



The Upper Uppers

What does it take to be a “one percenter?” How much do you have to earn before you fall into this rarified zone?

A new study written by socioeconomists Estelle Sommeiller and Mark Price, looked at state-level tax data from the Internal Revenue Service over the past 35 years. They’ve created a chart which looks at annual income at the threshold of the top 1% in each U.S. state. If you live in Connecticut, you’re a “one percenter” if you earn more than \$678,000 a year, higher than New York’s threshold of \$506,000, the \$539,000 threshold in New Jersey, \$555,000 in Washington, D.C. or \$532,000 in Massachusetts. California (\$438,000) and Texas (\$423,000), which are considered wealthy states, actually came in behind North Dakota (\$502,000).

States with the lowest threshold include West Virginia (\$243,000), Kentucky and Alabama (\$263,000) and Maine (\$274,000). If somebody earning a good income in Connecticut or New York wanted to break into the one-percent category, he/she could move to a less competitive state.

Nationwide, the total share of income going to the upper 1% rose by about 12 percentage points since 1979. The one-percenters in Connecticut make a little over 33% of all income in that state, and in New York, the percentage is 32.6%. Elsewhere, the range is generally in the 14% to 22% range, up from the 7-11% range back in 1979.

