The Geographic Concentration of High-Income Households: 2007–2011

American Community Survey Briefs

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Two questions present themselves when considering the geographic concentration of high-income households. First, where do most high-income households live? Second, where are the highest concentrations of high-income households? This brief answers the first question by estimating the number of high-income households in each area. This brief answers the second question by presenting estimates of the proportions of households that are among the top 5 percent.

This brief is based on data from the American Community Survey pooled across survey years 2007 through 2011, referring to income received from January 2006 to November 2011.[1] During this period, the top 5 percent of households received at least $191,469 per year.[2]

Figure 1 depicts the number of high-income households in each county, while Figure 2 maps the number of all households in each county. These figures illustrate that, like the general population, most high-income households lived in high-population counties, especially along the coasts.[3]

We are interested not only in where most high-income households lived, but also in which places had the highest concentrations of high-income households. Figure 3 illustrates the proportion of households within each county that were among the top 5

percent of U.S. households with respect to income. This map highlights how the geographic distribution of high-income households differed from that of other households. Some sparsely populated areas, for example, may have low absolute numbers of high-income households (relative to other counties), and yet have high concentrations of such households.

Inspection of Figure 3 suggests that high-concentration counties are especially prevalent in the coastal areas as well. The Pacific, Middle Atlantic, and New England divisions had high proportions of counties with high concentrations of high-income households. In contrast, the East South Central division's counties tended to have unusually low concentrations of high-income households.

Table 1 presents proportions of households that were in the top 5 percent of the national distribution for each of the 50 most populous metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). This table suggests that high-population areas often had high-income households not only in large numbers, but also in high concentrations. These 50 most populous metropolitan areas contained 51.9 percent of all U.S. households, and 71.9 percent of the top 5 percent of households. Within MSAs, the central cities had lower concentrations than the suburbs, as 4.9 percent of households in the central city were among the top 5 percent, compared to 6.1 percent of those within MSAs but outside central cities.[4]
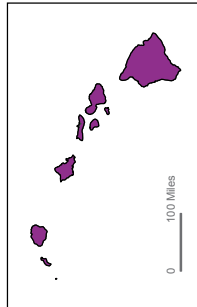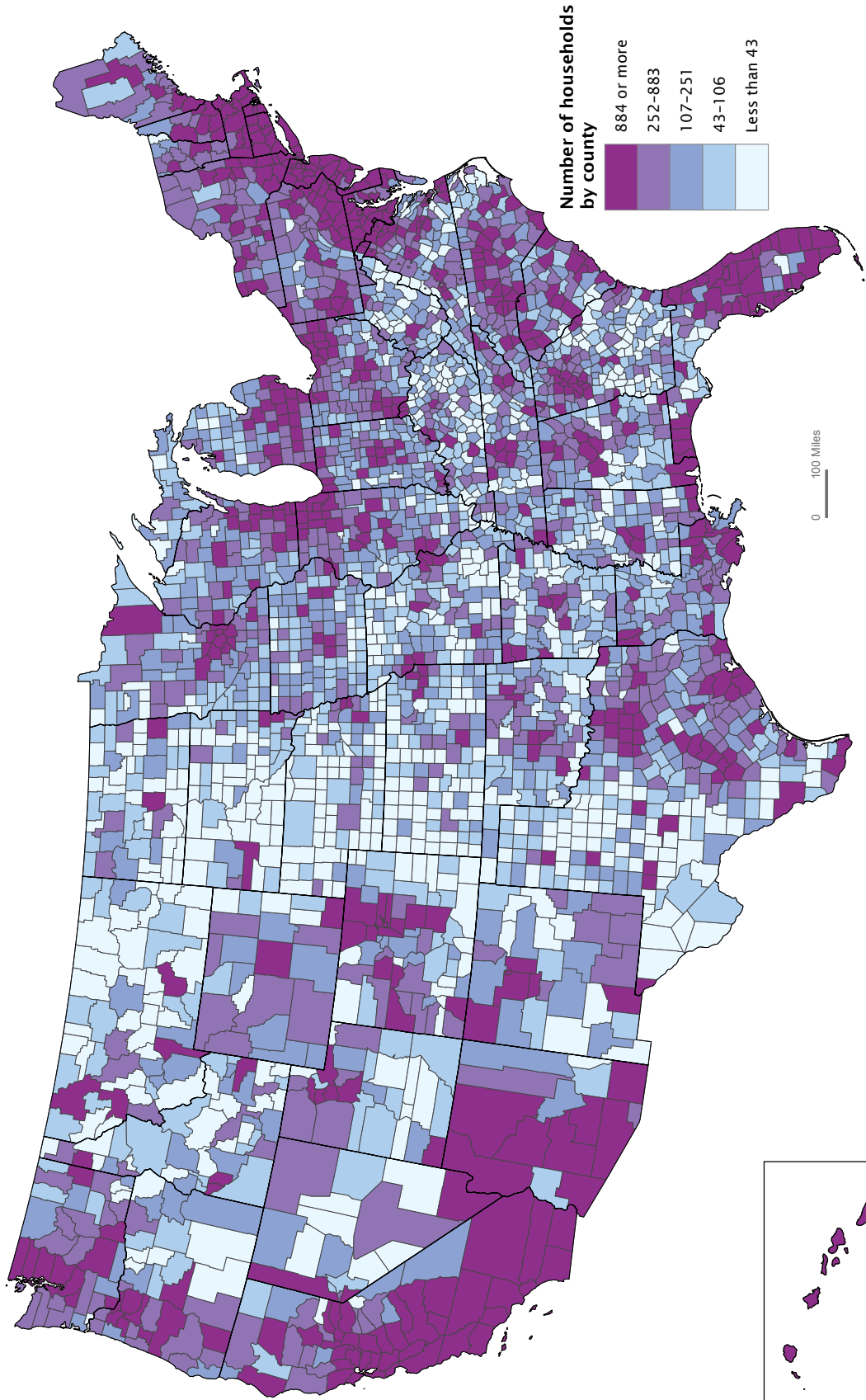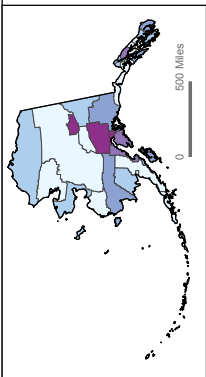
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[1] All income data are adjusted for inflation to 2011 dollars.
[2] Source: 2007–2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Base Table B19080: Household Income Quintile Upper Limits.
[3] The correlation between the number of high-income households in each county and the number of other households was 0.88.

