ACS 2016 1-Year Estimates Released

Pennsylvanians' Access to High-Speed Internet is Lagging

HARRISBURG – The release of the American Community Survey's 2016 1-Year estimates provides a wealth of new data on Pennsylvania and its constituents relating to education, income, employment, housing and much more. This year's release is accompanied by three new tables, two of which focus on access to high-speed internet services, or broadband. Thus, this release will highlight some trends in access to high-speed internet in Pennsylvania.

The Digital Divide in Pennsylvania

Just over 8 out of 10 Pennsylvanians had an internet subscription of some sort in 2016. Pennsylvania (69.1 percent) exceeded the national average (67.3 percent) in its share of citizens with high-speed, or broadband, internet service. Despite this, the Commonwealth's broadband usage lagged regionally where it ranked last among the eight states of the Northeast. Pennsylvania also ranked last in the percent of its constituency with any internet subscription (81.0 percent) and first in the percent of its constituency with no internet access (16.4 percent) in the Northeast.

Higher income households typically had greater access to high-speed internet than those with lower incomes in Pennsylvania during 2016. Households with incomes of $75,000 or more had the highest rate of Broadband access (94.7 percent). Households with incomes of $20,000 or less were least likely to have access to broadband (53.3 percent).
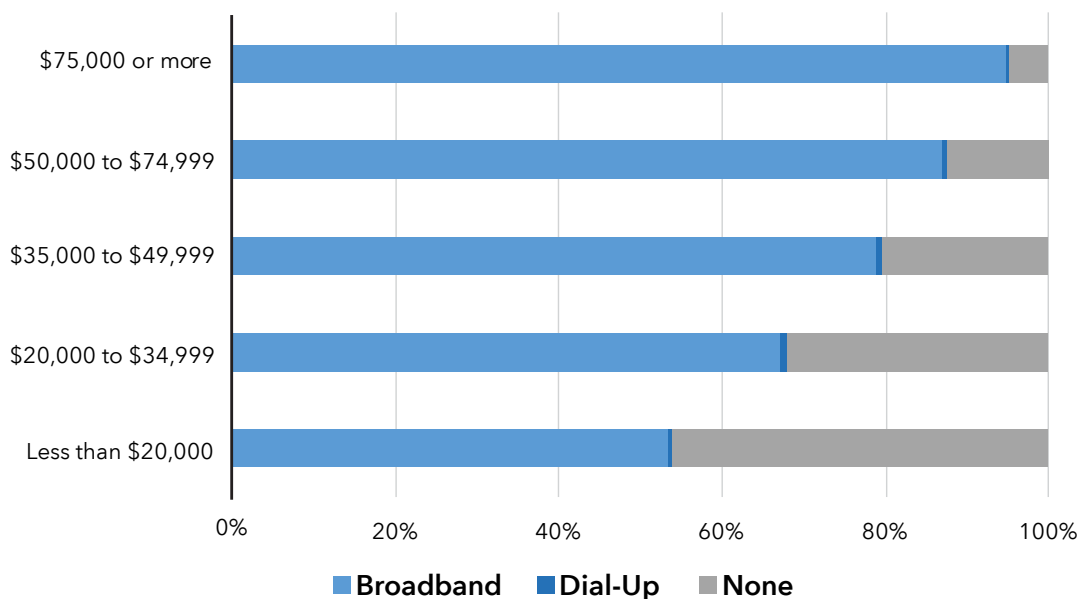

Figure 1. *Internet access by level of income in Pennsylvania, 2016.*

Black or African-American alone households (77.7 percent) had the least access to high-speed internet when compared to white alone, Asian alone, and Hispanic alone households in Pennsylvania during 2016. Asian alone households (92.2 percent) had the highest rate of access to broadband, followed by white alone households (86.1 percent) and Hispanic or Latino alone households (83.4 percent).

Most Pennsylvanians age 25 and over with Bachelor's degrees or higher (94.2 percent) had access to high-speed internet in 2016. Pennsylvanians age 25 and over with a high school diploma or equivalency, some college, or an Associate's degree were less likely to have access to broadband (81.3 percent) while those without a high school diploma or equivalency were least likely to have access to high-speed internet (59.5 percent).

Persons under the age of 18 are the most likely age cohort to have access to broadband internet (90.4 percent) followed closely by those age 18 to 64 years (88.9 percent). Only two-thirds of Pennsylvania's 65 years and over population (66.7 percent) have access to broadband internet which is less than the average population of persons 65 years and over in the Northeast (70.8 percent) and the United States (71.1 percent).

