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Series P-23, No. 106

# **Child Support and Alimony: 1978**

**(Advance Report)**

U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

CURRENT POPULATION REPORTS

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**Child Support  
and Alimony:  
1978**

**(Advance Report)**



**U.S. Department of Commerce**

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#### SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

- Represents zero or rounds to zero.
  - B Base is less than 75,000.
  - X Not applicable.
-

## Child Support and Alimony: 1978 (Advance Report)

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Only about three-fifths of the 7.1 million women with children present from an absent father were awarded or had an agreement to receive child support payments in 1978.
- The proportion of women who were awarded child support payments was higher for White women (71 percent) than for Black (29 percent) or Spanish women (44 percent).
- Women with 4 or more years of college were more likely to receive child support payments (86 percent) than women with 4 years of high school (73 percent).
- Of the women who were supposed to receive child support in 1978, 49 percent received the full amount that they were due.
- Only about 14 percent of the 14.3 million ever-divorced or separated women were awarded or had an agreement to receive alimony or maintenance payments.
- As of spring 1979, less than one-half of the 12 million women who had been divorced received some form of property settlement.

### INTRODUCTION

Interest in and concern about the adequacy of child support and alimony payments have increased in recent years. These two sources of income take on added importance with the rapid rise of the divorce rate and with the increase in the number of households maintained by women with no husband present. In the past, there were no survey data available which directly addressed the issue of the economic consequences of divorce and separation. The need for this type of survey data was emphasized at the conference on Issues in Federal Statistical Needs Relating to Women, held in the spring of 1978. As a result of the growing demand for these types of data, the Department of Health and Human Services (formerly HEW) and the Department of Commerce jointly funded a special supplement to the April 1979 Current Population Survey (CPS) to collect detailed data on the receipt of child support and alimony payments and on the economic conditions surrounding divorce. For further discussion of the survey design and processing, see "Brief Description of the Survey." A more detailed report containing results from the April 1979 CPS, including a facsimile of the questionnaire used, is scheduled to be published in late 1980 by the Bureau of the Census.

### RECIPIENCY OF CHILD SUPPORT, ALIMONY, AND PROPERTY SETTLEMENTS

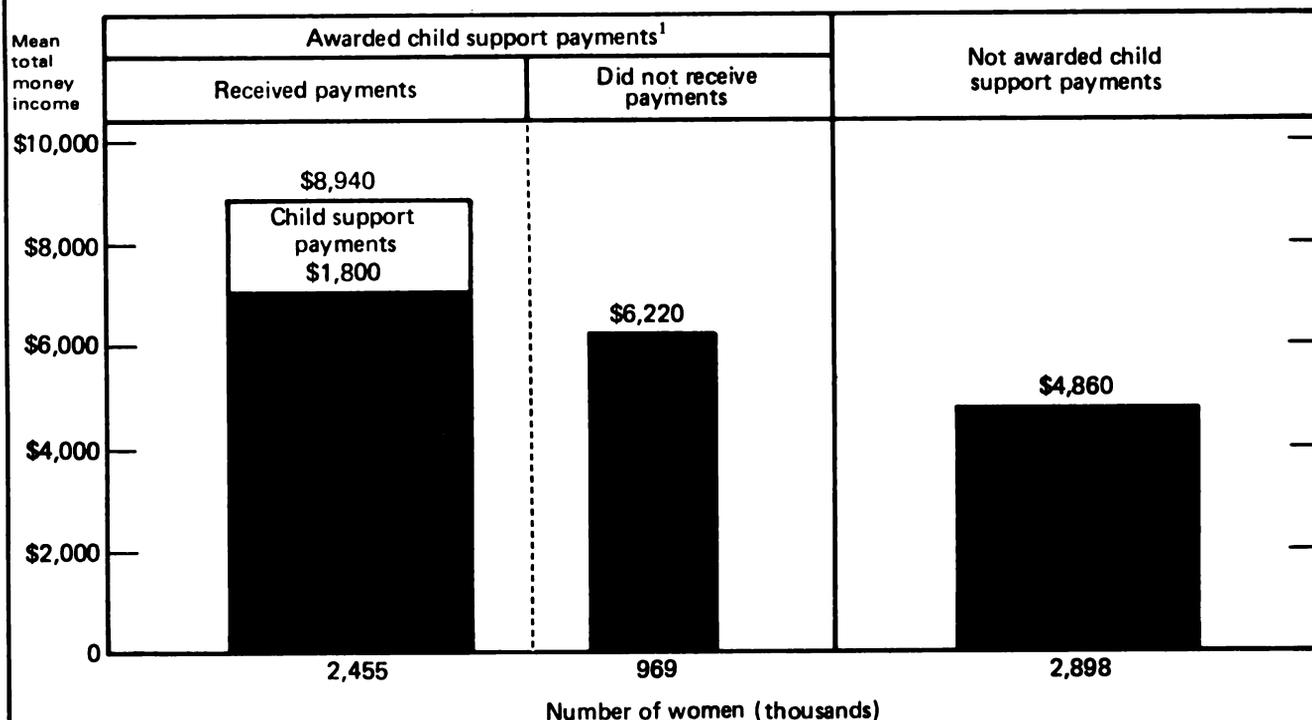
This report presents information on the 7.1 million women at the survey date who had one or more children under 21 years of age who were members of the household but whose father was not. Only about 3.4 million of these women (about one-half) were awarded and were supposed to receive child support payments in 1978. About 10 percent had been awarded but were not supposed to receive payments in 1978 because of a variety of reasons, such as death of a former spouse or children past the age of eligibility for payments. The remaining 41 percent were never awarded payments.

In 1978, almost three-quarters of the women due child support payments actually received them; 49 percent received the full amount and 23 percent received less than they were due. For women who actually received child support, the mean amount received was \$1,800, about 20 percent of their mean total money income (\$8,940). On average, the total money income of women who were due payments but did not receive them was below the mean income of women who received payments, and by an amount greater than the mean child support payment (see the figure). The mean income for women not awarded payments was lower than the average income of those who were due payments, whether or not they were actually received.

Of the 14.3 million ever-divorced or separated women in 1979, only about 2 million (14 percent) were awarded or had an agreement to receive alimony or maintenance payments (table A). Of these women, about 760,000 (a little over one-third) were supposed to receive payments in 1978. Approximately two-thirds (69 percent) of the women due payments actually received them, with an average payment of \$2,850. The mean total money income for women receiving payments (\$11,060) was higher than that for women due payments but not receiving them (\$7,270).

