

Movers and population turnover

Data by state show Alaska represents the extremes

By ERIC SANDBERG

The Internal Revenue Service recently released 2019 to 2020 migration data that allow us to compare movement trends with other states.

For Alaska, it confirms what population estimates from other sources show. Alaska has the highest yearly population turnover of any state, called gross migration. The gross migration rate is the total number of people who moved both in and out of a state over the year, divided by the total population. The IRS data also show Alaska's negative net migration: more people left the state than moved in.

Our turnover is highest, but that's Alaska's historical norm

Alaska's gross migration rate was nearly 11 percent over those two years, and while ours was the highest rate among states, that's our historical norm. Alaska's gross migration rate topped the list in 19 of

the 30 available years of IRS data — including the last 14 in a row — and never ranked below second place.

Alaska's turnover isn't as high as it used to be, though, having declined from around 16 percent in the early 1990s.

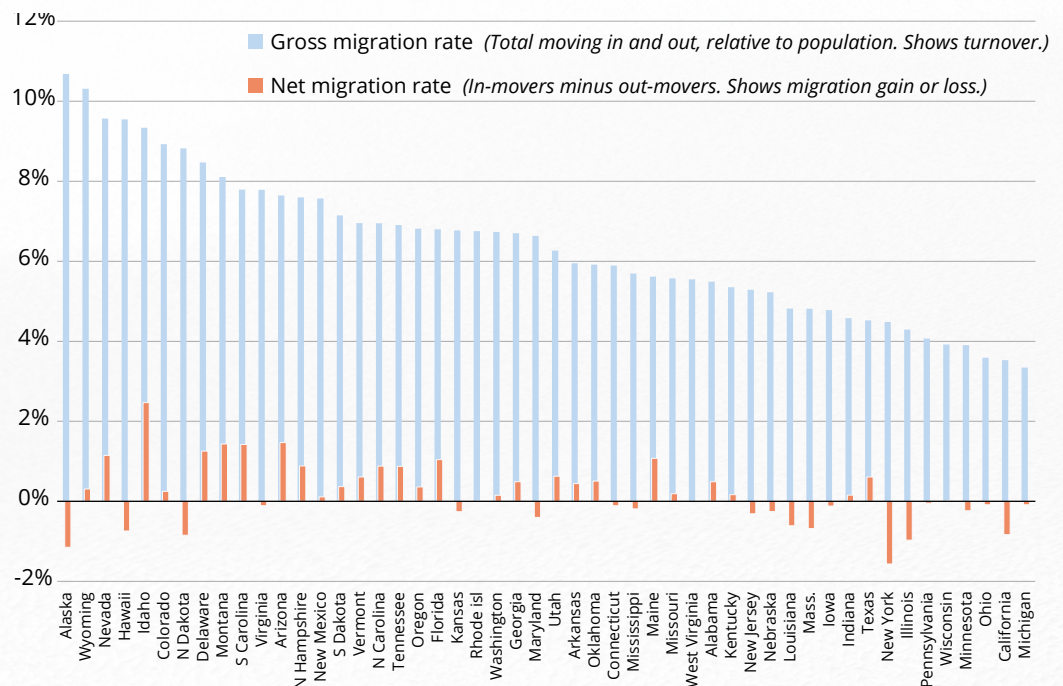
Turnover is easy to misinterpret. For example, a rate of 10 percent doesn't mean the entire population would turn over in a decade. In reality, many people who leave Alaska also arrived fairly recently, so annual data shouldn't be added cumulatively.

Most other states with high gross migration rates are having a population influx (positive net migration) or are places where high turnover is the norm.

Among the latter, several are broadly similar to Alaska. Wyoming and North Dakota have big resource extraction industries. Before natural resources became a large part of North Dakota's economy, that state's gross migration rate was in the middle of the pack.

Migration by state, 2019 to 2020

Source: Internal Revenue Service Tax Statistics



Hawaii shares Alaska's detachment from the contiguous states and has a large military population.

Certain parts of the country are drawing the most movers

People are flocking to states in specific areas of the country. From 2019 to 2020, Idaho received the largest proportional influx of newcomers at 2.5 percent, followed by fellow western states Arizona (1.5 percent) and Montana (1.4 percent).

Nevada, whose net migration rate was highest for most of the last 30 years, also continued to draw movers.

Other major destinations were in the Southeast (the Carolinas, Florida, and Tennessee), upper New England (Maine and New Hampshire), and Delaware.

Alaska is among the states losing the most people to net migration each year. Many states with large net outflows are urban, but not all.

Alaska's 2019-2020 net migration rate of -1.1

About the IRS mover data

In May, the Internal Revenue Service released new migration data for all states. The IRS recorded moves for all filers and their dependents between 2019 and 2020 by comparing address changes on their tax returns.

While these numbers are a couple of years old and match already-published Department of Labor and Workforce Development estimates for Alaska's gross migration and net migration rates, the IRS data's value lies in the comparisons they allow us to make across states.

percent ranked second-lowest behind New York (-1.6 percent).

Other states with notable net losses included Illinois (-1.0 percent), North Dakota (-0.8 percent), California (-0.8 percent), Hawaii (-0.7 percent), and Massachusetts (-0.7 percent).

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EMPLOYER RESOURCES

2022 Veterans and Military Spouses Job Fair is Nov. 9

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development will host our annual Veterans and Military Spouses Job Fair in person this year, on Nov. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Anchorage at 1251 Muldoon Road.

Did you know ... that an armistice, or temporary peace, was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, bringing the fighting of World War I to an end? A year later, President Woodrow Wilson announced that Nov. 11 would be called Armistice Day, a day dedicated to world peace in honor of World War I veterans. In 1954, Congress changed the name to Veterans Day to honor all military veterans.

More than 69,000 veterans call Alaska home, and Alaska has the highest concentration of veterans per capita in the nation. Veterans are an asset to the workforce because of their adaptability, dependability, problem solving skills, leadership, follow-through,

ability to work as part of a team, and strong sense of responsibility.

To honor Alaska's veterans, the department hosts the Veterans and Military Spouses Job Fair each November, connecting veterans and their family members with a network of employers. This is one of the largest hiring fairs in Alaska, and many Alaska employers use this event to find valuable military talent.

We encourage employers who want to participate or learn more about the numerous reasons to hire veterans and military spouses to contact the department's Business Connections at (907) 269-4777.

We hope to see you there!

Employer Resources is written by the Employment and Training Services Division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.