Shifting Households: Decadal Growth and Change in Salt Lake City

More renters, fewer family households, and more people living alone continue to distinguish the capital city from the rest of the state.

February 2024
Shifting Households: Decadal Growth and Change in Salt Lake City

Analysis in Brief

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of households in Salt Lake City grew, household composition shifted, and the number of renters increased significantly.

- **Increased Growth** - Both the number of Salt Lake City housing units and households (occupied units) increased more than 13% from 2010 to 2020, exceeding more moderate growth experienced in previous decades.

- **Living Alone** - In 2020, individuals living alone accounted for nearly four in ten Salt Lake City households, a higher share than any other large city in the state.

- **Renters** - Over half (56.5%) of Salt Lake City households rent, which is true in only six other Utah cities. Adults age 35 and under make up the majority (52.7%) of Salt Lake City's renters.

- **Small Households** - Between 2010 and 2020, Salt Lake City gained 11,613 households of three people or less but lost 896 households with five or more members.

- **Same-Sex Couples** - Salt Lake City's 1,707 same-sex couple households composed only 2.0% of households city-wide but accounted for 19.7% of same-sex couple households in the state.

The 2020 census provides a new baseline for communities to understand their populations and households. This fact sheet presents highlights for Salt Lake City.
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Housing Units

This section reports housing unit and household growth and provides insights into Salt Lake City's vacancy rates.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Housing Unit:** A house, apartment, mobile home used as living quarters.

**Household:** All the people who occupy a housing unit.


**Housing Unit and Household Growth**

Between 2010 and 2020, Salt Lake City added 11,445 new housing units, increasing its housing stock by 14.2% and reflecting a boom in the construction of rental units in Salt Lake City.1

Over the same period, the city gained 9,836 new households, a 13.2% increase. The housing unit and household growth rates between 2010 and 2020 were nearly triple the modest growth rates the city experienced between 2000 and 2010 (Figure 1).

The highest number of new housing units in Salt Lake City were added in the Capitol Hill/Marmalade (C2) and Downtown (C9) tracts just east of I-15 and in the Jordan Meadows tract (W7), near the intersection of I-80 and I-215 (Figure 2). These three tracts each gained more than 1,000 housing units between 2010 and 2020.

**Occupancy and Vacancy Rates**

In 2020, residents occupied 91.5% of Salt Lake City’s housing units, while 8.5% were vacant. These rates differ slightly from 2010’s 92.3% occupancy rate, with 7.7% of units vacant.

Of the 7,820 vacant housing units in 2020, almost half (48.8%) were for rent (Table 1). Another 5.9% were for sale, and 14.2% were units intended for occasional, seasonal, or recreational use. In 2010, 1,600 fewer units were vacant, with 41.3% available for rent and 15.8% for sale. Though 214 more vacant units were intended for seasonal use in 2020 than in 2010, these units represented a similar share of vacancies citywide: 14.4%.

**Figure 1: Salt Lake City Housing Units and Households and Decadal Percent Growth, 1980-2020**


**Table 1: Vacant Housing Units in Salt Lake City by Vacancy Type, 2010 and 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy Type</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percent of Vacant Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For rent</td>
<td>2,564</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vacant*</td>
<td>1,315</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For seasonal use</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented, not occupied</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold, not occupied</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For migrant workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Vacant Units</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,211</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Other Vacant are vacant units that the owner does not want to rent or sell. Common reasons include: the unit is being renovated or repaired, is being held for settlement of an estate, is in foreclosure, or the elderly owner is living in an assisted living setting or with family members.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Demographic and Housing Estimates (DHC), U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1 (SF1)
Figure 2: Change in Salt Lake City Housing Units Between 2010 and 2020 by Census Tract

Note: Map displays 2010 census tracts—additional insights on geography and tract-to-neighborhood names available in Appendix C. A majority of the population living in tract W14 resides outside of Salt Lake City’s boundary.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Demographic and Housing Estimates (DHC), 2010 Census Summary File 1 (SF1)
Housing Tenure

In 2020, over half of Salt Lake City households (56.5%) were renter-occupied and 43.5% were owner-occupied. This homeownership rate was lower than the 69.0% rate statewide. Salt Lake City's homeownership rate decreased between 2010 and 2020, dropping from 48.4% to 43.5%, while the city's renter-occupied household rate increased from 51.6% to 56.5%. During the decade, the number of renter-occupied households in Salt Lake City increased by 9,197, far exceeding the 639 owner-occupied households added.

New developments in a handful of census tracts drove the increase in new renter-occupied households in Salt Lake City. Four tracts gained more than 900 renter-occupied households each, all west of State Street. These tracts are in: Jordan Meadows (W7), Downtown (C9), Central Ninth (C10), and Capitol Hill/Marmalade (C2) (Figure 4A). Tracts in Sugarhouse (E14), Ballpark (C19), Central City (C11, C12), and East Central (C17) also experienced sizeable increases in renter-occupied households. Owner-occupied households increased most in Central Ninth (C10), which gained over 200 homeownering households (Figure 4B).

