

## POPULATION

According to U.S. Census Bureau, New Hampshire's population was an estimated 1,395,231 residents on July 1, 2022, a gain of more than 7,726 residents over-the-year. New Hampshire's population gain is nearly equivalent to the net population loss in Massachusetts — between 2021 and 2022 the population in the Bay State declined by -7,716 residents. The largest population gain among New England states from 2021 to 2022 was in Maine, which added 8,102 residents.

Since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. population has migrated from densely populated urban areas to rural settings.<sup>1</sup> This outbound migration from larger cities helped boost a population influx into New Hampshire. The population gains over-the-year in 2021 and 2022 in New Hampshire were stronger than annual population gains in the decade prior to the pandemic.

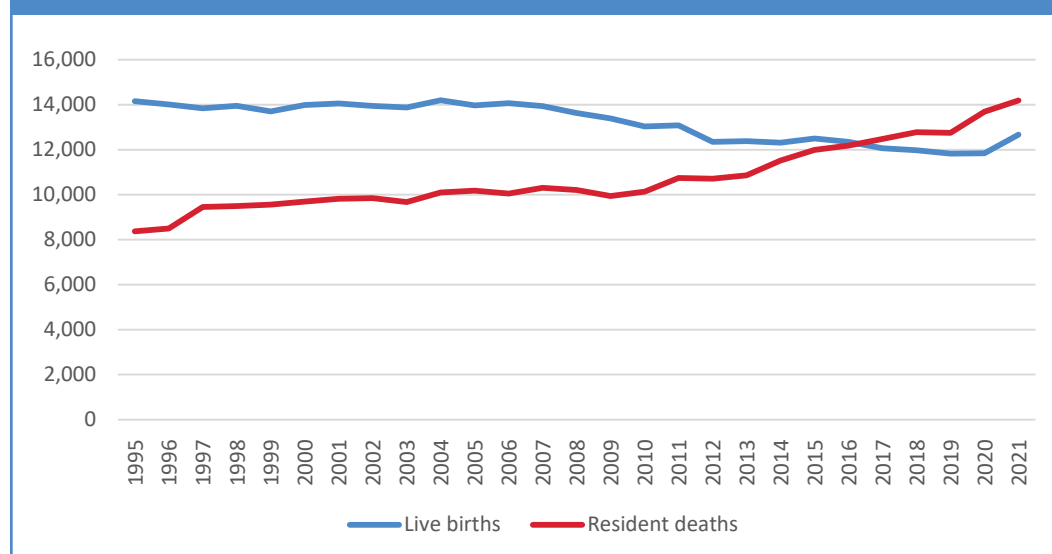
Population growth in New Hampshire from 2020 to 2021 and from 2021 to 2022 was driven by a strong increase in net migration as the natural change (births minus deaths) was negative for both years. The two components of net migration (domestic and international migration) were both positive

and summed to a little more than 10,000 over both 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. But net domestic migration slowed from about 8,500 from 2020 to 2021, dropping to 6,300 from 2021 to 2022, whereas international migration increased from 1,500 to 3,900 over the same periods. Given the demographic make-up of the state, with an older population, it is a positive sign for the economy that net migration to the state has been trending upward since 2015.

The number of residents deaths in New Hampshire has exceeded the number of live births since 2017. Combined with a low fertility rate, this is an indication of New Hampshire's aging population. Though the number of deaths continued to outnumber the number of births in New Hampshire, there was a seven percent increase in the number of births in 2021, breaking from a downward trend in the number of births in New Hampshire. According to an analysis from QuoteWizard by LendingTree, New Hampshire had the largest percentage increase in the number of births from 2020 to 2021.<sup>2</sup> The increasing number of childbirths in 2021, in New Hampshire as well as nationwide, is being referred to as a pandemic

caused baby-boom, although nationwide birth rates are still below pre-pandemic levels. Government spending during the pandemic

