COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

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DOMESTIC MIGRATION DATA – 2024

POPULATION RECOVERS, INCOME DRAINS: WHO IS MOVING TO AND FROM OREGON

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INTRODUCTION

Recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau and Portland State University's Population Research Center indicate that Oregon's population has returned to modest growth after two years of decline. Historically, Oregon consistently ranked among the top states for population growth from net migration, but the state has experienced profound demographic shifts since 2020. The last time Oregon saw its population decline was in the early 1980s, when wood product mills closed across the state. The current environment is much different, with the job market healthy in most regions — yet migration patterns have fundamentally changed.

The recent recovery is real but fragile. In 2024, domestic migration turned positive for the first time since 2021, with roughly 5,600 more arrivals than departures, and international migration has grown substantially. However, both inflows and outflows declined, suggesting a broad cooling of migration activity rather than a renewed surge of newcomers. Meanwhile, Oregon's natural population growth remains structurally negative. With a total fertility rate of 1.36 in 2024 — the fifth lowest among all states and well below the 2.1 replacement level, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics — deaths now consistently outnumber births, meaning migration is the only path to population growth for the foreseeable future.

Beneath the headline numbers, this report finds that Oregon's migration challenge is increasingly about who is moving rather than how many. IRS Statistics of Income data reveal that departing households consistently out-earn arriving ones, with the state losing a net $476 million in adjusted gross income to migration in 2022–2023. Within Oregon, growth is flowing toward more affordable communities — from Central Oregon to the outer suburban ring — while Portland's urban core continues to shed residents. The sections that follow examine these dynamics through Census, PSU-PRC, DMV, and IRS data at the state, county, and city levels.

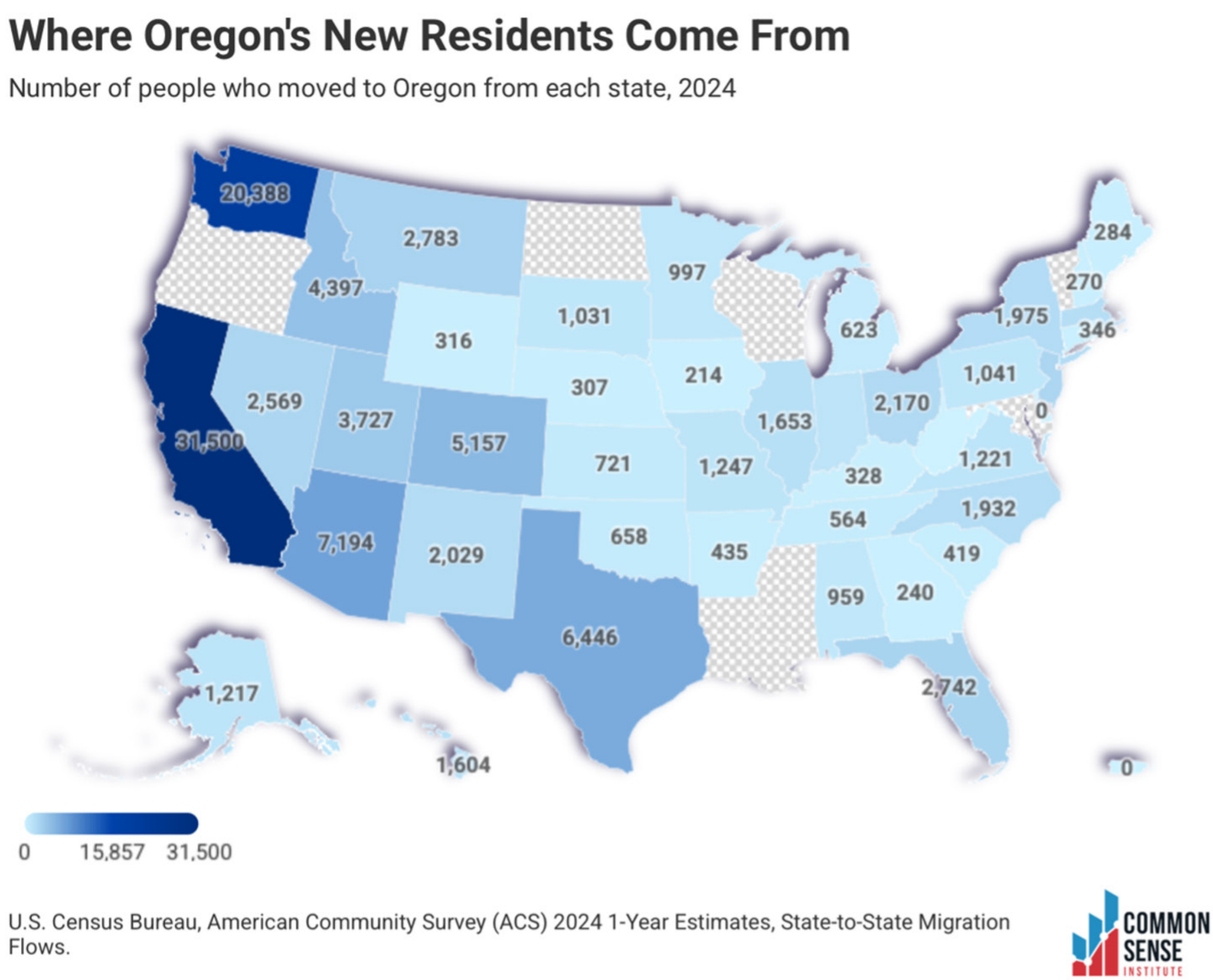
KEY FINDINGS

- In 2024, domestic migration turned positive for the first time since 2021, with 118,547 arrivals against 112,955 departures — a net gain of roughly 5,600. Both flows declined, indicating a cooling of migration activity overall rather than a surge in new arrivals.
- Oregon lost a net $476 million in adjusted gross income to migration in 2022–2023 despite nearly identical numbers of households arriving and departing. Departing households earned roughly $7,300 more per return than arrivals.
- The income drain is concentrated at the top: households earning $200,000 or more accounted for a net loss of $403 million — over three-quarters of the total — while Oregon gained households in every income bracket below $50,000.
- Washington is Oregon's single largest migration drain, absorbing a net 3,127 households and $487 million in AGI. California is the clear exception, providing Oregon a net gain of 6,396 households and $609 million in income.
- Oregon gains young households (under 35) through migration but loses households and income in every age group from 35 to 64, with the 45–54 cohort — peak earners — driving the largest losses.
- Both Census and PSU-PRC estimates now agree Oregon returned to growth in 2024 and 2025, though the two sources diverged sharply during 2022–2023 and a gap of roughly 27,600 residents remains between them.
- Population growth within Oregon is highly uneven: Central Oregon and the Portland suburban ring are growing while Multnomah County remains below its 2020 population. Within counties, affordable smaller cities like Estacada (+40%), La Pine (+26%), and Cornelius (+16%) are dramatically outpacing established urban centers.

