



Update from the American Community Survey

Characteristics of Population Change and Migration in Washington Metro Area (WMA) and Other Major U.S. Metro Areas, 2011-2012

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In the wake of the national economic recession of 2008-2009 the Washington Metro Area (WMA) succeeded at attracting migrants from outside the region, as it lost fewer jobs and recovered more quickly than did other large metro areas. Since 2010 the WMA has begun to lag behind its peers in terms of job growth; during 2012, the region added just 32,000 jobs, ranking it 13th in job change among the 15 largest metro areas.¹

In spite of the WMA's recent struggles with job growth the region has continued to add new residents at a competitive pace with other regions. Between 2011 and 2012 the WMA's population increased from 5,771,213 to 5,860,342; this gain of 89,129 residents ranked the region fifth among the largest metro areas in terms of population growth. From 2011 to 2012 the ratio of population growth to job growth in the WMA was 2.77; the other 14 largest metro areas averaged a ratio of 1.14.

The in-migration of new residents to the WMA continues to fuel population growth in the region. According to American Community Survey (ACS) data, about 286,000 of the WMA's 5.73 million residents in 2012 had moved into the region within the preceding year, representing 5.0 percent of the

Figure 1: Population and Job Change for 15 Largest Metro Areas, 2011-2012 (000s)

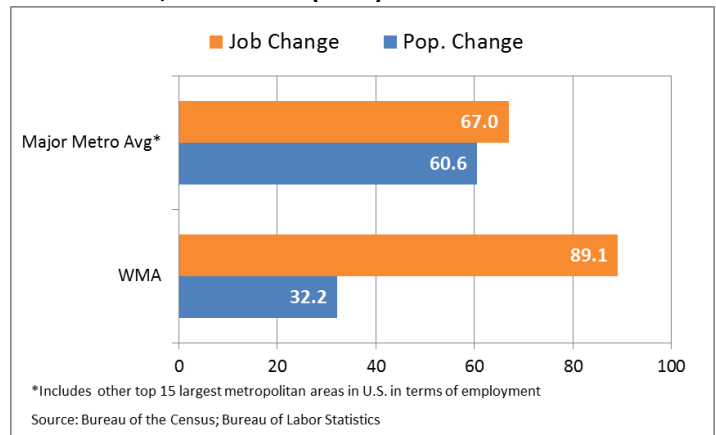
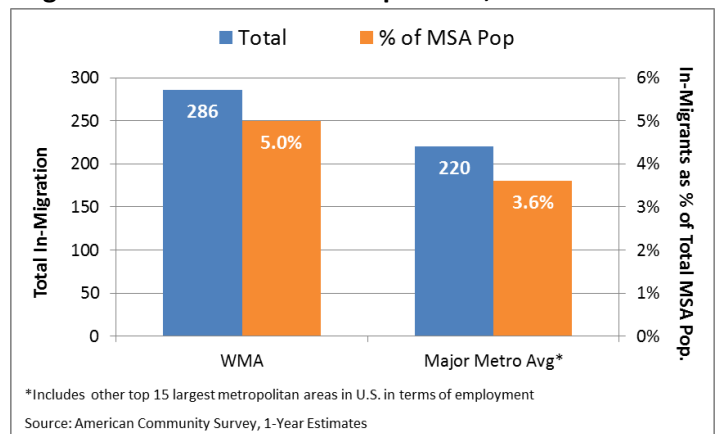


Figure 2: In-Migration in Past Year (000) and In-Migrants as % of Total MSA Population, 2012



¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics figures, not seasonally adjusted

region’s total population. The number of in-migrants from 2011 to 2012 in the WMA ranked third among the 15 largest metro areas, trailing only New York and Los Angeles, and the 5.0 percent share trailed only Seattle. In total, the other 14 major metro areas averaged 220,000 in-migrants between 2011 and 2012, and the number of in-migrants represented an average of 3.6 percent of their total populations.

Though the ACS does not report the characteristics of migrants into metropolitan areas, it does document a variety of demographic and economic indicators of those who move into a region from out-of-state.² As of 2012, 5.4 percent of the WMA’s residents lived in a different state in 2011, giving it the highest concentration of out-of-state in-migrants among the 15 major metro areas.

**Table 1: Profile of In-Migrants from Out of State, 2011-2012:
In-Migrants as Percent of Total Cohort**

	WMA	Major Metro Avg*
Total In-Migrants	5.4%	2.8%
Age 18-24	11.5%	5.9%
Age 25-34	9.8%	5.0%
Hispanic	4.2%	2.7%
White, Non-Hispanic	5.8%	2.8%
Bachelor's or Higher	6.2%	3.5%

*Includes other top 15 largest metropolitan areas in U.S. in terms of employment

Source: American Community Survey

This profile holds true for a variety of age, ethnic, and educational attainment groups:

- Among age 18-24 WMA residents, 11.5 percent moved from another state in the preceding year, compared with 5.9 percent of 18-24 year olds in the other major metro areas.
- 9.8 percent of residents in the 25-34 age group in the WMA had moved from out-of-state in the prior year, compared to just 5.0 percent for other metros.
- The White, non-Hispanic population (5.8 percent) was more likely to have moved into the WMA within the past year than the Hispanic population (4.2), though the averages were similar for these two groups in other metro areas.
- About 6.2 percent of WMA residents with at least a Bachelor’s degree had moved from out of state in the prior year, compared with 3.5 percent of the residents of other major metro areas.

²This information differs from in-migrants to the metro area, as it counts a person who may have moved from Arlington County, VA to the District of Columbia, for example, as an in-migrant. These figures do provide an adequate proxy for in-migrants: as of 2012, a total of 309,000 of the WMA’s residents had lived in a different state one year earlier; this represents an 8.0 percent variance from the 286,000 in-migrants, making it sufficient for this level of analysis.

GMU Center for Regional Analysis

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Updates from the American Community Survey

The Center for Regional Analysis issue periodic reports on demographic and economic topics based on newly released data from the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides detailed data every year about states, metropolitan areas, counties and cities. The ACS is based on sampled data; its results therefore have a margin of error. More information about the ACS can be found at www.census.gov/acs.