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COLORADO'S POPULATION SHIFTS:

COUNTY-LEVEL TRENDS IN MIGRATION,
GROWTH, AND CHANGE

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Jimena recently graduated from the University of Denver, where she completed a major in Political Science with minors in International Studies, Sociology, and Marketing. Her academic background reflects a deep commitment to understanding complex global issues and the social dynamics that shape them. With her degree and experience at CSI, Jimena brings a unique interdisciplinary perspective to her work, combining her knowledge in political science with insights from sociology and marketing to drive impactful projects.



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Before joining CSI, Cole attended the University of Denver where he double majored in Economics and Public Policy, fostering his passion for pressing policy issues. His work at CSI has covered a variety of topics including crime, healthcare, foster care, and workforce issues among other topics.

ABOUT COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

Common Sense Institute is a non-partisan research organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of Colorado's economy. CSI is at the forefront of important discussions concerning the future of free enterprise and aims to have an impact on the issues that matter most to Coloradans. CSI's mission is to examine the fiscal impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI employs rigorous research techniques and dynamic modeling to evaluate the potential impact of these measures on the economy and individual opportunity.

TEAMS & FELLOWS STATEMENT

CSI is committed to independent, in-depth research that examines the impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI's commitment to institutional independence is rooted in the individual independence of our researchers, economists, and fellows. At the core of CSI's mission is a belief in the power of the free enterprise system. Our work explores ideas that protect and promote jobs and the economy, and the CSI team and fellows take part in this pursuit with academic freedom. Our team's work is informed by data-driven research and evidence. The views and opinions of fellows do not reflect the institutional views of CSI. CSI operates independently of any political party and does not take positions.

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INTRODUCTION

Colorado's population is still growing, but the geography of that growth has changed. Recent gains are increasingly concentrated in a smaller group of counties, while several large metro and mountain counties are growing slowly, losing population, or attracting fewer net new residents than they did a decade ago. As these patterns continue to evolve, the shifts can have important implications for housing demand, labor markets, and local government planning.

This report examines county-level population and migration trends across Colorado using 2025 State Demography Office data. It focuses on identifying the state's fastest growing regions, the counties where growth has slowed, and how those patterns have shifted over the past decade. This analysis focuses on the 1-, 3-, 5-, and 10-year changes in population and net migration with the year 2025 as the baseline.

This report does not attempt to isolate the causes of these shifts. However, changes in housing affordability, job location/remote-work patterns, and other factors may all influence where residents choose to live within Colorado.

This report distinguishes between population, net migration, and change in net migration. **Population is the total number of people living in a county. Net migration is the number of people moving into a county minus the number moving out during a given period. Change in net migration measures how that net migration figure differs from a prior year.**

KEY FINDINGS

Colorado's statewide growth has slowed. Weld and Douglas counties continue to account for a large share of recent gains, and several large metro and mountain counties are showing flat or negative recent population trends.

Largest Population Increases and Decreases (2024-2025)

Counties with largest population gain:

- Weld County (+8,651)
- Douglas County (+7,181)
- Adams County (+4,836)

Counties with largest population loss:

- Jefferson County (-600)
- Boulder County (-556)
- Eagle County (-481)

Largest Net Migration Increases and Decreases (2024-2025)

Counties with largest net migration gain:

- Weld County (+6,008)
- Douglas County (+5,306)
- Mesa County (+1,683)

Counties with largest net migration loss:

- Arapahoe County (-1,884)
- Jefferson County (-1,225)
- Denver County (-903)

Migration Slows in Major Metro Counties

- Jefferson County, Colorado's fourth-most populous county, increased by just 2.24% over the past decade, one of the slowest 10-year growth rates among the state's largest counties.
- Net migration declined across all of Colorado's most populous counties between 2015 and 2025.
- Alongside the state's 80% decline in net migration, two of Colorado's most populous counties, Arapahoe and Jefferson Counties, saw the steepest declines, -125.9% and -126%, respectively between 2015 and 2025.

