

Brief Summary of 2000 Census
Data on Place-of-Work
Prepared by the Colorado Demography Section
March, 2003

The U. S. Bureau of the Census has just released new 2000 census data showing place-of-work by county for Colorado residents by county-of-residence. In effect, the data show inter-county commuting patterns. The data are especially important for transportation planners in their analysis and planning for these trips. They are also important to labor market analysts and housing providers in understanding the cross-county effects of job changes.

For example, the data show that 98% of the residents of the six-county Denver metropolitan area also work in the region, but that they fill only 95% of the jobs. Of the other 5% or 60,000 remaining jobs, more than half (31,600) are filled by residents of Larimer and Weld counties. Another one-third are supplied by surrounding counties to the west (Gilpin, Clear Creek and Park) and to the South (El Paso and Elbert). Interestingly, residents of all other counties in the state, except four, make up the remaining 10,000 that work in the Denver metropolitan area.

More generally, the data show that 2/3rds or 67% of the state's workers work in the county of their residence. But the data also show that a large number of workers commute large distances: at least 20,000 work over seventy miles from home, and of these, many who work much more than 100 miles from home probably commute on a weekly rather than daily basis.

Of special interest are the data on *out-of-state residents* who work in the state. These are essentially temporary workers who reported their residence elsewhere in the country. These data are especially valuable to regional and county forecasters in their efforts to relate population and housing demands to job growth. (Included in these numbers may also be students and military personnel but census instructions urged them to report Colorado as their residence even though it may have been only short-term.)

Of the state's 2.2 million workers, 13,400 reported their residence as out-of-state. While 5,100 or 38% worked in the Denver region, another 3,400 worked in other counties of the metropolitan Front Range. Nearly, 1,500 residents of New Mexico worked in the Southwest counties of La Plata and Montezuma. Another 1,500 out-of-state workers were employed in resort counties.

The Colorado Demography Section is pleasantly surprised that the census results showed any numbers at all on workers who reported themselves as out-of-state residents. As mentioned before, even temporary workers are instructed to regard their current work-related location as their current residence albeit short-term. However, the census was conducted in the Spring of 2000 -- at the end of the ski season and the beginning of farm-related work -- which was a transition period for many of these workers. Consequently, they may not have regarded their Colorado workplace as their primary residence.

The Demography Section has long felt that a large number of workers in the state – maybe as high as 50,000 or more – are *not counted* in the census. The majority of these are workers (and others) from outside the country, who may not even have received a census form; more than likely they did, but were inclined not to fill it out.