

# Making the most of the U.S. Census Bureau's Factfinder

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**U.S. Census Bureau** web site: <http://www.census.gov>

## What's available in the Census Bureau's Factfinder? (<http://factfinder.census.gov/>)

Decennial Census, American Community Survey, Population Estimates, Economic Census (every 5 years), Annual Economic Surveys, Fact Sheets (quick facts for your state or community), and the U.S. Population Clock.

## American Community Survey (ACS)

American Community Survey > learn more > American Community Survey Home Page

The ACS is scheduled to replace the long form in the decennial (once every 10 years) census, beginning in 2010. From that time on, censuses will consist of a short form only. 2.5% of the population will be surveyed per year -- or about 1-in-40 a year. During Census 2000, about 1-in-6 addresses received the long form.

Starting in 2006, data will be available annually for all areas with populations of 65,000 or more. For smaller areas, it will take three to five years to accumulate a large enough sample to produce annual data. For example, areas of 20,000 to 65,000 can receive data averaged over three years. For rural areas, small urban neighborhoods or population groups of less than 20,000, it will take five years to accumulate a sample size comparable to the decennial census. These averages will be updated every succeeding year.

**Annual results will be available for all areas by 2010.**

Type of Data	Population Size of Area	Data For The Previous Year Released In The Summer Of:							
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010+
Annual estimates	250,000+	→							
Annual estimates	65,000+	→							
3-year averages	20,000+	→							
5-year averages	Census Tract and Block Group*	→							

**Survey Questionnaire** (current and previous years): Survey Basics (tab): **Survey Questionnaire**

Direct link: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/SQuest/SQuest1.htm>

There are more than 60 questions on the American Community Survey, and they are comparable to those on the Census 2000 long form.

**2000 Census Long Form Questionnaire:** <http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/pdf/d02p.pdf>

**Historical Census Comparability:** see <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf>, Appendix B.

**Subject Definitions:** Using the Data (tab): **Subject Definitions**

Direct link: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Def.htm>

Definitions on population and housing variables to help you understand the results.

**Group Quarters Questionnaire:** Survey basics (tab): Information about **Group Quarters**

Direct link: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/GQ/index.htm>

**What's included in Group Quarters?** Correctional Facilities, Nursing Homes, Drug & Alcohol Abuse Centers, Hospitals, In-Patient Hospice Facilities, College/University Housing, Military Living Quarters, Emergency and Transitional Shelters (with sleeping facilities) for People Experiencing Homelessness, Military Ships, etc.

**Group Quarters Definitions:** Using the data (tab): ACS Group Quarters Definitions

Direct link: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/GQ/def.htm>

**Getting started:** <http://factfinder.census.gov/>

Click on “get data” under American Community Survey in the “Getting Detailed Data” section. The most current year available is pre-selected. You can, however, select any year going back to 2000. Immediately to the right of your selection you will see several options to choose from. Feel free to explore these options at your leisure sometime. This session will primarily explore the “detailed tables.” Click on “detailed tables” to get to the following screen:

The screenshot shows the 'Select Geography' page on the American FactFinder website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Main', 'Search', 'Feedback', 'FAQs', 'Glossary', 'Site Map', and 'Help'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here: Main > Data Sets > Data Sets with Detailed Tables > Geography > Tables > Results'. The page title is 'Select Geography' and the subtitle is '2004 American Community Survey, Detailed Tables'. There are four selection methods: 'list', 'name search', 'address search', 'map', and 'geo within geo'. The 'list' method is selected. Below the methods, there are links for 'Show all geography types' and 'Explain Census Geography'. A dropdown menu for 'geographic type' is set to 'Nation'. Below that, there is a section for selecting geographic areas, with 'United States' listed. An 'Add' button is visible. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Current geography selections' which is currently empty, and a 'Remove' button. A 'Next' button is also present. A note mentions downloading data for more than 7,000 geographic areas using the 'Download Center'.

