

Demographic Trends in Los Angeles County 2019 and 2021

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**Los Angeles County Department of Public Health**

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Total Population Change

The population in Los Angeles County (LAC) experienced a significant decline in 2020, followed by a smaller decrease in the subsequent year. Between 2019 and 2021, LAC lost 315,314 residents, which represents a decline of 3.1%. As a result, the population dropped to under 10 million for the first time since 2012 (Figure 1).^{1,2}

With the exception of Service Planning Area (SPA) 1, which experienced a 4.9% increase by adding 19,285 residents, all SPAs had a population decrease from 2019 to 2021. SPA 4 had the largest decline during this period, losing 84,795 residents (-7.1%) (Figure 2).²

Figure 1. Total population, LAC, 2010-2021

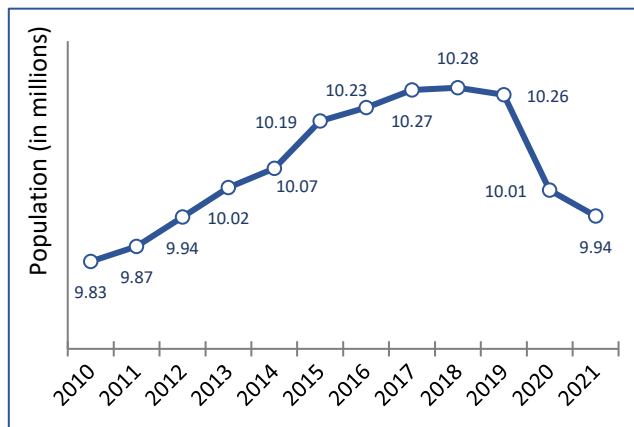
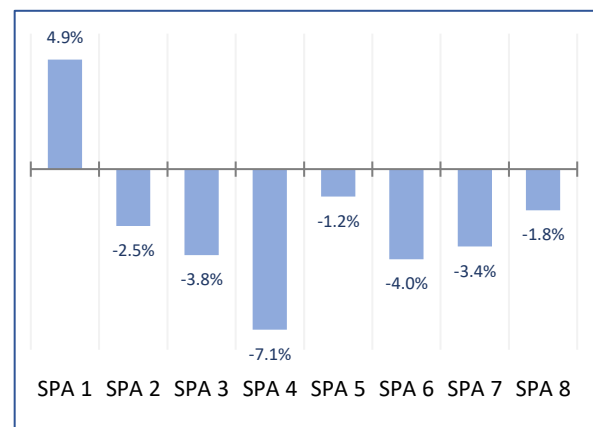


Figure 2. Population change by SPA, 2019 to 2021



Population Change by Gender and Age

The population in all SPAs in LAC decreased for both males and females from 2019 to 2021, with the exception of SPA 1 (Table 1, Figure 3).²

Although the youth and working age population under 65 years followed the same overall trend with decreases in all SPAs except SPA 1, the population 65 and older increased in all SPAs by 55,371 (4.0%) overall in LAC during the same period. Notably, the youth population under 18 years decreased by 52,660 (-23.3%) in SPA 4 (Table 1, Figure 4).²



