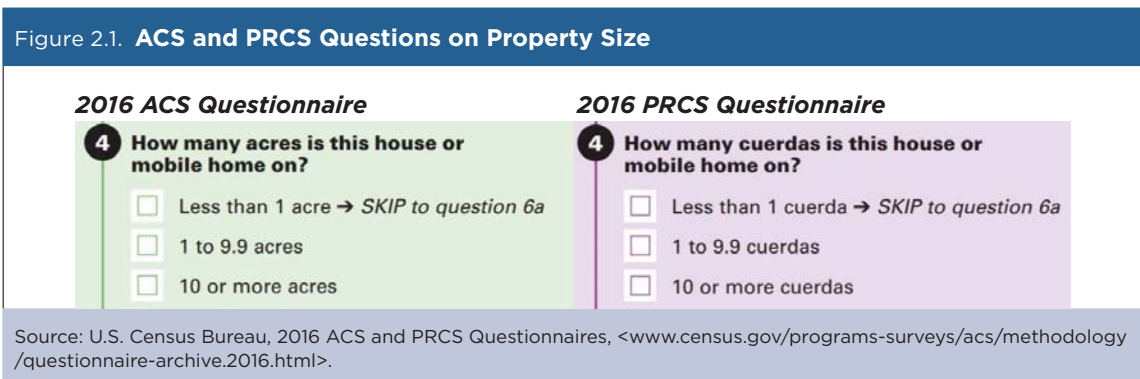


## 2. HOW IS THE PRCS DIFFERENT FROM THE ACS?

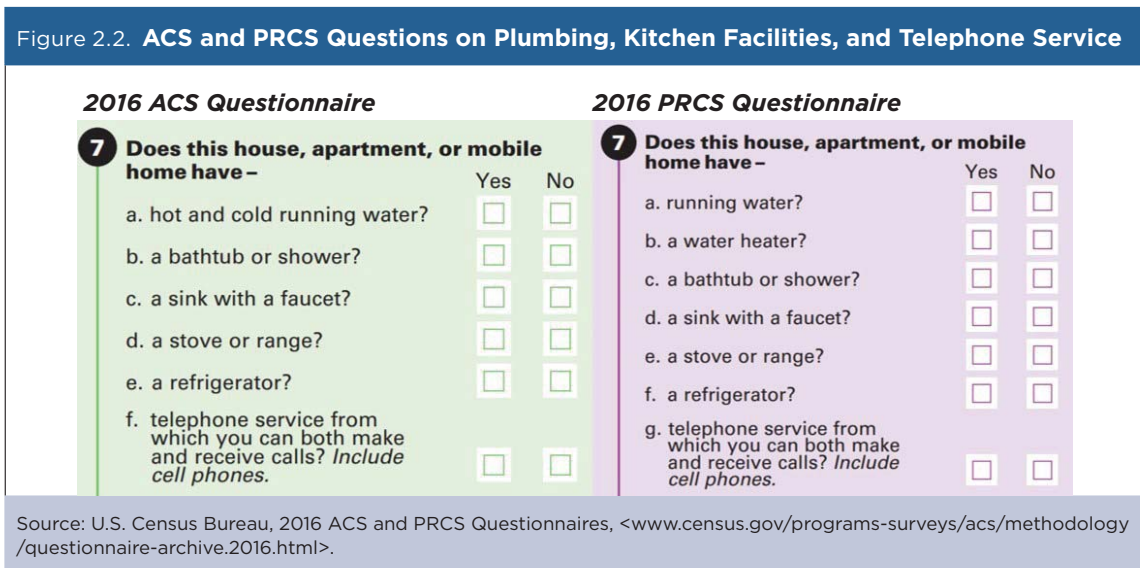
The data collected in the Puerto Rico Community Survey (PRCS) are similar to those collected in the American Community Survey (ACS) for the 50 states and the District of Columbia, but there are also some important differences between the two surveys.

