



# **THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY: PROVIDING DATA FOR DIVERSE BLACK COMMUNITIES**

January 2025



**National  
Urban League**



## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE**

The National Urban League is a non-profit, nonpartisan, civil rights and community-based movement that serves over 2 million people, providing direct services, research and policy advocacy to help individuals and communities reach their fullest potential.

Primarily working with African-Americans and other emerging ethnic communities, its network of over 100 professionally staffed affiliates in over 35 states across the nation, working to close equality gaps for people at all economic levels and stages of life, and giving citizens a chance to give back as volunteers.

**THE ACS: PROVIDING DATA FOR DIVERSE BLACK COMMUNITIES**



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# INTRODUCTION

## UNDERSTANDING THE ACS: WHAT THE BLACK COMMUNITY NEEDS TO KNOW

### WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)?

Since 1790, Congress has authorized the government to conduct a national census of the U.S. population every 10 years, known as the decennial census. Though widely recognized for determining the population count, President James Madison also ensured that the Constitution gave Congress the authority to use the decennial census to collect additional information beyond the population count, enabling “[future legislators] to adapt the public measures to the particular circumstances of the

community.” While the decennial census collected some basic demographic information, a rapidly changing America required a longer form questionnaire that would capture detailed data on a more populous, highly mobile, and diverse nation. The Census Bureau created the long form questionnaire (1940-2000), sending it to only a subset of the population along with the traditional short form.

As the demand and need for more timely data increased among local decision-makers, business owners and



federal/state legislators, the Census Bureau established the American Community Survey (ACS), the current adaptation of the long form questionnaire. The ACS captures detailed demographic characteristics and socioeconomic trends of the U.S. population on an annual basis (versus once a decade). While the decennial census still uses the short form, asking basic questions about age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, household relationship, and owner/renter status, the ACS' long form questionnaire asks more in-depth, socioeconomic and demographic data about:

- population, such as ancestry, U.S. citizenship status, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration disability, employment;
- housing characteristics, such as the type of building, the number of rooms, and cost for housing; and
- economy, such as labor force characteristics, income, and occupation.

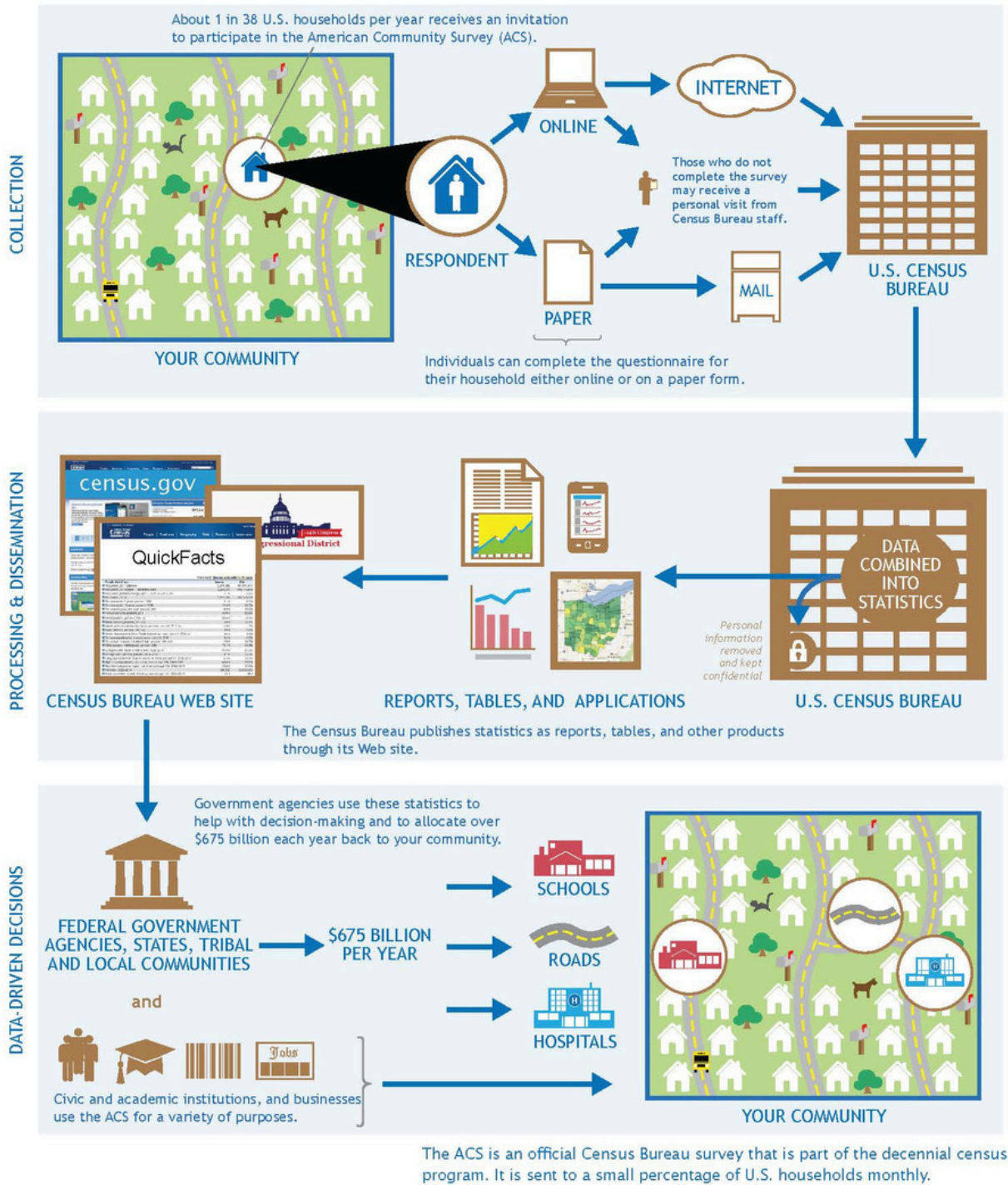
*THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE ACS IS TO BE A RELIABLE, CONTINUOUS, AND NATIONWIDE SURVEY PROVIDING TIMELY ANNUAL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, HOUSING, AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA.*

This annual nationwide data is especially important for the Black community, given its growing diversity, the dispersion of its community due to gentrification, climate change, and continued disparities in social, health, legal, economic, and educational opportunities and outcomes. The ACS allows one to continue identifying priorities and gaps for state, local, and the federal government.

