



 THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Iowa Brain Drain

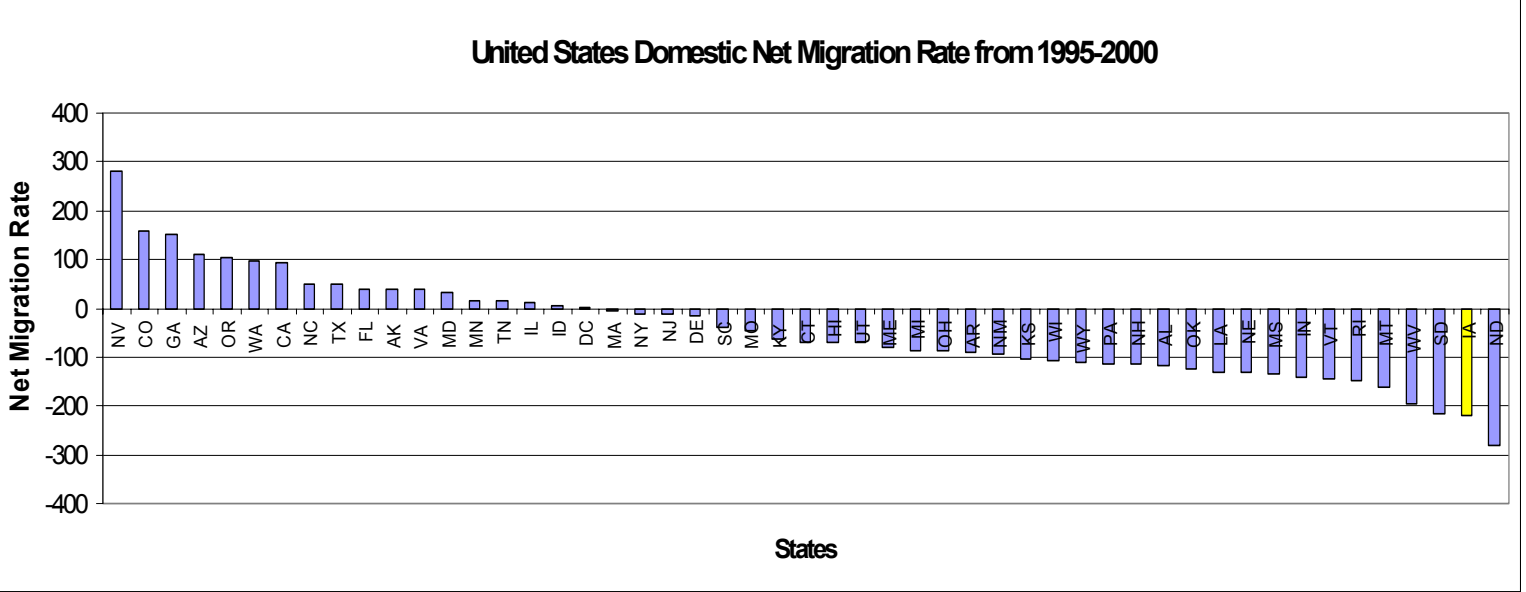
Iowa has been experiencing the gradual out-migration of young, college educated individuals, a trend sometimes called brain drain, for the past ten years. Significant factors contributing to Iowa's brain drain include more job opportunities with higher wages outside of the state and the national trend toward urbanization. Many other states have also experienced brain drain and some have developed initiatives to try to curb the trend.

National Trends and Statistics

The U.S. Census Bureau often reports brain drain in terms of the out-migration of young (aged 25-29), single, and college educated individuals. One of the reasons for this is that single adults are two-times more likely than married adults to move residences across state boundaries. Single individuals more commonly move in order to meet economic or lifestyle demands, while married individuals are often limited by a spouse's career, the education of children, and/or other constraints.

Figure 1 shows that Iowa experienced the second highest net out-migration rate of young, single, and college educated residents (only behind North Dakota) from 1995 to 2000.

Figure 1: Net Migration Rate of Young, Single, and College Educated (1995-2000)¹



Iowa also experienced a net out-migration of its total population from 1995 to 2000, a trend sometimes referred to as total drain.

Figure 2 shows that 18 states (including Iowa) experienced both total and brain drain (light tan states), 15 states experienced both total and brain in-migration (dark blue states), four states experienced total drain and brain in-migration (light blue states), and 13 states experienced total in-migration and brain drain (dark tan states).

Iowa's border states exhibited all four different combinations of net domestic migration. Minnesota experienced total and brain in-migration, Wisconsin and Missouri experienced total in-migration and brain drain, Illinois experienced total drain and brain in-migration, and Nebraska and South Dakota experienced total and brain drain.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau: "Domestic Migration of People Who Were Young, Single, and College Educated, and for the Population Aged 5 and Over: 1995-2000 migration total by the 1995 to 2000" 2000; <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/censr-12.pdf> (The net migration rate was calculated by dividing the 1995-2000 migration total by the 1995 population for each state. The values were then multiplied by 1,000.)

