



# Housing the Extended Family

By Michela Zonta October 2016

Center for American Progress



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# Introduction and summary

Is the U.S. housing market keeping pace with demographic changes? This is a critical question for planners and policymakers who work to ensure that all American families have a decent, safe, and affordable home of their choice.

It can be misleading to attempt to answer this important question by relying solely on national statistics, which lump all households together, because today's American households are more diverse than ever and are increasingly becoming so. As an example, official statistics indicate that the average home size has increased while household size has decreased;<sup>1</sup> however, if we distinguish among different types of household composition, the picture is much more complex. The shrinking average household size is partly the result of an increasing number of individuals living alone and of couples delaying having children. In addition, what is not directly obvious from this statistic is that the number and size of other types of households has also increased. These include the extended family, a living arrangement that has been proliferating in the past few decades and has tended to grow faster than the nuclear family—married couples with single children under the age of 18—that was more common in the middle of the 20th century.

While much media attention has been focused on the rise of smaller households, less attention has been given to the growing segment of the population that is living in larger, extended families. The term “extended family” refers to the living arrangement of groups of individuals whose relationships to each other extend beyond the nuclear family. Examples of extended families include families in which adult children return to their parents' home for financial support; families that take in parents who may be widowed, ill, disabled, or in need of economic and other types of support; and families that take in the householders' siblings or other relatives of the same generation. The U.S. population living in extended families increased from 58 million in 2001 to 85 million in 2014. In 2014, extended families represented 17 percent of all households.

This report takes a closer look at these often overlooked households. To paint a more complete and accurate picture of extended family households, data were analyzed from the American Community Survey and American Housing Survey, along with data from the U.S. Census Bureau that were used to make independent calculations, which are presented throughout this report unless otherwise stated. (see Appendix)

Changes in household formation and composition, along with the increasing racial and ethnic diversity and changes in the age composition of the U.S. population, have important implications for housing. For a long time—in particular, since World War II—the physical design of housing has been mostly oriented toward the needs of the nuclear family living outside of city centers—suburban nuclear families—a family structure that peaked in the post-World War II era.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the existing housing stock is less suited to the realities of today’s modern households, particularly for the greater number of adults who live together as part of extended and multigenerational families.<sup>3</sup>

This report describes the characteristics and trends of extended families and discusses some of the housing challenges that need to be addressed in order to accommodate the housing demand of a growing number of extended families. In particular, the report illustrates how extended families differ from nuclear families and shows that there is a gap in terms of the affordable units that are available for extended families in order to meet current occupancy standards. This report takes a careful look at what is termed “underhoused” extended families, those families that would have to move to a different unit in order to meet the occupancy standard of two persons per bedroom. The number of affordable units available to these households, given the competition from other underhoused households, is insufficient. Moreover, in many metropolitan areas there is a geographic mismatch between where extended households tend to live and where the housing stock equipped with dwellings large enough to accommodate them is located.

These trends emphasize the need for policies that account for growing demographic changes. To that end, this report concludes with a series of policy recommendations that support the development and preservation of affordable housing that best suits the needs of extended families, specifically policy that:

- Encourages local jurisdictions to broaden housing code and land use regulations to support the development and legalization of accessory dwelling units

- Brings secondary units now deemed substandard to code
- Encourages the development and preservation of larger affordable units
- Preserves small rental properties
- Continues supporting homeownership
- Explores and funds pilot programs for the development of affordable flexible homes

As American households are undergoing profound demographic changes due to immigration, increased numbers of people of color, the aging of the population, and the increasing presence of the Millennial generation in urban areas, planners and policymakers need to pay attention to the housing needs of increasingly diverse households for whom the current housing stock is no longer fit. Demographic changes are already boosting demand for units that accommodate extended and multigenerational households. It is time to pay close attention to the reality of this growing segment of modern households in order to ensure equitable and inclusive access to safe and affordable housing for these families.

# A look at extended families

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## Characteristics of extended families

The term “extended family” refers to the living arrangement of groups of individuals whose relationships to each other extend beyond the nuclear family. Extended families are typically multigenerational; that is, they may include members of three or more generations. They can be found across different income groups and can take a variety of forms. Extended families live together for various reasons, both out of necessity and out of choice. Many come from cultural backgrounds in which home sharing is the norm. Sharing household space with extended family members is a common way of living throughout much of the world and a common way of getting through hard times, especially during the immigration process.

Previous studies of household extension have classified extended families based on factors such as the relationship of members to the householder, the roles of household members as hosts or guests, the voluntary or involuntary nature of the cohabitation, and the driving forces behind these shared living arrangements.<sup>4</sup> Sociologist Yoshinori Kamo’s seminal study on extended family households classified household extension as downward, upward, and horizontal.<sup>5</sup> An example of downward extension involves adult children returning to their parents’ home for financial support. Householders taking in parents who may be widowed, ill, disabled, or in need of economic or other types of support represent examples of upward household extension. Horizontal household extensions typically involve householders’ siblings or other relatives of the same generation moving in.

Cohabitation allows members of extended families to help each other financially and emotionally. Extended families are formed for various reasons, such as emergency situations, financial needs, social support, and caretaking, and these reasons tend to be reflected in the family composition and characteristics.<sup>6</sup> For example, a family may take in someone temporarily or permanently because of

immigration; a family may take in an aging parent or a disabled relative in order to provide housing, companionship, and practical support; and a family may share the home with parents and/or other relatives in order to obtain assistance with child care and household management.<sup>7</sup>

In an aging society, the shortage of affordable senior housing and affordable assisted living facilities, and the cost of care—both for aging parents and for children—as well as the wish of many seniors to age in place have fueled the intentional incorporation of seniors into their adult children’s households. As life expectancy has continued to rise, many seniors fearing they might outlive their savings opt for cohabitation with relatives.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, with rising rates of divorce, new extended family households have formed as the result of remarriages and stepparenting.<sup>9</sup> Members of extended families may decide to pool financial resources in order to live in better quality homes or neighborhoods. Sharing housing costs may address affordable housing and neighborhood safety issues.

## Household families

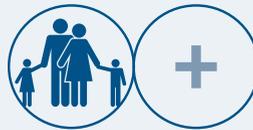
Because this report focuses on housing and relies on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the analysis presented here is based on definitions of households, families, and household relationships that are prevalent and available in federal statistical datasets. According to the Census Bureau, a household consists of everyone living in a housing unit and can contain one or more people. The householder, or head of household, is the person who owns or rents the housing unit. Furthermore, a household can be categorized as a family or a nonfam-

ily.<sup>10</sup> A family household has at least two members related by birth, marriage, or adoption, one of whom is the householder. It consists of married couples or of a person living with other relatives.<sup>11</sup> A nonfamily household can be either a person living alone or a householder who shares the housing unit only with nonrelatives—for example, boarders or roommates. The analysis presented in this report distinguishes among several types of households, as illustrated in Figure 1, and focuses specifically on nuclear and extended families.



### NUCLEAR FAMILIES

Married parents and their own unmarried children under the age of 22.



### EXTENDED FAMILIES

A group of individuals whose relationships to each other extend beyond the nuclear family.

#### Vertical



##### Downward

adult progeny:  
Primary families  
hosting unmarried adult  
progeny at least  
22 years of age



##### Downward; other

Primary families  
hosting adult children  
with their own spouses/  
partners/children



##### Upward

Primary families  
hosting aging parents/  
parents-in-law, with  
or without the parents'  
own spouses/partners

#### Horizontal



Primary families  
hosting siblings or  
other same-generation  
relatives with or  
without their own  
spouses/partners/  
children

#### Other



Multiple extension  
families: Primary  
families with vertical  
and horizontal  
extensions.

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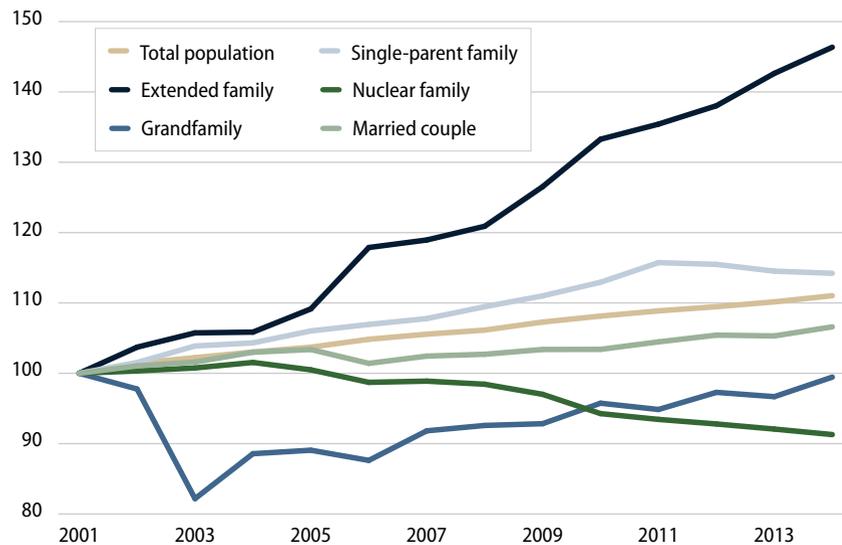
## Growth in extended families

Extended families do not represent a new pattern of living arrangements in American society; they were very common in the early decades of the 20th century. Post-WWII modernization, economic prosperity, and public policies weakened the ties and economic roles of extended families and made nuclear families and independent households the preferred norm.<sup>12</sup> In the 1940s, approximately 10 percent of families were doubled-up. By the 1970s, that percentage had dropped to 2.5 percent.<sup>13</sup> In recent decades, however, the number of extended families has increased once more.<sup>14</sup>

Much of the growth of extended families, including those with adult children still living with or moving back in with their parents, can be attributed to the Great Recession, which has played a critical role in encouraging doubling-up among those who have lost jobs, homes, income, and wealth or who have lacked the economic opportunities necessary to begin their own households.<sup>15</sup> High housing costs and the lack of jobs have increased the likelihood of many young single adults living or returning to living with their parents.<sup>16</sup> It is important to note, however, that the growth of extended families has continued in the years following the economic downturn. Much of this increase has also been fueled by continuing immigration to the United States, especially from Latin America and Asia. The greater propensity for family extension among people of color is often attributed to family cohesiveness and patterns of support and mutual aid among family members nurtured by their customs and cultures of origin.<sup>17</sup> Previous studies suggest that immigrants may view household extension as a strategy to pool financial resources and cope with a possible economic and housing disadvantage that occurs when moving to a new country.<sup>18</sup> Relatives who have migrated earlier may be able to facilitate the adjustment process of newly arrived relatives and friends in the host country through social and material support in the form of lodging, job information, loans, legal protection, and language assistance.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 2 illustrates the growth of the U.S. population by family type since 2001. Clearly, the population in extended families has grown faster than the population living in nuclear families and other types of families during the past decade and a half. The population living in extended families increased from 58 million in 2001 to 85 million in 2014, whereas the number of people living in nuclear families has continued a downward trend, decreasing from 95 million in 2001 to 87 million in 2014.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Growth of population by family type, from 2001 to 2014**



Source: Author's calculations based on data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

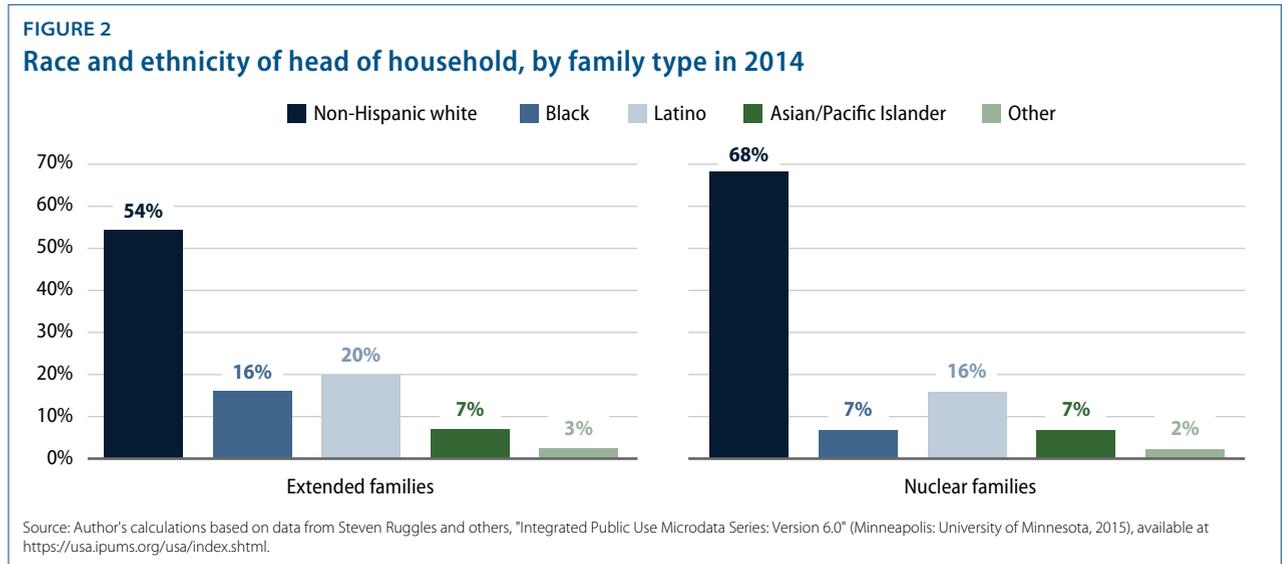
## Differences between extended families and nuclear families

Extended families are complex and differ from nuclear families in many respects. They tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse, often contain multiple generations and subfamilies, and are usually worse off economically than nuclear families. Also, extended families are more likely to concentrate in metropolitan areas—in particular, in their central cities.