### DEATHS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE HAVE OUTNUMBERED BIRTHS SINCE 2017



Source: New Hampshire Division of Vital Records Administration

- 1 Johnson, Kenneth M., "Recent Data Suggest Rural America Is Growing Again After a Decade of Population Loss. December 6, 2022." University of New Hampshire, Carsey School of Public Policy. Accessed on March 7, 2023 at <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/snapshot/recent-data-suggest-rural-america-is-growing-again>.
- 2 Cousineau, Michael, "Our state may be 'old,' but..." New Hampshire Union Leader. February 1, 2023. P.1. [https://www.unionleader.com/news/health/nh-leads-the-nation-in-growth-in-births/article\\_69d85724-2440-5d79-b7d7-755fe06a5c2d.html](https://www.unionleader.com/news/health/nh-leads-the-nation-in-growth-in-births/article_69d85724-2440-5d79-b7d7-755fe06a5c2d.html).

reduced poverty rates, which likely contributed to the increased birth rate in 2021.<sup>3</sup> Fertility rates increased most for women under 25, as well as for those 25 to 44 with a college degree, who were more likely to retain their jobs during the pandemic, and more likely to be able to work from home.

### New Hampshire's Longer Demographic Trend: Community by Community

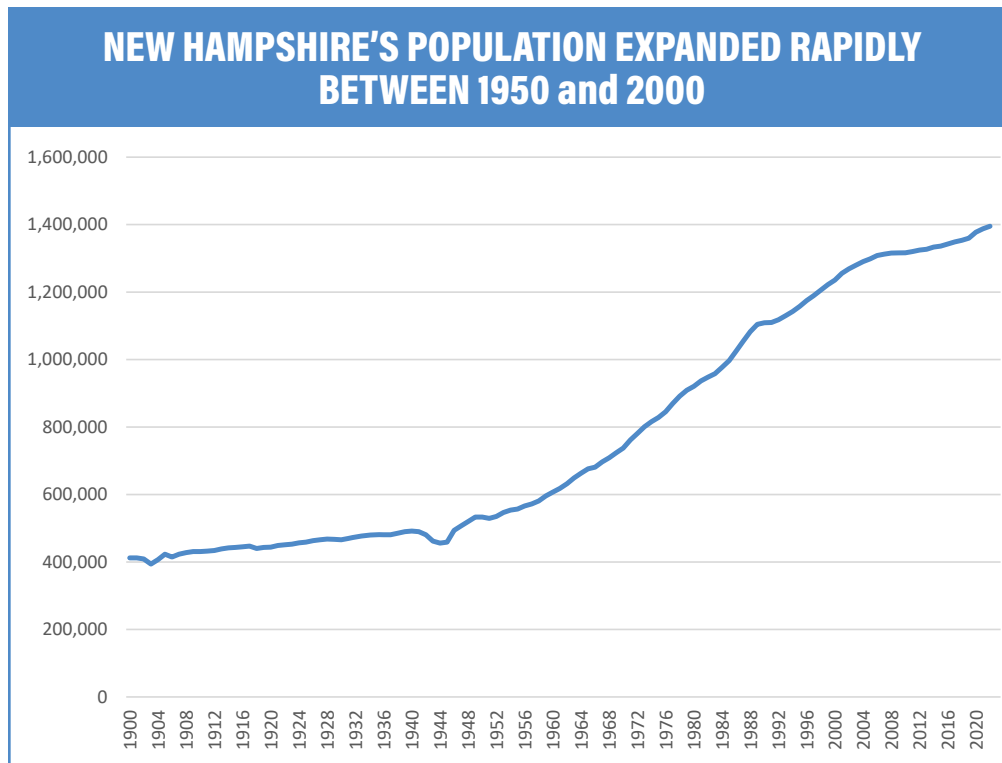
The recent post-COVID-19 uptick is muted when compared to the rapid growth occurring in New Hampshire between 1960 and 2000. This rapid population growth, especially from 1970 to 1990, led to conversion of agricultural and forested land to housing and other developments, and to the expansion of municipal budgets, creating some fear that the rural character of the state would disappear.<sup>4</sup>

As New Hampshire's population is expanding at a faster rate again, it might be important to take a look at how New Hampshire's population

growth since the 1950s took shape. Did this rapid expansion occur equally throughout the state and was there a difference between the rapid expansion in the state's cities versus the state's rural communities? In which geographic areas of the state did the population expansion primarily occur?

A comparison of population counts from each of the decennial Censuses between 1950 and 2020 for the state's 234 incorporated communities, show some variations in when the population expansion occurred.

