



# Missouri Economy Indicators

## 2010-to-2020 Population Change

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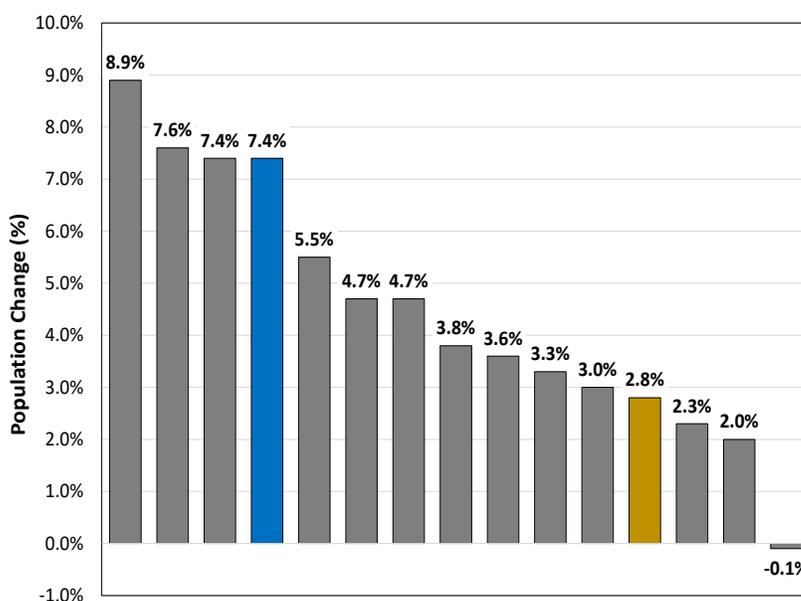
The U.S. Census Bureau plays a prominent role in “counting the people,” especially every 10 years when it conducts the decennial census. In August 2021, it released the initial [2020 census](#) data for states to use in the redistricting process. These data include new information about how the U.S. population changed in the past 10 years — in terms of its size and racial and ethnic characteristics. These trends are important for states, regions and communities. They affect not only political representation, but they also often reflect a community’s ability to generate economic activity, build its workforce and grow its tax base.

### Relatively Slow Growth

The census reports that Missouri’s population totaled 6,154,913 residents in 2020, making it the nation’s 19th largest state. The state’s population grew 2.8% from 2010 to 2020 — less than half the U.S. growth rate (7.4%). Compared with growth rates for all states and Washington, D.C., Missouri’s rate ranked 39th.

Among neighboring states, Missouri’s growth rate was similar to rates for Kansas and Arkansas. Illinois, which contains 24% of the St. Louis metro’s total population, lost population in the past decade. Among other Midwestern states, Missouri grew more than Ohio, Michigan and Illinois.

### Population Growth in Missouri and Other Neighboring and Midwest States, 2010-20



TN MN NE USA OK IA IN KY WI AR KS MO OH MI IL  
 Source: MU Extension graphic using data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 decennial census

### Greater Growth in Missouri’s Suburban Counties

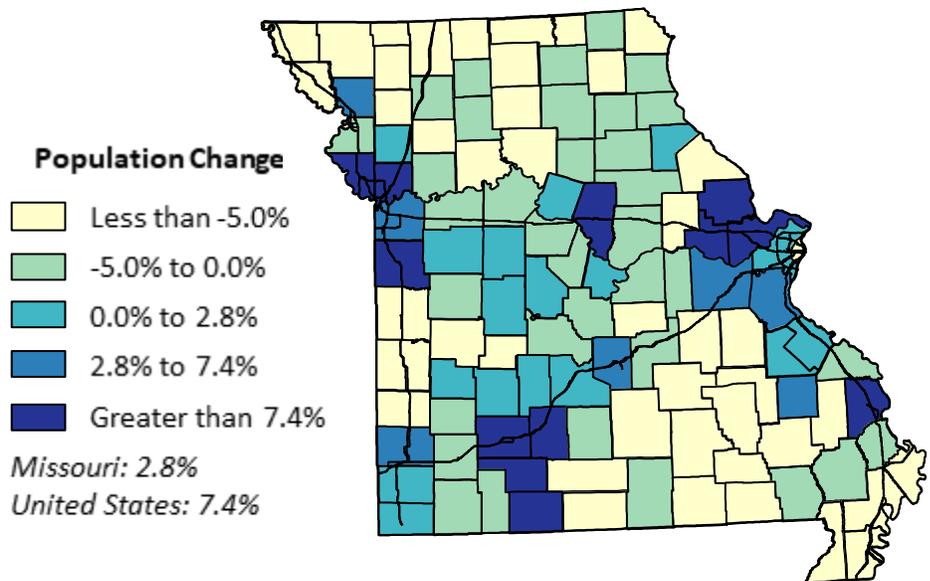
Consistent with national trends, Missouri’s population growth has been geographically uneven. Of Missouri’s 115 counties, including St. Louis City, 34 experienced net population gains between 2010 and 2020. Most of these counties were in metropolitan areas, and growth in Missouri’s metro areas offset population losses in its rural areas. In spite of this growth, Missouri’s metropolitan counties (4.9%) grew slower than U.S. metro counties overall (8.5%). Moreover, population losses in the state’s nonmetropolitan counties (-3.2%) exceeded losses in all U.S. nonmetro counties (-0.8%).

