

Help! I'm an Accidental Government Information Librarian
North Carolina Library Association, Government Resources Section
Webinar #27: June 12, 2013


Just the Facts, Ma'am

Getting Started with the U.S. Census & American FactFinder

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- **Introduction** to Census and American Community Survey
- **Approaches** for navigating American FactFinder

Objectives



What languages do the **people in my community** speak at home?

Research Questions




What are the top occupations of
first-generation Americans?

Research Questions

How has the area around the Staples Center in Los Angeles been **affected** by its development and expansion?

Research Questions



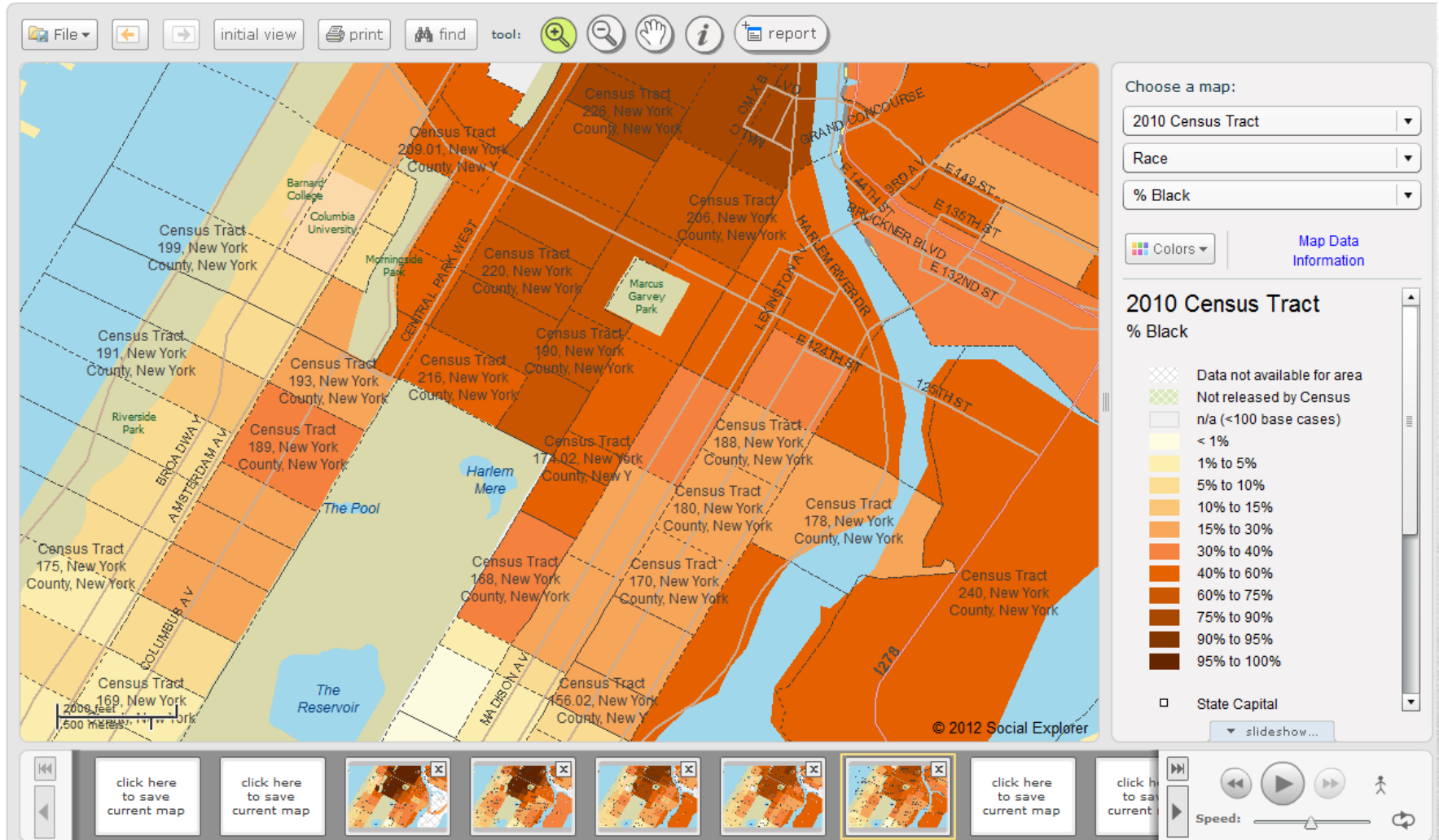
Key: Census data allow us to describe a population or place at a specific time.

