

American Community Survey

Webinar: Impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic

July 29, 2021



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Moderator



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Presenter

American Community Survey

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July 29, 2021

Audio Conference Access Information

To ask a question, you must dial in:

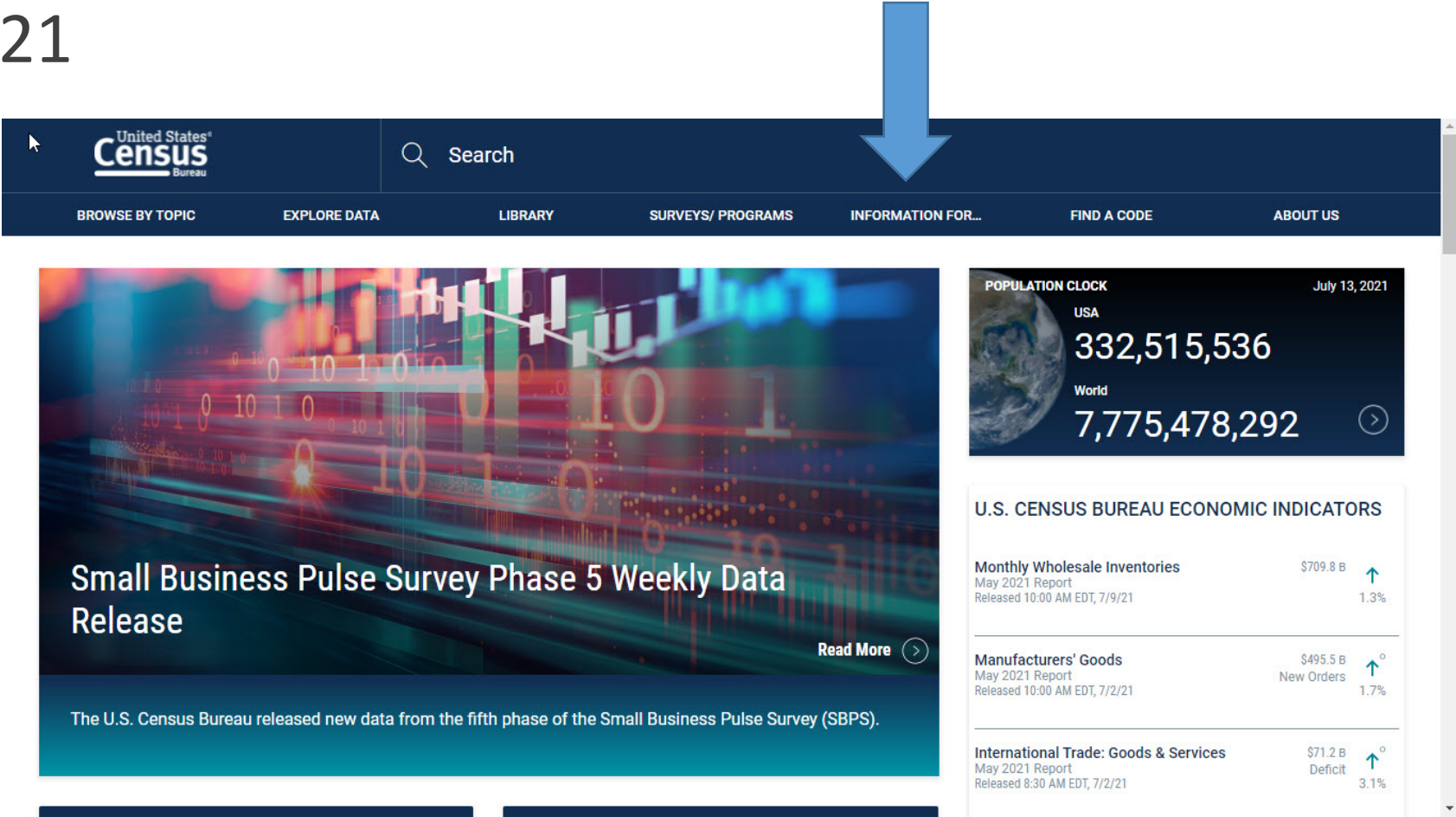
Toll-free number: 1-888-566-5775

Participant passcode: 6714070

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United States Census Bureau

Search

BROWSE BY TOPIC EXPLORE DATA LIBRARY SURVEYS/ PROGRAMS INFORMATION FOR... FIND A CODE ABOUT US

Small Business Pulse Survey Phase 5 Weekly Data Release

[Read More](#)

The U.S. Census Bureau released new data from the fifth phase of the Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS).

