ELIMINATING AMERICA'S PLAYBOOK
Prepared by the Census Project

INTRODUCTION

Recently the U.S. House of Representatives voted to eliminate the Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey (ACS) as part of its FY 2013 budget process. Established in 2005 by a bipartisan vote in Congress, the ACS has replaced the so-called long form that was taken every 10 years as part of the decennial census process. Each year three million American households are asked 50+ questions on such issues as housing, education, and transportation (see http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about_the_survey/american_community_survey/) as part of this vital rolling survey which provides businesses, policymakers and local government with an annual snapshot of our country.

The ACS helps businesses identify customers and local businesses. That's why the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Retail Federation and the International Council of Shopping Centers oppose its elimination. ACS data is also used to allocate $450 billion each year in federal support to state and local governments for such activities as public health, public education, transportation and road construction. Additionally, community planners and researchers use the ACS data to plot America's progress.

In this report "Eliminating America's Playbook" the Census Project has compiled scores of case studies and comments on why the ACS is one of the most useful tools the nation has to measure how its communities are doing each year. These case studies and comments are organized nationally, and, in some states, by topic area. Contact information is included with each case study or comment.

NATIONAL CASE STUDIES/COMMENTS

Children's Issues

Children's Defense Fund
ACS Case Study
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A central part of the Children's Defense Fund's mission is to educate the nation about the needs of children, particularly poor and minority children. Without the American Community Survey (ACS) we would be unable to fulfill this goal. Although other data sources, such as the Current Population Survey, provide information about the nation's children as a whole, only the ACS provides statistically sound data about specific states and localities. We use ACS data to look at a wide range of trends, but two specific examples demonstrate how we have used ACS data to improve children's access to health insurance and provide another organization with the information it needs to fund its efforts to fight child poverty.

Currently over 4 million children who are eligible for low-cost health insurance through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are not enrolled. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), with a CHIPRA grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, are working to reduce this number through a project taking place in school districts in California, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi. By working with schools and districts to incorporate children's health outreach and enrollment activities into routine school operations, CDF and AASA are facilitating the identification of eligible children and connecting their families with people who can help them navigate the process of signing up for benefits. However, our efforts go beyond helping children, families, and schools in our target districts – we also want to be able to show how this model could be used more widely. To do so, we needed to have an estimate of how many eligible but not enrolled children lived in each school district. And to calculate these estimates, we turned to the ACS. Specifically, we drew on ACS data that told us:

- The percent of children in each district living in families with incomes that match the Medicaid and CHIP eligibility levels in each state;
- The percent of children in each district who lack health insurance;
- The percent of children living in each district who attend private schools, as these children would not be reached by our program; and
- The percent of children in each district who are not U.S. citizens, making them likely to be ineligible for Medicaid and CHIP.

As this program unfolds we'll continue to use the ACS to track the progress of our efforts in each district. In a world without the ACS, we wouldn't have a consistent, high-quality source of district-level data to use in evaluating our program, making it impossible for us to show if our model is an effective and low-cost means of ensuring that children who are eligible for public health insurance receive those benefits.

CDF also disseminates ACS data through its role as a Census Information Center (CIC). CICs are independent organizations that work with the U.S. Census Bureau to facilitate access to data that are of use to a specific community – in our case, anyone who advocates for the needs of children. Not only do we release reports that draw heavily on ACS data, such as our annual *State of America's Children* publication, we also respond to data requests from other organizations and the public. Recently we received a call from a service provider in Rochester, New York, that was interested in knowing the child poverty rate in that city for a grant application. Using the ACS, we were able to provide this organization with an analysis that clearly demonstrated an overwhelming income disparity between Rochester and its surrounding suburbs. Among metro areas Rochester ranks 77th in child poverty, with a rate of 21 percent, about average for the nation. However, among cities with populations of 100,000 or more, the city of Rochester (without its suburbs) ranks fifth, with a child poverty rate of 51.1 percent. Armed with these facts, this organization is now able to submit a grant proposal that clearly demonstrates a need for its program.

Without the ACS it would be all too easy for policymakers to overlook the needs of children, a population that is unable to vote or lobby for itself. With the ACS, the Children's Defense Fund and organizations like it have the data necessary to advocate for the policies and programs that best benefit our society's most vulnerable members.

Civil Rights

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For the 1990, 2000, and 2010 decennial censuses, AALDEF undertook major multilingual community education campaigns to promote Asian American participation. Our educational work continues for the American Community Survey. In 2006, AALDEF also testified in support of reauthorization of the language assistance provisions (Section 203) of the federal Voting Rights Act. Over the past decade, we have monitored elections for compliance with Section 203 and have conducted multilingual exit polls to identify emerging language minority groups.

The American Community Survey (ACS) replaced the decennial census long form. The ACS is distributed to a random sample of the population every month. If The ACS is an ongoing survey conducted throughout the decade. Data from the ACS, along with the decennial census, determine the availability of bilingual ballots, translated voting materials, and interpreters at poll sites under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

AALDEF supports ACS. ACS provides more timely data about American demographics. When Congress was considering the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, AALDEF supported the change to determine Section 203 coverage more frequently. Prior determinations were only made once every ten years with the decennial census. With the information obtained from ACS, determinations can be assessed more often.

Under Section 203, language assistance in voting must be provided in counties where the U.S. Census Bureau finds more than 5% or 10,000 people who are (1) over 18 years old; (2) citizens of the United States; (3) speak the same Asian language; (4) have limited English proficiency; and (5) have a higher illiteracy rate than the national illiteracy rate.

ACS asks respondents to identify their citizenship, level of English proficiency and educational attainment. These are used to determine Section 203 coverage. ACS also asks respondents about their native language. Once the language minority group is covered, the native language question determines what exact language the minority group speaks.

Because ACS is used to determine the enforcement of Section 203, ACS should be continued.

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Since 1990, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, a member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, has worked with community-based organizations to outreach to the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities about the importance of participating in the Census. In 2010, our outreach efforts involved over 70 organizations across the state of California.

APALC established this network of organizations because we all understand that it is essential for us to understand the needs in our communities. AA and NHPI communities are extremely diverse: for example, the educational attainment of Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans is lowest among Asian American ethnic groups and similar to those of Latinos and African Americans. Only 61% of Hmong Americans hold a high school diploma, while only 12% of Laotian Americans have graduated from college. In contrast, eight Asian American ethnic groups, including Taiwanese, Indonesian, and Japanese Americans, are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to hold a high school degree. These statistics also generally correspond with the poverty rates for these communities.

With this in mind, educators and policy makers can use information like this to design programs that are tailored to these communities to increase graduation rates, prepare students to attend college, and address cycles of poverty due to lack of educational attainment. Without disaggregated and comprehensive data from the American Community Survey, we would not have been able to conduct that analysis, and policy-makers and community leaders would not be able to fully understand the characteristics and needs of specific ethnic groups. The ACS provides us with the data needed to develop effective public policy.

Hmong National Development, Inc.
American Community Survey (ACS) Case Study
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Hmong National Development, Inc. (HND) is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower the Hmong community to achieve prosperity and equality through education, research, policy advocacy and leadership development. Founded in 1993, HND is the only national policy advocacy organization for the Hmong American community. The American Community Survey (ACS) is of vital importance to HND and to the Hmong community as a whole, and we vehemently oppose any efforts to eliminate the ACS or undermine its effectiveness by making it voluntary.

Elimination of the ACS would have a devastating impact on the over 260,000 Hmong living throughout the U.S.[1] Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities are vastly diverse, with each community having distinct backgrounds and needs. Despite this diversity, most studies lump all AAPI communities into one monolithic "Asian" category, which fails to paint an accurate picture of each community and its unique needs. The victims of the failure to disaggregate data by ethnicity are those communities such as the Hmong, whose experiences stand in stark contrast to other AAPI ethnic groups, but whose needs are subsumed by the "Model Minority" myth which continues to persist in present day. The ACS is one of the only tools which counters this phenomenon through disaggregation of data by ethnicity and down to the community level. Indeed, it is often the ONLY source of disaggregated data available. It was data from the ACS which revealed that the Hmong community often ranks lowest among all AAPI ethnic groups across the spectrum of educational attainment, income, employment, and has the most needs in terms of housing, health insurance, and language.[1] Data from the ACS showed that, in fact, Hmong Americans have the lowest per capita income of *any* racial or ethnic group nationwide (including Latinos and African Americans), with nearly one-third of Hmong American children living in poverty.[1] The impact of this data cannot be overstated. By providing this level of data on local communities, the ACS ensures that resources from the local, state, and federal levels are allocated to those who need it most.

The data also improves utilization of existing resources by communities such as the Hmong, who have historically had high rates of under-utilization due to linguistic and cultural barriers. Certain efforts by government agencies to provide linguistic and culturally appropriate services through bilingual staff hires and community-specific outreach have been successful. However, such efforts are implemented based on needs identified by community demographics, and many agencies will be unable to provide linguistic and culturally relevant services without data which supports the need for such services. Without the data provided by ACS, the unique needs of Hmong Americans will remain in the shadows, leaving them with little chance of lifting themselves up out of the cycle of poverty.

Moreover, the elimination of the ACS would seriously compromise the ability of nonprofit organizations such as HND and its local partners to adequately serve their communities. As a national organization based in Washington, D.C., HND relies on nation-wide data on local communities to identify areas of need for local partnerships and priority areas for policy advocacy. A major portion of HND's work involves capacity-building for nonprofit organizations which serve Hmong communities. Part of this capacity-building means assisting organizations with identifying needs within their communities to maximize the effectiveness of the services provided. Organizations must also develop funding proposals which are backed up by data on existing needs and gaps in service. Without ACS data, the ability of nonprofit organizations to effectively serve their communities will be severely compromised. Ultimately, individuals and families from marginalized, poverty-stricken communities are the ones who will suffer the most.

On behalf of the Hmong community and other marginalized communities throughout the U.S., we urge the Senate to oppose the House's proposed elimination of the ACS and protect funding for the U.S. Census Bureau in general.

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The mission of the Julian Samora Research Institute at Michigan State University is to generate, disseminate, and apply knowledge to serve the needs of Latino communities in the Midwest and across the nation. The American Community Survey (ACS) is our main source of data on estimates of social, economic, and demographic characteristics of the population we serve. ACS is very useful and unique because it provides data estimates between decennial censuses, which occur every ten years. We use ACS, in addition to data from decennial censuses, to identify population size and composition by age and sex, and by race/ethnic composition; foreign-born status and origin; education (enrollment and attainment); labor force participation, employment, and unemployment; income, sources of income, and poverty levels; occupation and industry for individuals and local labor markets; households, families and children; and housing characteristics. We also use ACS to understand the characteristics of neighborhoods and communities, local labor markets, and metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-metropolitan areas.   There is no substitute for ACS estimates data for JSRI's mission.   If ACS is discontinued as proposed in the House of Representative Appropriations Bill, JSRI would not have access to yearly estimates on key social and demographic indicators for Latinos and their local communities in the Midwestern states and across the nation, and our clients would not have access to useful reports that they use for planning and grant proposal development.

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
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The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is a coalition of more than 210 national organizations that exemplify the breadth of our nation's diversity.

For our members, the American Community Survey is not an end in and of itself, but a blueprint for future policies, allocations of funds and political representation. The ACS' greatest strength is that it gives detailed information about us as a people. This, in turn, can show where populations are growing and a new school or hospital may be needed. It can provide the impetus for government intervention in areas of high unemployment or influence local government to build a

new highway or expand a public bus system. It's also the basis for the distribution of trillions of dollars in public – and private – investment. Simply put, the loss of ACS data would be among the most significant civil rights issues facing the country.

That's because, for an ever-diversifying nation, the ACS provides the only accurate, reliable source of data that helps us understand who we are. For example:

- The Voting Rights Act relies on ACS data to determine which jurisdictions must offer multi-lingual ballots.
- The ACS collects information on place of birth, citizenship, year of entry, and language spoken at home in order to better serve the needs of immigrants and refugees.
- The ACS is our communities' major source of state and local data on poverty, household income, education level of the workforce, types of disabilities of local residents, and scores of other major topics.
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For all of these reasons, losing the ACS would have serious adverse consequences that could leave the nation in a precarious decision-making vacuum and hinder its economic recovery and future growth. And for The Leadership Conference and its 200-plus member organizations, losing this data would mean hurting every community and population we represent.

The civil rights movement of the 1960's was a fight to stand up and be counted at the voting booth and in the fullness of American life. And in today's data-driven society, we shouldn't need to fight again just to be counted by our census.

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The recent proposal by the House of Representatives to cut funds for the American Community Survey (ACS) administered by the U. S.

