

# U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce • Washington D.C. 20233

Robert R. Callis  
Linda B. Cavanaugh  
(301) 763-3199

For Release 10:00 am EDT, April 27, 2009  
CB09-57

## CENSUS BUREAU REPORTS ON RESIDENTIAL VACANCIES AND HOMEOWNERSHIP

National vacancy rates in the first quarter 2009 were 10.1 ( $\pm$  0.4) percent for rental housing and 2.7 ( $\pm$  0.1) percent for homeowner housing, the Department of Commerce's Census Bureau announced today. The Census Bureau said the rental vacancy rate was not statistically different from the first quarter 2008 rate or the rate last quarter (10.1 percent each). For homeowner vacancies, the current rate was lower than the first quarter 2008 rate, but not statistically different from the rate last quarter (2.9 percent each). The homeownership rate at 67.3 ( $\pm$  0.5) percent for the current quarter was lower than the first quarter 2008 rate (67.8 percent), but not statistically different from last quarter's rate (67.5 percent).

Table 1. **Rental and Homeowner Vacancy Rates for the United States: 1996 to 2009** (in percent)

Year	Rental vacancy rate				Homeowner vacancy rate			
	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
2009....	↓ 10.1				↓ 2.7			
2008....	10.1	10.0	9.9	10.1	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.9
2007....	10.1	9.5	9.8	9.6	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.8
2006....	9.5	9.6	9.9	9.8	2.1	2.2	2.5	2.7
2005....	10.1	9.8	9.9	9.6	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0
2004....	10.4	10.2	10.1	10.0	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8
2003....	9.4	9.6	9.9	10.2	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.8
2002 <sup>a</sup> ..	9.1	8.4	9.0	9.3	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
2002....	9.1	8.5	9.1	9.4	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
2001....	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.8	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.8
2000....	7.9	8.0	8.2	7.8	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6
1999....	8.2	8.1	8.2	7.9	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.6
1998....	7.7	8.0	8.2	7.8	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8
1997....	7.5	7.9	7.9	7.7	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7
1996....	7.9	7.8	8.0	7.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.7

<sup>a</sup>Revised in 2002 to incorporate information collected in Census 2000.

NOTE: The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing, and when significant, they are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. The data in this report are from the monthly samples of the Housing Vacancy Survey, which is a supplement to the Current Population Survey. The populations represented (the population universe) are all housing units (vacancy rates) and the civilian non-institutional population of the United States (homeownership rate). For an explanation of how the rates are calculated, please see pages 10-11.

For rental housing by area, the first quarter 2009 vacancy rates inside principal cities (10.6 percent) was higher than in the suburbs (9.5 percent), but not statistically different from outside Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's), 9.8 percent. The rate outside MSA's was not statistically different from the rate in the suburbs. The rental vacancy rate inside principal cities was higher than the corresponding rate one year ago, while the rate in the suburbs was lower. The rate outside MA's showed no statistical change from the first quarter 2008 rate.

The homeowner vacancy rate in principal cities (3.4 percent) was higher than in the suburbs (2.6 percent) and outside MSA's (2.3 percent). The rates outside MSA's and in the suburbs were not statistically different from each other. The homeowner vacancy rate in principal cities was lower than a year ago, while rates in the suburbs and outside MSA's were not statistically different from their corresponding rates last year.

Among regions, the rental vacancy rate was highest in the South (12.9 percent) and lowest in the Northeast (6.9 percent). When compared to first quarter 2008, the rental vacancy rate was higher in the West and lower in the Midwest. Rates for the Northeast and the South were not statistically different from their respective rates a year ago.

The regional homeowner vacancy rate for first quarter 2009 was lowest in the Northeast (1.9 percent). The rates in the Midwest (2.7 percent), the South (3.0 percent), and the West (2.9 percent) were not statistically different from each other. Homeowner vacancy rates by region were not significantly different from their respective rates last year.

