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American Community Survey

2003 Subject Definitions

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Housing Variables

Contact List: To obtain additional information on these and other American Community Survey subjects, see the list of Census 2000/2010 Contacts on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/contacts/www/c-census2000.html>.

Historical Census Comparability: For additional information about the data in previous decennial censuses, see <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf>, Appendix B.

Acreage

The data on acreage was obtained from questionnaire Item 4 in the 2003 American Community Survey. This question was asked at occupied and vacant one-family houses and mobile homes. The data for vacant units are obtained by asking a neighbor, real estate agent, building manager, or anyone else who had knowledge of the vacant unit in question.

This question determines a range of acres on which the house or mobile home is located. A major purpose for this item is to exclude owner-occupied and renter-occupied one-family houses on 10 or more acres from the specified owner- and renter-occupied universes for value and rent tabulations. Another major purpose for this item, in conjunction with questionnaire housing Item 5 on agricultural sales, is to identify farm units. The land may consist of more than one tract or plot. These tracts or plots are usually adjoining; however, they may be separated by a road, creek, another piece of land, etc.

Comparability – The American Community Survey question about acres included response categories that combine two questions from the 1990 decennial census “Is this house on 10 or more acres” and “Is this house on less than one acre” into one question. The 1999-2003 American Community Survey questions were the same as the 2000 decennial census questions.

Agricultural Sales

Data on the sales of agricultural crops were obtained from questionnaire Item 5 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at occupied one-family houses and mobile homes located on lots of 1 acre or more. Data for this item exclude units on lots of less than 1 acre, units located in structures containing two or more units, and all vacant units. This item refers to the total amount (before taxes and expenses) received in the 12 months prior to the interview, from the sale of crops, vegetables, fruits, nuts, livestock and livestock

products, and nursery and forest products, produced on “this property.” Respondents new to a unit were to estimate total agricultural sales from the 12 months prior to the interview even if some portion of the sales had been made by previous occupants of the unit.

This item is used mainly to classify housing units as farm or nonfarm residences, not to provide detailed information on the sale of agricultural products. Detailed information on the sale of agricultural products is provided by the Census of Agriculture conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture/National Agricultural Statistics Service (see <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/>).

Comparability – On the 1996-1998 American Community Survey questionnaire, there were just two response categories to indicate whether or not the amount of sales was over \$1,000. On the 1999-2003 American Community Survey questionnaire, and on the 1990 and 2000 decennial census questionnaires, the item included a series of response categories for the amount of the agricultural sales.

Bedrooms

The data on bedrooms were obtained from questionnaire Item 8 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at both occupied and vacant housing units. The number of bedrooms is the count of rooms designed to be used as bedrooms; that is, the number of rooms that would be listed as bedrooms if the house, apartment, or mobile home were on the market for sale or for rent. Included are all rooms intended to be used as bedrooms even if they currently are being used for some other purpose. A housing unit consisting of only one room, such as a one-room efficiency apartment, is classified, by definition, as having no bedroom.

Comparability – The 1990 and 2000 decennial census item, and the 1999-2003 American Community Survey item provided pre-coded response categories. The 1996-1998 American Community Survey item provided a response category for ‘None’ and space for the respondent to enter a number.

Business on Property

The data for business on property were obtained from questionnaire Item 6 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at occupied and vacant one-family houses and mobile homes. This question is used to exclude owner-occupied one-family houses with business or medical offices on the property from certain statistics on financial characteristics.

A business must be easily recognizable from the outside. It usually will have a separate outside entrance and have the appearance of a business, such as a grocery store, restaurant, or barbershop. It may be either attached to the house or mobile home or be located elsewhere on the property. Those housing units in which a room is used for business or professional

purposes and have no recognizable alterations to the outside are not considered to have a business. Medical offices are considered businesses for tabulation purposes.

Comparability – The American Community Survey and the 1990 and 2000 decennial census items were the same.

Condominium Status & Fee

The data on condominium housing units were obtained from questionnaire Item 16 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at both occupied and vacant housing units.

Condominium Status – Condominium is a type of ownership that enables a person to own an apartment or house in a development of similarly owned units and to hold a common or joint ownership in some or all of the common areas and facilities such as land, roof, hallways, entrances, elevators, swimming pool, etc. Condominiums may be single-family houses as well as units in apartment buildings. A unit need not be occupied by the owner to be counted as a condominium. However, in the tabulations, the count of condominiums is provided only for owner-occupied condominiums. A unit classified as “mobile home or trailer” or “Boat, RV, van, etc.” cannot be a condominium unit.

Condominium Fee – A condominium fee normally is charged monthly to the owners of the individual condominium units by the condominium owners association to cover operating, maintenance, administrative, and improvement costs of the common property (grounds, halls, lobby, parking areas, laundry rooms, swimming pool, etc.). The costs for utilities and/or fuels may be included in the condominium fee if the units do not have separate meters.

Data on condominium fees may include real estate tax and/or insurance payments for the common property, but do not include real estate taxes or fire, hazard, and flood insurance reported in Questions 20 and 21 (in the 2003 American Community Survey) for the individual unit.

Amounts reported were the regular monthly payment, even if paid by someone outside the household or remain unpaid. Costs were estimated as closely as possible when exact costs were not known.

The data from this item were added to payments for mortgages (both first, second, home equity loans, and other junior mortgages); real estate taxes; fire hazard, and flood insurance payments; and utilities and fuels to derive “Selected Monthly Owner Costs” and “Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income” for condominium owners.

Comparability – The 1990 decennial census questionnaire asked condominium status as a separate question. The 1996-2003 American Community Survey included the question on condominium status with one that asked for condominium fees. The 2000 decennial census questionnaire did not have a specific question asking about condominium status.

Contract Rent

The data on contract rent (also referred to as “rent asked” for vacant units) were obtained from questionnaire Item 18 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at occupied housing units that were rented for cash rent and vacant housing units that were for rent at the time of enumeration.

Housing units that are renter occupied without payment of cash rent are shown separately as “No cash rent.” The unit may be owned by friends or relatives who live elsewhere and who allow occupancy without charge. Rent-free houses or apartments may be provided to compensate caretakers, ministers, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, or others.

Contract rent is the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. For vacant units, it is the monthly rent asked for the rental unit at the time of enumeration.

If the contract rent includes rent for a business unit or for living quarters occupied by another household, only that part of the rent estimated to be for the respondent's unit was included. Excluded was any rent paid for additional units or for business premises.

If a renter pays rent to the owner of a condominium or cooperative, and the condominium fee or cooperative carrying charge also is paid by the renter to the owner, the condominium fee or carrying charge was included as rent.

If a renter receives payments from lodgers or roomers who are listed as members of the household, the rent without deduction for any payments received from the lodgers or roomers was to be reported. The respondent was to report the rent agreed to or contracted for even if paid by someone else such as friends or relatives living elsewhere, a church or welfare agency, or the government through subsidies or vouchers.

In the tabulations, contract rent is only presented for specified renter-occupied units paying cash rent. Specified renter-occupied units exclude one-family houses on 10 or more acres. (For more information on rent, see “gross rent.”)

Specified Renter-Occupied Units – These units (or specified vacant-for-rent units) are renter-occupied (or vacant-for-rent) units that exclude one-family houses on 10 or more acres.

Median contract rent – The median divides the rent distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median contract rent and one-half above the median. Median contract rent is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) In computing median contract rent, units reported as “No cash rent” are excluded. Median rent calculations are rounded to the nearest whole dollar. (For more information on medians and quartiles, see “Derived Measures.”)

Aggregate contract rent – Aggregate contract rent is calculated by adding all of the contract rents for occupied housing units in an area. (For more information, see “Aggregate” under “Derived Measures.”)

Aggregate rent asked – Aggregate rent asked is calculated by adding all of the rents for vacant-for-rent housing units in an area. (For more information, see “Aggregate” under “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – The 1990 decennial census questionnaire provided pre-coded response categories ranging from “Less than \$80” to “\$1,000 or more.” The 1996-2003 American Community Survey questionnaires and the 2000 decennial census questionnaire provided a space for the respondent to enter a dollar amount.

Food Stamps

The data on Food Stamps were obtained from housing Item 15 in the 2003 American Community Survey, housing Item 16 in the 1999-2002 American Community Survey, and questionnaire Item H21 in the 1996-1998 American Community Survey. The Food Stamp Act of 1977 defines this federally funded program as one intended to “permit low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet” (from title XIII of Public Law 95-113, The Food Stamp Act of 1977, declaration of policy). Food purchasing power is increased by providing eligible households with coupons that can be used to purchase food. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Food Stamp Program through state and local welfare offices. The Food Stamp Program is the major national income support program to which all low-income and low-resource households, regardless of household characteristics, are eligible.

Comparability – The questions on participation in the Food Stamp Program were designed to identify households in which one or more of the current members received food stamps during the past 12 months. Once a food stamp household was identified, a question was asked about the total value of all food stamps received for the household during that 12-month period. This question was not asked in the 1990 or 2000 decennial censuses.

Gross Rent

Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid for by the renter (or paid for the renter by someone else). Gross rent is intended to eliminate differentials that result from varying practices with respect to the inclusion of utilities and fuels as part of the rental payment. The estimated costs of water and sewer, and fuels are reported on a 12-month basis but are converted to monthly figures for the tabulations. Renter units occupied without payment of cash rent are shown separately as “No cash rent” in the tabulations.

Median Gross Rent – Median gross rent divides the gross rent distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median gross rent and one-half above the median. Median gross rent is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) Median gross rent is rounded to the nearest whole dollar. (For more information on medians, see “Derived Measures.”)

Aggregate Gross Rent – Aggregate gross rent is calculated by adding together all the gross rents for all specified housing units in an area. (For more information, see “Aggregate” under “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census question. The yearly cost of electricity and gas was collected in the 1990 decennial census, while the American Community Survey collected the monthly cost for these two utilities. In the 1990 decennial census, only the yearly cost of water was collected. In the 2000 decennial census, the yearly cost of water and sewer were collected. The American Community Survey collected the 12-month cost of water and sewer.

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

Gross rent as a percentage of household income is a computed ratio of monthly gross rent to monthly household income (total household income divided by 12). The ratio is computed separately for each unit and is rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Units for which no cash rent is paid and units occupied by households that reported no income or a net loss comprise the category “Not computed.”

Median gross rent as a percentage of household income. This measure divides the gross rent as a percentage of household income distribution into two equal parts, one-half of the cases falling below the median gross rent as a percentage of household income and one-half above the median. Median gross rent as a percentage of household income is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) Median gross rent as a percentage of household income is rounded to the nearest tenth. (For more information on medians, see “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – Income in the American Community Survey is for the past 12 months as opposed to a single reference year.

Homeowner Vacancy Rate

See [Vacancy Status](#)

House Heating Fuel

The data on house heating fuel were obtained from questionnaire Item 13 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The item was asked at occupied housing units. The data show the type of fuel used most to heat the house, apartment, or mobile home.

Utility gas. This category includes gas piped through underground pipes from a central system to serve the neighborhood.

Bottled, tank, or LP gas. This category includes liquid propane gas stored in bottles or tanks that are refilled or exchanged when empty.

Electricity. Electricity is generally supplied by means of above or underground electric power lines.

Fuel oil, kerosene, etc. This category includes fuel oil, kerosene, gasoline, alcohol, and other combustible liquids.

Coal or coke. This category includes coal or coke that is usually distributed by truck.

Wood. This category includes purchased wood, wood cut by household members on their property or elsewhere, driftwood, sawmill or construction scraps, or the like.

Solar energy. This category includes heat provided by sunlight that is collected, stored, and actively distributed to most of the rooms.

Other fuel. This category includes all other fuels not specified elsewhere.

No fuel used. This category includes units that do not use any fuel or that do not have heating equipment.

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey items were the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census items.

Household Size

This item is based on the count of people in occupied housing units. All people occupying the housing unit are counted, including the householder, occupants related to the householder, and lodgers, roomers, boarders, and so forth.

For products based on population data, “household size” is the number of people in households. The sample count of “occupied housing units” may not match the sample count

of “households.” Consequently, the household size measures derived from housing and population-based data also may differ.

Average household size of occupied unit – A measure obtained by dividing the number of people living in occupied housing units by the total number of occupied housing units. This measure is rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Average household size of owner-occupied unit – A measure obtained by dividing the number of people living in owner-occupied housing units by the total number of owner-occupied housing units. This measure is rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Average household size of renter-occupied unit – A measure obtained by dividing the number of people living in renter-occupied housing units by the total number of renter-occupied housing units. This measure is rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Housing Units

See [Living Quarters](#)

Insurance for Fire, Hazard, and Flood

The data on fire, hazard, and flood insurance were obtained from questionnaire Item 21 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked of owner-occupied units. The statistics for this item refer to the annual premium for fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property (land and buildings); that is, policies that protect the property and its contents against loss due to damage by fire, lightning, winds, hail, flood, explosion, and so on.

Liability policies are included only if they are paid with the fire, hazard, and flood insurance premiums and the amounts for fire, hazard, and flood cannot be separated. Premiums are reported even if they have not been paid or are paid by someone outside the household. When premiums are paid on other than a yearly basis, the premiums are converted to a yearly basis.

The payment for fire, hazard, and flood insurance is added to payments for real estate taxes, utilities, fuels, and mortgages (both first, second, home equity loans, and other junior mortgages) to derive “Selected Monthly Owner Costs” and “Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income.”

A separate question (22d in the 2003 American Community Survey) determines whether insurance premiums are included in the mortgage payment to the lender(s). This makes it possible to avoid counting these premiums twice in the computations.

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census question.

Kitchen Facilities

Data on kitchen facilities were obtained from questionnaire Item 10 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at both occupied and vacant housing units. A unit has complete kitchen facilities when it has all three of the following facilities: (1) a sink with piped water, (2) a range **or** cook top and oven, and (3) a refrigerator. All kitchen facilities must be located in the house, apartment, or mobile home, but they need not be in the same room. A housing unit having only a microwave or portable heating equipment such as a hot plate or camping stove should not be considered as having complete kitchen facilities. An icebox is not considered to be a refrigerator.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 American Community Survey question differed from the question in the 1990 decennial census in that the decennial question asked whether the respondent had complete kitchen facilities. The three facilities had to be in the same structure. The American Community Survey question asked whether the house or apartment had complete kitchen facilities, requiring that the three facilities all be in the same unit. The 1999-2003 American Community Survey question was similar to the 2000 decennial census question.

Living Quarters

Living quarters are classified as either housing units or group quarters. Living quarters are usually found in structures intended for residential use, but also may be found in structures intended for nonresidential use as well as in places such as tents, vans, and emergency and transitional shelters.

Housing unit. A housing unit may be a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms or a single room that is occupied (or, if vacant, intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall. For vacant units, the criteria of separateness and direct access are applied to the intended occupants whenever possible. If that information cannot be obtained, the criteria are applied to the previous occupants.

Both occupied and vacant housing units are included in the housing unit inventory. Boats, recreational vehicles (RVs), vans, tents, railroad cars, and the like are included only if they are occupied as someone's current place of residence. Vacant mobile homes are included provided they are intended for occupancy on the site where they stand. Vacant mobile homes on dealers' sales lots, at the factory, or in storage yards are excluded from the housing inventory. Also excluded from the housing inventory are quarters being used entirely for

nonresidential purposes, such as a store or an office, or quarters used for the storage of business supplies or inventory, machinery, or agricultural products.

Occupied Housing Unit – A housing unit is classified as occupied if it is the current place of residence of the person or group of people living in it at the time of enumeration, or if the occupants are only temporarily absent from the residence for two months or less; that is, away on vacation or a business trip. If all the people staying in the unit at the time of the interview are staying there for two months or less, the unit is considered to be temporarily occupied, and classified as “vacant.” The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated people who share living quarters.

Occupied rooms or suites of rooms in hotel, motels, and similar places are classified as housing units only when occupied by permanent residents, that is, people who consider the hotel as their current place of residence or have no current place of residence elsewhere. If any of the occupants in rooming or boarding houses, congregate housing, or continuing care facilities live separately from others in the building and have direct access, their quarters are classified as separate housing units.

Vacant Housing Unit – A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of enumeration, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent for two months or less. Units occupied at the time of enumeration entirely by persons who are staying two months or less and who have a more permanent residence elsewhere are considered to be temporarily occupied, and are classified as “vacant”.

New units not yet occupied are classified as vacant housing units if construction has reached a point where all exterior windows and doors are installed and final usable floors are in place. Vacant units are excluded from the housing inventory if they are open to the elements; that is, the roof, walls, windows, and/or doors no longer protect the interior from the elements. Also, excluded are vacant units with a sign that they are condemned or they are to be demolished.

Meals Included in Rent

The data on meals included in the rent were obtained from questionnaire Item 18b in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked of occupied housing units that were rented for cash rent and vacant housing units that were for rent at the time of enumeration.

The statistics on meals included in rent are presented for specified renter-occupied and specified vacant-for-rent units. Specified renter-occupied and specified vacant-for-rent units exclude one-family houses on 10 or more acres. (For more information, see the discussion on specified units under “Tenure.”)

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census question.

Mobile Home Costs

The data on mobile home costs were obtained from questionnaire Item 24 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at owner-occupied mobile homes.

These data include the total yearly costs for personal property taxes, land or site rent, registration fees, and license fees on all owner-occupied mobile homes. The instructions are to not include real estate taxes already reported in question 20 in the 2003 American Community Survey.

Costs are estimated as closely as possible when exact costs are not known. Amounts are the total for an entire 12-month billing period, even if they are paid by someone outside the household or remain unpaid.

The data from this item are added to payments for mortgages, real estate taxes, fire, hazard, and flood insurance payments, utilities, and fuels to derive selected monthly owner costs for mobile homes owners.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 American Community Survey item was the same as the 1990 decennial census item. For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, the item had a lead-in question on whether the respondent had an installment loan or a contract on the mobile home. The item then asked for total costs including any installment loan. The 1999-2003 American Community Survey item was comparable to the 2000 decennial census item.

Mortgage Payment

The data on mortgage payment were obtained from questionnaire Item 22b in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at owner occupied units. The item provides the regular monthly amount required to be paid the lender for the first mortgage (deed of trust, contract to purchase, or similar debt) on the property. Amounts are included even if the payments are delinquent or paid by someone else. The amounts reported are included in the computation of “Selected Monthly Owner Costs” and “Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income” for units with a mortgage.

The amounts reported include everything paid to the lender including principal and interest payments, real estate taxes, fire, hazard, and flood insurance payments, and mortgage insurance premiums. Separate questions determine whether real estate taxes and fire, hazard, and flood insurance payments are included in the mortgage payment to the lender. This makes it possible to avoid counting these components twice in the computation of “Selected Monthly Owner Costs.”

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey questions were the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census questions.

Mortgage Status

The data on mortgage status were obtained from questionnaire Items 22a and 23a in the 2003 American Community Survey. The questions were asked at owner-occupied units. “Mortgage” refers to all forms of debt where the property is pledged as security for repayment of the debt, including deeds of trust; trust deeds; contracts to purchase; land contracts; junior mortgages; and home equity loans.

A mortgage is considered a first mortgage if it has prior claim over any other mortgage or if it is the only mortgage on the property. All other mortgages, (second, third, etc.) are considered junior mortgages. A home equity loan is generally a junior mortgage. If no first mortgage is reported, but a junior mortgage or home equity loan is reported, then the loan is considered a first mortgage.

In most data products, the tabulations for “Selected Monthly Owner Costs” and “Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income” usually are shown separately for units “with a mortgage” and for units “not mortgaged.” The category “not mortgaged” is comprised of housing units owned free and clear of debt.

