

## American Community Survey

Housing and Urban Development  
Negotiated Rulemaking Session  
Speaker: James B. Treat  
July 29, 2014



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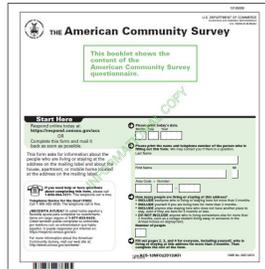
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## The American Community Survey (ACS)

- Is an ongoing monthly survey sent to 3.5 million addresses to produce detailed population and housing estimates each year
- Is designed to produce *critical information on small areas and small population groups* previously collected on the decennial long form
- Annually releases over 11 billion estimates for over 35,000 communities for
- Annually releases 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year periods.
- Has four data collection modes: Internet, Mail, Telephone, Personal Visit



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## ACS Budget

- The ACS budget is determined each year by Congress.
- Total Requested for Fiscal Year 2014: \$241 million
  - Data Collection Costs: \$174.3 million
    - Internet and Mail - \$38.1 million
    - Telephone Interviews - \$21.5 million
    - Personal Interviews - \$99.4 million
    - Group Quarters - \$15.3 million



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## ACS Data Collection



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### ACS Data Collection Process

ACSO provides a centrally managed data collection approach that offers a consistent data source across all geographies. This approach includes:

- Internet, paper questionnaire, telephone interviews, and personal interviews
- Centralized telephone center and a decentralized field representative staff
- Provides periodic refresher training and consistent monitoring of the telephone center and field staff



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### ACS Data Collection Process

Online	Mail	Telephone	Personal Visit
			
Self-Response Modes		Non-Response Modes	



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### Field Staff Working in AIAN Areas



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### FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)

- " The American Indian and Alaska Native Policy Statement pledges to consult with tribal leaders and cooperate with them on any activities regarding the census that might affect their tribes.
- " This policy applies to all activities of the Census Bureau.
- " Since each nation forms its own government, the Census Bureau works with them one by one.

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### FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)

- " The Census Bureau strives to respect each individual tribes own customs, beliefs, and cultural norms.
- " For the U.S. Census Bureau, it is imperative that all Census operations, including the American Community Survey, be conducted with the acknowledgement and cooperation of the tribal authority over those reservation areas.
- " We train FRs on how to conduct interviews in AIAN areas.

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## ACS Response Rates



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### ACS Response Rates in AIAN Areas

- “ Response rate for AIAN areas as a whole is 97 percent
- “ The table below shows response rates are high for most AIAN areas

Response Rate	Number/Percent of AIAN Areas With This Response Rate
95 to 100 percent	399 / 77.3
90 to 94 percent	70 / 13.6
85 to 89 percent	17 / 3.3
80 to 84 percent	14 / 2.7
Less than 80 percent	16 / 3.1
Total	516 / 100.0

Note: Only AIAN areas with ten or more sample cases are shown in this table.



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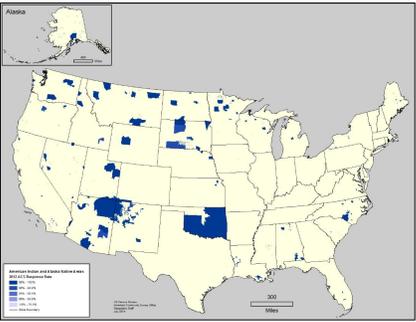
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### ACS Response Rates in AIAN Areas




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**ACS Sample Design**



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**ACS Sample Design**

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- “ Housing units: ex. house, apartment, mobile home, a group of rooms, a single room
- “ Group quarters unit: ex. college dorms, prisons, military barracks, emergency and transitional shelters
- “ Initial sample size:
  - 295,000 housing unit addresses each month
  - 3.54 million housing unit addresses each year
  - 18,000 group quarters facilities each year



