

### INTRODUCTION

This report, part of a series that analyzes data from the 2010 Census, highlights housing in 2010 and changes in housing characteristics between 2000 and 2010 in the nation, regions, states, metropolitan areas, counties, and ten most populous cities.<sup>1</sup>

Focusing on housing characteristics is a basic way to understand housing markets and changes in housing throughout the nation. Since Census 2000, the housing industry has been impacted by various events and conditions that have resulted in noticeable shifts in housing characteristics within many parts of the nation. As a

<sup>1</sup> The Northeast region includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Midwest includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The South includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The West includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Figure 1.

### Reproduction of the Question on Housing Tenure From the 2010 Census

- 3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home —**  
Mark  ONE box.
- Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? *Include home equity loans.*
  - Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?
  - Rented?
  - Occupied without payment of rent?

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census questionnaire.

result, housing markets in areas across the nation shifted to reflect these changing conditions in the latter half of the decade.<sup>2</sup>

A review of these events and circumstances, in combination with the housing characteristics data within this report, helps provide a greater understanding of housing in 2010 and the changes the nation has experienced in the past decade.

### HOUSING QUESTIONS

Housing tenure identifies a basic feature of the housing inventory: whether a unit is owner occupied or renter occupied. Data on housing tenure have been collected in

<sup>2</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of this and housing issues throughout the decade, see the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, *The State of the Nation's Housing*, annual report series, 2000–2011, <[www.jchs.harvard.edu/](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/)>.

By  
Christopher Mazur  
and  
Ellen Wilson

the census since 1890, when less than half of householders in the United States owned their homes.

Data on vacancy status have been collected since 1940. Vacancy status and other characteristics of vacant units were determined by enumerators obtaining information from property owners and managers, neighbors, rental agents, and others. Vacant units were subdivided into seven housing market classifications: for rent; rented, not occupied; for sale only; sold, not occupied; for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use; for migrant workers; and other vacant.

## HOUSING INVENTORY

According to the 2010 Census, there were 131.7 million housing units in the United States. Of these housing units, 116.7 million had people living in them (88.6 percent) on Census Day. The remaining 15.0 million units (11.4 percent) were vacant. Between 2000 and 2010, the national housing inventory increased by 15.8 million units or 13.6 percent.

### The South led all regions in total housing units.

Of the four census regions in 2010, the South had the most housing units with 50.0 million. The Midwest followed with 29.5 million, while the West had 28.6 million and the Northeast had 23.6 million. As a percentage of the entire national housing inventory, the South led the way with 37.9 percent of total housing units located in the region. The Midwest (22.4 percent) and the West (21.7 percent) followed as the next largest segments. The Northeast (18.0 percent) contributed the balance of the total housing inventory.

### The South and West outpaced the Northeast and Midwest in housing growth.

Between 2000 and 2010, the South (17.9 percent) and the West (17.3 percent) regions experienced higher rates of housing growth than the Midwest (9.3 percent) and the Northeast (6.6 percent). The states with the top ten percentage increases in housing units were in the West and South. In the West, these states included Nevada (41.9 percent), Arizona (29.9 percent), Utah (27.5 percent), Idaho (26.5 percent), and Colorado (22.4 percent). In the South, these states included Georgia (24.6 percent), Florida (23.1 percent), North Carolina (22.8 percent), Texas (22.3 percent), and South Carolina (21.9 percent). Among the states in the Midwest and Northeast, none had a percentage increase in housing inventory greater than the national percentage change of 13.6 percent.

### All states had increases in housing inventory during the decade.

As it did from 1990 to 2000, Nevada again experienced the largest percentage increase in housing units during the decade among all states; the number of units in Nevada increased from 827,000 to 1.2 million. In terms of absolute gains, Texas (1.8 million), Florida (1.7 million), and California (1.5 million) were the only states with increases greater than 1 million housing units. All states had increases in housing inventories during the decade,

Figure 2.

### Reproduction of the Question on Vacancy Status From the 2010 Census

**B.** *If vacant, ask: Which category best describes this vacant unit as of April 1, 2010? (Read categories.)*

- For rent
- Rented, not occupied
- For sale only
- Sold, not occupied
- For seasonal, recreational or occasional use
- For migrant workers
- Other vacant

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census enumerator questionnaire.

however West Virginia had the lowest percentage increase at 4.4 percent. In the Northeast, where the regional growth rate in housing units of 6.6 percent was well below the national growth rate, Pennsylvania (6.0 percent), New York (5.6 percent), and Rhode Island (5.4 percent) had lower percentage increases than both the national and Northeast growth rates.

## VACANT UNITS

In 2010, there were 15.0 million vacant housing units in the nation, an increase of 43.8 percent from the 2000 vacant-housing-unit inventory of 10.4 million. During the decade, the national gross vacancy rate, that is the percentage of vacant housing units to total housing units, increased 2.4 percentage points from 9.0 percent in 2000 to 11.4 percent in 2010.

### Gross vacancy rates increased in each region during the decade.

With 11.4 percent of the housing units in the nation vacant in 2010, the regional gross vacancy rates were 10.2 percent in the West, 10.3 percent in the Northeast, 11.1 percent in the Midwest, and

Table 1.

## General Housing Characteristics for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: 2000 and 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))