Information on the type and value of property settlements received following divorce was obtained from ever-divorced women (table 4). Property settlements are defined as a house or other real estate, a one-time cash settlement, or other property (for example, cars or furniture). As of spring 1979, less than one-half of the 12 million women who had ever been divorced received some form of property settlement. Table 4 contains distributions of the reported value of the settlement for women divorced during the 1975-79 period. The median settlement value for all women receiving a

## Mean Income of Women With Children Under 21 Years of Age Present From an Absent Father: 1978



<sup>1</sup> Excludes a small number of women who were awarded payments but were not supposed to receive them in 1978.

property settlement was \$4,650. The amounts reported in the survey represent the *share* of the house or other property received by women.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN RECEIVING CHILD SUPPORT

Of the 3.4 million women due payments in 1978, the proportion actually receiving payments and the mean amounts received showed some variation by marital status and race (table B). Only 11 percent of never-married women were awarded payments, compared with 71 percent for all other women. However, once payments were awarded, never-married women were just as likely to receive them as other women. The low percentage of never-married women awarded payments may be due to the difficulty in establishing paternity. However, once paternity is established, it may be likely that child support payments are ordered by the court; such an order might explain the high rate of receipt. Never-married women received, on average, the lowest amount of child support payments (\$980). White women with children from an absent father were much more likely to be awarded child support payments (71 percent) than Black women (29 percent) or women of Spanish origin (44 percent). Of those who were supposed to receive payments in 1978, race and Spanish origin did not seem to be factors in the receipt of payment. However, the mean payment received by White women (\$1,860) was higher than the average payment received by Black women (\$1,290) and those of

Spanish origin (\$1,320), which were not significantly different from each other.

Women who were not high school graduates were much less likely to be awarded child support payments than were women with higher educational attainment. Of those who were supposed to receive payments in 1978, both reciprocity rates and the mean amount of child support received varied positively with years of school completed. Those with 4 or more years of college were more likely to receive payments (86 percent) than were those who had completed only 4 years of high school (73 percent). Of the women actually receiving child support payments, those who had attended 4 or more years of college received higher payments, on the average (\$2,570), than those who had completed only 4 years of high school (\$1,660); they also had higher mean total money incomes (\$16,440) than those with the lower educational attainment (\$7,940). There are several potential explanations for the relationship between educational attainment and both reciprocity rates and average child support payments. In general, there is a positive correlation between the educational attainment of husbands and wives. Since more highly educated husbands are more likely to have higher incomes, they are also more likely to be in a better economic position to provide child support payments. Also, it is possible that more highly educated women are more effective in using the legal system to obtain and assure receipt of support payments. However, the survey design did not allow these hypotheses to be directly tested.

**Table A. Reciprocity Status of Women—Child Support and Alimony Payments**

(Women as of March 1979. Child support payments for women with own children under 21 years of age present from an absent father; alimony payments for ever-divorced women)

Reciprocity status of women	Child support payments		Alimony payments	
	Number (thousands)	Percent distribution	Number (thousands)	Percent distribution
Total.....	7,094	100.0	14,334	100.0
Awarded.....	4,196	59.1	2,052	14.3
Supposed to receive payments in 1978.....	3,424	48.3	760	5.3
Not supposed to receive payments in 1978.....	772	10.9	1,292	9.0
Not awarded.....	2,898	40.9	12,282	85.7
Supposed to receive payments in 1978.....	3,424	100.0	760	100.0
Actually received payments.....	2,452	71.6	528	69.5
Received full amount.....	1,675	48.9	312	41.1
Received partial amount.....	777	22.7	216	28.4
Did not receive payments.....	971	28.4	232	30.5

**Table B. Child Support Payments Awarded and Received—Women With Children Present, by Selected Characteristics**

(Women with children under 21 years of age from an absent father as of March 1979)

Characteristics of women	Total (thousands)	Percent awarded child support payments	Supposed to receive child support in 1978			
			Total (thousands)	Actually received child support in 1978		
				Percent	Mean child support	Mean total money income
Total.....	7,094	59.1	3,424	71.7	\$1,799	\$8,944
<b>CURRENT MARITAL STATUS</b>						
Married <sup>1</sup> .....	2,006	77.1	1,145	68.3	1,602	7,187
Divorced.....	2,390	79.8	1,693	73.3	1,951	10,582
Separated.....	1,257	45.1	463	72.6	1,906	8,177
Widowed <sup>2</sup> .....	67	(B)	16	(B)	(B)	(B)
Never married.....	1,374	10.6	107	81.3	976	4,522
<b>RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN</b>						
White.....	5,085	70.7	2,973	72.9	1,861	9,183
Black.....	1,895	28.8	413	63.0	1,294	7,271
Spanish origin <sup>3</sup> .....	521	43.8	191	65.4	1,318	6,922
<b>YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED</b>						
Less than 12 years.....	2,365	46.3	870	61.4	1,503	6,611
High school: 4 years.....	3,157	63.7	1,650	72.9	1,664	7,937
College: 1 to 3 years..	1,117	68.6	629	76.6	2,089	10,395
4 years or more.....	455	71.0	274	85.8	2,574	16,439

B Base less than 75,000.

<sup>1</sup>Remarried women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.<sup>2</sup>Widowed women whose previous marriage ended in divorce.<sup>3</sup>Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.

The age of the woman seemed to be a factor in the awarding of child support payments. About 46 percent of the women under 30 years old were awarded payments, while about 67 percent of older women had payments awarded to them. For those women who were awarded payments, age did not seem to be a factor in the receipt of payment, but it was positively associated with the amount received. Women under 30 years of age received an average of \$1,290, while those between 30 and 39 years and those 40 years of age and over received \$1,880 and \$2,240, respectively.

Although the number of children from an absent father did not affect reciprocity, the mean child support payment increased with the number of children. For women with only one child present, the average payment was \$1,290, compared with \$2,000 for women with two children present. Thus, the average payment for women with two children was less than twice that for women with one child. The mean amount rose further (\$2,530) with the presence of three children, but did not show any significant change when four or more children were present.

In 1979, there were 2 million women below the poverty level who were caring for children from an absent father. For these women, the reciprocity rate for those who were supposed to receive child support payments in 1978 was only three-fifths, compared with about three-fourths for the total population. The mean child support for those below the poverty level was \$1,220, which represented about one-third of the average total income of those receiving payments (\$3,540) as compared with one-fifth for all women.

Never-married women below the poverty level were less likely than others to be awarded child support payments. For women in poverty, neither reciprocity nor amount of child support payments differed significantly by race or Spanish origin. Although payment amount appeared to differ with the years of school completed (table 1), the apparent differences were not statistically significant due to the large sampling variability.

As mentioned earlier, the average child support payment for women actually receiving payments was \$1,800 in 1978. For women who were supposed to receive payments in 1978, whether they actually received them or not, the mean amount of child support was \$1,290. Table 2 shows the mean amounts that would have been received if the full amount of payments due had been made. For example, the mean child support income for all women who were supposed to receive payments would have been \$2,000, and they would have had a total money income of \$8,900. The poverty rate for women who were supposed to receive child support payments was 17 percent. If they had received full payment, the rate would not have decreased significantly.

