

Arkansas' Retirement-Age Migration: A Statewide Overview

Wayne Miller
Professor and Extension
Economist

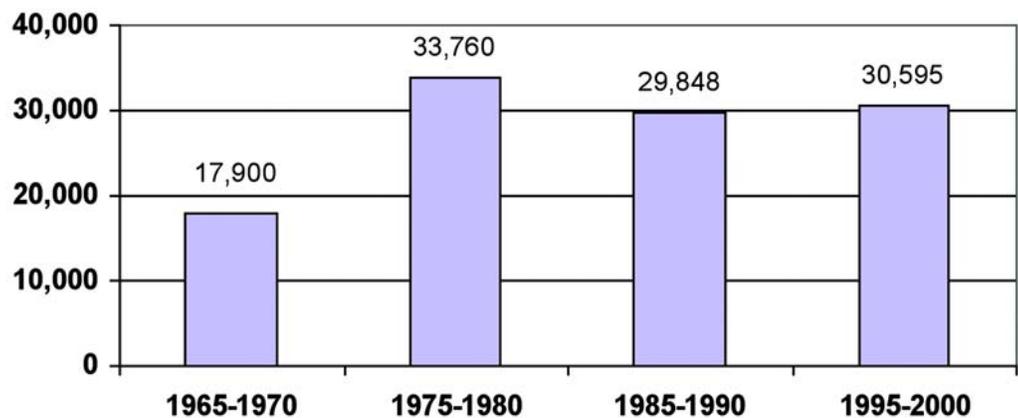
Katy Elliott
Extension Associate -
Community and
Economic Development

Projections suggest that as “baby boomers” begin to retire, the number of people 60 years of age and older who move to another state will increase dramatically. Arkansas has attracted retirees to the state for several decades – due to its friendly people, picturesque scenery, lakes, recreational opportunities and four distinct seasons – and has the potential to attract an increasing number of retirees as the baby boomers begin to retire. These retirees provide numerous social and economic benefits to the communities where they locate. To continue to attract retirees, Arkansas needs to aggressively market to people who desire the living environment the state

offers. Other states also aggressively market their states as retirement destination areas, so Arkansas will need to identify and market its unique and desirable amenities.

We have developed this publication to help local leaders, decision-makers and developers understand what type of retirees migrate to Arkansas and where they originate. In this publication, readers will discover easy-to-read and easy-to-interpret charts and data detailing the trends, characteristics and demographics of Arkansas' retirement-age migration from the early 1970s up to the present time.

Figure 1. Arkansas In-Migration, 1965 to 2000



Source: Migration Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

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Figure 1 illustrates the overall amount of retirement-age people relocating into the state of Arkansas from 1970 until 2000.

In-Migration

Arkansas has been a popular retirement state since the late 1960s, when relocation after retirement began increasing nationwide. In the 1970s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture designated 36 of Arkansas' 75 counties as "retirement destination" areas. Although Arkansas has experienced slight declines in retiree in-migration since 1980, Arkansas continued to attract people 60 years of age and older who relocated to Arkansas from another state during the 1990s. Census Bureau estimates indicate that the number of people in this age group relocating to Arkansas was over 30,000 between 1995 and 2000. (See Figure 1 on page 1.)

When in-migration figures for ages 60 and over for the state of Arkansas are compared to other states across the nation, Arkansas ranks 23rd. However, Arkansas ranks 13th in terms of the in-migration

