

# Living Arrangements in the Great Plains

*Shifting Household Composition and Living Arrangements.* The composition of households in the region is important to monitor because it provides insight into possible changes in service needs for the area. Two trends which deserve attention are changing family composition and shifts in the proportion of individuals living alone. Changes in family composition can be detected by looking at the proportion of family households relative to non-family households. Typically, family households greatly outnumber non-family households. Shifts in this pattern can have important consequences for many institutions including schools, churches, and health providers. Similarly, changes in proportion of individuals living alone may translate into greater demand on institutions, especially health and social services. This is especially true for isolated rural areas of the region.

*Household:* A household includes all persons who occupy a housing unit. A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied as separate living quarters. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

*Family Household:* A family consists of a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All persons in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family.

*Non-Family Household:* A non-family household consists of a group of unrelated persons or one person living alone.

## Highlights

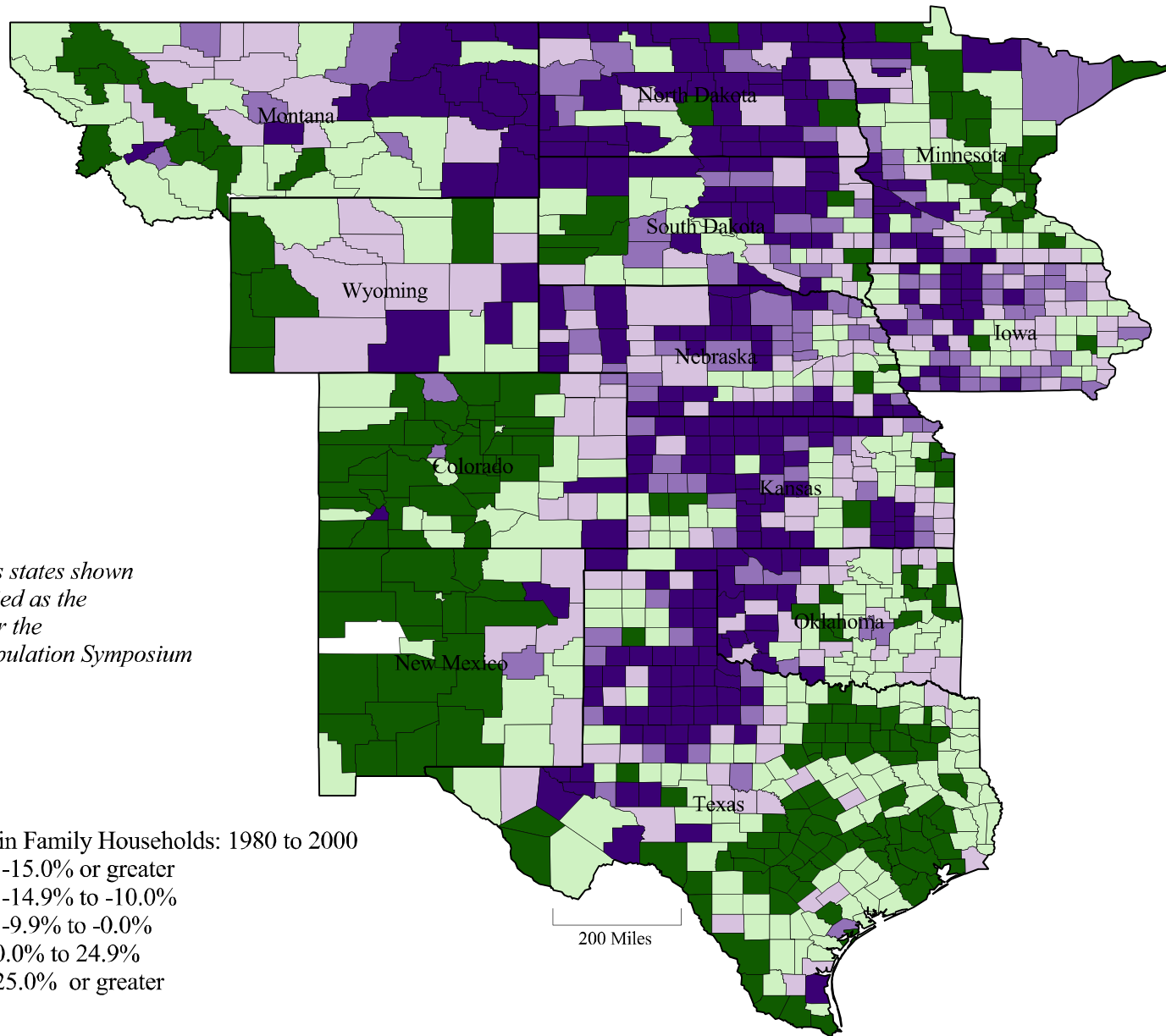
Figure 20. There has been a significant decline in the proportion of family households between 1980 and 2000, especially in the central and northern counties of the Great Plains.

Figure 21. The number of persons living alone in the region nearly doubled in the past two decades. This trend is distinctly different from what is occurring outside the Great Plains region.