**Table 2. Rental and Homeowner Vacancy Rates by Area and Region: First Quarter 2008 and 2009**  
(in percent)

Area/Region	Rental vacancy rates				Homeowner vacancy rates			
	First Quarter 2008	First Quarter 2009	90-Percent Confidence Interval ( ± ) <sup>a</sup>		First Quarter 2008	First Quarter 2009	90-Percent Confidence Interval ( ± ) <sup>a</sup>	
			of 2009 rate	of difference			of 2009 rate	of difference
United States.....	10.1	10.1	0.4	0.5	2.9	2.7	0.1	0.2
Inside Metropolitan Statistical Areas.....	10.0	10.2	0.5	0.5	3.1	2.8	0.2	0.2
In principal cities.....	9.7	10.6	0.6	0.6	4.3	3.4	0.4	0.4
Not in principal cities (suburbs).....	10.3	9.5	0.7	0.7	2.5	2.6	0.2	0.2
Outside Metropolitan Statistical Areas.....	10.7	9.8	1.5	1.6	2.3	2.3	0.3	0.4
Northeast.....	7.3	6.9	0.7	0.8	2.0	1.9	0.3	0.4
Midwest.....	11.8	10.1	0.8	1.0	2.9	2.7	0.3	0.3
South.....	12.7	12.9	0.9	1.0	3.2	3.0	0.2	0.3
West.....	7.0	8.6	0.8	0.9	3.2	2.9	0.3	0.4

<sup>a</sup>A 90-percent confidence interval is a measure of an estimate's reliability. The larger the confidence interval is, in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. For more information, see page 10.

NOTE: Metropolitan Statistical Area data for 2005 and later are not comparable to earlier data. Beginning in first quarter 2005, the Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey is using the new metropolitan and micropolitan statistical definitions that were announced by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in June 2003, and were based on the application of the 2000 standards to Census 2000 data. The OMB announced updates as of December 2003, based on application of the 2000 standards to more recent Census Bureau estimates. In this report, outside Metropolitan Statistical Areas includes micropolitan and non-metropolitan statistical areas. The December 2003 definitions are available at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metrodef.html> and <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/aboutmetro.html>.

Approximately 85 percent of the housing units in the United States in the first quarter 2009 were occupied and 15 percent were vacant. The owner-occupied housing units were 57 percent of total housing units and renter-occupied units made up 28 percent of total housing units in first quarter 2009. Vacant housing units comprised 15 percent of total housing units, including 11 percent for year-round use and 4 percent for seasonal use. Approximately 3 percent of the total units were for rent, 2 percent were for sale only, and 6 percent were vacant for a variety of other reasons.

**Table 3. Estimates of the Total Housing Inventory for the United States: First Quarter 2008 and 2009**

(Estimates are in thousands and may not add to total, due to rounding)

Type	First Quarter 2008	First Quarter 2009	90-Percent Confidence Interval ( $\pm$ ) <sup>a</sup>		Percent of total (2009)
			of 2009 estimate	of difference	
All housing units.....	129,386	130,429	(X)	(X)	100
Occupied.....	110,824	111,368	296	266	85
Owner.....	75,145	74,942	630	430	57
Renter.....	35,678	36,426	547	422	28
Vacant.....	18,563	19,061	380	337	15
Year-round.....	13,853	14,166	371	320	11
For rent.....	4,063	4,155	181	201	3
For sale only.....	2,277	2,114	110	141	2
Other.....	7,513	7,897	282	246	6
Seasonal.....	4,711	4,894	253	220	4

<sup>a</sup>A 90-percent confidence interval is a measure of an estimate's reliability. The larger the confidence interval is, in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. For more information, see page 10.

(X) Not Applicable. Since the number of housing units is set equal to an independent national measure, there is no sampling error, and hence no confidence interval.

