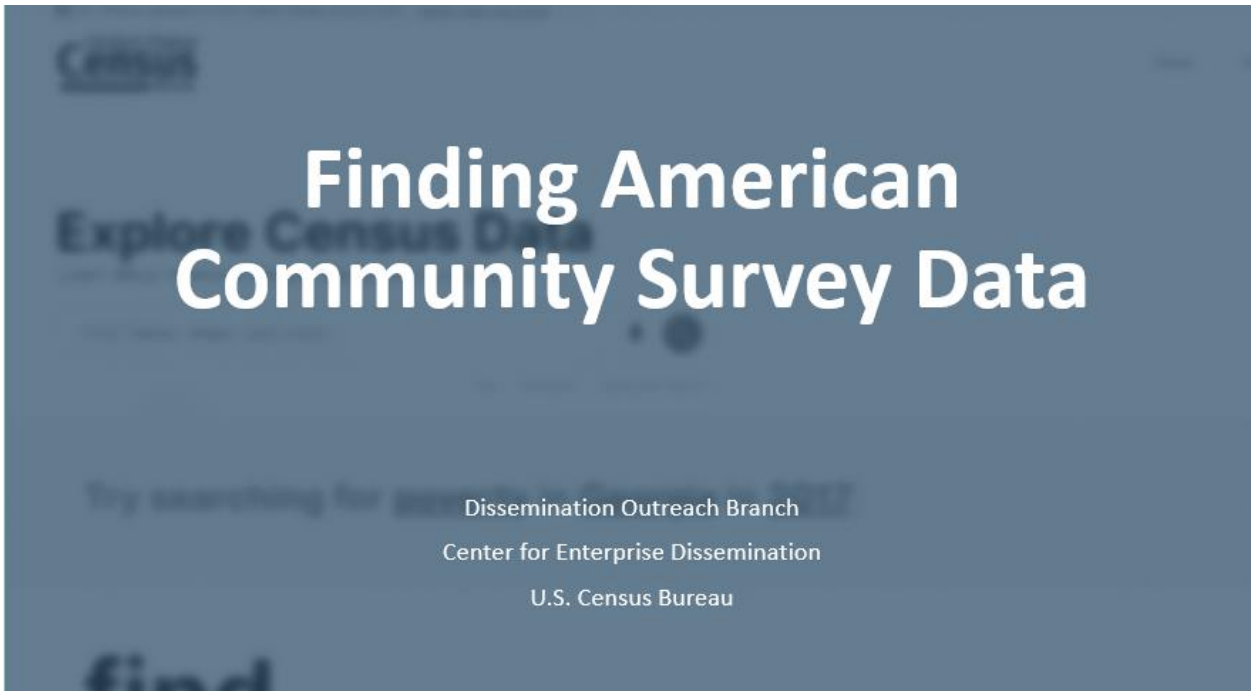
Finding American Community Survey Data
Dissemination Outreach Branch
Center for Enterprise Dissemination
U.S. Census Bureau

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Additional Resources and Information

1 data.census.gov/Census API/Microdata Access

1.1 data.census.gov Resources Page

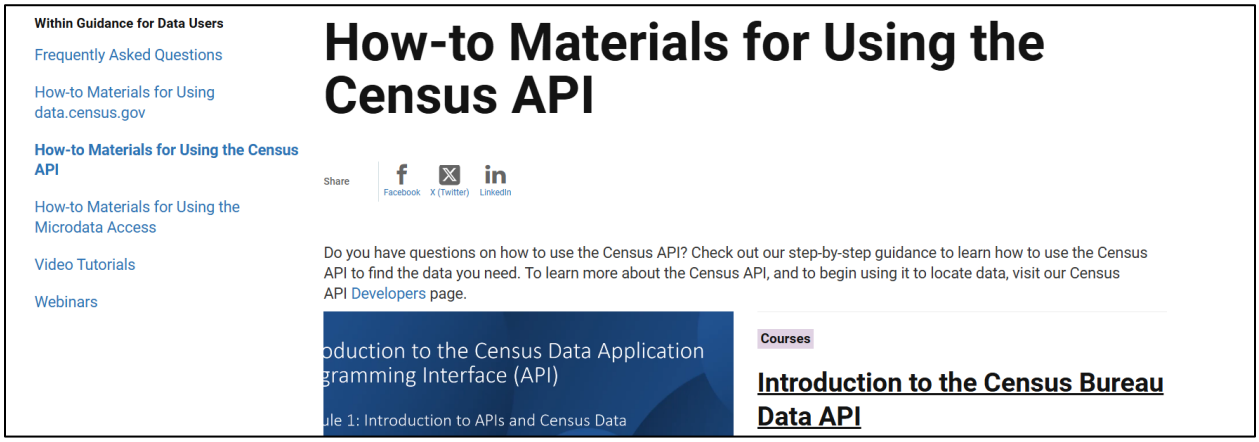
Link: https://www.census.gov/data/what-is-data-census-gov.html

This page provides information on data.census.gov, including recorded video tutorials, webinars, workshops, our monthly newsletter, and informational PDFs.

1.2 API Resources Page

Link: https://www.census.gov/data/what-is-data-census-gov/guidance-for-data-users/how-to-materials-for-using-the-census-api.html

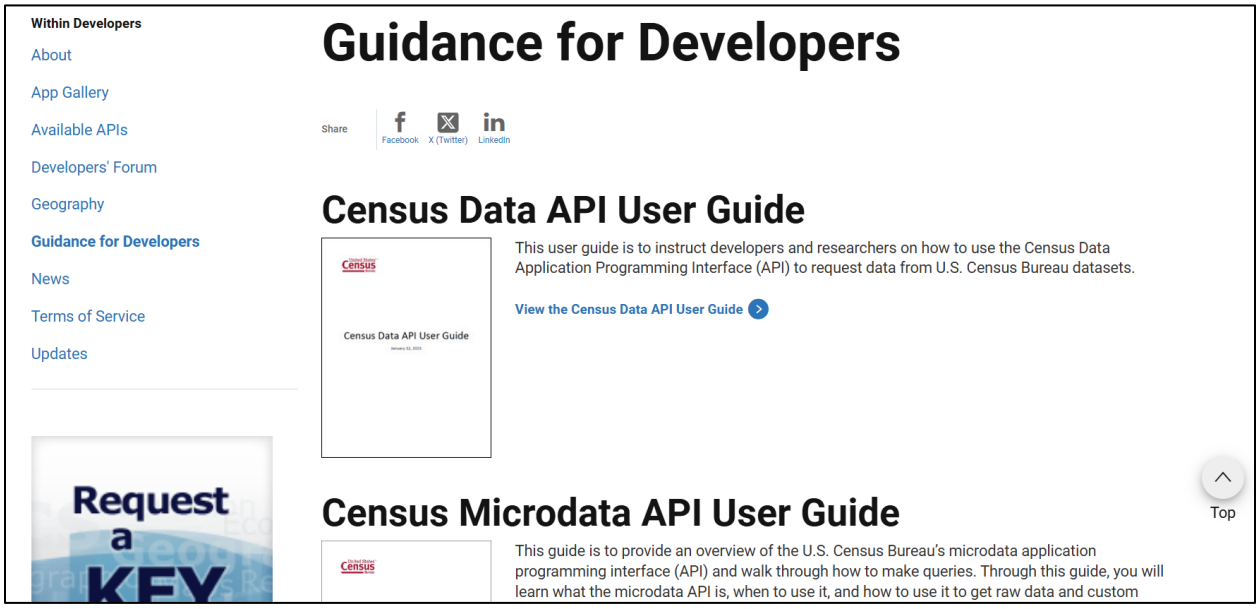
This page provides helpful information for getting started with the Census API, including an introductory course, video tutorials, and the API User Guide.



