

Domestic Migration Flows for States from the 2005 ACS

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Since 2000, the American Community Survey (ACS) has been providing 1-year in-migration estimates for states, but out-migration and flow estimates have not been available since Census 2000. With the full implementation of the 2005 ACS, statistically reliable estimates can now be produced that provide a larger picture of internal migration within the United States and Puerto Rico. This paper will use the 2005 American Community Survey (ACS) data to calculate recent migration estimates between individual states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Besides examining the migration for the population as a whole, the paper will also go into detail about the migration patterns for the subpopulations of the older population; the young, single, well educated; and the foreign born. These subpopulations have different migration patterns from one another and than the population as a whole.

The analysis will include statistical testing for significance and some comparisons with Census state population estimates and Census 2000 data. Most comparisons between the Census 2000 and ACS data are not possible since the Census previous residence question covers a 5-year period while the ACS migration question covers a 1-year period. However, some comparisons such as flow trends and whether the net migration is positive or negative can be made and will be included.

The first part of the paper will discuss the in-migration, out-migration, and net migration of individual states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico as well as the larger interstate migration flows. State comparisons can be made using the migration rates based upon the 2004 household population estimates.

The second part of the paper will examine the in-migration, out-migration, and net migration for three subpopulation groups. The first group will be the older population, namely, those 65 years and older. Even though the migration rate for the older population is lower than younger population groups, there is a tendency for them to move to certain retirement states such as Florida and Arizona.

The definition of the second group to be discussed, the young, single, well educated, is defined as those 25 to 39 years old; widowed, divorced, or never married; and having a bachelor's degree or higher. This group tends to be very mobile and because of their potential future earning power is a highly sought after group as a catalyst for economic development. Some states that have seen a net loss of this group in the past years have tried to implement programs to stop the brain drain and lure them back.

The final group consists of the foreign born. The foreign born are defined as those born abroad but not of an American parent or parents. This is a very fast growing and mobile sector of the population. Most new immigrants to the United States come in through the gateway states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey, but the trend recently is for many of them to eventually move to other states.

The findings are not expected to be much different than Census 2000. Most states in the Northeast and Midwest as well as California continue to have negative net migration while the Southern and other Western states show increases. However, the data might show some changes. For instance, four out of the twelve collection months were after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit, and while the full extent of people being displaced will not be measured, the figures should show some of the movement out of Louisiana and Mississippi and into other states.