

2022 County Population Estimates Southwestern Pennsylvania Update

April 7, 2023



Summary

- As part of its phased release of 2022 Population Estimates data, the U.S. Census Bureau released its annual population estimates update for the nation's counties on March 30, 2023.
 - The Census Bureau annually utilizes current data on births, deaths, and migration to calculate population change since the most recent decennial census and produce a time series of estimates of population, demographic components of change, and housing units.
 - The estimates cover the period from July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2022, and also include revisions reflecting the 2020 to 2021 estimates period.
 - Future releases will cover Metropolitan Area, Housing Unit and Municipal Estimates (all in May) and estimates by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin (all in June). Additional analyses will follow each release.
- Nationally, population continued to migrate to the Southeast and West, while rural areas in several states registered population increases counter to historic trends.
- International migration rebounded to its highest level since 2016, increasing from a low of around 250,000 in 2021 to more than one million in 2022.
- While births rebounded, increasing by more than 100,000, deaths also increased slightly resulting the second lowest natural increase on record – 245,080.
- These national factors impacted the region as International migration in Southwestern Pennsylvania also increased to the highest level since 2016 and the fifth highest on record. Unfortunately, the region's natural population loss, while smaller than in 2021, was the second highest on record. Furthermore, Domestic out-migration increased to the highest level since 2017 leading to a regional population decrease of more than 17,500 individuals.
- Similar to past years, all of the counties in the region saw decreases in population during 2022 with the exception of Butler and Washington. While all counties experienced natural population loss, negative net migration was a larger factor driving the population loss since 2020 in Allegheny and Greene Counties. Butler and Washington, which had traditionally been the only counties to experience positive net migration have been joined by Armstrong, Indiana and Westmoreland as having more people move in than move out.