1.3 API Guidance for Developers Page

Link: https://www.census.gov/data/developers/guidance.html

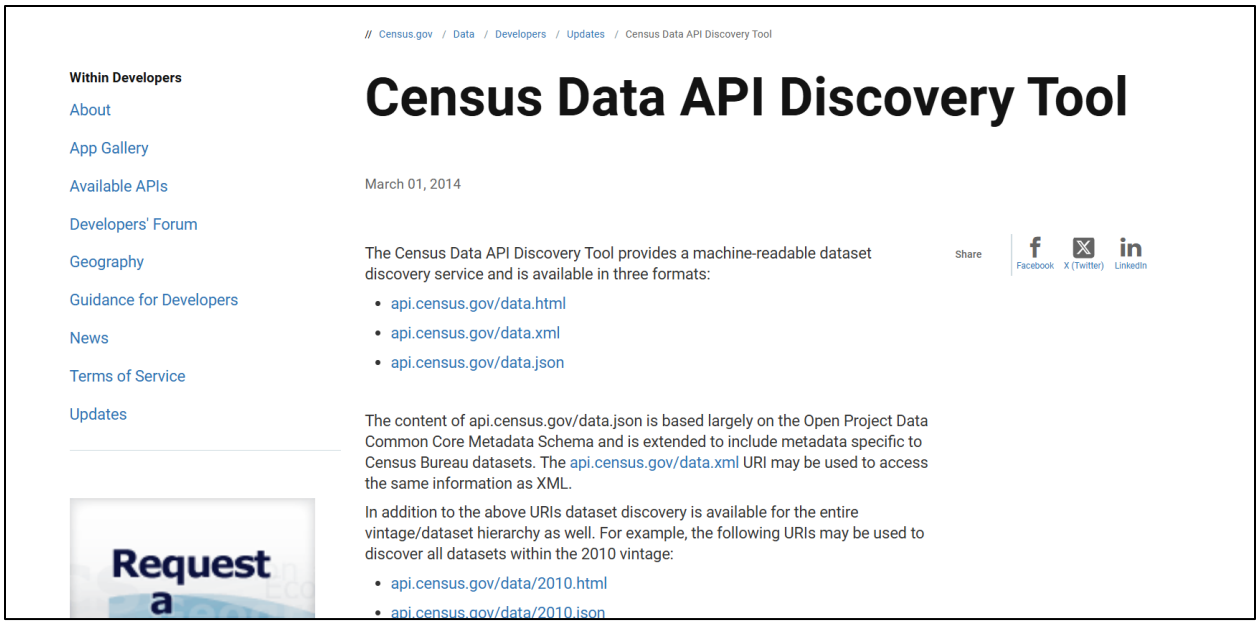
Provides additional links to the API User Guide and Microdata API User Guide, as well as the API Discovery Tool.



1.4 API Discovery Tool

Link: https://www.census.gov/data/developers/updates/new-discovery-tool.html

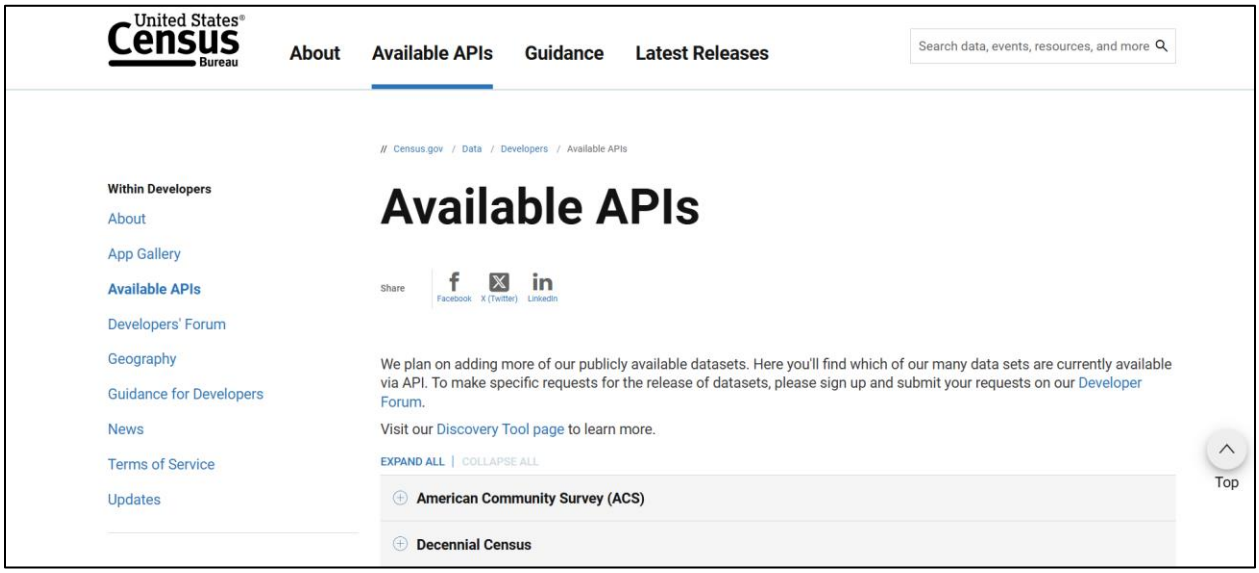
The Discovery Tool includes dataset description, variables included, changes, variable formats, supported geographies, example calls, links to program technical documentation, and more.



1.5 Available APIs

Link: https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets.html

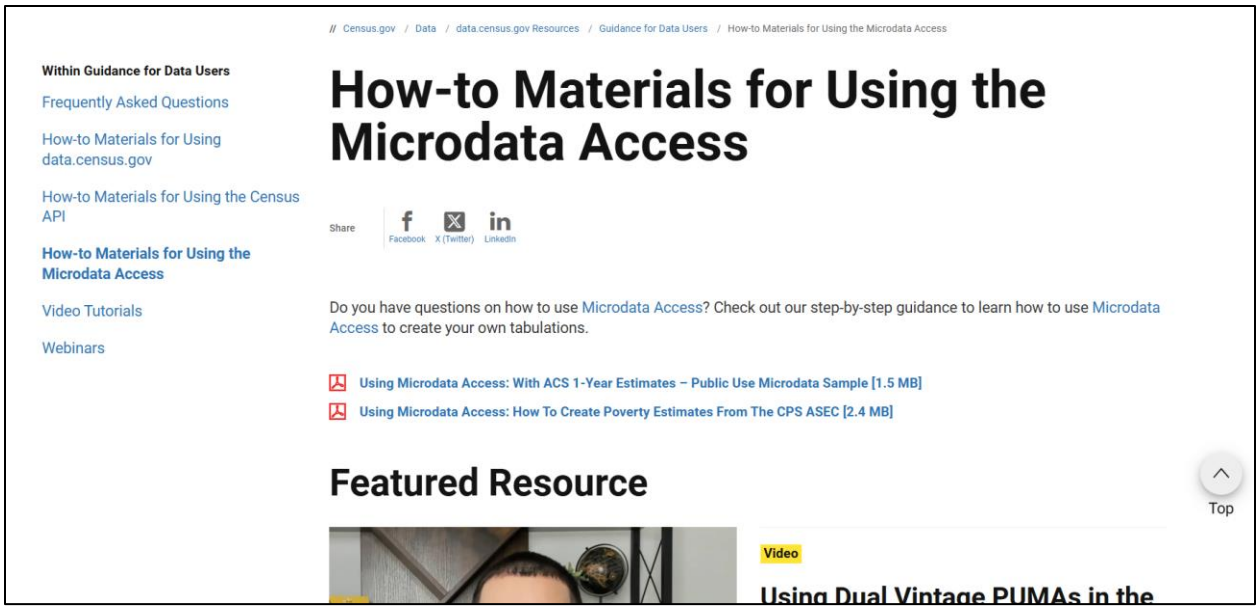
Provides available APIs across Census Programs and provides information by dataset.



1.6 MDAT Resources Page

Link: https://www.census.gov/data/what-is-data-census-gov/guidance-for-data-users/how-to-materials-for-using-the-microdata-access.html

Provides guidance on using the Microdata Access Tool, including video tutorials, PDFs, recorded webinars, data dictionaries, and information on data availability.

