NWX-US DEPT OF COMMERCE

2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental Data Release Webinar Transcript

November 30, 2021

2:00 pm ET

Michael Cook: Good afternoon. I'm Michael Cook, Chief of the Public Information Office at the US Census Bureau. Thank you for joining us today for the Webinar on the American Community Survey One Year Experimental Data Release.

As you may know the American Community Survey is an important source of information providing key social, economic, housing and demographic data about the US population. Quick note off the top - if you'd like to ask a question today you need to dial into our phone line at 1-888-324-0283 and use the passcode that you see on your screen. We will be taking questions at the end of today's presentations.

Our present - our presenters today are Donna Daily, Chief of the American Community Survey Office, and Jonathan Eggleston, Senior Economist with the Center for Economic Studies at the Census Bureau. They'll walk us through how COVID-19 impacted data collection and data quality for the ACS.

They'll also give insight into today's release including how to access the experimental data and the methodology behind it. During their presentations be sure to keep an eye on the chat box. We'll be dropping links for the ACS release throughout the Webinar. Without further delay I'll turn it over to Donna Daily. Donna?

Donna Daily: Thank you Michael and thank you everyone for joining us today. I'll start with a brief introduction to the American Community Survey, or ACS. As you are all aware the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for the ACS program.

I will discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the ACS 2020 data collection operations and how those challenges impacted the 2020 ACS data quality. This will include information about the 2020 ACS 1-year Experimental Data release and I'll include some information….
I'll conclude with some information on how to access the experimental data on our Web site. Then I'll turn it over to Jonathan who will provide an overview of the experimental methodology behind this release. And finally we'll conclude with a Q&A session at the end.

So the ACS samples approximately 3-1/2 million addresses each year. These data are collected from continuously throughout the year to produce annual social, economic, housing and demographic estimates.

The data collected through ACS are used to inform the distribution of more than $675 billion dollars of federal government spending each year. Our estimates covering more than 40 topics, support more than 300 known federal uses and countless non-federal uses.

The Census Bureau typically releases three different sets of ACS data estimates each year in the form of 1-year and 5-year period data sets as well as

1-year supplemental estimates. Our release is different this year due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and I'll share more details about that today.

The typical ACS data collection strategy includes multiple modes including Internet, mail, telephone and personal visits. For most housing units the first phase includes a mailed request to respond online followed later by an option to complete a paper questionnaire and then return it by mail.

If no response is received by mail or Internet or if the household refuses to participate the address may be selected for a personal visit during our non-response follow-up operation. The ACS uses a multi-mode data collection strategy with multiple mailings in order to get responses from all segments of the population.

The ACS includes 12 monthly independent samples. Data collection for each sample spans three months with mail and Internet returns collected during this entire period.

The process operates in continuously overlapping cycles so that during any given month we have data collection activities occurring for three separate monthly panels. Respondents are always able to call our telephone questionnaire assistance line at any point during the three months data collection period if they have questions or if they would prefer to respond over the phone.

When the pandemic hit we had to temporarily stop many of our operations in order to comply with the national, state and local health guidelines and to protect our staff and the survey respondents. We rely on our National Processing Center in Indiana to print, assemble, mail out survey invitations,

they capture data from completed forms, provide telephone assistance for people who respond.

Most of this work cannot be done virtually so the local stay at home orders and need for social distancing created substantial disruption to our operation. We suspended mail operations in mid-March of 2020 and ultimately canceled the mail outs for April, May and June panels in 2020.

From July of 2020 through March of 2021 we mailed survey materials using a revised strategy. We returned to our full five piece mailing strategy in April of 2021.

The Internet option was always available however due to the lack of the mailings from April through June many of our sample addresses did not know that they were in the ACS sample until the computer assisted personal visit happened later in the summer. This was a subsample of the full monthly panel.

In person interviewing for housing units and group quarters such as nursing homes, college dorms and prisons was suspended from mid-March through June of 2020. Our field representatives conducted telephone interviews for housing unit addresses from April through June of 2020 when we had a phone number available.

The regional offices mailed letters to non-responding addresses to encourage respondents to complete the survey online or to contact the Census Bureau field representatives to complete the survey. Personal visits resumed in some areas in July of 2020 and for all areas that did not have stay at home orders in September of 2020. And given the access issues that we encountered for our

group quarters facilities we are using administrative records from the Bureau of Prisons for that particular population.

Ultimately, the data collection challenges we faced during the pandemic impacted the ACS data quality. As I mentioned before the ACS uses a multi-mode data collection strategy with multiple mailings to get responses from all segments of the population. Due to the limitations in our data collection and in our inability to fully utilize all three data collection modes during the pandemic we were unable to collect information from certain segments of the population.

The people who did not, I'm sorry, the people did respond to the survey had significantly different social, economic and housing characteristics from those who didn't resulting in non-response bias in the data. For example people who responded to the 2020 ACS had higher income, higher education and were more likely to own their own home.

While all surveys have non-response bias our standard methods for mitigating the non-response bias are insufficient for this data year. We released an analytical report on October 27 that described how the pandemic disrupted the ACS data collection in 2020 and gives data users insight into why the Census Bureau decided to release the the 2020 ACS 1-year as an experimental product.

