

# The U.S. Census Bureau: The leading source of quality data about the nation's people and the economy

## Poverty in America and Our Communities: Using Census Data

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# Our Statistical Programs-Overview

## Censuses:

- The **Decennial Census** is the once-a-decade population and housing count required by the U.S. Constitution
- The **Economic Census** measures the nation's economy every five years
- The **Census of Governments** provides comprehensive data about state and local governments in the nation every five years.

## Surveys:

- The **American Community Survey (ACS)** is an ongoing annual survey that shows what the U.S. population looks like and how it lives.
- **Demographic surveys** measure income, poverty, education, and many other subjects.
- **Economic surveys** are conducted monthly, quarterly, and yearly.
- **Sponsored surveys** are demographic and economic surveys, including the Current Population Survey.

## Population Estimates and Projections

- Every year, the Census Bureau publishes population estimates and demographic components of change, such as births, deaths, and migration.

# The Decennial Census Shapes America for the Next 10 Years



The U.S. Constitution (Article 1, Section 2) requires a census every 10 years to determine state representation in the U.S. Congress.

Federal funding—**more** than \$675 billion a year—is allocated based on the census.

This funding affects vital local services, including:

- Education
- Housing
- Transportation
- Health care

Census data is used by businesses, governments, and civic organizations to inform decision-making.

***An accurate and complete count is essential!***

# Redistricting Data Program

## Apportionment vs. Redistricting

What is next for the 2020 Census?

		APPORTIONMENT	REDISTRICTING
Geography	Largest	State	State
	Smallest	State	Census Block
Who is counted		Resident Population + Federally Affiliated Count Overseas	Resident Population Only
What is reported		Total Population only	Race, ethnicity, and select housing characteristics
Disclosure Avoidance		None	Differentially Private (TopDown Algorithm)

# Data Dissemination and Training



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**Contact us:**  
**Census.askdata@census.gov**  
**1-844-ASK-DATA**

# Measuring Poverty

- The official measure of poverty was established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Statistical Policy Directive 14 (May 1978) and is designed to be used by federal agencies in their statistical work.
- Poverty is measured by comparing resources (Money income) with the cost of basic needs of family or individual
- Official poverty data come from the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

# Income Sources Used to Compute Official Poverty Status Include:

- Earnings
- Unemployment compensation
- Workers' compensation
- Social Security
- Supplemental Security Income
- Public assistance
- Veterans' payments
- Survivor benefits
- Pension or retirement income
- Interest
- Dividends
- Rents
- Royalties
- Income from estates
- Trusts
- Educational assistance
- Alimony
- Child support
- Assistance from outside the household
- Other miscellaneous sources

# 2019 Thresholds

Size of family unit	Related children under 18 years								
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual):									
Under age 65.....	13,300								
Aged 65 and older.....	12,261								
Two people:									
Householder under age 65.....	17,120	17,622							
Householder aged 65 and older.....	15,453	17,555							
Three people.....	19,998	20,578	20,598						
Four people.....	26,370	26,801	25,926	26,017					
Five people.....	31,800	32,263	31,275	30,510	30,044				
Six people.....	36,576	36,721	35,965	35,239	34,161	33,522			
Seven people.....	42,085	42,348	41,442	40,811	39,635	38,262	36,757		
Eight people.....	47,069	47,485	46,630	45,881	44,818	43,470	42,066	41,709	
Nine people or more.....	56,621	56,895	56,139	55,503	54,460	53,025	51,727	51,406	49,426
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.									



# Determining Poverty Status

*Poverty Thresholds for 2019 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years*

**Compare total family/individual income with appropriate threshold for that family/individual**

**Example:**

- If the total annual family income for a family of three with one child under 18 years in 2019 was \$20,000.
- The appropriate threshold in 2019 for this type of families was \$20,578 (from the table)
- Since the total annual family income is less than the threshold, the poverty status for this family of three in 2019 was “below poverty level”.

