

# News Release

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## UNITED VAN LINES 49TH ANNUAL MOVERS STUDY REVEALS FAMILY, JOBS AND RETIREMENT ARE FACTORS RESHAPING INTERSTATE MIGRATION IN THE U.S.

- *U.S. movers are moving primarily for the opportunity to be closer to family (29%), company transfer/new job (26%) and retirement (14%)*
- *A broad migration shift toward smaller cities and towns is redefining American relocation patterns*
- *Oregon leads the nation in inbound moves for the first time, while New Jersey tops the outbound list for the eighth consecutive year but with positive momentum from GenZ and younger millennials moving into the state*

**ST. LOUIS – Dec. 29, 2025** – United Van Lines released the company's 49<sup>th</sup> Annual National Movers Study today, revealing a fundamental shift in American migration patterns as economic headwinds reshape where and why people move. While the traditional population movement from colder North and Midwest regions to the warmer South and West regions continues, American migration patterns are primarily driven by the desire to be closer to family, followed by the job market.

According to the results of the study, **Oregon** topped the list with the highest percentage of inbound migration (65%), moving up from no. 8 inbound in 2024, whereas for the eighth consecutive year, more residents moved out of **New Jersey** than any other state, reporting a 62% outbound migration.

Oregon, known as The Beaver State, has emerged as a leading inbound destination for job-seeking migrants (36%) with opportunities in growing tech and health care fields. Eugene-Springfield, OR is also the top inbound metro statistical area (MSA) with 85% inbound moves. Springfield, specifically, offers a lower cost of living than other Oregon metros making it attractive because of its proximately to both Eugene and Portland. While the birth rate in Oregon is well below the national average, inbound migration is having an impact and shaping statewide population change, especially in the metro areas.

New Jersey tells a different story: it is attracting younger professionals and families who see the region as a “launch state,” while losing retirees. This reveals a shift in migration patterns that

while major outbound states like New Jersey, New York, and California still pull ambitious job seekers, they're simultaneously losing more people motivated by retirement, affordability and lifestyle changes.

"For most Americans, interstate relocation is no longer a linear calculation, it's a complex decision balancing multiple competing factors," Michael A. Stoll, Economist and Professor in The Department of Public Policy at The University of California, Los Angeles said. "It is interesting to see that in general, population movement continues from North/Midwest regions to Southern states – and again top inbound locations dominated by smaller to medium size metro areas. This reflects a legacy of COVID-era preferences for lower-density living, combined with the reality that housing costs continue to drive people toward more affordable regions."

The study and its accompanying survey, which examines the motivations and influences for Americans' interstate moves, reveals the top driver for moving interstate was wanting to be closer to family (29%), followed by new job/company transfer (26%).

"The data reveals Americans are seeking a different pace of life, and destinations like Oregon, the Carolinas and the south are delivering it," Eily Cummings, Vice President of Corporate Communications at United Van Lines said. "While our total number of residential moves is similar to 2024, we're seeing much greater complexity in why people move and increasingly divergent migration patterns across age groups."

## **WHERE AMERICANS MOVED IN 2025**

In 2025, the data revealed inbound migration patterns to states across Southern regions, with a few exceptions. Inbound moves were led by Oregon (65%), West Virginia (62%) and South Carolina (61). We're also seeing a trend that reflects Americans' broader shift toward smaller cities and towns -- moving outside major metros where housing is more affordable. Top destination metros in the region include Eugene-Springfield, OR (85%), Wilmington, NC (83%) and Dover, DE (79%).

Meanwhile, primarily the Northeast, among other regions, continued to experience significant outbound migration. New Jersey (62%), New York (58%), and California (58%) led departures, with Hagerstown, MD (88%), Nassau-Suffolk, NY (78%), and Pueblo, CO (74%) recording the highest outbound activity United's city data.

### **Moving In**

The top inbound states\* of 2025 were:

1. Oregon
2. West Virginia
3. South Carolina
4. Delaware
5. Minnesota
6. Idaho
7. North Carolina
8. Arkansas
9. Alabama

## 10. Nevada

New states to the 2025 top inbound list are Nevada, Idaho and Minnesota. South Carolina and Alabama have been included in the top inbound states over the past six years.

### **Moving Out**

The top outbound states for 2025 were:

1. New Jersey
2. New York
3. California
4. North Dakota
5. Colorado
6. Mississippi
7. Massachusetts

New Jersey has ranked among the top 10 outbound for more than 15 years. However, 21% of inbound moves to New Jersey were movers aged 18-34, as the state is considered a "launch state" for younger families and those looking to start careers.

### **Balanced States**

Several states experienced balanced migration, with nearly equal inbound and outbound movement. For the first time in more than a decade, Illinois is a balanced state, not appearing on the top outbound list. Notably, major Southern migration magnets like Texas and Florida -- historically powerhouse inbound destinations -- are now experiencing balanced migration patterns, reflecting how rising housing costs are beginning to constrain even traditionally attractive regions.

### **Methodology**

Since 1977, United Van Lines annually tracks migration patterns on a state-by-state basis. The 2025 study is based on household moves handled by the UniGroup network (parent company of United Van Lines) within the 48 contiguous states and Washington, D.C. and ranks states based off the inbound and outbound percentages of total moves in each state. United classifies states as "high inbound" if 55 percent or more of the moves are going into a state, "high outbound" if 55 percent or more moves were coming out of a state or "balanced" if the difference between inbound and outbound is negligible.

*\*Although Vermont experienced the highest percentage of inbound moves overall, United Van Lines moved fewer than 250 families in and out of the state. The inbound and outbound rankings in the 2025 study only reflect states with 250 moves or more.*

To access the study details and creative assets, download the [press kit](#).

### **About United Van Lines**

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