

Evaluation of Poverty Estimates:
A Comparison of
the American Community Survey
and the Current Population Survey

Alemayehu Bishaw and Sharon Stern
Poverty and Health Statistics Branch
Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division
U.S. Census Bureau

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This background paper is released to inform interested parties of research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed on statistical, methodological, technical, or operational issues are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Introduction

This report is one in a series of reports that compares data from the American Community Survey (ACS) with data from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The data analysis in this report focuses on comparisons of national estimates of poverty between the 2003 ACS and the 2004 CPS ASEC (income year 2003). This analysis also compares state level estimates from the 2003 ACS with 2-year average estimates from CPS ASEC. The report looks for differences that are both statistically and substantively different, and for those found, looks for possible explanations. Since poverty is an income-based measure, one of the purposes of this report is to examine methodological differences in the collection of income data between the two surveys.

Methodology

The tables included in this report compare tabulated data on poverty from the ACS and CPS ASEC. Comparisons consist primarily of percentage point differences between the two distributions. Tables display the ACS and CPS ASEC estimates, the margins of error representing the 90 percent confidence interval of the estimates, and the difference in the two estimates, calculated as the percentage point difference between the two estimates. An asterisk (*) denotes statistically significant differences.

At the national level, the ACS and CPS ASEC variances were quite small, resulting in many statistically significant differences between the ACS and ASEC distributions, although differences may not be substantive. This report series generally considers significant differences of 0.5 percentage points or less as not important. This yardstick was developed to help focus the analysis in the comparison reports, though it varies based on the relative size of the category. For example, for a relatively common characteristic, a 0.5 percentage point difference in the estimates might be small, while for a relatively uncommon characteristic, like poverty among some demographic groups, a 0.5 percentage point difference could be quite large. This decision is subjective, however, and users can apply their own standards to interpret the data presented in this report.

The remainder of the methodology section examines differences across the two surveys that may help to explain and substantiate differences between the two surveys.

Sample frame

The 2003 ACS surveyed a national sample of housing units, both occupied and vacant. Data were collected in a total of 1,235 counties. The sample is designed to provide estimates of housing and socio-economic characteristics for the nation, all states, most areas with a population of 250,000 or more, and selected areas of 65,000 or more.

The 2004 CPS ASEC surveyed a national sample of housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The sample is designed primarily to produce estimates of the labor force characteristics of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and older for the nation and all states.

A primary difference between the two survey universes is that the CPS ASEC, unlike the ACS, includes individuals living in noninstitutional group quarters (e.g. college dormitories, emergency and transitional shelters, worker dormitories, and group homes).

Sample size and mode of data collection

The 2003 ACS interviewed a total of 535,945 households.¹ Data was collected continuously throughout the year using a combination of mail-out/mail-back questionnaires, Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), and Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). Each month a unique national sample of addresses receives an ACS questionnaire. Addresses that do not respond are telephoned during the second month of collection if a phone number for the address is available, and personal visits are conducted during the third and last month of data collection for a subsample of the remaining nonresponding units. The 2003 ACS achieved an overall survey response rate, calculated as the initially weighted estimate of interviews divided by the initially weighted estimate of cases eligible to be interviewed, of 96.7 percent.

The 2004 ASEC contained interviews from about 77,000 housing units, 59 of which were noninstitutional group quarters in which the population is sampled using housing unit equivalents (the GQ population / the national average persons per housing unit). The ASEC interviews were collected over a three-month period in February, March, and April 2004 as a supplement to the basic monthly CPS conducted during those months, with most of the data collected in March. All ASEC data is collected via Computer-Assisted Telephone and Personal Interviews (CATI/CAPI), with interviews conducted only one week each month. The response rate for the 2004 ASEC was 91.8 percent.

Both the ACS and CPS ASEC employ experienced permanent interviewers for CATI and CAPI data collection.

Residence rules

The ACS and the CPS ASEC employ different residence rules to determine which individuals in a household are eligible for interview; the ACS uses the concept of current residence while the CPS ASEC uses a version of usual residence. This difference may contribute to variation in the universes on which social characteristics depend.

The ACS interviews everyone who is in the housing unit on the day of interview who is living or staying there for more than two months, regardless of whether or not they maintain a usual residence elsewhere, or who does not have a usual residence elsewhere. If a person who usually lives in the housing unit is away for more than two months at the time of the survey contact, he or she is not a current resident of that unit. This rule recognizes that people can have more than one place where they live or stay over the course of a year, and these people affect that estimates of the characteristics of the population for some areas.

The CPS ASEC interviews everyone staying in the housing unit at the time of the interview who considers the housing unit as their usual residence or who has no usual residence elsewhere. In

¹ Including both vacant and occupied housing units, the number of final interviews was 572,447.

addition, the CPS ASEC also includes temporarily absent individuals who consider the housing unit as their usual residence. In theory, the ASEC residence rules and sampling frame would allow for college students who are away from home temporarily to be counted both at their current residence and at their parent's residence.

While the use of usual residence or current residence as the classification basis would produce substantially the same statistics for the vast majority of areas of the country, there might be appreciable differences for areas where large numbers of people spend several months of the year in units that are not their primary residences. Given that this report only compares national and state data, the difference in residence rules likely plays little role in any observed difference in the estimates.

How Poverty is Defined

Poverty is often called a derived measure. The CPS ASEC and ACS do not measure poverty directly, rather the surveys ask questions about income and family relationships. The answers are used to calculate poverty status. The current official poverty measure has two components—poverty thresholds (income cutoffs) and family income that is compared to these thresholds, as specified by the Office of Management and Budget. More specifically, the thresholds are arranged in a two-dimensional matrix consisting of family size (from one person to nine or more) cross-classified by presence and number of family members under 18 years old (from no children present to eight or more children present). Unrelated individuals and two-person families are differentiated by the age of the reference person (under 65 years old and 65 and older). These thresholds are revised annually to allow for changes in the cost of living as reflected in the Consumer Price Index. The poverty thresholds are not adjusted for regional, state, or local variation in the cost of living.

To determine whether someone is in poverty, their total family income is compared with the poverty threshold appropriate for that person's family size and composition. If the total income of the family is less than the threshold, then the person and every member of the family is considered to be in poverty. If a person is not related to the householder; or the person is a householder who is not related to anyone in the household by birth, marriage, or adoption; or the person does not live in a household, then the person's own income is compared with his or her poverty threshold. Thus, the total number of people below the poverty level is the sum of people in families and the number of unrelated individuals with incomes below the poverty thresholds.

The regular two-dimensional thresholds, which are used for CPS-ASEC, use an array of 48 thresholds matching the size and composition of different families. Because the ACS sample is spread throughout the twelve months of the year, the thresholds are adjusted for the month in which the data were reported. Technically, this adds the month of interview as a third dimension – requiring the usual set of 48 thresholds (based on family size and composition) to be adapted for each month of the year using the monthly Consumer Price Index to adjust the monthly changes in prices of consumer items. This ultimately results in 576 different thresholds to match the different families.

Questionnaire Items On Income

Among other questions, the ACS asks people 15 years and older about money income from various sources during the last 12 months as measured from the survey interview date to a year ago (questionnaire items 41 and 42 on the 2003/2004 ACS questionnaire). The income types included are as follows:

1. wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips from all jobs;
2. self-employment income from own nonfarm business or farm business, including proprietorship and partnership;
3. interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts;
4. Social Security or Railroad Retirement;
5. Supplemental Security income (SSI);
6. any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office;
7. retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and
8. income from any other sources received regularly such as Veterans' payments, unemployment compensation, child support or alimony.

Each question asks first if the type of income itemized was received during the reference period. If a positive response is given, the dollar amount of that income is requested.

Income data are collected as part of the CPS ASEC in the months of February, March and April as a supplement to the regular CPS monthly labor force interviews. The CPS ASEC asks each person in the sample who is 15 years old and over about the amount of income received from a list of sources in the previous calendar year. This list of income types is both longer and more detailed than the ACS types of income. The CPS ASEC asks a series of more than 50 questions to collect income data for each source separately (Appendix D of the "Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement 2004, Technical Documentation" contains the full ASEC questionnaire).² Income items are collected using separate questions for each income source, such as income from own business, farm, unemployment compensation, and income from worker's compensation payments and continues up to a series of questions on other income sources such as hobbies, severance pay, and others. This series of probing income questions helps respondents to remember and report smaller amounts which otherwise could have been forgotten.

Item nonresponse

Item nonresponse is the failure of a responding unit to provide complete and usable information for a data item. Item allocation rates are often used as a measure of the level of item nonresponse. These rates are computed as the ratio of the number of eligible people or households for which a value was allocated for a specific item to the number of people or households eligible to have responded to that item. As described above, poverty status is determined based on the result of several items on the questionnaire. To the extent that those items may have nonresponse, the estimates of poverty may be influenced by those as well. For

² The 2004 Public Use File technical documentation is available online at <http://www.census.gov/aprd/techdoc/cps/cpsmar04.pdf>

example, one element of income is earnings. In the 2003 ACS, 15.9 percent of aggregate earned income data for people 16 years and older was allocated. In the 2004 CPS ASEC (2003 income data), 31.4 percent of aggregate earned income data for people 16 and over was allocated. For more information on nonresponse rates, see the Data Quality Measures on the ACS website at <<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/sse/index.htm>> and the CPS ASEC Technical Paper 63RV.