Size of family unit	Related children under 18 years		
	None	One	Two
One person (unrelated individual):			
Under age 65.....	13,300		
Aged 65 and older.....	12,261		
Two people:			
Householder under age 65.....	17,120	17,622	
Householder aged 65 and older.....	15,453	17,555	
Three people.....	19,998	<b>20,578</b>	20,598
Four people.....	26,370	26,801	25,926
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Seven people.....	42,085	42,348	41,442
Eight people.....	47,069	47,485	46,630
Nine people or more.....	56,621	56,895	56,139

# Selected Sources of Poverty Data

<https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/data/tables.html>

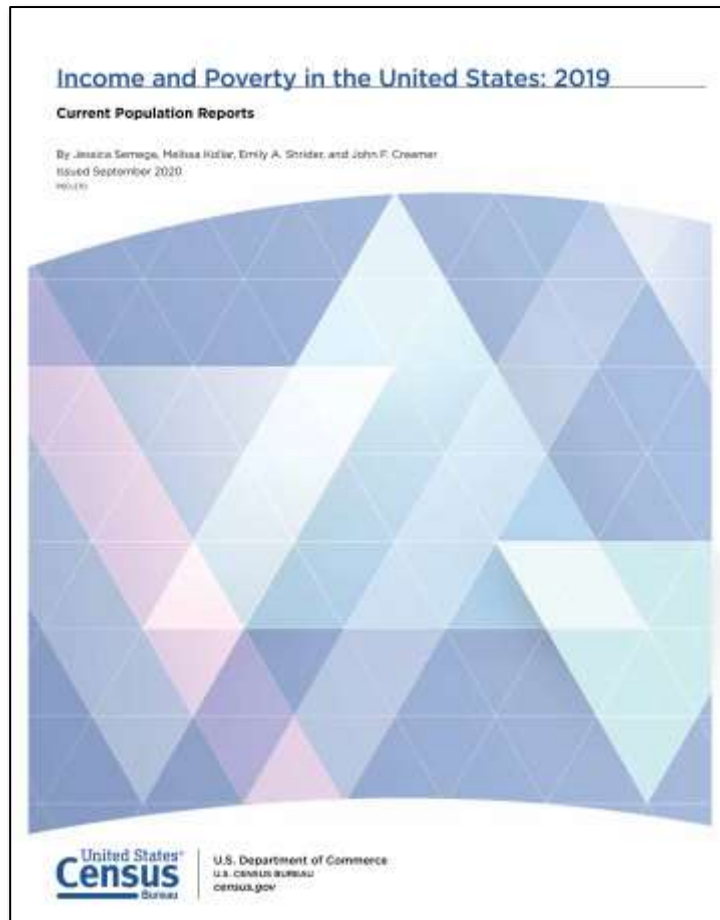
- **Current Population Survey** - Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS-ASEC) – Source of official poverty measure.
- **Decennial Census** - 2000 Census and prior was source of demographic and socio-economic sub-national data.
- **American Community Survey (ACS)** – Current source of demographic and socio-economic sub-national data.
- **Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)** – longitudinal survey.
- **Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)** – model-based annual estimates of school age poverty for every school district.
- **Supplemental Poverty Measure** – which extends the official poverty measure by using cash resources and noncash benefits and subtracts necessary expenses (such as taxes and medical expenses)

# Current Population Survey (CPS)

<https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/data/tables.html>

<https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/data/tables/cps.html>

- Produce specific socioeconomic and demographic estimates for the United States and states for **total population and selected subpopulations**.
- The Annual Social Economic Supplement (ASEC), provide timely estimates of income and health insurance, as well as official poverty estimates.
- Annual sample size is about 100,000 addresses.
- **Rich historical data**
  - For characteristics of U.S. population – since 1959
  - For state level – since 1980



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# American Community Survey (ACS)

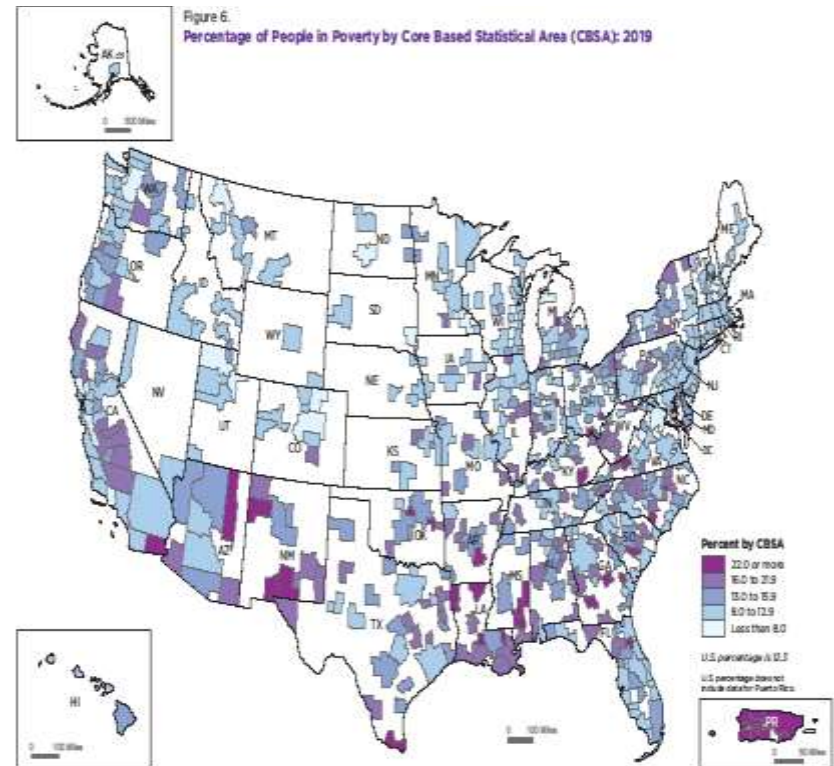
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