POPULATION CLOCK July 13, 2021

USA
332,515,536

World
7,775,478,292

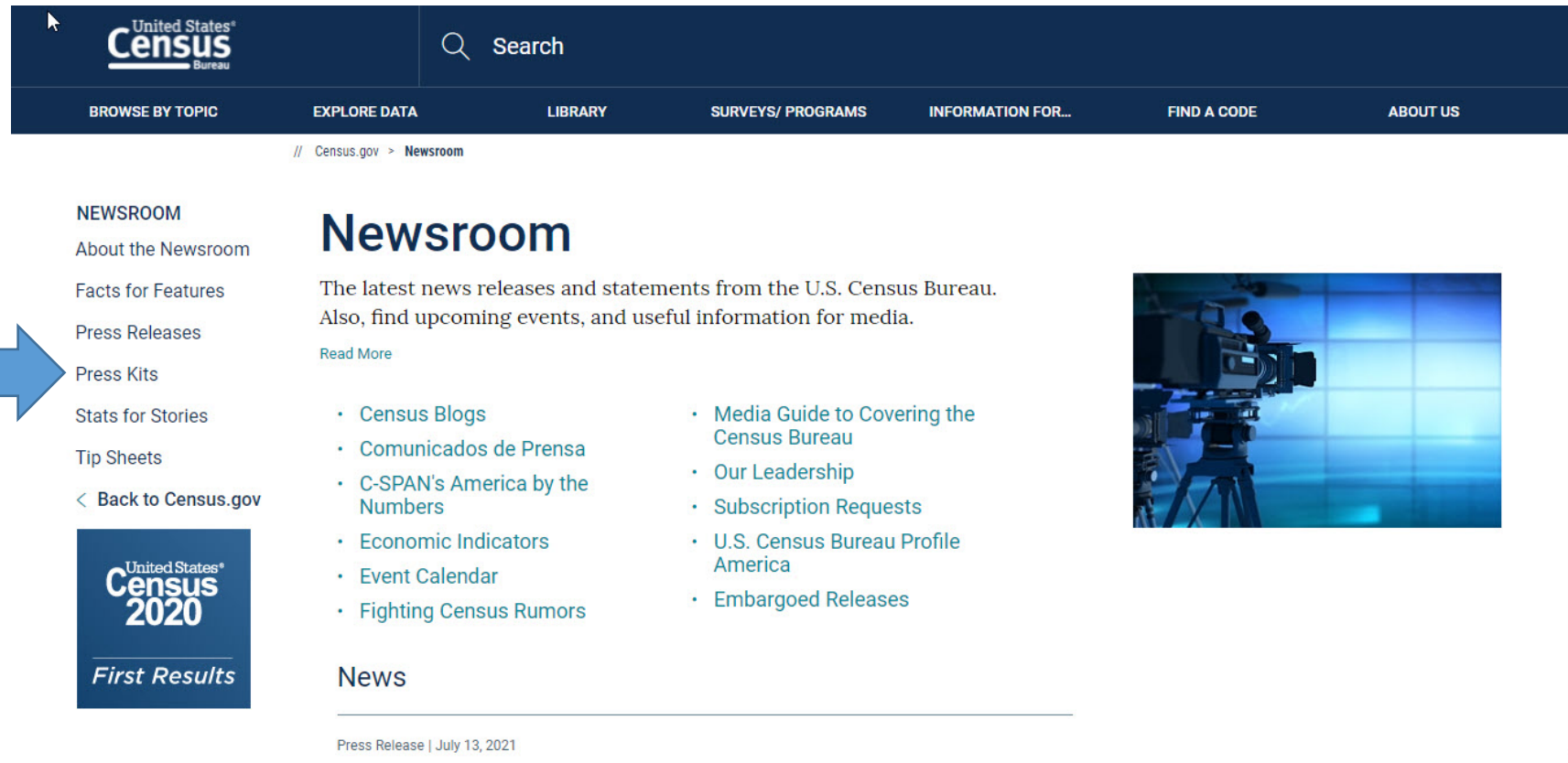
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Monthly Wholesale Inventories May 2021 Report Released 10:00 AM EDT, 7/9/21	\$709.8 B ↑ 1.3%
Manufacturers' Goods May 2021 Report Released 10:00 AM EDT, 7/2/21	\$495.5 B ↑ New Orders 1.7%
International Trade: Goods & Services May 2021 Report Released 8:30 AM EDT, 7/2/21	\$71.2 B ↑ Deficit 3.1%

