

American Community Survey Program Update

2021 ACS Data Users Conference

May 19, 2021

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The American Community Survey Program Update

Outline

- Impact of COVID-19 on ACS Operations
- Research Initiatives
- 2020 ACS Data Releases
- Data User Resources

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ACS Data Collection Process: Pre COVID-19

SELF-RESPONSE



NONRESPONSE FOLLOWUP



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ACS Data Collection Process: Pre COVID-19



First month:
Mail survey
instruction for online
or paper response



Second month:
Select addresses for
nonresponse follow-
up personal visits



Third month:
Visit nonresponse
address for personal
interview

ACS Sample Panel	Month of Data Collection						
	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
November	Internet / Mail Response (HUs Receive Mailings 1 – 5)		Personal Visit				
December		Internet / Mail Response (HUs Receive Mailings 1 – 5)		Personal Visit			
January			Internet / Mail Response (HUs Receive Mailings 1 – 5)		Personal Visit		
February				Internet / Mail Response (HUs Receive Mailings 1 – 5)		Personal Visit	
March					Internet / Mail Response (HUs Receive Mailings 1 – 5)		Personal Visit
April						Internet / Mail Response (HUs Receive Mailings 1 – 5)	

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Data Collections Modification Due to COVID-19



Mail

- Suspended mail operations starting mid-March 2020
- Resumed mailing packages in July 2020 but restricted to mailing 2 packages to housing units
- Beginning in October 2020, ACS began mailing 3 packages and all nonresponding housing units received a questionnaire
- Resumed the 5-mailing strategy in April 2021



In-Person

- Housing Unit
 - Temporarily increased workloads - Telephone interviews only April - June 2020
 - Personal visit interviews resumed in July 2020 for some areas and in September 2020 for all areas without stay-at-home orders
- Group Quarters (GQ)
 - Suspended interviewing April - June 2020 due to restrictions accessing GQ facilities
 - Starting July 2020 gradually began telephone interviewing
 - Exploring using administrative records

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Impact of COVID-19 on ACS Operations

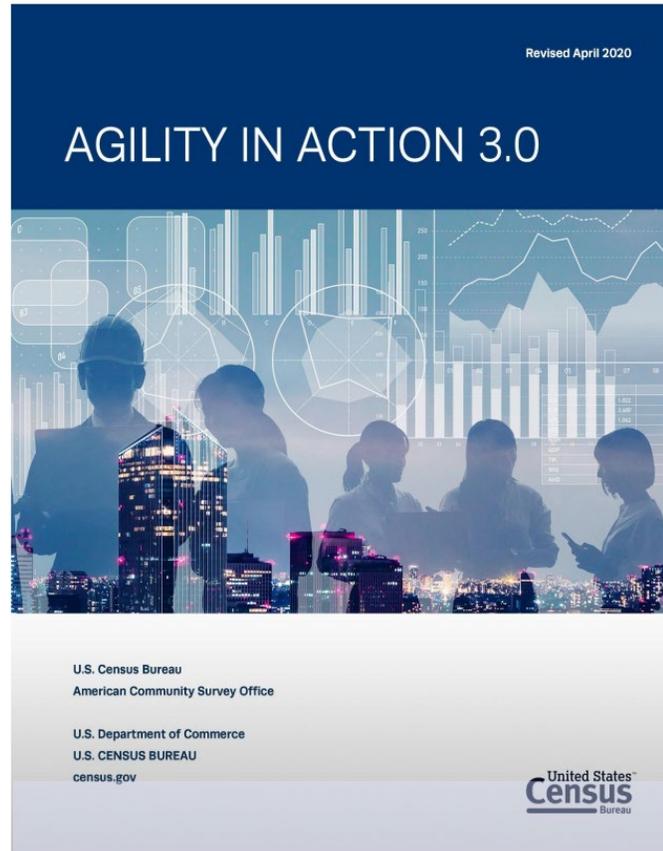


Considerations for 2020 ACS Data Products

- The 2020 ACS estimation methodology will be different because of the impact of COVID-19 on our data collection operations
- We are taking things into consideration, such as:
 - Under reporting of vacant housing units while CAPI was limited
 - Data collection methods varied during the peak pandemic months, so the weighting has to adapt to varying survey designs
 - Lack of access to certain group quarters facilities (e.g., nursing homes and federal prisons)
- We will document operational changes and their effect on the data when we release the 2020 ACS estimates

