We ask for a respondent’s name in case we need to contact someone to ask about incomplete, inconsistent, or missing information on the form. This information is never published, does not result in published estimates, and is carefully protected to respect the personal information of respondents.

The question as it appears on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census in 1850, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.
American Community Survey (ACS)

Why We Ask: Relationship

We ask about the relationship of each person in a household to person 1 (a person who owns or rents the home) to create estimates about families, households, and other groups, and to produce other estimates such as income, by household.

The question as it appears on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1880, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses

- Required to describe housing needs for households of different sizes and composition. State and local government grantees receiving formula block grant funds from the Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership Program, Emergency Solutions Grant and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS programs, are required by law to include this information.
- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Used for program planning in federal programs designed to help families, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Used to understand overcrowding in housing assistance programs.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks to understand differences in household composition over time and the relationship between household types and education, employment, home ownership, health and many other areas of interest to policymakers.

Examples of Other Uses

State and local agencies use this information to plan and administer programs promoting the well-being of families and children, and providing funds and services for household types such as single parents, low-income families, older people living alone, etc. Advocacy groups may use this information to advocate for policies that benefit single parents, working parents, grandparents caring for grandchildren, and other groups.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Sex

We ask about a person’s sex to create statistics about men and women and to present other estimates, such as occupation, by sex. These statistics are used to understand the needs and characteristics of each group and to monitor against discrimination. At the Census Bureau, the sex question wording very specifically intends to capture a person’s biological sex and not gender.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Required to enforce against discrimination in education, employment, voting, financial assistance, and housing.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks to investigate whether there are differences for men and women in education, employment, home ownership, health, income and many other areas of interest to policymakers.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to understand the needs of people in their community over time. Some social, economic, or housing trends may have different impacts for men and women; understanding these changes may highlight future social and economic challenges. Advocacy groups use these statistics to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups.
American Community Survey (ACS)

Why We Ask: Age

We ask about a person’s age and date of birth to create statistics about different age groups, and to present other estimates by age group. Age statistics are used in planning and evaluating government programs and policies that provide funds or services for specific age groups, such as children, working-age adults, women of childbearing age, or the older population. These statistics are also used to monitor against age discrimination in government programs and in society.

The ACS includes an additional question about date of birth to solve inconsistencies that result from year-round interviewing. For example, young people turning 18 could be children if they are completing a survey in January and adults if they are completing a survey in December. A birth date allows the Census Bureau to account for these differences and still produce accurate annual age estimates.)

Examples of Federal Uses

- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Required to enforce against age discrimination in education, employment, voting, financial assistance, and housing.
- Required to plan programs and forecast future needs for programs that serve the elderly, including housing assistance programs.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks to investigate whether there are generational differences in education, employment, home ownership, health, income and many other areas of interest to policymakers.

Examples of Other Uses

State and local agencies use these statistics to understand population changes, and the needs of a community over time. Understanding changes in a population's age composition may highlight future social and economic challenges. Advocacy groups use statistics about specific age groups (children, college students, working men and women, workers nearing retirement, older people, etc.) to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups. Similarly, businesses use these statistics to analyze a community’s potential clients and workforce when planning new ventures.

The question as it appears on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census 1790, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Hispanic Origin

We ask whether someone is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin to create statistics about this ethnic group. Hispanic origin statistics are used in planning and evaluating government programs and policies to ensure they fairly serve the needs of each community and to monitor against discrimination in these programs and in society.

Though many respondents expect to see a Hispanic, Latino or Spanish answer category on the race question, this question is asked separately because people of Hispanic origin may be of any race(s). The Census Bureau collects this data in accordance with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards on race and ethnicity.

The question as it appears on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census in 1970, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Required to enforce against discrimination in education, employment, voting, financial assistance, and housing.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks to investigate whether there are differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in education, employment, home ownership, health, income and many other areas of interest to policymakers.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to understand the needs of all the groups in their communities over time. Some social, economic, or housing trends may have different impacts for Hispanics; understanding these changes may highlight future social and economic challenges. Researchers and advocacy groups use these statistics to examine the size and characteristics of Hispanic groups over time.
We ask about a person’s race to create statistics about these race groups and to present other estimates by race group. Race statistics are used in planning and evaluating government programs and policies to ensure they fairly serve the needs of each community and to monitor against discrimination in these programs and in society.

