4. TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR THE ACS SUMMARY FILE

Summary File Excel Import Tool and Simplified Geography Files

The Summary File Excel Import Tool provides an option for retrieving tables from the American Community Survey (ACS) Summary File for data users without access to SAS or other statistical programming software. This tool is also useful if you are seeking data for just a few tables and/or geographies. To use this tool, download the Summary File data, the appropriate template for importing the data, and the Simplified Geography File (described below).[14] A guide titled "Instructions on How to Read the ACS Summary File into Excel" is available on the ACS Summary File Documentation Web page and walks you through each step to import the data into a spreadsheet.[15]

The Simplified Geography Files include basic information (LOGRECNO, GEOID, and name of geography) and are designed to be used with the Excel templates as outlined in the guide for reading the ACS Summary File into Excel. This Excel file contains a sheet for the United States, as well as each state or state equivalent. Compared to the standard geography files in .csv and .txt format, these simplified files contain only the geography variables needed to read the ACS Summary File into Excel. You can find the Simplified Geography Files on the ACS Summary File Documentation Web page.

SAS Programs

There are two programming options for SAS users. The first option is a set of individual SAS programs, one for each Summary File by geography, sequence, and file type (estimate or margin of error). These programs are best for users only interested in looking at a specific sequence for a specific geography. The individual SAS programs provide code for reading in each sequence into SAS, labeling variables, and saving the table as a SAS data set. However, you need to produce your own code to merge the geography, estimation, and margin of error files together.

The second option is a single SAS program that is parameterized to allow users to read the entire Summary File into SAS. This program includes a series of macros and is designed for advanced users who need a large quantity of data. You can access these programs, as well as an example SAS program, on the Summary File Documentation Web page.[16]

Appendix Tables

The U.S. Census Bureau produces a series of appendix tables for data users who want more information about ACS Detailed Tables and the types of geographies that are available. The 1-year and 5-year appendixes can be downloaded as Excel files from the Summary File Documentation page.[17] Each file contains a separate sheet for Appendix A and Appendix B.

Appendix A lists all the Detailed Tables included in the ACS Summary File, along with their associated sequence numbers. This appendix also includes information on geography restrictions for each table. For data quality and geographic reasons, some tables are published with specific geography restrictions. For example, Table B05001PR, "Citizenship Status in Puerto Rico," is produced for Puerto Rico only, and Table B08501, "Means of Transportation to Work by Age for Workplace Geography," is only produced for the workplace geographies.

The Topics column in the Appendix A sheet includes the ACS data topics covered, such as Age and Sex, Commuting, and School Enrollment; while the Universe column describes the total number of units in the population of interest, such as total population, housing units, or workers 16 years and over.

Appendix B contains a list of the summary levels and components for each geography that is included in the ACS Detailed Tables.

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[14] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) Summary File Data, <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/summary-file.html>.

[15] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) Summary File Documentation, <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/summary-file-documentation.html>.

[16] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) Summary File Documentation, <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/summary-file-documentation.html>.

[17] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) Summary File Documentation, <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/summary-file-documentation.html>.