

Neighborhood Growth Rates

Growth in New Orleans neighborhoods continues in 2013

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From 2010 to 2012, increases in New Orleans households receiving mail mirrored increases in Census Bureau population estimates at about 7.5 percent. Households receiving mail grew another 1.6 percent between 2012 and 2013, with growth occurring across the vast majority of New Orleans neighborhoods.

According to Census Bureau data, New Orleans was the fastest-growing large city (population greater than 300,000) in the country between April 2010 and July 2012.¹ Even newer data from Valassis, Inc. on households receiving mail suggests population growth has continued in New Orleans between 2012 and 2013, and reveals just where the growth is happening.

Between 2010 and 2011, both Census Bureau population estimates and the number of households receiving mail grew by 5 percent. Between 2011 and 2012, increases in households receiving mail continued to match increases in population at 2.5 percent. More recent data on households receiving mail suggest that the population of New Orleans continued to expand from 2012 to 2013, albeit more slowly at 1.6 percent.

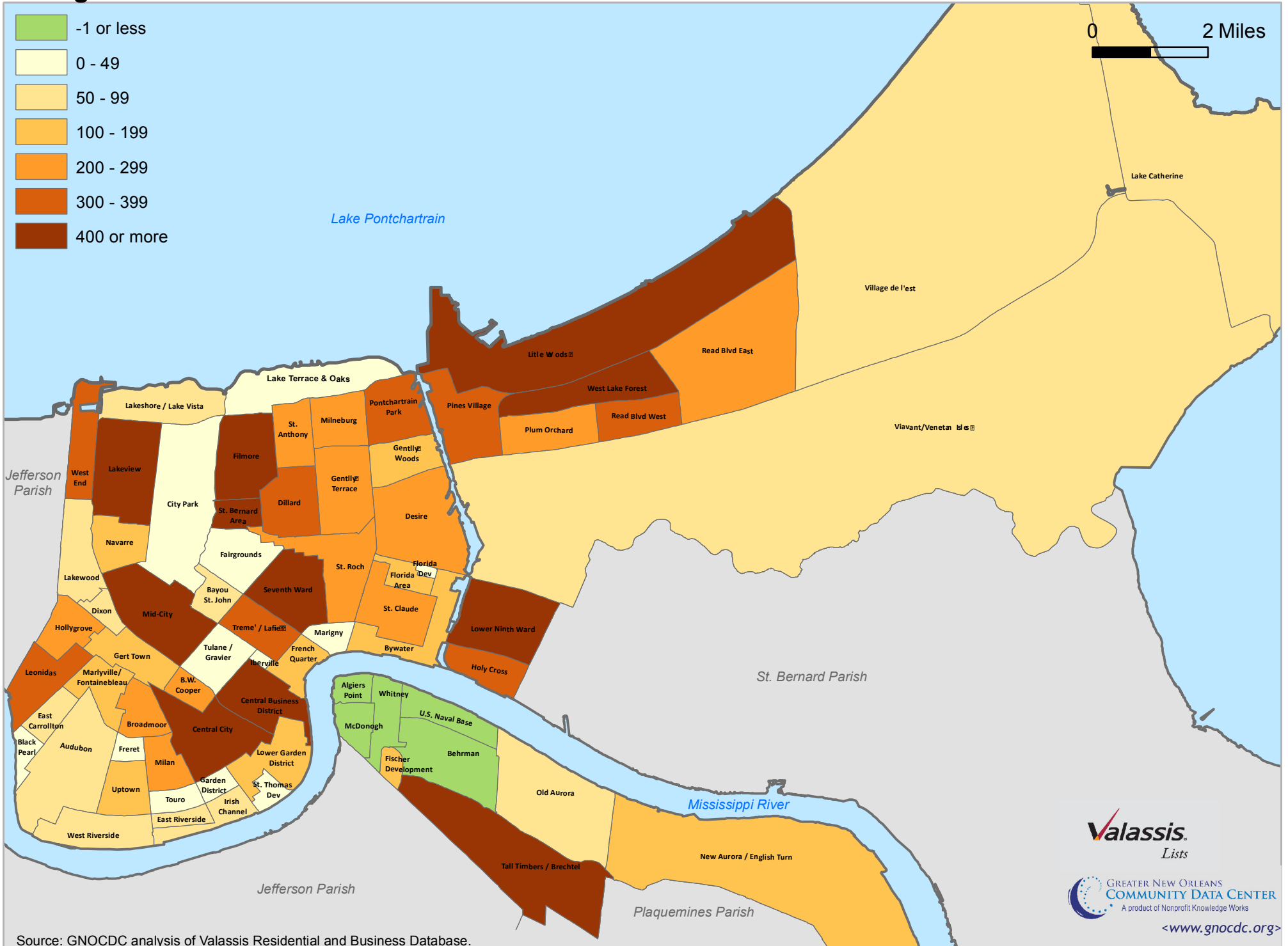
All told, New Orleans households receiving mail have surged by 15,600 since the Census 2010, with fully 67 of 72 neighborhoods experiencing gains. Eight neighborhoods have experienced more than 30 percent growth since 2010. These include four public housing sites (B.W. Cooper, Desire area, Fischer, and St. Bernard area) that are in the process of being redeveloped and re-inhabited. These also include three heavily flooded neighborhoods that were slower to recover and have experienced a new surge in repopulation since 2010 including Pontchartrain Park, Lower Ninth Ward, and West Lake Forest. Finally, the Central Business District has experienced nearly 40 percent growth since 2010 and now has more than twice its 2005 number of households receiving mail – highlighting the popularity of downtown living post-Katrina.

