

Demographic Profile of Pennsylvania Rural Families

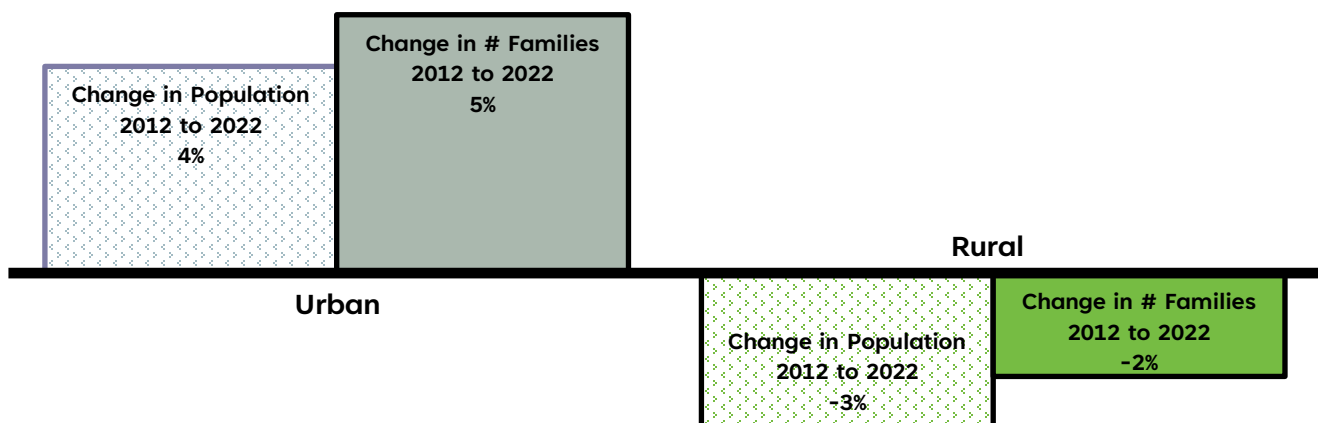
Families are often thought of as the bedrock of a rural community. However, families are not immune from demographic changes. Over the last decade (2012 to 2022), rural Pennsylvania families have seen significant changes. Using Census Bureau data and its definition of a family,¹ the Center for Rural Pennsylvania found that between 2012 and 2022 there was a:

- 2 percent decrease in the number of rural families.
- 7 percent decrease in rural families with children.
- 4 percentage point increase in rural family members 65 years old.
- 7 percent increase in rural families of color.

Number of Rural and Urban Families

In 2022, there were approximately 1.04 million rural families in Pennsylvania. Roughly 3.06 million rural residents live in families, or 81 percent of the rural population. In both 2012 and 2022, the average family remained unchanged at 3.0 members. From 2012 to 2022, the number of rural families decreased. There was also a decrease in the total number of people living in families. These decreases are closely parallel with the decrease in Pennsylvania's rural population. During this same period, there was an increase in the urban population and number of families.

Figure 1: Percent Change in Rural and Urban Population and Number of Families, 2012 to 2022