Additional Data Points
More than thirty percent (30.8 percent) of Pennsylvanians age 25 and over had attained at least a bachelor's degree in 2016, an increase from 2015 (29.7 percent). Increases occurred across all racial and ethnic groups from 2015 to 2016, though the proportion of black or African American alone individuals with at least a Bachelor's degree grew by 2.4 percentage points from 2015 to 2016, representing the highest absolute change followed by Asian alone individuals (1.7 percentage points). Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin alone saw the smallest increase in the portion of its population with at least a Bachelor's degree (0.4 percentage points).
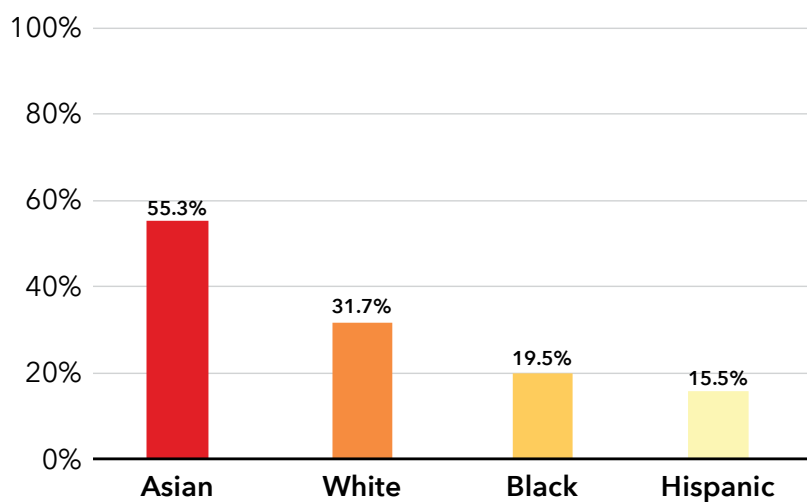

Figure 2. *Attainment of Bachelor's degree or higher by race/ethnicity in Pennsylvania, 2016.*

The median income for Asian alone households increased the most from 2015 to 2016 with an increase of 8.7 percent or $5,639 (2016-adjusted dollars). Black alone and Hispanic alone households both saw increases of 6.9 and 5.9 percent, respectively in their median incomes representing increases of over $2,000. Despite these gains, black alone and Hispanic alone households still have much lower median incomes than their white alone or Asian alone counterparts.

Table 1. *Select socioeconomic indicators for Pennsylvania in 2016 and previous year.*

Indicator	2016	2015	Trend
Household Median Income ($)	56,907	56,406	↑
White alone Households	60,595	60,233	↑
Black alone Households	36,253	33,910	↑
Asian alone Households	70,086	64,447	↑
Hispanic alone Households	38,271	36,146	↑
Below Poverty Level (%)	12.9	13.2	↓
Lacking Healthcare (%)	5.6	6.4	↓
Civilian, Non-Institutionalized with Disability (%)	14.2	13.9	↑
Worked Full-Time, Year Round (%)	65.0	64.7	↑
Median Age of Worker (Years)	40.6	41.2	↓
Renter-Occupied Units (%)	31.5	31.3	↑
Married Couple Households (%)	47.4	47.8	↓
Limited-English, Spanish-Speaking Households (#)	54,863	50,208	↑

Dollar values for 2015 are in 2016-adjusted dollars.

Along with rising incomes Pennsylvanians experienced a decrease in persons below the poverty level and those lacking healthcare. Pennsylvanians with a disability increased by 45,715 persons from 2015 to 2016 with a majority (96.8 percent) coming from the white alone population. Additionally, workers aged 16 to 64 were more likely to be engaged in full-time, year-round labor in 2016 than the previous year, and the median age of Pennsylvania's workforce decreased by over half a year.

Renters increased as a portion of householders from 2015 to 2016 with nearly 5,000 new renters and over 23,000 less owners. Married-couple households decreased slightly during that time while households with limited English that speak primarily Spanish increased. In 2016 approximately 4,655 more households had limited English, Spanish speakers than in 2015, an increase of 9.3 percent.

New to the American Community Survey

Three new tables have been added to the American Community survey including two new Detailed Tables which provide additional estimates for Types of Computers (B28010) and Internet Subscriptions (B28011) as well as a new Collapsed Table which provides household-level language estimates for four non-English language categories (C16002).

Detailed Tables B28001 (Types of Computers) and B28002 (Presence of Internet) were updated to reflect changes in the 2016 survey. Detailed Table B16001 (Language Spoken at Home) and Collapsed Table C16001 (Language at Home) were updated to match the four most common languages in 2016.

Pennsylvania experienced one change in geography for the 2016 American Community Survey. Lumber City borough in Clearfield County is no longer listed as a valid county subdivision or place. Due to its low population size, it was incorporated by neighboring Ferguson Township.

About the American Community Survey

The 2016 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. In Pennsylvania, 3.1 percent of the 5.6 million housing units were included in the sample.

The estimates aggregate the sample responses from Pennsylvania households collected from January 1 to December 31 of 2016. One-year estimates data are available only for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more.

The 2012-2016 ACS five-year estimates will be released on December 7. These five-year estimates will produce estimates for all Pennsylvania counties, municipalities, and other census geographies down to the block group level regardless of population size.