

# County Income Patterns



Independent Fiscal Office | Research Brief | August 2019

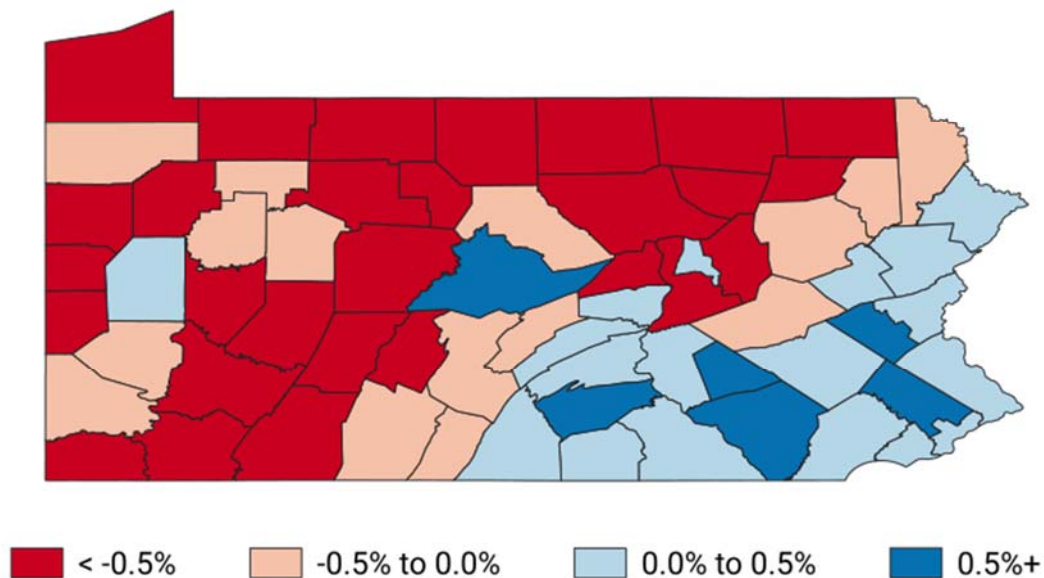
## Introduction

This research brief presents four maps that illustrate recent demographic and income trends at the county level. The brief starts with demographic trends, then presents income trends and finally combines the two metrics to analyze per capita income trends and levels for the latest two years that data are available. (See page 4 for data sources and page 6 for a reference map of county names.) Per capita income growth and levels provide policymakers with two of the best and most current measures of economic well-being at the county level. Although the metrics control for population, it should be noted that they do not control for cost of living, which varies widely across the state.

## Population Growth

From 2015 to 2017, Pennsylvania's population expanded at an average rate of 0.1 percent per annum. **Figure 1** displays general results for all counties. At the county level, population growth ranged from a high of 0.8 percent (Lehigh County) to a low of -1.8 percent (Cameron County). (See page 5 for a list of values for all counties.) While the northern and western regions of the state generally recorded contractions, the southern and southeast regions recorded moderate gains.

