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## Detroit's Population Plunges by 25% in a Decade

Hard hit by a sluggish auto industry, Detroit's population dropped by a quarter over the last decade, according to newly released census data.

The drastic population drop marks one of the largest percentage drops for any U.S. city with more than 100,000 residents. New Orleans had the largest, when it's population dropped 29 percent following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. However, 140,000 people left New Orleans; 237,500 have fled Detroit.

Detroit's population dropped from 951,270 in 2000 to 713,777 in 2010.

"I never thought it would go this low," says Kurt Metzger, an urban affairs expert and demographer who analyzes data about the city. "This is the biggest percentage loss that Detroit has ever seen."

Detroit's population peaked in 1950 at 1.8 million, when it ranked as the fourth-largest city nationally. According to The New York Times, Detroit is now smaller than Charlotte, N.C., or Jacksonville, Fla.

The drop in residents in Michigan's largest city caused it to become the only state in the country to have an overall population decline in the past decade, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

### Mayor: The Numbers Can't Be Right

Detroit Mayor Dave Bing plans to appeal the population data, saying the census missed counting thousands of its residents. Bing says Detroit has at least 750,000 residents. That number is crucial for the city to qualify for some state and federal financial programs.

The vanishing residents among the city has left Detroit with a plague of abandoned homes and foreclosures that have driven prices down. More than 20 percent of the city's lots now stand vacant.

Source: "Detroit Census Confirms a Desertion Like No Other," The New York Times (March 22, 2011) and "Detroit's Population Falls 25 Percent in Past Decade, Losing More than 237,000 People," Associated Press (March 22, 2011)