OFFICE OF THE NEW YORK STATE COMPTROLLER

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NYC's Shifting Population: The Latest Statistics

Highlights

- From April of 2020 to July of 2022, the New York City population declined by 5.3 percent. This decline of 468,293 residents, many of whom remained in New York or neighboring New Jersey, wiped out almost three-quarters of the population gains from the prior decade.
- From April 2020 to June 2021, net international migration to the City fell just short of 21,000 people, almost a third lower than the level from the 12-month period ending in June 2019 and almost two-thirds lower than the June 2016 level.
- The natural increase in the City's population was smaller than normal due to over 41,000 COVID-related deaths from the onset of the pandemic through June 2022 and fewer births.
- From 2019 to 2020, the number of filers with an adjusted gross income of less than \$100,000 increased by 3.3 percent (109,800), more than offsetting the decline (42,383) in the number of higher-income filers earning greater than \$100,000.
- From 2019 to 2021, the share of City households with incomes of \$100,000 or more decreased for the first time in over a decade, to 35.2 percent. In the following year, the share increased to a record high of 39 percent.
- In New York City, with fewer births since the pandemic, the population of children younger than 5 years old declined by 12.5 percent from April 2020 to June 2022, a much faster rate of decline than that of the adult population (4.7 percent).

New York City, the largest city in the country by population, is a diverse, dynamic place where people of all ages, races, ethnicities, nationalities and incomes live and work together. The City grew by 7.7 percent in the decade from 2010 to 2020, a pace that surpassed the nation. These new New York City residents represented a total population greater than that of Miami, Florida's 442,241 residents in 2020.

As the decade drew to a close, disruption emerged in the City's growth patterns, including declines in families with children. Additionally, federal limitations on immigration beginning in 2017 slowed international migration, a source of historical population growth in the City. The decline accelerated, fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic, its wide-ranging impact and devastating repercussions. Early in the pandemic, the demand for outdoor and additional living space amid the shift to remote work hollowed central business districts across the nation, including in New York City.

These changes initially left the City's composition of residents older and less wealthy and raised the share of the non-White population. As the pandemic eased and the cost of living soared, Black and Hispanic households, many of them low-income, began to leave, offsetting the return of some households. Children, however, remain a smaller portion of the City's population.

As immigration to the City returns to historic norms and the economy continues to grow, so, too, will the City and its population. Ultimately, understanding these changes can help inform policy choices necessary to serve residents and keep the City competitive and dynamic.

Pandemic Impact on the City's Total Population

In the decade before the pandemic, April 1, 2010 to April 1, 2020, New York City's population increased by 7.7 percent, three times greater than the growth from the prior decade (2.1 percent; see Figure 1).¹ The City's population growth was greater than that of the nation (7.4 percent) and the State (4.2 percent).

Growth in the City was led by Brooklyn and Queens, where the population increased by 9.2 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively. Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island each grew by more than 5 percent. The population in every borough grew at a faster pace than during the prior decade.

One factor that determines the overall change in population is the natural increase, the number of births less the number of deaths. From 2010 to 2020, the natural increase totaled 623,637 people, accounting for 99 percent of the total population increase (629,057) during this period.

The rest of the population change is attributed to net migration, which is the total of net domestic and net international migration. Net domestic migration measures the number of people moving to New York City from another area within the nation minus those leaving the City to other parts of the country. Net international migration

measures the number of people moving to the City from outside the country minus those leaving the City to another country. Total net migration of 5,420 accounted for a small share of the City's overall population change from 2010 to 2020 because positive net international migration was almost totally offset by negative net domestic migration.

Even though the City's population increased from 2010 to 2020, both the natural increase and net migration slowed during the decade. The pandemic accelerated these trends, leading to population loss in the following two years.

"From April 1, 2010 to April 1, 2020, New York City's population increased by 7.7 percent, three times greater than the growth from the prior decade...[but the pandemic] wiped out almost three-quarters of the population gains."