Though, a question about race has been included on the Decennial Census since 1790, the categories have changed over time. The Census Bureau collects racial data in accordance with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards on race and ethnicity. The racial categories are based on self-identification and generally reflect a social definition of race and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, people may choose to report more than one race to indicate their racial identity.

The question as it appears on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1790, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Required to enforce against discrimination in education, employment, voting, financial assistance, and housing.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks to investigate whether there are race differences in education, employment, home ownership, health, income and many other areas of interest to policymakers.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to understand the needs of all the groups in their communities over time. Some social, economic, or housing trends may have different impacts for different race groups; understanding these changes may highlight future social and economic challenges. Advocacy groups use statistics about specific race groups to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Place of Birth, Citizenship and Year of Entry

We ask about place of birth, citizenship, and year of entry to provide statistics about citizens and the foreign-born population. These statistics are essential for agencies and policy makers setting and evaluating immigration policies and laws, understanding how different immigrant groups are assimilated, and monitoring against discrimination. These statistics are also used to tailor services to accommodate cultural differences.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. A question about “foreigners not naturalized” was first included in the Census of 1820, while a question on place of birth originated in 1850, and a year of entry question originated in 1900. These questions were transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required in the enforcement responsibilities under the Voting Rights Act's bilingual requirements, to determine eligible voting populations for analysis and for presentation in federal litigation.
- Required to enforce against discrimination in education, employment, voting, financial assistance, and housing.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks to investigate whether there are differences for citizens and foreign-born individuals in education, employment, home ownership, health, income and many other areas of interest to policymakers.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to understand the needs of all the groups in their communities over time. Some social, economic, or housing trends may have different impacts for different groups; understanding these changes may highlight future social and economic challenges. Researchers and advocacy groups use these statistics to examine the size and characteristics of native and foreign-born populations over time.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: School Enrollment

We ask about whether a person is attending school or college to create statistics about school enrollment. These statistics are used to analyze the demographic, social and economic characteristics and needs of school-age children and to understand the continuing education needs of adults.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1850, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required in the enforcement responsibilities under the Voting Rights Act
- Required to enforce against discrimination in employment, recognizing that some occupations have educational qualifications.
- Used in the enforcement of nondiscrimination in education by state and local governments, including ensuring appropriate action to assist English language learners in overcoming language barriers, and monitoring desegregation.
- Used to allocate funds to states based on the number of adults beyond the age of compulsory school attendance, without a secondary school diploma.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to understand the needs of a community over time. Colleges, universities, and businesses may use this information to bridge gaps between the educational attainment of potential workers and the educational requirements of potential employers. Advocacy groups use these statistics to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups. Researchers use this information to investigate changes in educational attainment over time, and how it is related to other factors such as parents’ education and health.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Educational Attainment and Undergraduate Field of Degree

We ask about the highest degree or level of school a person has completed, and the field of any Bachelor’s degree, to produce statistics about educational attainment. These statistics are used to measure changes in education over time, evaluate the educational attainment of the workforce, and to identify the educational and training needs of adults.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1850, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005. The undergraduate field of degree question was added in 2009.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required in the enforcement responsibilities under the Voting Rights Act
- Required to enforce against discrimination in employment, recognizing that some occupations have educational qualifications.
- Used in the enforcement of nondiscrimination in education by state and local governments, including ensuring appropriate action to assist English language learners, and monitoring desegregation.
- Used to allocate funds to states based on the number of adults beyond the age of compulsory school attendance, without a secondary school diploma.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to understand the needs of a community over time. Colleges, universities, and businesses may use this information to bridge gaps between the educational attainment of potential workers and the educational requirements of potential employers. Researchers use this information to investigate changes in
educational attainment over time, and how it is related to other factors such as parents’ education and health.
American Community Survey (ACS)

Why We Ask: Ancestry

We ask about a person’s ancestry to identify the ethnic origins of the population. These statistics are needed to measure the characteristics of ethnic groups and to tailor services to accommodate cultural differences.

