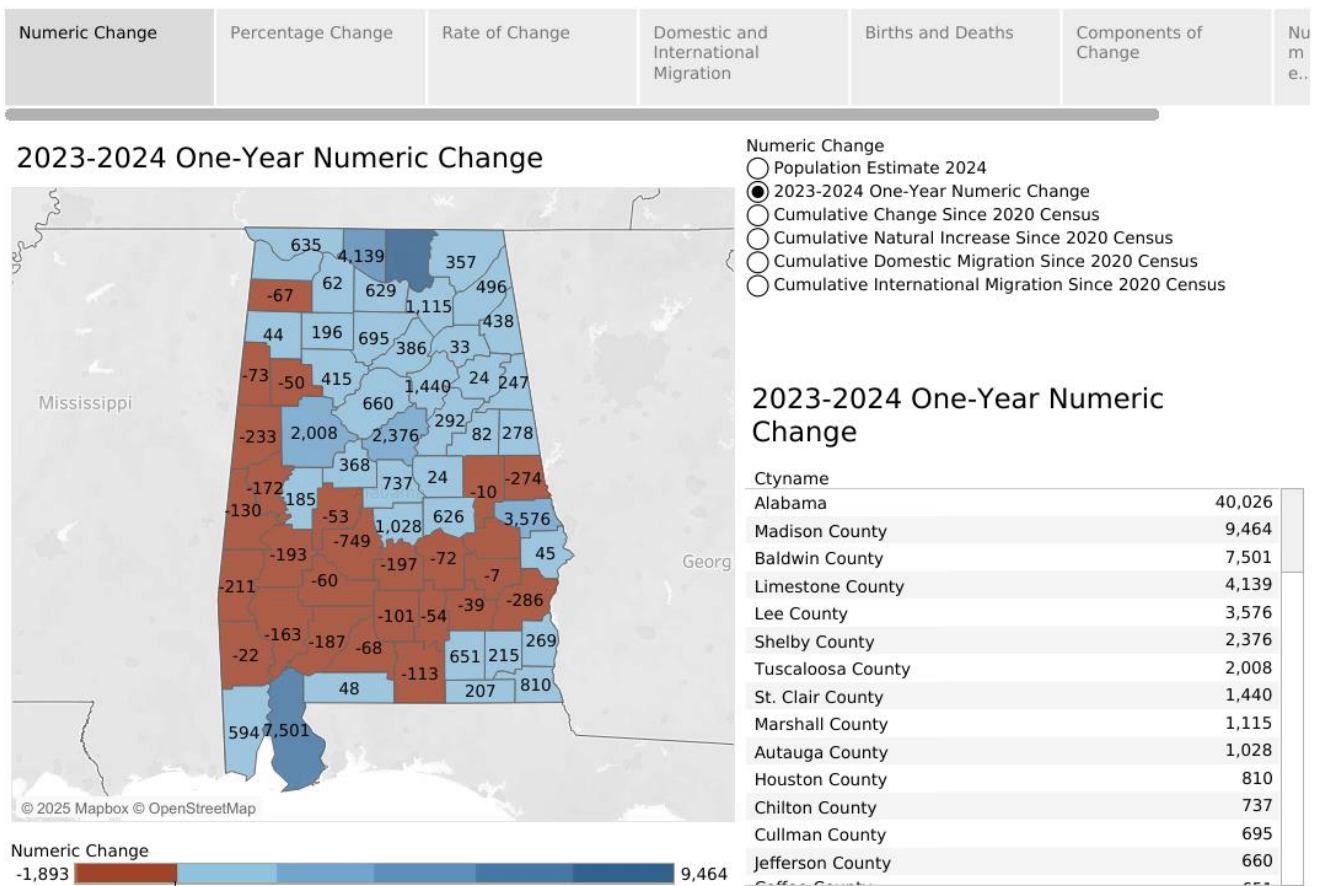




Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama®

A Varied Pattern of Population Growth and Decline across Alabama Counties

By Thomas Spencer, March 25, 2025



According to the latest estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, Jefferson and Mobile counties grew, and Montgomery narrowed its population losses in 2024 thanks to an increase in international migration. International immigration also padded growth in Madison and Baldwin Counties, though growth there was largely driven by domestic migration—new residents moving in from other counties and states.

