

USA Population Urban/Rural Split*

This table provides a best estimate of the urban/rural divide in the USA since 1880, based on US Census Bureau source information. Similar information is available across the web, but the derivation is listed just as “Census Bureau” and cannot be readily validated. This paper provides links back to US Census Bureau documents and describes necessary corrections and assumptions.

Decennial Census	Urban %	Rural %	Urban Pop	Rural Pop	Total Pop	Source
1880	26.3	73.7	13,184,902	36,970,881	50,155,783	histstats-colonial-1970
1890	35.8	64.2	22,559,367	40,388,347	62,947,714	histstats-colonial-1970
1900	40.3	59.7	30,683,411	45,411,164	76,094,575	histstats-colonial-1970
1910	45.6	54.4				measuring america 2016
1920	51.2	48.8				measuring america 2016
1930	56.1	43.9				measuring america 2016
1940	56.5	43.5				measuring america 2016
1950	64.0	36.0				measuring america 2016
1960	69.9	30.1				measuring america 2016
1970	73.7	26.3				measuring america 2016
1980	73.7	26.3				measuring america 2016
1990	75.2	24.8				measuring america 2016
2000	79.0	21.0				measuring america 2016
2010	80.7	19.3				measuring america 2016
2020	80.0	20.0				geo-areas 2020

*Excludes Puerto Rico

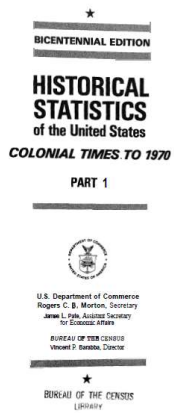
Sources

source: histstats-colonial-1970

<https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/histstats-colonial-1970.pdf>

See table Series A 73-81

1890 through 1960



Series A 73-81. Population, by Type of Residence, Sex, and Race: 1880 to 1970
 [For definition of urban, see text for series A 43-56; for definition of rural farm, see text for series A 73-81]

Year	All races			White		Negro		Other races	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81
TOTAL									
1970 ¹	208,211,926	98,912,192	104,299,734	86,720,987	91,027,988	18,749,316	11,831,973	1,442,889	1,439,773
1960 ^{1*}	178,328,176	88,881,494	90,891,681	79,367,149	80,464,583	9,113,408	8,758,423	850,897	768,676
1960 ²	178,484,286	87,884,510	90,899,726	76,153,040	80,901,919	9,235,701	8,754,415	605,768	549,395
1950.....	150,697,861	74,883,239	75,864,122	67,126,130	67,512,836	7,293,732	7,143,684	405,325	307,722
1940.....	131,669,275	66,061,592	65,607,683	58,448,643	58,768,322	6,269,038	6,596,480	344,006	244,881
1930.....	122,775,048	62,137,080	60,637,986	55,922,528	54,364,212	5,355,669	5,035,574	358,883	238,280
1920.....	105,710,620	53,900,431	51,810,139	48,430,655	46,390,260	6,009,438	6,035,505	267,340	166,284
1910.....	91,972,266	47,832,277	44,639,689	42,178,245	39,583,712	4,585,821	4,941,882	269,151	144,325
1900 ³	78,994,576	38,816,448	37,178,127	34,201,735	32,607,461	4,386,747	4,447,447	228,166	123,321
1890 ³	62,947,714	32,237,101	30,710,613	28,270,379	26,830,879				
1880 ³	50,155,783	50,155,783		43,402,970					
URBAN									
1970 (1970 urban def.) ¹	149,324,830	71,958,564	77,886,866	61,210,243	66,562,997	9,657,231	9,710,087	1,091,680	1,098,282
1960 (1960 urban def.) ^{1*}	125,266,750	60,733,005	64,535,745	53,681,145	56,797,187	6,557,433	7,051,517	544,737	483,701
1960 (1960 urban def.) ²	125,699,022	60,436,461	64,282,641	53,510,314	56,691,186	6,553,829	7,247,785	378,438	328,624
1950.....	96,467,686	46,891,782	49,575,804	42,246,894	44,506,541	4,449,766	4,943,842	192,122	176,521
1950 (1940 urban def.).....	88,927,484	43,117,270	45,810,194	38,697,282	40,970,582	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
1930 (1930 urban def.).....	68,954,823	35,369,706	38,059,996	33,304,701	34,669,122	3,926,423	3,324,465	128,582	67,709
1920 (1920 urban def.).....	54,304,603	27,208,312	27,101,291	31,638,238	32,021,745	2,476,158	2,714,766	137,914	89,863
1910 (1910 urban def.).....	42,623,383	21,498,181	21,127,262	25,373,627	25,246,457	1,737,620	1,821,663	91,865	38,181
1900 (1906 urban def.).....	30,683,411	15,190,726	15,922,685	20,149,679	19,703,234	1,279,484	1,408,745	87,013	15,223
1890 (1906 urban def.).....	22,559,367	11,239,148	11,276,121	14,137,311	14,818,835	988,731	1,087,390	66,684	6,460
1880 (1906 urban def.).....	13,184,902	13,184,902		13,176,238	13,317,892	844,797	965,453	62,295	6,717
1880 (1906 urban def.) ³				10,849,983	10,435,556	1,48	651		
1880 (1906 urban def.) ³				9,876,685	9,640,865	1,31	662		
1880 (1906 urban def.) ³				13,184,902	12,267,612	84	721		
RURAL									
1960 (1960 urban def.) ¹	53,765,214	27,958,489	26,933,868	24,879,129	24,306,729	2,091,085	2,121,836	351,799	346,891
1950 (1950 urban def.).....	34,229,676	17,428,029	16,288,218	27,586,235	27,507,906	2,556,235	2,507,906	306,200	280,684
1950 (1940 urban def.).....	61,769,897	31,715,969	30,058,928	28,481,910	26,842,284	2,589,173	2,908,680	233,630	219,774
1940 (1940 urban def.).....	57,245,573	29,697,886	27,547,687	26,848,958	26,342,467	(NA)	(NA)	213,203	161,201
1930 (1930 urban def.).....	32,982,323	17,382,303	15,897,903	26,143,847	24,098,200	3,339,615	3,272,315	214,424	177,172
1920 (1920 urban def.).....	24,006,017	12,697,119	12,708,898	23,974,230	23,342,467	3,376,511	3,320,719	174,717	174,717
1910 (1910 urban def.).....	19,349,883	9,849,883	9,501,903	23,057,028	21,143,823	3,471,616	3,432,042	169,476	138,053
1900 (1906 urban def.).....	45,341,316	23,625,722	21,785,442	22,048,566	19,851,478	3,166,139	3,338,137	181,133	129,172
1900 (1906 urban def.) ¹	47,622,183	24,733,118	22,889,065	20,014,434	18,268,626	3,449,816	3,380,067	161,432	116,769
1890 (1906 urban def.).....	40,388,347	20,868,958	19,434,334	21,025,497	19,289,569	3,541,750	3,481,994	166,871	117,502
1890 (1906 urban def.) ³	42,125,730	21,887,138	20,366,652	17,744,568	16,845,323	6,00	6,00	292,431	290,469
1880 (1906 urban def.) ³	36,970,881	36,970,881		18,698,894	17,190,014	6,17	614		
1880 (1906 urban def.) ³						6,78	672		