NOTE: Since first quarter 2003, the Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey (CPS/HVS) estimates have been controlled to independent housing unit counts. Doing so should make the CPS/HVS estimates of housing units more comparable to other Census Bureau housing surveys. The housing controls affect the estimate of vacant units in the sense that the estimates of total occupied and vacant units sum to the control total. Vacancy *rates* and homeownership *rates* are not affected by this change. The totals shown above have a two-year time lag. (First quarter 2008 estimates use 2006 housing unit controls which are projected forward and first quarter 2009 estimates use 2007 housing unit controls which are projected forward.) For the most current historical time series on **total** housing units and the methodology used, please see Population Division's website: <http://www.census.gov/popest/housing/index.html>.

The homeownership rate (67.3 percent) for the current quarter was lower than the rate in first quarter 2008 (67.8 percent), but not statistically different from the rate in fourth quarter 2008 (67.5 percent).

Table 4. **Homeownership Rates for the United States: 1982 to 2009** (in percent)

Year	Homeownership Rates <sup>a</sup>			
	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
	↓			
2009.....	67.3			
2008.....	67.8	68.1	67.9	67.5
2007.....	68.4	68.2	68.2	67.8
2006.....	68.5	68.7	69.0	68.9
2005.....	69.1	68.6	68.8	69.0
2004.....	68.6	69.2	69.0	69.2
2003.....	68.0	68.0	68.4	68.6
2002 <sup>b</sup> .....	67.8	67.6	68.0	68.3
2002.....	67.8	67.6	68.0	68.3
2001.....	67.5	67.7	68.1	68.0
2000.....	67.1	67.2	67.7	67.5
1999.....	66.7	66.6	67.0	66.9
1998.....	65.9	66.0	66.8	66.4
1997.....	65.4	65.7	66.0	65.7
1996.....	65.1	65.4	65.6	65.4
1995.....	64.2	64.7	65.0	65.1
1994.....	63.8	63.8	64.1	64.2
1993 <sup>b</sup> .....	63.7	63.9	64.2	64.2
1993.....	64.2	64.4	64.7	64.6
1992.....	64.0	63.9	64.3	64.4
1991.....	63.9	63.9	64.2	64.2
1990.....	64.0	63.7	64.0	64.1
1989 <sup>c</sup> .....	63.9	63.8	64.1	63.8
1989.....	63.9	63.9	64.0	63.8
1988.....	63.7	63.7	64.0	63.8
1987.....	63.8	63.8	64.2	64.1
1986.....	63.6	63.8	63.8	63.9
1985.....	64.1	64.1	63.9	63.5
1984.....	64.6	64.6	64.6	64.1
1983.....	64.7	64.7	64.8	64.4
1982.....	64.8	64.9	64.9	64.5

<sup>a</sup>Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates for the United States generally are 0.3 percent.

<sup>b</sup>Revised in 2002 to incorporate information collected in Census 2000, and in 1993 to reflect the results of the 1990 decennial census.

<sup>c</sup>Revised to reflect edit changes implemented in 1990.

Table 4SA shows the seasonally adjusted homeownership rates for the United States from 1982 to the present. (Research has shown that seasonality for homeownership rates is present.) When adjusted for seasonal variation, the current homeownership rate (67.5 percent) was lower than the rate in first quarter 2008 (68.0 percent), but was not statistically different from the rate in fourth quarter 2008 (67.6 percent).

Table 4SA. **Homeownership Rates for the United States: 1982 to 2009**  
**Seasonally Adjusted** (in percent)