[4] Among households residing outside MSAs, 1.9 percent were in the top 5 percent.

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Figure 1.
Number of High-Income Households for Each County in the United States: 2007–2011

Number of households by county

884 or more
252–883
107–251
43–106
Less than 43

0   100 Miles

0   500 Miles

0   100 Miles

Note: The term "county" refers to a county or statistically equivalent entity.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007–2011 American Community Survey.

Figure 2.
Number of Households for Each County in the United States: 2007–2011
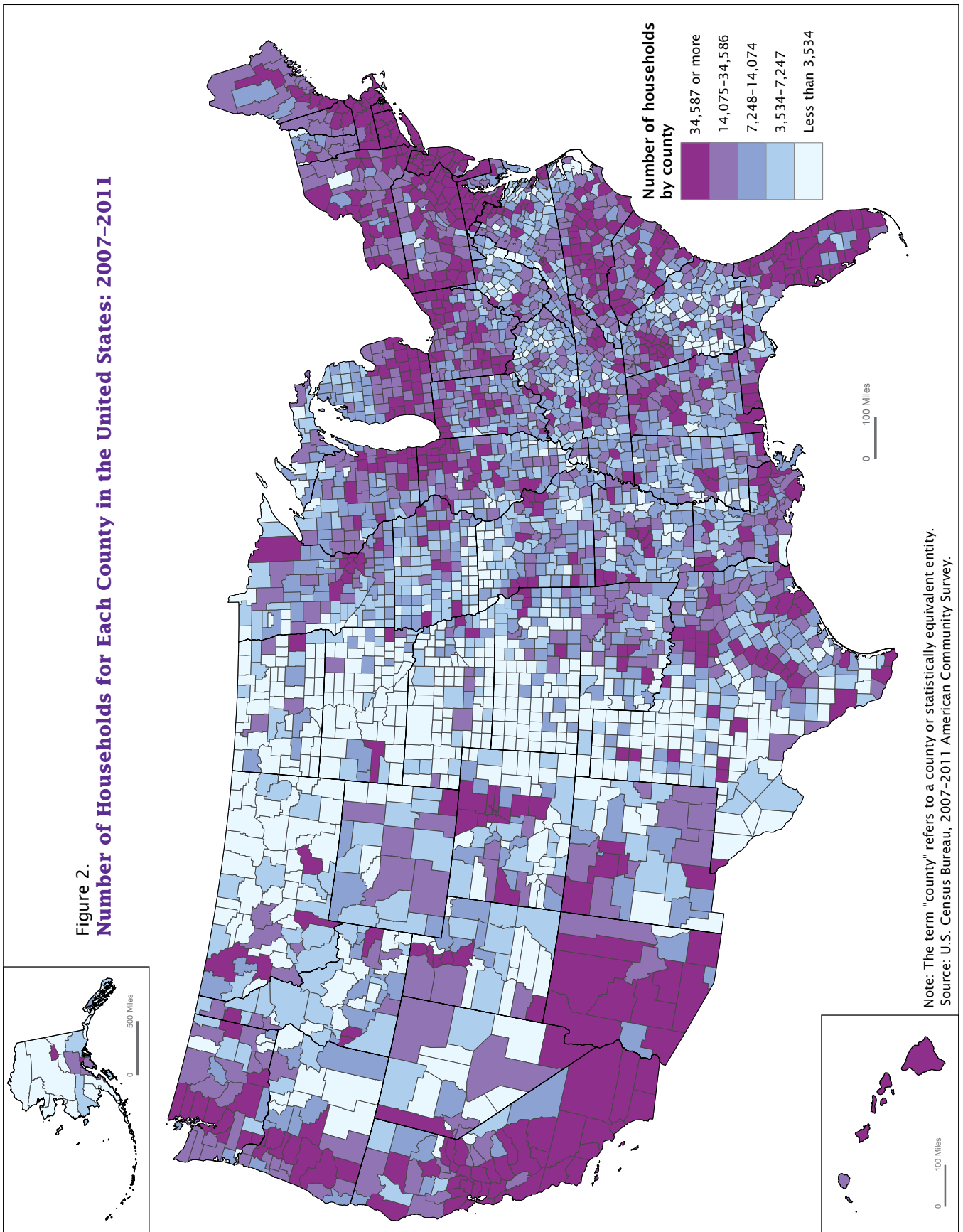
Number of households
by county

34,587 or more
14,075–34,586
7,248–14,074
3,534–7,247
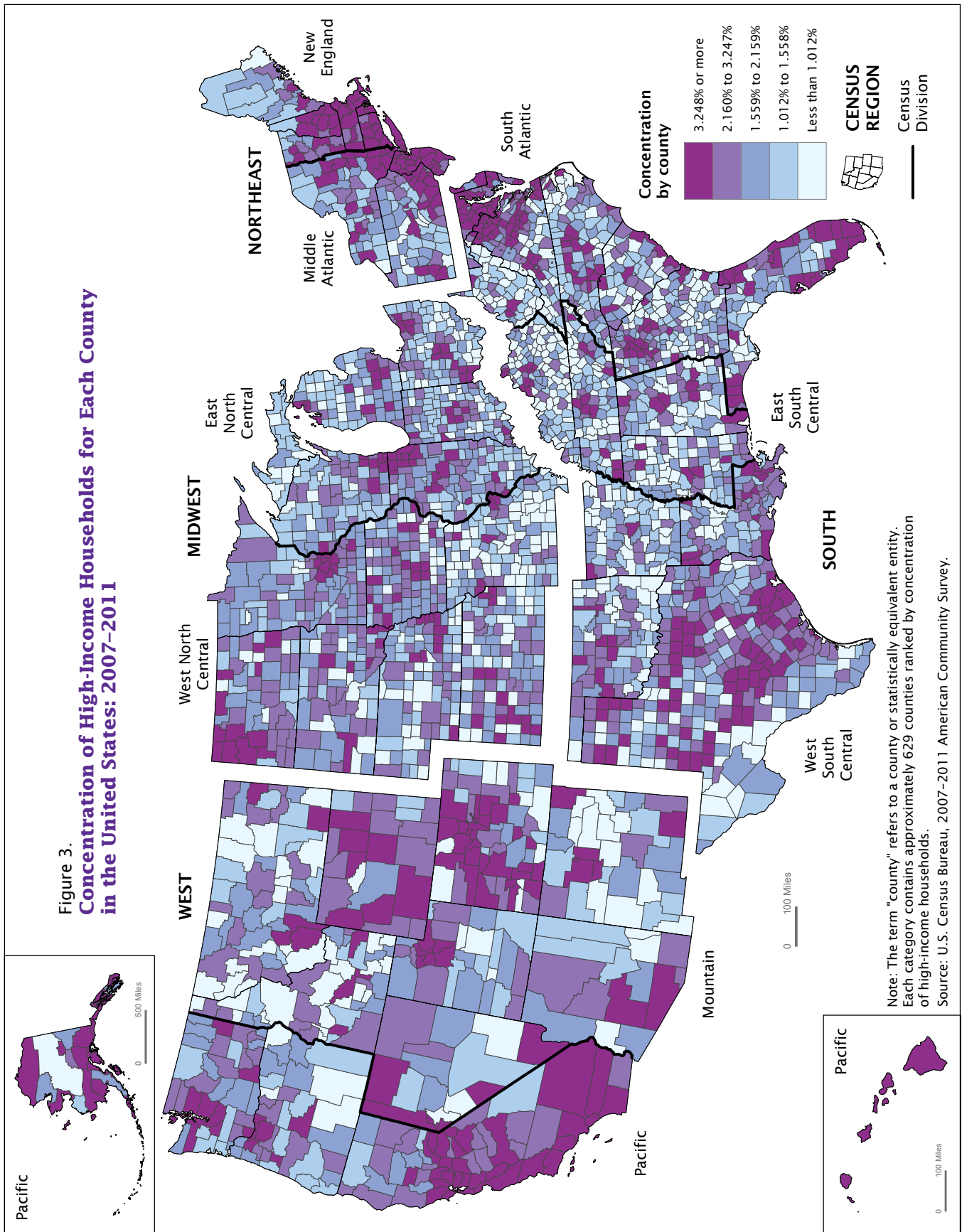Less than 3,534