DETAILED MIGRATION FLOWS TO AND FROM OREGON

In 2024, 118,547 approximately **individuals moved to Oregon,** while 112,955 **residents left**, indicating a **net migration gain.**

FIGURE 1.



Incoming Migration (Inflow):

The primary sources of incoming migrants remain neighboring states, with California leading at 31,500 and Washington following with 20,388—both down roughly 2,000 from 2023, though they retain their top two positions by a wide margin. Arizona held steady as the third largest source with 7,194 movers, nearly identical to its 2023 figure of 7,144. The most notable shift was Texas, which jumped from 8th place in 2023 (3,766) to 4th in 2024 (6,446). Colorado (5,157) and Idaho (4,397) round out the top six. The close proximity and similar economic opportunities or lifestyle preferences among western states continue to shape these patterns, and the overall rate of inflows into Oregon has remained relatively stable in recent years.

Data on out-of-state driver's licenses surrendered to Oregon DMV indicates inflows continued into 2025, with 88,281 new Oregon licenses issued to out-of-state residents — led by California (22,306) and Washington (16,816).

FIGURE 2.

Top 10 Origin States for Oregon In-Migrants, 2023 vs. 2024

Texas, Montana, and Florida rose notably in 2024, while Alaska and New York dropped out of the top 10. California and Washington remain the dominant sources of Oregon's inflow, together accounting for roughly half of all tracked arrivals.

2024 Rank	State	2024 Movers	2023 Movers	Rank Change
1	California	31500	33807	-
2	Washington	20388	22169	-
3	Arizona	7194	7144	-
4	Texas	6446	3766	↑ 4
5	Colorado	5157	6038	↓ 1
6	Idaho	4397	4122	-
7	Utah	3727	5690	↓ 2
8	Montana	2783	3017	↑ 3
9	Florida	2742	2265	↑ 4
10	Nevada	2569	3051	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2023 and 2024 1-Year Estimates, State-to-State Migration Flows.

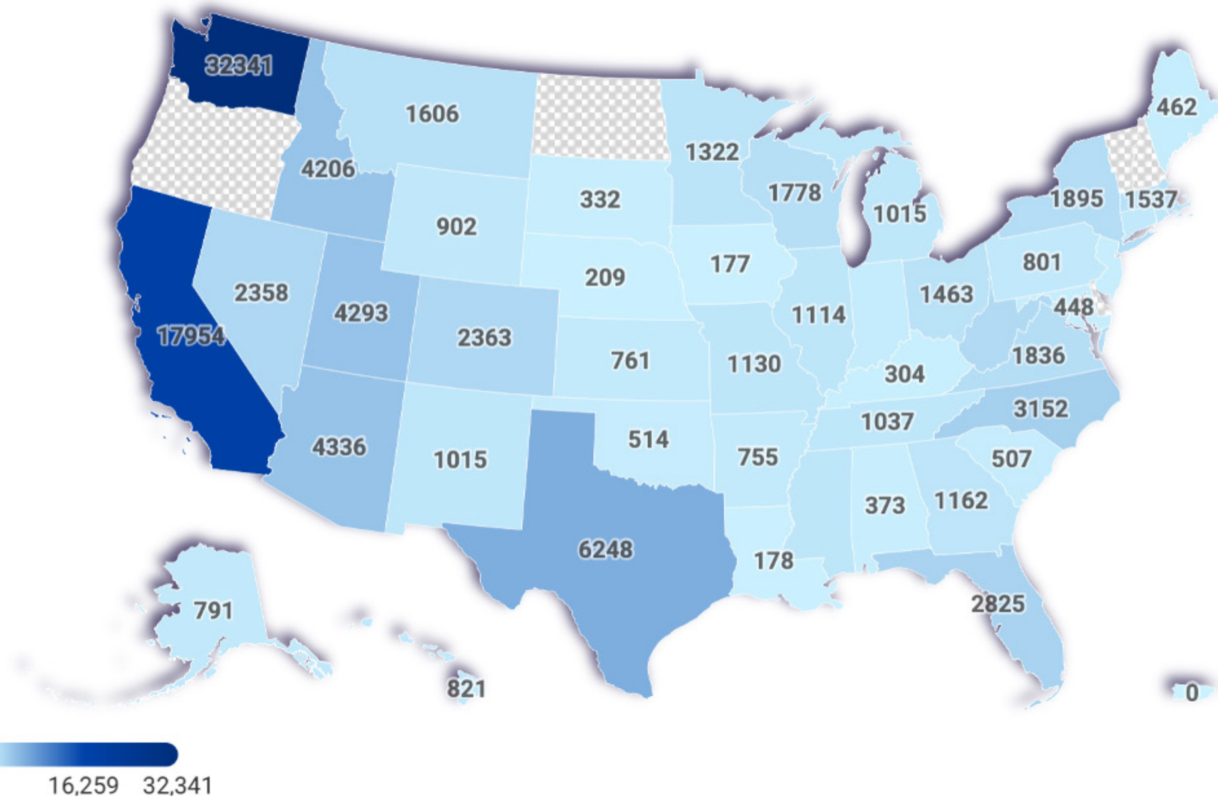
Outgoing Migration (Outflow):

Washington remains the top destination for departing Oregonians, and outflow there actually increased in 2024 (32,341, up from 29,960). California held second place but saw a sharp decline as a destination (17,954, down from 22,162). The most notable shift is the significant drop in outflows to the Sun Belt states that dominated the 2023 story — Arizona fell from 10,465 to 4,336, Texas from 10,131 to 6,248, and Idaho from 7,458 to 4,206. North Carolina (3,152) and Florida (2,825) emerged as new entrants to the top ten destinations.