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an abrupt change in the City's population. From April 2020 to July 2022, the population declined by 5.3 percent (468,293 residents), wiping out almost three-quarters of the population gains from the prior decade.² As the City was the initial epicenter of the pandemic nationally, the

FIGURE 1
Total Population Before and After Pandemic

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Region	2000	2010	2000-2010 % Change	2020	2010-2020 % Change	2022	2020-2022 % Change
United States	281,421,906	308,745,538	9.7%	331,449,520	7.4%	333,287,557	0.6%
New York State	18,976,457	19,378,102	2.1%	20,201,230	4.2%	19,677,151	-2.6%
New York City	8,008,278	8,175,133	2.1%	8,804,190	7.7%	8,335,897	-5.3%
Bronx	1,332,650	1,385,108	3.9%	1,472,654	6.3%	1,379,946	-6.3%
Brooklyn	2,465,326	2,504,700	1.6%	2,736,074	9.2%	2,590,516	-5.3%
Manhattan	1,537,195	1,585,873	3.2%	1,694,251	6.8%	1,596,273	-5.8%
Queens	2,229,379	2,230,722	0.1%	2,405,464	7.8%	2,278,029	-5.3%
Staten Island	443,728	468,730	5.6%	495,747	5.8%	491,133	-0.9%

Sources: U.S Census Population Estimates; OSC analysis

population decline was much worse than in the State, which declined by 2.6 percent, and in the nation, whose population increased by 0.6 percent.

Among the City's boroughs, the Bronx had the largest population decline, shrinking by 6.3 percent. Most other boroughs decreased by over five percent each except for Staten Island, whose population declined by just 0.9 percent.

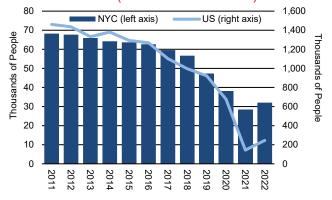
"The population of children younger than 5 years old declined by 12.5 percent from April 2020 to June 2022, a much faster rate of decline than that of the adult population (4.7 percent)."

According to data from the U.S. Census, the decline in the City's total population since April of 2020 is due to the relatively large number of residents leaving the City for other parts of the country, which is not being offset fully by gains in natural increase and net international migration.

Fewer Births and More Deaths

From April 2020 to June 2021, the natural increase in the City was 65 percent lower than the increase that occurred from July 2018 to June 2019, which had already been the lowest during the prior decade (see Figure 2). However, this was better than the 80 percent drop that the

FIGURE 2
Natural Increase (Births Minus Deaths)



Sources: U.S. Census, Population Estimates

nation experienced during the same period. While the City's natural increase improved in the 12 months after June 2021, it was still 32 percent lower than the 2019 increase. This rate was still better than the nation, which remained 73 percent below its 2019 increase.

This depressed level of natural increase resulted from the over 41,000 COVID-related deaths in the City through July 2022.³ At the same time, the public health crisis and the economic turmoil that followed led to fewer births.⁴ Compared to the number of births from July 2018 to June 2019, the number of births in July 2020 through June 2021 was 11 percent lower, dropping to 95,037. In the following year, the number increased to 97,939, still 8.3 percent lower than the 2019 level.

In New York City, with fewer births since the pandemic, the population of children younger than 5 years old declined by 12.5 percent from April 2020 to June 2022, a much faster rate of decline than that of the adult (ages 18 and over) population (4.7 percent).

Even with the large post-pandemic decline, the natural increase in the City stayed positive, with a total cumulative increase of 48,460 people from April 2020 to June 2022.

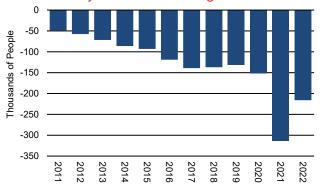
An Increasing Outflow of Residents to Other Parts of U.S.

Outflow Started Long Before the Pandemic

The outflow of residents from New York City to elsewhere across the nation has been observed in every year since the data series began in 1990. The overall population only increased before the pandemic because of positive net international migration and natural increase. As more and more residents left the City, this outflow eventually outweighed changes in international migration and natural increase, resulting in the City's post-pandemic population decline.

From July 2010 through June 2011, net domestic migration was negative 48,668 people (see

FIGURE 3
New York City Net Domestic Migration



Note: Year denotes 12-month period ending in June 30 of that year. Sources: U.S. Census, Population Estimates

Figure 3). By June 2019, the net domestic migration in the prior 12 months was negative 131,367 people.

