

## Snapshot of America

### Who's Richest, Poorest, Where Single Men Are

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**T**he Census Bureau—which deals in big numbers, like the total number of Americans (299,599,204 as of 7 p.m. yesterday) and the percentage of households with incomes above \$100,000 (17.2% last year) -- is taking a magnifying glass to the economy and offering fresh details about American communities and disparities among them.

The Census Bureau yesterday released its annual snapshot of America, as it always does at this time of year. But with more speed than in the past, it also provided details about individual communities, with populations as small as 65,000, in 2005.

The result is a wealth of new information and surprising facts about states and localities. A few samples:

Camden, N.J., a city struggling with crime, had a poverty rate of 44% in 2005—the highest number among small-to-midsize cities—but so, too, did College Station, Texas, home of Texas A&M University. “That’s very surprising,” said Jim Gaines, an economist with the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M.

Among counties with populations of more than 250,000, the three where the households had the highest median incomes (the point at which half the households earn more, and half less) were in suburban Washington, D.C.—Loudoun and Fairfax counties in Virginia and Howard County in Maryland.

Government contracting continues to create high-paying jobs in the area. “It’s always been our anchor,” said Gerald Gordon, president and chief executive of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

The ratio of single men to single women between ages 15 and 44 last year was highest in Nevada (120.2 per 100 women), North Dakota (120.1) and Alaska (118.9). It was lowest in the District of Columbia (93.4).

Commuters in New York state had the longest average daily trip to work last year at 31.2 minutes, followed closely by commuters in Maryland and New Jersey. Those in the Dakotas had the easiest trip on average: only 16 minutes.

The new Census figures also shone statistical flashlights into the workplace. Women earned less than men in every state and region last year, the bureau said, but the gap was at its narrowest in Washington, D.C., where women earned 91 cents for every dollar that men earned.

Women working in finance and insurance earned about 55% of what men in that industry earned last year, the widest gap of any sector.

The earnings data were broken out not only among 20 broad industry sectors but also among 22 major occupational groups. Within “legal occupations,” men had a me-

dian income of \$102,272, but women earned slightly less than half that amount, making law the field with the widest income disparity between men and women.

“As with so many other fields, support staff in law tend to be more populated by women than by men, and those numbers bring down the statistical information on women’s earnings,” said Karen Mathis, president of the American Bar Association, in a statement. “That said, the ABA is aware that there are discrepancies between the earnings of women and men functioning at the same level in the legal profession.” Ms. Mathis pointed out that full-time male lawyers were paid a median weekly salary of \$1,748 last year, according to the Labor Department. Their female counterparts made \$1,354.

Overall, men had inflation-adjusted median earnings of \$41,400 last year, while the typical woman earned \$31,900. That put the female-to-male earnings ratio at 77%, flat compared with a few years ago but up from 60% or so in 1980.

In ranking larger American cities, the Census Bureau found San Jose, Calif., and Plano, Texas, had the highest median incomes, at around \$71,000, while Miami and Cleveland had the lowest, with median incomes below \$25,000.

Cleveland also had the highest poverty rate for big cities at 32.4%, followed closely by Detroit, two cities suffering from the downturn in the American automobile industry and manufacturing. “We’ve been heavily reliant on the auto industry, and the Big Three are really struggling these days,” said N. Charles Anderson, president and chief executive of the Detroit Urban League.

Most of the above data come from questionnaires sent to roughly three million American households per year. Here’s how to look up the latest on your community: Go to <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Click on “get data” under American Community Survey. Be sure “2005” is selected, and click “data profiles.” Use pull-down menus to select a geographic area. Click “show result.” When demographic data appear, click on “economic” or “social” for more.

#### Corrections & Amplifications:

*The Census Bureau said the poverty rate in College Station, Texas, was 39.2% in 2005, among the highest in the nation, as noted in this article. The Census press release that referred to this figure didn’t note that the tally includes students at Texas A&M University who live off campus. If students and others who don’t live in conventional family households were excluded, College Station’s poverty rate would be 10.1%, below the national average.*