

# Housing Data Between the Censuses

*The American Housing Survey*

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U.S. Department of Housing  
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Office of Policy Development and Research

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U.S. CENSUS BUREAU



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# Home Sweet Home

The place you live is more than a place to “hang your hat,” more than four walls and a roof. It is an investment, an expense, a retreat, a responsibility, an expression of yourself, and more. For these and other reasons, analysts in government and business study the nation’s housing very closely.

One way the federal government keeps track of the nation’s housing is through housing questions asked in the decennial census. But the census comes only once in a decade and includes few housing questions. For the years between censuses, the government uses other measures – most notably the

American Housing Survey (AHS). The AHS is the largest, regular national housing sample survey in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the AHS to obtain up-to-date housing statistics for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The AHS contains a wealth of information that can be used by professionals in nearly every field for planning, decisionmaking, market research, or various kinds of program development.

If you need housing data, you can not afford to overlook the AHS. This booklet tells you where to find these data.



*Housing is often our biggest expense — and an important reflection of how we see ourselves.*

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# Households Live in Housing Units

Let's start with you. You belong to a "household." You may even be a "householder," and you live in a "housing unit."

A household is made up of all the people who occupy a housing unit. This may be a family or a nonfamily such as a group of friends or unmarried partners.

The householder is designated as the first household member who is 18 years old or over and is an owner or renter of the housing unit.

In both the decennial population and housing censuses and the AHS, the Census Bureau collects and publishes data about households and householders.

## What Is a Housing Unit?

Do not confuse households with housing units. A household consists of one or more people in a housing unit. A housing unit is where they live. (A housing unit may also be vacant.) The focus of the housing census and the AHS is on the housing unit.

In general, a housing unit is a house, apartment, flat, manufactured (mobile) home, or group of rooms – even a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. This means that any occupants do not generally live with other people in the building and there is direct access to the unit from the outside or from a public hall.

Living quarters not included in the housing inventory are transient accommodations, barracks for workers or members of the armed forces, and institutional-type quarters (dormitories, wards, large rooming houses, etc.).

In the AHS, the housing units surveyed have been scientifically selected to represent a cross section of all housing in the nation, updated each year to include new construction. In addition to interviewing the households in the survey, Census Bureau workers obtain information on unoccupied units from landlords, rental agents, or neighbors.

*Housing units come in different shapes and sizes.*



# More Housing Data Than the Census

The American Housing Survey has much more data than the census, though in less geographic detail. The AHS focuses on the size and composition of the housing inventory. For example, it asks about stories in structures, water leakage, and external building conditions. It also collects data on heating— and cooling—degree days and fuels.

It looks at financial characteristics, such as monthly housing costs; that is, the sum of all housing costs including utilities, the ratio of housing costs to income, and payment plans of primary and secondary mortgages.

Questions on neighborhood quality, such as presence or lack of crime, litter, or housing deterioration, give valuable

qualitative data to social scientists, health officials, and other analysts.

The survey is redesigned from time to time to make sure it meets current needs. Some recently added items include information about gated communities and about home equity loans.

The survey asks homeowners about repairs and mortgages, renters about rent control and rent subsidies, recent movers about the homes they left and why they moved, and workers about their commutes.

For all people, whether adult or child, the AHS provides age, sex, household relationships, education, wages, and the year moved into their home.



*New construction, repairs, and neighborhood quality are all part of the AHS.*

## New Questions

The American Housing Survey adapts itself to deal with new policy and research issues that arise from time to time. Increasing homeownership rates for minorities is one such issue. We can learn something about the people and households who were able to become first-time owners and about the situations of those who still rent.

Figure 1 shows the sorts of data that are available for high-rise units, houses, mobile homes, vacant homes, wage and nonwage income housing, neighborhood quality, etc.

Figure 1.

### Subjects Included in the Published Reports of the American Housing Survey

#### *Housing Units and Householders*

Citizenship of householder  
Cooperatives and condominiums  
Duration of vacancy  
Hispanic origin  
Housing units  
Last used as a permanent residence  
Occupied housing units  
Owner or manager on property  
Population in housing units  
Previous occupancy  
Race  
Rental vacancy rate  
Seasonal units  
Suitability for year-round use  
Tenure  
Vacancy status  
Vacant housing units  
Year householder immigrated to the United States  
Year householder moved into unit  
Year-round housing units

#### *Household Characteristics*

Adults and single children under 18 years old  
Age of householder  
Elderly (age 65 and over)  
Family or primary individual  
Household composition by age of householder  
Household moves and formation  
Nativity  
Nonrelative  
Other relative of householder  
Own never-married children under 18 years old  
Persons other than spouse or children  
Single children under 18 years old  
Subfamily  
Years of school completed by householder

#### *Housing Units Occupied by Recent Movers*

Change in housing costs  
Choice of present home and home search

Choice of present neighborhood and neighborhood search  
Location of previous unit  
Person's previous residence  
Present and previous units  
Previous home owned or rented by someone who moved here  
Reasons for leaving previous unit  
Recent mover comparison to previous home  
Recent mover comparison to previous neighborhood  
Recent movers  
Structure type of previous residence  
Tenure of previous unit

#### *Utilization Characteristics*

Bedrooms  
Lot size  
Persons per room  
Persons  
Rooms  
Square feet per person  
Square footage of unit

#### *Structural Characteristics*

Common stairways  
Elevator on floor  
External building conditions  
Foundation  
Light fixtures in public halls  
New construction  
Site placement  
Stories in structure  
Stories between main and apartment entrances  
Units in structure  
Water leakage during last 12 months  
Year structure built