About two-thirds of the women who were supposed to receive child support payments in 1978 had a court-ordered agreement. However, a court order did not seem to be an effective method of ensuring full payment, since only approximately three-eighths of the women with court-ordered payments received the full amount of payment due; about the same proportion received no payment at all. The mean amount received under court-ordered agreement was \$1,090.

Women who were supposed to receive child support payments under a voluntary written agreement fared better than women who were awarded payments by the courts. About 68 percent of the women with voluntary agreements actually received the full amount of payment due and only 12 percent received no payment at all; their mean child support payment was \$1,690, 50 percent higher than for women with a court-ordered agreement. However, the women who received payments under voluntary agreements were in a higher income group, with total incomes averaging \$2,000 more than that for women with court-ordered agreements. There was a small number of women who had neither a court-ordered agreement nor a voluntary written agreement (table 2).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN RECEIVING ALIMONY

The percentage of women who were awarded or had an agreement to receive alimony or maintenance payments showed little variation by selected characteristics. The most pronounced difference in the likelihood of alimony payments being awarded was between White women (16 percent) and Black women (7 percent). Approximately 13 percent of Spanish women were awarded payments, not significantly different from the percentage for all women.

Reciprocity for women due alimony or maintenance payments in 1978 also varied little according to selected demographic and economic characteristics. The likelihood of White women receiving payments was not significantly different from that of Black women or women of Spanish origin. Age, years of schooling, and presence of own children had little apparent effect on reciprocity (table 3). However, women who were divorced or separated during the 1975-79 period were more likely to receive payments (84 percent) than those whose divorce or separation took place prior to 1975 (54 percent). Surprisingly, the reciprocity rate did not vary significantly for those who worked full time (72 percent), compared with those who did not work at all (65 percent).

About 12 percent of the 2.7 million ever-divorced women with incomes below the poverty level were awarded (or had an agreement to receive) alimony or maintenance payments, about the same as for all women.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN RECEIVING PROPERTY SETTLEMENTS

The receipt of property settlements also varied for women by selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. A higher percentage of currently divorced women (50 percent) reported that they received a property settlement than did remarried women (42 percent) or widows (24 percent) (table 4). White women were more likely to have received a settlement than Black women or women of Spanish origin (47 percent compared with 27 and 29 percent, respectively<sup>1</sup>). Receipt of a settlement did not vary greatly by age. Women who had not completed high school were much less likely to receive a property settlement than those

<sup>1</sup>The percentages for Black and Spanish-origin women were not significantly different from one another.

who were high school graduates. The proportion receiving settlements appeared to be associated with the year of divorce; the more recent the year, the more likely that the women reported having received a property settlement.

## OTHER DATA ON CHILD SUPPORT AND ALIMONY

Survey data previously available on the receipt of child support and alimony payments were obtained as a byproduct from the Survey of Income and Education (SIE) conducted by the Bureau of the Census in the spring of 1976. Because of the design of the SIE, neither the number of women who were actually supposed to receive payments nor the amount of the payment due could be determined. Because of the questionnaire design, the mean amounts of child support payments actually received could be tabulated only for those women who received no other outside support payments.

In contrast, information was obtained from the April 1979 CPS supplement on both the amounts actually received as well as the amounts due for child support and alimony. Questions concerning the method of payment and the frequency of payments received were asked. Reasons for the irregularity of payments were sought for cases in which full payments were not received. Information on type and value of property settlements of ever-divorced women was also collected.

It should be noted that in the SIE, all child support payments were included in the tabulation. In the CPS, only those payments from the most recent divorce or separation were included. This enabled the collection of detailed information about the most recent divorce or separation, although it undoubtedly missed some payments for the small number of women who received support from multiple sources. Because of the differences in survey design and scope, the data from the SIE and CPS are not strictly comparable. For these and other reasons, the average amount of money received for child support was somewhat lower in the 1979 study than in the 1976 study (\$1,800 versus \$2,430). Likewise, the average amount of alimony payment was lower in the 1979 study than in the 1976 study (\$2,850 versus \$4,120). (The information on child support and alimony collected from the SIE may be found in Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 84, *Divorce, Child Custody, and Child Support*.)

The reader should also be aware of the existence of administrative and survey data available from the Social

Security Administration (SSA) concerning women who may have received child support payments as part of their income from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). With the enactment of the Child Support Enforcement amendments of 1973 to the Social Security Act, provision was made for AFDC child support payments contributed by the father to be paid directly to the welfare agency and not to the parent with whom the child lives. Thus, it is theoretically possible that if a woman received AFDC income in which the child support payment were included, and if she had no knowledge of the inclusion, the CPS data may show her as receiving no child support payment. For further discussion of Child Support Enforcement with relation to AFDC families, see *Aid to Families with Dependent Children—1975 Recipients Characteristics Study* published by the Office of Research and Statistics, Social Security Administration.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY

The data on child support and alimony were collected in a special supplement to the April 1979 Current Population Survey (CPS). All women 18 years of age and older were within the universe for the supplemental questions. Marital status, divorce history, and the presence of own children under 21 years old determined whether or not a woman was eligible to be asked certain series of questions on child support, alimony, and property settlements.

A data file was created containing all of the supplemental data from the April 1979 CPS as well as the income information from the supplement to the March 1979 CPS. This enabled the data gathered in each survey to be jointly tabulated. The file was created by matching the persons on the March 1979 CPS Supplement file with the persons on the April 1979 CPS Basic file, using only those segments from each (approximately three-fourths of the sample) that were interviewed in both months. The match rate for the relevant unweighted universe for April supplement data was approximately 95 percent. March was chosen as the base month from which demographic characteristics were taken. Each time that a match occurred for which there were April supplement data, this information was added to each person's record. The unmatched April records were discarded. If a supplement had unfilled items, an attempt was made to produce a response using a consistency edit of reported information; if this was not possible, the items were imputed from fully reported cases.

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## NOTE

In the past the Census Bureau has designated a head of household to serve as the central reference person for the collection and tabulation of data for each member of the household (or family). However, the trend toward recognition of equal status and roles for adult family members makes the term "head" less relevant in the analysis of household and family data. As a result, the Bureau is currently developing new techniques for the enumeration and presentation of data which will eliminate the concept "head." Although the data in this report are based on this concept, methodology for future Census Bureau reports will reflect a gradual movement away from this traditional practice.

