

Appendix C.

Historical Changes: 2009

The American Housing Survey (AHS) began in 1973 as the Annual Housing Survey. Since 1981, the U.S. Census Bureau has conducted the national survey every odd numbered year. It was renamed the American Housing Survey in 1984.

The metropolitan survey program began in 1974 and has changed many times, mostly in response to changes in the AHS budget. In 2009, seven metropolitan areas were in sample, five of which were designed as a supplemental portion to the national sample (see Appendix B). For a complete list of areas and the year of data collection, see page vi of this report.

Only changes for the 2009 survey year are noted in this appendix. Historical changes prior to 2009 can be found online at www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/ahs/datacollection.html or in previous publications.

When comparing the 2009 publication tables to prior years, please note the following.

Book title, metropolitan sample.

The title of the metropolitan publication changed in 2009. The new title is *American Housing Survey for Selected Metropolitan Areas: 2009*. One volume is published for all metropolitan areas, as opposed to separate publications for each area.

Chapter 1.

Table 1-7 (Financial Characteristics—All Housing Units) is no longer included; this information can be found in chapters 2 and 3.

Chapters 2 through 6.

Tables 17 through 24 have been deleted in each chapter.

Chapters 5 and 6 are no longer included in the report.

Comparison to local area elementary schools.

The universe for this category changed in 2009. This question is now only asked of households with children aged 0 to 13 who were dissatisfied with their local area elementary school.

Current interest rate.

Size categories were revised in 2009; the resulting top size category is now 9 percent or more. The published top size category prior to 2009 was 20 percent or more.

Current line-of-credit interest rate.

Size categories were revised in 2009; the bottom size category is now less than 3 percent, and the resulting top size category is now 8 percent or more. Prior to 2009, the published bottom size category was less than 6 percent, and the top size category was 20 percent or more.

Dependent interviewing.

Down payment percentage was not asked if a valid answer was obtained in a previous interview and if the current interview was at the same housing unit. In this case, the answers from the previous interview were used to process and tabulate the data.

Disabilities.

Questions were added to determine the disability status of household members.

Heating equipment.

The heating equipment questions were revised to address underreporting of “other heating equipment” in 2007. In 2007, the series of questionnaire items dealing with “other heating equipment” began with a question asking if the respondent had any other kind of working heating equipment in their homes. Only respondents who answered “yes” to this question were asked follow-up questions on types of “other heating equipment.” In 2009, the screener question was removed and the next question in the series was revised, so that all respondents were read the types of “other heating equipment” when asked if they had any “other heating equipment.” Prior to 2007, respondents were not asked the screener question, but rather were asked from the outset if they had specific types of “other heating equipment.”

Income.

The reference period for the income questions was changed from “in the last twelve months” or “during the past twelve months” to a specific date, which is exactly twelve months prior to the date of the interview.

Median.

All medians are now calculated as true medians (see the definition “Median” in Appendix A) with the exception of “Year Structure Built” which continues to be calculated as an interpolated median, as in previous publications.

Monthly payment for principal and interest.

Additional size categories are shown in 2009; the resulting top size category is now \$2,000 or more. The published top size category prior to 2009 was \$1,500 or more.

No cash rent.

In 2009, the answer categories were changed to (a) rented or (b) occupied without payment of rent. Prior to 2009, respondents were asked if the unit was (a) rented for cash rent or (b) occupied without payment of cash rent.

Public elementary school.

Questions about school satisfaction and proximity are no longer asked of households where all children are 5 years of age or younger. Prior to 2009, these households were included in their respective "Not Reported" rows.

Public transportation.

The table rows have been reordered to more accurately reflect how this series of questions is asked. Also, prior to 2009, the "Not Reported" rows included households who did not have public transportation in the area.

Ratio of value to current income.

Additional size categories are shown in 2009; the resulting top size category is now 11.0 or more. The published top size category prior to 2009 was 5.0 or more.

Rent paid by lodgers.

The bottom size category is expanded to less than \$200 in 2009, and additional size categories are shown. The resulting top size category is now \$800 or more. Prior to 2009, the published bottom size category was less than \$100 and the top size category was \$400 or more.

Wiring.

A rewording of the dependent interviewing verification questions from 2005 to 2007 resulted in an overestimate of households with exposed wiring. In 2009, dependent interviewing was not used and all households were asked the wiring questions.