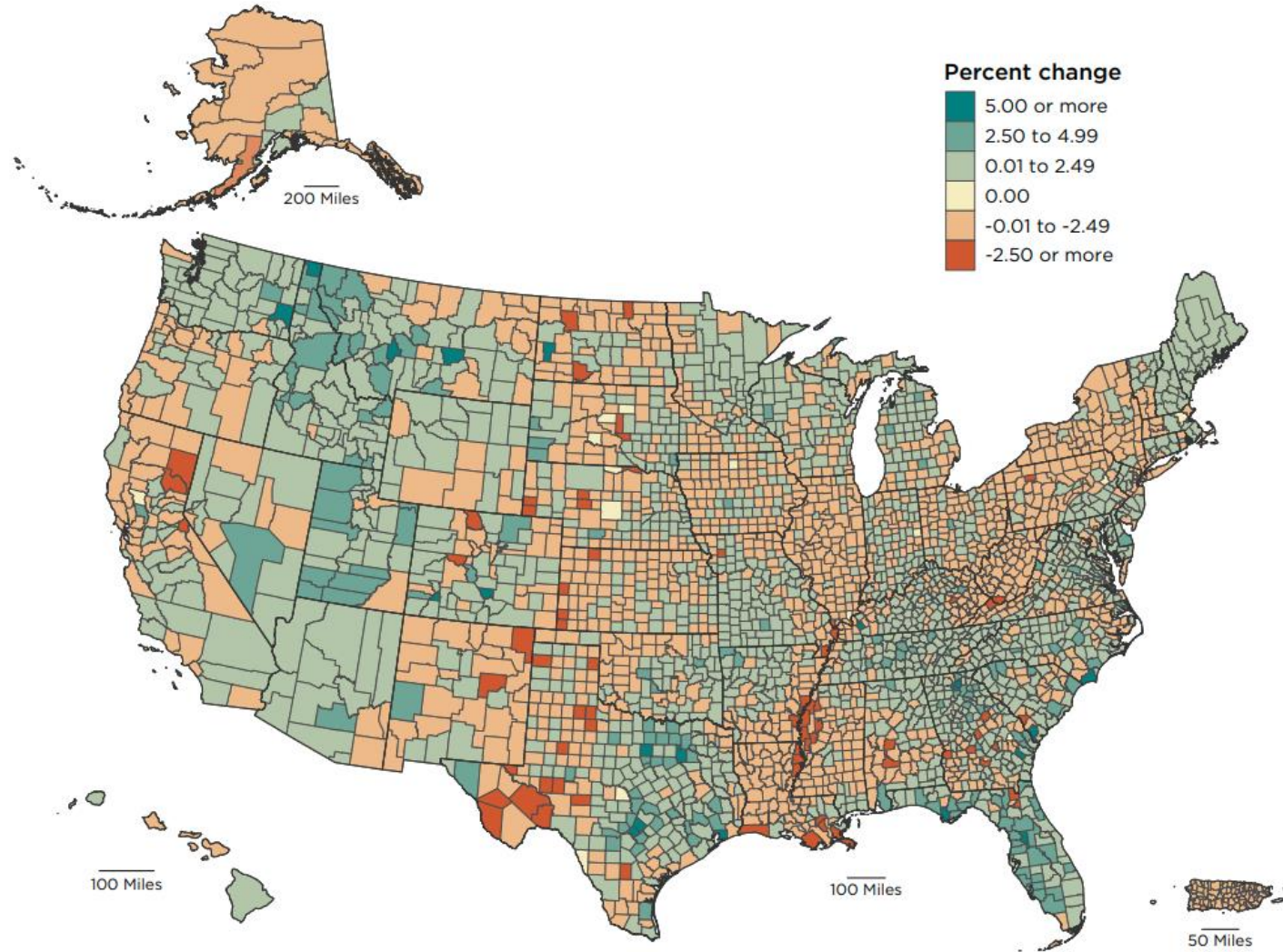
Introduction

On March 30, 2023, the U.S. Census Bureau released its annual county level population estimates for 2022. According to the release, “After some of the nation's most populous counties experienced significant outmigration and population declines in 2021, overall patterns of population growth and decline are moving towards pre-pandemic rates for the nation’s 3,144 counties.” Among the key findings outlined in their [press release](#):

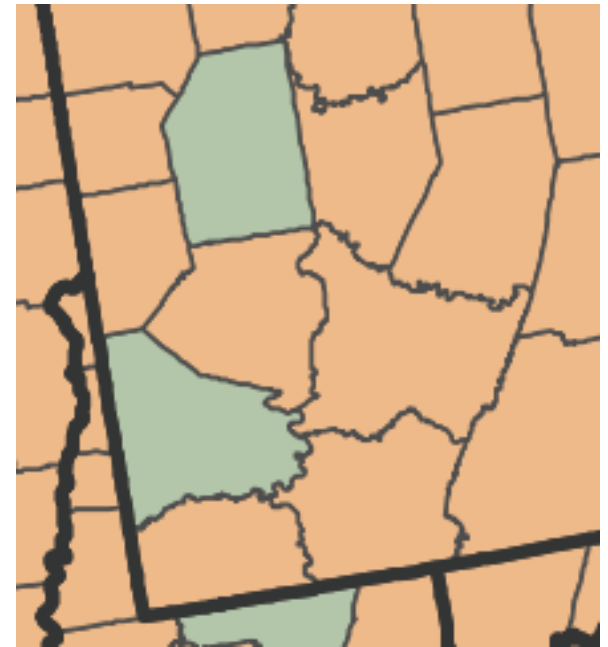
- Some urban counties, such as Dallas and San Francisco, saw domestic outmigration at a slower pace between 2021 and 2022, compared to the prior year. Meanwhile, many counties with large universities saw their populations fully rebound this year as students returned.
- Population declines lessened for some urban counties that had seen considerable net domestic outmigration in 2021. For instance, New York County, New York, which had a population decline of 98,505 in 2021 due largely to net domestic outmigration, had population growth of 17,472 this past year
- Over one-half of all counties (52.5%) grew between 2021 and 2022, down from 55.7% of counties the prior year. At the same time, 1,482 (47.1%) declined and 11 counties (0.3%) saw no change in population.
- The smallest counties nationally, those with populations below 10,000, experienced more population loss (60.8%) than gains (38.3%); while the largest counties, having populations at or greater than 100,000, largely experienced population increases (68%).