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**ACS Sample Design**

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- “ ACS samples housing units in less populous areas at higher rates (as high as 15% annually)
- “ Special provisions exist to increase the sampling rates for American Indian and Alaska Native Areas
- “ Sample design changes in 2011:
  - Reallocate the sample with the goal to produce more even quality across areas
  - Higher overall sample size
  - Full CAPI follow-up in most American Indian and Alaska Native Areas



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### Effect of Sample Design Changes for American Indian and Alaska Native Areas

- “ Compare 2010 ACS 1-year initially selected sample size and interview counts to 2012
- “ Initially selected housing unit addresses
  - Increase from ~80,000 to ~101,000
  - Relative terms, a 26% increase
- “ Final housing unit interviews
  - Increased from ~47,000 to ~84,000 housing units
  - Relative terms, an 80% increase



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### Percent in Sample for AIAN Areas

- “ The overall percent in sample for the U.S. increased from 2.1% in 2010 to 2.6% in 2012.
- “ In AIAN areas, the percent in sample grew significantly more during the same period.

Number of Housing Units in AIAN Area	2010	2012
Less than 400	9.6	13.6
401 to 1,200	7.5	10.3
1,201 to 8,000	6.0	7.6
8,001 and higher	4.3	5.0
<b>Overall</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>12.0</b>



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### Further Addition of ACS Sample in AIAN Areas

- “ The ACS does not have provisions for agencies or groups to contribute funding to increase the sample for a group of interest.
- “ A larger sample will improve the reliability of estimates but will not necessarily cause the estimates to change.
- “ The cost would be about \$100-\$150 a case:
  - Increase sample from about 50,000 would be about \$5,000,000-\$7,500,000 a year.
  - Increase sample from about 100,000 would be about \$10,000,000-\$15,000,000 a year.
- There could be some concerns about respondent burden.



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## Estimates of the AIAN Population from the ACS



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### Comparing Estimates for the AIAN Population from ACS to Census

- “ Overall the coverage error for AIAN Alone or in Combination in the ACS is low
- “ Using population estimates built from the decennial census helps correct for under coverage
- “ Important to note that 5-year estimates will have a lag effect
  - Total population from ACS 5-year estimates will be an average over the five years
  - For a steady growing population, expect that all 5-year estimates prior to 2008-2012 to be lower than 2010 Census



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### Comparing Estimates for the AIAN Population from ACS to Census

- “ Coverage of AIAN Alone population is more difficult to gauge
- “ Fluidity in race reporting may be one contributor to this
- “ Census Bureau is working on a detailed match study
  - Match Census 2000, 2006-2010 ACS 5-year, and 2010 Census
  - Expected to be released in late summer 2014
- “ Helps show the fluidity in race reporting between decennial censuses and the ACS. Some highlights:
  - Only 70% of those matched who responded AIAN Alone in 2010 Census responded in the same manner on the ACS
  - Also flows both directions who respond as AIAN in one but not the other
- “ Full report has much more detail and information



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## Content on the ACS



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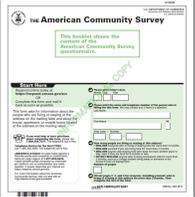
## ACS Questionnaire

**2010 Census**



10 Questions

**2014 American Community Survey**



48 Person Questions  
24 Housing Questions



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## ACS Characteristics

### Demographic and Social Characteristics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Sex</li> <li>~ Age</li> <li>~ Race</li> <li>~ Hispanic Origin</li> <li>~ Place of Birth</li> <li>~ Citizenship</li> <li>~ Year of Entry</li> <li>~ Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Ancestry/Tribal Affiliation</li> <li>~ Language Spoken at Home</li> <li>~ Residence 1 Year Ago</li> <li>~ Disability Status</li> <li>~ Marital Status/History</li> <li>~ Fertility</li> <li>~ Grandparent Caregivers</li> <li>~ Military Service</li> </ul>
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### ACS Characteristics