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey questions were the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census questions.

Occupied Housing Units

See [Living Quarters](#)

Owner Occupied Housing Units

See [Tenure](#)

Occupants Per Room

Occupants per room is obtained by dividing the number of people in each occupied housing unit by the number of rooms in the unit. The figures show the number of occupied housing units having the specified ratio of people per room. Although the Census Bureau has no official definition of crowded units, many users consider units with more than one occupant per room to be crowded. Occupants per room is rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Plumbing Facilities

The data on plumbing facilities were obtained from questionnaire Item 9 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at both occupied and vacant housing units. Complete plumbing facilities include: (1) hot and cold piped water, (2) a flush toilet, and (3) a bathtub or shower. All three facilities must be located inside the house, apartment, or mobile home, but not necessarily in the same room. Housing units are classified as lacking complete plumbing facilities when any of the three facilities is not present.

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census question.

Population in Occupied Housing Units

The data shown for population in occupied units is the total population minus any people living in group quarters. All people occupying the housing unit are counted, including the householder, occupants related to the householder, and lodgers, roomers, boarders, and so forth.

Poverty Status of Households

The data on poverty status of households were derived from answers to the income questions. Since poverty is defined at the family level and not the household level, the poverty status of the household is determined by the poverty status of the householder. Households are classified as poor when the total income of the householder's family is below the appropriate poverty threshold. (For nonfamily householders, their own income is compared with the appropriate threshold.) The income of people living in the household who are unrelated to the householder is not considered when determining the poverty status of a household, nor does their presence affect the family size in determining the appropriate threshold. The poverty thresholds vary depending on three criteria: size of family, number of children, and, for 1- and 2-person families, age of householder. (For more information, see "Poverty Status" and "Income" under Population Variables.)

Real Estate Taxes

The data on real estate taxes were obtained from questionnaire Item 20 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at owner-occupied units. The statistics from this question refer to the total amount of all real estate taxes on the entire property (land and

buildings) payable to all taxing jurisdictions, including special assessments, school taxes, county taxes, and so forth.

Real estate taxes include state, local, and all other real estate taxes even if delinquent, unpaid, or paid by someone who is not a member of the household. However, taxes due from prior years are not included. If taxes are paid on other than a yearly basis, the payments are converted to a yearly basis.

The payment for real estate taxes is added to payments for fire, hazard, and flood insurance; utilities and fuels; and mortgages (both first and second mortgages, home equity loans, and other junior mortgages) to derive “Selected Monthly Owner Costs” and “Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income.” A separate question (Item 22c in the 2003 American Community Survey) determines whether real estate taxes are included in the mortgage payment to the lender(s). This makes it possible to avoid counting taxes twice in the computations.

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census question.

Rental Vacancy Rate

See [Vacancy Status](#)

Renter Occupied Housing Units

See [Tenure](#)

Rooms

The data on rooms were obtained from questionnaire Item 7 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at both occupied and vacant housing units. The statistics on rooms are in terms of the number of housing units with a specified number of rooms. The intent of this question is to count the number of whole rooms used for living purposes.

For each unit, rooms include living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, finished recreation rooms, enclosed porches suitable for year-round use, and lodger's rooms. Excluded are strip or Pullman kitchens, bathrooms, open porches, balconies, halls or foyers, half-rooms, utility rooms, unfinished attics or basements, or other unfinished space used for storage. A partially divided room is a separate room only if there is a partition from floor to ceiling, but not if the partition consists solely of shelves or cabinets.

Median rooms. This measure divides the room distribution into two equal parts, one-half of the cases falling below the median number of rooms and one-half above the median. In computing median rooms, the whole number is used as the midpoint of the interval; thus, the category “3 rooms” is treated as an interval ranging from 2.5 to 3.5 rooms. Median rooms is rounded to the nearest tenth. (For more information on medians, see the discussion under “Derived Measures.”)

Aggregate rooms. To calculate aggregate rooms, a value of “10” is assigned to rooms for units falling within the terminal category, “9 or more.” (For more information on aggregates, see “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – The 1990 and 2000 decennial census item, and the 1999-2003 American Community Survey item provided response categories from ‘1 room’ to ‘9 or more rooms’. The 1996-1998 American Community Survey item provided a space for a write-in entry.

Second or Junior Mortgage Payment or Home Equity Loan

The data on second mortgages or home equity loan payments were obtained from questionnaire Items 23a and 23b in the 2003 American Community Survey. The questions were asked at owner-occupied units. Question 23a in the 2003 American Community Survey asks whether a second mortgage or a home equity loan exists on the property. Question 23b in the 2003 American Community Survey provides the regular monthly amount required to be paid to the lender on all second and junior mortgages and home equity loans. Amounts are included even if the payments are delinquent or paid by someone else. The amounts reported are included in the computation of “Selected Monthly Owner Costs” and “Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income” for units with a mortgage.

All mortgages other than first mortgages (for example, second, third, etc.) are classified as “junior” mortgages. A second mortgage is a junior mortgage that gives the lender a claim against the property that is second to the claim of the holder of the first mortgage. Any other junior mortgage(s) would be subordinate to the second mortgage. A home equity loan is a line of credit available to the borrower that is secured by real estate. It may be placed on a property that already has a first or second mortgage, or it may be placed on a property that is owned free and clear.

If the respondents answered that no first mortgage existed, but a second mortgage or a home equity loan did, a computer edit assigned the unit a first mortgage and made the first mortgage monthly payment the amount reported in the second mortgage. The second mortgage/home equity loan data were then made “No” in Question 23a in the 2003 American Community Survey and blank in Question 23b in the 2003 American Community Survey.

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey items were similar to the 1990 and 2000 decennial census items. The 1996-2003 American Community Survey item on having a second mortgage or home equity loan had a response category for a respondent to indicate having both a second mortgage and a home equity loan.

Selected Conditions

The variable “Selected Conditions” is defined for owner- and renter-occupied housing units as having at least one of the following conditions: 1) lacking complete plumbing facilities, 2) lacking complete kitchen facilities, 3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room, 4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30 percent, and 5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30 percent.

Selected Monthly Owner Costs

The data on selected monthly owner costs were obtained from 2003 American Community Survey questionnaire Items 14 and Items 20 through 24. The data were obtained for owner-occupied units. Selected monthly owner costs are the sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts on the property (including payments for the first mortgage, second mortgages, home equity loans, and other junior mortgages); real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer); and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.). It also includes, where appropriate, the monthly condominium fee for condominiums and mobile home costs (installment loan payments, personal property taxes, site rent, registration fees, and license fees). Selected monthly owner costs were tabulated for all specified owner-occupied units, and usually are shown separately for units “with a mortgage” and for units “not mortgaged.”

Specified Owner-Occupied Units – Specified owner-occupied units include only 1-family houses on less than 10 acres without a business or medical office on the property. The data for “specified units” exclude mobile homes, houses with a business or medical office, houses on 10 or more acres, and housing units in multiunit buildings.

Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs – This measure divides the selected monthly owner costs distribution into two equal parts, one-half of the cases falling below the median selected monthly owner costs and one-half above the median. Medians are shown separately for units “with a mortgage” and for units “not mortgaged.” Median selected monthly owner costs are computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) Median selected monthly owner costs are rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census question. The yearly cost of electricity and gas was collected in the 1990 decennial census, while the American Community Survey collected the monthly cost for these two utilities. In the 1990 decennial census, only the yearly cost of water was collected. In the 2000 decennial census, the yearly cost of water and sewer were collected. The American Community Survey collected the 12-month cost of water and sewer.

Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

The information on selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income is the computed ratio of selected monthly owner costs to monthly household income. The ratio was computed separately for each unit and rounded to the nearest whole percentage. The data are tabulated separately for owner-occupied units, specified owner-occupied units, condominiums, and mobile homes.

Separate distributions are often shown for units “with a mortgage” and for units “not mortgaged.” Units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss are included in the “not computed” category. (For more information, see the discussion under “Selected Monthly Owner Costs.”)

Median selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income. This measure divides the selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income distribution into two equal parts, one-half of the cases falling below the median selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income and one-half above the median. Median selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) Median selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income is rounded to the nearest tenth. (For more information on medians, see “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – Income in the American Community Survey is for the past 12 months as opposed to a single reference year.

Specified Owner-Occupied Units

See [Selected Monthly Owner Costs](#)

See [Value](#)

Specified Renter-Occupied Units

See [Contract Rent](#)

Telephone Service Available

The data on telephones were obtained from questionnaire Item 11 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at occupied housing units.

For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, the question asked whether there is a telephone in the house or apartment. A telephone must be inside the house or apartment for the unit to be classified as having a telephone. Units where the respondent uses a telephone located inside the building but not in the respondent's living quarters are classified as having no telephone.

For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, the question asked whether telephone service was available in the house, apartment, or mobile home. A telephone must be in working order and service available in the house, apartment, or mobile home that allows the respondent to both make and receive calls. Households whose service has been discontinued for nonpayment or other reasons are not counted as having telephone service available.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 decennial census question. The 1999-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 2000 decennial census question.

Tenure

The data for tenure were obtained from questionnaire Item 17 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at occupied housing units. Occupied housing units are classified as either owner occupied or renter occupied.

Owner Occupied – A housing unit is owner occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. The owner or co-owner must live in the unit and usually is Person 1 on the questionnaire. The unit is “Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan” if it is being purchased with a mortgage or some other debt arrangement such as a deed of trust, trust deed, contract to purchase, land contract, or purchase agreement. The unit is also considered owned with a mortgage if it is built on leased land and there is a mortgage on the unit. Mobile homes occupied by owners with installment loan balances are also included in this category.

A housing unit is “Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage)” if there is no mortgage or other similar debt on the house, apartment, or mobile home including units built on leased land if the unit is owned outright without a mortgage.

Renter Occupied – All occupied housing units which are not owner occupied, whether they are rented for cash rent or occupied without payment of cash rent, are classified as renter occupied. “No cash rent” units are separately identified in the rent tabulations. Such units generally provided free by friends or relatives or in exchange for services such as resident manager, caretaker, minister, or tenant farmer. Housing units on military bases also are classified in the “No cash rent” category. “Rented for Cash Rent” includes units in continuing care, sometimes called life care arrangements. These arrangements usually involve a contract between one or more individuals and a health services provider guaranteeing the individual shelter, usually a house or apartment, and services, such as meals or transportation to shopping or recreation. (For more information, see the discussion under “Meals Included in Rent.”)

Comparability – The 1996-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census question.

Units in Structure

The data on units in structure (also referred to as “type of structure”) were obtained from questionnaire Item 1 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at all housing units. A structure is a separate building that either has open spaces on all sides or is separated from other structures by dividing walls that extend from ground to roof. In determining the number of units in a structure, all housing units, both occupied and vacant, are counted. Stores and office space are excluded. The statistics are presented for the number of housing units in structures of specified type and size, not for the number of residential buildings.

Mobile Home – Both occupied and vacant mobile homes to which no permanent rooms have been added are counted in this category. Mobile homes used only for business purposes or for extra sleeping space and mobile homes or trailers for sale on a dealer's lot, at the factory, or in storage are not counted in the housing inventory.

1-Unit, Detached – This is a 1-unit structure detached from any other house; that is, with open space on all four sides. Such structures are considered detached even if they have an adjoining shed or garage. A one-family house that contains a business is considered detached as long as the building has open space on all four sides. Mobile homes or trailers to which one or more permanent rooms have been added or built also are included.

1-Unit, Attached – This is a 1-unit structure that has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures. In row houses (sometimes called townhouses), double houses, or houses attached to nonresidential structures, each house is a separate, attached structure if the dividing or common wall goes from ground to roof.

2 or More Apartments – These are units in structures containing 2 or more housing units, further categorized as units in structures with 2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 19, 20 to 49, and 50 or more units.

Boat, RV, Van, Etc. – This category is for any living quarters occupied as a housing unit that does not fit the previous categories. Examples that fit this category are houseboats, railroad cars, campers, and vans. Recreational vehicles, boats, vans, tents, railroad cars, and the like are included only if they are occupied as someone's current place of residence.

Comparability – The 1990 decennial census item provided a response category of “Other,” while the comparable category in the American Community Survey item and the 2000 decennial census item was “Boat, RV, van, etc.”

Utilities

The data on utility costs were obtained from questionnaire Items 14a through 14d in the 2003 American Community Survey. The questions were asked of occupied housing units. The questions about electricity and gas asked for the monthly costs, and the questions about water, sewage, and other fuels (oil, coal, wood, kerosene, etc.) asked for the yearly costs.

Costs are recorded if paid by or billed to occupants, a welfare agency, relatives, or friends. Costs that are paid by landlords, included in the rent payment, or included in condominium or cooperative fees are excluded.

Limitation of the Data – Research has shown that respondents tended to overstate their expenses for electricity and gas when compared to utility company records. There is some evidence that this overstatement is reduced when yearly costs are asked rather than monthly costs. Caution should be exercised in using these data for direct analysis because costs are not reported for certain kinds of units such as renter-occupied units with all utilities included in the rent and owner-occupied condominium units with utilities included in the condominium fee.

Comparability – The 1990 and 2000 decennial census questions asked for yearly costs for all of the utilities. However, the American Community Survey questions asks for monthly costs for electricity and gas, and yearly costs for water/sewer and other fuels. The 1990 decennial census asked for water costs. The 2000 decennial census and the 1996-2003 American Community Survey ask for water and sewer.

Vacancy Status

The data on vacancy status were obtained only for a sample of cases in the computer-assisted personal interview (known as “CAPI”) follow-up by field representatives. Data on vacancy status were obtained at the time of the personal visit. Vacancy status and other characteristics of vacant units were determined by field representatives obtaining information from landlords, owners, neighbors, rental agents, and others. Vacant units are subdivided according to their housing market classification as follows:

For Rent – These are vacant units offered “for rent,” and vacant units offered either “for rent” or “for sale.”

For Sale Only – These are vacant units being offered “for sale only,” including units in cooperatives and condominium projects if the individual units are offered “for sale only.” If units are offered either “for rent” or “for sale” they are included in the “for rent” classification.

Rented or Sold, Not Occupied – If any money rent has been paid or agreed upon but the new renter has not moved in as of the date of enumeration, or if the unit has recently been sold but the new owner has not yet moved in, the vacant unit is classified as “rented or sold, not occupied.”

For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use – These are vacant units used or intended for use only in certain seasons or for weekends or other occasional use throughout the year. Seasonal units include those used for summer or winter sports or recreation, such as beach cottages and hunting cabins. Seasonal units also may include quarters for such workers as herders and loggers. Interval ownership units, sometimes called shared-ownership or time-sharing condominiums, also are included here.

For Migrant Workers – These include vacant units intended for occupancy by migratory workers employed in farm work during the crop season. (Work in a cannery, a freezer plant, or a food-processing plant is not farm work.)

Other Vacant – If a vacant unit does not fall into any of the categories specified above, it is classified as “other vacant.” For example, this category includes units held for occupancy by a caretaker or janitor, and units held for personal reasons of the owner.

Homeowner Vacancy Rate – The homeowner vacancy rate is the proportion of the homeowner inventory that is vacant “for sale.” It is computed by dividing the number of vacant units “for sale only” by the sum of the owner-occupied units and vacant units that are “for sale only,” and then multiplying by 100. This measure is rounded to the nearest tenth.

Rental Vacancy Rate – The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of the rental inventory that is vacant “for rent.” It is computed by dividing the number of vacant units “for rent” by the sum of the renter-occupied units and vacant units that are “for rent,” and then multiplying by 100. This measure is rounded to the nearest tenth.

Comparability – The American Community Survey questions was the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial census questions.

Vacant Housing Units

See [Living Quarters](#)

Value

The data on value (also referred to as “price asked” for vacant units) were obtained from questionnaire Item 19 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at housing units that were owned, being bought, or vacant for sale at the time of enumeration. Value is the respondent's estimate of how much the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) would sell for if it were for sale. If the house or mobile home was owned or being bought, but the land on which it sits was not, the respondent was asked to estimate the combined value of the house or mobile home and the land. For vacant units, value was the price asked for the property. Value was tabulated separately for all owner-

occupied and vacant-for-sale housing units, owner-occupied and vacant-for-sale mobile homes, and specified owner-occupied and specified vacant-for-sale housing units.

Specified Owner-Occupied and Specified Vacant-for-Sale-Only Units – Specified owner-occupied and specified vacant-for-sale housing units include only one-family houses on less than 10 acres without a business or medical office on the property. The data for “specified units” exclude mobile homes, houses with a business or medical office, houses on 10 or more acres, and housing units in multiunit buildings.

Median Value – The median divides the value distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median value of the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) and one-half above the median. Median value is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) This measure is rounded to the nearest hundred dollars. (For more information on medians, see “Derived Measures.”)

Aggregate value. To calculate aggregate value, the amount assigned for the category “Less than \$10,000” is \$9,000. The amount assigned to the category “\$1,000,000 or more” is \$1,250,000. (For more information on aggregates, see “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – The 1990 decennial census item provided pre-coded response categories from “Less than \$10,000” to “\$500,000 or more.” The 2000 decennial census item provided pre-coded response categories from “Less than \$10,000” to “\$1,000,000 or more.” The 1996-1998 American Community Survey item provided a space for the respondent to enter a dollar amount. The 1999-2001 American Community Survey item provides pre-coded response categories from “Less than \$10,000” to “\$250,000 or more – *Specify.*”

Vehicles Available

The data on vehicles available were obtained from questionnaire Item 12 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The questions were asked at occupied housing units. These data show the number of passenger cars, vans, and pickup or panel trucks of one-ton capacity or less kept at home and available for the use of household members. Vehicles rented or leased for one month or more, company vehicles, and police and government vehicles are included if kept at home and used for non-business purposes. Dismantled or immobile vehicles are excluded. Vehicles kept at home but used only for business purposes also are excluded.

Comparability – The 1990 and 2000 decennial census item, and the 1999-2003 American Community Survey item provided pre-coded response categories. The 1996-1998 American Community Survey item provided a space for the respondent to enter the number of vehicles.

Year Householder Moved into Unit

The data on year householder moved into unit were obtained from answers to questionnaire Item 3, which was asked of occupied housing units. These data refer to the year of the latest move by the householder. If the householder moved back into a housing unit he or she previously occupied, the year of the latest move was reported. If the householder moved from one apartment to another within the same building, the year the householder moved into the present apartment was reported. The intent is to establish the year the present occupancy by the householder began. The year that the householder moved in is not necessarily the same year other members of the household moved in, although in the great majority of cases an entire household moves at the same time.

Median year householder moved into unit. Median year householder moved into unit divides the distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median year householder moved into unit and one-half above the median. Median year householder moved into unit is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) Median year householder moved into unit is rounded to the nearest whole number. (For more information on medians, see “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – The 1990 and 2000 decennial census questions provided pre-coded response categories, whereas the 1996-2003 American Community Survey item provided two spaces for the respondent to enter month and year the householder (person 1) moved into the house, apartment, or mobile home. In the decennial census, the data were collected as of a specific reference date, April 1. In the American Community Survey, the data are collected and compiled over a period of time.

Year Structure Built

The data on year structure built were obtained from questionnaire Item 2 in the 2003 American Community Survey. The question was asked at both occupied and vacant housing units. Year structure built refers to when the building was first constructed, not when it was remodeled, added to, or converted. Housing units under construction are included as vacant housing if they meet the housing unit definition--that is, all exterior windows, doors, and final usable floors are in place. For mobile homes, houseboats, RVs, etc., the manufacturer's model year was assumed to be the year built. The data relate to the number of units built during the specified periods that were still in existence at the time of enumeration.

