

Immigration Continues to Fuel Growth in Western States and U.S.

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Between the years 2000 and 2030, the populations of Arizona and Nevada are projected to double, with Nevada soon overtaking Utah to become the third most populous state in the Intermountain region. (At present Arizona ranks number one in the region, followed by Colorado, Utah and Nevada.)

Immigration is projected to continue to contribute to the growth of the U.S. and Utah, just as it did during the beginning of the 20th century. However, the present wave of immigration is influencing Utah to a lesser extent than it is the nation as a whole, according to the latest issue of the *Utah Economic and Business Review*, a publication of the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Utah.

In the 1990s, roughly one-fifth of Utah's population growth resulted from increases in the foreign born population. For the nation as a whole, increases in the foreign born accounted for more than a third of the population growth during that same time. The U.S. population nearly quadrupled over the 20th century with the West and South leading that growth into the 21st century.

According to Pamela S. Perlich, senior research economist for BEBR, the difference in the demographic influence of immigrants on present day Utah, as compared to the nation, has two causes: First, there is a smaller share of foreign born in Utah than the nation as a whole. Second, although the fertility rate of Hispanics (the largest immigrant and minority population) significantly exceeds that of non-Hispanics in the state and the nation, Utah's fertility rate is already the highest in the nation and is well above replacement level. In contrast, the non-Hispanic fertility rate for the nation as a whole is well below replacement level. The exceptionally high fertility rate of Utah Hispanics is the result of very high rates at the youngest ages: 15 to 24. It is not likely that these rates will be sustained, especially in the second

generation of immigrants.

Over the 20th century, the nation's population has been steadily drifting westward, and since 1970, southward as well. The West is the most rapidly growing region of the country, with positive net migration and internal growth. Within the West, Utah's net in-migration rate is lower and natural increase rate is higher. Beginning in the 1980s, but especially from the 1990s on, net migration to the West was increasingly international and Hispanic. California has become a domestic net out-migration state, exporting population to other states, while continuing to be a net in-migration state internationally. Immigrants enter and become established in California and later may become domestic migrants when they move from California. Utah receives its largest domestic migration flows from California, and many of these migrants are Hispanic and/or foreign born. Without in-migration from California, Utah would have experienced domestic out-migration in the late 1990s. Roughly half the net in-migration to Utah from California was minority, almost entirely Hispanic.

Arizona and Nevada, which have emerged as the new growth engines for the west, were the only western states in the 1990s (and beyond) with significant domestic net in-migration as well as immigration. All other western states, including Utah, had either minimal domestic net in-migration or domestic out-migration, relying on international net in-migration for growth.

According to Census 2000 data, California is, by far, the greatest source region for Utah's domestic net in-migration; much of this is Hispanic. Nearly one-third of California's domestic net out-migration was foreign born, while nearly one-third of Utah's domestic net in-migration was foreign born. Over half of Utah's domestic net in-migration was Hispanic.

From at least 1990 to the present, Utah has

increasingly depended upon immigration to sustain its positive net in-migration. According to estimates produced by the Bureau of the Census, from 1997 through 2004, Utah had domestic net out-migration, sending more population to other states than it received. However, international net migration has been sufficient to more than compensate for these domestic losses. During the most recent recession when the state lost jobs, immigrants continued to come to the state. The Bureau of the Census estimates that beginning in 2005, domestic migration again turned positive for Utah. These migration patterns are the result of changing economic conditions (labor demand) and the effect of age waves on fluctuations in the size of the Utah labor force (labor supply).

Hispanics contributed 40 percent of the nation's population growth in the 1990s, 80 percent in California, 60 percent in Texas, and 23 percent in Utah. Over the next 50 years, Hispanics are projected to contribute more than half of the national population growth.

Utah's population in the 18-through-24-year-old age group is sandwiched between age waves and, consequently, is projected to be flat or very slowly growing for at least the next 10 years. The surge in net in-migration estimated by the Utah Population Estimates Committee for 2005 is at least partly explained by the slow internal growth of the labor force in a robust job creation environment.

Source: University of Utah

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