The latest Census Bureau data provides population estimates for counties and metropolitan areas as of July 1, 2024, and includes underlying estimates of net

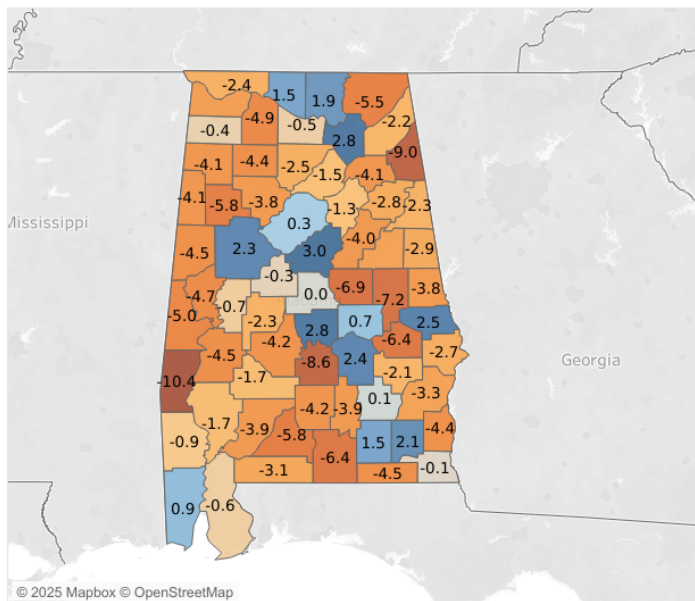
change due to births, deaths, and movement of residents between counties, states, and other countries. A PARCA analysis of the data finds that:

- Considering births, deaths, and both domestic and international migration, 41 of 67 Alabama counties saw population growth.
- In 54 of Alabama’s 67 counties, deaths exceeded births
- 26 counties lost population, all rural and mostly in Central Alabama’s Black Belt.
- 42 counties experienced a net gain of residents moving in from other counties or other states.
- 60 counties saw net positive growth from international migration
- Without that international inflow, 30 of Alabama’s 67 counties would have lost population in 2024

Natural change, births vs. deaths, provides a backdrop for population growth or decline, and in most Alabama counties, natural change has been negative for several years now. That trend began during the Covid-19 pandemic, but continues, though to a lesser degree. As the large Baby Boom generation ages and experiences higher rates of mortality, the number of deaths increases. Meanwhile, younger generations are having fewer children. The two factors combined create a backdrop of population decline through natural change.

| Numeric Change | Percentage Change | Rate of Change | Domestic and International Migration | Births and Deaths | Components of Change | Num e.. |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|

Rate of Natural Change 2024



- Rate per 1,000
- Rate of Natural Change 2024
 - Birth Rate 2024
 - Death Rate 2024
 - Domestic Migration Rate 2024
 - International Migration Rate 2024

Rate of Natural Change 2024

| Ctyname | Rate |
|-------------------|------|
| Shelby County | 3.0 |
| Marshall County | 2.8 |
| Autauga County | 2.8 |
| Lee County | 2.5 |
| Montgomery County | 2.4 |
| Tuscaloosa County | 2.3 |
| Dale County | 2.1 |
| Madison County | 1.9 |
| Limestone County | 1.5 |
| Coffee County | 1.5 |
| Mobile County | 0.9 |
| Elmore County | 0.7 |
| Jefferson County | 0.3 |
| Pike County | 0.1 |
| Chilton County | 0.0 |
| Houston County | -0.1 |
| Bibb County | -0.3 |
| Alabama | -0.3 |
| Franklin County | -0.4 |



There are exceptions. Fifteen counties are still gaining population through natural increase. Those counties tend to be those where young people make up a disproportionate share of the population: suburban counties and counties with universities. [Counties with high percentages of Hispanic residents](#), like Marshall and Franklin counties, tend to have [higher birth rates](#), offsetting the high death rates typical of rural counties.

