

New Estimates of Puerto Rican Migration Post Hurricane Maria in 2018: Florida Continues to Grow as the State with the Largest Puerto Rican Population

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The Puerto Rican population grew in the U.S. from 5.5 million in 2017 to 5.8 million in 2018, this is an addition of 202,790 Puerto Ricans in a one-year span. This continued population trend is mainly attributed to the massive exodus of Hurricane Maria in September 2017 and natural growth of the population (greater birth than deaths) is also a contributing factor to the stateside Puerto Rican population growth in 2018. These data are based on recently release estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey for the year 2018. The 2018 ACS collects information from January through December of that calendar year.



Table 1. United States Population by Major Ethnic Groups, 2017-2018

	2017	2018	Absolute Change	Percent Change (%)
Total Population	325,719,178	327,167,439	1,448,261	0.4%
Non-Hispanic White	197,285,202	197,033,939	-251,263	-0.1%
Non-Hispanic Black	40,129,593	40,305,870	176,277	0.4%
Hispanic or Latino¹	53,257,470	53,972,178	714,708	1.3%
Puerto Ricans in the U.S.²	5,588,664	5,791,453	202,789	3.6%
Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico³	3,201,679	3,064,018	-137,661	-4.3%
Total Population in Puerto Rico⁴	3,337,177	3,195,153	-142,024	-4.3%

1. Not including Puerto Ricans.
 2. Stateside Puerto Ricans only.
 3. Includes only the Puerto Rican population.
 4. Includes overall population in Puerto Rico.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 & 2018 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

As shown in table 1, data from these one-year estimates also showed that Puerto Ricans (3.6%) and Latinos overall (1.3%) were among the fastest growing population groups in the United States, compared to non-Hispanic blacks (0.4%), and the total U.S. population (0.4%). The non-Hispanic white population slightly decreased between 2017 and 2018 (-0.4%). These figures keep track with long-term

population trends in the country (see table 1).

In contrast to the continued growth of the Puerto Rican population in the U.S. overall, the Puerto Rican population in Puerto Rico continues to rapidly decline from 2017 to 2018 (see table 1). In a one-year period, Puerto Rico experienced a net loss of about 142,000 residents of its total population, Puerto Ricans and non-Puerto Ricans included,

an overall population decline of 4.3 percent. However, of these 142,000 individuals' population decline on the island, 137,600 (-4.3%) were of Puerto Rican origin or descent (see table 1). These figures suggest that the population decline of the island involves both Puerto Rican and non-Puerto Rican residents at similar rates of emigration. It is evident that these data reveal Hurricane Maria had a dramatic impact on both Puerto Rico's overall population and stateside Puerto

Rican population between 2017 and 2018.

By Region

In contrast to the Puerto Rican population in Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican population in the U.S. increased by 202,790 new statewide residents. Overall, Puerto Ricans in the U.S. continue to grow and disperse throughout the country. Regionally, the Puerto Rican population increased in the U.S. South (+133,470) followed by the Midwest (+27,487),

Table 2. Puerto Rican Population by States and Puerto Rico, 2017-2018

Regions	2017	2018	Change	Percent Change (%)
South	1,859,353	1,992,823	133,470	7%
Midwest	533,157	560,644	27,487	5%
Northeast	2,720,389	2,746,297	25,908	1%
West	475,765	491,689	15,924	3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 & 2018 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

Table 3. Puerto Rican Population by States and Puerto Rico, 2017-2018

	2017	2018	Change	Percent Change (%)
Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico	3,201,679	3,064,018	-137,661	-4.3%
Puerto Ricans in U.S.	5,588,664	5,791,453	202,789	+3.6%
Top 5 States with Growth				
Florida	1,128,225	1,187,437	59,212	+5.2%
Pennsylvania	445,442	477,312	31,870	+7.2%
Texas	184,643	214,765	30,122	+16.3%
Arizona	44,901	62,519	17,618	+39.2%
New Jersey	470,640	488,181	17,541	+3.7%
Top 5 States with Declines				
Nevada	30,046	25,740	-4,306	-14.3%
Kentucky	20,312	15,876	-4,436	-21.8%
Massachusetts	334,959	329,713	-5,246	-1.6%
Indiana	44,746	37,370	-7,376	-16.5%
New York	1,113,123	1,070,071	-43,052	-3.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 & 2018 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

Northeast (+25,908), and West (+15,924) between 2017 and 2018 (see table 2).

By State

Among the selected states, Florida (+59,212) had the largest increase followed by Pennsylvania (+31,870), Texas (+30,122), Arizona (+17,618), and New Jersey (+17,541) (see table 2). On the other hand, New York (-43,052) experienced the largest decline followed by Indiana (-7,376), Massachusetts (-5,246), Kentucky (-4,436), and Nevada (-4,306). dispersion for Puerto Ricans in the U.S., especially in states of more recent settlement as well as traditional settlement states.

IMPACT OF HURRICANE MARIA⁵

More than half of the growth of the Puerto Rican population in the U.S. in 2018 was a result of massive exodus of after Hurricane Maria. The 2018 American Community Survey

reports that 133,451 migrants from Puerto Rico relocated throughout the U.S. and 20,900 returned to Puerto Rico for a net emigration of 112,551 people. This is an increase of approximately 75% from prior years when net migration from Puerto Rico reached an average of 68,000 people.

At least 76 percent of migrants from Puerto Rico relocated to the top 10 states that already contained the most Puerto Ricans in the U.S., includes both states of traditional and areas of more recent settlement. The remaining 24% of migrants from the island dispersed throughout the U.S. As shown in table 4, the top 10 receiving migrants from Puerto Rico states includes: Florida at 34% (44,710) followed by 8% in Pennsylvania (11,188), 8% in Texas (11,057), 7% in New York (9,431), 4% in New Jersey (5,863), 4% in Massachusetts (5,677), 3% in Connecticut (4,485), 3% in South Carolina (3,505), 2% in Illinois (2,677), and 2% in Indiana (2,561).