Navigating to the numbers you need

**Select a geographic type:** The geographic type describes the level at which the numbers will be totaled. You’ll typically be looking for national, state, county, place (city), or MSA (metropolitan statistical area).

Note: *If you don’t know what an MSA is, click on the **Glossary** link at the top of the page for more information.*

**Select: Place**

Once you select a geographic type, the screen will refresh and populate the next input box.

**Select a state:** select New Jersey from the list of states. The screen will refresh again and allow you to select from the available cities (population 65,000 or more)

**Select one or more geographic areas and click ‘Add’:** The contents of this box will only relate to the geographic type you have selected. In this case it will allow us to from cities (places). Select Newark and click the Add button. The selection will be added to the “Current Geography Selections” box.

You can add more than one selection and they don’t have to be the same geography type. To add more selections just start over from the “Select a geographic type” box and follow the instructions above.

For example: If we’d like to compare ACS figures for Newark, NJ with San Antonio, TX. We can do this from this screen before moving on. The geographic type remains the same, so we will go back to the **state** listing and select Texas from the drop down list. Then select San Antonio and click the Add button.

Now you’re screen should look like this:

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American FactFinder

Main Search Feedback FAQs Glossary Site Map Help

### Select Geography

You are here: [Main](#) > [Data Sets](#) > [Data Sets with Detailed Tables](#) > [Geography](#) > Tables > Results  
2004 American Community Survey, Detailed Tables

Choose a selection method

[list](#) [name search](#) [address search](#) [map](#) [geo within geo](#)

[Show all geography types](#) | [Explain Census Geography](#)

Select a [geographic type](#)

..... Place

Select a state

Texas

Select one or more geographic areas and click 'Add'

Dallas city  
El Paso city  
Fort Worth city  
Houston city  
Missouri City city  
Pasadena city  
**San Antonio city**  
Sugar Land city

Map It

Add

Current geography selections:

==== Place =====  
Newark city, New Jersey  
San Antonio city, Texas

Download data for more than 7,000 geographic areas using the [Download Center](#).

Remove

Next

Click on the Next > button to move to the next screen to select from a list of tables. For this exercise we will pull poverty statistics for both locations.

Scroll down the list of tables and select:

B17001. Poverty Status in the past 12 months by Sex and Age.

Then click the Add button.

*Note that you can also use the “by subject” or “by keyword” tabs to search for a table.*

**U.S. Census Bureau**  
American FactFinder

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**Select Tables**

You are here: [Main](#) ▶ [Data Sets](#) ▶ [Data Sets with Detailed Tables](#) ▶ [Geography](#) ▶ [Tables](#) ▶ Results

2004 American Community Survey, Detailed Tables

Choose a table selection method

by subject by keyword **show all tables**

Select one or more tables and click 'Add'

B16006. Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for Population 5+ Over (Hispanic or Latino)  
 B16007. Age By Language Spoken At Home For The Population 5 Years and Over  
 B16008. Citizenship Status By Age By Language Spoken At Home For The Population 5 Years and Over  
 B16009. Poverty Status in The Past 12 Months By Age By Language Spoken At Home For The Population 5 Years and Over  
 B16010. Educational Attainment and Employment Status By Language Spoken At Home For The Population 25 Years and Over  
**B17001. Poverty Status in the past 12 Months by Sex by Age**  
 B17001A. Poverty Status in the past 12 Months by Sex by Age (White Alone)  
 B17001B. Poverty Status in the past 12 Months by Sex by Age (Black or African American Alone)  
 B17001C. Poverty Status in the past 12 Months by Sex by Age (American Indian and Alaska Native Alone)  
 B17001D. Poverty Status in the past 12 Months by Sex by Age (Asian Alone)

Abbreviations:  
 Black - Black or Afr  
 AIAN - American Ind  
 NHPI - Native Hawa  
 SOR - Some Other f

What's this?