A question about ancestry first appeared on the long form of the Census of 1980, replacing an earlier question on parental place of birth. Ancestry refers to a person’s ethnic origin or descent, "roots," or heritage, or the place of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1980, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Required to enforce against discrimination in education, employment, voting, financial assistance, and housing.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks to investigate whether there are differences by ancestry in education, employment, home ownership, health, income and many other areas of interest to policymakers.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to understand the needs of all the groups in their communities over time. Some social, economic, or housing trends may have different impacts for different ancestry groups; understanding these changes may highlight future social and economic challenges. Advocacy groups use statistics about specific ancestry groups to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Language Spoken at Home

We ask questions about whether people speak a language other than English at home, what language they speak, and how well they speak English to create statistics about language. These statistics help the federal government understand how well people in each community speak English, and analyze and plan programs for adults and children who do not speak English well. Statistics about language spoken are also used to ensure that information about public health, law, regulations, voting, and safety is communicated in languages that community members understand.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census in 1890, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Required to report the housing needs of minorities, including non-native English speakers. State and Local government grantees receiving formula block grant funds from the Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership Program, Emergency Solutions Grant and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS programs, are required by law to report these needs.
- Required to enforce against discrimination in education, employment, voting, financial assistance, and housing, as failure to provide language assistance services to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) could constitute national origin discrimination.
- Required in the enforcement responsibilities under the Voting Rights Act's bilingual requirements, to determine eligible voting populations for analysis and for presentation in federal litigation.
- Used to develop plans to meet the needs of older individuals, including the languages spoken by older people in the potential service population.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to provide translation services and appropriate informational materials about voting, emergency planning, law enforcement, etc. in languages that residents understand. Public health officials use this information to determine whether there could be language or cultural barriers to obtaining health care. Libraries use this information to focus their collections. Advocacy groups use these statistics to measure demand, plan, and fund English language education and programs for children and adults.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Residence One Year Ago

We ask questions about whether a person moved in the last year, and where he or she lived one year ago to create statistics about where people are moving (among countries, and within the United States). These statistics help federal agencies assess residential stability, the effects of immigration, and the effects of migration in both urban and rural areas.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1930, and transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to produce estimates of international migration.
- Used to allocate funds to States for assistance to counties because of factors such as unusually large refugee populations and high refugee concentrations.
- Used to estimate the spread of communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to estimate residential turnover in their communities. These statistics can be used to plan programs, services, and infrastructure for new residents when there is a trend in people arriving, or to plan programs that attract new residents or employers when there is a trend in people leaving.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Health Insurance

We ask questions about health insurance to create statistics about the percentage of the population covered by health insurance, and the sources of their health insurance. These statistics help federal agencies better understand health insurance coverage, state and local health insurance needs, and to help federal agencies accurately distribute resources and plan programs.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1850, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses

- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Used for Marketplace, Medicaid, and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to target efforts to enroll eligible people and allocate Navigator funding.
- Used to project the demand for VA extended health care services.
- Used to determine where health insurance is lacking as part of research into infectious disease and contaminants. Also used in the development of exposure assessment tools that estimate potential exposures to the general public and specific demographic groups.
- Used to review and analyze the unmet needs of people with disabilities and to identify the characteristics of the target service population.

Examples of Other Uses

State and local agencies use these statistics to understand gaps in community services, and to plan services for everyone, including the uninsured. Researchers use these statistics to understand the effect of new health care policies, and to understand who is covered by health insurance and the sources of their insurance. Advocacy groups use these statistics to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups, such as those with chronic illness or disabilities.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Disability

We ask questions about a person’s difficulty with specific daily living tasks to produce disability statistics. These statistics are used by federal agencies to understand the population with disabilities, to monitor against discrimination, and to distribute funds, provide services, and develop programs for people with disabilities.