#### *Plumbing Characteristics*

Complete bathrooms  
Flush toilet and flush toilet breakdowns  
Plumbing facilities  
Sewage disposal and sewage disposal breakdowns  
Source of water and water supply stoppage

### **Equipment and Fuels**

Cooling degree days  
Electric fuses and circuit breakers  
Fuels  
Heating degree days  
Heating equipment and heating equipment breakdowns  
Kitchen appliances

### **Housing and Neighborhood Quality**

Age of other residential buildings within 300 feet  
Bars on windows of buildings  
Cars and trucks available  
Condition of streets  
Description of area within 300 feet  
Gated communities  
Mobile homes in group  
Moderate physical problems  
Nearby buildings vandalized or with interior exposed  
Neighborhood conditions  
Overall opinion of structure  
Overall opinion of neighborhood  
Selected deficiencies  
Selected amenities  
Severe physical problems  
Trash, litter, or junk on streets or on any properties

### **Financial Characteristics**

Amount of savings and investments  
Annual taxes paid per \$1,000 value  
Cash received in primary mortgage  
Condominium and cooperative fee  
Cost and ownership sharing  
Current line-of-credit  
Current total loan as percentage of value  
Current interest rate  
First-time owners  
Food stamps  
Households with home equity loans  
Income

Items included in primary mortgage payment  
Lenders of primary and secondary mortgages  
Lower cost State and local mortgages  
Major source of down payment  
Median monthly housing costs for owners  
Monthly housing costs  
Monthly payment for principal and interest  
Monthly housing costs as percentage of income  
Mortgage origination  
Mortgages currently on property  
Other activities on property  
Other housing costs per month  
Payment plans of primary and secondary mortgages  
Poverty status  
Primary mortgage  
Property insurance  
Purchase price  
Real estate taxes  
Reason refinanced  
Remaining years mortgaged  
Rent reductions  
Rent paid by lodgers  
Repairs, improvements, alterations in last 2 years  
Routine maintenance last year  
Term of primary mortgage at origination or assumption  
Total outstanding principal amount  
Type of primary mortgage  
Use of cash from refinancing  
Value  
Value-income ratio  
Year unit acquired  
Year primary mortgage originated

### **Alterations and Replacements**

Adding or replacing: roof, siding, doors, windows, insulation, pipes, plumbing, fixtures, wiring  
Additions: inside bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, other  
Changing unfinished areas to finished rooms: bedrooms, baths, other  
Installing: carpet, flooring, paneling  
Remodeling: bathrooms and kitchens  
Renovations: bedrooms, bathrooms, other  
Repairs due to a major disaster  
Replacing or adding outside: driveway, fence, patio, pool, shed  
Replacing or adding inside: central air, heating equipment, septic, water heater, dishwasher, disposal



# How the American Housing Survey Is Conducted

## The AHS Is a Household Survey

The AHS is a household survey that asks questions about the quality of housing in the United States. In gathering information, Census Bureau interviewers visit or telephone the household occupying each housing unit in the sample. For unoccupied units, they obtain information from landlords, rental agents, or neighbors.

## The AHS Is Actually Two Surveys

The AHS conducts a national survey and a metropolitan area survey. Both surveys are conducted during a 3- to 7-month period.

The national survey, which gathers information on housing throughout the country, interviews at about 55,000 housing units every 2 years, in odd-numbered years.

The metropolitan area survey consists of 47 metropolitan areas, where householders are interviewed every 6 years. We gather data for about 14 metropolitan areas on an even numbered year until all 47 metropolitan areas are surveyed. The cycle begins again 6 years later. Every 4 years, six of the largest metropolitan areas are included with the national sample. Figure 2A shows the

metropolitan areas that are currently included in the American Housing Survey.

Since 1984, each metropolitan area is represented by a sample of at least 3,200 designated housing units. The units are divided between the central city and the rest of the metropolitan area.

A sample of housing units in all survey areas was selected from the decennial census. These are updated by a sample of addresses obtained from building permits (for new construction) to include housing units added since the sample was selected.

Where are the homes in the national survey located? They come from each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

The survey goes back to the same housing units on a regular basis, recording changes in characteristics, adding and deleting units when applicable.

This cross-sectioning of the housing inventory gives a picture of houses and households as they change over long periods of time.



*A Census Bureau field representative visits the household.*



Figure 2A.