Area	Total housing units in 2000	Housing units in 2010				Percent change, 2000 to 2010				
		Total	Percent vacant	Occupied	Percent owner-occupied	All housing units	Vacant units	Occupied units		
								Total	Owner	Renter
<b>United States ...</b>	<b>115,904,641</b>	<b>131,704,730</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>116,716,292</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>14.2</b>
<b>REGION</b>										
Northeast .....	22,180,440	23,647,636	10.3	21,215,415	62.2	6.6	28.4	4.6	4.4	5.0
Midwest .....	26,963,635	29,483,646	11.1	26,215,951	69.2	9.3	46.6	6.0	4.5	9.6
South .....	42,382,546	49,980,829	12.7	43,609,929	66.7	17.9	45.9	14.7	12.0	20.6
West .....	24,378,020	28,592,619	10.2	25,674,997	60.5	17.3	50.9	14.4	12.6	17.3
<b>STATE</b>										
Alabama .....	1,963,711	2,171,853	13.3	1,883,791	69.7	10.6	27.1	8.4	4.3	19.4
Alaska .....	260,978	306,967	15.9	258,058	63.1	17.6	24.2	16.5	17.5	14.7
Arizona .....	2,189,189	2,844,526	16.3	2,380,990	66.0	29.9	61.0	25.2	21.5	33.2
Arkansas .....	1,173,043	1,316,299	12.9	1,147,084	67.0	12.2	29.8	10.0	6.2	18.7
California .....	12,214,549	13,680,081	8.1	12,577,498	55.9	12.0	54.9	9.3	7.5	11.8
Colorado .....	1,808,037	2,212,898	10.8	1,972,868	65.5	22.4	60.2	19.0	15.9	25.4
Connecticut .....	1,385,975	1,487,891	7.9	1,371,087	67.5	7.4	38.5	5.3	6.4	3.2
Delaware .....	343,072	405,885	15.7	342,297	72.1	18.3	43.4	14.6	14.2	15.6
District of Columbia ...	274,845	296,719	10.1	266,707	42.0	8.0	13.2	7.4	10.7	5.1
Florida .....	7,302,947	8,989,580	17.5	7,420,802	67.4	23.1	62.6	17.1	12.5	27.7
Georgia .....	3,281,737	4,088,801	12.3	3,585,584	65.7	24.6	82.7	19.3	16.0	26.0
Hawaii .....	460,542	519,508	12.4	455,338	57.7	12.8	12.0	12.9	15.3	9.9
Idaho .....	527,824	667,796	13.2	579,408	69.9	26.5	51.9	23.4	19.1	34.6
Illinois .....	4,885,615	5,296,715	8.7	4,836,972	67.5	8.4	56.5	5.3	5.7	4.7
Indiana .....	2,532,319	2,795,541	10.5	2,502,154	69.9	10.4	49.7	7.1	4.7	13.0
Iowa .....	1,232,511	1,336,417	8.6	1,221,576	72.1	8.4	38.0	6.3	5.9	7.3
Kansas .....	1,131,200	1,233,215	9.8	1,112,096	67.8	9.0	29.8	7.1	4.8	12.3
Kentucky .....	1,750,927	1,927,164	10.8	1,719,965	68.7	10.1	29.3	8.1	5.0	15.8
Louisiana .....	1,847,181	1,964,981	12.0	1,728,360	67.2	6.4	23.8	4.4	3.3	6.6
Maine .....	651,901	721,830	22.8	557,219	71.3	10.7	23.1	7.5	7.1	8.5
Maryland .....	2,145,283	2,378,814	9.3	2,156,411	67.5	10.9	35.3	8.9	8.5	9.6
Massachusetts .....	2,621,989	2,808,254	9.3	2,547,075	62.3	7.1	46.4	4.2	5.2	2.6
Michigan .....	4,234,279	4,532,233	14.6	3,872,508	72.1	7.0	47.1	2.3	-	8.7
Minnesota .....	2,065,946	2,347,201	11.1	2,087,227	73.0	13.6	52.2	10.1	7.9	16.8
Mississippi .....	1,161,953	1,274,719	12.5	1,115,768	69.6	9.7	37.6	6.6	2.7	17.0
Missouri .....	2,442,017	2,712,729	12.4	2,375,611	68.8	11.1	36.3	8.2	5.9	13.7
Montana .....	412,633	482,825	15.2	409,607	68.0	17.0	35.7	14.2	12.4	18.2
Nebraska .....	722,668	796,793	9.5	721,130	67.2	10.3	34.0	8.2	7.9	9.0
Nevada .....	827,457	1,173,814	14.3	1,006,250	58.8	41.9	119.6	34.0	29.4	41.1
New Hampshire .....	547,024	614,754	15.6	518,973	71.0	12.4	32.3	9.3	11.4	4.7
New Jersey .....	3,310,275	3,553,562	9.5	3,214,360	65.4	7.3	38.1	4.9	4.5	5.6
New Mexico .....	780,579	901,388	12.2	791,395	68.5	15.5	7.2	16.7	14.3	22.5
New York .....	7,679,307	8,108,103	9.7	7,317,755	53.3	5.6	27.0	3.7	4.2	3.1
North Carolina .....	3,523,944	4,327,528	13.5	3,745,155	66.7	22.8	48.6	19.6	15.0	30.0
North Dakota .....	289,677	317,498	11.4	281,192	65.4	9.6	11.6	9.3	7.4	13.3
Ohio .....	4,783,051	5,127,508	10.2	4,603,435	67.6	7.2	55.4	3.5	1.3	8.7
Oklahoma .....	1,514,400	1,664,378	12.3	1,460,450	67.2	9.9	18.5	8.8	6.9	12.9
Oregon .....	1,452,709	1,675,562	9.3	1,518,938	62.2	15.3	31.6	13.9	10.2	20.5
Pennsylvania .....	5,249,750	5,567,315	9.9	5,018,904	69.6	6.0	16.0	5.1	2.5	11.4
Rhode Island .....	439,837	463,388	10.7	413,600	60.7	5.4	58.5	1.3	2.4	-0.4
South Carolina .....	1,753,670	2,137,683	15.7	1,801,181	69.3	21.9	53.1	17.4	12.7	29.6
South Dakota .....	323,208	363,438	11.3	322,282	68.1	12.4	24.9	11.0	10.9	11.3
Tennessee .....	2,439,443	2,812,133	11.3	2,493,552	68.2	15.3	54.2	11.7	8.9	18.1
Texas .....	8,157,575	9,977,436	10.6	8,922,933	63.7	22.3	38.0	20.7	20.5	21.0
Utah .....	768,594	979,709	10.4	877,692	70.4	27.5	51.6	25.2	23.2	30.0
Vermont .....	294,382	322,539	20.5	256,442	70.7	9.6	23.0	6.6	6.8	5.9
Virginia .....	2,904,192	3,364,939	9.2	3,056,058	67.2	15.9	50.7	13.2	11.8	16.2
Washington .....	2,451,075	2,885,677	9.2	2,620,076	63.9	17.7	47.8	15.4	14.1	17.6
West Virginia .....	844,623	881,917	13.4	763,831	73.4	4.4	9.2	3.7	1.3	11.0
Wisconsin .....	2,321,144	2,624,358	13.1	2,279,768	68.1	13.1	45.6	9.4	8.8	10.6
Wyoming .....	223,854	261,868	13.4	226,879	69.2	17.0	15.7	17.2	15.9	20.2
<b>Puerto Rico .....</b>	<b>1,418,476</b>	<b>1,636,946</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>1,376,531</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>65.7</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>14.3</b>

- Percentage rounds to 0.0

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Summary File 1* and *2010 Census Summary File 1*.