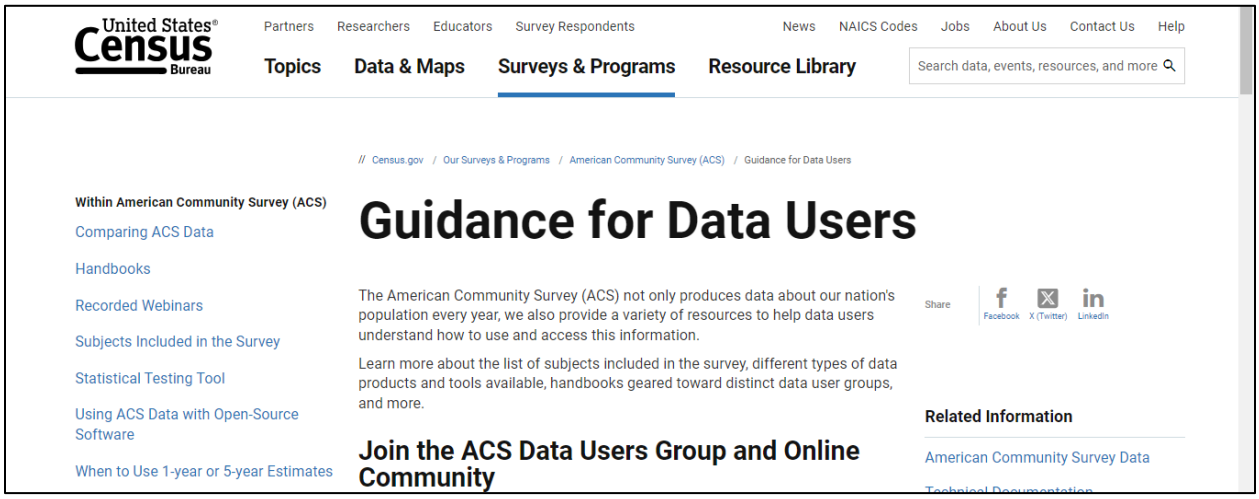


2 American Community Survey (ACS)

2.1 Guidance for Data Users

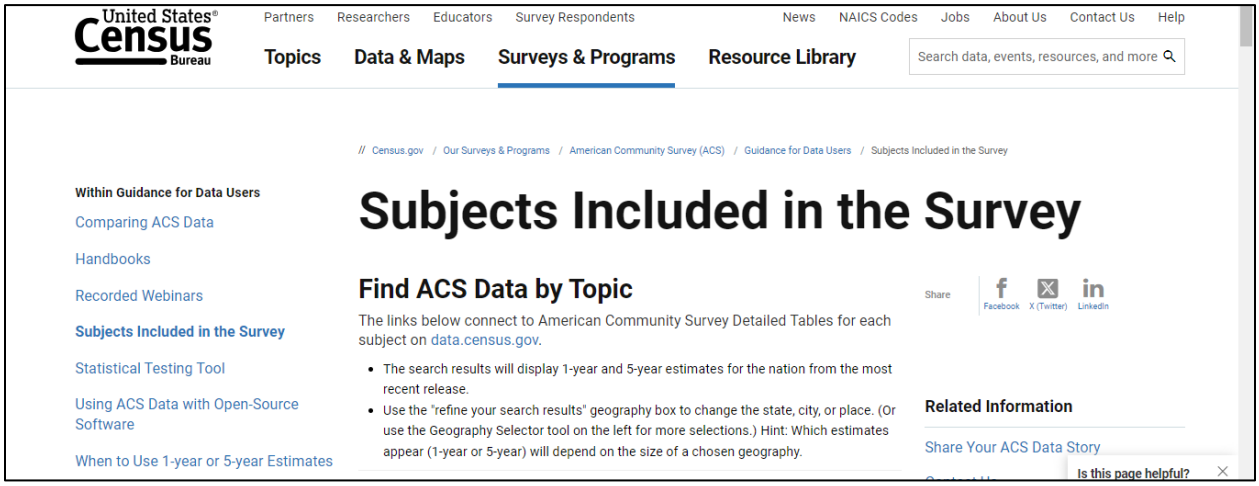
Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance.html

This is the primary page for guidance on using the American Community Survey.



2.2 Subjects Included in the Survey

Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/subjects.html



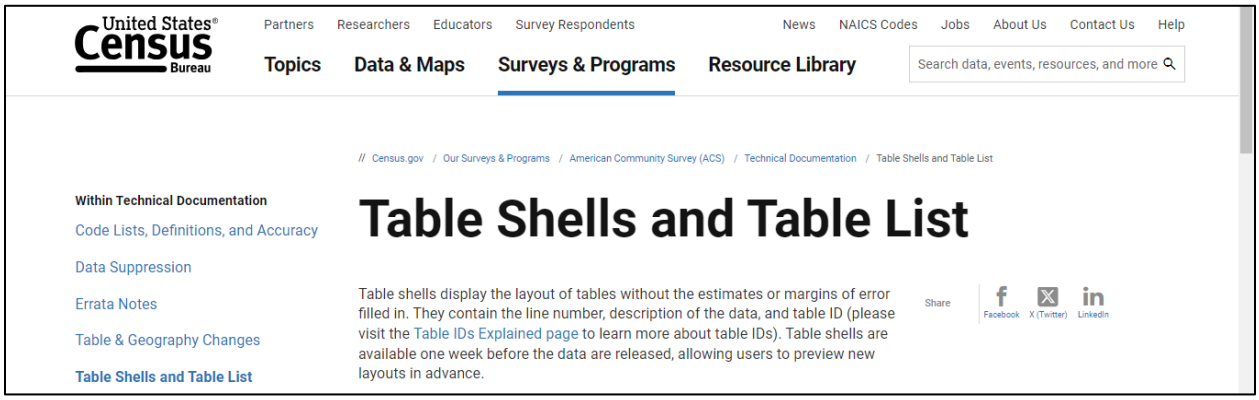
POPULATION		HOUSING
SOCIAL	**DEMOGRAPHIC**	Bedrooms
Ancestry	Age; Sex	Computer and Internet Use
Citizen Voting-Age Population	Group Quarters Population	House Heating Fuel
Citizenship Status	Hispanic or Latino Origin	Kitchen Facilities
Disability Status	Race	Occupancy/Vacancy Status
Educational Attainment	Relationship to Householder	Occupants per Room
Fertility	Total Population	Plumbing Facilities
Grandparents as Caregivers	**ECONOMIC**	Rent
Language Spoken at Home	Class of Worker	Rooms
Marital History	Commuting (Journey to Work) and Place of Work	Selected Monthly Owner Costs
Marital Status	Employment Status	Telephone Service Available
Migration/Residence 1 Year Ago	Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Tenure (Owner/Renter)
Place of Birth	Health Insurance Coverage	Units in Structure
School Enrollment	Income and Earnings	Value of Home
Undergraduate Field of Degree	Industry	Vehicles Available
Veteran Status; Period of Military Service	Occupation	Year Householder Moved Into Unit
Year of Entry	Poverty Status	Year Structure Built
	Work Status Last Year	

2.3 When to Use 1-year, 3-year, or 5-year Estimates

Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html

2.4 Table Shells and Table List

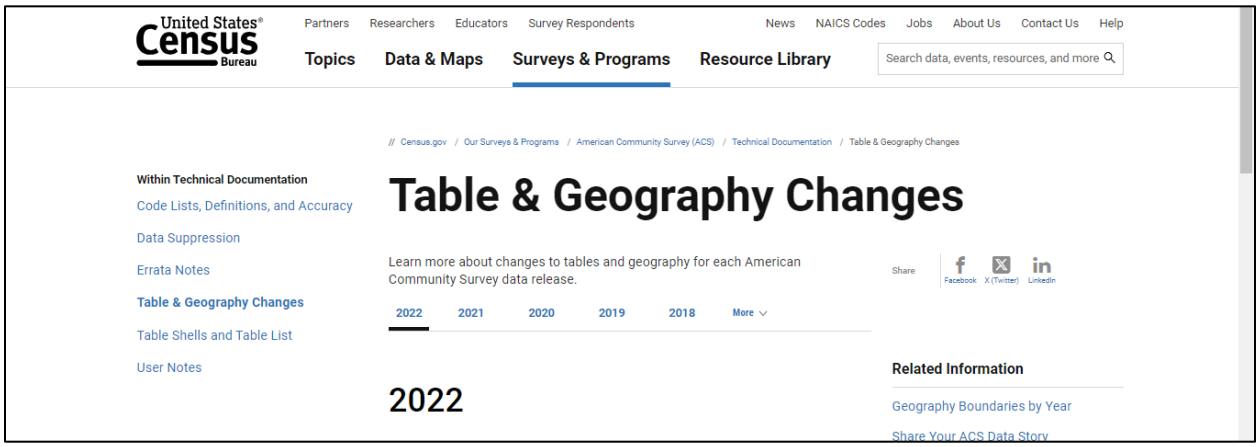
Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/table-shells.html