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ACS Research Initiatives: Agility in Action



Released December 2019

We continuously conduct research to improve the quality of:

- The **experience of people** who take the survey
- The **survey** itself
- The **data** we collect

Our current research addresses:

- Exploring **alternate data sources** to determine if we can reduce the number of survey questions
- **Improving** our survey design
- **Understanding** what it is like for people to take the survey
- **Ensuring quality data collection** for people who live in institutions like military barracks, colleges, or prisons
- Finding the **best ways to communicate** to the public about the ACS

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ACS Research Initiatives: Administrative Records



We have made significant progress toward our goal of using administrative records in the ACS

- 2020 ACS production to account for suspension of in-person interviews due to COVID
 - Using auxiliary data to predict housing unit status and improve vacancy rates
 - Using data from the Bureau of Prisons as an alternate data collection method
- Continue research initiatives for using:
 - Auxiliary data to impute for missing demographic response data
 - Property tax and sales data to improve the quality of housing characteristics data
 - Income tax data for statistical modeling to improve the quality of income data
- Continue work on data sharing agreements to acquire auxiliary data

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ACS Research Initiatives: 2022 ACS Content Test

- The ACS Content Test is conducted approximately every five years to improve quality of existing questions or test the addition of new questions
- Cognitive testing began in 2020 and field testing will be in 2022
- The 2022 ACS Content Test is testing 11 topics



Person Topics:

- Disability
- Educational Attainment
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Income
- Means of Transportation to Work



Housing Topics:

- Electric Vehicles*
- Home Heating Fuel
- Homeowners Association Fees
- Household Roster
- Sewer*
- Solar Panels*

- Results from the Test will be implemented in the 2025 ACS

* Potential new topic

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ACS Research Initiatives: Disclosure Avoidance Modernization

- We do not anticipate implementing formal privacy for the full suite of ACS data products before 2025
- The ACS program will continue to evaluate its existing privacy protections and strengthen them as necessary to address privacy risks
- Our goal is to maintain the utility of the ACS as the preeminent federal survey addressing the needs of federal, state, and local data users, while remaining committed to our legal obligations to protect confidentiality
- We will engage with the data user community to understand the effect of these methods on data accuracy

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2020 ACS Data Releases

Data Products	Release Date
2020 1-Year Data Releases	
1-Year Data Products	September 23, 2021
1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File	October 14, 2021
1-Year Supplemental Estimates	
2016-2020 5-Year Data Releases	
5-Year Data Products	December 9, 2021
5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)	January 13, 2022
5-Year Variance Replicate Estimates	

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2020 ACS Data Releases: Blog Series



- Releasing a series of Blogs on some challenges the ACS Program faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how we adapted

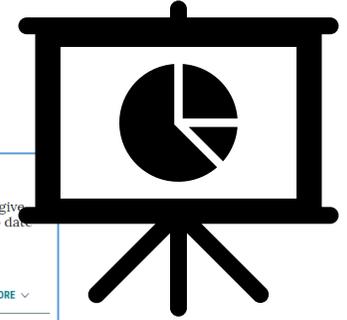
- Topics:

- Housing Unit Data Collection
- Housing Unit Estimation
- Group Quarters Data Collection and Estimation
- Data Products
- Data Quality

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Data User Resources

- Educational materials, such as flyers and training materials
- Conference exhibits, webinars, and presentations
- User support via phone, e-mail, and ask.census.gov
- ACS Data Users Group
- ACS Data Users Conferences



Events

American Community Survey staff exhibit at conferences throughout the year, as well as give presentations and webinars. Learn more about our events below. You can also stay up to date on upcoming ACS events by [subscribing to our email updates!](#)

All **2021** 2020 2019 2018 2017 2016 2015 [MORE](#) ▾

2021

Event | May 11, 2021
American Association for Public Opinion Research Annual Conference
Learn more about the various aspects of the ACS data collection challenges in 2021.

