

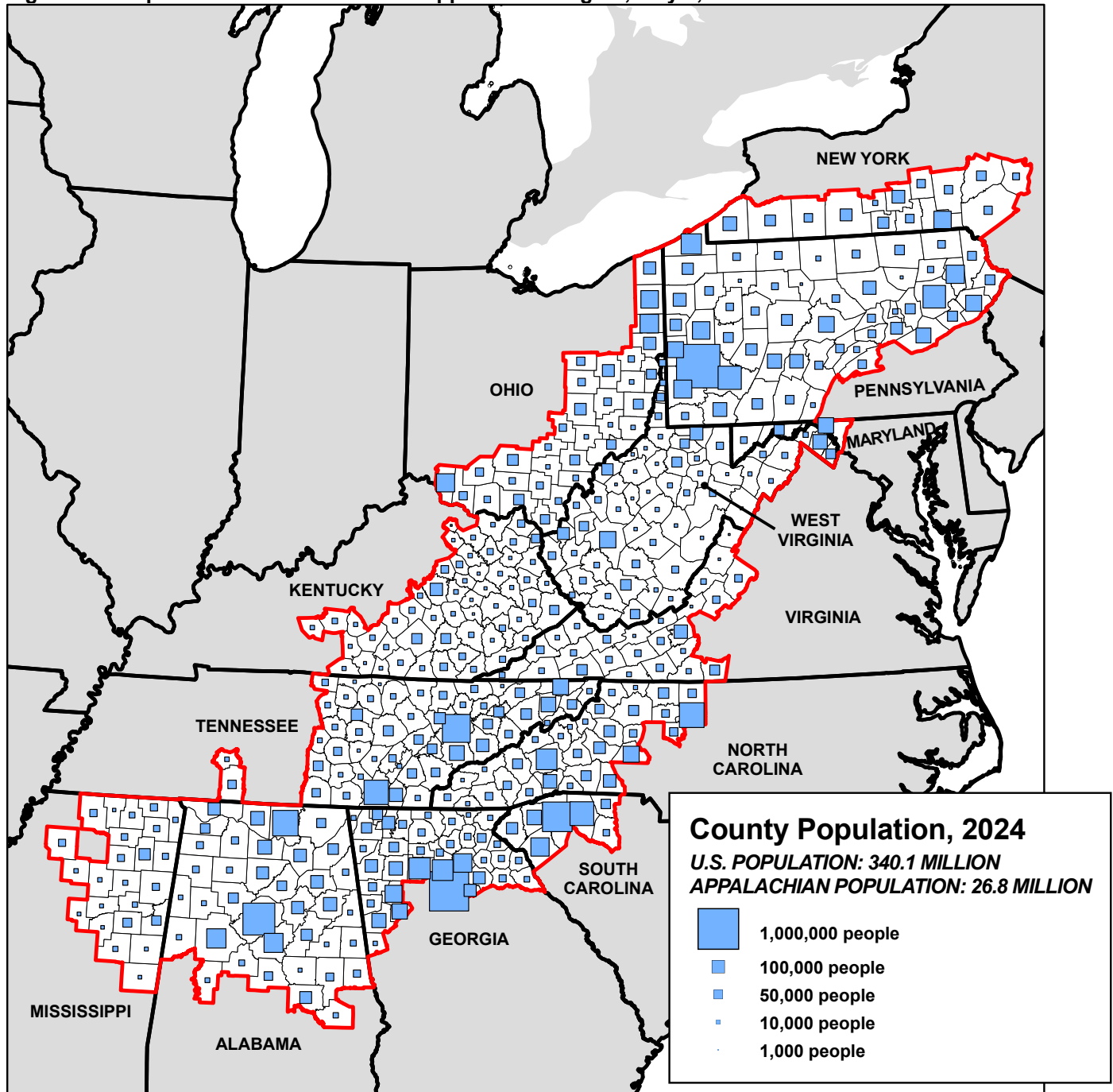
CHAPTER 1: POPULATION BASICS

Table 1.1: Population, Land Area, and Population Density in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2024

Population, Land Area, and Density	Population, July 1, 2024	Change Since July 1, 2010		Land Area (Square Miles)	Population per Square Mile of Land Area, July 1, 2024
		Number	Percent		
United States	340,110,988	+ 30,783,845	+ 10.0	3,533,038	96.3
Appalachian Region	26,785,329	+ 1,240,760	+ 4.9	205,840	130.1
Subregions					
Northern Appalachia	8,022,967	- 228,906	- 2.8	56,396	142.3
North Central Appalachia	2,484,901	- 72,873	- 2.8	29,923	83.0
Central Appalachia	1,858,312	- 61,503	- 3.2	29,773	62.4
South Central Appalachia	5,400,620	+ 425,596	+ 8.6	35,866	150.6
Southern Appalachia	9,018,529	+ 1,178,446	+ 15.0	53,883	167.4
County Types					
Large Metro (metro pop. 1 million +)	6,619,744	+ 600,585	+ 10.0	19,615	337.5
Small Metro (metro pop. <1 million)	11,098,857	+ 746,044	+ 7.2	53,241	208.5
Nonmetro, Adjacent to Large Metro	2,406,587	+ 32,062	+ 1.4	25,425	94.7
Nonmetro, Adjacent to Small Metro	4,138,577	- 52,820	- 1.3	58,822	70.4
Rural (nonmetro, not adj. to a metro)	2,521,564	- 85,111	- 3.3	48,738	51.7
Alabama	5,157,699	+ 372,185	+ 7.8	50,647	101.8
Appalachian Alabama	3,336,150	+ 268,521	+ 8.8	25,763	129.5
Non-Appalachian Alabama	1,821,549	+ 103,664	+ 6.0	24,884	73.2
Georgia	11,180,878	+ 1,468,669	+ 15.1	57,717	193.7
Appalachian Georgia	3,611,878	+ 671,067	+ 22.8	11,380	317.4
Non-Appalachian Georgia	7,569,000	+ 797,602	+ 11.8	46,337	163.3
Kentucky	4,588,372	+ 239,908	+ 5.5	39,492	116.2
Appalachian Kentucky	1,164,897	- 20,856	- 1.8	18,230	63.9
Non-Appalachian Kentucky	3,423,475	+ 260,764	+ 8.2	21,261	161.0
Maryland	6,263,220	+ 474,436	+ 8.2	9,711	645.0
Appalachian Maryland	252,718	- 121	+ 0.0	1,529	165.3
Non-Appalachian Maryland	6,010,502	+ 474,557	+ 8.6	8,182	734.6
Mississippi	2,943,045	- 27,570	- 0.9	46,924	62.7
Appalachian Mississippi	608,187	- 20,763	- 3.3	12,401	49.0
Non-Appalachian Mississippi	2,334,858	- 6,807	- 0.3	34,523	67.6
New York	19,867,248	+ 467,292	+ 2.4	47,124	421.6
Appalachian New York	1,013,290	- 52,576	- 4.9	11,682	86.7
Non-Appalachian New York	18,853,958	+ 519,868	+ 2.8	35,442	532.0
North Carolina	11,046,024	+ 1,471,438	+ 15.4	48,623	227.2
Appalachian North Carolina	2,085,009	+ 132,601	+ 6.8	12,752	163.5
Non-Appalachian North Carolina	8,961,015	+ 1,338,837	+ 17.6	35,871	249.8
Ohio	11,883,304	+ 343,855	+ 3.0	40,859	290.8
Appalachian Ohio	1,972,196	- 69,858	- 3.4	15,978	123.4
Non-Appalachian Ohio	9,911,108	+ 413,713	+ 4.4	24,881	398.3
Pennsylvania	13,078,751	+ 367,345	+ 2.9	44,742	292.3
Appalachian Pennsylvania	5,666,530	- 126,185	- 2.2	36,443	155.5
Non-Appalachian Pennsylvania	7,412,221	+ 493,530	+ 7.1	8,299	893.1
South Carolina	5,478,831	+ 842,985	+ 18.2	30,064	182.2
Appalachian South Carolina	1,462,314	+ 259,621	+ 21.6	4,338	337.1
Non-Appalachian South Carolina	4,016,517	+ 583,364	+ 17.0	25,726	156.1
Tennessee	7,227,750	+ 872,232	+ 13.7	41,232	175.3
Appalachian Tennessee	3,114,150	+ 325,787	+ 11.7	20,123	154.8
Non-Appalachian Tennessee	4,113,600	+ 546,445	+ 15.3	21,110	194.9
Virginia	8,811,195	+ 787,191	+ 9.8	39,482	223.2
Appalachian Virginia	728,031	- 42,192	- 5.5	11,180	65.1
Non-Appalachian Virginia	8,083,164	+ 829,383	+ 11.4	28,302	285.6
West Virginia (entire state)	1,769,979	- 84,286	- 4.5	24,041	73.6