Eligible respondents

In the 2000 through 2004 ACS, data collection is limited only to people living in housing units. It includes both the civilian and military populations and excludes group quarter residents. On the other hand, the CPS ASEC represents the civilian non-institutional population and therefore includes people living in noninstitutional group quarters, such as college dormitories. The CPS data collection includes military personnel who live in housing units with at least one other civilian adult.

The universe for the official poverty estimates from the CPS ASEC is the civilian non-institutionalized population. The poverty universe also excludes unrelated individuals under 15 years old, people living in military barracks, and people living in institutional group quarters.

College students living in dormitories are treated differently in the two surveys. The CPS includes these students in the household where they maintain their permanent address, that is, their family home address within the United States. Therefore, their poverty status is based on their entire family income.

As the ACS did not include group quarters in 2003, college students living (away from their parent's house) in dormitories for more than 2 months were not included. As a result, during some of the data collection period – for example in August when college students may be living at home on summer break – data on college students may have been collected with their families. At other times during the year – for example in April when college students have been living in their dormitories for more than 2 months – data on college students may not have been collected in the ACS. When ACS added group quarters during the full implementation, the college dormitory residents were sampled and interviewed.

This exclusion of group quarters population may have a slight effect on the poverty rate estimate. Since people in households tend to have lower poverty rates than people living in group quarters, the ACS poverty rate may be lower than it would have been if it included group quarters residents. The ACS is scheduled to include group quarters population in 2006.

Time frame / Reference period

Since the ACS collects data nearly everyday of the year and asks for income received during the 12 months previous to the interview, the yearly estimates combine 12 different reference periods spanning 23 months. For example, for a household responding in October of 2003, the reference period for reporting income was October 2002 through September 2003. This type of reference period presents a challenge to respondents who are more used to thinking of income in terms of

calendar year as they do for tax-reporting purposes.³ In order to assess poverty status, the ACS uses the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to adjust the thresholds for the month of interview. The number and percentage of people reported in poverty for the given year include all the people interviewed in that year, regardless of the reference period. As an example, poverty rates from the 2003 ACS represent a reference period which spans from January 2002 through November 2003 (see Figure 1).

On the other hand, the CPS ASEC conducts interviews from February to April and asks about the previous calendar year income-- the 2004 CPS ASEC uses 2003 as the income reference period. The ASEC is conducted during these three months to take advantage of the individual income tax-reporting time frame. Since April 15th is the deadline for filing the previous year's tax returns, respondents are likely to have recently prepared tax returns or be in the midst of preparing such returns and might report their income more accurately than at other times of the year.

Family definitions

The CPS ASEC identifies families in 2 ways--as primary families and as unrelated subfamilies. Primary families are families made up of the householder and the people related to the householder. Unrelated subfamilies are groups of people related to each other, but not related to the householder. ACS collects relationship information only in reference to the householder, the person in whose name the house is owned or rented, as a result the survey cannot identify unrelated subfamilies. CPS ASEC allows people in unrelated subfamilies to combine their income for the purpose of determining their poverty status, whereas ACS treats those people as unrelated individuals. Because the poverty universe excludes people under the age of 15 who are not living in families (unrelated individuals), the two surveys will have slightly different universes. The ACS will have more children under 15 who are excluded from ACS poverty universe because they are not related to the householder.⁴ This difference in definition of secondary families between these two surveys may affect the poverty rate estimate of people.

Comparison of Poverty Rate Estimates **National estimates of individual poverty rates**

Based on the national 2003 ACS estimate, 35.8 million people, 12.7 percent of all people for whom poverty status is determined, had income below poverty level. This estimate is higher than the 2002 ACS estimate of 34.8 million or 12.4 percent (see Table 1).

Estimates obtained from the CPS ASEC were comparable to the estimates from the ACS listed above. According to 2004 ASEC, 35.9 million people, 12.5 percent of all people for whom

³ A split-panel test of reporting income by calendar year versus by the previous 12 months showed that respondents reported lower earnings for the previous 12 months compared with the previous calendar year. See Nelson, Charles, Edward Welniak, and Kirby Posey, "Income in the American Community Survey: Comparisons to Census 2000," US Census Bureau working paper, available online at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/ASA_nelson.pdf

⁴ In 2003, the CPS ASEC estimated that 1.2 million people lived in unrelated subfamilies, 652,000 of these were children under age 18. See POV01 of the detailed poverty tables available online at <http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032004/pov/toc.htm>.

poverty status is determined, had income below poverty level in 2003. In 2002, the corresponding estimates were 34.6 million people or 12.1 percent with income below poverty level.