Median Year Structure Built – Median year structure built divides the distribution into two equal parts one-half of the cases falling below the median year structure built and one-half above the median. Median year structure built is computed on the basis of a standard distribution (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) The median is rounded to the nearest calendar year. Median age of housing can be obtained by subtracting median year structure built from survey year. For example, if the median year

structure built is 1967, the median age of housing in that area is 33 years (2000 minus 1967). (For more information on medians, see “Derived Measures.”)

Limitation of the Data – Data on year structure built are more susceptible to errors of response and non-reporting than data on many other items because respondents must rely on their memory or on estimates by people who have lived in the neighborhood a long time.

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey, and the 1990 and 2000 decennial census questionnaires provided pre-coded response categories for ranges of years. The 1996-1998 American Community Survey questionnaire provided a space for the respondent to enter a year.

Population Variables

Contact List: To obtain additional information on these and other American Community Survey subjects, see the list of Census 2000/2010 Contacts on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/contacts/www/c-census2000.html>.

Historical Census Comparability: For additional information about the data in previous decennial censuses, see <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf4.pdf>, Appendix B.

Ability to Speak English

See [Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English](#)

Age

The data on age were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 2. The age classification is based on the age of the person in complete years at the time of interview. Both age and date of birth are used in combination to calculate the most accurate age at the time of interview. Inconsistently reported and missing values are assigned or imputed based on the values of other variables for that person, from other people in the household, or from people in other households (“hot deck” imputation).

Data on age are used to determine the applicability of other questions for a particular individual and to classify other characteristics in tabulations. Age data are needed to interpret most social and economic characteristics used to plan and analyze programs and policies. Therefore, age data are tabulated by many different age groupings, such as 5-year age groups.

Median Age – The median age is the age that divides the population into two equal-size groups. Half of the population is older than the median age and half is younger. Median age is based on a standard distribution of the population by single years of age and is shown to the nearest tenth of a year. (See the sections on “Standard Distributions” and “Medians” under “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – In the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, age was based on the age of the person on a fixed reference date (April 1) rather than age at the time of interview. Census 2000 and the American Community Survey asked for age and date of birth, while the 1990 decennial census questionnaire asked for age and year of birth.

Ancestry

The data on ancestry were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 12. The question was based on self-identification; the data on ancestry represent self-classification by people according to the ancestry group(s) with which they most closely identify. Ancestry refers to a person’s ethnic origin or descent, “roots,” or heritage; or the place of birth of the person, the person’s parents, or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. Some ethnic identities, such as “Egyptian” or “Polish” can be traced to geographic areas outside the United States, while other ethnicities such as “Pennsylvania German” or “Cajun” evolved in the United States.

The intent of the ancestry question was not to measure the degree of attachment the respondent had to a particular ethnicity. For example, a response of “Irish” might reflect total involvement in an Irish community or only a memory of ancestors several generations removed from the individual.

The Census Bureau coded the responses through an automated review, edit, and coding operation. The open-ended write-in ancestry item was coded by subject-matter specialists into a numeric representation using a code list containing over 1,000 categories. The code list reflects the results of the Census Bureau’s own research and consultations with many ethnic experts. Many decisions were made to determine the classification of responses. These decisions affected the grouping of the tabulated data. For example, the “Indonesian” category includes the responses of “Indonesian,” “Celebesian,” “Moluccan,” and a number of other responses.

The ancestry question allowed respondents to report one or more ancestry groups. Generally, only the first two responses reported were coded. If a response was in terms of a dual ancestry, for example, “Irish-English”, the person was assigned two codes, in this case one for Irish and another for English. However, in certain cases, multiple responses such as “French Canadian,” “Scotch-Irish,” “Greek Cypriote,” and “Black Dutch” were assigned a single code reflecting their status as unique groups. If a person reported one of these unique groups in addition to another group, for example, “Scotch-Irish English,” resulting in three terms, that person received one code for the unique group (Scotch-Irish) and another one for the remaining group (English). If a person reported “English Irish French,” only English and Irish were coded. For certain combinations of ancestries where the ancestry group is a part of

another, such as “German-Bavarian,” the responses were coded as a single ancestry using the smaller group (Bavarian). Also, responses such as “Polish-American” or “Italian-American” were coded and tabulated as a single entry (Polish or Italian).

The Census Bureau accepted “American” as a unique ethnicity if it was given alone, with an ambiguous response, or with state names. If the respondent listed any other ethnic identity such as “Italian American,” generally the “American” portion of the response was not coded. However, distinct groups such as “American Indian,” “Mexican American,” and “African American” were coded and identified separately because they represented groups who considered themselves different from those who reported as “Indian,” “Mexican,” or “African,” respectively.

In all tabulations, when respondents provided an unclassifiable ethnic identity (for example, “multi-national,” “adopted,” or “I have no idea”), the answer was included in “Ancestry not reported.”

The tabulations on ancestry use two types of data presentations – one used total people as the base, and the other used total responses as the base. The following are categories shown in the two data presentations.

Presentations Based on People

Single Ancestry Reported – Includes all people who reported only one ethnic group such as “German.” Also included in this category are people with multiple-term responses such as “Scotch-Irish” who are assigned a single code because they represent one distinct group.

Multiple Ancestries Reported – Includes all people who reported more than one group, such as “German” and “Irish” and were assigned two ancestry codes.

Ancestry Unclassified – Includes all people who provided a response that could not be assigned an ancestry code because they provided unclear entries or entries that represent religious groups.

Presentations Based on Responses

Total Ancestries Reported or Total Ancestries Tallied – Includes the total number of ancestries reported and coded. If a person reported a multiple ancestry such as “French Danish,” that response was counted twice in the tabulations--once in the French category and again in the Danish category. Thus, the sum of the counts in this type of presentation is not the total population but the total of all responses.

First Ancestry Reported – Includes the first response of all people who reported at least one codeable entry. For example, in this category, the count for Danish would include all those who reported only Danish and those who reported Danish first and then some other group.

Second Ancestry Reported – Includes the second response of all people who reported a multiple ancestry. Thus, the count for Danish in this category includes all people who reported Danish as the second response, regardless of the first response provided.

Limitation of the Data – Although some experts consider religious affiliation a component of ethnic identity, the ancestry question was not designed to collect any information concerning religion. The Census Bureau is prohibited from collecting information on religion. Thus, if a religion was given as an answer to the ancestry question, it was coded as an “Other” response.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 American Community Survey question was the same as the 1990 decennial census question. The system for coding the responses differed slightly from that used in the 1990 decennial census. The change involved consistency checks with answers to other questions when the write-in response to ancestry was “Indian.” Since 1999, the American Community Survey question has been identical to the 2000 decennial census question, which added the words “or ethnic origin” to the question “What is this person's ancestry?” The coding in 2000 and subsequent years involved consistency checks for those respondents writing “Indian” and for two-word ancestries containing the word “Black,” such as “Black Irish.”

Children Ever Born

For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, the data on fertility (also referred to as “children ever born”) were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 17, which was asked of all women 15 years old and over regardless of marital status. Stillbirths, stepchildren, and adopted children were excluded from the number of children ever born. Ever-married women were instructed to include all children born to them before and during their most recent marriage, children no longer living, and children living away from home, as well as children who were still living in the home. Never-married women were instructed to include all children born to them.

Data were most frequently presented in terms of the aggregate number of children ever born to women in the specified category and in terms of the rate per 1,000 women.

Beginning in 1999, American Community Survey data on fertility were derived from questionnaire items that asked if the person had given birth in the past 12 months. See the section on “Fertility” for more information.

Comparability – In the 1990 decennial census this question had a series of response categories from “None” through “12 or more.” The 1996-1998 American Community Survey used a write-in space for the number and a response category for “None.” There was no fertility question on the 2000 decennial census questionnaire.

Citizenship Status (U.S. Citizenship Status)

The data on citizenship status were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 8. The responses to this question were used to determine the U.S. citizen and non-U.S. citizen populations as well as to determine the native and foreign-born populations.

Respondents were asked to select one of five categories: (1) born in the United States, (2) born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas, (3) born abroad of American parent or parents, (4) U.S. citizen by naturalization, or (5) not a citizen of the United States. People born in American Samoa, although not explicitly listed, are included in response category (2).

When no information on citizenship status was reported for a person, information for other household members, if available, was used to assign a citizenship status to the respondent. All cases of nonresponse that were not assigned a citizenship status based on information from other household members were allocated the citizenship status of another person with similar characteristics who provided complete information. In cases of conflicting responses, e.g., a respondent states he or she was born in Puerto Rico but was not a U.S. citizen, place of birth information is used to edit citizenship status, e.g., a respondent born in Puerto Rico becomes a U.S. citizen at birth.

U.S. Citizen – Respondents who indicated that they were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (such as Guam), or abroad of American (U.S. citizen) parent or parents are considered U.S. citizens at birth. Foreign-born people who indicated that they were U.S. citizens through naturalization are also considered U.S. citizens.

Not a U.S. Citizen – Respondents who indicated that they were not U.S. citizens at the time of the survey.

Native – The native population includes anyone who was a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (such as Guam), or abroad of American (U.S. citizen) parent or parents.

Foreign born – The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a U.S. citizen.

The American Community Survey and the census questionnaires do not ask about immigration status. The population surveyed includes all people who indicated that the United States was their usual place of residence on the survey date. The foreign-born population includes naturalized U.S. citizens, Lawful Permanent Residents (immigrants),

temporary migrants (e.g., foreign students), humanitarian migrants (e.g., refugees), and unauthorized migrants (people illegally present in the United States).

Comparability – The U.S. citizenship status questions for the American Community Survey, the 1990 decennial census, and the decennial census 2000 are identical. For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, there was one variation in the response category for Americans (U.S. citizens) born abroad. The 1999-2002 American Community Survey and the 1990 and 2000 decennial response category was “Yes, born abroad of American parent or parents,” while the 1996-1998 American Community Survey response category was “Yes, born abroad of American parent(s).”

Class of Worker

See [Industry, Occupation, and Class of Worker](#)

Disability

The Census Bureau defines disability as a long-lasting sensory, physical, mental, or emotional condition. This condition can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. It can impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work at a job or business, and it includes persons with severe vision or hearing impairments. In the 2003 American Community Survey, there are three disability questions with two subparts each as described below.

Sensory and Physical Limitations

For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, data on sensory and physical limitations were derived from answers to questionnaire Items 15a and 15b, which were asked of people 5 years old and over. Questionnaire Items 15a and 15b asked respondents if they had any of the following two long-lasting conditions: “blindness, deafness, severe vision, or hearing impairment,” or “a condition that substantially limits physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying.” Respondents were instructed to mark “yes” or “no” for each long-lasting condition. Questionnaire Item 15a is labeled as Sensory Disability and Item 15b as Physical Disability for some of the disability data products such as the ACS Detailed Tables.

For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, the questionnaire item, which was asked of persons 5 years old and over, instructed the respondents to mark each appropriate box if they had difficulty with any of the following three specific functions: “Difficulty seeing (even with glasses),” “Difficulty hearing (even with a hearing aid),” or “Difficulty walking.” The respondents could mark as many as three boxes depending on their functional limitation status. If the respondents did not have difficulty with any of the three specific functions, the questionnaire item instructed them to mark the box labeled “None of the above.”

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items were changed to match the 2000 decennial census items. No comparable data were obtained in the 1990 decennial census or the 1996-1998 American Community Survey. The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items were changed to match the 2000 decennial census items.

Mental Limitations

For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, the data on mental limitations were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 16a, which was asked of people 5 years old and over. The questionnaire item asked respondents if they had a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more that made it difficult to “learn, remember, or concentrate.” Respondents were instructed to mark “yes” or “no.” Questionnaire Item 16a is labeled as Mental Disability for some disability data products such as the ACS Detailed Tables.

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items were changed to match the 2000 decennial census items. No comparable data were obtained in the 1990 decennial census or the 1996-1998 American Community Survey.

Self-Care Limitations

For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, the data on self-care limitations were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 16b, which was asked of people 5 years and over. The questionnaire item asked respondents if they had a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more that made it difficult to “dress, bathe, or get around inside the home.” Respondents were instructed to mark “yes” or “no.” Questionnaire Item 16b is labeled as Self-Care Disability for some disability data products such as the ACS Detailed Tables.

Comparability – The American Community Survey question is essentially the same as the Census 2000 question. It is also similar to the 1990 decennial census. However, due to differences in the wording and layout of this question, direct cross-decennial comparison is discouraged. This question was not asked on the 1996-1998 American Community Survey.

Going-Outside-Home Limitations

For the 2003 American Community Survey, the data on mobility limitations were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 17a, which was asked of people 15 years and over. The questionnaire item asked respondents if they had a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more that made it difficult to “go outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor’s office.” Respondents were instructed to mark “yes” or “no.” Questionnaire Item 17a is labeled as Go-outside-home Disability for some disability products such as the ACS Detailed Tables.

In 1999-2002, questionnaire item 17a was part of question 16. The 2003 questionnaire introduced a new skip instruction between questions 16 and 17.

For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, the data on going-outside-home limitations were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 16a, which was asked of persons 16 years old and over. The questionnaire item was slightly different from the 1999-2002 item and asked the respondents if they had a long-lasting physical or mental condition that made it difficult to “go outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office.” Respondents were instructed to mark “yes” or “no.”

Comparability – The Census Bureau does not recommend trend analysis using the 2003 data with prior years due to the 2003 questionnaire change. For more information regarding the 2003 questionnaire change, view “Disability Data From the American Community Survey: A Brief Examination of the Effects of a Question Redesign in 2003” (http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS_disability.pdf).

The 1999-2002 American Community Survey question was essentially the same as the Census 2000 question. It was also similar to the 1990 decennial census. However, due to differences in the wording and layout of this question, direct cross-decennial comparison is discouraged.

Employment Limitations

For the 2003 American Community Survey, the data on work limitations were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 17b, which was asked of people 15 years and over. The questionnaire item asked the respondents if they had a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more that made it difficult to “work at a job or a business.” Respondents were instructed to mark “yes” or “no.” Questionnaire Item 17b is labeled as Employment Disability for some disability data products such as the ACS Detailed Tables.

The 2003 questionnaire introduced a new skip instruction between questions 16 and 17. In 1999-2002, questionnaire Item 17b was part of question 16.

For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, the data on employment limitations were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 16b, which was asked of persons 16 years old and over. The questionnaire item was slightly different from the 1999-2003 item and asked the respondents if they had a long-lasting physical or mental condition that “prevents this person from working at a job or business.” Respondents were instructed to mark “yes” or “no.”

Comparability – The Census Bureau does not recommend trend analysis using the 2003 data with prior years due to the 2003 questionnaire change. For more information regarding the 2003 questionnaire change, view “Disability Data From the American Community Survey: A Brief Examination of the Effects of a Question Redesign in 2003” (http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS_disability.pdf).

The 1999-2002 American Community Survey question was essentially the same as the Census 2000 question. However, it was quite different from the 1990 decennial census item. In the 1990 census, respondents were asked if they were “limited in the kind or amount of work” they could do. People who responded “yes” were asked if they were prevented from working. Therefore, direct cross-decennial comparison is strongly discouraged.

Disability Status

The Census Bureau uses the six disability items above to determine an individual's disability status in some of its data products such as in ACS Detailed Tables and the Disability Profile. In the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, people aged 16-64 were classified as having a disability if they reported at least one of the above six conditions. People aged 5-15 were classified as having a disability if they reported any one of the four conditions: sensory disability, physical disability, mental disability, or self-care disability. People over 65 were classified as having a disability if they reported any one of the five conditions: sensory disability, physical disability, mental disability, self-care disability, or go-outside-home disability.

Comparability – Since 2 of the 6 items used to determine disability status are no longer comparable with those of the prior years, the Census Bureau does not recommend trend analysis using the 2003 data with prior years. For more information regarding the 2003 questionnaire change, view “Disability Data from the American Community Survey: A Brief Examination of the Effects of a Question Redesign in 2003” (http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS_disability.pdf).

The American Community Survey (1999-2003) recode of disability status is essentially the same as the disability status recode in Census 2000.

Educational Attainment

Data on educational attainment were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 11, which was asked of all respondents. Educational attainment data are tabulated for people 18 years old and over. Respondents are classified according to the highest degree or the highest level of school completed. The question included instructions for persons currently enrolled in school to report the level of the previous grade attended or the highest degree received.

The educational attainment question included a response category that allowed people to report completing the 12th grade without receiving a high school diploma. Respondents who received a high school diploma or the equivalent (for example, passed the test of General Educational Development (G.E.D.)), and did not attend college, were instructed to report “high school graduate.” “Some college” is in two categories: “Some college credit, but less than 1 year” and “1 or more years of college, no degree.” The category “Associate degree” included people whose highest degree is an associate degree, which generally requires 2 years of college level work and is either in an occupational program that prepares them for a specific occupation, or an academic program primarily in the arts and sciences. The course work may or may not be transferable to a bachelor's degree. Master's degrees include the traditional MA and MS degrees and field-specific degrees, such as MSW, MEd, MBA, MLS, and MEng. Instructions included in the respondent instruction guide provided the following examples of professional school degrees: Medicine, dentistry, chiropractic, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, podiatry, veterinary medicine, law, and theology. The order in which degrees were listed suggested that doctorate degrees were “higher” than professional school degrees, which were “higher” than master's degrees. If more than one box was filled, the response was edited to the highest level or degree reported.

The instructions further specified that schooling completed in foreign or ungraded school systems should be reported as the equivalent level of schooling in the regular American system. The instructions specified that certificates or diplomas for training in specific trades or from vocational, technical or business schools were not to be reported. Honorary degrees awarded for a respondent's accomplishments were not to be reported.

High School Graduate or Higher – This category includes people whose highest degree was a high school diploma or its equivalent, people who attended college but did not receive a degree, and people who received an associate, bachelor's, master's, or professional or doctorate degree. People who reported completing the 12th grade but not receiving a diploma are not included.

Not Enrolled, Not High School Graduate – This category includes people of compulsory school attendance age or above who were not enrolled in school and were not high school graduates. These people may be taken to be “high school dropouts.” There is no restriction on when they “dropped out” of school; therefore they may have dropped out before high school and never attended high school.

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey item is comparable to the 2000 decennial census item. They are both different from the 1996-1998 American Community Survey item and the 1990 decennial census item. The 1999-2003 American Community Survey item does not have the response category for “Vocational, technical, or business school degree” that the 1996-1998 American Community Survey item had. Neither the 1990 nor the 2000 decennial censuses had the category. The 1996-1998 and 1999-2003 American Community Survey item and the 2000 decennial census item had one Associate degree category; whereas the 1990 decennial census item had two Associate Degrees categories (Occupational Program and Academic Program).

The 1999-2003 American Community Survey item and the 2000 decennial census item have two categories for some college: “Some college credit, but less than 1 year” and “1 or more years of college, no degree.” The 1996-1998 American Community Survey item and the 1990 decennial census item had one category: “Some college, no degree.”

In the 1996-1998 American Community Survey and the 1990 decennial census, the educational attainment item was used to estimate level of enrollment. In the 1999-2003 American Community Survey and the 2000 decennial census, a grade of enrollment question was included.

The 1999-2003 American Community Survey item and the 2000 decennial census item grouped grade categories below high school into the following three categories: “Nursery school to 4th grade,” “5th grade or 6th grade,” and “7th grade or 8th grade.” The 1990 decennial census categories were slightly different: “Nursery school,” “Kindergarten,” “1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade,” and “5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.” The 1996-1998 American Community Survey item allowed a write-in for highest grade completed for grades 1-11 in addition to “Nursery or preschool” and “Kindergarten.”

