

# Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

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## Population decline trend continues

Census Bureau data shows more than 12,000 left Allegheny County last year, a 1% drop

By Neena Hagen and Michael Korsh  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

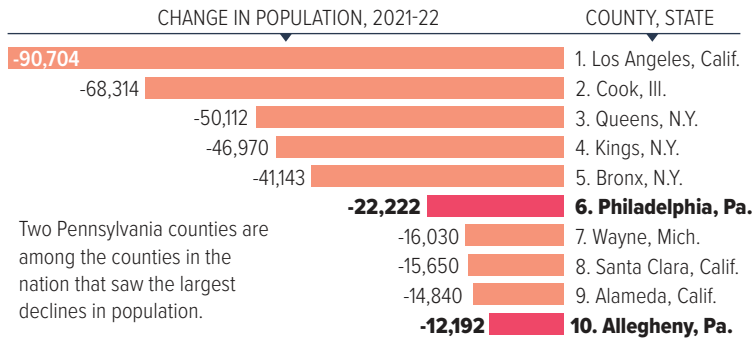
Allegheny County saw one of the steepest population declines in the United States last year, continuing a decadeslong trend in Western Pennsylvania, which has steadily lost residents since the collapse of key industries in the 1970s.

According to data released Thursday by the Census Bureau, more than 12,000 people left the county last year — about a 1% drop — landing it in the top 10 counties for population loss between July 2021 and 2022.

A host of factors have been blamed for the drop, including the COVID-19 pandemic and a

SEE **CENSUS**, PAGE A-3

### U.S. counties ranked by the most population loss



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2022 Population Estimates James Hillston/Post-Gazette

## GRAND JURY INDICTS TRUMP

First ex-president to face criminal charges

By Michael R. Sisak, Colleen Long and Eric Tucker  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Donald Trump was indicted by a Manhattan grand jury, prosecutors and defense lawyers said Thursday, making him the first former U.S. president to face a criminal charge and jolting his bid to retake the White House next year.

The charges remained under seal late Thursday, but the investigation centered on payments made during the 2016 presidential campaign to silence claims of an extramarital sexual encounter. Prosecutors said they were working to coordinate Mr. Trump's surrender. CNN reported Mr. Trump would turn himself in Tuesday. They did not say whether they intended to seek prison time in the event of a conviction, a development that wouldn't prevent Mr. Trump from seeking or winning the presidency.

SEE **TRUMP**, PAGE A-2

## SEASON OPENER PIRATES 5, REDS 4 OFF TO A GREAT START



Jeff Dean/Associated Press

Pirates relief pitcher David Bednar, left, celebrates with catcher Austin Hedges after closing out a season-opening victory over the Cincinnati Reds on Thursday at Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati. More game coverage in Sports, C-1.

## Weinstein: Executive training not needed

By Adam Smeltz  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Allegheny County Treasurer John Weinstein on Thursday defended his campaign spending and his work on the local sewer board, saying he doesn't "need to be trained" for the county executive job.

Mr. Weinstein, during an appearance on KDKA radio, took shots at some of his opposition in the May 16 Democratic primary for executive, particularly Pittsburgh City Controller Michael Lamb (though he didn't mention him by name). And he pushed back on recent reports by the Post-Gazette, including that his campaign spent \$1.2 million over the course of nine years — despite never facing an opponent during that time.



Weinstein

SEE **WEINSTEIN**, PAGE A-11

### ALLEGHENY ASSESSMENT APPEALS

## Taxpayers making most of 2nd chance

By Mark Belko  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Droves of Allegheny County property owners aren't wasting their second chance.

As of Thursday, thousands of taxpayers had taken advantage of the "special appeals period" offered by County Council and Executive Rich Fitzgerald to challenge their 2022 property assessments because of the controversy over the ratio used to set taxable values.

In all, 5,113 so-called second-chance appeals had been filed in

advance of Friday's deadline. That's in addition to the 9,262 appeals that have been filed so far for 2023.

Friday is the deadline for submitting those appeals.

