

U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce · Washington, D.C. 20233

RELEASED: THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2009

- Robert Bernstein
- Public Information Office
- 301-763-3030/763-3762 (phone/fax)
- e-mail: <pio@census.gov>

Raleigh and Austin are Fastest-Growing Metro Areas

Raleigh-Cary, N.C., and Austin-Round Rock, Texas, were the nation's fastest-growing metro areas between 2007 and 2008, according to July 1, 2008, population estimates for the nation's metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas and counties released today by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Raleigh-Cary saw its population climb 4.3 percent between July 1, 2007, and July 1, 2008, to 1.1 million. Similarly, Austin-Round Rock experienced a 3.8 percent increase, to 1.7 million. These two large metro areas were among 47 of the 50 fastest-growing areas located entirely in the South or West. ([Table 1](#))

Large metro areas — those with 2008 populations of 1 million or more — were home to nine of the 10 fastest-growing counties. These metros included New Orleans, which contains St. Bernard Parish (the nation's fastest-growing county between 2007 and 2008) and neighboring Orleans Parish (the country's third-fastest-growing county). The nation's second-fastest-growing county in 2008 was Pinal in Arizona (part of the Phoenix metro area).

The Chicago metro area was home to the fourth-fastest-growing county, Kendall, and the Atlanta metro area was home to fifth-ranked Forsyth County. **In Texas, the Austin metro area was the location of sixth-ranked Williamson and 10th-ranked Hays**, San Antonio includes eighth-ranked Kendall, and Dallas-Fort Worth includes ninth-ranked Rockwall. Only seventh-ranked Geary, Kan., did not belong to a large metro area.

All in all, 94 of the 100 counties (with a population of 10,000 or more) with the fastest population growth last year were in either the South (71 counties) or the West (23 counties). The remaining six were in the Midwest. ([Table 2](#))

Numeric Growth

Four metro areas increased their populations by more than 100,000 people from 2007 to 2008: Dallas-Fort Worth (147,000), Houston (130,000), Phoenix (116,000) and Atlanta (115,000). Los Angeles (88,000) ranked fifth. ([Table 3](#)) Four of the five counties with the largest numeric gains were in one of these metro areas: top-gaining Maricopa County, Ariz. (which accounted for 90,000 of the Phoenix metro gain), Harris County, Texas (contributing 72,000 of the Houston metro gain), Los Angeles County, Calif. (54,000 of the Los Angeles metro gain) and Tarrant County, Texas (accounting for 41,000 of the Dallas-Fort Worth metro gain). ([Table 4](#))

Among the 10 counties that added the largest number of residents during the period, four were in Southern California (Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside and Orange), three were in Texas (Harris, Tarrant and Bexar), and one each was in Arizona (Maricopa), Nevada (Clark) and North Carolina (Wake).

Most Populous Metro Areas and Counties

The most populous metro areas on July 1, 2008, were New York (19.0 million people), Los Angeles (12.9 million) and Chicago (9.6 million). (Table 5) Fourteen metro areas had populations of 4 million or more. The most populous counties were Los Angeles (9.9 million), Cook (5.3 million and part of the Chicago metro) and Harris (4.0 million and part of the Houston metro). Overall, 12 counties had populations of 2 million or more. (Table 6)

As of July 1, 2008, the nation's 363 metro areas contained 254.2 million people — 83.6 percent of the total population. Of these areas, 313 gained and 50 lost population between 2007 and 2008. Among the nation's 3,142 counties, 1,974 gained population, 1,161 lost and seven remained unchanged.

Other highlights:

2007-2008:

Counties

- **Among the 100 fastest-growing counties, the majority were in Texas (19), Georgia (14), North Carolina (11) or Utah (nine).**
- **Texas was home to 10 counties among the 25 with the highest numerical gains and California to six. Each of the top 25 was in the South or West, with the exception of Cook, Ill. (Chicago).**
- **Five counties were among both the 25 fastest-growing and the 25 top numerical gainers: Pinal, Ariz.; Orleans, La.; Williamson, Texas; Fort Bend, Texas; and Wake, N.C.**

Metro Areas

- Four of the 10 fastest-growing metro areas were in Utah and Idaho: Provo-Orem and St. George in Utah, Idaho Falls in Idaho, and Logan, which encompasses parts of Utah and Idaho.

