

#### Included in this Brief:

- 4.3 million Texans lived in a different residence one year ago.
- 16 percent of these movers originated outside of Texas .
- The other 84 percent originated within Texas.
- One million of these moved from one Texas county to another.

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## Texas Mobility

The stream of people moving to Texas has received much attention in the past few years. In a recent brief (White et al., 2016), we noted that, between 2005 and 2013, Texas gained around 126,000 additional people per year from domestic migration. In addition, recent annual international migration to Texas has exceeded 120,000. Together, this adds up to almost a quarter of a million new Texans each year. Some have questioned whether the state can accommodate this kind of growth.

On the one hand, the 246,000 extra people a year represent less than 1.0 percent of the state's 27 million plus population and, after all, Texas does have more than 260,000 square miles of land area. On the other hand, these migrants are not evenly dispersed and tend to settle in a handful of the state's metropolitan areas. Also, in addition to this domestic migration from other states, more than one million Texans a year move between counties within Texas and many of these migrants also settle in the state's major metropolitan areas.

### Migration Terms

#### Based on migrant origins and destinations:

- **Internal Migration** - migration between two Texas counties.
- **Domestic Migration** - migration between a Texas county and another U.S. state
- **International Migration or Immigration** - migration from another nation to a Texas county

#### Based on migration volume:

- **Net Migration** - the number of in-migrants minus the number of out-migrants.
- **Gross Migration** - the number of in-migrants plus the number of out-migrants

**Note:** *Net migration tells us how much population growth or decline occurs through migration. Gross migration counts all of the people who move into and out of a place during a period of time and, as such, provides a gauge of overall population mobility.*

In this series of migration briefs, we examine how migration is affecting the state’s population geography. This initial brief provides a broad view of mobility patterns in Texas. We show that while there are concerns about the volume of external migration to Texas, far more migration begins and ends within the state.

Here are some highlights:

- Texas has a highly mobile population.
- Texas gains about one-quarter million persons a year from external migration.
- One million people a year move within Texas.

### How Texas Compares to Other States

Americans continue to be a people on the move. Recent survey data indicate around 15 percent of all Americans had moved in the previous year (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). Texans are no exception. In this same survey, Texans had the highest mobility rate among the nation’s top 10 most populous states.

Table 1 shows that 17.2 percent of the 25,281,858 Texans in 2009-2013 had changed residence in the previous year<sup>1</sup>. This means that some 4.3 million Texans moved in the last year. These movers include those moving within their own county, those moving between Texas counties, those moving from another state to Texas, and those moving to Texas from another country. Not included are the approximately 400,000 Texans who moved to other states and the unknown number of Texans who moved to other countries<sup>2</sup>.

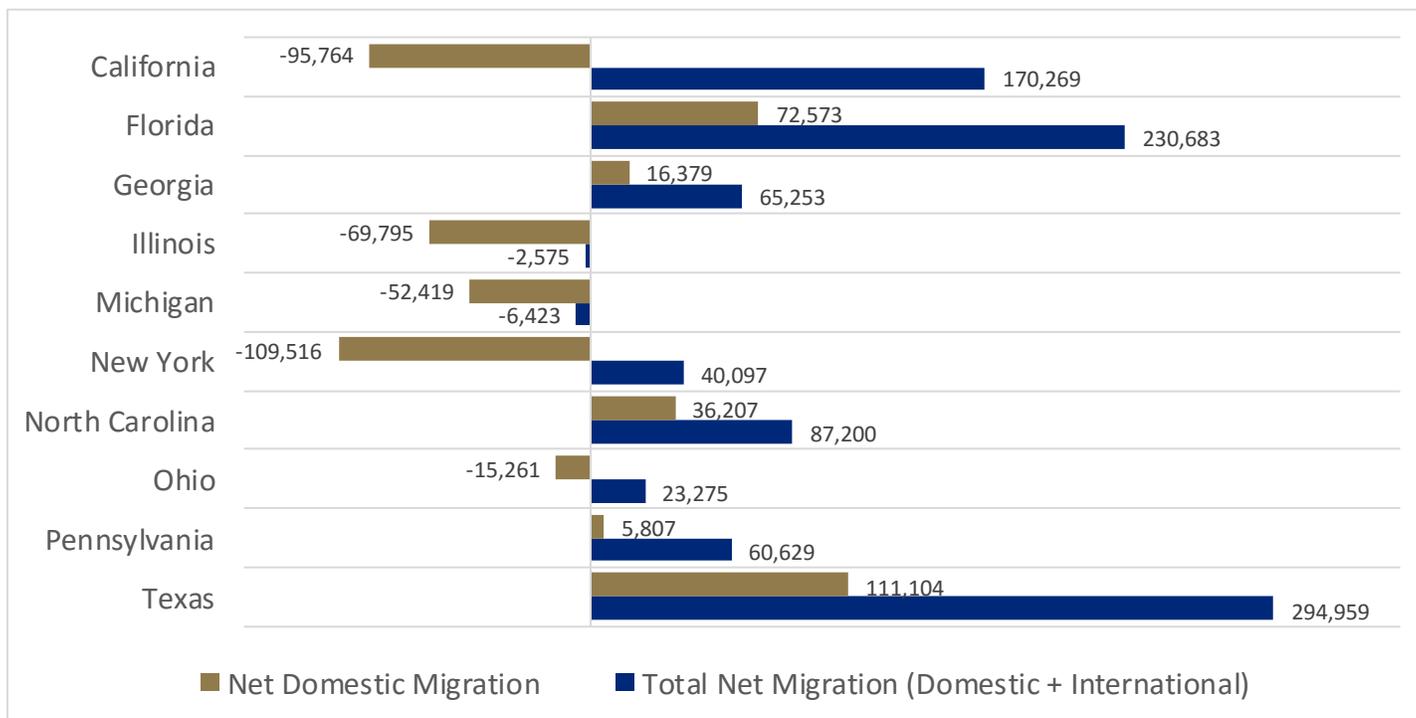
Figure 1 presents annual net migration for the 10 most populous states during the 2009-2013 time period<sup>3</sup>. This figure shows net domestic migration (i.e., state-to-state moves) and total net migration (i.e., domestic and international migration combined). We see that Texas, with a total gain of 294,959 persons, grew the most from net migration. We also find that half of the 10 largest states lost population due to domestic migration. That is, for domestic migration, there were more people leaving than moving into the states of California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Ohio.