Population and Net Migration Declines

- Colorado's population growth slowed from +83,036 in 2015-16 to +33,151 in 2024-25, marking a decline of roughly 60% over the period.
- Net migration declined from +68,844 in 2015 to +13,568 in 2025, an 80% decrease.

STATEWIDE POPULATION GROWTH

From 2024 to 2025, Colorado's population increased by 33,151 individuals. Table 1 shows annual population changes over the past decade. While the state continued to experience population growth from 2024 to 2025, the increase was notably smaller than in recent years and represented the lowest annual growth since the pandemic-era increase of 26,674 individuals from 2020 to 2021.

TABLE 1. COLORADO'S POPULATION CHANGES OVER TIME

Colorado's Population Changes Over Time	
Year	Change in Population
2015-2016	+83,036
2016-2017	+69,960
2017-2018	+77,324
2018-2019	+57,996
2019-2020	+51,968
2020-2021	+26,674
2021-2022	+36,570
2022-2023	+50,299
2023-2024	+56,309
2024-2025	+33,151

COUNTY-LEVEL POPULATION GROWTH

In 2025, Weld County experienced the largest change in population, growing by 8,651 individuals. Meanwhile, Jefferson County experienced the least amount of growth, with a decline in population of 600 individuals.

Population trends over the past decade show that Weld County led all counties in growth, with a 32.89% increase. Meanwhile, the statewide change in population saw an increase of 9.97%.

Table 2 shows the population changes in Colorado's most populous counties over a 1-, 3-, 5- and 10- year period. For a fuller picture, Appendix C shows these changes for Colorado's 64 counties.

TABLE 2. POPULATION CHANGES OVER TIME IN COLORADO'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTIES

Counties	1-year change*	3-year change	5-year change	10-year change
Colorado	0.56%	2.39%	3.51%	9.97%
Adams	0.89%	3.86%	5.40%	11.88%
Arapahoe	0.20%	1.49%	1.92%	6.02%
Boulder	-0.17%	0.43%	-0.46%	2.84%
Denver	0.38%	2.28%	1.87%	8.22%
Douglas	1.82%	6.58%	11.35%	24.57%
El Paso	0.55%	1.95%	3.17%	11.67%
Jefferson	-0.10%	0.22%	-0.91%	2.24%
Larimer	0.50%	2.23%	4.53%	12.84%
Pueblo	0.07%	0.37%	1.01%	4.67%
Weld	2.34%	7.98%	14.20%	32.89%

*1-year change is from 2024-2025, 3-year change is from 2022-2025, 5-year change is from 2020-2025, and 10-year change is from 2015-2025.

Population growth has slowed across these metropolitan counties over time. Short-term population growth has slowed relative to longer-term trends in these counties.

Among these counties, Jefferson County experienced the lowest 10-year population growth, increasing by just 2.24%. It was also one of the two most populous counties that experienced a decline in one-year population change.

Appendix A illustrates the population patterns across Colorado from 2024 to 2025, with several metro and mountain counties, including Jefferson County, Boulder County, and Eagle County, experiencing population declines, while Weld County led the state in population growth during this period.

STATE-LEVEL MIGRATION PATTERNS

In 2024, Colorado's net migration was 38,860 individuals, whereas in 2025, net migration was 13,586 individuals. Although the state experienced positive net migration in 2025, net migration slowed significantly. A decline of 25,292 individuals suggests that Colorado became a less attractive destination for new residents compared to the previous year.

Table 3 shows the shift in statewide net migration since 2015. Net migration had not been as low as it was in 2025 since the pandemic-era level in 2021. Also, the statewide change over the past decade reflected an 80% decline, suggesting that the state is no longer attracting new residents at the pace it once did.