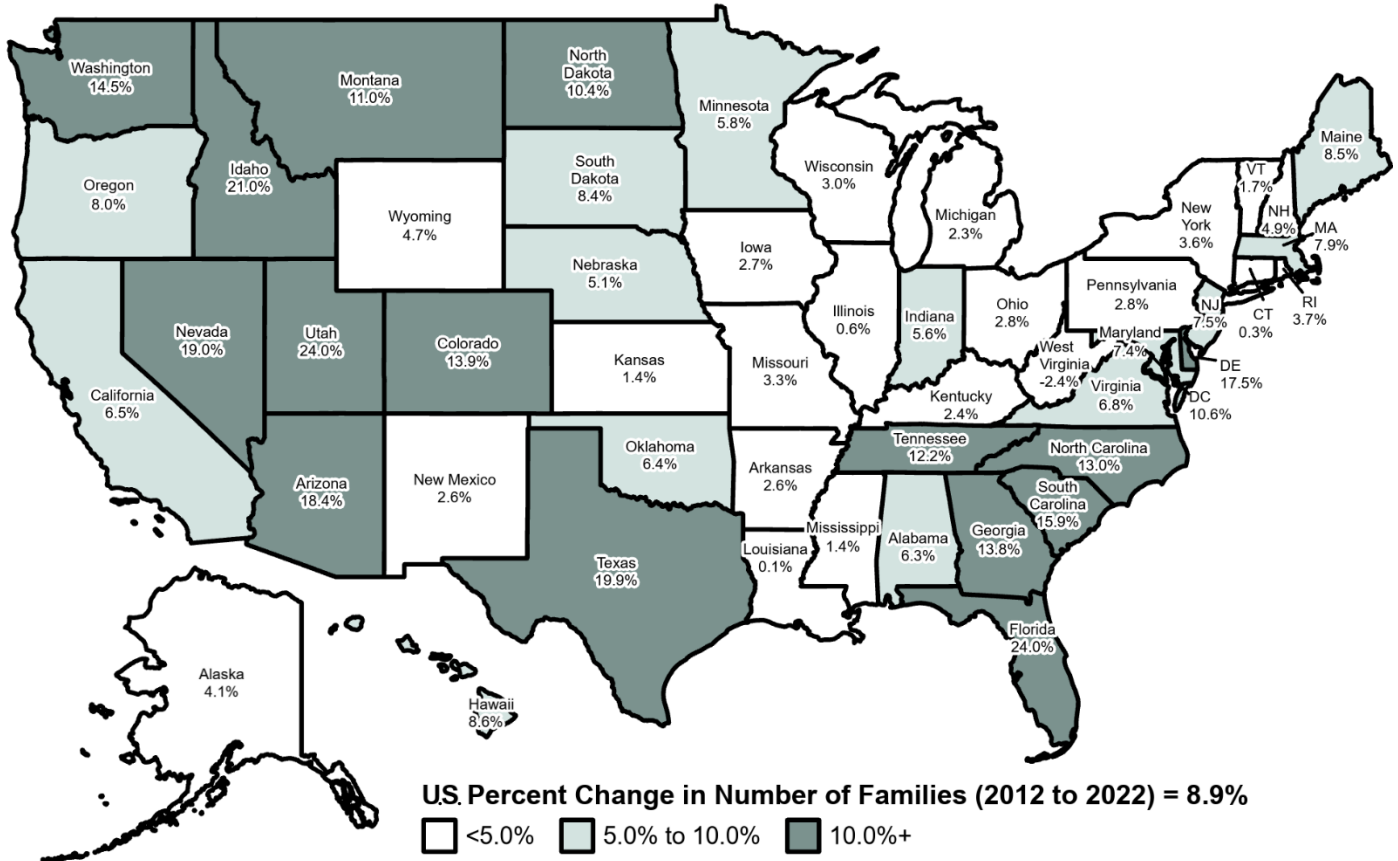
Data sources: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as any two or more people residing together, and related by birth, marriage, or adoption (see page 11 for more information).

Change in Families in the United States

From 2012 to 2022, the number of families in the United States increased 9 percent. The three states with the highest increases were Utah (24 percent), Florida (24 percent), and Idaho (21 percent). The three states with the smallest increases were West Virginia (-2 percent), Louisiana (0 percent), and Connecticut (0 percent). Among the 50 states, Pennsylvania had the 38th highest increase in families with 3 percent.

Figure 2: Percent Change in the Number of Families by U.S. State, 2012 to 2022



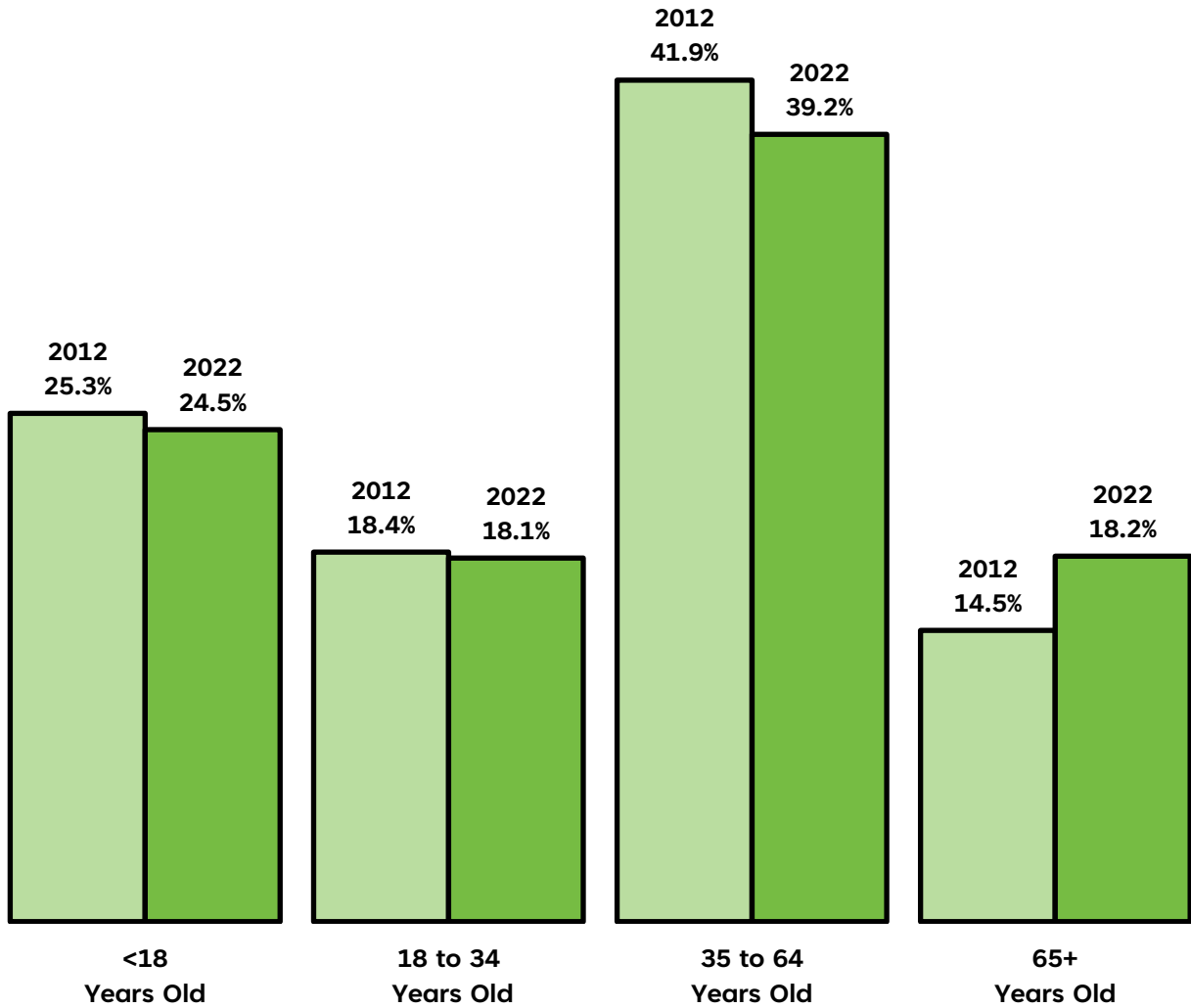
Data sources: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Family Demographics

