



American Community Survey

ACS Content Review Webinar
Data Users Group

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Background

- In December 2010, the Census Bureau began a comprehensive assessment of the ACS program – including an initiative to examine and confirm the value of each question on the ACS.
- In June 2012, OMB initiated a process to confirm and update information the statutory and regulatory authority for the questions on the ACS with select federal agencies.
- In August 2012, the Interagency Council of Statistical Policy (ICSP) Subcommittee for the ACS was formed with a mission, in part, to ensure that the ACS would “provide the most useful information with the least amount of burden.”
- To support the ICSP Subcommittee, the ACS Content Review is the next logical step in reviewing content beyond what was accomplished with the OMB effort.

Approach

We will review all topics on the questionnaire, placing our initial focus on several difficult to measure topics:

- Plumbing Facilities
- Journey to Work
- Income
- Disability
- Request agencies identify POC's – Mar 2014
- Hold kickoff meeting with all Federal agency POC's – Apr 2014
- Gather input from all POC's – Apr-June 2014
- Analyze input and make content decisions – Summer-Fall 2014
- Formally announce decisions – Oct-Dec 2014
- Implement decisions – 15 months to affect CY2016 ACS data collection
- Continue efforts to complete a comprehensive top-to-bottom assessment

Methodology

Review Methodology:

- In order to evaluate ACS content to determine which variables were most valuable, we decided on a cost-benefit analysis in which:
 - “cost” is the difficulty in obtaining quality information
 - “benefit” is the usefulness and quality of the data
- The Census Bureau then identified and selected the decision criteria that fit into these two categories.

Decision Criteria

Decision Criteria:

- The Census Bureau has identified 19 decision criteria in all:
 - 13 that measure the utility and quality of a variable
 - 6 that measure the difficulty of obtaining information
- The Census Bureau will rely on federal agencies to provide information for about one-third of the criteria, and we will provide the information for the remaining criteria.