- The American Community Survey (ACS), is the largest and the most current nationwide survey since 2005
- The ACS is a critical element in the Census Bureau's decennial program.
  - 2010 as well as 2020 Census focused on counting the U.S. population
- The ACS is a continuous survey,
  - Each month a sample of about 290,000 housing unit addresses receive a questionnaire.
  - Nearly, 3.5 million addresses are surveyed each year.
- The ACS Collects data on various social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics covering over 40 topics

# ACS (Cont'd) – Estimates

Every year ACS produces and releases,

- 1-year estimates for geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or more.
- 1-year Supplemental Estimates (areas w/ population of 20,000+)
- The 5-year estimates provides data for all geographic areas



Note: This map is limited to CBSAs with a population of 65,000 or greater. For more information on metropolitan and micropolitan areas included, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/geography-acs/reference-materials/terms.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/geography-acs/reference-materials/terms.html). CBSAs are defined by the Office of Management and Budget as of September 2018. For more information, see [www.census.gov/acs/](http://www.census.gov/acs/).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey and 2019 Puerto Rico Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates.

# Some of Key ACS Data Products

[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html)

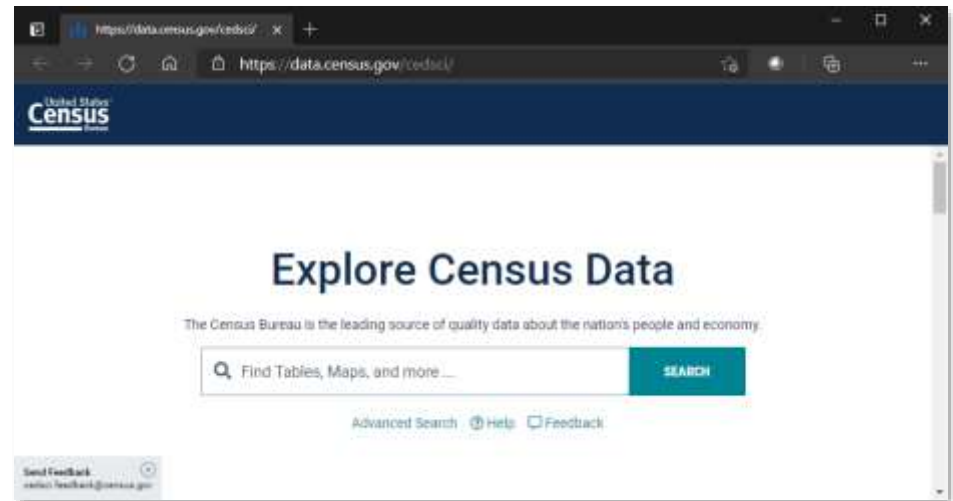
- **Data Profiles (DP)** - Provide broad estimates on Social, Economic, Housing, Demographic Characteristics –
- **Comparison Profiles (CP)** - Provide statistical significance tests to show the change in the year-to-year estimates are statistically significant
- **Selected population profiles (SPP)**
- **Subject Tables (S)** - Provides similar to data profiles but are classified by subject area
- **Detailed Tables** - Provide access to the most detailed ACS data and crosstabulations of ACS variables
- **Narrative Profiles** - Summarize the information in the data profiles using concise, nontechnical text.
- **Data Tools** - Quickfacts, My congressional District, and my tribal area, and Microdata Access Tool (MDAT)

