

Household Income: 2012

American Community Survey Briefs

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents data on median household income at the national and state levels based on the 2011 and 2012 American Community Survey (ACS). Estimates from the 2011 ACS and the 2012 ACS show no significant change in median household income at the national level and for most states.¹ National- and state-level income trend data back to the 2000 ACS are also discussed, along with 2012 ACS metropolitan area income estimates.² The ACS provides detailed estimates of demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics for states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. A description of the ACS is provided in the text box “What Is the American Community Survey?”

In the 2012 ACS, information on income was collected between January and December 2012 and people were asked about income for the previous 12 months (the income reference period). This yielded a total income time span covering 23 months (January 2011 to November 2012). Therefore, adjacent ACS years have income reference months in common and comparisons of 2012 economic conditions with those in 2011 will not be precise.³

¹ The medians from this report were calculated from the microdata and household distributions using 2012 dollars. Published estimates inflation adjusted by the CPI-U-RS will not match exactly to the estimates in this report.

² The text of this report discusses data for the United States, including the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, collected with the Puerto Rico Community Survey, are shown in Table 1, Table 2, Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4.

³ For a discussion of this and related issues, see Hogan, Howard, “Measuring Population Change Using the American Community Survey,” *Applied Demography in the 21st Century*, Steven H. Murdock and David A. Swanson, Springer Netherlands, 2008.

Household income: Includes income of the householder and all other people 15 years and older in the household, whether or not they are related to the householder.

Median: The point that divides the household income distribution into halves, one-half with income above the median and the other with income below the median. The median is based on the income distribution of all households, including those with no income.

Median Household Income: 2011–2012 National and State Comparison

Real median household income in the United States showed no statistically significant change between the 2011 ACS and the 2012 ACS (see Table 1).⁴ The ACS 2011 U.S. median household income was \$51,324 and the ACS 2012 U.S. median household income was \$51,371. This is the first time since the 2007 ACS that median household income did not decrease. From 2006 to 2007 there was a significant increase in U.S. median household income of 1.9 percent (see Figure 4).

State estimates from the 2012 ACS ranged from \$71,122 in Maryland to \$37,095 in Mississippi (see Figure 1). Median household income was lower than the U.S. median in 27 states and higher in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Pennsylvania (\$51,230), Wisconsin (\$51,059), and Iowa (\$50,957) had median household

⁴ All income data in this report are inflation-adjusted to 2012 dollars. “Real” refers to income after adjusting for inflation.

income not statistically different from the U.S. median.⁵

For 44 states and the District of Columbia, real median household income in the 2012 ACS was not statistically different from that in the 2011 ACS.

Between the 2011 ACS and the 2012 ACS, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Oregon were the only states that showed an increase in real median household income (see Figure 2). Between the 2010 ACS and the 2011 ACS, Vermont was the only state with

a significant increase.⁶ No state had an increase between the 2009 ACS and the 2010 ACS. Looking back to the 2008 and 2009 ACS, North Dakota was the only state to experience an increase in median household income (5.1 percent). Five states (Kansas, Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, and Texas) had increases between the 2007 ACS and the 2008 ACS, and between the 2006 ACS and the 2007 ACS, 33 states had increases in median household income.

Real median household income decreased between the 2011 ACS and 2012 ACS in Missouri (1.6

percent) and Virginia (2.2 percent).⁷ Comparatively, between the 2010 ACS and 2011 ACS, 18 state medians decreased. Between the 2009 ACS and the 2010 ACS, 35 states showed decreases in median household income. Between the 2008 ACS and the 2009 ACS, 34 states experienced decreases, and between the 2007 ACS and the 2008 ACS, 5 states had decreases.

State Median Household Income: 2000 to 2012

Looking at ACS data back to 2000, four states and the District of Columbia showed real median household income that was

⁵ Median household incomes for Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Iowa are not statistically different from each other.

⁶ Estimates discussed and not shown in Figures 1–4 and Tables 1 and 2 can be found using the American FactFinder tool at <www.census.gov>.

