

Using American Community Survey Summary File Data Webinar Transcript

January 25, 2017

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This presentation was presented as a webinar to the general public on January 25, 2017 by Gretchen Gooding of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office. A link to the recording is available at

<https://census.webex.com/census/lsr.php?RCID=e529fb8e44e0ce309cc24b545d53887c>

The transcript of the webinar follows. Slide references and links have been added to the spoken text as appropriate.

Man: Welcome and thank you for standing by.

At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today's conference. At that time you may hit star one on your touch tone phone to ask a question. I would also like to inform all parties that today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Ms. Gretchen Gooding.

Thank you, ma'am, you may begin.

Slide 1: Title Slide

Gretchen Gooding: All right, thank you. Before I get started I just wanted to let everyone know that we did post the slides for today's presentation on our website. You can see the URL at the bottom of the screen. That program surveys ACS forward slash news forward slash events in the Summary File. So if you'd like to follow along by downloading or printing the slides then you can do that. I think - I received comments last year that people would find that helpful.

So go ahead and do that and then also after we're done we'll be - post the recording, the slides, and the transcript from today's presentation on our website (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/training-presentations.html>). You can also access that later. Hopefully you don't worry about frantically writing down the all URLs that you see.

So as we mentioned this is the Using American Community Survey Summary File Data webinar and I'm Gretchen Gooding and I'm from the American Community Survey Office here at the Census Bureau.

Slide 2: Outline

So to talk about - what we're going to talk about today first I'll discuss some basics of the ACS -- including content, availability of data products and geographies -- and then I'm going to show you an option called the American FactFinder Download Center.

I suspect that many of you are on the call today because you're probably looking for lots of data probably at smaller geographies, and I just want to show you one option that's kind of a good - a good option to get that data before going into the Summary File. And then if that's not what you're looking for I will kind of delve into what is the ACS Summary File and talk about different ways to access it -- including the retrieval tool, DataFerrett, the API, the FTP site, the TIGER/Line Shapefiles -- and then I'm going to wrap up and I'll take questions at the end.

Slide 3: ACS Basics

So the ACS. I suspect many of you are familiar with our survey if you're here for this conference call or here for this presentation. It's an ongoing survey that's sent to three and half million addresses per year, and it produces the detailed population and housing estimates. And we also visit group quarter facilities.

It's designed to produce the critical information on small areas and I'm going to talk about what some of those small geographies are -- like tracts and block groups -- in a minute. And also small population groups that were previously collected on the decennial long form.

So in the past we would have kind of a large update every 10 years of what's happening in the country, and now with the ACS we're doing this every year.

And now the decennial census is a just short form and the ACS is collecting detailed information. We cover 35 topics and I'm going to show you more of what those are. And then we support over 300 known federal uses and also many, many non-federal uses.

We have two big data releases each year. The one-year estimate based on 12 months of data and the five-year estimates based on 60 months of data. And I'll also go over that a little bit more in a future slide.

Slide 4: ACS Content

So our content, we largely group into four categories -- social, economic, housing, and demographic. And as an example, today we just released a report Veterans in Rural America

(<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/acs/acs-36.html>), so that's a social characteristic. We collect information about the veteran population and then -- just as kind of an example for today -- that report covers the demographic information you see here like age, sex, Hispanic origin, race, relationship. And then also we're able to kind of cross that by economic characteristics. Particularly in this report, we're looking at employment, industry, and occupation what not. And then it also even looked at housing characteristics like computer and internet use.

And so you've got - you have all this different content that's coming from the American Community Survey. So that's kind of a snapshot of what we have.

We have over 35 topics, over 1000 tables, and billions and billions of estimates.

Slide 5: Selected Census Geographic Concepts

So what we - I like to say is what puts the community in the American Community Survey is geography. So our information is definitely interesting at the national level, but what most people find is that they like to see it for their community, you know, whether that's something small -- like a tract or block group, or maybe it's a congressional district, a school district, their city - you know, the ACS is often the only source of information for these smaller geographies.

So you can see on here we have some of the geographies for which ACS data are produced and the relationship between them. So those lower geographic areas fit neatly within the larger areas that are connected with the lines. You can see that block groups nest into tracts, tracts into counties, whatnot. And again I suspect most of you are looking for that smaller data.

So as a reminder, the Census tracts are divisions of counties and they have an optimal size of 4000 people or 1600 housing units. And then our smallest level of geography in the ACS are block groups -- and they're divisions of tracts -- and they have anywhere between 600 and 3000 people and between 240 to 1200 housing units.