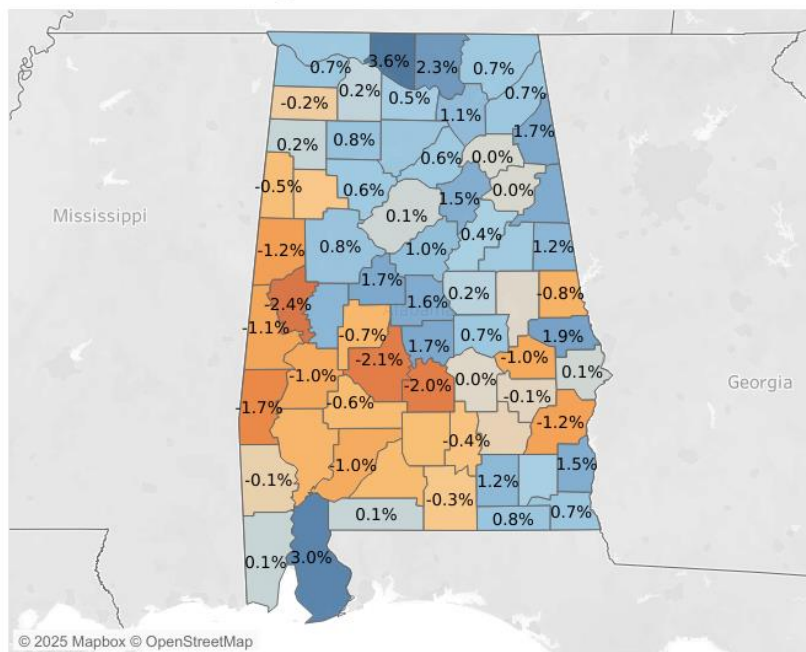
High Growth Counties

The two Alabama counties that saw the most population growth—Madison, home to Huntsville, and coastal Baldwin County—each saw more than 6,500 additional residents move in from other counties or states while also drawing some international migrants.

Limestone, the fastest-growing county in percentage terms, added over 4,000 residents through domestic migration but added very few international migrants.

| Numeric Change | Percentage Change | Rate of Change | Domestic and International Migration | Births and Deaths | Components of Change | Num e.. |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|

2023-2024 % Change



Percentage Change
 ● 2023-2024 % Change
 ○ 2020-2024 % Change

2023-2024 % Change

| Ctyname | Percentage Change |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Limestone County | 3.6% |
| Baldwin County | 3.0% |
| Madison County | 2.3% |
| Lee County | 1.9% |
| Cherokee County | 1.7% |
| Autauga County | 1.7% |
| Bibb County | 1.7% |
| Chilton County | 1.6% |
| Cleburne County | 1.6% |
| St. Clair County | 1.5% |
| Henry County | 1.5% |
| Hale County | 1.2% |
| Randolph County | 1.2% |
| Coffee County | 1.2% |
| Marshall County | 1.1% |
| Shelby County | 1.0% |
| Tuscaloosa County | 0.8% |
| Winston County | 0.8% |
| Alabama | 0.8% |



Lee County drew evenly from both sources, adding about 1,500 residents from other counties or states and a similar amount from abroad. Rounding out the top

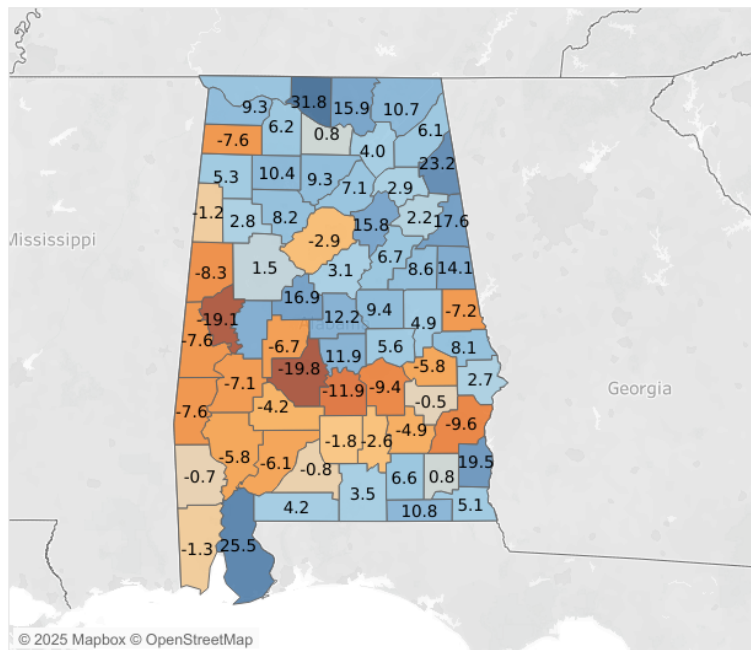
five, Shelby County added from both sources as well, with an estimated 950 net international arrivals and 720 new residents from other counties and states.