Year	Homeownership Rates <sup>a</sup> (Seasonally Adjusted)			
	First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
2009.....	↓ 67.5			
2008.....	68.0	68.0 <sup>d</sup>	67.8 <sup>d</sup>	67.6 <sup>d</sup>
2007.....	68.6	68.2	68.0 <sup>d</sup>	67.8
2006.....	68.6 <sup>d</sup>	68.8	68.9	68.8
2005.....	69.2 <sup>d</sup>	68.8 <sup>d</sup>	68.7	68.9
2004.....	68.7	69.4 <sup>d</sup>	68.9	69.1 <sup>d</sup>
2003.....	68.1	68.2 <sup>d</sup>	68.3	68.5 <sup>d</sup>
2002 <sup>b</sup> .....	67.9	67.8 <sup>d</sup>	67.9	68.2
2001.....	67.6	67.9 <sup>d</sup>	67.9	67.9
2000.....	67.1 <sup>d</sup>	67.3	67.5	67.5
1999.....	66.7 <sup>d</sup>	66.7	66.8	66.9
1998.....	66.0	66.1	66.6	66.5 <sup>d</sup>
1997.....	65.5	65.7 <sup>d</sup>	65.8	65.8 <sup>d</sup>
1996.....	65.3 <sup>d</sup>	65.4	65.4	65.4
1995.....	64.4	64.7 <sup>d</sup>	64.8	65.1
1994.....	64.0	63.9	63.9	64.1
1993 <sup>b</sup> .....	63.9 <sup>d</sup>	64.0	64.0	64.1
1992.....	64.1	64.1 <sup>d</sup>	64.1	64.3
1991.....	64.0	64.1	64.1 <sup>d</sup>	64.1
1990.....	64.1	63.9	63.9 <sup>d</sup>	64.0
1989 <sup>c</sup> .....	64.0	63.9	63.9	63.7
1988.....	63.8	63.8	63.8 <sup>d</sup>	63.8
1987.....	63.9	63.9	64.1	64.1
1986.....	63.7	63.8	63.7	63.9
1985.....	64.1	64.1	63.8	63.6
1984.....	64.6	64.6	64.5	64.3 <sup>d</sup>
1983.....	64.7	64.7	64.6	64.6 <sup>d</sup>
1982.....	64.8	65.0 <sup>d</sup>	64.7	64.7 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates for the United States generally are 0.3 percent.

<sup>b</sup>Revised in 2002 to incorporate information collected in Census 2000, and in 1993 to reflect the results of the 1990 decennial census.

<sup>c</sup>Revised to reflect edit changes implemented in 1990.

<sup>d</sup>Revised as a result of seasonality computation for this quarter.

The homeownership rates by region were highest in the Midwest (70.7 percent) and the South (69.6 percent) during the first quarter 2009, although the 70.7 percent and the 69.6 percent were not statistically different from each other. The homeownership rates were lowest in the Northeast (63.7 percent) and the West (62.8 percent), although the 63.7 percent and the 62.8 percent were not statistically different from each other. When compared to first quarter 2008, the homeownership rates in the Northeast and the Midwest were lower than their respective rates a year ago, while the rates in the South and the West were not statistically different from their corresponding rates last year.

**Table 5. Homeownership Rates for the United States and Regions: 2004 to 2009 (in percent)**

Year/Quarter	Homeownership Rates <sup>a</sup>				
	United States	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
2009					
First Quarter.....	67.3	63.7	70.7	69.6	62.8
2008					
Fourth Quarter.....	67.5	64.0	71.4	69.8	62.7
Third Quarter.....	67.9	64.4	71.9	69.9	63.5
Second Quarter.....	68.1	65.3	71.7	70.2	63.0
First Quarter.....	67.8	64.7	72.0	69.7	62.8
2007					
Fourth Quarter.....	67.8	64.6	71.7	70.0	62.7
Third Quarter.....	68.2	65.2	71.9	70.1	63.5
Second Quarter.....	68.2	65.4	71.8	69.9	64.1
First Quarter.....	68.4	64.8	72.2	70.6	63.6
2006					
Fourth Quarter.....	68.9	65.3	73.0	70.8	64.5
Third Quarter.....	69.0	65.5	72.8	70.6	65.3
Second Quarter.....	68.7	65.4	72.5	70.4	64.7
First Quarter.....	68.5	64.7	72.5	70.4	64.4
2005					
Fourth Quarter.....	69.0	65.4	72.8	71.1	64.6
Third Quarter.....	68.8	65.1	73.3	70.6	64.2
Second Quarter.....	68.6	64.7	73.4	70.4	63.8
First Quarter.....	69.1	65.4	73.1	71.1	64.9
2004					
Fourth Quarter.....	69.2	65.2	73.7	71.5	63.9
Third Quarter.....	69.0	64.4	73.8	71.0	64.7
Second Quarter.....	69.2	65.4	74.2	70.9	64.5
First Quarter.....	68.6	65.1	73.5	70.3	63.7

<sup>a</sup>Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by region generally are 0.6 percent.

