State and County Population Estimates for Utah: 2023

Summary
July 1, 2023 estimates produced by the Utah Population Committee indicate a total Utah population of 3,456,482, adding 55,989 residents to the state since July 1, 2022. The midyear reference date of these estimates reflects a post-COVID-19 era, with rising inflation, increasing interest rates, and a moderation of high growth from the last few years. From July 1, 2022 to July 1, 2023, population growth continued to be strong but slowed to 1.6% from 1.7% in 2022. This year’s growth was primarily driven by net migration, accounting for 56% of new residents. Deaths declined sharply for the first time since the start of the pandemic; however, births also declined this year after increasing in 2022. These dynamics caused an increase in natural increase for the first time since 2013, totaling 24,431 and 44% of annual population growth.

Twenty-seven counties grew in 2023, with approximately two-thirds of those counties driven by net migration. For the second year in a row, Iron County experienced the fastest population growth (3.7%) for a county with a resident population over 5,000. Utah County added the most population, totaling 22,063 new residents, over 39% of the state's population growth.

State-Level Results
In 2023, Utah experienced a slight decline in population growth, from 1.7% in 2022 to 1.6% in 2023. Net migration continued to drive growth statewide, following a similar trend from 2021 and 2022. Of the estimated 55,989 new residents, Piute, Daggett, Rich, Juab, Kane, Washington, Wasatch, and Tooele counties grew by over 2.0%. Utah County added the most population, totaling 22,063 new residents, over 39% of the state's population growth.

Revised Population Estimates for 2021 and 2022
Utah state and county population estimates for 2021 and 2022 have been revised. The UPC improved one of the three methods used to create the estimates by focusing on better utilization of building permit data, construction timing, and occupancy characteristics.¹ These methodological changes were retroactively applied to previous years’ estimates. The revised estimates produced notable changes to net migration and total population. Further insights will be available in the upcoming 2020-2030 methodology documentation.

The Utah Population Committee (UPC), chaired and staffed by the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, produced Utah’s state and county population estimates for July 1, 2023. The 2023 estimates incorporate the most recent 2020 decennial census data, released in August 2021. This postcensal series will extend from July 1, 2020, until the next decennial census in 2030.
Natural Increase

Natural increase increased to 24,431, or 44% of 2023’s population growth. Natural increase is the number of annual births minus annual deaths. This is the first time natural increase has increased since 2013. The increase is the result of a sharp decline in annual deaths, a signal that COVID-19 deaths are starting to subside. COVID-19 sharply increased deaths in 2021 and 2022 with statewide deaths increasing by 14.9% in 2021 and 6.1% in 2022 but decreasing by -10% in 2023. After an increase in annual births in 2022, births in 2023 declined again, continuing Utah’s general trend of declining births since 2008.

Net Migration

Net migration reached 31,558 in 2023, declining from 34,939 in 2022. Net migration accounted for 56% of total state growth this year, declining from 60% of growth in 2022 and 58% in 2021. This strong influence of net migration on overall growth follows national trends, where it has been the driver in growing areas since 2020.

added between 2022 and 2023, 56% came from net migration and 44% from natural increase. Utah’s shift from natural increase to net migration as the primary source of growth represents a continuation of COVID-19 trends.
Subtracting out-migration (people moving out of the state or a county) from in-migration (people moving into the state or a county) provides the net migration value. Net migration is more volatile than natural increase and sensitive to societal and economic situations. Positive net migration is often an indicator of favorable economic conditions, particularly in the western United States.\(^4\) Utah’s low unemployment rate in 2023, combined with slightly dampened effects of natural increase for the factors mentioned above, combined to result in net migration continuing to be the dominant driver of growth for the July 1, 2023 estimates.

**County-Level Results**

Iron County recorded the fastest growth for a county with a resident population over 5,000 for the second year in a row at 3.7%, decreasing from last year’s increase of 4.2%. Utah (3.1%), Piute (4.7%), Daggett (4.5%), Rich (3.1%), Juab (2.6%), Kane (2.6%), Washington (2.4%), Wasatch (2.3%), and Tooele (2.2%) counties all grew by over 2.0%. Utah County added the most residents at 22,063, driven by net migration (13,022 or 59%) with natural increase of 9,041 or 41% of growth. This population growth was more than Salt Lake County’s (13,836), which added the second most new residents in 2023, an additional 4,300 residents than in 2022.