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**Table 1. Child Support Payments Agreed to or Awarded—Women With Children Present, by Selected Characteristics, for All Women and Women Below the Poverty Level in 1978**

(WOMEN WITH OWN CHILDREN PRESENT UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE FROM AN ABSENT FATHER AS OF MARCH 1979. FOR MEANING OF SYMBOLS, SEE TEXT)

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS	CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS--													
	AGREED TO OR AWARDED											NOT AWARDED		
	SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS IN 1978													
				RECEIVED PAYMENTS				DID NOT RECEIVE PAYMENTS						
				TOTAL	NUMBER	MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME	STANDARD ERROR	MEAN INCOME FROM CHILD SUPPORT	STANDARD ERROR	NUMBER	MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME	STANDARD ERROR	NUMBER	MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME
(THOUS.)	(THOUS.)	(THOUS.)	(THOUS.)	(DOL.)	(DOL.)	(DOL.)	(DOL.)	(THOUS.)	(DOL.)	(DOL.)	(THOUS.)	(DOL.)	(DOL.)	
<b>ALL WOMEN</b>														
TOTAL . . . . .	7 094	4 196	3 424	2 455	8 944	227	1 799	58	969	6 216	268	2 898	4 841	138
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	147	125	115	100	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	66	(X)	(X)	108	(X)	(X)
<b>CURRENT MARITAL STATUS OF WOMAN</b>														
MARRIED <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	2 006	1 547	1 145	782	7 187	400	1 602	95	363	4 587	390	459	4 372	432
DIVORCED . . . . .	2 390	1 907	1 693	1 241	10 582	323	1 951	83	452	7 837	423	483	7 500	433
SEPARATED . . . . .	1 257	567	463	336	8 177	528	1 906	182	127	5 425	522	690	4 815	229
WIDOWED <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	67	30	16	8	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	8	(B)	(B)	37	(B)	(B)
NEVER-MARRIED . . . . .	1 374	145	107	87	4 522	473	976	147	20	(B)	(B)	1 230	3 915	157
<b>RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN OF WOMAN</b>														
WHITE . . . . .	5 085	3 596	2 973	2 168	9 183	247	1 861	63	805	6 140	299	1 489	5 154	211
BLACK . . . . .	1 895	546	413	260	7 271	601	1 294	141	154	6 872	659	1 348	4 444	174
SPANISH ORIGIN <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	521	228	191	125	6 922	1 149	1 318	257	66	(B)	(B)	292	4 555	608
<b>AGE OF WOMAN</b>														
18 TO 29 YEARS . . . . .	2 585	1 189	1 024	709	6 927	375	1 286	68	314	4 975	335	1 396	3 762	137
30 TO 39 YEARS . . . . .	2 654	1 790	1 506	1 106	9 135	313	1 876	90	400	6 152	458	864	5 790	291
40 YEARS AND OVER . . . . .	1 854	1 217	894	640	10 853	511	2 236	132	254	7 848	557	638	5 917	359
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WOMAN</b>														
LESS THAN 12 YEARS . . . . .	2 365	1 095	870	534	6 611	476	1 503	105	336	4 507	313	1 270	3 497	138
HIGH SCHOOL: 4 YEARS . . . . .	3 157	2 012	1 650	1 203	7 937	243	1 664	79	447	6 149	365	1 145	5 252	207
COLLEGE: 1 TO 3 YEARS . . . . .	1 117	766	629	482	10 395	495	2 089	155	147	8 777	834	352	6 078	454
4 YEARS OR MORE . . . . .	455	323	274	235	16 439	1 026	2 574	186	39	(B)	(B)	131	10 949	1 264
<b>NUMBER OF OWN CHILDREN</b>														
1 CHILD . . . . .	3 627	2 002	1 560	1 097	8 507	305	1 288	62	463	7 047	439	1 625	5 077	200
2 CHILDREN . . . . .	2 100	1 374	1 185	880	9 168	384	1 995	95	305	5 720	427	726	4 584	269
3 CHILDREN . . . . .	430	513	426	297	9 710	875	2 528	233	129	5 230	601	318	4 605	333
4 CHILDREN OR MORE . . . . .	537	307	253	181	9 252	709	2 752	280	72	(B)	(B)	230	4 311	298
<b>WOMEN WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL IN 1978</b>														
TOTAL . . . . .	1 973	752	596	351	3 536	288	1 219	178	245	3 003	379	1 221	2 742	171
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	144	89	79	61	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	51	(X)	(X)	113	(X)	(X)
<b>CURRENT MARITAL STATUS OF WOMAN</b>														
MARRIED <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	113	62	40	22	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	18	(B)	(B)	51	(B)	(B)
DIVORCED . . . . .	553	388	316	174	3 773	379	1 370	272	141	3 034	453	165	3 331	449
SEPARATED . . . . .	624	237	191	120	3 634	513	1 186	286	70	(B)	(B)	386	2 970	334
WIDOWED <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	18	10	6	2	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	4	(B)	(B)	8	(B)	(B)
NEVER-MARRIED . . . . .	666	55	43	32	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	11	(B)	(B)	611	2 555	216
<b>RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN OF WOMAN</b>														
WHITE . . . . .	1 007	535	422	246	3 608	336	1 294	218	176	2 765	456	471	2 581	283
BLACK . . . . .	944	211	171	105	3 368	551	1 044	301	66	(B)	(B)	734	2 854	214
SPANISH ORIGIN <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	213	60	49	29	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	20	(B)	(B)	153	3 141	677
<b>AGE OF WOMAN</b>														
18 TO 29 YEARS . . . . .	936	285	236	128	2 747	416	787	231	108	2 798	517	652	2 435	191
30 TO 39 YEARS . . . . .	654	296	239	144	4 176	439	1 590	299	95	3 078	652	358	3 162	350
40 YEARS AND OVER . . . . .	383	172	121	79	3 649	555	1 246	340	42	(B)	(B)	211	2 977	490
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WOMAN</b>														
LESS THAN 12 YEARS . . . . .	1 099	342	268	137	3 616	427	1 091	245	130	2 872	535	757	2 696	206
HIGH SCHOOL: 4 YEARS . . . . .	656	315	262	168	3 383	435	1 282	272	95	3 188	580	341	2 709	353
COLLEGE: 1 TO 3 YEARS . . . . .	194	83	62	42	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	20	(B)	(B)	111	3 138	564
4 YEARS OR MORE . . . . .	23	11	4	4	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	-	(B)	(B)	13	(B)	(B)
<b>NUMBER OF OWN CHILDREN</b>														
1 CHILD . . . . .	800	281	208	114	2 843	416	766	190	94	2 465	597	519	2 285	227
2 CHILDREN . . . . .	591	244	195	122	3 603	505	1 478	360	72	(B)	(B)	347	2 690	314
3 CHILDREN . . . . .	299	125	110	65	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	45	(B)	(B)	174	3 125	455
4 CHILDREN OR MORE . . . . .	283	102	83	50	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	33	(B)	(B)	181	3 787	489

<sup>1</sup>INCLUDES A SMALL NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS IN 1978. <sup>2</sup>REARRIED WOMEN WHOSE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE. <sup>3</sup>WIDOWED WOMEN WHOSE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE. <sup>4</sup>PERSONS OF SPANISH ORIGIN MAY BE OF ANY RACE.

