

Comparing the American Community Survey to the American Housing Survey

March 15, 2023

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Slides are available at <https://www.census.gov/data/academy/webinars/2023/comparing-the-ac-s-to-ah-s.html>

This webinar is being recorded. The recording will be available after the webinar.

About the U.S. Census Bureau

- The U.S. Census Bureau is the federal government's largest statistical agency.
- The U.S. Census Bureau conducts more than 130 surveys and programs each year, including
 - **The Decennial Census** – the once-a-decade population and housing count of all 50 states and U.S. territories
 - **The American Community Survey** – the ongoing, annual survey of the social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics of the nation's population
 - **The Economic Census** – the official five-year measure of American businesses
 - **The Census of Governments** – identifies the scope and nature of the nation's state and local government sector
- Our mission is to serve as the nation's leading provider of quality data about its people and economy.



Comparing the ACS and AHS

Outline

- **American Community Survey (ACS) basics**
- American Housing Survey (AHS) basics
- Similarities and differences
- When to use each survey: ACS or AHS?
- Resources for learning more


The American Community Survey

The Foundation

The American Community Survey is on the leading edge of survey design, continuous improvement, and data quality


- The nation's most current, reliable, and accessible data source for local statistics on critical planning topics such as age, children, veterans, commuting, education, income, and employment
- Surveys **3.5 million** addresses and helps inform the distribution of hundreds of billions in federal funds each year
- Covers **40+ topics**, supports over **300** evidence-based federal government uses
- Three key annual data releases:
 - 1-year Estimates (for large populations, geographies of 65,000+ population)
 - 1-year Supplemental Estimates (for small populations, geographies of 20,000+ population)
 - 5-year Estimates (for very small populations, geographies down to Census Tracts and Block Groups)

13193016


 **United States Census Bureau** **The American Community Survey**

Start Here


You have two ways to respond:

 Respond online today at:
<https://respond.census.gov/acs>

OR

 Complete this form and mail it back as soon as possible.

Your response is required by law.
The American Community Survey is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. This survey is one of only a few surveys for which all recipients are required by law to respond. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information.

 **If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call 1-800-354-7271.**

Text Telephone (TTY):
Call 1-800-582-8330.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Llame sin cargo alguno al 1-877-833-5625.

For more information about the American Community Survey, visit our website at: <https://www.census.gov/acs>

Please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form. We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Last Name

First Name MI

Area Code + Number
 -

How many people are living or staying at this address?


- **INCLUDE** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
- **DO NOT INCLUDE** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

Number of people

Fill out pages 2 - 7 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address for more than 2 months. Then complete the rest of the form.

FORM **ACS-1(2023)**
(05-18-2022)

OMB No. 0607-0810
OMB No. 0607-0936



The American Community Survey

Data Collection Process

SELF-RESPONSE



NONRESPONSE FOLLOWUP



The American Community Survey

Content Overview

POPULATION		HOUSING
SOCIAL Ancestry Citizenship Citizen Voting Age Population Disability Educational Attainment Fertility Grandparents Language Marital Status Migration School Enrollment Veterans	DEMOGRAPHIC Age Hispanic Origin Race Relationship Sex ECONOMIC Class of Worker Commuting Employment Status Food Stamps (SNAP) Health Insurance Income Industry & Occupation Weeks Worked	Computer & Internet Use Costs (Mortgage, Rent, Taxes, Insurance) Heating Fuel Home Value Occupancy Plumbing/Kitchen Facilities Structure Tenure (Own/Rent) Utilities Vehicles Year Built Year Moved In