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2020 and Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

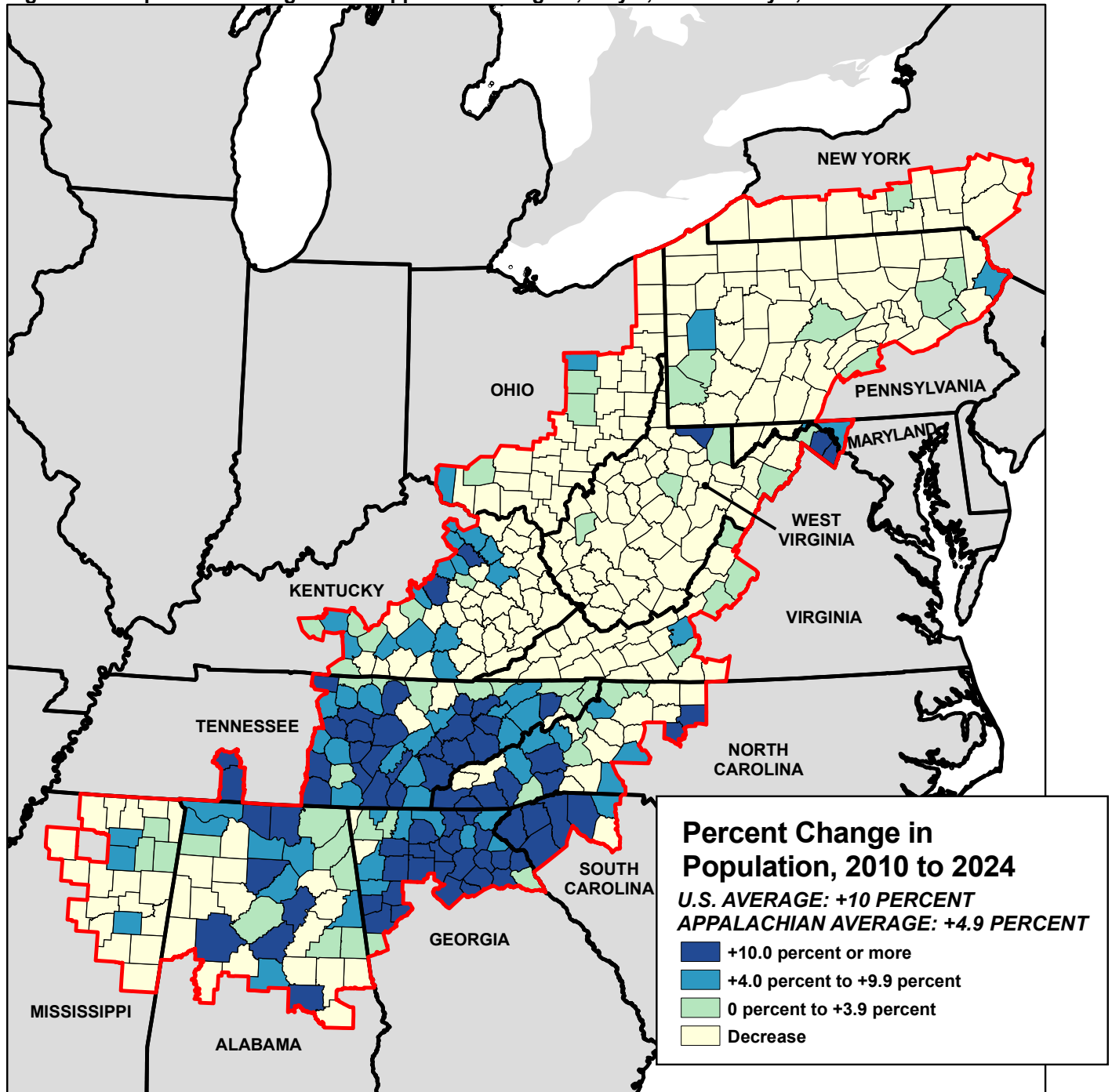
Figure 1.1: Population Distribution in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2024



Map Title: Population Distribution in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2024
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

Of the 340 million persons in the United States as of July 1, 2024, 26.8 million lived in the Appalachian Region – an increase of more than 1.2 million residents compared with July 1, 2010. Yet, throughout the region’s 423 counties, population size varied greatly. Most counties had fairly small population sizes – two-thirds of the counties had populations of fewer than 50,000 people, and 128 counties had fewer than 20,000 residents. The most populous county in the region was Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (where Pittsburgh is located) which had more than 1.2 million residents in 2024.