Table 2. Reciprocity of Child Support Income in 1978--Women With Children Present, By Type of Arrangement

(NUMBERS IN THOUSANDS. WOMEN WITH OWN CHILDREN PRESENT UNDER 21 YEARS OF AGE FROM AN ABSENT FATHER AS OF MARCH 1979. FOR MEANING OF SYMBOLS, SEE TEXT)

TYPE OF ARRANGEMENT	SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS IN 1978									
	NUMBER	STANDARD ERROR	AMOUNT OF PAYMENT DUE IN 1978							
			\$1 TO \$499	\$500 TO \$999	\$1,000 TO \$1,499	\$1,500 TO \$1,999	\$2,000 TO \$2,999	\$3,000 TO \$4,999	\$5,000 TO \$6,999	\$7,000 AND OVER
<b>TOTAL</b>										
<b>PERCENT OF PAYMENTS RECEIVED IN 1978:</b>										
TOTAL . . . . .	3 424	115	236	641	743	529	640	494	76	64
0.0 . . . . .	971	66	93	241	210	157	181	73	5	10
0.1 TO 24.9 . . . . .	208	31	6	37	42	38	34	32	7	12
25.0 TO 49.9 . . . . .	147	26	10	27	35	32	21	17	3	3
50.0 TO 74.9 . . . . .	268	35	21	32	65	50	44	49	7	-
75.0 TO 99.9 . . . . .	154	27	9	22	39	8	41	27	4	4
100.0 AND OVER . . . . .	1 675	85	97	281	352	295	318	297	50	36
MEAN INCOME FROM CHILD SUPPORT, DOLLARS . . . . .	1 290	(X)	163	451	719	959	1 460	2 676	4 404	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	47	(X)	17	44	33	54	68	108	384	(B)
MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	8 172	(X)	4 996	6 611	7 320	7 815	8 096	11 040	18 222	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	183	(X)	509	399	278	366	366	501	3 030	(B)
NUMBER BELOW POVERTY LEVEL . . . . .	596	(X)	108	134	115	76	94	61	5	3
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	79	(X)	34	38	35	28	32	(B)	(B)	(B)
<b>IF FULL AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS WERE RECEIVED IN 1978:</b>										
MEAN INCOME FROM CHILD SUPPORT, DOLLARS . . . . .	2 003	(X)	313	751	1 201	1 714	2 385	3 634	5 591	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	56	(X)	13	9	7	10	15	35	95	(B)
MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	8 898	(X)	5 147	6 960	7 813	8 574	9 023	11 997	19 416	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	186	(X)	509	396	275	357	359	491	2 979	(B)
NUMBER BELOW POVERTY LEVEL . . . . .	480	(X)	102	115	106	57	66	34	-	-
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	71	(X)	33	35	33	(B)	(B)	(B)	-	-
<b>COURT-ORDERED PAYMENTS</b>										
<b>PERCENT OF PAYMENTS RECEIVED IN 1978:</b>										
TOTAL . . . . .	2 277	97	154	428	497	389	425	301	48	35
0.0 . . . . .	822	61	70	196	177	139	164	61	5	10
0.1 TO 24.9 . . . . .	135	25	6	29	24	20	28	16	7	5
25.0 TO 49.9 . . . . .	120	24	7	26	32	23	19	10	-	3
50.0 TO 74.9 . . . . .	188	29	15	24	48	40	32	24	7	-
75.0 TO 99.9 . . . . .	106	22	7	18	25	7	34	15	-	1
100.0 AND OVER . . . . .	906	64	49	136	191	160	149	175	28	16
MEAN INCOME FROM CHILD SUPPORT, DOLLARS . . . . .	1 088	(X)	147	385	621	879	1 166	2 581	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	51	(X)	21	62	41	63	85	148	(B)	(B)
MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	7 652	(X)	5 333	6 072	7 035	7 720	7 590	10 196	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	207	(X)	712	392	347	423	393	639	(B)	(B)
NUMBER BELOW POVERTY LEVEL . . . . .	406	(X)	69	80	72	48	80	48	5	3
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	65	(X)	(B)	29	(B)	(B)	29	(B)	(B)	(B)
<b>IF FULL AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS WERE RECEIVED IN 1978:</b>										
MEAN INCOME FROM CHILD SUPPORT, DOLLARS . . . . .	1 941	(X)	325	739	1 204	1 715	2 404	3 625	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	67	(X)	15	11	9	12	19	45	(B)	(B)
MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	8 520	(X)	5 512	6 496	7 625	8 561	8 828	11 241	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	211	(X)	711	389	344	413	382	627	(B)	(B)
NUMBER BELOW POVERTY LEVEL . . . . .	308	(X)	65	63	65	34	54	28	-	-
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	57	(X)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	-	-
<b>VOLUNTARY WRITTEN AGREEMENT</b>										
<b>PERCENT OF PAYMENTS RECEIVED IN 1978:</b>										
TOTAL . . . . .	1 032	68	68	187	225	127	198	183	26	18
0.0 . . . . .	124	24	24	43	23	15	14	5	-	-
0.1 TO 24.9 . . . . .	63	(B)	-	3	19	16	6	15	-	5
25.0 TO 49.9 . . . . .	27	(B)	2	1	2	9	3	7	3	-
50.0 TO 74.9 . . . . .	69	(B)	1	5	17	10	10	25	-	3
75.0 TO 99.9 . . . . .	45	(B)	1	4	12	1	7	12	4	3
100.0 AND OVER . . . . .	704	56	40	131	151	76	158	119	19	10
MEAN INCOME FROM CHILD SUPPORT, DOLLARS . . . . .	1 685	(X)	(B)	591	948	1 187	2 056	2 931	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	95	(X)	(B)	43	52	82	82	140	(B)	(B)
MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	9 478	(X)	(B)	8 287	8 154	8 186	9 373	12 543	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	383	(X)	(B)	996	486	779	796	809	(B)	(B)
NUMBER BELOW POVERTY LEVEL . . . . .	150	(X)	34	39	33	21	13	10	-	-
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	40	(X)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	-	-
<b>IF FULL AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS WERE RECEIVED IN 1978:</b>										
MEAN INCOME FROM CHILD SUPPORT, DOLLARS . . . . .	2 099	(X)	(B)	769	1 202	1 710	2 348	3 640	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	104	(X)	(B)	16	14	22	27	57	(B)	(B)
MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	9 897	(X)	(B)	8 473	8 424	8 712	9 665	13 252	(B)	(B)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . . . . .	390	(X)	(B)	993	479	762	796	793	(B)	(B)
NUMBER BELOW POVERTY LEVEL . . . . .	132	(X)	32	38	32	17	10	3	-	-
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	37	(X)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	-	-

\*INCLUDES A SMALL NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO RECEIVED PAYMENTS BY 'SOME OTHER METHOD,' NOT SHOWN SEPARATELY.

