



WHERE IS EVERYONE GOING?

U.S. Migration Trends and What They Mean for
Corporate Relocation in 2026

A Resource for HR Leaders and Mobility Professionals

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INTRODUCTION: A NATION ON THE MOVE



For HR leaders and mobility professionals, understanding where people are headed and why is essential to staying ahead of the challenges these shifts create for corporate relocation programs.

For HR leaders and mobility professionals, migration patterns have direct, practical consequences. When tens of thousands of people flood into the same metro areas simultaneously, those markets face housing shortages, longer temporary housing timelines, and increased competition for moving services during peak season.

If your organization is transferring employees into a high-growth market or recruiting from an outbound state, you need to plan further ahead than ever before.

A study of over 122,000 people who expressed interest in moving between March 2024 and March 2025 reveals clear patterns: nearly 46% of respondents intend to relocate to a Southern state, while the West and Northeast are experiencing net losses in migration interest. That interest is translating into action.

Redfin's Q4 2025 migration report found that nearly one in five house hunters (18.8%) searched for homes in a different metro area, up from 15.9% five years earlier, suggesting that more Americans are following through on relocation plans than at any point in the last five years. Long-distance moves are ticking upward, driven by affordability pressures, remote work flexibility, and a persistent housing supply gap.

This ebook walks through the latest migration data, explains the forces behind the movement, and translates those trends into actionable guidance for your relocation program.



WHERE PEOPLE ARE GOING: TOP DESTINATION STATES

The South dominates the list of destination states, and the pattern has been remarkably consistent. According to the [ConsumerAffairs migration trends report](#), eight of the top 11 states for net migration interest are located in the South, with North Carolina leading the way for the second consecutive year.

NORTH CAROLINA:

North Carolina recorded the largest net gain, with 2,208 more people expressing interest in relocating to the state than leaving it.

The state's population recently topped 11 million, with [GOBankingRates reporting](#) that more than 139,000 people moved there in 2024 alone, the highest net migration in the Southeast.

Raleigh and Charlotte continue to draw families and professionals with expanding job markets and lower costs of living compared to coastal cities.



SOUTH CAROLINA:

South Carolina follows closely, with 83% more people wanting to relocate to the state than wanting to leave.

[Raleigh Realty's 2026 Migration Momentum ranking](#) places South Carolina at the top with a score of 0.92, the strongest inbound signal in the country.

Cities like Myrtle Beach and Greenville are attracting retirees and remote professionals with affordable housing and low property taxes.

TENNESSEE:



Tennessee overtook Florida for the third spot in 2025. [U-Haul's migration trends rank Tennessee near the top for inbound one-way moves](#), with cities like Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga offering affordability, no state income tax, and strong quality of life. Migration experts describe Tennessee as a "sticky state," where new residents tend to settle long-term.

FLORIDA:

Florida remains a major draw. It still attracts roughly twice as many Redfin home searchers as the next most popular state. However, its net domestic migration fell significantly from 2022 to 2023.

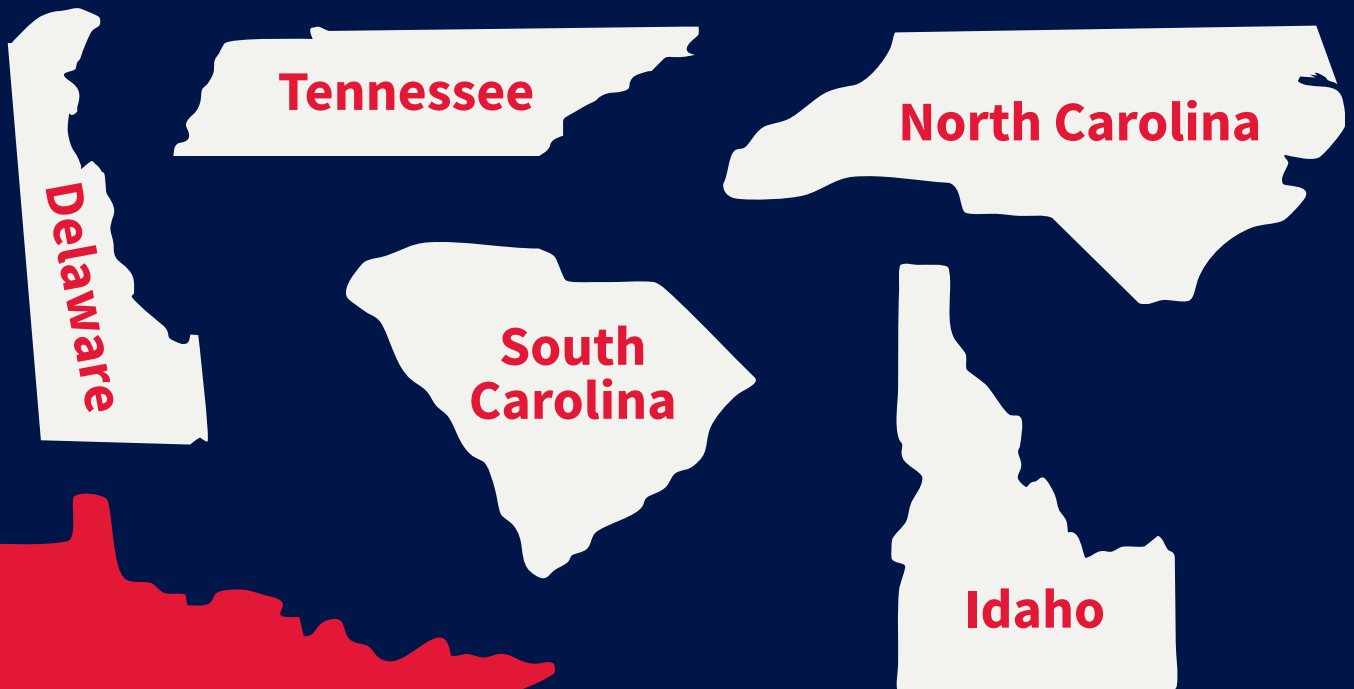
Rising homeowners' insurance premiums, now averaging nearly \$9,500 annually, the highest in the nation, are a key factor cooling Florida's growth.



