**University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute Population Estimates Program**

**Summary of U.S. Census Bureau’s 2011 Population Estimates**

**for Massachusetts Minor Civil Divisions**

For Release June 28, 2012

**U.S. Census Bureau Releases Sub-County-level Population Estimates for July 1, 2010 and 2011**

On June 28, 2012 the U.S. Census Bureau released updated population estimates for Massachusetts cities and towns (also called “minor civil divisions” or “MCDs”) for July 1, 2011. This vintage represents the first sub-county level population data produced by the Census Bureau since their release of Census 2010 data. It includes estimates for both July 1, 2010 – which brings 2010 Census data 3 months forward from the April 1st collection date – as well as for July 1, 2011.

This new vintage of estimates divides the Census Bureau’s 2011 County-level population estimates between individual municipalities. The initial county-level estimates are determined by an analysis of the “components of change” including births, deaths, and migration. The MCD level estimates then distribute that county-level, household population to each city and town based on a housing unit formula, and then factor in the group quarters population of each. In its housing unit formula, the Bureau accounts for current housing unit estimates (number of residential units) along with person-per-household and occupancy rates specific to each municipality.

Highlights from the state and county-level estimates released earlier this year by the U.S. Census Bureau appear below. For further information on State and County estimates released for Massachusetts previously this year, please see our detailed reports at: <http://www.massbenchmarks.org/statedata/news.htm>

* For State-level population estimates, refer to the release dated 12/21/2011.
* For County-level population estimates, including components of change, refer to the release dated 4/5/2012.

**Highlights from the 2011 State and County Level Estimates Releases**

* **State-level estimates** for Massachusetts released by the U.S. Census Bureau on December 21, 2011 increased the state population by 39,907 over the April 1, 2010 Census estimates base, yielding a new total of 6,587,536 persons on July 1, 2011. This 0.6 percent increase put Massachusetts’ growth ahead of the Northeast average, and ranked it as the fastest growing state in the Northeast region in terms of percentage growth. This 0.6 percent growth is also double the average growth rate experienced by Massachusetts during the previous decade; from 2000 to 2010, the average growth for Massachusetts was about 0.3 percent per year. The growth from 2010 to 2011 follows an upward trend experienced by Massachusetts toward the end of the last decade.
* **Compared to other parts of the U.S**., the Massachusetts increase of 0.6 percent was less than half the percentage growth experienced in the Southern and Western states of the U.S., where the average was 1.3 percent; however Massachusetts was growing twice as fast as the Midwestern region, which was growing at about 0.3 percent. This continues the trend seen over the last decade, when Southern and Western states’ growth significantly outpaced the Northeast and the Midwest. The United States as a whole increased by 0.92 percent from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011, which was, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, its lowest percent increase since the mid-1940s.
* **The components of change**, the data factors which account for estimated changes in population, include: “natural increase” (births minus deaths), net migration (internal within the U.S. plus international migration), and group quarters population counts. In Massachusetts, the total number of births was higher than the number of deaths. This natural increase contributed to a moderate increase of 21,013 people from July 1, 2010 to 2011. Net migration also contributed to Commonwealth’s increase in population. Despite a negative trend of domestic out-migration (an estimated 8,299 net persons leaving MA for other U.S. locations), a positive trend in international migration (a net of 19,664 persons moving into Massachusetts from outside of the U.S.) resulted in an overall positive net in-migration of 11,365. Nantucket and Suffolk counties experienced the highest rates (per person) of natural increase and Dukes and Suffolk counties experienced the highest rates of international in-migration and, as it follows, the highest net in-migration rates.
* **The Massachusetts counties** showing the largest population growth from July 1st 2010 to July 1st 2011 – based on the percentage of total population - were Dukes County at 1.1 percent; Suffolk County at 1.1 percent; and Middlesex at .0.8 percent. These rankings are comparable to the growth patterns seen in the last estimates series produced by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2009 when these same counties ranked as the fastest three growers by percentage. Dukes, Suffolk, and Middlesex also had the three highest rates of net migration in the state in 2011, helping to boost their population growth over the past year. Suffolk and Middlesex counties also had the second and third highest rates of *natural increase* from 2010 to 2011, meaning they had a higher rate of births compared to deaths over the past year as compared to most other parts of the state.
* The largest percent point decreases in population from July 2010 to July 2011 were in: Berkshire County at -0.5 percent; Nantucket County at -0.1 percent; and Barnstable at -0.1 percent. These decreases were spurred by a negative natural increase in Barnstable (more deaths than births), negative net migration in Nantucket (more people moving out than in), and a combination of both in Berkshire.

