

# Geography and the American Community Survey (ACS)

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Slides are available at [census.gov/data/academy/webinars/2025/geography-and-ac.html](https://census.gov/data/academy/webinars/2025/geography-and-ac.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. Our mission is to serve as the nation's leading provider of quality data about its people and economy.



The U.S. Census Bureau conducts a variety of 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

# The American Community Survey

## Outline

- **American Community Survey (ACS) basics**
- ACS geography basics
- Census Bureau geography basics
- Geography live demonstration
- Resources for learning more

# The American Community Survey

## The Foundation

- The American Community Survey (ACS) is the premier source of detailed information about the nation's people and housing
- Surveys **3.5 million** addresses and about **150,000** Group Quarters (GQ) residents to produce annual social, economic, housing, and demographic estimates for communities throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico
- Covers **40+ topics** — Collects detailed information previously collected by the decennial census each decade
- Helps inform how federal funds are distributed each year, supports over **300** evidence-based federal government uses
- Data released the year after collection as 1-year and 5-year estimates
- Officially started in 2005 (1-year estimates = 2005; 5-year 2005-2009)

The image displays two versions of the American Community Survey (ACS) interface. The top screenshot shows the website's login page, titled 'United States Census Bureau American Community Survey'. It includes a 'Welcome! Start here to respond:' section with a link to 'Respond online today at: respond.census.gov/acs'. Below this is a 'User ID' field and a 'Login' button. A 'Can't find the User ID?' section provides instructions on how to find the 10-digit code above the address and to the right of the resident. The bottom screenshot shows the 'Start Here' section of the paper form. It includes instructions on how to respond (online or by mail), a section for 'Your response is required by law', and a section for 'Please print the name and telephone number of the person who is filling out this form'. The form also includes a section for 'How many people, including yourself, live or stay at this address?' and a section for 'Fill out pages 2-7 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address. Then complete the rest of the form.'

# The American Community Survey

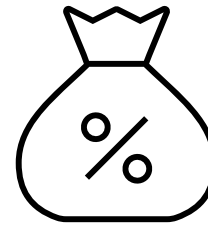
## Who Uses the ACS



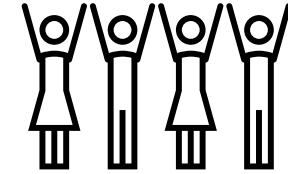
Amer. Indian & Alaska  
Native Populations



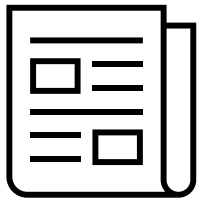
Businesses



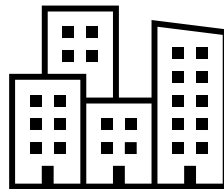
Federal  
Government



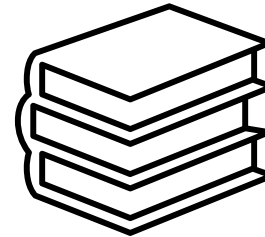
General Users



Media



Nonprofits



Researchers



State & Local  
Government

# The American Community Survey

## Content Overview

POPULATION			HOUSING
Social	Economic	Demographic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancestry</li> <li>• Citizenship Status</li> <li>• Citizen Voting-Age Population</li> <li>• Disability Status</li> <li>• Educational Attainment</li> <li>• Fertility</li> <li>• Grandparents as Caregivers</li> <li>• Language Spoken at Home</li> <li>• Marital History and Status</li> <li>• Migration/Residence 1 Year Ago</li> <li>• Place of Birth</li> <li>• School Enrollment</li> <li>• Undergraduate Field of Degree</li> <li>• Veterans Status; Period of Military Service</li> <li>• Year of Entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class of Worker</li> <li>• Commuting and Place of Work</li> <li>• Employment Status</li> <li>• Food Stamps (SNAP)</li> <li>• Health Insurance Coverage</li> <li>• Income and Earnings</li> <li>• Industry and Occupation</li> <li>• Poverty Status</li> <li>• Weeks Worked Last Year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Group Quarters Population</li> <li>• Hispanic or Latino Origin</li> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Relationship to Householder</li> <li>• Sex</li> <li>• Total Population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bedrooms</li> <li>• Computer &amp; Internet Use</li> <li>• Costs (Mortgage, Rent, Taxes, Insurance)</li> <li>• Electric Vehicles</li> <li>• House Heating Fuel</li> <li>• Kitchen/Plumbing Facilities</li> <li>• Occupancy/Vacancy Status</li> <li>• Occupants per Room</li> <li>• Rooms</li> <li>• Solar Panels</li> <li>• Telephone Service Available</li> <li>• Tenure (Owner/Renter)</li> <li>• Units in Structure</li> <li>• Value of Home</li> <li>• Vehicles Available</li> <li>• Year Householder Moved Into Unit</li> <li>• Year Structure Built</li> </ul>

