

The National Notary Association
Official 2017 Notary Census



4,462,573
U.S. Notaries
ON THE RISE AGAIN

By David Thun

IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT OUR 2017 NATIONAL CENSUS of Notaries made clear, it's that the economy drives Notary growth — and the rising number of U.S. Notaries suggests business may be looking up. 2012 saw the first significant drop in U.S. Notary population in 40 years due to the economic hardships brought on by the collapse of the U.S. housing bubble and the Great Recession that followed.

But since then, the economy has stabilized, and the NNA's exclusive count of Notaries found that the number is again climbing upwards — to the tune of more than 77,000 nationwide.

While many states saw small decreases over the past five years, others such as Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas all saw significant upswings in new Notaries receiving commissions. Officials in these states credited the rise in Notaries to increasing prosperity and business growth, with more companies looking for Notaries to meet their transaction needs.

"Between 2007 and 2012, we saw many Notaries leaving the mortgage and settlement services industries," said Phil Browne, NNA Vice President of Communications. "Now that we're in better economic times, the demand for Notaries is starting to pick up again."

What's remarkable is that for the past 25 years, America has shown a consistent need for more than 4 million Notaries, to help protect its most important business and personal transactions. The Notary count broke the 4-million mark in the 1992 census and has stayed there ever since.

More Than 20 States See New Notary Growth

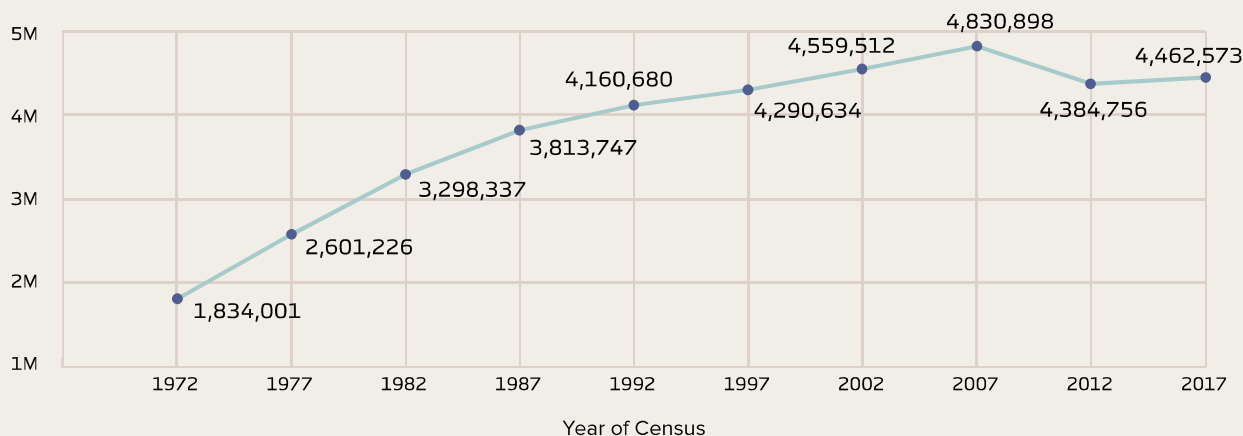
Today, there are more than 4.4 million Notaries commissioned throughout the United States. Overall, the number of new Notaries rose in 21 states.

The number of Notaries nationwide has climbed steadily, adjusting to fit the growing needs of consumers.

Florida surpassed every other U.S. state and territory in new Notaries over the past five years, with an astonishing 97,838 additional Notaries commissioned between 2012 and 2017 — bringing the state's total population to nearly half a million Notaries. Officials pointed to the state's private-sector job growth, which has been above the national average for the past five years, and a drop in unemployment in Florida to the lowest levels since 2007.

"Since December 2010, more than 1.37 million Floridians have found private-sector employment, meaning job seekers are finding good jobs," Cissy Proctor, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity said. "Our impressive job growth and business-friendly climate has helped Florida establish itself as a national leader in job creation."