Table 1: Annual Mobility Rates for the Ten Most Populous U.S. States, 2009-2013

Population Rank	State Name	Total Population	Percent Non-Movers	Percent Movers
2	Texas	25,281,858	82.8%	17.2%
9	Georgia	9,685,706	83.6%	16.4%
4	Florida	18,888,570	83.7%	16.3%
1	California	37,198,858	84.2%	15.8%
10	North Carolina	9,535,230	84.7%	15.3%
8	Michigan	9,775,443	85.3%	14.7%
7	Ohio	11,418,877	85.5%	14.5%
5	Illinois	12,695,273	86.8%	13.2%
6	Pennsylvania	12,597,683	88.0%	12.0%
3	New York	19,265,730	88.8%	11.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014. ACS 5-Year Summary Data, 2009-2013

Figure 1: Annual Net Migration for the 10 Most Populous States, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014. ACS 5-Year Summary Data, 2009-2013

Figure 1 indicates that migration is an important source of population change in Texas. For 2009-2013, the state gained almost 300,000 additional Texans annually through domestic and international migration. However, this external migration is only a small portion of the total mobility occurring in Texas each year.

### Types of Moves

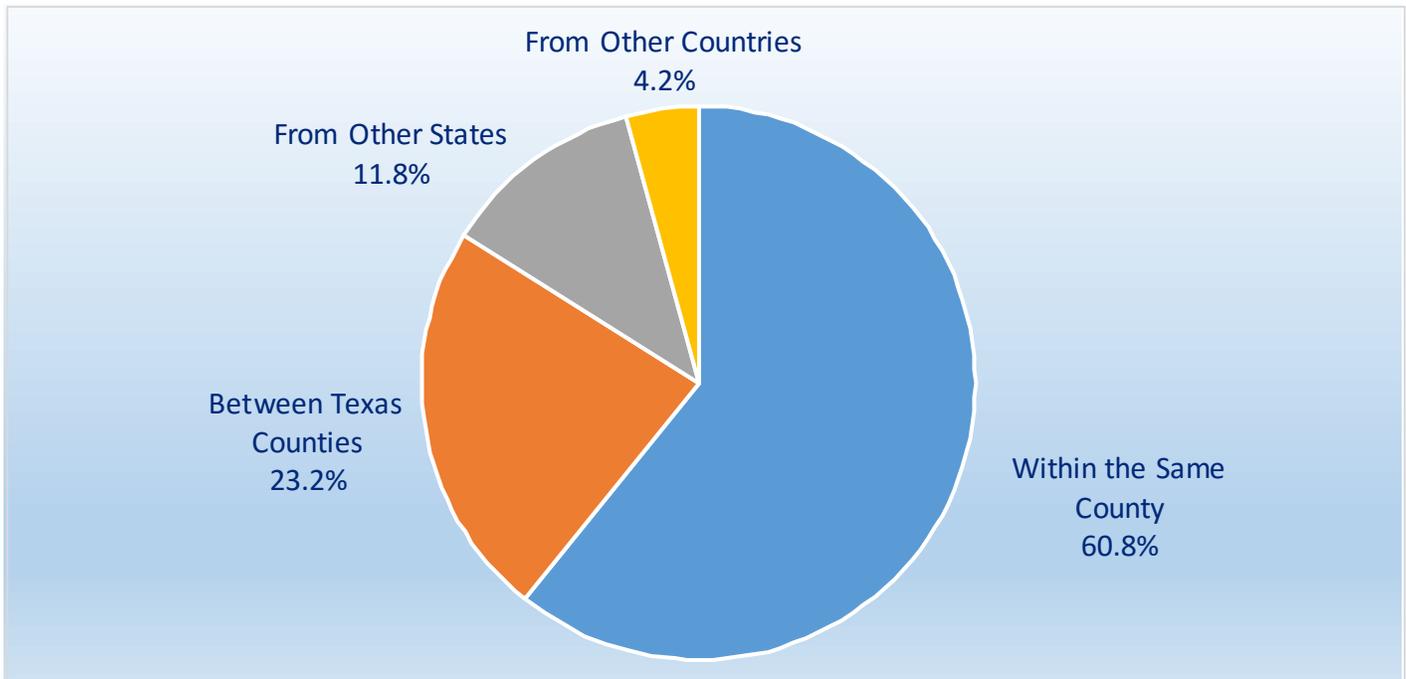
As Table 1 indicates, more than one-in-six Texans (i.e., 17.2 percent of the population) move per year. This means that close to 4.3 million resident Texans moved in the previous year. Figure 2 indicates that the majority of these moves are short distance with 60.8 percent occurring within the mover’s county of residence. An additional 23.2 percent of the moves are between counties within Texas. This means that 84 percent of all Texas moves occurred within the state. As such, only around 16 percent of the total moves originated outside of Texas.