Among the five neighborhoods that lost households from June 2010 to June 2013, all were on the west bank (Algiers Point, Behrman, McDonogh, U.S. Naval Support Area, and Whitney). As a whole, the west bank of New Orleans grew by 0.7 percent since 2010, with all of that growth in the Fischer public housing development and the most far-flung suburbs of Tall Timbers/Brechtel, Old Aurora, and New Aurora/English Turn.

Eight years after Katrina, just over half of New Orleans' 72 neighborhoods have recovered more than 90 percent of the population they had before the levees failed. Thirteen neighborhoods now have a larger number of active addresses than they did prior to the levee breaches, and one neighborhood has the same number. Only three neighborhoods have less than half the population they had prior to Katrina, including two public housing sites that are under redevelopment and the Lower Ninth Ward, which was the most heavily damaged neighborhood of all when the levees failed.

To be sure, the New Orleans metro's strong economy continues to support a growing population regionwide.² Among metro parishes, Orleans Parish experienced the largest gain in households receiving mail over the last year with an increase of about 3,000 households. St. Tammany had the next largest increase with about 1,300 additional households.

Change in number of active residential addresses from June 2010 to June 2013



Source: GNOCDC analysis of Valassis Residential and Business Database.

Appendix: About Various Sources of U.S. Postal Data

The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC) relies on three different sources of U.S. Postal Service data for indicators of occupancy and vacancy between the years of the decennial census. Each source includes different data formats, but is ultimately derived from the same USPS Address Management Services database.

1. For **neighborhood-level tabulations of addresses receiving mail**, GNOCDC relies on the Valassis Residential and Business Database, which must be purchased from Valassis Direct Mail, Inc. Valassis is one of only a few companies nationwide that qualifies to receive weekly data feeds from the U.S. Postal Service's 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, GNOCDC developed a robust in-house geocoding process in order to generate extremely accurate census-block data, which we rolled up to neighborhoods. The Valassis Database includes active and vacant addresses, but does not include "No-Stat" addresses.

2. For **ZIP code tabulations of addresses actively receiving mail**, which we publish monthly on our home page, GNOCDC relies on the USPS Delivery Statistics Product. The Delivery Statistics Product is made available to the public by the U.S. Postal Service for a small processing fee, and includes ZIP code-level tabulations for vacant and possible residential addresses. The Delivery Statistics Product includes active and possible (active + vacant) addresses, but does not include "No-Stat" addresses. The U.S. Postal Service does not maintain an archive of its Delivery Statistics data, although some private resellers do.

3. As a proxy for **blight and unoccupied addresses**, GNOCDC relies on HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) Aggregated USPS Administrative Data on Address Vacancies. HUD has an agreement with the U.S. Postal Service to receive quarterly aggregated data on the number of vacant, No-Stat, and total (vacant + active + No-Stat) addresses. The HUD data is unique from other sources of U.S. Postal Service data because it includes tabulations of No-Stat addresses, which can be used as a proxy for blight in some housing markets. HUD maintains an archive of its U.S. Postal Service data since 2005, which is available to governmental entities and non-profit organizations registered as users. Data prior to 2008 aggregates residential and commercial addresses.

There are some small differences between the Valassis Database, HUD dataset, and USPS Delivery Statistics Product. The Valassis Database includes a record for each residence that is part of a "drop stop" (for example, each dorm room in a college dormitory). The Delivery Statistics Product and the HUD dataset, in contrast, count each drop stop as only one address regardless of the number of residences at the drop stop. This difference explains why the Valassis Database counts a few thousand more addresses than the HUD and Delivery Statistics Product datasets. There are also differences in reference periods between the sources.

You can find more detailed information in the following publications:

- Valassis Lists Data as an Indicator of Population Recovery in the New Orleans Area.³

This GNOCDC 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.

- Using U.S. Postal Service Delivery Statistics to Track the Repopulation of New Orleans & the Metropolitan Area.⁴

This GNOCDC 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.

- Using administrative data to estimate population displacement and resettlement following a catastrophic U.S. disaster.⁵



This academic paper 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/parish-level population estimates following a catastrophic U.S. event.

About the Author

Elaine Ortiz is senior research associate at the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center.

About the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center makes informed decisions possible. For the past 15 years, we have been both a trusted resource and an objective partner in bringing reliable, thoroughly researched data to conversations about building a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region. The Data Center has played a critical role in assessing the strength of the New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana economy since the onset of the Great Recession. The Data Center is also recognized across the country for expertise in New Orleans demographics, disaster recovery indicators, and actionable data visualization.

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¹ GNOCDC analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates (2012 vintage) and Census 2010.

² According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, while the U.S. shed 1.3 percent of its jobs between May 2008 and May 2013, the New Orleans metro economy actually grew jobs by 2.1 percent during the same period.

The New Orleans metro is defined as the seven-parish region including Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John, and St. Tammany parishes.

³ Ortiz, E. and Plyer, A. (2011). Valassis Lists data as an indicator of population recovery in the New Orleans area. Retrieved July 12, 2012 from https://gnocdc.s3.amazonaws.com/reports/GNOCDC_ValassisListsDataAsAnIndicatorOfPopulationRecovery.pdf.

⁴ Plyer, A. and Bonaguro, J. (2007). Using U.S. Postal Service Delivery Statistics to track the repopulation of New Orleans and the metropolitan area. Retrieved July 12, 2012 from https://gnocdc.s3.amazonaws.com/reports/GNOCDC_research_note_May07.pdf.

⁵ Plyer, A., Bonaguro, J. and Hodges, K. (2009). Using administrative data to estimate population displacement and resettlement following a catastrophic U.S. disaster. *Population & Environment*, 31 (1-3), 150-175. Retrieved July 12, 2012 from <http://www.springerlink.com/content/27r338422847q807/>.