

## Appendix A.

### Definitions of Geographic Terms, Subject Characteristics, and Facsimile of the American Housing Survey Control Card and Questionnaire: 1991

#### AREA DEFINITIONS

The data shown in this report relate to areas as defined for the 1980 census for urban, rural, farm, and nonfarm; and as of 1983, as defined by OMB for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. The area definitions used in this report were not updated to include any OMB decisions after 1983 or the 1990 census results.

**Regions.** The standard census geographic regions are used in the tables of this report. States contained in each region are as follows: Northeast—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey; Midwest—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota; South—Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas; West—Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California, and Hawaii. Data for the regions are shown in chapters 1 through 11, tables 4 and 5; and chapters 1 and 2, table 6.

**Places.** Two types of places are recognized by the Census Bureau, incorporated places and census designated places as defined below.

*Incorporated places.* Incorporated places are those that are incorporated under the laws of their respective States as cities, boroughs, towns, and villages.

*Census designated places (CDP's).* The Census Bureau has delineated boundaries for closely settled population centers without corporate limits. To be recognized for the census, CDP's must have a minimum population. If located in urbanized areas that have one or more cities of 50,000 or more population, CDP's must have a minimum population of 5,000. All other areas except for areas in Alaska and Hawaii require a minimum population of 1,000. The requirements are a population of 25 in Alaska and 300 in Hawaii.

Place size as shown in national reports reflects the place size as of the 1980 census. More detailed information on places appears in the 1980 Population Census PC (1)-A reports.

**Urban and rural residence.** As defined for the 1980 census, urban housing comprises all housing units in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 or more inhabitants outside urbanized areas. More specifically, urban housing consists of all housing units in (a) places of 2,500 or more inhabitants incorporated as cities, villages, boroughs (except in Alaska and New York), and towns (except in the New England States, New York, and Wisconsin), but excluding those housing units in the rural portions of extended cities; (b) census designated places of 2,500 or more inhabitants; and (c) other territory, incorporated or unincorporated, included in urbanized areas. Housing units not classified as urban constitute rural housing. Information on the historical development of the urban-rural residence definition appears in the 1980 Census of Population report, *Characteristics of the Population, Number of Inhabitants*, PC801-A.

*Urbanized areas.* The major objective of the Census Bureau in delineating urbanized areas is to provide a better separation of urban and rural housing in the vicinity of large cities. In the 1980 census, an urbanized area comprised an incorporated place and adjacent densely settled (1.6 or more people per acre) surrounding area that together have a minimum population of 50,000. For more information on urbanized areas, refer to the 1980 Population Census PC(1)-A reports.

**Farm-nonfarm residence.** In rural areas, occupied housing units are subdivided into rural-farm housing (which comprises all rural units on farms) and rural-nonfarm housing (which comprises the remaining rural units). Occupied housing units are classified as farm units if the sales of agricultural products amounted to at least \$1,000 during the 12-month period prior to the interview. Occupied units in rural territory that do not meet the definition for farm housing are classified as nonfarm.

**Metropolitan statistical areas.** Metropolitan statistical areas (MSA's) shown in the American Housing Survey are defined by the Office of Management and Budget. By current standards, as published in the Federal Register on January 3, 1980, an area qualifies for recognition as an MSA in one of two ways: if there is a city of at least 50,000 population, or a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area of at least 50,000 with a total metropolitan population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New

England). Except in the New England States, an MSA is defined in terms of entire counties. In New England, MSA's are composed of cities and towns. In addition to the county containing the main city, additional counties are included in an MSA if they are socially and economically integrated with the central county. An MSA may contain more than one city of 50,000 population and may cross State lines.

**Primary metropolitan statistical areas.** Within the metropolitan statistical areas classified as Level A (population size of 1,000,000 or more), some areas may qualify for separate recognition as primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSA's). A PMSA is a large urbanized county, or cluster of counties, that demonstrates very strong internal economic and social links, in addition to close ties to the other portions of the Level A metropolitan statistical area.

**Consolidated metropolitan statistical area.** A consolidated metropolitan statistical area (CMSA) is a Level A metropolitan statistical area when at least two primary metropolitan statistical areas are defined.

**Central cities.** Every metropolitan statistical area has at least one central city, which is usually its largest city. Smaller cities are also identified as central cities if they have at least 25,000 population and meet the following two commuting requirements. First, the city must have at least 75 jobs for each 100 residents who are employed. Second, no more than 60 percent of the city's resident workers may commute to jobs outside the city limits. In addition, any city with at least 250,000 population or at least 100,000 persons working within its corporate limits qualifies as a central city even if it fails to meet the above two commuting requirements. Finally, in certain smaller metropolitan statistical areas, there are places with between 15,000 and 25,000 population that also qualify as central cities, because they are at least one-third the size of the metropolitan statistical area's largest city and meet the two commuting requirements.

**Standard metropolitan statistical areas.** The definitions of standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSA's) used in the Annual Housing Survey prior to 1984 corresponded to the 243 SMSA's used in the 1970 census. Except in the New England States, an SMSA is a county or group of contiguous counties that contains at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more, or "twin cities" with a combined population of at least 50,000. In addition to the county or counties containing such a city or cities, contiguous counties are included in an SMSA if, according to certain criteria, they are socially and economically integrated with the central city. In the New England States, SMSA's consist of towns and cities instead of counties. Each SMSA must include at least one central city, and the complete title of an SMSA identifies the central city or cities.

