

HVS-600
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Fact Sheet for the
Housing Vacancy Survey

This address is among those selected for the Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey (CPS/HVS), which the Bureau of the Census is conducting. The Federal Government needs current data on the rental vacancy rate (a component of the index of leading economic indicators), homeowner vacancy rate, and homeownership rate to assess the economic climate with regard to housing affordability. In addition, current data on the number and characteristics of units available enables housing officials to evaluate the housing supply.

The Housing Vacancy Survey is conducted under Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. The survey has been taken for 50 years and serves as an invaluable instrument in providing data for the development of Federal housing policy.

By law, Census Bureau employees hold all information you give in strict confidence. We will combine the information you give us with that concerning other vacant housing units for summary statistical purposes only.

Because this is a sample survey, your answers represent not only this vacant housing unit, but also hundreds of other similar vacant housing units. For this reason, your cooperation in this voluntary survey will be a distinct service to our country.

On the other side of this sheet are the answers most frequently asked about this survey. The Census Bureau appreciates your cooperation in this important survey.

I Thought That the Census Bureau Only Operated Every 10 Years, When It Counted People. What is the Bureau of the Census Doing Here Now?

Besides the Decennial Census, which we conduct every 10 years, we collect many different kinds of statistics from other censuses and surveys. We conduct other censuses regularly, including the Census of Agriculture, the Censuses of Business and Manufacturers, and the Census of State and Local Governments. In addition, we collect data on a monthly basis to provide current information on such topics as retail and wholesale trade, various manufacturing activities, and new housing construction, as well as yearly surveys of business, manufacturing, governments, family characteristics, income, and education. This survey, conducted monthly, provides current information on the state of vacant housing units.

Why is This Survey Important? Who Uses This Information?

The Housing Vacancy Survey provides current information on the rental and homeowner vacancy rates, and characteristics of units available for occupancy. These data are used extensively by public and private sector organizations to evaluate the need for new housing programs or initiatives. In addition, the rental vacancy rate is a component of the index of leading economic indicators and is thereby used by the Federal Government and economic forecasters to gauge the current economic climate.

How Was This Unit Selected for This Survey?

Actually, we selected the address; rather than the unit for this survey. Of the 72,000 housing units both occupied and vacant contained in the CPS sample, approximately 59,000 are eligible for interview each month. In addition to the 59,000 there are also about 10,000 sample units in an average month that are found to be vacant. About half of the 10,000 vacants are eligible and interviewed for the survey.

What Confidentiality Protections Do I Have? Is This Survey Authorized by Law?

All information individuals give to the Census Bureau is held in the strictest confidence by law (Title 13, United States Code, Section 9). Our representative has taken an oath to this effect and is subject to a jail penalty and/or a fine if he/she discloses any information that survey respondents give him/her. Title 13, United States Code, Section 182, authorized the collection of data for the Housing Vacancy Survey.