

## Decennial Census

The Decennial Census collects data every 10 years about households, income, education, homeownership, and more for the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas.

The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States. It is mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution and takes place every 10 years. The data collected by the decennial census determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and is also used to distribute billions in federal funds to local communities.

The 2010 Census represented the most massive participation movement ever witnessed in our country. Approximately 74 percent of the households returned their census forms by mail; the remaining households were counted by census workers walking neighborhoods throughout the United States. National and state population totals from the 2010 Census were released on December 21, 2010. Redistricting data, which include additional state, county and local counts, will be released starting in February 2011.

When you completed the 2010 Census questionnaire or an in-person interview with a census taker, you made a statement about what resources your community needs.

Accurate data reflecting changes in your community are crucial in apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and deciding how more than \$400 billion per year is allocated for projects like new hospitals and schools.

That's more than \$4 trillion over a 10-year period for things like new roads and schools, and services like job training centers.

The census effect in action

In addition, residents themselves have used census data to support community initiatives involving environmental legislation, quality-of-life issues and consumer advocacy.

<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>

## American Community Survey

The American Community Survey is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities a fresh look at how they are changing.

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides data every year -- giving communities the current information they need to plan investments and services. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year.

To help communities, state governments, and federal programs, we ask about: age, sex, race, family and relationships, income and benefits, health insurance, education, veteran status, disabilities, where you work and how you get there, and where you live and how much you pay for some essentials.

All this detail is combined into statistics that are used to help decide everything from school lunch programs to new hospitals.

### Distinguishing features of ACS 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year estimates

1-year estimates	3-year estimates	5-year estimates
12 months of collected data	36 months of collected data	60 months of collected data
Data for areas with populations of 65,000+	Data for areas with populations of 20,000+	Data for all areas
Smallest sample size	Larger sample size than 1-year	Largest sample size
Less reliable than 3-year or 5-year	More reliable than 1-year; less reliable than 5-year	Most reliable
Most current data	Less current than 1-year estimates; more current than 5-year	Least current
Best used when	Best used when	Best used when
Currency is more important than precision Analyzing large populations	More precise than 1-year, more current than 5-year Analyzing smaller populations Examining smaller geographies because 1-year estimates are not available	Precision is more important than currency Analyzing very small populations Examining tracts and other smaller geographies because 1-year estimates are not available

[http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about\\_the\\_survey/american\\_community\\_survey/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about_the_survey/american_community_survey/)

## Population Estimates Program

The Population Estimates Program publishes estimated population totals for the previous year for cities and towns, metropolitan areas, counties, and states.

The Population Estimates Program publishes total resident population estimates and demographic components of change (births, deaths, and migration) each year. We also publish the estimates by demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin) for the nation, states, and counties. In addition to the resident population universe, we also produce population estimates for these universes: resident plus armed forces overseas, civilian, and civilian noninstitutionalized at the national level; and civilian at the state level. The reference date for estimates is July 1.

The U.S. Census Bureau produces estimates of total resident population for all areas of general-purpose government on an annual basis. The subcounty areas consist of both incorporated places, such as cities, boroughs, and villages; and minor civil divisions such as towns and townships. We use updated housing unit estimates to distribute county population to subcounty areas based on housing unit change. County population estimates are produced with a component of change population method, which updates the latest census population using data on births, deaths, and domestic and international migration.

Estimates usually are for the present and the past, while projections are estimates of the population for future dates. We develop these estimates with the assistance of the Federal State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates (FSCPE).

These estimates are used in federal funding allocations, as denominators for vital rates and per capita time series, as survey controls, and in monitoring recent demographic changes. With each new issue of July 1 estimates, we revise estimates for years back to the last census. Previously published estimates are superseded and archived.

The Population Estimates are also available on American Factfinder.

<http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.html>