

Group Quarters

Pennsylvania Transfer of Wealth Study

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Background and Introduction

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship has been retained by the [Center for Rural Pennsylvania](#) to update the Commonwealth's **Transfer of Wealth Opportunity (TOW)** analysis. Related to this project the Center has prepared a [series](#) of mini-reports focusing on unique factors that impact community TOW opportunities. This mini-report addresses residents living in **Group Quarters**.

Question and Additional Information

Don Macke – Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
don@e2mail.org – 402.323.7336 – www.energizingentrepreneurs.org

What are Group Quarters?

The U.S. Census Bureau tracks Americans by their place and type of residence. Group quarters can include:

- Adult Correctional Facilities
- Nursing Facilities including Skilled Nursing Facilities
- College and University Housing

According to the *2010 U.S. Census*, over eight million Americans were living in group quarters with nearly 2.3 million living in Adult Correctional Facilities, over 1.8 million living in Skilled Nursing Facilities and nearly 2.5 million living in College or University Housing.

Why are Group Quarters Important?

Generally speaking, persons living in group quarters have relatively low wealth and a lower prospect for estate formation. An incarcerated person has limited earning potential while in prison and reduced earning potential upon release. Persons in skilled nursing may have assets, but often spend down assets to cover costs and ultimately become dependent upon Medicare. College and university students may have significant earning potential in future years, but while living in dorms and other forms of student housing, their wealth status is typically very low. In lower population communities with group quarters, there can be a distortion in the wealth holding and TOW profiles. For these counties, we make adjustments to reflect the location of larger populations (relative to the overall population) of group quarter residents.

What Has Our Analysis Found?

The map below summarizes concentrations of group quarter residents as a percent of total county population. There are a handful of counties with very large group quarter populations relative to their total populations. Over 38% of the population in Forest County is in group quarters associated with the SCI Forest Prison in Marienville. Union County in central Pennsylvania has the second highest concentration of group quarters residents at nearly 21%, associated with Bucknell University and the U.S. Penitentiary in Lewisburg. Both Greene and Huntingdon Counties have over 10 percent of their populations in group quarters. In Greene County, there is the SCI Green Prison and Waynesburg University. In Huntingdon County, there is the SCI Huntingdon Prison and Juniata College. Concentrations in other Pennsylvania counties drop off to the Commonwealth average of 3.3% (2.7% nationally) with the lowest in Fulton County at 0.4% of total population.



Supporting Research and Sources

The source for this analysis is the [2009-2013 American Community Survey](#) (ACS), DP04 or Selected Housing Characteristics data series. We used this data series to calculate a percent of the total county population and then raked Pennsylvania's counties using that indicator.



The Center promotes and sustains the vitality of Pennsylvania's rural and small communities by sponsoring research projects to identify policy options for legislative and executive branch consideration and action; collecting data on trends and conditions to understand the diversity of rural Pennsylvania; publishing information and research results to inform and educate audiences about the diverse people and communities of rural Pennsylvania; and participating in local, state and national forums on rural issues to present and learn from best practices.

Mary Kandray Gelenser – Center for Rural Pennsylvania – 717.787.9555
gelsenrmk@rural.palegislature.us – www.rural.palegislature.us