# How to Find ACS Data

- Type in <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/> (you will see the screen show here)

**OR**

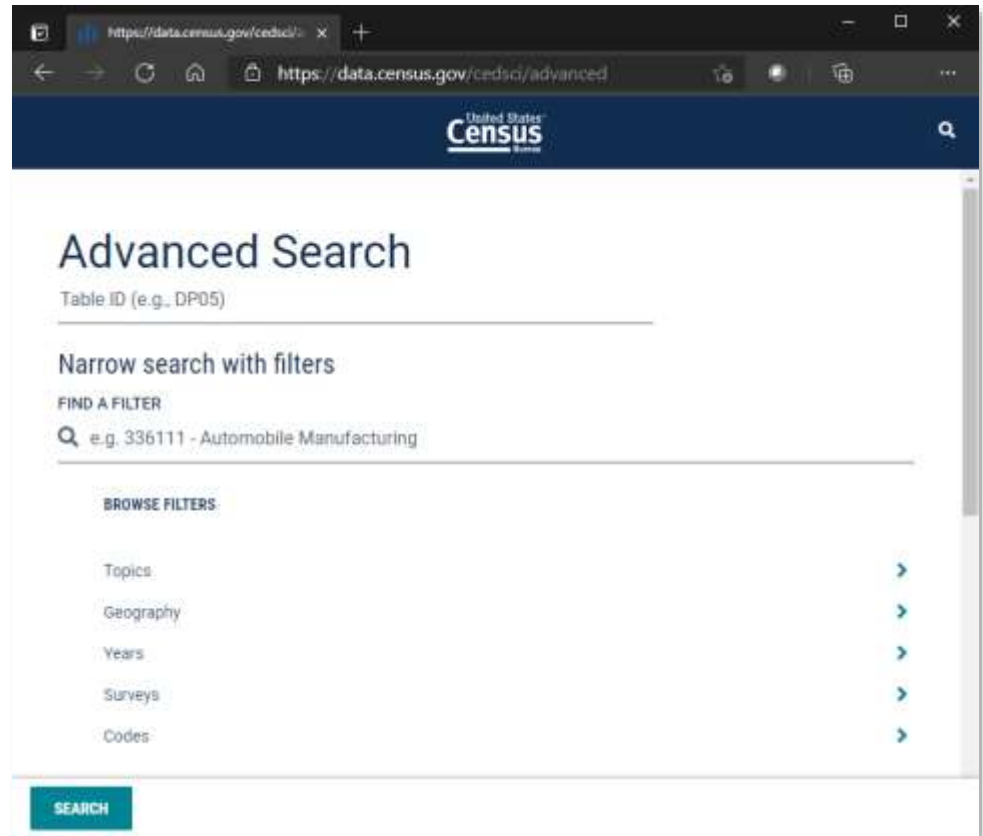
- From main Census Web page ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)):
  - Click on '**EXPLORE DATA**'
  - Select '**Explore Data Main**'
- Click on '**GO TO DATA.CENSUS.GOV**' (you will see the screen show here)
- Click on '**Advanced Search**'



# How to Find ACS Data (Cont'd)

From '**Advanced Search**'