### Extended families tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse than nuclear families

Extended families differ from nuclear families in terms of race and ethnicity.<sup>20</sup> People of color are present in larger proportions in extended families when compared to nuclear families. (see Figure 2) The various types of family extension differ in terms of racial and ethnic composition. (see Table A1) In particular, black households tend to be overrepresented in downward vertical families; Latino households are present in relatively larger proportions in horizontal families; and

Asian and Pacific Islander households are overrepresented in upward vertical families. Not surprisingly, the proportion of families headed by a foreign-born individual is larger among upward extended families and horizontal extended families than in other family configurations.<sup>21</sup>

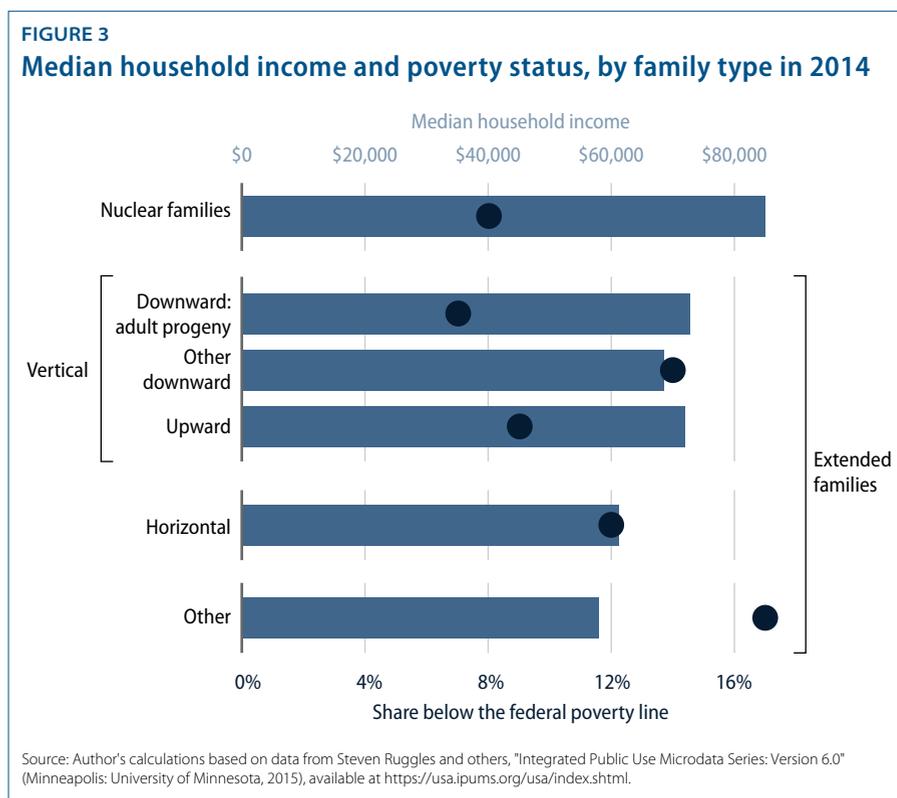


### Extended families tend to be multigenerational and often comprise one or more subfamilies

Multigenerational households—that is, households featuring three or more generations—tend to be common among extended families, especially among downward extended families. (see Table A2) Typically, in a downward extended family, the primary generation consists of grandparents hosting two generations: their adult children and their grandchildren.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, 53 percent of upward extended households are multigenerational. In these families, a primary family consisting of two generations—parents and their own children—typically hosts a third generation: the grandparents. The complexity of extended families is often augmented by the presence of multiple related subfamilies.<sup>23</sup> The presence of subfamilies is particularly common in downward extended households—83 percent of downward extended families host one or more subfamilies

## Extended families tend to be economically worse off than nuclear families

By and large, nuclear families enjoy higher household incomes and feature lower poverty rates compared with extended families. (see Table A2) Horizontal families and those with multiple extensions feature the lowest median household incomes. The income distribution across nuclear and extended families is reflected in the extent of poverty. Poverty rates are particularly pronounced among downward families and those with multiple extensions: 14 percent and 17 percent, respectively, are living below the federal poverty line.

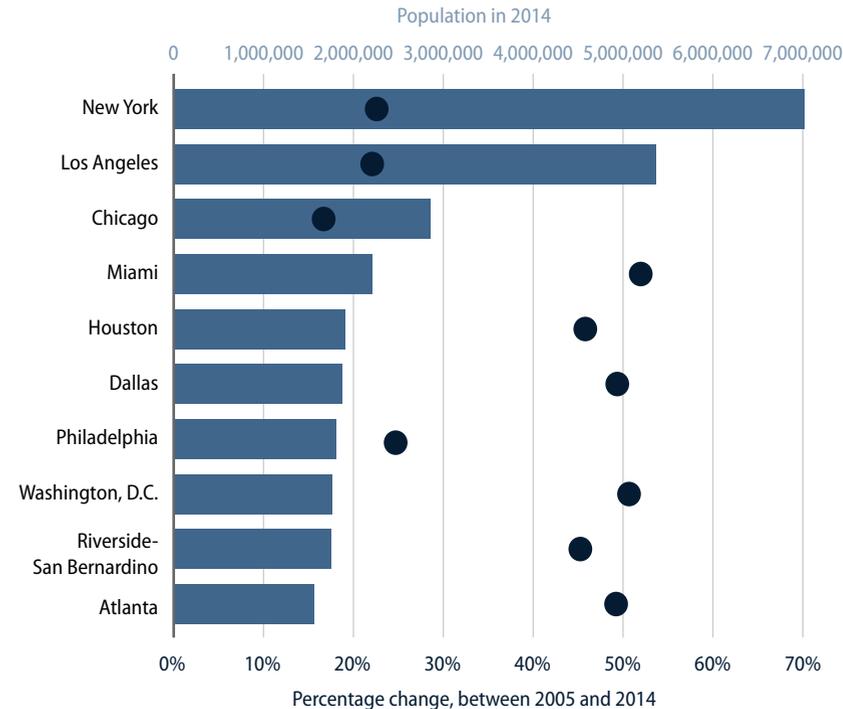


## Extended families tend to reside in metropolitan areas—in particular, in their central cities

Extended families, especially upward and horizontal extended families, have a stronger tendency than nuclear families to reside in a metropolitan area. (see Table A2) Most importantly, 13 percent of extended families reside in central cities, compared to 8 percent of nuclear families.<sup>24</sup> Figure 4 illustrates the size and percentage growth

of the population living in extended families in the 10 metropolitan areas featuring the largest concentrations of extended families. The largest concentrations of individuals living in extended families can be found in such high-cost metropolitan areas as New York, with 7 million individuals living in extended families, and Los Angeles, with 5.4 million individuals living in extended families. Not surprisingly, these two areas also host the largest concentrations of foreign-born populations, as they have historically served as major ports of entry for newcomers to the United States. Another eight metropolitan areas each feature more than 1 million individuals living in extended families: Atlanta; Chicago; Dallas; Houston; Miami; Philadelphia; Riverside-San Bernardino; and Washington, D.C. All 10 metropolitan areas have experienced a remarkable growth of the population living in extended families during the past 10 years. The growth has been particularly pronounced in Miami, Washington, Dallas, and Atlanta.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Population in extended families in selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 2005–2014**



Source: Author's calculations based on data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

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## The characteristics of extended families vary based on geographic context

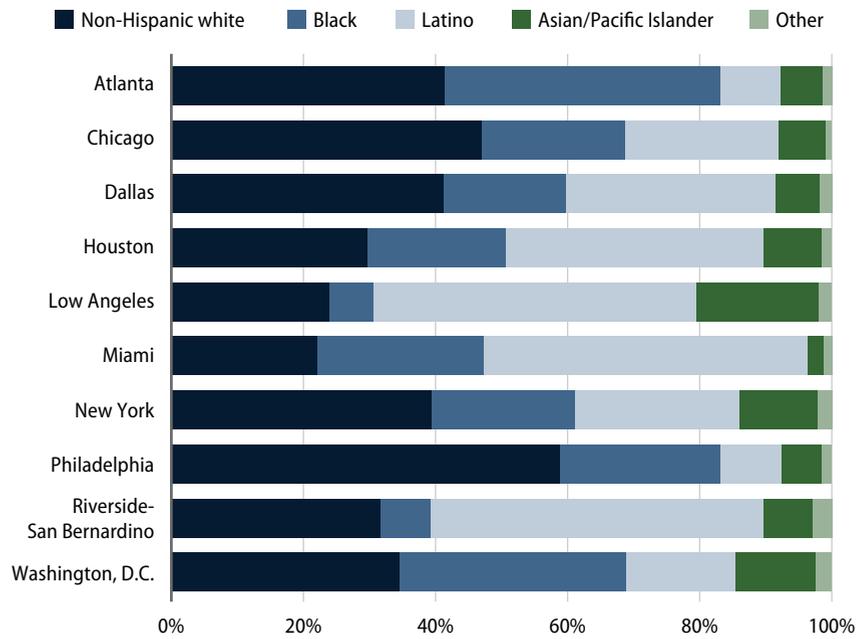
Extended families in the top 10 metropolitan areas above exhibit distinct characteristics that reflect the demographic and economic makeup of each geographic area. (see Table A3, Appendix) Downward extended families represent the most typical configuration in all 10 areas but particularly in Philadelphia and Chicago, where this type of family represents more than 60 percent of all extended families. In general, large proportions of horizontal families and families with multiple extensions are common in areas with large and growing immigrant populations. This is particularly clear in areas such as Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Dallas, Atlanta, and Houston.

In all 10 metropolitan areas—with the exception of Philadelphia—people of color are particularly prevalent among extended families. (see Figure 5) The percentage of extended families headed by blacks is particularly pronounced in Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Washington, mirroring the overall racial distribution of the population in these areas. Latino families represent large proportions of extended families in Los Angeles, Riverside-San Bernardino, and Miami, as well as in Houston, Dallas, and Chicago. The largest percentages of extended families headed by Asians and Pacific Islanders can be found in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington.