Combined, the total number of second-chance and 2023 appeals already has surpassed the 12,655 appeals filed in 2022.

The vast majority of those — 11,460 — were filed by school districts or municipalities seeking to increase the assessments on properties that they believed were

SEE **APPEALS**, PAGE A-11



Liam Kennedy/The Tennessean via AP

**9 DIE IN BLACK HAWK CRASH** Brig. Gen. John Lubas gives details to media about the Black Hawk helicopter crash that occurred early Thursday morning. Soldiers were conducting a training mission when they crashed. Story, **A-4**.



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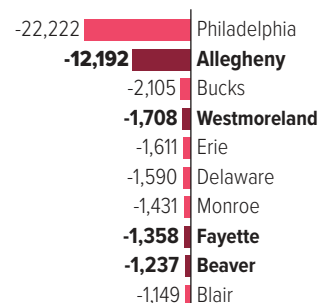
Local

# Population decline among steepest

## County, state population declines, 2021-22

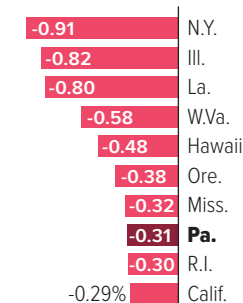
### COUNTIES WITH THE MOST POPULATION LOSS

Allegheny County is second only to Philadelphia for the most population loss.



### STATES WITH THE MOST POPULATION LOSS

Pennsylvania is among the states that saw the most population loss.



## CENSUS, FROM A-1

surge in violent crime nationwide that has led to an exodus in many cities.

The counties enveloping the nation's largest cities — Los Angeles, Chicago and New York City — saw the sharpest declines.

The new figures mark the third year in a row that Allegheny County has lost residents in a trend that has raised concerns among economic development leaders and other local officials and has a direct impact on tax revenue and federal money.

"Less population means less people available to spur economic growth which further dissuades people from moving to the area," said Frank Gamrat, executive director of Allegheny Institute for Public Policy, a think tank that targets economic development in the region.

Pennsylvania was among the hardest hit states. Overall, it experienced a loss of more than 40,000 residents — the fourth-largest drop across the United States. Of the 67 counties in the state, more than two-thirds lost people.

Only two counties in Western Pennsylvania saw an influx of people, including Butler County, which benefited from the migration of Pittsburghers over the past decade.

The Census Bureau's yearlong window considers births, deaths, and migration — the number of people moving in and out of counties — to establish population trends.

Allegheny County has an aging population, and death counts have long outpaced births, experts say; last year nearly 2,900 more people died than were born.

While the county saw a

slight uptick in people moving from foreign countries, its losses were largely due to people leaving for other parts of Pennsylvania and the country.

That runs against national trends: A majority of counties gained people from other parts of the country, especially in the Southern and Western states, Census data shows.

The primary cause for a lack of migration is a languishing job market, according to Mr. Gamrat.

"It's the spiral that keeps going," Mr. Gamrat said. "Because you're seeing this lack of a labor force, you're seeing this lack of economic growth."

Since the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Pittsburgh has lost nearly 4% of its jobs, while the country at large has seen slight gains. Charlotte, N.C., for example, has grown jobs by more than 5%. In Salt Lake City, Utah, it's more than 6%.

"People vote with their feet," Mr. Gamrat said. "They tend to migrate to areas where there are opportunities for them."

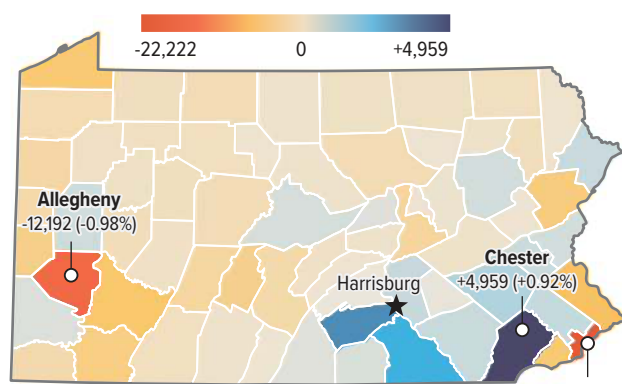
While the Census data doesn't zero in on population declines in specific neighborhoods, many areas of Pittsburgh have hemorrhaged residents for years, giving way to blight and crime.

