

Summary of Seasonal Migration Issue for the 2010 Census

(1) Financial Impact

For each Michigan resident who is missed by the Census or counted in a different state, over \$1,000 in federal funds that should be allocated to Michigan each year is spent elsewhere instead. That adds up to \$10,000 over the course of a decade for an individual living alone, or \$40,000 for a family of four.

Data suggests that roughly \$2 billion which should have been allocated to state and local agencies in Michigan over the past decade was spent elsewhere instead because too many of Michigan's "snowbirds" were counted in different states by the 2000 Census.

(2) The Message for Snowbirds:

[See www.michigan.gov/census2010 for the latest updated message for snowbirds. (Click on the button labeled "Away on Census Day.")]

(3) Data on Seasonal Residents of Michigan

In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau's "American Community Survey" included special questions for households with no members who were present on a year-round basis. Such part-year households were classified as permanent residences, seasonal or vacation residences, school residences, work residences, etc. Even though this data pertains to only one segment of the seasonal population—i.e. no data was collected about seasonal residents who stay with other family members who are present year-round—the 2005 ACS is a valuable source of information about seasonal migration patterns.

This data indicates that:

- a) Michigan has more seasonal residents than most other states.

Over the course of the year, an average of 2.1% of Michigan's residents were identified as part-year residents. This was the 7th highest percentage in the nation, behind only Florida, Arizona, Montana, Delaware, Rhode Island, and North Dakota.

- b) Most of Michigan's part-year residents have their permanent homes in Michigan.

Over the course of the year, an average of 1.3% of Michigan's population was identified as part-year residents whose permanent residence was in Michigan.

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This was the 3rd highest percentage in the nation, behind only Florida and Wyoming.

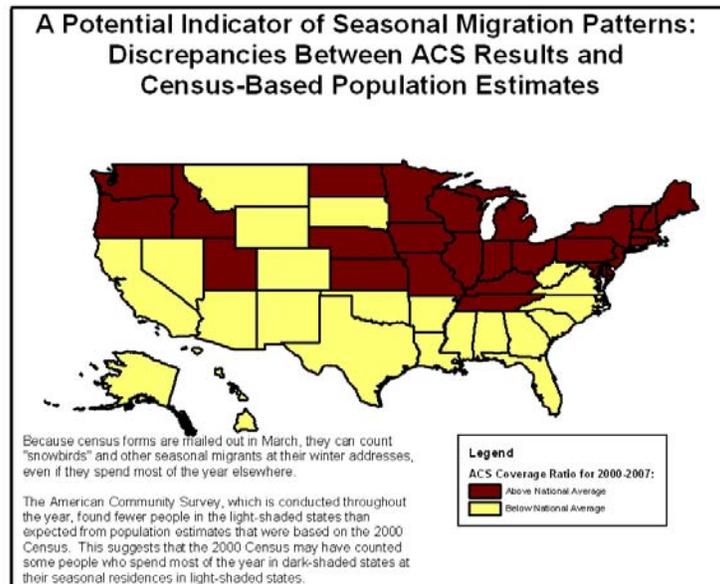
- c) Most of Michigan's part-year residents spend the largest part of the year in Michigan.

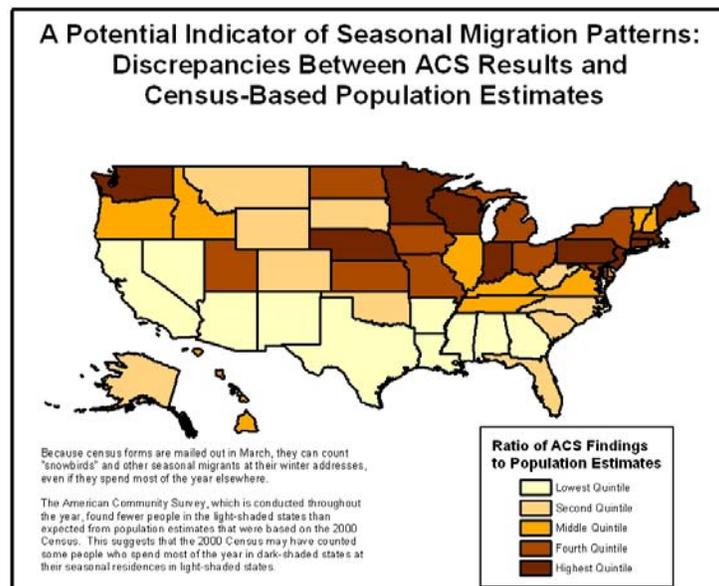
Over the course of the year, an average of 75.4% of Michigan's part-year residents were spending six months or more at their Michigan residence. This was the 11th highest percentage in the nation. Because the census is intended to count people at their "usual residence," all of these people should be counted by the census in Michigan instead of being counted at whatever address they may be at when census forms are mailed out in March.

[Michigan was behind Kansas, Wyoming, South Dakota, Utah, New Hampshire, Iowa, Ohio, Arkansas, Oregon, and Vermont]

(4) National Pattern of Seasonal Migration

Michigan is not the only state that is shortchanged when part-year residents are counted in the wrong place. The American Community Survey, which is conducted throughout the year, has consistently found fewer people in southern states than would be expected from their census-based population estimates. Most northern states, on the other hand, have consistently had ACS coverage ratios above the national average. This may primarily reflect part-year residents who are counted in the wrong states by the census.





Note: Four states with high levels of seasonal migration had relatively low coverage rates in the American Community Survey relative to their census-based population estimates. Nevertheless, Alaska, Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota probably experience large adverse effects due to part-year residents who are counted in the wrong states.

- Alaska's ACS interviews are conducted through a single annual survey instead of twelve monthly surveys in order to avoid the spring and summer mud season. Thus, the ACS does not measure the "annual average" population for Alaska and its ACS coverage rate does not reflect its pattern of seasonal migration.
- Montana's ACS coverage rate was above the national average at the beginning of the decade, but it has progressively dropped in subsequent years. This reflects the fact that many of Montana's rapidly growing communities do not require building permits. This has caused the address list that is used for ACS sampling to become less complete each year.
- South Dakota's ACS coverage rate was above the national average in 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2007, but it was below the national average in the remaining four years. This fluctuation may largely reflect sampling error rather than changes in seasonal migration or other factors that tend to influence ACS coverage rates. Sampling error affects all ACS statistics, but it is particularly problematic in smaller states and communities.
- Wyoming's ACS coverage rate was higher than the national average in 2000 and 2002. There has been a general decline similar to that in Montana, as well as a large amount of fluctuation from year to year as has occurred in South Dakota. Other data on seasonal migration suggest that Wyoming has a large number of part-year residents who spend more than half of the year in the state.
- Wyoming and South Dakota are among only seven states without state income taxes. Even though census responses are not shared with other government agencies or used for

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non-statistical purposes, part-year residents of Wyoming and South Dakota who want to claim residence in those states for tax purposes may take greater care to be counted by the census at their frost-belt homes than part-year residents of other states. That would lower their coverage rates by increasing the census figures on which subsequent population estimates are based. Likewise, residents of these states who begin spending part of the year elsewhere may be more likely to keep using their Wyoming or South Dakota address for federal tax purposes. That would also elevate the population estimates for these states and lower their ACS coverage rates. [The seven states without income taxes are: Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.]
