

## **The Covid-19 Impact on USA Moving**

Analytics by Webster Pacific, a location analytics consultancy ([www.websterpacific.com](http://www.websterpacific.com))

Data from United Van Lines, a leading nationwide mover ([www.unitedvanlines.com](http://www.unitedvanlines.com))

**Link to Report:** <https://websterpacific.com/october-29-2020-covid-19-impact-on-usa-moving/>

**Release Date and Time:** October 29, 2020. 6AM ET

**Webster Pacific Contact:** Steve Bazant, [steve@websterpacific.com](mailto:steve@websterpacific.com)

**United Van Lines Contact:** Eily Cummings, [eily\\_cummings@unigroup.com](mailto:eily_cummings@unigroup.com)



Executive Summary:

Webster Pacific and United Van Lines collaborated to better understand the impacts of Covid-19 on USA moving trends. Using United Van Lines data, Webster Pacific studied moves by zip code and metro area<sup>1</sup> over a two-year period across the contiguous United States. This report finds that Covid-19 has caused people to move out of the largest metro areas, favoring smaller metro areas. Additionally, people are moving out of New York/New Jersey and California at higher rates due to Covid-19 and moving into the South and the Midwest Plains.

Research Metrics:

Webster Pacific studied the percent of outbound moves, which is the number of moves out of a metro area divided by total moves in and out. A percentage of outbound moves greater than 50% indicates that more people are moving out of a metro rather than in.

Webster Pacific studied May 1 to September 30 of both 2019 (pre-Covid-19) and 2020 (Covid-19) to evaluate the impacts of Covid-19 on moving trends. March and April were excluded because moves during that period in 2020 were generally planned pre-Covid-19.

Findings on Moves by Size of Metro Area:

Covid-19 has caused people to move out of large metro areas at higher rates in 2020 than 2019. In metro areas with more than 5 million (M) residents, 56.6% of moves in 2019 were outbound, which increased to 61.3% in 2020. In other words, Covid-19 caused a +4.7% change in the percent of outbound moves. Small metro areas, categorized as having less than 1 M residents, saw the opposite effect, showing a -3.0% change in the percent of outbound moves.

CBSA Resident Population 2019	% Outbound May to Sep 2019	% Outbound May to Sep 2020	Change in PCT Outbound
> 5 M	56.6%	61.3%	4.7%
2.5 M to 5 M	49.7%	51.6%	1.9%
1 M to 2.5 M	48.7%	48.0%	-0.7%
< 1 M	47.7%	44.7%	-3.0%

<sup>1</sup> Core-Based Statistical Areas (CBSA) as defined by the Office of Management and Budget. Referred to as “metro areas” in this report.



Findings on Moves by Region:

Moving trends by region have shifted significantly due to Covid-19. Particularly, people are moving out of New York/New Jersey and California at higher rates in 2020 than in 2019. Additionally, people are moving into the South and Midwest Plains at higher rates in 2020 than in 2019.

Region	% Outbound May to Sep 2019	% Outbound May to Sep 2020	Change in PCT Outbound
New York and Jersey	70.1%	74.5%	4.4%
California	57.6%	60.7%	3.1%
Pacific Southern	38.7%	40.7%	2.0%
Pacific Northwest	39.8%	41.0%	1.2%
Mid Atlantic	52.1%	53.1%	1.0%
New England	56.2%	56.4%	0.2%
Greater Texas	46.9%	47.1%	0.2%
Great Lakes	59.1%	58.4%	-0.7%
Rocky Mountain	45.6%	44.9%	-0.8%
South	40.3%	38.6%	-1.7%
Midwest Plains	55.9%	53.0%	-2.9%

Regardless of Covid-19, people are moving out of NY/NJ (74.5% outbound in 2020) and California (60.7% outbound in 2020) while people are moving in to the South (38.6% outbound in 2020), Pacific Southern (40.7% outbound in 2020), and the Pacific Northwest (41.0% outbound in 2020)

Findings on Moves by Metro Area for the Top 50 by Population:

