maine (2.7 percent) and New Hampshire (1.5 percent). Florida, Texas, and North Carolina each grew by over 5 percent during that span.

Massachusetts did grow among certain age groups within that broader pool. The Commonwealth added 70,000 35-to-44 year olds. The population shrank most significantly for

the 45 to 54 age group, which dropped by 59,000 residents, and it remained relatively flat for people aged 25 to 34 (-4,800).

Growth in the 25-to-54 population was also uneven geographically within Massachusetts. Suffolk (-12,200), Hampshire (-1,500), and Barnstable counties (-1,400) each lost residents, while Middlesex (9,700), Worcester (6,100), and Norfolk counties (4,300) grew.

In 2023, all New England states had fertility rates that ranked in the bottom seven in the country (not including D.C.). Only Connecticut had a birth rate greater than 50 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44.

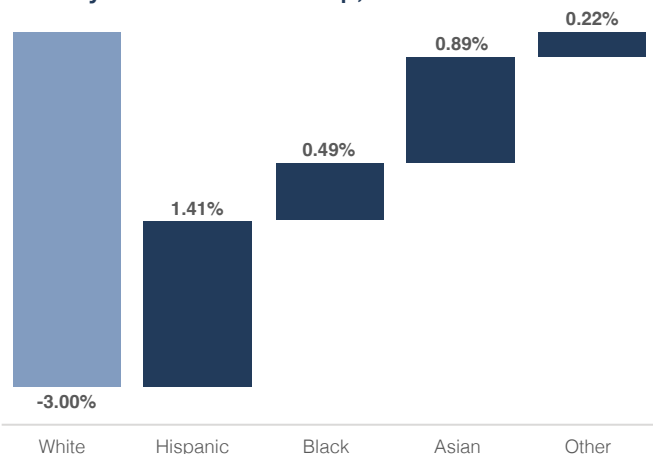
FAST FACT

Racial and Ethnic Change

From April 2020 to July 2024, Massachusetts was one of the fastest changing states in its racial and ethnic composition. During that period the share of the total population that was white declined by 3 percent, while its proportion of Hispanics grew by 1.4 percent, Asians by 0.9 percent, and Blacks by 0.5 percent.

In real terms, those changing population shares correlated to a decrease in the white population by 141,559. The number of Hispanic residents rose by 113,289, Asian residents by 71,252, and Black residents by 42,263.

Figure 2: Change in Proportion of Massachusetts Population by Racial/Ethnic Group, 2020 to 2024



Note: Analysis of state demographic change based on Census Bureau [population estimates](#). The reference period is from April 2020 to July 2024.

There were only a handful of states with faster rising rates of minority residents than Massachusetts since 2020. Those increasing their proportions of minority residents significantly

were Rhode Island (3.1 percent), Connecticut (3.1 percent), Washington (3.6 percent), and Nevada (3.9 percent).

However, Massachusetts remained average in its minority share of the total population, with 32.4 percent identifying with a minority group. In contrast, seven states were majority-minority in 2024, including California and Texas, each of which had in excess of 60 percent of their populations identify that way.

Three New England states were among the least diverse in the country: Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire each had a minority share of the population under 12 percent.

On average, minorities grew in their share of state populations by 1.9 percent nationally. Hispanics made up the largest percent of that gain (1.1 percent), followed by Asians (0.5 percent) and other races (0.2 percent).

Conclusion

Massachusetts faces significant structural headwinds to sustaining and growing its labor force, including a decline in the youngest population cohorts and a substantial [out-migration](#) of domestic residents. While immigration has recently bolstered the number of residents in the state and kept the state's workforce [younger](#) than it would otherwise be, changing federal immigration policy will likely [stem those flows](#) in the coming years, leaving Massachusetts more likely to experience a decline in population.

IF YOU MISSED IT

Previous editions of the newsletter covered:

- [Migration trends for remote workers](#)
- [County population change in New England, 2020–2023](#)
- [2024 Census population estimates](#)
- [Historical migration patterns](#)

STAY TUNED!

Upcoming editions of Mapping Mass Migration will include analyses of:

- Growth in millionaire tax filers
- New 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) migration data