Migration

Alabama has continued net positive growth from domestic migration people moving in from other states. Within the state, domestic migration was positive in all counties bordering Tennessee and Florida, and in nine of 11 counties bordering Georgia. Meanwhile, only three of the 10 counties bordering Mississippi experienced a net gain.

| Numeric Change | Percentage Change | Rate of Change | Domestic and International Migration | Births and Deaths | Components of Change | Num e.. |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|

Domestic Migration Rate 2024



- Rate per 1,000
- Rate of Natural Change 2024
 - Birth Rate 2024
 - Death Rate 2024
 - Domestic Migration Rate 2024
 - International Migration Rate 2024

Domestic Migration Rate 2024

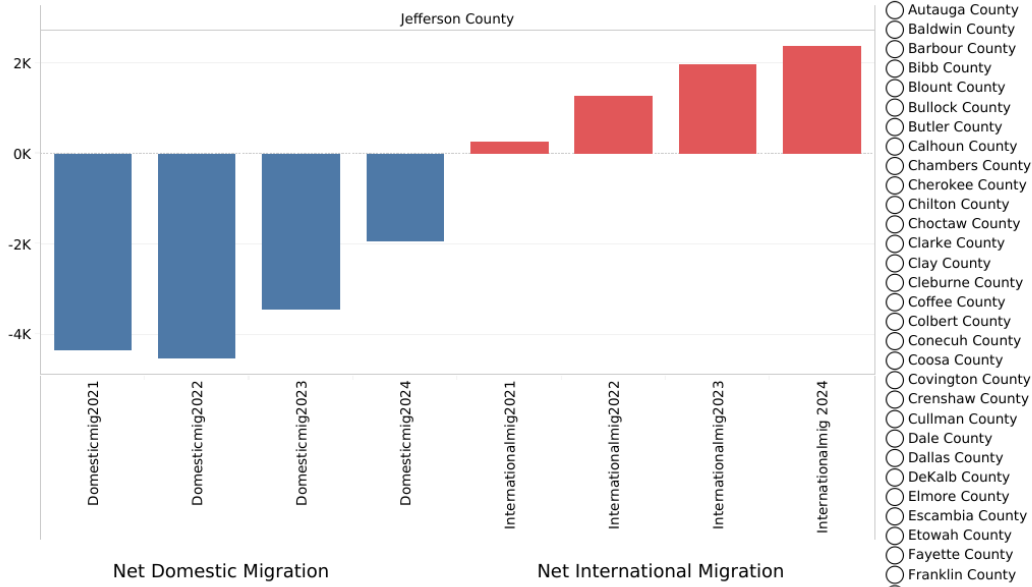
| Ctyname | Rate |
|------------------|------|
| Limestone County | 31.8 |
| Baldwin County | 25.5 |
| Cherokee County | 23.2 |
| Henry County | 19.5 |
| Cleburne County | 17.6 |
| Bibb County | 16.9 |
| Madison County | 15.9 |
| St. Clair County | 15.8 |
| Randolph County | 14.1 |
| Hale County | 13.0 |
| Chilton County | 12.2 |
| Autauga County | 11.9 |
| Geneva County | 10.8 |
| Jackson County | 10.7 |
| Winston County | 10.4 |
| Coosa County | 9.4 |
| Colbert County | 9.3 |
| Cullman County | 9.3 |
| Clay County | 8.6 |



Central counties of the larger metropolitan areas tend to see an outflow of population to the surrounding suburban counties. This is true for Jefferson, Montgomery, and Mobile counties. For all three of those countries, an increase in international immigration helped offset those domestic losses.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Numeric Change | Percentage Change | Rate of Change | Domestic and International Migration | Births and Deaths | Components of Change | Numeric Change by Year by Cou.. |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|

