

CLEVELAND FED

District Data Brief

Migrants from High-Cost, Large Metro Areas during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Their Destinations, and How Many Could Follow

Fourth Quarter 2021 Update for Tables and Figures

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This document contains tables and figures from [“Migrants from High-Cost, Large Metro Areas during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Their Destinations, and How Many Could Follow”](#) that have been updated with data through December 31, 2021.

This update is substantially different from previous updates. The measures in the original data brief were designed to characterize the immediate impact of the pandemic and lockdowns. The duration of the pandemic has grown quite long and has exhibited enough variation that measures aggregating over the whole pandemic period are not as useful. To provide a more accurate sense of recent developments on an ongoing basis, the tables now report migration in the most recent four quarters, rather than the whole pandemic era. Where percentage changes are reported in the tables, they are the increase or decrease of the most recent four quarters relative to the comparable averages from the three years just before the pandemic (2017:Q2 through 2020:Q1). This update continues to display the time series figures, so the recent estimates can be compared to the series' history.

In the 2021 estimates presented in Table 1, almost all gross migration flows between location types were above their prepandemic averages. However, the flows toward less populated locations were up by 11 percent to 21 percent, while the flows toward high-cost locations or more populated locations ranged from a slight decline to a 6 percent increase. In the fourth quarter of 2021, the net migration out of high-cost, large metro areas declined substantially (see Figure 1), but it still remained higher than it was at any point from 2009 to 2019. Table 2 shows that most estimated 2021 migration flows from the high-cost, large metros to lower-cost locations were up by 10 percent to 30 percent over prepandemic levels. Migration to near destinations, within 150 miles (see Table 3), was up by more than migration to far destinations for people leaving Boston, Chicago, Miami, New York, and Washington DC.

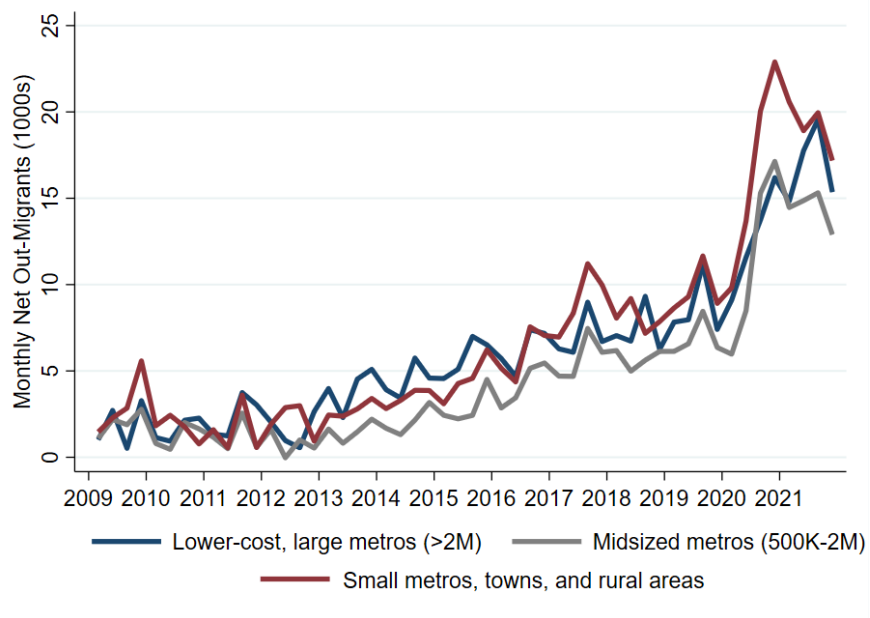
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Table 1. Estimated Interregional Gross Migration by Type of Region during the Last Four Quarters (2021:Q1 through 2021:Q4)

	To high-cost, large metro areas (>2M)		To lower-cost, large metro areas (>2M)		To midsized metro areas (500K–2M)		To small metro areas (<500K), towns, and rural areas	
	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change
From high-cost, large metro areas (>2M)	916,740	7.2	658,420	21.1	605,300	20.5	770,960	18.2
From lower-cost, large metro areas (>2M)	455,880	1.5	495,880	4.9	481,360	11.5	802,180	12.8
From midsized metro areas (500K–2M)	432,680	1.2	486,420	6.3	553,100	7.9	860,240	11.5
From small metro areas, towns, and rural areas	541,100	-0.2	761,640	3.2	852,480	6.4	1,984,800	6.0

Notes: Populations indicated in parentheses. The percentage change is relative to the equivalent migration flows from 2017:Q2 to 2020:Q1. Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax Data, American Community Survey, National Association of Realtors, and author’s calculations.

Figure 1. Net Migration from High-Cost, Large Metro Areas to Other Types of Regions



Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax Data, American Community Survey, National Association of Realtors, and author’s calculations.