2.5 Table and Geography Changes

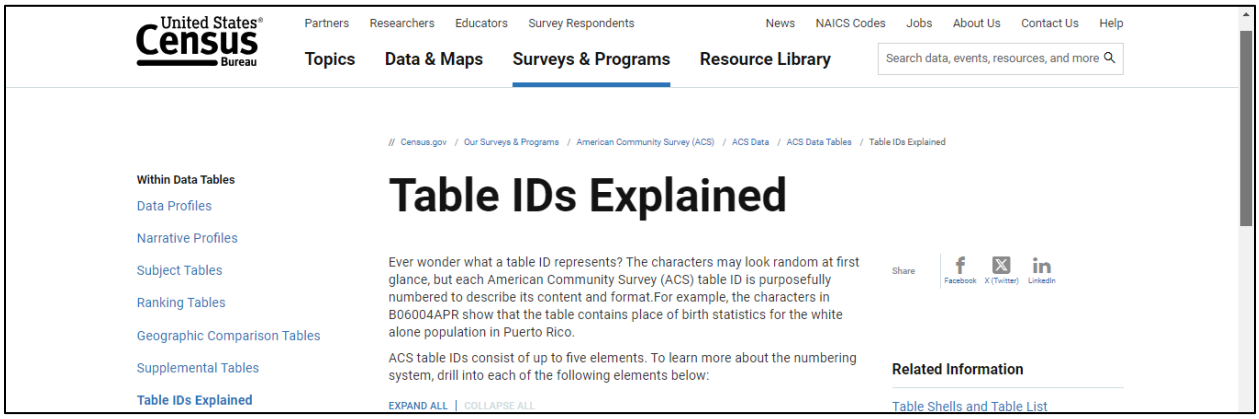
Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/table-and-geography-changes.html

Find out what tables and geographies changed from one year to the next on this page.



2.6 Table IDs Explained

Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/data-tables/table-ids-explained.html



2.7 Selected Population Tables and American Indian and Alaska Native Tables

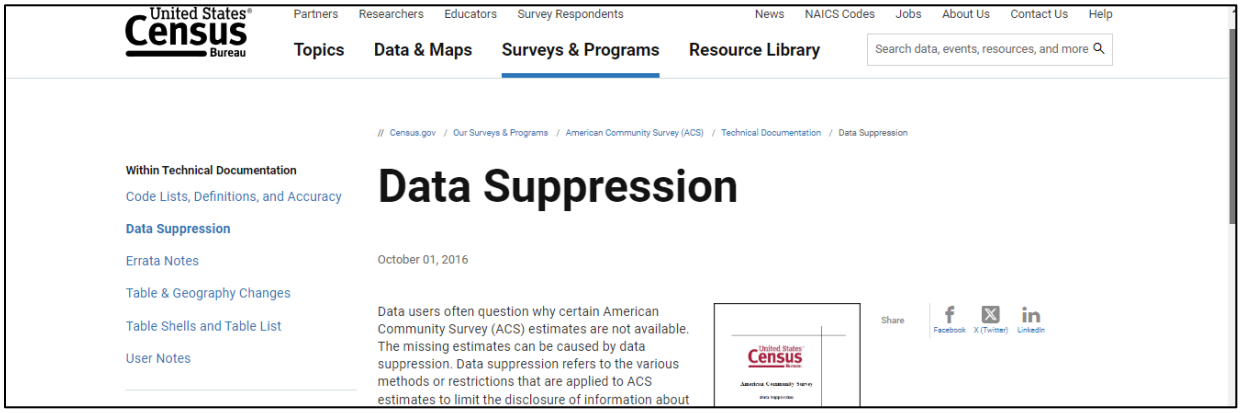
Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/race-aian.html

Learn more about the Selected Population Tables and the American Indian and Alaska Native Tables that are release from the ACS every five years.

2.8 Data Suppression

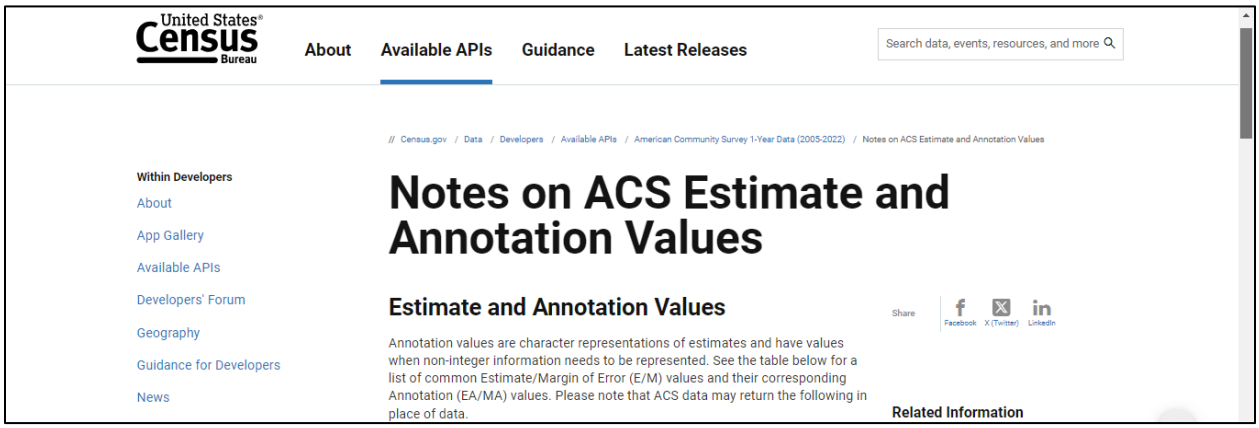
Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/data-suppression.html

Learn more about Data Suppression in the ACS.



2.9 Notes on Estimate and Annotation Values

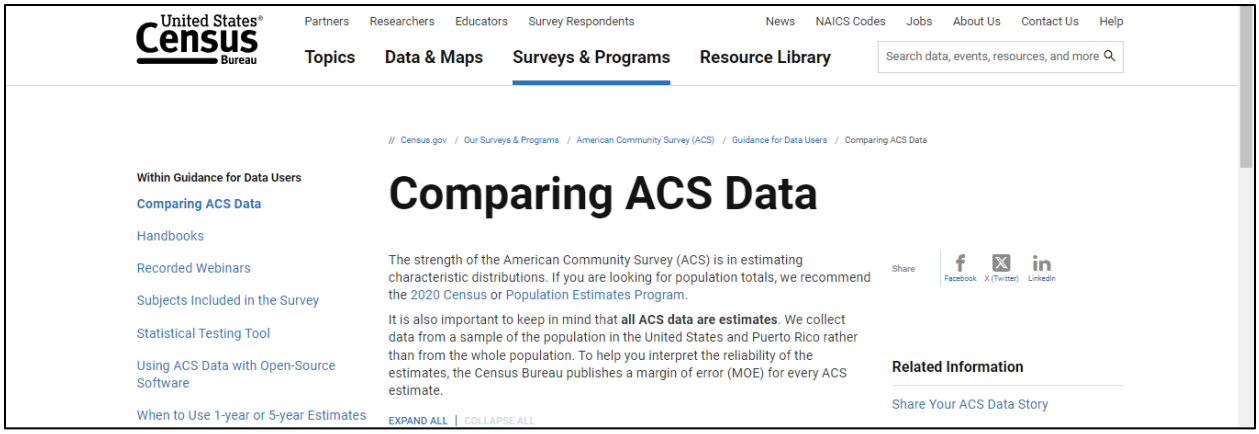
Link: https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/acs-1year/notes-on-acs-estimate-and-annotation-values.html



