



# Missouri Economy Indicators

## Young Adult Migration

VOL. 3, ISSUE 11, 12 SEPT. 2022

A [new study](#) titled *The Radius of Opportunity: Evidence from Migration and Local Labor Markets* sheds light on how youth move about the country. For the study, researchers at the U.S. Census Bureau and Harvard University looked at where individuals resided at childhood — measured by location at age 16 — and at young adulthood — measured by location at age 26. Using these data, they developed the Young Adult Migration tool, which shows where youth choose to live as they age. The [interactive tool](#) highlights migration patterns for demographic groups and pinpoints popular destinations for young adults from specific commuting zones.

The study found that 80% of young adults born between 1984 and 1992 migrated less than 100 miles from where they grew up, and 90% migrated less than 500 miles. Factors including parental income, race and population density affected choices to move a long distance or stay close to home. Young adults who remained in their origin commuting zone at age 26 were considered close to home. Nationwide, Black and Hispanic individuals and individuals from low-income families were more likely to stay close to home. Also, as population density increases, areas tended to be more likely to retain young adults raised nearby.

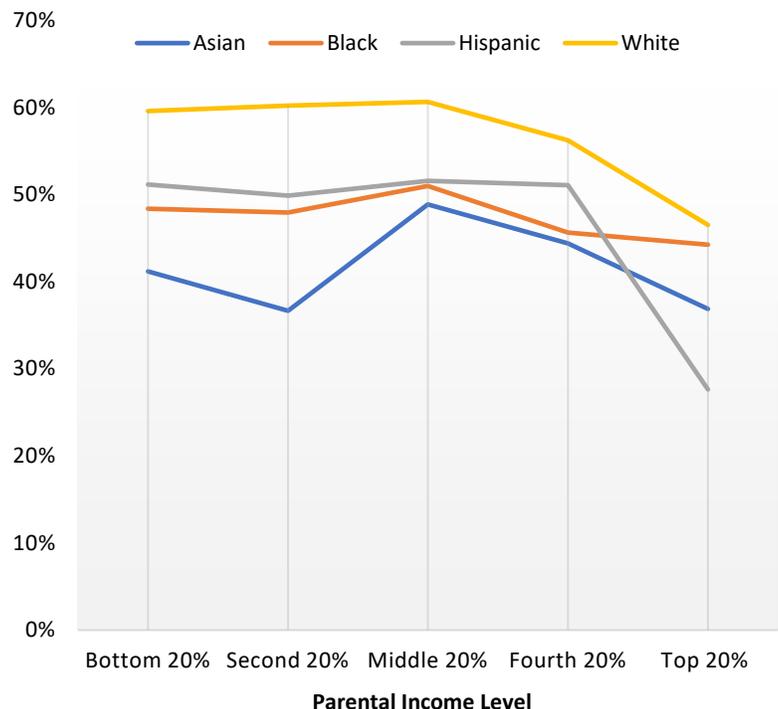
### Young Adults from High-Income Households are Likelier to Move

Missouri young adult migration shares similarities with national trends, except when looking at the data by race.

White Missourians were more likely than Asian, Black and Hispanic Missourians to stay close to home. The chart shows 61% of white young adults from middle-income households stayed close to home — compared with 52% of Hispanic young adults, 51% of Black young adults and 49% of Asian young adults.

However, in Missouri, white individuals from top-earning households were less likely to stay close to home relative to Black and Hispanic individuals from lower income households.

### Share of Young Missourians (Born 1984-92) Who Stayed Close to Home



Source: MU Extension graphic using data from “The Radius of Opportunity: Evidence from Migration and Local Labor Markets”

## Young Adult Migration across Missouri by Commuting Zone

On average, Missouri's commuting zones retained roughly 1% more young adults than the national average. Of the 24 commuting zones that include part of Missouri, the St. Louis and Kansas City zones had the greatest share of young adults born between 1984 and 1992 who stayed close to home — 75% and 73%, respectively. Other Midwestern cities had similar trends: Milwaukee (71%), Indianapolis (73%), Memphis (74%) and Chicago (76%). In Missouri, young people from Northern Missouri and parts of Southwest Missouri were most likely to move.