Census will eliminate a critical means for identifying health and social problems among America's most vulnerable citizens. The Seattle Indian Health Board's Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) supports the health and well-being of urban Indian communities through information, scientific inquiry, and technology. ACS is a key part of the information we use to understand the health status of over one million urban Indians residing in 19 states. Elimination of the ACS would result in the loss of a critical means for identifying health and social problems among America's most vulnerable citizens.

These data help us understand how many urban Indians are veterans, have health insurance, or use food stamps, to name a few examples. ACS is a uniquely valuable data source for our work since it provides multi-year estimates that allow us to aggregate American Indian / Alaska Native data across years to achieve more reliable estimates than one year alone can provide. We depend on this data to help track health and social factors that affect urban American Indians and Alaska Natives, a mostly invisible population with documented health disparities.

Urban Indians now constitute the largest segment of American indigenous people estimated at more than 70% of self-identifying Indians according to the 2010 census. Without good data, we have no way to show policy makers how investing in our work can save both money and lives. We hope that the Congress will continue to fund this vital information source for the nation.

Community Development

Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, Inc. (CEOC)
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The Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, Inc. –CEOC is Cambridge's designated anti-poverty community action agency founded in 1965. Our mission is to challenge poverty's causes and impacts. CEOC relies upon the American Community Survey (ACS) demographic data to report on the conditions facing fixed and low-income individuals and families.

CEOC also utilizes the data to advocate for funding and public policies that assist low-income individuals and families with the economic development. Without the ACS this valuable information would not be collected thus diminishing CEOC's ability to improve the economic condition of its participants.

Center for Housing Policy
The Importance of the American Community Survey for
Evidence-Based Policymaking
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The Center for Housing Policy uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) on topics such as housing costs, incomes, and employment to support evidence-based policy solutions that allow federal, state, and local governments to spend limited resources more wisely. The data make policy discussions more concrete by expanding knowledge of the struggles faced by working families, the parts of the nation that are more or less affordable to their residents, and the specific needs of special populations like our nation's veterans.

The ACS has an essential role in several Center for Housing Policy reports that help policymakers allocate scarce resources and evaluate strategies for their communities. Some specific reports and analyses that would not exist without the ACS include:

- Housing Landscape: Using ACS data on housing costs, employment and income, we document trends in housing costs and incomes for the nation as a whole, for each state, and for many metropolitan areas. In 2012, we found that 23.6 percent of working families (or 10.6 million households) are severely burdened by their housing costs – up from 21.8 percent (10.3 million households) in just two years. The ACS provides evidence to counter assumptions that housing is more affordable and demonstrates the need for policies that increase access to safe and affordable housing for working Americans.

- Housing for Veterans: America's veterans have sacrificed much in service to the nation, yet ACS data show that more than 1.5 million veterans pay more than half of their income on housing. Without the ACS, policymakers might know the story of veterans' homelessness, but would not know that affordable

housing policies should also be part of an overarching strategy for taking care of our returning heroes.

- State and Local Data Reports: The Center's Housing Research and Advisory Service uses data from the ACS to provide detailed reports about housing markets for states and local communities. Mayors' offices, government agencies, and local housing organizations use these reports to target federal funding resources wisely and make decisions about local policy needs. The ACS data are an important resource for understanding local housing markets, where communities have become unaffordable to working families, where development could thrive, how to combat vacant and abandoned properties, and a number of other issues.

Eliminating the ACS would impede our ability to know what the country needs, how the population is changing in between Censuses, and what policies and programs would be a good use of the nation's limited resources. When funds are tight, it is more important than ever to use them wisely. The ACS allows   governments, developers, and businesses to understand local conditions, develop smarter policies and programs, and reduce wasteful spending on approaches that are based on guesswork rather than facts.

Community Housing Network
Why the American Community Survey (ACS) is important to the Community Housing Network
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The ACS is first and foremost a necessary supplement to the decennial Census. Without the ACS the decennial Census would not be as important as it is. Whereas the decennial Census provides generalized population information, the ACS describes the social, economical, and environmental aspect of the population. Moreover, the decennial census, as the word suggests, is every 10 years. Between the 10-year periods no other information of that scale exists. It is at this point that the ACS steps in. It helps bridge the gap between this extended amount of time.

Without the ACS, Community Housing Network could not:

- **Identify current community needs.** We would not be able to allocate the limited amount of resources strategically to efficiently target those in need. Without the ACS, there would be misuse of resource, potential waste, and most importantly the lives of many individuals in need would be detrimentally affected as community development would not be as efficient. This would affect current livelihood of those in need, and slower growth in the future.
- **Assess the feasibility and viability of projects.** Housing developed would be at a greater risk of failure (e.g. high vacancy rate, overpriced or underpriced rental housing), as feasibility and viability projections would be reduced in accuracy. This does not detrimentally affect available funding (waste) solely, but it could also result in potentially less decent and safe housing created.
- **Identify future community needs.** Successful community and economic development depends on the ability to predict the future. At this point, the ACS helps identify past and future trends. It helps in the understanding of where a community has been and where it is heading (e.g. population growth, racial distribution, household income, educational attainment, employment, housing tenure, vacancies etc.). The ability to predict such trends cannot be emphasized enough. One example relates to the length it takes to develop not only housing, but any type of infrastructure. Therefore the ability to predict the future direction of a community helps take a proactive approach in the changes that will happen in a community, instead of a reactive approach.
- **Assist in creation of community wide consolidated plans, masters plans.** These documents, created by local and state governments, and in the case of consolidated plans required by the federal government if one is to receive federal funding, rely heavily on ACS datasets. They are typically used to assess how to strategically allocate the limited amounts of resources to most efficiently spur economic growth and assist the population. Without the ACS, accuracy of such resource allocation would greatly decline, and in turn detrimentally affect all outcomes of these documents.

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I am writing to voice our center's concerns about the recently proposed elimination of the American Community Survey (ACS) and efforts to make participation in the survey voluntary. The loss of the ACS or an ACS with greatly diminished quality and reliability due to dramatic reductions in response rates would have significant consequences for the work of our center, which helps inform policymakers, industry members and the research community about important housing and demographic issues.

The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University advances understanding of housing issues and informs policy. Through our research, education, and public outreach programs, our center helps leaders in government, business, and the civic sectors make decisions that effectively address the needs of cities and communities. Through graduate and executive courses, as well as fellowships and internship opportunities, the Joint Center also trains and inspires the next generation of housing leaders. We make extensive use of the annual American Community Survey in our research.

The importance of the ACS to understanding housing conditions and trends in the United States cannot be overstated. Indeed, the ACS is the only source of comprehensive and consistent information about the nation's household characteristics and housing conditions available annually and at the state, city and even neighborhood level. The timeliness, reliability and breadth of coverage in both subject matter and geography make the ACS vital to the work we do at the center to inform the public of important housing and household trends. In particular, the

ACS is a critical source to track the changing composition of the supply and demand for housing and housing cost burdens among the nation's households, as well as homeownership and vacancy rates at the state and local level. Additionally, the ACS provides critical input on the demographics of housing demand incorporated in future housing demand projections. Without the ACS, the ability to produce these estimates would be severely impaired, if not impossible.

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MDC is a nonprofit organization based in Durham, North Carolina committed to helping communities and regions develop and implement strategies that connect individuals and families to opportunity. We work in the interrelated fields of workforce development, education, and asset-building. As we work with these communities, we encourage, indeed insist, that any decisions that are made are driven by data. How many individuals live below the poverty line? How many individuals are getting high school degrees? Community college degrees? Are there different findings by race or ethnic group? Without the American Community Survey, we, and the communities we serve, will be forced to rely on severely out of date data, which can lead to the development of strategies that are ineffective. How, for instance, can a region decide on whether or not to increase its investment in post-secondary education without knowing the gap that currently exists in their community?

MDC also works extensively with community-based foundations to help them make better decisions on where to invest their money. With every foundation, we work to provide them with detailed data analysis based in large part on the American Community Survey. Without this data, these foundations are essentially operating in the dark— continuing to make reactive investments instead of making investments that can lead to true systemic change in a community.

We strongly encourage funding for the American Community Survey to continue.

National Low Income Housing Coalition
How the National Low Income Housing Coalition Uses the American Community Survey
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The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) is dedicated solely to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes. Our members include non-profit housing providers, homeless service providers, fair housing organizations, state and local housing coalitions, public housing agencies, private developers and property owners, housing researchers, local and state government agencies, faith-based organizations, residents of public and assisted housing and their organizations, and concerned citizens. NLIHC does not represent any sector of the housing industry. Rather, NLIHC works only on behalf of and with low income people who need safe, decent, and affordable housing, especially those with the most serious housing problems.

Understanding the scope and depth of the housing problems faced by Americans is critical to the work that we do and it is only through the data provided in the American Community Survey (ACS) that we can begin to truly understand these issues. We use the ACS to estimate the number of households paying over 30% or over 50% of their incomes towards housing costs. These households have unaffordable housing cost burdens and are often the families that fall behind on rent when they face an unexpected car repair bill or health emergency. They also face a higher risk of homelessness than families who are not cost burdened.

We also use the ACS data to estimate the number of units currently affordable and available to the lowest income households. Year after year we find that there is a massive shortage of units that are affordable and available to extremely low income households. By using the 5-year ACS data we can estimate the shortage of affordable units at the Congressional District level, allowing advocates to go to their member of Congress with a specific number of units needed to meet the demand for affordable housing in their District. We were recently able to update this information because of the release of the 5-year ACS data. Before the release of this dataset, the data we gave our

members was stale because we were relying on Census 2000 data. Without the ACS, we lose the ability to use the most recent data at the lowest levels of geography. The housing market has changed rapidly over the past decade and we must have data that reflects those changes in order to understand how Americans are being impacted.

A great number of our resources and tools rely on the ACS in one way or another. Our annual research report, *Out of Reach*, uses HUD's Fair Market Rents and Income Limits to compare typical rents across the country to typical incomes. Both of these datasets use the ACS as their base. Our Congressional District Profiles include data from the ACS on the number and percentage of renters with unaffordable housing cost burden and the shortage of affordable and available units to low income renters for each congressional district and state. Without the ACS, these advocacy tools would be missing critical pieces of information that advocates use to tell the stories of the housing issues in their communities to decision makers on Capitol Hill and in state and local legislative offices nationwide. The ACS allows us and our members to provide the hard numbers to back up the stories we hear of low income households struggling to pay rent and find a decent place to live, and without these data it would be nearly impossible to accurately convey the housing needs in this country.

National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP)
Use of the American Community Survey
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The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) is a collaborative effort of organizations in 36 cities and the Urban Institute with the mission of democratizing information. The primary purpose of these local organizations is to further the development and use of neighborhood-level information systems in policymaking and community building. These organizations also emphasize using information to build the capacities of institutions and residents in distressed urban neighborhoods.

NNIP Partners take on many institutional structures including non-profits, university-based centers, foundations, county agencies, metropolitan planning organization or a collaboration of several of the above. In their role as data intermediaries NNIP partners serve many

audiences including city and county agencies, local non-profits, community foundations, community development corporations, resident groups and associations, and school districts. While much of the data that NNIP Partners collect, process, transform into indicators, and provide analysis on, is from local administrative records, most NNIP Partners, make use of data provided in the American Community Survey (ACS) and the decennial censuses. As neighborhoods and cities are the geographies that NNIP Partners most often work with, the ACS was an critical addition to the Census program because it provides much more frequently updated data on socio-economic conditions, population, demographic and housing trends, at more detailed levels of geography than available for many public data sources.

Several partners use indicators created from the ACS such as the poverty rate or the share of people with college degrees, in neighborhood profiles that are available on the web for local organizations to access. These neighborhood profiles provide context for the community work that many social service organizations perform and can help highlight disparities at the neighborhood and regional level. For example our partner in Portland, Oregon at Portland State University's Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies works with the METRO council on a project called Greater Portland Pulse, which tracks the desired goals and outcomes for the region to foster more coordinated policy and action (see an example of how ACS data is used to support the goals of having a well-educated workforce and individuals in the region at http://portlandpulse.org/adult_education_levels). Many of the ACS indicators that the Greater Portland Pulse uses are not available in any other data set, particularly not one that is updated annually and has estimates at the census tract level.

NNIP's Washington, D.C., partner, NeighborhoodInfo DC, also uses the ACS to track and measure demographic, economic, educational, employment, housing, and other measures for individuals and households in Washington, D.C., and it's region. These data are used by local governments and nonprofits to determine needs for supports and services and evaluate progress toward achieving goals such as reducing poverty. The ACS also has helped NeighborhoodInfo DC expand into work in Prince George's County, Maryland, where local administrative data is not readily available to community organizations. NeighborhoodInfo DC staff were able to create a demographic brief using ACS data to provide a coalition of local housing counseling groups a bird's eye of the county, its residents and its needs.