The American Community Survey

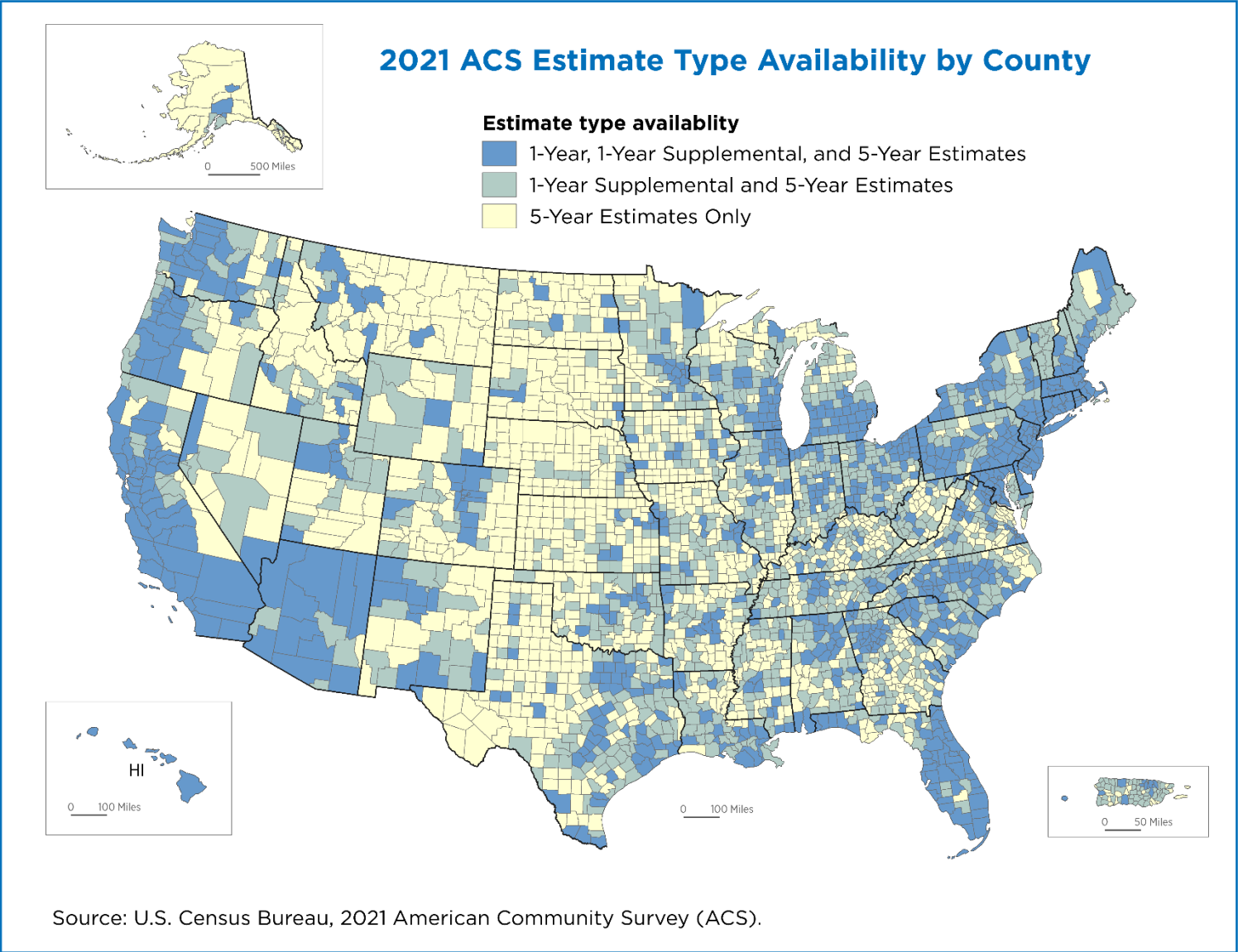
Availability of Data Products

Estimated Population of Geographic Area	1-Year Estimates	1-Year Supplemental Estimates	5-Year Estimates
65,000 or more	X	X	X
20,000 to 64,999		X	X
Less than 20,000			X
Typical Release Month (Occurs in the calendar year after data collection)	September	October	December

census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/news/data-releases.html