With the ACS, the initial mailings sent to U.S. addresses are printed in English and residents can receive Spanish-language materials upon request. By comparison, Puerto Rico addresses initially receive PRCS mailings that are printed in Spanish, although residents can request English-language materials. English and Spanish versions of sample PRCS questionnaires are available on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site.<sup>10</sup>

The PRCS form includes several questions that are modified from those on the ACS to account for cultural and geographic differences between Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland.<sup>11</sup> For example, Question 4 in the Housing section asks the amount of land that a house, apartment, or mobile home occupies. Whereas the acre is the unit of measurement in the ACS, the cuerda (or "Spanish acre," equal to .971 acres) is the measurement unit in the PRCS (see Figure 2.1).<sup>12</sup>



While the ACS asks if respondents have "hot and cold running water," the PRCS asks if they have "running water" and "a water heater," as it is less common to have hot water heaters in Puerto Rico (see Figure 2.2).



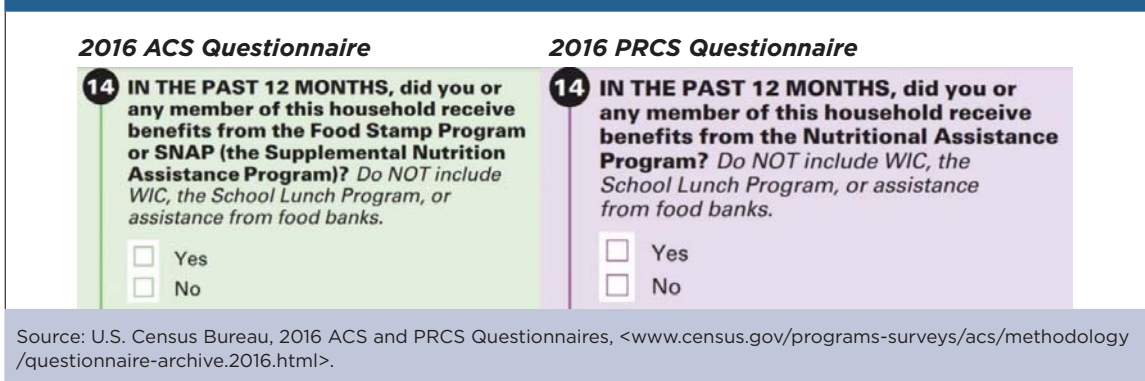
<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), Questionnaire Archive, <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.html)>.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Design and Methodology Report (January 2014), p. 56, <[https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/design\\_and\\_methodology/acs\\_design\\_methodology\\_report\\_2014.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/design_and_methodology/acs_design_methodology_report_2014.pdf)>.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS and PRCS Questionnaires, <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html)>.

In the ACS, Question 14 asks whether anyone in the household received benefits through the Food Stamp Program or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (see Figure 2.3). Puerto Rico operates a “Nutritional Assistance Program” in place of SNAP, and eligibility requirements and benefit amounts are determined by Puerto Rico, rather than the federal government.