Figure 1.2: Population Change in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2010 to July 1, 2024

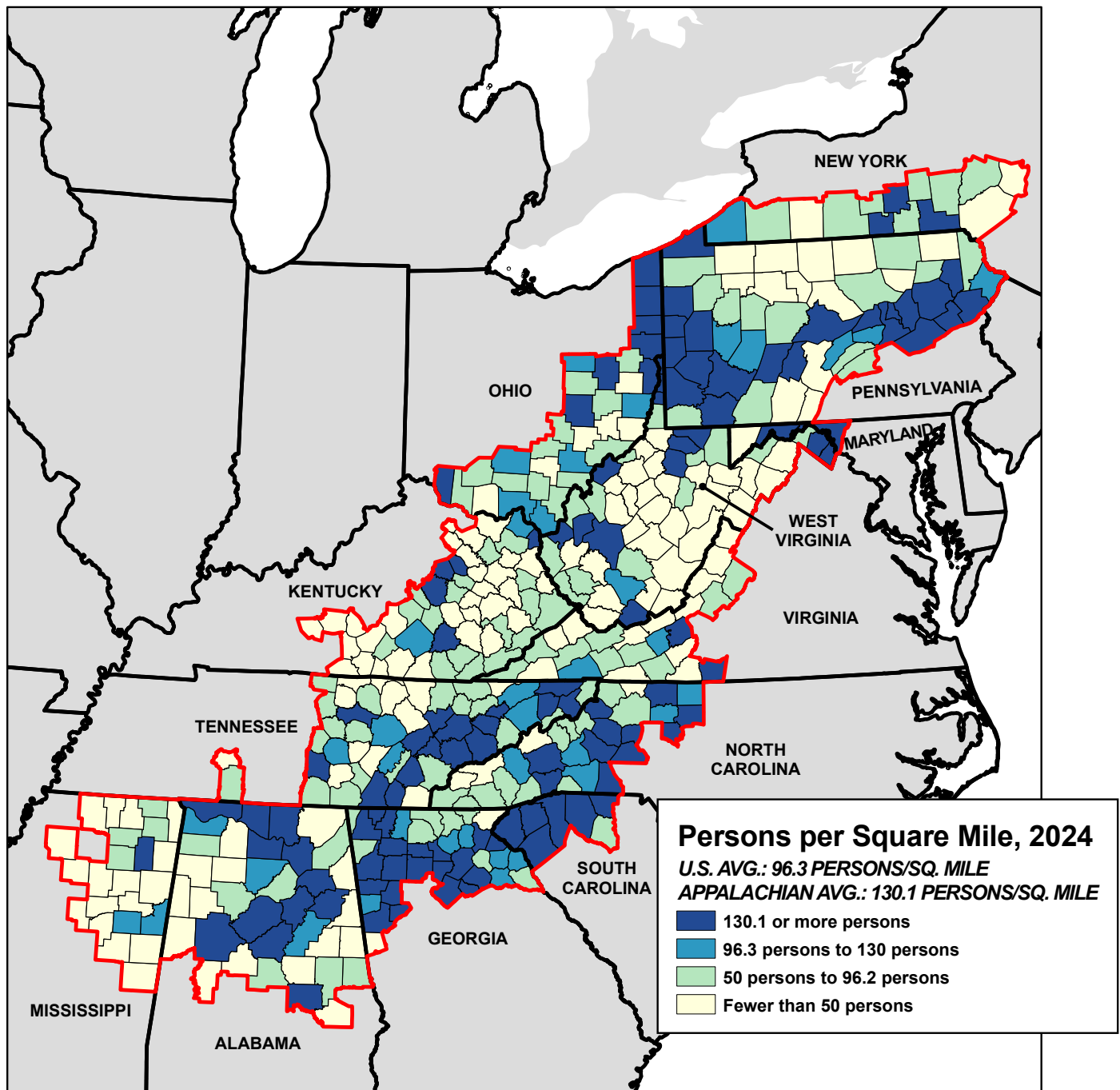


Map Title: Population Change in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2010 to July 1, 2024

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2020 and 2024 Population Estimates.

The size of the Appalachian Region's population has grown by nearly five percent between 2010 and 2024. However, the region's growth was about half that of the national population increase of 10 percent. Despite the overall pattern of growth in the region, in the Appalachian sections of seven states (including all of West Virginia) population declined since 2010. On the other hand, at 15 percent, population growth in Southern Appalachia exceeded the national average. Of the 73 counties where population grew at or above the national rate, nearly three-quarters were in the Appalachian portions of Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee – the three Appalachian state portions where the overall population grew by more than the national average. More than half of the most rapidly growing counties – those with population growth exceeding 20 percent – were retirement destination communities. On the other hand, of the Appalachian counties that were home to four-year colleges or universities, more than one-in-three had a decline in population from 2010 to 2024.

Figure 1.3: Population per Square Mile of Land Area in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2024



Map Title: Population per Square Mile of Land Area in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2024

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

While the Appalachian Region's population density was noticeably greater than the United States average in 2024, less than two-fifths of the region's counties had population concentrations at or above the national average of 96.3 persons per square mile of land area. Throughout the region, there were 159 high-density counties (defined as those where the population concentration matched or exceeded the national average). Of these, 101 were in metropolitan areas and one-in-five were home to a college or university. On the other hand, population density fell below the national average in Central and North Central Appalachia, as well as in the Appalachian portions of Kentucky, Mississippi, New York, Virginia, and in all of West Virginia. Overall, Georgia and South Carolina had the highest population density in the Appalachian portions of their states.

BASIC POPULATION TRENDS

- The Appalachian Region had a population of 26.8 million persons in 2024 – 1.2 million more residents than in mid-2010 (see Table 1.1). However, compared with the United States growth rate of 10 percent, growth in the region has been slower, at 4.9 percent.
- The Appalachian portion of seven states lost population between July 2010 and July 2024. And in five of those states – Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia – the population in Appalachian areas declined by more than three percent. Population loss was most common in counties outside of metropolitan areas. Of the 271 non-metropolitan counties in the region, 169 saw a decrease in population since 2010. Rural counties and counties adjacent to small metropolitan areas were especially susceptible to declining population size, with 73 of the 108 rural Appalachian counties – and 74 of the 118 nonmetropolitan counties adjacent to small metros – seeing a decrease in population.
- In contrast to the other three subregions, South Central and Southern Appalachia increased in population size between 2010 and 2024. Southern Appalachia saw a particularly sharp rise of 15 percent – five percentage points higher than the national average.
- The five states where Appalachian populations have grown since 2010 were all in the South – Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Tennessee. Georgia’s and South Carolina’s Appalachian sections have grown especially rapidly since 2010, with increases of 22.8 and 21.6 percent, respectively.
- Several possible factors account for the rapid growth in some parts of Appalachia. Many counties that were home to colleges and universities also had population growth at or above the national average. One in five of the 73 counties with growth rates matching or exceeding that of the U.S. as a whole had at least one college or university, such as Tuscaloosa County, Alabama (University of Alabama); Spartanburg County, South Carolina (Wofford College and University of South Carolina Upstate); Franklin County, Tennessee (Sewanee - The University of the South); and Jefferson County, West Virginia (Shepherd University). And retirement-friendly counties were even more likely to see high rates of population growth. Of the 73 Appalachian counties where population growth matched or exceeded the national average, 31 were also “retirement destination” counties according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (ERS). Yet, economic diversity may have been the most impactful characteristic shared among the fastest growing counties. Of the 73 counties where population growth met or exceeded the U.S. average, nearly half were classified as “non-specialized” by the ERS – meaning that their economies were not dependent on a single economic factor or industry.
- In contrast to high-growth counties, 236 of the 423 counties in the region saw a decline in population between July 2010 and July 2024. Of these, one in five have been classified as “manufacturing-dependent” by ERS, meaning that manufacturing in those counties accounted for 23 percent or more of the county’s earnings or 16 percent of the county’s employment. Lack of job opportunities may drive population decline, as more than one-in-four of the 236 counties where population size decreased have been classified as low-employment counties by ERS (where less than 65 percent of adults 25 to 64-years-old were employed).