## GENERAL DEFINITIONS

The American Housing Survey was conducted by personal interview. The survey interviewers were instructed to read the questions directly from the questionnaire. The definitions and explanations given for each subject are, to a considerable extent, drawn from various technical and procedural materials used in the collection of the data. These materials helped the field interviewers to understand more fully the intent of each question and, thus, to resolve problems or unusual cases. Additional explanatory information has been added to this portion of the text to assist the user in understanding the statistics.

**Medians.** We estimate each median from the printed distribution. For example, if there are 10 million homes of a particular type, the median is the 5 millionth, or halfway point of these homes. Therefore, if 4 million homes are below \$400 rent, then the median is the millionth home above \$400. Finally, if the next interval printed in the book (from \$400 to \$449), has 3 million homes, the median is assumed to be one-third of the way through the interval (at \$417). Actually, this technique overestimates medians by a few percent since most homes cluster at the bottom of their intervals. The clustering happens because landlords ask for rent in round numbers, like \$400, and people give answers in round numbers, like \$20,000 income, or 40 years old. There are two special cases in calculating medians: For education, we assume that an interval like "completed twelve years" means 12.00 to 12.99, so one-third of the way through is 12.33. For numbers of people or rooms, we assume an interval like 3 means 2.50 to 3.49, so one-third of the way through is 2.83. This method is used rather than just saying that the median is 3, in order to give a more detailed picture of the distribution. We do not show the median at all if the distribution is estimated to have fewer than 25 sample cases (50,000 homes in the national report, smaller numbers in the metropolitan reports).

**Comparability with 1990 Census of Population and Housing data.** The concepts and definitions are essentially the same for items that appear in both the 1990 census and the national reports.

There is a major difference, however, in the time period of the recent mover classification. In the American Housing Survey, recent movers are households that moved into their unit during the 12 months prior to interview, a period of 1 year or less. In publications for the 1990 Census of Housing on mover households, the time period was from January 1, 1989, through March 31, 1990, a period of 15 months or less.

A variety of data on mortgages and homeowner properties will be presented in planned publications from the Residential Finance Survey. Differences in the

concepts and definitions in the American Housing Survey and planned publications include the following: the basic unit of tabulation in AHS is the housing unit; in Residential Finance publications, it is the property. All the data in AHS are provided by the occupant; in Residential Finance publications, mortgage is reconciled with responses from the lender.

In the American Housing Survey, units are classified as new construction if constructed 4 years or less from the date of interview. In publications from the 1990 Census of Housing, units are classified as new construction if constructed in 1985 through 1990.

Data on poverty level in the 1990 Census of Housing do not contain the income of household members unrelated to the householder. In the American Housing Survey, data on poverty level include the income of all household members whether or not they are related to the householder.

Income data in the American Housing Survey are based on income for the 12 months prior to interview for those household members 14 years and older. The 1990 Census of Housing income data are for calendar year 1989 and for income of household members 15 years and older.

In the 1990 Census of Population, data for years of school completed were based on responses to two questions: the highest grade or year of regular school each household member attended, and whether or not that grade was completed. The response categories for persons who have attended college were modified from earlier censuses, because there was some ambiguity in interpreting responses in terms of number of years of college completed. This modification enhances the reporting of the number of college graduates. In the AHS, data for years of school completed were based on responses to a single question: the highest grade or year of regular school completed by the householder. Therefore, the AHS may overstate the education level of the householder; that is, respondents may have reported the grade or year the householder was currently enrolled in or had last been enrolled in whether or not the grade or year was completed.

Differences between the American Housing Survey data and the 1990 census may also be attributed to several other factors. These include the extensive use of self-enumeration in the census in contrast to personal interview in the survey; differences in processing procedures and sample designs; the sampling variability associated with the sample data from both the AHS and the census; the nonsampling errors associated with the survey estimates; and the nonsampling errors associated with census data.

**Comparability with Current Construction Reports from the Survey of Construction.** The Census Bureau issues several publications under the general titles,

"Current Construction Reports." The data for these reports are primarily from the Survey of Construction.

The Survey of Construction consists of approximately 8,300 permit-issuing places throughout the United States. The reports from the survey contain current data on housing starts and completions, construction authorized by building permits, new one-unit structures sold and for sale, characteristics of new housing, and value of new construction put in place. The concepts and definitions used in this report differ from some of those used in the Survey of Construction. The major difference is that the Survey of Construction shows counts and characteristics of housing units in various stages of construction through completion. The American Housing Survey shows counts and characteristics of the existing housing inventory. Additional differences between the American Housing Survey and the Survey of Construction may be attributed to factors such as the sampling variability and nonsampling errors of the data from the two surveys, survey procedures and techniques, and processing procedures.

## SUBJECT CHARACTERISTICS

### Living Quarters

Living quarters are classified as either housing units or group quarters. Usually, living quarters are in structures intended for residential use (e.g., a one-unit structure, apartment house, hotel or motel, boarding house, or mobile home or trailer). Living quarters may also be in structures intended for nonresidential use (e.g., the rooms in a warehouse where a watchman lives), as well as in places such as tents, caves, and old railroad cars.

**Housing units.** A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants do not live and eat with any other persons in the structure and that have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall that is used or intended for use by the occupants of another unit or by the general public. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements (except as described in the section on group quarters).

**Group quarters.** Group quarters are living arrangements for institutional inmates or for other groups containing nine or more persons not related to the person in charge. Group quarters are located most frequently in institutions, boarding houses, military barracks, college dormitories, fraternity and sorority houses, hospitals, monasteries, convents, and ships. A house or

apartment is considered group quarters if it is shared by the person in charge and nine or more unrelated persons or, if there is no person in charge, by 10 or more unrelated persons. Information on the housing characteristics of group quarters was not collected.

