COMING SOON:
Vintage 2023 Population Estimates

Boston’s Population: 2025-2050 and Implications
BPDA Research Division April 5, 2024
Boston’s Population: 2025-2050 and Implications

1. The Importance of Population Projections
2. Boston’s Population
3. Projection Methodology
4. 2050 Projected Population
5. Revising the Population Projection and References
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Population projections help inform decisions related to Boston’s future

How many...

- **Housing units** will be needed to house Boston’s population in the future?

- **Schools** will be needed to educate Boston Public School’s children?

- **Senior centers** will Boston need to build?

- **Dorms** will Boston’s colleges and universities need to build?
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BPDA Research estimates Boston’s current population to be ~700,000 - higher than Census estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, BPDA Research Division Analysis
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Three factors drive population change:

- Births
- Deaths
- Migration

Population = Base + Births - Deaths + Domestic In-Migration - Domestic Out-Migration + International Migration

Age-and gender-specific survival rates from historical death data 2010-2021 from Boston Public Health Commission and BPDA revised 2020 Census and ACS population data.

Age- and gender-specific migration rates from ACS 2010-2019 migration and population data optimized to 2020 and 2025 BPDA population estimates and then 2010-2019 and 2020-2025 rates are averaged.

Apply these rates to the population base (2010 Decennial Census) to project Boston’s population through 2050.
Boston’s population has a different age structure than the rest of the country due to increased international and domestic migration starting at age 18.

Source: 2020 Census, Boston BPDA adjusted, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Boston’s population is projected to age, but retain its distinctive age structure.

### Boston 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
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<td>1.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census Adjusted, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Boston net migration is positive only among young adults. Children under 10 and adults 30-44 see significant out-migration.

Source: BPDA Research Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Boston’s population growth depends on immigration: Net international migration remains positive, but net domestic migration has become increasingly negative over the past decade.

Source: BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Slowing global population growth will impact international migration to Boston
Slowing national population growth will impact domestic migration to Boston

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & BPDA Research Division
Boston’s births are projected to decline while deaths are projected to increase

Source: BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Analysis
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Boston’s population growth is projected to slow, and population may decline if international and domestic migration fall.


* The 2020 Decennial Census is adjusted to reflect Boston's successful Post Census Group Quarter Review plus estimated household population missed in the 2020 Census count.
Boston’s middle-aged population ages 30-to-59 will grow to equal the under 30 population

Source: 1990-2020 Decennial Census & 2025-2050 BPDA Population Projection, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Population of children will **decline** due to low birth rates and significant outmigration.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Boston’s young adults will **peak** in 2030

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division*
Boston’s younger working age population will peak in 2035

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Boston’s older working age population continues to grow during this period

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Decennial Census, BPDA Population Projections, BPDA Research Division Analysis
Boston’s older population increases rapidly until 2035 and then levels off as all Boomers enter this age group.

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Projections involve two kinds of judgements:

- Learning from the past (while monitoring the contemporary situation). This kind of judgement is data intensive based on documentable current conditions and historic relationships.

- Estimating what is different in the future is a matter of looking at the reactions to an interaction among existing trends (not guess).

As conditions change, we will update our estimates and change future population projections.
Today’s best understanding of Boston’s population:
The data used in this population projection can be updated and revised population projections will be produced when new data are available.

**Updates**

- Yearly BPHC birth and death data
- Yearly school-aged population from BPS
- Quarterly housing data from Mayor’s Office of Housing and BPDA
- 2028 U.S. population projections

Updated data will change future population projections.
References Demography

**General Demographic Trends** - Ezra Klein Podcast – Interview with Jennifer D. Sciubba, author of *8 Billion and Counting: How Sex, Death and Migration Shape Our World*. This podcast provides an overview of demographic trends and examines some implications of them.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YW63FmvX5Qo&list=PLdMrbgYfVl-szepgVpArP0obwYgbKdfvx&index=2

**Declining Births and the Impact on the College “Enrollment Cliff”** - The enrollment cliff is a demographic trend that will disrupt higher education starting in 2026. The number of births peaked in 2007 and each year has continued to decline. Colleges and universities are planning for a shrinking number of high school graduates. This Vox article shows how a similar demographic trend was avoided a couple of generations earlier because of rising college enrollment (demography is not destiny), and how this present trend can affect regions of the country differently (policies seldom effect all equally).

https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/23428166/college-enrollment-population-education-crash

**Japan and Declining Population** - New York Times has covered the declining population in Japan for over a decade. These stories give some indication of the effects that declining population can have on a country. Any search of the paper with Japan and declining population results in a variety of articles. Here is one of the impacts on housing.

Migration, Public Health and Economic Development

Public Health and Economic Development and Population Growth - Hans Roslin – Short video on the relationship between public health and economic development on human health over the last 200 years, with a hint of the importance of inequality within countries, Hans Rosling’s 200 Countries, 200 Years, 4 Minutes - The Joy of Stats - BBC Four

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbkSRLYSojo

An Economic Assessment of International Migration - Research paper by Don DeVoretz providing an economic assessment of immigration policies of different countries.

https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/1217

Overview of International Migration in the United States – Freakonomics recently produced a series of podcasts on international migration that debates the economic motivations of immigration and examines why the United States has changed in its orientation towards international migration since 1980.