# 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
Planned 2024 ACS Data Releases	Sept. 11, 2025	Oct. 16, 2025	Dec. 11, 2025

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# The American Community Survey

## Legal and Statistical Areas

### Legal

- States (and equivalents)
- Counties
- County subdivisions  
(Towns & townships)
- Places (incorporated)
- Tribal areas  
(Reservations and trustlands)

### Administrative

- Election areas
- School districts

### Statistical

- Regions
- Divisions
- County subdivisions  
(Census county divisions)
- Places (census designated)
- Tribal areas (statistical areas)
- Census tracts
- Block groups
- Tabulation blocks
- Metropolitan/micropolitan statistical areas
- Urban areas
- ZCTAs

# The American Community Survey

## Selected Census Geographic Concepts

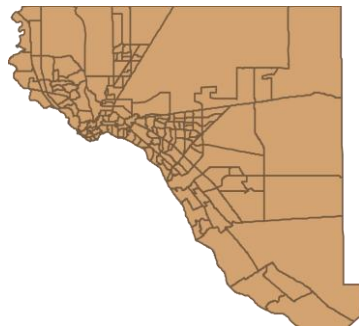
**STATE**



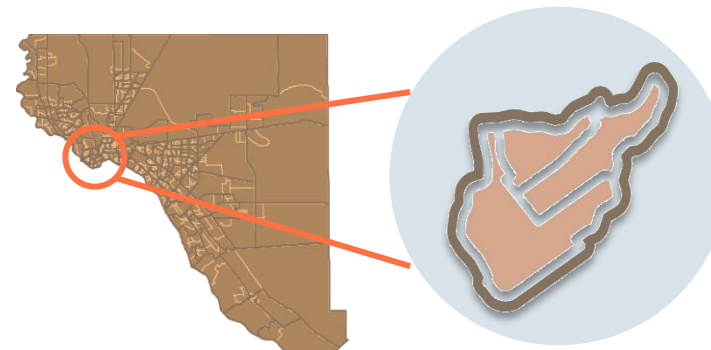
**COUNTY**



**CENSUS TRACT**

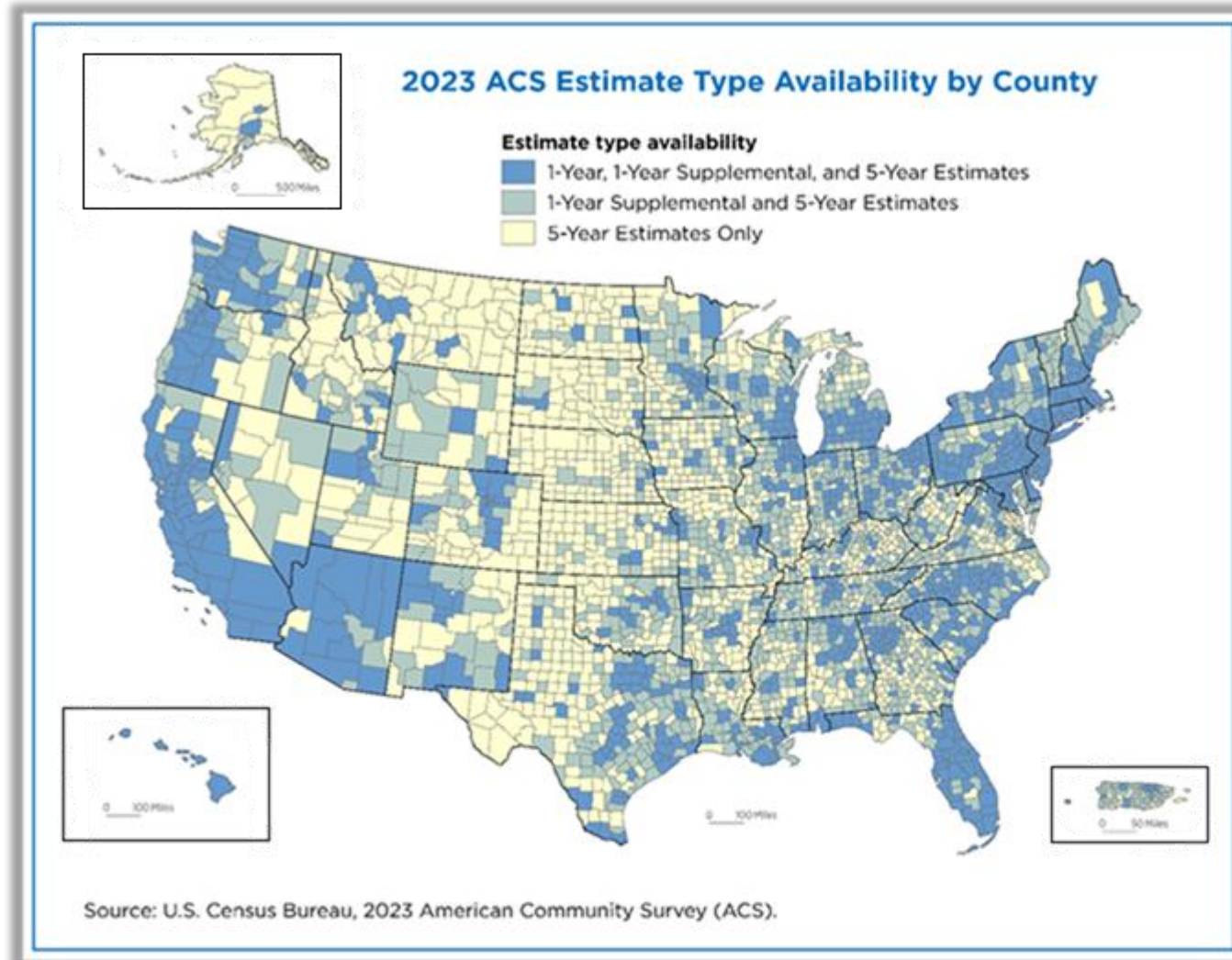


**BLOCK GROUP**



# The American Community Survey

## Estimate Type Availability by County



# The American Community Survey

## Areas Published

### Selected Geographic Areas Published in the 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 1-Year Supplemental Estimates, and 5-Year Estimates

Geographic Areas	1-year estimates		1-year Supplemental Estimates		5-year estimates
	Areas with a Population of 65,000+*		Areas with a Population of 20,000+*		All areas**
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number
United States	1	100%	1	100%	1
Region	4	100%	4	100%	4
Division	9	100%	9	100%	9
States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico	52	100%	52	100%	52
County or equivalent <sup>1</sup>	854	27%	1,907	59%	3,222
County Subdivision <sup>2</sup>	234	1%	1,204	3%	36,434
Subminor Civil Division (Puerto Rico Only) <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	145
Census Tract <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	85,396
Block Group <sup>3</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	242,336
Place (incorporated places and census designated places)	649	2%	2,400	7%	32,328

2023 2022 2021 2020 2019 More ▾

## 2023

### National-Level Resources

- ☒ Geographic areas published in 1-year estimates [<1.0 MB]
- ☒ Detailed list of geographic areas for ACS 1-year estimates [<1.0 MB]
- ☒ Geographic areas published in 1-year supplemental estimates [<1.0 MB]
- ☒ Detailed list of geographic areas for ACS 1-year supplemental estimates [<1.0 MB]
- ☒ Geographic areas published in 5-year estimates [<1.0 MB]

