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State of Mississippi and Counties Population Components of Change, 2020

Jamiko Deleveaux, Ph.D.

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The U.S. Census Bureau released the 2020 Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties and County Equivalents in the United States. This annual vintage release of Mississippi's 82 counties and county equivalents population estimates follows the release of the 2020 Census national and state total populations. The data used to compile the population estimates come from various sources such as the previous decennial census, vital records (births and deaths), and the Internal Revenue Service.

The ability to compare the population estimates to the decennial census helps to ensure an accurate estimate. Traditionally, differences between the estimate and decennial census are “interpreted as error in the estimates and are used to inform research and methodological improvements over the decade” ([Evaluation Estimates, census.gov](#)). The recent estimate release focuses on a broad range of topics such as:

- Estimates of the components of population change for the nation, states, metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, counties, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth.
- Estimates of total and voting-age (18+) population for Puerto Rico Commonwealth.
- Estimates of total population for metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, counties, and Puerto Rico municipalities.
- Estimates of total population by single year of age and sex for the nation.

Although the Census Bureau plans to release more detailed information (county, race, gender, age) from the 2020 Census in early fall 2021, we can compare the 2020 Census state total population to the previously released 2020 Population Estimate for the State of Mississippi.

In the 2020 Vintage Population Estimate the State of Mississippi had a population of 2,966,786. The official total population for Mississippi according to the 2020 Decennial Census was 2,961,279. Mississippi saw a difference of 5,507 residents in the 2020 Decennial Census when compared to the 2020 Vintage Population Estimate. The difference of 5,507 residents represents a 0.19% change in residents for the 2020 Census. Calculating population change for a nation, states, and counties is often complex and has the possibilities for errors. However, the Census Bureau has been able to make adjustments to account for errors.

Between 2010-2020 the United States experienced one of the country's slowest growth rates. A major contributor to the slow growth rate were the declining birth rates in the United States. For example, Mississippi saw 52,422 less births between 2000-2009 and 2010-2019. Mississippi was ranked 35 out of 51 states and Washington D.C. with a 0.68 natural rate of increase. Several counties in Mississippi are experiencing natural decrease (total number of deaths are greater than the total number of births over a given period). The counties with the highest level of natural decrease are Tishomingo County (-110) and Alcorn County (-112). Although some counties are experiencing natural decrease, many counties in the state are growing through natural increase such as Hinds County (+549) and DeSoto County (+561).

The natural decrease or increase of a particular state or county can be used to counteract the net migration (migration balance of an area consisting of the number of in-migrants minus the number of out-migrants) of the state or county. The State of Mississippi saw a decrease of 14,205 residents through out-migration while gaining a total of 787 residents from international migration, for a negative net migration rate of 4.5. Several Mississippi counties experienced a positive net migration rate (Benton County 11.1 and DeSoto County 12.5), while Issaquena County with -76.3 and Yazoo County with -96.0 saw the largest negative net migration rate.

The recent release of the sub-state level estimates provides a wealth of information on Mississippi's population change. The State Data Center of Mississippi, housed at the University of Mississippi, represents the state as part of the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (FSCPE). In this capacity we serve as a hub for the coordination and submission of Mississippi data to the Census Bureau to help construct a reliable state and sub-state estimates.