The 2020 ACS 1-year experimental release includes 54 tables similar in format to our ACS 1-year supplemental tables. The tables cover social, economic, housing and demographic characteristics and are available for the nation, states and the District of Columbia. The experimental weighting methodology does not apply to Puerto Rico so there will not be experimental estimates released today for Puerto Rico.

A technical working paper detailing the methodology for the experimental weights was also released today along with a corresponding blog. The estimates were produced using a methodology that was developed last year to the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

The paper includes a limited set of 2019 and 2020 ACS estimates with the experimental weighting methods applied to help data users understand the impact of the methods on the weights in a non-pandemic year to provide the context for the year to year comparison. One of the authors, Jonathan Eggleston, will talk about the methodology in greater detail later during this presentation.

And finally we also released the 2020 ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, or what we call PUMS file for the experimental - with the experimental weights. All of the products released today can be found on the Experimental Data page on the American Community Survey Web site.

The URL for the page is at the bottom of this screen. The data tables and the PUMS files are not available on data,census,gov or on the Census Bureau's Application Programing Interface or API.

So the ACS Public Use Microdata Sample files enable data users to create custom estimates and tables that are not available through pre-tabulated ACS data products like those available on data.census.gov. The 2020 ACS 1-year PUMS files includes experimental weights and includes data on approximately 1% of the US population while protecting the confidentiality of survey respondents.

The file provides population and housing characteristics down to the Public Use Microdata Areas, or PUMAs, which are special non-overlapping areas that partition each state into contiguous geographic units. These are drawn after each decennial census so that they contain no fewer than 100,000 people.

The PUMS data released today are available for the nation, divisions, states and PUMAs and can be accessed by using the URL at the bottom of this slide. This will take you to the Experimental Data Web page and on the ACS website. Please note that the PUMA boundaries have not changed with this release.

And here's some guidance for data users that we want to provide. So the Census Bureau encourages data users to determine whether the data are suitable for your particular use. The Census Bureau does not recommend comparing the 2020 ACS 1-year experimental estimates with our standard ACS estimates, or the decennial census, or comparing the 2020 1-year PUMS data with standard pre-tabulated products or PUMS based estimates from previous years.

Experimental data should be used with caution because they may not meet all of our quality standards. And the estimates for PUMAs should be used with caution because the experimental weights are not optimized to produce estimates for these areas.

All of the information about the experimental data release is located on our ACS Experimental Data Web page. You can find it by going to census.gov/acs, clicking on Data from the left navigation and then clicking on Experimental data again from the left navigation as shown on this slide.

And this slide shows the Data and Documentation Section of the Experimental Data web page where you can find the data tables. The page also contains links to several blogs we've released discussing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it impacted our data collection operations, the data release schedule and some resources for data users.

When you click on 2020 ACS 1-year Experimental Data Tables you will see the page on the right-hand side of this slide. Here is where you'll find the tables for this release.

The 54 tables are grouped into four headings: social, economic, housing and demographic. You can expand the heading and then click on the table title that you're interested in and open it up in Excel.

So now I want to highlight a couple of data user resources that we've posted on the Experimental Data page. First, the ACS Resource Hub flyer on the left of this slide provides general information about the ACS, resources available for accessing the data, getting assistance with using the data and key points of contact. While the flyer was developed due to the change in our data releases it is a great general resource for data users.

We also created a 2020 ACS 1-year estimate what you need to know flyer that helps users understand if they are impacted by the change to our 1-year data products. Some data users may not know whether or not they're using the 1-year or the 5-year estimates so this can be a helpful tool for them.

And we know many data users are very curious to know what is happening with the 2016 to 2020 ACS 5-year data. The US Census Bureau is committed to producing high quality data. The Census Bureau recognizes the critical

importance of the ACS 5-year data in particular on government and business decision making and the need for quality ACS data for that purpose.

To reflect our quality standards the Census Bureau is delaying the 2016 to 2020 ASC 5-year data release originally targeted for December of 2021. We need additional time to continue refining our methodology so that we can minimize the impact of the non-response bias due to the 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our current plan targets a March 2022 release date. And we expect to provide more information in an update in December.

And finally I do want to make everyone aware of our online ACS data users groups. The purpose of the data users group is to improve understanding of the value and utility of the ACS data as well as promote information sharing among data users.

The data users group has over 3000 members. The Web site contains information such as previous conference information, presentations, archived Webinars, discussion forums and they also allow members to share messages, and materials and announcements related to ACS. In fact a new discussion thread was recently started regarding the 2020 ACS 1-year Experimental Data of release where data users can share information with one another as they navigate this change.

Census Bureau staff are also members of this forum and we share program updates here. Membership is free and open to all interested data users. And to learn more there's a web site link at the bottom of the page acsdatacommunity.prb.org. And it's on the bottom of that slide.

Okay, and with that I'd like to turn it over to Jonathan Eggleston who will provide an overview of our experimental methodology. Jonathan?

Jonathan Eggleston: All right, great Donna, thank you. Michael, can you confirm that you can hear me?

