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Shifting Foundations: A Contemporary History of Utah Households

Utah's signature demographics have long distinguished its households in the national context. Long-term social, economic, and demographic trends continue to shape Utah's households over time.

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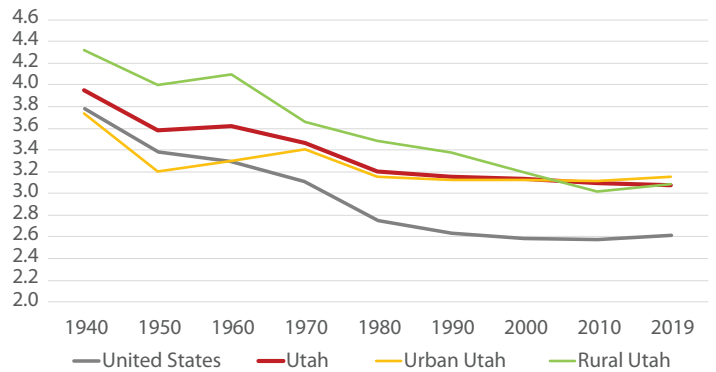
Shifting Foundations: A Contemporary History of Utah Households

Analysis in Brief

Utah's signature demographics have long distinguished its households in the national context. Utah's iconic ranking as having the most people per household remains even as broader demographic trends have transformed its communities. Long term changes in the composition and dynamics of households reveal shifts in the fundamental demographics of Utah.

Historical decennial census data supplemented by the most recent American Community Survey data illustrates how changes in Utah's households follow national trends with a delay. While household sizes in Utah have been the largest in the nation since the 1980 census, persons per household are decreasing. While Utah's high share of married-couple households and large families have driven this difference, its share of nonfamily households has increased over time. Increases in domestic and international in-migration, greater urbanization, societal shifts, and new framing of what constitutes a family have all created impacts on the 'traditional' Utah household.

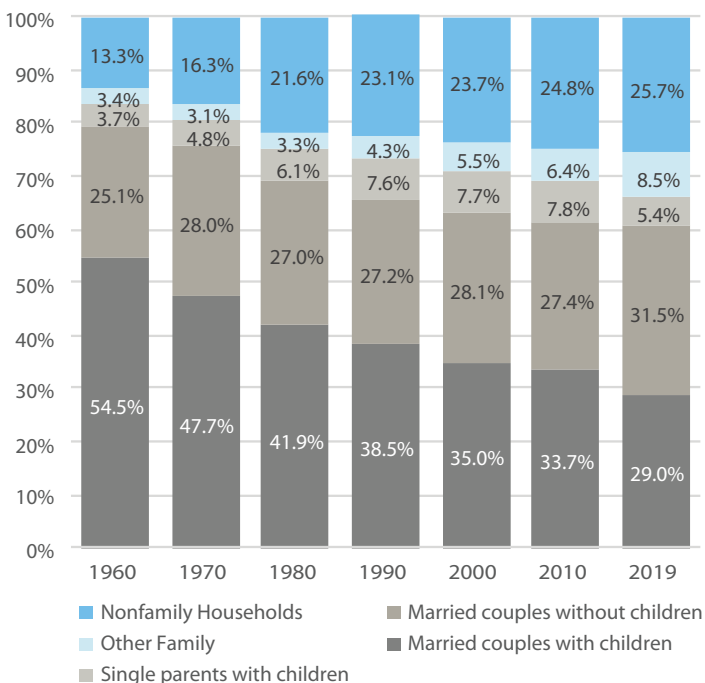
Average Household Size in Rural and Urban Utah, Utah, and the United States



Note: For 1940 rural populations, representation on the chart is the average of nonfarm (4.05) and farm (4.58) rural persons per household.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Household Types in Utah, 1960 to 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Key Findings:

- Since 1970, Utah has added over 725,000 new households, growing from nearly 300,000 to over one million.
- In both Utah and the nation, household growth has outpaced total population growth every decade since 1940.
- While the average Utah household size is the largest in the nation, it decreased from 4.0 in 1940 to 3.08 in 2019. This decline is the combined effect of declining fertility rates and increasing median age.
- Since the 1950s, the average household size in rural Utah decreased significantly, converging with that of urban Utah.
- In 1940, Utah's share of one-person households was similar to the nation's at around 7%. By 2019, 19.2% of Utah households and 28.3% of households nationwide were a single person.
- Between 1940 and 2010, the addition of over 150,000 one-person households was responsible for 20% of overall household growth.
- Despite the stereotype of Utah households being primarily those of large families, the reality is different. In 1960, over half of Utah households were married couples with children. By 2019, this share had fallen to less than one-third (29%).

Introduction

While medians and averages reveal general trends in household characteristics, it is the changing distributions that provide a more granular and nuanced understanding of a community. Living arrangements provide one window into people’s daily experiences. The vast majority of people live in households. Historical census data provides insights into changing household composition. For example, are they small or large? Are the residents renters or owners? Are they filled with families, roommates, or single people? Is the head of the household female, male, old, or young? Are people able to live in the households they want, or are there circumstances preventing that from happening? This paper provides descriptive insights into Utah households and how they have changed over time.

While official definitions of households and families are limited and not inclusive, Census Bureau data is the primary source for learning more about living arrangements nationwide. The most recent data indicate that Utah households are the largest in the nation but have decreased over time. The majority of Utah households are filled by families, with the nonfamily household share increasing to one of four in the most recent data.

What is a household?

Whether living alone, with family, friends, roommates, or random strangers, households are typically the people who live together. Housing units are the physical structures that serve as dwelling units. Households provide a way to be a part of or create a community. COVID-19 has increased awareness of how foundational households are, making many households the hub for working, school, child and elder care, and many other non-conventional uses.

This research focuses on households rather than housing units or group quarters. By the Census Bureau definition, a household consists of people who live together or alone in a

residential structure. Two major federal statistical programs, the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey (ACS), provide insights into households and are the data sources for this analysis. These sources provide insights such as household size, occupants’ characteristics, and housing details such as utilities and costs. In Utah, the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute produces several local estimates that provide housing and household insights.