U.S. Notary Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau & NNA Research

Change in U.S. Notary Population 2012 to 2017 **↑ 77,967**

Notaries by State



STATE	NOTARIES 2017	NOTARIES 2012	CHANGE	2010 U.S. POPULATION CENSUS	2017 NOTARIES PER 100,000
ALABAMA	66,450	63,065	3,385	4,779,736	1390
ALASKA	14,529	13,194	1,335	710,231	2046
ARIZONA	69,032	99,206	-30,174	6,392,017	1080
ARKANSAS	50,372	54,198	-3,826	2,915,918	1727
CALIFORNIA	162,411	163,711	-1,300	37,253,956	436
COLORADO	83,783	87,812	-4,029	5,029,196	1666
CONNECTICUT	49,500	50,000	-500	3,574,097	1385
DELAWARE	10,001	10,275	-274	897,934	1114
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA*	10,000	9,500	500	601,723	1662
FLORIDA	495,891	398,053	97,838	18,801,310	2638
GEORGIA	174,102	159,649	14,453	9,687,653	1797
GUAM	584	576	8	185,674	315
HAWAII*	6,000	6,000	0	1,360,301	441
IDAHO	25,217	25,681	-464	1,567,582	1609
ILLINOIS	163,956	173,713	-9,757	12,830,632	1278
INDIANA	90,779	86,555	4,224	6,483,802	1400
IOWA	59,492	57,490	2,002	3,046,355	1953
KANSAS	49,002	50,554	-1,552	2,853,118	1717
KENTUCKY	80,705	84,610	-3,905	4,339,367	1860
LOUISIANA	59,192	56,245	2,947	4,533,372	1306
MAINE	23,876	30,506	-6,630	1,328,361	1797
MARYLAND*	80,000	70,915	9,085	5,773,552	1386
MASSACHUSETTS	113,842	140,000	-26,158	6,547,629	1739
MICHIGAN	112,069	121,974	-9,905	9,883,640	1134
MINNESOTA	76,721	84,826	-8,105	5,303,925	1446
MISSISSIPPI	37,382	38,000	-618	2,967,297	1260
MISSOURI	72,066	76,501	-4,435	5,988,927	1203
MONTANA	16,270	20,000	-3,730	989,415	1644
NEBRASKA	28,418	33,497	-5,079	1,826,341	1556





STATE	NOTARIES 2017	NOTARIES 2012	CHANGE	2010 U.S. POPULATION CENSUS	2017 NOTARIES PER 100,000
NEVADA	25,350	28,364	-3,014	2,700,551	939
NEW HAMPSHIRE	23,051	22,940	111	1,316,470	1751
NEW JERSEY	134,414	124,607	9,807	8,791,894	1529
NEW MEXICO	29,776	34,624	-4,848	2,059,179	1446
NEW YORK*	292,000	279,674	12,326	19,378,102	1507
NORTH CAROLINA*	174,000	143,180	30,820	9,535,483	1825
NORTH DAKOTA	15,348	13,116	2,232	672,591	2282
OHIO	163,932	224,060	-60,128	11,536,504	1421
OKLAHOMA	82,644	83,959	-1,315	3,751,351	2203
OREGON	38,790	40,795	-2,005	3,831,074	1013
PENNSYLVANIA	114,187	74,008	40,179	12,702,379	899
PUERTO RICO	9,072	9,186	-114	3,725,789	243
RHODE ISLAND	20,774	20,449	325	1,052,567	1974
SOUTH CAROLINA	139,985	138,000	1,985	4,625,364	3026
SOUTH DAKOTA	18,031	17,667	364	814,180	2215
TENNESSEE	88,093	97,996	-9,903	6,346,105	1388
TEXAS	427,556	401,232	26,324	25,145,561	1700
UTAH	22,072	17,000	5,072	2,763,885	799
VERMONT	15,804	14,120	1,684	625,741	2526
VIRGINIA*	135,000	113,693	21,307	8,001,024	1687
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS	733	645	88	109,574	669
WASHINGTON	74,352	75,830	-1,478	6,724,540	1106
WEST VIRGINIA	41,545	44,730	-3,185	1,852,994	2242
WISCONSIN	82,265	86,920	-4,655	5,686,986	1447
WYOMING	12,157	11,505	652	563,626	2157
AMERICAN SAMOA	NA	45		68,061	
NORTHERN MARIANAS	NA	105		44,852	
TOTAL	4,462,573	4,384,756	77,967	312,879,480	1,518

States with the most Notaries

1. Florida	495,891
2. Texas	427,556
3. Georgia	174,102
4. North Carolina	174,000
5. Illinois	163,956

Texas added more than 26,000 new Notaries, giving the Lone Star State the second-largest number of Notaries in the U.S. The rising number of new businesses in the state in recent years has directly contributed to growing demand for Notary services, said Sam Taylor, Communications Director for the Texas Secretary of State's office.