Table 1. Population change by SPA and demographics, LAC, 2019 to 2021

	2019	2021	SPA 1	SPA 2	SPA 3	SPA 4	SPA 5	SPA 6	SPA 7	SPA 8	LAC
Gender											
Male	5.06M (49%)	4.91M (49%)	8,883	-26,406	-35,206	-39,096	-4,153	-18,547	-22,723	-13,664	-150,912
Female	5.20M (51%)	5.04M (51%)	10,402	-30,157	-33,931	-45,699	-3,994	-23,472	-22,528	-15,023	-164,402
Age											
0-17	2.19M (21%)	2.01M (20%)	10,950	-23,388	-26,410	-52,660	-14,822	-27,065	-25,491	-22,771	-181,657
18-64	6.70M (65%)	6.51M (66%)	6,630	-49,472	-49,514	-38,227	1,439	-17,266	-24,285	-18,333	-189,028
65+	1.37M (13%)	1.43M (14%)	1,705	16,297	6,787	6,092	5,236	2,312	4,525	12,417	55,371
Race/Ethnicity											
Latinx	4.99M (49%)	4.79M (48%)	36,973	-45,580	-45,043	-99,963	-5,885	-16,346	-26,585	-3,634	-206,063
White	2.86M (28%)	2.75M (28%)	-21,502	-20,556	-54,650	28,055	485	7,638	-29,552	-17,386	-107,468
Asian	1.49M (15%)	1.55M (16%)	1,461	7,555	40,802	-15,740	1,376	5,746	11,017	9,863	62,080
Black	0.87M (9%)	0.82M (8%)	2,839	3,047	-9,259	3,036	-3,835	-38,527	212	-12,563	-55,050
Am. Indian	0.02M (0%)	0.02M (0%)	-464	-1,209	-808	-289	-233	-285	-423	-1,209	-4,920
Pacific Isl.	0.02M (0%)	0.02M (0%)	-22	180	-179	106	-55	-245	80	-3,758	-3,893
Total	10.26M	9.94M	19,285	-56,563	-69,137	-84,795	-8,147	-42,019	-45,251	-28,687	-315,314

Figure 3. Population change by gender and SPA, LAC, 2019 to 2021

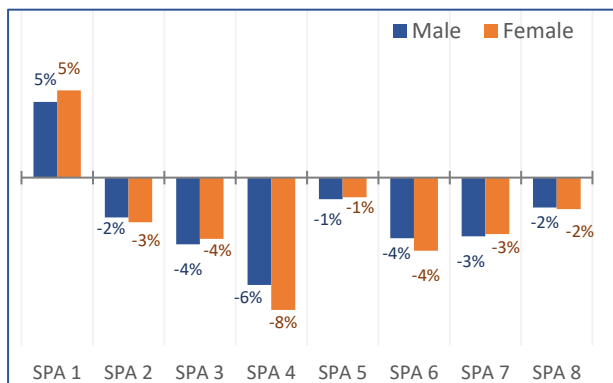
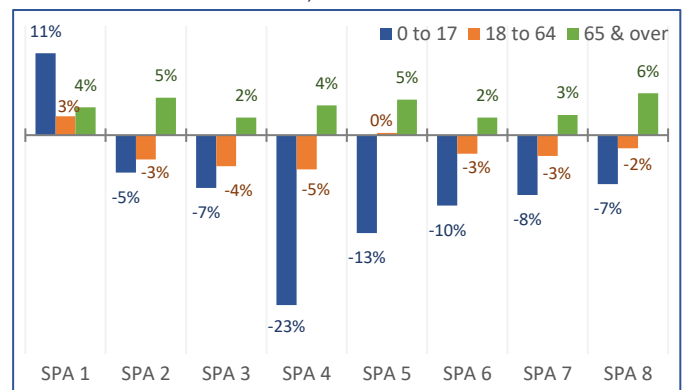


Figure 4. Population change by age and SPA, LAC, 2019 to 2021



Population Change by Race/Ethnicity

From 2019 to 2021, the Latinx population decreased by 206,063 (-4.1%) in LAC overall. SPA 4 experienced the largest decrease, losing 99,963 (-16.2%) Latinx residents during this period. The Latinx population decreased in all SPAs from 2019-2021 except in SPA 1, which increased by 36,973 (20.3%) Latinx residents (Table 1, Figure 5).²

Meanwhile the White population decreased by 107,468 (-3.8%) in LAC overall from 2019 to 2021, with varying changes across SPAs. SPA 4 and SPA 6 saw increases of 28,055 (9.4%) and 7,638 (29.0%) White residents, respectively, while SPA 3 experienced a decrease of 54,650 (-14.6%) (Table 1, Figure 5).

The Asian population, on the other hand, increased by 62,080 (4.2%) in LAC overall and had increases in all SPAs except SPA 4, which had a decrease of 15,740 (-7.4%). SPA 3 had the largest increase with 40,802 (7.8%) more Asian residents, while SPA 6's Asian population grew 32% (Table 1, Figure 5).