While the term *disability* was first used in the 1880 Census, it was not the same as the way we think of disability now. The six questions on the ACS are designed to identify limitations in the four basic areas of functioning (vision, hearing, mobility, and cognitive functioning) and independent living. The estimates from these questions can be analyzed individually or combined as one measure to assess the equalization of opportunity for people with disabilities, and the need for services in particular areas.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping?</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Does this person have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Does this person have difficulty dressing or bathing?</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. Though a Census question about disability was introduced in 1880, the current questions originated on the 2006 ACS Content Test and were added to the ACS in 2008.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to identify vulnerable populations which may be at disproportionate risk of experiencing limitations in health care access, poor health quality, and suboptimal health outcomes.
- Required to report the housing needs of disabled persons. State and Local government grantees receiving formula block grant funds from the Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership Program, Emergency Solutions Grant and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS programs, are required by law to report these needs.
- Used to reviews and analyze the unmet needs of people with developmental disabilities and to identify the characteristics of the target service population.
- Used to prepare and respond to disasters. Information about disability status, income, and plumbing facilities is used to estimate the size and nature of populations in a disaster-affected area and determine how best to respond to community needs.
- Used for transit service planning, where some geographic areas may need to be targeted for special public transportation service such as paratransit service.
- Used to enforce against discrimination in education and employment.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to plan programs and services for the disabled population. Advocacy groups use this information to advocate for public policy that ensures the independence and inclusion of people with disabilities in society.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Marital Status and History

We ask about a person’s marital status, changes in marital status in the past 12 months, and lifetime marital history to create estimates about marital status and marital history. These estimates are used to help federal agencies understand marriage trends, forecast future needs of programs that have spousal benefits, and measure the effects of policies and programs that focus on the well-being of families, including tax policies and financial assistance programs.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1850, and a marital status question was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005. The marital history questions were added to the ACS in 2008.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required in researching and reporting tasks to project usage of programs with spousal benefits, including veterans’ and social security programs.
- Used to analyze family formation, and to understand the different types of families in need, in federal programs that benefit low-income families.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics, in combination with number of children, income, and employment to determine what kinds of social services might be needed in a community. Health care and community services may use this information to understand the percentage of older people in a community without spousal support, who may need additional care as they age. Advocacy groups use these statistics to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups. Researchers use these statistics to understand marriage trends, changing attitudes about marriage, blended families, etc.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Fertility

We ask whether a woman has given birth in the past 12 months to create fertility statistics. These statistics can be used to project the future size of the population, and to understand more about growing families.

Though local vital statistics offices typically have a count of births per year, ACS data is able to provide federal program planners, policy-makers and researchers with additional statistics about the age, education and employment of parents in households welcoming children, and other important information about the homes (age, size, etc.) and households (income, language spoken, etc.), for a more complete picture of growing families.

The question as it appears on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1940, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to estimate current and future populations eligible for certain federal programs and services, such as health care.
- Used in many reporting and research tasks in programs that investigate poverty, environmental justice, and children's health.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics, in combination with their vital statistics, to understand future demands on local education systems, health programs and services, etc. Businesses, especially in baby-related industries, use this information to focus activities in different areas based on fertility rate, and to understand their markets. Advocacy groups, such as those advocating for changing parental leave policies, may use these statistics to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups.
American Community Survey (ACS)

Why We Ask: Grandparents as Caregivers

We ask questions about grandparents with primary responsibility for their grandchildren to create statistics about grandparent caregivers. While a variety of events may result in grandparents caring for their grandchildren, older Americans are often in different financial, housing, and health circumstances than those in middle-age. Estimates about these grandparents help many federal programs understand the needs of this group and design programs that assist both generations.

