

We asked... You told us

Value of Home and Monthly Rent

The Census Bureau conducts a census of population and housing every 10 years. This bulletin is one of a series that shows the questions asked in the 1990 census and the answers that you, the American people, gave. Each bulletin focuses on a question or group of questions appearing on the 1990 census questionnaires.

Median Home Value—\$79,100

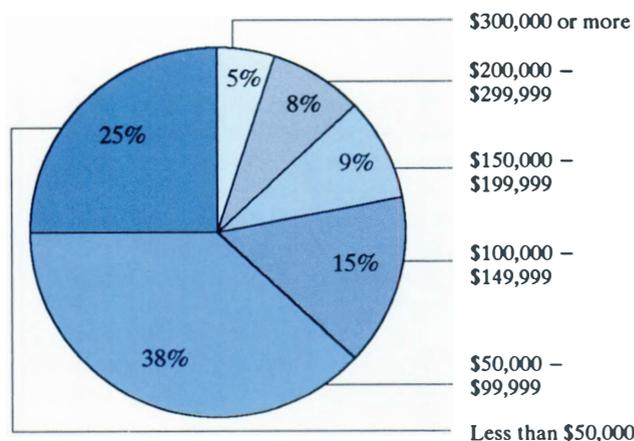
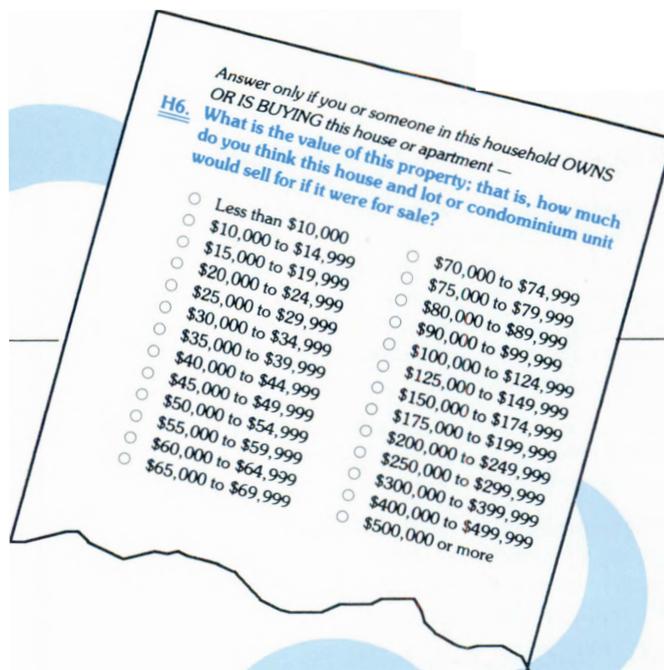
In question H6 on the 1990 census forms, we asked people who owned or were buying their homes to give us the “market value” of their property; that is, how much they thought their property would sell for, if it were for sale. The pie chart to the right shows the answers to this question. About 5 percent of owners said their house or condominium was worth \$300,000 or more. By comparison, about 25 percent of owners valued their dwelling at less than \$50,000.

From what you told us, we also learned that:

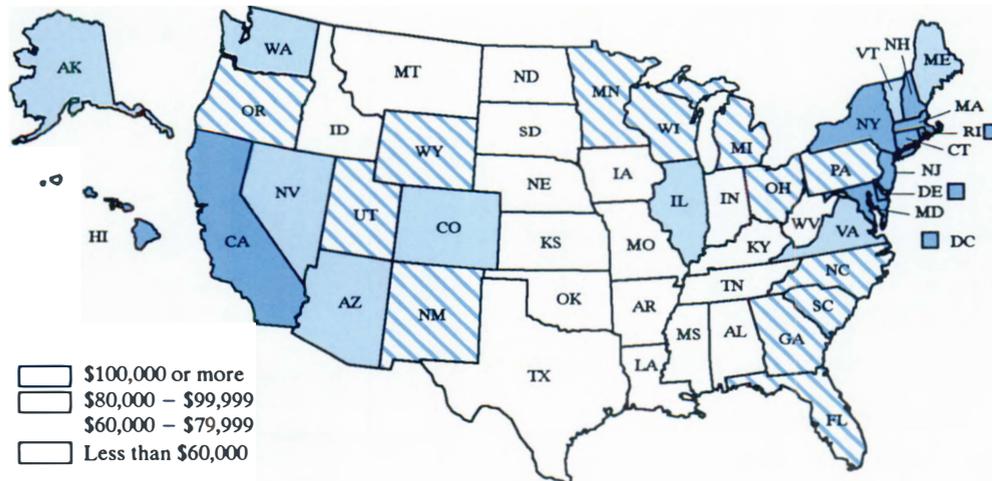
- The median* value of a one-family house in the United States was \$79,100 in 1990, 5 percent higher after adjusting for inflation than the 1980 value. Median housing values in the West and Northeast in 1990 were almost double those in the South and Midwest.
- Eleven States had median home values exceeding \$100,000 in 1990. Home values in three States surpassed \$175,000—Hawaii, \$245,300; California, \$195,500; and Connecticut, \$177,800.
- In contrast, median home values were less than \$60,000 in 18 States, with the lowest home values found in South Dakota, \$45,200; Mississippi, \$45,600; and Iowa, \$45,900.

**The median represents the middle case in the value or rent distribution. The median divides the distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases fall below the median, and one-half of the cases exceed the median. Median value is rounded to the nearest hundred dollars, median rent to the nearest dollar.*

Census Trivia: Of the 25 largest cities, which one had the highest median home value according to the 1990 census? Which one had the lowest? (Answer on reverse.)



