Kem C. Gardner POLICY INSTITUTE
THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
DAVID ECCLES SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
10 YEARS OF IMPACT 2015-2025

Utah's Declining Fertility Rate, 2023

U.S. and Utah fertility rates continued a long-term decline in 2023. The U.S. total fertility rate (TFR) was 1.621 in 2023, a 2.1% decline from 1.656 in 2022.[1] Utah's TFR has now declined or stayed constant for 15 consecutive years, dropping to 1.801 in 2023, a 2.8% decline from 1.853 in 2022. Three states (North Dakota, Mississippi, and Tennessee) experienced TFR increases or no change in 2023, while the rest declined. Economic factors such as housing and childcare costs and broader social factors like postponement of marriage and childbearing all influence fertility rate declines.[2]

Key Findings

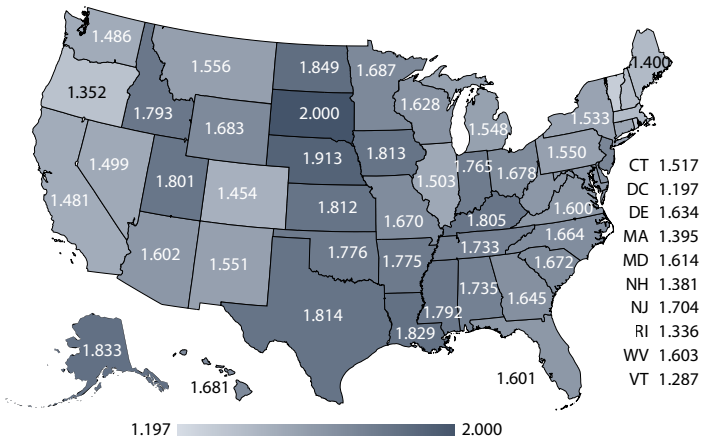
Utah

- **Utah's 2023 TFR drops from 4th to 10th highest in the nation –** Utah's TFR of 1.801 dropped from 4th highest to 10th highest, behind many midwestern and some southern states (Figure 5). Between 2022 and 2023, Utah's TFR declined by 2.8%. This is a continuation of Utah's TFR declining or staying consistent since 2012, but slower than the 3.4 % decrease from 2021 to 2022.[3] [4]
- **Utah's 2023 TFR decline is largely driven by fertility declines in 25–29 and 30-34-year-old women –** This is the sharpest fertility decline for 25-29-year-olds since 2016-2018, when fertility rates dropped substantially. All but two age groups experienced a fertility decline. Age-specific fertility rates for 15-17-year-old and 45-49-year-old women increased (Figure 7).

National

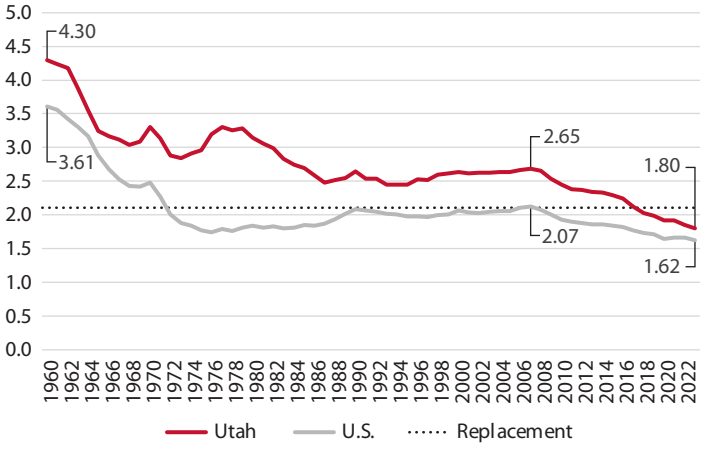
- **The U.S. 2023 TFR decreased by 2.1% to 1.621 children per woman (down from 1.656) –** Between 2022 and 2023, total fertility rates in North Dakota and Mississippi increased and Tennessee's remained the same. South Dakota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Alaska, and Louisiana's TFRs rank highest in the nation. The District of Columbia, Vermont, Rhode Island, Oregon, and New Hampshire rank lowest.
- **The range of state TFR changes narrowed in 2023 –** The 2023 range of percentage changes in state TFRs narrowed compared to 2022. In 2022, TFR percentage changes ranged from a 1.9% increase to a -7.2% decline; in 2023, TFR percentage changes ranged from a 0.6% increase to a -4.9% decline (Figure 4).

Figure 1: Total Fertility Rate by State, 2023



Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Figure 2: Total Fertility Rate for Utah and the United States, 1960-2023

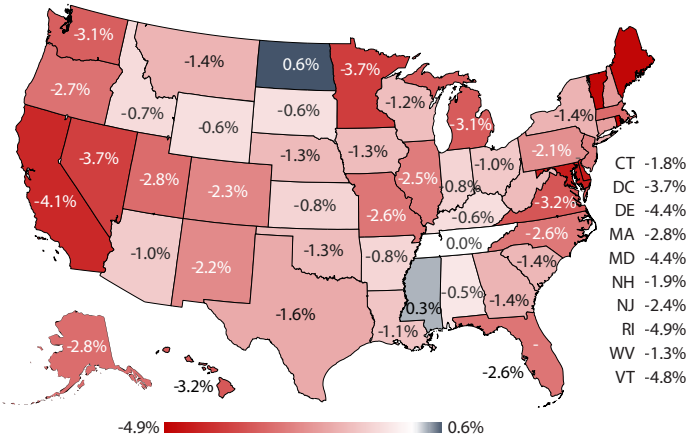


Note: Replacement (TFR of 2.1) is the theoretical fertility level at which the current population is replaced.
Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Total Fertility Rate (TFR): The average number of children a woman will have if she survives all her childbearing (or reproductive) years. Also the sum of the Age Specific Fertility Rates.