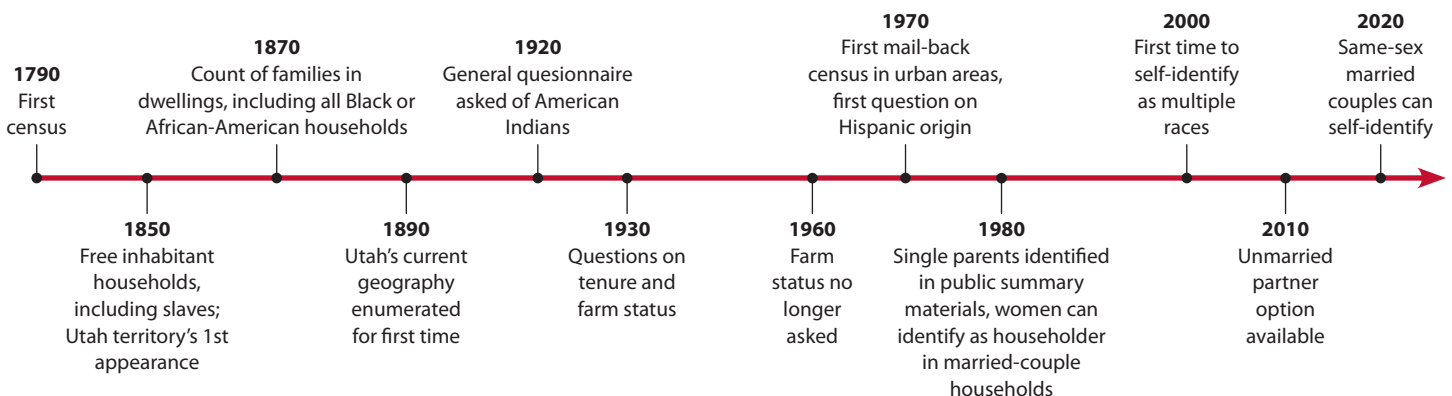
Housing units are the physical structures where people live, and their count is not impacted by having people living in them. They can be vacant or occupied. The Census Bureau Population Division produces annual estimates of housing units at the state and county levels.

Neither household nor housing unit estimates include the population that lives in group quarters. Group quarters are places where people live other than usual homes, apartments, or mobile homes. These include institutional (nursing homes, correctional facilities, hospitals treating chronically ill patients) and noninstitutional (college dormitories, military barracks, shelters, group homes).¹ In the latest available data, about 1.5% of Utahns lived in group quarters.²

The households and people counted by the Census Bureau has changed over time

The household has long been the reference point for the population in the decennial census. The constitution requires the decennial census enumeration. It initially counted white men and those in their households, either as family or property. The first decennial census in 1790 included six questions to identify: the name of the male head of the household, the number of people in each household who were free white males older or younger than 16, free white females, all other free persons, and slaves. Everyone connected to the male head of household was considered part of the family. This question

Figure 1: Selection of Changes to the Decennial Census over Time



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial History

Note: Additional resources on the history of the decennial census and how it has changed over time available in endnotes.³

structure did not include indigenous populations and any other households that might not have fit the question framework.

By the time the Utah Territory appeared in the seventh enumeration in 1850, the questions had shifted into two separate forms: one for free inhabitants and one for slaves.⁴ United States Marshals, the data collection agents at the time, asked free inhabitants who were white, black, or mulatto to identify the number of people in a household, marital status, and the number of children.⁵ Slave inhabitants became a part of the white household, with the decennial census ignoring familial or societal connections with other slaves. Records show a confusing picture for the slave population in Utah in 1850.⁶ The 1850 census still did not include indigenous populations. Estimates indicate that the indigenous population living in the Utah territory was nearly double that of the newly arrived non-Hispanic white population.⁷

Diversification of self-identification has changed throughout the history of the census. The ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1868 allowed the enumeration of Black or African-American residents as a whole person, and in theory, allowed representation of Black or African-American households in the data. These changes included the relationship to the male head of the family, single questionnaire sheets for each family, how many individuals lived in each dwelling or family, and how many living children belonged to one mother. By 1920, the Census Bureau requested general questionnaire responses from American Indians, allowing their households to appear for the first time. A broader segment of the population was allowed to self-identify in the 1970 census, which included questions on Hispanic origin for the first time.

As society has shifted, so have questions on household location and tenure. The 1930 census asked whether the home

was owned or rented and if the family lived on a farm. The farm question had different iterations in the 1940 and 1950 censuses but was gone by 1960. In Utah, the switch from the majority of the population living in rural to urban areas occurred between the 1920 and 1930 censuses. As of the 2010 census, 9 out of 10 households statewide were in urban areas.⁸ In western nations, household sizes dropped as economies shifted from agrarian to industrial.

Definitions of what constitutes “family” have shifted dramatically over time, reflecting social and political changes. Before 1940, “family” broadly identified not only related individuals living together but landlords and their tenants, inmates at jails, people at poorhouses, and more.⁹ The 1940 census instituted ‘household’ as terminology for people living together, whether family or not. This use of household also included boarding houses, which lead to female boarders appearing to be part of a typically male-run household,¹⁰

The 1980 census introduced several changes for the enumeration of households and families. Single parents first appeared in census summary materials in 1980.¹¹ After a concerted effort by a group of social scientists and aided by broader waves of civil rights changes, women were allowed to identify as the householder within opposite-sex married couples.¹² Before this shift, women could only be the householder if there was no husband present.

The 2020 census is the first decennial census where same-sex married couples can identify themselves as a family household. Previously, same-sex couple households were classified as nonfamily households comprised of unrelated individuals or roommates.

Context

The post-World War II period was a time of significant changes to households across the country. Economic and social events impacted the ability to purchase homes, the timing of marriage, and how many children families were having. The 1940 census introduced new terminology for and an increased focus on households.