**Hotels, motels, rooming houses, etc.** Occupied rooms or suites of rooms in hotels, motels, and similar places are classified as housing units only when occupied by permanent residents; i.e., persons who consider the hotel as their usual place of residence or have no usual place of residence elsewhere. Vacant rooms or suites of rooms are classified as housing units only in those hotels, motels, and similar places in which 75 percent or more of the accommodations are occupied by permanent residents.

If any of the occupants in a rooming or boarding house live and eat separately from everyone else in the building and have direct access, their quarters are classified as separate housing units. The remaining quarters are combined. If the combined quarters contain eight or fewer roomers unrelated to the householder, they are classified as one housing unit; if the combined quarters contain nine or more roomers unrelated to the householder, or person in charge, they are classified as group quarters. In a dormitory, residence hall, or similar place, living quarters of the supervisory staff and other employees are separate housing units if they satisfy the housing unit criteria; other living quarters are considered group quarters.

**Staff living quarters.** Living quarters of staff personnel are separate housing units if they satisfy the housing unit criteria. Other living quarters are considered group quarters.

**Occupied housing units.** A housing unit is classified as occupied if a person or group of persons is living in it at the time of the interview or if the occupants are only temporarily absent, for example, on vacation. However, if the unit is occupied entirely by persons with a usual place of residence elsewhere, the unit is classified as vacant. By definition, the count of occupied housing units is the same as the count of households.

**Race.** The classification of "race" refers to the race of the householder occupying the housing unit. The concept of race as used by the Census Bureau does not denote a clear-cut scientific definition of biological stock. Race was determined on the basis of a question that asked for self-identification of a person's race. Figures on tenure are given separately for White and Black householders in table 1. Detailed characteristics of units with Black householders are presented in chapter 4.

**Hispanic.** The classification "Hispanic" refers to the origin of the householder occupying the housing unit. Detailed characteristics of housing units with Hispanic

householders are presented in chapter 5. Hispanic origin was determined on the basis of a question that asked for self-identification of persons living in the unit who were Hispanic or Spanish American. Hispanic persons may be of any race.

**Tenure.** A housing unit is owner occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. Also, a cooperative or condominium unit is owner occupied only if the owner or co-owner lives in it. All other occupied housing units are classified as renter occupied, including housing units rented for cash rent and those occupied without payment of cash rent.

**Suitability for year-round use.** A housing unit is suitable for year-round use if it is built as a permanent structure, properly equipped and insulated for heating as necessitated by the climate, and if it has a heating system that would be adequate during extended cold periods.

**Recent movers.** In this report, data for recent movers are shown for units where the householder/respondent moved into the present unit during the 12 months prior to the interview.

### Utilization Characteristics

**Persons.** All persons occupying the housing unit are counted. These persons include not only occupants related to the householder but also any lodgers, roomers, boarders, partners, wards, foster children, and resident employees who share the living quarters of the householder. The data on persons show categories of the number of one-person through seven-or-more-person households. The median for persons is rounded to the nearest tenth.

A person is counted at the usual place of residence for that person. This refers to the place where the person lives and sleeps most of the time. This place is not necessarily the same as a legal residence, voting residence, or domicile.

**Rooms.** The statistics on rooms are for the number of housing units with a specified number of rooms. Rooms counted include whole rooms used for living purposes, such as bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, recreation rooms, permanently enclosed porches that are suitable for year-round use, lodgers' rooms, and other finished and unfinished rooms. Also included are rooms used for offices by a person living in the unit. The median for rooms is rounded to the nearest tenth.

A dining room, to be counted, must be a separate room. It must be separated from adjoining rooms by built-in floor-to-ceiling walls extending at least a few

inches from the intersecting walls. Movable or collapsible partitions or partitions consisting solely of shelves or cabinets are not considered built-in-walls. Bathrooms are not counted as rooms.

**Persons per room.** Persons per room is computed for each occupied housing unit by dividing the number of persons in the unit by the number of rooms in the unit. The figures shown refer, therefore, to the number of housing units having the specified ratio of persons per room.

### Structural Characteristics

**New construction.** Housing units built in the 4 years prior to the date of the interview are classified as new construction.

**Year structure built.** Year structure built refers to when the building was first constructed, not when it was remodeled, added to, or converted. The figures refer to the number of housing units in structures built during the specified periods and in existence at the time of the interview. For mobile homes and trailers, the manufacturer's model year was assumed to be the year built. Median year built is rounded to the nearest year.

**Units in structure.** In determining the number of housing units in a structure, all units, both occupied and vacant, were counted. The statistics are presented for the number of housing units in structures of specified type and size, not for the number of residential structures.

A structure is a separate building if it has either open space on all sides or is separated from other structures by dividing walls that extend from ground to roof. Structures containing only one housing unit are further classified as detached or attached. A one-unit structure is detached if it has open space on all four sides even though it has an adjoining shed or garage. A one-unit structure is attached if it has one or more walls extending from ground to roof that divide it from other adjoining structures and does not share a furnace or boiler with adjoining structures such as in rowhouses, townhouses, etc.

Mobile homes and trailers are shown as a separate category. When one or more rooms have been added to a mobile home or trailer, it is classified as a mobile home. In previous AHS reports, these units were classified as a house, apartment, or flat.

### Plumbing Characteristics

**Water supply stoppage.** Water supply stoppage means that the housing unit was completely without running water from its regular source. Completely without running water means that the water system servicing the

unit supplied no water at all, that is, no equipment or facility using running water (in kitchen and bathroom sinks, shower, in bathtub, flush toilet, dishwasher, and other similar items) had water supplied to it, or all were inoperable. The reason could vary from a stoppage because of a flood or storm, to a broken pipe, to a shutdown of the water system, to a failure to pay the bill, or other reasons.