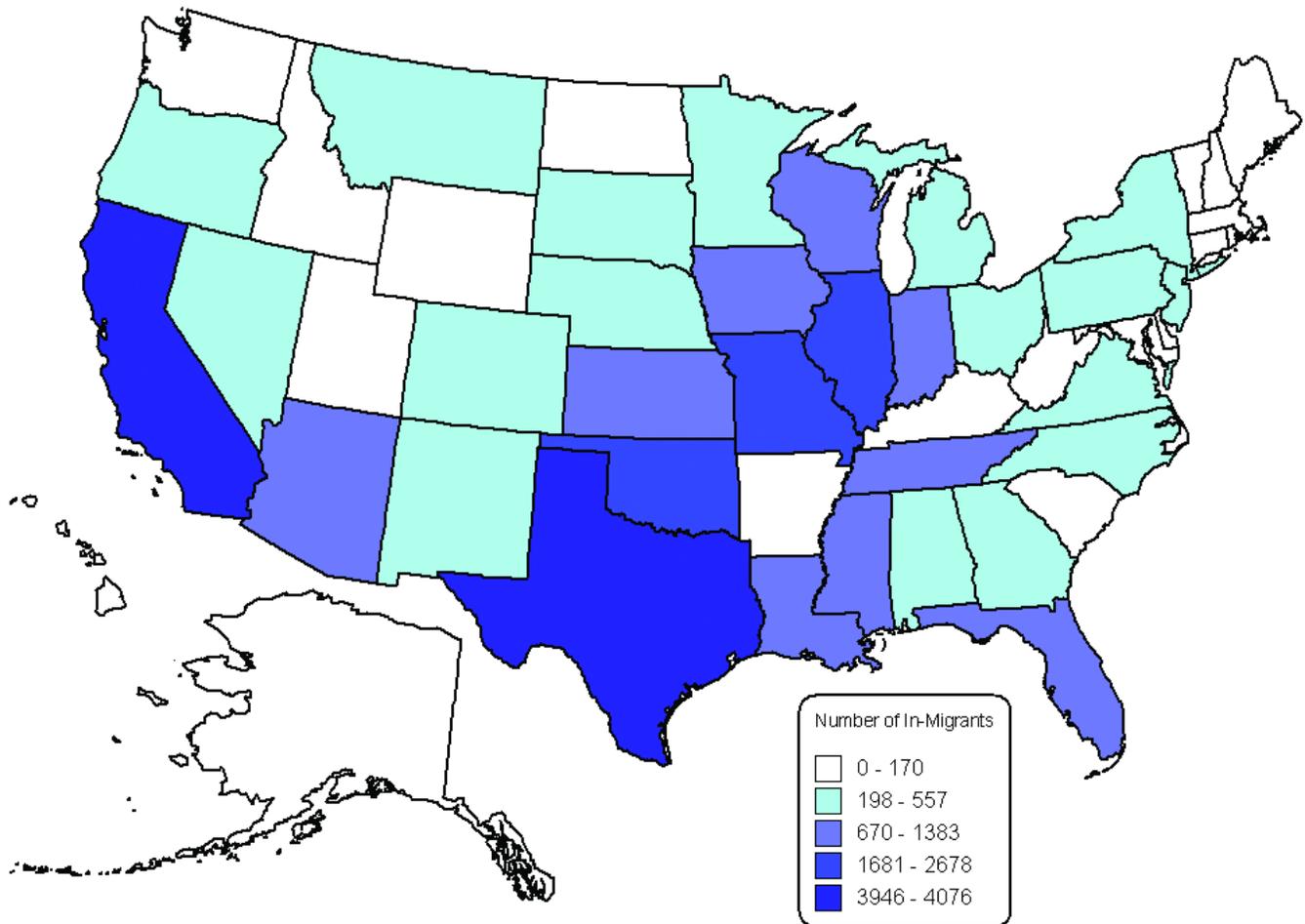
rate for these same ages. The in-migration rate provides an accurate assessment of in-migration relative to the population of this age group.

Origin of In-Migrants

From 1995 to 2000, more than one-fourth of all in-migrating retirement-age people (60 years and older) moved to Arkansas from either Texas or California (Figure 2). Approximately 4,000 people in this age group moved to Arkansas from Texas and 4,000 from California. This is a slight decline in the number of retirement-age people moving to Arkansas from Texas compared to a decade earlier, 1985 to 1990, whereas the number of people moving from California remained about the same as a decade earlier.

A large number of retirement-age in-migrants also come from Illinois, Missouri and Oklahoma. Over one-fifth (22.5 percent) or approximately

Figure 2. In-Migration of People Aged 60 and Older to Arkansas (1995 to 2000)



Source: This map was generated by the University of Arkansas from Census PUMA data provided by Dr. Charles Longino of Wake Forest University.

Figure 2 illustrates the origin of Arkansas' in-migrants from 1995 until 2000. The majority of Arkansas' in-migrants originated from Texas, California, Missouri, Illinois and Oklahoma.

7,300 retirement-age people relocated to Arkansas from these three states. Only five other states – Tennessee, Louisiana, Florida, Kansas and Iowa – had 1,000 or more of their retirement-age residents relocate to Arkansas. These states accounted for about one-half of all retirement-age people who relocated to Arkansas between 1995 and 2000.

