New American FactFinder: A Guide to Getting the Data You Need

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Before you look at American FactFinder, ask these four questions:

- **WHO** do you want to learn about?
  - Race, ancestry, or ethnicity
- **WHAT** is it you want to know about them?
  - Subject matter
- **WHEN** is the time period you are most interested in?
  - Time period
- **WHERE** is the place that these people live?
  - Geography
Who?

- If you are interested in the five major race groups, all Census Bureau products have data for them.
  - American Indian or Native Alaskan
  - Asian
  - Black
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Some Other Race is found in some products.
- Hispanic is its own category. Available in all Census Bureau Products
- Ethnicity- only in decennial census and ACS (examples are the check boxes and write-in categories for the Census and ACS, primarily American Indian tribes, Asian and Pacific Islander groups.)
- Ancestry- only in the ACS (examples are Scottish, Polish, etc.)
What?

- Population and basic housing questions
  - Decennial census
  - Population items include sex, age, race, Hispanic or Latino origin, household relationship, household type, household size, family type, family size, and group quarters.
  - Housing items include occupancy status, vacancy status, and tenure
- Detailed characteristics
  - American Community Survey (ACS)
What is in the ACS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Demographics</th>
<th>Social Characteristics</th>
<th>Economic Characteristics</th>
<th>Housing Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td>• Ancestry</td>
<td>• Class of Worker</td>
<td>• Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sex</td>
<td>• Citizenship Status</td>
<td>• Employment Status</td>
<td>• Stamps/Supplemental</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hispanic or Latino Origin</td>
<td>• Disability Status</td>
<td>• Health Insurance</td>
<td>Nutrition Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Race</td>
<td>• Educational Attainment</td>
<td>Coverage</td>
<td>Program (SNAP)</td>
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<td>• Relationship</td>
<td>• Fertility</td>
<td>• Income and Earnings</td>
<td>• House Heating Fuel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Field of Degree</td>
<td>• Industry</td>
<td>• Kitchen Facilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Grandparents as</td>
<td>• Journey to Work</td>
<td>• Owner Statistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Caregivers</td>
<td>• Occupation</td>
<td>• Plumbing Facilities</td>
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<td>• Language</td>
<td>• Poverty</td>
<td>• Renter Statistics</td>
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<td>• Marital Status and Marital History</td>
<td>• Work Status</td>
<td>• Rooms and Bedrooms</td>
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<td>• Telephone Service</td>
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<td>Available</td>
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<td>• Tenure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Units in Structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Value of Home</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Vehicles Available</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Year Householder Moved Into Unit</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Year Structure Built</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
When?

- Most recent data available?
  - Census is only once every 10 years
  - ACS is ongoing with data releases every year
    - One-year data for population groups or geographic areas with more than 65,000 people
    - Three-year data for population groups or geographic areas with more than 20,000 people
    - Five-year data for Census tract level (neighborhoods)
  - Must trade off between more current data versus more precise data
Where?

- Are you interested in national, state, county, city or neighborhoods?
- Neighborhood data is a challenge: What constitutes a neighborhood?
- Pre-defined areas versus creating your own
  - Pre-tabulated geographies: easy to download, but larger areas
    - Public Use Microdata Areas are close to New York City Community Districts.
    - Zip Code Tabulation Areas
  - Pre-defined geographies: provides a common frame of reference
    - New York City Neighborhood Tabulation Areas
  - Make-your-own: Must decide what constitutes a neighborhood
    - Asian American Federation’s Chinatown Brief
    - Defined Chinatown as Census Tracts with Asian concentration of 25% or more, plus two Census Tracts with commercial importance to neighborhood.
Strategies for Approaching New American FactFinder

- New users of Census data, the best approach is to:
  - Answer the four questions above. This will help you narrow down the number of tables you will have to search through.
  - Start with “Where?” Narrow down your choices by geography.
  - “Who?”
    - For 2010 Census data, type in the search box for your ethnic groups. The filters leave out 2010 data currently.
    - For detailed characteristics from 2000, select filters from the Population Groups menu.
  - “What?” Choose from Topics menu or Search box
  - “When?” Often the previous three questions will limit your choices for the most recently available data.
Strategies for Approaching New American FactFinder

• If you have used the old (“Legacy”) FactFinder, using a similar approach may help in navigating the myriad of choices in the new system.
  • Dataset (What?)
  • Year and Data Product (When?)
  • Geography (Where?)
  • Race, Ethnic or Ancestry Group (Who?)
  • Tables (What?)
Helpful References

- American Community Survey

- 2010 Census

- NYC Neighborhood Maps
  - ZIP Code Tabulation Areas: [http://www.census.gov/geo/ZCTA/zcta.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/ZCTA/zcta.html)