Michael Cook: Loud and clear.

Jonathan Eggleston: All right, thank you. All right, so thank you for that introduction. So I'm Jonathan Eggleston and I'll give more details on the experimental weights.

So first just to make sure we're all on the same page. First, I want to discuss what the survey weights do in general? So a really simple overview is that they either increase or decrease the importance of individual respondents to make the respondent sample look more like the target population.

So for example, we find that in our Household Surveys that older individuals are more likely to respond than younger people. So the weighting process gives younger people a higher weight value - it'll make the respondent sample look more like the target population.

Another way of saying this is that the weighting process decide how many people out of the total US population each ACS respondent represents. So for example let's say we have a male ACS respondent who's 35-years-old and makes $80,000 a year. Is he roughly a representative of 20, 40 or 80 people in the country? So one important clarification is that the weighting algorithm and the creation of these weights does not change the person's answers to a survey only in essence how many times the answer gets repeated for calculating a statistic.

So when we talk about this release of ACS being experimental, in these experimental tables and data, was experimental are the survey weights. So for the most part all the other variables on the file are the most part constructed in a similar manner as in prior years.

Next Slide. All right, so given that overview of weights in general let me kind of discuss what an ACS's standard weighting process is like. So there's numerous steps, and this is definitely a simplification, but some - the two most important parts are first a household non-interview adjustment which first adjusts the ACS weight to different response rates by track and building type. For example whether a housing unit is a single family home versus an apartment.

And then at the end there's something called a housing unit and population controls adjustment. With adjust ACS weighted counts of age, race, Hispanic origin, sex, and number of housing units and people to independent census population estimates at the sub-state level.

Next slide. So as discussed previously it was determined that something different needed to be done for the 2020 ACS. So that's what led to this - these experimental weights.

So at a really high level what we do is we add a lot more variables in the data sets to the weighting process. And more specifically we add the following administrative data sets to ACS's weighting algorithm.

Some of our primary data sets come from the Internal Revenue Service Form 1040 and Form 1099 which includes W-2s. That gives us a - lots of valuable data on income for the US population but also provide some demographics

such as listed household residents, presence of children and through filing status also gives a proxy for marital status as well.

We also use data from the Social Security Administration, their program benefit data. That gives us very info on retirement and disability benefits. We also use demographic data from the 2010 Census and Social Security Administration giving us data on age, race, Hispanic origin, citizenship and foreign born status.

We also make use of industry data from the Census Business Register. That gives us, for example, a proxy of whether someone works for a restaurant during 2020.

And we also make use of some third party home value data giving us an additional proxy for income. So intuition is that adding these new data sets gives us a lot more detailed information on how ACS respondents and non-respondents differ which then allows us to better track for non-response bias during 2020.

Next slide. All right, so a few more details because we're adding a lot more data sets to the weighting process that necessitate us using basically an overall different weighting technique for the 2020 experimental release as well. So we use a weighting technique called entropy balancing to incorporate these additional inputs.

So some details about this algorithm it's, you know, well-suited to handle numerous inputs into a weighting model. Another benefit allows for simultaneous adjustment of the weight to both administrative data and population controls at the same time rather than having to do that sequentially.

And then as discussed previously by Donna it's been used at the Census Bureau in prior weighting research on the annual social and economic supplement of the current Population Survey. So that put us in the position to be able to extend this to working on the ACS for this year.

All right, next slide. All right, so that's basically an overview of what the experimental weights are and how they're constructed. So next I'll just share a few more details from the technical paper describing these weights.

So first I'll just provide some more evidence on how the respondent sample and ACS changed during the pandemic. So to further show how the respondent sample became less representative we use our administrative and sampling framed data to compare statistics between one, all occupied housing units including non-respondents. This is our measure of the benchmark versus two, just respondents.

In the graph I'll show next basically the bigger the gap between number one and number two above the bigger non-response bias is before any weighting adjustments.

Next slide. All right, so what this graph shows are various estimates of the percent of households residing in single family homes. We get this data from the Master Address File the sampling frame for the ACS.

We get that in blue. You see an estimate you get from all occupied housing units including non-respondents. And then in green you get the estimate from just respondents.

On the Y or vertical axis you get the percent residing in single family homes. And then on X or vertical - horizontal axis is the month a household is

sampled for the ACS which is might (unintelligible) when a household is actually complete the ACS could be a couple of months after being sampled.

So in summary what this graph shows is that even in 2019 it appears respondents were a little bit more likely to reside in single family homes but then this gap greatly increased when the pandemic started and in person interviewing was suspended. And then the gap went down later in late summer and fall of 2020 but in the in-person interviewing resumed for lot of the country but still it seems the difference didn't quite get back to pre-pandemic levels.

All right, next slide. And this graph shows something fairly similar but from the percent of households with W-2 earnings between $1 and $25,000. So similar to before like in 2019 not as much difference between respondents and the benchmark but during the pandemic there was a much bigger difference and respondents were less likely to fall into that category.