Table 4. Migration from Puerto Rico to the Top 10 States, 2018

	Migration from Puerto Rico	Percent (%)
United States	133,451	100%
Top 10 States	101,154	76%
Florida	44,710	34%
Pennsylvania	11,188	8%
Texas	11,057	8%
New York	9,431	7%
New Jersey	5,863	4%
Massachusetts	5,677	4%
Connecticut	4,485	3%
South Carolina	3,505	3%
Illinois	2,677	2%
Indiana	2,561	2%
Other States	32,297	24%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. Table.B07204

5 The 2018 ACS population estimates include households surveyed from January to December of 2018. This includes a representative sample of the population in Puerto Rico collected after September 2017 when Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico and induced a massive emigration from the Island. Yet, according to the U.S. Census survey protocols, evacuees from Puerto Rico would only be counted as emigrants in the survey if they had arrived in the United States prior to the hurricane's landfall or planned to stay in the United States for two or more months. Therefore, population and migration figures reported here are likely to underestimate actual changes in residence between Puerto Rico and the United States in 2017, and by implication total population and migration estimates.

Appendix A. Puerto Rican Population by State, 2016-2018

State	2016	2017	2018	Absolute Change 2016-2017	Percent Change 2016-2017	Absolute Change 2017-2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
Florida	1,067,747	1,128,225	1,187,437	60,478	6%	59,212	5%
Pennsylvania	444,263	445,442	477,312	1,179	0%	31,870	7%
Texas	196,460	184,643	214,765	-11,817	-6%	30,122	16%
Arizona	44,250	44,901	62,519	651	1%	17,618	39%
New Jersey	470,143	470,640	488,181	497	0%	17,541	4%
Rhode Island	38,810	40,065	54,342	1,255	3%	14,277	36%
Illinois	209,638	195,046	206,543	-14,592	-7%	11,497	6%
Virginia	102,807	96,085	106,886	-6,722	-7%	10,801	11%
Ohio	122,204	126,554	137,104	4,350	4%	10,550	8%
Maryland	50,543	52,028	60,552	1,485	3%	8,524	16%
Oklahoma	11,672	10,604	18,222	-1,068	-9%	7,618	72%
Connecticut	298,245	291,603	298,006	-6,642	-2%	6,403	2%
Tennessee	31,336	31,295	37,537	-41	0%	6,242	20%
Mississippi	9,405	6,766	11,726	-2,639	-28%	4,960	73%
Alabama	19,930	22,027	26,822	2,097	11%	4,795	22%
New Hampshire	15,517	16,331	20,193	814	5%	3,862	24%
Michigan	45,826	43,952	47,412	-1,874	-4%	3,460	8%
Wisconsin	61,901	60,781	63,932	-1,120	-2%	3,151	5%
North Carolina	95,915	107,472	110,248	11,557	12%	2,776	3%
Colorado	33,961	35,872	38,288	1,911	6%	2,416	7%
District of Columbia	4,658	3,845	6,146	-813	-17%	2,301	60%
Missouri	13,955	14,577	16,816	622	4%	2,239	15%
California	214,255	224,500	226,738	10,245	5%	2,238	1%
Minnesota	13,257	15,344	17,477	2,087	16%	2,133	14%
North Dakota	3,037	2,099	4,221	-938	-31%	2,122	101%
Arkansas	6,609	6,988	9,016	379	6%	2,028	29%
Idaho	2,282	5,320	7,281	3,038	133%	1,961	37%
Georgia	100,398	101,921	103,647	1,523	2%	1,726	2%
Delaware	28,560	23,514	24,471	-5,046	-18%	957	4%

State	2016	2017	2018	Absolute Change 2016-2017	Percent Change 2016-2017	Absolute Change 2017-2018	Percent Change 2017-2018
Kansas	10,836	12,234	12,793	1,398	13%	559	5%
Alaska	7,729	7,737	8,156	8	0%	419	5%
South Dakota	2,142	2,514	2,853	372	17%	339	13%
Iowa	7,970	7,545	7,792	-425	-5%	247	3%
Wyoming	872	1,002	1,187	130	15%	185	18%
Maine	5,363	6,091	6,248	728	14%	157	3%
Vermont	3,526	2,135	2,231	-1,391	-39%	96	4%
Montana	2,409	2,136	2,166	-273	-11%	30	1%
Utah	12,211	12,676	12,566	465	4%	-110	-1%
South Carolina	32,848	41,025	40,888	8,177	25%	-137	0%
Hawaii	51,384	45,995	45,801	-5,389	-10%	-194	0%
New Mexico	8,677	9,895	9,606	1,218	14%	-289	-3%
Washington	29,805	39,346	38,591	9,541	32%	-755	-2%
Nebraska	3,547	7,765	6,331	4,218	119%	-1,434	-18%
Louisiana	14,868	16,109	14,472	1,241	8%	-1,637	-10%
West Virginia	6,062	6,494	4,112	432	7%	-2,382	-37%
Oregon	13,065	16,339	13,050	3,274	25%	-3,289	-20%
Nevada	26,995	30,046	25,740	3,051	11%	-4,306	-14%
Kentucky	16,967	20,312	15,876	3,345	20%	-4,436	-22%
Massachusetts	319,042	334,959	329,713	15,917	5%	-5,246	-2%
Indiana	35,460	44,746	37,370	9,286	26%	-7,376	-16%
New York	1,081,110	1,113,123	1,070,071	32,013	3%	-43,052	-4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2018 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates.

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