

Appendix C.

Changes: 2015 to 2017

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. In 1984, it was renamed the American Housing Survey. Beginning with the 2011 AHS, the survey instrument consisted of a permanent set of core questions, plus questions on topical supplements that will rotate in and out of future surveys. Starting in 2013, the AHS asked questions from the topical supplements of only half the sample to reduce respondent burden. The 2015 AHS underwent a major redesign. For the first time since 1985, the survey selected a new national and metropolitan area longitudinal sample.

Results from the 2017 AHS will be available in the following two formats:

- [AHS Table Creator](#) (a web application)
- [Public Use File \(PUF\)](#) (microdata)

Using the Table Creator tool, AHS summary tables can be customized using selected column variables and tenure and geography filters, and downloaded into Excel.

This document only notes changes in Table Creator column variables (boxheads), tables, and table items (individual table rows/stubs) for the 2017 survey year. For historical changes prior to 2017, see <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/tech-documentation/def-errors-changes.html>.

Rounding:

Beginning in 2017, all values in the tables have been rounded to four significant digits as part of the new disclosure avoidance protocol.

Modified Column Variables:

Year Structure Built. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

Year Moved Into Unit. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

New Tables:

The 2017 AHS included new topical supplements. As a result, four new tables were introduced:

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness. This table provides indicators measuring household readiness for emergencies and disasters. Many of the table items previously appeared in the 2013 AHS. New items on First Source of Emergency Information During Disaster, Home Has Tornado Safe Room or Shelter, Home Covered by Flood Insurance, and Disaster Repairs in the Last Two Years for

Renters were added and 2013 items on House or Building Number Clearly Visible were dropped. The following 2017 stubs were renamed since 2013, but the data are still comparable between the two years: Household has enough non-perishable food for at least 3 days, Household has at least 3 gallons or 24 bottles of water per person, Household has agreed-upon meeting location, Household has communication plan if cell service disrupted, Evacuation funds of up to \$2,000, and Evacuation vehicle(s) available.

Delinquent Payments and Notices. Table covers topics such as utility payment activity, as well as, foreclosures and eviction notices. Many of the table items previously appeared in the 2013 AHS. Since 2013, a new subuniverse for Renter-Occupied Units was added, the owner part of the table changed from "OWNERS WITH ONE OR MORE REGULAR OR LUMP-SUM HOME-EQUITY MORTGAGES" in 2013 to "HOUSEHOLDS WITH AT LEAST ONE MORTGAGE". Also, the universe of the 'Foreclosure Status' stub changed (in 2013, it was asked of those who had missed or made late mortgage payments, but in 2017, it was asked of all owners with at least one mortgage.). The 'Likelihood of leaving home within two months due to foreclosure' section and the 'Where the household would move in the event of foreclosure' also changed universe (in 2013, it was only asked of households who received a foreclosure notice, whereas in 2017, the universe was expanded to households with at least one mortgage).

Evictions. These questions were asked of respondents who rented their previous unit and moved in the past two years. The table presents statistics on why people moved and whether they were forced to move, whether it was in response to a particular condition, or whether it was voluntary. It also includes topics, such as whether respondents were behind on rent payments and whether children in the household had to switch schools because of the move.

Commuting to Work. The American Housing Survey AHS collects commuting information from household members who are 16 and over and have worked within a week of the interview. Eligible respondents are then asked whether they usually report to the same location to begin work each day and for their principal means of transportation – the transportation type used most often and for the longest distance. Respondents commuting in trucks, vans, or cars are asked whether they drive with others. Those who do are asked how many are included in their carpool.

Deleted Tables:

All of the 2015 topical supplements were dropped from the 2017 AHS, but may return in subsequent surveys. As a result, the following tables are not options in the 2017 Table Creator menus:

Health and Safety Characteristics.

Arts and Culture.

Housing Counseling.

Food Security.