The homeownership rates by age of householder for first quarter 2009 were highest for those age 65 years and over (80.4 percent) and those age 55 to 64 (79.8 percent), although the rates were not different from each other. Second highest were those in the age category 45 to 54 years (74.6 percent). Homeowners age 35 to 44 years (65.7 percent) were third, while the lowest rate was for the under 35 years of age group (39.8 percent). The rates for the under 35 years of age, the 35 to 44 years, and the 55 to 64 years groups were lower than a year ago, while rates for the other age groups were not statistically different from their corresponding rates in first quarter 2008.

**Table 6. Homeownership Rates by Age of Householder: 2004 to 2009** (in percent)

Year/Quarter	Homeownership Rates <sup>a</sup>					
	United States	Under 35 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years	65 years and over
2009						
First Quarter.....	67.3	39.8	65.7	74.6	79.8	80.4
2008						
Fourth Quarter.....	67.5	40.3	66.6	74.5	79.7	80.4
Third Quarter.....	67.9	41.0	67.2	75.2	80.0	80.1
Second Quarter....	68.1	41.2	67.6	75.4	80.1	80.2
First Quarter.....	67.8	41.3	66.7	75.0	80.4	79.9
2007						
Fourth Quarter.....	67.8	41.0	67.2	75.1	80.4	80.3
Third Quarter.....	68.2	42.0	68.1	75.2	81.1	79.9
Second Quarter....	68.2	41.9	67.6	75.5	80.6	80.5
First Quarter.....	68.4	41.7	68.3	75.8	80.4	80.9
2006						
Fourth Quarter.....	68.9	42.8	68.9	76.4	80.7	81.2
Third Quarter.....	69.0	43.0	68.8	76.4	80.7	81.5
Second Quarter....	68.7	42.4	68.9	76.3	81.0	80.6
First Quarter.....	68.5	42.3	68.9	75.8	81.2	80.3
2005						
Fourth Quarter.....	69.0	43.1	69.7	76.7	80.6	80.6
Third Quarter.....	68.8	43.0	68.6	76.7	80.9	80.6
Second Quarter....	68.6	42.8	68.7	76.3	81.3	80.3
First Quarter.....	69.1	43.3	70.1	76.5	81.8	80.8
2004						
Fourth Quarter.....	69.2	43.3	70.0	77.4	81.6	80.5
Third Quarter.....	69.0	43.1	68.6	77.4	81.2	81.8
Second Quarter....	69.2	43.6	69.4	77.0	82.4	81.1
First Quarter.....	68.6	42.3	68.8	77.0	81.7	80.7

<sup>a</sup>Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by age of householder generally are 0.5 percent.

For the racial categories shown below, the homeownership rate for non-Hispanic White householders reporting a single race was highest at 74.7 percent. The rate for All Other Races householders was second at 57.4 percent, and single-race Black householders was lowest with a rate of 46.1 percent. When compared to their respective rates a year ago, the homeownership rates for non-Hispanic White householders and for single-race Black householders were lower, while the rate for All Other Races householders was not statistically different. The rate for Hispanic householders (who can be of any race), at 48.6 percent, was not statistically different from a year ago.