"The overall strength and diversity of the Texas economy is certainly a factor in our increased number of Notaries," Taylor said. "As more people and businesses move to the state, the business community, homeowners, entrepreneurs and others are looking for the most efficient, streamlined process that allows them to get up and running quickly, which creates a demand for more Notaries."

In Georgia, which gained more than 14,000 new Notaries in the past five years, a turnaround in the construction industry may have helped drive demand from businesses for notarial services, said Mike Smith, Director of Communications for the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority, which regulates the state's Notaries.

"We were slower to rebound from the recession than most states, because a lot of our economy was tied up in construction, and that took a hit when the real estate bubble burst," Smith said. "But now there's building going on everywhere. If the economy is doing better, I'd imagine businesses have

States with the fewest Notaries

1. Hawaii	6,000
2. Delaware	10,001
3. Wyoming	12,157
4. Alaska	14,529
5. North Dakota	15,348

more documents that need notarizing."

North Carolina — a state that lost more than 20,000 between 2007 and 2012 — saw significant growth in new Notaries as of 2017, now boasting an estimated 174,000 Notaries in 2017. Most of that growth is very recent, said Ozie Stallworth, eNotarization Analyst and Director with the North Carolina Secretary of State's office.

"A lot of that had to do with the recession and the problems in the mortgage industry," Stallworth said. "Overall, our numbers plummeted in the past five or six years. But as of the past 18 months or so, the numbers are coming back thanks to trending economic improvement."

Conversely, states that have been slower to recover from the economic downturn have seen fewer Notaries commissioned. One example is Arizona. With many jobs lost in the recession and a struggle with high unemployment rates over the past five years, Arizona saw a decline of more than 30,000 Notaries in the state between 2012 and 2017.

Ohio, a state that has experienced a downturn in manufacturing and a slow rate of job growth since the Great Recession, lost more than 60,000 Notaries in the past five years. Tennessee, another state that has struggled with high unemployment rates, saw a drop of 9,903 Notaries.

States with the largest increase since 2012

1. Florida	+97,838
2. Pennsylvania	+40,179
3. North Carolina	+30,820
4. Texas	+26,324
5. Virginia	+21,307

States with the largest decrease since 2012

1. Ohio	-60,128
2. Arizona	-30,174
3. Massachusetts	-26,158
4. Michigan	-9,905
5. Tennessee	-9,903

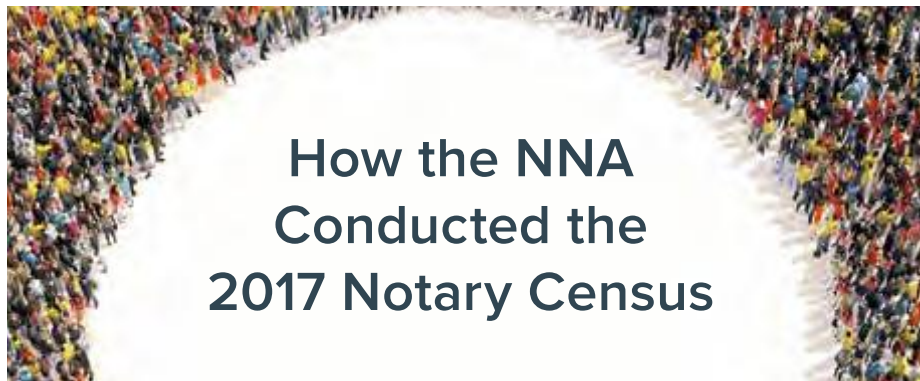
National Notary Population Remains Stable

Despite a handful of states seeing noticeable growth or decline, overall, the number of Notaries nationwide has climbed steadily over the past few years, adjusting to fit the growing needs of consumers as the national economy has settled from the tumultuous booms and busts of the previous decade.

Compared to 2012 — which saw a decline of more than 450,000 Notaries in the United States, the first national downturn the NNA has tracked in 40 years — in 2017 the U.S. total Notary population started to grow again with an increase of 77,967 new commission holders joining its ranks. In fact, the two states that reported the largest drops in 2012 — California and New Jersey, which each lost more than 120,000 Notaries between 2007 and 2012 — appear to be coming back. California's Notary tally remained steady at 162,411 Notaries, and New Jersey saw its Notary count reach 134,414 — a gain of more than 9,800 new Notaries for the Garden State over the past five years.

