Fast Facts for Congress How to find and use information from the

## **American Community Survey**

Sponsored by The Brookings Institution Prepared by Cynthia Taeuber and D'Vera Cohn September 28-29, 2006

## Examples of the Types of Questions the ACS Can Address

- What are the educational levels of people in this Congressional District?
- How does the stock of affordable housing compare with other Districts in the state?
- How many people who speak a language other than English also speak English well?
- What proportion of this District's children are poor and has that changed over time?

## A problem to start your workday

Let's say the Member for whom you work is considering the need for a community college in your Congressional District. The Member asks:

"What are the educational levels of working-age adults in this Congressional District?"

## **American Community Survey**

- Estimates for 2005; updates how areas have changed since Census 2000
- Updated every year
- Available now for the nation, metropolitan areas, Congressional Districts, and counties and cities with 65,000+ people.
- Smaller areas will get data in 2008 and 2010
- Topics: essentially the same as Census 2000 long form

#### Examples of Characteristics in the ACS

- Demographic: Age; Sex; Household relationships; Marital status; Race/Hispanic origin/ancestry;
- Social: Place of birth and citizenship; School enrollment and educational attainment; Language; Migration; Disability; Grandparents; Veteran Status
- Economic: Employment; Income and poverty status; Journey to work
- Housing: Age; Costs; Own/rent; Fuels; Vehicles available; Food Stamps; Utilities and types of facilities available

## **Finding ACS Data**

 Fast Facts for Congress: www.fastfacts.census.gov

 American Factfinder: http://factfinder.census.gov





## **The American Community Survey**



# Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Data

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	Vacant housing units	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Social Characteristics - <u>show more</u> >>	Estimate	Percent	U.S.	Margin of Error		
	Population 25 years and over	418,578			+/-5,335		
	High school graduate or higher	$\approx$	85.9	84.2%	$(\times)$		
	Bachelor's degree or higher	$\sim$	24.8	27.2%	$\sim$		
	<u>Civilian veterans</u> (civilian population 18 years and over)	58,065	12.4	10.9%	+/-3,432		
	Disability status (population 5 years and over)	100,503	17.1	14.9%	+/-5,562		
	Foreign born	17,057	2.7	12.4%	+/-1,970		
	Male, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	132,776	55.5	55.9%	+/-4,231		
	Female, Now married, except separated (population 15 years and over)	129,277	49.9	51.0%	+/-3,911		
	Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	24,499	4.2	19.4%	+/-3,037		
	Economic Characteristics	Estimate	Percent	U.S.	Margin of Error		
	In labor force (population 16 years and over)	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Mean travel time to work in minutes (workers 16 years and over)	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Median household <u>income</u> (in 2005 inflation- adjusted dollars)	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Median family income (in 2005 inflation-adjusted dollars)	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Per capita income (in 2005 inflation-adjusted dollars)	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Families below poverty level	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Individuals below poverty level	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Housing Characteristics	Estimate	Percent	U.S.	Margin of Error		
	Owner-occupied homes	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
	Median value (dollars)	tbr	tbr	tbr	tbr		
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Find the Range of the Estimate LOWER bound of confidence interval = Estimate - Margin of error 10.1 - 0.9 = 9.2UPPER bound of confidence interval = Estimate + Margin of error 10.1 + 0.9 = 11.0**RANGE of estimate = 9.2 – 11.0** 

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	District 2	79.3	+/-1.1		
	District 3	77.7	+/-1.2		
	District 4	73.5	+/-1.0		
	District 5	81.4	+/-1.1		
	District 6	88.2	+/-0.9		
	District 7		+7-1.2		
	Alaska	91.0	+/-0.6		
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	Arizona	83.8	+/-0.4		
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#### Rule #2

Be careful what you say is different

• Do a simple test to determine if estimates are statistically different.

Then judge the practical significance of the difference.

# **Rule # 1**

# Do not make a big deal out of small differences

#### What is the

**American Community Survey?** 

- An annual sample survey
- Replaces Decennial Census long form
- Characteristics: demographic, social, economic, and housing estimates

 Geography: same as the decennial census long form by 2010 – for the nation, states, Congressional Districts, counties cities and towns, down to neighborhoods

## Updated Statistics in the American Community Survey

- Statistics updated every year
- Sample in every county
- 1-year averages areas of 65,000+
- 3-year averages areas of 20,000+ by 2008
- 5- year averages all areas by 2010

		Data for the Previous Year Released in the Summer of:							
Type of Data	Size of Area	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010+
Annual estimates	≥250,000								♦
Annual estimates	≥65,000								
3-year averages	≥20,000								→
5-year averages	Census Tract and Block Group*								•



Data reflect American Community Survey testing through 2004

\* Census tracts are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county averaging about 4,000 inhabitants. Census block groups generally contain between 600 and 3,000 people. The smallest geographic level for which data will be produced is the block group; the Census Bureau will not publish estimates for small numbers of people or areas if there is a probability that an individual can be identified.

