Accessing and Using the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a demographics survey program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It regularly gathers information previously contained only in the long form of the decennial census, such as ancestry, citizenship, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration, disability, employment, and housing characteristics. These data are used by many public-sector, private-sector, and not-for-profit stakeholders to allocate funding, track shifting demographics, plan for emergencies, and learn about local communities. Sent to approximately 295,000 addresses monthly (or 3.5 million per year), it is the largest household survey that the Census Bureau administers.

The Census Bureau has provided a series of web-based videos on how to access and explore U.S. census data from the American Community Survey.

By viewing these videos, you should be able to easily access data on any metro area, city, or town in the U.S. and then you will be able to compare the data on each across communities.

These videos called **Data Gems** include the following:

**How does the Census estimate the U.S. Population**

This Data Gem breaks down how the Census Bureau estimates the Size of the U.S. Population.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2020/how-we-estimate-the-population-in-the-united-states.html>

**What are Microdata and How to access it**

Microdata are a set of untabulated records about individual people or housing units that can be used to create custom tables. In this Data Gem, we will introduce you to the basics of microdata.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2020/what-is-microdata-and-why-should-i-use-it.html>

**Understanding Census Terminology**

The Census Bureau has numerous surveys and Censuses going on at any one time! And inside of each of those programs are a number of unique terms and definitions. To help you understand those terms, we've created a plain language Glossary, where you can print and bookmark terms, or send us feedback on the site itself.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2018/definitions.html>

**How to Navigate ACS Data Files:**

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2019/navigate-data-census-gov.html>

**How to Access a Community Profile**

Learn an easy way to access social, economic, housing, and demographic statistics for your selected area or multiple areas.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2019/acs-data-profile.html>

**How to Customize and Download ACS Tables**

Discover easy tricks to customize your view, and learn how to the download the data in two different formats.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2019/customize-download-tables.html>

**How to Select Geographical Areas**

Selecting your area is one of the most important steps of every data search. Check out this data gem to learn three easy options to select geographies on [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/).

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2019/select-your-area.html>

**How to Use Census Filters:**

Learn how to use pre-selected filters to find new data tables as well as table IDs to access your favorite products.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2020/how-to-use-filters-on-data-census-gov.html>

**Data on Neighborhoods**

Accessing data for your neighborhood or service area can be challenging. But did you know that data.census.gov has a mapping feature that you can use to select your areas? By using census tracts you can select the boundaries of your area and access demographic, socioeconomic, and housing statistics about your community.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2020/how-to-access-data-for-your-neighborhood.html>

**Saving ACS Data**

In this Data Gem you will learn a few great tricks about how to save and edit your filters, data search and results when accessing data on [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov/).

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2020/saving-your-data-search-and-results.html>

**How to Print and Transfer Data Tables**

In this Data Gem you will learn a neat trick about how to transfer a data table in its original format to an excel spreadsheet. You will also learn how to print and create a .pdf file for your data table.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2020/how-to-print-and-transfer-data-tables-to-excel.html>

**How to Access Data on Race**

Discover how to find population totals and characteristics across racial groups using the advanced search on [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/).

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2019/access-race-data.html>

**How to Access Data about the Latinx Community**

Learn how to access Census Bureau data on the Latinx population.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2019/hispanic-population-data.html>

**How to Visualize ACS Data**

 Discover how to visualize the most popular statistics for your area through the data visualization tool.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2019/visualize-data.html>

**How to Use the Census Engagement Navigator:**

Explore two easy options to navigate the site.

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2018/engagement-navigator.html>