# The American Community Survey

## Geography Boundaries by Year

**Within Geography & ACS**  
[Areas Published](#)  
[Concepts & Definitions](#)  
**[Geography Boundaries by Year](#)**  
[Geography Tools](#)  
[Reference Materials](#)


## Geography Boundaries by Year

### Vintage of Geographic Areas for ACS Estimates

The ACS typically publishes estimates using the latest available geographic boundaries (also known as "vintages"). For ACS 5-year estimates, use the last year of the estimate period to determine the vintage. For example, the following datasets use the same vintages of geographic boundaries:

- 2023 ACS 1-year estimates
- 2019-2023 ACS 5-year estimates

To learn more about geographic concepts used in the ACS, check out our geographic handbook [Geography and the American Community Survey: What Data Users Need to Know](#).

[2023](#) [2022](#) [2021](#) [2020](#) [2019](#) [More](#) 

## 2023

Share [Facebook](#) [X \(Twitter\)](#) [LinkedIn](#)

### Related Information

[American Community Survey Data](#)

[Table & Geography Changes](#)

USER NOTES

[Change to County-Equivalents in the State of Connecticut for 2022 ACS](#)

# The American Community Survey

## Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs)



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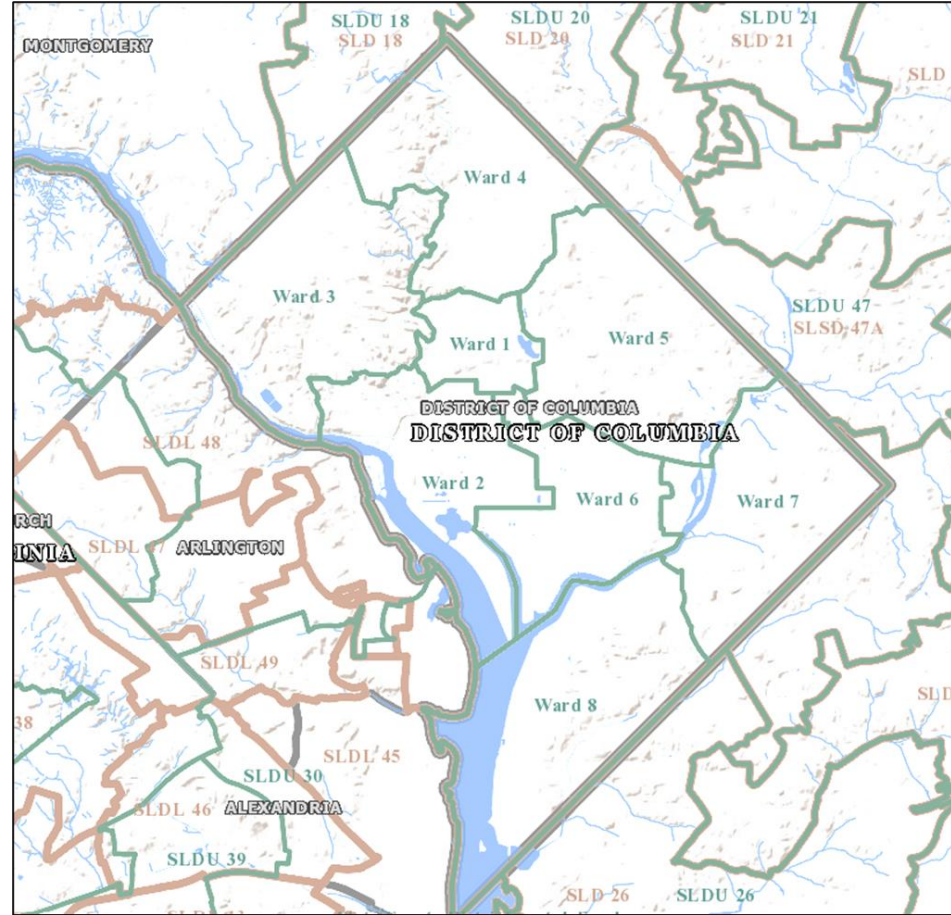