Comparing the estimates across the two surveys, both the estimated number of people with incomes below the poverty level and the poverty rates for 2003 were not significantly different between the two surveys.

Age

Both surveys estimated that the 2003 poverty rate for children under 18 was higher than any of the other age groups (see Table 1). The ACS estimated about 12.7 million children (17.7 percent) were in poverty in 2003, compared with 19.9 million (11.3 percent) people between 18 and 64 years. For people 65 and older, the survey estimated 3.3 million (9.8 percent) with income below the poverty level.

For the same year, the ASEC, estimated the number of children in poverty at 12.9 million (17.6 percent of children under 18) . Among people 18 to 64 years, 19.4 million (10.8 percent) and for people 65 and older 3.6 million (10.2 percent) were in poverty.

Comparison of the 2003 national estimates between the surveys shows that both the poverty rates and the estimated numbers of children in poverty were not statistically different in the ACS and ASEC, while only the poverty rates for people 65 years and older show the same result. In 2003, the poverty rate in the ACS for children under 18 was 17.7 percent, not different from the corresponding CPS estimate of 17.6 percent. For people 65 years and older, ACS estimated 9.8 percent, not different from the ASEC estimate of 10.2 percent (see Table 1).

Comparing the estimates of change from 2002 to 2003 shows that the national poverty rates in ACS did not change for children under 18 and for people 65 years and older, while the poverty rate increased for people 18 to 64 from 10.9 percent in 2002 to 11.3 percent in 2003.

Making an analogous comparison of 2002 and 2003 using CPS ASEC estimates shows that the poverty rate remained unchanged for all age groups except for children under 18. The poverty rate for children under 18 years increased from 16.7 percent in 2002 to 17.6 percent in 2003.

Sex

Table 1 also shows the estimated numbers and percentage in poverty of people by sex from both surveys. In 2003, the ACS estimated 15.5 million or 11.3 percent of males were in poverty, an increase from 14.8 million or 10.9 percent in 2002. In 2003, 20.3 million females were in poverty, a slight increase from 19.9 million in 2002. The poverty rate for females between 2003 and 2002 did not change significantly (14.1 percent in 2003 and 13.9 percent in 2002).

The corresponding CPS ASEC figures were 15.8 million or 11.2 percent of males in poverty in 2003, which is not statistically different from 2002 estimates of 15.2 million and 10.9 percent. In

2003, about 20.1 million or 13.7 percent of females were in poverty while it was 19.4 million or 13.3 percent 2002, which are also statistically not different from each other.

Comparison of the CPS ASEC estimated number of males and females in poverty with the ACS estimates revealed no significant differences in 2002 and 2003. On the other hand, comparison of the rates shows a different picture. Male poverty rates did not differ significantly in ACS and CPS ASEC in both 2002 and 2003, while female rates were statistically different in both years. Specifically, the ACS female poverty rates (14.1 percent in 2003 and 13.9 percent in 2002) higher than the CPS rates in the corresponding years (13.7 percent in 2003 and 13.3 percent in 2002) (see Table 1).

National estimates of family poverty rates

Even though there is a difference in identifying unrelated subfamilies, both surveys adopt a similar core definition of a family. They both use a similar definition based on the person's relationship to the householder. Thus, the number and percentage of families or people in families in poverty obtained from CPS are comparable to estimates from ACS.

In 2003, the ACS estimated that 9.8 percent of families in the United States had incomes below poverty level, an increase from 9.6 percent in 2002. The CPS ASEC also showed an increase in percentage of families in poverty to 10.0 percent in 2003 from 9.6 percent in 2002. The ACS and CPS poverty rate estimates for families were not statistically different from each other for 2002 to 2003 .

Both surveys show that poverty rate was lower for married-couple families compared with single-parent families. According to the ACS for 2003, the poverty rate was 4.8 percent for married-couple families, 13.5 percent for male-householder families with no wife present, and 28.3 percent for female-householder families with no husband present. The corresponding estimates from the CPS were 5.4 percent, 13.5 percent, and 28.0 percent, respectively.

Table 1 shows that both surveys produce comparable poverty rate estimates for all families and the different types of families. Among these pairs of 2003 poverty rate estimates, only the rate for married-couple families showed significant difference between the surveys (4.8 percent in ACS was lower than 5.4 percent in CPS).

State estimates of poverty rates

CPS uses multi-year averages to increase the reliability of state estimates. For this paper, 2-year averages for 2002-2003 are used since they approximate the reference period of the ACS respondents and provide more reliable estimates than 2003 alone. In the annual poverty report, the Census Bureau uses 3-year CPS ASEC averages to compare states estimates and 2-year moving averages to measure changes.