Employment Status

The data on employment status were derived from questionnaire Items 23 and 29 to 31 in the 2003 American Community Survey. (In the 1999-2002 American Community Survey, data were derived from Items 22 and 28 to 30; in the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, data were derived from Items 21 and 28 to 30.) The questions were asked of all people 15 years old and over. The series of questions on employment status was designed to identify, in this sequence: (1) people who worked at any time during the reference week; (2) people on temporary layoff who were available for work; (3) people who did not work during the reference week but who had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent (excluding layoff); (4) people who did not work during the reference week, but who were looking for work during the last four weeks and were available for work during the reference week; and (5) people not in the labor force. (For more information, see the discussion under “Reference Week.”)

The employment status data shown in American Community Survey tabulations relate to people 16 years old and over.

Employed – This category includes all civilians 16 years old and over who either (1) were “at work” – those who did any work at all during the reference week as paid employees, worked in their own business or profession, worked on their own farm, or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers on a family farm or in a family business; or (2) were “with a job but not at work”--those who did not work during the reference week but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to illness, bad weather, industrial dispute, vacation, or other personal reasons. Excluded from the employed are people whose only activity consisted of work around the house or unpaid volunteer work for religious, charitable, and similar organizations; also excluded are all institutionalized people and people on active duty in the United States Armed Forces.

Civilian Employed – This term is defined exactly the same as the term “employed” above.

Unemployed – All civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they (1) were neither “at work” nor “with a job but not at work” during the reference week, and (2) were looking for work during the last 4 weeks, and (3) were available to start a job. Also included as unemployed are civilians who did not work at all during the reference week, were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off, and were available for work except for temporary illness. Examples of job seeking activities are:

- Registering at a public or private employment office
- Meeting with prospective employers
- Investigating possibilities for starting a professional practice or opening a business
- Placing or answering advertisements
- Writing letters of application
- Being on a union or professional register

Civilian Labor Force – Consists of people classified as employed or unemployed in accordance with the criteria described above.

Experienced Unemployed – These are unemployed people who have worked at any time in the past.

Experienced Civilian Labor Force – Consists of the employed and the experienced unemployed.

Labor Force – All people classified in the civilian labor force plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard).

Not in Labor Force – All people 16 years old and over who are not classified as members of the labor force. This category consists mainly of students, housewives, retired workers, seasonal workers interviewed in an off season who were not looking for work, institutionalized people, and people doing only incidental unpaid family work (less than 15 hours during the reference week).

Worker – This term appears in connection with several subjects: employment status, journey-to-work items, class of worker, weeks worked in the past 12 months, and number of workers in family in the past 12 months. Its meaning varies and, therefore, should be determined in each case by referring to the definition of the subject in which it appears. When used in the concepts “workers in family” and “full-time, year-round workers,” the term “worker” relates to the meaning of work defined for the “work status” subject.

Limitation of the Data – The data may understate the number of employed people because people who have irregular, casual, or unstructured jobs sometimes report themselves as not working. The number of employed people “at work” is probably overstated in the data (and conversely, the number of employed “with a job, but not at work” is understated) since some people on vacation or sick leave erroneously reported themselves as working. This problem has no effect on the total number of employed people. The reference week for the employment data is not the same for all people. Since people can change their employment status from one week to another, the lack of a uniform reference week may mean that the employment data do not reflect the reality of the employment situation of any given week. (For more information, see the discussion under “Reference Week.”)

Comparability – Since employment data from the American Community Survey are obtained from respondents in households, they differ from statistics based on reports from individual business establishments, farm enterprises, and certain government programs. People employed at more than one job are counted only once in the American Community Survey and are classified according to the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours during the reference week. In statistics based on reports from business and farm establishments, people who work for more than one establishment may be counted more than once. Moreover, some tabulations may exclude private household workers, unpaid family workers, and self-employed people, but may include workers less than 16 years of age.

An additional difference in the data arises from the fact that people who had a job but were not at work are included with the employed in the American Community Survey statistics, whereas many of these people are likely to be excluded from employment figures based on establishment payroll reports. Furthermore, the employment status data in tabulations include people on the basis of place of residence regardless of where they work, whereas establishment data report people at their place of work regardless of where they live. This latter consideration is particularly significant when comparing data for workers who commute between areas.

For several reasons, the unemployment figures of the Census Bureau are not comparable with published figures on unemployment compensation claims. For example, figures on unemployment compensation claims exclude people who have exhausted their benefit rights, new workers who have not earned rights to unemployment insurance, and people losing jobs not covered by unemployment insurance systems (including some workers in agriculture, domestic services, and religious organizations, and self-employed and unpaid family workers). In addition, the qualifications for drawing unemployment compensation differ from the definition of unemployment used by the Census Bureau. People working only a few hours during the week and people with a job but not at work are sometimes eligible for unemployment compensation but are classified as “Employed” in the census. Differences in the geographical distribution of unemployment data arise because the place where claims are filed may not necessarily be the same as the place of residence of the unemployed worker.

For guidance on differences in employment and unemployment estimates from different sources, go to <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/laborfor/laborguidance082504.html>.

Comparability to Census 2000 and 1990 Census – The employment questions on the American Community Survey are the exact questions used in Census 2000. Except for the treatment of people on layoff, the American Community Survey employment questions were generally the same as those for the 1990 census. For layoff, the American Community Survey drew an explicit distinction between “temporary” and “permanent” layoff; this distinction was not expressed in the 1990 question about layoff, which could have caused some people to misinterpret the meaning of the term. Also, the American Community Survey asked people on temporary layoff whether they were available for work; the 1990 census in effect assumed that all people on layoff were available to go back to work.

Families

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Fertility

Beginning in 1999, a new question was developed for the American Community Survey. For the 1999-2002 American Community Survey, the data on fertility were derived from questionnaire Item 17, and for the 2003 ACS, from questionnaire Item 18. The question

asked if the person had given birth in the past 12 months, and was asked of all women 15 to 50 years old regardless of marital status.

Data are most frequently presented in terms of the aggregate number of women who had a birth in the past 12 months in the specified category, and in terms of the rate per 1,000 women.

Comparability – The 1990 decennial census and 1996-1998 American Community Survey collected data on “children ever born.” In 1999, the American Community Survey began collecting data on children born in the last 12 months. There was no fertility question on the 2000 decennial census questionnaire.

Foreign-Born Population

See Citizenship Status

See Place of Birth

Foster Children

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Grade in Which Enrolled

See [School Enrollment](#)

Grandparents As Caregivers

Beginning in 2003, the American Community Survey data on grandparents as caregivers were derived from questionnaire Items 19a through 19c. For the 1999-2002 American Community Survey, data were derived from questionnaire Items 18a through 18c. Data were collected on whether a grandchild lives with a grandparent in the household, whether the grandparent has responsibility for the basic needs of the grandchild, and the duration of that responsibility.

Existence of a grandchild in the household – This was determined by a “Yes” answer to the question, “Does this person have any of his/her own grandchildren under the age of 18 living in this house or apartment?” This question was asked of people 15 years of age and

over. Data were then edited to include only responses for those aged 30 and over. People under age 30, by virtue of their young age, were edited as not having any grandchildren.

Responsibility for basic needs – This question determines if the grandparent is financially responsible for food, shelter, clothing, day care, etc., for any or all grandchildren living in the household.

Duration of responsibility – The answer refers to the grandchild for whom the grandparent has been responsible for the longest period of time. Duration categories ranged from less than 6 months to 5 years or more.

Comparability – These questions were not included in the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, or the 1990 decennial census. The questions are included in the 1999-2003 American Community Survey and the 2000 decennial census. The response categories for length of time caring for grandchildren was modified slightly between the 1999 and 2000 American Community Survey questionnaires to match the 2000 decennial census questionnaire. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 mandated that the decennial census collect data on this subject.

Hispanic Origin

The data on the Hispanic or Latino population, which was asked of all people, were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 5. The terms “Spanish,” “Hispanic origin,” and “Latino” are used interchangeably. Some respondents identify with all three terms, while others may identify with only one of these three specific terms. Hispanics or Latinos who identify with the terms “Spanish,” “Hispanic,” or “Latino” are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories listed on the questionnaire — “Mexican,” “Puerto Rican,” or “Cuban” — as well as those who indicate that they are “other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino.” People who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed on the questionnaire but indicate that they are “other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino” are those whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Dominican Republic, or people identifying themselves generally as Spanish, Spanish-American, Hispanic, Hispano, Latino, and so on. All write-in responses to the “other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino” category were coded.

Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race.

Some tabulations are shown by the origin of the householder. In all cases where the origin of households, families, or occupied housing units is classified as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino, the origin of the householder is used. (For more information, see the discussion of householder under [“Household Type and Relationship.”](#))

If an individual could not provide a Hispanic origin response, their origin was assigned using

specific rules of precedence of household relationship. For example, if origin was missing for a natural-born daughter in the household, then either the origin of the householder, another natural-born child, or the spouse of the householder was assigned. If Hispanic origin was not reported for anyone in the household, the origin of a householder in a previously processed household with the same race was assigned. Spanish and non-Spanish surnames are also used to assist in assigning an origin.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 American Community Survey questionnaire and the 1990 decennial census questionnaire differed slightly. The decennial questionnaire item asked “Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin?” while the American Community Survey questionnaire asked “Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?” Also, the decennial questionnaire listed several examples of possible groups as “Other Spanish/Hispanic.” The American Community Survey questionnaire did not.

The 1999-2003 American Community Survey question was the same as the 2000 decennial census question.

Household

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Household Type and Relationship

Household – A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit. A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied (or if vacant, is intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other people in the building and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated people who share living arrangements.

Note that the sample count of “occupied housing units” may not match the sample count of “households.” Consequently, the household size measures derived from housing and population-based data also may differ.

Average Household Size – A measure obtained by dividing the number of people in households by the number of households. In cases where people in households are cross-classified by race or Hispanic origin, people in the household are classified by the race or Hispanic origin of the householder rather than the race or Hispanic origin of each individual. Average household size is rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Note that the sample count of “occupied housing units” may not match the sample count of “households.” Consequently, the household size measures derived from housing and population-based data also may differ.

Relationship to Householder

Householder – The data on relationship to householder were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 3, which was asked of all people in housing units. One person in each household is designated as the householder. In most cases, this is the person, or one of the people, in whose name the home is owned, being bought, or rented and who is listed on line one of the survey questionnaire. If there is no such person in the household, any adult household member 15 years old and over could be designated as the householder.

Households are classified by type according to the sex of the householder and the presence of relatives. Two types of householders are distinguished: a family householder and a non-family householder. A family householder is a householder living with one or more individuals related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. The householder and all people in the household related to him or her are family members. A non-family householder is a householder living alone or with non-relatives only.

Spouse – Includes a person married to and living with a householder who is of the opposite sex of the householder. The category “husband or wife” includes people in formal marriages, as well as people in common-law marriages.

The number of spouses, however, is generally less than the number of “married people with spouse present”, since more than one married couple can live in a household, but only spouses of householders are specifically identified as “spouse.”

Child – Includes a son or daughter by birth, a stepchild, or adopted child of the householder, regardless of the child’s age or marital status. Unlike the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, the American Community Survey does not distinguish between natural-born children, adopted children, and stepchildren. The category excludes sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and foster children.

Own Child – A never-married child under 18 years who is a son or daughter by birth, a stepchild, or an adopted child of the householder. In certain tabulations, own children are further classified as living with two parents or with one parent only. Own children of the householder living with two parents are by definition found only in married-couple families. (Note: When used in “EMPLOYMENT STATUS” tabulations, own child refers to a never married child under the age of 18 in a family or a subfamily who is a son or daughter, by birth, marriage, or adoption, of a member of the householder’s family, but not necessarily of the householder.)

Related Child – Any child under 18 years old who is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Related children of the householder include ever-married as well as never-married children. Children, by definition, exclude persons under 18 years who maintain households or are spouses of householders.

Other Relatives – In tabulations, the category “other relatives” includes any household member related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption, but not included specifically in another relationship category. In certain detailed tabulations, the following categories may be shown:

- **Grandchild** – The grandson or granddaughter of the householder.
- **Brother/Sister** – The brother or sister of the householder, including stepbrothers, stepsisters, and brothers and sisters by adoption. Brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law are included in the “In-law” category on the questionnaire.
- **Parent** – The father or mother of the householder, including a stepparent or adoptive parent. Fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law are included in the “In-law” category on the questionnaire.
- **In-law** – Unlike the 1990 decennial census, the American Community Survey questionnaire distinguishes “In-laws” from “Other Relatives.” This category includes brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, sons-in-law, and daughters-in-law. The 2000 decennial census had a separate category for “Son-in-law/Daughter-in-law.”
- **Other Relatives** – Anyone not listed in a reported category above who is related to the householder by birth or adoption (grandparent, nephew, aunt, cousin, and so forth).

Nonrelatives – This category includes any household member, including foster children, not related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. The following categories may be presented in more detailed tabulations:

- **Roomer or Boarder** – A roomer, boarder, and lodger is a person who lives in a room in the household. Some sort of cash or noncash payment (e.g., chores) is usually made for their living accommodations.
- **Housemate or Roommate** – A housemate or roommate is a person age 15 years and over, who is not related to the householder, and who shares living quarters primarily in order to share expenses.
- **Unmarried Partner** – An unmarried partner is a person age 15 years and over, who is not related to the householder, who shares living quarters, and who has a close personal relationship with the householder.
- **Foster Child** – A foster child is a person who is under 18 years old placed by the local government in a household to receive parental care. Foster children may be living in the household for just a brief period or for several years. Foster children are nonrelatives of the householder. If the foster child is also related to the householder, the child is classified as that specific relative.
- **Other Nonrelatives** – Anyone who is not related by birth, marriage, or adoption to the householder and who is not described by the categories given above.

When relationship is not reported for an individual, it is imputed according to the responses for age, sex, and marital status for that person while maintaining consistency with responses for other individuals in the household.

Unrelated Individual – An unrelated individual is: (1) a householder living alone or with non-relatives only, or (2) a household member who is not related to the householder.

Family Type – A family consists of a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family. A family household may contain people not related to the householder, but those people are not included as part of the householder’s family in tabulations. Thus the number of family households is equal to the number of families, but family households may include more members than do families. A household can contain only one family for purposes of tabulations. Not all households contain families since a household may be comprised of a group of unrelated people or of one person living alone – these are called nonfamily households.

Families are classified by type as either a “married-couple family” or “other family” according to the sex of the householder and the presence of relatives. The data on family type are based on answers to questions on sex and relationship that were asked of all people.

- **Married-Couple Family** – A family in which the householder and his or her spouse are listed as members of the same household.
- **Other Family:**
 - Male Householder, No Wife Present--A family with a male householder and no spouse of householder present.
 - Female Householder, No Husband Present--A family with a female householder and no spouse of householder present.

Average Family Size – A measure obtained by dividing the number of people in families by the total number of families (or family householders). In cases where the measure, “people in family” or “people per family” are cross-tabulated by race or Hispanic origin, the race or Hispanic origin refers to the householder rather than the race or Hispanic origin of each individual. Average family size is rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Subfamily – A subfamily is a married couple (husband and wife interviewed as members of the same household) with or without never-married children under 18 years old, or one parent with one or more never-married children under 18 years old. A subfamily does not maintain its own household, but lives in a household where the householder or householder’s spouse is a relative. The number of subfamilies is not included in the count of families, since subfamily members are counted as part of the householder’s family. Subfamilies are defined during processing of data.

In selected tabulations, subfamilies are further classified by type: married-couple subfamilies, with or without own children; mother-child subfamilies; and father-child subfamilies.

In some labor force tabulations, children in both one-parent families and one-parent subfamilies are included in the total number of children living with one parent, while children in both married-couple families and married-couple subfamilies are included in the total number of children living with two parents.

Unmarried-Partner Household – An unmarried-partner household is a household other than a “married-couple household” that includes a householder and an “unmarried partner.” An “unmarried partner” can be of the same sex or of the opposite sex of the householder. An

“unmarried partner” in an “unmarried- partner household” is an adult who is unrelated to the householder, but shares living quarters and has a close personal relationship with the householder. An unmarried-partner household may also be a family household or a nonfamily household, depending on the presence or absence of another person in the household who is related to the householder. There may be only one unmarried partner per household, and an unmarried partner may not be included in a married-couple household, as the householder cannot have both a spouse and an unmarried partner.

Comparability – The 1990 decennial census question had separate categories for “natural-born or adopted son/daughter” and “stepson/stepdaughter”; whereas, the American Community Survey questionnaire has one category for “son/daughter.” Compared to the 1990 decennial census, the American Community Survey has an additional category for “in-laws” as opposed to including them in the “other relatives.” The 2000 decennial census had separate categories for “adopted son/daughter,” “stepson/stepdaughter,” and “natural-born son/daughter,” as well as separate categories for “son-in-law/daughter-in-law” and “parent-in-law.”

Household Size

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Householder

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Immigrants

See [Foreign-Born Population](#).

Income in the Past 12 Months

The data on income were derived from answers to questionnaire Items 41 and 42, which were asked of the population 15 years old and over. “Total income” is the sum of the amounts reported separately for wage or salary income; net self-employment income; interest, dividends, or net rental or royalty income or income from estates and trusts; Social Security or railroad retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); public assistance or welfare payments; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and all other income.

Receipts from the following sources are not included as income: capital gains, money received from the sale of property (unless the recipient was engaged in the business of selling such property); the value of income “in kind” from food stamps, public housing subsidies, medical care, employer contributions for individuals, etc.; withdrawal of bank deposits; money borrowed; tax refunds; exchange of money between relatives living in the same household; gifts and lump-sum inheritances, insurance payments, and other types of lump-sum receipts.

Income Type in the Past 12 Months

The eight types of income reported in the American Community Survey are defined as follows:

1. Wage or salary income: Wage or salary income includes total money earnings received for work performed as an employee during the past 12 months. It includes wages, salary, armed forces pay, commissions, tips, piece-rate payments, and cash bonuses earned before deductions were made for taxes, bonds, pensions, union dues, etc.

2. Self-employment income: Self-employment income includes both farm and non-farm self-employment income.

Non-farm self-employment income includes net money income (gross receipts minus expenses) from one’s own business, professional enterprise, or partnership. Gross receipts include the value of all goods sold and services rendered. Expenses include costs of goods purchased, rent, heat, light, power, depreciation charges, wages and salaries paid, business taxes (not personal income taxes), etc.

Farm self-employment income includes net money income (gross receipts minus operating expenses) from the operation of a farm by a person on his or her own account, as an owner, renter, or sharecropper. Gross receipts include the value of all products sold, government farm programs, money received from the rental of farm equipment to others, and incidental receipts from the sale of wood, sand, gravel, etc. Operating expenses include cost of feed, fertilizer, seed, and other farming supplies, cash wages paid to farmhands, depreciation charges, cash rent, interest on farm mortgages, farm building repairs, farm taxes (not state and federal personal income taxes), etc. The value of fuel, food, or other farm products used for family living is not included as part of net income.

3. Interest, dividends, or net rental income: Interest, dividends, or net rental income includes interest on savings or bonds, dividends from stockholdings or membership in associations, net income from rental of property to others and receipts from boarders or lodgers, net royalties, and periodic payments from an estate or trust fund.

4. Social Security income: Social Security income includes Social Security pensions and survivor benefits, permanent disability insurance payments made by the Social Security Administration prior to deductions for medical insurance, and railroad retirement insurance checks from the U.S. government. Medicare reimbursements are not included.

