

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.

30 At what location did this person work LAST WEEK? If this person worked at more than one location, print where he or she worked most last week.

a. Address (Number and street name)

If the exact address is not known, give a description of the location such as the building name or the nearest street or intersection.

b. Name of city, town, or post office

c. Is the work location inside the limits of that city or town?

Yes
 No, outside the city/town limits

d. Name of county

e. Name of U.S. state or foreign country

f. ZIP Code

31 How did this person usually get to work LAST WEEK? If this person usually used more than one method of transportation during the trip, mark (X) the box of the one used for most of the distance.

Car, truck, or van
 Bus or trolley bus
 Streetcar or trolley car
 Subway or elevated
 Railroad
 Ferryboat
 Taxicab

Motorcycle
 Bicycle
 Walked
 Worked at home → SKIP to question 39a
 Other method

32 How many people, including this person, usually rode to work in the car, truck, or van LAST WEEK?
Person(s)

33 What time did this person usually leave home to go to work LAST WEEK?

Hour Minute a.m. p.m.

34 How many minutes did it usually take this person to get from home to work LAST WEEK?
Minutes

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.

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.).