Slide 6: Availability of ACS Data Products

And then the ACS -- I kind of alluded to earlier -- we release information every year. And so we release it a year after the data is collected and so generally in September we'll release the one-year estimates, those are for areas of 65,000 or more. So we plan in this September to release the 2016 ACS one-year estimate, so that's based on data collected from January to December of 2016.

And then we have a new product I want to make sure people are aware of called the one-year supplemental estimates. So it just came out last year for the first time. And these are a smaller set of Detailed Tables that are available for geographic areas for of 20,000 or more and they're just simplified versions of some of our popular tables. So not as much detail as what you would get in the full one-year or five-year release but they hit on some of the key topics that people are looking for. And so we plan to release those 2016 supplemental estimates in October.

And then the five-year data set -- five-year estimates -- goes all the way down to our small geographies, tracts, and block groups and those will come out in December -- so that'll be the the 2012 to 2016 five-year estimates coming out in December -- and so if you're looking again for tracts and block groups you're only going to find them in the five-year estimates.

Slide 7: Outline

Slide 8: AFF Download Center

And now I want to talk about an option for you called the American FactFinder Download Center and this is a great way to get - it's a lot of tables for smaller geographies. So if you don't want to go into the Summary File -- maybe you're a new user -- I just want to make you aware of this option and then we'll go into the Summary File itself.

So the Download Center is available at factfinder.census.gov (https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/download_center.xhtml) and you'll see in that kind of blue ribbon at the top of the page that Download Center is highlighted there in gold next to Advance Search and it's very easy it's a guided search.

So you're going to say I know the data center table that I want to download and click next.

Slide 9: 2-Dataset

And then you move on to step two and you pick your program, of course the American Community Survey is what we're looking at today. And I'm using a little bit out dated screenshots -- the 2015 estimates would be there now but for this example I'm going to use the 2014 five-year estimates -- and just say Add to your Selection and Next, you're probably seeing a pattern here at this point.

Slide 10: 3-Geographies

And then what's really cool here is when you get to step three and geographies, you can select the geographic type -- so in this example I'm doing block groups for the state of Michigan -- and then here you can get all the block groups for your state. So this is the only spot in FactFinder where you can get all the block groups for a state.

If you go through the normal advanced search you can do it by county, but if you're looking again for lots of data you can do all the block groups. And then you can also do all the tracts for the United States. So that's kind of a unique feature of the Download Center and a reason why you might be interested in using it.

Slide 11: 4-Search Results

Again, just add to your selections and say next. And then you'll get to the search results. Here I just picked one table -- an employment status table -- but you can actually pick up to 40 tables at a time. So again you could do all the block groups for your state and get 40 tables in one run in FactFinder. So I think that's a really good option for people.

Slide 12: Table B23025

And then you'll say next, you'll get a ZIP file to download and when you open it up to edit it in Excel you get something that looks like this. So basically it looks like the table you would see in FactFinder and if you want more information we have instructions on our website. So again that's - these slides

are available on our website if you want to download those or print them you'll have all these URLs handy for later on.

Slide 13: Outline

Slide 14: What is the ACS Summary File?

So if the download center wasn't what you were looking for -- if you really are here because you want to learn about the Summary File -- I'm going to go talk about that right now. So what is the Summary File? It is a set of comma delimited text files that contain all of our ACS Detailed Tables.

And by comma delimited I mean the files that contain estimates or margins of error separated by commas -- and I'm going to show you what that looks like in the next slide -- and by Detailed Tables I mean all of our tables that start with a B or a C. So in that FactFinder example I was looking at a table that started with a B and that's one of our Detailed Tables.

They're stored in a series of files on the FTP site. Essentially, we have so many tables that we can't just put them all in one file so we have them in a series of files called sequences. And these files contain only the data from the tables -- so you're just getting your estimates or you're getting your margins of error -- it doesn't have kind of all that descriptive information like the title or what's in each row.

And the tables are already tabulated for specific geographic areas. So if you're thinking that you want to create your own table, you know, pull your own variables, create your own table, that's what the PUMS is for -- the Public Use Microdata Sample files. Here in the Summary File the tables are already made.

Slide 15: AFF vs. Summary File

This is kind of an example of what you would see in the upper left hand corner. I have a table I pulled from FactFinder -- it's the same table here as

B23025-- so I know it's a Detailed Table because it starts with that B -- for base table -- and it's really easy to kind of figure out what you're looking at.

You have that table ID and then you have a title "Employment status for the population 16 years and over." You see that the unit first is the population 16 and over, you can tell that you're looking at the 2010 to 2014 five-year estimate. And then you can see the geography we're looking that block group one census tract one, Alcona county Michigan. And then I have outlined the estimates so you can see that 595 corresponds to total, 174 in the labor force, whatnot.

