



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

September 12, 2007

2006 American Community Survey Data Released, Social, Economic & Housing Characteristics Now Available

MIDDLETOWN, Pa –The U.S. Census Bureau today released social, economic and housing data for areas with populations of 65,000 or more. The data is from the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS), an integral part of the Census Bureau's reengineered 2010 census. The American Community Survey will replace the decennial census long form and provide more timely and updated information about the nation's changing and diverse population every year.

In Pennsylvania, data was released for all of the congressional districts, 39 counties, the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem, Erie, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, and Scranton, 19 school districts, metropolitan statistical areas, and several other geographies. Columbia County, the only new Pennsylvania County in the 2006 ACS data, will have data released for the first time since 2000 this year.

The 2006 release is the first time ACS will include data on group quarters (any nontraditional living arrangement, such as nursing homes, prisons, college dormitories, etc.). Group quarters and selected population profiles/tables by race, Hispanic origin and ancestry are set to be released on September 27.

Pennsylvania and the Nation

According to the 2006 ACS ranking tables, Pennsylvania ranks 31st in percent of the population that is foreign born (5.1 percent) and 40th among the states in foreign born population born in Mexico, 6.4 percent. The commonwealth is 4th in nativity, the percent of the population born in the state of residence (79.6 percent).

Pennsylvania ranks 2nd in old age dependency ratio* (24.3 percent) and 4th among states with one or more persons 65 or older in households (26.7 percent). The state ranks 43rd in the birth rate for women ages 15 to 50 (48/1,000).

Median Housing Value

The Commonwealth now ranks 31st in median housing value (for owner-occupied units) nationally with a value of \$145,200. In Pennsylvania, the southeastern counties of Bucks (\$330,500), Chester (\$328,400) and Montgomery (\$292,600) led all counties in median

housing value of owner-occupied housing units in 2006. Housing values in these counties were more than double the state median. The median housing value was lowest in Fayette County (\$75,300). Of the seven places in Pennsylvania that have a population of 65,000 or more, Bethlehem had the highest median housing value (\$169,800), while Reading had the lowest (\$49,700).

Median Selected Monthly Home Ownership Costs

In 2006, median monthly costs in the Commonwealth (\$1,271) ranked 28th nationally. Costs were highest in the counties that also had the highest median housing values: Chester (\$1,952), Bucks (\$1,882) and Montgomery (\$1,817). Indiana (\$851) was the least expensive county to live in, in terms of median selected monthly ownership costs in 2006.

Selected Data for Pennsylvania's Largest Counties and Cities

Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher

More than 40 percent of the population 25 or older in Chester (45.0 percent), Montgomery (43.4 percent) and Centre (40.2) Counties had a bachelor's degree or higher. Clearfield County (11.0 percent) had the lowest percentage of the population with a four-year degree or higher. Pittsburgh leads the largest cities with 31.3 percent of its population 25 years or older with a bachelor's degree or better, while just 9.7 percent of Reading's residents have a higher degree.

Percent Foreign Born

Philadelphia (10.9 percent) is the only county where more than 10 percent of the population is foreign born. Armstrong County has the highest percentage of Pennsylvania-born residents (93.4 percent). More than 18 percent of Reading's population is foreign born, followed by Allentown City (14.2 percent).

Other Selected County Data

- Dauphin County (55.6 percent) has the highest percentage of grandparents responsible for their grandchildren. More than 50 percent of grandparents are responsible for their grandchildren in 3 Pennsylvania counties.
- Armstrong County has the highest percentage of the population that are veterans (13.8 percent).
- Lycoming County has the highest proportion of people 65 or older with a disability (50.7 percent).
- At least 10 percent of the population in Lehigh and Berks Counties speak Spanish at home.
- Monroe (28.3 percent), Chester (27.7 percent), and Bucks (26.7 percent) have the highest percentages of married couple households with (their own) children.
- Franklin County has the highest birth rate (72/1,000) for women ages 15-50.

More about the ACS

As part of the Census Bureau's reengineered 2010 Census, the data collected by the ACS helps federal officials determine where to distribute more than \$300 billion to state and local governments each year. Responses to the survey are strictly confidential and protected by law.

The 2006 ACS estimates are based on an annual, nationwide sample of about 250,000 addresses per month. In addition, approximately 20,000 group quarters across the United States were sampled, comprising approximately 200,000 residents.

To request custom American Community Survey data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Notes: *The old-age dependency ratio is derived by dividing the population 65 years and over by the 18-to-64 population and multiplying by 100.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

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The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.