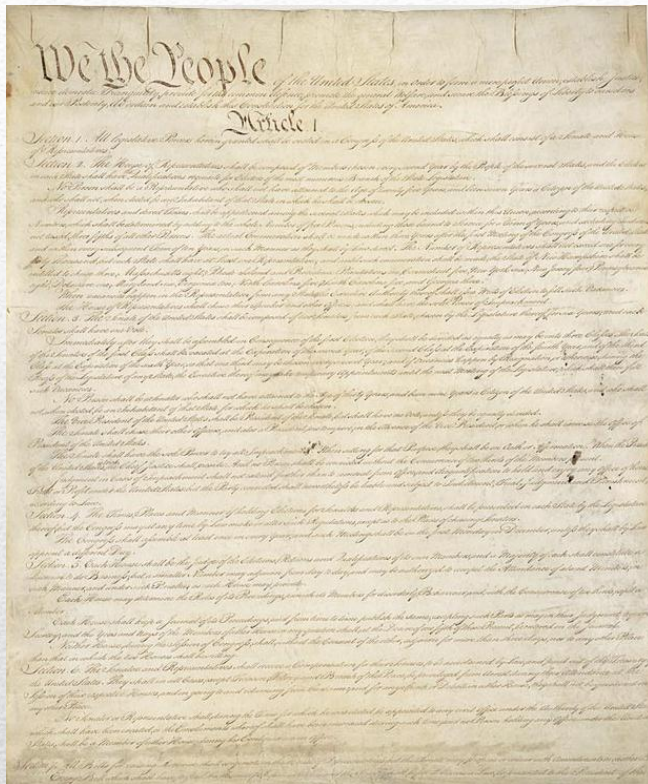
Research Questions



272,993

2010 Census Tract - % Black





Article 1, Section 2

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

U.S. Census Bureau & the Decennial Census



▶ Click to enlarge form

▶ Explore the English/Spanish form

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

NOTE: THE FORM CAN NOT BE FILLED OUT ONLINE.

Roll over any question below for a more in-depth look at the form and the information we ask of you.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2010?

Number of people =

We ask this question to help get an accurate count of the number of people in the household on Census Day, April 1, 2010. The answer should be based on the guidelines in the "Start here" section. We use the information to ensure response accuracy and completeness and to contact respondents whose forms have incomplete or missing information.

"10 Questions in 10 Minutes" Census 2010

- The American Community Survey (ACS) is a **nationwide, continuous survey** of social, economic & housing characteristics

Key: More timely data but limitations

- Education
- Marital Status
- Veterans
- Place of Birth
- Citizenship
- Year of Entry to U.S.
- Language Spoken at Home
- Grandparent Caregivers

American Community Survey

Social Characteristics

- Income
- Benefits
- Employment Status
- Occupation
- Industry
- Commuting to Work
- Place of Work

American Community Survey

Economic Characteristics

- Tenure
- Occupancy & Structure
- Housing Value
- Taxes & Insurance
- Utilities
- Mortgage & Monthly Rent

American Community Survey

Housing Characteristics

- Sex
- Age
- Race
- Hispanic Origin

American Community Survey

Demographics

- The ACS is continuously given to a **sample** of the population.
- Statistics calculated from the ACS are considered **estimates** and include a **margin of error**.
- The Census Bureau claims a confidence interval of 90% for the ACS estimates.

ACS Estimates

AGE BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME
Universe: Population 5 years and over 
2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

	United States	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	291,524,091	+/-19,607
5 to 17 years:	53,842,873	+/-26,371
Speak only English	42,005,224	+/-59,939
Speak Spanish	8,470,505	+/-50,936
Speak other Indo-European languages	1,557,090	+/-28,580
Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages	1,325,053	+/-20,320
Speak other languages	485,001	+/-17,796
18 to 64 years:	196,296,192	+/-24,439
Speak only English	153,532,515	+/-101,096
Speak Spanish	26,399,097	+/-74,137
Speak other Indo-European languages	7,396,350	+/-55,878
Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages	7,024,203	+/-39,928
Speak other languages	1,944,027	+/-36,919
65 years and over:	41,385,026	+/-20,340
Speak only English	35,409,332	+/-31,665
Speak Spanish	2,710,185	+/-16,004
Speak other Indo-European languages	1,893,972	+/-21,747
Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages	1,136,208	+/-12,884
Speak other languages	235,329	+/-8,435