⁷ The percent change in median household incomes for Missouri and Virginia are not statistically different from each other.

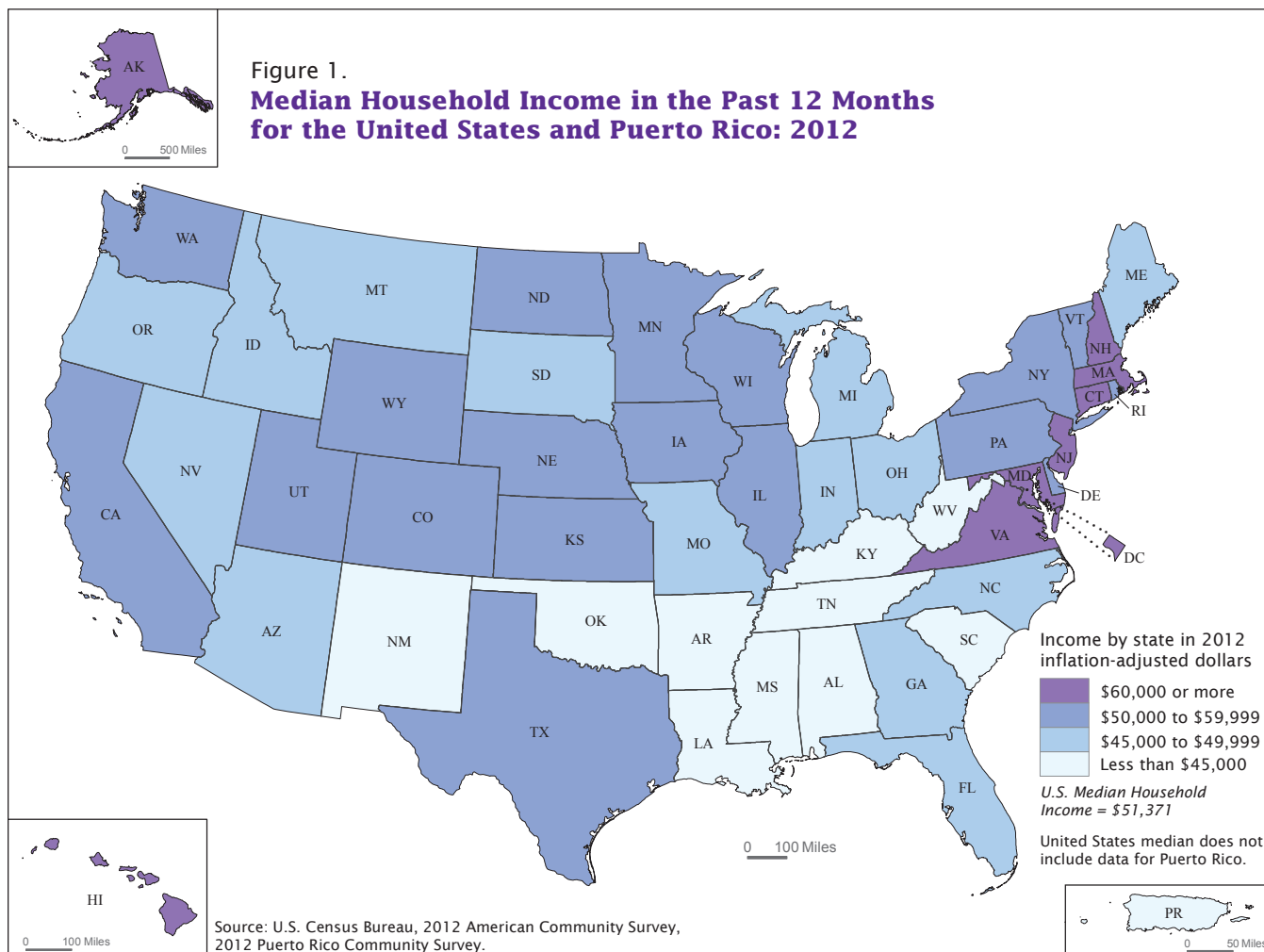


Table 1.

Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months by State and Puerto Rico: 2000, 2011, and 2012

(In 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars. Data are limited to the household population and exclude the population living in institutions, college dormitories, and other group quarters. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Area	2000 ACS median household income (dollars)		2011 ACS median household income (dollars)		2012 ACS median household income (dollars)		Change in median income (2000–2012)		Change in median income (2011–2012)	
	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Percent		Percent	
							Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹
United States . . .	55,030	259	51,324	75	51,371	53	*-6.6	0.4	0.1	0.2
Alabama	44,482	1,212	42,116	576	41,574	477	*-6.5	2.8	-1.3	1.8
Alaska	70,709	2,156	69,519	1,701	67,712	1,894	*-4.2	4.0	-2.6	3.6
Arizona	51,376	1,662	47,493	610	47,826	604	*-6.9	3.2	0.7	1.8
Arkansas	43,991	1,448	39,469	666	40,112	497	*-8.8	3.2	1.6	2.1
California	62,088	724	58,509	343	58,328	354	*-6.1	1.2	-0.3	0.8
Colorado	61,743	4,027	56,443	661	56,765	594	*-8.1	6.1	0.6	1.6
Connecticut	71,931	1,659	67,223	979	67,276	865	*-6.5	2.5	0.1	1.9
Delaware	63,572	1,832	60,216	1,398	58,415	1,593	*-8.1	3.6	-3.0	3.5
District of Columbia	53,995	1,515	64,486	1,928	66,583	2,040	*23.3	5.1	3.3	4.4
Florida	50,709	871	45,169	367	45,040	345	*-11.2	1.7	-0.3	1.1
Georgia	54,676	1,022	46,731	440	47,209	378	*-13.7	1.8	1.0	1.2
Hawaii	68,586	4,666	63,218	1,311	66,259	1,628	-3.4	7.0	*4.8	3.4
Idaho	50,089	2,132	44,360	1,278	45,489	929	*-9.2	4.3	2.5	3.6
Illinois	60,937	1,445	54,371	471	55,137	408	*-9.5	2.2	*1.4	1.2
Indiana	54,135	1,373	47,214	472	46,974	421	*-13.2	2.3	-0.5	1.3
Iowa	50,884	1,286	50,366	524	50,957	431	0.1	2.7	1.2	1.4
Kansas	53,389	1,623	49,952	714	50,241	520	*-5.9	3.0	0.6	1.8
Kentucky	43,821	1,257	41,784	459	41,724	419	*-4.8	2.9	-0.1	1.5
Louisiana	41,227	1,138	42,303	574	42,944	680	*4.2	3.3	1.5	2.1
Maine	48,595	1,818	46,811	846	46,709	898	-3.9	4.0	-0.2	2.6