Data on water supply stoppage are shown if they occurred in the 3 months prior to the interview, or while the household was living in the unit if less than 3 months, and if the breakdown or failure lasted 6 consecutive hours or more. Housing units with water supply stoppage are also classified according to the number of times the stoppages occurred.

### Sewage disposal and sewage disposal breakdowns.

A public sewer is connected to a city, county, sanitary district, neighborhood, or subdivision sewer system. Included are only systems operated by a government body or private organization sewage treatment system serving six or more units. Small sewage treatment plants, which in some localities are called neighborhood septic tanks, are classified as public sewers. A septic tank or cesspool is an underground tank or pit used for disposal of sewage (serving five or fewer units). A chemical toilet, which may be inside or outside the unit, uses chemicals to break down or dissolve sewage. Housing units for which sewage is disposed of in some other way are included in the "other" category.

The data on breakdowns in the means of sewage disposal are limited to housing units in which the means of sewage disposal was a public sewer, septic tank, or cesspool. Breakdowns refer to situations in which the system was completely unusable. Examples include septic tank being pumped because it no longer perked, tank collapsed, tank exploded, sewer main broken, sewer treatment plant not operating as a result of electrical failure or water service interruption, etc.

Data on breakdowns are shown if they occurred in the 3 months prior to the interview or while the household was living in the unit if less than 3 months, and if the breakdown lasted 6 consecutive hours or more. Housing units with a breakdown in sewage disposal are also classified according to the number of breakdowns.

**Flush toilet and flush toilet breakdowns.** A privy or chemical toilet is not considered a flush toilet. Flush toilets outside the unit were not counted. The statistics on breakdowns of flush toilet are shown for housing units with at least one flush toilet for the household's use only. The flush toilet may be completely unusable because of a faulty flushing mechanism, broken pipes, stopped up soil pipe, lack of water supplied to the flush toilet, or some other reason.

Data on breakdowns are classified by whether any of the flush toilets were working in the 3 months prior to

the interview, or while the household was living in the unit if less than 3 months, and the number of times the breakdown lasted 6 hours or more.

## Equipment

**Heating equipment and heating equipment breakdowns.** Data are shown for the main heating equipment and other heating equipment used in addition to the main heating equipment. More than one category of "other heating equipment" could be reported for the same household. Only one type of equipment was reported as the "main heating equipment." Warm-air furnace refers to a central system that provides warm air through ducts leading to various rooms. Steam or hot water system refers to a central heating system in which heat from steam or hot water is delivered through radiators or other outlets. It also includes solar heated hot water that is circulated throughout the home. An electric heat pump refers to a heating-cooling system that utilizes indoor and outdoor coils, a compressor, and a refrigerant to pump in heat during the winter and pump out heat during the summer. Only heat pumps that are centrally installed with ducts to the rooms are included in this category. Built-in electric units refers to units permanently installed in floors, walls, ceilings, or baseboards. A floor, wall, or other built-in hot-air unit without ducts delivers warm air to the room right above the furnace or to the room(s) on one or both sides of the wall in which the furnace is installed. Room heaters with flue include non-portable room heaters in the wall or free standing heaters that burn liquid fuel, and which are connected to a flue, vent, or chimney to remove smoke and fumes.

Room heaters without flue include any room heater that burns kerosene, gas, or oil, which does not connect to a flue, vent, or chimney. Portable electric heaters include heaters that receive current from an electrical wall outlet. Stoves refer to ranges, stoves, or Franklin stoves that burn wood, coal, or other solid fuel. Fireplaces with inserts have a fan-forced air circulation system to force the heat into the room. A fireplace without inserts or with only glass door fire screens or firebacks inserted in the back of the fireplace to passively reflect heat is included in the category "fireplace without inserts."

For breakdowns of heating equipment, statistics are shown for housing units occupied by the householder during the winter prior to the interview. The data are classified by whether the housing unit was uncomfortably cold for 24 hours or more, the number of times equipment breakdowns occurred lasting 6 hours or more, and causes for the breakdowns.

The heating equipment is broken down if it is not providing heat at its normal heating capacity through some fault in the equipment. Utility interruptions occur

when there is a cut-off in the gas, electricity, or other fuel supplying the heat. Inadequate heating capacity refers to heating equipment that is providing heat at its normal capacity, but the housing unit is still too cold for the occupants. Inadequate insulation refers to air drafts through window frames, electrical outlets, or walls that are cold.

## Housing and Neighborhood Quality

### Selected amenities:

*Porch, deck, balcony, or patio.* The porch, deck, balcony, or patio must be attached to the sample unit, not just to the building or free standing. Porches may be enclosed or open.

*Telephone available.* A housing unit is classified as having a telephone if there is a telephone for receiving calls available to the occupants of the unit. The telephone may be located outside or inside the housing unit, and one telephone may serve the occupants of several units. The number of housing units with a telephone available, therefore, does not indicate the number of telephones installed in homes.

*Usable fireplace.* Excludes the following: fireplaces that have been blocked off or whose chimney or flue have been filled, decorative or artificial fireplaces, and Franklin stoves. Free-standing fireplaces are included in this item.

*Separate dining room.* A separate dining room is an area separated from adjoining rooms by a built-in floor-to-ceiling wall extending at least a few inches from its intersecting wall. Built-in walls do not include movable or collapsible partitions or partitions consisting solely of shelves and cabinets.

