

CITYLAB

What We Actually Know About How Americans Are Moving During Covid

Despite talk of an urban exodus, fewer people moved during the height of the pandemic. But in a few cities, the story is a little different.

By Marie Patino
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... found more moves out of these two cities than last year. According to its data, between May and August 2020, move requests out of New York City to any destination were up 45%, and in San Francisco, up 23%, compared to the same time last year.

... But what's just as interesting about these datasets is where the people who left were going: Among those requesting long-distance moves through United Van Lines, the company found that the top destinations for people leaving these cities were other large metropolitan areas.

Moving Out of San Francisco

Percentage total moves out of San Francisco



Source: United Van Lines

Note: Numbers are interest in moving, which is the number of people requesting a quote to move out of a specific location

Moving Out of New York City

Percentage total moves out of New York City



Source: United Van Lines

Note: Numbers are interest in moving, which is the number of people requesting a quote to move out of a specific location

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It's important to be clear: We shouldn't deduce from these findings that there are droves of New Yorkers migrating west to L.A., or that Seattle is the new San Francisco. (Although these two migration patterns were both trends that were happening even before the pandemic.) In fact, these top