Maryland	69,922	2,231	71,298	825	71,122	579	1.7	3.4	-0.2	1.4
Massachusetts	66,300	1,130	64,311	680	65,339	645	-1.4	1.9	*1.6	1.5
Michigan	57,963	950	46,754	333	46,859	331	*-19.1	1.4	0.2	1.0
Minnesota	63,592	1,495	58,109	537	58,906	668	*-7.4	2.4	1.4	1.5
Mississippi	43,664	1,882	37,515	687	37,095	584	*-15.0	3.9	-1.1	2.4
Missouri	49,534	1,074	46,048	497	45,321	418	*-8.5	2.2	*-1.6	1.4
Montana	44,268	1,789	45,206	982	45,076	1,092	1.8	4.8	-0.3	3.2
Nebraska	49,838	1,070	51,209	752	50,723	577	1.8	2.5	-0.9	1.8
Nevada	56,499	2,362	49,965	870	49,760	826	*-11.9	4.0	-0.4	2.4
New Hampshire	67,587	1,947	64,115	1,346	63,280	1,537	*-6.4	3.5	-1.3	3.2
New Jersey	72,137	1,143	68,962	677	69,667	716	*-3.4	1.8	1.0	1.4
New Mexico	44,688	1,972	42,728	945	42,558	902	-4.8	4.7	-0.4	3.1
New York	58,279	1,053	56,343	427	56,448	371	*-3.1	1.9	0.2	1.0
North Carolina	50,349	1,581	44,763	488	45,150	391	*-10.3	2.9	0.9	1.4
North Dakota	45,812	1,876	52,763	1,325	53,585	1,546	*17.0	5.9	1.6	3.9
Ohio	52,777	1,293	46,610	319	46,829	293	*-11.3	2.2	0.5	0.9
Oklahoma	45,451	1,015	44,078	601	44,312	462	*-2.5	2.4	0.5	1.7
Oregon	51,981	2,034	47,576	798	49,161	807	*-5.4	4.0	*3.3	2.4
Pennsylvania	52,702	623	51,032	304	51,230	265	*-2.8	1.3	0.4	0.8
Rhode Island	58,307	1,960	54,810	1,644	54,554	1,789	*-6.4	4.4	-0.5	4.4
South Carolina	48,401	1,453	43,163	699	43,107	660	*-10.9	3.0	-0.1	2.2
South Dakota	46,456	1,150	49,435	1,555	48,362	974	*4.1	3.3	-2.2	3.7
Tennessee	48,716	1,018	42,320	475	42,764	579	*-12.2	2.2	1.0	1.8
Texas	52,365	787	50,355	298	50,740	267	*-3.1	1.5	0.8	0.8
Utah	60,681	2,381	56,763	931	57,049	737	*-6.0	3.9	0.5	2.1
Vermont	53,840	1,333	53,841	1,520	52,977	1,259	-1.6	3.4	-1.6	3.6
Virginia	62,810	1,500	63,147	567	61,741	410	-1.7	2.4	*-2.2	1.1
Washington	60,304	2,346	57,949	606	57,573	595	*-4.5	3.8	-0.6	1.5
West Virginia	38,816	1,487	39,301	812	40,196	697	3.6	4.4	2.3	2.8
Wisconsin	56,269	2,589	51,318	421	51,059	321	*-9.3	4.2	-0.5	1.0
Wyoming	51,345	2,152	57,291	1,960	54,901	1,491	*6.9	5.3	-4.2	4.2
Puerto Rico	N	N	19,054	355	19,429	325	N	N	2.0	2.6