¹ Definition modified to exclude population in incorporated places and New England towns in the 2,500-3,999 size range.

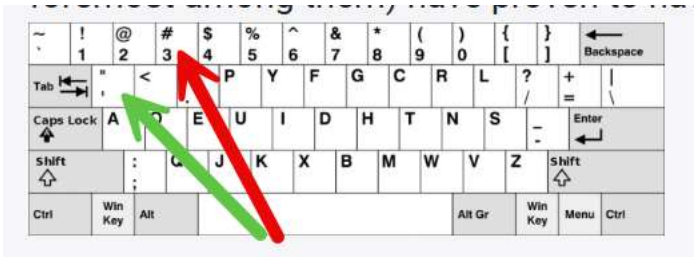
Extract from this table utilized:

URBAN	
1900 (1906 urban def.).....	30,683,411
1890 (1906 urban def.).....	22,559,367
1890 (1906 urban def.) ³	20,849,983
1880 (1906 urban def.) ³	13,184,902
RURAL	
1900 (1906 urban def.).....	45,341,316
1900 (1906 urban def.) ¹	47,622,183
1890 (1906 urban def.).....	40,388,347
1890 (1906 urban def.) ³	42,125,730
1880 (1906 urban def.) ³	36,970,881

Notes:

- Per note 3 of the table, statistics are given both with and without urban exclusion for 2,500 through 3,999 size settlements. To provide maximum comparability with 1900 and beyond, the 1890 statistics w/o this exclusion is selected. This is also forced because:
 - For 1900, the only statistic is w/o this exclusion.
 - Image quality for the 1890 values with this exclusion are difficult to read.

- The RURAL 1900 value shown as 4534113164 appears to be a typing error, as it is two digits too long. As the QWERTY keyboard was already standard by 1906, a misdirected reach for the single quote key can land on the 3 key. By transformation of the two '3' to the single quote we reach a value of 45,411,164. With this adjusted value the gap between the excluded and non-excluded values for 1900 is roughly consistent with that shown for 1890, adjusted for population growth (and consequently greater gap) across a decade.



- 1970 rural title lines are missing, and there are two rows. Perhaps the chart image was taken from a partially corrected table. For decennial census for 1910 and beyond, more recent Census Bureau documents are utilized as they are probably more trustworthy

Source: urpop 1900 to 1990

<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/1990/dec/1990-urban-pop.html> (“1990 Urban Pop (census.gov)”)

www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/tables/1990/1990-urban-pop/urpop0090.txt

Published Oct 1995 but loss of column alignment information makes reading this table unreliable, so not useful.

Source: measuring america 2016

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/2016/comm/acs-rural-urban-text.pdf>

1910 through 2010

Source: geo-areas 2010

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural/ua-facts.html>

2010 urban is 80.7%

Source: geo-areas 2020

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural/2020-ua-facts.html>

2020 urban is 80.0%

Notes

BACKGROUND ON DROP OF URBANIZATION PERCENT FROM 2010 TO 2020

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/urban-rural-populations.html>

DEC. 29, 2022 — The nation's urban population increased by 6.4% between 2010 and 2020 based on 2020 Census data and a change in the way urban areas are defined, according to the new list of urban areas released today by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Despite the increase in the urban population, urban areas, defined as densely developed residential, commercial, and other nonresidential areas, now account for 80.0% of the U.S. population, down from 80.7% in 2010. This small decline was largely the result of changes to the criteria for defining urban areas implemented by the Census Bureau, including raising the minimum population threshold for qualification from 2,500 to 5,000. The rural population — the population in any areas outside of those classified as urban — increased as a percentage of the national population from 19.3% in 2010 to 20.0% in 2020.

Authorship

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