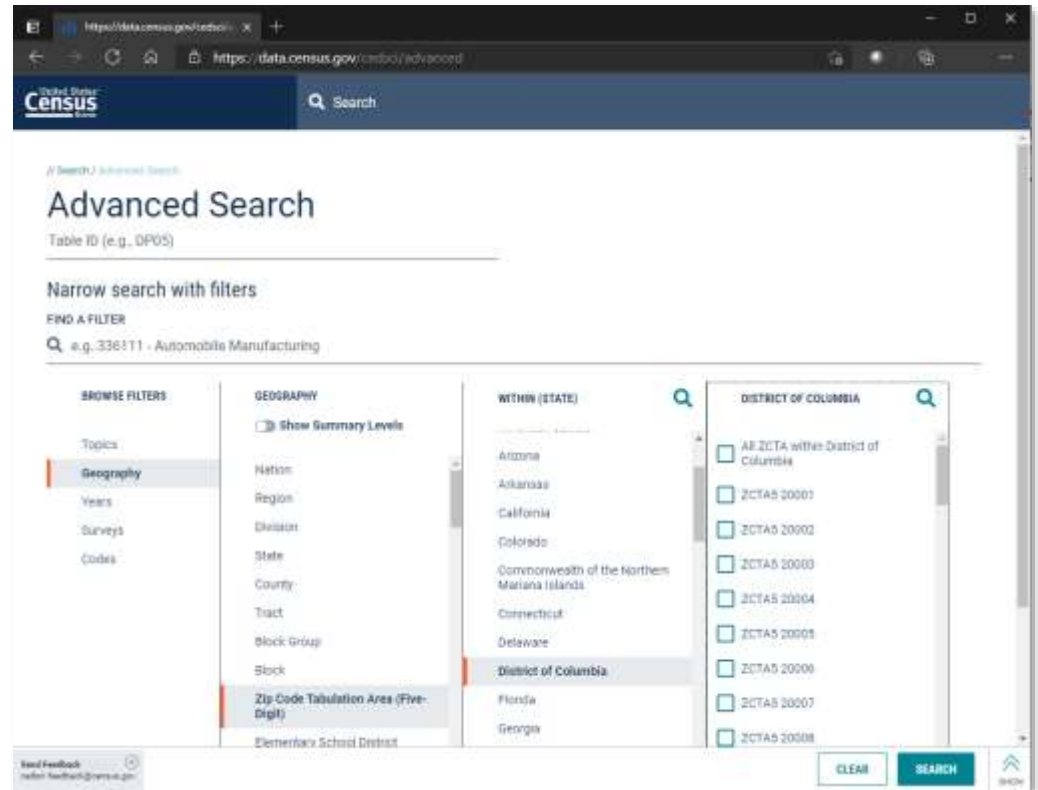
- Click on '**Topics**' to choose the subject
- Click on '**Geography**' to choose geographic area
- Click on '**Years**' to choose data year
- then click '**SEARCH**'





# How to Find ACS Data (Cont'd)

- When you click '**Geography**', a list of all available choices will show
- Choose '**Zip Code Tabulation..**' if you want data by zip code,
- Select a specific '**State**'
  - For Poverty data we recommend the subject table '**S1701**'
    - Type in S1701 in the shaded search bar above . Or you need to choose a subject area from the list of 'TOPICS'
- Click '**Search**' at the bottom corner of the screen.



# How to Find ACS Data (Cont'd)

https://data.census.gov/cedsci/...  
 https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=0400000U509.860000&tid=ACSS15Y2019.S1701&hidePreview=true

United States Census Bureau  
 s1701

# Search / Tables / S1701

**POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**  
 Survey/Program: American Community Survey TableID: S1701 Product: 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Notes Selections Geo Years Topics Surveys Codes Filter Margin of Error Restore Excel Download More Data Map

Label	ZCTAS 06001				ZCTAS 06002			
	Total	Below poverty level		Percent below poverty level		Total	Below	
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error
Population for whom poverty status is determined...	16,320	±218	630	±261	3.4%	±1.4	20,628	±158
<b>AGE</b>								
Under 18 years	4,526	±281	129	±88	2.9%	±1.3	3,024	±272
Under 5 years	1,081	±241	10	±16	0.9%	±1.5	703	±225
5 to 17 years	3,445	±303	119	±84	3.5%	±2.4	2,321	±310
Related children of householder under ...	4,486	±288	90	±92	2.2%	±2.0	3,024	±272
18 to 64 years	10,066	±304	314	±149	3.1%	±1.3	12,280	±344
18 to 34 years	1,935	±256	96	±57	5.0%	±3.0	3,625	±379
35 to 64 years	8,131	±282	218	±141	2.7%	±1.7	8,658	±391
65 years and over	5,174	±261	225	±122	4.3%	±2.4	7,179	±540
65 years and over	3,732	±261	187	±117	5.0%	±3.0	5,321	±333
<b>SEX</b>								
Male	8,725	±295	262	±133	3.0%	±1.5	9,428	±439
Female	6,604	±312	368	±154	3.0%	±1.6	11,200	±425

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# Observations on Current Poverty Measure

- The current poverty methodology is consistent over the years
- Federal and State governments often use these estimates to allocate funds to local communities

However...

