

# US Census Data & American Fact Finder

Topic Overview

# Why Use Census Data?

- US Census provides a detailed snapshot of demographic information
  - population (number of people)
  - general social characteristics
  - statistical abstract of the US
- Provides useful information to inform the decision-making process

# More About the Census

- What is the purpose of the US Census?
  - Public Law: data collected and released that is necessary for voting district configuration
    - (Over 18 years old; total population; race)
- Decennial Census
  - data collected every 10 years
    - households, income, education, home ownership, etc.
    - United States, Puerto Rico and Island Areas
  - summary files provide levels of detail at different scales
- Other surveys conducted more frequently
  - American Community Survey, Economic Census
  - population estimates program

<http://www.census.gov/main/www/surveys.html>

updated link: <http://www.census.gov/aboutus/surveys.html>

# Summary Files

- Summary File 1 (SF 1) and 2 (SF 2)
  - census short form (100% - entire population)
- Summary File 3 (SF 3) and 4 (SF 4)
  - census long form (sample of the population)
- SF 1 and SF 3: data on a larger set of topics
- SF 2 and SF 4: vast data on population subgroups

# Content of Data

## Public Law (P.L.) Data

- Population, total and over 18 (voting)
- Race and ethnicity

## SF1

- Age & sex
- Race & ethnicity
- Household relationships
- Housing units & tenure data; vacancy characteristics
- Group quarters data
- Urban/rural

# More Detailed Forms

## SF3 – Population

- Age
- Race & ethnicity
- Marital Status
- Employment & Income
- Language spoken at home, ancestry & migration
- Military service
- Farm residence
- Disability
- Grandparents as caregivers
- School enrollment & educational attainment

## SF3 – Housing

- Heating fuel & fuel cost
- Number of rooms & bedrooms
- Occupation, industry, class of worker; work status in 1999
- Year structure built & units in structure
- Telephone service
- Plumbing & kitchen facilities
- Utilities, mortgage, taxes, insurance
- Value of home/monthly rent paid
- Vehicles available
- Year moved into residence

# A Note on Important Distinctions

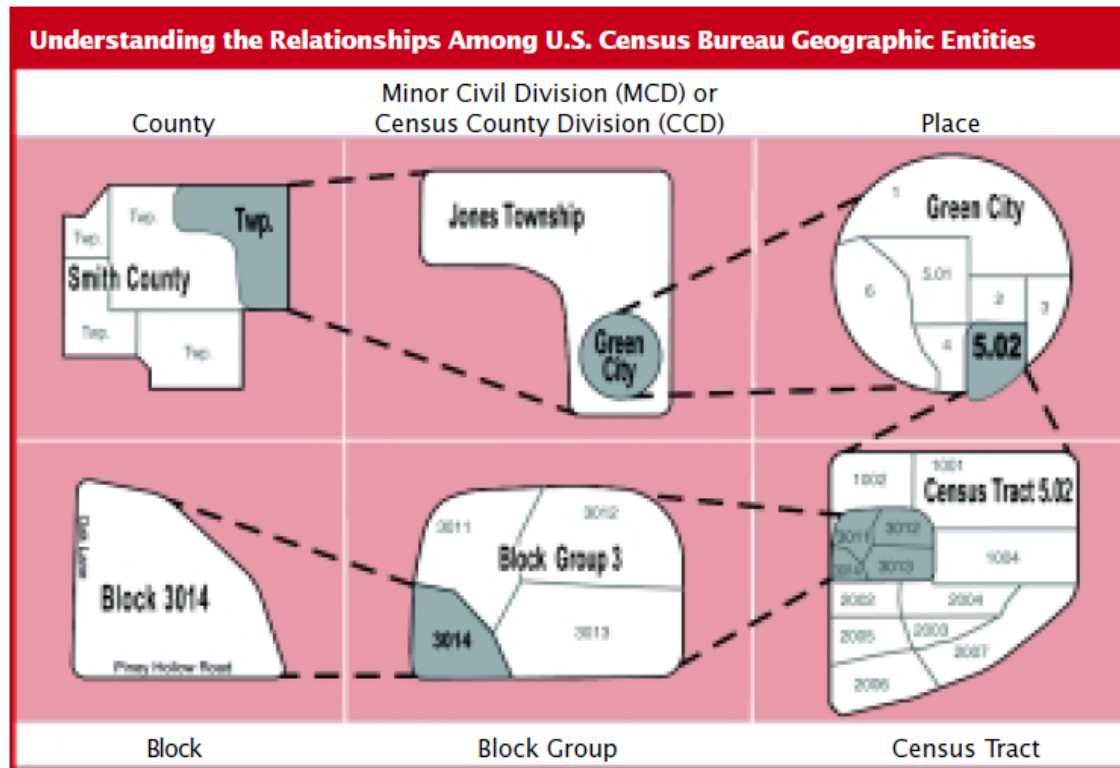
- Race vs. Ethnicity
  - Race is a physiological construct whereas ethnicity is a sociological one. They are not interchangeable terms.
- Household vs. Family
  - A household is an occupied housing unit. A family is that, also, but in addition, the occupants must be related to one another. The category “family” is a subset of the category “household.”
- Metropolitan vs. Urban
  - Metropolitan and urban are not interchangeable terms but rather have distinct definitions in Census-speak. With the new emphasis on commuting patterns in the definition of “core-based” areas, metropolitan areas can include quite rural segments.

