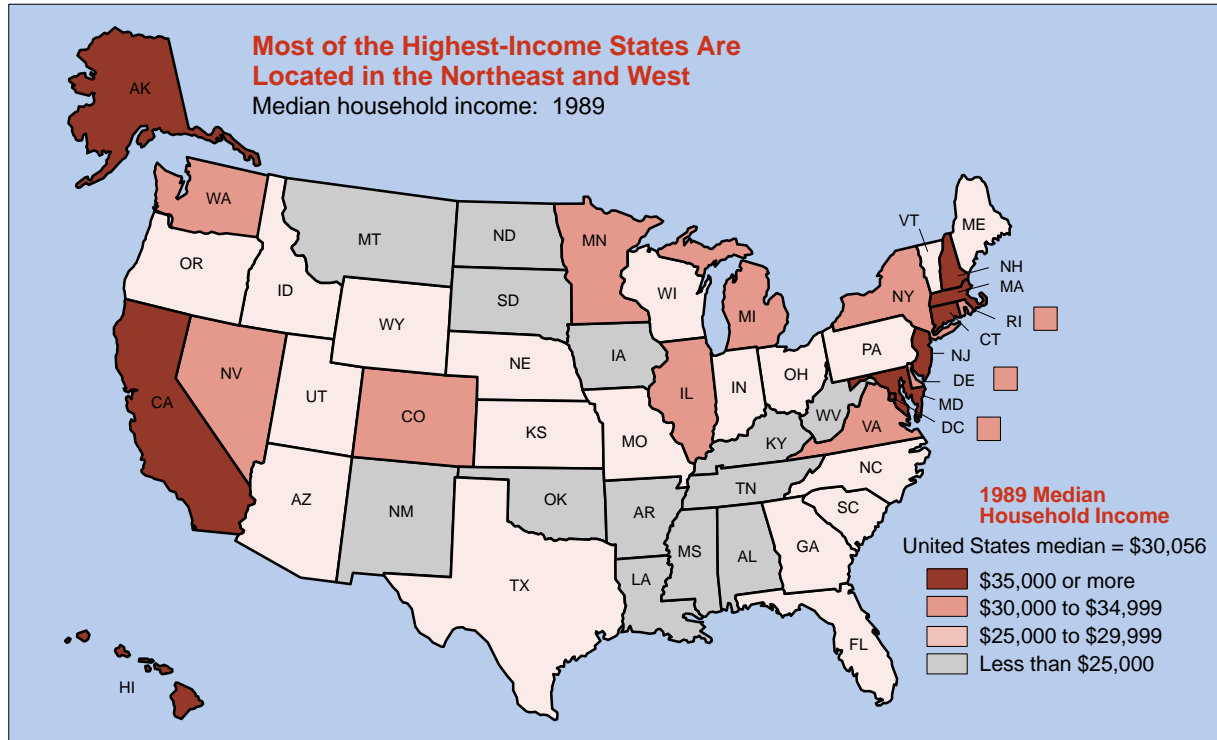


Statistical Brief

America's Income— Changes Between the Censuses



During the 1990 Census, 5 out of every 6 households received the "short form," which asked them a handful of questions, such as the number of rooms in their housing unit and the race, age, and marital status of persons living there. The remaining 1 out of 6 households (17 percent) — a repre-

sentative sample of the United States — received the "long form," which asked those questions, plus many others covering numerous housing, social, and economic subjects. One of these subjects was income.

Approximately 15.3 million of the Nation's 91.9 million households were asked the total amount of money income received by each household member 15 years old and over during the 1989 calendar year. (As in all sample surveys, estimates are subject to sampling variability and errors of response, including underreporting and nonreporting.) These amounts were reported

before any deductions, such as personal income tax, and exclude the value of any noncash benefits, such as food stamps and health benefits. The box on page 4 lists the specific sources that comprise household money income.

The Nation's *median* household money income was \$30,056 in 1989; in other words, one-half of households had higher income and one-half had lower income than the median.