A 2-year average rate represents the effects of a two year period economic situations that may have a bearing on the poverty rate, depending upon the direction of the economic growth at the

time. Thus, if the economy is improving in the later year, the 2-year average poverty rate of a given state may be higher than it would be if only the later year was included.

Table 2 presents national and state data comparing 2-year average CPS ASEC to 2003 ACS. At the national level, the 2-year average poverty rate of the CPS ASEC (12.3 percent) is lower than the ACS estimate of 12.7 percent.

In 14 states and the District of Columbia, the 2-year average CPS estimates differed from the 2003 ACS at the 90-percent confidence level. In three of these states (Arkansas, Illinois, and Maine), the 2-year average CPS ASEC rate was higher. In the other 11 states (Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Oregon) and the District of Columbia, the CPS ASEC estimate was lower than ACS estimate. A further comparison of the 50 states and the District of Columbia showed that 25 states had a difference of less than 1 percentage point, and 15 states had a difference of less than 0.5 percentage point.

Summary

This report shows that CPS ASEC and ACS are relatively consistent in their estimates of poverty at the national level. Differences in methodology suggest that one of the surveys may result in higher or lower estimates of poverty, but the data do not show a systematic difference between the surveys.

Comparisons of poverty rates for the nation for selected characteristics show that overall the number and percentage of people in poverty was the same in both surveys. Furthermore, between 2002 and 2003, both surveys found no statistical difference in the number of people in poverty and both showed an increase in the poverty rate.

For selected characteristics, the national estimates of poverty rates differed between the two surveys. For example, the 2003 percentage of people 18 to 64 years old in poverty was higher in ACS (11.3 percent) than in the CPS ASEC (10.8 percent). The 2003 ACS estimate was higher than the 2002 estimate that was not different from the 2002 CPS ASEC estimate.

The state poverty rates were the same in ACS and CPS ASEC for 36 states. Of the remaining, the ACS estimated higher poverty rates than the CPS ASEC in 12 states and lower poverty rates in 2 states and the District of Columbia. The absolute value of the differences was less than 0.5 percentage points, which leaves open the question of whether these observed differences represent meaningful differences.

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Table 1. Number and Percentage of People in Poverty by Selected Characteristics and Survey: 2002 and 2003

| Characteristics | ACS | | CPS ASEC | | Difference ² |
|--|----------|------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Estimate | Margin of Error ¹ | Estimate | Margin of Error ¹ | |
| 2003 | | | | | |
| Number (in thousands) | | | | | |
| All individuals | 35,846 | 426 | 35,861 | 673 | -15 |
| AGE | | | | | |
| Under 18 years | 12,673 | 125 | 12,866 | 347 | -193 |
| 18 to 64 years | 19,854 | 162 | 19,443 | 508 | 411 |
| 65 and older | 3,319 | 54 | 3,552 | 131 | -233 * |
| SEX | | | | | |
| Male | 15,511 + | 220 | 15,783 | 448 | -272 |
| Female | 20,335 + | 231 | 20,078 | 500 | 257 |
| FAMILY | | | | | |
| Married-couple family | 7,143 + | 87 | 7,607 + | 185 | -464 * |
| Male householder, no wife present | 2,645 | 51 | 3,115 | 109 | -470 * |
| Female householder, no husband present | 637 | 28 | 636 + | 47 | 1 |
| | 3,861 + | 62 | 3,856 + | 123 | 5 |
| Percent | | | | | |
| All individuals | 12.7 + | 0.2 | 12.5 + | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| AGE | | | | | |
| Under 18 years | 17.7 | 0.2 | 17.6 + | 0.5 | 0.1 |
| 18 to 64 years | 11.3 + | 0.1 | 10.8 | 0.3 | 0.5 * |
| 65 and older | 9.8 | 0.2 | 10.2 | 0.4 | -0.4 |
| SEX | | | | | |
| Male | 11.3 + | 0.2 | 11.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 |
| Female | 14.1 | 0.2 | 13.7 | 0.3 | 0.4 * |
| FAMILY | | | | | |
| Married-couple family | 9.8 + | 0.1 | 10.0 + | 0.2 | -0.2 |
| Male householder, no wife present | 4.8 | 0.1 | 5.4 | 0.2 | -0.6 * |
| Female householder, no husband present | 13.5 | 0.5 | 13.5 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| | 28.3 | 0.4 | 28.0 + | 1.0 | 0.3 |
| 2002 | | | | | |
| Number (in thousands) | | | | | |
| All individuals | 34,763 | 437 | 34,570 | 662 | 193 |
| AGE | | | | | |
| Under 18 years | 12,518 | 135 | 12,133 | 339 | 385 * |
| 18 to 64 years | 19,013 | 166 | 18,861 | 501 | 152 |
| 65 and older | 3,232 | 52 | 3,576 | 132 | -344 * |
| SEX | | | | | |
| Male | 14,847 | 205 | 15,162 | 440 | -315 |
| Female | 19,916 | 260 | 19,408 | 492 | 508 |
| FAMILY | | | | | |
| Married-couple family | 6,952 | 90 | 7,229 | 179 | -277 * |
| Male householder, no wife present | 2,584 | 60 | 3,052 | 108 | -468 * |
| Female householder, no husband present | 601 | 29 | 564 | 44 | 37 |
| | 3,768 | 59 | 3,613 | 118 | 155 * |
| Percent | | | | | |
| All individuals | 12.4 | 0.2 | 12.1 | 0.2 | 0.3 * |
| AGE | | | | | |
| Under 18 years | 17.6 | 0.2 | 16.7 | 0.5 | 0.9 * |
| 18 to 64 years | 10.9 | 0.1 | 10.6 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| 65 and older | 9.6 | 0.1 | 10.4 | 0.4 | -0.8 * |
| SEX | | | | | |
| Male | 10.9 | 0.1 | 10.9 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| Female | 13.9 | 0.2 | 13.3 | 0.3 | 0.6 * |
| FAMILY | | | | | |
| Married-couple family | 9.6 | 0.1 | 9.6 | 0.2 | 0.0 |
| Male householder, no wife present | 4.8 | 0.1 | 5.3 | 0.2 | -0.5 * |
| Female householder, no husband present | 12.8 | 0.6 | 12.1 | 1.0 | 0.7 |
| | 28.3 | 0.4 | 26.5 | 1.0 | 1.8 * |

