

TRICK-OR-TREATING IN OHIO BY THE NUMBERS

BY DEVIN KEITHLEY

This Halloween season, many Ohioans will be preparing for costumed children arriving at their doors in search of candy. Based on our analysis of Ohio census data and assumptions from a national survey on what ages people stop trick-or-treating, we estimate that 1,344,064 Ohioans between the ages of 3 and 18 will be partaking in the holiday tradition this year. The chart on the right shows the age distribution of these likely trick-or-treaters. Data show that the practice peaks at about age 7, but as they grow beyond that age kids are less and less likely to participate.

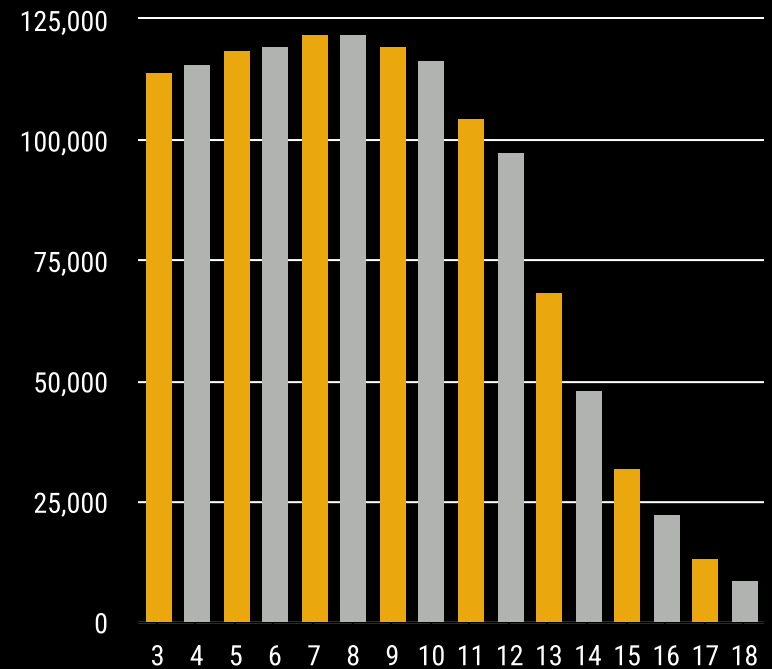
Across much of Ohio, the housing density is too sparse to allow for traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating. In these areas, a popular alternative involves residents gathering in a parking lot and opening their trunks to distribute candy to children walking from car to car. This is called “trunk-or-treating.”

Communities where homes are within walking distance are far more fitting for traditional trick-or-treating. In order to quantify how many Ohio homes are optimal for this door-to-door foot traffic, we first needed to identify the parts of the state with dense enough housing. Traditional subdivisions and small towns have a housing density between four and five dwelling units per acre. Based on this, we determined that only neighborhoods with an average housing density of three or more dwelling units per acre should be considered. These neighborhoods account for only 22% of Ohio homes.

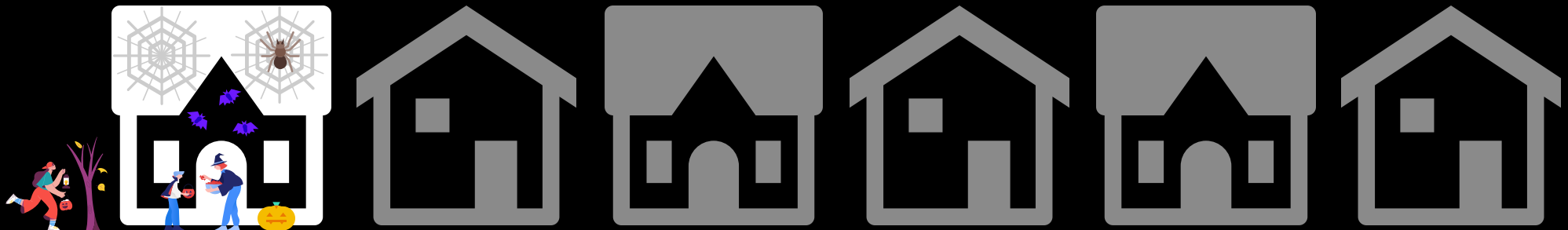
Even in walkable neighborhoods, not all homes have the best design for door-to-door trick-or-treating. For instance, it's not easy to tell if someone is home and handing out candy in an apartment building. Limiting our analysis to single-family dwellings and structures with fewer than five housing units, we determined that 798,651 Ohio homes have the best structure type and housing density for traditional trick-or-treating. This accounts for 75% of homes in those mid-to-high density neighborhoods but only 17% of all Ohio homes, or one out of every six occupied housing units in the state.

Wherever you are trick-or-treating or handing out candy this year, we wish you a safe and spooky Halloween!

Age Distribution of Likely Trick-or-Treaters



Only one in six homes in Ohio is has the optimal conditions for door-to-door trick-or-treating.



Questions? Contact the Office of Research and Analytics at research@ohiohome.org

Sources: 2018–2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, Tables B09001, B25032, S0101; 2023 Population and Housing Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau; Geocorr Applications, University of Missouri Census Data Center; Walt Hickey, “Here’s when you should stop trick-or-treating,” *FiveThirtyEight* (2015); Ayana Archie, “What to know about trunk-or-treating, a trick-or-treating alternative,” *NPR* (2023)