



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

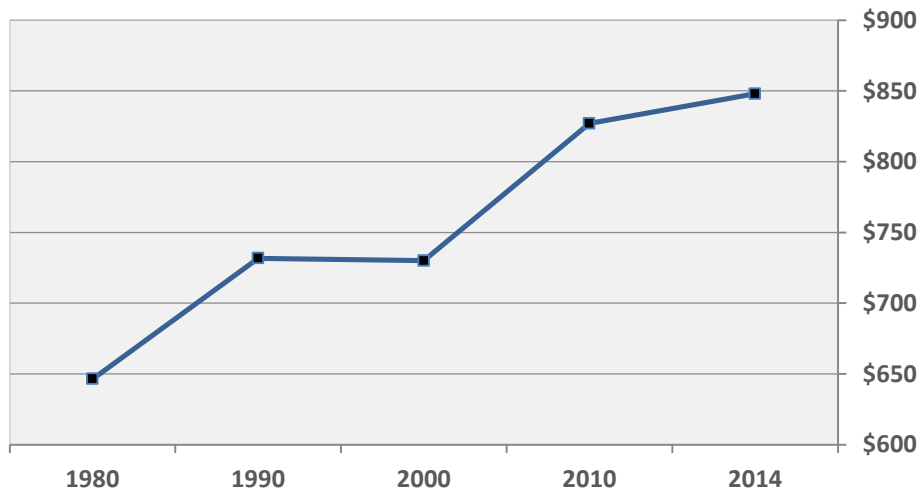
September 17, 2015

New 2014 ACS Estimates Show Rents on the Rise; Home Values Flat Statewide

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – The U.S. Census Bureau today released the 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates for the nation's geographic areas exceeding 65,000 in population. The American Community Survey (ACS) provides updated information about the nation's changing and diverse population every year

According to the new data, the gross rent¹ paid by renters in the Keystone State has increased from \$827 in 2010 to \$848 in 2014. This equated to a \$21 on average increase gross rent statewide over the four-year period. Figure 1. shows how the median gross rent has change in the commonwealth since 1980. After growing from \$646 in 1980 to \$732 in 1990- a 13.2 percent increase, the median gross rent remained flat between 1990 and 2000, before again rising significantly (13.3 percent) between 2000 and 2010. This increase took the median gross rent from \$730 in 2000 to \$827 in 2010. Four years into the 2010s and the median gross rent statewide has increase 2.5 percent, reaching \$848 in 2014. Nationally, renters paid a median gross rent of \$934 in 2014; an \$8 increase from \$926 in 2010.

Figure 1. Median Gross Rent, Pennsylvania: 1980 to 2014



¹ Gross rent is the amount of the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid for by the renter (or paid for the renter by someone else). Gross rent is intended to eliminate differentials which result from varying practices with respect to the inclusion of utilities and fuels as part of the rental payment.



Median Value

The median value of a Pennsylvania owner-occupied housing unit in 2014 was \$165,400. This figure revealed no statistically significant change since 2010. Pennsylvania's median home value was less than the nation overall, which came in at \$181,200 in 2014; a \$1,300 increase since 2010. Among Pennsylvania cities with a population of 65,000 or more, Philadelphia had the highest median home value in 2014 at \$148,700, a \$5,900 increase from 2010. Median home values increased even more in Pittsburgh during the period; from \$88,000 in 2010 to \$97,900 in 2014. Scranton and Allentown both saw significant losses during the period. Scranton's median home value fell from \$113,100 in 2010 to \$101,800 in 2014. Allentown saw an even bigger loss, \$17,300 – from \$145,100 to \$127,800 – during the period 2010 to 2014.

Other Select Data

The annual update to the ACS assists data users in easily making detailed comparisons of a variety of demographic and socioeconomic statistics over time. Below is a look at how some select characteristics of Pennsylvania's population and households have changed since 2010:

- Between 2010 and 2014, the poverty rate for married-couple families with related children under five years of age increased from 4.1 percent to 5.6 percent. Female-headed families with children under 5 years were most likely to live in poverty. In 2014, 46.3 percent of these families lived below the poverty level. This figure was not statistically different from 2010.
- There has been a more than two-percentage point increase in Pennsylvania households that have received Social Security income between 2010 and 2014. (32.2 percent versus 34.4 percent). A larger percentage of household are also received Supplemental Security income (5.6 percent vs 6.0 percent) and Food Stamps/SNAP benefits (11.4 percent vs 13.0 percent).
- Twenty-nine percent of Pennsylvanians aged 25 years and over had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2014, up from 27.1 percent in 2010.
- Since 2010, the percentage of veterans in the civilian population 18 years and over has decreased. The percent reporting veteran status decreased from 9.9 percent in 2010 to 8.1 percent in 2014.
- The percentage of Pennsylvanians reporting German Ancestry decreased to 25.3 percent in 2014, down from 26.9 percent in 2010.
- Between 2009 and 2014, the percentage of Government workers declined (11.9 percent in 2010 compared to 10.3 percent in 2014).
- For Pennsylvania workers, the mean travel time to work increased from 25.9 minutes in 2010 to 26.4 minutes in 2014.

New Tables

The 2014 ACS includes several new tables. First, two new detailed tables (B05013 and B05014) provide estimates for the foreign-born populations by sex and detailed age categories. Table B05013 provides estimates in 5 year age intervals, and table B05014 provides estimates in 10 year age intervals. Previously, only the age cohorts under 18 years and 18 years and over were available.

Next, two new tables in the topic area of employment status have been added. New table (B23026) provides estimates for usual hours worked per week by weeks worked for the population 65 years and

over, while another table (B23027) provides estimates for full-time, year-round work status by age for the population 16 years and over.

In addition to new tables, several tables have been modified or deleted from the 2014 ACS. Click [here](#) for a complete list.

More about the ACS

The 2014 ACS estimates are based on an annual, nationwide household sample of about 295,000 addresses per month, or nearly 3 percent of the population per year. The estimates aggregate the sample responses from Pennsylvania households collected from January 1 to December 31 of 2014. Geographic areas for which data are available are based on total populations of 65,000 or more. They are different from, and should not be directly compared to the previously released ACS multi-year estimates. As is the case with all surveys, statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error.

The 2010-2014 ACS five-year estimates will be released on December 10. These five-year estimates will produce estimates for all Pennsylvania counties, municipalities, and other census geographies down to the block group level. This release is notable as it will mark the first non-overlapping ACS 5-Year Estimates product. Data Users will be able to compare estimates from this release with the 2005-2009 ACS 5-Year Estimates, which were released in December of 2010. Change between the two time period - 2005-2009 and 2010-2014 – for more than 40 demographic and socio-economic topics, such as age, race, education, income and more will be available for all Pennsylvania counties and municipalities.

Finally, one geographic note: The U.S. Census Bureau suspended the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) in FY 2014. As a result, the 2014 ACS Estimates do not reflect boundary updates from legal annexations, but new incorporations, disincorporations and legal name changes are included.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's expert in demographics and Census datasets. To request custom American Community Survey data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey and 2009 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.

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