

**Florida TaxWatch Webinar:  
“Demographic Data for Businesses and  
The Census”**

*Mary Jo Hoeksema, Co-Director*

*The Census Project*

*August 31, 2022*



**THE CENSUS  
PROJECT**

Supporting quality measures of  
America's economy and places



## ***The Census Project is...***

A broad-based coalition of 800+ national, state, and local organizations that support an inclusive and accurate decennial census and American Community Survey (ACS) (the modern version of the census “long form”).

Its member organizations, representing the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors, rely on objective data that the Census Bureau produces to inform evidence-based investment, policy and planning decisions.

Governed by an advisory committee comprised of most former Census Bureau Directors, the former U.S. Chief Statistician, and a representative group of officials representing diverse interests of the broad census stakeholder community, including business.

[www.thecensusproject.org](http://www.thecensusproject.org)

# Business Community Relies on ACS Data

- ACS provides corporations, small businesses, and individuals detailed socioeconomic, housing, and demographic data to:
  - **gauge** the **sales** potential of products and services
  - better **understand** the **workforce**
  - **identify** and **select sites** for factories, stores, offices and warehouses
  - **set strategies** for **growth** and **investment**.





## Business Uses of ACS Data

- A "high-end mountain bike component manufacturer" to open "his own bike shop to sell his manufactured components along with mountain bikes and other components" in Portland, Oregon used ACS data to identify potential customers and develop marketing strategy.
- A "restauranteur in Albuquerque, New Mexico" to add "a drive-through window to each of his five restaurants."
- A "utility truck manufacturer" conduct and act upon a periodic review of the company's "network of dealerships and repair facilities across the U.S." to relocate certain facilities and open some new facilities "to better serve their markets" and improve customer satisfaction.



*Without accurate, timely ACS data...*

- Retail companies like Target cannot accurately understand their local stores' customer bases, plan where and how to exactly stock and display certain goods in specific stores, or track changes in consumer preferences between urban, suburban, and rural communities in a timely fashion.
- The National Association of REALTORS<sup>®</sup> cannot benchmark its home sales figures and would struggle to properly analyze trends in migration among recent movers, generational demand or household formation.
- Nielsen cannot constitute representative samples of U.S. households for its definitive surveys determining national radio and television ratings.

# Recent ACS Operational and Political Challenges

- **2020 ACS 1-year estimates cancelled**
  - Replaced with “experimental” data release in November 2021.
- **Delay in release of 2016-2020 ACS 5-year estimates (2016-2020)**
  - Due December 2021--were not [released](#) until March 17, 2022.
  - Disrupted research and ability of data users to understand social, economic, and demographic change across the U.S.
- **Other**
  - Sample size has not been increased since 2011.
  - Response rates have declined steadily since 2014.
  - Incomplete Non-Response Follow Up Operations.
  - ACS budget has remained relatively stagnant.
  - Faced political challenges post 2010 census in U.S. Congress.





## ACS: America's Data at Risk: A Vision to Preserve and Enhance the American Community Survey

- The Census Project [released](#) in March 2022
- Recommendations include:
  - **Increase** annual sample size
  - **Add new questions** regarding relationships between all household members, parental place of birth, and on respondents' race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
  - Provide **additional funding for nonresponse follow up** operations to increase the number of completed interviews and reduce nonresponse bias in ACS data.
  - **Develop new data products**, such as, those for small geographic areas derived from the combination of ACS and administrative records data and new products or tools that would enable data users to measure trends more easily.

## ACS Initiative Goals

- **Educate** policymakers about **value and uses** of the ACS
- **Educate** policymakers and users about ACS **challenges**
- **Secure** additional **resources** to **enhance** the ACS!







# Census Stakeholder Engagement

The Census Project is working with census stakeholders **now** to:

- **Build more ACS background information and resources.**
- **Develop support for enhancing ACS—especially with release of paper.**

**Learn more and get involved!**

**<http://www.thecensusproject.org>**