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The screenshot shows the U.S. Census Bureau Newsroom page. At the top is a dark blue navigation bar with the 'United States Census Bureau' logo on the left, a search bar in the center, and menu items: 'BROWSE BY TOPIC', 'EXPLORE DATA', 'LIBRARY', 'SURVEYS/ PROGRAMS', 'INFORMATION FOR...', 'FIND A CODE', and 'ABOUT US'. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: '// Census.gov > Newsroom'. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a main column. The sidebar contains a 'NEWSROOM' section with links: 'About the Newsroom', 'Facts for Features', 'Press Releases', 'Press Kits', 'Stats for Stories', and 'Tip Sheets'. A large blue arrow points to the 'Press Releases' link. Below these links is a '< Back to Census.gov' link and a 'United States Census 2020 First Results' graphic. The main column features a 'Newsroom' heading, a brief description: 'The latest news releases and statements from the U.S. Census Bureau. Also, find upcoming events, and useful information for media.', and a 'Read More' link. Below this is a two-column list of links: 'Census Blogs', 'Comunicados de Prensa', 'C-SPAN's America by the Numbers', 'Economic Indicators', 'Event Calendar', 'Fighting Census Rumors', 'Media Guide to Covering the Census Bureau', 'Our Leadership', 'Subscription Requests', 'U.S. Census Bureau Profile America', and 'Embargoed Releases'. At the bottom of the main column is a 'News' section with a horizontal line and a 'Press Release | July 13, 2021' link. On the right side of the page, there is a photograph of a professional video camera on a tripod in a studio setting with blue lighting.

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Donna M. Daily
Chief, American Community Survey Office

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The American Community Survey

Overview

- Introduction to the ACS
- Impact of COVID-19 on ACS Data Collection Operations
- Impact of Data Collection Challenges on 2020 ACS Data Quality
- Plans for 2020 ACS Data Products
- Questions

The American Community Survey

The Foundation

The American Community Survey is on the leading edge of survey design, continuous improvement, and data quality

- The nation's most current, reliable, and accessible data source for local statistics on critical planning topics such as age, children, veterans, commuting, education, income, and employment
- Surveys **3.5 million** addresses and informs over **\$675 billion** of Federal government spending each year
- Covers **40+ topics**, supports over **300** evidence-based Federal government uses
- Typically provides three key annual data releases:
 - 1-year Estimates (for large populations)
 - 1-year Supplemental Estimates (for small populations)
 - 5-year Estimates (for very small populations)

The image shows the front cover of the American Community Survey questionnaire booklet. At the top right, the number '12181010' is printed. The top left features the United States Census Bureau logo and the text 'The American Community Survey'. A green-bordered box in the upper center contains the text: 'This booklet shows the content of the American Community Survey questionnaire.' Below this, a 'Start Here' section provides instructions on how to respond: online at <https://respond.census.gov/acs> or by mail. A 'Your response is required by law' section explains that the survey is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and that respondents are required to provide information. A 'If you need help or have questions about completing this form, please call' section lists the Text Telephone (TTY) number 1-800-562-8330 and the Spanish language helpline 1-877-833-5625. A 'NECESITA AYUDA?' section provides the Spanish language helpline number. A 'Number of people' section includes a small grid for entering the number of people. At the bottom, there is a barcode and the text 'ACS-1(Info)(2021)' and 'Census No. 0407-0810'.

The American Community Survey

How is the American Community Survey Different From a Census?

ACS

Census

Purpose

Sample estimates

Official counts

Collects

Detailed social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics

Basic demographics

Produces

Population and housing characteristics

Population and housing totals

New Data Every

Year

10 years

Data Reflect

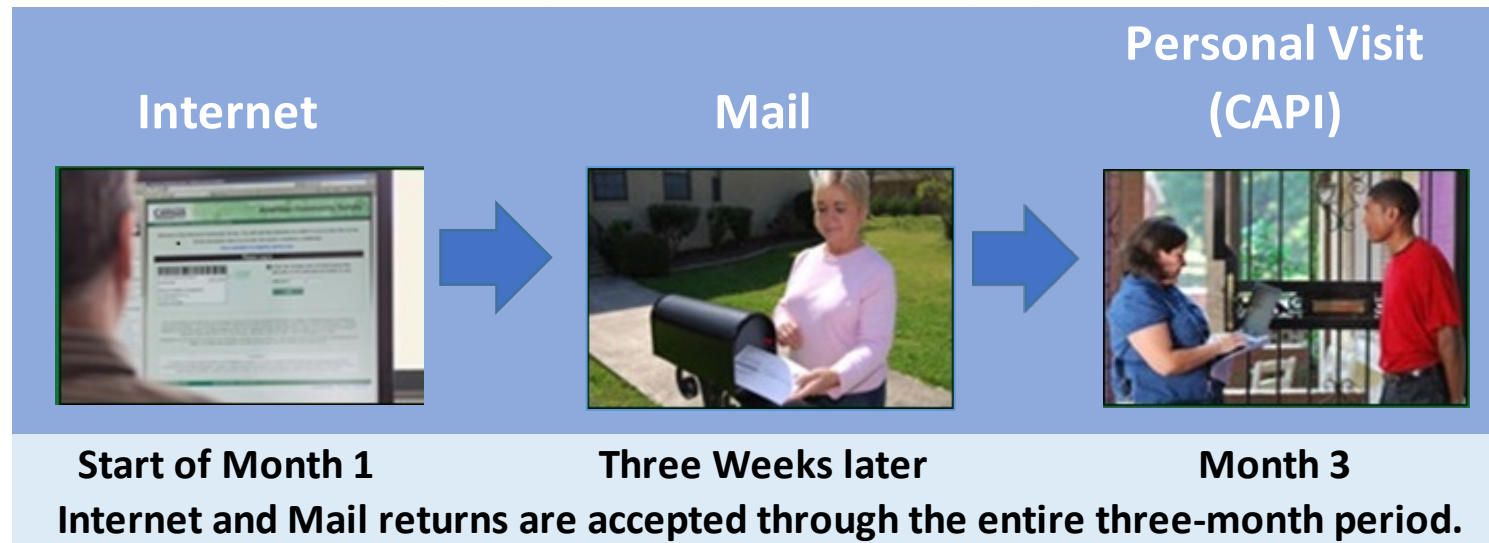
Period of time

Point in time

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ACS Data Collection Process: Pre COVID-19

- The ACS is a continuous, multimode survey that uses a multiple mailing strategy
- Data collection for each monthly panel takes place over a three-month period



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Data Collection Modifications Due to COVID-19

Mail

- Suspended mail operations starting mid-March through June 2020
- Resumed limited mail operations in July 2020
- Restored our full 5-piece mail strategy in April 2021

Internet

- The internet option was available only to a subset of our full sample due to reduced mailings during April—June 2020

In-Person Interviewing

- In-person interviewing for housing units and group quarters was suspended mid-March—June 2020

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Data Collection Modifications Due to COVID-19

In-Person Interviewing

- **Housing Units**
 - In-person interviewing was suspended mid-March—June 2020
 - Only telephone interviews were conducted during this period
 - In-person interviewing resumed for some areas in July 2020 and for all areas without stay-at-home orders in September 2020
- **Group Quarters (GQ)**
 - Suspended interviewing mid-March—June 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions
 - Began in-person interviewing in July 2020, however some facilities continued to restrict access
 - Applied select use of administrative records

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Operational Considerations for Addressing the Data Collection Challenges