Figure 1  
Average Annual Population Growth: 2015 to 2017

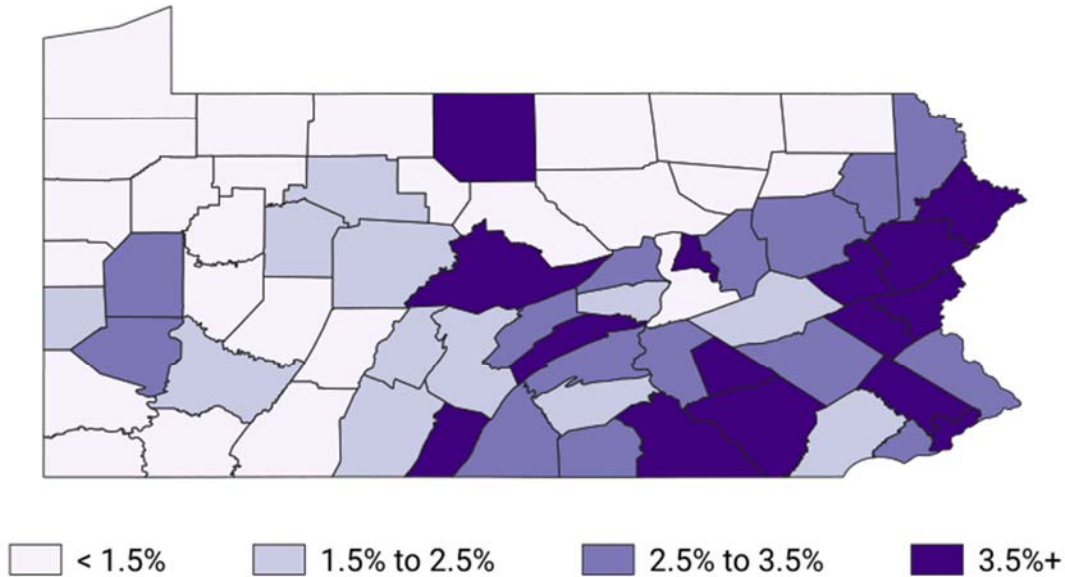


## Personal Income Growth

From 2015 to 2017, nearly all Pennsylvania counties recorded personal income gains. Personal income includes all wages and salaries, interest, dividends, business income, rents, royalties, transfer receipts (e.g., SNAP and veteran’s benefits) and retirement income (e.g., Social Security and pension contributions). The measure is published by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and is the most comprehensive measure of income available. For example, the income measure is much broader than state taxable income because it includes Social Security income and employer contributions to pension accounts. However, it does not include capital gains income.

For the entire state, total personal income grew at a weighted average rate of 3.1 percent per annum, and ranged from -0.2 percent (Cameron County) to 5.4 percent (Juniata County). (See **Figure 2.**) The statewide average rate of 3.1 percent reflects strong growth in areas that are densely populated. As shown by Figure 2, 25 counties recorded an average growth rate under 1.5 percent per annum. That rate slightly exceeded inflation, which suggests that residents of certain counties did not experience real income gains at a county-wide level. Eight of those counties were significant natural gas producers, and the material reduction in natural gas royalty payments due to lower prices likely had a significant impact on income growth. For 2015, tax data suggest that natural gas royalty income may have comprised between 10 to 15 percent of state taxable income in certain large gas producing counties.

Figure 2  
Average Annual Personal Income Growth: 2015 to 2017

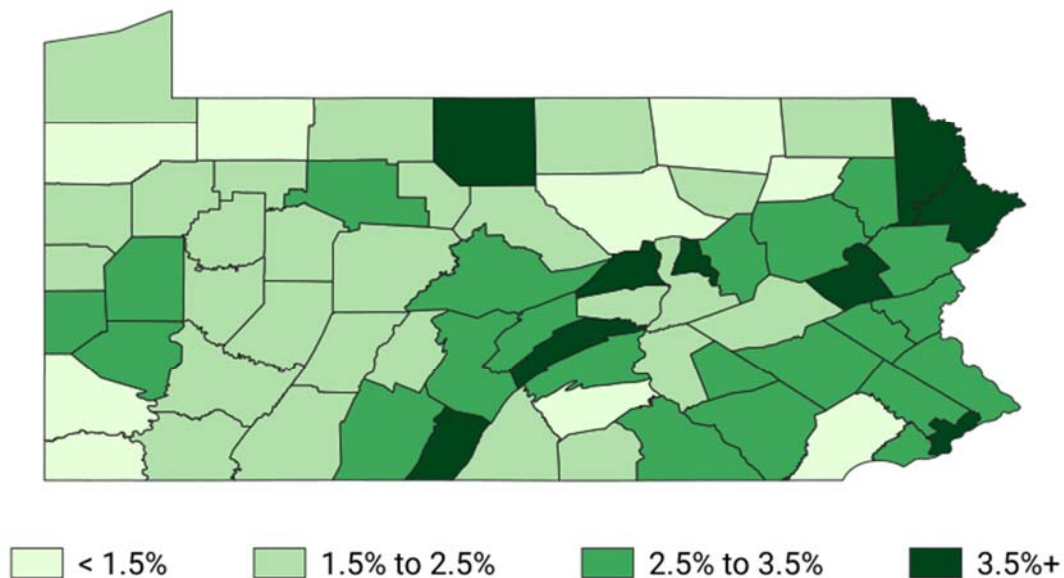


## Per Capita Personal Income Growth

Figure 2 does not control for county population gains or losses. **Figure 3** controls for population growth and displays per capita average income growth. Average per capita income growth for the state was 3.0 percent per annum. The top five counties were as follows: Juniata (5.1 percent), Potter (5.0 percent) Philadelphia (4.8 percent), Carbon (4.6 percent) and Pike (4.4 percent). The five lowest counties were: Bradford (1.0 percent), Wyoming (1.0 percent), Lycoming (1.2 percent), Crawford (1.2 percent) and Cumberland (1.3 percent).

