Wealth of Households: 2024

Current Population Reports

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INTRODUCTION

This brief examines household wealth at the end of 2024 using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2025 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) public-use data.[1] It highlights differences in asset ownership and debt-holding rates and demonstrates significant variation in median household wealth by demographic and economic characteristics such as education and income. By illustrating how wealth varies across U.S. households, this brief provides key insights into the economic well-being of households.[2]

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD WEALTH

Wealth can vary dramatically across households. For example, a household with few assets and a heavy debt load may have negative wealth in the tens of thousands of dollars. Conversely, a household that owns its own home and has multiple retirement accounts may have positive wealth in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Table 1 presents the value of household wealth by percentile. The median household wealth in 2024 was $204,900. The 10th percentile of household wealth was zero dollars, meaning 1 in 10 households had net wealth of zero dollars or less. The 90th percentile of household wealth was $1,810,000, meaning 1 in 10 households had wealth exceeding $1.8 million.

[1] The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7516454 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY26-0189).

[2] All estimates include households with negative wealth.

WHAT IS SIPP?

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) is a nationally representative, longitudinal survey administered by the U.S. Census Bureau that provides comprehensive information on the dynamics of income, employment, household composition, and government program participation. The SIPP is also a leading source of data on economic well-being, family dynamics, education, wealth, health insurance, child care, and food security. The SIPP interviews individuals for several years and provides monthly data about changes in household and family composition and economic circumstances over time. Visit the SIPP website at <www.census.gov/sipp> for more information.

KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

A **household** consists of a group of people occupying a housing unit together (group quarters such as dormitories, institutions, or nursing homes are excluded from this analysis). The **householder** is a person who owns or rents the housing unit (i.e., a person whose name appears on the deed or lease).

Wealth is the value of assets owned minus the debts owed. Therefore, wealth can be negative. The major assets not covered in this measure are equity in pension plans and the value of home furnishings.

Household wealth percentile is the dollar amount below which a given percentage of households falls. The 50th percentile is also referred to as the median.

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Table 1.
Value of Household Wealth by Percentile: 2024

Percentile	2024 dollars
10th	0
25th	20,760
50th	204,900
75th	672,700
90th	1,810,000

Note: The 50th percentile is calculated using a weighted interpolated median. All other percentiles are calculated using standard weighted methods.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2025 Survey of Income and Program Participation public-use data (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7516454 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY26-0189).