Age Cohorts

In 2022, the average Pennsylvania rural family member was 39.9 years old. In 2012, the average family member was 38.6. Not surprisingly, families with children tend to be younger (average age 24.4 in 2022), and families without children tend to be older (average age 53.8 in 2022).

Figure 3: Age Cohorts of Rural Pennsylvania Family Members, 2012 and 2022

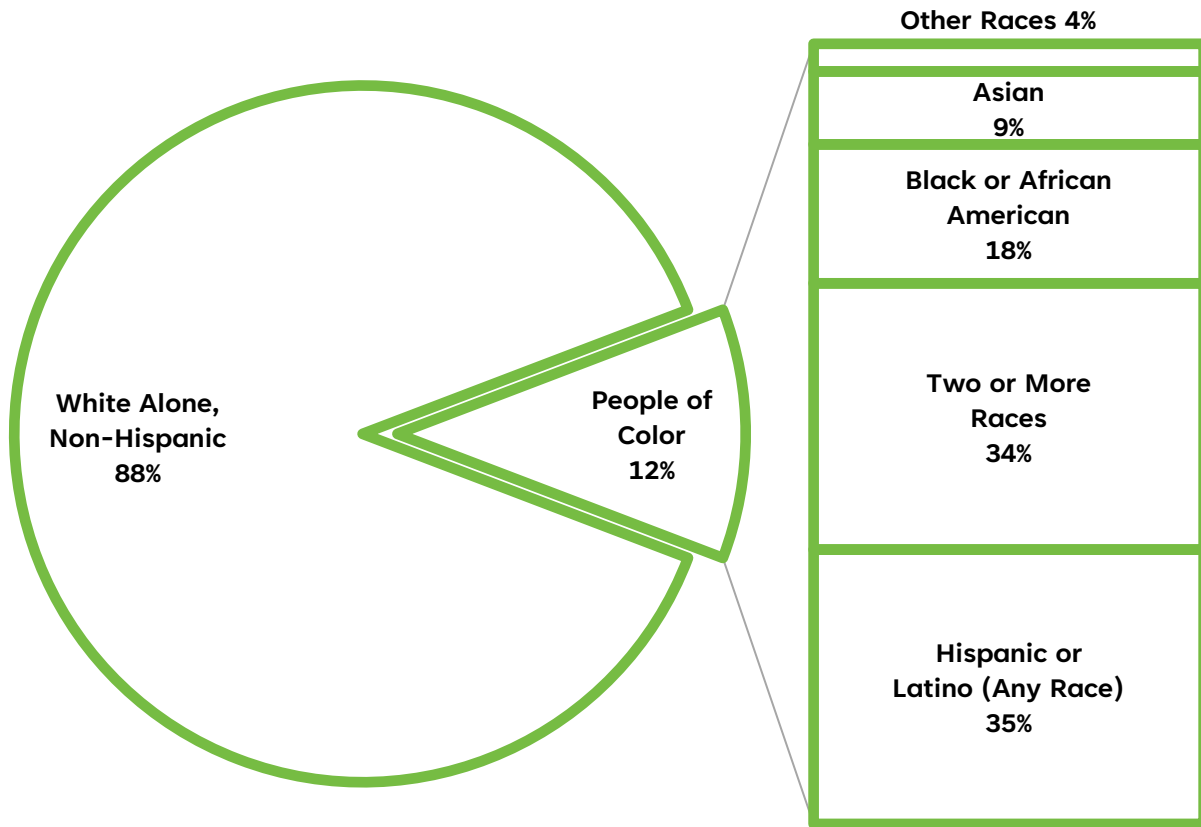


Data sources: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Race and Ethnicity

In 2022, 88 percent of rural family members were white alone and non-Hispanic, and 12 percent were people of color. From 2012 to 2022, the rural family members who were white alone and non-Hispanic, decreased by 10 percent, and family members of color increased 55 percent.

