

# American Community Survey Program Updates

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2026 LED Partnership Hybrid Workshop

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# The American Community Survey

## Outline

- ACS Overview
- Changes for the 2025 ACS
- Future Changes, Testing, and Initiatives
- Data User Resources

# The American Community Survey

## The Foundation

- Premier source of detailed information about the nation's people and housing
- Samples approximately **3.5 million** addresses and about **150,000** group quarters (GQ) residents
- Covers **40+ topics** — Collects detailed information previously collected by the decennial census each decade
- Helps inform how federal funds are distributed each year; supports over **300** evidence-based federal government uses
- Data released the year after collection as 1-year and 5-year estimates
- Officially started in 2005

The image shows two screenshots of the American Community Survey interface. The top screenshot is the login page, titled "United States Census Bureau American Community Survey". It features a "Welcome! Start here to respond:" section with a link to "Respond on es.ssa.gov". Below this is a "User ID" input field and a "Login" button. To the right, there is a "Can't find the User ID?" section with instructions and an example of a User ID: "100000-00000" with a barcode below it. The bottom screenshot is the "Start Here" page, which provides instructions on how to respond (online or by mail) and includes a section titled "Your response is required by law." with a list of who to include and who to exclude. It also contains a "Number of people" field and a "Fill out pages 2-7 for everyone, including yourself, who is living or staying at this address. Then complete the rest of the form." instruction.

# The American Community Survey

## Recent Changes — New & Modified Content for the 2025 ACS



### Three new questions:

- Sewer
- Electric Vehicles
- Solar Panels



### Four modified topics:

- Household Roster
- Educational Attainment
- Health Insurance Coverage
- Labor Force

# The American Community Survey

## Sewer Question

- Requested by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration
- Data are critical for understanding the wastewater infrastructure in rural and smaller communities
- Data allow for monitoring of water quality (i.e., impacts to well water) as well as potential environmental impacts (seepage into surrounding soil)

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**Is this house, apartment, or mobile home connected to a public sewer?**

- Yes, connected to public sewer
- No, connected to septic tank
- No, use other type of system

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## Electric Vehicles Question

- Requested by the Energy Information Administration (EIA)
- Housing-unit level data will help federal agencies:
  - Project future energy needs
  - Make technological and capital changes necessary within the energy infrastructure

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**Do you or any member of this household own or lease an electric vehicle?** *Include both all-electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.*

Yes

No

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## Solar Panels Question

- Requested by the Energy Information Administration (EIA)
- Data will help EIA match energy consumption to energy production across the U.S.

**16** Does this house, apartment, or mobile home use solar panels that generate electricity?


Yes

No

# The American Community Survey

## Household Roster Question


2024


 **How many people are living or staying at this address?**

- **INCLUDE** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** yourself if you are living here for more than 2 months.
- **INCLUDE** anyone else staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less.
- **DO NOT INCLUDE** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away or someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.


**Number of people**

2025

 **How many people, including yourself, live or stay at this address?**

 **INCLUDE...**

- ✓ anyone not related to you, like roommates and other families.
- ✓ babies and children, related or unrelated, including grandchildren and foster children.
- ✓ everyone staying here now who has no other place to stay.

 **DO NOT INCLUDE** anyone living somewhere else, such as...

- X a college student living away.
- X someone in the Armed Forces on deployment.

**Number of people**

# The American Community Survey Educational Attainment Question

2024

**11** What is the highest degree or level of school this person has **COMPLETED**? Mark (X) **ONE** box. If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.

**NO SCHOOLING COMPLETED**

No schooling completed

**NURSERY OR PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 12**

Nursery school

Kindergarten

Grade 1 through 11 – Specify grade 1 – 11

12th grade – **NO DIPLOMA**

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE**

Regular high school diploma

GED or alternative credential

**COLLEGE OR SOME COLLEGE**

Some college credit, but less than 1 year of college credit

1 or more years of college credit, no degree

Associate's degree (for example: AA, AS)

Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, BS)

**AFTER BACHELOR'S DEGREE**

Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)

Professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)

Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)

2025

**11** What is the highest grade of school or degree this person has **COMPLETED**? Mark (X) **ONE** box. If currently enrolled, select the previous grade or highest degree received.

