



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

April 21, 2006

Mobile Homes in Pennsylvania

MIDDLETOWN, Pa – Recent media reports indicate that developers across the U.S. are purchasing trailer parks and replacing them with strip malls, townhouses, condominiums and big box stores. As affordable housing dwindles, states and counties are taking notice of their low-income mobile home residents.* Data from the 2004 American Community Survey (ACS) provides a picture of Pennsylvania's mobile home communities and can answer important questions like: what are the characteristics of the commonwealth's mobile home residents, and who will be affected by this trend in our state?

Affordable Housing

Mobile homes are an affordable housing alternative for low-income families and individuals. In 2004, the median value of mobile homes in the commonwealth was \$27,455, considerably less than the median value of all owner-occupied housing units (\$116,520). Mobile homes also stay more affordable over time. Since 2000, the median value of all owner-occupied housing units has increased by \$21,720, but the value of mobile homes has risen by just \$3,055. Affordability may also be reflected in the higher ownership rate of mobile home residents, 80.3 percent versus 72.5 percent for all other structures. There were 159,181 owner-occupied mobile homes in 2004 valued at \$6.1 billion, about 1.1 percent of the total value of owner-occupied housing units in the state. Since 2000, the number of owner-occupied mobile homes has declined by 16,050, or 10.1 percent.

More than 39,000 mobile homes were rented in 2004, about 3.0 percent of all renter-occupied units. Rent was less of a burden on household income for mobile home residents, accounting for less than 20 percent of household income in 31 percent (12,130) of mobile homes (Table 1). Gross rent of mobile homes averaged \$353, \$266 less than all other renter-occupied housing units.

Resident Characteristics

In the majority of mobile home residences in Pennsylvania, the householder who responded to the American Community Survey was White alone (195,849, or 98.7 percent), followed by persons of two or more races (1,246, or 0.6 percent), Black alone (673, or 0.3 percent), American Indian or Alaska Native alone (383, or 0.2 percent), and persons of some other race (213, or 0.1 percent). No Asians lived in mobile homes, and

due to the small sample size, no data was available for Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders. Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, who can be of any race, accounted for 1,694 or 0.9 percent of mobile home householders.

More than 82,000 mobile home households were made up of married couple families, 37,005 households were single parent with no husband or wife present, and 80,092 nonfamily households were reported in mobile homes. Grandparents caring for grandchildren under 18 lived in 2,840 mobile home households.

Vacant Mobile Homes and All Other Types of Units

Some 51,000 of the 249,493 mobile homes and all other types of units were vacant in 2004. More than 5,600 were for sale or rent, and 26,958 were kept for seasonal or recreational use. Almost half of all mobile homes in Pennsylvania were built between 1960 and 1979. Nearly two-thirds have 4-5 rooms, and 84.4 percent have at least 2 bedrooms. Twenty-eight percent (14,316) lack complete plumbing facilities, and 14,336 lack complete kitchen facilities.

More on the American Community Survey

Most of the data in this brief is from the 2004 American Community Survey (ACS). ACS, which has already begun a phased rollout, will replace the census long form currently collected every 10 years and provide yearly socio-economic data. The 2004 survey was confined to population areas of 250,000 or greater and did not include group quarters. Group quarters are living quarters in which unrelated people live or stay other than the usual house (for example, college dormitories, military barracks, prisons, and nursing homes). Beginning in 2005, ACS will include group quarters and expand to areas of 65,000 or greater.

For more information about mobile homes in Pennsylvania, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Sources: **USA Today* "Location, location: Developers snatch up trailer parks," by Charisse Jones, April 11, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey, 2000 Census.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.

Table1: Units in Structure by Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months, Pennsylvania: 2004

	Number of Units	Percent of Units
1 detached or attached	458,535	-
Less than 20.0 percent	112,396	24.5
20.0 to 24.9 percent	54,222	11.8
25.0 to 29.9 percent	44,365	9.7
30.0 to 34.9 percent	30,230	6.6
35.0 percent or more	149,657	32.6
Not computed	67,665	14.8
2 to 4:	348,527	-
Less than 20.0 percent	97,580	28.0
20.0 to 24.9 percent	43,289	12.4
25.0 to 29.9 percent	35,211	10.1
30.0 to 34.9 percent	31,098	8.9
35.0 percent or more	123,578	35.5
Not computed	17,771	5.1
5 to 19:	231,908	-
Less than 20.0 percent	69,711	30.1
20.0 to 24.9 percent	30,406	13.1
25.0 to 29.9 percent	32,006	13.8
30.0 to 34.9 percent	17,076	7.4
35.0 percent or more	75,946	32.7
Not computed	6,763	2.9
20 to 49:	91,059	-
Less than 20.0 percent	19,773	21.7
20.0 to 24.9 percent	13,353	14.7
25.0 to 29.9 percent	13,256	14.6
30.0 to 34.9 percent	10,175	11.2
35.0 percent or more	33,602	36.9
Not computed	900	1.0
50 or more:	142,134	-
Less than 20.0 percent	28,912	20.3
20.0 to 24.9 percent	17,025	12.0
25.0 to 29.9 percent	26,769	18.8
30.0 to 34.9 percent	14,125	9.9
35.0 percent or more	51,014	35.9
Not computed	4,289	3.0
Mobile home:	39,183	-
Less than 20.0 percent	12,130	31.0
20.0 to 24.9 percent	3,940	10.1
25.0 to 29.9 percent	2,190	5.6
30.0 to 34.9 percent	473	1.2
35.0 percent or more	10,816	27.6
Not computed	9,634	24.6

Note: Boats, RVs, vans, etc. omitted due to zero units.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 American Community Survey