- The ACS is an ongoing survey that is designed to collect data for a new sample each month
- Thus, the ACS could not postpone nonresponse follow-up until after the peak pandemic months when it could be conducted in person, which led to a lower overall response rate and a less representative sample
- The 2020 Census was able to postpone their nonresponse follow-up until a time when they could carry out their full planned operation
 - This allowed the 2020 Census to mitigate the potential high nonresponse they would have faced had they continued their nonresponse operations during peak pandemic months
 - As a result, the 2020 Census could limit the effects of the pandemic on data quality in ways that the ACS could not
 - Overall, this translated into the 2020 Census being able to maintain higher quality throughout their data collection operations

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Impact of Data Collection Challenges on ACS Data Quality

- The ACS uses a multi-mode data collection strategy with multiple mailings in order to get responses from all segments of the population
- Given the limitations in our data collection for the 2020 ACS and our inability to fully utilize all three modes, we were unable to collect information from certain segments of the population
- Due to changes in our data collection operations, our response universe was different than the full population
- As a result, significant nonresponse bias was present in the collected data

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Impact of Data Collection Challenges on ACS Data Quality

- All surveys typically have some nonresponse bias because those who do not respond tend to be different from those who do respond
- Our standard methods for mitigating the nonresponse bias are insufficient for this data year
- The 2020 ACS data collection had the lowest response rate ever for the survey at 71%, down from 86% in 2019 and 92% in 2018
 - This rate is an average across the entire data collection year
 - Response rates during the peak pandemic months were significantly lower

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2020 ACS Data Products

The Census Bureau is committed to releasing quality data about America's people, places and economy

2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental

- Standard 2020 ACS 1-year data products will not be released because the data do not meet our statistical quality standards - <https://www.census.gov/about/policies/quality/standards/standardf1.html>
- An analytical report with more information on the data and related quality metrics will be shared
- The following experimental products will be released for research purposes:
 - Limited set of tables using experimental weights for limited geographic areas
 - Research paper explaining the experimental weighting methodology
 - Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) File containing experimental weights
- 2020 ACS 1-year health insurance data will not be included in the 2020 Current Population Survey Health Insurance Report

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2020 ACS Data Products

2016-2020 ACS 5-Year

- Plan is to release the standard set of 5-year ACS products using our normal methodology
- Impact of nonresponse bias present in the 2020 ACS collected data on the 5-year estimates should be smaller
 - Approximately 6 months of the 2020 ACS data were strongly impacted to varying degrees
 - This represents one-tenth of the 5-year period as opposed to one-half of the 1-year estimates
- Thorough data review is being conducted in order to assess the quality of the 5-year data

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Schedule of 2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental Data Releases

2020 ACS 1-Year Experimental Release	
Data Products	Target Release
Media Advisory	July 2021
Webinar and News Release	July 2021
Analytical Report	October 2021
Working Paper on Experimental Methodology	November 2021
1-Year Experimental Estimates	November 2021
1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) with Experimental Weights	December 2021

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Schedule of 2020 ACS 5-Year Data Releases

2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Standard Release	
Data Products	Target Release
5-Year Data Products	December 2021
5-Year Variance Replicate Estimates	January 2022
5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)	February 2022

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ACS Resources

American Community Survey Resource Hub

This resource hub connects you to American Community Survey (ACS) resources and access to data experts. We can help navigate various options, answer questions, and direct you to more information.

ACS Website

The ACS website contains a wealth of up-to-date information for respondents, data users, and the general public. You can access supporting documentation for each data release, as well as resources to learn more about the survey at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.html.

Data Dissemination Specialists

The Census Bureau's dedicated team of Data Dissemination Specialists (DDS) play a unique role in working directly with individuals, organizations, governments, and others across the country. These experts are available to help you understand what datasets are available and provide free, customized training by phone at 1-844-ASK-DATA or email census.askdata@census.gov.

Data.census.gov

Access ACS data at <https://data.census.gov>, the Census Bureau's primary data dissemination tool. You can use the search bar to search data by state, county or place, and see an overview of that area in a geographic profile with visualizations and infographics. Users have access to tables, maps, webpages, geographical profiles, and visualizations.

Handbooks for Data Users

Available at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/handbooks.html.

Training Presentations

Available at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/training-presentations.html.