5. Supplemental Security Income (SSI): Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a nationwide U.S. assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration that guarantees a minimum level of income for needy aged, blind, or disabled individuals. The American Community Survey questionnaire for Puerto Rico asks about the receipt of SSI; however, SSI is not a federally administered program in Puerto Rico. Therefore, it is probably not being interpreted by most respondents as the same as SSI in the United States. The only way a resident of Puerto Rico could have appropriately reported SSI would have been if they lived in the United States at any time during the past 12-month reference period and received SSI.

6. Public assistance income: Public assistance income includes general assistance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Separate payments received for hospital or other medical care, (vendor payments) are excluded. This does not include Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or non-cash benefits such as Food Stamps.

7. Retirement or Disability income: Retirement income includes: (1) retirement pensions and survivor benefits from a former employer; labor union; or federal, state, or local government; and the U.S. military; (2) income from workers' compensation; disability income from companies or unions; federal, state, or local government; and the U.S. military; (3) periodic receipts from annuities and insurance; and (4) regular income from IRA and Keogh plans. This does not include Social Security income.

8. All other income: All other income includes unemployment compensation, Veterans' Administration (VA) payments, alimony and child support, contributions received periodically from people not living in the household, military family allotments, and other kinds of periodic income other than earnings.

Income of households: This includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. Because many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income. Although the household income statistics cover the past 12 months, the characteristics of individuals and the composition of households refer to the time of enumeration. Thus, the income of the household does not include amounts received by individuals who were members of the household during all or part of the past 12 months if these individuals no longer resided in the household at the time of enumeration. Similarly, income amounts reported by individuals who did not reside in the household during the past 12 months but who were members of the household at the time of enumeration are included. However, the composition of most households was the same during the past 12 months as at the time of enumeration.

Income of families: In compiling statistics on family income, the incomes of all members 15 years old and over related to the householder are summed and treated as a single amount. Although the family income statistics cover the past 12 months, the characteristics of individuals and the composition of families refer to the time of enumeration. Thus, the income of the family does not include amounts received by

individuals who were members of the family during all or part of the past 12 months if these individuals no longer resided with the family at the time of enumeration. Similarly, income amounts reported by individuals who did not reside with the family during the past 12 months but who were members of the family at the time of enumeration are included. However, the composition of most families was the same during the past 12 months as at the time of enumeration.

Income of individuals: Income for individuals is obtained by summing the eight types of income for each person 15 years old and over. The characteristics of individuals are based on the time of enumeration, even though the amounts are for the past 12 months.

Median income: The median divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income and one-half above the median. For households and families, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of households and families including those with no income. The median income for individuals is based on individuals 15 years old and over with income. Median income for households, families, and individuals is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under “Derived Measures.”) Median income is rounded to the nearest whole dollar. Median income figures are calculated using linear interpolation if the width of the interval containing the estimate is \$2,500 or less. If the width of the interval containing the estimate is greater than \$2,500, Pareto interpolation is used. (For more information on medians and interpolation, see “[Derived Measures.](#)”)

Aggregate income: Aggregate income is the sum of all incomes for a particular universe. (For more information, see “[Aggregate](#)” under “Derived Measures.”)

Mean income: Mean income is the amount obtained by dividing the aggregate income of a particular statistical universe by the number of units in that universe. For example, mean household income is obtained by dividing total household income by the total number of households. (For more information, see “Aggregate income.”)

For the various types of income, the means are based on households having those types of income. For household income and family income, the mean is based on the distribution of the total number of households and families including those with no income. The mean income for individuals is based on individuals 15 years old and over with income. Mean income is rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

Care should be exercised in using and interpreting mean income values for small subgroups of the population. Because the mean is influenced strongly by extreme values in the distribution, it is especially susceptible to the effects of sampling variability, misreporting, and processing errors. The median, which is not affected by extreme values, is, therefore, a better measure than the mean when the population base is small. The mean, nevertheless, is shown in some data products for most small subgroups because, when weighted according to the number of cases, the means can be added to

obtained summary measures for areas and groups other than those shown in Census Bureau tabulations. (For more information on means, see [“Derived Measures.”](#))

Earnings: Earnings are defined as the sum of wage or salary income and net income from self-employment. “Earnings” represent the amount of income received regularly for people 16 years old and over before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, bond purchases, union dues, Medicare deductions, etc.

Median earnings: The median divides the earnings distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half above the median. Median earnings is restricted to individuals 16 years old and over with earnings and is computed on the basis of a standard distribution. (See the “Standard Distributions” section under [“Derived Measures.”](#)) Median earnings figures are calculated using linear interpolation if the width of the interval containing the estimate is \$2,500 or less. If the width of the interval containing the estimate is greater than \$2,500, Pareto interpolation is used. (For more information on medians and interpolation, see [“Derived Measures.”](#))

Aggregate earnings: Aggregate earnings are the sum of wage/salary and net self-employment income for a particular universe of people 16 years old and over. (For more information, see [“Aggregate”](#) under [“Derived Measures.”](#))

Mean earnings: Mean earnings is calculated by dividing aggregate earnings by the population 16 years old and over with earnings. (For more information, see [“Aggregate earnings.”](#)) Mean earnings is rounded to the nearest whole dollar. (For more information on means, see [“Derived Measures.”](#))

Per capita income: Per capita income is the mean income computed for every man, woman, and child in a particular group. It is derived by dividing the aggregate income of a particular group by the total population in that group. (For more information, see [“Aggregate”](#) under [“Derived Measures.”](#)) Per capita income is rounded to the nearest whole dollar. (For more information on means, see [“Derived Measures.”](#))

Adjusting Income for Inflation: Income components were reported for the twelve months preceding the interview month. Monthly Consumer Price Indices (CPI) factors were used to inflation-adjust these components to a reference calendar year (January through December). For example, a household interviewed in March 2003 reports their income for March 2002 through February 2003. We adjust their income to the 2003 reference calendar year by multiplying their reported income by 2003 average annual CPI (January-December 2003) and then dividing by the average CPI for March 2002-February 2003.

In order to inflate income amounts from previous years, the dollar values on individual records are inflated to the latest year’s dollar values by multiplying by a factor equal to the average annual CPI-U-RS factor for the current year, divided by the average annual CPI-U-RS factor for the earlier/earliest year.

Limitation of the data: Since answers to income questions are frequently based on memory and not on records, many people tend to forget minor or sporadic sources of income and, therefore, underreport their income. Underreporting tends to be more pronounced for income sources that are not derived from earnings, such as public assistance, interest, dividends, and net rental income. Extensive computer editing procedures were instituted in the data processing operation to reduce some of these reporting errors and to improve the accuracy of the income data. These procedures corrected various reporting deficiencies and improved the consistency of reported income items associated with work experience and information on occupation and class of worker. For example, if people reported they were self employed on their own farm, not incorporated, but had reported only wage and salary earnings, the latter amount was shifted to self-employment income. Also, if any respondent reported total income only, the amount was generally assigned to one of the types of income items according to responses to the work experience and class-of-worker questions. Another type of problem involved non-reporting of income data. Where income information was not reported, procedures were devised to impute appropriate values with either no income or positive or negative dollar amounts for the missing entries. (For more information on imputation, see [“Accuracy of the Data.”](#))

In income tabulations for households and families, the lowest income group (for example, less than \$10,000) includes units that were classified as having no income in the past 12 months. Many of these were living on income “in kind,” savings, or gifts, were newly created families, or were families in which the sole breadwinner had recently died or left the household. However, many of the households and families who reported no income probably had some money income that was not reported in the American Community Survey.

Comparability: Users should exercise care when comparing income figures from the American Community Survey with those of Census 2000. While the same eight income questions were asked on both questionnaires, the ACS asked respondents to report their income for the “past 12 months.” The Census 2000 questionnaire, on the other hand, asked respondents to report income for the past calendar year (1999).

Also, the income data shown in ACS tabulations are not directly comparable with those that may be obtained from statistical summaries of income tax returns. Income, as defined for federal tax purposes, differs somewhat from the Census Bureau concept. Moreover, the coverage of income tax statistics is different because of the exemptions for people having small amounts of income and the inclusion of net capital gains in tax returns. Furthermore, members of some families file separate returns and others file joint returns; consequently, the tax reporting unit is not consistent with the census household, family, or person units.

The earnings data shown in ACS tabulations are not directly comparable with earnings records of the Social Security Administration (SSA). The earnings record data for SSA excludes the earnings of some civilian government employees, some employees of nonprofit organizations, workers covered by the Railroad Retirement Act, and people not

covered by the program because of insufficient earnings. Because ACS data are obtained from household questionnaires, they may differ from SSA earnings record data, which are based upon employers' reports and the federal income tax returns of self-employed people.

The Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) publishes annual data on aggregate and per-capita personal income received by the population for states, metropolitan areas, and selected counties. Aggregate income estimates based on the income statistics shown in ACS products usually would be less than those shown in the BEA income series for several reasons. The ACS data are obtained from a household survey, whereas the BEA income series is estimated largely on the basis of data from administrative records of business and governmental sources. Moreover, the definitions of income are different. The BEA income series includes some items not included in the income data shown in ACS publications, such as income "in kind," income received by nonprofit institutions, the value of services of banks and other financial intermediaries rendered to people without the assessment of specific charges, and Medicare payments. On the other hand, the ACS income data include contributions for support received from people not residing in the same household if the income is received on a regular basis.

In comparing income for the most recent year with income from earlier years, users should note that an increase or decrease in money income does not necessarily represent a comparable change in real income, unless adjusted for inflation.

Industry, Occupation, and Class of Worker

The data on industry, occupation, and class of worker were derived from answers to questionnaire Items 35 through 40. These questions were asked of all people 15 years old and over who had worked in the past 5 years. Information on industry relates to the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization; occupation describes the kind of work the person does on the job.

For employed people, the data refer to the person's job during the previous week. For those who worked two or more jobs, the data refer to the job where the person worked the greatest number of hours. For unemployed people, the data refer to their last job. The industry and occupation statistics are compiled from data that are coded based on the detailed classification systems developed for Census 2000 and modified in 2002.

Respondents provided the data for the tabulations by writing on the questionnaires descriptions of their kind of business or industry and the kind of work or occupation they are doing. A clerical staff in the National Processing Center in Jeffersonville converted the written questionnaire descriptions to codes by comparing these descriptions to entries in the *Alphabetical Index of Industries and Occupations*. For the industry code, these coders also referred to an Employer Name List (ENL), which was formerly called Company Name List. The Census Bureau developed this list from the American Business Index, a publication that contained the names of business establishments and their North American Industry

Classification System (NAICS) designation. The ENL converts the individual company's NAICS designation to census codes, and thereby facilitated coding and maintained industry classification comparability.

Industry -- The American Community Survey uses the industry classification system developed for Census 2000 and modified in 2002. This system consists of 270 categories for employed people, classified into 20 sectors. However, these categories are aggregated into 20 broad industry categories. The modified 2002 census industry classification was developed from the 2002 NAICS published by the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget. The NAICS provides industry classifications that groups establishments into industries based on the activities in which they are primarily engaged. This system was developed to increase comparability in industry definitions between the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

The NAICS was created for establishment designations and provides detail about the smallest operating establishment. American Community Survey data are collected from households, and differ in detail and nature from those obtained from establishment surveys. Because of disclosure issues, ACS data cannot be released in great detail. Therefore, the industry classification system, while defined in NAICS terms, cannot reflect the full detail in all categories.

Occupation -- The American Community Survey uses the occupational classification system developed for the 2000 census and modified in 2002. This system consists of 509 specific occupational categories for employed people arranged into 23 major occupational groups. This classification was developed based on the *Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Manual: 2000*, published by the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget.

Some occupation groups are related closely to certain industries. Operators of transportation equipment, farm operators and workers, and healthcare providers account for major portions of their respective industries of transportation, agriculture, and health care. However, the industry categories include people in other occupations. For example, people employed in agriculture include truck drivers and bookkeepers; people employed in the transportation industry include mechanics, freight handlers, and payroll clerks; and people employed in the health care profession include occupations such as janitor, security guard, and secretary.

Class of Worker -- The data on class of worker were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 35. The information on class of worker refers to the same job as a respondent's industry and occupation and categorizes people according to the type of ownership of the employing organization. The class of worker categories are defined as follows:

Private wage and salary workers -- Includes people who worked for wages, salary, commission, tips, pay-in-kind, or piece rates for a private for-profit employer or a private not-for-profit, tax-exempt or charitable organization. Self-employed people whose business was incorporated are included with private wage and salary workers because they are paid employees of their

own companies. ACS tabulations present data separately for these subcategories: “For-profit,” “Not-for-profit,” “Own incorporated business,” and “Own not incorporated business.”

Government workers -- Includes people who were employees of any local, state, or federal governmental unit, regardless of the activity of the particular agency. For ACS tabulations, the data were presented separately for the three levels of government.

Employees of foreign governments, the United Nations, or other formal international organizations controlled by governments were classified as “federal government employee.”

Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers -- Includes people who worked for profit or fees in their own unincorporated business, profession, or trade, or who operated a farm.

Unpaid family workers -- Includes people who worked 15 hours or more a week without pay in a business or on a farm operated by a relative.

Salaried or self-employed in own incorporated business workers – Includes private wage and salary workers, because they are paid employees of their own companies

The industry category, “Public administration,” is limited to regular government functions such as legislative, judicial, administrative, and regulatory activities of governments. Other government organizations such as schools, hospitals, liquor stores, and bus lines are classified by industry according to the activity in which they are engaged. On the other hand, the class of worker government categories includes all government workers.

Occasionally respondents supplied industry, occupation, or class of worker descriptions that were not sufficiently specific for precise classification or did not report on these items at all. In the coding operation, certain types of incomplete entries were corrected using the *Alphabetical Index of Industries and Occupations*. For example, it was possible in certain situations to assign an industry code based on the occupation reported, or vice versa.

Following the coding operation, there was a computer edit and an allocation process. The edit first determined whether a respondent was in the universe that required an industry and occupation code. The codes for the three items (industry, occupation, and class of worker) were checked to ensure they were valid and were edited for their relation to each other. Invalid and inconsistent codes were either blanked or changed to consistent codes.

If one or more of the three codes was blank after the edit, a code was assigned from a “similar” person based on other items such as age, sex, education, and weeks worked. If all of the labor force and income data were blank, all of these economic items were assigned from one other similar person who provided all the necessary data.

Comparability – Comparability of industry and occupation data was affected by a number of factors, primarily the systems used to classify the questionnaire responses. In both the industry and occupation classification systems, changes in the individual categories limit comparability of the data from one year to another. These changes are needed to recognize the “birth” of new industries and occupations, the “death” of others, the growth and decline in existing industries and occupations, and the desire of analysts and other users for more detail in the presentation of the data. Probably the greatest cause of noncomparability is the movement of a segment from one category to another. Changes in the nature of jobs and respondent terminology and refinement of category composition made these movements necessary.

Data for the 1998 and 1999 ACS used the same industry and occupation classification systems used for the 1990 census; therefore, the data are comparable. Because of major changes to the industry and occupation classification systems in 1998, the 2000, 2001, and 2002 ACS data are comparable to the Census 2000 data and not to previous ACS data. In ACS as in Census 2000, both the industry and occupation classifications had major revisions to reflect the shift from the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and the changes within the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). In 2002, NAICS underwent another change and the industry codes were again changed accordingly. Because of the possibility of new industries and occupations being added to the list of codes, the Census Bureau needed to have more flexibility in adding codes. Consequently, in 2002, both industry and occupation census codes went through a major renovation going from three-digit codes to four-digit codes. The changes to these code classifications mean that the ACS 2003 data are not completely comparable to the data from earlier surveys.

There is a small difference in the “Class of Worker” question on the 1996-1998 American Community Survey questionnaire from the 1999-2001 American Community Survey, and the 1990 and 2000 decennial census questionnaires. The 1996-1998 American Community Survey the “Class of Worker” question had an additional response category for “Active duty US Armed Forces.” People who marked this category were tabulated as federal government workers. Otherwise, the questions and classification systems are the same as the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses.

Journey to Work

Place of Work – The data on place of work were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 24, which was asked of people who indicated in Question 23 that they worked at some time during the reference week. (See “[Reference Week](#).”)

Data were tabulated for workers 16 years old and over; that is, members of the Armed Forces and civilians who were at work during the reference week. Data on place of work refer to the geographic location at which workers carried out their occupational activities during the reference week. The exact address (number and street name) of the place of work was asked, as well as the place (city, town, or post office); whether or not the place of work was inside or outside the limits of that city or town; and the county, state, and ZIP Code. If the respondent's employer operated in more than one location, the exact address of the location or branch where he or she worked was requested. When the number and street name were

unknown, a description of the location, such as the building name or nearest street or intersection, was to be entered.

People who worked at more than one location during the reference week were asked to report the location at which they worked the greatest number of hours. People who regularly worked in several locations each day during the reference week were requested to give the address at which they began work each day. For cases in which daily work did not begin at a central place each day, the respondent was asked to provide as much information as possible to describe the area in which he or she worked most during the reference week.

Place-of-work data may show a few workers who made unlikely daily work trips (e.g., workers who lived in New York and worked in California). This result is attributable to people who worked during the reference week at a location that was different from their usual place of work, such as people away from home on business.

In areas where the workplace address was coded to the block level, people were tabulated as working inside or outside a specific place based on the location of that address regardless of the response to Question 24c concerning city/town limits. In areas where it was impossible to code the workplace address to the block level, people were tabulated as working in a place if a place name was reported in Question 24b and the response to Question 24c was either “Yes” or the item was left blank. In selected areas, census designated places (CDPs) may appear in the tabulations as places of work. The accuracy of place-of-work data for CDPs may be affected by the extent to which their census names were familiar to respondents, and by coding problems caused by similarities between the CDP name and the names of other geographic jurisdictions in the same vicinity.

Place-of-work data are given for selected minor civil divisions (MCDs), (generally cities, towns, and townships) in the 12 strong MCD states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin), based on the responses to the place of work question. Many towns and townships are regarded locally as equivalent to a place, and therefore, were reported as the place of work. When a respondent reported a locality or incorporated place that formed a part of a township or town, the coding and tabulating procedure was designed to include the response in the total for the township or town.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 American Community Survey items are the same as the 1990 decennial census items. The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items are the same as the decennial census 2000 items, except the numbering for the 2003 American Community Survey is different from previous years of the American Community Survey. The American Community Survey and the decennial census 2000 differ from the 1990 census items, in that the labels on the write-in spaces were modified to provide clarifications.

Since both the American Community Survey and the decennial censuses are related to a ‘reference week’ that has some variability, the data do not reflect any single week. Since the American Community Survey data are collected over 12 months, the reference week in American Community Survey has a greater range of variation. (See “[Reference Week](#).”)

Limitation of the Data --The data on place of work is related to a reference week; that is, the calendar week preceding the date on which the respondents completed their questionnaires or were interviewed. This week is not the same for all respondents because data were collected over a 12-month period. The lack of a uniform reference week means that the place-of-work data reported in the survey will not exactly match the distribution of workplace locations observed or measured during an actual workweek.

The place-of-work data are estimates of people 16 years and over who were both employed and at work during the reference week (including people in the Armed Forces). People who did not work during the reference week but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to illness, bad weather, industrial dispute, vacation, or other personal reasons are not included in the place-of-work data. Therefore, the data on place of work understate the total number of jobs or total employment in a geographic area during the reference week. It also should be noted that people who had irregular, casual, or unstructured jobs during the reference week might have erroneously reported themselves as not working.