WHERE PEOPLE ARE GOING: TOP DESTINATION STATES CONT'D

Other top destinations include Texas, Georgia (with Atlanta ranking among the top inbound metros), and Idaho. A comprehensive analysis from KNSI notes that the five states with the strongest inbound domestic migration (South Carolina, Idaho, Delaware, North Carolina, and Tennessee) are all low-to-moderate tax states.

5 LOW TAX STATES WITH STRONGEST INBOUND DOMESTIC MIGRATION:



THE MIDWEST IS A SURPRISE STORY

Minneapolis ★

Not all migration is headed South. According to a [KNSI analysis of Census, U-Haul, and Redfin data](#), Minneapolis and Indianapolis both flipped from net domestic outflow to net inflow in the most recent year. Minnesota appeared on United Van Lines' top 10 inbound list for the first time. Zillow's hottest housing markets of 2025 were dominated by affordable Midwest cities including Rockford, IL; Toledo, OH; and South Bend, IN.

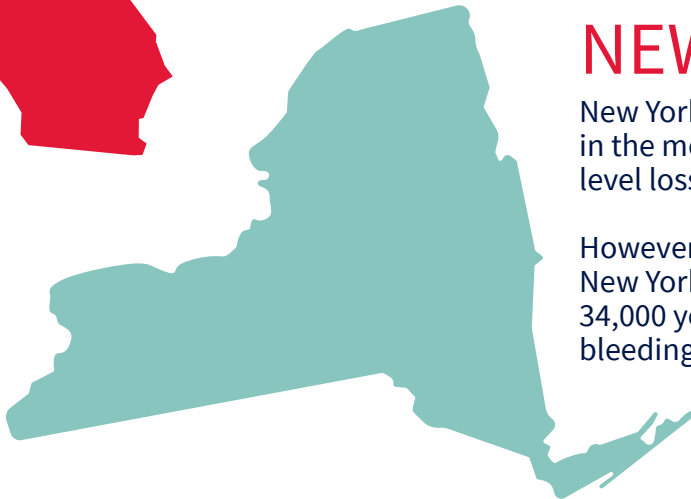
WHERE PEOPLE ARE LEAVING: THE OUTBOUND STATES



CALIFORNIA:

California continues to lead outbound lists. California and New York have experienced net domestic out-migration for at least 20 to 30 years.

San Francisco faces one of the steepest population declines among major U.S. cities, with tech professionals relocating to more affordable metros like Austin, Denver, and Boise.



NEW YORK:

New York lost 119,198 domestic residents in the most recent year, the largest metro-level loss in the country.

However, there is a notable countertrend: New York's outflow improved by nearly 34,000 year over year, suggesting the bleeding is slowing.

NEW JERSEY:

New Jersey marked its sixth consecutive year leading the nation in outbound moves, according to the [United Van Lines National Movers Study](#). Respondents cited job changes, family reasons, and lifestyle preferences as their primary motivations.