FIGURE 3.

Where Oregonians Are Moving To, 2024

Outflows to Arizona, Texas, and Idaho dropped sharply from 2023, while Washington absorbed more Oregonians than ever. North Carolina and Florida emerged as new destinations.



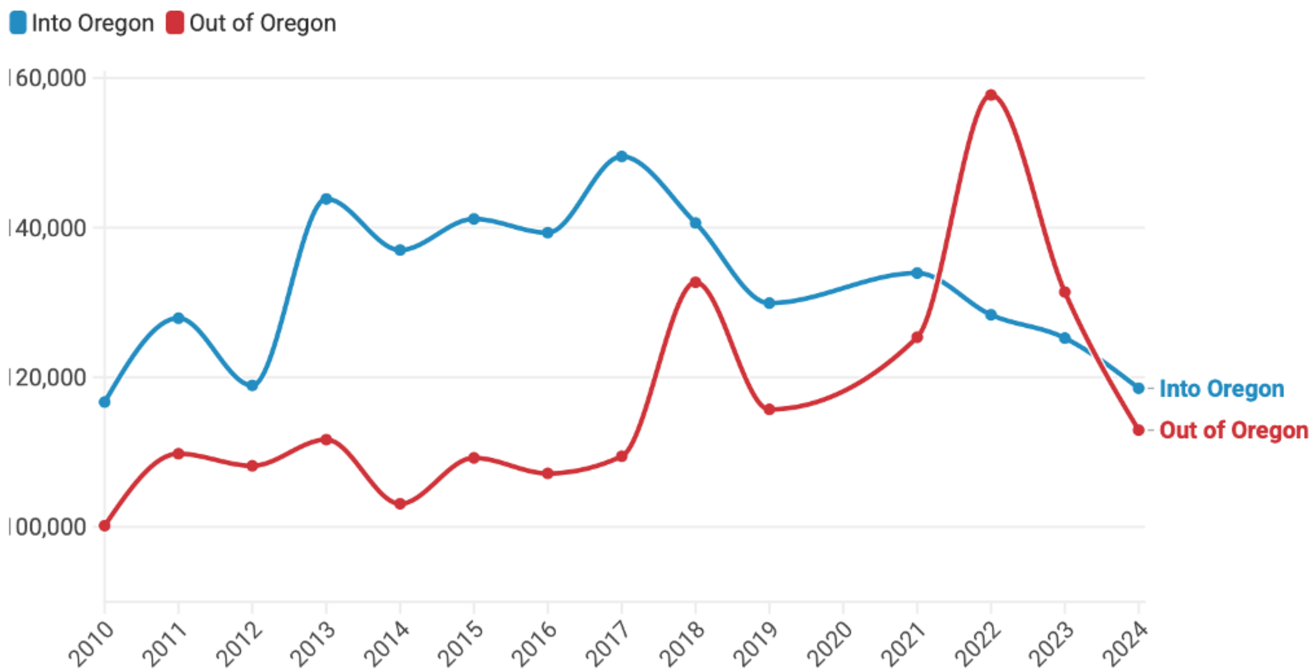
U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 1-Year Estimates, State-to-State Migration Flows.

From 2010 through 2021, more individuals moved into Oregon than left each year. Outmigration surged sharply in 2022, pushing net domestic migration to -29,370 — the worst year in recent history. By 2023, outmigration had retreated significantly, though net migration remained slightly negative (-6,157). In 2024, domestic migration turned positive for the first time since 2021, with 118,547 arrivals and 112,955 departures, a net gain of roughly 5,600. Notably, both inflows and outflows declined in 2024, suggesting a broad cooling of migration activity rather than a surge in new arrivals.

FIGURE 4.

Oregon Domestic Migration: Inflows and Outflows, 2010–2024

After record outmigration in 2022, net domestic migration turned positive in 2024 for the first time since 2021 — driven by falling departures rather than rising arrivals.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2024 1-Year Estimates, State-to-State Migration Flows.

IRS Statistics of Income migration data for 2022–2023 reveal that Oregon's migration challenge is as much about income as it is about population. The number of households moving into and out of Oregon was nearly identical — 64,386 arriving and 64,431 departing — yet **Oregon recorded a net loss of $476 million in adjusted gross income.** The gap stems from an income asymmetry between movers: departing Oregonians reported an average AGI of $82,124 per return, compared to $74,782 for arriving households — a difference of roughly $7,300 per household. In other words, Oregon is broadly replacing the residents it loses, but not the income they carried.

FIGURE 5.

Oregon Migration Income Flows by State, 2022–2023

The table shows the 11 largest destinations for AGI leaving Oregon — ten states plus foreign addresses, which rank tenth — comparing the number of households and average income of arrivals and departures for each. A negative net AGI indicates Oregon lost more taxable income to that destination than it gained. California is the only destination shown where Oregon posted a net gain in both households and income.

State	Households In	Avg AGI In	Households Out	Avg AGI Out	Net Households	Net AGI
Washington	12,212	$7278.8	15,339	$8973	3,239	-$487.5M
California	16,765	$8784.6	10,369	$8328.2	8,437	$609.2M
Texas	3,335	$7565.4	4,018	$8967.9	-5,633	-$108.0M
Arizona	3,130	$7187.7	4,007	$9783.4	-6,653	-$167.0M
Idaho	2,534	$5606	3,156	$7329.2	-4,795	-$89.3M
Florida	2,012	$6735.6	2,289	$8215.3	-6,203	-$52.5M
Colorado	2,296	$7392.6	2,061	$7974.4	-5,678	$5.4M
Nevada	1,698	$6163.3	1,642	$9742.2	-8,044	-$55.3M
New York	1,305	$9093.6	1,440	$7893.7	-6,589	$5.0M
Foreign	706	$8336.1	1,295	$8371	-7,665	-$49.6M
Utah	1,491	$6953.7	1,287	$7544.6	-6,054	$6.6M

Source: IRS Statistics of Income, State-to-State Migration Data, Calendar Years 2022–2023 • Foreign includes returns filed from abroad, U.S. territories, and military addresses overseas.