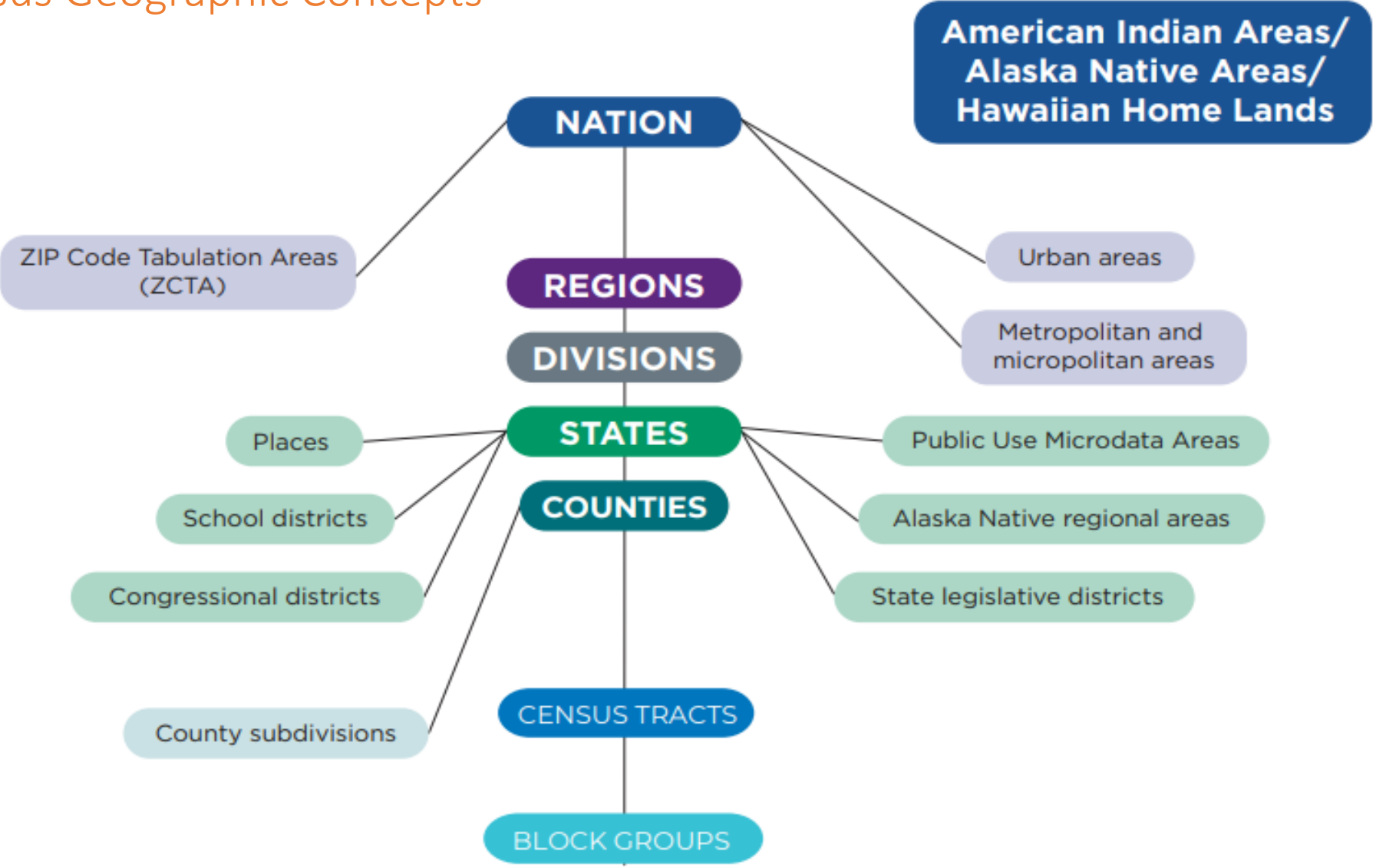
The American Community Survey

Estimate Type Availability by County




The American Community Survey

Selected Census Geographic Concepts



The American Community Survey

ACS Main Page



Partners Researchers Educators Survey Respondents


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Topics **Data & Maps** **Surveys & Programs** **Resource Library**

// [Census.gov](#) / [Our Surveys & Programs](#) / [American Community Survey \(ACS\)](#)

American Community Survey (ACS)

The [American Community Survey \(ACS\)](#) helps local officials, community leaders, and businesses understand the changes taking place in their communities. It is the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation.



Featured

Respond to the ACS

Learn the different ways to respond to the American Community Survey -- online, by phone, by email. Read our FAQs or call us for more help with the survey.