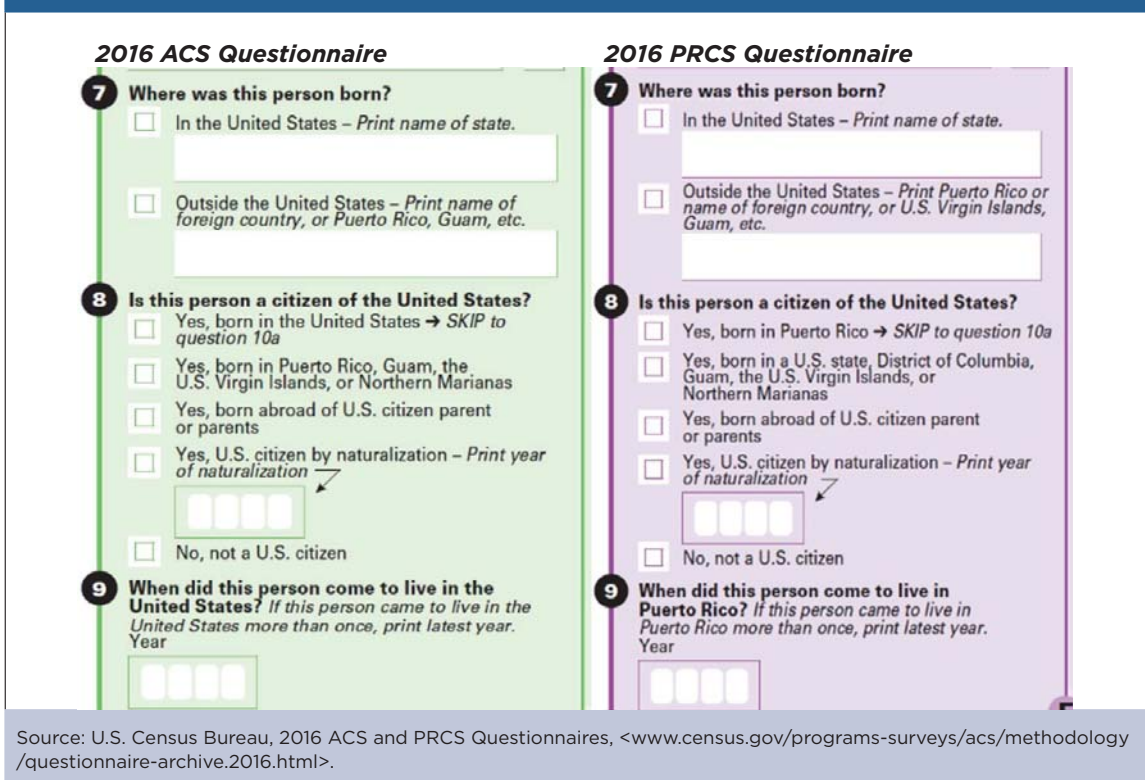
Figure 2.3. ACS and PRCS Questions on Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS and PRCS Questionnaires, <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html)>.

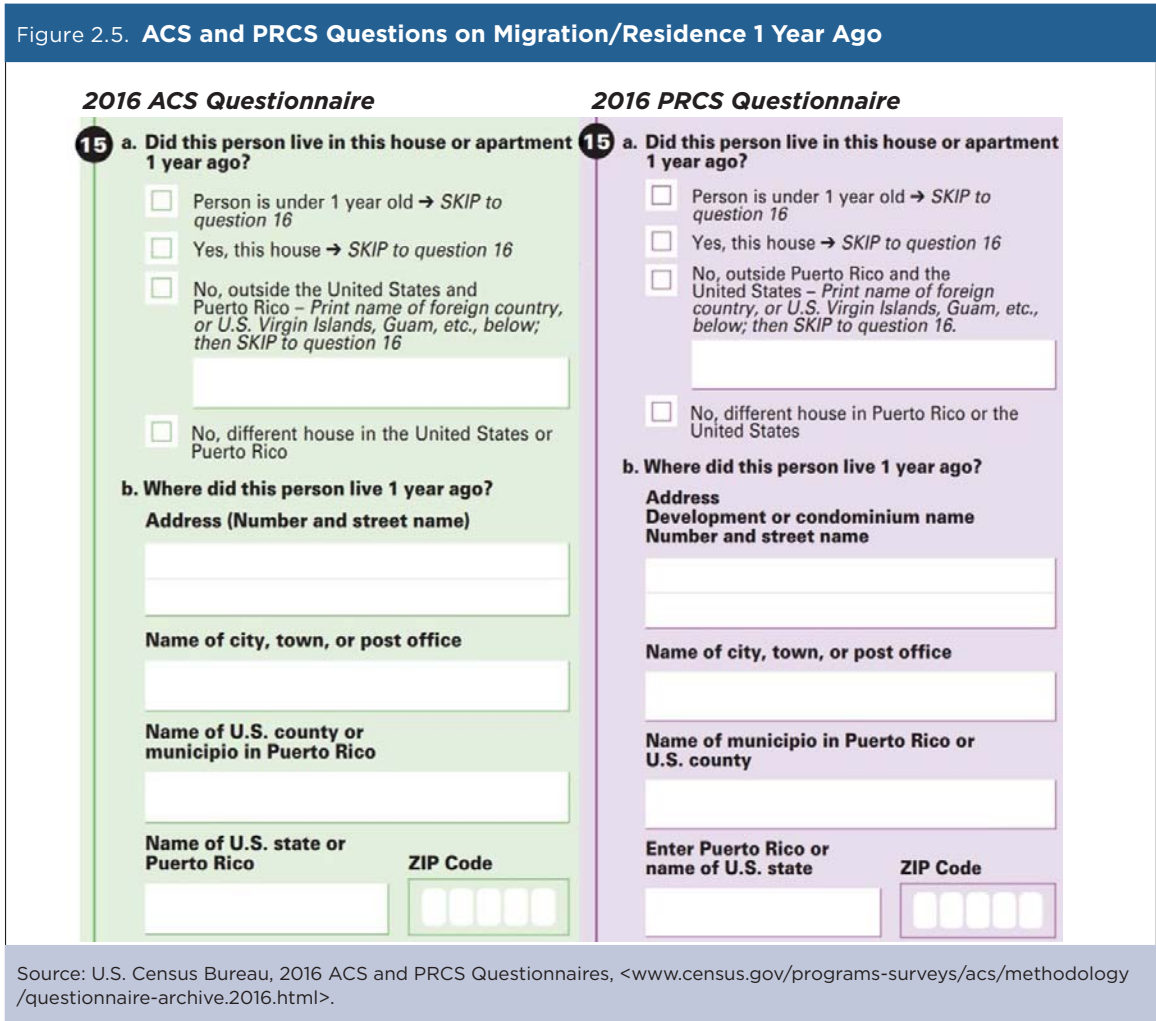
Figure 2.4 shows additional PRCS modifications to the questions on birthplace (nativity), citizenship, and year of entry. For these questions, the differences are in the geographic areas emphasized in the question wording or response options. For example, the “year of entry” question in the ACS asks when a respondent came to live in the United States. In the PRCS, that same question asks when someone came to live in Puerto Rico.