The official poverty measure *does not* account for:

- Provision of in-kind benefits (SNAP, LIHEAP, WIC)
- Necessary expenses (taxes, health care, work)
- Changes in family or household structure
- Higher standards and levels of living since 1965
- Geographic price differences among regions

# Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)

[www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/supplemental-poverty-measure.html](http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/supplemental-poverty-measure.html)

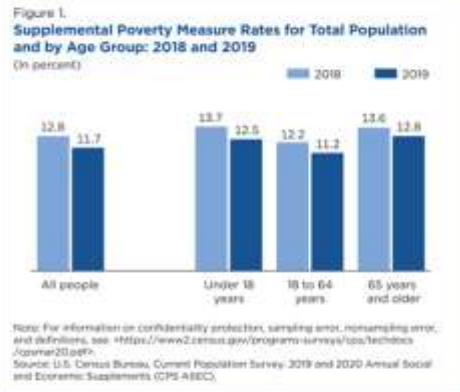
## The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2019

### Current Population Reports

By Liana Fox  
PEO-272  
September 2020

#### INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the first official U.S. poverty estimates, researchers and policymakers have continued to discuss the best approach to measure income and poverty in the United States. Beginning in 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau began publishing the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which extends the official poverty measure by taking account of many of the government programs designed to assist low-income families and individuals that are not included in the official poverty measure. The SPM is produced with the support of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and this is the tenth in the series. This report presents estimates of the prevalence of poverty in the United States using the official measure and the SPM based on information collected in 2020 and earlier Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplements (CPS ASEC). The data collection period for the 2020 CPS ASEC coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, the



associated public health response, and the end of the economic expansion. For details on the impact of COVID-19 on CPS ASEC data collection, see the text box "The Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on the CPS ASEC."

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2019, the overall SPM rate was 11.7 percent. This was 1.0 percentage point lower than the 2018 SPM rate of 12.8 (Figure 1).

<sup>1</sup> Calculated differences have and throughout this report may differ due to rounding.

- In 2009, the Office of Management and Budget formed an Interagency Technical Working Group (ITWG) on Developing a Supplemental Poverty Measure.
- ITWG recommended the Census Bureau together with the Bureau of Labor Statistics develop a SPM to improve the understanding of the economic well-being of American families
- The SPM will not replace the official poverty measure
- Will not be used for resource allocation or program eligibility

# Poverty Measure Concepts

## Official - SPM

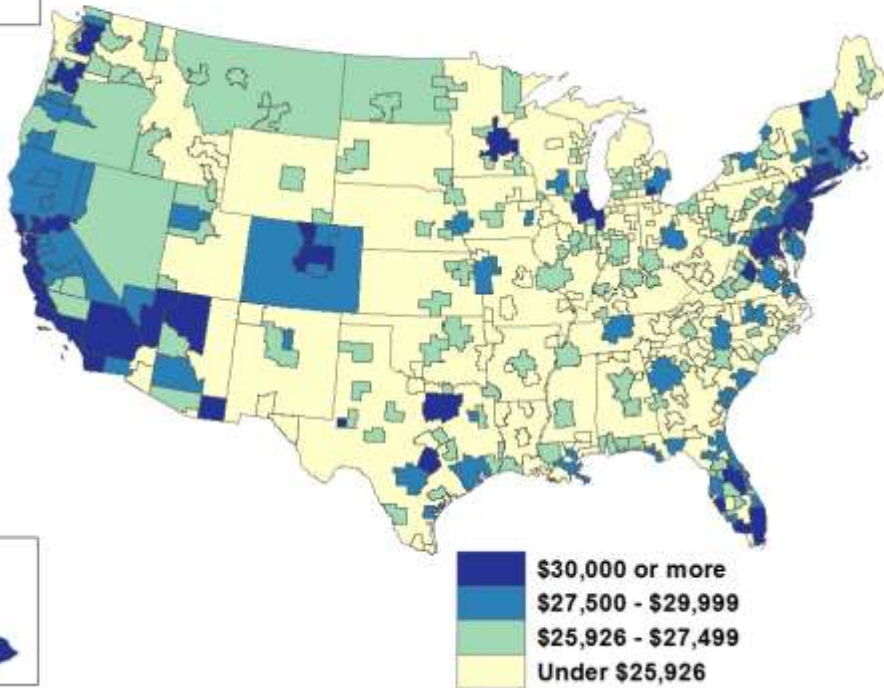
	Official Poverty Measure	Supplemental Poverty Measure
Measurement Units	Families (individuals related by birth, marriage or adoption) or unrelated individuals	Resource units (official family definition plus any co-resident unrelated children, foster children, and unmarried partners and their relatives) or unrelated individuals (not otherwise included in the family definition)
Poverty Threshold	Three times the cost of a minimum food diet in 1963	Based on expenditures of food, clothing, shelter and utilities (FCSU)
Threshold Adjustments	Vary by family size, composition and age of householder	Vary by family size, composition and tenure, with geographic adjustments for differences in housing costs
Updating Thresholds	Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers: all items	Five-year moving average of expenditures on FCSU
Resource Measure	Gross before-tax cash income	Sum of cash income, plus noncash benefits that resource units can use to meet their FCSU needs, minus taxes (or plus tax credits), minus work expenses, medical expenses, and child support paid to another household

