

The American Community Survey

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Brown Bag Seminar
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Decennial Census History

Since 1790, the U.S. has conducted a census.

In addition to enumerating the population, detailed characteristics were also collected.

In recent decades, two census forms were used:

1. “short” form – basic demographic and housing
2. “long” form – collected more in-depth information from a sample of the population

History of the ACS

1990: Congress expresses interest in more timely "long-form" data.



1996: Census Bureau begins testing a continuous survey in 4 counties, increasing to 36 counties by 1999.



2000: Census Bureau launches Census 2000 Supplementary Survey with a national sample to test the ACS concept on a large scale.



2005: ACS implemented nationwide, replacing census long form in 2010 and beyond.



2006: First ACS estimates (based on 2005 ACS) released for areas with populations of 65,000 and greater.

ACS is Part of the 2010 Decennial Census Program

The 2010 Census counts the population to support apportionment and redistricting.

The ACS supplements this information with annually updated data on the characteristics of population and housing.

The purpose of the ACS is not to count every person in a community or town but rather, to provide a portrait of the community's characteristics.

Uses of the ACS

ACS data are used in the allocation of more than \$400 billion in Federal funds.

For many topics, ACS is the *only* source of Federal population-based statistics for states, communities, towns, tribal lands, neighborhoods, and small population groups.

The ACS has a diverse set of data users including Congress, federal, state, and local governments, academia, media, and the private sector.

ACS Data Collection

Mail



Telephone



Personal Visit



ACS Language Program

Mail

- Toll free number for telephone assistance
- Respondents can request a Spanish version
- Translated materials such as letters and brochures

Telephone: More than 20 languages used by approximately 180 bilingual interviewers

Personal Visit: More than 50 languages used by approximately 350 bilingual field interviewers

ACS Data Release Strategy

ACS estimates are released in the form of both single year and multiyear estimates.

Users of State and Congressional District data have three sets of data to choose from:

- 2009 ACS (12 months of data)
- 2007-2009 ACS (36 months of data)
- 2005-2009 (60 months of data)

Users of data for neighborhoods, small towns, state legislative districts, census tracts and block groups will **ONLY** use 2005-2009 ACS.

2009 ACS 1-year Release

Planned for September 2010

Based on data collected January 2009 through
December 2009

Of particular interest to Congressional staff are:

- Data profiles (provides comprehensive summary for each State and *Congressional District*)
- Ranking tables
- Comparison profiles

Planned 2009 ACS Economic Briefs

- Percentage of People In Poverty in the Past 12 Months
- Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months
- Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers 16 and Older by Sex
- Percentage Employed in Construction, Extraction, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations Among the Civilian Employed
- Percentage of Workers Who Drove Alone
- Home Values
- Housing Costs of Mortgaged Owners
- Food Stamp Receipt in the Past 12 Months
- Labor force participation rate of people 65 years and over
- Work status of employed people 65 years and over

2005-2009 ACS Data Release Plans

First time towns and communities with populations less than 20,000 will receive ACS data.

ACS 5-year estimates will be released annually and disseminated through the Census Bureau's American FactFinder.

Block group data will only be available for download in Summary File format (for more advanced data users).

How to Access ACS Data

The screenshot shows the U.S. Census Bureau website. The top navigation bar includes links for [FAQs](#), [Subjects A to Z](#), [Help](#), and a [SEARCH](#) box. On the left, a vertical menu lists various site features: [Mother's Day Facts for Features](#), [New on the Site](#), [Data Tools](#), [American FactFinder](#) (highlighted with a red border), [Jobs@Census](#), [Catalog](#), [Publications](#), [Are You in a Survey?](#), [About the Bureau](#), [Regional Offices](#), [Doing Business with Us](#), and [Related Sites](#). The main content area features a large banner for the 2010 Census with the text "United States Census 2010 IT'S IN OUR HANDS" and "We can't move forward until you mail it back." Below the banner is a "Learn More" button and a grid of links: [Multimedia](#), [News](#), [Jobs](#), [For Partners](#), [Census in Schools](#), [En Espanol](#), [Road Tour](#), and [Census on Campus](#). Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are also present. Below the banner, there are two main sections: "People & Households" with links to [American Community Survey](#), [Estimates](#), [Projections](#), [Housing](#), [Income](#), [State Median Income](#), [Poverty](#), [Health Insurance](#), [International](#), [Genealogy](#), [Census 2000](#), and [More](#); and "Business &" with links to [Economic Census](#) and [Get Help with Your Form](#).

