

# Migration to rural America resulted in population growth last year

BY SARAH MELOTTE  
The Daily Yonder

Thousands of people moved to rural America last year, causing the fourth year of continual growth in rural areas, according to a Daily Yonder analysis of 2024 Census estimates.

Nonmetropolitan, or rural, counties grew by 134,000 residents between 2023 and 2024, reversing a decade-long trend of population decline that happened between 2010 and 2020. Since 2020, in-migration has been the primary force behind rural population gain. If it wasn't for people moving to rural America, nonmetro counties would have lost more than half a million residents over the past four years.

That's because deaths have been outnumbering births in rural places, a phenomenon demographers refer to as natural decrease. (Natural increase, on the other hand, occurs when births outnumber deaths).

Between 2023 and 2024, rural America lost 104,600 residents to natural decrease. But because the number of people who moved to rural counties was greater than the number of people who left, rural America saw a net migration of 240,000 residents.

(Nonmetropolitan, or rural, counties in this analysis are the counties not on the list of metropolitan areas in the 2013 Office of Management and Budget database.)

A similar trend occurred in smaller metropolitan areas. Metro counties with populations fewer than 250,000, referred to simply as small metros in the table below, lost just over 2,000 residents to natural decrease in 2024. These counties, however, also gained an additional 226,200 residents by people moving in.

In medium-sized suburbs of cities with populations between 250,000 and 1 million, natural decrease resulted in a drop of 10,300 residents. But in-migra-

tion added 203,600 residents to those counties, resulting in a net gain of 193,100 residents in 2024.

But in the nation's largest counties, population growth happened through a combination of both natural increase and in-migration. In the major metros with populations exceeding 1 million residents, both natural change and positive net migration resulted in a growth of almost 1 million residents. The suburbs of those cities gained about 1.2 million, primarily through migration.

In medium-sized metros, or cities with populations between 250,000 and 1 million, increases in migration and births resulted in a net gain of more than half a million more residents.

## The South as epicenter of rural growth

In 2024, America gained population across every type of geography, from the nation's largest cities to the countryside's smallest towns. But that growth was more pronounced in some regions over others.

About two-thirds of the national rural population growth happened in the South, for example. Home to nearly 18 million rural residents in 2024, the South is the largest region in the United States in terms of population size, so it follows that the most drastic fluctuations in raw numbers happened there.

Like the rest of rural America, population growth in the South was a direct result of people moving in. The South gained an additional 130,100 residents in 2024.

Simultaneously, these counties lost 41,800 residents through natural decrease. The resulting net change in population in the rural South was a growth of 88,200 people.

In terms of percent change, however, the largest growth last year happened in the Interior Northwest. Between 2023 and 2024, the Interior Northwest, which includes the states of Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, grew by 12,000 residents,



(Photo by Tomaz Filipek/Unsplash)

a 0.68% increase.

Population growth in the Interior Northwest happened because of a mix of natural increase and migration. In-migration accounted for an additional

10,000 residents, while natural change resulted in about 2,000 new residents.

The Mid Atlantic region, which includes states like Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland,

among others, was the only region that saw rural population declines in 2024. But that decrease was relatively minor—about 3,100 residents, a 0.07% drop since 2023.

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The Danville Independent School district will publish a full list of delinquent school taxes in the Advocate Messenger on Tuesday, April 29, 2025. The list will contain owner name, property address and tax amount due as of published date.

All delinquent tax information is currently available for public inspection in person weekdays between 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM or online at [www.danvilleschools.net](http://www.danvilleschools.net). To view the list online, choose DEPARTMENTS, PROPERTY TAX INFORMATION, then DELINQUENT AMOUNTS THROUGH APRIL 2025.

Unpaid tax bills as of May 30, 2025 will be offered for sale on June 2, 2025. Offers to purchase unpaid bills may be submitted in writing and received in the office listed below by Monday, May 26, 2025.

Place: Danville Board of Education  
115 E Lexington Ave  
Danville, KY 40422  
Time of Sale: Monday, June 2, 2025 at 9:00 AM

All individuals wishing to participate in the sale must register with the office above between the dates of May 1, 2025 – May 22, 2025

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