The address where the individual worked most often during the reference week was recorded on the questionnaire. If a worker held two jobs, only data about the primary job (the job where one worked the greatest number of hours during the preceding week) was requested. People who regularly worked in several locations during the reference week were requested to give the address at which they began work each day. For cases in which daily work was not begun at a central place each day, the respondent was asked to provide as much information as possible to describe the area in which he or she worked most during the reference week.

Means of Transportation to Work--The data on means of transportation to work were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 25, which was asked of people who indicated in Question 23 that they worked at some time during the reference week. (See "[Reference Week](#).") Means of transportation to work refers to the principal mode of travel or type of conveyance that the worker usually used to get from home to work during the reference week.

People who used different means of transportation on different days of the week were asked to specify the one they used most often, that is, the greatest number of days. People who used more than one means of transportation to get to work each day were asked to report the one used for the longest distance during the work trip. The category, "Car, truck, or van," includes workers using a car (including company cars but excluding taxicabs), a truck of one-ton capacity or less, or a van. The category, "Public transportation," includes workers who used a bus or trolley bus, streetcar or trolley car, subway or elevated, railroad, ferryboat, or taxicab, even if each mode is not shown separately in the tabulation. The category, "Other means," includes workers who used a mode of travel that is not identified separately within the data distribution. The category, "Other means," may vary from table to table, depending on the amount of detail shown in a particular distribution.

The means of transportation data for some areas may show workers using modes of public transportation that are not available in those areas (for example, subway or elevated riders in a metropolitan area where there is no subway or elevated service). This result is largely due to people who worked during the reference week at a location that was different from their

usual place of work (such as people away from home on business in an area where subway service was available), and people who used more than one means of transportation each day but whose principal means was unavailable where they lived (for example, residents of nonmetropolitan areas who drove to the fringe of a metropolitan area, and took the commuter railroad most of the distance to work).

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items were changed to match the decennial census 2000 item, which is the same as the 1990 census item except for the format of the skip instructions. The numbering for the 2003 American Community Survey is different from previous years of the American Community Survey.

Private Vehicle Occupancy – The data on private vehicle occupancy were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 26. This question was asked of people who indicated in Question 23 that they worked at some time during the reference week and who reported in Question 25 that their means of transportation to work was “Car, truck, or van.” (See [“Reference Week.”](#))

Private vehicle occupancy refers to the number of people who usually rode to work in the vehicle during the reference week. The category, “Drove alone,” includes people who usually drove alone to work as well as people who were driven to work by someone who then drove back home or to a non-work destination. The category, “Carpooled,” includes workers who reported that two or more people usually rode to work in the vehicle during the reference week.

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items were changed to match the decennial census 2000 item, which is the same as the 1990 census item except for the format of the skip instructions. The numbering for the 2003 American Community Survey is different from previous years of the American Community Survey.

Workers Per Car, Truck, or Van – This is obtained by dividing the number of workers who reported using a car, truck, or van to get to work by the number of such vehicles used. The number of vehicles used is derived by counting each person who drove alone as one vehicle, each person who reported being in a two-person carpool as one-half vehicle, each person who reported being in a three-person carpool as one-third vehicle, and so on, and then summing all the vehicles.

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey means of transportation and private vehicle occupancy items are similar to the 1990 decennial census and decennial census 2000 items. The numbering for the 2003 American Community Survey is different from previous years of the American Community Survey. In order to save space, the American Community Survey response area allows for a write-in rather than labeled response categories in the census.

Time Leaving Home to Go to Work – The data on time leaving home to go to work were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 27. This question was asked of people who indicated in Question 23 that they worked at some time during the reference week, and who reported in Question 25 that they worked outside their home. The departure time refers to the

time of day that the respondent usually left home to go to work during the reference week. (See "[Reference Week](#).")

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items are similar to the 1990 decennial census and decennial census 2000 items, except that the American Community Survey has “Hour” and “Minute” labels in the answer space. The numbering for the 2003 American Community Survey is different from previous years of the American Community Survey.

Travel Time to Work – The data on travel time to work were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 28. This question was asked of people who indicated in Question 23 that they worked at some time during the reference week, and who reported in Question 25 that they worked outside their home. Travel time to work refers to the total number of minutes that it usually took the worker to get from home to work during the reference week. The elapsed time includes time spent waiting for public transportation, picking up passengers in carpools, and time spent in other activities related to getting to work. (See "[Reference Week](#).")

Comparability – The 1999-2003 American Community Survey items are the same as the 1990 decennial census and decennial census 2000 items, except the numbering for the 2003 American Community Survey is different from previous years of the American Community Survey.

Labor Force Status

See [Employment Status](#)

Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English

Language Spoken at Home – Data on language spoken at home were derived from the answers to questionnaire Items 13a and 13b, which were asked of persons 5 years old and older. Instructions mailed with the American Community Survey questionnaire stated that a respondent should mark “Yes” in Question 13a if the person sometimes or always spoke a language other than English at home but should mark “No” if a language was spoken only at school or if speaking was limited to a few expressions or slang. For Question 13b, respondents were instructed to print the name of the non-English language spoken at home. If the person spoke more than one language other than English, the person was to report the language spoken most often or, if they cannot determine the one spoken most often, the language learned first.

Questions 13a and 13b referred to a language spoken at home in an effort to measure the current use of a language other than English. Persons who knew languages other than English but did not use them at home, or who only used them elsewhere, were excluded. Most

respondents who reported speaking a language other than English at home also speak English. The questions did not permit determination of the primary language of persons who spoke both English and another language.

The write-in responses listed in Question 13b (specific language spoken) were keyed onto computer files, and then coded into more than 380 detailed language categories using an automated coding system. The automated procedure compared write-in responses reported by respondents with entries in a computer dictionary or the master code list, which contained approximately 55,000 previously coded language names and variants of names. The computer dictionary was developed from the 2,000-name original master file and then expanded as unmatched entries were coded in the 1990 census and each American Community Survey. Each write-in response was given a numeric code that was associated with one of the detailed categories in the dictionary. The computerized matching assured that identical alphabetic entries received the same code. Write-ins that did not match the computer dictionary were clerically coded and added to the file. If the respondent listed more than one non-English language, only the first was coded.

The write-in responses represented the names people used for languages they speak. They may not match the names or categories used by linguists. The sets of categories used are sometimes geographic and sometimes linguistic. The following table provides an illustration of the content of the classification schemes used to present language data.

Four and Thirty-Nine Group Classifications of Languages Spoken at Home with Illustrative Examples

Four-Group Classification	Thirty-nine Group Classification	Examples
Spanish	Spanish and Spanish Creole	Spanish, Ladino
Other Indo-European languages	French	French, Cajun, Patois
	French Creole	Haitian Creole
	Italian	
	Portuguese and Portuguese Creole	Portuguese, Papiamentu
	German	
	Yiddish	
	Other West Germanic languages	Dutch, Pennsylvania Dutch, Afrikaans
	Scandinavian languages	Danish, Norwegian, Swedish
	Greek	
	Russian	
	Polish	
	Serbo-Croatian	Serbo-Croatian, Croatian,

		Serbian
	Other Slavic languages	Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian
	Armenian	
	Persian	
	Gujarati	
	Hindi	
	Urdu	
	Other Indic languages	Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Romany
	Other Indo-European languages	Albanian, Gaelic, Lithuanian, Rumanian
Asian and Pacific Island languages	Chinese	Cantonese, Formosan, Mandarin
	Japanese	
	Korean	
	Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	
	Miao, Hmong	
	Thai	
	Laotian	
	Vietnamese	
	Other Asian languages	Dravidian languages (Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil), Turkish
	Tagalog	
	Other Pacific Island languages	Chamorro, Hawaiian, Ilocano, Indonesian, Samoan
All other languages	Navajo	
	Other Native North American languages	Apache, Cherokee, Dakota, Pima, Yupik
	Hungarian	
	Arabic	
	Hebrew	
	African languages	Amharic, Ibo, Twi, Yoruba, Bantu, Swahili, Somali
	Other and unspecified languages	Syriac, Finnish, Other languages of the Americas, not reported

Household Language – In households where one or more people (age 5 years old or over) speak a language other than English, the household language assigned to all household members is the non-English language spoken by the first person with a non-English language in the following order: householder, spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandchild, other relative, stepchild, unmarried partner, housemate or roommate, and other nonrelatives. Thus, a person who speaks only English may have a non-English household language assigned to him/her in tabulations of individuals by household language.

Ability to Speak English – People 5 years old and over who reported that they spoke a language other than English in Question 13a were asked in Question 13c to indicate their ability to speak English based on one of the following categories: “Very well,” “Well,” “Not well,” or “Not at all,” in Question 13c. The data on ability to speak English represent the person’s own perception of his or her own ability or, because American Community Survey questionnaires are usually completed by one household member, the responses may represent the perception of another household member. Respondents were not instructed on how to interpret the response categories in Question 13c.

Linguistic Isolation – A linguistically isolated household is one in which all adults (high school age and older) have some limitation in communicating in English. A household is classified as “linguistically isolated” if no household members age 14 years and over speak only English, and no household members age 14 years and over who speak a language other than English speak English “Very well.” All the members of a linguistically isolated household are tabulated as linguistically isolated, including members under 14 years old who may speak only English.

Limitation of the Data – The language question is about current use of a non-English language, not about ability to speak another language or use of such a language in the past. People who speak a language other than English, but do not do so at home, should not be reported as speaking a language other than English at home. People whose mother tongue was a non-English language but who do not currently use the language at home should not report the language. Some people who speak a language other than English at home may have first learned that language at school. These people would be expected to indicate that they spoke English “Very well.”

The detail in which language names were coded may give a false impression of the linguistic precision of these data. The names used by speakers of a language to identify it may reflect ethnic, geographic, or political affiliations, and do not necessarily respect linguistic distinctions. Although, according to linguists, there are more than 6,000 languages in the world, the Census Bureau codes all reported languages into about 380 categories of languages and language families. The categories shown in the tabulations were based on a number of criteria, such as information about the number of speakers of each language that might be expected in a sample of the U.S. population.

Comparability – The American Community Survey questions and coding procedures were the same as those for the 1990 decennial census and the 2000 decennial census. The minor changes in specific codes starting in 1999 do not affect the tabulations of languages. Write-in entries were keyed to a computerized file in the American Community Survey and the 1990 census. For the 2000 decennial census, write-ins were optically scanned. Those that failed

optical character recognition were keyed. The tabulations for 2000 are consistent with the 2000 census tabulations and show more language detail than the 1990 census.

Marital Status

The data on marital status were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 4. The marital status classification refers to the status at the time of interview. Data on marital status are tabulated only for people 15 years old and over.

All people were asked whether they were “now married,” “widowed,” “divorced,” “separated,” or “never married.” Couples who live together (unmarried people, people in common-law marriages) were allowed to report the marital status they considered the most appropriate. When marital status was not reported, it was imputed according to the relationship to the householder and sex and age of the person.

Never Married – Includes all people who have never been married, including people whose only marriage(s) was annulled.

Ever Married – Includes people married at the time of interview (including those separated), widowed, or divorced.

Now Married, Except Separated – Includes people whose current marriage has not ended through widowhood, divorce, or separation (regardless of previous marital history). The category may also include couples who live together or people in common-law marriages if they consider this category the most appropriate. In certain tabulations, currently married people are further classified as “spouse present” or “spouse absent.”

Separated – Includes people legally separated or otherwise absent from their spouse because of marital discord. This category also includes people who have been deserted or who have parted because they no longer want to live together but who have not obtained a divorce.

Widowed – Includes widows and widowers who have not remarried.

Divorced – Includes people who are legally divorced and who have not remarried.

Now Married – All people whose current marriage has not ended by widowhood or divorce. This category includes people defined above as “separated.”

- **Spouse Present** – Married people whose wife or husband was reported as a member of the same household.
- **Spouse Absent** – Married people whose wife or husband was not reported as a member of the same household.
 - **Separated** – Defined above.
 - **Spouse Absent, Other** – Married people whose wife or husband was not reported as a member of the same household, excluding separated. Included is

any person whose spouse was employed and living away from home or in an institution or absent in the Armed Forces.

In selected tabulations, data for married and separated people are reorganized and combined with information on the presence of the spouse in the same household.

Differences between the number of currently married males and the number of currently married females occur because of reporting differences and because some husbands and wives have their usual residence in different areas. By definition, the numbers would be the same.

Comparability – The American Community Survey response categories and definitions are the same as those for the 1990 and 2000 decennial census.

Means of Transportation to Work

See [Journey to Work](#)

Migration

See [Residence 1 Year Ago](#)

Native Population

The native population includes anyone who was a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (such as Guam), or abroad of American (U.S. citizen) parent or parents. See [Citizenship Status](#).

Occupation

See [Industry, Occupation, and Class of Worker](#)

Own Children

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Period of Military Service

See [Veteran Status](#)

Persons in Family

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Persons in Household

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Place of Birth

The data on place of birth were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 7. Respondents were asked to select one of two categories: (1) in the United States, (2) outside the United States. Respondents selecting category (1) were then asked to report the name of the state while respondents selecting category (2) were then asked to report the name of the foreign country, or Puerto Rico, Guam, etc. People not reporting a place of birth were assigned the state or country of birth of another family member, or were allocated the response of another individual with similar characteristics. People born outside the United States were asked to report their place of birth according to current international boundaries. Since numerous changes in boundaries of foreign countries have occurred in the last century, some people may have reported their place of birth in terms of boundaries that existed at the time of their birth or emigration, or in accordance with their own national preference.

Information on place of birth and citizenship status was used to classify the population into two major categories: native and foreign born. (See “Citizenship Status.”)

Native – The native population includes anyone who was a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes those born in the United States, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as those born abroad of at least one American (U.S. citizen) parent. The native population is divided into the following groups: people born in the state in which they resided at the time of the survey; people born in a different state, by region; people born in Puerto Rico or one of the U.S. Island Areas; and people born abroad with at least one American (U.S. citizen) parent. (See “Citizenship Status.”)

Foreign Born – The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a U.S. citizen. (See “Citizenship Status.”)

The foreign-born population is shown by selected area, country, or region of birth. The places of birth shown in data products were chosen based on the number of respondents who reported that area or country of birth.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 items are the same as the 1990 decennial census item. The 1999-2003 place of birth items were changed to match the decennial census 2000 item that was reworded. Check boxes were added to distinguish between born in the United States versus born in a foreign country. The foreign country write-in space was separated from the state write-in space.

Place of Work

See [Journey to Work](#)

Poverty Status

The poverty status data were derived from questionnaire Items 41 and 42, the same questions used to derive the income data. (For more information, see the discussion under “Income.”) The Social Security Administration (SSA) developed the original poverty definition in 1964, which federal interagency committees subsequently revised in 1969 and 1980. The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) *Directive 14* prescribes this definition as the official poverty measure for federal agencies to use in their statistical work. Poverty statistics presented in American Community Survey products adhere to the standards defined by the Office of Management and Budget in *Directive 14*.

Derivation of the Current Poverty Measure

When the SSA created the poverty definition in 1964, it focused on family food consumption. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) used its data about the nutritional needs of children and adults to construct food plans for families. Within each food plan, dollar amounts varied according to the total number of people in the family and the family's composition; that is, the number of children within each family. The cheapest of these plans, the Economy Food Plan, was designed to address the dietary needs of families on an austere budget.

Since the USDA's 1955 Food Consumption Survey showed that families of three or more people across all income levels spent roughly one-third of their income on food, the SSA multiplied the cost of the Economy Food Plan by three to obtain dollar figures for total family income. These dollar figures, with some adjustments, later became the official poverty thresholds. Since the Economy Food Plan budgets varied by family size and composition, so too did the poverty thresholds. For two-person families, the thresholds were adjusted by slightly higher factors because those households had higher fixed costs. Thresholds for unrelated individuals were calculated as a fixed proportion of the corresponding thresholds for two-person families.

The poverty thresholds are revised annually to allow for changes in the cost of living as reflected in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The poverty thresholds are the same for all parts of the country; they are not adjusted for regional, state, or local variations in the cost of living. For a detailed discussion of the poverty definition, see U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Series P60-210, *Poverty in the United States: 1999*.

How the Census Bureau Determines Poverty Status

In determining the poverty status of families and unrelated individuals, the Census Bureau uses thresholds (income cutoffs) arranged in a two-dimensional matrix. The matrix consists of family size (from one person to nine or more people) cross-classified by presence and number of family members under 18 years old (from no children present to eight or more children present). Unrelated individuals and two-person families are further differentiated by age of reference person (RP) (under 65 years old and 65 years old and over).

To determine a person's poverty status, one compares the person's total family income in the last twelve

months with the poverty threshold appropriate for that person's family size and composition (see example below). If the total income of that person's family is less than the threshold appropriate for that family, then the person is considered poor or "below the poverty level," together with every member of his or her family. If a person is not living with anyone related by birth, marriage, or adoption, then the person's own income is compared with his or her poverty threshold. The total number of people below the poverty level was the sum of people in families and the number of unrelated individuals with incomes in the last twelve months below the poverty level.

Since ACS respondents are interviewed throughout the year and asked about their income in the last twelve months, the appropriate threshold for a given family or individual person is determined by the threshold from the base year (1982) multiplied by the average of all the twelve monthly poverty factors (converted CPI-U) preceding the interview month.

For example, consider a family of three with one child under 18 years of age, which was interviewed in the month of July 2003 and reported a total income of \$12,000 for the last 12 months -- from July 2002 to June 2003.

In order to determine the poverty status of this family we need: (1) the threshold for the 1982 base year for family size three with one child under 18 years of age which is \$7,765 (see the table "Poverty Thresholds in 1982, by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years (Dollars)," below); and (2) the average poverty factor for the twelve months starting from July 2002 to June 2003, which is 1.88692 (see "The 2003 Poverty Factors," below). The product of the above ($\$7,765 \times 1.88692$), which is \$14,652, is the appropriate threshold for family of three with one child under 18 years of age. Thus, comparing the threshold \$14,652 against the family's annual income \$12,000 reveals that this family (all members of the family) is considered to have an annual income that is below the poverty level in 2003.

The 2003 Poverty Factors:

Months	Poverty Factors
January	1.86377
February	1.86769
March	1.87225
April	1.87695
May	1.88038
June	1.88361
July	1.88692
August	1.89021
September	1.89361
October	1.89724
November	1.90044
December	1.90321

Poverty Thresholds in 1982, by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years (Dollars)										
Size of family unit	Related children under 18 years									
	Weighted average thresholds	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or more
One person (unrelated individual)	\$4,901									
Under 65 years	5,019	5,019								
65 years and over	4,626	4,626								
Two persons	6,281									
Householder under 65 years	6,487	6,459	6,649							
Householder 65 years and over	5,836	5,831	6,624							
Three persons	7,693	7,546	7,765	7,772						
Four persons	9,862	9,950	10,112	9,783	9,817					
Five persons	11,684	11,999	12,173	11,801	11,512	11,336				
Six persons	13,207	13,801	13,855	13,570	13,296	12,890	12,649			
Seven persons	15,036	15,879	15,979	15,637	15,399	14,955	14,437	13,869		
Eight persons or more	16,719	17,760	17,917	17,594	17,312	16,911	16,403	15,872	15,738	
Nine persons or more	19,698	21,364	21,468	21,183	20,943	20,549	20,008	19,517	19,397	18,649

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

Individuals for Whom Poverty Status is Determined--Poverty status was determined for all people except institutionalized people, people in military group quarters, people in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old. These groups also were excluded from the denominator when calculating poverty rates.