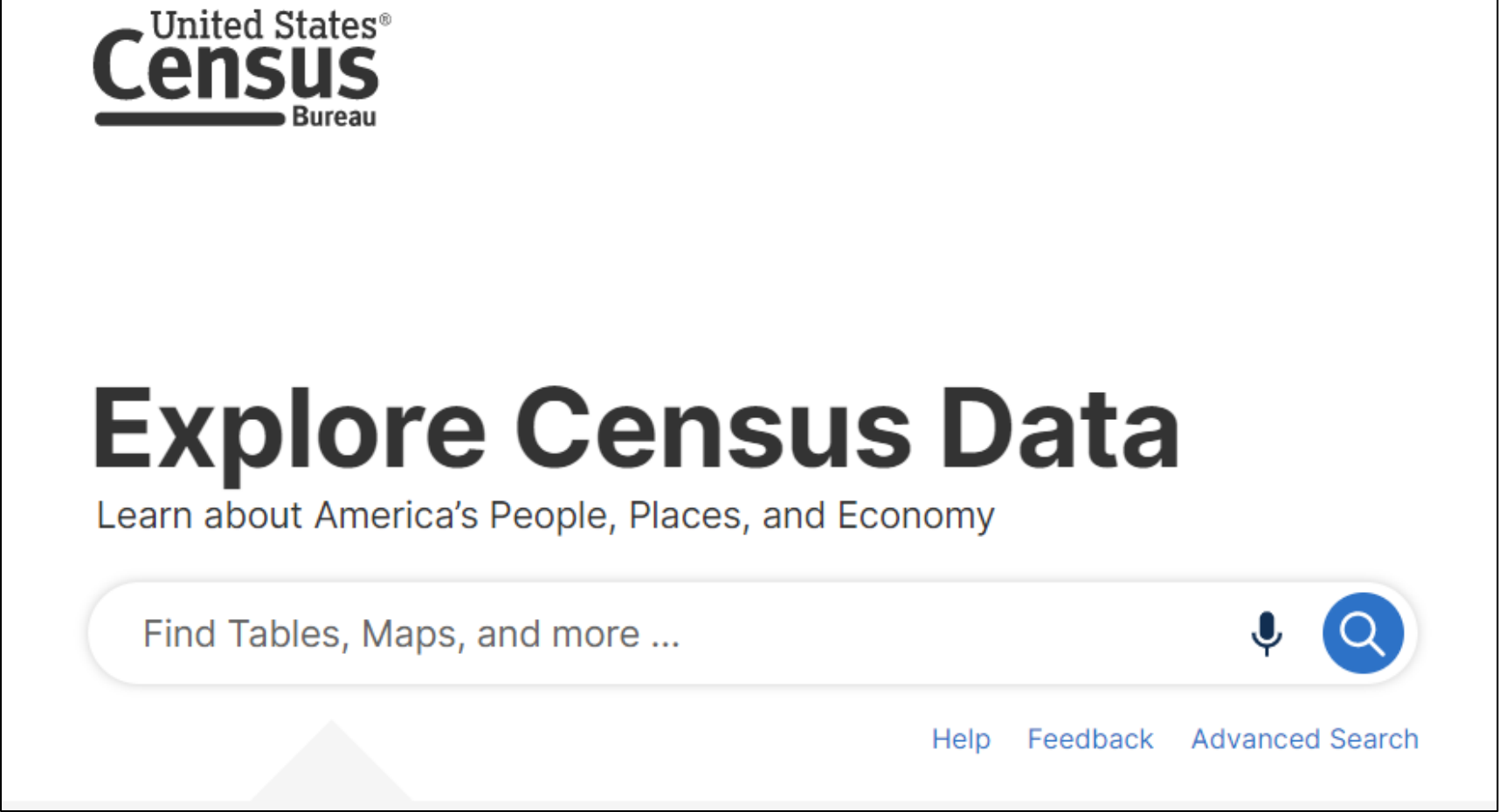
- Within Our Surveys & Programs
 - [About the ACS](#)
 - [Respond to the ACS](#)
 - [News & Updates](#)
 - [Data](#)
 - [Microdata](#)
 - [Guidance for Data Users](#)
 - [Geography & ACS](#)
 - [Technical Documentation](#)

The American Community Survey

Selected Ways to Access Data

- data.census.gov
- QuickFacts
- My Congressional District
- My Tribal Area
- OnTheMap for Emergency Management
- Census Business Builder
- My Community Explorer
- TIGER/Line Shapefiles w/ Selected Demographic Data
- Application Programming Interface (API)





