

Population Change and Migration

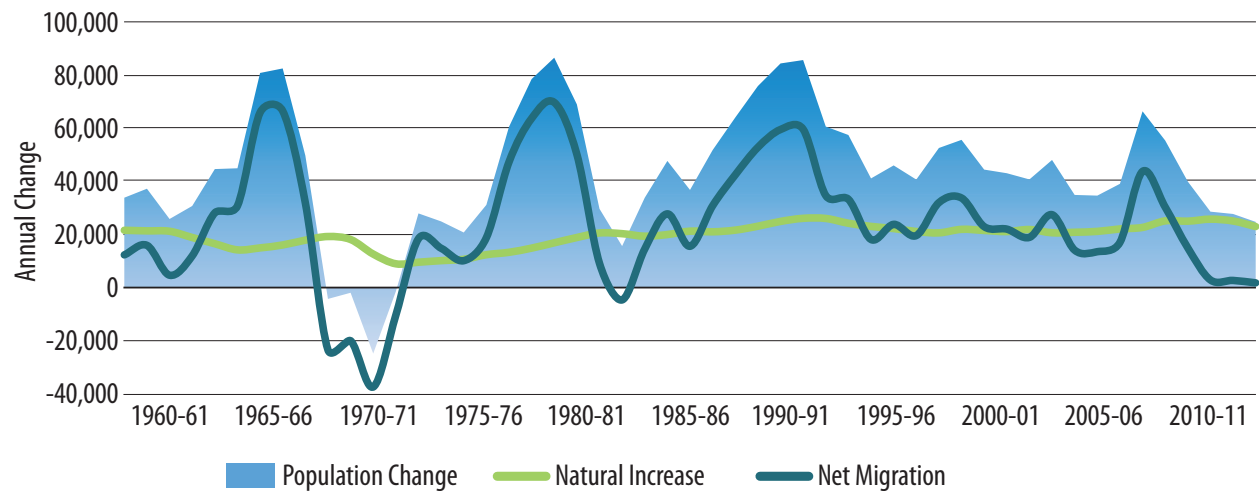
Fewer people moved into the central Puget Sound region in the 2000s compared to the previous two decades, showing the effects of two significant recessions and the bursting housing bubble that made it harder for people to find or change jobs, sell their houses and relocate.

Components of Population Change and Migration

Population change is a function of two components: **natural increase** (births minus deaths) and **net migration** (people moving into an area minus people moving out). Since 1960, according to estimates by the state Office of Financial Management (OFM), net migration has contributed 55% of the region's total population growth while natural increase accounted for the other 45%.

Net migration is the primary driver behind population growth trends in the region. While growth from natural increase remains relatively stable from year to year, net migration is far more volatile, rising and falling in response to the strength of job opportunities and attractions in the central Puget Sound relative to other places. Federal policy governing international migration flows can also play a role.

Figure 1. Annual Population Change by Component, Central Puget Sound Region



Source: OFM

Table 1. Components of Population Change by County, Central Puget Sound Region

	1960-1970	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	% Share by Component 2000-2010	1960-2010	% Share by Component 1960-2010
King								
Net Migration	119,700	55,700	140,700	120,400	75,600	38.9%	512,000	51.4%
Natural Increase	104,700	54,900	96,700	109,300	118,700	61.1%	484,200	48.6%
Total Population Change	224,400	110,500	237,400	229,700	194,200	—	996,200	—
Kitsap								
Net Migration	9,800	36,400	26,000	24,400	7,700	40.3%	104,400	62.5%
Natural Increase	7,700	9,000	16,600	17,800	11,400	59.7%	62,600	37.5%
Total Population Change	17,600	45,400	42,600	42,200	19,200	—	167,000	—
Pierce								
Net Migration	46,600	33,800	44,200	62,300	42,400	45.0%	229,300	48.4%
Natural Increase	44,200	39,500	56,400	52,400	52,000	55.0%	244,400	51.6%
Total Population Change	90,800	73,300	100,500	114,600	94,400	—	473,600	—
Snohomish								
Net Migration	68,200	48,700	87,000	92,400	59,500	55.4%	355,700	65.7%
Natural Increase	24,900	23,700	40,900	48,000	47,800	44.6%	185,400	34.3%
Total Population Change	93,000	72,500	127,900	140,400	107,300	—	541,100	—
Region								
Net Migration	244,200	174,700	297,800	299,500	185,200	44.6%	1,201,400	55.2%
Natural Increase	181,500	127,100	210,600	227,500	229,900	55.4%	976,600	44.8%
Total Population Change	425,700	301,800	508,400	527,000	415,100	—	2,178,000	—

Source: OFM

The region grew by 415,000 persons over the last decade from 2000 to 2010. This level of growth was comparatively lower than the two preceding decades when the region grew by well over a million people — 508,000 during the 1980s and 527,000 during the 1990s. The difference is due to substantially lower levels of net migration — 185,000 persons during the 2000s, compared to 300,000 per decade during the 1980s and 1990s. Recent trends reflect the impact of two severe recessions on the regional economy, complicated by the national housing crisis that constrained mobility for numerous households owing more on a home than its worth.