### **WHEN AND HOW IS THE ACS CONDUCTED?**

The ACS is conducted monthly throughout the year. The U.S. Census Bureau randomly samples about 250,000 addresses each month from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This means that responses are received at different times throughout the month and year. The U.S. Census Bureau contacts respondents by mail first, then by phone if the survey is not returned within a month. If the respondent still does not respond, an interviewer (or enumerator) may contact them in person. The data collected each month is combined over a year to produce 1-year estimates, over three years to produce 3-year estimates, or over five years to produce 5-year estimates. These estimates represent the characteristics of a community over the entire data collection period rather than a fixed date.

# How the ACS Works for Your Community



Source: [American Community Survey Information Guide](#)

Figure 1: The chart above depicts the ACS process from the collection phase, when community members complete and submit the survey, through data processing and tabulation, until when ACS data products eventually return to the community and can be used to inform funding and programmatic decisions in our communities.



## WHY SHOULD THE BLACK COMMUNITY CARE ABOUT THE ACS?

The ACS is a vital source of information for public and private sectors, including policymakers, business leaders, and planners. The ACS provides a statistical profile of a community for programs, economic development, emergency management, and understanding of local trends. For example, ACS data are used by businesses to determine where to locate an establishment or whether to expand (e.g., where to build the Apple Campus or Amazon warehouse with the requisite workforce) and transportation infrastructure. Similarly, it provides critical data for the public sector in determining what services are needed, such as ensuring schools, hospitals, police and fire departments, and new plants and services are constructed to keep pace with a community's changing demographics. Given the growing occurrence of natural disasters, extreme weather— from hurricanes, tornadoes and floods to wildfires and pandemics, ACS data is critical to helping local leaders understand the characteristics of a displaced population or where services and support should be allocated. Reports show that Black households and communities are most at risk of living in communities vulnerable to climate change (e.g., lowest-lying areas or in neighborhoods without green space to absorb water) and are less likely to receive or have the resources to respond adequately. As a civil rights issue, ACS data helps to ensure fair employment opportunities for vulnerable historically undercounted populations, (including Black Americans), people with disabilities, and veterans.

***EVERY ACS SURVEY IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A RESPONDENT TO HELP AFFECT WHAT THEIR COMMUNITY RECEIVES.***

The ACS also helps policymakers, public agencies, businesses, community leaders, and advocates identify the needs and priorities of communities and determine whether given programs or policies benefit a community. It is critical that Black people respond to the ACS as it serves as an impartial measuring stick for decisions that affect nearly every aspect of life. Compared to Non-Hispanic White and Asian and Hispanic households, whose coverage rates are over 90%, the coverage rate for Black Americans over the past 15 years has declined from over 90% to 83%. Census districts with high concentrations of Black people are less likely to be contacted (i.e., higher noncontact rates) than tracts that are predominantly White. Additionally, Census districts with 75 percent or more Black Americans have significantly higher refusal rates (the percentage of cases where respondents refuse to participate in a survey or break off the interview) than White majority areas. This means the ACS is less likely to have accurate data for Black households and communities and thus, less useful.

# HOW ACS DATA IMPACTS THE BLACK COMMUNITY

The ACS is a critical data source between decennial censuses because of the historical and continuous undercount of the Black community each decade. Black Americans have been undercounted in every Census since 1790, when Black people were counted as three-fifths of a person. An [independent analysis](#) found that the overall 2020 undercount of the Black population might be three times worse than the 2010 Census. Furthermore, the U.S. Census Bureau's official post Census measurement of the Black undercount found that the Black or African American alone or in combination population had a statistically significant net undercount of 3.30% or about 2 million people. This is [higher than the Census 2010 undercount](#), which stood at

2.06%. The [George Washington Institute of Public Policy](#) places the value of each completed census form at more than \$4,000 per person, which means an undercount of 2 million Black people represents a loss of more than \$8 billion in funding for Black communities. The undercount also siphons political representation away from communities with high Black populations. With each Congressional district representing about 700,000 residents, the undercount is roughly equivalent to the loss of three members of the House of Representatives.

The ACS provides *more frequent, accurate, and detailed information* on communities during the nine years between decennial censuses to support federal funding allocations, community resilience needs, voting rights, and fair redistricting.



**Community Funding and Resilience.** As discussed above, Black communities stand to lose more than \$8 billion in funding across federally funded programs due to ACS undercounts and nonparticipation. While addressing population undercounts is an ongoing Census Bureau priority, it has created a unique ACS dataset that measures a community's resilience and ability to overcome adverse environmental, political, public health, or social threats. Using ACS and other Census data sets to identify demographic and economic risk factors, the Census Bureau created the Community Resilience Estimates (CRE). These data allow communities across the country to assess potential vulnerabilities affecting crucial opportunities for funding and rebuilding.

**Voting Rights and Redistricting.** The ACS data helps more than 10,000 jurisdictions in the U.S. to redraw district boundaries to meet the one-person/one-vote criteria. In addition, ACS data helps ensure fair implementation of the Voting Rights Act, which protects the voting rights of racial and ethnic minorities, including Black people, to determine where voters are likely to need more or less resources and assistance voting. In particular, Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits the denial of the right to vote of any citizen of the U.S. on the basis of race, ethnicity, or membership in a language minority group. ACS data helps determine whether the three conditions in a Section 2 voting rights case are met:

- The minority group is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute the majority in a single-member district.
- The minority group is politically cohesive.
- The white majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it to defeat the minority group's preferred candidate usually.



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Community resilience is the capacity of a community or individuals to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from disruptions and adverse situations. These can range from environmental disasters, such as Gulf Coast Hurricanes (e.g., Hurricane Katrina), California wildfires and floods, to worldwide diseases, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and even widespread civil unrest experienced in many Black communities over the last decade, due to improper and often violent policing tactics against Black residents. As a result of these factors, assessments of community resilience have become a public health priority for government officials and lawmakers at every level—federal, state, local, and Tribal. In order to offset the devastating effects of disasters and emergencies, U.S. Census Bureau data, including the American Community

Survey, was used to provide new data tools to help lawmakers identify and equitably fund programs through its Community Resilience Estimates Program.