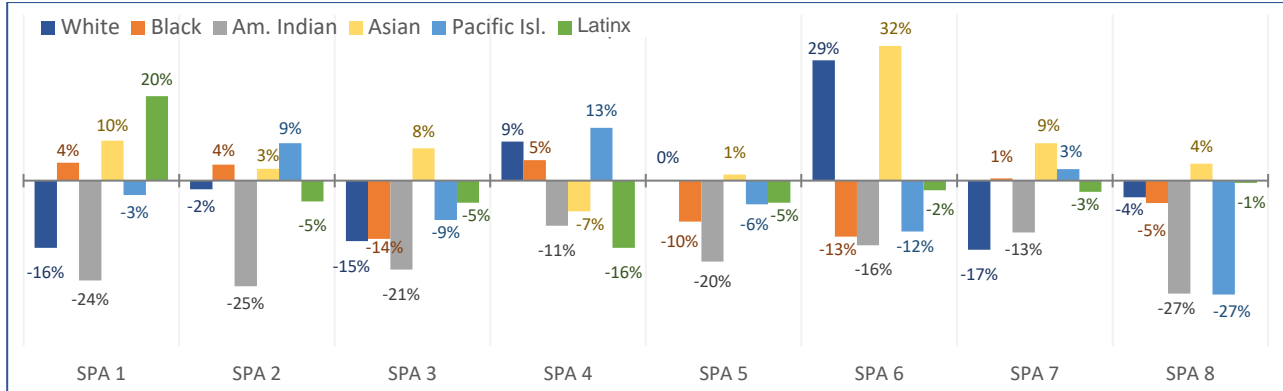
The Black population decreased by 55,050 (-6.3%) in LAC overall, with the majority of the decrease occurring in SPA 6, which lost 38,527 (-13.5%) Black residents from 2019 to 2021 (Table 1, Figure 5).

The American Indian population decreased by 4,920 (-20.5%) in LAC from 2019 to 2021, with all SPAs experiencing large decreases, ranging from -10.9% in SPA 4 to -27.2% in SPA 8 (Table 1, Figure 5).

Finally, the Pacific Islander (PI) population decreased by 3,893 (-15.6%) in LAC overall, with most of the decrease occurring in SPA 8, which lost 3,758 (-27.5%) PI residents from 2019 to 2021 (Table 1, Figure 5).



Figure 5. Population change by race/ethnicity and SPA, LAC, 2019 to 2021



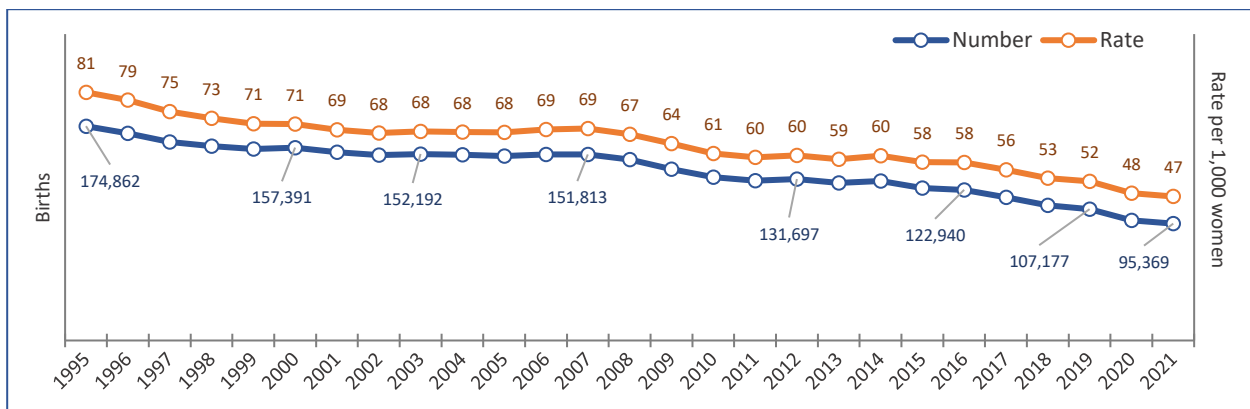
Causes of Population Change

Population change is determined by the net effect of natural increase (births minus deaths), and migration (net international and net domestic migration). While population growth in California had been slowing over the past three decades, the COVID-19 pandemic, along with other factors, has further impacted deaths, births, and most importantly, migration in recent years.