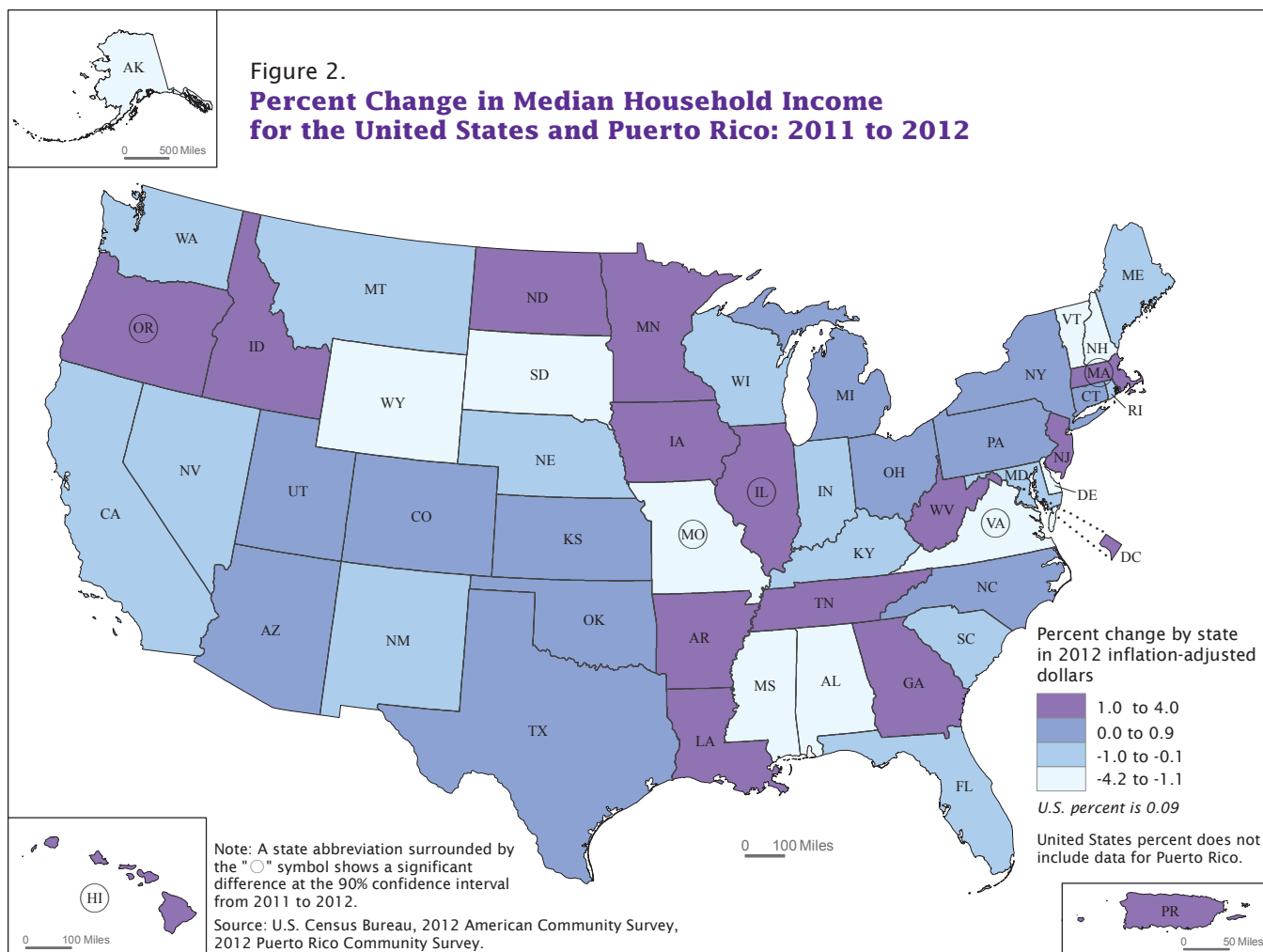
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*Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