The 23.2 percent of the moves that were between counties within Texas represent about one million persons. While these internal migrants do not affect the overall state population size, they can affect county population levels. For example, in 2009-2013, roughly half of the state’s counties (119 or 46.9 percent) gained population through net internal migration while the other half (135 or 53.1 percent) of the counties lost population from net internal migration. Thus, while much attention has focused on the impacts of external migration, it is clear that internal migration also plays an important role in re-shaping the Texas population.

### Conclusions

Internal migration redistributes the population from one Texas county to another and, in the process, can reallocate human capital from one place to another. Also, while domestic and international migration can affect the state’s overall population size, internal migration simultaneously

Figure 2: Annual Percentage of Total Moves by Mobility Type in Texas, 2009-2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014. ACS 5-Year Summary Data, 2009-2013

can produce areas of population growth and population decline within Texas. As such, the population changes from external and internal migration pose different challenges for Texas' planners and decision-makers.

With more than four million people moving into and around Texas, there is little doubt that migration is affecting the state's population. However, the number of migrating Texans only tells part of the story. Each of these four million moves affects an origin and a destination. Each move potentially impacts transportation, housing, school enrollment, labor markets, and other local resources. Thus, in order to better understand the full effects of migration, we also need to know where people are moving within Texas. Part 2 in this series, TEXAS MIGRATION PATTERNS, addresses this issue by examining how migration impacts the state's 254 counties.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This brief uses the U.S. Census Bureau's concept of migration. In the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau, people are considered to be migrants if they changed residence during the previous year. The questionnaire asks if the person lived in their current house one year ago. If not, the questionnaire asks for the person's residence one year ago. In this manner, information on migration origins and destinations can be collected. Because migration is based on residence one year ago, all references to population size in this brief are based on the number of persons one year of age and older.

<sup>2</sup> Here we use the terms international migration and immigration interchangeably. The American Community Survey does not provide data on net international migration. The U.S. Census Bureau produces several annual reports that include the mobility patterns of Americans. Two of the primary sources are surveys: The American Community

Survey and the annual supplement to the Current Population Survey. The other primary source, Population Estimates, is not a survey. The Population Estimates Program uses various data sources to produce annual estimates of the population and components of population change. Using various estimation techniques, the Population Estimates are able to calculate Net International Migration as well as Net Domestic Migration. By contrast, the surveys are based on respondents' answers. Because these surveys are administered only in the United States and its territories, they do not get information on persons who emigrate from the U.S. to other countries.

<sup>3</sup> The 2014 5-Year ACS Summary File covers the 2009-2013 time period. With this, five years of data are accumulated on a continuous basis. This is done to increase the sample size which improves the survey's accuracy and permits the inclusion of geographic areas with populations of less than 20,000 persons. Conceptually, these period surveys measure the average characteristics of a geographic area over five years (U.S. Census Bureau 2008).

As with all survey data, the ACS is subject to sampling error which occurs when a random sample does not fully represent the whole population that is being evaluated. Sampling error becomes less problematic with larger sample sizes. For a more detailed description of the ACS data accuracy, please see the U.S. Census Bureau (2015) reference.

## References

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