So this in addition to the previously release analytic reports, you know, this helped us provide, you know, further evidence that when the pandemic started suddenly ACS respondents were - had relatively much higher income than before which has led to the EVs experimental weights.

All right, next slide. All right, so next I'll just show a few graphs from our technical paper showing how the experimental weight changed ACS estimates compared to the prior production method. So I do want to note that we also apply the experimental weighting method to the 2019 ACS.

So we do this because, you know, applying these new methods and adding this administrative data has the potential to change ACS estimates in prior years as well. So we do this to separate out one, the effects of applying a new

weighting method from, two, changes in economic and demographic characteristics of individuals how that changed between 2019 and 2020.

All right, next slide. All right, so this graph shows the percent of housing units that are single family homes. This graph includes vacants. And what it shows here is the estimate you get from the prior production weighting method in the light gray dashed line and then - and the solid dark gray line you get the estimate from the experimental weights using our Entropy Balance Weights, EBW for short.

Basically what this graph shows is that with the prior production method the year to year change between 2019 and 2020 was relatively large and did not line up with prior historical trends. But then when we apply experimental weights we did get a year to year change that seemed to be more in line with what you'd get in prior years.

But do keep in mind that in addition to the experimental weights changing the estimate for 2020 they also changed the estimates for 2019 as well. So do keep in mind that when analyzing the tables we just released today.

All right, next slide. This next graph shows some consensus on income basically showing how the estimates of income in ACS how income changed between 2019 and 2020 whether it was an increase, a decrease or not much changed.

The dashed line gives the production method and then the solid line gives the experimental estimates. And then on the horizontal X axis is the household's percentile and income distribution to see whether, you know, estimates differ between low income households versus high income households.

And basically what this graph shows is that with the prior production method that would have resulted in a estimate of a relatively large increase in income between 2019 and 2020 across income distributions. But then you when you apply the experimental estimate and compare experimental to experimental from 2019 to 2020 you get that for the most part basically it's the estimates of household income is relatively flat and relatively similar to the 2019 estimate.

All right, next slide. And finally I just wanted to give one example of where the experimental methodology didn't really seem to change the ACS estimates. So this shows the estimates of the unemployment rate. The white dashed line is the estimate you get from, you know, the main ACS production weighting methodology and then the more solid dashed line gives the official estimate produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

So you can see that in all the years throughout the 2010s - the ACS estimate was different from the BLS estimate and that was still true in 2020 as well. That we do get that when we apply the experimental methodology. It did result in a slight increase in employment rate but overall there was still a noticeable gap between that and the BLS officially produced estimate.

So to keep in mind, you know, that applying the experimental weight, you know, had a wide variety of effects on various topic areas.

All right, next slide. Well, that ends my portion of the talk. And I'll hand it back to Michael for the Q&A portion. Thank you.

Michael Cook: Thanks, Jonathan. We'd like to start taking questions now from the media. Then open it up to the general public.

As a reminder, you must call the phone number displayed on the slide on your screen. You cannot ask a question if you don't dial into our phone line.

So just want to make sure you guys see that and know that. Before asking your question, we'll ask that you state your name and either your news outlet or your organization. We want to fit in as many questions as possible. We know that we have upwards of 800 people that have already dialed in already. So please only ask one question with one follow-up question being allowed.

Operator, I'll now hand it over to you for additional instructions.

Coordinator: Thank you. If you would like to ask a question, please press star 1.

Michael Cook: And while we wait for our first question to queue up, a quick reminder to check out our press kit online. That's where you'll find a number of resources, including links to the 2020 ACS 1-year experimental data tables, a technical working paper, a blog along with several other important ACS items. You'll also find slides from today's presentation and eventually a recording of today's webinar.

Operator, do we have our first question?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. It'll be one moment for the questions to come in.

Michael Cook: While we wait, just want to let folks know that in the interest of time and making sure that we're able to address any questions that come up from our many stakeholders, as well as media that have logged on today, we do have some subject matter experts that are standing in the wings. And if we get questions during the Q&A that are appropriate for them to address, we'll go ahead and introduce them so we can get that question answered.

But knowing that we probably won't be able to get to every single question today, I just want to remind everyone that if you don't get a chance to ask your question, please contact the Public Information Office at 301-763-3030. And we'll make sure and connect you with those subject matter experts and get your questions addressed as quickly as possible.

Operator, do we have our first question?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. Our first question comes from Tami Luhby with CNN. Your line is open. And as a reminder, please press star 1 if you have a question. Thank you.

Michael Cook: Hi Tami.

Tami Luhby: Hi. Can you hear me?

Michael Cook: We can, Tami. Loud and clear.

Tami Luhby: Oh, okay, great. So my question is I guess two parts. One is I noticed that you do not have poverty rates in the information in the tables that you sent. Did I just miss it somewhere?

And I just wanted to - and is that something that we can calculate on our own based on the poverty numbers and the total demographic numbers for those of us who are math-challenged journalists?

Michael Cook: Thank you for that question, Tami. And I appreciate your honesty. I know that the data was released today at 10 o'clock this morning. And so you haven't had much time to take a look at it. I'll turn it over to our subject matter experts that

can address the level of detail that we have in today's release that'll address your needs.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Lisa Frehill).