Table 2.

### Ten States With the Highest Percentage of Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use Homes: 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))

Area	Total housing units	For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	Percent
<b>United States</b> .....	<b>131,704,730</b>	<b>4,649,298</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Maine .....	721,830	118,310	16.4
Vermont .....	322,539	50,198	15.6
New Hampshire .....	614,754	63,910	10.4
Alaska .....	306,967	27,901	9.1
Delaware .....	405,885	35,939	8.9
Montana .....	482,825	38,510	8.0
Wisconsin .....	2,624,358	193,046	7.4
Florida .....	8,989,580	657,070	7.3
Arizona .....	2,844,526	184,327	6.5
Idaho .....	667,796	41,660	6.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1.

12.7 percent in the South, the only region with a vacancy rate higher than the national rate. Between 2000 and 2010, all four regions experienced percentage-point increases in vacancy rates, with the Midwest experiencing the largest increase at 2.8 percentage points. The South (2.4) and West (2.3) had similar percentage-point increases, while the Northeast had the lowest increase among the regions at 1.7 percentage points.

#### Most of the states with the highest gross vacancy rates also had the highest proportions of vacant units classified for seasonal, recreational, and occasional use.

Of the 50 states, nine states had gross vacancy rates greater than 15.0 percent in 2010. Of these nine states, three were located in the Northeast (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire), three in the South (Florida, South Carolina, Delaware), and three in the West (Arizona, Alaska, Montana). Though these states had the highest gross vacancy rates, it is of note that all but South Carolina had a higher-than-average proportion of vacant units classified as “Vacant—for

seasonal, recreational, and occasional use” in 2010 (see Table 2). This class of units is more commonly referred to as “vacation” homes, but this category also includes units occupied on an occasional basis as corporate apartments and other temporary residences where all household members reported their residence was elsewhere.

On a percentage basis, Maine (16.4 percent), Vermont (15.6 percent), and New Hampshire (10.4 percent), three northern New England states, topped the list of states with the most vacant units classified for seasonal, recreational, and occasional use. In terms of absolute numbers, Florida was the clear leader in the number of these homes (657,000), followed by California (303,000), New York (289,000), and Michigan (263,000).

#### All but three states experienced an increase in gross vacancy rates during the decade.

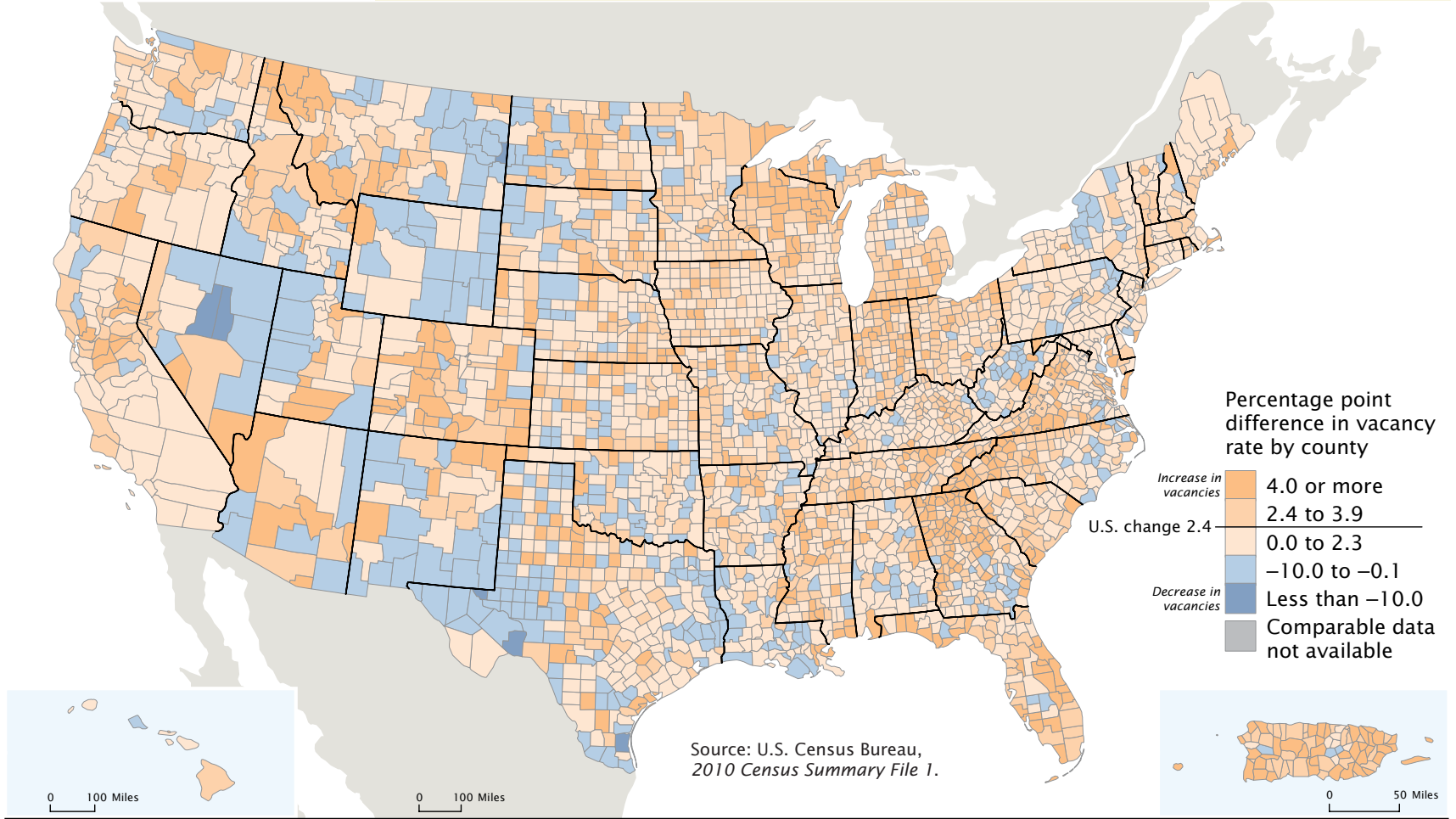
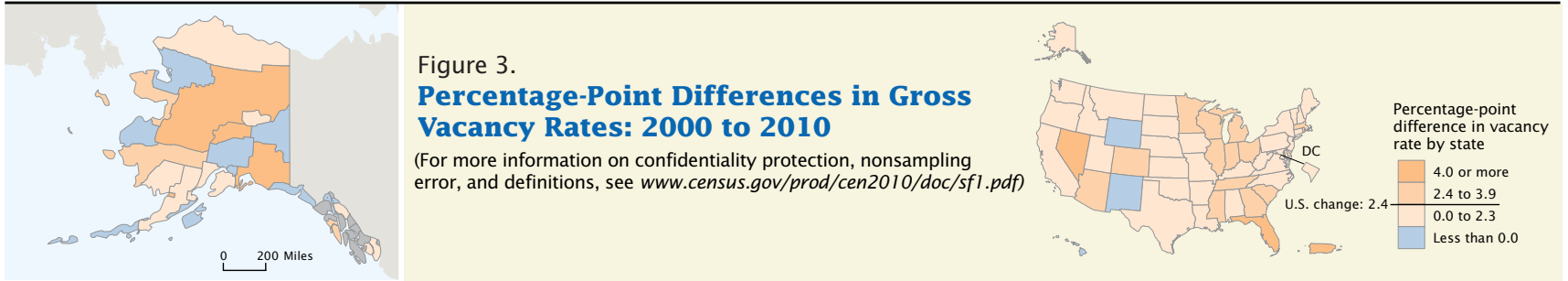
During the decade, the state with the largest percentage-point increase in gross vacancy rate was Nevada, which went from 9.2 in 2000 to 14.3 in 2010. Seven other states also experienced increases

