

What is a Population Projection?

A population projection is a *guess* of the *structure* and *size* of the population in the future

Population projections are always *conditional* based upon a defined set of assumptions

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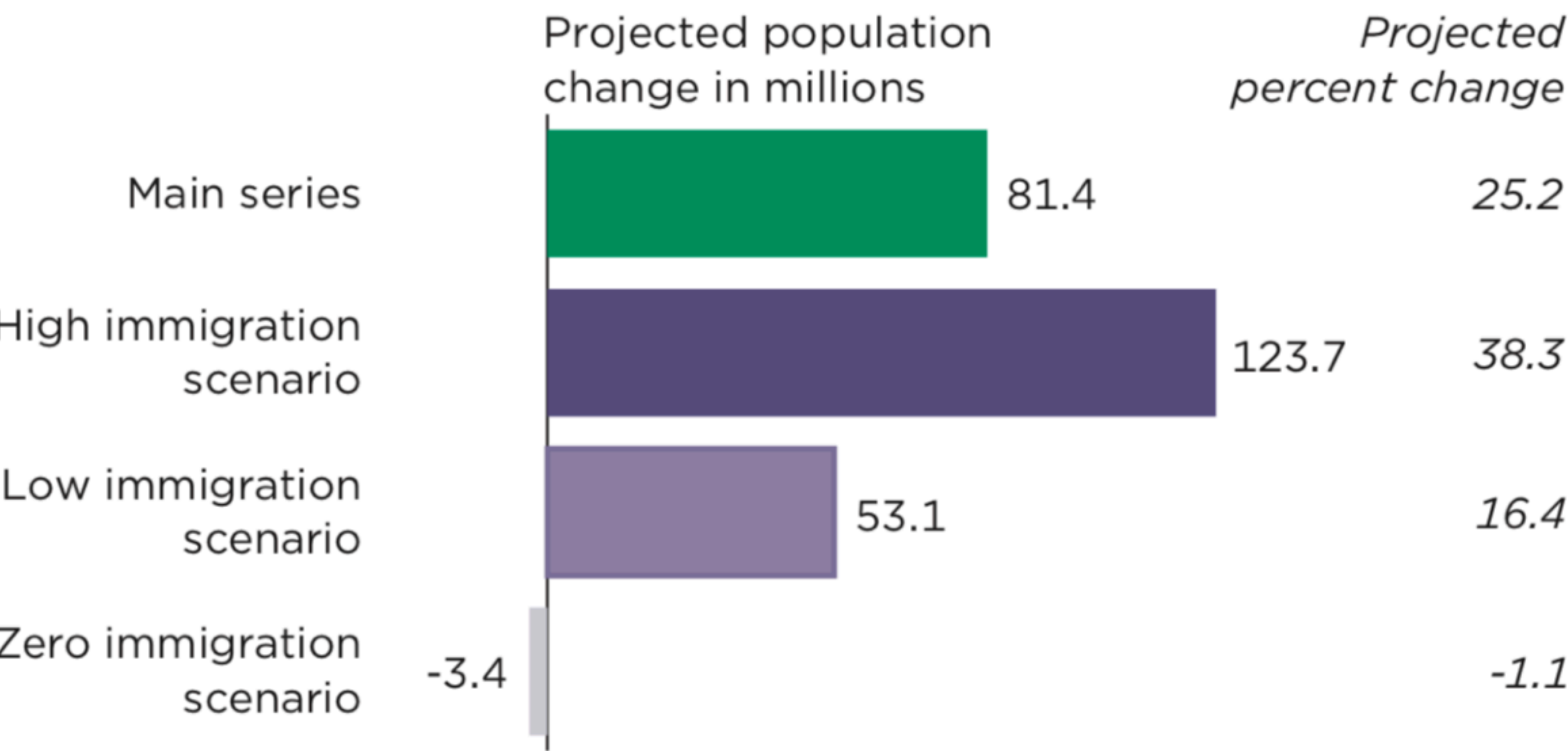
Zero immigration scenario. Assumes that immigration into the United States falls to zero (the theoretical minimum). Under this scenario, there is no immigration, but we still allow for emigration out of the United States. This offers the most dramatic picture of demographic change.

High immigration scenario. Assumes immigration increases by 50.0 percent compared with levels from 2011 to 2015 for all projected years. This scenario shows what the outcome would be if we were underestimating immigration by half in the main series.

Low immigration scenario. Assumes that immigration rates are roughly cut in half from their 2011 to 2015 levels. This scenario is not strictly 50.0 percent less, but is log symmetrical to the values for the high migration scenario. As a result, the projected migration rates vary between 40 and 50 percent less than those projected for the main series in any of the given years, starting with 2017.

Figure 2.
Projected Population Change Between 2016 and 2060 by Immigration Scenario

Population change between 2016 and 2060 ranges from -3.4 to 123.7 million, depending on immigration.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 National Population Projections.