Homewood — one of Pittsburgh's most impoverished neighborhoods — has seen an exodus since the collapse of blue collar industries. Now, the entire neighborhood is ravaged by blight. Many houses have been collapsing and posing a danger to residents for years.

"If you're looking to buy a home, you don't want to occupy the only house on that block," said Sam Ware, the executive director of Building United of Southwestern PA (BUSP), a faith-

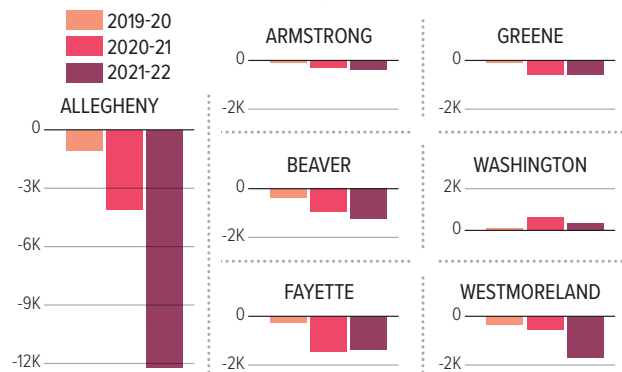
## Population changes in Pa., by county

July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2022



Philadelphia: -22,222 (-1.4%)

### POPULATION CHANGES IN SW PA., 2019-22

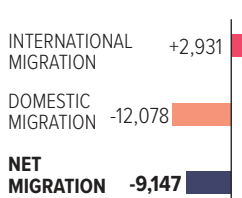


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2022 Population Estimates

Ed Yozwick, James Hilston/Post-Gazette

### ALLEGHENY COUNTY MIGRATION

Net migration refers to the number of people who moved into the county minus the number of people who moved out of it.

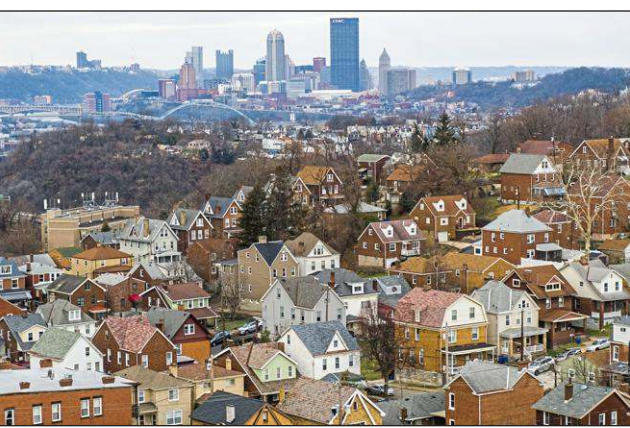


Domestic migration creates a feedback loop for the economy/job market.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2022 Population Estimates

James Hilston/Post-Gazette



Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Allegheny County has an aging population, and death counts have long outpaced births, experts say; last year nearly 2,900 more people died than were born.

-based nonprofit focusing on affordable housing.

Mr. Ware said the vacant housing across the neighborhood has become a magnet for gangs and other vices, chasing longtime residents out of the neighborhood. In other cases, the neighborhood's older residents pass away, and younger generations leave their houses to rot.

"There are some streets that have almost a whole block of vacant homes," Mr. Ware said.

And local officials have only exacerbated the problem: the city owns about

5,000 vacant properties; one in five have been slapped with code and health violations, with more than 300 condemned, a Post-Gazette investigation found.

At the same time, Pittsburgh is mired in an affordable housing crisis that has left thousands of residents waiting for homes.

"If you have a neighborhood that has vacant properties and high crime and poor performing schools, what's the incentive to move there and purchase a house?" Mr. Ware said. "What's the incentive to stay there?"

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