

Bureau of the Census Statistical Brief

Housing in Metropolitan Areas — Renter Financial Characteristics

Looking to rent a home without spending a small fortune? Don't mind moving to a small metro area? Then read this Brief closely. It will give you an idea of where to look and where not to.

This Brief is one of a series that uses data collected in the 1990 Census of Population and Housing to examine the characteristics of housing in America's metropolitan areas (MA's). It compares how much renters in different MA's spent on gross rent in 1990; it also looks at the share of their 1989 household income they spent on gross rent. Gross rent refers to the monthly rent agreed to, plus the amount spent on utilities. These data exclude those renting single-family houses on lots of 10 acres or more.

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.



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In general, MA's in the Northeast and California had the highest median gross rents.

For example, Stamford, CT led the Nation (\$844); Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA was second (\$790). But there were some exceptions to this rule. Honolulu, HI and Washington, DC-MD-VA both made the top 30, the only MA's outside the Northeast and California to do so. And not all Northeastern and Californian MA's had high rents. Altoona, PA (\$299) and Johnstown, PA (\$279), for instance, had among the lowest rents in the Nation.

Large metro areas (population over 1 million) followed the same pattern. (See table on back.) Only 1 of the 12 with the highest rents was located outside the Northeast or California. Pittsburgh, like Altoona and Johnstown, another

MA in western Pennsylvania, and Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN had the lowest rents.

Gross rent varied greatly by housing type.

Within all MA's, persons living in single-family homes had the highest median gross rent (\$546), followed by those in multi-unit structures (\$456) and mobile homes (\$371).

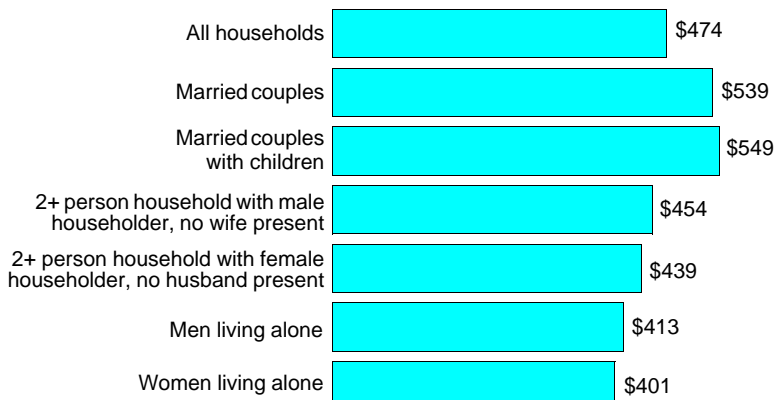
By age, householders between 35 and 44 were tops (\$515).

Where did gross rent take a real bite out of income?

Renters who spend more than 30 percent of their household income on rent are often considered to be financially burdened. There were 10 MA's where more than half the renters fell into this category.

Those Married With Children Pay More in Rent

Median gross rent inside metropolitan areas, by household composition: 1990



Eight of the 10 had one thing in common — they were smaller areas (populations under a million) with large universities. Two, Bryan-College Station, TX, and Lawrence, KS, led all MA's in median gross rent as a percentage of household income (34 percent each).

The only large MA to crack the top 10 was Miami-Hialeah, FL. As the table shows, the large MA's with the next 4 highest percentages were all in California.

And on the other side of the coin ...

Want to really stretch your income dollars? Then head for Hickory-Morganton, NC, where median gross rent was only 21 percent of household income. Actually, renters in smaller MA's (without big universities) often had the lowest percentages. Nine (all small) had rates under 23 percent, with 7 located in the South. Of the large MA's, Houston (23 percent) had the lowest percentage.

More information:

Subject Summary Tape File 7 (Metropolitan Housing Characteristics) presents 1990 census data for States and MA's. Statistics on year structure built and units in structure are cross-tabulated by items such as household income and housing costs. *SSTF 7* comes on both computer tape and CD-ROM. Call Customer Services (301-763-4100) for more information on 1990 census products.

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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 is included in the SSTF 7 technical documentation.

Metro Area Rankings by Gross Rent

(Metro areas with 1 million or more persons)

	Gross rent: 1990		Gross rent as a percent of income: 1989	
	Median	Rank	Median	Rank
Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA PMSA	\$790	1	29.0	6
Atlanta, GA MSA	\$529	16	26.0	27
Baltimore, MD MSA	\$490	23	25.3	34
Bergen-Passaic, NJ PMSA	\$646	8	26.2	25
Boston, MA PMSA	\$656	7	26.7	21
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC MSA	\$426	35	23.6	45
Chicago, IL PMSA	\$491	22	26.3	23
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN PMSA	\$367	45	24.6	38
Cleveland, OH MSA	\$406	40	26.3	23
Columbus, OH MSA	\$421	37	24.6	38
Dallas, TX PMSA	\$456	28	24.3	41
Denver, CO PMSA	\$431	33	25.5	33
Detroit, MI PMSA	\$455	29	27.3	16
Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood-Pompano Beach, FL PMSA	\$575	13	29.0	6
Fort Worth-Arlington, TX PMSA	\$428	34	24.0	42
Houston, TX PMSA	\$406	40	23.2	46
Indianapolis, IN MSA	\$413	39	24.0	42
Kansas City, MO-KS MSA	\$425	36	24.5	40
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA PMSA	\$626	10	29.5	4
Miami-Hialeah, FL PMSA	\$493	21	31.3	1
Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ PMSA	\$680	5	25.3	34
Milwaukee, WI PMSA	\$447	31	26.0	27
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	\$479	25	26.9	20
Nassau-Suffolk, NY PMSA	\$778	2	29.0	6
New Orleans, LA MSA	\$397	42	28.5	10
New York, NY PMSA	\$503	20	25.7	31
Newark, NJ PMSA	\$583	12	26.2	25
Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA MSA	\$480	24	27.2	17
Oakland, CA PMSA	\$642	9	28.6	9
Orlando, FL MSA	\$524	17	27.2	17
Philadelphia, PA-NJ PMSA	\$516	18	27.4	14
Phoenix, AZ MSA	\$465	27	27.5	13
Pittsburgh, PA PMSA	\$366	46	26.6	22
Portland, OR PMSA	\$437	32	24.9	37
Riverside-San Bernardino, CA PMSA	\$562	14	29.7	3
Rochester, NY MSA	\$466	26	27.9	12
Sacramento, CA MSA	\$531	15	29.3	5
Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT MSA	\$379	44	23.7	44
San Antonio, TX MSA	\$380	43	25.2	36
San Diego, CA MSA	\$611	11	29.8	2
San Francisco, CA PMSA	\$709	4	28.0	11
San Jose, CA PMSA	\$773	3	27.4	14
Seattle, WA PMSA	\$516	18	25.8	30
St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	\$415	38	25.7	31
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	\$448	30	27.2	17
Washington, DC-MD-VA MSA	\$667	6	25.9	29

Data for Smaller MA's

Due to space constraints, the table contains data only for the 46 largest metro areas. However, the information we show in it is available at a small charge for all 335 metropolitan areas. To order these printouts, call Myra Washington (301-763-8553).