*Living rooms, recreation rooms, etc.* Includes family rooms, dens, recreation rooms and/or libraries.

*Garage or carport.* The garage or carport must be on the same property but does not have to be attached to the house. Off-street parking is considered driveway or parking lot privilege that is paid for as part of the rent.

### Selected deficiencies:

*Signs of rats.* The statistics on signs of rats refer to respondents who reported seeing rats or signs of rats inside the house or building during the last 3 months or while the household was living in the unit if less than 3 months. Signs of rats include droppings, holes in the wall, or ripped or torn food containers.

*Holes in floors.* Data are shown on whether there are holes in the interior floors of a housing unit. The holes do not have to go all the way through to a lower floor or to the exterior of the unit. The holes must be large enough to cause someone to trip.

*Open cracks or holes (interior).* Statistics are presented on whether or not there are open cracks or holes in the interior walls or ceilings of the housing unit. Included are cracks or holes that do not go all the way through to the next room or to the exterior of the housing unit. Hairline cracks or cracks that appear in the walls or ceilings but are not large enough to insert the edge of a dime and very small holes caused by nails or other similar objects are not considered to be open cracks or holes.

*Broken plaster or peeling paint (interior).* The area of peeling paint or broken plaster must be on the inside walls or ceilings and at least one area of broken plaster or peeling paint must be larger than 8 inches by 11 inches.

*Electric wiring.* A housing unit is classified as having exposed electric wiring if the unit has any wiring that is not enclosed, either in the walls or in metal coverings, or if the unit has any wiring outside the walls enclosed in some material other than metal. Excluded from the tabulation are appliance cords, extension cords, chandelier cords, and telephone, antenna, or cable TV wires.

*Electric wall outlets.* A housing unit is classified as having rooms without electric wall outlets if there is not at least one working electric wall outlet in each room of the unit. A working electric wall outlet is one that is in operating condition; i.e., can be used when needed. If a room does not have an electric wall outlet, an extension cord used in place of a wall outlet is not considered to be an electric wall outlet.

**Severe physical problems.** A unit has severe physical problems if it has any of the following five problems:

*Plumbing.* Lacking hot or cold piped water or a flush toilet, or lacking both bathtub and shower, all inside the structure for the exclusive use of the unit.

*Heating.* Having been uncomfortably cold last winter for 24 hours or more because the heating equipment broke down, and it broke down at least three times last winter for at least 6 hours each time.

*Electric.* Having no electricity, or all of the following three electric problems: exposed wiring; a room with no working wall outlet; and three blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers in the last 90 days.

*Upkeep.* Having any five of the following six maintenance problems: water leaks from the outside, such as from the roof, basement, windows, or doors; leaks from inside structure such as pipes or plumbing fixtures; holes in the floors; holes or open cracks in the walls or ceilings; more than 8 inches by 11 inches of peeling paint or broken plaster; or signs of rats or mice in the last 90 days.

*Hallways.* Having all of the following four problems in public areas: no working light fixtures; loose or missing steps; loose or missing railings; and no elevator.

**Moderate physical problems.** A unit has moderate physical problems if it has any of the following five problems, but none of the severe problems.

*Plumbing.* On at least three occasions during the last 3 months or while the household was living in the unit if less than 3 months, all the flush toilets were broken down at the same time for 6 hours or more.

*Heating.* Having unvented gas, oil, or kerosene heaters as the primary heating equipment.

*Upkeep.* Having any three of the overall list of six upkeep problems mentioned above under severe physical problems.

*Hallways.* Having any three of the four hallway problems mentioned above under severe physical problems.

*Kitchen.* Lacking a kitchen sink, refrigerator, or burners inside the structure for the exclusive use of the unit.

**Overall opinion of structure.** The data presented are based on the respondent's overall opinion of the house or apartment as a place to live. The respondent was asked to rate the structure based on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is the best and 1 is the worst.

**Overall opinion of neighborhood.** The data presented are based on the respondent's overall opinion of the neighborhood. The respondent defines neighborhood. The respondent was asked to rate the neighborhood based on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is the best and 1 is the worst.

**Neighborhood conditions.** The statistics presented in table 3 are based on the respondent's opinion and attitude toward the neighborhood. The respondent defines neighborhood. The respondent was asked a two-part question: (1) If anything about the neighborhood bothered the respondent and (2) if so, what? The interviewer coded the responses into the following categories: crime; noise; traffic; litter or housing deterioration; poor

city/county services; undesirable commercial, institutional, or industrial property; people; and other. Multiple responses were allowed. The respondent may not have the same opinion as a neighbor about neighborhood conditions. The respondent's opinion may or may not reflect the actual neighborhood situation.

**Neighborhood conditions and neighborhood services.** The statistics presented in table 4, as a percent of the total occupied units, are based on the respondent's opinion and attitude toward the neighborhood in which he/she lives. Thus, the respondent's answer may or may not reflect the actual description of the neighborhood. Furthermore, the respondent may not have the same opinion as a neighbor about the neighborhood services; for example, the respondent may feel that the street lighting or neighborhood shopping facilities are inadequate but a neighbor may not.

*Neighborhood conditions and wish to move.* Data on neighborhood conditions and wish to move in table 4 are based on the respondent's answers to a three-part question concerning specific neighborhood conditions. The respondent was asked (1) if the condition was present, (2) if the condition was bothersome, and (3) if the condition was so objectionable that the respondent would like to move from the neighborhood.

- a. Street noise or heavy street traffic—Street noise refers to noise made by children playing outdoors, noise from a factory or business, or any other sounds that the respondent considers street noise. Traffic refers to the amount of vehicular traffic that the respondent considers "heavy."
- b. Neighborhood crime—This category refers to all forms of street and neighborhood crime such as petty theft, assaults against the person, burglary, etc., or any related activities that the respondent judges to be a crime.

