CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRATION FOR THE PUGET SOUND REGION

People who moved to the Puget Sound region between 1995 and 2000 tended to be younger, better educated, and with a higher income compared to those who moved out of the region during that period. Across all occupations, in-migrants were younger, in some cases much younger, than out-migrants. Additionally, both groups were considerably younger than the regional average. But in comparison to a decade earlier, the ages are somewhat higher.

These findings are from the Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. This Census product contains complete census questionnaire answers for a sampling of households in areas of 100,000 or more. This allows the selection of a specific subset of the population (people who either moved into the area between 1995 and 2000, or who moved out of the region) and examines the demographic characteristics of that group.

The data provided the state, metropolitan area, and PUMS area (PUMA) where the person lived 5 years previously (i.e., in 1985 for the 1990 PUMS and 1995 for the 2000 PUMS) if that person lived in a different house than currently. In-migrants, or incomers, are those who lived in another state or some Washington county outside the 4-county Central Puget Sound region. Out-migrants, or outgoers, are those who lived in the Puget Sound region in 1985 or 1995 but reported their current residence in another state or some other Washington county.

IN-MIGRATION VS. OUT-MIGRATION

According to PUMS data, 570,780 persons moved into the region between 1995 and 2000, while 428,862 persons moved out. King County received slightly more than half of all in-migrants to the region, and contributed about the same percentage to all out-migrants. Both percentages were about the same as the county’s portion of the region’s 2000 population. Only a third (36%) of the in-migrants ended up in Seattle, while it contributed half of the county’s out-migrants.

Among both in-migrants and out-migrants, there are slightly more males (51.5%) than females region-wide.

Age

In-migrants are significantly younger that out-migrants at all income levels and in all occupations. The median age of in-migrants is 31 years, compared to 34 years for out-migrants and 41 years for the region as a whole. In the $10-15,000 income range, in-migrants have a median age of 28 years, 5 years younger than out-migrants and 13 years younger than the region.
Looking at persons with occupations, the median age of in-migrants is 4 years younger than out-migrants, 31 to 35. The occupations with the largest gaps are computer and other sciences, engineering, and social and legal services, with 4-6 years separating incomers from out-migrants. Among those in social and legal services, education and library professions, and other sciences besides computer and mathematics, in-migrants are 10-11 years younger than the regional median.

**Occupation**

When looking at the percent distribution of current occupations among people in the labor force, there is little difference between in-migrants and out-migrants and the region as a whole, with a few exceptions. The most notable is in computer and mathematical sciences: this represents 4.9% of all incomers, compared to 2.7% of out-migrants and 3% of the region as a whole.

Persons in the military represent a larger portion of the total for both incomers (2.5%) and out-migrants (1.9%) than for the region (0.9%). Sales and related occupations comprise 10.6% of all out-migrants compared to 9% of in-migrants and 9.3% of the region.

**Income**

The median income of in-migrants 18 years and older is $2,000 higher than that of out-migrants, but more than $3,700 lower than the region. In the 18-24 age group, the median income of in-migrants is higher than both out-migrants and the region, $10,000 compared to $7,000 and $9,000 respectively. But the gap between in-migrants and out-migrants gets smaller as the ages get higher, from 30% to 3.6% in the 45-64 age group. For people 65 years and older, in-migrants median income is 13% lower than that of out-migrants, $14,200 compared to $16,320. The in-migrants median income for people 45-64 is 23%, or $7,600, lower than the regional median.

Occupations where in-migrants show a significantly higher income than out-migrants include computer and mathematical science; entertainment, sports, and media; services including food preparation and serving-related; and sales and office support. In three occupation categories — other sciences and engineering; social and legal services; and military — out-migrants incomes are significantly higher than that of in-migrants.
**Education**

In-migrants tend to be better educated than out-migrants, and in some cases better than the region as a whole. The percent with bachelor’s or master’s degrees are significantly higher than either out-migrants or the region and representing nearly a third of all in-migrants. In addition, in-migrants with college degrees are younger than out-migrants and the region, significantly so in the case of the latter, where in-migrants with master’s degrees or above are 10 to 11 years younger than the regional average.

**1990-2000 Trends**

In 1990 a slightly smaller number moved into the region (532,956), but they represented a larger proportion of the total population. In contrast, there were 220,225 out-migrants between 1985 and 1990, representing only 8% of the 1990 population.

**Age**

The age gap between in-migrants and the region was smaller in 1990 than in 2000, no more then 8 years at any income level, and at the higher incomes, in-migrants tended to be older than out-migrants.

**Occupation**

In 1990, only 2.1% were in computer and mathematical sciences. In contrast, other sciences and engineering represented a larger share of in-migrants in 1990 than in 2000 (5.8% vs. 4%).

In the blue-collar occupations (including construction, repair, production, material moving) a couple trends are noticeable: they represented a larger share of the workforce in 1990 and significant numbers of them were moving into the region in the late 1980s. In 1990 26% of all occupations were in these areas, compared to 17.4% in 2000; 24% of the 1985-90 in-migrants were blue-collar workers, while only 16.5% were a decade later.

**Income**

Median incomes were similar between in-migrants and out-migrants in 1990 across most occupations and age groups, unlike in 2000 when in-migrants had significantly higher incomes.

In many white-collar occupations (management, business and financial, computer science) median incomes among in-migrants were lower or at the same level as those among out-migrants. In contrast, 2000 incomes were generally higher among in-migrants than among out-migrants.

For more information concerning this Trend, please contact Neil Kilgren at (206) 464-7964 or nkilgren@psrc.org.