

## U.S. Census Updates: Arizona's Rural Population

There are multiple approaches to identifying urban and rural areas in the United States. An overview of the different approaches can be found from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [here](#) and from the Rural Health Information Hub [here](#).

The U.S. Census Bureau regularly reviews and updates their classification of urban-rural areas. The most recent update was implemented based on the 2020 Decennial Census. The differences between the 2010 and 2020 approach are summarized [here](#). In 2010 there were two types of urban areas, “urbanized areas” (areas with 50,000 population or more) and “urban clusters” (areas with a population between 2,500 and 50,000). In the 2020 approach, there is only one “urban area” type of “at least 2,000 housing units or have a population of at least [5,000](#).”

Between 2010 and 2020, Arizona’s population increased from 6.4 million in 2010 to 7.2 million, about 12%. In 2010 the Census estimated there were 651,358 Arizonans living in rural areas (e.g., outside urbanized areas or urban clusters). In 2020, after the updates to the urban-rural classification, this estimate increased by 114,914 to 766,272. The percentage of the population in Arizona living in rural areas changed from 10.2% in 2010 to 10.7% in 2020.

The table below shows the population for urban-rural areas in Arizona at the state and county level for 2020 and for 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, the population increased in 10 of Arizona’s 15 counties. Counties that experienced a population decrease were Apache, Cochise, Gila, La Paz, and Navajo counties.

|                | 2020 Census          |                         |                       | 2010 Census          |                         |                       |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
|                | Population (percent) |                         |                       | Population (percent) |                         |                       |
|                | Total                | Urban                   | Rural                 | Total                | Urban                   | Rural                 |
| <b>Arizona</b> | <b>7,151,502</b>     | <b>6,385,230 (89.3)</b> | <b>766,272 (10.7)</b> | <b>6,392,017</b>     | <b>5,740,659 (89.8)</b> | <b>651,358 (10.2)</b> |
| Apache         | 66,021               | 0 (0)                   | 66,021 (100)          | 71,518               | 18,551 (25.9)           | 52,967 (74.1)         |
| Cochise        | 125,447              | 79,323 (63.2)           | 46,124 (36.8)         | 131,346              | 83,666 (63.7)           | 47,680 (36.3)         |
| Coconino       | 145,101              | 98,082 (67.6)           | 47,019 (32.4)         | 134,421              | 92,124 (68.5)           | 42,297 (31.5)         |
| Gila           | 53,272               | 29,642 (55.6)           | 23,630 (44.4)         | 53,597               | 31,589 (58.9)           | 22,008 (41.1)         |
| Graham         | 38,533               | 18,331 (47.6)           | 20,202 (52.4)         | 37,220               | 19,936 (53.6)           | 17,284 (46.4)         |
| Greenlee       | 9,563                | 0 (0)                   | 9,563 (100)           | 8,437                | 4,508 (53.4)            | 3,929 (46.6)          |
| La Paz         | 16,557               | 9,368 (56.6)            | 7,189 (43.4)          | 20,489               | 8,948 (43.7)            | 11,541 (56.3)         |
| Maricopa       | 4,420,568            | 4,318,689 (97.7)        | 101,879 (2.3)         | 3,817,117            | 3,726,888 (97.6)        | 90,229 (2.4)          |
| Mohave         | 213,267              | 162,227 (76.1)          | 51,040 (23.9)         | 200,186              | 154,216 (77.0)          | 45,970 (23.0)         |
| Navajo         | 106,717              | 38,148 (35.7)           | 68,569 (64.3)         | 107,449              | 49,278 (45.9)           | 58,171 (54.1)         |
| Pima           | 1,043,433            | 951,173 (91.2)          | 92,260 (8.8)          | 980,263              | 906,513 (92.5)          | 73,750 (7.5)          |
| Pinal          | 425,264              | 327,317 (77.0)          | 97,947 (23.0)         | 375,770              | 293,459 (78.1)          | 82,311 (21.9)         |
| Santa Cruz     | 47,669               | 19,168 (40.2)           | 28,501 (59.8)         | 47,420               | 34,672 (73.1)           | 12,748 (26.9)         |
| Yavapai        | 236,209              | 160,668 (68.0)          | 75,541 (32.0)         | 211,033              | 140,976 (66.8)          | 70,057 (33.2)         |
| Yuma           | 203,881              | 173,094 (84.9)          | 30,787 (15.1)         | 195,751              | 175,335 (89.6)          | 20,416 (10.4)         |

