

Employment Status of Married-Couple Families by Presence of Own Children Under 18 Years: 2008 and 2009

Issued October 2010

American Community Survey Briefs

ACSBR/09-10

INTRODUCTION

Although the current recession has impacted the country in a variety of ways, a common scenario emerging from this economic climate is an increase in the number of women who are the sole worker within a married-couple family.¹ In some cases, husbands have lost their jobs while their wives have not. In others, wives have reentered the labor force to help offset lost family income after their husbands' job loss. Between 2008 and 2009, the largest job losses were reported in male-dominated industries such as construction and manufacturing, whereas female-dominated industries such as healthcare have fared relatively better over the course of the recession.²

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the unemployment rate for women was 2.2 percentage points lower than the rate for men in 2009, one of the largest unemployment rate gender gaps reported by BLS.³ Reinforcing this difference in unemployment rates is the increasing likelihood that women possess education

Unemployed: All civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they (1) were neither "at work" nor "with a job but not at work" during the reference week, and (2) were actively looking for work during the last 4 weeks, and (3) were available to accept a job. Also included as unemployed are civilians who did not work at all during the reference week, were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off, and were available for work except for temporary illness.

Own children: A child under 18 years old who is a son or daughter by birth, marriage (stepchild), or adoption.

Family: A group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

levels, such as advanced degrees, required to attain and hold on to jobs in today's evolving economy.⁴ The unemployment rate gender gap may have consequences for family spending power since, on average, women earn less than

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Characteristics of Families, Economic News Release, Table 4. Families with own children: Employment status of parents by age of youngest child and family type, 2008-09 annual averages.

² Hipple, Steven F., "The Labor Market in 2009: Recession Drags On," *Monthly Labor Review*, March 2010, Vol. 133, No. 3, pp. 3-22 and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009, table S2403.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics CPS Annual Averages: <bls.gov/cps/cpsaat.2.pdf>.

⁴ For example, between 2008 and 2009, the number of females over the age of 25 with a graduate or professional degree increased 3.7 percent while the number of male graduate and professional degree holders over the age of 25 remained unchanged (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009, author's tabulations). Also see McQueen, M. P., "Better Education Shields Women from Worst of Job Cuts," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 12, 2010, at <online.wsj.com/article/NA_WSJ_PUB:SB10001424052748703389004575033762482114190.html> and Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2010-11 Edition, <www.bls.gov/oco/oco2003.htm>.

By
Braedyn K. Woodring

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

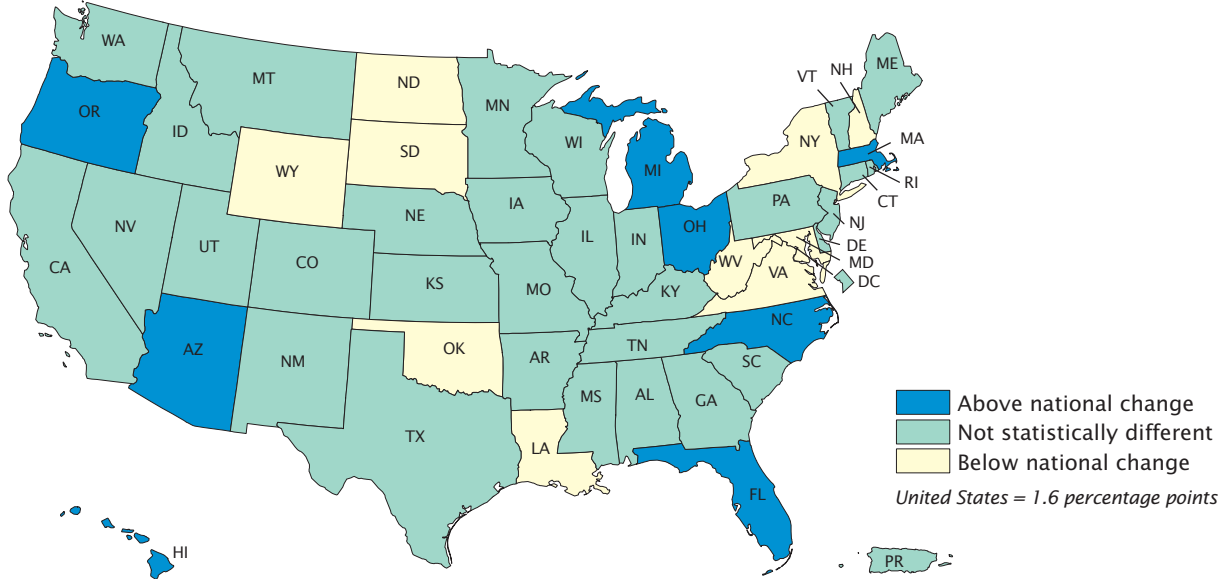
Helping You Make Informed Decisions

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



Figure 1.
Employment Status of Married-Couple Families With Own Children by State and Puerto Rico: 2008 Versus 2009

(Percentage point change in married-couple families with own children with an unemployed husband and employed wife)



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009, Puerto Rico Community Survey, 2009.

men do.⁵ Given the rising costs of education, childcare, and health-care, married-couple families with children will face an even greater strain on their family budgets.

CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR MARRIED-COUPLE FAMILIES WITH OWN CHILDREN

Nationally, 3.4 percent of married-couple families with own children under 18 years old had an unemployed husband and employed wife in 2009—up from 1.8 percent in 2008.⁶ Between 2008 and 2009, 41 states saw an increase in the per-

centage of married-couple families in this situation.

Compared with the national increase of 1.6 percentage points, Arizona, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio, and Oregon all reported a larger increase in the percentage of married-couple families with own children with an unemployed husband and employed wife. Six of these states (Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and Oregon) experienced larger percentage decreases in total construction and manufacturing employment than the nation (see Figure 2).⁷ Employment losses in

construction and manufacturing industries, which are consistently male-dominated industries, may have contributed to larger increases in the percentage of married-couple families with own children with an unemployed husband and employed wife for these states.⁸

While male-dominated industries experienced considerable employment losses over the past year,

in construction employment. Information on industry classifications can be found at <www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Def.htm>. The decrease in construction and manufacturing employment for Massachusetts was not significantly different than the decrease for the United States.

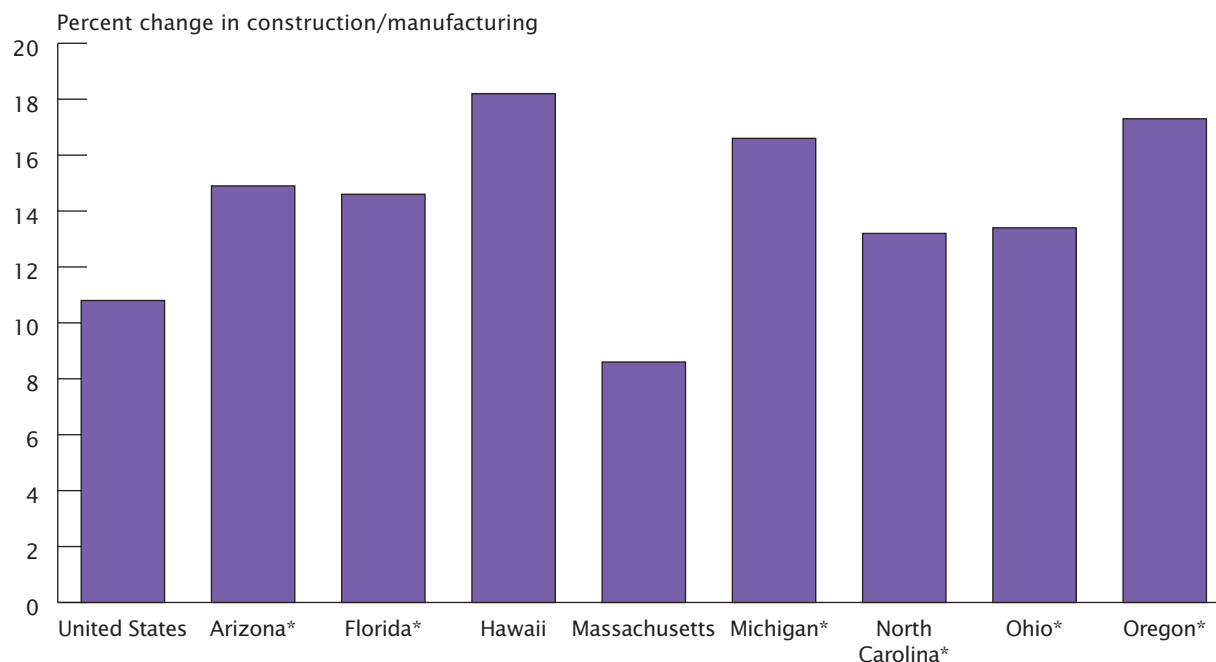
⁸ According to American Community Survey data, males made up 78.6 percent of construction and manufacturing employment in 2009. Please see table C24030 for additional information at <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G00_-&-_ang=en&-mt_name=ACS_2009_1YR_G2000_C24030&-format=&-CONTEXT=dt>.

