Oregon Migration Estimation Update
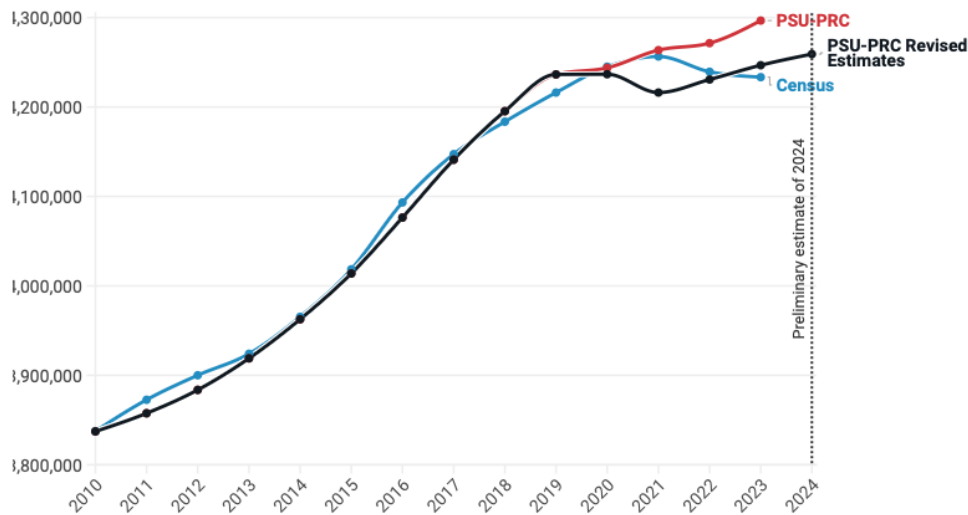## Population Research Center Revises Oregon's Migration Estimates Downward

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The Population Research Center (PRC) at Portland State University has recently revised Oregon's population estimates, revealing significant adjustments from 2021 onwards. The new figures include a preliminary estimate for 2024 showing a population increase of 12,444, while all previous estimates from 2020 have been revised downwards. The updated 2023 figures are now 49,938 lower than initially estimated but remain 13,330 higher than the U.S. Census Bureau's estimates. Particularly striking is the revision for 2021, which previously indicated a population increase from 2020. The latest data now shows a decline for that year, followed by a steady increase, contrasting with the Census projections of a population decline starting in 2022.

- **2024 Population Estimate:** The preliminary estimate for Oregon's population in 2024 is 4,259,132, marking an anticipated increase.
- **Revised Historical Estimates:** PRC has updated population figures for 2020 and beyond, showing significant downward revisions.
- **Sharp Adjustment for 2021:** Revised data now shows a population decrease in 2021, contrary to previous reports of growth during that period.
- **Oregon County Population Trends 2024**: Rural counties like Grant and Baker are seeing declines, while Deschutes and Crook show notable growth of 1.0% and 1.1%, respectively, with Washington, Columbia, and Yamhill counties also experiencing positive growth rates.

PSU Population Research Center Estimates vs. Census
Oregon Population Estimates

ACS 1-year estimates, Portland State University; Population Research Center
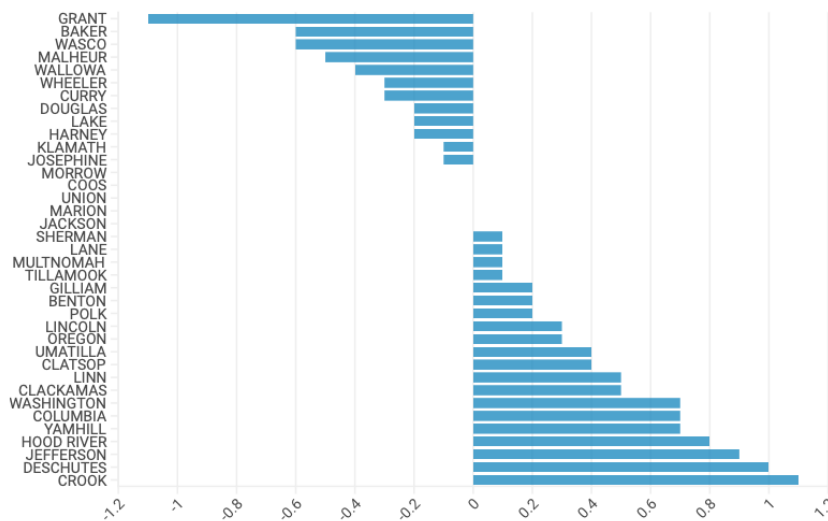
PRC uses a comprehensive approach for population estimation, integrating baseline data from the U.S. Census with administrative records from various sources such as ODOT and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). IRS data is particularly valuable as it includes migration patterns derived from tax filings, enhancing the understanding of demographic shifts.

The adjustments to population estimates likely stem from challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when data collection and processing encountered unique disruptions. Vehicle registration data from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) plays a notable role in these estimates. During the pandemic, ODOT implemented temporary waivers and relaxed enforcement for vehicle registrations to mitigate pandemic-related challenges. These measures likely affected the number of vehicle registrations recorded during that period.