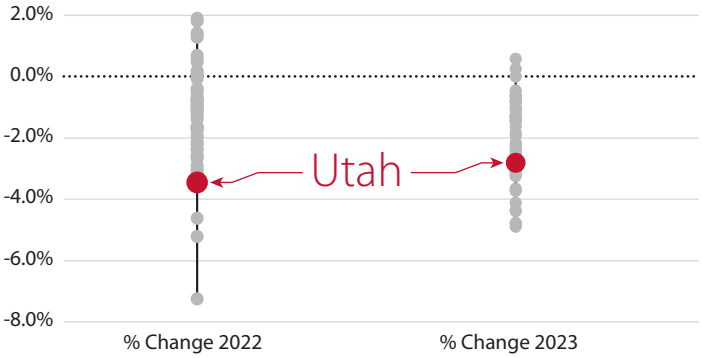
Age Specific Fertility Rate (ASFR): The number of live births (often per 1,000 women) in a specific age group for a specific point in time, usually a year.

Figure 3: Annual Percent Change in TFR by State, 2023



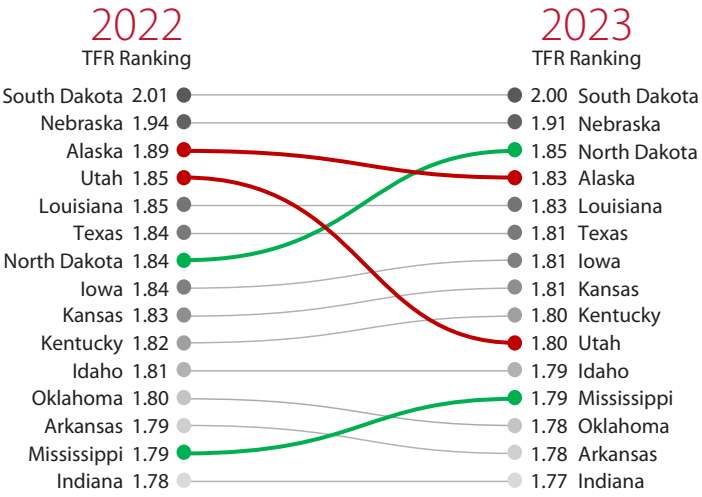
Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Figure 4: State Annual Percent Changes in TFRs, 2022 and 2023



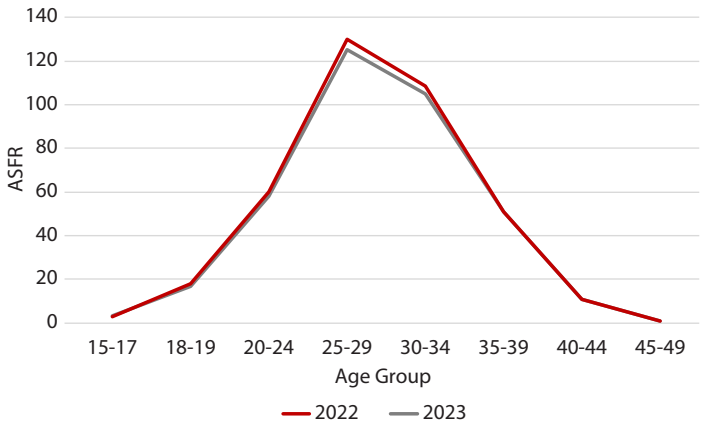
Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Figure 5: Top 15 States with Highest TFRs and their Rankings, 2022 and 2023



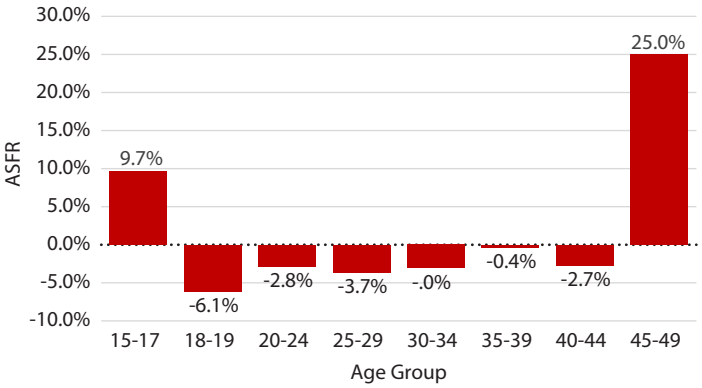
Note: Green line indicates percent increase in TFR; Red line indicates over 2% decrease in TFR.
Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Figure 6: Age Specific Fertility Rates in Utah, 2022 and 2023



Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Figure 7: Percent Change in Age Specific Fertility Rates in Utah, 2022 - 2023



Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Endnotes

1. Osterman MJK, Hamilton BE, Martin JA, Driscoll AK, Valenzuela CP. Births: Final data for 2022. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 73, no 2. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2024. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:145588.
2. Hollingshaus, M, Bateman, M, Harris, E, Perlich, P. 2017 Fertility in Utah since the Great Recession: The New Normal or a Pregnant Pause? Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. https://d36oiwf74r1rap.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/FertilityReport-Final.pdf
3. For more information on the recent history of Utah and the nation's declining fertility, see Harris, E. 2022. A Decade of Declining Fertility in Utah, the Intermountain West, and the Nation: 2010-2020. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/Fertility-RB-Jul2022.pdf?x71849
4. Harris, E. 2024. Utah's Declining Fertility Rate, 2022. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. https://d36oiwf74r1rap.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Fertility-FS-June2024.pdf

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