Source: U.S Census Geography Program [Urban and Rural](#)

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A list of Arizona’s urban areas is provided in the table below. Any area not in an urban area is categorized as rural. A map of Census urban and rural areas can be found [here](#).

| Name  | Population | Name                                 | Population |
|---|------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Arizona City, AZ                              | 9,640      | Needles, CA--AZ                      | 1,986      |
| Benson, AZ                                    | 3,830      | Nogales, AZ                          | 19,168     |
| Bisbee, AZ                                    | 4,637      | Page, AZ                             | 7,022      |
| Blythe, CA--AZ                                | 429        | Parker, AZ--CA                       | 4,618      |
| Buckeye, AZ                                   | 23,897     | Payson, AZ                           | 17,022     |
| Buckeye North, AZ                             | 6,796      | Peoria, AZ                           | 19,593     |
| Bullhead City, AZ--NV                         | 54,177     | Phoenix--Mesa--Scottsdale, AZ        | 3,976,313  |
| Camp Verde, AZ                                | 5,759      | Phoenix West--Goodyear--Avondale, AZ | 419,946    |
| Casa Grande, AZ                               | 50,981     | Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ                 | 9,393      |
| Chino Valley, AZ                              | 13,317     | Prescott-Prescott Valley, AZ         | 92,427     |
| Cienega Springs, AZ                           | 2,041      | Prescott Valley East, AZ             | 7,229      |
| Coolidge, AZ                                  | 12,008     | Quartzsite, AZ                       | 2,280      |
| Corona de Tucson, AZ                          | 7,866      | Rio Verde, AZ                        | 2,765      |
| Cottonwood (Yavapai County)-Verde Village, AZ | 29,121     | Safford, AZ                          | 18,331     |
| Douglas, AZ                                   | 16,582     | Sahuarita, AZ                        | 17,276     |
| Flagstaff, AZ                                 | 79,842     | San Luis, AZ                         | 24,790     |
| Florence East, AZ                             | 14,049     | Sedona, AZ                           | 9,190      |
| Florence West, AZ                             | 11,636     | Show Low, AZ                         | 12,173     |
| Globe, AZ                                     | 12,620     | Sierra Vista, AZ                     | 54,274     |
| Gold Canyon, AZ                               | 9,590      | Snowflake, AZ                        | 5,342      |
| Goodyear South, AZ                            | 16,042     | Somerton, AZ                         | 13,847     |
| Green Valley, AZ                              | 37,315     | Tuba City, AZ                        | 7,942      |
| Heber-Overgaard, AZ                           | 3,573      | Tucson, AZ                           | 875,441    |
| Kingman, AZ                                   | 46,953     | Vail, AZ                             | 12,835     |
| Lake Havasu City, AZ                          | 59,017     | Village of Oak Creek (Big Park), AZ  | 6,128      |
| Marana, AZ                                    | 10,618     | Wickenburg, AZ                       | 4,801      |
| Maricopa, AZ                                  | 57,771     | Winslow, AZ                          | 7,667      |
| Mesquite, NV--AZ                              | 94         | Yuma, AZ--CA                         | 134,457    |
| Munds Park, AZ                                | 773        |                                      |            |

Source: U.S Census Geography Program [Urban and Rural](#)

If you have questions about the new Census approach you can find more information [here](#).

There are other approaches to categorizing rural areas like the Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) [Codes](#) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for [Counties](#). Updates to these approaches are expected in 2024.



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