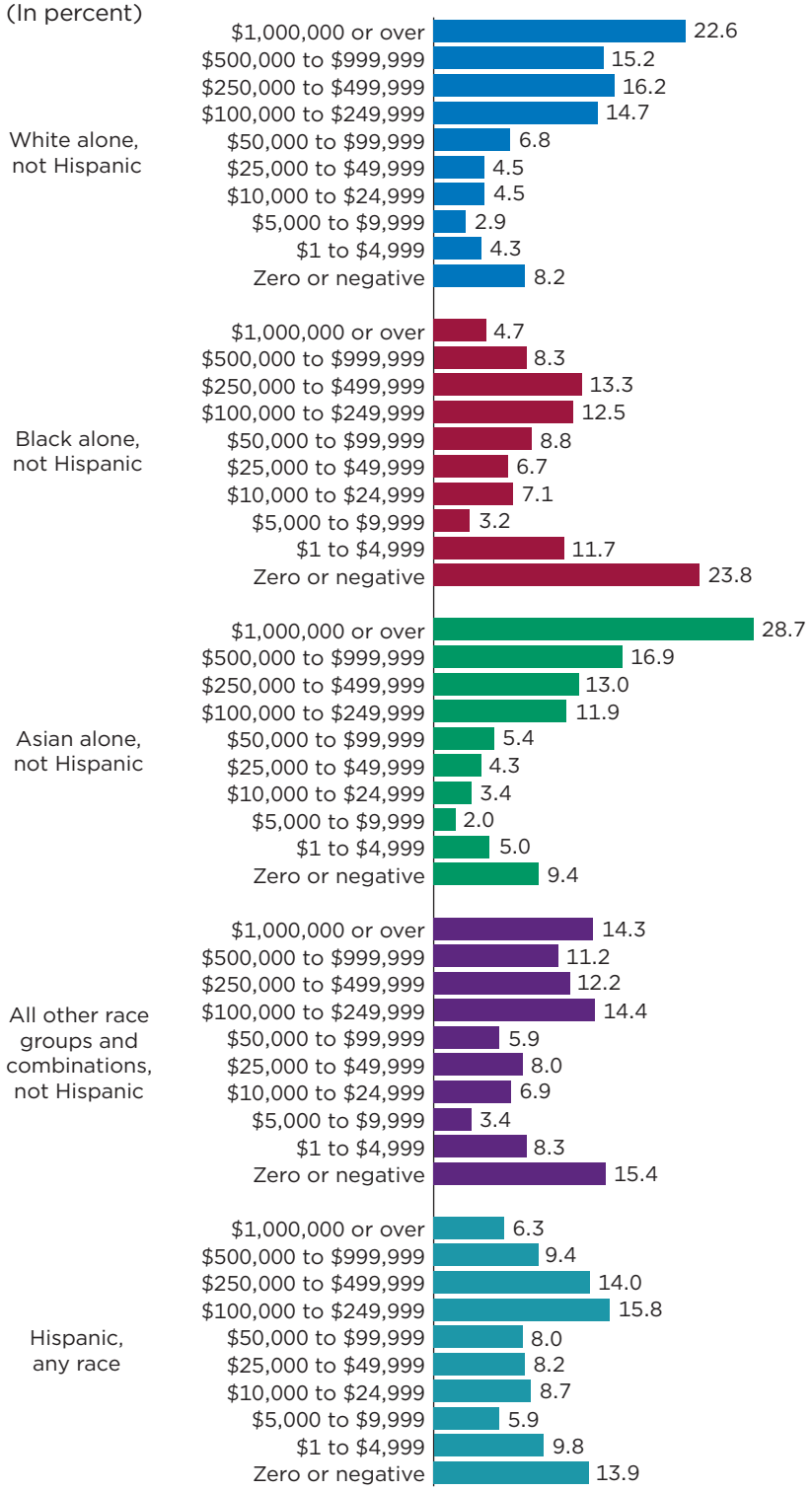
THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD WEALTH BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Figure 1 presents the distribution of household wealth by the race and ethnicity of the householder. Households with a non-Hispanic White or non-Hispanic Asian householder were more likely to have wealth over $1 million when compared to other households (22.6 and 28.7 percent, respectively). Meanwhile, 4.7 percent of households with a non-Hispanic Black householder and 6.3 percent with a Hispanic householder had wealth over $1 million.

Households with negative wealth are more likely than other households to experience higher rates of financial insecurity and are more vulnerable to economic shocks. Around 24 percent of households with a non-Hispanic Black householder, 13.9 percent with a Hispanic householder of any race, and 15.4 percent with a non-Hispanic householder of any other race group or combination had zero or negative wealth.[3] Smaller shares of households with a non-Hispanic White

[3] There was no statistically significant difference between the share of households with zero or negative wealth for those with a Hispanic householder and those with a householder of another race or race combination.

Figure 1.
Distribution of Household Wealth by Amount of Wealth and Race of Householder: 2024
(In percent)



Note: Wealth categories are defined in 2024 dollars. Householder is a person who owns or rents the housing unit (whose name appears on the deed or lease).
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2025 Survey of Income and Program Participation public-use data (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7516454 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY26-0189).

or non-Hispanic Asian householder had zero or negative wealth, at 8.2 and 9.4 percent, respectively.[4]