**Figure 6: Share of Utah Annual Population Growth by Components of Change, 2015-2023**

Utah County has been the largest driver of statewide growth for the last five years and accounts for 39% of the population increase in 2023. Salt Lake (25%), Davis (9%), and Washington (8%) counties also contributed large shares of state growth in 2023. Carbon and Wayne counties were the only populations that decreased in 2023, losing 82 and 20 residents, respectively.

**Figure 7: Absolute and Percentage Changes in County Population, 2022-2023**

Note: 2021 and 2022 population estimates and net migration have been revised due to methodological improvements.

Source: Utah Population Committee, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

Note: 2021 and 2022 population estimates and net migration have been revised due to methodological improvements.

Source: Utah Population Committee, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute
Natural Increase and Net Migration

Natural increase and net migration have had a stable relationship at the state level, but there is more variation at the county level. Typically, slower-growing counties are fueled by natural increase, with less or negative net migration, and faster-growing counties are fueled more by net migration. In 2023, net migration drove growth in 17 counties, a drop from last year when 28 counties' growth were fueled by net migration.

Five counties, Carbon, Piute, Kane, Daggett, and Garfield, experienced natural decrease between 2022 and 2023, ranging from -1 to -78 residents. Despite this, four of the five counties added population in 2023, with positive net migration compensating for the natural decrease.

Twelve counties, Weber, Uintah, Millard, Beaver, Duchesne, Cache, Morgan, Summit, San Juan, Box Elder, Salt Lake, and Davis, had net migration shares of growth lower than the state (see Figure 9). For the last few years, natural increase has been the driver of Salt Lake County’s growth. However in 2023, Salt Lake County’s growth was 51% net migration.
Conclusion

In 2023, Utah exited the COVID-19 era, evidenced by natural increase returning to pre-pandemic levels. Compared to 2022, Utah experienced strong but slightly lower population growth, driven mostly by net migration. Natural increase increased for the first time since 2013, driven by a sharp decline in deaths. These estimates reflect a slowing of the fast growth exhibited in the previous two years.

The UPC continues to investigate the data and modify the estimates process to accurately reflect the period between July 1, 2020, and July 1, 2023. Recently, the UPC enhanced its methodology to appropriately utilize building permit data and provide more intuitive and realistic results. UPC will continue to monitor the state's data and conditions into the future.