Figure 2.4. ACS and PRCS Questions on Place of Birth, Citizenship, and Year of Entry



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS and PRCS Questionnaires, <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html)>.

Similarly, questions on migration and place of residence 1 year ago differ slightly between the two surveys (see Figure 2.5).



The “place of work” question in the ACS asks the respondent to name the county and state of their work location, while the same question in the PRCS asks the person to name the Puerto Rico municipio as the first option, while listing the U.S. county and state as an alternative (see Figure 2.6).<sup>13</sup>

Figure 2.6. ACS and PRCS Questions on Place of Work

The figure displays two side-by-side questionnaire sections. The left section is titled "2016 ACS Questionnaire" and the right is "2016 PRCS Questionnaire". Both sections start with question 30: "At what location did this person work LAST WEEK? If this person worked at more than one location, print where he or she worked most last week." Below this, both forms have a text box for the address, followed by a note: "If the exact address is not known, give a description of the location such as the building name or the nearest street or intersection." The ACS form then asks for the city, town, or post office, followed by a question: "Is the work location inside the limits of that city or town?" with "Yes" and "No, outside the city/town limits" options. It then asks for the county, the U.S. state or foreign country, and the ZIP code. The PRCS form follows a similar path but includes an additional step: "Name of municipio in Puerto Rico or U.S. county" before asking for the state or foreign country. Both forms have a ZIP code field with five individual boxes.

**2016 ACS Questionnaire**

**30** At what location did this person work LAST WEEK? If this person worked at more than one location, print where he or she worked most last week.

If the exact address is not known, give a description of the location such as the building name or the nearest street or intersection.

a. Address (Number and street name)

b. Name of city, town, or post office

c. Is the work location inside the limits of that city or town?