2.10 Comparing ACS data

Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/comparing-acs-data.html

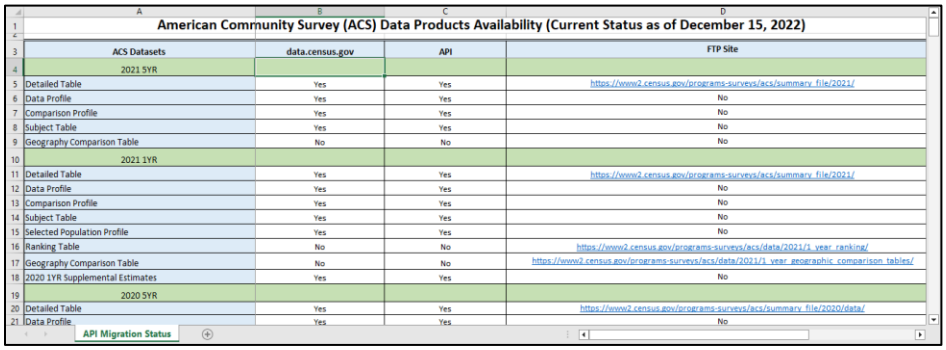
This page provides guidance on comparing ACS estimates, both with other ACS estimates and with counts from the Decennial Census.



2.11 ACS Data Availability Spreadsheet

Link: https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/data/ACS_datasets_migration.xlsx

This table provides all data products by year and where they can be found.



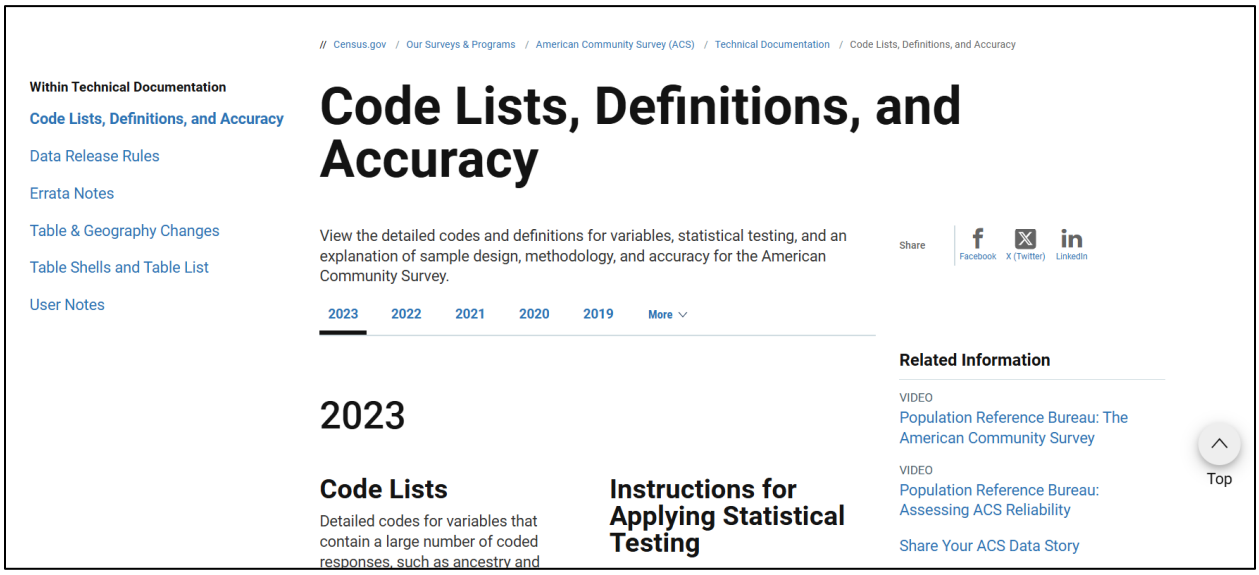
American Community Survey (ACS) Data Products Availability (Current Status as of December 15, 2022)

ACS Datasets	data.census.gov	API	FTP Site
2021 5YR			
Detailed Table	Yes	Yes	https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/summary_file/2021/
Data Profile	Yes	Yes	No
Comparison Profile	Yes	Yes	No
Subject Table	Yes	Yes	No
Geography Comparison Table	No	No	No
2021 1YR			
Detailed Table	Yes	Yes	https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/summary_file/2021/
Data Profile	Yes	Yes	No
Comparison Profile	Yes	Yes	No
Subject Table	Yes	Yes	No
Selected Population Profile	Yes	Yes	No
Ranking Table	No	No	https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/2021/1_year_ranking/
Geography Comparison Table	No	No	https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/2021/1_year_geographic_comparison_tables/
2020 1YR Supplemental Estimates	Yes	Yes	No
2020 5YR			
Detailed Table	Yes	Yes	https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/summary_file/2020/data/
Data Profile	Yes	Yes	No

API Migration Status

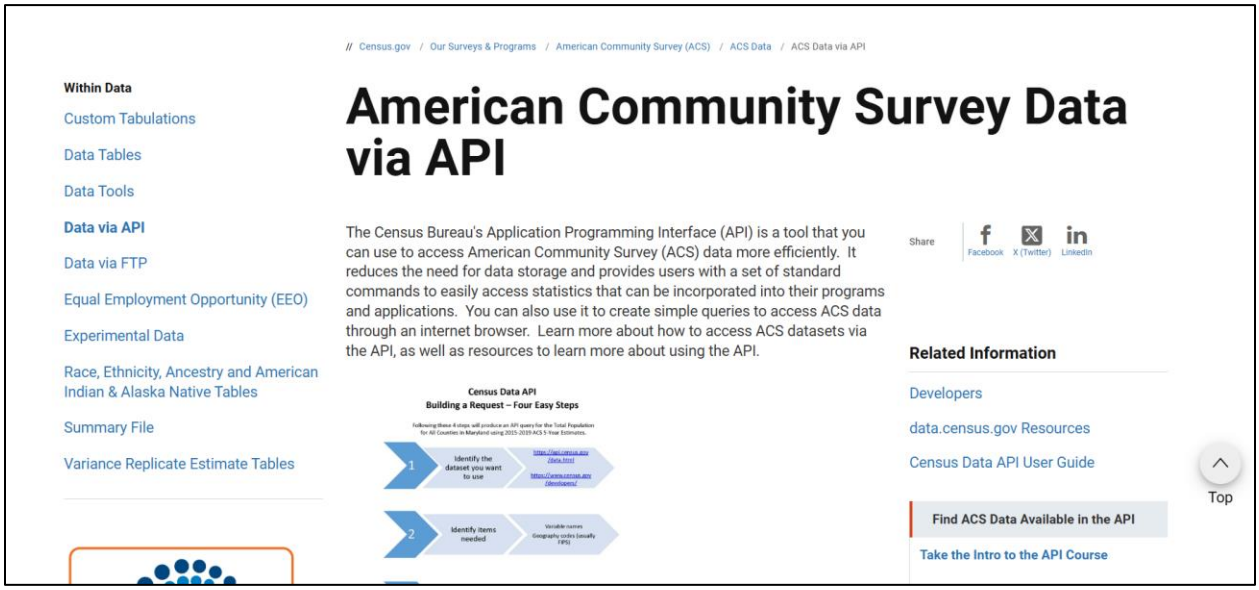
2.12 American Community Survey (ACS) Code Lists, Definitions, and Accuracy

Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html



2.13 Available ACS APIs via the ACS Program Page

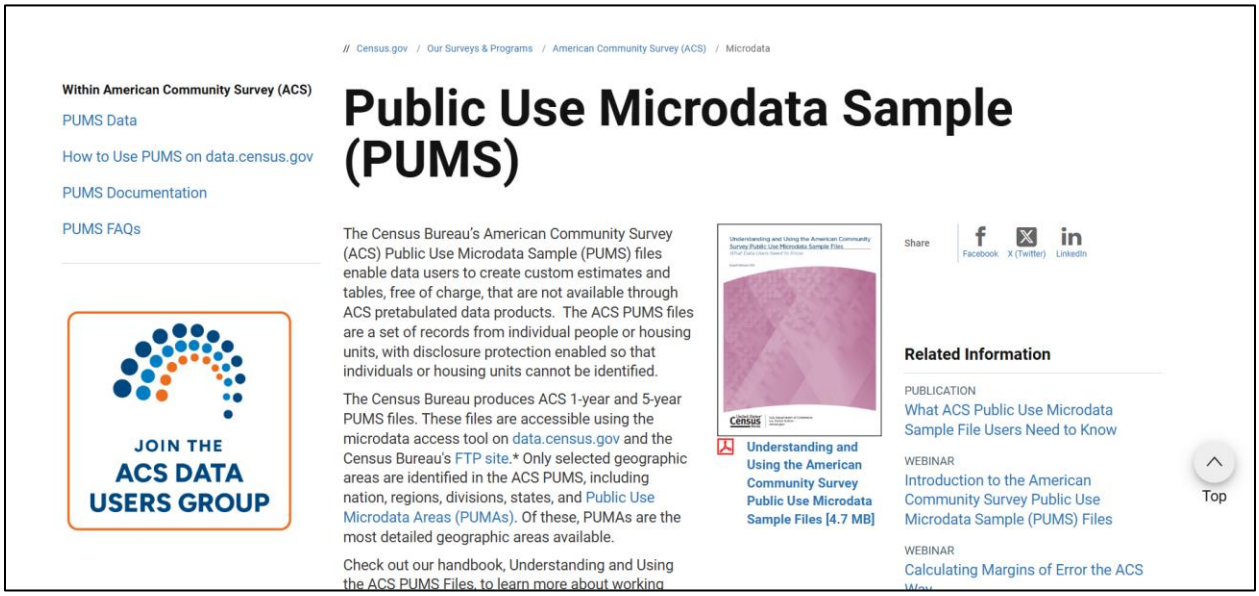
Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/data-via-api.html



2.14 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html

Provides more information on the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) including links to the PUMS documentation, how to use the PUMS, and FAQs.



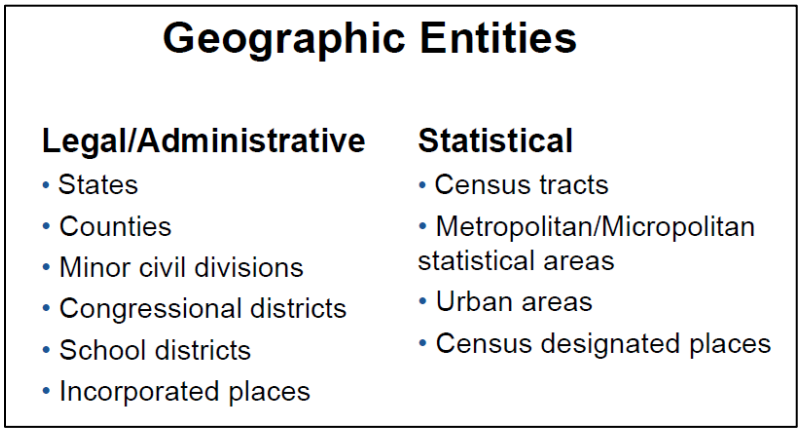
3 Geography

3.1 Geographic Entities

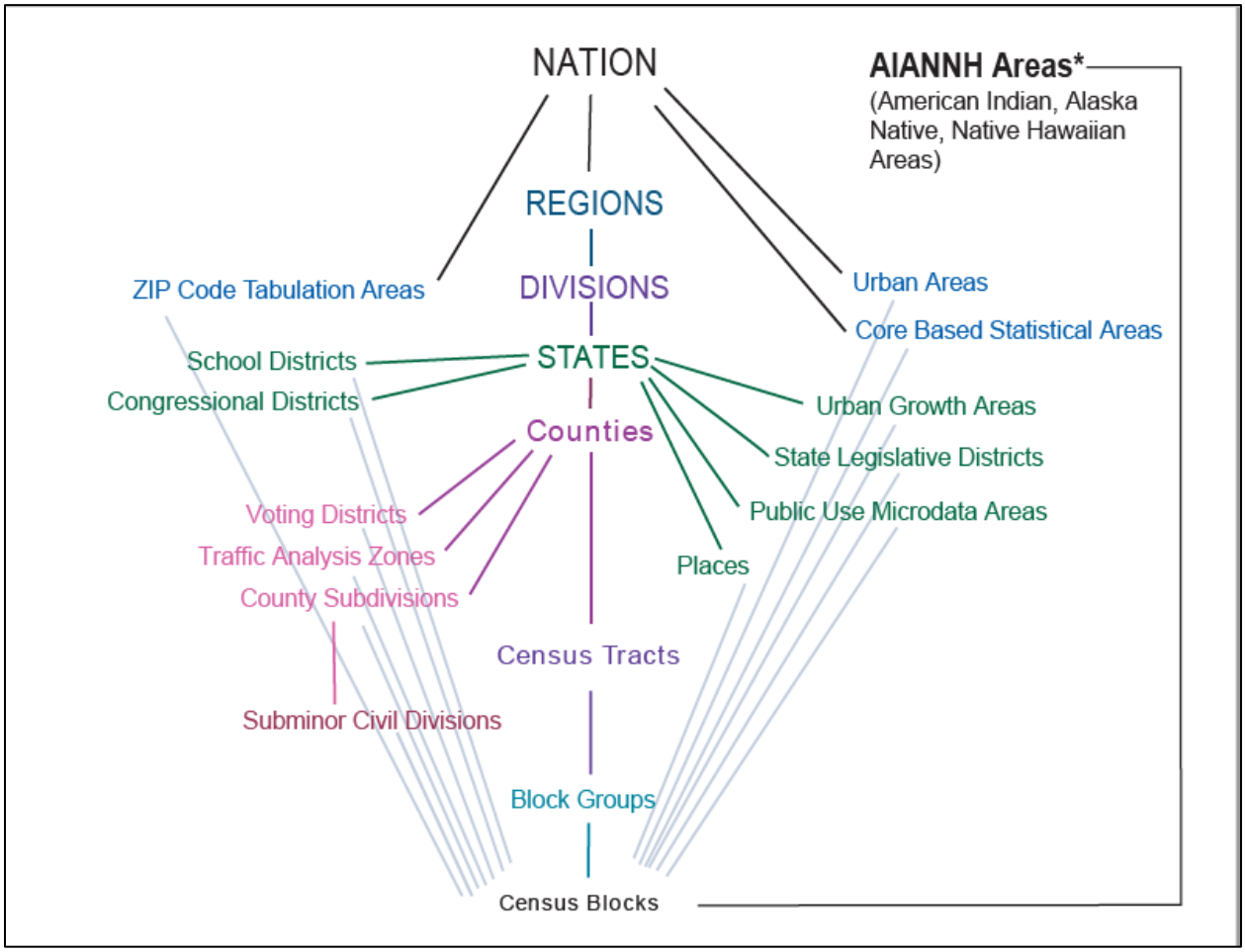
The nation is subdivided into two main types of geographic areas, **legal** and **statistical**.

Legal areas are defined specifically by law, and include state, local and tribal government units, as well as some specially defined administrative areas like congressional districts. Many, but not all, are represented by elected officials.

