Global, National, and Regional Demographic Trends Affecting Boston’s Population

BPDA Research Division
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1. Global Population Trends
2. United States Population Trends
4. Summary
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The world’s population is projected to triple over 110 years from 1950 to 2060.

**Figure 1a.**

*Estimated and Projected World Population: 1950-2060*

(In billions)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Database.
However, the rate of growth is rapidly decelerating
The world’s population will age due to decreasing birth rates and longer life expectancy.
Three factors drive population change:

- Births
- Deaths
- Migration
As societies develop economically, views on children change and births tend to fall.

- In agrarian economies, children can be viewed as capital goods:
  - children are a financially beneficial source of labor that contributes to family income

- In modern industrial/post-industrial economies, children can be viewed as consumption goods:
  - children are not financial contributors and must be enjoyed for their own sakes
  - children may require large investments in education to achieve independence
Life expectancy *increased* during the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century leading an *aging* population

- **Economic development**
  - Better nutrition and housing
- **Public health measures**
  - Clean drinking water and wastewater treatment
- **Medical advancements**
  - Antibiotics, vaccines, and other medical technologies
Lack of unifying understanding of the role of international migration

- **Economic perspective** - a country should admit migrants until the marginal migrant makes a negative contribution to the national treasury.
- **Cultural perspective** - migrants do not possess the same cultural heritage as native born.

- The UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 13, states that a person has a right to leave a country but is silent on a right to enter another country.
Some sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria are still growing rapidly. France, Spain, and the UK have stable populations. Japan, Russia, and some European countries are already losing population.
Japan - shrinking population

- low births: 1.4 births per woman
- low immigration: 2.0% foreign born

Population by Age and Sex

Current and Projected Population

Fewer people in younger cohorts

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base, birth rate 2023, foreign born share 2019
France - stable population

- moderate births: 1.9 births per woman
- moderate immigration: 12.8% foreign born

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base
birth rate 2023, foreign born share 2019
Nigeria - growing rapidly

- high births: 4.6 births per woman
- low immigration: 0.6% foreign born

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base
birth rate 2023, foreign born share 2019

More people in younger cohorts
United States - growing slowly

- low births: 1.7 births per woman
- moderate immigration: 13.8% foreign born

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base
birth rate 2023, foreign born share 2022 American Community Survey
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Total fertility rates in the United States have declined since 2008, to 1.7 births per woman.

Source: World Bank, Total Fertility Rate for the United States
Fertility rates (per 1000 women aged 15-44) have fallen across the country, and are lowest in New England.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics
Birth rates for women of childbearing age have been declining nationally and regionally.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital System, Natality on CDC Wonder Online Database, BPDA Research Division Analysis.
Over the last century, life expectancy greatly increased, leading to an aging population.


Source: 1850-2000 Censuses & 2010 & 2022 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Without high levels of immigration, the U.S. population likely declines due to lower birth rates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & BPDA Research Division

![Graph showing U.S. Population Count and Projections.](Image)
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Boston births have been declining and deaths have been rising since 2011 - before the pandemic effect in 2020-2021.

Source: Boston Public Health Commission, BPDA Research Division Analysis
The birth rate for women of childbearing age has been **declining** in Suffolk County since 2003.
Until COVID-19, the age-adjusted death rate in Suffolk County had been declining.
Boston has seen **net positive** international migration but **net negative** regional migration.

Recent net migration to Boston peaked in 2012 at ~14,000 before falling to -5,590 in 2019

Source: 2010-2019 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Boston’s population was undercounted in the 2020 Census, then fell during the pandemic but rebounded by 2022 - a recovery the Census estimates have not yet captured.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, BPDA Research Division Analysis

2023 Census population estimate comes out in May.
As these population trends hit 20 year olds, these demographic trends may disproportionately influence Boston’s population.

Source: 2020 Decennial Census: BPDA Research Division Analysis
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Global and national population trends are important to Boston’s future

- Births are in decline in most of the countries of the world, especially in more economically developed countries
- Life expectancy appears to have peaked
- Global population growth peaked in the 1960s and slowing population growth may continue
- The United States population may start declining over the next 50 years
- These trends can shape Boston’s population growth mainly through domestic and international migration
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Revised Boston Population Projections

- The most recent BPDA population projections used the 2017 vintage U.S. projected population
  - The newer 2022 vintage with 13% fewer 20-to-29 year olds in the United States in 2050 will be used to revise the BPDA projections

- We are updating these U.S. data and Boston’s migration rates to revise Boston 2025-2050 population projections by age cohort. **Presentation on Friday, April 5th**