Tables 19-20. During the past two decades, the proportion of family households has declined from 73.3% in 1980 to 68.7% in 2000. In contrast, the number of non-family households in the region grew 60% and they account for nearly one of every three households. Currently, more than 4.3 million households in the Great Plains are individuals living by themselves; this is an increase of 1.5 million since 1980. More than one in three of these households are single elderly. In the rural counties the single elderly are nearly 50% of all single households.

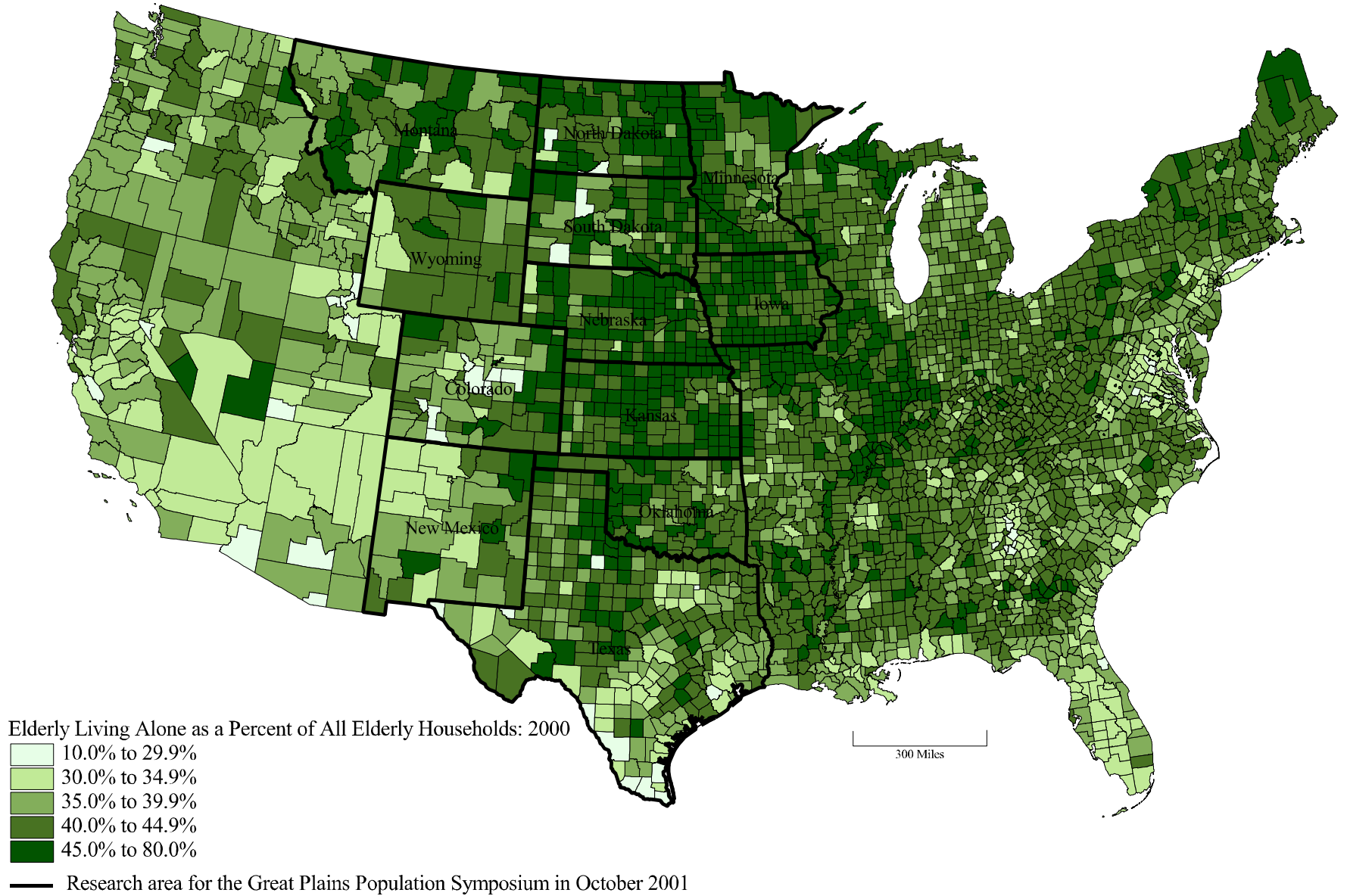
**Figure 20. Percent Change in Family Households for the Great Plains States by County: 1980 to 2000**

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980 and 2000 Decennial Censuses*



**Figure 21. Persons 65 Years and Older Living Alone as a Percent of Total Elderly Households for the U.S. by County: 2000**

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census*



**Table 19. Household Composition in the Great Plains by Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Status: 1980 to 2000**

*Note: Metropolitan Status was determined using the 1993 Beale Codes provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. For purposes of this study, the Great Plains is defined as all counties in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses*