**LESS THAN GRADE 1**

Less than grade 1

**GRADE 1 THROUGH GRADE 12**

Grade 1 through 11 – Specify grade 1 – 11

12th grade – **NO DIPLOMA**

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE**

Regular high school diploma

GED or alternative credential

**COLLEGE OR SOME COLLEGE**

Some college credit, but less than 1 year of college credit

1 or more years of college credit, no degree

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Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)

# The American Community Survey

## Health Insurance Coverage Question

2024

**16** Is this person **CURRENTLY** covered by any of the following types of health insurance or health coverage plans? Mark "Yes" or "No" for EACH type of coverage in items a – h.

	Yes	No
a. Insurance through a current or former employer or union (of this person or another family member)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Insurance purchased directly from an insurance company (by this person or another family member)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Medicare, for people 65 and older, or people with certain disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Medicaid, Medical Assistance, or any kind of government-assistance plan for those with low incomes or a disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. TRICARE or other military health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. VA (enrolled for VA health care)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Indian Health Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Any other type of health insurance or health coverage plan – Specify ↴	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2025

**16** Is this person **CURRENTLY** covered by any of the following types of health insurance or health coverage plans? Do NOT include plans that cover only one type of service, such as dental, drug, or vision plans.

**YES, INSURED**

Mark (X) for all that apply.

- Insurance through a current or former employer, union, or professional association (of this person or another family member)
- Medicare, for people 65 and older, or people with certain disabilities
- Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or any kind of government-assistance plan for those with low incomes or a disability
- Insurance purchased directly from an insurance company, a broker, or a State or Federal Marketplace, such as HealthCare.gov
- Veteran’s health care (enrolled for VA)
- TRICARE or other military health care
- Indian Health Service
- Any other type of health insurance or health coverage plan – Specify ↴

**NO, UNINSURED**

- No health insurance or health coverage plan

# The American Community Survey

## Labor Force Questions

2024

**39** When did this person last work, even for a few days?

Within the past 12 months

1 to 5 years ago → SKIP to **M**

Over 5 years ago or never worked → SKIP to question 43

**40** a. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), did this person work EVERY week? Count paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service as work.

Yes → SKIP to question 41

No

b. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), how many WEEKS did this person work? Include paid time off and include weeks when the person only worked for a few hours.

Weeks

**41** During the PAST 12 MONTHS, in the WEEKS WORKED, how many hours did this person usually work each WEEK?

Usual hours worked each WEEK

2025

**39** When did this person last work for pay, even for a few days?

Within the past 12 months

1 to 5 years ago → SKIP to **M**

Over 5 years ago or never worked → SKIP to question 43

**40** a. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), did this person work EVERY week? Count paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service as work. Include all jobs for pay.

Yes → SKIP to question 41

No

b. During the PAST 12 MONTHS (52 weeks), how many WEEKS did this person work for at least one day? Include weeks when this person only worked for a few hours. Include all jobs for pay. Count paid vacation, paid sick leave, and military service as work.

Weeks

**41** During the PAST 12 MONTHS, for the weeks worked, how many HOURS did this person usually work each WEEK? Include all jobs for pay and military service.

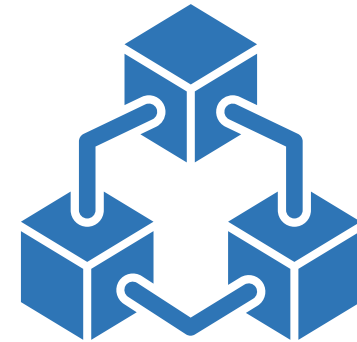
Usual hours worked each WEEK

# The American Community Survey

## Future Changes — Transformation Efforts

### **Data Ingest and Collection for the Enterprise (DICE)**

- Delivers a suite of systems that can more efficiently manage survey collection and gather existing data from external sources
- Streamlines instrument development for the ACS
- ACS transitions to DICE starting in January 2027