Michael Cook: Did we have anyone that could address Tami's question about poverty before we move on?

Woman: (Jonathan).

Jonathan Rothbaum: This is Jonathan Rothbaum. If you're interested in the poverty rate calculations they're in the technical working paper. I'm trying to pull up the exact table number.

But we do have the poverty rates by states in that paper for both 2020 with the experimental weights and ('21) as...

Tami Luhby: Okay.

Jonathan Rothbaum: ...well.

Tami Luhby: Can someone email them to me?

Michael Cook: What we'll do, Tami, we've got your - we know how to reach you.

Tami Luhby: Okay.

Michael Cook: We're taking copious notes. And we'll make sure and get that information from Jonathan and shoot that over to you either during this webinar or as soon as possible soon thereafter.

But by chance, if you don't hear from us momentarily, please reach out to us at the Public Information Office at 301-763-3030. And we will be utilizing the chat function in today's webinar to chock it full of information if we find it. And so you'll have it in real-time there. So thanks for that, Tami.

Tami Luhby: Thank you.

Michael Cook: Operator, you had someone else on the line.

Coordinator: Yes, sir. (Bill O'Hare), your line is open, sir, with (ODDS).

Michael Cook: Hey, (Bill). (Bill), are you there?

Coordinator: (Bill), your line is open. You may need to check your Mute button.

Michael Cook: Hi, (Bill).

Coordinator: (Bill), your line is open.

Michael Cook: Do you have him?

Coordinator: Looks like (Bill) has withdrawn his question.

Michael Cook: Okay, great. We'll move on then.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question is (Lisa Frehill). Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi (Lisa).

(Lisa Freehill): Thanks. Can you hear me?

Michael Cook: We can. Loud and clear.

(Lisa Freehill): Okay. Oh, thanks. I want to congratulate you all for persevering in the face of this last year. This is an amazing product to have available. Quick question, though, related to availability. And that is, the EEOC estimates that get done each year, I know that the 2016-2020 5-year estimates aren't going to be available till March 22. When do you think the EEOC stuff is going to get updated?

Michael Cook: Let me take a look at all of our SMEs standing in the wings to see if anyone can address that question about the EEOC data that's set to come out. If not, we'll definitely make sure and circle back to you with that response.

(Lisa Frehill): Thank you.

Donna Daily: Yes. This is Donna Daily. So that is the EEOC tab. That special tab comes out of the American Community Survey Office.

And I know that I have my ADC on the line, (Nate). I don't know whether or not you and your team have worked that out yet.

But I - why don't we take this offline? And we're happy to have a conversation about the EEOC tab to give an update on where we are with that.

And (Nate):, do you have anything to add to that?

Michael Cook: (Nate), make sure you unmute yourself.

(Nate): That - thanks, Donna. I was just going to add that, you're right. We haven't worked out the details of that schedule just yet. But when we do, we'll certainly let our stakeholders know.

Donna Daily: Right.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that, (Nate). And we'll make sure and circle back to you as well knowing that you have interest in that. Thanks for that question. Operator, do we have our next caller?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. (Adeline Leonardo) with Brandeis University. Your line is next - your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi (Adeline).

(Adeline Leonardo): Hi.

Michael Cook: Hi. How are you?

(Adelaine Leonardo): Hello. Can you hear me?

Michael Cook: Yes. We can hear you loud and clear.

(Adelaine Leonardo): Great. I just wanted to ask when the summary files from the Decennial Census will be released and whether we can expect any changes to the file format for those.

Michael Cook: Not sure that we have someone on that can address the summary files from the 2020 Census since we gathered all the SMEs here to talk to today specifically

about the ACS 1-year experimental data release that came out at 10 o'clock today.

But what we'll do, I'll ask you to do, if you could just give us a call at 301-763-3030, we'll make sure and give you the latest and greatest on what we have on timing. But then also make sure that you are tied into and opting into our email alert so that you can get all that information that we put out and list in our biweekly tip sheets. So thanks for that. Thanks for that question.

(Adeline Leonardo): Thank you.

Michael Cook: Operator, can we have our next caller?

Coordinator: Thomas Stagg, your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi Thomas.

Thomas Stagg: Hi, everybody. Thank you for taking the time today. My question is maybe a little premature. But I'm wondering if we have any insight as to whether or not we'll have a valid 1-year for 2020 or not. I'm sorry, for 2021.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that question about our future releases, as we have been dealing with the current one. I'm looking at Donna Daily now.

Donna Daily: Yes.

Michael Cook: To see if she has anything to say about our fall and future plans with 2020 ACS 1-year. Donna.

Donna Daily: Yes. Thank you so much for that question. So at the moment, we are still collecting the 2021 data from the data year 2021. And our typical processing starts in March of 2022 after we collect the data. That's how we process the ACS. We collect the entire data year first and then we process.

So we will have more information about that in the spring.

But I do want to let everyone know that our strategy, our mailing strategy, and our data collection operations strategy went back to normal in April of 2021. That was on one of the slides that I had provided that will now, I think, be in the press kit, if I'm not mistaken, or it's going to be available. The slide deck will be available. We are now currently, since April of 2021, back to our normal data collection operations.