The screenshot shows the homepage of data.census.gov. At the top left is the United States Census Bureau logo. The main heading is "Explore Census Data" in a large, bold, black font. Below it is the subtitle "Learn about America's People, Places, and Economy". A search bar is centered, containing the text "Find Tables, Maps, and more ...". To the right of the search bar are a microphone icon and a magnifying glass icon. At the bottom right of the search area are three links: "Help", "Feedback", and "Advanced Search".

data.census.gov

census.gov/data/what-is-data-census-gov.html

Comparing the ACS and AHS

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- **American Housing Survey (AHS) basics**
- Similarities and differences
- When to use each survey: ACS or AHS?
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American Housing Survey

The Basics

- The AHS provides accurate, up-to-date information on housing quality, housing costs, and neighborhood assets, along with topical information on unique housing concerns.
- Funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) beginning in 1973, administered by Census.
- Longitudinal housing unit sample covering 50 states and DC
- Biennial Data Release
 - AHS Table Creator tool
 - Public Use Files (PUF) Microdata



American Housing Survey

Sample Design

- Sample of housing units, including vacant and seasonal
- Conducted every two years
- Supplemental metro sample rotates every four years
- Longitudinal - visits same housing units every cycle

Rotating Metros: 2015 and 2019

Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN

Cleveland-Elyria, OH

Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO

Kansas City, MO-KS

Memphis, TN-MS-AR

Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI

New Orleans-Metairie, LA

Pittsburgh, PA

Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA

Raleigh, NC

Rotating Metros: 2017 and 2021

Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD

Birmingham-Hoover, AL

Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV

Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI

Oklahoma City, OK

Richmond, VA

Rochester, NY

San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX

San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA

Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL

American Housing Survey

Sample Size

- Around 100,000 National sample
- 10 additional metro area samples of around 3,000 each
- Around 84,000 total interviews



American Housing Survey

Data Collection Cycle

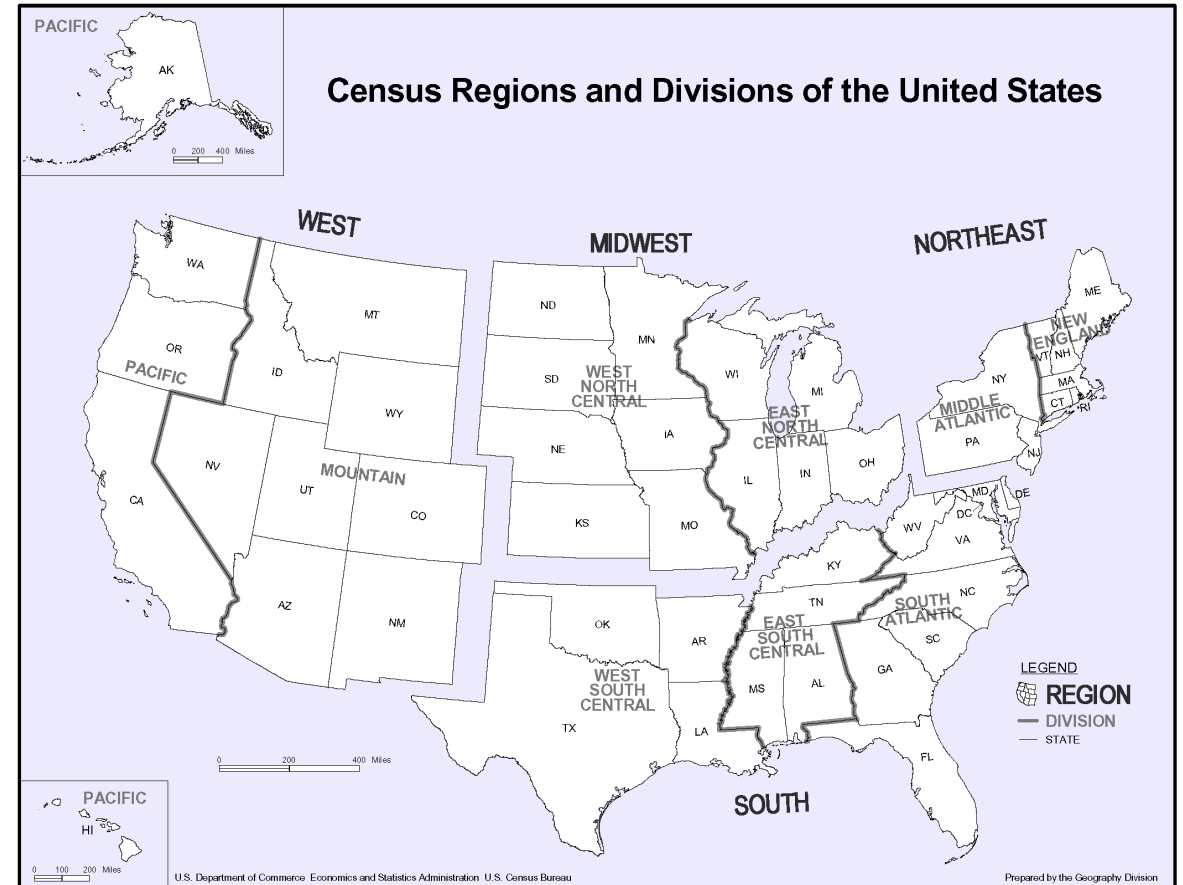
- Collected May – September in odd numbered years
- Interviewers collect through phone or personal visit
- Census processes and reviews data
- Tables and microdata released in Fall of even numbered years