National context, 1940 to 2010

Research from the Urban Institute provides a framework of two distinct timeframes for analysis based on household formation – 1940 to 1980 and 1980 to 2010.¹³ In the first phase, younger and typically white Americans had increasing rates of household formation, aided in part by GI Bill funding. 1980 provides a tipping point, where age groups between 20 and 44 began to experience decreasing household formation.

“Increasing, and shared, national prosperity between 1940 and 1970 gave rise to dramatic gains in incomes and falling wage and income inequality. Women gained economic power and financial independence, raising the age at first marriage and depressing the marriage rate, increasing parents’ age at first childbirth and reducing total childbearing, and raising divorce rates. . . . Young adults had an especially sharp drop in householding in the 1980s, mainly because of the recession and unemployment. Though they regained some ground in the economically stronger 1990s, rates began to fall between 2000 and 2007 as economic growth slowed again and fell sharply after 2007.”¹⁴

The 1980s and 2010s have some similar attributes for young adults who would have been the newest householders in earlier decades. Both decades featured the two largest generational

cohorts (Baby Boomers and Millennials) in varying stages of adulthood. Traditionally, this would have resulted in the significant growth of new households, created through moving away from parents for education or work and starting new lives with roommates or marriage.

However, both of these decades also included significant economic downturns in tandem with other social and cultural changes, which impacted these generations' ability to follow trends from their predecessors. Figure 2 highlights the changes in the median age of the householder, or reference person, in Utah and the United States since 1940. The decreases in the 1980s and 1990s reflect a larger share of younger householders, while the increase in 2010 reflects the overall aging of the population combined with fewer younger householders.

Utah context, 1940 to 2010

Using the framework provided by the Urban Institute research, here are some additional contextual considerations for Utah across the same periods.

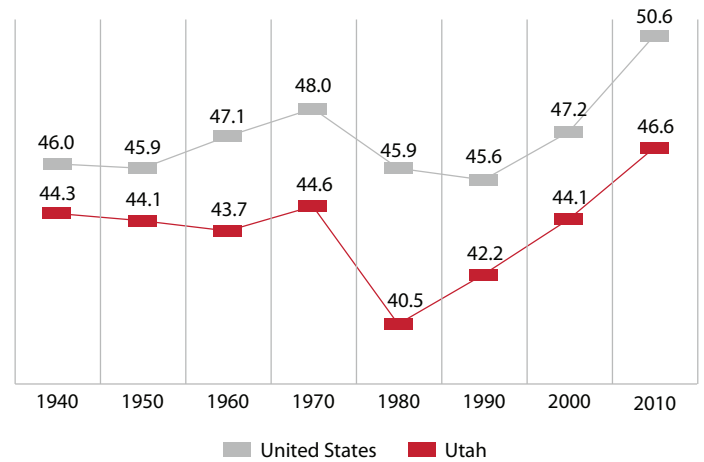
Between 1940 and 1980

- The period leading to Utah's population reaching 1 million (1940-1964) was heavily impacted by defense spending in industrial, manufacturing, and military installations. The increasing diversification of the economy kept young adults in Utah and brought over 100,000 new migrants, primarily to the Wasatch Front.^{15,16}
- In addition to substantial investments by private investors and local governments, the GI Bill provided financial and institutional resources to predominantly white veterans that enabled their investment in affordable single-family homes. For veterans from the Vietnam War, Utah had a relatively high use of the GI Bill for education, allowing them to move into adulthood without incurring educational debt.^{17,18}

Between 1980 and 2010

- External factors influenced in-migration as a contributor to the growth of the population, which impacted household composition. For example, Delta Airlines claimed the Salt Lake International airport as a hub in the late 1980s, opening the state to international travelers and increased migration.¹⁹ Utah again received international recognition when Salt Lake City played host to the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.
- The migration of the 1990s helped to accelerate Utah's population growth due to newcomers to Utah staying and starting their families in the state. The migrants of the 1990s increased racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in Utah. This population shift included new household traditions and practices in Utah.²⁰

Figure 2: Median Age of Householder in United States and Utah, 1940 to 2010



Note: Due to data limitations, median age of householder is calculated for householders between age 18 and 75.

Source: Decennial census Data reassembled from Ruggles, S., Flood, S., Goeken, R., Grover, J., Meyer, E., Pacas, J., et al. (2019) IPUMS USA: Version 9.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2018. Calculations by Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute.

- Between 1990 and 2002, the total fertility rate (TFR) in Utah remained between 2.6 and 2.4. However, during the same period, the TFR for non-Hispanic white women declined by 0.2 while the TFR for Hispanic women increased by 0.8.²¹ In recent years, the TFR has declined in Utah since 2007.²² These TFR differences translate to fewer children statewide than in previous decades, impacting the share of households with children.

Changing roles of women

The shifts for women in the national picture towards the close of the 1940-1970 period impacted household dynamics, composition, and size. Women's educational attainment and workforce participation increased during the 1970s. Indicators of these national shifts include:²³

- the median age of for both men and women at first marriage increased by one full year,
- fertility rates for mothers over age 25 were increasing, as women postponed childbirth, and
- the share of family households led by a single woman increased

Evidence of changes in Utah include:

- The share of Utah's population with a bachelor's degree or higher was in the top 10 in the nation between 1940 and 1980. Typically, this would lead to lower fertility and smaller families. Utah's population was counter to this national trend.²⁴
- In recent decades, the share of Utah women in higher education and the workforce has increased.²⁵ Since 2001, Utah women are more likely to have a Bachelor's degree than other levels of educational attainment.²⁶

Utah Household Basics

The Utah population has increased in every decennial census. Barring a significant increase of people sharing households, living in group quarters facilities, or off-the-grid locations, an increase in the population also increases households.