# The American Community Survey

## Geography basics

# Geography and the ACS

- Where people live
- Geographic areas
- Geographic codes
- Live demo





# The American Community Survey

Where people live

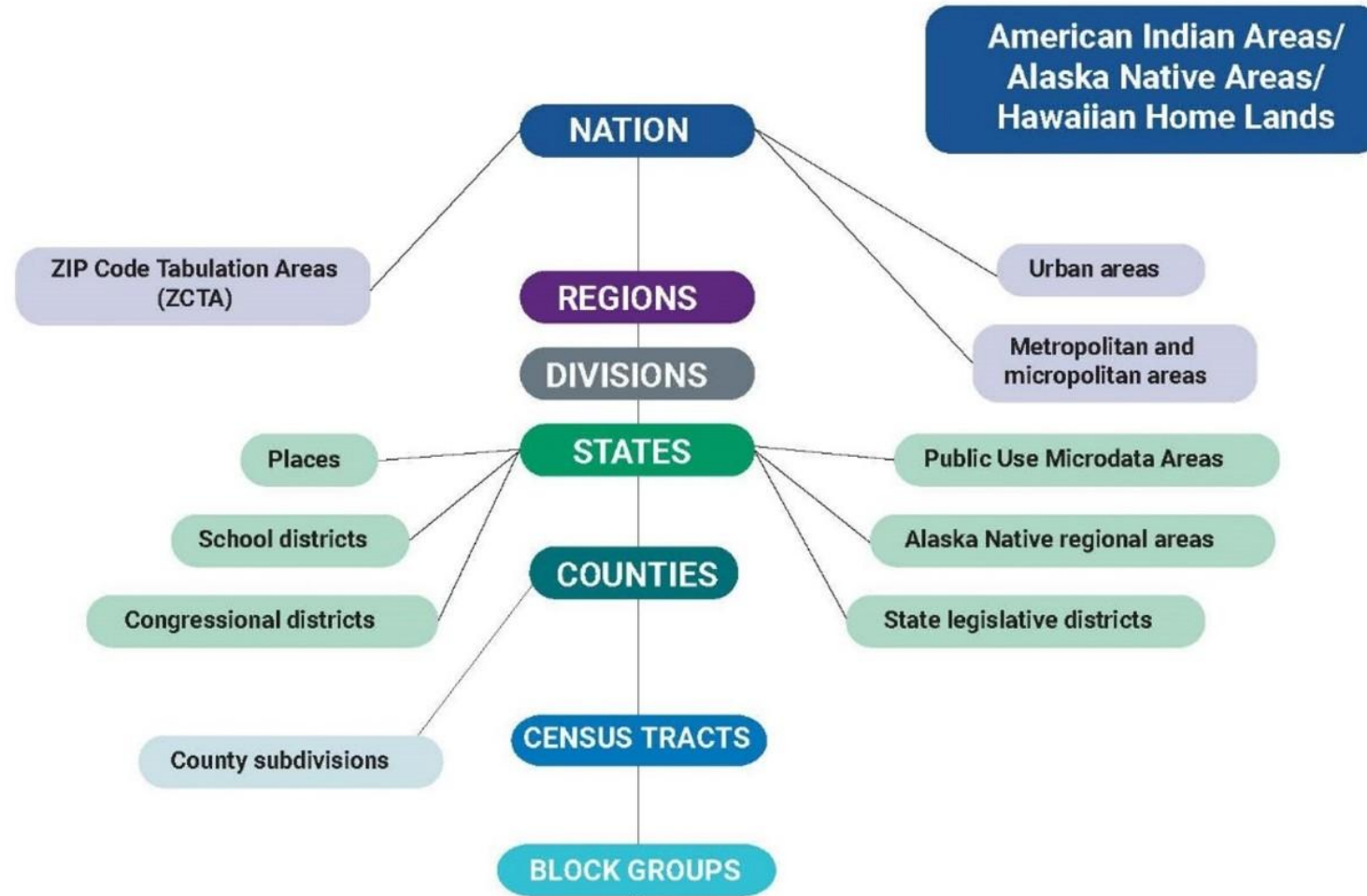
## Creating the frame for the ACS and other surveys

