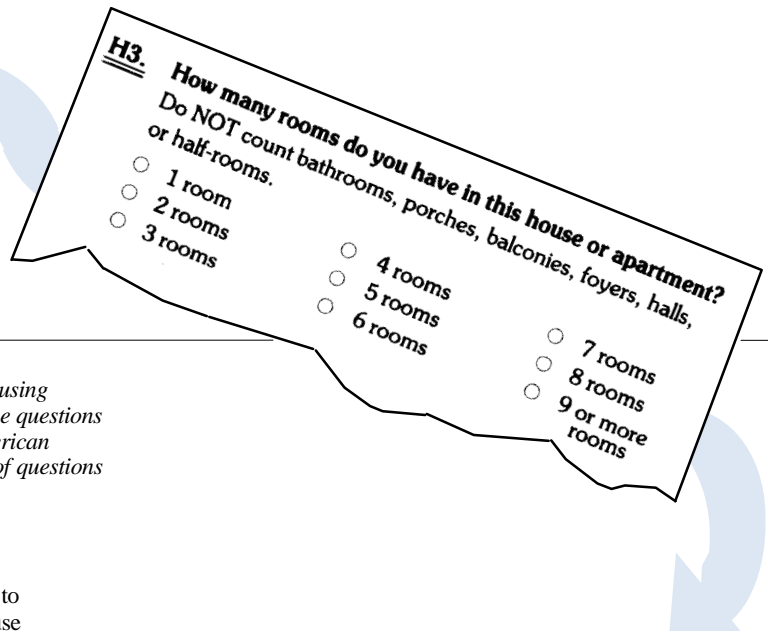


# We asked... You told us

## Number of Rooms and Bedrooms



The Census Bureau conducts a census of population and housing every 10 years. This bulletin is one of a series that shows the questions asked in the 1990 census and the answers that you, the American people, gave. Each bulletin focuses on a question or group of questions appearing on the 1990 census questionnaires.

### Number of Rooms

In question **H3** on the 1990 census forms, we asked people to provide us with a count of the number of rooms in their house or apartment. The pie chart shows what you told us in replying to this question.

- In 1990, a majority (60 percent) of the homes in the United States had 4 to 6 rooms.
- Large homes with 8 or more rooms accounted for only 13 percent of the Nation's total. Smaller homes with 1 to 3 rooms made up 16 percent of the total.

The information you gave us about rooms also helped us learn about trends in housing size. Measured by the number of rooms, housing units grew steadily larger between 1950 and 1990. The median<sup>1</sup> number of rooms for the Nation rose from 4.6 in 1950 to 5.2 in 1990. This increase was a result of the more rapid growth during that period in the percentage of housing units with 6 or more rooms.

### How Much Elbow Room?

A housing unit is often considered crowded if it has more than one person to a room. (The number of persons per room is calculated for a household by dividing the number of occupants by the number of rooms.)

On the basis of persons per room, housing units in the United States have become less crowded in the last 50 years. Overall, the percentage of crowded households declined between 1940 and 1990 from 20 to 5 percent, despite a slight increase, less than 1 percent, between 1980 and 1990.

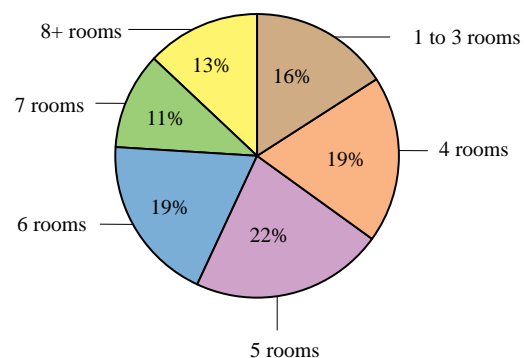
As the bar chart illustrates, the percentage of crowded households varied widely in 1990 among the Nation's top 10 metropolitan areas<sup>2</sup>, from 16 percent in Los Angeles to only 3 percent in Philadelphia, Boston, and Detroit.

<sup>1</sup>The median divides the distribution for rooms into two equal parts: one-half of the cases fall below the median, and one-half of the cases exceed the median.

<sup>2</sup>Generally, a metropolitan area consists of a sizable city and its suburbs, with a total population of at least 100,000. The chart identifies metropolitan areas by their principal cities. The official names include additional cities.

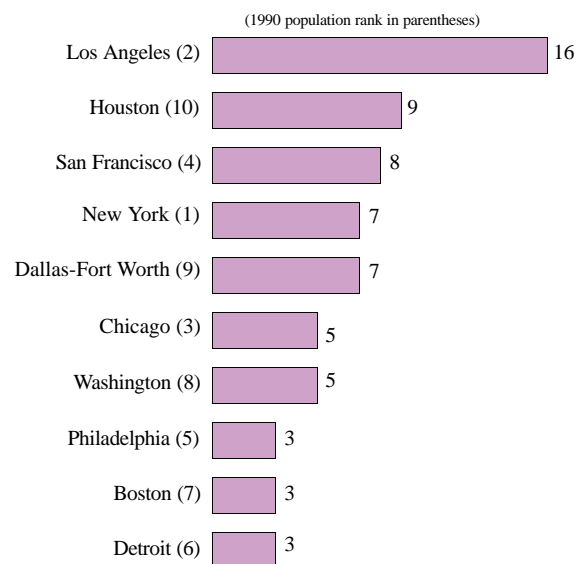
### How Big Are the Nation's Homes?