In the lower right hand corner I have the same information from the Summary File that I alluded to earlier, you're literally just getting those estimates separated by commas.

You can see how FactFinder -- if you're a newer user -- would be more helpful and the Summary File's kind of geared more toward our advanced users who can kind of make sense of what you're seeing in this file.

Slide 16: How to Use the ACS SF

So how do you use the Summary File? First you want to figure out if your table is available for your geographic level of interest. Not all of our tables are published at the block group level, it's often times why we get phone calls from people who are like, you know, "I'm looking for this table and I think it's missing, you know, maybe an error." Sometime it's just not published for that geography.

I'll show you how you can make sure your table is available. And then we have these different tools we're going to walk through for how to access the Summary File data and I'll go through those one at a time.

Slide 17: Summary File Page

Now I'm on our website [census.gov/acs](https://www.census.gov/acs). I'm going to our technical documentation on the left-hand side and then I'm going to the Summary File documentation (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/summary-file-documentation.html>), and then picking your year of interest since we have many years of ACS you want to make sure you're looking in the right year.

And then we include this appendice, the five-year appendice (sic). And so if you open that up it's an Excel file and you're looking at appendix A.

Slide 18: Check Appendix for Table

And when you open that up -- I just did a little screenshot here -- but we have all the table numbers -- again B23025, my example -- we tell you what the title is, "Employment status for the population 16 and over". And then you can check and see, there's some kind of geographic restriction.

In this example there are none, but you can see at the bottom there's a table that's not available at the block group level, so that's indicated. And then if you're kind of a hardcore Summary File user and you're going to go into the FTP site -- I'm going to talk about that in a minute -- you'd want to know that it's in sequence 78. Basically, there are - because there's so many tables we can't fit them all in one file and so we know that the 78th file -- sequence 78 -- contains your table of interest here.

And then I'd want to know where it starts in that file and where it ends. And so here it's positions 38 to 44. So if you are an FTP user this would be useful information. Some of the tools I'm going to show you, you don't have to have this information. But kind of a good place to start and check.

Slide 19: Outline

So now you've been to your website - our website and you know if your table is available for the geography you're looking for and we're going to start

walking through some of these tools roughly ordered in ease of use, although of course depends on your background too.

Slide 20: Summary File Retrieval Tool

So the Summary File Retrieval Tool, this tool includes our datasets through 2012. It's no longer being updated, so it hasn't been updated for many years.

Initially when we released block group data for ACS it wasn't on American FactFinder and so this retrieval tool was kind of a way for people to access that data without having to go and, like, pull out the FTP files, you know, one by one.

So we're not going to talk about this much but I have in past webinars if you want more details. So basically allows you to load tables into an Excel spreadsheet -- kind of similar to the AFF download center -- so you need to have Excel 2007 or newer to run it. And you can access all your tracts and block groups per table, per state. And that link on the bottom is how you can access the tool (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/tools/summary-file-retrieval-tool.html>). There's also some more documentation about how to use it.

And I also talked about it more length last year so if you want to pull up this webinar from last year. But since it's not being updated, not too much interest in it any more.

Slide 21: Outline

Next, I'm going to talk about DataFerrett. So we're kind of warming our way up to the more advanced tools.

Slide 22: DataFerrett

So DataFerrett is the Census Bureau's data analysis and extraction tool. It includes the five-year Summary File as well as many other surveys, and it's helpful if you don't have access to statistical software.

It also includes the ACS PUMS data if you're a PUMS user. So when you get to dataferrett.census.gov you can click on launch DataFerrett, enter your email address, and then click Get Data Now (<https://dataferrett.census.gov/>).

Slide 23: Finding Summary Data

So when you get into DataFerrett and you're in step one, on the left hand side you'll see a number of datasets.

There's more than just the ACS in here -- so you'll collect - you'll click on search all data sets and then you'll expand the American Community Survey, summarize data, and then you'll look for your year of interest. I'm being consistent here and using the 2010 to 2014 and then the five-year Summary File and when you do that you're going to see all the table IDs.

And these are the same table IDs that you'd see in FactFinder. So again these B and C tables and once again I'm going to do B23025. And then if you see on the right side of the page I clicked on that table and I said to add all to data basket.

Slide 24: Select Geographies

So now that I've picked my table of interest I need to tell DataFerrett what geography I want it for. And so you'll see this outline of Needs to Be Selected - DataFerrett is now waiting for me to pick my geography of interest. So kind of similar to I'd say FactFinder -- maybe a little bit older looking -- is the way that you'd select your geography in DataFerrett.

Slide 25: Select Geographies

So you'd have this overlay screen that appears and you can see the different geographies available. So here I'm looking at block groups. And I'm going to click on that on the left side and then I'm going to double click kind of on the middle of the page on that state counties and census-tracked block group and say next.