Some states provided more retirement-age in-migrants to Arkansas from 1995 to 2000 compared to a decade earlier, while other states had fewer residents who relocated to Arkansas. Tennessee had 425 more retirement-age people relocate in Arkansas, while another six states had between 205 and 276 more people in this age group move to Arkansas. These six states included Indiana, Nebraska, Arizona, Montana, Virginia and Missouri. However, there were about 1,400 fewer retirement-age people from Texas (-707) and Illinois (-703) who moved to Arkansas compared to a decade earlier. There was also a considerable decline in the number of retirement-age people who moved to Arkansas from Minnesota, Kansas and Michigan compared to the previous decade.

Out-Migration

While in-migration of people aged 60 and older to Arkansas remained about the same during the 1980s and 1990s, out-migration of people in this age group, from Arkansas to other states, increased from about 18,300 to approximately 22,300 (Figure 3).

Destination of Out-Migrants

Nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of Arkansas residents (4,210) in this age group who moved to

another state between 1995 and 2000 moved to Texas (Figure 4, page 4). Missouri and Oklahoma were also major recipients of Arkansas residents, receiving 2,723 and 2,074 retirement-age people from Arkansas between 1995 and 2000. Another four states, California, Florida, Tennessee and Illinois, were all recipients of more than 1,000 retirement-age Arkansas residents.

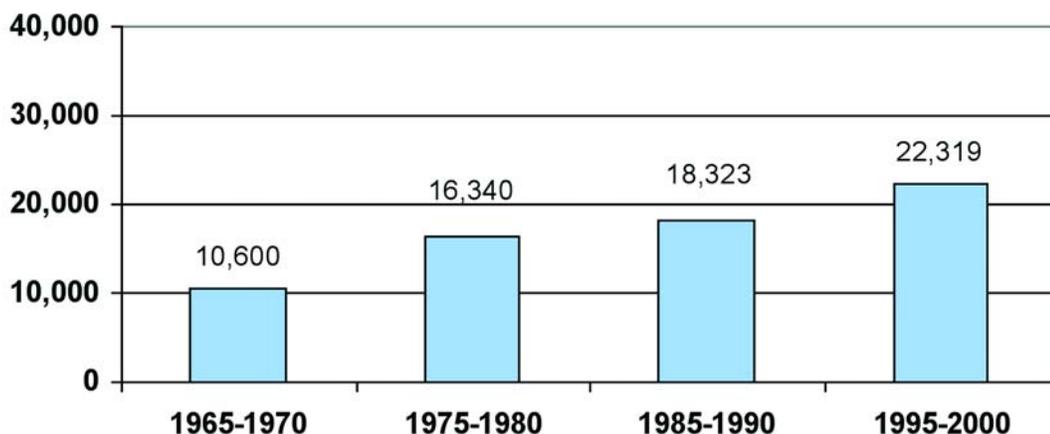
Texas and Missouri also experienced the largest increase in the number of retirement-age Arkansas residents who relocated in their states between the 1985-1990 and 1995-2000 time periods. Texas had an increase of 1,710 Arkansas retirement-age residents relocating in the state, compared to an increase of 1,007 moving to Missouri. However, somewhat fewer Arkansas retirement-age residents moved to Illinois and 14 other states as compared to the previous decade.

Seven major elderly migration streams flowed out of Arkansas between 1975 and 2000. Texas, California, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Florida each received more than 1,000 persons aged 60 and older from Arkansas during the time periods 1975-1980, 1985-1990 and 1995-2000.

Net In-Migration

Since the number of people 60 years and older in-migrating to Arkansas stayed about the same and the number of people in this age group leaving Arkansas increased between 1985-1990 and 1995-2000, the net in-migration of retirement-age people declined. There was a net in-migration of 8,276 people aged 60 and older between 1995 and