*Neighborhood services.* Data on neighborhood services are based on the respondent's answer to a series of questions concerning neighborhood services.

The respondent was asked a three-part question on public transportation: (1) if service is available, (2) if service is satisfactory, and (3) if any member of the household used the service at least once a week.

Data were also collected on satisfaction with neighborhood shopping such as grocery stores and drug stores, and whether or not these stores are located within 1 mile of the neighborhood.

Respondents were asked a three-part question on public elementary schools: (1) if children within the household attended public elementary school or private elementary school, (2) if the public elementary school is satisfactory, and (3) if the public elementary school is within 1 mile of the neighborhood.

## Journey to Work

**Workers.** Includes all persons aged 14 years and over who held a job any time the previous week of the survey within the United States.

**Principal means of transportation last week.** Means of transportation refers to the principal mode of travel used to get from home to work. Householders who used different means of transportation on different days of the week were asked to specify the one used most often. Householders who used more than one means of transportation to get to work each day were asked to specify the one used for the longest distance during the work trip. Mass transportation refers to bus or streetcar and subway or elevated railroad.

**Travel time from home to work.** The total elapsed time in minutes that the person reported it usually took to get from home to work during the week prior to interview was counted as the travel time to work. The elapsed time included time spent waiting for public transportation and picking up members of carpools. Respondents were instructed to report travel time to the nearest minute.

**No fixed place of work.** Workers with no fixed place of work were those who did not usually work at the same location each day and did not usually report in to a central location to begin work each day.

**Distance from home to work.** The one-way, "door-to-door" distance in miles that the person reported usually traveling from home to work during the week prior to interview was counted as the travel distance to work. Respondents were instructed to report travel rounded to the nearest mile.

**Departure time to work.** Refers to the time (hour and minutes) the respondent left for work. The categories begin with 12:00 a.m. and progress to 11:59 p.m.

## Financial Characteristics

All of the financial characteristics shown in this report are shown for all renters and/or all owners. In 1983 and earlier, the Annual Housing Survey reported financial characteristics for specified owners and specified renters. Specified owners are single-family, owner-occupied units on less than 10 acres with no business or medical office. Specified renters exclude single-family units on 10 acres or more. This report does not present financial characteristics for specified owners and specified renters. See *The American Housing Survey for the United States in 1991*, series H150, for data on specified owners and renters.

**Value.** Value is the respondent's estimate of how much the property (house and lot) would sell for if it were for sale. Any nonresidential portions of the property are excluded from the cost. For vacant units, value represents the sale price asked for the property at the time of the interview, and may differ from the price at which the property is sold. Medians for value are rounded to the nearest dollar.

**Income.** The statistics on income in the American Housing Survey are based on the respondent's reply to questions on income for the 12 months prior to the interview and are the sum of the amounts reported for wage and salary income, self-employment income, interest or dividends, Social Security or railroad retirement income, public assistance or welfare payments, alimony or child support, and all other money income. The figure represents the amount of income received before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, union dues, bond purchases, health insurance premiums, Medicare deductions, etc. Medians for income are rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

In this report, the statistics are shown separately for the money income of the household (the sum of the income of the householder and all other household members 14 years old and over). Household income is shown separately for family households and nonfamily households.

Wage or salary income is defined as the total money earnings received for work performed as an employee at any time during the 12-month period prior to the interview. It includes wages, salary, piece-rate payments, commissions, tips, cash bonuses, and Armed Forces pay. Self-employment income is defined as money income received from a business, professional practice, partnership, or farm in which the person was self-employed. Social Security or pensions includes cash receipts of Social Security pensions; survivors' benefits, disability insurance programs for retired persons, dependents of deceased insured workers, or disabled workers; and deductions for Medicare and health insurance premiums. Cash receipts of retirement, disability, and survivors' benefit payments made by the U.S. Government under the Railroad Retirement Act are also included. Separate payments received for hospital or other medical care are not included.

Income from all other sources includes money income received from sources such as periodic payments from interest or dividends; net rental income (or loss) from property rentals; net receipts from roomers or boarders; net royalties; public assistance or welfare payments which include cash receipts received from public assistance programs, such as old age assistance, aid to families with dependent children, and aid to the blind or totally disabled; unemployment insurance benefits; workmen's compensation cash benefits; periodic payments by the Veteran's Administration to disabled veterans;

public or private pensions; periodic receipts from insurance policies or annuities; alimony or child support from persons who are not members of the household; net gambling gains; and nonservice scholarships and fellowships.

Receipts from the following sources were not included as income: Value of income "in kind," such as, free living quarters, housing subsidies, food stamps, or food produced and consumed in the home; money received from the sale of property (unless the recipient was engaged in the business of selling such property); money borrowed; tax refund; withdrawal of bank deposits; accrued interest on uncashed savings bonds; exchange of money between relatives living in the same household; gifts of money; and lump-sum payments from inheritances, insurance policies, estates, trusts, gifts, etc.

The income statistics and the characteristics of the household refer to different periods in time. Income data refer to the 12 months prior to the interview, whereas the household characteristics refer to the date of interview. Thus, family or household income does not include amounts received by persons who were members of the family during all or part of the income period if these persons no longer resided with the family at the time of the interview. On the other hand, family or household income includes income reported by persons who did not reside with the household during the income period but who were members at the time of the interview. For most households, however, the income reported was received by persons who were members of the household throughout the income period.