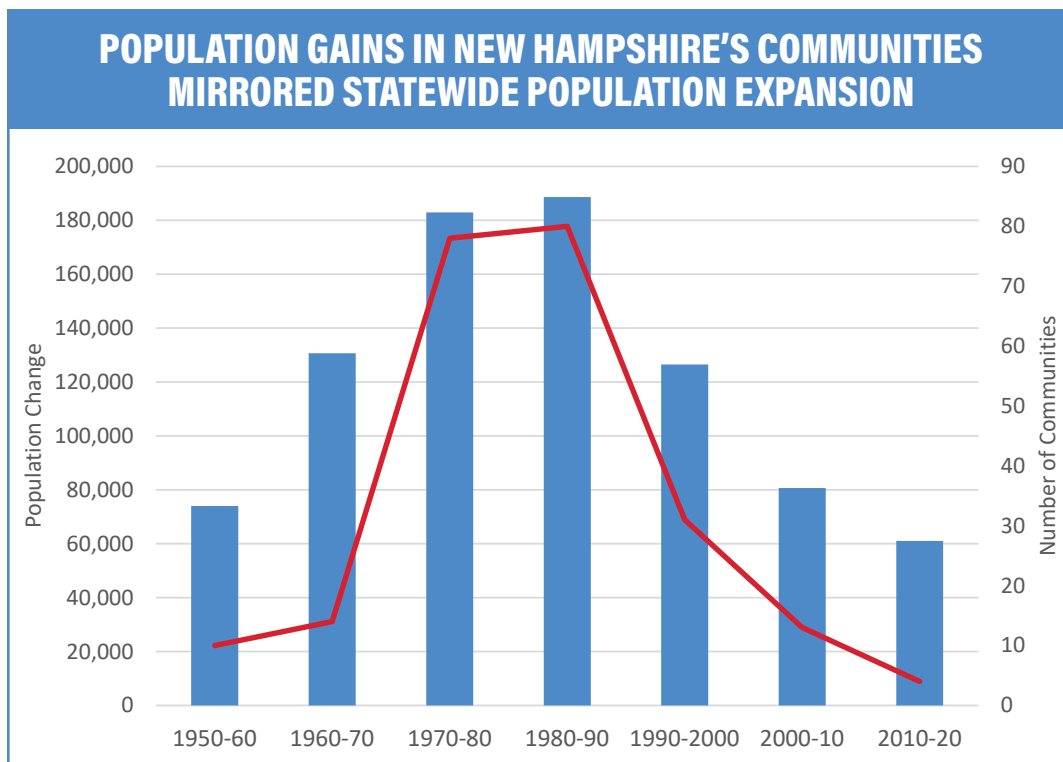
Of the 234 incorporated cities and towns in the State of New Hampshire, 78 communities experienced their largest population expansion between 1970 and 1980 and another 80 communities experienced their largest population expansion between 1980 and 1990. As the chart above illustrates, the rapid population expansion in most communities mirrored the statewide population expansion with the strongest growth during the 1970's and 1980's. For the vast



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

3 Martha J. Bailey, Janet Currie, Hannes Schwandt. "The COVID-19 Baby Bump: The Unexpected Increase in U.S. Fertility rates in Response to the Pandemic," National Bureau of Economic Research. [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w30569/w30569.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30569/w30569.pdf).

4 New Hampshire Council on Resources and Development, Smart Growth Report. July 2016. <https://www.nh.gov/osi/planning/programs/cord/documents/smart-growth.pdf>.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

majorities of New Hampshire's communities, the rapid population growth occurred more than 20 years ago, with only four communities experiencing their largest population gains over the decade 2010-2020. The four communities with largest decennial growth from 2010 to 2020 were Laconia, Henniker, Waterville Valley and Hart's Location.

