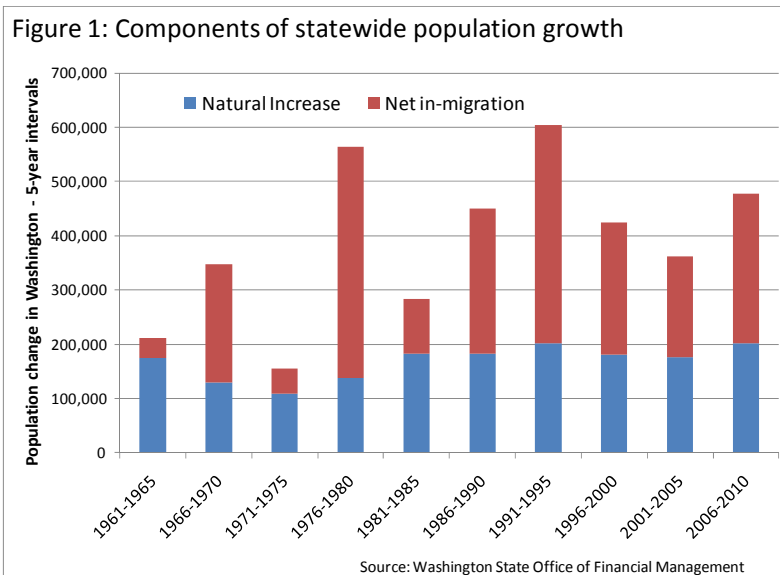


# Migration into Washington

Migration is central to the demographic story of Washington. Since 1960, net in-migration (people moving into the state minus people moving out of the state) has accounted for 57 percent of state growth. Washington has been on the receiving end of a national trend of people moving away from the Mid-West and Northeast toward the West Coast and the Sunbelt. **The effects of the "Great Recession" have moved Washington to the front rank of states receiving in-migrants.**

Figure 1 shows the roles of natural change (births minus deaths) and net in-migration in growth since 1960. Natural growth, while low during the "Birth Dearth" of the 1970s, stays relatively consistent. Net migration, on the other hand, has been less consistent. Migration was strong in the mid 1960s, as Boeing ramped up, but fell dramatically in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the "Boeing Bust." The late 1970s saw a major surge, and after the effects of the 1980s recession abated, the state saw a decade of very strong net in-migration from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. Migration was lower but still impressive into the 2000s, staying strong even through the Great Recession.



**Who are these people and why do they come here?** Figure 2 shows the top 15 sending states from 2006 to 2010, based on drivers license trade-ins. The most significant source of in-migrants is California, which is not only large and nearby, but has many complementary industries -- especially aerospace and IT -- making it easier to transfer jobs and careers to Washington.

Research indicates that the people most often move long distances to pursue economic opportunity: migrants usually have a job waiting for them when they arrive. Washington's higher education system is small, especially when compared to the talent demands of the state's knowledge-intensive industries. This drives out-of-state recruiting efforts of the state's large employers, such as Boeing and Microsoft. As Figures 3 and 5 show, in-migrants tend to be young and well educated.

The "Mount Rainier effect," thought to draw migrants seeking natural beauty and an attractive lifestyle, is real but not likely a major force. The state's natural endowments may help it compete with other states for talent, but the talent recruitment game always starts with an immediate job and good long-term career development potential.

Figure 2: Drivers license trade-ins

Trade-ins 2006-2010	
California	144,446
Oregon	99,732
Texas	34,352
Florida	30,833
Arizona	29,656
Idaho	28,759
Colorado	19,296
Michigan	19,018
Nevada	18,657
North Carolina	18,106
Alaska	15,245
Illinois	14,769
New York	14,349
Utah	14,029
Georgia	12,795
Balance of U.S.	184,675

Source: Wa State Dept. of Licensing

Figures 3 through 6 show important characteristics of in-migrants to Washington and to two major metro areas – Puget Sound and Spokane (data for other metro areas is not reliable). Figures 7 and 8 show trends in migration to other states with a pattern of heavy in-migration.

## Migrants, both nationally and to Washington, tend to be . . .

. . . **Young.** Consistent with the intuitive idea that young people are less rooted and more flexible, the demographic of migrants skews toward the young. Figure 3 shows that the largest group of migrants, both statewide and in the two metro areas, is the 20 to 29 age group: one third of migrants are in their 20s, whereas only about 15 percent of the general population is in that age group. Conversely, migrants are far less likely to be over 50.