**Table 3. Alimony or Maintenance Payments Agreed to or Awarded—Ever-Divorced or Separated Women, by Selected Characteristics of All Women and Women With Incomes Below the Poverty Level in 1978**

(WOMEN AS OF MARCH 1979. FOP MEANING OF SYMBOLS, SEE TEXT)

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS	ALIMONY OR MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS--													
	AGREED TO OR AWARDED											NOT AWARDED		
	SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS IN 1978													
	RECEIVED PAYMENTS											DID NOT RECEIVE PAYMENTS		
	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	NUMBER	MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME		MEAN INCOME FROM ALIMONY OR MAIN.		NUMBER	MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME		NUMBER	MEAN TOTAL MONEY INCOME	
(THOUS.)	(THOUS.)	(THOUS.)	(THOUS.)	(DOL.)	STAND-ARD ERROR (DOL.)	(DOL.)	STAND-ARD ERROR (DOL.)	(THOUS.)	(DOL.)	STAND-ARD ERROR (DOL.)	(THOUS.)	(DOL.)	STAND-ARD ERROR (DOL.)	
<b>ALL WOMEN</b>														
TOTAL . . . . .	14 334	2 052	760	528	11 061	625	2 851	251	232	7 273	682	12 282	6 401	66
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	142	93	58	49	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	33	(X)	(X)	152	(X)	(X)
<b>CURRENT MARITAL STATUS OF WOMAN</b>														
MARRIED <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	5 758	835	146	74	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	71	(B)	(B)	4 924	4 954	134
WIDOWED <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	955	119	7	5	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	2	(B)	(B)	836	5 772	305
DIVORCED . . . . .	5 311	859	473	339	12 685	839	3 162	335	135	8 612	937	4 452	8 426	148
SEPARATED . . . . .	2 309	240	134	110	8 959	1 100	2 327	466	24	(B)	(B)	2 070	5 740	162
<b>RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN OF WOMAN</b>														
WHITE . . . . .	11 936	1 870	686	486	11 532	663	3 041	267	200	7 315	751	10 066	6 521	98
BLACK . . . . .	2 208	165	72	41	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	31	(B)	(B)	2 043	5 869	189
SPANISH ORIGIN <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	780	98	43	25	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	19	(B)	(B)	682	4 896	446
<b>AGE OF WOMAN</b>														
18 TO 29 YEARS . . . . .	2 832	243	128	97	9 079	2 001	1 225	291	31	(B)	(B)	2 589	5 888	152
30 TO 39 YEARS . . . . .	3 851	583	243	155	11 016	960	2 583	361	88	7 524	1 302	3 298	7 295	175
40 YEARS AND OVER . . . . .	7 651	1 256	389	276	11 785	791	3 575	406	113	7 101	921	6 395	6 147	124
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WOMAN</b>														
LESS THAN 12 YEARS . . . . .	5 128	638	188	119	7 419	1 737	1 772	355	68	(B)	(B)	4 489	4 039	86
HIGH SCHOOL: 4 YEARS . . . . .	5 920	839	301	205	10 030	680	2 274	291	96	6 030	852	5 081	6 639	122
COLLEGE: 1 TO 3 YEARS . . . . .	2 101	351	168	120	12 131	989	4 472	709	48	(B)	(B)	1 750	8 331	246
4 YEARS OR MORE . . . . .	1 185	223	104	83	17 290	1 670	3 489	711	20	(B)	(B)	962	12 655	495
<b>PRESENCE OF OWN CHILDREN</b>														
NO CHILDREN PRESENT . . . . .	8 614	1 294	347	242	8 825	746	3 224	441	105	6 227	871	7 320	6 123	113
1 OR MORE CHILDREN PRESENT . . . . .	5 720	758	413	286	12 951	929	2 536	271	127	8 138	1 000	4 961	6 810	132
<b>YEAR OF DIVORCE OR SEPARATION</b>														
1975 AND LATER . . . . .	4 813	646	396	331	10 862	703	2 938	338	66	(B)	(B)	4 167	7 067	135
1970 TO 1974 . . . . .	3 282	472	200	130	12 755	1 645	2 742	454	70	(B)	(B)	2 809	6 786	189
1960 TO 1969 . . . . .	3 064	463	120	47	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	73	(B)	(B)	2 601	6 389	193
BEFORE 1960 . . . . .	3 175	470	43	19	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	24	(B)	(B)	2 705	4 984	184
<b>WORK EXPERIENCE IN 1978 OF WOMAN</b>														
WORKED . . . . .	9 258	1 259	533	360	12 513	621	2 716	269	153	9 337	896	7 999	8 449	106
WORKED AT FULL-TIME JOBS . . . . .	7 324	956	420	304	12 916	683	2 319	277	115	10 579	1 016	6 368	9 441	117
50 TO 52 WEEKS . . . . .	5 031	647	277	197	15 582	773	2 783	383	80	12 237	1 210	4 384	11 084	135
WORKED AT PART-TIME JOBS . . . . .	1 934	303	113	76	10 892	1 438	4 307	687	37	(B)	(B)	1 632	4 580	179
DID NOT WORK . . . . .	5 076	794	227	148	7 325	1 451	3 200	566	80	3 314	499	4 282	2 573	93
<b>WOMEN WITH INCOMES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL IN 1978</b>														
TOTAL . . . . .	2 747	325	124	71	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	53	(B)	(B)	2 422	2 543	116
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	169	59	36	(B)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(B)	(X)	(X)	159	(X)	(X)
<b>CURRENT MARITAL STATUS OF WOMAN</b>														
MARRIED <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	366	61	6	-	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	6	(B)	(B)	305	962	254
WIDOWED <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	244	14	3	1	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	2	(B)	(B)	230	2 430	234
DIVORCED . . . . .	1 114	166	66	40	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	26	(B)	(B)	948	2 757	178
SEPARATED . . . . .	1 024	84	49	30	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	19	(B)	(B)	939	2 869	190
<b>RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN OF WOMAN</b>														
WHITE . . . . .	1 860	270	96	54	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	83	(B)	(B)	1 590	2 342	141
BLACK . . . . .	856	53	27	18	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	9	(B)	(B)	803	2 961	190
SPANISH ORIGIN <sup>3</sup> . . . . .	236	26	7	-	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	7	(B)	(B)	209	2 770	613
<b>AGE OF WOMAN</b>														
18 TO 29 YEARS . . . . .	657	46	25	18	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	7	(B)	(B)	610	2 436	209
30 TO 39 YEARS . . . . .	725	83	41	23	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	18	(B)	(B)	641	3 095	267
40 YEARS AND OVER . . . . .	1 366	196	59	31	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	28	(B)	(B)	1 170	2 297	149
<b>PRESENCE OF OWN CHILDREN</b>														
NO CHILDREN PRESENT . . . . .	1 440	204	52	33	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	18	(B)	(B)	1 236	1 994	123
1 OR MORE CHILDREN PRESENT . . . . .	1 308	122	72	38	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	34	(B)	(B)	1 186	3 115	184

<sup>1</sup> INCLUDES A SMALL NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS IN 1978. <sup>2</sup> REMARRIED WOMEN WHOSE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE. <sup>3</sup> WIDOWED WOMEN WHOSE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE. \* PERSONS OF SPANISH ORIGIN MAY BE OF ANY RACE.

