

## PREFACE

For more than 100 years, Missouri vital records have captured a piece of the life story of every person who was born or died in Missouri. Legislation passed by the Missouri General Assembly and approved on May 6, 1909, provided for the “immediate registration of all births and deaths” by the State Board of Health. Improved sanitation and hygiene for the people of the state were anticipated as a result of centralizing these duties. With the passage of the legislation, Missouri became the 19<sup>th</sup> state to enact a comprehensive vital statistics law, and acceptance into the death registration area of the U.S. Census Bureau soon followed. The 1909 law was implemented by February of 1910, and the first vital statistics report using a full year of Missouri birth and death records was for 1911.

Vital records and vital statistics impact our lives every day. Birth and death certificates are permanent legal records that contain valuable health and medical information. As legal documents, birth and death certificates provide proof of age, parentage, and citizenship. They are used to obtain passports and driver’s licenses, enroll in benefits programs, settle estates, obtain life insurance payouts, and terminate Social Security benefits. Health and medical information from birth and death records is transformed into data to calculate population growth, identify health risk factors, measure health outcomes, plan and evaluate health programs, and conduct research. Vital statistics help drive public health programs that keep people healthy, and they influence our personal health care.

This report presents the final tabulation of statistical data relating to vital events in Missouri during 2021. Records of live births received through February 22, 2022, death, fetal death, abortion, and marriage records through October 13, 2022, and dissolutions received through April 15, 2022, are included in the tables, allowing information on 2021 events to be as complete as possible.

Missouri Vital Statistics 2021 is published for use in public health and related fields as an aid for studying births, deaths, fetal deaths, marriages, dissolutions, and abortions. This document, along with additional vital statistics data, is available on the Department of Health and Senior Services website at [www.health.mo.gov](http://www.health.mo.gov) under “Data and Statistics.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to have a major impact in Missouri as reflected in vital statistics. COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death with even more deaths attributed to COVID-19 compared to 2020. Total deaths due to all causes in 2021 were slightly below 2020, 73,831 resident compared to 73,883. Resident births were nearly the same as 2020, resulting in a natural decrease for a consecutive year. Life expectancy decreased again, this time from 75.0 years in 2020 to 74.6 years in 2021. This is the lowest life expectancy in Missouri in about 40 years. Tables showing specific causes of death have been modified so that the COVID-19 category could be added.

For a complete printer friendly version:

<https://health.mo.gov/data/vitalstatistics/mvs21/2021MissouriVitalStatistics.pdf>

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