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<p><u>Economic Characteristics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>" Income</li> <li>" Occupation</li> <li>" Industry</li> <li>" Commuting to Work</li> <li>" Place of Work</li> <li>" Labor Force Status</li> <li>" Health Insurance</li> </ul>	<p><u>Housing Characteristics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>" Housing Tenure</li> <li>" Occupancy &amp; Structure</li> <li>" Housing Value</li> <li>" Taxes &amp; Insurance</li> <li>" Utilities</li> <li>" Mortgage/Monthly Rent</li> <li>" Plumbing Facilities</li> <li>" Kitchen Facilities</li> </ul>
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### ACS Content Process

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- " Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approves content
  - National need for small geographic areas and population groups weighed against respondent burden
  
- " Census Bureau works closely with OMB and Federal Agencies
  - Solicits Federal Agencies on content changes
  - Conducts research
  - Updates content on a five-year cycle



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### ACS Questionnaire Changes Since 2005

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- " Changes to Content
  - Questions Added
    - Health insurance and coverage (2008)
    - Veterans service-connected disability (2008)
    - Marital history (2008)
    - Field of bachelor's degree (2009)
    - Computer and Internet use (2013)
  - Questions Removed (2008)
    - Amount of food stamps received
    - Years in military (0-2 years and 2+ years)



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### ACS Questionnaire Changes Since 2005

#### Changes to Content

- Significant modifications (2008)
  - Number of rooms and bedrooms
  - Plumbing and kitchen facilities
  - Telephone service
  - Housing value
  - Tenure
  - Disability
  - Employment status
  - Relationship
  - Weeks Worked

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### The Process for ACS Content Changes

Requests for changes come from Federal agencies participating in the OMB Interagency Committee for the ACS

ICSP Subcommittee for the ACS provides recommendations to OMB on the requested changes. OMB provides approval prior to beginning any testing, and a topical subcommittee is formed

Conduct cognitive testing in English and Spanish, followed by field testing in all modes of collection

Census provides empirical test results, Federal agency submits a final recommendation to OMB and Census, ISCP Subcommittee provides input, ESA and DOC provide input during review of the OMB clearance package, and OMB makes a final decision.

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### Time Frame for Questionnaire Changes

#### Example for 2013 content changes

- Summer 2008: Agencies solicited for content changes
- Spring 2009: Cognitive testing began
- Fall 2010: Content Test conducted in field
- Summer 2011: Content Test results available
- Fall 2011: Office of Management and Budget determined final content
- January, 2013: New and modified content collected for the first time
- Fall 2014: First 1-Year estimates published for new and modified content for 2013
- Fall 2016: First 3-Year estimates published for new and modified content for 2013-2015
- Fall 2018: First 5-Year estimates published for new and modified content for 2013-2017

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**Questions and Discussion**



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**Background Slides**



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**ACS Questionnaire Walkthrough**



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### ACS Questionnaire Walkthrough

- “ Core Demographic (Person) Questions, Pages 2-4
  - Name, sex, date of birth, and relationship\* (questions 1-4)
  - Origin and race (questions 5-6)

\* - Applicable to households with 2 or more persons



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### ACS Questionnaire Walkthrough

- “ Housing Questions, Pages 5-7
  - Basic Housing Characteristics
    - Type, built, tenure, acreage, and agricultural sales/business (questions 1-6)
    - Number of rooms and bedrooms (question 7)
    - Facilities and services (questions 8-11)
    - Number of vehicles (question 12)
    - Heating (question 13)
  - Homeowner/Resident Costs
    - Utilities (question 14)
    - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (question 15)
    - Fees, Owner, Mortgage, Rent, and Taxes (questions 16-24)



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### ACS Questionnaire Walkthrough

- “ Expanded Demographic (Person) Questions, Pages 8-11
  - Citizenship and Educational Attainment (questions 7-12)
  - Ancestry and Language (questions 13-15)
  - Migration (question 15)
  - Healthcare and Disability (questions 16-19)
  - Marital, fertility, and grandparents (questions 20-25)
  - Veteran Service (questions 26-28)
  - Employment
    - Status and Location (questions 29-30)
    - Commute (questions 31-34)
    - Time worked (questions 35-40)
    - Employment duties (questions 41-46)
    - Income and earnings (questions 47-48)



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**FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)**



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**FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)**

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- " For the first visit to the AIR, the RO management staff or RO Partnership Staff contacts the tribal government and establishes a contact person for the initial visit and subsequent visits.
- " The contact person is usually the Chairperson or Chief of the tribe.
- " Each tribe has their own protocol for conducting interviews on the reservation.