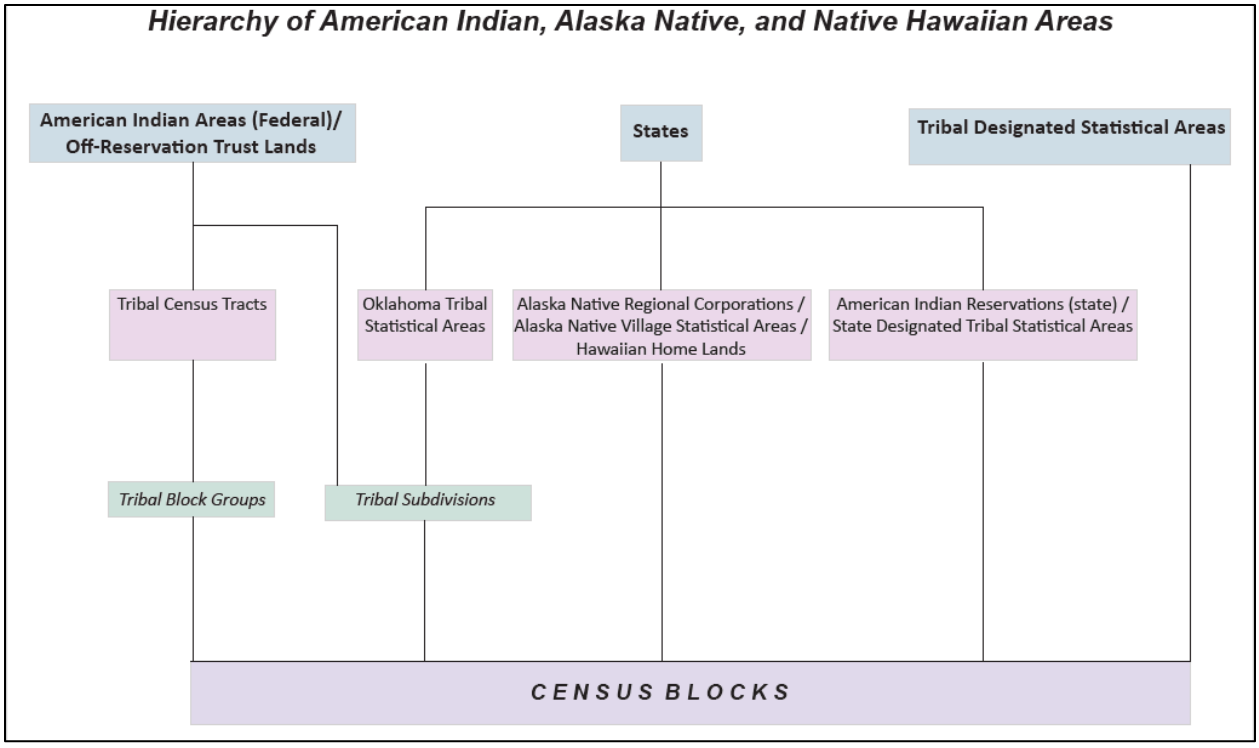
Statistical areas are defined directly by the Census Bureau and state, regional or local authorities, and include census tracts and urban areas. The primary purpose of statistical areas is to tabulate and present census data.

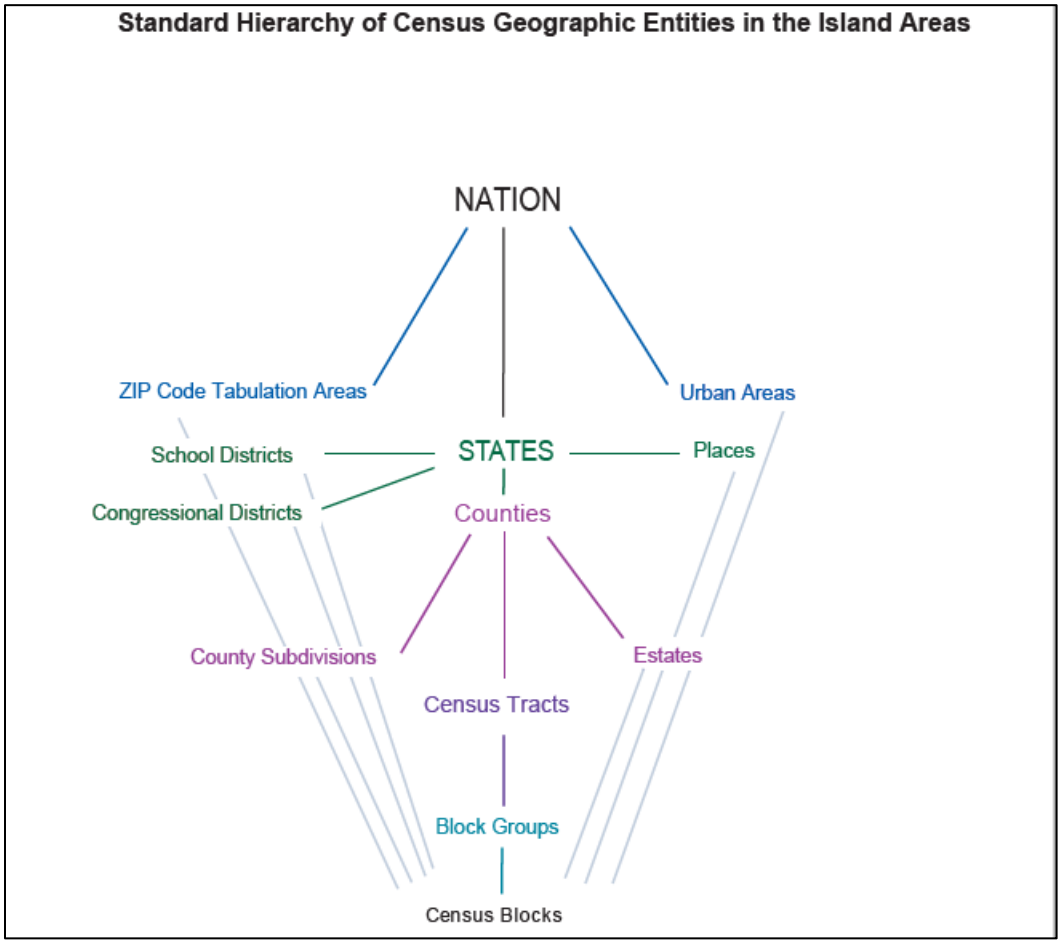


3.2 Hierarchy of Geographic Entities

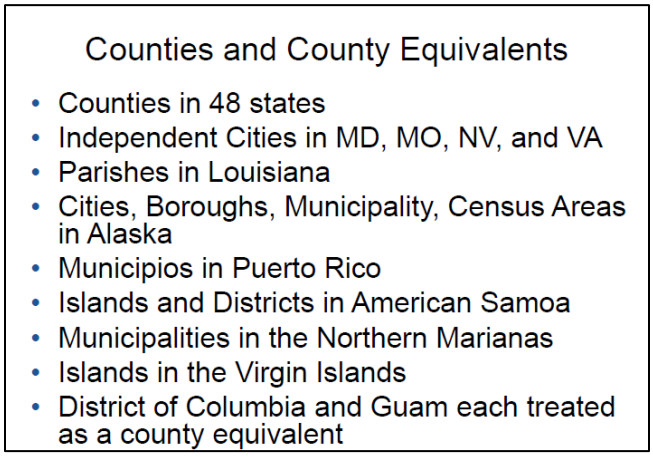


* Refer to the "Hierarchy of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Areas" in next diagram.


