



Attachment H-1

Simple Explanation, FAQs

When is it best to use American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year, 3-year, or 5-year estimates?

The primary consideration is population size:

- 1-year estimates are available for areas with populations of 65,000 or more
- 1-year supplemental estimates are available for areas with populations of 20,000 or more
- 3-year estimates are no longer produced but are available for 2011-2013 and earlier, for populations of 20,000 or more
- 5-year estimates are available for all areas

You must also think about the balance between currency and sample size/data quality. The 1-year estimates are more current than the 5-year estimates. However, the 5-year estimates have a larger sample size and are therefore usually more precise than the 1-year estimates. The increased precision of a 5-year estimate may be particularly important if you are studying a small area or a small population subgroup.

For more detailed information, visit [When to use 1-year, 3-year, or 5-year estimates](#) on the American Community Survey (ACS) website.

- ACS 3-year estimates have been discontinued. The 2005-2007, 2006-2008, 2007-2009, 2008-2010, 2009-2011, 2010-2012 and 2011-2013 ACS 3-year estimates will remain available to data users, but no new 3-year estimates will be produced. Every community in the nation will continue to receive a detailed statistical portrait of its social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics through 1-year and 5-year ACS products.
- ACS 1-year 2014 Supplemental Estimates consist of 58 detailed tables tabulated on the 1-year microdata for geographies with populations of 20,000 or more. These supplemental estimates were released on American FactFinder (AFF) and the API on July 21, 2016, and are available for the same geographic summary levels as those in the ACS 1-year dataset.

What American Community Survey (ACS) estimates are available for my area? When will they be available?

New American Community Survey (ACS) estimates are released every year. The type of estimates available varies depending on the population of an area.

- 1-year estimates (based on data collected in the previous calendar year) are published for geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or more.
- 1-year supplemental estimates (based on data collected in the previous calendar year) are published for geographic areas with a population of 20,000 or more.
- 3-year estimates (based on data collected from the previous three calendar years), are no longer produced but are available 2011-2013 and earlier for areas with a population of 20,000 or more.
- 5-year estimates (based on data collected from the previous five calendar years), are available for areas of all sizes, down to the block group level.

Learn more about [When to use 1-year, 3-year, or 5-year estimates](#) on the ACS website. You can also learn more about the specific [Geographic Areas Published](#) on the ACS website.

Population Size of Area	Data Product	Data Release In:		
		2013	2014	2015
65,000+	1-Year Estimates	2012	2013	2014
20,000+	1-Year Supplemental Estimates	n/a	n/a	2014
20,000+	3-Year Estimates	2010-2012	2011-2013	n/a
Areas as small as Census Tracts and Block Groups	5-Year Estimates	2008-2012	2009-2013	2010-2014

ACS data products are generally released the year after they are collected. For example, data collected in 2009 was released in 2010. As soon as specific release dates are set, they are posted on the [Data Releases](#) page. We will also notify everyone who has registered to receive ACS [email updates](#) as soon as release dates are announced.

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