

# Bureau of the Census Statistical Brief

## Housing in Metropolitan Areas — Single-Parent Families

For America's children, living with only one parent isn't quite the rule. But it's very common nonetheless.

In 1990, there were more than 7 million single-parent families in the United States. A single-parent family consists of a parent who maintains a household and has one or more own children under the age of 18 living with him or her. These families represented 23 percent of all family households with own children under 18; the remainder were headed by married couples.

This is one of a series of Briefs that uses data collected in the 1990 Census of Population and Housing to examine the characteristics of housing in American metropolitan areas (MA's). This Brief looks specifically at various housing conditions faced by single-parent family households. It also compares their situation with that of married-couple family households with own children.

The MA's used here correspond to the definitions that were in place in 1990. The count of 335 MA's equals the total number of MSA's (metropolitan statistical areas) and

PMSA's (primary metropolitan statistical areas).

PMSA's are aggregated into consolidated metropolitan statistical areas, not discussed in this Brief.

**Single-parent families were most commonly found in central cities.**

A plurality of the Nation's single-parent families (42 percent) lived in central cities; the rest resided either in the suburbs (37 percent) or outside metro areas (21 percent). Married-couple families, on the other hand, most often dwelled in the suburbs (51 percent); meanwhile, 25 percent lived in central cities and 24 percent in nonmetro areas.

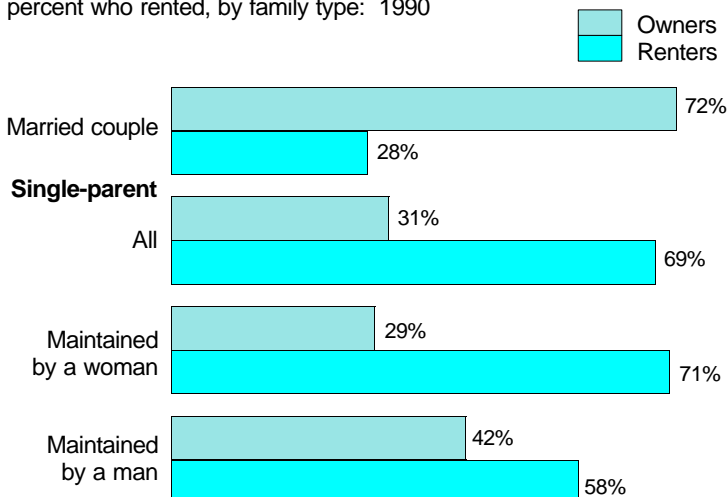
**One-parent families were more prevalent in some MA's than in others.**

In all metro areas, one-quarter of family households with own children were maintained by a single parent. The highest rate belonged to Albany, GA (37 percent); New York, NY (36 percent); New Orleans, LA (34 percent); and Miami-Hialeah, FL (31 percent) led the largest MA's (those with 1 million or more inhabitants) in the proportion of single-parent family households.

At the other end of the scale was Provo, UT (12 percent). Interestingly, the 3 large MA's with the lowest rates — Nassau-Suffolk, NY

### Unlike Married Couples, Most Single Parents Were Renters

Percent of metro area family households with own children under 18 years old who owned their home and percent who rented, by family type: 1990



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### Metro Area Rankings by Single-Parent Families

(Metro areas with 1 million or more persons)