According to the EPA, “85% of the world’s population have already noticed changes to temperature and precipitation due to climate change,” noting that negative impacts do not affect all populations equally. When disasters occur, recovery depends on the community’s ability to weather the effects of that particular disruption—sometimes coupled (e.g. wildfires, flooding, and hurricane destruction, and widespread power outages). To facilitate community disaster preparedness, the Census Bureau has developed new small-area estimates, identifying communities where resources and information may



effectively mitigate the impact of disasters.

Some groups are less likely to have the capacity and resources to overcome hardships presented during a hazardous event. Other communities and/or groups have substantial resources to manage the crisis and quickly bounce back. These resources might include higher levels of educational attainment, a reliable transportation infrastructure, plenty of health options/access to doctors, internet access, economic investment, and access to food and clean water. These variables all contribute to community resilience.

ACS Community Resilience Estimates (CRE), along with other Census data (i.e., American Housing Survey, the Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program, and the 2020 Census), help stakeholders, public health officials, and government leaders in developing plans to reduce a disaster’s potential effects.

## Snapshot: ACS and Census-Based Federal Funding

### Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, LIHEAP is a mandatory block grant program for the states. The mission of LIHEAP is to help low-income households pay their home energy bills.

Congress established the law’s block grant distribution formula based on each state’s weather and low-income population. *The income question on the ACS is essential to determining the low-income population in each state.*

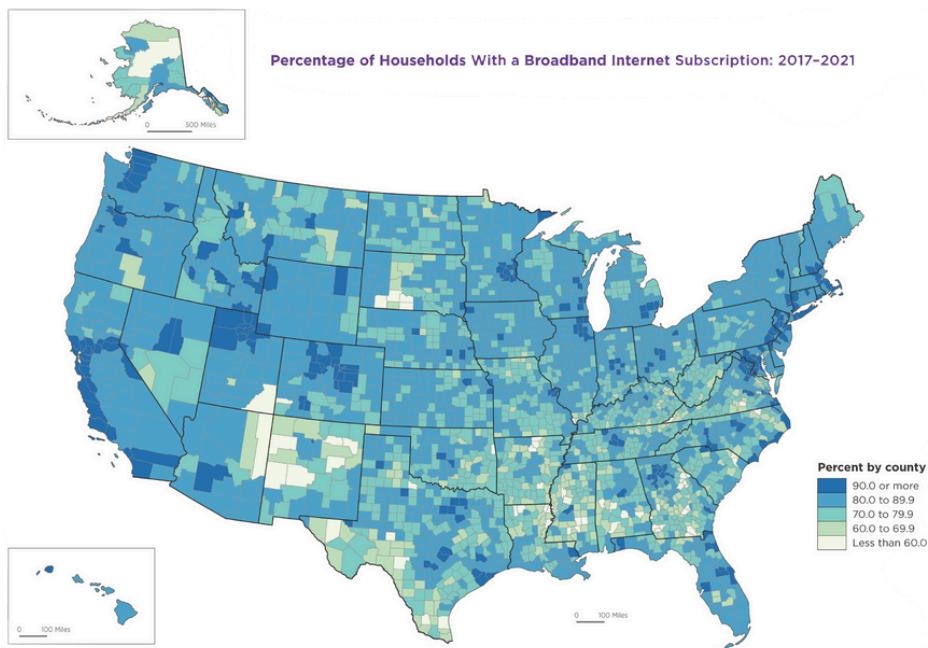
Implementation of the LIHEAP program also relies on data from other ACS questions, including age, sex, Hispanic origin, relationship, disability status, units in structure, and occupants per room. LIHEAP program administrators also use data from the ACS question on selected monthly owner costs to analyze current residential energy supply and consumption and to forecast future energy needs.

## CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL BLACK COMMUNITIES

Today, access to high-speed broadband is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Since 2013, the ACS has collected data from U.S. households on computer use and internet usage and provides annual estimates for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater, down to neighborhood levels. *In closing the digital divide— whereby particular areas or groups of people have lower rates of internet access, policymakers and governmental officials across all levels and communities – urban and rural – depend on accurate data across several categories to address digital inequities.* The ACS provides data on indicators of digital well-being for communities, including internet availability, computer or laptop ownership, internet subscription rates, and an assessment of city, county, and home broadband infrastructure that are needed to identify technology inequities and propose effective data-driven solutions.

Each year, ACS data on internet access and use help state and local policymakers identify digital deserts, particularly within Black Communities where residents are least likely to either own a computer of any type or have a broadband subscription than most households. This became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit Black communities disproportionately hard and thrust a critical need for reliable internet access as both businesses, educational entities, and governmental officials struggled to ensure continuity of social programs, healthcare, K-12 educational needs and remote telework policies.

*Figure 2: The Census Bureau’s 2021 Report on Computer and Internet Use shows that Southern households, where there are larger Black populations, are less likely to have broadband internet subscriptions.*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.



From a community resilience perspective, broadband is a basic infrastructure just as vital as roads and bridges, electrical lines and sewer systems. Through the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act law (IIJA) enacted in 2021, \$42.45 billion was earmarked for distributing funds to expand broadband services in unserved and underserved communities using ACS and Census data. Further, the Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the agency responsible for administering grant programs that help close the digital divide, uses ACS and other census data to allocate funding to states for Digital Equity Planning and Capacity Grants.

### COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY TO EXTREME HEAT

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the warm-season months (May–September) of 2023 were the hottest ever recorded in the United States, impacting considerable adverse health impacts, such as deaths and illnesses. While hot weather conditions can affect all persons, the CDC acknowledges that “for certain specific populations, exposure and health risks are compounded by adverse physiologic, behavioral, demographic, or socioeconomic factors that result in their being disproportionately affected by extreme heat.” Accurate data and/or assessments of vulnerable populations’ preparedness to sustain or lessen the full impact of a disaster (man-made or natural) are critical since different approaches are needed to improve preparedness among diverse populations.