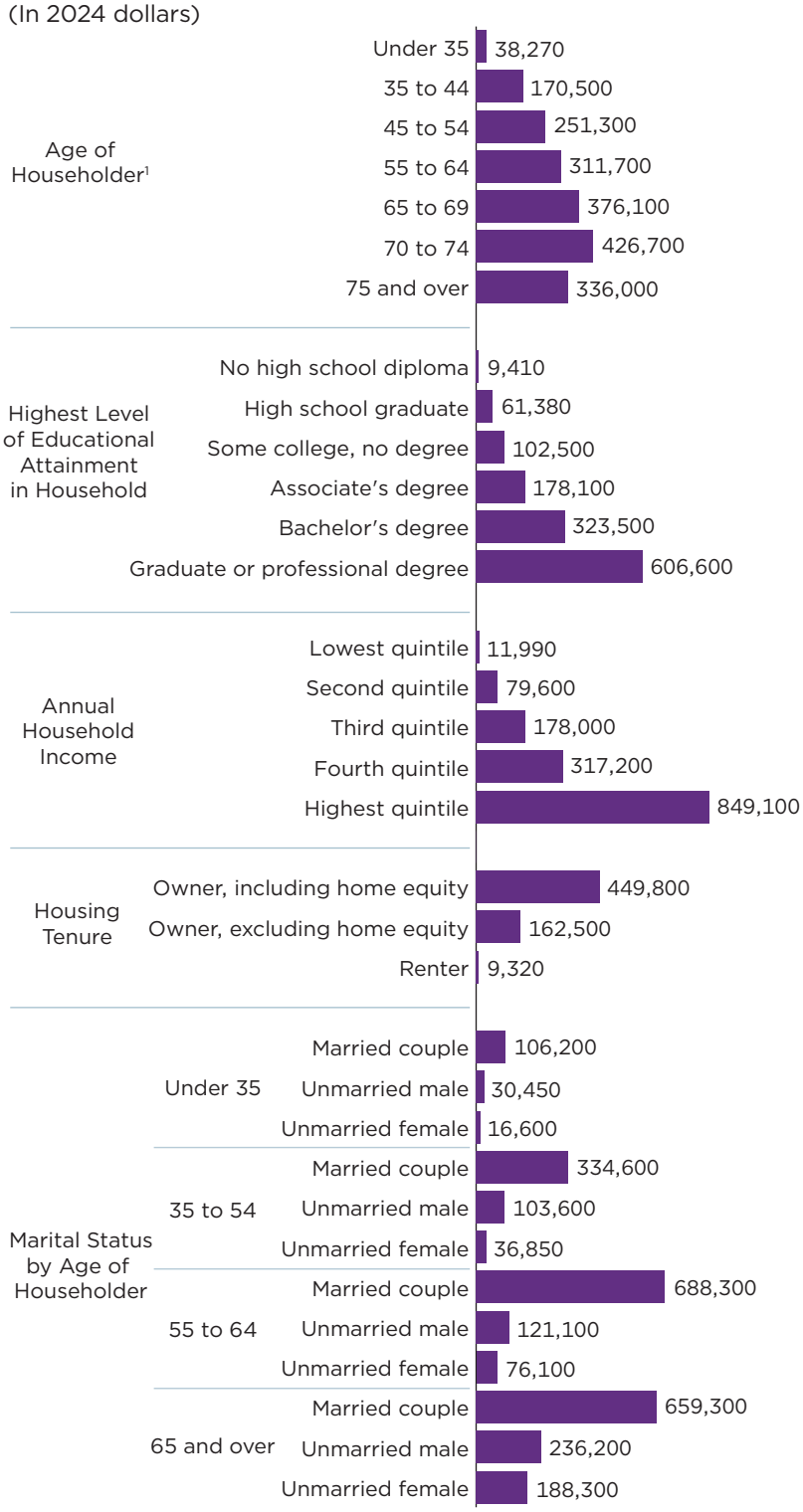
MEDIAN WEALTH BY HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 2 depicts how median wealth varied by demographic and economic characteristics of the household according to the 2025 SIPP.

The data suggest that households generally accumulate more wealth as they age.[5] In 2024, median wealth was $38,270 for households in which the householder was under the age of 35. For households in which the householder was between 70 and 74 years old, median household wealth was $426,700—or 2.1 times the value of overall median wealth ($204,900). Figure 2 also suggests that aging households eventually draw down their wealth. For households in which the householder was at least 75 years old, median household wealth was $336,000, or about 79 percent of the median household wealth for householders between 70 and 74 years old.

Higher education was associated with more wealth. Median wealth among households in which the most educated member held a high school diploma was $61,380, or 6.5 times greater than households in which no member had a high school diploma. Households in which the most educated member had a bachelor's degree had a median wealth of $323,500—5.3 times greater than those in which the most educated member held a high school diploma.