**Table 7. Homeownership Rates by Race and Ethnicity of Householder: 2006 to 2009** (in percent)

Year/Quarter	Homeownership Rates <sup>a</sup>				
	U.S.	Non-Hispanic White alone	Black Alone <sup>b</sup>	All Other Races <sup>c</sup>	Hispanic (of any race)
2009					
First Quarter.....	67.3	74.7	46.1	57.4	48.6
2008					
Fourth Quarter.....	67.5	74.8	46.8	58.3	48.6
Third Quarter.....	67.9	75.1	47.8	59.0	49.5
Second Quarter....	68.1	75.2	47.8	58.4	49.6
First Quarter.....	67.8	75.0	47.1	58.1	48.9
2007					
Fourth Quarter.....	67.8	74.9	47.7	58.6	48.5
Third Quarter.....	68.2	75.3	46.7	60.1	50.1
Second Quarter.....	68.2	75.4	46.3	59.4	50.0
First Quarter.....	68.4	75.3	48.0	58.6	50.1
2006					
Fourth Quarter.....	68.9	76.0	48.2	60.0	49.5
Third Quarter.....	69.0	76.0	48.6	60.6	49.7
Second Quarter.....	68.7	75.9	47.2	59.3	50.0
First Quarter.....	68.5	75.5	47.3	59.6	49.4

<sup>a</sup>Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by race and ethnicity of householder generally are 0.3 percent for non-Hispanic White (single race) householders, 0.6 percent for Black (single race) householders, 0.7 percent for All Other Races householders, and 0.6 percent for Hispanic householders.

<sup>b</sup>The homeownership rate for first quarter 2009 for householders who reported Black whether or not they reported any other race was 45.8 percent.

<sup>c</sup>Includes people who reported Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or American Indian or Alaska Native regardless of whether they reported any other race, as well as all other combinations of two or more races.

NOTE: Beginning in 2003, the question on race on the CPS was modified to comply with the revised standards for federal statistical agencies. Respondents may now report more than one race, but small sample sizes preclude showing all race categories. The question on Hispanic origin is asked separately, and is asked before the question on race. For further information on each major race group and the Two or More Races populations, see reports from the Census 2000 Brief series (C2KBR/01), available on the Census 2000 Web site at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html>.



In first quarter 2009 the homeownership rates for households with family incomes greater than or equal to the median family income (82.4 percent) was lower than a year ago, while the rate for those with family incomes less than the median family income (51.0 percent) was not statistically different from the rate shown for first quarter 2008.

**Table 8. Homeownership Rates by Family Income: 2004 to 2009** (in percent)

Homeownership Rates <sup>a</sup>			
Year/Quarter	United States	Households with family income greater than or equal to the median family income <sup>b</sup>	Households with family income less than the median family income
2009			
First Quarter.....	67.3	82.4	51.0
2008			
Fourth Quarter.....	67.5	82.9	51.2
Third Quarter.....	67.9	83.0	52.0
Second Quarter.....	68.1	83.5	51.8
First Quarter.....	67.8	82.8	51.2
2007			
Fourth Quarter.....	67.8	83.0	50.9
Third Quarter.....	68.2	83.7	51.9
Second Quarter.....	68.2	83.4	52.0
First Quarter.....	68.4	83.3	52.1
2006			
Fourth Quarter.....	68.9	84.5	52.9
Third Quarter.....	69.0	84.4	53.0
Second Quarter.....	68.7	84.1	52.6
First Quarter.....	68.5	83.7	52.4
2005			
Fourth Quarter.....	69.0	84.3	53.1
Third Quarter.....	68.8	83.7	52.8
Second Quarter.....	68.6	84.0	52.7
First Quarter.....	69.1	84.5	53.0
2004			
Fourth Quarter.....	69.2	84.6	52.5
Third Quarter.....	69.0	84.0	52.7
Second Quarter.....	69.2	83.9	53.1
First Quarter.....	68.6	83.8	51.5

<sup>a</sup>Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by family income generally are 0.3 percent.

<sup>b</sup>Based on families or primary individuals reporting income.