100 Miles
0

500 Miles
0

100 Miles
0

Note: The term "county" refers to a county or statistically equivalent entity.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007–2011 American Community Survey.

Figure 3.

Concentration of High-Income Households for Each County in the United States: 2007–2011

Concentration by county

- 3.248% or more
- 2.160% to 3.247%
- 1.559% to 2.159%
- 1.012% to 1.558%
- Less than 1.012%

CENSUS REGION

Census Division

NORTHEAST

New England

Middle Atlantic

MIDWEST

East North Central

West North Central

SOUTH

South Atlantic

East South Central

West South Central

WEST

Mountain

Pacific

Pacific

Pacific

500 Miles

100 Miles

100 Miles

Note: The term "county" refers to a county or statistically equivalent entity. Each category contains approximately 629 counties ranked by concentration of high-income households.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007–2011 American Community Survey.

Table 1.
Concentration of High-Income Households in the 50 Most Populous Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 2007–2011
(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/acs/www/*)

Rank	Population	Metropolitan statistical area	Percentage of MSA households among top 5 percent
1	19,015,900	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	10.0
2	12,944,801	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	7.9
3	9,504,753	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	6.8
4	6,526,548	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	6.1
5	6,086,538	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	6.8
6	5,992,414	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	6.9
7	5,703,948	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	14.1
8	5,670,125	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	5.3
9	5,359,205	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	5.9
10	4,591,112	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	9.7
11	4,391,037	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	13.0
12	4,304,997	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	4.4
13	4,285,832	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	4.3
14	4,263,236	Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale, AZ	4.6
15	3,500,026	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	7.1
16	3,318,486	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	6.4
17	3,140,069	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	7.3
18	2,824,724	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	3.6
19	2,817,355	St. Louis, MO-IL	4.3
20	2,729,110	Baltimore-Towson, MD	8.0
21	2,599,504	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO	6.3
22	2,359,746	Pittsburgh, PA	3.8
23	2,262,605	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	4.7
24	2,194,927	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	3.9
25	2,176,235	Sacramento—Arden-Arcade—Roseville, CA	5.5
26	2,171,360	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	3.9
27	2,138,038	Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	4.4
28	2,068,283	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	3.7
29	2,052,676	Kansas City, MO-KS	4.4
30	1,969,975	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	4.1
31	1,865,450	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	15.9
32	1,858,464	Columbus, OH	4.5
33	1,795,472	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	5.4
34	1,783,519	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX	6.3
35	1,778,568	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	4.4
36	1,679,894	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	4.0
37	1,617,142	Nashville-Davidson—Murfreesboro—Franklin, TN	4.6
38	1,600,224	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	4.7
39	1,562,216	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	4.3
40	1,360,251	Jacksonville, FL	4.1
41	1,325,605	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	3.9
42	1,294,849	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	3.5
43	1,278,053	Oklahoma City, OK	3.5
44	1,269,380	Richmond, VA	5.3
45	1,213,255	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	7.4
46	1,191,089	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	4.3
47	1,163,515	Raleigh-Cary, NC	6.0
48	1,145,905	Salt Lake City, UT	4.4
49	1,134,039	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	3.2
50	1,132,264	Birmingham-Hoover, AL	4.2

Note: Population estimates are as of July 1, 2011.
Sources: High-income concentrations are from the 2007–2011 American Community Surveys, and populations are from "Annual Estimates of the Population of Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011."