Births

The number and rate of live births among women aged 15-44 in LAC have consistently declined over the past three decades, from 174,862 (81 per 1,000) in 1995 to 95,369 live births (47.0 per 1,000) in 2021 (Figure 6).³ Compared to 2019, there were 11,808 fewer births in 2021.

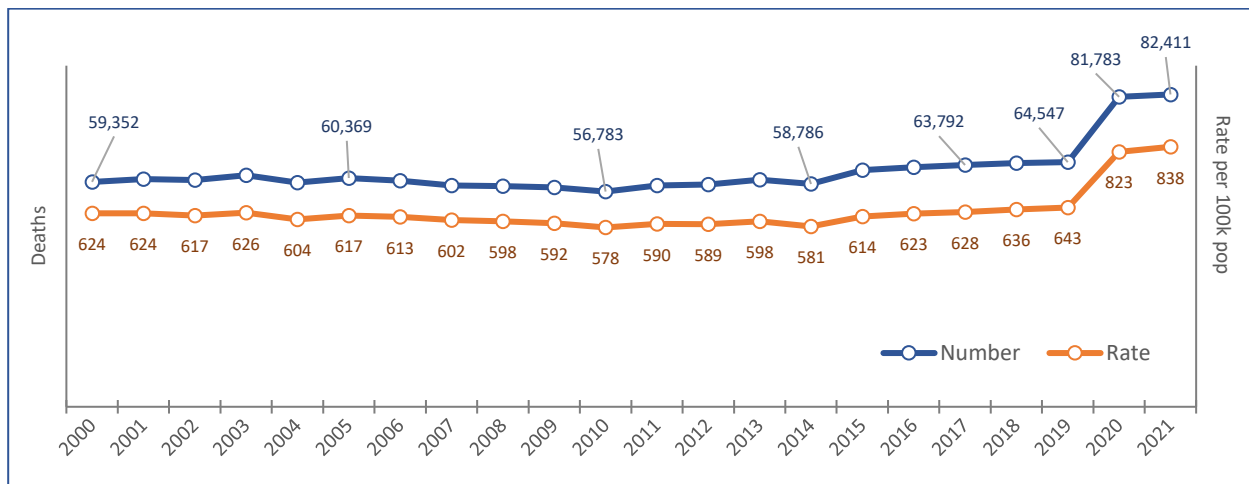
Figure 6. Number and rate of live births among women aged 15-44, LAC, 1995-2021



Deaths

The number of deaths in LAC remained stable from 2000 to 2010 with an average of about 59,000 deaths (608 per 100,000) per year. However, it began to steadily increase, reaching to 64,547 deaths (643 per 100,000) in 2019, before spiking in 2020 to 81,783 deaths (823 per 100,000) and increasing further in 2021 with 82,411 deaths (838 per 100,000) (Figure 7).^{4,5} Compared to 2019, there were 17,864 more deaths in 2021.

