

# All the Right Moves

Ali Anari  
November 17, 2017

Publication 2184



People moving from one location to another directly affects real estate markets. In residential markets, movement to an area results in more housing units purchased or rented while moving out means more are available for sale or rent. Population changes in an area also affect demand for goods and services. This impacts commercial real estate markets (retail and offices, for example) and service-providing industries, such as moving and insurance companies.

The Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University researches and monitors household movements in Texas. Recent research finds that:

- Texas' average geographical mobility rate is higher than the U.S. average;
- more people move to Texas from other states than leave for other states;
- Texas has higher rates of movers from abroad than does the U.S.; and

## The Takeaway

Local residential and commercial markets are directly impacted when residents move. Center research shows that, on average, Texas has a higher rate of movers—and more from abroad—than the U.S., and more people move to Texas from other states than vice versa.

- mobility in both Texas and the U.S. fell in the Great Recession (GR) and has not yet returned to pre-GR levels.

## Texas Geographic Mobility

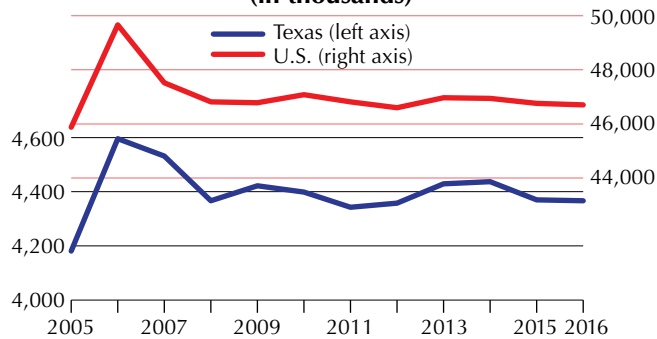
In 2016, more than 4.3 million people in Texas changed residences, accounting for 15.9 percent of the state's population one year and older, compared with 14.6 percent nationwide (Table 1). Texas had the highest

**Table 1. Population Mobility in Texas, United States, California, New York, and Florida in 2016 (thousands)**

Population Mobility	Texas	Percent	U.S.	Percent	California	Percent	Florida	Percent	New York	Percent
Population 1 year and older	27,472.6	100.0	319,362.0	100.0	38,783.4	100.0	20,401.6	100.0	19,526.4	100.0
In same house 1 year ago	23,106.0	84.1	272,660.1	85.4	33,594.8	86.6	17,176.5	84.2	17,465.2	89.4
Changed residence	4,366.6	15.9	46,701.9	14.6	5,188.6	13.4	3,225.1	15.8	2,061.3	10.6
In state	3,599.9	13.1	36,952.7	11.6	4,337.3	11.2	2,387.2	11.7	1,634.5	8.4
In same city/town	1,585.9	5.8	14,037.5	4.4	1,711.4	4.4	712.7	3.5	841.7	4.3
From different state	532.0	1.9	7,552.5	2.4	514.8	1.3	605.0	3.0	260.7	1.3
From abroad	234.7	0.9	2,196.7	0.7	336.6	0.9	232.8	1.1	166.1	0.9

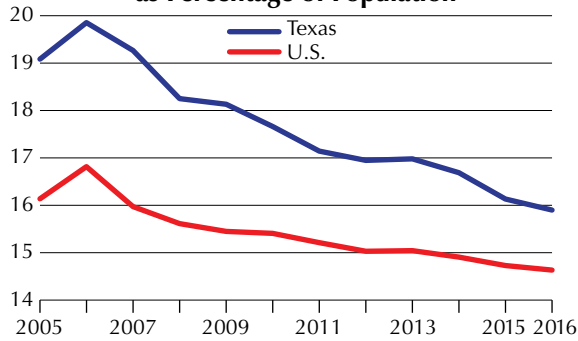
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