¹Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to and subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Note: Puerto Rico data was not collected in the Census 2000 Supplemental Survey.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2011, and 2012 American Community Surveys, 2011 and 2012 Puerto Rico Community Surveys.



significantly higher in 2012 (see Figure 3).⁸ The District of Columbia (23.3 percent) and North Dakota (17.0 percent) showed the largest increases over time.⁹

Comparatively, 35 states showed statistically significant decreases in real median household income from 2000 to 2012. Over the 12-year span, Indiana (13.2 percent), Georgia (13.7 percent), Mississippi (15.0 percent), and Michigan (19.1

percent) experienced some of the largest decreases in real median household income.¹⁰

The recession that occurred from December 2007 through June 2009 may be part of the reason for those significant decreases. Prior to the recession, fewer states showed decreases in median household income. From the 2000 ACS to the 2007 ACS, only seven states showed significant decreases in median household income. Among

the largest decreases in this period were Michigan and Mississippi, both at 8.4 percent. There were 17 states and the District of Columbia that had median household income that increased between 2000 and 2007. Wyoming (10.9 percent) had one of the largest increases.

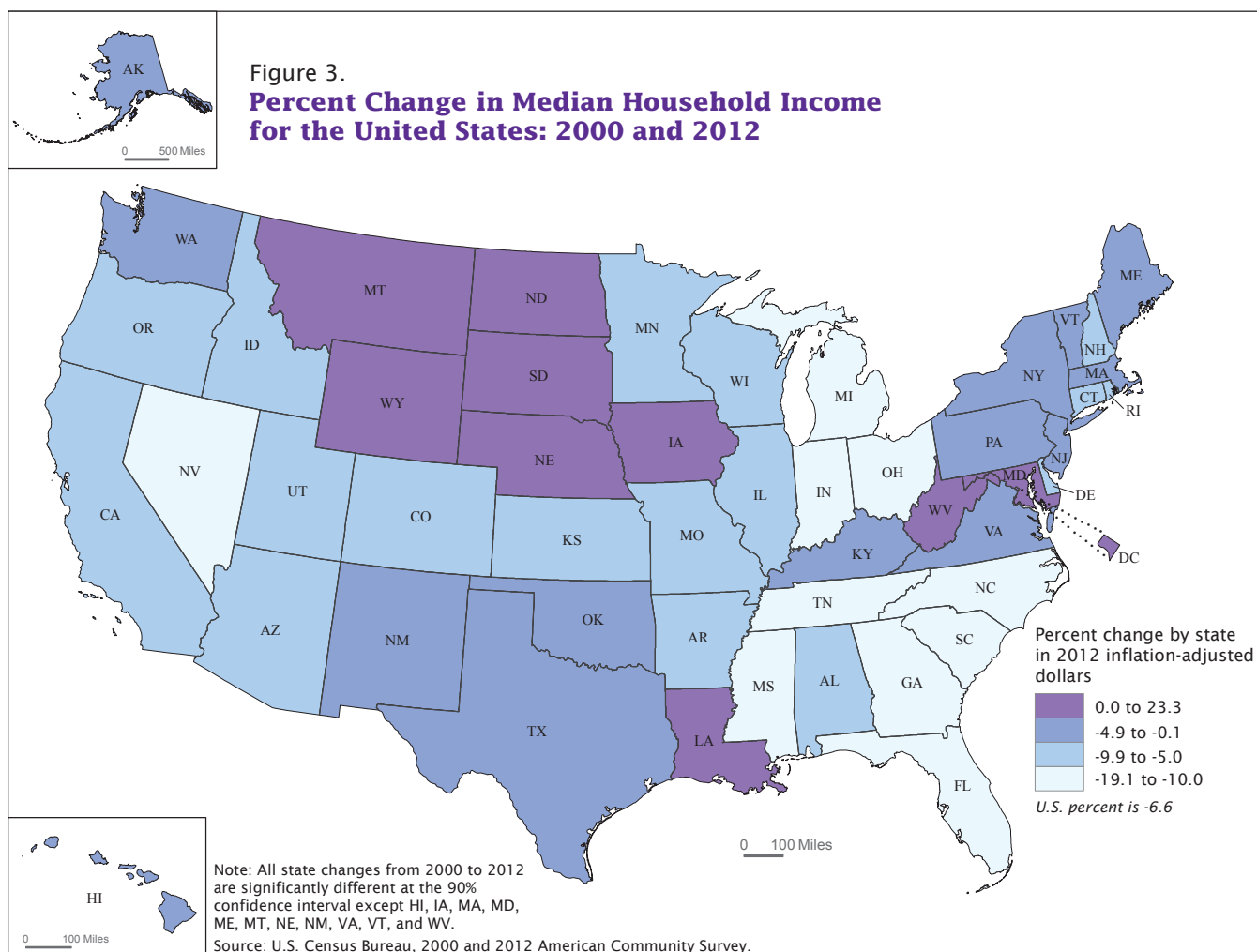
National Median Household Income: 2000 through 2012

From the 2000 ACS to the 2012 ACS, real U.S. median household income decreased 6.6 percent. The U.S. median household income decreased from \$55,030 in 2000 to \$51,371 in 2012. There appeared

⁸ ACS 2000 is also known as the Census 2000 Supplemental Survey.

⁹ The percent change in median household income for the District of Columbia and North Dakota are not statistically different from each other.