Personal income can be decomposed into three categories: (1) resident earnings (wages, salaries and business income), (2) dividends, interest and rent and (3) transfer receipts and retirement income. For the state, per capita average annual growth rates for these income sources were as follows: earnings (2.9 percent), dividends, interest and rent (3.4 percent), transfer receipts and retirement income (2.8 percent). The moderate growth of the last category reflects the low cost of living adjustment that was applied to Social Security payments, which was offset by strong growth in the number of beneficiaries. For counties with strong income growth, all recorded per capita earnings gains that exceeded 5.0 percent per annum. By contrast, all counties reporting weak income growth reported negative earnings growth, with the exception of Cumberland County, where strong population gains diluted the per capita figures.

Figure 3  
Average Per Capita Personal Income Growth: 2015 to 2017

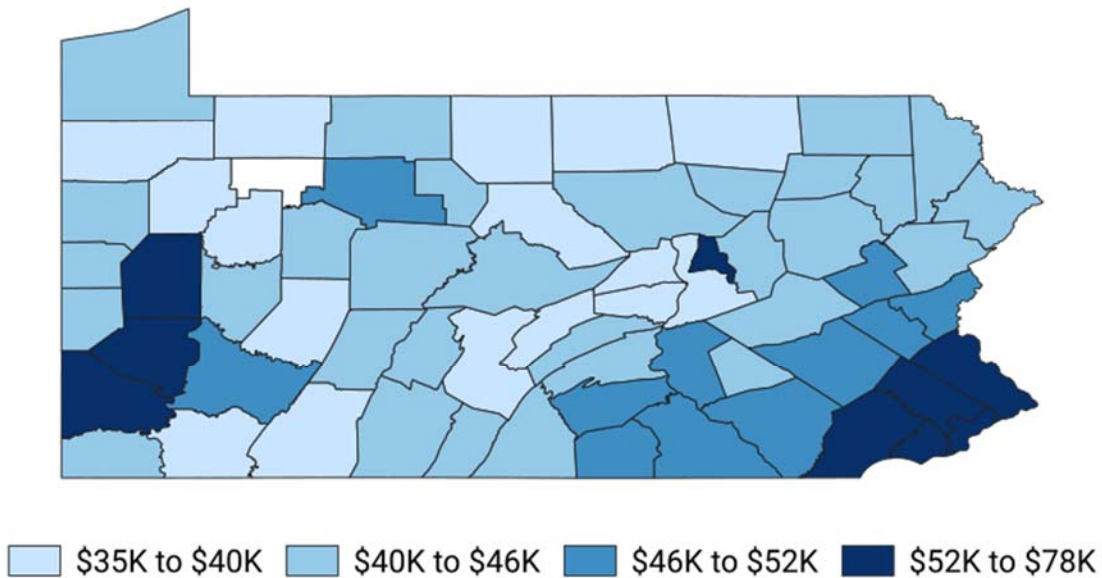


## Per Capita Personal Income Level for 2017

For 2017, statewide (weighted average) personal income per capita was \$53,300, and ranged from \$35,882 in Huntingdon County to \$77,465 in Chester County. (See **Figure 4**.) The Philadelphia and Pittsburgh metro regions generally recorded the highest levels of per capita personal income, in excess of \$55,000. By contrast, 16 counties recorded per capita income levels below \$40,000.

Two counties deserve special note. First, Forest County (filled white) was excluded from the dataset because a significant proportion (33.8 percent) of the population was institutionalized, which produced artificially low per capita income levels. Second, Montour County is a relatively small county and the median income level is similar to statewide averages. However, the Census data reveal that the county has a somewhat higher proportion of families with incomes above \$200,000 (highest Census family income group). For a county with a small population, that characteristic is sufficient to move Montour County to the highest category in Figure 4, with a per capita or average income level of \$55,000 for 2017.

Figure 4  
Per Capita Personal Income for 2017



### Data Sources

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2015-17. ([Web](#))

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Personal Income Summary, 2015-17. ([Web](#))

