

Glossary

North Carolina Intercensal Socio-Economic and Demographic Measures Current Population Survey Data

Each month, the Bureau of the Census conducts a survey of households throughout the United States to gather national and state information on employment. In March, the sample is supplemented with extra households and extra questions to provide estimates for a variety of demographic measures. The March sample of about 2,500 households within North Carolina allows for some precision in these demographic estimates.

The data taken from the households in the small sample is weighted to reflect estimates of statewide values. For example, in 2003, a raw count of 2,237 interviewed households becomes a statewide estimate of 3,305,000 households by multiplying each household observation by the sample's corresponding household weighting factor. Data are weighted separately for households, families, and persons, using the appropriate household-, family-, or person-weight.

There are some key warnings to users of the Current Population Survey (CPS) data.

- First, it excludes the military (except for military living off base and those living in family housing on base) and it excludes all institutional population (e.g., prisons, nursing homes, etc.). Thus, the CPS measures characteristics of the civilian, non-institutional population.
- Secondly, because the sample of 2,500 households is small, estimates vary considerably due to sampling error. Tracking year to year fluctuations in estimates for the same measure will illustrate the variability present. The Bureau of the Census warns against using any estimate with a weighted value of less than 75,000, regardless of the raw count.
- Thirdly, because the universe of households and population in the CPS differs from that of the decennial census, it is not possible to compare CPS estimates with similar measures from a census.
- Additionally, the CPS questions and methodology change from year to year

Using CPS data appropriately requires an understanding of some basic definitions. For example, there is a considerable difference between the concept of family and family group. Please read the definitions provided with these data to insure proper interpretation of the measures.

Most of the state level CPS data are not published by the Bureau of the Census. The microdata come from the Census Bureau in the form of raw files that must be processed. This processing has been done by the State Data Center, Office of State Budget and Management. There are many other tabulations and cross-tabulations of data that may be processed from the CPS. If you need additional information about North Carolina persons, families, or households from the CPS, contact the State Data Center at 919-733-7061.

Glossary Terms

Children, own and related - "Own" children in a family are sons and daughters, including stepchildren and adopted children, of the householder. Similarly, "own" children in a subfamily are sons and daughters of the married couple or parent of the subfamily. (All children shown as members of related subfamilies are own children of the person(s) maintaining the subfamily.) "Related" children in a family include own children and all other children in the household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. For each type of family unit identified in the CPS, the count of own children under 18 years old is limited to never-married children; however, related children under age 18 may be married.

Family - The term "family" refers to a group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption who reside together; all such persons are considered as members of one family. A household may contain no families (one person or all persons unrelated), one family (all are related to householder), or one or more related or unrelated subfamilies. Without any qualifiers, the number of "families" is the count of primary families. The count of family members is the count of members of the primary family and members of any related subfamily in the household.

Family group - A family group is any two or more persons (not necessarily including a householder) residing together, and related by birth, marriage, or adoption. The count of family groups is the count

of all primary families plus all related subfamilies plus all unrelated subfamilies.

Family, primary - The count of families is the count of all primary families. A primary family consists of the family householder plus all members of the household that are related to the householder. It includes related subfamily members.

Family, related subfamily - A related subfamily is a subfamily whose members are related to the person or couple maintaining the household. A related subfamily may be a married couple family with or without child(ren) under age 18 or a single parent with own never-married child(ren) under age 18.

Family, subfamily - A subfamily is a married couple family with or without children under age 18 or a single parent with own never-married child(ren) under age 18 who may or may not be related to the householder of the primary family household in which they live.

Family, unrelated subfamily - An unrelated subfamily is a subfamily whose members are not related to the person or couple maintaining the household. An unrelated subfamily may be a married couple family with or without child(ren) or a single parent with his or her own never-married child(ren). Although unrelated subfamilies are not counted as families, they are treated as families for the purpose of determining whether their members are above or below the poverty level (as tabulated in the data on persons). The number of unrelated subfamily members is included in the total number of household members, but is not included in the count of family members. Any person who is not related to the householder and who is not the husband, wife, parent, or child in an unrelated subfamily is counted as an unrelated individual.

Household - A household consists of all persons in an occupied housing unit. It may be a family household or a non-family household. The count of individuals in a household is the count of all persons living in the household, whether or not they are related to each other. Group quarters, such as a college dorm, are not considered to be households.

Householder - The householder is designated by the respondent as one of the persons in whose name the home is owned or rented. If the house is owned jointly by a married couple, either the husband or the wife may be listed first, thereby becoming the reference person, or

householder, to whom the relationship of the other household members is recorded. The number of householders is the same as the number of households.

Household, family - A family household is one in which the householder is related to at least one other person in the household. The number of families is the same as the number of family households.

Household, non-family - A non-family household is one in which the householder is a person maintaining a household while living alone or with nonrelatives only.

Income, money - For each person in the sample 15 years old and over, questions were asked on the amount of money income received in the preceding calendar year from each of the following sources: (1) money wages or salary; (2) net income from nonfarm self-employment; (3) net income from farm self-employment; (4) Social Security or railroad retirement; (5) Supplemental Security income; (6) public assistance or welfare payments; (7) interest; (8) dividends, income from estates or trusts, net rental income or royalties; (9) veterans' payments or unemployment and worker's compensation; (10) private pensions or government employee pensions; (11) annuities, alimony or child support, regular contributions from persons not living in the household, and other periodic income.

Income, family - Family income is the annual money income from all sources for all members of the family (including income from related subfamily members).

Income, family group - The income of family groups is the annual money income from all sources for all primary families (including related subfamily members), related subfamilies (same as income for primary family), and unrelated subfamilies. Thus, the family group income of a primary family is the same as the family group income of the related subfamily contained within the primary family.

Income, household - Household income is the annual money income from all sources for all members of the household including income from related and unrelated subfamily members and unrelated individuals living in the household.

Income, median - Median income is the income value that falls in the middle of the income distribution ranked from lowest to highest. That

is, it determines two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and the other having incomes below the median. The medians for households, families and unrelated individuals are based on all households, families and unrelated individuals. The medians for persons are based on persons aged 15 or over with income.

Income, person - The annual money income of persons is the income from all sources for all persons age 15 and older. Typically median income for persons, excludes those with zero income, while medians for household income and family income include all households and all primary families.

Poverty - Each year the federal government issues a set of poverty thresholds below which a family or unrelated individual is considered to be in poverty. Poverty is a family income concept, and each member of a family in poverty is considered to be an individual in poverty. The universe of individuals for whom poverty is calculated excludes any person under age 15 who is neither in a family or subfamily nor considered a nonfamily householder.

Poverty, income as percentage of poverty threshold - Percentages below 100 are below the official definition of poverty, while a percentage of 100 or greater indicates income above the poverty level. A percentage between 100 and 125 indicates, for example, that the income was above the poverty threshold but below 125 percent of the poverty threshold.

Related children in a family - Related children in a family refers to all persons under age 18 living in the household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Tenure - A housing unit is "owned" if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. A cooperative or condominium unit is owned only if the owner or co-owner lives in it. All other occupied units are classified as "rented," including units rented for cash rent and those occupied without payment of cash rent.

Unrelated individual - The term "unrelated individuals" refers to persons who are not members of a family or a subfamily. An unrelated individual may (1) constitute a one-person household. (2) be part of a household including one or more other families or unrelated individuals, or (3) reside in group quarters such as a rooming house. The poverty status of unrelated individuals is determined independently of other household members' incomes.