Figure 2.
Median Wealth by Household Characteristics: 2024
(In 2024 dollars)



[1] Householder is a person who owns or rents the housing unit (whose name appears on the deed or lease).
Note: Weighted interpolated medians are used to calculate statistics.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2025 Survey of Income and Program Participation public-use data (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7516454 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY26-0189).

[4] There was no statistically significant difference between the share of households with zero or negative wealth for those with a non-Hispanic White householder and those with a non-Hispanic Asian householder.

[5] Differences between the following age groups were not statistically significant: 65–69 and 70–74, 55–64 and 75 and over, and 65–69 and 75 and over.

Households with higher annual incomes had more wealth.[6] When households are separated into income quintiles (meaning five equally sized groups ordered by income from lowest to highest), a meaningful wealth difference can be found between the highest, the middle, and the lowest income households.[7] For example, the median wealth of households in the lowest quintile was 6.7 percent of the median wealth of households in the middle income group (third quintile). The median wealth of households in the third income quintile was 21.0 percent of the median wealth of the households in the highest quintile.

Homeowners were wealthier than renters. Households that owned their home had a median wealth 48.3 times larger than those that rented. If home equity is excluded from total wealth, the median wealth of households that owned their home was 17.4 times that of the median household that rented. In other words, home equity alone did not account for the difference in median wealth between households that owned and households that rented.

At each age level, the median wealth of married householders was greater than that of unmarried householders. For example, married householders under the age of 35 had a median wealth 6.4 times that of unmarried female householders and 3.5 times that of unmarried male householders in the same age group.[8] This pattern suggests that the gaps in median wealth cannot solely be attributed to the presence of an additional adult in the household; otherwise, married householders would have no more than twice the median wealth of unmarried householders.

There were also statistically significant differences in median wealth between households with unmarried men and women for some age groups. For those under the age of 35, 35 to 54, and 65 and over, the median wealth of unmarried female householders was less than the median wealth of unmarried male householders. For example, unmarried female householders under the age of 35 had a median wealth of $16,600 (54.5 percent of their unmarried male counterparts' wealth). But among those ages 55 to 64, the difference in median wealth between unmarried male and female householders was not statistically significant.

ASSET OWNERSHIP RATES AND VALUES

The SIPP collects data on many different asset types; the ownership rates and median values of these assets are presented in Table 2.[9] In calculating median asset value, equity is the value of an asset net of any secured debts held against it. For example, the mortgage balance is subtracted from the value of a home to calculate home equity. Therefore, the value of these secured assets may be negative.

Assets at financial institutions (such as checking and savings accounts) and vehicle equity were the most common assets. In 2024, 95.7 percent of households had assets at financial institutions and 82.5 percent owned vehicles. The median values of these two asset classes were among the lowest values: $10,100 for assets at financial institutions and $12,900 for vehicles.[10]

The assets with the highest median values were rental property equity ($250,000) and primary home equity ($220,000). However, rental property was among the least commonly held assets, owned by 6.5 percent of households, compared to 62.5 percent of households who owned a home during the year.

Retirement accounts, owned by 60.5 percent of households, were another major source of wealth, with a median value of $89,150.

RATES AND VALUES OF UNSECURED DEBT HOLDINGS

Table 2 also shows debt-holding rates and the values of unsecured debts (e.g., credit card or medical debt). Unsecured debts differ from secured debts in that they have no asset backing them. For example, a lender cannot repossess someone's education if the individual fails to pay a student loan, the way an auto lender might repossess a car. By including unsecured debts, Table 2 provides a more complete picture of the debts held by households.

[6] Annual household income includes labor force and business earnings, means-tested transfer income, asset income, social insurance payments, and other personal income.

[7] Thresholds for income quintiles differ across survey years. In the 2025 SIPP public-use data, we define the lowest quintile as household income at or below $33,468. The middle quintile includes households with income between $63,111 and $102,104. The highest quintile is defined as household income above $169,068.

[8] The ratio of median wealth between married-couple households and unmarried female households was not statistically different from the ratio between married-couple and unmarried male households.

[9] Estimates of median value are conditional on asset ownership or holding of the relevant debt type. If a household held an asset or debt type during the reference year but reported its value to be zero dollars as of December 31 (e.g., because the asset was sold or the debt paid off), the zero is included in the median calculation.

