

# American Community Survey

## Introduction

America is changing, and so is the census. In 1790, the year of the first census, 3.9 million individuals were counted. Over two hundred years later, the number is more than 300 million. As our Nation expands, so does the need for more current and up-to-date information. The Census Bureau is using a powerful new tool to adjust to this increased need - the American Community Survey (ACS).

The ACS is a part of the Decennial Census Program, however, it will not provide counts of the population. Instead, the ACS will provide detailed information on the characteristics of the people and housing in the country every year. In the past, this information was only collected every ten years as part of the decennial census.

The ACS is conducted by mail, telephone, and visits from Census Bureau field representatives. It is conducted in every county, American Indian reservation, Alaska Native Village, and Hawaiian Homeland. The ACS is also conducted as the Puerto Rico Community Survey in every municipio in Puerto Rico.

Title 13, United States Code, requires that the survey is completed for all addresses selected for the survey. Since the ACS

represents a new way of collecting detailed decennial census information, you may receive questions from constituents about the validity of the survey, why certain questions are on the form, and whether response to the survey is required by law.

Public cooperation is vital to the success of the ACS, just as it is for the decennial census. We appreciate your efforts in encouraging your constituents to fulfill their civic responsibility to participate in this survey. We stand ready to assist you in responding to their concerns and inquiries.

We developed the attached tool kit to assist you in answering constituents' questions about the survey. For further information about the ACS, please call the Census Bureau's Congressional Affairs Office at 301-763-6100.