**Figure 1. Number of Movers in Texas and U.S. (in thousands)**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

**Figure 2. Population Mobility Rates for Texas and U.S. as Percentage of Population**

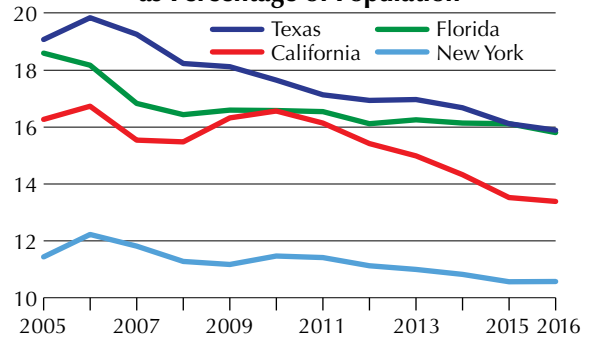


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

mobility of the most populous states, followed by Florida (15.8 percent), California (13.4 percent), and New York (10.6 percent). In both the U.S. and Texas, the numbers of movers fell in the GR after peaking in 2006 and have not yet recovered their pre-GR peaks (Figure 1). As a percentage of population one year and older, the Texas population mobility rate peaked at 19.9 percent in 2006. Since then, it has trended downward but remained above rates for the U.S., California, New York, and Florida (Figures 2 and 3).

Intrastate movers (movers within a state) are the largest group of movers, accounting for 82.4 percent of

**Figure 3. Population Mobility Rates Texas, California, Florida, and New York as Percentage of Population**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

## About the Data

Data on geographical mobility of U.S. residents is from the U.S. Census Bureau's annual American Community Surveys. The datasets are compiled by asking residents whether they moved in the last year, and where they lived one year ago.

The survey also asks about reasons for moving. According

to most recent nationwide surveys, there are more than 18 reasons for moving. They fall into four major groups: housing-related (48 percent), family-related (30.3 percent), employment-related (19.4 percent), and other reasons (2.3 percent).

Housing-related reasons include wanted better neighborhood,

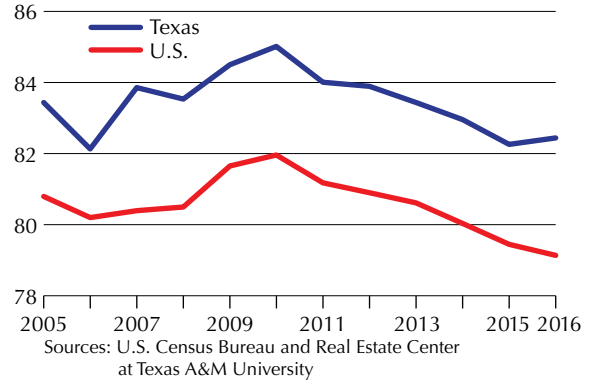
own instead of rent, cheaper homes, new home, foreclosure, and eviction. Family-related reasons are marriage, divorce, children, and better school districts. Job-related moves are employment availability, retirement, closeness to workplace, new jobs, job transfers, and easier commuting. 🏠

**Table 2. States Ranked by Texas Net Migration in 2015 (including Puerto Rico)**

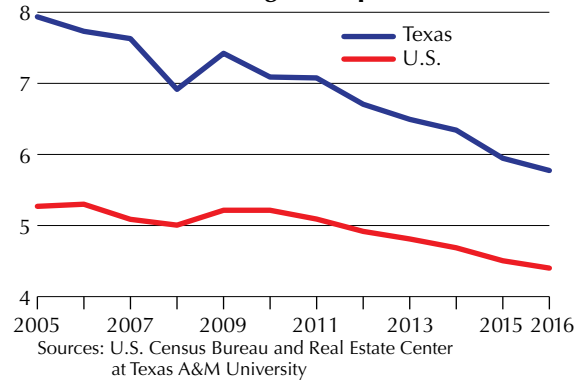
Rank	State	To Texas	From Texas	Net Migration
1	California	65,546	41,713	23,833
2	New York	26,287	12,082	14,205
3	Louisiana	31,044	19,863	11,181
4	Illinois	21,927	11,719	10,208
5	Puerto Rico	9,707	582	9,125
6	Missouri	17,273	9,634	7,639
7	New Jersey	11,141	4,778	6,363
8	Pennsylvania	12,984	7,490	5,494
9	Michigan	13,919	8,466	5,453
10	Maryland	10,839	5,611	5,228
11	Georgia	20,924	16,078	4,846
12	Mississippi	13,476	8,842	4,634
13	Florida	33,670	29,706	3,964
14	New Mexico	16,056	12,101	3,955
15	Massachusetts	8,279	4,398	3,881
16	Indiana	9,413	5,878	3,535
17	Arizona	16,067	13,025	3,042
18	Nevada	7,822	5,271	2,551
19	Kansas	9,952	7,577	2,375
20	Virginia	18,429	16,685	1,744
21	Iowa	5,874	4,325	1,549
22	Connecticut	3,973	2,519	1,454
23	Hawaii	3,342	2,031	1,311
24	Tennessee	13,199	11,934	1,265
25	West Virginia	2,083	967	1,116
26	Alabama	7,167	6,469	698
27	Delaware	2,051	1,423	628
28	North Carolina	15,869	15,245	624
29	Ohio	12,077	11,553	524
30	Alaska	2,573	2,196	377
31	Vermont	395	144	251
32	Minnesota	4,956	4,814	142
33	District of Columbia	1,423	1,314	109
34	Nebraska	4,486	4,460	26
35	New Hampshire	1,407	1,407	0
36	Rhode Island	1,060	1,164	-104
37	Wisconsin	4,393	4,665	-272
38	South Carolina	5,617	5,987	-370
39	Maine	1,144	1,817	-673
40	Kentucky	4,884	5,595	-711
41	Oregon	3,906	4,761	-855
42	South Dakota	762	1,742	-980
43	Montana	2,210	3,235	-1,025
44	Wyoming	2,743	4,587	-1,844
45	Idaho	995	2,959	-1,964
46	Utah	6,583	8,698	-2,115
47	Colorado	22,587	25,268	-2,681
48	North Dakota	976	3,968	-2,992
49	Oklahoma	25,555	28,642	-3,087
50	Arkansas	14,539	17,708	-3,169
51	Washington	9,155	12,829	-3,674
<b>Total</b>		<b>562,739</b>	<b>445,925</b>	<b>116,814</b>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

