

Executive Summary

The reasons why people change residences have only recently been directly addressed by the Census Bureau in their March Current Population Survey (CPS). All respondents who moved in the previous year were asked their reasons for moving. Utilizing data from the 1998-2000 surveys of the CPS, this report looks at residents of Northwest Indiana who have recently moved, either from outside the region or within the region.

The analysis replicates a Census Bureau study by focusing on specific reasons and categories of reasons. Four categories are delineated: family-related, work-related, housing-related, and other reasons. In addition to an overall assessment of reasons for moving given by regional respondents, this report looks at various factors that might influence the choice to move.

Key findings

- Nearly half of all movers in the region cited housing-related reasons for their move. While consistent with the national sample, the specific reasons within this category varied, as the local movers were more likely to say they moved because they wanted a better neighborhood. Local movers were also more likely to select family-related reasons than the national sample, and less likely to choose a work-related reason.
- *Intracounty* movers (those who moved within the same county) were more likely to move for housing-related reasons, while *intercounty* movers (those who came from outside the county) more often cited family-related reasons.
- Respondents with less than a college degree were more likely to select a family-related reason than those with a college degree. Conversely, those with a degree were more likely to choose work-related reasons. Although housing-related reasons were equally likely to be selected in general, the two groups varied in the specific reasons chosen. Those with a degree were more likely to want to own a home and want a better neighborhood, while those without a degree tended to want a new house or cite some other housing reason.
- Those who were employed selected work-related reasons more than the nonemployed (unemployed or out of labor force), while the nonemployed more often cited family-related reasons.
- The poor (less than 150 percent of poverty-level income) cited family-related and other reasons more than the nonpoor (150 percent or more or poverty-level income), while the nonpoor were more likely to indicate work-related and housing-related reasons.
- Significant differences exist between blacks and whites. Blacks were much more likely to choose family-related reasons for moving, with nearly three-quarters of blacks choosing an item within this category. The remaining black respondents chose housing-related reasons, while none chose either work-related or other reasons. Reasons for moving were more equally distributed among whites, with housing-related reasons most common. Wanting a better neighborhood was exclusively selected by whites in the local sample.

Conclusion

Movers in the local sample were much like their national counterparts, with some differences. Of particular interest are the racial differences. These may indicate cultural differences between whites

and blacks, and “white flight” from neighborhoods experiencing change in racial composition. The relatively small number of local movers (123), which results in some small comparison groups, made a more detailed analysis of these differences inadvisable.