So we will see what 2021 data yields in the spring. And I'm sure that we will be giving an update probably early summer with where we stand with the 2021 data.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that, Donna.

Thomas Stagg: Okay.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that line of questioning, Thomas. Operator.

Thomas Stagg: Can I indulge with one follow-up question?

Michael Cook: Yes. Sure. Go ahead.

Thomas Stagg: Okay, thank you. Thank you for your time today. I work for Novogradac & Company. We're an accounting firm that specializes in low-income housing

tax credits. And the 1-year ACS data is used for determining if tenants can qualify for low-income housing tax credit, housing, as well as Section 8 in HUD housing. Our initial research shows that if there's not a 1-year ACS available that income limits will likely decrease by 3.5% if HUD has to use the 5-year ACS. And so - which would make it harder for tenants to qualify for affordable housing.

So we're wondering if there's been any discussions between Census Bureau and HUD to determine an alternative method for the 2020 two income limits. I'm sorry, 2023, which would use the 2020 ACS data.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that additional question about the low-income tax credit and the alternate methods or resources available to get at that. I know that we probably won't be able to unpack all of those details on today's call.

But I'll toss it over to the SMEs who might be able to just give you a little sound bite. But nonetheless, please reach out. Continue to reach out to us. And I really am encouraged by everybody's continued interest in our data products. Looking at our SMEs.

Donna Daily: So what I can share is that we have started conversations with HUD regarding the 1-year. And also we are - based on the delay for the 5-year where we're supposed to put it out in December and it's been delayed till March, right. We've already started conversations with HUD. And we recognize the criticality of the data that they, you know, and the products that they produce. So this is definitely not a conversation that we could have here on the webinar. This is a lot of details in your question.

So I would love to have a conversation offline, though. And we've got our - Nathan Walters is my Assistant Division Chief for Processing. And he deals

with most of the special tabs that we work on with HUD. So we can get back with you and have a conversation about the specific need if you'd like.

Thomas Stagg: Great. Thank you so much and great presentation today.

Donna Daily: Okay. Great.

Michael Cook: Thank you.

Donna Daily: Thank you.

Michael Cook: Thank you, Thomas. Operator, do we have another caller?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. (Stuart White) with Elder Law of Michigan. Your line is open, sir.

Michael Cook: Hi (Stuart).

(Stuart White): This is probably a very naive question. But I haven't had a chance to look at the data that's been released today. Is it my understanding - am I understanding correctly that the data will not go down to the census tract or zip code or lower level in a PUMA?

Michael Cook: Thanks for that question about geographies and specifically the data that's available. You mentioned PUMA.

Now I'll let the SMEs touch on that. And also illuminate as to where one might be able to find that level of detail and information in today's release.

Donna Daily: So if I could, I know that, Mark Asiala. There you go. Okay. Mark, you want to introduce yourself too.

Mark Asiala: Hello. I'm Mark Asiala. I am the Chief for the ACS Statistical Design area here at the Census Bureau.

So the areas down to tract and zip code areas, those are normally products from our 5-year estimates. So those would still be forthcoming. Our typical 1-year geographies include things like nation, state, county, place, metropolitan areas are some of our primary geographies that we release with the 1-year estimates.

With these experimental estimates, we decided based upon some of the limitations of the experimental weighting to primarily release for the national and state level. Below the state, there are the public use microdata areas that are available on our Public Use Microdata Set file, our PUMS file. We do encourage users to use caution when using the data at the PUMA level.

And that's because the weighting was not optimized to produce estimates at the PUMA level. So you may see PUMAs that have very low estimates of total population and higher estimates than expected of total population. Or you may see characteristic data that do not demonstrate the improvements that we see at some of the state or national levels for those characteristics where we had improvement.

So while those data are available, we do encourage users to use caution with them.

(Stuart White): If I can follow up then, does that mean that when you do release in March, assuming you release in March the 5-year data set that you'll have the same caution applying to the census tract and zip code data that you would to the PUMA data?

Mark Asiala: So for these 5-year data, what we are targeting for that is to make fuller use of our production weighting methodology with some enhancements, but still trying to preserve some of those things that data users come to expect in terms of the quality at lower levels of geography to the extent possible.

And so we will know more as we, you know, start to evaluate those data more at lower levels of geography. We do hope to release a statement later in December. Correct, Donna?

Donna Daily: Correct.

Mark Asiala: That will give a little more information about, you know, where we are along that path to releasing the 5-year estimates.

But certainly, our hope is to produce estimates that can be used for low levels of geography because that is really the design purpose of the 5-year estimates. And we recognize that.

(Stuart White): Okay. Thank you.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that, Mark. And thanks for that question, caller. Operator, do we have another caller, another question?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. We do have a couple of questions. And as a reminder, if you'd like to ask a question, please press star 1 on your phone. Unmute and record your name and also your media outlet or your affiliation. Thank you.

And our next question comes from (Rafael Martinez), consultant for legal. Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi (Rafael).