**Current American Housing Survey Metropolitan Areas in Sample\***

Anaheim–Santa Ana, CA PMSA**	2008, 2002, 1994, 1990, 1986, 1981, 1977, 1974
Atlanta, GA MSA	2004, 1996, 1991, 1987, 1982, 1978, 1975
Baltimore, MD MSA	2006, 1998, 1991, 1987, 1983, 1979, 1976
Birmingham, AL MSA	2006, 1998, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1976
Boston, MA–NH CMSA	2006, 1998, 1993, 1989, 1985, 1981, 1977, 1974
Buffalo, NY CMSA**	2008, 2002, 1994, 1988, 1984, 1979, 1976
Charlotte, NC–SC MSA	2008, 2002, 1995
Chicago, IL PMSA	2007, 2003, 1999, 1995, 1991, 1987, 1983, 1979, 1975
Cincinnati, OH–KY–IN PMSA**	2006, 1998, 1990, 1986, 1982, 1978, 1975
Cleveland, OH PMSA	2004, 1996, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1979, 1976
Columbus, OH MSA	2008, 2002, 1995, 1991, 1987, 1982, 1978, 1975
Dallas, TX PMSA**	2008, 2002, 1994, 1989, 1985, 1981, 1977, 1974
Denver, CO MSA	2004, 1995, 1990, 1986, 1983, 1979, 1976
Detroit, MI PMSA	2007, 2003, 1999, 1995, 1993, 1989, 1985, 1981, 1977, 1974
Ft. Worth–Arlington, TX PMSA	2008, 2002, 1994, 1989, 1985, 1981, 1977, 1974
Hartford, CT MSA	2004, 1996, 1991, 1987, 1983, 1979, 1975
Houston, TX (new sample in 1987) PMSAs	2006, 1998, 1991, 1987, 1983, 1979, 1976
Indianapolis, IN MSA**	2004, 1996, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1976
Kansas City, MO–KS MSA	2008, 2002, 1995, 1990, 1986, 1982, 1978, 1975
Los Angeles–Long Beach, CA PMSA**	2007, 2003, 1999, 1995, 1989, 1985, 1980, 1977, 1974
Memphis, TN–AR–MS MSA	2004, 1996, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1977, 1974
Miami–Ft. Lauderdale, FL CMSA	2008, 2002, 1995, 1990, 1986, 1983, 1979, 1975
Milwaukee, WI PMSA**	2008, 2002, 1994, 1988, 1984, 1979, 1975
Minneapolis–St. Paul, MN–WI MSA	2006, 1998, 1993, 1989, 1985, 1981, 1977, 1974
New Orleans, LA MSA	2004, 1995, 1990, 1986, 1982, 1978, 1975
New York–Nassau–Suffolk–Orange, NY PMSAs	2007, 2003, 1999, 1995, 1991, 1987, 1983, 1980, 1976
Norfolk–Virginia Beach–Newport News, VA–NC MSA***	2006, 1998
Northern NJ PMSAs	2007, 2003, 1999, 1995, 1991, 1987
Oakland, CA PMSA****	2006, 1998
Oklahoma City, OK MSA	2004, 1996, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1976
Philadelphia, PA–NJ PMSA**	2007, 2003, 1999, 1995, 1989, 1985, 1982, 1978, 1975
Phoenix, AZ MSA**	2008, 2002, 1994, 1989, 1985, 1981, 1977, 1974
Pittsburgh, PA MSA	2004, 1995, 1990, 1986, 1981, 1977, 1974
Portland, OR–WA PMSA	2008, 2002, 1995, 1990, 1986, 1983, 1979, 1975
Providence–Pawtucket–Warwick, RI–MA PMSAs	2008, 1998, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1976
Riverside–San Bernardino–Ontario, CA PMSA**	2008, 2002, 1994, 1990, 1986, 1982, 1978, 1975
Rochester, NY MSA	2006, 1998, 1990, 1986, 1982, 1978, 1975
Sacramento, CA PMSA	2004, 1996, 1983, 1980, 1976
St. Louis, MO–IL MSA	2004, 1996, 1991, 1987, 1983, 1980, 1976
Salt Lake City, UT MSA	2006, 1998, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1977, 1974
San Antonio, TX MSA	2004, 1995, 1990, 1986, 1982, 1978, 1975
San Diego, CA MSA	2008, 2002, 1994, 1991, 1987, 1982, 1978, 1975
San Francisco, CA PMSA**	2006, 1998
San Jose, CA PMSA	2006, 1998, 1993, 1988, 1984
Seattle–Everett, WA PMSA	2004, 1996, 1983, 1979, 1976
Tampa–St. Petersburg, FL MSA	2006, 1998, 1993, 1989, 1985
Washington, DC–MD–VA MSA	2006, 1998, 1993, 1989, 1985, 1981, 1977, 1974

\* No areas surveyed in 1997.

\*\* Same area since beginning. All other areas change boundaries over time; see map or list of counties in each report.

\*\*\* Currituck County, NC, was added to the geographic definition in 1998.

\*\*\*\* Formerly San Francisco–Oakland, CA PMSAs.

Figure 2B.

**American Housing Survey Metropolitan Areas No Longer in Sample**

Albany–Schenectady–Troy, NY**	1980, 1977, 1974
Allentown–Bethlehem–Easton, PA–NJ**	1980, 1976
Colorado Springs, CO**	1978, 1975
Grand Rapids, MI**	1980, 1976
Honolulu, HI**	1983, 1979, 1976
Las Vegas, NV**	1979, 1976
Louisville, KY–IN**	1983, 1980, 1976
Madison, WI**	1981, 1977, 1975
Newark–NJ (now covered by Northern NJ)**	1981, 1977, 1974
Norfolk–Virginia Beach–Newport News, VA MSA	1992, 1988, 1984, 1978, 1975
Omaha, NE–IA**	1979, 1976
Orlando, FL**	1981, 1977, 1974
Paterson–Clifton, Passaic, NJ (Now covered by Northern NJ)**	1982, 1978, 1975
Raleigh, NC**	1979, 1976
Saginaw, MI**	1980, 1977, 1974
San Francisco–Oakland, CA PMSAs	1993, 1989, 1985, 1982, 1978, 1975
Seattle–Tacoma, WA	1991, 1987
Spokane, WA	1981, 1977, 1974
Springfield–Chicopee–Holyoke, MA–CT**	1978, 1975
Tacoma, WA**	1981, 1977, 1974
Wichita, KS**	1981, 1977, 1974

\*\* Same area since beginning. All other areas change boundaries over time; see map or list of counties in each report.



# AHS Printed Products

## Availability, How Where to Order

AHS data are available in many formats. Many of the printed reports and microdata are available on CDs. See below for availability and ordering information.