**Table 4. Property Settlement Following Divorce—Ever-Divorced Women, by Selected Characteristics**

(NUMBERS IN THOUSANDS. WOMEN AS OF MARCH 1979. FOR MEANING OF SYMBOLS, SEE TEXT)

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS	TOTAL	NO SETTLEMENT REACHED	PROPERTY SETTLEMENT REACHED							
			TOTAL	HOUSE ONLY <sup>1</sup>	CASH ONLY <sup>2</sup>	OTHER PROPERTY ONLY <sup>3</sup>	HOUSE AND CASH	HOUSE AND OTHER PROPERTY	CASH AND OTHER PROPERTY	HOUSE, CASH, AND OTHER PROPERTY
TOTAL . . . . .	12 025	6 675	5 350	616	417	2 060	32	1 417	545	263
STANDARD ERROR . . . . .	153	145	136	53	44	93	(8)	78	50	35
CURRENT MARITAL STATUS OF WOMAN										
DIVORCED . . . . .	5 311	2 636	2 675	323	193	962	7	771	267	151
MARRIED <sup>4</sup> . . . . .	5 758	3 311	2 447	239	206	1 016	23	587	270	106
WIDOWED <sup>5</sup> . . . . .	955	728	227	54	18	81	2	59	8	5
RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN OF WOMAN										
WHITE . . . . .	10 568	5 635	4 933	570	383	1 940	31	1 287	475	247
BLACK . . . . .	1 307	951	355	41	30	91	-	118	61	15
SPANISH ORIGIN <sup>6</sup> . . . . .	548	388	160	34	12	68	-	33	10	3
AGE OF WOMAN										
18 TO 29 YEARS . . . . .	2 067	1 165	902	13	55	593	2	133	88	17
30 TO 39 YEARS . . . . .	3 273	1 587	1 686	153	131	708	13	433	175	73
40 YEARS AND OVER . . . . .	6 684	3 922	2 762	450	231	758	17	851	282	173
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WOMAN										
LESS THAN 12 YEARS . . . . .	4 000	2 706	1 294	178	117	508	5	349	99	37
HIGH SCHOOL 4 YEARS . . . . .	5 114	2 596	2 518	255	175	1 015	7	696	253	116
COLLEGE: 1 TO 3 YEARS . . . . .	1 849	930	919	114	60	363	8	195	119	60
4 YEARS OR MORE . . . . .	1 062	443	619	69	65	174	11	177	73	50
YEAR OF DIVORCE										
1975 AND LATER . . . . .	3 529	1 606	1 924	131	137	829	11	520	210	86
1970 TO 1974 . . . . .	2 871	1 526	1 345	139	99	550	11	326	165	56
1960 TO 1969 . . . . .	2 754	1 546	1 208	273	101	408	5	271	116	34
BEFORE 1960 . . . . .	2 870	1 997	873	73	81	273	4	301	95	87
VALUE OF SETTLEMENT <sup>7</sup>										
TOTAL . . . . .	(X)	(X)	1 924	131	137	829	11	520	210	86
VALUE REPORTED . . . . .	(X)	(X)	1 672	103	115	706	9	475	190	74
UNDER \$5,000 . . . . .	(X)	(X)	899	31	72	593	6	107	75	15
\$5,000 TO \$9,999 . . . . .	(X)	(X)	263	11	17	81	-	91	52	12
\$10,000 TO \$19,999 . . . . .	(X)	(X)	244	23	19	20	2	119	45	14
\$20,000 TO \$29,999 . . . . .	(X)	(X)	94	17	2	5	1	60	5	3
\$30,000 TO \$49,999 . . . . .	(X)	(X)	108	12	2	5	-	77	5	8
\$50,000 AND OVER . . . . .	(X)	(X)	63	9	2	2	-	20	7	23
MEDIAN VALUE . . . . . DOLLARS . .	(X)	(X)	4 647	14 334	3 982	2 978	(8)	13 284	6 863	(8)
STANDARD ERROR . . . . . DOLLARS . .	(X)	(X)	180	3 484	588	178	(8)	1 446	1 045	(8)
DO NOT KNOW VALUE . . . . .	(X)	(X)	252	28	22	123	2	45	20	12

<sup>1</sup>THE HOUSE OR OTHER REAL ESTATE.<sup>2</sup>A ONE-TIME CASH SETTLEMENT.<sup>3</sup>OTHER PROPERTY (CARS, FURNISHINGS, ETC.).<sup>4</sup>REMARIED WOMEN WHOSE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE.<sup>5</sup>WIDOWED WOMEN WHOSE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE ENDED IN DIVORCE.<sup>6</sup>PERSONS OF SPANISH ORIGIN MAY BE OF ANY RACE.<sup>7</sup>RESTRICTED TO WOMEN WHO WERE DIVORCED IN 1975 AND LATER.

## Appendix A. Definitions and Explanations

**Money income.** Data on income collected in the CPS are limited to money income received before payments for personal income taxes and deductions for Social Security, union dues, Medicare premiums, etc. Money income is the sum of the amounts received from earnings (including losses which occurred among the self-employed from their own farm or nonfarm operations); Social Security and public assistance payments; Supplemental Security income; dividends, interest, and rent (including losses); unemployment and worker's compensation; government and private employee pensions; and other periodic income. (Certain money receipts such as capital gains are not included.) Therefore, money income does not reflect the fact that many families receive part of their income in the form of nonmoney transfers such as food stamps, health benefits, and subsidized housing; that many farm families receive nonmoney income in the form of rent-free housing and goods produced and consumed on the farm; or that nonmoney incomes are also received by some nonfarm residents such as the use of business transportation and facilities, full or partial payments by business for retirement programs, medical and educational expenses, etc. These elements should be considered when comparing income levels.

As in most household surveys, the estimated total amount of income received by persons derived from the March CPS is somewhat less than estimated amounts derived from independent sources such as the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Social Security Administration, and Veterans' Administration. The difference between the survey estimate and the independent estimate is termed "underreporting." Underreporting tends to be more pronounced for income sources that are not derived from earnings, such as Social Security, public assistance, and net income from interest, dividends, rentals, etc. Overall, income earned from wages or salary is

much better reported than other sources of income and, when dollar imputations are assigned for nonreporting, total wage and salary income approximates independently derived estimates. By contrast, 1978 income data (both reported and allocated) for Social Security and public assistance payments to beneficiaries were approximately 94 and 76 percent, respectively, of independently derived estimates. For further details, see Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 123.