American Housing Survey

Geographic Concepts

- Census Division and Region
- 15 Highest Populated Metro Areas
- Rotating 20 Metro Areas
- Some States



American Housing Survey

Content

- **Core Content:** Questions that appear in every survey
- **Rotating Topical Content:** Questions about special topics that appear in one survey year, and then are rotated out

General Housing
Rooms, Size, and Amenities
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Appliances
Plumbing, Water, and Sewage Disposal
Housing Quality
Housing Migration
Housing and Neighborhood Search and Satisfaction
Household Demographics
Disabilities
Income Characteristics
Housing Costs
Value, Purchase Price, and Source of Down Payment
Mortgage Characteristics
Additional Mortgage Characteristics
Home Improvement Characteristics
Home Improvement Costs
Rent Subsidies and Rental Property Management
Neighborhoods
Emergency and Disaster Preparedness
Delinquent Payments and Notices
Evictions
Commuting to Work by Mode of Transportation
Annual Commuting Costs by Type of Commuter

American Housing Survey

Core Content Overview

HOUSING		HOUSEHOLD
<p>BASIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Value Occupancy Plumbing/Kitchen Facilities Structure Type Tenure (Own/Rent) Year Built Year Moved In <p>STRUCTURAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenities (Garage, Porch, Fireplace, etc.) Equipment, Appliances, and Fuel Use Rooms and Bedrooms Size of Unit and Lot Type of Heating and Cooling System 	<p>HOUSING QUALITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakdowns in plumbing, heating, and electricity External Building Conditions Internal Building Conditions Leaks Mold Mice and Cockroaches <p>COSTS AND AFFORDABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed Mortgage Information Mortgage, Rent, Taxes, Insurance, HOA Fees Remodeling costs and types of projects Rental Assistance and Subsidies Upkeep costs Utility Costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age Hispanic Origin Race Relationship Sex Ancestry Citizenship Disability Educational Attainment Fertility Food Stamps (SNAP) Marital Status School Enrollment Veterans Income

American Housing Survey

Core Content Overview (Continued)

HOUSING

NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY

Bars on Windows
Bodies of Water
Opinions on schools, crime, and public transportation
Trash, litter, or junk
Vandalized or abandoned buildings

RECENT MOVER INFORMATION

Distance Moved
Forced moves (eviction, disaster)
Housing and neighborhood search details
Reason for move
Structure Type and Tenure of Prior Residence

American Housing Survey

Topical Content Overview

RECENT ROTATING TOPICAL CONTENT (2015+)