The West (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington) had continual household growth from 1900 to 2000, despite a decrease in the share of one-person households.²⁷ In 1940, Utah's population of just over 550,000 people lived in nearly 140,000 households. The most recent estimates from the ACS indicate that over one million households provide homes

to over 3.2 million Utahns.²⁸ Except for the 1950s, the rate of household growth each decade has exceeded that of the population. Throughout the century, this pattern of more intense household growth than population growth also occurred nationwide as persons per household have declined.²⁹

Household size has decreased over time.

Throughout the study period, Utah households have been larger than the national average and have been the largest in the nation since the 1980 census. Across the 1940, 1950, and 1960 censuses, the largest households were predominantly in southern coastal states and New Mexico. The 1960 census added Alaska and Hawaii to the list of states with households larger than Utah. By the 1970 census, only Hawaii and Alaska had average households larger than Utah.³⁰

In 1940, the difference between Utah and the United States was small (0.17) – 3.95 persons per household (pph) in Utah, 3.78 nationally. This gap between Utah and the nation continued to grow. The largest gap occurring in the 2000 census at 0.54 (3.13 pph in Utah and 2.59 pph in the U.S.). More recent data shows that this gap is decreasing slightly, with a difference of 0.47 in the 2019 1-Year ACS (3.08 pph in Utah, 2.61 in the U.S.). The decadal decrease was more pronounced nationally than in Utah between almost all of the decennial censuses. Between 2000 and 2010, Utah's decline exceeded that of the U.S.

The average household size in the United States decreased by 11.6% between 1970 and 1980. This shift was partly due to smaller families, an aging population, and an increase in single-person households.³¹ Household size also declined in Utah during the same period, although the decrease was smaller (7.5%). This downward trend continued, with a more significant decrease nationwide than in Utah during the following decade (1980-1990).³² The difference between Utah and the nation was partially due to the impacts of the early 1980s recession and differences in fertility rates.³³

Throughout this decade, the ACS has indicated slight increases in household size throughout the United States and Utah. However, considering the margin of error, the most recent data indicates a similar average household size to 2010 for both Utah and the nation.

Rural and Urban changes to household size

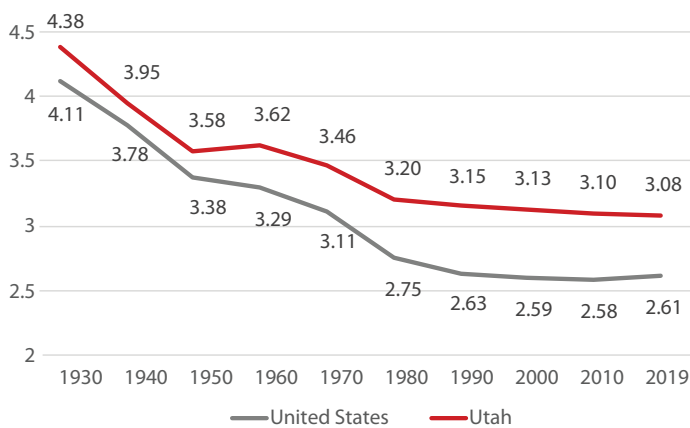
Changes in household size have occurred differently in rural and urban Utah. While the decreases in urban household sizes have primarily led to the downward trend statewide, the decreases in rural Utah have been much greater over time. In 1940, persons per household in rural Utah ranged from 4.05 (nonfarm) to 4.58 (farm). By 2010, the average rural household

Table 1: Utah Population and Households, 1890 to 2019

Year	Population	Households	Percent Change between decades	
			Population	Households
1890	207,905	38,816		
1900	276,749	55,208	33.1%	42.2%
1910	373,351	77,339	34.9%	40.1%
1920	449,396	98,346	20.4%	27.2%
1930	507,847	115,936	13.0%	17.9%
1940	550,310	139,487	8.4%	20.3%
1950	688,862	187,825	25.2%	34.7%
1960	890,627	241,532	29.3%	28.6%
1970	1,059,273	297,934	18.9%	23.4%
1980	1,461,037	448,603	37.9%	50.6%
1990	1,722,850	537,273	17.9%	19.8%
2000	2,233,169	701,281	29.6%	30.5%
2010	2,763,885	877,692	23.8%	25.2%
2019	3,205,958	1,023,855	16.0%	16.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial census and 2019 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Figure 3: Average Household Size in Utah and United States, 1940 to 2019



Note: Margin of error for 2019 is +/-0.01 for the United States and +/-0.02 for Utah
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial census and 2019 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

had decreased to 3.02. In the same timeframe, the average urban household decreased from 3.20 to 3.12 people.

Analysis of recent data demonstrates that rural Utah counties are net-exporters of young adults.³⁴ This out-migration of young adults has led to population declines in some rural counties and a more pervasive aging population. Older householders tend to have smaller household sizes.³⁵ Although definitions of rural have changed at the Census Bureau across the study period, Utah's rural counties had greater increases in median age between 1950 and 2010 than urban counties.³⁶

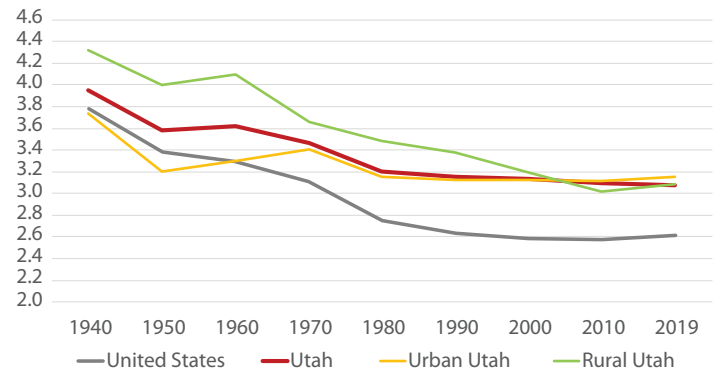
Why are Utah households so large?

Two components of Utah's household size distribution illustrate why the state continues to have a larger household size than the nation: a lower share of one-person households and a higher share of households with six or more people. Utah's share of one-person households has been nearly ten percentage points lower than the national share for decades. Conversely, the share of households with six or more people has ranged from 5 to 10 percentage points higher in Utah than nationwide. The share of large households has been decreasing and the share of single-person households has been increasing nationally and in Utah throughout recent decades.