The table above reveals three distinct patterns in Oregon's migration income dynamics. **Washington stands out as the single largest drain** — Oregon loses more households and more AGI to Washington than any other state, with a net loss of 3,127 households and $487 million in adjusted gross income. The income gap is particularly stark: Oregonians leaving for Washington earn $89,730 on average while Washingtonians arriving in Oregon earn only $72,788, a difference of nearly $17,000 per household.

California is the clear exception to the drain story. **Oregon gains more households from California than from any other state and posts a net AGI gain of $609 million** — the only major state relationship where Oregon comes out ahead on both counts. California arrivals also bring above-average incomes at $87,846 per return, making them Oregon's most economically significant inflow.

Arizona and Nevada tell the most pointed income story. Despite relatively modest net household losses, both states **attract Oregon's highest-earning leavers** — $97,834 per return to Arizona and $97,422 to Nevada — well above what any major source state sends to Oregon. These flows are consistent with higher-income households relocating to lower-tax, lower-cost destinations. Colorado, New York, and Utah are the only other states besides California where Oregon posts a net AGI gain, though the amounts are modest.

THE AGE PROFILE OF OREGON'S INCOME MIGRATION

Breaking the IRS migration data down by age reveals that Oregon's income losses are concentrated among a specific segment of movers, and that where the state does gain income, the gains come through different mechanisms. Oregon posts net household gains among movers under 35 — more than 1,100 net households in both the under-26 and 26–34 groups — and these translate into modest net AGI gains of $14.5 million and $56.8 million respectively. Notably, these gains are driven purely by volume: arrivals in both groups actually earn slightly less on average than departures. Oregon is attracting young people in numbers, not attracting unusually high-earning young people.

FIGURE 6.

Incomes of Oregon's Arriving and Departing Households by Age, 2022–2023

The table compares households moving into and out of Oregon by age of the primary taxpayer, with income measured as adjusted gross income reported in tax year 2023. Net figures are calculated as inflows minus outflows. Oregon gains households among movers under 35, but loses both households and income across every age group from 35 to 64. In all working-age groups, arriving households earn less on average than departing ones — a gap that peaks at over $27,000 in the 45–54 cohort, which accounts for the largest net income loss at $277 million.

Age Group	Out Returns	Out Avg AGI	In Returns	In Avg AGI	Avg AGI Gap	Net Returns	Net AGI ($M)
All ages	64,864	83,483	64,293	76,063	-7,420	-571	-524.7
Under 26	14,401	33,136	15,528	31,663	-1,473	1,127	14.5
26-34	19,415	66,173	20,518	65,384	-789	1,103	56.8
35-44	11,084	105,310	9,957	99,399	-5,911	-1,127	-177.5
45-54	6,410	144,629	5,538	117,316	-27,313	-872	-277.4
55-64	5,610	135,951	5,013	121,165	-14,786	-597	-155.3
65+	7,944	100,213	7,739	104,707	4,494	-205	14.2

Source: SOI tax stats - Migration data 2022–2023

The picture reverses sharply at age 35. Every age group from 35 to 64 shows net losses in both households and income, and in each of these groups arriving households earn meaningfully less than departing ones. The 45–54 cohort is the epicenter of the drain — departing households in this group earn an average of $144,629, more than $27,000 above their arriving counterparts, producing the largest net income loss of any age group at $277 million. The 35–44 and 55–64 groups add another $178 million and $155 million in net losses. These are peak earning years, and the IRS data confirms what the demographic analysis earlier in this report suggested: Oregon is losing established, high-earning households in mid-to-late career and replacing them with lower earners.

The lone exception is the 65-and-over group. Oregon loses a small number of net households among retirees, but arrivals in this group are the only ones who out-earn departures — $104,707 versus $100,213 — producing a modest net AGI gain of $14.2 million. Oregon appears to retain some appeal as a destination for wealthier retirees even as it loses higher earners at every working age.

