



# Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama®

## Cities in the north, south, and east grow fastest; Central cities continue to see population flow to suburbs

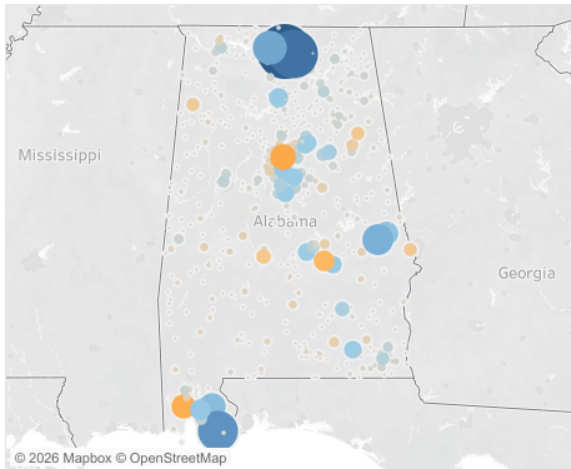
By [Thomas Spencer](#) on May 20, 2026

Growth moderated across most of Alabama cities in 2025 according to [new population estimates](#) for Alabama cities.

### Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Population 2025	Numeric Change and Rank	% Change	Change Since 2020	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000
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#### Population and Change in Incorporated Places



#### 2025 Population Change and Rank in Alabama

Name	2025 Change	Rank of 2025 Change	Rank of 2024 Change
Madison city	4,157	1	3
Huntsville city	3,280	2	1
Foley city	2,207	3	2
Athens city	1,582	4	4
Auburn city	1,300	5	5
Loxley city	964	6	11
Opelika city	736	7	6
Daphne city	564	8	19
Silverhill town	499	9	56
Hoover city	479	10	10
Cullman city	473	11	17
Pike Road city	462	12	21
Calera city	446	13	29
Chelsea city	429	14	13
Enterprise city	418	15	12
Margaret city	412	16	18
Prattville city	410	17	9
Odenville city	350	18	21

Earlier this year, state-level estimates showed that [population growth had tapered in Alabama](#) and across the U.S., primarily due to a drop in international migration. In Alabama, migration into the state by residents of other states slowed as well. Estimates for [counties and metropolitan areas](#) showed that the drop in international immigration disproportionately affected the central counties of

Alabama metro areas, where, in years prior, more international immigrants had arrived.

The latest estimates for incorporated places do not include components of population change, like international and domestic migration. However, the new estimates suggest that central cities, like Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile, are feeling the effects of that drop in international migration. Mature central cities tend to attract international immigrants and young people. At the same time, as families form and grow or move to the area, they tend to seek new homes, which tend to be built in outlying suburbs. For more context on growth patterns within cities, see [a series of analysis pieces published in February by AL.com](#). That analysis is based on the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

## **Metro Birmingham**

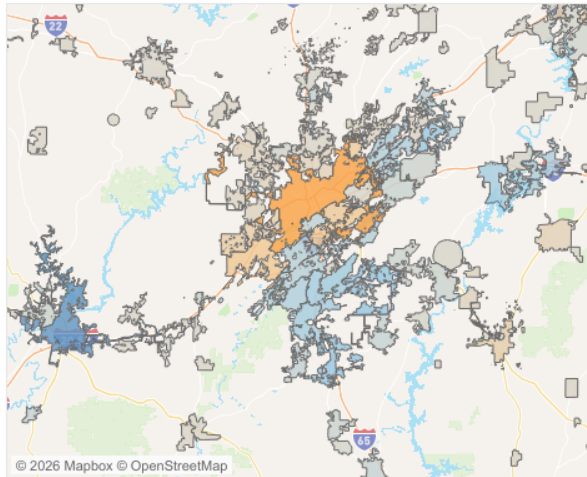
Birmingham is a particular example of that dynamic. Birmingham's population total declined by almost 900 in 2025 and by 4,333 since 2020, according to the estimates.

Since the 1960s, Birmingham has been hemmed in by suburbs, where most of the new housing and population growth has occurred. A few areas of [the city are adding population](#), according to an AL.com analysis of American Community Survey Data. That includes the Oxmoor Valley, one area of the city that was previously undeveloped. Now, some built-out and close-in suburbs are seeing population declines. That includes Vestavia Hills, down 900 since 2020, and Mountain Brook, down about 850 over the same period, according to the estimates. Contributing to population declines in established communities is the aging and increased mortality of the Baby Boom generation. Succeeding generations are smaller and have fewer children.

## Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Population 2025	Numeric Change and Rank	% Change	Change Since 2020	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000
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### Numeric Population Change in Incorporated Places, Shaded by 2020-2025



Name	Pop estimate 2025	2025 Change	Change 2020 to 2025
Huntsville..	233,627	3,280	17,335
Tuscaloos..	114,316	105	8,752
Auburn ci..	85,113	1,300	7,994
Athens city	34,209	1,582	8,490
Foley city	30,354	2,207	9,379
Madison c..	67,968	4,157	10,732
Daphne ci..	31,396	564	3,630
Opelika ci..	35,765	736	4,678
Fairhope ..	26,625	188	3,541
Florence ..	42,581	-70	1,996
Calera city	18,992	446	2,365
Gulf Shor..	17,394	47	2,106
Chelsea ci..	17,716	429	2,469
Prattville ..	40,582	410	2,746
Pike Road..	11,899	462	2,363
Enterprise..	31,211	418	2,369



The growth in the Birmingham area is spread across several suburbs to the south and east of the central city. To the south, Hoover, a major city of more than 90,000 residents, has added 900 residents since 2020, but smaller cities farther south have added even more. Helena, Alabaster, and Pelham have all added over 1,000 new residents since 2020, and Chelsea and Calera each added over 2,000.

To the east, Trussville (Pop 27,273) has added more than 1,000 new residents since 2020, but so has Odenville, which started the decade with fewer than 5,000. Neighboring Margaret, which now has a population of 7,000, has added 2,000 of those residents in just the past 5 years.

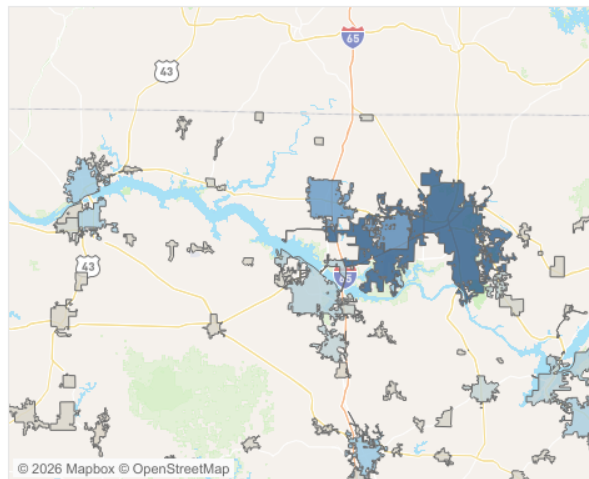
To the west and beyond the Birmingham MSA, Tuscaloosa showed atypically slow growth over the past year but still ranks as a strong gainer since 2020. Tuscaloosa protested its Census count in 2020 and won an upward revision in the 2021 estimates. Since then, growth has been steady but moderate, following the leap between 2010 and 2020. Since 2010, Tuscaloosa's population has increased by almost 24,000, growing into the state's fifth-largest city, with more than 114,000 residents.

# North Alabama

## Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Population 2025	Numeric Change and Rank	% Change	Change Since 2020	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000
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Daphne ci..	31,396	564	3,630
Fairhope ..	26,625	188	3,541
Prattville ..	40,582	410	2,746
Loxley city	6,131	964	2,501
Chelsea ci..	17,716	429	2,469
Enterprise..	31,211	418	2,369
Calera city	18,992	446	2,365
Pike Road..	11,899	462	2,363
Cullman c..	20,799	473	2,330



Meanwhile, the state’s growth champion, Huntsville, has been able to expand its boundaries and avoid the pitfalls of suburbanization that challenge Birmingham.

Huntsville and its neighboring city, Madison, led all Alabama cities in growth over the past year. Madison added over 4,157 residents while Huntsville saw a net gain of 3,280 in 2025. Together, the two cities have added almost 30,000 residents since 2020.

Back in 1950, Huntsville had fewer than 20,000 residents, and Birmingham had over 300,000. In the ensuing years, Birmingham was thwarted in most attempts to annex additional land or consolidate with its suburbs.