Margin of Errors

Distinguishing features of ACS 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year estimates

1-year estimates	3-year estimates	5-year estimates
12 months of collected data	36 months of collected data	60 months of collected data
Data for areas with populations of 65,000+	Data for areas with populations of 20,000+	Data for all areas
Smallest sample size	Larger sample size than 1-year	Largest sample size
Less reliable than 3-year or 5-year	More reliable than 1-year; less reliable than 5-year	Most reliable
Most current data	Less current than 1-year estimates; more current than 5-year	Least current
Best used when	Best used when	Best used when
Currency is more important than precision	More precise than 1-year, more current than 5-year	Precision is more important than currency
Analyzing large populations	Analyzing smaller populations	Analyzing very small populations
	Examining smaller geographies because 1-year estimates are not available	Examining tracts and other smaller geographies because 1-year estimates are not available

Multi-Year Estimates

Source: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/estimates/

B25002

OCCUPANCY STATUS
Universe: Housing units ⓘ
2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table View 

 BACK TO SEARCH RESULTS

Actions:  [Modify Table](#) |  [Bookmark](#) |  [Print](#) |  [Download](#) |  [Create a Map](#)

 [View Geography Notes](#) |  [View Table Notes](#)

Although the American Community Survey (ACS) produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates, it is the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program that produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities and towns and estimates of housing units for states and counties.

3 of 3

	ZCTA5 90027	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	23,572	+/-290
Occupied	21,702	+/-341
Vacant	1,870	+/-353

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

Explanation of Symbols:

An '***' entry in the margin of error column indicates that either no sample observations or too few sample observations were available to compute a standard error and thus the margin of error. A statistical test is not appropriate.

An '-' entry in the estimate column indicates that either no sample observations or too few sample observations were available to compute an estimate, or a ratio of medians cannot be calculated because one or both of the median estimates falls in the lowest interval or upper interval of an open-ended distribution.

An '-' following a median estimate means the median falls in the lowest interval of an open-ended distribution.

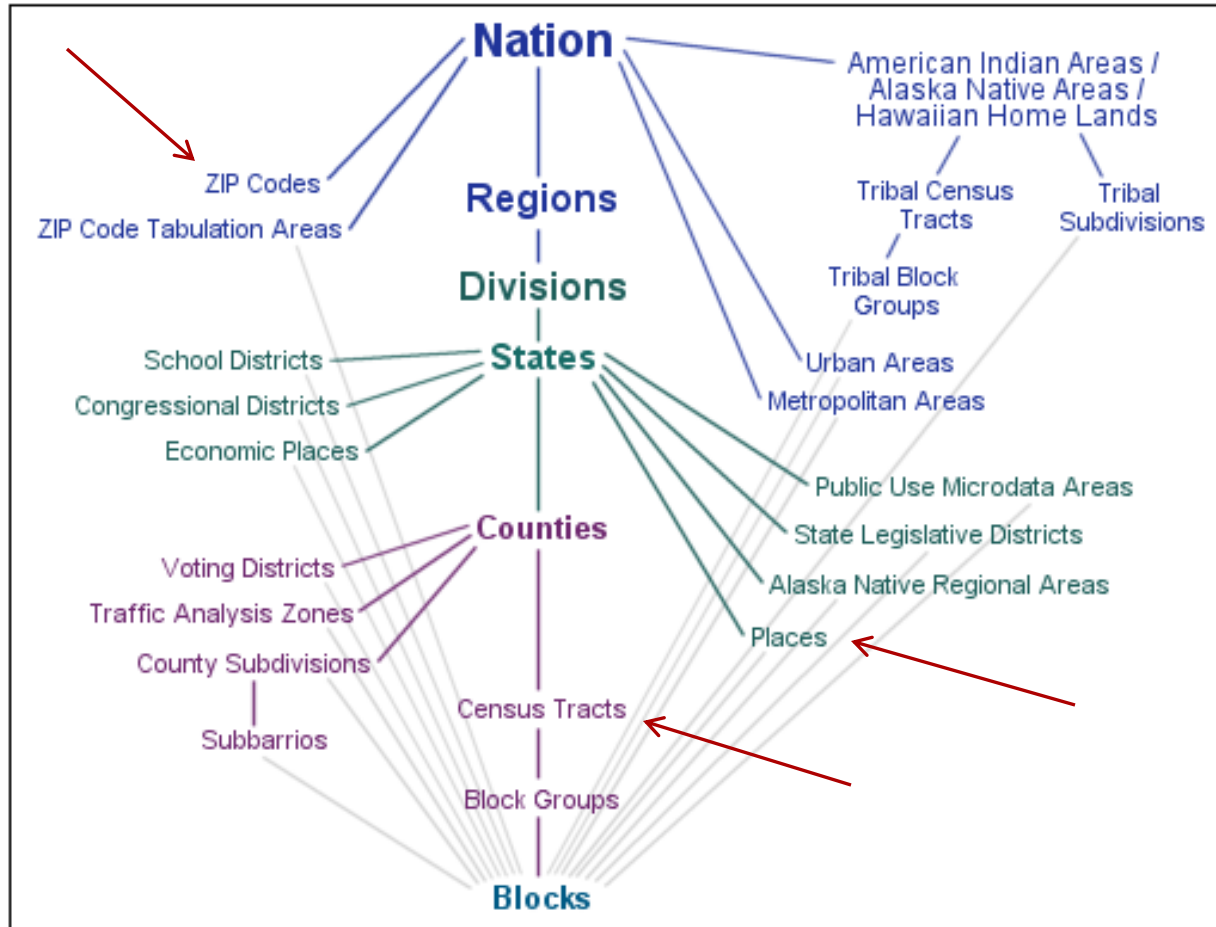
An '+' following a median estimate means the median falls in the upper interval of an open-ended distribution.