While Florida, Georgia and Texas saw the largest Notary growth among the 50 U.S. states, several others, including Alaska, Maryland, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont and Virginia saw an increase in the per capita number of Notaries available to serve state residents. In fact, while South Carolina ranks ninth in total number of Notaries, the Palmetto State has boasted more Notaries per capita than any other state for the past decade.

As the U.S. economy has recovered, the need for Notary services today has not only remained constant, but in some states has seen significant growth. Through good times and bad, the services Notaries provide remains a vital part of our nation's business and economy. ■



How the NNA Conducted the 2017 Notary Census

Every five years the National Notary Association conducts and compiles an exclusive census of Notaries commissioned in the United States and its jurisdictions. Over a six-month period starting in January, a special NNA research team spent countless hours collecting data from Notary regulating officials throughout the country to establish the current number of Notaries commissioned in each state, and then reviewing and following up with the officials on figures that required clarification.

In addition, the NNA invited Notaries to participate in a nationwide survey to collect demographic data on the U.S. Notary population.

While the number of commissioned Notaries can change daily, five states and the District of Columbia did not provide precise counts, claiming an inability to do so based on the following:

- **The District of Columbia** was amid an IT infrastructure upgrade, prohibiting them from accessing detailed data.
- **Hawaii** manages its Notary commissions on paper and counting them would have been time and cost prohibitive.

- **New York** chose to release an estimate instead of an exact count, claiming their numbers change daily.

- **Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia** all reported that staff time constraints, coupled with technical and scheduling issues, prohibited them from providing a precise count.

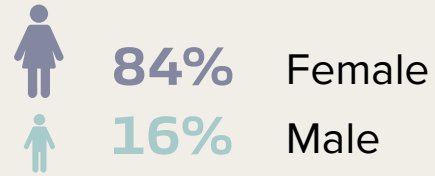
"In the cases where estimates were provided, state officials gave their assurance that their estimates were trustworthy," said Phillip Browne, the NNA's Vice President of Communications. "Still, in our ongoing pursuit of precision and accuracy, it's disappointing that these six jurisdictions could not provide more than estimates within a reasonable time period for the populations they serve.

"We will continue to be diligent in working with all states to get precise and accurate state Notary counts so our readers, federal and state governments, policy makers, academicians, industry leaders, and the legal community can confidently rely on the information we publish every five years," Browne said. "We are very appreciative of the efforts made by all participating state officials and also of Notaries and industry leaders."