**Poverty (low-income) classification.** Families and unrelated individuals are classified as being above or below the poverty level using the poverty index adopted by a Federal Inter-agency Committee in 1969. This index is based on the Department of Agriculture's 1961 Economy Food Plan and reflects the different consumption requirements of families based on their size and composition, sex and age of the family head, and farm-nonfarm residence. It was determined from the Department of Agriculture's 1955 survey of food consumption that families of three or more persons spend approximately one-third of their income on food; the poverty level for these families was, therefore, set at three times the cost of the economy food plan. For smaller families and persons living alone, the cost of the economy food plan was multiplied by factors that were slightly higher in order to compensate for the relatively larger fixed expenses of these smaller households. The poverty thresholds are updated every year to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The poverty threshold for a nonfarm family of four was \$6,662 in 1978, about 7.6 percent higher than the comparable 1977 cutoff of \$6,191. For further details, see Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 124.

**Symbols.** A dash (—) represents zero or rounds to zero, and the symbol "B" means that the base is less than 75,000. An "X" means not applicable.

## Appendix B. Source and Reliability of the Estimates

### SOURCE OF DATA

The estimates in this report are based on data collected in March and April of 1979 from the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Bureau of the Census. The present CPS sample was initially selected from the 1970 census file and is updated continuously to reflect new construction where possible. The sample was spread over 614 areas with coverage in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

In the March sample, approximately 56,000 occupied households were eligible for interview. Interviews were not obtained at about 3,000 of these occupied units because the occupants were not found at home after repeated calls or were unavailable for some other reason. In addition to the 56,000 occupied units, about 10,000 sample addresses were visited but found to be vacant or otherwise ineligible for interview.

About 40,000 of the households interviewed in March were interviewed again in April. Women 18 years of age and older were asked supplemental questions regarding child support and alimony payments. These responses were successfully matched to the March responses for 37,033 of the 40,981 eligible women who were interviewed in March.<sup>1</sup> Child support and alimony information was imputed for the other 3,948 eligible women. The table below gives sample sizes and imputation rates by marital status.

**Sample Size and Imputation Rates**

Marital status	Sample size	Imputed cases	Rate
Total.....	40,981	3,948	9.6
Married or widowed....	30,473	2,420	7.9
Divorced.....	2,686	488	18.2
Separated.....	1,119	233	20.8
Never married.....	6,703	807	12.0

The estimation procedure used in this survey involves the inflation of weighted sample results to independent estimates of the civilian noninstitutional population of the United States by age, race, and sex. These independent estimates are based on statistics from decennial censuses; statistics on births, deaths, immigration, and emigration; and statistics on the strength of the Armed Forces.

<sup>1</sup>The main reasons why responses were not obtained for all eligible women interviewed in March are families who have relocated and April nonresponse.

### RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

Since the estimates in this report are based on a sample, they may differ somewhat from the figures that would have been obtained if a complete census had been taken using the same schedules, instructions, and enumerators. There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. The standard errors provided for this report primarily indicate the magnitude of the sampling error. They also partially measure the effect of some nonsampling errors in response and enumeration, but do not measure any systematic biases in the data. The full extent of the nonsampling error is unknown. Consequently, particular care should be exercised in the interpretation of figures based on a relatively small number of cases or on small differences between estimates.

**Nonsampling variability.** Nonsampling errors in surveys can be attributed to many sources, e.g., inability to obtain information about all cases in the sample, definitional difficulties, differences in the interpretation of questions, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, inability to recall information, errors made in collection such as in recording or coding the data, errors made in processing the data, errors made in imputing values for missed data, and failure to represent all sample households and persons within sample households (undercoverage).

**Sampling variability.** The standard errors given in this report are primarily measures of sampling variability, that is, of the variations that occurred by chance because a sample rather than the whole of the population was surveyed. The sample estimate and its estimated standard error enable one to construct interval estimates that include the average result of all possible samples with a known probability. For example, if all possible samples were selected, each of these surveyed under identical conditions and an estimate and its estimated standard error were calculated from each sample, then:

1. Approximately 68 percent of the intervals from one standard error below the estimate to one standard error above the estimate would include the average result of all possible samples;
2. Approximately 90 percent of the intervals from 1.6 standard errors below the estimate to 1.6 standard errors above the estimate would include the average result of all possible samples;

3. Approximately 95 percent of the intervals from two standard errors below the estimate to two standard errors above the estimate would include the average result of all possible samples.

The average result of all possible samples may or may not be contained in any particular computed interval. However, for a particular sample one can say with specified confidence that the average result of all possible samples is included within the constructed interval.

All the statements of comparison appearing in the text are significant at a 1.6 standard error level or better, and most are significant at a level of more than 2.0 standard errors. This means that for most differences cited in the text, the estimated difference is greater than twice the standard error of the difference. Statements of comparison qualified in some way (e.g., by use of the phrase, "some evidence") have a level of a significance between 1.6 and 2.0 standard errors.

**Note when using small estimates.** Percent distributions are shown in the report only when the base of the percentage is 75,000 or greater. Because of the large standard errors involved, there is little chance that percentages would reveal useful information when computed on a smaller base. Estimated totals are shown, however, even though the relative standard errors of these totals are larger than those for corresponding percentages. These smaller estimates are provided primarily to permit such combinations of the categories as serve each user's needs.

**Standard errors.** Standard errors of estimates for those characteristics of greatest interest are given together with these estimates in tables 1 through 4. Standard errors for the other estimates can be computed directly by the user as outlined in the next section.

**Computation of standard errors for estimated numbers and estimated percentages.** Standard errors of estimated numbers

and estimated percentages can be computed directly with formulae (1) and (2) below, respectively. The formulae are:

$$\sigma_x = \sqrt{ax^2 + bx} \quad (1)$$

Here  $x$  is the size of the estimate and  $a$  and  $b$  are the parameters associated with the characteristic.

$$\sigma_{(x,p)} = \sqrt{\frac{b}{x} \cdot p \cdot (100 - p)} \quad (2)$$

Here  $x$  is the size of the subclass of the population which is the base of the percentage,  $p$  is the percentage ( $0 < p < 100$ ), and  $b$  is the parameter associated with the characteristic.

Table B-1 provides the values of the  $a$  and  $b$  parameters that are used in formulae (1) and (2) to create standard errors of estimated number of persons and estimated percentages.

**Table B-1. Parameters To Be Used in the Computation of Standard Errors for Estimated Numbers and Percentages of Persons**

Characteristics	Parameters <sup>1</sup>	
	a	b
<b>Total women:</b>		
Total or White.....	-.000227	4,667
Black.....	-.000280	6,693
Spanish origin.....	-.000112	9,959
<b>Women from income levels below poverty:</b>		
Total or White.....	-.000080	10,595
Black.....	-.000677	10,595
Spanish origin.....	-.000276	25,904

<sup>1</sup>These parameters should not be used to calculate standard errors for estimates which are given in dollars (e.g., mean income).

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