- Address Updates
  - USPS Delivery Sequence File
- Road Updates
  - Partnership programs
- Boundary Updates
  - Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS)



# The American Community Survey

## Geographic areas



# The American Community Survey

## Geographic Codes

GEO_ID	NAME
Geography	Geographic Area Name
0500000US08001	Adams County, Colorado
0500000US08003	Alamosa County, Colorado
0500000US08005	Arapahoe County, Colorado
0500000US08007	Archuleta County, Colorado
0500000US08009	Baca County, Colorado
0500000US08011	Bent County, Colorado
0500000US08013	Boulder County, Colorado

# The American Community Survey

## Geographic Codes

### Place Table

Please select a state or equivalent entity:

Select a State



Field Name	Field Description	Example
STATE	State postal abbreviation	FL
STATEFP	State FIPS code	12
PLACEFP	Place FIPS code	21850
PLACENS	Place NS code	02403596
PLACENAME	Place name and legal/statistical area description	Fanning Springs city
TYPE	Place type	Incorporated Place
CLASSFP	FIPS class code	C1
FUNCSTAT	Legal functional status	A
COUNTIES	Name of county or counties in which this place is located	Gilchrist County~~~ Levy County

[census.gov/library/reference/code-lists/ansi.html](https://census.gov/library/reference/code-lists/ansi.html)

[census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-identifiers.html](https://census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-identifiers.html)

# The American Community Survey

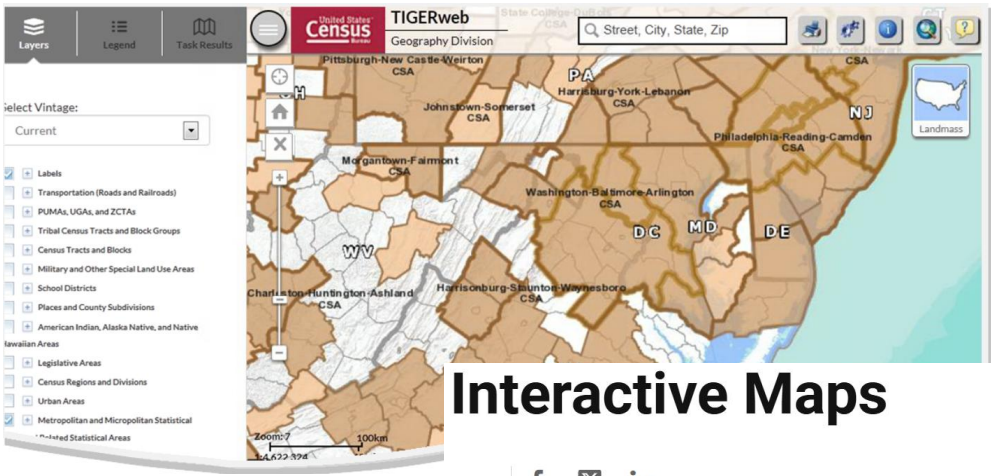
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# The American Community Survey

## Geographic Data Tools and Demo

### TIGERWeb



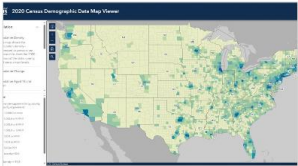
### Interactive Maps

Share [Facebook](#) [X \(Twitter\)](#) [LinkedIn](#)

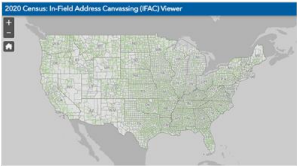
Work with interactive mapping tools from across the Census Bureau.