Rooms Per Housing Unit: 1990



### How Crowded Are the Households in the 10 Largest Metro Areas?

Percent of Households With More Than One Person Per Room: 1990

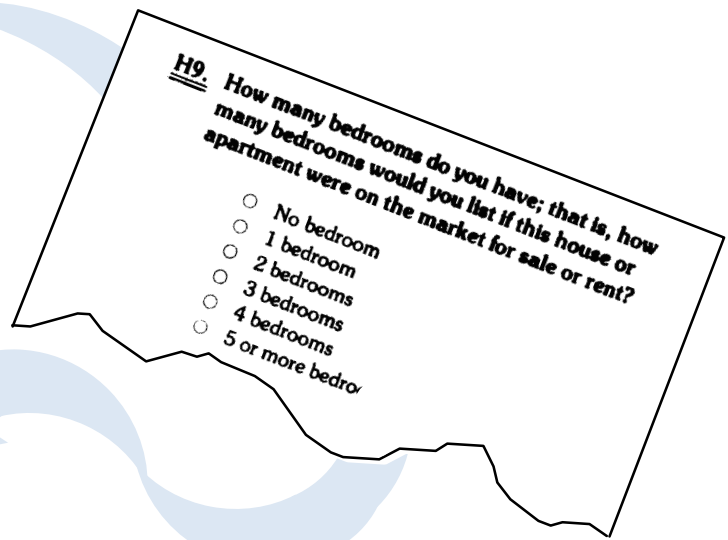


*Census Trivia:* According to the 1990 census, which State had the highest percentage of crowded households (those with more than one person per room)? (Answer on reverse.)

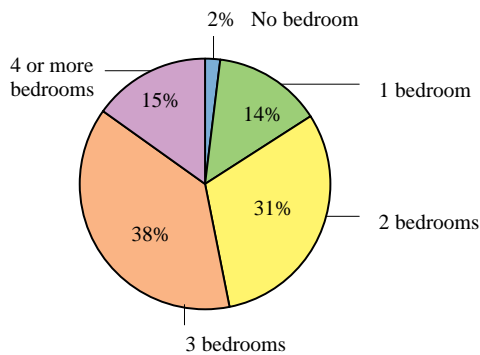
## Number of Bedrooms<sup>3</sup>

In question **H9**, we asked people to provide us with a count of the number of bedrooms in their house or apartment; that is, the number of bedrooms they would list if the house or apartment were on the market for sale or rent. The pie chart shows your answers to this question.

- In 1990, 3-bedroom homes were the most common housing style, accounting for 38 percent of the Nation's housing units. Two-bedroom dwellings followed closely in popularity, making up 31 percent of the housing total.
- Housing units with no bedroom, such as one-room efficiency apartments, made up only 2 percent of the total.



### Bedrooms Per Housing Unit: 1990



From what **you told us**, we also learned that:

- Despite the small percentage of homes with no bedroom in 1990, this category had the largest percentage increase during the 1980's, as illustrated in the bar chart. During the 1960's, however, homes with 3 or more bedrooms grew the fastest and homes with no bedroom actually decreased by about a third.
- Among the States, the percentage of housing units with 4 or more bedrooms varied significantly in 1990. Utah had the highest percentage of housing units in this category (29 percent), about double the Nation's average of 15 percent. The States with the lowest percentages of homes with 4 or more bedrooms were Arkansas, with 8 percent, and Oklahoma and Florida, each with 9 percent.
- The two States with the highest percentage of housing units with no bedroom at all were Alaska and Hawaii, each with 7 percent.

<sup>3</sup>Data on bedrooms are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability.

*Trivia Answer:* Hawaii had the highest percentage of crowded households (16 percent) in 1990.



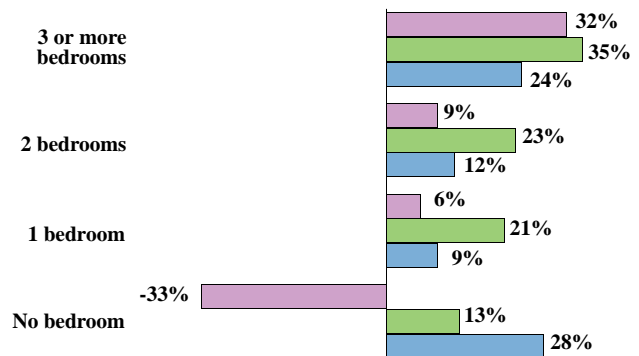
Issued April 1993

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

### Changes in Bedrooms: 1960 to 1990

Percent Change in the Number of Housing Units by Bedrooms

1960 to 1970 1970 to 1980 1980 to 1990



### Who Uses This Information?

Just a few examples:

- Federal, State, and local governments to identify communities eligible for housing assistance programs
- City and community officials to determine neighborhood housing deficiencies
- Individuals who are considering relocating

### Want to Know More?

Consult the series of 1990 census reports, CPH-1, *Summary Population and Housing Characteristics*; CH-1, *General Housing Characteristics*; and CH-2, *Detailed Housing Characteristics*, at a large public or university library. Also for sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office. For ordering information, call Customer Services at the Census Bureau, 301-763-4100.

For copies of CQC bulletins, call Customer Services. For more information on CQC bulletins, call Kim Giesbrecht or Karen Mills, 301-763-4263.

For further information on housing data, call the Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, 301-763-8553.