

Tennessee 'Brain Drain' Data

Comparison of Chattanooga to Knoxville and Nashville

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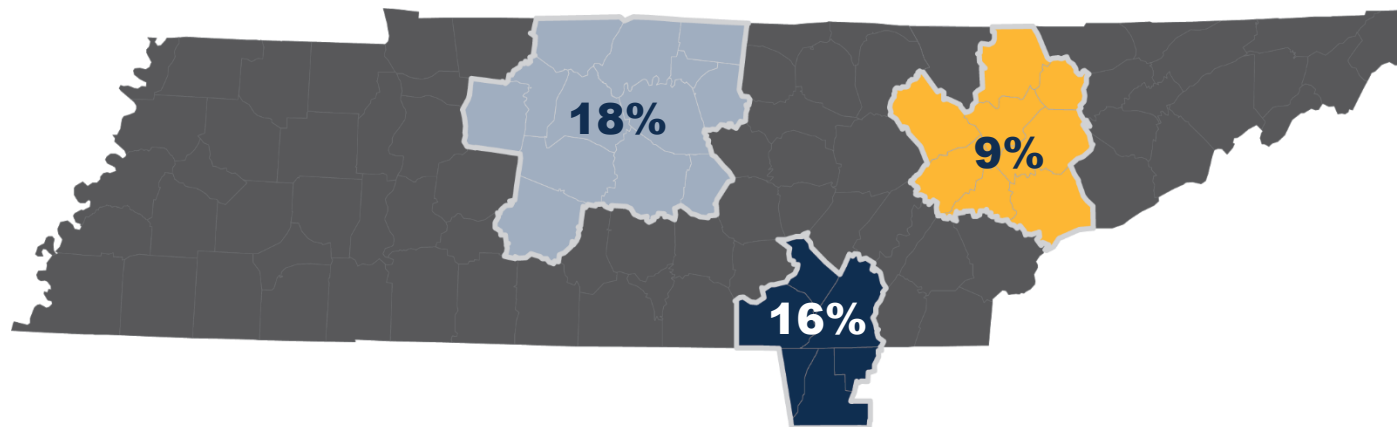
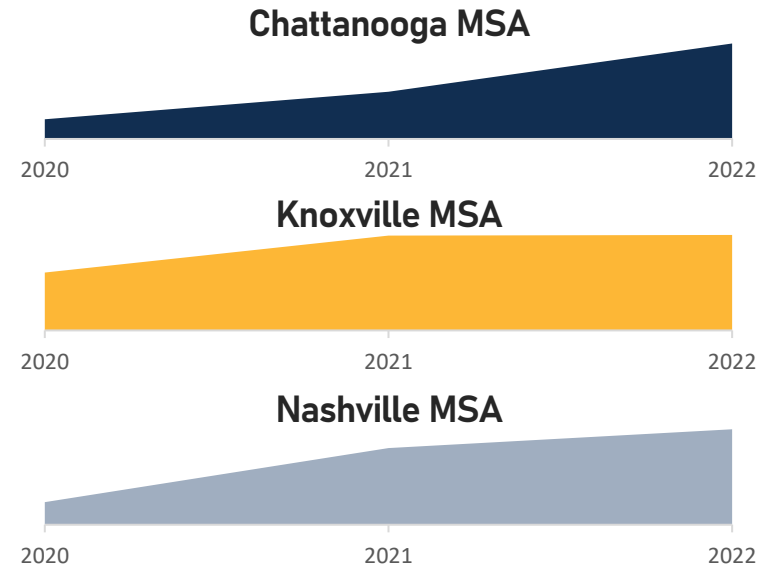


Overview

Comparison of College-Educated Adults in Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville

Based on population data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the Chattanooga area has not encountered the same population plateau in recent years as the Knoxville area. When looking at each metropolitan statistical area (MSA) for Chattanooga¹, Knoxville², and Nashville³, Chattanooga had a 16% population increase from 2020 to 2022 in people aged 25-64 with a bachelor's degree or higher. Nashville had a slightly higher percent increase in this group at 18%, but Knoxville had a significantly lower increase at 9%.

This difference in population increase between Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville is further analyzed within this report to look at characteristics such as migration based on age range and educational level. Although the data show that people 25 or older with a bachelor's degree or higher are increasing at a higher rate in Chattanooga compared to Knoxville, further exploration would be needed to determine why.



¹ Includes Hamilton, Marion, and Sequatchie counties in Tennessee and Catoosa, Dade, and Walker counties in Georgia.

² Includes Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Roane, and Union Counties in Tennessee.

³ Includes Cannon, Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Macon, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, and Wilson Counties in Tennessee.