Table 1: Population Estimates and Components of Change, 2020-2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Region/County</th>
<th>2020 Census</th>
<th>July 1, 2020</th>
<th>July 1, 2021</th>
<th>July 1, 2022</th>
<th>July 1, 2023</th>
<th>Absolute Growth</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>Natural Increase</th>
<th>Net Migration</th>
<th>Net Migration Share of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>3,271,616</td>
<td>3,284,823</td>
<td>3,342,543</td>
<td>3,400,493</td>
<td>3,456,482</td>
<td>55,989</td>
<td>1.65%</td>
<td>24,431</td>
<td>31,558</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Salt Lake</td>
<td>2,836,793</td>
<td>2,847,422</td>
<td>2,892,355</td>
<td>2,940,154</td>
<td>2,987,855</td>
<td>47,701</td>
<td>1.62%</td>
<td>22,719</td>
<td>24,982</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Elder</td>
<td>57,666</td>
<td>57,886</td>
<td>59,208</td>
<td>60,607</td>
<td>61,250</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>133,154</td>
<td>133,743</td>
<td>136,945</td>
<td>140,289</td>
<td>141,700</td>
<td>1,411</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
<td>1,324</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>362,679</td>
<td>363,419</td>
<td>367,361</td>
<td>372,262</td>
<td>377,380</td>
<td>5,119</td>
<td>1.37%</td>
<td>2,504</td>
<td>2,615</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juab</td>
<td>11,786</td>
<td>11,831</td>
<td>12,057</td>
<td>12,438</td>
<td>12,766</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>2.64%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>12,295</td>
<td>12,353</td>
<td>12,678</td>
<td>13,016</td>
<td>13,059</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>2,510</td>
<td>2,517</td>
<td>2,559</td>
<td>2,643</td>
<td>2,725</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.09%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake</td>
<td>1,185,238</td>
<td>1,188,213</td>
<td>1,197,256</td>
<td>1,206,733</td>
<td>1,220,569</td>
<td>13,836</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>6,831</td>
<td>7,005</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit</td>
<td>42,357</td>
<td>42,394</td>
<td>42,837</td>
<td>43,249</td>
<td>43,492</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooele</td>
<td>72,698</td>
<td>73,149</td>
<td>76,249</td>
<td>77,692</td>
<td>79,409</td>
<td>1,716</td>
<td>2.21%</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>659,399</td>
<td>664,258</td>
<td>683,385</td>
<td>705,692</td>
<td>727,755</td>
<td>22,063</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
<td>9,041</td>
<td>13,022</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasatch</td>
<td>34,788</td>
<td>34,933</td>
<td>35,816</td>
<td>37,075</td>
<td>37,934</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>2.32%</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber</td>
<td>262,223</td>
<td>262,727</td>
<td>266,003</td>
<td>268,459</td>
<td>269,816</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>-82</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utah County</th>
<th>2020 Census</th>
<th>2021 census</th>
<th>2022 census</th>
<th>2023 census</th>
<th>2024 census</th>
<th>Absolute Growth</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>Natural Increase</th>
<th>Net Migration</th>
<th>Net Migration Share of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utah County</td>
<td>659,399</td>
<td>664,258</td>
<td>683,385</td>
<td>705,692</td>
<td>727,755</td>
<td>22,063</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
<td>9,041</td>
<td>13,022</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasatch</td>
<td>34,788</td>
<td>34,933</td>
<td>35,816</td>
<td>37,075</td>
<td>37,934</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>2.32%</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber</td>
<td>262,223</td>
<td>262,727</td>
<td>266,003</td>
<td>268,459</td>
<td>269,816</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>-82</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The 2020 Census reflects April 1, 2020. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (April 1, 2020); Utah Population Committee, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute (2020-2023) Note: 2021 and 2022 population estimates and net migration have been revised due to methodological improvements.
About the Utah Population Committee (UPC)

The Utah Population Committee (UPC) prepares state and county-level estimates of the usual resident population for the state of Utah. The U.S. Census Bureau produces annual national, state, and county-level estimates, but their methods lack a contextual understanding of each state. This motivates many states, including Utah, to calculate their own estimates to create a more precise view and explanation of population change each year. State statute determines UPC membership composition and utilization of the committee-produced population estimates. The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute chairs and provides technical staff for the committee.

Utah Population Committee (UPC) Members:

- Mallory Bateman, UPC Chair, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute
- Aaron Brough, Utah State Board of Education
- Laura Hanson, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget
- Gwen Kervin, Department of Workforce Services
- David Landward, Dominion Energy
- Jacoba Larsen, Utah State Tax Commission
- Sojung Lim, Utah State University
- Carrie Mayne, Utah System of Higher Education
- Andrea Wilko, Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst
- Linda Winninger, Utah Department of Health

Endnotes

1. UPC averages three separate methods to create the annual state and county population estimates. Previously, the Housing Stock method was used in the average, but has now been replaced with a traditional Housing Unit Method. This methodological change was incorporated into the 2023 population estimates, and retroactively applied to the 2021 and 2022 population estimates.

2. Utah state and county population estimates for 2021 and 2022 have been revised, producing notable changes to net migration and total population. Originally, 2021 and 2022 state net migration were estimated at 34,931 and 38,141, respectively. Revised 2021 and 2022 state net migration are now estimated at 33,956 and 34,939.


5. UPC averages three separate methods to create the annual state and county population estimates. Previously, the Housing Stock method was used in the average, but has now been replaced with a traditional Housing Unit Method. This methodological change was incorporated into the 2023 population estimates, and retroactively applied to the 2021 and 2022 population estimates.

6. Utah state and county population estimates for 2021 and 2022 have been revised, producing notable changes to net migration and total population. Originally, 2021 and 2022 state net migration were estimated at 34,931 and 38,141, respectively. Revised 2021 and 2022 state net migration are now estimated at 33,956 and 34,939.