Median household income and poverty rates also vary across metropolitan areas and reflect local overall income distributions. Areas such as New York and Washington feature the highest median household incomes among extended families. It is worth noting that in all 10 areas the median household income of extended families is much lower than that of nuclear families. In Miami and Riverside-San Bernardino, poverty rates for extended families are particularly high compared to the national average—13 percent versus 10 percent nationwide.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Distribution of extended families by race and ethnicity**

In the metropolitan statistical areas with the largest presence of extended families



Source: Author's calculations based on 2012, 2013, and 2014 data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

# Housing conditions of extended families

The housing needs of the increasing number of extended families are not being fully met by the current housing market. This is clear when the housing characteristics of extended families are compared with those of nuclear families.

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## Renting is more common among extended families than among nuclear families

The large majority of both nuclear and extended families own their homes. (see Table A4) The percentage of renters, however, is much higher among horizontal extended families, at 48 percent, and families with multiple extensions, at 42 percent, than among other types of family configurations. The larger propensity to rent among extended families partly reflects their relatively larger presence in central cities, which has a higher concentration of rental properties than the suburbs, as well as their relatively lower median household income compared to nuclear families.

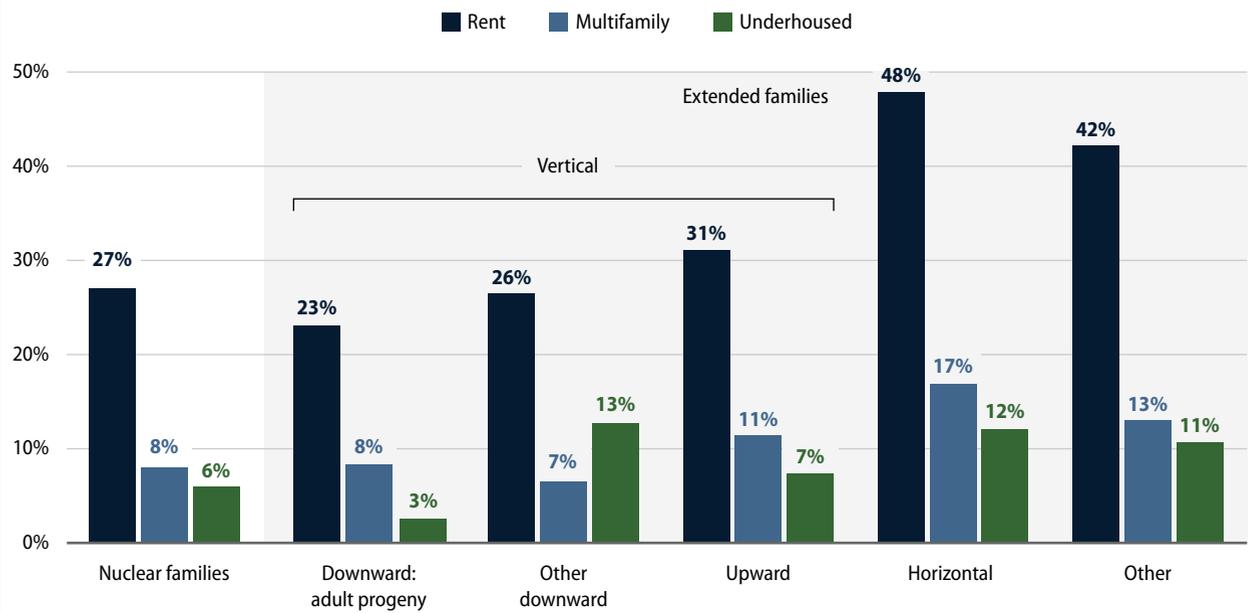
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## Larger percentages of extended families reside in multifamily and manufactured housing

While 83 percent of nuclear families reside in single-family homes, only 76 percent of extended families do so. Horizontal extended families have the lowest rates of residing in single-family homes, at 66 percent. (see Table A4) Compared with nuclear families, larger percentages of extended families occupy two-unit to four-unit structures and multifamily structures. It is worth noting that the percentage of families residing in multifamily housing is particularly pronounced among horizontal extended families. (see Figure 6) In addition, 11 percent of horizontal extended families reside in two-unit to four-unit structures. Extended families are also more likely than nuclear families to reside in manufactured housing.

FIGURE 6

Selected housing characteristics of extended and nuclear families in 2014



Source: Author's calculations based on data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

Extended families' homes tend to be older

Extended families are more likely than nuclear families to occupy older housing units. (see Table A4) Forty-four percent of extended families reside in homes built before 1970, compared with 33 percent of nuclear families. Only 14 percent of extended families reside in new housing units—those built since 2000—compared with 25 percent of nuclear families. The fact that extended families tend to occupy older units is not surprising given their large presence in central cities and their relatively lower income. In addition, many older units—such as those built in prewar years in cities such as New York and Chicago—offer more space because they were originally designed for extended families. These families often sheltered multiple generations, boarders, and/or servants.<sup>25</sup> Despite their larger size, however, older units may not feature the more adequate physical conditions and energy efficiency of newer properties.

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## Extended families tend to be underhoused

Despite their larger presence in older units that in some cases may be more spacious, certain types of extended families tend to be underhoused and tend to enjoy much less per capita space than nuclear families. A family is regarded as underhoused if its members exceed current occupancy standards of no more than two persons per bedroom. Twenty-four percent of extended families comprise four or more adults occupying the same home, compared with just 3 percent of nuclear families. Yet it is more common for nuclear families than extended families to occupy homes with a large number of bedrooms, which translates into more privacy. For instance, 26 percent of horizontal extended families occupy two-bedroom housing units, compared with only 15 percent of nuclear families.

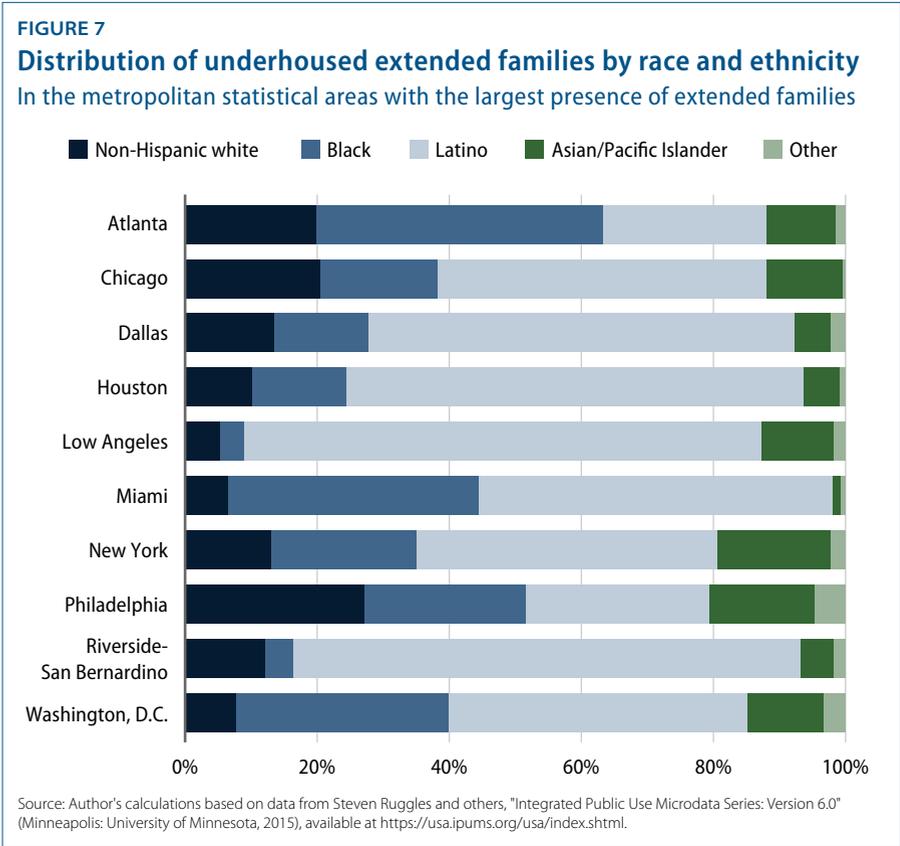
Furthermore, members of extended families tend to occupy dwellings in which per capita space is much smaller than that typically enjoyed by people in nuclear families, particularly among those living in downward and horizontal extended families. Approximately 6 percent of nuclear families are considered underhoused whereas up to 13 percent and 12 percent of downward and horizontal families, respectively, are underhoused. These families would need to move to a unit with more bedrooms in order to meet the U.S. occupancy standard of two persons per bedroom. Underhoused families tend to rent their homes and their median square footage per person drops considerably.

### Underhousing is more common among people of color, especially those living in extended families

Among both nuclear and extended families, Latino families most often experience underhousing. Forty-eight percent of underhoused extended families are Latino. Among horizontal families, this percentage increases to 56 percent. In addition, Asians and Pacific Islanders and those who are foreign-born feature large percentages among underhoused upward families—22 percent and 61 percent, respectively.

Higher underhousing rates among people of color and those who are foreign born may signal dynamics of a different nature, from cultural heritage to economic necessity. In a 1996 article, Dowell Myers, William C. Baer, and Seong-Youn Choi argued that this propensity is greater in Asian American and Latino households compared to non-Hispanic whites, suggesting that racial and ethnic groups have different notions of privacy and prioritize housing choices differently.<sup>26</sup> For

instance, some individuals may be willing to sacrifice personal privacy in exchange for the companionship and support offered by relatives. Others may feel obligated to cohabit and take care of kin because of cultural and/or religious norms and beliefs. Yet others may be willing to tolerate higher housing density in return for the opportunity to live in better quality neighborhoods and in closer proximity to services, public transportation, and ethnic resources.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, underhousing among these groups may represent an unavoidable condition stemming from pure necessity, such as a financial emergency, an abrupt relocation, and/or a shortage of available affordable housing options, especially in metropolitan areas where these types of households tend to be concentrated.



Underhousing is a problem for many extended families in metropolitan areas, especially among people of color

The percentage of underhoused extended families is higher than the national average—7 percent—in all 10 metropolitan areas with the largest concentrations of extended families with the exception of Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. In Los Angeles in particular, 19 percent of all extended families would have to move to a housing unit with more bedrooms in order to comply with the occupancy standard of two persons per bedroom. (see Table A5) In all metropolitan areas, significant disparities exist across racial and ethnic groups with regards to the proportion of extended families that can be considered underhoused. (see Figure 7) In Los Angeles and Riverside-San Bernardino, more than 75 percent of underhoused extended families are Latino. In Atlanta and Miami, black families represent large percentages of underhoused extended families—43 percent and 38 percent, respectively. Large percentages of underhoused extended families that are headed by Asians and Pacific Islanders can be found in New York and Philadelphia—17 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

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The housing conditions of extended families vary across metropolitan areas

The housing conditions of extended families vary based on the market in which they reside. As mentioned above, the largest concentrations of extended families can be found in New York and Los Angeles, two of the most expensive housing markets in the nation. In each of these areas, more than 40 percent of extended families rent their homes. (see Table A5, Appendix) In New York, 48 percent of extended families occupy a multifamily unit: 21 percent reside in two-unit to four-unit housing structures and 27 percent reside in larger multifamily structures.<sup>28</sup> Residing in two-unit to four-unit housing structures is also common among extended families living in the Chicago metropolitan area, where this type of housing is prevalent, at 15 percent. In both Los Angeles and Miami, 20 percent of extended families reside in multifamily housing. The majority of extended families living in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia reside in older housing units—those built before 1970. Well more than one-third of extended families in Los Angeles and New York occupy homes with no more than two bedrooms.

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## There is a demand-supply mismatch in housing for extended families

It is difficult to discern the reasons why so many disparities exist between the housing conditions of nuclear families and those of extended families. Compared with nuclear families, smaller proportions of extended families own their homes, reside in single-family housing, and live in newer buildings. In addition, larger proportions of extended families are underhoused, based on U.S. occupancy standards, and enjoy smaller per capita space. Underhousing could be the result of several factors stemming from either choice or necessity, as discussed above. Also, underhousing could be perceived as a problem by some, while others may not consider it as such. Nonetheless, regardless of the voluntary or involuntary nature of household extension and varying degrees of tolerance for density among families coming from different cultural backgrounds, a housing market that keeps pace with demographic and social changes should be able to accommodate the needs and housing choices of the whole population, including the growing number of extended families.