Areas with highly dense populations offer greater and more diverse job opportunities and amenities that attract young adults and encourage them to stay. Young adults tend to locate in areas that provide opportunities to earn higher wages. Importantly, the study found improvements in local labor markets can lead to significant positive, and geographically concentrated, benefits.

### Young Adult Migration in Missouri

By Commuting Zone

Percentage of Youth born 1984-1992 Remaining in Region

39.6% to 47.5%

47.6% to 56.4%

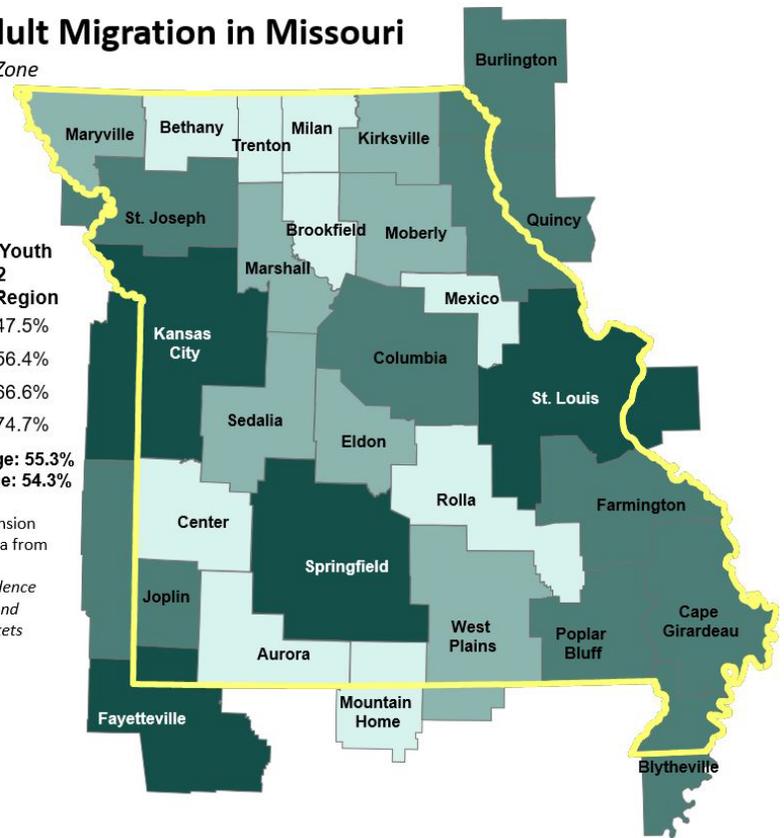
56.5% to 66.6%

66.7% to 74.7%

Missouri Average: 55.3%

National Average: 54.3%

Source: MU Extension graphic using data from *The Radius of Opportunity: Evidence from Migration and Local Labor Markets*



### Additional Resources and Notes

- The United Van Lines [National Movers Study](#) explains where and why Americans move each year. In 2021, Missouri's total inbound migration was 48.2%, and its total outbound migration was 51.8%. Therefore, the state had a 3.6% net migration loss. For migration metrics, Missouri fell near the middle of states. South Dakota (69% inbound) and Illinois (67% outbound) ranked at the top and bottom, respectively. The study describes reasons for migration and migrants' ages and income levels.
- The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago used the United Van Lines data to analyze [changes in migration patterns before and after the COVID-19 pandemic began](#). Looking at data from 2018-21, patterns of pre-pandemic moves largely mirrored pandemic-era move patterns. However, the number of moves declined substantially after the pandemic began. This observation, along with an analysis of [U.S. Postal Service data](#) that showed a spike in temporary address change requests during February through July 2020, demonstrates that many pandemic-era moves were not permanent.

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

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