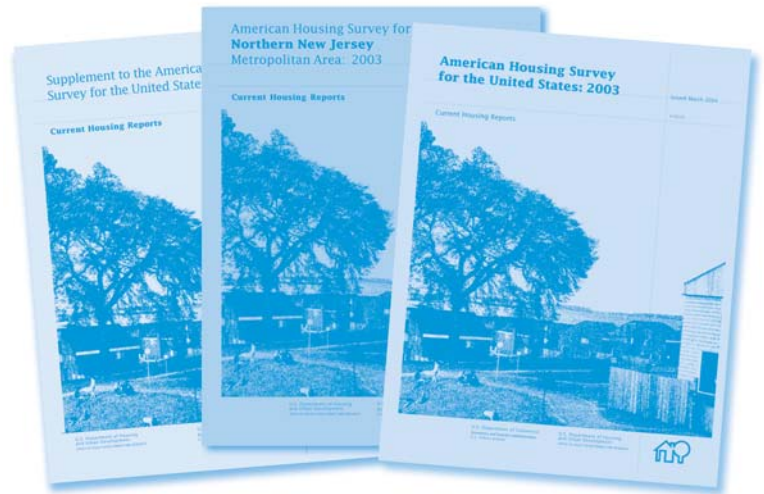


Figure 3. Sources for American Housing Survey Data

Source	Telephone	Books	Microdata
HUD USER Box 6091 Rockville, MD 20849-6091	800-245-2691 301-495-5863 TDD 800-927-7589 Fax 301-495-3765	National and Metropolitan Codebooks Volume I \$30 Volume II \$5 Volume III \$20	National CD-ROM Before 1997 \$50 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003 \$15 Metropolitan CD-ROM Before 1996 \$50 1996 to present \$15 Table Generating Data Disk \$15 CD-ROM <sup>1</sup> AVI-000102
Customer Services U.S. Census Bureau Washington, DC 20233-0801	301-763-INFO (4636) for general information Fax 301-457-3842, orders only Fax 301-457-4714, general information	Metropolitan \$10-\$20	National and Metropolitan CD-ROMs Back to early 1970s \$50 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003 \$15
Superintendent of Documents <sup>2</sup> Washington, DC 20402-9326	202-512-1800 Fax 202-512-2250	National \$50	
Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division (HHES) U.S. Census Bureau Washington, DC 20233-8500	301-763-3235 Fax 301-457-3277	Analytical H121, H123 \$2-\$10	
U.S. National Archives and Records Administration Center for Electronic Records <a href="http://www.archives.gov">www.archives.gov</a>	301-837-0470		National and Metropolitan Tapes, 1974-1995 Fees vary
Internet (type address in lower case): Publications: <a href="http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/cons-hou.html#house">www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/cons-hou.html#house</a>		National, Metropolitan Analytical All reports since 1973 Internet address CD-ROM Free \$15	Interactive Internet Tools Ferret—data extraction system 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003 Free Data Extraction System (DES) 1993, 1995 Free
American Housing Survey Home Page: <a href="http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/ahs.html">www.census.gov/hhes/www/ahs.html</a>			
HUD USER Home Page: <a href="http://www.huduser.org">www.huduser.org</a>		Codebooks Free	1995 and later National and Metropolitan Free

<sup>1</sup>The American Housing Surveys for 1999 and 2001 issued CD-ROMS titled "Table Generating Data Disk." The CDs contain a special type of database file called an EXTRACT. This file allows users to create their own tables (cross tabulations) with the built-in software. On the CDs, there are data tables that users can manipulate to show selected information, to form graphs, and to print. Included also on the CDs is the microdata file in both SAS and ASCII formats, along with the associated documentation. The publications also are included.

<sup>2</sup>Ask for U.S. Census Bureau series H150 and H151. Depository libraries may order Superintendent of Documents prefix C3.215. Libraries often keep national books in a special catalog and section for U.S. Government documents. Metropolitan reports may be located in the general catalog, since these are not published by the Superintendent of Documents.



## Geographic Areas in the American Housing Survey for the United States

- United States
  - Regions
    - Metropolitan statistical areas
      - Central cities
      - Suburbs
    - Urbanized areas
    - Rural areas
    - Places grouped by size

## Metropolitan Reports

*Housing Characteristics for Selected Metropolitan Areas (AHS-MS)* is released in separate reports for selected MSAs, their central cities, and subareas. The tables are for the most part the same as those in the national report. The areas surveyed change each even numbered year. See pages 9 and 10 for the list of MSAs and the years in which they were surveyed. See Figure 3 on page 11 for ordering information.

The AHS publications (PDF) can be viewed at the following Census Web sites:

- [www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h150.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h150.html)
- [www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h170.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h170.html)
- [www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/cons-hou.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/cons-hou.html)

## Data Chart

Series H150/# (survey year; e.g. 01) –wall or H170/# –wall, is a collection of tables from the national publication showing data on housing characteristics in the United States. Information can be found on the number of owners, renters, race and origin, single family units, year the structure was built, type of heating equipment, monthly housing costs, value of the home, and the number of homeowners who own their homes free and clear of a mortgage. Hundreds of other data items are shown on this 24– x 36–inch chart.

## Statistical Briefs

Don't overlook the *American Housing Briefs*, a series of short, nontechnical fact sheets presenting demographic and housing data for selected metropolitan areas complete with colorful charts.