TABLE 3. COLORADO NET MIGRATION OVER TIME

Colorado Net Migration Over Time	
Year	Yearly Net Migration
2015	+68,844
2016	+53,295
2017	+42,395
2018	+51,761
2019	+34,157
2020	+31,308
2021	+11,244
2022	+23,817
2023	+33,370
2024	+38,860
2025	+13,568

COUNTY-LEVEL MIGRATION PATTERNS

At the county level, Weld County recorded the largest net migration gain in 2025, adding 6,008 residents, while Arapahoe County recorded the largest net out-migration, losing 1,884 residents. Appendix B shows the negative and positive net migration changes in all Colorado counties from 2024 to 2025.

Colorado's most populous counties had lower net migration totals in 2025 than they did in 2015, indicating a slowdown in population inflows. Figure 1 illustrates net migration trends in these counties over the past decade. For a fuller picture, Appendix D illustrates the changes that every Colorado county has experienced with its net migration.

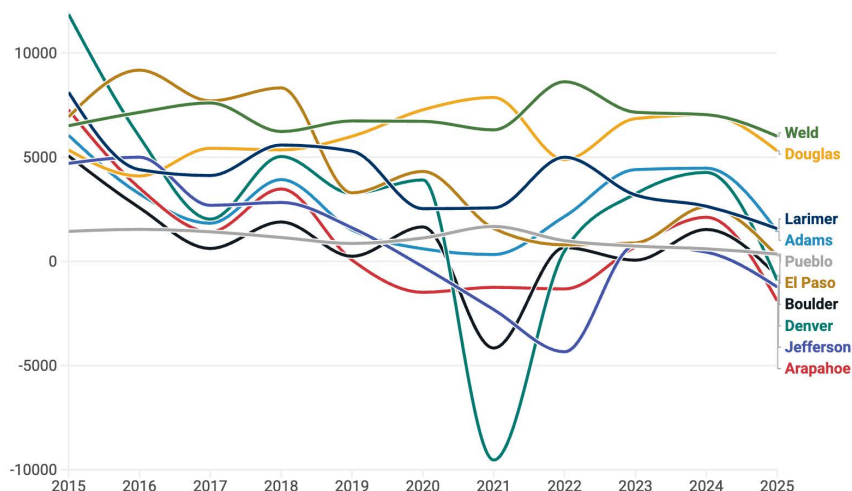
Jefferson County recorded the steepest decline in net migration between 2015 and 2025, decreasing by 126%, with Arapahoe County close behind at a 125.9% decline. Because both counties shifted from net in-migration to net out-migration, the percentage decline exceeds 100%.

Notably, none of the most populous counties experienced higher net migration levels in 2025 than in 2015. However, Douglas County experienced only a minimal decline of 1% during this period.

FIGURE 1: NET MIGRATION BY COLORADO'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTIES OVER TIME

Net Migration by Colorado's Most Populous Counties Over Time

While statewide net migration remains positive, most populous counties saw lower migration levels in 2025 than in 2015.



