**Fiscal Facts: Wisconsin’s net migration soars to levels not seen in decades**

Our latest research finds that Wisconsin recently has seen its highest levels of net migration in at least two decades, due largely to a nationwide increase in migrants entering the United States from abroad.

Net migration to Wisconsin has seen a marked increase since 2022, rising far above pre-pandemic levels. During the last three years for which data are available, Wisconsin’s net migration levels were at their highest point since at least 2004, a Forum analysis shows.

During the 12-month period that ended June 30, 2024, Wisconsin saw an estimated net gain of 22,146 residents through international migration, recently released U.S. Census Bureau estimates show. That, coupled with a net gain of 6,332 residents through domestic migration, spurred an estimated net migration of 28,478 residents to Wisconsin during this period.

These two sources accounted for the vast majority (93.2%) of Wisconsin’s population growth during this period, estimated at 30,570 residents. The remainder came from natural population change, with births exceeding deaths by only slightly more than 2,000 residents.

In each of the last three years, net migration to our state topped 25,000 – more than twice the previous high during the last two decades. Since July 2021, our state saw total net migration of nearly 82,000 residents. This tops the total during the entire preceding 18-year period from 2004-2021.

Of the total net migration to Wisconsin since 2021, nearly three-fourths -- or about 60,000 -- was from international migration, the Census Bureau estimates. During these years, the nation as a whole saw a continued trend of rising international migration.

The Census Bureau found that in the 12-month period that ended June 30, 2024, international migration resulted in a net population increase of 2.8 million residents nationwide. This followed net international migration increases of 1.7 million in 2022 and 2.3 million in 2023.

During the three-year period ending June 30, Wisconsin ranked 26th among the states for its average annual per capita rate of net migration. Wisconsin ranked second among the 12 Midwest states during this period – and first among its neighboring states – in per capita net migration.

There is now some evidence that the recent national immigration surge has abated due to changes that either predated, or came during, the new presidential administration. While our state is unlikely to sustain recent levels of international migration, going forward, they may mark a transition to a new demographic paradigm in our state.

Until very recently, natural change – the number of births relative to the number of deaths in a given period -- accounted for most of Wisconsin’s population growth. But with annual deaths in our state now approaching – and possibly set to surpass -- the number of births, in the future, migration could play a bigger role in our state’s chances for population growth. Thus, state and local policymakers may wish to consider additional strategies for Wisconsin attract and retain residents.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at* [*wispolicyforum.org*](https://wispolicyforum.org/research/state-tax-burden-up-but-overall-burden-still-falling/)*.*