Slide 26: Next Level-State

And so now it knows I want block groups. And it's going to say okay well what state do you want them for? And here I'm picking Michigan, so I'm either going to drag Michigan from the left box to the middle box or you can just double click on Michigan. And I'm going to say Next Level so it knows I want block groups from Michigan.

Slide 27: Next Level-County

Now it wants to know what county do I want them for? And here I'm going to say - I'm going to select all and drag it over and then click next level so I'm selecting all counties in Michigan. And you can see there's a bit of a repetitive process here.

Slide 28: Next Level-Census Tract

So now I'm at the track - census tract level. I'm going to say select all and I'm going to double click from the left side of the screen and click next level and then finally we get down to block groups.

Slide 29: Next Level-Block Group

So I'm going to click - double click on select all on the left side of the screen and I'll see all those block groups from Michigan appear on the right side of the screen and then I'll finish.

Slide 30: Step 2

Now DataFerrett - it knows the table I'm interested in and it knows the geography I'm interested in, so now it's ready for me to make the table. So I can move on to step 2 which is the data basket download, make a table. And I'm going to click on that make a table button -- it's outlined in red.

Slide 31: Make Table

The screenshot's a little bit blurry but essentially you're going to drag your geography over to row one and then you're going to start dragging your variables to the different columns.

So -- like, for example -- I can drag the total in labor force and labor force civilian, labor force, what not and then I'll tell DataFerrett to go get data.

Slide 32: Results

And then you see kind of similar to again the other tools that I've showed you, you'll see the table B23025 for the five-year ACS for tracts and block groups in Michigan. And so I'm getting the same estimate that's in the DataFerrett - that's in the FactFinder download center.

Slide 33: Outline

The next thing I'm going to talk about the Census API or Application Programming Interface.

Slide 34: Census API

So this is kind of a newer tool for the Census Bureau I didn't talk about it a lot last year. I feel like it's becoming more and more popular, so I just want to touch base and expand on that a little more.

So the Census API -- Application Programming Interface -- I have the URL there on the screen (<http://www.census.gov/developers/>). And it's really a source for developers to access data to create software applications. Every time I look at it or am updating a presentation I feel like they're adding more data sets to the API.

So it includes the ACS - our Summary File since it first came out and now it's also including our Subject Tables and our comparison profiles, and also include their Data Profiles, so more and more data is being added.

Slide 35: Available APIs

So when you get to the API website, census.gov/developers, on that left hand side of the screen you can say click on available APIs. The one-year data's in here, the five-year data's in here. And I'm going to pick the five-year data, and then again we have multiple years of it in here so you can pick your year of interest and then you can click on the Summary File section.

Slide 36: Table B23025

This is an example of a call to the API. And so you look at that URL, and it's very descriptive in what it's telling you. So it's telling you that I'm looking at

the 2014 ACS five-year estimate. So it means the 2010 to 2014 ACS five year estimate.

Again, I'm looking at table B23025, but what's cool about the API is that I don't have to necessarily get the entire table. I can just pick a particular estimate that I'm interested in. So if you only want the total from the table but you're not interested in how it's broken out -- for, you know, males and females or you don't need to know, you know, civilian labor force versus, you know, different kinds -- you can just pull what you want. So it makes it nice because you're not downloading or accessing as much information.

And here I'm saying that I want to get it for block groups in state 26 -- and that's the code that corresponds to Michigan -- and it's county 001 -- so the first county in Michigan. So you're really just able to get exactly what you want and you could also - I could expand my call. I could get more than one table and I could also get multiple geographies at one time.

And the nice thing about this is that you're querying the data directly from our servers and again -- as opposed to maybe the FTP site I'm going to talk about - - you're really only getting the variables and geographies that you want. So if you're interested in learning more about the API, we're going to do a webinar later this year in June called "Using the Census API With the American Community Survey". So that'll be coming up later this year.

Slide 37: Outline

Now I'm going to go and talk about the FTP site.

Slide 38: Summary File Organization

This is really for the customer who wants everything. You want every table, you want every geography. This is all kind of where it lives.

So the Summary File is available on our FTP site. You want make sure that you - if you have our FTP bookmarked we did change the URL a couple years

ago. If you go in the old spot you might think we haven't added data for a couple years. But you want to make sure you're going to that program surveys forward slash ACS, and once you're there there's lots of information up there (http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/summary_file/).