[10] The median values of assets at financial institutions and vehicles were statistically lower than the median values of equity in own home, retirement accounts, other real estate, stocks and mutual funds, rental property, and other asset holdings.

Table 2.
Asset and Unsecured Debt Ownership Rates for Households and Median Values of Asset Holdings and Unsecured Debts Owed: 2024

Asset or debt type	Percent holding asset or debt type	Standard error	Median value (2024 dollars)[1, 2]	Standard error (2024 dollars)
Wealth	**X**	**X**	**204,900**	**4,917**
Value of Asset Holdings				
Assets at financial institutions	95.7	0.2	10,100	307
Vehicles	82.5	0.4	12,900	142
Equity in own home	62.5	0.4	220,000	3,389
Retirement accounts[3]	60.5	0.5	89,150	2,781
Stocks and mutual funds	24.7	0.4	47,500	4,207
Business assets	15.8	0.4	7,000	1,706
Bonds	7.7	0.2	7,880	1,148
Other real estate	7.3	0.2	100,000	14,250
Rental property	6.5	0.3	250,000	5,839
Other asset holdings[4]	25.8	0.4	20,000	447
Unsecured Debts[5]				
All unsecured debts	53.5	0.5	10,000	Z
Credit card and store bills	40.0	0.5	5,000	128
Student loan and education-related expenses	17.8	0.4	23,800	1,532
Medical debts	16.0	0.4	2,000	227
Other unsecured debts[6]	9.4	0.3	7,000	674

X Not applicable.
Z Represents or rounds to zero.
[1] Asset values are net of debts held against them, otherwise known as equity. Wealth is also net of all unsecured debts.
[2] Interpolated medians are used to calculate statistics, and estimates of median value are conditional on asset ownership or possession of the relevant debt type. If a household held an asset or debt type during the reference year but reported its value to be zero dollars as of December 31 (e.g., because the asset was sold or the debt paid off), the zero is included in the median calculation.
[3] Includes individual retirement accounts (IRAs), Keogh accounts, Thrift Savings Plans, and 401(k) accounts.
[4] Includes annuities, trusts, cash life insurance policies, educational savings accounts, mortgages held for sale of real estate, amount due from sale of business property, and other financial assets.
[5] The percentage of households holding secured debts and the median value of those debts can be found in the "2024 Wealth, Asset Ownership, & Debt of Households Detailed Tables" at <www.census.gov/data/tables/2024/demo/wealth/wealth-asset-ownership.html>. Estimates are provided for total secured debt, home debt, business debt, and vehicle debt.
[6] Includes loans obtained through a bank or credit union, money owed to private individuals, debt held against mutual funds or stocks, and all other debts.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2025 Survey of Income and Program Participation public-use data (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7516454 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY26-0189).

In 2024, 53.5 percent of households had some unsecured debt. Credit card debt was the most common form of unsecured debt, held by 40.0 percent of households, with a median balance of $5,000. Student loans were held by 17.8 percent of households and had the highest median balance at $23,800. Sixteen percent of households had medical debt; the median amount owed was $2,000.

THE COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD WEALTH

Median asset values vary across asset types, meaning that some commonly held assets are a small part of overall wealth (Table 2). Therefore, to illustrate the composition of wealth, Figure 3 shows aggregate household wealth decomposed by asset type.[11]

Because the asset holdings of extremely wealthy households are not representative of the rest of the population, this section focuses on households at or below the 99th percentile of net worth.

In 2024, home equity and retirement accounts composed the majority (66.3 percent) of aggregate household wealth. Specifically, 35.0 percent of household wealth was held in retirement accounts, and home equity accounted for 31.3 percent of household wealth.