⁵ “Men’s and Women’s Earnings for States and Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 2009,” *American Community Survey Briefs*, <www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/acsbr09-3.pdf>.

⁶ Nationally, there were 23,411,061 married-couple families with own children under 18 years old in 2009.

⁷ Although Hawaii did not experience a significantly larger decrease in total construction and manufacturing employment compared to the nation, the state did experience a significantly larger decrease in construction employment separately. Between 2008 and 2009, Hawaii reported a 27 percent decrease

Figure 2.
Percent Change in Total Construction and Manufacturing Employment for Select States and the Nation, 2008–09



*Statistically different from the change for the United States at the 90 percent confidence level.
 Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009.

female-dominated industries fared relatively better between 2008 and 2009. For example, national employment in the educational services and health care and social assistance industry group increased nearly 1.0 percent between 2008 and 2009, compared with a 3.7 percent decline in total national employment during the same time period.⁹ Given differences in gender composition between industries, in addition to differences in educational attainment between men and women, women have been more likely to maintain current employment or reenter the labor force, likely contributing to the increase in married-couple families with

⁹ According to American Community Survey data, females made up 74.8 percent of employment in the educational services and health care and social assistance industry group in 2009.

own children with an unemployed husband and employed wife.¹⁰

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Data presented in this report are based on people and households that responded to the ACS in 2008 and 2009. The resulting estimates are representative of the entire population. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent

¹⁰ Women in the prime working age group of 25 to 54 experienced increases in labor force participation between 2008 and 2009 while men of the same age experienced decreases. For more information, see "Labor Force Participation Rate for Selected Age Groups: 2008 and 2009," *American Community Survey Briefs*, <www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/acsbr09-9.pdf>. Also see Greenhouse, Steven, "Recession Drives Women Back to the Work Force," *The New York Times*, September 18, 2009, at <www.nytimes.com/2009/09/19/business/19women.html>.

confidence level unless otherwise noted.

Due to rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the "2009 ACS Accuracy of the Data" document located at <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2009.pdf>.

Employment Status of Married-Couple Families With Own Children Under 18 Years and Percent Change in Total Employment in Select Industries

(In percent)