## **Data Release Schedule**

- Data collected for one year
- Date released in late summer of following year
- Data release for 2005 ACS characteristics for places of 65,000+ (U.S. and Puerto Rico)
  - Demographic & Social Aug. 15, 2006
  - Economic Aug 29,2006
  - Housing, physical & financial Oct. 3, 2006
  - Race, Hispanic origin, Ancestry Nov. 14, 2006

## American FactFinder Find ACS Data and More -



## **ACS Data Products**









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International processing list (in the program of the program)           Congressional list (it 3 (109th Congress), Ohio)           Estimate         Margin of Error           Totat         471,390         +/-5,842           Male:         225,031         +/-3,408           18 to 24 years:         26,931         +/-1,321           Less than 9th grade         258         +/-211           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         6,913         +/-1,404           Some college, no degree         6,718         +/-1,351           Associate's degree         1,006         +/-579           Bachelor's degree         1,855         +/-546           Graduate or professional degree         243         +/-166           25 to 34 years:         38,202         +/-1,795           Less than 9th grade         942         +/-562           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         3,065         +-863           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         11,828         +/-1,819           Associate's degree         10,041         +/-1,819           Associate's degree         2,461         +/-655           Bachelor's degree         7,370         +/-1,181           Associate's degree         7,370         +/-1,135     <	NOTE. Data are limited to the household population a information on confidentiality protection, sampling er	ind exclude the populatio from popsampling error is	In IMing in instations, conogo dominionos, and other group quarters in or and definitions, see Survey Methodology	
Estimate         Margin of Error           Totat         471,390         +/5,842           Male:         225,031         +/3,408           18 to 24 years:         26,931         +/4,321           Less than 9th grade         258         +/-211           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         6,913         +/-1,208           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         10,108         +/-1,444           Some college, no degree         6,718         +/-579           Bachelor's degree         1,685         +/-546           Graduate or professional degree         1,685         +/-546           25 to 34 years:         38,202         +/-1,795           Less than 9th grade         942         +/-662           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         3,065         +/-863           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         11,628         +/-1,652           Some college, no degree         10,041         +/-1,652           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         3,065         +/-863           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         11,628         +/-1,671           Some college, no degree         10,041         +/-1,613           Associate's degree         7,370         +/-1,135		Congregeional Distric	et 3 (199th Congress) Obio	
Totat         471,390         +/-5,842           Male:         225,031         +/-3,408           18 to 24 years:         26,931         +/-1,321           Less than 9th grade         258         +/-211           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         6,913         +/-1,208           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         10,108         +/-1,444           Some college, no degree         6,718         +/-1,351           Associate's degree         1,066         +/-579           Bachelor's degree         1,685         +/-546           Orraduate or professional degree         243         +/-166           25 to 34 years:         38,202         +/-1,755           Less than 9th grade         3065         +/-663           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         11,828         +/-1,819           Associate's degree         10,041         +/-1,819           Associate's degree         2,461         +/-685           Bachelor's degree         7,370         +/-1,135           Graduate or professional degree         7,370         +/-1,135           Sto 44 years:         46,688         +/-2,274		Estimate Mar	rain of Error	
Male:       225,031       +/-3,408         18 to 24 years:       26,931       +/-1,321         Less than 9th grade       258       +/-211         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       6,913       +/-1,208         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       10,108       +/-1,444         Some college, no degree       6,718       +/-1,351         Associate's degree       1,006       +/-579         Bachelor's degree       1,065       +/-656         Graduate or professional degree       38,202       +/-1,795         Less than 9th grade       942       +/-562         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       3,065       +/-863         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       11,828       +/-1,871         Some college, no degree       10,041       +/-1,819         Associate's degree       2,465       +/-655         Bachelor's degree       2,465       +/-655         Some college, no degree       2,445       +/-1,819         Associate's degree       2,465       +/-655         Bachelor's degree       7,370       +/-1,135         Graduate or professional degree       2,495       +/-781         35 to 44 years:       46,698       +/-2,274     <	Total:	471.390	+/-5.842	
18 to 24 years:       26,931       +/-1,321         Less than 9th grade       258       +/-211         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       6,913       +/-1,208         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       10,108       +/-1,444         Some college, no degree       6,718       +/-1,351         Associate's degree       1,006       +/-579         Bachelor's degree       1,885       +/-546         Graduate or professional degree       243       +/-165         25 to 34 years:       38,202       +/-1,795         Less than 9th grade       942       +/-562         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       3,065       +/-863         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       11,828       +/-1,671         Some college, no degree       10,041       +/-1,619         Associate's degree       2,461       +/-655         Bachelor's degree       7,370       +/-1,135         Graduate or professional degree       2,495       +/-781         35 to 44 years:       46,698       +/-2,274	Male:	225,031	+/-3,408	