¹⁰ The decreases for Mississippi and Michigan are not statistically different from each other. The decreases for Indiana, Georgia, and Mississippi are not statistically different from each other.



to be stability in the beginning of the decade (see Figure 4). By mid-decade, the nation had reached a peak in real median household income. The U.S. ACS median household income in 2007 was \$56,048. U.S. median household income decreased 8.7 percent from the 2007 ACS to the 2011 ACS and showed no change in the 2012 ACS.

Median Household Income: 25 Most Populous Metropolitan Areas

Table 2 shows median households income for the 25 most populated metropolitan areas.

According to the 2012 ACS, median household income ranged

from \$88,233 in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area to \$44,402 in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area. Along with the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area the median household income for the San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA Metro Area (\$74,922), the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH Metro Area (\$71,738), and the Baltimore-Towson, MD Metro Area (\$66,970) were among metropolitan areas with the highest median household income. In addition to the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area, the median household income for the Pittsburgh, PA Metro Area (\$50,489), the

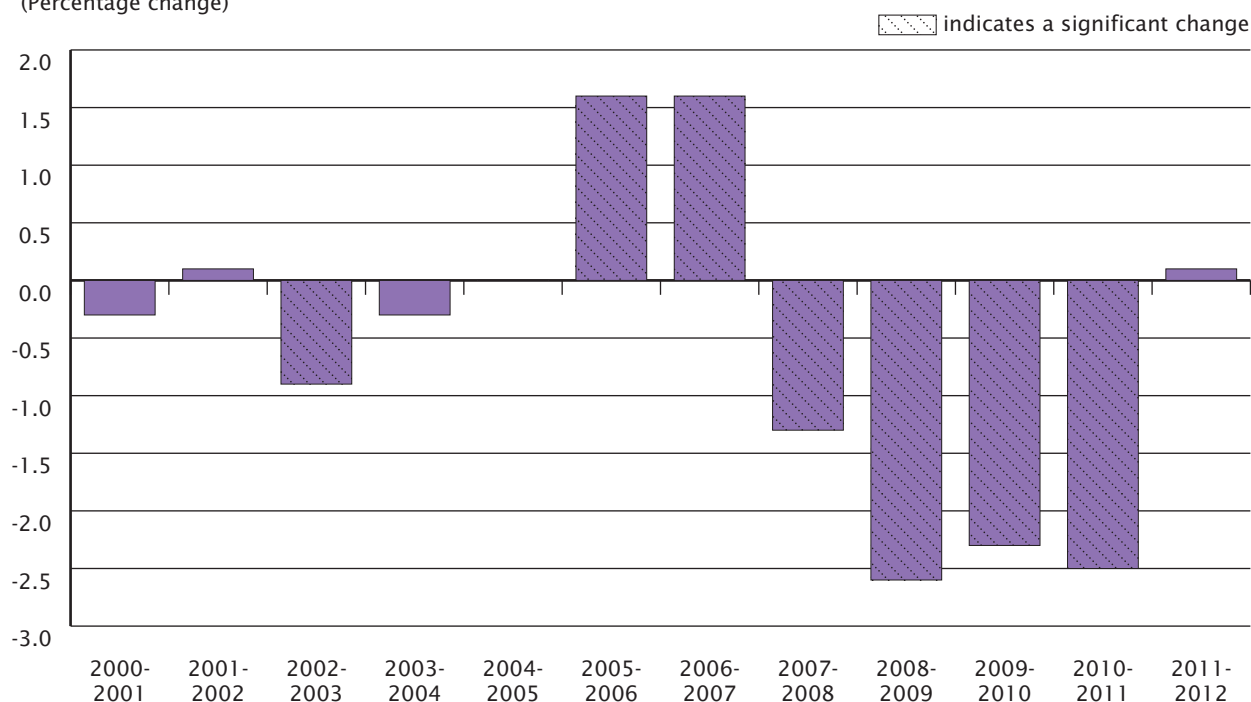
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI Metro Area (\$50,310), the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL Metro Area (\$46,648), and the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area (\$46,020) were among the lowest median household incomes for metropolitan areas.¹¹ The Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area (2.4 percent) and the San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metro Area (3.8 percent) were the only areas that increased in median household

¹¹ Median household incomes for the Pittsburgh, PA Metro Area and the Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI Metro Area are not significantly different. Median household incomes for the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL Metro Area and the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area are not statistically different from each other.