	Number of family households with own children under 18	Single-Parent Families				
		Percent of all family households with own children	Rank	Number maintained by mothers	Number maintained by fathers	Mother-to-father ratio
Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA PMSA	278,456	20.0	42	41,248	14,481	2.8
Atlanta, GA MSA	376,734	24.8	23	79,093	14,174	5.6
Baltimore, MD MSA	285,017	28.2	5	67,173	13,070	5.1
Bergen-Passaic, NJ PMSA	142,555	18.2	44	21,126	4,880	4.3
Boston, MA PMSA	305,463	23.0	36	60,749	9,416	6.5
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	148,286	23.1	34	28,284	6,038	4.7
Chicago, IL PMSA	709,586	27.2	9	162,982	30,131	5.4
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN PMSA	190,856	25.1	17	40,897	7,060	5.8
Cleveland, OH PMSA	217,724	27.4	8	51,270	8,489	6.0
Columbus, OH MSA	175,635	24.8	23	36,339	7,219	5.0
Dallas, TX PMSA	340,945	23.3	33	64,676	14,903	4.3
Denver, CO PMSA	213,599	25.3	15	43,399	10,714	4.1
Detroit, MI PMSA	551,789	29.2	4	138,398	22,608	6.1
Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood-Pompano Beach, FL PMSA	130,400	26.6	12	27,240	7,410	3.7
Fort Worth-Arlington, TX PMSA	181,771	21.4	41	30,969	7,845	3.9
Houston, TX PMSA	455,143	24.0	29	88,375	21,041	4.2
Indianapolis, IN MSA	164,761	24.8	23	33,644	7,142	4.7
Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	205,943	24.2	28	41,320	8,420	4.9
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	1,015,965	27.2	9	208,090	68,140	3.1
Miami-Hialeah, FL PMSA	219,409	30.8	3	53,692	13,913	3.9
Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ PMSA	118,890	14.8	45	14,214	3,433	4.1
Milwaukee, WI PMSA	179,714	27.6	7	43,073	6,599	6.5
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	325,808	21.5	40	57,435	12,451	4.6
Nassau-Suffolk, NY PMSA	300,669	13.9	46	34,234	7,682	4.5
New Orleans, LA MSA	160,702	33.6	2	46,801	7,134	6.6
New York, NY PMSA	925,042	35.9	1	286,976	44,839	6.4
Newark, NJ PMSA	212,749	24.9	22	44,418	8,633	5.1
Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA MSA	184,738	24.8	23	38,730	7,017	5.5
Oakland, CA PMSA	251,284	26.7	11	53,609	13,447	4.0
Orlando, FL MSA	130,729	24.3	27	25,098	6,608	3.8
Philadelphia, PA-NJ PMSA	560,904	25.0	20	116,248	23,977	4.8
Phoenix, AZ MSA	259,911	25.1	17	50,044	15,225	3.3
Pittsburgh, PA PMSA	231,531	22.5	38	44,665	7,461	6.0
Portland, OR PMSA	155,095	23.8	31	28,751	8,167	3.5
Riverside-San Bernardino, CA PMSA	344,193	23.1	34	59,539	19,992	3.0
Rochester, NY MSA	125,191	25.2	16	26,415	5,163	5.1
Sacramento, CA MSA	186,950	28.2	5	41,923	10,767	3.9
Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT MSA	153,694	18.7	43	23,546	5,222	4.5
San Antonio, TX MSA	173,352	25.6	14	37,408	6,997	5.3
San Diego, CA MSA	291,335	25.0	20	57,149	15,588	3.7
San Francisco, CA PMSA	151,153	23.9	30	28,379	7,773	3.7
San Jose, CA PMSA	172,166	21.7	39	27,903	9,394	3.0
Seattle, WA PMSA	241,845	22.8	37	43,080	12,028	3.6
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	312,148	25.1	17	65,981	12,426	5.3
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	215,622	26.5	13	46,280	10,821	4.3
Washington, DC-MD-VA MSA	469,624	23.6	32	90,556	20,101	4.5

Note: Counts reflect 100-percent response rates and are not subject to sampling variability. Metro areas correspond to the definitions that were in place in 1990.

(14 percent), Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ (15 percent), and Bergen-Passaic, NJ (18 percent) — each adjoined the large MA with the highest rate of single-parent family households (New York).

**Most single parents were women who rented their homes.**

More than 8 in 10 single-parent families in MAs were maintained by women. Thus, there were about 5 single-parent mothers for every single-parent father. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of metropolitan area one-parent families rented their home. For married-couple families, the opposite was true — 72 percent were owners.

**Single-parent renters had it tough.**

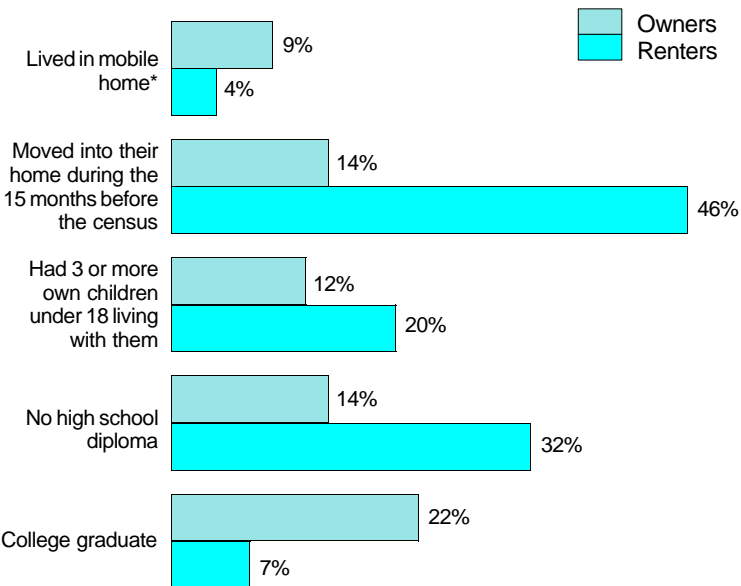
Metro area single-parent renters were more likely than their owner counterparts to face a variety of obstacles. These included —

- **No job:** Four in ten single-parent renters were either unemployed or not in the labor force; the rate for owners was less than half that (16 percent).
- **No motor vehicle:** Single-parent renters were 7 times more likely than their owner counterparts to lack a motor vehicle (35 percent compared with 5 percent).
- **No phone:** Eighteen percent of single-parent renters did not have a telephone in their home, more than five times the rate for owners (under 4 percent).
- **Crowded homes:** Housing units with more than one person per room are often considered to be “crowded.” Single-parent renters were more than 3 times as likely as similar owners to live in such units (17 percent versus 5 percent).

In addition, it was twice as common for renters as for owners to have at least one child under age 6 (47 percent compared with 24 percent). Consequently, there was a better chance renters had to worry about making child care arrangements. The graph at the top right

**Some Major Differences Between Owners and Renters**

Selected characteristics of single-parent family householders inside metro areas, by tenure: 1990



\*Includes those living in homes other than single-family houses or apartments.

illustrates some more differences between owners and renters.