Nationally the share of one-person households increased from 7.7% in 1940 to 28.3% in 2019. Between 1960 and 2000, the number of men living alone increased more significantly than women, with men under age 65 being the largest contributor to the overall growth followed by women under age 65.³⁷

While Utah and the nation had nearly equal shares of one-person households in 1940, the shares have subsequently diverged, with national shares increasing more rapidly. The share of one-person households in Utah has remained between 17% and 19% since 1980. This slower growth in one-person

Figure 4: Average Household Size in Rural and Urban Utah, Utah, and the United States



Note: For 1940 rural populations, representation on the chart is the average of nonfarm (4.05) and farm (4.58) rural persons per household.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

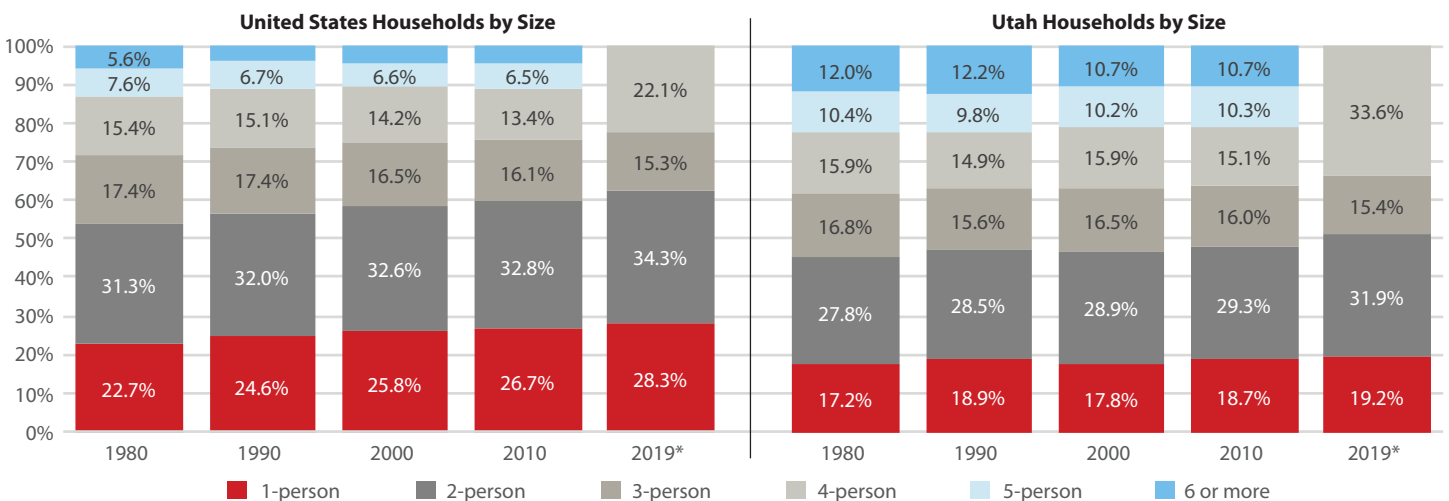
households resulted in Utah having the lowest share nationwide in 2010 (18.7%) and 2019 (19.2%). Between 1940 and 2010, more than half (55%) of the growth in single-person households in Utah came from women living alone.³⁸

Table 2: One-Person Households as Share of Total Households in Utah and the United States, 1940 to 2019

Year	Utah Share	U.S. Share
1940	7.9%	7.7%
1950	9.1%	9.3%
1960	12.0%	13.3%
1970	14.4%	17.6%
1980	17.2%	22.7%
1990	18.9%	24.6%
2000	17.8%	25.8%
2010	18.7%	26.7%
2019	19.2%	28.3%

Note: Margin of error for 2019 is 0.6 for Utah and 0.1 for U.S.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Figure 5: Households by Size as a Share of Total Households in Utah and the United States, 1980 to 2019



Note: Data for 2019 comes from the 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates, which only provide household sizes of 1, 2, 3, or 4 or more people.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota

Demographic Changes in Utah Households

Age of householder

Historically in Utah, younger adults form households earlier than in the rest of the United States. Since the 1940s, a larger share of Utah households have had a householder age 44 or younger than the national share. In the same timeframe, the share of householders age 65 and older is smaller in Utah than the nation.. Utah's median age at first marriage in 2005 for both men and women was similar to the nation in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This again illustrates how Utah's signature demographics remain, although they trend in the same direction as the nation. Figure 6 highlights these differences.

Household by Race/Ethnicity since 1990

As previously mentioned, the migration in the 1990s had a significant impact on Utah's population. The Latino or Hispanic or population, currently Utah's largest minority population, significantly aided that growth between 1990 and 2010. Increases in the Hispanic or Latino population contributed 26% of the population growth statewide over this period.

The migration wave of the 1990s increased the size of Utah's Hispanic or Latino population. The characteristics of Hispanic or Latino-led households differ from the non-Hispanic White population. Previous Gardner Institute analysis indicated that those who moved to Utah in the 1990s, plus the children they had once here, account for half of the state's overall population