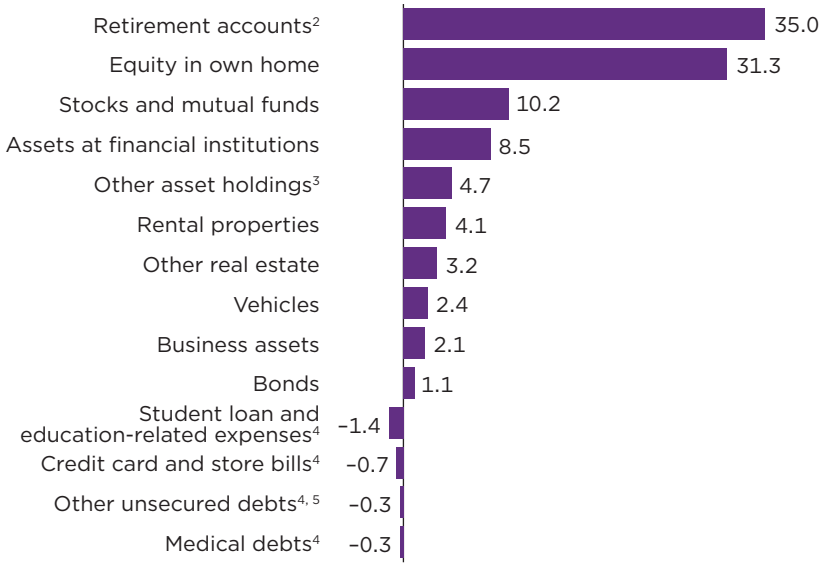
Despite being the two most commonly held assets, assets at financial institutions and vehicle equity accounted for 8.5 percent and 2.4 percent of aggregate household wealth, respectively.[12]

[11] The aggregate value of wealth is defined as the sum of wealth across all U.S. households. To calculate the share of wealth held in a specific asset category, the value of the asset (net of any debt held against it) is summed across all households and divided by aggregate household wealth.

[12] Note that decompositions of aggregate wealth are not necessarily informative of individual households' wealth composition. For example, while vehicles represent a small share of aggregate wealth, they represent a much larger share of wealth for households owning only vehicles and a checking account.

Dividing the total value of unsecured debt among all households by the total value of household wealth, unsecured debt was 2.7 percent of aggregate wealth. Student loans and other education-related expenses accounted for the largest share of unsecured debt in the United States. Although the magnitude of these expenses was equivalent to 1.4 percent of aggregate wealth, they accounted for about 52 percent of unsecured debt.

Figure 3.
Composition of Wealth by Asset Type: 2024[1]
(In percent)



[1] Excludes households in the top 1 percent of wealth.
[2] Includes individual retirement accounts (IRAs), Keogh accounts, Thrift Savings Plans, and 401(k) accounts.
[3] Includes annuities, trusts, cash life insurance policies, educational savings accounts, mortgages held for sale of real estate, amount due from sale of business property, and other financial assets.
[4] Because wealth is assets minus debts, unsecured debts are subtracted from the distribution of wealth and are shown as negative.
[5] Includes loans obtained through a bank or credit union, money owed to private individuals, debt held against mutual funds or stocks, and all other debts.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2025 Survey of Income and Program Participation public-use data (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7516454 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY26-0189).

SUMMARY

Estimates presented in this brief illustrate the wide variation in household wealth and, therefore, the economic well-being of households. Assets at financial institutions (such as checking or savings accounts) and vehicle equity were the most commonly held assets, but they only accounted for a relatively small portion of aggregate household wealth. Retirement accounts and home equity made up the majority of aggregate household wealth.

Additionally, the estimates demonstrate significant variation in the distribution of household wealth by race and ethnicity, and in median wealth by demographic and economic characteristics, namely: age, education, income, home ownership, and marital status.

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this brief have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level, unless otherwise noted. This means the 90 percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero. Nonsampling errors in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. To minimize these errors, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process, including the overall design of surveys, wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and the statistical review of reports.

Additional information can be found on the main SIPP website at <www.census.gov/sipp>, in the SIPP Users' Guide at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/guidance/users-guide.html>, and in the SIPP Source and Accuracy Statements at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/tech-documentation/source-accuracy-statements.html>. For technical documentation and more information about SIPP data quality, visit the SIPP website's technical documentation page at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/tech-documentation.html>.

CONTACTS

For more information on the SIPP, including data and methodology, contact the SIPP Coordination and Outreach staff by email at <census.sipp@census.gov> or call 1-888-245-3076.

For further information on the content of this report, contact the Labor Force Statistics Branch at 301-763-3230.

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