

Commentary on  
**American Community Survey:  
Content Review**

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**PSC**

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# Utility Criteria

- All of the utility criteria listed refer to specific governmental uses.
- ACS data are also important for research, which provides governmental agencies and policymakers with input for many important decisions.
- Among the utility considerations should be their importance for research.



# Targeted Items

- The items initially targeted for consideration for removal from the ACS are:
  - 1) Plumbing Facilities
  - 2) Journey to Work
  - 3) Income
  - 4) Disability items
- It is not clear when removal is being considered and when rephrasing or reducing the number of items in the area is being considered.



# Plumbing Facilities

- This is one item of a list of 6 things that a residence might have. It is in the Housing section, and thus is asked only once in each interview. The Difficulty is likely very low, 2% allocated in 2012 ACS
- A consideration is the percentage of households by characteristics that do not have a flush toilet. The question is:
  - Does this house, apartment or mobile home have:
    - b. a flush toilet?



# Journey to Work

- There are four items asked in the Person section. Three of the items are only asked if the mode or travel is “Car, truck or van.” The percent allocated in 2012 varies 6-13%.
- The other items refer to mode of travel, number of people in vehicle, time left for work, and travel time.
- The Time of Departure item (13.3% allocated in 2012 ACS) seems the most reasonable for consideration for removal.
- A question is the contribution of the time of departure beyond travel time.



# Income

- There are eighteen items asked in the Person section. For nine categories it is asked whether the person had the type of income and, if so, the amount. Besides income components, total income is asked. The percent allocated varies 8-19% I did not find the allocated percentage for total income. 23% of persons in 2012 have some of income allocated.
- Income is clearly important. It would be good to know what is being considered for modification or deletion.



# Disability

- There are six items asked in the Person section. The percent allocated in 2012 varies 3-4%.
- With population aging and the relevance of disability to health care costs, information about disability is clearly important.
- It would be good to know what is being considered for modification or deletion.



# Other Items for Consideration

- There are four questions about expenditures for electricity, gas, water and sewer, and other fuel.
- The allocation percentage varies 3-11%, with 10% for gas and 11% for other fuel.
- To answer these questions accurately requires time-consuming consultation of records, or just a guess.
- There is no “total utilities cost” question. Such a question might be considered.
- Last month I was a member of an ACS household and did the internet questionnaire. These were the most annoying and time-consuming items.