But you'll want to go to the Summary File, pick your year of interest -- here I'm doing 2014 -- and then there's a data file and documentation file. And here you just want to go to the data file. You can see we have the one-year Summary File and the five-year Summary File. And we have the files three different ways -- I've outlined in red -- that the five-year Summary File's organized. It's five-year by state, the entire Summary File, and sequenced by state. And these are the same combination of files they're just arranged differently to accommodate different data users.

So here, no surprises, I am picking this by state - sequence by state folder, the third option. I'm going to pick Michigan and then after I do that I have two options - two folders. You can see in the lower right hand corner one is the all geographies, not tracts and block groups. So it's the name would suggest it's going to have all the other geographies except for those small geographies of tracts and block groups. And then one called tracts and block groups only and that only has our tracts and block groups.

Slide 39: File Naming

So I'm going to go into the tracts and block groups only. And then you see the following name convention -- it kind of looks like bunches of letters and numbers -- and you're just like "Ah". But it actually does make quite a bit of sense what you're seeing here.

So the 2014 - that corresponds to the reference year. So we're looking at the '10 to '14 ACS five-year estimates -- the five is the period covered -- so again we're looking at five year estimates. You could also see a one here if you're

looking at the one-year estimates. The M-I corresponds to the state so here I'm looking at Michigan.

Another thing we see a lot with questions is there's a US folder. Sometimes people think the US folder has, like, everything for the nation in that file. And that's actually just for geographies that cross state boundaries like ZCTAs or metropolitan statistical areas. US does not include the entire country.

And then if you remember back when we looked on the website we looked at a sequence number. And so here we're going to look at sequence 78 -- so kind of the 78th ZIP file has our table of interest -- along with other tables. We want to know that because otherwise you'd be clicking through a lot of ZIP files to find your information.

And then we just have these three zeroes. It's called an iteration ID, they're always zero for ACS. And it's a standard, they're always there for the one- and five-year estimates.

Slide 40: Estimate, MOE, Geography Files

So I'm going to open up that 78 - the sequence file 78 I have outlined. And when you open it up, little hard to see but you basically get your estimates that start with E, margin of error starts with M. So you can see it's all your estimates separated by commas, all your margins of error separated by commas, and then also there's the geography file.

So these are kind of the three pieces that you need to stitch together to kind of get this - replicate kind of that same experience you had in FactFinder, where you can see the margin of error and the estimates for a particular geography.

Here they're just kind of separated out.

Slide 41: Starting and Ending Position

So anyway if we zoom in on one of the estimate files so you can see we have this number one corresponding to the ACSSF -- which is the ACS Summary

File -- which just reminds you that you're looking at the 2014 five-year estimate.

So 2014E5. Again, your state is Michigan, you're seeing those triple zeroes for the iteration ID, you're in sequence 78. So you want to make sure you're looking at the right sequence. And then this is a number, it's called the Logical Record Number -- that's kind of the piece that connects the estimate file, the margin of error file, and the geography file -- so you know kind of how to match them up.

And then in that kind of position 38 through 44 those are the estimates with the same information we saw in FactFinder and these other tools here in the Summary File. It's just a little bit harder to see because it's there with so many other estimates.

Slide 42: Templates

So we also do offer a template file. So if you have your - you can kind of merge in your estimates with this template file, and then you kind of make a little more sense of what you're seeing and kind of looks more like what you'd see in FactFinder.

Slide 43: Outline

So I'm down to our last option. You've seen a lot of different options, and this one is really geared towards our attendees who are interested in making maps visualizing ACS data. This is called the TIGER/Line Shapefile, so if the word Shapefile means something to you then you probably know what I'm talking about (<http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/data/tiger-data.html>).

Slide 44: TIGER/Line Shapefiles Pre-joined with Demographic Data

These are pre-joined with demographic data so - in geodatabase format, so again if you're interested in mapping our estimates this is a really great resource for you. It kinds of puts together different pieces so you're not having to pull in Shapefiles and then get data.

I'm told that the newest ACS estimates -- the data that came out in December, the 2011 to 2015 tables -- should be released by the end of February. So those'll be coming up soon.

And then also if you're interested in learning more about this product we will be doing a webinar in mid-May about using the geodatabase files with ArcMap, so that'll be coming up in a couple months.

Slide 45: Outline

So I'm going to wrap up here try to recap what we covered. I know we covered a lot of different information in half an hour so again, I do have those slides posted and then also we'll be posting this recording with the transcript and the slides so you can also look at this later and kind of sit down and play with it.

Slide 46: Summary File Documentation

So just to remind you the Summary File documentation page -- this has all the technical documentation for the Summary File. You can also access the appendices here, see, you know, where your tables are located in the Summary File. That's on our website under technical documentation and then Summary File documentation. And there's tabs for each year of the Summary File (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/summary-file-documentation.html>).