Population Change in Counties: 2021 to 2022			
Size group	Gain	No change	Loss
100,000 or higher	417 (68.0%)	0 (0.0%)	196 (32.0%)
50,000 to 99,999	242 (62.9%)	1 (0.3%)	142 (36.9%)
25,000 to 49,999	335 (54.5%)	0 (0.0%)	280 (45.5%)
10,000 to 24,999	374 (47.2%)	4 (0.5%)	415 (52.3%)
Under 10,000	283 (38.3%)	6 (0.8%)	449 (60.8%)

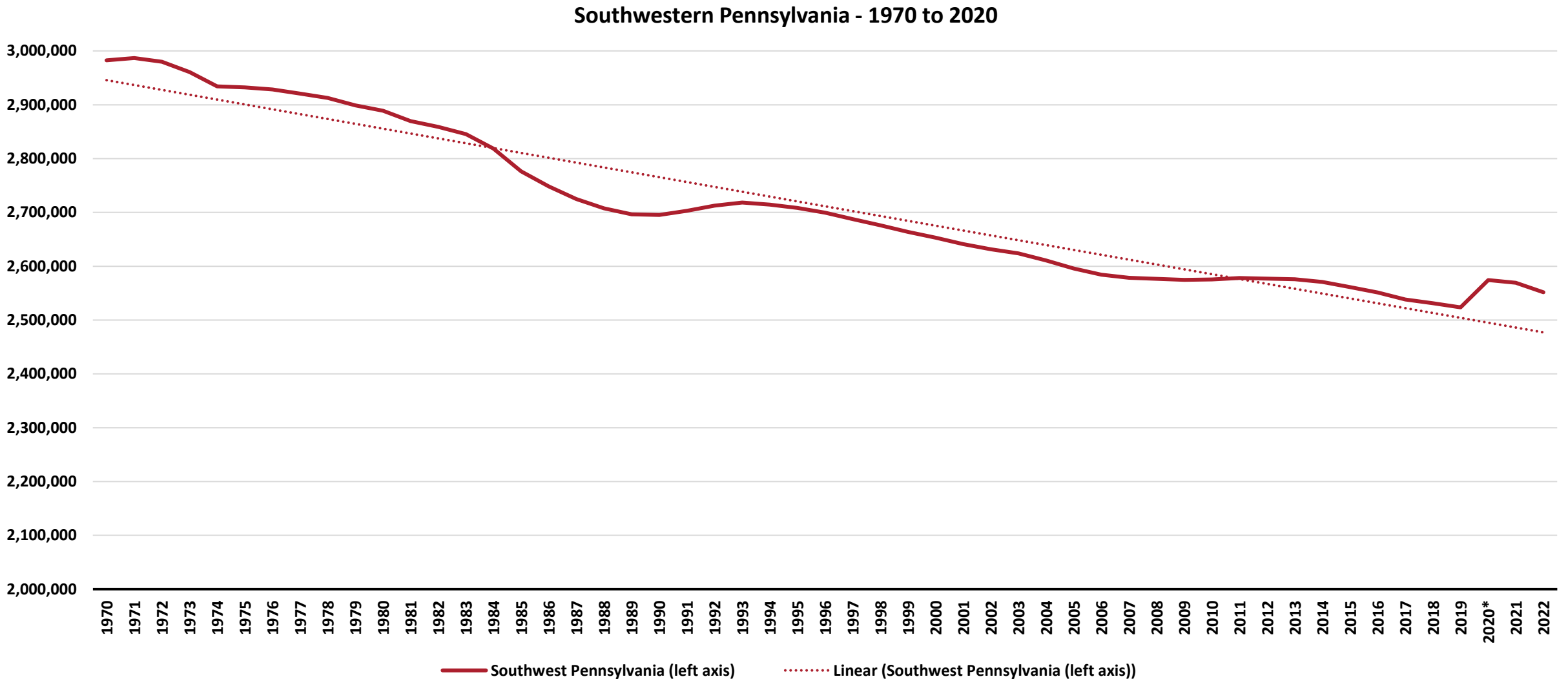
As seen in the following map, traditional migration patterns from the Northeast and Midwest to Southeast and Mountain West continued in 2022. While the urban to rural migration evident last year was much more muted, rural counties in several states including Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Arkansas, Georgia, Colorado and those in the New England showed increases whereas rural counties in central states such as Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and the Dakotas showed decreases.