The question as it appears on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census in 2000, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to provide family formation and stability measures to the performance measures in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- Used to develop plans and programs for older individuals, especially those persons in greatest economic or social need, such as low-income elderly.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to plan programs and services that benefit grandparent caregivers. Advocacy groups use this information to provide community support for grandparent caregivers.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Veteran Status, Period of Service and VA Service-Connected Disability Rating

We ask about a person’s military service to create estimates of veterans and their needs at the community level. Though the Department of Veterans’ Affairs maintains veterans’ records, ACS statistics are able to provide federal program planners, policy-makers and researchers with additional statistics about all veterans, regardless of whether they utilize VA services. Statistics about where veterans are moving throughout the country, their ages, and their VA service-connected disability rating status, help communities plan for future health care and nursing homes, statistics about whether veterans are in school or working help plan and fund job training, and statistics about veterans’ homes help improve the home loan guarantee program.

Examples of Federal Uses
• Required to estimate the number of nursing home and domiciliary beds necessary to accommodate the projected demand for VA extended care services by age 65+ veterans.
• Required to enforce against employment discrimination.
• Used to estimate the usage for all major VA medical care construction projects.
• Used, with market-level information on both income and mortgages, to understand the effect of the VA Home Loan Guarantee program on housing cost burden and foreclosure.
• Used to assess the eligible population for federal programs benefiting veterans, such as health care and job training, and the effect of those programs on participants.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to determine what kinds of social services might be needed in a community. Advocacy groups use these statistics to understand current and future challenges and to advocate for policies that benefit their groups. Businesses may use these estimates to understand potential employees or trainees.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census of 1890, and transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Labor Force Status

We ask about whether a person worked last week, and if the answer is no, why they were not working, and whether they are looking for work to produce statistics about labor force status. These statistics help the federal government understand more about unemployment and the availability of workers, plan unemployment programs and services, and plan programs to grow employment over time.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to enforce nondiscrimination provisions in employment by private employers, employment agencies, and labor organizations. Required in federal affirmative employment programs, to identify under-representation in job categories, including veterans and people with disabilities.
- Used to understand the unmet needs of people with developmental disabilities and to identify the characteristics of the target service population.
- Used in assessing program eligibility and planning outreach in programs that help low-income families and individuals afford health insurance, utilities, housing, and other necessities.
- Used to help make other federal surveys more accurate, including those that produce the nation’s official labor market estimates.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to identify labor surplus areas (areas with people available for hiring and training) plan workforce development programs including job fairs to training programs, and promote business opportunities.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Commuting/ Journey to Work

We ask questions about where people work, how they get there, when they leave, and how long it takes, to create statistics about commuting, or a person’s journey to work. This information is for planning improvements to roads and highways and planning emergency response routes.

The 1960 Census was the first to ask about how people get to work. In 1970, the Census added a question about where a person worked, and in 1980, the Census added a question about how long it took to get there. In order to calculate peak travel times, a time of departure question (What time did this person usually leave home to go to work last week?) was introduced to the 1990 Census, and retained for Census 2000.

Examples of Federal Uses
• Required in transportation planning to ensure compliance with various Federal regulations.
• Required to understand where people could reasonably commute from in order to work in a certain area. This information is then used for employment planning, protection against employment discrimination, defining banking and housing markets, planning emergency response, etc.
• Used in transportation planning to understand the current users of various transportation options, and forecast future use.

Examples of Other Uses
State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and regional planning agencies use commuting information for long range transportation planning and travel demand forecasting. Local planning agencies and organizations use these statistics to address unmet transportation needs such as services for the disabled population, bicycle commuters, carpool and ride shares, and many other groups. Researchers use these estimates to study the effects of long commutes on health (obesity, hypertension, etc.), and on the environment (emissions, contaminants, etc.).