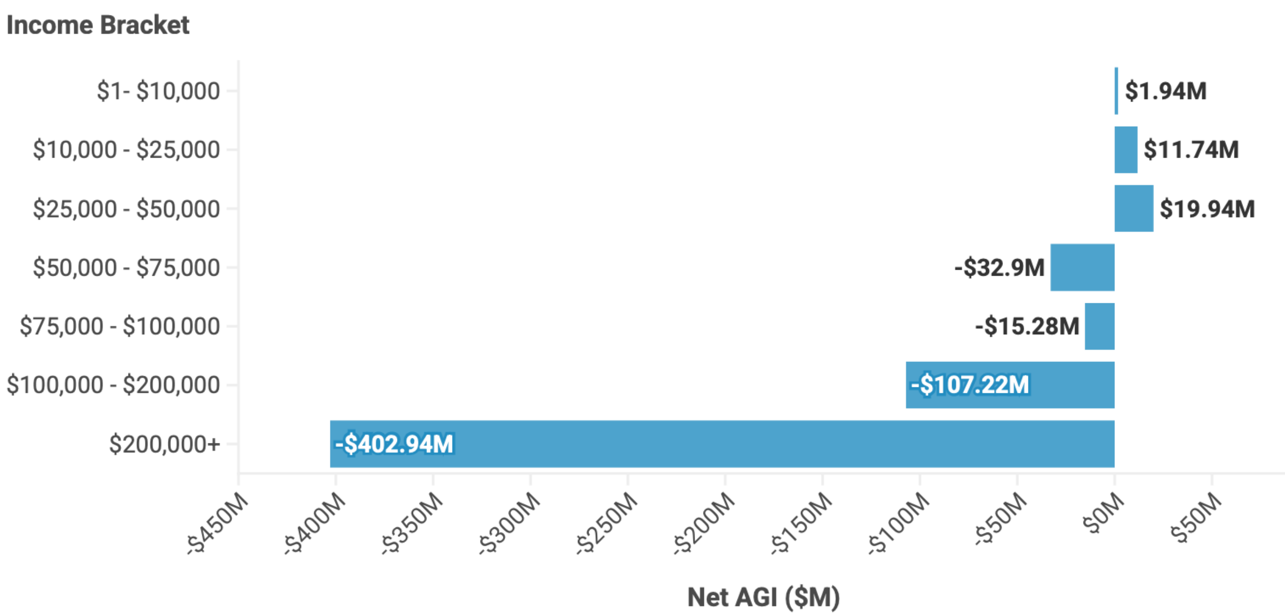
INCOME LEVELS OF OREGON'S MOVERS

Sorting Oregon's migration flows by income bracket reveals the clearest picture yet of who is driving the state's income drain. The pattern forms an almost perfect gradient: Oregon gains households in every income bracket below $50,000 and loses households in every bracket above it, with losses deepening as incomes rise. Movers earning under $50,000 contributed a combined net gain of roughly $34 million in AGI — Oregon attracts more lower- and moderate-income households than it loses. Above $50,000, the balance turns negative in every bracket, and the losses are dominated by the very top: households earning $200,000 or more accounted for a net loss of $403 million, more than three-quarters of Oregon's total net income drain from migration, despite representing fewer than 5,000 departing returns. The $100,000–$200,000 bracket added another $107 million in net losses.

FIGURE 7.

Oregon's Net Income Gain or Loss from Migration by Income Bracket
2022–2023

Net adjusted gross income is calculated as income arriving with in-migrants minus income departing with out-migrants, in millions of dollars, based on tax year 2023 AGI. Oregon gains income from movers earning under $50,000 but loses income in every bracket above it. Households earning $200,000 or more account for roughly $403 million of the loss — over three-quarters of Oregon's total net income drain from migration.



SOI tax stats - Migration data 2022–2023

These findings add important context to the high-income household trends discussed earlier in this report. American Community Survey data show the number of households earning over $200,000 in Multnomah County continued to grow through 2023, driven largely by strong income growth pushing existing households across the threshold. The IRS data clarify that this growth occurred despite migration, not because of it — on net, Oregon's highest earners are leaving the state, and the households replacing them earn considerably less. Whether driven by tax policy, cost of living, remote work flexibility, or retirement decisions, the direction of the flow is unambiguous: migration is eroding the top of Oregon's income distribution even as the overall number of high-income households continues to rise.

FROM DOMESTIC BOOM TO INTERNATIONAL RELIANCE: OREGON'S MIGRATION SHIFT

From 2010 to 2016, Oregon experienced a significant rise in net migration, driven by strong gains in both domestic and international flows. After peaking in 2016, domestic migration began a long decline, turning sharply negative in 2022 before recovering modestly in 2024 and 2025.

Natural population growth compounded the problem. By 2021, births fell below deaths for the first time, partly due to COVID-related mortality but more structurally due to Oregon's persistently low birth rate, which ranks in the bottom five nationally. Oregon's fertility rate of 1.36 — well below the 2.1 replacement threshold — means natural population decline is likely to continue regardless of migration trends.[1]

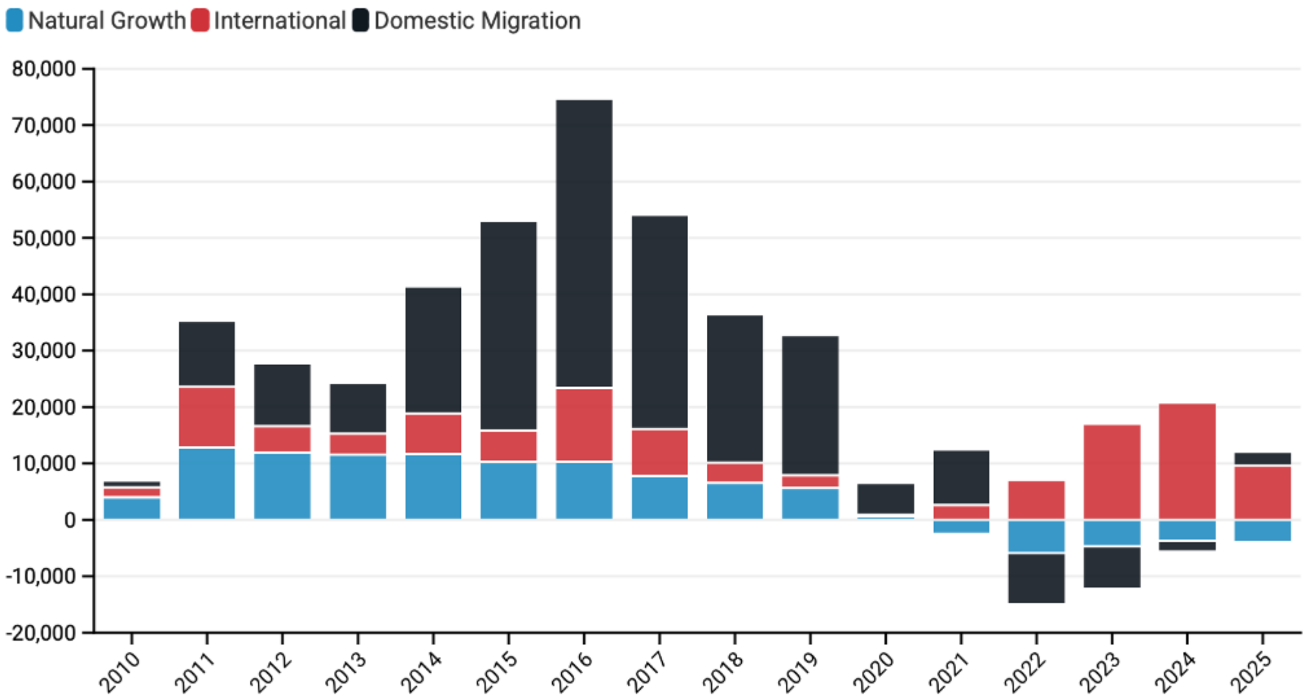
The combined effect pushed total population growth into negative territory in 2022 and 2023. The more recent picture is cautiously better: international migration has grown substantially and domestic outmigration has eased, returning net population change to modestly positive in 2024–2025.