Slide 47: Options for Accessing Bulk Data

And to try to recap kind of why you would want to use each tool. There's not necessarily a discrete use for each thing -- there's kind of overlap in why you would want to use one or other -- but in general the download center in FactFinder - American FactFinder - one of the advantages of that tool I guess is that it's probably the easiest to use (https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/download_center.xhtml).

So if you're a new user it's a great place to go. You can download one geographic type -- but that kind of has a generous definition -- so you could be

getting all the block groups in your state or all the tracts in the nation. And you can do that for a table - for 40 tables at a time, so it's a good option particularly if you're interested in kind of minimal geographies but you want more tables.

The Summary File Retrieval Tool -- I talked about that briefly -- it's particularly useful if you're looking for block group data from the older ACS data sets. Again, it's not being updated any more, but if you are looking for some of the earlier years of Summary File block group data this is the tool that helps you.

DataFerrett - we talked about - it's good if you want a large number of geographic areas or a small number of tables.

The Census API, or Application Programming Interface. If you're a developer this is likely where you'd be going. But even if you're not a developer it's fairly easy to make calls to it if you understand how we, you know, name our tables and you understand a little bit about how the geography is coded.

And what's nice about this is that you can pick only the variables you want -- you don't have to get the entire table -- and you can also pick the geographies you want. You can do kind of multiple tables and geographies in your call.

And then if you are kind of a hardcore Summary File user and you want everything, it's likely you're going to go to our FTP site that has all the tables for every geography.

And then if you're interested in mapping, visualizing ACS data, you'd likely want to see those Shapefiles that are already pre-joined with our ACS estimates.

Slide 48: Questions?

Slide 49: Continue the Conversation #ACSdata

Gretchen Gooding: Right so while you do that I'll give you some of the ACS infomercials here. We are on social media using the hashtag ACS data (#ACSdata) and we'd like to know how you're using our data. So feel free to use that, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn. We're on all those different channels.

Also, we have a way that you can sign up to get a monthly alert as to what events we're going to, what webinars we're doing. You can see the URL there on the screen

(<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/subscriber/new>). And I talked a lot about our website [census.gov/acs](https://www.census.gov/acs), and then we also have contact information if you have a question you can contact us at 1-800-923-8282 or 301-763-1405.

Man: Thank you and we do have a question. Our first question comes from (Camille Kohler). Ma'am, your line is open.

(Camille Kohler): Hi there, thanks for the presentation by the way. To start, we have a set of users who generally download their data using the FactFinder but are looking for us to pull that data directly into our database using the API and we've noticed that in the Excel export from the FactFinder there's this alphanumeric reference above each column that looks like HD oh one underscore BD oh one or something like that.

But when you look in the API documentation it lists the variables by a table name -- like I don't know, B two zero two five or whatever it is. So we're wondering, is there a piece of documentation that would help us cross reference the variables that they're pulling from the FactFinder to the variables that we're seeing in the API?

Gretchen Gooding: That's a good question. Off the top of my head I don't have an answer for that but you can email that one in and we can take a look and connect you with the right staff and figure that out.

(Camille Kohler): Oh perfect.

Gretchen Gooding: And the email is - it's ACSO.users.support@census.gov. We can take a look at that.

(Camille Kohler): And was that ACSO...

Gretchen Gooding: Yes

(Camille Kohler): ... at users.gov?

Gretchen Gooding: Yes, the O is for office.

(Camille Kohler): Oh, okay, and what was the rest of it? ACSO.users.gov at...?

Gretchen Gooding: ACSO.users.support...

(Camille Kohler): .port...

Gretchen Gooding: ...support at census.gov

(Camille Kohler): Perfect. Thank you so much.

Gretchen Gooding: I don't have that one...

Man: Thank you. Our next question comes from (Alicia Ellster). Ma'am, your line is open.

(Alicia Ellster): Okay, thank you very much. Very helpful webinar. I'm a grant writer and our agency serves an age range of 18 to 24, and I only am able to get data for that specific range it seems like happenstance. Is there any way I can zero in on the 18 to 24 age range at the beginning of my search so that I can get right to that demographic information?

Gretchen Gooding: One of the products I didn't discuss at this webinar it's called PUMS - public use microdata sample. What geography are you looking for, are you looking for like a state, county, city...?

(Alicia Ellster): City, urban city Detroit in fact, in specific.

Gretchen Gooding: PUMS may be an option for you it's kind of where you can have - create your own tables pulling the variables. So you could probably do the ages - you could do 18 to 24. That's also another one where if you wanted to send in an email we can look more in FactFinder to see if there's tables that already have that age range. I'm not sure that there are many that have that.

