Median Household Income
Life in the Middle
Quick Start – U.S. Median Household Income

Midpoint of U.S. household incomes, ranked from bottom to top

Considered an important indicator of economic well-being

Median Household Income

$59,039 in 2016

$57,379 in 2006

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, pre-tax/transfer HH income

www.frbsf.org/education/teacher-resources/datapost
Annual Median Household Income
Real 2016 Dollars (1967-2016)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, pre-tax/transfer HH income
Inflation-adjusted

Annual Median Household Income
Real 2016 Dollars (1967-2016)

The width of the bar indicates the length of the economic recession.

Median household income rose to $58,665 in 1999.

The downward trend in median household income was accelerated by the Great Recession.

Median household income began rising in the 1980s.

Median household income set a new high of $59,039 in 2016 -- up 0.6% from the previous peak in 1999 (after adjusting for inflation).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, pre-tax/transfer HH income

www.frbsf.org/education/teacher-resources/datapost

FRBSF Education & Outreach
1. Why do you think household income is a more commonly used measure than family income? (See slide 2)
2. What percentage of households is above the median household income level? (See slide 2)
3. What was the median household income in 2007? How much higher is the median in 2016? (See slide 4)
4. How many recessions have occurred since you were born? (See slide 3)
5. How would you describe the pattern of household income right before the beginning of an economic recession? (See slide 3)
6. Based on the pattern of median household income following a recession, what direction do you expect household income to head in the future?

View an in-depth talk about income inequality on our YouTube Channel

www.frbsf.org/education/teacher-resources/datapost