The supply of available housing units capable of accommodating underhoused extended families may not be sufficient, may not be located where these families are concentrated and desire to live, or may not be affordable. Most important, the demand-supply mismatch acquires more significance if one takes into account the fact that other types of households are underhoused and thus compete with extended families for the available units able to accommodate their household size and needs. Center for American Progress analysis of American Community Survey data indicates that 5.2 million U.S. households could have been considered underhoused in 2014. (see Table 1) Nearly 1.4 million extended families represent 26 percent of all underhoused households and would have to compete with 3.8 million other households for larger housing units.

A gap exists between the number of underhoused households and the number of vacant housing units that are for rent or for sale and could accommodate them. About 4.4 million vacant units were for sale or for rent in 2014. These units, however, included homes of different sizes. About 2.6 million of these units comprised homes with no more than two bedrooms. Furthermore, the majority of those with three or more bedrooms were for sale only. As the Joint Center for Housing Studies has illustrated, affordable rental units that can accommodate larger families are particularly difficult to find. Larger rental units are generally more expensive than smaller units and many of the larger units affordable to extremely low-income households are occupied by higher-income households.<sup>29</sup>

As discussed above, extended families feature household incomes that are typically much lower than those of nuclear families.<sup>30</sup> Lower incomes often translate into higher propensities to rent. Therefore, assuming that the 1.5 million underhoused households with five or more members, including 618,442 extended families, were to move to a rental unit with at least three bedrooms, the number of vacant units for rent with three or more bedrooms—773,000—would not be sufficient.

**TABLE 1A**  
**Housing characteristics of underhoused households, by type of household**

	Type of household		
	Extended family	Other households	Total
Underhoused	1,388,237	3,844,816	5,233,053
Five or more people in household	1,068,492	1,143,486	2,211,978
Living in a home with two bedrooms or fewer	618,442	910,353	1,528,795
<b>Total households</b>	<b>19,525,789</b>	<b>97,735,077</b>	<b>117,260,866</b>

Source: Author's calculations based on data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

**TABLE 1B**  
**Vacant housing units for rent**

Number of bedrooms	For rent
Studio and one bedroom	995,562
Two bedrooms	1,194,487
Three bedrooms	616,657
Four bedrooms and more	156,593
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,963,299</b>

Source: Author's calculations based on data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

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The demand-supply mismatch comes in different forms based on geographic area.

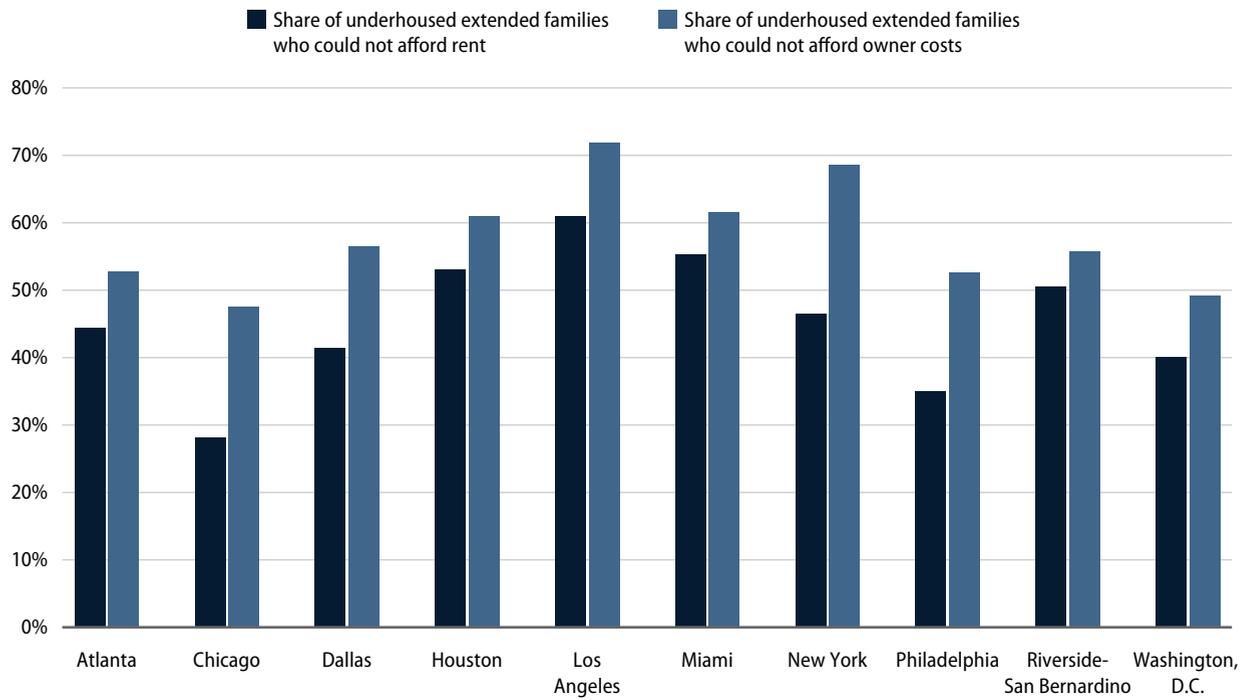
The supply of available units that can accommodate the needs of underhoused extended families varies across metropolitan areas in terms of size, affordability, and location.

### Housing stock size

Let's consider, for example, the needs of underhoused extended families with five or more members. (see Table A6, Appendix) In each of the 10 metropolitan areas with the largest concentrations of extended families, underhoused extended families of five or more individuals represent a very large percentage of all underhoused households of the same size. They represent more than half of all underhoused families in Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Riverside-San Bernardino, and Washington, D.C. Not all metropolitan areas, however, present a severe shortage of vacant units for rent or sale that could accommodate these families. Two areas, Atlanta and Philadelphia, feature a surplus of vacant units with three or more bedrooms that could accommodate all underhoused families of five or more people. In other areas, such as Chicago, Houston, Miami, and Washington, the number of vacant units with three or more bedrooms outnumber extended families but would not be sufficient to also accommodate all other underhoused families. The shortage of vacant units able to accommodate underhoused families of five or more is particularly acute in Los Angeles, New York, and, to a smaller extent, Dallas and Riverside-San Bernardino. Los Angeles and New York are high-demand and high-cost markets.

FIGURE 8

**Underhoused extended families of five and more members who could not afford a home with at least three bedrooms in 2014**



Source: Author's calculations based on 2012, 2013, and 2014 data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

## Affordability

Affordability represents a critical barrier in most metropolitan areas. Based on current average rental and owner costs for homes with three or more bedrooms, at least one-third of underhoused extended families in each of the 10 metropolitan areas with the highest concentration of extended families would not be able to afford to rent or own a larger home.<sup>31</sup> At least half of underhoused families of five individuals or more in Houston, Miami, and Riverside-San Bernardino would not be able to afford to rent a larger home. The percentage of these families is 61 percent in Los Angeles. Furthermore, the proportions of families that could not afford to purchase a home with three or more bedrooms is even higher across the board, particularly in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, and Houston. Even in areas where there are available units for underhoused extended families and other types of households, some are out of reach for families that cannot afford renting or purchasing them.

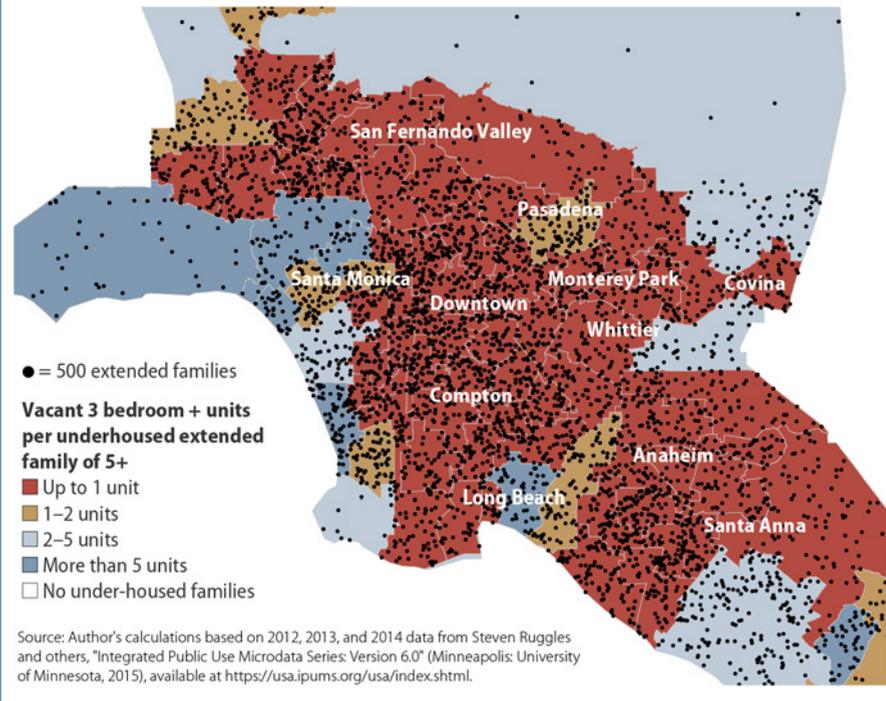
## Location

Location represents another important challenge contributing to the demand-supply mismatch in most metropolitan areas. In these areas, available vacant units tend not to be located where demand is concentrated. Atlanta and Philadelphia represent the exception. A Geographic Information Systems analysis of extended families and vacant housing stock helps illustrate the spatial mismatch between demand and supply of vacant housing units for underhoused extended families in the other eight metropolitan areas with the largest concentrations of extended families.

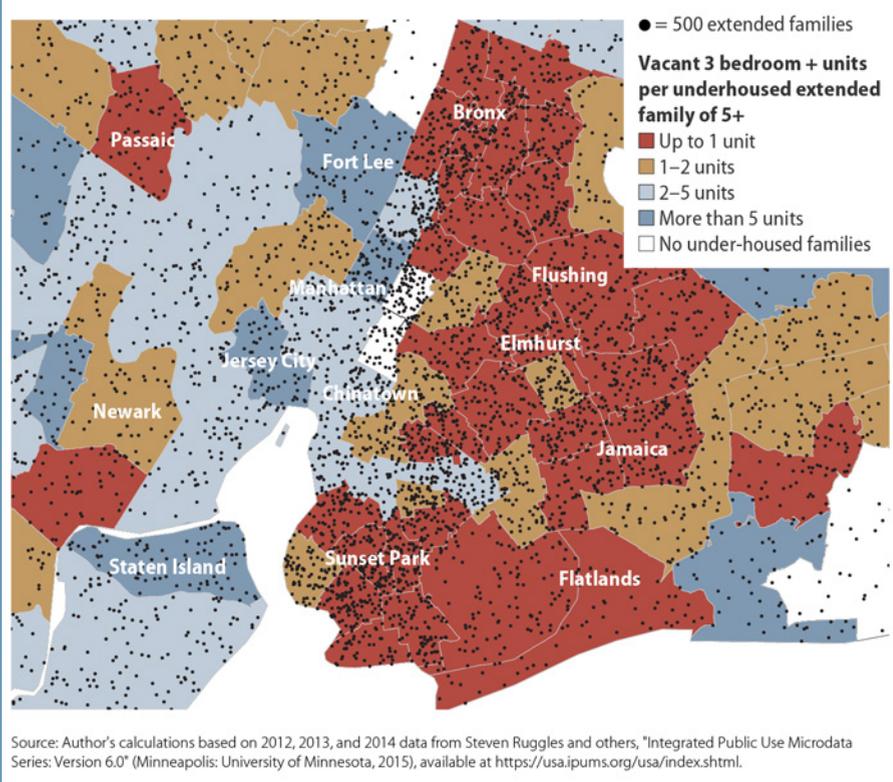
Typically, in these areas newer and larger homes—those with at least three bedrooms—tend to be located in the outskirts of the metropolitan area and in more affluent neighborhoods, whereas extended families tend to be concentrated in central neighborhoods and those featuring large numbers of people of color, those who are foreign-born, and lower-income families. The maps in the figures below illustrate the density of extended families and the supply of vacant housing units in each metropolitan area. In particular, the dots illustrate the density of extended families: Each dot represents 300 families to 600 families, depending on the metropolitan area. The density of extended families is overlaid on a graduated-color map illustrating the ratio of vacant units with three or more bedrooms to the number of underhoused extended families of five or more individuals—those who would have to move to a unit with at least three bedrooms in order to be adequately housed. The methodology and the data used for the Geographic Information Systems analysis are discussed in the Appendix.