* Statistically significant difference between ACS and CPS ASEC estimates at the 90-percent confidence level.

+ Indicates 2003 estimates with significant differences from the 2002 estimate.

¹ This number added to or subtracted from the estimate yields the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.

² The percentage-point difference and is calculated as ACS minus CPS ASEC. All calculations and tests of significance are done on unrounded estimates and standard errors.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2. Poverty Estimates by State: 2003 American Community Survey and 2002-2003 Current Population Survey

Percentage of People Below Poverty Level

| State | ACS | | CPS ASEC | | Difference ² |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Percentage | Margin of Error ¹ | 2-year Average (02-03) Percentage | Margin of Error ¹ | |
| United States | 12.7 | 0.1 | 12.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 * |
| Alabama | 17.1 | 0.7 | 14.7 | 2.7 | 2.4 * |
| Alaska | 9.7 | 1.0 | 9.2 | 2.1 | 0.5 |
| Arizona | 15.4 | 0.7 | 13.5 | 2.7 | 1.9 * |
| Arkansas | 16.0 | 0.9 | 18.8 | 3.2 | -2.8 * |
| California | 13.4 | 0.4 | 13.1 | 1.2 | 0.3 |
| Colorado | 9.8 | 1.2 | 9.7 | 2.0 | 0.1 |
| Connecticut | 8.1 | 0.9 | 8.2 | 1.8 | -0.1 |
| Delaware | 8.7 | 1.1 | 8.2 | 2.1 | 0.5 |
| District of Columbia | 19.9 | 1.5 | 16.9 | 3.1 | 3.0 * |
| Florida | 13.1 | 0.4 | 12.6 | 1.5 | 0.5 |
| Georgia | 13.4 | 0.7 | 11.5 | 2.4 | 1.9 * |
| Hawaii | 10.9 | 1.3 | 10.3 | 2.3 | 0.6 |
| Idaho | 13.8 | 1.4 | 10.8 | 2.5 | 3.0 * |
| Illinois | 11.3 | 0.6 | 12.7 | 1.6 | -1.4 * |
| Indiana | 10.6 | 0.8 | 9.5 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| Iowa | 10.1 | 0.9 | 9.1 | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| Kansas | 10.8 | 1.1 | 10.4 | 2.2 | 0.4 |
| Kentucky | 17.4 | 1.4 | 14.3 | 2.6 | 3.1 * |
| Louisiana | 20.3 | 1.0 | 17.2 | 3.0 | 3.1 * |
| Maine | 10.5 | 0.9 | 12.5 | 2.2 | -2.0 * |
| Maryland | 8.2 | 0.8 | 8.0 | 1.8 | 0.2 |
| Massachusetts | 9.4 | 0.6 | 10.1 | 1.9 | -0.7 |
| Michigan | 11.4 | 0.6 | 11.5 | 1.7 | -0.1 |
| Minnesota | 7.8 | 0.5 | 6.9 | 1.7 | 0.9 |
| Mississippi | 19.9 | 1.0 | 17.2 | 3.2 | 2.7 * |
| Missouri | 11.7 | 0.6 | 10.3 | 2.1 | 1.4 |
| Montana | 14.2 | 1.3 | 14.3 | 3.0 | -0.1 |
| Nebraska | 10.8 | 0.9 | 10.2 | 2.3 | 0.6 |
| Nevada | 11.5 | 1.1 | 9.9 | 2.1 | 1.6 |
| New Hampshire | 7.7 | 0.9 | 5.8 | 1.6 | 1.9 * |
| New Jersey | 8.4 | 0.6 | 8.3 | 1.5 | 0.1 |
| New Mexico | 18.6 | 1.5 | 18.0 | 3.4 | 0.6 |
| New York | 13.5 | 0.5 | 14.2 | 1.4 | -0.7 |
| North Carolina | 14.0 | 0.7 | 15.0 | 2.2 | -1.0 |
| North Dakota | 11.7 | 1.2 | 10.6 | 2.3 | 1.1 |
| Ohio | 12.1 | 0.5 | 10.3 | 1.6 | 1.8 * |
| Oklahoma | 16.1 | 1.2 | 13.5 | 2.6 | 2.6 * |
| Oregon | 13.9 | 0.9 | 11.7 | 2.4 | 2.2 * |
| Pennsylvania | 10.9 | 0.5 | 10.0 | 1.4 | 0.9 |
| Rhode Island | 11.3 | 1.0 | 11.3 | 2.1 | 0.0 |
| South Carolina | 14.1 | 1.0 | 13.5 | 2.5 | 0.6 |
| South Dakota | 11.1 | 1.4 | 12.1 | 2.3 | -1.0 |
| Tennessee | 13.8 | 0.8 | 14.4 | 2.8 | -0.6 |
| Texas | 16.3 | 0.6 | 16.3 | 1.6 | 0.0 |
| Utah | 10.6 | 1.0 | 9.5 | 2.2 | 1.1 |
| Vermont | 9.7 | 1.0 | 9.2 | 2.1 | 0.5 |
| Virginia | 9.0 | 0.9 | 10.0 | 2.1 | -1.0 |
| Washington | 11.0 | 1.1 | 11.8 | 2.4 | -0.8 |
| West Virginia | 18.5 | 1.2 | 17.1 | 2.7 | 1.4 |
| Wisconsin | 10.5 | 1.2 | 9.2 | 1.9 | 1.3 |
| Wyoming | 9.7 | 1.0 | 9.4 | 2.2 | 0.3 |