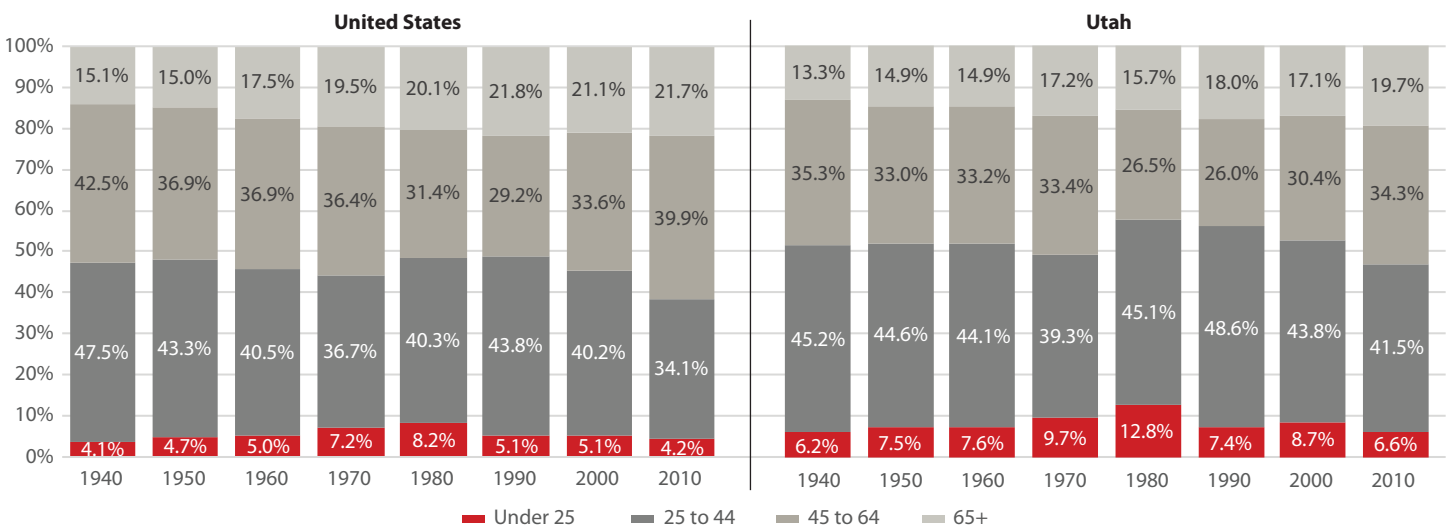
Table 3: Selected Household Characteristics of non-Hispanic White and Latino or Hispanic Households in Utah, 1990 to 2010

	Non-Hispanic White			Hispanic or Latino		
	Share of Total Households	Average Household size	Average Family Size	Share of Total Households	Average Household size	Average Family Size
1990	95%	3.14	3.66	4%	3.27	3.9
2000	89%	3.06	3.51	7%	3.9	4.13
2010	85%	2.99	3.5	10%	3.9	4.16

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial census and 2019 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

growth.³⁹ Between 1990 and 2010, the average household and family size in Utah decreased slightly (-0.05 for average household and -0.11 for family). This decrease was moderated by an increasing share of Latino-led households growing while non-Hispanic White-led household sizes decreased. In this timeframe, non-Hispanic White-led households decreased more significantly than the state (-0.15 for household and -0.16 for families), while Latino-led households increased (+0.63 for household and +0.26 for family).

Figure 6: Householder by Age Group in Utah and United States, 1940 to 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota

Family and Nonfamily Households

What is a family (according to the Census Bureau)?

Family households include two or more related people – some of the categories the Census Bureau uses include single parents, married-couple parents, married couples, and multigenerational households. The definition of family used by the Census Bureau has remained consistent since 1930.⁴⁰ While that definition is broad enough to encompass many different types of families, not all have been represented equally in the data. The 2020 census will be the first decennial census to recognize married same-sex households as family households rather than nonfamily or roommate households.⁴¹

Residents of nonfamily households can include unrelated roommates, unmarried partners, or single persons.

Family households shifting in the overall balance of households

Since 1970, the majority of households in Utah and the nation are family households. However, these shares have decreased, with about two-thirds of households nationwide and just under three-quarters of households in Utah being family households in 2019. As the definition of family above indicates, this share includes several types of family households.

Married-couple households have long-been the largest share of family households in Utah, although following the decreasing trend. In 1970, over 90% of family households were married-couple households. By 2019, this share had decreased to 74%. As a share of total households, married-couple families represented 60% of all Utah households and 48% nationally in 2019. Marriage rates in Utah rank among the highest in the nation.⁴²

The remaining share of family households is led by single householders, meaning a single or adult without a spouse rather

than a married couple. Over half (58%) of single-householder households, with or without children, are led by women.

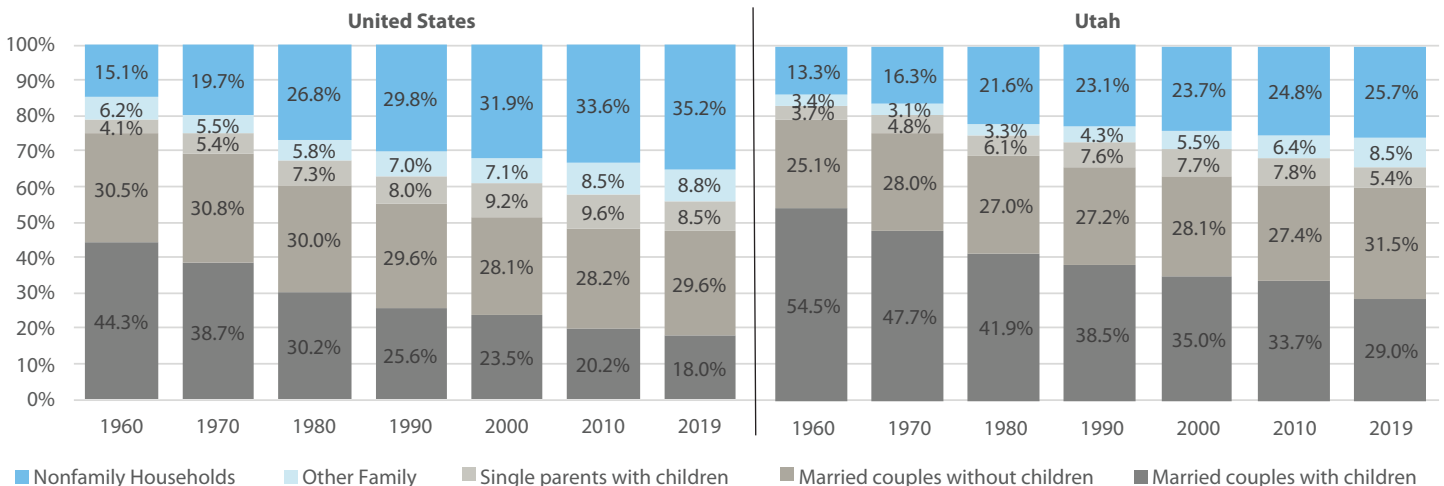
The average family size is typically larger than the average household size. Utah had the 2nd largest average family size in 2019 at 3.56, behind Hawaii at 3.57. Nationally, the average family size was 3.23. If further examined by family type, married-couple families were even larger at 3.64 persons. Utah’s share of married-couple households has been above the national average since the 1970s and, in 2000, 2010, and 2019, Utah had the highest share of married-couple households in the United States.⁴³