Figure 2: Net Domestic Migration for the Total Population (1995-2000)²

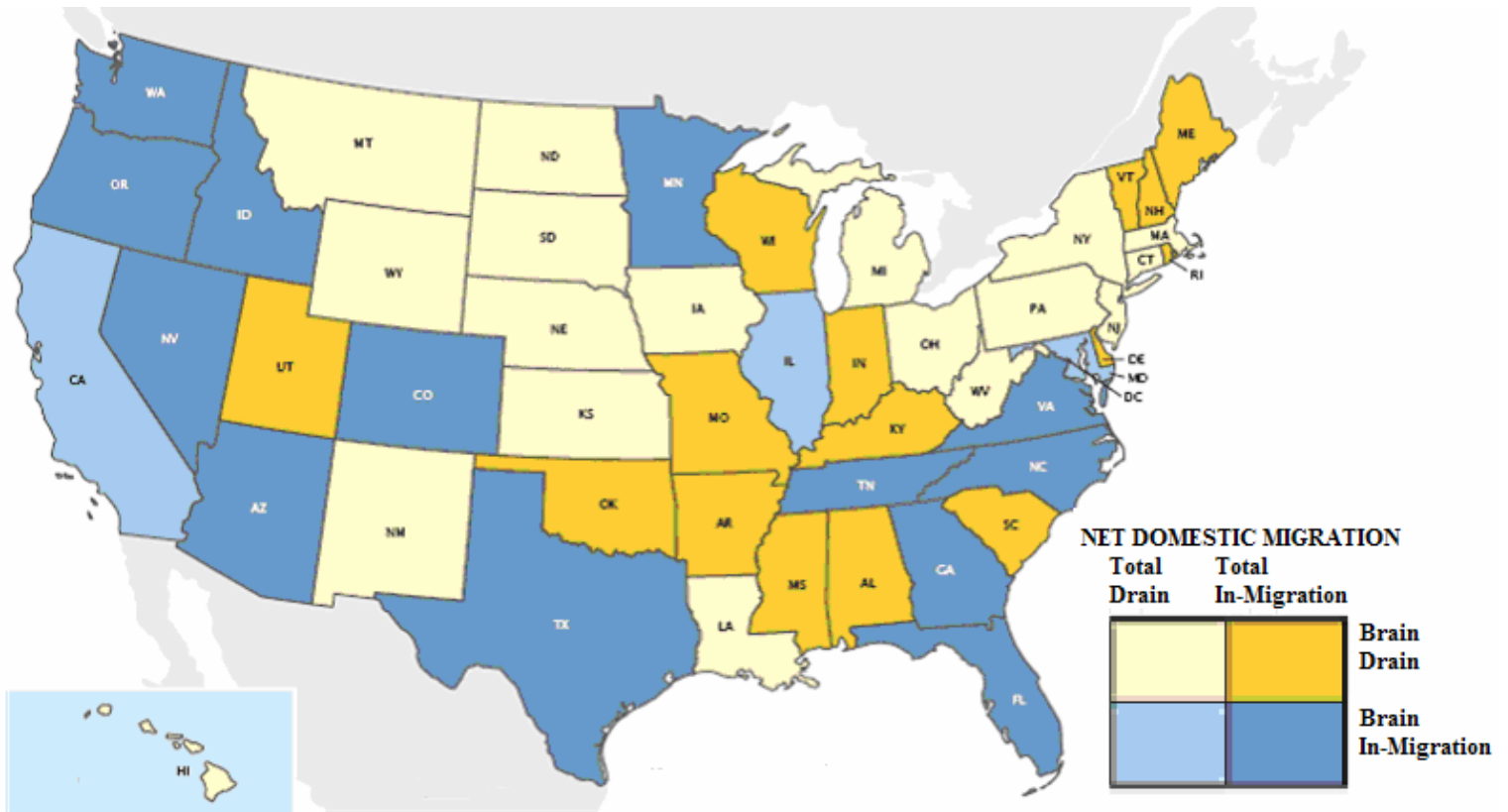
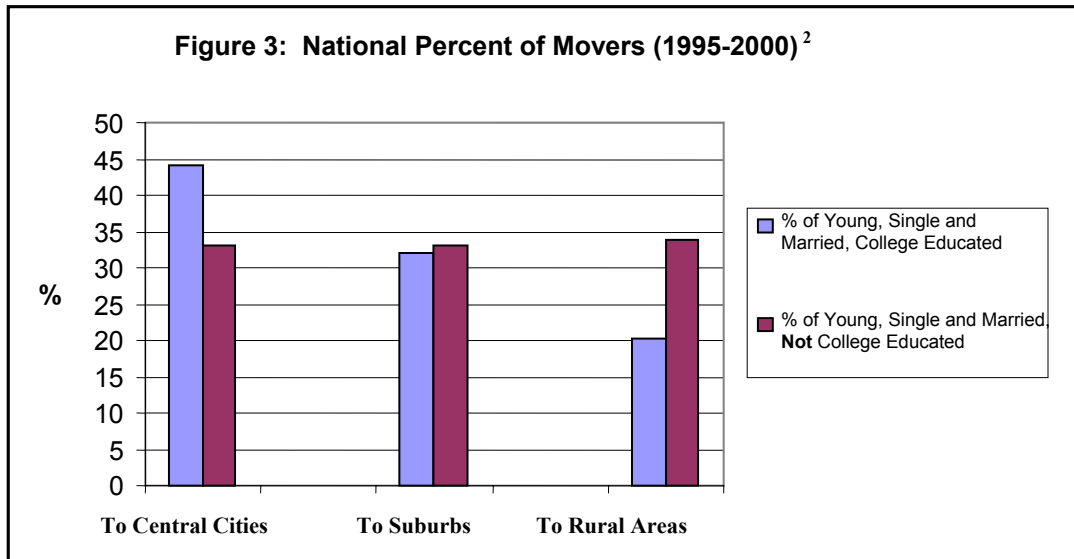