of at least 3.0 percentage points. These states included Florida (4.2), Michigan (4.0), Georgia (3.9), Rhode Island (3.6), South Carolina (3.2), Ohio (3.2), and Arizona (3.1). Only three states, New Mexico (−0.9), Wyoming (−0.2), and Hawaii (−0.1), experienced percentage-point decreases in gross vacancy rates.

Of the ten states with the largest percent increases in total housing units during the decade, Utah and Texas had the lowest increases in gross vacancy rates at 1.7 and 1.2 percentage points, respectively. Nevada led all states with both the largest percent increase in total housing units and largest percentage-point increase in gross vacancy rate. Florida (4.2) and Georgia (3.9) also experienced large percentage-point increases in gross vacancy rates. The percentage-point increases in gross vacancy rates of the remaining ten states with the largest increases in total housing units were 3.2 in South Carolina, 3.1 in Arizona, 2.6 in Colorado, 2.3 in North Carolina, and 2.2 in Idaho.

#### Increases in gross vacancy rates during the decade were experienced by counties of all population sizes.

Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage-point changes in gross vacancy rates of the 3,137 comparable counties and equivalent areas ranged from −33.7 in Loving County, TX, to 15.5 in White County, GA. Of the ten most populous counties in 2010, Maricopa County, AZ, had both the largest percentage-point increase (4.5) during the decade and highest vacancy rate (13.9 percent) in 2010. Miami-Dade County, FL (12.3 percent), and Harris County, TX (10.2 percent), followed with the next highest vacancy rates, with these counties experiencing increases in vacancy rates of 3.4 and 3.1 percentage points since 2000, respectively.





Other counties among the ten most populous that experienced large percentage-point increases in vacancy rates were Cook County, IL (4.0), and Dallas County, TX (3.9). The remaining ten largest counties and their percentage-point increases during the decade included King County, WA (3.1); Kings County, NY (2.9); San Diego County, CA (2.3); Orange County, CA (1.9); and Los Angeles County, CA (1.7).

**At least one in ten houses was vacant in half of the country's ten largest cities in 2010.**

Of the ten most populous cities in 2010, five had gross vacancy rates above 10.0 percent. Phoenix had the highest gross vacancy rate at 12.8 percent. Chicago (12.5 percent), Houston (12.3 percent), Dallas (11.3 percent), and Philadelphia (10.5 percent) followed with the next highest proportion of vacant housing units. San Jose, with a vacancy rate of 4.0 percent, had the lowest rate by far.

Even with the fifth-highest vacancy rate among the ten most populous cities in 2010, Philadelphia was the only city to experience a percentage-point decrease (-0.4) in its gross vacancy rate during the decade. The remaining cities all had increases greater than 2.0 percentage points, with the highest increases experienced in Phoenix (6.7), Dallas (4.6), Chicago (4.6), and Houston (4.1). The remaining ten largest cities and their respective percentage-point increases in vacancy rates were San Diego (2.4), New York (2.2), San Jose (2.1), San Antonio (2.1), and Los Angeles (2.1).

Table 3.

**Ten States With the Highest Homeowner and Rental Vacancy Rates: 2010**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))

State	Homeowner vacancy rate	State	Rental vacancy rate
Nevada . . . . .	5.2	South Carolina . . . . .	14.3
Arizona . . . . .	3.9	Florida . . . . .	13.2
Florida . . . . .	3.8	Nevada . . . . .	13.0
Georgia . . . . .	3.4	Arizona . . . . .	12.9
Idaho . . . . .	3.1	Georgia . . . . .	12.3
South Carolina . . . . .	2.8	Alabama . . . . .	12.1
North Carolina . . . . .	2.8	Mississippi . . . . .	11.6
Tennessee . . . . .	2.7	Michigan . . . . .	11.5
Michigan . . . . .	2.7	North Carolina . . . . .	11.1
Alabama . . . . .	2.6	Missouri . . . . .	11.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1.

**The increases in the national homeowner and rental vacancy rates during the decade help to provide additional information about the nation's vacant housing inventory.**

To further assess vacant units and the impact they have on the housing inventory, both the homeowner vacancy rate and rental vacancy rate are used to provide additional information. The homeowner vacancy rate is the proportion of the homeowner inventory that is vacant "for sale." It is computed by dividing the number of vacant units "for sale only" by the sum of the owner-occupied units, vacant units that are "for sale only," and vacant units that have been sold but not yet occupied, and then multiplying by 100. The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of the rental inventory that is vacant "for rent." This rate is computed by dividing the number of vacant units "for rent" by the sum of the renter-occupied units, vacant units that are "for rent," and vacant units that have been rented but not yet occupied, and then multiplying by 100.