Yes

No, outside the city/town limits

d. Name of county

e. Name of U.S. state or foreign country

f. ZIP Code

**2016 PRCS Questionnaire**

**30** At what location did this person work LAST WEEK? If this person worked at more than one location, print where he or she worked most last week.

a. Address  
Development or condominium name  
Number and street name

If the exact address is not known, give a description of the location such as the building name or the nearest street or intersection.

b. Name of city, town, or post office

c. Is the work location inside the limits of that city or town?

Yes

No, outside the city/town limits

d. Name of municipio in Puerto Rico or U.S. county

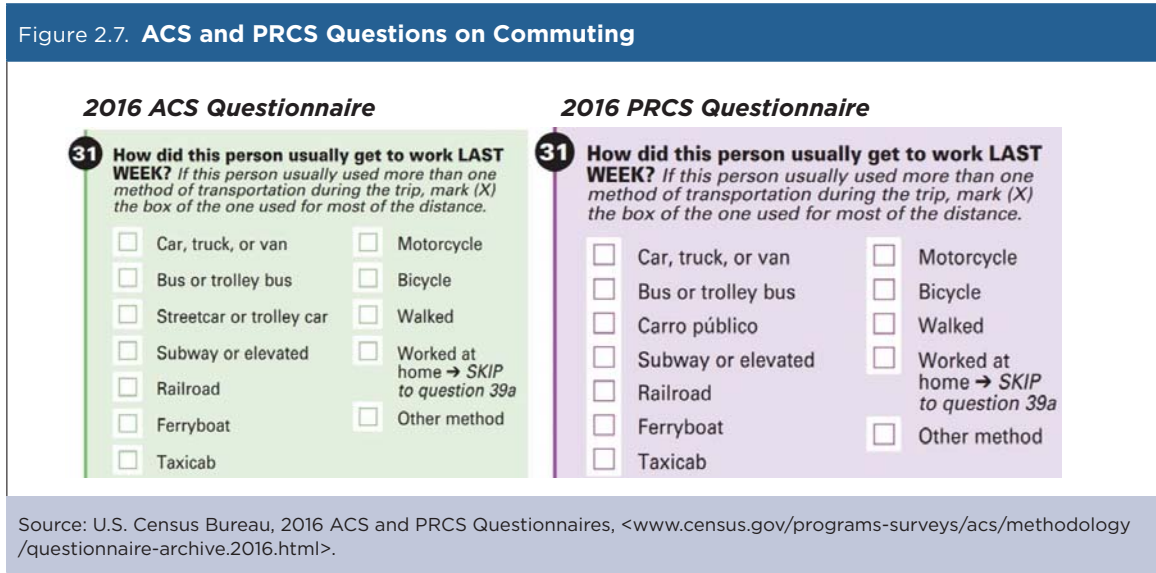
e. Enter Puerto Rico or name of U.S. state or foreign country