We also release a series of *Statistical Briefs* that give data for the United States as a whole in topics of current interest (such as residential energy use, homeownership, and recent movers). These can be found at: [www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/ahb.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/ahb.html)

The image displays three overlapping browser windows from the U.S. Census Bureau website. The top window shows the 'Current Housing Reports' page for the American Housing Survey for the United States 1985-2001: H150. The middle window shows the 'Current Housing Reports - H170' page, which includes a list of publications for selected metropolitan areas from 1994-2002 and a note that publications are scanned documents. The bottom window shows the 'Construction and Housing Publications' page, which includes a table of publications from the 1997 Economic Census and the 1992 Census of Construction Industries.

CONSTRUCTION			
1997 Economic Census -- Construction Reports			
EC97C23A	Geographic Area Series	<a href="#">Document</a>	<a href="#">Order</a>
EC97C23I	Industry Series	<a href="#">Document</a>	<a href="#">Order</a>
EC97C23S-AS	Subject Series - Geographic Area Summary	<a href="#">Document</a>	<a href="#">Order</a>
EC97C23S-IS	Subject Series - Industry Summary	<a href="#">Document</a>	<a href="#">Order</a>
1992 Census of Construction Industries			
CC92-A	Geographic Area Series (Files are 3 Mb or less)	<a href="#">Document</a>	<a href="#">Order</a>

# Electronic Products Available From the AHS

The AHS electronic data are produced in a variety of formats to suit a wide range of user needs and preferences.

Copies of printed reports, microdata files on CD-ROM (compact disk/read-only memory), table generating software and codebooks are all available at the Census Bureau and HUD Web sites on some CD's and at URL's:

- [www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h150.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h150.html)
- [www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h170.html](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/h170.html)
- [www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs.html](http://www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs.html)

See Figure 3 on page 11 for ordering information.

The microdata on the public use file (PUF) from the American Housing Survey show the responses for individual interviews. The files contain records from the individual housing units, with all identifying information removed. The records in the PUF are for all addresses that are in sample, including occupied and vacant interviews, as well as a limited amount of information for addresses in sample, but not interviewed.

The microdata on CDs and the Internet are available in flat ASCII format and in SAS. Users can then prepare tabulations designed to meet specialized needs. Using CDs from a period of years, you can employ various statistical-analysis programs to make comparisons. For example, you can tabulate mortgage costs for young homeowners and study change over time. You can further study how the costs differ for owners in central city and suburban areas. See Figure 1 on page 6 for some of the many subject areas covered.

## Codebook Availability

Title	Format	Source
Codebook for the American Housing Survey Data Base: 1973 to 1993, aka, Codebook Volume 1	paper	HHES Division, AHSB, US Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233-8500
	pdf files	<a href="http://www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs/ahs_codebook.html">www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs/ahs_codebook.html</a>
Codebook for the American Housing Survey, Volume 2 (1995 to 1996 only)	Word file	<a href="http://www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs/ahsprev.html">www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs/ahsprev.html</a>
Codebook for the American Housing Survey, Public Use File: 1997 and later	pdf file	<a href="http://www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs/ahsprev.html">www.huduser.org/datasets/ahs/ahsprev.html</a>

Geographic areas on the national files include the United States and the four census regions, metropolitan /nonmetropolitan areas, inside/outside central cities, urban/rural areas, and places grouped by size.

Geographic areas shown on the metropolitan files include about 14 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) per year. Microdata showing geographic data are not shown for the 6 areas surveyed with the national sample. In addition, central city/noncentral city indicators are provided for all MSAs as are AHS zones, which are groups of census tracts having at least 100,000 population.

## The Codebook

Three codebooks are available dealing with the AHS microdata. Each contains the same sort of information but each covers a different set of survey years. Generally, the codebooks contain the text of the survey questions, the values and coding of each variable available to the public, information about data processing (such as the use of imputation, edit specifications, policies on topcoding, and the like) and other information about the survey. The table below describes the survey years shown in each volume and the sources for obtaining each volume.

In addition to these sources, the public may request a custom CD-ROM containing pdf versions of one or more of the codebooks. Contact HHES Division, AHSB, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233-8500, or [ahsn@census.gov](mailto:ahsn@census.gov), for the cost of this service.

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## American Housing Survey (AHS)

### Internet Sites

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) – links to several AHS-related sites

[www.census.gov/hhes/www/ahs.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/ahs.html), which contains:

Publications in pdf format

1973 through current AHS National

1974 through current AHS Metropolitan

1995 AHS National supplement

Publication tables in html format

1997 through current AHS National

1997 through current Alterations, Additions and Repairs tables from the National survey

1993 through current data charts from the National survey

Codebooks for the microdata files, table specifications, and other supporting materials on survey design, definitions and schedules

[www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/cons-hou.html#house](http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/cons-hou.html#house), which contains:

Publications in pdf format – for National, Metropolitan and CINCH, including AHS supplements and Housing Briefs.

<http://dataferrett.census.gov/TheDataWeb/index.html>, which provides software to create custom tables and access to AHS microdata files for 1993 through the current national survey, and 1998 through the current metropolitan survey.

[www.huduser.org](http://www.huduser.org) – links to more AHS information through the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Includes sites to download the AHS microdata, copies of the questionnaire program (qcode), value label files, and more.

## Tapping Other Census Bureau Resources

### Decennial Census

The Census Bureau has more to offer in housing data than just the American Housing Survey; for example, Census 2000. Figure 4 shows items from Census 2000. These are similar to questions asked in previous censuses. Only a few items were asked of all housing units – the 100 percent count. All the other items were asked of a fraction (sample) of the units (about 1 out of every 6 households). The resulting sample data were reported as estimates for geographic areas such as census tracts. These are areas with 1,500 to 8,000 people. The optimum size is 4,000.

