Using American FactFinder to access data from the American Community Survey.
- American FactFinder (AFF) - [http://factfinder2.census.gov/](http://factfinder2.census.gov/)
- The primary dissemination point of data from the decennial census and the American Community Survey.
New Look for AFF

Community Facts
Find popular facts (population, income, etc.) and frequently requested data about your community.

Guided Search

Advanced Search

Download Options

American FactFinder provides access to data about the United States, Puerto Rico and the Island Areas. The data in American FactFinder come from several censuses and surveys. For more information see Using FactFinder and What the House.
Use Advanced Search for full access to everything
You have fast access to search for a topic or table for a larger geography (US, state, county, or place) or to search for a single table only.

Your primary search selections can be made with the five options on the left side.
I start with “Topic” first. As you work in AFF, you will notice that selections in one area will determine what shows up in the others.

Clicking on “Topics” or “Search” on the top bar will change the screen to the “Search Results” page.

(CLICK ON “TOPICS”)

When something is selected, it appears in the “Your Selections” box at the top and is removed from the list under topics.
By default, the “Topics” menu will expand to seven top level choices. Let’s explore what is in each one.

FIRST: select the “Program” – usually this will be Decennial Census or ACS

SECOND: Choose the “Dataset” – in ACS which file (1,3,5-year) / in Census SF1 or SF2

THIRD: What do you want to count – people or housing? Probably “People”. Choose your characteristic.
   Labor Force data are classified under “Employment Status”
   “Origins” – this covers a lot including migration, foreign born, etc. Not just “Hispanic Origin”

Product Type: (DON’T LIMIT THIS OR YOU MAY MISS SOMETHING USEFUL!!) EXPLAIN!!  But HCD may need detail to calculate unincorp.
   • Data Profile and Quick Table are similar – high level collection of basic data
   • Subject Tables – a collection of info about a specific population or characteristic, example, vets, education, etc.
   • Detailed Table – the source for everything else – the tables from the Summary Files
   • Geographic Comparison Table – data on one topic, such as income for areas of one type like state.
   • Geographic Header – the geographic codes for each area (no characteristic data)
   • Ranking Table
In the Dataset list, the 2010 and 2000 Census files do not have “census” in their name. So if you are not sure, select the “Program” first then the Dataset.
Look at the “Your Selections” box in the upper left corner. You can remove items individually or all of them.

But your selections MUST appear in this box to affect the search results.

A new feature is that the Your Selections box will always be displayed in the upper left corner. Even when you scroll down the page.

Now let’s move on to “Geographies”
We select Topics FIRST because the data set will affect what geographies are available.

Initially we have 2130 tables to choose from – too many to scroll through
We select Topics FIRST because the data set will affect what geographies are available.

Now specify the geography.
Note the four tabs at the top of the panel – List, Name, Address, & Map. The default tab is by “List”.

You will use the “List” tab the most. Look at the dropdown list to select the type of geography you need. The three digit code after the geographic area type is the “summary level”. A code for that type.

POINT OUT THE “PLACE – 160”

If you don’t see it on the list, [CLICK] select “all geographic types”. Something that is grayed out is not available in the selected dataset.

NOW SHOW THE “COUNTY – 155” NESTED UNDER THE PLACE.

Follow the selection boxes until you select the specific geography you need – be sure to click “Add to your
Selections”

This selection method is really good when you need a specific county, tract, or place.
Step through your options.
You can select specific tracts or “All Census Tracts within…”.
Note the “All” selection is not always available such as SL 155.
Use this tab to identify/select the census geography for a specific address. This is useful for grant program to see if an area qualifies.

This is primarily useful for the Enterprise Zone program - Lesley James. Can now look up 2000 or 2010 census tracts for an address. Unfortunately, not 1990 or 1980. Copy of DGS/TACPA instructions – on the CD.
Close the Geography Overlay

Select geographies to add to Your Selections

- Select from: most requested geographic types ☐ all geographic types
- Select a geographic type: ☐ County: 950
- Select a state: California

Select one or more geographic areas and click Add to Your Selections:

- All Countries within California
- All States within the United States
- All Counties within California

ADD TO YOUR SELECTIONS

Didn't find your geographic type? Click the 'All geographic types' radio button above, or by the Name, Address or Map geography search options instead.
When you close the Selections overlays, you are back at the Search page. The Your Selections box (at left) should reflect all of the search criteria you selected.

