



## Estimates: Florida growing to 22 million residents by 2022

By Mike Schneider / The Associated Press  
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ORLANDO — State demographers estimate Florida's population will surpass 22 million residents as soon as 2022.

Forecasts released earlier this month by the Demographic Estimating Conference estimate that Florida will grow an average of 330,000 people a year over the next five years.

With 21.3 million people, Florida is the nation's third most populous state, trailing only California and Texas.

The U.S. Census Bureau said Florida had the second-biggest population gain in 2018, growing by more than 322,000 residents. Only Texas had bigger growth by adding 379,000 residents.

The bureau uses a methodology different from the Demographic Estimating Conference in Florida.

Florida will grow by more than 900 new residents a day, representing a compound growth rate of 1.53% over the next half-decade, according to the conference's forecasts.

The Florida demographers said most of the growth to the Sunshine States is coming from people moving to Florida as opposed to a natural increase from births.

They also said Hurricane Michael's devastation of parts of the Florida Panhandle likely didn't affect the state's overall population as residents for the most part moved to neighboring counties or cities.

The University of Florida's Stefan Rayer has used changes in utility customers as a proxy for estimating changes in population in the Panhandle since the hurricane.

Rayer, the population program director at the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, said in a presentation to the conference that electrical power customers in Bay County, the area hardest hit, had declined by more than 6 percent in the past year.