During the past decade, 12 Missouri counties grew faster than the U.S. Many of those were suburban counties. Missouri's fastest-growing counties from 2010 to 2020 included Platte (+19.5%), Christian (+14.8%), Clay (+14.1%), Lincoln (+13.3%) and Boone (+12.9%). Counties adding the most net new residents in the past decade were St. Charles (+44.8K), Jackson (+43.0K), Clay (+31.4K), Greene (+23.7K) and Boone (+21.0K).

Of Missouri's 80 nonmetro counties, 67 lost population in the past decade. The greatest relative losses occurred in southeast Missouri's Ozarks region. Between

2010 and 2020, the five counties that lost the greatest share of their population were Ripley (-24.3%), Oregon (-20.6%), Wayne (-18.8%), Carter (-17.0%) and Shannon (-16.7%). The greatest net population losses, however, occurred in a mix of metro (St. Louis City, -17.7K; Buchanan, -4.4K) and nonmetro (Dunklin, -3.7K; Ripley, -3.4K; Pemiscot, -2.6K) counties.

## Population Change by County, 2010-20



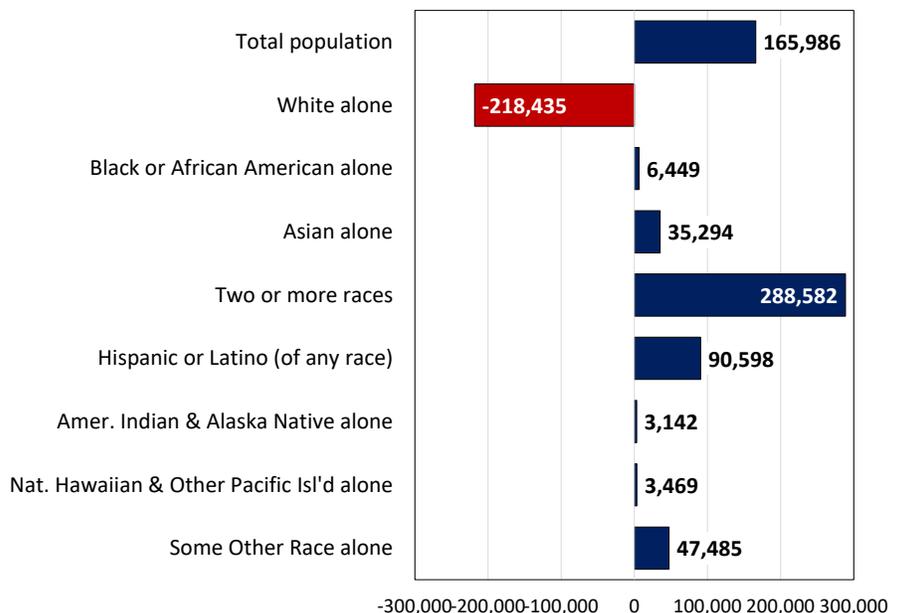
Source: MU Extension graphic using data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 decennial census

## Slowly Changing Population in Missouri

Consistent with [national trends](#), Missouri's population has become more diverse. The census data show 218,435 fewer Missouri residents identified as "white alone" in 2020 than in 2010. By contrast, Missouri gained more than 288,000 new residents who identified as two or more races and more than 90,000 new Hispanic residents during the decade. Note, Hispanic is an ethnic category, not a racial category. The state's Asian population also grew significantly, and the Black or African American population experienced modest growth.

Overall, Missouri lacks diversity relative to other states. In 2020, 77% of Missouri residents identified as white compared with 61.6% of the U.S. Black or African American residents represented Missouri's second largest racial or ethnic group (11.4%), but in percentage terms,

## Change in Missouri Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2010-20



Source: MU Extension graphic using data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 decennial census

Missouri had a smaller share of Black or African American residents than the nation overall (12.4%). Missouri's Hispanic population grew by more than 40% in the past decade, but it still only represented 4.9% of the state's 2020 population. By contrast, Hispanic residents accounted for almost one in five (18.7%) U.S. residents.

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to release [additional data](#) from the 2020 census in 2022. Most notably, these future data releases will include information about individuals (e.g., age, gender) and households (e.g., housing type). This new information will better describe Missouri and its regions and allow communities to make more informed decisions about how to build and strengthen themselves.

## Additional Resources

- The U.S. Census Bureau provides a series of data visualizations to simplify accessing the information contained in the 2020 redistricting data summary files.
  - [2020 population and housing data](#)
  - [Missouri state profile](#)
  - Summary tools are also now available through [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).
- The [Missouri Census Data Center](#) and [Missouri Map Room](#) are additional resources you can use to access Missouri-related Census data.
- The 2020 census draws a lot of scholarly and media attention. William Frey, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program, is a prominent source of demographic analysis. He writes about census data as they are released. Most recently, he [mapped America's diversity](#) using 2020 census data.
- University of Missouri Extension recently published a piece about [demographic trends in Missouri regions](#) using the U.S. Census Bureau's annual population estimates. These estimates are not a head count like the decennial census, but because they are produced annually, they can illustrate intercensal trends and the components of population change. With each annual release, the [Population Estimates Program](#) revises and updates the entire time series back to the previous decennial census. As a result, the 2021 estimates will be benchmarked to the 2020 census. The 2020 estimates, which the linked report used, were benchmarked to the 2010 census.

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All Missouri Economy Indicators briefs in this series are available at [tinyurl.com/ExceedEconomyIndicators](https://tinyurl.com/ExceedEconomyIndicators)

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