Nationally, the homeowner and rental vacancy rates in 2010 were 2.4 percent and 9.2 percent, respectively. During the decade, the homeowner vacancy rate increased

0.7 percentage points, while the rental vacancy rate increased 2.3 percentage points.

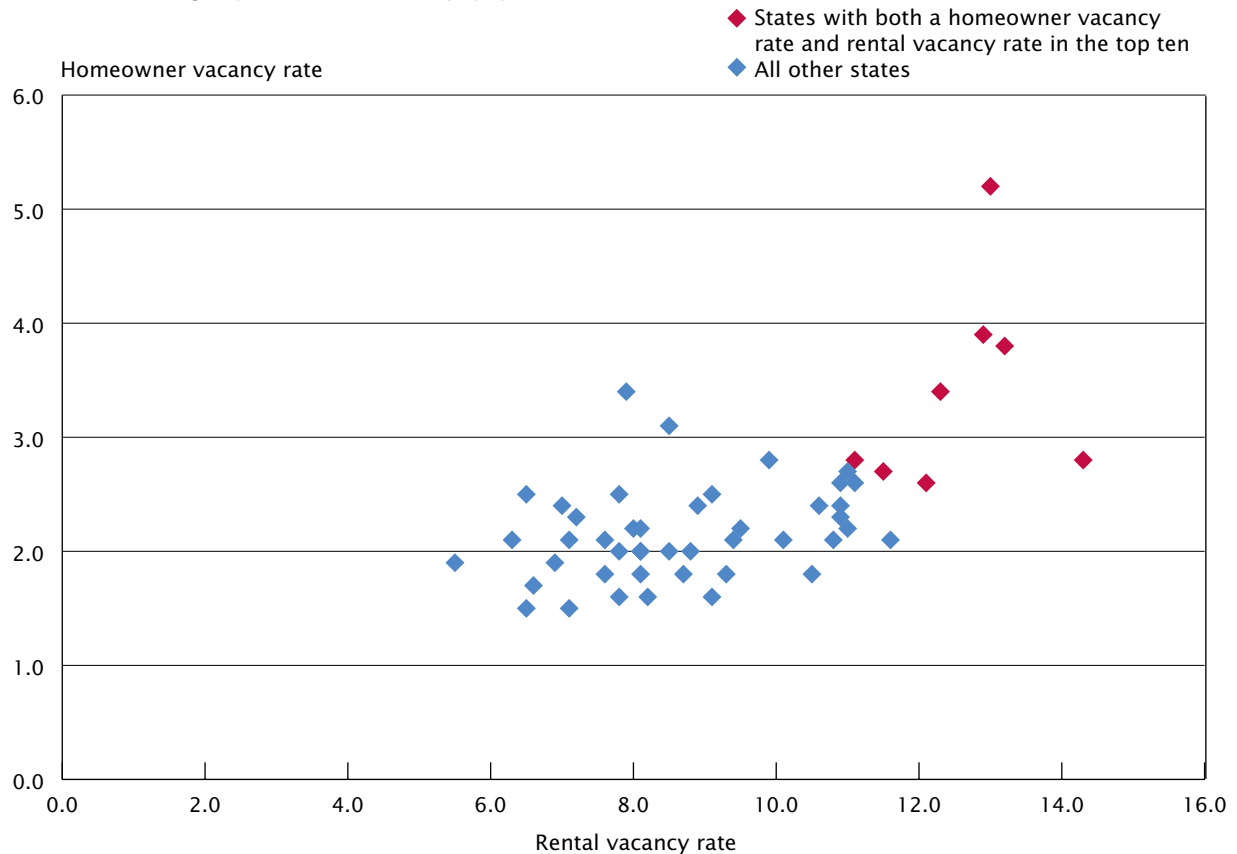
**Many of the states with the highest homeowner vacancy rates also had the highest rental vacancy rates in 2010.**

The five states with the highest homeowner vacancy rates were also the only states with rates greater than 3.0 percent (see Table 3). These states were Nevada (5.2 percent), Arizona (3.9 percent), Florida (3.8 percent), Georgia (3.4 percent), and Idaho (3.1 percent). Except for Idaho, these states also were in the top five states with the highest rental vacancy rates in 2010. However, states with the highest rental vacancy rates were led by South Carolina, which had a rate of 14.3 percent. Following South Carolina and rounding out the top five states with the highest rental vacancy rates were Florida (13.2 percent), Nevada (13.0 percent), Arizona (12.9 percent), and Georgia (12.3 percent). Eight states made both the list of the top ten states with the highest homeowner vacancy rates and the list of the top ten states with the highest rental vacancy rates. These states included Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, and South Carolina

Figure 4.

### State Homeowner Vacancy and Rental Vacancy Rates

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1.

(see states highlighted in red in Figure 4).

#### “Other vacant” units comprised almost one-fourth of all vacant units.

Nationally, 3.7 million housing units were classified as “other vacant” in 2010, representing 24.4 percent of all vacant units. Between 2000 and 2010, there was a percentage-point increase of 2.3 for these types of vacant units. Among the 50 states, the percentages of units classified as “other vacant” ranged from 8.2 in Vermont to 39.9 in Louisiana.

The “other vacant” category includes units being held off the

market by an owner for any number of reasons, such as the possibility of repair, future occupancy by a caretaker or janitor, and bank-owned properties not yet on the market for sale or rent. A large proportion of vacant units classified as other can also indicate difficulty on the part of the enumerators to determine the status for these vacant units.

#### OWNER/RENTER OCCUPANCY

In 2010, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units to all occupied units, also known as the homeownership rate, was 65.1 percent nationally. From 2000, when the homeownership rate

was 66.2 percent, to 2010, the homeownership rate decreased by 1.1 percentage points. This decline in the national homeownership rate was the largest decrease since the change experienced between 1930 and 1940. However, the 2010 homeownership rate remains as the second-highest rate since collection of tenure data began in the census of 1890.