The Search Results pane (below) now has the data tables that match your search criteria.
Let's explore the search results panel.

REFINE YOUR SEARCH RESULTS!!!!! Use this to narrow down the tables or the topics. Talk about the Table Codes list. Demonstrate

Table Selector - a checkbox to select a table for viewing or download

Table # or ID - QT = Quick Table / DP = Demographic Profile / CP = Comparison Profile (1-year ACS ONLY) / GCT = Geographic Comparison Table / DETAIL TABLES: P & PCT = Population table; H & HCT = Housing table; B&C for ACS Pop & Hsg / S = Subject Tables / G = Geographic Header

Table Title – title of the table or the profile contents.
Dataset – the source of the data – year and file

“i” – the information about the table including a table shell. This is similar to the “What’s This?” button on legacy AFF.

USE THE REFINE YOUR SEARCH function to narrow down the number of results.
Narrow down your list.

REFINE YOUR SEARCH RESULTS!!!!! Use this to narrow down the tables or the topics.

Talk about the Table Codes list. Demonstrate “B###*” search.

Talk about table types DP, S, B, C
After you have made your selections, [CLICK] to view only one data table, click on the table title.

To view or download multiple tables, [CLICK] click in the check boxes. Then click “View” to see the data or [CLICK] “Download” to copy the selected tables to your computer.
Let’s look at the features on the table display page:

1. Page through Selected Tables – if you select more than one table or report, you can page through them here.

2. Note the “correction note”

3. Action Bar – use options on this bar to modify the table, bookmark or save the query, or download the data. NOTE: the Create a Map option and tab will only activate if you have selected more than one area in the same type. Such as census tracts in a county or counties in a state.

Let’s “Modify the Table”…
When you click “Download” you will get two options.

(1) Database-compatible: Download the file to a csv in a zip file, you will get the entire table, **without your modifications**. With variables across the top and geography on the left. **If you are going to keep the data in Excel and the data format is not important, select “Data and annotations in a single file”. **BE SURE to check the box for descriptive names. If you do not check the box, you will only get the descriptive titles as a separate “metadata” file.

When you do the “Download” from the search
results page, you will get the data **WITHOUT** the descriptive labels.
In AFF2, your “session” will be ended after 30 minutes of inactivity. So, be sure to bookmark or save your query, before you go to that meeting!

Click on “Bookmark” on the Action Bar.
When you click on the “Create Bookmark” button, [CLICK] you get your browser’s function box to add a bookmark or favorite. You are shown what the link will be – you can copy and paste this into your e-mail or documentation to be able to retrieve the same table and geography again in the future.

When you click on the “Save Query”, [CLICK] you will see the standard window for downloading a file to your computer. This file has an “.aff” extension (for American FactFinder). Save this file to your computer.

Depending up on the complexity of your query, you will get a box with both options or only the option to “Save Query”. If you have modified the table, you will only have the option to “Save Query”.
If you are given the option, consider what you plan to do. If you want to share your query with someone else or if you have a standard level of geography, you can create a bookmark and use it as a base for future inquiries. For example to create all the cities in your MSA.
Bookmarks

- You can use the bookmarks to go to the same table and geography year after year.
- The bookmark to access the 2007–2011 ACS table B17001 for CA, counties and places:

  http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/11_5YR/B17001/0400000US06|0400000US06.05000|0400000US06.16000
To be able to edit the bookmark, you need to understand its parts.

Break down the link:

Required elements:
`factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en`

Program – Dataset “Year” – Table:
`/ACS/  11_5YR/  S1701`

Geography:
- 0400000US06 State of California
- 0400000US06.05000 All Counties in CA
- 0400000US06.16000 All Places in CA

Geography uses a “|” as a separator.
Questions? Call Us.

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Thank you!