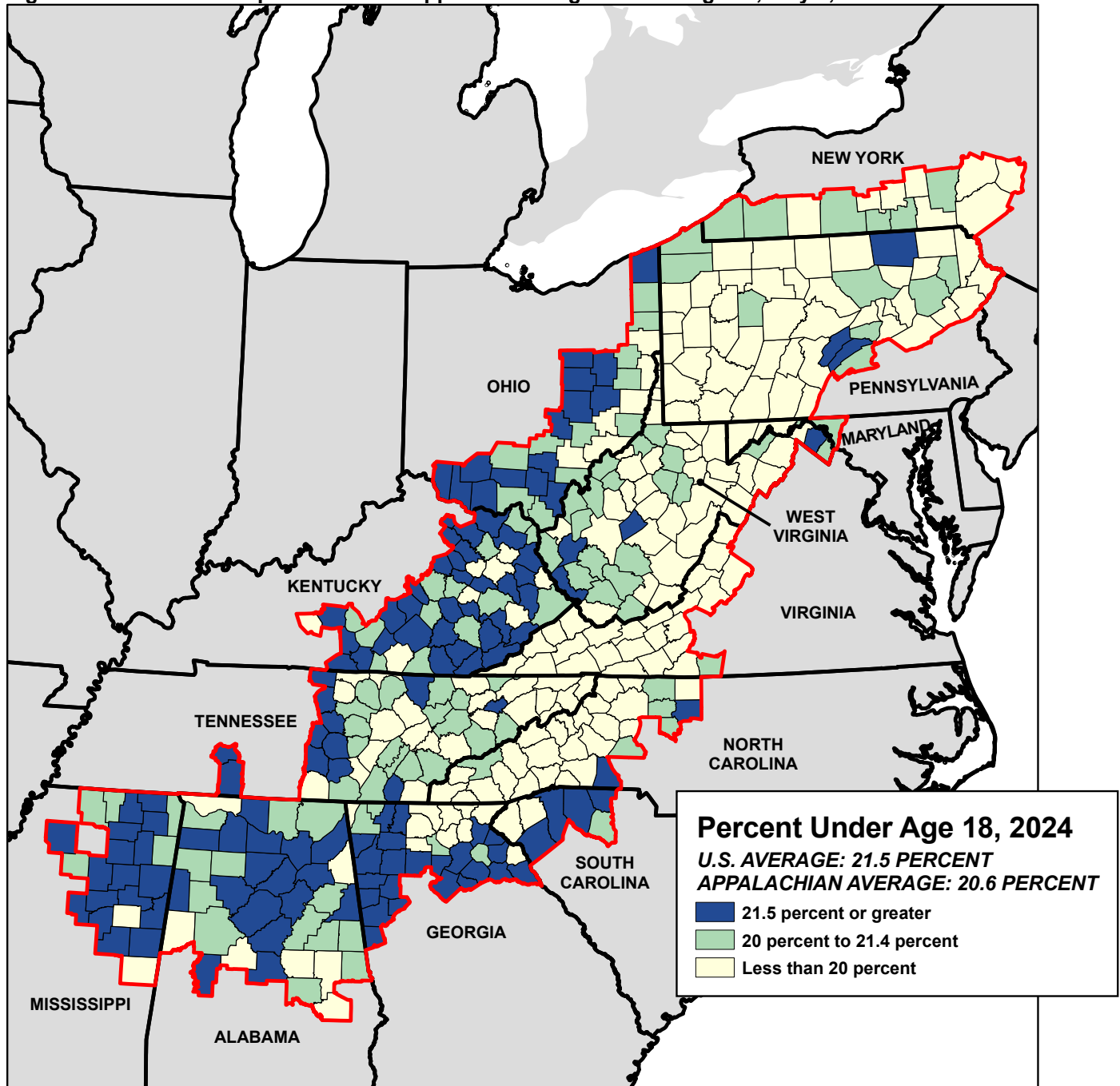
CHAPTER 2: AGE

Table 2.1: Population in the Appalachian Region by Age Group, July 1, 2024

Population by Age Group	Total Population, July 1, 2024	Percent of Population				Median Age (Years)
		Under Age 18	Ages 18-24	Ages 25-64	Ages 65 and over	
United States	340,110,988	21.5	9.2	51.3	18.0	39.1
Appalachian Region	26,785,329	20.6	9.3	50.1	20.1	41.2
Subregions						
Northern Appalachia	8,022,967	19.2	9.4	49.3	22.2	42.7
North Central Appalachia	2,484,901	20.1	9.1	49.7	21.1	42.2
Central Appalachia	1,858,312	21.2	8.2	50.3	20.3	42.1
South Central Appalachia	5,400,620	19.6	9.3	49.9	21.2	42.4
Southern Appalachia	9,018,529	22.5	9.4	50.9	17.2	39.0
County Types						
Large Metro (metro pop. 1 million +)	6,619,744	21.5	8.7	51.6	18.2	40.2
Small Metro (metro pop. <1 million)	11,098,857	20.3	9.9	50.0	19.8	40.7
Nonmetro, Adjacent to Large Metro	2,406,587	20.5	9.0	49.4	21.0	42.4
Nonmetro, Adjacent to Small Metro	4,138,577	20.0	8.4	49.1	22.5	43.7
Rural (nonmetro, not adj. to a metro)	2,521,564	20.5	9.8	48.5	21.2	42.0
Alabama	5,157,699	22.0	9.5	50.0	18.5	39.3
Appalachian Alabama	3,336,150	21.9	9.5	50.3	18.3	39.4
Non-Appalachian Alabama	1,821,549	22.3	9.3	49.4	19.0	39.6
Georgia	11,180,878	22.7	9.5	52.0	15.7	37.5
Appalachian Georgia	3,611,878	23.4	9.1	52.0	15.6	38.6
Non-Appalachian Georgia	7,569,000	22.4	9.7	52.0	15.8	37.6
Kentucky	4,588,372	22.4	9.1	50.5	18.0	39.2
Appalachian Kentucky	1,164,897	21.8	8.7	50.2	19.2	41.0
Non-Appalachian Kentucky	3,423,475	22.5	9.3	50.6	17.6	38.6
Maryland	6,263,220	21.9	8.6	52.0	17.6	39.4
Appalachian Maryland	252,718	20.0	8.7	51.1	20.2	41.6
Non-Appalachian Maryland	6,010,502	22.0	8.5	52.0	17.5	39.7
Mississippi	2,943,045	22.9	9.7	49.4	18.0	38.4
Appalachian Mississippi	608,187	22.5	10.7	48.4	18.4	38.4
Non-Appalachian Mississippi	2,334,858	23.0	9.5	49.6	17.9	38.8
New York	19,867,248	20.0	9.0	52.1	18.9	39.9
Appalachian New York	1,013,290	18.7	13.3	46.5	21.6	41.1
Non-Appalachian New York	18,853,958	20.1	8.8	52.4	18.8	40.0
North Carolina	11,046,024	21.4	9.5	51.2	17.9	39.1
Appalachian North Carolina	2,085,009	19.2	8.8	49.8	22.2	43.4
Non-Appalachian North Carolina	8,961,015	21.9	9.7	51.6	16.9	38.4
Ohio	11,883,304	21.7	8.9	50.3	19.1	39.6
Appalachian Ohio	1,972,196	21.1	8.4	49.3	21.1	42.0
Non-Appalachian Ohio	9,911,108	21.8	9.0	50.5	18.7	39.4
Pennsylvania	13,078,751	20.1	9.1	50.4	20.4	40.9
Appalachian Pennsylvania	5,666,530	18.9	9.0	49.7	22.4	43.1
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Appalachian South Carolina	1,462,314	21.9	9.4	50.6	18.1	39.0
Non-Appalachian South Carolina	4,016,517	20.7	9.0	50.0	20.2	41.0
Tennessee	7,227,750	21.9	9.0	51.5	17.7	38.9
Appalachian Tennessee	3,114,150	20.3	8.9	50.6	20.3	41.7
Non-Appalachian Tennessee	4,113,600	23.1	9.0	52.1	15.7	37.3
Virginia	8,811,195	21.4	9.2	51.8	17.6	39.0
Appalachian Virginia	728,031	17.9	11.2	48.1	22.8	43.6
Non-Appalachian Virginia	8,083,164	21.7	9.1	52.2	17.1	39.0
West Virginia (entire state)	1,769,979	19.7	8.8	49.6	21.9	42.8

