

News Release  
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## **COMPASS Board Accepts Annual Population Estimates: Increase of 150,000 in Six Years**

*Meridian, ID* – The Board of Directors of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) accepted the 2026 population estimates for Ada, Canyon, Boise, and Elmore Counties in its Board meeting on April 27, 2026. The total population for Ada and Canyon Counties combined is estimated at 876,760 – an increase of 150,000 since the 2020 Census. The addition of Boise and Elmore Counties brings the total four-county population to 915,940.

COMPASS updates its population estimates as of April 1 each year using the most recent decennial Census count as the base. Building from the Census count, COMPASS calculates the population estimates for Ada and Canyon Counties using local building construction permits, current household sizes and vacancy rates, and recent annexations (expansions of city limits). Not all of the same data are available for Boise and Elmore Counties, so their populations are calculated using a slightly different method.

“While our population growth is spread throughout the region, the percentage of growth in some of our smaller communities is staggering,” explains COMPASS Planning Team Lead Austin Miller. “For example, the Cities of Kuna and Star each grew by 14% in just one year, as compared to larger cities, such as Meridian and Nampa that each grew by 3% in the same period.

“These distinctions underscore the importance of looking at the data from multiple viewpoints, such as numeric growth, percent growth, change year-over-year, and change as compared to the most recent Census count. Each of these provides insight into how we are growing and helps COMPASS and the individual jurisdictions plan for the future.”

Key takeaways from the 2026 population estimates include:

- The populations of Ada, Boise, Canyon, and Elmore Counties combined have increased over 20% since the 2020 Census.
- The City of Star has experienced the greatest percentage increase since the 2020 Census at 131%.
- The Cities of Caldwell, Meridian, and Kuna gained the most individuals in the past year (2025 to 2026), with increases of 5,160; 4,730; and 4,810, respectively.
- Despite significant regional growth, the populations of unincorporated areas and some smaller cities, such as Greenleaf and Notus, remained essentially unchanged between 2025 and 2026.

The 2026 population estimates, including comparisons to previous years, can be found on the COMPASS website at <https://compassidaho.org/>.

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