Although recent population growth has been slow compared to growth between 1960 and 2000, some residents are still wary about their community losing its rural character if more dense residential development is allowed.<sup>5</sup>

Over the entire 70-year period, only a few communities experienced a decline in population. The most prominent population decline has been in Berlin, with the population declining from 16,615 residents in 1950 to 9,704 in 2020. All other communities experiencing population decline between 1950 and 2020 were in the northern part of New Hampshire, and population declines in

these areas were likely a consequence of the demise of the wood-based economy (paper mills and logging) and its associated job losses.<sup>6</sup>

The state's largest communities, such as Manchester, Nashua and Concord have expanded, yet population growth in these larger communities have not experienced the same type of population growth that the bedroom communities along I-93 and Route 3 did over the period 1950 to 2020. Currently, many of these communities along I-93 and Route 3 continue to expand with new residential developments being built.<sup>7</sup>

In general, New Hampshire's cities have experienced population growth to a lesser degree than most of the smaller communities. Some of these communities changed from being a rural village to becoming a suburban community within a generation. This is likely contributing to resistance many smaller communities have towards large-scale development.

<sup>5</sup> The Saint Anselm College New Hampshire Housing Poll indicated that 42 percent of respondents disagreed with the question: "New Hampshire towns and cities should relax their planning and zoning regulations in order to allow more housing to be built" and 32 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that: "New Hampshire communities should do more to prevent development and keep the state the way it is". Soren, Jason. "The New Hampshire Statewide Housing Poll and Survey Experiments: Lessons for Advocates." Pages 4-5. Saint Anselm College Center for Ethics in Business and Governance. January 1, 2021. <https://www.anselm.edu/sites/default/files/CEBG/20843-CEBG-IssueBrief-P2.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> The decline of the paper industry in New Hampshire was discussed in several papers produced by New Hampshire Employment Security. For more information, see <https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/documents/cooscounty-groveton.pdf>.

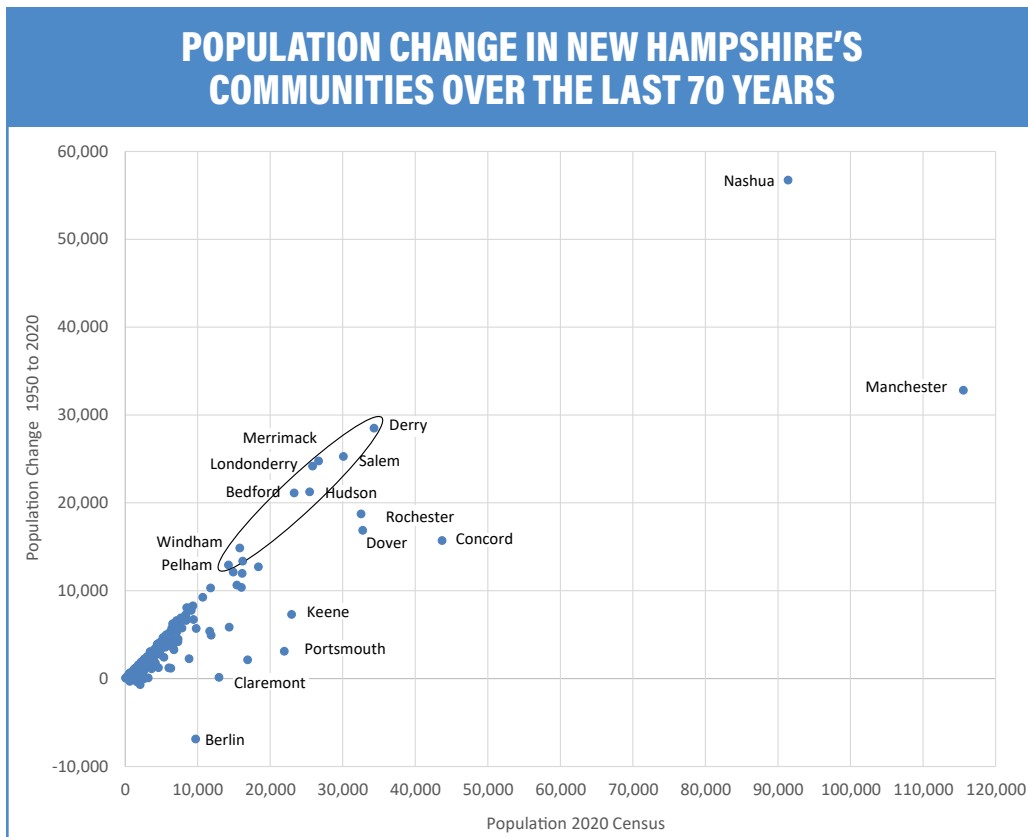
<sup>7</sup> Examples of new residential and mixed-use developments are Woodmont Commons in Londonderry and Market and Main in Bedford.