Meanwhile, Huntsville avoided being hemmed in by surrounding suburbs and was able to capture growth. For a time, residential growth in the area was concentrated in Madison, which continues to receive a generous share of new arrivals. But Huntsville has now strategically annexed a circle around [Madison and has extended its western boundary to Interstate 65](#). Much of the land that Huntsville has annexed was undeveloped farmland and relatively flat, creating new frontiers for future development in the city limits and preventing a rival from

arising. Growth is not without its challenges, such as coping with [traffic](#), increased [runoff, drainage issues, and flooding](#).

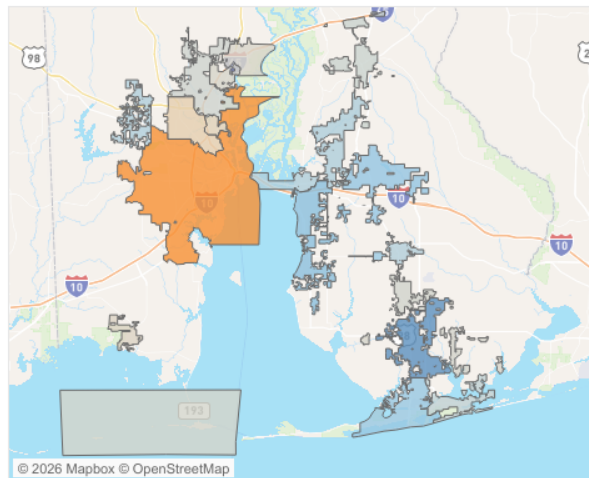
As Huntsville continues to see job growth in technology, defense, government, and manufacturing, the city is well-positioned, thanks to its annexation strategy, to attract new movers. At the same time, Madison and nearby Athens continue to grow robustly. In fact, cities across the northern tier of the state seem to be benefiting from the surge.

## Lower Alabama

### Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Population 2025	Numeric Change and Rank	% Change	Change Since 2020	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000
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Numeric Population Change in Incorporated Places, Shaded by 2020-2025



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Florence ..	42,581	-70	1,996
Calera city	18,992	446	2,365
Gulf Shor..	17,394	47	2,106
Chelsea ci..	17,716	429	2,469
Prattville ..	40,582	410	2,746
Pike Road..	11,899	462	2,363
Enterprise	31,211	418	2,369



The 2025 estimates show Mobile’s population at 200,824, down by 788 compared to 2024. However, that population total is 13,783 higher than the official 2020 Census Count of 187,041. Mobile’s population jumped due to a 2023 annexation of growing neighborhoods on the western edge of the city. The new Census Bureau estimates reflect the current geographic boundaries. The estimate also creates a back projection of the population of the city: the old city plus the newly annexed area. Those estimates put Mobile’s 2020 population at 206,900 in 2020, a historic peak. That secures Mobile’s spot as the second largest city in the state, ahead of the City of Birmingham but well behind Huntsville. However, according to estimates, the city’s population has declined in subsequent years.

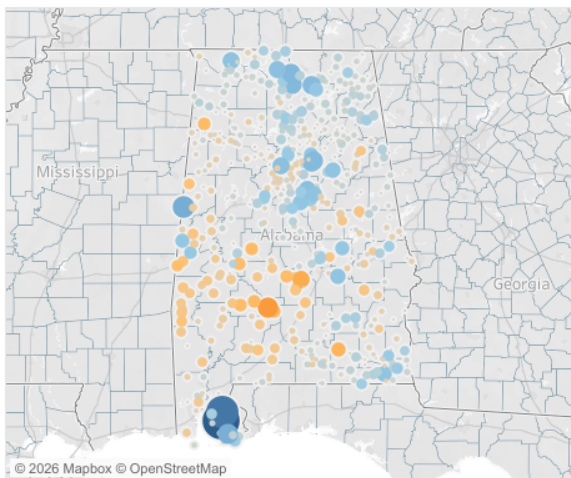
Like in Birmingham, [the older industrial core of Mobile is experiencing population decline, while other areas are growing](#), including neighborhoods in the west and near the University of South Alabama. Until fairly recently, Mobile didn't have an adjacent suburb to capture growth, but since 2010, Saraland to its north has been growing rapidly, after establishing its own school system. Between 2010 and 2020, as the school system developed, the population jumped 20%. Since 2020, Saraland has grown more modestly, adding 315 net new residents. To the west, Semmes, which became an incorporated city in 2011, has experienced its own growth spurt, from 5,174 residents in 2020 to 6,259 in the 2025 estimates.