In general, dark red denotes an acute shortage of vacant units whereas dark blue indicates a larger supply of available units. Overall, the density of underhoused extended families is more pronounced in neighborhoods where the supply of vacant units with three or more bedrooms is very limited. In Los Angeles and New York, two high-demand and high-cost areas, the spatial mismatch is particularly evident. (see Figures 9 and 10) In these areas, the majority of extended families reside in neighborhoods where there is a trivial supply of available units with three or more bedrooms.

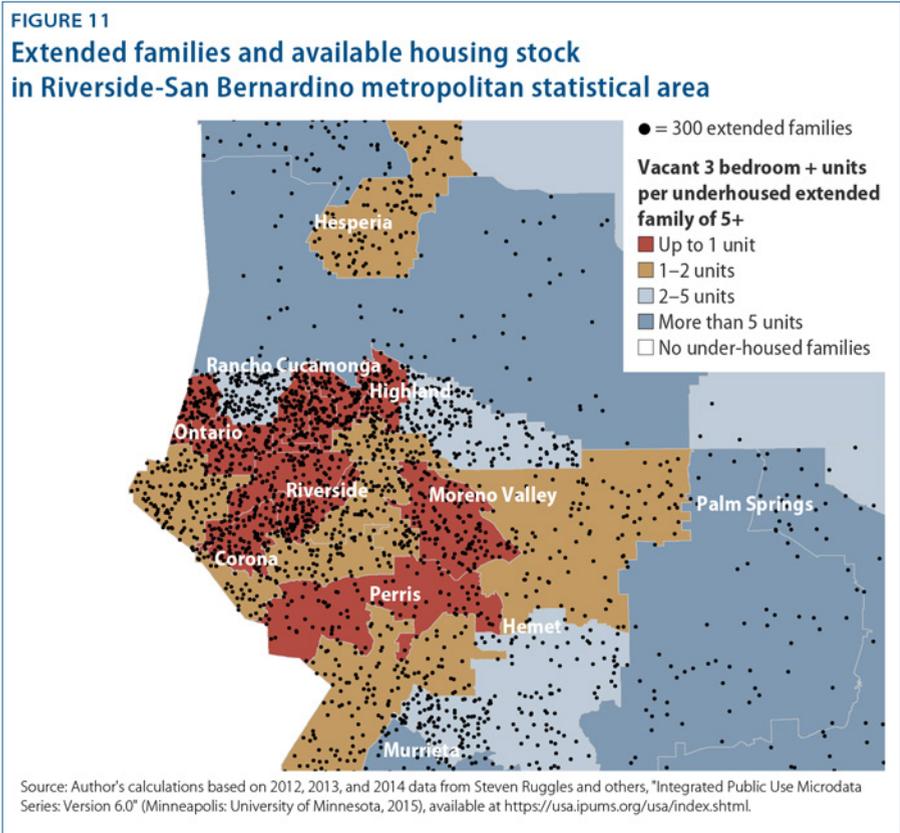
**FIGURE 9**  
**Extended families and available housing stock**  
**in Los Angeles metropolitan statistical area**



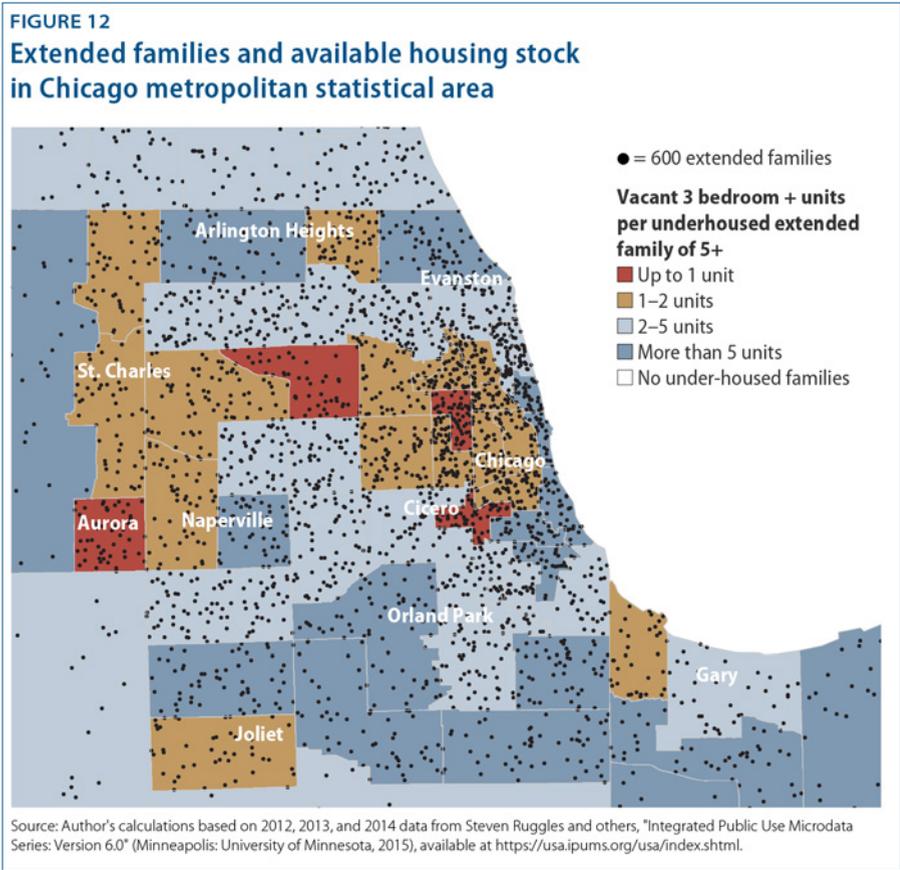
**FIGURE 10**  
**Extended families and available housing stock**  
**in New York metropolitan statistical area**



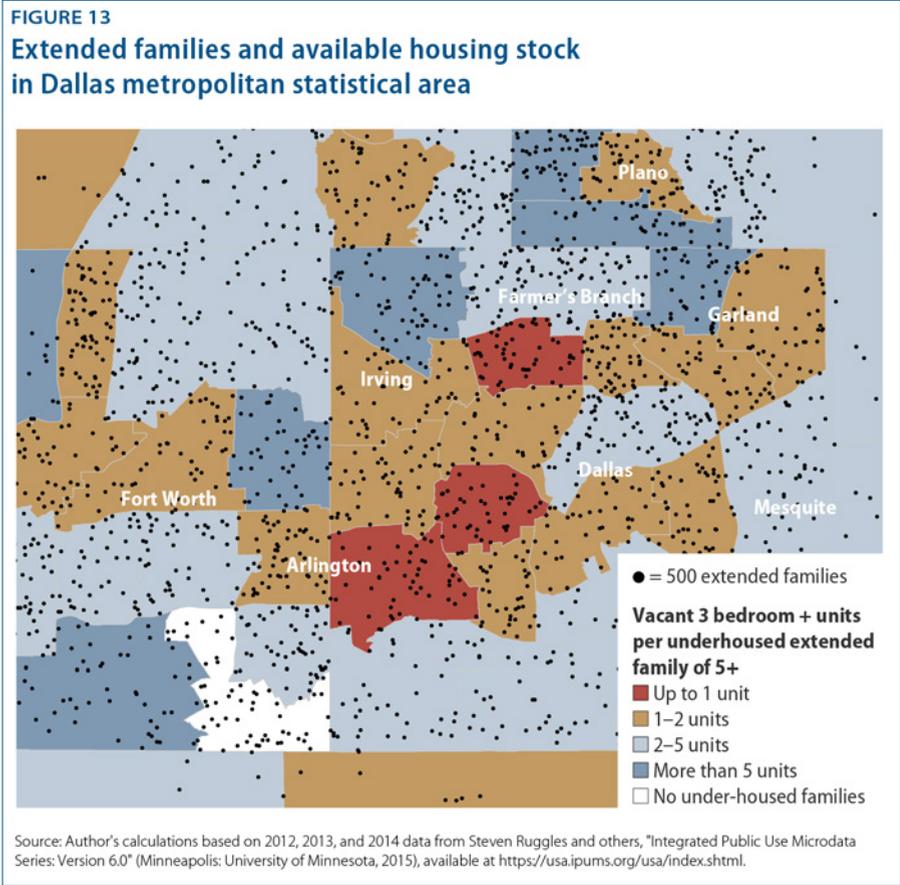
Similar patterns can be observed in the Riverside-San Bernardino metropolitan area. (see Figure 11)



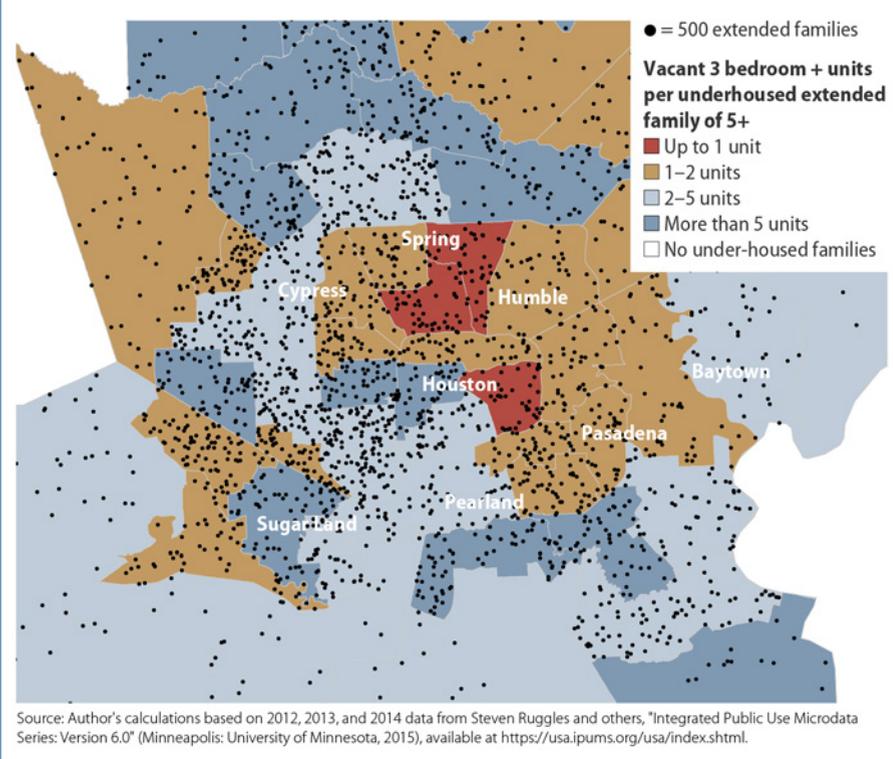
In Chicago, large concentrations of extended families can be found both in northwestern neighborhoods with large immigrant populations—predominantly Latino and Asian American—and in South Side Chicago, which features a large concentration of black families. (see Figure 12) The supply of available units with three or more bedrooms is particularly limited in the Cicero neighborhood, as well as other predominantly Latino and Asian American areas.