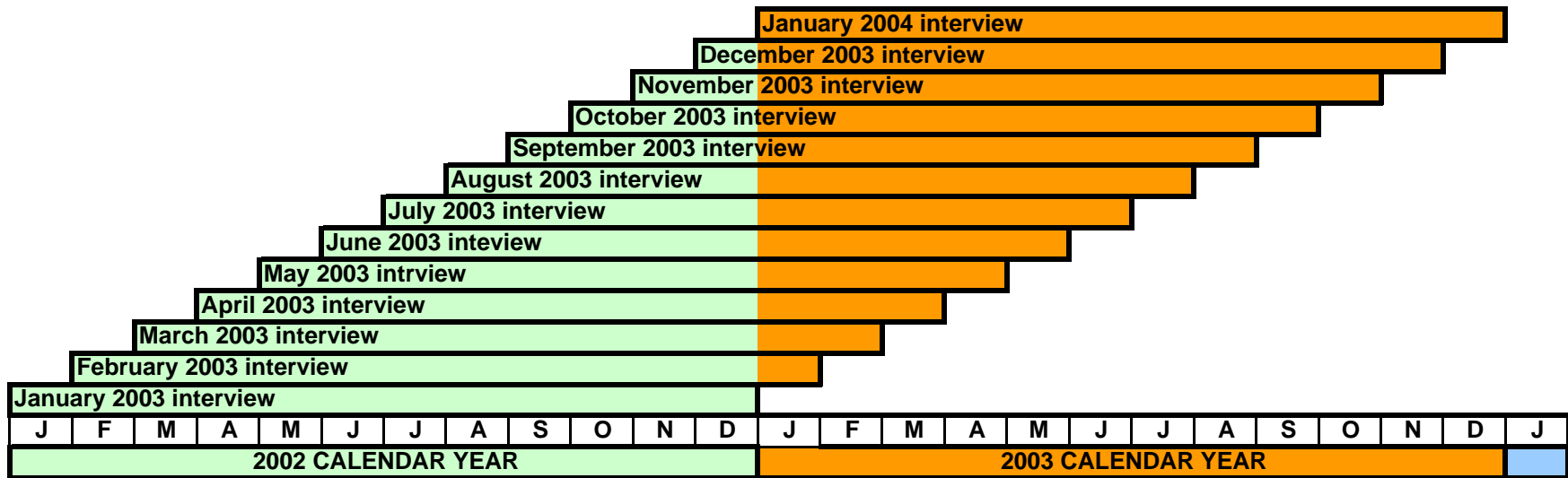
* Statistically significant difference at the 90-percent confidence level.