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

Figure 2.1: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Under Age 18, July 1, 2024

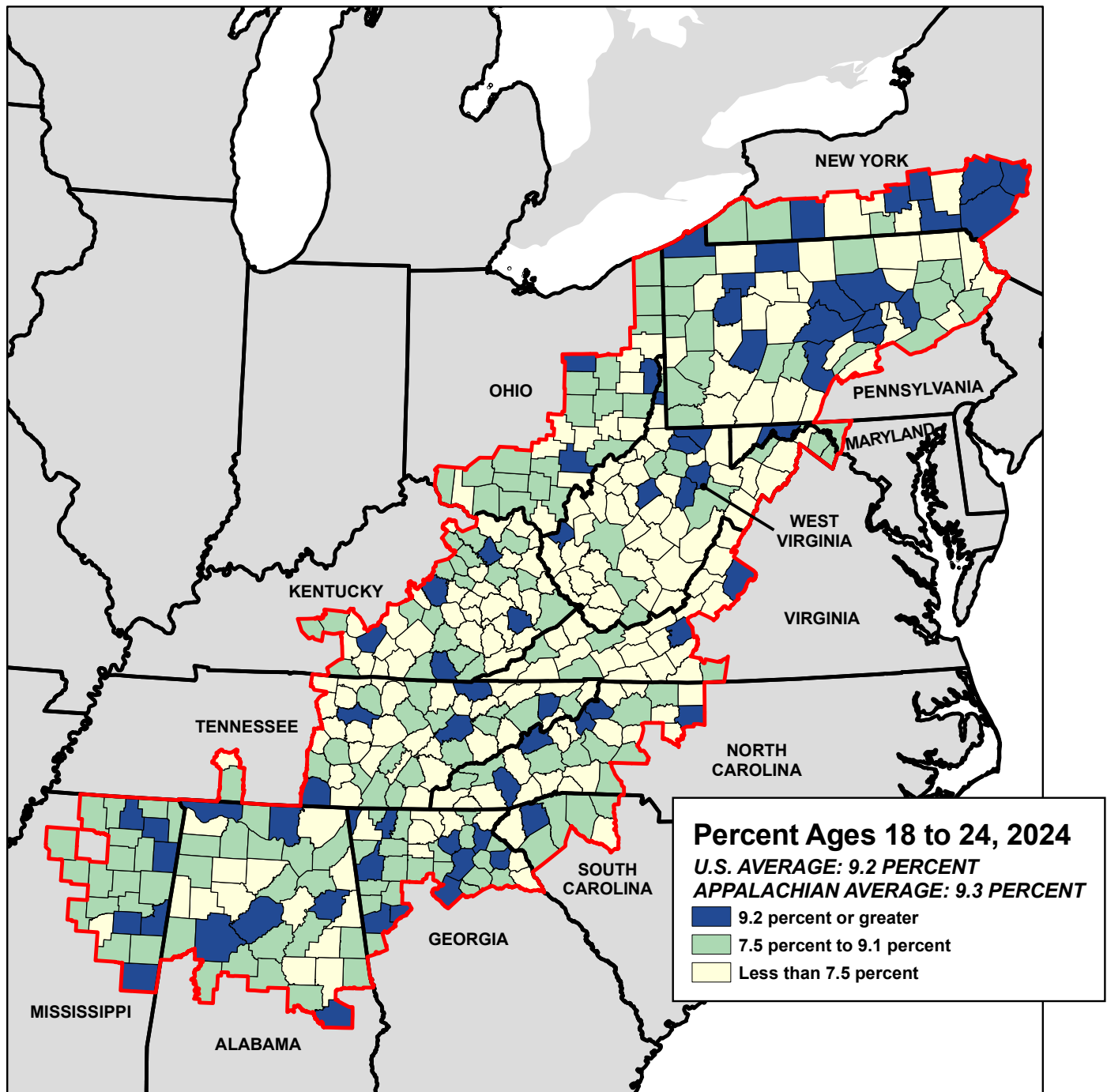


Map Title: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Under Age 18, July 1, 2024

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

As of mid-2024, one-in-five people in the Appalachian population were children and youth under the age of 18. This share was slightly lower than the national average. In 188 of the region's 423 counties, the share was less than 20 percent. Most of these were small metropolitan counties or counties adjacent to small metropolitan areas. And while Pennsylvania had 41 of the 188 counties with a low share of children and youth under 18, there were also pockets throughout North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. On the other hand, in 130 Appalachian counties the share of children under age 18 matched or exceeded the national average. Nearly half of these counties were in Southern Appalachia, while 37 of these counties were in Central Appalachia – with concentrations in Georgia and Kentucky.

Figure 2.2: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Ages 18 to 24, July 1, 2024