Hierarchy of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Areas
American Indian Areas (Federal)/ Off-Reservation Trust Lands
States
Tribal Designated Statistical Areas
Tribal Census Tracts
Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas
Alaska Native Regional Corporations / Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas / Hawaiian Home Lands
American Indian Reservations (state) / State Designated Tribal Statistical Areas
Tribal Block Groups
Tribal Subdivisions
CENSUS BLOCKS


Standard Hierarchy of Census Geographic Entities in the Island Areas
NATION
ZIP Code Tabulation Areas
Urban Areas
School Districts
STATES
Places
Congressional Districts
Counties
County Subdivisions
Estates
Census Tracts
Block Groups
Census Blocks

3.3 Counties and County Equivalents

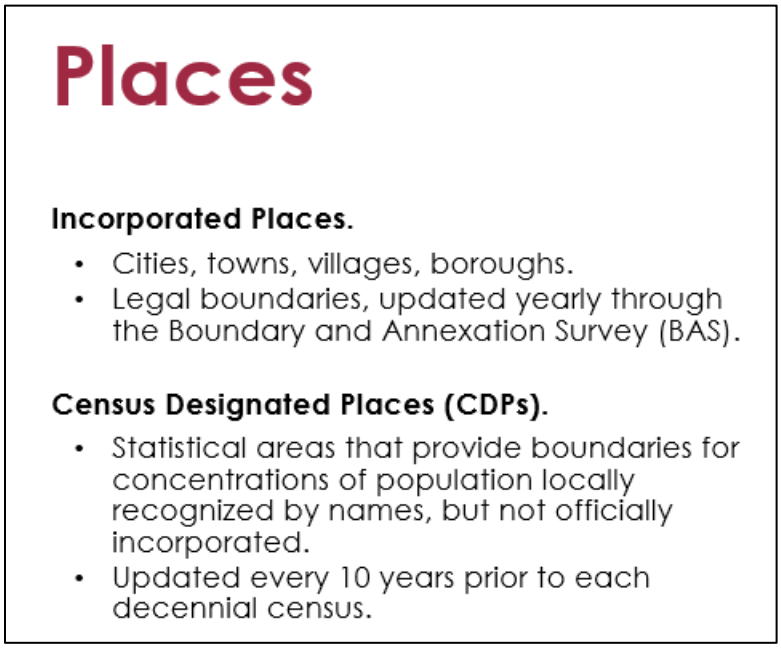


3.4 Places and County Subdivisions

The Census Bureau maintains boundaries for two types of Places – Incorporated Places and Census Designated Places.

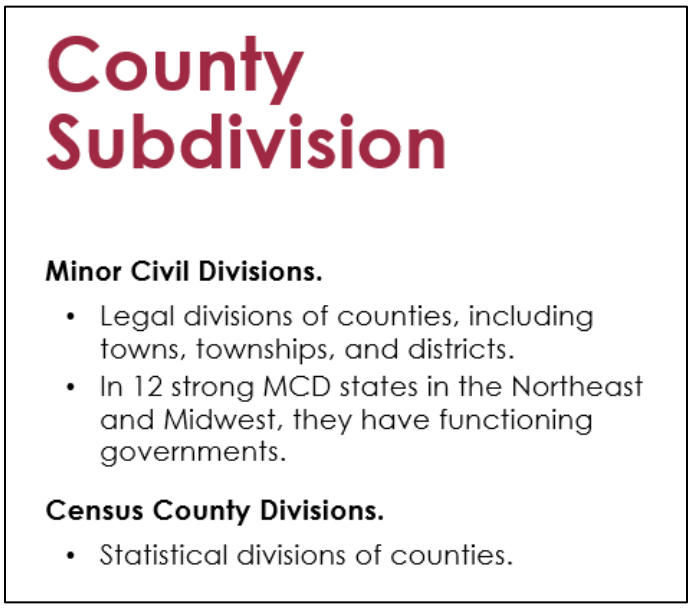
Incorporated places are legal geographic areas. They include cities, towns, villages and boroughs and we update their boundaries yearly through the Boundary and Annexation Survey.

The second type of place, Census Designated Places, or CDPs, are statistical geographic areas. Their boundaries are drawn to provide data for concentrations of population that are recognized by name by local residents but are not legally incorporated. CDP boundaries are updated once every 10 years, prior to each decennial census, by local participants.



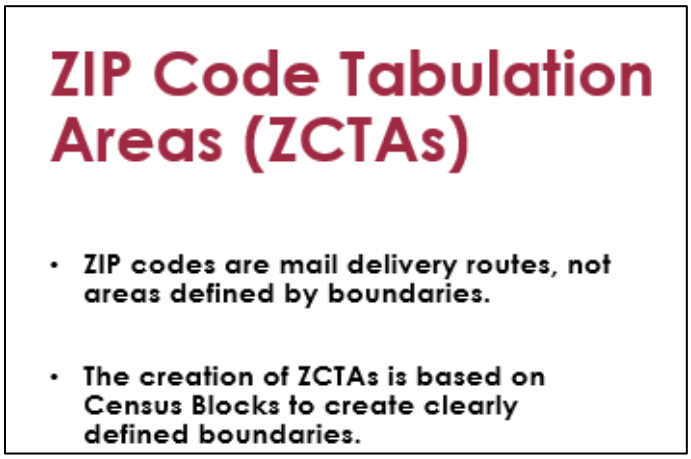
Like Places, there is also both a legal and a statistical type of county subdivision. The legal county subdivisions are called Minor Civil Divisions, or MCDs. MCDs are formal governmental entities like towns, townships, and districts. In some states, MCDs have fully functioning governments, on par with

incorporated places. In states that do not have MCDs, local partners delineate Census County Divisions, or CCDs. CCDs are created solely for the purpose of displaying statistical data.



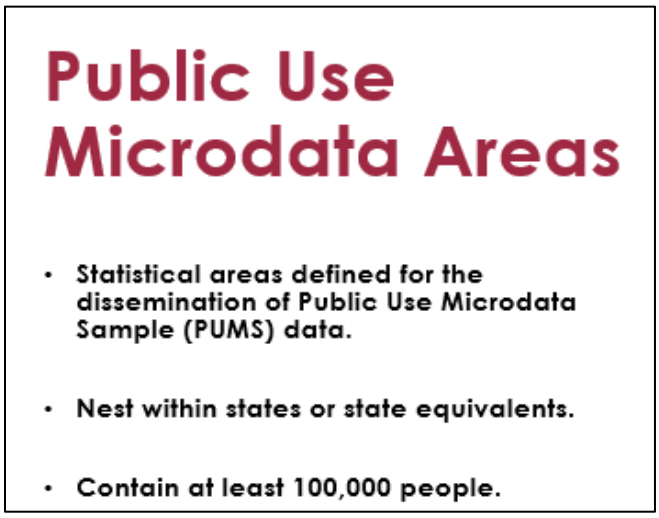
3.5 Small Geographic Areas

ZIP Code Tabulation Areas or ZCTAs (pronounced *zik-tahs*) are a geographic product of the U.S. Census Bureau created to allow mapping, display, and geographic analyses of the United States Postal Service (USPS) Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP) Codes dataset. More information can be found here.



Public Use Microdata Areas are geographic areas for which the Census Bureau provides selected extracts of raw data from a small sample of census records that are screened to protect confidentiality. These extracts are referred to as public use microdata sample (PUMS) files. The PUMAs are required to contain at least 100,000 people. PUMAs do not overlap and are contained within a single state. PUMAs enable the Census Bureau to publish census data for sub-state areas throughout every state. For example, the ACS publishes detailed data every year, but due to their sampling procedure only publishes detailed data for census areas that have more than 65,000 People. Only seven of the fifty-five counties of West Virginia were large enough to receive estimates from the first ACS in 2006. In contrast, all 12

PUMAs that partition West Virginia received ACS estimates for that year, because by definition a PUMA is large enough for complete demographic data availability. More information can be found here.



3.6 Understanding Geographic Identifiers

Link: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-identifiers.html

Learn everything you ever wanted to know about Geographic Identifiers, or GEOIDs, from why they are important to how they relate to each other.

4 External Resources

4.1 MABLE Geocorr from Missouri State Data Center

Link: https://mcdc.missouri.edu/applications/geocorr.html

Link to guidance on using the Geocorr (found under the Related Information section): https://www.census.gov/data/what-is-data-census-gov/guidance-for-data-users/how-to-materials-for-using-data-census-gov.html

Direct link to *Can I find information on selected geographies using the MABLE Geocorr?*: https://www2.census.gov/data/api-documentation/Address%20Search%20-%20Geocoder%20and%20TIGERweb/Using%20MABLE%20Geocorr_ZCTAs%20within%20State.pdf

Direct link to *How can I determine whether a geography, such as a county, is completely within an urban area, completely rural, or a mix?*: https://www2.census.gov/data/api-documentation/Address%20Search%20-%20Geocoder%20and%20TIGERweb/Using%20MABLE%20Geocorr_Urban_Rural_Mix.pdf