**Many single parents face extreme housing cost burdens.**

Median household income in 1989 was much higher for single-parent owners than for renters. Furthermore, single fathers had higher incomes than lone mothers. Income stood at \$36,400 for men who were single parents and owned their home; the median for single mothers who were owners was \$25,800 — 29 percent less. Among renters, the figure for single fathers was \$23,300; for single mothers, it was half that (\$11,700).

Since renters had lower incomes, it's not surprising that it was more likely for them to be severely burdened by housing costs. One in three single-parent *specified* renters had an *extreme* cost burden. This means that housing costs consumed at least 50 percent of their household income. For *specified* owners who were lone parents, the situation was less dire — 19 percent

with mortgages and 10 percent without them faced extreme cost burdens. For specified renters, costs included contract rent and utilities. Meanwhile, mortgage payments (if any), real estate taxes, property insurance, utilities, and fuels were among the costs for specified owners. (Specified owners, incidentally, were those in one-family houses located on a property of less than 10 acres with no business or medical office on the

**The Majority of Black Families With Children Contained Only One Parent**

Percent of all family households with own children in MA's that contained only one parent, by householder's race or ethnicity: 1990

Race or ethnicity	Percent
Black	55%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	39%
Other	32%
Hispanic origin	30%
White	19%
Asian	14%

Note: Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

property. Specified renters exclude those in one-family homes on 10 or more acres.)

### Home value was lower for single parents.

Homes owned by single-parent families in metro areas had a much lower median value than those their married-couple counterparts owned (\$73,200 compared with \$99,900).

### More information:

*Subject Summary Tape File 7 (Metropolitan Housing Characteristics)* presents 1990 census data for States and MA's. Data are presented on various social, housing, and financial characteristics of one-parent households. *SSTF 7* comes on both computer tape and CD-ROM. Call Customer Services (301-763-4100 or 301-457-4100 after December 16) for information.

### Contacts:

One-parent housing —  
Timothy Grall  
301-763-8148

Statistical Briefs —  
Robert Bernstein  
301-763-1584 (301-457-1221 after December 16)

*This Brief is one of a series that presents information of current interest. It examines data from the 1990 census. A complete description of statistical quality and limitations of sample data is included in the SSTF 7 technical documentation. Please note that the data on individual metro location and race of householder are not from a sample, and therefore not subject to sampling variability.*

### Data for Smaller MA's

The tables in this Brief contain data only for the 46 largest metro areas. However, the information we show in them is available at a small charge for all 335 metropolitan areas. To order these printouts, call Timothy Grall (301-763-8553).

## Metro Area Rankings by Married-Couple Families

(Metro areas with 1 million or more persons)

	Percent of all family households with own children	Rank
Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA PMSA	80.0	5
Atlanta, GA MSA	75.2	21
Baltimore, MD MSA	71.8	41
Bergen-Passaic, NJ PMSA	81.8	3
Boston, MA PMSA	77.0	11
Charlotte-Gastonia- Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	76.9	12
Chicago, IL PMSA	72.8	37
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN PMSA	74.9	28
Cleveland, OH PMSA	72.6	39
Columbus, OH MSA	75.2	21
Dallas, TX PMSA	76.7	14
Denver, CO PMSA	74.7	32
Detroit, MI PMSA	70.8	43
Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood- Pompano Beach, FL PMSA	73.4	35
Fort Worth-Arlington, TX PMSA	78.6	6
Houston, TX PMSA	76.0	18
Indianapolis, IN MSA	75.2	21
Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	75.8	19
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	72.8	37
Miami-Hialeah, FL PMSA	69.2	44
Middlesex-Somerset- Hunterdon, NJ PMSA	85.2	2
Milwaukee, WI PMSA	72.4	40
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	78.5	7
Nassau-Suffolk, NY PMSA	86.1	1
New Orleans, LA MSA	66.4	45
New York, NY PMSA	64.1	46
Newark, NJ PMSA	75.1	25
Norfolk-Virginia Beach- Newport News, VA MSA	75.2	21
Oakland, CA PMSA	73.3	36
Orlando, FL MSA	75.7	20
Philadelphia, PA-NJ PMSA	75.0	26
Phoenix, AZ MSA	74.9	28
Pittsburgh, PA PMSA	77.5	9
Portland, OR PMSA	76.2	16
Riverside-San Bernardino, CA PMSA	76.9	12
Rochester, NY MSA	74.8	31
Sacramento, CA MSA	71.8	41
Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT MSA	81.3	4
San Antonio, TX MSA	74.4	33
San Diego, CA MSA	75.0	26
San Francisco, CA PMSA	76.1	17
San Jose, CA PMSA	78.3	8
Seattle, WA PMSA	77.2	10
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	74.9	28
Tampa-St. Petersburg- Clearwater, FL MSA	73.5	34
Washington, DC-MD-VA MSA	76.4	15

Note: Counts reflect 100-percent response rates and are not subject to sampling variability. Metro areas correspond to the definitions that were in place in 1990.