## *Did you know...*

*Neighborhoods that are home to racial minorities and low-income residents have the highest inland flood exposures in the South, and Black communities nationwide are expected to experience a disproportionate share of future flood damages. Black, Latino, Asian, historically redlined, and urban communities are disproportionately exposed to heat, as are those with low wealth and people experiencing homelessness.*

Source: [The White House | Fact Sheet](#)

## Haitian Residents Value ACS Community Resilience Data

Sant La, Haitian Neighborhood Center is a lifeline for the Haitian and Haitian American community in South Florida through services rooted in equity, inclusion, and opportunity, but especially Improved Capacity—a characteristic of community resilience. Sant La’s services advance community health and well-being; educational attainment; financial stability; citizenship and civic engagement; employability; increased technical skills and access to technology; collaboration and partnerships; current community data and trends; older adult care; improved capacity for staff and sector colleagues.

In October 2024, Sant La hosted a workshop with a diverse group of South Florida Haitian leaders and organizations to understand the importance of ACS survey data in determining the prevalence of social vulnerabilities in neighborhoods with predominant Haitian populations. The primary emphasis was on senior populations.

The workshop presenter demonstrated the Census Bureau’s Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) tool and FEMA’s High Risk Index tool. Although the Census Bureau’s CRE tool outlines the primary components of social vulnerability, ACS indicators of poverty, language, employment, disability, health, housing and/or unit overcrowding (i.e., >0.75 persons per room), internet and/or vehicle access, and more, enable decision makers to calculate a more precise measurement of community resilience to establish needed programs that improve conditions. For example, ACS data showed a poverty rate of 26.4% for Haitian seniors in Miami-Dade County compared to 20.7% for all seniors in the county, and only 12% in the state.

*“THE ACS PRODUCES DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION AND THE BLACK DIASPORA (I.E., HAITIAN, JAMAICAN, NIGERIAN).*

*THESE PROFILES PROVIDE ESSENTIAL DATA USEFUL TO CITY PLANNERS, BUSINESS OWNERS, STATE AND LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS AND BLACK ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PURPOSES OF BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND TARGETING RESOURCES AND SERVICES.*

*Marilyn Stephens, Meeting presenter and  
Principal Analyst and Consultant,  
DATA Consulting, LLC*

As we start to see negative impacts due to climate change, it is increasingly clear that not all populations are affected equally. A 2021 EPA report showed that Black communities are already 40% more likely to live in areas predicted to see the highest increases in heat-related deaths—a figure that rises to 59% more likely under increased temperatures of warming. This means that Black communities are at a structural and environmental disadvantage when it comes to climate change. Further, extreme heat has been the greatest weather-related cause of death in the U.S. for the past 30 years, disproportionately affecting Native American and Black communities, as well as those living in the urban core or very rural neighborhoods.

Accurate data is critical to providing information on how climate change, especially extreme heat, affects Black populations nationwide. In April 2023, the U.S. Census Bureau released the Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) for Heat that identify areas across the country that are socially vulnerable (meaning they are less able to respond to disasters and health emergencies) to extreme heat. CRE data shows that nearly 1 in 4 people in the United States are socially vulnerable and are susceptible to extreme heat exposure, with that number growing when considering additional housing and transportation characteristics. This tool produces national, state, county and census tract (neighborhood equivalent) estimates using individual and household data from the 2019 ACS and the Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program. The goal is to “build resilient infrastructure that helps communities withstand extreme heat, drought, wildfires, and other heat-related hazards.”

***ACS DATA, MODELED TO PROVIDE THE CRE FOR HEAT MEASURE, PROVIDES THE PUBLIC AND DECISION MAKERS WITH CLEAR, TIMELY, AND SCIENCE-BASED INFORMATION TO UNDERSTAND AND REDUCE THE HEALTH RISKS OF EXTREME HEAT.***

Participation in the ACS helps us to protect the Black community in several ways. The data enables decision-makers and community advocates to target intersectional, codependent needs, i.e., poverty, housing, the digital divide, healthcare or education, and so on. The more the Black community participates as ACS respondents, the closer it is to increasing community resilience and recovery from external hardships. Each ACS question is tied to a programmatic need or federal funding requirement. Filling out the ACS survey when it reaches your household is a huge commitment toward ensuring better funding and better program decisions are made on your behalf based on more accurate and complete data.



## Snapshot: 2025 Los Angeles County Wildfires

The importance of community resilience and the use of ACS data could not be more evident than in the assessment of damage and the impact of epic wildfires destroying property and wildlife throughout Los Angeles County, including (at the time of report publication) historic Black communities in Altadena, California. The community of 42,000 residents—where 18% are Black—has been among the hardest hit by wildfires according to press reports. According to recent AXIOS press reports, “the Eaton Fire has all but flattened the many Black-owned homes and businesses in the unincorporated area of Altadena, California.” Octavia E. Butler, the late award-winning Black science fiction novelist, wrote about a wildfire from climate change happening in 2025 in her novel "Parable of the Sower." She is buried in an Altadena cemetery, the community in which she was raised.



Danny Robinson and Sharon Beckford sift through the rubble of their family's home that the Eaton Fire in Altadena destroyed.  
Photo: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

The ACS has enabled local and state leaders to capture timely data on the socioeconomic characteristics of Altadena residents as well as other Los Angeles County neighborhoods. Altadena became a rare haven for Black Americans to reach the middle class during the Civil Rights era. They kept homes within the family, passing them down generation after generation.

“Today, the Black home ownership rate there is at 81.5%, almost double

the national rate. That's impressive considering 92% of the 15,000 residences in Altadena are single-family homes, according to the 2023 Census American Community Survey. The median income is over \$129,000. Just over 7% of residents live in poverty.”

*The Associated Press, “The California Wildfires Could be Leaving Deeper Inequality in their Wake”*

As the city looks to rebuild, the socioeconomic, housing, and demographic data captured by the ACS can be utilized to assess where disaster relief efforts should be concentrated. Local and federal leaders can quickly identify and evaluate the most vulnerable communities using detailed ACS data, such as age, income, housing tenure, insurance coverage, etc – in addition to the rich data that’s been incorporated into both of the Community Resilience Estimate datasets.

# REDISTRICTING AND VOTING RIGHTS

## COMMUNITY DISPLACEMENT, GENTRIFICATION, AND POPULATION SHIFTS

As racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic characteristics shift across the United States over time, the ACS helps local officials, community leaders, and businesses understand the changes taking place in their communities. For example, Black urban communities often face political impacts associated with gentrification.

