

## PRESS RELEASE

**Summary:** The [official state population estimates](#) developed by UVA's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service show more deaths than births in 64 of Virginia's 95 counties.

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### Virginia's Annual Population Growth the Lowest in Nearly a Century

Virginia's annual population growth rate this decade is the lowest since the 1920s, according to [new population estimates](#) released by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

A decrease in the number of births, an increase in the number of deaths and domestic out-migration – more people moving out of Virginia than into the state – are the contributing factors, according to Hamilton Lombard, a demographer at the center who prepared the estimates.

"The aging of rural Virginia's population has caused the number of deaths to rise and births to decline," Lombard said. "A record 64 of Virginia's 95 counties now have more deaths than births in 2017, making it harder for their population to grow, and is often causing population to decline."

Virginia's overall population grew by 5.9 percent, to nearly 8.5 million people, over a seven-year span ending in July 2017.

More than 60 percent of the growth is concentrated in Northern Virginia, with Prince William County surpassing Virginia Beach to become Virginia's second-most-populous locality. Three of Virginia's four largest localities are now located in Northern Virginia.

Given the cut in federal spending in the region since 2013, Lombard said that development may be unexpected for some.

"Since the federal budget sequestration began, Northern Virginia's share of the commonwealth's population growth has actually increased," he said.

Since 2010, the Hampton Roads and Richmond metro areas have also grown, with rates of 3.9 and 6.2 percent, respectively.

Outside of Virginia's three largest metro areas, population growth has been marginal, increasing by just 1.3 percent over the last seven years. The populations of eastern, Southside and Southwest Virginia all declined, with the largest declines concentrated in Southwestern Virginia's coal-producing counties.

The [Cooper Center's population estimates](#) are the state's official figures. The estimates are based on changes since 2010 in housing stock, school enrollment, births, deaths and driver's licenses. They are used by state and local government agencies in revenue-sharing, funding allocations and planning and budgeting purposes.