Table 2 lists 25 metropolitan statistical areas with high concentrations of households among the top 5 percent. Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT, had the highest concentration of high-income households, with 17.9 percent of households falling in the top 5 percent of the national distribution.

Table 3 lists 25 MSAs with low concentrations of high-income households out of the 366 MSAs. Coincidentally, two of the lowest MSAs were both named Danville. In Danville, IL, and Danville, VA, 1.1 percent of each county's households were among the top 5 percent of U.S. households by income.[5]

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

The data presented in this report are based on the ACS sample interviewed in years 2007 through 2011. The estimates based on this

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[5] The estimated proportions for Danville, VA, and Danville, IL, were not statistically significantly different at the 90 percent confidence level. The estimated proportion for Danville, VA, is also not statistically significantly different from the third-, fourth-, and seventh-lowest estimates. The estimate for Danville, IL, is not statistically significantly different from any of the seven lowest estimated proportions.

sample approximate the actual values and represent the entire household and group quarters population. Sampling error is the difference between an estimate based on a sample and the corresponding value that would be obtained if the estimate were based on the entire population (as from a census). Measures of the sampling errors are provided in the form of margins of error for all estimates included in this report. All comparative statements in this report have undergone statistical testing, and comparisons are significant at the 90 percent level unless otherwise noted. In addition to sampling error, nonsampling error may be introduced during any of the operations used to collect and process survey data such as editing, reviewing, or keying data from questionnaires. For more information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the 2011 ACS Accuracy of the Data document located at <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2011.pdf>.

Table 2.
Concentrations of High-Income Households in the Highest-Concentration Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 2007–2011

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/acs/www/*)

Rank	Metropolitan statistical area	Percentage of MSA households among top 5 percent
1	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	17.9
2	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	15.9
3	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	14.1
4	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	13.0
5	Trenton-Ewing, NJ	11.6
6	New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	10.0
7	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	9.7
8	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH.	9.7
9	Boulder, CO	9.4
10	Napa, CA	9.3
11	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA	9.0
12	Naples-Marco Island, FL	8.8
13	Baltimore-Towson, MD	8.0
14	Midland, TX	7.9
15	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	7.9
16	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA	7.4
17	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	7.4
18	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA.	7.3
19	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	7.1
20	Honolulu, HI.	7.0
21	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	6.9
22	Anchorage, AK	6.9
23	Santa Rosa-Petaluma, CA.	6.8
24	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	6.8
25	Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	6.8

Sources: 2007–2011 American Community Surveys.

Table 3.
Concentrations of High-Income Households in the Lowest-Concentration Metropolitan Statistical Areas: 2007–2011

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/acs/www/*)

Rank	Metropolitan statistical area	Percentage of MSA households among top 5 percent
342	Owensboro, KY	1.7
343	Lake Havasu City-Kingman, AZ.	1.7
344	Morristown, TN	1.7
345	Lewiston-Auburn, ME	1.6
346	Jacksonville, NC	1.6
347	Bay City, MI	1.6
348	Williamsport, PA	1.6
349	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	1.6
350	Springfield, OH	1.5
351	Pocatello, ID	1.5
352	Goldsboro, NC.	1.5
353	Clarksville, TN-KY	1.5
354	Johnstown, PA.	1.4
355	Wheeling, WV-OH	1.4
356	Sumter, SC	1.4
357	Cumberland, MD-WV	1.4
358	Gadsden, AL	1.4
359	Mansfield, OH	1.4
360	Hinesville-Fort Stewart, GA.	1.3
361	Anderson, IN	1.3
362	Muskegon-Norton Shores, MI	1.3
363	Steubenville-Weirton, OH-WV.	1.3
364	Pine Bluff, AR	1.2
365	Danville, IL	1.1
366	Danville, VA.	1.1

Sources: 2007–2011 American Community Surveys.