There are many factors that may have driven residents to move out of the City during this time, but the persistent high cost of living was likely one of them.⁵ In a 2015 New York Times/Siena College Poll, 51 percent of City residents said they were just getting by financially or finding it difficult or very difficult. In the same survey, 17 percent said that at some point over the last year, they did not have enough money to pay for adequate shelter or housing.⁶

These figures varied substantially by income range but were felt across the spectrum, with 72 percent of residents earning \$50,000 or less responding as just getting by or finding it difficult, versus 17 percent for those earning \$100,000 or more. Households with children at home (57 percent) were also more likely to respond as just getting by or finding it difficult.

"The number of people that left the City from 2020 to 2021 increased by 35 percent compared to those that moved out from 2018 to 2019...the number that moved into the City was 10 percent lower." Another reason that may have driven residents to leave is the difficulty of raising a family in the City. In the 2015 survey, 44 percent of residents said the City was either a fair or poor place to raise children. Likely reasons for this response are lack of space resulting from the City's high population density and the City having the highest child care costs in the State. Many residents may be leaving the City to start or grow a family.

A sign of reduced family formation in the City is that from 2010 to 2020, the population of young children (younger than 5) increased by just 4.4 percent, less than half the rate of adults (9.1 percent). Many families with children also likely left the City as the total child population (younger than 18) in the City had an even slower growth rate of 2.7 percent during this period.

Pandemic Led to Faster Rate of Outflow

While there are many reasons residents chose to leave the City even before the pandemic, others remained because their employment was tied to the City, limiting where they could live to the commuter shed. However, with the onset of the pandemic, many employers implemented workfrom-home policies for their employees, who tend to earn higher incomes. Even now, years after the pandemic began, some form of remote work policies are the norm for many workers as evidenced by an in-office rate of around 50 percent. Fully remote workers were able to move anywhere outside the City while even partially remote policies allowed workers to live farther away from their City job.

The pandemic and the resulting lockdowns and mandates intensified the outward migration from New York City to elsewhere within the nation and lowered the domestic migration into the City. According to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) migration data, the number of people that left the City from 2020 to 2021 increased by 35 percent compared to those that moved out from 2018 to 2019. At the same time, the number of people that moved into the City was 10 percent lower. Of

the people that left the City, the top three destination states were other parts of New York State (28.9 percent), New Jersey (18 percent), and Florida (9.4 percent).

Similar to the trend from the IRS data, U.S. Census data showed that from July 2020 to June 2021, the domestic outflow of residents outnumbered the inflow by 313,358 people, more than double (139 percent) the amount from the 12-month period ending in June 2019 and over six times the amount from a decade ago.

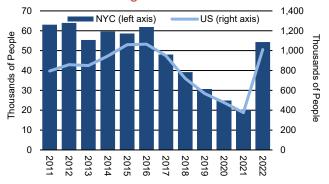
In the following 12 months, many of the higher-income individuals that left the City returned to work in person as restaurants, cultural institutions, Broadway shows and many other forms of entertainment also opened back up. As a result, the gap between those leaving and those moving in improved by almost a third to 216,031, though this is still 64 percent higher than the 2019 level.

Inflow of International Migrants Slows

The immigrant population is a vital part of the City as they made up 36.8 percent of the total population in 2022. Shares in some neighborhoods such as <u>Jackson Heights</u> and <u>Flushing</u> exceeded 50 percent. Like the rest of the country, the City's inflow of international migrants was slowing before the pandemic and worsened as the pandemic stopped almost all international travel.

In the decade prior to the pandemic, international migration declined in the City, from a net of 63,067 people in the 12-month period ending in June 2011 to a net of 30,610 people in the period ending in June 2019 (see Figure 4). However, the decline was not gradual. Instead, a steep drop started in the 12-month period ending in June 2017, when the federal government made immigration into the U.S. more restrictive, and net international migration dropped by 22 percent from the prior year to 48,030 people.⁹

FIGURE 4 Net International Migration



Note: Year denotes 12-month period ending in June 30 of that year. Data before 2020 uses old methodology which produced lower net international migration totals. Sources: U.S. Census, Population Estimates

"Like the rest of the country, the City's inflow of international migrants was slowing before the pandemic and worsened as the pandemic stopped almost all international travel."