Source: State Demographer's Office





THE BOTTOM LINE

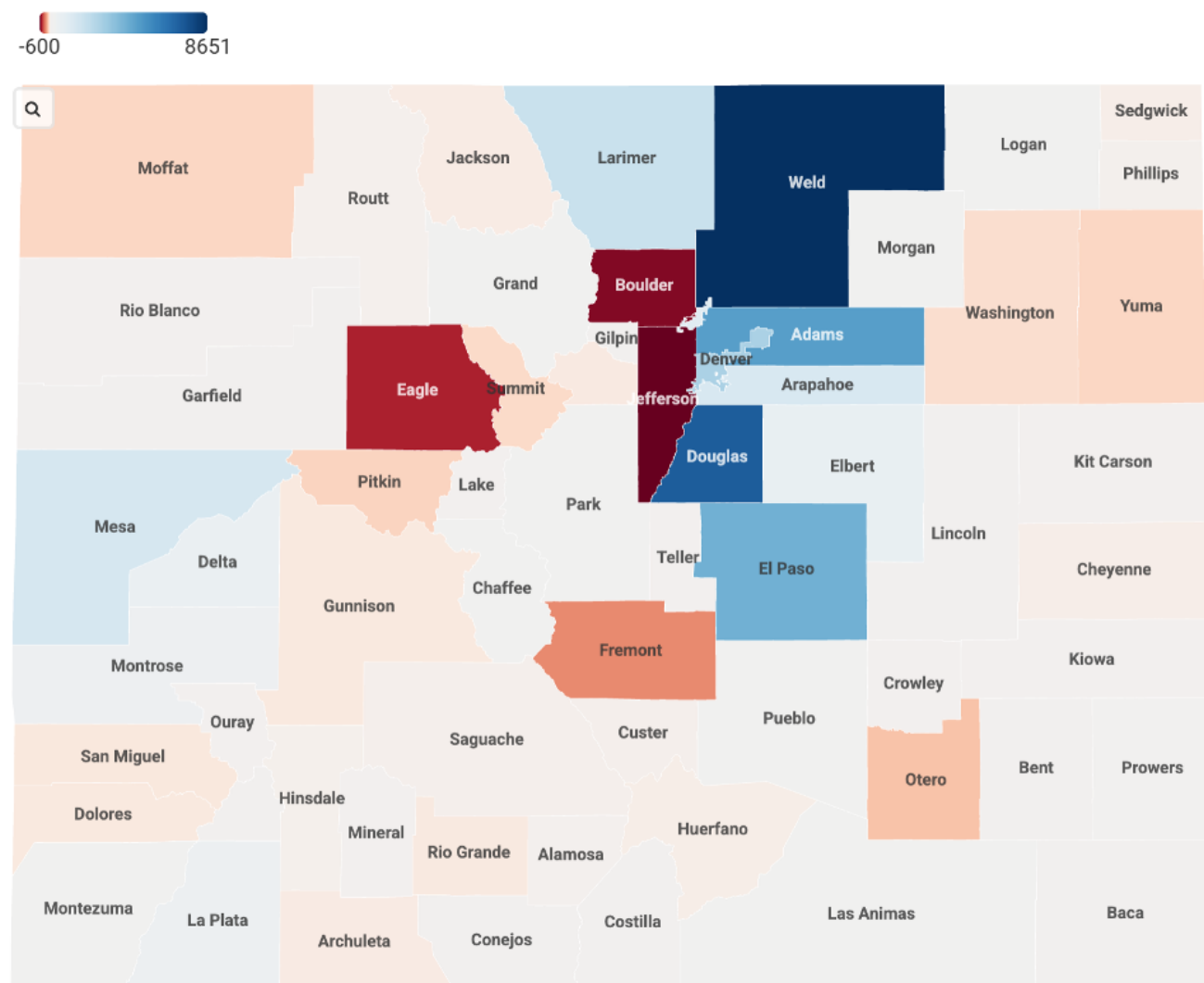
Colorado remains a growing state, but recent growth is occurring in different places than it did during the state's peak growth years.

Net migration is far below its mid-2010s level, and many of the state's largest metro counties are no longer attracting residents at the same pace. At the same time, growth is increasingly concentrated in counties such as Weld and Douglas, which, while benefiting in a multitude of ways from the more rapid population increase, may face greater pressure on housing, transportation, infrastructure, and other services. Counties with slower or negative growth may face a different challenge: maintaining labor-force growth, school enrollment, and tax-base momentum.

APPENDIX A: POPULATION CHANGE BY COLORADO COUNTY

Population Change by Colorado County (2024 to 2025)

From 2024 to 2025, Weld County experienced the largest population increase, adding 8,651 residents. Meanwhile, Jefferson County saw the largest population decrease, losing 600 residents.