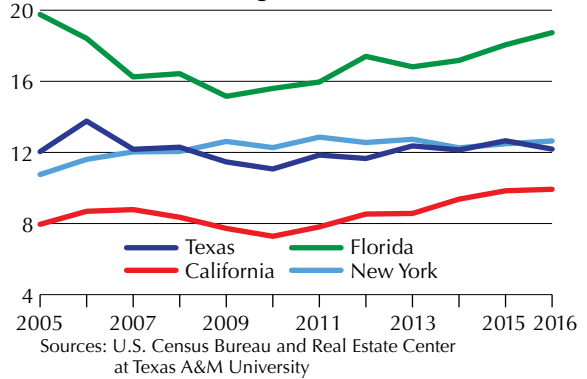
**Figure 4. Intrastate Movers as Percentages of Total Movers in Texas and U.S.**



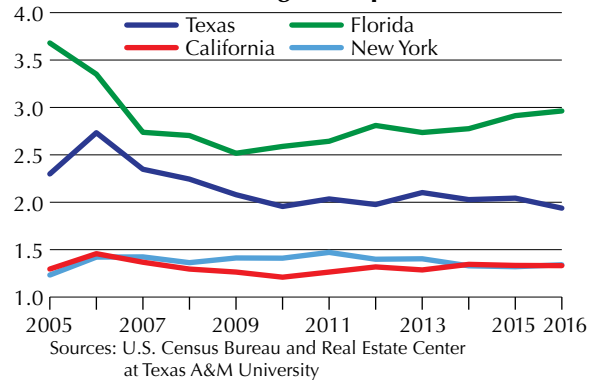
**Figure 5. Movers in Same City or Town as Percentage of Population**



**Figure 6. Movers to States from Other States as Percentage of Total Movers**



**Figure 7. Movers to States from Other States as Percentage of Population**



**Table 3. Texas Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Percentages of Movers, 2011–15**

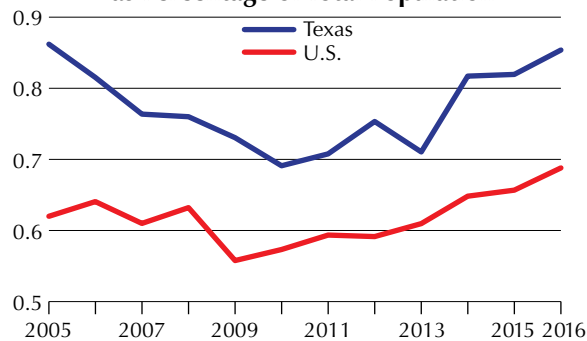
Rank	Metropolitan Area	Number of Movers	Percent of Population
1	College Station-Bryan	67,818	28.71
2	Lubbock	74,560	24.95
3	Abilene	37,717	22.78
4	Killeen-Temple	93,022	22.35
5	San Angelo	25,261	21.92
6	Austin-Round Rock	381,392	20.45
7	Corpus Christi	83,234	19.06
8	Waco	48,209	18.86
9	Longview	40,158	18.79
10	Odessa	26,856	18.30
11	Sherman-Denison	21,863	18.03
12	Wichita Falls	26,875	17.99
13	Amarillo	45,548	17.83
14	Midland	27,416	17.82
15	Tyler	37,767	17.60
16	San Antonio-New Braunfels	394,338	17.48
17	Victoria	16,343	16.99
18	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington	1,115,917	16.55
19	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land	1,013,130	16.18
20	Texarkana	23,095	15.68
21	El Paso	121,329	14.75
22	Beaumont-Port Arthur	58,082	14.49
23	Laredo	34,516	13.39
24	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	89,367	11.10
25	Brownsville-Harlingen	41,786	10.15