¹ This number added to or subtracted from the estimate yields the 90-percent confidence interval around the

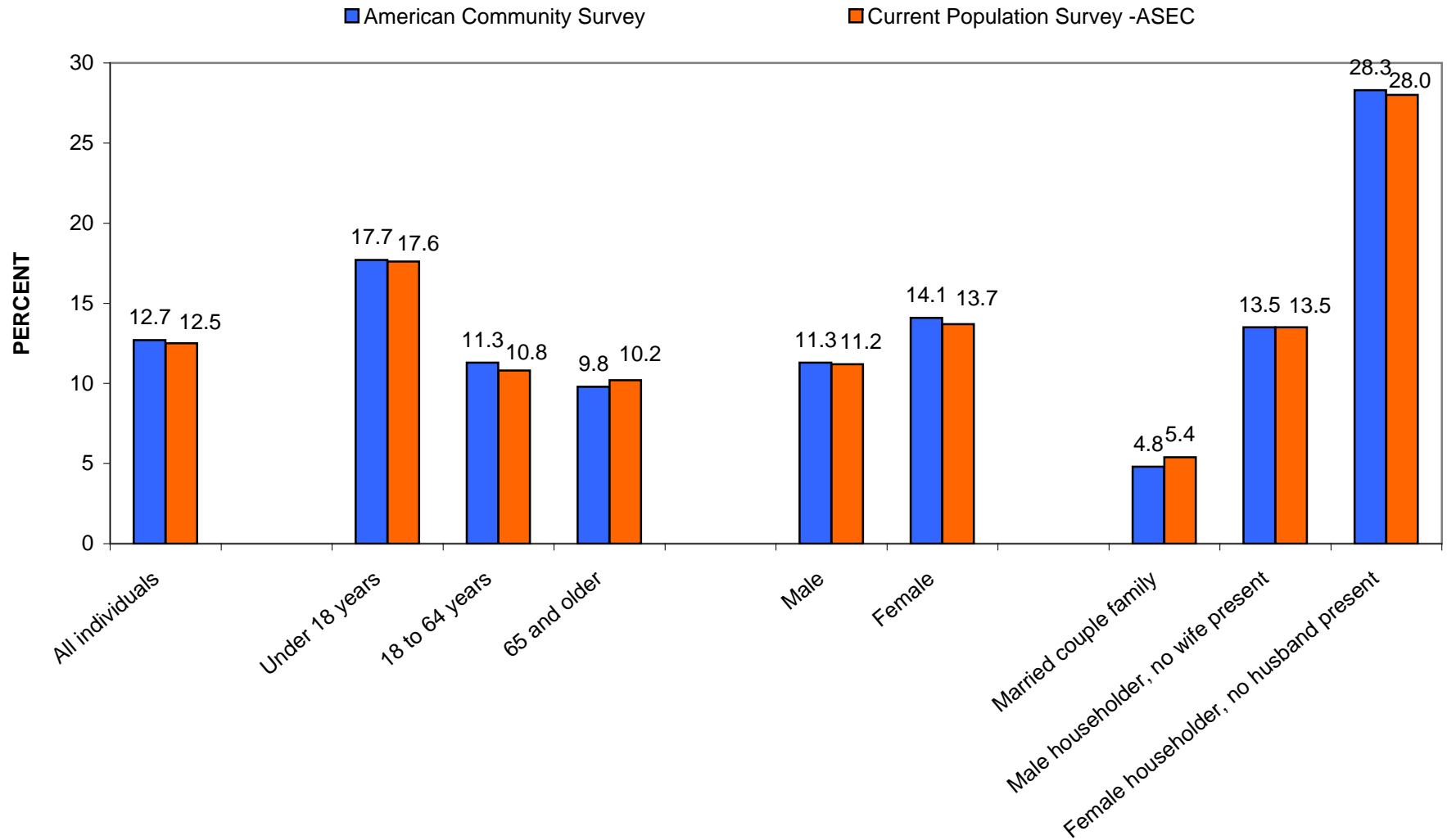
² The percentage-point difference is calculated as ACS minus CPS ASEC. All calculations and tests of significance are done on unrounded estimates and standard errors.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 1. Illustration of rolling (overlapping) reference period of income in the past 12 months by month of ACS interview: 2003



**Figure 2. COMPARISON OF 2003 POVERTY RATE ESTIMATES
American Community Survey VS Current Population Survey**



Source: 2003 American Community Survey and 2004 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.