2020 Census Address Count Listing Files Viewer

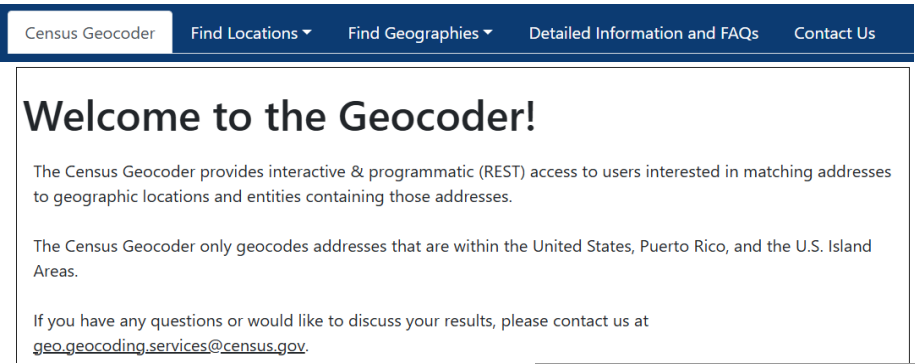


2020 Census Demographic Data Viewer



2020 Census In-Field Address Canvassing (IFAC) Viewer

### Census Geocoder



### TIGER/Line Shapefiles

## TIGER/Line® Shapefiles

Select the year and layer you are interested in from the dropdown menus below and click "Submit" for a list of the available geographic areas.

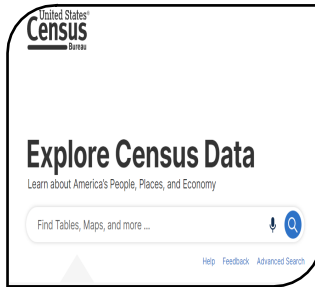
Select year

Select a layer type



# The American Community Survey

## Selected Ways to Access Data



data.census.gov



My Congressional District



QuickFacts



OnTheMap  
for Emergency Management



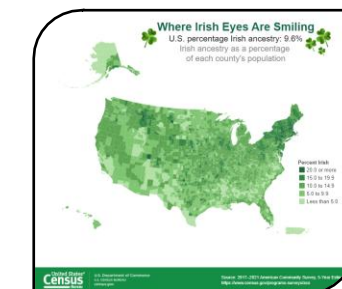
My Tribal Area



My Community Explorer



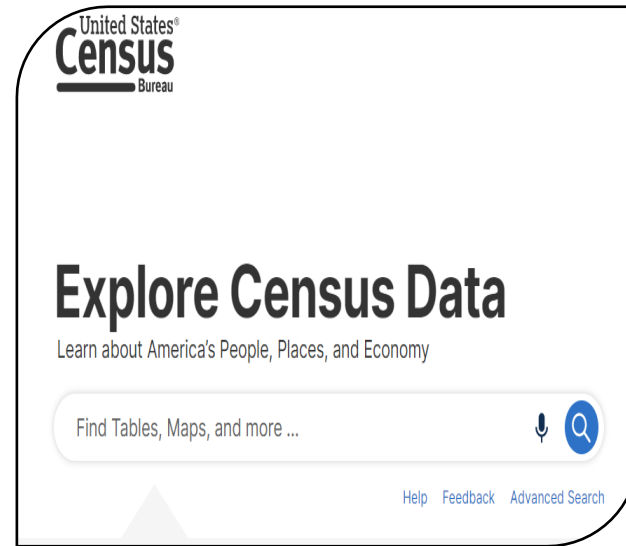
Census Business Builder



Application  
Programming Interface

# The American Community Survey

## Quick Demo



[data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov)




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# The American Community Survey

## ACS Main Page



[Partners](#) [Researchers](#) [Educators](#) [Survey Respondents](#) [News](#) [NAICS Codes](#) [Jobs](#) [About Us](#) [Contact Us](#) [Help](#)

[Topics](#) [Data & Maps](#) [Surveys & Programs](#) [Resource Library](#)

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

Within Our Surveys & Programs

[About the ACS](#)

[Respond to the ACS](#)

[News & Updates](#)

[Data](#)

[Microdata](#)


[Guidance for Data Users](#)

[Geography & ACS](#)

[Technical Documentation](#)

## 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.



American Comm...

