In March of this year, the U.S. Census Bureau released its 2017 estimate of the total population of New Orleans, confirming that the population of the city grew by 271 people from 2016 to 2017.

For a closer and more up-to-date look at change in New Orleans’ neighborhoods, the number of active residential addresses based on U.S. Postal Service data is a useful indicator of population change. Updated June of 2018, this postal data indicates that New Orleans added 124 households from June 2017 to June 2018. This small number reflects growth in most neighborhoods offset by losses in others.

The postal data shows that 58 of the city’s 72 neighborhoods experienced an increase in active residences from 2017 to 2018. Topping this list are the Treme/LaFitte and Iberville neighborhoods which each gained more than 150 households — likely reflective of on-going public housing redevelopment activities. On the other hand, 12 neighborhoods lost active residences from 2017 to 2018. Seven of these neighborhoods lost fewer than 20 residences. But, Lower Garden District, St. Roch, and Whitney all lost between 31 and 34 active residences. Algiers Point lost 177 active residences. And, Audubon lost 1,189 active residences — attributable primarily to the changing status of 1,200 addresses associated with Loyola University’s dorms shifting from residential to business addresses.

These losses stand in contrast to longer term growth trends. New Orleans households receiving mail increased 15 percent from June 2010 to June 2018, with 64 of 72 neighborhoods experiencing gains. Topping this list is the Central Business District which has added 2,013 residences since 2010. Many neighborhoods that flooded when the levees failed in 2005 grew substantially from 2010 to 2018. Little Woods, Central City, Lakeview, and Mid-City all gained more than 1,000 households from 2010 to 2018. Only eight neighborhoods lost households from 2010 to 2018. Of those neighborhoods, six of them are on the west bank.

For data by neighborhood going back to June 2005, be sure to check out the downloadable Excel table.

Thirteen years after Katrina, there are 21 neighborhoods in the city that now have a larger number of active addresses than they did prior to the levee breaches. Four neighborhoods have less than half the population they had prior to Katrina, including three former public housing sites that are being redeveloped as mixed-income housing: B.W. Cooper, Iberville and Florida Development.

The Lower Ninth Ward, where the surge of water was so strong it knocked homes completely off their foundations, also has less than half the population it had prior to Katrina.

The latest Census and postal data suggest that population growth in New Orleans has slowed. While jobs in the city are important for attracting workers, the population of the metro area will rise and fall with economic growth. But, metro area workers and their families will choose to live in the parish they find most attractive. New Orleans’ ability to attract additional residents will be largely dependent on availability of affordable housing, reliable transportation to job centers, low crime rates, and availability of appealing amenities.
NEW ORLEANS FLOOD EXTENT - SEPTEMBER 11, 2005

Source: The Data Center analysis of data from FEMA.
PERCENT CHANGE OF JUNE 2017 RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES ACTIVELY RECEIVING MAIL IN JUNE 2018

- Less than 0% (a loss of active addresses)
- 0.1 - 1%
- 1.1 - 3%
- 3.1 - 6%
- Greater than 6%

Source: The Data Center analysis of Valassis Residential and Business Database
Source: The Data Center analysis of Valassis Residential and Business Database
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF ACTIVE RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES FROM JUNE 2010 TO JUNE 2018

- Less than zero (a loss of active addresses)
- 0 - 250
- 251 - 600
- 601 - 1000
- More than 1000

Source: The Data Center analysis of Valassis Residential and Business Database
About Valassis data

The Data Center relies on the Valassis Residential and Business Database, which must be purchased from Valassis Direct Mail Inc, for neighborhood–level tabulations of addresses receiving mail. Valassis is one of only a few companies nationwide that qualifies to receive weekly data feeds from the U.S. Postal Services’ Address Management Services database. The Valassis Database is unique from other sources of U.S. Postal Service data because it provides address level data. Although the address level data cannot be released to the public, The Data Center developed a robust in–house geocoding process in order to generate extremely accurate census–block and neighborhood level data. The Valassis Database includes active and vacant addresses, but does not include no–stat addresses.

You can find more detailed information in the following The Data Center publications:


This technical documentation includes detailed descriptions of the Valassis Inc. database, including a comparison of counts of active residential addresses between sources of U.S. Postal Service data.


This research note explains why U.S. Postal Service Delivery Statistics are useful for tracking repopulation in a post–disaster context, and documents some of the limitations of the data as a measure of repopulation.


This paper published in an academic journal reviews literature from the fields of demography and other disciplines to identify available administrative data sets including USPS data that can form the basis of sound, relevant, and timely county–level population estimates following a catastrophic U.S. event.
About The Data Center

The Data Center is the most trusted resource for data about greater New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana. Since 1997, The Data Center has been an objective partner in bringing reliable, thoroughly researched data to conversations about building a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region.

The Data Center (formerly known as the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center) became the local authority for tracking post-Katrina recovery with The New Orleans Index, developed in partnership with the Brookings Institution.

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