Figure 4: Rural Pennsylvania Family Members by Race and Ethnicity, 2022



Data source: 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

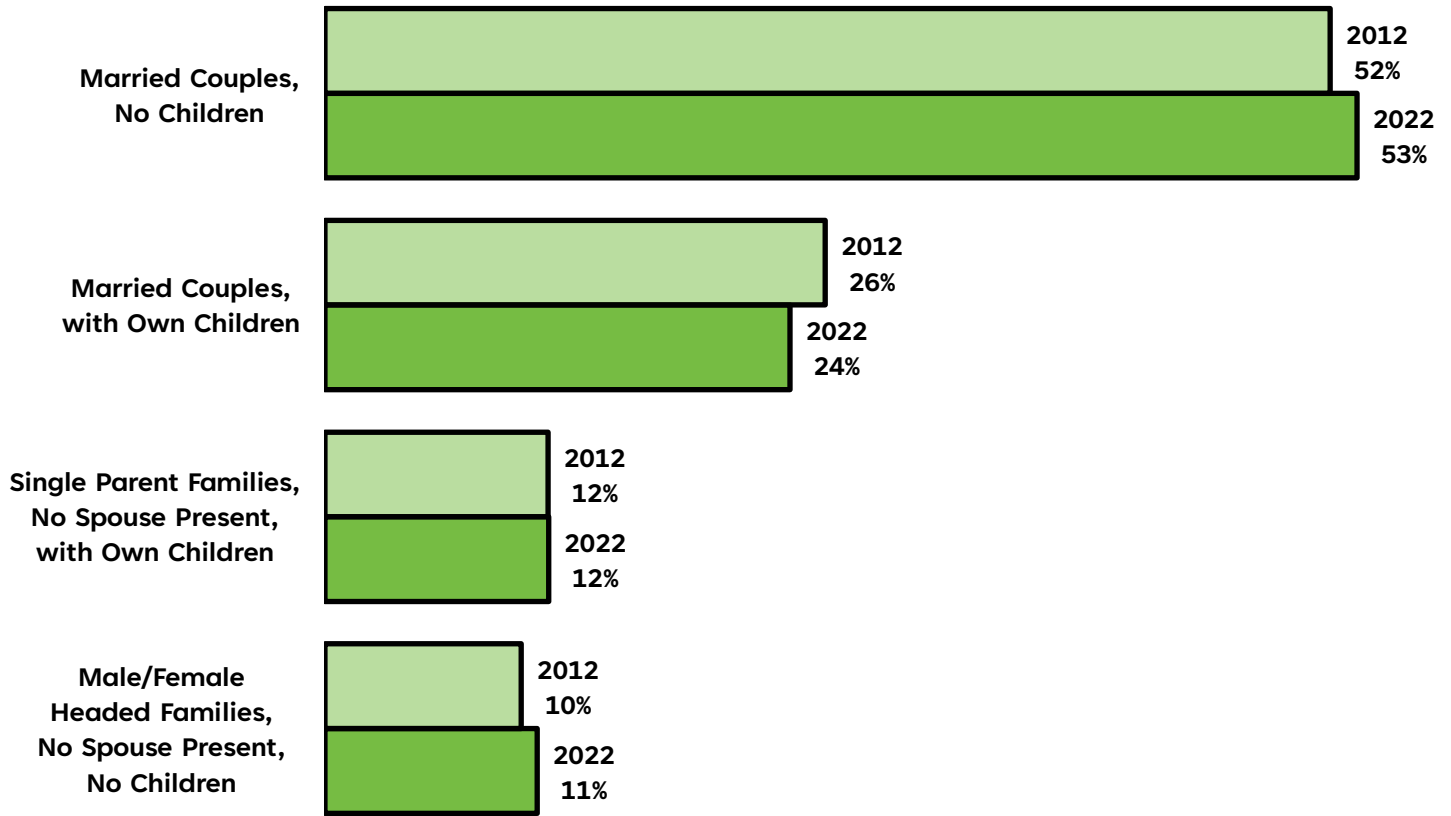
Same-Sex Married Couples

In 2022, 0.8 percent of the rural married couples were same-sex. There is no comparable data from 2012. Among urban married couples, 1.1 percent were same-sex.

