

# Census At-A-Glance

September 14, 2004



# Overview

- Background of Census
  - History
  - How the Census is organized
- Hands On-how to locate and use census data

# History of the Census

- Following Independence there was a need to count every person in order to determine state's representation in the US House of Representatives but also to determine each state's share of paying for the war-both based on population
- "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"

# History of Census

- The first census was taken in 1790 with 3.9 million counted inhabitants
- Three Subjects of Interest
  - Number of free White Males with a distinction of over or under 16 to determine military eligibility
  - Number of other free persons-including Indians that paid taxes
  - How many slaves there were
- 18 months to complete the census

•Source: US Census Bureau, Fact finder for the Nation (2000)

# How the Census Is Conducted

- 1940 & 1950 Conducted by Family Interviews
- 1960 & 1970 Conducted utilizing both short form & long form and US Mail
- 2000 Census
  - First Census Released online
  - First Census to allow persons to describe themselves as “more than one race”
  - First Census translated into 5 languages
  - First ever paid advertising campaign

# How the Questions Expanded

- 1810-First Inquiry About Manufacturers
- 1840-Questions on Agriculture, Mining and Fisheries were added
- 1850-Included inquiries on social issues- taxation, churches, pauperism, and crime.

■ Source: US Census Bureau, Fact Finder for the Nation (2000)

# Census Benefits & Undercounts

## Benefits of Census

- Distribution of tax dollars fairly
- Comparable information across and within states for program evaluation and use in funding
- Current information to track health & well-being of families
- Current information for decision-making and policy development

▪ Source: US Census Bureau ACS Congressional Tool Kit

## Undercounts

- Official New York State undercount estimate for Census 2000 is 209,123 persons
- Each person represents an annual loss of approximately \$3,000 in Federal funding= 6.3 Billion lost over 10 Years
- Source: The U.S. Census Monitoring Board web page / PricewaterhouseCoopers Census Study

# Short Form-Long Form

## Short Form (Summary File 1) or (SF1)

About 83% of Households (5 out of 6)

\*Name \*Sex \*Race \* Ethnicity \* Age  
\*Relationship to Head of Household \*Own/Rent Home

## Long Form (Summary File 3) or (SF3)

About 17% of Households (1 in 6)

All SF1 data plus...Socio-Economic and Housing Data

•Data from US Census Bureau

# The Short Form- SF1

- 7 Questions
- 100% Data- A complete count of “All persons” living in the U.S. as of April 1, 2000
- Over 300 tables including race, ethnicity, gender and age data

# The Long Form- SF3

- 7 population questions plus 46 additional questions
- “Sample Data” –Goes to 1 in 6 households
- Over 825 tables of socio-economic and housing data with over 16,500 variables
- The data file most used by demographers and those performing census analysis
- Not 100% Accurate- Simply a “Sample” of American Households

# The Long Form & Sampling Error

- What is a sampling error?
- Each responding “long form” household represents, on average, five or six other households who reported using short forms-not a complete count
- This standard error is larger in areas of smaller populations
- The Census Bureau over samples the Long Form in small communities to obtain accurate results
- Validity & Reliability: Who in your community might be missed?

# The American Community Survey

- Goal is to streamline and improve the Census
- Beginning with 2010 Census all households will receive short form
- Long form will be collected on a flow basis on an annual basis via the American Community Survey (ACS)
- Conducted by mail, telephone and visits
- Provides updated information every year instead of every 10 years
- Will be sent to approx 2 ½ percent of US Households per year
- Addresses are randomly selected to represent similar households in their area



# Planned Release of ACS Data

*Pending Congressional Funding*

Population Year	<b>65,000 or greater (annual data)</b>	<b>20,000 to 64,999 (3-year average)</b>	<b>Below 20,000 (5-year average)</b>
2006	2005 Data		
2007	2006 Data		
2008	2007 Data	2005-2007 Data	
2009	2008 Data	2006-2008 Data	
2010	2009 Data	2007-2009 Data	2005-2009 Data

•Source: Calm River Demographics & US Census Bureau, Fact finder for the Nation (2004)

# Census Data Types Summary






- Short-form Data or 100% Data-SF1
  - SF2-Short Form Data you can organize into racial groups
- Long-form Data or Sample Data-SF3
  - SF4- Long form data you can organize into race, ethnicity and ancestry groups

# Geography of the US Census Bureau





- Census Tracts= 1000 to 8000 population
- Block Groups= 300 to 3000
  - SF3 can be broken down into block groups
- Blocks = +/- 50 to 1500
  - SF1 can be broken down into blocks

# Census Tracts

Population=1000 to 8000

Boundaries	
	State
	'00 County
	'00 Census Tract
	'00 Block Group
	'00 Block
	'00 Place
	'00 Place
	'00 Urban Area
	'00 Urban Area

Features	
	Major Road
	Street
	Stream/Waterbody
	Stream/Waterbody



# Block Groups

Population=300 to 3000

Boundaries	
	State
	'00 County
	'00 Census Tract
	'00 Block Group
	'00 Block
	'00 Place
	'00 Place
	'00 Urban Area
	'00 Urban Area

Features	
	Major Road
	Street
	Stream/Waterbody
	Stream/Waterbody



# Blocks

Population= +/-50 to 1500



# Race & Ethnicity

- Ethnicity-only two choices
    - Hispanic or Not Hispanic
  - Race-unlimited choices
  - Race-multiple choices
    - White alone
    - Black or African American alone
    - American Indian and Alaska Native Alone
    - Asian Indian
- Japanese
    - Chinese
    - Filipino
    - Hawaiian
    - Korean
    - Vietnamese
    - Guamanian
    - Chamorro
    - Samoan
    - Write in

United States Census Bureau

[www.Census.gov](http://www.Census.gov)