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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2012

New Census Bureau Estimates from 2005 to 2010 Show Changes in Household Net Worth

U.S. median household net worth declined 35 percent between 2005 and 2010, from \$102,844 to \$66,740 (in 2010 constant dollars), according to a set of detailed tables released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. However, excluding home equity, median household net worth increased by 8 percent between 2009 and 2010, from \$13,859 to \$15,000.

The [Net Worth and Asset Ownership \(hhes/www/wealth/\)](https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/wealth/) tables show household net worth — the value of assets minus debts — by a variety of demographic characteristics in 2005, 2009 and 2010. The statistics come from the Survey of Income and Program Participation.

"The overall decline in net worth reflects drops in housing values and stock market indices," said Census Bureau economist Alfred Gottschalk.

In absolute terms, median net worth decreased for all age groups over the period, but more so for older households than for younger ones. For householders 65 and older, it decreased from \$195,890 to \$170,128; for those under 35, the decrease was from \$8,528 to \$5,402. In percentage terms, however, the story was much different: a 37 percent decline for younger householders, compared with a 13 percent decline for older ones.

All educational groups also experienced declines. For example, those with a high school diploma saw their median net worth fall 39 percent and those with a bachelor's degree experienced a 32 percent decline.

Other highlights (All dollar figures are in 2010 constant dollars):

- More education is associated with higher net worth. In 2010, those with a graduate or professional degree had a median net worth of \$245,763, while the median net worth of those with a high school diploma only was \$42,223. Those with a bachelor's degree had a median net worth of \$142,518.
- In 2000, those with a bachelor's degree had a median net worth value almost twice as large as those with a high school diploma only; by 2010, this number had risen to almost three and one-half times as large. The same pattern can be seen when examining the graduate or professional degree to high school diploma ratio; this ratio has increased from 3.5 to 5.8 over the same period.
- Householders age 35 to 44 had the largest percent decline in median net worth from 2005 to 2010 of any age group: 59 percent.

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These data were collected in the Survey of Income and Program Participation. As in all surveys, these data are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. For further information on the source of the data and accuracy of the estimates, including standard errors and confidence intervals, go to <http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/source.html> (<http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/source.html>). All dollar figures are in 2010 constant dollars.

Release Information

CB12-108

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau | Public Information Office | PIO@census.gov (mailto:PIO@census.gov) | Last Revised: May 19, 2016