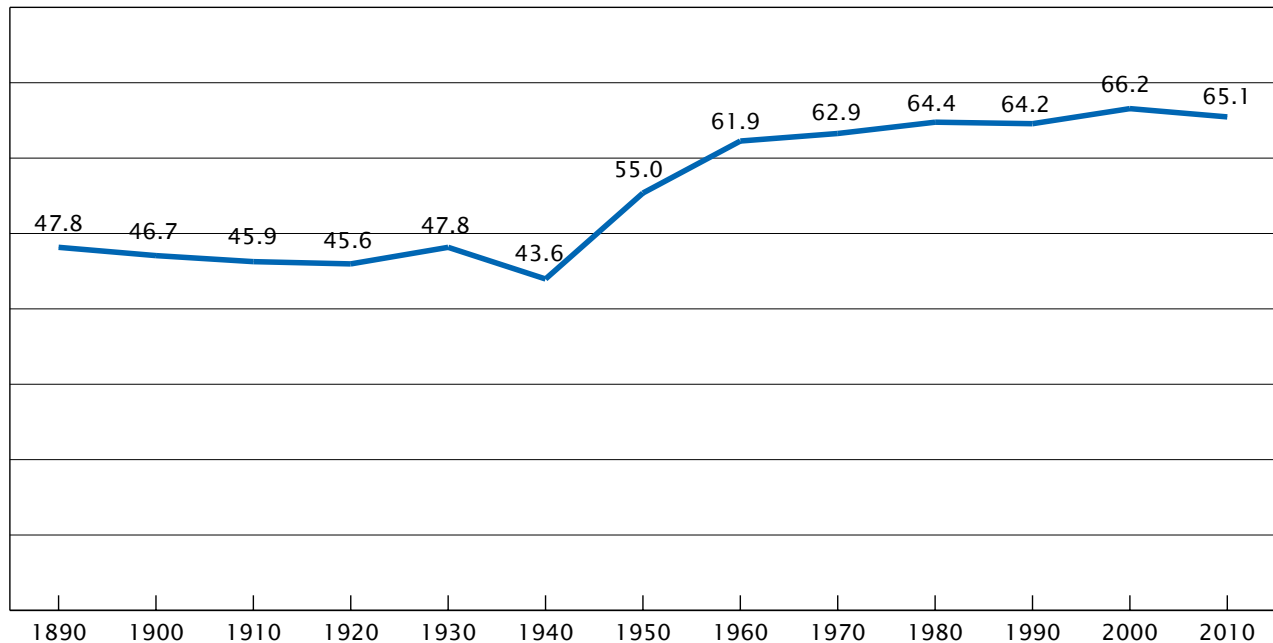
#### More than a third of the nation’s owners and renters lived in the South.

Within the regions, the homeownership rates were 60.5 percent in the West, 62.2 percent in the Northeast, 66.7 percent in the South, and 69.2 percent in the

Figure 5.

### Owner-Occupied Units as a Percentage of All Occupied Housing Units: 1890 to 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, decennial volumes, and 2010 Census Summary File 1.

Midwest. Between 2000 and 2010, each region experienced a decrease in homeownership rate. As a percentage of the entire national owner-occupied housing inventory, more than a third (38.3 percent) of all owner-occupied homes were located in the South. The next largest segment was in the Midwest (23.9 percent). The West (20.4 percent) and Northeast (17.4 percent) contributed the balance of the homeowner inventory.

Among the 40.7 million renter-occupied housing units in the nation, about a third (35.6 percent, or 14.5 million) were located in the South and a quarter (24.9 percent, or 10.1 million) in the West. The remaining renter-occupied homes were about evenly distributed between the Midwest (19.8 percent, or 8.1 million) and the Northeast (19.7 percent, or 8.0 million).

#### In 2010, as in 2000, West Virginia and Minnesota maintained their positions as the states with the highest proportions of owner-occupied housing.

While the majority of occupied housing units in all 50 states were owner occupied, West Virginia and Minnesota had the highest homeownership rates in 2010 at 73.4 percent and 73.0 percent, respectively. Following these two states and rounding out the top five states with the highest homeownership rates were Michigan (72.1 percent), Iowa (72.1 percent), and Delaware (72.1 percent). As in 2000, New York ranked at the bottom with respect to homeownership (53.3 percent) in 2010.

In the District of Columbia, about three out of five households (58.0 percent) were renters. Though renters outnumbered owners in 2010,

both the number of owner-occupied units and the homeownership rate increased during the decade at 10.7 percent and 1.3 percentage points, respectively. The number of renter-occupied units also increased 5.1 percent, going from 147,000 in 2000 to 155,000 in 2010.

Between 2000 and 2010, the largest increase in both owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units among the 50 states was in Nevada at 29.4 percent and 41.1 percent, respectively. Among renter-occupied housing units, Idaho (34.6 percent) and Arizona (33.2 percent) also experienced large increases. Rhode Island was the only state to have a decrease (-0.4 percent) in the number of renter-occupied housing units during the decade.

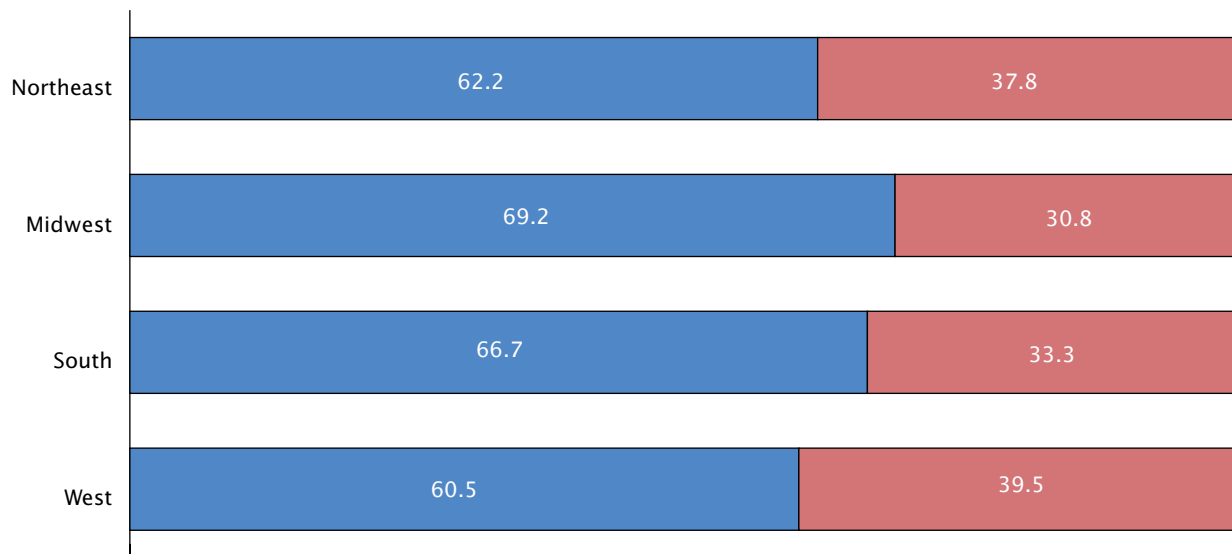


Figure 6.