### Featured

#### Respond to the ACS

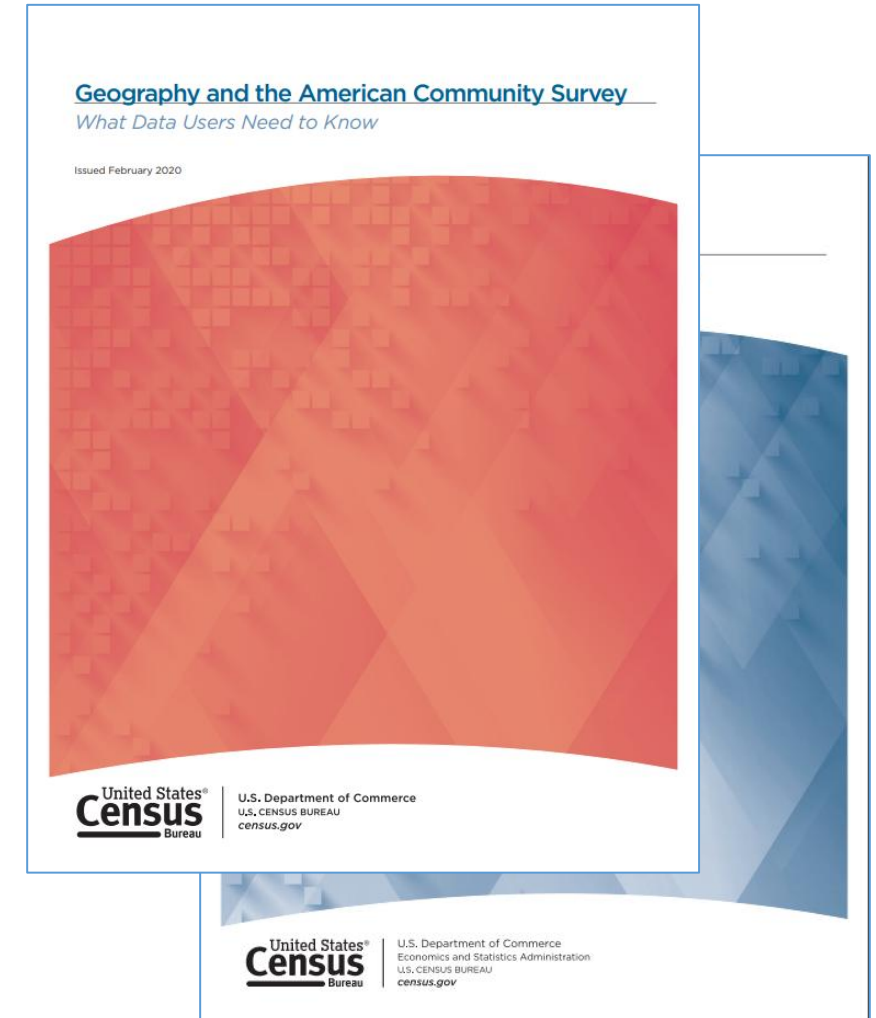
Learn the different ways to respond to the American Community Survey -- online, by phone, by email. Read our FAQs or call us for more help with the survey.

# The American Community Survey

## Data Handbooks

### Currently Available

- All Data Users
- American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN)
- Application Programming Database (API)
- Business
- **Geography**
- Journalists
- Public Use Microdata Sample
- Puerto Rico Community Survey
- Researchers
- Rural
- State and Local Government
- Summary File



# The American Community Survey

## Stay Connected



**Share Your ACS  
Data Story**

[census.gov/acs-data-stories](https://census.gov/acs-data-stories)



**Join the ACS  
Data Users Group**

[acsdatacommunity.prb.org](https://acsdatacommunity.prb.org)



**Sign Up for  
Email Updates**

[ACS](#) | [GEO](#)

# The American Community Survey & Geography Division

Find Answers, Get Support

## American Community Survey

- Phone: 800-923-8282
- Email: [acso.users.support@census.gov](mailto:acso.users.support@census.gov)
- Web: [census.gov/acs](https://census.gov/acs)

## Geography Division

- Phone: 301-763-1128
- Email: [geo.geography@census.gov](mailto:geo.geography@census.gov)
- Web: [census.gov/geo](https://census.gov/geo)