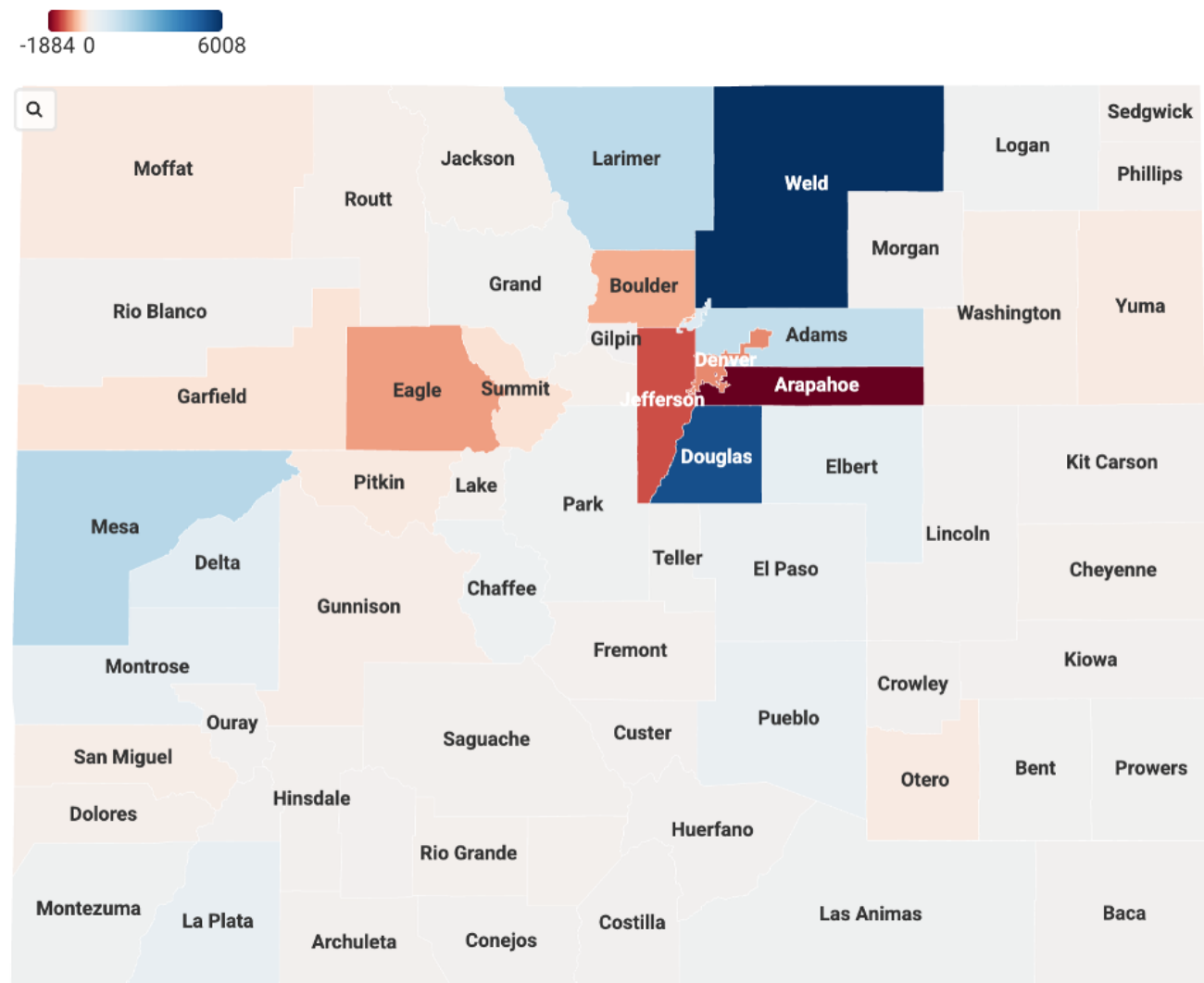
Source: State Demographer's Office



APPENDIX B: NET MIGRATION BY COLORADO COUNTY

Net Migration by Colorado County (2024 to 2025)

From 2024 to 2025, Weld County recorded the highest net migration, gaining 6,008 individuals. Meanwhile, Arapahoe County recorded the lowest net migration, losing 1,884 individuals.