	Population (000s)				Personal Income (\$B)				Income Per Capita (\$000s)			
	2015	2017	AAGR	Rank	2015	2017	AAGR	Rank	2015	2017	AAGR	Rank
Adams	101.6	102.3	0.34%	13	\$4.6	\$4.8	2.81%	23	\$44.8	\$47.1	2.46%	33
Allegheny	1,230.1	1,223.0	-0.29%	31	\$67.5	\$71.1	2.64%	28	\$54.9	\$58.1	2.94%	21
Armstrong	66.6	65.6	-0.75%	52	\$2.7	\$2.7	1.38%	45	\$40.0	\$41.8	2.15%	44
Beaver	168.5	166.1	-0.71%	51	\$7.3	\$7.6	2.01%	36	\$43.4	\$45.9	2.74%	26
Bedford	48.8	48.5	-0.32%	33	\$1.9	\$1.9	2.36%	32	\$38.1	\$40.1	2.69%	29
Berks	415.3	417.9	0.31%	16	\$18.6	\$19.8	3.14%	20	\$44.7	\$47.3	2.82%	24
Blair	124.8	123.5	-0.55%	41	\$5.2	\$5.4	1.79%	38	\$41.8	\$43.8	2.35%	35
Bradford	61.5	60.9	-0.56%	42	\$2.3	\$2.4	0.40%	65	\$38.1	\$38.9	0.96%	67
Bucks	626.2	628.3	0.17%	19	\$40.7	\$43.6	3.49%	16	\$65.0	\$69.4	3.31%	12
Butler	185.9	187.1	0.33%	15	\$9.8	\$10.4	3.03%	22	\$52.7	\$55.5	2.69%	28
Cambria	135.9	133.1	-1.04%	61	\$5.3	\$5.5	1.10%	54	\$39.3	\$41.0	2.16%	43
Cameron	4.8	4.6	-1.83%	67	\$0.2	\$0.2	-0.21%	67	\$44.3	\$45.8	1.66%	55
Carbon	63.8	63.9	0.07%	22	\$2.9	\$3.1	4.64%	3	\$44.8	\$49.0	4.56%	4
Centre	160.6	162.7	0.65%	4	\$6.7	\$7.2	3.79%	9	\$41.5	\$44.2	3.12%	16
Chester	515.2	519.3	0.39%	11	\$38.8	\$40.2	1.88%	37	\$75.2	\$77.5	1.48%	59
Clarion	38.8	38.5	-0.47%	36	\$1.5	\$1.5	1.16%	53	\$38.3	\$39.5	1.64%	57
Clearfield	80.7	79.7	-0.60%	44	\$3.2	\$3.3	1.67%	41	\$39.9	\$41.8	2.28%	36
Clinton	39.4	39.0	-0.47%	37	\$1.4	\$1.5	1.23%	52	\$36.7	\$38.0	1.71%	53
Columbia	66.7	65.9	-0.57%	43	\$2.5	\$2.7	2.71%	25	\$37.8	\$40.3	3.30%	13
Crawford	86.7	86.2	-0.31%	32	\$3.2	\$3.3	0.86%	58	\$37.3	\$38.2	1.18%	64
Cumberland	246.2	250.1	0.77%	3	\$12.4	\$12.9	2.05%	35	\$50.5	\$51.8	1.27%	63
Dauphin	273.2	275.7	0.46%	9	\$12.7	\$13.4	2.70%	26	\$46.6	\$48.7	2.23%	39
Delaware	563.7	564.7	0.09%	21	\$33.0	\$35.3	3.35%	18	\$58.6	\$62.4	3.26%	15
Elk	30.8	30.2	-0.96%	60	\$1.3	\$1.4	2.11%	34	\$43.4	\$46.1	3.10%	17
Erie	278.1	274.5	-0.64%	46	\$11.3	\$11.5	0.88%	57	\$40.6	\$41.9	1.54%	58
Fayette	133.3	131.5	-0.67%	48	\$5.1	\$5.3	1.07%	55	\$38.6	\$39.9	1.75%	52
Forest	7.4	7.3	-0.41%	34	\$0.2	\$0.2	1.24%	51	\$21.1	\$21.8	1.66%	56
Franklin	152.9	154.2	0.43%	10	\$6.4	\$6.8	2.65%	27	\$42.0	\$43.9	2.21%	41
Fulton	14.6	14.6	-0.11%	27	\$0.6	\$0.6	3.53%	14	\$38.8	\$41.7	3.64%	9
Greene	37.3	36.8	-0.76%	54	\$1.5	\$1.5	0.63%	61	\$40.0	\$41.2	1.40%	60
Huntingdon	45.6	45.5	-0.16%	29	\$1.6	\$1.6	2.49%	31	\$34.1	\$35.9	2.65%	30
Indiana	86.9	85.0	-1.11%	64	\$3.1	\$3.2	1.33%	47	\$35.4	\$37.2	2.46%	32
Jefferson	44.2	43.8	-0.49%	39	\$1.8	\$1.8	1.73%	40	\$39.7	\$41.5	2.24%	38