Types of Families

From 2012 to 2022, family types in rural Pennsylvania had only modest changes. Some of these changes included a 1-percentage point increase in married couples without children and a 2-percentage point decrease in married couples with children. During this period, the percent of multigenerational families (three or more generations living together) remained unchanged at 4 percent.

Figure 5: Types of Families in Rural Pennsylvania, 2012 and 2022

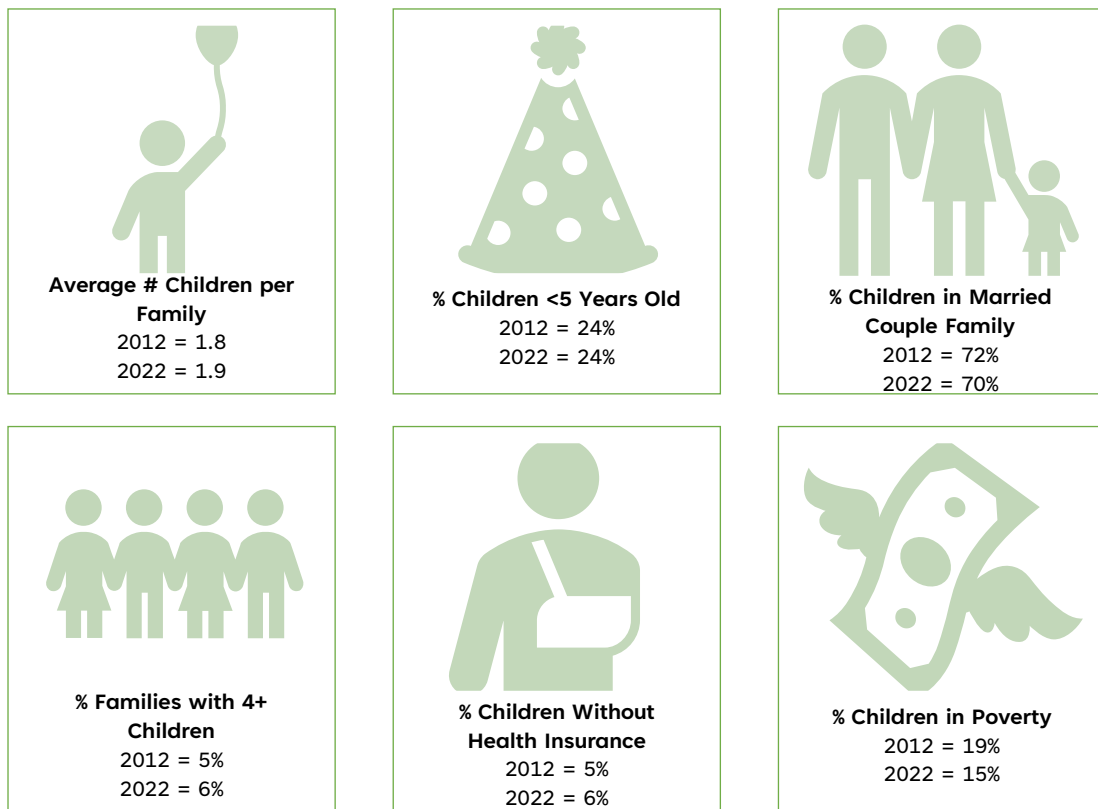


Data sources: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Families with Children

In 2022, there were more than 698,300 rural children living in families. From 2012 to 2022, there was a 4 percent decrease in children living with families. The average number of children per family and percentage of families with greater than 3 children remained relatively constant between 2012 and 2022. During the same period, the percentage of children in poverty decreased by 4 percentage points while the number of children without health insurance increased by 1 percentage point.

Figure 6: Characteristics of Rural Pennsylvania Families with Own Children Under 18 Years Old, 2012 and 2022



Data sources: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Family Economy

Income/Poverty

In 2022, the median rural family income was \$82,436. The median urban family income was \$101,104. From 2012 to 2022, rural families experienced an 11 percent increase in income, while urban families had a 15 percent increase.

In 2022, 8 percent of both rural and urban families had incomes below the poverty rate. In 2022, the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$29,782. From 2012 to 2022, the rural and urban family poverty rate decreased.