The share of households with children is decreasing

While the total number of households with children increased since 1960, their overall share decreased. In 1960, 48% of United States households and 58% of Utah households had children under 18 living in them. By 2019, this share had dropped to 26% nationally and 34% in Utah. As a share of family households, households with children decreased, although less significantly than as a share of all households. Nationally, the share of households with children decreased from 57% in 1960 to 41% of family households. In Utah, this share decreased from 67% to 46% in the same period.

The majority of the adults in these households in both Utah and the nation were married-couples. More than half of married-couple households in the United States had children until 1980. This shift was more recent in Utah, with the 2019 data indicating that married-couple families without children now represent more than half of married-couple households. As a share of family households, single adults with no spouse present with children has ranged from 5% to 14% nationally and 4% to 10% in Utah.

Figure 7: Household Types in Utah and the United States, 1960 to 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial census and 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Table 4: Households with Children Under 18 in Utah and the United States, 1960 to 2019

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2019
United States							
Total Households with Children	25,690,472	27,972,451	30,136,510	30,877,675	34,588,368	34,743,604	32,481,312
Share of Total Households with Children	48.5%	44.1%	37.5%	33.6%	32.8%	29.8%	26.4%
Share of Family Households with Children	56.9%	54.9%	51.2%	47.9%	48.2%	44.8%	40.8%
Share of Married-Couple Households with Children	59.3%	55.7%	50.2%	46.3%	45.6%	41.7%	37.8%
Share of Family Households with Children, Single Parent with No Spouse Present	4.9%	6.7%	10.0%	11.4%	13.6%	14.4%	13.1%
Utah							
Total Households with Children	140,555	156,590	215,265	247,463	299,746	363,729	351,987
Share of Total Households with Children	58.2%	52.6%	48.0%	46.1%	42.7%	41.4%	34.4%
Share of Family Households with Children	67.1%	62.8%	61.2%	59.9%	56.0%	55.1%	46.3%
Share of Married-Couple Households with Children	68%	63%	61%	59%	55%	55%	48%
Share of Family Households with Children, Single Parent with No Spouse Present	4.3%	5.8%	7.7%	9.8%	10.1%	10.3%	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census and 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

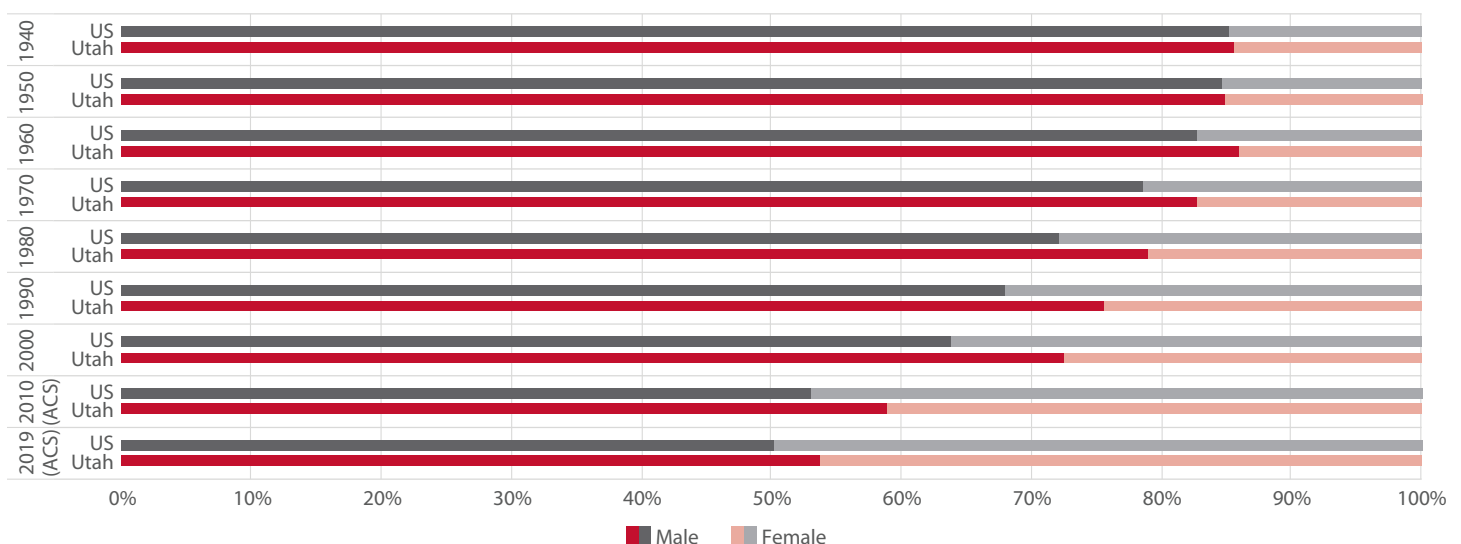
Large families are part of the cultural framework of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which has been the dominant religion in Utah since the 1850s.⁴⁴ Research in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s indicated that practicing LDS women had a higher fertility rate than non-LDS women, leading to larger family sizes for a significant share of the state population.⁴⁵ Nationwide, but not in Utah, there was a downward shift in births and the total fertility rate during the same time.⁴⁶ However, Utah's fertility rate has decreased since the spike in the 1980s.

