



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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Census 2010 Shows Changing Pennsylvania Households: Single Parent Households on the Rise

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – Households headed by married couples no longer account for the majority of households in Pennsylvania, according to recently-released 2010 Census Summary File 1. The number of married couple households declined by 2.0 percent between 2000 and 2010, a decrease of 49,908 households. Married couple households now account for 48.2 percent of the state's total households.

The number of households in Pennsylvania increased 5.1 percent over the past ten years to a total of 5,018,904. According to U.S. Census Bureau, a household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. Families, a subset of households, are defined as those households that included people who are related to one another by birth, marriage, or adoption. The 2010 Census Summary File 1 release in June includes added detail about the subjects covered in the 2010 Census to provide an enhanced picture of the Commonwealth. Other data products from the 2010 Census will be released over the next several years.

Unmarried Partner Households Increase

Pennsylvanians living in unmarried partner households rose across the Commonwealth, according to the 2010 Census. The number of unmarried-partner households increased 40.0 percent to a total of 332,717 households since 2000. Unmarried-partner households represented 6.6 percent of all Pennsylvania households in 2010 up from 5.0 percent in 2000.

Over the past decade, same sex unmarried-partner households grew more rapidly than male and female unmarried-partner households, 58.8 percent vs. 38.2 percent, respectively. Among same sex unmarried-partner households, the growth of female headed households with a female partner (72.5 percent) outpaced the growth of male headed households with male partner (44.8 percent). Despite the growth in same-sex unmarried-partner households, nine out of ten unmarried-partner households consisted of a male and a female living arrangement in 2010.

Family Households

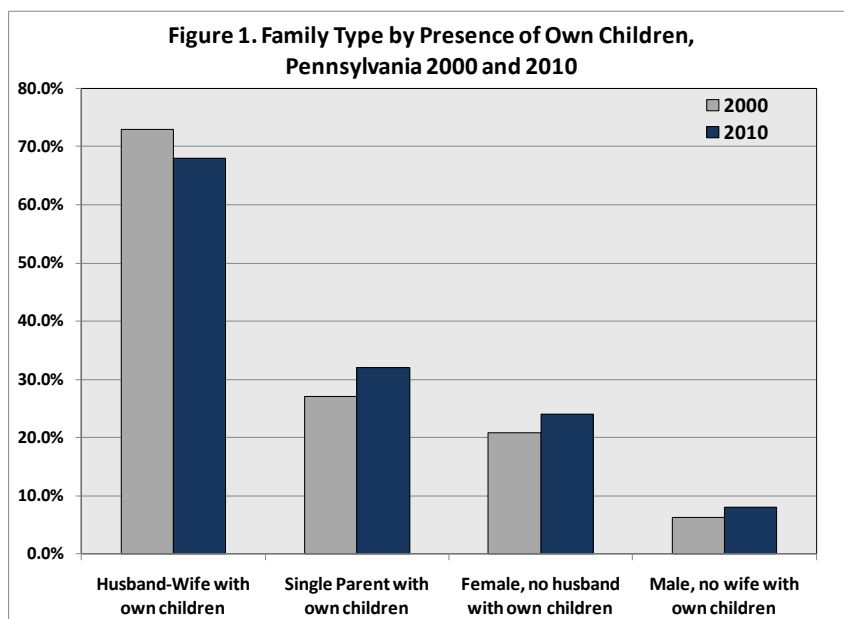
Fewer Pennsylvanians lived in a "nuclear family" in 2010. A nuclear family is defined as a family group consisting of a father and mother and their own children, who share living quarters. The share of married couple families raising their own children declined 11.9 percent since 2000 Census, a decrease of 124,004 families.

Chester County had the largest percent gain in married couple families raising their own children: between 2000 and 2010, the share of nuclear families increased 7.2 percent. Pike (2.2 percent) and Monroe (0.6 percent) were the only other Pennsylvania counties to see an increase in married couple families raising

their own children. Western Pennsylvania counties saw the largest percent decline in the number of nuclear families. Cameron County (-35.8 percent) led all Pennsylvania counties in terms of largest percent decrease in married couple families raising their own children, followed by Elk (-32.6 percent) and Fayette (-29.1 percent) counties.

Increasingly, Pennsylvania children are being raised in single parent homes. Over the past decade, the number of single parent families with their own children increased 45,520, or 11.7 percent. Single parent families with their own children now represent 32.0 percent of all families with their own children (see Figure 1.). Females are three times as likely as males to head single families with their own children. Female headed single parent families totaled 324,578, while males headed households totaled 108,679 in 2010. However, male headed households with their own children have grown considerably faster than female headed single parent homes since 2000 (21.1 percent and 8.9 percent, respectively).

The increase of single parent families raising their own children is occurring throughout Pennsylvania, but the largest percent population increases are concentrated in the far Northeastern part of the state. Between 2000 and 2010, Monroe County (45.4 percent) had the largest percent increase of households containing a single parent raising their own children, followed by Pike County (41.0 percent). Outside of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Lehigh (36.3 percent), Franklin (35.6 percent) and Berks (29.9 percent) counties also experienced large percent increases in single parent families raising their own children. Four Pennsylvania counties saw a decrease in the number of single parent families with their own children: Sullivan (-14.3 percent), Cameron (-8.9 percent), Fayette (-1.0 percent) and Allegheny (-0.4 percent) counties.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 and 2000 Summary File 1

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the Commonwealth’s expert in demographics and Census datasets. To request custom Census 2010 data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1 and Census 2000

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.

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