Gentrification significantly impacts redistricting—the redrawing of electoral district boundaries—by causing major demographic shifts within neighborhoods. These shifts often lead to changes in racial and socioeconomic composition, important variables that local and state officials consider in the redistricting process. Changing boundaries of

electoral districts can lead to the dilution of political power of previously minority-majority communities when new, white, and higher-income residents move in. The ACS provides local data on income, occupation/employment, and educational attainment, annually and is the most likely source of data for lawmakers to consider when assessing population shifts during redistricting.

In addition to gentrification, displacement of populations can occur due to natural disasters (e.g., Hurricane Katrina, global pandemics, climate change, forest fires and floods). Likewise, these shifts in population distribution can impact federal funding allocations, as well as the redistricting process. Even the distribution of disaster recovery resources can be impacted as vulnerable communities are compromised due to

displacement from natural disasters and socioeconomic and demographic population shifts.

Hurricane Katrina made landfall near New Orleans, Louisiana, on the morning of August 29, 2005. The disastrous effects of the Hurricane on the predominantly Black population of the city affected every level of existence for New Orleans residents—school closings, housing, infrastructure, jobs and unemployment, and health, as well as political ramifications. Trupania Bonner, Executive Director of Moving Forward Gulf Coast, Inc., spoke to the Louisiana House of Representatives about redistricting and the visceral impact of Black displacement and political representation (February 17, 2010):

“The faces of New Orleans have changed—the city is whiter, public housing has been torn down and what little affordable housing remains cannot accommodate the thousands of low income displaced New Orleans’ residents dispersed throughout the country. Displaced and disenfranchised citizens search for hope that their voices will be heard in this redistricting process and in the rebuilding of our community.”

## *Did you know...*

*The ACS produces data for congressional districts annually, as part of the 1-year and 5-year estimates data releases. ACS data for the 119th Congressional Districts were released September 2024 (1-year estimates) and December 2024 (5-year estimates).*

*For example, the 119th Congress can use ACS data to determine socioeconomic and demographic trends affecting their Districts, and to appropriate adequate funding to meet diverse local needs across U.S. communities.*

*These data are available at [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Redistricting and Voting Rights Data Office



## HOW ARE ACS DATA USED IN REDISTRICTING AND TO SECURE VOTING RIGHTS?

The Census Bureau is required to provide small area census population tabulations to state legislatures and the public bodies responsible for legislative redistricting in each state within 1 year of Census Day. The U.S. Census Bureau provides the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico with population counts for each of them to use in the redrawing of their congressional and state legislative district boundaries—otherwise known as “redistricting.” While decennial census data provides the basis for redistricting decisions, the ACS offers critical details on the characteristics of the population that help meet the requirements of the federal Voting Rights Act.

The ACS provides baseline data for the Citizen Voting Age Population, or CVAP data, which is the estimated number and percentage of people who are both over 18 and U.S. citizens in each state, and thus eligible to vote, categorized by location, race and ethnicity. The Voting Rights Act includes provisions to ensure that legislative district boundaries reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the people they represent. ACS data are essential in producing this comparative information over time to meet statutory CVAP needs. This data is relied upon by line drawers, legislatures and courts, including providing useful data to challenge efforts to suppress or diminish political representation within Black communities. Further, ACS statistics on “Language spoken at home” are used to monitor compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, especially since Congress has mandated its use to enforce bilingual ballot requirements.

New York City’s Democracy NYC program has developed a multilingual Poll Site Language Assistance Program to improve the electoral participation of limited English-proficient New Yorkers (including Haitian Creole-speaking residents) at select polling sites. By using ACS data on the number of limited English-speaking citizens of voting age residing in the election district, the Program was able to select polling sites that would most benefit from the interpretation services.

The data rich ACS is a useful and essential tool in helping local and state leaders measure changing social and economic characteristics of their communities—to adjust boundaries to ensure fair representation across diverse and often displaced populations.

## Fast Facts on the Diversity of the Black Community

The American Community Survey (ACS) and other data sources, such as the decennial census, provide information about the diversity of the Black population in the U.S., including their racial and ethnic identities, language use, educational attainment, and more. Here are some quick facts about the Black community in the U.S. using data primarily from the 2022 ACS Estimates by the Pew Research Center.

**Racial and ethnic identities.** The Black population is diverse, with people identifying as single-race, non-Hispanic Black, multiracial, non-Hispanic Black, or Black Hispanic (i.e., Afro-Latino). In 2019, 87% of Black or African American people identified as Black alone and non-Hispanic, while 8% identified as Black and another race, and 5% identified as Black Hispanic. The Black population has increased by 32% over the last two decades, rising from 36.2 million in 2000 to 47.9 million in 2022.

A significant contributor to the Black population growth in the U.S. is the arrival of new immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and other areas across the diaspora. The number of Black immigrants more than doubled, up from 2.4 million in 2000 (7% of the Black population) to 5.1 million (11%) in 2022.

**Age.** The U.S.'s Black population is relatively young. Nearly half of Black Americans are under 30 years old. In 2022, the median age of Black Americans was 32.1 years, which is younger than the national median age of 38.0.

**Language.** The vast majority of the Black population speaks only English (89%), while a smaller subset of the Black population ages five and older report speaking a language other than English at home (9.3%). Though most report also speaking English very well, about 2.9% report speaking English less than “very well.” Other languages spoken in Black households include Spanish (4%), French or Haitian Creole (3%), and African languages, (e.g. Ethiopian, 1%).

**Region.** More than half of the Black population (56%) lives in the South. About one-third of the Black population lives in the Midwest and Northeast, with the smallest percentage living in the West (10%). Texas, Florida, and Georgia are home to the largest Black populations in the nation, at 4.2 million, 3.9 million, and 3.7 million, respectively.

The New York City metro area has the largest number of Black residents among metropolitan areas (3.6 million), followed by the Atlanta metro area with 2.2 million, and the Chicago metro area with 1.7 million Black residents. States with historically small numbers of Black residents have had the fastest growth in their Black population, including Utah, Hawaii, and Nevada.

States with historically small numbers of Black residents have had the fastest growth in their Black population, including Utah, Hawaii, and Nevada.