# Example of Poverty Threshold for SPM

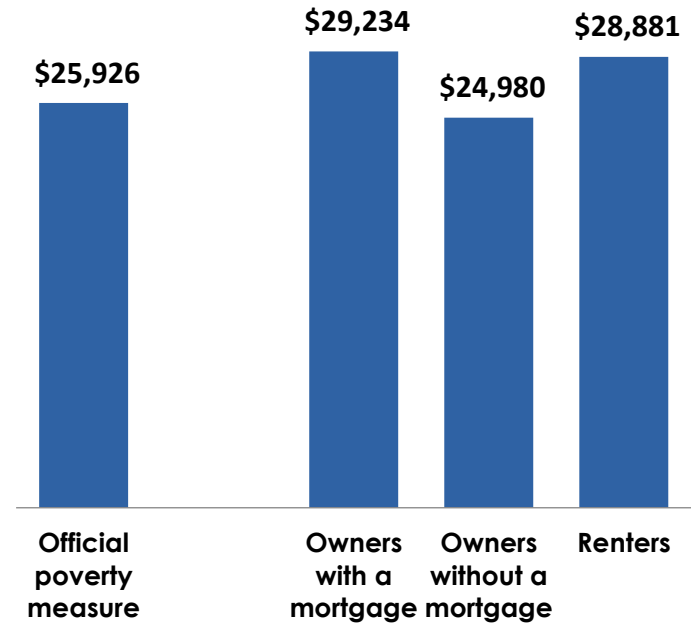
[www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/supplemental-poverty-measure.html](http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/supplemental-poverty-measure.html)



Supplemental Poverty Measure Thresholds for Renters: 2019



Supplemental Poverty Measure Thresholds for Households with 2 Adults and 2 Children, 2019



Source: Official Poverty Thresholds, <[www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html](http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html)>, Supplemental Poverty Measure Thresholds, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), <<https://stats.bls.gov/pir/spmhome.htm>>, Geographic adjustments based on housing costs from the American Community Survey 2014-2018.

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# Community Resilience Estimates (CRE)

<https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/community-resilience-estimates.html>

- **Community resilience** is a measure of the capacity of individuals and households within a community to absorb, endure and recover from the external stresses of the impacts of a disaster.
- Research shows that resilience can be predicted by individual and household characteristics.

# How CRE is measured

<https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/community-resilience-estimates.html>

- The Community Resilience is measured using individual risk flags
- Risk flags are assigned to individuals in the ACS microdata.
- The flags are cumulative, with up to 11 risk categories.
- Individuals are then grouped by their number of risk factors.
- Direct estimation methods are used to produce weighted area-level tabulations for each risk group.
- These tabulations (and standard errors) serve as the direct estimate for the small area model.



# Community Resilience (Cont'd)

**Universe:** Total population except prisons and dorms

## Individual Flags –from ACS

Risk flags are assigned to individuals:

- Aged 65 and above.
- In households with an Income-to-Poverty Ratio less than 130.
- Living in single, or zero, caregiver households.
- Living in households with a communication barrier (education and language).
- Who live in a household with no employed persons.
- With either physical or mental disability or serious constraint to significant life activity.
- Living in a household with more than 0.75 persons per room.
- Or who live in a tract where more than 75% of the population reside in a block denser than 4,000 people per square mile.

## Flagging for Health Risks – from NHIS

- Publicly available tables from the NHIS are utilized for respiratory disease, heart disease, and diabetes.
- Totals and rates of incidence of the condition by age, sex, race / Hispanic origin and region are used to estimate incidence rates by detailed demographic table.

