Who’s in Your Neighborhood? Using the American FactFinder

Salma Abadin and Carrie Koss Vallejo
Data You Can Use – www.datayoucanuse.org
Learning Objectives

• Learn what American FactFinder is and is not
• Become familiar with the data that are available
• Explore how to find and use the data
What is American FactFinder?

- [http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml](http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml)

- The primary vehicle for searching for and distributing census data

- Access to data about the United States, Puerto Rico, and Island areas

- Different tools available to ascertain data Provides data for the lowest level of geography (blocks) to ZIP codes to legislative districts
Navigating American FactFinder

Community Facts
Find popular facts (population, income, etc.) and frequently requested data about your community.

Guided Search
Advanced Search
Download Center

Popular Tables
- Population and Housing
  - Demographic and Housing Estimates (2014 ACS, DP05)
  - General Housing Characteristics (2014 ACS, DP04)
  - General Demographic Characteristics (2010 Census, DP-1)
- Poverty and Income
- General Economic Characteristics (2014 ACS, DP03)
- Age, Race, Sex and Education
  - Selected Social Characteristics (2014 ACS, DP02)
  - Educational Attainment (2014 ACS, S1501)
Navigating American FactFinder

American FactFinder provides access to data about the United States, Puerto Rico and the Island Areas. The data in American FactFinder come from several censuses and surveys. For more Information see Using FactFinder and What We Provide.

Using American FactFinder
Learn about American FactFinder's functions and features.

What We Provide
The following data are available on American FactFinder:
- American Community Survey  more » | get data »
- American Housing Survey more » | get data »
- Annual Economic Surveys more »
- Annual Surveys of Governments more »
- Census of Governments more » | get data »
- Decennial Census more » | get data »
- Economic Census more » | get data »
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Tabulation more » | get data »
- Population Estimates Program more » | get data »
- Puerto Rico Community Survey more » | get data »

Deep Linking Guide
A how-to guide for Building Deep Links into American Factfinder (PDF) is available.

News and Notes
December 03, 2015
The 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates are now available...

view all news, release schedules, and more »

Address Search
Find Census data by entering a street address.

Reference Maps
Reference Maps show selected geographic boundaries for an area along with orienting features, such as roads.

Load Search or Query
To retrieve a saved search or query, use the "Load Search/Query" button.

LOAD SEARCH/QUERY
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Available Data

• Decennial Census
  • Count of all residents
  • Population traits
    • Sex, age, race, household size, vacancy status, etc

• American Community Survey
  • Annual survey
  • Has information similar to the Decennial Census
  • But also has detailed social, economic, and housing characteristics
## Decennial vs ACS data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decennial Census</th>
<th>American Community Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counts people in all housing units and group quarters</td>
<td>Conducts a sample survey and generates estimates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects one point in time</td>
<td>A continuous survey that releases data every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes the most detailed geographic data with coverage down to the Block level</td>
<td>Coverage down to the Block group level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>American FactFinder only contains data down to the Census Tract level</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A closer look at the ACS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Demographics</th>
<th>Social Characteristics</th>
<th>Economic Characteristics</th>
<th>Housing Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Class of Worker</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino Origin</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latino Origin</td>
<td>Health Insurance Coverage</td>
<td>House Heating Fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Income and Earnings</td>
<td>Kitchen Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Plumbing Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Journey to Work</td>
<td>Renter Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Rooms and Bedrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Telephone Service Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work Status</td>
<td>Tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Units in Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Value of Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vehicles Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year Householder Moved Into Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Year Structure Built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Asian American Federations*
## ACS versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-year estimates</th>
<th>3-year estimates</th>
<th>5-year estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data for areas with populations of 65,000+</td>
<td>Data for areas with populations of 20,000+</td>
<td>Data for all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest sample size</td>
<td>Medium sample size</td>
<td>Largest sample size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least reliable</td>
<td>More reliable</td>
<td>Most reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most current data</td>
<td>Less current data</td>
<td>Least current data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Best used when:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-year estimates</th>
<th>3-year estimates</th>
<th>5-year estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Currency is more important than precision</td>
<td>• Analyzing smaller populations or geographies</td>
<td>• Precision is more important than currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analyzing large populations</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyzing very small populations and geographies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other available data

• Puerto Rico Community Survey
• Population Estimates Program (PEP)
• Economic census
• American Housing Survey
• Equal Employment Opportunity Tabulation
## Advantages and Limitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less need of knowledge of census data, data programs, and geography</td>
<td>No data as good as local data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows users to start searching for data in multiple ways, by a person’s needs and interests</td>
<td>The data is dated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search all census data programs for data collected at all geographic levels</td>
<td>Census tract and block group data are available every 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can avoid raw data</td>
<td>Margin of error is not negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to be cautious in comparing data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 ways to access data

1. Community Facts
   • Popular facts and frequently requested data about a specific geography
2. Guided search

- Step-by-step guidance in finding data
  - Choose this option if you’re not sure where to begin
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     - Choose this option if you’re not sure where to begin
4 ways to access data

3. Advanced search

• Access all geographic types and datasets in American FactFinder using all search features
4 ways to access data

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4. Download center

- Large volumes of data
  - Examples: all census tracts in the United States or all counties in a state
- To use this feature, you need to know which dataset, table, or data program you’re looking for
Before using American FactFinder

• Ask yourself these questions:
  • Who do you want to learn about?
    • Race, age, gender
  • What is it you want to know about them?
    • Demographics, income, employment, housing
  • Where is the place that these people live?
    • Wisconsin, Milwaukee county, Milwaukee city
  • When is the time period you are interested in?
    • Recent or historic data
GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT!
Application of the data

• Learn about your community

• Inform decision-making

• Determine target areas or populations

• Making comparisons

• Can use data in other programs
Resources and references

A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data – What General Data Users Need to Know

Comparing ACS Data

United States Census FAQs

American FactFinder Help and Video Tutorials

50 Ways Census Data Are Used
Thank you!

Please visit our website (www.datayoucanuse.org) or contact us if you have any questions:

Salma Abadin
salma.abadin@gmail.com
414-286-8592

Carrie Koss Vallejo
carriekv@gmail.com