The decreasing share of households with children is due to a multitude of factors. The timing and prioritization of life events like marriage and children have been shifting for decades. Nationwide, an emphasis on economic and educational milestones have overtaken marriage and children as the most important milestones for young adults.⁴⁷ External influences in

these shifts seen for young people throughout the past 50 years include an increase in the number of women pursuing higher education, increased labor force participation of women, shifting attitudes toward cohabitation and divorce, access to affordable and effective contraception, and increasing life costs (i.e., housing and student loans).^{48,49}

Nationally, the median age at first marriage for both men and women increased since 1950 (22.8 to 29.8 for men, 20.3 to 27.8 for women).⁵⁰ Utah's median age at first marriage is younger than the nation but has also increased. This increase follows nation trends, with a delay. Starting in the 1970s, Utah's median age at first marriage aligns with the nation's from two decades earlier.⁵¹ The most recent available data shows this trend continuing, with the median ages of marriage in Utah for men (26.8) and women (24.8) comparable with 2000 and 1996 nationwide.⁵²

Figure 8: Householder by Sex in Utah and the United States, 1940 to 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota (1960-1990), Decennial census (2000, 2010), 2019 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Between 2000 and 2014, the mean age for women at first birth in Utah increased from 24.9 years to 26.3 years.⁵³ Utah is following the national trend of women giving birth at older ages than previous generations.

Householders have shifted

Households led by women have increased both nationally and in Utah since 1940. While Utah and the United States had similar shares of women-led households in 1940 and 1950, between 1960 and 1980 Utah's share was reflective of national shares in the previous decade. In 1940, 14.3% of Utah households had a woman head of household. The share steadily increased between 1940 and 2000, with a dramatic increase in 2010.

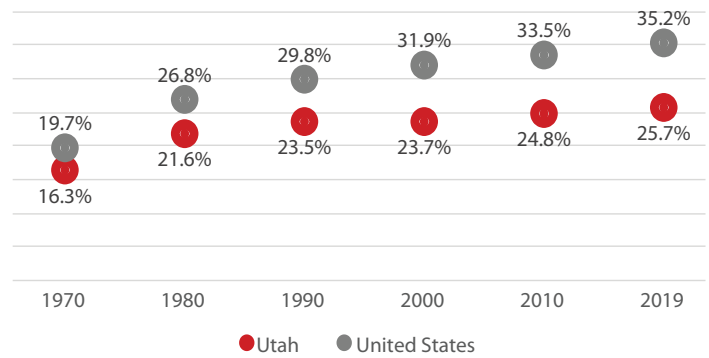
Until 1980, men were identified as the householder in married-couple households, leaving women to be the head of household only if a single parent or living alone. From 1980 to 2000, the gap between women-led households in Utah and the U.S. slowly increased from 7 to 9 percentage points. In 2010, the difference reduced to 6 percentage points and the most recent data indicates an even smaller gap, with women leading 46.2% of households in Utah compared with 49.7% nationally. In Utah's married-couple households, the share of women identifying as the head of household has increased from 7% in 1980 to over 50% in the most recent available data.⁵⁴

Nonfamily households have increased over time

Since the 1980 census, Utah has had the lowest share of nonfamily households in the nation. However, like the national trend, the share of nonfamily households has been increasing since the 1970s. While nationally the share increased from nearly one in five households being nonfamily in 1970 to over one in three by 2019, in Utah, the share increased from one in six households in 1970 to one in four by 2019.

One-person households are the most common type of nonfamily household, which impacts the average household size.⁵⁵ Between 1950 and 2000, the share of one-person

Figure 9: Nonfamily Households as a Share of Total Households in Utah and the United States, 1970 to 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, 2019 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates

households grew the most of all household types in the United States.⁵⁶ This share has continued increasing, with 28% of households in 2019 being home to one person.⁵⁶

In every state except Utah, at least 20% of households were one-person by 2000, when 18% of Utah households were people living alone.⁵⁷ That does not mean that Utah's share of one-person households was not increasing. Between 1940 and 2010, the addition of over 150,000 one-person households was responsible for 20% of overall household growth. By 2019, 19.2% of households were one-person.

Single person households in Utah and the United States have similar characteristics. In the most recent data for both geographies, the women lead the majority of single-person households (55% for both). Men between ages 15 and 64 are the largest share of one-person householders (33% in Utah and 32% nationally), followed by women in the same age group (28% for both).

Conclusion

As the population in Utah has changed over time, so have households. Households are the foundation of communities. In whatever form they take, households and families provide the most basic support for births, childrearing, and mutual support essential to sustaining our lives. Estimates indicate that there are over one million households across the state – increasing by over 725,000 in the 50 years since 1970.

While Utah households have maintained the status of being larger than the nation for the past several decades, the characteristics of living arrangements of Utah households are changing. These shifts reflect broader changes occurring throughout all sectors in Utah. A more diversified economy that is attractive to outsiders has increased immigration. That immigration changes the racial, ethnic, and cultural makeup of the population. These shifts occur simultaneously with broader societal shifts as younger generations come of age.

Heads of households are older and are more likely to be women than in prior decades. The trademark Utah large family with many children is no longer reflective of the majority of households. The

share of nonfamily households is increasing while the share of households with children is decreasing. Newcomers to Utah have unique household composition compared with those who have lived in the state for a longer time.

These shifts occurred earlier nationwide, with Utah following a few decades later. Utah is trending in the same direction as the nation but maintains a relative difference. Societal differences between Utah and the nation, as well as societal shifts within Utah, could provide insights into this delay.

The upcoming data from the 2020 census will provide another decennial benchmark in this story. With increasing social, cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity and the inclusion of additional types of households and families, new spaces are emerging for a new chapter in Utah's household history.

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	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
State	25.1	22.9	23.1	24.5	26.3	27.1	29.2
Urban	26.1	23.2	23.1	24.6	26.2	28.5	30.1
Rural	22.5	21.4	23.0	24.2	27.0	30.8	33.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census

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