The geographic location of each of New Hampshire’s communities is also an indicator of the level of population growth over the last 70 years. The communities in proximity to highways and bordering Massachusetts have grown at a much higher rate than communities in more remote locations.

New Hampshire’s future population expansion will rely on to what extent the state’s communities are willing to embrace new housing development. According to data released by New Hampshire

Department of Business and Economic Affairs, building permits increased by 11 percent in 2021, with a high concentration of the permits in a select number of larger communities. Noah Hodgetts, a principal planner at the department noted that “confining construction to cities and larger towns is insufficient ... A little bit of housing permitting activity from every community can help us get out of the [housing] crisis.”<sup>8</sup>

– Annette Nielsen

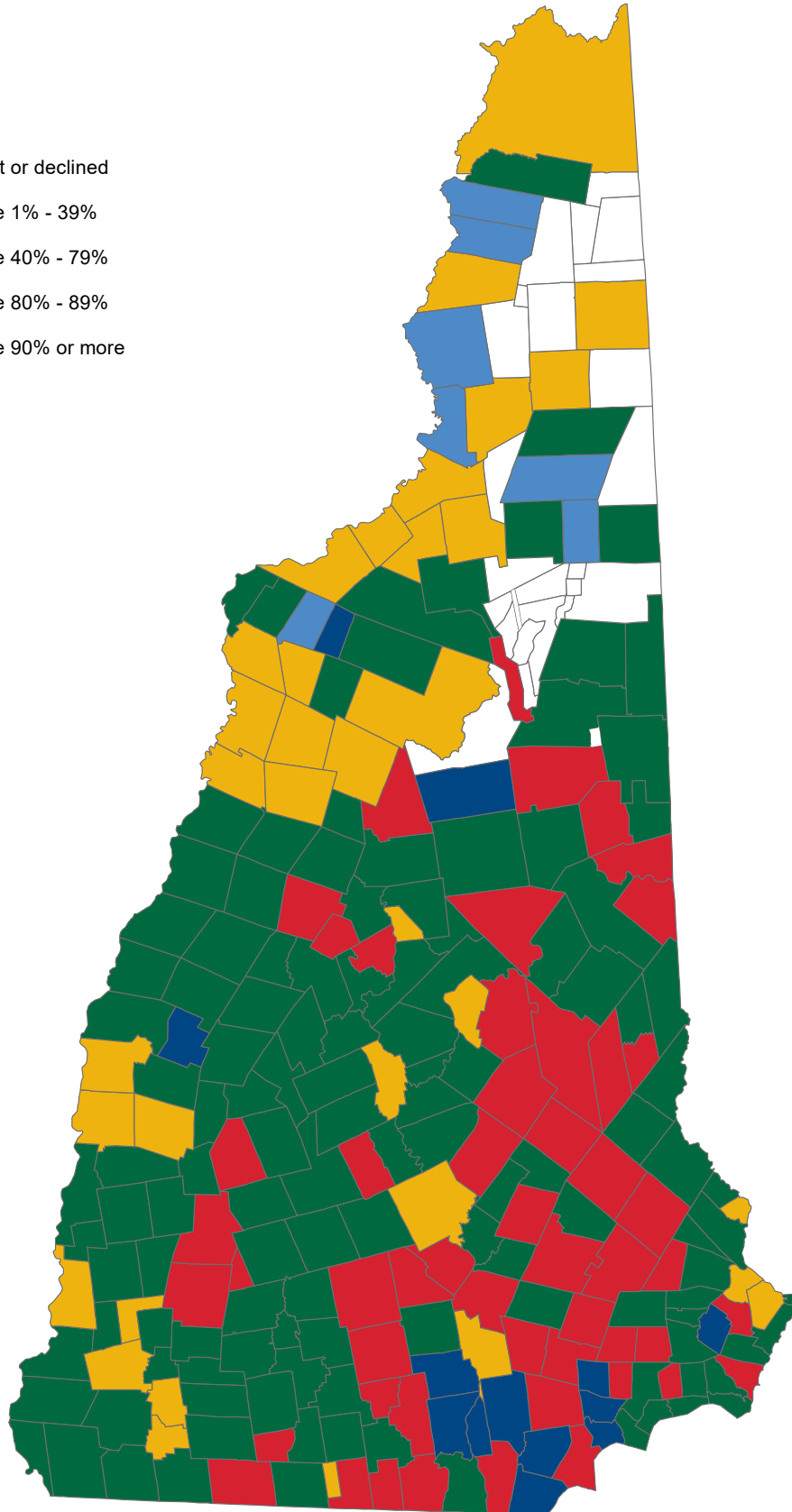


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

8 Gopalakrishnan, Sruthi, "Building permits rose by 11 percent in 2021, but housing crisis requires more." Concord Monitor. January 24, 2023. <https://www.nhbr.com/building-permits-rose-by-11-percent-in-2021-but-housing-crisis-requires-more/>.

## Legend

- Population constant or declined
- Population increase 1% - 39%
- Population increase 40% - 79%
- Population increase 80% - 89%
- Population increase 90% or more
- Data not available



<b>RESIDENT POPULATION</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Population, July 1st	1,348,787	1,353,465	1,359,711	1,377,848	1,388,992
Annual percent change	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	1.3%	0.8%
United States rank of annual percent change (including District of Columbia)	23	23	21	18	12
<b>Population by Gender</b>					
Population, Males	667,781	670,773	673,793	687,214	693,132
Population, Females	681,006	682,692	685,918	690,634	695,860
<b>Distribution by Age</b>					
Under 5 years	4.8%	4.7%	4.7%	4.6%	4.5%