**Where people are moving** (see table on p.6 in Appendix)

- Top 3 metro areas by % outbound May to September 2020
  - New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA
  - Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI
  - Buffalo-Cheektowaga, NY
- Top 3 metro areas by % inbound May to September 2020
  - Jacksonville, FL
  - Raleigh-Cary, NC
  - Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC

**How Covid-19 has changed where people are moving** (see table on p.6 in Appendix)

- Top 3 metro areas by increase in % outbound 2019 to 2020
  - San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA
  - Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA
  - New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA
- Top 3 metro areas by decrease in % outbound 2019 to 2020
  - Salt Lake City, UT
  - Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN
  - Richmond, VA



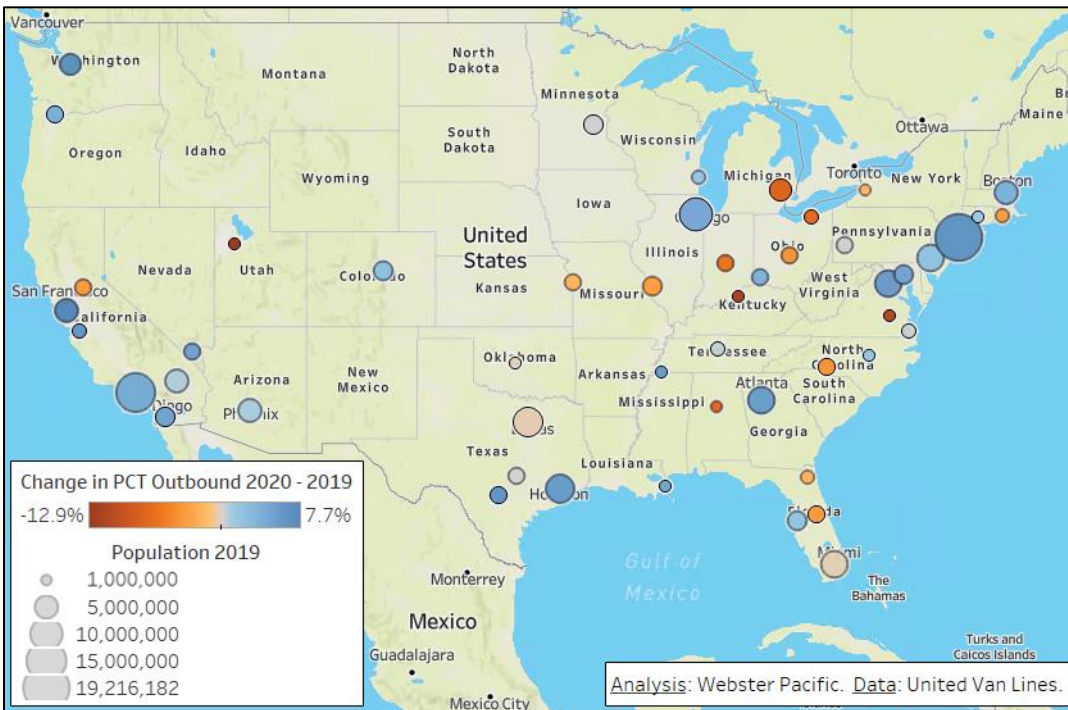
Map 1) % Outbound May to September 2020 (Top 50 CBSA by Population):

People are moving out of the most populous metro areas (large, blue circles). Regionally, people are moving to the South and the Pacific Northwest (orange and red circles).



Map 2) Change in % Outbound, May to September 2019 to 2020 (Top 50 CBSA by Population):

Covid-19 has caused people to move out of large metro areas at higher rates in 2020 than in 2019 (large, blue circles).



