U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

CONSUMER INCOME

October 22, 1959 | Washington 25, D. C. | Series P-60, No. 32

SLIGHT RISE IN FAMILY INCOME IN 1958

(Advance data, March 1959 sample survey. Preliminary data on the 1958 income of persons appear in Series P-60, No. 31, issued in August 1959)

The average (median) income of families was estimated at $5,100 in 1958, or about 2 percent higher than in 1957, despite the decline in economic activity which extended over most of the year, according to estimates released today by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce. However, this $120 gain in money income between 1957 and 1958 did not represent a significant change in purchasing power for the average family, since prices also rose during this period.[1]

The slight increase in average family income in 1958, despite sizable unemployment and a shorter average workweek, is attributable in part to wage-rate increases in most industries. This factor largely accounts for the substantial rise in the average income of families headed by persons who worked at full-time jobs throughout the year. For this group, the average income rose to $6,000 in 1958, a gain of about $260, or 5 percent over the previous year. The proportion of families whose head worked full time throughout the year, however, dropped from 65 percent in 1957 to 62 percent in 1958. Families headed by a person with less than a full year's employment had an average income of $3,900 in both years.

The average income of families headed by persons who were unemployed during the survey week (in March 1959) was estimated at about $3,500 in 1958, a drop of 14 percent from the previous year, when the average was $4,100. This decline in the income of families whose head was unemployed is closely related to the marked increase in the duration of unemployment during 1958.

[1] The Consumer Price Index of the Department of Labor averaged 120.2 in 1957 and 123.5 in 1958.

Although there was only slight evidence of an increase in the median income of nonfarm families, the income of farm families, on the average, rose substantially over the year. The median income of nonfarm families, which had been rising steadily since the end of World War II, reached $5,300 in 1958, 67 percent higher than in 1947. In contrast, the median income of rural-farm families, at $2,700 in 1958, was only 40 percent higher than the 1947 level, despite a 10-percent increase between 1957 and 1958.

Of the Nation's 44 million families, about 4½ million, or one-tenth, received incomes of $10,000 or more in 1958, and an additional 18 million, or two-fifths, had incomes ranging between $5,000 and $10,000. At the other end of the income scale, 10½ million, or about one-fourth, had incomes under $3,000. The remaining 11 million families were in the $3,000-$5,000 bracket. The distribution of families (groups of two or more related persons residing together) by their income in 1958 is shown in table A.

Table A.--NUMBER OF FAMILIES BY FAMILY INCOME, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1958

Family income	Number of families
Total	44,202,000
Under $1,000	2,478,000
$1,000 to $1,999	3,882,000
$2,000 to $2,999	4,305,000
$3,000 to $3,999	4,942,000
$4,000 to $4,999	5,964,000
$5,000 to $5,999	6,074,000
$6,000 to $6,999	4,728,000
$7,000 to $9,999	7,424,000
$10,000 to $14,999	3,349,000
$15,000 and over	1,056,000

For sale by the Bureau of the Census
Price 10 cents

The 1958 income data presented in this report were obtained from information collected in the Bureau's Current Population Survey of March 1959. 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 Department of Agriculture's farm income series, the Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finances, Federal income tax data, and Old Age and Survivors Insurance earnings 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. 30, "Income of Families and Persons in the United States: 1957."

Table B.--DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY TOTAL MONEY INCOME, FOR THE UNITED STATES, FARM AND NONFARM: 1952 TO 1958

Total money income	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952
UNITED STATES							
Number.....thousands..	44,202	43,714	43,445	42,843	41,934	41,202	41,020
Percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under $500.....	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.4	4.6	4.7	4.1
$500 to $999.....	3.0	3.4	3.3	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.4
$1,000 to $1,499.....	3.9	4.0	4.4	4.9	5.6	4.9	5.3
$1,500 to $1,999.....	4.8	4.5	4.5	4.9	5.4	5.0	5.5
$2,000 to $2,499.....	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.7	6.7
$2,500 to $2,999.....	4.7	4.4	5.1	5.5	6.4	6.0	7.4
$3,000 to $3,499.....	5.3	5.7	6.2	7.4	7.5	7.6	9.7
$3,500 to $3,999.....	5.9	6.1	6.3	7.2	7.9	8.2	8.8
$4,000 to $4,499.....	6.9	7.3	8.0	8.2	8.4	8.6	8.2
$4,500 to $4,999.....	6.5	6.8	6.9	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.2
$5,000 to $5,999.....	13.7	14.5	13.7	12.7	11.9	13.2	11.9
$6,000 to $6,999.....	10.7	10.3	9.8	9.5	8.5	8.1	7.5
$7,000 to $9,999.....	16.8	16.3	15.6	12.9	11.1	11.6	9.1
$10,000 to $14,999.....	7.6	6.5	5.9	4.8	4.4	4.1	2.8
$15,000 to $24,999.....	1.9	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9
$25,000 and over.....	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4
Median income.....	$5,087	$4,971	$4,783	$4,421	$4,173	$4,233	$3,890
URBAN AND RURAL NONFARM							
Number.....thousands..	39,198	38,904	38,537	37,532	36,708	35,993	35,568
Median income.....	$5,338	$5,232	$5,061	$4,705	$4,406	$4,462	$4,111
RURAL FARM							
Number.....thousands..	5,004	4,810	4,908	5,311	5,226	5,209	5,452
Median income.....	$2,747	$2,490	$2,371	$2,111	$1,973	$2,131	$2,226

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