

Introduction

America is an extremely mobile nation. Every year, millions of people in the United States pack up and move to a different home. Two often-asked questions about this mobility are the time of the year when most moves occur—seasonality of moves—and the length of time that people stay in one place—duration of residence. This report, using data collected in the Survey of Income and Program Participation, gives us a look at these two topics.

Seasonality of Moves

Seasonality of moving, that is, how mobility varies from month to month, is important to schools and many businesses but these data are rarely collected in surveys. The 1993 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP),

however, asked people who were at least 15 years old for the month and year they moved into both their current and previous residences.

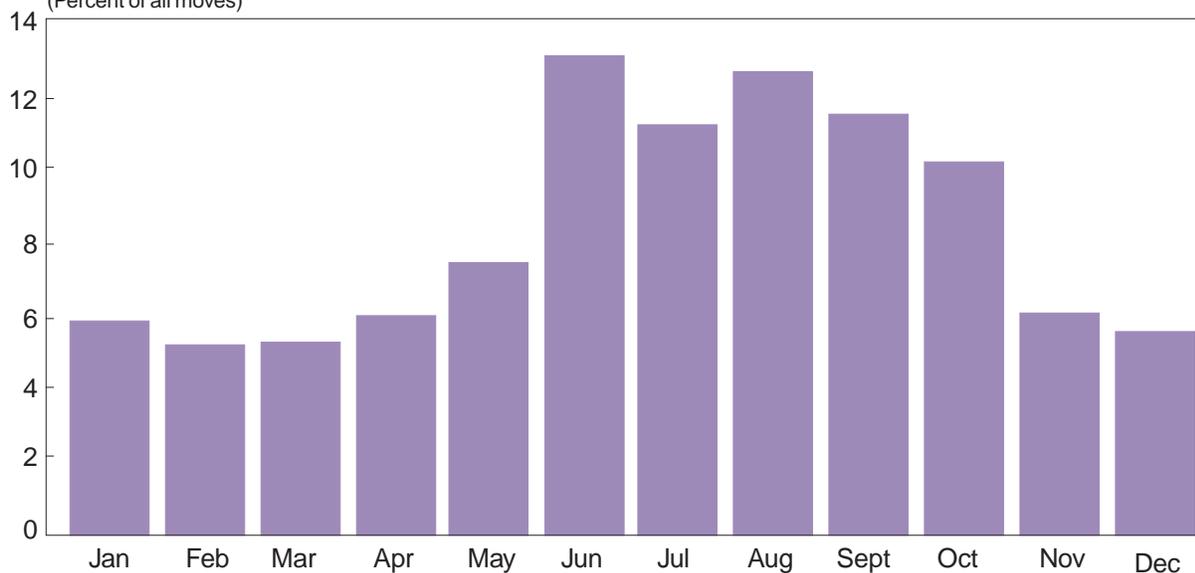
The data on seasonality of moves contained in this report have been tabulated by the characteristics of movers at the time the survey was conducted. Some characteristics such as owner/renter status (also known as tenure), household relationship, income, education, and employment status may have been different at the time of the move than at the survey date. The survey did not collect data on the characteristics of people at the time they moved.

Moving is concentrated in the summer months.

Moves are not evenly distributed throughout the year. Most people

appear to prefer to move in the summer when the weather is good and children are not in school. Some moves may be timed to coincide with the end or the beginning of the school year. The months of June, about the time most schools let out, and August, just before they start again, have the largest percentages of people changing residence. July and September have the next highest percentages. Nearly half of all moves (48.4 percent) take place during the four months of June through September; about 60 percent are in June through October. After October moving rates decline significantly. In many areas, the winter weather conditions make moving an unpopular event; rates are much lower in November through May.

Figure 1.
Distribution of Moves by Month
(Percent of all moves)



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, SIPP, 1993