

# Missouri Economy Indicators

## 2020 to 2025 Population Trends

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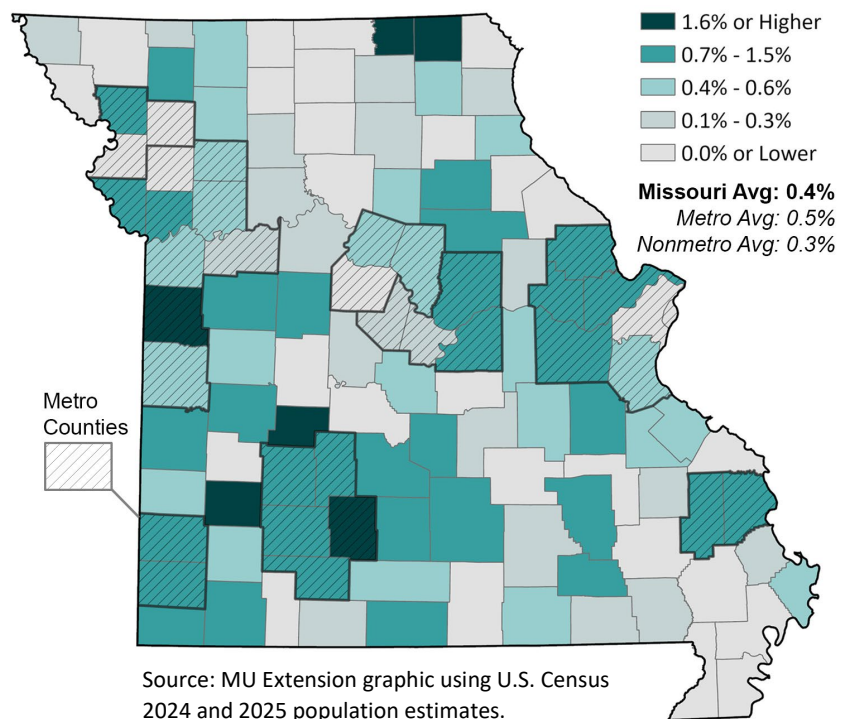
Missouri was the nation's 18th largest state in 2025, with a population of 6.27 million. Between 2024 and 2025, the Show-Me State added more than 27,000 residents, representing an annual growth rate of 0.4%. This was slightly slower than the prior year's growth of 0.6% and was modestly below the national average of 0.5%, but was consistent with growth trends across many Midwestern states. Among neighboring states, Missouri's growth notably exceeded Illinois (0.1%) and Iowa (0.2%), though it remained well below Tennessee (0.9%).

### Missouri Metros Lead Population Growth in 2025

With a 0.5% annual growth rate, Missouri's metro counties grew at a faster pace than nonmetro areas (0.3%). Metro area growth came largely from suburban counties: Webster (2.3%) and Cass (1.7%) Counties, on the outskirts of Springfield and Kansas City, respectively, had the highest annual growth rates.

In nonmetro Missouri, growth rates increased notably in the far north and southwest. Scotland (2.6%), a less populous county in northern Missouri, had the state's highest growth rate. Dade (2.2%) and Hickory (1.7%), both adjacent to the Springfield metro area, also posted strong gains.

### Percent Change in Population, 2024-25



### In-Migration Drove Missouri's Population Growth from 2020 to 2025

Population shifts occur from natural change (the difference between births and deaths) and from domestic and international migration. From 2020 to 2025, Missouri's population increased by 115,000, or 1.9%. Missouri experienced a natural decrease in population over those years, as deaths exceeded births by more than 12,000. Offsetting that natural change was migration into the state, as 70,000 international migrants and 57,000 domestic migrants moved to Missouri. Although population estimates do not indicate where migrants originated, [state-to-state migration](#) inflow data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) suggest that most domestic migration came from Kansas, Illinois, and Texas.

## Despite Slower State Growth, Some Missouri Counties Outpaced the Nation

Over the past five years, Missouri's population growth has varied across the state; metropolitan counties grew by 2.0%, while nonmetropolitan counties increased by 1.6%. Although urban areas generally expanded faster than rural areas, consistent with national trends, Missouri's nonmetropolitan counties still outpaced similar U.S. counties over the five-year period.

Missouri's population growth can also be understood through an economic lens. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service classifies counties into [six economic dependency categories](#) based on the degree of job and income concentration (see map). Most counties are nonspecialized or diverse, meaning no single sector drives the overall economy.

From 2020 to 2025, population growth in Missouri was strongest in counties dependent on recreation, government, and manufacturing, all of which grew faster than Missouri's average. Meanwhile, mining- and farming-dependent counties generally experienced either stagnant growth or population decline.

Missouri's recreation-dependent counties, around the Lake of the Ozarks and Branson areas, experienced the highest growth rates in the state. These areas also serve as popular retirement destinations, reflecting a broader national pattern in which older adults relocate to outdoor recreational communities and bring with them retirement income, consumer spending, and entrepreneurial activity.

### Additional Notes and Resources

- Missouri's story of population shifts is not unique to the state. A recent U.S. Census [article on retirement destinations](#) provides additional context on this national trend.
- A U.S. Census [visualization on the components of population change](#) in recent years shows how counties of different sizes have seen their population change.

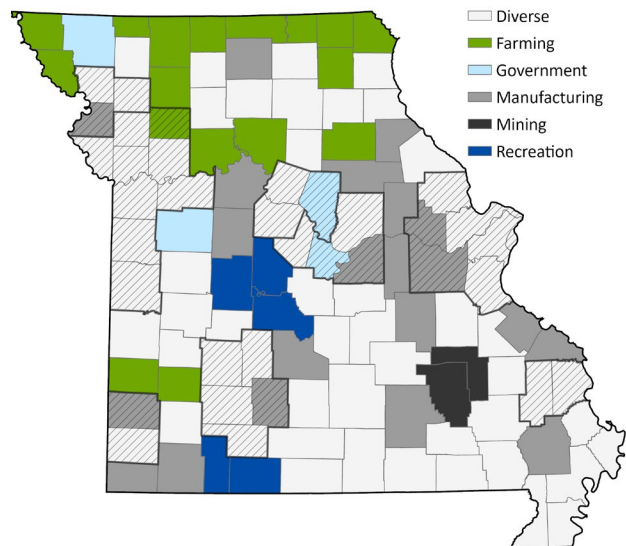
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### Percent Change in Population, 2020-25

Area	Missouri	U.S.
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Metro Counties	2.0%	3.4%
Nonmetro Counties	1.6%	1.2%
<b>County Economic Type</b>		
Recreation-Dependent	3.5%	7.0%
Fed./State Gov-Dependent	3.2%	1.8%
Manufacturing-Dependent	2.6%	2.3%
Diversified	1.7%	3.1%
Farm-Dependent	0.6%	-0.5%
Mining-Dependent	-1.8%	0.7%

### Missouri County Economic Types



Sources: MU Extension graphic using U.S. Census 2024 and 2025 population estimates. 2025 economic types from USDA.