

American Community Survey - Group Quarters

Frequently Asked Questions for Facility Administrators

What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey is a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in every county, American Indian and Alaska Native Area, and Hawaiian Home Land. It replaced the long form in the decennial census and greatly simplified operations so that the focus of the decennial census is solely on counting the population.

The American Community Survey provides current demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics every year. In the past, this information was only available every 10 years - when the decennial census was conducted. Data from the American Community Survey helps communities make informed decisions and is a key to their future.

The American Community Survey does not count the population, but it does provide information that reflects what the population looks like and how it lives. That information is vital for states and local communities in determining how to plan for schools, roads, senior citizen centers, and other goods and services.

We have not heard of the American Community Survey. How long have you been conducting it?

The American Community Survey began in 1996 in a sample of counties across the country. The American Community Survey began sampling group quarters in 2006. Today, the survey is conducted in all U.S. counties, as **Why did the Census Bureau select this group quarters facility?**

Group quarter facilities are randomly selected each year from a sample list of all group

well as in Puerto Rico where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey.

How does this group quarters and its residents benefit by answering the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey provides up-to-date information for your community. By responding to the American Community Survey you are helping your community to establish goals, identify problems and solutions, and measure the performance of programs.

Communities need data about the well-being of children, families, and the elderly to provide services to them. The data also are used to decide where to locate new highways, schools, libraries, hospitals, and community centers; and to determine the goods and services its residents need.

What type of group quarter facilities are included in the American Community Survey?

Examples of group quarter facilities include:

- College/University student housing
- Residential treatment centers for adults
- Nursing facilities/skilled-nursing facilities
- Group homes intended for adults
- Military quarters
- Correctional facilities for adults
- Workers' group living quarters and Job Corps centers

quarters in your area. The larger the group quarters, the greater the probability that it will be selected to participate in the survey one or more times each year.

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Your participation is very important for us to be able to produce accurate information from this survey.

We have already participated in this survey. How many times during the year will the Census Bureau sample my facility?

The number of times we visit your facility depends on the size of your facility. Large facilities may be sampled multiple times throughout the year.

What level of assistance is expected from my staff during the survey period?

Your staff will be asked to:

- provide a list of residents currently staying at your facility
- give the Census Bureau representative access to the sample residents to conduct interviews, and
- inform the Census Bureau representative of any special requirements that may assist them in conducting interviews at your facility.

How are residents at my facility selected to be in the sample?

After you provide a list of all residents currently staying at your facility, we randomly select residents to take part in the American Community Survey. One of the advantages of a random sample is that we can use it to measure the whole population without having to actually interview every resident at every facility. But in order for it to work properly, we cannot substitute sample residents—the

sample has to be truly random.

Do the sampled group quarters and sampled residents have to answer the questions on the American Community Survey?

Yes. You are required by law to answer the American Community Survey. Two provisions of Title 13, United States Code, require your participation. Section 221 of Title 13 makes it mandatory for individuals to participate in the American Community Survey, and Section 223 of Title 13 makes it mandatory for building owners and others to provide access to individuals in order to conduct the American Community Survey group quarter interviews. The same law protects the confidentiality of the information you provide.

How will data be collected from sampled residents in this facility?

The American Community Survey collects residents' data through face-to-face or telephone interviews. This can either be with the sampled resident or a proxy respondent. The sampled resident may also fill out the questionnaire on his/her own. The Census Bureau representative will leave the questionnaire with the resident, and, return to pick up the completed questionnaire at an agreed upon time.

Why do you select residents who may be physically or mentally unable to answer the American Community Survey?

Residents are randomly selected to take part in the American Community Survey. Sampled residents may designate another person, such as a relative, guardian, or facility administrator to help with the survey. The facility administrator may talk with the Census Bureau representative

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to resolve any issues. To produce the most accurate results, it is very important that every resident selected for the survey is included.

How long will it take to complete the survey?

We estimate that the facility survey will take about 15 minutes to complete and each resident survey will take about 25 minutes to complete.

Can the sampled resident interviews be done via e-mail or online?

No. At this time, the survey cannot be completed via e-mail or online.

Why do you ask detailed questions that may seem unnecessary for residents living in this facility?

The American Community Survey asks very detailed questions because we are required to collect specific information that is used for a variety of federal and state programs. Businesses also use these data to develop new products and services for their communities. This is why it is very important to participate in the American Community Survey.

Will the Census Bureau keep the group quarter facility and resident information

confidential?

Yes. Your answers are confidential by law under Title 13, United States Code, Section 9. This law specifies that the Census Bureau can use the information provided by the facility and residents for statistical purposes only and cannot publish or release information that would identify any group quarters or individual.

How will the Census Bureau use the information the group quarters and sampled residents provide?

The Census Bureau will compile and publish summary data for geographical areas, such as, for the nation, states, counties and municipalities. The Census Bureau will not publish or release information that would identify a facility, or its residents. Summary data are then available for use by a variety of programs supporting your community.

Who can see the answers this group quarters or its residents provide to the survey?

Your facility and resident responses will only be seen by Census Bureau personnel with a work-related need to know. The Census Bureau protects the confidentiality of the information. The police cannot see it and no court of law can see it. No one can see or use your specific answers to enforce any type of law or amend any kind of benefit.

If any Census Bureau employee were to share information about your facility or its residents, he or she would be subject to severe criminal sanctions imposed by Congress—up to 5 years imprisonment and/or up to a \$250,000 fine

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(Title 13, United States Code, Section 214, as amended by Title 18, United States Code, Sections 3559 and 3571).

When will results of the survey be available?

The previous years' results of the American Community Survey are released every Fall. Survey data are released each year for areas of 65,000 or more people. For smaller areas, results are available in the form of 3-year and 5-year estimates.

Atlanta, GA	1-800-424-6974
Boston, MA	1-800-562-5721
Charlotte, NC	1-800-331-7360
Chicago, IL	1-800-865-6384
Dallas, TX	1-800-835-9752
Denver, CO	1-800-852-6159
Detroit, MI	1-800-432-1495
Kansas City, KS	1-800-728-4748
Los Angeles, CA	1-800-992-3530
New York, NY	1-800-991-2520
Philadelphia, PA	1-866-238-1374
Seattle, WA	1-800-233-3308

How can the group quarters and the residents see the results of the survey?

This information is published on the Census Bureau's American FactFinder web site at: <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

For more information about the American Community Survey, or to obtain survey results from past years, we encourage you to visit our web site at: <http://www.census.gov/acs>.

Where can the facility and its residents get assistance or find more information about the American Community Survey?

You can contact the Census Bureau's Regional Office nearest you as listed below:

You may also contact us by calling 301-763-INFO (4636), by going to <http://ask.census.gov>, or contact us by mail at the following address:

American Community Survey
 U.S. Census Bureau
 4600 Silver Hill Road
 Washington, DC 20233-7500

Census Bureau Regional Offices