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

movers in Texas in 2016 (Figure 4). In both Texas and the U.S., intrastate mover rates peaked in 2010 and have trended downward since. However, Texas' intrastate mobility rates have remained higher than national averages.

In 2016, 5.8 percent of the Texas population moved within the same city or town, compared with 4.4 percent for the U.S. (Table 1 and Figure 5). In both Texas and the U.S., the same city/town moving rates have trended

**Figure 8. Movers to Texas and U.S. from Other Countries, Puerto Rico, U.S. Islands as Percentage of Total Population**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

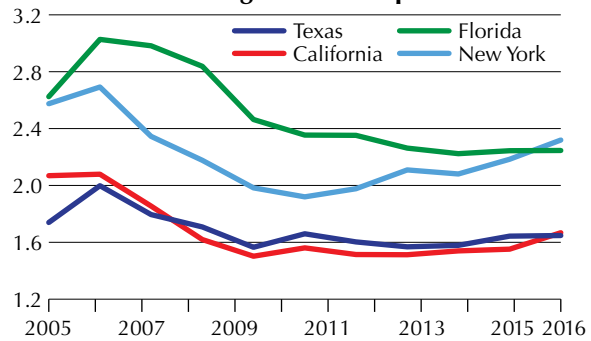
downward since 2009, but Texas' rates have remained higher than national averages (Figure 5).

More than half a million people moved to Texas from other states in 2016 (Table 1). Movers from other states accounted for 13.8 percent of total Texas movers in 2006 before the GR, falling to 11.1 percent in 2010, and trending upward to 12.2 percent in 2016 (Figure 6). Since 2005, rates of in-migrants from other states as percentages of total movers have been close to the corresponding rates for New York, higher than California rates, but lower than Florida rates (Figure 6). As a percentage of the Texas population, the in-migrant rate to Texas trended downward from 2.7 percent in 2006 to 1.9 percent in 2016 (Figure 7). Since 2005, Texas rates' have been lower than Florida's rates but higher than the corresponding rates for New York and California (Figure 7).

Texas draws more movers from other countries, Puerto Rico, and U.S. islands than the U.S. does. These movers accounted for 0.9 percent of Texas' population in 2016 compared with 0.7 percent for the U.S. (Table 1 and Figure 8). International migration rates for both the state and the nation trended downward in the GR, then upward after the recovery.

Texas mobility also includes those leaving Texas and moving to other states or countries. In 2015, 445,925 moved from Texas to other states and Puerto Rico. As

**Figure 9. Movers from States as Percentage of Total Population**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University



**Table 4. Texas Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Percentages of Movers in the Same Metro Area, 2011–15**

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Number of Movers	Percent of Population
1	Lubbock	47,056	15.75
2	College Station-Bryan	35,229	14.91
3	Abilene	22,846	13.80
4	Austin-Round Rock	249,713	13.39
5	Corpus Christi	55,273	12.66
6	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington	846,382	12.55
7	San Antonio-New Braunfels	280,994	12.46
8	Amarillo	31,450	12.31
9	Waco	30,972	12.11
9	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land	758,218	12.11
11	Longview	24,589	11.51
12	Killeen-Temple	47,198	11.34
13	Sherman-Denison	13,670	11.27
14	San Angelo	12,627	10.96
15	Victoria	10,438	10.85
16	Texarkana	15,302	10.39
17	Laredo	26,735	10.37
18	Odessa	15,166	10.34
19	Tyler	21,629	10.08
20	El Paso	78,365	9.53
21	Beaumont-Port Arthur	37,896	9.45
22	Midland	14,248	9.26
23	Wichita Falls	13,820	9.25
24	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	64,852	8.06
25	Brownsville-Harlingen	31,035	7.54

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

**Table 5. Texas Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Percentages of Movers from Different Metro Areas in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, 2011–15**