**Educational attainment.** The rate of educational attainment among Black Americans has steadily grown over the last two decades. About 26% of Black adults ages 25 and older (7.8 million people) earned at least a bachelor's degree as of 2022, up from 14.5% in 2000. Nearly 23% of Black males had at least a bachelor's degree in 2022 compared to 13.4% in 2000. Even more precipitous, almost 30% of Black women had at least a bachelor's degree in 2022 compared to 15.4% in 2000.

**Income.** Black households had a median annual income of \$50,000 in 2022. Multiracial and Black Hispanic households had a slightly higher median income, at \$60,000 and \$56,500, respectively. Among all U.S. Black households, about a third (34%) earned \$75,000 or more, majority of which earned \$100,000 or more.



# ACS PROFILES IN BLACK COMMUNITIES

ACS provides detailed information about communities from the national to local levels. Here are examples of ACS data at the national and local levels that civic leaders, policymakers, business leaders, and organizations can use to improve the quality of services in the Black community.

**UNITED STATES** BLACK POPULATION COUNT: 47,893,286 | 14.4%

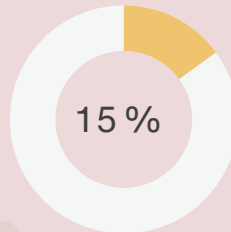
## INCOME, HEALTH, AND HOUSING



**\$53,444**

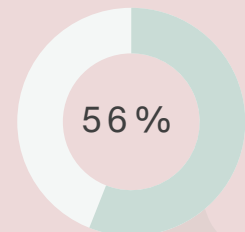
### Median Income

The median income for Black Americans is about \$53,500, compared to nearly \$78,500 among all Americans.



### Disability

15% of Black Americans reported a disability (compared to 13% of overall population), making up 14% of the U.S.' disabled population.



### Renter Status

The majority of Black Americans are renters, (compared to 35% of overall population), making up 20% of the U.S.' renting population.



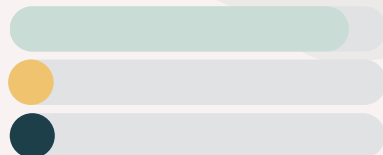
**64%**

### Employment

64% of Black Americans are in the labor force (compared to 64% of overall population), making up 12% of the U.S.' employment population.

## LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND VOTING AGE

### Language



**90%** Speak only English

**7%** Speak another language, and English "very well"

**3%** Speak another language, and English not "very well"

### Education

**25%**

of Black Americans Earned a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, compared to 35% of the overall population

### Voting Age

**72%**

of Black Americans are of voting age, making up 13% of the country's eligible voting population



# EAST POINT, GA

BLACK POPULATION COUNT: 29,452  
PERCENTAGE: 77.0%



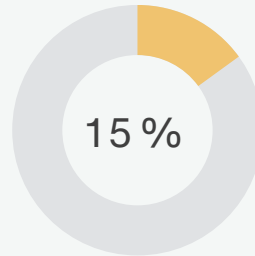
## INCOME, HEALTH, AND HOUSING



**\$55,556**

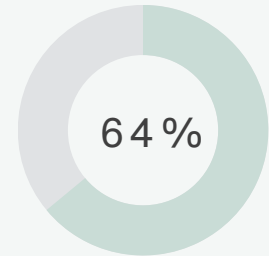
### Median Income

The median income for Black East Point residents is about \$55,600, compared to nearly \$59,000 among all East Point residents.



### Disability

15% of Black East Point residents reported a disability (compared to 15% of overall population), making up 79% of East Point's disabled population.



### Renter Status

The majority of Black East Point residents are renters, (compared to 56% of overall population), making up 89% of East Point's renting population.



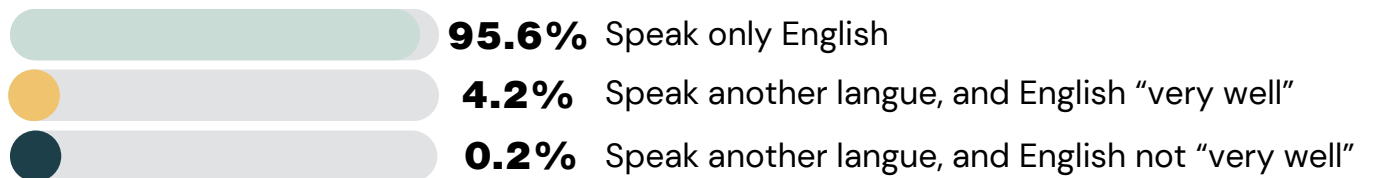
**72%**

### Employment

72% of Black East Point residents are in the labor force (compared to 72% of overall population), making up 77% of East Point's employment population.

## LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND VOTING AGE

### Language



### Education

**33%** of Black East Point residents Earned a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, compared to 36% of the overall population

### Voting Age

**74%** of Black East Point citizens are of voting age, making up 80% of the city's eligible voting population

# IMMOKALEE, FL

BLACK POPULATION COUNT: 5,712

PERCENTAGE: 22.3%



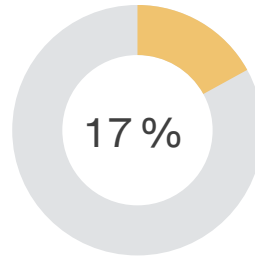
## INCOME, HEALTH, AND HOUSING



**\$40,814**

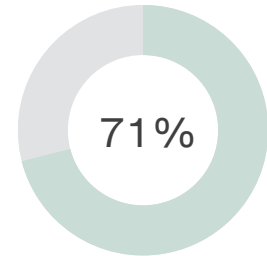
### Median Income

The median income for Black Immokalee residents is about \$40,800, compared to nearly \$46,100 among all Immokalee residents.



### Disability

17% of Black Immokalee residents reported a disability (compared to 9% of overall population), making up 39% of Immokalee's disabled population.



### Renter Status

The majority of Black Immokalee residents are renters (compared to 61% of overall population), making up 30% of Immokalee's renter population.



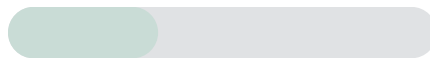
**64%**

### Employment

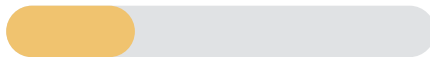
64% of Black Immokalee residents are in the labor force (compared to 67% of overall population), making up 22% of Immokalee's employment population.

## LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND VOTING AGE

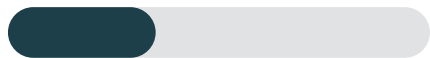
### Language



**35%** Speak only English



**30%** Speak another language, and English "very well"



**35%** Speak another language, and English not "very well"

### Education

**9%**

of Black Immokalee residents Earned a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, compared to 6% of the overall population

### Voting Age

**52%**

of Black Immokalee citizens are of voting age, making up 26% of the city's eligible voting population

# MINNEAPOLIS, MN

BLACK POPULATION COUNT: 77,906

PERCENTAGE: 18.3%



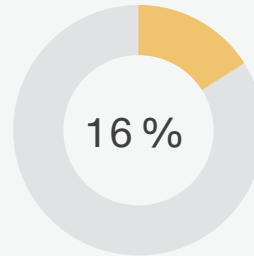
## INCOME, HEALTH, AND HOUSING



**\$39,863**

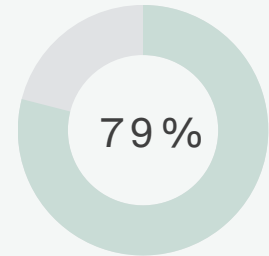
### Median Income

The median income for Black Minneapolis residents is about \$39,900, compared to nearly \$80,300 among all Minneapolis residents.



### Disability

16% of Black Minneapolis residents reported a disability (compared to 12% of overall population), making up 25% of Minneapolis' disabled population.



### Renter Status

The majority of Black Minneapolis residents are renters (compared to 52% of overall population), making up 23% of Minneapolis' renter population.



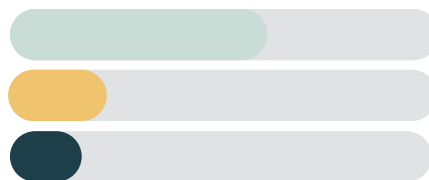
**64%**

### Employment

64% of Black Minneapolis residents are in the labor force (compared to 74% of overall population), making up 14% of Minneapolis' employment population.

## LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND VOTING AGE

### Language



**60%** Speak only English

**23%** Speak another language, and English "very well"

**17%** Speak another language, and English not "very well"

### Education

**19%**

of Black Minneapolis residents Earned a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, compared to 55% of the overall population

### Voting Age

**61%**

of Black Minnesota citizens are of voting age, making up 15% of the city's eligible voting population

# NEW YORK CITY, NY

BLACK POPULATION COUNT: 1,933,195  
PERCENTAGE: 22.7%



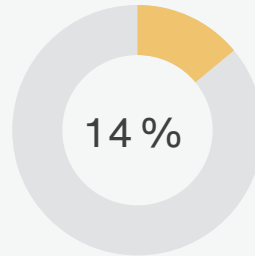
## INCOME, HEALTH, AND HOUSING



**\$60,673**

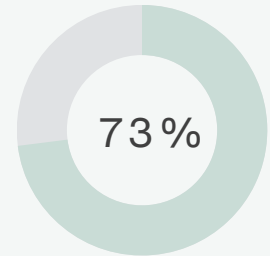
### Median Income

The median income for Black New York City residents is almost \$60,700, compared to about \$79,700 among all New York City residents..



### Disability

14% of Black New York City residents reported a disability (compared to 12% of overall population), making up 27% of New York City's disabled population.



### Renter Status

The majority of Black New York City residents are renters (compared to 67% of overall population), making up 24% of New York City's renting population



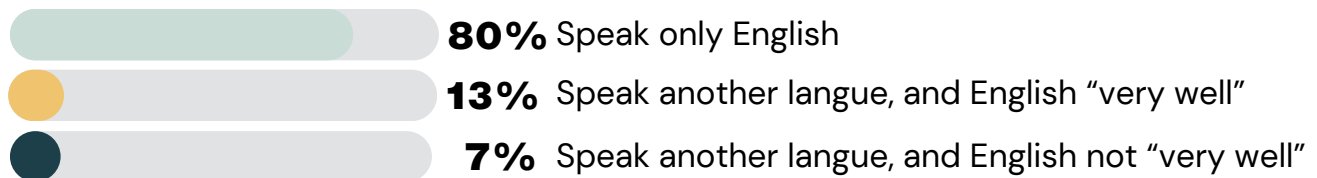
**61%**

### Employment

61% of Black New York City residents are in the labor force, (compared to 63% of overall population), making up 22% of New York City's employment population.

## LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND VOTING AGE

### Language



### Education

**27%** of Black New York City residents Earned a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, compared to 41% of the overall population

### Voting Age

**70%** of Black New York City citizens are of voting age, making up 24% of the city's eligible voting population



# PRAIRIE VIEW, TX

BLACK POPULATION COUNT: 7,035

PERCENTAGE: 85.6%



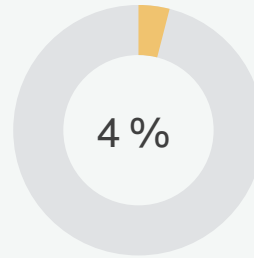
## INCOME, HEALTH, AND HOUSING



**\$18,494**

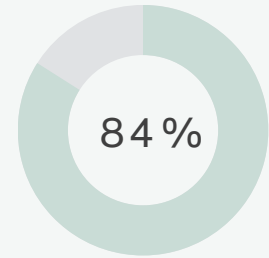
### Median Income

The median income for Black Prairie View residents is almost \$18,500, compared to about \$19,100 among all Prairie View residents..



### Disability

4% of Black Prairie View residents reported a disability (compared to 4% of overall population), making up 71% of Prairie View's disabled population.



### Renter Status

The majority of Black Prairie View residents are renters (compared to 79% of overall population), making up 96% of Prairie View's renting population



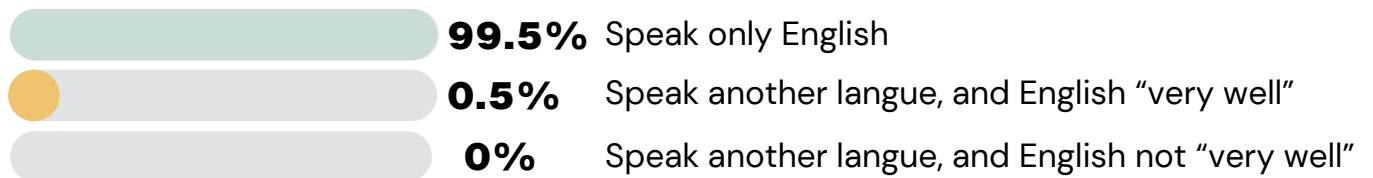
**51%**

### Employment

51% of Black Prairie View residents are in the labor force, (compared to 53% of overall population), making up 85% of Prairie View's employment population.

## LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND VOTING AGE

### Language



### Education

**54%** of Black Prairie View residents Earned a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, compared to 43% of the overall population

### Voting Age

**91%** of Black Prairie View citizens are of voting age, making up 90% of the city's eligible voting population

# WILLMAR, MN

BLACK POPULATION COUNT: 2,219  
PERCENTAGE: 10.5%



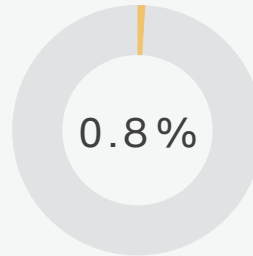
## INCOME, HEALTH, AND HOUSING



**\$48,679**

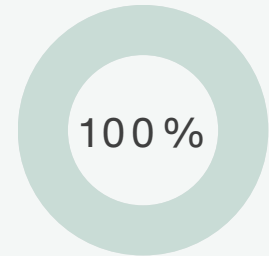
### Median Income

The median income for Black Willmar residents is almost \$48,700 compared to about \$63,400 among all Willmar residents..



### Disability

Under 1% of Black Willmar residents reported a disability (compared to 17% of overall population), making up 0.5% of Willmar's disabled population.



### Renter Status

All of Willmar's Black residents are renters (compared to 43% of overall population), making up 17% of Willmar's renting population



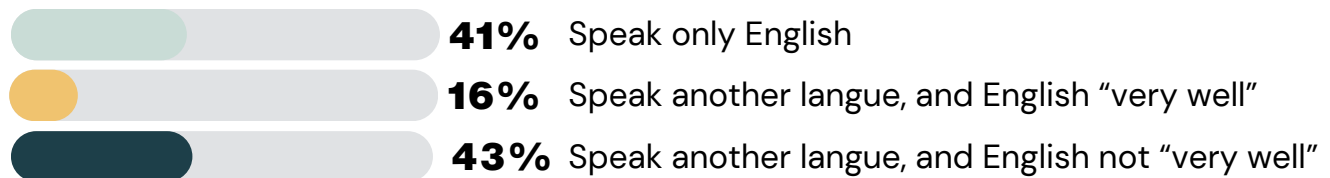
**81%**

### Employment

81% of Black Willmar residents are in the labor force, (compared to 67% of overall population), making up 9% of Willmar's employment population.

## LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND VOTING AGE

### Language



### Education

**4.5%** of Black Willmar residents Earned a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, compared to 25% of the overall population

### Voting Age

**42%** of Black Willmar citizens are of voting age, making up 7% of the city's eligible voting population



# CONCLUSION

## CALL TO ACTION

*An urgent need exists for all facets of the Black community, foreign-born and those born in the U.S., to respond to the ACS when it arrives in your mailbox or when a Census enumerator knocks on the door.*

The Black population of the United States is diverse across every measure of social, cultural, economic, educational, geographic, religious and ethnic categorization imaginable. This rich tapestry of Black American and African descendant populations has enriched America's domestic and international footprint since their earliest presence in the U.S. Given the varied histories of the Black population (many are descendants of enslaved people, while others recently arrived as new

immigrants), accurate data reflecting population trends, across and between diverse Black populations and the diaspora are essential. The ACS provides estimates for every community in the country every year on ancestry, citizenship, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration, disability, employment, housing characteristics, and more. These data are used exhaustively by those in public, private, and not-for-profit roles to target funding, measure shifting demographics,

plan for local services, and to inform businesses large and small on where to invest (e.g., African hair braiding salons, Caribbean restaurants, grocery stores, child development facilities, and affordable housing).

According to Linda Jacobson of the Population Reference Bureau, "[The ACS is so vital to every community](#) in the country for the planning of government services and economic development alike. No other data source provides such critical information for every community in our nation, every year.

*Unfortunately, America's essential data workhorse, the ACS, is at serious risk.* According to [reports from The Census Project](#), "ongoing challenges," including declining response rates and rising costs for nonresponse follow-up, "have compromised the utility and reliability of the data essential to social and economic planning for the country."

The ACS faces longstanding external threats by powerful political forces in Congress to either eliminate the ACS, to threaten data accuracy by making it a voluntary survey, or significantly reduce the number of questions to four questions. According to [Insights Association](#), rich demographic and socio-economic data on household characteristics, race and ethnicity would be eliminated, as well as data on country of birth, commuting patterns, Internet access, income and more.

*Why should Black communities care?* Here's why: The ACS is the most comprehensive, robust, and current source of information about America's changing population, housing, and economy. As Black Americans return to Southern states in high numbers since the great migration, and greater numbers of Black immigrant communities appear in long-existing and/or newly established migrant communities, policymakers, and elected leaders need current, reliable, and accurate data to inform decision-making around infrastructure, housing, social services and education for new residents.

Further, ACS data are used to enforce civil rights laws, including the Voting Rights Act, to protect people from housing and other forms of discrimination and ensure political representation. Federal spending programs, which distributed more than \$1.5 trillion to states and local areas, are based on whole or in part from the ACS. When communities do not respond to the ACS, they miss opportunities for elected officials, businesses, and service providers to "get it right" regarding resource and federal funding allocations, redistricting line drawing, and business investment.



Vastly declining response rates for the ACS within the Black community are a serious threat to the viability of the survey and the usefulness of its data. **An urgent need exists, therefore, for all facets of the Black community, foreign-born and those born in the U.S., to respond to the ACS when it arrives in your mailbox or when a Census enumerator knocks on the door.** *Your privacy is completely protected*—it is against the law for a Census employee to share your information with anyone and is punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

ACS participation is essential to the Democratic principles of the United States, as well as the health and economic well-being of Black communities.

Black Data Matters!