Partners in the Community

The following individuals and entities help support the research mission of the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute.

Legacy Partners
The Gardner Company
Christian and Marie Gardner Family
Intermountain Healthcare
Clark and Christine Ivory Foundation
KSL and Deseret News
Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation
Mountain America Credit Union
Salt Lake City Corporation
Salt Lake County
University of Utah Health
Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity
WCF Insurance
Zions Bank

Executive Partners
The Boyer Company
Clyde Companies

Sustaining Partners
Dominion Energy
Salt Lake Chamber
Staker Parson Materials and Construction
Wells Fargo

Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute Advisory Board

Conveners
Michael O. Leavitt
Mitt Romney

Board
Scott Anderson, Co-Chair
Gail Miller, Co-Chair
Doug Anderson
Deborah Bayle
Roger Boyer
Michelle Camacho
Sophia M. DiCaro
Cameron Diehl
Lisa Eccles
Spencer P. Eccles
Christian Gardner
Kem C. Gardner
Kimberly Gardner
Natalie Gochnour
Brandy Grace
Jeremy Hafen
Rachel Hayes
Clark Ivory
Mike S. Leavitt
Derek Miller
Ann Millner
Sterling Nielsen
Jason Perry
Ray Pickup
Gary B. Porter
Taylor Randall
Jill Remington Love
Brad Rencher
Josh Romney
Charles W. Sorenson
James Lee Sorenson
Vicki Varela

Ex Officio (invited)
Governor Spencer Cox
Speaker Brad Wilson
Senate President Stuart Adams
Representative Angela Romero
Senator Luz Escamilla
Mayor Jenny Wilson
Mayor Erin Mendenhall

Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute Staff and Advisors

Leadership Team
Natalie Gochnour, Associate Dean and Director
Jennifer Robinson, Chief of Staff
Mallory Bateman, Director of Demographic Research
Phil Dean, Chief Economist and Senior Research Fellow
Shelley Kruger, Accounting and Finance Manager
Colleen Larson, Administrative Manager
Nate Lloyd, Director of Economic Research
Dianne Meppen, Director of Community Research
Laura Summers, Director of Industry Research
Nicholas Thiriot, Communications Director
James A. Wood, Ivory-Boyer Senior Fellow

Staff
Eric Albers, Public Policy Analyst
Samantha Ball, Senior Research Associate
Parker Banta, Public Policy Analyst
Melanie Beagley, Public Policy Analyst
Preston Brightwell, Dignity Index Field Director
Andrea Thomas Brandley, Senior Education Analyst
Kara Ann Byrne, Senior Research Associate
Mike Christensen, Scholar-in-Residence
Nate Christensen, Research Economist
Dejan Eskic, Senior Research Fellow and Scholar
Emily Harris, Senior Demographer
Michael T. Hogue, Senior Research Statistician
Mike Hollingshaus, Senior Demographer
Thomas Holst, Senior Energy Analyst
Madeleine Jones, Dignity Index Field Director
Jennifer Leaver, Senior Tourism Analyst
Levi Pace, Senior Research Economist
Pratoomchat, Senior Research Economist
Heidi Prior, Public Policy Analyst
Natalie Roney, Research Economist
Shannon Simonsen, Research Coordinator
Paul Springer, Senior Graphic Designer

Faculty Advisors
Matt Burbank, College of Social and Behavioral Science
Elena Patel, David Eccles School of Business
Nathan Seegert, David Eccles School of Business

Senior Advisors
Jonathan Ball, Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Silvia Castro, Suazo Business Center
Gary Comia, Marriott School of Business
Wes Curtis, Community-at-Large
John C. Downen, Camoin Associates
Dan Griffiths, Community-at-Large
Emma Houston, University of Utah
Beth Jarosz, Population Reference Bureau
Darin Mellott, CBRE
Pamela S. Perlich, University of Utah
Chris Redgrave, Community-at-Large
Wesley Smith, Northbound Strategy
Juliette Tennert, Community-at-Large

Informed Decisions™
Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute 411 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111 801-585-5618 gardner.utah.edu

(DE) UPC Estimates Dec2023