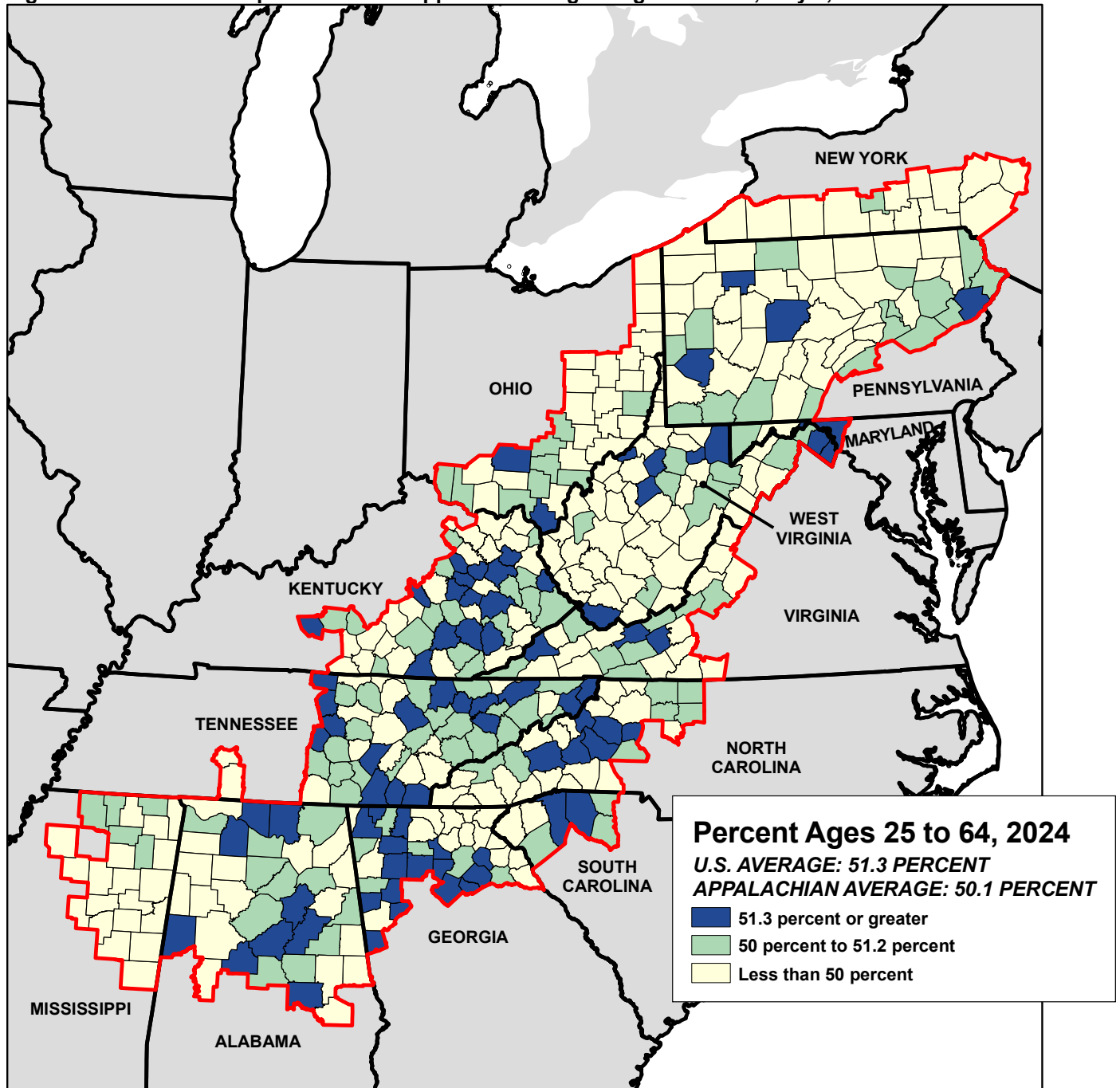


Map Title: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Ages 18 to 24, July 1, 2024

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

At 9.3 percent, the share of young adults (ages 18 to 24) in the Appalachian Region in 2024 was on par with the national average of 9.2 percent. Young adults in this age group comprised at least 15 percent of the population in just 21 of the region's 423 counties, and all but one of these counties are home to colleges and universities, such as Watauga County, North Carolina (Appalachian State University); Tompkins County, New York (Cornell University); and Broome, Cortland, and Otsego Counties in New York, all home to campuses of the State University of New York. In contrast, 18-to-24-year-olds made up less than 7.5 percent of the population in 198 Appalachian counties. Of those counties, 140 were outside of metropolitan areas – including 49 rural counties – 59 were classified as low postsecondary education counties, and 48 of these were classified as low-employment counties, suggesting a lack of educational and employment opportunities for young adults in this age group.

Figure 2.3: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Ages 25 to 64, July 1, 2024

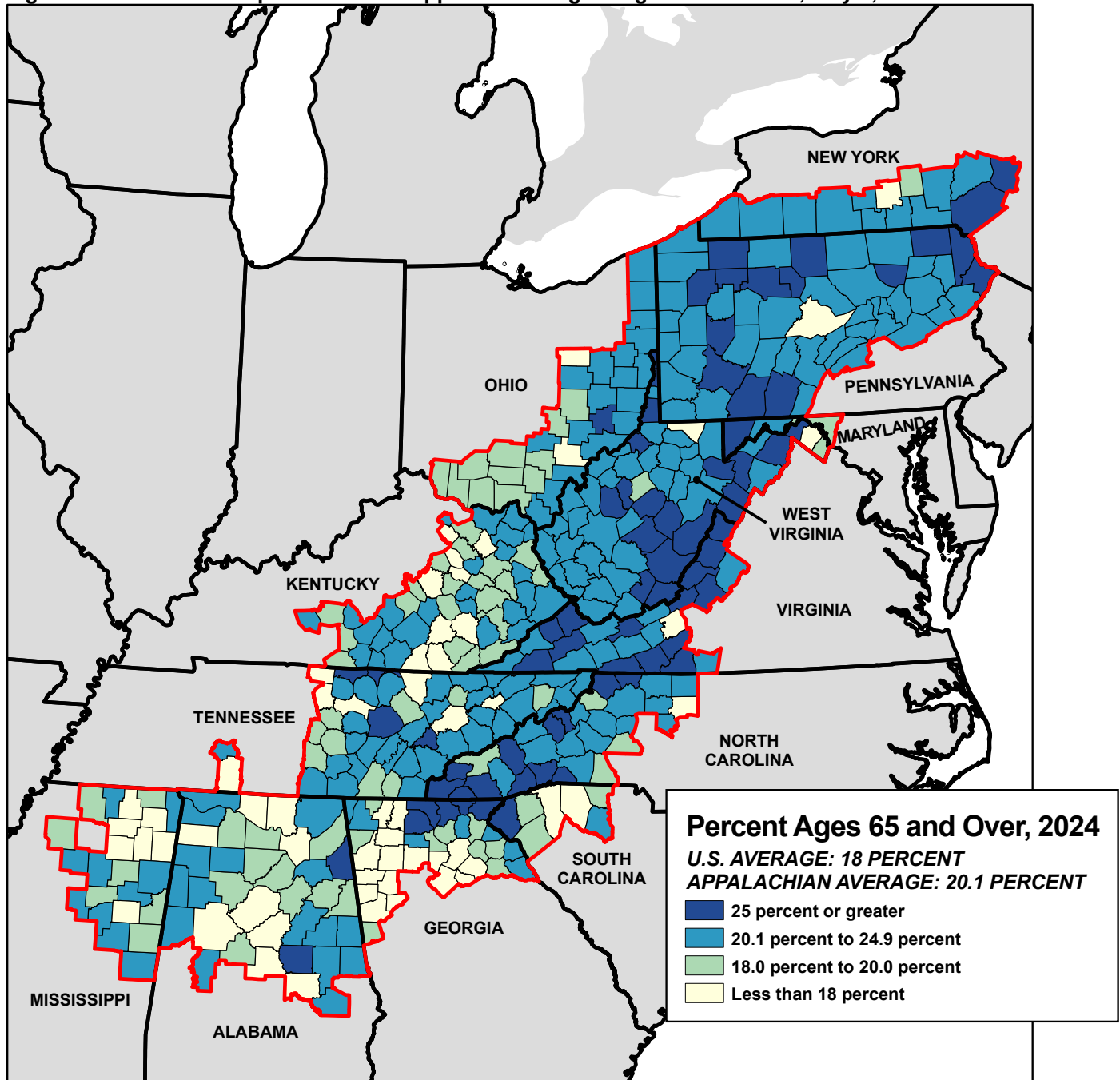


Map Title: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Ages 25 to 64, July 1, 2024

