

District Data Brief

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

Second Quarter 2021 Update for Tables and Figures

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August 26, 2021

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 June 30, 2021.

Instead of declining back toward prepandemic levels, the net migration out of high-cost, large metro areas increased slightly to 51,000 people per month in the second quarter of 2021. Outflows from the high-cost metro areas continue to favor nearby small metro areas such as Stockton, Bakersfield, Allentown, and Scranton. Larger metro areas that have a long track record of drawing migrants have displaced the slow-growing metro areas that briefly benefited earlier in the pandemic, such as Rochester, St. Louis, and Milwaukee. The high-cost, large metro areas are once again sending people to rapid-growth destinations such as Las Vegas, Nashville, Atlanta, and Phoenix.

Table 1. Estimated Interregional Gross Migration by Type of Region during the Pandemic

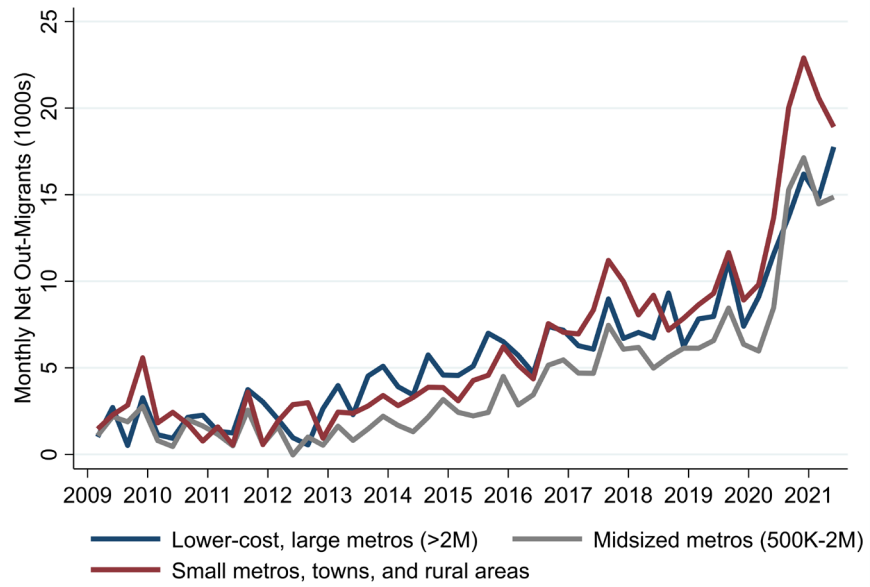
	To high-cost, large metro areas (>2M)		To lower-cost, large metro areas (>2M)		To midsized metro areas (500K–2M)		To small metro areas (<500K), towns, and rural areas	
	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change
From high-cost, large metro areas (>2M)	1,096,820	4.2	758,060	13.4	720,940	16.7	932,200	15.8
From lower-cost, large metro areas (>2M)	535,760	-3.1	582,340	0.1	567,460	6.7	939,160	6.7
From midsized metro areas (500K–2M)	510,220	-3.1	567,820	-3.1	660,500	4.2	1,023,320	7.2
From small metro areas, towns, and rural areas	643,880	-3.6	900,700	-0.9	1,004,340	1.4	2,366,740	2.2

Notes: Populations indicated in parentheses. The pandemic period is 2020:Q2 to 2021:Q2. 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.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland or the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Figure 1. Net Migration between High-Cost, Large Metro Areas and 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 Migration from the High-Cost, Large Metro Areas to Other Types of Regions during the Pandemic

	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	160,400	12.1	175,160	20.3	175,240	24.2	150,460	26.8
Los Angeles	228,620	6.0	99,240	20.1	83,320	21.0	77,240	15.5
Washington	59,940	-4.2	93,840	7.0	68,680	10.2	88,160	15.2
Chicago	53,600	-6.1	81,120	6.3	53,960	5.8	91,840	9.6
San Francisco	126,400	18.7	33,920	21.7	41,320	27.2	66,240	26.9
Miami	57,520	-6.6	75,620	5.7	59,880	16.8	73,380	13.0
Riverside	107,300	3.9	33,580	18.8	23,440	6.3	41,300	14.9
Boston	46,660	2.6	26,360	4.3	75,420	15.7	54,280	20.1
Seattle	39,080	-6.2	30,700	8.0	29,700	11.1	77,380	12.1
San Diego	71,100	-1.1	33,520	14.0	30,520	16.2	40,220	10.6
Denver	22,080	-3.8	32,660	10.2	30,480	5.5	62,320	12.0
San Jose	70,740	8.6	14,300	23.3	17,300	21.0	23,260	13.5
Sacramento	32,360	-0.2	12,620	19.7	17,980	20.4	39,260	14.5
Portland	21,020	-11.0	15,420	12.1	13,700	12.1	46,860	4.8

Notes: Populations indicated in parentheses. The pandemic period is 2020:Q2 to 2021:Q2. 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 Migration from High-Cost, Large Metro Areas to Other Regions by Distance during the Pandemic

	To other regions within 150 miles		To other regions beyond 150 miles	
	Migrants	Change	Migrants	Change
New York	169,080	28.8	492,180	18.0
Los Angeles	172,540	14.8	315,880	11.3
Washington	96,460	11.0	214,160	5.9
Chicago	52,760	12.6	227,760	2.9
San Francisco	102,600	23.0	165,280	21.8
Miami	40,920	33.2	225,480	3.2
Riverside	91,660	4.0	113,960	12.4
Boston	90,040	21.3	112,680	5.4
Seattle	43,520	6.3	133,340	6.8
San Diego	43,600	4.7	131,760	7.8
Denver	35,160	12.2	112,380	6.2
San Jose	64,640	10.7	60,960	14.8
Sacramento	41,560	10.5	60,660	11.2
Portland	27,740	-1.5	69,260	4.7

Notes: The pandemic period is 2020:Q2 to 2021:Q2. 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 Increases in Net Migration from the High-Cost, Large Metro Areas as a Percent of Their Workforce during the Pandemic

	Net migration from high-cost, large metro areas	Change in net migration from high-cost, large metro areas	Change in net migration from high-cost, large metro areas as a percent of the metro-area workforce
Fort Myers	10,240	4,880	1.81
Stockton	9,680	4,373	1.73
Sarasota	10,060	4,927	1.62
Oxnard	5,860	4,713	1.49
Boise City	10,920	4,273	1.27
Austin	21,120	11,520	1.07
Bakersfield	5,100	2,700	0.85
Allentown	6,420	2,400	0.66
Jacksonville	9,220	4,453	0.63
Chattanooga	1,740	1,320	0.52
Las Vegas	25,000	5,313	0.52
Nashville	10,820	5,060	0.51
Raleigh	8,220	3,213	0.49
Scranton	2,400	1,267	0.49
Colorado Springs	4,020	1,360	0.47
Ogden	2,040	1,207	0.46
Albuquerque	1,760	1,760	0.45
Baltimore	8,080	6,127	0.45
Knoxville	2,960	1,673	0.44
Atlanta	20,600	11,973	0.44
Honolulu	460	1,853	0.41
Orlando	18,560	4,980	0.39
Virginia Beach	3,700	2,860	0.38
Phoenix	34,180	7,940	0.37
Tucson	4,000	1,373	0.36

Notes: The pandemic period is 2020:Q2 to 2021:Q2. 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, Occupational Employment Statistics, American Community Survey, National Association of Realtors, and author's calculations.