The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center incorporates the ACS into many of their reports, such as their recent report on "Building an Inclusive, High–Skilled Workforce for New Orleans' Next Economy" (see http://www.gnocdc.org/Workforce/index.html), to demonstrate which population groups are higher skilled and where resources needed to help promote education skill development for a more diverse workforce.

Without the American Community Survey, many of the types of analyses NNIP partners produce and assist local organizations with would not be possible and certainly would not provide important context need to help revitalize distress urban communities.

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The first project (which has received a Revise and Resubmit from Journal of Marriage and Family) is titled, "Poverty at a Racial Cross Roads: Assessing Poverty Among Multiracial Children in Single-Mother Families." Here's the paper description:
Although multiracial youth represent a growing segment of children in all American families, we have little information on their well-being within single-mother households. This article examines multiracial children's level of poverty within single-mother families to identify the degree to which they may "stand out" from their monoracial peers. Using data from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (3 year estimates), we explore the level of racial disparities in child poverty between monoracial White children and several monoraical and multiracial sub-groups. Fully adjusted multivariate logistic regression analyses (N=359,588) reveal that nearly all groups are more likely to be poor than the reference, however White-Black children have somewhat lower probability of poverty than Blacks meanwhile partial Asian children have lower probability of poverty compared to Asians and Whites. Findings reveal that the depth of racial disparities in poverty varies to an extent by specifics of racial background.

Our second paper, titled, "Employment, Race and Single Mothers: Is Employment Equally Beneficial Across Race?" is in progress. Here's a description:

While The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) raised employment levels among single mothers (the group most likely to benefit from welfare) and decrease the number of families on welfare (US Department of Health and Human Services 2003; Lerman and Ratcliffe 2001), claims of success are offset by findings that many of the single mothers who leave welfare for paid employment have low wages and few benefits, often lacking health insurance, sick pay or vacation (Boushey and Gunderson; Corcoran et al. 2000; Hays 2003; London et al. 2004; Michalopoulos et al. 2003).

Despite the wealth of information about the effects of PWORA, critical gaps remain in researchers' understanding of how the benefits of work vary across race for women. Using data from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (3 year estimates), we explore whether employment reduces poverty rates across racial groups. Preliminary results suggest that the benefits of employment differ according to race and that white women receive the greatest benefits and greatest chance of leaving poverty through full-time employment.

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A rising tide of immigration and other social and demographic forces have transformed America's cities, towns, and rural areas over the past half-century. This group of projects investigates racial and ethnic diversity**,** segregation**,** inequality, and neighborhood change during the 1980 to 2010 period. **Project I** provides an overview of patterns and correlates of racial-ethnic diversity across American communities. Its focus is on diversity in functional geographic units larger than neighborhoods, such as metropolitan areas, cities, suburbs, and rural places. **Project II**, on segregation, complements this analysis by boring down to a lower level of geography—the neighborhood. Here we ask whether diversity within larger geographic units is translating into

more diverse residential settings. **Project III**, on <u>racial neighborhood inequality</u>, broadens the scope of residential outcomes by analyzing the extent to which groups live in neighborhoods that differ in their socioeconomic characteristics. Many would argue that such characteristics are at least as important as segregation itself, given that neighborhood resources substantially affect people's well being. Finally, **Project IV** examines the temporal and spatial dynamics associated with <u>neighborhood change</u>. The racial compositional trajectories followed by highly segregated (or integrated) neighborhoods and the factors responsible for those trajectories are of particular interest. These projects address the four objectives using data collected in the 1980 through 2010 decennial censuses and the 2006-2010 American Community Surveys (ACS).

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Research Advisory Services, a general practice research consulting firm, has been using detailed socio-economic data from the Census Bureau since the firm's founding in 1987. Most of our clients are public or nonprofit agencies engaged in providing human, social or cultural services. Much of our work also involves GIS (geographic information system) analysis, so we have needed data at detailed levels of geography such as Census Tract and Block Group.

Some examples of our work are:

- Analysis of social and economic needs and costs to deliver legal services to populations on Native American reservations, contrasted with non-reservation populations, for the Legal Services Corporation, Washington DC. The analysis involved about fifty Census population and housing data items, analyzed nationwide.

- Preparation of Community Assessments for Head Start and Early Head Start agencies. Full assessments have to be prepared on three-year cycles, with annual updates, which mean that fresh Census socio-economic data is needed at least every three years.

- Community needs assessments and analysis of system-wide service delivery resources for County-level administration of Community Action Programs. Projects include GIS analysis of service delivery areas and spreadsheet modeling of funding allocations based on several Census measures of economic distress.

- Expert testimony in a legal challenge to new proof-of-identity requirements for voter registration imposed by state government. Census data was used extensively to calculate an estimate of eligible-but-not-registered persons lacking particular forms of identification.

- Examination of the potential effects of Welfare Reform on fifty-seven local communities and fifteen counties in Arizona. Part of the study involved determining the numbers of persons who would no longer be eligible in various federal and state support categories, and the 'multiplier loss' to each community for each dollar reduction in transfer payments.

- Thematic mapping of Census income, poverty, age, housing condition, race, Hispanic Origin, employment status, educational attainment, housing value, housing tenure and rent costs, at the Census Tract or Block Group level, overlaid with legislative or congressional district boundaries, to illustrate to elected officials the geographically specific population and housing conditions in their districts.

- Implementation of a multiple-regression based retail location model. A retailer with 30 locations gave us detailed performance data at each site. Our GIS-based model 'harvested' forty Census data variables at the Block Group level from a one-mile radius around each site. After performing multiple regression tests to identify the best combination of Census variables associated with variation in site performance, we installed the multiple regression formula, the 'harvest' routine and the database of Census variables in the client's GIS. The retailer could then point the mouse at any intersection in the metropolitan area and get a 'probable' performance value for that location.

- We just today received the green light to prepare a statewide definitive report on poverty, which will include several poverty and poverty-characteristics tables by county, congressional

district and legislative district. This report was prepared after the Censuses of 1990 and 2000 but lost much of its impact in the second half of those decades. Now, with fresh ACS poverty data available every year, the client has asked us to prepare an updated poverty reference "data book" every three years. As the economy improves, it will be nice to have a running trend line of these measures.

The American Community Survey is an irreplaceable resource that enables the firm to keep its commitment to improve the quality of public decision-making.

Ribbon Demographics, LLC
The American Community Survey (ACS) and the
Housing Development Industry
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June 1, 2012

Data collected through the ACS is invaluable for assessing the condition of the existing housing stock and housing needs of the population in specific areas. Some areas need more lower cost housing, while others have demand for higher end homes; some need more homes for young starter families, others need homes more appropriate for those in their golden years. Without solid data to guide the industry, there would be considerable risk with any type of new residential project. Inappropriate development would result in vacant, abandoned properties scarring neighborhoods and countless dollars lost in terms of business and tax revenues.

The recent housing market crisis has already resulted in many of these situations and limited new construction is occurring currently. One of the most active segments of the industry at this time is affordable housing. Before describing how important the ACS data is for directing such development to the areas with the most need, it should be made abundantly clear that a significant portion of new **affordable housing is built for working families – teachers, nurses, police officers and a wide range of other people who work hard, but simply do not make enough to be able to afford market rents or prices** and still feed and clothe their families. Affordable and age-appropriate housing for seniors who have worked hard all their lives and now live

on fixed retirement incomes is another important component. Both types of development contribute to their neighborhoods, not only by providing decent housing but also by attracting and retaining numerous households and thus stimulating the local economy to a considerable extent.

Most affordable housing programs require detailed market analysis in order to gain funding from both public and private sources. Detailed demographic analysis is needed to make sure that these developments are built where they are most needed:

- Because they are income restricted, data on **household income** – a key component of the ACS not collected by the decennial census – is essential.
- Because the supply of decent existing housing must be quantified to understand the net demand, a wide range of **housing unit data**, as collected by the ACS, is essential. The presence or lack of flush toilets is actually very important information!
- Because the draw areas or market areas for housing developments are often highly constrained, the above data must be pulled for **small areas such as census tracts or block groups** – only available from the ACS.
- Because housing market conditions can change rapidly – as occurred after 2006 in most parts of the country – **data needs to be collected annually**, as with the ACS. Using data up to 10 years old is just not sound business practice.

Without ACS data, the affordable housing industry would be particularly impacted with no up-to-date tools for quantifying eligible households or finding the best locations to build such housing.

The American Community Survey and Private Demographic Data Providers.

Our company, Ribbon Demographics, uses customized ACS data to develop a special demographic database designed to quantify the need for all types of housing, with special emphasis on affordable housing. Without the ACS as a base, we would not be able to develop reliable data. Without a reliable product we would have to shut down – we don't believe in making up numbers or guessing. This would be the case for other providers of demographic data, so there would be significant job losses in this industry. Job losses would also likely occur among workers who analyze demographic data for all industries – not just housing.

Businesses that rely on ACS based data to make decisions about expansion and locations will be less certain about making investments without data to back them up. Eliminating the ACS could result in an economic contraction as businesses delay making such decisions or make the wrong ones.

A personal comment:

The US Census Bureau does not release any information that could lead to the identification of particular households. Those wishing to protect the privacy of individuals would better serve the general population by changing how credit bureaus, employers and others release or use highly sensitive and often inaccurate personal data that is often directly harmful to affected individuals.

The Urban Institute
Uses of the American Community Survey
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The Urban Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit research organization founded in 1968 to address the need for analysis of the problems facing America's cities and their residents. The Urban Institute builds knowledge about the nation's social and fiscal challenges, practicing open-minded, evidence-based research to diagnose problems and figure out which policies and programs work best, for whom, and how. Composed of ten different policy centers covering policy topics such as health, taxes, justice, housing, income and benefits, and human services, quality data sources are essential to the research and program evaluation work the Urban Institute performs for its government and foundation clients. Below are just a few examples of how researchers at the Urban Institute make use of the American Community Survey (ACS) and its importance in producing quality research on public policies.

Staff in the Urban Institute's Income and Benefits Policy Center have used ACS data to analyze how state safety-net choices affect poverty in three different states (Georgia, Illinois, and Massachusetts). They have also conducted two separate projects for two community organizations—one in Illinois and the other in Wisconsin—to assess the extent to which various policy options could reduce poverty. These researchers have had conversations with individuals in government

and community organizations in other states, suggesting that they would be interested in similar analyses for their states. Without the ACS, this kind of analysis would have to use data from the Current Population Survey, which has much smaller sample sizes and which therefore cannot support in-depth state-level analysis.

Research staff in the Institute's Statistical Methods group report that the ACS is the only source of small area estimates on social and demographic characteristics that they feel confident using to adjust estimates for the many state and local surveys that they work on. Given that people who are from the lower socioeconomic status (SES) are generally underrepresented in most studies that rely on survey data – the loss of the ACS would certainly make the estimates from many of these studies less reliable.

Another project at the Urban Institute called MetroTrends (see MetroTrends.org) is a report card and toolkit for researchers, students, journalists, elected officials and the public on the variations in conditions and trends across metropolitan areas. UI staff working on this project make frequent use of ACS data to complement their analyses of the strength and health of metropolitan economies in the recession and recovery.

The American Community Survey is an important source of data that can provide context to much of the evaluation work that the Urban Institute conducts. For example, researchers in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Center have used ACS indicators to provide demographic context to the analyses performed in their evaluation of the U.S. Department of Treasury's New Market Tax Credit Program. Other researchers in this Center are completing an assessment of the Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian housing needs, a study funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which is congressionally mandated. Several portions of the research plan depend on the ACS, including an analysis of the social and economic conditions for American Indians living in and out of Tribal Areas. Without the ACS, the research team would not be able to produce such an analysis.

Education and Training

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
The American Community Survey helps states and the federal government make targeted investments in education and training for low-income, low-skilled workers

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The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) develops and advocates for federal, state and local policies to strengthen families and create pathways to education and work. As part of our work, the American Community Survey (ACS) is an essential tool that helps us, policymakers and researchers make informed decisions about *where* and *how* to invest in American workers in order to ensure that the most vulnerable workers among us have access to continued education and training.

The ACS is the most reliable and up-to-date source of information the country has on specific socioeconomic indicators and characteristics of workers in the U.S., including the earnings and poverty status of workers by educational attainment levels, the geographic mobility of workers, and the proportion of workers with limited English skills. It also helps us better understand the composition of families and their socioeconomic status. The existence of these data allows us to conduct research that informs public policies to improve the lives of low-income workers and develop programs that help them increase their educational attainment and skill levels.

For example, using data from the ACS together with other publically available data sources, we have been able to calculate the return on investment (in the form of increased per capita income, state and local taxes, Medicaid savings, and corrections savings) to states of increasing their postsecondary credential attainment rates. This popular tool, the *Return on Investment to Increasing Postsecondary Credential Attainment in the United States Dashboard*, is being used by states across the country to build awareness and strengthen the political will to adopt and reform policies to help more adults and youth access and complete postsecondary education and earn credentials.

In addition, our research and advocacy efforts to build pathways to postsecondary credentials for low-income, low-skilled workers are consistently driven by the use of ACS data on educational attainment and earnings. Through analysis of ACS data, we can tell that poverty, low wages, and limited English proficiency loom largest among those with low educational attainment. In 2010, 24.7% of adults aged 25 and over without a high school diploma lived in poverty, versus only 12% of those with a high school degree or equivalent and 3.8% of

those with a Bachelor's degree or higher. Similarly, earnings for lower-skilled workers are nearly half those of workers with higher-levels of educational attainment.

Knowing *where* these trends are strongest, in *which* states, counties, and congressional districts these workers reside, and the *depth* of poverty is provided only by having access to this hyper-local data and allows us to advocate for targeted investments that will be an efficient use of taxpayer dollars at the state and federal level. In fact, federal programs for which we advocate often use these data to distribute funds efficiently. A concrete example of this can be found in the distribution of funds for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Investment Act), the primary source of federal funding for adults with low basic skills seeking further education or English language services. These funds are distributed to states based on a formula that takes into account the number of adults 16 and over without a high school diploma, using data from the American Community Survey. Having these ACS data enable the Department of Education to efficiently distribute funds to where these services are most needed.

The ACS is a vital tool for policy makers and advocates to better understand the diverse needs of low-income workers and their families, and to effectively target resources. Elimination of this data source would drastically hinder our ability to provide this analysis and information to state and federal policymakers that rely on solid research to design effective education and training policies.

General

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The American Community Survey (ACS) is among the most important social and economic data used in policy design, analysis, and economics research. It is, furthermore, a data set on which many others are based to be representative of the American population. We do not think it is an exaggeration to state that the ACS is fundamental to our national statistical infrastructure.

The ACS is the successor to the decennial census long-form, first collected in 1940 and preceded by a census that has revealed aspects of our economy and society ever since 1790. The ACS differs in some ways from the long-form of the decennial census but contains the same economic, demographic, household, and geographic information on a wide range of variables including employment, earnings, geographic mobility, race, gender, age, ethnicity, education and household composition. The ACS is collected annually and is tailored to provide reliable information on local areas and communities.

If we did not have the ACS and the long-form of the census we would know far less about a wide range of economic and social issues on which key policies have been based. The ACS is used by businesses as well as researchers to understand the market for a wide range of products, how demographics affect consumer preferences, and the impact of international trade on the economy. Without the ACS, we would have scant information with which to assess policies that have differential impacts across geographic areas, such as enterprise and empowerment zones, Head Start, federal education aid, environmental regulation, military spending, and welfare reform. We would know far less about racial and ethnic segregation and occupational segregation by gender and race. Almost everything we know about poverty, inequality, and unemployment at the local level would vanish. Knowledge of how immigrants assimilate in the labor market is due to these data. Knowledge of the effect on adults of interventions when they were children depends on data such as the ACS, as do the effects of educational policies. Without the ACS we would not know much about the labor market and social consequences of globalization, including the expansion of trade with China. The ACS is also used to assess public health interventions and the long-run impacts of Medicare and Medicaid.

There is no question that the ACS is essential to our understanding of a host of policy issues. It is also the case that it has been used in a large number of influential studies during the past decade.[1] Its value in the future can only increase with the growing ability to link ACS data at the detailed geographic area level to on-line data sources.

The key features of the ACS that make it indispensible and fundamental are its large size, frequency, and representativeness of the United States population. The ACS is an input into the design of virtually all other major population-based data sets, such as the Current Population Survey (CPS), the Survey of Income and Program Participation, the Panel Study on Income Dynamics, and the National

Longitudinal Survey. The CPS, which provides the unemployment figures each month as well as a host of other economic data on poverty, the labor force, work hours, employment, and earnings, updates its population weights every year based on the ACS and the decennial census. If the government were forced to rely solely on data collected during the decennial census, we would lose critical and timely insight into how state and local economies adjust to shocks that are regional, as in the case of the shale gas development boom, and national, as in the case of the financial crisis of 2008 and its aftermath.

Many of the most popular websites such as Google, Bing, and Wolfram Alpha, on which many Americans including most scholars depend, are ultimately based on the data collected by the Census Bureau, such as the ACS. Most mapping software products used by newspapers rely on the ACS for geographically small-area estimates. A host of private businesses rely on the ACS directly and indirectly.

Without the American Community Survey economists would lose one of their most valuable data sets. Statistical agencies and institutions would not be able to produce accurate population-based surveys. The American public would lose an ability to have precise data on which to base economic and social policies. Something of great value would be lost today and something of immense importance to our national heritage and history would be forgone. The census informs us of our past and helps us map our future. Generations of Americans will not have that capability without the ACS.

World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR)
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The survey researchers and social scientists who belong to the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) heavily depend on the American Community Survey (ACS) and other key data-collections of the US Bureau of the Census. First, the ACS and decennial Census are absolutely essential for drawing nationally-representative, scientifically-sound samples of the US population. While the decennial Census provides a good basis for a sample frame around the time it is collected, it quickly becomes outdated and one must utilize more current data. The best current source and the only one suitable for covering local areas across the nation is the ACS. Second, the ACS serves as the gold standard for checking the representativeness of

other surveys in general. The ACS is routinely used to weight results from other surveys and thereby make them more accurate. Without the ACS almost all survey data would become less reliable. Third, demographers in WAPOR rely almost exclusively on the ACS to study trends in the size, structure, composition, and distribution of the American population. The decennial Census is conducted too far apart to provide up-to-date information on trends and developments and also covers too limited a set of variables to fully examine the basic structure of American society. Fourth, one often wants to study areas smaller than the nation as a whole. The large sample size of the ACS not only makes its national figures more accurate, but makes it the only general source for generating scientifically-creditable statistics on local areas. Finally, WAPOR members find the ACS crucial for both advancing basic research and applied research. It allows social scientists to closely examine the dynamics of American society in general and to track crucial societal trends in particular. It also allows government officials, public policy analysts, and those in the private sector to better understand the needs of citizens and consumers and thus it both improves government services and strengthens the economy.

Health Research

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Census data is critical to my research. I use Census data to research and understand cancer disparities associated with low income and other measures of socioeconomic status. For decades, the rates of many cancers have been higher in lower income or disadvantaged populations. The reasons for this are not understood, and seem to persist even after adjustment for known risk factors. My research involves surveys of communities in lower and higher income geographic areas to understand these cancer disparities. Spatial and economic data from the American Community Survey are critical to this effort. By seeking to understand the role of social, environmental and lifestyle factors that may differ between different Census areas, our goals are to identify those factors that contribute to increased

disease burden in disadvantaged geographic areas, and to use this information to make public recommendations for education and prevention that can reduce these disparities.

Immigration Policy

Immigration Policy Center
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The Immigration Policy Center (IPC) relies heavily upon data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to fulfill its core mission of providing policymakers, the media, and the general public with accurate information about the role of immigrants and immigration policy in U.S. society. Without the ACS we wouldn't understand the linguistic and cultural diversity of the 40 million immigrants in the United States who now comprise 12.9% of the total population. And, without that knowledge, federal, state, and local governments, as well as nonprofit organizations, would not be able to determine what kinds of programs are needed where in order to serve what specific populations.

For instance, it is the ACS which tells us that nearly half (46%) of immigrants in North Carolina have arrived in the United States since 2000, compared to less than a third (31%) of immigrants in New York. It is the ACS which informs us that roughly half of people in Spanish-speaking households in both North Carolina and in New York speak English less than "very well." This kind of basic knowledge is crucial for policymakers tasked with deciding what immigrant populations in what areas are most in need of English-language and other newcomer-integration programs.

Similarly, the ACS tells us much about the fast-growing Latino and Asian communities in the United States. For example, most Latinos were born in this country, although more than one-third are immigrants. Latinos as a whole (both foreign-born and native-born) are sizeable shares of the population and electorate in New Mexico, California, and Texas, but the fastest growing Latino populations are in South Carolina, Alabama, and Tennessee. The demographic profile of Asians is much different. Two-thirds of all Asians are immigrants. Asians as a whole (both foreign-born and native-born) are sizeable shares of the population and electorate in Hawaii and California, but

their numbers are growing most rapidly in Nevada and Arizona. Demographic information like this is essential not only to policy planning, but to understanding who we are as a nation.

The ACS is a window into the U.S. population. It provides the demographic and socioeconomic information that policymakers at all levels of government need to make sound judgments when it comes to the allocation of funds and creation of programs. Eliminating or cutting back the ACS would needlessly leave policymakers in the dark.

Literacy

National Coalition for Literacy
Using American Community Survey Data to Raise Awareness of Educational Disparities among Adults and Non-English Speakers
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The National Coalition for Literacy is a 32 member organization dedicated to advancing adult education, family literacy, and English language acquisition in the U.S. by increasing public awareness for the need to increase funding and programs; promoting effective public policy; and serving as an authoritative resource on national adult education issues. The American Community Survey is a vital instrument for us to achieve our organization's goals and allow the federal government and states to make smart educational investments.

These data and the American Community Survey are vital instruments for broadening awareness of the problems related to low educational attainment and poor adult literacy and designing solutions to help workers and their families access education and improve their economic mobility. Elimination of this data source would not make it more difficult to achieve our goals—it would make it impossible. The American Community Survey (ACS) represents the single-most reliable source of information our nation has on how many individuals living in the U.S. do not have a high school diploma. Furthermore, it breaks this information down by state and local areas, including counties, congressional districts, zip codes, and census tracts. Without these

tools, we would have absolutely no idea how many American workers and individuals did not have educational credentials, including high school diplomas, college degrees, and graduate or professional degrees.

In addition, without ACS, we would not be able to correlate, on a large scale, these educational attainment levels with any other socioeconomic characteristics, such as earnings, employment, household type, and others. These data assist policymakers, researchers, and advocates in designing policies and solutions that improve the lives of adults without a high school diploma or secondary school credential because they can tell us both where to invest (geographically) and what types of family and economic barriers must be overcome for these individuals to succeed.

For example, because we have access to ACS data, we know that:
- Poverty hits those with low educational attainment and their families the hardest. In 2010, 24.7% of adults aged 25 and over without a high school diploma lived in poverty, versus only 12% of those with a high school degree or equivalent and 3.8 percent of those with a Bachelor's degree or higher. Southern states are far more likely to be poor and have low educational attainment than Western or Northeastern states.
- Earnings for workers with at least some college are nearly twice the earnings for adult workers without a high school diploma or degree.
- Workers without a high school diploma or secondary school credential are much more likely to speak a language other than English than workers with at least some college.
- Economic and geographic mobility—the ability of workers to increase their wages or move from their locality—is far less likely for workers in states that have poor educational attainment rates and lower wages.

In addition, knowing *where* and *how* to target resources improves the efficient and effective use of state, local, and federal funding dedicated for this purpose. A concrete example of this can be found in the distribution of funds for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Investment Act), the primary source of federal funding for adults with low basic skills seeking further education or English language services. These funds are distributed to states based on a formula that takes into account the number of adults

16 and over without a high school diploma, using data from the American Community Survey. Having these ACS data enable the Department of Education to efficiently distribute funds to needy populations based on a scientific analysis of where these services are most needed.

Member organizations of NCL report that ACS is invaluable to state and local funders as well as to a wide range of researchers. Several of our member organizations report routinely delivering assistance to state and local program practitioners in the use of ACS (particularly county and zip code level information) for program improvement efforts, grant applications, and community awareness/education purposes. In this way, ACS can have a significant direct effect on local adult education program effectiveness and efficiency – both in numbers of adults supported and increased positive outcomes (GED attainment, jobs gained or kept, higher earnings, college entrance and success, etc.)

Elimination of the American Community Survey would obliterate our nation's ability to make smart investments and create policies that helped all workers and families increase their educational attainment. We strongly support its continued funding.

Sustainable Transportation

League of American Bicyclists
Don't let Congress Stop the Census Bureau from Counting Bike Commuters
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One of the most common laments of the bicycling policy community is the lack of consistent, reliable data on bicycle travel. The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is the only comprehensive, national survey that captures bike commuting data at the local level.

ACS data in action

If Congress eliminates the ACS, it's not just bike commuting data that would be lost. It's a whole range of economic, household, and community information. ACS data are used by all sorts of decision-makers. Federal, state, and local governments make critical decisions about how to distribute resources based on ACS data. Academics and researchers at think tanks use ACS data to track trends.

However, the ACS is a critical source of transportation data. ACS commuting data are used by planners and engineers to mitigate traffic congestion by gauging peak travel demand. The ACS allows public and private investors to measure the success (or failure) of their transportation infrastructure investments. Transit planners use it to determine unmet transportation needs. And – most important of all! – the ACS tracks bicycle commuters (among the other modes).

The ACS is undeniably one of the most important national data sources for bicycling. (The intermittent National Household Travel Survey, NHTS, is another important one.) The ACS is annual, giving us the ability to track change over time. The ACS is the source of our commuter statistics and a cornerstone of the Alliance for Biking & Walking's biennial Benchmarking Report.

Without the ACS, it would become harder to show the results of your community's bicycling investments, especially in comparison to other cities, since the standardized methodology makes comparisons more reliable. And we wouldn't know that bicycle commuting increased 40 percent nationally since 2000 and 77 percent in Bicycle Friendly Communities.

Womens and Family Issues

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
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On behalf of the nearly 100,000 bipartisan members and donors of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I am pleased to share AAUW's input on the importance of the American Community Survey (ACS) data. AAUW fears that recent moves by the House of Representatives to strip the Census Bureau of ACS funding will

endanger the federal government's ability to gather and disseminate important information used not only by the government, but by organizations such as AAUW.

One of AAUW's central priorities is promoting pay equity and closing the wage gap between men and women in the workforce. AAUW's member-adopted Public Policy Principles affirm our opposition to "all forms of discrimination" and commitment to "an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities."[i] To further this goal, AAUW has published several original research reports into the wage gap, analyzing the national gap as well as the gap in all fifty states and Washington DC. The ACS is critical to this analysis.

AAUW uses the ACS data to calculate the wage gap at the state level, as the ACS includes more households in its reports that the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). According to ACS data, in 2010 the pay gap was smallest in Washington, D.C., where women earned 91 percent of what men earned, and largest in Wyoming, where women earned 64 percent of what men earned.[ii] This larger sample size, and the random nature of the ACS, allows AAUW to capture a better and more robust statistical portrait of the wage gap at the state level. Without the ACS data, AAUW researchers would not be able to dig as deeply into the state level wage gap, and we would not know how wide these gaps still are.

ACS data is also valuable because it is timelier than other surveys. Before the introduction of the ACS, wage gap information was difficult to ascertain with certainty, as the Census was conducted only every ten years, but salaries did not remain constant within that timeframe. A survey taken only once per decade misses a lot of economic fluctuation, particularly changes in the rates of inflation, cost-of-living, and the wage gap. Policies adopted in response to decade-old data do little to solve the problems they are meant to address.

Not only is ACS data useful for analysis, it's also necessary for activism. It's not enough to *tell* people that there's still a gender wage gap – you have to *show* them the data. The ACS data enables AAUW, and other organizations, to engage our members and allies with facts, not just rhetoric.

The ACS is the *only source* of objective, consistent, and comprehensive information about the nation's social, economic, and demographic characteristics down to the neighborhood level. The importance of high-quality, objective, and universal ACS data for

public and private sector decision-makers cannot be overstated. AAUW strongly believes the ACS, and the valuable data it provides, should be protected.

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The National Partnership for Women & Families relies on data from the American Community Survey (ACS) for our analyses of economic and health policies. The ACS provides critical demographic data on the state, county and municipal levels that is not available from any other public source. Our ability to engage in policy analysis would be significantly impeded if the Census Bureau were no longer able to collect and provide these data to the public.

Our Work-Family team regularly uses ACS data to investigate demographic trends and to analyze the need that workers and their families have for policies that help workers manage the dual demands of work and family. The Work-Family team uses the ACS data to:
- Analyze demographic and economic characteristics of the workforce and families at the state level, which provides necessary context for examining state-level policies. For example, ACS data allow us to paint a current and accurate picture of the labor force and caregiver populations in all 50 states, which provided the context for our *Family Friendly America* project (see www.nationalpartnership.org/ffa).
- Easily compare demographic, economic and labor figures across states and between the state and federal levels, which is necessary to determine the most appropriate policy solutions.
- Analyze sub-populations on the federal, state and local levels, which is essential in examining the different ways policies might impact different populations. ACS provides data disaggregated by characteristics such as gender, age, race and ethnicity, etc., in an accessible format.
- Provide customized technical assistance to state- and local-level partners. Our work with these partners to craft appropriate

policy proposals for their geographic area would be severely diminished if we could not provide and analyze local-level data using ACS.

- Analyze business and employment patterns and practices, taking into account various factors including age, race/ethnicity and gender.
- Paint a timely picture of the current situation and assess trends over time.

Our Workplace Fairness team also relies on ACS data to analyze the wage gap between men and women (see www.nationalpartnership.org/fairpay). Specifically, the ACS data enable us to:

- Explore pay gaps by providing information on median wages by gender for full-time, year-round workers. As a result, we are aware of disparities over time, and can propose policy solutions.
- Disaggregate factors that underlie the wage gap to better understand how the industries in which workers are employed, workers' education level, workers' region of residence and other factors contribute to the size of the wage gap.
- Analyze how the wage gap impacts sub-groups such as Latinas and African-American women; and compare outcomes among these groups.
- Review the impact of the wage gap for different geographic units of measurement.
- Understand how the wage gap may impact families of different sizes and structures.

Not only does the National Partnership rely on ACS data, but we depend on Department of Labor staff who are trained on the ACS to help guide us through research projects and better understand how to access and analyze the information collected by the Census Bureau. Their help has been invaluable and has played an important role in ensuring that our reports are accurate and provide the best available information to the public.

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The American Community Survey (ACS) has been vital to the research, education, and advocacy work that the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) has done in the last several years on a wide variety of issues. The ACS data have enabled NWLC to produce state-level analyses showing the impact of various federal and state policies on different demographic groups in each state. These analyses have helped educate the public and policy makers, supported state partners' efforts to identify and advance policies important to women and families in their state, drawn local media attention to issues affecting women and vulnerable populations, and drawn national media attention to state issues. These analyses have prompted and informed public discussion on a variety of issues by providing tailored information that is relevant to their communities.

Recent NWLC publications that have used ACS data include state-level analyses of:

- **Poverty and women's economic security**: These annual analyses (http://www.nwlc.org/state-state-poverty-data-2010-census) provide state data on poverty, insurance status, and income for women of different racial and ethnic groups, ages, and family types – information not easily accessible for many advocates, policy makers and the public.

- **The wage gap:** These analyses of the gender wage gap (http://www.nwlc.org/resource/wage-gap-state-state-2012-fact-sheets) compare women's earnings with men's for different racial and ethnic groups, occupations, and education levels. They have been cited extensively in the media.

- **Minimum wage:** Several recent analyses of state minimum wage legislation (http://www.nwlc.org/our-issues/poverty-%2526-income-support/minimum-wage) rely on ACS data to make the case that women and their families in each state are struggling economically and that increasing the minimum wage would help to reduce these difficulties. These analyses have been used by state partners in media, advocacy and education work. NWLC also analyzed ACS data for a recent report on women workers in tipped professions written in conjunction with

the Restaurant Opportunities Center and other several other women's organizations.

- **State tax proposals**: NWLC has analyzed the potential beneficiaries, by gender and income, of several state proposals to introduce or expand state tax credits for child care expenses.

- **Federal tax plans:** These analyses of tax proposals (http://www.nwlc.org/resource/impact-mcconnell-tax-plan-working-families-and-single-mothers-states) utilize ACS data, in conjunction with data from other sources, to examine the impact of these plans on different groups of women in each state.

Future NWLC publications that will use ACS data include:
- **Educational attainment and barriers to educational success:** This analysis will be used in a report on the educational attainment of different groups of women, the economic situation of high school dropouts, and barriers that African American girls face in education.

- **State-level analyses of retirement security:** These analyses will examine retirement security for elderly men and women as well as current workers who are preparing to retire.

Without the ACS data these types of analyses would not be possible. Eliminating the ACS would also severely limit data available at the city-, county- or congressional district-level, data NWLC has analyzed for special requests or presentations on various occasions. This would be harmful not only to NWLC as an organization, by limiting the information we can provide on the impact of various policies on women across the country, but also to the public discourse in general, by limiting very useful and pertinent information.

STATE CASE STUDIES/COMMENTS

Arizona

Community Development

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To the Census Bureau and to US Legislators:
ACS data is critically important in assisting state and local governments prepare population estimates for their areas between census years. These estimates are used to share revenue, are used as input for planners and transportation modelers and to simply understand how an area is growing (or not). Further, since the long form of the Census was eliminated, is the ACS is the only remaining source of data for local socio-economic characteristics.

California

Community Development

Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)
Case Study: LAANE Construction Careers Project
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The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) has been advocating for working families in Los Angeles since 1993 by helping pass policies that create good jobs, thriving communities and a healthier environment. LAANE's comprehensive approach to passing successful policies combines advocacy, research, communications and community organizing. In order to successfully advocate for policies that will have long lasting effects on working families, and that can be replicated across the country, government data, such as the American Community Survey (ACS), is an incredibly valuable tool in understanding the socio-economic conditions in the communities that we work in.

The Construction Careers Project, one of seven projects at LAANE, has been advocating since 2006 for policies that increase standards in the construction industry and provide career opportunities to individuals living in communities hardest hit by the recession. Two key components of the Construction Careers approach are Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) and Targeted Hire Programs. PLAs are collective bargaining agreements between construction trade unions and developers or government agencies that set wages, benefits, work hours for workers on a project. PLAs, typically used in large-scale, multi-year project allow for training initiatives to be incorporated for individuals entering the construction industry. The targeted hire program requires that a contractor work with the various constructions trades to set aside a certain percentage of work hours for individuals living in high unemployment areas adjacent to the project and those with barriers to employment such as chronic unemployment, homelessness, or history with the criminal justice system. To date, Construction Careers Policies have been approved at the Port of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works and most recently, at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). In all the policies approved, contractors were required to set aside at least 30% of all work hours for individuals living in areas with significantly high unemployment.

Prior to the passage of the Metro Construction Careers Policy in January 2012, such a policy was not applicable to projects that received funds from the US Department of Transportation, as the agency has a prohibition on geographic hiring preferences. It was clear that we needed a national standard by which to assess poverty across the US if the FTA was to approve the targeted hire language.   In an effort to comply with federal guidelines and still advance the Metro and LAANE's efforts of reducing poverty and unemployment in communities hardest hit by the recession, the agency worked closely with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to ensure that major transportation projects such as the Crenshaw Line, Regional Connector and the Westside Subway Extension, representing several billion dollars of investment, are successfully completed. The Construction Careers Policy approved by the Metro board of directors and subsequently by the FTA applied a PLA with 40% of all work hours reserved for targeted workers, or individuals living in economically disadvantaged areas for projects over $2.5 million. Of that 40 percent, 10 percent of all work hours are to be reserved for disadvantaged individuals, those meeting three of the nine criteria defined in the policy. Within the first five years, over $6 billion in investment would

be subject to the policy covering 17 projects, generating approximately 23,000 construction jobs.

This joint effort between LAANE, Metro, the construction trade unions and the FTA would not have been possible without the availability of income data through the ACS. For projects using FTA funding, the targeted hiring goals are national in scope, therefore a national definition was applied. In this case, nationally targeted workers mean an individual whose primary place of residence is within an extremely economically disadvantaged area, a zip code whose median income is determined to be under $32,000, or an economically disadvantaged area, zip code whose median income is determine to be under $40,000. Metro is the first transit agency in the country to approve an agency-wide PLA and targeted hire program, specifically one with a national scope.

Colorado

Civil Rights

CLLARO (Colorado Latino Leadership Advocacy & Research Organization)
Olivia Mendoza
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The Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization is the premier leadership development, public policy and research center dedicated to strengthening Colorado's Latino community. CLLARO is a statewide organization that leads a collaborative effort to move the state of Colorado toward a future that we have envisioned for so long: equality in civic representation, educational achievement, economic opportunity, and social integration. We operate with a policy platform in these nine areas: criminal justice, economic development, education, energy and environment, health, immigration, LGBTQ, media and voting rights. We accomplish our mission through these five programs:

    1.) Civic leadership training
    2.) Public policy education and advocacy
    3.) Civic engagement

4.) Research

5.) Center for partnerships.

As an organization dedicated to improving the lives of Latinos in Colorado, we care deeply about utilizing accurate and timely data that informs our work. In order to successfully execute our mission and our work we depend heavily on Census data, including the American Community Survey. In 2010 we depended on the Census data to provide reliable, nonpartisan snapshot of the State of Colorado. That data was analyzed and extrapolated in order to help us understand the changes in our community, over the past ten years.

However, that ten year census data is very high-level information; the value of the ACS is it provides us a more detailed understanding of the changing demographics of Colorado in between the ten year census count. This is important, because a key component of our work is to educate our Latino community on public policy issues and how those issues impact us. We use the information gathered through ACS in order to more strategically define our focus areas. For example our policy forums and town halls on housing opportunities are coordinated with areas that may have seen a large community that is struggling with foreclosures etc. Our education discussions are informed by the changing data regarding degree attainments and potential increase or decreases in disparity information. Data and information allow us to be disciplined with the limited resources that are available to us. The information from the ACS is indispensible to our work.

The truth of the matter is that good, impartial data informs sound public policy and public education. The absence of the ACS would negatively impact our work beyond words. We would be blind for ten years to the changing demographics of our community, thus the changing needs in our community. Below are examples of three policy questions that could potentially be impacted if this data was not available:

1.) Where are the youth are in our state and what are their living conditions? i.e. health insurance coverage, education attainment, housing situations, transportation realities
2.) Are we seeing shifts in the population centers of our community? If so, what may be the factors that are impacting this, economic opportunities, transportation, education etc.
3.) Our Latinos seeing improvements in their lives over the next 3-5 years? Data graphs of communities reporting on unemployment, rental rates, school enrollment.

This information is not simply analyzed with no purpose in mind. This data is about working to provide sound public policy recommendations to our elected officials and community leaders along with policy education to our communities that are experiencing these realities. There is a critical need for demographic data during the ten years in between census. Colorado is changing rapidly and we cannot rely on data that is updated only every ten years. Most importantly, the amount of data collected during those ten years is so critical to understand our community as we work with the community on economic, educational, and many other issues.

Other – Hunger Efforts

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The American Community Survey (ACS) is crucial to Hunger Free Colorado's mission to end hunger in Colorado. Hunger Free Colorado (HFC) is the state's leading anti-hunger organization dedicated to ensuring that all Coloradans have sustainable access to nutritious, affordable food. We leverage the power of system change, policy change and social change to educate, advocate and mobilize Coloradans to take an active stance against hunger in our community and to ensure that no Coloradan goes hungry. To immediately reduce hunger in our community, we identify, investigate and expose unnecessary gaps and barriers that prevent food access to Coloradans at risk of hunger. We educate elected officials and their constituents to implement policy change that ensures that Coloradans have access to nutritious, affordable food. Current program focuses include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the federal child nutrition programs.

Hunger Free Colorado's work is significantly guided by the ACS. The ACS is one of HFC's primary sources for state and local level data on poverty. It provides our organization with a comprehensive, accurate and up-to- date understanding of the changing demographic, social

and economic characteristics of low income populations and communities in Colorado. The results of this survey, coupled with data on food insecurity in Colorado, inform the implementation of our programs and drive our policy priorities and advocacy. For instance, the data and information derived from the ACS:

- allows us to target our SNAP and child nutrition program outreach to those most in need of nutrition assistance
- allows us to implement effective, culturally appropriate strategies to combat food insecurity and increase federal nutrition program participation in minority, low income communities that have high rates of food insecurity
- assists us in educating legislators on the prevalence of poverty and food insecurity in their districts, thereby highlighting the need for more streamlined, efficient access to federal nutrition programs and other resources/services to prevent hunger
- drives our policy agenda and priorities to combat food insecurity, streamline federal nutrition programs and improve state service delivery
- assists us in evaluating, measuring and improving the success of our programmatic, community outreach and policy work
-

The negative impact on HFC's mission of eliminating, underfunding or undermining the ACS cannot be overstated. Without the annual, state and local level data on poverty provided by the ACS, HFC would not have an accurate and comprehensive picture of poverty and food insecurity in Colorado. Therefore, HFC would not be able to as effectively: (1) target those most in need of nutrition assistance, (2) identify barriers to food access, (3) advocate for needed policy changes, and, ultimately (4) reduce and eliminate hunger and food insecurity in Colorado.

For all of these reasons, Hunger Free Colorado strongly urges Congress to protect, support and fully fund the American Community Survey.

<div align="center">**Connecticut**</div>

Children's Issues

Connecticut Voices for Children
Keep Funding the American Community Survey
Orlando J. Rodriguez, M.A.
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Connecticut Voices for Children is a small non-profit based in New Haven, CT, that focuses on government policies that affect the daily lives of children, and their families, throughout the state. The organization's staff numbers fifteen, including Sr. researchers, Jr. researchers, a communications director, an executive director, and support staff. The organization's annual operating budget is not much to brag about.

However, this small, but dedicated group of individuals is highly regarded in Connecticut as the go-to source for unbiased, data driven information on the state's **health policies, early childhood education, juvenile justice, taxes, K-12 education, child welfare,** and **family economic concerns**. They have earned this reputation by basing much of their analyses on unbiased data from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Without a single objective source of socioeconomic data, as provided by ACS, it would be impossible to discuss the consequences of government actions - either good or bad. There would not be a common set of facts that all can agree is not tainted by partisan biases in how information is collected or reported.

Those who argue that the ACS is an intrusion on personal liberty ignore that ACS data empowers individual Americans to make informed petitions to their elected officials and government institutions. Furthermore, Connecticut state government needs an objective source of data on population, income, and poverty to determine how best to distribute over $2 billion in state funds to municipalities every year.

ACS needs more funding to increase the number of surveys conducted and thereby reduce the large margins of error associated with small population areas. ACS needs more support – not less.

District of Columbia

Children's Issues

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ACS Case Study: Why We Need the ACS
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The American Community Survey is a window into crucial information about our community that we cannot get anywhere else. At DC Action for Children, the KIDS COUNT grantee for the District of Columbia, we use American Community Survey (ACS) data on a regular basis, to answer questions from policy makers and community members and to conduct in-depth analysis about child and family well-being in D.C. In February 2012, we produced a series of "Ward Snapshots" to highlight child and family well-being in each of D.C.'s eight wards. The snapshots used ACS and Census data to examine changes in well-being from 2000 to 2010, as well as differences among the eight wards. We used ACS five-year estimates to provide reliable information about child poverty, unemployment, median family income, single parent families, home ownership and education level, among other indicators.

Since the publication of the ward snapshots in February, we have sent them to local policy makers and direct service providers. We have shared ward-level data at community meetings and highlighted shifts in child poverty. We often hear that poverty is only "across the river" in D.C., or in two specific wards. Using the ward snapshots, we are able to discuss how child poverty exists in all wards of the city. While overall child poverty has decreased in D.C., half of the District's wards have actually seen increases in child poverty. Understanding what is happening for our city's children and families is crucial, and the ACS data allow us to look below the city level, into smaller geographies, helping us to produce a more nuanced, informative picture.

Using ACS data, we were also able to show that median income for families with children has increased 12% from 2000 to the 2006-10 ACS estimates, which corroborates numerous recent news articles about the growing prosperity of D.C. However, when we looked at ward-level data, we saw (and shared with others) a much more varied landscape, where income has risen in some areas but decreased in others. We later used ACS data to examine neighborhoods within those wards and saw even greater variation.

The information included in our Ward snapshots informs our community. We have heard that staff members of the local school system regularly reference these ward-level data. A staff member of a

local pre-K provider told us "I always carry around your ward snapshots." We shared snapshots at a community meeting in Ward 4 and heard that "people need to know about this information and what's happening in their communities."
A council of home-visiting programs is using these data to apply for a federal grant to increase the number of families who benefit from home visitation programs.

The ACS supplies the data that allow us to create products like these ward snapshots, but more importantly, to understand more about the needs of our community. If we did not have the ACS we would not have a clear picture of the changes in our city or the sometimes vast differences in need and opportunity among the many neighborhoods. We would not be able to share this information with citizens, council members making our local laws and other organizations serving children and families. The ACS is essential for all of these stakeholders as a reliable data source that is the starting point for community awareness and policy change.

Hawaii

Community Development

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
What ACS data means to Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities and what the loss of the data would mean for our communities
Won Kim Cook
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The ACS is arguably the single best data source for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the United States population. Compared to the limited range of data the decennial census covers, the ACS provides far more comprehensive annual estimates of the detailed demographic, social and economic characteristics of individuals and families, as well as housing characteristics, for all states, cities, counties, and metropolitan areas. For smaller areas, multi-year average estimates covering 3-5 years are generated. No other data source surpasses or is equal to the ACS in the breadth of socioeconomic data on the U.S. population it provides.

ACS data are particularly valuable to understand the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of small subpopulations. The ACS collects large

samples, consisting of about 3 million people since 2005, representative of the U.S. population. ACS large samples carry sufficient statistical power that allows stable estimates for even small populations, often unavailable from other national surveys. This is of tremendous consequences for our constituents in Asian American (AA), Native Hawaiian (NH), and Pacific Islander (PI) communities. While growing fast, both AAs and NHPIs still constitute small fractions of the U.S. population—4.8% and 0.2%, respectively, as a single race, and 5.6% and 0.4%, respectively, when combined with other races. Most national surveys do not have sufficiently large samples, particularly for NHPIs, and even when aggregated do not allow estimates that can be generalized to the entire AA or NHPI population. Furthermore, both AAs and NHPIs include culturally and socioeconomically diverse ethnic groups. It is critical to understand the socioeconomic profiles of each ethnic group, and the ACS is the only national survey that provides reliable national data for defining and documenting a diverse range of AA and NHPI issues by ethnic-specific populations and geographic regions.

Another advantage of the ACS is it is supported by a language assistance program designed to assist sample households with limited English proficiency in completing the interview in a wide variety of languages. ACS is among the few federal surveys with such a program. ACS interviewer language capabilities include several Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Tagalog, and Urdu. The significance of administering the survey in-language is enormous because English-only surveys entail an important barrier for persons with limited English proficiency in participating in the surveys and, as a result, are likely to capture only the fraction of the eligible individuals from Asian ethnic groups proficient in English. While language barriers may be an issue for various subpopulations, it is often a serious issue for Asians as the proportion of Asians who speak languages other than English in their home is high—higher than for all other racial/ethnic groups but Latinos. In fact, ACS data shows that 9 million people in the U.S. speak an Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander language at home. Recent research has also found that those who respond to surveys in English are significantly different from those who do so in Asian languages in a number of important aspects. English respondents are more likely to have professional occupations and higher incomes than the Asian language respondents. Findings from an English-only survey may thus lead to a vastly skewed sample of Asian Americans toward those with higher socioeconomic status and grossly underestimate the socioeconomic disparities affecting all Asian

Americans through the omission of those with limited English proficiency.

Between the large enough sample size for small populations and the language assistance covering the widest range of Asian languages among the national surveys, ACS is the only survey that can generate truly representative samples of AAs and NHPIs in the aggregate and by granular ethnicity. With the loss of the ACS, we would not be able to accurately estimate socioeconomic characteristics about our communities or measure the basis of health and well-being of the U.S. population.

In a nutshell, ACS is invaluable and irreplaceable. We strongly commend and support your effort to sustain the funding for this important survey.

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I am John Knox, an independent socio-economic research consultant in Hawaiʻi, working for both private-sector and public-sector clients . Almost every project I do has utilized data from the American Community Survey and/or the Economic Census. In the last few years, these have included:

·   Economic development: Socio-economic impact study for two new commercial projects in Waikīkī (profiles of changing residential and consumer groups).

·   Evaluation report to federal government (NSF) on success of University of Hawaiʻi science research programs in recruiting student or other personnel from under-represented minority groups in Hawaiʻi (use of ACS for overall population percentages of Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, and others as comparison base).

·   Housing needs analysis and economic development activity on the Hawaiian islands of Molokaʻi and Lānaʻi, for County community plan update.

·   Entitlement study for mixed housing-commercial development on

the Island of Hawaiʻi (social analysis of effective housing outcomes for various ethnic groups).

Not to have solid and fairly up-to-date data on the income, housing, and social characteristics would greatly hobble good decision-making by both private-sector investors and public-sector policy makers. For local governments or private industrial associations to attempt to gather similar information would be far more costly – and would likely generate less public cooperation, leading to much less reliable information – than the current national system.

Idaho

Community Development

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The proposed significant decrease in funding for the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) would have deleterious effects on Community Action Partnership Association of Idaho (CAPAI), as well as CAPAI's member organizations; we depend on these information-gathering organizations for credible, accurate statistics and other information. Data from the U.S. Census and ACS has proven invaluable to us in the following ways:

- · CAPAI relies on Census and ACS data to provide timely information to local legislators, our Congressional delegation, and community partners on the number of low-income households in Idaho.
- · CAPAI utilizes county-level poverty data to determine how much funding will be allocated to member organizations providing CSBG, DOE, LIHEAP, and TEFAP services.
- · CAPAI depends upon county-level poverty data to allocate LIHEAP applications to member organizations providing this service.
- · CAPAI uses Census and ACS poverty data to demonstrate need for utility support of the Low-Income Weatherization program.

- CAPAI uses ACS data during non-Census years to ensure that data is as accurate and timely as possible.
- Member organizations utilize county-level poverty data to provide information to their Boards of Directors, community partners, and local stakeholders.

The loss of U.S. Census and ACS data would severely hinder CAPAI and its member organizations in our efforts to demonstrate the need for anti-poverty programs within Idaho, educate decision makers on the increasing numbers of low-income Idahoans, allocate resources based on need, or provide reliable, timely data to community partners or local stakeholders.

Illinois

Community Development

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Formed in 1981, the Chicago Jobs Council (CJC) works to influence public policy and programs that help disadvantaged Chicagoans move out of poverty and into the workforce. CJC accomplishes this by partnering with more than a hundred community-based organizations, businesses, civic groups, and individuals.

An important part of advocating is sharing information with partners and policymakers. Stories are important, but numbers and hard data are also essential. All organizations have stories about client needs, but research is important to supplement these stories with figures that show community-level needs. Research that provides these figures must continue to be conducted and made available to all stakeholders.

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a resource that provides a very strong core set of demographic, economic, social, and housing information. The continued funding and existence of this resource is

very important to CJC, as staff often find the most recent, reliable, and geographic-specific data for a number of indicators on the ACS (e.g. poverty rates, educational attainment rates).

Stories about individuals and the barriers they face can be a common strategy in engaging stakeholders. However, as funders and policymakers are inundated and grow weary with individual examples, stories can start to lose their impact. To combat this issue, CJC has developed resources that encourage and help direct service organizations use ACS and other data to 1) improve their service programs and 2) inform foundations and government agencies of the need that exists in their communities.

Data allows organizations to connect individual stories to the broader issues facing disadvantaged job seekers. For example, while an individual story may highlight one unemployed individual's experience living in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, data from the ACS shows how 34 percent of Englewood citizens are unemployed and 96 percent are African-American. Meanwhile, in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood only six percent of the population is unemployed and 86 percent are white.

Keeping data, and the issues it raises, front and center for leaders is the role of CJC and our partners. One significant way CJC organizes and distributes data from the ACS is through the Workforce Information and Resource Exchange (WIRE), an online portal to timely data and information for workforce development and closely-related fields. Without the ACS, the following WIRE information would be at risk of being lost:

- A poverty page listing updated poverty rates in Illinois, Chicago, and Chicago neighborhoods.
- Employment and unemployment rates for smaller geographic areas.

In addition to the WIRE, CJC utilizes data for various other initiatives. Data from the ACS has been used to inform community planning projects for municipalities in the Chicago metropolitan region. Local planning projects, facilitated by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, address issues of economic, workforce, and community development. Also, through Illinois Works for the Future, a statewide campaign led by CJC, ACS data is used to make the case for the integration of workforce and economic development.

If the ACS loses its funding and is no longer conducted on annual basis, a vital piece of the data and information that CJC, its partners, and its member organizations rely upon will be lost. This will have a negative impact on the entire workforce development system, as everyone will be required to spend more time and resources seeking elusive sources for quality data.

Michigan

Community Development

Southeast Michigan Census Council (SEMCC)
What the ACS Means to Us
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The Southeast Michigan Census Council is a non-profit (501(c)3) organization whose mission is to help its members, and by reference, the entire community, gain access to and use census and related statistics. Members include county governments, local governments, state agencies, libraries, non-profit organizations, and consultants. What these entities have in common is that they are intermediaries, both users of census data and providers of data to other end users. The Council itself also serves this function, as a coordinating agency of the Michigan State Data Center.

The ACS, as the replacement for the census long form, is the fuel that runs the planning and economic development function for the public, non-profit, and private sectors. Following are some examples from SEMCC members:

David Allen, Chief Market Analyst, Michigan State Housing Development Authority: I am currently using the five-year small area estimates to analyze urban transects in the state. Previously, I have used the PUMS data from the ACS to assess the demand for affordable housing in the state. Most of the market analyses that I review for affordable housing projects use the ACS in one way or another, since they are now being used by most third-party data vendors (I believe)

in their estimates of current demographic conditions and projections of future trends. Without these data, there would be no way to estimate how much of a market exists for a particular project. This would lead to public funds (millions of dollars per year) being allocated to projects with no idea of how well they might do market-wise. Added together with the allocations of other states and funding agencies, this change involves a sum of money much greater than the cost of the ACS.

Jim McGuire, Area Agency on Aging, Region 1-B: The Older Americans Act requires that funding for services to older adults be allocated by a formula that targets the most needy populations, including low income older adults. We need ACS senior low income data for our formula to assure that programs for providing home delivered meals are allocated to the communities that have the greatest levels of need, which corresponds directly to the communities with the highest numbers and concentrations of low income seniors. The OAA requires that the best data available be used in these formulas.

Eric Bombery, Washtenaw Area Transportation Services: We use ACS data of Journey to Work and Transportation Use information. Since the Census long form is gone the only place we can get those data is from the ACS. The data we receive from the ACS are used in transportation planning and funding here at WATS.

Larry Rosen, Public Policy Associates: One of PPA's most important current use for data from the ACS is to prepare customized profiles for use in community health needs assessments for not- for-profit hospitals. Current federal law requires not-for-profit hospitals to conduct Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) every three years. Each CHNA must be accompanied by a strategy that identifies the community's greatest health needs and a plan by which the hospital outlines how it plans to address these needs in during the three year period. This is an important tool for keeping community hospitals--many of which are not-for-profit--sensitive to the greatest needs in the communities they serve. This tool, which must be identified in the IRS Form 990 submitted by each not-for-profit hospital each year, could not be prepared appropriately without the data made available through the ACS. In order to be effective, each hospital needs to be able to identify the population it serves--including their racial and ethnic characteristics, their household composition, their economic status, housing conditions, and myriad other factors of the populations they serve that are now only available through the ACS.

Jane Zehnder-Merrill, Michigan League for Human Services: The state's capacity to track trends in child poverty would be severely compromised by the elimination of the American Community Survey (ACS). Michigan's Kids Count project uses the ACS to track trends in child poverty--the extent, the depth, differences by race/ethnicity, living arrangements and various levels--for the state since 2000, and the counties since 2005. Tracking child poverty at the county level would also be affected since the child poverty measure from the Small Area Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), which changed to include the ACS in 2005, is the only one that can be used across all Michigan counties. Several other key ACS indicators of interest to the policy makers at the local and state levels include the percent of children living in single parent families and families where no parent has a full-time year-round job. The ACS is just now beginning to provide such data with a five-year pool of data for the many rural counties and small communities throughout the state. Program providers will be severely hampered in their efforts to document the needs and outcomes that policy makers and funders require to demonstrate the impact of program efforts. In its advocacy to improve the economic security of the state's residents, the League also uses the ACS to monitor trends in the vital signs of the body politic such as overall poverty, aggregate shares of income by quintile, median household income by race/ethnicity, and health insurance coverage by public/private source race/ethnicity, and income. These data are shared with decision makers at the state and local levels so that they can invest public funds to improve the well-being of the state's residents.

And finally, Patricia Becker, APB Associates and SEMCC Executive Director: I use the ACS to estimate Head Start enrollment potential for areas in the City of Detroit, and in comparable cities testimony in labor arbitration. A document describing these two applications will be part of the "case study" book prepared for the ACS Workshop being held at the National Academy of Sciences on June 14-15. I also use it frequently just to answer questions or to help SEMCC members work through American FactFinder to get the data they seek.

A world without demographic and socio-economic data would be a poor world, indeed, stumbling through important levels of planning and decision-making without good information.

Minnesota

Community Development

The Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP)
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The Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) plays a role as a source of knowledge and connections to create affordable homes in our state. Our work include policy, research and advocacy work to support the creating and preservation of affordable housing, as well as technical assistance to organizations and communities that already have or need to plan for affordable housing.

The American Community Survey is used by MHP in many facets of our work. For our research work, the ACS provides invaluable background information for in-depth reports on important public policy issues, such as the role of manufactured housing (mobile homes) in providing an affordable housing alternative.

We are also able to use the ACS to educate local leaders, policymakers, and the media with timely information. With the ACS, we have been able to demonstrate in a compelling manner that housing affordability in Minnesota became an increasingly severe problem between 2000 and 2010. From the ACS, we came to understand that since 2000, Minnesota has had the fastest rate of increase in severely cost burdened households of any state in the nation. We also know that 1 in 8 Minnesota households now pays more than half their income for housing. And that the ranks of our state's renters are growing quickly, even as rents are becoming increasingly unaffordable. Data like this enable us to make a compelling case to policymakers that housing is an issue we must pay attention to.

The detailed geographic data of the ACS has been a very useful resource for the local communities, policymakers, organizations, and governments that we work with. Using the ACS, we have been able to craft housing "County Profiles" and "Legislative District Profiles" for all of Minnesota. Our partners tell us repeatedly how much they use this information to understand housing in their area, how their area compares to other parts of the state, and how useful it is to have important information compiled in a format that is accessible and attractive.

In community planning work, too, the ACS has been of use. The ACS has enabled us to assist the small town of Hibbing, Minnesota in estimating how many households in a given target neighborhood have an income below $40,000 annually. Without this resource, Hibbing

would be in the dark about what kinds of housing programs to plan for.

The loss of the ACS would mean that we would find ourselves in the data dark ages. We would be at a severe disadvantage in knowing which policies to advocate for. Communities we work with would either have to undertake expensive surveys themselves, or would have to base decisions on Decennial Census data, which can be 10 years old at the end of a decade. We have seen how dramatically the housing market has changed in the last 10 years, which underscores the importance of annual data.

The Minnesota Housing Partnership strongly supports continued, ample funding for the American Community Survey, an American treasure trove of essential information.

Nebraska

Children's Issues

Voices for Children in Nebraska
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To paraphrase an oft quoted saying, you can't know where you're going unless you know where you've been. To our mind, one of the most reliable ways of knowing where we've been is tracking changes in data over time. The American Community Survey (ACS), provided by the Census Bureau, has long been a reliable source of information on a variety of data. The ACS provides an annual look at things like income and family composition at the state and local level.

At Voices for Children in Nebraska, we were dismayed to hear that Congress was considering eliminating the ACs.   We rely on the data contained in the survey to help us assess how children in the state are doing and how things have changed over time. Because the data is national, it is also a useful source of comparison for looking at how Nebraska is faring relative to other states.

 In 2013, Voices for Children in Nebraska will publish the 20th edition of our annual *Kids Count in Nebraska* report. The annual *Kids Count*

report is just one of the places where you are likely to find data from the American Community Survey. This report is used by policymakers, grant writers, community organizations and funders to assess what issues need more attention as well as where improvements have been made. Time and again, we hear our legislators ask for data to inform their decision-making. The ACS is a prime source of the data they seek.

Throughout the year, our organization also uses ACS data in issue briefs, fact sheets, and legislative testimony as a measure of how kids are faring in a variety of different measures.

The loss or erosion of the ACS as a data source would truly be a step backwards. Reliable, accurate, comparable data is not easy to come by. Further, the sudden loss of ACS data would mean the loss of ability to track trends over time.

In the context of larger fiscal issues, it might seem as though cutting the American Community Survey would be reasonable, but it is truly a wealth of information about our communities and there would be a significant void in its absence. Without having reliable data on health insurance status, household income and other issues, policymakers will be left without objective sources of information about their communities.

As an organization, we can't afford to lose our ability to assess child well-being based on indicators contained in the ACS, but more importantly, we don't want to lose our ability as a state and as a nation to make decisions based on accurate data.

Although data alone isn't enough to shape decisions, having to rely only on organizations that have varying agendas or media reports to track information currently contained in the ACS would be unfortunate. Because the ACS exists, we have a reliable source of information about our states and communities. We hope that Congress will consider the value of having reliable information about our nation when making decisions about the future of the ACS.

New York

Children's Issues

New York State Council on Children and Families
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The Council on Children and Families is a state level entity that uses ACS data on a regular basis. Information is used to compile research briefs on specific topics and used to support local planners. Recently, Council staff combined ACS and administrative data to identify high-need communities across the state, which were then given priority ranking for service delivery. This has also been done in the past to make decisions about funding allocations. The data are used regularly at the county level for a range of community assessments and the loss of this data source would be extremely detrimental to our day-to-day work.   Thank you for pulling together the information.

North Dakota

Children's Issues

North Dakota State University and North Dakota KIDS COUNT
Case Studies Involving ACS Data
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Approximately 20,000 children living in North Dakota are impoverished. Approximately 15,000 seniors living in North Dakota are spending 30 percent or more of their household income on housing costs. This information comes from the American Community Survey (ACS), a Census Bureau poll sent to 3 million U.S. households each year. The knowledge obtained from this survey helps target federal, state, and local government spending on those who need it most.

Because so much important planning occurs at the community level (schools, transportation systems, housing), having annual data is vital for individuals in smaller rural and urban communities to make data-driven decisions. Here at North Dakota State University (NDSU), we use the ACS data extensively to assist community and state leaders, nonprofits, and educators make the necessary decisions to move North Dakota forward.

Value of ACS
We are currently processing housing-specific ACS data by population characteristics to model housing demand throughout the entire state

of North Dakota, at the county, city, and reservation levels of geography. These data will provide state leaders at the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency the necessary information to assess current and future housing needs by location by householder type. This information is especially critical in western North Dakota, where energy-development activity is creating a critical shortage of housing.

In alignment with 2010 Health Care Reform, nonprofit hospitals are tasked with conducting community health needs assessments to ensure they are accountable to the communities they serve. In our collaboration efforts with local health care providers, we are using ACS data to provide a socio-economic profile of residents within communities served by each hospital within a five-state area – with perspective across age, race, and ethnic categories. The intent is to update these profiles as successive ACS data become available. The participating members of the collaborative will use these data to examine social determinants of health and establish priorities for future collaboration.

Through our North Dakota KIDS COUNT efforts, ACS data are used in our annual assessment of child well-being in the state. They are used to track changes in household income for families with children, whether children are living with grandparents, poverty rates for children by age, teen idleness, and working mothers. These data are essential in our efforts to inform local and state discussions about securing better futures for all North Dakota children.

We also use ACS data to provide private foundations and nonprofit organizations the information they need for strategic planning. The ability to examine individual communities by age, income, gender, race, and ethnicity and to look at trends over time is an essential component to how they determine priorities and funding decisions for community programs.

Consequences of the Loss of ACS
Having access to annual, comparable, and reliable data at all levels of geography is vital to community leaders and planners. The ACS is necessary to monitor changes in demographics, social characteristics, and economic indicators. Eliminating on-going data collection of these types of data will have a detrimental impact on funding allotments and policy development.

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<u>Pennsylvania</u>

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Community Development

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ACS Case Study for the City of Pittsburgh
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The American Community Survey data is of critical importance for the City of Pittsburgh. Central to PLANPGH (Pittsburgh's current comprehensive planning effort) is a project called PGHSNAP. PGHSNAP serves as the data foundation for the plan, and is an easily accessible data resource for citizens to access and use however they choose. Providing this resource would not be possible without the use of ACS data—the baseline U.S. Census data, while highly valuable, does not have the same level of diversity of data types that the ACS offers. Like most cities, Pittsburgh relies heavily on data for decision making—without the detailed data we receive from ACS, we would not be able to plan for our future.

Without access to ACS data, Pittsburgh's comprehensive plan would not be possible—to properly predict what our population and demographic changes will be over the course of the plan (through 2035), we need to understand today's trends. We fully expect that in 2015 when the ACS is due to provide additional block-group level data, we will be able to further refine our projections. If that data is not available, our plan will certainly be negatively impacted, and land use projections will not be reliable. The comprehensive plan will be used to set future policy, ordinances, and budgets—without proper data to justify such decisions, we would be left in a situation where the plan is no more useful than if we did not have one at all.

Beyond the very important task of comprehensive planning, the ACS data we utilize in compiling PGHSNAP is critical to its usefulness to Pittsburgh. Citizens have open and free access to PGHSNAP, which is a diverse data resource that incorporates Census/ACS data sets (along with data from other sources) and aggregates them to familiar neighborhood geographies. Some of the most commonly utilized data sources within PGHSNAP are those which the ACS provides. Income levels, transportation/employment data, education levels, and many

more critical data sets would no longer be available for citizens. Planning professionals and citizens alike are doing more with this data than simply indulging their own curiosities about their neighborhoods' demographics—they're using this data to complete grant applications, to find a neighborhood in which to live, to make positive changes in their neighborhoods using data rather than simply intuition.

A key part of PGHSNAP is a module called "Action Planning"—it relies heavily on ACS data in order to function. Action Planning aggregates and computes ACS data in a way that can be mapped into geographic strategy areas—strategy areas that determine the scale of developmental and social interventions that would be successful. Without the specific data sets provided by ACS, this analysis would not be possible. We are using these strategies in PLANPGH to inform policy recommendations, and we also use these strategies to make decisions on funding for specific projects and organizations.

Real people will be negatively impacted with the elimination of ACS—real money is also at stake. This is not an experiment that some elected officials should take lightly—in today's data-driven world, we should embrace the responsible use of the wealth of data we have access to. We should make every effort to maintain these critical data sources—every neighborhood in the City of Pittsburgh will be negatively impacted by the elimination of the ACS. Pittsburgh is a city that is experiencing a major renaissance, and as we make data-driven decisions today, we must have some assurance that we will have reliable data in the future in order to continue the great progress we are making here.

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I am very concerned that ACS will be discontinued and will leave us with an impossible situation in large part because of the inadequacy of the 2010 Census. No information on household income was collected in 2010, a very critical limitation.

My firm prepares market studies for real estate development projects.

We presently are working on a market study for a neighborhood in Philadelphia called Mantua, which is located in West Philadelphia just above University City (University of Pennsylvania, Drexel). Our work involves researching the market for affordable, market-rate, and mixed-income housing and making recommendations to address redevelopment in the neighborhood. As part of our work, we look at the number of households by income band and age cohort so that we understand the demand for for-sale and rental housing and are able to make recommendations about targeting by household size and income level. Data in the ACS is the most recent income data collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Without it, we would have to rely on the 2000 Census, and the income data are obsolete for any purpose, especially in a neighborhood that is undergoing revitalization and redevelopment. At the present time, the ACS data are a critical tool in supporting market research efforts by cities trying to stimulate private investment that can revitalize neighborhoods.

Rhode Island

Community Development

HousingWorks RI
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HousingWorks RI seeks to improve long-term affordable rental and home ownership opportunities in Rhode Island, especially for the state's workforce. We conduct research and data analysis of long-term affordable housing—particularly how it relates to Rhode Island's economy– and communicate this research to policymakers.

When researching for a publication, we use a number of different data sources, but rely heavily on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. It allows us to look at housing cost burdens for our residents and also key data points related to our housing stock.

For example, earlier this year, we produced a four page Issue Brief on rental housing in Rhode Island. We know that rents in Rhode Island are higher than many residents can afford, but ACS data revealed that a staggering one in four renters in the state are spending 50 percent or more of their income on housing. The ACS also showed that Rhode Island has the highest percentage of renters in New England, nearly 40 percent. To give a complete picture of renters in our state, we used statewide ACS data to determine demographic information like the age, education level, and median household income of renters. We used this information to produce the attached infographic about renters in Rhode Island.

In addition, we used ACS data to prepare our special reports on foreclosures in Rhode Island. We analyze the number of actual foreclosures for every city and town in the state, but comparing those numbers with a municipality's mortgage housing stock, found through the ACS, gives a better picture of how a community is faring the crisis. For example, it would be no surprise that the state's largest city, Providence, had the highest number of actual residential foreclosures. When comparing the number of actual foreclosures with the mortgaged housing stock, however, we actually found that the community most heavily impacted by the state's foreclosure crisis was Central Falls. Almost 14 percent of the city's mortgaged homes were foreclosed from 2009 through 2011. This statistic would not have been possible without the 5-year ASC estimate, and the severity of that community's foreclosure crisis could have been overlooked.

HousingWorks RI shares all of our research and data analysis with policymakers to communicate the breadth of the housing affordability problem in our state. At a time when federal and state budgets are being cut, it's essential for our leaders to fund investments that have proven results; our economic times require public investments that can be shown improving the economy and jobs climate. The ACS provides the data necessary for policymakers to make informed decisions, and ensure that public investments are spent wisely. To eliminate funding for the ACS would be shortsighted and devastating to policymakers needing to make evidence based policy decisions.

Education and Training

Economic Progress Institute
The American Community Survey Important to Data-Driven Analysis in Rhode Island
Laura M. Faulkner

Policy Analyst
http://economicprogressri.org/

As a research and policy organization working in Rhode Island, the smallest state the country, we rely heavily on the American Community Survey (ACS) as it provides the only data source that has a sample large enough to allow us to use single year information instead of averaging several years of data, thus providing more accurate and timely information.

We regularly use the ACS to attain state and local data which we use to educate the public and policymakers about issues such as: changing demographics, poverty rates across communities, average income and earnings for workers, education levels, and English-language proficiency.

As an example of how we use the ACS data, this spring we determined that there are approximately 86,000 working-age adults in Rhode Island lacking a high school diploma who could benefit from additional workforce training and adult basic education (9 percent of the individuals between ages 18 and 64). In our effort to restore funding for workforce development and job training programs for people in Rhode Island, we used this information in an issue brief distributed to over 400 policy makers, media sources, advocates, business leaders and other Rhode Islanders. Ultimately, previously eliminated funding to support workforce development was reinstated thanks to this data.

Without the ACS data, the public and policymakers wouldn't have had a way to measure the need for such services. By eliminating or scaling back funding for the ACS, we would not be able to access timely information such as this about Rhode Island's residents. While other data sources measure similar information, they are not as timely and not as detailed. Access to ACS data gives advocates the tools to identify needs within their communities and policymakers the information to make informed decisions at the state and local levels. We urge that the necessary investments continue to be made to maintain the ACS.

Texas

Children's Issues

Center for Public Policy Priorities
Eliminating America's Playbook

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Football is a longstanding tradition in Texas, with high expectations for rigor, skill, and success. But what if I told you that one day, all of the playbooks and player stats would just disappear? Coaches would no longer have information on how the opposing team is performing. Or, worse yet, how their own team was performing, or what types of players they might need to add to develop a winning game plan. And you can't know if what you are doing is making conditions better or worse if you don't have good statistics. That, my friends, is exactly what will happen for businesses, governments, and nonprofits if Congress stops funding the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Texans rely on the annual American Community Survey's invaluable data because it is reliable, credible, and the only consistent source for local-level data to guide action today and plan for tomorrow. The survey replaced the old "long-form" decennial census survey and reaches approximately 3 million households each year, asking about income, family relationships, transportation, and home construction. Although it may not be obvious why some questions are asked, the data are used daily by businesses and governments to make their best game plans.

The American Community Survey helps us understand our local communities. Without it, we would not know that Texas has four of the five worst poverty rates, and 12 of the 20 worst uninsured rates, among U.S. metropolitan areas. In a time of limited resources and great need, these data become even more essential. They inform wide-ranging decisions, from new road projects based on population growth to plans for water usage in a community to businesses determining where to build a new store.

In fact, the Target corporation just released a video explaining how it uses the survey's local-level data to determine where to build stores and what customers in each area might need (e.g., compact furniture in areas with many apartments or a larger children's clothing section in areas with many families). With 148 Target stores hiring employees

and providing services in communities across Texas, this is no small matter for our state.

The American Community Survey also helps determine how approximately $400 billion in state and federal funds (including approximately $30 billion for Texas) are distributed each year. These funds include investments in health care, educational grants for low-income or special education students, Head Start, national school breakfast and lunch, foster care, and child care.

At the Center for Public Policy Priorities, we use the American Community Survey on a daily basis. We used data from the survey during the 2011 Texas Legislative Session to demonstrate the local impact of changes to federal and state budgets. In addition, because the survey is the most accessible source of employment information by gender, we use it to demonstrate the impact of the economic downturn and decrease in public-sector jobs on women. We also help grant writers use the data to accurately describe the need so that they can bring millions of philanthropic dollars to their communities.

It is inspiring to see that Senator Hutchison and Senator Cornyn believe in the value of the American Community Survey data so much that they link to the data from their official U.S. Senate websites as a way to inform their constituents. We hope Texans from across the state will ask Senators Hutchison and Cornyn to continue showing their support by voting to fully fund the American Community Survey and keep our "playbook" intact.