**MCD-Level Estimates Highlights**

**Large Cities:**

In all of Massachusetts’ largest cities and incorporated places of 50,000 persons or more, the U.S. Census Bureau has estimated that population has increased since the 2010 Census. Boston gained 1.21 percent, or 7,493 persons, and is now ranked nationally as the 21st most populous city. Worcester increased by 586 persons, or 0.32 percent, and ranks as 127th largest, while Springfield remained almost unchanged, at 95 persons or 0.06 percent increase, ranking 157th in size, nationally. Throughout the U.S., most of the 715 places over 50,000 (91 percent) did increase over the past year, with an average increase of 1.21 percent. The most significant growth was seen in parts of the South and West. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, “large cities in the South (99 places) showed the largest growth at 1.8 percent, followed by those in the West (113 places) at 1.4 percent. Large cities in the Northeast (25 places) grew by 0.7 percent and the 48 large places in the Midwest grew by 0.6 percent.” (<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/releases/cb12-117.html>).

The following table shows the estimated numerical and percentage differences - from the Census base date of April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011 - for the incorporated places in Massachusetts with populations over 50,000, as well as their national ranking by percentage change.



**All Cities and Towns:**

Among the 351 individual cities and towns in Massachusetts, the U.S. Census estimated that from April 1, 2010 to July 1st 2011 two-hundred-eighty (280) municipalities increased in population, four (4) were unchanged, and sixty-seven (67) decreased. By percentage point, the largest gains from the 2010 Census to 2011 were estimated in the very small towns of Martha’s Vineyard in Dukes County: Aquinnah (1.61%), Edgartown (1.4%), Tisbury, Oaks Bluffs, and West Tisbury (all 1.39%). However, these gains represent only 5 to 63 people for each town. Numerically, Boston (7,493), Lowell (1,065), Cambridge (876), Newton (799), and Somerville (765) represented the municipalities with the largest gains.

The municipalities showing the greatest estimated loss as a percentage of total population included the small Berkshire County towns of Adams (-0.61%), Becket, Otis, Dalton (all at -0.62%), and Sheffield (-0.64%). As with the Martha’s Vineyard gainers, the actual numbers factoring into these percentages were very small, ranging between 10 and 52 persons per town. The greatest population decreases in terms of numbers were also very minimal and were estimated in the Berkshire and Hampshire County municipalities as follows: Pittsfield (-265), North Adams (-76), Adams (-52), Northampton (-48), and Amherst (-43).

As described earlier, the Census Bureau’s method for estimating sub-county population uses an estimate of the number of housing units in each city or town to distribute the county-level population, which it derives from other components such as births, deaths, and migration. Whereas in previous estimates years the Census Bureau calculated municipal housing unit change at a local, municipal level, the current 2011 vintage is produced by estimating housing unit change at the larger, county level. Their method then distributes that housing unit change to each city and town based on Census 2010 housing unit proportions. Because all change is calculated at the county level, the 2011 estimates show cities and towns always following the direction of their county in terms of gain or loss in population. For example, because Berkshire County’s population decreased overall, all of its cities and towns also show a loss. Likewise, because Middlesex County as a whole showed an increase in population, all of its cities and towns share in that increase in the 2011 estimates set. When the Census Bureau starts incorporating local data into its housing unit estimates again, which is anticipated in the 2012 vintage, it is expected that there will be more variance within each county – with some towns in a county increasing while others decrease, depending on their unique housing unit changes.

**For detailed tables and maps related to this summary report, refer to the appendices of our June 28, 2012 release at:** <http://www.massbenchmarks.org/statedata/news.htm>

* Appendix A: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population of Massachusetts Counties and Minor Civil Divisions, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011
* Appendix B: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population of Massachusetts Minor Civil Divisions, Percent Change, and Percent Change Rank: April 1 2010 to July 12011
* Appendix C Map: Estimated Population of Massachusetts Municipalities: July 1, 2011
* Appendix D Map: Estimated Percent Change in Population for Massachusetts Municipalities; April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011

**For more information on the U.S. Census Bureau’s Vintage 2011 Population Estimates Release, and to see data for the rest of the U.S., go to the U.S. Census Bureau’s estimates page at:** <http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.html>.

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