Note: This press release, along with more detailed data, is available on the Internet. Our Internet address is: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/hvs/hvs.html>

The estimates in this release are based on a sample survey and therefore are subject to both sampling and non-sampling error. Sampling error is a result of not surveying the entire population. Non-sampling error occurs because accurate information cannot always be obtained.

The sample estimate and its standard error enable one to construct a confidence interval. A confidence interval is a measure of an estimate's reliability. The larger a confidence interval is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. For example, the standard error on the estimated rental vacancy rate of 10.1 percent is 0.258 percentage points. Then the 90-percent confidence interval is calculated as  $10.1 \pm (1.645 \times 0.258)$  percent, or  $10.1 \pm 0.4244$  percent, or from 9.7 percent to 10.5 percent. If all possible samples were surveyed under essentially the same general conditions and the same sample design, and an estimate calculated from each sample, then 90 percent of the estimates would fall within the 90 percent confidence interval, in this case, from 9.7 percent to 10.5 percent.

Beginning with first quarter 2003, population controls that reflect the results of Census 2000 are used in the CPS/HVS estimation process. As a final additional step in the process, the estimates are controlled to independent housing counts used for the first time in order to produce a more accurate estimate of housing units. This new procedure should make the CPS/HVS estimates of housing units more consistent with other Census Bureau housing surveys. The new housing controls affect the estimate of vacant units in the sense that the estimates of total occupied and vacant units sum to the new control total. Vacancy rates and homeownership rates are not affected by this change. For the most current historical time series on **total** housing units, please see Population Division's website: <http://www.census.gov/popest/housing/index.html>.

The CPS/HVS also began computing first-stage factors (used for weighting purposes) based on year-round and seasonal counts of housing units from Census 2000 for the first quarter 2003. From 1980 to 2002, the CPS/HVS first-stage factors were based on year-round estimates only. The effect on the data is slight and the change should improve the counts of year-round and seasonal units. For more information on the effects of these changes, please see Source and Accuracy Statement at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/hvs.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hvs.html).

The question on race on the CPS was modified beginning in the first quarter 2003 to comply with new standards for federal statistical agencies. Respondents are now asked to report one or more races. The question on Hispanic origin is asked separately, and is asked before the question on race.

First stage factors for year-round vacant units have been corrected as of the second quarter 2004. Research has shown that this correction had no significant effect on the vacancy rates or homeownership rates.

The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of the rental inventory that is vacant for rent. In tables 1 and 2, the rates are computed using the following formula.

$$\text{Rental Vacancy Rate (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{Vacant year-round units for rent}}{\left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Renter} \\ \text{occupied} \\ \text{units} \end{array} \right) + \left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Vacant year-round} \\ \text{units rented but} \\ \text{awaiting occupancy} \end{array} \right) + \left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Vacant year-round} \\ \text{units for rent} \end{array} \right)} \right] * 100$$

The homeowner vacancy rate is the proportion of the homeowner inventory that is vacant for sale. In tables 1 and 2 the rates are computed using the following formula.

$$\text{Homeowner Vacancy Rate (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{Vacant year - round units for sale only}}{\left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Owner} \\ \text{occupied} \\ \text{units} \end{array} \right) + \left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Vacant year - round} \\ \text{units sold but} \\ \text{awaiting occupancy} \end{array} \right) + \left( \begin{array}{c} \text{Vacant year - round} \\ \text{units for sale only} \end{array} \right)} \right] * 100$$

The homeownership rate is the proportion of households that is owner-occupied. It is computed by dividing the number of households that are occupied by owners by the total number of occupied households (tables 4, 4SA, and 5).

$$\text{Homeownership Rate (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{Owner occupied housing units}}{\text{Total occupied housing units}} \right] * 100$$

For the homeownership rate for a specific characteristic (tables 6-8), use the owner and total number of units for that characteristic. For example, for the West region,

$$\text{Homeownership Rate (West) (\%)} = \left[ \frac{\text{Owner occupied housing units (West)}}{\text{Total occupied housing units (West)}} \right] * 100$$