Figure 7. Number and rate of deaths from all causes, LAC, 2000-2021

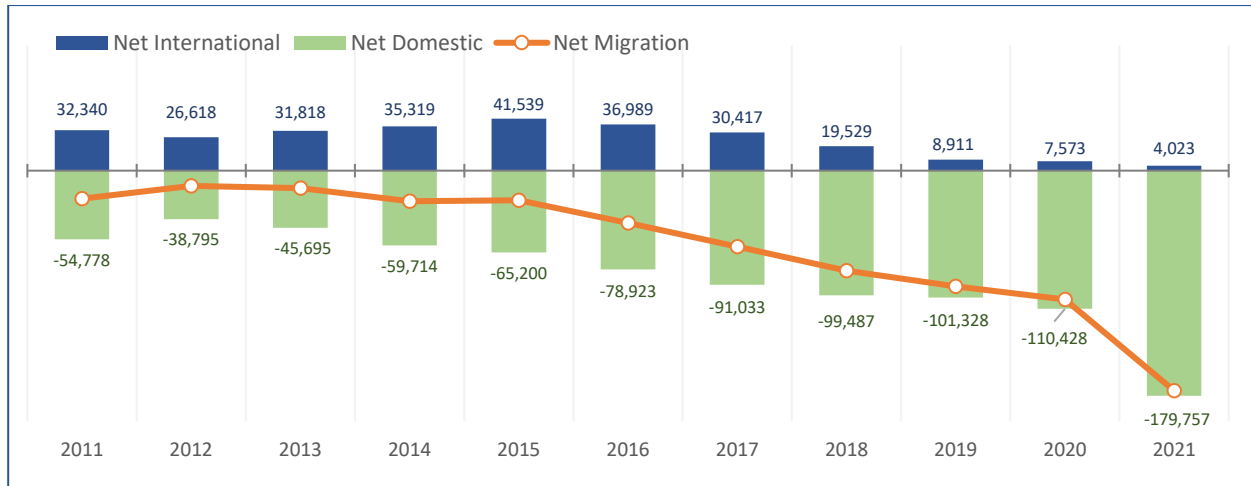


According to preliminary analyses,⁶ COVID-19 was the leading cause of death in LAC during the first six months of 2021, and the second leading cause of death in the first six months of 2020 and 2022. Unintentional drug overdose was also a leading cause of death during the first six months of 2019 to 2022, particularly for the population under 65 years of age.

Migration

While international migration has greatly decreased in recent years due to immigration policies and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on travel, the primary driver of the population decrease in recent years in LAC has been domestic out-migration (Figure 8).^{7,8} From 2019 to 2021, there was a net increase of 20,507 residents from international migration, but a net decrease of 391,513 residents from domestic migration, resulting in a net loss of 371,006 residents from migration.

Figure 8. Net migration, LAC, 2011-2021



Between 2016 and 2020, the majority of domestic migration to (51.6%) and from (55.7%) LAC occurred within California, particularly among the surrounding counties of Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside (Tables 2 and 3).⁹ Outside of California, the top states that domestic migrants to LAC moved from were New York (6.5%), Texas (3.9%), and Illinois (2.6%), while the top states that LAC migrants moved to were Texas (6.1%), Nevada (4.3%), and Arizona (4.1%).

Table 2. Top 10 States of LAC domestic migration, 2016-2020

Rank	To LAC from State of Origin			From LAC to State of Destination		
	State	Number	Percent	State	Number	Percent
1	California	103,932	51.6%	California	180,755	55.7%
2	New York	13,131	6.5%	Texas	19,933	6.1%
3	Texas	7,766	3.9%	Nevada	14,025	4.3%
4	Illinois	5,314	2.6%	Arizona	13,182	4.1%
5	Washington	5,153	2.6%	Washington	9,910	3.1%
6	Arizona	4,692	2.3%	New York	8,457	2.6%
7	Florida	4,293	2.1%	Florida	7,153	2.2%
8	Massachusetts	4,142	2.1%	Oregon	6,670	2.1%
9	Nevada	3,730	1.9%	Colorado	5,195	1.6%
10	Colorado	3,726	1.8%	Georgia	4,649	1.4%



Table 3. Top 10 Counties of LAC domestic migration, 2016-2020

Rank	To LAC from County of Origin				From LAC to County of Destination			
	State	County	Number	Percent	State	County	Number	Percent
1	California	Orange	23,839	11.8%	California	Orange	38,761	11.9%
2	California	San Bernardino	15,590	7.7%	California	San Bernardino	34,920	10.8%
3	California	Riverside	10,232	5.1%	California	Riverside	23,292	7.2%
4	California	San Diego	8,898	4.4%	Nevada	Clark	12,873	4.0%
5	California	Ventura	6,625	3.3%	California	Kern	10,503	3.2%
6	New York	New York	5,267	2.6%	California	San Diego	10,436	3.2%
7	California	San Francisco	5,205	2.6%	California	Ventura	10,187	3.1%
8	California	Kern	5,058	2.5%	Arizona	Maricopa	8,614	2.7%
9	California	Alameda	4,404	2.2%	California	Alameda	6,538	2.0%
10	California	Santa Clara	3,900	1.9%	California	Santa Clara	5,413	1.7%

From 2016-2020, the majority of international immigrants to LAC were from Asia (50.9%), followed by Central America excluding Mexico (19.3%), and Europe (13.4%) (Table 4).⁹