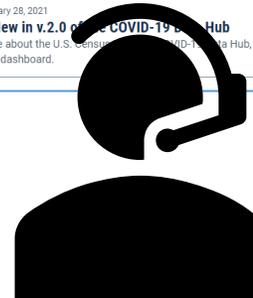
Event | May 11, 2021
American Association for Public Opinion Research Annual Conference
Learn more about the various aspects of the ACS data collection challenges in 2021.

Event | March 31, 2021
Exploring Census Data Webinar Series: Starting a Small Business
Learn how ACS data can help when starting a small business and for making business decisions.

Event | March 10, 2021
Using American Community Survey (ACS) Geodatabase Files and Tools
Learn how to map American Community Survey (ACS) data using Census Bureau geodatabases.

Event | February 17, 2021
Comparing the American Community Survey and the Population Estimates
Learn about both the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Population Estimates and the differences between each.

Event | January 28, 2021
What's New in v.2.0 of the COVID-19 Data Hub
Learn more about the U.S. Census Bureau's COVID-19 Data Hub, the surveys that inform it, and the interactive dashboard.

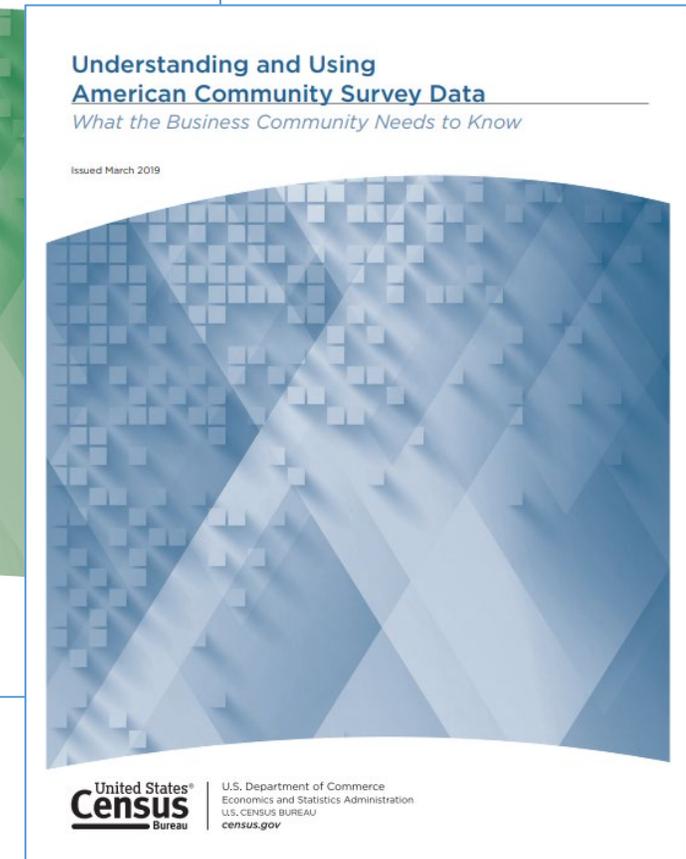
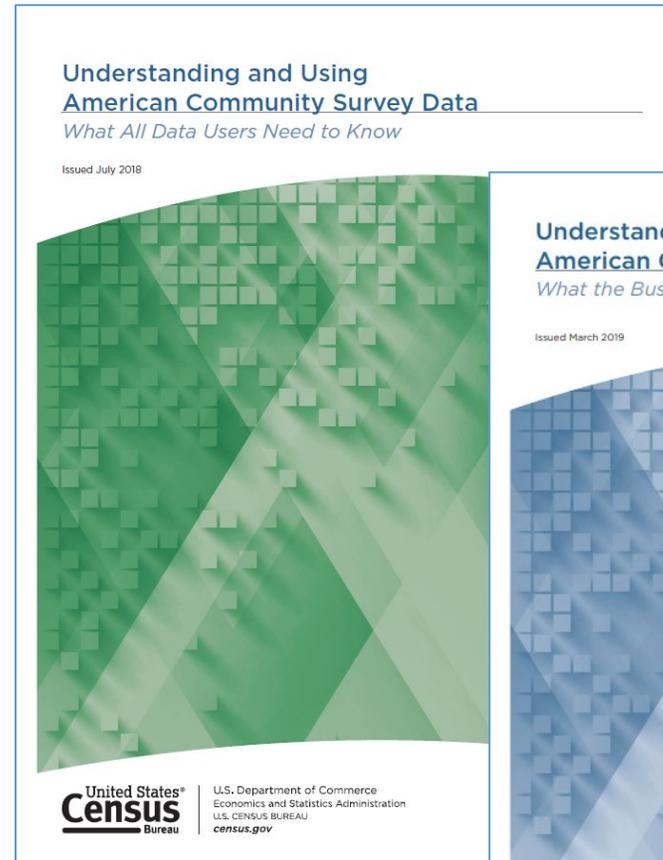