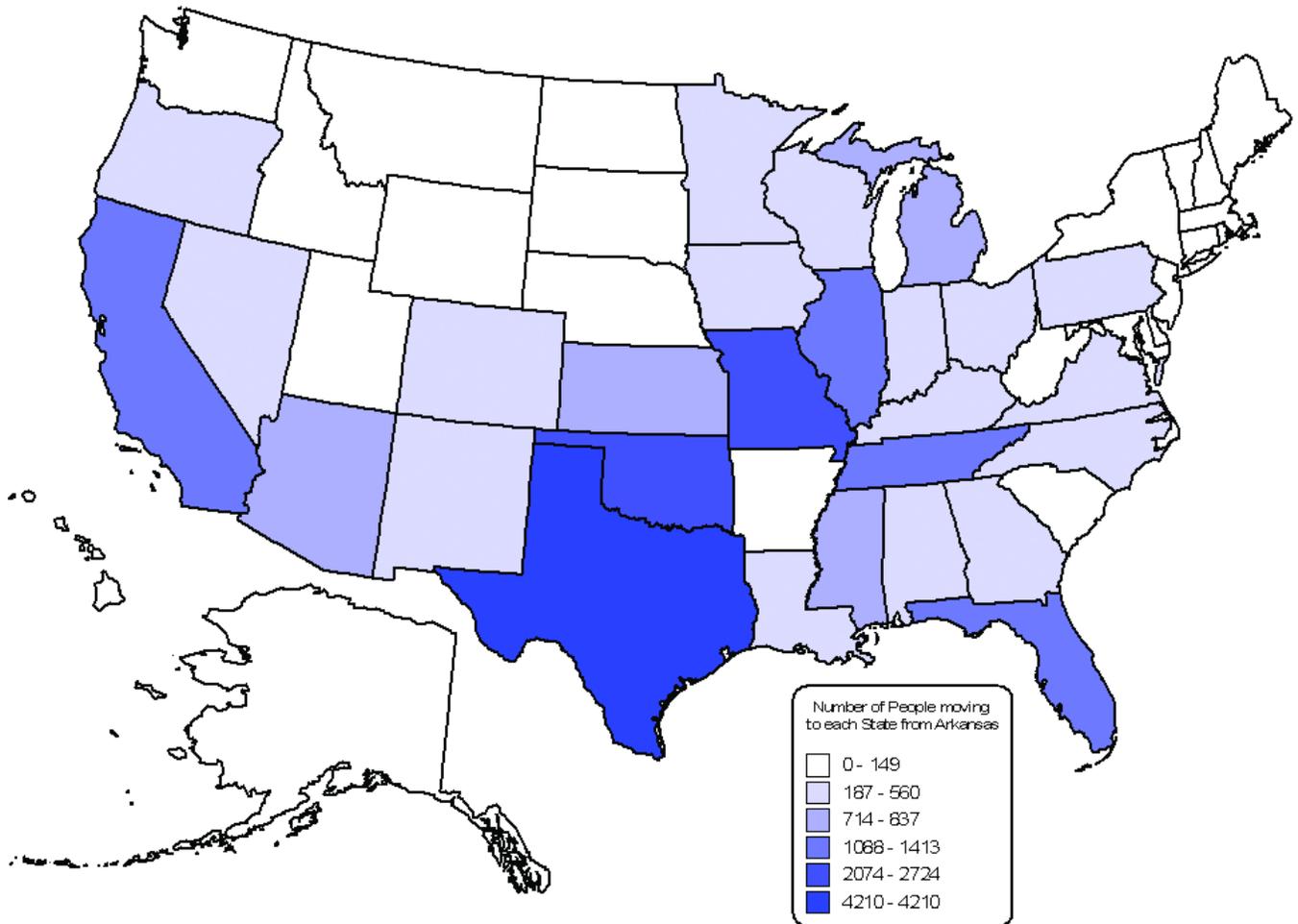
Figure 3. Arkansas Out-Migration, 1965 to 2000



Source: Migration Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 3 shows the totals for Arkansas' out-migration from 1970 until 2000. Out-migration increased during this time.