After the onset of the pandemic, from April 2020 to June 2021, net international migration fell to 20,978 people, almost a third lower than the level from the 12-month period ending in June 2019 and almost two-thirds lower than the June 2016 level. This large decline in immigrants is likely due to restrictions on international travel that were implemented by governments all over the world to mitigate the spread of the disease. The drop is likely to have been worse because post-pandemic international migration data (2021 and later) was raised due to a change in methodology from the U.S Census.¹⁰

By June 2022, as COVID-19 subsided and traveling restrictions were lifted, net international migration more than doubled (172 percent) from the prior year to 54,307 people, the highest level since the 12-month period ending June 2016. At the same time, the nation saw an increase of 169 percent to reach a level close to that in 2016.

Changes to the Composition of the City's Population

With such a large change to the overall population since the pandemic, the composition of the City's population has also changed. In the first year after the pandemic, many high-income households left for other parts of the country but in the following year, the share of low-income households dropped even more, resulting in a lower share of low-income households in the City. The City has also become more diverse as the share of the non-White population has increased, which is similar to nationwide trends. Another trend that occurred in the City as well as in the nation is the aging of the population as the number of seniors (ages 65 and over) increased much faster than the rest of the total population.

Household Incomes

After the onset of the pandemic, the residents that left were more likely to be remote workers. 11 Remote workers also tend to have higher incomes, so higher-income households were more likely to have moved. 12

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2021, of the people from the City that moved to other parts of the country in the past year, 37 percent of those employed worked in the high-paying sectors of business services, financial activities and information even though only 28 percent of employed City residents worked in these sectors. In contrast, 22 percent of employed City residents worked in the lower-paying retail trade, leisure and hospitality and other service (e.g., nail salons, etc.) sectors but only 19 percent of those that moved away from the City worked in these sectors.

The employment trend is corroborated by changes in wages and income. In 2021, of the people that left the City in the prior year for other parts of the U.S., the median wage was \$60,000, 22 percent higher than for those that moved from the City in 2019 (data not available in 2020). At

the same time, the median household income in the City decreased by 2 percent from 2019 to 2021.

"After the onset of the pandemic, the residents that left were more likely to be remote workers...37 percent of those employed worked in the high-paying sectors of business services, financial activities and information."

As a result, from 2019 to 2021, according to the ACS, the share of households in the City with incomes of \$100,000 or more decreased for the first time in over a decade, declining by 0.8 percentage points to 35.2 percent (see Figure 5). During the same period, the nation had the opposite trend as the share of households with incomes of \$100,000 or more continued to increase.

However, in the following year, as the dangers of the pandemic subsided and restrictions and lockdowns were lifted, many employers changed remote work policies to some form of hybrid schedules, bringing some employees back into the office. ¹³ As a result, from 2021 to 2022, the share of City households with incomes of \$100,000 or more increased by 3.7 percentage points, the most in at least a decade, to reach 39 percent, a record high. In 2022, the people that

FIGURE 5Share of Households with Incomes of \$100,000 or More



Note: Data for 2020 is not available. Sources: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

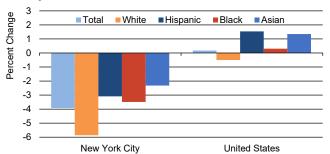
moved into the City from elsewhere in the U.S. had a median wage of \$51,000, 13.3 percent higher than in the prior year.

At the same time, the cost of living grew in the City amid an inflationary environment, with rents exceeding record highs. ¹⁴ This may have forced lower-income households out of the City. As a result, in 2022, people that moved out of the City in the past year to other parts of the country had a median wage of \$49,000, 18 percent lower than those that moved in the prior year.

A similar trend appears when looking at the personal income tax returns of full-year New York City resident tax filers. ¹⁵ From tax liability year 2019 to 2020, the number of City filers with adjusted gross income (AGI) of over \$100,000 decreased by 5.5 percent (42,383 filers), the first decline in at least five years. At the same time, the number of filers with AGI of less than \$100,000 increased by 3.3 percent (109,800 filers). This increase more than offset the decline in the higher-income filers resulting in an overall increase of 1.6 percent to 4,218,143 City filers for tax liability year 2020.