Census Geographic Concepts

Legal/Administrative and Statistical Areas

Legal/Administrative Areas	Statistical Areas
Nation	Regions
States	Divisions
Counties	Census County Divisions
Minor Civil Divisions	Census Designated Places
Incorporated Places	Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas
Congressional Districts	Urban / Rural Areas
School Districts	Census Tracts
Voting Districts	Block Groups
ZIP Code Tabulation Areas	Public Use Microdata Areas

Congressional District Data

Congressional District 5 (110th Congress), Maryland - Selected Social Characteristics in the Un - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=500\\$50000US2405&-context=adp&-ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_&-tree_id](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=500$50000US2405&-context=adp&-ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_&-tree_id)

U.S. Census Bureau
American FactFinder

Main Search Feedback FAQs Glossary Site Map Help

Data Profile

You are here: [Main](#) > [Data Sets](#) > [Geography](#) > [Results](#)

Print / Download | Related Items

2008 Data Profiles:

- Social
 - [Economic](#)
 - [Housing](#)
 - [Demographic](#)
 - [Narrative](#)

[View this table...](#)

from 2008

Congressional District 5, Maryland (110th Congress)
Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2006-2008 ?
Data Set: 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates
Survey: American Community Survey


Social - Education, Marital Status, Relationships, Fertility, Grandparents...
Economic - Income, Employment, Occupation, Commuting to Work...
Housing - Occupancy and Structure, Housing Value and Costs, Utilities...
Demographic - Sex and Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Housing Units...
Narrative - Text profile with graphs for easy analysis...


http://fastfacts.census.gov/home/cws/main.html

Fast Facts for Congress - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address  http://fastfacts.census.gov/home/cws/main.html








U.S. Census Bureau

Fast Facts for Congress

MAIN GLOSSARY FAQ HELP FEEDBACK

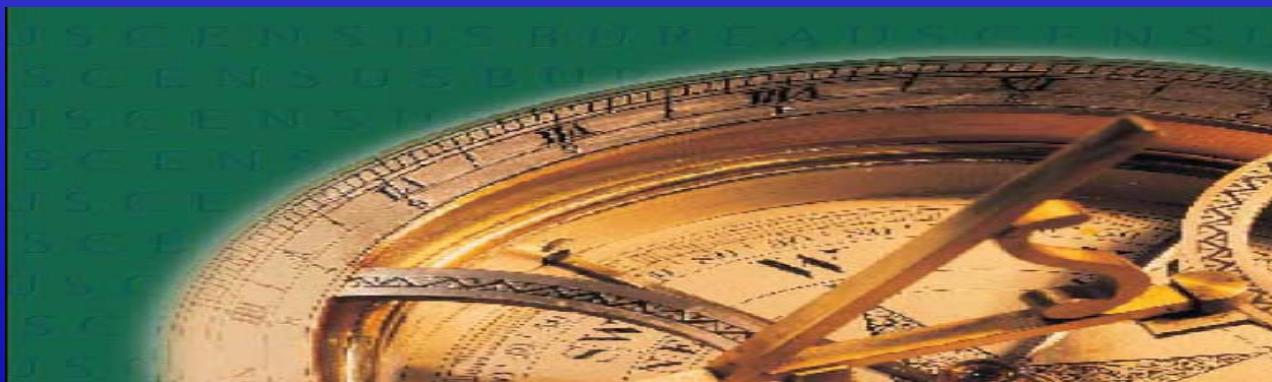
Can't find what you need?
Call the
Census Bureau's
Congressional Affairs
Office: (301) 763-6100,
cao@census.gov.

 **Enter an address, a ZIP code, or select a state, county, or 110th Congressional District to view highlights from Census Bureau sources of economic and demographic data.**

Locate a District:	- OR -	Select a State, District, or County:
ADDRESS <input type="text"/>		STATE <input type="text" value="United States"/> 
ZIP CODE <input type="text"/> 		DISTRICT <input type="text" value="-- select a district --"/> 
		COUNTY <input type="text" value="-- select a county --"/> 

The ACS Compass Products Handbooks

A Compass for Understanding and Using
American Community Survey Data
What Congress Needs to Know



http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Compass/compass_series.html

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Helping You Make Informed Decisions



The ACS Compass Products Presentations

Fully-scripted PowerPoint presentations on our website

- An Overview of the ACS
- Things that May Affect the Estimates
- Understanding Multiyear Estimates
- Data Products
- Geographic Areas and Concepts
- Introduction to the Public Use Microdata Sample files

The ACS Compass Products E-Tutorial

Designed to reach novice users and ACS respondents interested in learning more about the survey.

Describes the purpose and benefits of the ACS.

Summarizes the ACS estimates explaining data collection, margins of errors, and the data release schedule.

Demonstrates how to access data on American FactFinder.

For more information about the ACS

Subscribe to “ACS Alert”

<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Special/Alerts.htm>

Visit the ACS website:

<http://www.census.gov/acs/www>

Contact by telephone or email:

301-763-1405

acso.users.support@census.gov