Household Composition	All Counties		Metropolitan Counties		Non-Metropolitan Counties							
					Total		Urban population 20,000 or more		Urban population 2,500 to 19,999		Rural population less than 2,500	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Households												
1980	12,411,866	100.0	8,079,238	100.0	4,332,628	100.0	1,048,962	100.0	2,594,332	100.0	689,334	100.0
1990	14,336,427	100.0	9,841,688	100.0	4,494,739	100.0	1,116,108	100.0	2,698,601	100.0	680,030	100.0
2000	16,920,006	100.0	11,958,868	100.0	4,961,138	100.0	1,238,668	100.0	2,991,686	100.0	730,784	100.0
Family Households												
1980	9,101,666	73.3	5,867,150	72.6	3,234,516	74.7	767,439	73.2	1,948,321	75.1	518,756	75.3
1990	10,068,480	70.2	6,848,579	69.6	3,219,901	71.6	785,101	70.3	1,947,410	72.2	487,390	71.7
2000	11,618,687	68.7	8,175,828	68.4	3,442,859	69.4	841,301	67.9	2,093,940	70.0	507,618	69.5
Non-Family Households												
1980	3,310,200	26.7	2,212,088	27.4	1,098,112	25.3	281,523	26.8	646,011	24.9	170,578	24.7
1990	4,267,947	29.8	2,993,109	30.4	1,274,838	28.4	331,007	29.7	751,191	27.8	192,640	28.3
2000	5,301,319	31.3	3,783,040	31.6	1,518,279	30.6	397,367	32.1	897,746	30.0	223,166	30.5
Householders Living Alone												
1980	2,811,440	22.7	1,824,038	22.6	987,402	22.8	239,463	22.8	588,156	22.7	159,783	23.2
1990	3,576,006	24.9	2,445,307	24.8	1,130,699	25.2	277,631	24.9	675,079	25.0	177,989	26.2
2000	4,310,010	25.5	3,014,423	25.2	1,295,587	26.1	321,794	26.0	775,981	25.9	197,812	27.1
Householders 65+ Living Alone												
1980	1,086,069	8.8	572,564	7.1	513,505	11.9	103,902	9.9	317,142	12.2	92,461	13.4
1990	1,320,200	9.2	738,215	7.5	581,985	12.9	120,787	10.8	359,743	13.3	101,455	14.9
2000	1,442,843	8.5	854,574	7.1	588,269	11.9	126,334	10.2	363,385	12.1	98,550	13.5

**Table 20. Change in Household Composition in the Great Plains by Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Status: 1980 to 2000**

*Note: Metropolitan Status was determined using the 1993 Beale Codes provided by the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. For purposes of this study, the Great Plains is defined as all counties in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses*

Change in Households by Household Composition	All Counties		Metropolitan Counties		Non-Metropolitan Counties							
					Total		Urban population 20,000 or more		Urban population 2,500 to 19,999		Rural population less than 2,500	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Households												
1980 to 1990	1,924,561	15.5	1,762,450	21.8	162,111	3.7	67,146	6.4	104,269	4.0	-9,304	-1.4
1990 to 2000	2,583,579	18.0	2,117,180	21.5	466,399	10.4	122,560	11.0	293,085	10.9	50,754	7.5
1980 to 2000	4,508,140	36.3	3,879,630	48.0	628,510	14.5	189,706	18.1	397,354	15.3	41,450	6.0
Family Households												
1980 to 1990	966,814	10.6	981,429	16.7	-14,615	-0.5	17,662	2.3	-911	-0.1	-31,366	-6.1
1990 to 2000	1,550,207	15.4	1,327,249	19.4	222,958	6.9	56,200	7.2	146,530	7.5	20,228	4.2
1980 to 2000	2,517,021	27.7	2,308,678	39.4	208,343	6.4	73,862	9.6	145,619	7.5	-11,138	-2.2
Non-Family Households												
1980 to 1990	957,747	28.9	781,021	35.3	176,726	16.1	49,484	17.6	105,180	16.3	22,062	12.9
1990 to 2000	1,033,372	24.2	789,931	26.4	243,441	19.1	66,360	20.1	146,555	19.5	30,526	15.9
1980 to 2000	1,991,119	60.2	1,570,952	71.0	420,167	38.3	115,844	41.2	251,735	39.0	52,588	30.8
Householders Living Alone												
1980 to 1990	764,566	27.2	621,269	34.1	143,297	14.5	38,168	15.9	86,923	14.8	18,206	11.4
1990 to 2000	734,004	20.5	569,116	23.3	164,888	14.6	44,163	15.9	100,902	15.0	19,823	11.1
1980 to 2000	1,498,570	53.3	1,190,385	65.3	308,185	31.2	82,331	34.4	187,825	31.9	38,029	23.8
Householders 65+ Living Alone												
1980 to 1990	234,131	21.6	165,651	28.9	68,480	13.3	16,885	16.3	42,601	13.4	8,994	9.7
1990 to 2000	122,643	9.3	116,359	15.8	6,284	1.1	5,547	4.6	3,642	1.0	-2,905	-2.8
1980 to 2000	356,774	32.9	282,010	49.3	74,764	14.6	22,432	21.6	46,243	14.6	6,089	6.6