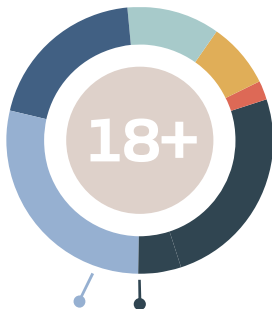
Notaries

BY THE NUMBERS

Source: NNA Research Center

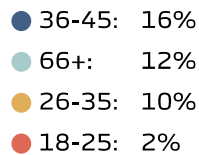


Age

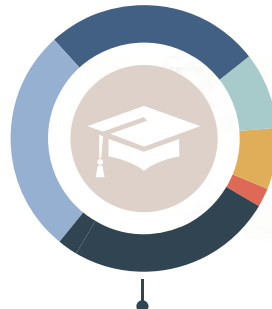


30%

56-65 & 46-55

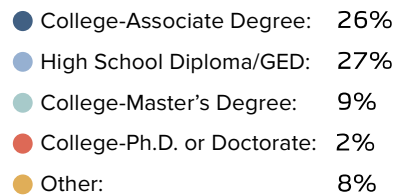


General Education



28%

College-Bachelor's Degree

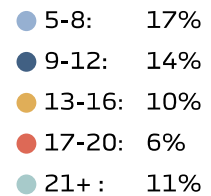


Years as a Notary

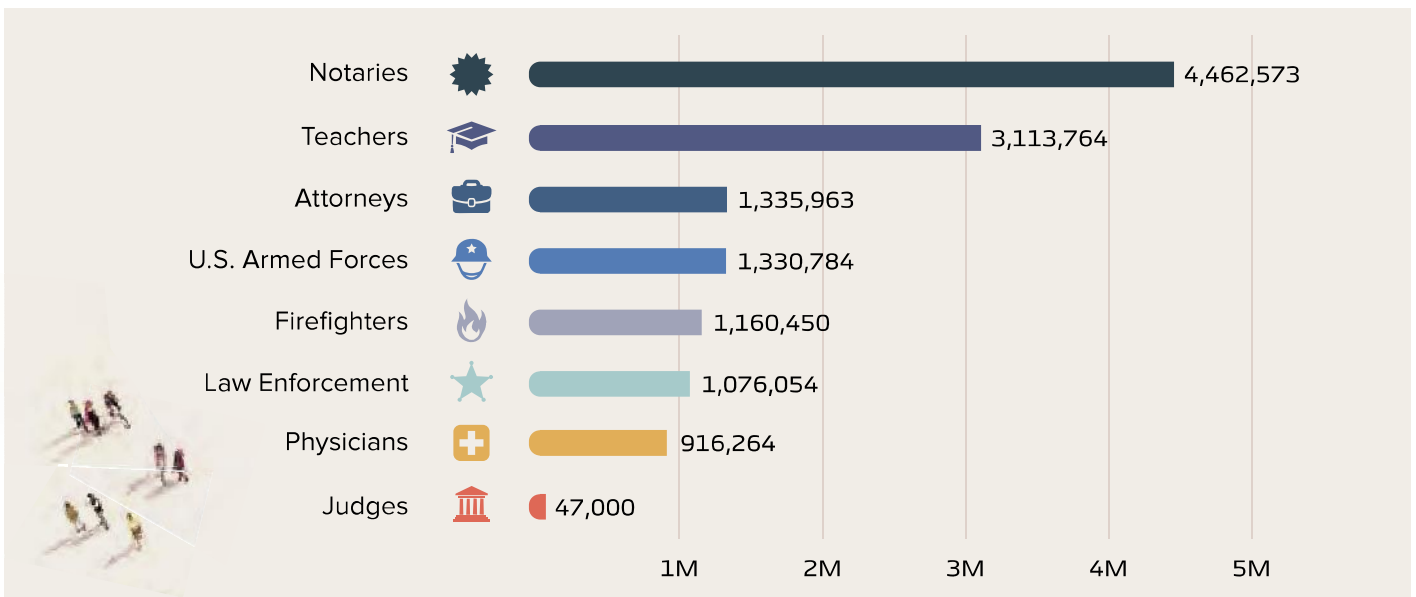


42%

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How You Compare to Other Professions





Office & Retail Notaries

1 in 5

Number who have been asked to perform an illegal or improper notarization

15

The percentage who notarize outside the workplace

Self-Employed Notaries

54

The percentage who have been self-employed for 5 years or less

53

The percentage who get most of their work from loan signings

46

The percentage who have been self-employed for more than 5 years

47

The percentage who get most of their business from work other than loan signings

Who Are America's Notaries?

The importance of Notaries can be underscored by a couple of simple facts. There is one Notary for every 73 U.S. residents. And there are more Notaries than military personnel, police and firefighters combined.

But who are these Notaries? To find out, the NNA conducted an online survey of our Notary community, and more than 2,500 individuals responded, offering intriguing observations.

The Notary population tends to skew older and is fairly well educated. Sixty percent of the respondents were between 46 and 65 years old. And nearly two thirds have some college education. Respondents were overwhelmingly female (84 percent), and a surprising number (42 percent) have been a Notary for four years or less.

Traditionally, Notaries have been found in all industries and most walks of life. And that is still true. Our survey asked respondents what industry they worked in and offered 19 options, including real estate, legal professionals, healthcare, banking and government. The responses crossed the gamut. The most common option — chosen by 28 percent of respondents — was “other.”

Only two other options — real estate and paralegal-legal assistant — were chosen by more than 10 percent of the respondents. The rest of the responses were spread out among the remaining industries, including:

- Real estate, 13.2 percent
- Paralegal-legal assistant, 11.5 percent
- Healthcare, 9.8 percent
- Banking/Financial Services, 9.6 percent
- Corporate, 6.3 percent
- Education, 6.2 percent

Of the self-employed, mobile Notaries who responded, 54 percent said they had been a mobile Notary for five years or less. Interestingly, a similar number (53 percent) said they get most of their business from loan-signing assignments, while 43 percent rely mostly on general Notary work.

Ultimately, all these numbers show that business, consumers and governments alike value the protection Notaries bring to our countless daily transactions. ■