(Alicia Ellster): Right. So can you give that - you said it's PUMS?

Gretchen Gooding: Yes, the project is called PUMS. But let's see if I can - is there a way I can add the email address? Let's see... It's the `ACSO.users.support@census.gov`. We're going to see if we can just add that to the screen since...

(Alicia Ellster): Oh, great.

Gretchen Gooding: ...you guys are asking some tough but good questions. So we're going to pause sharing and then we'll add that up there.

Man: And if we're ready for our next question, our next question comes from (Eileen Hobbs). Ma'am, your line is open.

(Eileen Hobbs): Hi, I - my question was about the age range search, so I did get that answered. However, I do not see anything now online that can give us that - those email addresses and I didn't - I thought you said ACSO users support. So if that's something that can - we can get again? I don't know if there's a way that it can be - is there a chat box it can be posted on here that I just don't see?

Gretchen Gooding: So I think we just added it...

(Eileen Hobbs): Oh.

Gretchen Gooding: ...can you see the email address?

(Eileen Hobbs): Yes.

Gretchen Gooding: Yes, so that is it.

(Eileen Hobbs): So, okay, and so then I'm just learning that there is no age sort in this data through ACS...

Gretchen Gooding: No, because the tables are...

(Eileen Hobbs): Can you confirm that?

Gretchen Gooding: ...premade and so there may be some tables that include 18 to 24 year-olds. They're likely not crossed by a lot of other variables that you'd be interested in. If you email us we can look closer.

(Eileen Hobbs): All right, and then what was that other website - what was it called the public use -- the P-U-M-S -- can you put that on?

Gretchen Gooding: It's on our website the census.gov/acs. Again, if you email us we can send you more information about that.

(Eileen Hobbs): Thank you.

Man: Thank you. Our next question comes from (Allison). Ma'am, your line is open.

(Allison): Hi, thanks, yes, I'm one of those people that know with -what Shapefiles are and I'm looking at the data set. And I just wanted to understand, it looks like there's a TIGER/Line Shapefile that has an extensive rather than limited list of descriptive attributes. Is that the same as what we would get on the Summary File information -- you know all those B and C tables -- or is that different?

Gretchen Gooding: So you're looking at the Shapefiles that are pre-joined with our data?

(Allison): I don't know - there's two options. One TIGER/Line Shapefiles that says it has an extensive list of attributes and then there's another one that says TIGER/Line with selected demographic and economic data. And that's what I've used before but that's a limited set of it -- so it doesn't seem to be all of the Summary File -- so I'm just wondering what the best source of data is that's the most comprehensive?

Gretchen Gooding: So if you want to have the Shapefiles that are already joined with our information you have to go to the - hopefully you can see that on the screen the ones that are with the selected demographic and economic data...

(Allison): Okay.

Gretchen Gooding: And they should have all the tables that start with the B and the C all the detail tables.

(Allison): It does?

Gretchen Gooding: I believe so, but if you're seeing something different and you email us I can connect you with the geography area they can look into it.

(Allison): Okay, yes, it just says limited but it doesn't tell me what it's limited to for the descriptive attributes -- whereas other things say extensive -- so I'm not sure what that involves. So yes, I would love to email you, thank you.

Gretchen Gooding: Yes, I think the limited might be in the number of geography, like, summary levels available. I believe it has all of our tables just not for every single geography level.

(Allison): Got you.

Gretchen Gooding: But I'll look into that.

(Allison): Okay, thanks. And then I have one other question. Is it possible when you use American FactFinder Download Center to exclude the margin of error columns from your download?

Gretchen Gooding: You can it- I think you can either uncheck the boxes in FactFinder or when you download it you could just delete those columns or rows.

(Allison): Yes. I just done it manually in the past and was looking for a shortcut so I'll look for that. Thank you so much.

Gretchen Gooding: Yes.

Man: Thank you. Our next question comes from (Abankra Boulya), your line is open.

(Abankra Boulya): Yes, I have a question. You were talking about the API, and I'm a new user and I came across this City SDK. Can you talk about it a little bit, like what are the advantages? I know it's in the beta but how can it help me to query the API?

Gretchen Gooding: (Abankra) are you talking about this city SDK?

(Abankra Boulya): Yes, correct, first.

Gretchen Gooding: So I don't know much more about that other than it is available. Again -- I feel like I'm saying this over and over again -- email us. We can connect you with the staff who works on the API. I do think there's a video about how to use it on the API website. That might get you started but then we can connect you with the API staff.

(Abankra Boulya): Okay and who do I email to this?

Gretchen Gooding: To be what you see on the screen it's that ACSO.users.support

(Abankra Boulya): Oh, okay.