- Commuting Costs and Modes (2015)
- Delinquent Payments and Notices (2017, 2021)
- Disaster Related Moves (2023)
- Emergency and Disaster Preparedness (2017)
- Evictions (2017)
- First Generation Homeownership (2023)
- Food Security (2015, 2019)
- Health and Safety Characteristics (2015, 2023)
- Heat Risk and Cooling Problems (2023)
- Home Accessibility (2019)
- Housing Counseling (2015)
- Housing Insecurity (2019, 2023)
- Intent to Move (2021)
- Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Resources (2015)
- Parent Ancestry (2023)
- Pets (2021)
- Post-Secondary Education (2019)
- Power Outages (2023)
- Rental Housing Search (2021)
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (2023)
- Wildfire Risk (2021)

American Housing Survey

Resources

- AHS Main Site
 - <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs.html>
- Table Creator Tutorial
 - <https://www.census.gov/library/video/2019/ahs-table-creator.html>
- Other AHS Webinars
 - <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/users/webinar.html>
- Interactive Electronic Codebook
 - <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/tech-documentation/codebooks/ahs-codebook-tool.html>
- User Guides
 - <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/tech-documentation.html>



AHS Table Creator Demo

<https://www.census.gov/data/data-tools/ahs-table-creator.html>

Comparing the ACS and AHS

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- **Similarities and differences**
- When to use each survey: ACS or AHS?
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Comparing the ACS and AHS

Similarities

Both surveys:

- Produce housing unit estimates
- Contain basic housing data on occupancy, structure, costs, and value
- Collect general demographics of households such as age, sex, race, ethnicity, ancestry, citizenship, marital status, education, etc.
- Release tables and microdata

Comparing the ACS and AHS

Differences

Difference Category	ACS	AHS
Purpose	Ongoing survey that is the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation.	Assess and monitor the nation's housing needs and stay up to date on what's going on in the housing market.
New Data Every	Year	Two Years
Data Collection Methods	Internet self-response, mail, and personal-visit interviews. The ACS is a mandatory survey.	Telephone and personal-visit interviews for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The AHS is a voluntary survey.
Tools to Access Data	data.census.gov, File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site, Application Programming Interface (API), QuickFacts, and other tools	AHS website, Table Creator and codebook applications

Comparing the ACS and AHS

Differences

Difference Category	ACS	AHS
Sample Size	About 3.5 million addresses per year	Around 100,000 housing units
Geography	Nation, states, counties - all the way down to the tract and block group level	Nation, Census Division, 35 metro areas, some states
Level of Estimates	ACS produces estimates at the housing unit and person level	AHS produces estimates at the housing unit level, but not person

Comparing the ACS and AHS

Differences

Difference Category	ACS	AHS
Reference Period	Reference periods can vary by question. The ACS reference period for select questions (like income and the number of weeks worked) is the 12-month period prior to the response month.	Reference periods can vary by question. Questions in common with ACS have a similar 12-month reference period. Some questions use a two-year reference period and others use the period since the current occupant's move-in date.
Unique Content	Computer ownership, vehicles available, health insurance, commuting method, occupation and hours worked	Unit size, detailed housing and neighborhood quality, home improvements, renter subsidies, and topical content

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Comparing the ACS and AHS

When to use each survey: ACS or AHS?

Interest	Product
Population tables	ACS
Basic estimates on housing characteristics, quality, costs and affordability	ACS or AHS
Detailed estimates on housing and neighborhood characteristics, home improvement jobs, mortgage information and rotating topics	AHS
Longitudinal data	AHS
Population and housing unit estimates of smaller geographies or populations	ACS
Annual data	ACS

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- Purpose:
 - Improve understanding of the value and utility of ACS data.
 - Promote information sharing among data users about key ACS data issues and applications.
- Includes users group website and online community
- ACS Data Users Conference May 16-18 (in-person and virtual)
- Membership is free and open to all interested ACS data users

acsdatacommunity.prb.org

Comparing the ACS and AHS

Continue the Conversation

Customer Service Center

ACS: 1-800-923-8282 or 301-763-INFO (4636)

AHS: 1-888-518-7365 or 301-763-3235

Email Us

ACS: acso.users.support@census.gov

AHS: ahsn@census.gov

Website

census.gov/acs

census.gov/ahs



Email Alerts

ACS:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/sig_nup/12426

AHS:

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/subscribe/subscribe.html>

Social Media @uscensusbureau

#ACSdata

Source Us

U.S. Census Bureau, [YYYY – YYYY] American Community Survey [1/5]-year estimates

U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, YYYY American Housing Survey