Southwestern Pennsylvania

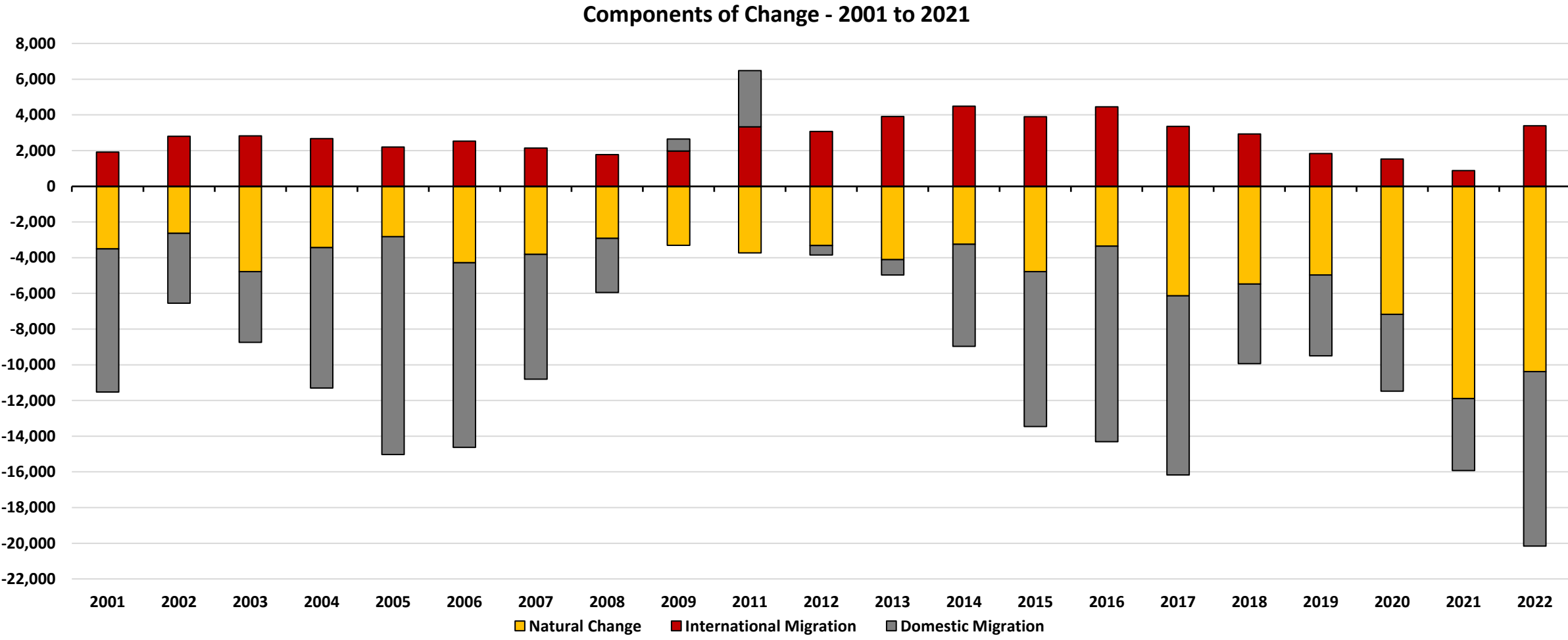


The ten-county Southwestern Pennsylvania region saw its population fall by an estimated 17,516 individuals between July 1, 2021 and July 1, 2022, to 2,551,641 individuals.



* In 2020, the population was adjusted upward to reflect the results of the 2020 Decennial Census.