**Percent Distribution of Tenure by Region: 2010**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))

Owners  
Renters



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1.

**Homeowners were a majority in nearly all counties, however many of these counties saw homeownership rates decrease during the decade.**

In 2010, owners outnumbered renters in all but 47 (1.5 percent) of the 3,143 counties and equivalent areas. The counties with the highest homeownership rates were Keweenaw County, MI (89.8 percent); Sumter County, FL (89.7 percent); Alcona County, MI (89.6 percent); Morgan County, UT (89.1 percent); and Powhatan County, VA (88.5 percent). Homeownership was fairly uncommon among households in New York City, where three of the five counties had homeownership rates below 30 percent. These counties were Bronx (19.3 percent), New York (22.8 percent), and Kings (27.7 percent). The only other county with a homeownership rate below 30 percent was the small county of Kalawao in Hawaii, where the

homeownership rate was 1.4 percent.

During the decade, 2,558 comparable counties from 2000 had percentage-point decreases in homeownership rates, thus relatively more households occupied rental housing units in 2010. The largest percentage-point increases in renter occupancy were in Loving County, TX (19.8); Manassas Park, VA (13.2); and Madison County, ID (10.9). Only 14 counties experienced an increase in homeownership rates greater than 5 percentage points. Of these 14 counties, Denali Borough, AK (9.8), and Mineral County, CO (8.8), had the largest percentage-point increases in homeownership rates.

**All but one metropolitan area had more homeowners than renters in 2010.**

Among the metropolitan areas with the ten highest homeownership rates, three were located in

Michigan and three in Florida (see Table 4). The metropolitan areas in Michigan were Monroe (79.8 percent), Holland-Grand Haven (78.2 percent), and Bay City (77.8 percent); in Florida the areas were Punta Gorda (79.7 percent), Palm Coast (76.6 percent), and Ocala (76.3 percent).

With a homeownership rate of 49.5 percent, Manhattan, KS, home to Kansas State University, was the only metropolitan area where owners were outnumbered by renters. Other metropolitan areas with low homeownership rates were College Station-Bryan, TX (50.0 percent), which is home to Texas A&M University; Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA (50.4 percent); Salinas, CA (50.9 percent); and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA (51.1 percent).

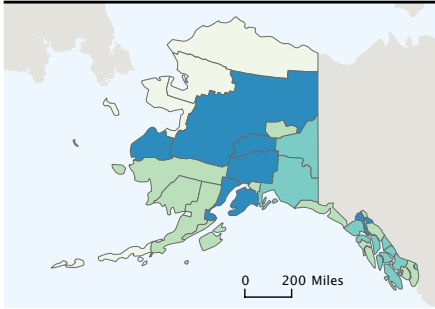
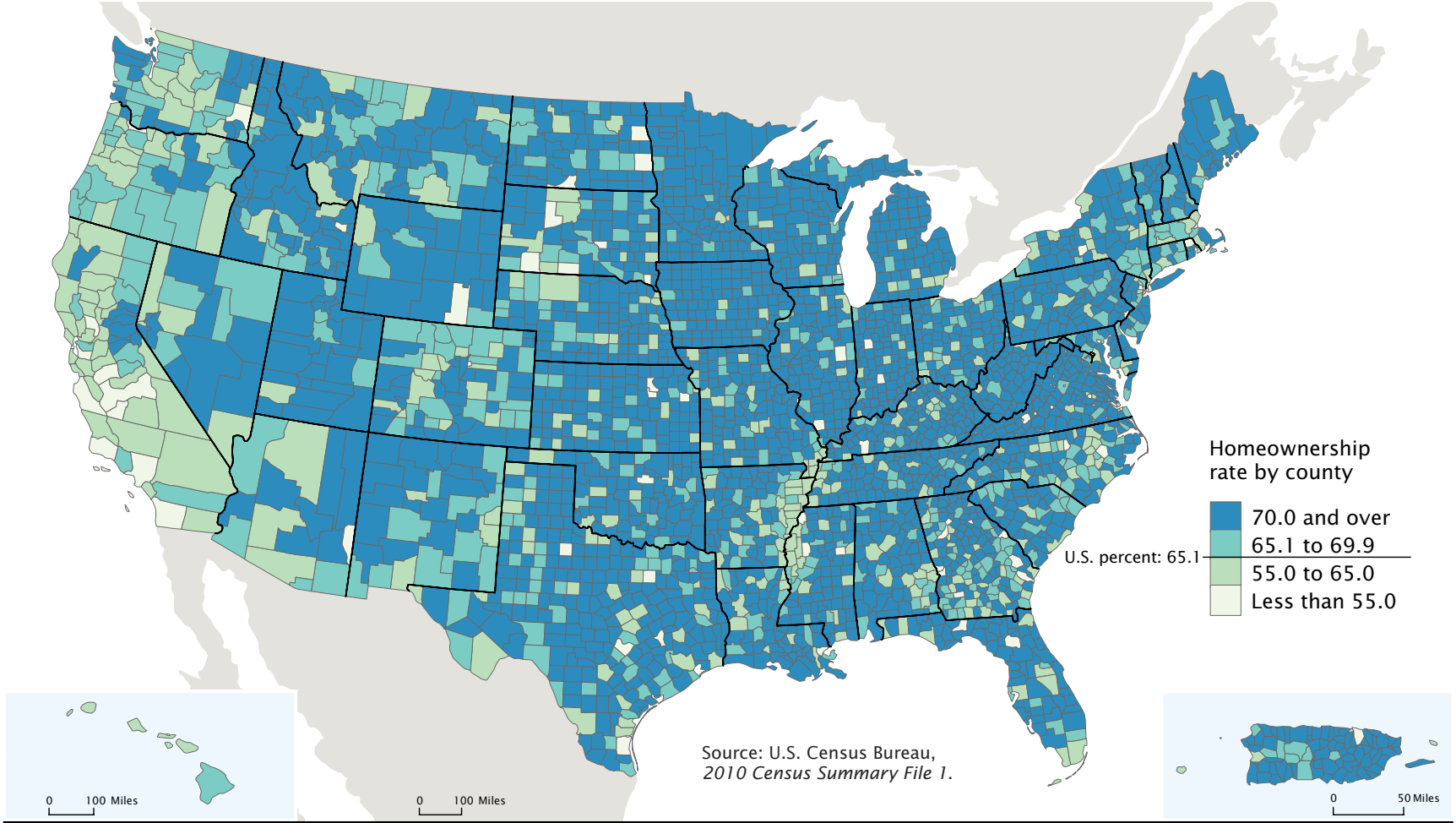
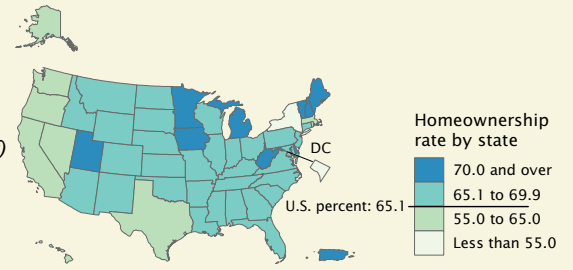