Table 2. Estimated Gross Migration from the High-Cost, Large Metro Areas to Other Types of Regions during the Last Four Quarters (2021:Q1 through 2021:Q4)

	To high-cost, large metro areas (>2M)		To lower-cost, large metro areas (>2M)		To midsized metro areas (500K–2M)		To small metro areas (<500K), towns, and rural areas	
	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change
New York, NY	130,620	11.3	150,140	26.0	145,040	26.2	121,180	25.3
Los Angeles, CA	194,800	11.8	89,960	34.1	70,760	26.3	61,980	14.1
Washington, DC	47,760	-6.5	79,640	11.1	57,240	12.3	71,420	13.9
Chicago, IL	45,640	-1.8	69,780	12.9	48,180	16.2	75,920	11.7
Miami, FL	47,460	-2.6	64,220	11.6	50,440	22.7	60,580	16.5
San Francisco, CA	104,260	20.1	29,840	32.8	33,920	29.4	54,120	27.9
Riverside, CA	90,480	8.7	29,820	30.6	20,420	14.2	36,300	25.7
Boston, MA	38,360	2.4	22,020	6.9	60,380	13.5	44,240	19.5
Seattle, WA	34,040	-0.7	28,900	22.6	24,540	11.5	64,740	15.4
San Diego, CA	58,980	1.4	27,960	18.3	25,740	20.4	33,220	13.9
Denver, CO	18,640	0.1	27,560	15.3	27,140	16.4	53,360	18.9
San Jose, CA	58,540	10.6	13,600	43.2	14,520	25.4	18,680	13.9
Sacramento, CA	28,060	5.9	10,780	24.3	15,020	23.4	33,500	20.8
Portland, OR	19,100	-1.1	14,200	27.2	11,960	18.0	41,720	15.5

Notes: Populations indicated in parentheses. The percentage change is relative to the equivalent migration flows from 2017:Q2 to 2020:Q1. The city name indicates the core based statistical area (www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2020/geo/cbsa.html).

Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax Data, American Community Survey, National Association of Realtors, and author's calculations.

Table 3. Estimated Gross Migration from High-Cost, Large Metro Areas to Other Regions by Distance during the Last Four Quarters (2021:Q1 through 2021:Q4)

	To other regions within 150 miles		To other regions beyond 150 miles	
	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change
New York, NY	135,000	26.5	411,980	20.7
Los Angeles, CA	144,100	18.4	273,400	18.9
Washington, DC	80,720	14.0	175,340	5.8
Chicago, IL	43,540	14.7	195,980	9.0
Miami, FL	36,080	46.6	186,620	6.8
San Francisco, CA	84,320	24.9	137,820	24.9
Riverside, CA	78,380	10.6	98,640	20.3
Boston, MA	69,980	15.7	95,020	8.2
Seattle, WA	35,680	7.8	116,540	13.3
San Diego, CA	35,700	6.4	110,200	11.6
Denver, CO	28,820	14.0	97,880	14.6
San Jose, CA	52,800	12.0	52,540	21.5
Sacramento, CA	35,000	15.4	52,360	17.0
Portland, OR	24,500	8.3	62,480	15.5

Notes: The percentage change is relative to the equivalent migration flows 2017:Q2 to 2020:Q1. The city name indicates the core based statistical area (www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2020/geo/cbsa.html).

Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax Data, American Community Survey, National Association of Realtors, and author's calculations.

Table 4. Metro Areas with the Greatest Net Migration from the High-Cost, Large Metro Areas as a Percent of Their Workforce during the Last Four Quarters (2021:Q1 through 2021:Q4)

	Net migration from high-cost, large metro areas	Ratio of net migrants to metro area labor force
Fort Myers, FL	10,000	3.7
Sarasota, FL	10,120	3.3
Stockton, CA	6,780	2.7
Boise City, ID	8,800	2.6
Las Vegas, NV	23,020	2.3
Austin, TX	18,320	1.7
Orlando, FL	19,980	1.5
Colorado Springs, CO	4,320	1.5
Tampa, FL	19,500	1.5
Allentown, PA	5,220	1.4
Phoenix, AZ	28,220	1.3
Nashville, TN	13,120	1.3
Jacksonville, FL	9,100	1.3
Raleigh, NC	8,220	1.3
Oxnard, CA	3,960	1.3
Bakersfield, CA	3,740	1.2
Charleston, SC	3,720	1.0
Provo, UT	2,380	0.9
Knoxville, TN	3,420	0.9
Charlotte, NC	10,920	0.9
Dallas, TX	26,400	0.7
Scranton, PA	1,800	0.7
Tucson, AZ	2,560	0.7
San Antonio, TX	6,920	0.7
Atlanta, GA	17,840	0.7

Sources: Federal Reserve Bank of New York Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax Data, Occupational Employment Statistics, American Community Survey, National Association of Realtors, and author's calculations.