An '****' entry in the margin of error column indicates that the median falls in the lowest interval or upper interval of an open-ended distribution. A statistical test is not appropriate.

An '*****' entry in the margin of error column indicates that the estimate is controlled. A statistical test for sampling variability is not appropriate.

An 'N' entry in the estimate and margin of error columns indicates that data for this geographic area cannot be displayed because the number of sample cases is too small.

An '(X)' means that the estimate is not applicable or not available.



Census Geographies

U.S. Department of Commerce

United States[™]
Census
Bureau

AMERICAN
FactFinder



MISSOURI

Feedback FAQs Glossary Help

MAIN

COMMUNITY FACTS

GUIDED SEARCH

ADVANCED SEARCH

DOWNLOAD OPTIONS

English

Español

Community Facts

Find popular facts (population, income, etc.) and frequently requested data about your community.

Enter a state, county, city, town, or zip code:

GO

Guided Search

Advanced Search

Download Options



American FactFinder

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

C14003

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY TYPE OF SCHOOL BY AGE FOR THE POPULATION 3 YEARS AND OVER
Universe: Population 3 years and over ⓘ
2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table View

Map View

← BACK TO ADVANCED SEARCH

Actions: Bookmark Print Download Show Statistical Significance Create a Different Map

Thematic Map of Estimate; Enrolled in public school: - 3 and 4 years
Geography: by County