Figure 7.  
**Homeownership Rates: 2010**

(For more information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))



Source: U.S. Census Bureau,  
2010 Census Summary File 1.

Table 4.  
**Ten Metropolitan Areas With the Highest Percentage of Owner-Occupied Units: 2010**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))

Metropolitan area	Percent
Monroe, MI . . . . .	79.8
Punta Gorda, FL . . . . .	79.7
Holland-Grand Haven, MI . . . . .	78.2
Bay City, MI . . . . .	77.8
Barnstable Town, MA . . . . .	77.4
Palm Coast, FL . . . . .	76.6
Rochester, MN . . . . .	76.6
Ocala, FL . . . . .	76.3
Ogden-Clearfield, UT . . . . .	75.8
York-Hanover, PA . . . . .	75.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2010 Census Summary File 1*.

**Renters outnumbered owners in many of the country's ten largest cities.**

In the four most populous cities in 2010, the majority of households were renters (see Table 5). Sixty-nine percent of households in New York City, 61.8 percent in Los Angeles, 55.1 percent in Chicago, and 54.6 percent in Houston rented their homes. Renters also accounted for the majority of households in San Diego (51.7 percent) and Dallas (55.9 percent), the eighth and ninth most populous cities in 2010, respectively. Of the remaining ten largest cities, homeownership was more common in Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, and San Jose.

**METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF DATA**

This report used decennial census data primarily for the years 2000 and 2010. All derived values were computed using unrounded data. For readability, most whole numbers in the text are expressed in millions or rounded to the nearest thousand, and percentages are rounded to tenths. In the tables, whole numbers are unrounded, and percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth. In the maps, data are categorized based on unrounded data.

**COMPARABILITY WITH DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES**

The Census Bureau collects data on vacant units and homeownership rates from several other surveys, and one will find that there will be differences, sometimes noticeable differences, between the results provided by the 2010 Census and results from these other surveys. For example, the gross vacancy rate for the 2010 Census was 11.4 percent, while the rate (based on an annual estimate) for the 2010 Housing Vacancy Survey (HVS) was 14.3 percent. However, both the 2010 Census and the HVS show a similar upward trend in vacancies from 2000 to 2010. On the other hand, both the 2010 Census and annual estimates for the HVS for 2010 show very similar homeowner vacancy rates—2.4 percent for the 2010 Census and 2.6 percent based on an annual estimate from the 2010 HVS. Numbers from these different sources may differ for several reasons. For example, the Census Bureau attempted to measure the occupancy status of units on April 1, 2010—a single day—for the 2010 Census. Most surveys that supply vacancy rates measure the status of sample

units at the time the field representative conducts the interview. Census enumerators returned to units thought to be vacant over several months to verify the status, but always attempted to measure status as of April 1, 2010. The Census Bureau will be actively investigating these differences as analysts evaluate the results of the 2010 Census, the 2010 HVS, and the 2010 American Community Survey. The Census Bureau plans to release the results of this research at the 2012 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Research Conference and in future informal working papers.

**ABOUT THE 2010 CENSUS**

The U.S. Constitution mandates that a census be taken in the United States every 10 years. This is required in order to determine the number of seats each state is to receive in the U.S. House of Representatives. The data collected in the census is also used to provide states with the small-area data they need to redraw state legislative districts, to distribute over \$400 billion in federal program funding per year, and to help a variety of stakeholders in such tasks as planning services for their

Table 5.  
**Ten Largest Cities and Percent of Renter-Occupied Units: 2010**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf))

City	Total population	Total occupied housing units	Percent renters
New York, NY . . . . .	8,175,133	3,109,784	69.0
Los Angeles, CA . . . . .	3,792,621	1,318,168	61.8
Chicago, IL . . . . .	2,695,598	1,045,560	55.1
Houston, TX . . . . .	2,099,451	782,643	54.6
Philadelphia, PA . . . . .	1,526,006	599,736	45.9
Phoenix, AZ . . . . .	1,445,632	514,806	42.4
San Antonio, TX . . . . .	1,327,407	479,642	43.5
San Diego, CA . . . . .	1,307,402	483,092	51.7
Dallas, TX . . . . .	1,197,816	458,057	55.9
San Jose, CA . . . . .	945,942	301,366	41.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2010 Census Summary File 1*.

communities or researching the diversity of their neighborhoods.

The Census Bureau collects data on housing characteristics to support and provide information on a variety of housing programs for multiple levels of government. Data on vacant units are needed by federal and local agencies to evaluate the overall state of housing markets, while homeownership rates have served as an indicator of the health of the nation's economy for decades.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on housing in the United States, visit the U.S. Census Bureau's Internet site at <[www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing.html)>.

2010 Census housing data for state and local areas are available on the Internet at <[factfinder2.census.gov](http://factfinder2.census.gov)> and on DVD. Information on confidentiality protection, non-sampling error, and definitions is available on the Census Bureau's Internet site at <[www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1)>.

Information on other population and housing topics is presented in the 2010 Census Briefs series, located on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site at <[www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/)>. This series presents information about race, Hispanic origin, age, sex, household type, housing tenure, and people who reside in group quarters.

If you have questions or need additional information, please call the Customer Services Center at 1-800-923-8282. You can also visit the Census Bureau's Question and Answer Center at <[ask.census.gov](http://ask.census.gov)> to submit your questions online.