Source: State Demographer's Office



APPENDIX C: POPULATION CHANGE IN COLORADO'S COUNTIES OVER TIME

County	1-year change*	3-year change	5-year change	10-year change
Colorado	0.56%	2.39%	3.51%	9.97%
Adams	0.89%	3.86%	5.40%	11.88%
Alamosa	-0.04%	0.20%	1.55%	4.66%
Arapahoe	0.20%	1.49%	1.92%	6.02%
Archuleta	-0.32%	0.71%	4.94%	17.35%
Baca	0.41%	-0.64%	-1.90%	-3.34%
Bent	0.99%	6.93%	5.88%	-2.77%
Boulder	-0.17%	0.43%	-0.46%	2.84%
Broomfield	1.20%	4.10%	6.57%	20.61%
Chaffee	0.73%	3.45%	7.54%	15.72%
Cheyenne	-1.55%	-1.33%	-2.01%	-5.32%
Clear Creek	-0.56%	-3.06%	-3.45%	-0.92%
Conejos	0.37%	-0.19%	1.31%	-4.75%
Costilla	0.41%	2.54%	5.82%	5.43%
Crowley	0.21%	0.70%	-0.79%	-3.34%
Custer	-0.27%	3.82%	17.41%	24.09%
Delta	1.49%	3.80%	5.53%	9.11%
Denver	0.38%	2.28%	1.87%	8.22%
Dolores	-2.49%	-2.31%	3.66%	3.21%
Douglas	1.82%	6.58%	11.35%	24.57%
Eagle	-0.89%	-2.90%	-3.52%	1.77%
Elbert	1.99%	7.54%	14.11%	24.36%
El Paso	0.55%	1.95%	3.17%	11.67%
Fremont	-0.57%	0.40%	1.83%	5.45%
Garfield	0.07%	1.36%	2.30%	9.96%
Gilpin	0.77%	1.73%	3.28%	8.32%
Grand	0.91%	3.74%	3.80%	9.28%
Gunnison	-0.32%	-0.40%	1.79%	8.99%
Hinsdale	-1.72%	-4.88%	-6.44%	-8.86%
Huerfano	-0.44%	-1.51%	2.34%	4.29%

Jackson	-3.31%	-6.54%	-10.82%	-11.08%
Jefferson	-0.10%	0.22%	-0.91%	2.24%
Kiowa	-0.07%	-0.98%	-2.61%	0.71%
Kit Carson	0.10%	0.84%	0.01%	-6.49%
Lake	0.11%	0.11%	-0.70%	2.82%
La Plata	0.70%	1.18%	2.81%	5.41%
Larimer	0.50%	2.23%	4.53%	12.84%
Las Animas	0.84%	2.65%	1.35%	-2.07%
Lincoln	0.36%	1.32%	-1.18%	0.76%
Logan	0.53%	0.24%	-1.60%	-4.60%
Mesa	0.87%	2.52%	4.22%	9.29%
Mineral	0.43%	1.52%	7.69%	24.24%
Moffat	-0.90%	-0.77%	-1.51%	0.22%
Montezuma	0.38%	1.70%	4.14%	5.64%
Montrose	0.79%	2.86%	5.34%	8.79%
Morgan	0.35%	3.44%	4.56%	7.31%
Otero	-0.96%	-2.92%	-4.96%	-5.70%
Ouray	0.02%	1.88%	6.46%	14.11%
Park	0.84%	3.17%	6.10%	15.69%
Phillips	-0.20%	0.56%	-1.06%	-0.53%
Pitkin	-0.77%	-2.39%	-5.14%	-6.98%
Prowers	0.65%	1.67%	0.07%	1.10%
Pueblo	0.07%	0.37%	1.01%	4.67%
Rio Blanco	0.02%	0.69%	1.23%	-0.29%
Rio Grande	-0.47%	-2.14%	-3.90%	-5.87%
Routt	-0.05%	0.49%	1.58%	5.90%
Saguache	-0.24%	0.65%	4.30%	7.81%
San Juan	2.69%	5.00%	18.14%	20.69%
San Miguel	-0.77%	-3.30%	-3.90%	-1.06%
Sedgwick	-1.23%	-2.05%	-5.90%	-5.78%
Summit	-0.35%	-0.41%	-1.46%	1.69%
Teller	0.01%	-0.13%	0.32%	7.91%
Washington	-2.01%	-3.37%	-2.83%	-0.11%
Weld	2.34%	7.98%	14.20%	32.89%
Yuma	-1.20%	-0.70%	-0.72%	-1.32%