f. ZIP Code

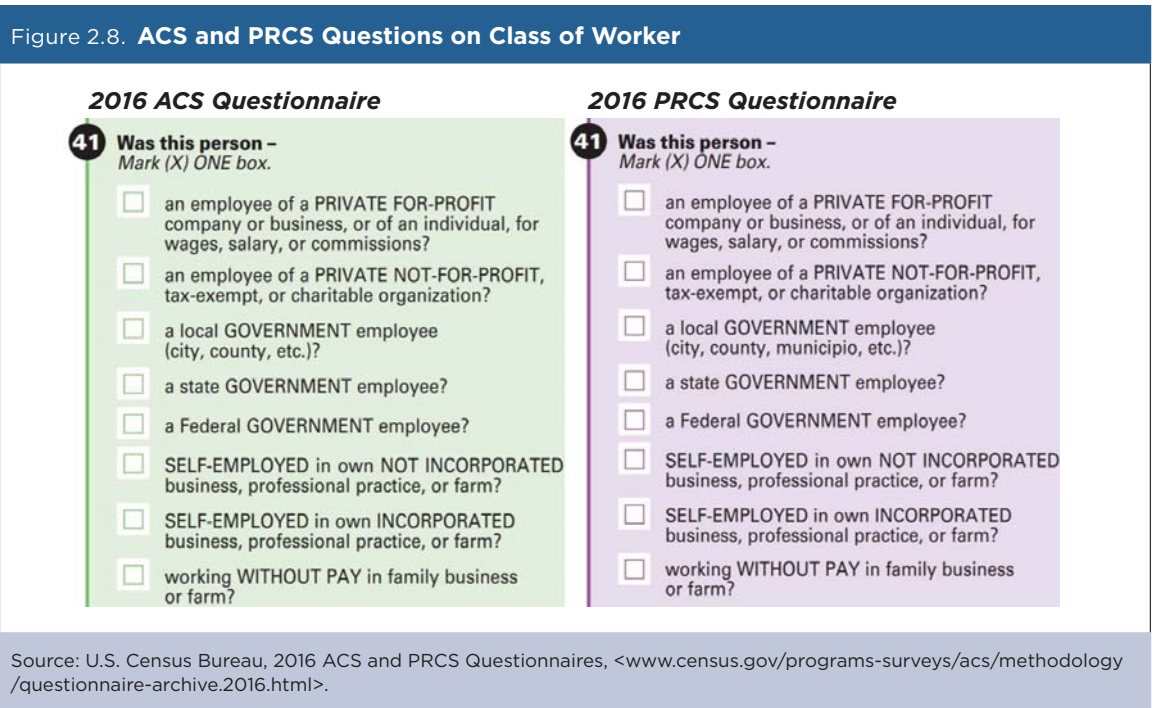
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 ACS and PRCS Questionnaires, <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.2016.html)>.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), Questionnaire Archive, <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/questionnaire-archive.html)>.

There are also differences in the ACS and PRCS questions on the means of transportation to work. The ACS includes an option for “Streetcar or trolley car” while “Carro público,” or “public car” is included in the list of options in the PRCS (see Figure 2.7).



Finally, Figure 2.8 shows a minor difference in the ACS and PRCS questions on class of worker. The ACS questionnaire includes “county” as an example of a local government employee, while the PRCS questionnaire refers to both “county” and “municipio” employees.



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## ***Differences in Data Collection Methods and Population Controls***

Unlike the ACS, the PRCS does not have an Internet response option. As a result, the Census Bureau uses a different mail strategy to encourage households to complete the PRCS. About 4 days before the initial mail package, addresses selected for the PRCS receive a prenotice letter, which addresses selected for the ACS do not receive. The initial mail package for the PRCS contains the full questionnaire, rather than an instruction card for completing the survey online, as is the case for the ACS mailing. In both cases, the replacement mail package for nonrespondents is sent approximately 3 weeks after the initial mailing. In addition, the Census Bureau sends only two reminder postcards for the PRCS, compared with three reminders for the ACS (two pressure seal letters and one postcard).

As with most household surveys, the PRCS data are controlled so that the number of people in certain categories agree with the Census Bureau's official estimates. The PRCS, like the ACS, uses a weighting method to ensure that estimates are consistent with official Census Bureau population control totals. However, there are minor differences in the controls used in the ACS and the PRCS. ACS estimates are controlled to the Census Bureau's July 1 population estimate totals by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, while PRCS estimates are controlled to population estimates by age and sex only. Additionally, while both ACS and PRCS estimates are controlled to the population at the county (or municipio) level, they are not controlled to the sub-county level in Puerto Rico—unlike in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>14</sup>

Housing unit totals in the ACS are controlled to the Census Bureau's mid-year totals, but there are currently no housing unit controls available for Puerto Rico.<sup>15</sup> This is because the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program only produces July 1 housing unit estimates for the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

More information about PRCS and ACS methods is available in the Census Bureau's Design and Methodology Report.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Starting with the 2009 surveys, ACS estimates of the total population of incorporated places (self-governing cities, towns, or villages) and minor civil divisions (such as county precincts) are also adjusted so that they are consistent with official population estimates.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Design and Methodology Report (January 2014), pp. 153–154, <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/design-and-methodology.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/design-and-methodology.html)>.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Design and Methodology Report (January 2014), <[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/design-and-methodology.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/design-and-methodology.html)>.