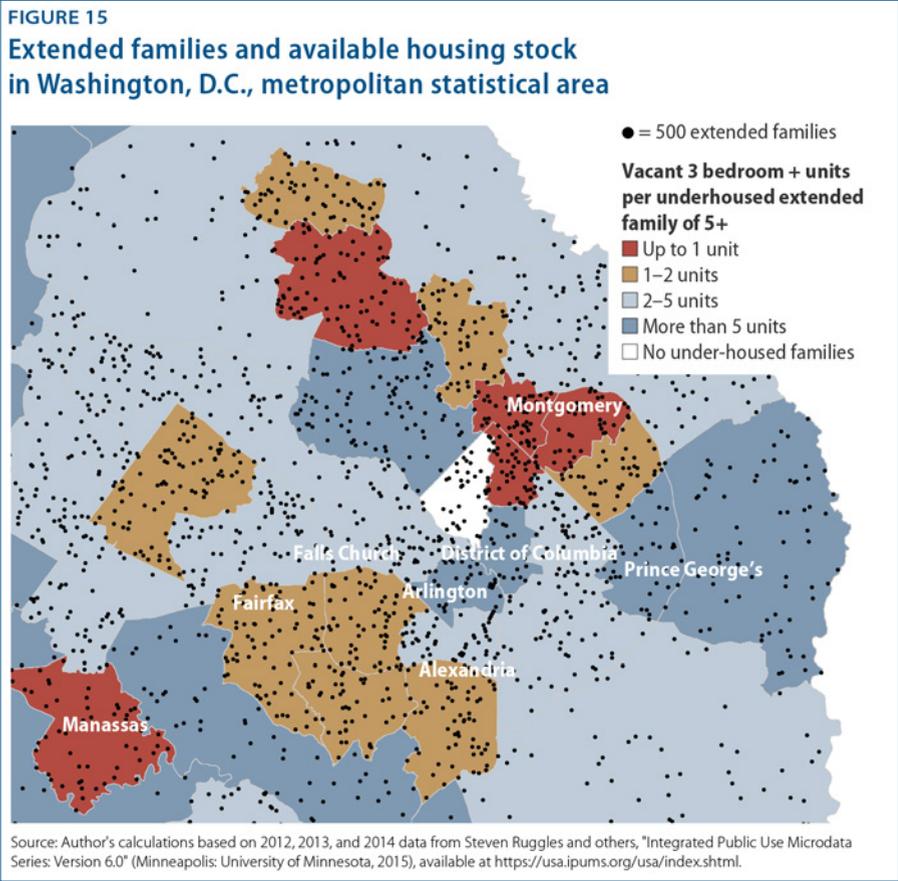
In both Dallas and Houston, extended families seem to be more geographically dispersed than in other metropolitan areas. (see Figures 13 and 14) Many extended families can be found in the suburbs. Yet the supply of available units is limited in the central parts of both areas, where immigrants and people of color tend to be concentrated.



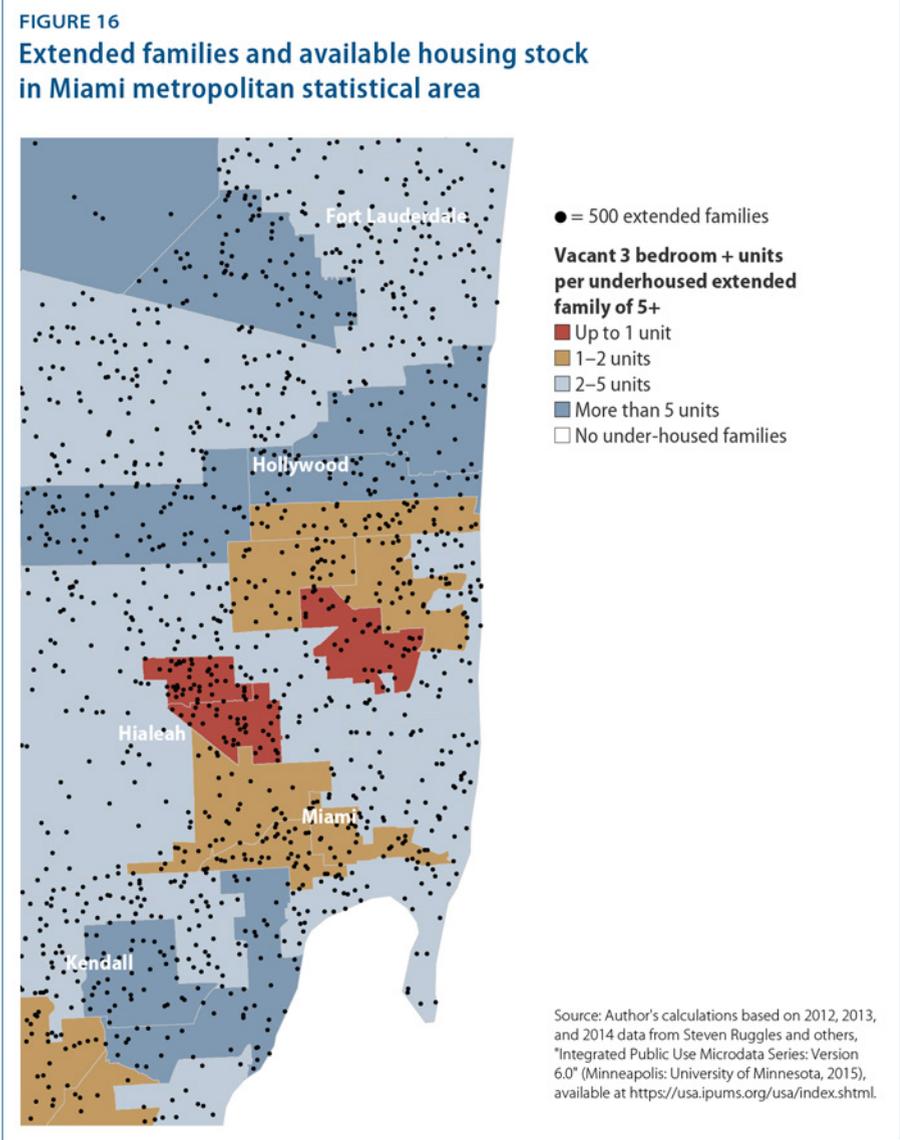
**FIGURE 14**  
**Extended families and available housing stock**  
**in Houston metropolitan statistical area**



In the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, extended families are concentrated mostly in the suburbs, particularly in Montgomery County and northern Virginia, mirroring the suburban settlement patterns of immigrants in the area. (see Figure 15) Not surprisingly, the supply of available units is particularly limited in these same areas outside of the District of Columbia.



In Miami, large clusters of extended families can be found in the areas surrounding the city of Miami—areas that are characterized by large concentrations of blacks and Latinos. (see Figure 16) In these areas, the supply of available vacant units tends to be more limited than in other parts of the metropolitan area.



# Recommendations

It is important to rethink the issues raised by the housing needs of extended households, as this type of living arrangement is becoming more common in American society due to demographic changes. More attention is being devoted by developers nationwide to the proliferation of extended and multigenerational families and several pioneering housing developments have emerged to accommodate these families. A number of homebuilders across the country, including Lennar, Maracay Homes, Standard Pacific Homes, and Franciscus Homes, have seized the opportunity to expand the production of new residential products designed specifically with the multigenerational and extended family in mind.<sup>32</sup> These large homes usually feature multiple separate entries; a separate laundry and kitchenette; a direct-entry private full bath; and a separate living room and master bedroom. Such developments, however, tend to be exclusive as they are in the very high price range. The aim, therefore, should be to rethink incentives and ways of providing a greater number of housing options in the residential landscape by making the most efficient and sustainable use of housing and infrastructure that are already in place.

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## Encourage local jurisdictions to broaden housing code and land use regulations to support the development and legalization of accessory dwelling units

Local jurisdictions should broaden their housing code and land use regulations to support the development of accessory dwelling units, which have the potential to increase the supply of affordable housing in areas featuring large concentrations of extended and multigenerational families. Accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, are independent housing units that have their own kitchens, bathrooms, and living areas, and are generally developed using underutilized space within a lot. This can be in the form of a garage, storage building, basement, backyard cottage, or an attic.<sup>33</sup> ADUs are also known as secondary units, in-laws, or granny flats.<sup>34</sup>

ADUs have been a subject of interest and controversy for several decades. Proponents usually argue that ADUs represent a flexible form of housing that might contribute to affordable housing, housing older persons, and reducing the environmental effect of housing. Those opposing ADU development have consistently voiced concerns over parking problems, crowding, and declining property values. The few existing systematic studies on ADUs published to date, however, provide support for the model.<sup>35</sup> Most important, ADUs help increase a community's housing supply and because they cost less than a new single-family home on a separate lot, they potentially represent an affordable housing option for many low- and moderate-income residents.<sup>36</sup> ADUs have the potential to meet the housing needs of different groups, including multigenerational and extended families. In particular, elderly persons who want to live close to family members or caregivers, empty nesters, and young adults find ADUs convenient and affordable. ADUs are well-suited for low-income families, including those with young children, because they tend to be relatively large, at least for a rental; provide direct access to outdoor yards; and are often located in neighborhoods well served with schools and parks.<sup>37</sup>

ADUs could be a sound solution for underhoused families whose members have the desire or necessity to live near each other. In addition to increasing the supply of affordable housing, ADUs can benefit homeowners by providing extra income that can assist in mitigating increases in the cost of living, especially in high-cost metropolitan areas and gentrifying neighborhoods. Growing demand for affordable housing has led increasing numbers of communities across the country to adopt flexible zoning codes within low-density areas in order to boost the production of affordable housing supply. A few cities have recently considered loosening restrictions on ADU development, including San Francisco;<sup>38</sup> St. Paul; Seattle;<sup>39</sup> Portland, Oregon;<sup>40</sup> Austin; and Washington, D.C.,<sup>41</sup> among others. Local jurisdictions interested in loosening restrictions on ADU development should refer to the strategies adopted by Vancouver, British Columbia, Portland, and other cities that have implemented this model so far.<sup>42</sup>

## Vancouver's laneways: An example

Vancouver, British Columbia, features the largest number of ADUs in North America.<sup>43</sup> In Vancouver, one-third of single-family houses have legal ADUs, or laneways, as they are called in the area. Vancouver has created a very permissive policy, which allows ADUs to be built on almost all single-family lots. In addition, the city has recently proposed the laneway apartment building, a model in which property owners could build mini-apartment buildings up to six stories tall facing the alleys. In this model, the units must be rentals and at least half must have two or more bedrooms, in order to make room for families. ADUs have also become common in the suburbs of Vancouver in both working-class and higher-income areas.

The city had started legalizing thousands of existing, but illegal, ADUs in the late 1980s.<sup>44</sup> Over time, ADUs became increasingly popular as Vancouver simplified the process for homeowners interested in developing these types of units. Developers can obtain a permit without seeking any approval from neighbors and owners are not required to occupy one of the units on the property. In addition, the city awards additional occupancy limits for each dwelling on a property, and provides great flexibility in terms of size, height, and placement of each ADU. Each ADU, however, has to have its own off-street parking space. Vancouver's rules apply all across the city, not just in certain so-called hot neighborhoods. Therefore, every homeowner in a single-family zone has the right to build an ADU.<sup>45</sup>

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### Bring secondary units currently deemed substandard to code

Allowing the development of new ADUs by private owners does not guarantee the addition of a significant number of new affordable units to the existing housing stock, especially if financing is a challenge. It is important that cities featuring a shortage of affordable housing and a limited supply of units able to accommodate the housing needs of extended families also consider making the best use of the existing stock. For instance, cities should consider bringing secondary units now deemed substandard to code.

In high-cost cities such as New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, the shortage of affordable rental units has spurred a wave of informal conversions of basements and garages into residential units that do not comply with city code, especially with regards to safety.<sup>46</sup> Illegal conversions typically involve the

modification of an existing one- or two-family home by adding an apartment in the basement or attic. Sometimes, several dwelling units are added to a home. In New York, this phenomenon is particularly acute among the South Asian community, which is largely concentrated in the borough of Queens. As a result of their immigration status and a lack of awareness about tenant rights, South Asian Americans have been particularly affected by municipal crackdowns on illegal conversions and speculative landlords. Unfortunately, these crackdowns have not provided any suitable alternatives. South Asian Americans, as mentioned above, often share homes to reduce costs as well as to be close to family and community. Bringing informal units to code would be a first step to provide affordable housing to these families in the short run. The longer-term solution is the development of more affordable housing that can accommodate larger family sizes, as the next recommendation discusses.

