

Housing Costs of Renters

In May of 2003 the Census Bureau released a report on the housing costs of renters in 2000. The report delineates gross rent by characteristics such as age, race, and geography in real dollar terms and as a percent of household income. The Census Bureau defines gross rent as the amount of rent, plus the estimated average monthly cost of fuel and utilities. The data are based on the sample of households responding to the Census 2000 long form. Nationally, about 1-in-6 households were included in the sample. Estimates in the report are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. The full report, "Housing Costs of Renters: 2000," is available at the Census website, www.census.gov. The following includes highlights of the report, as well as Utah-specific analysis.

The State of Utah led the nation with the highest percent increase in median gross rent between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. Utah's increase of 26.8% was nearly five times the United States increase of 5.4%. Other states following Utah were Colorado (25.9%), Idaho (22.0%), Oregon (19.0%), and Washington (16.5%).

Ten states experienced decreases in median gross rent. Rhode Island experienced the largest decrease at 11.5%, followed by Connecticut (10.9%), New Hampshire (7.9%), Massachusetts (7.7%), Maine (7.1%), Hawaii (6.1%), California (5.7%), Vermont (3%), Maryland (1.6%), and New Jersey (0.7%).

In Utah, the leading 26.8% increase brought the median gross rent from \$471 in 1990 to \$597 in 2000. However, Utah remains below the national average of \$602 per month.

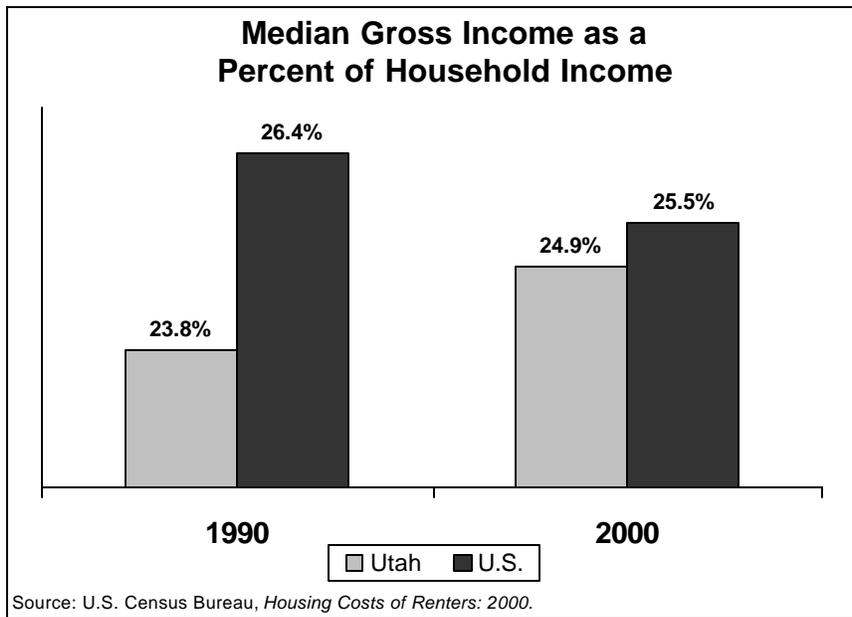
At \$779 median gross rent in Hawaii surpassed that of all other states, just as it did in 1990. New Jersey was second at \$751, followed by California (\$747), Alaska (\$720), and Nevada (\$699). Median monthly rents were lowest in West Virginia (\$401), North Dakota (\$412), South Dakota (\$426), Wyoming (\$437), and Mississippi (\$439).

For the first time in 50 years the proportion of national household income spent on rent decreased between decades, from 26.4% in 1990 to 25.5% in 2000. Only nine states, including Utah, experienced an increase in the percent of income spent on rent. With the exception of New York, all of these states are in the West.

Renters in California led the nation with 27.7% of their incomes spent on rent. Utah was tied with Georgia, ranking 24th with 24.9% of household income spent on rent in 2000. The cities of Irvine, Sunnyvale, and Santa Clara, California; recorded the highest median gross rents among large U.S. cities, all above \$1,200 a month. The only non-California city that topped \$1,000 in median gross rent was Stamford, Connecticut.

In Brownsville, Texas, and Erie, Pennsylvania, renters paid the lowest monthly rents at \$405 and \$424 a month, respectively.

In Utah's cities and Census Designated Places (CDP), median gross rent ranged from a high of \$1120 in Oquirrh CDP to a low of \$453 in Cedar City. The table below shows the ten highest and lowest rent places in Utah.



Due to the smaller population sample of local cities and CDPs, the median gross rent is significantly affected by the median household income in that area. For example, although Cottonwood Heights CDP is among the highest rent areas in Utah at \$787, it is also among the areas that spends the least percentage of household income on rent (23.3%). Similarly, while Provo city is among the lowest rent

places at \$521, it is among the highest in the percent of household income spent on rent (26.1%).

Highest		Lowest	
Place	Median gross rent	Place	Median gross rent
Oquirrh CDP	\$1,120	Cedar City city	\$453
South Jordan city	\$1,049	Logan city	\$499
Keams CDP	\$830	Ogden city	\$504
Clinton city	\$796	Provo city	\$521
Cottonwood Heights CDP	\$787	Brigham City city	\$524
Sandy city	\$768	Tooele city	\$544
Canyon Rim CDP	\$747	South Salt Lake city	\$564
Draper city	\$742	South Ogden city	\$568
West Jordan city	\$730	Springville city	\$569
Farmington city	\$730	St. George city	\$589

Note: Because of sampling error, the estimates in these tables may not be significantly different from one another or from rates for geographic areas not listed in these tables.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Housing Costs of Renters: 2000*. Census 2000, Summary File 3 (SF3).

Note: CDP or "Census Designated Place" is a statistical area defined as a densely settled concentration of population that is not incorporated but which resembles an incorporated place in that it can be identified with a name.