

Fairfax is biggest draw for region's newest residents

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More people at home and abroad are choosing Fairfax County for their new home over any other jurisdiction in the region, according to [new census data released Wednesday](#).

Meanwhile, rival Montgomery County's new population was driven by immigrants, as nearly one-quarter of the roughly 68,000 new residents in that county came from outside the United States, according to the latest American Community Survey estimates. Fairfax welcomed nearly 88,000 new residents in 2009, accounting for roughly one-quarter of the Washington region's total new residents.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Sharon Bulova said the county's friendly business climate and top-rated public school system draws companies and workers moving to the region for a job. Nationally, Fairfax ranks as the 23rd-highest county for the number of domestic relocations.

Welcome to the region

Rank/Jurisdiction	Movers from:			Total domestic	Total moved	Total population*
	in-state	out-of-state	Total Abroad			
1. Fairfax Co.	34,790	38,256	14,592	73,046	87,638	998,115
2. Montgomery Co.	15,919	36,070	15,791	51,989	67,780	932,026
3. Prince George's Co.	18,336	32,769	7,026	51,105	58,131	823,064
4. District	n/a	45,702	7,700	45,702	53,402	580,260
5. Prince William Co.	17,196	15,073	3,181	32,269	35,450	354,698
6. Arlington Co.	8,870	16,420	4,323	25,290	29,613	203,548
7. Loudoun Co.	11,769	10,434	3,104	22,203	25,307	272,302
8. Alexandria City	8,725	11,389	2,395	20,114	22,509	139,463

Source: American Community Survey * Based on ACS 2005-09 population estimates

"That's what I hear people say the most when they've moved from some other state or county is that they made their home in Fairfax because they wanted to be ensured of great schools for their children," Bulova said, adding that Northrop Grumman listed education as the "number one" reason it chose Fairfax over Montgomery for its new headquarters in 2010. Across the Potomac, Montgomery's growth in residents was driven by a large number of people coming from abroad. A total of 15,791 people immigrated to the county, accounting for 23 percent of the county's new residents, according to an analysis of the survey. Immigrants in Fairfax make up about 16 percent of the new residents there.

Lisa Sturtevant, assistant research professor at the George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis, attributed the shift to changes in immigration trends.

"Immigration from Latin America and Mexico has slowed because there's less business in the construction industry, which is where many [sought] jobs," she said. "So there are fewer Salvadorans coming out, and Fairfax is where they went."

She added that housing prices in Montgomery have also not recovered from the recession as well as in Fairfax, and that more affordable options were likely luring immigrants north of the Potomac River.

The two counties combine for half of the Washington area's more than 58,000 immigrants out of a total of 379,830 new foreign and domestic residents to the region.

Farther out in Northern Virginia, counties like Prince William and Loudoun tend to be more of a draw for in-state moves rather than those moving from out of state. Closer in to the District and in suburban Maryland, new residents from other states far outnumber the closer movers.

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