A factor not captured in the data is the phenomenon in Washington of college students returning to the state. Washington has a very high rate of sending its young people out of state to college, so many of the in-migrants picked up in the America Community Survey could be young adults who grew up in the state, left to attend college elsewhere, and then returned to launch or continue their careers in their home state.

Figure 3: Age of in-migrants

	Statewide		Puget Sound*		Spokane County	
	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants
Under 20	25%	25%	24%	23%	25%	27%
20 to 29	15%	32%	15%	35%	16%	33%
30 to 39	14%	17%	15%	19%	13%	13%
40 to 49	15%	10%	16%	9%	14%	10%
50 to 59	14%	8%	14%	7%	14%	9%
60 to 69	9%	4%	8%	4%	9%	4%
Over 70	8%	4%	7%	3%	9%	5%

\*King, Pierce, Snohomish

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2009

. . . **Single.** Migrants are somewhat less likely than the general population to be married. This not only follows from the youth of the group, but also signals the challenge of migration when two careers are at stake. The deeper the job pool in an area, the more likely married couples will be to migrate there, confident that both partners can find satisfying careers.

Figure 4: Marital status of in-migrants

	Statewide		Puget Sound*		Spokane County	
	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants
Never married	30%	42%	31%	44%	29%	42%
Now married	51%	42%	51%	42%	51%	41%
Divorced	12%	11%	12%	9%	13%	12%
Separated	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Widowed	5%	3%	5%	2%	5%	4%

\*King, Pierce, Snohomish

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2009

. . .**Well educated.** If a migrant has a job already lined up, then that job probably requires at least a bachelor's degree. For lower level positions companies do not tend to recruit nationally or transfer people cross-country, and people with lower level skills tend not to search the country for jobs. Hence, migrants, as a group, are more highly educated than the population as a whole. Figure 5 shows that migrants are more likely to hold college degrees than the population as a whole. Interestingly, migrants are also as likely, or more likely to have less than a high school degree, probably reflecting the movement of low-skilled agricultural workers. And, again, it is not known how many of these degree-holding in-migrants are returning to the state after completing their schooling elsewhere.

Figure 5: Education attainment of in-migrants

	Statewide		Puget Sound*		Spokane County	
	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants
Less than high school grad.	10%	10%	9%	11%	8%	18%
High school grad.	24%	18%	22%	15%	26%	18%
Some college or assoc. deg.	34%	30%	33%	20%	39%	37%
Bachelor's deg.	20%	26%	24%	33%	17%	18%
Graduate or prof. deg.	11%	16%	13%	21%	10%	14%
All college graduates	31%	42%	37%	54%	27%	32%

\*King, Pierce, Snohomish

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2009

. . . **and lower income.** Although the skill levels of in-migrants are high, their incomes are not. Figure 6 shows the incomes brackets of in-migrants and the general population, indicating that in-migrants are somewhat more likely to have lower incomes than the population as a whole. Given that young people tend to have lower incomes than more experienced workers, and that corporate recruits may be coming directly from college or a non-professional position, this makes sense. Also worth noting is that the local movement between the Portland area and Clark County, and between Northern Idaho and the Spokane area will show up in the data as migration between states, but more accurately reflects the migration that happens within metropolitan areas, which disproportionately involves lower income people.

Figure 6: Individual income of in-migrants

	Statewide		Puget Sound*		Spokane County	
	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants	All residents	In-migrants
\$1 to \$9,999 or loss	21%	27%	18%	25%	24%	33%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	9%	11%	8%	9%	10%	13%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	15%	17%	14%	17%	17%	19%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13%	12%	13%	13%	15%	10%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15%	12%	15%	13%	14%	10%
\$50,000 to \$64,999	10%	7%	11%	7%	9%	7%
\$65,000 to \$74,999	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	1%
\$75,000 or more	13%	11%	17%	13%	8%	7%