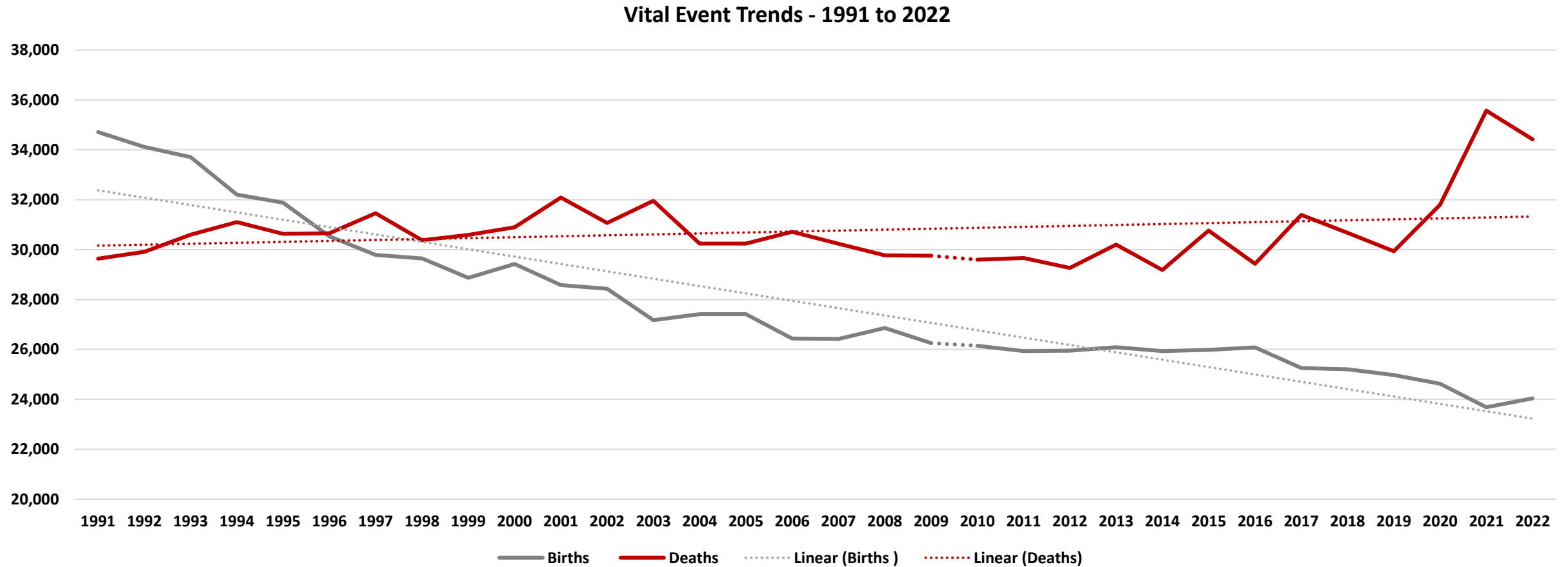
In 2022, the Pittsburgh region saw international migration rebound to its highest level since 2016 and fifth highest on record (3,393). Unfortunately, this only provided a small offset to a more than doubling of domestic outmigration to -9,767, the highest since 2017. While the natural population loss did decline from 2021, it was still the second biggest drop on record as deaths exceeded births by 10,385.



Note: Components reflect year of initial data release and do not account for any subsequent revisions.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2022 Population Estimates, compiled April 2023

Since the mid-1990s, the region has struggled with more deaths than births leading to a natural population loss. Before spiking in 2021 as a result of the pandemic, annual deaths in the region had been steady in the 30,000 to 32,000 range, while births had steadily declined from nearly 32,000 in 1996 to less than 25,000 in 2019. While deaths decreased from 2021 (35,571) to 2022 (34,422) and births rebounded slightly from a record low of 23,684 in 2021, the natural population loss remains a significant challenge.