LOUISIANA:

Louisiana was the leading outbound state for the second consecutive year according to the [Atlas Van Lines 2025 Migration Patterns Report](#), with 66% of all moves being outbound.

WHERE PEOPLE ARE LEAVING: THE OUTBOUND STATES CONT'D

METROS LOSING THE MOST DOMESTIC RESIDENTS:

METRO AREA	NET DOMESTIC LOSS
NEW YORK	119,198
LOS ANGELES	99,979
MIAMI	67,418
CHICAGO	42,844



WHY THIS IS HAPPENING: THE FORCES BEHIND THE MIGRATION

1

Affordability Is the Primary Driver

74.9% of U.S. households cannot afford a median priced new home at current prices. According to the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#), the average U.S. home value stands at \$357,445 as of January 2026, up nearly 33% over the past five years, far outpacing income growth. The 30-year fixed mortgage rate averaged 5.98% at the end of February 2026.

This creates what economists call the “lock-in effect”: homeowners with low-interest pandemic-era mortgages are reluctant to sell, further limiting supply. Over half of baby boomers own their homes mortgage-free, and those who do carry mortgages benefit from historically low rates, reducing their incentive to move.

2

Remote Work Has Permanently Changed the Equation

According to research from Stanford economist Nick Bloom, 25% of all paid U.S. workdays are now performed from home. This figure has stabilized since 2023 and shows no signs of returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia found that remote work disproportionately enables migration among high-income, highly educated workers. Among movers, 53% chose suburban areas, and remote households spent 7% or more on housing than comparable non-remote households, trading commute costs for space.

3

Tax Policy Plays a Supporting Role

Several Southern states either have a flat-rate income tax (Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina) or have no state income tax at all (Florida, Tennessee, and Texas). This accounts for companies too; [CBRE research found 465 corporate headquarters relocations](#) between 2018 and 2023, with Texas attracting 209 of them. The cities that lost the most headquarters were San Francisco/San Jose, Los Angeles, and New York City.

THE HOUSING CRUNCH IN HIGH-GROWTH MARKETS

When large volumes of people move to the same markets simultaneously, those markets face real constraints which have a direct impact on your ability to relocate employees efficiently.

The nation needs roughly 2.8 million more housing units to match demand, according to J.P. Morgan estimates. Homeownership fell to 65% in the U.S. in the second quarter of 2025, the lowest level since 2019. Between 2019 and 2024, median single-family home prices rose by 48% nationally.

The housing shortage has cost states billions in economic output, personal income, and jobs. Even states that are building aggressively are struggling to keep pace. Phoenix, for example, needs approximately 9,000 new units per year to meet demand from rapid domestic migration and corporate expansion.

What This Means in Practical Terms

For companies relocating employees into high-growth metros like Nashville, Raleigh, Charlotte, or Austin, the housing crunch creates several practical challenges:

- **Extended temporary housing needs.** When transferees cannot find permanent housing quickly, they stay in temporary accommodations longer. According to a TRC Global Mobility analysis of industry trends, temporary housing remains a persistent pain point in relocation due to constrained supply and rising costs. Many apartment complexes are capping corporate leases, while some cities and states are introducing restrictions on short-term rentals.
- **Household goods in storage.** When permanent housing is not available, employees' belongings must go into storage. This adds cost to your relocation program and adds stress to your employees' transition. Storage costs compound quickly, especially in markets where warehouse space is also in high demand.
- **Rising relocation costs.** Property insurance premiums are expected to rise by 10–15%, and corporate housing rental rates remain high due to inflation and demand pressure. According to CapRelo, the average 30-year mortgage rate sits near 6.10% as of early 2026, and buyers need to start their housing search at least 90 days out in tight markets.

ABOUT INTERSTATE

Interstate Moving | Relocation | Logistics is a three-generation, family-owned company founded in 1943. For over 80 years, we have built our reputation on moving people with care, and today that legacy extends to helping companies and employees navigate every aspect of corporate relocation.

As the legislative landscape around corporate home ownership continues to evolve, Interstate is committed to helping HR leaders stay informed and prepared. We work with HR teams, mobility managers, and business leaders across the country to design and execute relocation programs that adapt to regulatory changes while maintaining outstanding employee experiences.

Our Relocation Services Include:

- Household goods moving (domestic & international)
- Move management & coordination
- Relocation program design and policy consulting
- School search assistance
- Tax liability navigation
- Expense management & reporting
- Regulatory compliance
- Home sale assistance
- Executive & white-glove relocation services

Ready to build or strengthen your relocation program?

Contact Interstate to learn how we can help you create a policy and partnership that supports your talent strategy and your people.