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

Adults ages 25 to 64 made up half of all residents in the Appalachian Region and slightly more than half in the nation as a whole. The region's share of adults in this age group was 1.2 percentage points lower than the national average of 51.3 percent. In 229 of the region's 423 counties, less than half of the population was comprised of persons in this age group – 171 of which were outside of metropolitan areas. These 229 counties generally had a lower percentage of the working age population because of above average populations of either college students (Washington County, Pennsylvania) or retirees (Towns County, Georgia). On the other hand, in 82 of the 423 Appalachian counties the percentage of people in this age group matched or exceeded the national average. More than half of these counties were metropolitan counties, where opportunities for employment and recreation may be more concentrated for adults in this age group.

Figure 2.4: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Ages 65 and Over, July 1, 2024

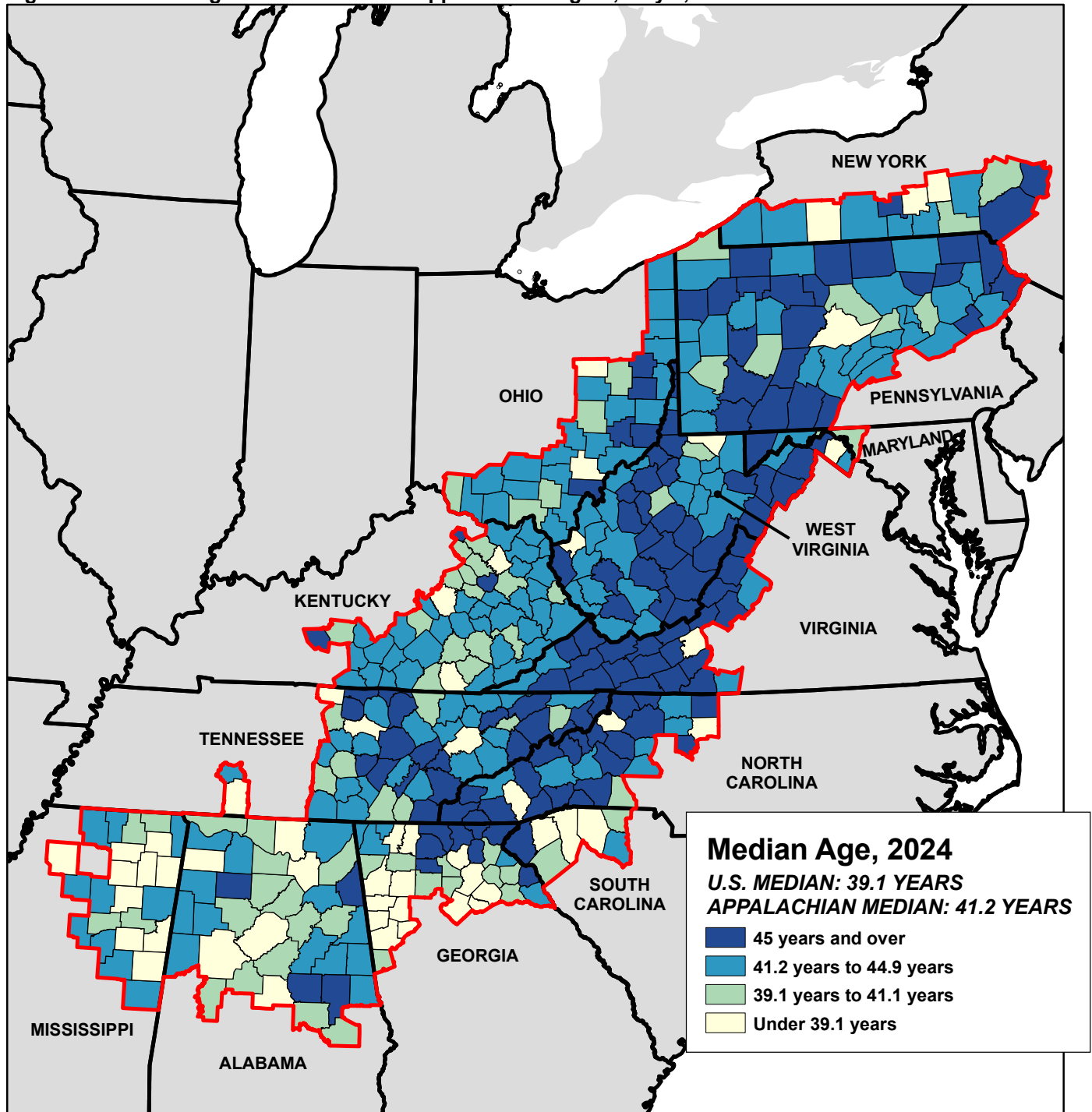


Map Title: Percent of Population in the Appalachian Region Ages 65 and Over, July 1, 2024

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

In the Appalachian Region, the share of adults ages 65 and older exceeded the national average of 18 percent by more than two percentage points in 2024. Moreover, the percentage of persons in this age group matched or exceeded the U.S. share in 365 of the 423 Appalachian counties – and was at least 20.1 percent in 288 of them. There were 74 counties in the region where older people made up 25 percent or more of the population, and all but 14 of these were outside metropolitan areas. In contrast, of the 58 Appalachian counties with older population shares below the national average, more than half were in metro areas and more than one in four were home to colleges and universities. Of the subregions, only Southern Appalachia had a share of older adults below the national average. As more of the large baby boom cohort moves into this age group, the share of residents ages 65 and over will continue to increase over the coming years in both Appalachia and the nation.

Figure 2.5: Median Age of Persons in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2024



Map Title: Median Age of Persons in the Appalachian Region, July 1, 2024

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

At 41.2 years, the median age of the Appalachian population (the point at which half of the population is older and half is younger) was 2.1 years older than that of the United States as of mid-2024. In fact, 370 Appalachian counties had median ages at or above the national average, and 300 of those counties had median ages exceeding the regional average as well. Furthermore, in 134 of those counties, the median age was at least 45 years. And while large- and small-metropolitan county types throughout Appalachia had median ages below the regional median, among metro-adjacent and rural counties the median age was higher. Southern Appalachia was the only subregion with a median age below the regional median, and in fact Southern Appalachia's median age fell just below the national median as well.