There may be significant differences in the income data between the American Housing Survey and other Bureau surveys and censuses. For example, the time period for income data in the American Housing Survey refers to the 12 months prior to the interview while other income data generally refer to the calendar year prior to the date of the interview. Additional differences in the income data may be attributed to factors such as the various ways income questions are asked, the sampling variability and nonsampling errors between the American Housing Survey and other Census Bureau surveys and censuses, survey procedures and techniques, and processing procedures.

**Current income.** Two new questions were added to the American Housing Survey in 1989. Upon completion of the detailed income questions, respondents were asked, "Is your total family income THIS MONTH about the same as it was a year ago?" "About the same" was defined as within 10 percent or just cost of living adjustments. If the respondent answered "no," a second question was asked, "What do you expect your total family income to be in the NEXT 12 MONTHS?" Current income for families whose most recent month's income was NOT about the same as a year ago is the

"total expected family income in the NEXT 12 MONTHS." Current income for families whose most recent month's income WAS about the same as a year ago is "family and primary individual income." For the majority of families, current income equals income of families and primary individuals. Data on current income is not published separately. It's used in the calculation of "Ratio of value to current income," and "Monthly housing costs as percent of current income." It is felt that respondents who have only recently entered the job market and those who changed jobs during the past year often report a previous year's income, which is too low to accurately reflect their current financial situation as it relates to the value of their home and their housing costs.

**Poverty status.** The poverty data in this report differ from official poverty estimates in two important respects. The first important difference is the use of a poverty definition that is based on household income in place of the official method that is based on the income of the family or the unrelated individual. Under the official approach, the poverty status of two unrelated individuals living together would be determined by comparing the income of each individual to the poverty threshold for an unrelated individual. The result might be that both were in poverty, both were out of poverty, or one was in poverty and one was not. Under the approach used in this report, the two unrelated individuals were treated as members of a two-person family and their poverty status was determined by comparing their combined income to the poverty threshold for a two-person family. The effect of using a poverty concept that is based on household income is to undercount the number of persons in poverty relative to the official estimate. A study based on the March 1975 Current Population Survey found that poverty estimates based on a household income concept were about 6 percent lower than official estimates. For more information, see Technical Paper X, Effect of Using a Poverty Definition Based on Household Income, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976. A second important difference between the poverty estimates in this report and the official poverty estimates has to do with the method used to measure income. The official annual poverty estimates are based on data collected in the March supplement to the Current Population Survey. The income questions asked in that survey are very detailed and measure the amount of income received during the previous calendar year. The income questions asked in the AHS are much less detailed and measure the amount received during the previous 12 months. Because interviews were conducted during the period July through December, the income measures do not pertain to a fixed period. Many of the income questions in the AHS were

asked on a household rather than an individual income basis. The lack of data for individuals made it necessary to adopt a poverty definition based on household income.

Officially, families and unrelated individuals are classified as being above or below the poverty level using the poverty index originated at the Social Security Administration in 1964 and revised by the Federal Interagency Committees in 1969 and 1980. The poverty index is based solely on money income and does not reflect the fact that many low-income persons receive noncash benefits such as food stamps, Medicaid, and public housing. The 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. The poverty thresholds are updated every year to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). For further details, see Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 181, Poverty in the United States: 1991.

**Mortgage status on property.** The owner or the owner's spouse was asked the status of mortgages or similar loans currently in effect on second homes or investment properties. Units were reported as with mortgage or as being owned free and clear. A mortgage or similar debt refers to all forms of debt where the property is pledged as security for payment of the debt. It includes such debt instruments as deeds of trust, trust deeds, mortgage bonds, and vendors' liens. In the first three arrangements, usually a third party, known as the trustee, holds the title to the property until the debt is paid. In the vendor lien arrangements, the title is kept by the buyer, but the seller (vendor) reserves, in the deed to the buyer, a lien on the property to secure payment of the balance of the purchase price. Also included as a mortgage or similar debt are contracts to purchase; land contracts, and lease-purchase agreements where the title to the property remains with the seller until the agreed upon payments have been made by the buyer.

**Monthly housing costs.** The data are presented for owner- and renter-occupied housing units. Monthly housing costs for owner-occupied units is the sum of monthly payments for all mortgages or installment loans or contracts, real estate taxes (including taxes on mobile homes or trailer sites if the site is owned), property insurance, homeowners association fee, cooperative or condominium fee, mobile home park fee, land rent, utilities (electricity, gas, water, and sewage disposal), fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.), and garbage and trash collection. As of 1989, data on the costs of electricity and gas are collected differently (see "Monthly costs of electricity and gas" definition). Because of this, "Monthly housing costs" in 1989 and beyond may not be entirely comparable with data published in previous years. Monthly housing costs are not computed for households with a mortgage or similar debt that failed to report the amount of their loan or contract payment.

For renter-occupied housing units, monthly housing costs include the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water, and sewage disposal), and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.); property insurance, mobile home land rent, and garbage and trash collection if these items are paid for by the renter (or paid for by someone else, such as a relative, welfare agency, or friend) in addition to rent. Renter housing units occupied without payment of cash rent are shown separately as no cash rent. For rental units subsidized by a public housing authority, the Federal government, or State or local governments, the monthly rental costs reflect only the portion paid by the household and not the portion subsidized. Before 1991, the monthly rental costs may have included the amount subsidized for many subsidized units.

Monthly housing costs are shown for all renters and all owners. Medians for monthly housing costs are rounded to the nearest dollar.