Area	Married-couple families with own children						Employment change in select industries				
	2009		2008		Percentage point change 2008–2009		Percent change 2008–2009		Percent change 2008–2009		
	Husband unemployed/wife employed	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Husband unemployed/wife employed	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Husband unemployed/wife employed	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Construction and manufacturing employment	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Educational services and health care and social assistance	Margin of error ¹ (±)	
United States . . .	3.4	0.1	1.8	0.1	*1.6	0.1	*-10.8	0.4	*0.9	0.4	
Alabama	2.4	0.4	0.9	0.2	*1.5	0.5	*-11.0	3.4	-1.0	3.1	
Alaska	2.3	1.1	1.4	0.6	1.0	1.3	*-13.4	11.8	6.9	8.1	
Arizona	4.0	0.4	1.4	0.3	*2.7	0.5	*-14.9	3.4	*4.3	3.0	
Arkansas	2.9	0.6	1.5	0.4	*1.3	0.7	*-5.0	4.2	4.0	4.3	
California	3.7	0.2	2.2	0.1	*1.5	0.2	*-8.9	1.3	-0.8	1.3	
Colorado	2.8	0.4	1.2	0.3	*1.6	0.5	*-12.5	3.2	2.6	3.1	
Connecticut	3.5	0.6	1.5	0.4	*2.0	0.7	*-5.8	3.9	*5.1	3.6	
Delaware	3.1	1.3	2.1	1.1	1.1	1.7	*-9.4	7.8	*11.1	7.3	
District of Columbia	4.3	2.5	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.3	*-19.3	18.6	-4.6	9.0	
Florida	4.9	0.3	2.5	0.2	*2.3	0.4	*-14.6	2.4	1.6	1.7	
Georgia	3.3	0.4	1.7	0.3	*1.6	0.5	*-13.3	2.3	1.7	2.6	
Hawaii	3.9	1.1	1.0	0.5	*2.9	1.2	*-18.2	8.5	5.8	6.6	
Idaho	3.5	0.8	2.4	0.7	*1.1	1.1	*-14.8	4.9	2.8	5.3	
Illinois	4.1	0.3	2.2	0.2	*1.9	0.4	*-11.6	1.9	1.2	1.9	
Indiana	4.2	0.5	2.5	0.3	*1.6	0.6	*-10.4	2.3	1.9	2.4	
Iowa	2.7	0.4	1.2	0.4	*1.5	0.6	*-8.6	3.1	-1.5	3.2	
Kansas	2.7	0.6	1.1	0.3	*1.7	0.7	*-7.5	3.9	*-6.2	3.2	
Kentucky	3.0	0.5	1.7	0.4	*1.2	0.6	*-11.5	3.1	*5.2	3.1	
Louisiana	1.8	0.5	1.0	0.2	*0.8	0.6	-1.8	3.6	*7.2	3.4	
Maine	3.3	0.8	2.0	0.6	*1.3	1.1	*-8.0	5.1	1.9	5.1	
Maryland	2.7	0.4	1.7	0.3	*1.0	0.5	*-9.7	3.5	-0.5	2.6	
Massachusetts	4.1	0.5	1.9	0.3	*2.3	0.6	*-8.6	3.1	1.7	2.5	
Michigan	5.9	0.4	3.0	0.3	*2.9	0.5	*-16.6	2.0	*-2.3	1.9	
Minnesota	3.7	0.4	1.9	0.3	*1.8	0.5	*-9.1	2.2	*3.4	2.4	
Mississippi	2.4	0.6	1.4	0.5	*1.1	0.8	*-11.3	4.3	-3.2	4.4	
Missouri	3.3	0.4	2.0	0.3	*1.4	0.5	*-10.1	2.6	1.5	2.6	
Montana	2.3	0.7	1.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	*-20.6	7.8	-4.8	5.4	
Nebraska	1.9	0.5	0.8	0.3	*1.1	0.6	*-8.3	4.6	0.8	4.4	
Nevada	4.6	0.9	2.2	0.6	*2.4	1.1	*-21.2	5.5	*9.0	5.8	
New Hampshire	2.5	0.6	1.8	0.6	0.7	0.8	*-9.4	5.1	-0.8	5.0	
New Jersey	3.6	0.3	1.7	0.2	*1.9	0.4	*-12.4	2.7	*-4.7	2.1	
New Mexico	3.1	0.8	1.6	0.6	*1.5	1.0	*-15.9	6.1	-2.9	4.6	
New York	2.5	0.2	1.8	0.2	*0.7	0.2	*-9.4	2.0	0.3	1.5	
North Carolina	3.9	0.4	1.7	0.2	*2.1	0.4	*-13.2	2.2	-0.7	2.2	
North Dakota	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7	-1.0	8.3	3.5	5.5	
Ohio	4.4	0.3	2.0	0.3	*2.3	0.4	*-13.4	1.6	1.0	1.8	
Oklahoma	2.1	0.4	1.3	0.4	*0.8	0.6	*-9.9	3.4	2.2	3.9	
Oregon	4.7	0.5	2.3	0.4	*2.4	0.7	*-17.3	3.5	0.6	3.9	
Pennsylvania	3.3	0.2	1.8	0.2	*1.5	0.3	*-8.1	1.8	1.1	1.6	
Rhode Island	3.7	1.2	3.0	1.0	0.7	1.6	*-10.5	6.9	3.8	6.3	
South Carolina	3.7	0.6	1.7	0.4	*2.0	0.7	*-13.4	3.3	1.4	3.5	
South Dakota	1.7	0.7	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.9	*-11.7	7.9	-5.6	6.2	
Tennessee	3.2	0.4	1.8	0.3	*1.4	0.5	*-14.7	2.8	-0.4	2.8	
Texas	2.7	0.2	1.3	0.1	*1.4	0.2	*-7.0	1.6	*3.3	1.5	
Utah	2.1	0.5	0.9	0.3	*1.2	0.6	*-6.1	4.1	-0.5	4.0	
Vermont	3.1	1.0	2.2	0.9	1.0	1.4	*-9.6	6.7	-4.6	4.9	
Virginia	2.1	0.3	1.3	0.3	*0.9	0.4	*-9.4	3.0	0.7	2.8	
Washington	3.5	0.4	1.5	0.2	*2.0	0.5	*-11.2	2.7	2.0	3.0	
West Virginia	2.3	0.7	1.6	0.6	0.7	0.9	*-9.7	5.9	1.0	4.8	
Wisconsin	3.6	0.4	1.7	0.3	*1.9	0.5	*-12.4	2.1	2.0	2.3	
Wyoming	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.3	*0.8	0.8	-4.7	11.2	8.3	9.0	
Puerto Rico	3.3	0.6	2.5	0.5	*0.8	0.8	*-11.3	4.7	*-4.3	4.1	

* Statistically different at the 90 percent confidence level.

¹Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to and subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009, Puerto Rico Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009.

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data for 2005 were released for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit <www.census.gov/acs/www>.