Figure 7: Range of Rural and Urban Family Income 2012 and 2022 (Inflation Adjusted)

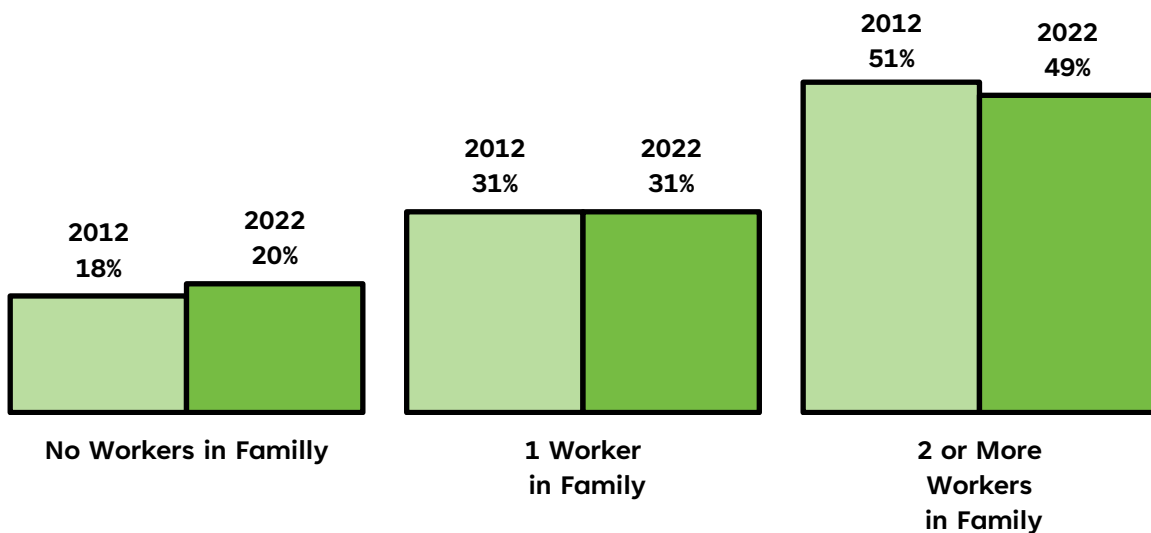
Rural Family Income, 2012	<\$50,000 31%	\$50,000 to \$99,999 36%	\$100,000 to \$149,999 19%	\$150,000+ 14%
Rural Family Income, 2022	<\$50,000 26%	\$50,000 to \$99,999 35%	\$100,000 to \$149,999 21%	\$150,000+ 18%
Urban Family Income, 2012	<\$50,000 26%	\$50,000 to \$99,999 30%	\$100,000 to \$149,999 21%	\$150,000+ 23%
Urban Family Income, 2022	<\$50,000 21%	\$50,000 to \$99,999 29%	\$100,000 to \$149,999 21%	\$150,000+ 30%

Data source: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Employment

In 2022, 80 percent of rural families had one or more employed persons. From 2012 to 2022, this percentage decreased slightly. Among rural families with children, 58 percent had two or more employed persons. Among rural families with no employed persons, the average age of family members was 59.9, suggesting that many of these people could be retired, therefore they are not actively searching for a job (meeting the standard definition of unemployment).