The temporary waiver of DMV fees and penalties was aimed at alleviating the impact of pandemic-related disruptions by suspending enforcement for vehicle registrations. When these measures were lifted, it likely led to an increase in vehicle registrations, as individuals and businesses who delayed compliance during the relaxed period would have needed to update their registrations. This increase might have influenced PRC's population estimates, potentially contributing to the observed discrepancies between PRC's estimates and the Census data.

The preliminary population growth rates for Oregon's counties as of July 1, 2024, highlight a notable divergence in population trends across the state. Counties like Grant, Baker, Wasco, and others are experiencing slight population declines, with Grant leading at a -1.1% decrease. These reductions may be due to factors such as changing demographics, lower birth rates, or limited economic opportunities in these areas.

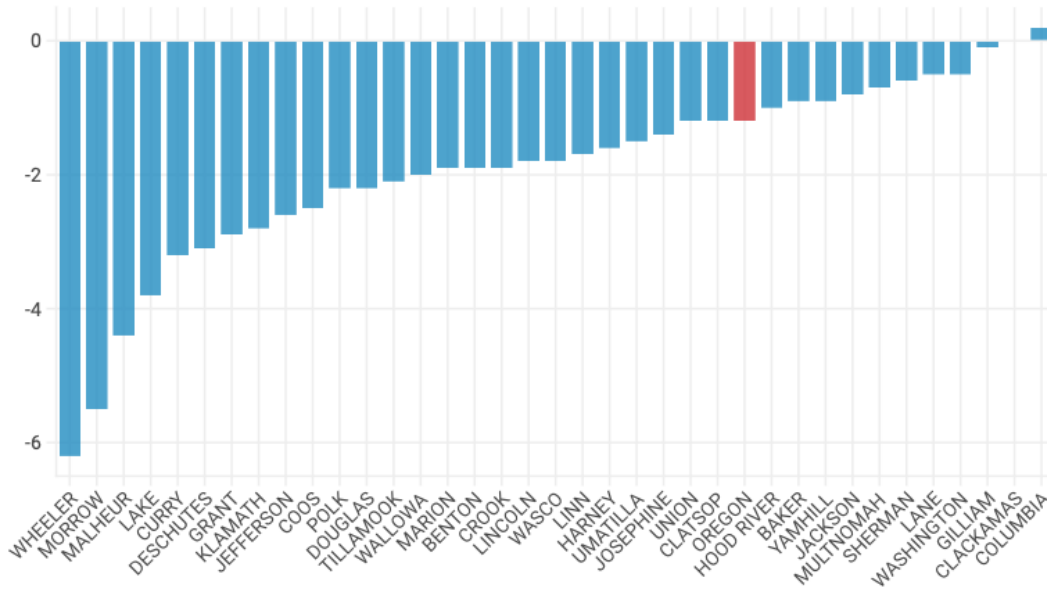**Preliminary Population Growth Estimates July 1, 2024**

Portland State University; Population Research Center

Conversely, several counties, particularly those within or near major metropolitan areas or with growing economic opportunities, show positive growth rates. Deschutes and Crook counties, for example, top the growth chart with increases of 1.0% and 1.1% respectively, likely driven by their appeal as desirable living locations outside the urban sprawl and their growing tourism and recreational industries. Meanwhile, counties like Washington, Columbia, and Yamhill also exhibit growth, benefiting from spillover effects of urban expansion and economic development.

In addition to the 2024 preliminary estimates, the revised population estimates for July 1, 2023, show that many counties in Oregon had their figures adjusted downwards compared to the initial estimates. For instance, Wheeler County experienced a significant revision of -6.2%, indicating an overestimation in earlier figures or possibly more rapid changes in population than anticipated. Malheur and Morrow counties also saw notable downward revisions of -4.4% and -5.5%, respectively, which may reflect changes in population patterns that were not initially captured accurately. Many of the counties with larger downward revisions are rural and economically challenged, which suggests these areas are struggling to attract or retain residents.

Some counties, such as Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah, showed virtually no change or smaller changes in their 2023 revisions, suggesting that initial estimates were already reliable. The contrast between counties experiencing significant downward revisions and those with minimal changes points to differences in the stability and consistency of their populations.

November 2015 Revision of July 1 2023 Population, %

Portland State University; Population Research Center

Overall, the combination of the 2023 population revisions and the 2024 growth estimates suggests that Oregon's counties are facing diverse population dynamics. Some counties are seeing stable or increasing populations, possibly due to their proximity to urban centers or other economic draws, while others are experiencing adjustments and slight declines, potentially due to shifting local conditions.

Despite the revisions and efforts to refine these estimates by incorporating time-series data from sources like the IRS, PRC and similar agencies continue to face challenges in aligning multiple data sources to accurately reflect demographic trends. This alignment is crucial for policy making and planning across the state. Looking forward, PRC plans to release their certified estimates on December 15th, which will provide more rigorously validated population figures for official use, further enhancing the understanding of Oregon's demographic trends and ensuring accurate data for policy development and resource allocation.