[1] Osterman MJK, Hamilton BE, Martin JA, Driscoll AK, Valenzuela CP. Births: Final Data for 2024. National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 75, No. 2. National Center for Health Statistics, June 2026. Table 6.

FIGURE 8.

Components of Oregon Population Change, 2010–2025

Oregon's population growth engine has fundamentally shifted. Domestic migration — once the dominant driver — has largely dried up, while international migration now carries the weight. Natural population change has been a consistent drag since 2021.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, National Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010–2020 and 2020–2025.

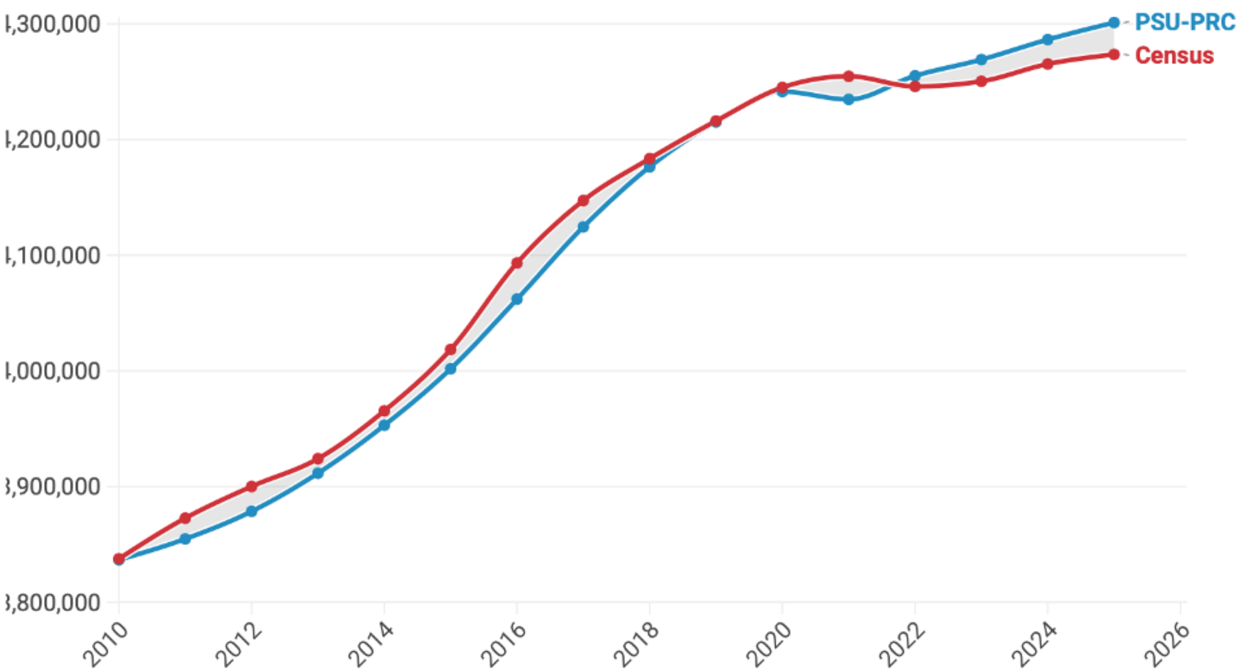
Both the U.S. Census Bureau and Portland State University's Population Research Center (PSU-PRC) now agree that Oregon's population has grown in 2024 and 2025, a welcome convergence after several years of divergent narratives. During 2022 and 2023, the two sources told starkly different stories: Census reported population declines in both years, while PSU-PRC showed continued — if modest — growth throughout. By 2025, PSU-PRC estimates Oregon's population at 4,301,164 compared to the Census figure of 4,273,586, a gap of roughly 27,600 residents.[2] Notably, the relationship between the two series has shifted over time. Through 2021, Census figures consistently ran higher than PSU-PRC's; since 2022, the positions have reversed and the gap has been widening. PSU-PRC has also revised its earlier estimates upward — its revised 2021 figure now reflects a much shallower dip than originally reported — further closing the distance between the two methodologies' accounts of Oregon's recent demographic trajectory.

[2] PSU-PRC's estimates rely on a combination of administrative records — including birth and death records, school enrollments, and tax exemptions — and survey data collected directly from local officials. Unlike Census estimates, PSU-PRC's methodology explicitly accounts for residents in group quarters such as college dormitories, nursing homes, military barracks, and prisons, which may partly explain the persistent differences in absolute population levels between the two sources.

FIGURE 9.

Oregon Population Estimates: PSU-PRC vs. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010–2025

PSU-PRC and Census figures diverged sharply after 2021, with PSU-PRC now running roughly 27,600 above Census; both sources agree growth resumed in 2024–2025.



Source: ACS 1-year estimates, Portland State University Population Research Center, Vintage 2025 Certified Estimates (April 2026).

COUNTY-LEVEL POPULATION TRENDS, 2020–2025

Oregon's statewide population growth since 2020 masks significant variation at the county level. Growth has been heavily concentrated in Central Oregon and the Portland suburban ring, while the urban core, southern Oregon, and parts of the coast have lagged or declined outright.

Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties form the state's clearest growth corridor, posting gains of 12.7%, 7.3%, and 4.8% respectively since 2020. Growth across this corridor reflects strong in-migration drawn by Central Oregon's outdoor amenities, a relatively affordable housing market compared to the Willamette Valley, and continued expansion of Bend's regional economy which has generated spillover demand in neighboring counties. Morrow County's 9.0% gain stands apart from the Central Oregon lifestyle migration story — it is largely driven by industrial and agricultural expansion concentrated in Boardman, which has grown 25% since 2020.

Portland's suburban ring has absorbed much of what the urban core has lost. Washington, Clackamas, and Yamhill counties all grew between 2.5% and 3.0% since 2020, consistent with a broader pattern of households seeking lower housing costs without leaving the metro entirely. Clark County, Washington grew even faster at 5.7% over the same period, underscoring that the Portland metro's suburban expansion extends well beyond Oregon's Multnomah County, by contrast, remains below its 2020 population — a trajectory no other large Oregon county shares.