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### Encourage the development and preservation of larger affordable units

Given the variety of housing supply and demographic profiles across different municipalities, policymakers need to make the most efficient and sustainable use of housing and infrastructure that are already in place in each geographic area. Incentives should be designed to encourage the development of larger units, or units with three or more bedrooms, with programs such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, by adjusting the Qualifying Allocation Plans, or by providing density or other types of bonuses.<sup>47</sup> Development strategies should include conversion and rehabilitation strategies to put properties back into use, such as prewar apartment buildings, hotels, and other vacant properties that could be adapted to home sharing. In high-demand and high-cost areas such as Los Angeles and New York, which host the largest concentrations of extended families, mandatory inclusionary zoning should continue to be encouraged, by paying particular attention to the development of both micro-units and larger units in multifamily housing.<sup>48</sup>

In cities with a growing young and single population, including college towns, more attention should be paid to opportunities to filter large units down to larger households through the development of micro-units. Micro-units and, in some cases, expanded college dormitory housing would be helpful in freeing existing larger units that are currently occupied by households that could reside in smaller homes. Cities

such as Boston have already espoused such concepts.<sup>49</sup> The development of micro-units serves the affordable housing needs of Millennials, a growing segment of the population. Most important, it is believed that the addition of these units to the housing stock can free other units that better suit the needs of larger households.

In addition, existing single-family rental properties that are owned by private investors should be kept affordable for their tenants, including extended families, as recommended by a recent CAP report, “An Opportunity Agenda for Renters: The Case for Simultaneous Investments in Residential Mobility and Low-Income Communities.”<sup>50</sup> Finally, as home-sharing among extended families is often the result of economic necessity and a shortage of affordable housing, it is critical to boost the availability of Housing Choice vouchers for these families.

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### Preserve small rental properties

Small rental properties—buildings with two to four units—often have more room and greater flexibility than single-family homes and apartments and are more suitable for housing more than one family. Asian American realtors have noted that Asian American homebuyers often purchase duplexes or multiple apartments in order to accommodate their large families.<sup>51</sup> Two-family, three-family, and four-family properties make up 19 percent of all rental housing and an even larger share of affordable rental housing, according to the Urban Institute.<sup>52</sup> These types of homes are particularly common in areas such as Chicago and New York, where extended families are concentrated.

An additional challenge to the two-unit to four-unit property stock is that many of these units are at risk of being lost due to the foreclosure crisis. In Chicago, nearly one-third of two-unit to four-unit properties located in low-income communities were foreclosed on during the foreclosure crisis.<sup>53</sup> As for foreclosed properties in low-income neighborhoods, with limited financing available for prospective owner occupants and nonprofits to buy and rehabilitate these properties, many of which are likely in serious disrepair, it is possible that they will sit abandoned or be purchased by a cash buyer who is less likely to invest in high-quality rehabilitation.<sup>54</sup> It is important that existing two-unit to four-unit properties that were foreclosed on are put back into the market and that affordable two-unit to four-unit rentals are preserved.<sup>55</sup>

The Government-sponsored enterprises can provide leadership in the two-unit to four-unit housing market to help address the needs of underserved markets. Freddie Mac's Home Possible Mortgages are an example of the products that could be used for properties with two to four units.<sup>56</sup> Freddie Mac should continue to improve its outreach efforts in order to promote this type of mortgage product. As the Urban Institute has recommended, in order to preserve the two-unit to four-unit segment of the rental market, the government-sponsored enterprises should be encouraged to relax current loan-to-value requirements and provide counseling services for landlords.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the Federal Housing Administration, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac should be encouraged to sell the distressed loans associated with two-unit to four-unit properties to nonprofits and local governments that could raise the funds to rehabilitate them and make them available to their local communities.<sup>58</sup>

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### Continue supporting homeownership

Local markets with large concentrations of extended households feature a shortage of affordable homeownership opportunities. This is a particularly acute problem among Latino and Asian American households, which tend to be concentrated in geographic areas where the housing inventory is thin, according to Latino and Asian American realtors.<sup>59</sup> Even real estate owned properties can be out of reach of many of these households.<sup>60</sup> Credit access is also a significant problem for extended households interested in homeownership. Often, they are first-time homebuyers and do not have the financial resources for mortgage payments. Pooled resources could address this problem, but not all lenders take nonborrower income into account when calculating debt-to-income ratios. According to a Fannie Mae study, borrowers may be denied a loan due to debt-to-income constraints that underestimate their actual resources, which could include those coming from members of their extended households.<sup>61</sup> Fannie Mae has introduced a product that makes it easier for extended families to approach the mortgage market. HomeReady is a promising mortgage product that is built for today's variety of households by including, for example, greater income flexibility.<sup>62</sup> In particular, HomeReady takes nonborrower income into account during the underwriting process. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac should continue exploring and refining ways to safely facilitate lending to the extended family segment of the market.

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## Explore and fund pilot programs for the development of affordable flexible homes

More effort should be put into devising a housing stock that is more flexible and sustainable. In a continuously changing demographic context, it is difficult to exactly predict what the future needs of the population will be. The United States is already experiencing several pressures related to the shortage of affordable housing in a society where the gap between the haves and have-nots continues to widen. The Baby Boom generation may soon have to face an inadequate supply of housing that is affordable, safe, and accessible and provides access to support services for an aging population. Many seniors may move out of their suburban single-family housing units to be closer to their families and to support resources. Furthermore, growing immigrant populations coming from cultures in which home-sharing is the norm will pose more challenges to the housing market, which does not seem to be prepared to meet the needs of increasingly diverse types of households. Pilot programs should be funded to introduce innovative solutions such as flexible housing in the United States in order to address the changing housing needs of extended and multi-generational families and other types of households.

## Flexible housing

In countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom, which are experiencing demographic changes that are very similar to those experienced in the United States, some innovative types of homebuilding have been introduced in order to better accommodate growing numbers of very diverse households. Similar efforts have taken place in Germany, in order to accommodate the growing and diverse refugee population.<sup>63</sup> These efforts fall into the rubric of flexible housing—that is, housing that can adapt to the changing needs of its residents and to accommodate varying household sizes.<sup>64</sup>

Behind the notion of flexible housing is the assumption that as demographics and populations change, household size and user group needs change as well. Supporters of flexible housing argue that the present system of designing affordable housing for a specific user group—for example, efficiency and one-bedroom units for seniors or young singles—does not allow for changes that naturally occur as the residents age and evolve. In the example of independent seniors, the efficiency or one-bedroom floor plan does not take into consideration the real possibility that seniors may find themselves as the legal guardian of their grandchildren, their own aging parents, or both, or may themselves eventually need a live-in caregiver. Flexible housing encompasses different options, including the ability to modify one’s housing layout over time based on changing demographics and the potential to incorporate new technologies.<sup>65</sup>

Flexible housing provides the ability to reconfigure a home’s interior walls with minimal effort and expense in order to meet the evolving needs of the household. This building option can be applied to different types of dwellings, including single-family units. Proponents of flexible housing claim that it could be a cost-effective solution to the shortage of affordable housing in order to benefit the many thousands of families that struggle to find low-cost housing that suits their needs. In particular, the development of flexible housing may be more cost-effective than renovating older buildings and modifying existing floor plans. Flexible housing provides a viable long-term solution to the challenges of affordable housing by incorporating flexibility and sustainability into the design from the outset. Similar to tenant improvement modifications in office buildings, the structure of the flexible housing model provides for nonloadbearing interior walls. Any initial increase in cost to build the structural envelope is offset over time by the ability to modify the plan as needed rather than perform major renovations as is typical today. Additionally, flexible housing lends itself well to the current planning thrust to develop denser housing around transit hubs.<sup>66</sup>

# Conclusion

Today's American households are increasingly becoming more diverse, as a growing segment of the population is living in larger, extended families. These changes have important implications for housing, as the existing housing stock is less suited to the realities of today's modern households, particularly for the greater number of adults who live together as part of extended and multigenerational families. There is a need for policies to account for often-overlooked demographic changes and to support the development and preservation of affordable housing that best suits the needs of extended families.

## Appendix: Methodology

The results presented in this report are based on analyses of data from the American Community Survey, or ACS, and American Housing Survey, or AHS. Specifically, most descriptive statistics presented in the tables below were calculated with ACS data contained in the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.<sup>67</sup> Data were extracted for the period from 2001 to 2014.

In addition, per capita square footage was calculated with data extracted from the AHS 2013 National Public Use File.<sup>68</sup> The Geographic Information Systems analysis of extended families is based on 2012, 2013, and 2014 ACS Public Use Micro Sample data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The maps illustrate geographic distributions by 2010 Public Use Microdata Areas—statistical geographic areas defined for the dissemination of individual-level ACS data. These areas typically contain at least 100,000 people. In order to minimize estimation biases due to small Public Use Micro Sample samples for individual metropolitan areas, the Geographic Information Systems analysis pools individual-level ACS data for three consecutive years: 2012, 2013, and 2014.

**TABLE A1**  
**Selected demographic and economic characteristics of nuclear and extended families**

Characteristics	Nuclear families	Extended families				
		Vertical			Horizontal	Other
		Downward: Adult progeny	Other downward	Upward		
<b>Total families</b>	<b>21,033,534</b>	<b>8,654,936</b>	<b>2,727,199</b>	<b>2,712,632</b>	<b>2,882,389</b>	<b>2,548,633</b>
Race and ethnicity of head of household						
Non-Hispanic white	68%	63%	52%	49%	41%	47%
Black	7%	14%	19%	12%	18%	21%
Latino	16%	15%	22%	22%	29%	24%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7%	6%	4%	14%	9%	5%
Other	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Foreign born head of household	20%	20%	22%	32%	31%	25%
Linguistically isolated family	5%	2%	3%	8%	10%	7%
Median age of head of household	41	58	60	45	41	48
One generation	0%	0%	0%	0%	47%	41%
Two generations	100%	100%	11%	47%	44%	44%
Three or more generations	0%	0%	88%	53%	9%	15%
One or more subfamilies	0%	0%	83%	15%	17%	27%
Median household income	\$85,000	\$72,800	\$68,600	\$72,000	\$61,200	\$58,000
Share in poverty	8%	7%	14%	9%	12%	17%
Share in metropolitan areas	78%	81%	78%	85%	85%	79%
Share in central city, if metropolitan area	8%	12%	12%	13%	16%	14%
<b>Total population</b>	<b>86,873,951</b>	<b>31,440,766</b>	<b>15,772,479</b>	<b>12,114,897</b>	<b>13,632,587</b>	<b>11,723,540</b>

Source: Author's calculations based on data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

TABLE A2

## Demographic and economic characteristics of extended families in selected metropolitan areas

Characteristics	Atlanta	Chicago	Dallas	Houston	Los Angeles	Miami	New York	Philadelphia	Riverside-San Bernardino	Washington, D.C.
<b>Total extended families</b>	<b>346,257</b>	<b>658,362</b>	<b>412,049</b>	<b>419,773</b>	<b>1,124,809</b>	<b>444,026</b>	<b>1,651,732</b>	<b>423,618</b>	<b>340,191</b>	<b>387,636</b>
Type of extended family										
Downward	55%	61%	53%	54%	54%	51%	58%	63%	56%	53%
Upward	14%	13%	15%	15%	15%	20%	16%	13%	16%	16%
Horizontal and other	31%	26%	32%	31%	31%	29%	26%	24%	28%	31%
Race and ethnicity										
Non-Hispanic white	41%	47%	41%	30%	24%	22%	39%	59%	32%	35%
Black	42%	22%	18%	21%	7%	25%	22%	24%	8%	34%
Latino	9%	23%	32%	39%	49%	49%	25%	9%	50%	17%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6%	7%	7%	9%	18%	3%	12%	6%	8%	12%
Other	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Foreign born	21%	31%	31%	39%	58%	59%	46%	15%	41%	37%
Linguistically isolated	3%	4%	10%	10%	10%	12%	9%	4%	5%	5%
Median age of head of household	53	55	52	52	53	54	55	55	53	54
Three or more generations in the household	24%	23%	27%	27%	25%	25%	21%	21%	30%	24%
One or more subfamilies in the household	19%	18%	23%	23%	22%	18%	17%	16%	25%	19%
Median household income										
Extended families	\$64,000	\$75,000	\$71,200	\$69,000	\$70,000	\$59,000	\$81,800	\$79,000	\$68,000	\$102,960
Nuclear families	\$89,000	\$98,500	\$91,000	\$89,300	\$85,000	\$75,000	\$107,000	\$111,400	\$70,900	\$130,000
Share in poverty	11%	9%	10%	11%	11%	13%	9%	9%	13%	5%