Median Home Value: 1990





Median Monthly Rent—\$374

In question H7, we asked persons who were renting their house or apartment, "What is the monthly rent?" and "Does the monthly rent include any meals?"

Here are a few things you told us about monthly rent:

- Nationally, the median monthly rental payment was \$374 in 1990, up 19 percent after adjusting for inflation from the 1980 level. The amount of the rental payment reflects the location of the unit, type of structure, number of rooms, age, and overall quality of the unit. These factors account for the large variations in monthly rent shown in the bar chart to the right.
- For example, about 10 percent of renters in the United States paid less than \$150 rent per month in 1990, while 8 percent paid \$750 or more.
- Not surprisingly, rental prices tended to follow the same geographic pattern as housing values; that is, the highest rents often were found in the same areas as those with the highest home values.
- At the State level, the highest median monthly rents were paid by renters living in Hawaii, \$599; California, \$561; and New Jersey, \$521. Median monthly rents were lowest in Mississippi, \$215; West Virginia, \$221; and Alabama, \$229.

Meals Included in Rent

Fewer than 1 percent (0.9) of renters had the cost of meals included in their rent. Question H7b was new for 1990 and refers to housing arrangements, mainly for elderly residents, in which the tenants live in separate housing units but eat some or all of their meals in a common dining hall. As our population ages, we can expect more rental arrangements to feature meals and other personal services, such as transportation to shopping and recreation.

Who Uses This Information?

Just a few examples:

- Individuals who are considering relocating.
- Businesses for selecting office/plant sites and for marketing products.
- Federal, State, and local governments for identifying service areas for housing assistance programs and for measuring the ability of the population to obtain adequate shelter.

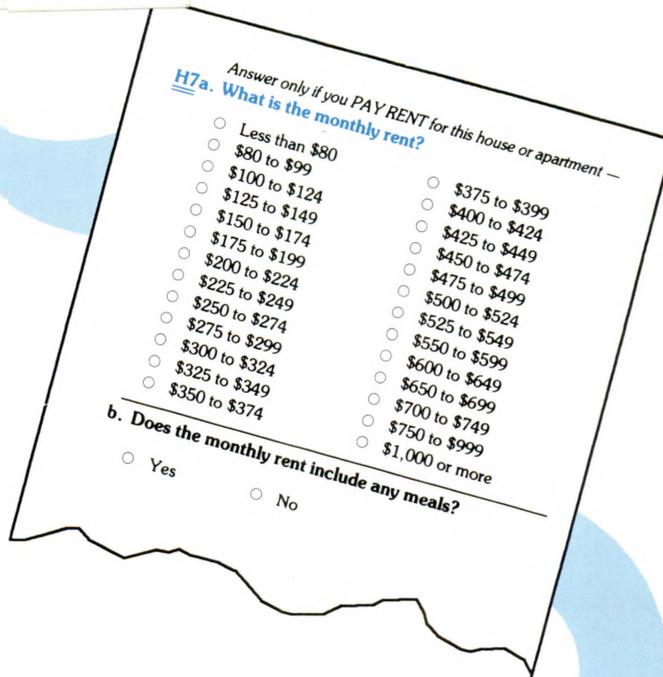
Trivia Answer: Of the 25 largest cities, San Francisco had the highest median home value (\$298,900) in 1990; Detroit, the lowest (\$25,600).

Want to Know More?

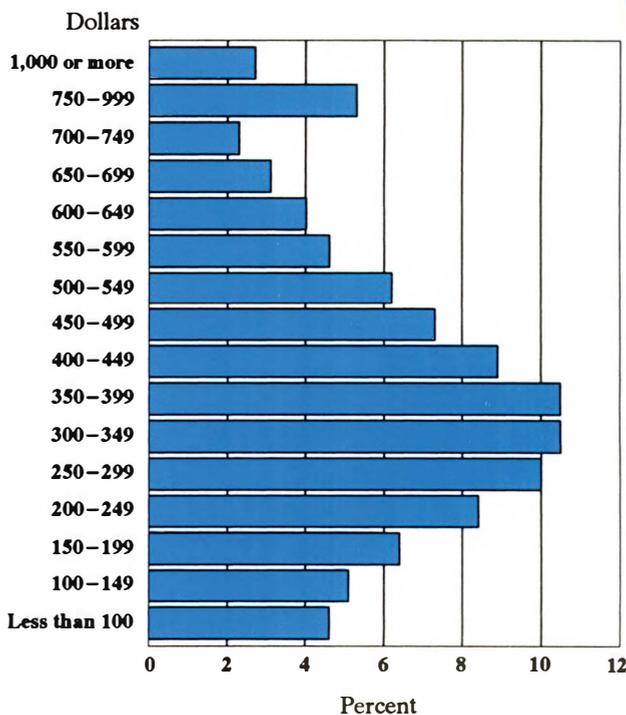
Consult the series of 1990 census reports, CPH-1, *Summary Population and Housing Characteristics*, and CH-1, *General Housing Characteristics*, at a large local or university library. Also for sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office. For telephone orders, call 202-783-3238.

For more information on CQC bulletins, contact Karen Mills, 301-763-4255. For copies of CQC bulletins, call Customer Services at the Census Bureau, 301-763-4100.

For further information on housing data, contact the Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, 301-763-8553.



Percent Distribution of Monthly Rent: 1990



Issued April 1992

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS