

# Questions and Answers

American  
Community  
Survey  
Group Quarters





### What is the American Community Survey?

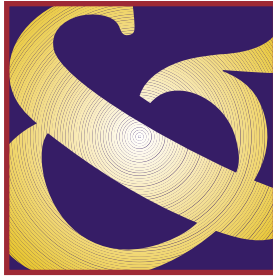
It is a new survey the U.S. Census Bureau developed as part of the 2010 Decennial Census Program.

- The American Community Survey will provide critical economic, social, demographic, and housing information to this country's communities every year, instead of once in 10 years. Communities tell us the American Community Survey helps them make informed decisions and is a key to their future.
- The American Community Survey doesn't count the population, but it does provide information that reflects what the population looks like and how it lives. That information is vital for states and local communities in determining how to plan for schools, roads, senior citizen centers, and other goods and services.

- The Census Bureau conducts the American Community Survey in every county, American Indian and Alaska Native Area, and Hawaiian Home Land. It replaces the long form in the 2010 census and greatly simplifies operations so that the focus of the 2010 census is solely on counting the population.

### I have not heard of the American Community Survey. How long have you been conducting it?

The American Community Survey began in 1996 in a sample of counties across the country. Today the survey is conducted in all U.S. counties and Puerto Rico municipios.



### How can I see the results of the survey?

This information is published on the Census Bureau's American FactFinder® Web site at <factfinder.census.gov>. The data are provided in several formats for everyone from beginners (who may just want to look at the data) to experienced researchers.

American FactFinder® provides:

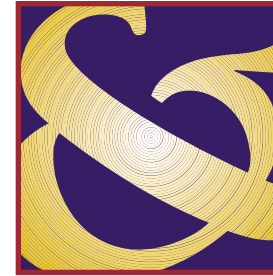
- Quick Tables that provide an overview of the data quickly.
- Geographic Comparison Tables that compare data for different places.
- Detailed Tables that provide more extensive data for more detailed research.

### When will the results of the survey be available?

The results of the American Community Survey are released every summer. Survey results are released each year for areas of 65,000 or more people. For smaller areas, results are available in the form of 3-year and 5-year averages.

### How do I benefit by answering the American Community Survey?

Federal agencies, states, and communities say that they do not have the up-to-date information they need to better understand community issues, respond to needs, and allocate programs and resources. As one community leader said, "Guessing is always fun, but seldom effective."



By responding to the American Community Survey questionnaire, you are helping your community establish goals, identify problems and solutions, locate facilities and programs, and measure the performance of community programs.

The American Community Survey data are used by:

- *Local governments* for budgeting, evaluating programs, and planning for community development projects.
- *Community programs*, such as those for the elderly, scout programs, libraries, banks, hospitals, and other community organizations to provide services to the community and to locate buildings, services, and programs.

- *Transportation planners* use journey-to-work information to make decisions to build new roads, or add capacity to existing roads and to develop transit systems, such as light rail or subways, by projecting future ridership.

### Do the sampled Group Quarters (GQ) and individuals have to answer the questions on the American Community Survey?

Yes; your response to this survey is required by law (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 141 and 193). Title 13, as changed by Title 18, imposes a penalty for not responding. The survey is approved by the Office of Management and Budget. We estimate that the facility-level survey will take about 15 minutes to complete, and the individual survey will take about 25 minutes to complete.



**Why did you select this GQ facility, and how did I get selected?**

This GQ was selected from a sample of all GQs in your area. The GQ and individuals are randomly selected from this list each year, so we cannot substitute another GQ for this one. One of the advantages of a random sample is that we can use it to measure the whole population without having to actually interview every person at every GQ. But in order for it to work, we cannot substitute sampled facilities or individuals—the sample has to be truly random. Your participation is very important if we’re going to be able to produce accurate statistics from this survey.

**How will the Census Bureau use the information that I provide?**

The Census Bureau can only use the information you provide for statistical purposes and cannot publish or release information that would identify you. Your information will be used in combination with information from other individuals to produce statistical data for your community. Similar statistics will be produced for communities across the United States.

**Will the Census Bureau keep my information confidential?**

Yes. Your answers are confidential by law under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. This law specifies that the Census Bureau can use the information provided by individuals for statistical purposes only and cannot publish or release information that would identify any individual.



**Can the police or any regulatory agency see my answers to the survey?**

No. The Census Bureau protects the privacy of your information. The police cannot see it and no court of law can see it. No one can see or use your specific answers to enforce any type of law or amend any kind of benefit. Your individual responses will only be seen by authorized persons with a Census Bureau work-related need to know. The Census Bureau compiles and publishes summary data for geographical areas, and cannot publish or release information that would identify an individual.

If any Census Bureau employee were to violate these provisions, he or she would be subject to severe criminal sanctions imposed by Congress—up to 5 years’ imprisonment and/or up to a \$250,000 fine for any Census

Bureau employee who violates those provisions (Title 13 U.S.C., Section 214, as amended by Title 18 U.S.C., Sections 3559 and 3571).

**I am elderly, disabled, or otherwise unable to complete the American Community Survey questionnaire. What do I do?**

You may designate another person to help you or a Census Bureau representative may assist you in completing the survey. Respondents may call their regional office for assistance. To produce the most accurate results, it is very important that every respondent selected for the survey participate.



**Do I have to answer these questions every year?**

A random sample of GQ facilities in the U.S. and Puerto Rico and a random sample of the people staying at these sampled facilities are selected each year to participate in the ACS GQ data collection. You will not be asked to complete the ACS GQ questionnaire every year. You will be asked to complete the survey information only when you are randomly selected from all people staying at a sampled GQ.

It is important that each sampled person respond to this mandatory survey so that the Census Bureau can produce characteristics about the GQ populations in your community and in the U.S. each year.

**Why does the American Community Survey ask one question about race and another question about Hispanic origin?**

Race and Hispanic origin (or ethnicity) are considered distinct concepts and, therefore, require separate questions in censuses and surveys. Hispanics or Latinos may be of any race. The Office of Management and Budget issues the standards governing the collection of data on race and ethnicity, and all federal agencies, including the Census Bureau, must follow these standards.



**Where can I get assistance or find more information about the American Community Survey?**

For questions or assistance with completing this survey, call the Census Bureau's Regional Office nearest you as listed below:

Census Bureau Regional Offices	
Atlanta, GA	1-800-424-6974
Boston, MA	1-800-562-5721
Charlotte, NC	1-800-331-7360
Chicago, IL	1-800-865-6384
Dallas, TX	1-800-835-9752
Denver, CO	1-800-852-6159
Detroit, MI	1-800-432-1495
Kansas City, KS	1-800-728-4748
Los Angeles, CA	1-800-992-3530
New York, NY	1-800-991-2520
Philadelphia, PA	1-866-238-1374
Seattle, WA	1-800-233-3308

For more information about the American Community Survey, or to obtain survey results from past years, we encourage you to visit our Web site at:

[www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www)

You may also contact us by calling 301-763-INFO (4636), through e-mail at <[cmo.acs@census.gov](mailto:cmo.acs@census.gov)> or by mailing your information request to the following address:

American Community Survey  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4700 Silver Hill Rd., Room 1657-3  
Washington, DC 20233-7500

# AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

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