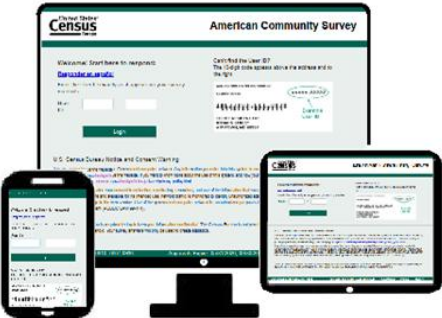


# The American Community Survey

## Future Changes – Data Collection

Planning to implement an Internet Response Option for the Puerto Rico Community Survey in 2027

**Online Response**



**Paper Questionnaire**



**Computer-Assisted Interviewing**  
In-Person and Telephone



**Self-Response**

**Nonresponse Follow-up**

# The American Community Survey

## Testing

### **Internet Instrument Response Option and Error Messaging Design Test**

- Occurred in summer 2025
- Tested whether changing the visual design of response buttons and error messages in the internet instrument can increase data quality and improve the respondent experience
- Will help inform the development of web design standards for data collection instruments throughout the Census Bureau
- Full results will be available later this year

### **Questionnaire Timing Test**

- Currently being tested
- Test whether changing the timing of when the paper questionnaire is sent can increase self-response and/or reduce data collection costs
- Evaluate the impact of including a Quick Response (QR) code directing respondents to the internet to complete the survey

# The American Community Survey

## ACS Content Review

- In preparation for the 2030 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau is mandated to submit to Congress the subjects and questions planned for the census and the American Community Survey.
- To inform these reports, we solicited feedback across the federal government regarding current uses of decennial census and ACS data.
- This process ensures that every question on the census and ACS remains necessary and legally justified.
- The *Subjects Planned for the 2030 Census Program* report will be delivered to Congress by March 31, 2027.
- The *Questions Planned for the 2030 Census Program* report will be delivered to Congress by March 31, 2028.

# The American Community Survey

## 2024 ACS Data Releases

### 2024 ACS 1-Year Release

Data Products	Release
1-Year Estimates	September 11, 2025
1-Year Supplemental Estimates	December 4, 2025
1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)	December 4, 2025

### 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Release

Data Products	Release
5-Year Estimates	January 29, 2026
5-Year Variance Replicate Estimates	January 29, 2026
5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)	March 5, 2026

# The American Community Survey

## Availability of Data Products

<b>Estimated Population of Geographic Area</b>	<b>1-Year Estimates</b>	<b>1-Year Supplemental Estimates</b>	<b>5-Year Estimates</b>
65,000 or more	X	X	X
20,000 or more		X	X
Less than 20,000			X
Typical Release Month (Occurs in the calendar year after data collection)	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>December</b>

# The American Community Survey

## Upcoming Stats in Action Webinars

Name	Date
How Cross-Survey Modeling Enhances Census Bureau Measures	May 27, 2026
Using the ACS to Get a Full Picture of Your Community	June 3, 2026
Creating ACS Maps with R	June 10, 2026
Understanding Housing Data from the ACS	June 24, 2026
Understanding Education Data from the ACS	June 25, 2026
Creating ACS Income and Poverty Estimates with SAIPE	July 22, 2026
Unlocking ACS Data: Tools for New and Experienced Users	August 12, 2026
Introduction to the ACS	August 19, 2026

# The American Community Survey

## Encouraging Response to the ACS

Resource	URL
<b>Respond to the ACS Webpage</b> <i>Learn about different ways to complete the survey and access instructions for completing the questionnaire</i>	<a href="https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/respond.html">census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/respond.html</a>
<b>Verify a Census Survey, Mailing, or Contact</b> <i>Verify a Census Bureau survey or contact by a field representative</i>	<a href="https://www.census.gov/verify">census.gov/verify</a>
<b>ACS Flyers</b> <i>Relevant information for ACS respondents</i>	<a href="https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/library/flyers.html">census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/library/flyers.html</a>

# The American Community Survey

## Stay Connected



**Share Your ACS  
Data Story**

[census.gov/acs-data-stories](https://census.gov/acs-data-stories)



**Sign Up for  
Email Updates**

[public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/signup/12426](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/signup/12426)

Thank you!

ACS Data User Support  
[acso.users.support@census.gov](mailto:acso.users.support@census.gov)

