

Geographical Mobility

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About 1 in 6 Americans move each year.

Over 42 million Americans moved in the 1-year period between March 1992 and March 1993. This amounted to 16.8 percent of the population 1 year old and over. Most of these persons made local moves — 26 million moved from one residence to another within the same county. Nearly 8 million persons moved between counties within the same State and another nearly 7 million changed States. During that 1-year period, 1.3 million persons moved into the United States from abroad.

The rate of moving declined slightly between 1992 and 1993 and the previous 1-year period (16.8 percent, compared with 17.3 percent, respectively). While the small declines in the moving rates from one year to the next do

not seem large enough to be very important, over time they add up to an important decline in annual moving rates. The annual rate of moving has gradually declined from a high of 20.2 percent in the 1-year period between March 1984 and March 1985 and is now similar to the rates found most years during the early 1980's.

Most movers stay in the same county.

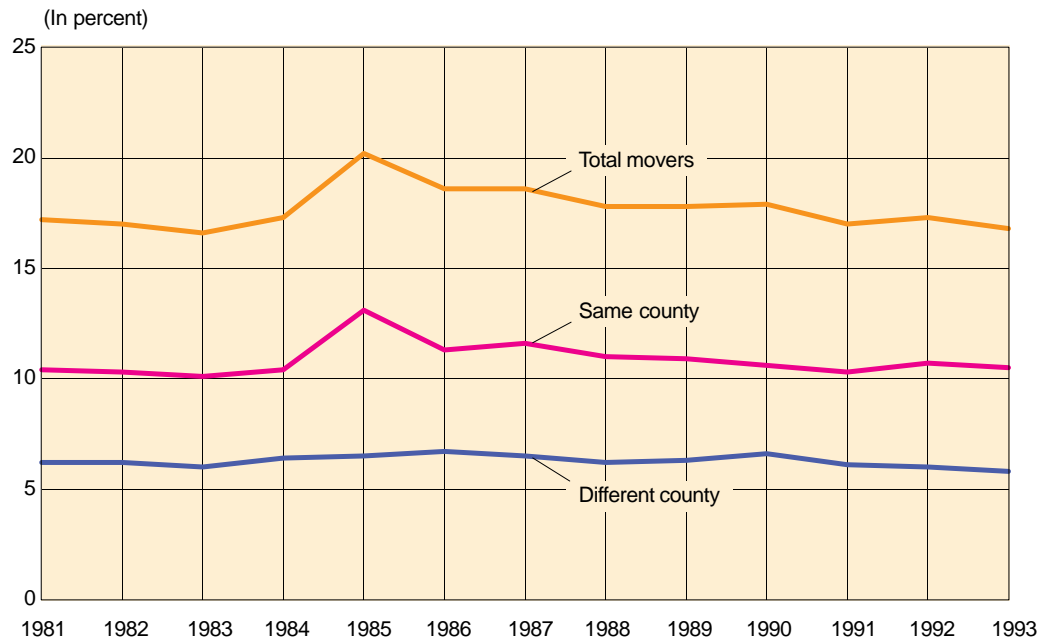
About two-thirds of the movers between March 1992 and March 1993 (10.5 percent of the total population 1 year old and over) moved locally (within the same county). Longer distance movers were somewhat more likely to move between counties in the same State (3.1 percent) than to move between States (2.7 percent). Most of the fluctuation in the annual moving rate

reflects changes in the rate of local moving, while there is little change in the rates of longer distance moving.

The average American moves 11.7 times in a lifetime.

The “average American” makes 11.7 moves in a lifetime (based upon current age structure and average rates of moving by age between 1990 and 1993). By age 4, an American can expect to have 10.8 moves remaining. At age 19, 9.2 moves can still be expected. But by age 44, only 3.1 moves remain. The actual mobility experience of individual persons, of course, will vary from these average numbers. In addition, since these moves are not evenly distributed throughout that average American's life, we cannot

Annual Rates of Moving, by Type of Move: 1981 to 1993



calculate an average length of stay in a particular residence.

The highest mobility rates are found for young adults in their twenties.

Over one-third of persons 20 to 24 years old (35.8 percent) moved between 1992 and 1993. This rate is twice the annual rate found for all persons 1 year old and over (16.8 percent). Persons 25 to 29 years old have nearly as high a rate of moving as persons in their early twenties; 30.9 percent moved in the previous year. Moving rates continue to decline as age increases to an apparent low of 5.3 percent for persons 75 to 84 years old. There appears to be a slight upturn in

moving rates for persons at the oldest ages; persons 85 years old and over had a moving rate of 6.1 percent.

Whites have lower rates of moving than either Blacks or persons of Hispanic origin.

Whites have lower overall rates of moving (16.2 percent) than either Blacks (19.0 percent) or persons of Hispanic origin (23.6 percent).¹ The same pattern is shown for local movers; Whites had

¹Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. These data do not include the population of Puerto Rico. In the Current Population Survey, most Hispanics report their race as White; therefore, the rates for all Whites includes the moving rates of most Hispanics.

the lowest rate of moving within the same county (9.8 percent), Hispanics had the highest (17.0 percent), and the rate for Blacks fell in between the other two groups (13.8 percent).

Renters have much higher rates of moving than homeowners.

Tenure (whether the person is living in a housing unit occupied by owners or renters) has a very strong correlation with mobility rates. Tenure is owner/renter status at the time of the survey in March 1993; tenure before the move is not known.

About one-third of persons living in renter-occupied housing units in March 1993 had

moved in the previous year (32.9 percent). In contrast, fewer than 1 in 10 persons in owner-occupied housing units had moved in the same period (9.1 percent). Renters have vastly higher rates of moving than owners for all types of moves.

For Further Information

See: Current Population Reports, Series P20-481, *Geographical Mobility: March 1992 to March 1993*.

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**Moving Rates, by Age:
1992 to 1993**

