

MAPPING MASS MIGRATION

NEW CENSUS DATA SHOWS CONTINUED OUT-MIGRATION FROM MASSACHUSETTS TO COMPETITOR STATES

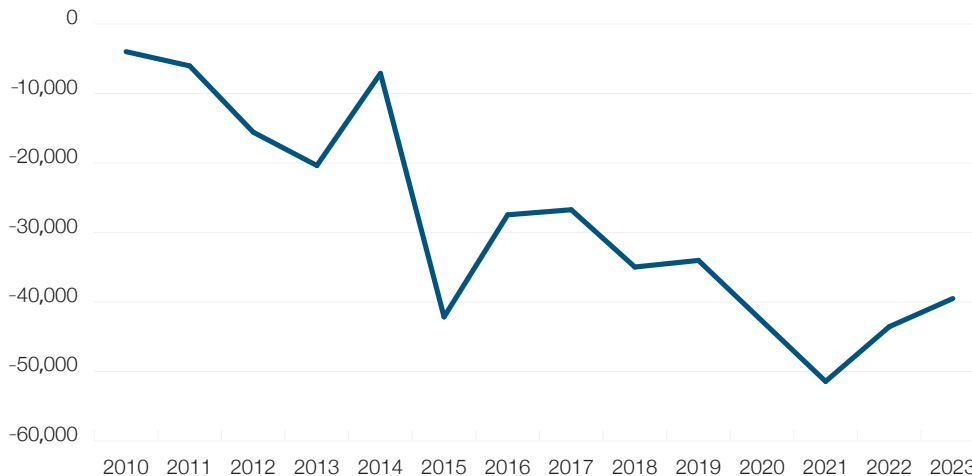
Massachusetts continues to lose a significant number of residents to out-migration, according to new [data](#) released by the Census Bureau as part of its [American Community Survey](#) (ACS).

While Census Bureau [population estimates](#) show an increase of 18,481 people in 2023, that was largely thanks to an influx of 50,000 new foreign immigrants. Without them the state would have lost significant population.

In 2023 an estimated 184,534 individuals over a year old left Massachusetts for other states while 145,021 relocated here from other states. That means that on net the Commonwealth lost 39,513 domestic residents.

Net out-migration remains elevated, with Massachusetts losing more domestic residents each year from 2021 to 2023 than it did in 2019 (no ACS data is available for 2020). In total, net out-migration has increased exponentially over the last decade; out-migration levels were 10 times greater in 2023 than they were in 2010.

Figure 1: Domestic out-migration from MA based on state-to-state migration tables from the American Community Survey (ACS)



In 2023, the destination states that welcomed the greatest net number of Bay Staters were Florida, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and South Carolina. Massachusetts lost net residents to every other New England state including Connecticut, a state known for its high cost structure and taxes. Fully 43 percent of all net departing residents and 26 percent of total departing residents chose to relocate to other New England states.

The number of residents leaving for New York diverged from historical norms, since 2010 Massachusetts has only lost residents to New York in one other year, 2019 (-767), and nowhere near the scale at which they left in 2023 (-4,754).

Net losses of residents to Florida grew from 2,782 in 2010 to 11,244 in 2023. Florida has consistently been one of the states to which Massachusetts loses the greatest number of individuals. From 2010 to 2023 (excluding 2020), Massachusetts experienced a net loss of 90,372 people to Florida, a figure exceeded only by New Hampshire, which saw a net gain of 98,879 relocating Bay Staters. Maine was also a popular destination, with a net total of 62,557 residents relocating there during that period.

More than 1 out of every 4 current residents of New Hampshire were originally born in Massachusetts. By far the highest percentage of Massachusetts natives of any state.

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Figure 2: Analysis of domestic migration based on American Community Survey (ACS) data

TOP RELOCATION STATES FROM MASSACHUSETTS				TOP STATES RELOCATING TO MASSACHUSETTS			
STATE	OUTFLOW	INFLOW	NET	STATE	OUFLOW	INFLOW	NET
Florida	24002	12,758	-11244	Pennsylvania	6379	9,392	3013
Maine	5670	762	-4908	California	10101	12,160	2059
New Hampshire	16362	11,508	-4854	Ohio	2324	3,804	1480
New York	21001	16,247	-4754	New Jersey	4851	6,272	1421
South Carolina	5444	1,367	-4077	Virginia	3789	5,186	1397
Texas	10162	6,165	-3997	Louisiana	1025	2,391	1366
North Carolina	8935	5,217	-3718	Illinois	1938	3,187	1249
Utah	3449	380	-3069	Georgia	1739	2,897	1158
Connecticut	13428	10,437	-2991	Tennessee	2916	3,996	1080
Vermont	3965	1,430	-2535	Wyoming	0	858	858

In 2023, the top states Massachusetts received residents from on net were Pennsylvania, California, Ohio, New Jersey, and Virginia. However, these numbers represent significant movement for certain states. The number of people relocating annually from Pennsylvania doubled from 2019 to 2023. While Virginia gained 6,045 net residents from the Commonwealth in 2021, two years later it lost 1,397. New Jersey, on the other hand, has been losing fewer residents to Massachusetts than in the past. In 2021 it lost a net total of 5,790, but in 2023 it lost only 1,421.

From 2010 to 2023 (excluding 2020) the states from which Massachusetts received the most residents on net were New York (+42,140), New Jersey (+39,214), and Louisiana (+38,181).

WHY THIS MATTERS

Migration numbers continue to be a major cause for concern for state policymakers, especially as more reliable data from the [IRS](#), using tax returns, shows that more high-income and young filers (26–34) are leaving, bringing their wealth and future tax dollars with them. Recent [polls](#) of [both](#) important demographics find no easing of this trend.

To make Massachusetts more competitive and attractive to current and potential residents and employers, Massachusetts needs to do more to lower its overall cost structure. Affordability solutions from growing the housing supply, easing tax burdens, and improving public transportation must be considered.

DATA NOTE

State-to-state ACS estimates likely don't tell the whole story of migration and population change, as immigrant inflows and natural population increases (births minus deaths) are not fully accounted for. A separate Census Bureau population estimate had net international migration to Massachusetts at over 50,000 in 2023 and showed a natural population increase of roughly 6,000. Thus their population growth estimate was positive even as Massachusetts lost a significant number of domestic residents to other states.

From 2021 to 2023 Massachusetts lost a net 134,519 residents according to the American Community Survey.

FAST FACT

STAY TUNED!

Upcoming issues of Mapping Mass Migration will include analyses of:

- International flows into Massachusetts
- Remote work and interstate migration
- County population change in New England
- 2024 state population change