American Community Survey: COVID-19 Impacts and an Overview of the Foreign-Born Population

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The American Community Survey (ACS)

- Surveys **3.5 million addresses** and informs over **$675 billion** of Federal government spending each year
- Covers 40+ topics, supports over 300 evidence-based Federal government uses
- Typically provides three key annual data releases:
  - 1-year Estimates (areas with populations of 65,000+)
  - 1-year Supplemental Estimates (areas with populations of 20,000+)
  - 5-year Estimates (all areas)
ACS Data Collection Process: Pre COVID-19

• The ACS is a continuous, multimode survey that uses a multiple mailing strategy

• Data collection for each monthly panel takes place over a three-month period
ACS Data Collection Modifications Due to COVID-19

**Mail**
- Suspended mail operations starting mid-March through June 2020
- Resumed limited mail operations in July 2020
- Restored our full 5-piece mail strategy in April 2021

**Internet**
The internet option was available only to a subset of our full sample due to reduced mailings during April—June 2020

**In-Person Interviewing**
In-person interviewing for housing units and group quarters was suspended mid-March—June 2020
Impact of Data Collection Challenges on ACS Data Quality

- Significant nonresponse bias
- The 2020 1-year estimates did not meet the Census Bureau’s data quality standards

**Decision:** Release experimental estimates.
Guidance for Data Users: 2020 1-Year ACS & Beyond

- The Census Bureau encourages data users to evaluate the data and determine whether they are suitable for their needs
- Experimental data should be used with caution because they may not meet all our quality standards
- Estimates for lower levels of geography, particularly, Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) should be used with caution because the experimental weights were not optimized to produce estimates for these areas

Moving forward:
- 2016-2020 5-year ACS release
- 2021 ACS Releases
Historical Perspective
Number and Percent Foreign-Born in the U.S.: 1850-2020

Source: U.S Census Bureau, Census of Population, 1850-2000; 2010 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates; 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
Place of Birth Among the Foreign-Born Population

• **13.5 percent** of the nation’s population was foreign-born.

• Approximately half of the foreign-born population was born in Latin America.

### Percent Foreign-Born by World region of Birth, 2016-2020 ACS

- **Latin America**: 50.0%
- **Asia**: 31.3%
- **Europe**: 10.8%
- **Africa**: 5.4%
- **Other Regions**: 2.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Percent Foreign-Born by County: 2016-2020
American Community Survey

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Thank you!

Questions?

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