Figure 8: Percent of Employed Persons in Rural Families, 2012 and 2022

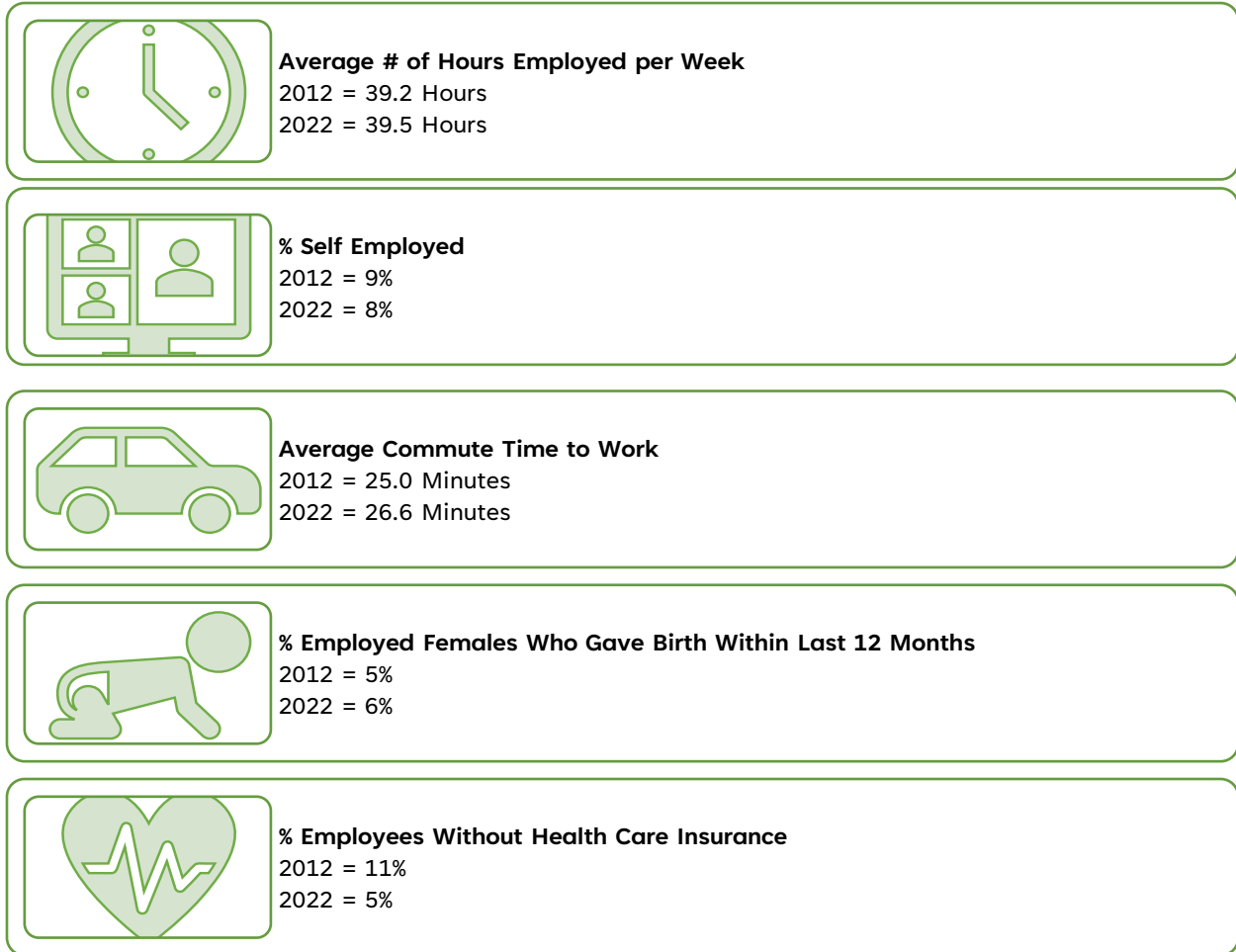


Data source: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Characteristics of Working Rural Families

In 2012, 64 percent of employed females who lived in a family worked full-time/year-round (35+ hours a week and 50+ weeks a year). In 2022, this percentage increased to 70 percent. The change was less dramatic among employed males living in a family. In 2012, 80 percent worked full-time/year-round. In 2022, this percentage increased to 81 percent.

Figure 9: Characteristics of Rural Pennsylvania Working Families, 2012 and 2022

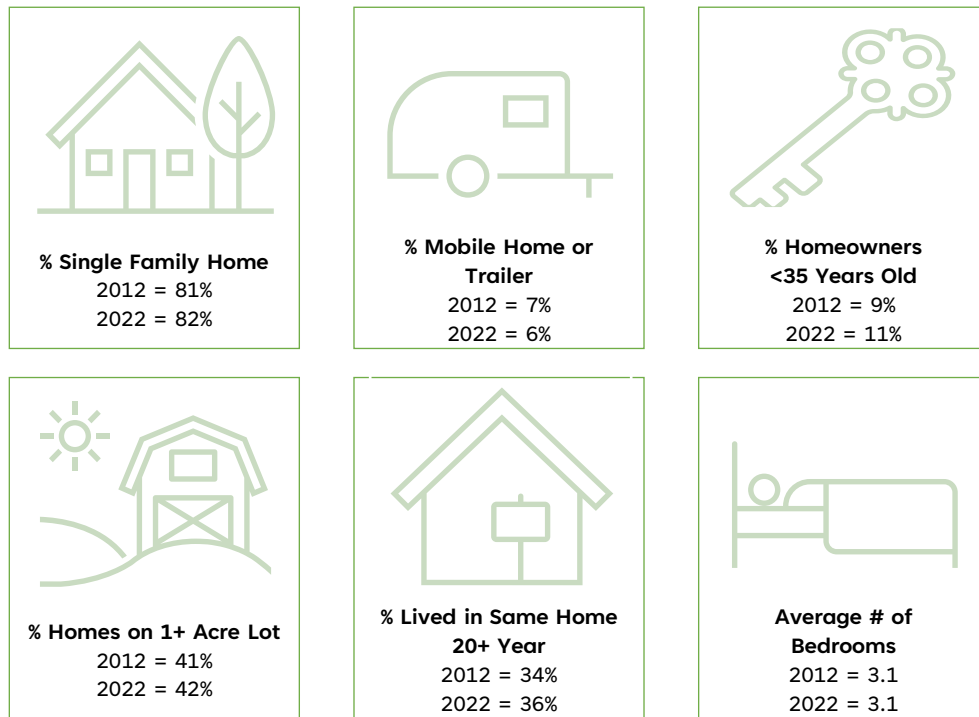


Data sources: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Family Housing

In 2022, 83 percent of rural families were homeowners, and 17 percent were renters. Between 2012 and 2022, rural homeownership among families increased 1 percentage point and the number of renters decreased 1 percentage point.

