

American Community Survey

Population: Questions on Marital History

Questions as they appear in the questionnaire.

21 In the PAST 12 MONTHS did this person get -

	Yes	No
a. Married?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Widowed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Divorced?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22 How many times has this person been married?

Once

Two times

Three or more times

23 In what year did this person last get married?

Year

Source: ACS-1(2009)KFI

MEETING FEDERAL NEEDS

Marital history data enables multiple agencies to more accurately measure the effects of federal and state policies and programs that focus on the well-being of families. Adding measures of marital transitions to the American Community Survey will provide estimates of marriage and divorce rates and duration, as well as flows into and out of marriage. This information is critical for more refined analyses of eligibility for program services and benefits, and of changes resulting from federal policies and programs.

Marriage and divorce data will be used at the national, state, and sub-state level to plan for and assess state and community activities designed to influence marital and divorce behavior. Equally important are tax and entitlement forecasting functions in a variety of federal programs including Medicare and Medicaid.

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COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Social Services

Data will be used for formulation and assessment of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) policies and programs at both the federal and state level.

Data will be used to plan for and assess the success of grantees funded under the new Healthy Marriage grant program.

Rates of marriage and divorce data are used to track and forecast changes in areas with large numbers of single-parent families, and thus identify needs for childcare, child support, and other social services.

Government

Marital history will permit analyses and projections of tax policies that can create or mitigate “marriage penalties”—increased taxes for a married couple compared with what the same couple would pay if filing as unmarried individuals.

Local governments use data about marital history in assessing needs for housing and other community development services under the Community Development Block Grant Evaluation.

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