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**FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)**

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When conducting interviews on an AIR, FRs follow the procedures below:

- " Be mindful of and respect the heritage, customs, and practices of the people with whom you interact.
- " Dress appropriately.
- " Observe all posted signs. These might include areas that are closed to outsiders, restrictions to outsiders on tribal areas after dark, etc.
- " If you are interviewing in an area requiring a specific protocol, make sure you follow the protocol at all times.



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**FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)**

When conducting interviews on an AIR, FRs follow the procedures below:

- “ If any situation occurs where tribal members are concerned about your presence, do not try to resolve the situation on your own. Contact your supervisor immediately and discuss the situation. You may be instructed to leave and return after the RO contacts the tribal liaison or tribal leader.
- “ If an interpreter is required in order to speak to the respondent, the tribe should be able to provide someone to assist. Remember the interpreter must be sworn in before conducting the interview.



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**FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)**

When conducting interviews on an AIR, FRs follow the procedures below:

- “ Be sensitive to the culture and be flexible. If the timing is inappropriate, reschedule the interview. This could be due to a culturally inappropriate situation (e.g. gender can influence who can speak to whom) or inappropriate timing (e.g. a ceremonial event occurring within the household.)
- “ After your introduction, take a cue from the resident to determine where the interview should be conducted and where you should sit. This may be in your car, outside the home, or inside the home. Do not ask to be invited inside the home.



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**FR Procedures for Conducting Interviews on American Indian Reservations (AIRs)**

When conducting interviews on an AIR, FRs follow the procedures below:

- “ Do not touch ceremonial/cultural objects such as eagle feathers, sacred bundles and ties, etc.
- “ When approaching a housing unit in a rural area, honk your horn and wait in the car for someone to present himself or herself if that is expected protocol in the area. Also, if there are loose dogs this is a good way to ensure your safety.



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### Content Test - Proposed Revisions

- May 2013
  - Instructions provided to members of the OMB Interagency Committee for the ACS on proposing revisions or new content
- June 2013
  - Agencies submitted justifications for proposed changes or additions to Census and OMB
- July 2013
  - The Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP) Subcommittee for the ACS reviewed proposals
- August/September 2013
  - Topical subcommittees began to form for approved proposals
- October/November 2013
  - Topical subcommittees submitted proposed wording to OMB and Census for cognitive testing




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### Cognitive Testing and Final Wording for Field Testing

- January through April 2014
  - Developed and posted RFP, evaluated proposals, and awarded cognitive testing contract
- May 2014 through January 2015
  - Round One: the self-administered questions shall be cognitively tested in English only and the interviewer-administered questions shall be tested in English and Spanish
  - Round Two: the questions shall be tested in English and Spanish in both self-administered and interviewer-administered modes
- January 2015
  - Topical subcommittee leads and OMB Interagency Subcommittees provide final recommendations for question wording for field testing
- February 2015
  - OMB, in consultation with the Census Bureau and the ICSP Subcommittee for the ACS, determines the final wording for field testing




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### 2016 Content Test and 2019 ACS

- March through June 2015
  - Conduct cognitive testing to identify any modifications necessary for Group Quarters and Puerto Rico (neither are included in the field test)
- March through May 2016
  - Conduct 2016 Content Test - data collection for the field test via Internet, mail, CATI, and CAPI (Content Follow-Up Re-interview continues into June)
- January 2019
  - Implement revised content into the production ACS




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