This brief uses data collected by the 1990, 1980, and 1970 Censuses of Population to discuss changes in median household money income over the past



SB/93-1
Issued February 1993

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

State and Regional Rankings by Median Household Income: 1969–1989

	1989		1979		1969		1979–1989		1969–1979
	Median	Rank	Median (1989 dollars)	Rank	Median (1989 dollars)	Rank	Percent change in real median income		Percent change in real median income
United States	\$30,056		28,220		26,707		6.5		5.7
Connecticut	41,721	1	33,643	4	34,232	2	24.0		-1.7
Alaska	41,408	2	42,586	1	37,191	1	-2.8		14.5
New Jersey	40,927	3	33,178	6	32,640	4	23.4		1.7
Maryland	39,386	4	33,984	3	31,790	5	15.9		6.9
Hawaii	38,829	5	34,306	2	33,596	3	13.2		2.1
Massachusetts	36,952	6	29,450	13	30,097	8	25.5		-2.2
New Hampshire	36,329	7	28,508	21	27,230	18	27.4		4.7
California	35,798	8	30,569	10	29,275	10	17.1		4.4
Delaware	34,875	9	29,904	13	29,297	10	16.6		2.1
Virginia	33,328	10	29,282	13	26,100	23	13.8		12.2
New York	32,965	11	27,895	26	29,168	10	18.2		-4.4
Illinois	32,252	12	32,376	7	30,547	7	-0.4		6.0
Rhode Island	32,181	12	26,973	29	27,119	18	19.3		-0.5*
Washington	31,183	14	30,777	9	28,718	14	1.3		7.2
Michigan	31,020	15	32,212	8	31,463	6	-3.7		2.4
Nevada	31,011	15	30,516	10	29,914	9	1.6		2.0
Minnesota	30,909	15	29,762	13	27,548	17	3.9		8.0
DC	30,727	15	27,164	29	26,068	23	13.1		4.2
Colorado	30,140	19	30,256	12	26,509	22	-0.4*		14.1
Vermont	29,792	20	24,783	38	25,055	28	20.2		-1.1
Utah	29,470	21	29,611	13	26,695	21	-0.5*		10.9
Wisconsin	29,442	21	29,626	13	28,315	15	-0.7		4.6
Pennsylvania	29,069	23	28,285	22	26,902	18	2.8		5.1
Georgia	29,021	23	25,190	37	23,119	36	15.2		9.0
Indiana	28,797	25	29,462	13	28,076	16	-2.3		4.9
Ohio	28,706	25	29,750	13	29,203	10	-3.5		1.9
Maine	27,854	27	23,151	47	23,022	36	20.3		0.6*
Arizona	27,540	28	27,562	27	25,804	26	-0.1*		6.8
Florida	27,483	28	24,591	38	22,559	38	11.8		9.0
Kansas	27,291	30	27,417	28	23,850	31	-0.5		15.0
Oregon	27,250	30	28,118	23	26,109	23	-3.1		7.7
Wyoming	27,096	30	33,503	4	25,288	27	-19.1		32.5
Texas	27,016	33	27,997	25	23,724	31	-3.5		18.0
North Carolina	26,647	34	24,265	38	22,109	40	9.8		9.8
Missouri	26,362	35	26,109	32	24,145	30	1.0		8.1
South Carolina	26,256	35	24,651	38	21,511	42	6.5		14.6
Iowa	26,229	35	28,150	23	24,800	29	-6.8		13.5
Nebraska	26,016	38	26,685	31	23,371	34	-2.5		14.2
Idaho	25,257	39	25,613	33	23,547	33	-1.4		8.8
Tennessee	24,807	40	23,697	45	20,869	43	4.7		13.6
New Mexico	24,087	41	24,555	38	22,333	38	-1.9		10.0
Alabama	23,597	42	22,905	48	20,202	47	3.0		13.4
Oklahoma	23,577	42	24,716	38	20,759	43	-4.6		19.1
North Dakota	23,213	44	25,626	33	21,744	41	-9.4		17.9
Montana	22,988	45	25,839	33	23,403	34	-11.0		10.4
Kentucky	22,534	46	23,401	46	20,573	45	-3.7		13.7
South Dakota	22,503	46	22,045	49	20,299	47	2.1		8.6
Louisiana	21,949	48	25,516	33	20,576	45	-14.0		24.0
Arkansas	21,147	49	20,467	50	16,856	50	3.3		21.4
West Virginia	20,795	50	24,405	38	20,416	47	-14.8		19.5
Mississippi	20,136	51	20,269	51	16,432	51	-0.7*		23.4
Regions									
Northeast	33,826	1	29,006	3	29,121	1	16.6		-0.4
West	32,270	2	29,879	1	28,133	3	8.0		6.2
Midwest	29,334	3	29,748	2	28,237	2	-1.4		5.4
South	26,832	4	25,668	4	22,606	4	4.5		13.6

Note: Asterisks signify changes were not statistically different from zero. Some States may have the same ranking because medians were not statistically different.

two decades for the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The decennial census provides reliable sub-national income estimates and rankings unavailable from current surveys.

