PSU’s Population Research Center Releases Preliminary Oregon Population Estimates

Oregon added more than 50,000 residents for the fourth consecutive year.

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Oregon’s population increased by 54,200 between 2017 and 2018, largely because of new residents moving to the state, according to new preliminary 2018 estimates from Portland State University’s Population Research Center.

The preliminary July 1 population estimates show that Oregon’s population increased from 4,141,100 in 2017 to 4,195,300 in 2018. This increase of 54,200 represents a decline in population growth recorded between 2016 and 2017 when the state’s population grew by 64,750 residents. The growth between 2017 and 2018, a 1.3 percent year-over-year increase, is lower than the 1.6 percent growth recorded in the 2016-2017 period due to lower natural increase and net in-migration.

Population growth consists of two factors: natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths) and net migration (people moving in minus people moving out). From 2017 to 2018, net migration accounted for roughly 88 percent of Oregon’s population growth, the same percentage as 2016 to 2017. Due to an aging population and declining birth rates, natural increase now contributes less to Oregon’s population growth than at any time since the 1930s. The number of births to Oregon residents in 2017-18 was nearly 14 percent lower than its recent peak in 2007-08.

Mirroring the slowdown in natural increase is moderating net migration levels. The number of people moving to Oregon exceeded the number moving out by over 47,000, about 9,000 less than in 2016 to 2017. In the four years since 2014, net migration has resulted in about 200,000 additional Oregon residents, accounting for 85 percent of the state’s growth.

Oregon’s three most populous counties, each in the Portland metropolitan area, experienced the largest gains in population from 2017 to 2018. Multnomah and Washington counties each added more than 10,000 residents, and Clackamas County added over 6,000. The largest percentage growth occurred in the Central Oregon counties of Deschutes (3.3 percent) and Crook (2.7 percent).
The federal Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) designation applies to 13 of Oregon’s 36 counties. Together these 13 counties accounted for a population increase of 50,945, 94 percent of the state’s growth.

Twenty of Oregon’s thirty-six counties experienced natural decrease, meaning there were more deaths than births. These included eastern, southwestern, and coastal counties. In many, but not all counties, net in-migration (more people moving in than out) offsets these decreases.

Among incorporated cities and towns:

- Portland continued to add more residents than other cities in Oregon. Its 2018 population of 648,740 includes growth of 9,640 (1.5 percent) since 2017.
- Bend had the second biggest population gain among Oregon cities, adding 2,740 residents (3.2 percent) to reach a population of 89,505 in 2018.
- Other Oregon cities adding more than 1,000 residents each were Beaverton, Eugene, Salem, and Tigard.

The Population Research Center produces annual population estimates for Oregon and its counties and incorporated cities using the most recent available data. These estimates are based on fluctuations in the numbers of housing units, persons residing in group quarter facilities, births and deaths, students enrolled in public school, persons employed, Medicare enrollees, State and Federal tax exemptions, Oregon driver license holders as well as counts in other administrative data that are symptomatic of population change.

The preliminary population estimates are subject to revision during a month review period. The final July 1 population estimates will be certified by December 15. The annual population estimates are revised quarterly to account for annexations throughout the year.

For more information and to view the preliminary population estimates, visit the Population Research Center’s website.

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