



Research Brief

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New American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates Released: Home Values and Homeownership Rates Before and After the Recession

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – The U.S. Census Bureau today released the 2010-2012 American Community Survey (ACS) 3-Year Estimates. This new demographic and social data for areas with populations of 20,000 or more provides the first non-overlapping ACS 3-Year Estimates, allowing smaller communities (those with fewer than 65,000 in population) to compare changes over time in their social, economic and housing characteristics.

In Pennsylvania, three-year estimates for the period 2010-2012 were released for all of the state's congressional districts and metropolitan statistical areas, 61 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, the largest 20 cities, 208 school districts, 68 larger municipalities and other geographies.

Median Housing Value

The so called "Great Recession" is generally considered to have started in 2008 as the result of the bursting housing bubble. Thus, the figures from the 2010-2012 and 2007-2009 ACS 3-Year Estimates can offer some insight as to how home values are progressing from the recession (2007-2009) and after the recent recession into the recovery (2010-2012).

The median value of an owner-occupied housing unit rose in 29 Pennsylvania counties between the pre-recession period of 2007-2009 and post-recession period of 2010-2012, among Pennsylvania counties with populations of 20,000 residents or more. Fourteen counties reporting an upswing in median values had increases of \$10,000 or more. In contrast, ten Pennsylvania counties experienced a decrease in median values between the time periods. These counties were located in the Lehigh Valley (Berks, Lehigh and Northampton), Poconos (Monroe and Pike), Central Pennsylvania (Adams and York), and surround Philadelphia (Bucks, Chester and Montgomery). The median home value in the post-recession period of 2010-2012 was not statistically different from the recession period of 2007-2009 in 22 (or 36.1 percent) Pennsylvania counties

Wyoming County in Northeastern Pennsylvania had the largest monetary and percent increase in median value between the two time periods. Between the periods 2007-2009 and 2010-2012, the median home value in Wyoming County increased \$20,100. The median value grew from \$136,600 to \$156,700, equating to a 14.7 percent increase between pre and post-recession periods. Another county in Northeastern Pennsylvania, Pike County, had the largest decline in

median value. Before the recession, the median value of a home in Pike County was \$222,000. This figure dropped by 12.7 percent to \$193,900 after the recession. The percent decline was also the largest among Pennsylvania counties over 20,000 in population with a statistically significant change between the two periods.

During the post-recession period, the median home value in the Keystone state was \$164,700, an increase of \$3,000 from the recession period of 2007-2009. This represents a modest increase of just 1.9 percent. Nationally, the median home value was \$174,600 in the post-recession period, a \$17,300 (9.0 percent) decline from the recession period of 2007-2009.

Home Ownership Rates

The homeownership rate in Pennsylvania declined by 1.3 percent to 69.6 percent in 2010-2012 from the previous three-year period. The change in homeownership rates since 2007-2009 for Pennsylvania counties over 20,000 in population and with a statistically significant change over the time period ranged from a decrease of 4.5 percent in Lawrence County to a increase of 3.1 percent in Venango County. Nineteen out of 20 counties with a statistically significant change between the pre and post-recession time periods reported a decline.

In 2010-2012, Philadelphia County had the lowest homeownership rate at 53.4 percent followed by Centre County at 59.2 percent. Pike County had the highest homeownership rate (82.9 percent) in 2010-2012. Monroe (80.3 percent), Elk (79.8 percent), Perry (79.4 percent) and Wayne (79.1 percent) counties round out the top five in homeownership rates among Pennsylvania counties with populations of 20,000 and up.

Other Selected County Housing Data, 2010-2012

- In 2010-2012, median selected monthly home ownership costs were highest in the counties that also had the highest median housing values: Chester (\$2,197), Bucks (\$2,066) and Montgomery (\$2,050). Venango County (\$895) was the least expensive county to own a home in 2010-2012. (Monthly home ownership costs are the sum of mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, utilities and fuel and associated costs.)
- Green County, in far Southwestern Pennsylvania, had the largest percent increase in median gross rent between 2007-2009 and 2010-2012. Median gross rents increased 15.2 percent (\$80) between the two time periods. Pike County had the largest monetary increase in median gross rents. Between pre and post-recession, the median gross rent increased from \$981 to \$1,126, an increase of \$145.
- Nearly three-quarters (74.1 percent) of owner-occupied housing units in Chester County had a mortgage in 2010-2012; the largest percentage of any Pennsylvania county over 20,000 in population. Statewide, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage was 62.5 percent in 2010-2012.

More about the 2010-2012 ACS Estimates

The 2010-2012 ACS Estimates aggregate the sample responses from Pennsylvania households collected from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012 and represent the average estimate of a population/housing characteristic over the entire 3-Year time period. For the year 2010, the

2010-2012 ACS Estimates were based on an annual, nationwide household sample of about 250,000 addresses per month (2.5 percent of the population). Because of sample size enhancements in June of 2011, the data collected in the 2011 and beyond were based on 295,000 addresses per month (3.0 percent of the population per year). Data is available for all geographic areas in Pennsylvania with a total population figure of 20,000 and above, including geographies that were previously included in the one-year release.

It is important to note that the 2010-2012 ACS 3-Year Estimates are different from, and should not be directly compared to the ACS one-year estimates, released in September for geographies of 65,000 population and larger, which relate to the year 2012 only. As is the case with all surveys, statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. Margins of error have been omitted in this Research Brief for clarity, but are available for all ACS estimates on factfinder2.census.gov.

The remaining geographies that do not have estimates yet released (all counties, school districts, and municipalities below 20,000 population, and other geographies such as Census Tracts, Block Groups, and ZIP Code Tabulation Areas), will be released as five-year estimates in late December of 2012. Five year estimates will also include all geographies that are included in three-year and one-year releases.

To request custom American Community Survey data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2009 and 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.
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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.