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The Counties Where Wealthier People Are Moving.

Long-awaited migration data show where people are relocating to and the wealth that they're bringing. View data for your county.

An influx of new residents can provide local governments with a substantial boost, whether they're adding to tax rolls or spending their dollars supporting local businesses.

Last week, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) released long-awaited migration data shedding light on migration patterns for counties and states. New data for 2011 and 2012 includes total incomes for those who moved, helping to approximate wealth gained or lost and its potential impact on local budgets.

A range of factors influence a person's decision to move. Most often, employment considerations largely dictate where people opt to relocate. Others, depending on their circumstances, decide more based on family-related reasons. An area's amenities, taxes and educational opportunities also all typically play some role in decisions to move.

Wealthier residents are often tied to specific job locations, such as a corporate headquarters or employment center for a particular industry. So, their occupations may drive decisions somewhat more than other workers. Technology, however, is enabling more employees to work remotely, so job-related considerations may not carry as much weight in moving decisions as they had in the past, said Steve Murdock, a former U.S. Census Bureau director who now teaches at Rice University.

The independently wealthy or retired, on the other hand, typically give greater consideration to regional amenities or quality of health services. But as retirees age and their health deteriorates, they may require more services or move back to where they came from. As a result, Murdock said, these areas that are attracting large numbers of older, wealthier residents need to be replenished with new retirees each year.

"High incomes are both produced by migration and allow for migration," Murdock said.

The IRS reports numbers of actual tax returns, which can be used to approximate households moving to and from each county. Adjusted gross income (AGI) figures serve as a proxy for total household incomes. One way to assess total wealth gained or lost is to compute a net migration AGI, or total AGI for in-migrants minus AGI for outmigrants. The following table lists this measure for counties with 1,000 or more new residents:

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