View Table Notes

Legend

Data Classes

Persons

- 88 - 385
- 462 - 673
- 816 - 1107
- 1484 - 2357
- 3102 - 5222

Boundaries

- State
- '11 County

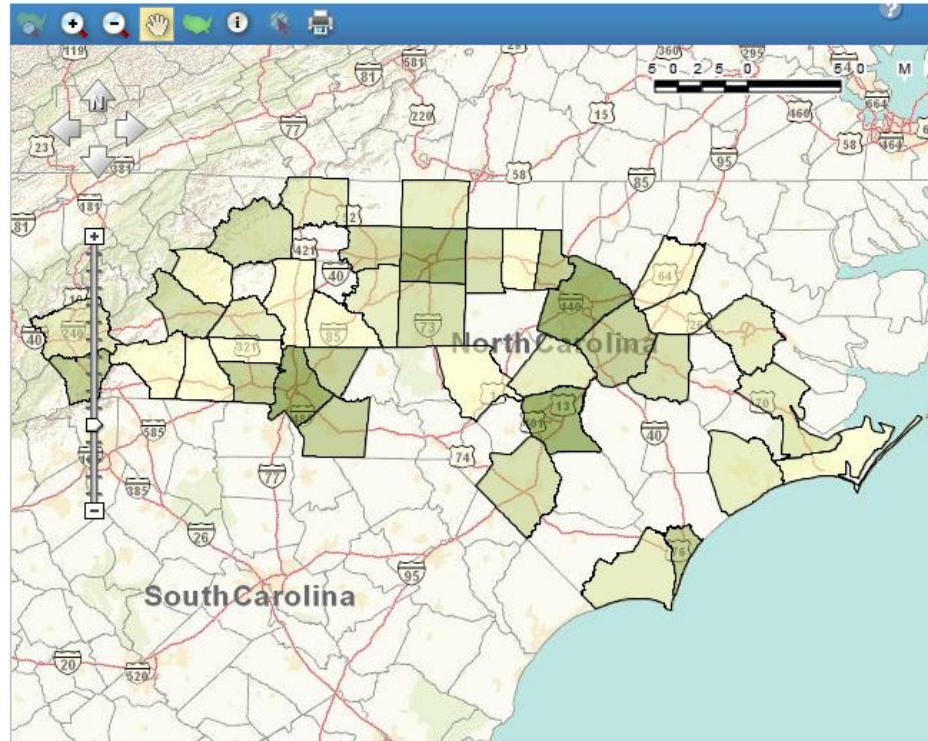
Features

- Major Road
- Street
- Stream/Waterbody

Items in grey text are not visible at this zoom level

Modify the map using the options below:

- Colors and Data Classes
- Boundaries and Features
- Find a Location
- Map Markers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

Search - Use the options on the left (topics, geographies, ...) to narrow your search results

Your Selections

Search using...

- People: Employment: Employment (Labor Force) Status ✖
- Census Tract: All Census Tracts within Los Angeles County, California ✖

[clear all selections and start a new search](#)

Recommendations (2) HIDE ▲



The 2006-2010 American Community Survey American Indian Alaska Native Tables (AIANT) provide detailed social, economic, demographic and housing data for up to 950 tribes and tribal groups. Availability of ACS AIANT tables for a specific tribe is limited to geographic areas with at least 50 unweighted sample cases of the chosen tribe or tribal group. This means that tables will not be shown for tribes or tribal groups with less than 50 unweighted sample cases in a



The 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates provide detailed social, economic, demographic, and housing data for areas with populations of 65,000 or more. [View Available Tables](#)

Search Results: 1-25 of 251 tables and other products match 'Your Selections'

per page: 25 ▼

1 Selected: [View](#) | [Download](#) | [Compare](#) | [Clear All](#) ?

◀ 1 2 3 4 5 ▶

Narrow your search: [GO](#)

Search using the options below:

Topics (age, income, year, dataset, ...)

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

Race and Ethnic Groups (race, ancestry, tribe)

Industry Codes (NAICS industry, ...)

EEO Occupation Codes (executives, analysts, ...)

	ID	Table, File or Document Title	Dataset	About
<input type="checkbox"/>	DP03	SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	DP03	SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	2010 ACS 5-year Selected Population Tables	i
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	S2301	EMPLOYMENT STATUS	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2302	EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2303	WORK STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2401	OCCUPATION BY SEX AND MEDIAN EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2010 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) FOR THE CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2402	OCCUPATION BY SEX AND MEDIAN EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2010 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) FOR FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2403	INDUSTRY BY SEX AND MEDIAN EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2010 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) FOR THE CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2404	INDUSTRY BY SEX AND MEDIAN EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2010 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) FOR THE FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER	2010 ACS 5-year estimates	i

American FactFinder

But wait...



Source: U.S. National Archives, Local Identifier: 412-DA-13597
<http://research.archives.gov/description/556049>

2000 Census

- 16** Does this person have any of the following long-lasting conditions:
- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2013 ACS

- 17** a. Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?
- Yes
 No
- b. Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
- Yes
 No

Making Comparisons

Questions, Boundaries & Timeframe

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinian, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* ↴

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark one or more boxes.