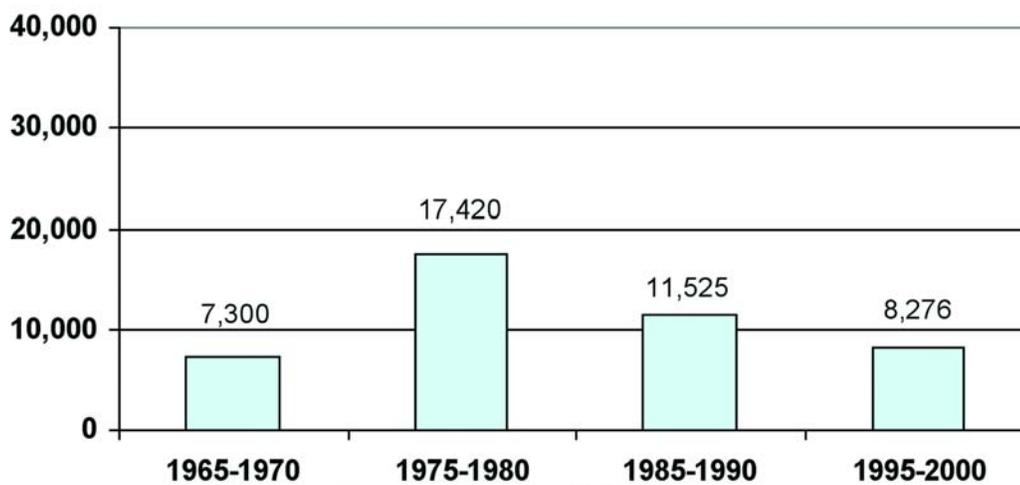
Figure 4. Out-Migration of People Aged 60 and Older From Arkansas (1995 to 2000)



Source: This map was generated by the University of Arkansas from Census PUMA data provided by Dr. Charles Longino of Wake Forest University.

Figure 4 illustrates the destination of Arkansas' out-migrants between 1995 and 2000. The states capturing the majority of Arkansas' out-migration include Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri.

Figure 5. Arkansas Net In-Migration, 1965 to 2000



Source: Migration Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 5 captures the "net" number of age 60+ in-migrants – this number being the difference between in-migrating retirement-age newcomers to the state and out-migrating retirement-age Arkansans. While Arkansas maintained a positive net in-migration in 2000, net in-migration has consistently decreased since 1980.

2000 as compared to 11,394 a decade earlier. Although net in-migration of retirement-age population has declined since 1980, Arkansas continues to receive more retirement-age in-migrants compared with out-migrating Arkansans aged 60 years and older. While Arkansas is attracting about the same number of retirement-age people from other states as is it did during the late 1980s, the exodus of people in this age group is growing.

Age of In-Migrants and Out-Migrants

The majority of elderly in-migrants who moved to Arkansas between 1995 and 2000 were younger than 70 years of age. Nearly 19,000 people aged between 60 and 69 relocated to Arkansas during this time. They make up nearly two-thirds of the total in-migrants over 60 years old. Approximately 17 percent of the in-migrants were between 75 and

84 years of age, and approximately 7 percent were aged 85 and older (Figure 6).

While the majority of the elderly in-migrants to Arkansas are less than 70 years of age, the majority of elderly out-migrants are over 70 years of age. Approximately 13,100 or more than 50 percent of the elderly out-migrants were 70 years of age or older. Slightly more than 9,200 of elderly out-migrants were between the ages of 60 and 69 (Figure 7).

Net in-migration into Arkansas between 1995 and 2000 was positive for ages 60 to 74 and negative for ages 75 and older. The largest net in-migration consisted of elderly people between 60 and 64 years of age. Between 1995 and 2000, Arkansas gained over 5,700 citizens between the ages of 60 and 64 and over 3,700 citizens aged 65 to 69 years of age (Figure 8, page 6).