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Number of Movers	Percent of Population
1	College Station-Bryan	24,535	10.39
2	Killeen-Temple	34,367	8.26
3	San Angelo	8,681	7.53
4	Midland	9,844	6.40
5	Lubbock	18,705	6.26
6	Abilene	10,299	6.22
7	Wichita Falls	8,813	5.90
8	Odessa	8,013	5.46
9	Austin-Round Rock	101,497	5.44
10	Waco	13,291	5.20
11	Tyler	10,424	4.86
12	Corpus Christi	20,566	4.71
13	Longview	9,711	4.54
14	Sherman-Denison	5,074	4.18
15	San Antonio-New Braunfels	85,116	3.77
16	Victoria	3,455	3.59
17	Beaumont-Port Arthur	14,260	3.56
18	El Paso	27,354	3.33
19	Texarkana	4,508	3.06
20	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington	185,314	2.75
21	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land	165,524	2.64
22	Amarillo	6,699	2.62
23	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	12,896	1.60
24	Brownsville-Harlingen	6,484	1.58
25	Laredo	3,885	1.51

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

a percentage of the state’s population, out-migrants accounted for 2 percent in 2006, then trended downward in the GR to 1.6 percent in 2015 (Figure 9). Data for Texans who moved to other countries are not available because Census surveys are administered only in the U.S.

Table 2 shows the number of movers to and from Texas in 2015 and net movers (movers to Texas minus movers from Texas). There were 65,546 movers from California to Texas and 41,713 movers from Texas to California, ranking the Golden State first in Texas net migration with positive 23,833 net movers. New York, Louisiana, and Illinois were next. Sixteen states had negative net migration, including Washington, Arkansas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, and Colorado.

### Mobility in Texas Metropolitan Areas

The most recent moving data available for Texas metropolitan areas are annual averages for 2011–15 (Table 3). College Station-Bryan ranked first in number of movers as a percentage of the population followed by Lubbock, Abilene, Killeen-Temple, San Angelo, and Austin-Round Rock. Brownsville-Harlingen had the lowest mobility rate followed by McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, Laredo, Beaumont-Port Arthur, and El Paso. Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington had the largest absolute number of movers followed by Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, San Antonio-New Braunfels, Austin-Round Rock, and El Paso.

Lubbock ranked first in percentage of movers within the same metro area followed by College Station-Bryan, Abilene, Austin-Round Rock, Corpus Christi, Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, and San Antonio-New Braunfels (Table 4). Brownsville-Harlingen had the lowest percentage followed by McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, Wichita Falls, Midland, and Beaumont-Port Arthur.

**Table 6. Texas Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Percentages of Movers from Abroad, 2011–15**

Rank	Metropolitan Area	Number of Movers	Percent of Population
1	El Paso	12,169	1.48
2	College Station-Bryan	3,456	1.46
3	Killeen-Temple	5,865	1.41
4	Laredo	3,111	1.21
5	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land	59,444	0.95
6	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	7,050	0.88
7	Brownsville-Harlingen	3,280	0.80
8	Austin-Round Rock	14,462	0.78
9	Odessa	1,091	0.74
10	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington	47,189	0.70
11	Wichita Falls	977	0.65
12	San Antonio-New Braunfels	13,234	0.59
13	Amarillo	1,364	0.53
13	San Angelo	606	0.53
15	Abilene	845	0.51
16	Lubbock	1,467	0.49
17	Midland	686	0.45
18	Sherman-Denison	427	0.35
19	Beaumont-Port Arthur	1,232	0.31
20	Waco	767	0.30
21	Longview	630	0.29
21	Victoria	278	0.29
23	Corpus Christi	1,182	0.27
24	Tyler	555	0.26
25	Texarkana	278	0.19

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

College Station-Bryan ranked first in percentage of movers from different metropolitan areas (including those outside Texas) followed by Killeen-Temple, San Angelo, Midland, and Lubbock (Table 5). Laredo ranked last followed by Brownsville-Harlingen, McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, Amarillo, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, and Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington.

El Paso ranked first in percentage of movers from abroad followed by College Station-Bryan, Killeen-Temple, Laredo, and Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land (Table 6). Texarkana had the lowest rate followed by Tyler, Corpus Christi, Victoria, Longview, and Waco. 🗺️

---

*Dr. Anari (m-anari@tamu.edu) is a research economist with the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University.*

© 2017. Real Estate Center. All rights reserved.