White

Black, African Am., or Negro

American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ↴

Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian

Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro

Filipino Vietnamese Samoan

Other Asian — *Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.* ↴

Other Pacific Islander — *Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.* ↴

Some other race — *Print race.* ↴

B03002

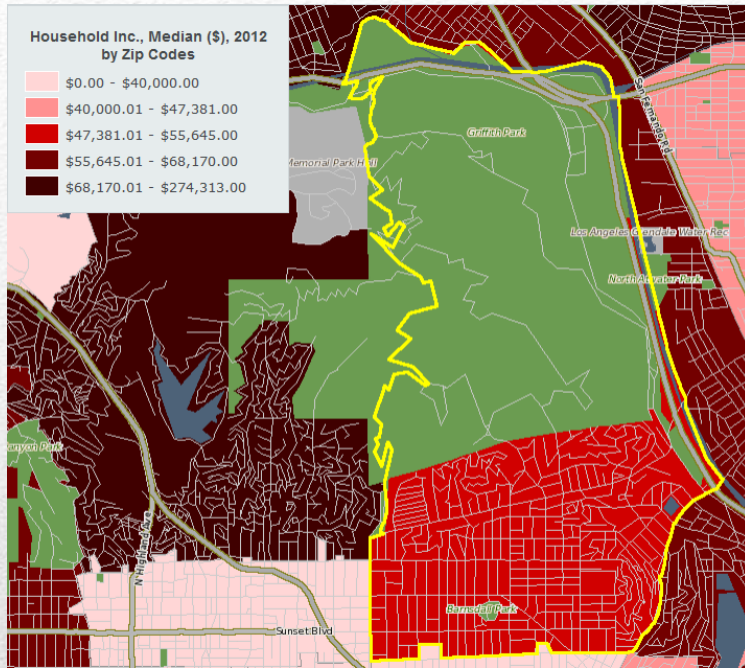
HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN BY RACE

Universe: Total population

2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

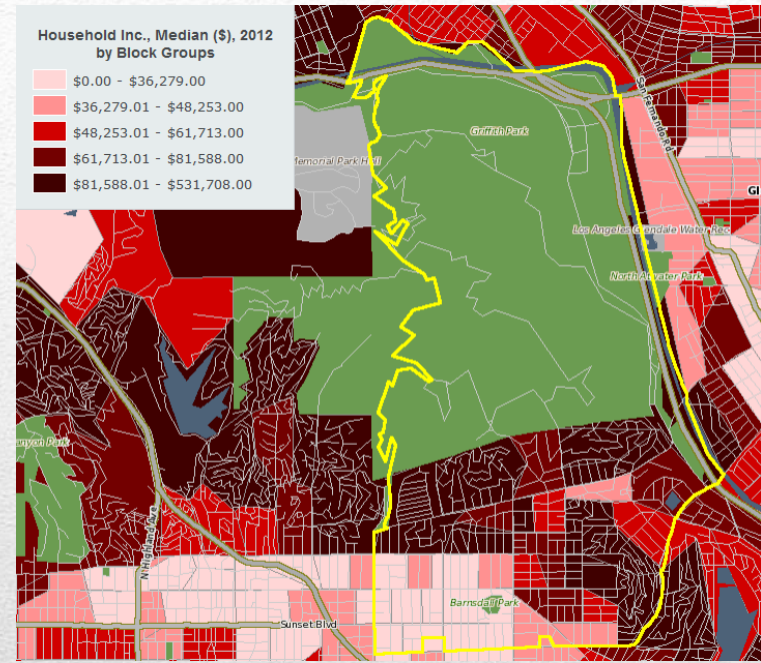
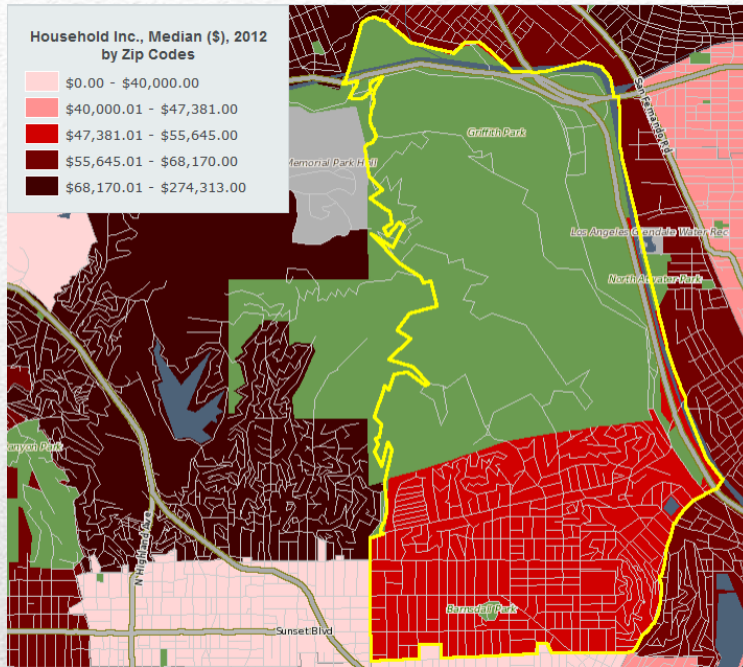
	United States	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	311,591,919	*****
Not Hispanic or Latino:	259,652,003	+/-8,666
White alone	197,084,523	+/-22,989
Black or African American alone	38,148,876	+/-46,486
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	2,086,995	+/-19,477
Asian alone	14,854,988	+/-32,374
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	469,941	+/-12,258
Some other race alone	565,213	+/-23,160
Two or more races:	6,441,467	+/-62,125
Two races including Some other race	300,228	+/-17,256
Two races excluding Some other race, and three or more races	6,141,239	+/-57,199
Hispanic or Latino:	51,939,916	+/-8,665
White alone	33,754,452	+/-110,640
Black or African American alone	1,040,652	+/-28,984
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	460,011	+/-24,181
Asian alone	165,431	+/-9,457
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	36,076	+/-5,691
Some other race alone	14,202,943	+/-107,431
Two or more races:	2,280,351	+/-50,279
Two races including Some other race	1,182,822	+/-35,836
Two races excluding Some other race, and three or more races	1,097,529	+/-33,742