Juniata	24.4	24.5	0.28%	17	\$1.0	\$1.1	5.43%	1	\$39.1	\$43.2	5.13%	1
Lackawanna	211.8	210.8	-0.24%	30	\$9.1	\$9.6	2.54%	30	\$42.9	\$45.3	2.78%	25
Lancaster	536.5	542.9	0.59%	5	\$24.9	\$26.7	3.65%	11	\$46.3	\$49.2	3.04%	19
Lawrence	88.3	87.1	-0.71%	50	\$3.5	\$3.6	1.44%	43	\$39.5	\$41.3	2.16%	42
Lebanon	137.5	139.8	0.80%	2	\$5.9	\$6.4	3.92%	7	\$42.9	\$45.6	3.09%	18
Lehigh	360.5	366.5	0.83%	1	\$17.5	\$18.8	3.57%	13	\$48.6	\$51.3	2.72%	27
Luzerne	318.0	317.3	-0.11%	26	\$13.0	\$13.7	2.74%	24	\$40.8	\$43.2	2.85%	22
Lycoming	115.6	113.8	-0.76%	53	\$4.7	\$4.7	0.41%	64	\$40.4	\$41.3	1.17%	65
McKean	42.2	41.3	-1.09%	63	\$1.7	\$1.8	1.25%	49	\$40.9	\$42.9	2.37%	34
Mercer	113.7	111.8	-0.88%	56	\$4.4	\$4.5	1.24%	50	\$38.4	\$40.1	2.14%	45
Mifflin	46.4	46.4	-0.04%	25	\$1.7	\$1.7	2.55%	29	\$35.6	\$37.5	2.59%	31
Monroe	166.8	168.0	0.36%	12	\$6.4	\$6.8	3.63%	12	\$38.2	\$40.7	3.26%	14
Montgomery	817.9	826.1	0.50%	6	\$59.1	\$63.8	3.91%	8	\$72.2	\$77.2	3.40%	11
Montour	18.3	18.3	0.03%	24	\$0.9	\$1.0	3.67%	10	\$51.2	\$55.0	3.64%	8
Northampton	300.5	303.4	0.49%	7	\$14.4	\$15.6	3.98%	6	\$48.1	\$51.5	3.48%	10
Northumberland	93.0	92.0	-0.53%	40	\$3.5	\$3.6	1.43%	44	\$38.0	\$39.5	1.98%	49
Perry	45.9	46.1	0.27%	18	\$1.8	\$2.0	3.13%	21	\$40.0	\$42.3	2.85%	23
Philadelphia	1,570.5	1,580.9	0.33%	14	\$79.7	\$88.1	5.11%	2	\$50.8	\$55.7	4.77%	3
Pike	55.5	55.7	0.14%	20	\$2.3	\$2.5	4.54%	4	\$41.7	\$45.5	4.40%	5
Potter	17.0	16.8	-0.67%	47	\$0.6	\$0.7	4.34%	5	\$36.1	\$39.8	5.04%	2
Schuylkill	143.9	142.6	-0.46%	35	\$5.6	\$5.8	1.75%	39	\$38.8	\$40.6	2.21%	40
Snyder	40.7	40.8	0.07%	23	\$1.6	\$1.6	2.16%	33	\$38.3	\$39.9	2.09%	46
Somerset	75.6	74.5	-0.70%	49	\$2.9	\$2.9	1.37%	46	\$37.7	\$39.3	2.09%	47
Sullivan	6.2	6.1	-1.19%	66	\$0.3	\$0.3	0.61%	62	\$42.7	\$44.2	1.83%	51
Susquehanna	41.8	41.0	-0.94%	59	\$1.7	\$1.7	1.04%	56	\$39.9	\$41.5	1.99%	48
Tioga	41.5	40.8	-0.90%	58	\$1.6	\$1.6	0.78%	60	\$37.9	\$39.2	1.69%	54
Union	45.5	44.6	-1.04%	62	\$1.6	\$1.7	3.18%	19	\$36.1	\$39.2	4.27%	6
Venango	53.0	51.8	-1.14%	65	\$2.0	\$2.0	0.80%	59	\$38.0	\$39.5	1.97%	50
Warren	40.4	39.7	-0.89%	57	\$1.6	\$1.6	0.45%	63	\$38.7	\$39.7	1.35%	62
Washington	207.7	207.3	-0.11%	28	\$11.0	\$11.2	1.26%	48	\$52.8	\$54.2	1.37%	61
Wayne	51.7	51.2	-0.49%	38	\$2.0	\$2.1	3.41%	17	\$38.4	\$41.5	3.92%	7
Westmoreland	357.0	352.6	-0.61%	45	\$16.7	\$17.3	1.65%	42	\$46.9	\$49.0	2.28%	37
Wyoming	27.8	27.3	-0.79%	55	\$1.2	\$1.2	0.16%	66	\$41.6	\$42.4	0.96%	66
York	441.8	446.1	0.48%	8	\$19.7	\$21.2	3.52%	15	\$44.7	\$47.4	3.02%	20

## Reference Map



### **Staff Acknowledgements**

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