All information collected in the decennial census is available through the American FactFinder that can be accessed through the Census homepage ([factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)). Census briefs, discussing specific topics, can be accessed on the Census Web site at [www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html](http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html).



# Census 2000 Content

A short-form questionnaire was used in 5 out of 6 housing units. These are the type of data collected using fewer questions.

## Population

Age  
Race  
Sex  
Hispanic origin  
Relationship

Only two questions were asked that pertained to housing:  
Tenure (owned or rented) and Vacancy status.

The long-form questionnaire was used in 1 of every 6 housing units. In addition to the questions asked in the above categories, the types of questions asked in the sample are below:

## Population

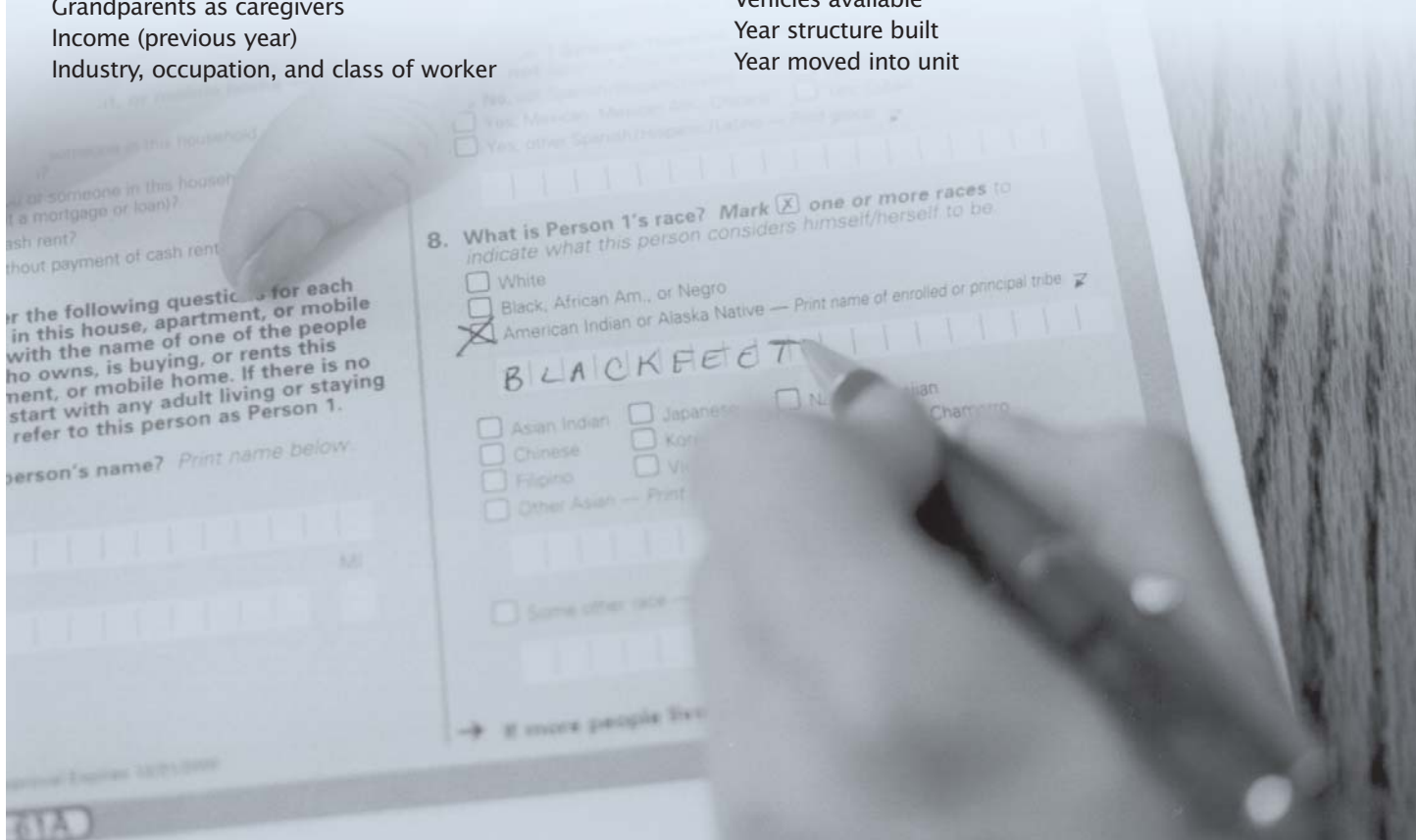
Ancestry  
Citizenship and year of entry  
Disability  
Education – school enrollment and educational attainment  
Grandparents as caregivers  
Income (previous year)  
Industry, occupation, and class of worker

Labor force status (current)  
Language spoken at home  
Marital status  
Place of work and journey to work  
Place of birth,  
Residence five years ago (migration)  
Veteran status  
Work status last year

The following information was gathered from the questions on housing:

## Housing

Farm residence  
House heating fuel  
Monthly rent (including congregate housing)  
Number of bedrooms  
Number of rooms  
Plumbing and kitchen facilities  
Shelter costs  
Telephone  
Units in structure  
Vacancy status  
Value of home  
Vehicles available  
Year structure built  
Year moved into unit





# Use HUD USER to Get the Latest Housing Research Information

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sponsors the American Housing Survey (AHS) to obtain up-to-date housing statistics. HUD's office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) supports the Department's efforts to help create cohesive economically healthy communities.

HUD USER [www.huduser.org](http://www.huduser.org) is the gateway to current written research and analytic tools produced by and for HUD's Office of Policy Development & Research (PD&R). You can use this online resource to access research reports about housing and community and economic development, data sets that can be used for original research, HUD income limits and fair market rents, and much more!

