

# Planning Information Center

# Census Data Bulletin

RHODE ISLAND  
STATEWIDE  
PLANNING  
PROGRAM



Rhode Island Division of Planning  
One Capitol Hill, Third Floor, Providence, RI 02908

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## On the Move: Geographic Mobility in Rhode Island

For many, the moving truck is a symbol of neighborhood change, for better or for worse. Planners pay attention to the tendency of residents to move, or their “geographic mobility,” for many reasons. The availability of jobs and housing can drive decisions about where people move, and conversely, the places where people want to live often attract businesses and development.

*Who, where, and how often* are important questions about geographic mobility. High turnover in an area can reflect growing families, changing home values or economic conditions, or a university student population. Understanding mobility in a town, city, or region can help planners plan for adequate and affordable housing, population-appropriate amenities, and appropriate management of development and growth.

### Moving from Near and Far

According to the 2010 1-year American Community Survey findings, 13.5% of current Rhode Island residents moved homes in the last year. This figure includes 8.1% of residents who moved from another home in the same county, 1.4% who moved from another county in Rhode Island, 3.1% who moved from a different state, and 1.0% who moved from another country. These figures vary greatly

## BY THE NUMBERS

**13.5%** of R.I. residents moved in past year

**26.9%** of residents who are Asian alone moved in past year

**21.3%** of adult residents with incomes under \$10,000 moved in past year

**3.1%** of all residents moved from another state in past year

*Source: 2010 American Community Survey*

among age groups, race, income, and citizenship status.

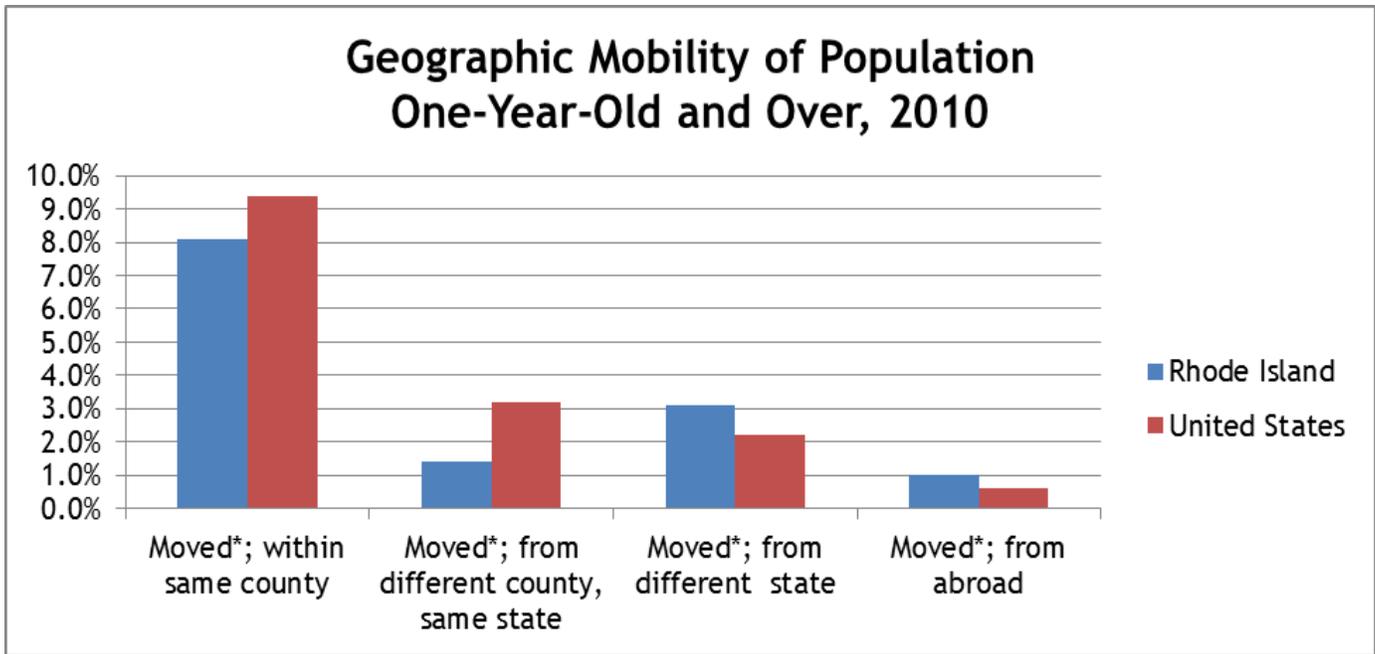
Compared with the United States as a whole, Rhode Island residents are slightly less likely to have moved in the past year, but the moves of Rhode Island residents are more likely to come from out of state or out of the country. Geographic mobility has increased by nearly two percentage points since 2005, when the American Community Survey reported 11.6% of state residents who had moved in the past year.

### Income and Moving

Rhode Island residents with lower incomes are more likely to have moved recently. Of adults (age 15 and older) with incomes under \$10,000, 21.3% moved in the past year, compared with 11.3% of residents with incomes \$35,000-\$49,999, and just 5.5% of residents with incomes \$65,000-\$74,999.

## ABOUT THE DATA

Data in this Bulletin are drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) 2010 and 2005 one-year estimates. The ACS surveys a sample of residents continually over the course of a year and generates *estimates* of population characteristics. The questions on geographic mobility ask residents about their residence “one year ago.” Because the ACS is administered on a year-round rolling basis, the reports on geographic mobility also refer to a rolling one-year window. In other words, the data on geographic mobility from the 2010 ACS do not refer to the 2009 calendar year or to any singular window of 365 days. These data only describe the mobility of current residents and they do not capture the count or destination of out-migrants.



\*Moved within the past 12 months. See footnote on Page 1.

Source: U.S. Census

Compared with five years prior, residents with incomes under \$10,000 are significantly more likely to have moved in the past 12 months, up nearly seven percentage points from 14.4% in 2005.

This very low-income group includes residents with profound economic challenges whose moves may reflect housing insecurity, as well as full-time college students who may have more economic stability than their income reflects. More adults ages 18-24 moved than any other age group; 30.7% of these young adults changed residence in the past year, about a third of whom moved from another state, which suggests that these movers are largely college students. However, it is unlikely that full-time students alone account for the high geographic mobility rate of the very poor, given that an estimated 170,525 Rhode Island adult residents have incomes are under \$10,000.

### Race and Moving

Geographic mobility in Rhode Island varies by race. Residents who are Asian alone have the highest rate of geographic mobility among racial groups, with 26.9% of residents reporting a move in the past year (*n.b.* results are not reported for the following groups: American Indian and Alaska Native alone and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone). Nearly one in ten Asian residents

moved from another state in the past year. Asian residents also led all racial groups in the share who moved from another country, 5.3%, and the share who moved between Rhode Island counties, 2.6%.

As for people who moved within their county of residence in the past 12 months, the racial groups encompassing two or more races and “some other race” had the greatest shares: 13.9% and 13.7%, respectively. Residents who are White alone have the lowest rate of recent geographic mobility, with just 11.9% who moved in the past year.

## TO LEARN MORE...

For additional information about geographic mobility of Rhode Island’s residents, visit the U.S. Census website, *American FactFinder*, at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

The IRS compiles detailed data on in- and out-migration. Analyze Rhode Island data at [http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=214143\\_00.html](http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=214143_00.html)

For further information about Planning Information Center resources, contact Amanda Martin at Rhode Island Statewide Planning: [amanda.martin@doa.ri.gov](mailto:amanda.martin@doa.ri.gov) or (401) 222-4720.