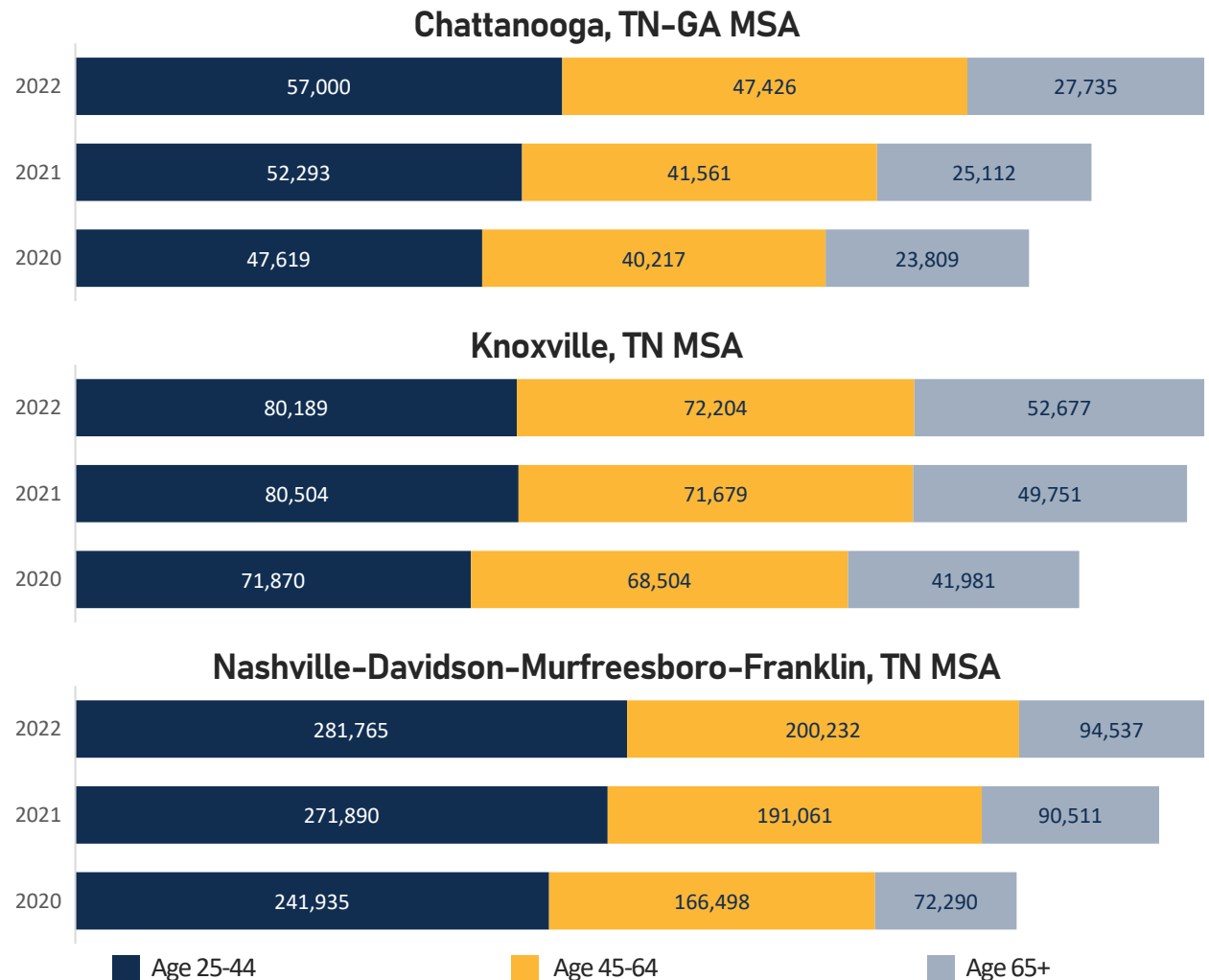
Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Three-Year Comparisons by Age Group

For this request, data analyzed was restricted to only include the population 25 years or older holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

Both the Knoxville and Nashville MSAs had a larger increase overall between 2020 and 2021, whereas, the Chattanooga MSA had its most substantial increase between 2021 and 2022. In the Nashville MSA, this demographic increased by 15.1% from 2020 to 2021, but only by 4.2% from 2021 to 2022. In the Knoxville MSA, this demographic increased by 10.7% from 2020-2021 and only 1.6% from 2021-2022. The Chattanooga MSA had an increase of 6.6% from 2020 to 2021 and an 11.1% increase from 2021 to 2022.

More specifically, Chattanooga had the largest percent increase from 2020 to 2022 within the population aged 25-44 with a 20% increase and adults aged 45-64 with an 18% increase. Although people aged 65+ account for a larger portion of the overall population in Chattanooga, the Knoxville and Nashville MSAs saw a much larger increase in this demographic between 2020 and 2022 than Chattanooga.