Table 2.2: Percentage Point Change in the Share of the Population in the Appalachian Region, by Age Group, July 1, 2010 to July 1, 2024

Population by Age Group	Percentage Point Change in Share of Population				Change in Median Age (Years)
	Under Age 18	Ages 18-24	Ages 25-64	Ages 65 and over	
United States	- 2.5	- 0.7	- 1.7	+ 4.9	+ 1.9
Appalachian Region	- 1.8	- 0.4	- 2.7	+ 4.9	+ 1.3
Subregions					
Northern Appalachia	- 1.7	- 0.7	- 3.0	+ 5.4	+ 1.0
North Central Appalachia	- 1.6	- 0.4	- 3.6	+ 5.6	+ 1.7
Central Appalachia	- 1.0	- 0.5	- 3.7	+ 5.2	+ 1.7
South Central Appalachia	- 1.9	- 0.4	- 2.7	+ 4.9	+ 1.6
Southern Appalachia	- 2.4	- 0.1	- 2.1	+ 4.5	+ 1.8
County Types					
Large Metro (metro pop. 1 million +)	- 2.3	- 0.1	- 2.4	+ 4.8	+ 1.6
Small Metro (metro pop. <1 million)	- 1.7	- 0.5	- 2.5	+ 4.7	+ 1.2
Nonmetro, Adjacent to Large Metro	- 2.1	- 0.9	- 2.5	+ 5.4	+ 2.0
Nonmetro, Adjacent to Small Metro	- 1.5	- 0.4	- 3.5	+ 5.4	+ 1.8
Rural (nonmetro, not adj. to a metro)	- 1.7	- 0.1	- 3.6	+ 5.3	+ 1.7
Alabama	- 1.6	- 0.5	- 2.5	+ 4.7	+ 1.4
Appalachian Alabama	- 1.5	- 0.3	- 2.7	+ 4.5	+ 1.2
Non-Appalachian Alabama	- 1.8	- 1.2	- 2.3	+ 5.2	+ 2.4
Georgia	- 2.9	- 0.5	- 1.6	+ 5.0	+ 2.1
Appalachian Georgia	- 3.7	+ 0.5	- 1.7	+ 5.0	+ 2.6
Non-Appalachian Georgia	- 2.6	- 1.0	- 1.6	+ 5.0	+ 2.5
Kentucky	- 1.1	- 0.5	- 3.0	+ 4.7	+ 1.1
Appalachian Kentucky	- 0.9	- 0.5	- 3.5	+ 4.8	+ 1.5
Non-Appalachian Kentucky	- 1.4	- 0.4	- 2.9	+ 4.6	+ 1.2
Maryland	- 1.5	- 1.1	- 2.7	+ 5.3	+ 1.4
Appalachian Maryland	- 1.3	- 1.0	- 2.2	+ 4.4	+ 1.2
Non-Appalachian Maryland	- 1.5	- 1.2	- 2.7	+ 5.4	+ 1.9
Mississippi	- 2.5	- 0.6	- 2.1	+ 5.1	+ 2.4
Appalachian Mississippi	- 2.1	- 0.1	- 2.1	+ 4.3	+ 1.4
Non-Appalachian Mississippi	- 2.6	- 0.7	- 2.1	+ 5.4	+ 3.1
New York	- 2.3	- 1.2	- 1.9	+ 5.3	+ 1.9
Appalachian New York	- 2.3	+ 0.5	- 4.1	+ 6.0	+ 1.0
Non-Appalachian New York	- 2.2	- 1.3	- 1.8	+ 5.4	+ 2.2
North Carolina	- 2.4	- 0.5	- 2.0	+ 4.9	+ 1.7
Appalachian North Carolina	- 2.6	- 0.2	- 2.8	+ 5.6	+ 2.2
Non-Appalachian North Carolina	- 2.5	- 0.5	- 1.8	+ 4.8	+ 2.0
Ohio	- 1.9	- 0.7	- 2.5	+ 5.0	+ 0.8
Appalachian Ohio	- 1.8	- 0.6	- 3.1	+ 5.5	+ 1.4
Non-Appalachian Ohio	- 1.9	- 0.7	- 2.3	+ 4.9	+ 1.1
Pennsylvania	- 1.8	- 0.8	- 2.3	+ 5.0	+ 0.7
Appalachian Pennsylvania	- 1.6	- 1.0	- 2.8	+ 5.4	+ 1.1
Non-Appalachian Pennsylvania	- 2.0	- 0.8	- 1.8	+ 4.8	+ 1.0
South Carolina	- 2.3	- 1.2	- 2.5	+ 6.0	+ 2.3
Appalachian South Carolina	- 1.7	- 0.8	- 1.7	+ 4.2	+ 0.9
Non-Appalachian South Carolina	- 2.5	- 1.3	- 2.8	+ 6.5	+ 3.3
Tennessee	- 1.6	- 0.6	- 1.9	+ 4.2	+ 0.8
Appalachian Tennessee	- 1.5	- 0.3	- 2.4	+ 4.3	+ 1.1
Non-Appalachian Tennessee	- 1.7	- 0.8	- 1.7	+ 4.1	+ 1.3
Virginia	- 1.7	- 0.8	- 2.8	+ 5.3	+ 1.5
Appalachian Virginia	- 1.6	- 0.5	- 3.9	+ 6.0	+ 2.3
Non-Appalachian Virginia	- 1.8	- 0.7	- 2.7	+ 5.3	+ 2.0
West Virginia (entire state)	- 1.2	- 0.3	- 4.3	+ 5.8	+ 1.5

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Vintage 2020 and Vintage 2024 Population Estimates.

TRENDS IN AGE

- Keeping with the national trend, Appalachia's population became older between 2010 and 2024. The region's pace of aging has been slower than the nation's, with a rise in age of 1.3 years compared with the U.S. increase of 1.9 years during this 14-year period (See Table 2.2).
- Aging varies throughout Appalachia, with some areas – such as the Appalachian portions of Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia – having median age increases of more than two years, while others – such as the Appalachian sections of Alabama, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee – had median age increases lower than the regional average of 1.3 years. The median age increased by more than the regional average in all rural-urban county types except for small metros, where the increase was slightly lower at 1.2 years. Among the states, median age ranged from nearly 43.6 years in Appalachian Virginia, to just over 38.4 years in Appalachian Mississippi (See Table 2.1).
- In Appalachia, the share of adults ages 25 to 64 decreased by 2.7 percentage points between 2010 and 2024, while the share of persons aged 18-years or younger decreased by 1.8 percentage points and the share of young adults in the region – those aged 18 to 24 – declined by 0.4 percentage points. The pronounced decline in the share of adults ages 25 to 64 is largely because members of the baby boom cohort have aged out of this group. The share of adults ages 65 or older in the region increased by 4.9 percentage points between mid-2010 and mid-2024, matching the increase in this group for the nation as a whole. The share of adults 65 and older grew most in Northern (5.4 percentage points), North Central (5.6 percentage points), and Central Appalachia (5.2 percentage points each), as well as in nonmetropolitan counties adjacent to large and small metros (5.4 percentage points), and in rural counties (5.3 percentage points).
- While much of Appalachia is “aging in place”, there are growing shares of older residents in retirement destinations in the region. For example, more than one in five of the 134 Appalachian counties where the median age is at least 45 years – such as Cumberland County, Tennessee (53.6 years); Towns County, Georgia (58.5 years), and Highland County, Virginia (60.2 years)– have been designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (ERS) as “retirement destination” counties.