

Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

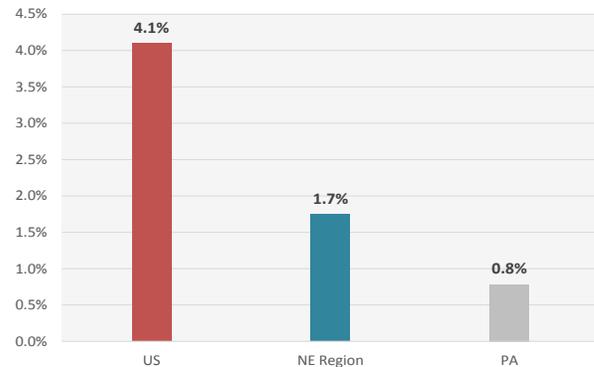
December 22, 2015

2015 National and State Population Estimates Show the Commonwealth has Increased by nearly 100,000 Residents at Mid-Decade

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – The Keystone State's long standing trend of slow and consistent population growth continues at mid-decade, according to the 2015 National and State Population Estimates released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. Pennsylvania's estimated population grew by 99,616 residents since 2010 to reach a total of 12,802,503 in 2015. Pennsylvania remains the sixth largest state in the nation behind California, Texas, Florida, New York and Illinois.

The commonwealth's growth rate of 0.8 percent over the five-year period was about half that of the Northeast region's 1.7 percent and well behind that of the nation 4.1 percent (see Figure 1). Pennsylvania ranked 23rd in numeric change (99,616 people) in population between 2010 and 2015 and 43rd in percent change (0.8 percent).

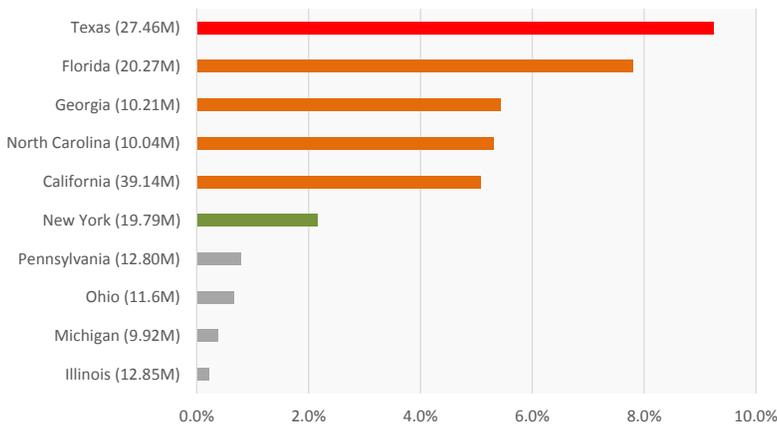
Figure 1. Population Change, US, NE Region and PA: 2010EB to 2015



Growth of the Nation's Ten Largest States

Growth rates varied greatly among the nation's ten most populous states from the last decennial census in 2010 to the mid-decade July 1, 2015 population estimate. Figure 2 shows that states in the South:

Figure 2. Growth Rates of Ten Most Populous States: 2010EB to 2015



Texas (9.2 percent), Florida (7.8 percent), Georgia (5.4 percent) and North Carolina (5.3 percent) had the largest percent increases in population over the last five years. California representing the West region was not too far behind at 5.1 percent. With the exception of New York (2.2 percent) the most populous states in the Midwest and Northeast regions had growth rates below 1.0 percent: Pennsylvania (0.8 percent), Ohio (0.7 percent), Michigan (0.4 percent) and Illinois (0.2 percent).

Notable Population Growth and Decline

Among the states and the District of Columbia, Texas had the largest increase at 2.3 million followed by California at 1.8 million. North Dakota had the highest percent increase in population from 2010 to 2015 at 12.5 percent.

West Virginia was the only state in the nation that experienced a decline in population from 2010 to 2015. Since 2010, the Mountain State has lost 8,883 residents. The lowest numeric and percent population increases were generally found in the New England states and in the Midwestern states.

Components of Population Change

Census Bureau Population Estimates are created by taking the last Decennial Census count, and updating the count using counts of births, deaths, and migration (both domestic and international). The addition of births, and subtraction of deaths, results in the ‘natural increase’ of an area. Between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2015, births (746,467) outpaced deaths (671,050) by 75,417 in the Keystone State. The state’s natural increase accounted for more than three-quarters (75.7 percent) of Pennsylvania’s population increase since 2010.

International migration has been a significant source of Pennsylvania’s population growth. Between 2010 and 2015, Pennsylvania ranked ninth nationally in terms of total population growth from international migrants with the state adding 164,475 people from international migration. Conversely, domestic migration alone resulted in a loss of 132,073 people. Taken together this resulted in a net migration gain of 32,402, which ranked Pennsylvania 21st nationally.

More about Population Estimates

The Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program’s National and State Population Estimates file produces estimates for the United States, Regions, and States. The Population Estimates Program (PEP) utilizes annual data on births, deaths, and migration to calculate population change since the most recent decennial census and produce a time series of estimates of population, demographic components of change, and housing units. The annual time series of estimates begins with the most recent decennial census data and extends to the vintage year.

These estimates are used in federal funding allocations, as survey controls, as denominators for vital rates and per capita time series, and as indicators of recent demographic changes. With each new release of annual estimates, the entire time series of estimates is revised for all years back to the last census. All previously published estimates are superseded and archived.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Division, 2015 National and State Population Estimates.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth’s official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg’s Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau’s National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center’s State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg’s Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.

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