

Which New Hampshire cities grew the most from 2000 to 2002? How does this city's growth compare to growth in the rest of the state?

Recently released U.S. Census Bureau July 2002 population estimates hold answers to these questions.

Among New Hampshire cities, Manchester had the largest population gain from 2000 to 2002 adding almost 1,200 new inhabitants. Nashua was the only other city to approach 1,000 new residents. Since Manchester and Nashua have large populations relative to the state's other cities, their larger net gains did not yield large growth rates over the two-year period.

The fastest growing city was Laconia. With a significantly smaller base population, just under 16,500, this city grew by 3.0 percent. Dover and Rochester were next in line adding 2.9 and 2.7 percent respectively.

The only city to decline in population was Berlin. During this two-year period its local economy suffered through a long shutdown of two paper mills. Workers may have uprooted their families to find employment.

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## Population In New Hampshire's Cities

Ranking City Population Change July '00 to '02 Among All 248 Populated Places in NH

Place	July '02 Population	Change from July 2000 to 2002			
		Net	Rank	Percent	Rank
Manchester city	108,398	1,195	2	1.1%	187
Nashua city	87,705	929	5	1.1%	191
Dover city	27,784	795	7	2.9%	108
Rochester city	29,350	780	8	2.7%	116
Concord city	41,404	639	12	1.6%	163
Laconia city	16,949	499	14	3.0%	104
Somersworth city	11,758	251	40	2.2%	133
Portsmouth city	21,048	223	54	1.1%	190
Lebanon city	12,788	213	58	1.7%	153
Franklin city	8,553	139	78	1.7%	156
Keene city	22,714	128	82	0.6%	205
Claremont city	13,195	43	141	0.3%	211
Berlin city	10,209	-123	248	-1.2%	248
City Total	411,855	5,711	—	1.4%	—
Balance of State	863,201	28,873	—	3.5%	—
NH Total	1,275,056	34,584	—	2.8%	—

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NH Communities with Largest Growth July '00 to July '02

Place	2002 Population	Net Change	Rank
Bedford town	19,842	1,354	1
Manchester city	108,398	1,195	2
Merrimack town	26,448	1,184	3
Windham town	11,852	1,012	4
Nashua city	87,705	929	5
Londonderry town	24,219	852	6
Dover city	27,784	795	7
Rochester city	29,350	780	8
Salem town	28,980	763	9
Pelham town	11,672	667	10
Hooksett town	12,433	653	11
Concord city	41,404	639	12
Chester town	4,386	525	13
Laconia city	16,949	499	14
Hudson town	23,476	493	15

As to the second question, are cities where the action is in the Granite State? For growth the answer is no! While growth in New Hampshire's 13 cities averaged 1.4 percent, the state grew at double that rate. Take away the cities and the rest of the state grew by 3.5 percent. The town of Bedford added 159 more people than Manchester. Merrimack and Windham each added more than 1,000 new residents. Londonderry grew more than Dover and Rochester.

and Temple each grew by more than seven percent. Their net gains ranged from 56 for Monroe, at the doorstep of the White Mountains, to 1,012 and 1,354 respectively for Windham and Bedford, located between Manchester and Nashua, along the I93-Everett Turnpike corridor.

Peter S. Bartlett

NH Communities with Fastest Growth July '00 to July '02

Place	2002 Population	% Change	Rank
Chester town	4,386	13.6%	1
Windham town	11,852	9.3%	2
New Ipswich town	4,739	9.1%	3
Mont Vernon town	2,230	8.4%	4
New Boston town	4,528	8.1%	5
Chichester town	2,427	7.4%	6
Bedford town	19,842	7.3%	7
Monroe town	822	7.3%	8
Epping town	5,936	7.0%	9
Temple town	1,400	7.0%	10
Barnstead town	4,180	6.8%	11
Lyndeborough town	1,699	6.7%	12
Dunbarton town	2,398	6.6%	13
Brentwood town	3,436	6.5%	14
Deerfield town	3,937	6.5%	15

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Ranking New Hampshire communities by growth rate, the first 103 are towns. Chester, just east of Manchester, topped the charts at 13.6 percent. Chester, Windham, New Ipswich, Mont Vernon, New Boston, Chichester, Bedford, Monroe, Epping,