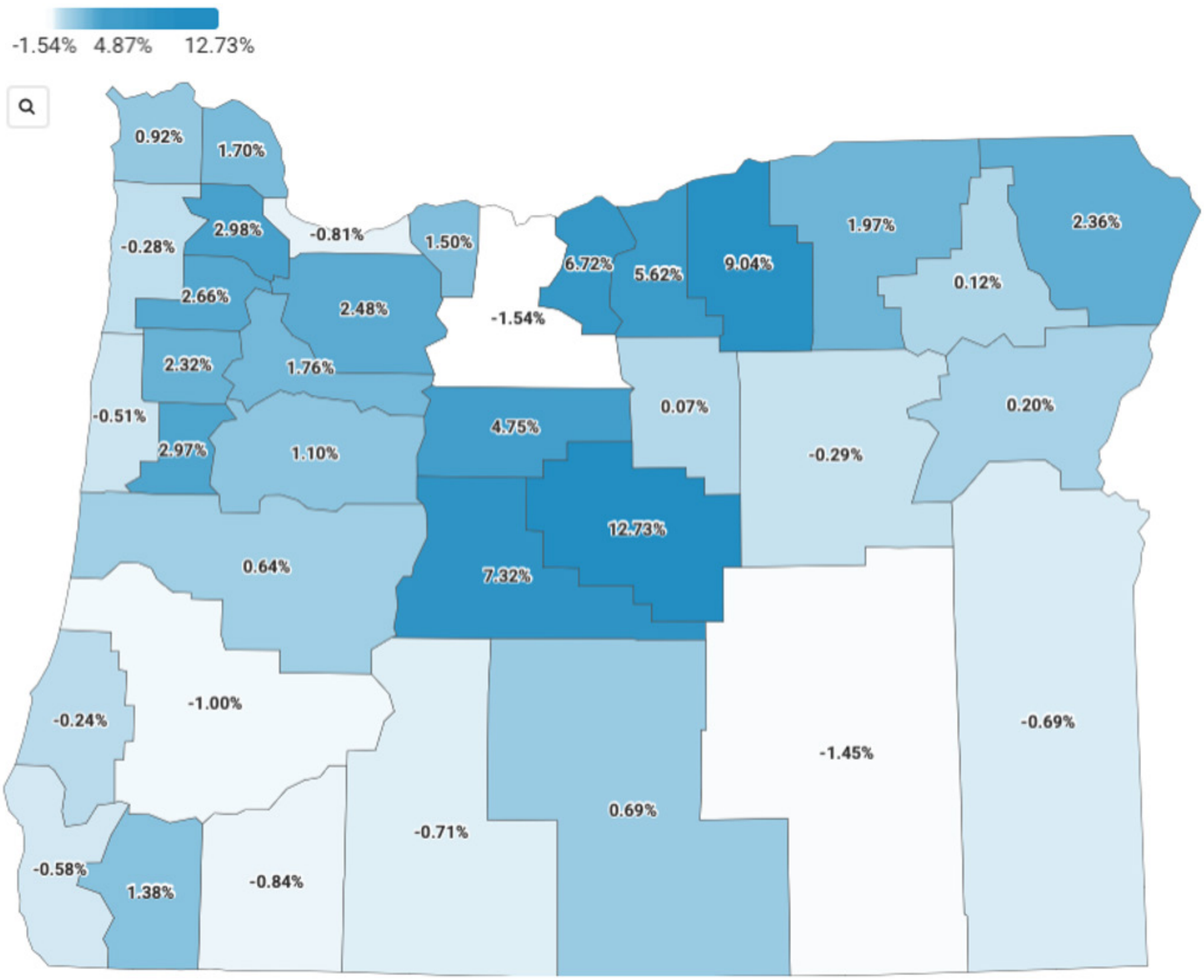
Southern Oregon has struggled throughout the period. Douglas County declined 1.0% and Klamath 0.7%, reflecting longer-term economic headwinds in timber and manufacturing-dependent communities. Jackson County declined 0.8% overall, though its trajectory is more directly tied to the 2020 Almeda Fire, which devastated large portions of unincorporated areas and displaced thousands of residents — a dynamic explored in more detail in the city-level section below.

Coastal counties present a mixed picture. Clatsop retained most of its post-2020 gains while Lincoln, Curry, and Tillamook have given some back, suggesting that relocation to the coast during the early pandemic years has at least partially reversed.

FIGURE 10.

Oregon County Population Change (%), 2020–2025

Central Oregon dominated growth over the past five years, led by Crook (+12.7%), Deschutes (+7.3%), and Morrow (+9.0%). The Portland suburban ring grew steadily while Multnomah County remained below its 2020 population. Southern and coastal Oregon posted the most widespread losses.



Source: Portland State University Population Research Center, Vintage 2025 Certified Population Estimates (April 2026).

