

Our Homes, Our Neighborhoods

Housing Profile

1999

Issued May 2001

AHB/01-2

American Housing Brief

This brief presents findings from the 1999 American Housing Survey (AHS). The Census Bureau conducts this survey for the Department of Housing and Urban Development with the occupants of 47,000 housing units across the United States.

Monthly housing costs: Renters had greater housing costs than owners for nearly every house size.

Monthly housing costs were greater for renters than owners, except for those with seven rooms or more. Monthly housing costs for owners included mortgage payments, utility costs, property insurance, and taxes and for renters included gross rent, utility costs, and property insurance. Figure 1 compares the monthly housing costs for owners and renters with the size of the unit.

Structure type: Single-attached and mobile homes are a larger proportion of the housing stock than in 1970.

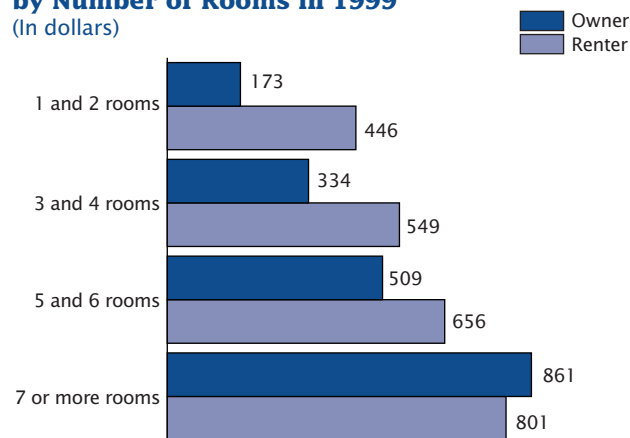
The U.S. housing stock in 1999 included about 112 million year-round housing units. About 61 percent were occupied by owners, 30 percent were occupied by renters, and 8 percent were vacant units. Over time, the type of housing stock has changed. Along with an increase of over 44 million units since 1970, mobile

homes and single-attached units (such as townhouses and row houses) have more than doubled their share of the housing stock at the expense of single-detached and multiunit structures. See Figure 2 on the reverse side for the percentage of housing stock structure type for 1970 and 1999.

Seniors' housing: The elderly have higher homeownership rates than the nonelderly.

Nationally, 80 percent of elderly householders (65 years or older) were homeowners compared with 63 percent of nonelderly householders. House size and living space also differed. Elderly homeowners lived in single-family and mobile homes that were smaller than similar units occupied by nonelderly homeowners. However, the area per person was significantly greater for

Figure 1.
Median Monthly Housing Costs by Number of Rooms in 1999
(In dollars)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Housing Survey: 1999.



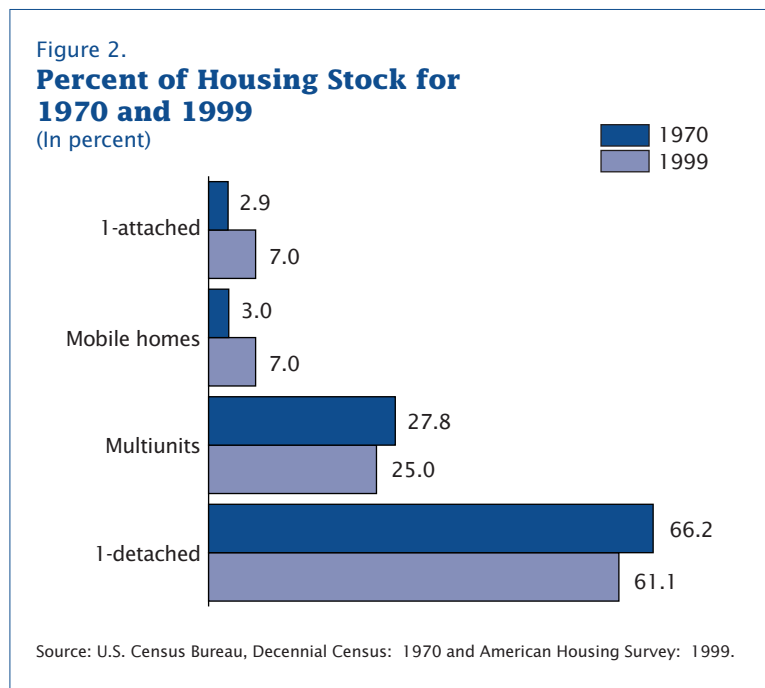
elderly homeowners (1,014 square feet) than nonelderly homeowners (671 square feet). Smaller households among the elderly helped account for this difference. Elderly householders, both owners and renters, also enjoyed a comparable number of rooms in their homes, as did the nonelderly.

Home and neighborhood satisfaction: Owners and renters liked their homes and neighborhoods, but also reported some problems.

Of those reporting an opinion about their residences, 90 percent of owners and 74 percent of renters rated their residence as 7 or better, on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 was the highest. Of those reporting an opinion about their neighborhoods, 87 percent of owners and 73 percent of renters gave their neighborhoods a rating of 7 or better.

Most of the 102 million households reported amenities that have come to be associated with American lifestyles. Slightly more than 4 in 5 homes had porches, decks, or balconies; slightly less than 3 in 4 homes had a washer and dryer; and more than half reported having the following: a garage or carport, dishwasher, or central air conditioning. Most households reported satisfaction with important features of their neighborhood. More than 9 in 10 reported satisfactory police protection in their neighborhoods and over 8 in 10 reported satisfactory shopping.

However, homes and neighborhoods were not without problems. Although more than half of households reported that their neighborhoods had no serious problems, others reported problems with street noise (11 percent), crime (8 percent), and



odors (4 percent). Some homes also had shortcomings, such as water leaks (10 percent), mice and rats (8 percent), and interior cracks (6 percent).

Accuracy of the Estimates

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the U.S. Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports. However, because of methodological differences, use

caution when comparing these data with data from other sources.

For information on the source of data and accuracy of estimates, including the use and computation of standard errors, see the statement from the 1999 American Housing Survey, Errors—Appendix D at www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/ahs/meth.html

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Detailed tabulations can be found on the (AHS) section of the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site at www.census.gov/hhes/www/ahs.html

This brief presents findings from an analysis of data from the 1999 American Housing Survey, a study of 53,000 housing units across the United States. Within this total, there were considerable differences in size, construction, and features.