Specified Poverty Levels – For various reasons, the official poverty definition does not satisfy all the needs of data users. Therefore, some of the data reflect the number of people below different percentages of the poverty level. These specified poverty levels are obtained by multiplying the official thresholds by the appropriate factor. For example, the average income cutoff at 125 percent of the poverty level was \$21,286 (\$17,029 x 1.25) in 1999 for a family of four people.

Income Deficit--Income deficit represents the difference between the total income in the last twelve months of families and unrelated individuals below the poverty level and their respective poverty thresholds. In computing the income deficit, families reporting a net income loss are assigned zero

dollars and for such cases the deficit is equal to the poverty threshold.

This measure provides an estimate of the amount, which would be required to raise the incomes of all poor families and unrelated individuals to their respective poverty thresholds. The income deficit is thus a measure of the degree of the impoverishment of a family or unrelated individual. However, please use caution when comparing the average deficits of families with different characteristics. Apparent differences in average income deficits may, to some extent, be a function of differences in family size.

Aggregate Income Deficit – Aggregate income deficit refers only to those families or unrelated individuals who are classified as below the poverty level. It is defined as the group (e.g., type of family) sum total of differences between the appropriate threshold and total family income or total personal income. (For more information, see “Aggregate” under “Derived Measures.”)

Mean Income Deficit – Mean income deficit represents the amount obtained by dividing the total income deficit for a group below the poverty level by the number of families (or unrelated individuals) in that group. (For more information, see “Aggregate Income Deficit.”) As mentioned above, please use caution when comparing mean income deficits of families with different characteristics, as apparent differences may, to some extent, be a function of differences in family size. Mean income deficit is rounded to the nearest whole dollar. (For more information on means, see “Derived Measures.”)

Comparability – Because of differences in survey methodology (questionnaire design, method of data collection, sample size, etc.), the poverty rate estimates obtained from American Community Survey data may differ from those reported in the Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, and those reported in Census 2000. Please refer to www.census.gov/hhes/income/guidance.html for more details.

POVERTY STATUS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN LAST 12 MONTHS

Since poverty is defined at the family level and not the household level, the poverty status of the household is determined by the poverty status of the householder. Households are classified as poor when the total income of the householder's family in the last twelve months is below the appropriate poverty threshold. (For nonfamily householders, their own income is compared with the appropriate threshold.) The income of people living in the household who are unrelated to the householder is not considered when determining the poverty status of a household, nor does their presence affect the family size in determining the appropriate threshold. The poverty thresholds vary depending upon three criteria: size of family, number of children, and, for one- and two-person families, age of the householder.

Private Vehicle Occupancy

See [Journey to Work](#)

Race

The data on race were derived from answers to the question on race, Item 6. The concept of race, as used by the Census Bureau, reflects self-identification by people according to the race or races with which they most closely identify. These categories are socio-political constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature. Furthermore, the race categories include both racial and national-origin groups.

The racial classifications used by the Census Bureau adhere to the October 30, 1997, Federal Register Notice entitled, “*Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*,” issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These standards govern the categories used to collect and present federal data on race and ethnicity. The OMB requires five minimum categories (White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander) for race. The race categories are described below with a sixth category, “Some other race,” added with OMB approval. In addition to the five race groups, the OMB also states that respondents should be offered the option of selecting one or more races.

If an individual did not provide a race response, the race or races of the householder or other household members were assigned using specific rules of precedence of household relationship. For example, if race was missing for a natural-born child in the household, then either the race or races of the householder, another natural-born child, or the spouse of the householder were assigned. If race was not reported for anyone in the household, the race or races of a householder in a previously processed household were assigned. This procedure is a variation of the general imputation procedures described in [“Accuracy of the Data.”](#)

White – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “White” or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish.

Black or African American – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as “Black, African Am., or Negro,” or provide written entries such as African American, Afro-American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian.

American Indian or Alaska Native – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. It includes people who classified themselves as described below.

American Indian — This category includes people who indicate their race as “American Indian,” entered the name of an Indian tribe, or reported such entries as Canadian Indian, French American Indian, or Spanish American Indian.

American Indian Tribe — Respondents who identified themselves as American Indian were asked to report their enrolled or principal tribe. Therefore, tribal data in tabulations reflect the written entries reported on the questionnaires. Some of the entries (for example, Iroquois, Sioux, Colorado River, and Flathead) represent nations or reservations. The information on tribe is based on self-identification and therefore does not reflect any designation of a federally or state-recognized tribe. The information for the American Community Survey is derived from the American Indian Tribal Classification List for the 1990 census that was updated for Census 2000 and the ACS based on a December 1997, *Federal Register* Notice, entitled “Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Service From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs,” Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, issued by the Office of Management and Budget.

Alaska Native – This category includes written responses of Eskimos, Aleuts, and Alaska Indians as well as entries such as Arctic Slope, Inupiat, Yupik, Alutiiq, Egegik, and Pribilovian. The Alaska tribes are the Alaskan Athabaskan, Tlingit, and Haida. The information for ACS is based on the American Indian Tribal Classification List for the 1990 census and Census 2000, which was expanded to list the individual Alaska Native Villages when provided as a written response for race.

Asian – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. It includes “Asian Indian,” “Chinese,” “Filipino,” “Korean,” “Japanese,” “Vietnamese,” and “Other Asian.” See Table A below.

Table A. Asian Groups Reported in the American Community Survey

Asian Indian
Chinese
Filipino
Japanese
Korean
Vietnamese
Cambodian
Hmong
Laotian
Thai
Other Asian 1/
Bangladeshi
Bhutanese
Burmese
Indochinese

Indonesian
Iwo Jiman
Madagascar
Malaysian
Maldivian
Nepalese
Okinawan
Pakistani
Singaporean
Sri Lankan
Asian, not specified 2/

1/ In some data products, specific groups listed under “Other Asian” or “Other Pacific Islander” are shown separately. Groups not shown are tabulated as “All other Asian” or “All other Pacific Islander,” respectively.

2/ Includes entries such as Asian American, Asian, and Asiatic.

Asian Indian --This category includes people who indicate their race as “Asian Indian” or identified themselves as Bengalese, Bharat, Dravidian, East Indian, or Goanese.

Chinese – This category includes people who indicate their race as “Chinese” or who identify themselves as Cantonese, or Chinese American. In some tabulations, written entries of Taiwanese are included with Chinese while in others they are shown separately.

Filipino – This category includes people who indicate their race as “Filipino” or who report entries such as Philipino, Philippine, or Filipino American.

Japanese – This category includes people who indicate their race as “Japanese” or who report entries such as Nipponese or Japanese American.

Korean – This category includes people who indicate their race as “Korean” or who provide a response of Korean American.

Vietnamese – This category includes people who indicate their race as “Vietnamese” or who provide a response of Vietnamese American.

Cambodian – This category includes people who provide a response such as Cambodian or Cambodia.

Hmong – This category includes people who provide a response such as Hmong, Laohmong, or Mong.

Laotian – This category includes people who provide a response such as Laotian, Laos, or Lao.

Thai – This category includes people who provide a response such as Thai, Thailand, or Siamese.

Other Asian – This category includes people who provide a response of Bangladeshi; Bhutanese; Burmese; Indochinese; Indonesian; Iwo Jiman; Madagascar; Malaysian; Maldivian; Nepalese; Okinawan; Pakistani; Singaporean; Sri Lankan; or Other Asian, specified and Other Asian, not specified.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who indicate their race as “Native Hawaiian,” “Guamanian or Chamorro,” “Samoaan,” and “Other Pacific Islander.” See Table B below.

Table B. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Groups Reported in the American Community Survey

Native Hawaiian
 Guamanian or Chamorro
 Samoaan
 Other Pacific Islander 1/
 Carolinian
 Chuukese (Trukese)
 Fijian
 Kosraean
 Melanesian 3/
 Micronesia 3/
 Northern Mariana Islander

 Palauan
 Papua New Guinean
 Pohnpeian
 Polynesian 3/
 Solomon Islander
 Tahitian
 Tokelauan
 Tongan
 Yapese
 Pacific Islander, not specified

1/ In some data products, specific groups listed under “Other Asian” or “Other Pacific Islander” are shown separately. Groups not shown are tabulated as “All other Asian” or “All other Pacific Islander,” respectively.

2/ Includes entries such as Asian American, Asian, and Asiatic.

3/ Melanesian, Micronesia, and Polynesian are Pacific Islander cultural groups.

Native Hawaiian – This category includes people who indicate their race as “Native Hawaiian” or who identify themselves as “Part Hawaiian” or “Hawaiian.”

Guamanian or Chamorro – This category includes people who indicate their race as such, including written entries of Guam or Chamorro.

Samoan – This category includes people who indicate their race as “Samoan” or who identify themselves as American Samoan or Western Samoan.

Other Pacific Islander – This category includes people who provide a write-in response of a Pacific Islander group such as Carolinian; Chuukese (Trukese); Fijian; Kosraean; Melanesian; Micronesian; Northern Mariana Islander; Palauan; Papua New Guinean; Pohnpeian; Polynesian; Solomon Islander; Tahitian; Tokelauan; Tongan; Yapese; or Other Pacific Islander, specified and Other Pacific Islander, not specified.

Some Other Race – Includes all other responses not included in the “White,” “Black or African American,” “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Asian,” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” race categories described above. Respondents providing write-in entries such as multiracial, mixed, interracial, or a Hispanic/Latino group (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban) in the “Some Other Race” write-in space are included in this category.

Two or More Races – People may have chosen to provide two or more races either by checking two or more race response check boxes, by providing multiple write-in responses, or by some combination of check boxes and write-in responses. The race response categories shown on the questionnaire are collapsed into the five minimum races identified by the OMB, and the Census Bureau “Some Other Race” category. For data product purposes, “Two or More Races” refers to combinations of two or more of the following race categories:

1. White
2. Black or African American
3. American Indian and Alaska Native
4. Asian
5. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
6. Some Other Race

There are 57 possible combinations (see below) involving the race categories shown above. Thus, according to this approach, a response of “White” and “Asian” was tallied as two or more races, while a response of “Japanese” and “Chinese” was not because “Japanese” and “Chinese” are both Asian responses. Tabulations of responses involving reporting of two or more races within the American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories are available in other data products.

Two or More Races (57 Possible Specified Combinations)

1. White; Black or African American
2. White; American Indian and Alaska Native
3. White; Asian
4. White; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
5. White; Some Other Race
6. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native

7. Black or African American; Asian
8. Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
9. Black or African American; Some Other Race
10. American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian
11. American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
12. American Indian and Alaska Native; Some Other Race
13. Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
14. Asian; Some Other Race
15. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
16. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native
17. White; Black or African American; Asian
18. White; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
19. White; Black or African American; Some Other Race
20. White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian
21. White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
22. White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some Other Race
23. White; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
24. White; Asian; Some Other Race
25. White; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
26. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian
27. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
28. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some Other Race
29. Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
30. Black or African American; Asian; Some Other Race
31. Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
32. American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
33. American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some Other Race
34. American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
35. Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
36. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian
37. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
38. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some Other Race
39. White; Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
40. White; Black or African American; Asian; Some Other Race
41. White; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
42. White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

43. White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some Other Race
44. White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
45. White; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
46. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
47. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some Other Race
48. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
49. Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
50. American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
51. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
52. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some Other Race
53. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
54. White; Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
55. White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
56. Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race
57. White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race

Given the many possible ways of displaying data on two or more races, data products will provide varying levels of detail. The most common presentation shows a single line indicating “Two or More Races.” Some data products provide totals of all 57 possible combinations of two or more races, as well as subtotals of people reporting a specific number of races, such as people reporting two races, people reporting three races, and so on. In other presentations on race, data are shown for the total number of people who reported one of the six categories alone or in combination with one or more other race categories. For example, the category, “Asian alone or in combination with one or more other races” includes people who reported Asian alone and people who reported Asian in combination with White, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race. This number, therefore, represents the maximum number of people who reported as Asian in the question on race. When this data presentation is used, the individual race categories will add to more than the total population because people may be included in more than one category.

Coding of Race Write-in Responses – The coding of race write-in entries included an automated review, computer edit, and coding operation. There were two types of coding operations: (1) automated coding where a write-in response was automatically coded if it

matched a write-in response already contained in a database known as the “master file,” and (2) expert coding, which took place when a write-in response did not match an entry already on the master file, and was sent to expert coders familiar with the subject matter. During the coding process, subject-matter specialists reviewed and coded written entries from four response categories on the race item: American Indian or Alaska Native, Other Asian, Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race. All tribal entries were coded as either American Indian or as Alaska Native.

Comparability – The data on race in the American Community Survey are not directly comparable. Ongoing research conducted following the 1990 census affected the ACS question on race since its inception in 1996. Also, the October 1997 revised standards for federal data on race and ethnicity issued by the OMB led to changes in the question on race for Census 2000. Consequently, in order to achieve consistency, other census-administered surveys such as ACS were modified to reflect changes required by OMB.

1996-1998 American Community Survey

- The sequence of the questions on race and Hispanic origin was switched. In 1998, the question on race immediately followed the question on Hispanic origin, while in the 1990 census, the question on race (Item 4) preceded the question on Hispanic origin (Item 7) with two intervening questions.
- The 1990 census category, “Black or Negro” was changed to “Black, African Am.”
- The 1990 census category, “Other race,” was renamed “Some other race.” A separate “Multiracial” category was added. The instruction to “print the race(s) or group below” pertained to both the “Some other race” and “Multiracial” categories.
- The “Indian (Amer.),” “Other Asian/Pacific Islander,” “Some other race,” and “Multiracial” response categories all shared a single write-in area.

1999-2002 American Community Survey

- The response category “Black, African Am.” was changed to “Black, African Am., or Negro” to correspond with the Census 2000 response category.
- The separate 1990 census and 1996-1998 ACS response categories “Indian (Amer.),” “Eskimo,” and “Aleut” were combined into one response category, “American Indian or Alaska Native.” Respondents were asked to “print name of enrolled or principal tribe” on a separate write-in line. This corresponds with the Census 2000 response category.
- The 1990 Asian or Pacific Islander category was separated into two categories, “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.” Also, the six detailed Asian groups were alphabetized; and the three detailed Pacific Islander groups were alphabetized after the Native Hawaiian response category.

- The response category “Hawaiian” was changed to “Native Hawaiian.” The response category “Guamanian” was changed to “Guamanian or Chamorro.” The response category “Other Asian/Pacific Islander” was split into two separate response categories, “Other Asian,” and “Other Pacific Islander.” These changes correspond to those in the Census 2000 response categories.
- The separate “multiracial” response category was dropped. Rather, respondents were instructed to “**Mark (x) one or more races** to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.” Respondents were allowed to select more than one category for race in Census 2000.
- In the American Community Survey, the “Other Asian,” “Other Pacific Islander,” and “Some other race” response categories shared the same write-in area. On the Census 2000 questionnaire, only the “Other Asian” and “Other Pacific Islander” response categories shared the same write-in area, and the “Some other race” category had a separate write-in area.

2003 American Community Survey

The response category “Black, African Am., or Negro” was changed to “Black or African American.”

Reference Week

The data on employment status and journey to work relate to the reference week; that is, the calendar week preceding the date on which the respondents completed their questionnaires or were interviewed. This week is not the same for all respondents since the interviewing was conducted over a 12-month period. The occurrence of holidays during the relative reference week could affect the data on actual hours worked during the reference week, but probably had no effect on overall measurement of employment status.

Comparability – Although the reference week for all respondents in the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses was not the same, the data were collected in a more compressed time period (that is less than 12 months).

Residence 1 Year Ago

The data on residence 1 year ago, which was obtained starting with the 1999 American Community Survey, were derived from answers to questionnaire Items 14a, 14b, and 14c which were asked of the population 1 year and older. Question 14a is a mobility screener question. Question 14b and 14c asked for the city or town, U.S. county, state or foreign country of residence 1 year ago for those people reporting in Question 14a that 1 year ago they lived in a different house from their current residence. Residence 1 year ago is used in conjunction with location of current residence to determine the extent of residential mobility

of the population and the resulting redistribution of the population across the various states, metropolitan areas, and regions of the country.

When no information on previous residence was reported for a person, information for other family members, if available, was used to assign a location of residence 1 year ago. All cases of nonresponse or incomplete response that were not assigned a previous residence based on information from other family members were allocated the previous residence of another person with similar characteristics who provided complete information.

The tabulation category, "Same house," includes all people 1 year and over who did not move during the 1 year as well as those who had moved and returned to their residence 1 year ago. The category, "Different house in the United States" includes people who lived in the United States 1 year ago but in a different house or apartment from the one they occupied at the time of interview. These movers are then further subdivided according to the type of move.

In most tabulations, movers within the U.S. are divided into three groups according to their previous residence: "Different house, same county," "Different county, same state," and "Different state." The last group may be further subdivided into region of residence 1 year ago. An additional category, "Abroad," includes those whose previous residence was in a foreign country, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, including members of the Armed Forces and their dependents. Some tabulations show movers who were residing in Puerto Rico or one of the U.S. Island Areas 1 year ago separately from those residing in foreign countries.

Comparability – The 1996-1998 items were the same as the 1990 decennial census items. The 1999-2003 migration items were changed to match the decennial census 2000 item, except for the time reference. The American Community Survey time period of 1 year reflects the on-going data collection on the American Community Survey, and allows for annual estimates of migration. A separate write-in line and a skip instruction were added for a foreign country response. This write-in line was moved to the mobility screener. The migration parts (city, county, and state response areas) were also reordered.

School Enrollment and Type of School

For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, data on school enrollment and grade or level attending were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 10. People were classified as enrolled in school if they were attending a "regular" public or private school or college at any time during the 3 months prior to the time of interview. The question included instructions to "include only nursery or preschool, kindergarten, elementary school, and schooling which leads to a high school diploma, or a college degree" as regular school or college. Respondents who did not answer the enrollment question were assigned the enrollment status and type of school of a person with the same age, sex, and race/Hispanic or Latino origin whose residence was in the same or nearby area.

A regular school advances a person toward an elementary school certificate, a high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional school (such as law or medicine) degree. Tutoring or correspondence schools are included if credit can be obtained in a “regular school.” People enrolled in “vocational, technical, or business school” were not reported as enrolled in regular school. Field interviewers were instructed to classify individuals who were home schooled as enrolled in private school. The guide sent out with the mail questionnaire does not include explicit instructions for how to classify home schoolers.

Enrolled in public and private school – Includes people who attended school in the reference period and indicated they were enrolled by marking one of the questionnaire categories for “public school, public college”, or “private school, private college”. The instruction guide defines a public school as “any school or college controlled and supported primarily by a local, county, State, or Federal Government.” Private schools are defined as “schools” supported and controlled primarily by religious organizations or other private groups. Respondents who marked both the “public” and “private” boxes are edited to the first entry, “public.”

Comparability – The major difference between the school enrollment items in the 1999-2003 American Community Survey and in the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses is the time reference. The American Community Survey question asked, “At any time in the past 3 months, has this person attended regular school or college”; the decennial census question asked, “At any time since February 1, (1990 or 2000), has this person attended regular school or college”. The reference date of February 1 is two months prior to the census date of April 1. The three-month reference in the American Community Survey is expected to pick up spring enrollment for respondents interviewed during the summer months.

While the 1999-2003 American Community Survey and the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses refer to “regular school or college,” the 1996-1998 American Community Survey did not restrict reporting to “regular” school, and contained an additional category for the “vocational, technical or business school.”

Data on school enrollment are also collected and published by other federal, state, and local government agencies. Because these data are obtained from administrative records of school systems and institutions of higher learning, they are only roughly comparable to data from population censuses and surveys. Differences in definitions and concepts, subject matter covered, time references, and data collection methods contribute to the differences in estimates. At the local level, the difference between the location of the institution and the residence of the student may affect the comparability of census and administrative data because census data are collected from and based on a respondent’s residence. Differences between the boundaries of school districts and census geographic units also may affect these comparisons.