Less than 9th grade         258         +/-211           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         6,913         +/-1,08           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         10,108         +/-1,444           Some college, no degree         6,718         +/-1,351           Associate's degree         1,006         +/-579           Bachelor's degree         1,685         +/-546           Graduate or professional degree         243         +/-166           25 to 34 years:         38,202         +/-1,795           Less than 9th grade         942         +/-562           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         3,065         +/-863           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         11,828         +/-1,671           Some college, no degree         1,004         +/-1,671           Some college, no degree         2,461         +/-655           Bachelor's degree         2,461         +/-655           Bachelor's degree         7,370         +/-1,135           Graduate or professional degree         2,495         +/-781           35 to 44 years:         46,698         +/-2,274	18 to 24 years:	26,931	+/-1,321	
9th to 12th grade, no diploma       6,913       +/-1,208         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       10,108       +/-1,444         Some college, no degree       6,718       +/-1,351         Associate's degree       1,006       +/-579         Bachelor's degree       1,685       +/-546         Graduate or professional degree       243       +/-1,795         Less than 9th grade       942       +/-562         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       3,065       +/-863         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       11,828       +/-1,613         Some college, no degree       2,461       -/-655         Bachelor's degree       2,461       -/-655         Bachelor's degree       2,461       -/-655         Bachelor's degree       2,461       -/-655         Bachelor's degree       2,465       -/-781         Sto 44 years:       46,698       +/-2,274	Less than 9th grade	258	+/-211	
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Associate's degree       1,006       +/-579         Bachelor's degree       1,685       +/-546         Graduate or professional degree       243       +/-166         25 to 34 years:       38,202       +/-1,795         Less than 9th grade       942       +/-562         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       3,065       +/-863         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       11,828       +/-1,671         Some college, no degree       10,041       +/-1,619         Associate's degree       2,461       +/-655         Bachelor's degree       7,370       +/-1,135         Graduate or professional degree       2,495       +/-7,811         35 to 44 years:       46,698       +/-2,274	Some college, no degree	6,718	+/-1,351	
Bachelor's degree       1,685       +/-546         Graduate or professional degree       243       +/-166         25 to 34 years:       38,202       +/-1,795         Less than 9th grade       942       +/-562         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       3,065       +/-4663         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       11,828       +/-1,671         Some college, no degree       10,041       +/-1,619         Associate's degree       2,461       +/-4,655         Bachelor's degree       7,370       +/-1,135         Graduate or professional degree       2,495       +/-1,781         35 to 44 years:       46,698       +/-2,274	Associate's degree	1,006	+/-579	
Graduate or professional degree         243         +/-166           25 to 34 years:         38,202         +/-1,795           Less than 9th grade         942         +/-562           9th to 12th grade, no diploma         3,065         +/-863           High school graduate (includes equivalency)         11,828         +/-1,671           Some college, no degree         10,041         +/-1,619           Associate's degree         2,461         +/-655           Bachelor's degree         7,370         +/-1,135           Graduate or professional degree         2,495         +/-7,811           35 to 44 years:         46,698         +/-2,274	Bachelor's degree	1,685	+/-546	
25 to 34 years:       38,202       +/-1,795         Less than 9th grade       942       +/-562         9th to 12th grade, no diploma       3,065       +/-685         High school graduate (includes equivalency)       11,828       +/-1,671         Some college, no degree       10,041       +/-1,619         Associate's degree       2,461       +/-655         Bachelor's degree       7,370       +/-1,135         Graduate or professional degree       2,495       +/-7,811         35 to 44 years:       44,6898       +/-2,274	Graduate or professional degree	243	+/-166	
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Some college, no degree         10,041         +/-1,619           Associate's degree         2,461         +/-655           Bachelor's degree         7,370         +/-1,135           Graduate or professional degree         2,495         +/-781           35 to 44 years:         46,698         +/-2,274	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	11,828	+/-1,671	
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Bachelor's degree         7,370         +/-1,135           Graduate or professional degree         2,495         +/-781           35 to 44 years:         46,698         +/-2,274	Associate's degree	2,461	+/-655	
Graduate or professional degree         2,495         +/-781           35 to 44 years:         46,698         +/-2,274	Bachelor's degree	7,370	+/-1,135	
35 to 44 years: 46,698 +/-2,274	Graduate or professional degree	2,495	+/-781	
	35 to 44 years:	46,698	+/-2,274	
Less than 9th grade 864 +/-558	Less than 9th grade	864	+/-558	
9th to 12th grade, no diploma 3.733 +/-1.200	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	3.733	+/-1.200	

## **Data Issues**

- Pay attention to the margin of error shown in the tables
- Check the universe statement on the table
- Remember that ACS data through 2005 are for households only, not the total population
- Check for changes in geographic boundaries
- Learn how to use multi-year averages

More Help This training session, and cheat sheets, are archived on the website of the Brookings Institution:

<u>http://www.brookings.edu/</u> metro/umi.htm

## Help from Your State Data Center

![](_page_31_Picture_1.jpeg)

**Census Bureau Help Congressional Affairs Office** Phone: 301 763 6100 E-mail: cao@census.gov Web page: http://fastfacts.census.gov