Add ▼

Current table selections:

B17001. Poverty Status in the past 12 Months by Sex by Age

Remove

Show Result ▶

We're ready to view the results, so click on the Show Result > button to go to the next screen which should look something like this:

**U.S. Census Bureau**  
American FactFinder

http://206.254.132.159/ Main Search Feedback FAQs Glossary Site Map Help

**Detailed Tables**

You are here: [Main](#) ▶ [Data Sets](#) ▶ [Data Sets with Detailed Tables](#) ▶ [Geography](#) ▶ [Tables](#) ▶ Results

Use the links above to change your results | Options | Print / Download | Related Items

[B17001. POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY SEX BY AGE - Universe: POPULATION FOR WHOM POVERTY STATUS IS DETERMINED](#)

Data Set: [2004 American Community Survey](#)

NOTE. Data are limited to the household population and exclude the population living in institutions, college dormitories, and other group quarters. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [Survey Methodology](#).

Newark city, New Jersey	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Total:	249,753	225,905	273,601
Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	70,073	53,115	87,031
Male:	26,762	18,517	35,007
Under 5 years	1,938	220	3,656
5 years	0	0	538
6 to 11 years	6,005	2,629	9,381
12 to 14 years	3,770	890	6,650
15 years	0	0	538
16 and 17 years	2,268	599	3,937
18 to 24 years	2,029	268	3,790
25 to 34 years	3,076	184	5,968
35 to 44 years	1,728	49	3,407
45 to 54 years	1,894	409	3,379
55 to 64 years	1,406	0	3,029
65 to 74 years	2,429	18	4,840
75 years and over	219	0	579
Female:	43,311	32,598	64,004

The results for Newark are displayed above the results for San Antonio.

There are several things you should notice here. Most importantly, the [Print / Download](#) link above table. You can save the results to a comma delimited or Excel Spreadsheet file so that you can organize the data for a graphic. You can also use the navigation links at the top (to the right of “You are here”) to go back and change any of the selections you’ve made or add additional locations to the results.

Here are the general subjects covered by the U.S. Census Decennial Census. The American Community Survey includes topics previously covered in the long form.

**100-percent characteristics (short form):** A limited number of questions were asked of every person and housing unit in the United States. Information is available on:

Age  
Hispanic or Latino origin  
Household relationship  
Race

Sex  
Tenure (whether the home is owned or rented)  
Vacancy characteristics

**Sample characteristics (long form):** Additional questions were asked of a sample of persons and housing units (generally 1 in 6 households). Data are provided on:

Population	Housing
Ancestry	Farm residence
Disability	Heating fuel
Grandparents as caregivers	Number of rooms and number of bedrooms
Income in 1999	Plumbing and kitchen facilities
Labor force status	Telephone service
Language spoken at home and ability to speak English	Units in structure
Marital status	Utilities, mortgage, taxes, insurance, and fuel costs
Migration (residence in 1995)	Value of home or monthly rent paid
Occupation, industry, and class of worker	Vehicles available
Place of birth, citizenship, and year of entry	Year moved into residence
Place of work and journey to work	Year structure built
School enrollment and educational attainment	
Veteran status	
Work status in 1999	

**If you get lost** and don’t know where to find the information you are looking for, I’ve found the **Subject A to Z** index to be very useful. You’ll find a link to it on the Census Bureau home page.

News releases, reports, data tables and radio transcripts are available on the Public Information Office’s Web page at <http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/news.html>. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau’s Public Information Office at (301) 763-3030; fax (301) 457-3670; or e-mail [pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov).

**Census Bureau Alert Mailing List:** [census-bureau-alert@lists.census.gov](mailto:census-bureau-alert@lists.census.gov)  
<http://lists.census.gov/mailman/listinfo/census-bureau-alert>

State Data Centers: [Census Home Page > Related Sites >](#)  
Direct link: <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/>

The U.S. Census Bureau partners with a network of state agencies, universities, libraries, and regional and local governments to provide easy and efficient access to U.S. Census Bureau data.