Guidance for Data Users

Available at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance.html.

ACS Resources Available For You

Stories

Information on how ACS data are used to help communities is available at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/acs-data-stories.html.

Census Academy: Data Gems (YouTube Channel)

Available at www.youtube.com/channel/UCkXZk3qzt24RUKjCekG8sh.

Contact Us

General Questions

Call the Census Bureau's Customer Service Center at 301-763-4636 or 1-800-923-8282, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. EST.

State Data Centers (SDC)

The SDC program is a partnership between the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the island areas to make data available locally to the public. More information is available at www.census.gov/about/partners/sdc.html.

Ask Census

Select "American Community Survey" on the left-hand menu at <https://ask.census.gov> to view questions and answers about the ACS.

Census Information Centers (CIC)

CIC provide local access, education, and technical assistance on census data for planning and decision making to underserved communities. More information is available at www.census.gov/about/partners/cic.html.

United States Census Bureau

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2020 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

What You Need to Know

Question 1. Do you use population or demographic data in your work to allocate funds, conduct program evaluation, make decisions, or for other purposes?

YES You are not impacted by this announcement. For more information on how to make data-driven decisions for your program go to: Federal Data Strategy <https://strategy.data.gov>.

NO

Question 2. Does the data you use for your program come from the U.S. Census Bureau?

YES You are not impacted by this announcement. For more information on how to make data-driven decisions for your program go to: Federal Data Strategy <https://strategy.data.gov>.

NO

? Explore Census data sources at <https://data.census.gov>. If you still have questions, please contact the Census Bureau's Customer Help Center at 1-800-923-8282 or <https://ask.census.gov>.

Question 3. Does the data you use come from the American Community Survey (ACS)?

YES You are not impacted by this announcement. For more information on how to make data-driven decisions for your program go to: Federal Data Strategy <https://strategy.data.gov>.

NO

? Learn more about the differences between the ACS and decennial census at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/acs-and-census.html, and about the questions on the ACS form at www.census.gov/acs/www/about/why-we-ask-each-question/ to help identify whether the ACS is the source of your data. If you still have questions, please contact the Census Bureau's Customer Help Center at 1-800-923-8282 or <https://ask.census.gov>.

Question 4. Does the data you use come from ACS 1-year estimates or ACS 5-year estimates?

1-Year Estimates	5-Year Estimates	I Don't Know
<p>You are likely impacted by this announcement. Work with legal and technical staff in your program to determine if one of the following options is feasible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 ACS 1-year estimates in place of 2020 ACS 1-year estimates. 2015-2019 ACS 5-year estimates in place of 2020 ACS 1-year estimates. An alternative data source (i.e., Current Population Survey, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2020 ACS 1-year experimental estimates) in place of 2020 ACS 1-year estimates. 	<p>You are not impacted by this announcement. The Census Bureau is currently analyzing the impact of COVID data collection issues on ACS 5-year estimates. At present, no action is necessary. However, we encourage you to retain the information you have collected in this review in case the Census Bureau determines that there are impacts on ACS 5-year estimates from the data collection issues that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Learn more about the differences between ACS 1-year estimates and ACS 5-year estimates at www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html to help identify the source of your data. If you still have questions, please contact the Census Bureau's Customer Help Center at 1-800-923-8282 or https://ask.census.gov. Our Customer Help Center representatives can connect you with the ACS Data Users team if additional assistance is needed.</p>

United States Census Bureau

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Questions?

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Participant passcode: 6714070

Dial *1 for the operator

- Recording of today's webinar will be available in **press kit** and posted on Census Academy at: [census.gov/data/academy/webinars.html](https://www.census.gov/data/academy/webinars.html)
- Press kit available at: [census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/impact-pandemic-2020-ac-1-year.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/impact-pandemic-2020-ac-1-year.html)

The American Community Survey

Subject Matter Experts

Name	Title
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Donna Daily	Chief, American Community Survey Office
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Nathan Walters	Assistant Division Chief, American Community Survey Office
David Raglin	Branch Chief, American Community Survey Office
Jonathan Rothbaum	Research Economist, Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division

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Additional questions?

Contact PIO

301-763-3030

pio@census.gov