



## WHAT IS THE NEW CENSUS DATA ABOUT ANYWAY?!

### 2009 DATA TO BE RELEASED IN SEPTEMBER ON HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE, POVERTY, AND INCOME

On two dates in September, the Census Bureau will release data on poverty, income, and the number of uninsured. On September 16, the Bureau will release health insurance, poverty, and income data from the Current Population Survey. On September 28, the Bureau will release additional health insurance, poverty, and income data from the American Community Survey. Although the data from these two surveys are similar, they do differ in important ways and will likely yield somewhat different numbers.

#### Apples and Oranges

Although the data will be similar, you should not compare the CPS data to the ACS data (i.e., do not compare local uninsured rates from the ACS to statewide uninsured rates from the CPS)! The surveys ask different questions at different times of the year to different populations.

The key differences are as follows (for more details, visit the Census Bureau's [CPS vs. ACS webpage](#)):

- The way the two surveys ask about health insurance (i.e., if you had it at any point in the previous year versus if you have insurance today)
- Whether military health insurance coverage is represented as private or public/government insurance
- Annual U.S. sample sizes: CPS = 100,000 addresses vs. ACS = 3 million addresses.
- What geographic level of data is available (i.e., CPS only goes down to state-level, while ACS goes down to areas above 65,000, including Congressional Districts, metro areas, and some counties)

#### Use CPPP as a Resource to Help Make Sense of the Numbers

The Center for Public Policy Priorities is a Texas-based non-profit, non-partisan policy institute that will issue press releases to the press and be available for interviews on both days of the data releases to help provide context and interpretation of the numbers. If you have questions regarding the methodology or what kinds of data will be available (e.g. geographic areas, changes over time, etc.), please contact our Communications Director, Brian Stephens, at (512) 320-0222 ext. 112 or [stephens@cphp.org](mailto:stephens@cphp.org).

Also note that, unlike in years past, the Census Bureau will not be releasing embargoed data early to the press or any other organization. Everyone (press and research organizations alike) will be allowed access to the data at the same time.

#### For National and State-level Health Insurance Coverage Data, We Recommend Using September 16th's Current Population Survey.

##### Key Facts about the CPS:

- Data only available for U.S. and States
- Asks: whether the person had health insurance at any time during 2009

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- “Uninsured” = no health insurance for all of 2009
  - “Insured” = had health insurance at any point in the year, even for a short period of time. Subcategories include:
    - Private insurance = employment-based coverage, union-based coverage, or insurance purchased independently from an insurance company.
    - Government insurance = insurance through public insurance programs (e.g., Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP), or any military-based healthcare (i.e., TRICARE, VA, or other military health care).
  - Data over time: 1987-2009

**For Health Insurance Data for State and Sub-state Areas of 65,000 or More, We Recommend Using September 28th’s American Community Survey.**

**Key Facts about the Health Insurance Data from the ACS:**

- Health insurance coverage data for states, as well as geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more (including 50 Texas counties, all U.S. Congressional Districts, and all 25 Texas Metropolitan Areas)
- Asks: whether individuals had health insurance *at the time they were surveyed*
  - “Uninsured” = didn’t have insurance at the time survey was completed
  - “Insured” = had insurance at the time survey was completed. Subcategories include:
    - Private = employment- or union-based coverage, insurance purchased independently from an insurance company, or TRICARE or other active military health care coverage.
    - Public = coverage through public insurance programs (e.g., Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP), or through the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- This question was asked for the first time in 2008, so only 2008 & 2009 data are available.

**For National, State, and Local-level Poverty and Income Data, We Recommend Using September 28th’s American Community Survey.**

**Key Facts about the Population, Income, and Poverty Data from the ACS:**

- Population data
  - Average family size
  - Poverty rates by age, race/ethnicity, gender, and educational attainment
  - Median income for families or non-family households, and by race/ethnicity or age
  - Housing costs as a percentage of income
- Data available for the state, as well as geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more, including:
  - 50 Texas counties,
  - all U.S. Congressional Districts, and
  - all 25 Texas Metropolitan Areas
- Data over time: 2001-2009