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census in 1960, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Work Status

We ask about how many weeks a person worked in the last year, and how many hours he or she worked each week to produce statistics about full-time and part-time workers, as well as full-year and part-year workers. These statistics help federal agencies understand trends and differences in wages, benefits, work hours, and seasonal work.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Required to examine the labor force participation and income status of all service-connected (SC) veterans compared to service-connected (NSC) veterans and non-veterans. This comparison is important to compensate and care for SC veterans.
- Used to enforce nondiscrimination provisions in employment by private employers, employment agencies, and labor organizations. Required in federal affirmative employment programs, to identify under-representation in job categories, including veterans and people with disabilities.
- Used in the formula that determines the allocation of funding to states and territories for the Mental Health Services Block Grant, and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

Examples of Other Uses
State and local agencies use these statistics to identify the percentage of people employed full-time, and the percentage of residents who work in each community year-round.
American Community Survey (ACS)

Why We Ask: Class of Worker

We ask about whether a person was a private employee, government employee, self-employed, or working without pay in a family business to produce statistics about class of worker. These statistics are used to understand more about the type of ownership of employing organizations, to plan and measure education, employment, career development and job training programs, and to measure compliance with antidiscrimination policies.

Examples of Federal Uses

- Required to support cooperative agricultural extension work.
- Used to enforce nondiscrimination provisions in employment by private employers, government agencies, and labor organizations. Used in federal affirmative employment programs, to identify under-representation in job categories, including veterans and people with disabilities.
- Used to help make other federal surveys more accurate, including those that produce the nation’s official labor market estimates.

Examples of Other Uses

State and local agencies use these statistics to identify the percentage of people employed full-time, and the percentage of residents who work in each community year-round.
American Community Survey (ACS)
Why We Ask: Industry and Occupation

We ask about a person’s employer, the kind of business or industry of that employer, the work a person was doing, and that person’s most important duties at that job to produce industry and occupation statistics. These statistics are used to understand more about the labor force, to plan and measure education, employment, career development and job training programs, and to measure compliance with antidiscrimination policies.

The questions as they appear on the 2016 ACS paper questionnaire. This topic was introduced on the Decennial Census in 1850, and was transferred to the ACS when it replaced the Decennial Census long-form in 2005.

Examples of Federal Uses

- Required to enforce nondiscrimination provisions in employment by private employers, government agencies, and labor organizations. Used in federal affirmative employment programs, to identify under-representation in job categories and specific occupations.
- Used to help make other federal surveys more accurate, including those that produce the nation’s official labor market estimates.
- Used in the formula that determines the allocation of funding to states and territories for the Mental Health Services Block Grant, and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

Examples of Other Uses

State and local agencies use these statistics to identify the percentage of people employed full-time, and the percentage of residents who work in each community year-round. Used by companies to decide where to locate new plants, warehouses, stores, or offices.
We ask questions about the funds a person receives from various sources to create statistics about income, earnings, and poverty. These estimates help gauge the need for economic assistance for populations in need (such as children and seniors), and measure the economic well-being of the nation. Income and poverty estimates are often part of allocation formulas that determine how food, health care, job training, housing and other assistance are distributed.

Income questions originated with the 1940 Census, as a way to understand the financial situation of Americans in the wake of the Great Depression. Today, income estimates still help policy makers and others understand how such factors as where a person lives, the kind of work they do, and their education affect their earnings, and how those earnings compare to their housing costs (rent, mortgage, utilities, etc.). Income estimates are also vital for measuring poverty.

Examples of Federal Uses
- Used in formulas that allocate funding to geographic areas with the greatest need.
- Used to understand the characteristics of people living at or below the poverty line. These estimates are then used to set eligibility requirements for individuals, governments, and organizations seeking funding for education, housing assistance, health care, food assistance, legal services, and many other programs.
- Used to prepare and respond to disasters. Information about disability status, income, and plumbing facilities is used to estimate the size and nature of populations in a disaster-affected area and determine how best to respond to community needs.
- Used to estimate future demand for assistance and services, including disaster response. For example, people living on small, fixed incomes may not be able to evacuate as easily or as long as other groups.

Examples of Other Uses
States and counties use these statistics to identify local areas eligible for grants to stimulate economic recovery, run job-training programs, and define areas as empowerment or enterprise zones. States and counties also use this information to assist children in poverty, and to allocate funds to counties and school districts for resources and services that improve the education of economically disadvantaged children. Advocacy groups and other organizations use these estimates to report on the conditions facing fixed and low-income individuals and families. Researchers use these estimates to understand the effect of income on other aspects of life, including health and health care.