

## How Your Organization Can Use and Benefit from Census Data

Diane Gibson

Associate Professor, Baruch College, School of Public Affairs  
Executive Director, New York Census Research Data Center

February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009

### Presentation note:

Several slides in this presentation are taken directly from the “ACS Basics” presentation developed by the Census Bureau and available at:  
<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Compass/presentations.html>

### Outline of presentation:

- Census Bureau data for learning about the characteristics of communities, cities, states and the country
- Types of information these data sets contain
- How to access the data
- Examples

### Census Bureau data for learning about the characteristics of communities, cities, states and the country:

- 2000 Decennial Census
- 2010 Decennial Census
- American Community Survey

### 2000 Decennial Census

- Two types of forms were sent to people
  1. “short” form – asked for basic demographic and housing information, such as age, sex, race, how many people lived in the housing unit, and if the housing unit was owned or rented by the resident
  2. “long” form – collected the same information as the short form and also collected more in-depth information such as income, education, and language spoken at home
- Only a small portion of the population received the long form.

### 2010 Census

The 2010 Census will focus on counting the U.S. population and will only collect short form-type information.

Where will we get the type of information  
previously collected on the long form?

...from the American Community Survey  
(ACS)

American Community Survey (ACS)

- The ACS collects essentially the same information as the long-form questionnaire used in the 2000 Census.
- The ACS is a continuous survey. Each month a sample of housing unit addresses receives a questionnaire.
- About three million addresses are surveyed each year.

- ACS estimates are period estimates, describing the characteristics in an area over a specific period of time.
- The ACS will provide 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year estimates.

- The type of estimates that are provided depends on the size of the area:
  - 1-yr estimates are provided for all 50 states and places with a population >65,000
  - 3-yr estimates are provided for places with a population >20,000
  - 5-yr estimates are provided for ZIP Code Tabulation Areas, Census Tracts and larger areas

- The ACS will update the 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year estimates annually
  - Annually updated 1-year and 3-year estimates are already available.
  - The first 5-year estimates will be available in 2010 and will be updated annually thereafter
- Consequently, an important feature of the ACS is that it will provide more timely information than the Decennial Census.

Types of Information Available about Areas

- Demographic Characteristics
- Economic Characteristics
- Social Characteristics
- Housing Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics (selected)

- Age
- Sex
- Race/Ethnicity

Economic Characteristics (selected)

- Income
- Poverty Status
- Food Stamps Benefits
- Labor Force Status
- Industry
- Occupation

Social Characteristics (selected)

- Marital Status and Marital History
- Fertility
- Ancestry
- Place of Birth, Citizenship and Year of Entry
- Language Spoken at Home
- Educational Attainment and School Enrollment
- Veteran Status
- Disability

Housing Characteristics (selected)

- Year Structure Built
- Units in Structure
- Rooms
- Bedrooms
- Kitchen Facilities
- Farm Residence
- Housing Value
- Rent

Information For What Types Of Areas?

examples:

- United States as a whole
- States
- Cities
- Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs)
- Census Tracts

The Census Bureau provides guidance on how to compare data from different years of the ACS and between different years of the ACS and the 2000 Census.

<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/compACS.htm>

Getting the Data

For simple analyses, the easiest place to start is with the “American Fact Finder” on the Census Bureau’s website

<http://www.census.gov/>

- Click on the “American Fact Finder” link in the left column
- Then click “get data” under the Decennial Census or American Community Survey in the “getting detailed data” column.

Ways the data are available:

- Profiles
  - Data Profiles
  - Narrative Profiles
  - Comparison Profiles
  - Selected Population Profiles
- Tables
  - Detailed Tables
  - Subject Tables
  - Ranking Tables
  - Geographic Comparison Tables
- Thematic Maps
- Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Files

Examples:

1. What is the poverty rate in New York State and how does it compare to other States and to the United States as a whole?
2. What is the poverty rate in New York City and how does it compare to other cities in New York State and to New York State as a whole?
3. What is the poverty rate in Baruch’s ZCTA and how does it compare to other ZCTAs in New York City?

Examples:

4. How do other characteristics of Baruch’s ZCTA compare to ZCTA 10035 in Harlem?
5. What percentage of ZCTAs in New York City do not have a grocery store? Do ZCTAs with and without grocery stores differ significantly in their poverty rate and racial/ethnic concentration?

1. What is the poverty rate in New York State and how does it compare to other states and to the United States as a whole?

*Data:* 2007 ACS 1-year estimates.

*Variable:* percent of people below poverty level in the past 12 months (for whom poverty status is determined)

*Data product:* “ranking table”

*Poverty rate:*

- United States as a whole – 13.0%
- New York State – 13.7% (18<sup>th</sup> highest state rate)
- Mississippi – 20.6% (highest state rate)
- New Hampshire – 7.1% (lowest state rate)

2. What is the poverty rate in New York City and how does it compare to other cities in New York State and to New York State as a whole?

*Data:* 2007 ACS 1-year estimates.

*Variable:* percent of people below poverty level in the past 12 months (for whom poverty status is determined)

*Data product:* “geographic comparison table”

*Poverty rate:*

- New York State as a whole – 13.7%
- New York City – 18.5%
- Syracuse – 31.0%
- Buffalo – 28.7%
- Yonkers – 12.7%

3. What is the poverty rate in Baruch's ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) and how does it compare to other ZCTAs in New York City?

Data: 2000 Decennial Census, SF3

Variable: Poverty in 1999

Data product: "geographic comparison table"

Poverty rate:

ZCTA 10010 – 9.1% (Baruch)

ZCTA 10022 – 4.9% (Midtown East)

ZCTA 10035 – 43.7% (Harlem)

4. How do other characteristics of Baruch's ZCTA compare to ZCTA 10035 in Harlem?

Data: 2000 Decennial Census, SF3

Data product: "fact sheets" for ZCTA 10010 and ZCTA 10035

ZCTA 10010:

Housing units vacant – 6.6%

Completed less than high school (if age>25) – 5.0%

Speak English "less than very well" – 7.3%

ZCTA 10035:

Housing units vacant – 7.3%

Completed less than high school (if age>25) – 50.0%

Speak English "less than very well" – 23.7%

5. What percentage of ZCTAs in New York City do not have a grocery store? Do ZCTAs with and without grocery stores differ significantly in their poverty rate and racial/ethnic concentration?

Data: 2000 Decennial Census, SF3 merged with 2000 ZIP Code Business Patterns Data

Percentage of ZCTAs *without* a supermarket: 45.3%

Percentage of ZCTAs *without* a grocery store of any size: 92.3%

ZCTAs without a supermarket:

Average poverty rate: 12.6%

Average percentage African American: 16.6%

Average percentage Hispanic: 16.2%

ZCTAs with a supermarket:

Average poverty rate: 12.5%

Average percentage African American: 14.1%

Average percentage Hispanic: 17.5%

\*These characteristics *are not* statistically significantly different between the two groups of ZCTAs .

ZCTAs without a grocery store of any size:

Average poverty rate: 5.9%

Average percentage African American: 5.4%

Average percentage Hispanic: 7.6%

ZCTAs with a grocery store:

Average poverty rate: 13.1%

Average percentage African American: 16.1%

Average percentage Hispanic: 17.7%

\*These characteristics *are* statistically significantly different between the two groups of ZCTAs .