HUD USER offers relevant, practical information on a wide range of topics, such as new building technologies, emerging trends in urban planning and demographics, alleviating housing discrimination and homelessness, and strategies for making housing more affordable, durable, accessible, and more readily available to the people who need it most.

HUD USER also creates and distributes a wide variety of useful information products and services such as:

- Data Sets – HUD USER provides interested researchers with access to the original electronic data sets generated by PD&R sponsored data collection efforts, including the American Housing Survey, HUD median family income limits, as well as microdata from research initiatives on topics such as housing discrimination, the HUD-insured multifamily housing stock, and the public housing population.

- Publications – HUD USER makes available printed copies of recently published HUD material. Primarily sponsored by PD&R, these reports, executive summaries, case studies, and guidebooks span the fields of housing and urban development.
- Periodicals – HUD USER publishes a series of five periodicals that support the PD&R mission to provide reliable information to researchers, practitioners, advocates, industry groups, foundations, and the general public. These periodicals include : (1) three unique, pragmatic newsletters of interest to several constituent groups, (2) *Cityscape*, HUD's journal of policy development and research, which is an essential inclusion in the researcher's library, (3) *U.S. Housing Market Conditions*, a quarterly report that provides the latest available nationwide housing statistics.
- Ongoing research – PD&R's primary research and development mission is to provide reliable and objective data and analysis to inform policy decisions. PD&R focuses on finding definitive answers to questions about what programs work and how they can be made to work better, through quick-turnaround studies and conferences, as well as through long-term evaluations that systematically measure outcomes.
- Calendar of events – HUD USER provides a calendar of events where you can find information about HUD news, communities working with HUD, resources, and other tools.



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# Other Housing Surveys and Topics of Interest

*The Housing Vacancy Survey (HVS) and Homeownership* provides current information on the rental and homeowner vacancy rates and characteristics of units available for occupancy. Data are collected from vacant housing units in the Current Population Survey (CPS). The survey produces quarterly and annual statistics on rental vacancy rates and homeownership rates for the United States, regions, individual states, and for the 75 largest metropolitan areas. Quarterly rates are shown going back to 1980. The HVS also has national homeownership rates by age of householder, family type, race, and Hispanic origin. A press release is published each quarter and quarterly and annual data tables are released on the Internet. The Web site is [www.census.gov/hhes/www/hvs.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hvs.html)

*Moving to America – Moving to Homeownership: 1994 to 2002* focuses on homeownership rates by citizenship status, crossed with several demographic characteristics. These include age and race of householder, family type, world region of birth, and year of entry into the United States. This report, as well as additional detailed tabulations, can be found on the Census Bureau's Web site at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/movingtoamerica2002.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/movingtoamerica2002.html).

*The New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS)* is conducted approximately every 3 years to determine the vacancy rate for New York City's rental stock and to comply with the New York City's rent control laws. New York city also uses the data to measure the quality and quantity of housing and the demographic characteristics of the city's residents. This survey is sponsored by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The data are available at: [www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/nychvs/2002/nychvs02.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/nychvs/2002/nychvs02.html).

*The Survey of Market Absorption (SOMA)* measures how quickly newly-built units in buildings of five or more units are absorbed (rented or sold in condominium buildings). Data are collected monthly throughout the country beginning 3 months after a sample building is ready for occupancy. Subsequent interviews are conducted at 6, 9, and 12 months after a building is completed, if necessary. Data are tabulated on a quarterly basis and released via the Internet and by printed report. SOMA data can be accessed on the Internet at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/soma.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/soma.html).

*The American Community Survey (ACS)* provides data similar in content of Census 2000 on an annual basis for the United States, states, and smaller geographic areas.

Once the ACS is in full operation, the data are released through the American FactFinder, which can be accessed at [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/).

*The Residential Finance Survey (RFS)* is a national survey of all types of residential properties. It is a valuable source of information on small rental properties. The 2001 RFS surveyed about 65,000 properties nationwide. Owners of properties asked to answer questions about the property and its mortgage if there was a mortgage. Data about the RFS are available on the Internet at [www.census.gov/mso/www/rfs/rfs.html](http://www.census.gov/mso/www/rfs/rfs.html).

*The Property Owners and Managers Survey (POMS)*, conducted in 1995, collected information from the owners and managers of privately held rental properties on their rental and maintenance policies, and the reasons for these policies. Publicly held (governmentally owned) rental properties were not included in the survey. This was the first known national survey of property owners and managers in the United States. The data allow researchers to analyze characteristics by the number of rental units or the number of properties. Detailed tabulations using the number of rental units as the unit of analysis can be found on the housing statistics section of the Census Bureau's Web site at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/poms.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poms.html).

*These Old Houses, Series H151*, describes the characteristics of housing units built before 1920 and compares them with units built 1990 or later. The report also looks at the reasons old housing units fall out of the housing inventory. To obtain copies of this report, contact HHEs Division, AHSB, U.S. Census Bureau, 20233-8500, or [www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/H121-04-1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/H121-04-1.pdf).

*Who Can Afford to Buy a House* is one in a series of reports that have attempted to gauge changing housing affordability for families and unrelated individuals. Many homeowners who purchased their homes many years ago might not qualify for a mortgage under current conditions; for them, not being able to afford a house may be a barrier to residential mobility. This publication is expected to be updated in 2004, and publication can be found at [www.census.gov/prod/99pubs/h121-991.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/99pubs/h121-991.pdf).

