

United States Census Bureau

December 8, 2016

Measuring America

Our Changing Landscape

Over the past century, the urban landscape of the United States has changed, and with it, so have rural areas. As urban areas and the criteria used to define them have evolved, the share of the total population living in rural areas has decreased. In the 1910 Census, more than half of the total population (54.4 percent) lived in rural areas. In the 2010 Census, only 1 in 5 of the total population (19.3 percent) lived in rural areas.

The American Community Survey is part of the decennial census program and uses the same definition of rural geographies. It allows us to provide rich detailed statistics about the rural and urban populations in America each year, not just every ten years.

Change in Rural and Urban Population Size: 1910-2010

U.S. population

Year	Urban Population	Rural Population	Urban Percentage	Rural Percentage
1910	42,064,001	50,164,495	45.6%	54.4%
1920	54,253,282	51,768,255	51.2%	48.8%
1930	69,160,599	54,042,025	56.1%	43.9%
1940	74,705,338	57,459,231	56.5%	43.5%
1950	96,846,817	54,478,981	64.0%	36.0%
1960	125,268,750	54,054,425	69.9%	30.1%
1970	149,646,629	53,565,297	73.7%	26.3%
1980	167,050,992	59,494,813	73.7%	26.3%
1990	187,053,487	61,656,386	75.2%	24.8%
2000	222,360,539	59,061,367	79.0%	21.0%
2010	249,253,271	59,492,267	80.7%	19.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1910 to 1990 censuses, www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt; Census 2000, Table P002; 2010 Census, Table P2.

Rural	Adults (18 years and older)	Urban
51 years	Median age (years)	45 years
61.9%	Now married	50.8%
11.6%	Lives alone	14.3%
65.4%	Lives in state of birth	48.3%
19.5%	Bachelor's degree or higher	29.0%
67.6%	Civilian employed (18-64 years old)	70.0%
11.7%	Poverty rate	14.0%
13.6%	Uninsured rate	15.3%

Rural	Children (Under 18 years)	Urban
22.3%	Percent of total population	23.5%
76.3%	Lives in married-couple household ¹	67.4%
8.9%	Grandchild of householder	7.4%
18.9%	Poverty rate	22.3%
7.3%	Uninsured rate	6.3%

Rural	Housing and Households	Urban
\$52,386	Median household income	\$54,296
\$151,300	Median home value	\$190,900
81.1%	Homeownership rate	59.8%
78.3%	Single-family houses	64.6%
23.8%	No Internet access [*]	17.3%

¹ Includes never-married biological, step, and adopted children of the couple.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates; 2015 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates (denoted with *). For more information, see www.census.gov/program-surveys/acs/.

United States Census Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce

Social, Economic and Housing Statistics Division

U.S. Census Bureau

Census.gov

#MeasuringAmerica

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn