

Notes from the September 22, 2011 Data Release of 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) data from the U.S. Census Bureau

Data based off household interviews conducted in each month of calendar year 2010

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This information is under embargo until 12:01 a.m. on Thursday September 22, 2011. The information cannot be shared with anyone not certified by the Census Bureau's embargo policy. No stories can run on this topic until Thursday morning. Feel free to contact me for comment during the embargo period.

Here are a few things I noted when looking through the annual data for 2010 and in comparison to other years. They are not necessarily in any order, although I will organize them by topic area.

Median Household Income

1. Nebraska was among the nation's leaders in the change in real household incomes between 2009 and 2010. The median household income increased by more than \$300 or 0.7 percent from \$48,092 in 2009 to \$48,408 in 2010 (both in 2010 dollar terms). Nebraska's income gain was similar to that of the District of Columbia, 0.8 percent, where median incomes grew at the fastest rate in the nation. Since the District of Columbia is not a state, it can be said that Nebraska was the state with the fastest pace of income growth between 2009 and 2010.

2. Only 5 states and the District of Columbia had increases in their median incomes between 2009 and 2010. Besides Nebraska's 0.7 percent advance, neighboring South Dakota gained 0.5 percent and North Dakota 0.4 percent. These three plains states consistently had the lowest state unemployment rates throughout 2010. Other states with real income improvements were in the DC area (West Virginia increasing 0.5 percent and Virginia gaining 0.3 percent). [Data for all states can be found on page 5 of the attached pdf file.]

3. Overall for the United States real median incomes declined 2.2 percent from \$51,190 in 2009 to \$50,046 in 2010. Several states had their median income decline about 6 percent, notably Nevada, Arizona, and Oregon.

4. Nebraska ranked as having the 26th highest median income in 2010, gaining 5 places from ranking 31st in 2009. Nebraska's income gain coupled with declines in Arizona, Oregon, Iowa, Kansas, and Georgia allowed Nebraska to pass those states regarding the level of median household income. Nebraska had ranked about 30th in each of the past five years of annual ACS information; thus, this marks the first time of ranking in the mid 20s on this measure. NOTE: this

ranking does not take into account higher costs of living that are associated with higher nominal incomes in certain parts of the United State – if cost of living were factored in, Nebraska would rank better regarding what “income can buy”. For example, in 2009 Nebraska ranked 17th when incomes were adjusted for cost of living – a cost of living scale was not readily available for adjusting the 2010 income data.

4a. Nebraska’s income increase came in contrast to declines of -1.8 and -0.9 percent in our best comparison states of Iowa and Kansas respectively. Neighboring states Colorado and Missouri each declined about -4 percent, while Wyoming declined by -0.6 percent.

5. Nebraska’s income gains were driven by improvements in Nebraska’s rural areas, presumably due to increased commodity prices and a relatively strong and profitable agricultural sector. The state’s nonmetropolitan portion saw incomes increase 2.2 percent while the metropolitan portion actually had a decline of -0.4 percent. Dissecting the nonmetropolitan gains, incomes improved by 0.7 percent in the state’s regional centers containing cities of 10,000 or more people (called micropolitan areas), while the states most rural counties (not metropolitan nor micropolitan) led the state’s growth by increasing 2.7 percent. See table on page 3.

5a. Stated another way by looking at a different geographic level, incomes in the mostly rural 3rd Congressional District covering the western two-thirds of the state increased by 3.8 percent. The partly rural 1st Congressional District containing Lincoln increased by 1.7 percent, while the urban 2nd Congressional District (Omaha area) saw incomes decline by -1.3%.

5b. Among counties, real median household incomes in Douglas County decreased -1.0 percent, while Sarpy County increased by 1.6 percent. The Grand Island micropolitan area consisting of Hall, Howard, and Merrick counties improved 0.4 percent overall while the Lincoln metro area of Lancaster and Seward counties had incomes grow by 3.1 percent.

Poverty

6. While poverty rates and incomes are typically inversely related, the rise in median incomes did not translate into a reduction in poverty for all of Nebraska. Nebraska’s poverty rate rose slightly from 12.3 percent in 2009 to 12.9 percent in 2010. The increase of 0.6 percentage points stood in line with 0.8 and 0.2 percentage point increases in the best comparison states of Iowa and Kansas respectively. Poverty in the U.S. increased by 1.0 percentage points.

7. The inverse relationship between income and poverty was more apparent in certain Nebraska areas. The income declines in Nebraska’s metro counties led to a 1.1 percentage point increase in poverty levels while rising incomes in nonmetro counties led to a slight -0.1 percentage point reduction in poverty. Likewise, Congressional District 3 where incomes rose had a -0.7 percentage point reduction in poverty while Congressional District 2 saw poverty increase 2.3 percentage points as incomes fell. See table on page 4.

8. Poverty rates increased by 2.4 and 1.3 percentage points in Douglas and Sarpy counties respectively while holding steady in Lancaster County. The 2010 poverty rate exceeded 15 percent in both Douglas and Lancaster County. Poverty rates increased from 12.2 percent to 12.9 percent (0.7 percentage points) in the 3-county Grand Island micropolitan area.

Comparison of Median Household Income Values for Various Nebraska Areas: 2009 vs. 2010

Source: 2010 Comparison Profiles, American Community Surveys, U.S. Census Bureau

Note: Dollar values are inflation adjusted (real dollars) and in 2010 dollar terms

Compiled by David Drozd, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research

Area	2009	2010	Change	% Change
Nebraska (93)	48,092	48,408	316	0.7
NE: Metro portion (9)	52,542	52,325	-217	-0.4
NE: Nonmetro portion (84)	42,523	43,467	944	2.2
NE: Metro portion (9)	52,542	52,325	-217	-0.4
NE: Micro portion (20)*	44,968	45,268	300	0.7
NE: Not in metro or micro (64)	40,899	42,016	1,117	2.7
NE: In metro or in micro (29)	50,472	50,366	-106	-0.2
NE: Not in metro or micro (64)	40,899	42,016	1,117	2.7
Congress District 1 (Lincoln area)	48,764	49,602	838	1.7
Congress District 2 (Omaha)	52,972	52,306	-666	-1.3
Congress District 3 (rest of state)	42,169	43,757	1,588	3.8
Omaha metro area (8)	53,451	54,060	609	1.1
Lincoln metro area (2)	48,603	50,091	1,488	3.1
Sioux City metro area (4)	45,791	44,038	-1,753	-3.8
Grand Island micro area (3)**	46,308	46,479	171	0.4
Douglas County	50,554	50,038	-516	-1.0
Lancaster County	47,714	50,031	2,317	4.9
Sarpy County	68,428	69,538	1,110	1.6
Hall/Howard/Merrick counties**	46,308	46,479	171	0.4
Pottawattamie County, Iowa	45,853	47,864	2,011	4.4
Woodbury County, Iowa	44,447	42,208	-2,239	-5.0
United States	51,190	50,046	-1,144	-2.2
Iowa	48,864	47,961	-903	-1.8
Kansas	48,678	48,257	-421	-0.9

* Metropolitan counties are nonmetro areas that contain a city of at least 10,000 people. Nebraska has 10 such counties as well as 10 additional counties that are economically tied and considered micropolitan.

** The Grand Island micropolitan area consists of Hall, Howard, and Merrick counties.

Comparison of Poverty Rates for Various Nebraska Areas: 2009 vs. 2010

Source: 2010 Comparison Profiles, American Community Surveys, U.S. Census Bureau
 Compiled by David Drozd, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research

Area	2009	2010	Change
Nebraska (93)	12.3	12.9	0.6
NE: Metro portion (9)	12.0	13.1	1.1
NE: Nonmetro portion (84)	12.8	12.7	-0.1
NE: Metro portion (9)	12.0	13.1	1.1
NE: Micro portion (20)*	12.8	12.2	-0.6
NE: Not in metro or micro (64)	12.9	13.2	0.3
NE: In metro or in micro (29)	12.2	12.9	0.7
NE: Not in metro or micro (64)	12.9	13.2	0.3
Congress District 1 (Lincoln area)	13.1	13.1	0.0
Congress District 2 (Omaha)	11.2	13.5	2.3
Congress District 3 (rest of state)	12.8	12.1	-0.7
Omaha metro area (8)	10.7	12.4	1.7
Lincoln metro area (2)	15.6	15.4	-0.2
Sioux City metro area (4)	14.9	13.8	-1.1
Grand Island micro area (3)**	12.2	12.9	0.7
Douglas County	12.7	15.1	2.4
Lancaster County	15.9	15.9	0.0
Sarpy County	4.3	5.6	1.3
Hall/Howard/Merrick counties**	12.2	12.9	0.7
Pottawattamie County, Iowa	14.3	15.7	1.4
Woodbury County, Iowa	15.3	14.9	-0.4
United States	14.3	15.3	1.0
Iowa	11.8	12.6	0.8
Kansas	13.4	13.6	0.2

* Micropolitan counties are nonmetro areas that contain a city of at least 10,000 people. Nebraska has 10 such counties as well as 10 additional counties that are economically tied and considered micropolitan.

** The Grand Island micropolitan area consists of Hall, Howard, and Merrick counties.

Uninsured Rates regarding Health Coverage

9. Health uninsured rates fell slightly in Nebraska from 11.9 percent to 11.5 percent for all individuals. The decline of -0.4 percentage points stood in contrast to a 0.4 percentage point increase in the U.S. and a 0.7 percentage point rise in both Iowa and Kansas.

10. Nebraska's declines in uninsured rates were concentrated in metro areas. Uninsured rates dropped -0.9 percentage points in metro areas while the rate of those without health insurance increased 0.4 percentage points in nonmetro counties. The more urban 2nd and 1st Congressional Districts had uninsured rates decline (-1.1 and -0.3 percentage points respectively) while the uninsured rate rose 0.4 percentage points in the more rural 3rd Congressional District. See table on page 6.

11. Among counties, uninsured rates improved the most in Sarpy and Lancaster Counties; Douglas County also had a decline in their uninsured rate but the 3-county Grand Island micropolitan area saw its uninsured rate rise from 12.0 to 13.9 percent.

Comparison of Health Uninsured Rates for Various Nebraska Areas: 2009 vs. 2010

Source: 2010 Comparison Profiles, American Community Surveys, U.S. Census Bureau
 Compiled by David Drozd, UNO Center for Public Affairs Research

Area (Number of counties)	2009	2010	Change
Nebraska (93)	11.9	11.5	-0.4
NE: Metro portion (9)	12.0	11.1	-0.9
NE: Nonmetro portion (84)	11.8	12.2	0.4
NE: Metro portion (9)	12.0	11.1	-0.9
NE: Micro portion (20)*	11.8	12.2	0.4
NE: Not in metro or micro (64)	11.9	12.1	0.2
NE: In metro or in micro (29)	11.9	11.4	-0.5
NE: Not in metro or micro (64)	11.9	12.1	0.2
Congress District 1 (Lincoln area)	10.4	10.1	-0.3
Congress District 2 (Omaha)	13.3	12.2	-1.1
Congress District 3 (rest of state)	12.0	12.4	0.4
Omaha metro area (8)	12.2	11.4	-0.8
Lincoln metro area (2)	11.1	9.8	-1.3
Sioux City metro area (4)	13.3	13.4	0.1
Grand Island micro area (3)**	12.0	13.9	1.9
Douglas County	14.0	13.2	-0.8
Lancaster County	11.3	10.0	-1.3
Sarpy County	8.7	7.2	-1.5
Hall/Howard/Merrick counties**	12.0	13.9	1.9
Pottawattamie County, Iowa	14.0	12.2	-1.8
Woodbury County, Iowa	13.4	13.6	0.2
United States	15.1	15.5	0.4
Iowa	8.6	9.3	0.7
Kansas	13.2	13.9	0.7

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Additional Information on the Source of the Data

The ACS is the Census Bureau's new approach to providing timely information that decision makers can benefit from. It replaces the sample survey portion of the decennial census, and Census 2010 was entirely a headcount for apportionment purposes. The ACS is sent to a sample of about one in 40 households annually, and covers the same key information and subject areas as the long form in Census 2000 (income, poverty, educational attainment, etc.).

Areas having 65,000+ persons receive annual ACS information, with the first data for such areas beginning in 2005. In Nebraska, there are not that many geographies having 65,000 people, but data are released for the state, 3 counties (Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy), 2 cities (Lincoln, Omaha), 3 metropolitan areas (Omaha, Lincoln, Sioux City), the Grand Island micropolitan area, the 3 Congressional Districts, as well as "geographic components" such as all metropolitan counties and all nonmetropolitan counties combined as a group. Data for areas that have at least 20,000 people will be released in October using a combined 3-year period of survey results from 2008 to 2010.