Grade in Which Enrolled – For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey products, people reported to be enrolled in “public school, public college” or “private school, private college” were classified by grade or level according to responses to Item 10b, “What grade or level was this person attending?” Seven levels were identified: “nursery school, preschool;” “kindergarten;” elementary “grade 1 to grade 4” or “grade 5 to grade 8;” high school “grade 9

to grade 12;” “college undergraduate years (freshman to senior);” and “graduate or professional school (for example: medical, dental, or law school).”

Comparability – The 1990 decennial census and the 1996-1998 American Community Survey used the educational attainment question to estimate level of enrollment for those reported to be enrolled in school. The 1990 census educational attainment question had grouped years below high school, while the 1996-1998 American Community Survey had a single year write-in. Levels estimated in the 1990 decennial census using the attainment item were not consistent with other estimates, so a new question specifically asking grade or level of enrollment was added to the 2000 decennial census and the 1999-2003 American Community Survey questionnaires.

Sex

The data on sex were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 1. Individuals were asked to mark either “male” or “female” to indicate their sex. For most cases in which sex was not reported, the appropriate entry was determined from the person’s given (i.e., first) name and household relationship. Otherwise, sex was imputed according to the relationship to the householder and the age of the person.

Sex Ratio – The sex ratio represents the balance between the male and female populations. Ratios above 100 indicate a larger male population, and ratios below 100 indicate a larger female population. This measure is derived by dividing the total number of males by the total number of females and then multiplying by 100. It is rounded to the nearest tenth.

Comparability – A question on the sex of individuals has been asked of all people in every census.

Social Security Income

See [Income](#)

Subfamily

See [Household Type and Relationship](#)

Time Leaving Home to Go to Work

See [Journey to Work](#)

Travel Time to Work

See [Journey to Work](#)

Type of School

See [School Enrollment](#)

Veteran Status

Data on veteran status, period of military service, and years of military service were derived from answers to questionnaire Items 20, 21, and 22 in the 2003 American Community Survey; Items 19, 20, and 21 in the 1999-2002 American Community Survey; and Items 18, 19, and 20 in the 1996-1998 American Community Survey.

Veteran Status – For data products, a “civilian veteran” is a person 18 years old or over who has served (even for a short time), but is not now serving, on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or the Coast Guard, or who served in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II. People who served in the National Guard or military Reserves are classified as veterans only if they were ever called or ordered to active duty, not counting the 4-6 months for initial training or yearly summer camps. All other civilians 18 years old and over are classified as nonveterans.

Period of Military Service – People who indicated that they had served on active duty or were now on active duty were asked to indicate the period or periods in which they served.

The responses to the question about period of service were edited for consistency and reasonableness. The edit eliminated inconsistencies between reported period(s) of service and age of the person; it also removed reported combinations of periods containing unreasonable gaps (for example, it did not accept a response that indicated that the person had served in World War II and in the Vietnam era, but not in the Korean conflict).

Years of Military Service – For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, people who indicated that they had served on active duty or were now on active duty were asked to report the total number of years and months of active-duty service. For the 1999-2003 American Community Survey, people who indicated that they had served on active duty or were now on active duty were asked to report whether the total number of years of active-duty service was less than 2 years or 2 years or more. The question asked for accumulated service, which is not necessarily the same as continuous service.

Limitation of the Data – There may be a tendency for the following kinds of persons to report erroneously that they served on active duty in the Armed Forces: (a) persons who served in the National Guard or Military Reserves but were never called to duty; (b) civilian employees or volunteers for the USO, Red Cross, or the Department of Defense (or its predecessors, the Department of War and the Department of the Navy); and (c) employees of the Merchant Marine or Public Health Service. There may also be a tendency for persons to erroneously round up months to the nearest year in 2003 ACS Question 22. (For example, persons with one year and eight months of active duty military service may mistakenly report “two years.”)

Comparability – For the 1996-1998 American Community Survey, the response categories from the 1990 decennial census were modified by eliminating the “World War I” service period, closing the “September 1980 or later” period at July 1990, and adding the “August 1990 or later (including Persian Gulf War)” period. For the 1999-2002 American Community Survey item, which is the same as the 2000 decennial census item, the response categories were modified by closing the August 1990 or later period at March 1995, and adding the April 1995 or later category. In the 2003 American Community Survey, the response categories for the item were modified in several ways. The first category “April 1995 or later” was changed to “September 2001 or later” to reflect the era that began after the events of September 11, 2001; the second category “August 1990 to March 1995” was then expanded to “August 1990 to August 2001”. The category “February 1955 to July 1964” was split into two categories - “March 1961 to July 1963” and “February 1955 to February 1961”. To match the revised dates for war-time periods of the Department of Veteran Affairs, the dates for the “World War II” category were changed from “September 1940 to July 1947” to “December 1941 to December 1946, “ and the dates for the “Korean War” were changed from “June 1950 to January 1955” to “July 1950 to January 1955.” To increase specificity, the “Some other time” category was split into two categories - “January 1947 to June 1950” and “November 1941 or earlier.”

Weeks Worked

See [Work Status](#)

Work Status

The data on work status in the past 12 months were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 32. People 16 years old and over who worked 1 or more weeks according to the criteria described below are classified as “Worked in the past 12 months.” All other people 16 years old and over are classified as “Did not work in the past 12 months.”

Weeks Worked in the Past 12 Months

The data on weeks worked in the past 12 months were derived from responses to questionnaire Item 33, which was asked of people 16 years old and over who indicated that they worked during the past 12 months.

The data pertain to the number of weeks during the past 12 months in which a person did any work for pay or profit (including paid vacation and paid sick leave) or worked without pay on a family farm or in a family business. Weeks of active service in the Armed Forces are also included.

Usual Hours Worked Per Week Worked in the Past 12 Months

The data on usual hours worked per week worked in the past 12 months were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 34. This question was asked of people 16 years old and over who indicated that they worked during the past 12 months.

The data pertain to the number of hours a person usually worked during the weeks worked in the past 12 months. The respondent was to report the number of hours worked per week in the majority of the weeks he or she worked in the past 12 months. If the hours worked per week varied considerably during the past 12 months, the respondent was to report an approximate average of the hours worked per week.

People 16 years old and over who reported that they usually worked 35 or more hours each week during the weeks they worked are classified as “Usually worked full time”; people who reported that they usually worked 1 to 34 hours are classified as “Usually worked part time.”

Full-Time, Year-Round Workers – All people 16 years old and over who usually worked 35 hours or more per week for 50 to 52 weeks in the past 12 months.

Number of Workers in Family in the Past 12 Months – The term “worker” as used for these data is defined based on the criteria for work status in the past 12 months.

Limitation of the Data – It is probable that the number of people who worked in the past 12 months and the number of weeks worked are understated since there is some tendency for respondents to forget intermittent or short periods of employment or to exclude weeks worked without pay. There may also be a tendency for people not to include weeks of paid vacation among their weeks worked; one result may be that the American Community Survey figures understate the number of people who worked “50 to 52 weeks.”

Comparability – The 1990 and 2000 decennial census data referred to work status in the calendar year preceding the census. The American Community Survey data refer to the 12 months preceding the date of interview. Since not all people in the American Community Survey were interviewed at the same time, the reference period for the American Community Survey data, unlike that for the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, is neither fixed nor uniform.

Year of Entry

The data on year of entry were derived from answers to questionnaire Item 9.

All respondents born outside the United States were asked for the year in which they came to live in the United States. This includes people born in Puerto Rico and U.S. Island Areas; people born abroad of an American (U.S. citizen) parent or parents; and the foreign born. (See “Citizenship Status.”)

Limitation of the Data – Respondents were directed to indicate the year they entered the country “to live.” For respondents who have entered the U.S. multiple times, the interviewers were instructed to request the most recent year of entry. For respondents who either did not ask the interviewer for clarification or for those who mailed back the questionnaire without being interviewed in person, it was difficult to ensure that respondents interpreted the question as intended.

Comparability – The year of entry questions for the American Community Survey and for the 2000 decennial census were identical. This question differs from the year of entry question in the 1990 decennial census. The 1990 decennial census item asked “When did this person come to the United States to stay?” while the American Community Survey questionnaire item asks “When did this person come to live in the United States?” Moreover, the year of entry question in the 1990 decennial census provided respondents with a fixed number of response options, while the year of entry question in the American Community Survey and the decennial census 2000 collects year of entry through a write-in space.

Years of Military Service

See [Veteran Status](#)

DERIVED MEASURES

Census data products include various derived measures, such as medians, means, and percentages, as well as certain rates and ratios. Derived measures that round to less than 0.1 are shown as zero.

Aggregate

See “Mean.”

Average

See “Mean.”

Interpolation

Interpolation is frequently used to calculate medians or quartiles and to approximate standard errors from tables based on interval data. Different kinds of interpolation may be used to estimate the value of a function between two known values, depending on the form of the distribution. The most common distributional assumption is that the data are linear, resulting in linear interpolation. However, this assumption may not be valid for income data, particularly when the data are based on wide intervals. For these cases, a Pareto distribution is assumed and the median is estimated by interpolating between the logarithms of the upper and lower income limits of the median category. The Census Bureau estimates median income using the Pareto distribution within intervals when the intervals are wider than \$2,500.

Mean

This measure represents an arithmetic average of a set of values. It is derived by dividing the sum (or aggregate) of a group of numerical items by the total number of items in that group. For example, mean household earnings is obtained by dividing the aggregate of all earnings reported by individuals with earnings living in households by the total number of households with earnings. (Additional information on means and aggregates is included in the separate explanations of many population and housing subjects.)

Aggregate. An aggregate is the sum of the values for each of the elements in the universe. For example, aggregate household income is the sum of the incomes of all households in a given geographic area. Means are derived by dividing the aggregate by the appropriate universe.

Median

This measure represents the middle value (if n is odd) or the average of the two middle values (if n is even) in an ordered list of n data values. The median divides the total frequency distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half above the median. Each median is calculated using a standard distribution (see below). (For more information, see “Interpolation.”)

For data products displayed in American FactFinder, medians that fall in the upper-most category of an open-ended distribution will be shown with a plus symbol (+) appended (e.g., “\$2,000+” for contract rent), and medians that fall in the lowest category of an open-ended distribution will be shown with a minus symbol (-) appended (e.g., “\$100- for contract rent”). For other data products and data files that are downloaded by users (i.e., FTP files), plus and minus signs will not be appended. Contract rent, for example will be shown as \$2001 if the median falls in the upper-most category (\$2,000 or more)

and \$99 if the median falls in the lowest category (Less than \$100). (The “Standard Distributions” section below shows the open-ended intervals for medians.)

Standard Distributions. In order to provide consistency in the values within and among data products, standard distributions from which medians and quartiles are calculated are used for the American Community Survey. This new approach was used in Census 2000; in previous censuses medians were not necessarily based on a single, standard distribution. The American Community Survey standard distributions are listed below.

Standard Distribution for **Median Age:**

[116 data cells]

- Under 1 year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- .
- .
- .
- 112 years
- 113 years
- 114 years
- 115 years and over

Standard Distribution for **Median Contract Rent/Rent Asked/Gross Rent:**

[22 data cells]

- Less than \$100
- \$100 to \$149
- \$150 to \$199
- \$200 to \$249
- \$250 to \$299
- \$300 to \$349
- \$350 to \$399
- \$400 to \$449
- \$450 to \$499
- \$500 to \$549
- \$550 to \$599
- \$600 to \$649
- \$650 to \$699
- \$700 to \$749
- \$750 to \$799
- \$800 to \$899

\$900 to \$999
\$1,000 to \$1,249
\$1,250 to \$1,499
\$1,500 to \$1,749
\$1,750 to \$1,999
\$2,000 or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Earnings and Median Income (Individuals)**:
[35 data cells]

\$1 to \$2,499 or loss
\$2,500 to \$4,999
\$5,000 to \$7,499
\$7,500 to \$9,999
\$10,000 to \$12,499
\$12,500 to \$14,999
\$15,000 to \$17,499
\$17,500 to \$19,999
\$20,000 to \$22,499
\$22,500 to \$24,999
\$25,000 to \$27,499
\$27,500 to \$29,999
\$30,000 to \$32,499
\$32,500 to \$34,999
\$35,000 to \$37,499
\$37,500 to \$39,999
\$40,000 to \$42,499
\$42,500 to \$44,999
\$45,000 to \$47,499
\$47,500 to \$49,999
\$50,000 to \$52,499
\$52,500 to \$54,999
\$55,000 to \$57,499
\$57,500 to \$59,999
\$60,000 to \$62,499
\$62,500 to \$64,999
\$65,000 to \$67,499
\$67,500 to \$69,999
\$70,000 to \$72,499
\$72,500 to \$74,999
\$75,000 to \$79,999
\$80,000 to \$84,999
\$85,000 to \$89,999
\$90,000 to \$99,999
\$100,000 or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income:**

[9 data cells]

Less than 10.0 percent
10.0 to 14.9 percent
15.0 to 19.9 percent
20.0 to 24.9 percent
25.0 to 29.9 percent
30.0 to 34.9 percent
35.0 to 39.9 percent
40.0 to 49.9 percent
50.0 percent or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Income (Household/Family/Nonfamily Household):**

[39 data cells]

Less than \$2,500
\$2,500 to \$4,999
\$5,000 to \$7,499
\$7,500 to \$9,999
\$10,000 to \$12,499
\$12,500 to \$14,999
\$15,000 to \$17,499
\$17,500 to \$19,999
\$20,000 to \$22,499
\$22,500 to \$24,999
\$25,000 to \$27,499
\$27,500 to \$29,999
\$30,000 to \$32,499
\$32,500 to \$34,999
\$35,000 to \$37,499
\$37,500 to \$39,999
\$40,000 to \$42,499
\$42,500 to \$44,999
\$45,000 to \$47,499
\$47,500 to \$49,999
\$50,000 to \$52,499
\$52,500 to \$54,999
\$55,000 to \$57,499
\$57,500 to \$59,999
\$60,000 to \$62,499
\$62,500 to \$64,999
\$65,000 to \$67,499
\$67,500 to \$69,999

\$70,000 to \$72,499
\$72,500 to \$74,999
\$75,000 to \$79,999
\$80,000 to \$84,999
\$85,000 to \$89,999
\$90,000 to \$99,999
\$100,000 to \$124,999
\$125,000 to \$149,999
\$150,000 to \$174,999
\$175,000 to \$199,999
\$200,000 or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Real Estate Taxes:**
[14 data cells]

Less than \$200
\$200 to \$299
\$300 to \$399
\$400 to \$599
\$600 to \$799
\$800 to \$999
\$1,000 to \$1,499
\$1,500 to \$1,999
\$2,000 to \$2,999
\$3,000 to \$3,999
\$4,000 to \$4,999
\$5,000 to \$7,499
\$7,500 to \$9,999
\$10,000 or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Rooms:**
[9 data cells]

1 room
2 rooms
3 rooms
4 rooms
5 rooms
6 rooms
7 rooms
8 rooms
9 or more rooms

Standard Distribution for **Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs by Mortgage Status (With a Mortgage):**
[19 data cells]

Less than \$100
\$100 to \$199
\$200 to \$299
\$300 to \$399
\$400 to \$499
\$500 to \$599
\$600 to \$699
\$700 to \$799
\$800 to \$899
\$900 to \$999
\$1,000 to \$1,249
\$1,250 to \$1,499
\$1,500 to \$1,749
\$1,750 to \$1,999
\$2,000 to \$2,499
\$2,500 to \$2,999
\$3,000 to \$3,499
\$3,500 to \$3,999
\$4,000 or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs by Mortgage Status (Without a Mortgage):**

[14 data cells]

Less than \$100
\$100 to \$149
\$150 to \$199
\$200 to \$249
\$250 to \$299
\$300 to \$349
\$350 to \$399
\$400 to \$499
\$500 to \$599
\$600 to \$699
\$700 to \$799
\$800 to \$899
\$900 to \$999
\$1,000 or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income by Mortgage Status:**

[9 data cells]

Less than 10.0 percent
10.0 to 14.9 percent

15.0 to 19.9 percent
20.0 to 24.9 percent
25.0 to 29.9 percent
30.0 to 34.9 percent
35.0 to 39.9 percent
40.0 to 49.9 percent
50.0 percent or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Usual Hours Worked Per Week:**
[9 data cells]

Usually worked 50 to 99 hours per week
Usually worked 45 to 49 hours per week
Usually worked 41 to 44 hours per week
Usually worked 40 hours per week
Usually worked 35 to 39 hours per week
Usually worked 30 to 34 hours per week
Usually worked 25 to 29 hours per week
Usually worked 15 to 24 hours per week
Usually worked 1 to 14 hours per week

Standard Distribution for **Median Value/Quartile Value/Price Asked:**
[24 data cells]

Less than \$10,000
\$10,000 to \$14,999
\$15,000 to \$19,999
\$20,000 to \$24,999
\$25,000 to \$29,999
\$30,000 to \$34,999
\$35,000 to \$39,999
\$40,000 to \$49,999
\$50,000 to \$59,999
\$60,000 to \$69,999
\$70,000 to \$79,999
\$80,000 to \$89,999
\$90,000 to \$99,999
\$100,000 to \$124,999
\$125,000 to \$149,999
\$150,000 to \$174,999
\$175,000 to \$199,999
\$200,000 to \$249,999
\$250,000 to \$299,999
\$300,000 to \$399,999
\$400,000 to \$499,999
\$500,000 to \$749,999

\$750,000 to \$999,999
\$1,000,000 or more

Standard Distribution for **Median Weeks Worked:**
[6 data cells]

50 to 52 weeks worked
48 or 49 weeks worked
40 to 47 weeks worked
27 to 39 weeks worked
14 to 26 weeks worked
1 to 13 weeks worked

Standard Distribution for **Median Year Householder Moved Into Unit:**
[6 data cells]

Moved in 1999 to March 2000
Moved in 1995 to 1998
Moved in 1990 to 1994
Moved in 1980 to 1989
Moved in 1970 to 1979
Moved in 1969 or earlier

Standard Distribution for **Median Year Structure Built:**
[9 data cells]

Built 1999 to March 2000
Built 1995 to 1998
Built 1990 to 1994
Built 1980 to 1989
Built 1970 to 1979
Built 1960 to 1969
Built 1950 to 1959
Built 1940 to 1949
Built 1939 or earlier

Percentage

This measure is calculated by taking the number of items in a group possessing a characteristic of interest and dividing by the total number of items in that group, and then multiplying by 100.

Quartile

This measure divides a distribution into four equal parts. The first quartile (or lower quartile) is the value that defines the upper limit of the lowest one-quarter of the cases.

The second quartile is the median. The third quartile (or upper quartile) is defined as the upper limit of the lowest three quarters of cases in the distribution. Quartiles are presented for certain financial characteristics such as housing value and contract rent. The distribution used to compute quartiles is the same as that used to compute medians for that variable.

Rate

This is a measure of occurrences in a given period of time divided by the possible number of occurrences during that period. For example, the homeowner vacancy rate is calculated by dividing the number of vacant units “for sale only” by the sum of owner-occupied units and vacant units that are “for sale only,” and then multiplying by 100. Rates are sometimes presented as percentages.

Ratio

This is a measure of the relative size of one number to a second number expressed as the quotient of the first number divided by the second. For example, the sex ratio is calculated by dividing the total number of males by the total number of females, and then multiplying by 100.