Figure 3 shows that young educated people tend to be moving to cities, while young people without a college education tend to be moving to rural areas. This suggests that the rural nature of Iowa is one reason why the state is experiencing brain drain.

² U.S. Census Bureau: “Net Domestic Migration of People Who Were Young, Single, and College Educated, and for the Total Population aged 5 and Over: 1995-2000”: 2000; <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/censr-12.pdf>



Soothing the Headache: Initiatives to Curb Brain Drain

Many states acknowledge that brain drain is a problem, but few studies have been done to determine its causes or outline preventative measures. The Finance Authority of Maine aimed to fill this research gap in the report, *Maine's College Graduates: Where They Go and Why*.³ Maine provides a useful comparison to Iowa because both states lack a major metropolis and both states have large cities nearby.

The report found that keeping young people in state for their college educations was important in curbing brain drain. The findings showed that college reputation was the most important factor determining whether Maine's high school graduates attended college in Maine or out of state. The next most important factors were affordability and financial assistance. Also, graduates who stayed in Maine rated social issues (such as family and cultural ties) as the main reasons why they live in state, while graduates living out of state rated career opportunities as the main reason why they left the state.

The report recommends that Maine needs to develop a long-term plan to combat brain drain through:

- 1) Incentives aimed at keeping Maine's students in-state for college:
 - Better marketing of Maine's colleges and universities
 - More support for Honors programs and other specialty programs that attract top in-state and out-of-state students
 - More financial aid for students
- 2) Increased employment opportunities
- 3) Greater social opportunities and cultural diversity

State Responses

Below are some examples of how other states are working to reduce brain drain through both educational and career initiatives.

Educational Initiatives:

³ http://usm.maine.edu/cepare/pdf/Where_They_Go_and_Why_-_Maine's_College_Graduates.pdf

Operation Intern: <http://www.ndinterns.com/learnmore.php/>

Operation Intern is a student-led website that allows North Dakota companies to post internship and post-graduate employment opportunities to a central internet database, which can be viewed by all North Dakota college students. The database is updated weekly.

University of Wisconsin Milwaukee's (UWM) Student Technology Services (STS):

<http://www3.uwm.edu/imt/sts/aboutSTS.cfm/>

STS is a tech-support department that is operated, budgeted, and managed primarily by students. Students gain Information Technology (IT) training and skills while providing IT service to UWM at a reduced cost. The program has created more than 700 IT jobs in Wisconsin and the Board of Regents intends to double the size of the program by 2007.

Career Initiatives:

Stay and Invent the Future: <http://www.stayinventcentralpa.com/>

This Pennsylvania initiative divides the state into ten separate areas in order to play up regional strengths. Business, education, and political teams in each region then compete each year for a \$9 million grant that is intended to promote regional opportunities and pay for internships and other employment to help attract and retain young talent.

Move Back to Nebraska: www.movebacktonebraska.com/

MovebacktoNebraska.com, a privately-owned company, uses the internet to match state businesses with early and mid-level professionals who may want to move back to Nebraska. As a free subscription-based service, the website allows companies to post job opportunities and professionals to upload their resumes to its database.

Future for Youth in Maine Loan Repayment Program:

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Ach428-Bsec0.html/>

Any graduate with outstanding loans who is either the founder or employee of a technology-based business developed through any type of statewide development program is eligible for \$5000 in college loan repayment per year for a maximum of four years.

This report was prepared in October, 2006 by the Iowa Civic Analysis Network (I-CAN), a non-partisan public policy undergraduate research group at the University of Iowa. For additional research on this or other issues, please visit our website at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~ican> or contact us at studorg-ican@uiowa.edu