(Rafael Martinez): Hi. Thank you for answering the call. I'm working for - as a consultant with (CDBG). We are working with $8.5 billion for the Department of Housing.

And I saw that the past year, the ACS 1-year, and the past supplemental estimate, they have changed their name to vintage estimates. What does that mean? That they will eventually be revised or they are not, never, ever revised along with the population estimate for what revision that they make this decade.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that question, (Rafael). I'm going to pause to see which one of our SMEs want to take that question about our nomenclature. I'm assuming it's Mark Asiala.

Mark Asiala: This is Mark Asiala, ACS Statistical Design area, again. So the term vintage is typically used primarily with the population estimates. And it's a way of how they distinguish one version of their population estimates from another.

So, for example, in their estimates that - there are postcensal estimates that are for the time frame between 2010 through 2019, they will refer to that as their vintage 2019 estimates. When they release the next year, they will revise that time series, as you, you know, were questioning. They will revise the time series for 2010 through 2019 and also produce a 2020 estimate. That new time series is then referred to as the vintage 2020 population estimates. That nomenclature has principally been used with the Population Estimates Program and not the ACS.

To the extent that the ACS documentation refers to that, it is just to make clear what were the source population estimates that we used in controlling our population totals that we produced from the ACS. So it's more so referring to, you know, what version of input files did we use to make that clear.

(Rafael Martinez): One question first of all. I spoke with (Ryan Burson) from the Population Estimates Program. And they will be revising the 2010 to 2019, which are already called vintage. But after the revision that will be done by the end of next year, they will remain (is at) their intercensal estimate. And they will be final. They will never be revised again.

So the ACS doesn't use those revisions, the intercensal.

Mark Asiala: Right. So we will not re-release the ACS estimates based upon each revision to the population estimates. We do, however, make use of the most recent version of the population estimates when we apply population controls to our 5-year data.

So, for example, the data that we released in 2020 or that includes 2021 5-year will be 2017 through 2021. We will make use of the most recent population estimates for 2017 through 2021 in our processing. If the most recent are the intercensals, which don't change, as you stated, then that's what we use. Otherwise, our 5-year, we'll use the most current vintage of the population estimates.

But just to...

(Rafael Martinez): Okay.

Mark Asiala: ...be clear, even the, like, current release, say in 2020, are called vintage 2020, that just is a way of saying this is the version. You know, you could almost think of vintage as version, so you can think of it as Pop Estimates Version 2019 or Version 2020. That's really what the nomenclature means.

(Rafael Martinez): Okay. Okay, thank you. And one last question. And excuse me. Then Puerto Rico won't be included in this experimental ACS 1-year of 2020. So Puerto Rico will never be included. We will lose the 2020 1-year ACS estimates for Puerto Rico estimate. Am I right?

Mark Asiala: That is correct. Puerto Rico, we did not have the additional administrative record data to try to improve those estimates. So we are not releasing Puerto Rico with our 1-year estimates. However, we do plan to include them with the 2020, or sorry, the 2016 through 2020 ACS 5-year estimates. So we will still make use of that data in our 5-year estimates that, you know, we plan to release next spring.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that, Mark. And thanks for those questions, (Rafael). (Rafael), if you have any more questions, please reach out to us at the Public Information Office, 301-763-3030. We'll make sure and answer those questions.

Operator. I know we have some other callers on the line. We'll take that person now.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Abel Obie). Your line is open. And from San Jose, the City of San Jose.

(Abel Obie): Hello. My question was, I think, pretty much answered. I was looking for, like, city-level data. It sounds like I should look - go to the PUMA data to find that.

Michael Cook: Yes, that's correct.

(Abel Obie): Okay. All right, thank you. Okay, bye-bye.

Michael Cook: Very welcome. Operator, can we have our next caller?

Coordinator: Yes, sir. Our next question comes from Wei Yen, Washington State Office of Financial Management. Your line is open.

Wei Yen: Yes. First of all, thank you very much for this very informative webinar and also for taking my question. My question is about the PUMS data. Maybe the answer is in the Read Me file.

But anyway, are there any variables in the PUMS file that are modified or dropped in connection to the experimental weights?

Michael Cook: Thanks for that line of questioning about the variables in the experimental product. I'm seeing that Mark Asiala is going to be a very popular guy during this webinar. I'm going to turn it over to Mark.

Mark Asiala: So to answer your question, no. We did not suppress or modify any of the variables on the PUMS file. The administrative records that were used for the experimental weighting were used only in the production of the weights. The response data themselves are what we collected from the respondents. So, you know, there was no other special processing for that.

Wei Yen: Great. Thank you.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that, Mark. And thanks for that line of question, Wei.

Operator, could we have our next caller?

Coordinator: Yes. Our next...

Woman: Yes. We do...

Coordinator: ...question is from Jeffrey Passel, Pew Research Center. Your line is open.

Jeffrey Passel: Thank you.

Michael Cook: Hi Jeff.

Jeffrey Passel: Hi. Thanks very much. Very interesting presentation and quite a challenge you have. I may have missed it. Just what population estimates did you use for the weighting in the 2020 ACS experimental weights?