Micro Areas

- The fastest-growing micro areas were Safford, Ariz., and Andrews, Texas, growing by 4.1 and 4.0 percent, respectively.
- Twenty-seven of the 50 fastest-growing micro areas were in the South, 21 in the West and two in the Midwest.
- Overall, 397 of the 577 U.S. micro areas gained and 180 lost population between 2007 and 2008.

Puerto Rico

- San Juan was the most populous metro area in Puerto Rico, at 2.6 million in 2008. It also had the highest numeric gain on the island (8,600) from 2007 to 2008. The San Juan metro area contained the municipio with the largest population in 2008 (San Juan, at 423,000), the one with the largest numeric gain from 2007 to 2008 (Toa Alta, with 2,200) and the fastest-growing (Florida, at 2.9 percent).

2000-2008:

Metro Areas

- Between April 1, 2000, and July 1, 2008, the fastest-growing metro area was Palm Coast, Fla., increasing by 83.1 percent. (Its single county, Flagler, was the second-fastest growing county.) Four western metro areas (St. George, Utah; Provo-Orem, Utah; Greeley, Colo.; and Bend, Ore.) rounded out the five fastest-growing metro areas. Three of the 10 fastest-growing metro areas had 2008 populations of 1 million or more: Raleigh (sixth), Las Vegas (seventh) and Austin (10th).
- Four metro areas had numeric gains of more than 1 million over the period: Dallas-Fort Worth (1.14 million), Atlanta (1.13 million), Phoenix (1.03 million) and Houston (1.01 million). Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif., which gained 861,000, ranked fifth.

Counties

- Eight of the 10 fastest-growing counties between April 1, 2000, and July 1, 2008, were located in metro areas with 2008 populations of 2 million or more. The exceptions were Flagler, Fla., and Lincoln, S.D. (a county within the Sioux Falls metro area). The fastest-growing county during the period was Kendall, Ill. (part of the Chicago metro area), which grew by 89.6 percent. Three of the top 10 counties were part of the Atlanta metro area: Forsyth, sixth, at 70.8 percent; Paulding, eighth, at 63.2 percent; and Henry, ninth, at 60.5 percent.
- The three counties with the largest numeric gains over the period were found in top gaining metro areas: Maricopa, Ariz. (which contributed 882,000 of Phoenix's gain);

Harris, Texas (which accounted for 584,000 of Houston's gain); and Riverside, Calif. (contributing 555,000 of Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario's gain).

- Maricopa's gain since Census 2000 exceeded the population of six states.

The Census Bureau's Internet tables show July 1 population estimates for 2000 through 2008, as well as the April 1, 2000, census counts. Also included are rankings and estimates of components of population change (births, deaths, net domestic migration and net international migration) for all metro areas, micro areas and counties. The county-level data in this news release on percent change apply only to those with total populations of 10,000 or more.

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The county and municipio resident population estimates are calculated using administrative records to estimate components of population change, such as births, deaths, domestic and international migration. The estimates reflect changes to the Census 2000 population resulting from legal boundary updates, other geographic program changes and Count Question Resolution (CQR) actions. (The CQR Program was an administrative review program that handled external challenges to particular official Census 2000 counts.)

All geographic boundaries for the July 1, 2008, population estimates series are defined as of Jan. 1, 2008. The Office of Management and Budget's statistical area definitions (for metro and micro areas) are those issued by that agency in November 2007. Metro areas contain at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population and micro areas contain at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population. Both metro and micro areas consist of one or more whole counties or county equivalents. Some metro area titles are abbreviated in the text of the news release. Full titles are shown in the tables.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin