

The U.S Census Bureau's housing data!

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Presentation highlights

- Basic concepts, what is an HU
 - How do we add/find Hus?
 - What's a GQ vs a HU
- What surveys we have and what they're good at
 - Why are there some differences between the surveys
- Bureau wide efforts

- Q/A- let's go in depth



Housing topics at the forefront

- Non-traditional housing (ADUs, transitory units, etc.)
 - Revisiting the GQ and HU definitions
 - Hidden housing, best source would be the Decennial Census
- Changing housing markets
 - Affordability/demand
 - Cost burden vs changing work patterns
 - Zoning changes, leading to changes in units in structure
- Household composition
 - Doubling up and non-family households



Background on living quarters

- Living quarters are:
 1. Housing units (HU)
 - Vast majority of living quarters are HUs
 2. Group Quarters (GQ)
 - Dorms, barracks, skilled nursing facilities
 - Usually, GQs are service based (not always though)
- There are edge cases
 - Some properties will have both a GQ present and HUs, while uncommon we do provide guidance to field staff on these cases.



Housing units, defined

- Most Census demographic surveys and the decennial Census use a similar definition:

“A housing unit may be a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms or a single room that is occupied (or, if vacant, intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall. “



So, what is a housing unit?

- A housing unit can be:
 - Single detached unit
 - Single attached unit (e.g., townhome)
 - Multiunit structure (ranges from duplexes to large complexes)
 - Mobile homes
 - Transitory units
 - Houseboats, vans, hotels, RVs and more



How do we collect new housing units?

- In the lead up to the Decennial Census two major operations work to create a complete inventory of the nations housing:
 - Address canvassing
 - LUCA (local update of Census addresses)
- Then the Census field work, where units can be added and removed
 - The post enumeration survey (PES) checks for over/under counts
 - No over/under count in 2020 for total HUS.
 - Undercount of vacant units (2.47%) and overcount of occupied units (0.33%)
- Between the Censuses our master address file (MAF) is updated with information from the post office, twice a year
 - And from ongoing survey work



This updated MAF then feeds into.....

- Annual Population and Housing estimates
 - Which are used as the basis for many demographic surveys control totals
- A viable national sampling frame
 - Most Census demographic surveys sample from the MAF



Ok, now back to housing data

- While the basic definitions and sample universe are similar across Census surveys, each has differences that can result in difference estimates for the same topic.
 - Weighting methodology
 - Interview methods (in person, paper, internet response)
 - Residence rules
 - Sample composition
- Decennial estimates can vary from surveys and caution should be used when comparing estimates across surveys and the Census
 - Vacancy is a good example, there are known differences between surveys and the Census



There are lots of different surveys, each fills a purpose

- American Community Survey (1 and 5 year)
 - Has small geographies, a variety of population and housing statistics
 - Structure type/units in structure, # of rooms/bedrooms and housing cost
- American Housing Survey
 - Longitudinal, lots and lots of content
 - Detailed mortgage data, housing quality (amenities) and home improvement
- Housing Vacancy Survey (a CPS supplement)
 - Released quarterly, a variety of geographies available
 - Most timely data on vacancy and homeownership



Surveys, continued

- Survey of construction
- Building permits survey
- Manufactured housing survey
- Survey of market absorption
- Rental housing finance survey



Census Data moving forward

- Leveraging third party data (tax assessor, HUD records and mortgage data)
 - Changing survey response rates
 - New products, blended estimates (see community resilience estimates)
- Privacy and disclosure avoidance
 - Ongoing, the 2020 Census will be the first major product released with new methods applied.
 - Housing units are invariant (i.e. not impacted by the privacy changes)



Any questions?

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