Gretchen Gooding: ...at census.gov.

(Abankra Boulya): All right, thank you.

Man: Thank you. Our next question comes from (Cathy Hartzog). Ma'am, your line is open.

(Cathy Hartzog): Hi, thank you. I have a question about documentation for MOEs.

I've noticed over the years that when there's a zero estimate the value for the MOE has changed from a fixed value for every geographic unit to a variable value depending on the population in that geographic unit. And I've had difficulty finding documentation to tell me what the MOE should be for any given geographic unit for particular ACS data year.

Gretchen Gooding: So I thought that the zero MOEs - I thought that zero estimates - I thought that the margin of error was the same across the state. That may have changed. We do have our statistical support area. Once again -- usually I'm good at answering questions -- but that ACSO.users.support - we can connect you with the staff that works on the statistical support and they can help you out.

(Cathy Hartzog): Okay, thank you.

Man: Thank you. Our next question comes from (Ms. Griswald). Ma'am your line is open.

(Griswald): Hi. I've - have been trying to resolve a situation that an age and disability data that I have found in the CMS website with the American Community Survey for a specific rural county in my state. And I was just wondering if there was someone who might be able to guide me better through the types of data that I'm using?

And I know that you've been giving an email address and I've - and as you were doing that I've actually been exploring a download that I had put

together. And I guess probably what my situation is, is that it looks like according to CMS 50% of my population is disabled or on Medicare and their numbers - I'm trying to find information from the American Community Survey.

I guess my real question is if I am mixing apples and oranges and if there would be somebody who could help work me through this? Thank you.

Gretchen Gooding: Yep, so you can probably guess what I'm going to say. We have email -- the ACSO.users.support and we do have subject matter areas that would know more about disability, would be able to help you and we can connect you with that staff.

(Griswald): Okay, all right, thank you.

Man: And our last question in queue is from (Mr. Greg Jareau). Sir, your line is open.

(Greg Jareau): Thank you. (Greg Jareau) with Bloomberg News. I frequently use ACS data at the congressional district level of geography and I'm wondering if the bureau was still planning to release ACS data for the 115th Congress reflecting new district lines in North Carolina, Virginia, and Florida?

Gretchen Gooding: Is this fall? I'm conferring with a colleague, just a sec. All right, we sit right by the redistricting office here at Census and so if you email us that question we can connect you with them and ask what's going on with that.

(Greg Jareau): Okay, great, thank you.

Man: And as a reminder if you need to ask a question it is star one. Otherwise -- at this time -- I am showing no further questions in queue.

Slide 50: ACS Data Users Group

Gretchen Gooding: And while we're waiting for any additional questions I'll just give you a plug for the ACS data user group. It's - you can see the URL there at the bottom of the screen (<https://acsdatacommunity.prb.org/>).

It's there to promote the understanding of the value and utility of ACS data. Membership is free. We have about 1700 members online and what's exciting for us is that we have a data user conference coming up in May. It'll be at the Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria, Virginia. So hopefully you can come and join us.

We also do some other webinars -- special sessions -- and also a great place - we have a Summary File group on the online community so if you want to connect with other Summary File users, it's there.

Slide 51: Need Local Stats?

And then also another option -- this might be helpful for my caller from Detroit -- we also have data dissemination specialists. And these are staff who are located across the country -- I think there are about 40 some of them, they're everywhere from, like, Seattle to Miami -- and they're available to help you access statistics. They can come do a training, a webinar, a workshop, whatnot, and their contact information is on the screen. So they're a great resource for localized data.

And then we'll see if there's any more questions.

Man: We did have one more question come in. Sir, your line is open.

Man 2: What would be the best way to download a few statistics a few statistics... (unintelligible).

Gretchen Gooding: So I think that got cut off. I couldn't hear...

Man: I think...

Gretchen Gooding: ...your question.

Man: Yes, can you pick up your handset maybe that might help out?

Man 2: What would be the best way to download a few statistics for every (unintelligible) in the whole United States?

Gretchen Gooding: I think you're still cutting out but I'm going to put up the user support email address and that's - you can email that in - your question in and we can take a look.

Man2: Okay.

Gretchen Gooding: And then before we cut off we do have an evaluation that we're going to post. We really appreciate your feedback. We have a number of upcoming webinars later this year, so if you can give us some feedback now hopefully we can improve the webinars later this year, and we're going to be sharing that.

We really appreciate you taking the time to look at that. Otherwise thank you so much for joining us. Thank you for your difficult questions, these were good ones but we will - if you email us, we'll get back to you and we'll connect you with the right resources here at Census.

Man: Thank you. This concludes then today's conference, and thank you for participating. You may disconnect at this time.

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