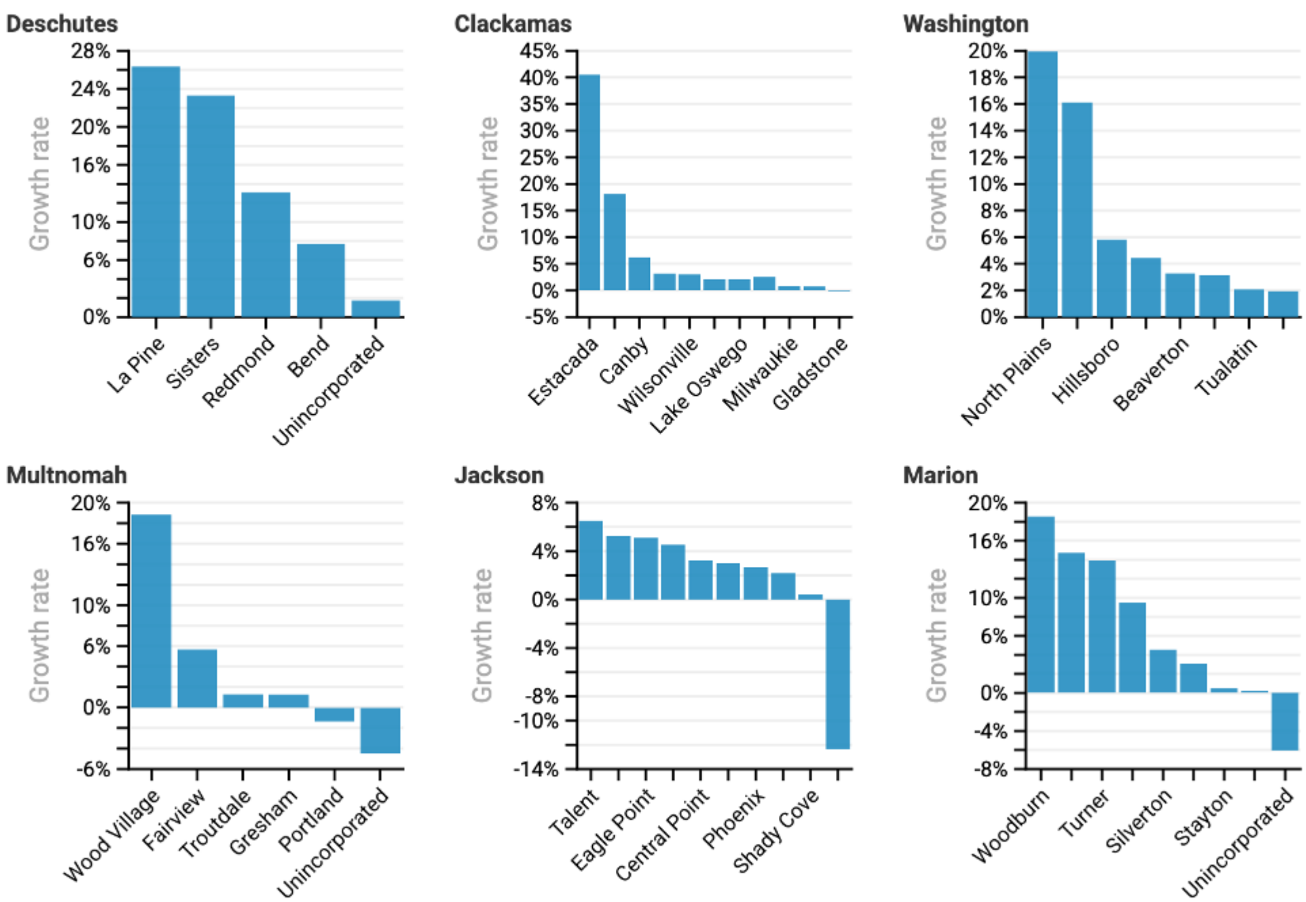
CITY-LEVEL POPULATION TRENDS WITHIN OREGON'S GROWING COUNTIES

Oregon's county-level growth figures tell only part of the story. Within counties, population change often follows a clear affordability gradient — with smaller, less expensive cities consistently outpacing their more established neighbors. This pattern suggests that cost-of-living pressures are reshaping Oregon's internal geography as much as they are driving interstate migration.

FIGURE 11.

Population Growth Within Oregon's Key Counties, 2020–2025

Within Oregon's growing counties, smaller and more affordable cities have dramatically outpaced their larger neighbors since 2020.



Source: Portland State University Population Research Center, Vintage 2025 Certified Population Estimates (April 2026).

Nowhere is this more apparent than in **Deschutes County,** which grew 7.3% overall since 2020. While Bend itself grew 7.7%, the county's more affordable communities expanded at a dramatically faster pace. La Pine grew 26% and Sisters 23%, both drawing households priced out of Bend while still seeking access to Central Oregon's amenities and economic opportunities. Redmond also outpaced the county average at 13%. The gradient is consistent and steep — the further from Bend's urban core and price point, the faster the growth. **Jefferson County,** Deschutes' neighbor to the north, grew 4.75% overall, led by Madras at 8.9%.

Clackamas County grew 2.5% overall, but this modest headline figure masks extraordinary variation within the county. **Estacada,** the county's most remote and affordable incorporated city, grew 40% since 2020 — the highest rate of any city across the counties examined. Happy Valley followed at 18%, while more established and expensive communities like West Linn (0.78%), Gladstone (-0.17%), and unincorporated Clackamas (-0.08%) were essentially flat. A similar gradient appears in **Washington County,** where affordable Cornelius (16%) and North Plains (20%) far outpaced established tech-corridor cities like Beaverton (3.3%) and Tigard (4.4%).

Multnomah County declined 0.8%. That decline is concentrated in Portland (-1.4%) and unincorporated areas (-4.5%). The county's smaller eastern communities tell a different story: Wood Village grew 19% and Fairview 5.7%, while Gresham and Troutdale each added about 1.3%. Growth within Multnomah is entirely confined to its more affordable outer communities while the urban core continues to shed residents.

Jackson County declined 0.8% overall despite strong growth in several of its incorporated cities — a divergence that reflects the aftermath of the 2020 Almeda Fire rather than an affordability gradient. Talent (6.5%), Jacksonville (5.3%), Eagle Point (5.1%), and Medford (4.5%) all posted solid gains, but these numbers largely reflect internal redistribution of a displaced population as fire-affected residents relocated from unincorporated areas into incorporated cities. Unincorporated Jackson County declined 12.4% over the period — by far the steepest decline of any geographic unit examined — underscoring that the county's city-level growth does not represent net new arrivals.

BOTTOM LINE

Oregon has historically grown faster than the nation during economic expansions, with in-migration of young, working-age households a key driver of that advantage. The findings in this report suggest that advantage has not returned — and that the problem now runs deeper than headcounts. Migration flows have stabilized in volume, but their composition has deteriorated: departing households consistently out-earn arriving ones, with three-quarters of the state's net income loss concentrated among households earning over $200,000. Within Oregon, growth is flowing to more affordable communities while Portland's urban core sheds residents, pointing to cost of living as the central force reshaping where Oregonians live.

With deaths outnumbering births every year since 2021 and a fertility rate that is the fifth lowest in the nation, migration is the state's only available source of population and labor force growth. Whether Oregon can restore the volume and, critically, the income quality of its migration flows — or find sources of growth that do not depend on them — is the central economic question these trends pose