# APPENDIX

## Methodology:

- Time range
  - May 1 to September 30, 2019 (pre-Covid) and May 1 to September 30, 2020 (Covid)
- Calculations
  - % Outbound May to Sep 2020 = (Outbound moves from CBSA) / (Outbound moves from CBSA + Inbound moves to CBSA)
  - Change in % Outbound, 2019 to 2020 = (% Outbound May to Sep 2020) – (% Outbound May to Sep 2019)
  - % Inbound = 1 - % Outbound
- Metro Geography
  - Core-Based Statistical Areas (CBSA) as defined by the Office of Management and Budget. Referred to as “metro areas” in this report.
  - Data from United Van Lines provided at zip code level, which were then joined to CBSA using HUD-USPS ZIP Crosswalk files, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020 Zip-Tract.
- Population
  - Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by CBSA July 1, 2019. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.
- Data exclusions
  - Corporate-sponsored moves, Military moves
  - Only contiguous United States considered
- Other notes
  - United Van Lines primarily serves customers travelling cross-state. For example, a move from Manhattan to the Hamptons is likely to be handled by local movers rather than by United Van Lines.
  - CBSA’s are assigned to regions based on primary state. For example, the New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area is assigned to the New York and Jersey region.

## State to Region Crosswalk:

Region	States Included
California	CA
Great Lakes	IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI
Greater Texas	AR, LA, NM, OK, TX
Mid Atlantic	DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV
Midwest Plains	IA, KS, MO, NE
New England	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
New York and Jersey	NY, NJ
Pacific Northwest	ID, OR, WA
Pacific Southern	AZ, NV
Rocky Mountain	CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY
South	AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN



Raw Data for Top 50 CBSA by 2019 Population:

CBSA	Population 2019	% Outbound May to Sep 2019	% Outbound May to Sep 2020	Change in PCT Outbound
San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA	4,731,803	53%	61%	8%
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	3,979,845	43%	50%	7%
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	19,216,182	72%	79%	7%
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	2,550,960	48%	54%	6%
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	1,990,660	61%	67%	6%
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	7,066,141	49%	54%	6%
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	6,280,487	51%	57%	6%
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	1,346,045	41%	47%	5%
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA	6,020,364	44%	50%	5%
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	2,266,715	44%	49%	5%
San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA	3,338,330	55%	60%	5%
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	2,800,053	52%	57%	5%
New Orleans-Metairie, LA	1,270,530	51%	55%	5%
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	9,458,539	67%	71%	4%
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	13,214,799	58%	62%	4%
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	2,492,412	36%	40%	4%
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	4,873,019	58%	61%	4%
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	2,221,208	58%	62%	4%
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	2,967,239	47%	49%	2%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	6,102,434	54%	56%	2%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	3,194,831	39%	41%	2%
Raleigh-Cary, NC	1,390,785	33%	35%	2%
Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	1,575,179	51%	52%	2%
Hartford-East Hartford-Middletown, CT	1,204,877	61%	62%	1%
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	4,948,203	38%	39%	1%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	4,650,631	64%	65%	1%
Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN	1,934,317	35%	35%	0%
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	1,768,901	46%	46%	0%
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	3,640,043	53%	53%	0%
Pittsburgh, PA	2,317,600	57%	57%	0%
Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX	2,227,083	38%	38%	0%
Oklahoma City, OK	1,408,950	44%	44%	0%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	6,166,488	46%	45%	0%
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	7,573,136	47%	47%	0%
Buffalo-Cheektowaga, NY	1,127,983	70%	68%	-2%
Kansas City, MO-KS	2,157,990	52%	51%	-2%
Jacksonville, FL	1,559,514	35%	33%	-2%
St. Louis, MO-IL	2,803,228	61%	58%	-3%
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	1,624,578	51%	48%	-3%
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	2,608,147	45%	41%	-4%
Sacramento-Roseville-Folsom, CA	2,363,730	50%	47%	-4%
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	2,636,883	39%	35%	-4%
Columbus, OH	2,122,271	55%	50%	-4%
Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	2,074,537	55%	49%	-6%
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	2,048,449	58%	51%	-7%
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	1,090,435	52%	45%	-7%
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	4,319,629	66%	58%	-8%
Richmond, VA	1,291,900	55%	44%	-11%
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	1,265,108	52%	41%	-12%
Salt Lake City, UT	1,232,696	56%	43%	-13%

Note: CSV file available upon request (steve@websterpacific.com)