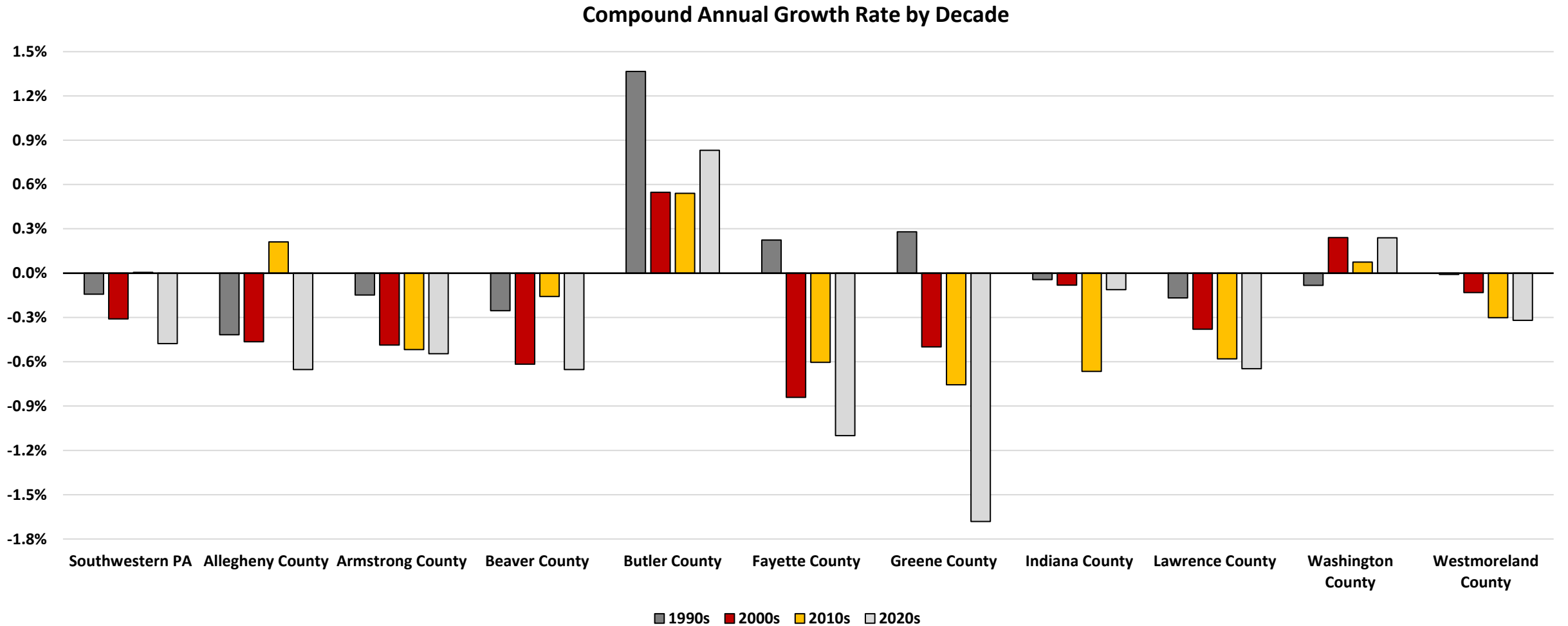
Note: Births and deaths for 2010 are estimated.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2022 Population Estimates, compiled April 2023

Similar to past years, all of the counties in the region saw decreases in population with the exception of Butler and Washington, which each recorded small increases of under 1,000 individuals. Furthermore, Allegheny County recorded the third largest decrease for the second consecutive year trailing Fayette and Greene Counties. Conversely, Armstrong and Indiana Counties have seen annual population losses decrease in the past couple of years.