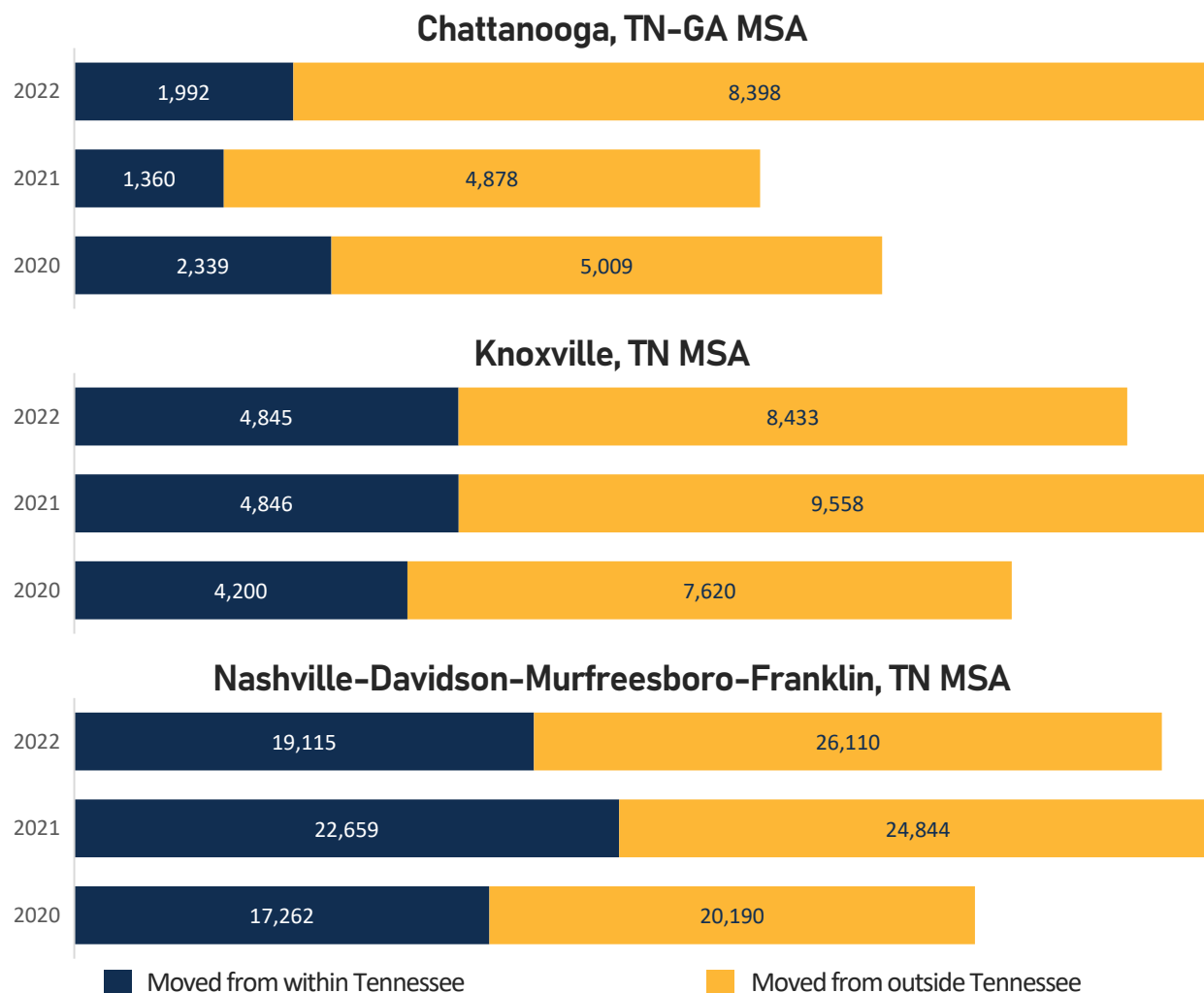


Migration with Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Three-Year Comparisons of Population Age 25 and Older by Location

To better understand the increase in population for people aged 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher, migration patterns of people moving into these MSAs were analyzed. The migration data of people aged 25 or older with a bachelor's degree or higher are not available at the more granular age groups like the prior page.

Although there were fewer people within this demographic moving into the Chattanooga MSA from 2020 to 2021, there was a significant increase in people moving into the MSA from 2021 to 2022. Specifically, 15% less people within this demographic moved into the Chattanooga MSA in 2021 compared to 2020, but 67% more moved into the MSA in 2022. Conversely, a decrease in people within this demographic moved into the Knoxville and Nashville MSAs from 2021 to 2022. There was an increase of 22% of people within this demographic moving into the Knoxville MSA and 27% moving into the Nashville MSA between 2020 and 2021; however, 8% less people moved into the Knoxville MSA and 5% less people moved into the Nashville MSA in 2022.



Migration of All Educational Levels

Three-Year Comparisons by Age Group and Location

Lastly, the data from the American Community Survey was analyzed to show the age ranges of people moving into each MSA regardless of educational level. Again, the Chattanooga MSA had its largest influx of people aged 25 or older moving into the area between 2021 and 2022. Additionally, within all three of the more specific age ranges, people the majority of people that moved into the Chattanooga MSA in 2022 moved from a different state. This may be a more likely scenario due to Chattanooga's proximity to the Tennessee border than either Knoxville or Nashville; however, the number of people aged 25 or older who moved into the Chattanooga MSA from another state was 69% higher in 2022 than 2020. This is the highest increase of migration population across all three MSAs by more than 45%.

Considering each comparison of data sets, the Chattanooga MSA does not seem to have the same potential "brain drain" in the population aged 25 and older than other areas of Tennessee may have. The notable increase of people in the Chattanooga MSA within this age range that also have a bachelor's degree or higher indicates that there are opportunities within this area that are appealing to this demographic and possibly more so compared to the Knoxville and Nashville regions.