Net migration accounted for just 45% of population growth in the region during the 2000s, compared to 55% on average from 1960 to 2010. These trends held across each of the region's four counties, to varying degrees. Net migration constituted just 39% and 40% of King and Kitsap counties' population growth over the last decade, compared to averages of 51% and 63% over the past 50 years. In Snohomish County, net migration contributed a notably higher share of its last decade's growth than in the region's other counties, 55%, although this was a level still significantly lower than its 50-year average of 66%. Pierce was the only county for which recent net migration levels over the past decade, 45%, were relatively consistent with its 50-year average of 48%; major expansion of military personnel at Joint Base Lewis-McChord was likely a factor.

County-to-County Migration Trends

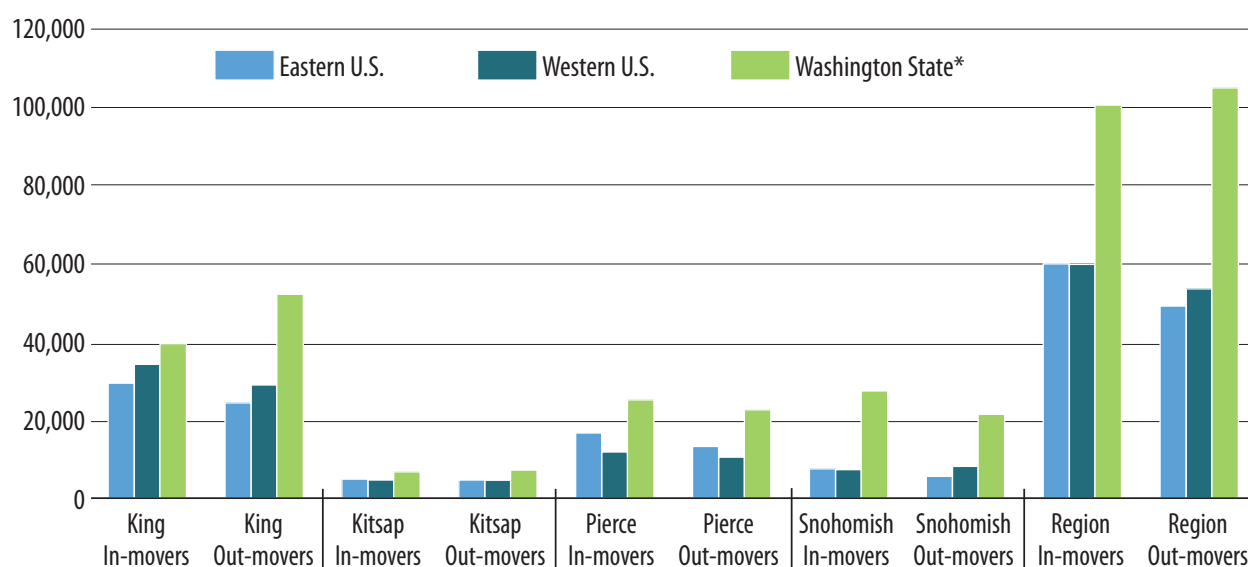
Census Bureau data on county-to-county migration flows provides additional detail about the geographic component of where people are moving to and from. The data come from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, and the question asked was where the person lived one year previous to filling out the census questionnaire.

Over that five-year period, the biggest contribution to regional in-migration came from within Washington state, with nearly 40% of all in-movers to the Puget Sound region coming from other Washington counties. However, slightly

more of the region’s residents moved the other way to other parts of Washington state during this same period. This trend was mostly driven by migration flows to and from King County, where the number of county residents who moved to other parts of the state outside the region was 31% greater than the number who moved to King County.

This trend for King County held for movement within the region as well. The number who moved to the other regional counties was nearly 45% greater than those moving into the county. Most of this movement out of King County went to Pierce and Snohomish counties, which both had considerably more movement into those counties than out of them. Looking beyond in-state migration, approximately equal numbers of people came here from both the eastern and western regions of the United States, while fewer went the other way.

Figure 2. Migration to and from Region



*Note: Does not include movement within Puget Sound region.
Source: Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS)

Table 2. Percent Movers within Region by County

	In-movers		Out-movers	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
King	36.4%	2.2%	52.6%	2.0%
Kitsap	6.9%	1.2%	7.2%	1.0%
Pierce	27.6%	2.1%	20.1%	1.9%
Snohomish	29.0%	1.4%	20.2%	1.8%
Region	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%

Source: Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS)

Data Note: The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) and Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) use different methodologies to estimate in- and out-migration. As such, the estimates reported by the two datasets may differ substantially. It is recommended that the OFM dataset be used for actual numeric estimates, whereas the ACS dataset be used to derive migration flow patterns.

Copies of this *Puget Sound Trend* are available at psrc.org and through the PSRC Information Center at 206-464-7532, info@psrc.org. For questions about the data presented in this *Trend*, contact Neil Kilgren at 206-971-3602 or nkilgren@psrc.org.