Source: Author's calculations based on data from Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

**TABLE A3A**  
**Selected housing characteristics of nuclear and extended families**

Characteristics	Nuclear families	Extended families				
		Vertical			Horizontal	Other
		Downward: Adult progeny	Other downward	Upward		
<b>Total families</b>	<b>21,033,534</b>	<b>8,654,936</b>	<b>2,727,199</b>	<b>2,712,632</b>	<b>2,882,389</b>	<b>2,548,633</b>
Own	73%	77%	74%	69%	52%	58%
Rent	27%	23%	26%	31%	48%	42%
Single family	83%	81%	80%	76%	66%	71%
Two to four units	5%	6%	6%	8%	11%	9%
Multifamily	8%	8%	7%	11%	17%	13%
Manufactured	5%	5%	8%	5%	6%	7%
Year housing unit was built						
1949 and earlier	14%	19%	20%	17%	21%	21%
1950s to 1960s	18%	26%	26%	23%	25%	24%
1970s to 1990s	42%	44%	43%	41%	40%	41%
2000s and later	25%	12%	12%	19%	14%	15%
Average household size	4.0	3.1	4.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
Number of adults in household						
Two adults	83%	31%	18%	30%	36%	44%
Three adults	14%	48%	40%	45%	35%	36%
Four or more adults	3%	21%	42%	25%	29%	20%
Number of bedrooms						
Studio and one bedroom	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%	4%
Two bedrooms	15%	19%	14%	20%	26%	23%
Three bedrooms	45%	47%	47%	40%	41%	44%
Four or more bedrooms	38%	31%	37%	37%	27%	29%
Median square footage per person	450	503	309	400	333	338

Sources: Author's calculations based on data Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>; American Housing Survey, "AHS 2013 National Public Use File (PUF)," available at <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/2013/ahs-2013-public-use-file--puf-/ahs-2013-national-public-use-file--puf.html> (last accessed July 2016).

TABLE A3B

## Selected housing characteristics of underhoused nuclear and extended families

Characteristics	Nuclear families	Extended families				
		Vertical			Horizontal	Other
		Downward: Adult progeny	Other downward	Upward		
<b>Underhoused: More than two people per bedroom</b>	<b>1,244,588</b>	<b>222,702</b>	<b>347,530</b>	<b>198,851</b>	<b>348,540</b>	<b>270,614</b>
Share of total families	6%	3%	13%	7%	12%	11%
Rent	74%	66%	48%	62%	73%	68%
Median household income	39,000	51,600	60,300	55,000	57,850	50,000
Race and ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic white	30%	27%	31%	21%	15%	24%
Black	9%	13%	16%	12%	13%	16%
Latino	46%	46%	44%	43%	56%	50%
Asian/Pacific Islander	12%	11%	6%	21%	12%	6%
Other	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Foreign-born head of household	56%	58%	44%	61%	60%	51%
Median square footage per underhoused person	200	193	183	175	143	171

Sources: Author's calculations based on data Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>; American Housing Survey, "AHS 2013 National Public Use File (PUF)," available at <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/2013/ahs-2013-public-use-file--puf/ahs-2013-national-public-use-file--puf.html> (last accessed July 2016).

TABLE A4A

Housing characteristics of extended families in selected metropolitan areas

Characteristics	Atlanta	Chicago	Dallas	Houston	Los Angeles	Miami	New York	Philadelphia	Riverside-San Bernardino	Washington, D.C.
Total extended families	346,257	658,362	412,049	419,773	1,124,809	444,026	1,651,732	423,618	340,191	387,636
Own	67%	72%	68%	68%	57%	65%	58%	77%	68%	71%
Rent	33%	28%	32%	32%	43%	35%	42%	23%	32%	29%
Single family	83%	73%	79%	78%	71%	72%	52%	88%	85%	81%
Two to four units	3%	15%	3%	2%	7%	6%	21%	6%	3%	2%
Multifamily	11%	11%	13%	15%	20%	20%	27%	5%	6%	17%
Manufactured	4%	1%	5%	5%	2%	2%	0%	1%	6%	1%
Year housing unit was built										
1949 and earlier	4%	31%	7%	6%	22%	6%	40%	32%	6%	13%
1950s to 1960s	14%	29%	22%	19%	40%	28%	33%	32%	21%	24%
1970s to 1990s	56%	32%	49%	50%	32%	54%	22%	28%	50%	47%
2000s and later	26%	8%	23%	25%	5%	13%	6%	8%	23%	16%
Average household size	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.7	3.8	3.6	4.3	3.9
Number of adults in household										
Two adults	33%	29%	31%	30%	23%	30%	28%	32%	22%	26%
Three adults	44%	42%	43%	44%	39%	43%	40%	44%	38%	43%
Four or more adults	23%	29%	26%	26%	37%	27%	32%	25%	39%	31%
Number of bedrooms										
Studio and one bedroom	2%	3%	4%	5%	9%	5%	8%	2%	3%	4%
Two bedrooms	14%	22%	18%	17%	28%	26%	26%	13%	17%	16%
Three bedrooms	43%	41%	46%	43%	36%	43%	36%	48%	38%	33%
Four or more bedrooms	42%	34%	32%	36%	26%	26%	29%	36%	42%	48%

Source: Author's calculations based on data Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

TABLE A4B

## Housing characteristics of underhoused extended families in selected metropolitan areas

Characteristics	Atlanta	Chicago	Dallas	Houston	Los Angeles	Miami	New York	Philadelphia	Riverside-San Bernardino	Washington, D.C.
<b>Underhoused: More than two persons per bedroom</b>	<b>15,279</b>	<b>44,148</b>	<b>38,694</b>	<b>37,632</b>	<b>208,317</b>	<b>37,771</b>	<b>187,401</b>	<b>16,338</b>	<b>35,786</b>	<b>24,604</b>
Share of total extended families	4%	7%	9%	9%	19%	9%	11%	4%	11%	6%
Race and ethnicity										
Non-Hispanic white	20%	20%	13%	10%	5%	6%	13%	27%	12%	8%
Black	43%	18%	14%	14%	4%	38%	22%	25%	4%	32%
Latino	25%	50%	65%	69%	78%	53%	45%	28%	77%	45%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11%	12%	5%	6%	11%	1%	17%	16%	5%	11%
Other	2%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	5%	2%	3%
Foreign-born head of household	47%	59%	58%	62%	78%	73%	76%	39%	62%	67%
Median household income	\$48,000	\$65,000	\$51,800	\$43,200	\$55,800	\$47,600	\$58,900	\$58,200	\$53,200	\$76,000
Share of total families who rent their housing unit	70%	51%	60%	62%	71%	64%	78%	51%	56%	73%

Source: Author's calculations based on data Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

TABLE A5

## Demand and supply of affordable housing for underhoused extended families in selected metropolitan areas

Characteristics	Atlanta	Chicago	Dallas	Houston	Los Angeles	Miami	New York	Philadelphia	Riverside-San Bernardino	Washington, D.C.
All underhoused households of five or more	28,607	78,402	65,946	62,617	269,723	46,505	220,421	22,794	58,997	33,390
Underhoused extended families of five or more	12,552	36,110	30,655	27,524	154,096	26,506	118,300	12,614	30,837	18,148
Share of total	44%	46%	46%	44%	57%	57%	54%	55%	52%	54%
Median household income	\$50,200	\$73,800	\$54,400	\$47,400	\$61,600	\$54,400	\$65,600	\$61,000	\$57,400	\$93,600
Vacant for sale or rent units with three or more bedrooms	44,278	48,897	29,084	30,906	21,910	28,133	60,753	33,807	19,346	21,035
Average monthly gross rent for three or more bedroom unit	\$1,163	\$1,248	\$1,227	\$1,243	\$1,820	\$1,502	\$1,519	\$1,189	\$1,457	\$1,840
Income needed to afford rent	\$46,523	\$49,905	\$49,099	\$49,725	\$72,799	\$60,071	\$60,755	\$47,556	\$58,260	\$73,600
Share of underhoused extended families who could not afford rent	44%	28%	41%	53%	61%	55%	47%	35%	50%	40%
Average monthly owner costs for three or more bedroom unit	\$1,375	\$1,755	\$1,492	\$1,431	\$2,202	\$1,675	\$2,429	\$1,630	\$1,625	\$2,174
Income needed to afford owner costs	\$54,988	\$70,206	\$59,684	\$57,240	\$88,066	\$66,998	\$97,146	\$65,189	\$65,020	\$86,960
Share of underhoused extended families who could not afford owner's costs	53%	48%	57%	61%	72%	62%	69%	53%	56%	49%

Source: Author's calculations based on data Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>.

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## About the author

**Michela Zonta** is a Senior Policy Analyst for the Housing Policy team at the Center for American Progress. She has extensive research, teaching, and consulting experience in housing and community development. She has published work on the government-sponsored enterprises, mortgage-lending practices of ethnic-owned banks in immigrant communities, jobs-housing imbalance in minority communities, residential segregation, and poverty and housing affordability. Zonta holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Milan, as well as a master's degree and a doctorate in urban planning, both from the University of California, Los Angeles.

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## Endnotes

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- 2 Postwar housing policies greatly promoted suburbanization, white flight, single-use zoning, and separation between residence and workplace. In the suburbs, nuclear families could achieve a dream of a private life in a single-family home, usually located in a safe and socio-economically homogeneous residential neighborhood. Suburban homes were larger and featured a specialization in the space inside the home, with formal social space, kitchen work space, and private upstairs rooms. Mass production building techniques contributed to the construction of houses similar in style and size to those that surrounded them. Most important, the large majority of families inhabiting suburban single-family homes were white and nuclear in structure, with fathers as breadwinners, mothers as housewives, and children reared to emulate similar roles. This was in contrast to the large number of inner-city households, which frequently consisted of extended families and often contained lodgers and boarders. Usually, urban boarders or lodgers would live with others for at least a few years. Some boarders and lodgers consisted of young, unmarried migrants but often also included whole families that would stay until they could obtain a dwelling of their own. It was common for European immigrants and African American migrants to lodge newly arrived relatives and friends until they could establish themselves. See Howard P. Chudacoff and Judith E. Smith, *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993); Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia* (New York: Vintage, 2004).
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- 7 Personal communication with Hope Atuel, Executive Director of the Asian Real Estate Association of America, and other members of AREAA, November 23, 2015.
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- 9 Scott, "Mortgage Lending and Non-Borrower Household Income."
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- 22 Not surprisingly, the typical householder in downward families tends to be older—60 years old, on average—than householders in nuclear families—41 years old, on average—and other types of extended families.
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The Center for American Progress is an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country.

## Our Values

As progressives, we believe America should be a land of boundless opportunity, where people can climb the ladder of economic mobility. We believe we owe it to future generations to protect the planet and promote peace and shared global prosperity.

And we believe an effective government can earn the trust of the American people, champion the common good over narrow self-interest, and harness the strength of our diversity.

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We develop new policy ideas, challenge the media to cover the issues that truly matter, and shape the national debate. With policy teams in major issue areas, American Progress can think creatively at the cross-section of traditional boundaries to develop ideas for policymakers that lead to real change. By employing an extensive communications and outreach effort that we adapt to a rapidly changing media landscape, we move our ideas aggressively in the national policy debate.