# How CRE is measured

<https://uscensus.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opstdashboard/index.html#/f8fc348e4c99498baf18af09d4401553>



# Household Pulse Survey

## Measuring Social and Economic Impacts during the Coronavirus Pandemic

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html>

- The Census Bureau is the designated federal Statistical agency conducting the survey
- It is designed in collaboration with
  - Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
  - Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS)
  - The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
  - The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
  - The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)
  - The Social Security Administration (SSA); and
  - The USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)

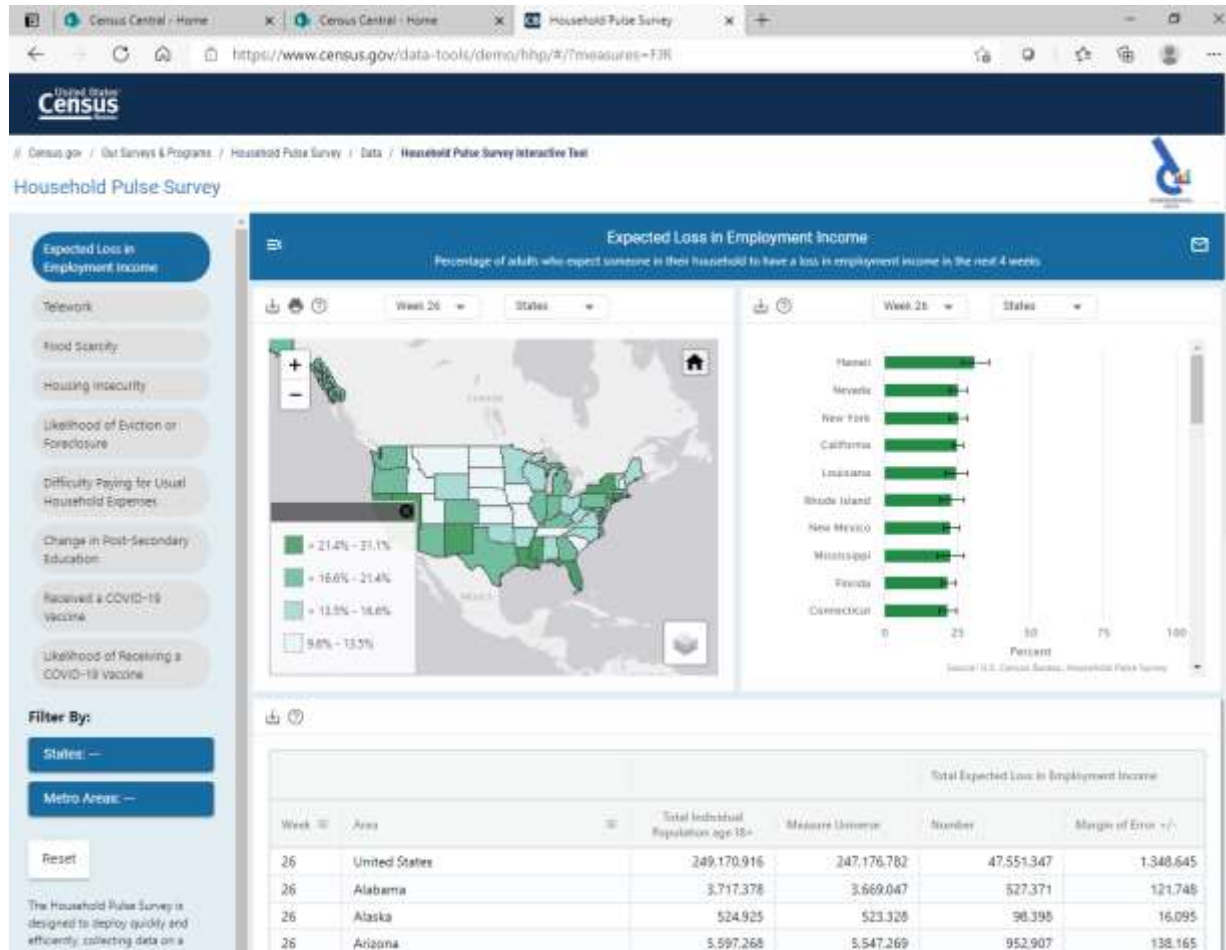
# Household Pulse Survey – Cont'd

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html>

- The survey is a 20-minute online survey studying how the impact of the pandemic on household across the country
- It asks questions about how
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Food security
  - Health
  - Housing
  - Social security benefits,
  - Household spending
  - Consumer spending associated with stimulus payments
  - Intentions to receive COVID-19 vaccination, and
  - Transportation have been affected

# Household Pulse Survey – Cont'd

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html>



# Contact Information

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**THANK YOU!**