See [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) to learn more about terminology and definitions used (“Census-speak”)

# Geographic Areas

- Census data is broken up into geographic areas

## Census Small-Area Geography





# Geographies

Geographies are created on a basis of population density:

- tracts≈ 1,000 people
- block groups≈ 500 people
- blocks≈ 100 people

So size will vary from urban (small) to rural areas (large).

Note About Sample data (more detailed SF 3 information)

- It is less reliable at very small levels of geography.
- Consequently, the lowest level of geography in Summary File 3 is the block group rather than the block.
- This also helps protect the confidentiality of respondents.

# ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs)

- ZCTAs are **not** the same as ZIP Codes
  - statistical geographic entity produced by the US Census Bureau for tabulating summary statistics (used in 2000 and 2010 Census)
  - generalized area representations of US Postal Service ZIP Code service areas
  - aggregate of Census blocks
- Items available for ZCTA
  - boundaries and shapefiles, relationship files (*future*), plus other items
- Census Bureau is tabulating 2010 Census data by ZCTA
  - **NO** Postal Service ZIP Code data is available for the 2010 Census

<http://www.census.gov/geo/ZCTA/zcta.html>

# Tabular Census Data

- Tabular Data
  - by Summary File
  - Large data sets
    - see instructions from Census.gov and with downloaded files for instructions on using the data in various software packages
    - two files may be required to accurately view and use the data (appropriate files and instructions are included in the zip file data downloaded from AFF)

# Spatial Data

- Relate tabular data to spatial data for display
  - TIGER Line shapefiles (Census)
  - ESRI data
  - NCSU Libraires
    - provides links to these national datasets and many NC local government subsets
- Scale of data for display
  - Census Tract, Block Group, Block
  - What data are you displaying?
    - remember, SF1, SF3 summaries collect data at difference scales

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

Updated link for AFF: Data > American FactFinder

The screenshot shows the US Census Bureau website in a Firefox browser window. The address bar displays [www.census.gov/#panel-1](http://www.census.gov/#panel-1). The main navigation bar includes links for People, Business, Geography, Data, and Newsroom. The 'Data' menu is open, showing a list of options: Quick Facts, American FactFinder (highlighted with a red box), Population Finder, 2010 Census, Economic Census, Interactive Maps, Training & Workshops, Data Tools, Catalogs, and Publications. The main content area features a 'The 1940 Census is Coming' announcement, a 'Countdown to 1940 Census Release' graphic, and a 'Data Tools' section with various reports and indicators. A 'Quick Facts' sidebar is visible on the left, and a 'Census News' section is at the bottom left. A red speech bubble at the bottom right says 'We changed our homepage Tell us what you think'.

United States Census Bureau

People | Business | Geography | **Data** | Newsroom

Search

The 1940 Census is Coming

On April 2, the National Archives will release 1940 Census records giving everyone a unique glimpse into family and U.S. history.

See More

Countdown to 1940 Census Release

APR 2

Population Schedule

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

January 2012 Report

Released 8:30 AM EST, 2/14/12

\$401.4 B

0.4%

\* change not statistically significant

View All

Quick Facts

Census News

Bachelor's Degree Attainment Tops 30 Percent for the First Time, Census Bureau Reports

Thursday, February 23, 2012

In March 2011, for the first time ever, more than 30 percent of U.S. adults 25 and older ... Read More

We changed our homepage Tell us what you think

Stat of the Day

Service Annual Survey

<http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

**Topics** ?

**Geographies**  
(states, counties, places, ...)

**Population Groups**  
(race, ancestry, ...)

**Industry Codes**  
(NAICS, ...)

Race, Hispanic or Latino, Age, and Housing Occupancy: 2010

Race, Hispanic or Latino, Age, and Housing Occupancy: 2010

Name

Address

Map

**Select Geographies**

Enter a geography name or use the Geography Filter Options below:

Enter a geography name (Alabama, Marengo County, ...) GO ?

**Your Geography Filters**

'Your Geography Filters' is empty

**Geography Filter Options**

- Geographic Type
  - Nation (1)
  - State (62)
  - County (6,372)
  - City or Town (147,421)
  - Congressional District (7,619)
  - Census Tract (163,160)
  - Metro/Micro Area (1,163)
  - ZIP Code/ZCTA (166,081)
  - Other (139,172)
- Summary Level
- Within State
- Geographic Component
- Geographic Vintage

Include in results:

All geographies ?

Individual geographies

Groups of geographies

**Select geographies to add to Your Selections**

Geography Results: 1-25 of 631,051

Selected:  Add |  Check All |  Clear All |

	Geography Name	Geography Type	About
<input type="checkbox"/>	United States	Nation	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	All States within United States	State	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alabama	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alaska	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arizona	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arkansas	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	California	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colorado	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Connecticut	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delaware	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	District of Columbia	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Florida	State	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Georgia	State	<a href="#">i</a>

# Data Access

- American Factfinder
  - filter data that you are interested in using
  - download tabular data
- NCSU Libraries
  - starting location to find spatial data relevant to your tabular information to display
- What Year?
  - data is archived and available historical reference / comparison (...1990, 2000, 2010)
  - Check metadata, Census Bureau information for details on changes to the process, data collected, boundary changes, etc.

Thank You