Table 4. Regions of origin for LAC international migration, 2016-2020

Rank	To LAC from Region of Origin		
	State	Number	Percent
1	Asia	33,605	50.9%
2	Central America	12,745	19.3%
3	Europe	8,855	13.4%
4	South America	4,226	6.4%
5	Africa	2,278	3.4%
6	Northern America	1,410	2.1%
7	Oceania and At Sea	1,397	2.1%
8	Caribbean	1,006	1.5%
9	U.S. Island Areas	321	0.5%
10	Puerto Rico	194	0.3%



Demographics of Domestic Out-Migrants

In the past, California typically gained residents who had high income or were college graduates, and lost residents who were low or middle income or had less than a bachelor’s degree. However, in recent years, there has been a shift, with more residents who are high income or are college graduates migrating out (Figures 9 and 10), possibly due to availability of remote work and the lower cost of living in other states.¹⁰

Figure 9. Net domestic migration by income among adults aged 18-64, CA, 2010-2021

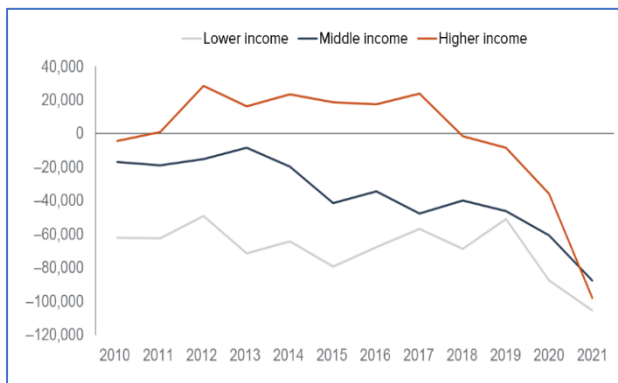
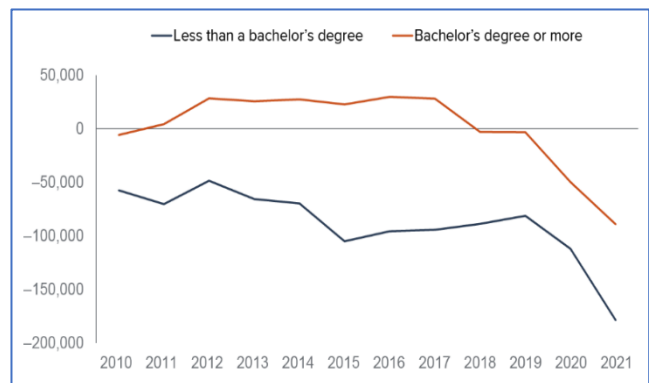


Figure 10. Net domestic migration by education among adults aged 20-60, CA, 2010-2021



Note: Figures 9 and 10 were created by the Public Policy Institute of California using data from the American Community Survey for California from 2010 to 2021.

Conclusions

From 2019 to 2021, the population of LAC has been impacted by a variety of factors, such as declining birth rates, increasing death rates, and significant domestic out-migration. Although international migration has also decreased due to policy changes and travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic migration has had a more substantial impact on population changes in LAC. The data indicates that LAC gained over 300,000 residents from births, but lost almost 230,000 residents from deaths and over 370,000 residents from net migration, resulting in a population decrease of over 300,000 residents. Large decreases were observed across LAC regions, age, gender, and race/ethnicity groups, except for SPA 1, residents aged 65 or older, and Asians, which increased from 2019 to 2021.

Furthermore, the data suggests that more high-income or college-educated residents are migrating out of California, most likely including LAC, possibly due to remote work opportunities and lower costs of living in other states. As LAC continues to undergo changes in its population composition, it will be important to monitor these trends and their implications for the region's economy, social dynamics, and public services including behavioral health services. Understanding the population changes and their underlying factors can help inform policy decisions and resource allocation to ensure that LAC meets the needs of its residents.

References and Notes

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Note: Different data sources were presented for each component of population change, and may not add up to the total population estimates in LAC, which were further adjusted using other administrative records including voter registration, housing unit, and school enrollment, in addition to vital statistics and migration data.

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