Housing Tenure by Age

Salt Lake City householders who rent their homes tend to be younger than those who own. In 2020, less than 15% of Salt Lake City's owner-occupied householders (14.5%) were residents younger than 35. In contrast, the majority of rental households (53.7%) were led by householders younger than 35 (Figure 5).

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of Salt Lake City renting householders increased in every age group except 85 and older (Figure 6). The largest increase occurred in the 25 to 34-year-old age group, which gained 3,750 renting householders. The fastest growing group of renters, relative to its size, was householders

Figure 4A: Change in Renter-Occupied Households Between 2010 and 2020, by Salt Lake City Census Tract

Note: Map displays 2010 census tracts—additional insights on geography and tract-to-neighborhood names available in Appendix C. A majority of the population living in tract W14 resides outside of Salt Lake City’s boundary.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Demographic and Housing Estimates (DHC), 2010 Census Summary File 1 (SF1)
In 2020, homeownership rates in Salt Lake City differed based on the race or ethnicity of the householder. Householders who identified as White alone had the highest homeownership rate, 46.9%, followed by multiracial Utahns at 37.0% (Figure 7). Black or African American householders were the least likely to own their homes, with a homeownership rate of 15.1%.

Tenure by Race and Ethnicity

Salt Lake City’s population became more racially and ethnically diverse last decade, with the share of Hispanic and non-White residents increasing from 34.4% to 36.6% of the city’s total population. In 2020, non-White residents led one-quarter (24.6%) of city households compared to only 17.8% in 2010.

In 2020, homeownership rates in Salt Lake City differed based on the race or ethnicity of the householder. Householders who identified as White alone had the highest homeownership rate, 46.9%, followed by multiracial Utahns at 37.0% (Figure 7). Black or African American householders were the least likely to own their homes, with a homeownership rate of 15.1%.
Salt Lake City Household Size

Among Utah cities, Salt Lake City stands out for its high proportion of one-person households, comprising over one-third (37.1%) of households citywide (Figure 8). This high share exceeds every other medium or large city (with over 500 households) in the state.

Salt Lake City households decreased in size over the past two decades, with the share of one and two-person households growing while the percentage of three or more-person households decreased (Figure 9). In 2020, more than two-thirds of Salt Lake City’s households included only 1 or 2 people. Meanwhile, only 8.0% of Salt Lake City households had five or more people compared to 20.4% statewide.

Size and Tenure

Salt Lake City’s renting households are smaller than its owner-occupied households. In 2020, 76.7% of renter-occupied households in Salt Lake City included one or two members, compared to 61.5% of owner-occupied households.

Both owner and renter-occupied households reflected Salt Lake City’s decreasing household size last decade. Between 2010 and 2020, Salt Lake City gained 10,025 one to three-person renter-occupied households but lost 828 renter-occupied households with four or more residents (Figure 10). Similarly, among owner-occupied households, the number of households with four or fewer members increased by 1,159, while the number with five or more members decreased by 520.

The sizeable increase in 1 and 2-person households in Salt Lake City last decade did not occur uniformly across the city. Areas with the most significant increases in these small households also experienced the most intense housing unit development between 2010 and 2020 (Figure 11).
Figure 11. Change in One and Two-Person Households Added Between 2010 and 2020 by Salt Lake City Census Tract

Note: Map displays 2010 census tracts—additional insights on geography and tract-to-neighborhood names available in Appendix C.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Demographic and Housing Estimates (DHC), 2010 Census Summary File 1 (SF1)
Household Types

This section provides insights into family and non-family households, including observations related to households with children and same-sex couple households.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Family Household:** A household with two or more people, in which the householder is related to at least one household member by birth, marriage, or adoption.

**Non-Family Household:** A householder living alone (a one-person household) or sharing a home exclusively with people to whom they are not related (e.g. a roommate).

---

**Non-Family Households**

In 2020, more than half of Salt Lake City households (52.4%) were non-family households, in which a householder lives alone or with individuals who are unrelated to them. Statewide, the share of non-family households was 26.4%.

Nine of ten new households in Salt Lake City between 2010 and 2020 were non-family households (8,818 or 89.7%). More than one-third (35.1%) of these new nonfamily households reside in the four tracts bordering the east side of I-15 (Capital Hill/Marmalade (C2), Downtown (C9), Central Ninth (C10), and Ballpark (C19) (Figure 13).

