

10 states account for most Vermont migration

People move to and from the same places Vermont migration, in and out, 1993-2014

MIGRATION FROM VERMONT TO OTHER STATES



MIGRATION TO VERMONT FROM OTHER STATES



Data source: IRS Statistics of Income
©2016 Public Assets Institute

In the last two decades most of the people moving to and from Vermont have followed the same paths. Between 1993 and 2014, the top 10 destinations for people moving away were New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Florida, California, North Carolina, Connecticut, Maine, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Nine of those states—all but North Carolina—were also among the top 10 states of origin for Vermont’s new arrivals.

The Internal Revenue Service produces migration statistics each year by tracking the addresses of people filing annual income tax returns. The statistics include filers who migrate to another state, a different county within the same state, and non-migrants.¹

Most people did not go far. The top 10 destinations and states of origin accounted for about two-thirds of the movement in and out of

¹ The IRS tracks tax returns, which approximates the number of households in the migration statistics, and the number of exemptions declared on each return, which approximates the number of individuals. Throughout this report “people” refers to exemptions reported in the IRS statistics. Not all residents file income tax returns, so the total number of people (exemptions) counted in the IRS data is less than Vermont’s population.

Vermont. About half migrated to or from New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, and Pennsylvania.

About a third of Vermonters who leave the state head for warmer climes. An average of 5,000 people go to what could be called sunshine states: the southern coastal states plus Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, and Hawaii.

Among these, Florida has been the most popular, receiving an average of about 1,500 Vermonters each year since the early 1990s. That number dropped to 1,200 after the recession but rose to about 1,600 more recently. Florida is also in the top 10 states of origin for people moving into Vermont. On average, about 1,000 Floridians move to the Green Mountain State each year.

Vermonters have moved to the nine states with no or low income taxes, and people from those states have been moving here for 20 years. On average, about 4,800 Vermonters migrate to these states each year, and each year Vermont gains about 3,900 people from them.

Top 3 states are Vermont neighbors

Average annual movement to and from Vermont, 1993-2014

	FROM VT	TO VT	VT NET
NH	2223	2129	-94
NY	1894	2327	433
MA	1654	1936	282
FL	1493	994	-499
CA	647	657	10
NC	636	355	-281
CT	561	964	403
ME	558	465	-93
VA	494	405	-89
PA	418	505	87

Data source: IRS Statistics of Income
©2016 Public Assets Institute

One of the low-tax states is New Hampshire, the top destination for people leaving Vermont. But the state next door is also the Number 2 state of origin for people moving to Vermont, with a steady annual in-migration of about 2,000 people over 20 years. Vermont's annual net loss to New Hampshire has averaged fewer than 100 people, and the numbers suggest the appeal of Live Free or Die may be waning.

Money comes, money goes; most stays



Data source: IRS Statistics of Income
©2016 Public Assets Institute

and nearly 13,500 moved in. The biggest year for newcomers was 2001, when almost 17,500 came from other states. The biggest exodus was in 2006, when more than 16,600 people left.

From 1993 through 2004, annual migration usually ended in a net gain for Vermont—about 750 more people came than left. But since 2005 that pattern has reversed, and Vermont has seen an average loss of about 890 people a year. Still, the net gain or loss

Florida is another state with no income tax. Because the IRS statistics don't explain why people move, it is impossible to know whether Vermonters are going there to avoid taxes or icy roads. But it's worth noting that in 2014 more people moved to Florida from New Hampshire than from Vermont, both in numbers and as a share of the population.

in any given year has been tiny—of families that filed federal income tax returns, never more than 0.4 percent of the total.

The net loss to the other seven states with no or low personal income taxes has averaged about 200 per year. Since the early 1990s, on average, just under 1,000 people a year have gone to these seven no- or low-tax states. And every year, on average, about 800 people have left these states to come to Vermont.

In all but two years from 1993 through 2014, the average per-person income of new arrivals was higher than the income of people leaving. Over the entire period, the average income per individual moving in was 9 percent higher than the average income of each person leaving.

The vast majority of Vermonters stay put. That pattern has remained steady since the early 1990s. According to the IRS data, in any given year about 97 percent of Vermonters do not migrate; since 1993, no more than 3.2 percent have moved away in any single year.

Until the Great Recession, the total income of all the people moving to Vermont generally was greater than the total income of those who left. But the difference in total income between those coming and those going made up a relatively small part of all the income earned by Vermonters—less than 1 percent. In the five years after the recession, the pattern changed. The total income of those leaving was greater than the income of those moving in. But again the difference was about 0.6 percent of Vermonters' total adjusted gross income.

For the last two decades an average of about 15,700 people have been moving in and out of Vermont each year. Vermont saw the least movement in 2010, when about 14,000 people—2.6 percent—left

© 2016 by Public Assets Institute

This research was funded in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings presented in this report are those of the Public Assets Institute and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation.



PO Box 942, Montpelier, Vermont 05601 | 802-223-6677 | publicassets.org
The Public Assets Institute supports democracy by helping Vermonters understand and keep informed about how their government is raising and spending money and using other public assets.