\*King, Pierce, Snohomish

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2009

## Migration continues in Washington while falling in other states

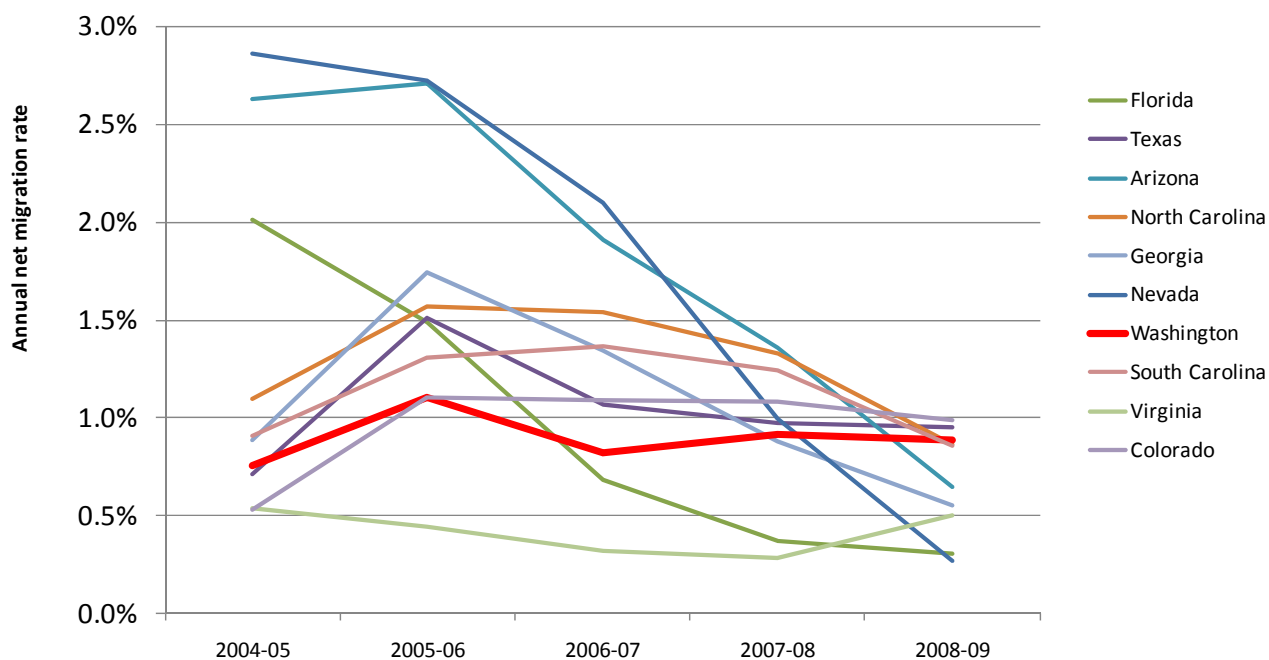
Figure 7 shows migration and migration rates (net in-migrants divided by population) for the ten states with the most net in-migration for the past decade. Figure 8 shows the trend in migration rates for those states over the past five years. The states with the highest in-migration rates of the decade -- Nevada, Arizona, Florida -- saw those rates plummet in the past few years, while Washington, Texas and Colorado saw their rates increase. **Washington now ranks fourth in the nation in terms of both net number of in-migrants and the net in-migration rate.**

Figure 7: Top ten net in-migration states 2000 to 2009

	Net Migration				Net Migration Rate			
	00-09 migrants	00-09 rank	08-09 migrants	08-09 rank	00-09 rate	00-09 rank	08-09 rate	08-09 rank
Florida	2,034,234	1	56,202	5	12.68%	3	0.31%	19
Texas	1,781,785	2	231,539	1	8.51%	8	0.95%	3
Arizona	986,764	3	42,108	8	19.10%	2	0.65%	9
North Carolina	889,589	4	80,319	2	11.01%	4	0.87%	5
Georgia	849,133	5	53,950	6	10.32%	6	0.56%	10
Nevada	485,443	6	7,168	24	24.05%	1	0.27%	25
Washington	440,988	7	58,157	4	7.46%	12	0.89%	4
South Carolina	376,441	8	38,745	10	9.36%	7	0.86%	6
Virginia	375,639	9	39,166	9	5.29%	14	0.50%	13
Colorado	357,683	10	48,669	7	8.26%	10	0.99%	2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 8: Trends in high-migration states



Source: U.S. Census Bureau