Domestic and International Migration

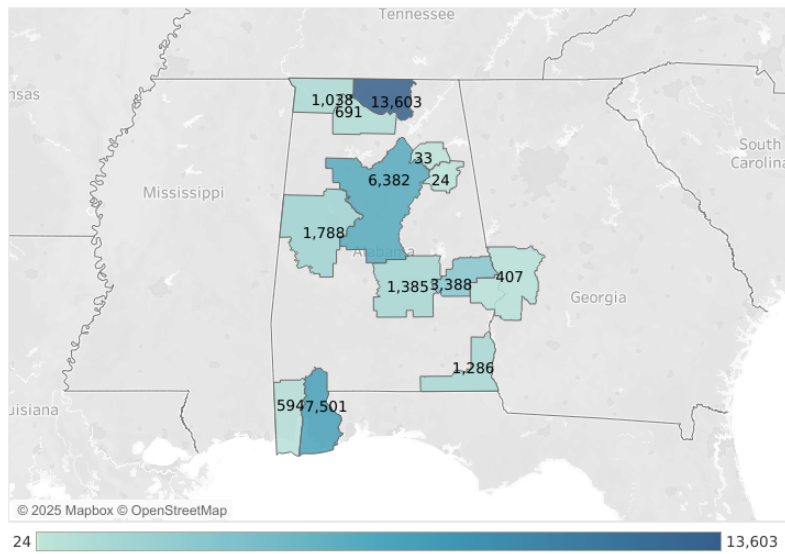


Metro Areas

Alabama MSA Population Estimates and Change, 2024

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Numeric Change | Percentage Change | MSA Population Change by Year | Change Visualization | Alabama Population Change Table | USA Numeric Change | US A Pe r.. |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|

2023-2024 One Year Numeric Change



2023-2024 One Year Numeric Change

| Name | 2023-2024 One Year Numeric Change |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Huntsville, AL | 13,603 |
| Daphne-Fairhope-Foley, AL | 7,501 |
| Birmingham, AL | 6,382 |
| Auburn-Opelika, AL | 3,388 |
| Tuscaloosa, AL | 1,788 |
| Montgomery, AL | 1,385 |
| Dothan, AL | 1,286 |
| Florence-Muscle Shoals, AL | 1,038 |
| Decatur, AL | 691 |
| Mobile, AL | 594 |
| Columbus, GA-AL | 407 |
| Gadsden, AL | 33 |

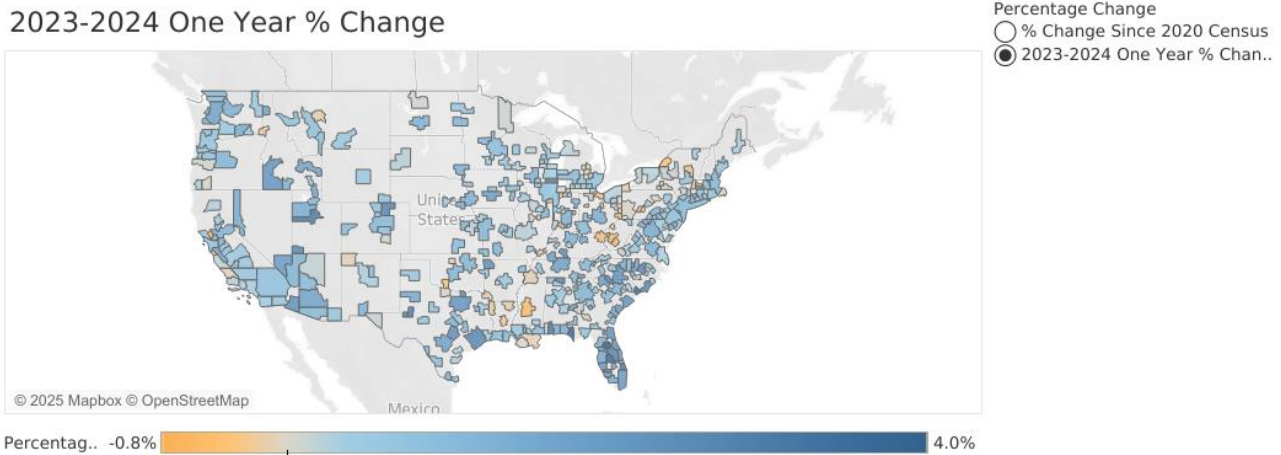
All of the state’s metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) experienced positive population growth. MSAs are counties or groups of counties in which the economies are connected through employment and commuting patterns. The Birmingham MSA’s population increased by over 6,000 residents to nearly 1.2 million. That’s the strongest growth in several years. Over half of those net new residents were the result of international immigration.

Nationally, international immigration was the largest driver of population increase in large metropolitan areas like New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Houston, and Dallas. However, border crossings dropped sharply in the first part of 2024 and have continued to decline. If trends hold, international in-migration will diminish as a factor driving population change in subsequent years.

Alabama MSA Population Estimates and Change, 2024

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Change Visualization | Alabama Population Change Table | USA Numeric Change | USA Percentage Change | National MSA Cumulative Change Table | Alabama Components of Change | National Components of Change |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|

2023-2024 One Year % Change



2023-2024 One Year % Change

| Name | Percentage Change | Rank of Percentage Change along Table (Down) |
|--|-------------------|--|
| Ocala, FL | 4.0% | 1.0 |
| Panama City-Panama City Beach, FL | 3.8% | 2.0 |
| Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC | 3.8% | 3.0 |

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