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As More Residents Move Out of State, Massachusetts' Economic Future Hangs in the Balance

By [Marilyn Schairer](#)

New census data show that more residents moved out of Massachusetts last year compared to 2024. If the trend worsens like it has after the pandemic, experts say that could impact the future of the state's economy.

Massachusetts' population still grew, with more births than deaths and international immigration. But, domestically, 33,000 more people moved out of state than arrived to Massachusetts in 2025, the U.S. Census Bureau's release shows. Like every state, census estimates show Massachusetts saw far fewer immigrants arriving from outside the U.S. than in recent years under the Trump administration.

Mark Williams, finance professor at Boston University's Questrom School of Business, [studies outmigration in Massachusetts](#) and has found people leave Massachusetts because of the high cost of living. He worries it could push the state's economy into a recession by the third quarter of this year.

"When people flee, when they leave Massachusetts, they take with them not only their possessions, but their money, and they go to

states that actually have lower costs," Williams said.

Doug Howgate with the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation says the state has struggled with domestic outmigration for decades. But it's both the wealthiest and the poorest residents who are disproportionately fleeing the state, he says, which means the solutions are far from one-size-fits-all.

"It would be a mistake, from a policy-making standpoint to say: 'We're just gonna solve for lower-income, lower- to middle- income families.' Or, 'We're gonna solve for tax issues,'" Howgate said. "We need an approach that, I think, is mindful of the fact that we've got cost pressures on lower-wage families — we also have folks who maybe can afford to leave, at the wealthier end of the spectrum. ... And both of those things are problems."

A closer look at the data shows the outmigration isn't just retirees heading to Florida. Young people, ages 25 to 34, are disproportionately moving out of state. Those early-career professionals that are leaving the state are drivers of the economy, looking to buy houses and have families.

Williams says Massachusetts' economy is especially vulnerable under the Trump administration, with tariffs, targeted funding cuts in key local industries like higher education and life sciences, and the immigration crackdown.

"Immigrants are such a part of the fabric of Massachusetts and important to our economy," he said.

The Mass Opportunity Alliance, a group dedicated to strengthening Massachusetts' business climate, [found in a recent poll](#) that a third of Massachusetts voters are either personally considering moving out of the state in 2026 or know someone who is thinking about leaving.

"Restoring our state's competitive edge must be a priority," said Christopher Anderson, MOA co-organizer and president of the Massachusetts High Technology Council.

He pointed to ballot questions voters could see in the fall to cut the state's income tax and trigger more tax returns, which he called "commonsense reforms that will keep more money in peoples' pockets and help reverse this trend."

The bottom line, Williams said, a shrinking population is a detriment for a large number of reasons.

"A state economy like Massachusetts, where more people are leaving than coming — over time then the tax base shrinks, the labor force shrinks and it becomes basically a weakened economy," he said. "And as a result, taxes are increased and services are reduced. And it's not a healthy environment."