The cover of the '2019 ACS Data Users Conference Final Program'. At the top is the logo for the 'AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA USERS GROUP'. Below the logo is a photograph of a modern building with large glass windows. Overlaid on the bottom half of the photo is the text '2019 ACS DATA USERS CONFERENCE FINAL PROGRAM'. At the bottom of the cover, it says 'American University Washington College of Law, Washington, DC, May 14-15, 2019, #ACSConf19'.

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Data User Resources: Data User Handbooks

- All Data Users
- American Indian and Alaska Natives
- Summary File
- Rural
- State and Local Government
- Business
- Congress
- Federal Agencies
- Researchers
- Journalists
- PRCS
- PUMS
- API
- Geographic Products





AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA USERS GROUP

- 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
- Membership is free and open to all interested ACS data users

acsdatacommunity.prb.org

Data Dissemination Services:

The Census Bureau has a team of specialists who can assist in bringing the world of data to you by providing trainings, workshops and presentations to you and your organization at no cost.

Our team offers presentations and trainings tailored to the customer's needs on a variety of Census data tools, data sets, and programs both virtually and in-person.

Contact us:

Census.askdata@census.gov

1-844-ASK-DATA



- ✓ **Data Workshops and Presentations, in-person or via webinar.**
- ✓ **A presentation on a data topic relevant to you or your constituents.**
- ✓ **Hands-on training for accessing Census Bureau data.**
- ✓ **A presenter for your conference or event.**
- ✓ **Assist customers with data inquiries.**

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Data Tell Stories. Tell Us Yours!!

The screenshot shows the 'Share Your ACS Data Story' form on the American Community Survey website. The form is titled 'Share Your ACS Data Story' and includes an introductory paragraph: 'We want to hear about how you use American Community Survey (ACS) data... Did you or your organization use the ACS to make an important decision, help your community, open/expand a business, etc? If so, we are eager to learn more about how you use ACS data in action. Share your story by completing the fields below to help us showcase the value of the ACS. Need help getting started? Check out featured examples from our current collection of ACS data stories.' The form has three main sections: 'Your Story *', 'Outcome *', and a section for 'Your data details' (partially obscured). The 'Your Story *' section has a text input field with the prompt 'Tell us how you use ACS data.' The 'Outcome *' section has a text input field with the prompt 'Tell us about any outcomes or decisions that you or your organization have made based on ACS data. For example: selecting a location for a \$250 million department store distribution center that brought 4,000 jobs to Denver, CO.' Three circular callout images are overlaid on the form: a bookshelf for 'Your story', a hand holding a tablet with a world map for 'Your data details', and a hand holding a bar chart for 'Your outcome'.

Your story

Your data details

Your outcome



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Continue the Conversation



Sign up for and manage alerts at
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/subscriber/new>



Social media: @uscensusbureau
#ACSdata



More information online:
census.gov/acs



acso.users.support@census.gov



Census Customer Service Center
800-923-8282



Source Us:
*U.S. Census Bureau's [YYYY – YYYY] American
Community Survey
[1/5]-year [estimates/statistics/data release]*



Thank you!