Connecticut leads the way in 1989.

Regionally, the Northeast had the highest median household income (\$33,826) in 1989. It contained 6 of the 13 highest-income States in the Nation, led by Connecticut, at \$41,721.

The West followed closely, at \$32,270. Alaska (the leader in 1969 and 1979, 2nd in 1989), Hawaii, and California were all among the top 8 in the country. Montana and New Mexico, though, were in the bottom 11.

The Midwest lagged further behind, at \$29,334. Illinois (ranked 12th nationally) led the region, at \$32,252. Nine of the 12 Midwestern States had median incomes below the national value.

Although the South contained 3 of the 10 highest-income States (Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia), 13 States had incomes below the national median, including the Nation's four lowest-income States: Mississippi (the lowest at \$20,136), West Virginia, Arkansas, and Louisiana. As a result, the South ranked last among the regions in income, at \$26,832.

Northeast contains the biggest gainers.

After adjusting for inflation, the Nation's median household income rose by 7 percent between 1979 and 1989. The national increase, though, masked a great deal of State-by-State variation. During the 1980's:

- Twenty-six States and the District of Columbia saw their real income rise.
- Four saw their income remain statistically unchanged.

Eight Components of Money Income

(as itemized on census questionnaire)

1. Wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, and tips from all jobs (amount before deductions for taxes, bonds, dues, or other items).
2. Self-employment income from own nonfarm business, including proprietorships and partnerships (net income after business expenses).
3. Farm self-employment income (net income after operating expenses — includes earnings as a tenant farmer or sharecropper).
4. Interest, dividends, net rental income or royalty income, income from estates and trusts.
5. Social Security or Railroad Retirement.
6. Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), or other public assistance or public welfare payments.
7. Retirement, survivor, or disability pensions.
8. Any other sources of income received regularly — for instance, Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. Does not include lump-sum payments, such as money from an inheritance or the sale of a home.

Georgia, Florida, and North and South Carolina.

..... while others experienced large turnarounds.

Five times as many States experienced declines in incomes between 1979 and 1989 as had in the previous 10 years (20 compared with 4). The degree of decline was also greater during the 1980's. Each of the States that suffered declines between 1969 and 1979 had relatively small losses — less than 5 percent. During the next 10 years, in contrast, 2 States had declines between 5 and 10 percent and 4 experienced decreases of greater than 10 percent.

Interestingly, each State that suffered a real income loss between 1979 and 1989 had posted a real gain between 1969 and 1979. Three States had especially dramatic turnarounds:

- Wyoming had the greatest swing. Its 1980's-leading loss of 19 percent followed a 1970's-leading gain of 33 percent.
- Louisiana had a 38-point swing (from +24 percent in the '70's to -14 percent in the '80's), West Virginia a 35-point swing (from +20 percent to -15 percent).

Conversely, the only States that had real income losses between 1969 and 1979 were 4 Northeastern States — Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont, all very big gainers during the 1980's.

More information:

Income data down to the block group level from the 1990 Census of Population are available from *Summary Tape File 3A* on computer tape and CD-ROM.

They also are available (for geographic entities down to the place level) in printed report series, such as *Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics*, Series 1990, CPH-5.

Population and Housing Characteristics for Census Tracts and Block Numbering Areas, Series 1990, CPH-3, contains information for even smaller entities. Call Customer Services at the Census Bureau (301-763-4100) for more information on 1990 Census products.

Contacts:

Income —
Lydia Scoon-Rogers
301-763-8576

Statistical Briefs —
Robert Bernstein
301-763-1584

This brief is one of a series that presents information of current interest. It examines data from the 1990 Census and previous censuses. A complete description of statistical quality and limitations are included in the introduction and appendices of the 1990 Census printed reports.