But the fastest population growth is taking place across the bay in Baldwin County. That includes four of the five fastest-growing cities in Alabama, ranging from little Silver Hill (2,529), which grew by 25% in 2025, to Foley, which is now among the top 25-cities in Alabama, with a population over 30,000. Foley grew by 7.8% in 2025, adding 2,207 net new residents. [Foley, Robertsedale, Orange Beach, and Fairhope have all imposed growth moratoriums at various points in recent years, trying to catch up with the changes](#). In some cases, growth has overwhelmed infrastructure, leading to sewage spills and other [challenges](#).

### Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Population 2025	Numeric Change and Rank	% Change	Change Since 2020	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000
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% Population Change in Incorporated Places



2025 Population and Rank in Alabama

Name	Pop estimate 2025	% Change 2020-25
Silverhill town	2,529	25%
Loxley city	6,131	7.8%
Foley city	30,354	7.8%
Summerdale town	1,724	7.8%
Madison city	67,968	7.8%
Triana city	5,244	7.8%
Odenville city	6,023	7.8%
Margaret city	7,149	7.8%
Owens Cross Roads city	3,334	7.8%
Westover town	2,121	7.8%
Brookside town	1,433	7.8%
Athens city	34,209	7.8%
St. Florian town	748	7.8%
Harpersville town	2,019	7.8%
Rehobeth town	2,217	7.8%
Lincoln city	9,110	7.8%

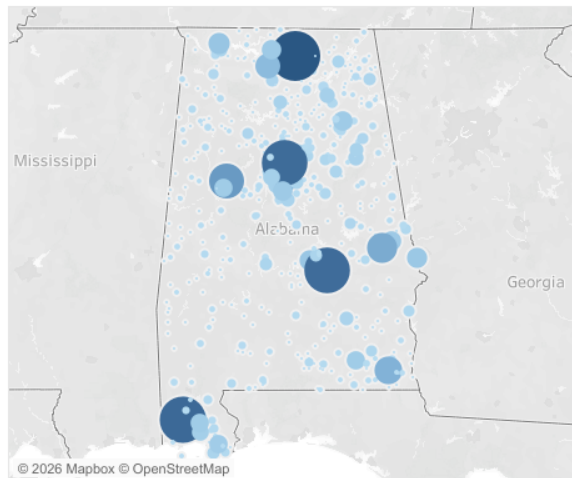
# South Central Alabama

## Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Population 2025	Numeric Change and Rank	% Change	Change Since 2020	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000
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### Population and Change in Incorporated Places

### 2025 Population and Rank in Alabama



Name	Pop estimate 2025	Rank of Pop estimate 2025
Huntsville city	233,627	1
Mobile city	200,824	2
Birmingham city	195,893	3
Montgomery city	195,300	4
Tuscaloosa city	114,316	5
Hoover city	93,550	6
Auburn city	85,113	7
Dothan city	72,060	8
Madison city	67,968	9
Decatur city	58,056	10
Florence city	42,581	11
Prattville city	40,582	12
Phenix City city	38,344	13
Vestavia Hills city	38,306	14
Opelika city	35,765	15
Alabaster city	34,748	16
Gadsden city	33,367	18
Athens city	34,209	17
Northport city	31,648	19



Montgomery’s population declined by about 500, while neighboring Pike Road gained almost 500, and Prattville gained just over 400. In the nearby Auburn MSA, the cities of Auburn and Opelika continued a strong streak of growth, with both cities in the top 10 in numeric gain. Since 2010, Auburn has added more than 30,000 residents, and Opelika’s population has increased by more than 10,000.

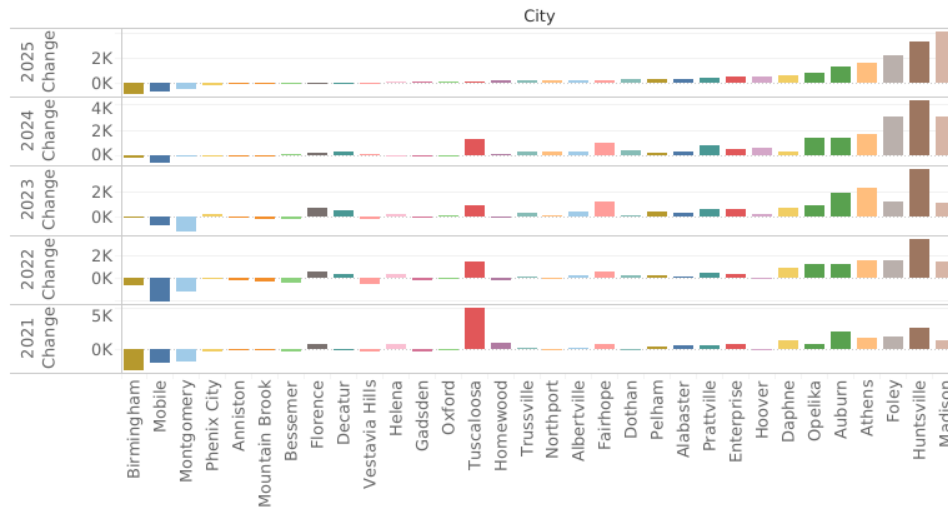
Across most of the state, cities saw slower population growth.

## Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Change Since 2020	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000	USA MAP	USA Change	USA Change Detail
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Use the menu to compare other Alabama Cities over 20,000 in population

### Alabama Large City Population Change Comparison Tool



## The USA

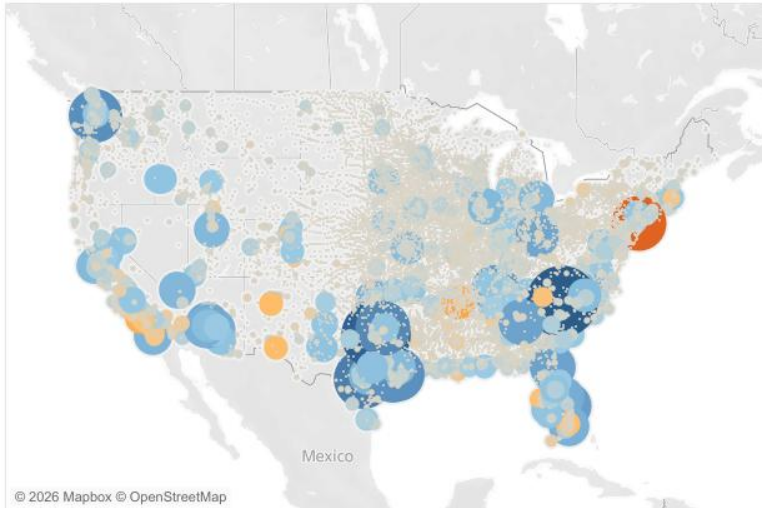
And across the US, most cities attracted more residents. Southern cities were the biggest gainers, especially in Texas and Florida. Charlotte gained more residents than any other city in the U.S., jumping by 20,000 in one year. Nashville and Atlanta also continued to gain. Metropolitan areas for international immigration, like New York City and Los Angeles, saw population declines, but outlying areas in their metropolitan area experienced gains.

Explore population change throughout the country or close to home with interactive charts and graphs. Use the tabs above the visualization to navigate. The visualization is best viewed in full-screen mode, an option available at the bottom-right. On maps, tools for moving the view and zooming in and out are accessible in the tool kit on the left of the map. Feel free to embed the maps in websites or download images, all options that are available on the toolbar below the visualizations.

# Population Change in Incorporated Places 2025

Change Since 20..	Cumulative Population Change Since 2010	Alabama's Big Four	Cities over 20,000	USA MAP	<b>USA Change</b>	USA Change Detail
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## Change



## Population Change

City and State
Charlotte city, North Carolina
Fort Worth city, Texas
San Antonio city, Texas
Celina city, Texas
Seattle city, Washington
Houston city, Texas
Fulshear city, Texas
Nashville-Davidson metropolitan governm
Port St. Lucie city, Florida
McKinney city, Texas
Atlanta city, Georgia
Jacksonville city, Florida
Surprise city, Arizona
Columbus city, Ohio
Goodyear city, Arizona
Raleigh city, North Carolina
Queen Creek town, Arizona
Palm Bay city, Florida
Princeton city, Texas
Buckeye city, Arizona
Miami city, Florida
Oklahoma City city, Oklahoma

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