



# Office of Health Equity

## Healthy Communities Data and Indicators Project

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**Short Title:** Household types.

**Full title:** Household by type of family and head of household.

**1. Healthy Community Framework.**

Meets basic needs of all.

**2. What is our aspirational goal?**

Affordable, high quality, socially integrated and location-efficient housing.

**3. Why is this important to health?**

**a. Description of significance and health connection.**

Families and household structure play a fundamental role in determining the overall health and well-being of adults and children. Mounting evidence supports that families with two stable married parents tend to yield the best outcomes for children, not only during childhood but well into adulthood. The key mechanisms that link family structure to child health and developmental outcomes are parental resources, parental mental health, parental relationship quality, parenting quality, father involvement, and family stability. Compared to married parents, single-parents have fewer resources; report more depression and psychological problems; tend to have poorer and problematic relationships with their partners; have poorer parenting skills; and are more susceptible to family instability. Besides parents, extended kin can provide additional social and financial support, resulting in improved health outcomes and access to health care. For example, 25% of children living with a single mother and a grandparent live in poverty compared with 41% of those living with a single mother only. The number of children living in U.S. households with two married parents has decreased from 77% in 1980 to 64% in 2012, while children living in single-mother households have increased from 18% to 24%. The likelihood of children living in single-mother households is more prevalent among African-American children (52%) compared to Latino children (27%) and White children (16%).

The proportion of non-family households of Americans living alone has also grown steadily over the past 40 years, increasing from 17% in 1970 to 27% in 2012, and the proportion increases with advanced age. The elderly living alone with limited social contact with others experience worse health and mental health outcomes including functional decline, depression, and death than the elderly not living alone. Retired women of age 65 or older that live alone (never married, widowed, divorced) are more likely to live in poverty than



retired men living alone of the same age group (18% of women versus 12% of men). The U.S. population 65 years or older increased from 9.7% in 2000 to 15.1% in 2010 and it is predicted to continue growing. Women constitute almost 60% of the people 65 years or older.

#### b. Summary of evidence.

An extensive body of research suggests that with greater access to health care, children raised in married-couple families tend to exhibit better mental and physical health and fewer emotional or behavioral problems than children living in other types of families, particularly in single-mother families. Infants born to unmarried mothers have a higher risk than those born to married mothers to experience low birth weight and infant mortality, and they are also more likely to live in poverty than those of married mothers. Most single-mother families have limited disposable incomes to cover children's education, child care, and health care costs. Approximately 70% of children living with a single mother are poor or low income compared to 32% of children living in other types of families.

#### c. Key References

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3. Kreider RM, Ellis R. [Living Arrangements of Children: 2009, Current Population Reports](#). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau; 2011.
4. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. [America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2013](#). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office; 2013.
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Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Health Stat. 2010; 10(246).

#### 4. What is the indicator?

##### a. Detailed definition.

Percent of households by type of family and head of household.

##### b. Stratification.

Types of family (8 groups), race/ethnicity (8 groups).

##### c. Data Description.

- i. Data source: American Community Survey (ACS), <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.
- ii. Years available: 2005 through 2007, 2008 through 2010, 2011 through 2013, and 2006 through 2010.
- iii. Updated: 1, 3, and 5 year intervals.
- iv. Geographies available: Census tract, cities/town, county, county subdivision, region (derived), state.

Data from ACS table DP02 were downloaded from <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. The types of family households included were: 1) married couple, 2) married couple with own children under 18 years, 3) female householder, no husband present, 4) female householder, no husband present, with own children under 18 years, 5) male householder, no wife present, 6) male householder, no wife present, with own children under 18 years. The types of nonfamily households included were: 7) nonfamily households and 8) nonfamily households with householder living alone. A nonfamily household is a householder living alone or with nonrelatives only. The denominator was the total number of households, and the numerator was the number of households by type of family. The percent of household for each type of family was calculated from the household estimate of the numerator and denominator (x100), and its standard error was computed from the margin of error provided by the ACS table DP02. Other calculations included 95% confidence interval, relative standard error, deciles and relative risk. Regional estimates were based on county groupings associated with California metropolitan planning organizations as reported in the [2010 California Regional Progress Report](#).

#### 5. Limitations.

The relationship to the householder (relative or nonrelative) determines the type of household. This creates some limitations. For example, the number of grandparent headed households cannot be quantified since these households could be included in various categories. If a grandparent and grandchild in the household were neither related to the householder, this



would be classified as nonfamily households. For married grandparents living with grandchildren, this would be classified as a married couple with own children under 18 years. Family households and married-couple families do not include same-sex married couples even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples. Same sex couple households are included in the family household category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption. Same-sex couple households with no relatives of the householder present are tabulated in nonfamily households.

## 6. Projects using this indicator

- a. [Healthy Mendocino: Connecting people and information for better health.](#)
- b. [The future of families to 2030: Projections, policy challenges and policy options - a synthesis report by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development \(OECD\).](#)
- c. [World Family Map: Mapping family change and child well-being outcomes.](#)