Figure 10: Characteristics of Rural Family Housing, 2012 and 2022



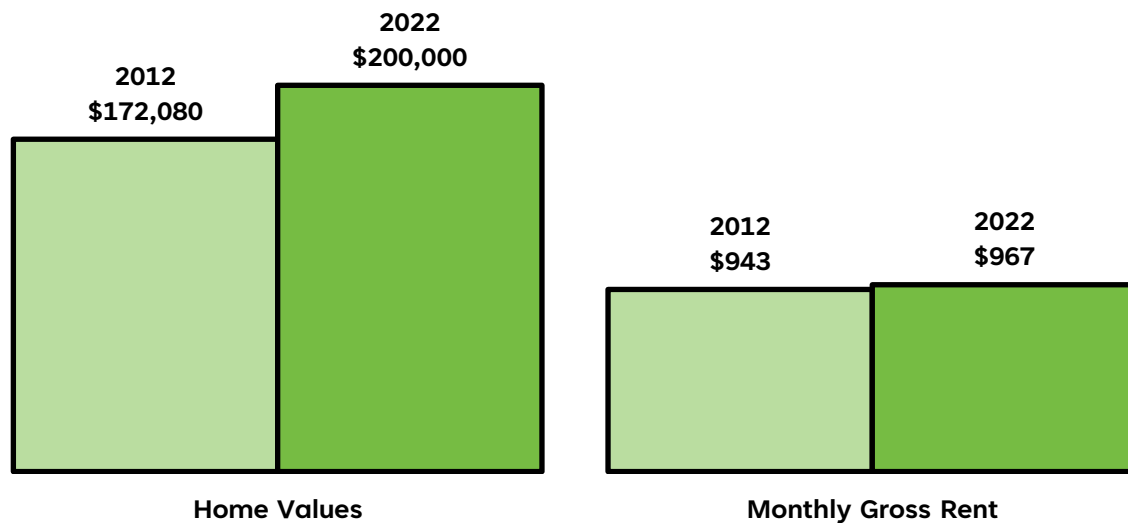
Data sources: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Housing Costs

In 2022, 57 percent of rural homeowner families had a mortgage. For these families, the median monthly housing cost was \$1,443, or approximately 17 percent of their monthly household income. These costs included insurance, taxes, and utilities.

Among rural renters in 2022, the median monthly gross rent (includes rent and utilities) was \$967, or 24 percent of the renter's monthly income. It is worth noting that the average housing costs of both renters and homeowners in rural Pennsylvania are below the 30-percent threshold of income versus housing costs.

Figure 11: Inflation Adjusted Median Home Values and Gross Monthly Rent in Rural Pennsylvania, 2012 to 2022 (Graph Not to Scale)



Data source: 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

Conclusion

Rural families are not immune to demographic change: From 2012 to 2022, rural Pennsylvania’s population declined, grew older, and became more racially and ethnically diverse. These same trends are evident among rural Pennsylvania families. The projected decline in Pennsylvania’s rural population means that the number of rural families will likely continue to decline over the next 30 years.

Rural families are having fewer children: There are many reasons for a decrease in the number of families with children. The three most notable are: decrease in the number of births; decrease in the number of women in their prime childbearing age (15 to 44); and children becoming adults (18 years old and older). The sum effect of these factors has led to a decrease in families with children.

Married couples are the most common type of family: In both 2012 and 2022, the majority of rural Pennsylvania families were comprised of married couples. This trend will likely continue. According to data from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, from 2012 to 2022, the number of divorces filed in Pennsylvania declined 20 percent. During this same period, the number of marriages increased by 3 percent. In addition, Census data shows the number of adults who are widowed decreased 9 percent from 2012 to 2022.

Most rural families have seen economic improvement: In 2012, rural Pennsylvania, like the rest of the United States, was still recovering from the Great Recession. Since then, there has been an increase in rural family income and a corresponding decrease in

poverty. In addition, unemployment rates have decreased, and the average number of hours worked per week has increased.

Most rural families live in their own home: Homeownership rates among rural Pennsylvania families are over 80 percent compared to 78 percent in urban areas. In addition, rural housing values are generally lower than they are in urban areas. What is unclear is whether the supply of housing is keeping up with demand. According to the data, from 2012 to 2022, the number of occupied rural units increased 2 percent, while the number of urban units increased 9 percent.

Methods

Definitions:

Family: The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as any two or more people residing together and related by birth, marriage, or adoption. The key term is “related to one another.” Same-sex married couples are considered a family. A widow living alone, however, is not a family, nor is an unmarried couple cohabiting. Also, having children is not a prerequisite for being a family. For some, this definition may seem overly rigid, but there are many complex living arrangements. This definition allows researchers to better catalog and analyze issues facing families across time.

Rural and Urban: Geographic data from the 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample is released at geographic levels called Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). PUMAs with a population density below the statewide rate of 291 persons per square mile were identified as rural. PUMAs with a population density at or above 291 persons per square mile were considered urban. The 2012 PUMAs were harmonized with the 2022 PUMAs using a relationship file from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Data Source:

This factsheet used data from the 2012 and 2022, 1-year Average, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, U.S. Census Bureau.

All financial data was adjusted for inflation using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index with 2022 as the base year.

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