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FAMILY INCOME UP 6 PERCENT SINCE 1954

(Advance data, March 1956 sample survey)

Average (median) family income in the United States was estimated at \$4,400 in 1955, or about 6 percent higher than in 1954, according to estimates released today by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. This increase probably represented a significant gain in purchasing power for the average family, since prices were fairly stable during this period, according to the Consumer Price Index.

The average income of nonfarm families increased by about 7 percent over the year, largely because of wage rate increases and greater regularity of employment among non-agricultural workers. In contrast, the average income of rural-farm families did not change significantly in 1955. The stability in the income of farm families despite a drop in farm prices is due largely to their increased earnings from nonfarm work. A large proportion of the farm population derives at least part of its income from employment off the farm.

Of the Nation's 43 million families, about 18 million, or two-fifths, received incomes of \$5,000 or more in 1955 while 7½ million, or one-fifth, had incomes under \$2,000. The remaining 17½ million families were in the \$2,000-\$5,000 bracket. The distribution of families (groups of two or more related persons) by their income in 1955 is shown in table A.

Table A.--NUMBER OF FAMILIES BY FAMILY INCOME,
FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1955

(Figures derived from data in table B and rounded
to the nearest 100,000)

Family income	Number of families
Total.....	42,800,000
Under \$1,000.....	3,300,000
\$1,000 to \$1,999.....	4,200,000
\$2,000 to \$2,999.....	4,700,000
\$3,000 to \$3,999.....	6,300,000
\$4,000 to \$4,999.....	6,600,000
\$5,000 to \$5,999.....	5,400,000
\$6,000 to \$6,999.....	4,100,000
\$7,000 to \$9,999.....	5,500,000
\$10,000 to \$14,999.....	2,100,000
\$15,000 and over.....	600,000

The 1955 income data presented in this report were obtained from information collected in the Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey of March 1956. The survey covered the civilian noninstitutional population and members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post in continental United States. Additional family income data from this survey will appear in a more detailed report to be issued later this year.

Income as defined in this report represents the combined total money income of the

family, or the sum of money wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, and income other than earnings received by all family members during the calendar year. The median income is the amount which divides the distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median and the other having incomes below the median.

Since the estimates in this report are based on a sample, they are subject to sampling variability. Particular care should be exercised in the interpretation of figures based on relatively small numbers of cases as well as small differences between figures. Moreover, as in all field surveys of income, the

figures are subject to errors of response and nonreporting.

Other data relating to the income received by the population are available from the Personal Income Series of the Department of Commerce, the Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finances, Federal income tax data, and Old-Age and Survivors Insurance wage record data. These data are collected for different purposes and, therefore, differ from the Current Population Survey income data in several important respects. A discussion of the comparability of these data may be found in Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 19, "Income of Persons in the United States: 1954."

Table B.--DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES AND UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS BY TOTAL MONEY INCOME, FOR THE UNITED STATES, URBAN AND RURAL: 1952 TO 1955

Total money income	Families				Unrelated individuals			
	1955	1954	1953	1952	1955	1954	1953	1952
UNITED STATES								
Number.....thousands..	42,843	41,934	41,202	41,020	9,766	9,623	9,514	9,774
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under \$500.....	3.4	4.6	4.7	4.1	20.2	21.7	21.1	20.0
\$500 to \$999.....	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.4	21.9	23.5	21.1	20.2
\$1,000 to \$1,499.....	4.9	5.6	4.9	5.3	12.5	10.7	9.9	12.0
\$1,500 to \$1,999.....	4.9	5.4	5.0	5.5	8.4	8.6	7.8	9.4
\$2,000 to \$2,499.....	5.5	5.5	5.7	6.7	7.8	7.4	9.8	9.6
\$2,500 to \$2,999.....	5.5	6.4	6.0	7.4	5.8	6.9	8.1	6.7
\$3,000 to \$3,499.....	7.4	7.5	7.6	9.7	7.1	5.8	7.2	6.9
\$3,500 to \$3,999.....	7.2	7.9	8.2	8.8	4.1	4.9	4.3	5.5
\$4,000 to \$4,499.....	8.2	8.4	8.6	8.2	4.1	2.9	2.9	2.6
\$4,500 to \$4,999.....	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.2	2.1	1.9	2.6	2.2
\$5,000 to \$5,999.....	12.7	11.9	13.2	11.9	2.5	2.9	2.2	2.4
\$6,000 to \$6,999.....	9.5	8.5	8.1	7.5	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.0
\$7,000 to \$9,999.....	12.9	11.1	11.6	9.1	1.0	0.7	0.7	1.0
\$10,000 to \$14,999.....	4.8	4.4	4.1	2.8	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4
\$15,000 to \$24,999.....	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.3	...
\$25,000 and over.....	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2
Median income.....	\$4,421	\$4,173	\$4,233	\$3,890	\$1,316	\$1,224	\$1,394	\$1,409
URBAN								
Number.....thousands..	27,612	27,530	26,959	26,786	7,545	7,604	7,555	7,670
Median income.....	\$4,840	\$4,591	\$4,663	\$4,249	\$1,476	\$1,421	\$1,649	\$1,605
RURAL NONFARM								
Number.....thousands..	9,920	9,178	9,034	8,782	1,655	1,405	1,452	1,434
Median income.....	\$4,328	\$3,891	\$3,951	\$3,720	\$934	\$850	\$905	\$937
RURAL FARM								
Number.....thousands..	5,311	5,226	5,209	5,452	566	614	507	670
Median income.....	\$2,111	\$1,973	\$2,131	\$2,226	\$628	\$635	\$623	\$665