5 to 17 years	14.5%	14.3%	14.1%	14.2%	14.0%
18 to 24 years	9.5%	9.3%	9.1%	8.9%	8.9%
25 to 44 years	23.7%	23.9%	24.2%	24.5%	24.9%
45 to 64 years	30.1%	29.7%	29.2%	29.1%	28.5%
65 years and over	17.5%	18.0%	18.7%	18.8%	19.3%
<b>Median Age</b>					
United States	38.0	38.2	38.4	38.5	38.8
New Hampshire	42.9	43.0	43.1	43.0	43.0
Connecticut	40.9	41.0	41.1	41.0	41.1
Maine	44.8	44.9	45.0	44.8	44.7
Massachusetts	39.4	39.4	39.6	39.6	39.9
Rhode Island	40.0	40.0	40.1	40.2	40.3
Vermont	42.8	42.9	43.0	42.8	42.9

<b>Components of Population Change (annual)</b>					
Natural increase rate (per 1,000 population)	-0.1	-0.5	-0.4	-0.8	-2.7
Net migration rate (per 1,000 population)	5.1	4.0	4.6	4.8	10.7

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, ELMI Analysis. Last Update 10/26/2022

Detailed population data from the 2020 Decennial Census have not been released. 2020 population estimates are from the U.S. Census Bureau's Vintage Population Estimates, and from the 2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Experimental Data

<b>VITAL STATISTICS</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Marriages	9,445	9,406	9,033	8,305	9,363
Marriage rate (per 1,000 population)	7.0	6.9	6.6	6.0	6.7
Divorces	4,268	4,231	4,238	3,274	3,631
Divorce rate (per 1,000 population)	3.2	3.1	3.1	2.4	2.6
Live births	12,064	11,977	11,826	11,840	12,670
Birth rate (per 1,000 population)	8.9	8.8	8.7	8.6	9.1
Births to teenage mothers (less than 20 years old)	370	346	283	278	234
Percent of total live births	3.1%	2.9%	2.4%	2.3%	1.8%
Non-marital births (percent of live births)	33.3%	33.5%	32.0%	32.7%	31.9%
Resident deaths	12,480	12,779	12,749	13,690	14,189
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	9.3	9.4	9.4	9.9	10.2
Infant death rate (per 1,000 live births)	4.2	3.6	3.2	4.4	4.2

Source: Division of New Hampshire Vital Records Administration, ELMI Analysis. Last Update 1/19/2023

Prepared by: New Hampshire Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau

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