County	2022	2021 to 2022		2020 to 2022	
		#	%	#	%
Allegheny	1,233,253	-12,192	-1.0%	-17,332	-1.4%
Armstrong	64,747	-391	-0.6%	-806	-1.2%
Beaver	165,677	-1,237	-0.7%	-2,551	-1.5%
Butler	197,300	511	0.3%	3,533	1.8%
Fayette	125,755	-1,358	-1.1%	-3,061	-2.4%
Greene	34,663	-606	-1.7%	-1,283	-3.6%
Indiana	82,957	-201	-0.2%	-274	-0.3%
Lawrence	84,849	-705	-0.8%	-1,220	-1.4%
Washington	210,383	371	0.2%	1,058	0.5%
Westmoreland	352,057	-1,708	-0.5%	-2,606	-0.7%
TOTAL	2,551,641	-17,516	-0.7%	-24,542	-1.0%

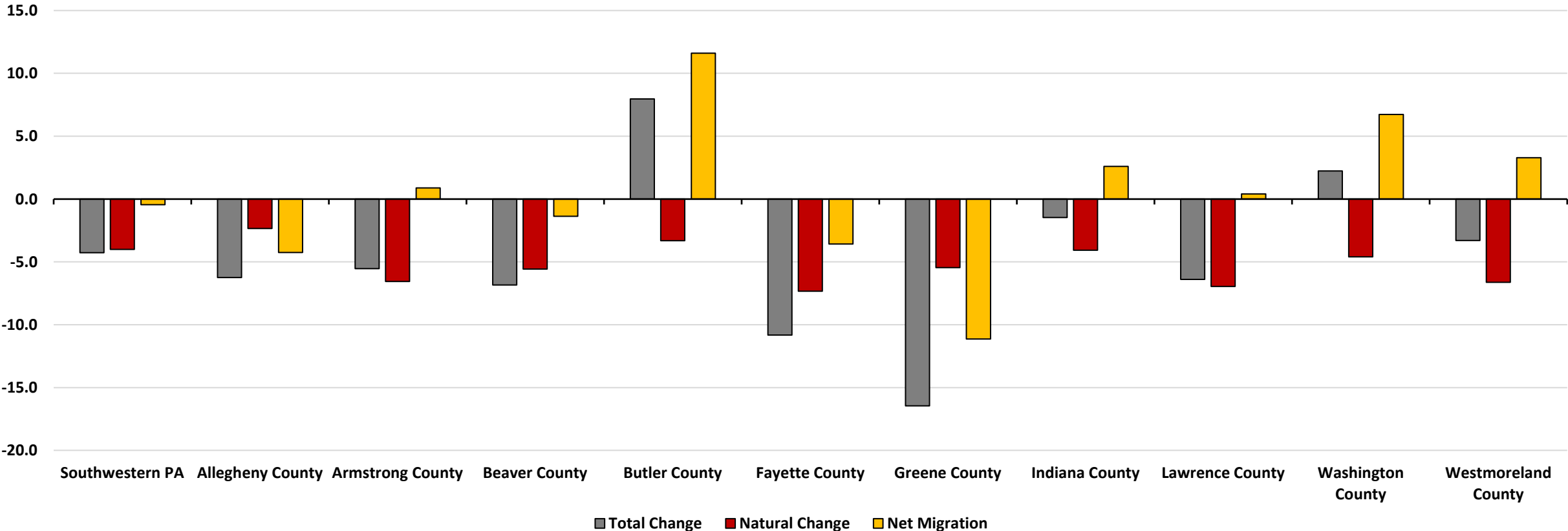
While the regional population growth rate was flat in the 2010s as gains in Allegheny, Butler and Washington Counties offset losses in the other counties, the annual rate of population loss over the past two years is accelerating. While only based on two years of data, the 2020s are pointing to a continuation of an accelerating population loss in several counties including Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence and Westmoreland.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2022 Population Estimates, compiled April 2023

Since 2020, natural population decrease has been the primary driver of the population loss in the region. However, the drivers vary by county. While all counties experienced natural population loss, negative net migration was a larger factor driving the population loss in Allegheny and Greene Counties. Allegheny County, which tends to have a younger population than the other counties in the region, had the lowest annual rate of natural loss in the region since 2020. Butler and Washington, which had traditionally been the only counties to experience positive net migration have been joined by Armstrong, Indiana and Westmoreland as having more people move in than move out. However, all three of those counties join Fayette has having the highest annual rates of natural loss in the region.

Average Annual Rate of Change per 1,000 Residents (2020 to 2022)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2022 Population Estimates, compiled April 2023