

American Housing Brief



From the American Housing Survey: 1994

Housing Profile: Buffalo, New York

The Buffalo area includes the counties of Erie and Niagara.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: The 1994 median household income for homeowners was more than twice that for renters—\$39,400 versus \$17,700.

For all occupied units, the median household income was \$30,800. While the median incomes for the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls were similar to each other at \$19,000, it was substantially higher for the remainder of the area at \$37,600.¹

At the lower end of the income scale, 15 percent of all households in the Buffalo area had annual incomes of less than \$10,000 in 1994, while at the upper end, only 4 percent had incomes of \$100,000 or more. As one might expect, incomes were higher in the suburbs. While in Buffalo and Niagara Falls, only about 1 percent of the households had incomes of \$100,000 or more, in the remainder of Erie County, 6 percent of the households had incomes at that level. In the balance of Niagara County, 4 percent of households reported six-figure incomes.

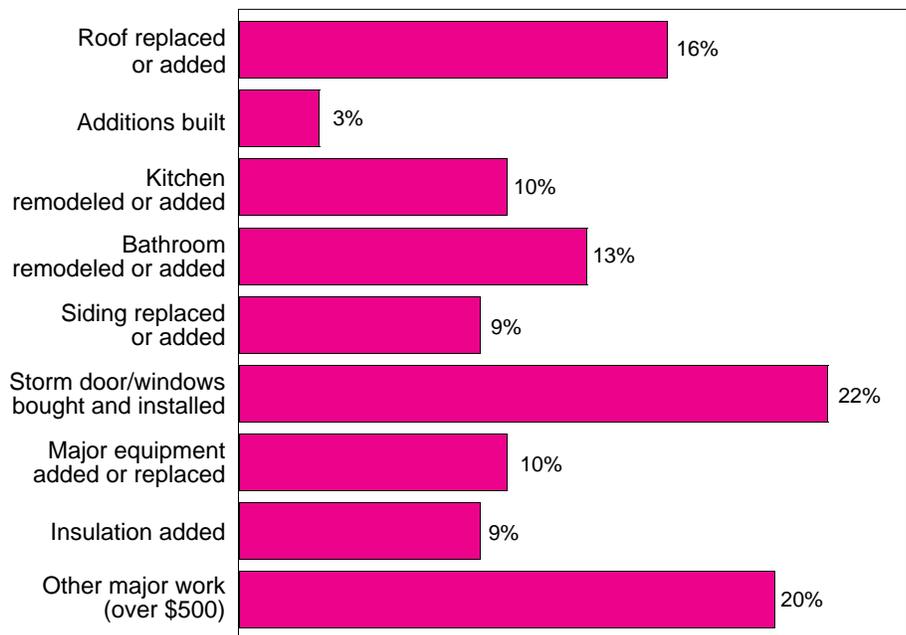
HOME QUALITY: Twenty-one percent of local households said that water had leaked into their homes in the past year.

The water could have entered through the roof, walls, or basement.

Some Characteristics of a Typical Buffalo Household

Median	Owners	Renters
Age of householder	52 years	38 years
Length of time lived at address	14 years	Less than 4 years
Age of home	41 years	61 years
Amount paid monthly for housing	\$589	\$446
Amount paid monthly for electricity	\$65	\$43
Percent of income used for housing	21%	29%

Homeowners Reporting Home Improvements or Repairs in the Last 2 Years



Besides these damp conditions, in the past 12 months, 9 percent of the households discovered water leaking

inside their homes from backed-up plumbing, leaky water pipes, or overflowing fixtures. Water wasn't

¹Median income for all renters was not significantly different from the overall median income in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Median income for all owners was not significantly different from the overall median for the balance of the area.

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the only problem encountered. Eight percent of the households reported that it was uncomfortably cold for 24 hours or more last winter. Four percent of households lived in units with open cracks or holes in the walls or ceilings, and the same proportion reported having broken plaster or peeling paint in the unit.

Moving to the outside of the unit, 8 percent of households stated that there was a problem with crime in their neighborhoods. Four percent said litter or housing deterioration could be seen in their neighborhood. Also, 9 percent of units reported that there was a problem with noise in the area, while another 13 percent had a problem with other people.

HOME VALUE: The median value of a home in the Buffalo area was \$85,400 in 1994.

Similar to the income pattern, median value was higher outside the two major cities. Homes in Buffalo had a median value of \$48,200. Niagara Falls was somewhat higher, at \$58,400. For the balance of the area, the median value was \$92,300.

Elderly homeowners, age 65 years and over, lived in units with a median value slightly lower than that of the entire area—\$78,700. Newer units (those built within the previous 4 years) tended to bring up the area's value since they had a median value of \$170,900. The elderly owned just 8 percent of the newer homes, although this group made up 29 percent of area homeowners.

HOUSING AGE: Many Buffalo area homes were old.

In the city, 4 in 10 homes (about 50,000 units) were at least 75 years old. Niagara Falls was somewhat younger. There, only about 2 in 10 were built before 1920. Housing in the remaining areas was younger still. Not only was there a smaller proportion (12 percent) of old homes in the areas outside these two cities, but 9 in 10 of the residential units built in 1990 or later were located there.

Old homes were more likely to have severe or moderate physical problems than those built since 1919—

7 percent compared with 3 percent. But they were also less expensive to live in. The median housing costs in homes built before 1920 was \$441 per month; among the area's remaining homes, it was \$524 per month.

This series of housing profiles presents housing data for various demographic groups in selected metropolitan areas in 1994. The data are drawn from the American Housing Survey (AHS), a highly detailed, comprehensive set of data collected each year for a different group of metropolitan areas. The AHS is sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and conducted by the Census Bureau.

For further information on Housing and American Housing Briefs see:

American Housing Survey for the Buffalo Metropolitan Area, Series

H170/94-44. This publication is for sale for \$11 by the Census Bureau, Customer Services, Washington, DC 20233. Use 301-457-4100 for telephone orders.

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This brief is one of a series that presents information of current policy interest. It may include data from businesses, households, or other sources. All statistics are subject to sampling variability as well as survey design flaws, respondent classification and reporting errors, and data processing mistakes. The Census Bureau tries to minimize errors and tests analytical statements to meet statistical standards. However, because of methodological differences, users should be cautious when comparing these data with data from other sources.

Percent of Homes Occupied by Owners and Renters by Size of the Home: 1994

Median number of rooms for owners = 6.2
Median number of rooms for renters = 4.6