In the following year, the trend more than reversed as the total number of City filers declined by 4.1 percent in tax liability year 2021 to 4,044,894 filers. As a result, the total number of filers was 2.5 percent lower than the 2019 level.

FIGURE 6
Population Change by Race from April 2020 to July 2021



Note: White, Black and Asian population calculations exclude Hispanics Sources: U.S. Census, Population Estimates; OSC analysis

This decrease was due to a 7 percent decline in filers with AGI of less than \$100,000 in 2021. This also more than offset the previous year's gains resulting in a drop to 3,240,282 filers, 4 percent fewer than in 2019.

At the same time, the number of filers with AGI greater than \$100,000 increased by 9.7 percent in 2021 to reach 804,612 filers. When compared to the pre-pandemic 2019 level, this was 3.7 percent more.

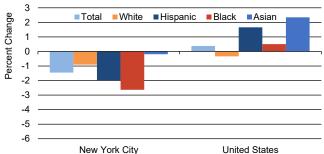
Population by Race and Ethnicity

When compared to the changes in the number of lower- and higher-income households, a similar post-pandemic trend can be seen when looking at population changes by race and ethnicity in the City.

"In 2022, the people that moved into the City from elsewhere in the U.S. had a median wage of \$51,000, 13.3 percent higher than in the prior year... people that moved out of the City...to other parts of the country had a median wage of \$49,000, 18 percent lower than the prior year."

From April 2020 to July 2021, the White population throughout the nation was the only major group that declined in size, shrinking by 0.5

FIGURE 7Population Change by Race from July 2021 to July 2022



Note: White, Black and Asian population calculations exclude Hispanics Sources: U.S. Census, Population Estimates; OSC analysis

percent (see Figure 6). ¹⁶ During the same period, the City's White population decreased by 5.9 percent, much faster than the City's Black, Hispanic and Asian populations, declines of 3.5 percent, 3.1 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively. These rates contrast with the prior decade, when the population in all major racial and ethnic groups increased. Asian and Hispanic populations increased the most (25.3 and 9.2 percent, respectively) while the White and Black populations had smaller increases (2.3 and 1.9 percent, respectively).

In 2021, of those that moved out of the City in the prior year to other parts of the country, 42 percent were White, higher than the 38 percent share in both 2019 and 2018. A possible explanation is that, according to the ACS, White people generally have higher median household incomes and are more likely to have jobs that allow for remote work. These dynamics may have increased the likelihood of White residents leaving the City during the height of the pandemic.

In the following year, while the nation's White population was again the only group that declined, the City's White population's rate of decline slowed to just 0.9 percent, less than half the rates of the Black and Hispanic populations (see Figure 7).

Black people and Hispanic people have lower median household incomes and higher poverty rates, which may have made them more likely to leave the City once high inflation and large rent hikes occurred. ¹⁷ In 2022, of the people that moved out of the City, the non-White share was 64 percent, higher than the 58 percent from the prior year and the 62 percent from both 2019 and 2018.

In the August 2020 Manhattan Institute/Siena College survey of City residents with income of more than \$100,000, Black and Hispanic residents were more likely to say it is at least somewhat likely that they will not be living in the

City within the next two years and were more likely to cite the cost of living as a reason for leaving.¹⁸

When looking at these two periods together, from April 2020 to June 2022, the populations of all major racial and ethnic groups declined after increasing the prior decade but at differing rates. Since April 2020, the City's White and Black populations declined (6.7 percent and 6 percent, respectively) faster than the total population (5.3 percent). During the same period, the Hispanic and Asian populations declined at slower rates (5 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively).

As a result, the White and Black shares declined (0.5 percent and 0.2 percent, respectively) while the Asian and Hispanic shares increased (0.4 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively). These trends are similar to the prior decade as the White and Black shares also declined while the Asian and Hispanic shares increased.

"Since April 2020, the City's White and Black populations declined (6.7 percent and 6 percent, respectively) faster than the total population (5.3 percent)."

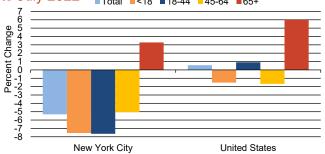
Population by Age

The City's population has become older, especially after the pandemic as there were fewer births, more families have left the City compared to before the pandemic, and a large cohort has entered retirement age.

The share of households in the City with related children of the householder has declined in every year since at least 2010. In 2022, out of all occupied households in the City, only 25.4 percent of them had related children, down 5.9 percentage points from 2010. This drop was larger than the 3.9 percentage point drop that the nation's share experienced during the same time period.

FIGURE 8
Population Change by Age from April 2020 to July 2022

Total
18-44
45-64
65+



Sources: U.S. Census, Population Estimates; OSC analysis

From April 2020 to July 2022, the under 18 population decreased by 7.5 percent, much faster than the 1.5 percent decline in the nation's under 18 population (see Figure 8). As a result, the share of children of the City's total population declined to 20.1 percent in 2022, with the biggest annual drop (0.3 percentage points) occuring in 2022.

During this period, the population from ages 18 through 44 declined at a faster rate of 7.6 percent, much worse than the nation, which had an increase of 0.9 percent. Similar to the child population, the City's 18 through 44 population share also declined every year since 2010, dropping by 3.1 percentage points from 2010 to 38.7 percent in 2022. This suggests that some younger couples decided to start families and raise children outside of the City.

"The senior share of the total population increased by 4.6 percentage points from 2010 to 16.7 percent in 2022. This was a bigger increase than the nation's senior population share."

For those ages 45 through 64, the City as well as the nation saw a population decline, though the City saw a more substantial 5.1 percent drop, compared to the nation's decrease of 1.7 percent. The City's 45-64 population share has been very

stable going back to 2010 as it has been about one quarter of the population every year.

In the decade before the pandemic, the population of those 65 years and over grew by 35.8 percent, almost five times faster than the total population (7.7 percent). This was similar to the nation's trend as the senior population increased by 35.4 percent while the total population grew by 7.4 percent.

From April 2020 to June 2022, the senior population was the only group that increased, growing by 3.3 percent, though slower than the nation's increase of 6 percent. As a result, the senior share of the total population increased by 4.6 percentage points from 2010 to 16.7 percent in 2022. This was a bigger increase than the nation's senior population share, which grew by 4.3 percentage points to 17.3 percent in 2022.

Outlook

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated the population of New York City, reversing substantial population growth in the prior decade. In the years since, deaths from COVID-19 have declined, contributing to population growth, but births remain low, a challenge also seen nationally. Net international migration more than fully rebounded from pandemic restrictions and is approaching levels prior to the implementation of federal government restrictions. A continuation of this trend would likely support continued population growth, as it has in years past. Net domestic migration has also improved, although remains negative as it has for many years. As the City's economy has recovered with the lifting of pandemic restrictions, employment has recovered across key industry sectors and employers have tightened remote work policies.

As the City regains population, it looks different today than at the onset of the pandemic. While the number of wealthier households had returned to pre-pandemic levels by 2022 following temporary outmigration, that of lower-income

households had not, highlighting concerns over the cost of living in New York City. Rents remain elevated amid limited supply, contributing to an overall high cost of living. In September 2023, a Siena College poll found that 90 percent of respondents with incomes less than \$50,000 thought the cost of living in New York State was a major problem compared to 78 percent of respondents with incomes over \$100,000.19

The aging population is at once a national and local challenge. While the share of senior citizens nationally is currently larger than that locally, the citywide share grew more over the last decade, suggesting the City should continue to monitor this group and respond to health care and housing needs amid rising costs. Additionally, families with children left the City at a greater rate than those nationally during the pandemic, suggesting the City and the State have more to do to reduce childcare costs and provide further opportunities for working- and middle-class families that want to raise their children here.

ENDNOTES

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- ¹⁷ OSC, New York State Rent Relief Update: Spotlight on New York City, Report 5-2024, July 2023, https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-5-2024.pdf.
- ¹⁸ Siena College Research Institute, see note 6.
- ¹⁹ Siena College Research Institute, Siena College Research Poll September 10 13, 2023, https://scri.siena.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2023/09/SNY0923-Crosstabs.pdf.

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