AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY
2024 5-Year PUMS File ReadMe

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The Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files allow data users to create estimates for user-defined characteristics. The files contain a sample of the responses to the American Community Survey (ACS). Additional measures are applied to protect confidentiality and provide consistency within the PUMS files. Training, access to the microdata, and documentation may be found on the PUMS landing page located at: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html.

Previously, this ReadMe contained additional information, such as why variables changed, how to crosswalk PUMS geographies to obtain geographies not available in PUMS, such as counties, and how to calculate the margin of error. This information has been moved to the PUMS User Guide, located on the PUMS documentation page located at: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/documentation.html. Additional documentation, such as the PUMS Variable Changes and Explanation document, are also located there.

Data users may obtain PUMS data from either the FTP site or by using the Microdata Analysis Tool (MDAT). Both may be found at: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/access.html.

MDAT is an online tool that allows data users to calculate estimates without using statistical software. It may be found at: https://data.census.gov/mdat/. Training and documentation for MDAT is located at: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/mdat.html.

The ACS is a survey. Like all surveys, it must be weighted to create estimates that represent the population. When using the Person files, use the person weight (called PWGTP). For the Housing files, use the housing weight (WGTP). The Housing files contain data on housing units (including vacant units). The Person files contain data on people who live in housing units, as well as people in group quarters (GQ) such as those living in nursing homes or college dorms.

In addition, pre-tabulated ACS estimates on data.census.gov are published with a measure of uncertainty called the margin of error (MOE). Data users may calculate the MOE for PUMS estimates using either a generalized variance formula (GVF) or the successive differences replication (SDR) method. More information may be found in the PUMS Accuracy of the Data document as well as in the PUMS User Guide (https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/documentation.html).

Users, please note that the 2024 ACS PUMS will be the final year design factors will be published. In lieu of design factors, we strongly encourage the use of the replicate weight (SDR) methodology.

The Census Bureau occasionally provides corrections or updates to PUMS files. Data users may sign up for notifications and updates via the Census Bureau's E-mail Updates system at:

https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/subscriber/new?category_id=USCENSUS_C12.

In addition, PUMS errata notes may be found here: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/errata.html.

User notes are located here: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/user-notes.html.

Data users may also email acso.users.support@census.gov with any PUMS-related questions.