

New to the 2019 PDB is the 2013-2017 ACS 5-year census tract self-response rates! CBDRB-FY19-244.

How are the ACS 5-year self-response rates calculated?

The ACS self-response rates for housing units are calculated using the 2013 through 2017 ACS control files and the 2013-2017 5-year ACS replicate base weights. The self-response rate measures the proportion of the eligible mail out universe that provide an internet, mail, or Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (TQA) response. For this response rate, responses from the mail, TQA, and internet modes are combined into a single self-response mode. For addresses providing a response in more than one of these modes, we count only one response in the self-response rate.

The numerator for this rate is sample addresses with an internet, mail, or TQA response except for those determined to be non-housing units (e.g., businesses).

The denominator for this rate is all sample addresses sent the initial mail package except for addresses:

- deemed a UAA by the postal service, or
- determined to be a business, or
- determined to not exist during the CAPI operation, or
- determined to be vacant or temporarily occupied during the CAPI operation, or
- subsampled out of the CAPI universe,

unless a self-response is received for the address (represented in the numerator of the rate). If we count an address in the numerator, it will be included in the denominator regardless of the above reasons for exclusion.

Some of these rates seem much lower than the official ACS response rates, why is that the case?

The ACS 5-year self-response rates represent self-response of households and do not include interviews completed by Census Bureau interviewers. Follow up by interviewers helps to increase the overall response rate.

Why do some tracts have no ACS 5-year self-response rates?

A tract must have a minimum number of housing units in the ACS mailing universe to have a self-response rate be publicly released to prevent risk of disclosure.

Why do no tracts in Puerto Rico contain ACS 5-year self-response rates?

We do not currently produce self-response rates for Puerto Rico.

Are group quarters included in the ACS 5-year self-response rates?

No, most responses from Group Quarters are collected by Census Bureau interviewers and are not considered self-response.