Figure 6. In-Migration to Arkansas by Age, 1995 to 2000

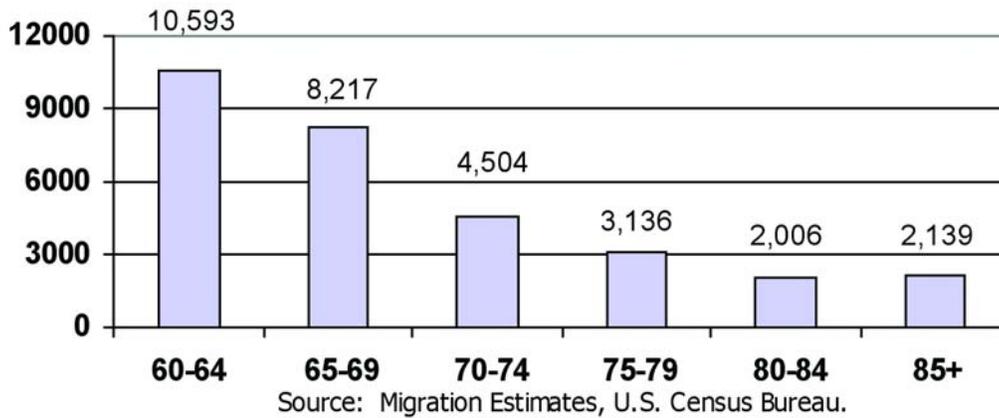


Figure 7. Out-Migration from Arkansas by Age, 1995 to 2000

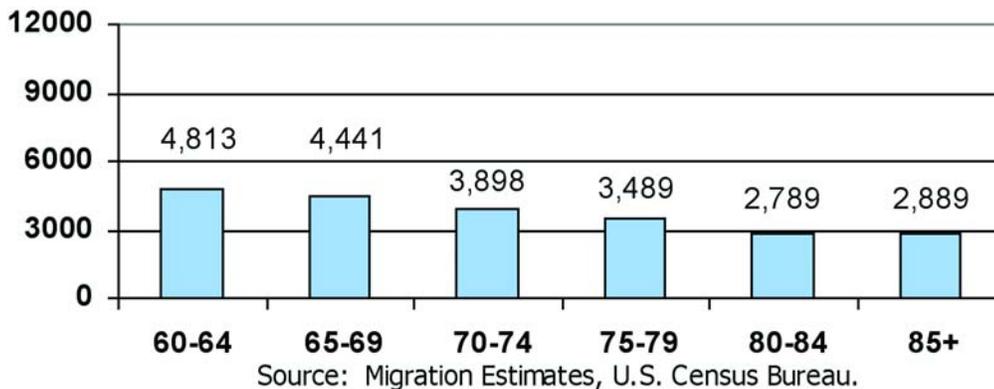
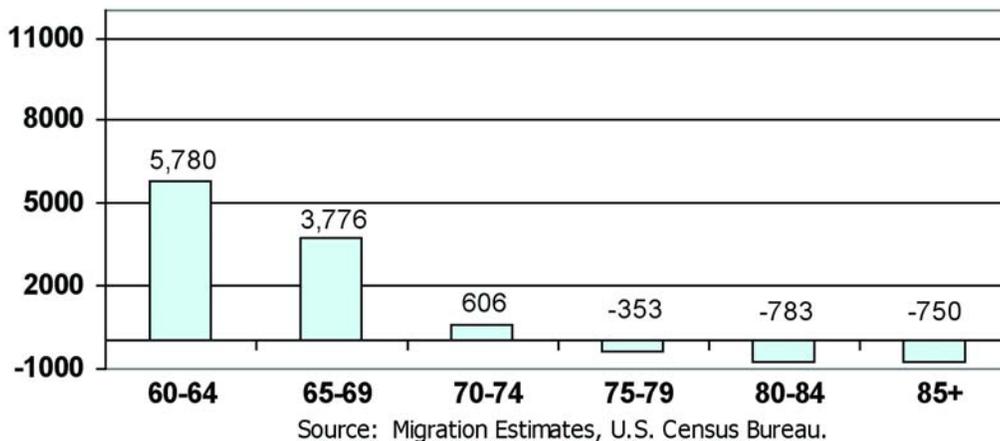


Figure 8. Arkansas Net In-Migration by Age, 1995 to 2000



Summary

Arkansas has attracted a large number of people who want the amenities and lifestyle offered by many Arkansas communities, including a relaxed and scenic environment and abundant outdoor recreational opportunities. During the 1960s, Arkansas experienced a large influx of elderly in-migrants. This influx increased dramatically during the 1970s and declined slightly throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, the number of elderly people leaving Arkansas has also risen steadily since 1970. As a result, net elderly in-migration has declined in Arkansas since the 1970s, although net in-migration levels remain higher than they were from 1965 to 1970.

The majority of retirement-age in-migrants to Arkansas come from Texas, California, Illinois and states contiguous with Arkansas. States that share

borders with Arkansas are states of origin as well as destination for migrants moving in and out of Arkansas.

Many of the elderly in-migrants (62 percent) are less than 70 years of age, while nearly 60 percent of the out-migrants are 70 years of age and older.

The impact of elderly migration on Arkansas' population structure is substantial. Arkansas gained over 8,000 people 60 years and older due to state-to-state migration. Though net in-migration has declined, the state of Arkansas nevertheless possesses the qualities that attract retirees – scenic beauty, low cost of living, quality medical care and recreational opportunities. Communities wishing to attract retirees to their area should adopt aggressive marketing strategies to promote their qualities and assets.