Utility vs. Difficulty

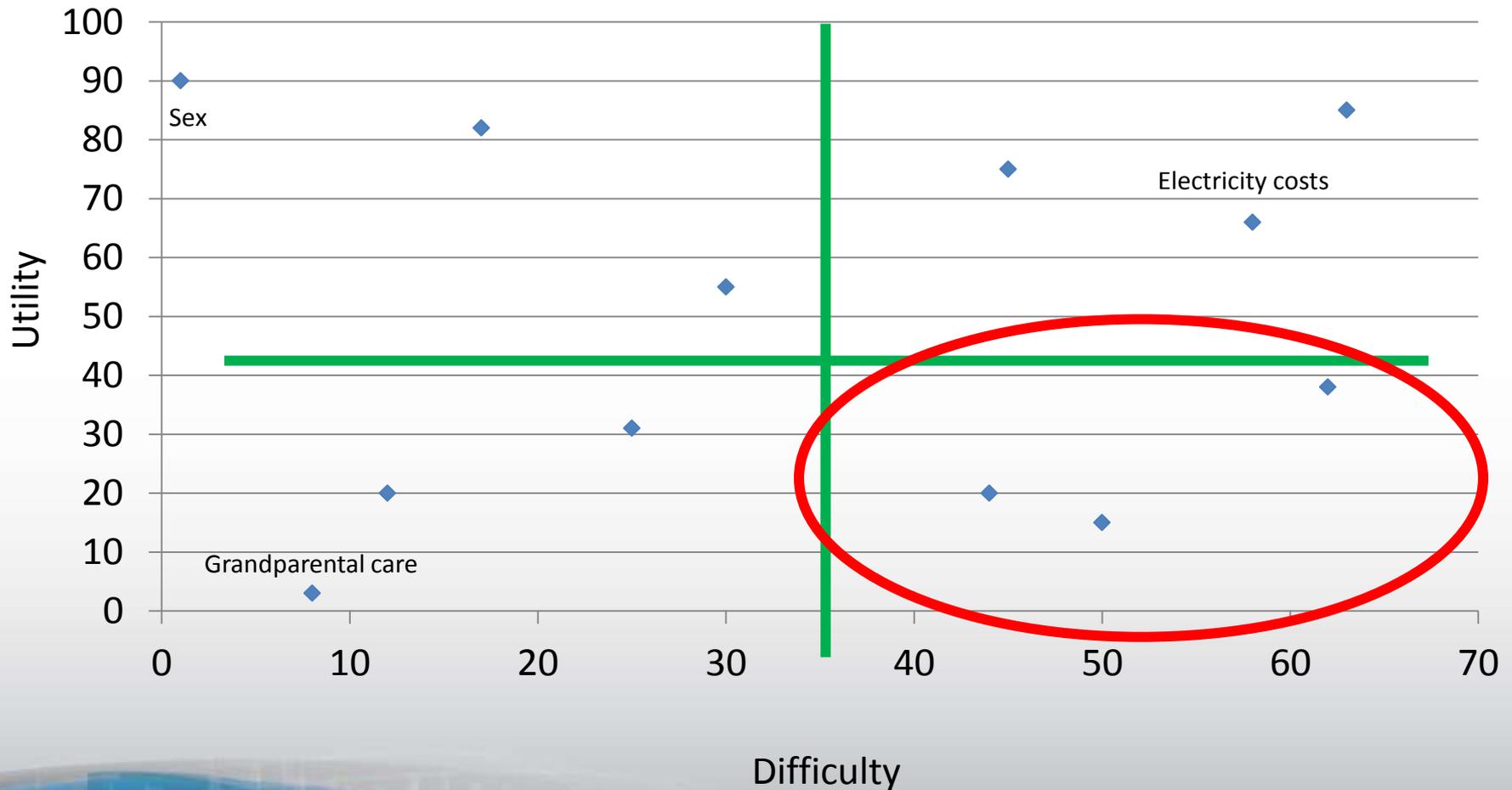
Utility

- Uses at Block Group/Tract Level—Statutory
- Uses at Place/County/MSA Level—Statutory
- Uses at State/Nation Level—Statutory
- Uses at Block Group/Tract Level—Required
- Uses at Place/County/MSA Level—Required
- Uses at State/Nation Level—Required
- Uses at Block Group/Tract Level—Programmatic
- Uses at Place/County/MSA Level—Programmatic
- Uses at State/Nation Level—Programmatic
- County-Level Interquartile Range in Values
- Used to Select frame for a Federal Survey
- Other Data Sources Exist
- Median County-Level Coefficients of Variation

Difficulty

- Cognitive Burden
- Sensitivity
- Overall Difficulty
- Number of Complaints
- Seconds to Answer
- Median Item Response Rate at County Level

Notional Example



Respondent Feedback

- Feedback form to be launched May 2014
- Asks respondents/general public to please give us comments about the American Community Survey (ACS)
- Specific questions:
 1. Have you, or any member of your household, ever responded to the American Community Survey (online, by mail, by phone, or an in-person interview)?
 2. Do you have any comments on specific questions or topics on the American Community Survey? Download a paper version of the form. If yes, please describe.
 3. Is there any other feedback you would like to share about the American Community Survey? For example, comments about the materials you received, accessing the online questionnaire, the Census employee who contacted you, or something else. If yes, please describe.

Data User Feedback (1)

- Feedback form to be launched late May/early June 2014
- Asks data users to provide feedback on highest valued questions
- Specific Questions:
 1. Please select up to 5 questions on the American Community Survey that are most important to you or that you use most frequently.
 - Social (Characteristics about people such as Educational Attainment, Marital Status, Language Spoken at Home, etc.)
 - Economic (Characteristics about people and households such as Income, Occupation, Health Insurance Coverage, etc.)
 - Financial (Characteristics about housing such as Property Value, Mortgage, Rent, Utility Costs, etc.)
 - Physical (Characteristics about housing such as Acreage, Year Structure Built, Computer & Internet Use, etc.)

Data User Feedback (2)

Specific Questions (cont'd.):

2. For each of the 5 questions you selected, please provide further details below.
 - Please tell us how you use the information from this question.
 - The American Community Survey might not be the only source for this information. Is there another source that you use?
 - If yes, is the American Community Survey your primary source for this information?
 - If yes, please tell us why the American Community Survey is your primary source for this information.
3. Please tell us if you have any additional comments about any of the questions on the American Community Survey that you use.
4. Please select your affiliation below so that we can better understand your use of the American Community Survey.
5. We may want to highlight various uses of the American Community Survey. If you are willing to be contacted about your responses, please provide contact information.

Questions for Discussion

1. Given the approach to begin with difficult to measure topics, do you agree with the selection of Plumbing Facilities, Journey to Work, Income, Disability? Please explain. Are there other topics you would recommend be included?
2. What weighting scores would you assign to the various 'utility' versus 'difficulty' criteria?
3. Would you be willing to supply case examples of how ACS information is used in research, for programmatic purposes, or other uses?