Understanding Measurement of Race & Ethnicity



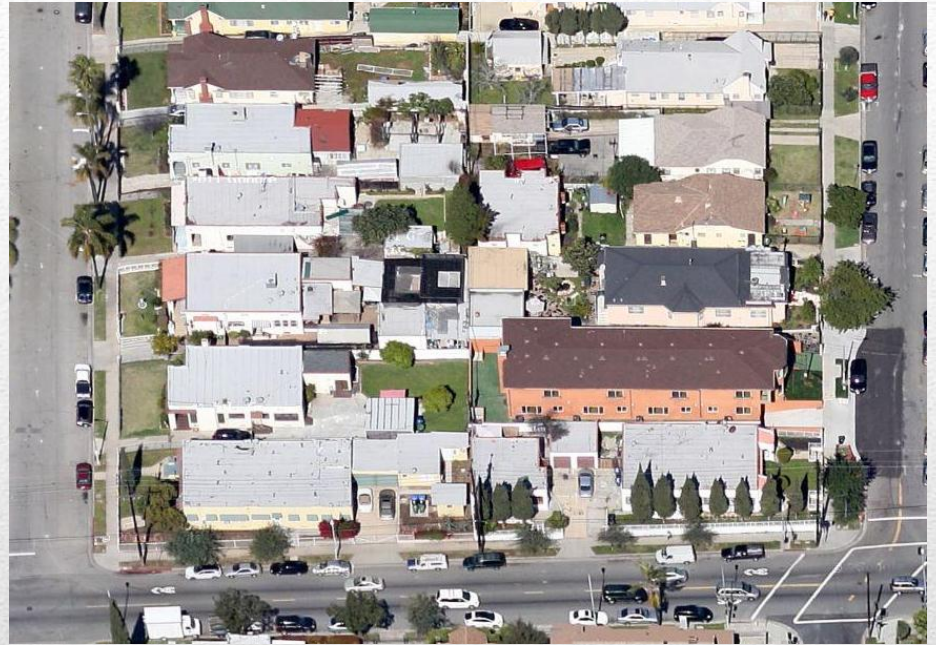
Census Data is Spatial Data

Selecting Geographies



Census Data is Spatial Data

Selecting Geographies



Census Data is Spatial Data

Selecting Geographies

Source: Google Maps

- American Community Survey
<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>
- 2010 Census
<http://www.census.gov/2010census/>

Digging Into the Data

- **Social Explorer** Interactive mapping database that can be used to view current and historical Census and ACS data in map or table (“report”) format. Available by subscription and with limited data freely available.
<http://www.socialexplorer.com>
- **National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS)** Aggregate census data and GIS-compatible boundary files for the United States, 1790 to present:
<https://www.nhgis.org/>
- **IPUMS-USA** Public-use Census and ACS microdata:
<http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>

Beyond the Census Bureau



August 7: Congressional research with Rosalind Tedford

<http://www.nclaonline.org/government-resources/help-im-accidental-government-information-librarian-webinars>

Archived & Upcoming

NCLA GRS Webinars



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Thank You! Questions?