---

**Figure 12. Salt Lake City Households by Type, 2000 to 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married Couple with Children</th>
<th>Single Parent with Children</th>
<th>Married Couple without Children</th>
<th>Other Family</th>
<th>Non-Family: not living alone</th>
<th>Non Family: Living Alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 13. Change in Non-Family Households Between 2010 and 2020 by Salt Lake City Census Tract**

Note: Map displays 2010 census tracts—additional insights on geography and tract-to-neighborhood names available in Appendix C.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Demographic and Housing Estimates (DHC), U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1 (SF1)
Residents living in non-family households are likely to be younger working-age adults living alone or with one other person. Residents younger than 45 lead 59.7% of non-family households, with 25 to 35-year-olds representing the largest portion of this population. 7 in 10 non-family households (70.8%) consist of one individual living alone (Figure 14). Another 21.9% of non-family households include just two individuals. Nonfamily households with two or more members grew faster than any other household type in Salt Lake City last decade, increasing 34.5% from 9,608 households to 12,921. These households represented 15.3% of city households in 2020, compared to 12.9% in 2010 (Figure 12).

**Family Households**

In 2020, for the first time, less than half of all households in Salt Lake City (47.6%) were family households (see Figure 12). Married-couple households without children made up the largest share of family households, representing one in every five city households (20.6%). Married-couple households including at least one of the householder’s own children under 18 (including adopted or stepchildren), were a much smaller share: 13.3%. These two-parent families with children have declined as a share of city households since 2000, when they represented 19.4% of Salt Lake households. Unmarried householders with one or more children under 18 (single parents) also declined, decreasing from 7.4% to 6.4% of city households between 2010 and 2020.

Overall, the number of families with children (married-couple and single-parent) decreased in 42 out of 52 census tracts in Salt Lake City last decade (Figure 15). Declines exceeding 100 families occurred in select tracts within Rose Park (W6), Westpointe (W4), Fairpark (W8), Poplar Grove (W11), and Sugarhouse (E10). Out of the ten city tracts that gained families with children, two increased by more than one hundred families: Downtown (C9) and Central Ninth (C10).
Same-Sex Couples

The 1,707 same-sex couple households in Salt Lake City represented 2.0% of total households city-wide and accounted for 19.7% of same-sex coupled households in the state. Of the 36,097 couple-led households city-wide, 95.3% were opposite-sex couples and 4.7% were same-sex couples (Figure 16). Over half (56.9%) of the same-sex couple households in Salt Lake City were led by married couples.

The Census Bureau further disaggregates same-sex couple data by the couple’s sex, revealing that male same-sex couples (59.2%) made up a larger share of Salt Lake’s same-sex couple households than female same-sex couples (40.8%). Utah’s male same-sex couples were also more highly concentrated in Salt Lake City than the state’s female same-sex couples, with 24.2% of Utah’s male same-sex couple households located in Salt Lake City compared to only 15.5% of female same-sex couple households.

Improved Measures of Coupled Households

After more than a decade of research, in 2020 the Census Bureau implemented three major improvements to address data quality issues related to the measurement of coupled households.

1. The Census Bureau added specific answer categories for: opposite-sex spouse, opposite-sex unmarried partner, same-sex spouse, and same-sex unmarried partner.
2. They created an automated check for consistency between reports of sex and relationship on the electronic questionnaire.
3. Procedures were updated for processing data when sex values did not match the reported relationship category.

The revised relationship question on the 2020 census is included to the right.

Endnote

## Appendix

### Appendix A. Change in Salt Lake City Households by Size, 2010 to 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020 Count</th>
<th>2020 Percent</th>
<th>2010 Count</th>
<th>2010 Percent</th>
<th>Change Absolute</th>
<th>Change Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>84,349</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>74,513</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>9,836</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Person Households</td>
<td>31,317</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>25,812</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>5,505</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Person Households</td>
<td>27,819</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>22,861</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>4,958</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Person Households</td>
<td>10,681</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>10,016</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Person Households</td>
<td>7,782</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>7,780</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Person Households</td>
<td>3,593</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3,957</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>-364</td>
<td>-9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Person Households</td>
<td>1,777</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1,985</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>-208</td>
<td>-10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-or-More-Person Households</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2,102</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>-722</td>
<td>-34.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Demographic and Housing Estimates (DHC), U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1 (SF1)

### Appendix B. Change in Salt Lake City Household Types, 2010 to 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020 Count</th>
<th>2020 Percent</th>
<th>2010 Count</th>
<th>2010 Percent</th>
<th>Change Absolute</th>
<th>Change Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple with Children</td>
<td>11,234</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>12,981</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>-1,747</td>
<td>-13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Parent with Children</td>
<td>5,378</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>5,514</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>-136</td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple without Children</td>
<td>17,410</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>15,259</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>2,151</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family</td>
<td>6,089</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>5,339</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Family: 2+ Persons</td>
<td>31,317</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>25,812</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>5,505</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Family: 1-Person</td>
<td>12,921</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>9,608</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>3,313</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Demographic and Housing Estimates (DHC), U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1 (SF1)

### Appendix C. Salt Lake City Community Council and Census Tract Map

Note: Community Council boundaries reflect October 2023 updates. 2010 Census tracts are shown to align with maps presented in this paper. Two tracts were split in 2020: C9 and E3. A majority of the population living in tract W14 resides outside of Salt Lake City’s boundary.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Salt Lake City GIS Hub
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