#### **Monthly housing costs as percent of current income.**

The yearly housing costs (monthly housing costs multiplied by 12) are expressed as a percentage of the total current income (see definition of current income.) This percentage is calculated for the same owner- and renter-occupied housing units for which "Monthly housing costs" were computed (for exclusions see "Monthly housing costs"). The percentage was computed separately for each unit and rounded to the nearest percent. The measure was not computed for units where occupants reported no income or a net loss.

Before 1989, the item "Monthly housing costs as percent of income," was computed by using the income of family and primary individuals only. It was felt that respondents who only recently entered the job market or who changed jobs during the past year often reported a previous year's income, which was too low to accurately reflect their current situation. In addition to a change in the source of income used in calculations, the item uses new procedures to estimate the costs of electricity and gas (see "Monthly costs of electricity and gas" definition).

**Monthly costs for electricity and gas.** Beginning in 1989, two procedures were introduced that attempt to correct the overreporting of electricity and gas costs in the AHS. In the first procedure, respondents were asked the amount of their electricity and/or gas bill for the previous months of January, April, August, and December. These months are the best predictors of annual costs. If the respondent provided data for at least 3 of the 4 months, the results were used to provide an annual estimate of costs. This estimate was then divided by 12 to provide average monthly costs.

The second procedure was applied to the remaining units. If the respondents did not know the amount of their electricity and/or gas bill for at least 3 of the 4

months, we used their estimate of average monthly costs. A factor was then applied that, in effect, lowered these costs to make them consistent with electricity and gas costs reported in the Residential Energy Consumption Survey sponsored by the United States Department of Energy. Before 1989, respondents were only asked to provide an estimate of average monthly costs. Research has shown that this approach produces 15 to 20 percent overestimates of the electricity and gas costs. The new procedures produce lower and more accurate estimates. On average, more than one-third of the respondents provided answers for at least 3 of the 4 months.

Monthly costs for electricity and gas are not shown separately in this report but are included as part of the monthly housing costs.

### **Household Characteristics**

**Household.** A household consists of all the persons who occupy a housing unit. By definition, the count of households is the same as the count of occupied housing units.

**Householder.** The householder is the first household member 18 years old and over who is the owner or renter of the sample unit. If no household member occupying the sample unit owns or rents the unit, the householder is the first household member listed who is 18 years old or older. In cases where no household member listed owns or rents the unit or is 18 years or older, the first household member listed is the householder.

### **Family Type**

**Family.** Family refers to the householder and all (one or more) other persons living in the same household who may be related to the householder by blood, marriage or adoption. Married couples related to the householder of a family are included in the family and are not considered as separate families unless they reside in separate living quarters.

**Married couple.** Each household in this group consists of the householder and spouse and one or more other persons, if any.

**Male householder, no wife present.** This category includes families with male householders who are married, but with wife absent because of separation or other reason where husband and wife maintain separate residences; and male householders who are widowed, divorced, or single.

**Female householder, no husband present.** This category included families with female householders who are married, but with husband absent because of separation or other reason where husband and wife maintain separate residences; and female householders who are widowed, divorced, or single.

**Nonfamily households.** Housing units where the householder lives alone or with nonrelatives only. A lodger, servant, or other person unrelated to the householder is considered a member of the household but not of the family.

**Own children under 18 years old.** Statistics on presence of own children of households are shown in this report. A child under 18 years old is defined as an own child if he or she is a single (never married) son, daughter, stepchild, or adopted child of a householder. Own children of subfamilies are excluded from the total count of own children.

**Age of householder.** The age classification refers to the age reported for the householder as of that person's last birthday.

**Elderly.** Data for elderly include all households with a householder of 65 years of age and over.

### **Additional Residential Properties**

**Ownership.** This refers to households owning additional residential property in addition to their usual residence. The property may be owned for vacation or investment purposes as well as other reasons.

**Reasons for ownership.** Respondents indicated the reason for owning additional residential property. The categories include previous usual residence, used for recreational purposes, investment purposes, unable to sell property, inherited property, and other reasons.

**Vacation units.** Vacation homes or recreational homes characteristics are only shown for the first vacation home listed. Vacation homes exclude multiunit buildings and units with ownership shared with nonhousehold member. Units reported as both vacation and investment properties are classified as vacation units.

**Investment properties.** Investment properties characteristics are shown for up to six additional properties. Investment properties include units or multiunit buildings but exclude those properties used also for recreational purposes. Units reported as both vacation and investment properties are classified as vacation units.

**Shared ownership.** This item is restricted to owner-occupied housing units. Shared ownership includes properties where the ownership of the investment property is shared with one or more nonhousehold members.

**Type of housing unit.** This item refers to the type of housing unit used for vacation or recreational purposes. The types include single-family home, unit in multiunit building, mobile home, or other type.

**Type of property.** This item refers to the type of residential property used for investment purposes. These units used for both recreational and investment purposes are excluded from this category. The types include single-family homes, multiunit buildings, unit in a multiunit building, mobile homes, or other type.

**Value of property.** Refers to the amount that the property (vacation or investment) is perceived to sell for on today's market. The value of shared ownership property is limited to respondent's share only.

**Location of property.** Refers to the distance from current residence to the vacation or investment property. Statistics are shown for within 150 miles or 150 miles and greater from current residence.

**Nights spent at vacation unit.** Refers to the number of nights spent at the unit during the past year. Data are shown for 3 nights or less, 4 to 7 nights, 8 to 28 nights, and 29 nights or more. The median number of nights is rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Nights unit rented.** Refers to the number of nights rented during the past year for investment properties only. Data are shown for 7 nights or less, 8 to 14 nights, 15 to 28 nights, 29 to 89 nights, and 90 nights or more. The median number of nights rented is rounded to the nearest whole number.