*Housing Patterns – Report Materials*. Report materials include the "Racial and Ethnic Residential Segregation in the United States: 1980–2000" Census Special Report in HTML and PDF, which presents data for four racial/ethnic groups for five indexes (one for each dimension of segregation). This report examines and discusses trends in residential segregation and includes tables, which provide

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descriptive statistics, changes over time, as well as magnitudes of changes for selected characteristics. In addition, there are graphical representations of residential segregation in the form of scatter plots, histograms, and maps. Measures of Housing Patterns/Residential Segregation are also provided. See [www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/resseg/report\\_matl.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/resseg/report_matl.html).

*Housing: Then and Now – 50 Years of Decennial Censuses.* The types of houses we live in have changed greatly in the United States in a single lifetime. This report includes topics over a number of years on Crowding, Plumbing Facilities, Telephones, Homeownership, Recent Movers,

Units in Structure, House Heating Fuel, Sewage Disposal, Vacation Homes, Living Alone, Source of Water, and Ownership Rates by Household and Structure Type. This report assembles tables that show housing trends by states over the decades. For further information, go to [www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/histcensushsg.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/histcensushsg.html).

An AHS Bibliography shows a list of authors using the American Housing Survey in recent literature and Internet sites that have papers that use AHS data. You can access this at [www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/ahs/bib.html](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/ahs/bib.html).



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## Other Housing and Construction Programs

Current housing and construction reports provide current statistics on housing construction (for example, vacancies and market absorption of apartments, monthly housing starts, sales and completions).

*New Residential Construction* – (formerly consisted of C20, C22, and C40 series) Provides data on new housing units authorized but not yet started, under construction, and completed. Data are often produced monthly. Data are produced for the United States and for the four census regions. You can access the data at [www.census.gov/newresconst](http://www.census.gov/newresconst).

*New Residential Sales* – (formerly C25 series) Provides data on the number of new houses sold and for sale, the monthly supply at current sales rate, average and median sales prices for new homes, houses sold, and for sale by stage of construction, and the median number of months on the sales market following completion. Data are produced monthly. In addition, each quarter a constant quality index for new homes sold is produced, along with average and median sales prices by type of financing and census region. You can access the data at [www.census.gov/newhomesales](http://www.census.gov/newhomesales).

*Characteristics of New Housing* – Ten quarterly tables show single- and multifamily-units started, sold, and completed, for the United States and four census regions by purpose of construction and design type. The annual report has characteristics of completed single- and multifamily-homes, as well as houses sold and housing units started. They also show the median and average square feet. You can access the data at [www.census.gov/const/www/charindex.html](http://www.census.gov/const/www/charindex.html).

*Residential Improvement and Repairs* describes an area of economic activity that is subject to changes in the weather, interest rates, the housing market and material

prices. This data series tracks these changes each quarter. Comprehensive statistics cover all types of housing: owner occupied, rental, vacant and seasonal; private and public; single family and multifamily. Data are shown in unadjusted and seasonally adjusted terms. Data are used directly in the national income and products accounts where they represent public and private investment for improvements and repairs to residential structures. The estimates are developed from a nationwide demographic survey of housing units, which is conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and a followup survey of owners of rental, vacant, and seasonal properties.

Data about Residential Remodeling, Residential Improvements, Residential Repairs, Residential Upkeep, and Residential Alterations are on the Internet at [www.census.gov/const/www/c50index.html](http://www.census.gov/const/www/c50index.html).

*The Manufactured Homes Survey (MHS)* produces monthly regional estimates of manufactured home shipments, placements, average sales prices, and dealers inventories, and more detailed annual estimates including selected characteristics of new manufactured homes. The statistics on shipments of manufactured homes are produced by the Institute for Building Technology and Safety (IBTS) and published by the Manufactured Housing Institute. The survey is sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Data can be accessed at [www.census.gov/const/www/mhsindex.html](http://www.census.gov/const/www/mhsindex.html).

*Construction Spending* provides monthly estimates of the total dollar value of construction work done in the United States for new private residential and nonresidential construction, public construction, and improvements to existing buildings and structures. Data can be accessed at [www.census.gov/const/www/c30index.html](http://www.census.gov/const/www/c30index.html)





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# Other Sources of Assistance

## State Data Center Program

The State Data Center (SDC) program is one of the Census Bureau's longest and most successful partnerships. The SDC program's mission is to provide easy and efficient access to Census Bureau data and information through a wide network of lead, coordinating agencies in each state. To accomplish this mission, the SDCs work in partnership with the Census Bureau through the Customer Liaison Office and the Regional Offices of the Census Bureau. A Memorandum of Understanding between each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the island areas of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands supports this partnership.

The SDCs are official sources of demographic, economic, and social statistics produced by the Census Bureau. These data are made available by the Census Bureau to the SDCs at no charge (fees may be charged for customized products). More information about the SDCs is on the Internet at the Census Bureau Web site at [www.census.gov/sdc/www](http://www.census.gov/sdc/www).

Another program to check is the Business and Industry Data Center (BIDC), an outgrowth of the State Data Center. The BIDC was set up to better serve information needs of the business community and is designed to compliment the State Data Center program. The BIDC's help new and existing businesses and are a national network of more than 1,700 independent organizations. You can access the SDC/BIDC at [www.sdcbidc.iupui.edu/](http://www.sdcbidc.iupui.edu/).

Partnership and Data Services staff in the Census Bureau's 12 regional offices answer thousands of questions each year and provide data presentations and workshops to the public. If you have questions about the Census Bureau's products and services, contact the regional office nearest you.

Regional Office's  
[www.census.gov/field/www/](http://www.census.gov/field/www/)

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