Figure 4.

Change in U.S. Median Household Income: 2000 ACS to 2012 ACS

(Percentage change)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys.

income from the 2011 ACS to the 2012 ACS.¹² The Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area was the only area that decreased in median household income from the 2011 ACS to the 2012 ACS (2.8 percent).

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

The data presented in this report are based on the ACS sample interviewed from January 2012 through December 2012. The estimates based on this sample describe the actual average values of person, household, and housing unit characteristics over this period of collection. Sampling error is the

¹² The percent change in median household income for the the Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area and the San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metro Area are not statistically different from each other.

What Is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing homes and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data for 2005 were released for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit <www.census.gov/acs/www>.

uncertainty between an estimate based on a sample and the corresponding value that would be obtained if the estimate were based

on the entire population (as from a census). Measures of sampling error are provided in the form of margins of error for all estimates

Table 2.

2012 Median Household Incomes by 25 Most Populous U.S. Metropolitan Areas

(In 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars. Data are limited to the household population and exclude the population living in institutions, college dormitories, and other group quarters. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Metropolitan area	2011 ACS median household income (dollars)		2012 ACS median household income (dollars)		Change in real median income (2011–2012)	
	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹	Percent	
					Estimate	Margin of error (±) ¹
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	88,505	1,226	88,233	1,145	−0.3	1.9
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA Metro Area	73,563	1,361	74,922	1,040	1.8	2.4
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH Metro Area	70,699	979	71,738	630	1.5	1.7
Baltimore-Towson, MD Metro Area	66,654	1,290	66,970	1,051	0.5	2.5
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area	64,712	682	66,282	792	*2.4	1.6
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area	65,405	951	65,677	759	0.4	1.9
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area	63,841	427	63,982	531	0.2	1.1
Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO Metro Area	60,263	1,017	61,453	764	2.0	2.1
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA Metro Area	60,699	1,209	60,330	911	−0.6	2.5
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metro Area	59,631	714	60,105	648	0.8	1.6
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI Metro Area	58,561	618	59,261	627	1.2	1.5
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA Metro Area	57,745	570	57,271	441	−0.8	1.2
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metro Area	56,023	925	56,978	854	1.7	2.3
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area	56,498	662	56,954	590	0.8	1.6
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX Metro Area	55,806	954	55,910	903	0.2	2.4
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA Metro Area	53,681	814	54,628	870	1.8	2.2
St. Louis, MO-IL Metro Area	51,869	620	52,243	630	0.7	1.7
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area	53,201	1,050	51,695	757	*−2.8	2.4
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metro Area	49,599	1,398	51,486	913	*3.8	3.5
Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ Metro Area	50,869	675	51,359	480	1.0	1.6
Pittsburgh, PA Metro Area	49,809	788	50,489	596	1.4	2.0
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI Metro Area	49,923	625	50,310	527	0.8	1.6
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL Metro Area	46,110	496	46,648	637	1.2	1.8
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area	46,852	1,075	46,020	898	−1.8	3.0
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area	44,877	884	44,402	748	−1.1	2.6

*Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

¹ For purposes of this report text does not discuss the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico. Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to and subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Note: Because of sampling variability, some of the estimates in this table may not be statistically different from one another or from estimates for other geographic areas not listed in the table.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 and 2012 American Community Surveys.

included in this report. All comparative statements in this report have undergone statistical testing, and comparisons are significant at the 90 percent level unless otherwise noted. In addition to sampling error, nonsampling error may be

introduced during any of the operations used to collect and process survey data such as editing, reviewing, or keying data from questionnaires. For more information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and

sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the 2012 ACS Accuracy of the Data document located at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2012.pdf.