Michael Cook: Thanks for that line of question, Jeffrey. I'm going to toss it back to Mark Asiala.

Mark Asiala: So our original plan was to make use of a set of 2020 census-based population estimates that would've been extrapolated forward from census day to July 1st, 2020. Because of the delays in the data collection in the census and the processing of those files, the Population Estimates Program was unable to produce those estimates for us in time for our processing. In place what we used are the vintage 2020 postcensal estimates that are carried forward from the 2010 Census up through providing an estimate for July 1, 2020. Those are typically referred to as an evaluation population estimate because typically you would make use of the census counts rather than the pop estimates in a decennial year.

But for this year, we had to make use of those vintage 2020 postcensal estimates.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that, Mark. And thanks for that line of questions, Jeffrey. I know we got a couple more callers, so let's try and get to them. Operator, can we have our next caller?

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Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Jim Chang) with Arizona State. Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi (Jim).

(Jim Chang): Hi. My question was just answered. Thank you.

Michael Cook: You're very welcome. Next caller, Operator.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Raybon Seque) with Anthem. Your line is open.

(Raybon Seque): Hi. How many times you (unintelligible) webinar?

Michael Cook: I'm sorry. We're having some difficulties hearing you. If you have called in on the phone and also are listening to us on your mobile device or your computer, you can go ahead and mute your computer and repeat your question.

(Raybon Seque): Okay. Hi all. In how many months, do you post the Webinar on WebEx?

Michael Cook: If I heard you correctly, you asked and how many months are we going to have this Webinar online for viewing? Is that what you're asking, sir?

What I'm going ot do, um, is see how many months do we post this Webinar on WebEx. We - for all of our Webinars that we post publicly, um, we put them in our electronic press kit and that stays up for years. So you'll be able to get access to it.

But it will take us a matter of hours to get it posted into the Web site for you to view it. And if you have any questions or any difficulty accessing it, I please encourage you and others to to contact us at 301-763-3030, the Public Information Office.

And I also will mention that this Webinar itself and the slide presentation that was given earlier by Donna Daily and Jonathan Eggleston, it'll be loaded into electronic press kit if it is not already during this Q&A. Thanks for that question.

Operator, do we have our caller?

Coordinator: Yes, give me one moment. They just queued up.

Michael Cook: Thank you. And while we wait for the next person to make themselves readily available, just for anyone again repeating if you have called in, if you're waiting to ask the question or after you get off the phone, that question hits you, please contact the Public Information Office.

We will make sure and circle back to you as expeditiously and as fast as possible regardless if you're a stakeholder or the media. We want to make sure and connect you with the right subject matter expert so that you can make informed decisions that will impact your work and invest in the lives of all of the people that consume our data.

Operator, do we have our next caller?

Coordinator: We sure do. It's from Andrea Rice, Hungarian American Coalition. Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi Andrea.

Andrea Rice: HI everyone. Hi, everyone. Thanks so much for taking my call and for doing the session today.

I'm sure this is only due to user error on my part, but I've been trying to do a deep dive into some of the Hungarian population estimates that you have from the 2020 ACS and I'm not finding them which again, I'm sure is my own fault. But I just wanted to make sure that that data is already available or is it not yet available?

Michael Cook: Thanks for that line of question about availability of data. I'm going to pass that to our subject matter experts to address that.

Donna Daily: So hi. This is Donna Daily. Um, so the the estimates that we provided today, we have 50 - we have a limited set of experimental data available today. There are 54 tables at the nation state and District of Columbia level.

We have the - that we have racial data at those levels in these tables crossed by different topic areas. So what I would encourage you to do is to go to our Experimental Data Web page on the ACS. There's a URL and I think it's in the chat for the Webinar as well how to access the data.

And I also see that Hyon Shin is on the video, and she will likely be able to answer this question.

Hyon Shin: Yes, hi.

Andrea Rice: Yes.

Hyon Shin: My name is Hyon Shin. I'm Assistant Division Chief in the Social Economic Housing Statistics Division. In order to get detailed ethnicity from - with these experimental data, the only way you're going to be able to get is specifically for the 2021 year is in our public use micro data sample.

And in the chat within the press kit, there should be a link to our PUM and that is where you'll be able to get it. It is not with the the report that was released, by Jonathan Rothbaum, (Jonathan Eggleston and the other co-authors or our other tables. You can only access that via the PUM.

Andrea Rice: Great, thanks so much -- appreciate it.

Michael Cook: You're very welcome. And I know I think that might have been our last caller, but I'll just double check with the operator, see if anybody squeezed in the line before we wrap up

Coordinator: Speakers, we have no additional questions in queue.

Michael Cook: Very well. I'd like to thank everyone for their questions and for joining today's Webinar. A reminder, go to census.gov to access a press kit for more information and resources for today's 2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental Data release.

If you have additional questions again, please call our Public Information Office at 301-763-3030 or email us at pio@census.gov. And I encourage you to sign up if you haven't already to our email updates so you can get timely updates on what we do and when we're doing it.

I'd like to thank you for joining us on behalf of our our speakers today, and I wish everyone a great and safe day. Take care of everybody.

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