*1-year change is from 2024-2025, 3-year change is from 2022-2025, 5-year change is from 2020-2025, and 10-year change is from 2015-2025.

APPENDIX D: NET MIGRATION SHIFTS IN COLORADO'S COUNTIES OVER TIME

County	1-year change*	3-year change	5-year change	10-year change
Colorado	-25,292	-10,249	-17,740	-55,276
Adams	-3,026	-708	844	-4,602
Alamosa	-7	-55	-127	-39
Arapahoe	-4,004	-563	-401	-9,159
Archuleta	-10	-236	-253	-71
Baca	-20	31	79	30
Bent	0	-48	552	-49
Boulder	-2,222	-1,354	-2,346	-5,755
Broomfield	-379	85	-845	-2,236
Chaffee	-13	-336	55	117
Cheyenne	-29	-59	3	-8
Clear Creek	-5	44	-28	-161
Conejos	1	8	107	114
Costilla	-53	9	22	30
Crowley	3	91	135	26
Custer	-6	-297	-83	-37
Delta	-7	197	666	544
Denver	-5,174	-1,403	-4,814	-12,763
Dolores	1	-159	-59	-50
Douglas	-1,728	424	-1,969	-40
Eagle	-139	45	-1,275	-629
Elbert	1	-149	8	70
El Paso	-2,353	-525	-4,051	-6,672
Fremont	-13	-779	-700	-280
Garfield	-195	-196	-1,095	-177
Gilpin	-7	38	-34	29
Grand	-60	206	-186	99
Gunnison	-30	-79	-62	-314
Hinsdale	0	-15	-11	-3
Huerfano	3	-229	-108	-26

Jackson	1	5	-40	-36
Jefferson	-1,672	3,112	-973	-5,929
Kiowa	-30	17	0	-19
Kit Carson	-39	-61	133	153
Lake	19	52	160	-60
La Plata	-32	-11	368	-87
Larimer	-1,075	-3,429	-958	-6,547
Las Animas	-45	72	257	225
Lincoln	-83	-37	-19	8
Logan	-37	253	439	264
Mesa	-124	-25	664	1,119
Mineral	-1	2	-36	-4
Moffat	12	-215	-48	-94
Montezuma	-132	-214	-18	216
Montrose	-165	-389	45	349
Morgan	-379	-281	156	18
Otero	-9	-20	-127	-236
Ouray	-22	-42	25	-20
Park	-34	-11	290	-4
Phillips	-23	-1	-30	-21
Pitkin	-39	360	-24	-271
Prowers	-78	164	108	247
Pueblo	-251	-641	-769	-1,088
Rio Blanco	-4	-101	34	73
Rio Grande	6	-11	3	16
Routt	-94	-22	-312	-111
Saguache	3	-137	-45	3
San Juan	0	-43	10	24
San Miguel	-18	-14	4	-146
Sedgwick	-3	-14	-28	-54
Summit	-151	227	-131	-832
Teller	-97	71	14	198
Washington	-13	-95	-107	-166
Weld	-1,036	-2,615	-715	-502
Yuma	-181	-148	-99	45

*1-year change is from 2024-2025, 3-year change is from 2022-2025, 5-year change is from 2020-2025, and 10-year change is from 2015-2025.