American Community Survey (ACS) Content Review
(As of 10/24/2014)
The Census Bureau engaged in a comprehensive review of the content of the American Community Survey beginning in 2011. The review steps included:

- Examining and confirming the value of each question on the ACS
- Confirming and updating the statutory and regulatory authority for the questions on the ACS with federal agencies
- Gathering input from customers
- Analyzing data
- Developing recommendations for ACS content that will provide the most useful information with the least amount of burden to the public
Objectives and Scope

Objectives:

- Use pre-specified, unbiased criteria to identify potential questions for removal (Phase I)
- Obtain comprehensive understanding of ACS question uses, justification, and merit for potential revision or removal (Phases II & III)

Scope: All questions (and subparts) currently on the 2013 ACS Questionnaire
Project Phases

- **Phase I** – assess full survey content and identify questions for removal in 2016

- **Phase II** – assess availability of other sources

- **Phase III** – research modifications to existing questions
Phase 1 Process

- Initial Data Gathering
- Data Analysis
- Initial Recommendations
- Public Comment Period
- All Comments Considered
- Final Determination
## Inputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Inputs</th>
<th>Other Inputs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter from the acting Deputy Secretary of Commerce to federal agencies informing them of Content Review</td>
<td>Survey of over 1,000 Field and Call Center Representatives</td>
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<td>Department of Commerce Office of General Counsel (OGC) Letter to agency OGCs</td>
<td>Website tool to collect input on questions from non-federal customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Summit with 23 federal agencies to develop understanding of purpose, process, and desired outcomes for Content Review</td>
<td>National Advisory Committee Content Review Working Group provided input on data use and ACS questions</td>
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<td>Dedicated extranet site to collect input on questions from all federal agencies</td>
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What drives our analysis?

### LEGAL
- **Mandatory** – a federal law explicitly calls for use of decennial census or ACS data on that question
- **Required** – a federal law (or implementing regulation) explicitly requires the use of data and the decennial or the ACS is the historical source; or the data are needed for case law requirements imposed by the U.S. federal court system
- **Programmatic** – the data are needed for program planning, implementation, or evaluation and there is no explicit mandate or requirement

### GEOGRAPHY
- Block Group/Tract Level
- Place/County/MSA Level
- State/Nation Level
Examining Benefits

1. Uses at Block Group/Tract Level-Mandatory
2. Uses at Place/County/MSA Level-Mandatory
3. Uses at State/Nation Level-Mandatory
4. Uses at Block Group/Tract Level-Required
5. Uses at Place/County/MSA Level-Required
6. Uses at State/Nation Level-Required
7. Uses at Block Group/Tract Level-Programmatic
8. Uses at Place/County/MSA Level-Programmatic
9. Uses at State/Nation Level-Programmatic
10. County-Level Interquartile Range in Values
11. Used to Select Frame for a Federal Survey
12. Other Data Sources Exist
13. Median County-Level Coefficients of Variation
Examining Costs

1. Cognitive Burden Score
2. Sensitivity Score
3. Overall Difficulty Score
4. Number of Complaints to Census Bureau HQ
5. Median Seconds to Answer
6. Median County-Level item Response Rate
Quadrant Analysis

1. High Benefit / Low Cost
2. High Benefit / High Cost
3. Low Benefit / Low Cost
4. Low Benefit / High Cost
Driving Factor for Benefits and Costs

Mandatory Uses at all Geographic Levels
Required Uses at Sub-State Level
No Other Data Sources Available

Cognitive Burden, Sensitivity, and Difficulty

Cost
Benefit
# Phase 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate results to ICSP Sub-Committee</td>
<td>NLT 9/19/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide immediate “heads-up” to Participating Agencies</td>
<td>NLT 9/22/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish <em>Federal Register</em> Notice</td>
<td>NLT 10/15/14</td>
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<td>Complete Phase I documentation</td>
<td>NLT 12/31/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess comments received from <em>Federal Register</em> Notice</td>
<td>NLT 12/31/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit proposed changes to OMB</td>
<td>NLT 4/1/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMB reviews proposed changes and issues <em>Federal Register</em> Notice with 30-day public comment period</td>
<td>4/1/15-6/1/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOC notified on final content decisions for CY 2016 ACS</td>
<td>NLT 6/1/15</td>
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<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct full quadrant analysis for each question</td>
<td>NLT 12/15/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigate other sources for questions</td>
<td>NLT 12/15/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop research agenda</td>
<td>NLT 2/28/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begin research into administrative records and question modifications</td>
<td>NLT 4/30/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct 2016 Content Test</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze Results of 2016 Content Test</td>
<td>2016 and beyond</td>
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Stay Involved!

- View the ACS Content Review Web Page:
  
  http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about_the_survey/acs_content_review/

- Sign up for GovDelivery ACS Subscriber Notices:
  
  https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCENSUS/subscriber/new

- Review Federal Register Notices