Table Changes: (listed by table title and universe)

Housing Unit Characteristics (All Housing Units)

Modified Items:

Year Structure Built. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

Deleted Items:

The following neighborhood stubs were dropped from the table:

Bodies of Water Within ½ Block

Description of Area Within ½ Block

Bars on Windows of Buildings Within ½ Block

Vandalized or Abandoned Buildings Within ½ Block

Trash, Litter, or Junk on Streets or Any Properties Within ½ Block

Secured Communities

Senior Citizen Communities

Opinion of Neighborhood by Selected Characteristics

General Housing (Occupied Units)

New Items:

Member of Any Type of Cooperative or Association.

Modified Items:

Year Structure Built. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

Rooms, Size, and Amenities (Occupied Units)

New Items:

Phone Service.

Heating, Air Conditioning, and Appliances (Occupied Units)

New Items:

Supplemental Heating Equipment.

Carbon Monoxide Detector.

Solar Panels.

Housing Quality (Occupied Units)

Modified Items:

Due to new imputations for the component variables of the Housing Adequacy indicator, not reported rows in the following stubs were deleted:

Flush Toilet Breakdowns

Heating Problems

Electric Fuses and Circuit Breakers

Water Leakage During Last 12 Months

Housing Migration (Occupied Units)

Modified Items:

Reasons for Leaving Previous Residence. Forced to move category was split into two new categories – “Forced to move by landlord, bank, or other financial institution, or government” and “Forced to move due to natural disaster or fire.” In addition, a footnote was added to explain why this data is not comparable with the data in the Eviction table.

Household Demographics (Occupied Units)

New Items:

Enrollment Status of Householder.

Modified Items:

Year Householder Immigrated to the United States. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

Year Householder Moved Into Unit. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

Income Characteristics (Occupied Units)

Modified Items:

Food Stamps. In 2015, the food stamp subuniverse was based on poverty thresholds and family size. In 2017, it was based on individual income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) receipt, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits reported in the prior survey cycle.

Value, Purchase Price, and Source of Down Payment (Owner-Occupied Units)

Modified Item:

Year Unit Acquired. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

Additional Mortgage Characteristics (Owner-Occupied Units)

Modified Items:

Year Mortgage Obtained. A new category was added with the most current year (2016 to 2017).

Items Included in Mortgage Payment. The "Principal and interest only" category previously included the number of mortgages with payments that did not include real estate tax, homeowners insurance, private mortgage insurance, or other charges. It was changed to include mortgages where the respondent explicitly stated that principal and interest were the only items included in the mortgage payment.

Home Improvement Characteristics (Owner-Occupied Units)

Modified Items:

Gut Rehabilitation in the Last Ten Years. Subuniverse was updated to include the year 2007, which helps keep the data consistent with the 2015 AHS by restricting it to units that have experienced a gut rehabilitation "in the last ten years."

Home Improvement Costs (Owner-Occupied Units)

Modified Items:

Disaster Repairs. In 2015, there was a "Lightning/Fire" category. In 2017, the word lightning was deleted from the survey questionnaire, so the row label changed to "Fire."

Rent Subsidies and Rental Property Management (Renter-Occupied Units)

Modified Items:

Rent Control or Stabilization. Footnote 1 was updated to include a new 2017 metro area that is rent controlled – San Jose.

New Metro Areas:

(Metros in the 2017 AHS Sample, but not in 2015)

- Minneapolis-St. Paul
- Tampa-St. Petersburg

- Baltimore
- San Antonio
- Las Vegas
- San Jose
- Oklahoma City
- Richmond
- Birmingham-Hoover
- Rochester

Metros sampled in 2017 match Office of Management and Budget (OMB) February 2013 delineations. All of the above metros, except San Jose and Birmingham, were last sampled in the 2013 AHS. For more on how the definitions changed between 2013 and 2017, see [Metropolitan Area Histories](https://www.census.gov/population/metro/data/metrodef.html) and <https://www.census.gov/population/metro/data/metrodef.html>.

Deleted Metro Areas:

(2015 Metro Areas not in 2017 AHS Sample)

- Cincinnati
- Cleveland
- Denver
- Kansas City
- Memphis
- Milwaukee
- New Orleans
- Pittsburgh
- Portland
- Raleigh

New States:

(States in the 2017 AHS Sample, but not in 2015)

- Illinois
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Virginia

Deleted States Areas:

(2015 States not in 2017 AHS Sample)

- Colorado
- Ohio